Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:17 PM



Recession warning

UN chief warns Hormuz disruptions could deepen global economic pain

PAGE 4



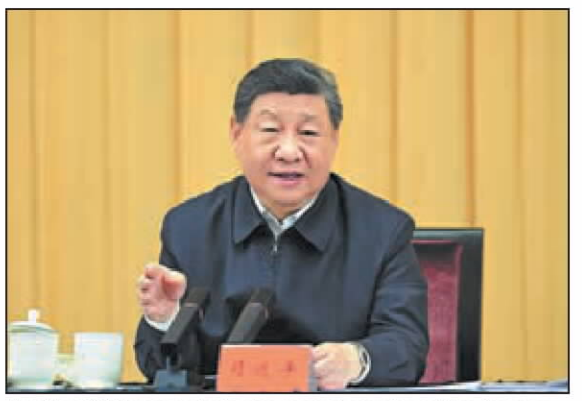
Lighting up runways

Shenyang airport team stands firm at their posts to ensure flight safety

IMAGE, PAGE 8

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 FRIDAY, MAY 1, 2026



President Xi Jinping, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, addresses a symposium on strengthening basic research in Shanghai on Thursday. XIE HUANCHI / XINHUA

Xi urges more efforts to boost basic research

Realizing sci-tech strength through groundbreaking innovations stressed

By **CAO DESHENG**
caodesheng@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping has called for greater efforts and more solid measures to strengthen basic research, enhance China's capacity for original innovation, and further solidify the foundation for building the nation's strength in science and technology.

Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, made the remarks on Thursday in Shanghai when attending a symposium on strengthening basic research.

A new round of sci-tech revolution and industrial transformation is rapidly evolving and global technological competition is increasingly focusing on fundamental cutting-edge fields, he said, adding that the importance of developing original and groundbreaking innovations is becoming more prominent.

Xi emphasized the need to seize opportunities, rise to the challenges, prioritize basic research and make consistent efforts to make new achievements.

The symposium took place as China has been paying greater attention to boosting basic research in recent years, in order to realize the nation's scientific and technological self-reliance and strength amid intensifying global competition.

By optimizing research layout, increasing investment and innovating institutional framework, China has significantly improved its basic research. The new whole-nation innovation model has paid dividends, enabling the country to funnel vast resources into key sectors such as artificial intelligence, quantum technologies and semiconductors.

While addressing the symposium, Xi underlined the need for coordinated planning and top-level design to optimize the systematic layout of basic research, and to further identify the main directions and key areas of basic research.

It is important to strengthen the leading role of national research institutions and high-level research universities as well as encourage and regulate the development of new type of research and development institutions, he said.

Xi highlighted the importance of promoting the deep integration of industry and academia, led by enterprises, thereby linking the innovation chain — from basic research to application development — until research achievements are fully transformed into industrial applications.

It is essential to strengthen the construction of basic disciplines and promote the coordinated development of applied and basic disciplines, he said.

While emphasizing the need to strengthen support for basic research, Xi said that the nation will allocate a greater proportion of its science and technology expenditures toward basic research and also shape a diversified investment pattern.

It is also necessary to plan and build major sci-tech infrastructure in a systematic way, he said, calling for building intelligent research platforms.

This year's Government Work Report, which was adopted at the annual session of the National People's Congress, China's top legislature, in March, indicates a strategic shift in funding allocation for basic research, which aligns with the nation's long-term goals of becoming a global leader in science and technology.

According to data from the Ministry of Science and Technology, China's total R&D investment exceeded 3.92 trillion yuan ($574 billion) in 2025, accounting for 2.8 percent of its GDP. Basic research funding last year hit nearly 280 billion yuan, accounting for 7.08 percent of total R&D spending, making it the first time the funding surpassed the 7 percent threshold.

Government officials noted that investing in basic research is vital for addressing both current and future challenges, particularly in fields such as renewable energy, AI, biotechnology and materials science.

Analysts said this strategic shift underscores a commitment to building a robust research ecosystem that supports not only academic research, but also promotes collaboration between universities, research institutions and the private sector.

See ***Research,*** *page 2*

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved
Vol.8 — No. 1818

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

Book acts as window on China's governance philosophy

By **MO JINGXI**
mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn

"A book holds a house of gold," said Johari Abdul, speaker of Malaysia's House of Representatives, quoting an old Chinese saying at a readers' forum on Thursday in Kuala Lumpur, where the book under discussion was the English edition of the fifth volume of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*.

For Johari and other Malaysian attendees at the event, the saying pointed to the broader value of the book, which offers readers a window on China's governance philosophy, development priorities and approach to international cooperation.

Against the backdrop of an evolving geopolitical landscape and profound changes in the global governance system, deeper exchanges between China and Malaysia on governance experience are of great significance to deepening bilateral friendship, mutual trust and win-win cooperation, they said.

Published in both Chinese and English last year, the fifth volume of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* contains 91 spoken and written works of Xi from May 27, 2022, to Dec 20, 2024. Thursday's forum brought together about 200 participants from publishing, media and other sectors in China and Malaysia.

Johari said that all the five volumes of the book represent an effort to articulate a governance philosophy — one that explains how a nation understands its development priorities and role in the world.

Engaging with such a book, Johari said, allows readers to better understand the thinking behind China's policy directions. For Malaysia, this is important not simply as an observer, but also as a long-standing partner that seeks to engage with China thoughtfully and constructively, he added.

Anwar Ridhwan, chairman of the board of directors of the Institute of Language and Literature of Malaysia, said the book represents more than a translation of language — it is also "a translation of ideas, perspectives and aspirations across cultures".

In an increasingly interconnected world, understanding one another is not a luxury but a necessity, Anwar said, adding that the book is expected to help Malaysian readers gain a clearer view of China's development goals, governance philosophy and its place in the global community.

Malaysian Transport Minister Anthony Loke Siew Fook said the book's discussions on the Belt and Road Initiative, new quality productive forces, green and coordinated development, scientific and technological innovation, and the integration of the digital and real economies respond to key issues in global development.

These ideas also provide inspiration for Malaysia as it considers its own modernization path, he said, noting that Malaysia's Madani vision — a national development framework introduced by Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim — and China's governance philosophy share highly consistent development aspirations.

Ngeow Chow Bing, director of the Institute of China Studies at Universiti Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, said that China's development journey over the past several decades represents one of the most remarkable transformations in modern history.

China's approach, he said, is not purely economic in a narrow sense, but multidimensional, integrating industrial upgrading, infrastructure development, technological innovation and social improvement.

See ***Forum,*** *page 2*

Spectacular show



A journalist takes a photo on Thursday with performers from Cebu, the Philippines, which will host the 7th Asian Beach Games, before the closing ceremony of the 6th Asian Beach Games in Sanya, Hainan province. The games in Sanya, which started on April 22, won great applause from athletes and officials for the coastal city's competition venues and organizational capability. ZHANG WEI / CHINA DAILY **See story, page 2**

Chinese, US officials exchange views on ties

By **ZHAO JIA** and **ZHANG CHENXU**

Foreign Minister Wang Yi urged the United States on Thursday to work with China to prepare for key high-level engagement, broaden cooperation and keep differences under control.

He made the remarks in a phone conversation with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

Head-of-state diplomacy has always served as the anchor of China-US relations, Wang said, noting that under the strategic guidance of President Xi Jinping and US President Donald Trump, bilateral relations have remained generally stable.

Such stability serves the fundamental interests of both peoples and meets the broad expectations of the international community, Wang added.

He called on the two sides to safeguard the hard-won stability in bilateral ties and explore building a relationship that is strategic, constructive and stable, in order to realize mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation.

Regarding the Taiwan question, Wang emphasized that it concerns China's core interests and remains the biggest risk in China-US relations. Washington should honor its commitments, make the right choices, open up new space for China-US cooperation and make due efforts to achieve world peace, he said.

Rubio told Wang that the US-China relationship is the most important bilateral relationship in the world, and that head-of-state diplomacy lies at the core of this relationship.

Both sides should maintain communication and coordination, respect each other, properly manage differences, build up outcomes for high-level engagement and seek strategic stability in bilateral ties, Rubio added.

Also on Thursday, He Lifeng, China's vice-premier and lead for China-US economic and trade affairs, held a video call with US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer.

The Chinese side expressed serious concerns over the recent US economic and trade restrictive measures against China. Both sides agreed to continue to make good use of the China-US economic and trade consultation mechanism, build consensus, manage differences and strengthen cooperation, in order to promote the healthy, stable and sustainable development of China-US ties.

Contact the writers at zhaojia@chinadaily.com.cn

President sends festive greetings to working people

By **ZHAO JIA**
zhaojia@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping has extended festive greetings and best wishes to the country's working people ahead of the International Workers' Day, which falls on Friday.

Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, sent the greetings on behalf of the CPC Central Committee.

This year marks the 105th anniversary of the founding of the CPC and the first year of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, Xi said, praising the important contributions made by the working people to the cause of the Party and the country.

He expressed hope that working people across the country will vigorously carry forward the spirit of model workers, the working spirit and craftsmanship, work diligently, dedicate themselves to their posts, and demonstrate their role as the main force and their sense of ownership in promoting high-quality economic and social development.

Xi asked Party committees and governments at all levels to earnestly safeguard the lawful rights and interests of workers, make greater efforts to address their most pressing concerns, and encourage them to strive unremittingly for the country's grand goals.

HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE INSTILLS STEEL, EMPATHY IN STUDENTS

Enthusiastic response to labor-intensive programs teaching respect, value of physical work

By **ZOU SHUO**
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

On a crisp autumn afternoon, Chen Yijie, a 20-year-old finance major at Renmin University of China, found herself in a baking class learning how to make a chiffon cake. On three consecutive Wednesdays, with each session lasting two to three hours, she measured flour, whipped egg whites and watched the oven with anticipation.

"It was really fun," Chen said. "I personally enjoy baking, so I chose this course. We worked in groups of three, helping each other — one stirring, one preparing ingredients. It really developed team cooperation."

When the cake came out of the oven, the sense of achievement was immediate. Chen and her group shared their creation with their peers. "It was a very happy experience," she said.

Chen is among a growing number of Chinese university students now required to complete labor education credits before graduation. Under a national guideline issued in 2020 by the Ministry of Education, undergraduate students must complete at least 32 class hours of labor education as a compulsory requirement. The policy aims to integrate labor into the broader framework of moral, intellectual, physical, and aesthetic education, alongside traditional academic subjects.

The ministry has since called for universities to build systematic labor education curricula, emphasizing hands-on experience, teamwork and respect for workers.

Across campuses, that mandate has given rise to a remarkable range of courses: baking cakes, fixing leaky faucets, pruning trees, and harvesting bamboo fungus. And students are lining up for spots.

At Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications, Zhao Xiaoye, deputy Party secretary of the university's logistics department, has witnessed the enthusiasm firsthand.

See ***Courses,*** *page 3*

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:17 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:17 PM

NATION

Manufacturing defies Mideast energy shock

Chinese factories continue growth spurt for second consecutive month

By **ZHANG CHENXU**
zhangchenxu@chinadaily.com.cn

China's manufacturing sector maintained its expansion streak for a second month in April, signaling sustained growth momentum despite a global energy shock triggered by tensions in the Middle East.

Inside
See more, **page 4**

The official manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index was 50.3 in April, according to National Bureau of Statistics data released on Thursday. While a marginal 0.1-point dip from March, the figure remains above the critical 50-point threshold that separates expansion from contraction.

The data revealed a substantial recovery for the backbone of the country's private sector. The PMI for small and medium-sized enterprises stood at 50.1 and 50.5, respectively, up 0.8 and 1.5 percentage points from March, with both returning to expansion territory, the NBS said.

Wang Qing, chief macroeconomic analyst at Orient Golden Credit Rating International, attributed the rebound to the continued application of supportive macro policies targeting the real economy.

"The improvement was likely supported by a package of structural monetary and fiscal policy measures introduced earlier this year to strengthen financing support for private SMEs," Wang said.

The rapid development of "new quality productive forces", Wang said, is playing an increasingly stronger role in supporting overall macroeconomic growth.

Notably, high-tech manufacturing posted a PMI of 52.2 in April, up 0.1 percentage point from March, while equipment manufacturing recorded a PMI of 51.8, up 0.3 percentage points from the previous month.

Despite the escalation of tensions in the Middle East threatening global supply chains, analysts suggest China is uniquely buffered.

"Although Middle East tensions continue to disrupt global supply chains, China has maintained strong competitiveness in foreign trade markets," said Wen Tao, an analyst at China Logistics Information Center.

Jeremy Zook, lead analyst for China at Fitch Ratings, added that the country is relatively well positioned to withstand the energy shock, thanks to its sizable oil reserves, strong refining capacity and current energy mix.

Near-term risks of energy shortages remain limited, Zook said, adding that China's export outlook is expected to stay resilient, though growth may moderate over the coming year.

Despite the overall expansion in manufacturing, nonmanufacturing activity softened in April, with the construction sector remaining under pressure.

The construction PMI came in at 48.0, down 1.3 percentage points from March and staying in contraction territory, according to the NBS.

Wang, the analyst, said the weaker reading reflected the continued drag from the ongoing adjustment in the real estate market, and pointed to the need to further strengthen investment momentum.

Wang said there remains ample policy room to further stabilize the real estate market and to better cope with external uncertainties.

Buffalo tide



A herd of buffaloes swims across the Jialing River to reach the lush shores of Taiyang Island in Peng'an county, Sichuan province, as onlookers gather to witness the spectacle on Thursday. This unique ecological phenomenon began in the 1990s following the construction of the Mahui Hydropower Station. As water levels rose, the local buffaloes adapted, evolving from waders into skilled swimmers to reach the rich forage on the island. JIANG HONGJING / XINHUA

Forum: Nations aligned on many key issues, says expert

From page 1

"Such a holistic approach resonates with many developing countries, including Malaysia, which also prioritize balanced and inclusive growth," Bing said.

Neo Chee Hua, CEO of the Southeast Asia Research Centre for Humanities, said the fifth volume of the book focuses on high-quality development, high-level opening-up, win-win cooperation and building a community with a shared future for humanity.

Many of the important concepts in the book are reflected in China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), while the 13th Malaysia Plan also emphasizes economic resilience, supply chain security and structural reform in response to a more uncertain global environment, he noted.

The two countries are therefore highly aligned on many key issues, which lays an important foundation for deeper and more substantive Malaysia-China cooperation, he added.

Dato' Abdul Majid Ahmad Khan, president of the Malaysia-China Friendship Association and former Malaysian ambassador to China, said the forum provided an important opportunity for intellectual exchange and mutual understanding, particularly in appreciating China's governance philosophy and its broader vision for global cooperation.

Greeting the future



Maxime Prevot, Belgium's deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs, waves to greet a humanoid robot during his visit to Deep Robotics Co in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, on Wednesday. Prevot is on a five-day visit to China that started on Monday. WANG GANG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Sanya praised for sports venues, hospitality

By **SUN XIAOCHEN**
sunxiaochen@chinadaily.com.cn

As the flame of the 6th Asian Beach Games flickered out on Thursday in Sanya, etching memories in the hearts and minds of athletes and officials, the tropical tourism paradise in South China's Hainan province added a feather in its cap as a fitting stage for international sporting events.

Inside
See more, **pages 6-7**

A grand closing ceremony capped off 10 days of intense competition in 15 disciplines across sand and sea, which recorded the participation of more than 1,700 athletes from 45 countries and regions. Host China dominated the final tally with 14 gold medals, as well as two new world records in speed climbing, to cement the nation's status as a sporting power in Asia.

The games, which showcased some niche disciplines such as beach kabaddi, teqball and dragon boat race, stole the international spotlight not only for Sanya's breathtaking landscapes and vibrant culture, but also for the quality and organization of its competition venues.

The sun-drenched coastal city tested and honed the skills of emerging young talent for the 20th Asian Games scheduled to take place in Nagoya, Japan, in the fall.

The beach games highlighted Sanya's capability to integrate sports, tourism, culture and lifestyle activities into the development of the Hainan Free Trade Port, with a visa-free policy applicable for 86 countries further facilitating the city's opening-up.

> "The people are very warm and friendly — all very welcoming. ... I would love to come back with my family to Sanya."
>
> **Saphna Ravichandran,** legal counsel for the Asian Football Confederation

Athletes and officials gave the thumbs-up for Sanya's warm hospitality and great organizational capability, expressing the hope to be able to visit again.

"The games have been very well organized, and I'm thankful for the chance to compete here," said Cherif Samba, a beach volleyball player from Qatar, who along with partner Ahmed Janko retained the men's title on Wednesday with a straight-sets win over an Iranian pair.

"I haven't had the time to explore Sanya properly yet, because we've spent most of our time in the athletes' village. But I've seen many interesting spots, and maybe one day I will come back for a visit," he added.

Saphna Ravichandran, a legal counsel for the Asian Football Confederation from Malaysia, said the Sanya event has helped many people, including her, to see the true picture of China.

Noting that this is her first visit to the country, Ravichandran said China is very different than what "the outside world" makes it to be. "Coming to Sanya has really changed my perspective of ... what China really is," she said.

"The people are very warm and friendly — all very welcoming. In Malaysia, we do have similar areas, like beaches and stuff, but it's always different to go out to another country to see what they can offer. So yes, I would love to come back with my family to Sanya," she added.

Raven Faith Alcoseba, a triathlete from the Philippines, praised Sanya for its easy accessibility, modern infrastructure and laid-back vibe, calling the city a must-visit destination.

"The visa-free policy made my trip so smooth. I could just arrive with my passport and then focus entirely on the competition," she said. "After the race, I even had time to go shopping at a duty-free mall, which is a wonderful bonus of being here."

Already popular for its 264 kilometers of pristine coastline and wide sandy beaches, Sanya has now earned the confidence of top officials and further established itself as an ideal host for future international sporting events.

Thomas Bach, former chief of the International Olympic Committee, hailed the beach games as a compelling example of the unifying power of sports and lauded Sanya as a competent host following his visit to the city.

"Hainan, I think, has the intention to attract even more international sports events," said Bach, who is now IOC honorary president for life.

Xing Wen in Sanya contributed to this story.

Revision to Prison Law helps protect inmate rights, improve rehabilitation

By **CAO YIN**
caoyin@chinadaily.com.cn

China's top legislature has adopted a significant revision to the nation's Prison Law, guaranteeing better protection of prisoners' rights and more professional measures aimed at rehabilitation.

The revision to the law, comprising 121 articles across eight chapters, was adopted by the Standing Committee of the 14th National People's Congress in a session that concluded on Thursday. The updated law will take effect on Nov 1.

The NPC Standing Committee's Legislative Affairs Commission said the amended law places greater emphasis on safeguarding inmates' rights, noting that respect for and protection of human rights were introduced as a general principle in the first chapter.

The revised law emphasizes that inmates' personal dignity, life, health and physical safety must remain inviolable. It also clearly stipulates that their rights to defense and to receive legal assistance while serving sentences should be protected.

Prisons are allowed to reasonably schedule the frequency and duration of inmates' phone calls and family in-person visits, based on rehabilitation needs, security classifications and custody levels. Video calls can also be arranged if necessary.

The amended law focuses on enhancing the quality of inmate education and rehabilitation, requiring innovative measures to help them reintegrate into society.

The law encourages legal, education, psychology and social work professionals to support inmate rehabilitation, while prison management staff are urged to strengthen communication and collaboration with various sectors, including government agencies, social organizations, military authorities and enterprises, to create opportunities and provide support for former inmates returning to normal life.

While maintaining prison security as a fundamental priority, the revised law also mandates stronger oversight by procuratorial agencies over the execution of prison sentences. Specialized attention is also directed toward juvenile offenders, with mandates for tailored facilities and professional personnel to support their physical and mental health.

Justice Minister He Rong said the update — the first comprehensive revision since 1994 — is a necessary response to public demand for fairness, justice and security.

She added that improvements in law enforcement institutions and mechanisms have created new circumstances and higher demands placed on prison work. Therefore, it is necessary to revise the law to incorporate the experiences, practices and mechanisms developed over the past 30 years, ensuring that prison work progresses in an orderly manner under the rule of law.

Originally enacted in 1994, the current Prison Law underwent some updates in 2012. In 2023, a comprehensive revision to the law was added to the legislative agenda of the 14th NPC Standing Committee.

Research: Country set to hike R&D spending

From page 1

China estimates an annual average increase of at least 7 percent in nationwide R&D spending during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, and Chinese companies and entrepreneurs are becoming increasingly important for the nation's research system.

During the symposium, Xi pointed out the importance of actively integrating into the global innovation network, deepening international exchanges and cooperation in basic research, jointly tackling major scientific issues such as climate change, energy, environment, life science and health, and actively participating in global science and technology governance.

While emphasizing the need to advance talent development in the field of science and technology, he called for improving the working and living conditions of professionals who engage in basic research and fostering an open, inclusive and failure-tolerant innovation environment.

Briefly

Appointment of new ministers approved

The top legislature on Thursday approved the appointment of two new ministers.

At a session of the Standing Committee of the 14th National People's Congress, lawmakers voted to appoint Zhang Zhu as minister of agriculture and rural affairs and Zhang Chengzhong as minister of emergency management.

Zhang Zhu, born in February 1968, previously served as deputy Party secretary of the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region and Party secretary of its capital, Urumqi, according to public information.

Zhang Chengzhong, born in October 1970, previously served as a member of the Standing Committee of the CPC Hebei Provincial Committee and Party secretary of Tangshan.

Senior official expelled from CPC, public office

Yi Huiman, a member of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, has been expelled from the CPC and dismissed from public office over serious violations of discipline and laws, China's top anti-graft agency announced on Thursday.

Yi previously served as deputy director of the Committee of Economy of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and as chairman of the China Securities Regulatory Commission.

Major carrier orders 137 Airbus A320neos

China Southern Airlines and its subsidiary, Xiamen Airlines, have signed agreements to purchase 137 Airbus A320neo family aircraft. The deal is valued at approximately $21.4 billion at list prices, though substantial discounts are expected. Deliveries are scheduled between 2028 and 2032.

The carrier said late on Wednesday that it and Xiamen Airlines had signed separate agreements with Airbus to purchase 102 and 35 A320neo jets, respectively.

This order aims to accelerate fleet renewal and meet rising travel demand.

Seven killed, 12 injured in traffic accident

Seven people were killed and 12 others injured in a traffic accident on Thursday in Yunnan province, local public security bureau said.

The accident occurred on Thursday morning in Yuanyang county, when a vehicle carrying 19 people overturned.

An investigation into the cause of the accident is underway.

XINHUA—CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:17 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:17 PM

COVER

Courses: Fulfillment, relaxation behind popularity

From page 1

"Every time we announce our cooking micro-classroom spots disappear within seconds," she said. "Just recently, we offered a *qingtuan* (sweet green rice ball) class for 70 students. They (places) were gone in less than three minutes."

But the cooking classes are about more than just food.

Zhao explained that before students start mixing ingredients, she teaches the cultural story behind the Cold Food Festival, which is traditionally observed the day before Qingming Festival, where no fire is lit and only cold food is eaten.

Many students have never had the chance to cook at home, she said. Through this process, they not only learn to make a dish but also experience the joy of labor, the inheritance of Chinese culture, and develop empathy for kitchen staff.

That empathy, Zhao stressed, is a crucial outcome.

"When a student finds a hair in their cafeteria food, they get very angry. But after they've gone through the entire process of making a dish themselves — even if they find two hairs in their own cooking — their reaction is completely different. They understand how much work goes into each dish."

Zhao believes labor education also addresses deeper needs, including mental well-being.

Science and engineering students, for example, have very tight schedules and their course loads are heavy.

Labor education helps them decompress. When they're stuck on a research problem or feeling down, getting their hands dirty outdoors can open their minds and lift their spirits, she said.

Zhao pointed to a recent outdoor labor session where students were asked to clear stones from a field before planting flowers and vegetables. Within five minutes, over 100 students had signed up.

"They're curious, they want to learn, and they also get labor hours and credits. It's a win-win," she said.

For Zhao, the old slogan "labor is the most glorious" only truly takes root through experience. The university has a persimmon harvest festival on campus every year, she said.

The fruit grows high on the trees and is not easy to pick. But when students work hard to harvest them themselves, they find the persimmons beautiful, sweet and fragrant. They show them off to friends and say they picked them. If a persimmon simply fell to the ground, they might not even pick it up, she said.

"That self-directed growth and personal experience — that's what makes them truly feel the glory of labor."



Students from Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications learn to identify meat patterns during a culinary class on campus in Beijing. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

> "I used to think labor was far away from me. Now I feel it's right beside me. I learned not just to cherish food, but to respect every person who lives by their own hands."
>
> **Li Junjie,** student at Beijing International Studies University



Students from Renmin University of China take part in a carpentry class in Beijing. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Connecting to the land

On a spring morning in Handan, Hebei province, Zhi Ying, a first-year law student at Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications, knelt in the freshly tilled soil of a cornfield.

Under the guidance of agricultural experts, Zhi and her classmates learned to open furrows, sow seeds and cover them with earth. Weeks later, when the mature corn was harvested and sent back to campus, she tasted the fruit of her own labor.

"The sweetness lingered not just on my tongue but also brought a complete sense of achievement, from sowing to harvest," she said. "I went from being a bystander of agricultural production to someone who truly got their hands dirty."

Wang Xinyi, a second-year undergraduate majoring in artificial intelligence at BUPT participated in a spring pomegranate tree planting event on campus as part of labor classes, working alongside university leaders and fellow students.

"We dug soil, watered, and carefully planted the saplings," she said. Afterward, those who toiled sat together and listened to classmates share their stories.

Wang said labor education helped her "connect more deeply with the land and real life". She added: "As young people in the new era, we not only need to master skills like coding and technology — we also need to grow into well-rounded individuals with responsibility, teamwork skills, and an understanding of life."

"Planting a tree and waiting for it to grow teaches you patience and helps fight the anxiety of today's fast-paced world. Making food by hand shows you that technology should serve life, not the other way around. And clearing snow in winter toughens your will and deepens your respect for every ordinary worker," she said.

Zhi, who planted corn in Handan, found that the experience reshaped her understanding of time and reward.

Most of our daily learning gives immediate feedback, she said. But farming follows the unchangeable rhythm of nature — after spring planting, you have to wait through a long growing season before you can harvest in autumn, she said.

"Now, when I have three meals a day, I carry a deep sense of awe and gratitude. That kind of conservation mindset, born from firsthand experience, is something classroom lectures alone can never give."

She also noted the different mental state.

"Classroom learning is all about rational thinking and abstract knowledge — a mental drain," Zhi said. "Working in the fields is immersive: the feel of soil under your feet, the shape of seeds in your hand, the warmth of sunlight on your face. Away from complex theories, your mind actually relaxes, and you find a rare sense of peace."

Reviving 'Red memories'

Miao Hanzhe, a master's student in integrated circuit science and engineering at BUPT, led a team deep into the Jinggangshan revolutionary area in Jiangxi province for a labor practice project.

There, he identified a problem: outdated exhibition boards and monotonous explanations were failing to engage young people with the region's revolutionary heritage.

So Miao and his team designed an NFC chip-based "Red memory trigger device". Visitors can tap their phones against the device to instantly play micro-lectures and revolutionary stories, bringing static exhibits to life.

They also developed a digital study tour mini-program, putting Jinggangshan's historical sites and stories in the cloud.

The experience helped Miao see that true learning means rooting professional knowledge in the needs of the country and society. He is about to graduate and join a tech company focused on communications and chips, and is determined to tackle key technological bottlenecks and serve the nation through science.

At Beijing International Studies University, labor education is taking students into rural villages.

Zhao Mingzhuang, an undergraduate student majoring in international economics and trade, recalled spending over two hours bent over, sowing seeds in a village in Beijing's Yanqing district.

"By the time I straightened up, my back ached so much I could barely stand. That's when I truly understood what 'labor' means," she said. At lunch that day, she finished every grain of rice in her bowl. "Not a single grain left. I've learned to cherish things."

Li Junjie, a Japanese major at BISU, took part in corn-threshing. Watching the farmers, it looked easy. But when he tried, his hands hurt and his back ached within minutes, he said.

"Thanks to the local farmers who taught us their techniques, we got through it. I used to think labor was far away from me. Now I feel it's right beside me. I learned not just to cherish food, but to respect every person who lives by their own hands."

RUC has made labor education a one-credit compulsory course totaling 32 hours — eight hours of theory and 24 hours of practical work. In 2025 alone, the university offered 20 campus-wide courses, from coffee-making and traditional printing to auto repair and plumbing maintenance, plus 55 college-level courses. A Song Dynasty (960-1279) brocade accessory-making workshop attracted over 200 students within one minute of registration.

RUC English major Zhuang Zhanwang took a plumbing course. Over two days, he learned to install faucets and fix leaks, then shadowed maintenance staff on actual campus repair calls.

"I learned basic skills that will be really helpful for independent living," he said. "But equally important, I got to understand the work that maintenance staff does every day. I have a lot more respect for them now."

He also spent a full day at RUC's Tongzhou campus woodland, building insect enclosures, pruning branches, turning soil and planting vegetables.

"It was a bit tiring, but I was very happy," he said. "Seeing everyone work together and seeing the finished products — it felt very rewarding."

Exertion, sweat give students 'real rewards'

By **ZOU SHUO**

As China's universities place greater emphasis on holistic development, Beijing International Studies University has embedded labor education as a compulsory component of its undergraduate curriculum to foster respect for labor and enhance students' sense of social responsibility.

According to Zhang Xihua, head of the university's academic affairs office, the labor education program includes no fewer than 32 class hours, consisting of eight hours of theoretical instruction and 24 hours of practical work.

Practical activities take students beyond campus cleaning or routine volunteering. In Beijing's Yanqing district, for example, students work alongside agricultural technicians to clear old seedlings and plow fields in autumn. In a forest farm in Shunyi district, they learn about and harvest bamboo fungus. Other popular activities include tea-picking, tea-making, and community gardening.

"We want students to truly work, exert themselves, sweat, and gain real rewards," Zhang said.

These hands-on activities not only build practical skills but also teach students to respect labor and value its fruits, she said.

Working in the fields, they realize that farm work is far from easy and come to understand that "every grain comes from hard work". They also develop a stronger belief that labor creates a better future, she said.

Meanwhile, labor education strengthens teamwork and problem-solving abilities and also boosts physical and mental health, she added.



Students from Beijing International Studies University learn to plant trees in Beijing's Yanqing district. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Students have responded positively.

Qiu Sijing, a first-year French major at the university, said the most memorable session was cutting down dried eggplant stalks in the university's labor education base in Yanqing. Those dry stalks were hard and tough.

Cutting them with a sickle required the right angle and real effort, she said. After cutting, the students had to tie them into bundles and carry them away, and their hands were soon marked with red prints.

The experience taught her that farming is a full cycle. "It's not just sowing in spring and harvesting at the peak moment. The unnoticed cleanup work is just as essential," she said. "As a young person, I've come to appreciate the complete effort behind every achievement — including the repetitive, not so glamorous tasks."

Han Xinyu, a first-year trade economics student at the university, recalled an October labor course that took her class to a village history museum, a revolutionary memorial, and then into farm fields.

For the first time, she truly got her hands dirty from picking vegetables and shelling corn, she said. "I felt in my bones that every grain of rice comes from hard work. Labor taught me patience and groundedness, and helped me shed my previous restlessness."

Han also noted the benefits of working alongside classmates. "Unlike lectures that can make you drowsy, labor lessons — though physically tiring — lift your spirits. Working outdoors, talking and helping each other, we drew much closer as classmates."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:17 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:17 PM

WORLD

UN chief warns of recession as Hormuz disruptions continue

By **MINLU ZHANG**
at the United Nations
minluzhang@chinadailyusa.com

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Thursday warned that ongoing restrictions to navigation in the Strait of Hormuz could tip the world into recession, stating that navigational rights and freedoms "must be restored immediately".

Speaking at a news conference hosted at UN headquarters in New York, the UN chief listed three scenarios tied to the duration of the Middle East crisis, which is entering its third month.

In the best case, if the restrictions are lifted today, global growth would still fall from 3.4 to 3.1 percent this year, with inflation rising to 4.4 percent, Guterres said.

If the crisis extends through midyear, 32 million people could be pushed into poverty and 45 million more could face extreme hunger, said Guterres. And if it persists through year-end, global growth could collapse to 2 percent and inflation surpass 6 percent, he said.

"These consequences are not cumulative. They are exponential," said Guterres, adding that developing countries will be hit the hardest.

The secretary-general called on all parties to comply with Security Council Resolution 2817. "Open the Strait. Let all ships pass," he said.

"Now is the time for dialogue, for solutions that pull us back from the brink, and for measures that can open a pathway to peace," Guterres said. "The world is waiting."

The warning comes amid escalating tensions following a breakdown in post-ceasefire talks between the United States and Iran earlier this month.

Two months into the US-Israeli war with Iran, the vital sea channel remains closed, choking off 20 percent of the world's oil and gas supplies. That has sent global energy prices surging and heightened concerns about the risks of an economic downturn, Reuters reported on Thursday.

Iran said on Thursday it would respond with "long and painful strikes" on US positions if Washington renewed attacks, and also restated its claim to the Strait of Hormuz, complicating US plans for a coalition to reopen the waterway.

US President Donald Trump was slated to receive a briefing on Thursday on plans for a series of fresh military strikes on Iran to compel it to negotiate an end to the conflict, a US official told Reuters.

Such options have long been part of US planning but reports of the proposed briefing, first issued by news site Axios late on Wednesday, initially spurred big gains in oil prices, with the benchmark Brent crude contract hitting more than $126 a barrel at one point. It later slipped back to around $114.

Negotiations held in Islamabad, Pakistan on April 11 and 12 failed to produce an agreement, after which Washington imposed a blockade on Iranian ports, while Iran threatened maritime traffic, preventing tankers from transiting through the Strait of Hormuz.

A ceasefire between Iran, the US and Israel took effect on April 8 after 40 days of fighting that began on Feb 28 with strikes on Tehran and other Iranian cities.

Iranian officials said the attacks killed senior leadership figures, including then-Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, as well as civilians. Iran responded with missile and drone strikes targeting Israel and US assets in the region and later moved to restrict traffic through the Strait.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Thursday said any attempt by the US to impose a naval blockade would be "doomed to failure," according to a statement published on his office's website, Xinhua reported.

In a statement marking Persian Gulf National Day, Pezeshkian said regional waterways should not be subject to "unilateral foreign will", and called instead for collective security based on mutual respect among coastal states.

Xinhua and Reuters contributed to the story.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

HOUSTON
1001 South Dairy Ashford Suite 100
Houston, TX 77077
Tel: 713-595-7660

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1565

Briefly

UNITED STATES

Fed holds rates steady amid high energy prices

The Federal Reserve kept interest rates unchanged on Wednesday, but in its most divided decision since 1992, noted rising concerns about inflation in a policy statement that drew three dissents from officials who no longer feel the US central bank should communicate a bias toward lowering borrowing costs. A fourth dissent at the meeting favored a quarter-percentage-point rate cut. "Inflation is elevated, in part reflecting the recent increase in global energy prices," the Fed said in its policy statement, a shift from previous language saying that inflation was just "somewhat" elevated. "Developments in the Middle East are contributing to a high level of uncertainty about the economic outlook," it said. "In support of its goals, the Committee decided to maintain the target range for the federal funds rate at 3-1/2 to 3-3/4 percent," the statement said.

LIBYA

17 killed, 7 rescued after week at sea

The Libyan Red Crescent said on Wednesday that a patrol boat recovered 17 bodies and rescued seven people during an operation to assist a stranded vessel off the North African country. The organization shared photos on its Facebook page showing aid workers hauling black body bags from a boat. It did not give information about the nationality of those killed or those rescued, but said it provided humanitarian assistance to survivors along with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which suggests they were migrants. "After eight days of distress, the *Almarqab* patrol boat, attached to the naval base, successfully rescued a stranded vessel. The operation resulted in the rescue of seven survivors and the recovery of 17 bodies," the Red Crescent said on Facebook.

AGENCIES—XINHUA

Terror probe



Forensic officers comb a cordoned-off street in Golders Green, London, on Wednesday after two people were stabbed in what authorities have declared a terrorist attack. The neighborhood, home to a large Jewish community, has seen a series of targeted assaults. British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said he was "deeply concerned". KIN CHEUNG / AP

Japan condemned for rash advances in military agenda

Moves seen as stirring regional unease, trigger Beijing's call for global scrutiny

By **ZHANG YUNBI**
zhangyunbi@chinadaily.com.cn

China's diplomacy and defense authorities have spoken out to slam Japan's "dangerous" military, espionage and nuclear policy drives that have reminded other Asian countries of its atrocities over 80 years ago during World War II.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian warned on Thursday that Japan's neo-militarism is "becoming a serious concern" and "has posed a clear threat to world peace and stability".

Lin was responding to Japan's latest legislative drive to restore the military ranks used by the Imperial Japanese Army prior to the end of World War II.

According to Japanese media reports, the country has finalized a plan to revise the titles of Self-Defense Forces officers and plans to submit a draft amendment to the Japanese Diet within the year.

The reports also noted that senior government officials described the move as aimed at "creating a work environment that fosters a sense of honor" to attract and retain talent.

Lin said this "amounts to a breakthrough at both institutional and cognitive levels", and "is tantamount to rubbing salt into the wounds of the people of the victimized nations".

He noted that after World War II, Japan disbanded its military as a defeated country, and when the Japan Self-Defense Forces were established in 1954, the titles from the former military were abolished.

"The forces of justice in the international community, including the Chinese people, should remain highly vigilant about this, resolutely defend the outcomes of the victory in World War II, and ensure that the tragedies of history are not repeated," Lin said.

On Tuesday, the Japanese government revised the operational guidelines for the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology and scrapped a ban on lethal weapons exports.

Last week, the Japanese Diet passed a bill establishing the National Intelligence Council.

In response, China's National Defense Ministry spokesman Zhang Xiaogang said at a news conference on Thursday that Japan is "racing headlong" down the path of remilitarization.

"Japan's recent frequent dangerous and rash advances, testing and provocative moves in the military and security fields have directly debunked its self-proclaimed labels of a 'peace-loving nation' and a country committed to 'exclusive defense'," Zhang said.

The planned National Intelligence Council reminds people of the notorious Special Higher Police, Japan's brutal policing and espionage organization torturing people in the war, he said.

This "seriously offends the sentiments of the people of Asian countries", he added.

Retrograde actions

"All peace-loving people must remain highly vigilant against this, resolutely curb Japan's retrograde actions, and absolutely not allow it to undermine peace and wreak havoc on the world," Zhang said.

Also on Thursday, the Foreign Ministry released a working paper regarding Japan's pursuit of nuclear weapons.

In the document, China called on countries that have signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to "remain highly vigilant and firmly oppose Japan's possessing nuclear weapons".

The paper urged the countries to "carefully consider Japan's strong motivation to acquire nuclear weapons and other related developments, exercise caution in nuclear cooperation with Japan, and effectively safeguard the international nuclear nonproliferation regime".

In the document published on the Foreign Ministry's website, Beijing urged Tokyo not to seek nuclear weapons in any form, not to develop nuclear submarines, and not to seek to introduce or deploy nuclear weapons within Japan.

The document urged the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to attach great importance to Japan's dangerous tendency to seek nuclear weapons and its immediate and long-term negative effect on the treaty, and to treat this as a key issue for thorough discussion and consideration.

The document called on the International Atomic Energy Agency to specifically strengthen the scope, intensity and frequency of comprehensive safeguards and verification activities regarding Japan to ensure the timely detection of any non-peaceful nuclear activities conducted by Japan.

China urges restraint, dialogue to steady intl security

By **MINLU ZHANG**
at the United Nations
minluzhang@chinadailyusa.com

China on Wednesday urged all parties to exercise restraint and uphold international law, as military strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities raised global concern.

Addressing the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Sun Xiaobo, director-general of the Department of Arms Control of China's Foreign Ministry, said the world faces "increasing uncertainty and instability", with certain countries pursuing unilateral policies, imposing sanctions and provoking conflicts.

"They frequently impose sanctions and blockades on other countries, provoke conflicts and wars around the world, and arbitrarily trample on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of others, seriously threatening the national security and even the basic right to survival of small and medium-sized countries," Sun said.

Such actions severely undermine the international system with the United Nations at its core, the international order based on international law, and the basic norms governing international relations founded on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, he said.

Hegemonism, power politics and unilateralism pose real threats to the global nonproliferation policy, he said, warning that the pursuit of "absolute strategic advantage" and strengthened military alliances have fueled the risk of an arms race and eroded strategic stability.

"Military strikes against nuclear facilities under safeguards, without authorization from the UN Security Council, seriously violate international law," he said, adding that such actions, carried out under the pretext of nonproliferation, risk accelerating proliferation and destabilizing entire regions.

His remarks came as the situation surrounding Iran has intensified in recent weeks, with military actions reportedly targeting nuclear facilities under safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Sun called on all parties to resolve disputes through dialogue, saying preventing nuclear war and maintaining global strategic stability must remain the top priority.

China reiterated support for nuclear disarmament in a fair and orderly manner, urging states with the largest nuclear arsenals to take the lead. It called for early negotiations on a no-first-use treaty among nuclear-weapon states and a legal instrument providing security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon states.

Under safeguards

Regarding regional issues, Sun said China renewed its call for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and urged Israel to join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear-weapon state and place all its nuclear facilities under international safeguards.

Sun also warned against moves by certain countries to seek nuclear capabilities, and pointed to recent developments in Japan.

"Senior officials of certain countries have openly advocated pursuing nuclear weapons, seriously undermining the authority and credibility of the treaty," he said.

"As a country defeated in World War II, Japan refuses to acknowledge this status, is promoting revisions to its pacifist constitution and its Three Non-Nuclear Principles, expanding long-range strike capabilities, and seeking the deployment of nuclear weapons by allies on its territory."

The international community should prevent Japan from acquiring nuclear weapons, he added.

Responding to the United States delegation, the Chinese delegation on Wednesday rejected what it called "groundless smears", saying Washington was misrepresenting China's nuclear policy and shifting attention from its own disarmament responsibilities.

"The so-called 'multilateral nuclear arms control dialogue' proposed by the US is more political show than substantive engagement," the Chinese representative said, adding that it is based on "erroneous narratives" and distracts from US obligations as a major nuclear power.

China also criticized US withdrawals from key arms control agreements, including the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the Open Skies Treaty, saying these developments have weakened the global arms control framework.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:17 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:17 PM

READ





Left: A view of the production line is a highlight during a tour of China YTO, a leading agricultural and construction machinery manufacturer founded in 1955 in Henan province.
Right: Students enjoy a virtual reality experience at Longmen Grottoes in Luoyang, Henan province. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Immersive lessons taught by Luoyang

As study tours trend, new courses share extensive information and hands-on experiences, **Yang Feiyue** reports.

In the early 1950s, Peking Opera master Mei Lanfang stood before a niche on the southern wall of the Ten Thousand Buddhas Cave at the Longmen Grottoes in Luoyang, Henan province.

For a long moment, he gazed at a statue of a bodhisattva whose face had long been destroyed. Yet, what he saw was not ruin, but a spirit of grace that reminded him of the line "Startled swan, roaming dragon" from Cao Zhi's (192-232) *Ode to the Goddess of the Luo River*.

That year, the statue inspired Mei's opera, *The Goddess of the Luo River*.

Today, more than seven decades later, groups of young students make their way to the grottoes site, where they wear virtual reality headsets and enter the cave where the statue stands. They see not only the fragmented beauty that moved Mei, but also a digital restoration of a face erased by time.

These experiences are just a glimpse of what awaits study tour participants at Longmen Grottoes, one of China's largest cave temple complexes and a UNESCO World Heritage site that represents "the pinnacle of Chinese stone carving art".

"We don't just bring cultural relics to life," says Ma Jialun, a representative of the cave site. "We want every participant to become a carrier of civilization."

Under professional guidance, visitors shape their own clay Buddha figures in art workshops and paint patterns from the grottoes' lotus-flower ceilings onto silk fans, brushstroke by brushstroke.

The programs at Longmen Grottoes are part of Luoyang's broader efforts to immerse visitors in a tangible experience of its history and culture hidden in its abundant museums and UNESCO World Heritage sites.

In late March in Beijing, Luoyang unveiled five study tours focused on archaeological exploration, Yellow River culture, and the preservation of intangible cultural heritage, aiming to appeal to travelers' cultural curiosity and enthusiasm.

"Beijing and Luoyang are both among the eight great ancient capitals of China," says Zhang Xu, an official from the Luoyang municipal bureau of culture, radio, television, and tourism.

Luoyang encourages travelers to explore the roots of Chinese civilization across the ruins of five ancient capital cities, explore 112 museums, and witness three UNESCO World Heritage sites.

"The city is a living museum of Chinese history," he notes.

Luoyang has established more than 100 study bases offering over 1,600 courses covering a wide range of topics, forming a comprehensive spectrum of information from the dawn of civilization to modern technology.

For the upcoming season, the city has prepared 900 tour routes tailored to meet the diverse needs of study travelers.

With multiple ancient emperors having paid homage here, the Longmen Grottoes have been systematically developing study tour activities since September 2021, transforming the weight of history into hands-on educational programs.







Top: At the Sui-Tang Dynasties Grand Canal Cultural Museum, visitors become part of the waterway in an immersive theater program where they are cast as merchants or boatmen traveling the artificial waterway that once connected Beijing to Hangzhou, Zhejiang province.
Left: A girl engages in an art project during her visit to Luoyang Museum. **Right:** Visitors learn about history at the Han-Wei Luoyang Ancient City Site Museum, in which the displays bear witness to the exchange and mutual learning between Eastern and Western civilizations along the ancient Silk Road.

For adults, the site invites scholars to lead participants into the caves for on-site academic exchanges alongside its own experts, while senior guides provide up-close art appreciation. "Visitors find it unforgettable and immersive when they watch experts engage in live scholarly debate," Ma notes.

For younger students, experience and creation are emphasized. Thirteen original courses cover areas including technology and intangible cultural heritage. One particularly inventive program uses 3D-printing technology to create 1:1 replicas of relief carvings and inscribed stelae, allowing students to experience traditional rubbing techniques firsthand.

"As students brush and press, they capture the details of the Longmen Grottoes' content," he explains.

If the Longmen Grottoes are a brilliant jewel in Luoyang's historical crown, the city's museums form a three-dimensional narrative of "what makes China".

At the Erlitou Site Museum of the Xia Capital, visitors can explore the origins of Chinese civilization through more than 30 courses.

A course on the path of technological innovation in Xia Dynasty (c. 21st century-16th century BC) handicrafts is offered for visitors to vicariously feel what it's like to be Xia artisans, as they try their hand at pottery, bronze casting, and turquoise inlay, recommends Yang Kexin, a representative from Luoyang's cultural and museum system.

"Visitors can gain an intuitive understanding of the innovative spirit that has been part of the Chinese nation since ancient times," Yang says.

At the Luoyang Museum, the summer Little Museum Specialist series turns students into docents, restorers, cultural creative designers, and curators.

"Through immersive, task-driven activities, they evolve from visitors into inheritors," Yang explains.

For those interested in ancient mystic sacrificial rituals, the Luoyang Museum of Ancient Tombs takes them underground, with courses on murals and brick carvings that reveal ancient views on life and death.

The relatively new Han-Wei Luoyang Ancient City Site Museum, which opened last year, allows students to walk the Silk Road through a specially designed study guide that evokes a time when Luoyang was a Silk Road's eastern terminus.

It leads them through the museum's galleries with a series of tasks: locating artifacts that traveled from distant lands, including a Byzantine gold coin, Persian silverware and Western glassware; tracing trade routes on a map; and imagining the crowded streets of Tongtuo (copper camel) Street, the city's main boulevard, where foreign merchants once gathered.

Inside the museum, a digital exhibition brings that lost world into view. Developed by Harvard University's CAMLab, the immersive installation uses holographic projection and 3D modeling to reconstruct the ancient capital. The museum also offers hands-on experiences beyond the screen. Participants can try their hand at simulated archaeological digs or piece together replica eave tiles.

Beyond these core venues, specialized museums offer their own experiences. At the Sui-Tang Dynasties Grand Canal Cultural Museum, visitors become part of the waterway in an immersive theater program where they are cast as merchants or boatmen traveling the artificial waterway that once connected Beijing to Hangzhou, Zhejiang province.

Visitors can also try their hand at Tang Dynasty (618-907) three-color glazed pottery at the Luoyang Sancai Art Museum, where skilled craftsmen guide them through the entire production process.

"A museum is a great school," Yang says, encouraging visitors to measure history with their footsteps in Luoyang.

For those who want to understand not just how China's civilization was shaped but how its modern industry was built, there is China YTO. Founded in 1955, this leading agricultural and construction machinery manufacturer exposes visitors to a grittier side of the city's story.

"Young people can understand the struggle and pride of an era among gears and steel," says Guo Yushi, from the company's Dongfanghong industrial tourism program.

Stories about the first female tractor driver in China and the major pioneers who built the industry from nothing will be shared. A bus tour then passes the well-preserved Soviet-style buildings before arriving at the advanced assembly line for large-wheel tractors, where one tractor rolls off every three minutes.

Thirty percent of China's tractors are produced here, and they have been exported to more than 150 countries, Guo notes.

Hands-on activities include a clay tractor workshop and a tractor assembly model class, she recommends.

Zhang Nan, a representative of Beijing's travel industry, observes that a rising number of students across the country have opted for study tours.

Experts attribute the trend to a shift in expectations, as parents and educators no longer want passive sightseeing; they seek destinations where young people can touch, make and ask.

"The universal feedback is that the destinations that truly move people are those that explain culture thoroughly and make the experience profound," Zhang Nan explains.

Luoyang has stood out as a top destination, she adds.

"Luoyang's history is not a cold display but a living scene in which you can participate," she says.

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:17 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:17 PM

Sanya 2026 Games Special



Thailand and Chinese Taipei compete in women's beach kabaddi. ZHANG WEI / CHINA DAILY



Two Saudi Arabian beach soccer players celebrate a goal. WEI XIAOHAO / CHINA DAILY

Cultural links leave lasting memories

Asian Beach Games' athletes touched by hospitality and traditional craft experiences in Sanya, Hainan province



Members of Team China celebrate at the medal ceremony on Saturday after winning the aquathlon mixed relay at the Asian Beach Games. WEI XIAOHAO / CHINA DAILY

By WANG YUCHEN
in Sanya, Hainan province
wangyuchen@chinadaily.com.cn

The sixth Asian Beach Games Sanya 2026 brought its curtain down on Thursday in the Hainan province city, yet for many athletes, the most enduring memories may lie not in medals or ceremonies, but in quiet moments away from the spotlight.

They may be found in a sheet of calligraphy, a conversation at a craft booth, a shared meal or a photo taken with volunteers before departure. In that sense, Sanya 2026 offered athletes from across Asia not only a place to compete, but a place to meet, learn and leave with memories of the host city.

Held from April 22, the Games brought together more than 1,600 athletes from 45 Asian countries and regions.

Much of that experience unfolded at the athletes' village in Sanya Bay. Alongside accommodation, dining, transport and medical support, the village gave athletes space to unwind between events, visit cultural booths and interact with other delegations.

More than 5,100 service personnel worked in and around the village, covering catering, transport, security, cleaning and village operations. Their work kept daily life running smoothly, making room for the cultural activities and everyday exchanges that gave the village its warmth.

At the village's intangible cultural heritage exhibition area, athletes tried hands-on activities ranging from calligraphy, paper-cutting and kite-making to Li brocade, coconut carving and other Hainan crafts, guided by local artisans who explained the techniques and stories behind the works.

One participant followed a paper-cutting pattern to make a lantern, while another used a brush to write Arabic script alongside Chinese calligraphy on a sheet of paper. In such moments, the heritage displays became hands-on experiences shaped by face-to-face exchanges with local artisans.

For Magdalene Lau Ing Siew, a Malaysian open water swimmer whose family has roots in Fujian province, the visit had personal resonance. It was her first trip to China, and she was especially drawn to the coconut-carving area. "From my grandfather's stories, I learned that China is a very beautiful country and also his hometown. That was why I had been looking forward to coming here," she said.

Other members of visiting delegations also found familiar elements in Hainan's traditions.

A doctor with the Sri Lankan delegation said Li brocade patterns reminded him of similar handicrafts back home. "There are similar handicrafts in Sri Lanka, so it was easy for me to get started," he said.

During a calligraphy activity, a doctor with the Thai delegation tried Chinese calligraphy for the first time. "Chinese calligraphy is very beautiful and artistic," the doctor said, adding that he wanted to take the work home to his family.

Together, these encounters helped the village become more than a service base. For many athletes, it felt like a temporary home during the Games. A piece of calligraphy, a handmade craft or a photo with volunteers became a reminder for some of their time in Sanya beyond the competition schedule.

Traditional Chinese medicine added another dimension to the village experience. At the village's traditional Chinese medicine clinic, athletes could try massage, acupuncture, cupping and moxibustion. Medical staff provided services to delegations including those from Singapore, the United Arab Emirates and Pakistan, with translation devices helping them communicate. The clinic offered athletes another form of care as well as a glimpse of Chinese wellness traditions.

Everyday interactions also shaped life in the village. Volunteers helped athletes with transport arrangements, schedules and village services, offering practical support and a welcoming presence throughout the Games. As athletes from Nepal prepared to return home, they presented gifts to volunteers and posed for photos together.

In dining areas and other shared spaces, athletes sampled dishes such as Hainan rice noodles, Indian curry shrimp and Korean kimchi, while talking about training, food from home and their customs.

For some athletes, the experience extended to Sanya itself. Marc Alexander Lim, a jujitsu athlete from the Philippines, described the organization of the Games as "super smooth" and said he hoped to return to the city to enjoy its seafood and night markets.

Hadi El Chabib, a Lebanese beach volleyball player, said the Games combined high-level competition with cultural discovery. "It's a beautiful country, beautiful people, very nice culture," he said, adding that the competition was well organized and that his team had enjoyed its time in China.



Players from the Omani team celebrate a goal during the men's beach soccer semifinals. WEI XIAOHAO / CHINA DAILY



An athlete from Bhutan experiences the art of coconut carving in the intangible cultural heritage exhibition area. ZHANG WEI / CHINA DAILY



Davoud Shokri Baghdadabadi (second from right) of the Iranian team kicks out for a goal during the men's beach soccer final on Wednesday. WEI XIAOHAO / CHINA DAILY

Nations find peace and solidarity through sport

By XING WEN and **CHEN BOWEN**
in Sanya, Hainan province

> "I think all the people in Iran are very happy about this achievement in Sanya. Sports can heal our pain."
>
> **Mahdi Alinejad,** secretary-general of the Iranian National Olympic Committee

No cleats. No hard ground. No room for reckless slides or brute force. Instead, beach soccer rewards barefoot artistry on soft sand: delicate footwork, razor-sharp turns, and tiny passing combinations that carve open defenses.

Most captivating of all, stunts like diving headers, scissor kicks and bicycle kicks hang in the air just long enough for the crowd to erupt.

To play barefoot could somehow lower one's guard. It means shedding disguises, leaving behind identities and pretenses, so that the soles can feel the sand's warmth directly; skin to earth, body to nature.

Under a warm sea breeze and orange sunset, the recently concluded sixth Asian Beach Games in Sanya, Hainan province, brought players and spectators together to share in the laid-back, respectful and peaceful vibe of beach soccer matches.

Now look at the four best beach soccer teams in the Games: Iran, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Palestine.

Caught in active conflict, shaken by regional turmoil, or burdened by unresolved, long-standing strife; all are facing uncertainties. Not one is truly at peace.

Take Iran for example, a nation still bleeding from war. It sent a 57-athlete delegation to contest 10 out of the total 14 sports disciplines in Sanya, and ended up third on the medal table with nine golds and one silver.

"It was a historic placing for our team," said Mahdi Alinejad, secretary-general of the Iranian National Olympic Committee.

He said the war had destroyed some of their sports training bases and there were no flights from Tehran. They had to start their journey with several bus rides that took more than 20 hours to reach Ashgabat, the capital of neighboring Turkmenistan, from which they could finally take a plane. The whole journey took them 52 hours.

"We tried to make up for the lack of training, as we didn't have much time to prepare because of the war," Alinejad told China Daily after Iran beat Oman 6-2 to clinch the gold medal in beach soccer on Wednesday night.

"I think all the people in Iran are very happy about this achievement in Sanya. Sports can heal our pain," he said, adding that they received a warm welcome in Sanya, as they constantly heard support and cheers from the stands. "We want to show that we support the peace and unity on our continent."

Talib Al-Thanawi, head coach of Oman's beach soccer team, said that they have a good relationship with Iran in sports. They invite each other to exchange and play matches, and they often meet in the finals of major tournaments.

When asked if he believed that sports can make the world a better place, he responded with an immediate yes. "In a sporting gala like this, you meet people, you get connected, and you find new friends," he said. "You see (that in) the world, war's often happening. But here? Not one makes a difference."

Mundhir Al-Barwani, team doctor of Oman's beach soccer team, shares the same sentiment. A beach soccer lover since the age of 6, he said he enjoyed watching the games and soaking up the atmosphere. He was often seen smiling broadly while dancing to the music on the sidelines.

"I also live in the athletes' village, where athletes from different countries interact very frequently, and I talked a lot with medical team members from countries including Kuwait and Saudi Arabia," he said.

"Sport is loved by everyone, and that really brings everyone together, regardless of where you are in the world. So I think that's something you can see through every aspect of sports," said Saphna Ravichandran, a legal counsel at the Asian Football Confederation.

Reflecting on the Games, Husain Al-Musallam, director-general of the Olympic Council of Asia, highlighted that the presence alone of these conflict-ridden countries demonstrates that this is a game of peace — and that, he said, is the core value of the Games.

"You saw the athletes living in one place under one roof, in one restaurant, in one competition venue, in one training venue. And they are happy with each other. They are hugging each other," said Al-Musallam. "The future Games will follow in the footsteps of the Sanya Asian Beach Games."

Contact the writers at xingwen@chinadaily.com.cn









Above, from left: Attendees take photos with Yaya, the mascot of the sixth Asian Beach Games. ZHANG WEI / CHINA DAILY Thailand's team celebrates victory in the men's beach handball group stage match. WEI XIAOHAO / CHINA DAILY Athletes take photos with performers after a cultural show. ZHANG WEI / CHINA DAILY Saudi Arabian beach soccer players celebrate scoring a goal. WEI XIAOHAO / CHINA DAILY

Right: China's Shao Yuqi in action at the women's beach high jump final at the sixth Asian Beach Games. WEI XIAOHAO / CHINA DAILY





An Iranian athlete tests his chopstick skills with a traditional Chinese game in the athletes' village. ZHANG WEI / CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:17 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:17 PM

IMAGE



Airfield lighting staff conduct routine inspections and maintenance on March 26 to ensure safe aircraft takeoff and landing. PHOTOS BY CHEN SONG / FOR CHINA DAILY



Airfield lighting staff inspect taxiway guidance signs to ensure clear and accurate guidance for night taxiing operations on March 26.



Senior technicians offer hands-on guidance to junior staff, explaining the functions and layout of airfield lights on March 26.



Daily tools, instruments and equipments used by airfield lighting staff are displayed.

GUARDING THE SKIES

Shenyang airport's team behind the lights

As night falls over Shenyang Taoxian International Airport, its airfield lighting system guides aircraft takeoff and landing, backed by the 24/7 dedication of the Ruijie Chuangxin Team from the Airfield Lighting Supporting Office. Dubbed the "guardians of the airport's eyes", the team stands firm at their posts, wielding professional skills to ensure the safety of flight operations.

Airfield lighting is the "lifeline" for aircraft movements. The team undertakes a full range of tasks including inspection, maintenance, emergency repairs and upgrades of runways, taxiways, lighting systems and signage. Operating on round-the-clock standby, the team adheres to a "second-level response and minute-level disposal" principle to ensure uninterrupted facility performance.

During the winter-spring transition period, sharp temperature fluctuations pose severe challenges. Working only during flight gaps, team members must carry tools, climb towers, and calibrate, repair and replace lights one by one on icy runways, strictly complying with civil aviation standards to eliminate hazards.

Beyond routine work, the team has made notable strides in innovation. It has independently developed rapid maintenance tools, boosting lamp replacement efficiency by 30 percent, established a closed-loop "prediction-inspection-rectification" mechanism to prevent risks at the source, and promoted technical continuity through a mentor-apprentice system.

Through harsh winters and scorching summers, the team members steadfastly adhere to their posts. With their commitment, they embody civil aviation spirit, providing a reliable "air beacon" for airport safety and passengers' peaceful journeys.

CHINA DAILY



Airfield lighting staff carry out detailed inspection and maintenance of the approach lighting system, ensuring safe visual guidance for aircraft landing at night on March 26.



Airfield lighting staff carry out the disassembly, inspection and commissioning of vertical runway edge lights in the workshop on March 26, preparing for reinstallation.



Airfield lighting staff inspect airport lighting facilities on March 26.



Airfield lighting technicians conduct power-on tests on runway threshold lights and end lights in the workshop on March 26.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:17 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:17 PM

BIZ LIFE

Healthcare, rehab applications account for largest share of demand

BCI tech moves beyond research labs





Top: An employee from BrainCo showcases using intelligent bionic hands to practice calligraphy during the 135th China Import and Export Fair in Guangzhou, Guangdong province on April 15, 2024. LIU DAWEI / XINHUA **Left:** A staff member with a disabled right hand from BrainCo takes off glasses with the company's intelligent bionic hand during the third China International Supply Chain Expo in Beijing on July 17. JU HUANZONG / XINHUA

By **LI JING**
lijing2009@chinadaily.com.cn

On a weekday afternoon, Cai Yuqingyan waits outside a kindergarten gate. For most parents, the moment a child runs into their arms is entirely unremarkable. For Cai, it is a hard-won triumph.

A world champion in para swimming and canoeing, Cai lost her leg in a traffic accident before her third birthday. For decades, navigating life on crutches meant that even a simple, spontaneous embrace required careful physical calculation.

That changed after she was fitted with an intelligent bionic leg developed by Chinese neurotech firm BrainCo.

"Now when my daughter runs toward me, I can stand steady and catch her," Cai said. "It used to be something I had to consciously prepare for. Now, it's just everyday life."

Her experience reflects a broader shift as brain-computer interface (BCI) technologies begin moving beyond research laboratories into commercial medical devices aimed at rehabilitation and assistive care.

Industry researchers say the market remains small but is expanding rapidly. Global BCI revenue could grow from about $562 million in 2024 to more than $2.2 billion by 2032, market research firm Kings Research estimates, with healthcare and rehabilitation applications accounting for the largest share of current demand.

For BrainCo, the move from academic theory to commercial hardware was sparked by a chance encounter.

During the company's early days, its researchers met a student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology who had lost his right hand in a laboratory accident. The engineering team began to wonder if their ongoing research into neural signals could be applied to control a prosthetic limb. That single question birthed the company's first neural-controlled prototype.

As development continued, the potential market became clearer. China is home to about 85 million people with disabilities, according to the China Disabled Persons' Federation, including 24 million living with limb impairments. Many advanced assistive devices remain expensive or difficult to access, limiting their use among potential users.

That gap helped shape BrainCo's commercial strategy, which the company says focuses on usability and affordability. Engineers focused on improving neural signal decoding to enable more precise movement control. The company says its prosthetic hands can move individual fingers independently, allowing users to perform tasks such as typing or writing.

Globally, much of the attention around BCI technology has focused on invasive brain implants developed by companies such as Elon Musk's Neuralink. These systems implant electrodes directly into the brain to capture high-resolution neural signals, but they involve neurosurgery and lengthy and stringent regulatory approval.

BrainCo has instead focused on noninvasive wearable devices designed to interpret neural signals through external sensors. The approach avoids surgical procedures and could potentially reach a broader range of rehabilitation and consumer health applications, the company said.

> "The purpose of technology is ... whether it can help people rebuild their lives."
>
> A spokesperson for BrainCo

The technology relies on proprietary hydrogel electrodes designed to capture neural signals without conductive gels.

According to the company, the sensors can achieve about 95 percent of medical-grade signal quality while decoding motor intentions in roughly 200 milliseconds.

BrainCo said its products are now sold in more than 35 countries and regions, with overseas markets accounting for about 30 percent of its revenue.

Despite the technological progress, wider adoption of BCI-based rehabilitation devices still faces challenges. Healthcare systems and insurance providers remain cautious about emerging neuro-technology, while procurement processes for assistive devices can move slowly.

Policy support is beginning to emerge. In 2025, the National Healthcare Security Administration issued pricing guidelines for neurological medical services that, for the first time, created dedicated reimbursement categories for BCI procedures, including fees for implanting and removing invasive BCI devices as well as adaptation services for noninvasive systems.

The move signaled growing policy recognition of BCI technology as it begins moving toward clinical application. The regulator has released 39 batches of medical service pricing guidelines covering about 180 new technology categories to help speed up the clinical adoption of emerging medical technologies, according to official data.

"The policy framework could help accelerate adoption of rehabilitation devices by clarifying how neurotech services may be priced and integrated into healthcare systems," said a spokesperson for BrainCo.

To expand access, BrainCo says it has focused on reducing manufacturing costs by developing core components in-house and using domestic supply chains.

The company says the retail price of its intelligent prosthetic limbs is roughly one-fifth to one-seventh that of comparable products in some Western markets.

Local governments have also begun testing the technology. In Zhejiang province, a government-backed program has already helped fit around 2,000 people with intelligent prosthetic limbs.

For some users, the changes are felt in everyday milestones. Hou Yunyan, a snowboard athlete who lost her left leg in a car crash at age 9, had never climbed stairs independently even after joining a sports team years later.

That changed after she began using a neural-controlled prosthetic leg.

"I felt calm and steady," she recalled of the first time she climbed a staircase on her own. "It was the first time I experienced what it feels like to walk upstairs."

"The purpose of technology is not how futuristic it looks," a BrainCo spokesperson said. "It's whether it can help people rebuild their lives."

Policy, venture capital powering commercial rollouts

By **LI JING**

Inside a quiet rehabilitation ward in eastern China, a paralyzed patient stares intently at a plastic cup. He doesn't move a muscle, yet a robotic, pneumatic glove encasing his paralyzed hand suddenly hums to life, smoothly closing its fingers around the cup.

The invisible trigger? His sheer intention.

By decoding neural signals and bypassing severed spinal cords entirely, brain-computer interface (BCI) technology is performing what looks like medical magic. But behind this clinical breakthrough lies a rapidly maturing business ecosystem. Driven by a strategic influx of venture capital and robust policy tailwinds, BCI is fast graduating from academic curiosity to early commercial deployment.

For years, the BCI sector was a pure-play scientific endeavor confined to university labs. Today, it is arguably the hottest frontier in venture capital.

Data from a recent report by the Beijing-based Fourth Wave Technology Think Tank and Zhongguancun Tiancheng Innovation Research Center paint a staggering picture. Throughout 2025, Chinese BCI startups recorded at least 24 financing events, raising more than 1.45 billion yuan ($212.1 million). In stark contrast, the first three months of 2026 alone saw at least 17 funding rounds, with the total capital raised already eclipsing the entirety of 2025.

The report projects China's BCI market could breach the 5-billion-yuan mark in 2026, on track to reach 15 billion yuan by 2030.

The deal flow reflects this bullish sentiment. Hangzhou-based BrainCo closed a massive 2-billion-yuan funding round in January. More recently, Shanghai-based medical neurotech firm StairMed secured 500 million yuan, bringing its total funding to more than 1.1 billion yuan within a single year.

"The technology is at an inflection point, transitioning from experimental verification to early clinical implementation," Gu Xiaosong, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, said at a BCI developer conference in Tianjin. He attributes this shift to breakthroughs in artificial intelligence, machine learning algorithms, and high-performance computing, which are finally transforming laboratory prototypes into clinical-grade medical systems.

In July 2025, China issued BCI industry development guidelines, urging breakthroughs in core hardware/software, high-performance products and real-world applications. Beijing, Shanghai, Shandong province and others introduced supportive policies.

In the 2026 Government Work Report, BCI was formally designated as a future industry, prioritized alongside strategic sectors such as advanced robotics and embodied AI. This alignment underscores BCI's role not only as a medical tool, but also as a critical control component for the next generation of intelligent machines.

The true catalyst for the current market exuberance was a recent regulatory breakthrough. China's National Medical Products Administration approved the world's first implantable BCI medical device for clinical use.

Dubbed the NEO system, the semi-invasive device acts as a wireless translator between the brain and the body, specifically designed to help patients with cervical spinal cord injuries regain hand-grasping functions.

Developed by a Tsinghua University research team led by professor Hong Bo from the School of Biomedical Engineering in collaboration with Neuracle, the NEO system represents a different technological approach from some Western competitors.

In the United States, Elon Musk's Neuralink is pursuing a fully invasive route, implanting electrodes directly into brain tissue. While this can yield high-resolution signals, it involves more invasive surgery and associated risks.

Tsinghua's NEO, by contrast, is implanted with its main device embedded in the skull, while electrodes are placed over the dura mater between the skull and the cerebral cortex, without penetrating brain tissue.



A patient undergoes rehabilitation treatment through mental control using a brain-computer interface device at a hospital in Chongqing on April 10. CHEN CHENG / XINHUA

"For quadriplegic patients with cervical spinal injuries who can't grasp objects, we implant a coin-sized device outside the dura mater using minimal invasive surgery," Wang Yujing, Neuracle product director, told People's Daily.

"The system decodes brain signals in real time, enabling them to control a pneumatic glove with their thoughts to grasp objects or drink water," she added.

The clinical data are highly promising. In trials conducted across 11 Chinese hospitals, all participants achieved brain-controlled grasping. The system boasted a decoding accuracy exceeding 90 percent, with a response delay of mere milliseconds. Furthermore, the implant is powered wirelessly through near-field communication, eliminating the need for internal batteries and risky replacement surgeries.

Despite the hype surrounding surgical implants, the reality of today's commercial landscape is far less invasive.

According to the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology, noninvasive systems — such as wearable EEG headsets — currently account for more than 80 percent of China's BCI market. Because they require no surgery, companies are already monetizing these devices, rolling out products ranging from neurofeedback headbands for gamers and students, to advanced sleep-monitoring systems.

Yet, beneath the soaring valuations, sobering technical and ethical hurdles remain.

For implantable devices, the human body's immune system is a formidable opponent. Over time, the body forms scar tissue around implanted electrodes, which can degrade signal quality.

Data scarcity is another major bottleneck. Unlike generative AI models that are trained on billions of readily available internet texts, BCI algorithms require highly sensitive neural data, which is exceedingly difficult and expensive to collect.

Then there is the issue of cognitive privacy. Recognizing the profound ethical implications of "reading minds", China's Ministry of Science and Technology issued the country's first national ethical guidelines for BCI research in February 2024, ensuring the technology remains "tech for good" and prioritizing patient autonomy.

"The approval of the first product is just the beginning," noted Hong of Tsinghua University. Scientists are still grappling with deep biological mysteries, such as how these interfaces interact with the brain's natural plasticity, and whether they can actually help heal the nervous system rather than just act as a high-tech crutch.

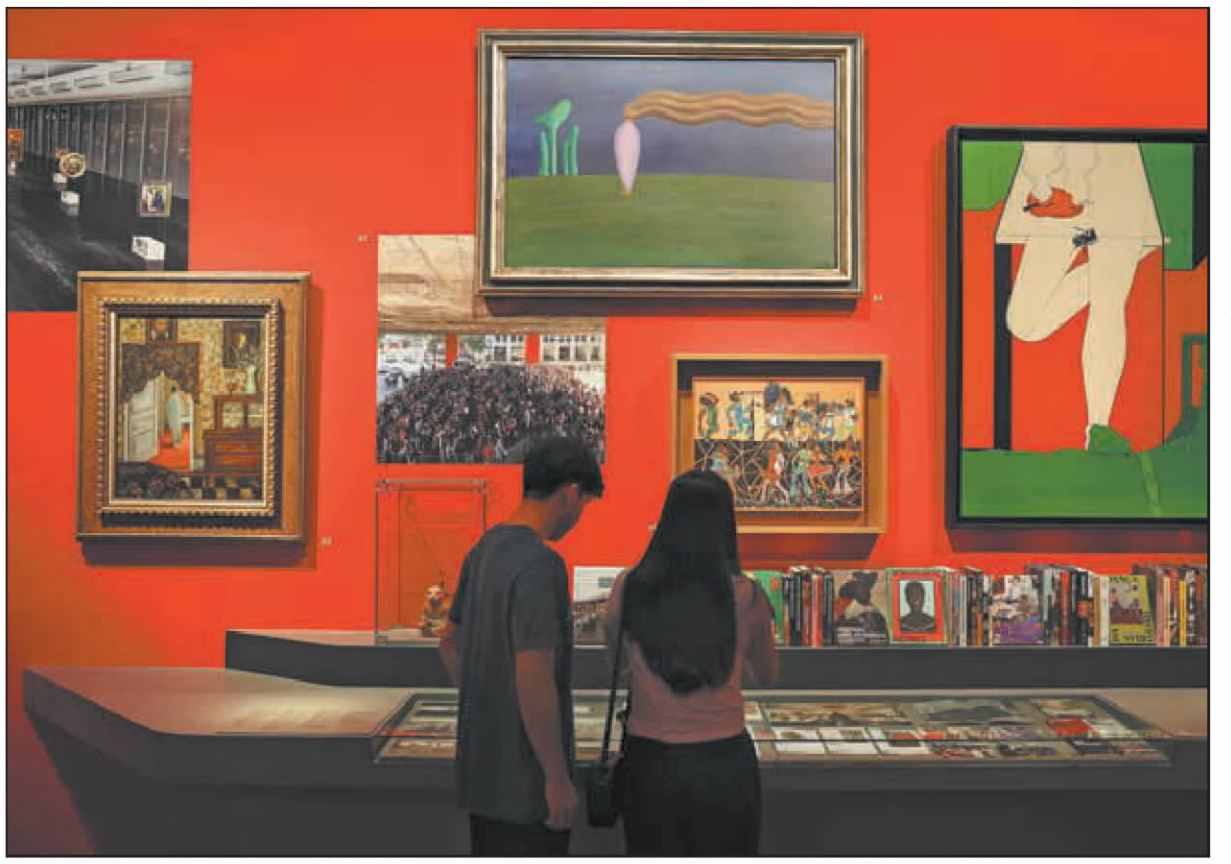
For now, medical rehabilitation will be the industry's most viable cash cow. But the ultimate ceiling of the BCI market remains unknown.

Translating the silent symphony of human thought into code remains one of the most complex engineering challenges in modern history. As one researcher put it: decoding any conventional computer system is child's play compared to understanding the human brain.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:17 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:17 PM

TRAVEL



People visit the exhibition *Stories of the MASP* during the official inauguration of the new building of the Sao Paulo Museum of Art on March 28, 2025. ISAAC FONTANA / EPA-EFE

Beyond the beaches Brazil's urban giant beckons

Sao Paulo entices more travelers to rediscover city with deep cultural density

By **ALFRED ROMANN**
in Sao Paulo, Brazil
For China Daily

At first glance, Sao Paulo can seem hard to read.

Brazil's main financial center does not offer itself in the postcard language of Rio de Janeiro. There is no single defining vista, no instantly digestible icon that explains the whole place. It is too large, too layered and too restless for that.

But after a few days, another city emerges: one of deep cultural density, where heavy tropical rain can give way to a blazing sunset, where dense greenery presses up against office towers, and where a walk at dusk can lead from formal avenues and modernist landmarks to streets alive with bars, food and conversation.

On a recent visit, the city revealed itself in fragments: a skyline glowing orange after a storm, late-night crowds spilling onto the pavement under strings of lights, buses moving beside protected bike lanes, and a sense of dense urban life. Sao Paulo does not feel curated for tourists.

That may be precisely why it is beginning to resonate with Chinese travelers.

For years, Latin America sat outside the mainstream imagination of China's outbound tourism market, except for a handful of marquee destinations. Brazil, though admired from afar, often remained more of an aspiration than an actual itinerary. The fact that China is very far away may have played into it — it can take a full day or more to get there from many cities in China.

Still, this appears to be changing.

Official Brazilian figures show that the country received 94,400 visitors from China from January to November 2025, surpassing the total recorded for all of 2024.

The growth validates a premeditated strategy by Brazil's tourism authorities.

"Attracting Chinese tourists is a strategic opportunity for Brazil," said Marcelo Freixo, the then president of Embratur, the country's international tourism promotion agency, last May. "This rapprochement is essential to paving the way toward new connections and, potentially, allowing more Chinese people to discover the attractions of Brazil."

A few months later, in January 2026, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva announced that Brazil would exempt certain categories of short-term visas for Chinese citizens, in reciprocity for the exemption China had granted Brazilians.

Travel interest spiked. According to Qunar, a major Chinese online travel platform, searches for flights to Sao Paulo jumped 22 percent hour by hour right after the announcement.

The timing is significant because Brazil is in the middle of a tourism boom.

The country closed 2025 with more than 9.2 million international visitors, a record. Sao Paulo led the country for foreign arrivals, receiving 2,753,869 international visitors throughout the year, ahead of Rio de Janeiro and Rio Grande do Sul, the southern state that borders Uruguay and Argentina. That makes the city not just Brazil's financial capital, but its main gateway for foreign visitors.

Gateway to country

Sao Paulo is often the point of arrival, the place where a continent-scale trip often begins, but it is also a place worth lingering in.

What visitors find is not a city organized around a single landmark or feature, but one built on accumulation with the closest beaches sitting more than an hour away.

Sao Paulo rewards appetite: for museums, for architecture, for food, for neighborhoods and for the pleasure of noticing how many different histories have been compressed into one metropolis.

Italian, Japanese, Portuguese and many other immigrant communities have shaped the city's cuisine, traditions and public life over generations, helping create one of the world's most varied urban food scenes. Official Brazilian tourism material highlights that multicultural layering is one of the city's defining traits.

That diversity is one of Sao Paulo's most appealing aspects for travelers from China, and anywhere else.

Meals can become a kind of map.

A day might begin with strong Brazilian coffee and pao de queijo (a pastry with cheese), move on to ramen or sushi in Liberdade, continue with an Italian lunch in Bixiga or Jardins, and end the day with cocktails and plates to share in a crowded neighborhood bar.

This is a place where Michelin-starred restaurants sit not far from old markets, corner bakeries and family-run eateries. The range is staggering, but what stands out even more is the way food here reflects migration, adaptation and urban confidence.

Liberdade may be one of the city's most immediately legible neighborhoods for Chinese visitors. Liberdade remains the neighborhood most associated with the city's large Japanese population, but the district today also carries broader East Asian influences, including Chinese and Korean, visible in its shops, grocery stores and restaurants.

For Chinese travelers, that can create moments of recognition in a city that is otherwise unmistakably Brazilian. The lanterns, the signs, the food and the foot traffic may feel familiar in fragments, yet the atmosphere is entirely local, shaped by Sao Paulo rather than transplanted into it.

Still, Sao Paulo's strongest case as a destination may be its cultural infrastructure.

Paulista Avenue remains the city's symbolic spine, and the Sao Paulo Museum of Art, known as MASP, is one of its essential stops. The museum, founded in 1947, became the first modern museum in Brazil. Its building, designed by Lina Bo Bardi, is among the most recognizable pieces of modern architecture in Latin America: suspended, severe and unforgettable. And its collection is impressive.

Even travelers with little prior knowledge of Brazilian art are likely to feel the force of the place. MASP is not simply a museum to visit; it is one of the structures that seems to explain Sao Paulo's ambitions back to itself.

"Sao Paulo surprised me," said Karina Rubio, a visitor from Chile who was in the city for the first time attending a conference and had just stepped out of the MASP. "It feels very alive. There is music, a lot of culture and a lot of good food ... the museum was one of the highlights for me."

Another highlight for Rubio was the city's famous churrascarias (or steakhouses), typically all-you-can-eat-style restaurants serving a variety of cuts of beef.

"Of course I had to try them!" she said.

Not far away, Ibirapuera Park offers another version of the city.

Often described as Sao Paulo's "green lung", the park brings together open lawns, dense trees, lakes, museums and performance spaces in one vast urban expanse. It is where many visitors understand that Sao Paulo, for all its scale and density, also knows how to make room for clean air, shade and peace.



An attendee visits the *Arts of Africa* exhibition during the official inauguration of the new building of the Sao Paulo Museum of Art on March 28, 2025. ISAAC FONTANA / EPA-EFE



People enjoy walking, running, cycling and strolling in Ibirapuera Park, in the southern part of Sao Paulo, one of the main outdoor leisure spots in the city. LECO VIANA / THENEWS2

> "This is the year of Brazil in China and we have a plan of action that will further boost the interest in knowing our culture and our natural destinations, which today are the ones that most attract the Chinese."
>
> **Marcelo Freixo,** former president of Embratur, an international tourism promotion agency in Brazil

The park also says something important about the city's character. In many global metropolises, cultural life is scattered. In Sao Paulo, it can feel concentrated, almost insistently available. Art, performance, architecture and public life are not tucked away from one another. They overlap.

And that overlap is part of what makes the city so compelling.

Sao Paulo is a megacity, but not a sealed one. It does not feel like a glass box of towers and highways, even though it has plenty of both. Trees soften vast stretches of it. Neighborhoods break up the scale. Street life keeps reasserting itself.

From a window overlooking one of the city's greener central areas, the skyline after rain can look almost theatrical, with towers fading into haze and an orange band of sunset setting the horizon on fire. Later, the city reassembles itself in lights, traffic and silhouettes.

At ground level, it often feels more intimate than its size should allow.

During a recent evening, tables spilled out into the street outside a bar, and office workers and younger drinkers stood shoulder to shoulder under strands of yellow lights. The scene felt easy, social and dense with energy.

Traffic, however, can be brutal at rush hour. TomTom's 2025 data showed that a 10-kilometer drive in Sao Paulo took about 34 minutes in the morning rush and more than 37 minutes in the evening. The saving grace is public transport: the subway and rail map spreads across the city and deep into the wider metropolitan area, giving visitors a practical way to avoid the worst road congestion.

These details help explain the kind of traveler Sao Paulo is likely to attract.

New strategy

This is not primarily a city of passive sightseeing. It is a city for people who like urban texture, who enjoy moving through neighborhoods, who want to eat well, who do not mind a little ambiguity and who understand that some of the world's best travel experiences arrive not in one grand reveal but in layers.

That also helps explain why Sao Paulo fits Brazil's new strategy for engaging Chinese travelers.

Brazil has been working to make itself more visible and more bookable in China.

Embratur returned to ITB China, the largest B2B travel trade show focused on the Chinese market, in 2025 after a six-year absence.

The agency said at the time that it was making a strategic push into China with a variety of efforts, including launching a "Brazil Travel Specialist" platform in Mandarin to train Chinese travel agents and operators, an official tourism website in Mandarin and opening a public relations office in China.

Brazil also moved to expand its presence through Chinese-language promotion and partnerships with major travel companies. Reports on those efforts said agreements were signed with Trip.com Group and Tongcheng Travel.

"We are very optimistic about the growth that we will continue to see in the Chinese market," said Freixo in February. He credited the visa exemptions announced in January with much of the growth.

"This is the year of Brazil in China and we have a plan of action that will further boost the interest in knowing our culture and our natural destinations, which today are the ones that most attract the Chinese," said Freixo.

Long-haul tourism depends not only on desire, but on visibility, language access and booking infrastructure. The easier Brazil becomes to search, compare and book in Chinese, the more likely Sao Paulo is to shift from an abstract possibility to a real itinerary.

Sao Paulo has long had the substance to attract international leisure travelers, but abroad it was often overshadowed by Brazil's beach imagery and by its own reputation as a city of business first. That reputation is not wrong. Sao Paulo is a commercial powerhouse. But it is also incomplete.

The same city that hosts major corporations and trade fairs also offers one of the richest urban experiences in the Americas. It is a place where migration shaped cuisine, where culture remains publicly visible, where modernism still feels alive and where the city's immense scale generates not sterility but variety.

For Chinese travelers who are increasingly willing to go beyond the most established long-haul routes, Sao Paulo offers something more substantial than easy fantasy. It offers a real metropolis.

That may be why the city feels newly timely.

Chinese visitors looking at Sao Paulo now are not simply looking at another faraway destination. They are looking at a city that broadens the map of what Brazil means: not only beaches and samba, but museums, immigration histories, high culture, nightlife, architecture and one of the world's most exciting food scenes.

It is the cumulative force of the place: the food, the art, the greenery, the sense of scale, the energy after dark, the neighborhoods that keep shifting register from block to block, and the feeling that the city is always revealing another version of itself.

Sao Paulo asks for curiosity more than certainty. It does not hand itself over all at once.

For travelers willing to meet it on those terms, it may prove to be not only Brazil's main gateway, but also one of Latin America's great city breaks.

Alfred Romann is a freelance journalist for China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:17 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:17 PM

SPORTS



China's Shao Yuqi and Hu Linpeng, the respective high jump gold and bronze medalists from November's 15th National Games, both added a silver medal to their collections at the 2026 Asian Beach Games in Sanya, Hainan province. WEI XIAOHAO / CHINA DAILY

2026 ASIAN BEACH GAMES





China's Hu Linpeng (top) and Shao Yuqi in action in Sanya, Hainan province, during the Asian Beach Games. WEI XIAOHAO / CHINA DAILY AND XINHUA

Rising to the challenges of unique locale

Powdery sand and expansive arena combine to create a jump in difficulty

By **XING WEN**
in Sanya, Hainan province
xingwen@chinadaily.com.cn

On a sunny Sunday on Sanya's Phoenix Island in the tropical island province of Hainan, the women's high jump final of the just-concluded 2026 Asian Beach Games drew a packed house at the athletics venue, and for good reason.

China's Shao Yuqi and Hu Linpeng, the respective gold and bronze medalists from November's 15th National Games, were both expected to add another medal for their country.

But the open-air setting, with swaying coconut trees and an expanse of azure sea dwarfing the competition mats, along with a sand-covered run-up area, would test them in ways a traditional stadium high jump setup never could.

"When you compete indoors, the mats and the bar look quite large. In a 400-meter open-air stadium, they shrink a bit. But, today, on the sand, they seem tiny. The sky and the background stretch out endlessly, so it's a very wide-open view," said Hu.

While spectators can enjoy a unique and picturesque experience — watching athletes arch their backs and float over the bar with the sea breeze — for the jumpers, adapting to this environment is a real challenge, because the vast, open setting messes with their ingrained spatial awareness, making technical mistakes more likely.

"The sand saps some of your energy, so you don't build up as much speed on the run-up. That means we have to rely more on vertical explosive power," Hu said.

The run-up takes place on soft sand, while the takeoff zone features a standard rubber surface, creating an abrupt shift in underfoot conditions. Compounding the challenge, sand inevitably spreads across the rubber.

"The surface is slippery when you take off, and there is a risk of injury. I tried to control my speed during my approach and adjust my steps. It was so hard," said Filipino men's high jump athlete Leonard Grospe in an interview following the first competition day.

During the competition, both Shao and Hu missed twice at 1.83 meters, before finally clearing it on their third attempts. After Uzbekistan's Barnokhon Sayfullayeva successfully made 1.85m, the two Chinese jumpers decided to skip their remaining tries at that height and moved straight to 1.87m. Unfortunately, they failed all three attempts, and both had to settle for silver.

"Of course, I'm disappointed not to win the gold, but I'm still proud that we Chinese athletes took home two silver medals — and congratulations to the gold medalist," Shao said.

"No matter what kind of venue we compete in, everyone faces the same conditions. As long as you give it your all, there's no reason to regret anything," Hu added.

As the high jump competition was wrapping up, the 4x60-meter relay races had already begun on the adjacent track, with the cheers from the crowd ringing out.

Yet, both jumpers said they didn't notice any of it — they were completely absorbed in their own performances.

That same ability to block out distractions has served them well off the field, too, especially in coping with the surge of public attention that followed the 15th National Games.

People haven't just been talking about their athletic prowess; more visibly, they've also been drawn to their striking good looks and toned, athletic physiques.

Seeing so many spectators come out to cheer for her, Shao said that all this public interest is actually a good thing for athletics.

"If people can focus that attention on the high jump, I'd be very happy," she said.

Now 24, Shao is a postgraduate student at Tsinghua University's School of Social Sciences and is often called a "beauty A-grader" by the public.

She finds it natural to balance her academic studies with her training.

Standing at just 1.75 meters — hardly an advantage for a female high jumper — Shao has strengthened herself by training more than 300 days a year.

She now has her sights set on this year's Asian Games in Nagoya, Japan.

This year is the Year of the Horse, her zodiac year, and she likens herself to a colorful pony.

"Compared to those tall, powerful horses, I might look small, but even the small have their own strength."



Brown University's Olivia Pichardo pitches during the ninth inning of a Division I game against Cornell last week. AP



Pichardo fist bumps Brown catcher Andrew Hanlon after getting the final out of their team's 16-4 win over Cornell last week. AP

BASEBALL

Pioneer Pichardo reluctant to steal team's spotlight

In her ideal world, Olivia Pichardo would just play ball and not take attention away from her teammates.

"Sometimes it feels a little ridiculous," she told reporters. "But, it's something I understand is going to happen. That's not what my primary focus is ever on."

Pichardo grew accustomed to being the only girl on her baseball team during her years in Little League, high school and travel ball. Four years ago, she tried out for the Brown University team, made it and, early in her freshman season, became the first woman to appear in a Division I game when she pinch-hit against Bryant University.

As a senior, last Saturday she became the first woman to pitch in a Division I game when she got the final out in a key win over Cornell.

"I feel like sometimes it might distract a bit too much from the success of our team," Pichardo said.

"We just made the playoffs for the first time since 2007, so that's a huge accomplishment, and I wouldn't want to take away from that."

Pichardo was listed as an outfielder and pitcher in her first three years, and focused only on pitching this season. The fact she stuck it out for four years might seem surprising. Brown has played 151 games since Pichardo arrived, and she has appeared in only six. She pinch-hit once as a freshman, once as a sophomore and three times as a junior, when she also played right field for an inning and caught two fly outs.

> "I've always been able to play at every level that I've progressed to, so there was never any reason for me to stop playing baseball just because I didn't see other women in the same space as me."
>
> **Olivia Pichardo,** the first woman to play Division I college baseball

Until Saturday, she hadn't appeared in a game this season, let alone warmed up in the bullpen. With Brown leading Cornell 16-3 in the ninth inning, coach Frank Holbrook's plan was to have little-used reliever Ty Harris get the first two outs and have Pichardo finish.

The 174-centimeter, 75-kilogram Pichardo has a four-pitch repertoire that includes a low-80s four-seam fastball to go with a sinker, changeup and curve. She entered with the bases loaded and threw two fastballs to Tyler Beaulieu, who grounded out to short to end Brown's 16-4 win.

Pichardo said she has never had any problem melding with her teammates. She prefers just being one of the guys and not taking spotlight away from the team. She does, however, understand the magnitude of what she's accomplished, not just in college, but also in summer ball. In 2023, she became the first woman to hit a home run in a summer league, connecting for Sag Harbor in the Hamptons Collegiate Baseball League.

"It's important for inspiring the younger generation of female baseball players, give them some kind of hope, I guess, that, if they want to play at the collegiate level, no matter what division, that door is open for them and it is possible," she said.

Pichardo, who graduates this spring with a degree in business economics, has been able to capitalize on name, image and likeness opportunities as the most visible woman in college baseball.

She's in her third year as an endorser for the baseball equipment and apparel company Warstic Sports, and she has a deal with Topps Allen & Ginter baseball cards.

Once Brown's season ends, she'll turn her attention to trying out for the United States women's team that will play in the group stage of the 2027 World Cup. She has been a regular on Team USA since 2022 and pitched against Japan in the 2024 World Cup in Thunder Bay, Ontario.

Pichardo said she's been grateful for every baseball opportunity since her father signed her up for a league in her hometown of Queens, New York, when she was six years old.

"He didn't have any sons, so I like to say I was his designated son," she said. "I've always been able to play at every level that I've progressed to, so there was never any reason for me to stop playing baseball just because I didn't see other women in the same space as me. It was my first sport, my first love, and I knew I wanted to try and play at the highest level possible."

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:17 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:17 PM

SPORTS

SOCCER

Gunners shoot first, but Atletico returns fire

Arsenal and the Rojiblancos exchange penalties in Madrid, as Champions League semifinal first-leg ends in a 1-1 draw

Atletico Madrid and Arsenal exchanged penalties in a 1-1 draw in the first leg of the Champions League semifinals on Wednesday, a gritty encounter with plenty of intensity from start to finish, even if it lacked the fireworks of the nine-goal thriller that saw defending champion Paris Saint-Germain edge Bayern Munich 5-4 in France on Tuesday.

Viktor Gyokeres put Arsenal ahead at the Metropolitano stadium on Wednesday, converting a 44th-minute penalty kick before Julian Alvarez equalized for Atletico — also from the penalty spot — 12 minutes later.

The Gunners were awarded another penalty in the 78th minute after Eberechi Eze was brought down by David Hancko inside the area, but the call was overturned after a video review.

The second leg is in London next Tuesday, when both clubs have a shot at returning to the final after a long absence, giving whichever side makes it a chance to win the European title for the first time.

"Here, you have to suffer. Many teams have suffered here, including some of the best in the world," Arsenal coach Mikel Arteta said.

"We had some good moments in the match, and moments where we had to suffer. The margins are very slim. We are in an incredible position — the semifinal of the Champions League. Now, we have to play in front of our people — it's in our hands."

In the league phase of the competition, Arsenal routed Atletico 4-0 at the Emirates Stadium.

Atletico last made it to the Champions League final in 2016, when it lost to crosstown rival Real Madrid.

"We tried," Atletico midfielder Jorge Resurreccion said. "We went behind to that penalty, which was doubtful, but the team recovered and we were able to equalize with a penalty ourselves. We had the opportunities to win, but it will all be decided in the second leg. I think we played a good match."

Gyokeres broke the deadlock from the penalty spot after he was brought down inside the area by Hancko, who was a bit late to the ball and slightly bumped the Arsenal striker from behind.

The buildup came after Atletico lost possession in attack.

"Overall, I think it was a tough game, we know it's a tough place to come, but it's only halftime," Gyokeres said.

"We know that, when we play at home, with our fans, it's going to be different, for sure, and we just have to do our job, be at our best. It's going to be a good game at home."

Arsenal last appeared in the final in 2006, when it lost to Barcelona.

The Rojiblancos' equalizer came after a handball by Arsenal defender Ben White following a shot by Marcos Llorente.

The call came after a video review, and Alvarez converted the penalty with a firm shot for his 10th Champions League goal this season, before being replaced later in the second half with an apparent injury.

Gyokeres' opening penalty was Arsenal's first attempt on target, but both teams had exchanged a few early chances.

Arsenal goalkeeper David Raya had made a nice save on a shot by Alvarez, and Martin Odegaard — who was also substituted later — had his dangerous strike from inside the area blocked by Atletico's defense.

Alvarez led the Atletico attack early on, but the connection with Antoine Griezmann and Ademola Lookman didn't work well until the second half.

Alvarez almost curled in a free-kick after the break, and both Lookman and Griezmann had chances shortly afterward. Griezmann struck the post with a shot in the 63rd minute, and Lookman, who had been doubtful to start because of a muscle injury, missed from close range later in the second half.

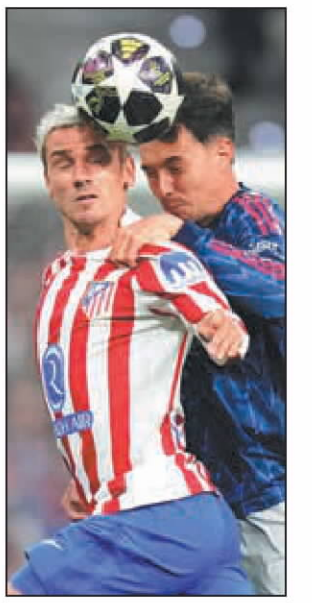
"We played a very good second half and had the chances to win the match," Atletico coach Diego Simeone said.

Griezmann, who played his last home Champions League fixture with Atletico, was named the player of the match.

The France star will join MLS club Orlando City this summer.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA





Left: Atletico Madrid's Julian Alvarez (second right) runs with the ball during Wednesday's UEFA Champions League semifinal first leg against Arsenal in Madrid. **Above:** Atletico's Antoine Griezmann (left) and Arsenal's Martin Zubimendi battle for the ball. **Bottom:** Arsenal players celebrate Viktor Gyokeres (left) scoring the opening goal. AFP / AP



Arteta infuriated by 'unacceptable' decision to overturn second penalty

Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta called it "unacceptable", and said it was a moment that changed the course of his team's Champions League semifinal against Atletico Madrid.

Meanwhile, Atletico coach Diego Simeone's antics as Dutch referee Danny Makkelie studied the sideline monitor at the Metropolitano stadium came under scrutiny Wednesday.

In a white-hot atmosphere and the score locked at 1-1 in Madrid, Makkelie opted to overturn a second-half penalty awarded to Arsenal when substitute Eberechi Eze went down under a challenge from David Hancko.

"The whole sequence tells the story. I mean it's a clear contact," Arteta told TNT Sports. "At this level it's completely unacceptable."

The game ended 1-1 with the second leg set to take place at Arsenal's Emirates Stadium next week.

Arteta said Makkelie had reviewed the penalty incident 13 times before deciding to overturn his decision. Soccer's rules state decisions should not be changed unless there is a "clear and obvious error".

"You make that decision, you cannot overturn that decision when you have to look at it 13 times," Arteta added.

UEFA said the penalty was ruled out because no foul had been committed, despite replays showing clear contact between Hancko and Eze.

TNT Sports panelists Steven Gerrard, Martin Keown and Steve McManaman also disagreed with the Dutchman's decision to overturn the penalty, but they also pointed to Simeone's reaction on the sideline while the official reviewed the video.

"As the referee is coming over, before he's even looked at the screen, Simeone's in his face, he's waving his arms," said former Liverpool midfielder Gerrard. "Then, he's in his ear when he's at the screen. It's a performance, and he's the best at doing it."

McManaman, who played for Atletico's crosstown rival Real Madrid, said of Simeone: "His performance was terrible, and that's why people don't like the dark arts, or don't like Atletico Madrid."

Earlier in the game, Simeone and Atletico players complained about the penalty call that went against their team late in the first half. Viktor Gyokeres put Arsenal ahead by converting from the spot in the 44th minute. Julian Alvarez equalized for Atletico — also with a spotkick — 12 minutes later.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

MOTOR SPORTS

Antonelli chases hat-trick, as F1 season revs back up

MIAMI — Italian teenager Kimi Antonelli, the youngest championship leader in F1 history, will seek to complete a hat-trick of early season victories at the weekend, as Formula One returns after a month's enforced absence due to the conflicts raging in the Middle East.

The 19-year-old Mercedes driver, triumphant in China and Japan, leads teammate George Russell, who won the season-opening Australian Grand Prix, by nine points ahead of what is, effectively, the start of another season, complete with more revised rules and widespread car upgrades, at the Miami Grand Prix.

"After a month without any racing, we are ready to get back on track," said Mercedes team chief Toto Wolff.

"We've used this break to analyze the opening races, address our weaknesses and raise our level.

"We've started the season well, but that counts for very little if you stand still. We know our competitors will have used this time to improve and build a deeper understanding of their cars, so we expect the field to be closer in Miami.

"That's the reality of F1 — it's a challenge we must rise to."

Antonelli's early triumphs made him the first Italian driver since Alberto Ascari in 1953 to win two consecutive races. Ascari completed his treble that season.

Wolff also addressed the tweaks to the new regulations that will be introduced in Miami, aimed at making the cars, and the spectacle more natural, with reduced battery recharging in qualifying and increased super-clipping to reduce dangerous speed differentials.

He said the revised rules would "respect the DNA of our sport", and deliver an improved spectacle without any significant reduction to Mercedes' early-season performance advantage.



Mercedes driver Kimi Antonelli is looking to snatch a third win on the bounce when the F1 season restarts in Miami on the weekend. AP

For Mercedes, Sunday's race is an opportunity for a first win in Florida since the event was launched five years ago. It has been won twice by four-time champion Max Verstappen for Red Bull, and twice by McLaren with a win apiece for reigning world champion Lando Norris and teammate Oscar Piastri.

'Completely new car'

They will harbor hopes of claiming points, too, with success in Saturday's sprint race, which was won last year by Norris.

Ferrari, however, is widely expected to be a strong contender when it arrives in Miami. Like McLaren, Ferrari is bringing an almost "completely new car", with a heavily revised package.

"It was one of our best tracks for pure pace, compared to others, last year," said Norris. "It's a different track, and it may still suit us a little more than others."

After winning in 2022 and 2023, Verstappen will be aiming to stop Mercedes' winning run and revive Red Bull's challenge this year after a discouraging start. He is ninth, on 12 points, 60 adrift of Antonelli, with teammate Isack Hadjar in 12th place on four points.

Ferrari's duo of Charles Leclerc and seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton is third and fourth, respectively, on 49 and 41 points, with many paddock observers suggesting Ferrari is poised to fight for a first win since Carlos Sainz's success in Mexico in October 2024.

Leclerc's eighth and last win came in Austin, Texas, shortly before Sainz's triumph, while Hamilton is chasing his 106th win and first since the 2024 Belgian Grand Prix — before he joined Ferrari. After a desultory first year, the Briton said he is relishing the challenge of a new formula that has seen him rediscover his racing mojo.

"We're all recharged after the break," said Russell, expressing the feelings of most drivers.

"I'm hoping we can continue where we left off."

It will also mark United States newcomer Cadillac's first racing appearance on home soil when Sergio Perez and Valtteri Bottas venture onto the grid at Hard Rock Stadium in a new American livery.

AFP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:17 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:19 PM



Nature seeker

Wildlife photographer Dong Lei records rare wild creatures in Southwest China

READ, PAGE 6



Ethiopian adventure

African nation offers cultural experiences for Chinese visitors

TRAVEL, PAGE 10

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 MONDAY, MAY 4, 2026

Xi commends exemplary young people

President's reply extends his festive greetings ahead of national Youth Day

By JI HAISHENG
jihaisheng@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping has encouraged Chinese youth to integrate their personal aspirations into the bigger picture of national development, while extending his festive greetings to young people nationwide ahead of China's Youth Day, which falls on Monday.

Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, made the remarks in a reply letter to representatives of recipients of the China Youth May Fourth Medal and the New Era Youth Pioneer award.

In his reply, Xi commended those exemplary young people for their dedication in grassroots and frontline positions, such as sci-tech innovation, rural vitalization, social services and border defense, and highlighted that they have written a meaningful chapter of youth through practical work and responsibility.

This has demonstrated the confident, self-reliant and high-spirited outlook of Chinese youth in the new era, he added.

Citing that this year marks the beginning of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, Xi said it is a prime time for young people to contribute to the country's development. He expressed hope that those representatives will uphold lofty ideals, remain committed to hard work, and inspire more young people to integrate their personal pursuits into the country's overall development.

The president urged young Chinese to strive for new accomplishments in their posts and inject youthful dynamism into advancing the nation's new journey of development.

The China Youth May Fourth Medal and the New Era Youth Pioneer award are designed to honor outstanding young role models who demonstrate political advancement, high moral character, and make significant contributions to society.

Recently, 16 awardees who have won the titles since 2012 wrote to the president to report on their work and insights from serving at the grassroots level, and reaffirmed their resolve to contribute to national development.

This year, 29 individuals and 30 organizations have been awarded the China Youth May Fourth Medal, the country's highest youth honor for Chinese people aged from 14 to 40. Meanwhile, 749 young individuals received the New Era Youth Pioneer award.

Li Yao, a recipient of 2026 China Youth May Fourth Medal and a grassroots official of Kantiangezhuang village in Tangshan, Hebei province, said he felt profoundly inspired by Xi's reply and pledged to translate the encouragement into concrete action in promoting rural vitalization.

He said that he will work with fellow villagers to develop local specialty industries, improve the living environment, and encourage more young people to engage in agriculture and rural development — all with the aim of boosting the village's economy and increasing residents' incomes.

Qiu Kunfeng, also a 2026 China Youth May Fourth Medal recipient and dean of the Beijing-based China University of Geosciences' School of Earth Sciences and Resources, said that Xi's message has offered young people renewed motivation to contribute to the nation's broader development goals.

He said he will remain dedicated to teaching and research, venture into new technological frontiers, and work to address key challenges in strategic mineral exploration.

Zou Shuo contributed to this story.

Victory in Hungary



Valentin Debise (center), racing for EASTROC ZXMOTO Evan Bros Factory, celebrates on the podium after winning the FIM Supersport World Championship race at Balaton Park Circuit in Hungary on Saturday. The victory marks the third win of the season for ZXMOTO. AP





Holiday highlights

Above: Visitors explore exhibits at the Shanghai Natural History Museum in Shanghai on Saturday, as crowds flock to the venue during the May Day holiday. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Left: Visitors watch a traditional molten iron fireworks performance at Shuihu Hero City in Yuncheng, Shandong province, on Saturday. QIAN HAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Beijing bans US sanctions on five Chinese cos, signals legal recourse

By ZHONG NAN
zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

The United States' sanctions on Chinese companies contravene international law and the basic norms of global relations, while Beijing's blocking measure aims to safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of domestic firms and individuals, the Ministry of Commerce and analysts said.

The ministry issued a ban on Saturday prohibiting any recognition, enforcement or compliance with US sanctions imposed on five Chinese companies, including Hengli Petrochemical (Dalian) Refining Co and Shandong Shouguang Luqing Petrochemical Co, on the grounds of their alleged involvement in Iranian petroleum transactions.

Since 2025, the US government has imposed sanctions on these Chinese firms under executive orders, placing them on the Specially Designated Nationals List, freezing their assets and prohibiting transactions with them.

In response, a spokesperson for the ministry said that China has consistently opposed unilateral sanctions lacking United Nations authorization and a basis in international law, adding that the prohibition order represents a concrete step under China's Rules on Counteracting Unjustified Extra-territorial Application of Foreign Legislation and Other Measures, which was approved by the State Council in 2021.

The issuance of the ban does not affect China's fulfillment of its international obligations or its protection of the legitimate rights and interests of foreign-invested enterprises under Chinese law, the ministry official stressed.

> "The company has strictly complied with laws and regulations since its inception. We have never engaged in any trade with Iran, and our suppliers guarantee that the origin of our crude oil does not fall under US sanctions."
>
> **Public filing from Hengli Petrochemical (Dalian) Refining Co**

Hengli Petrochemical, the parent company of Hengli Petrochemical (Dalian) Refining Co, condemned the US sanctions last week, dismissing US allegations of ties to Iran as "groundless" and lacking both factual and legal grounds.

"The company has strictly complied with laws and regulations since its inception. We have never engaged in any trade with Iran, and our suppliers guarantee that the origin of our crude oil does not fall under US sanctions," Hengli Petrochemical said in a public filing.

Analysts said that the US has long leveraged the dominance of its currency and financial system to extend the reach of its sanctions. Secondary sanctions — targeting entities dealing with blacklisted parties — have become a key policy tool to reshape global supply chains and influence cross-border commercial activities.

Mei Xinyu, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation in Beijing, said that China maintains a neutral stance toward external conflicts, but will not tolerate infringements on the legitimate rights of its citizens and businesses.

"Safeguarding those interests is a necessary response to external pressures," said Mei. "At the same time, such measures do not alter China's broader commitment to openness, international cooperation and a stable, predictable environment for foreign investment."

Ding Rijia, a professor of industrial economy at China University of Mining and Technology-Beijing, said China's latest step highlights the country's growing use of legal instruments to counter the extra-territorial application of foreign sanctions.

"It sends a signal to both domestic and multinational companies that China is capable of providing a more predictable legal environment for cross-border trade," said Ding.

See ***Trade,*** *page 2*

Authority of Tokyo Trials 'must not be challenged'

By ZHANG YUNBI
zhangyunbi@chinadaily.com.cn

As neo-militarism is now rising in Japan and "beginning to pose a real threat", the Foreign Ministry said on Sunday that "it is all the more relevant" to revisit the backdrop, conclusion and principles of the historic Tokyo Trials that started 80 years ago.

Sunday marked the 80th anniversary of the opening of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, also known as the Tokyo Trials, on May 3, 1946.

The trials brought together judicial powers of 11 nations, used abundant solid evidence and a rigorous legal basis, found Japanese militarists guilty of waging the war of aggression and severely violating the international law, and brought to light the innumerable crimes Japanese aggressors committed in various Asian countries.

Through the Tokyo Trials, 25 Class A war criminals including Hideki Tojo were sentenced to death by hanging or imprisonment.

In a written reply published on the Foreign Ministry website, the spokesperson said the Tokyo Trials were held to implement the Cairo Declaration and the Potsdam Proclamation, and embodied the collective will of both the victorious nations and the victimized peoples.

"Through the trials, the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter were upheld, and the fruits of victory in World War II were honored", the spokesperson said.

Japan's right-wing forces are still trying to whitewash the crimes committed during the war of aggression, including revising history textbooks and indoctrinating the Japanese people with a wrong perception of history, the spokesperson warned.

The right-wing forces currently are gearing up their drive to speed up remilitarization, deploy offensive weapons, rebuild the war machine and push for revision of the pacifist Constitution, the spokesperson said.

All these are diametrically the opposite of what "a country for peace" — as Japan claims itself to be — should do, the spokesperson added.

"The Tokyo Trials, as a litmus test of humanity's conscience, delivered historical justice and, along with the Nuremberg Trials, nailed the fascist war criminals to the eternal pillar of shame," the spokesperson said.

"The historical justice delivered by the two great trials must not be denied. Their legal authority must not be challenged. And the cornerstone of the postwar international order they laid must not be shaken," the spokesperson added.

Liu Jiangyong, a professor of Japan studies at Tsinghua University, said Japan's perspective on history and wars is closely linked to its current political landscape.

"Some in Japan view the convicted war criminals enshrined at Yasukuni Shrine as 'heroes' because they believe Japan's past colonial rule, aggression and expansion constitutes a history of 'victory' and 'pride' — they show not the slightest remorse," he said.

See ***Crimes,*** *page 2*

IN CHINA'S HEALTHCARE GAP, AN AI DOCTOR STEPS IN

Guidance, expert connections provided to patients in outlying communities

By WEI WANGYU
weiwangyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Qian Zhifang sat at the kitchen table in her home in rural Hubei province, scrolling through her phone. The 65-year-old factory worker had just checked her blood pressure using a smartwatch her daughter had bought her. Within seconds, a message appeared on the screen, saying that her reading was slightly elevated.

Instead of traveling hours to the nearest city hospital in Wuhan, Zhang opened an app and typed a question, and the response came almost instantly from an artificial intelligence doctor.

"It reminded me to monitor my salt intake and suggested when to see a 'real' doctor," Zhang said. "For someone like me, it feels like having a family doctor at home."

She is part of a growing wave of digital healthcare users. What began as a set of experimental tools is evolving into a system operating at scale, one that simultaneously guides patients in daily health decisions and supports doctors in clinical care.

At the center of this transformation is Ant Health's AQ, launched in mid-2025. The platform has grown rapidly, particularly in smaller cities and rural areas, where access to specialists remains limited. The company reports surging adoption, with combined daily consultations exceeding 10 million and monthly active users tripling that number.

See ***Healthcare,*** *page 3*

www.chinadailyglobal.com

A member of ANN

China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved

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

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:19 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:19 PM

NATION

Golden duet



Cao Yixin (third from right) and Shi Haoyue (third from left) celebrate on the podium after winning the mixed duet technical final at the 2026 World Aquatics Artistic Swimming World Cup in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, on Sunday, and pose with the British runners-up and Russian third-place finishers at the award ceremony. WANG JIAN / XINHUA

Chinese subs to boost Pakistan's defense

By **ZHAO LEI**
zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

The commissioning of the Chinese-built Hangor-class attack submarines will substantially improve the Pakistan Navy's combat and deterrence capabilities, according to military affairs observers.

Wu Peixin, an observer in Beijing, said that the deployment of the Hangor-class submarines marks a strategically significant hardware upgrade in the history of the Pakistan Navy.

"As the first submarines in South Asia fitted with an air-independent propulsion system, they are equipped with China's domestically developed Stirling engine, and this means they can navigate silently at certain speeds for several days. Such capability delivers a generational leap in performance compared with conventional diesel-electric submarines without AIP systems, and to some extent, enables them to engage with nuclear submarines," he said.

On Thursday, the commissioning ceremony for the first Hangor-class submarine, PNS/M *Hangor*, was held in the Chinese coastal city of Sanya in Hainan province.

Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari, who visited China, and Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf, the top commander of the Pakistan Navy, attended the event and made speeches.

Zardari said that the induction of the advanced submarine was a "historic milestone" in the Pakistan Navy's modernization, affirming his nation's resolve to maintain a robust, balanced and credible defence posture.

Ashraf stated that the new submarines are armed with state-of-the-art weapons, advanced sensors and an AIP system, and they will be key in preserving maritime order and stability in the region.

The new assets will bolster Pakistan's maritime defense and modernize its fleet with cutting-edge technology, the admiral added.

According to the Pakistan Navy, the commissioning of the first Hangor-class submarine "marks another chapter in the time-tested and enriching friendship between Pakistan and China".

In 2015, the Pakistani government announced that Pakistan and China had signed a deal for eight attack submarines, disclosing that the first four vessels would be built in China, and the remaining four in Pakistan.

Wu noted that each Hangor-class submarine is fitted with a cylindrical bow sonar array and multi-line flank sonar arrays on both sides of the hull, granting the boat outstanding capabilities to detect and track hostile submarines.

The observer said that in terms of weapons systems, the Chinese-built submarines can carry torpedoes and missiles made by China as well as weaponry from other countries. These weapons are capable of striking surface warships, submarines and land-based facilities, and laying naval mines.

"With eight Hangor-class submarines set to enter service gradually in the future, Pakistan will build an asymmetric maritime advantage in its region. The new assets will offset its rival's numerical and scale edge in surface vessels, help to secure the country's transportation of fuels and materials, and strengthen its strategic influence across the Indian Ocean region," Wu anticipated.

Another observer, who wished to be identified only as Xiao, said the Hangor-class submarines can operate in coordination with Chinese-built frigates in the Pakistan Navy, and that means the Pakistan Navy can use a small group of advanced assets to pin down and deter hostile naval forces.

"Thanks to the AIP system and other modern silencing technologies, the submarine features outstanding acoustic stealth performance. It can team up with surface warships to strike enemy vessels and land targets at long ranges, wielding powerful strategic deterrence," he said.

Moreover, under the submarine project, China has transferred to Pakistan full sets of submarine design skills, construction techniques, and maintenance capacity, and has helped train a large group of workers, engineers and technicians, allowing Pakistan to break away from absolute reliance on Western suppliers and reduce the full life-cycle cost of the Hangor-class submarines, according to Xiao.

Tokyo Trials-related items donated to memorial hall

NANJING — Eighteen rare archival items related to David Nelson Sutton, a US assistant prosecutor at the Tokyo Trials and one of the earliest international prosecutors to investigate the Nanjing Massacre, were officially donated on Wednesday to the Memorial Hall of the Victims in Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders.

With this year marking the 80th anniversary of the start of the Tokyo Trials, the donation includes six original diaries written by Sutton between 1946 and 1948, when he was conducting investigations for the trial, as well as a series of original reports titled "Reports from China".

From May 3, 1946, to Nov 12, 1948, the International Military Tribunal for the Far East was held in Tokyo by 11 countries, including the United States, China, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union, to try Japan's Class A war criminals after World War II.

Sutton came to China with the International Prosecution Section in 1946 and was tasked with investigating Japanese war crimes in China, with a particular focus on collecting evidence related to the Nanjing Massacre.

"Sutton was among the earliest members of the International Prosecution Section to conduct investigations in Nanjing and other places, and he played an irreplaceable role in the trial of the Nanjing Massacre case," said Zhou Feng, curator of the memorial hall.

The diaries recorded many details of Sutton's work during the Tokyo Trials. In one entry, dated March 9, he wrote that he had received formal orders to go to Shanghai, Nanking (Nanjing), Peiping (Beijing) and other sites in the China theater to investigate war crimes and gather evidence.

Another entry recorded his arrival in Nanjing at 11:20 am on April 2. On May 3, the day the trial opened, he described the defendants as looking like "insignificant beaten men".

Barak Kushner, a professor at the University of Cambridge, said the Sutton diaries "will be of great interest since there isn't a comparable diary from the time".

The donated materials also include Sutton's "Reports from China", which further exposed Japanese wartime atrocities in China, including mass killings, violence against civilians, germ warfare and the coercion of Chinese people into opium cultivation.

Yang Xiaming, a researcher with the Institute for National Memory and International Peace who began studying Sutton about two decades ago, said the archives donated this time are likely to have originated from a folder lost during the outsourced digitization of the Sutton archives by the law library of the University of Richmond in 2009, before eventually entering the auction market.



Zou Dehuai speaks about archival materials related to David Nelson Sutton that he has donated, during an exchange event marking the 80th anniversary of the opening of the Tokyo Trials in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, on Wednesday. YANG BO / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

"The core value of these archives lies in their status as irrefutable original first-hand historical materials, further strengthening the hard evidence of Japanese war crimes in China," Yang said.

The donor, Zou Dehuai, a collector born in the 1990s who has long searched for wartime historical evidence, first found the Sutton materials in November 2025 on a US-based auction website specializing in military artifacts.

After confirming Sutton's identity and reviewing preview images that indicated the items were original archival materials, Zou placed a bid for the collection and later arranged for its return to China with assistance from others.

At the donation ceremony, Zou received a donation certificate. He said the Sutton archives were the most expensive items he had acquired in a decade of collecting, and also his first donation.

"I hope that after the Sutton diaries settle in the memorial hall, they can better fulfill their value and tell every visitor that justice, though delayed, did arrive," Zou said.

Zhou, the curator of the memorial hall, said the Tokyo Trials had a profound and unshakable impact on safeguarding the victory of World War II and the postwar international order.

The return of these valuable archives to Nanjing, he said, provides new historical materials and perspectives for further research on the Tokyo Trials and helps uphold the legal conclusions of postwar justice and defend peace.

XINHUA

Lai's Eswatini trip dubbed a political farce

Mainland says Taiwan leader ditched people and wasted taxpayers' money

By **MO JINGXI** and **LI SHANGYI**

The Chinese mainland has criticized Taiwan leader Lai Ching-te's visit to Eswatini as a political farce, while urging the African nation and some other individual countries to stop serving as a prop for "Taiwan independence" separatists.

The remarks came after reports said Lai arrived in Eswatini on Saturday aboard a "private jet" of the King of Eswatini. Just a day earlier, a magnitude 6.1 offshore earthquake struck off Yilan county in Taiwan, with strong tremors felt in many areas.

A Foreign Ministry spokesperson said on Saturday that Lai had ditched the people in Taiwan who were still reeling from the disaster and sneaked onto a foreign plane to "smuggle" himself out of the island, squandering taxpayers' money and performing a laughable stunt in front of the world.

"That just added yet another episode to the scandalous 'Taiwan independence' separatism," the spokesperson said.

The spokesperson said the undignified act of Lai and his like once again proves that the one-China principle has long been a basic norm in international relations and a prevailing consensus of the international community.

No matter how the Democratic Progressive Party authorities collude with external forces and keep those people in the DPP's pay, it will always be a losing cause and nothing will ever change the fact that Taiwan is part of China, the spokesperson said.

No matter how "Taiwan independence" forces try to cover up their nature or change their appearance, nothing can save their reputation or help them escape the denunciation of the international community, the spokesperson added.

"We urge Eswatini and some other individual countries to see where the arc of history bends and stop serving as a prop for 'Taiwan independence' separatists," the spokesperson said.

Eswatini is one of the 12 countries — and the only African country — that still maintain so-called "diplomatic relations" with Taiwan.

The Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council also slammed Lai's trip on Saturday, saying his previous attempt to visit Eswatini by chartered plane had been forced to be canceled after relevant countries upheld the one-China principle.

Chen Binhua, a spokesman for the office, said Lai refused to accept the setback and traveled to Eswatini "in a sneaky manner" while Taiwan was being hit by an earthquake, exposing his indifference to people on the island and his stubborn "Taiwan independence" stance.

Chen said safeguarding peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and leading secure and prosperous lives are what people on the island truly hope for.

"By disregarding public safety and deceiving the people at will, Lai is bound to be rejected by the vast majority of Taiwan compatriots," he said.

Chen said the one-China principle represents the trend of the times and the shared aspiration of the international community, adding that Lai's so-called "diplomatic achievement" was nothing more than a political trick that would only draw ridicule. "The overarching trend toward national reunification is irreversible," he said.

Contact the writers at mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn

Crimes: Remembering history, vigilance urged

From page 1

"This year is particularly significant because of the Tokyo Trials anniversary. At such a crucial historical juncture, we must remember history while remaining vigilant against Japan's attempts to whitewash these war criminals," he added.

Recently, commemoration events have been held in China and Japan and by the international community to renew the historic significance of the trials.

On Sunday, the Foreign Ministry spokesperson quoted Mei Ru'ao, the late Chinese judge at the Tokyo Trials, who said, "Amnesia of past sufferings may lead to future disasters."

"Should anyone or any force foolishly attempt to reverse the verdict of aggression, they will be rejected by all peace-loving people in the world and brought once again before the tribunal of history," the spokesperson said.

Mei Xiaokan, daughter of Mei and a veteran researcher on the history of the Tokyo Trials, said, "What concerned my father most at that time was the possible scene in which those people (Japanese war criminals) do not receive the punishment they deserve."

"So he spared no effort in explaining what actually happened (during the war) to his fellow judges, trying to let them better know how atrocious the war crimes committed by the Japanese had been to the Chinese people," she told local media recently in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province.

Tokyo's fallacies such as "a trial exercising so-called victor's justice" and "Japan's war of self-defense" were refuted at the trials, the Foreign Ministry spokesperson noted. "Accepting the judgment of the Tokyo Trials is the prerequisite for Japan's postwar return to the international community."

Trade: Predictable policy environment seen as key

From page 1

He added that the policy measure will help reduce compliance uncertainty for firms operating in multiple jurisdictions, while reinforcing the resilience of global supply chains in the face of rising unilateralism.

Zhang Xin, head of customs affairs at Oriental Energy (Ningbo) New Material Co, a Ningbo, Zhejiang province-based petrochemicals producer, said a predictable policy environment is fundamental to the sound development of China-US economic and trade relations, adding that the company will maintain US imports and optimize supply chains to ensure stable raw material supply.

The company imported 258,000 metric tons of liquefied propane from the US, valued at $150 million, in the first four months of this year, according to data from Ningbo Customs.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:19 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:19 PM

COVER

Healthcare: AI doctors to bridge divide

From page 1

Its popularity reflects a structural challenge long facing China's medical system. While the country has world-class hospitals in major cities like Beijing and Shanghai, patients from smaller towns and rural areas often travel long distances for specialist care. Many crowd into large urban hospitals for conditions that might be handled elsewhere.

AQ aims to relieve some of that pressure by combining AI-generated health guidance with access to real doctors.

"People often need guidance before they ever see a doctor, and support after they leave the hospital," said Shen Yunfang, head of communications at Ant Health. "Our goal is to help users understand their health situation earlier, while making sure they still seek professional medical care when needed."

Behind the app is a large network of medical data and partnerships. According to Ant Health, the system draws on clinical guidelines, peer-reviewed medical journals, and collaborations with more than 5,000 hospitals and 300,000 physicians. Despite the impressive numbers, the company stresses that the platform is designed to assist doctors, not replace them.

More than 55 percent of AQ users live in third-tier cities or smaller communities, according to the company. "In those regions, people may not have easy access to top hospitals," Shen said.

As these users may depend on the app more than people living in urban areas, Shen assured that they have complete control over the uploading and utilization of their data, including test results, prescriptions, or photos for AI-assisted interpretation through the platform's question-and-answer function. Privacy protections automatically blur sensitive information, and data is encrypted end to end, she said.

"We strictly follow the nation's legal requirements and regulations, and ensure that only the user can access their health data," Shen said. "Trust is critical when dealing with medical information."

One of the app's most unusual features is a library of "AI doctor avatars". These digital assistants are modeled on the knowledge and clinical experience of more than 1,000 physicians.

Patients can ask routine questions to these virtual doctors, while complex cases are redirected to human specialists.

"The avatars allow doctors to focus their time on difficult cases," Shen said. "At the same time, they allow patients in remote areas to interact with medical experts they might otherwise never reach."

Beyond commercial platforms, researchers are pushing the boundaries of what AI in medicine might become.

At Tsinghua University, scientists have developed an experimental system known as "Agent Hospital", where AI doctors are trained to diagnose and treat simulated patients in a fully virtual environment. The system allows multiple AI agents to collaborate, mimicking the workflows of real hospitals.

"The idea is to let AI systems learn medicine the way young doctors do, through repeated exposure to cases, decision-making, and feedback," said Liu Yang, executive dean of the Institute for AI Industry Research at Tsinghua University and the project's lead scientist.

"In a virtual setting, they can accumulate experience at a scale and speed that would be impossible in the real world," Liu said.

The project offers a glimpse of a more automated future, in which elements of medical care could be scaled far beyond the limits of human staffing.

"We are not trying to replace hospitals," Liu added. "But we are exploring how parts of medical reasoning and routine care could be standardized and extended through AI."

Yet as the technology advances, so do the questions surrounding it.

The rapid expansion of AI healthcare tools has sparked debate over accuracy, accountability, and the evolving role of physicians.

While platforms emphasize that AI is designed to assist rather than replace doctors, some experts warn that overreliance on automated systems could introduce new risks, particularly in complex or ambiguous cases.

"Medicine is full of uncertainty," said Mo Kai, a Beijing-based health policy expert. "When cases fall outside standard patterns, human judgment becomes critical, and that's where current AI systems still struggle."

There are also concerns about accessibility. While digital tools can extend care to underserved populations, they may be less effective for elderly users or those unfamiliar with smartphones.

"Technology can expand access," Liu said, "but ensuring that it remains usable and trustworthy for all populations is just as important as improving its intelligence."

Some physicians say such tools are already changing how they work.

Zhang Ling, a cardiologist at China-Japan Friendship Hospital, uses Ant A-Fu's desktop platform to manage online consultations and review patient histories.

"The AI assistant organizes patient information before I even begin the consultation," Zhang said. "It identifies potential warning signs and highlights urgent cases."

That kind of triage can be valuable in China's busiest hospitals, where doctors often see dozens of patients each day.

"It doesn't replace clinical judgment," Zhang added. "But it can make the system much more efficient."

Still, adoption has not been without resistance, particularly from within hospitals. Some administrators and clinicians remain cautious about integrating large AI models into clinical workflows, citing concerns over reliability and professional risk.

"Medicine is not just pattern recognition, but involves judgment, responsibility, and uncertainty," said a hospital administrator who asked not to be named.

"If an AI system produces an incorrect recommendation, even rarely, the consequences in a clinical setting can be serious. That's where many institutions remain hesitant."

Concerns over data governance present an additional barrier. While technology companies stress that patient information is protected, some hospitals are reluctant to share internal data with external platforms, fearing loss of control or unintended exposure.

"From the hospital's perspective, data is one of its most sensitive assets," the administrator said.

"Even if companies claim the data won't be used beyond specific applications, it sometimes sounds not trustworthy enough. Trust takes time to build."

Developers say such concerns are understandable, but, in many cases, misplaced. According to Shen, the Ant Health communication head, most platforms operate under strict data isolation protocols, with patient information encrypted and stored within controlled environments.

Data used for AI-assisted services is typically not fed back into foundational model training, and these safeguards are often written into formal agreements with partner institutions.

"We don't use hospital data to train base models, and that is clearly specified in our contracts," Shen said. "There are also strict rules governing data storage, access permissions, and system architecture."

With AI medicine remaining a developing field, experts have said that algorithms must cope with more diverse medical conditions and the digital barriers faced by users. Ensuring accuracy and maintaining public trust will remain critical challenges.

Ant Health says it is already working on new features, including chronic-disease management tools. A senior-friendly interface with dialect support for elderly users launched in February.

For patients like Qian in Hubei, the technology is already reshaping everyday healthcare. She now checks her blood pressure regularly and consults the app whenever she has questions. If necessary, it can connect her directly to a physician online. "It makes me feel less alone dealing with my health," she said.



The international health consumption sub-zone of the 6th China International Consumer Products Expo opens at the Boao Lecheng International Medical Tourism Pilot Zone on April 12 in Hainan province. Guests experienced the AI medical robot dedicated area. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY.

> "Our goal is to help users understand their health situation earlier, while making sure they still seek professional medical care when needed."
>
> **Shen Yunfang,** head of communications at Ant Health



A radiologist retrieves a patient's coronary artery CT angiography from the AI workstation and uses AI to assist in image interpretation and diagnosis in Huzhou, Zhejiang province. PAN XUEKANG / FOR CHINA DAILY



The 2026 International Medical Devices Expo is held in Shanghai on April 9, displaying AI imaging solutions from Shenzhen Blue Shadow Medical Technology. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Digitized medical services scale up, but real-world performance remains uneven

By **WEI WANGYU**
weiwangyu@chinadaily.com.cn

As artificial intelligence gains traction in China's healthcare system, experts say its expansion is following a clear pattern, shaped as much by clinical realities as by technological capability.

Across academia and industry, there is a growing consensus that AI healthcare holds tangible potential in improving efficiency, extending access, and shifting care toward earlier intervention. Yet where and how these systems are deployed remains highly selective.

"AI tends to be adopted first in areas where data is standardized, workloads are heavy, and risks are relatively controllable," said Wu You, an associate professor at Tsinghua University's medical school.

"These conditions make it easier to integrate AI as a tool for assistance and quality control," Wu said.

That logic has placed imaging-related specialties at the forefront. In radiology, AI systems are increasingly used to assist with CT and MRI interpretation—tasks that are repetitive, high-frequency, and governed by standardized workflows.

Digital pathology is another fast-growing area, supporting the development of regional pathology centers and cloud-based diagnostic networks, although human experts still dominate most clinical decisions.

Beyond diagnostics, AI is also gaining ground in hospital quality management. Tools for prescription review, medical record auditing, and disease-specific quality control are being deployed to improve consistency and reduce error rates.

Meanwhile, patient-facing applications, such as intelligent triage, pre-consultation services, and automated billing, are reshaping hospital workflows, even if many rely more on digital infrastructure than advanced clinical intelligence.

Despite this progress, adoption remains concentrated in top-tier hospitals.

"In most cases, AI systems are first piloted in large tertiary hospitals, which are deeply involved in their development and validation," Wu said. "Only after that do they gradually expand to regional healthcare networks. Direct adoption at the primary-care level is still limited."

One structural reason is that the current medical practice still assumes that physicians must be capable of evaluating and, when necessary, correcting AI-generated outputs. In lower-tier settings, where technical training and resources may be more constrained, that condition is not always met.

Another challenge lies in the gap between controlled testing and real-world performance.

Regulatory approval in China typically confirms that AI systems meet baseline standards for safety and accuracy under controlled conditions. But once deployed in clinical environments, outcomes can vary widely.

"Effectiveness depends on who is using the system, how it is integrated into workflows, and how long it has been in use," Wu said.

In a multiyear study tracking AI-assisted lung CT analysis at two hospitals in Beijing, Wu and her colleagues observed markedly different patterns between junior and senior physicians.

Less experienced doctors were more likely to rely on AI suggestions, sometimes leading to short-term increases in false positives and longer reporting times. Senior doctors, by contrast, showed more stable performance, with gradual improvements emerging over time as workflows adapted.

The findings suggest that early declines in efficiency, particularly among less experienced users, should not necessarily be interpreted as technological failure, but rather as part of the adjustment process in human-machine collaboration.

More broadly, they point to the limits of a regulatory approach focused solely on market entry.

"In high-risk and complex medical scenarios, governance cannot stop at approval," Wu said. "It needs to extend to continuous evaluation and adaptation in real-world use."

As AI becomes more deeply embedded in healthcare systems, experts say the next phase will depend less on technological breakthroughs than on how effectively these systems are integrated, monitored, and governed.

The promise of AI in medicine may be substantial. But its success, they argue, will ultimately be determined outside of controlled trials, in the messy, variable realities of everyday clinical practice.



Multiple AI products are showcased at the Artificial Intelligence and Robotics Innovation Products and Services Release Event in Guangzhou,Guangdong province in September. QIN ZIHANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:19 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:19 PM

WORLD

Vintage beauties



Children look over classic vehicles at a car expo in Auckland, New Zealand, on Sunday, as enthusiasts gather to showcase vintage models and share automotive culture. WU JIAXIANG / XINHUA

US prepares to guide ships through strait

Iran warns that "Project Freedom" initiative would be considered a violation of ceasefire

By **SHI GUANG** in New York
shiguang@chinadailyusa.com

US President Donald Trump said on Sunday that the United States will launch a new effort to "guide" hundreds of stranded ships through the Strait of Hormuz as early as Monday, a move that Iran quickly warned would violate a fragile ceasefire.

Trump said in a social media post that "neutral and innocent" countries have been affected by the Iran war, and "we have told these Countries that we will guide their Ships safely out of these restricted Waterways, so that they can freely and ably get on with their business".

The initiative, called Project Freedom, would begin on Monday morning, Trump said, adding that his representatives are having discussions with Iran that could lead to something "very positive for all", The Associated Press reported.

Trump warned that any interference in the program would be dealt with "forcefully," but provided few specifics about how it would work.

In response, Iran's National Security Commission Chairman Ebrahim Azizi said any US interference with the Strait of Hormuz would be considered a violation of the ceasefire.

"The Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf would not be managed by Trump's delusional posts!" Azizi said on X.

He said Trump's announcement is an attempt to shift the blame for the blockade in the Strait of Hormuz to Iran, allowing him to authorize US strikes without Congressional approval.

Iran's tight restrictions on shipping through the strait, combined with a US naval blockade that has curtailed Iranian oil exports and disrupted tanker traffic, have shaken global markets.

Crews stuck on the mainly oil and gas ships have spoken about running low on food, water and other supplies.

Many sailors come from countries in south and southeast Asia.

On Sunday, a cargo ship near the Strait of Hormuz said it was attacked by multiple small craft, marking at least two dozen attacks in and around the strait since the Iran war began, according to an AP report.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack, the first reported in the area since April 22, the operations center said.

Meanwhile, Tehran said it was reviewing the US response to its latest proposal on ending the war.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei said on Sunday the United States has responded to Iran's 14-point proposed plan to end the war.

He made the remarks in an interview with state-run IRIB TV while noting that the US response is being reviewed.

He stressed that Iran's plan is exclusively focused on ending the war, and "nothing pertaining to the nuclear field's details exists in it".

"At present, we are focused on the parameters related to ending the war in the region, including Lebanon," Baghaei added, stressing "we have no nuclear negotiation at this stage".

Trump on Saturday said he was reviewing the proposal but expressed doubt it would lead to a deal, adding on social media that "they have not yet paid a big enough price for what they have done" in the nearly 50 years since the Islamic Revolution there.

Iran's proposal called for the US lifting sanctions on Iran, ending the US naval blockade of Iranian ports, withdrawing forces from the region and ceasing all hostilities, including Israel's operations in Lebanon, according to the semi-official Nour News and Tasnim agencies.

Xinhua and Agencies contributed to this story.

Pentagon to pull more troops from Germany

WASHINGTON — United States President Donald Trump said on Saturday the country plans to withdraw "a lot further" than the 5,000 troops from Germany that the Pentagon had earlier said.

"We're going to cut way down, and we're cutting a lot further than 5,000," Trump told reporters before boarding Air Force One in Florida.

The Pentagon announced on Friday the withdrawal of about 5,000 US troops from Germany, which is expected to be completed over the next six to 12 months.

"This decision follows a thorough review of the (Defense) Department's force posture in Europe and is in recognition of theater requirements and conditions on the ground," Pentagon chief spokesman Sean Parnell said.

NATO said on Saturday that it was working with the United States to understand Washington's decision to withdraw troops from Germany, amid fresh tensions between the US and Germany over the Middle East crisis.

Earlier, Trump hinted at a troop withdrawal after German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said Iran was "humiliating" the US in negotiations to end the conflict between the two sides.

On Thursday, Trump said he may also reduce US military presence in Spain and Italy, while criticizing European allies for not helping in the US-Israeli war against Iran.

Spain's Defense Minister Margarita Robles called Trump's statements "neither appropriate nor, of course, based on any legal grounds".

German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul said on Thursday that Berlin is prepared, while stating that major US military sites, such as the Ramstein Air Base, still serve an irreplaceable role for both sides.

More than 36,000 US troops were assigned to bases throughout Germany as of December, along with nearly 1,500 reservists and 11,500 civilians.

Yu Xiaohua, a professor at Germany's University of Goettingen, said that Trump might execute a symbolic reduction, maybe a few hundred troops, as a political gesture. Still, some observers see a broader shift underway.

In a commentary published in the French daily Le Monde, former German vice-chancellor Joschka Fischer said, "Whatever the case, the dissolution of the alliance has already begun."

XINHUA

Africa eyes benefits from tariff waiver

By **NDUMISO MLILO** in Johannesburg
For China Daily

With China's zero-tariff offer taking effect on Friday, South African experts and the business community expect it to boost China-Africa trade and bring economic benefits to the continent.

While China previously offered duty-free access to dozens of least developed countries, the current offer has been expanded to include middle-income countries such as South Africa and Nigeria.

Theuns Botha, CEO of Kingday Textiles, which imports textiles from China and exports aluminum and zinc to it, urged South African companies to take advantage of the opportunity.

"This is an incredible opportunity. China is trying its best to increase trade with African countries," he said.

"This offer has been extended to benefit the manufacturing, agricultural and mining sectors and increase employment with high demand from China. We are seeing China opening its markets and making concessions available to the rest of the world," Botha said.

The zero-tariff policy could provide relief to African countries facing uncertain trade relations with the United States, which has unilaterally imposed tariffs, he said.

Dealing with Washington has become "difficult and complicated" under the current US administration, he said, adding that South Africa should expand its production capacity to increase exports to China.

Wolfe Braude, a manager at the Agricultural Business Chamber of South Africa, welcomed China's offer while urging exporters to meet the country's regulatory requirements.

African nations seeking to export agricultural products to China must negotiate and sign sanitary and phytosanitary protocols, he said. South Africa has already signed several such protocols but is planning to add cherries and blueberries to the list this year, he added.

Standards compliance

For nonagricultural products, exporters must comply with the standards set by China's regulatory authorities, Braude said.

Navigating the Chinese market comes with challenges for some companies because of its regulations and procedures, and smaller businesses will require capacity-building support to fully benefit from the opportunity, he said.

Exporters will benefit from understanding the Chinese systems, rules and regulations as a result of the Framework Agreement on Economic Partnership for Shared Prosperity, which South Africa signed with China earlier this year, he said.

Under the agreement, African countries are also expected to benefit from cooperation in areas such as green energy, digitization, technical expertise and financing, he added.

China's development experience offers valuable insights for Africa, Braude said, noting that the country has successfully confronted many of the challenges that African economies continue to face.

Philani Mthembu, executive director at the Institute for Global Dialogue in South Africa, said the zero-tariff policy could further strengthen Africa-China trade ties.

"China is opening its market to South African products, particularly in the agriculture sector, which is very important," Mthembu said.

Looking ahead, he said the next step in the trade relationship should involve greater investment and manufacturing partnerships.

"Even in the automotive space, we encourage China to build factories to manufacture high-tech and other products within the African continent," he said.

The writer is a freelance journalist for China Daily.

Smoke screen

Thick ash billows from Mayon Volcano as seen from Camalig in Albay Province, the Philippines, on Saturday, blanketing dozens of villages and forcing thousands to evacuate as authorities enforce a 6-kilometer danger zone.

CHRISTIAN ANONUEVO LORILLA VIA AP



CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.
WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045

Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247
SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388
SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868
CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706
CHINA DAILY (ISSN 0748-6154) is published daily except weekends by China Daily USA, 1500 Broadway, Suite 2800, New York, NY 10036. Periodical postage paid at New York, NY and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to CHINA DAILY USA, 1500 Broadway, Suite 2800, New York, NY 10036.
Vol. 38 — No.1819

China-Australia partnerships offer bright spot amid global disruptions

By **XIN XIN** and **ALEXIS HOOI** in Sydney

China-Australia partnerships offer a bright spot amid major disruptions to global supply chains, business leaders heard at a recent industry event in Sydney, where speakers pointed to expanding collaboration as a way to navigate rising uncertainty.

Australia's designation as the Country of Honor at this year's China International Supply Chain Expo, to be held in Beijing in June, is expected to provide an important platform for deepening industrial and supply chain ties, in line with China's push for high-quality development.

The momentum is particularly visible in renewable energy, with export-ready Australian companies seeking closer engagement with China's rapidly growing energy ecosystem. The Smart Energy Council, in partnership with the Australian Trade and Investment Commission, will lead a delegation of companies to the expo.

David McElrea, the council's chief advocacy officer, told China Daily that the sector illustrates the "enduring partnership" between the two countries. "In Australia, we use a lot of Chinese material and investments; whether it's solar panels, batteries or electric vehicles," he said, highlighting China's central role in driving the global renewable energy transition.

"We're constantly impressed by the innovation in China," he said. "There are so many ways we can work together and the future for cooperation is bright."

The expo promotes collaboration across industry, academia, research and application, encouraging interaction between Chinese and international businesses to strengthen global industrial and supply chain partnerships.

Ma Lei, chief representative of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade's office in Australia, said Australia's confirmation as the Country of Honor reflects its "strong confidence" in deepening industrial and supply chain cooperation and will inject new momentum into the countries' economic and trade ties.

Ma, whose office organized the Sydney event, said the expo's focus on major industrial chains, including advanced manufacturing, is "perfectly aligned with China-Australia cooperation priorities", creating broad opportunities for businesses in both countries.

Chen Jianyu, general manager of the Sydney branch of the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, said Australia's designation at the expo reflects the depth of bilateral economic cooperation and underscores the important role of Australian businesses in global supply chains.

The bank, a strategic partner of the expo, supported the Sydney event with the China Chamber of Commerce in Australia.

"Leveraging the ICBC's extensive global network and deep presence in China, we aim to help Australian enterprises connect with the right partners, explore new opportunities and achieve tangible business outcomes," Chen said.

Arnold Jorge, CEO of the Export Council of Australia, told China Daily that heightened uncertainty and ongoing supply chain reconfiguration have made stability a priority.

Against that backdrop, he said Australia's relationship with China — its largest trading partner — offers much-needed complementarities to help overcome current challenges.

Contact the writers at xinxin@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:19 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:19 PM

PEOPLE

The art of remembering lives

A tombstone designer creates customized memorial spaces, helping families stay connected to loved ones through personal stories, **Zhou Lihua** and **Hu Qing** report.



Xu Hang checks vegetation beside a burial plot at a cemetery in Xianning, Hubei province. The 42-year-old tombstone designer incorporates seasonal planting into his designs to keep spaces alive year-round.
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

During this year's Tomb-Sweeping Day, Xu Hang moved slowly along rows of tombstones at Crane Lake Memorial Park in Xianning city, Hubei province. He brushed dust from the surfaces, and paused beside one he had designed years ago, lost in thought.

No one asked him to do this. It is simply something he has done for nearly 20 years.

The tombstones stand in silence. Each one holds a story that can no longer be spoken aloud.

And Xu's work ensures those stories are not entirely lost.

At 42, Xu is a tombstone designer. Over the past two decades, he has designed nearly 1,000 tombstones.

Having studied environmental art design at Xi'an Polytechnic University, Xu had not planned to enter the funeral industry. After graduation in 2006, he took a job at a cemetery in Zhengzhou, Henan province, and stayed for nearly a decade.

"I wasn't interested in the job at all back then," he recalls.

The setting felt far removed from his ambitions. But over time, something shifted — not through design theory or artistic pursuit, but through an encounter he still remembers clearly.

More than a decade into his career, Xu was organizing a burial ceremony when he presented a tombstone design to a woman in her 50s who had just lost her husband. After the ceremony, she suddenly dropped to her knees.

"Thank you, child," she said.

The moment stayed with him. The woman, whom he later referred to as Aunt Li, told him the tombstone carried the memory of their 30 years together. From then on, she said, this would be the place where she could return and "talk" to her husband.

At that moment, Xu began to understand that what he was shaping was not just stone, but a form of continuity — something that allowed the living to remain connected to those they had lost. A tombstone could hold the presence of a parent for a child, or offer quiet companionship to someone left behind.

"That was when I realized this job could truly matter," he says. "It allows me to help people, and earn their trust."

From then on, he chose to take the work seriously.

He stopped chasing abstract notions of "art" and began by listening. Before starting any design, he sits with families and asks simple questions: What colors did they like? What music or opera did they enjoy? What kind of life did they live?









Clockwise from above: Xu Hang inspects the health of a tree at a cemetery in Xianning, Hubei province. Xu discusses a tombstone design plan with a colleague. A hand-drawn tombstone sketch by the designer. He uses computer software to develop a burial plot master plan. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

A typical design takes around 10 days. Xu begins with hand-drawn sketches, refining them through conversations with the family. Once a direction is agreed upon, he develops digital renderings to finalize materials, colors and layout.

His work often extends beyond the tombstone itself. He treats each site as a small, contained environment — a place designed not only for remembrance, but for return.

Xu says he avoids the traditional use of plain black stone, instead creating what he describes as a "small courtyard". Evergreen plants provide structure, flowers bloom in spring, and even in winter there is some greenery, ensuring the space never feels desolate.

He often leaves intentional blank spaces on the stone, inviting families to return each year and add their own inscriptions or elements. He also visits regularly to check conditions and maintain the sites.

Xu follows a principle passed down from his parents. "If you deceive the living, you may still have a chance to make amends. But if you deceive the dead, you never will," he says.

One project continues to stay with him. A young woman once described her father, a serviceman stationed on a remote island. Her clearest memory was of arriving each year to find him waiting at the dock, the sea stretching behind him under a vast sky.

Xu translated that memory into a horizontal tombstone. Small stones outlined the shape of the island, while the background opened into a wide "sky", decorated with small stones in shades of blue, yellow and white, inspired by *The Starry Night* created by Vincent van Gogh.

When the woman saw the finished design, she said nothing.

"But I knew she understood," Xu says.

His work has drawn attention beyond families. Ding Shan, a teacher at the School of Art and Design at Wuhan University of Technology, became a client two years ago when Xu designed a shared burial site for his grandfather and father.

"Xu Hang is very approachable. We had detailed discussions about materials, design and dimensions to meet my specific requests," Ding says, adding that what impressed him most was Xu's attitude toward his job — treating it as a delicate act of creation rather than just a way to earn a living.

> "The tomb sits by a lakeside cherry blossom tree, with cranes and black swans nearby. It feels more like a park than a cemetery. Knowing our loved ones rest in such a place brings us a sense of peace."
>
> **Ding Shan,**
> a client, teacher at the School of Art and Design at Wuhan University of Technology

"The garden-style layout was truly thoughtful," he says. "The tomb sits by a lakeside cherry blossom tree, with cranes and black swans nearby.

"It feels more like a park than a cemetery. Knowing our loved ones rest in such a place brings us a sense of peace," Ding says.

In recent years, Xu has noticed a shift in how people approach memorials. Families are less concerned with scale or formality, and more focused on emotional expression. They want tombstones to reflect the individuality of the person being remembered — places where they can sit, talk, and spend time.

Younger clients, in particular, often bring clear and personal ideas. Some bring sketches; others gather references and images to explain what they have in mind, he says.

After 20 years in the field, Xu believes not everyone is suited to the work.

"It's not about skill," he said. "It's about what's in your heart."

Awards no longer concern him. What matters is the moment when a family looks at a design and says, "I never imagined it could be like this."

That, he believes, is enough.

He no longer cares about leaving his own name behind. If anything is to endure, he believes, it should be the lives of ordinary people — each one carrying its own quiet significance.

Liu Kun contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at huqing@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:19 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:19 PM

READ



Seeing the wild side of life one frame at a time

Photographer Dong Lei documents the extraordinary diversity of China's environment over the course of 20 years

By CHEN LIANG
chenliang@chinadaily.com.cn

The year began with a quiet milestone for Dong Lei, a photographer from Chengdu in Sichuan province; the publication of his new book, *My Wildlife Circle of Friends*.

He told China Daily that the seed for a photo book had been planted in 2014-15, initially conceived with the title *Mountains of Southwest China Through the Eyes of a Nature Photographer*. In 2017-18, he frequently ventured deep into the Gaoligong Mountains in Yunnan province, documenting the elusive pheasant, Sclater's monal. He spent weeks in isolated wilderness. During downtime, or on rainy days when leaving camp was impossible, he began to create the book and later completed a first draft.

Eventually, a publisher expressed interest. The working title shifted to *China's National Parks (Southwest Chapter) Through the Eyes of a Nature Photographer*, with 10 chapters on key species distributed across 10 national parks of Southwest China.

However, with only five national parks being officially established so far and only two falling within his reach, the publisher had to rethink the marketing strategy. The title was changed to appeal to a younger audience. "The cover design is more cartoonish, but the content inside remains largely the same," Dong said.

The book is a collection of his works from 2006 to the spring of 2025, when he photographed the rare Himalayan red panda in the Xizang autonomous region. "The book contains the highlights of my 20 years of wildlife photography," Dong said.

Li Binbin, an associate professor of environmental sciences at Duke Kunshan University in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, wrote in the book's foreword: "With rapidly evolving imaging technology and readily accessible information, capturing beautiful nature images seems less daunting than before. However, the ability to relentlessly seek out uncharted territories in nature photography, to document and disseminate the biodiversity of China's vast land, and to use imagery to raise awareness of nature conservation — that's where people like Dong Lei are truly rare."

From enthusiast to expert

A nature enthusiast without a formal science background, Dong, 51, started bird-watching in 2003, which gradually transitioned into a career in nature photography.

He studied industrial design at a college in Jiangsu. After graduating, he joined Sichuan University as a teacher of design and photography. Nowadays, he teaches at the School of Design at Southwest Jiaotong University in Chengdu. As an only child, Dong lived according to his parents' expectations: education, marriage and a stable career.

But at the age of 25 lurking beneath the surface of his well-ordered life was "a hint of discontent", he said.

At Sichuan University, Dong found himself with more free time, joining the university's mountaineering association on a trek to Mount Gongga. This became the turning point that led him into the world of nature photography. He enjoyed taking pictures as he walked in the wild.

Around 2004, he immersed himself in wildlife photography. In the early 2000s, it was a new field and relevant visual materials were scarce, mostly found in foreign publications.

"I gradually realized that documenting wildlife through imagery is a crucial way for us to understand nature," Dong said.

From 2006, he began teaching at the China Wildlife Photography Training Camp, organized by the renowned photographer Xi Zhinong. Meanwhile, he embarked on his own project to photograph China's endangered species.

In 2008, he joined Image Biodiversity Expedition, the country's first imaging biodiversity survey institute.

After accumulating substantial first-hand images, Dong and his friends founded swild.cn, a natural image library, hoping to use the power of photography to reveal the vitality of the wilderness in Southwest China.

The Mountains of Southwest China are one of the world's 36 biodiversity hot spots, Dong said. In this region, there are about 12,000 plant species, 29 percent of which are endemic. The abundance of wildlife is equally extraordinary: giant pandas, several species of snub-nosed monkeys and gibbons, snow leopards, takins, white-lipped deer and various pheasants.

"There is a long list of key species that need our documentation," Dong said.

In 2014, he published his first nature photography album, focusing on the biodiversity in the Gaoligong Mountains.

Beyond photography, Dong and his partners gradually evolved toward nature documentaries, beginning around 2015, hoping to showcase the charms of wildlife through more diverse formats.

Over the past decade, he has been involved in the creation of around 10 wildlife documentaries. The mountains of Southwest China remain the central focus of these works.

Of these documentaries, Dong is most fond of *The Glories of the Minya Konka* (Mount Gongga), completed in 2018.

Through precious, on-location footage, the documentary tells the story of Mount Gongga, the highest peak in the Hengduan Mountains of western Sichuan, at 7,556 meters above sea level. It captures the coexistence of snow leopards and leopards, the spectacular giant tree of *Magnolia dawsoniana* and monkey troops seasonally feeding on the flowers, and the courtship of golden pheasants.

In January 2020, the documentary was broadcast on Central China Television and received an award from the National Radio and Television Administration.

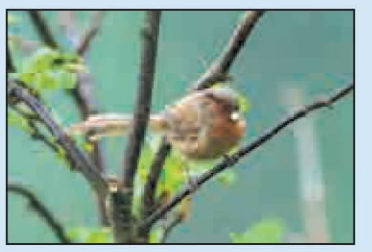
Because of these works, Dong is considered one of China's leading nature documentary directors and producers.











From top: A male blue sheep stands on a slope as Mount Qomolangma looms behind in the Xizang autonomous region. DONG LEI / FOR CHINA DAILY Dong Lei works in the snow at the Wanglang National Nature Reserve in Sichuan province for a documentary. ZOU TAO / FOR CHINA DAILY Two Nujiang snub-nosed monkeys perch on a tree in the Gaoligong Mountains in Yunnan province. DONG LEI / FOR CHINA DAILY A male Sclater's monal stands on a rocky slope of the Gaoligong Mountains in Yunnan. DONG LEI / FOR CHINA DAILY A cluster of *Meconopsis horridula* blooms in front of Mount Qomolangma in Xizang. DONG LEI / FOR CHINA DAILY An Asiatic jackal documented in Gyirong county, Xizang, in 2018. DONG LEI / FOR CHINA DAILY The rusty-throated parrotbill photographed in the Tangjiahe National Nature Reserve in Sichuan province in 2007 is the first confirmed record of this species since its discovery in 1886. DONG LEI / FOR CHINA DAILY Dong works on Mount Gongga. LI BINBIN / FOR CHINA DAILY



Discoveries and memories

Years of fieldwork have led to many unexpected discoveries. In 2007, while visiting the Tangjiahe National Nature Reserve in Sichuan, he rediscovered the rare rusty-throated parrotbill.

In 1886, the Russian explorer Nikolay Przhevalsky toured western China with his expedition team, documenting many species for the first time. The rusty-throated parrotbill, known as Przevalski's parrotbill, was among them.

Ever since the official discovery, enthusiasts from Europe and the United States have been eager to see the bird, but for more than a century no one had seen it.

In the 1990s, there were rumors that some foreign visitors had seen it in Jiuzhaigou in Sichuan, but there was no photo evidence. In 2007, Dong and his mentor, Xi Zhinong, finally photographed it in Tangjiahe.

"I had been bird-watching for three or four years then, and could identify many birds, and I had a field guide with me," he said. "But when I took the photo, I didn't realize it was rusty-throated parrotbill. Who would expect to be able to photograph a bird that hadn't been seen in 120 years?"

In 2018, while taking photos in Gyirong county, Xizang, he documented a new mammal record for China, the Asiatic jackal. "While investigating Gyirong Valley, an animal resembling a fox suddenly appeared in the bushes," he said. "We were able to capture clear photos before it disappeared quickly. The images confirmed the existence of the animal in China."

Both discoveries were significant enough to be published in academic journals, with Dong listed as the first author.

Reflecting on his passion for wildlife photography, Dong explained that it is the vast realm of the unknown that captivates him.

"You might meticulously plan every detail of a trip, only to find yourself unable to capture your intended target, which can be quite disheartening," he said. "Yet, it's often in those moments of unexpected discovery or unforeseen adventure that you find a surprising and profound joy.

"You will definitely not come away empty-handed. You are sure to harvest something. The unpredictability is fascinating."

His encounter with the Nujiang snub-nosed monkeys is a fine example. The monkey was only officially discovered as a species in 2010. It's currently only found in Yunnan and Myanmar, with a population of less than 600.

After learning about the species, Dong and his friends were thinking about photographing the animal. Starting in 2012, they repeatedly visited the animal's natural habitat in the Gaoligong Mountains but without success.

After they heard that the monkeys had been seen near the Pianma Protection Station in the Gaoligong Mountains on Oct 28, 2013, they launched their third attempt.

They started climbing at 3 am, in complete darkness and pouring rain. They had to rely on their hands to climb. "We didn't bring headlamps. When we needed both hands to climb, we had to bite down on the flashlight," Dong said.

They arrived at the destination at 7 or 8 am, when it was bright. However, the forest was quiet. "We were a bit disappointed because the monkeys would be active after daybreak, and it was already quite bright. We worried they had already left," he said.

Undeterred, they split up and searched in different directions. When they returned to camp, it was 9:30 am, and they still hadn't found them. "Our mood was really low, thinking we had wasted our efforts. I even packed my lens into my bag," he said. "It was very cold. The rangers from the patrol station built a fire, and we dried our clothes and warmed ourselves. Just as we were about to give up, the snub-nosed monkeys appeared by the dozen, very noisy!"

Zhang Jinshuo, curator of the National Zoological Museum of China, wrote in his foreword to *My Wildlife Circle of Friends*: "Wherever there is unique biodiversity, no matter how harsh the environment or conditions, he (Dong) can scale its peaks; thus, pursuing the truest side of nature, thereby recording rare endangered species and displaying their elusive natural behaviors."

Due to his increasing commitments in documentary direction and production, Dong finds that his opportunities to photograph wildlife have become limited. However, he said that he remains eager to seize any chance to venture into the wild and capture its beauty whenever possible.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:19 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:19 PM

IMAGE

Revitalizing villages by attracting young people

Huzhou, Zhejiang province, is where the idea that lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets first took root.

In March this year, China's first local regulation specifically designed to encourage young people to develop rural areas was enacted in Huzhou.

By integrating youth-driven rural development into local legal and planning frameworks, the regulation aims to address key challenges and inject fresh energy into rural revitalization.

Since the start of 2025, Huzhou has launched over 2,000 youth-led innovation projects across its rural areas.

These initiatives are giving rise to new business models and lifestyles, all driven by the creativity and ambition of young people.

From the digital nomad community — China's first comprehensive hub of its kind — nestled in the tea fields of Xilong township, Anji county of Huzhou, to a wide range of innovative projects that help boost local incomes, more and more young people in Huzhou are turning their dreams into reality among the green hills and clear waters.

Huzhou will continue to empower rural development through young talent, unlocking new growth drivers to help the youth tap their full potential. This influx of talent is reshaping urban-rural integration, offering a dynamic new vision of balanced growth.

-CHINA DAILY

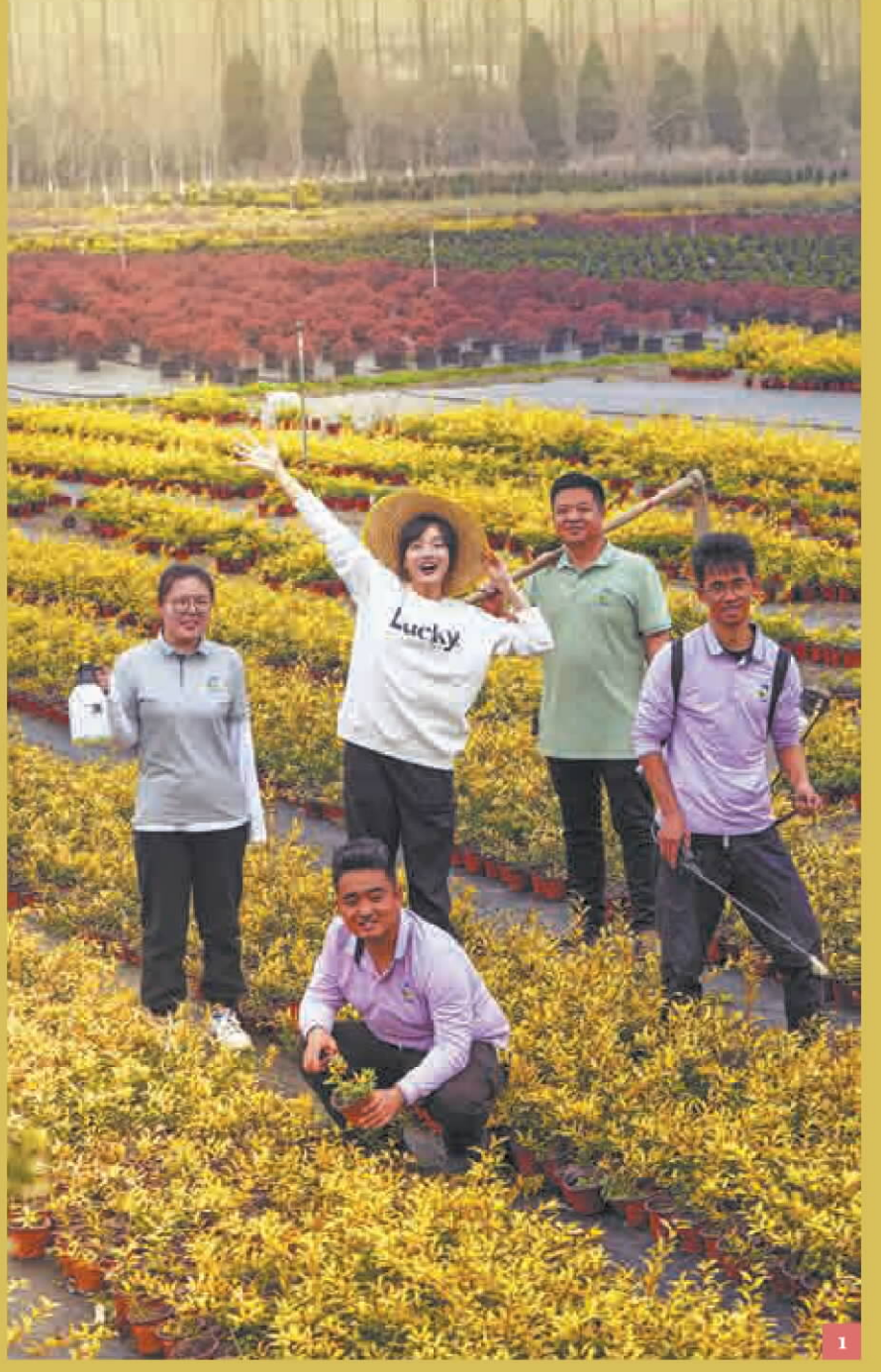


2


3


4


5



1

1. Yu Shifan (second from the left) and her team members work joyfully in the fields in March, 2025. PHOTO PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

2. A concert is held in Xiaopu town, Changxing county, Huzhou to celebrate Youth Day on May 4, 2025. PHOTO BY HE PENGFEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

3. A band performs for the crowd at a night coffee venue run by young entrepreneurs on July 6, 2024. PHOTO BY LI CHENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

4. Lu Yingfeng, founder of a hairy crab company based in Huzhou, displays crabs raised using traditional, free-range, all-natural methods in November 2015. PHOTO PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

5. Yao Yulin, a bearer of the Huzhou brush-making heritage, goes live to sell Huzhou brushes, ink, paper, as well as inkstones on Dec 29, 2024, with her husband Yang Wen assisting her on the side. PHOTO BY YAO ZHENQUAN / FOR CHINA DAILY



On April 20, four young people come together to map out their response to the expected surge in visitors to their coffee shop over the May Day holiday this year. PHOTO BY SU XIN / FOR CHINA DAILY



A coffee shop named Yucun Club, located in Anji county, Huzhou, sees a steady stream of visitors in April. PHOTO PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

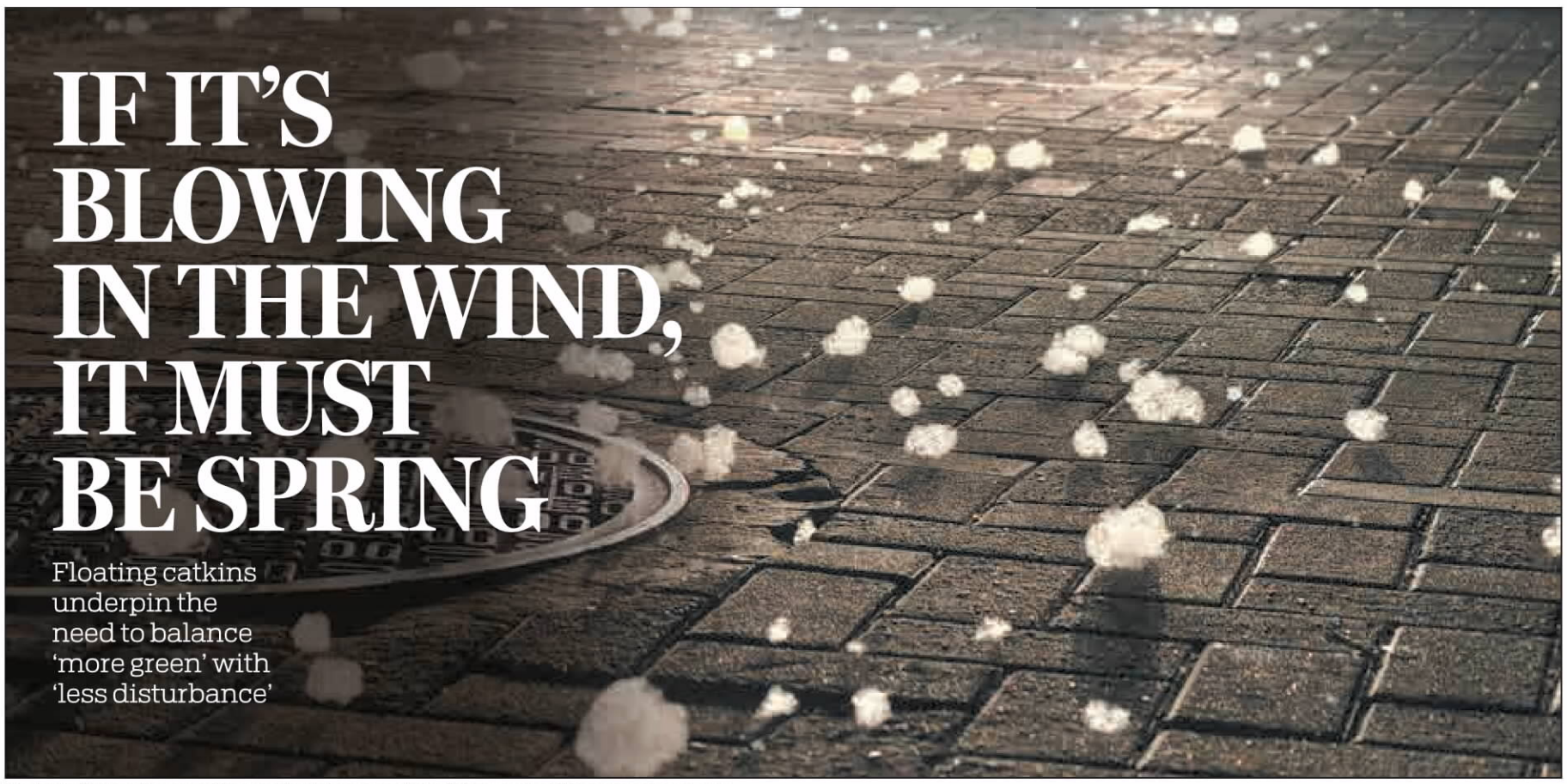


In July, 2025, a rural tech startup conducts drone-based water quality testing and sampling amid the lush green hills of Anji county, Huzhou. PHOTO PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:19 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:19 PM

TREND



IF IT'S BLOWING IN THE WIND, IT MUST BE SPRING

Floating catkins underpin the need to balance 'more green' with 'less disturbance'

Poplar fluff litters the ground in a residential community in Beijing on April 12. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By LI WEI in Beijing
liwei@chinadaily.com.cn

During the May Day holidays, Beijing is at its most inviting. Parks fill up, greenways hum with people, and spring seems to hit its stride. Yet for many residents, the season brings something else along with the sun and fresh leaves: fine white fluff drifting through the air.

It spins in loose swirls, slips into collars, sticks to camera lenses, and floats through the half-open window of ride-hailing driver Yang Shuquan's car. "Here we go again," he says, brushing it away with a wave of his hand. "Like snow that just hangs around."

From late April into May, as much of the country settles into spring, cities across northern China enter what locals half-jokingly call a season of "spring snow" — the airborne seeds of poplar and willow trees. The phenomenon can last for more than a month.

Yang has been driving in Beijing for years and knows this stretch well. "It's the toughest time of the year," he says. "You can't really open the windows. Once it gets in, your eyes sting, your throat feels off. After a while, it gets on your nerves."

He's hardly alone in this predicament. As temperatures climb, many northern regions move into peak fluff season. Data from the Beijing Municipal Forestry and Parks Bureau show that in 2026, the first wave began on April 6 and is expected to run through late May, roughly 50 days in total. The May Day holidays fall right in the middle of a second surge.

Nature turns into a hassle

What used to pass as part of the natural rhythm has, over time, turned into a recurring urban irritant.

For Hu Honghai, a resident of Changping district in Beijing, the situation is "messy". "You wash your car, and before long it's covered again," he says. "My eyes feel uncomfortable, my throat too. Sometimes I can't even tell if it's a cold or an allergy." He occasionally wears a mask or uses eye drops, though more often he just puts up with it.

That kind of quiet endurance is common. Wang Cheng, a researcher with the Research Institute of Forestry at the Chinese Academy of Forestry, points out that the fluff is part of a tree's natural reproduction cycle and has existed in northern China for centuries. "When it lingers and builds up, it starts to interfere with daily life and even health," he says.

For people who work outdoors or spend long hours on the road, the impact is more immediate. Yang notes that the fluff can affect not just comfort but safety. "If you're not careful, it can clog the radiator," he says. "In serious cases, that can damage the engine." He has installed a protective mesh to keep it out.

Add the cost of allergy relief, and the nuisance becomes something more tangible.

There's also a fire risk. The fluff contains plant oils and ignites easily. A stray spark is enough. There have been cases of piles of accumulated fluff catching fire due to cigarette butts or children playing with fire, with some escalating into larger incidents. Yang recalls lighting some fluff in a courtyard out of curiosity. "I ended up burning my shoe cabinet," he says. "A brand-new pair of leather shoes went with it."

Why it feels worse now?

The issue isn't only how much fluff there is. It's how close it is to where people live. Wang says that in the past, the catkins would drift into farmland, grasslands, forests, and rivers or wetland areas, where they would get trapped and not float in the air.

But urbanization has changed this. In cities, vast expanses of paved surfaces don't trap the fluff, so it keeps flowing back into the air. Wang explains that several factors come into play — the types of trees planted, how densely they are arranged, and the way urban spaces are built.

The age of the trees also matters, Wang emphasizes, with older trees producing more fluff. In the past, poplar and willow trees were often planted for timber and cut down before they ever reached the stage of heavy production of catkins. But with stronger urban ecological protection, they've been left to grow much longer in cities.

Given the discomfort, the first reaction of many residents is simple enough: why not just cut these trees down or replace them? The reality, however, is far more complicated than it seems.

Poplars and willows — especially populus tomentosa — once played a central role in greening China's northern cities. They grow quickly, tolerate harsh conditions, and provide long stretches of shade. Decades on, many of them now stand as towering trees and have become part of the city's ecological fabric.

Cutting them down is far from a simple fix. It would be expensive, ecologically costly, and at odds with the idea of ecological civilization. For many residents, it would also mean losing a familiar piece of the city's green memory and everyday landscape.

Hu puts it plainly: "Cutting them down doesn't seem realistic. But I've heard the city is replacing some of them." This is a common dilemma: people are bothered by the problem, but also recognize how complicated it is to manage.

A more targeted response

This year, though, things feel a little different. Hu says, "It seems better this year. I can see workers out there every night doing the cleanup. It feels like the issue is being taken more seriously. I've seen it covered quite a bit in the news, and my phone even pushes pollen forecasts."

Behind this perception lies a quieter, more systematic response — one that brings together satellites, big data, environmentally friendly agents, and even robotics. Beijing's catkin-control strategy in 2026 marks a shift from labor-intensive spraying and cleaning to a more precise, technology-driven approach.



Visitors walk through drifting poplar and willow fluff at the Palace Museum in Beijing on April 2.
YAN XIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY





Workers remove accumulated poplar and willow fluff from the ground using a fluff-collection machine and spray treetops with high-pressure water guns in Beijing on April 9, 2025. YUAN YI / FOR CHINA DAILY

At its core are prediction and targeted intervention. Jiang Yingshu, director of the Science and Technology division of the Beijing Municipal Forestry and Parks Bureau, explains that the city has integrated meteorological big data with ground-based monitoring to build a real-time forecasting platform. It provides street-level risk alerts on a five-tier scale, transforming response from reactive cleanup to proactive control.

A key tool developed this year is an improved eco-friendly binding agent. A non-toxic polymer is sprayed onto tree canopies via high-pressure mist cannons or drones to form a thin "ecological film" that binds the fluff before it disperses. "A single application can reduce catkin release from an individual female tree by more than two-thirds, at a cost of roughly 10 yuan ($1.46) per tree," says Jiang.

If there is no heavy rain, one treatment can last the entire season. Large-scale spraying is carried out during calm periods, with fog-cannon ranges adjusted for different tree heights to maximize efficiency and minimize waste. The agent degrades naturally when it rains and in sunlight. Importantly, it does not affect tree growth or pollute the surrounding environment.

On the ground, new portable suction devices — developed by Lvyou Group — are being deployed to remove accumulated fluff. Unlike conventional vacuum cleaners, which blow the fluff around, these devices enable precise collection without disturbing other debris. Lightweight and easy to operate, they are particularly effective in residential areas and hard-to-clean corners, while also reducing fire hazards.

"Looking ahead, we plan to expand research into automated spraying robots and long-term biological suppression methods," says Jiang.

To manage the surge of visitors during the May Day holidays, Beijing's landscaping authorities have rolled out a targeted plan. In parks, scenic spots and transport hubs, crews will step up high-pressure water spraying, ground wetting and routine cleaning, with more frequent patrols on the ground.

Jiang also reminds residents to take basic precautions — wearing masks and protective eyewear, planning outdoor trips for early mornings, evenings or after rainfall when the fluff is lighter, and avoiding any open flames outdoors.

Technological interventions buy time — but do not solve the root problem. Beijing's approach now combines short-term control with longer-term adjustment. On the mitigation side, traditional measures — spraying, flushing, cleaning, and physical barriers — remain in place. Nighttime spraying, often observed by residents, helps both to knock down fluff and increase humidity, reducing the airborne spread of catkins.

On the structural side, the city has stopped planting female poplar and willow trees — the source of the fluff. Meanwhile, a quiet "tree replacement revolution" is underway. Researchers have collected nearly 400 low- or non-fluff germplasm resources and developed 16 improved varieties. Advances in tissue culture propagation now allow for the rapid scaling of new seedlings, with up to one million produced within two to three years.

Even so, change takes time. Wang suggests a gradual, targeted approach: replace problematic trees in residential areas, schools, and hospitals first; manage tree belts in parks to contain the spread; and leave trees in less populated areas as they are. "At its core, it is still an ecological question," he says. "So it calls for ecological solutions."

Although the fluff itself is not always a strong allergen, it can carry dust, pollen and bacteria, triggering respiratory reactions. In March, the National Health Commission and the China Meteorological Administration jointly launched the country's first weekly pollen forecast.

Li Yi, a senior engineer at the Public Meteorological Service Center of China Meteorological Administration, explains that the system combines numerical weather prediction with expert calibration to help allergic people plan their activities.

But challenges remain. Current forecasts focus on total pollen concentration and cannot distinguish specific types, despite significant differences in allergenicity. Moreover, poplar and willow fluff is not yet included, as its dispersion depends not only on weather but also on tree distribution, surface conditions, and human activity — making modeling more complex.

"With denser monitoring networks and better data integration, more refined forecasts may become possible — distinguishing between pollen types. The aim is to move toward more personalized guidance, helping people decide when and where to go outside with fewer risks," says Fan Keqi, an engineer at the CMA Public Meteorological Service Center.

Living with it

For residents, coping with the fluff often means finding a balance between endurance and adaptation. "It's annoying, but you get used to it," Hu says. "Some people even treat it as part of what makes spring distinctive here."

That attitude reflects the complexity of the issue. Cities need greenery and ecological space. Residents, however, also expect comfort and quality of life. When the two collide, simple trade-offs rarely work.

"We shouldn't reject greening because of the fluff," Wang emphasizes. "The key is scientific planning and fine management to strike a better balance between ecological benefits and livability."

This thinking is gradually shaping policy and practice. From pollen forecasts to monitoring platforms, from new tree varieties to advanced control technologies, efforts are underway to shift from reactive responses to proactive management.

For many, the fluff is just a fleeting episode of spring. With the arrival of rain, the air clears and the white fibers disappear. But for the city, the issue does not end with the season. It raises deeper questions about species selection, urban planning, and ecological governance.

As people head outdoors during the May Day holidays to embrace the city's greenery, the drifting fluff serves as a quiet reminder: Every patch of urban green comes with choices — and trade-offs.

Finding a sustainable balance between "more green" and "less disturbance" may be the real challenge behind this annual phenomenon. It is not just about managing trees, but about how a megacity learns to coexist with nature — and to pursue ecological equilibrium alongside development. Beijing is already in the process of writing that answer.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:19 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:19 PM

BIZ LIFE

Firms enlist AI for intelligent appliances

Smart tech delivers expanded functions and enhanced user experience

By **ZHENG YIRAN** in Shanghai
zhengyiran@chinadaily.com.cn





Above: A coffee-making robot is displayed at the Appliance & Electronics World Expo 2026 in Shanghai on March 21. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY
Left: Bear Electric Appliance showcases over 100 home appliances and its AI smart home gadget series co-developed with Baidu Smart Cloud at AWE 2026. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Chinese home appliance companies are teaming up with internet giants to rapidly advance the integration of artificial intelligence, benefiting more consumers.

On March 12, which was the first day of the Appliance & Electronics World Expo 2026 in Shanghai. Baidu Smart Cloud inked a deal with Bear Electric Appliance Co Ltd, a maker of small home appliances based in Foshan, Guangdong province.

According to the agreement, the two parties announced that they will launch an AI strategic cooperation with a scale of 100 million yuan ($14.5 million) in the next three years. Relying on Baidu AI Cloud's big model 5.0 and Baidu Smart Cloud's AI technology capabilities, they will carry out in-depth cooperation around the AI big model and smart home appliance scenarios, and jointly promote the innovation and industrial upgrading of the new generation of AI small home appliances.

As per the deal, both parties will establish a long-term strategic partnership around "AI+Home Appliances+Intelligent Life", fully empowering products and enterprise operation systems through AI technology, and accelerating the home appliance industry's move toward the AI native era.

At the product level, both sides will focus on upgrading AI capabilities around the core categories of Bear Electric Appliance, including small household appliances such as air fryers, health pots, and rice cookers. Based on the Wenxin Yiyan big model capability, the new generation of AI home appliances will have natural voice dialogue, intelligent services, and content ecology capabilities. Through end-to-end voice interaction, low-latency voice control, and natural human-machine interaction will be achieved.

Li Yifeng, general manager of Bear Electric Appliance, said: "We attach great importance to cooperation with Baidu in the field of AI. This is not only a technical cooperation, but also an important opportunity to promote the product upgrade of Bear Electric Appliance Co Ltd. We have a rich range of home appliance application scenarios, while Baidu has leading advantages in large models and AI technology. We hope to collaborate with both parties to truly implement AI capabilities in products and user experience, and jointly explore more innovative possibilities for AI home appliances."

Yuan Foyu, vice-president of Baidu, said: "The combination of AI and home appliances has significant value for both industries. AI cannot just stay at the conceptual level, it must enter real life scenarios to make consumers feel the changes brought by technology in their daily use. Bear Electric Appliance Co Ltd has a strong industrial foundation, and Baidu has leading AI technology capabilities in the fields of big models, AI and cloud computing. The cooperation between the two parties will jointly promote the large-scale implementation of AI in small household appliances."

In the future, both parties will use the Wenxin Yiyan big model as the core technology base, continuously promote the large-scale application of AI technology in the field of smart home appliances and create a new generation of AI small home appliances with understanding, decision-making, and service capabilities so that home appliances can evolve from functional devices to home intelligent life partners, and jointly promote the innovative development of the AI home appliance industry, the two parties said.

Baidu's cooperation with Bear Electric Appliance Co Ltd is not the first case of an internet company joining hands with home appliance companies.

On Feb 12, JD.com officially signed a strategic agreement with Midea, Haier, Hisense and TCL, announcing a sales goal of 180 billion yuan.

According to the agreement, all parties will adhere to the principle of putting customers first, and continue to focus on the four core directions of service experience upgrading, product co-construction and innovation, channel deepening and expansion, and marketing operation coordination, jointly promoting the sales growth of many product categories such as televisions, air conditioning, refrigerators, washing machines, range hoods, stoves, water heaters, and small appliances, and achieving mutual benefit and win-win through resource integration.

The cooperation is not simply about supply and marketing collaboration, but based on years of cooperation, further deepening the collaboration of the entire industry chain. Among them, JD relies on nearly 30,000 JD Malls, JD Electric City Flagship Stores, and Home Appliance Specialty Stores nationwide to provide full channel coverage support from first-tier cities to counties, towns, and rural areas for the four major brands, helping them reach a wider range of consumer groups.

Gree also teamed up with JD, signing an agreement in 2015. In 2024, they had a new partnership, launching AI energy-saving products, including air conditioners, refrigerators, washing machines, water purifiers, heaters, and other new home appliances.

Zhang Jing, air conditioner purchaser of JD, said: "The cooperation between Gree and JD this time is not only a simple business alliance, but also a deep integration of innovation and service between the two industry giants. In the future, both parties will further deepen cooperation and provide consumers with more personalized products and services through cutting-edge technologies such as big data analysis and intelligent logistics."

Lu Qun, sales director of Gree, said: "The series of Gree household appliances products are positioned as healthy, intelligent, and personalized, and are important achievements of Gree's core development strategy of 'good appliances made by Gree'. Gree will deeply cooperate with JD and is committed to providing consumers with a more convenient and reassuring consumption experience."

Guo Tao, individual angel investor and an expert in AI, said: "Internet giants choosing to cooperate with home appliance companies is essentially driven by the two-way demand for technology implementation and scenario monetization."

"From the perspective of internet giants, AI technology requires physical scenarios to realize commercial value. Home appliances, as a high-frequency entry point for households, are an ideal scenario for the implementation of AI big models and internet of things technology," he said.

Furthermore, he said: "By equipping small appliances with 'intelligent brains', technologies such as voice interaction and personalized services can be transformed from concepts to daily experiences, which not only verifies the practicality of the technology, but also accumulates massive user behavior data to feed back model iteration."

At the same time, according to Guo, the home appliance market is large and close to the consumer end. Thus, "collaborating with home appliance companies can quickly transform technology into products, and seize the opportunity in the intelligent hardware ecosystem".

He also noted that traditional products are severely homogenized, and AI is the key to breaking through growth bottlenecks. The technological capabilities of large factories, Guo said, can help household appliance enterprises quickly achieve product upgrades, such as optimizing voice control accuracy through large models, automatically adjusting device parameters according to user habits, and enhancing product premiums and user stickiness.

"And the traffic and channel resources of large factories can also help home appliance companies connect production and sales links, reducing innovation costs," he added.

Expo spotlights key advances in consumer tech

By **WANG YING** in Shanghai
wang_ying@chinadaily.com.cn

Becoming an important window into the development of China's consumer electronics industry, this year's Appliance & Electronics World Expo 2026 in March was marked by the deep integration of artificial intelligence across the sector, officials and experts said.

Spanning an exhibition space of 170,000 square meters, the year's AWE displayed tens of thousands of cutting-edge technologies and smart lifestyle solutions to delegates.

"The exhibition offers a panoramic view of achievements made in areas including intelligent terminals, smart mobility, health technology, embodied intelligence, and computing infrastructure, showcasing the latest progress of high-quality development within China's home appliance and consumer electronics industry," said Tao Xiaonian, chairman of the China Household Electrical Appliances Association.

"Just like this year's theme 'Smart AI, Smarter Future' indicated, AI has deeply integrated across the industry. With AI, home appliances are capable of continuous upgrading in functional design, proactive services, multi-device scenario connectivity, and human-computer interaction," Tao said.

According to Tao, breakthroughs in innovative display technologies are blurring the boundaries between the digital world and reality.

For example, smartphones and smart glasses are rapidly emerging as the next generation of personal intelligent devices. Meanwhile, humanoid robots are moving toward commercial applications at an accelerated pace.

As an important part of the light industry, the home appliance sector has achieved impressive results, with retail sales of home appliances exceeding 1.1 trillion yuan ($159.92 billion) in 2025 and hitting a record high, according to Zhang Chonghe, president of the China National Light Industry Council.

"The penetration rate of digital tools in research, development and design has surpassed 85 percent, far above the average level of other industries, making the sector a benchmark for high-end, intelligent and green development in the light industry," Zhang said.

The event also saw the launch of a special committee on household service robots overseen by the China Household Electrical Appliances Association, marking a new phase in ecosystem development for companies across the industry chain.

"The committee addressed common challenges facing the industry, including repetitive data collection, inconsistent technological pathways, and a lack of standards," said Wan Chunhui, deputy secretary-general of the China Household Electrical Appliances Association.

According to Wan, more than 50 companies joined the committee's first batch of members, covering the entire household robotics industry chain, including home appliances, embodied intelligence, companion robots, AI models, AI motion control, chips, new materials, and batteries.

"Leading home appliance companies are taking the lead not only in developing household robot products tailored to specific home needs, but also in providing solutions that upgrade individual smart products into carriers of integrated intelligent services," Zhang said.

According to him, robots for specific scenarios — such as eldercare, cleaning, and companionship — are experiencing rapid growth.

"Producing 55 percent of the world's robots, China is currently the largest robot market globally. Last year, the country produced 18.58 million service robots, a year-on-year increase of 16.1 percent," Zhang said.

Under the central government's guidance of boosting domestic demand, the consumer electronics industry is entering a new phase of growth, as rapid development in the sector continues to blur the boundaries between online and offline consumption, said Yao Yao, head of research for JLL China.

"In Shanghai, the share of newly opened consumer electronics store space among lifestyle stores rose from 21 percent in 2023 to 26 percent in 2025. Leading brands are accelerating their expansion of brick-and-mortar stores, creating technology consumption channels such as immersive experiences and scenario-based marketing, reshaping the connection between consumers and tech products, and effectively boosting in-store consumption," Yao said.



Visitors try out Rokid AI glasses with built-in displays at AWE 2026 in Shanghai on March 13. CHEN LI / FOR CHINA DAILY

For the first time since its inception in 1992, the event set up two venues this year, putting its combined exhibition space at 170,000 square meters.

It consisted of a 140,000 sq m exhibition area at the Shanghai New International Expo Centre, and a newly launched 30,000 sq m space at Shanghai Eastern Hub International Business Cooperation Zone.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:19 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:19 PM

TRAVEL





Left: Rich wildlife on broad grasslands is among the highlights of traveling in Ethiopia. **Middle:** A golden sunset over Ethiopia's Omo Valley. **Right:** Dallol in the Danakil Depression is 116 meters below sea level, where the active Erta Ale Volcano creates a spectacular array of color when sulfur and other minerals mix with water.

Coffee culture in the cradle of humanity

From incense-laced ceremonies to ancient heritage, Ethiopia is inviting travelers to experience its traditions first-hand — beginning with a cup of Arabica in Chongqing, **Yang Feiyue** reports.

Ethiopia's coffee ceremonies, art, music, dance and food are available for visitors to immerse themselves in at the recently opened China-Ethiopia Cultural Tourism and Business Center in southwestern China's Chongqing.

Offering a taste of the African country before visitors even board a flight, the center marks a clear sign of Ethiopia's ambition to attract more Chinese travelers.

"When a Chinese individual participates in a genuine Ethiopian coffee ceremony in Chongqing, they don't just taste coffee; they experience a ritual of hospitality, community and tradition," says Tefera Derbew Yimam, ambassador of Ethiopia to China.

"This sparks curiosity, ignites the imagination, and creates a desire to experience the full, authentic version in its original setting."

As 2026 marks the China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges, Ethiopia is positioning tourism as the bridge to turn diplomatic ties into lasting emotional connections with Chinese travelers.

"Tourism is the perfect vehicle because it transcends formal agreements, allowing for direct, immersive and personal engagement," Yimam says, while laying out a vision that goes beyond landmarks and itineraries.

"When Chinese travelers visit, they don't just see landmarks; they experience ancient history, traditional coffee ceremonies, natural wonders, and Ethiopian hospitality firsthand. These tangible experiences forge emotional connections, break down cultural barriers, and create lasting friendships," Yimam adds.

On the ground in Ethiopia, inbound tour operators catering to Chinese visitors have found steadily rebounding interest.

Wen Xin, sales manager of an Ethiopia-based agency serving Chinese travelers, says both the number of visitors and the scale of tour groups are gradually returning to pre-pandemic levels.

However, the shape of travel has shifted.

"Compared with before the COVID-19 pandemic, we are seeing a clear trend toward smaller groups, with the proportion of large tour groups declining," she says.

The primary demographic remains seasoned travelers, who have already visited many countries around the world.

Wen adds that a niche but growing segment consists of photography enthusiasts, particularly those drawn to Ethiopia's rich birdlife.

For Chinese travelers who do make the journey, the experience often leaves a strong impression, one that has less to do with ticking off landmarks and more to do with moments of unexpected stillness.

Sun Yang, a traveler who documented his Ethiopia trip on Weibo, recently spent a few days in Lalibela, home to the famed rock-hewn churches. He found not just ancient architecture, but also a chance to slow down in ways he had not realized he needed.

"It felt like walking from one state into another. The hotel grounds were dotted with cacti, the air carried a hint of vanilla, and stone steps were scattered with rose petals," he writes.

He is impressed by an elderly man playing the *masinko*, a traditional Ethiopian fiddle also known as a *masenqo*, while waitresses sang and laughed as they worked.

"I suddenly felt a little unaccustomed to this warmth. It was too direct, without any sense of distance."

Ethiopia has marketed itself as "The Land of Origins" — the cradle of humankind and the birthplace of coffee, which the ambassador says are not abstract concepts but experiences designed for contemporary Chinese travelers.



Above: Mursi women of Ethiopia's Omo Valley, where the ancient tradition of wearing lip plates continues to be passed down through generations. **Below left:** The celebration of Timkat is one heritage to Ethiopia and the world. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

He points to the national museum in Addis Ababa, where visitors can stand before "Lucy", the 3.2-million-year-old hominid fossil. But the journey does not end there.

"We offer excursions to archaeological sites in the Omo Valley, where ancient traditions still thrive among indigenous communities, allowing visitors to glimpse lifestyles that echo our earliest ancestors," he says.

"It's about feeling the dust of time beneath your feet and recognizing our shared human journey."

For coffee lovers, Ethiopia has rolled out an immersive route into its southwestern highlands, the heartland of Arabica coffee. Travelers can walk through coffee forests, meet farmers, witness harvesting and processing, and participate in a traditional Ethiopian coffee ceremony, known locally as, *Buna Tetu* (come drink coffee).

"These experiences transform abstract concepts into delightful, aromatic, and cultural memories," Yimam says.

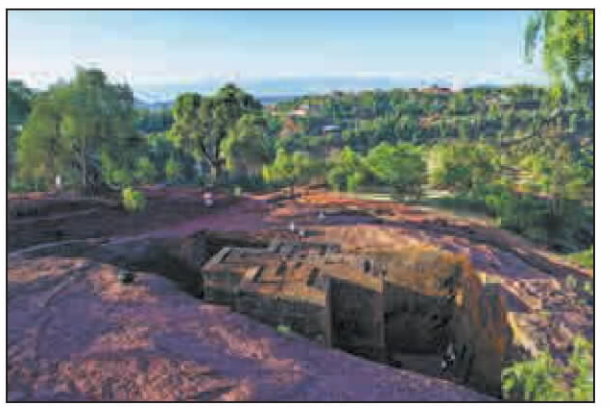
Sun had the chance to experience this tradition firsthand. One evening, a coffee ceremony was prepared for him. Frankincense was lit, and coffee beans were roasted, ground, and brewed before his eyes.

He was told that in Ethiopia, coffee is enjoyed in three rounds. As he sat watching the smoke rise, he found himself in an unfamiliar space.

"I suddenly realized I hadn't sat this 'slowly' in a very long time. No phone, no next plan, nothing that needed to be documented," he reflects.

Ethiopian Airlines is launching new domestic routes in 2026 to destinations including Negele Borana, Gore Metu, and Debre Markos.





According to the ambassador, this is a strategic move to diversify tourism offerings beyond the popular northern circuit while promoting sustainable travel.

Negele Borana, in Oromia, serves as a gateway to Bale Mountains National Park, where visitors can spot endemic wildlife such as the Ethiopian wolf and mountain nyala. Gore Metu offers immersion in rural Ethiopian life, with opportunities to engage with local farming communities and explore waterfalls and lush highland scenery. Debre Markos, in Amhara, is home to ancient monasteries and offers spectacular views of the Blue Nile Gorge.



Above: Tefera Derbew Yimam, ambassador of Ethiopia to China.

Left: The Church of Saint George in Lalibela, an entire place carved downward from a single block of stone, is a UNESCO World Heritage site that continues to inspire wonder and reflection.

"These new routes are a testament to our commitment to offering a richer, more varied, and truly unforgettable Ethiopian experience," the ambassador says.

To make Chinese tourists feel welcome, Ethiopia has rolled out concrete measures in recent years.

Yimam notes that training and certification programs are underway for local guides to become proficient in Mandarin, ensuring a growing pool of Chinese-speaking guides is available.

Major hotels, reputable tour operators, and larger souvenir shops in Addis Ababa and other key destinations have increasingly integrated WeChat Pay and Alipay, he says.

Workshops are also held for hotel and restaurant staff members to better understand Chinese customs, preferences and dietary requirements.

For Chinese families planning a trip, Yimam recommends applying for an e-visa in advance rather than relying on visa-on-arrival. "While visa-on-arrival is technically available, the e-visa process offers significantly more convenience, peace of mind, and a smoother entry experience, especially for families," he says, adding that visa-on-arrival can involve longer queues during peak travel periods.

On the connectivity front, Ethiopian Airlines already operates flights from Addis Ababa to several Chinese cities, including Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou (in Guangdong province), Chengdu (in Sichuan province) and Hong Kong.

The airline has submitted a request to authorities for additional flights on existing popular routes, and is actively exploring new direct routes from secondary and tertiary Chinese cities as part of a long-term growth strategy, Yimam says.

"Our goal is to solidify Addis Ababa's position as the leading aviation hub connecting China and Africa, making Ethiopia the natural first choice for Chinese travelers," he explains.

According to Wen, most Chinese travelers still lean toward more accessible experiences.

"Currently, most people in China have limited knowledge of Ethiopia's history and culture, so they tend to prefer quick, landmark-oriented sightseeing," she says.

"Many visitors take advantage of layovers in Addis Ababa to sample local cuisine and visit museums. The coffee ceremony is also quite popular," she shares.

Wen says her agency is open to exploring new destinations in the future, after conducting thorough research on each route beforehand.

"Much of Ethiopia's tourism resources remain not overly commercialized, and large areas still retain a relatively pristine and natural travel environment, making it an ideal destination to explore," Wen says.

When asked what single experience he hopes every Chinese visitor takes away, the ambassador recalls a memory rooted in everyday life.

"If I had to choose just one personal memory or place that I hope every Chinese visitor gets to experience for themselves, it would be witnessing a traditional Ethiopian coffee ceremony in a local home, particularly in the rural heartlands," he says.

Visitors can sit on low stools, take in the scent of roasting green coffee beans mingling with frankincense, the rhythmic sound of a pestle grinding beans, and anticipate the coffee brewing in the *jebena* — the traditional clay pot.

"More than that, it's the feeling of being welcomed, of sharing stories, of connecting with people across cultures without needing many words. It's a moment of pure, unadulterated Ethiopian hospitality and tradition."

He emphasizes that this experience, in his opinion, encapsulates the soul of Ethiopia.

"I truly hope every Chinese visitor gets to share in this beautiful, authentic tradition."

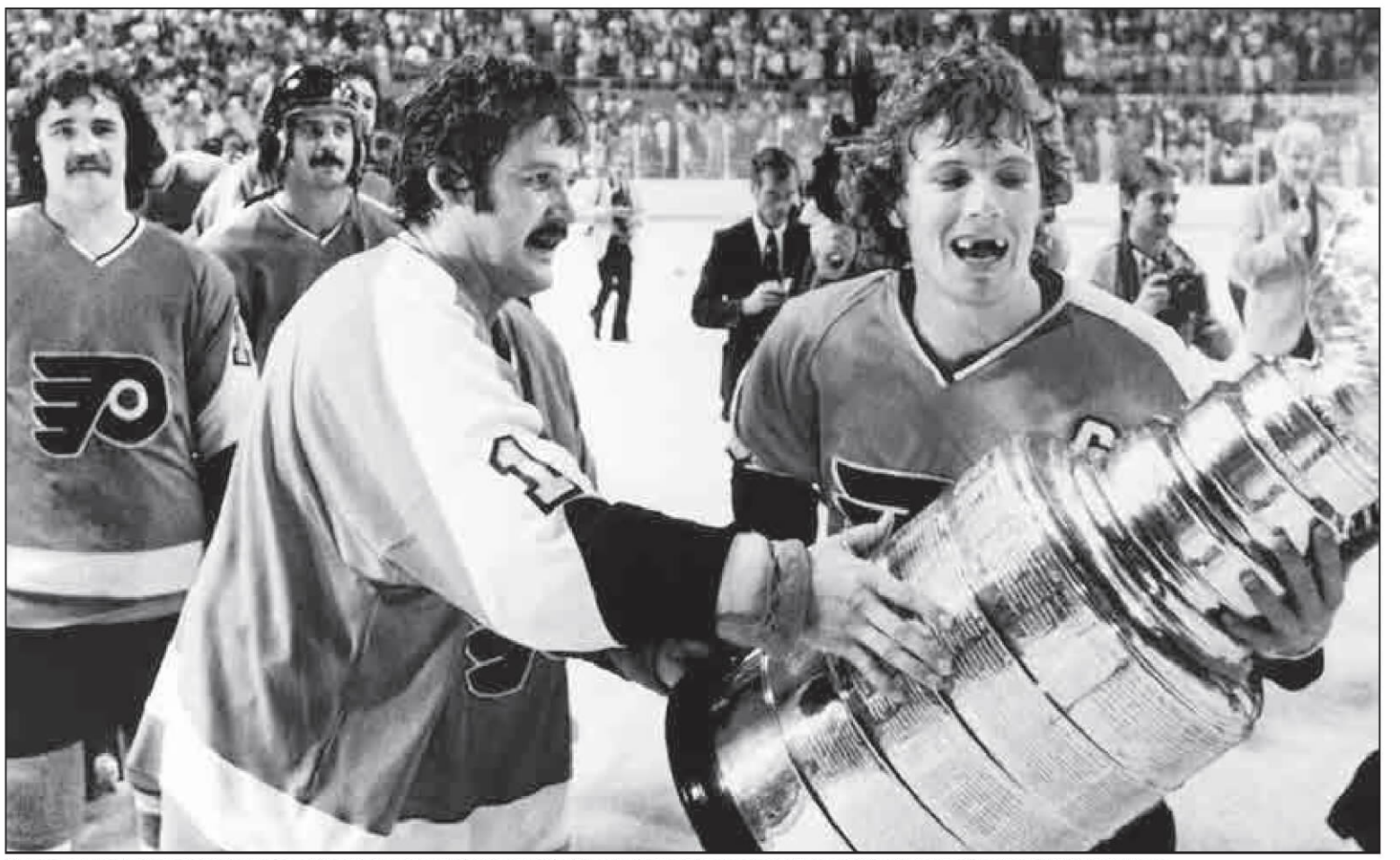
Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:19 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:19 PM

SPORTS

ICE HOCKEY



Bernie Parent (left) and Bobby Clarke of the Philadelphia Flyers carry the Stanley Cup off the ice in Buffalo in 1975 after defeating the Buffalo Sabres. AP

Dentists prove to be the real MVPs

Every squad has one, and these specialists join team doctors and other medical staff at every single NHL game

Jason Schepis was at home with his kids in New Jersey watching the gold medal men's hockey game at the Olympics when he saw some of his handiwork get scattered all over the ice late in the third period of a thriller.

Jack Hughes, the 24-year-old forward for the United States, had just taken a stick to the mouth from Canada's Sam Bennett and, as he explained later, saw at least one full tooth and shards of others lying on the ice.

Schepis knew those teeth, too. In fact, as the New Jersey Devils team dentist, he had repaired those very same chompers before, after Hughes took a high stick in the NHL playoffs a few years ago.

"We did the root canals, fixed it up," Schepis recalled. "Those were his teeth."

Hughes, like hockey players tend to do, shook off the injury, and he went on to score in overtime for a 2-1 win and America's first gold in men's hockey since 1980. His gap-toothed grin became the picture-perfect encapsulation of a sport where missing teeth is a badge of honor and "spittin' chiclets" is so ingrained in the lexicon that it's the name of a popular hockey podcast, not just the tooth-sized candy-coated chewing gum.

To say that hockey players need dentists is something of an understatement. Every team has one, and these specialists join team doctors and other medical staff at every single NHL game, ready to jump into action when the need arises.

"When there is an injury to the mouth, our physicians are like: 'Oh yeah, we're so happy you're here, because we would not have been able to do that,'" San Jose Sharks dentist Mark Nishimura said.

"Sometimes we're really not busy, and other times, when it's bad, it's bad."

It was bad when Nishimura was handed Joe Pavelski's teeth following a puck to the player's jaw during the 2019 playoffs, though that resulted in a goal. Later that year, Keith Yandle lost nine teeth, returned to the game and played 168 more in a row.

Brent Burns took a wayward stick to the face in 2013 that knocked out three of his pearly whites, and, since returning, he has skated in more than 1,000 games in a row. When a puck ramped off his own stick into his mouth in 2006, Chris Clark needed three hours of surgery involving braces, screws and a cadaver bone.

Rink-side surgery

Clark calls hockey dentists "triage doctors," learning about that from his own tooth-losing, palate-fracturing experience with the Washington Capitals.

Longtime Capitals dentist Tom Lenz was there that game and has seen it all, including driving players to his office at night when time is of the essence.

Because a puck or a stick to the mouth almost always causes damage different than the general population, he got nervous in his early days more than two decades ago.

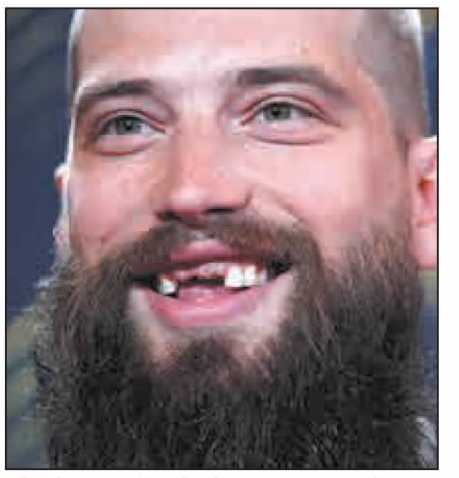
"You never know 'til you get back there, so you always have to be ready to just jump in and take care of it," Lenz said. "It can be a simple chipped tooth. It can be teeth knocked out. It can be jaw fractures. We try to get them stable, out of discomfort — whatever that takes."

That includes dealing with lacerations elsewhere on the faces of players, officials and even coaches. The home dentist, at least in the regular season, is responsible for the visiting team, too, and consults with the other doctors in the building, like when Schepis, in early 2024, ruled out Chicago's Connor Bedard because of a broken jaw.

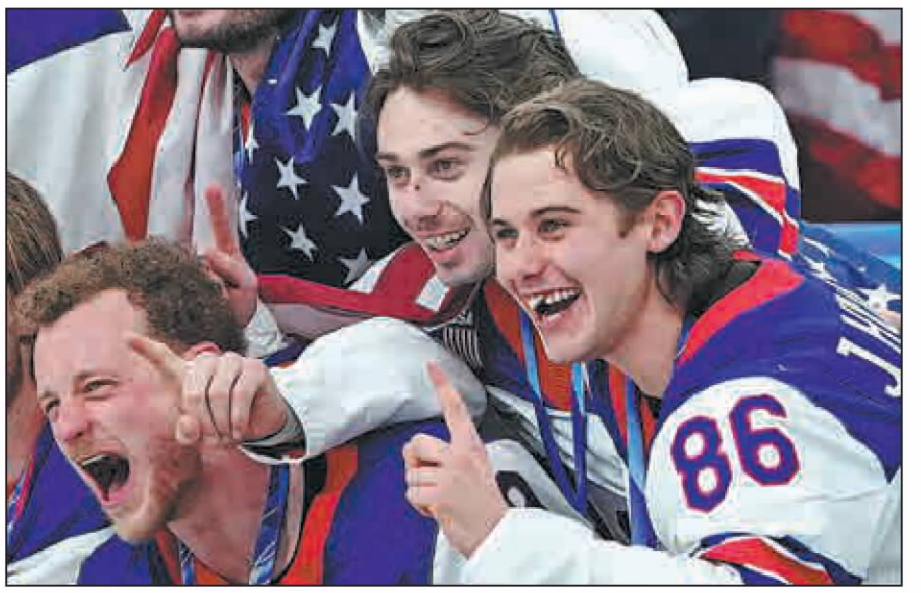
The playoffs are different, so Schepis was there on the road when Hughes took a stick to the mouth from Jordan Staal in the series opener between the Devils and the Carolina Hurricanes in May 2023.

"They're snapped in half, the nerves are hanging out, the ice is cold (and) he can't breathe because the nerves are hanging," Schepis said. "Just numbed him right up, did the root canals right there, pulled the nerves out. The orthopedic surgeons think it's like miracle work."





Left: Los Angeles Kings defenseman Drew Doughty smiles during an NHL hockey game against the Anaheim Ducks in 2021. **Right:** San Jose Sharks' Brent Burns smiles on the red carpet before the NHL Awards in 2019 in Las Vegas. AP





Above: Jack Hughes (86) poses with his United States teammates after defeating Canada in the men's ice hockey gold-medal game at the 2026 Milano-Cortina Winter Olympics in Milan. **Left:** This combo of file photos shows Hughes on the left celebrating after that gold medal game, and, on the right, smiling before a New York Yankees baseball game at Yankee Stadium in New York, sporting a brand-new set of teeth. AP

A different breed

When Alex Ovechkin took a stick to the mouth in October 2007 that knocked out one of his front teeth, Lenz put in an implant that's also known as a "flipper" with the plan to make a permanent fix once his career is over.

Lenz said Ovechkin wanted it immediately, then lost the implant and his smile without the tooth became part of his look, even if his mother did not approve.

Ovechkin is now league's leading career goal scorer and still playing at age 40.

"Had one made within a day or so because he was so adamant, saying 'I can't go around like this'," Lenz said. "It's so him now that it's going to be strange to see him with all his teeth up there."

Not Hughes, who told Jimmy Fallon that missing teeth definitely won't become his look long term. He has already been fixed up.

Now in his 14th full season in the league, Brenden Dillon wore a mouthguard playing as a kid because he needed braces three times from hockey-related incidents. After going without one with the minors, he got popped in the mouth in his first NHL fight and has worn one since.

"Not a fun part of (the game)," Dillon said. "I don't think (it happens as much in) basketball, football — maybe baseball, a ball here and there maybe — but way more in hockey. Sticks, pucks, the glass, ice — the whole nine yards. It feels like once a game, at least somebody's getting dinged up with something."

High pain tolerance

Schepis, Lenz and other NHL team dentists work in other sports. Lenz said many of the NBA players he works with have never had sutures before.

"Hockey players sometimes will even ask: 'How many is it going to be'?" Lenz said.

"If it's like two or three or so, a lot of the guys will just go: 'Then just suture it. No anesthetic, I don't want to take that. Just suture it and I want to get back out there'."

Nishimura remembers being asked: "Do you want to put these back in?" when Pavelski lost those teeth off a shot from Burns, his teammate at the time. The Sharks beat Vegas 5-2, and it became part of his courageous career.

"Pavs went back, we numbed him up, sutured him," Nishimura said. "He went back out and finished the game. It's incredible. Hockey players, they don't quit. They are a special breed of human beings."

Dillon, now with New Jersey, has had a couple of root canals, a couple of chipped teeth and realizes he should wear his mouthguard during practice, too. Lenz has noticed a decline in facial injuries since visors were made mandatory; only four players, grandfathered in, are skating without one.

Clark wore a visor sparingly in his playing days, but is glad to see the current generation widely adopt it, much like helmets becoming required equipment, because sticks and pucks to the mouth are such a regular occurrence.

"It's sort of part of the deal," Clark said.

So is having a hockey dentist on call. Schepis says he once did a root canal on Jaromir Jagr at 1 am and put in 30-plus sutures for another player when the puck caused damage all the way through his mouth.

"There's a lot of little nuances to sports dentistry compared to regular dentistry, because it's just not standard," Schepis said. "You have to move fast and you have to always move with the player's best intention. But we know they want to be out there. We know the team wants them out there. You always have to be available any time of night."

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:19 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:19 PM

SPORTS

SOCCER



Artist Lili Cantero paints a soccer ball with images commemorating Spain's 2010 World Cup victory at Rodilla cafe in Miami's Wynwood Art District last month as part of the launch of the Wynwood United Soccer Ball Art Trail that will showcase hand-painted soccer balls honoring historic World Cup moments. AP

Re-creating the game, beautifully

Artist produces special soccer balls depicting historic World Cup moments to promote tournament

Lili Cantero thinks of soccer as family.

The artist from Paraguay — someone who has built a devoted following in the soccer world, with her work admired by Argentina captain and Inter Miami star Lionel Messi, among others — still has fond childhood memories of gathering with relatives around a radio to listen to matches almost every weekend.

"That's where my love for the game began," Cantero said. "For me, soccer, futbol, is being with family and being with friends. The game is not just a game. It's a culture. It's love. It is family. It is friendship."

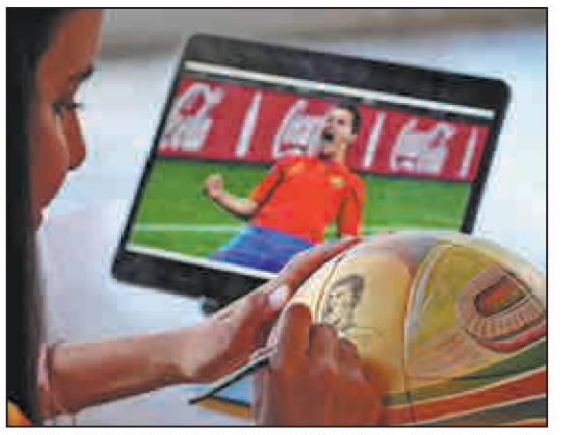
And now, it is her work.

Leading up to the start of the FIFA World Cup in June, Cantero will be putting her specialty — painted soccer balls — in 10 different businesses in Miami's Wynwood Art District, a place where warehouses have been converted into galleries and where just about anything can be turned into a mural. It is the heartbeat of the Miami art community, and for Cantero and the marriage of her work and soccer, it seemed a perfect fit.

"I think it's the perfect combination in the perfect moment with the perfect people," said Cantero, who has called Miami home for about two-and-a-half years. "Messi coming to the city was ... an interesting way to grow this sport here, and in the country. Because many kids, they look at him with so many aspirations and dreams and everything, so they think they can play this sport and also to grow in this sport. And I think that's beautiful."

Cantero's approach is simple: she believes soccer, like art, can bring people of different races, different backgrounds, different languages — different everything — together. Her biggest break might have come in 2018, when a pair of soccer boots she designed — adorned by images of Messi and his family — were sent to the soccer legend. Messi posed with them and the image of that moment went viral, suddenly giving Cantero the game's official seal of approval.

Diego Maradona and Pele both knew of her work. Same goes for former Brazil forward Ronaldinho, FIFA president Gianni Infantino and Messi's former Barcelona and Inter Miami teammate Jordi Alba, among many others.



Artist Lili Cantero paints a soccer ball with an image of David Villa to commemorate Spain's 2010 World Cup victory. AP

> "I feel honored to be known for this art and what I do. I think art and soccer have the power to change the world. It changed my life, so I can tell that it's true."
>
> **Lili Cantero,** an artist from Paraguay

The first of the Wynwood series of ball displays was unveiled last month when she revealed one depicting how Spain won the 2010 World Cup.

"I feel honored to be known for this art and what I do," Cantero said.

"I think art and soccer have the power to change the world. It changed my life, so I can tell that it's true. And when you go to the favelas (impoverished Brazilian neighborhoods) and you see, like, the kids playing, thinking the only way that they could do something in life is through soccer, that's art for me."

Wynwood is always bustling; art and fashion dominate the area, and there is no shortage of people working hard to ensure everything stays vibrant.

The World Cup will bring tens of thousands of people to south Florida, and Wynwood wants them to know they're all welcome in the art district.

"We're always promoting the arts, we're always changing the art in the neighborhood, the murals," David Lombardi, the chairman of the Wynwood Business Improvement District, said at the unveiling of Cantero's first ball in the series.

"It's vibrant, it's changing, it's alive, and people want to be a part of it."

Cantero never played the game, but is addicted to it.

She showed up for her first unveiling in a Spain jersey — mindful, yes, of how that nation ousted Paraguay, her homeland, on the way to that title.

Some soccer balls take Cantero days to paint. Others take her just a couple of hours. At the unveiling of the project, she even did some live work — setting up a tablet to her left, looking at an image of Spain star David Villa celebrating a goal during that 2010 World Cup.

With deft flicks of her right hand, she added that image of Villa, bit by bit, to the back of the ball, oblivious to the crowd that had gathered around to watch her.

Every soccer ball she's designing in this series will depict another World Cup moment.

"I grew up in Paraguay, and everyone tells me you cannot make a living with art. And now, I'm doing this, far away from my country, representing who I am and my roots," Cantero said. "It's been an honor."

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA





Left: Artist Lili Cantero (center) is joined by David Lombardi (left), chairman of the Wynwood Business Improvement District, and Beatriz Espartero, Rodilla cafe area manager, at the unveiling of the first piece in a series of painted soccer balls commemorating memorable World Cup moments. **Right:** A soccer ball painted by Cantero that commemorates Spain's 2010 World Cup victory. AP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:19 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:21 PM



Fashion fusion

Traditional Qiang attire, modernity meet on the runway IMAGE, PAGE 7



Strait standoff

US operation to guide vessels in Hormuz faces threats WORLD, PAGE 4

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2026

XI'S VISION | YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Xi encourages youths to play greater role

He praises role models' dedication to grassroots, calls for new achievements

By **JI HAISHENG**
jihaisheng@chinadaily.com.cn

On a summer day back in 1984, Xi Jinping, then Party secretary of Zhengding county in Hebei province, hopped on his bicycle to make a special visit — to greet a group of students visiting from Renmin University of China in Beijing for a field study.

Inside a dormitory room of the county's guesthouse, Xi sat down with the young students shoulder to shoulder on beds, sharing his insights and experiences from working at the grassroots level. The discussion was very engaging and lasted for two hours.

Youths have always been a central concern for Xi. Engaging deeply with young people, he emphasizes the importance of "integrating with the youth" and "becoming one with them".

From his early years at the local level to the present day as China's top leader, Xi has maintained a consistent and close bond with young people through various means, including exchanges of letters and face-to-face interactions.

In particular, he makes it a regular practice to engage with young people around Youth Day, celebrated on May 4. Around this time each year, he visits college campuses, attends youth gatherings or writes back to young students to extend his greetings.

He has consistently highlighted the crucial role of young people, showing unwavering care and support for the younger generation. He continually offers them encouragement and inspiration, while maintaining high expectations for their growth and contributions.

Ahead of this year's Youth Day, which fell on Monday, Xi wrote a reply letter to a group of young role models, commending their dedication in grassroots positions in areas such as sci-tech innovation, rural vitalization, social services and border defense. He also encouraged young Chinese to integrate their personal aspirations into the bigger picture of national development, strive for new achievements in their posts and inject their youthful dynamism into advancing the nation's new journey of development.

This call has been answered by a vast number of young people across the country over the years. Among them is Wang Xuemeng, a young forestry technician at the Saihanba forest farm in Hebei.

After graduating from university in 2018, Wang chose to follow in the footsteps of her grandfather and father to become a forester at Saihanba. Like them, she has woven her youth and ideals into the nation's ecological endeavors.

More than six decades ago, 369 young pioneers, including Wang's grandfather, with an average age below 24, arrived on the barren, windswept plateau with a critical mission: to build an artificial forest farm to halt the southward advance of the Hunshandake sandy land, which posed a persistent threat to Beijing and other northern cities.

Thanks to sustained efforts by generations of foresters, Saihanba has been transformed from a wasteland to a sea of forests — an achievement hailed by Xi as a "miracle". Today, a third generation is carrying this legacy forward.

Wang said that while earlier generations focused on helping the trees survive and thrive, the task of her generation is to protect the forest farm while enhancing its value as an ecological resource.

"Our strength in the three-generation relay stems from the same original aspiration: to safeguard the ecological shield for our nation," Wang said. "For over six decades, generations of foresters have all integrated their personal ideals into the broader mission of China's ecological progress."

See ***Youth,*** *page 2*

Time to celebrate



Students in their last year of senior high school cheer as they walk through a decorated gate during a coming-of-age ceremony in Huainan, Anhui province, on Monday. The day marked China's annual Youth Day. CHEN BIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

President's speech on basic research hailed

President Xi Jinping has delivered an important speech in Shanghai at a symposium on strengthening basic research.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, stressed in the speech on Thursday that greater efforts and more concrete measures should be taken to strengthen basic research, enhance China's capacity for original innovation, and further solidify the foundation for building the country's strength in science and technology.

Some of those who attended shared their views with Xinhua News Agency on the implementation of the guiding principles of the symposium.

They said that Xi's important remarks provided a clear direction for achieving high-level self-reliance in science and technology, and for building China's strength in science and technology. They vowed to take pragmatic steps to strengthen basic research, enhance original innovation and boldly pursue new scientific heights.

Ding Kuiling, president of Shanghai Jiao Tong University and an academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, said that Xi's remarks have boosted confidence and motivation for advancing basic research.

"We will focus on the country's major strategic needs, grasp the latest trends in basic research, promote the transformation of research paradigms, implement the plan for breakthroughs in basic and interdisciplinary research, and integrate independent sci-tech innovation and talent training with the strengthening of basic research," Ding said.

Calling Xi's remarks a "mobilization order" for strengthening basic research, Liu Chenli, president of the Shenzhen Institutes of Advanced Technology of the CAS, said that China has entered a stage of development in which it must pursue breakthroughs at the source and explore paths in uncharted territory.

"Only by mastering the capabilities to make breakthroughs in basic research can we truly hold the initiative in competition and development," he said.

The symposium holds great significance, as this year marks the start of the country's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30).

Zhang Xi, president of Jilin University and a CAS academician, noted that through successive five-year plans, China has made considerable progress in basic research with remarkable original achievements, and has cultivated a large pool of outstanding young talent dedicated to the field.

"After the symposium, I will lead my colleagues and students to continue strengthening research on new materials to provide sci-tech support for promoting high-quality development," Zhang said.

Huang Sanwen, president of the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences and a CAS academician, said that basic agricultural research serves as the "master switch" that generates source technologies and guides the development of the agricultural industry.

"Only by deeply understanding the life cycles of plants, animals and microorganisms can we efficiently cultivate new varieties, discover new methods for pest and disease control, and expand the applications of agricultural products," Huang said.

Tan Zhemin, president of Nanjing University and a CAS academician, said that once a breakthrough is achieved in basic research, it opens up entirely new frontiers of understanding, drives transformative technological innovation, and profoundly reshapes the way people live and work.

Wang Xiaoyun, chief engineer at China Mobile and an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, said she was deeply impressed by Xi's emphasis on promoting the deep integration of industry, academia, research and application led by enterprises, as well as on smoothing the innovation chain spanning basic research, application development and commercialization of achievements.

She pledged to strengthen market-oriented applied basic research, take application needs as the fundamental starting point, pursue interdisciplinary integration and cross-sector innovation as major breakthrough drivers, and consolidate industry-academia-research collaboration as an essential underpinning.

XINHUA

A colorful tribute



Tourists visit an exquisite flower bed in the shape of Mu Guiying, an iconic character of Peking Opera, at the China National Botanical Garden in Beijing on Monday. Re-created from an award-winning chrysanthemum flower bed display last year, the artwork integrates seasonal flowers with the signature makeup style of Mu, a female general. NIU YUNGANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Privately backed nuclear plant a crucial milestone

By **ZHENG XIN**
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

The operation of Unit 1 at the San'ao Nuclear Power Plant in Zhejiang province represents a watershed moment for China's energy sector, as the unprecedented inclusion of private capital in national nuclear infrastructure is seen as providing a critical clean energy boost for the Yangtze River Delta's accelerating shift toward an AI-driven and digital economy.

Managed by China General Nuclear Power Group, or CGN, the country's first privately backed nuclear power project and the region's first Hualong One unit officially began generating electricity last week.

The milestone unit is expected to generate over 9 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity annually, meeting the daily production and residential power demands of more than 1 million residents, while supplying the zero-carbon baseload power required to sustain energy-intensive data centers, the company said.

The San'ao project marks a historic milestone for China's energy sector, as it breaks the traditional model of exclusive State investment in nuclear power, said Lin Boqiang, head of the China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xiamen University.

Nuclear power requires massive upfront capital and features a long investment cycle. By bringing in private enterprises, the project proves that mixed-ownership models can inject new financial vitality and operational efficiency into national strategic infrastructure, while allowing private capital to share in the long-term dividends of the country's green transition, he said.

See ***Nuclear,*** *page 2*

GIG ECONOMY, DIGITAL PLATFORMS TEAMING UP TO RESHAPE WORK

Transformation driven not by traditional corporate hiring, but by millions of young users experimenting with flexible, task-based employment models

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn

The country's young people are rewriting the rules of work — turning hobbies, side gigs and digital platforms into viable careers, and in the process are reshaping the labor market from the ground up.

A decade ago, a chance encounter quietly set Lane Lu on that path. Newly married and looking for extra income, the resident of Wenzhou, Zhejiang province, stumbled across repair-service listings on Xianyu, the country's leading secondhand marketplace.

Lu posted a listing on an impulse. What followed surprised him.

"I never expected so many people would reach out," he recalled. "Not just from my city, but from all over the country — there was even someone from South Korea."

The barriers were minimal — no deposits, no storefront, just a smartphone and a willingness to try. Lu, who had always enjoyed tinkering with gadgets, took what felt like a small, almost naive step into a niche that would ultimately generate more than 200,000 yuan ($29,280) a year.

See ***Gig,*** *page 3*

www.chinadailyglobal.com

A member of ANN

China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved

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

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:21 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:21 PM

NATION



Residents of Wang Fuk Court return to their homes to collect their belongings on Monday, the last day of the first round of homecoming, after a deadly fire last year. EDMOND TANG / CHINA DAILY

Citywide efforts ease retrieval of Wang Fuk Court belongings

First round of collections concludes, authorities continue to help residents

By ATLAS SHAO in Hong Kong
atlasshao@chinadailyhk.com

The first round of belongings collection efforts by residents of Wang Fuk Court in Tai Po concluded on Monday, with more than 6,000 people briefly returning to their fire-damaged homes.

The 15-day operation, which began on April 20, granted residents of the seven fire-hit buildings a three-hour window to return to their homes and retrieve their remaining belongings. Residents of the only building spared from the fire, Wang Chi House, were given a 90-minute opportunity in December to go back to their apartments.

The government said on Monday night that a total of 6,265 people from 1,674 households went for the retrieval, and the process was smooth and in order.

Many brought back photo albums, paintings, necklaces and other items with financial and emotional worth.

A cross-sector support campaign has been mobilized by city authorities and community-level workers, offering timely relief to displaced residents, including assistance from police, district care teams, volunteers, on-site social workers and psychologists, as well as volunteer drivers.

> "A household moved over 100 bags of items, and the care teams helped them transport these items till after 8 pm. Many residents have responded that volunteers and the various departments helped them a lot during the process."
>
> **Lo Hiu-fung,** district councilor of Tai Po district

Among the initiatives is a facility named "Wang Fuk living room". Operated by the nonprofit organization AidVengers Federation, it was launched to support displaced residents with services such as traditional Chinese medicine treatment, free Cantonese-style soups and drinks, as well as various recreational activities.

On Monday, a 74-year-old Wang Fuk Court resident surnamed Wong could be seen chatting animatedly with a volunteer at the living room initiative.

Wong, who relocated to the suburb of Kai Tak, told China Daily that the facility has provided helpful services. As he still buys food in Tai Po, he comes to the living room from time to time to chat with neighbors and join activities.

Reflecting on his visit to fire-ravaged homes, Wong said volunteers provided a lot of help in communicating with the government to provide a more suitable time slot for him.

"I'd taken over 10 bags of items downstairs on that day, and the Civil Aid Service and a senior-level police officer had helped me a lot with moving them," he said.

Yip, a 20-year-old volunteer working at the living room initiative, was chatting with Wong. "I started to provide help soon after the outbreak of the fire and have continued till now," he said.

Rody Choi Cheuk-hin, chairman of the AidVengers Federation, said, "All items at the living room initiative are supported by kind people, organizations, volunteers and neighbors."

Lo Hiu-fung, a district councilor of Tai Po district, highlighted the dedicated citywide efforts implemented during the operation's planning phase.

Government departments provided flexible, dedicated arrangements during the process, Lo said.

District Services and Community Care Teams, for example, helped to distribute supplies and transport items, and assisted residents in registering for the collection operation.

"One time, a household moved over 100 bags of items, and the care teams helped them transport these items till after 8 pm. Many residents have responded that volunteers and the various departments helped them a lot during the process," Lo added.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government announced on Monday that the property owners and residents of Wang Fuk Court will be exempted from the final tax payable for the year of assessment 2025-26 in order to ease their financial burden.

Authorities also said they will arrange a second round for the collection of belongings by residents, starting with Wang Chi House in mid-May.

Roys Zhang contributed to this story.

'Star of Pakistan' honoree leverages AI to aid patients

By LI YINGQING and **YAN YUJIE** in Kunming

Chinese surgeon Pan Xiangbin, recently honored with Pakistan's "Star of Pakistan", aims to further leverage advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence to extend life-saving care to more patients worldwide.

Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari presented Pan with the award in Changsha, Hunan province, on April 26, in recognition of his cross-border work providing heart surgeries for children.

Pan dedicated the honor to his team, describing it as a reflection of the 75th anniversary of diplomatic ties between China and Pakistan.

According to Qassim Naveed Qamar, an official of the Sindh provincial government in Pakistan, Pan has become a well-known figure in Pakistan, given his ability to perform the complex procedures he specializes in.

In January 2025, Pan, a deputy director of China's National Center for Cardiovascular Diseases, led a team to Pakistan to treat children with congenital heart disease. They performed a series of free surgeries, with patients recovering well.

One of the patients, Afrah Amir, described the doctors as "angels from a distant land" who gave her a chance at a better future.

"For my daughter and me, no friend has ever been as supportive in our time of need as the Chinese doctors," the girl's mother said. "They are truly our friends."

The positive outcomes were made possible by a minimally invasive technique developed by Pan's team, known as the percutaneous and non-fluoroscopic procedure. Using ultrasound imaging instead of traditional X-ray guidance, the method allows doctors to treat heart conditions through blood vessels without open-heart surgery, while avoiding radiation exposure for both patients and medical personnel.

First included in a United Nations project in 2023 to improve access to cardiovascular treatment in developing countries, the procedure has since been adopted by more than 1,000 hospitals across over 60 countries, benefiting more than 200,000 patients.

Pan said China's medical assistance goes beyond sending doctors abroad.

"Our surgical vehicles can reach remote villages, bringing cardiac procedures directly to patients' doorsteps," he said. "More importantly, we are willing to share these technologies with local doctors so they can treat even more people."

During their time in Pakistan, his team also trained around 200 local medical workers.

Now, Pan is looking to push those efforts further by integrating AI and robotics.

In April, using a domestically developed surgical robot system, his team in France carried out a fully ultrasound-guided, robot-assisted mitral valve repair on a patient thousands of kilometers away — marking a new step in remote, high-precision cardiac care.

"We will use AI and other advanced technologies to improve efficiency and save more lives," Pan said.

China's medical outreach, he added, is also evolving in another direction — bringing patients to China for treatment.

At Fuwai Yunnan Hospital of the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences in Kunming, where Pan serves as executive director, children from neighboring countries have received life-saving surgeries as part of international programs such as the China-Cambodia "Love Heart Journey".

According to Chea Munyrith, president of the Cambodian Chinese Evolution Researcher Association, many young patients treated there return home sharing their experiences, helping more families learn about available care — and in some cases even inspiring them to begin learning Chinese.

Pan said the hospital's growing regional role reflects the progress of China's medical system, which now not only serves domestic needs but is increasingly able to compete internationally and support other countries.

Contact the writers at yanyj@chinadaily.com.cn



Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari (right) awards the "Star of Pakistan" to Pan Xiangbin on April 26 in Changsha, Hunan province. WANG JING / CHINA DAILY

Youth: Younger generation a bridge for intl friendship

From page 1

Such commitment is widespread among China's young people today. Beyond the story of Saihanba, it is reflected in various forms — from young scientists at the forefront of national research and athletes competing on the world stage, to volunteers teaching in less-developed western regions and university graduates driving rural vitalization in their hometowns.

Zhang Jun, secretary of the Shanxi Provincial Committee of the Communist Youth League of China, noted that more than 15,000 university graduates from the province have joined the national Go West volunteer service program. Zhang encouraged more young volunteers to step up and play a part in serving the western regions and working at the grassroots level.

Pledging further guidance and support, Zhang said Shanxi will create more opportunities, improve the recruitment and training process, and enhance job matching, so that more aspiring young people can gain experience, realize their potential, and contribute their youthful energy to advancing Chinese modernization.

According to an article in China Population News, people age 14 to 35 accounted for about 26 percent of China's total population in 2025, and their number is projected to remain at approximately 350 million by 2030 and stay above 210 million even by 2050.

The article noted that China is poised to maintain a sizable youth population for the foreseeable future, and this dynamic demographic profile will, in turn, provide favorable conditions for sustained and healthy socioeconomic development.

For President Xi, this dynamic generation is not only a vital force driving national progress, but also a bridge for international friendship and an envoy for people-to-people exchanges.

This vision is being translated into action through a series of concrete initiatives. In 2023, Xi announced a plan to invite 50,000 young people from the United States to China for exchange and study programs over the following five years, and more than 40,000 young people from the US have participated so far, opening a window for them to understand the real China and building a bridge to carry forward the friendship between the two peoples.

In 2025, China and Vietnam co-launched the Red Study Tour program, through which Vietnamese youths will visit China to trace the historical footsteps of the two countries' revolutionary forebears and strengthen the bonds of friendship. Furthermore, China has established Luban Workshops in numerous countries, including many in Africa, providing vocational skills training and creating sustained platforms for practical exchanges and cooperation among young people.

In January 2024, Xi replied to a letter from representatives of Kenyan students and alumni at Beijing Jiaotong University. Jamlick Mwangi Kariuki was one of the writers.

Xi places great importance on Africa's youths, creating many opportunities for them to grow and contribute more to their nation's development and China-Africa friendship, Kariuki told Xinhua News Agency.

After completing his undergraduate studies in China, Kariuki returned to work on the Mombasa-Nairobi Railway, a flagship project under the Belt and Road Initiative in Kenya. He later returned to China for postgraduate studies.

Kariuki also encouraged more Kenyan youths to study in China, emphasizing the critical importance of cultivating professionals with an international perspective for Kenya's development.

Yang Dian, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of Sociology, was quoted by China Youth Daily as saying that it is crucial to expand platforms for international youth exchanges and cooperation.

He said that global public goods, such as the Belt and Road Initiative and the Global Development Initiative, have provided young Chinese people with opportunities to engage on the world stage. Through these platforms, he said, young people can enhance mutual understanding, build friendships and grow together via mutual learning.

Yang also called for leveraging such cooperation frameworks to increase exchange programs, which he said will help foster a global perspective and strengthen the younger generation's cross-cultural communication skills.

Zhu Xingxin in Taiyuan contributed to this story.

Nuclear: Project to provide massive green energy support

From page 1

As the region accelerates its shift toward an artificial intelligence-driven and digital economy, intermittent renewables like wind and solar alone cannot sustain the immense, 24/7 power requirements of massive data centers, experts have said.

The San'ao project provides the critical, zero-carbon baseload power required to keep China's premier tech hub running smoothly without compromising the nation's dual-carbon goals, according to Lin.

Xing Yiteng, deputy director-general of the department of development and planning at the National Energy Administration, said that energy investment maintained robust growth in the first quarter of this year.

Furthermore, private enterprises deepened participation in key national energy research initiatives during the first three months of the year, he said.

According to CGN, since the inception of the mega-project, the company has collaborated with approximately 2,000 private enterprises, achieving multiple breakthroughs in independent core technology, intelligent engineering construction and innovative financing models.

Geely Technology Group holds a 2 percent stake in the project, setting a benchmark for the participation of private capital in major national energy infrastructure.

In addition, the project has localized 24 key pieces of core equipment for the first time, including the main steam relief control valves and nuclear-grade pressure and temperature switches, showcasing the robust competitiveness of China's entire nuclear power industry chain.

As global energy landscapes shift and the demand for AI computing power undergoes explosive growth, the Yangtze River Delta requires massive, uninterrupted energy support.

"The region has the nation's most vigorous demand for computing power and the most complete industrial supply chain, creating an urgent, sustained need for stable, clean and efficient baseload electricity," said Lin.

Once all six units in the San'ao project are fully operational, their combined annual power generation capacity is expected to exceed 54 billion kWh. This output is equivalent to reducing standard coal consumption by over 16.35 million metric tons and cutting carbon dioxide emissions by nearly 50 million tons annually, according to CGN.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:21 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:21 PM

COVER



A customer looks at secondhand mobile phones at a Xianyu shop in Wuhan, Hubei province in January. SUN XINMING / FOR CHINA DAILY

Gig: Used goods hot on Xianyu portal

From page 1

Today, Lu splits his time between two worlds. By day, he works as a consultant at an elderly health service institution. By night — and often into the wee hours — he repairs home appliances, troubleshoots electronics and installs electric vehicle charging equipment.

The turning point came in 2019. His own Philips electric toothbrush, worth more than 1,000 yuan, broke down. Instead of replacing it, he took it apart — and realized the fix was straightforward. That moment reframed his approach. He formally listed small-appliance repair as a service on Xianyu.

"Everything broken at home comes to me," he said. "During busy days it's normal for me to work until 2 am."

For Lu, the work is about more than income. He sees it as a quiet countercurrent to disposable consumption — extending the life of devices that might otherwise be discarded. A water flosser that costs just a few dozen yuan to repair, he noted, can be made to last for years.

"Every time I repair something, the sense of accomplishment is incredibly real."

The side business has also reshaped how his family views his career. His parents, who once favored the stability of a traditional job, have come around. "My dad thinks it's great. He says I've finally found a way to show my value," Lu said.

Lu's trajectory is increasingly mirroring a broader structural shift, as digital platforms blur the boundaries between hobby, freelance work and entrepreneurship — and redraw the contours of the modern labor market.

A recent report by the China New Employment Research Center examining emerging career trends said the country's youth are moving away from the pursuit of stable, long-term jobs toward a more fluid model of "multiple roles and identities". Instead of a single career trajectory, younger workers are assembling portfolios of income streams — part freelancer, part creator, part entrepreneur.



Shoppers examine items on display at a Xianyu store in Nanjing, Jiangsu province. FANG DONGXU / FOR CHINA DAILY

This shift is occurring against the backdrop of the rapidly expanding platform economy, which has absorbed more than 200 million flexible workers in recent years, according to official data. Platforms such as Xianyu are increasingly functioning as innovation ecosystems. They incubate new forms of employment and serve as a testing ground for emerging technologies and business models, said the report.

As spending patterns move from pure material acquisition toward experiences and personal growth, new categories of digital services have emerged. The report identifies three fast-growing segments on Xianyu — personal development, emotional companionship and skill monetization. Orders across these categories are expanding at annual rates exceeding 100 percent.

The so-called "emotional economy" is among the fastest-growing. Orders for emotional companionship services — including consultation, praise sessions and personality analysis — rose more than 107 percent last year. Sellers are increasingly positioning themselves as therapists, coaches or advisers, monetizing empathy and communication skills in ways that would have been difficult to scale in traditional offline settings.

At the same time, skill-based services are proliferating. In 2025, nearly 19.6 million sellers offered services ranging from photography and design to tutoring and home renovation on Xianyu. Generation Z accounted for about 41 percent of those sellers, while millennials contribute roughly a third — underscoring the platform's central role in youth employment, said the report.

Income levels remain modest on average, with active side-hustle participants earning around 4,317 yuan annually. Yet the aggregate impact is significant, particularly as a supplementary income source. More importantly, the data suggest that these activities are not merely casual experiments. A survey of over 1,200 platform users shows that more than 40 percent derive at least 30 percent of their monthly income from side gigs, while roughly 30 percent spend upward of 30 hours a week on platform-related work — effectively treating it as a second job.

The implications for China's labor market are substantial. Nearly 80 percent of surveyed users say they plan to develop their platform-based activities into long-term ventures, according to the survey.

Platforms such as Xianyu are also emerging as alternative training grounds, where users refine skills, test business ideas and build customer networks before committing to larger-scale ventures. The report recommends that universities and policymakers recognize this shift by incorporating verified side-hustle experience into academic credits or professional evaluations, effectively legitimizing digital labor as a formal component of career development.

The scale of participation is striking. According to platform data, more than 8 million female users on Xianyu now earn over 10,000 yuan per month. On average, female users posted 16 listings each last year, with strong activity in categories such as collectibles, rental services, artificial intelligence tools and home renovation.

Women, in particular, are playing a major role in shaping the platform's evolution. Many are leveraging interest-based communities to identify niche markets and build loyal customer bases. Some focus on reselling collectibles, while others provide specialized services ranging from AI customization to interior design.

The growing services highlight a broader redefinition of value creation in the country's digital economy. Skills that were once considered peripheral — emotional intelligence, community-building and niche expertise — are becoming monetizable assets.

Whether through selling discounted movie tickets, organizing group purchases or launching entirely new service categories, users are steadily pushing the boundaries of what digital marketplaces can offer.

Linda Liu, a frequent user of Xianyu, bought a sought-after concert ticket at a premium on the platform in March. "When the ticket arrived, it turned out to be a great seat, and the seller even packaged it with a thoughtful kit," she said. "It felt like we valued the same thing. It was definitely worth it."

'One-person companies' taking economy by storm

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**

China's startup landscape is being reshaped by a fast-growing class of businesses powered not by teams, but by individuals armed with artificial intelligence.

Known as "one-person companies", or OPCs, these ventures are emerging as a defining feature of the country's digital economy, prompting local governments to rethink how entrepreneurship is supported and scaled.

The numbers underscore the shift. As of mid-2025, China had more than 16 million one-person limited liability companies, said a report by the Zhongguancun Talent Association.

In the first half alone, 2.86 million new OPCs were registered, up 47 percent year-on-year and accounting for nearly a quarter of all new businesses. The surge reflects how AI tools — from code generators to content engines — are dramatically lowering the cost of starting and running a company.

Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, is positioning itself at the forefront of the trend. The eastern tech hub recently moved to formalize the model, with Shangcheng district unveiling one of the country's first policy frameworks aimed specifically at OPC development.

The district's new measures, released in early March, lay out a blueprint for building AI-focused OPC communities, offering everything from subsidized office space to computing resources and funding support.

Hangzhou's push reflects broader ambitions to cement its status as a national center for AI innovation. As the core district of the provincial capital, Shangcheng has been cultivating what they describe as a "tropical rain forest" innovation ecosystem — a dense network of startups, capital and infrastructure designed to accelerate emerging industries.

"We will allocate no less than 100 million yuan ($14.65 million) annually to support OPCs in growing from creative individuals into 'one-person unicorns'," said Chen Gang, a senior official in the district's technology, economic and information bureau.

> "We will allocate no less than 100 million yuan ($14.65 million) annually to support OPCs in growing from creative individuals into 'one-person unicorns'."
>
> **Chen Gang,** an official from Shangcheng district's technology, economic and information bureau in Hangzhou

The policy framework is structured around the full life cycle of OPC development.

Early-stage founders will gain access to move-in-ready workspaces, streamlined administrative services and living support.

As ventures scale, the focus shifts to mentoring, resource matching and scenario-based testing opportunities. More mature companies will be guided toward financing channels and integration into industrial supply chains.

Infrastructure is a central pillar of the plan. Shangcheng will provide more than 20,000 square meters of low-cost office space near key hubs, with subsidized workstations available for up to three years. The district is also building a unified AI services platform, bundling models, computing power and development tools into a membership system.

Financial backing is being scaled up in parallel. A dedicated OPC fund with a target size of 1 billion yuan will focus on early-stage and hard-tech projects, while urban scenarios — spanning consumption, tourism and public services — will serve as testing grounds for new applications. The district is also introducing a talent evaluation system that will annually identify top OPC founders and award up to 200,000 yuan in incentives.

By 2026, Shangcheng aims to establish 10 OPC communities, incubate 100 AI enterprises and attract 1,000 founders.

The local push mirrors similar efforts elsewhere in China. In Beijing, Zhongguancun-based initiatives are exploring "AI OPC-friendly communities" by integrating resources from universities and alumni networks. Shenzhen, Guangdong province, has set targets to build more than 10 OPC communities by 2027, each designed to create concentrated clusters of AI-driven startups.

Industry participants said the model is already reshaping how companies scale.

At Honghub, a Hangzhou-based OPC community, more than 1,300 projects have applied since its launch in late 2025, with a select group of startups now operating within the network. Some have expanded from single founders to teams of dozens, while others generate tens of millions of yuan in revenue with just a handful of employees.

Even so, structural challenges remain. The country's financial and regulatory systems are still geared toward traditional enterprises, leaving OPCs with limited access to tailored credit evaluation and financing channels.

Asset-light founders often struggle to secure loans without collateral, while the model itself raises questions about how companies sustain growth and retain talent as they expand.

Despite these hurdles, policymakers and investors are betting that OPCs will become a core component of the AI economy.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:21 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:21 PM

WORLD

Rallying against revisions



Protesters rally in Tokyo on Sunday against Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's agenda, holding placards opposing constitutional revisions and military expansion during a Constitution Memorial Day demonstration that organizers said drew about 50,000 people. PHILIP FONG / AFP

Standoff deepens in Hormuz

US denies claim Iran struck military vessel after announcing 'guiding' plan

By CUI HAIPEI in Dubai, UAE
cuihaipei@chinadaily.com.cn

A United States Navy vessel reportedly came under Iranian missile fire near the Strait of Hormuz on Monday after it ignored warnings to halt, but the US military denied that any warship had been struck.

Iran's semiofficial Fars News Agency reported that two missiles targeted the US frigate as it sailed near Iran's Jask Port and attempted to navigate the strait. The outlet added the vessel failed to continue its voyage and was forced to withdraw from the waters.

The reported attack came hours after Washington unveiled a new operation to guide stranded commercial ships through the strait, following Tehran's warning against the US military approach or entry into the waterway.

"We have told these countries that we will guide their ships safely out of these restricted waterways, so that they can freely and ably get on with their business," US President Donald Trump said on Sunday.

Operations would begin on Monday, he said, threatening that any Iranian interference would trigger a forceful US response.



Self-service kiosks stand idle at a Spirit Airlines check-in area at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport in Florida on Sunday after the US carrier halted operations, citing surging fuel costs. CRISTOBAL HERRERA-ULASHKEVICH / EPA

US media outlets The Wall Street Journal, CNN and Axios highlighted Trump's chosen word of "guide" rather than "escort" to describe how the so-called Project Freedom will work, though Trump gave few details. Axios quoted a US official as saying that US Navy ships will be "in the vicinity" to prevent Iranian attacks on the commercial ships.

In response, Iran said all maritime passage through the strait must be coordinated with its military.

"We warn that any foreign armed force — particularly the aggressive US military — will be targeted and attacked if it attempts to approach or enter the Strait of Hormuz," Ali Abdollahi, chief commander of Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, told state broadcaster IRIB.

Iran has enforced tight control over the strait since the war began on Feb 28, disrupting global oil, gas and fertilizer supplies, while the US has maintained a parallel naval blockade on Iranian ports.

Stranded ships

According to maritime intelligence firm AXSMarine, more than 900 commercial vessels were stranded in the Persian Gulf as of April 29, down from over 1,100 recorded when the conflict started.

US Central Command said it would support the effort with 15,000 military personnel, more than 100 land and sea-based aircraft, along with warships and drones.

The vital waterway has remained largely blocked since late February, cutting off the transit of 20 percent of the world's oil and gas and fueling a steep rally in global energy prices. A ceasefire took effect on April 8, and one round of direct US-Iran peace talks has since been held in Islamabad, Pakistan, yet both sides remained deadlocked over core demands.

Global equity markets edged higher on Monday, while crude oil prices were little moved, having surged back above $100 a barrel last week.

Raman Kapoor, an oil tanker captain whose vessel is stranded in the Gulf, told Al Jazeera that no ships were likely to attempt crossing the Strait of Hormuz under current conditions.

"No ships would want to show their courage and pass through the strait unless it is officially declared safe to transit," he said, adding that while his vessel was able to restock in fuel, food and water, other commercial ships were not able to.

Meanwhile, Iranian state media said Washington had delivered its response to Tehran's 14-point proposal via Pakistan, and that Iran was reviewing it. There was no immediate confirmation from Washington or Islamabad of the US response.

"At this stage, we do not have nuclear negotiations," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei was quoted by state media as saying.

Observers said the proposal to delay nuclear talks until a later phase would appear at odds with Washington's repeated demand that Iran accept stringent restrictions on its nuclear program before the war can end.

Shi Guang in New York and agencies contributed to this story.

Asia-Pacific urged to act together, build deeper ties

By YANG HAN in Hong Kong
kelly@chinadailyapac.com

The Asia-Pacific needs to "act together to develop together" by strengthening cross-border connections to bolster resilience and inclusive growth, says Asian Development Bank President Masato Kanda.

"The decisions we make at this new crossroads will secure the future for the next generation," Kanda told the opening session of the bank's 59th annual meeting on Monday in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

"In this fragmented world, traditional and isolated development responses will fail. To survive and thrive in this new era, we must build deeply connected and resilient systems," he said, adding that shocks today travel rapidly across borders and hit communities that are least able to absorb them.

To address these challenges, the ADB pledged on Sunday to back $70 billion by 2035 for new energy and digital infrastructure, aiming to build regional systems that will strengthen shared security and resilience in the Asia-Pacific.

"Energy and digital access will define the region's future," Kanda said, announcing the launch of the Pan-Asia Power Grid Initiative and the Asia-Pacific Digital Highway.

"By linking power grids and digital networks across borders, we can lower costs, expand opportunity and bring reliable power and digital access to hundreds of millions of people," he said.

The $50 billion power grid initiative will link national and subregional grids, allowing renewable energy to flow across borders. The $20 billion digital highway program aims to narrow infrastructure gaps and support AI-driven growth.

The power grid plan marks a shift from country-to-country links to a regional power market. By 2035, the ADB aims to integrate about 20 gigawatts of renewable energy across borders, connect 22,000 circuit-kilometers of transmission lines, improve energy access for 200 million people, create 840,000 jobs, and cut regional power-sector emissions by 15 percent.

The digital highway initiative aims to provide first-time broadband access to 200 million people and faster, more reliable digital connectivity for another 450 million by 2035. It is expected to cut connectivity costs in remote and landlocked areas by about 40 percent and help create 4 million jobs.

Economic impact

Also in Samarkand, finance ministers and central bank governors from ASEAN+3 met on Sunday, discussing the economic impact of the Middle East situation and underscoring the need for stronger regional unity.

ASEAN+3 comprises member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and their three East Asian dialogue partners — China, South Korea and Japan.

"ASEAN+3 entered 2026 from a position of relative strength ... however, the escalation of conflict in the Middle East has amplified downside risks to the regional outlook significantly," said a statement released after the meeting.

With growth expected to moderate and inflation to rise, finance leaders underscored the importance of upholding multilateralism and strengthening regional unity and cooperation in addressing shared challenges.

At a sideline event, Yasuto Watanabe, director and CEO of the ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic Research Office, said the region has become more interconnected, with deeper integration and stronger regional demand. It now accounts for 28 percent of global demand, making ASEAN+3 the world's largest market, he said.

"Today, we are navigating what many describe as 'changes unseen in a century,'" he said, noting heightened global uncertainty and growing structural challenges.

Embassy event brings Shaanxi to Washington

By YIFAN XU in Washington
yifanxu@chinadailyusa.com

The aroma of freshly made *biangbiang* noodles mingled with the rhythms of Tang Dynasty music as the Chinese embassy in Washington welcomed more than 7,000 visitors on Saturday.

Part of the annual "Around the World Embassy Tour", the event this year transported attendees to Northwest China's Shaanxi province, offering a vibrant window into the "cradle of Chinese civilization" and the opportunities of an opening China.

In keynote remarks, Chinese Ambassador to the United States Xie Feng highlighted the province's historical weight.

"Shaanxi is like a river, carrying the continuity of Chinese civilization," Xie said. "As a saying goes, 'To understand 5,000 years of Chinese history, visit Shaanxi.'"

He noted that 14 dynasties once established their capitals there, nurturing cultural treasures from the Terracotta Warriors to Xi'an drum music.

Fast-forward to the present, Shaanxi is emerging as a hub of future growth, he said, describing the province as a "frontier of China's opening-up" with a key role in the Belt and Road Initiative and a leading presence in high-tech industries.

"A more prosperous China will surely be an anchor of peace and a harbor of stability in a turbulent world," he said. "A more open China will bring strong momentum and vast opportunities for shared development of all countries."

Shaanxi is helping renew the China-US friendship through local-level exchanges and people-to-people ties, Xie said, adding that the province and its cities have established 13 sister-city partnerships with US counterparts.

He cited the 14th China-US Tourism Leadership Summit in Xi'an in 2024 and a joint performance by Utah's One Voice Children's Choir and Chinese students beneath the city's ancient wall in 2025 as evidence of a sustained public appetite for exchange and cooperation.

After more than 50 years of diplomatic engagement, China-US relations have reached another crossroads, he said, urging both sides to draw lessons from history, focus on steady and sustainable development, and seek "a right way" to coexist in the new era.

Fan Weibin, vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the Shaanxi Provincial People's Congress, said the province is expanding cooperation with the US in trade, culture, tourism, education and other sectors, and welcomed more US people to experience Shaanxi firsthand.

A highlight of the open house event was a performance of Xi'an drum music, known as a "living fossil" of Chinese music. Musicians in Tang Dynasty (618-907) attire played drums, flutes and chimes, while a vibrant *yangko* dance brought to life the folk traditions of northern Shaanxi.

The audience responded with enthusiastic applause and cheers, enjoying this direct encounter with musical and dance traditions passed down for centuries.

The embassy grounds were transformed into a lively showcase of culture and heritage. Visitors tried their hand at painting *shehuo* masks and explored ancient murals through virtual reality.

Stalls featuring cultural products and other goods from local Shaanxi companies drew large crowds, with long lines forming for regional delicacies.

Flavor of Chang'an

Among the exhibitors, Lu Zhiqi of Shaanxi Ziqi Food Company said he was proud to bring local flavors to Washington. "We hope visitors can taste the flavor of Chang'an (Xi'an's ancient name) — and of China — through our traditional delicacies," he said.

Lu added that the company combines traditional techniques with digital production lines to produce additive-free products tailored to US market trends.

Ralph Winnie Jr, director of the China program at the Eurasia Center, said such events underscore the value of cultural diplomacy.

"People-to-people exchanges and relationship building are very important to break down cultural barriers and promote understanding," he said.

David Harrison, a high school teacher from Virginia, said, "I've seen the Terracotta Warriors in books, but the craftsmanship here makes it all feel so real."

The technology displays highlighted China's rapid change and inspired him to bring his students to visit, he said.

Briefly

ATLANTIC OCEAN

Suspected outbreak of rare hantavirus kills 3

Three people have died and three are ill after a cruise ship was hit by a suspected outbreak of hantavirus, a rodent-borne virus that can cause fatal respiratory illness, authorities and media reports said on Sunday. Netherlands-based Oceanwide Expeditions said in a news release that it was "managing a serious medical situation" on a polar expedition ship, which was off Cape Verde, an island nation in the Atlantic west of Africa. The cruise departed from Argentina about three weeks ago with around 150 passengers and stopped in the Antarctic and other locations on its way to Cape Verde, according to media reports. A Dutch Foreign Ministry spokesperson confirmed that two Dutch passengers had died, but gave no further details.

OIL MARKETS

7 OPEC+ countries to hike production in June

Seven countries in the OPEC+ grouping of oil-producing countries say they have decided on a modest increase in production starting in June as part of a commitment to "market stability". The decision from the seven countries — Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iraq, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Algeria and Oman — to raise production by 188,000 barrels per day comes after they held a virtual meeting on Sunday. The increase is part of adjustments to the additional voluntary production cuts first announced in April 2023. The voluntary adjustments could be returned gradually, either in part or in full, depending on market developments, the group said.

AGENCIES—XINHUA

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108
529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

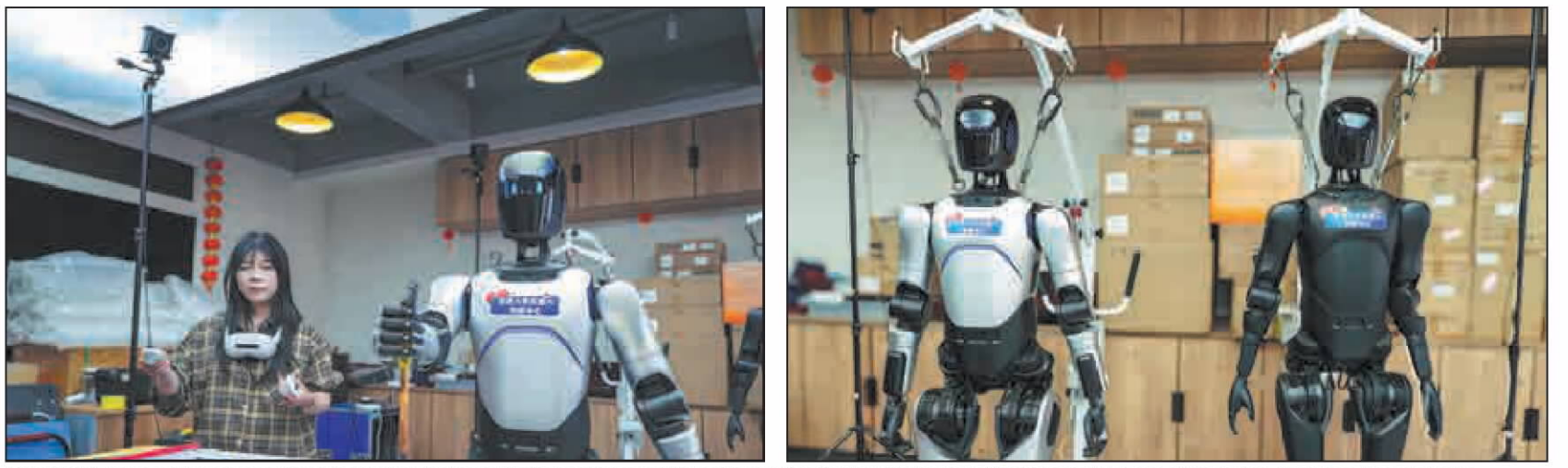
CHINA DAILY (ISSN 0748-6154) is published daily except weekends by China Daily USA, 1500 Broadway, Suite 2800, New York, NY 10036. Periodical postage paid at New York, NY and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to CHINA DAILY USA, 1500 Broadway, Suite 2800, New York, NY 10036.

Vol. 38 — No.1820

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:21 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:21 PM

PEOPLE



From left: A humanoid robot poses for a photo with a trainer at the Gansu Humanoid Robot Innovation Center. Two humanoid robots are displayed at the center. WU YUEXUAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Trainer teaches robots like kids in a kindergarten

Through trial and error, Kang Xiaolong continues to learn alongside his humanoid students. The goal is to make robots interact better with people.

By **MA JINGNA** and **HU YUMENG** in Lanzhou

In a lab in Lanzhou, Gansu province, a humanoid robot sways slightly as engineers gather around One engineer demonstrates a movement, arms stretching out and body leaning in, while another tweaks parameters on a computer. The motion is recorded, translated into code and sent back to the robot, which attempts to follow the command.

This is part of a typical day for Kang Xiaolong, a robot trainer at the Gansu Humanoid Robot Innovation Center, one of the largest robot training hubs in Northwest China.

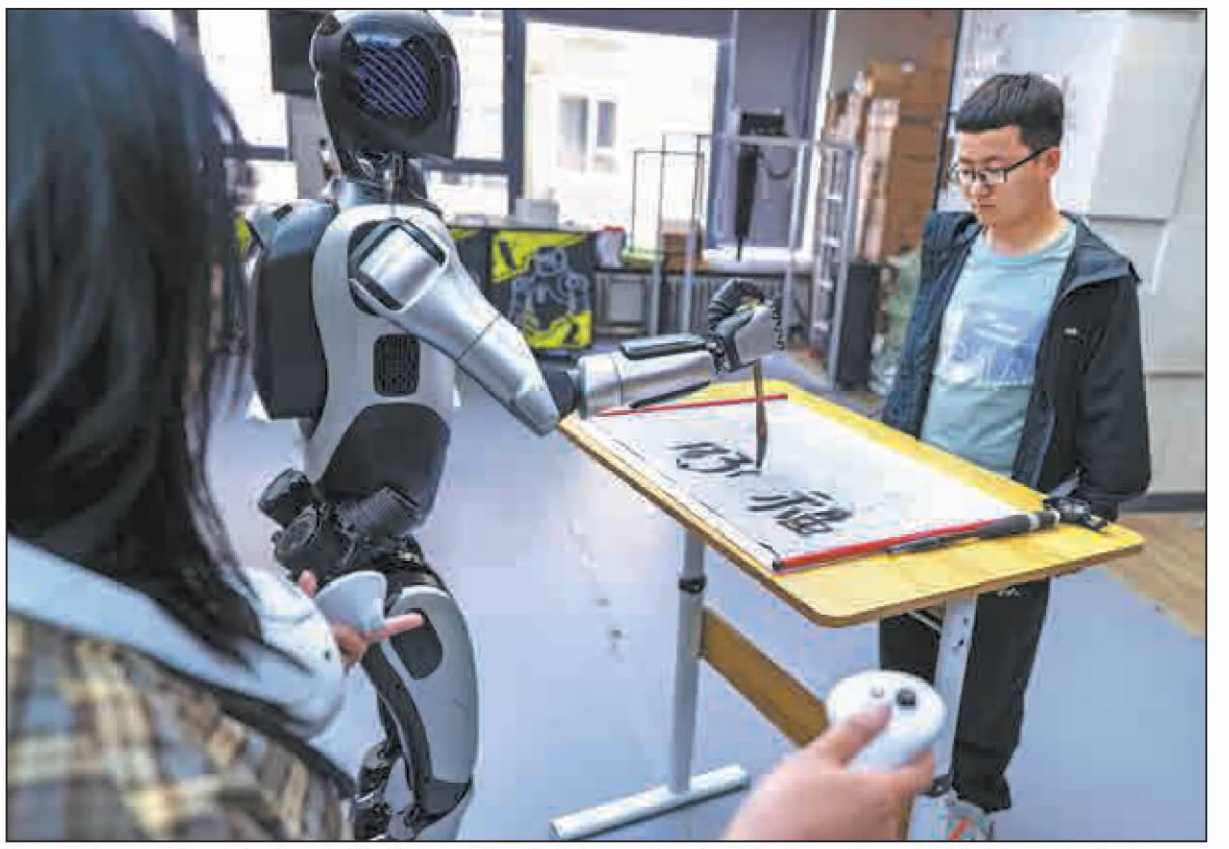
"It's a bit like teaching kindergarten kids," Kang said. "You guide them step by step, again and again, until they get it."

Kang, 31, graduated from Lanzhou University in 2020 with a degree in electronic information science and technology. He began his career in control software, working across fields such as new energy and industrial sensors, before joining the innovation center in 2025. The work was stable, but something was missing.

"Robotics is something new and exciting," he said. "It brings together mechanical engineering, electronics, software and AI models. You must continue to learn, but that's also what makes it interesting."

Training a robot is far from straightforward. A single movement can take days to refine, he said. The process often begins with a human demonstration, sometimes captured through motion-tracking systems. Engineers then retarget the motion — adapting it to the robot's proportions and mechanical limits — before testing it in a simulation.

Only after that do they try it on a real machine.



Kang Xiaolong (right) watches the robot that he trained to write Chinese calligraphy at the Gansu Humanoid Robot Innovation Center. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"We always have someone standing behind the robot, ready to support it," Kang explained. "If something goes wrong, we immediately hit an emergency stop. These machines are expensive and fragile."

Even with precautions, unpredictability is part of the job. "If you're not careful, you might get bumped or kicked," he said with a laugh. "So far, I've been lucky."

Kang's team focused on training robots for performances and public events — one of the more mature applications in the industry. But beyond commercial use, he is particularly interested in something more ambitious: blending robotics with local culture.

"In Northwest China, we have rich cultural resources," he said. "We want robots to reflect that — maybe through regional dances or dialects."

The idea of teaching robots to dance is appealing, but also technically demanding. Some styles, such as the iconic "playing the pipa behind the back" pose from Dunhuang murals, require fluidity and subtle expressions that robots still struggle to replicate. Limitations in joint flexibility and hardware design make certain movements difficult, if not impossible.

"Even if a robot can copy the shape of a movement, capturing the 'spirit' is much harder," Kang said.

Despite these challenges, progress is visible. Compared with earlier models, today's humanoid robots are more agile and expressive. In some cases, Kang said, their movements can look almost human. "It's not about replacing humans," he explained. "It's about teaching machines to work with us better."

Beyond the lab, the robots are increasingly meeting the public. Children are often the most enthusiastic, drawn to the machines' interactions.

Some even pose surprisingly profound questions.

"We've had kids ask if robots can solve the Goldbach conjecture," Kang said, "or even how a robot defines the unknown if it knows everything."

For him, the most rewarding moments come when the robots that he has trained step into the real world and are met with genuine delight. "It does feel like watching something you've taught being appreciated," he added. "It's not just about the technology, but how it can bring people happiness."

Contact the writers at huyumeng@chinadaily.com.cn

Railway engineer becomes a model worker through grit and global experience

By **ZHANG XIAOMIN** in Dalian, Liaoning
zhangxiaomin@chinadaily.com.cn

For Lu Xiaofan, being awarded the title of model worker in 2022 in Liaoning province was not just a badge of honor. It was a reminder to push himself harder, sharpen his skills and rise to greater responsibilities.

Since 2014, when he graduated from college, Lu, 33, has worked in a variety of posts at the Dalian branch of China Railway No 9 Group. Looking ahead, he hopes to take a more active part in the company's overseas projects.

"Our company has accumulated extensive construction experience and completed many projects abroad, offering employees plenty of room to grow," said Lu, who is currently working as a legal affairs officer at a mining construction site in Guizhou province.

His entry into the industry was not driven by a childhood dream but by pragmatism.

Looking back, he said, "It turned out to be a perfect fit. This job has made me a person who can stay focused, endure hardship and communicate well with others."

Lu's journey into overseas projects began in 2018.

After four years in his first frontline position as a bridge test engineer, he rose to become the lead of a quality control circle for a bridge project in Dalian.

He was then assigned to the company's project management department in Belarus, where he took part in six construction projects and, for three of them, served as the on-site Chinese technical lead.

On a road project north of the China-Belarus Industrial Park in Minsk Oblast, he proposed an improvement to the originally planned well-point dewatering method based on studying the terrain and soil conditions, comparing years of weather data and investigating the rainwater treatment station's storage and reuse capacity.

"Such improvements ensured construction quality, saved costs and eased schedule pressure," Lu said.

The overseas stint, he said, deepened his understanding of the world. Beyond technical skills, his business communication abilities improved significantly.

"I knew very little about Belarus before going there, only its name," he said. He also found that local employees had limited knowledge of Chinese people and companies, and sometimes held prejudices.



Lu Xiaofan reviews project blueprints at the construction site of the Minsk Arena on Prospekt Pobediteley in Minsk, Belarus. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Lu made a point of engaging with his local colleagues, visiting museums and communities in his spare time and by participating in public welfare activities.

"Since the project ended, many of my coworkers and I still keep in touch on WeChat. We send each other blessings on important holidays," he said.

After returning to China in 2021, Lu worked in the engineering management department of the Dalian branch of the railway, focusing on overseas project management and contributing to technological innovation.

He later participated in a project in Tonghua, Jilin province, taking charge of early-stage planning and review.

There, he conducted regular analyses and adjusted operational strategies to ensure strong economic returns.

He also took on the coordination duties for several overseas projects and helped compile a country-specific policy manual for the company's overseas engineering and technical management systems.

With the company pushing for differentiated, high-quality development and a stronger global footprint, Lu has set his next goal — mastering construction and production techniques for overseas mining projects.

"There is no end to learning," he said. "Only by striving can you move forward."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:21 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:21 PM

READ



Brewing success across Southeast Asia

Chinese tea-based beverages attract new fans by adding tropical fruit flavors and adapting to local tastes and trends

By **YANG WANLI** in Bangkok
yangwanli@chinadaily.com.cn

As Chinese tea beverages embark on their journey to global prominence, Southeast Asia has emerged as the first destination for many leading Chinese brands.

The combination of Chinese tea with the vibrant flavors of tropical fruits results in an innovative and health-conscious offering that captivates consumers in the region.

"The beverage market in Southeast Asia is characterized by its diversity and openness, coupled with a rich supply of fresh fruits and a rapidly expanding consumer base, presenting Chinese brands with ample opportunities for integrated growth and future prospects," said Chen Zhiyu, Thailand regional director of ChaPanda.

The Chinese tea chain, established in Southwest China's Sichuan province in 2008, has rapidly expanded into overseas markets over the past two years. It now operates in South Korea, Thailand, the United States, France, and Australia. As of March, it had about 70 overseas branches, with 40 percent in Southeast Asia.

In 2024, the brand entered Thailand — the first stop of its overseas expansion. "The tropical country has great consumption power for cold beverages all year round. Although there are a variety of fruit smoothies available (in Thailand), a combination of light Chinese tea and fresh fruit is a new track," Chen said.

Southeast Asia's coffee and tea market reached $9.9 billion last year, marking a 52 percent jump from $6.5 billion in 2021, as rapid outlet expansion, digital ordering, and broader consumer adoption fueled growth, according to the Singapore-based business information company Momentum Works.

The region's market potential is widely recognized by many Chinese brands. Back in 2018, Mixue opened its first overseas store in Hanoi, Vietnam. So far, it operates more than 4,700 stores outside China with Southeast Asia remaining its core overseas market.

The Chagee brand, meanwhile, has followed a more measured approach. After entering Malaysia in 2019, it has expanded to 196 stores in the market. In Singapore, it operates 22 outlets, including at Changi Airport and the National University of Singapore.

In Indonesia, operations have been carried out through a joint venture with a subsidiary of the local retail group Erajaya, with halal certification secured to better align with local consumer expectations.

Several brands have also emerged as key players in this trend. After the COVID-19 pandemic, brands such as Heytea, ChaPanda, and Naisnow expanded their presence across the region.

Fruit teas are among the top sellers for most of the brands. "The popularity of fruit teas, light milk teas, and vegetable teas suggests that consumers are increasingly aware of the health benefits. This mindset is (evident) among young (consumers) and the middle class," said Fei Cheng, general manager of Naisnow International Business Department.

Health consciousness

In Thailand, the tea industry encompasses diverse segments, from traditional Thai iced tea to premium organic varieties, driven by health-conscious consumers and bubble tea adoption (94 percent among people aged 20 to 29), according to a report by a local Thai company, Iconic Research.

It revealed that Thai consumers increasingly view tea as a wellness beverage, substituting it for sugary sodas and energy drinks. This health consciousness directly fuels growth in the Thailand organic tea sector and the green tea market.

The research showed that 62 percent of tea drinkers actively pursue healthy eating, making them receptive to messaging about functional benefits and clean ingredients. Generation Z leads this wellness movement, seeking products aligned with health and sustainability values.

Naisnow entered the Thai market by opening its first overseas branch in Bangkok in December 2023.

The brand highlights a healthy lifestyle by offering a wide range of high-fiber and vitamin-rich options made with a mixture of Chinese teas and fresh fruits.

Moreover, the trend of reducing daily sugar consumption is also supported by local authorities. On Feb 11, Thailand's Department of Health launched a major initiative to cut the default sugar content in "normal sweet" beverages by half of their original recipes.

In line with the preferences of local consumers in Thailand, Chen revealed that ChaPanda had initially increased the sugar content of its drinks by 15 percent from the level in the Chinese market to meet the average sweetness level of Thai beverages.

"But as more consumers nowadays are becoming more aware of health, we have reduced the sugar content ... while trying to explore more recipes with healthy ingredients," Chen said.









From top: Thai customers enjoy beverages at a Naisnow outlet in Bangkok's CentralWorld mall in March. A staff member prepares a fruit tea at a ChaPanda outlet in Bangkok's Siam Square. Exterior of the Naisnow outlet at CentralWorld. A Chinese zodiac-themed Year of the Horse pendant at the outlet. Chinese desserts at the outlet.
PHOTOS BY YANG WANLI / CHINA DAILY

In addition, the brand uses local halal milk to make milk-based beverages to meet the demands of Muslim customers.

"(To appeal) to local consumers, we also make (region-specific) costumes for the brand's mascot panda. For example, the panda will be dressed in a gentleman's style in France. In Singapore, the mascot will cosplay as the Merlion, while in Thailand it will have a beach-style outfit," Chen said.

The proliferation of Chinese tea beverage outlets across Southeast Asia does more than introduce these unique flavors to a new audience. It also provides a glimpse into the depth and diversity of Chinese traditions on the world stage.

"When I traveled to China, I particularly enjoyed drinking Heytea and Chagee. The reason why I like going to China is that the people there are very friendly, the scenery is particularly spectacular, and each place has its own unique charm," said Paullar, a 31-year-old Thai.

"Apart from tea, I also really like Chinese cuisine. Chinese traditional customs and delicious food make me enjoy every trip to China very much," she added.

Beyond drinks

Beyond business expansion, Chinese tea beverage brands are also integrating social responsibility into their global strategies.

In Singapore, Chagee opened a "silent store" employing hearing-impaired staff members, complete with accessible facilities. This initiative demonstrates a commitment to inclusive employment, while offering a practical example of how brand operations can contribute to local communities.

Mixue emphasizes local hiring and talent development. In Malaysia, the brand employs over 2,900 local staff members and has trained more than 4,000 personnel to date.

To that end, the company has experimented with culturally themed product launches, linking drinks to national celebrations or local design elements.

In August 2025, to commemorate Singapore's National Day, Chagee introduced a new orchid-flavored beverage, the "Orchid Biluochun Milk Tea" inspired by Singapore's national flower, the Vanda Miss Joaquim.

Most recently, it partnered with the Asian Civilisations Museum and the Singapore Tourism Board to launch "Garden of Senses: A Tea Reverie", an immersive, multi-sensory tea culture exhibition. This marks a landmark collaboration and is ACM's first in-depth curatorial partnership with an international brand.

By the end of 2025, Chagee's overseas membership in the Asia-Pacific region had grown 177 percent from a year earlier, with 61 percent of members under the age of 30, demonstrating the brand's strong value recognition among local youth.

Fei from Naisnow said Chinese tea-based beverages are a cultural icon for many foreign consumers, and the company seeks to serve as a gateway for the world to explore Chinese culture.

Apart from providing popular Chinese desserts as options beyond drinks, Naisnow has also integrated the brand with Chinese cultural elements and developed many related products.

"For instance, to celebrate the Year of the Horse, we collaborated with designers to make small pendants. The gifts symbolize this year in the Chinese zodiac — a spirit of progress and perseverance. They also provide another look at Chinese culture," Fei said.

Chinese tea, together with other cultural trends such as toys, the creative industry, and costume dramas that go viral among the younger Thai generation, combines commercial objectives with social contributions, said Arphon Thiragun, a lecturer at the School of Sinology at Mae Fah Luang University.

Over the past decades, she said Chinese culture has influenced Thai people through multiple cultural forms. For example, Hong Kong movies and the iconic musical style of Teresa Teng are unforgettable memories for many elderly Thai people. Such cultural exchanges are now evolving into more creative and vivid forms.

She cited examples such as the popularity of the cute fashion accessory Labubu from China and the Thai mascot Butterbear — both are widely loved by consumers from China and Thailand.

"Now, such cultural exchanges create mutually beneficial outcomes for business operators and consumers. In particular, deepened cultural exchanges are shaping the image of the world in the minds of younger generations and have sparked their enthusiasm for exploring different countries and their cultures. This will lay a solid foundation for a deep understanding of the world," she added.

Xinhua contributed to this story.

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:21 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:21 PM

IMAGE



Models from China and abroad showcase Qiang ethnic clothing at the 2026 New York Fashion Week Asia-Pacific Wuxi Show on March 20.

Eastern beauty meets global fashion

On March 20, dozens of top global brands and international haute couture designers graced the runway at the 2026 New York Fashion Week Asia-Pacific Wuxi Show, held at the Nianhua Bay in Wuxi, Jiangsu province.

Throughout the event, intangible cultural heritage (ICH) elements stood out as a major highlight.

Garments made using ICH techniques such as Su embroidery, Miao embroidery, and Qiang embroidery, appeared one after another on the runway.

The Qiang people, often called "the ethnic group living among the clouds," have a long history in China, well known for distinctive cultural, culinary, and sartorial traditions.

Chen Shijiang, a young Qiang lady from Baixi village, Maoxian county, in Sichuan's Aba Prefecture, amazed the audience with her collection, showcasing the beauty of traditional Qiang attire to the world.

Some reporters visited her studio to hear the story of her deep connection with Qiang clothing.

Chen, now a fourth-generation inheritor of her family's Qiang embroidery legacy, told the reporters that the Qiang people believe that all things have a spirit.

"We use clothing as a medium to pass on the good fortune and symbolism found in rivers, mountains, flowers, birds, and insects," she added.

She said that her collection displayed in this show reinterprets traditional Qiang clothing with a contemporary design language, honoring tradition while embracing modernity.

Her work blends intricate patterns and fluid tailoring with Qiang ICH techniques, bringing traditional wedding attire to life on the fashion stage.

Her pieces have been exhibited in countries such as Italy, the UK, and Switzerland, and have also been featured in international cultural exchange events.

-CHINA DAILY



Che Yuanlong, a Qiang man from Sichuan's Aba prefecture, models the Qiang garment made by Chen Shijiang at the show on March 20.



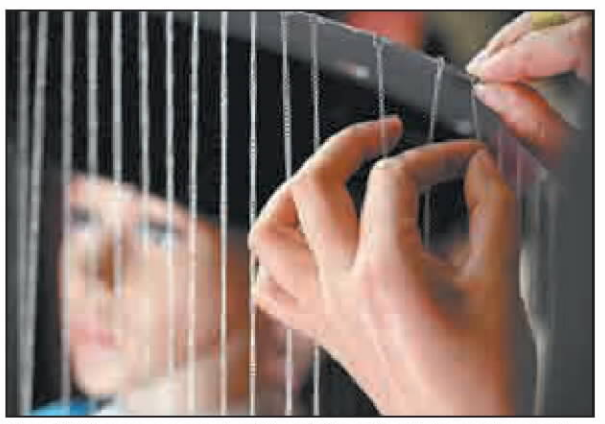
A Chinese model presents Qiang clothing made by Chen Shijiang at the show on March 20.
PHOTOS BY LI XIANGYU / FOR CHINA DAILY



Chen Shijiang attends a fashion industry exchange at the 2026 New York Fashion Week Asia-Pacific Wuxi Show on March 20.



Chen Shijiang (right) and her mother embroider a piece of Qiang clothing together at Chen Shijiang's studio on March 12.



Chen Shijiang arranges a traditional Qiang headpiece at her studio located in Baixi village, Maoxian county, in Sichuan's Aba prefecture on March 12.



Chen Shijiang's mother (right) helps Chen to adjust the traditional Qiang attire on March 11.



Chen Shijiang discusses Qiang embroidery patterns with her team members before the show starts on March 20.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:21 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:21 PM

TREND

‘Silent riders’ thrive, show resilience in digital era

Workers with impairments are overcoming barriers, redefining what inclusive employment looks like.



Sun Jingjing (right), a hearing-impaired Meituan delivery rider, communicates with Gu Xinru, a sign language instructor who helps Sun become familiar with the work, at a delivery station in Shanghai.
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By **LI SHANGYI**
lishangyi@chinadaily.com.cn

Zhao Lei, 38, has a hearing impairment and has worked as a ride-hailing driver for five years. When passengers book a ride, the app notifies them before they call Zhao, encouraging them to switch to text-based communication.

As a driver with a hearing impairment who is registered on DiDi, a major ride-hailing platform in China, Zhao said in sign language that the job provides him with a stable income and allows him to make ends meet.

Beyond ride-hailing services, people with hearing difficulties are also finding new opportunities in China’s on-demand delivery sector. “Without delivery jobs, most people with hearing impairments could only work in factories,” said Sun Jingjing, a 34-year-old delivery worker for Meituan in Shanghai, an on-demand service platform.

Although challenges remain, improvements in speech-to-text functions and AI communication tools are opening new possibilities. For this “silent” group, the app-based service economy is creating new horizons.

New forms of employment

Zhao, from Heilongjiang province, became a ride-hailing driver in 2021 after his startup venture failed. Once he had saved enough money, he bought a car and registered with DiDi.

Now an experienced driver covering about 300 kilometers a day, Zhao knows the city’s roads so well that the map is largely in his mind. He often shows his driver’s license to passengers to ease any concerns.

Yet for a driver with hearing impairments, the biggest challenge remains communicating with passengers by phone.

“When there’s a traffic jam, I need to let the passenger know it will take a few more minutes,” he explained. “In other cases, I have to call the passenger if I arrive early.”

Over time, Zhao has developed his own ways to bridge this gap. In such situations, he may ask a passerby to help make the call or use AI-powered text-to-speech tools to generate voice messages.

Since May last year, DiDi has introduced a feature that notifies passengers before the trip if their driver has a hearing impairment, encouraging them to use text-based communication. During the ride, the app also provides guidance to passengers, such as gently tapping the driver on the shoulder in urgent situations.

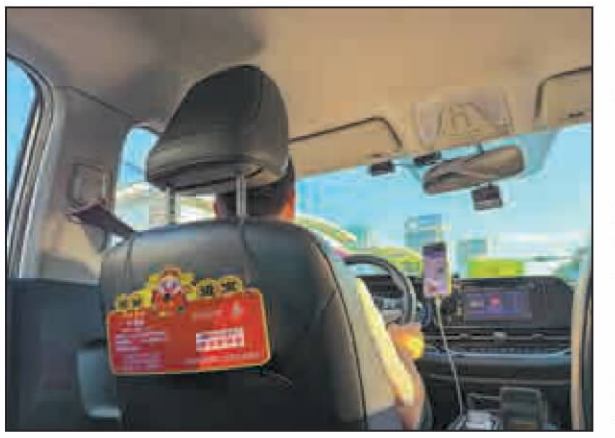
In recent years, many people with hearing impairments like Zhao have entered the ride-hailing industry. Zhao is part of a group chat with more than 100 drivers with hearing impairments, where they exchange experiences and advice.

Under current regulations in China, people with hearing impairments can apply for a small-car driver’s license if they meet specific hearing requirements, such as being able to hear car horns from different directions, with the help of assistive devices. After passing the necessary tests, they are also eligible to work in the ride-hailing sector.









Clockwise from top left: Two job seekers exchange information using sign language at a special job fair in Taiyuan, Shanxi province, on March 11. The event was dedicated to providing opportunities to people with disabilities. WEI LIANG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE A job seeker communicates with a recruiter at a booth during a job fair in Taiyuan on March 11. WEI LIANG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE A sign in the back seat of a DiDi ride-hailing car in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, on Nov 24, informs passengers that the driver is hearing-challenged. ZUO DONGCHEN / FOR CHINA DAILY An employment seeker with hearing difficulties communicates via text on a mobile phone while applying for a position at a job fair in Chaozhou, Guangdong province, on Feb 22, 2024. CHEN YIHANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

While a small number of passengers may have doubts, most are understanding. “Some even use sign language to say ‘thank you’ to me,” Zhao said.

Ride-hailing drivers and delivery workers represent new forms of employment that have emerged with the growth of internet technologies and the digital economy. As of March, more than 80 million people were engaged in these flexible jobs, including 12 million delivery workers and nearly 7 million ride-hailing drivers.

Compared with traditional job options for people with disabilities, these roles offer not only more equal access but often higher pay.

Last year, more than 10,000 people with hearing impairments worked as delivery workers for Meituan.

In Shanghai, a Meituan delivery station on North Sichuan Road established a dedicated branch for workers with disabilities in the autumn of 2024. The station also employs a sign language instructor to support daily communication with its 17 employees with hearing impairments.

Before becoming a delivery worker, Sun, who is originally from Henan province, spent four years working at an electronics assembly factory. The job was exhausting, she said, and paid only 2,000 yuan ($292.6) to 4,000 yuan per month.

She described on-demand delivery work as more equitable, noting that people with hearing impairments are not discriminated against and can perform just as well as others.

When Sun began working as a delivery rider in October last year, she was unfamiliar with the delivery system and the electric motorcycle, earning only about 3,000 yuan a month.

With guidance from more experienced colleagues at the station, she gradually improved. She now completes more than 1,200 orders per month, and her income has risen to around 8,000 yuan.

In December 2024, Meituan upgraded its accessibility features for delivery workers with hearing impairments. The updated system includes functions such as speech-to-text conversion and AI-powered voice calling.

While making deliveries, Sun wears a vest labeled “Silent Rider”. When people notice it, they will often step in to help her find her way if she is lost.

Excellence in silence

Yang Haobing, 30, is another “silent rider” at the station. He ranks among the top performers in both order volume and income, completing around 1,300 to 1,500 deliveries each month and earning more than 10,000 yuan.

Since becoming a full-time delivery rider for Meituan in October 2024, Yang has made it clear that he does not want to be treated differently because of his hearing impairment. He holds himself to higher standards than those of other riders, which in turn motivates those around him.

Yang attributes his success to diligently memorizing routes and frequently exchanging tips with fellow riders. “I like this job, not only because of the income, but also because it allows me to get to know the city while riding,” he said.

When he first arrived in Shanghai in 2019, Yang worked as a chef. Compared with kitchen work, he said, delivery work offers more practical, worldly experience. Now, he and his girlfriend are working hard in Shanghai and plan to get married once they have saved enough money.

According to Yang, many people with hearing impairments are doing delivery work through referrals, since on-demand delivery offers higher incomes, and people with hearing impairments can do just as well as others.

Gu Xinru, a sign language instructor at the Meituan delivery station, described these riders as energetic and resilient, noting their strong work ethic and ability to overcome challenges.

Zhao, the ride-hailing driver, has also received many positive reviews from passengers. Some praised his steady driving and efficient, well-chosen routes. Even in heavy traffic, reviewers noted that he adjusted course quickly. Many passengers also offered tips as a gesture of appreciation, according to Zhao.

Now, Zhao’s monthly income can reach over 15,000 yuan.

Still, communication remains Zhao’s biggest concern. Although he uses text-to-speech tools to make phone calls, he noted that “typing simply isn’t as fast as speaking, and when responses are delayed, passengers can become anxious. Some even hang up as soon as they hear the AI-generated voice.” He added that regional dialects can further complicate speech-to-text conversion.

Zhao said he hoped the app would introduce more accessibility features.

While hearing-impaired drivers and delivery riders work hard to overcome communication barriers, companies such as DiDi and Meituan have also introduced accessibility features on their apps, drawing on feedback from users.

According to DiDi, the company has held multiple meetings with these drivers and users to better understand their key challenges and practical needs. In May last year, it launched features such as call notifications and an in-trip communication card, with pilot programs rolled out in six cities. A total of 50 hearing-impaired drivers from Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou in Guangdong province volunteered for the trial, including Zhao.

Based on data from 120,000 test orders, the prompt notifications successfully encouraged about half of the passengers who attempted to call hearing-impaired drivers to switch to text-based communication. The in-trip communication card was also viewed 50,000 times.

After noticing the sign indicating a driver with hearing impairments, many passengers were initially surprised and shared their experiences online. Some even searched for basic sign language on the spot and used it to thank the driver at the end of the ride.

“The car is very quiet, without music or conversation,” one social media user wrote. Others described the experience as moving and inspiring, saying they were touched by the drivers’ hard work.

Gu, the sign language instructor, often helps these delivery riders handle communication issues with customers. In one case, a delivery rider received a negative review from a customer who complained about an “impolite response”. Gu later contacted the customer to explain that the rider could not hear and that his text replies might seem abrupt. After learning the situation, the customer sent a long message to apologize.

Gu said many customers shift from being critical to offering tips once they realize the rider has hearing impairments. She added that delivery work provides more opportunities for interaction, helping hearing-impaired individuals better integrate into society.

In June last year, the General Office of the State Council issued a three-year action plan for promoting the employment of people with disabilities (2025-27), which emphasized stronger support for flexible employment among people with disabilities.

The plan also calls for further leveraging the role of the platform-based digital economy. In addition, support for the employment of people with disabilities will be incorporated into the evaluation criteria used to assess internet companies’ fulfillment of their social responsibilities.

“Though those delivery workers cannot hear, they can feel the wind, smell the flowers, and be greeted on the street,” Gu said. “Fairness is not about giving them special treatment, but about allowing them, like anyone else, to support themselves through their own efforts.”

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:21 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:21 PM

BIZ LIFE





Visitors gather at booths of Chinese TV manufacturers — TCL and Hisense — during the CES 2026 at the Las Vegas Convention Center on Jan 7. PHOTOS BY DEECEE CARTER / MEDIA PUNCH VIA IPX

TV makers putting on big show abroad

Domestic brands ramping up for global share, with Mini LED tech narrowing gap with sector leaders

By LI JIAYING
lijiaying@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese television brands are increasingly taking over the overseas operations of foreign peers, as the industry moves toward deeper integration and higher-end competition.

This trend has been highlighted by a series of recent deals. Shenzhen, Guangdong province-based Skyworth Group recently reached a long-term strategic cooperation agreement with Japanese multinational electronics manufacturer Panasonic.

Under the deal, Panasonic will transfer the operation of its TV business in the United States and Europe to Skyworth. The Chinese company will take full responsibility for joint research and development, manufacturing, sales, marketing and after-sales services for Panasonic-branded TVs in these regions, while the two sides will also collaborate on high-end OLED products.

"In the face of intensifying global competition, Panasonic's competitiveness in Europe and the US has weakened, while Skyworth, with its experience in overseas channel operations, is seeking to rapidly expand into mid-to-high-end markets," said Yang Liu, a senior analyst at research and advisory company Sigmaintell Consulting.

Yang added that as competition in the TV market becomes increasingly saturated and supply chain costs continue to rise, integration models combining "technology, supply chain, channels and scale" are likely to become a key trend.

"By leveraging technology for market access and channels for business expansion, Chinese brands are expected to steadily increase their global influence," Yang said.

Similar moves have been seen across the industry. In January, domestic home appliance heavyweight TCL, which floated in Hong Kong, announced plans to establish a joint venture with Sony, in which TCL will hold a 51 percent stake and Sony 49 percent, to take over the latter's home entertainment business, covering the full chain from R&D to sales and customer service.

Skyworth acquired the operating rights for Philips-branded TVs in North America last year, and earlier acquired German TV brand Metz. In 2017, Hisense acquired a 95 percent stake in Toshiba's TV business, forming TVS Regza.

These developments point to the growing global competitiveness of Chinese TV brands. Data from market research institute AVC Revo show that global TV shipments reached 264 million units in 2025, with Samsung, TCL, Hisense, LG and Xiaomi ranking as the top five vendors.

Notably, TCL's shipments surpassed 30 million units for the first time, narrowing its gap with Samsung to within 5 million units.

"Whether through JVs or brand licensing, competition in the global TV sector has increasingly evolved into a contest between Chinese and South Korean players," Yang said.

At the same time, weakening demand in the domestic market is accelerating Chinese manufacturers' push overseas. AVC Revo's data show that China's TV sales fell to 27.63 million units in 2025, the lowest level on record. Research firm Omdia's analysis also indicates that as government subsidies ended and consumers had already brought forward purchases, shipments in China in the fourth quarter of 2025 dropped 25.3 percent year-on-year.

The slowdown has weighed on domestic revenues. According to TCL's annual financial results filed with the Hong Kong bourse, the company's domestic TV business generated HK$17.2 billion ($2.2 billion) in 2025, down 9.7 percent year-on-year, while Skyworth's domestic revenue in the TV sector fell 7.4 percent to 11.78 billion yuan ($1.73 billion). Hisense's TV unit also recorded a 5.14 percent decline in domestic revenue.



Consumers check out Mini LED televisions at a shopping center in Jiaxing, Zhejiang province, on Feb 21. JIN PENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

> Mini LED TVs have become a major focus of the industry over the past two years. The technology is likely to play a significant role in helping Chinese manufacturers compete in the high-end segment."
>
> **Wang Xianming,** director of TV industry chain research at market intelligence firm Runto

Against this backdrop, overseas markets have become a key growth engine. TCL's overseas TV revenue rose 15.7 percent to HK$47.5 billion in 2025, while Skyworth's overseas revenue increased 21.8 percent to 9.885 billion yuan. Hisense's overseas revenue reached 29.23 billion yuan, accounting for more than half of its total.

Behind the revenue growth is a shift toward higher average selling prices and improved product mix, industry experts said.

"As Chinese players increasingly expand their global footprint, future competition between Chinese and South Korean brands will focus on the mid-to-high-end segment, which South Korean brands have long dominated," said Wang Gang, a home appliances analyst at Sinolink Securities.

A report by Sinolink Securities noted that while Chinese brands' global shipment share rose from 10 percent in 2015 to nearly 30 percent in 2025, their average prices still lag behind South Korean competitors by $200 to $300.

This gap, however, is beginning to narrow. Data from global research firm Counterpoint Research show that the combined share of TCL and Hisense in the global premium TV market rose from 22 percent in the fourth quarter of 2023 to 39 percent in the first quarter of 2025, while South Korean brands have seen a continuous decline since 2024.

"Chinese brands have shown strong agility in their growth strategies over the past year," said Matthew Rubin, principal analyst of TV Set Research at Omdia.

Rubin noted that even though accessing the US market is more challenging now, major Chinese brands have adjusted supply chains to meet new requirements, mainly through positioning profitability as a bigger priority.

As premium models remain the main driver of profitability, Chinese manufacturers are increasingly focusing on high-end display product profiles. TCL said in its annual financial statements that the average selling price in North America rose more than 20 percent in 2025, driven by larger screen sizes and premium products such as Mini LED TVs.

Similarly, Hisense reported that shipments of its Mini LED TVs grew more than 26 percent year-on-year, and it ranked first globally in ultra-large TV segments of 98 inches and above, as well as 100 inches and above, with shares of 30.3 percent and 57.1 percent, respectively.

Skyworth also said its cooperation with Panasonic will focus on high-end technologies such as OLED, Mini LED, smart system integration and image processing algorithms.

According to Omdia, global Mini LED TV penetration rose from 3.1 percent in 2024 to 6.1 percent in 2025, with TCL ranking first globally with a 31.1 percent share after a 118 percent surge in shipments.

"Mini LED TVs have become a major focus of the industry over the past two years," said Wang Xianming, director of TV industry chain research at market intelligence firm Runto.

Wang noted that global Mini LED TV shipments reached 7.85 million units in 2024, surpassing OLED TV shipments of 6.12 million units for the first time. In 2025, that lead widened further and the trend is expected to continue in the coming years.

"The technology is likely to play a significant role in helping Chinese manufacturers compete in the high-end segment," Wang said.

Zhang Hong, deputy general manager of Sigmaintell's large-display division, said competition in the premium Mini LED segment has evolved into differentiated technology paths between Chinese and South Korean brands.

"Chinese manufacturers are pursuing multiple approaches, with Hisense focusing on RGB-Mini LED and TCL positioning its flagship products around SQD-Mini LED, while South Korean players such as Samsung and LG continue to adopt a dual-track strategy centered on both OLED and Mini LED technologies," Zhang said.

China's vacuums sweep into overseas markets with high-tech prowess

By LI JIAYING

As their global market share continues to expand, domestic robot vacuum brands are no longer seen as budget alternatives, but are increasingly setting the pace in performance and user experience in the global market.

From Dreame's X50 Ultra robot vacuum being named in Time Magazine's Best Inventions of 2025 — the only robot vacuum on the list — to Chinese brands dominating Amazon's best-seller rankings, the rise of Chinese robot vacuum players is becoming increasingly visible to global consumers.

According to a report released by market intelligence IDC in March, global shipments of home cleaning robots reached 32.72 million units in 2025, up 20.1 percent year-on-year. Notably, Chinese manufacturers — including Roborock, Ecovacs, Dreame, Xiaomi and Narwal — took all top five spots in terms of global shipments.

"Chinese manufacturers played a central role in driving the steady growth of the global robot vacuum market in 2025, supported by ongoing product innovation, stronger channel execution and the continued release of demand," said Zhao Siquan, a senior analyst at IDC China. "Going forward, competition will increasingly center on AI capabilities and ecosystem integration, with technological innovation becoming the key differentiator."

The shifting market dynamics are also reflected in the fortunes of traditional players. iRobot, a US pioneer in the robot vacuum industry, filed for bankruptcy late last year and agreed to be acquired by one of its Chinese suppliers, Shenzhen, Guangdong province-based Picea Group.

In a post-bankruptcy interview, iRobot CEO Gary Cohen said the company had fallen about four years behind Chinese competitors on product innovation.

"Driven by breakthroughs in laser navigation, AI-based visual recognition, multi-sensor fusion and embodied intelligence algorithms, Chinese robot vacuum brands have moved ahead of traditional incumbents such as iRobot in overall product intelligence," said Jiang Han, senior analyst at market consultancy Pangoal.

Driven by a dual strategy jointly powered by technological innovation and scenario adaptation, Chinese industry players are able to tailor products to different household layouts and flooring conditions across markets, thereby forming differentiated competitiveness, Jiang said.



A visitor tries out Dreame's vacuum during a home appliance expo in Shanghai on Aug 1. SHI JUE / FOR CHINA DAILY

> The ability to respond swiftly to these pain points is key to gaining a competitive advantage."
>
> **Meng Jia,** president of Dreame's robotic vacuum division

"Take the European market as an example, where wall-to-wall carpeting is common in many households. While the 'mop-lifting' function has been introduced as a solution, its limited lifting height means that long-pile carpets can still get wet," said Meng Jia, president of Dreame's robotic vacuum division.

To address the challenge, the manufacturer developed a detachable mop function specifically for carpeted homes. In vacuuming mode, the mop remains at the base station, and is automatically installed only when mopping is required, Meng said.

"The ability to respond swiftly to these pain points is key to gaining a competitive advantage," he added.

Another common frustration in everyday homes targeted by the Chinese brand is the difficulty of cleaning corners, where traditional robot vacuums often leave gaps of around 5 centimeters along edges, Meng explained.

In this regard, the manufacturer developed a bionic robotic arm that extends the mop to reach edges and mimic human cleaning, reducing gaps to less than 0.1 cm. Its robot vacuums equipped with this feature have sold over 7 million units as of late April.

According to Meng, such strong product capabilities have given Chinese brands the confidence to compete in the global high-end segment.

"With globally pioneering technologies such as the bionic robotic arm, embedded base station and binocular 3D vision-based obstacle avoidance, our flagship models are priced close to premium home appliances in markets such as Western Europe and North America, yet have still become a preferred choice among local consumers," he said.

The strategy has also translated into market performance. In 2025, Dreame's robotic vacuum cleaners ranked first in market share across 30 countries and regions, with its share exceeding 40 percent in 18 markets including Germany, Sweden and Poland. The company's revenue from the segment also doubled in 2025, marking its sixth consecutive year of 100 percent growth.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:21 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:21 PM

TRAVEL







Left: Fishermen tend circular fish cages on Lake Victoria in Busia, Kenya. Aquaculture sustains local livelihoods along the lakeshore. VICTOR RABALLA / CHINA DAILY **Center:** Tourists unwind at dusk beside Lake Victoria in Kisumu, Kenya. LI YAHUI / XINHUA **Right:** The Kit Mikayi rock formation rises dramatically from the landscape in Seme, Kisumu, a towering stack of naturally balanced stones. VICTOR RABALLA / CHINA DAILY

New life beckons for Lake Victoria

As the first light touches the horizon, the area awakens, weaving tales of tradition and transformation on Kisumu's shores

By **VICTOR RABALLA**
in Kisumu, Kenya
victor@chinadailyafrica.com

In Kisumu's Dunga Beach on the shoreline of Lake Victoria in Kenya, the day begins before the sun even rises.

It's a place where morning clouds drift lazily over horizons that seem endless and where human life remains deeply intertwined with the water and sky.

As both tourists and locals gather at daybreak, the first light slowly reveals a searing energy. Wooden boats, anchored shoulder-to-shoulder, rise and fall to the tunes of the tide, almost as if the lake is breathing.

Here, fishing is more than an economic activity; it is a culture, identity and living inheritance passed from one generation to the next.

At this landing site just 5 kilometers from the central business district of Kenya's third-largest city, entire communities revolve around the catching, drying, selling and feasting of fish, mainly Nile perch and tilapia.

"See that dock over there?" gestures Lillian Ochieng', a long-time fish trader from the region. Her gaze sweeps across a cluster of small canoes returning from night expeditions, their silhouettes cutting through the mist like returning ghosts of the water.

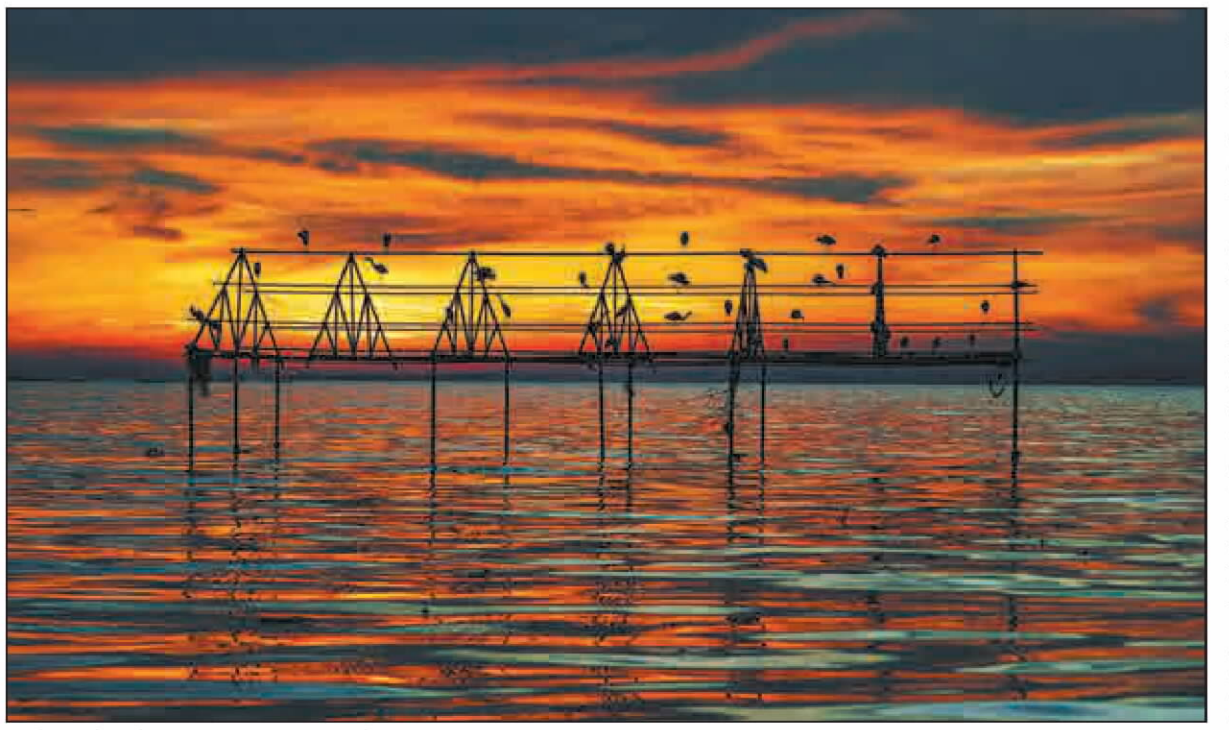
She pauses, a faint smile crossing her face, as though balancing years of memory against the weight of the present moment.

"My grandmother stood on this same shore," she said softly. "She learned how to smoke fish here, my mother learned how to sell fish here and it is now my turn. We laugh, we argue, we survive ... and we come back again tomorrow ... this is part of our lives."

The soft creaking of timber, the distant calls of fishers and the gentle slap of water against wooden hulls blend into a rhythm that belongs to the shores of Lake Victoria, second in size only to North America's Lake Superior among freshwater lakes.

Sprawling across roughly 68,800 square kilometers, this shared water resource between Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania delivers breathtakingly consistent sunrises and sunsets, moments so serene and spectacular that they seem to pause the world in quiet admiration.

In that gentle surrender, time itself appears to loosen its grip — until the watch on your wrist feels unnecessary — as if the lake has its own way of reminding you that some moments are not meant to be measured, only lived.



Birds perch and rest on structures over Lake Victoria in Kisumu, Kenya. XIE JIANFEI / XINHUA

Region of possibilities

Beyond Lake Victoria's enduring legacy as a fishing hub, Kisumu is quietly stirring to life as an emerging tourism destination. This is not only propelled by the allure of the lake but as a gateway to some of the region's most iconic safari destinations.

Just beside the lakeshore lies the serene Kisumu Impala Sanctuary, where wildlife roams against a stunning lakeside backdrop. Nearby, Ndere Island offers a tranquil escape, rich in birdlife and framed by sweeping panoramic views of the lake.

Visitors also have the opportunity to enjoy fishing boat excursions and immerse themselves in local homesteads and traditional fishing communities, with a visit to the Kisumu Museum offering insight into the region's cultural heritage and history.

Further afield, the iconic Kit Mikayi rises dramatically from the ground, steeped in Luo folklore and symbolizing a polygamous family structure.

The monument's name means "stone of the first wife". It's not just a natural wonder, but a towering stack of massive rocks, rising around 40 meters high. The rocks are naturally balanced on top of each other, forming an impressive structure.

You can even climb parts of it for views of the surrounding countryside. It's also considered a sacred site for prayers, rituals and spiritual gatherings.

To the south, the bird-rich Dunga wetland and the flamingo-dotted Lake Simbi Nyaima offer rare ecotourism experiences, drawing nature enthusiasts into a quieter, more intimate encounter with the region.

For Vivian Kobe, founder and managing director of Viba Explore Tours, the magic of Lake Victoria lies not just in its beauty, but in its untold stories.

"When visitors come here, they expect to see water," she says. "But what they discover is an entire way of life: fishing communities, birdlife, islands, culture. Lake Victoria is not just a destination, it's an experience layered with history and human connection."

Kobe has spent years curating immersive travel experiences, from sunrise boat rides at Dunga to cultural tours through villages and island excursions across the lake.

She believes the region is only beginning to scratch the surface of its tourism potential. "We're now seeing more travelers looking for authentic, slower experiences," she says. "Lake Victoria offers exactly that, unfiltered, intimate and deeply rooted in community."

Just beyond the bustle of Dunga Beach lies the fragile, thriving ecosystem of the Dunga wetland, a 500-hectare stretch of papyrus plants, water channels and birdlife that has quietly become one of western Kenya's most remarkable ecotourism sites.

Hesborne Okoth Owino, the site and species coordinator at Dunga Wetland Swamp Boardwalk, says the wetland hosts 156 bird species, including endangered and migratory varieties.

The wetland offers a rare glimpse into biodiversity, from the elegant gray crowned crane to the elusive sitatunga antelope, that continues to draw nature lovers from Europe, the United States and, increasingly, China.



Fishermen dock their boats along the shores of Dunga in Kisumu, Kenya. VICTOR RABALLA / CHINA DAILY

> We are witnessing a noticeable rise in Chinese visitors at Sarova Imperial (Hotel), a clear sign of growing international interest in Kisumu and the wider Lake Victoria region, which is prompting us to adjust our offerings to better meet their expectations."
>
> **Duncun Mwangi,** managing director of Sarova Imperial Hotel in Kisumu, Kenya

"Between 6 am and 9 am, you can record up to 60 bird species in a single session at Dunga Boardwalk," Owino says. "It's one of the most rewarding birding experiences in the region."

The boardwalk is a sightseeing spot built over a wetland swamp filled with papyrus reeds. The raised wooden walkway stretches into the lake area, creating the enchanting illusion of walking on water, immersed in the stillness and beauty of nature all around you.

Even more fascinating is how human activity subtly intersects with nature. Fish cages scattered across parts of the lake have begun influencing bird migration patterns, occasionally attracting flamingos. But a quiet transformation is underway. The rows of floating fish cages that dot sections of the lake stand as symbols of a new economic frontier.

In Busia County, entrepreneur Peter Odongo has embraced cage culture fish farming, turning the lake into a controlled yet thriving production system.

"The lake has always fed us," Odongo says.

"But now we are learning how to work with it differently, more sustainably, more predictably."

Fish farming is rapidly gaining ground as pressure mounts on dwindling wild stocks among the more than 40 million people who depend on the Lake Victoria basin, whose expansive shoreline stretches across the three East African countries.

For investors and local communities alike, it represents both opportunity and adaptation: an evolution of tradition in the face of modern challenges.

City in transition

Back on land, Kisumu's skyline tells another story, one of growth and ambition. Hotels, apartments and new infrastructure projects signal rising investor confidence.

Duncun Mwangi, managing director of Sarova Imperial Hotel, says the lakeside city is poised for a tourism breakthrough.

"We're seeing gradual expansion in tourism offerings, from water buses to safari vessels, that allow visitors to experience the lake in new ways," Mwangi says.

Improved infrastructure — including the Standard Gauge Railway extension to Malaba, linking the coastal city of Mombasa to Uganda's border — could boost travel patterns and promote domestic tourism around Lake Victoria, he says.

Air travel to Kisumu remains relatively expensive and limits tourist inflows, he says.

To adjust to the growing number of global visitors, Sarova Group of Hotels has tapped into its experience to develop Asian cuisine, among other major international culinary offerings, to ensure a diverse and globally appealing dining experience.

"We are witnessing a noticeable rise in Chinese visitors at Sarova Imperial, a clear sign of growing international interest in Kisumu and the wider Lake Victoria region, which is prompting us to adjust our offerings to better meet their expectations," Mwangi says.

Abhishek Sharma, general manager of Acacia Hotel in Kisumu, says the ongoing upgrades of the Kisumu International Airport could see growing demand for premium experiences tied to the lake for guests who take direct and chartered flights.

The Kenyan government has initiated works on a runway extension, construction of a modern cargo terminal with cold storage to support fish exports, and improved air traffic and operational systems.

Sharma says Acacia Hotel has established an independent travel desk to assist guests who want more than accommodation, conferencing and dining.

"From lake tours to cultural sites ... and tour drives around the neighboring towns, our facility offers a complete and immersive experience for every traveler," he says.

At a regional level, Charles Kataro, CEO of Lake Victoria Tourism Association, underlines the need to tap into the growing interest from Chinese travelers in the region.

"Chinese travelers are increasingly seeking less crowded, experiential destinations, which plays strongly in Western Kenya's favor," Kataro says.

The association has started to capitalize on the Chinese market by collaborating with tour operators and online travel agents, leveraging digital platforms such as Douyin — China's TikTok, introducing familiarization trips for Chinese influencers, and aligning the destination with Belt and Road-related travel narratives.

Kataro, who envisions a bold future for the lake, is also championing the introduction of cruise tourism that would connect Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania into a seamless regional travel circuit.

"Lake Victoria can become a regional tourism hub," he says, imagining a lake that no longer divides borders but links experiences across them.

That vision is beginning to take shape, with the Kenya Tourism Board working with stakeholders to co-create new strategies of promoting the region, from city hotels in Kisumu to island lodges scattered across the lake's vast waters.

Board member Victor Shitakha says cruise tourism is expected to spark activity across key ports, including Kisumu; Tanzania's Mwanza, Musoma and Bukoba; and in Uganda, Entebbe, Port Bell and Jinja.

For Malcolm Ormiston, founder of WaterBus, which connects more than 10 communities across the lake region through flexible routes, the network is expected to expand as demand grows.

"Offering improved rural transport, ensuring fast, safe and comfortable journeys, the service carries more than 1 million people per year," Ormiston says, adding that the locally built vessels support regional industry.

While the water buses primarily serve as a transport solution, moving passengers and goods between landing sites and islands, the fleet is transforming mobility and tourism across Lake Victoria.

The vessels also offer sunset cruises, island excursions, bird-watching trips and relaxation cruises, opening up new opportunities in the region.

Operators say the water buses are "the cleanest way to travel the lake", generating 95 percent fewer hydrocarbons per passenger per hour compared with small two-stroke outboard engines commonly used on canoes in commercial passenger operations.

To reshape the urban life of the city, which was founded in 1901, Kisumu identified the lakefront area as a key asset and proposed its development as an extension of the central business district.

Under Governor Anyang' Nyong'o, the Kisumu Lakefront Development Corporation was established to drive this transformation, guided by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

By turning the waterfront into an accessible and visually striking public space, Lake Victoria is fast becoming Kisumu's defining asset, recasting the city as a modern waterfront hub where nature, tourism and commerce converge.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:21 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:21 PM

SPORTS

SOCCER



HEARTBEAT OF A TROUBLED NATION

The 'beautiful game' is the one thing that unites everyone in Haiti

People play soccer in Petion-Ville, Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on April 12. The Haitian national team has qualified for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, reaching the Finals for just the second time in its history. Soccer is the most popular sport in Haiti. ALL PHOTOS BY AFP

On a street in a suburb of Port-au-Prince, a dozen teenagers using stones for goalposts are immersed in a Sunday game of soccer as traffic winds around them.

Haiti has many problems, including political instability, poverty and crime, but through it all, the heart of the nation beats for soccer.

Haiti's qualification for this summer's World Cup has come as a breath of fresh air for the poorest nation in the Americas, the nearly 12 million people of which have long grappled with gang violence that has caused a humanitarian crisis.

"Soccer is hope and love. It inspires pride and passion," said Salome Sandler Tally, founder and coach of the women's section of Aigle Noir AC, a professional club based in the Haitian capital.

"Qualifying for the World Cup is something special for a country that loves soccer so deeply."

The Grenadiers, as Haiti's team is known, made their only previous appearance at the Finals when it was held in West Germany in 1974.

"It is incredible to have achieved this 52 years later," Tally said.

'Pagan ceremonies'

In early April, the cash-strapped government allocated 264 million gourdes ($2 million) for the national soccer team as a qualification bonus and to help pay for World Cup preparations.

Haiti will face Brazil, Morocco, and Scotland in Group C. Its games will be played in the United States, which is co-hosting the tournament with Mexico and Canada from June 11-July 19.

In its World Cup qualifying campaign, Haiti did not play a single match on home soil.

The nation's main venue — the Sylvio Cator Stadium — has been closed since February 2024, as it is located in a Port-au-Prince neighborhood controlled by gangs, as is about 90 percent of the capital.

But the "beautiful game" is played everywhere by people who are barefoot, in flip-flops or in sneakers. They have matches on asphalt, dirt or worn-out artificial turf — in neighborhood leagues, interschool competitions and tournaments involving both professional and amateur clubs.

Patrice Dumont, a former senator and sports columnist, said that in Haiti, a deeply religious nation, summer holiday leagues "are sites of pagan ceremonies that would make even the most devout fanatics blanche" — an apparent reference to the charged atmosphere at the matches.

"You see them in every community — provided there is space — ranging from three-a-side matches to full 11-a-side games, always drawing massive crowds of spectators," he said.

Evens Lezin, a 49-year-old amateur player, said qualification for the World Cup will give "hope" to Haiti's youth.

"We can move forward, but it requires discipline," he said.

"Nowadays, many young people are delinquent. They struggle with alcohol, they smoke and they lack healthy recreational pursuits, but soccer can offer an escape."

In every conversation

The topic of soccer finds its way into every conversation. It bridges generational and social divides, and is talked about in restaurants, supermarkets, in living rooms and over the airwaves.

"Soccer is probably one of the few spaces for socialization still accessible to a large segment of the youth. It is the quintessential conversation starter," said soccer fan Marc Donald Orphee, 35.

Even though the majority of the men's and women's national team players play abroad, that has not diminished the public's devotion to the national side.

Pierreline Nazon, 18, a star of the women's under-20s team, compares herself to Melchie Dumornay, a Haitian midfielder for OL Lyonnes, a top French team.

Nazon spoke to reporters as she took time out from a training session in the hills above Petion-Ville, a suburb of the capital spared from violence.

"My dream has always been to play soccer — to be like Melchie, and even to surpass her," she said.

"I know I will achieve this. That is why I keep training, seizing every opportunity to play, even though the situation in Haiti is difficult."

AFP











In Haiti, soccer is played everywhere, by people who are barefoot, in flip-flops or in sneakers; in matches on asphalt, dirt or worn-out artificial turf, for neighborhood leagues, interschool competitions and tournaments involving both professional and amateur clubs. A quintessential conversation starter, it bridges generational and social divides.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:21 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:21 PM

SPORTS

BASKETBALL



After suffering two ACL tears in consecutive years, including one in a World Cup final, 31-year-old Wu Tongtong has returned to the court and rebuilt herself into one of the most complete guards of the 2025-26 Women's Chinese Basketball Association (WCBA) season, earning both regular-season MVP and assists leader honors, as well as re-establishing herself in the national team setup. AGENCIES





WALKING TALL ONCE AGAIN

Two career-threatening ACL injuries couldn't keep WCBA MVP Wu Tongtong down

Few setbacks are more cruel for an athlete than reaching the peak of their career only to be forced off the world stage by a torn ACL.

For Wu Tongtong, that ordeal came twice.

For the 1.75-meter guard, defined less by physical stature than by resilience, the challenge was not only to return, but to rebuild.

After suffering two ACL tears in consecutive years, including one in a World Cup final, the 31-year-old returned to the court and rebuilt herself into one of the most complete guards of the 2025-26 Women's Chinese Basketball Association (WCBA) season, earning both regular-season MVP and leading assists honors.

Setbacks

Just a few years ago, though, Wu's career appeared to be unraveling.

In the final of the 2022 FIBA Women's Basketball World Cup in Sydney, Wu, one of China's best-known all-around guards, combining a sturdy frame with reliable shooting range, suffered a devastating ACL tear in her left knee, along with severe meniscus damage.

For many athletes, such an injury can seriously alter — if not permanently end — a career.

After surgery and rehabilitation, she initially responded with optimism. The forced pause, she believed, might offer some balance after years of nonstop competition between national team duty and the WCBA.

"People always have ups and downs," she said. "I could rest, spend time with family, reset and come back."

Her recovery from the first surgery progressed smoothly, reinforcing her belief that a return to form was within reach.

Then came the second blow.

In June 2023, during a training session as she neared a comeback, Wu tore the ACL in her right knee.

"I hadn't even officially returned to the court, and I went down in the same way again," she said. "That made me feel desperate."

Before the injuries, Wu had rarely been sidelined.

Coaches and trainers consistently praised her physical condition. But, after the second tear, uncertainty replaced expectation.

Walking became difficult. Daily life, once effortless, required assistance.

Watching others play from afar, she was forced to confront an unfamiliar identity as an athlete separated from the game.

Struggle

Wu, who grew up in Fuxin in Northeast China's Liaoning province, had shown athletic promise from an early age. She ran fast, skated well and drew attention from multiple sports programs, with coaches from different disciplines trying to recruit her.

But when her father asked what she wanted to pursue, the girl's answer was immediate: basketball.

"At the time, I didn't have big ambitions like making the national team," she said. "I just loved playing."

That love supported her as she left home at a young age to pursue basketball, and it also became her anchor through the darkest period of her career.

To shorten the recovery timeline, Wu made a bold medical decision during her second surgery, opting for an artificial ligament implant.

Doctors warned that it would carry greater risk and long-term uncertainty than traditional reconstruction using the body's own tissue.

"If I didn't do it, I would face another long recovery period," she said. "Basketball has given me so much. I was willing to give something back."

The road back, however, was grueling.

In training, she sometimes struggled with basic movements, even simple jumps onto a 10-centimeter platform that children could complete easily.

Repetition bred doubt, and there were moments when she questioned whether she would ever return to the elite stage.

Driven more by inner resolve than external examples, Wu leaned into solitude during rehabilitation, spending 438 days away from competition while rebuilding herself physically and mentally, step by step.

"I always place responsibility on myself," she said.

"As long as I am still here, and mentally strong, I can face anything."

Rebirth

Her return began quietly, without fanfare.

Last season, she left Shanxi Flame after nine years and joined Xinjiang Magic Deer. The transition coincided with her ongoing physical rebuilding and a team still trying to find its shape.

The turning point came in the offseason, when she trained under former China women's national team head coach Zheng Wei with the Guangdong squad for China's 15th National Games. Immersed in high-intensity competition throughout the summer, she went through a physically demanding, but transformative period that gradually restored both her fitness and confidence, ultimately helping her team win the title.

By the 2025-26 WCBA season, Xinjiang had emerged as one of the league's surprise contenders.

Led by veterans including Wu, Wang Xuemeng and Zhang Qifang, the team steadily advanced through the season and into the semifinals.

Wu played a central role, averaging 17 points and 8.9 assists per game, while serving as both the primary initiator and offensive organizer.

"I thought I would improve, but I didn't expect these awards," she said. "It's an affirmation. I'm grateful to my teammates."

Before each game, her primary wish is simply to come through unscathed, but once the ball is tipped, caution disappears and competitive instinct takes over.

"I've made peace with the injuries," she said.

"If you keep dwelling on the past, you're wasting the present version of yourself."

The injuries have also reshaped how she sees her role. Once focused mainly on her own performance, she now sees herself as a connector and mentor.

On the sidelines, she often breaks down tactical details for younger teammates and emphasizes injury prevention, urging them to value their bodies.

As Chinese women's basketball continues to evolve, and younger players rise through the system, Wu acknowledges that her national team role may be changing. Instead, she is focused on something simpler and harder to lose — her love of the game.

"Anyone who truly loves something should have something to pursue," she said. "If someone has gone through similar difficulties as me, I hope they can stand back up, too."

XINHUA

> "I've made peace with the injuries. If you keep dwelling on the past, you're wasting the present version of yourself ... If someone has gone through similar difficulties as me, I hope they can stand back up, too."
>
> **Wu Tongtong,** WCBA MVP on suffering, and recovering from, two consecutive ACL tears



Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:21 PM

Recycling boom

Middle East unrest reshapes plastic supply landscape

ASIA FOCUS, PAGE 4



Foreign hosts in Hainan FTP help sell to world

BUSINESS, PAGE 10



Slow living revival

Youth embrace traditional crafts, rituals to counter digital fatigue

Z WEEKLY, PAGE 14

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:22 PM

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中國日報 WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 2026

XI'S VISION | GOVERNANCE PERFORMANCE

Village fostered new philosophy of development

Recasting of relationship between growth and environmental protection resonates still

By **ZHAO JIA**
zhaojia@chinadaily.com.cn

More than two decades ago, Yucun, a village in Anji county of East China's Zhejiang province, was known for what locals called the "stone economy". Quarrying and cement production brought income and made Yucun one of Anji's better-off villages, but the prosperity came at a heavy environmental cost: Hills stripped bare, waterways polluted and the air thick with dust.

Yucun began shutting down its quarries, a decision that sharply reduced village income. The choice that the village faced was stark: Keep quarrying, or seek a different future — one built around ecological restoration.

At that crossroads, Xi Jinping, then Party secretary of Zhejiang province, visited the village in August 2005. After hearing briefings from local officials, he endorsed the shutdown as a wise move and said growth should not come at the expense of the environment, because such growth is not development.

He also put forward a concept that would later become widely cited: "Lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets."

The idea was rooted in a concrete local choice rather than abstract theory, and it soon reached far beyond one village. It resonated not only because it recast the relationship between environmental protection and economic growth, but also because it challenged the GDP-centered view of governance performance that prevailed at the time.

Qian Kunfang, then Party secretary of Anji county, recalled that in an era when "GDP first, even industry first" prevailed, economic indicators were the most direct yardstick for judging local officials. He said that if officials failed to deliver results, they were effectively putting their political future at risk.

In that context, Xi's endorsement of Yucun's shift sent a clear message: Restructuring the economy and protecting the environment were not a retreat from development, but a different understanding of what real development — and real governance performance — should mean.

Two decades later, that shift is being reinforced through a Party-wide education campaign on fostering and practicing a correct view of governance performance.

For Xi, the commitment to high-quality development should become an important part of officials' correct view of governance performance.

Speaking on Jan 20 at a study session for principal officials at the provincial and ministerial levels, Xi said that such a view requires officials to proceed from reality, follow objective laws, and rely on sound decision-making and hard work to deliver results that stand the test of practice and history and are recognized by the public.

In 2023, during the annual two sessions meetings of China's top legislative and political advisory bodies, Xi warned against taking a hasty, resource-depleting or GDP-only path, saying that this was why the new development philosophy must be firmly established.

The environmental field has been one of the most visible areas where that philosophy has taken shape. Xi has repeatedly emphasized that "to protect the environment is to protect productivity, and to improve the environment is to boost productivity".

Yucun offers a concrete example of how that principle works on the ground. Yu Xiaoping, deputy Party chief of Yucun, said the village has stayed true to its ecological foundation while developing agritourism, cultural tourism and educational tourism programs based on local conditions, turning ecological gains into a driver of common prosperity.

According to Yu, in 2025, the village's collective economic income reached 17.22 million yuan ($2.52 million), per capita income among villagers stood at 74,800 yuan, and the village received 1.25 million tourist visits. Yucun distributed 3.17 million yuan in dividends that year.

To some foreign observers, China's green transition has also become a test of how governance performance should be understood — not by short-term output alone, but by long-term public benefit.

David Ferguson, a British translator, said that people-centered development is the overarching theme of the new development philosophy, which advocates innovation, coordination, green development, openness and shared prosperity. "Green development, one of President Xi's priorities, is about giving people a beautiful living environment and handing it down to their children and grandchildren."

See ***Growth,*** *page 3*

Historic win



Wu Yize of China poses with the trophy after beating Shaun Murphy of England in the finals of the World Snooker Championship 2026 in Sheffield, United Kingdom, on Monday. Wu became the second Chinese to win the title after Zhao Xintong's triumph last year. LI YING / XINHUA

Rush to return



Passengers check in with their ID cards on Tuesday at the Jiaxing South Railway Station in Zhejiang province. Tuesday marked the last day of the five-day May Day holiday, and destinations across the country witnessed a sharp increase in travel traffic. JIN PENG / FOR CHINA DAILY **Editorial, page 6**

All-out rescue urged after fireworks blast

By **CHEN MEILING** in Beijing and **HE CHUN** in Changsha

President Xi Jinping demanded a prompt investigation and proper handling of the aftermath following an explosion at a fireworks plant in Central China's Hunan province on Monday, stressing that those responsible must be held accountable.

Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, made an instruction ordering strengthened risk screening and hazard control in key sectors, enhanced public safety management, and efforts to safeguard people's lives and property.

Authorities across regions and departments must draw profound lessons from the accident and reinforce responsibility for workplace safety, Xi stressed.

Premier Li Qiang, who is also a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, urged efforts to strengthen workplace safety in key industries and sectors and resolutely prevent the occurrence of major accidents.

Vice-Premier Zhang Guoqing led senior officials from relevant departments to Liuyang, a county-level city under the provincial capital Changsha, on Tuesday to guide emergency rescue and response efforts following the explosion.

Zhang stressed the need to spare no effort in searching for the missing, treating the injured, and advancing the investigation and rectification of risks and hidden dangers in key industries and sectors.

He also called for intensifying the crackdown on illegal and noncompliant activities in the fireworks and hazardous chemicals industries. Violations — including overstaffing, excessive use of gunpowder, operations beyond the licensed scope, production exceeding designed capacity, and unauthorized alteration of workshop usage and production processes — must be severely penalized.

The State Council, China's Cabinet, will establish an accident investigation team to look into the case.

The explosion occurred at around 4:40 pm on Monday at the plant of Huasheng, a fireworks manufacturing and display company. As of late Tuesday, it had caused 26 deaths and had left 61 people injured.

Officials said at a news conference in Liuyang on Tuesday afternoon that on-site rescue operations had been basically completed, with efforts being made to treat the injured, prevent secondary disasters and inspect fireworks producers in the city, which have all halted operations as of 7 pm on Monday.

Before the conference, all participants observed a moment of silence for the victims.

Chen Bozhang, deputy Party secretary and mayor of Changsha, said that the Changsha Party Committee and the municipal government expressed deep condolences and offered sincere apologies to the victims' families, as well as the injured, other affected people and the whole of society.

Chen said that more than 1,500 personnel from multiple departments have been mobilized to carry out emergency rescue, medical treatment and other related work.

"Personnel verification is underway. The person in charge of the company has been detained by police," he added.

Ding Weiming, Party secretary and political commissar of Changsha's fire and rescue team, said that responders faced major challenges — a high risk of repeated explosions and harsh site conditions.

A large quantity of finished and semifinished products on site reignited sporadically, keeping the blasts going, Ding said, adding that gunpowder stored nearby could not be quickly moved, posing a threat to rescue workers.

Meanwhile, the plant's walls, pillars and roof had largely collapsed, burying victims and blocking access to the scene, he said.

Ding noted that fire trucks and remote-controlled water cannons will be used to protect the two intact but highly hazardous on-site gunpowder depots.

Liu Jiayong, secretary of the Party Leadership Group of the Changsha Health Commission, said that among the 61 injured, 55 have minor injuries and were in stable condition after receiving treatment, while six were in a critical condition and were receiving targeted treatment.

Dai Shuiwen, mayor of Liuyang, said, "We have closed fireworks plants and launched comprehensive safety inspections and rectification campaigns across all sectors simultaneously, in order to close regulatory loopholes, hold companies fully accountable for safety and raise overall safety standards."

Liuyang is a major fireworks manufacturing hub in China, accounting for about 60 percent of the domestic market and roughly 70 percent of the nation's exports.

Contact the writers at chenmeiling@chinadaily.com.cn

WORLD WATCH
By Dennis Munene

Zero-tariff policy to advance Africa's renaissance

China has expanded zero-tariff treatment to all 53 African countries that have diplomatic relations with it, a move that will reinvigorate the African renaissance dream and marks a major shift in China-Africa cooperation.

From May 1 this year to April 30, 2028, China will grant zero-tariff treatment — in the form of a preferential tariff rate — to 20 African countries that have established diplomatic ties with China and are not classified as least-developed countries. This builds on China's existing zero-tariff policy for 33 least-developed countries in Africa, which took effect in December 2024. Together, these 53 African countries will enjoy zero-tariff access to a consumer market of over 1.4 billion people — one of the largest in the world.

The zero-tariff policy presents a rare opportunity for China and Africa to upgrade trade, remove barriers and foster more open markets. It will also help Africa revitalize its industrialization and unlock agricultural potential, as well as modernize and standardize agricultural production and agri-processing. With zero tariffs in place, Africa is poised to attract Chinese investment and expand production capacity in mining — a sector that has long been a global supplier of critical minerals such as copper, cobalt and lithium — to drive the growth of local manufacturing industries.

See ***Policy,*** *page 6*

YUM CHA: GREETING THE DAY THE GUANGDONG WAY

Cantonese chefs help ensure traditional morning repast continues into the present

By **LI YINGXUE** and **LI WENFANG** in Guangzhou

At daybreak in Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong province, the city seems to stir itself awake to a single call — "water's boiling, tea is perfect".

In the teahouses, bamboo steamers rise and cups are rinsed in practiced rhythm. Here, nothing dispels the night's fatigue quite like *yum cha*, or morning tea — "one pot of tea, two dim sum dishes".

China Vibes — FOOD —

For Patrick Parsons, Lord Oxmantown and heir apparent to the Earldom of Rosse in Ireland, this time-honored Lingnan ritual is not only a window to a different culture — one in which he has immersed himself for more than two decades, and shared with his Chinese wife of 22 years — but a deeply felt part of everyday life.

On Parsons' personal *yum cha* menu, *har gow* — delicate shrimp dumplings — takes pride of place.

"The wrapper is translucent, the texture is excellent. I love shrimp, and these are done beautifully," he said, adding that *siu mai*, or pork dumplings, is another favorite.

See ***Teahouses,*** *page 3*

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:22 PM

www.chinadailyglobal.com

A member of ANN ASIA NEWS NETWORK

China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

Vol.8 — No. 1821

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

INDEPTH

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:22 PM

By YANG FEIYUE
yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn



Students from an equestrian school train at the arena of Tanlun Equestrian Town in Yihuang, Jiangxi province, on Dec 13. WAN XIANG / XINHUA

New generation saddles up for equine success

Equestrian sports sector spurred on by growing professionalism, popularity





Left: A teenager trains at an equestrian training center in Shenyang, Liaoning province, on Feb 10. ZHANG WENKUI / FOR CHINA DAILY **Right:** Children interact with a horse during a New Year's horse racing event in the Sandu Shui autonomous county in Guizhou province on Jan 1. YANG WENBIN / XINHUA

Kong Linghai's workday begins at six in the morning. He feeds and grooms his horses, cleans their stables, and then saddles them.

For the 28-year-old horse riding instructor at Mingyang Equestrian Club on the outskirts of Harbin, Heilongjiang province, these seemingly routine tasks are trust-building rituals with the animals in his care.

"Horses are living creatures and you have to understand their nature before you can communicate with them," he said.

Since Kong graduated from the Inner Mongolia Agricultural University with a degree in sport horse training and management six years ago, he has worked his way up from apprentice to instructor, cutting his teeth at equestrian clubs in Beijing and Harbin and teaching more than 6,000 students.

His trajectory reflects a broader shift, in which professionals with university and college equine training like Kong are becoming increasingly sought after in a country undergoing cultural changes in the relationship between humans and horses.

China is home to 3.6 million horses and more than 2,000 equestrian clubs, according to government data, and the sector's market size reached 21 billion yuan (about $2.9 billion) by the end of 2023. The figure is expected to surpass 60 billion yuan by 2030, according to the market consultancy iiMedia Research.

Lured by the thrill

When Huang Ying first saw a horse in late 2024, he was in his first semester at Hejun College in Huichang county, Jiangxi province. Before that, the 19-year-old's world revolved around basketball.

Then, the horses arrived at the college's newly built equestrian center. "When I saw them for the first time, I was amazed by how gentle and calm those large animals were," he recalled.

The first time he was given an opportunity to try horseback riding, he recorded the moment on his phone. "The horse's back was so high, and I was terrified. I was afraid of falling off. I was telling the people below to hold it steady," he said.

The thrill lured Huang into spending the following weeks mucking out stables, mixing feed, and hauling hay — work the college requires all equestrian students to do before they are allowed to mount a horse. It was during those hours of shoveling and sweeping that he began to consider a new path.

As Huang engaged in the stable chores, he formed a bond with the horses and chose to become an instructor after the faculty pointed him to equine career possibilities that also included training as a professional rider, farrier or stable manager. "I'm patient. I wanted to teach others, the way I was taught," he said.

In addition to his affinity with horses, he saw a career advantage in choosing equestrian sports.

"Basketball, soccer and badminton are too popular. There are too many people competing for those jobs. For someone like me, at a vocational college, going up against graduates from top-tier sports universities, I probably wouldn't stand a chance," he said.

Yu Hui, Huang's instructor at Hejun College, said the teaching objective is to train a new generation of industry professionals equipped with technical and management skills and formal credentials.

"Before, the equestrian coaching industry in China was dominated by people who were rough around the edges," Yu said candidly. "They might have known how to ride, but they lacked education."

A graduate of Wuhan Business University's horse racing and management program, Yu spent a decade working as an instructor in commercial equestrian clubs before joining the college in 2022, when the equestrian program was established.

He rose from apprentice to head instructor, specializing in youth education, show jumping, competition horse training, and instructor development.

The shift from club instructor to university instructor, he said, required a fundamental rethink of his role.

At the clubs, his students were children ages three to 16, brought by parents with specific goals of improving posture, or acquiring a riding credential to boost applications to Western universities, where equestrian skills are sometimes viewed favorably.

His teaching philosophy at the college follows a sequence: from understanding the horse and mastering the technique, before learning to work with people on a professional level. The top priority is treating horses with respect, he added.

"Equestrian sports are about equality between human and horse and any form of abuse is unacceptable," he noted.

This philosophy has already made an impact on students like Huang. "You have to be gentle with a horse. You can't shout at it or lose your temper. Horses can sense your emotions. If you approach them with anger, they'll lose trust in you. They might bite or kick," he said.

Huang learned to read the animal through subtle physical cues, such as the tilt of an ear, a shift in its stance and the rhythm of its breathing.

He recalled one horse in particular that was prone to becoming spooked and bolting. "I was scared. I thought, if I get seriously hurt from this, what happens to my career?"

Instead of backing away, he sought advice from his instructors, and over time, the horse began to trust him. "There's a sense of conquest, a sense of accomplishment, when you earn that trust," he said.

Grabbing the reins

Over the years, Kong Linghai has found increasing security with his equine career, and is a rarity among his peers for holding a formal university degree.

"When a horse is acting up, a trained professional will understand the animal's nature and apply systematic knowledge to address the issue. Someone without that background might resort to harsher, more forceful methods," Kong said.

The details matter when it comes to teaching in a real setting such as parents worrying about their child's safety, he said.

Kong recalled one incident, when a mother thought the horse was too big and "wild" for her son. He didn't change the horse. Instead, he observed the boy's riding skills and concluded that the problem wasn't the horse's temperament, but how the youngster was handling the reins.

He taught the child to adjust his grip and timing. Soon, the boy went from barely controlling the horse to riding it with ease. The parents went from constant complaining to full acceptance. "That's what specialized knowledge can do," Kong said.

Wang Yonghao, who runs Mingyang Equestrian Club in Harbin, said, "Instructors with formal education are far more capable overall than those who learned on the job".

Riders from the Inner Mongolia or the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous regions may have excellent riding skills, but they often lack the theoretical foundation and broader competencies that a formal education provides, he added.

Wang also views his equestrian club as part of a broader shift in how equestrian sports are being marketed in China.

Before opening the club in November 2025, Wang spent years in the field of culture and tourism, running a trail-riding camp in the vast Hulunbuir grassland in the north of the Inner Mongolia autonomous region.

He noticed a recurring pattern where many young people wanted to learn to ride but were put off by the cost of traditional equestrian clubs.

"Under the conventional model, lessons are expensive. Many families and young adults simply can't afford the tuition, even if they're drawn to the lifestyle," Wang said.

He set out to create something between a full-service club and a tourist attraction.

Mingyang sits on a 50,000-square-meter plot about 20 to 30 kilometers from downtown Harbin. It combines riding lessons with trail rides, camping, fishing, a petting zoo, and photo shoots. The aim, Wang said, is to "make equestrian sports more accessible — less remote and exclusive — so ordinary people can enjoy".

A casual ride costs 70 to 80 yuan per hour, while a structured lesson for a child runs from 300 to 400 yuan. A crash course designed for beginners costs around 900 yuan for enough sessions to learn basic control to ride independently.

In Beijing or Shanghai, comparable training would cost two to three times as much.

Four months after opening, the club's popularity exceeded Wang's expectations. "On weekends and holidays, we're fully booked," he said.

With 19 horses and four full-time instructors, the club can handle about 40 to 50 riders a day, plus family members who accompany them. On busy days, around 200 people come through the gates.

"What we're seeing is a shift. Equestrian sports are moving from being an elite pursuit to something more mainstream," he added.

Wang said the way forward involves continuing to bridge the gap between elite equestrian culture and the broader public.

"In a city of about 10 million people, only a few clubs offer serious instructions. That tells you how much room there is to grow," he said.

Rising enrollments

Yu, the instructor in Jiangxi, said the growth in demand is reflected in enrollment numbers.

When Hejun College launched its equestrian program in 2022, it admitted just over 20 students. By 2023, the number had grown to more than 40. By 2025, nearly 200 students were enrolled in equestrian studies.

Yu said the college now boasts one of the largest equestrian facilities in Jiangxi, with a 40-by-50-meter indoor arena and a 30-by-40-meter outdoor training area, a two-story stable with 40 stalls, and a fleet of 19 horses, including one warmblood used for competition. A second, larger venue is under construction nearby, designed to host major competitions.

The curriculum combines practical stable work with theoretical courses on horse nutrition and care, stable management and equine anatomy.

"The most important attraction for students is job placement," Yu said. "Our first-time employment rate is over 95 percent, with more than 90 percent of graduates entering equestrian-related fields," he said.

The college has partnerships with more than 200 equestrian clubs across China, many in first- and second-tier cities where the industry is growing fastest. Some students receive job offers before they graduate. "The market has a huge appetite for skilled talent," Yu said.

The growth of Hejun's program reflects a broader policy push. In 2020, China's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and the General Administration of Sport jointly issued the national equestrian industry development plan (2020–25), which explicitly called for integrating the equestrian industry with tourism, culture, and animal husbandry.

The plan envisioned a complete industrial chain, from breeding to sporting events management, and signaled that equestrian sports were no longer niche hobbies but a recognized economic sector.

Zhao Chunjiang, director of the equine research center at China Agricultural University in Beijing, sees the trend as part of a larger pattern.

Equestrian sports and their competitive levels are closely tied to a country's economic development, Zhao said. As incomes rise in China, he expects participation to grow accordingly.

The benefits extend beyond physical fitness, he said. Working with horses builds willpower and resilience, and the sport's inherent emphasis on etiquette can add a refined quality to a person's character that is increasingly valued in contemporary society, Zhao explained.

Yet he acknowledges that barriers remain. Equestrian sports demand high-quality facilities and well-trained horses. They're still a niche activity in China, not yet as widespread as in Western Europe, he added.

Zhao argues for innovation in business models to broaden participation, along with greater domestic breeding of sport horses to reduce costs and improve animal welfare.



A horse-riding performance takes place during the opening ceremony of the 7th Beijing International Garden Festival in the capital on April 28. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:22 PM

TOP NEWS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:22 PM

Threats, strikes test fragile Mideast truce

US, Iran trade charges over Hormuz control, UAE reports attacks on its energy facilities

By CUI HAIPEI in Dubai, UAE
cuihaipei@chinadaily.com.cn

Tensions were reignited in the Middle East on Tuesday as the United States and Iran traded charges over the Strait of Hormuz and the United Arab Emirates came under Iranian missile and drone attacks, threatening a fragile ceasefire that has held for more than three weeks.

Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, speaker of Iran's parliament, accused the US of undermining regional security and the security of global shipping and energy transit with its moves to end Iran's hold on the strait.

Ghalibaf warned that Tehran will respond to such provocations. "We know full well that the continuation of the status quo is intolerable for America, and we have not even started yet," he said in a social media post.

The latest escalation came after the UAE reported Iranian attacks on Monday for the first time since the truce was declared on April 8. The close US ally confirmed it was targeted by 12 ballistic missiles, three cruise missiles and four drones — all launched by Iran.

"These attacks constitute a dangerous escalation and unacceptable violation, posing direct threats to the UAE's security, territorial stability and civilian safety," the UAE's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

One Iranian missile hit an energy facility in the constituent emirate of Fujairah, leaving three Indian nationals injured, while a drone attack targeted a tanker operated by the Abu Dhabi National Oil Co, a state-owned oil giant, authorities said.

A senior Iranian military official did not deny the strikes, but emphasized that the Islamic republic had "no preplanned program to attack the oil facilities in question".

"US officials must end their ugly behavior of using force in a diplomatic process and stop military adventurism in this sensitive oil region, which affects economies around the world," the official was quoted as saying by Iranian state television.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei accused the UAE of backing and cooperating with the "aggressors" against Iran, saying that all regional countries have hopefully "learned the necessary lessons from the developments that occurred during these 50 days".

US President Donald Trump has repeatedly demanded that Iran fully reopen the Strait of Hormuz, a strategic maritime corridor through which about one-fifth of global crude supplies were transported before US and Israeli forces launched strikes against Iran on Feb 28.

Iran has, however, vowed not to relinquish control of the strait, which is its core geopolitical leverage.

Trump claimed that US forces had "shot down" seven small Iranian military boats. A US admiral earlier said that six such vessels were destroyed, but Iran denied it all. Instead, it said a US naval frigate was hit, a claim that has been denied by the US military.

Authorities in South Korea confirmed on Monday that its cargo vessel HMM *Namu* suffered an engine room explosion and fire while navigating the strait, but said no crew members were injured.

Iran's Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi said on Tuesday that the ongoing events in the strait prove "there is no military solution to this political crisis", and he praised Pakistan's sustained mediation efforts.

"The US should be wary of being dragged back into a quagmire by ill-wishers. So should the UAE. Project Freedom is Project Deadlock," he wrote on social media, referring to the plan announced by Trump to "guide" stranded ships from "neutral countries" out of the Persian Gulf.

Saudi Arabia joined calls for de-escalation of the Middle East situation on Tuesday, urging diplomatic means to reach a settlement. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz urged Tehran to return to the negotiating table and stop weaponizing regional energy transit, echoing appeals from French President Emmanuel Macron and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

Oil prices retreated slightly on Tuesday after surging on Monday. Brent crude, the international standard, fell $1.14 to $113.30 per barrel. Before the Iran war began in late February, it was trading near $70.

The Strait of Hormuz is a thoroughfare for global supplies of not just oil, but also fertilizers and other commodities. As it has remained virtually closed since the US and Israel launched attacks on Iran, global prices have continued to rally.

Shooting in Washington DC



Law enforcement officers stand guard near the scene of an officer-involved shooting on Monday in Washington, DC. The United States Secret Service said a man spotted carrying a gun in the vicinity of the White House by plainclothes agents was shot by law enforcement after he opened fire on them near the Washington Monument. The incident led to a brief lockdown at the White House. JONATHAN ERNST / REUTERS

Growth: Green efforts benefit world

From page 1

Amery Browne, former foreign minister of Trinidad and Tobago, said China's experience challenged the assumption that material progress must come at the expense of the environment.

What impressed him, he said, was that ecological protection had been given priority, while renewable energy and related advances could also contribute to global efforts to tackle climate change and other shared challenges.

China's green industries are also reshaping global markets. Its renewable energy products are exported to more than 200 countries and regions, meeting over 80 percent of global demand for photovoltaic components and 70 percent for wind power equipment, and helping countries around the world — particularly developing nations — gain access to clean, reliable and affordable energy.

China has also remained the world's largest producer and seller of new energy vehicles for 10 consecutive years.

Beyond the environmental field, the same decision-making logic has shaped other areas of governance.

It can be seen in targeted poverty alleviation, which rejects one-size-fits-all remedies, and in the development of new quality productive forces, which stresses local strengths over blind imitation.

This logic is also reflected in cultural heritage protection, where preservation is treated as an achievement in governance. In regional strategies, it means matching resources, industries and functions across wider areas instead of chasing isolated, short-term gains.

Hong Xianghua, a professor at the Party School of the Communist Party of China Central Committee (National Academy of Governance), said scientific decision-making has become an important pillar of China's efforts to modernize governance and pursue high-quality development.

At its core, the approach reflects a people-centered philosophy that measures governance performance by whether it improves lives and can stand the test of time, he said.

It also requires systematic planning — balancing development with protection, efficiency with fairness, and immediate needs with long-term goals — while grounding policy in China's realities and objective laws of development, he added.

In a more complex domestic and international environment, sound decision-making is essential for identifying development trends, managing risks, building consensus and turning institutional strengths into more effective governance, Hong said.

Teahouses: Commitment to craftsmanship reinforced at legal level

From page 1

His tea habits, too, have undergone a quiet transformation. In Ireland, black tea is typically served with milk and sugar. But in Guangzhou's teahouses, Parsons has come to prefer tea in its pure form.

Whether Pu'er or his favored Jin Jun Mei, he drinks it unadulterated. "Even when I'm abroad now, I never add milk or sugar," he said. "I've learned to appreciate the tea itself — its original flavor is much clearer this way."

This immersion in a culture of food and sociability has led him to draw parallels with home. In his view, the lively atmosphere of Guangzhou's teahouses echoes the social function of Irish pubs.

"It's a bit like being in a pub in Ireland," Parsons observed. "People come together for that warm, convivial atmosphere. It feels similar," he said.

Despite differences in timing — morning tea versus evening drinks — the purpose, he added, is strikingly similar: "to meet friends, to gather with family. It can feel a little chaotic, but that's part of its charm."

He is also intrigued by the finer details of the tradition, such as the custom of tapping fingers on the table to express thanks when tea is poured — often linked to a story about the Emperor Qianlong traveling incognito among commoners.

"That kind of story gives the ritual a deeper meaning," he said.

For those safeguarding this culinary heritage, the teahouses' bustle rests on exacting craftsmanship.

Xu Jinhui, executive chef of the China Hotel, describes Cantonese morning tea as "a cultural ritual" blending dim sum, tea and human connection.

In his view, dim sum is the "face" of Cantonese culture, and *har gow* its ultimate benchmark. "The wrapper must be thin yet resilient, crystal-clear, with the classic 13 pleats," Xu explained. "One bite should be fresh, tender and smooth. That refinement is the essence of Cantonese dim sum."

He emphasized rhythm and balance: tea first to awaken the palate, then steamed items for purity of flavor, fried dishes for texture, and sweets to finish — layering taste while avoiding heaviness.

Yet the passage of time has brought a sense of urgency.

"In more than 30 years in this trade, I've seen too many old techniques and flavors quietly disappear," Xu said.

"If we don't act now, they may be gone for good in a few decades."

That concern has led to projects aimed at reviving "lost dim sum", some requiring painstaking reconstruction. He cited the example of Jinling duck taro dumplings, where the ratio of taro paste, wheat starch and lard — and even the precise oil temperature tested with small fragments — determines the signature honeycomb texture.

Traditional methods, such as hand-pounding fillings, are preserved in defiance of industrial shortcuts, with the aim of "putting museum pieces back onto the plate".

This commitment to craftsmanship is now reinforced at the legal level. Regulations on the protection and inheritance of Guangzhou's morning tea culture, took effect on May 1, marking the country's first legislation dedicated specifically to *yum cha*.

They establish standards for on-site traditional preparation and require clear disclosure of production methods, including a strict 24-hour window for freshly made dim sum. Freshness, once reliant on a chef's discipline, is thus codified as a consumer right.

After navigating the crowds of the Canton Fair, Parsons returned to a teahouse table. Recalling his first visit years ago, he said the snacks and teahouses already left a strong impression — simpler than today, but just as special.

As tradition and regulation evolve together, *yum cha* continues to adapt. Yet each morning, the ritual endures: diners rinse their cups, share a few baskets, and ease into the day — one sip of tea, two bites of dim sum.

Contact the writers at liyingxue@chinadaily.com.cn



Yum cha, a traditional Cantonese morning meal, is laid out on a table in Shanwei, Guangdong province, on Aug 15, 2025. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:22 PM

AI app by ByteDance explores paid plans for revenue

By CHENG YU
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Doubao, a flagship artificial intelligence app developed by Chinese tech company ByteDance, is testing a tiered subscription model that would charge users up to 500 yuan ($73) per month, a move that industry experts called a clear sign of Chinese AI large model developers pivoting from increasing user volume to generating revenue.

A recent service notice on Doubao's app store page outlined three monthly pricing tiers: a standard plan for 68 yuan, an advanced plan for 200 yuan and a professional plan for 500 yuan. ByteDance said the plans are still being tested and full details will be released through official channels, adding that some free services will also continue.

People familiar with the matter told China Daily that the paid features will target more complex, productivity-driven use cases, including automated PowerPoint generation, deep data analytics and film or video content creation.

Industry experts said the move reflects a broader shift across China's AI sector, where companies are racing to prove commercial viability after years of heavy investment.

According to statistics from global financial data and analytics platform Wind, AI companies performed differently in 2025. While 35 leading AI companies reported net profit growth of more than 50 percent year-on-year, 40 enterprises saw their revenues decline, highlighting the tension between rapid AI adoption and profitability.

Wang Peng, a researcher at the Beijing Academy of Social Sciences, said that Doubao's pricing experiment underscores a significant shift occurring in China's AI industry.

"After an initial phase of spending money to increase their size, developers are now under pressure to build sustainable revenue streams, shifting their focus from accumulating traffic to extracting value," he said.

The idea to charge users is driven by a surge in computing costs due to explosive demand. According to ByteDance cloud platform Volcano Engine, as of March, Doubao's underlying large model processed more than 120 trillion tokens per day, doubling in just three months and expanding roughly a thousandfold since its launch in May 2024.

Tokens are the fundamental units of data processed by AI models. The platform said the number of enterprise clients exceeding 1 trillion cumulative token usage is currently 140, compared with 100 at the end of last year.

Tan Dai, head of Volcano Engine, said in a previous news conference that the difference in token pricing essentially reflects a difference in capability.

"More advanced models carry higher costs per token, but they also generate greater economic value," Tan added.

Subscription models for AI services are already well established globally. Leading models such as ChatGPT, Claude and Gemini typically charge between $8 and $20 per month for entry-level plans, with premium tiers priced at $200 to $250.

"The shift to paid models signals a new competitive logic — not who can attract the largest number of users, but who can translate AI capability into measurable economic returns," said Wang, the researcher.

China's demand for AI data is growing rapidly, and it is beginning to reshape the economy. According to the latest figures from the National Data Administration, daily token usage soared from just over 1 trillion at the start of 2025 to 100 trillion by the end of the year.

ASIAFOCUS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:22 PM

Editor's note: *In this weekly feature China Daily gives voice to Asia and its people. The stories presented come mainly from the Asia News Network (ANN), of which China Daily is among its 20 leading titles.*



A worker uses a forklift to carry plastic waste before putting it into a compressor for recycling in Bentong, Malaysia's Pahang state, in 2024. AFP

SUPPLY SQUEEZE

Demand for recycled plastic soars amid conflict in the Middle East

Under a cloudy sky in early April, five workers feed discarded Cookie Monster nappies into a machine to shred and recycle them.

"This is the warm 'popcorn' for low-density polyethylene, or LDPE, as a base material for industrial packaging, tarpaulin and drip tape," said G. Aushal, managing director of Sannanda Rika.

His company sources discarded plastic waste from the European Union and Japan to recycle it into up to 500 metric tons of LDPE materials every month. On the floor of the recycling plant, located 50 kilometers west of Kuala Lumpur, are hundreds of pallets of 25 kg packs of LDPE that are wrapped and stacked.

The Iran war has affected not only the flow of oil but also plastic supply. Aushal's recycled plastic firm, along with others in the industry, has seen increased demand.

He said: "A Singapore-based customer could not secure plastic supply, so he asked me to ship up to three 40-foot containers of recycled plastic resin per week instead of per month previously." One container typically carries 27 to 28 tons.

Will Low, vice-president of the Malaysia Plastic Recyclers Association, said the demand for recycled materials has risen an estimated 20 to 30 percent since the US and Israel launched airstrikes against Iran in end-February. "At the same time, prices of some virgin materials have increased more than 50 to 60 percent. That is why some manufacturers have brought forward plans to increase the percentage of recycled materials in their product," he said.

In a blog post on April 12, Malaysia's Deputy Finance Minister Liew Chin Tong said now is the best time to scale up the plastic recycling industry amid a shortage of imported plastic resin in Malaysia.

Given the shortage, Low said recycled plastic is a strategic alternative.

"Typically, the price of recycled resin final product is 10 to 20 percent lower than virgin resin, which is produced directly from crude oil. We are pushing hard for the government to implement Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) to drive the demand for recycled resin," he said.



A worker installs low-density polyethylene plastic roll into a machine at a plastic factory in Klang, Malaysia's Selangor state, in 2024. MOHD RASFAN / AFP

EPR makes producers responsible for products across their life cycle to reduce plastic waste. The Malaysia Plastics Sustainability Roadmap aims to increase recycled content in packaging from 10 percent in 2023 to 15 percent in 2030 to stimulate investments in the "collection, sorting and recycling industries".

Malaysia's Housing and Local Government Ministry plans to make some manufacturers — depending on their size — report the recycled content of plastics, paper, metal, used beverage cartons and glass in their products by 2030.

While there is increased demand for recycled resin, it cannot always replace virgin resin. The usage of recycled resin is limited to certain categories of plastic products.

Mike Tan, chairman of the Malaysian Plastics Manufacturers Association's Johor branch, said: "High-precision electronic components and medical devices, including some personal protective equipment, often require virgin resin due to its superior heat resistance and robust insulating properties."

An industry veteran said the toughness of plastic resin is reduced each time it is recycled.

"Household products can use more recycled plastic resin, as at most it affects the color with a lower risk of breaking. But automotive products need higher-quality material, as recycled resin may not provide long-lasting durability," said the 41-year-old, who wanted to be known only as Chia.

Before its recent uplift in prospects, Malaysia's plastic recycling industry had been under scrutiny over contaminated plastic scrap imports.

In 2019, then Environment Minister Yeo Bee Yin vowed that Malaysia would not become a dumping ground for overseas plastic waste and pledged to return illegal shipments to their countries of origin.

According to 2025 data from the United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database, Malaysia imported $162 million worth of plastic scrap weighing nearly 460,000 tons, making it the third-largest in the world behind only the Netherlands and the US. This value has tripled from a decade ago.

To clamp down on the smuggling of plastic waste, Malaysian officials in February proposed a three-month moratorium on plastic imports before making a final decision on whether or not to import plastic waste at all.

The United Nations Development Programme estimated Malaysia produces over 1 million tons of plastic waste annually, of which a mere 10 percent is recycled.

"If you ask me, there may be no need to import plastic waste at all," outgoing Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Chief Azam Baki, who is leading the clampdown on illegal e-waste and plastic waste, said on April 2. He said that improving domestic waste management systems could eliminate the need for imports altogether.

In July 2025, Malaysia further restricted the import of plastic waste by insisting on pre-shipment inspections in exporting countries to address the health and environmental risks linked to illegal or poorly managed plastic waste practices.

But two researchers at Monash University Malaysia — Associate Professor Saman Ilankoon and his PhD student Shafeeq Ahmed Syed Ali — said if domestic plastic waste is not separated at its source, "it does not produce enough good quality and uncontaminated feedstock for the local industry".

"Meanwhile, imported homogeneous plastic sources offer higher-quality feedstock for producing high-value resin and generating sustainable profit margins."

In March, Malaysian Plastics Manufacturers Association President Cheah Chee Choon made the same point when appealing against a proposed moratorium on plastic waste imports — imported plastic waste is generally pricier but of higher quality than local waste.

Aushal's company imports 70 to 80 percent of its feedstock, with the remainder sourced locally.

The two-decade veteran in plastic recycling said imports remain essential, as they are consistently supplied and largely derived from postindustrial production, whereas local feedstock consists mainly of more contaminated postconsumer waste.

In the long term, Aushal is optimistic about the prospects of the recycled plastics industry.

"The shortage of virgin resin has pushed many to increase the use of recycled materials in their products. As a result, the future demand for recycled materials is expected to grow, with manufacturers better understanding their composition," he said.

THE STRAITS TIMES, SINGAPORE

Falling literacy revives debate in S. Korea over Chinese characters in class

The National Education Commission of South Korea in April said it may review ways to strengthen education of Chinese characters, or "Hanja", including the possible addition of Chinese character annotations in textbooks, as part of broader efforts to improve student literacy.

"I think our discussions will mainly focus on reading, writing and vocabulary, but the issue of Hanja education will likely be the most controversial," said Kim Kyung-hoe, chair of the NEC's special committee on literacy. Hanja are Chinese characters traditionally used in written Korean.

"We will discuss the issue openly, but we will make sure there is no confusion among students or parents before anything is finalized," Kim added.

The government move comes as growing percentage of teachers voice concern over what they call falling literacy in classroom, as a significant number of students struggle to understand South Korean words derived from Hanja.

Park Young-hwan, a non-standing NEC member and chair of the Korean Teachers and Education Workers Union, cautioned against moving toward a conclusion that would mandate Chinese character annotations in textbooks.

"There was major turmoil during the Park Geun-hye administration over the proposal to add Hanja to textbooks, and it was ultimately scrapped due to strong opposition from schools," Park said. "I hope this discussion does not end with a push for textbook annotations."

South Korea is facing what some describe as a literacy crisis. In a 2024 survey, 92 percent of teachers said students' literacy had declined compared with the past.

The survey, conducted by the Korean Federation of Teachers' Associations, or KFTA, found that two in 10 students could not understand textbooks without substantial help.

While the survey identified excessive smartphone use and gaming as the leading cause of declining literacy, some critics argue that the lack of Hanja education is also a major factor.

"Hanja education is essential for properly understanding and using the Korean language," said Koh Moon-hyun, a law professor at Soongsil University.

According to the National Institute of the Korean Language, about 57 percent of South Korean vocabulary is derived from Hanja. Teachers say students increasingly struggle to understand those words.

The teachers' survey included several examples.

One teacher recalled that during a mock debate on easing school hair regulations, a student confused the word *dubal* — a Sino-Korean term for hair, derived from characters meaning "head" (*du*) and "hair" (*bal*) — with a homophone meaning "two feet".

In another case, students mistook *geumil*, the Sino-Korean word for "today", for *geumyoil*, meaning Friday. But others confused *jungsik*, the Sino-Korean word for lunch, with a similar-sounding word meaning Chinese food. In this case, the Hanja are the same.

Professors interviewed earlier also said the problem extends into universities. In one example, students misunderstood the term *budongcheung*, or "swing voters", interpreting it as referring to voters with fixed preferences rather than undecided voters because they misread the underlying Chinese-character roots.

"Efforts to improve Korean literacy should be based on Hanja education," said Yoon Kun-young, superintendent of North Chungcheong Province. "Some provincial education offices are already pushing for it."

Still divisive

Hanja was Korea's first writing system, with recorded use dating back to the first century BC. It remained the primary written system on the peninsula for centuries and continued to be used alongside Hangeul — the Korean alphabet — through the Joseon era and until the end of Japanese colonial rule in 1945.

After liberation, the South Korean government promoted an exclusive Hangeul policy to strengthen national identity while also improving literacy and administrative efficiency. In 1948, the government required public documents to be written primarily in Hangeul.

Hanja continued to be taught in schools until 1970, when the Park Chung-hee administration abolished Hanja education and removed it from textbooks. Since then, it has been offered only as an elective in middle and high schools.

In 2015, the Park Geun-hye administration briefly sought to reintroduce Chinese character annotations in textbooks, citing concerns over deteriorating literacy. The plan was abandoned after strong backlash from the education community.

Jang Seung-hyuk, spokesperson for the KFTA, said Hanja education could help improve literacy, but warned that it could also deepen educational inequality among students if not carefully designed.

"Hanja education may help improve literacy, but there are concerns that it could worsen polarization among students," Jang said. "The amount students are expected to learn would need to be set appropriately."

THE KOREA HERALD, SOUTH KOREA



A cultural center in Busan, South Korea, offers calligraphy-style couplets written in Chinese characters in 2025. YONHAP

Thai-Cambodia conflict impacting economy: Report

A UN report released in April warned that the 2025 border conflict between Thailand and Cambodia has triggered a "double shock" of mass displacement and economic collapse, which threatens to undo years of developmental gains.

The assessment showed that the hostilities, which peaked in late December, forced over 644,000 people to flee their homes while simultaneously driving nearly 900,000 Cambodian migrant workers back across the border.

Internally displaced families have fared little better, with average earnings declining by 34 percent. This financial freefall is exacerbated by the near-total evaporation of remittances, which were projected to drop by $942 million combined through 2026.

Beyond the immediate loss of cash, the conflict has obstructed essential services. At the height of the crisis, 883 schools were shuttered, disrupting the education of 200,000 children, while more than 50 health facilities were forced to suspend operations.

Agricultural production, the region's lifeline, has been gutted by falling farm-gate prices and a 42 percent crop loss for displaced farmers.

"This conflict did not just move people across a map; it dismantled the economic scaffolding of the border provinces, replacing steady wages with a debilitating cycle of debt and trauma that requires an immediate, localized response to repair," said the lead UN official involved in the assessment.

The UN is calling for a "transformative recovery" plan that moves away from traditional aid. The report's primary recommendation is to immediately stabilize household consumption through time-bound income support and cash-for-work programs. These initiatives would hire displaced workers to rehabilitate the very infrastructure — irrigation canals, roads and schools — damaged during the hostilities.

The macroeconomic damage has been equally severe, with the report identifying a "structural break" in Cambodia's trade and tourism sectors. Total exports to Thailand contracted by 13.5 percent, while tourism receipts in 2025 were slashed by $855 million as international arrivals plummeted.

In the agricultural sector specifically, the UN projects a $156 million decline in food and agriculture exports compared to the previous year. Major cash crops such as cassava, maize and fresh fruits suffered most, hit by a combination of border frictions, price collapses and quality restrictions.

"Prior to return, 85.8 percent of surveyed households received remittances from Thailand, averaging $2,194 per year. Following large-scale return, average remittances declined sharply to approximately $110. At the macro level, total remittances are projected at $2.60 billion in 2025, compared to a baseline of $2.88 billion, and $2.27 billion in 2026, compared to a baseline of $2.94 billion, implying estimated losses of $277 million in 2025 and $665 million in 2026," said the report.

Without this influx of money, which traditionally served as the primary means for servicing microfinance debt, the UN warns of a looming crisis of landlessness as impoverished families are forced into distress sales of their property to satisfy creditors.

THE PHNOM PENH POST, CAMBODIA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:22 PM

WORLD

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:22 PM

In the throes of sorrow



A grieving family gathers on Monday during the funeral of Palestinian Mousa Al-Abyad in Gaza City after he was killed in Israeli gunfire a day earlier, according to medics. Gaza's civil defense said on Monday that three Palestinians were killed in Israeli strikes in separate incidents across the enclave, amid reports that Israeli military officials were pushing for renewed operations. DAWOUD ABU ALKAS / REUTERS

US 'tariff theater' fuels divide

Global trade restructuring after move as China anchors multilateralism: Experts

By YIFAN XU in Washington
yifanxu@chinadailyusa.com

Global trade is not collapsing under mounting protectionism, but instead undergoing a profound and uncoordinated restructuring, US experts say.

As the United States continues to use tariffs as a form of "political theater" to address domestic grievances, the rest of the world is moving toward a new, decentralized multilateralism, they said. This shift is being driven by a "domino effect" of regional agreements, with China playing a pivotal role in helping stabilize the global trading system, they added.

During a presentation on April 29 at the Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington, Richard Baldwin, a professor at IMD Business School, said current trade frictions between the world's two largest economies are a long-term rather than a temporary episode.

US trade policy, characterized by aggressive tariff threats, is fundamentally about domestic political signaling, Baldwin said. "This is theater — tariff theater — not trade policy."

In an interview with China Daily, Gary Hufbauer, a nonresident senior fellow at the Peterson Institute, agreed with this assessment, saying "blowback from the financial markets, powerful firms and concern about affordability" have acted to restrain the height of effective tariffs.

As a result, the White House has initiated or allowed a range of special arrangements and exemptions, he said.

Both experts expressed concern that national security is being misused to justify protectionism. Hufbauer said efficiency is being "tossed out the window" as proponents of restrictions use security claims as an "all-purpose rationale".

Some US lawmakers are demanding a total ban on Chinese automobiles and parts in the name of national security, a move he described as "ridiculous".

This prioritization of politics over efficiency is consistent with findings from the World Trade Organization. In a March report, the WTO projected global merchandise trade growth would slow to 1.9 percent this year. While import growth in North America is forecast to stay flat, Asia is expected to lead with growth exceeding 3 percent.

Experts said the outlook underscores Asia's role — underpinned by China's robust industrial output — as the primary engine of global recovery, despite Western protectionism.

In contrast to US unilateralism, China has been recognized for its role in maintaining the integrity of the multilateral system.

Baldwin said Beijing's strategic use of export controls was intended to prevent the collapse of the global trade order.

"China's export controls did work," he said. "That dampened anti-Chinese aggression and indirectly protected the WTO system." China remains a natural defender of global connectivity, he added.

Advocating dialogue

Beijing continues to advocate dialogue and stability. On Thursday evening, Chinese Vice-Premier He Lifeng held a video call with US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Trade Representative Jamieson Greer to discuss the implementation of consensuses reached during previous summits.

During the candid and constructive exchange, both sides agreed to utilize trade and economic consultation mechanisms to manage differences.

As the US abdicates trade leadership, other countries are moving toward what Baldwin calls "WTO 2.0" through regional blocs such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.

Hufbauer said this appears to be the current "plan B" for the rest of the world.

Both experts said the current measures satisfy domestic hawks but do not achieve their stated economic goals.

As the global trading landscape shifts, the world is no longer looking to Washington for leadership in law-based commerce, Baldwin said.

"The whole rest of the world likes the multilateral rules-based trading system," he said.

WHO offers new clues on cruise outbreak

GENEVA/AMSTERDAM — The World Health Organization said on Tuesday that it suspects rarely seen human-to-human transmission took place between close contacts on board a luxury cruise ship hit by seven confirmed or suspected hantavirus cases.

A Dutch couple and a German national have died, while a British national was evacuated from the ship and is in intensive care in South Africa, officials said. Three more passengers suspected to be infected are still on board, one of whom has a mild fever.

The WHO said its working assumption was that the initial case of the couple, who boarded the boat in Argentina, was infected prior, possibly while bird-watching, and that human-to-human transmission may have happened on board.

The cruise ship hit by the deadly outbreak is marooned off Cape Verde — an island nation in the Atlantic Ocean off West Africa — and not allowed to put passengers ashore.

The WHO reiterated that the risk to the wider public was low as the disease typically spreads from infected rodents and only rarely passes between humans. People are usually infected by hantavirus through contact with infected rodents or their urine, their droppings or their saliva.



The *Hondius* cruise ship is anchored at a port in Praia, Cape Verde, on Monday. ARILSON ALMEIDA / AP

However, a limited spread among close contacts has been observed in some previous outbreaks with the Andes strain, which the WHO believes could be involved in this instance.

"We do believe that there may be some human-to-human transmission that's happening among the really close contacts, the husband and wife, people who have shared cabins," Maria Van Kerkhove, director of epidemic and pandemic preparedness and prevention at the WHO, told reporters in Geneva.

"Some people on the ship were couples, they were sharing rooms so that's quite intimate contact," Van Kerkhove said.

While the WHO said the ship would be headed to the Canary Islands, Spain's health ministry said it had made no decision yet on receiving it.

"Depending on the epidemiological data collected from the ship during its passage through Cape Verde, a decision will be made as to which port of call is most appropriate," the ministry said.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Partnerships aid Africa's transport, energy plans

By SHARON NAKOLA
in Nairobi, Kenya
sharon@chinadailyafrica.com

Africa's ambitious transport and energy plans under the African Union are gaining renewed momentum through international partnerships, particularly with China, officials say.

However, delivery of frameworks such as continental infrastructure plans has been lagging because of funding shortages, outdated systems and coordination challenges, they said.

Speaking at a side event during the Fifth Ordinary Session of the AU Specialized Technical Committee on Transport and Energy in Johannesburg last week, Lerato Mataboge, commissioner for infrastructure and energy at the African Union Commission, said the continent is increasingly prioritizing investments that can unlock stalled projects, particularly in energy systems.

"One of the biggest weaknesses is our transmission infrastructure and our ability to integrate energy systems," she said, noting that while many countries are expanding the generation capacity, the challenge lies in efficiently distributing that power.

Partnerships with China remain critical in addressing Africa's infrastructure financing gap, estimated at between $90 billion and $100 billion annually, she said. "China is our largest investor in infrastructure, and we want to continue leveraging partnerships with China and other development-oriented partners to close our energy gap."

Strengthening transmission networks is central to enabling industrial growth and ensuring that energy generated — particularly from renewable sources — can be effectively delivered across borders, Mataboge said.

Such cooperation helped move projects from planning to execution more quickly, particularly where financing and construction are bundled, though progress remains uneven across regions, she said.

African leaders are also rethinking how transport and energy systems are structured.

Kgosientsho Ramokgopa, South Africa's minister of electricity and energy, described the current global context as a strategic turning point, where infrastructure is no longer just developmental but a tool of economic power.

Africa's dual constraints — energy deficits affecting hundreds of millions of people and fragmented transport systems that raise trade costs — are mutually reinforcing and must be addressed through integrated planning, he said.

Rather than treating sectors separately, he called for aligning transport and energy systems into a unified economic platform capable of driving industrialization, urging a shift from policy frameworks to measurable outcomes such as megawatts added, operational corridors and jobs created.

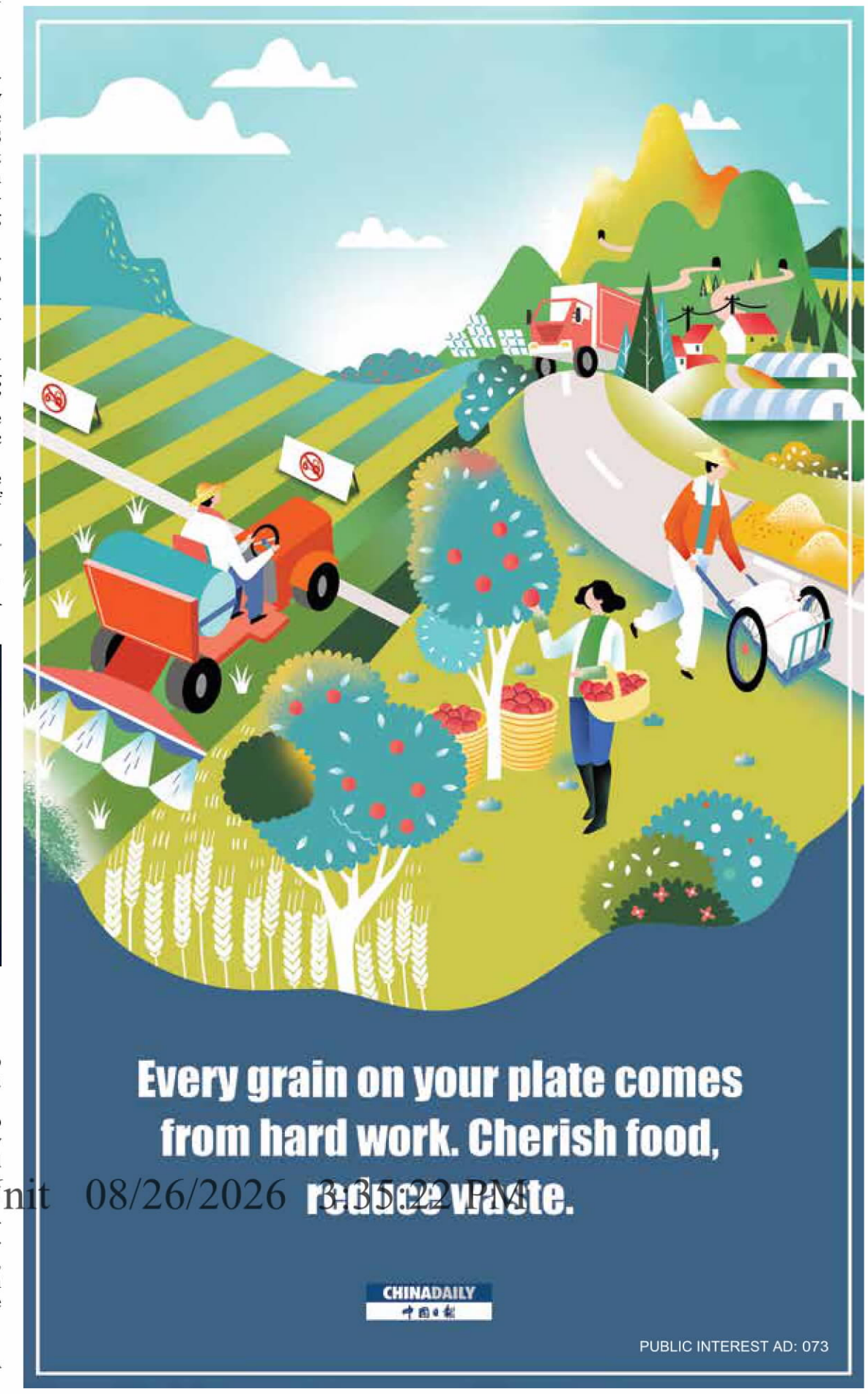
Update needed

Meanwhile, structural challenges continue to slow implementation on the ground. Rod Rembendambya, high commissioner of Gabon to South Africa, said much of Africa's infrastructure remains outdated, with systems in some countries dating back decades. "We need to update everything," he said.

The African Union has adopted long-term infrastructure strategies, but implementation continues to depend heavily on external financing, policy coordination and technical capacity.

While partnerships with China and other global players are helping unlock progress, analysts said addressing internal bottlenecks will be critical to sustaining momentum.

Ndumiso Mlilo in South Africa contributed to this story.



Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:22 PM

COMMENT

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:22 PM

Editorials

Tokyo's straying from Tokyo Trials judgments measures its push to advance neo-militarism

At a time when the world is marking the 80th anniversary of the opening of the Tokyo Trials, the hard-won lessons of history are once again being tested. Developments surrounding nuclear nonproliferation, regional security and Japan's political and military moves have raised serious concerns about whether the country is honoring its postwar commitments or drifting toward dangerous revisionism.

Speaking at a review conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in New York on Monday, China's Ambassador for Disarmament Affairs Shen Jian stressed that the global nonproliferation regime must not be undermined by double standards. As the cornerstone of international nuclear governance, the treaty relies on the authority of the International Atomic Energy Agency and the trust of nonnuclear-weapon states. Yet, certain countries' selective application of the rules is eroding that foundation.

Shen pointed in particular to Japan's recent trajectory. Tokyo has in recent years released a series of troubling signals. Discussions about revising the "Three Non-Nuclear Principles", the expansion of long-range strike capabilities, and interest in hosting nuclear weapons under so-called "extended deterrence" arrangements all suggest a shift that warrants vigilance.

These concerns are compounded by broader policy changes. Tokyo is pushing for a revival of the titles of the military ranks used during World War II for the country's Self-Defense Forces. As noted by Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian, Japan's postwar choice to abandon militaristic rank nomenclature was an effort to break with its wartime past. It was aligned with the spirit of its pacifist Constitution. Reinstating these titles now, under the pretext of fostering a "sense of honor", sends deeply troubling signals.

The Tokyo Trials delivered a definitive judgment on Japan's wartime aggression, affirming international justice and establishing a framework for postwar peace. Any attempt to dilute that legacy or advance neo-militarism runs counter to the postwar international order.

Further raising alarm are recent remarks by Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, who has called for revising key security documents and preparing the country for a long-time emergency. Such rhetoric, coupled with efforts to strengthen military capabilities across maritime, cyber and economic domains, suggests a departure from the "exclusively defense-oriented" policy Japan has long professed.

Japan goes even further. During her recent visits to Vietnam and Australia, Takaichi promoted the so-called "free and open Indo-Pacific" strategy. Such initiatives risk creating division and confrontation, forming exclusive blocs rather than fostering inclusive regional cooperation.

Equally troubling are actions that touch on historical accountability. The recent visit by Japanese lawmakers to the Yasukuni Shrine, following Takaichi's monetary offering to the notorious shrine, once again underscores a persistent unwillingness among certain political forces to confront Japan's past. The site, which enshrines 14 WWII Class-A war criminals, remains a symbol of militarism. Such visits constitute a challenge to historical justice and the outcomes of WWII.

Likewise, Japan's unresolved obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention continue to cast a shadow. The destruction of chemical weapons left in China by Japanese forces during the war remains incomplete, decades after the agreed deadline. These weapons still pose serious risks to public health and the environment, making their thorough elimination not only a legal duty but also a moral obligation.

The tragedies of the past were born of unchecked militarism, strategic miscalculation and the erosion of international norms. Today, as the world reflects on the legacy of the Tokyo Trials, it is imperative that all peace-loving countries uphold their commitments, reject double standards, and resist any resurgence of militarism.

Peace and stability in Asia and beyond depend on vigilance, responsibility and a shared commitment to the principles that emerged from the ashes of the war. The international community should remain resolute in safeguarding these principles, ensuring that history is not repeated.

Economic vitality reflected in holiday surge

The May Day holiday is one of the busiest travel times of the year in China. During the five-day period from Friday to Tuesday, large numbers of Chinese travelers take the opportunity to visit family, explore domestic destinations or go abroad. The surge in travel this year not only provides a boost to the country's transportation, tourism and retail sectors, but also serves as an indicator of the vitality and potential of the Chinese consumer market.

During this period, many travel figures reached new heights, with the number of cross-regional trips at home expected to total 1.52 billion, an average of 304 million per day — a 4 percent increase over last year. International air travel bookings are expected to surpass 1.12 million, while daily border crossings are projected to reach a peak of 2.25 million. This travel frenzy reflects a marked rise in the overall demand that has been facilitated by improvements in China's infrastructure as well as its policy and business environment.

Tourist consumption patterns have changed, with travelers no longer merely sightseeing but engaging in immersive experiences. Customized interest tours, intangible cultural heritage workshops and immersive performances have seen strong demand, with orders for "interest-based custom tours" on some platforms increasing by nearly 80 percent year-on-year.

China boasts a diverse tapestry of attractions, from breathtaking natural landscapes to profound cultural heritage sites, all supported by modern infrastructure such as high-speed rail and 5G networks. This combination provides a robust foundation for continued consumption growth.

The evolving consumption habits of the younger generation are also reshaping market dynamics, as they are driving the shift toward cultural tourism and more tailored experiences, and opening new opportunities for related sectors, including dining, accommodation and transportation.

This rise in cultural tourism has led to new business models, such as nighttime cultural tourism. The cross-industry integration invigorates the consumer market and injects new vitality into the cultural tourism industry.

Government initiatives have also played their part in the tourism boom, with over 284 million yuan ($41.58 million) in tourism vouchers distributed. Moreover, financial institutions have introduced interest subsidies and zero-interest coupons, reducing consumer credit costs and driving cultural tourism and dining spending. These policy dividends have helped unleash consumption.

Meanwhile, China's optimized visa policies, immediate tax refunds for departing tourists and the convenience of mobile payments have markedly lowered travel barriers and enhanced service convenience for overseas tourists. The country has expanded its unilateral visa-free access to 50 countries and extended mutual visa-exemption agreements to 29 countries. Plus, travelers from 55 countries can take advantage of a 240-hour visa-free transit policy to visit China.

The expansion of visa-free policies has directly spurred a surge in inbound tourism. Visitors from countries such as Russia, the United Kingdom and Spain have increased significantly, with inbound tourism extending beyond traditional hot spots, indicating China's growing international appeal. Destinations such as Lhasa, Chengdu, and Taiyuan have seen marked growth in foreign visitors thanks to the appeal of their intangible cultural heritage and local customs.

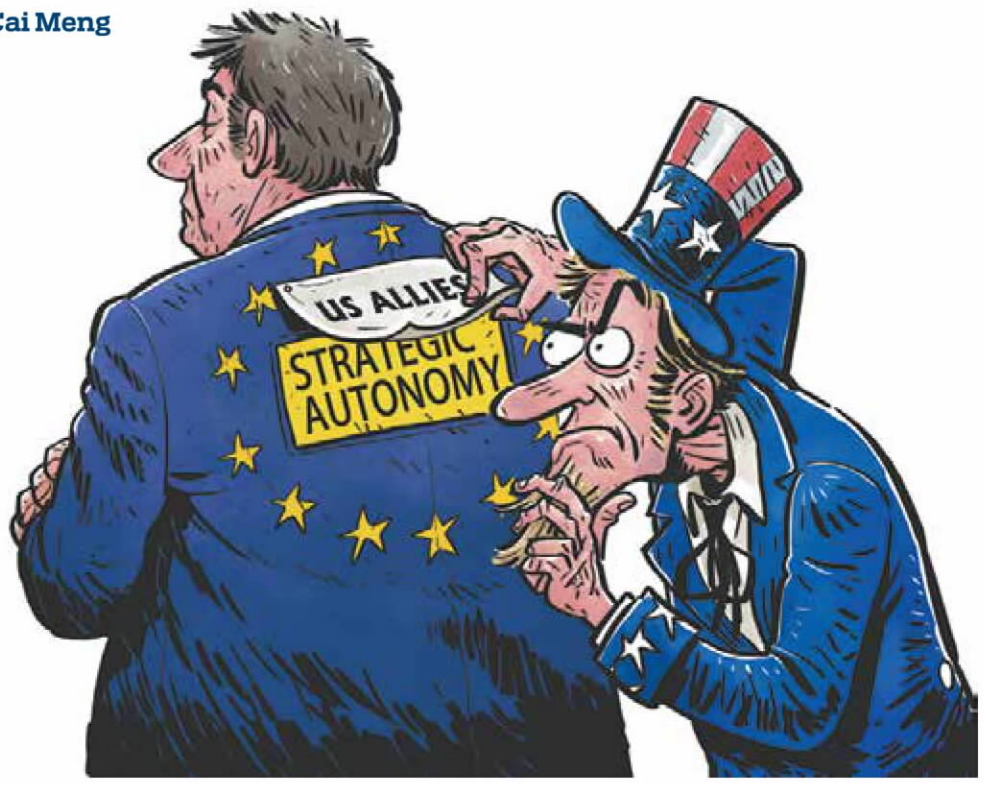
According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, China's travel and tourism economy grew 9.9 percent last year — more than twice the global average. The growth was largely driven by a more than 10 percent increase in foreign tourist spending in China in 2025. "China could become the world's largest tourism economy by the end of the decade," WTTC President and CEO Gloria Guevara told the media.

While the five-hour radius is still the mainstay of outbound tourism, longer trips are trending, with Italy, the United States and Australia ranking among the top 10 destinations for Chinese tourists. Young travelers are increasingly taking "extended vacations" to embark on long journeys. This not only helps boost the holiday economy, but also helps shape China's international image.

The strong holiday consumption is not only a result of the organic integration of residents' consumption upgrading and high-quality economic development, it also resonates well with China's first-quarter economic data, reflecting the smooth circulation of the economy and the release of domestic demand potential.

China's tourism consumption boom during the May Day holiday is a vivid reflection of the country's pursuit of high-quality development. The world sees an increasingly open, prosperous and confident China. What China offers to the world is opportunity, growth and innovation.

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

Bid for pomp and circumstance leaves Lai floundering in a flop

While the Democratic Progressive Party authorities' outreach to their "partners" is theater, their secessionist-minded leader Lai Ching-te's latest sneaky outing to Eswatini is more like an old-school farce.

The star of this curious production, Lai, did not so much depart China's Taiwan island as slip out, reportedly aboard the King of Eswatini's private jet.

The so-called "diplomatic achievements" painstakingly fabricated by Lai are nothing but petty tricks that make him a laughingstock to the world, as Chen Binhua, a spokesman for the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, said.

Lai's original itinerary — reportedly envisioned as a high-profile "visit" — ran into a wall of refusals, as multiple African countries along his flight path declined overflight permissions, adhering to the one-China principle. Some European countries also shut their doors to transit requests.

Chen stressed that the historical trend of China's national reunification is unstoppable.

Back in Taiwan, the timing has raised eyebrows. Taiwan is dealing with the aftermath of a damaging earthquake — one of those moments when local authorities are measured not in air miles but in presence. Yet Lai pressed ahead, prioritizing a symbolic overseas appearance over the island's urgency. The optics, to put it mildly, are not flattering.

That just added yet another scandalous escapade to "Taiwan independence" separatism.

The one-China principle has long been a basic norm in international relations and the prevailing international consensus, a Foreign Ministry spokesperson said.

Then there's the money. Critics argue that such trips are nothing more than expensive pageantry. The taxpayers on the Chinese island are footing the bill for a show whose ratings have plummeted.

Discontent in Taiwan appears to be bubbling. Polls suggest deep frustration. The sentiment points to a local leader whose performance has lost its luster.

Lai and his supporters have attempted to spin the visit as a "success". But that framing feels strained. Success in international engagement is usually measured by doors opened, not doors closed.

Lai's political ambition, untethered from geopolitical realities and historical truths, has veered into empty performative politics.

In the end, this was not the "triumphant tour" it aspired to be. It was something stranger and more revealing: a glimpse into the narrowing space in which the "Taiwan independence" forces' ambition now operates.

The curtain falls on a show that was a very public reminder of the DPP's isolation dressed up as intrigue.

As the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson stressed, no matter how the DPP authorities collude with external forces and keep those people in DPP's pay, it will always be a losing cause and nothing will ever change the fact that Taiwan is part of China. And no matter how "Taiwan independence" forces try to cover up their nature or change appearance, nothing can save their reputation or help them escape the denunciation of the international community.

Eswatini and some other individual countries are urged to see where the arc of history bends and stop serving as the prop of "Taiwan independence" separatists.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

Policy: Challenges need to be addressed

From page 1

As part of its impact on social support and the provision of public goods, the tariff-free arrangement will improve livelihoods, create jobs, stabilize employment, boost incomes and enhance public welfare.

The benefits of zero-tariff deals also align with the 2026 China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges. The tariff-free framework will strengthen bilateral ties and friendship, allowing people to share development dividends. It also upholds the principles of mutual benefit, sincerity, tangible outcomes, solidarity and good faith that have long guided China-Africa cooperation.

At the continental level, the zero-tariff policy will complement and advance Africa's strategic trade framework under the African Continental Free Trade Area, or AfCFTA, a flagship project of the African Union's Agenda 2063. It will also help dismantle long-standing structural trade barriers that have hindered full realization of the AfCFTA.

Furthermore, the new China-Africa trade framework will be bolstered by key global initiatives and mechanisms proposed by China, including the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, the Belt and Road Initiative and the four major global initiatives.

Ultimately, the zero-tariff policy will accelerate the implementation of the Beijing Action Plan for 2025-2027, which was adopted at the FOCAC summit in Beijing in 2024 and covers trade promotion.

The resulting zero-tariff system will further strengthen China-Africa solidarity in pursuing modernization and deepen bilateral cooperation.

However, to fully seize the opportunities presented by the zero-tariff policy, both China and Africa need to address critical challenges that, if left unresolved, will continue to slow down the full realization of the trade-transforming policy.

First, some stakeholders in Africa — including farmers, local producers and industrialists — lack a full understanding of the zero-tariff policy. These key stakeholders, who stand to benefit from the policy's dividends, have not yet fully grasped the tangible advantages. Therefore, there is a need to raise awareness of the zero-tariff policy across Africa. Chinese embassies and their commercial offices, for instance, could partner with local governments, media, industries and cooperatives to publicize the benefits of the program for all parties concerned.

Second, Africa continues to struggle with technological constraints and insufficient production capacity. Most African farmers lack access to modern technologies that would enable them to produce agricultural goods in large quantities and fully tap into China's huge consumer market. This shortage of modern technology undermines product consistency, quality grading, storage and value-added processing. As a result, Chinese assistance is needed to introduce advanced technological mechanisms and boost overall production capacity.

Third, many African products face difficulties in reaching Chinese consumers, as the market is regulated by stringent sanitary and phytosanitary standards and regulations. Therefore, it is of great importance for key stakeholders to fully understand relevant standards and certification policies, in order to effectively tap into and enter the Chinese market.

Last but not least, African countries still face challenges stemming from weak institutional capacity, resulting from poor coordination between government agencies, export promotion bodies and private-sector players. Such institutional inefficiency creates major obstacles for farmers and producers of key export goods, including avocados, coffee, tea and macadamia nuts. These products are vital for African nations to gain better access to the Chinese market and narrow the China-Africa trade imbalance, an issue the new zero-tariff framework is designed to address.

This notwithstanding, the benefits of the zero-tariff policy far outweigh the challenges.

China and Africa are genuine, dedicated and steadfast partners, committed to breaking down trade barriers, realizing shared development, and advancing Africa's renaissance to empower the continent in pursuing high-quality modernization.

The author is executive director of the China-Africa Center at the Nairobi-based Africa Policy Institute. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:22 PM

VIEWS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:22 PM

China and the World Roundtable | Report Unveils World Security Challenges

Editor's Note: *The China Institute of International Studies released the Report on the Global Security Situation 2025 in Beijing on April 20. CIIS President Chen Bo said the report identifies key characteristics of the global security landscape in 2025, including an increasingly tense global security situation, a polarized trend in contributions to world peace and justice, more frequent security challenges across various geopolitical hot spots, and China's prominent role as a stabilizing force for world peace. Below are excerpts from three speakers sharing their views on the topic.*

Navigating a new global security situation

Four levers to safeguard global security



Yang Mingjie is the former president of the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations.

In response to the evolving international security landscape, efforts should be made to advance the building of a community with a shared future for humanity by focusing on four key dimensions: promoting peace, putting people first, taking preventive measures, and safeguarding the role of the United Nations in global affairs.

First, curb the escalation and spread of regional conflicts. It is essential to stay committed to a political settlement. History has repeatedly shown that the use of force cannot resolve international disputes; it only intensifies tensions. Coordinating security with development offers both the framework and the practical pathway for achieving lasting stability.

Besides, adopt a people-centered approach to alleviating humanitarian crises. Hundreds of thousands of people in the Middle East have been displaced, and extensive civilian infrastructure has been destroyed. The food and energy crises triggered by conflicts are further spreading through global supply chains, severely impacting populations, particularly in less-developed regions. All parties must refrain from exploiting humanitarian assistance for political or military purposes. Moreover, humanitarian access and delivery methods should not be used as bargaining chips by stakeholders.

Additionally, take preventive measures to forestall potential crises. International security threats are becoming increasingly cross-domain and complex, exacerbated by certain major powers striving to maintain so-called absolute strategic superiority in areas such as nuclear technology and artificial intelligence. In light of threats to resume nuclear testing or military strikes targeting nuclear facilities, the international community must uphold international regulations on nuclear arms control and nonproliferation. It is also alarming that AI is being integrated into the kill chains and decision-making processes of warfare by certain countries. It is imperative to prevent technology from spiraling out of control.

Moreover, stay committed to the original aspiration and uphold the central role of the UN in international security affairs. The four global initiatives proposed by China align closely with the spirit of the UN Charter, forming an integrated framework that seeks to promote prosperity through development, ensure stability through security, enhance trust through dialogue among civilizations, and advance justice through governance.

Development remains a timeless theme of human society, and it is essential to stay highly vigilant against the growing trend of security risks encroaching upon the development domain. It is vital to coordinate development and security on a global scale.

Redefining security in an era of global interdependence

In an era defined by unprecedented interconnectivity, rapid technological advancement, and shifting geopolitical dynamics, the concept of security has undergone profound transformation. Security, as we know it, is no longer confined to traditional military confrontation. In today's world security now encompasses a broader spectrum of risks, including cyber threats, climate change, pandemics, and the intricate interplay of economic and political instability.

Among the most urgent of these challenges is cybersecurity. Cyberattacks possess the capacity to disrupt economies, undermine governance, and threaten the safety and livelihoods of individuals. Their anonymity and the difficulty of attribution render conventional response mechanisms insufficient. This evolving threat landscape underscores the need for enhanced international cooperation in the development of robust and coordinated cyber defense strategies.

Terrorism remains another significant and evolving global threat. The proliferation of digital platforms has enabled extremist ideologies to spread with unprecedented speed and reach, facilitating recruitment and operational coordination. While governments continue to strengthen counter-terrorism measures, the underlying drivers — poverty, marginalization, and ideological extremism — remain deeply entrenched. Addressing these root causes through sustained diplomatic engagement, education, and inclusive economic development is essential to achieving lasting stability.

Climate change has emerged as a defining security challenge of our time. Beyond its environmental implications, it acts as a threat multiplier — intensifying resource scarcity, exacerbating displacement and migration, and heightening the risk of conflict, particularly in regions already burdened by political fragility. As pressures on natural resources increase, so too does the potential for competition and instability, reinforcing the urgent need for collective climate action.

At the same time, the global security architecture is being reshaped by a shifting balance of power. The post-Cold War unipolar moment has gradually given way to a more multipolar international system, characterized by strategic competition and evolving alliances. In this context, multilateral institutions — foremost among them the United Nations — have an indispensable role in conflict prevention, peace building, and the coordination of humanitarian responses, even as they confront increasing complexity and constraint.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY



Martin Charles is the ambassador of the Commonwealth of Dominica to China.

The global security environment in 2026 is marked by fragmentation and the resurgence of nationalist tendencies. Major players are actively competing across technological, economic and environmental spheres, the result of which is spillover effects that disproportionately impact smaller and more vulnerable states. Yet, opportunities emerge out of this complexity. Interconnectivity, while presenting new vulnerabilities, also offers pathways for deeper cooperation and shared solutions. The international community must therefore renew its commitment to diplomacy, invest meaningfully in sustainable development, and strengthen collective mechanisms for addressing transnational threats.

Navigating the evolving security landscape will require sustained political will, mutual trust, and a steadfast commitment to multilateralism. While the challenges are considerable, they are not insurmountable. I remain hopeful that with coordinated action and a shared vision for global stability, we can navigate the complexities of global security.

SCO a sustainable contributor to global security

On the one hand, the international system is moving toward a more just, equitable, and representative multipolar structure, which presents new opportunities for shared development and mutually beneficial cooperation among nations. On the other hand, intensifying geopolitical rivalries pose severe threats to regional and global peace and stability. Against this backdrop, many countries are seeking effective pathways to ensure both sustainable security and development.



Piao Yangfan is the deputy secretary-general of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Over the past 25 years, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, making joint efforts with like-minded countries and international organizations and guided by the Shanghai Spirit, has continuously advanced multilateral cooperation in political, security, economic, people-to-people exchanges and cultural fields. This has contributed to lasting peace and stability in the region, enhanced the well-being of people and improved the global governance system.

The SCO supports the United Nations' central coordinating role in international affairs and adheres to the UN Charter and other universally recognized principles of international law. Our member states actively uphold both traditional and nontraditional security, opposing the pursuit of absolute security for oneself at the expense of others. Through SCO cooperation, we strive to lay the groundwork for an equal and indivisible security architecture in Eurasia, while promoting sustainable development to ensure sustainable security.

The CIIS security report serves as an important reference for understanding China's perspective and proposals regarding the global security landscape, particularly from the academic community. The SCO Secretariat maintains close communication with academic circles in member states and facilitates exchanges among scholars through platforms such as SCO forums. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the founding of the SCO. In autumn, Kyrgyzstan will host the SCO Summit in Bishkek. It is hoped that think tanks from member states, represented by the CIIS, will offer valuable insights on the SCO's future development. This will help contribute an SCO solution for reforming and improving regional and global governance and achieving lasting peace and shared development.

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

Niu Xinyi and Fan Beibei

ICT shows the way to empowering rural women

In the mountains of Gulin county in Sichuan province, ancient tea trees have stood for centuries, and wild honey has long been a local treasure. When internet connectivity arrived, it brought not only information but also opportunity.

Liu Qian, a young entrepreneur who returned to her hometown to vitalize its rich yet underutilized resources, quickly recognized this potential. She established an agricultural cooperative to sell local products and built a homestay, employing many elderly local residents. Liu is also supported by a women's cooperative leadership capacity development program in Sichuan supported by United Nations Women and Mengdingshan Academy for Cooperative Development, where she developed skills in digital applications and rural entrepreneurship. She uses short video platforms to showcase the beauty of the region and the local products.

Crucially, Liu ensured that connectivity benefited everyone in her community by introducing the elderly to artificial intelligence-powered voice assistance. When elderly workers encountered a problem such as understanding a new regulation, operating some equipment, or simply seeking information, they usually called their children working in distant cities for help. Now, AI provides immediate, spoken guidance.

Liu's story illuminates a broader reality: when women are equipped with the tools of the digital age, they do not just earn a living — they reshape their futures and the communities. It is a vivid example of what happens when supportive policies, digital infrastructure, and a commitment to women's empowerment converge.

Behind every woman in China stands a robust, multilayered national framework designed to ensure that the digital economy empowers women. As articulated in a 2025 white paper titled China's Achievements in Women's Well-Rounded Development in the New Era, gender equality is identified as a key policy priority, and the advancement of women is seen as integral to the broader framework of Chinese modernization. The country has published four outlines for women's development, each building on the last to create a supportive policy environment.

One of the most transformative aspects of this policy landscape has been the integration of information and communication technology (ICT) into women's economic participation. For rural women entrepreneurs, leveraging ICT has enabled them to overcome the constraints of time and mobility.

Liu Mengyue, the founder of a tea factory in Qilong village in Sichuan province, has been an advocate for leveraging technology to bring upskilling opportunities to local women farmers. Since the tea trees are located along the highland boundaries of the plateau, fertilizing and applying pesticides were always physically demanding tasks that only men could do. Nowadays, however, drone technology has made remote fertilization possible. She has also drawn on training received at the Mengdingshan academy to integrate digital technologies into agricultural production and management. In Liu Mengyue's tea garden, half of the drone pilots are women, including a former stay-at-home mother.

Such technological advancement enhances agricultural productivity and operational standardization, and brings equitable opportunities to women. ICT has effectively dismantled the physical barriers that once defined women's limits.

The stories are not random occurrences. The All-China Women's Federation, together with the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, rolled out nationwide e-commerce and live commerce training in 2015. The support ecosystem includes inclusive finance, brand creation, and rural service stations. Institutions such as the Mengdingshan academy have contributed to strengthening rural women's digital and entrepreneurial capabilities. The result is a growing cohort of women e-commerce experts selling local goods nationwide and globally, mastering advanced AI tools.

While the spread of ICT has resulted in tangible economic gains, the deeper significance of this approach lies in its alignment with a proven theoretical framework for women's empowerment. Gender equality is not only about equal access to resources, it is also about cultivating agency — allowing women to become agents of their own development and make their own decisions.

This agency grows by building skills, knowledge, confidence, and experience. A combination of skills and positive self-perception is the proven gateway to empowerment. When a woman learns to use a smartphone to film, edit, and broadcast a livestream, she is not just learning a technical skill but gaining confidence to present herself and her products. When she sees her efforts translate into a sale and income, that confidence solidifies into a new self-image: she is an active creator of value.

The global community celebrates the potential of technology to open doors for young women and girls. The digital road is ultimately a road to empowerment. And for millions of rural women and men across China, that road is now wider than ever.

Niu Xinyi is a program coordinator, and Fan Beibei is a communication officer at the UNESCO International Research and Training Centre for Rural Education. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:22 PM

Maya Majueran

Chinese public goods helping shape Asia-Pacific synergy

Global Lens

Asia-Pacific geopolitics is undergoing a subtle yet consequential shift. Where cooperation was once defined by Western-led rules, norms and security alignments, China is advancing a model focused on delivering tangible public goods rather than abstract principles.

At the core of this shift is a deeper contrast between two models of regional influence. The traditional Western approach focused on rules, standards, governance norms, and security alliances, drawing legitimacy from adherence to established principles. China, by contrast, is advancing a more functional model of leadership, where legitimacy flows from delivery: building infrastructure, mobilizing financing, and creating visible economic benefits. In this framing, Asia-Pacific cooperation is defined not just by rule-making but by the ability to implement solutions.

By prioritizing infrastructure, financing, digital connectivity, and the real economy, China is redefining both the terms of cooperation and the locus of leadership.

For decades, regional cooperation has been organized around frameworks governing trade, governance and security. While important, these frameworks can seem distant from the everyday realities of developing economies. China's approach begins differently by asking a practical question: What do countries actually need?

Across much of Asia, the answer has been consistent: roads, railways, ports, energy systems and access to capital. By focusing on these essentials, China has made cooperation visible, measurable and immediate. A railway that halves travel time or a port that unlocks trade is a concrete benefit in their daily lives.

At the center of this shift is infrastructure. Projects such as the China-Laos Railway, the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway and Hambantota International Port are connective tissues that bind the region closely together.

By reducing transport costs, opening inland regions to global markets and accelerating industrial growth, these projects are reshaping economic geography. Unlike traditional aid, infrastructure delivers visible, real-world benefits, making it one of the most persuasive forms of public goods in the region.

Yet infrastructure is capital-intensive, and this is where China's role becomes pivotal. Through the Belt and Road Initiative, its policy banks, investment funds, and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, China has helped address Asia's long-standing financing gap. Many developing countries have struggled to secure adequate and timely funding. China's financing is often faster and less encumbered by political conditions, making it an increasingly attractive partner.

This financial role ensures that China is not only building projects but also shaping the broader system in which regional development unfolds.

China's influence is now deeply embedded in regional supply chains and trade networks, with the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership at the center. Its decision to offer zero-tariff treatment to least developed countries, with which it has diplomatic relations, shows that this cooperation is grounded in action, not rhetoric. It does not unfold solely in diplomatic forums, but is built in factories, logistics hubs and digital platforms. Rooted in the real economy, it is inherently more resilient, as supply chains are far more difficult to unwind than political narratives.

China's approach now encompasses food security, poverty reduction, green energy, and digital connectivity. These are areas that directly affect people's livelihoods. Meantime, it is advancing into frontier sectors such as healthcare, biotechnology, and artificial intelligence, signaling an ambition to shape the region's developmental and technological trajectory.

Beyond physical infrastructure, China's push into the digital domain is becoming equally consequential. Through the Digital Silk Road, it is expanding its presence in 5G networks, e-commerce ecosystems, digital payments and smart city development across the region. More importantly, this expansion is increasingly tied to standard-setting in emerging fields.

These are not merely technical domains, they are the building blocks of future economic and political influence. As digital systems become embedded in everyday life, the ability to shape their standards and architecture will matter as much as building roads or ports, positioning China at the forefront of a data-driven layer of regional integration.

Taken together, these efforts point to a larger ambition: China is positioning itself as a provider of comprehensive development goods.

Importantly, China is not dismantling existing regional structures. Rather, it is working through them. By engaging ASEAN-led mechanisms such as ASEAN+3 and the East Asia Summit, China reinforces the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' centrality rather than displacing it. Its participation in frameworks like the RCEP and institutions such as the AIIB further complements this approach.

By delivering tangible public goods, China has shifted the region's center of gravity toward infrastructure, connectivity and real economic integration. Cooperation is becoming less about what is said and more about what is built. The defining question for Asia-Pacific cooperation is no longer who sets the rules but who builds the systems others depend on.

The author is the founding director of the Belt and Road Initiative Sri Lanka.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

GLOBAL VIEWS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:22 PM



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

XU MINGQI

Plan lays foundation for optimism

China's economic strength and competitiveness will continue to strengthen over the next five years

The Chinese government has set the GDP growth target at around 4.5 to 5 percent for 2026, slightly lower than in the past five years, as the country's focus has shifted toward qualitative development instead of quantitative expansion. However, it will still make a large contribution to global economic growth.



The main driving forces of the economy will be the development of high-quality industries, such as advanced semiconductors (including cutting-edge chips), robotics, artificial intelligence-driven manufacturing, new materials, new energy, aerospace, maritime equipment, biotechnology and low-carbon green technology. Investment in these industries will remain at a high level, while policies to stimulate domestic consumption will be strengthened. There is a consensus at home and abroad that China's industrial policy facilitating the manufacturing sector is very effective and should enable the country to meet this year's growth target.

Western commentators on Chinese economic development often focus on the structural imbalance between investment and domestic consumption, which leads to a deflationary tendency that makes the Chinese economy more dependent on international markets at a time when geopolitical confrontations and economic protectionism are on the rise. This may make China's export growth difficult to sustain in the future.

In the past four years, owing to high inflation in the United States and the appreciation of the US dollar, China's economic growth has been faster in real terms. Yet in nominal terms and at current market exchange rates, China's GDP as a share of that of the US dropped from 75.5 percent in 2021 to 63.3 percent in 2025. China's share of global GDP also declined from 19 percent to 17 percent, measured in current dollar terms.

According to the latest estimates by the International Monetary Fund, measured in purchasing power parity terms in 2025, China's GDP reached $40.7 trillion, exceeding the US figure of $30.5 trillion.

During 2021-25, the US had rather high inflation and its annual average consumer price index growth rate was 4.46 percent. High inflation forced the US Federal Reserve to raise interest rates dramatically from 1.5-1.75 percent in June 2022 to 5.25-5.5 percent in July 2023. Hiking interest rates caused the US dollar exchange rate to jump to a 10-year high, with the dollar index rising from 98 points in June 2022 to 114 points in September 2022.

During this period, China did not experience inflation and its average annual CPI growth rate was 0.66 percent, well below the target rate of 2 percent. The renminbi exchange rate depreciated from 6.5 yuan per dollar to 7.2 yuan per dollar, owing to the US dollar's appreciation against most currencies.

While the Chinese economy remains strong, this does not negate the need to tackle the structural imbalance. The Chinese government has already outlined policy measures, including employment promotion, improvements in government expenditure on social insurance and increasing household incomes, to promote domestic consumption in the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30).

There will be special programs to stimulate consumption of digital products, green products, healthcare, culture and tourism. The Chinese government will also make efforts to dismantle local and regional barriers to create a unified domestic market to promote service sector consumption. Culturally, Asian people tend to save more than Western people. The savings ratio is higher in China than in many non-Asian countries. This makes boosting consumption a difficult task. But with promoting consumption as a policy target of the 15th Five-Year Plan, there will be an obvious increase in consumption in the future.

The structural imbalance issue will be solved in the coming years not only because domestic consumption will grow faster with Chinese government policy facilitation, but also because of the further opening measures the Chinese government is pursuing. Maintaining a large trade surplus is not a policy target of the Chinese government. China has launched the China International Import Expo to enhance imports. The rapid growth of the Chinese trade surplus in recent years is mainly caused by the growing demand for Chinese products stimulated by overseas governments' expansionary fiscal and monetary policies and domestic high inflation. Chinese products are more competitive and attractive even though high tariffs have pushed up prices. The Chinese government is aware that a large trade surplus is not sustainable and may lead to more complaints and protectionist measures from trading partners. It is adjusting its trade policies to simultaneously promote exports and encourage imports. That the trade balance was highlighted in this year's Government Work Report is an important indication. Therefore, imports will increase and trade will be gradually balanced. This will create more opportunities for trade partners to access the Chinese market.

Foreign investment used to play an important role in the growth of China's exports and economy. Western observers have exaggerated the outflow of foreign capital from China in recent years. However, even if some foreign companies' profit margins are lower than before, most of them are still making profits in China.

China remains one of the most attractive destinations for foreign investment and its inflow of foreign direct investment has ranked second in the world in the past five years, just behind that of the US. In the next five years, foreign investment in the manufacturing sector may decrease, but it will increase in the service sector as China opens up its service industries further.

Even if denominated in US dollar, Western observers admit that China's share of the global economy may be set for a rebound. There is no reason to take a pessimistic view of Chinese economic development. The 15th Five-Year Plan will guide the Chinese economy to grow stronger and healthier. The Chinese economy remains on course to become the largest in the world both in PPP terms and in nominal terms, regardless of currency metrics, sooner or later.

The author is a senior researcher of international economics at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences and the honorary president of the Shanghai Institute for European Studies. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

LIU WEN AND LI XINTIAN

Lines of connection

High-speed railways are delivering on the promise of openness, shared technology and people-centered development

On a humid morning in Vientiane, the capital of Laos, passengers board sleek train carriages bound for Kunming, Yunnan province. In Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, commuters step onto a train that will carry them to Bandung in under an hour. Along China's southern border, freight cars loaded with tropical fruit roll north while consumer goods head south. The rhythm of departure and arrival is becoming part of everyday life across China and Southeast Asia. What was once a vision on planning maps has become a lived reality of connection.



Liu Wen



Li Xintian

More than two millennia ago, Confucius imagined a world in which "all under heaven is shared by all". Today, high-speed railways stretching across mountains and rivers give concrete form to that ideal. They are not only feats of engineering; they are pathways of shared development, binding countries together through cooperation and mutual benefit.

The transformation is visible in daily life. During this year's Spring Festival holiday, freight trains of the Lancang-Mekong Express on the China-Laos Railway carried bananas from Laos, dragon fruit from Vietnam and durians from Thailand into the Chinese market. Cold-chain logistics systems ensured that the fruit arrived fresh, meeting the growing demand of Chinese consumers for diverse, high-quality produce. Transport times that once depended on slower road or sea routes have been significantly shortened, improving reliability and reducing spoilage.

For farmers in Southeast Asia, the railway provides more than speed. It brings stable access to one of the world's largest consumer markets and greater certainty in pricing and delivery schedules. For Chinese families, it expands the "fruit basket" with affordable tropical flavors. At the same time, daily necessities, small appliances and medical supplies from China are transported southward, reaching towns and cities across Southeast Asia more efficiently. Behind these exchanges lies a rapidly evolving network integrating railways, ports and highway systems, making cross-border logistics smoother and more resilient.

Technology has played a critical role. On the China-Laos Railway, China's Beidou Navigation Satellite System enables precise real-time positioning, while intelligent monitoring systems inspect tracks, bridges and tunnels to ensure operational safety. Digitized management platforms track cargo throughout the journey, and advanced cold-chain systems help preserve perishable goods. These technologies, developed through years of research and now shared in international cooperation, have supported safe, efficient and increasingly low-carbon rail operations.

High-speed rail has also emerged as a flagship of regional infrastructure cooperation. Since the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway began commercial service in October 2023, travel time between Indonesia's capital and Bandung has been reduced from more than three hours to about 46 minutes. Known locally as "Whoosh", the line is Southeast Asia's first high-speed railway. Its launch marked a milestone not only for Indonesia's transport system but also for broader regional connectivity.

The shortened journey has stimulated tourism, facilitated commuting and enhanced the efficiency of the movement of goods. Industrial zones along the corridor are expected to benefit from improved logistics, while the railway has already become a symbol of technological advancement and partnership. As a landmark project under the Belt and Road Initiative, it demonstrates how infrastructure can accelerate economic transformation when aligned with local development strategies.

The opening of the China-Laos Railway in December 2021 represented another historic shift. Connecting Kunming in Southwest China with Vientiane, the line has linked more than 500 tourist destinations and created new channels for trade. For Laos, long described as landlocked, the railway offers a pathway to becoming land-linked. On Dec 2, 2025, the China-Laos Railway marked four years of operations. During this period, it has maintained a safe and stable service, with more than 62.5 million passenger trips and the transportation of over 72.5 million metric tons of cargo in total. The role of the railway as a "golden corridor" has continued to grow. By connecting to regional supply chains and facilitating cross-border commerce, it supports Laos' integration into the broader economic landscape of Southeast Asia and beyond.

The economic effects are tangible. Cross-border freight volumes have steadily increased since the line's inauguration, covering agricultural products, electronics, minerals and other goods. Passenger services have stimulated tourism on both sides, with travelers exploring heritage sites, culinary traditions and natural landscapes previously less accessible. Small businesses near stations have seen rising foot traffic, and new service industries have emerged to support growing mobility.

The significance of these railways extends beyond economics. Infrastructure can reshape perceptions as well as markets. As trains traverse borders with ease, they foster a sense of shared space and shared destiny. Reduced travel times make academic exchanges, business cooperation and cultural interaction more frequent and less costly.

Young people are at the forefront of this new connectivity. Increasing numbers of students from Southeast Asian nations are studying in Chinese universities, while Chinese students travel to Southeast Asia for exchange programs and internships. High-speed trains make weekend trips and research visits more practical, encouraging sustained engagement rather than one-off encounters. In classrooms, laboratories and startup incubators, friendships and professional networks take shape.

Digital connectivity amplifies these ties. Social media platforms host lively exchanges among Chinese and Southeast Asian youth, who share travel experiences, entrepreneurial ideas and cultural interests. Some collaborate through cross-border e-commerce and live streaming, bringing regional products to wider audiences. Others work together in digital creative industries, blending design, music and storytelling across cultures. The railway becomes both a physical and symbolic link, reinforcing the idea that cooperation is not abstract but personal.

From a broader perspective, high-speed rail illustrates how infrastructure can serve peace. In a world where geopolitical tensions and economic fragmentation are rising, projects grounded in mutual benefit offer an alternative narrative. Railways require long-term planning, technical coordination and sustained trust among partners. Their successful operation depends on shared standards, transparent management and continuous dialogue.

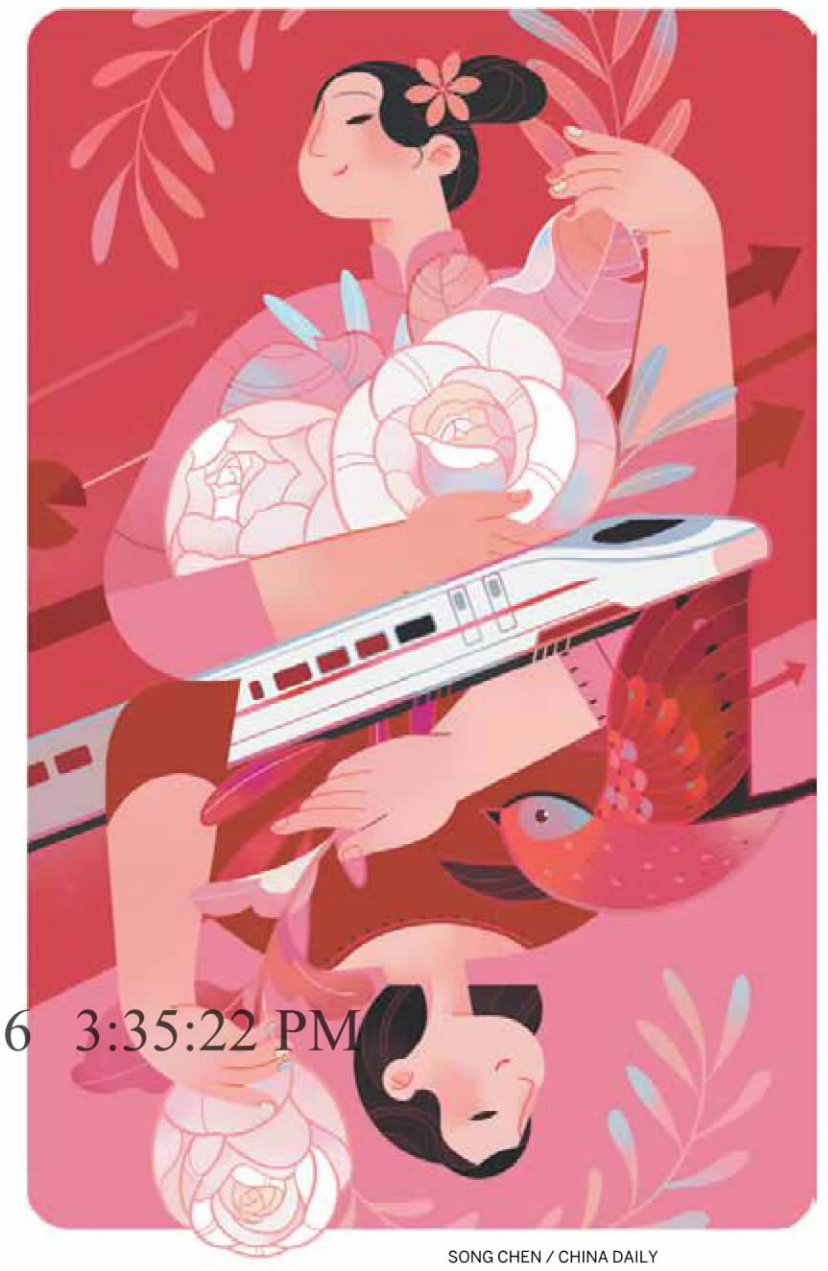
Moreover, modern electric rail systems contribute to greener development by providing energy-efficient alternatives to road and air transport. As countries in the region pursue sustainable growth and climate commitments, railways can play a constructive role in reducing emissions and promoting balanced regional development.

The journey from a "bond of hearts" to "lines of connectivity" is therefore both literal and metaphorical. It begins with shared aspirations and becomes concrete through railway lines, stations and trains. Each departure signals not only movement across distance but also progress toward deeper cooperation.

When passengers board in Vientiane, Jakarta or elsewhere, they are participating in a transformation that takes years in the making. Farmers sending produce across borders, entrepreneurs launching joint ventures, students exploring new cultures — all are beneficiaries of connectivity that turns geography from a barrier into a bridge.

As these rail corridors continue to expand and integrate with ports, highways and digital networks, they are weaving a tighter fabric of interdependence across China and Southeast Asia. The promise they embody is straightforward yet profound: That through openness, shared technology and people-centered development, infrastructures can serve as foundation for lasting peace and prosperity.

Liu Wen is an associate professor at Nanning Normal University and a PhD researcher at Beijing Foreign Studies University. Li Xintian is the assistant to the dean of the School of Foreign Languages at Weifang University and a PhD researcher at Beijing Foreign Studies University. The authors contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:22 PM

BUSINESS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:22 PM

Reel rise



A moviegoer passes promotional posters for the 2026 May Day film season at a theater in Renhuai, Guizhou province, on Tuesday. According to movie market tracker Maoyan, the holiday box office revenue had topped 700 million yuan ($102.4 million) as of Tuesday noon, with attendance hitting 18.948 million and surpassing the 2025 holiday's total visitor numbers. CHEN YONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

One-person companies rise in popularity, gain policy support

AI-empowered OPCs now hottest entrepreneurial trend nationwide

By **CHENG YU**
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

China is elevating the "one-person company" from a fringe business model to a national strategy, betting that artificial intelligence can turn individuals into scalable economic units, which industry experts said is a shift unfolding in parallel with the United States, but along a markedly different path.

The one-person company, or OPC, emerged as one of China's hottest entrepreneurial trends recently. A research report by the State Administration for Market Regulation describes the sector as "entering a phase of rapid expansion", concentrated in major economic clusters such as the Yangtze River Delta region, the Pearl River Delta region and the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, as well as rising inland innovation hubs.

The numbers underscore the momentum. By June 2025, China had more than 16 million registered one-person limited liability companies, accounting for 27.4 percent of all enterprises. In the first half of 2025 alone, 2.86 million new OPCs were registered, up 47 percent year-on-year and representing nearly a quarter of all new businesses.

> AI is creating significant opportunities for startups. But this is not something handed to entrepreneurs — it has to be built through practice."
>
> **Wang Jian,** an academician at the Chinese Academy of Engineering

Unlike in the US, where solo entrepreneurship is often tied to gig work or digital services, China's OPC boom is being hardwired into industrial policy and anchored in the country's vast manufacturing ecosystem.

A single entrepreneur operating behind a laptop can tap into dense supply chains spanning cities like Yiwu, Zhejiang province; Dongguan, Guangdong province and Suzhou, Jiangsu province, effectively leveraging an industrial network at national scale.

That "individual plus supply chain" model is emerging as a defining feature of China's approach and one with few direct parallels in Western economies, industry experts said.

Shenzhen, Guangdong, rolled out an action plan in January to position itself as a global hub for AI-driven OPCs. The province in March rolled out China's first provincial-level policy framework dedicated to AI-enabled solo entrepreneurship. In April, Sichuan province unveiled its own plan, outlining 16 priority tasks across five key areas to build a regional OPC innovation ecosystem.

The policy shift signals a broader recalibration. Rather than simply encouraging entrepreneurship, local governments are moving to construct full-stack support systems combining funding, data access, computing power and application scenarios. The aim is to create what officials describe as a five-dimensional ecosystem spanning policy, capital, talent, infrastructure and real-world use cases.

Early signs of that transition are visible on the ground. Dedicated OPC startup communities are taking shape, including a cluster in Shanghai's Lingang Special Area that had attracted more than 500 entrepreneurs by early 2026. Guangdong has introduced specialized recruitment tracks for "super individuals", while Sichuan plans to establish AI-focused OPC hubs by 2027.

Behind the policy push lies a structural shift in China's economy. As industrial upgrading accelerates, a growing pool of highly skilled young workers — many born in the 1990s and 2000s — are opting for flexible, independent career paths. OPCs, particularly in AI-driven and asset-light sectors, offer a vehicle to deploy those skills with minimal overheads.

Wang Jian, an academician at the Chinese Academy of Engineering, frames the trend as a "miniaturization" of small and medium-sized enterprises. "AI is creating significant opportunities for startups," Wang said. "But this is not something handed to entrepreneurs — it has to be built through practice."

In his view, the real task is to create an environment where a single-person venture can evolve into a technology leader — a transformation he compares to the early days of the internet economy.

Others are pushing for further institutional innovation. Zhong Bo, chairman of Chinese technology firm XGIMI, has called for the creation of a legal framework for "digital one-person enterprises", alongside tax incentives for data-driven production and more flexible social security systems tailored to independent entrepreneurs.

Zhong also urged the development of credit and financing systems designed specifically for micro-scale digital businesses.

Bluetooth SIG hails China's innovative role in global ecosystem

By **LI JIAYING**
lijiaying@chinadaily.com.cn

China is emerging as a pivotal force in the global Bluetooth ecosystem, both as a major market and an increasingly important source of innovation, as the technology shifts from consumer connectivity toward broader applications in the artificial intelligence era, said a senior executive of Bluetooth Special Interest Group.

"Boasting the second-largest number of Bluetooth member companies globally and ranking first in product qualifications, China is now an indispensable innovator to Bluetooth development," said Neville Meijers, CEO of the company.

> Boasting the second-largest number of Bluetooth member companies globally and ranking first in product qualifications, China is now an indispensable innovator to Bluetooth development."
>
> **Neville Meijers,** CEO of Bluetooth Special Interest Group

Meijers said that with one in every three qualified Bluetooth devices in Asia-Pacific now coming from China, the country sits at the heart of the Bluetooth ecosystem in the region.

Founded in 1998 by global tech heavyweights including Ericsson, IBM and Intel, Bluetooth has grown into a global industry consortium with the Asia-Pacific region accounting for 38 percent of its global membership.

With nearly half of the global mobile Bluetooth market and strong capabilities in self-developed chips, China is moving beyond manufacturing to become a source of innovation, contributing to global standards and feeding back into the broader ecosystem, Meijers said.

"To really serve a global ecosystem, we need to understand local innovation deeply," he added.

Reflecting such a need, Bluetooth SIG has stepped up its local engagement. It established legal entities in Beijing; Shenzhen, Guangdong province; and Shanghai in February last year, followed by the launch of a China Interest Group in October. The group, led by local companies such as Xiaomi, Oppo and Vivo, focuses on aligning Chinese market needs with global technology roadmaps.

"It's important for the Bluetooth community to understand the ideas, needs and regional requirements of our members here in China — not just for products designed for the domestic market, but also for those targeting global markets," Meijers said.

Targeting the Chinese market, the interest group has set up dedicated automotive and audio teams to explore innovative applications of Bluetooth technology in areas such as automotives and the industrial internet of things.

Lori Lee, senior director of Asia-Pacific and China at Bluetooth SIG, said the mechanism enables closer collaboration with local partners and allows Chinese innovation to be incorporated into global standards.

"Building on its success in China, the model is now being extended to other markets such as Japan," Lee said.

The importance of such collaboration is underscored by the scale of the market. Bluetooth SIG expects annual shipments of Bluetooth-enabled devices to approach 6 billion units by the end of 2026, with projections exceeding 8 billion units in the following years.

6 billion units
expected annual shipments of Bluetooth-enabled devices by the end of 2026

As the ecosystem expands, Bluetooth is also expected to gain new relevance in the AI era. Sitting at the edge of connected networks, the tech is playing a growing role in data collection and transmission — a key foundation for AI applications.

"In the AI era, Bluetooth devices will become even more prevalent, as they can pull data from networks through edge devices, enabling AI to generate insights," Meijers said.

This shift is also broadening Bluetooth's application scenarios. While long associated with consumer devices such as headphones and wearables, the technology is increasingly moving into industrial and enterprise environments.

From a deployment perspective, some of the fastest-growing use cases — including asset tracking, battery-free tags for inventory management and smart lighting control — have already completed the full cycle from proof of concept to large-scale rollouts in China.

"This makes China not only the largest user of Bluetooth standards, but also a real-world testing ground and accelerator for new applications," Meijers said.

Looking ahead, Bluetooth SIG has outlined a technology roadmap for 2026 to 2030. Key priorities include advancing high data throughput (HDT) technologies to enable cable-like wireless performance, enhancing lossless high-definition audio frameworks, and developing ambient IoT standards to support ultra-low-power and self-powered devices aligned with global sustainability goals.

'Rooftop economy' latest consumption front

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn

After the "night economy", the "rooftop economy" is now taking to the rooftops of shopping centers nationwide.

Rooftops and terraces are emerging as the latest frontiers for retailers in China, offering new ways to boost consumption and attract visitors.

Beijing's Dongcheng district has officially launched the Breeze Terrace Project, a coordinated effort to fuse cultural, commercial and tourism growth across the capital.

The initiative reflects a broader push by the country's commercial retail centers to diversify and extend retail spaces to stimulate consumption, linking communities.

The program, inaugurated at the 7th-floor terrace garden of Beijing APM Shopping Mall recently, will run through October, covering peak leisure periods including the May Day holiday, summer vacation and Mid-Autumn Festival/National Day.

The project integrates more than 100 terrace venues through a phased promotional strategy, leveraging partnerships across media, financial institutions, lifestyle platforms and the wider merchant supply chain.

Organizers said the initiative aims to drive experience upgrades through product innovation while fostering high-quality consumption through collective synergy.

The 2025 pilot of the Breeze Terrace Project drew more than 1 million residents and tourists, cementing the so-called "terrace economy" as a rising trend in Beijing's cultural consumption.

This year, the program expands with 75 new rooftop cultural tourism venues, spanning hotels, *hutong* cafes, bookstores, restaurants and cultural parks. Key highlights include a reading space at Librairie Peut-etre, Sugar Cafe Nanluoguxiang branch, Peace Hotel, and the Mandarin Oriental Qianmen.

Curated experiential offerings form a central part of the project. The classical music afternoon tea salon at Hilton Beijing Wangfujing features *guzheng*, a traditional Chinese zither, and *pipa*, a traditional lute, performances by emerging musicians.

At Beijing APM mall, activities such as Breeze Yoga and Sunset Concerts complement terrace tennis lessons, creating a multiage, multi-interest consumption ecosystem, organizers said.

Han Wei, deputy director of the Dongcheng district bureau of culture and tourism, said the program leverages terrace spaces "to link diverse industries", with the goal of building a "sky-high economic belt" that balances cultural depth with commercial vitality.

The launch coincides with steady retail growth in China. In the first quarter, total retail sales of consumer goods were up 2.4 percent year-on-year, accelerating 0.7 percentage point from the previous quarter.

Industry experts see structural transformation in China's retail sector as a key driver for initiatives like the Breeze Terrace Project. Speaking at the release of the 2026 Shopping Center and Retail Consumption Development Report last month, Cai Yun, vice-president of the China General Chamber of Commerce's shopping center branch, said that shopping centers in the country are evolving from traditional "goods-selling" spaces into lifestyle hubs, social destinations and experience-driven platforms, creating fertile ground for creative urban retail initiatives.

"The current window of opportunity allows shopping centers to evolve into urban hubs for culture, leisure and experience consumption," Cai said.



A performance is staged on the terrace of a building in Shikumen, a major tourist attraction in Shanghai, on Sunday. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:22 PM

BUSINESS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:22 PM

Foreigners booming in Hainan livestream mkt

Expat livestreamers help customers better understand China and Chinese products



A foreign host is livestreaming cosmetics products "Made in China" in Chengmai county, Hainan province, in September 2025. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By MA SI and **CHEN BOWEN**
in Chengmai, Hainan

The afternoon sun slants through the tinted glass walls of a livestreaming base in Chengmai county, Hainan province, casting a golden light on the busy venue.

At 2 pm, the place comes alive. Behind one soundproof door, a young woman from Morocco adjusts a ring light; behind another, a Ghanaian man flashes a wide smile at his camera. In less than a minute, they will begin speaking to thousands of shoppers thousands of miles away — in places like New York, Casablanca, Lagos and Jakarta.

This is not a scene from well-known Chinese e-commerce cities such as Shenzhen, Guangdong province, or Hangzhou, Zhejiang province. This is Hainan, the southern island province known for coconut trees, beach resorts and rocket launches.

But after the island-wide special customs operations came into effect in December at Hainan Free Trade Port, a different kind of tide is rolling in — not of tourists, but of foreign faces speaking into phones, selling "Made in China" to the world.

"What makes me come to Hainan? It's growing. It's a good opportunity. I feel like I'm going to grow together with this island," said Imane, a 25-year-old from Morocco, taking a quick break from her setup.

Her eyes scan a shelf of products: a professional DJ mixer, a foldable electric scooter and Labubu figurines from Pop Mart. "Especially the policies, especially the shipments — you know the ports, the delivery is fast plus it doesn't cost that much money."

Imane is one of a growing number of foreign livestreamers who have made Hainan their home base. Since arriving in October, she has gone from a newcomer to a seasoned host, broadcasting to audiences who once questioned the quality of Chinese goods. Now she speaks not just as a seller, but as a cultural bridge.

During a recent livestreaming session, she held up a sleek electric bike.

"This bike is popular, it's famous, and even trending — especially in the US," she said. Her tone was neither rehearsed nor forced. She speaks with the ease of someone who has lived in China for years — Hangzhou; Guangzhou, Guangdong; Shenyang, Liaoning province; and now Hainan. That journey gave her a layered understanding of a country that many overseas consumers still see in flat, outdated terms.

"Before, it was so difficult because people didn't trust Chinese products," she said. "But when we start explaining — the story of how it comes, we talk about the quality, how it's going to help your daily life — then they start understanding."

She held up a box of coconut tea, a Hainan specialty. "I drink Chinese tea every day — green tea, very refreshing. But when I moved to Hainan, I really like this: coconut tea. In Morocco, we also have tea, it's famous. So I tell my audience: 'This is like your tea, but with a tropical touch'. The biggest challenge is not the language," she reflected.

"It's the trust. But once you show them the story behind the product — how it's made, who makes it and what problem it solves — they become your loyal customers."

That trust-building is exactly why Hainan's cross-border e-commerce players are doubling down on foreign hosts. Xu Jie, co-founder of Hainan Chuangchen Overseas Enterprise Services, runs a livestreaming base in Chengmai that now employs hosts from nine countries — Pakistan, Egypt, Morocco, Ghana, Congo and beyond.

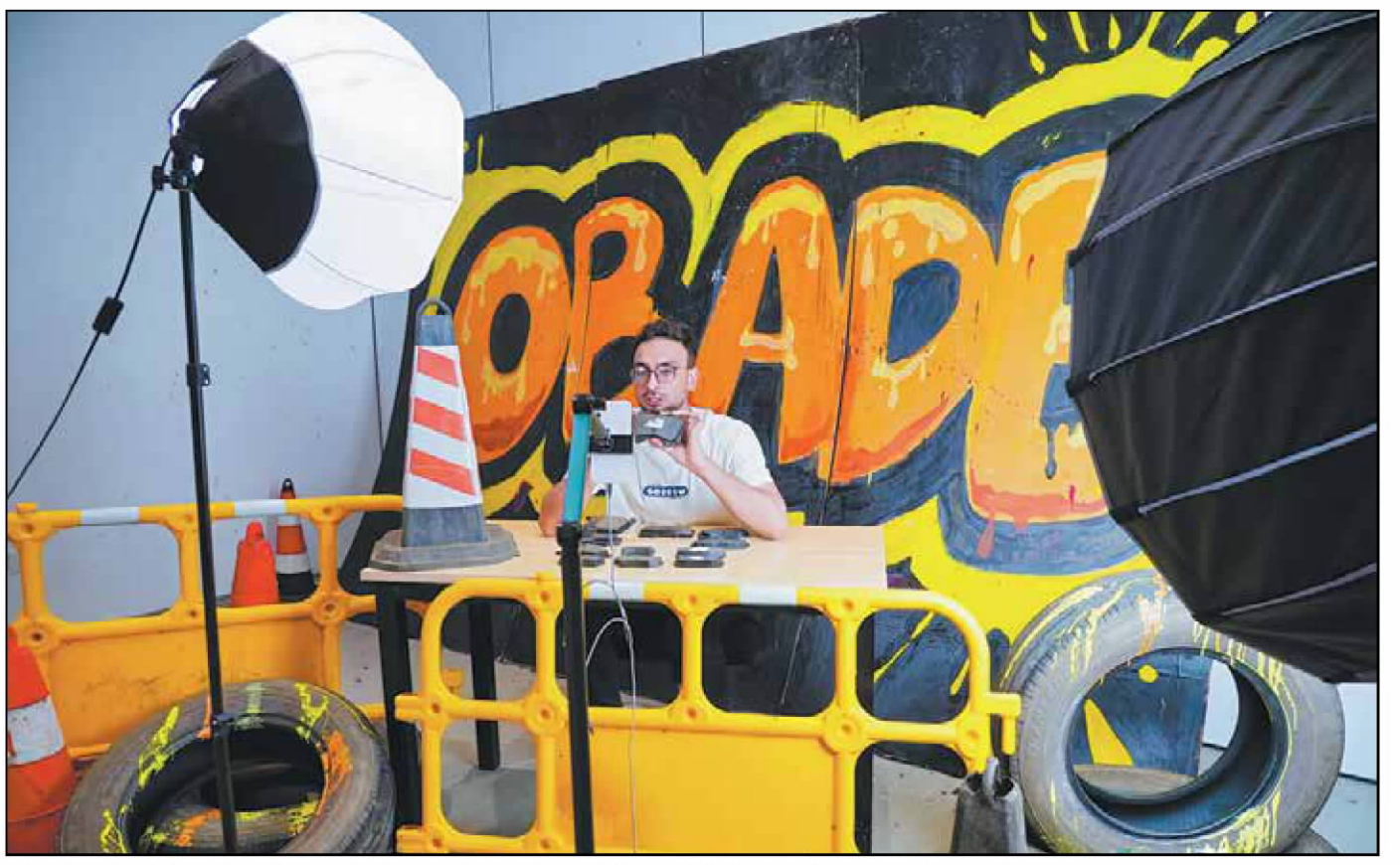
"In the Chinese mainland, it's very difficult to get work visas for foreign livestreamers. Thanks to Hainan's policy, we can legally hire foreign hosts. We also have dedicated cross-border livestreaming lines that ensure realtime transmission with very low latency. Overseas consumers see a local face, hear a local accent and receive a local cultural reference. That's an unbeatable advantage," Xu said.

Behind the smiling faces on camera is a carefully engineered policy environment. Xu said: "Without Hainan's special policies, we couldn't have built this international team."

Hainan Free Trade Port has rolled out a suite of measures that directly benefit cross-border e-commerce. For foreign talent, the process has been streamlined. Hainan now offers a joint work permit and residence permit application that takes just three working days — a reduction of more than seventy percent compared to traditional procedures. Work permits, once issued for three or six months, are now routinely valid for a year.

"That means our foreign hosts can legally live and work in Hainan for the long term. That stability is essential for building a team and growing a business," Xu said.

Even more attractive are the cost advantages brought by the customs policies. Xu calculated that with individual income tax capped at 15 percent for high-end talent — and corporate income tax at 15 percent for encouraged industries — his total operating costs are fifteen to twenty percent lower than in the Chinese mainland.



A male foreign host livestreams Chinese products in Chengmai in September. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Visitors ask about duty-free cross-border goods at an international consumer expo in Haikou, Hainan, on Nov 20. XU ERSHENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

For a company that employs dozens of international staff and ships thousands of parcels daily, that is a game-changing edge.

Why has Chengmai become the epicenter of this activity? The county, located in northwestern Hainan, sits inside the half-hour economic circle of the provincial capital Haikou. It is close enough to benefit from Haikou's infrastructure, but affordable enough to host large-scale operations.

Huang Wanshu, deputy director of the Bureau of Commerce in Chengmai, said the strategy comes with right timing, right location and right people.

The location includes Macun Port — a national first-class open port connecting to Southeast Asia and the countries and regions involved in the Belt and Road Initiative. Logistics giants such as JD.com, Prologis, Mapletree and Americold have set up facilities there, cutting transportation and customs costs by at least 10 percent.

As for people, Chengmai has adopted a "talent first" philosophy, streamlining bureaucratic hurdles and providing value-added services. "We chose the '100 meters deep, one meter wide' approach — focusing on a niche section of cross-border e-commerce, and digging deep," Huang said.

But Chengmai's ambitions rest on more than low costs and good ports. The county also boasts Hainan's first and largest digital economy cluster — Hainan Ecological Software Park.

"More than 17,000 enterprises have registered there, with combined annual revenue exceeding 200 billion yuan ($29.3 billion). Tech giants including Baidu, Tencent and Meituan have a presence."

The park was also approved as one of China's first digital service export bases, and its game-centric global public services platform has launched 158 Chinese games overseas, with more than 12 million registered users outside China.

"That digital infrastructure provides invaluable technical and data-compliance support for cross-border e-commerce," Huang said.

Financial services are equally robust. Chengmai has built a fund matrix of "mother funds plus sub-funds plus special funds". The entire county now hosts 55 registered private fund managers, managing 1,748 funds with total assets exceeding 220 billion yuan — more than half of the entire island's total.

The story of Chengmai is not isolated. Across Hainan, a bigger picture is emerging. In Haikou's industrial parks, livestreaming rooms facing Southeast Asia are running at full capacity. More than a thousand foreign livestreamers now operate in that park alone.

In Sanya, cross-border e-commerce charter flights are also busy traveling around the world.

Zhang Chunsheng, president of the Hainan Cross-border E-commerce Association, puts the transformation into a historical context.

"For a long time, when people in Hainan said 'cross-border e-commerce', they meant imports," he recalled. "Without a strong manufacturing base like Guangzhou or Hangzhou, Hainan naturally focused on bringing goods in — that's how we got the label 'the island of imported goods'."

That began to change two years ago, when the so-called "9610" e-commerce retail export model took off. About two years ago, Hainan's cross-border e-commerce export value reached roughly 2 billion yuan, mostly via "transshipment aggregation" — mainly goods made in the Pearl River or Yangtze River deltas being shipped to Hainan for customs clearance, then sent directly to overseas consumers using Hainan's extensive Southeast Asia shipping routes.

Special customs operations have brought two major benefits, Zhang said. First, the entire island has become a comprehensive pilot zone for exports — a scale and degree of autonomy unmatched anywhere else in China.

Second, a massive tourist dividend has evolved. "Hainan receives about 90 million tourists a year. That could rise to 400 million within two to three years," Zhang predicted. Those 400 million visitors will generate new offline-online hybrid models — O2O, self-pickup and fast delivery — aimed at foreign travelers, creating a completely new growth frontier.

"Some people say Hainan has no industry cluster," Zhang said. "But neither did Hong Kong nor Singapore. Hainan's goal is to become a free trade port with its own manufacturing support. The current zero-tariff policy covering 6,600 tariff lines benefits enterprises, but the real intent is to encourage the import of production-oriented raw materials to attract substantive processing and manufacturing to the island, and to gradually cultivate a local industrial base. That road is longer, but once built, its value will be much higher."

As dusk falls over Chengmai, Imane wraps up her final broadcast of the day. "I'm not just selling a lamp or a speaker," she said, unplugging her microphone. "I'm showing them that Chinese innovation is real, that it can make their life better. And I'm from Morocco — they see me, they trust me and they start to trust China."

Hainan, once a tropical vacation getaway, is now a frontier of a different kind — an island where a young woman from Casablanca and a young man from Accra are helping the world see a new China, one livestreaming session at a time.

Contact the writers at masi@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
Unlock China's Treasures:Shop, Explore, Enjoy.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:22 PM

CHINA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:22 PM

Shanghai to build iconic attractions

World's largest spokeless Ferris wheel among projects worth 4b yuan unveiled

By WANG YING in Shanghai
wang_ying@chinadaily.com.cn

An array of benchmark projects, including the world's largest spokeless Ferris wheel, has been announced in Shanghai, a move experts say will upgrade the city's skyline and boost its appeal as a cultural and tourism destination.

"The new attractions will further enhance Shanghai's appeal to both domestic and international tourists, reinforcing the East China city's position as a top-tier tourism destination," said Qi Xiaozhai, vice-chairman of the Commerce Economy Association of China.

"In particular, the would-be tallest Ferris wheel is expected to become a must-visit attraction for tourists interested in traveling to China," Qi said.

Located on the riverside in Baoshan district, the 2-billion-yuan ($292.83 million) Ferris wheel project tops the list. Literally meaning the "Arch of Shanghai", the 228-meter-high spokeless structure will take the shape of a gigantic ring, according to the city's official Jiefang Daily.

Designed to reflect features of an international cruise and maritime gateway, the new urban cultural and tourism landmark is set to begin construction by the end of 2026.

"It is common practice for global cities to develop iconic projects. Shanghai is already home to numerous attractions, including the Bund and the Shanghai Disney Resort. However, Baoshan district remains something of a missing piece when it comes to flagship tourism destinations," Qi said.

The project, located near the Shanghai Wusongkou International Cruise Terminal, is expected to integrate with nearby attractions to offer global travelers a unique experience, Qi added.

The current largest spokeless Ferris wheel in the world is the "Eye of Bohai" in Weifang, Shandong province. Standing at 142.52 meters, it holds the Guinness World Record for the tallest centerless Ferris wheel due to its distinctive structure and height, according to public information.

In addition, the country's first immersive artificial intelligence interactive theater, named "New World: Golden Age" in Chinese, is set to launch this year, Yu Song, assistant to the general manager of the Shanghai Film Park, said in a China News Service report.

Developed on the basis of the filming location of the award-winning TV drama *Fan Hua*, or *Blossoms Shanghai*, the theater is set in the 1990s Shanghai and will feature four main storylines and nearly 100 subplots, allowing visitors to choose their own narrative and role.

"Tourists will not be confined to fixed seating; instead, they can move freely across the nearly 10,000-square-meter real-life street set to experience an immersive adventure," Yu said.

Another highlight is a 360-degree spherical venue. With an investment of 1.2 billion yuan, the venue, located on the West Bund in Xuhui district, will accommodate about 3,000 people.

Scheduled to begin construction in the second half of this year, it is expected to become a new landmark and complement the area's cultural ecosystem.

Five major projects, with a combined investment of about 4 billion yuan, were announced during the Shanghai Tourism Investment Promotion Conference on April 29, covering waterfront leisure, urban renewal, digital performance, immersive experiences and landmark development.

"Standing out for their technological appeal, immersive experience and iconic features, the new projects are expected to enhance Shanghai's charm as a global cultural and tourism city," Qi said.

The projects come as Shanghai pushes to become a leading urban tourism destination. The city recorded 425 million tourist trips in 2025, generating 672.4 billion yuan in total tourism revenue, according to Jiefang Daily.

Inbound travel also surged, with 9.36 million trips made by overseas visitors last year, up 39.58 percent year-on-year, according to the Shanghai Municipal Administration of Culture and Tourism. Among them, overnight inbound tourists totaled 8.79 million trips, an increase of 45.09 percent year-on-year.

New lunar mineral found in meteorite

By LI MENGHAN
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese scientists have identified a new mineral in the first lunar meteorite ever found in China, marking the 11th lunar mineral discovered worldwide. With this finding, China has now identified four lunar minerals, tying with the United States for the most lunar mineral discoveries.

The mineral, named Magnesiochangesite-(Ce), has been approved by the International Mineralogical Association's Commission on New Minerals, Nomenclature and Classification, the global authority responsible for verifying and naming newly discovered minerals.

A rare-earth-bearing phosphate, Magnesiochangesite-(Ce), is colorless and transparent with a glasslike luster. It is brittle, breaks with shell-like fractures, and fluoresces under ultraviolet light. Researchers said such properties help distinguish it from other lunar materials.

> "The discovery provides key mineralogical evidence for understanding the origin and evolution of the moon."
>
> **Wang Yanjuan,** a doctoral graduate at the Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences

The mineral was discovered in Pakepake 005, the first lunar meteorite found in China. The 44-gram spherical stone, with a dark fusion crust formed during its passage through Earth's atmosphere, was recovered in 2024 in the Taklamakan Desert, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.

Wang Yanjuan, a doctoral graduate at the Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences and the first to identify the mineral, said the discovery carries scientific significance.

"The discovery provides key mineralogical evidence for understanding the origin and evolution of the moon, and expands the boundaries of human knowledge of the material world," Wang said.

She added that the mineral's crystal structure and chemical composition offer insights into lunar volcanic activity and the way rare earth elements separate during planetary formation. She also noted its unusual luminescent properties could inform the development of new glowing materials.

Che Xiaochao, an associate researcher at the planetary science research center of the Institute of Geology under the CAGS, said analysis of the meteorite relied on a domestically developed high-resolution secondary ion mass spectrometer. The instrument uses a focused ion beam to analyze a sample's surface composition at the microscopic level without dissolving or destroying it.

"It's like doing a CT scan on the rock — without dissolving the sample, we can accurately obtain its internal chemical information and precisely analyze almost all elements and isotopes," Che said. He noted the technology also has applications in semiconductors and new energy materials.

Institute director Yang Zhiming said advanced instruments are essential for accurately measuring and analyzing rare samples.

He added that the instrument was also used in studying lunar samples from China's Chang'e 6 mission and the country's first lunar meteorite, underscoring the importance of mastering core scientific equipment and analytical techniques to advance research capabilities.

Robots ease high-altitude construction in Xizang

By DAQIONG in Lhasa
and **ZHENG JINRAN**

A 300-megawatt solar project in Chamdo, Xizang autonomous region, has deployed high-altitude-adapted installation robots during construction, underscoring the growing role of intelligent technologies in overcoming extreme conditions and advancing renewable energy development on the plateau.

The project, in Yechen township of Pashoi county at elevations above 4,300 meters, faces challenges that include low oxygen levels, harsh weather and a construction window of less than five months each year.

Developed by Datang Yuquhe Hydropower Development Co, the project is a key component of eastern Xizang's clean energy base. Construction began in August.

"Traditional construction methods are difficult to sustain under such conditions," said Yang Shuanglong, the project manager. "Introducing intelligent equipment is both a practical solution and an important step toward upgrading construction methods in high-altitude areas."

To address these challenges, the project introduced four high-altitude-adapted photovoltaic installation robots as part of a pilot program exploring scalable solutions for plateau solar construction.

Operating under a "remote control plus on-site support" model and supported by a 5G system, the robots are capable of autonomous navigation, precise positioning and integrated panel installation, Yang said.

Each robot can install up to 100 solar panels per hour, with daily output exceeding 600 panels — about twice the efficiency of manual labor. Equipped with a high-precision 3D vision system, the machines maintain millimeter-level accuracy under strong ultraviolet radiation, while a hydraulic leveling system enables operation on slopes of up to 12 degrees.

"The robots significantly improve efficiency while reducing safety risks for workers," he said.

At such altitudes, manual installation requires workers to carry components weighing up to 39 kilograms, placing physical strain on laborers in oxygen-thin conditions. The robots have taken on high-intensity tasks such as lifting and positioning panels, reducing the risk of fatigue and injury.

Yang said early results from the pilot program show the technology is well suited to high-altitude environments and could be expanded in future projects across Xizang.

The deployment of robotic systems reflects a broader shift from labor-intensive construction to technology-driven solutions in extreme environments, with potential applications in other large-scale renewable energy projects, he said.

Once fully operational, the project is expected to generate about 530 million kilowatt-hours of electricity annually, enough to meet the needs of around 1.38 million people. It will also help reduce carbon emissions and support Xizang's transition toward a cleaner energy mix, Yang said.

The Yechen project, with a total investment of 980 million yuan ($143.5 million) and planned land use of about 357.6 hectares, has also generated economic benefits for surrounding communities.

It has contributed nearly 15 million yuan in income through housing rentals, equipment leasing, transportation and catering services, according to local media reports. More than 100 residents from nearby villages have been employed on-site, earning a combined total of more than 300,000 yuan.

Local residents have seen new income opportunities emerge alongside the project.

"We have taken up temporary construction work in addition to traditional herding, earning about 260 yuan per day," Dawa Gyaltsan, a resident from Yamda village, said in a Xizang Daily report.

Before construction began, residents in Yamda and Ochung villages mainly relied on livestock grazing and occasional temporary jobs to earn a living.

The project also includes ecological protection measures to minimize environmental impact in the fragile alpine ecosystem, including soil conservation and vegetation restoration during construction.

It has also incorporated a "solar-grazing" design model, with solar panel structures elevated to allow livestock to graze beneath them without disrupting traditional pastoral activities, according to the project team.

Contact the writers at zhengjinran@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
See more by scanning the code.



An intelligent robot installs solar panels at a photovoltaic project site in Yechen township, Chamdo, Xizang autonomous region.
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Fair trade



Overseas buyers explore products in the toy exhibition area of the 139th China Import and Export Fair in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, on Tuesday. The event, which concluded on the same day, attracted 314,000 overseas buyers from 220 countries and regions, reflecting a 1.1 percent increase compared to the previous fair. CHEN JIMIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Novel AI model to advance research and redefine innovation landscape

By LI MENGHAN
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

The Beijing Spectrometer — a state-of-the-art particle detector often described as a "high-speed camera" for microscopic particles invisible to the naked eye — is entering a new phase of intelligent, autonomous and more efficient operation, reflecting what researchers call agentic artificial intelligence.

Over its 16 years of operation, the large-scale scientific facility has generated vast amounts of data. Combined with the complexity of its research targets, that has led to long analysis cycles and challenges for traditional, human-led analysis methods, said Liu Beijiang, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Institute of High Energy Physics.

Now, guided by what researchers describe as an "intelligent brain", automated scientific workflows can integrate AI-enhanced tools to reduce repetitive tasks and improve efficiency, Liu said.

The "intelligent brain" is part of a suite of eight large language models tailored to different scientific disciplines, along with a foundational scientific model, released by the CAS in Beijing on April 28. The system, called ScienceOne 100, is designed to advance "AI for Science" by shifting research from fragmented, isolated efforts toward a more integrated, platform-based model of innovation.

Large language models are AI systems trained on vast amounts of text and data that can understand, generate and analyze language. In this case, they are adapted for scientific research tasks.

"With the acceleration of a new round of technological revolution, AI for Science has shifted the paradigm in scientific research. It is redefining the innovation landscape of the new era, as well as enhancing the efficiency and quality of scientific development," said Zeng Dajun, a researcher at the CAS' Institute of Automation.

China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) highlights the importance of fully implementing "AI Plus", an initiative that uses AI to process complex scientific data, improve research and development efficiency, and support more collaborative human-machine research methods.

Zeng said the system, built on a foundational scientific model first launched in July and continuously improved since then, promotes the open sharing of data, models and algorithms to support scientific innovation.

He said its most widely used function is an intelligent literature assistant, which helps researchers analyze academic papers. According to the CAS, it improves accuracy from about 70 percent in mainstream international systems to 90 percent through cross-checking and multi-step validation, helping reduce errors known as AI hallucinations, where systems generate incorrect or misleading information.

The system also allows users to intervene during operation, adjust tasks in real time, reduce trial-and-error work and shorten research time by more than 60 percent, Zeng said.

While the foundational model addresses broad scientific problems and supports interdisciplinary research, the eight discipline-specific models focus on more specialized challenges, he said. Together, they are designed to create a coordinated research ecosystem across different fields.

Liu Jianjun, a researcher at the CAS' Shanghai Institute of Ceramics, highlighted the model's role in developing high-performance materials used in extreme environments.

Such materials are essential for advances in aerospace and integrated circuits, but traditional development cycles can take about 15 years due to the large number of variables involved, he said.

By integrating scientific literature, physical laws and material properties, the model can help generate customized material designs. Liu said it also improves the link between laboratory research and real-world application, speeding up development.

Yang Yanchu, a researcher at the CAS' Aerospace Information Research Institute, said a large language model for the near space domain fills a gap in China's research capabilities.

Near space, at altitudes of 20 to 100 kilometers, is a transitional region between the atmosphere used by aircraft and the orbital environment of satellites.

Yang said the model simulates atmospheric, meteorological and electromagnetic conditions in that region and supports applications such as communications, navigation, remote sensing and detection. It also integrates knowledge in energy, materials and flight control.

Compared with other models of similar size, Yang said it performs better in logical consistency, accuracy and technical reasoning, providing more reliable expert-level responses.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:22 PM

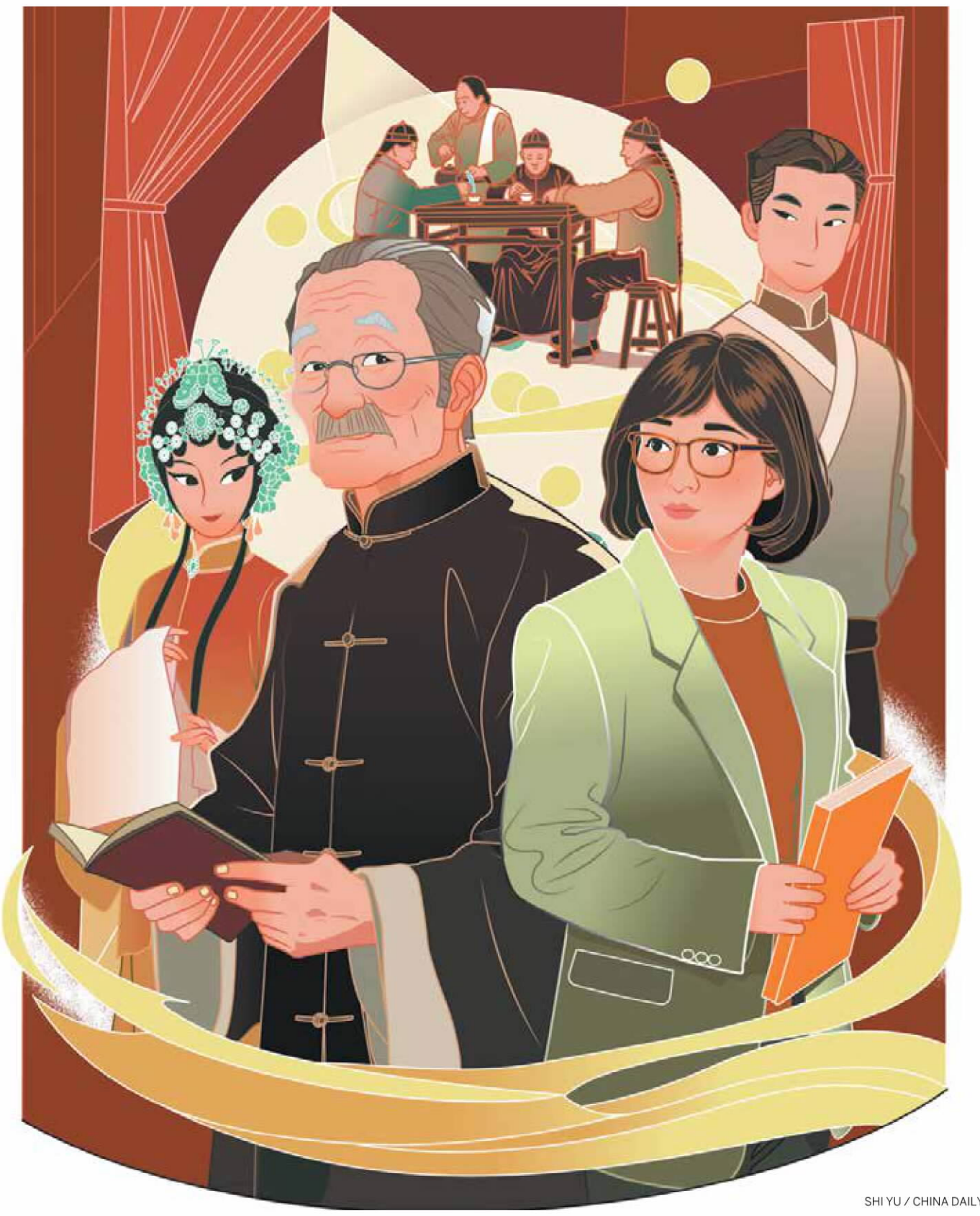
POLICY REVIEW

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:22 PM

Plan aims to revive traditional drama

Innovation, education key to winning over younger generation

By CHEN NAN
chennan@chinadaily.com.cn



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

China's cultural authorities have released a comprehensive three-year action plan aimed at revitalizing the country's traditional dramatic arts and boosting their appeal among younger audiences.

In recent years, traditional arts have faced fierce competition from digital entertainment, forcing a rethink of how to engage viewers.

To address this modern dilemma, the Three-Year Action Plan for the Revitalization of Drama (2026-28) was released in February by the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles.

The plan sets forth 24 measures across seven areas, including improving the development and training of theater troupes and their repertoires, cultivating new artists and better engaging the public.

To ensure these art forms remain relevant, theater professionals have emphasized the need for works that resonate with contemporary audiences and the importance of cultivating new viewers through educational institutions. They've also highlighted embracing technological innovation to expand artistic expression and create a sustainable ecosystem for the dramatic arts.

According to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, among China's 348 traditional opera types, roughly one-third are considered rare. Some exist in only a single troupe nationwide.

"Theater troupes across all levels are tasked with identifying enduring works, organizing research and promoting performances, with an emphasis on standardizing the transmission of key classics," the plan said.

Authorities are also focusing on rescuing and revitalizing precious historical materials.

"Cultural, tourism and publicity departments are coordinating with theater groups, research institutes, museums and libraries to collect, study, publish and exhibit traditional scripts, scores and archives," the plan said, noting that special attention is being given to preserving the audiovisual recordings of veteran performers, and oral histories of notable artists.

Local governments are encouraged to enact regulations to support the protection and development of regional opera forms. Experts say these measures aim to ensure China's opera heritage is systematically preserved and dynamically transmitted to future generations.

Liu Tong, director of the Chinese opera expert committee of the China Education Federation of the Arts, highlighted the plan's emphasis on "tailoring strategies to local conditions and specific troupes".

"Drama troupes across the country vary greatly — some are well-resourced, others face dual pressures of limited funding and talent shortages. Rare genres are particularly vulnerable; if key performers leave, the art itself may disappear," he said.

Liu said the plan's proposals, including a genre preservation program, a classical repertoire library and targeted support, respond directly to these realities, noting that troupe management requires more than funding.

"Effective governance must balance artistic principles, repertoire planning, market engagement and talent continuity," he said.

Shang Wenbo, director of the Taizhou Luantan opera troupe, has firsthand experience of pulling a dying art form back from the brink.

The group, a representative of national intangible cultural heritage, was dormant for nearly 30 years and faced significant hurdles, including the loss of performers, shrinking audiences and market decline.

Taizhou Luantan is a regional form of Chinese traditional opera originating from Zhejiang province. Featuring a flexible, improvisational style that blends local folk songs, dialect and storytelling, its themes are drawn from everyday life and local history.

"Our survival isn't luck, but is about finding a path that works for us," Shang said.

Under a hybrid public-private model, the troupe modernized its operations and implemented targeted talent development, producing a steady stream of original works. As a result, young actors gained practical experience, and the productions reached national stages and gained commercial success.

"The plan's support for grassroots troupes and reform is both encouragement and guidance," Shang added.

A major priority of the plan is the systematic training of young theater talent. This includes multitiered programs targeting primary schools, secondary schools and higher education institutions, combining academic instruction with hands-on performance experience.

According to Liu, China's traditional opera education system is facing a talent shortage, with only 1,670 students currently enrolled in vocational opera programs nationwide, which is far below industry demand.

He emphasized that the key lies in increasing student participation, calling for optimized enrollment policies. Measures should include tuition reductions, living allowances and other incentives to attract young people, particularly to smaller, less-known opera genres.

Liu said that deepening cooperation between opera schools and primary and secondary schools is of critical importance, as it creates a pipeline from early interest to professional training.

Wang Rongrong, a veteran Peking Opera actress with the Jingju Theatre Company of Beijing, highlighted the plan's emphasis on "master-apprentice" relationships, which allow young actors to inherit both technical skills and interpretative wisdom from veteran performers. She noted that these relationships are particularly critical for rare genres.

Peking Opera, or *jingju* in Chinese, dates back more than 200 years and was recognized as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2010. It brings together the art forms of singing, dancing, martial arts and acrobatics.

The plan also encourages cross-troupe exchanges, summer academies and intensive workshops, providing young actors with exposure to a variety of genres and performance techniques. Digital platforms are set to complement these efforts, with online master classes, artificial intelligence-assisted rehearsal tools, and virtual performance spaces to allow students to learn even when geographic constraints or limited local resources exist.

Recognizing that private theater troupes face persistent challenges, such as shortages of scripts and limited access to high-quality original works, the China Theatre Association launched the "One-Yuan Seed Plan" on Feb 24.

The initiative, which is also highlighted in the plan, aims to leverage the association's professional and resource advantages by inviting renowned playwrights to submit works suitable for private troupes. In a symbolic gesture, the performance rights are transferred for a nominal 1-yuan (15 cents) copyright fee, helping local and county-level private troupes gain access to tested and acclaimed works.

Chen Yongquan, vice-chairman of the association, said that the plan will authorize and publish 100 works in stages. The first batch includes 20 plays, spanning contemporary, historical and folk themes, all recognized for their quality and audience appeal.

So far, 35 private troupes have expressed interest, showing enthusiasm for performing classic and popular works. Chen noted that thriving private troupes are vital to cultural development and the broader arts ecosystem.

"They strengthen the foundation of Chinese drama, promote public engagement with traditional culture, and expand access to high-quality cultural services," he said.

Drama's long-term revival depends on the quality of productions, according to the plan, and as such it prioritizes improving repertoire quality through script evaluation, guided creative processes and funding incentives.

"A new initiative aims to improve the script review system. Productions must start with strong, well-vetted scripts. Script evaluation will become a prerequisite for staging plays. A national platform will be built to collect and promote outstanding scripts. This platform will connect playwrights with theater troupes," the plan said.

The plan also emphasizes the role of digital innovation and modern media in expanding the reach of dramatic arts. Traditional outlets such as radio, television, and film will be utilized to promote theater, with provincial TV stations encouraged to launch dedicated opera programs. Concurrently, technology is playing a larger role in audience development. Theater troupes are being supported in using the internet and artificial intelligence to reach broader demographics, while online performances and livestreams will be standardized to ensure quality and industry impact.

Feng Yuanzheng, president of the Beijing People's Art Theatre, and also a veteran actor and director, said: "Content is always the top priority. Only compelling works that combine artistic excellence with contemporary relevance can attract and retain audiences.

"I experimented with AI-generated scripts, and while the results were technically excellent, they lacked soul. Original scripts carry the emotions, quirks and personality of the author — something no machine can replicate," he said. "Scripts written by humans breathe life into stories. The precision of AI cannot replace the lived experience and emotional depth that make characters resonate with audiences."

To cultivate future audiences, the plan calls for strengthening general theater education in schools. Programs that bring performing arts to campuses will be expanded to offer students diverse ways to watch, participate, and engage. Additionally, schools with sufficient resources are encouraged to establish drama clubs to nurture young talent and future theatergoers.

Industry professionals emphasize that making productions accessible to younger viewers is critical. Kunqu Opera performer Ke Jun highlighted the success of youth-focused productions — such as a teen version of *The Peony Pavilion* — which attracted hundreds of thousands of young viewers. By utilizing online streaming as a "second stage", troupes can reach distant audiences and foster a new cycle of engagement.

To lower barriers and integrate traditional arts into everyday life, Shanghai Yue Opera House director Xu Biaoxin called for utilizing accessible digital formats. These include short videos, livestreams, behind-the-scenes content and performer personal branding, ensuring that classical performing arts remain relevant to modern, younger audiences.

Theater works to pass torch to new talent

By CHEN NAN

This March, Beijing's audiences flocked to the theater, eager to witness a performance that has enchanted generations.

Since its premiere in 1958, Lao She's *Teahouse*, brought to life by the Beijing People's Art Theatre under the meticulous guidance of directors Jiao Juyin and Xia Chun, has held a mirror to nearly half a century of China's social transformations. Yet, beyond its historical narrative, it is the dedication of the theater's actors — both veteran and young — that keeps this masterpiece alive.

The theater has long upheld a near-sacred tradition: once a production takes root, the core cast, stage design and performance style remain steadfast. This disciplined continuity ensures that each audience experiences the authenticity of old Beijing.

"Our goal is for the audience to feel the original spirit of the teahouse — without distortion, without modern embellishments," said actor Yang Lixin, who is also the restaging director of *Teahouse*.

For decades, actors like Liang Guanhua, Pu Cunxin and He Bing have embodied iconic characters with unwavering commitment. Liang, who has portrayed the second-generation Wang Lifa since 1999, meticulously records every performance in a personal log, reflecting on decades of insight and subtle refinement. Pu, now the chairman of the China Theatre Association, treats each staging as a fresh ascent, approaching every show with the immediacy of a first encounter with the audience.

Yet, the theater's leadership recognized that classical theater could not survive without thoughtful succession. To pass the torch to the younger generation, the Beijing People's Art Theatre revived its actor training programs in 2019 after a 30-year hiatus. The new cohort underwent rigorous instruction, including one-on-one mentorship, master classes, and immersion in real-life experiences.

"The challenge for young actors is not merely to imitate, but to understand and inhabit the essence of these roles," Pu said. "They must bring their own vitality and sensitivity, while honoring the rhythm, nuance and humanity of the characters."

Through this blend of tradition and innovation, the theater's younger performers stepped into secondary roles, learning the discipline, empathy, and interpretive depth that defined the institution. Actor Yang Mingxin described rehearsals as a living classroom where stage veterans, directors, and designers collaborated to create an environment of learning by observation and practice.

Today's theater-goers, especially younger ones, judge performances on merit rather than resemblance to legendary predecessors. This shift gave emerging actors room to explore and contribute their unique voices to the continuum of Chinese theater.

According to Feng Yuanzheng, a veteran actor, director and president of Beijing People's Art Theatre, the most urgent issue facing the theater is how to enable young actors to take the reins as soon as possible. In recent years, the theater has been actively exploring actor training and has boldly involved young actors in the creation of new productions.

In this interplay between old and new, the Beijing People's Art Theatre demonstrates the delicate art of cultural stewardship: honoring the past while empowering the next generation.

Feng said the current challenge is how to encourage today's young playwrights — or young people who enjoy creating — to develop works with contemporary significance.

In 2024, the theater held a director-playwright training program and one of the biggest challenges for young participants was committing themselves fully, Feng said.

"It is very difficult for a young person to spend three years completing a script; even half a year feels long to them," he said. Feng added that, for actors, the most persuasive way to win audience acceptance is through fully realized characters. And for a theater, the most effective way to gain audience recognition is through the quality of its productions.

Policy Digest

Subsidy program to aid phase-out of old commercial trucks

The Ministry of Transport and the National Development and Reform Commission have issued a notice rolling out a 2026 subsidy program to accelerate the replacement of old commercial trucks.

The program, effective throughout the whole year, provides financial incentives for scrapping and replacing heavy- and medium-duty trucks that comply with the older emission standards. A focus is promoting the transition to new energy vehicles, with priority support given to the purchase of electric trucks.

The subsidy amounts vary based on the vehicle type, scrapping time and the type of new vehicle purchased. The maximum combined subsidy for scrapping an old truck and purchasing a new electric truck can reach up to 140,000 yuan ($20,500) per vehicle .

Funding for the subsidies will be allocated to local governments through ultra-long-term special treasury bonds. If the central government allocation is exhausted, any additional funding required must be covered by local finances.

Initiative to boost deep AI integration with industrial growth

China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology and the National Data Administration have launched an action plan to foster synergistic development between artificial intelligence models and data resources to empower new industrialization.

The initiative targets 20 key manufacturing sectors, including steel, automobiles, medical equipment, aerospace and electronic components. Its core objective is to establish a self-reinforcing loop that connects data, AI models and practical industrial applications by the end of this year.

Key tasks outlined include building high-quality general and specialized industry datasets, and developing industry-specific models and intelligent agents.

According to the established timeline, provincial authorities and relevant State-owned enterprises directly administered by the central government are required to submit detailed implementation plans by May 30, provide a mid-term progress report by Aug 30, and submit a final summary by Nov 30.

CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:22 PM

Z WEEKLY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:22 PM

All about Gen Z

Z WEEKLY

Social Media Digest

Earphone renaissance

No charging, no device pairing — just plug in your earphones and enjoy the music. After being overshadowed by wireless Bluetooth earbuds for nearly a decade, wired earphones are making a comeback in 2026.

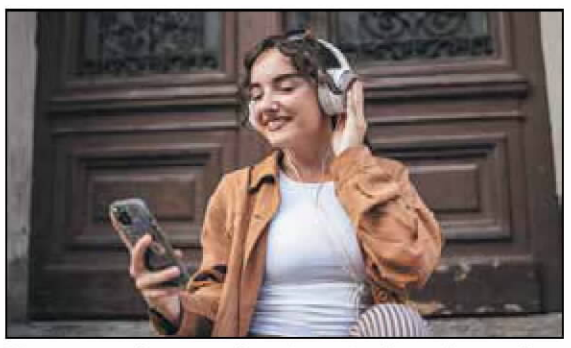
According to the market research firm Circana, sales of wired earphones rose by 20 percent in the first quarter of this year.

On the social media platform Xiaohongshu (RedNote), the hashtag "wired-earphone outfits" has also gained popularity, with young netizens creatively incorporating them into their style — using them as necklaces, belt decorations, and even hair accessories — bringing back the Y2K aesthetic.

So, what's driving this revival? Many people say Bluetooth earbuds are easy to misplace and require constant charging, while wired earphones are simple, reliable, and always ready to use.

In today's fast-paced digital world, the ever-present earphone cable has come to symbolize effortless, dependable freedom — with a touch of nostalgia and retro charm.

As one Xiaohongshu user puts it: "With wired earphones, you can enjoy lossless audio on music apps. And when you're with someone you like, you can share one side of the earphones. You sit close and enjoy the music together — it's really romantic."



Young people are embracing wired earphones for style and simplicity. VCG

Apple wisdom

What's the secret to happiness?

"When you have an apple, just enjoy the apple."

The simple yet thoughtful answer didn't come from a philosopher, but from a primary school student.

In April, during the annual Crabapple Blossom Season Campus Open Day at Tianjin University (TJU), an interactive board was set up at the university library for an activity titled "Quick Answers to Life's Puzzles".

University students wrote down their concerns, while younger children responded with candid and unfiltered honesty.

One university student asked, "What should I do if I can't find inner joy?" A child replied, "Watch *Peppa Pig*."

A high school student asked, "How can I get into TJU?" — referring to admission to the prestigious university. A primary school student responded humorously: "I got in on Open Day."

The cross-generational exchange quickly went viral online, attracting more than 100,000 likes on the Chinese social media platform Xiaohongshu.

Che Yifan, a library staff member at TJU, said the team hadn't expected such widespread attention.

"The original idea was simply to create a relaxed space for people of all ages to communicate," Che explained. "We hoped it would help students see their worries from a different perspective."

In a commentary shared on its official social media account, the university described the library as "the heart of the university".

"When members of the public come here with curiosity and hope, we want this heart to beat for society," the university wrote. "Culture knows no age or boundaries. It nurtures everyone equally, helping people become warmer, stronger, and more confident."

MENG WENJIE



Even the youngest minds can offer insights adults never expect. VCG

Music bridges cultures in Nanning

From Rio to Nanning, young musicians share melodies, dance, and laughter, bringing Brazilian and Chinese cultures together on stage.



Members of Brazil's Forte de Copacabana Orchestra sing the Chinese folk song *Mo Li Hua* (Jasmine Flower) in Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, on April 16. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By ZHANG LI in Nanning
zhangli@chinadaily.com.cn

Marcia Melchior, artistic director of Brazil's Orquestra Forte de Copacabana, or the Forte de Copacabana Orchestra, watched the young musicians on stage. A clear vocal melody rang out, followed by a graceful tune that filled the air. Brazilian performers danced to the rhythm, and local Chinese youth joined in, forming a circle and moving freely to the beat.

"This is more than just performing," Melchior said. "Music is universal; it connects people. Even without a common language, people can feel it with their hearts."

The scene unfolded at the opening ceremony of the 2026 Guangxi Sanyuesan Festival in Nanning, South China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, on April 18.

Traditionally celebrated on the third day of the third month on the Chinese lunar calendar — which fell on April 19 this year — the festival is a time for the Zhuang ethnic group to honor their ancestors and express love through singing.

From April 15 to 20, the Forte de Copacabana Orchestra was invited to participate in the festival and join cultural exchanges with local youth.

Based in Rio de Janeiro, the orchestra is composed of young musicians aged 13 to 25. Recognized as part of the Cultural and Intangible Heritage of the State of Rio de Janeiro, it serves as an important messenger of friendship between Chinese and Brazilian youth.

During the festival, the orchestra combined classical music with the passionate rhythms of Brazilian samba, performing melodies familiar to both Brazilian and Chinese audiences. Upbeat Brazilian classics brought energy to the stage, while *Flor de Lis* (Lily Flower) echoed the Chinese folk song *Mo Li Hua* (Jasmine Flower), creating a musical dialogue across cultures.





Above: Brazilian performers and Chinese youth take part in embroidered ball throwing. **Below:** Brazilian performers join local children for cultural activities. **Bottom:** Members of the Forte de Copacabana Orchestra perform at the Nanning Youth Activity Center. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Singer Michelly Gondim admitted that learning to sing in Chinese in a short time was not easy, but the challenge made it even more memorable.

"This is an incredible experience. Being able to share these cultural elements with Chinese artists is truly special," she said.

At the Nanning Youth Activity Center, Brazilian musicians performed Chinese songs alongside children dressed in traditional local ethnic costumes. The musicians played and sang as the children added harmonies, their instruments and voices blending into a warm melody.

Gondim said she was deeply moved by the children's dedication and the audience's enthusiastic response. "It made us feel close right away," she added.

Violinist Bruna Zurmele recalled how quickly the children learned Brazilian rhythms during rehearsals. "One young boy even picked up a hand drum and joined us on stage, keeping perfect time with the samba beats," she said. "That moment really stayed with me."

She added that Guangxi's climate and scenery reminded her of her hometown, Rio de Janeiro, making her feel right at home. She was also touched by the warmth and hospitality she encountered throughout the trip.

"Everywhere we played, people came over to watch and interact with us. Their kindness left a lasting impression," she said.

During the intangible cultural heritage session, Brazilian guests and Chinese youth participated in traditional activities such as three-person board-shoe racing, embroidered ball throwing, and *touhu*, or pitch-pot. They also tried Zhuang brocade weaving, fan painting, tea art, and local delicacies, immersing themselves in the charm of Guangxi's traditional culture.

Cellist Thiellen Sena said the visit gave her a more vivid understanding of China and inspired her to learn more about its culture.

"I started from scratch, learning and experiencing everything along the way," she said. "The whole process was just fascinating."

Xinhua contributed to this story.



Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:22 PM

Z WEEKLY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:22 PM

Slow living shapes young lifestyles

From crochet to ancient wellness rituals, a new generation discovers old-school lifestyles, weaving heritage and mindfulness into everyday routines.



By **XIONG XINYI** and **CHEN XUE**

Tulip (pseudonym), based in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, still treasures her first crochet piece: a navy-blue coaster she made in high school, with guidance from an older friend. What started as a simple hobby seven years ago has since grown into a full-time career.

"The internet moves too fast," she said. "People are trapped in constant anxiety. But crochet is inherently slow — it can't be rushed. It's about weaving together fragmented moments, stitch by stitch."

Known by the handle Qingzheng Mozai on social media, Tulip represents a rising wave of young Chinese embracing an "old-school life" as a counterbalance to the relentless pace of modern life. This philosophy encompasses crafts, food, and personal rituals, forming a holistic approach to living.

The scale of this shift is evident in the numbers: a 2025 survey by China Youth Daily found that 89.9 percent of 1,337 young respondents said they liked visiting local food markets while traveling. Similarly, content related to crochet has attracted billions of views across platforms such as Xiaohongshu and Douyin, according to a March report by China News Service.

A former fashion design student, Tulip struggled with crochet during her university years, receiving poor grades in related courses. But she didn't give up. She began posting her work online, looking for a community of like-minded people. The support she found there helped her improve, both in her crochet skills and in her understanding of the deeper value crochet brought to her life — a sense of peace.

"I used to fear heavy workloads," she admitted. "But crochet showed me how to take things step by step. No matter how heavy the load, it eventually gets done."

Her passion for crochet even led her to translate a foreign crochet pattern book into Chinese — a task that required not just language skills but also a deep, practical knowledge of the craft, as many international patterns didn't have Chinese editions.

"It taught me to stay true to my own vision," she said.

> "In an age of constant connectivity, bathing is one of the few things that forces us to strip away everything — clothes, phone, and social roles."
>
> **Yang Wenxi,** a lifestyle influencer



Above: Yang Wenxi writes Spring Festival couplets in traditional Chinese calligraphy.
Right: Yang wears traditional Chinese clothing as part of her daily routine at home. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Embracing wholeness

Food has long been a vessel for memory and connection, a sentiment deeply understood by Huang Chengjuan, the creator behind the Yan Jiu Suo account, and Lu Shi Yue (her social media pseudonym). Both of them cherish the slow, mindful preparation of traditional foods.

Huang, based in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, made a dramatic shift from being a vice president at a gaming company to becoming a full-time food creator after the birth of her son. At that moment, she realized she wanted more than just a career — she wanted to build something that could carry stories and memories.

"I could see exactly what my future would look like," she recalled, recognizing that food offers more than just nourishment — it carries the weight of tradition and shared experiences.

Through her social media platform, Huang shares her journey of researching and recreating traditional Chinese delicacies, bringing ancient flavors back to life for a new generation.

"Young people don't just want to learn how traditional dishes are made," she observed. "They want to understand the culture behind these foods, take what resonates with them, and incorporate the essence of traditional living into their daily lives."

Part of Huang's mindful approach to food includes visiting local food markets, where she shops not just for fresh ingredients, but also for a human connection.

"Chatting with vendors about flavors, origins, and seasonal availability offers a quiet wisdom that you can't find in a shopping app," she said.

Lu Shi Yue, based in Dali, Yunnan province, shares a similar ethos but with a unique twist: her culinary creations are deeply influenced by Chinese literature.

For example, she has recreated wisteria cakes, a pastry filled with wisteria petals that was popular during the Republic of China period (1912-1949) but is rarely seen today. This project, like many others, is part of her exploration of how food intersects with stories and culture.





Above left: Tulip (pseudonym) poses with yarn and crochet tools. **Above right:** Lu Shi Yue (pseudonym) makes spring-inspired wisteria cakes. **Below:** Huang Chengjuan enjoys home-cooked traditional Chinese dishes. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Lu moved from Beijing to Dali in 2023 in search of a slower pace of life. She soon realized, however, that the real challenge wasn't slowing down — it was confronting the fragmentation that comes with modern life.

"People are constantly interrupted by notifications, short videos, and the endless scroll. That's what really exhausts us," she explained. "What we're seeking is wholeness. When we complete something, whether it's a dish or a book, there's a sense of fulfillment in seeing the whole picture come together."

This is why so many of her followers recreate her dishes and engage with her work on a deeper level. They find not only a connection to the past and to literature but also a sense of belonging in the present.

"Wholeness may seem slow, but it's actually the quickest way to recharge," Lu added.

This same philosophy shapes the life of Yang Wenxi, known online as Zhu Le Tang, based in Chengdu, Sichuan province. She has found the power of slowing down through an ancient wellness ritual: bathing.

Yang is passionate about baths to the point that she installed a private one at home. "In an age of constant connectivity, bathing is one of the few things that forces us to strip away everything — clothes, phone, and social roles," she said.

She has since developed a system of slow, body-centered self-care inspired by ancient Chinese wellness traditions. For example, during spring, a season traditionally associated with renewal in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), she incorporates haircombing into her daily routine to help support *qi*, or vital energy.

She also revives small, personal rituals, like warming clothes over incense, reconnecting with the ancient wisdom that helps her navigate the stresses of modern life.

In addition to bathing, Yang has also taken up calligraphy, which she said helps her "switch my racing mind into energy-saving mode".

"When we write, take baths, burn incense, or simmer soup, we use these 'slow motions' to recalibrate a rhythm that's been disrupted by fast-paced life," Yang explained.

She has also noticed that when young people like her turn to older lifestyles, it's not about trying to relive the past. "We're simply borrowing wisdom and strength from them to make our present lives more comfortable — and more truly our own," she said.

Contact the writers at xiongxinyi@i21st.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:22 PM

Z WEEKLY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:22 PM

Nanyin finds new voices

A new generation breathes life into centuries-old Nanyin melodies, sharing them with global audiences in a fresh, modern way.

By **GUI QIAN**
guiqian@i21st.cn

When Zheng Mingming was about 5, she loved sitting next to her grandmother, listening to her sing ancient songs in the Minnan dialect. Her grandmother, a "resident musician" at a Nanyin hall in Quanzhou, Fujian province, had hundreds of songs memorized.

Whether at family gatherings, festivals, and quiet afternoons at home, Nanyin music was the soundtrack to Zheng's everyday life.

Little did she know that this family tradition, passed down through five generations, would one day lead her to perform on a world-renowned stage.

On March 28 and 29, at Hong Kong City Hall, Zheng, a member of the modern Nanyin ensemble Tiam Drop, played the Nanyin *pipa*, a crooked-neck lute held horizontally, accompanied by five fellow musicians. More than 400 audience members from around the world listened intently and responded with thunderous applause.

The performance was part of the 54th Hong Kong Arts Festival, which featured about 1,200 outstanding international and local artists.

For the first time ever, Tiam Drop, a youth troupe founded in 2021, brought Nanyin to this prestigious Asian arts event.

Often referred to as a "living fossil" of Chinese music, Nanyin originated in Quanzhou and is one of the oldest known music genres in China, with a history of 800 to 1,000 years. Traditionally performed in the Minnan dialect, it features instruments like the *pipa*, *dongxiao* (a vertical bamboo flute), *erxian* (a two-stringed instrument), and *sanxian* (a three-stringed instrument).

In 2006, Nanyin was included in the first batch of China's national-level intangible cultural heritage list. In 2009, it was inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Growing up in Quanzhou, Zheng was deeply immersed in Nanyin. Every spring and autumn, local Nanyin musicians would hold ceremonies honoring Meng Chang, the god of music. During celebrations such as the Birthday of the Buddha, families would prepare dishes to share, while the community gathered to sing, play Nanyin, and enjoy a meal together.

"Nanyin is not just music; it's a way of life, filled with human warmth. It encompasses a complete universe — music, rituals, culture, and so much more. There's no end to it," Zheng said.



Members of Tiam Drop, an ensemble that brings a modern touch to Nanyin, a centuries-old music genre from Quanzhou, Fujian province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



> "Nanyin is not just music; it's a way of life, filled with human warmth. It encompasses a complete universe — music, rituals, culture, and so much more. There's no end to it."
>
> **Zheng Mingming,** a musician and member of the Nanyin ensemble Tiam Drop

Many Nanyin lyrics are drawn from ancient tales, such as the Minnan love story of Chen San and Wu Niang. This story has inspired hundreds of songs passed down through generations, with each performer adding their own layers of emotion and detail.

"It's like reading a book, but even more enjoyable because you can sing and play it," Zheng explained.

"In Nanyin, time seems to fly," she added. "Each time you master a song or an instrument, you uncover new challenges — it's like leveling up in a game."

She noted that there are about 6,000 existing Nanyin songs, with some suites taking more than 40 minutes to perform.

The music 'chef'

Cai Kaidong, the founder and producer of Tiam Drop, was initially baffled by Nanyin's intricate musicality. A seasoned musician with experience performing with bands, arranging music, and producing albums for well-known groups, he realized he couldn't recall a single melody after listening to a Nanyin piece nearly 10 times.

This revelation made him question why so many people, even professionals like himself, found Nanyin so difficult to grasp.

"It's not that Nanyin isn't good," he explained. "It's just that our ears are so accustomed to the 'cooking style' of modern music."

He was referring to Nanyin's melody-centered texture, which differs from the harmonic progressions and strong rhythmic structures familiar to modern pop listeners.

"Nanyin is like raw meat from ancient times — pure and uncooked — while modern listeners are used to processed meat," he explained, using a culinary analogy. "What we need to do is provide 'chopsticks' in the form of arrangements to serve it to the audience."

However, Cai is determined not to turn Nanyin into something it's not. So, he has adopted the principle of "no changes, only arrangements" for Tiam Drop. The lyrics, melody, playing techniques, and tonality remain unchanged, but two subtle elements are introduced. First, bass harmony using the *daruan*, a long-lost Chinese plucked instrument. Second, a rhythmic framework with the cajon, whose neutral tone ensures that no foreign musical style is imposed.

"The *daruan* is a native instrument, yet not a single song featuring it has survived. This works in our favor, as it won't alter the core or style of Nanyin," Cai explained.

"The cajon is like plain boiled water. I don't want it to stand out; it shouldn't have any 'flavor'. I only use it to offer a subtle 'hint' at key moments — such as the start of a new section or a shift in emotion," he added.

These arrangements give Nanyin a clear structure — beginning, development, climax, and ending — making it more accessible to younger audiences.

At the Hong Kong Arts Festival, Tiam Drop even led an interactive session, teaching over 400 people to sing along. The experience was so moving that Cai removed his in-ear monitor and stood on stage, stunned.

On March 30, Tiam Drop hosted "Echoes of a Millennium: Nanyin" sharing session at the Legislative Council of Hong Kong, where Legislative Council member Kenneth Fok Kai-kong tried the instruments and later praised the group on social media: "This unwavering commitment and passion for culture truly deserve our full support."

Cai remains grounded in his mission.

"Every generation has its own role to play, and what it does will be remembered," he said.

"Our generation just needs to approach traditional Chinese music with sincerity, responsibility, and respect."

Shining Wisdom

China's governance model offers lessons for the world



Rafael Henrique Zerbetto

Over my 10 years in China, I paid close attention to the country's poverty alleviation work and had the chance to visit some of the last villages lifted out of poverty, in places such as Guizhou province and the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.

Walking through the narrow lanes of these rural communities, I saw local committees coordinating efforts to create jobs, develop tourism, improve education, and protect the environment — all tailored to each village's unique needs.

Wherever I went, even in the most remote areas, I met officials who knew their communities deeply, and I began to understand how China's governance system turned national strategy into local action.

I also kept up with the publication of all the volumes of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* and read many of President Xi's other books. I even contributed to editing and proofreading translations of his works into Portuguese.

These experiences helped me grasp the philosophy behind China's whole-process people's democracy, a system that allows citizens, including ethnic groups, to participate at every stage of policy-making — from planning to implementation — unlike Western representative democracy, which relies heavily on elections.

The accessibility of governance theories through President Xi's writings has made this participation more possible and active. Ordinary citizens are not only able to understand the rationale behind policies, but they can also suggest improvements and see their ideas reflected in both local and national initiatives.

Even as a foreigner, I found this system transparent and inclusive: I could attend public briefings, read official reports, and discuss policy limitations with local committees, contributing ideas to make daily life smoother for the international community and the country more attractive to international talent.

I witnessed firsthand how policies moved beyond theory into practice.

In one village, for example, a small cooperative was established to process local agricultural products. I watched as villagers who had spent decades in poverty were now operating machinery, negotiating with buyers, and learning digital marketing strategies. I realized that the state's efforts aimed to empower people with knowledge, skills, and sustainable livelihoods — not just provide financial aid.

By comparison, poverty alleviation in Brazil often comes in the form of conditional cash transfers. While such programs can improve consumption and provide temporary relief, they are not connected to a broader development plan. Seeing China's tailored, multi-sectoral approach made it clear why its overall efficiency and long-term impact far surpassed that of Brazil.

As a Brazilian, I felt especially proud when President Xi chose the 19th G20 Summit in Brazil in 2024 to deliver two important speeches. In one, he spoke on the fight against poverty and hunger, sharing China's successful experiences in supporting the Global South. In the other, he addressed the need to reform global governance, advocating for multilateralism and the strengthening of a rules-based international order.

Through it all, I came to deeply appreciate the holistic nature of China's governance model. Poverty alleviation, economic growth, social participation, international diplomacy, and citizen empowerment were all interconnected.

As an observer, reader, and contributor, I came to see that this system — rooted in China's long history and adapted to modern challenges — offers valuable lessons for the world.

This is why I believe that translations of President Xi's books will help foreigners better understand China's policies and promote international cooperation.

By the end of my 10 years, I realize that governance is more than just laws, policies, or speeches. It is the delicate weaving together of strategy and human experience — a village lifted out of poverty, a citizen's voice heard, a foreigner's suggestion considered — all forming a living, evolving tapestry of collective progress.

Written by Rafael Henrique Zerbetto, a Brazilian foreign languages expert at the Asia-Pacific Center of the China International Communications Group and a board member of the Brazilian Citizens Council of Beijing. He was one of the recipients of the Chinese Government Friendship Award in 2025.

Online
Watch the video by scanning the code.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:22 PM

SPORTS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:22 PM



The 2026 Asian Skateboarding Championships in Meishan, Sichuan province, featured three disciplines: park, street and game of skate flatland battle, divided into men's, women's, junior boys' and junior girls' categories, with a total of 11 gold medals up for grabs.

Online
See more by scanning the code.

SKATEBOARDING

CONTINENT GETS ON BOARD

Kids grind for glory at inaugural Asian championships in Meishan

By **PENG CHAO**
in Meishan, Sichuan province
pengchao@chinadaily.com.cn

Zheng Haohao stood at the edge of the concrete bowl, took a deep breath, and then dropped in.

What followed was pure flow, capped by a smooth 540-degree spin and a clean landing.

The crowd erupted.

"I'm thrilled, and honestly a little surprised by my own performance," said the 13-year-old after taking third place in the women's park final at the recent 2026 Asian Skateboarding Championships in Meishan, Sichuan province.

"I used to be afraid of the 540, because you have to rotate in the air. I'm glad that I finally found the courage to get past it."

Zheng's passion for skateboarding began six years ago, when she received a board as a birthday gift from her mother at age seven.

At nine, the skater from Huizhou, Guangdong province, competed in the women's park event at the 2021 National Games.

Her career highlight came at age 11, when she represented China at the 2024 Paris Olympics.

Zheng was the youngest athlete across all sports at the Paris Games, and the youngest-ever Chinese Olympian.

Thanks to pioneers like Zheng, since the sport's first inclusion at the Tokyo Olympics, skateboarding has gained increased popularity among a new generation and seen a pool of budding talent emerge.

An example and idol

Despite being labeled a prodigy by many, Zheng said her journey has been anything but easy.

There were tough days, she admitted, when she would cry after practice because she just couldn't land her tricks.

"Talent alone isn't enough," she said. "What really matters is who works harder, plays smarter and loves the sport more."

Zheng said she skates out of love, not obligation.

"As long as you stay passionate, no matter how many times you fail, you'll always believe that, maybe, the next one will land. You just have to keep trying," she said.

For her, the appeal of skateboarding lies in the thrill of pushing her own limits.

"That sense of freedom when you're in the air — you can't get it anywhere else," she said.

Zheng also loves the social aspect of skateboarding. The sport, born on the streets, has helped her build friendships with skaters from around the world.

"We may be rivals on the course," she said, "but off it, skateboarding brings us together as friends."

When she first picked up her board, Zheng was often the only girl at the skatepark. However, the once male-dominated sport, she noticed, is now attracting an ever-increasing number of girls. In fact, many have given the sport a try after seeing Zheng compete in Paris.

"I'm really happy to do my little bit for Chinese skateboarding. It gives me a sense of pride to inspire more kids, especially girls, to pick up the sport," she said.

Zheng's idols are Gu Ailing, China's Winter Olympic freestyle skiing champion, and Zheng Qinwen, the country's first Olympic tennis singles gold medalist.

"Their fighting spirit inspires me," she said. "I want to be like them someday — winning a major title for my country."

Zheng recalled her mother's playful encouragement: "Gu Ailing has a nickname — 'the Frog Princess', so, I guess that makes you the 'Tadpole Princess'."

She said her love for skateboarding won't end. After she retires, she says her dream is to become a female judge at international bowl events after retiring.

"That would be awesome — because, so far, I've never seen (a female judge)," she said.

'Just cool'

Yu Jinmo, also 13, fell in love with the sport for a simpler reason: "It's just so cool."

At age six, she was walking past a square with her parents where an older boy was skateboarding and she was instantly drawn to it. So, her parents took her to a skateboard club, where she started practicing.

In 2022, Yu earned a spot on the Sichuan provincial skateboarding team. That same year, she claimed a gold in skateboarding at the National Roller Skating Championships.

At the 2026 Asian Skateboarding Championships in Meishan, she finished second in the game of skate competition.

Yu enjoys trying new tricks — especially ones that no one else has done — even if it means risking poor results in competitions or a greater chance of injury.

"As long as a move looks cool, I will definitely give it a shot," she said.

Yu has suffered multiple injuries. The worst was when she missed a rail during a competition, fell, and landed on her chin.

She bled heavily and was taken to the hospital by ambulance.

That, however, hasn't kept her off her board.

"If you truly love the sport, those injuries don't really matter," she said.

Yu said her skateboarding experience has taught her a simple lesson: stick to what you love, and don't worry about what others say.

"My grandma used to be a little bit against me learning skateboarding, but, after seeing what I've achieved, she's now come around to support me," she said.

'Keep going'

Wu Bowen, 19, was also into skateboarding because it looked cool. However, he didn't take it up for medals, but to escape weekend homework.

"My parents noticed my athletic talent, so they supported me," said the youngster from Nanping, Fujian province. "I just thought it was fun."

Wu started at around 13, which is pretty late compared to most skaters, but, just 15 months later, he took sixth place at the 2020 National Skateboarding Championships.

In 2025, he won gold in men's park at the national championships.

"Most of my rivals have been skating for nearly ten years, but that doesn't scare me," he said.

"I can land the hardest tricks, the highest jumps, and the biggest moves — and I'm pretty consistent."

Wu said he had never performed so well and so flawlessly as he did at the Meishan event, despite only finishing third in the men's park final.

"I was so nervous in the prelims that I messed up my first run. Then I told myself: don't treat it as a competition, just enjoy it," he said. "Results matter, but what's more important is showing what you've got."

The competition was special for him, as the stands were filled with spectators — no longer just a few familiar faces.

"Every time I landed a trick, cheers erupted. That was a one-of-a-kind experience," he said.

Wu used to be a person with no big dreams. Skateboarding gave him a concrete goal: to perform on an international stage and bring honor to his country.

The teen noted that most Chinese athletes retire by the time they reach their early 20s, but he doesn't plan to follow suit.

"The sport has a high age ceiling. Overseas, some guys are still skating in their 50s," he said.

"I enjoy every bit of progress. As long as I see myself improving, I'll keep going."

Competitive location

While skateboarders compete for their dreams in Meishan, the host city is paving the way for more to follow.

Li Rui, deputy director of Meishan's education and sports bureau, said the city has built the Meishan International Roller Skating and Skateboarding Center — an Olympic-standard venue — to promote the sport's development.

The five-day event last month — Asia's first continental championship just for skateboarding — was the venue's inaugural competition and welcomed 172 athletes from 13 countries and regions.

"Our city may not be strong in traditional sports, but we have an edge in action sports like skateboarding," Li said.

In Meishan, skateboarding is a hit among students and young professionals. The city is home to more than 5,000 regular skaters and over 10 skateboard clubs and grassroots organizations.

The city has been promoting the sport in schools, neighborhoods, and malls, while adding skate spots in sports parks and plazas.

Training programs and youth summer camps are also underway to build a broader base for the sport, Li said.

"The goal of hosting the championships is also about using the event's exposure to boost skateboarding at both the professional and grassroots levels," he added.

The event brought not only sporting excitement, but also economic vitality, Li said. It attracted over 50,000 spectators and sports fans, generating over 80 million yuan ($11.7 million) in direct spending on tourism, dining, accommodation and shopping.

"I took my family out for a meal one night, and the tables around us were packed with Koreans, Filipinos — you name it," Li said. "That's proof of how the event drove up local spending."

Liao Jincheng, deputy general manager of Meishan Sports Industry Development and Investment Co Ltd, who oversees the venue's operations and training programs, said tickets for the semifinals and finals were completely sold out.

He said the venue will host professional teams for training camps and work with schools, youth centers, and skating associations to maximize its usage.

Right next to the skateboarding venue is a world-class rock climbing gym boasting 7,200 square meters of climbable surfaces — one of the largest facilities of its kind in the world, Liao said.

"Under Meishan's development plan, the venue's surrounding area will turn into a hub for action sports," Liao said. "Hopefully, one day, we'll see a national or world champion come from here."

A skate place to visit

What:
Meishan International Roller Skating and Skateboarding Center.

The Olympic-standard venue recently played host to the 2026 Asian Skateboarding Championships, Asia's first continental championship just for skateboarding.

Where:
Meishan city, Sichuan province.

How to get there:
Take a high-speed train to Meishan from Chengdu Shuangliu International Airport, or other train stations in Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province, with journeys ranging from 20-40 minutes.

Other attractions:
The city is also home to Meishan International Climbing Center, one of the world's largest rock climbing facilities, boasting 7,200 square meters of climbing surfaces and host of the 2026 World Climbing Asia Championship.

Famous scenic spots nearby include the Temple of the Three Sus, Wawu Mountain, Liujiang Ancient Town and Heilongtan Lake.







Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:22 PM

The 2026 Asian Skateboarding Championships in Meishan, Sichuan province, Asia's first continental championship for skateboarding, welcomed 172 athletes from 13 countries and regions. Among them, Chinese stars Wu Bowen (left) took third in the men's park final, while compatriot, 13-year-old Zheng Haohao (bottom right) took third place in the women's park final. ALL PICTURES PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:25 PM

Truce tensions
Russia and Ukraine trade ceasefire breach charges
WORLD, PAGE 5



Iran sends response to US proposal
TOP NEWS, PAGE 3



Epic revival
Acclaimed dance show based on legendary battle tours 23 cities
LIFE, PAGE 13

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日報 MONDAY, MAY 11, 2026

RCEP seen as key anchor for Asian growth

Agreement set to help global economy cope with geopolitical shifts, growing challenges

By **MA SI, WANG KEJU** and **CHEN BOWEN** in Haikou

As the world's largest free trade agreement, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership is set to play an even more prominent role in anchoring Asian economic integration and helping the global economy navigate geopolitical shifts and mounting challenges, officials and experts said.

Highlighting the RCEP's role as a powerful counterweight to trade unilateralism, they called for it to evolve from one of "scale advantage" to one of "functional and quality enhancement" — while also urging greater efforts to leverage Hainan Free Trade Port as a key gateway connecting China with other RCEP member economies.

The remarks were made at the 2026 RCEP Media and Think Tank Forum, which opened on Saturday in Haikou, Hainan province. With the theme of "Working Together to Address Challenges and Promote Development", the forum was hosted by China Daily and the China Institute for Reform and Development.

Liu Xiaoming, governor of Hainan, said covering 30 percent of the world's population and economic output, the RCEP is the free trade agreement with the greatest potential. It has played an irreplaceable role in maintaining global economic stability and has also become a key driver of Hainan's export-oriented economy.

"Hainan Free Trade Port demonstrates China's resolve to expand opening-up and advance economic globalization. We stand ready to work with all RCEP parties to jointly forge a new pattern of regional development through closer coordination," Liu added.

The governor said that Hainan has seen growing economic vitality since the island-wide special customs operations were launched in December, offering favorable trade policies such as tax reduction and duty-free measures.

Qu Yingpu, publisher and editor-in-chief of China Daily, said that over the past year, Asia has contributed over 60 percent to global economic growth, a result of joint efforts by China and other Asian nations.

"China has always championed open regionalism and true multilateralism, and the construction of the Hainan Free Trade Port stands as a vivid example of this commitment," Qu said.

He said that China Daily has been deeply engaged in the building of the Hainan Free Trade Port International Services portal.

"Confronted with high walls of trade barriers, what we need is not to build walls to protect ourselves, but to pave roads and build bridges," he said, calling on media and think tanks to use professional insights to dispel misinformation and to tell authentic stories of regional economic cooperation.

Qu also highlighted the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area 3.0 Upgrade Protocol, which, for the first time, includes emerging areas such as digital economy, green economy, and industrial and supply chain connectivity. "With everyone's efforts, I believe the fruits of technological innovation will cross borders and benefit all."

The RCEP, which is aimed at gradually eliminating tariffs on over 90 percent of goods traded among its 15 members, has delivered tangible results since coming into effect in 2022. Intra-regional trade surged from $4.9 trillion in 2021 to $6.1 trillion in 2025, a 24 percent increase, while its share of global trade rose from 27.2 percent to 29.1 percent.

Yose Rizal Damuri, executive director of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Indonesia, said: "Geopolitical competition is becoming more intense and more varied. Emerging industries are reshaping global landscapes, and contradictions in energy and food markets are worsening.

"This means that regional integration — such as the RCEP — is precisely what the current moment calls for. The institutional framework is providing member economies with a combination of growth opportunities, policy predictability and supply chain resilience."

Chi Fulin, president of the China Institute for Reform and Development, said, "China's vast market has become the largest source of certainty for RCEP's development."

"The next five years are crucial for China to build a strong domestic market. The efforts to accelerate China's tariff reduction commitments under the RCEP framework, especially on intermediate goods, and to further open up services trade will provide enormous new growth engines for RCEP cooperation," Chi added.

Chi also highlighted the strategic role of the Hainan Free Trade Port. "As a major gateway, Hainan is well-positioned to pioneer breakthroughs in finance and data flows, and serve as a vital platform linking the Chinese market with ASEAN, thus better safeguarding regional industrial and supply chain stability."

Lyu Bin, president of the China Oceanic Development Foundation, said, "Most RCEP members are ocean-based economies, and the ocean plays a vital role."

He called for more efforts to expand RCEP cooperation in mariculture, marine ecotourism and disaster prevention, as well as leveraging digital technologies to build smart ports and offshore new energy supplies.

Contact the writers at masi@chinadaily.com.cn

Inside
See more, **pages 3, 4**



Guests attend the 2026 RCEP Media and Think Tank Forum in Haikou, Hainan province, on Saturday. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

Passengers evacuated



Passengers carrying their belongings in plastic bags are evacuated from the hantavirus-hit cruise ship MV *Hondius* at the Granadilla Port in Tenerife, Spain, on Sunday. The passengers, none of whom were showing symptoms of the virus, were taken to Tenerife airport in military buses to be evacuated from the island in government planes sent by their respective countries. CHRIS MCGRATH / GETTY IMAGES **See story, page 5**

Deep-sea mission marks intl advance

By **LI MENGHAN**
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

The Chinese scientific research vessel *Tansuo 1* arrived in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, on Sunday after completing the first China-Chile joint manned deep-sea expedition to the Atacama Trench off the coast of Chile, marking a major step forward in international marine scientific cooperation and China's active participation in global ocean governance.

The hadal trench — the ocean's deepest layer below 6,000 meters — is one of the least understood scientific frontiers, but it is key to studying life under extreme conditions, uncovering the mechanisms of earthquakes and tsunamis, and identifying unique genetic resources.

The 156-day expedition, led by the Institute of Deep-Sea Science and Engineering of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, set sail from Sanya, Hainan province, on Dec 6. It covered more than 40,000 kilometers — equivalent to circling the Earth — and involved 83 researchers from China, Chile, Germany, Denmark, Canada and Spain.

The expedition focused on the Atacama Trench — which reaches depths of over 8,000 meters and holds significant scientific value for biodiversity and geology — and the largely unexplored Mussau Trench in the western Pacific, an area key to understanding tectonic plate formation.

During the mission, China's domestically developed manned submersible *Fendouzhe*, carried by *Tansuo 1*, completed 63 dives, 50 of which exceeded 6,000 meters. The team collected a large number of biological and geological samples, as well as high-definition underwater footage, laying a solid foundation for multidisciplinary research in deep-sea geology, biology and environmental science.

In a breakthrough, scientists identified for the first time the deepest chemosynthetic ecosystem in the Southern Hemisphere — a system sustaining life on the seafloor without sunlight or photosynthesis — providing crucial evidence for the hypothesis of a global chemosynthetic corridor on Earth.

Additionally, researchers discovered several species of deep-sea snailfish and captured numerous images of benthic animals, most of which were identified as new species, highlighting the region's rich fish biodiversity. They also identified fault ruptures on the seafloor caused by historical major earthquakes, offering valuable evidence of how seismic activity shapes deep-sea geomorphology and affects biological habitats.

Due to ultrahigh pressure, extremely low visibility and frigid temperatures, deep-sea exploration is considered even more challenging than space exploration. However, China's homegrown submersible *Fendouzhe* has addressed many of these challenges, enabling operations at full ocean depth.

Building on this capability, the Institute of Deep-Sea Science and Engineering launched the Global Hadal Exploration Programme in 2022 to bring together global expertise to explore, understand and protect deep-sea environments.

The program was officially endorsed by the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030), marking significant recognition of China's leadership in international deep-sea cooperation.

As a flagship operation of the program, the joint expedition has provided valuable experience in global deep-sea scientific data sharing, talent cultivation and long-term seafloor observation.

The mission aligns with China's emphasis on fundamental research, deep-sea exploration and global scientific cooperation outlined in the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), demonstrating the country's commitment to active participation in global ocean governance and international mega-science cooperation.

HENAN THEATER CLUSTER REVIVES HISTORY

Immersive storytelling transcends language to thrill audiences

By **LI LEI** in Beijing
and **SHI BAOYIN** in Zhengzhou

A general swears an oath to his troops: anyone who tramples the wheat will die. Moments later, his own horse bolts, flattening the precious stalks. The stage — dark, charged — holds its breath. To honor his word without sacrificing his life, the warlord Cao Cao draws his sword, seizes his hair, and slices. In ancient China, cutting one's hair was almost as shameful as losing one's head. With that single gesture, 1,800 years collapse. For a moment, the boundary between stage and history blurs. The field beneath Cao Cao's feet is no longer a set; it feels real.

This is *Echoes of Guandu: Where Wheat Whispers History*, a 35-minute play staged on the very battlefield where history once pivoted. It's one of nearly 800 minutes of back-to-back daily performances at "Unique Henan: Land of Dramas", a dizzying complex of 21 theaters and 56 interlocking spaces in Zhengzhou, the capital of Central China's Henan province. This is the kind of place where stories don't simply unfold — they sit down beside you and stay with you forever.

Outside the entrance, visitors first encounter a seven-hectare field that changes with the seasons — red sorghum one season, golden wheat the next — stretching before a 328-meter-long rammed-earth wall. Walk through the gate, and the theater's grid spaces open up. Inside, history does not sit quietly behind glass. It erupts from the stage, rises from the earth and whispers from the seat beside the viewers.

Performers shout in Chinese, and few foreign visitors follow every word. Yet many walk out with tears in their eyes.

"It's difficult for overseas students to fully understand the performances, but they really put thought into following the stories," said Bian Ting, a Chinese-Spanish educator who runs a Mandarin language school in Spain.

*See **Theater**, page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.

WORLD WATCH
By Lawrence Loh

Sustain momentum of triumph over poverty

This year marks the fifth anniversary of the monumental declaration by President Xi Jinping, in February 2021, of China's complete victory in the fight against absolute poverty. The country's alleviation of the poverty problem over its recent history is nothing short of a miracle that holds valuable lessons for all countries.

The victory was the culmination of an eight-year campaign that lifted nearly 100 million rural residents out of absolute poverty across the entire country. It came on the heels of a critical turning point in 2012, when targeted poverty alleviation became a central political priority.

The phenomenal triumph over poverty is a most dramatic transformation of the mass poverty situation since the founding of the People's Republic of China.

*See **Poverty**, page 3*

China visit

US President Donald Trump will pay a three-day state visit to China from Wednesday, a Foreign Ministry spokesperson announced on Monday.

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN ASIA NEWS NETWORK
China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved
Newsstand prices:
US $1 Canada C$1; UK 1£ EU 1€
Kenya 50 Kenya Shilling
Asia Pacific: Thailand 120 thb; Philippines 120 php; Myanmar 2000 kyat; Japan 210 yen; Dubai 10 dirham; Pakistan 300 rupee

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:25 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:25 PM

INDEPTH

Access to Chinese EVs drives debate in US

Unavailability of vehicles stokes frustration as free market tested

By **MAY ZHOU** in Houston, Texas
mayzhou@chinadailyusa.com



Visitors view the models of Chinese EV brand XPeng at the 2026 Brussels Motor Show in Belgium on Jan 10. PENG ZIYANG / XINHUA



Left: Visitors learn about a Geely electric car during an event in Madrid, Spain, on March 25. CHENG MIN / XINHUA **Right:** A woman tries a Xiaomi SU7 in Barcelona, Spain, during Mobile World Congress on March 5, 2025. YONHAP NEWS AGENCY

Jose, a landscape worker in Houston, Texas, recently visited his grandparents and cousins in Mexico.

"I am a little jealous of my cousin's truck," Jose told China Daily. "He's driving a Changan Hunter. It feels so luxurious."

Jose said he's amazed by the standard features packed into the Hunter truck imported from China. They include a tailgate that converts into a step to make it easier to get into the truck bed, a bed cover to secure items, a large touch screen, a 360-degree camera with a backup camera view, and heated seats. The vehicle is also marketed as an extended-range electric vehicle, a groundbreaking achievement in the pickup truck category.

"My cousin paid about $30,000 for that truck. Here, that's barely enough for a base model of a similar truck," Jose said. "I wish we had prices like that here."

Those features that Jose covets can be obtained on a similar United States-made truck through premium packages and aftermarket additions. The caveat lies in the price: similar US trucks with similar features would cost around $45,000 to $50,000, an amount Jose said he can't afford.

Following Mexico, Canada recently opened its market to Chinese EVs and lowered the tariff from 100 percent to 6.1 percent.

Tesla announced it is launching its China-made Model 3 in Canada at a record low price of C$39,490 ($29,040). In the US, the same car is priced at $42,490, according to electrek.com, making it $13,450 cheaper in Canada.

In February, The Wall Street Journal's senior personal technology columnist Joanna Stern wrote a report titled "I test drove a Chinese EV. Now I don't want to buy American cars anymore".

She drove a Xiaomi SU7 Max for two weeks in New Jersey, borrowed from a friend who got a temporary permit to drive it in the US.

The opening of Stern's report sounded like a love letter: "Now, every time I climb back into my Ford Mustang Mach-E, I can't stop thinking about you — your long range, your modular interior, your absurdly large infotainment screen," she wrote. "Please come back to America ... for me."

It's the same car that Ford CEO Jim Farley tried for at least half a year, and loved.

"I don't like talking about the competition so much, but I drive the Xiaomi," he said on "the Fully Charged podcast" over a year ago. "We flew one from Shanghai to Chicago, and I've been driving it for six months now, and I don't want to give it up."

Praising the Xiaomi SU7 as a "high quality, great visual experience", Farley said he drove it "because of the competition". "To beat them, you have to know them," he said.

Strong appeal

Chinese EVs are known for their innovation, competitive pricing, and advanced software integration.

While consumers in many other countries have embraced them, people in the US — consumers, analysts, elected officials, and auto industry figures — are still debating whether or not to let them into the country.

The biggest group wanting Chinese imports are consumers, most of whom, unlike Stern and Farley, haven't had a chance to lay their eyes on a Chinese EV.

But they are aware of them, and many want to buy one, according to a consumer survey released in February by Cox Automotive, a global leader in auto service and technology.

Roughly 47 percent said they'd buy a Geely Xingyuan over Tesla's Model Y, while 38 percent would opt for a BYD Seagull over the same Tesla.

Overall, 38 percent of those surveyed said they are very likely to consider a Chinese brand in the US. Among Gen Z, the percentage was as high as 69 percent — their enthusiasm largely due to their embrace of new technology and green energy, experts said.

The 2025 Dave Cantin Group Market Outlook Report showed that 40 percent of US consumers would consider buying a Chinese-made vehicle.

In April, the WSJ reported about people with dual citizenship driving Chinese EVs bought in Mexico into El Paso, Texas, for their daily cross-border commutes. The article drew almost 2,000 comments from readers.

A sample analysis of the comments using artificial intelligence showed those favoring an open market outweighed those wanting a ban for "national security" reasons.

The "most liked" comment said: "Sure. Let's prohibit imports instead of building better cars. American cars are not only more expensive; they are actually worse quality."

The reason is straightforward: no new car sold in the United States today has a sticker price below $20,000, while Chinese brands sell capable EVs in Mexico and elsewhere starting around the same price.

The average new car in the US had a list price of $51,456 in March, according to the vehicle valuer Kelley Blue Book.

"If US automakers aren't going to make small, affordable cars, why shouldn't we consumers be able to buy imported Chinese cars? I don't want an SUV or truck," said one of the most liked comments.

US automakers have relied heavily on expensive models to make profits in recent years. Yet, "we've reached peak truck, as consumers finally push back and demand more vehicle options, particularly sedans, that are more affordable, leaving some dealers struggling with their product mix," the 2025 Market Outlook Report said.

Affordability a key factor

Auto affordability has become a serious issue in the US. A modeling study by Plante Moran found that a third of the US population can't afford new vehicles, CNBC reported in January.

"Affordability is reshaping purchase decisions, driving interest in cheaper Chinese vehicles," Dave Cantin Group President Brian Gordon said when the 2025 Market Outlook Report was released in August.

However, US automakers are not willing to give US consumers the options to buy Chinese EVs.

"We should not let them into our country because (of) the economic impact," Ford CEO Farley said in a Fox TV interview in mid-April. "Manufacturing is the heart and soul of our country, and for us to lose that to those exports would be devastating for our country."

Many readers of the WSJ article said that banning Chinese EVs undermines the principle of a free market and the competitiveness of the US auto industry.

"Let's see ... should we protect a handful of billion dollar corporations (the US automakers) or should we protect millions of US citizens who want/need an affordable car? I favor the little people but I'm pretty sure Congress does not," wrote Simon Smith in the comments section.

"Let them in! If US automakers can't build a quality, affordable product, they deserve to lose the market. What happened to free markets?" asked Claude Whitworth.

Noah Smith, an economic analyst, former assistant finance professor and Bloomberg economic columnist, argued that the presence of Chinese EVs will benefit the US overall.

"The main reason to let in Chinese EVs is that the United States needs to embrace EVs in general," Smith said in a January blog.

He argued that if the US keeps driving combustion cars while the rest of the world switches to EVs, its automotive technology "will be orphaned from the rest of the world".

"One way Chinese EVs would benefit America is by forcing Detroit to compete," Noah Smith wrote, reasoning that competition would force US automakers to make big investments in EV innovation and technology and "keep doing this until it worked".

> Let them in! If US automakers can't build a quality, affordable product, they deserve to lose the market. What happened to free markets?"
>
> **Claude Whitworth,** a reader of Wall Street Journal

The US is not in a good position when it comes to EV innovation and production. According to analysis from E2's Clean Economy Works tracker, US companies announced just $12.3 billion in new clean-energy and battery investment in 2025 — the lowest annual figure since the project began.

Meanwhile, cancellations and downsizing reached $34.8 billion, with the EV battery sector losing $21 billion in committed capital.

The contraction was, to a great degree, due to domestic policy changes with tax credits for solar, wind and EVs compressed or rolled back.

Meanwhile, China is forging ahead with new EV technologies.

At the 2026 Beijing Auto Show that ended on May 3, CATL unveiled six new battery technologies in a single day, including a third-generation Qilin cell rated for more than 1,000 kilometers of range, a Shenxing fast-charging cell that reaches 98 percent of a full charge in six minutes and 27 seconds, and a 350 watt-hour-per-kilogram condensed-state cell that is good for 1,500 km.

BYD founder Wang Chuanfu, while launching the second-generation Blade Battery, put the design philosophy plainly: "The only way out is to make charging as fast and convenient as refueling a gas car."

Protectionism vs practicality

While the US public is warming toward Chinese EVs, some US politicians want a complete ban on them.

On April 29, Republican Senator Bernie Moreno and Democratic Senator Elissa Slotkin introduced a bipartisan bill — the Connected Vehicle Security Act — that would ban vehicles, connected vehicle technologies such as software and data systems made by China or in partnership with China from the US. They cited national security and job protection as the primary reason for this bill.

The bill has been endorsed by the United Auto Workers union. "Our national and economic security relies on a strong US auto industry," said UAW President Shawn Fain.

"General Motors supports policies that protect and strengthen American manufacturing and the global competitiveness of US automakers," GM said in a statement.

Job security is sometimes at odds with innovation, some investment analysts said. New technology means disruption, and disruption means changes to existing orders.

Many experts agree that China's EV advance has been driven primarily by competition.

However, American consumers may not be able to get what they want, at least in the short term, the 2026 Market Outlook Report from Dave Cantin Group predicted.

"While a highly limited, regulated and negotiated entry remains a small possibility in 2026, we don't see this impacting the retail landscape for another three to five years in the US," the report said.


A driver presents a newly launched Chinese-made new energy bus in Copiapo, Chile, on Oct 16. A fleet of more than 120 Chinese-made new energy buses were deployed. XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:25 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:25 PM

TOP NEWS



First responders and residents search through rubble on Saturday at the site of an Israeli airstrike in the southern Lebanese village of Saksakieh. At least 15 people were killed in a series of Israeli airstrikes in southern Lebanon, including one child, and several children were among the injured. AFP

Iran sends response to US peace proposal

The only path to ending the war is Washington's retreat, expert says

By CUI HAIPEI in Dubai, UAE
cuihaipei@chinadaily.com.cn

Iran has sent its response to a United States proposal aimed at ending the war in the region, the Islamic Republic News Agency said on Sunday. The response, details of which are awaited, was sent to mediator Pakistan, and will focus at this stage on ending the war, IRNA said.

Earlier on Sunday, Iran reiterated that any attack on its oil tankers or commercial vessels would be met with attacks on US bases in the region and enemy ships. The warning came after US forces struck two Iranian oil tankers, claiming the vessels were trying to breach the US blockade of Iran's ports — while insisting a fragile month-old ceasefire remains in effect.

"Any aggression against our vessels will be met with a heavy and decisive Iranian response against American vessels and bases," Ebrahim Rezaei, spokesman for the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission, wrote on social media, saying that as of Sunday, Tehran's "restraint is over".

On Sunday, a bulk carrier reported being struck by a projectile off Qatar's coast, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations said. Also, the United Arab Emirates' air defenses dealt with two drones coming from Iran on Sunday, the latest in renewed attacks on the oil-rich Gulf country.

Since the US and Israel launched military strikes against Iran on Feb 28, Iran has largely blocked the Strait of Hormuz to global energy shipments. Saudi Aramco, a majority state-owned petroleum and natural gas company, said in a statement on Sunday that the world has lost around 1 billion barrels of oil over the past two months. Before the conflict, the narrow waterway carried one-fifth of the world's oil supply.

In another development, Iranian officials signaled an elevated strategic status for the strait, one that could rival the significance of Iran's nuclear program.

"In reality, it is a capability on the level of an atomic bomb, because when you have a capability that can affect the entire global economy with a single decision, that is an enormous capability," Mohammad Mokhber, who served as the acting president of Iran in 2024, told state-linked Mehr News Agency on Friday.

A Qatari liquefied natural gas tanker was sailing toward the strait on Saturday en route to Pakistan, according to LSEG shipping data. Sources said the move was approved by Iran to build confidence with Qatar and Pakistan, both mediators in the ongoing conflict. A Panama-flagged bulk carrier bound for Brazil passed through the Strait of Hormuz using a route designated by Iran's armed forces, Iran's semi-official Tasnim News Agency reported on Sunday.

Meanwhile, a CIA assessment indicated that Iran would not suffer severe economic pressure from the US blockade for about another four months, Reuters reported.

Separately, Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Saturday that Moscow is ready to transport and store Iran's stockpile of enriched uranium, adding that he hopes the conflict will end "as quickly as possible". There was no immediate comment from Iran.

The war will likely end in Washington's retreat, said Jeffrey Sachs, director of the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University, as the US cannot continue the conflict without triggering disastrous consequences.

"A renewed escalation would likely lead to the destruction of the region's oil, gas and desalination infrastructure, causing a prolonged global catastrophe. Iran can credibly impose costs that the US cannot bear and that the world should not suffer," he wrote in a commentary, coauthored with analyst Sybil Fares, for Al Jazeera on Saturday.

"The only path, and the one the US seems to be taking, is a retreat, with Iran in charge of the Strait of Hormuz, and with none of the other issues between the US and Iran settled," they added, calling it "neither a war of necessity, nor a war of choice — it was a war of whim. The underlying premise was hegemony".

Vast potential seen in blue economy cooperation

By ZHANG CHENXU in Beijing, **MA SI** and **CHEN BOWEN** in Haikou

There is immense potential for China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to deepen cooperation in the blue economy sector and build a more integrated common market, a move that will strengthen regional resilience against external shocks and inject fresh momentum into regional growth, officials and experts said on Sunday.

Speaking at the China-ASEAN Blue Economy Cooperation Dialogue in Haikou, the capital of Hainan province, they said that rising geopolitical uncertainties, growing protectionism, and mounting energy and supply chain risks have underscored the need for both sides to further explore cooperation potential in the areas of marine energy, port logistics, shipping, marine tourism and coastal industries.

Against this backdrop, the Hainan Free Trade Port, with its unique location and policy advantages, is expected to serve as a strategic hub for deeper China-ASEAN blue economy cooperation, they added.

According to the World Bank, the blue economy, also known as the marine economy, refers to the "sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs, while preserving the health of ocean ecosystems".

Wang Bin, a member of the Standing Committee of the Hainan Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of China and head of the provincial Party committee's Publicity Department, said that Hainan serves as an important gateway for China's opening-up to ASEAN.

"Hainan is making every effort to promote high-quality marine development and play an active role in China-ASEAN cooperation," Wang said.

Sharing a similar view, Lyu Bin, president of the China Oceanic Development Foundation, said the Hainan FTP offers a rare opportunity to address bottlenecks that have constrained China-ASEAN blue economy integration, thanks to its unique opening-up arrangements and policy environment.

Chi Fulin, president of the China Institute for Reform and Development, said that such foundational strengths allow Hainan to function as a strategic hub for the emerging China-ASEAN blue economy common market.

"A common market for China-ASEAN blue economy would put the region in a stronger position to weather external shocks and sustain stable growth," Chi said. "It would also open up new room for cooperation and promote closer integration of industrial and supply chains."

Hainan's burgeoning marine economy is also bolstering confidence in the push for deeper regional cooperation. The province's gross ocean product rose 7.9 percent year-on-year last year, making it one of the mainstays of local growth, official data showed.

Emerging sectors are driving the expansion, with the deep-sea oil and gas industry posting robust gains in reserves and output. The independently developed Deep Sea No 1 gas field, China's first ultra-deepwater project, recently completed its 100th crude oil shipment since its commissioning in 2021.

That optimism over the common market on the blue economy was also shared by officials and experts from ASEAN countries.

Unny Sankar Ravi Sankar, minister of economic affairs at the embassy of Malaysia in China, said the blue economy offers one of the most promising pathways for China and ASEAN to build a more integrated common market.

"The blue economy will transform the development landscape of the entire region," Sankar said.

China and ASEAN together form one of the world's most dynamic maritime regions, creating vast room for deeper blue economy cooperation and regional integration, said Rokhmin Dahuri, former minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries of Indonesia.

Yet the promising outlook also underscores the need to address the structural challenges facing the blue economy.

Dahuri said the sector is still confronted with pressing challenges, including overfishing, marine pollution, habitat degradation and biodiversity loss.

To deal with these challenges, he said, there is a need to strike a balance between economic growth and environmental protection.

"China can play an important role in cutting-edge technologies, including artificial intelligence, smart digital applications, drones and robotics," Dahuri said, adding that such technologies could help countries tap the potential of the blue economy in a more sustainable way.

Contact the writers at zhangchenxu@chinadaily.com.cn

Poverty: China achieves UN goal a decade before deadline

From page 1

The hallmarks of the targeted poverty alleviation approach are the precision data-centric emphasis on six areas — accurate identification of poor households, targeted projects, efficient capital use, household-specific measures, appropriate cadre deployment, and goal fulfillment.

In addition, the operational focus is built on a model that covers industry-led poverty alleviation, relocation from uninhabitable or ecologically fragile areas, compensation for ecological protection, education to break intergenerational poverty, and social security for those unable to work.

The success of the national poverty alleviation plan is due to a unique dual-pillar model of growth plus governance.

The critical impetus is built on economic growth in agriculture and industry, as these areas have created jobs that in turn generated income opportunities.

In parallel, a well-coordinated system was fostered to implement the desired agenda under which millions of grassroots cadres were coordinated and mobilized to reach out to the highly localized grassroots levels.

The entire setup has been rooted in a people-first, livelihood-centered governance philosophy.

Even five years down the road since the announcement of victory over absolute poverty, the strong dual-pillar fundamentals have served well to sustain the momentum of income progress for those lifted from poverty. In the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, regular mechanisms will be developed to prevent relapses into poverty. The possibility of poverty relapse will also be avoided through increased development-based assistance, rather than one-off subsidies, to assure long-term growth capacity in formerly poor areas. In addition, key rural counties will continue to be revitalized to mitigate any reversion to the former situation.

The five-year plan specifically considers employment as the first line of defense, whereby high-quality, full employment is front and center for improving livelihoods. Furthermore, skills upgrading is a central focal point that will link job quality with job security, as jobs are indeed the best buffer for sustainable poverty alleviation.

Yet another major stipulation of the plan is to refine income distribution, which will shrink the extremes of wealth and poverty alike.

This reframes poverty as an issue of income distribution and not as a separate "silo" policy matter. The integrated thinking has signaled that poverty, as a resolved problem, is being mainstreamed into the broader economic policy framework, thus institutionalizing its place in the overall national strategic blueprint.

The Chinese development story has thus moved from a "war on poverty" to an "enhancing social harmony and sustainable development" narrative, in which the social sustainability aspects of employment and empowerment, as well as prosperity with protection, are the mainstay. The major recognition is that humans will be a core capital that is crucial for national advancement. This recasting consolidates all previous poverty alleviation efforts into forces that will eventually turn China into a great modern socialist country.

Indeed the complete victory in the fight against absolute poverty has enabled China to achieve the no-poverty goal set by the United Nations in its 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. And China has done so a full decade before the deadline. The speed and scale of China's poverty reduction are probably unparalleled in world history.

A famous proverb says that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. The human society of China has resolutely resolved one of its weakest links, poverty, and is on track in its quest for high quality of life for all.

Victory is sweet, and China will probably not rest on its laurels. Achieving a miracle may be easier than sustaining the miracle. But with the current leadership's resolve and the people's determination, poverty may well be relegated to a chapter in the Chinese history book.

The author is director of the Centre for Governance and Sustainability as well as professor in practice of strategy and policy at National University of Singapore's Business School. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Theater: Overseas Chinese reconnect with roots



An aerial drone photo taken on May 1 shows "Unique Henan: Land of Dramas", a large immersive theater complex in Zhengzhou, Henan province. GUAN YANGYANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

From page 1

She visited the Unique Henan theater complex for the second time after having brought her students there last year. "It makes history come alive for them," she said.

Bian was part of a group of 40 overseas Chinese school leaders on a weeklong inspection of international study travel offerings.

The group visited the theater complex and other cultural sites to explore potential study-tour collaborations.

Opened in 2021, the Unique Henan theater complex is unlike most attractions that draw overseas visitors. In the interlocking grid spaces and theaters — one of the largest theater clusters in China — wheat seeds rain down as villagers tell stories of famine and survival, while railway workers sprint across tracks that seem to extend into the audience. In one theater, visitors sit in a classroom where chalk dust hangs in the air, as actors playing teachers turn the story into a lesson in entertainment.

Many described it as a place where they feel history rather than simply learn it.

This captivating world was brought to life by Wang Chaoge, a director known for creating immersive performances across China. By the end of 2025, the complex had logged more than 58 million visits.

Liu Kaipeng, the complex's brand director, said that more than 80 percent of visitors come from outside Henan, and people from over 50 countries and regions have visited the site.

Currently, no simultaneous translation is provided, yet the set design and emotional performances largely transcend language.

"We now offer multilingual directional signage and optimized payment systems. Next, we will work with overseas influencers to help visitors from all cultural backgrounds understand Central China's culture," Liu said.

For now, overseas Chinese visitors are spreading the word themselves.

"This theater truly provides an immersive experience. It has deepened my affection for Henan," said Apple Rouse, vice-president of the US-based Chinese American Youth Association, who returned to Henan after more than two decades. "As an overseas Chinese, I feel deeply proud of how China has developed."

Chen Shuo, who runs several Mandarin language schools in Italy, said during his first trip to Henan: "I didn't think much when I first arrived, but the moment I stepped through the gate and saw that wheat field, something changed. Walking through the field into the city, passing every theater — I wanted to explore each one."

For Hardy Wang Haoyu, vice-president of the Canada-based North American Youth Federation, the experience reshaped his thinking about identity.

"After three decades overseas, I've come to see China not just as our path back, but sometimes as our way forward. Some of the answers we're looking for may actually lie in China," he said. "For those of us living in the West, China can be a solution to the challenges we face."

Qi Xin in Zhengzhou contributed to this story.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:25 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:25 PM

RCEP MEDIA & THINK TANK FORUM



Liu Xiaoming, governor of Hainan province, addresses the 2026 RCEP Media & Think Tank Forum in Haikou on Saturday. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

RCEP gearing up for bloc's next phase

Forum explores ways to improve world's largest free trade pact amid challenges

By **WANG KEJU** in Haikou
wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn

The world's largest free trade pact is gearing up for its next phase amid growing protectionism and other challenges, a forum in Hainan heard.

Experts weighed in, calling for the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership to expand its membership, focus more on the service industry and keep pace with other trade agreements.

They discussed the present and future of the agreement at the 2026 RCEP Media & Think Tank Forum held in Haikou, Hainan province, over the weekend. The event was hosted by China Daily and the China Institute for Reform and Development.

The sustained efforts of China, as a key player of the bloc, to advance high-standard opening-up, they say, would allow other member economies to share in its massive market for inclusive development.

RCEP economies are projected to grow at a rate of about 4.5 percent this year, with their contribution to global economic growth expected to remain at over 32 percent, according to the RCEP Industry Cooperation Committee.

By contrast, the IMF in April cut its global growth forecast for 2026 to 3.1 percent, citing the severe disruptions caused by conflicts in the Middle East.

RCEP members are looking at how to improve the pact amid a worsening external environment as the trade agreement enters its next phase following a general review in 2027, according to experts.

It will be the first time for such a review since the agreement came into effect in 2022.

Expanding RCEP membership is high on the agenda, as it will not only broaden the pact's footprint, but also strengthen its resilience against rising protectionism, said Wang Yiming, former deputy director of the Development Research Center of the State Council.

The RCEP opened its doors to welcoming new members since July 2023. China's Hong Kong, Sri Lanka, Chile and Bangladesh have expressed their interest in joining the RCEP.

"The RCEP's attractiveness and influence are continuously increasing. More and more economies are submitting applications," Wang said. "We need to actively respond to these applications and push for the expansion of RCEP membership."

But growing membership cannot address the pact's structural weaknesses, said Zhao Jinping, vice-president of the China Association of Trade in Services.

The agreement faces a significant gap in services trade, where RCEP commitments lag behind those of other major trade pacts, he said.

In 2024, services accounted for 26.4 percent of total cross-border trade worldwide, a historic high, according to WTO data. Yet the share of services in RCEP's total trade remains relatively lower.

The scheduled general review could serve as "a critical window" to expand commitments to the service industry, expanding intra-regional trade and investment, Zhao said.

Digital transformation

Lee Hee-sup, secretary-general of the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat, said that digital commerce, cross-border data flows, green development and innovation-driven industries are emerging as new growth drivers.

The pact should actively promote digital transformation to stay relevant in a fast-changing global landscape, he added.

The China-ASEAN Free Trade Area 3.0 Upgrade Protocol, signed last October, could provide experience that the RCEP can draw from, observers note. The China-ASEAN agreement has incorporated the digital economy, green economy and supply chain connectivity into its framework — areas that are also at the forefront of the RCEP's next phase.

China, with its continuous efforts to advance high-standard opening-up and open its door wider, will enhance market connectivity, factor mobility and regulatory alignment between China and other RCEP economies, said Guo Da, executive president of the Hainan Institute for Free Trade Port Studies.

Data from the RCEP Industry Cooperation Committee showed that in the first quarter, China's trade with other RCEP members surged 20.2 percent year-on-year to 3.73 trillion yuan (about $515 billion), with imports jumping 25 percent.

Hainan seen as gateway to regional markets

By **MA SI** and **CHEN BOWEN** in Haikou

The Hainan Free Trade Port is set to play an increasingly pivotal role in linking China with the vast markets of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, injecting fresh impetus into global economic growth amid rising trade headwinds, experts said.

Underscoring Hainan FTP's role as a key gateway advancing China's opening-up drive in the new era, they said the island's strategic geographic position at the center of the RCEP region and preferential trade policies will create new opportunities for cooperation in supply chains and services trade.

The remarks were made at a sub-forum of the 2026 RCEP Media & Think Tank Forum in Haikou, Hainan province.

Zhao Jinping, vice-president of the China Association of Trade in Services, said Hainan FTP will serve as a stress test field for China's high-level opening-up, against the backdrop of escalating global geopolitical uncertainties and rising trade protectionism.

"As its institutional and policy frameworks continue to improve, Hainan will evolve into a crucial hub enabling enterprises to tap into new investment and trade opportunities across the bloc of RCEP, the largest free trade agreement in the world," Zhao said.

Tu Xinquan, director of the China Institute for WTO Studies at the University of International Business and Economics, said the RCEP has become a vital force in sustaining global trade. For instance, direct China-US economic ties have weakened due to geopolitical factors, while the indirect trade links, especially through the RCEP, are on the rise, he said.

"As a frontier and test bed for China's reform and opening-up, Hainan can act as a core hub connecting the Chinese mainland with other RCEP members, much like Singapore and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region have facilitated exchanges between the Chinese mainland and Western countries," Tu said.

Bigger role

Guo Da, executive president of the Hainan Institute for Free Trade Port Studies, said high-level free trade ports such as Hainan can play a bigger role as the RCEP cooperation deepens. Currently, about 40 percent of Hainan's foreign trade flows to RCEP member economies, he noted.

Driven by unified RCEP rules and Hainan's free trade port policies, trade between Hainan and RCEP members has grown at an annual average rate of over 20 percent in recent years, he said.

Nicholas Kwan, deputy head of the chief executive's policy unit of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, said: "Hong Kong has long aspired to join the RCEP and looks forward to cooperating with Hainan to achieve a 'one plus one greater than two' effect.

"Hong Kong can be a great partner for Hainan. For instance, in the commercial space sector, Hong Kong's financial and service strengths can be effectively aligned with Hainan's Wenchang commercial space launch site to facilitate cooperation," Kwan said.

Kim Do-hoon, former president of the Korea Institute for Industrial Economics and Trade, said that to give full play to Hainan's potential, more efforts are needed to cultivate local industries such as transport, and attract more big companies to invest in the island.

Zhu Jianmin, chairman of Oxiranchem Group, said: "The Hainan FTP's tax policies, unique geographic location and logistics advantages have enabled us to source raw materials globally and target ASEAN markets effectively."

Contact the writers at masi@chinadaily.com.cn.

What they say



Geopolitics is the occasional typhoon outside. RCEP is not the roof — it is the room where neighbors keep talking positively and trading while the storm passes ... That is the accumulated wisdom of Asian diplomacy.
Wilson Lee Flores, *columnist for The Philippine Star*



As a frontier and test bed for China's reform and opening-up, Hainan can act as a core hub connecting the Chinese mainland with other RCEP members, much like Singapore and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region have facilitated exchanges between the Chinese mainland and Western countries.
Tu Xinquan, *director of the China Institute for WTO Studies at the University of International Business and Economics*



The RCEP upgrade could have big goals, but not too many. It should avoid turning into a wish list. Before piling on new issues, member economies must first resolve existing pain points: improving the utilization of rules of origin, addressing disparities in implementation capacity, and tackling nontariff measures. These may sound technical, but they are extremely practical and fundamental to the agreement's effectiveness.
Yose Rizal Damuri, *executive director of Center for Strategic and International Studies, Indonesia*



Hong Kong has long aspired to join the RCEP and looks forward to cooperating with Hainan to achieve a "one plus one greater than two" effect. Hong Kong can be a great partner for Hainan. For instance, in the commercial space sector, Hong Kong's financial and service strengths can be effectively aligned with Hainan's Wenchang commercial space launch site to facilitate cooperation.
Nicholas Kwan, *deputy head of the chief executive's policy unit of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region*



In a world where geopolitical events unfold almost every day, the RCEP has emerged as a vital anchor for multilateralism, proving that despite political differences and uneven levels of development, regional economic cooperation and integration remain not only possible but essential.
Yu Hong, *senior research fellow at the East Asian Institute of the National University of Singapore*

From durian to cars: Partnership tells success stories of agreement

By **CHEN BOWEN** and **MA SI** in Haikou

From duty-free durian to new energy vehicles, real-world stories prove the value of the world's largest trade pact, speakers said at an event in Hainan on Saturday.

The panel on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership was part of the 2026 RCEP Media & Think Tank Forum in Haikou, Hainan province.

Supachai Wuthichuwong, a member of the editorial board of Thailand's MGR Online, offered concrete evidence of those benefits.

"Taokaenoi, the largest seaweed manufacturer in Thailand, has been importing seaweed from South Korea and benefited from RCEP rules' zero tariff," he said. "It processes the raw material and makes popular seaweed snacks that are sold globally."

China has imported durian from Thailand duty-free, while Thailand has imported new energy vehicles from China duty-free, which are the kinds of examples the media should use in the RCEP region, he added.

Ko Ko Maung, executive board member of the Myanmar Institute of Strategic and International Studies, called RCEP "a strategic framework for shared prosperity".

Participants challenged the view that the RCEP is a conventional trade deal in the discussion.

"That is technically correct but analytically incomplete," said Wilson Lee Flores, columnist for The Philippine Star. "RCEP is better understood as an institutional stress test — can 15 economies with different political systems, income levels, legal traditions and strategic cultures cooperate without a centralized authority?"

Flores contrasted Europe's model of treaties, courts and bureaucracy with Asia's approach of flexibility, gradualism, consensus and patience.

"When we ask why progress on rule upgrades, a secretariat or membership expansion seems slow, we must first ask: slow by whose clock?" he said.

"In the Philippines, many small farmers still ask, 'Where do I even find the tariff schedule?' That is not ignorance. That is infrastructure — digital, logistical, educational — still being built."

Inclusive growth

He said gradual pace is "the price of inclusive growth" and that the existence of RCEP reveals a "quiet resilience".

Flores said RCEP offers a separate track for cooperation even when political temperatures rise.

"Geopolitics is the occasional typhoon outside. RCEP is not the roof — it is the room where neighbors keep talking positively and trading while the storm passes," he said. "That is the accumulated wisdom of Asian diplomacy."

With RCEP's general review approaching in 2027, Flores called for a regional public education initiative over the next two years: multilingual media campaigns, university partnerships, youth exchanges, journalist fellowships and digital storytelling focused on practical success stories.

"Not theory. Not jargon. But examples," he said. "If the people themselves feel included in the journey of regional development, then the foundations of RCEP will become far stronger, more stable and more enduring for future generations."

Xing Haiming, former Chinese ambassador to South Korea, described RCEP as a flag — "a flag that everyone in our region can see and touch, a flag that brings tangible benefits to ordinary people, enterprises and countries".

The panel agreed that the pact's ultimate measure is not bureaucratic milestones but whether farmers, entrepreneurs and consumers see better lives. RCEP's benefits are already on store shelves and dinner tables — stories, speakers said, that deserve to be told.

Contact the writers at chenbowen@chinadaily.com.cn.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:25 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:25 PM

WORLD

ASEAN vows to strengthen energy shield

Leaders seek quicker regional power links, renewable rollout amid oil shocks

By **PRIME SARMIENTO**
in Hong Kong
prime@chinadailyapac.com

Leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations have vowed to strengthen collaboration in energy security and renewable energy development amid the escalating Middle East crisis, with analysts calling for swift actions in that direction.

ASEAN leaders have agreed to expedite the ratification of the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Petroleum Security and promote energy transition and operationalize the ASEAN Power Grid.

The bloc's initiatives on energy security were among the highlights in the statement issued on Friday at the conclusion of the 48th ASEAN Summit in the central Philippine province of Cebu.

The summit was held as rising oil prices weigh on regional economies. The Asian Development Bank forecast inflation in developing Southeast Asia to rise from 2.3 percent in 2025 to 3.2 percent in 2026 on the back of upward pressures from higher energy and food production costs if the Middle East conflict is prolonged.

Analysts said that with most Southeast Asian countries dependent on energy imports, ASEAN must be able to expedite policies on regional energy cooperation as the war with Iran enters its 11th week.

"This turned out to be a very specifically themed summit, reflecting the acuteness of the repercussions of the Middle East crisis on ASEAN countries," said Oh Ei Sun, a senior fellow at the Singapore Institute of International Affairs.

Lavanya Venkateswaran, a senior economist for ASEAN at Overseas-Chinese Banking Corporation in Singapore, said the bloc's commitment on regional energy reflects a collective concern over the current situation in the Middle East.

However, these commitments "must also translate into swift actions considering the foreboding downside risks from geopolitics", she said.

ASEAN leaders committed to strengthening regional energy security and resilience through enhanced regional cooperation and coordination. They are looking to diversify the supply of energy through measures, such as developing renewable energy, strengthening intra-ASEAN energy trade, accelerating biodiesel and bioethanol blending, and promoting the adoption of electric vehicles.

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr, this year's rotating chair of ASEAN, said on Friday that the bloc's energy initiatives have to be enforced as soon as possible, but that the energy ministers are yet to meet and lay down a timetable.

Yeah Kim Leng, a professor of economics at Sunway University in Malaysia, told China Daily that the ASEAN leaders' responses to energy security and financial resilience are fitting but their effectiveness depends on timely and implementable regional cooperation and coordination frameworks.

The ratification of the petroleum security agreement is crucial but it may not be achieved in time to cope with the current crisis, Yeah said.

"This framework would have enabled member countries to supply 10 percent of their domestic petroleum needs to members facing supply crisis, a stark reality confronting several member countries during the current global energy crisis," he said.

Cooperation urged

Chan Wai-Shin, director of research at the Singapore-based Asia Research and Engagement, said ASEAN economies cannot optimize the energy transition in isolation, especially in light of the Middle East crisis.

Regional cooperation "makes much more sense economically", Chan said, adding that the abundance of solar and wind throughout the region is complementary.

Meanwhile, strengthening power trade, cross-border interconnections and financial investment across the region would reduce overall system costs, enhance regional self-sufficiency and accelerate renewable deployment, he said.

Jayant Menon, a visiting senior fellow at ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute in Singapore, said the urgency of moving forward on renewable energy is the "only silver lining to come out of this whole crisis".

"Renewable energy is not shock-proof, but it creates some kind of national independence, because it can be nationally generated. This will be the positive legacy of this crisis," he said.



Russian servicemen march on Red Square during the Victory Day parade in Moscow on Saturday, amid a three-day ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine, which runs through Monday. KREMLIN VIA NEWSCOM

Russia, Ukraine trade accusations of violating US-brokered ceasefire

KYIV — Russia and Ukraine on Saturday traded accusations of violating a three-day US-brokered ceasefire but no major strikes were reported by the warring sides so far.

United States President Donald Trump initially announced on Friday the surprise truce, which runs through Monday and coincides with Russia's World War II victory celebrations, along with an exchange of 1,000 prisoners from each side that is set to take place in the coming days.

"I'd like to see a big extension," Trump told reporters on Friday evening. "It could be."

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres welcomed the ceasefire and planned exchange of prisoners between Ukraine and Russia, his spokesman said on Saturday.

"The secretary-general reiterates his call for an immediate, full, unconditional and lasting ceasefire, as a first step toward a just, sustainable and comprehensive peace, in line with the UN Charter, international law and relevant UN resolutions," Stephane Dujarric said.

However, the Russian Defense Ministry said on Sunday that Ukraine had violated the ceasefire by launching drones and artillery strikes against Russian troops, Interfax news agency reported.

Over the past 24 hours, Russia has shot down 57 Ukrainian drones, the ministry said, adding that Moscow was observing the ceasefire.

Also on Sunday, Ukrainian officials reported Russian drone strikes and nearly 150 battlefield clashes over the past 24 hours.

In the northeastern Kharkiv region, Governor Oleh Syniehubov said eight people, including two children, were wounded in drone attacks on the regional capital and nearby settlements.

In its morning report, Ukraine's General Staff said 147 clashes had taken place along the front line.

Casualties were still reported on both sides, as Moscow and Kyiv continued to exchange drone strikes.

Russian drones killed two people and wounded three in the Zaporizhzhia and Dnipropetrovsk regions, local authorities said.

In Russia's western Belgorod region, three people were wounded by Ukrainian drone strikes, said Governor Vyacheslav Gladkov.

Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Saturday that he thought the conflict was coming to an end.

"I think that the matter is coming to an end," Putin told reporters of the four-year conflict.

Putin was speaking in the Kremlin after setting out his view of the causes of the special military operation. He blamed "globalist" Western leaders, saying they promised NATO would not expand eastward after the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall, but then tried to draw Ukraine into the European Union's orbit.

His statement came just hours after the parade on the May 9 national holiday celebrating the Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany in World War II. The annual event pays homage to the 27 million Soviet citizens who perished in that war.

AGENCIES—XINHUA

Briefly

HUNGARY

Magyar sworn in as prime minister

Peter Magyar was sworn in as Hungary's prime minister on Saturday after winning a parliamentary vote at the inaugural session of the new National Assembly, pledging to "change the system". A total of 195 of the 199 members of parliament cast votes, with 140 in favor, 54 against and 1 abstention. Magyar, leader of the Tisza Party, secured the required majority to be elected prime minister, marking the start of his four-year term.

PAKISTAN

First 'Panda bond' to be issued within week

Pakistan is expected to access Chinese capital markets for the first time through a renminbi-backed bond this week, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said on Saturday. "God willing, next week you will hear good news that for the first time, we will be accessing Chinese capital markets through Panda bond," he said at a news conference. The $250 million issue, the first of a planned $1 billion program, will be backed by the Asian Development Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

ISRAEL

Detained aid flotilla activists deported

Israel deported two activists, Saif Abu Keshek, a Spanish national, and Brazilian Thiago Avila, on Sunday after arresting them aboard a Gaza-bound flotilla in international waters, the foreign ministry said. The activists were part of a second Global Sumud Flotilla launched from Spain on April 12 to try to break Israel's blockade of Gaza by delivering aid to the enclave. They were detained by Israeli authorities on April 29 and brought to Israel.

AGENCIES—XINHUA

Evacuation of hantavirus-hit cruise ship begins off Spain's Canary Islands coast

GRANADILLA DE ABONA, Spain — Occupants of a cruise ship struck by a deadly hantavirus outbreak that has sparked international alarm began leaving the vessel for their repatriation in Spain's Canary Islands on Sunday.

Three passengers from the MV *Hondius* — a Dutch husband and wife and a German woman — have died, while others have fallen sick with the rare disease, which usually spreads among rodents.

No vaccines or specific treatments exist for hantavirus, which is endemic in Argentina, where the ship departed in April.

However, health officials have emphasized that the risk for global public health is low and played down comparisons to a repeat of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The final flight to evacuate most of the ship's nearly 150 passengers and crew would leave for Australia on Monday, before the ship continues to the Netherlands, Spain's Health Minister Monica Garcia said.

Passengers wearing blue medical suits began disembarking the Dutch-flagged vessel onto smaller boats to reach the port of Granadilla on Tenerife, Agence France-Presse journalists saw.

The evacuees then boarded a bus for their transfer to Tenerife South Airport, where their repatriation flights were due to take off.

"The disembarkation of the passengers and the Spanish crew member has started," the Health Ministry confirmed on Telegram.

The evacuees changed into new protective equipment before boarding their repatriation flight, the first of which left carrying 14 Spaniards who will observe quarantine at a military hospital in Madrid.

"The operation is going very well," World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told reporters at the port.

Separate flights for Canadian, Turkish, French, British, Irish and United States citizens were also planned for Sunday, Garcia said.

Regional authorities have warned that the operation must be completed by Monday, when adverse weather conditions will force the ship to leave.

The Canary Islands' regional authorities have consistently resisted taking in the ship, which was only authorized to anchor offshore instead of docking in the port.

However, all passengers are asymptomatic and underwent a medical assessment before their disembarkation, Garcia told reporters shortly before the operation began.

Spanish authorities have insisted there will be no contact with the local population in Tenerife.

AFP journalists at Granadilla saw white tents erected along the quay and that the police, some in protective medical suits, had sealed off part of the small industrial port.

Spain "is doing what it must do, with technical and scientific rigor and full transparency, with institutional loyalty and with international cooperation", Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said on Sunday.

The only hantavirus type that can transmit from person to person — the Andes virus — has been confirmed among those who have tested positive, fueling international concern.

The WHO said on Friday that it had confirmed six cases out of eight suspected ones. There are no suspected cases remaining on the ship.

The agency believes the first infection occurred before the start of the expedition, followed by transmission between humans onboard the vessel.

Health authorities in several countries have been tracking passengers who had already disembarked and anyone who may have come into contact with them.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA



Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:25 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:25 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Tokyo should heed the call of the times for peace and cooperation

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, Japan is charting a perilous course that threatens to destabilize the Asia-Pacific region. The nation's renewed push for constitutional revision, military expansion and strategic alliances under the guise of safeguarding a "free and open Indo-Pacific" is not only a departure from its post-World War II commitment to peace but also a dangerous revival of the country's militaristic tendencies.

Takaichi's advocacy for amending Japan's Constitution is a concerning development that signals a significant shift in the nation's defense posture. The country's pacifist Constitution stipulates that Japan should commit to peace and nonaggression. Takaichi's push for constitutional change is not merely a legal reform but a strategic maneuver to break free from the restrictions on Japan's military development. This move is deeply disturbing, as it indicates a willingness to abandon the principles of peace that have guided Japan since the end of World War II.

This concern is compounded by her government hyping up a "free and open Indo-Pacific" as a means for bloc confrontation.

During her recent visits to Australia and Vietnam, Takaichi promoted an updated version of the "free and open Indo-Pacific" vision, which serves as a pretext for building "small circles" that undermine the strategic security and interests of other nations. By framing this vision as a response to perceived "threats", Japan is effectively creating an environment of tension and confrontation, rather than fostering cooperation and dialogue.

Tokyo's "free and open Indo-Pacific" narrative is particularly problematic, as it is being used to justify military collusion and the formation of alliances that exclude and target specific nations, as Jiang Bin, a spokesman for the Ministry of National Defense, said at a news briefing on Saturday. He pointed out that Tokyo is undermining the strategic security and interests of other countries, by creating excuses for Japan to break free from the restrictions on its military development.

"The call of our times is for peace and cooperation rather than war and confrontation," he said, urging Japan and the countries it has been stepping up military collusion with "to do more things that are truly conducive to regional peace and stability", which is in line with the common aspiration of their peoples.

The joint statement issued by Japanese and Philippine defense officials, "opposing any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion in the East China Sea and the South China Sea", is a baseless accusation that serves to highlight Tokyo's attempts to create camp confrontation. The statement, while claiming to uphold regional security, is little more than a thinly veiled attempt to shift the blame onto China for the region's tensions.

The international community must view these developments with concern, as they signal a dangerous shift in Japan's military posture.

This is reinforced by Takaichi's actions, such as kneeling at the Tomb of the Unknown Australian Soldier during her visit to Australia, which was a calculated bid to curry favor with Western allies. However, Japan's Asian neighbors, which suffered immensely under Japanese imperialism, have yet to receive a formal apology for Japan's historical aggression.

The lack of genuine atonement is a significant barrier to reconciliation and further isolates Japan within the region.

The militaristic resurgence of Japan, coupled with a disregard for historical accountability, is deeply disturbing in a region that suffered immensely from Japan's past aggression.

The consequences of Japan continuing on its militaristic path will be far-reaching. The international community must recognize the dangers of Japan's current trajectory and hold Tokyo accountable for its actions. Only through sincere reflection on its past aggression and a sincere commitment to peace can Japan hope to rebuild trust with its neighbors and contribute positively to regional stability.

Openness a viable path for shared prosperity

The resilience and vitality of the world's second-largest economy are once again drawing wide attention as fresh data show China's foreign trade maintained double-digit growth in the first four months of 2026.

According to data released by the General Administration of Customs, China's total goods trade reached 16.23 trillion yuan ($2.39 trillion) in the first four months of the year, up 14.9 percent year-on-year. Exports climbed 11.3 percent to 9.33 trillion yuan, while imports surged 20 percent to 6.9 trillion yuan year-on-year. In April alone, total trade expanded 14.2 percent year-on-year, underscoring the continued momentum of China's foreign trade.

Behind the impressive figures lies a more diversified and resilient trade structure. Trade with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the European Union grew by 15.7 percent and 13.2 percent respectively year-on-year, while trade with Belt and Road partner countries increased 13.5 percent. Trade with the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership members rose 20 percent in the first four months year-on-year, showing that the trade agreement continues to inject new impetus into regional integration.

Such trends highlight that China's trade is becoming less dependent on any single market and increasingly embedded in broader regional and global networks. In an era marked by supply chain disruptions and geopolitical uncertainty, diversified partnerships are enhancing China's ability to withstand external risks while contributing stability to global industry and supply chains.

Equally noteworthy is the growing role of the services trade in China's trade structure. Data released by the Ministry of Commerce showed that China's total services trade reached 1.82 trillion yuan in the first quarter, with exports of services rising 11.2 percent year-on-year.

The effectiveness of China's high-level opening-up policies is highlighted by the robust growth of travel-related services. As China continues to expand its visa-free "circle of friends" and optimize departure tax refund policies, more foreign visitors are being drawn to the country for tourism, business and cultural exchanges. Travel service exports surged 32.3 percent in the first quarter year-on-year, the fastest among all service sectors.

What foreign visitors increasingly see is not merely a vast market, but an open, dynamic and confident China. From efficient digital payment systems and convenient transportation to thriving cultural consumption and modern urban landscapes, China's development is becoming ever more defined by innovation, green transformation and inclusiveness.

Meanwhile, the rise of new growth drivers in high-end manufacturing, artificial intelligence and new energy sectors is reshaping the global perception of China's economy. Exports of electric vehicles, lithium batteries and wind turbine units jumped by 68.1 percent, 43.2 percent and 40.7 percent respectively year-on-year in the first four months. China's robot industry also accelerated its overseas expansion, with exports reaching 11.32 billion yuan in the first quarter and products shipped to 148 countries and regions.

Reflecting both the booming global investment in AI and China's increasingly important role in global technology supply chains, exports of integrated circuits surged 78.3 percent year-on-year. As industry experts noted, China has become a key supplier of AI-related infrastructure, mature-process chips and supporting industrial components.

Some in the West have recently hyped up the notion of a so-called "China Shock 2.0", alleging that China's rapid advances in new energy and artificial intelligence rely excessively on overseas markets and create "overcapacity" that threatens developed economies. Yet such narratives ignore the reality of China's innovation-driven development and the benefits it brings to the world economy.

As Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian pointed out, China has genuine innovation capabilities that create tangible opportunities for global cooperation. The country has evolved from being "the world's factory" to being "a global market and innovation hub". China's exports, he stressed, have served to stabilize global supply chains, eased inflationary pressures, lowering living costs for consumers worldwide, and contributed to closing the world's green development supply gaps and accelerating the world's energy transition and low-carbon transformation.

More importantly, China's high-tech products are breaking technological monopolies and barriers, enabling more countries and people to access and afford emerging technologies.

Openness brings progress, and cooperation delivers mutual benefit, as Lin said. China's development is not a threat to any country, but an increment for common global development.

By steadfastly advancing high-level opening-up, promoting balanced trade development and fostering innovation-driven growth, China is providing the world economy with much-needed certainty and new momentum.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Shi Yu



Opinion Line

Museums have evolved to be carriers of historical continuity

In contemporary cultural policy, museums are often described as repositories of artifacts, or guardians of the past. Yet this definition increasingly lags behind the times. In China, official discourse has moved toward a more expansive understanding of museums in which they are no longer static containers of history, but dynamic imparters of knowledge.

This shift is clearly articulated in statements by the central authorities that emphasize that every museum is a big school. A university does not merely display knowledge; it interprets, transmits and shapes understanding. To define a museum in these terms is to assign it a civic function: it becomes a place where individuals encounter a shared narrative.

This reconceptualization also explains a second, equally important point. The central authorities have cautioned that museum development should avoid uniformity: museum construction should not be one model for all, nor should it pursue superficial scale; exhibitions must highlight distinctive content. What matters is not how many museums exist, but whether they offer distinctive cultural experiences that invite engagement. Exhibitions that draw on local history, traditions and material culture are more likely to resonate with surrounding communities, while also offering visitors a clearer sense of China's regional diversity and the varied roles different areas played in shaping its development.

For example, by foregrounding classical painting, garden culture, literati traditions and refined crafts such as silk weaving and embroidery, the Suzhou Museum has placed Suzhou within the cultural world of Jiangnan — the prosperous region south of the Yangtze long associated with commerce and artistic life. Suzhou's local heritage thus becomes a lens through which China's long engagement with the wider world can be understood.

In 2023, the Cleveland Museum of Art presented a major exhibition, "China's Southern Paradise: Treasures from the Lower Yangzi Delta", which examined the Lower Yangzi (Yangtze) region as both a cultural center and a conduit of exchange between China and the wider world. Drawing extensively on loans from Chinese museums, the exhibition traced how Jiangnan's economic vitality — rooted in silk production, commerce and urban culture — enabled sustained interaction with global trade networks and artistic currents. In doing so, it echoed the approach seen in Suzhou: local history was not treated as self-contained, but as part of a broader narrative of circulation and encounter. Presented on an international stage, such exhibitions demonstrate how regionally grounded cultural histories can illuminate China's long-standing engagement with the world.

Chinese museums can also draw lessons from international institutions, which often possess a sharper awareness of how to engage their audiences. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Metropolitan Museum of Art presented "Companions in Solitude: Reclusion and Communion in Chinese Art", an exhibition that explored the long-standing tension in Chinese thought between withdrawal from society and connection with others. Bringing together over a hundred works of painting, calligraphy and decorative arts, the exhibition framed Chinese aesthetics around a universal human dilemma — how to balance solitude and social life — in a moment of global isolation.

This curatorial approach continued in the museum's 2025 exhibition "Recasting the Past: The Art of Chinese Bronzes, 1100–1900", which demonstrated how later Chinese artists reinterpreted antiquity, emphasizing that tradition in China is dynamic rather than fixed. Taken together, these exhibitions suggest a clear trajectory: moving beyond presenting China as an object of external curiosity toward articulating its internal artistic logic and historical continuity.

In describing cultural relics as those that "embody a rich civilizational legacy, transmit history and culture, and sustain the collective spirit", and in calling for them to "come alive", the central authorities capture a fundamental transformation in the role of museums. Objects are no longer treated as static artifacts, but as carriers of continuity — linking past and present, individual and collective identity. This shift is increasingly reflected in more open exhibitions, expanded digital access and interactive formats that extend cultural experience beyond the museum itself.

Emphasizing participation over instruction allows culture to be encountered rather than imposed. Ultimately, it reflects a broader rethinking of culture itself: not merely as heritage to be preserved, but as a shared resource to be experienced. In an age of increasing fragmentation, the capacity to bring people into common cultural spaces may be among the most effective ways to sustain social cohesion.

— ZHAO XU, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

AI in filmmaking cannot replace human emotions

Editor's note: *Artificial intelligence is reshaping a broad range of industries, including the film industry. During the 16th Beijing International Film Festival, various insiders of AI, the film industry and scholars shared their insights on AI's role in filmmaking and how professionals should respond to the trend of AI. Below are excerpts from their comments as reported by Xinhua News Agency. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

AI can assist film producers in collecting and summarizing data and information. It can also help film directors visualize, while also assisting them in character design and casting.

Large AI models are able to create B-roll footage and scenes featuring animals. Footage that once took a week and cost hundreds of thousands of yuan to shoot can now be produced efficiently at low cost.

Currently, films that have powerful visual effects, such as *The Wandering Earth 3*, still rely on motion capture and modeling for previsualization of action and performance, as AI is as yet unable to achieve the same results. The smaller the screen, the wider the application of AI. The larger the screen, the more limited its application becomes.

AI technology is applied to only part of the production process of theatrical films, and has not yet been used to generate all the scenes in them. In AI-generated scenes, rendering human skin texture and subtle facial expressions remains a challenge.

The iteration of generative AI has drastically changed the underlying logic of audio-visual content creation. The production pattern of movies and television shows is shifting from one that features a clear division of labor and collaboration of multiple sectors to one that is highly creative, agile and involves human-machine cooperation.

AI technology is able to combine different kinds of media. Its "real-time generation" capability has greatly enhanced the interaction between products and their users, blurring the boundaries between animated films, live-action films and video games, and boosting the integration of films and video games. This will give rise to new patterns of consumption.

Films need a dose of human warmth to strike an emotional chord with the audience. For example, films such as *Dead to Rights* and *Her Story* have won praise mainly because they showcase genuine emotions, making audiences shed tears or smile.

The memorable parts of many classic film scenes are actors' impromptu performances inspired by directors. Algorithms cannot replicate this aspect of movies.

In an era when more and more people have gained access to tools for audio-visual creation, filmmakers need to make greater efforts in polishing their products, including the way a story is told, the aesthetic quality of the film and the audio-visual experience it provides, so as to make watching films in cinemas an irreplaceable choice for the audience.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:25 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:25 PM

VIEWS

Roman Novozhilov and Yuan Zheng

Nature-based solutions to climate challenges

Climate change is no longer a distant warning. Melting glaciers, dying coral reefs and collapsing ecosystems are racing toward dangerous tipping points, posing significant risks to both people and nature.

Many countries, including China, are responding to the alarming signals. China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) focuses on developing river-basin economies, highlighting a powerful idea: nature is part of our infrastructure, and investing in it could strengthen resilience.

Global Lens

Nature-based solutions (NbS) could turn this idea into practice.

NbS involves actions that protect, restore and manage ecosystems so that they continue to provide essential services for people and businesses.

Forests regulate water and stabilize slopes, wetlands store floodwater and filter pollution and mangroves shield coasts from storms and erosion. Urban trees and parks cool streets and reduce heat stress.

In these ways, nature delivers essential ecosystem services — flood protection, water security, coastal defense and urban cooling — that make existing "grey" infrastructure more resilient.

By viewing nature as a form of infrastructure, we recognize that, unlike roads, dams or drainage systems, natural systems can renew themselves and deliver multiple benefits simultaneously.

Trees or mangroves, for example, could regulate water, store carbon, support livelihoods and enrich communities with cultural and recreational spaces.

Thus, nature is no longer external to socio-economic development, but a core asset that generates goods and services essential for sustaining other economic activities. Our long-term prosperity depends on protecting nature.

In a warming world with more frequent hazardous weather events, the capacity of ecosystems to absorb climate and disaster shocks is one of the most cost-effective ways to adapt.

Yet, investment in nature still falls short. Global estimates indicate an annual biodiversity finance gap of around $700 billion between now and 2030.

One major barrier is that many of nature's benefits — such as a stable climate, or cleaner air — are not properly valued and priced in project appraisals or national accounts.

Tools and outcome metrics to measure and quantify the socioeconomic gains from NbS are still developing, making these benefits easy to overlook.

Also, data on nature remain fragmented, standards on nature finance are still evolving, and many public NbS projects have to coordinate across multiple agencies and ministries.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

All this can make nature-positive investments look risky, hard to structure and difficult to implement, even when they make strong economic sense.

As climate impacts intensify, building resilience is no longer a choice but a necessity. Investing in nature can change how we design infrastructure, plan cities and shape our economies for the long term.

A holistic approach is needed to align policy, project preparation and finance, so that NbS are systematically built into decisions rather than added on later.

First, efforts could focus on bringing nature into the mainstream of project finance. This entails developing and using simple methods to identify nature-related risks and opportunities early in project preparation, so that suitable NbS measures can be built into the design from the very start.

This work can build on the environmental and social safeguard reviews that many financial institutions carry out for the projects they finance, making such standards easier to apply and institutionalize.

In parallel, a practical "menu" of NbS options can be compiled for key investment areas, offering project teams a set of tried-and-tested measures for climate-resilient infrastructure that can then be tailored to local conditions.

Second, financial markets need to deepen and continuously innovate to better support investment in nature, including NbS. For NbS that are integral to climate-resilient infrastructure, more adaptation finance could be directed to these activities as part of core project funding.

Some NbS can also generate high quality carbon credits, drawing on existing accounting methodologies used in some global and national voluntary markets.

Moreover, new types of labeled sustainable finance instruments can be piloted to channel capital into nature-positive projects.

Emerging nature-finance taxonomies from international institutions, such as the one recently launched by multilateral development banks, could offer a useful starting point for defining qualifications and guiding the design of such instruments.

Furthermore, a portfolio approach could bundle NbS projects that would otherwise be too small or fragmented, helping to overcome bankability challenges and attract larger-scale investment.

Third, to support the endeavors mentioned above, cross-sector policy making needs to be strengthened so that clear, consistent guidance comes from the top. A country's climate strategies — especially adaptation plans — should be aligned with planning for biodiversity conservation and natural resource management, and coordinated across ministries.

This is crucial when setting strategic targets and designing financial and economic incentives, so that NbS are encouraged and enabled in a coherent way across different sectors and levels of government.

Last but not least, capacity building also needs sustained attention across all key stakeholders, including financial institutions, governments, contractors and regulators, so they know why and how to integrate NbS into major decisions in the first place.

This will be a gradual process, and expand as more data, practical tools and financial instruments become available, tested and ready to scale up.

Across emerging markets and developing countries, strong examples of NbS are already emerging, including in China, where rivers, grasslands and coasts are often being used to support development and resilience.

Picture a solar farm spread across once-degraded land, with panels raised just high enough for sheep or goats to graze in their shade: the panels help slow down wind erosion, the ground cover restores biodiversity and stores carbon, and local herders earn steadier incomes while clean power feeds nearby towns.

Such vivid combinations of clean energy, healthier ecosystems and stronger rural livelihoods show how emerging markets and developing countries can pioneer NbS at scale and play a leading role in advancing climate-resilient, nature-positive growth.

As the world looks toward the 31st United Nations Climate Change Conference, the focus is shifting from high-level commitments to concrete implementation.

Now is the right moment to bring NbS out of the margins into the mainstream of climate and development plans.

Countries and other stakeholders can arrive at the upcoming conference with real projects underway — restoring rivers, forests, coasts and city landscapes that protect people and the planet.

Roman Novozhilov is the chief of the Environment, Social and Governance Department at the New Development Bank; and Yuan Zheng is a climate finance specialist of the Strategy, Policies and Partnerships Department at the New Development Bank.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of the New Development Bank and China Daily.

Qu Yue

Enduring protection for workers in emerging fields

On April 26, the Chinese government issued a document offering guidelines on strengthening services and management for workers in new forms of employment — such as food delivery riders, couriers, ride-hailing drivers, and live-streamers who make a living through digital platforms.

It is China's first national-level policy document of its kind to focus specifically on the needs of this emerging workforce.

As China's social security and public service systems were developed alongside industrialization and are largely based on the work unit model, traditional workers are tied to a fixed employer, sign formal labor contracts, contribute to social insurance and receive corresponding benefits.

But workers engaged in new forms of employment have to face ambiguity.

Their flexible arrangements, often involving platforms, outsourcing firms and franchisees, create complex employment relationships.

As a result, these workers often lack clear legal protection and institutional support in areas such as pay, work injury insurance, rest rights and social security.

China's population service system requires that everyone, regardless of age, occupation, household registration status or employment type, be included.

Workers in new forms of employment, however, represent a large blind spot in this system. They often work away from their place of household registration, don't have stable employment and live in a dispersed manner.

The guidelines are meant to close that institutional gap by formally bringing this group into the national services and governance system, safeguarding their rights and providing tailored support.

The guidelines take into account the realities of the new forms of employment and clarify the responsibilities of all parties involved so that rights protection is based on clear and enforceable standards. This is essential to achieving high-quality and full employment.

Platform companies and courier firms are required to improve their management systems, use labor contracts or written agreements suited to the sector, and define rights and obligations in a lawful and reasonable way based on actual working arrangements.

The guidelines also urge platform companies to set remuneration in line with the workload, pay wages in full and on time and ensure workers' right to rest. They call for enhanced protection in special conditions such as extreme weather.

To ensure that the concerns of workers are heard, mechanisms will be established for consultation and dialogue on matters affecting their rights, with transparent outcomes.

Practices, such as unreasonable fees or commissions, unfair traffic allocation and abuse of market dominance, are expected to be investigated and punished. The protection of workers' rights may also be included in corporate social responsibility assessments.

To address a long-standing concern of workers, the guidelines have also tackled algorithm-related issues.

Platform companies must improve transparency and guarantee workers' rights to be informed about, participate in and make choices regarding algorithmic rules.

When adjusting algorithms, platforms should consult labor unions and worker representatives, and reasonably set rules on task allocation, pricing and time estimation, while strictly complying with filing requirements.

The guidelines call for measures to curb excessive competition, prevent harm to workers' rights, protect personal data and privacy, and crack down on fraud, predatory lending and other crimes targeting this segment of the workforce.

On the public services front, basic services need to be provided based on place of residence rather than household registration, a principle firmly upheld to allow services to follow the flow of workers.

Measures include improving social security systems suited to flexible employment, facilitating the transfer and continuation of social insurance, expanding pilot programs for occupational injury protection, enabling direct settlement of cross-regional medical expenses and exploring the inclusion of flexible workers in the housing provident fund.

The guidelines call for multi-party coordination mechanisms led by townships and communities to address practical issues such as access to residential compounds, parking areas, meals, rest areas and restroom facilities.

Community service centers and union stations are to be used to build service hubs such as "driver homes" and "rider stations", offering basic amenities including drinking water, charging facilities, hot meals and emergency supplies.

Outstanding workers are to be recognized and rewarded while regular skills competitions are to be organized to enhance professional pride.

Targeted support is also emphasized. Workers financially impoverished are to receive social assistance in accordance with regulations, while support is to be provided to the families of workers injured or killed on the job.

The guidelines highlight the importance of psychological services in easing work-related stress, expanded vocational training, improved systems for skill certification and professional evaluation, and clearer pathways for career advancement.

The guidelines come at a time when there are new changes in China's population structure and the platform economy is reshaping employment patterns.

The social security system is shifting from one centered on work units to one centered on society at large, extending protection from "employees of units" to "members of society."

By standardizing employment practices, safeguarding entitlements and opening pathways for career development, the guidelines lay a foundation for the long-term, healthy development of new forms of employment.

With the help of the guidelines, jobs that were once temporary stopgaps can be transformed into viable, stable careers, unlocking the potential of tens of millions of workers as a source of human capital.

The author is a researcher at the Institute of Population and Labor Economics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Wu Ruijun

Investing in education brings talent dividend

In the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), China has emphasized the importance of investing in both physical assets and human capital, with education playing a vital role in enhancing the well-being of its people.

Education should be seen not just as an expense, but as a long-term investment that transforms human resources into core capital for future growth.

Human capital investment views the population as a dynamic and evolving resource. By improving the allocation of educational resources and strengthening policy design, it enhances people's knowledge, skills, health and innovative capacity.

Through upgrading the labor force's skill structure, strengthening intergenerational development capacity, and promoting population mobility and integration, education investment improves both the quality and structure of the population.

This facilitates a shift from reliance on a traditional demographic dividend toward a more sustainable talent dividend that supports long-term economic transformation.

Such investment should be precise and consider the entire life cycle to address major demographic changes such as declining birth rates, population aging and the demand for quality improvement. To counter falling fertility, it is essential to expand child care services and optimize basic education resources, thereby reducing the cost of raising children.

For an aging population, education for older adults and vocational training can unlock the potential of the elderly workforce and extend productive working lives.

We also need to forecast demographic trends, ensure a balanced regional distribution of educational resources, and coordinate education with fertility, employment and elderly care policies.

We have to shift from expanding scale to improving quality, building a resilient education system that can better deliver a talent dividend.

With increasing population mobility between urban and rural areas and across regions, migrant children often struggle with educational integration.

Technologies such as artificial intelligence can be used to recommend personalized learning pathways and improve accessibility.

Breaking institutional barriers, such as those related to the household registration system, is essential to ensure educational equity based on the principle of equal rights within the same city.

This involves easing or even abolishing school enrollment thresholds linked to social insurance contributions or residence permits, and removing household registration restrictions for senior high school admissions so that migrant children can compete fairly for quality educational opportunities.

On the fiscal side, funding mechanisms should be improved through transfer payments to support destination areas in providing public education.

Educational process equity has to be promoted through teacher rotation, mixed classes and integrated support systems that combine academic assistance, psychological counseling and social integration services.

Building a lifelong education system requires strong institutional safeguards, open resource sharing and technological empowerment.

Developing a national qualifications framework and a credit bank system can enable mutual recognition among academic education, vocational training and lifelong learning outcomes, lowering barriers to participation.

Universities, enterprises and social organizations can work together to build digital learning platforms offering blended online and offline courses for people of all ages, with particular emphasis on skills training for career transitions and community-based education for older adults.

Technologies such as artificial intelligence can be used to recommend personalized learning pathways and improve accessibility.

Closer integration between industry and education is also essential to deliver training aligned with industrial upgrading and ensure a continuous appreciation of human capital.

Nudging families toward a more rational approach to educational investment requires policy guidance and effective public communication. They need to shift from traditional attitudes that overemphasize academic credentials.

The role of skilled professionals in economic and social development needs greater recognition. A diversified talent evaluation system can be established by combining academic diplomas with vocational skill certificates and improving the national qualifications framework.

Also, the remuneration, social status and career prospects of skilled workers should be enhanced, helping families recognize vocational education as a viable pathway for upward mobility. Better alignment between skills training and the demand in the labor market, along with the promotion of successful role models, can help alleviate education-related anxiety.

Governments can strengthen career guidance services to help families make informed choices based on children's interests, abilities and market trends.

It is crucial that governments anchor education policy in the goal of high-quality population development, ensure balanced provision of inclusive educational resources, fulfill fiscal responsibilities and address gaps in underdeveloped regions and among vulnerable groups.

Sound regulatory mechanisms are also needed to standardize the education market and improve coordination among education, population and employment policies.

The market, in turn, is expected to respond to diversified educational demands by providing differentiated services, deepening cooperation between schools and enterprises and leveraging digital technologies to enhance quality and efficiency.

Families too should make rational choices that align with their children's strengths and social needs, prioritize moral education and holistic development and work in coordination with national population and education strategies.

The author is a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference National Committee and the director of the Institute for Talent Development Strategy at East China Normal University.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:25 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:25 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

EFEM N. UBI

Free trade milestone

China's zero-tariff treatment for the 53 African countries with which it has diplomatic ties is set to boost Africa's economic growth and modernization



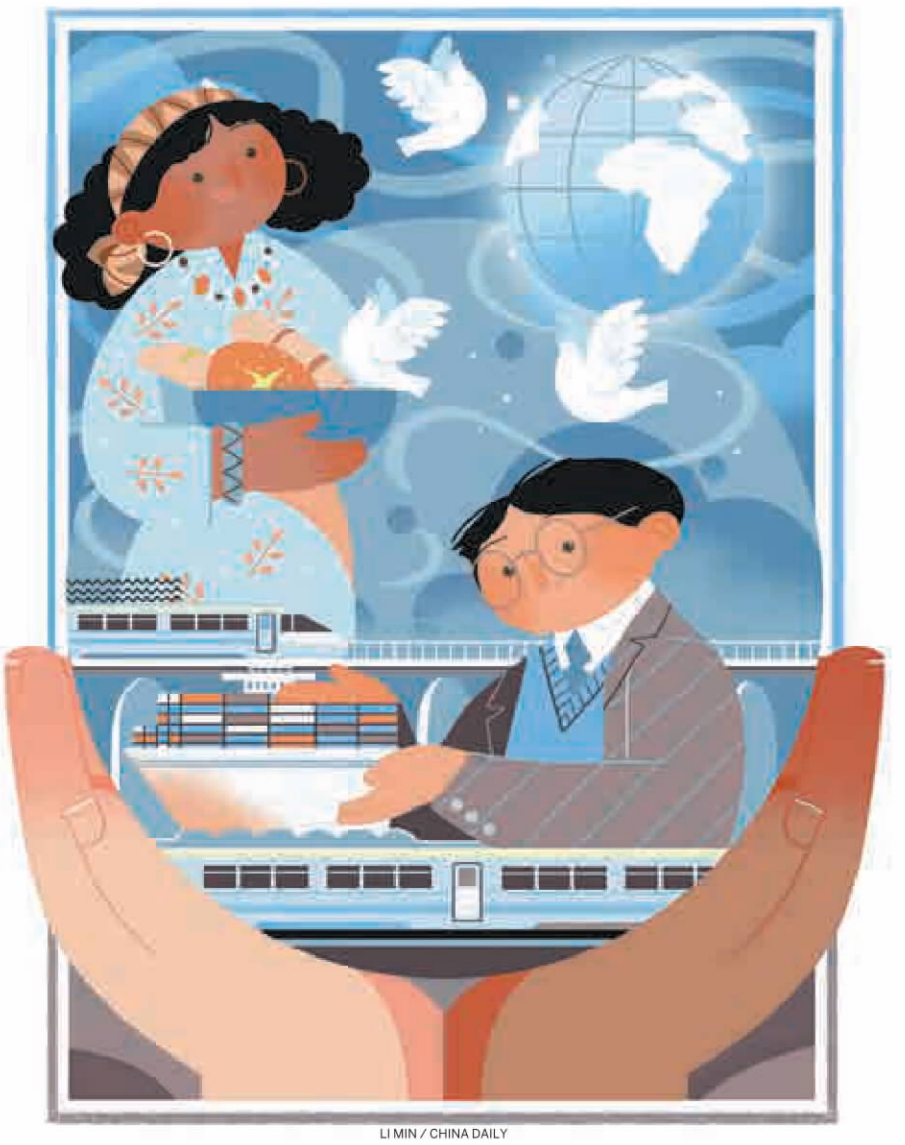
The importance of Africa's trade with China is reflected in numerous bilateral, multilateral and regional agreements. This is also indicative of the new policy of the Chinese government that, starting May 1, China fully implemented zero tariffs on all products from 53 African countries with which it has diplomatic ties.

Historically, Africa has faced significant challenges in its trade relations with Western countries. Stringent duties and high tariffs imposed by Western countries have often hindered the export of African goods. For instance, the United States administration has reignited tensions in international trade. This approach has had a negative impact on many African nations, thus making it difficult for them to compete on the global stage.

In contrast, China has offered a solution by removing trade barriers. By taking these steps, China is offering new opportunities for economic growth and prosperity across the African continent, provided these advantages are effectively leveraged by African governments.

The trade relationship between China and Africa has been highly significant. In light of this situation, implementing a zero-tariff policy can help boost trade with China, reduce trade imbalances, support Africa's manufacturing growth, and encourage trade and development within Africa itself.

Data released by China's General Administration of Customs indicate that China has become Africa's largest trading partner, with trade totaling $348 billion in 2025. However, it is estimated that Africa's trade with China accounts for 4.5 to 5.5 percent of China's global trade. Thus, with a zero-tariff policy now in place, Africa will gain wider access to China's vast and promising market. This initiative also indicates that China is readily attuned to the concerns expressed about trade imbalances with Africa, extending beyond traditional diplomatic and soft-power considerations. This significant policy will gradually enable Africa to increase production and expand trade, thereby increasing revenue and competitiveness while also lowering production costs.



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

One barrier to the effective participation of some African nations in international trade is the persistent lack of robust industrialization. Across the continent, numerous countries are struggling with insufficient infrastructure, outdated production techniques, and limited manufacturing capacity. According to the African Trade Report 2024 released by the African Export-Import Bank, the African continent accounts for about 2 percent of global trade. And some African nations rely heavily on exporting unprocessed raw materials such as crude oil, copper, cobalt, coffee, cocoa and lithium, while importing finished goods, machinery and technology.

This situation compromises their ability to compete globally, preventing them from fully exploiting the opportunities that international markets offer. The implementation of a zero-tariff policy could catalyze the growth of a more dynamic and resilient industrial sector in Africa. By eliminating tariffs, some African nations can reduce costs for manufacturers, encourage foreign investment and promote local production. This shift could lead to increased manufacturing output and innovation, which are crucial for fostering competitive industries. This comprehensive approach can pave the way for economic development that ultimately benefits not only the individual countries but the entire continent.

Some African countries can fully leverage this opportunity by combining their comparative advantages with efforts to improve logistics and standards systems. This will further boost export growth and diversification, which many African nations have been grappling with over the years.

The policy can also boost agriculture and food security. The zero-tariff policy is expected to enhance the agricultural sector across the African continent. Also, by promoting the processing and packaging of agricultural goods, some African nations can create a spectrum of jobs that range from farming and harvesting to manufacturing and distribution. These African nations can expect an increase in employment opportunities within local communities. This is particularly crucial, as the agricultural sector serves as one of the largest sources of employment in Africa, providing livelihoods for millions of people. In fact, China's zero-tariff policy for Africa has the potential to uplift rural economies and empower communities throughout the continent.

The landmark zero-tariff policy will also have positive effects on boosting intra-African trade and, importantly, the African Continental Free Trade Area. This policy will encourage intra-African trade by enabling some African nations to capitalize on their comparative advantages. As a result, countries will not only trade raw materials and commodities among themselves, but also exchange finished or value-added goods. Furthermore, it can incentivize the development of regional supply chains in Africa to meet China's growing demand.

In conclusion, China's zero-tariff policy for the 53 African nations with which it has diplomatic ties could not have come at a more opportune moment for Africa, as the world grapples with uncertainty, trade wars and conflicts that threaten the stability of developing countries. This effort offers opportunities for Africa's modernization through industrialization and manufacturing, aiming to realize a shared future for both parties.

The author is a professor at the Institute of African Studies at Zhejiang Normal University. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

STEPHEN NDEGWA

Companions in modernization

China's tech push is also helping expand Africa's digital footprint with high-impact projects that are reshaping the continent's technological landscape



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY



In global economic debates, innovation is often framed as a competitive race among major powers. Headlines tend to focus on who leads in artificial intelligence, advanced manufacturing or green technology. The narrative is usually about who is ahead, who is falling behind, and who will dominate future industries.

But for much of the developing world, the real question is whether innovation expands opportunity beyond the traditional centers of power. For Africa, China's growing push for technological innovation is increasingly providing that opportunity. And as articulated during this year's two sessions — the annual meetings of the National People's Congress and the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference — this partnership is entering a more mature, policy-driven phase focused on shared modernization.

For Global South nations, China's modernization drive is not an isolated project, but an open one. The two sessions were charged with a focus on new quality productive forces, driven by digitalization and AI. This is a signal of where China is investing in its immense research and development capacity and, crucially, what it is willing to share with partners such as Africa.

One of the most striking moments came during Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's news conference on the sidelines of the NPC session. When a Nigerian journalist was given the opportunity to ask a question, the gesture stood as a small but powerful symbol of the importance China places on its African partnership. Wang's response was a reaffirmation that China's path to modernization is intrinsically linked to Africa's — a sentiment that resonates deeply from the Great Hall of the People in Beijing to the tech hubs of Nairobi and Lagos.

This commitment was given strategic depth by Wang during his visit to three African countries in January, during which he laid out a comprehensive vision for the future. His message moved beyond simple infrastructure development to a holistic partnership for the 21st century, built on several key pillars that will directly impact Africa's digital future.

The first is the principle of prioritizing development as companions in modernization. This is backed by the implementation of zero-tariff treatment for 100 percent of taxable imports from the 53 African countries that have diplomatic ties with China, starting May 1. This policy is a game-changer. It is designed to boost African exports, and crucially, it fosters the development of local industries and technological capacity, giving African innovators a direct pathway to the huge Chinese market.

Second, Wang emphasized promoting mutual learning in national governance. This means creating platforms such as the China-Africa knowledge network for development to share expertise. For Africa's digital transformation, this is vital. It is not just about receiving technology, but about understanding the policies, regulatory frameworks and innovation ecosystems that allow technology to thrive. It is a direct channel for African engineers, entrepreneurs and policymakers to learn from China's development.

Third, Wang called for upholding openness and inclusiveness as partners with a shared future. This stands in direct contrast to the trend of technological protectionism elsewhere. By strengthening coordination in international forums, China and Africa can jointly advocate a global governance system that gives developing nations a greater voice in making the rules for emerging technologies such as AI, ensuring these technologies serve the shared interests of all humanity.

This policy alignment is already translating into tangible, high-impact projects that are reshaping Africa's technological landscape. The focus is shifting from basic connectivity to intelligent infrastructure. A landmark example is the 2026 strategic memorandum of understanding between MTN Group and Huawei, signed to accelerate Africa's digital and intelligent transformation.

This partnership is a blueprint for the future. It leverages AI as the core driver to build "agentic networks", the next-generation infrastructure that evolves from automation to true autonomy. By targeting Level 4 autonomous networks, where AI handles most network management, this collaboration aims to dramatically improve efficiency and unlock new possibilities for service innovation. In addition to enabling faster internet traffic, it is about creating an AI-ready digital backbone that can support everything from smart agriculture and telemedicine to fintech and logistics, powered by innovation labs based in Africa.

This builds on a long history of cooperation where companies such as Huawei have been instrumental in building the continent's digital skeleton, contributing to constructing a large share of Africa's 4G networks and deploying hundreds of thousands of kilometers of fiber-optic cables. Now, with AI integration, we are moving from building the skeleton to wiring the nervous system of a digital economy.

For Africa, the convergence of its youthful population is obvious, with more than 60 percent of the total population in the sub-Saharan region being under the age of 25, and these technological investments create unprecedented potential. The continent is already the world's fastest-growing mobile internet market, gaining 1.5 new users every second. Young developers in Africa's Silicon Valley are building solutions on this foundation — mobile payments that expand financial inclusion, platforms connecting farmers to markets and digital health services reaching rural patients.

The pieces are coming together. China's renewable energy push, another pillar of its innovation drive, is also making solar power more affordable, helping power this digital ecosystem and address the electricity gap that affects 600 million Africans, according to the International Energy Agency.

As Chinese companies invest in solar farms, hydropower and minigrids across the continent, they are providing the clean and reliable electricity needed to keep data centers running, charge millions of new mobile devices coming online every day and power the small businesses that form the backbone of Africa's digital economy.

Ultimately, the narrative is no longer simply about China's tech push. It is about a strategic partnership that is actively co-creating Africa's digital future. Innovation delivers its greatest value when it spreads, and in this partnership, there is a clear path for the technological breakthroughs of the 21st century to truly transform economies far beyond the traditional centers of power.

The author is the executive director of South-South Dialogues, a Nairobi-based communications development think tank. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:25 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:25 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

Research points to innovation depth

Foreign-funded R&D centers expand quantitatively and qualitatively

By ZHONG NAN
zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

Multinational companies once measured their presence in China by the number of factories they operated and the scale of their supply chains. Today, those metrics no longer fully capture their footprint.

The number of research and development centers has emerged as a more telling indicator of how deeply foreign businesses are embedded in the Chinese market and how committed they are to long-term innovation.

As of March this year, Beijing had 332 foreign-funded R&D centers, with 55 newly established this year, while Shanghai had 647 such centers, including 15 new additions this year, data from the Ministry of Commerce showed.

That shift is also becoming more evident in capital flows. The actual use of foreign direct investment in China's high-tech industries rose 30.7 percent year-on-year to 102.73 billion yuan ($15.05 billion) in the first quarter of 2026, accounting for 41.2 percent of the country's total FDI, according to the ministry data.

Of this, the actual use of FDI in R&D and design services rose by 127.8 percent on a yearly basis.

Zhao Yang, an official with the Ministry of Commerce's department of foreign investment administration, said China's industrial and innovation strengths are translating into tangible advantages.

Foreign-funded R&D centers are entering a phase of both quantitative expansion and qualitative upgrading, shifting from local adaptation hubs to integral nodes in multinational companies' global innovation networks, said Zhao.

Yin Zheng, executive vice-president of China and East Asia operations at Schneider Electric, said that running businesses, especially in the manufacturing sector, is no longer about simply taking orders and scaling up production in China.

"For many multinational corporations today, the country has evolved from a cost-efficient production base into a critical hub for innovation, market expansion and long-term strategic positioning," Yin said.

The French industrial group is currently building two new plants in Xiamen, Fujian province, and Wuxi, Jiangsu province, while upgrading its Beijing R&D center, focusing on energy management, optimization, efficiency and digitalization.

Bai Ming, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation in Beijing, said the trend reflects growing confidence among foreign investors in China's economic resilience and its capacity for sustained innovation.

As a result, investment decisions that were once seen as optional are increasingly being elevated to strategic imperatives, particularly in high-tech and consumer goods sectors, Bai said.

Sean Stein, president of the US-China Business Council, said the shift is evident.

"Twenty-five years ago, no one came to China to do R&D. Now, what I am seeing is that the best companies are doing some of their most important R&D in China," said Stein.

For example, US cosmetics group Estee Lauder is tailoring products for Chinese consumers, not only in packaging, but also in formulations and research and development. Tapestry Inc, the parent company of US fashion brands Coach and Kate Spade, has established an R&D center in Dongguan, Guangdong province, he added.

As part of its expansion in China, Estee Lauder launched two projects in Shanghai in late March — the China Fulfillment Center and the Group Open Innovation Center — to boost its research and development and intelligent supply chain operations.



Visitors experience cosmetics from Estee Lauder during the eighth China International Import Expo in Shanghai on Nov 9. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



A visitor checks out products from Danfoss during a machinery exhibition in Shanghai on Nov 28, 2024. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Visitors get to know information at Schneider's exhibition stand during the eighth CIIE in Shanghai on Nov 10. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

> "For many multinational corporations today, the country has evolved from a cost-efficient production base into a critical hub for innovation, market expansion and long-term strategic positioning."
>
> **Yin Zheng,** executive vice-president of China and East Asia operations at Schneider Electric

"China is more than one of the world's largest beauty markets. It is a global leader in shaping consumer trends, digital innovation and the future of our industry," said Stephane de La Faverie, the group's president and CEO.

Similar momentum is seen in other sectors. Louis Dreyfus Company, a Rotterdam-headquartered multinational trader and processor of agricultural commodities, has continued to expand its footprint in China, investing in four greenfield projects to strengthen processing capabilities.

James Zhou, LDC's chief commercial officer, said his group has already set up a global R&D center in Shanghai and launched two production lines for specialty feed ingredients in Tianjin, aiming to translate research into commercial applications.

"We are looking to expand our integrated specialty phospholipid production model — pioneered through innovation and advanced oilseed processing capabilities in China — to other LDC plants worldwide," said Zhou. "Meanwhile, we have launched various plant-based food and feed ingredients and solutions, tailored to evolving needs in China."

Pan Yuanyuan, deputy director of the international investment unit at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of World Economics and Politics, said foreign investment is becoming an increasingly important driver of employment and services sector development in China.

"In high-tech areas such as advanced manufacturing, green and low-carbon development, digital infrastructure and scientific research, multinational companies are increasingly leveraging China's industrial and supply chains to scale up innovation and accelerate its commercial application, integrating the country more deeply into their global production and innovation networks," she added.

Seeing great growth potential in the Chinese market, German anchoring system manufacturer Fischer expanded and upgraded its existing production base in Taicang, Jiangsu province in March.

Its new heavy-duty anchoring and structural reinforcement product lines have been put into operation, with products set to be supplied to the Chinese market from this month and expanded to cover the broader Asian market from November.

Alexander Bassler, CEO of Fischer, said that the Chinese market is one of the most dynamic and forward-looking globally for the group, with the speed at which innovations emerge and are implemented at scale standing out in particular. The company also sees new growth opportunities in areas such as digitalization, smart infrastructure, sustainable construction and high-tech industries, Bassler added.

"At the same time, demand is rising for high-quality, durable and technologically sophisticated solutions. This opens up excellent prospects for our company. Our fastening and system solutions are used in many modern-day industrial and construction projects and make a valuable contribution to efficient and sustainable solutions," he said.

Kim Fausing, president and CEO of Danfoss Group, said the Danish industrial conglomerate aims to deploy more resources in China's data center sector, drawing on its global expertise and technologies to support scalable, energy-efficient infrastructure for artificial intelligence-led digital expansion.

"China has become a key player in global digital and energy transitions, as data centers play a growing role in the energy system, driven by rising electricity demand from artificial intelligence and cloud computing," said Fausing.

As its sales in China more than doubled over the past decade to exceed 10 billion yuan, Danfoss, which operates 12 manufacturing bases and four innovation facilities across the country, posted a 13 percent sales growth year-on-year in 2025, driven by strong momentum in sectors such as data centers and marine industries, where demand for energy-efficient solutions is rising.

As China strives to drive high-quality economic development through higher-level opening-up, this year's Government Work Report called for steadily expanding institutional opening-up, promoting the reinvestment of foreign capital and the expansion of localized production, and improving services for foreign-funded enterprises.

More than 6,200 foreign-invested enterprises were registered with customs authorities in the first quarter, while the number of such companies with import and export activity rose by more than 1,000 from a year earlier to reach 69,000, statistics from the General Administration of Customs showed.

These companies recorded 3.47 trillion yuan in trade between January and March, up 16.1 percent year-on-year, marking the eighth consecutive quarter of growth.

"Multinational companies are playing a key role in driving new quality productive forces, and their trade outlook in China remains strong," said Wang Jun, GAC's vice-minister, adding that stable policy expectations and an open business environment are helping them select more trading partners and tap into more markets.

Wang said global businesses' integration with China's manufacturing sector is deepening.

In China, foreign-invested firms accounted for more than 30 percent of each sector's total trade in industries such as automobile manufacturing, instrumentation and pharmaceuticals during the January-March period, according to the GAC.

Meanwhile, these companies accounted for more than 30 percent and 60 percent of China's industrial robot and 3D printer exports, respectively, with growth in both categories outpacing the national average.

Trade ties depend on reliable partners

REPORTER'S LOG
By Zhong Nan

I have been covering the China Import and Export Fair (Canton Fair) for years, and every time I walk into its vast venue in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, my first instinct is to scan the crowd. It is a habit that comes naturally — reading the market through the density of people, especially foreigners, the pace of movement, and the hum of conversations across the halls.

That instinct still worked for me at the fair's 139th edition this year, but only up to a point. The crowds are there, the booths are busy and the noise level remains high. Yet, after a few hours on the floor, the feeling shifts. The signals are familiar, but the story behind them is not.

What has changed most is not the scale, but the substance of interaction. Buyers still stop, take photos and ask questions, but their questions have become more layered and more cautious. Conversations move quickly beyond product specifications and pricing, shifting toward delivery reliability, cost stability and the ability to manage unexpected disruptions.

In other words, customers today are not just buying products, but the ability to deliver with certainty.

Several exhibitors told me that decision-making cycles have lengthened compared with previous years. Buyers are taking more time to evaluate options, often revisiting the same supplier multiple times before moving forward. The process feels less transactional and more like risk assessment.

People can feel the contrast across the venue. The fair appears energetic and crowded, reinforcing the impression of strong demand. Yet the mood is more restrained, as both buyers and sellers deal with a more uncertain external environment shaped by cost pressures, supply chain disruptions and geopolitical considerations.

The mix of buyers is another sign of that shift. Visitors from emerging markets remain highly visible, but participation from Europe, the United States and South Korea has not faded. Instead, demand is spreading across regions rather than relocating, creating a more complex landscape for exporters trying to serve multiple markets at once.

That complexity is also reflected in what is being displayed. In newly expanded sections dedicated to drones, service robots and smart technologies, price is no longer the primary narrative. What stands out instead is application — how products are used, how systems are integrated, and how reliably they can be delivered at scale.

The fair itself is evolving alongside these changes. For many companies, it is no longer just about what happens on the exhibition floor, but part of a longer process. Leads are identified before arrival, conversations are structured during the event, and follow-ups begin almost immediately after. The physical interaction remains important, but it is no longer the starting point.

This shift is quietly redefining what success looks like. Counting visitors or collecting business cards is no longer a big deal. What matters more is how many of those contacts turn into real conversations, and how many of those conversations translate into actual orders over time.

All this points to a broader transformation in China's foreign trade model. Competitive advantage is moving away from simple cost competitiveness toward something more complex — the ability to deliver consistently, respond quickly and remain reliable when conditions become uncertain.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:25 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:25 PM

BUSINESSINSIGHT

How trade policy shapes consumer outcomes in US

EAGLE EYE
By John Quelch



CAI MENG / CHINA DAILY

In recent years, the United States has placed increasing emphasis on trade policies that prioritize national security, supply chain resilience and economic growth. In an era of global volatility and technological rivalry, these may be real and relevant policy objectives. However, it is equally, if not more, important to consider how such measures affect markets and, ultimately, the daily lives of US consumers.

Tariffs and import restrictions are two types of trade barriers that directly affect household well-being. First, such policies can reduce diversity in the domestic market by making it more difficult for consumers to access high-quality, lower-cost imports. A second effect concerns competition. When foreign firms face barriers to entry, domestic firms may encounter less competition, resulting in higher prices and reduced incentives to innovate over time. Together, these factors can make it more difficult for families to make ends meet, particularly for lower and middle-income households that are more sensitive to changes in the cost of goods.

The electric vehicle sector provides a useful example of how these dynamics play out. As part of its broader climate and industrial objectives, the US has set ambitious targets for deploying sustainable energy technologies, including EVs. At the same time, levies on imported EVs have increased significantly in recent years, in some cases by more than 100 percent. As a result, vehicles that are competitively priced at the point of production may end up costing significantly more by the time they reach US consumers, once taxes, tariffs and distribution costs are factored in.

In other major markets, including Europe and Canada, similar models — with a range of high-tech features such as advanced driver-assistance systems and integrated digital platforms — are often available at lower prices. Of course, cross-market comparisons are shaped by multiple factors, including government subsidies, regulatory frameworks and shipping costs. Nonetheless, the effect of current US trade policy is to make it more difficult for US consumers to access lower-cost alternatives at a time when affordability remains a pressing concern.

Survey data suggest that many US households are increasingly focused on value for money and would welcome a wider range of EV options. Expanding the variety of available vehicles could accelerate adoption, support environmental goals and ease financial pressures on households. However, current policies limit the availability of such options.

There is substantial empirical research on how tariffs affect consumers. Studies by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York indicate that US consumers and businesses, rather than foreign producers, have borne most of the costs of tariffs imposed since 2018. Similarly, the Kiel Institute for the World Economy found that tariffs function much like a consumption tax, with the burden falling largely on domestic consumers.

Industry projections provide further insight into how trade policies may affect consumers. According to the National Automobile Dealers Association, trade-related costs could raise vehicle prices by several thousand dollars. For many households, a car represents the second-largest expenditure after housing, meaning even modest price increases can significantly affect affordability and access.

As former White House economic adviser Gary Cohn has observed, tariffs can have regressive, tax-like effects, as lower-income households tend to spend a larger share of their income on goods.

At a macroeconomic level, tariffs can also contribute to higher prices. Several analyses suggest that recent trade restrictions have added upward pressure to the cost of various consumer goods, compared with historical trends. Tariffs are only one of several factors influencing inflation, including supply chain disruptions, energy prices and monetary policy, but they remain a policy tool with clear and measurable effects. Goldman Sachs, for example, has estimated that tariffs have had a modest but noticeable impact on inflation, with some effects likely to persist.

At the same time, tariffs have generated substantial government revenue, estimated to have exceeded $200 billion in 2025. This underscores the trade-offs involved in their use.

Trade barriers affect not only prices, but also the way firms compete. In more open markets, companies tend to improve efficiency, invest in innovation and adapt to evolving consumer preferences. When access to international competitors is constrained, these incentives may weaken. Over time, this can lead to higher prices, slower technological progress and fewer choices for consumers.

This raises important questions about how to balance short-term support for the domestic EV industry with long-term competitiveness. Policies that strengthen domestic production capacity can be valuable, particularly in emerging sectors. However, sustained success overseas often depends on the ability to compete on both quality and cost.

Trade policy discussions frequently emphasize the importance of safeguarding national interests, supporting job creation and strengthening industrial capacity. These are important objectives. It is equally important to consider the perspective of consumers, who bear much of the cost of these policies.

A well-designed trade strategy seeks to balance multiple objectives: safeguarding national security, supporting domestic industry and promoting consumer well-being. Achieving this balance is complex and requires ongoing adjustments as economic conditions evolve. Policies that preserve a degree of openness and competition — while advancing strategic priorities — are more likely to support innovation, efficiency and broad-based growth.

In this context, careful consideration of the long-term effects of trade policies can help inform better decisionmaking. By weighing impacts not only on industry, but also on prices, consumer choice and household purchasing power, policymakers can better align trade strategies with the broader goal of sustainable and inclusive economic development.

Ultimately, trade policy should be evaluated not only by how effectively it advances national objectives, but also by how it shapes everyday economic experiences of consumers. Ensuring that markets remain dynamic, competitive and responsive to consumer needs is an essential part of that broader goal.

The writer is the executive vice-chancellor, American president, and distinguished professor of social science at Duke Kunshan University in Kunshan, Jiangsu province. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Demographics, urbanization changing housing market

MAIN STREET
By Sheng Songcheng

China's real estate sector is undergoing a historic transition. During the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-25), the industry entered a phase of deep adjustment after more than two decades of rapid expansion. The development model that once powered growth — characterized by high leverage, rapid turnover and heavy borrowing — has over time become difficult to sustain.

The structural conditions underpinning the market have also changed. China's demographic profile is shifting, urbanization is slowing as it approaches maturity and the marginal contribution of property investment to economic growth has diminished.

Recognizing these shifts, policymakers have begun outlining a new direction for the sector. Since mid-2023, policy discussions have repeatedly emphasized a consistent approach: strictly control new supply, optimize the existing housing stock and improve the quality of housing. Most notably, central authorities have explicitly prioritized the goal to halt the decline and move toward stabilization in the property market, elevating its stabilization to a strategic level vital for the broader macroeconomy.

As China enters the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30), the policy framework has become increasingly clear. The half-decade has a distinctly layered objective. First, it seeks to address risks that accumulated during earlier phases of rapid growth, including risks related to real estate, local government debt and smaller financial institutions. At the same time, it aims to establish a new institutional foundation for the housing sector — reforming systems governing property development, financing and sales, while expanding the supply of affordable housing.

Guided by this shift in thinking, China's real estate industry may undergo a fundamental transformation, gradually returning to its core purpose: providing housing rather than serving primarily as a vehicle for financial expansion.

The most urgent task in this transition is risk management and reduction. Since China launched its market-oriented housing reforms in 1998, real estate has played an essential role in improving living conditions and driving economic growth. Yet the current challenges facing the sector are not simply cyclical fluctuations. Rather, they reflect deeper balance-sheet pressures emerging across the economy.

Over the past two decades, China's property sector developed a distinctive high debt-high growth model. Developers expanded aggressively using leverage; households increased borrowing through mortgage lending; and local governments relied heavily on land-transfer revenues to support fiscal spending. Together, these dynamics pushed up property prices while accumulating financial vulnerabilities.

Today, the situation has reversed. As housing and land prices enter a downward cycle, the liabilities associated with those assets — bank loans, bonds issued by developers and other forms of debt — remain rigid. This mismatch between declining asset values and fixed debt obligations has weakened balance sheets across the sector. Faced with such pressure, economic actors tend to shift their priorities from maximizing profits to minimizing risks. Income that might otherwise be used for investment is instead directed toward debt repayment. At the same time, falling property values reduce household wealth, which in turn dampens consumption and weakens domestic demand.

Managing this process requires caution. During periods of market stress, developers may attempt to sell assets quickly or slash prices in order to generate liquidity and repay debts. While such decisions may be rational for individual firms, if many companies simultaneously act in the same way, the collective effect can be destabilizing. Prices may fall sharply, liquidity may dry up and the industry may enter a negative cycle, in which declining asset values intensify debt pressures.

The appropriate strategy is therefore not a sudden correction, but a gradual adjustment — what Chinese policymakers often describe as "exchanging time for space". Real estate's share of China's GDP increased from 4.5 percent in 1998 to about 6.2 percent in 2025. The sector will continue to play an important role in the economy, but its functions can be recalibrated. By guiding key indicators such as the price-to-income ratio, rental yields and vacancy rates back toward sustainable levels, the industry can gradually shed the excessive financial and speculative functions that accumulated during the boom years.

Building a new development model requires strengthening the institutional framework governing property development, financing and sales. One important reform is the strengthening of the project-company system, ensuring that each real estate project operates as an independent legal entity and that funds raised for a project are used exclusively for its construction and delivery. Another reform involves establishing a "lead bank" system for project financing, under which a designated bank — or banking consortium — oversees financing and manages project cash flows. This mechanism builds on China's housing-project "white-list" program introduced in 2024, which has already supported financing for millions of homes.

Another significant change concerns the way homes are sold. For many years, China relied heavily on the presale of unfinished apartments. Increasingly, however, policymakers are encouraging the expansion of completed-home sales so that buyers purchase homes that are ready to occupy. This approach reduces delivery risks and helps restore confidence in the market.

At the same time, many developers are exploring asset-light business models, in which they provide development management services rather than funding projects directly. As the industry undergoes adjustment, this shift toward professionalized services may become an important path for sustainable development.

Another critical task is strengthening the affordable housing system. Housing possesses both a market dimension and a social-welfare function. International experience demonstrates the value of a dual-track system. Singapore's public housing program, administered by the Housing and Development Board, houses more than 80 percent of the city state's residents, while Germany's cooperative housing sector helps stabilize rental markets.

China faces its own structural challenges. The country's urbanization rate has surpassed 66 percent, and housing difficulties for new urban residents and young people coexist with underused housing stock. Expanding the supply of affordable housing and improving related institutional arrangements will therefore be essential to creating a tiered housing system that combines social protection with market efficiency.

Housing remains, above all, a place to live. Ensuring adequate housing for vulnerable urban households through public housing programs is therefore a core social objective. For lower-income families, shared-ownership housing and other mechanisms can help lower the threshold for homeownership. For households seeking improved living conditions, market-based housing can meet demand under appropriate policy guidance.

Better housing quality also contributes to human capital. The concept of building "good homes" — safe, comfortable, green and technologically advanced — reflects a growing recognition that housing quality matters as much as housing quantity. Large-scale urban renewal and the renovation of aging residential communities will not only improve living conditions, but also generate new investment opportunities.

Finally, housing also affects consumption through its influence on household wealth. Because more than 90 percent of Chinese households own homes, declining property prices can reduce perceived wealth and dampen spending. Policymakers are therefore exploring ways to enhance the efficiency of housing-related financial tools such as China's housing provident fund system, whose accumulated balances remain substantial but underutilized.

For all these reasons, stabilizing the housing market remains essential. Sales and investment have continued to decline in recent years, and restoring stability will be crucial for both the sector itself and the broader economy. Major metropolitan areas — where economic activity is concentrated and population inflows remain strong — will play a key role in anchoring the market. At the same time, improving housing quality, expanding affordable housing, and strengthening fiscal and financial support will help rebuild confidence.

China's real estate sector is now standing at a critical juncture between old and new development models. The path forward is increasingly clear: address accumulated risks, stabilize the market, and establish a new framework centered on quality, sustainability and housing as a basic social good. Achieving this transformation will not only determine the future of the industry itself, but also shape the stability and long-term development of China's economy.

The writer is former director-general of the Financial Survey and Statistics Department at the People's Bank of China. The article is translated from a piece originally published in Financial Market Search. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:25 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:25 PM

CHINA

BLUEPRINT INTO ACTION

New project aids Xinjiang's energy goals

Region to leverage resources to support transition plans and boost green power

By **FANG AIQING** and **MAO WEIHUA** in Urumqi

The Dashixia Water Control Project in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region has recently completed the installation of major components for all three power-generating units and the construction of its power transmission system.

Located on the Kumarak River in Aksu prefecture, the project features the world's tallest concrete-faced sand-gravel dam, rising 247 meters high, equivalent to an 80-story building.

According to the construction team, the 750,000-kilowatt project is scheduled to reach full impoundment by the end of May, with its first unit set to be commissioned in late June. All three units are expected to become operational in August, generating nearly 1.9 billion kilowatt-hours annually — enough to power 650,000 households.

Chen Wendeng, a project leader at China Gezhouba Group No 3 Engineering Co, which is in charge of construction, said that in addition to its water conservancy and ecological benefits, Dashixia's power generation will save about 764,000 metric tons of standard coal and cut carbon dioxide emissions by 2.45 million tons annually. It will also ease demand pressure in southern Xinjiang during summer and autumn and help smooth fluctuations from wind and solar power.

The Dashixia project epitomizes Xinjiang's energy transition and sets a promising tone for the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30).

At a news conference in Urumqi on Saturday, regional leaders outlined Xinjiang's goal of leveraging its rich energy resources to support national energy security while boosting new energy and green power over the next five years.

Erkin Tuniyaz, chairman of the region, said Xinjiang will tap the potential of oil, gas, minerals, coal and new energy resources to foster large-scale industrial clusters, while using green electricity to accelerate industrial upgrading, develop emerging sectors such as computing power, and promote the integration of artificial intelligence with various industries.

Zhang Yingchun, the region's executive vice-chairwoman, said that during the 15th Five-Year Plan period, Xinjiang will accelerate construction of a new energy-based power system, promote local consumption of green electricity and speed up the building of outbound power transmission channels.

Official data shows that Xinjiang's installed new energy capacity surpassed 170 million kW in February, accounting for more than 60 percent of the region's total installed capacity. One-third of Xinjiang's outbound electricity, transmitted to 22 provincial-level regions, is green power.

Zhang said greater emphasis will be placed on advanced equipment manufacturing — including power transmission and transformation equipment and energy storage equipment — as well as green hydrogen.

Regarding green hydrogen, Xinjiang will pursue breakthroughs in production, storage, transportation and application technologies, build a full hydrogen energy industrial ecosystem and promote integrated development of green hydrogen, ammonia and methanol, she said.

A green hydrogen project in Yiwu county, Hami, has recently been added to Xinjiang's approved list of local new energy consumption projects. The project plans to install 690,000 kW of new energy capacity along with supporting energy storage facilities.

Using a wind-solar hybrid off-grid model, the project will rely entirely on self-generated green electricity for hydrogen production without connecting to the public power grid. It marks Xinjiang's first off-grid project directly linking green power generation with end users. Once completed, the project is expected to produce about 30,000 tons of green hydrogen annually while consuming approximately 1.65 billion kWh of green electricity each year.

A Xinjiang Daily report quoted the regional development and reform commission as saying that the project will effectively address difficulties involving grid connection and renewable energy consumption in remote areas.

Contact the writers at fangaiqing@chinadaily.com.cn



Stitches of friendship

An international visitor shops for traditional Miao embroidery products during a cultural exchange event at the Jianwai Diplomatic Residence in Beijing's Chaoyang district on Sunday. Featuring intangible cultural heritage displays, family activities and live performances, the event brings together embassy representatives, residents and inheritors of intangible cultural heritage from China and abroad.

FU TIAN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

SPC urges personal data infringement crackdown

By **CAO YIN**
caoyin@chinadaily.com.cn

China's top court has emphasized the need to safeguard data security and protect individual rights in the digital age, releasing a landmark case in which two individuals were sentenced to prison for acquiring and disclosing more than 900 million pieces of personal information online.

As technology rapidly advances, criminal methods have become increasingly sophisticated and concealed. "This has resulted in the theft, leakage and sale of sensitive personal data, often due to inadequate data management by certain governments, enterprises and online platforms," the Supreme People's Court said on Friday.

It noted that some criminals exploit acquired personal data to engage in activities such as fraud, extortion and "box-opening", which severely harm individuals' personal and financial safety and pose substantial threats to public security and social order.

In the highlighted case, two defendants surnamed Lin and Wang illegally obtained personal information through encrypted communication tools and other internet channels between 2023 and 2025. Lin acquired more than 600 million pieces of personal data, while Wang obtained over 300 million pieces.

They subsequently sold the information for profit through methods including virtual currency payments. Lin also collaborated with another individual to set up an online group with more than 2,000 members, using the personal data to insult and abuse others.

After hearing the case, the Beijing Haidian District People's Court ruled that Lin and Wang were guilty of illegally obtaining and selling personal information, classifying their offense as "extremely serious".

Lin was sentenced to seven years in prison and fined 70,000 yuan ($10,287), while Wang received a prison term of five years and six months and was fined 50,000 yuan.

The Beijing court said such malicious acts of publicly disclosing others' personal information, including names, identity card numbers, phone numbers, home addresses, whereabouts and social media accounts, are known as box-opening, or doxing. The acts are often followed by inciting netizens to launch verbal attacks, harassment and cyberbullying.

"Doxing brings great physical and mental harm to victims and their families, as well as severely disrupts public order and social stability," the top court said. It underscored that the security of personal information concerns everyone, adding that cracking down on such acts is necessary to maintain order in cyberspace and foster a healthy online ecosystem.

On Friday, the top court also unveiled details of four other notable cases involving personal information infringement, calling on judges to continue intensifying the crackdown on the crime and related offenses such as extortion and fraud.

In one case, from February to July 2022, two defendants jointly funded the purchase of a Trojan program online and implanted it into an official booking website to illegally obtain more than 290,000 records of HPV vaccine appointment information stored on the site.

The pair then rented a virtual host server, uploaded the illegally obtained website source code to a domain service space and created a counterfeit phishing website. They organized a team with different assigned roles and used a platform to mass-send messages claiming successful vaccine appointments, luring recipients into clicking phishing links.

By impersonating doctors and customer service representatives, they used tactics such as price adjustments, priority appointments and reordering for discounts to defraud 51 victims of more than 580,000 yuan.

The two ultimately received prison terms of 12 years and 11 years and nine months, respectively, for personal information infringement and fraud, along with fines, according to a ruling by a court in Jiangsu province.

The top court said the criminals took advantage of women's health concerns by breaching a legitimate vaccine appointment website to illegally acquire personal information, which they then used for targeted fraud.

"Such actions warrant severe penalties due to their grave violation of personal data security and property rights," it added.

Nation to assess Beautiful China implementation

By **HOU LIQIANG**
houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

New measures to assess whether provincial-level governments are effectively implementing the Beautiful China initiative were unveiled recently to promote green and low-carbon development.

The Beautiful China initiative is a national development strategy aimed at fundamentally modernizing the country's ecological environment by 2035 through a comprehensive transition to green production, low-carbon lifestyles, and large-scale nature restoration.

Issued by the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council on Thursday, the measures also aim to advance the initiative on all fronts and achieve a comprehensive improvement and fundamental transformation in the country's ecological environment quality.

The assessment will adopt a 100-point scoring system, with results classified into four grades: excellent, good, pass and fail, according to a document released by the central authorities.

The document said the office of the leading group for the Central Ecological and Environmental Protection Inspection and the Organization Department of the CPC Central Committee, together with other relevant departments, will formulate detailed scoring rules for the assessment.

The evaluation will cover the implementation of responsibilities related to the initiative, progress in achieving annual major targets and fulfilling annual priority tasks, as well as fund utilization performance and public satisfaction levels.

The annual major targets include the condition of the atmospheric environment, water and marine ecological environments, soil ecological environment and overall ecological quality, along with the prevention and control of solid waste pollution.

In a media release, the office highlighted a goal-and-problem-oriented approach as one of the key principles guiding the assessment. It said key and directional indicators will be established to address major ecological and environmental concerns strongly voiced by the public and to steadily intensify the campaign against pollution.

The document also noted that provincial-level governments that fail the assessment must take corrective measures promptly and complete rectification within the required time frame.

In addition, principal heads of provincial-level Party committees and governments may be summoned by the Organization Department of the CPC Central Committee and the office of the leading group for the Central Ecological and Environmental Protection Inspection if rectification is not completed within the prescribed period.

According to the statement, China's top anti-corruption authorities, together with the Organization Department of the CPC Central Committee, will pursue accountability in accordance with regulations and laws where necessary.

The measures were made public as teams from the Central Ecological and Environmental Protection Inspection arrived in seven provincial-level regions, including Liaoning, Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces, for monthlong environmental inspections.

A key focus of the inspections will be whether these regions have properly implemented the Xi Jinping Thought on Ecological Civilization, according to a media release from the Ministry of Ecology and Environment, where the office of the leading group for the inspection is based. Inspection teams are typically led by ministerial-level officials.

The team assigned to Liaoning, for example, is headed by Cai Mingzhao, a member of the Standing Committee of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

Central authorities unveiled guidelines in early 2024 to comprehensively promote the development of a Beautiful China.

By 2027, China is expected to see a continued decline in the total discharge of major pollutants and further improvement in ecological environment quality, according to the guidelines.

And by 2035, green production methods and lifestyles will be widely adopted, carbon emissions will have peaked and entered a steady decline, and the country's ecological environment will have fundamentally improved.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1824

Visitors embrace Wuhan's tech-led factory tourism

By **ZOU SHUO** in Beijing and **LIU KUN** in Wuhan

Jia Meng's twin daughters thought they were visiting another museum during a recent outing. Instead, they walked into a room where a humanoid robot tried again and again to perfectly place a teapot in the center of a mat.

"It wasn't very good at pouring tea," said Jia, a 42-year-old freelancer from Wuhan, Hubei province. "But it's an emotionally stable perfectionist. It never got frustrated. My girls were glued to it for half an hour."

The robot in question, at the Hubei Humanoid Robot Innovation Center in Wuhan's Optics Valley, has hands that cost 50,000 yuan ($7,351) each.

It's still learning — human testers guide it, and the data is carefully selected for training. One day, the robot may teach itself, something Jia is looking forward to witnessing.

But the real jaw-dropper for Jia and her twins came later at the city's twin computing center — one of the few places in China that houses both a supercomputing center and an artificial intelligence computing center.

With 400 petaflops of computing power — one petaflop equals the combined might of 2 million laptops — the "smartest brains" of the digital age can find a specific star among 200,000 celestial bodies in just 100 seconds with 100 petaflops of power. Without that power, the same task would take over 100 days.

Jia's family was among the first wave of visitors to Optics Valley's new industrial tourism routes. Since March 12, the valley — known as one of China's tech heartlands — has launched nine themed tours, including "super factory", "AI" and "low-altitude economy".

The East Lake High-tech Development Zone, also known as the Optics Valley of China, has hosted more than 50 group tours in just a few weeks, according to the Wuhan bureau of culture, sports and tourism. "It's running smoothly, and the heat is only rising," an official with the bureau said.

The most popular stops are fully automated assembly lines, blacklight factories running without a single human worker and laser cutters that engrave metal in a flash, the official said. "Many parents and children told us it's the first time they turned textbook knowledge into real-life scenes," the official said.

Turning live production lines into tourist attractions is not easy. Factories have added glass-separated walkways, interactive screens and emergency exits. Each site pairs an engineer with a professional guide.

"Production first, safety above all," the official said. Visitors never enter the actual workshop, never touch equipment and never disturb a single bolt. "Staggered booking, capped group sizes and unified escorting — that's how we balance industry and tourism."

Asked whether visitors might one day assemble simple products or operate mini machines, the official said, "Definitely."

Plans include DIY laser bookmark-making, smart-device simulators and even a chance to try robot-like assembly tasks. "We want to move from watching to participating, from checking in to truly experiencing," the official said.

Finance professional Xiu Lei, 26, from Wuhan took his young daughter to Optics Valley expecting a quiet weekend. He left feeling like a child in a tech "wonderland". At Wuhan HGLaser Engineering Co, he saw a missile casing with a laser-welded seam — a sharp contrast to manual welding. "The guide pointed to it, and I felt a surge of pride," he said.

Then his daughter scribbled her name on a piece of paper. Seconds later, a laser engraved it onto a bookmark, and a machine automatically packed it into a gift box. "She was over the moon," Xiu said.

Next came Xiaomi's smart factory. Riding a sightseeing cart through spotless workshops, Xiu watched an air conditioner unit roll off the line every 6.5 seconds. The "lights-out factory" ran fully automated — products packed themselves, took an elevator and moved to a warehouse.

Wuhan is not alone. In Liuzhou, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, tourists make their own snail-rice noodles. In Jiaozuo, Henan province, visitors make DIY milk tea at the Mixue factory. In Renhuai, Guizhou province, home to Moutai, industrial A-level scenic spots hosted more than 10 million visitors in 2024, generating 12.86 billion yuan in tourism revenue.

Contact the writers at zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:25 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:25 PM

Editor's note: *As protection of the planet's flora, fauna and resources becomes increasingly important, China Daily is publishing a series of stories to illustrate the country's commitment to safeguarding the natural world.*

Shanghai's raccoon dogs find urban coexistence 'sweet spot'

City's residents learning to live with wild animals previously thought of as pests

By ZHOU WENTING in Shanghai
zhouwenting@chinadaily.com.cn



Wang Fang, director of the Institute of Biodiversity Science at Fudan University, announces the research team's findings in the latest annual census on wild raccoon dogs in Shanghai on Nov 30. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Human-wildlife conflict in Shanghai has dropped significantly as the city's raccoon dog population stabilizes between 3,000 and 5,000 individuals, according to the most recent survey data.

While the protected species is expanding into new districts, localized densities in residential areas have fallen to record lows, driven by improved waste management and public education, a survey published on Nov 30 by the Shanghai Forestry Station, Fudan University, and the Shan Shui Conservation Center shows.

Despite their "bandit mask" markings, raccoon dogs are not actually raccoons. Instead, they are ancient members of the *Canidae* family, making them cousins to foxes and wolves. Native to East Asia, they are the only members of the dog family that hibernate during the winter.

Though their numbers have declined in Shanghai, they are still spreading and migrating in the coastal metropolis, with the city's Putuo district recording their presence for the first time last summer, and Chongming Island recording them for the first time a year ago.

"These changes can mainly be attributed to the improvement in the ecological management, including community waste disposal and stray cat feeding over the past three years, and the deepening of public education and outreach," said Wang Fang, director of the Institute of Biodiversity Science at Fudan University.

"Also, the sense of security provided by real survey data has been key in changing the perceptions and attitudes of many in the public. A rising number of residents are adopting the mindset of coexistence, as the population of the animal is under control and poses no direct threat to humans," he said.

Raccoon dogs are generally not aggressive toward humans and do not view people as prey. In an urban environment, they are shy, nocturnal and highly conflict-averse.

Since 2022, the Shanghai Forestry Station, the Fudan institute, and the Shan Shui Conservation Center, a Beijing-based non-profit environmental organization, have jointly conducted annual surveys on raccoon dogs throughout the city.

The results of the latest survey included public concerns such as whether raccoon dogs getting sick would have an impact on humans living in the same community.

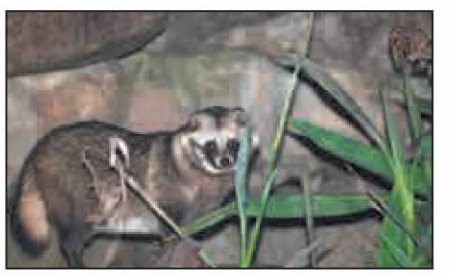
Shanghai's urban environment has abundant habitats and food resources, and with less competitive pressure from other species, this attracts some wild animals into the city.

According to the results of the surveys, Shanghai's thousands of raccoon dogs are distributed in more than 300 areas across the city, primarily in residential compounds and urban green spaces.

Based on results collected from online questionnaires and citizen hotline complaints last summer, 112 residential communities across the city reported raccoon dog activity between January 2024 and April 2025.

Over 500 citizen volunteers and professionals conducted multiple comprehensive surveys in those communities spanning nine districts. They collected transect survey data covering more than 560 kilometers and gathered 440 questionnaires regarding residents' attitudes toward raccoon dogs.









Left: Researchers take blood samples from a raccoon dog on Aug 29, 2024. **Center, Right:** Raccoon dogs are found during the team's field investigations.

Their results showed that raccoon dogs were either sighted during field investigations or reported by residents in 102 of the communities surveyed, with the distribution density at an average of 0.41 raccoon dogs per hectare. This represented the lowest level recorded in the past four years, indicating that the issue of high raccoon dog densities in residential community environments from four to five years ago has improved.

In comparison, the density of wild raccoon dogs in areas like the Qinling Mountains in Shaanxi province, the Taihang Mountains in northern China, and Sichuan province in Southwest China is typically below 0.1 raccoon dogs per hectare. Their density in Shanghai is comparable to that in the wild.

Zhao Xi, a leading member of the research team, said residents are beginning to understand that raccoon dogs are nocturnal and have little overlap with human activity times. "They have very low proactive aggression toward people, therefore many residents have come to accept their presence in the city," Zhao said.

The latest survey indicates a shift toward positive sentiment, with residents' emotional inclination toward raccoon dogs rising to 3.06 on a 5-point scale (where 1 is least favorable and 5 is most favorable). This represents a 25 percent increase since 2022, a trend mirrored by the fact that nearly 80 percent of residents now find the animals tolerable — up from just 50 percent three years ago.

According to Li Zirong, deputy director of the Shanghai Forestry Station, such results reflected the high prevalence of raccoon dogs, involving residents and street managers. As a result, they gradually developed a feasible response plan for communities.

Efforts include distributing brochures in communities, explaining to residents which departments to contact when encountering a large number of wild animals, and what measures to take when encountering wild animals with skin diseases, said Wang.

Experts highlighted that improper kitchen waste management and cat food feeding have been identified as major factors increasing raccoon dog visibility.

The latest survey showed that in residential compounds where cat food is fed to stray cats, the number of raccoon dogs observed was 2.75 times higher than in those where stray cat feeding does not occur. In residential compounds where both issues were poorly managed, the number of raccoon dogs was 3.32 times higher than in those where both issues were well managed.

Data from all four residential compounds continuously surveyed over four years clearly reflected the importance of managing such human behaviors. In an apartment complex in Songjiang district, the raccoon dog density decreased from 5.8 raccoon dogs per hectare in 2022 to 2.22 per hectare last year.

Li Min, a resident at this apartment complex in the district's Sijing town, said she used to complain a lot about raccoon dogs rummaging through the trash around her home, but later she learned that it was because residents were feeding them cat food and were not disposing of garbage properly.

"As long as we don't feed them and keep our distance, they won't cause trouble. We can coexist peacefully," said Li.

This trend is not unique to Shanghai. Wild animals are increasingly moving into cities across China. Species such as wild boars, leopard cats, civets and otters are now frequently found in urban environments. Experts attribute this shift to the completion of major urban construction projects, which have allowed local ecosystems to recover and become more hospitable to wildlife.

As in Shanghai, there are teams in cities such as Beijing and Nanjing in Jiangsu province, among others, conducting research on the urbanization of wildlife.

"This requires both research and management, which is something that must be done for the civilized management of megacities, regardless of people's perceptions of a particular wild animal, its size, or its level of cuteness," Wang said.

Wang's team is leading a multi-year national initiative involving 10 research groups to study how wild animals like raccoon dogs, squirrels and hedgehogs adapt to city life. A critical component of the project is the development of oral vaccines to prevent the spread of animal-borne diseases. The team plans to launch a pilot program in Shanghai's Songjiang district, where they will distribute these vaccines in the environment for animals to find and consume.

"Through community co-management, government involvement and vaccine development, we aim to clarify the relationship between humans and wildlife. Shanghai's approach in this is scientific and civilized, and quite advanced on an international level," he said.

Metropolis aims to double its parks by 2036

By ZHOU WENTING

Following the milestone achievement of being China's first city with 1,000 parks, Shanghai authorities have announced an ambitious expansion plan to construct 100 new parks this year and 1,000 more over the next decade.

The initiative aims to bring the city's total to over 2,000 by 2036, ensuring that residents in this high-density metropolis of 25 million have greenery at their windows and parks at their doors.

Residents have praised this initiative as a reflection of the city's commitment to integrating ecological beauty and community comfort into urban planning.

Parks are an essential element in urban ecology, contributing to the city's resilience by cooling and humidifying the air, purifying pollutants, reducing noise and managing stormwater.

During the 2022 renovation of Peace Park in Hongkou district, an additional 8,700 cubic meters of temporary storage space were created to absorb and filter rainwater from the surrounding area of approximately 36 hectares, which exceeds the area's total drainage capacity.

Parks also serve as connectors for fragmented habitats. Chinese water deer have reappeared in parks in Pudong New Area and on Chongming Island in the past few years, demonstrating the ecological benefits of such green spaces.

The Shanghai Landscaping and City Appearance Administrative Bureau said that in Shanghai, where land resources are scarce, expanding urban areas to create more public spaces is not feasible. Under the dual pressures of space and cost, tapping into existing potential has become a core strategy for a new wave of park construction.

Over the past few years, the city has developed replicable strategies for expanding green spaces, with several high-quality parks serving as models for improving public well-being. As of last year, all 36 parks planned along the city's Outer Ring Road had been completed. In addition to another 14 that were previously put into operation, they form a continuous ecological corridor across the city.

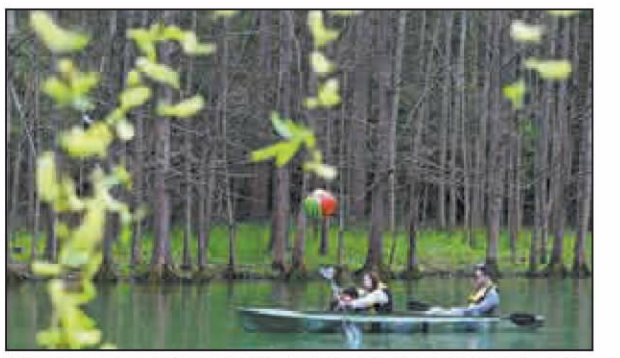
A notable example among them is the Xuhui West Bank Nature Art Park, which opened in August as Shanghai's 1,000th park. It used to be a 100-meter-wide greenbelt along the Outer Ring Road, serving as a buffer between urban and suburban areas.

Today, spanning roughly 300,000 square meters, which is equivalent to the size of more than 40 standard soccer fields, the park features sunflower fields, native vegetation, playgrounds, amenities like vending machines and accessible restrooms. It continues to serve its ecological isolation function, but has also become a popular leisure and recreational destination for residents and families.

"It was once a dense forest here that we could only look at from a distance. Now, it's a place where we can stroll and enjoy flowers anytime. I can't help but marvel at the full sense of happiness in our current lives," said 65-year-old Zuo Shuhua, a retired teacher who has lived nearby for over two decades.

To maximize existing resources, Shanghai opened 187 plots of green spaces formerly belonging to government agencies and public service units to the public by last year. The Minhang district government office complex removed its walls and barriers, transforming around 2,900 sq m of auxiliary green space into a garden that is now open to the public around the clock.

In addition to tapping into existing resources, the construction of pocket parks has made green spaces easily accessible right at residents' doorsteps. Shanghai plans to build or renovate 40 pocket parks within this year.



A family paddles at Shanghai Century Park in Shanghai on March 22. CHEN HAOMING / XINHUA

One such pocket park built in recent years is located in Xuhui district near Shanghai Stadium. Transformed from a once-neglected area, it now provides a convenient passage from the residential area to the metro station, reducing a detour of over 10 minutes to just a two-minute walk through the park. It also features flower shops and leisure seating areas, making it a recreational haven for the elderly and children.

Residents have expressed their hopes that parks can have designated areas for pets, allowing pet owners to comfortably and happily visit the parks with their furry friends.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:25 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:25 PM

LIFE

Dance brings ancient war alive

Revived production tours China, blending martial arts and opera to explore conflict and power through movement, **Zhang Kun** reports in Shanghai.

Blending modern dance with Peking Opera, martial arts and traditional Chinese music, the dance theater production *Under Siege: The Full Story of Farewell My Concubine* is on a four-month tour in 23 cities around China.

Choreographed and directed by Yang Liping, the production premiered in 2015 and draws on one of the most famous battles in Chinese history.

Designed with international audiences in mind, it has since been performed more than 300 times at home and abroad, earning a reputation as a landmark in China's contemporary dance theater scene.

The show has attracted critical praise overseas, described by The Guardian as rich in "hallucinatory images", while The Times noted its "urgency, vividness and wit".

A newly revived production was launched in April. Starting with three shows in Kunming, Yunnan province, it has traveled through Shanghai, Suzhou in Jiangsu province, and Wenzhou and Hangzhou in Zhejiang province.

Three shows were staged at the Poly Theatre in Beijing on Saturday and Sunday. The production will conclude its tour in August in Guangzhou, Guangdong province.

Yang explains why she chose to revisit the work now. "I feel there is a hunger for artworks of power and strength."

Over the past decade, she says, many dance productions in the country, including her own *Peacock*, have focused on grace and feminine beauty. Audience tastes, however, are changing.

"I think they want to see works that reflect real Chinese power," she says.

The narrative centers on the struggle between Xiang Yu and Liu Bang following the fall of the Qin Dynasty (221–206 BC). Their final confrontation in Gaixia ends in tragedy, as Xiang, defeated after a tactical ambush, chooses suicide over escape.

This historic rivalry between Xiang and Liu has long been retold in Chinese literature and performance, forming the basis of the Peking Opera classic *Farewell My Concubine*. The story reached global audiences through the 1993 film directed by Chen Kaige, which won major international awards.

Yang's version, however, shifts the focus. Rather than retelling the battle alone, she explores the emotional and psychological tensions experienced by individuals caught in cycles of power, desire and fear.

"People of all times and all over the world can relate to such situations," she says.

"Dance tells stories through the body, which is universal. You don't need language to understand it."

Xiang emerges as a tragic hero with serious personality flaws that make him a great theatrical character.

"He is stubborn and indecisive, yet also deeply loyal and righteous, willing to break rather than bend," Yang says. "It is this roughness and authenticity about him that endears the character to audiences."

The production's visual language reinforces that intensity.

Designed by Oscar-winning artist Tim Yip, the stage features installations by Liu Beili, including thousands of suspended pairs of scissors that shift above the performers, creating a constant sense of danger.

On one side of the stage, a paper-cutting artisan remains visible throughout the performance, crafting symbolic shapes tied to the unfolding narrative. The presence of this traditional craft adds a quiet counterpoint to the larger spectacle.

In keeping with Peking Opera conventions, Xiang's concubine is portrayed by a male dancer. As the story reaches its climax, the stage fills with vast cascades of red feathers — a striking visual metaphor for blood, sacrifice and loss.

From the Chinese folk art of paper-cutting to the costume design and choreography that borrow from traditional Peking Opera, Yang "adopted wide-ranging elements of Chinese culture ingeniously, and gave *Under Siege* a strong Eastern essence and contemporary avant-garde temperament", reads a review by Xuan Jing for the Shanghai-based Wenhui Daily.

Yang has explored digital innovation, including dance video projects using artificial intelligence, but she remains firm about the value of live performance.

"Technology can create impressive effects, but real experience cannot be replaced in a live dance show," she says.

For her, the physical immediacy of dance is essential. "People want to see real combat, where each strike of the fist hits hard on human flesh."

Also, the simple and strongly expressive stage design plays an important role during international tours, Yang says.

The production has performed in theaters old and new, on stages of various sizes. The full set of props can conveniently fit into three standard container trucks, which is cost-efficient for international transportation, according to Wang Yanwu, the producer of the show.

Yang, now 67, continues to shape China's dance landscape.

Born in Yunnan province, she rose to prominence with her 1986 work *Spirit of the Peacock*.

She later created *Dynamic Yunnan*, a large-scale production featuring local folk artists such as singers, dancers, and instrumentalists, which has been performed more than 7,000 times since 2003.

Contact the writer at zhangkun@chinadaily.com.cn



The dance theater production *Under Siege: The Full Story of Farewell My Concubine*, choreographed and directed by Yang Liping, is touring the country. By blending modern dance with Peking Opera, martial arts and traditional Chinese music, it presents a unique narrative of one of the most famous battles in Chinese history. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Caffeine and creativity meet along the North Bund

By HE QI in Shanghai
heqi@chinadaily.com.cn

During the May Day holiday, the 2.3-kilometer riverfront at Shanghai's North Bund in Hongkou district was filled with the aroma of freshly brewed coffee as crowds flocked to the 2026 Shanghai International Coffee Culture Festival.

Nathan Manfredi, marketing director of Phil & Sebastian, a specialty coffee roaster in Canada, attended the festival for the first time, and was overwhelmed by the enthusiasm.

"We're sharing coffee stories and learning about local coffee culture, and we can see people in China are crazy about coffee," Manfredi says.

Running from April 30 to May 4, the festival's main venue hosted nearly 300 brand booths and over 20 international coffee brands. The event was divided into international, industry chain, cross-border integration, and interactive experience zones.

Standout draws included a slate of Shanghai-style signature coffee creations from Jin Jiang International Holdings' luxury hotel portfolio: the Hudec Orange Sparkling Iced Americano paired with Park Hotel Shanghai's iconic palmier and the nostalgic Lacovo (Le Kou Fu) Mocha from Golden Tulip Shanghai Rainbow, both emerging as the event's most popular photo spots.



A variety of latte art is showcased at the festival.

"Shanghai's coffee festival is more than a local celebration; it serves as a global bridge, connecting the world's top coffee players with China's booming market and reflecting the city's inclusive and open character," says Xu Jian, deputy dean of the China Institute for Urban Governance at Shanghai Jiao Tong University.

Xu unveiled the 2026 China Urban Coffee Development Report at the opening ceremony.

According to the report, China's coffee industry reached 354.9 billion yuan ($52 billion) in 2025, marking a 13.3 percent year-on-year increase. Shanghai alone now has 10,336 coffee outlets, surpassing the 10,000 mark.

"In 2017, Shanghai had 5,500 coffee shops, already the highest number in the world. By 2025, the figure had almost doubled in less than 10 years, and the city has consistently remained at the top globally," Xu says.

"Coffee shops have become part of daily life in Shanghai, as common as convenience stores."

The festival has also become a core gateway for global specialty coffee brands to enter the Chinese market, attracting coffee professionals from around the world.

Oskar Garberg, co-founder and CEO of Standout Coffee and a Swedish barista champion, was among the festival's notable guests.

"I've been to numerous coffee shops, and the standards are extremely high here. People in Shanghai have grown up with a deep knowledge of tea from childhood, and they have embraced coffee remarkably well," Garberg says.

The niche Stockholm-based roaster has built a loyal following in Shanghai. "We are a small Swedish brand from the other side of the world, but people recognize us here, and I even sign autographs," he says, making no secret of his expectations for the Chinese market.

"I would love to open a shop here. We will soon have two locations in Stockholm, and Shanghai could definitely be our third."

Park Hyeri, co-founder of Aery, an 18-month-old specialty coffee brand from Busan, South Korea, made her festival debut.

"Shanghai's coffee culture is unique because every shop has its own signature pairing or combination," Park notes.

"That isn't very common in South Korea, so we introduced combo sets here to show Shanghai customers our personality, even though we don't offer them in our Korean stores."



The 2026 Shanghai International Coffee Culture Festival draws a big crowd during the May Day holiday. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Beyond industry insiders and hardcore enthusiasts, the festival drew a steady stream of casual visitors and expats.

Edvard Tadevosyan, a Swedish finance major at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, said he was surprised by the city's vibrant coffee scene. "I never imagined Chinese people would love coffee this much. The coffee shops here are amazing."

The festival's influence continues beyond the main event, with Shanghai rolling out a "one district, one feature" coffee culture map across all 16 districts and the Lin-gang Special Area in Pudong.

Nearly 50 flagship events and over 40 international professional competitions are planned in the coming months, alongside citywide promotions at more than 6,000 merchants.

Bookstores, cinemas, museums and commercial districts are also joining the festivities with themed activities and consumer incentives.

Li Junfeng contributed to this story.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:25 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:25 PM

LIFE



Taki Li presents a selection of limited-edition cocktails created for the Symposia cocktail series at Bvlgari Hotel Beijing. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Mixology at the world's best bar

Taki Li's approach to creating cocktails and customer service has shaped her drinking spot into a top nighttime destination, **Li Yingxue** reports.

On a busy night, Taki Li barely looks up. Her hands move instinctively — measuring, stirring, adjusting — each action precise and economical. There is no excess, no wasted gesture. Even at full capacity, with orders stacking and voices rising, she remains composed. It is this restraint, more than flair, that defines her.

It also explains why, at a moment when Bar Leone HK sits at the top of The World's 50 Best Bars 2025 by the namesake academy since 2009, Li has become one of the most closely watched bartenders in the industry.

Recently, that attention has extended beyond Hong Kong. As part of the Symposia cocktail series at Bvlgari Hotel Beijing, the 35-year-old bar manager brought her approach to a different audience — less as a showcase, more as an exchange. The format was collaborative, built around shared ideas rather than individual signatures.

For Nicola Turturro, director of the bar and restaurant at the hotel, what stood out was not just technical ability, but presence. "Very natural hospitality. She is super engaging and always smiling. Even though the bar was packed with people waiting outside, she was very calm and elegant in her movements."

That balance — between intensity and ease — is central to Li's practice. "It's a huge pleasure and honor to have her with us," Turturro adds. "She brings something, and we bring something. The two menus join together to create the drinks."

A meeting of philosophies

For Li, collaboration begins with alignment rather than contrast. "This time we used Amaro, which has floral notes, as one of the main ingredients. It fits very well with our identity as an Italian bar."

The four drinks she presented follow a clear logic: classical foundations, restrained execution, and subtle contextual references. One, Amber Night, draws directly from its surroundings. As Turturro explains: "It is inspired by the pine trees we have outside. We use a liquor made with pine needles and rum to remind guests of the warmth of our hospitality."

The emphasis is not on novelty, but coherence.

This focus on understanding how elements come together was not something she developed overnight. In fact, Li's path into bartending began with uncertainty rather than intention. "My first shift behind the bar was as a part-time server in a tiny spot," she recalls. "A guest ordered an amaretto and I hadn't expected the almond hit to be so strong and, unsurprisingly, he complained."

The moment could have passed as a routine mistake, but it became a turning point. "The bartender pulled out all the bottles and showed me how it was done," she says. "He explained the flavors, how everything comes together. I was hooked."

At the time, Li was still a student, working without any clear sense that it might become a career. The experience triggered a deeper curiosity — one that stayed. After graduating, she stepped behind the bar full time, beginning what would become a long-term commitment to the craft.

"I hadn't expected it to become something so serious," she reflects. "But once I started learning, I realized how much there is behind every drink."

With a background in design, she brings a strong sense of structure and detail to her work. "My design background taught me creativity and an eye for beauty. The number one rule is to be mindful of details."

Her early career was shaped in leading hotel bars in Hong Kong, but after years within that system, she sought a different environment.



Taki Li, bar manager of Bar Leone in Hong Kong, which is currently ranked No 1 on The World's 50 Best Bars 2025 list.

"I'd only worked in hotels, and I wanted the experience of a stand-alone bar, to work more closely with a team, which felt almost like family."

That transition came in 2023, when she joined Bar Leone's opening team in Hong Kong under Lorenzo Antinori, a signature mixologist from Rome.

Bar Leone's concept is built on cocktail popolari — a return to accessible, classical drinking. The bar avoids complex machinery and modernist techniques, focusing instead on fundamentals.

For Li, this framework sharpens rather than limits creativity.

"I prefer classic styles, focusing on reducing elements to their essence. With limited elements and steps, creation becomes a different kind of challenge."

Her process begins with structure. "I usually start with a classic I want to nod to, then build around it with flavors, ingredients, or a concept I want to explore."

Balance remains central. "The right garnish not only makes the drink look good but also lifts the whole experience," she says.

A place with strict standards

At the bar, volume and precision operate simultaneously. The bar fills quickly — often within the first hour — and maintains a steady flow until closing.

"It's a high-volume state," Li says. "We have strict standards — drinks must be delivered within 8 to 10 minutes."

Maintaining consistency under pressure requires coordination. "Teamwork is very important, guests don't interact with just one person." As bar manager, Li's role is to align the team's rhythm as much as its output.

For Li, technical skill is secondary to interpersonal ability. "Personality is more important than technique," she says. "Technique can be trained. Personality is core."

She distinguishes between competitive bartending and daily service. "Competition is a one-way presentation, daily operation is two-way communication."

There, the experience is structured around this interaction. "Guests step into the bar and the drink is the last thing they experience." What precedes it — conversation, guidance, atmosphere — is equally critical.

"We want guests to feel like they have been invited into our Italian home."

The spot's rapid rise has amplified expectations. Asia's No 1 in 2024, followed by World's No 1 in 2025, has placed the bar and its team under sustained global attention.

"When we got Asia's No 1, I was more nervous. When we got World's No 1, I kept telling my colleagues: 'Hold me, don't let me cry!'"

The recognition carries wider industry weight. As Turturro notes: "It doesn't happen every day that a bartender from the number one bar in Asia creates a cocktail with you."

Yet Li remains focused on the original intent. "We want to be a neighborhood bar, not just a place people wait in line for."

Her priorities are shifting toward leadership and development. "In the past 10 years, I focused on bartending. In recent years, I moved into management. I enjoy it."

Collaborations like the Beijing guest shift suggest a broader trajectory.

As Turturro observes: "Guests now look for the story behind the drink, they want to understand why."

Li's answer remains consistent: strip away the unnecessary, focus on balance, and build connections. "If my bartender is happy, the drinks will be good," she says.

It is a simple principle — one that, in her hands, is executed with exacting precision.

Contact the writer at liyingxue@chinadaily.com.cn

Archives reveal centuries-old ties with Naples

NAPLES — From local college names to street names, archives reveal close links between the southern Italian port of Naples and China over the centuries, serving as witnesses to the development of cultural exchanges between the two nations.

Luigi Carbone, Naples' city councilor and president of the City Council's commission for culture, tourism and productive activities, says that the ties between Naples and China are deeply rooted in history.

It has "become part of our DNA", says Carbone.

With a winding lane named "Salita dei Cinesi" (Chinese Slope), Naples became home to the Collegio dei Cinesi (Chinese College) almost 300 years ago, when it was founded by Italian missionary Matteo Ripa.

Serving as a painter and translator for the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) royal court, Ripa returned to Italy in 1723 and established the college with a clear mission: to overcome language and cultural barriers by nurturing truly inclusive, cross-cultural talent.

The college later turned into one of the earliest institutions in Europe to systematically teach Chinese language and culture.

After several name changes, the college evolved into the University of Naples L'Orientale, remaining a leading center for Sinology studies in Italy.

According to Antonella Vurchio, a librarian at L'Orientale, the library's earliest core collection came from the Collegio dei Cinesi.

Roberto Tottoli, rector of the university, says the "illuminating legacy" of Collegio dei Cinesi went directly to L'Orientale. In his view, Chinese language and culture studies have been the university's mission from the beginning.

Tottoli says the university's cooperation with Chinese institutions has expanded from language teaching and history to international relations and archaeology. It has signed multiple memorandums of understanding with Chinese partners and entered into cooperation with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

In addition, the Confucius Institute at L'Orientale has promoted cultural exchanges, people-to-people understanding, and friendship between China and Italy.

Valeria Varriano, director of the Confucius Institute at L'Orientale, says many Italians are first drawn to traditional Chinese culture, and are then surprised by China's vitality.

The institute has become a hub in Naples that connects schools with the university and promotes exchanges between Chinese students in Italy and Italian students, adds Varriano.

Wu Junru, the Chinese director of the Confucius Institute of Naples, says the institute serves not only as a language-teaching body but also as a platform for cultural exchanges.



People watch a lion dance during a Chinese New Year celebration in Naples in 2022. XINHUA

Italian student Davide Saracino says figures such as Matteo Ripa and Marco Polo helped build bridges across civilizations in their era, and it is up to younger generations to continue their work.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:25 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:25 PM

LIFE






From left: Students at Dahejia Primary School post sticky-note messages to welcome pianist Lang Lang. The school is nestled against the mountains near the Yellow River. Students listen attentively during Lang's music class. Students use drawings to express their understanding of music. PHOTOS BY BAI SHUHAO / CHINA DAILY

Healing in a major key

Pianist Lang Lang brings artistic inspiration and emotional comfort to children recovering from earthquake trauma, **Bai Shuhao** reports in Linxia, Gansu.

In mid-April, pianist Lang Lang sat at an electronic keyboard inside a classroom at Dahejia Primary School, a small rural school tucked beneath the snowcapped ridges of the Qilian Mountains.

Outside, the Yellow River flowed quietly across the Loess Plateau. Harsh sunlight streamed through the classroom windows. Inside, Lang's fingers drifted over the keys, the notes flowing through the room like water finding its course.

The children listening might not fully realize that the man before them was one of China's most internationally celebrated musicians. Many had never attended a live piano performance. They just knew that the music sounded beautiful, and that the keyboard in their classroom could produce sounds they had never imagined.

"When class ended, they didn't want to leave," says Zhang Zhengyun, the school's music teacher, who taught the lesson alongside Lang. He is one of the few full-time music instructors in the entire county.

Dahejia Primary School is located in Jishishan county, Linxia Hui autonomous prefecture in western Gansu province — an autonomous county where ethnic groups account for roughly two-thirds of the population. Long affected by poverty, the county was removed from China's national poverty list in 2020.

But three years later, disaster struck. On a winter night in December 2023, a magnitude-6.2 earthquake shook the region, followed by more than 400 aftershocks. Many homes built of adobe or brick collapsed; in some villages, as much as 70 percent of the residences were damaged. Dahejia Town, where the school stands, was among the hardest-hit areas.

After the earthquake, the school building remained standing but was deemed unsafe. For months, students attended classes in temporary prefabricated shelters. A new campus was later constructed, tripling the school's size and upgrading its facilities. Today, it serves 510 students across 12 classes.

When Lang arrived this spring, children were running on a newly laid rubber track during their physical education class. Word of his visit spread quickly. Within minutes, students gathered around him, curious and excited.

They know his name well and affectionately call him "Uncle Lang". On the third floor is a music classroom he donated.

The Lang Lang Arts Foundation first donated a piano classroom to a school in Jishishan in 2021. In 2025, the initiative expanded through a partnership with the Ant Foundation and One Foundation and educators from Beijing Normal University, introducing music courses designed specifically for rural schools. Altogether, 22 schools and 35 teachers in the county received music training, while the number of equipped music classrooms grew to eight.

Inside Dahejia's music room stand five electronic keyboards, along with tambourines, triangles and hand drums. Before every class, students rush in, tapping the black-and-white keys.

"Most of them can't perform yet," Zhang says. "But the instruments spark their curiosity."

That curiosity is precisely the goal. In Jishishan, where villages are widely scattered across mountainous terrain, some remote teaching sites serve only three to five students. Teachers are often responsible for multiple subjects and music education, when it exists at all, may amount to little more than playing popular songs through classroom speakers.

"The biggest challenge is the shortage of trained music teachers," says Bu Xiaomei, an associate professor at Beijing Normal University who helped design the online curriculum after conducting field research in the region.

Providing a dedicated music teacher for every teaching site, she explains, is unrealistic. Instead, the program trains existing teachers to deliver structured, high-quality lessons supported by prepared materials and recorded instruction.



Above: Lang Lang poses for a group photo with students at Dahejia Primary School. BAI SHUHAO / CHINA DAILY **Below:** At the end of the class, Lang performs Mozart's *Turkish March*. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



The curriculum introduces basic music theory, singing, and simple piano accompaniment, with deliberately modest expectations intended to ensure that every child has access to an instrument.

"The goal is to teach them to use the piano to play simple harmonies and accompany their own singing, so that every child gets a chance," Bu says.

During the class, Zhang divided students into groups and asked them to draw musical notes on paper as a challenge for Lang, who then improvised based on their creations.

Earlier that day, Lang had noticed vendors selling roasted sweet potatoes on the street. He turned the image into a playful improvisation, composing a rustic melody inspired by local life — prompting laughter and instant recognition from the children.

He also invited volunteers to play alongside him. Nearly every hand shot up.

One girl carefully played a melody, note by note, while Lang listened attentively. A boy with no musical training joined next. Starting with the familiar tune *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*, Lang guided him through simple harmonies.

"See?" he told the class. "Playing the piano isn't so hard."

The lesson ended with Lang performing Mozart's *Turkish March*, while students clapped to the rhythm in unison. He left them with a challenge: to learn the piece before his next visit.

"It feels a little like a spring outing," Lang says, looking toward the surrounding mountains.

Music, he says, has shaped his own life. "It made me a better person.

"No matter how well they play, something more important is letting them find the joy of music."

For many children here, music serves another purpose. Most of the current students experienced the earthquake firsthand. Some still jump at sudden noises. Many families relocated after losing their homes, forcing children to adapt to unfamiliar surroundings.

Schools provide psychological counseling, but teachers say music classes also help students process their emotions.

"Music gives children a way to express their feelings," Bu says.

Zhang agrees. After completing the required lessons, he often allows students to choose activities freely. "The most important thing is that they feel happy."

The enthusiasm is unmistakable. Students wait outside the classroom before the teacher arrives, constantly asking when the next music class will begin. Many eagerly volunteer to sing or perform, disappointed when they are not chosen.

Zhang himself pursued music despite family opposition when he was young. He still draws inspiration from the works of Franz Liszt, whose music, he says, gave him strength during difficult times. He hopes to pass that same energy on to his students.

After the lesson, students from eight local schools gathered for a small concert with Lang. Children from Dahejia sang in clear, bright voices. Before performing, they explained the meaning of their county's name: Jishishan — "stones accumulating into a mountain". They said they are just like those small stones.

The impact of such a project is difficult to measure. Few students here are likely to become professional musicians. But Lang says he understands that.

"Of course I would be happy if some became pianists, but what is more important is that music grows with them, helping them become better versions of themselves."

Before his arrival, students had covered a whiteboard with handwritten messages for him:

"Thank you for coming. We are very happy."

"I want to become a musician."

"I want to be successful like you — even though I play basketball better than the piano."

As he said goodbye, Lang left them with a phrase he often shares with students, one that reflects his own journey:

"May your dreams come true."

Contact the writer at baishuhao@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

Heartthrob to hard hat, star becomes a green storyteller

By **XING WEN**
xingwen@chinadaily.com.cn

Seven years ago, Zhang Jiawei was just another electrical engineering student at Nanjing Normal University until a talent scout spotted his towering 6-foot-3 frame and camera-ready face.

Today, that same young man, now known by his stage name Zhang Linghe, commands nearly 19 million followers on the Chinese social media platform Sina Weibo and 5 million on Instagram, where each of his posts easily garners a million likes.

The would-be electrical engineer now lives under spotlights, walks red carpets, and spends his days on drama sets.

Recently, however, he appeared in the documentary *The Answer Is Earth*, produced by Warner Bros. Discovery and the international environmental organization WildAid.

The film explores how China's green shift is quietly reshaping people's daily lives against the backdrop of the country's latest nationally determined contributions, announced on Sept 24, 2025.

The targets to be met by 2035 include reducing economywide net greenhouse gas emissions by 7-10 percent below peak levels, raising the share of nonfossil energy to over 30 percent, and expanding wind and solar power capacity to more than six times that of 2020, aiming for 3,600 gigawatts.

In the documentary, Zhang puts on a helmet and arc-flash protective clothing to work alongside real electrical engineers on an offshore booster station, finally getting the chance to experience the career path he could have taken.

"Today, some of the most important stories in the world are about climate change, energy, sustainability, and our changing relationship with nature," says Vikram Channa, vice-president of Warner Bros. Discovery.

"These are defining issues of our time. And yet, these stories are often told through facts and figures — not always in ways that people can truly connect with. That is where storytelling has the power to make a difference.

"Our goal was to make these stories feel accessible, intimate and real, especially for younger audiences, while staying grounded in scientific truth."

Channa believes Zhang is the right person to guide the journey because of his engineering mindset, which allows him to reconnect with the logic and natural curiosity behind these subjects.

"Through that journey, science becomes personal. Engineering becomes relatable. And the future becomes something audiences can feel part of," Channa says.

The documentary brought Zhang to his home province of Jiangsu, where he visited an offshore wind power cluster, a pumped-storage hydroelectric plant, and an ecological dredging platform on Taihu Lake to get hands-on experience in different jobs, including as a wind farm operation and maintenance engineer, dredging boat captain, fisherman, waste collector, and eco-agricultural technician.



Actor Zhang Linghe experiences jobs including equipment maintenance at an offshore booster station (left) and visits a wind turbine manufacturing plant (right) in a recently released documentary focusing on the country's low-carbon transition. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



He used language familiar to young audiences to explain electricity-related terms.

For instance, he described a pumped-storage hydroelectric plant — which uses surplus electricity to pump water to an upper reservoir and then releases it to generate power during peak demand — as a "giant power bank".

Zhang believes being a "translator" in the documentary can help more people understand what energy transition and low-carbon living really mean.

In the first episode, he lived and ate alongside electrical engineers at the offshore booster station, helping them carry out routine inspections and maintenance work on the station's power equipment.

Zhang observed that when the cameras were rolling, the engineers tended to speak in formal, academic terms. But once the crew paused, they would open up like family. And it was in those off-camera moments that he truly felt their passion for the job.

"I could feel how proud they are of what they do," Zhang says.

"They also want more young people to join them, but too many are chasing trendy majors and jobs instead. This documentary should show that this career has a real future and that it's truly making a difference for the environment."

Already known for a number of highly popular drama series, Zhang has been widely discussed for his good looks as a rising heartthrob in the entertainment industry.

"Because many people got to know me through my characters, and then started following me as a person, I want to make good use of that attention and influence to bring more positive things to everyone," he says.

"I hope that while following me, audiences can also see the country's energy transition, make small changes to their own lifestyles, and contribute to the progress of our energy transformation."

He also hopes more people can see his truest version. He describes this documentary as bringing him back to the world of Zhang Jiawei.

"In the past few years of becoming Zhang Linghe, I gradually drifted away from Zhang Jiawei, the young man surrounded by kind people, who was always willing to express his innermost, truest feelings."

He says that after becoming a star, he insulated himself from his old life, but this documentary journey brought him back to his hometown, doing work he was once familiar with, and most importantly, being surrounded by a group of very real people.

"The journey made me more willing to open up."

He once chose to become an actor partly out of a desire for freshness as he didn't want a conventional nine-to-five job. Acting allows him to live as a new character every few months, collaborating with different actors and directors.

However, by seeing and experiencing the daily lives of people doing different jobs throughout the journey, he has developed a completely different perspective.

"What they're doing is truly changing people's lives, changing the future of our country, and changing their own futures," he says.

"Sometimes, whether something feels fresh or not really depends on whether you can find something challenging in the repetitive work."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:25 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:25 PM

SPORTS

BASKETBALL



Los Angeles Lakers' LeBron James takes a pass as Oklahoma City Thunder's Shai Gilgeous-Alexander defends during Game 3 of a second-round NBA playoffs series on Saturday in Los Angeles. With a 131-108 victory, the Thunder's unbeaten playoffs run puts it on the brink of another Western Conference finals. AP

Thunder over LA looks ominous

Lakers on the brink of elimination, as Cavs claw one back against the Pistons

LOS ANGELES — The Oklahoma City Thunder used another explosive second half to beat LeBron James and the Los Angeles Lakers 131-108 on Saturday, pushing the Lakers to the brink of elimination in the NBA playoffs.

Ajay Mitchell scored 24 points and handed out 10 assists without a turnover to help the Thunder take a 3-0 stranglehold on the best-of-seven Western Conference semifinal series.

The Lakers will host Game 4 on Monday, when they'll try to become the first NBA team to rally from 3-0 down to win a playoff series.

"I'm not giving up on this series," defiant Lakers coach JJ Redick said. "We're going to try to win on Monday. We're going to try to extend the series and we're going to try to take this thing back to OKC."

The Cleveland Cavaliers, fueled by 35 points from Donovan Mitchell and clutch shooting from James Harden, avoided falling into a similar hole, grabbing a crucial 116-109 Game 3 victory over the Detroit Pistons to cut their series deficit to 2-1.

The Cavs, who dropped the first two games in Detroit, remained unbeaten at home in these playoffs.

But the Lakers, still without injured scoring champion Luka Doncic, couldn't conjure a crucial win as their series shifted to Los Angeles.

Rui Hachimura led the Lakers with 21 points and James added 19 points, six rebounds and eight assists.

But, the Thunder's depth was just too much for the depleted Lakers.

"That's the strength of their team," Redick said.

With reigning Most Valuable Player Shai Gilgeous-Alexander connecting on just seven of 20 shots from the floor, second-year guard Ajay Mitchell — starting in place of the injured Jalen Williams — stepped up.

"He's a gamer," said Gilgeous-Alexander, who finished with 23 points.

"It might be a shock to the world, but this is no shock to us."

Just like in game two, the Lakers took a two-point lead into halftime, this one largely on the strength of 11 first-half three-pointers.

But, again, the Thunder exploded in the third period, opening the second half on a 21-6 scoring run.

After that, it was all but over. The Lakers connected on just eight of 22 shots from the field in the third period, including just one from three-point range.

The turnovers began to mount for the Lakers, and the Thunder pushed its lead to as many as 27 in the fourth quarter.

Gilgeous-Alexander said the Thunder, which swept the Phoenix Suns in the first round, will "absolutely" be aiming to finish off the Lakers on Monday.

"We would never want to waste an opportunity to win a basketball game," he said. "We've got to do the same thing we did in the first three games — be the aggressor, play the right way together."



Cleveland Cavaliers' James Harden (right) shoots against Detroit Pistons' Tobias Harris in Saturday's game. AP

Harden on target

In Cleveland, Donovan Mitchell added 10 rebounds and four assists. Harden, a three-time NBA scoring champion, scored nine of his 19 points in a tight fourth quarter, drilling a trio of baskets that included a dagger trey that pushed Cleveland's lead to four with 25.9 seconds left.

"I love it," Harden said. "When your number's called, just getting to my spots. And it's something that I work on literally every day.

"Don(ovan) Mitchell had been working so extremely hard throughout the course of the game, (I was) just trying to find opportunities to help him. So that last minute-and-a-half, two minutes, however long it was, it presented itself. And for me, (it's about) just going out there and taking my shots."

Harden, who drew plenty of criticism for turnovers in the clutch in the first two games, kept the Cavaliers in front with big shots. The 17-year veteran hit a 16-foot step-back jumper to extend the lead to 108-104. After a driving dunk by Cade Cunningham, Harden made a floating seven-footer to put the lead back up to four.

"Chatter is going to be chatter, regardless," he said. "Whether you do something good, whether you do something bad, you give me opportunities in this fourth quarter, and I take advantage of them."

"It's the James Harden I've seen for however many years he's been in the NBA. That's the James we needed tonight," Cavaliers coach Kenny Atkinson said. "We were searching, and we got some good screenings into the matchups we wanted and he went to work."

Cunningham responded with a 3-pointer before Harden provided the decisive blow with 25 seconds remaining on a step-back 3-pointer while being guarded by Harris to make it 113-109. Robinson was short on a 3-pointer after a timeout and Mitchell made three free throws down the stretch.

The Cavs withstood a 27-point triple-double from Cunningham, who added 10 rebounds and 10 assists.

Cleveland led 64-48 at halftime and pushed the lead to 17 early in the third, before the Pistons clawed back.

Detroit managed to edge ahead with less than four minutes to play before Cleveland responded again.

The Cavs will try to level the series when they host Game 4 on Monday.

AGENCIES

Kerr offered 2-year deal to battle on with the Warriors



Steve Kerr

SAN FRANCISCO — Steve Kerr is giving it another go with Golden State.

Kerr has reached an agreement, in principle, on a two-year contract to continue coaching the Warriors, according to a person with knowledge of the negotiations. Kerr is still yet to sign the new deal, the person told reporters on Saturday night, speaking on condition of anonymity because the contract is yet to be finalized.

The Warriors missed the playoffs for the second time in three years, earning the 10th seed in the Western Conference and eventually losing to Phoenix in the play-in tournament.

Kerr's 12-year coaching run with the franchise has featured four championships and six NBA Finals appearances, including five straight from 2015-19. Kerr shared an embrace with Stephen Curry and Draymond Green near the end of the loss in Phoenix, saying afterward he knew it could be their final time together.

He has a career record of 604-353 and a 104-48 playoffs mark, with Golden State winning its last championship in 2022.

The Warriors were 37-45 this season while dealing with numerous injuries, including losing Jimmy Butler to a season-ending right knee injury in January and Curry's 27-game absence with a right knee injury of his own.

ESPN was first to report Kerr's new contract.

Kerr, 60, got his first coaching job in 2014-15 and immediately guided Golden State to the franchise's first title in 40 years. The Warriors would then begin the next season with a record 24-0 start under the guidance of assistant Luke Walton, as Kerr missed the initial 43 games as his team went on to a record 73 victories. Kerr took a leave of absence to recover from debilitating complications following two back surgeries, then missed time again in 2017, with Mike Brown filling in as Kerr underwent a procedure to deal with a spinal fluid leak.

Green had predicted on his podcast once the season ended that Kerr wouldn't return.

Throughout his coaching career, Kerr has used his platform to speak out against gun violence and social injustice, among other prominent issues. His father, Malcolm, president of the American University of Beirut, was murdered in Lebanon when Kerr, 18 at the time, was a freshman at the University of Arizona.

In March 2018, Kerr took part in the Oakland March for Our Lives. Earlier that same month, he joined Democratic Congressmen Ro Khanna and Mike Thompson — then-chair of the House Gun Violence Prevention Task Force — and students from across the South Bay during a town hall at Newark Memorial High School to discuss gun violence in schools, and cheered the efforts of youth nationwide.

Kerr has said it isn't hard to do double duty as a basketball coach and use his voice as a public figure for those who don't have one.

"I think, in some ways, the balance is presented to us, given what's happening around the country," Kerr said. "I know that when I played, players and coaches were never — maybe not never, but rarely — asked about politics and voting."

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

ATHLETICS

Nketia races into Australia's sprinting spotlight

MELBOURNE — From dreams of rugby glory for New Zealand to a Hail Mary shot at the NFL, sprinter Eddie Nketia is now on track to win medals for Australia and take a share of the limelight trained on teen talent Gout Gout.

Nketia clocked Australia's fastest 100m in 9.84 seconds at a US college meet last month, albeit with a tailwind that ruled it out of the record books.

Australians latching onto the enormous potential of 18-year-old Gout and 22-year-old Lachlan Kennedy may now have another star in the sprinting firmament.

For 24-year-old Nketia, who runs for University of Southern California (USC), the buzz back in Australia since his 9.84 at the Mt SAC Relays has been almost as overwhelming as the run itself.

"Honestly, it was genuinely a surprise, because I never expected I could run 9.84 in my life," he told reporters in a video interview from his California base.

"And it's like, 'look at where we're at now'. My name is everywhere back in Australia. And it's a lot to take in. It's insane."

Prior to his run, Nketia had been virtually unknown in Australia, despite the nation's rekindled interest in athletics thanks to the performances of Gout.

Auckland-born Nketia only switched allegiance from New Zealand in December after a mandatory stand-down period from major global events.

He spent much of his childhood in Canberra, but returned to New Zealand to finish high school.

His Ghanaian father, Gus Nketia, was also a sprinter and held New Zealand's fastest 100m (10.11) for 28 years until the younger Nketia eclipsed it with a 10.08 at the 2022 world championships — with the help of his father's coaching, of course.

It was a poignant moment hailed by New Zealand media, but Nketia's relationship with the nation's athletics federation was already strained.

New Zealand has strict criteria for Olympic selection, only picking athletes with a demonstrated ability to finish in the top 16 of their events.



Eddie Nketia (right), representing the USC Trojans, races in a 200m prelim during a Division I Track and Field Championship in Eugene, Oregon, last June. NCAA PHOTOS VIA GETTY IMAGES

In the weaker Commonwealth Games field, only potential top-six finishers are considered.

That policy has rankled more than a few Kiwi athletes over the years, and Nketia publicly criticized Olympic selectors after missing out on Tokyo 2020.

After also missing the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, Nketia's mind was made up.

"Circumstances just kept ruining my chances of becoming a better athlete," he said.

Turning his back on his birth nation was a tough decision for Nketia, who remains proud of his Kiwi heritage and was a promising junior rugby player with a dream of playing for the All Blacks.

He ditched the track altogether to join the University of Hawaii's American football program, saying he needed a fresh start.

"It wasn't essentially that I was tired of track. I was just tired of missing tournaments," he said.

At 1.90 meters and about 97 kilograms, the powerfully built Nketia played as a wide receiver before returning to the track with USC.

His USC coach Brenton Emanuel calls him "Incredible Hulk" — gentle off the track, but a beast on it. He believes Nketia could ultimately be ranked among the greats of sprinting.

"He puts his superpower on and he just goes," he told reporters, sitting next to Nketia in the video call.

Nketia wants championship medals and has circled this summer's Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland, which run from July 23 to Aug 2, on his calendar.

First, though, he wants to smash the 100m 10-second barrier legally during the NCAA season.

Only two Australians, Patrick Johnson (9.93) and Kennedy (9.96), have broken it, while Gout's PB is 10 seconds flat.

Gout is skipping Glasgow, but Nketia envisages a showdown in Australia next year against the teenager and Kennedy.

The prospect of the trio combining on relay squads also has Nketia excited, saying they could make Australia a sprinting power to rival the United States and Jamaica.

"When it comes to world championships next year ... and Olympic Games as well, it's like we're going to go all the way, do what we can to get as many podiums as possible," he said.

REUTERS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:25 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:27 PM

Clean power
Legislation transforms renewable energy sector
GOING GREEN, PAGE 12



Prosecutors harness tech to safeguard oceans
CHINA, PAGE 11



Ice breakthrough
Homegrown Chinese hockey squad earns historic worlds silver
SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2026

Emergency at sea



An ambulance boat carrying crew members wearing hazmat suits approaches the pilot door on the starboard side of the cruise ship MV *Hondius*, off the port of Praia, the capital of Cape Verde, on Tuesday. Three passengers have died and at least five people have been struck by hantavirus on board the Dutch-flagged cruise ship. AFP **See story, page 4**

RMB's role as intl option grows

Recent deals highlight currency's expanding use in commodity trade pricing, settlement

By **ZHOU LANXU** and **JIANG XUEQING**

The renminbi is starting to gain ground in the dollar-dominated global commodity trade, as recent deals highlighted the Chinese currency's expanding role in offering a diversified option for pricing and settlement, economists and executives said.

Breakthroughs in RMB-denominated commodity transactions, regarded as one of the most difficult frontiers for the RMB's global use, may signal a faster phase of the currency's internationalization, as demand rises for alternatives to the US dollar and China's role in global trade grows, they added.

The RMB ranked the fifth in global payments with a share of 3.1 percent in March, up from a sixth ranking in February, as calculated by global financial messaging services provider Swift.

The Cross-Border Interbank Payment System, or CIPS — the primary platform for cross-border yuan clearing and settlement — recently recorded a single-day transaction volume of 1.22 trillion yuan ($179 billion), a record high, according to Shanghai Securities News.

Meanwhile, Reuters reported last month that Indian refiners were settling payments for specific oil cargoes purchased under a US sanctions waiver using the Chinese yuan, while mining giant BHP Group has reportedly adopted a Chinese pricing benchmark in its iron ore trade with China, signaling a broader acceptance of RMB settlement and pricing in commodity markets.

Zhang Bin, a national political adviser and a nonresident senior research fellow at the China Finance 40 Forum, said these developments suggest that the RMB is increasingly providing global trading partners with a more diversified currency option for commodity trade.

"The dollar has long served as a dominant currency for pricing, settlement and investment. However, intensified geopolitical tensions and changes in global economic governance have led some countries to reconsider the assumption that the dollar is reliable," Zhang said. "As countries seek to add an extra layer of safeguard in investment and business operations, the yuan is a particularly promising option, given China's significant and expanding role in global trade and investment."

Huang Yiping, dean of Peking University's National School of Development, highlighted the potential of the RMB in playing a bigger role in commodity pricing, as China is one of the world's largest importers of commodities and a leading exporter of manufactured goods.

"Promoting the use of the RMB to price more of our economic activities is both possible and an indispensable step of RMB internationalization," Huang said.

China launched yuan-denominated crude oil futures trading in Shanghai in 2018, an early step toward expanding the RMB's role in global commodity pricing. In recent years, countries like Russia have increasingly used the Chinese currency in oil trade with China.

"The fundamental conditions for the formation of a 'petroyuan' cycle — in which oil is increasingly priced, settled and reinvested in RMB assets — are gradually taking shape after China has become the world's largest crude oil importer," said Zhang Ming, deputy director of the Institute of World Economics and Politics at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

However, analysts cautioned that how far the Chinese currency's role in commodity trade can evolve may ultimately depend on the depth of China's financial reforms and opening-up, the country's long-term economic strength, and the resilience of the US dollar's dominance.

"Part of the recent increase in RMB usage in commodity trade has been driven by short-term geopolitical factors, and the longer-term trajectory still needs to be observed," said Shao Yu, chief economist at the innovation center of Fudan University's School of Management.

Wu Xiaoqiu, former vice-president of Renmin University of China, said the key still lies in deepening market-oriented reforms to enable freer trade of the currency if a petroyuan system is to be established.

Pan Gongsheng, governor of the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, said China has worked to enhance institutional arrangements and financial infrastructure to support broader cross-border RMB usage to offer more diversified currency choices for all entities.

The yuan's rising role in commodity trade is part of a broader expansion of the currency's international use, with a Deutsche Bank report saying that the process of RMB internationalization is likely to accelerate.

Renminbi assets are becoming increasingly attractive, underpinned by China's strong growth prospects and the rapid development of future-oriented industries, said Stefan Hoops, CEO of DWS — Deutsche Bank's asset management arm.

Hoops pointed to a structural shift in trade invoicing: Whereas the vast majority of Chinese exporter invoices were denominated in US dollars five years ago, a growing share are now denominated in RMB.

Contact the writers at zhoulanxv@chinadaily.com.cn

China ready to help restore peace, stability in Mideast

By **ZHAO JIA**
zhaojia@chinadaily.com.cn

Foreign Minister Wang Yi said on Wednesday that China is ready to help create the conditions for starting peace talks and play a greater role in restoring peace and stability in the Middle East, as the region stands at a critical juncture between war and peace.

Wang made the remarks in Beijing during talks with Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi, whose visit was his first trip to China since the United States and Israel launched attacks on Iran on Feb 28. Before traveling to China, as part of his intensive shuttle diplomacy, Araghchi had visited Pakistan, Oman and Russia in late April.

Since the start of the conflict, Wang and Araghchi have held three phone conversations, maintaining close communication as the situation evolved.

Wang noted that more than two months of fighting has "dealt a severe blow" to regional and global peace and stability.

"China deeply regrets this. A full end to the fighting cannot wait, any resumption of hostilities would be even more inadvisable, and staying committed to negotiations is particularly important," Wang told his Iranian counterpart.

Araghchi briefed Wang on the latest developments in Iran-US negotiations and Iran's considerations in terms of its next steps. He said that Iran will firmly safeguard its national sovereignty and dignity while continuing to build consensus through peaceful negotiations in pursuit of a comprehensive and permanent solution.

Araghchi added that the issue of keeping the Strait of Hormuz open should be properly resolved at an early date.

Iran appreciates China's tireless efforts, which were made in a constructive spirit, to prevent the situation from deteriorating and spilling over, he said, adding that Tehran trusts Beijing and looks forward to China's continued active role in promoting peace and ending hostilities.

Araghchi also voiced hope that China would support the establishment of a new postwar regional architecture capable of coordinating development and security.

Wang told Araghchi that China supports Iran in safeguarding its national sovereignty and security, and appreciates Iran's willingness to seek a political settlement through diplomatic channels.

On the Strait of Hormuz, Wang said that the international community shares a common concern on restoring normal and safe passage through the strait, and China hopes that the parties concerned will respond to global calls as soon as possible.

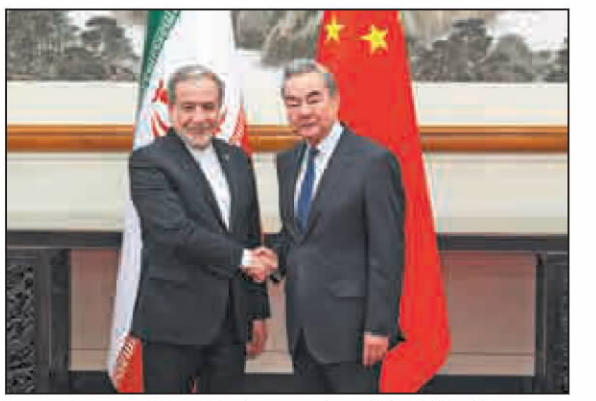
On the nuclear issue, Wang said that China appreciates Iran's commitment not to develop nuclear weapons, while maintaining that Iran has the legitimate right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

China believes that Gulf and Middle Eastern countries should keep their future in their own hands, Wang said. China encourages Iran and more Gulf countries to engage in dialogue and pursue good-neighborly relations, and supports regional countries in building a peace and security architecture based on common participation, shared interests and common development, he added.

*See **Talks,** page 3*

Inside

- Editorial, **page 6**
- See more, **page 4**



Foreign Minister Wang Yi, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, meets with Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi in Beijing on Wednesday. CAI YANG / XINHUA

Poverty alleviation requires constant vigilance, support

WORLD WATCH
By Daryl Guppy

On their first visit to China, Western leaders invariably congratulate China on its successful elimination of absolute poverty. But they may not understand well that poverty alleviation is an ongoing process — for China and other countries as well — that requires constant vigilance and assessment.

China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) builds on the nation's achievements in poverty alleviation, with the strategy's focus shifting from campaigns of poverty reduction to long-term support and monitoring. The challenge is to ensure that low-income households do not relapse into poverty.

Rural development in agriculture remains a top priority, with the aim of improving farmers' incomes. Increased productivity and more efficient logistics mean farmers can access broader and more competitive markets that offer better prices. The progress from poverty to reasonable prosperity rests on enabling infrastructure and research.

Key focus areas include strengthening high-quality development and technological self-reliance. Continued enhancement of healthcare and social services and increased access to senior high school education all align with the 2035 target of achieving "basic socialist modernization" and the prosperity that goes with it.

Although Western leaders admire China's poverty reduction programs, they fail to emulate them. This failure can be traced to differences in the way that China and some in the West think about poverty and its causes.

Modern rich Western nations prefer to describe poverty in terms of homelessness or disadvantage. This language hides and changes the way Western countries approach poverty alleviation.

*See **Disparity,** page 3*

IN CHONGQING, SPICE BRINGS VARIETY TO LIFE

Visitors keen to know what fuels the mountainous metropolis need look no further than its 40,000 hotpot restaurants

By **TAN YINGZI** and **DENG RUI** in Chongqing

China Vibes — FOOD —

The first bite is a velvet fire: rich beef tallow, dried chili, then the numbing buzz of Sichuan peppercorns dancing across the tongue. On a lantern-lit hillside under loquat trees, a group of Vietnamese hairdressers have just discovered their new obsession.

"This is unbelievable," one whispered, chopsticks already reaching for another mouthful.

In mid-April, more than 20 visitors from Hanoi, Vietnam's capital, made a pilgrimage to Nanshan Mountain's Pipayuan Shiweixian Hotpot Restaurant in Chongqing — a 30,000-square-meter terraced citadel of the hotpot world, which holds a Guinness World Record with more than 800 tables and 5,851 seats.

As dusk fell, golden lights outlined the wooden pavilions, and the scent of the bubbling beef-tallow broth drifted from terraces climbing over 100 meters high.

The Vietnamese visitors gathered around four tables, dipping shrimp paste, beef, tofu skin and mushrooms into dual-flavor pots, with the spicy side delivering the full mala (spicy and numbing) experience.

"It's truly overwhelming," said Do Duc Anh, 39.

"You taste the food and see the whole landscape. It's like eating inside a dream."

But Pipayuan is just one stage in the city's "Hotpot Broadway", which has grown spectacularly against the backdrop of the Yangtze River and soaring green mountains.

*See **Chongqing,** page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.

A member of ANN

© 2026 China Daily Global All Rights Reserved

www.chinadailyglobal.com

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

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:27 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:27 PM

INDEPTH



Left: Two women assemble a sofa for their rental apartment in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, to give the room a chic feel. **Middle:** Chen Xiaoli from Hangzhou measures the window space in a sunlit apartment as part of her daily work conducting pre-renovation assessments for low-budget makeovers tailored to young renters. **Right:** Xiao Cai relaxes in her renovated rental apartment in Zhangzhou, Fujian province, where low-cost upgrades have transformed the once bare space into a comfortable home that reflects her daily life. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Renters dig deep for home renovations

Long-term tenants carry costs of upgrades, focusing on quality, comfort, individual style



A woman puts up a shelf in her Hangzhou "pink princess" room in her rental apartment. MA CHONGYAN / FOR CHINA DAILY



Before-and-after photos show human resources professional Kai Li's redecorated living area in her apartment in Shenzhen, Guangdong province. Kai said the changes have made it a cozy and functional area that supports her lifestyle. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By YU RAN
For China Daily

Facing the prospect of long-term renting in a tough property market, a growing number of tenants are laying out money from their own pockets to upgrade apartments to their individual tastes, experts said.

Wu Tong, an associate professor at East China Normal University's School of Social Development, said the trend signals a deep generational shift.

"Compared with their parents' generation, who often spent decades saving to purchase a home as a symbol of stability and achievement, today's young people place greater emphasis on their immediate sense of well-being," said Wu.

"They care about whether they feel comfortable and happy now, rather than postponing satisfaction entirely to the future."

China's rental housing market is underpinned by 260 million renters, according to the 2024–25 Housing Rental Industry Development Report released by the PBC School of Finance at Tsinghua University in August. In 2024, the total number of rental housing units nationwide reached 91 million, with nearly 90 percent of listings coming from individual landlords.

Rising demand for higher-quality rental housing leaves more than 60 million existing units with potential for being upgraded and renovated, according to the 2025 China Urban Long-Term Rental Market Development Blue Book released in April.

Transforming existing stock into "better homes" has become central to optimizing rental supply, it said. Over 40 percent of renters are willing to increase their budget for higher-quality renovations.

New tenant Xiao Cai, 30, decided that renting would not prevent her from improving her space.

After five years of moving between small shared flats in Zhangzhou, Fujian province, Xiao, who works in the education industry, rented a 60-square-meter one-bedroom apartment for 1,000 yuan ($146.30) a month in 2025.

The budget-friendly unit came with plain white walls and shiny floor tiles, but it had good lighting and a functional layout. By signing a three-year lease, she secured a price well below the local market average.

Six months after moving in, water leakage caused sections of the walls to peel, so she decided to undertake a proper renovation. Her initial budget was 3,000 yuan, but the final cost exceeded 9,000 yuan, equivalent to her monthly salary.

Although she had planned to paint the walls and install stone plastic composite flooring herself, a lack of skills and time led her to hire professionals. To control costs, she purchased most large furniture items secondhand, significantly reducing expenses while maintaining quality.

"The most worthwhile investment was upgrading the walls and floors, because they directly determine the overall quality and comfort of the space. The biggest savings came from buying secondhand furniture and making some items myself," said Xiao.

The renovation made the apartment feel like it belonged to her, she said. "Now I genuinely look forward to returning. The house is rented, but the life inside it is mine. Renovating it wasn't about ownership, it was about creating a place where I can feel stable and at ease," said Xiao.

Comfortable spaces

In Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangdong province's Shenzhen and Guangzhou, the rental population is close to 40 million, accounting for nearly 50 percent of total residents, the blue book showed. More than half of renters said they are willing to accept renting for five years or longer, while nearly 20 percent are open to renting for more than 10 years.

For Kai Li, 28, an HR professional in the AI hardware industry, long-term renting is not a reluctant compromise, but a calculated choice in an environment where property ownership feels distant.

She has moved six times in six years from cramped urban village rooms to progressively larger rentals, with each move reshaping her expectations of a rental property.

Kai currently rents an 80-square-meter, three-bedroom apartment for 7,500 yuan per month in Shenzhen, the most spacious place she has lived in since leaving her hometown in Hunan province. "Over time, I realized I needed to look at whether a space had potential — good light and a workable layout, especially a balcony. I rent with the idea that I will shape it," said Kai.

For many young people who move to a new city, stability is less about property ownership and more about having a space that is a place to cook, host friends, play guitar or simply sit alone, she said.

Before renovating, she hesitated. She negotiated a lease of more than two years at a slightly reduced rent, using the money she saved for the upgrades.

Most of the renovation focused on soft furnishings and spatial zoning. She asked the landlord to repaint the walls, then divided the apartment into areas for dining, working and resting. The total cost exceeded 8,000 yuan, and most of the furnishings and decorations can move with her.

"I didn't want to overspend, but I also knew that if I was going to live here for years, the space had to support my daily life. Otherwise, coming home after work would feel like just another obligation," she said.

The balcony has become her anchor. Shelves assembled by hand hold rows of plants and small vegetable pots. One afternoon, sitting there alone, she felt a quiet sense of achievement.

"Everything here was arranged by myself. Even spending a short afternoon at home helps me recover my energy," said Kai.

Homeownership may feel distant, but comfort and self-definition need not be postponed, she said. "If we can't control the housing market, we can still choose how we live inside the space we have," said Kai.

Data from the 2025 Shanghai Youth Rental Housing Trends Report released by the Shanghai Youth Research Centre showed rental rates of 68 percent among those born after 2000, 64 percent among those born after 1995, and 53 percent among those born after 1990.

In Shanghai, the number of renters aged 20 to 30 reached 76,000 in 2024, marking a 68.89 percent increase compared with 2022.

When choosing rental housing, respondents placed greater emphasis on fundamental living conditions and transport accessibility. Survey data showed that indoor comfort (79 percent), convenient transportation (72 percent), and high housing quality (67 percent) rank as the top three considerations. To secure a better living experience, more than 40 percent said they were willing to pay more for better renovations.

Design innovations

The rising emphasis on comfort is influencing not only tenants but also landlords and designers.

After years of designing brand visuals for major corporations, Chen Xiaoli questioned the meaningfulness of her work.

"In large companies, my work often felt like a small interchangeable part in a vast system. It was hard to see its real impact or feel a clear sense of value," said Chen.

Now 35, and based in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, Chen turned to low-budget soft furnishing renovations in late 2025.

Within three months, she had taken on seven to eight projects, a shift she describes as moving design "from screens into real life".

The transition began unintentionally. After a low-cost renovation of her own rental property to attract more suitable tenants, she shared the results online. The apartment quickly drew attention and inquiries.

"I realized that landlords and tenants choose each other. If a flat looks worn and neglected, tenants won't feel motivated to care for it. But when a space feels thoughtfully arranged, it attracts people who appreciate and protect it. That small investment can completely change the relationship between a person and a home," she said.

Unlike corporate branding work, she said, each renovation directly affects someone's daily routine. Some of her clients are landlords hoping to improve competitiveness in a buyer's market; others are young renters seeking a stronger sense of belonging.

"When a tenant tells me she feels happier opening the door after work, or when a landlord says a property that sat idle for months finally sold after renovation, I can clearly see the impact. My design is not just decoration, but improving someone's everyday life," said Chen.

About 80 to 90 percent of her clients are landlords, while renters — typically aged 25 to 35 — often seek lighter services such as design plans and shopping lists costing around 1,000 yuan. Larger projects range from 20,000 to 40,000 yuan, a scale of work many traditional renovation companies are reluctant to take on.

Her design principles are consistent: prioritize function and movement flow before aesthetics, ensure adequate storage, unify colors and style, and avoid unnecessary waste.

"You don't need expensive items to create beauty. What matters is coherence and practicality. Whenever possible, I encourage clients to reuse what they already have, rather than discard everything," she said.

For Chen, the growing willingness among young people to invest in rental spaces signals a broader shift in mindset.

"Many people used to think renting was temporary and something you just had to endure. But young people today don't see it that way. Regardless of tenure, people still want their living space to reflect dignity and care," said Chen.

Landlords take note

As of March 2026, the hashtag "rental home renovation" had garnered over 2.3 billion views on Douyin, while related posts on Xiaohongshu, or RedNote, exceeded 3.7 billion views.

For savvy landlords, the online enthusiasm is also a barometer of renters' needs.

Zhu Chengjie, 49, moved from Jiangsu province to Shanghai more than two decades ago to start his own business. He gradually settled down in the city and now owns three apartments in Shanghai that he has rented for nearly a decade. Most of his tenants are young office workers fresh out of university, drawn to the city by career opportunities.

Recently, Zhu decided to renovate one of his apartments in Jing'an district.

Instead of simply repainting the walls, he hired a designer to make modest but thoughtful adjustments to the layout and furnishings, partly to justify a slight increase in rent, but also because he had noticed young tenants were placing greater emphasis on the style and quality of their living environment.

"I've noticed that young people today have much higher expectations for their living environment. A clean and functional space is no longer enough. They want warmth, personality and comfort," said Zhu.

His other two tenants have also approached him with requests to make small changes, such as adding houseplants, rearranging furniture or introducing soft decorative elements. Zhu has agreed to most of the requests.

"As long as the structure isn't affected, I'm happy to agree. After all, everyone wants to feel comfortable in the place they live," said Zhu.

When he first arrived in Shanghai, housing conditions were not his priority. Seeing today's young tenants invest time and energy in rented homes, he views it as a sign of changing attitudes. "Many of them are working hard in this city, just like I once did. Wanting to live well while striving for the future is not indulgence, but a reflection of confidence and social progress," said Zhu.

Experts said the change is closely linked to evolving market conditions and generational attitudes toward risk and stability.

Wu, from East China Normal University, noted that this transformation has been shaped by economic changes in recent years. When housing prices were widely expected to rise continuously, homeownership carried strong investment and status implications.

"As the market stabilizes and long-term (property) appreciation becomes less certain, renting is increasingly viewed as a rational and flexible choice. In an environment marked by employment uncertainty and income pressure, maintaining liquidity and reducing long-term financial burdens can provide a stronger sense of security," he said.

Wu added that reducing financial risk does not necessarily mean lowering living standards. Instead of investing heavily in property, many young people choose affordable soft furnishings to improve their living spaces.

"This is a pragmatic way of balancing quality of life with risk management," he said.

Contact the writer at sunnyu923@163.com

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:27 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:27 PM

TOP NEWS

Chinese firms in US grow, show resilience

Outlook of companies for countries' economic relations has improved, notes survey report

By **YIFAN XU** in Washington
yifanxu@chinadailyusa.com

Chinese companies operating in the United States remained largely profitable last year despite geopolitical tensions, according to a recently released survey report, which also indicated improved expectations for China-US economic relations this year.

The 2026 Annual Business Survey Report on Chinese Enterprises in the United States was unveiled on Monday in Washington, DC, by the China General Chamber of Commerce-USA and the CGCC Foundation.

The event brought together business leaders, industry experts and others to discuss the survey findings, which revealed remarkable operational resilience among Chinese companies and a pivot toward cautious optimism for the coming year.

According to the report, 81 percent of surveyed Chinese companies in the US remained profitable in 2025, while the share of enterprises with pretax profit margins above 15 percent rose sharply from 7 percent to 21 percent over the past year.

The report noted that the outlook of surveyed companies for China-US relations in 2026 has improved. "In economic and trade relations, expectations of 'moderate deterioration' fell by 24 percentage points from the previous year, while expectations of 'modest improvement' rose sharply to 36 percent," it said.

The CGCC, which was founded in 2005, is the largest independent chamber representing Chinese business interests in the US.

Speaking at the event, Zhang Jianyu, chairwoman of the CGCC, said the chamber's member companies have cumulatively invested more than $140 billion in the US economy, directly creating over 230,000 jobs and contributing to more than 1 million positions nationwide.

Qiu Wenxing, minister and deputy chief of mission at the Chinese embassy in the US, who delivered a keynote address, underscored the need for deeper integration of the world's two largest economies.

Referring to the investment and employment statistics quoted by the CGCC chairwoman, Qiu said: "That is the contribution Chinese companies have already made. We can do more to help America achieve even better lives for its people."

He urged US business leaders to be "quick and agile to seize the opportunity presented by China's development", particularly through the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), which offers expanded market access for international investors.

Qiu called on both Chinese and US business communities to "do the right thing instead of the politically correct thing", advocating for deeper engagement and more objective dialogue.

The relationship between China and the US is inherently mutually beneficial, and that characteristic could form the foundation for shared prosperity, he said, emphasizing that the two countries must find a common path based on "mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and mutually beneficial cooperation".

"The world depends on a stable, sound and sustainable relationship," Qiu said, adding that efforts made by the two governments to stabilize ties are injecting "positive momentum" and certainty into business operations.

Pin Ni, vice-chair of the CGCC and president of Wanxiang America Corporation, said that any "decoupling" between China and the US would be disastrous for the US due to its inflationary impact.

Amid the expectations of improved economic ties, the survey report highlighted some significant hurdles. Tariff policies remain the primary source of pressure, it said, negatively affecting 79 percent of respondents through rising costs and supply chain disruptions. Geopolitical tensions have also become a "structural ceiling" for brand building, it added.

Ni stressed that successful long-term growth in the US requires a deeper commitment to localization and human capital. "Localization is not just about investing in a company; it is about investing in the local people," he said.

The strategic goal of Chinese companies in the US is to become a permanent and contributing part of the local economy, he added.

Monday's event included a panel discussion on the global rise of Chinese brands. The speakers noted that while Chinese companies make high-quality products, they need to improve their "narrative capability" in order to extend their reach.

Crisis management and storytelling should be combined to successfully navigate local challenges, the speakers added.

Talks: Nation steps up effort to promote peace, encourage dialogue

From page 1

Since the fighting started, China has stepped up efforts to promote peace and encourage talks.

In April, President Xi Jinping put forward a four-point proposal on maintaining and promoting peace and stability in the Middle East, calling for peaceful coexistence, respect for national sovereignty, adherence to the international rule of law, and a balanced approach to development and security — a framework that has guided China's diplomatic engagement in the crisis.

Wang has held nearly 30 phone calls with senior officials from relevant parties, including Iran, Israel, Russia and Gulf countries. He spoke last week by phone with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, and the two sides exchanged views on the Middle East situation.

Niu Xinchun, executive director of the China-Arab Research Institute at Ningxia University, said that the US-Iran ceasefire remains fragile, with the risk of renewed hostilities still present.

He noted that prolonged disruption to the Strait of Hormuz could affect global energy supplies and maritime trade, drive up shipping costs, and increase pressure on the global economy.

Li Zixin, an associate researcher at the China Institute of International Studies, said that Tehran may hope that Beijing can convey necessary messages to Washington through bilateral and multilateral channels and convince Washington to exercise restraint.

China's communication with all key parties gives it a constructive role in preventing the ceasefire from breaking down and steering the crisis back toward dialogue, Li said.



Visitors enjoy hotpot in a pool at a water park in Meixin Wine Town, Chongqing, on Aug 2, 2025.
HE PENGLEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Chongqing: Hotpot served in unlikely places

From page 1

Here, dining is steeped in the vibrant, down-to-earth bustle of everyday life.

Nearby, Xianlongjing Hotpot Park sets 600 tables among lotus ponds, bridges and pavilions. At night, the traditional folk spectacle of datiehua, or molten iron fireworks, showers the lake in dramatic performances. As the sparks fly , diners dip on-site harvested lotus roots into the bubbling broth.

For a cooler dining experience, the Underground City Hotpot Restaurant repurposes a wartime air-raid shelter with 4,500 sq m of tunnels, which can seat 1,300 people at a constant 25 C.

Elsewhere, Chongqing offers more unusual places to enjoy hotpot. Set on a rooftop, the Mujiuge Hotpot Restaurant serves its ninegrid pots near a secondhand bookstore. At the Meixin Wine Town in Fuling district, diners can soak in a swimming pool while dipping into bubbling cauldrons — the ultimate summer flex in a city famously known as one of the country's "four furnaces", where summer temperatures routinely soar above 40 C.

Back on the hillside in Pipayuan, eight tables were filled with a Surabaya-based delegation of more than 40 Indonesian entrepreneurs. After touring factories to explore China's development and latest technology, they had been drawn to the eatery by Douyin videos. "It looked like a fantasy," said Fabiola Yonita Santoso, head of the delegation.

At the foot of the hill, Dave O'Toole from Dublin, Ireland, and Eve Adams from Seattle in the United States — a long-distance couple finally reunited — photographed their hotpot moment.

"My hometown is the birthplace of the Guinness World Records," O'Toole said with a laugh. "This is amazing."

Pipayuan manager Gan Yuanchuang said the restaurant now hosts many foreign diners daily, mostly from Southeast Asia. During the loquat season, which runs from late April to early May, diners pick the cool fruit to soothe palates scorched by spicy broth.

The roots of hotpot stretch back to 19th-century river porters, who simmered offal with chili. By the 1930s, two local entrepreneurs, known as the Ma brothers, had opened Chongqing's first hotpot eatery, bringing hotpot from the dockside into a proper restaurant. Today, Chongqing has nearly 20,000 hotpot enterprises and around 40,000 restaurants, with 160,000 of China's 500,000 hotpot spots tracing their lineage back to the city.

The flavor of hotpot has reached over 50 countries and regions. Locals believe that the fiery nature dispels the damp mountain air, while the unhurried, hours-long meals embody the city's inclusive, communal spirit.

Whether on a lantern-lit hillside, floating among lotuses, deep inside a cave, or bobbing in a swimming pool, a trip to Chongqing without dipping into its bubbling, numbing cauldrons would be unthinkable.

Contact the writers at dengrui@chinadaily.com.cn

China to attract more global students

By **ZOU SHUO**
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

The 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) prioritizes the expansion of high-level opening-up of education and strengthening of the "Study in China" brand, and education officials and university leaders are confident that China is on track to become one of the world's most attractive destinations for international students.

Inside
See more, **page 11**

Wang Daquan, head of the Chinese Service Center for Scholarly Exchange under the Ministry of Education, said, "We have confidence in that goal, and we will continue to make efforts to achieve it."

Citing data collected by the center over the past three years, Wang pointed to the steady rise in the number of applicants, greater diversity in the countries of origin of students, a significant increase in the number of self-funded students, and a marked rise in the number of degree-seeking candidates at the undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral levels.

He attributed this upward trajectory to several distinct advantages, including the strong cost-effectiveness of China's higher education system, with tuition fees in the country being among the lowest globally.

He also highlighted China's stable policies, safe environment, and rapid development — all of which allow international students to share in the country's growth. The expanding global footprint of Chinese enterprises and the Belt and Road Initiative are creating new career opportunities for graduates in their home countries and elsewhere, he added.

According to the latest data from the Ministry of Education, 380,000 international students from 191 countries and regions were studying in China as of the 2024-25 academic year.

Asian students made up the largest share at 61.1 percent, followed by those from Africa at 16.2 percent and from Europe at 15.6 percent. The number of degree-seeking students stood at 205,000, with postgraduates representing 35 percent of that figure. Engineering ranked first among the chosen fields of study, with 27.8 percent of students opting for it.



International students experience traditional Chinese stone-rubbing art, an intangible cultural heritage, in Lingshui, Hainan province, on April 26. ZHANG WEI / CHINA DAILY

The Beijing International Studies University exemplifies the shift from scale expansion to high-quality development at the institutional level.

Zheng Chengjun, vice-president of the university, said that as of March 2026, the university's international student population stood at 1,024 — a remarkable 70.6 percent increase year-on-year.

There has been notable growth in the number of students coming from Belt and Road partner countries and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership member states. Leading the enrollment figures are students from Saudi Arabia (177), Morocco (100) and Russia (54), followed by South Korea, Kazakhstan and Vietnam.

Zheng said the university aims to attract more postgraduate students during the 15th Five-Year Plan period. "International students act as a crucial link for trade, tourism and diplomatic relations between China and the world," he said.

By organizing international cultural festivals and improving campus facilities, the university ensures that international students find a true sense of belonging, he said.

Zhao Zhongxiu, president of the University of International Business and Economics, said the university has 70 years of experience in international education and has trained tens of thousands of students from over 170 countries and regions.

He said that deepening educational cooperation is a vital response to global uncertainties. Education cooperation can build cultural identity and people-to-people bonds, helping to forge a community with a shared future for humanity, he said.

In the economic sphere, international students boost two-way trade promotion, play a role in China's outward direct investment and contribute to building home-country human capital. In the field of science and technology, international cooperation in education serves as a major vehicle for talent flow and innovation, enabling global knowledge sharing and collaborative research, he said.

Zhang Hao, a professor at the Beijing Language and Culture University, emphasized that international students are the most powerful medium for telling the story of the real China when they return home.

To attract more students, Zhang urged Chinese universities to strive to reach high global rankings and work for the development of benchmark programs such as high-speed rail, electric vehicles and new energy.

Angelina Sanzharovskaya from Kazakhstan, a master's student majoring in Russian Interpretation at BISU, who has been in China for over three years, said: "The best thing about being a student here is the opportunities the university provides. Through various events, I've visited different cities and learned about the immense diversity of Chinese culture."

El Batoul Nejjaoui from Morocco, a postgraduate student at the same university with nearly 10 years of experience in living and working in China, said that as China plays an increasingly important role globally, she wants an on-the-ground understanding of its economy and urban development.

Disparity: Lack of opportunity leads to poverty

From page 1

If you pretend not to see poverty because it is classed as something different, then you do not need to act with urgency. But the reality is undeniable.

Walk the streets of the central business districts of Sydney or Melbourne, Australia, and you have to step around homeless beggars sleeping on the streets. In the countryside, they huddle in rough camps on the edge of towns. There are around 3.7 million people, or 15 percent of Australia's population, counted as living in poverty, according to a report co-authored by the Australian Council of Social Service and the University of New South Wales Sydney.

In the advanced economy of the United States, the figure is around 37 million, or 11 percent of the population, who live in poverty, according to the US Census Bureau. The percentage is much larger in the UK, where 13.4 million, or 20 percent of the population, are counted as living in poverty, according to UK government figures.

Western countries believe that poverty is the result of personal deficiencies and is not caused by structural economic problems. These unspoken beliefs are often reflected in the abusive language used to describe the poor as lazy, unintelligent or useless deadbeats.

In England, the Victorian era promoted the idea that idleness was a sin and that the workhouse or poorhouse — a place maintained at public expense to house needy people — was the solution for the lazy poor. These are ideas common to Western thinking about the foundation and causes of poverty.

Disgusted by the forced labor of industrializing Britain, German economist and philosopher Karl Marx took a different approach with his insightful analysis of social conditions: The workhouse was not a triumph of morality. It was a feature of an exploitative economic system that required a reserve of poverty-stricken workers to ensure that wages were kept low.

China treats poverty as a function of the economic system, so it has structured the system toward common prosperity and social good.

These are not abstract philosophical differences for academic debate. They are today's drivers of Chinese policy as shown in the details of the 15th Five-Year Plan.

China attacks the structural economic issues that create poverty. Western countries seem comfortable in accepting the assertion that the poor will always be with us, and so they see this as a moral problem and not an economic one.

When poverty is the result of a lack of economic opportunity, then the solution to poverty alleviation is to create the conditions necessary for economic opportunity.

Solutions require equal access to physical infrastructure and to modern digital infrastructure. Digital banking services in China like WeChat Pay and Alipay help expand inclusive financial access, as they generate financial records that can be used for loan assessments. Access rests on the rollout of reliable digital infrastructure.

China's focus is on using new quality productive forces to enable people to stay out of poverty by enabling and supporting economic opportunities.

Past success in tackling poverty means there is a genuine belief that life will improve, and that poverty will become just a memory on the path to a moderately prosperous society. Continued success is an ongoing process.

The author is an international financial technical analyst and a former national board member at the Australia China Business Council. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:27 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:27 PM

WORLD

US jet fires on Iranian tanker headed to port

Reports suggest Washington, Tehran moving toward a temporary framework agreement

By **LIA ZHU** in San Francisco
liazhu@chinadailyusa.com

The US military fired on an Iranian oil tanker in the Gulf of Oman on Wednesday as US President Donald Trump intensified pressure on Tehran to reach a deal ending the war.

An American fighter jet fired several rounds at an unladen Iranian-flagged tanker attempting to sail toward an Iranian port, US Central Command said in a post on X.

> "The Americans will not gain anything in a war they are losing that they have not gained in face-to-face negotiations."
>
> **Ebrahim Rezaei,** Iranian lawmaker

Since the two sides agreed to a ceasefire on April 8, their negotiations have yielded no concrete results, and tensions have recently risen again.

Speaking to reporters in the Oval Office on Wednesday, Trump said the US has had "very good talks" with Iran over the past 24 hours. He added there is "never a deadline" for when he expects Tehran to respond to a US proposal for ending the war.

Trump claimed Iran had accepted his demand that it not obtain a nuclear weapon, but there was no official confirmation from Tehran and Reuters reported that no agreement had been reached.

Iran said on Wednesday it was reviewing the new US proposal. Multiple media reports indicated Washington and Tehran were moving toward a one-page memorandum to end the war while deferring complex issues, such as Iran's nuclear program, to later negotiations.

US media outlet Axios first reported a proposed 14-point, one-page memorandum to end the war. CNN, citing an unnamed source familiar with the negotiations, confirmed the information.

The memorandum would declare an end to the war and trigger a 30-day negotiation period on resolving critical issues including nuclear matters, unfreezing Iranian assets and future security arrangements in the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran is still reviewing a US proposal and will convey its response to Pakistan — which has served as the main intermediary between the two sides — after completing its assessment, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei said on Wednesday, according to Iran's ISNA news agency.

Iranian lawmaker Ebrahim Rezaei, spokesman for Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, expressed skepticism. He described the text reported by Axios as "more of an American wish list than a reality".

"The Americans will not gain anything in a war they are losing that they have not gained in face-to-face negotiations," Rezaei wrote in a social media post on Wednesday.

The firing occurred after the US launched "Project Freedom", a military operation to guide commercial vessels through the Strait of Hormuz, a vital waterway for oil, gas, fertilizer and other petroleum products.

The US started the mission on Monday but halted it on Tuesday, citing progress in peace talks. Trump called the operation a "humanitarian gesture", saying other countries had asked the US to "help free up their ships, which are locked up in the Strait of Hormuz".

Iran and some analysts have disputed the US claims. Baghaei, the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson, said the waterway had been safe for international shipping before US-Israeli attacks began.

Following the halt of Project Freedom, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy said in a post on X on Wednesday that safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz is possible under "new procedures", though it did not specify what these procedures entail.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.
WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247
SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388
SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868
CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706
CHINA DAILY (ISSN 0748-6154) is published daily except weekends by China Daily USA, 1500 Broadway, Suite 2800, New York, NY 10036. Periodical postage paid at New York, NY and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to CHINA DAILY USA, 1500 Broadway, Suite 2800, New York, NY 10036.
Vol. 38 — No.1822



Protesters light flares in the colors of the Palestinian flag during a rally in Athens, Greece, on Tuesday, demanding the release of two activists detained by Israel. LOUISA GOULIAMAKI / REUTERS

UN demands Israel 'immediately' release activists

GENEVA — The United Nations on Wednesday urged Israel to immediately release two activists taken from a Gaza-bound flotilla, and demanded an investigation into "disturbing accounts" that they had been severely mistreated.

Spanish national Saif Abu Keshek and Brazilian Thiago Avila, who are held in a prison in Ashkelon, were among dozens of activists on a Gaza-bound flotilla intercepted by Israeli forces in international waters off the coast of Greece a week ago.

Israel must "immediately and unconditionally" release Keshek and Avila, "who were detained in international waters and brought to Israel, where they continue to be held without charge", UN Human Rights Office spokesman Thameen Al-Kheetan said.

"It is not a crime to show solidarity and attempt to bring humanitarian aid to the Palestinian population in Gaza, who are in dire need of it," he added.

The flotilla's vessels set sail from France, Spain and Italy with the aim of breaking Israel's blockade of Gaza and delivering humanitarian aid to the war-ravaged Palestinian territory.

Keshek and Avila's detention had initially been extended until Tuesday, but the Ashkelon Magistrate's Court extended it further until May 10.

Representatives for Avila and Keshek have accused Israeli authorities of abusing the two men, who have been on hunger strike for the past week.

Spokesman Kheetan decried the "disturbing accounts of severe mistreatment", calling for an investigation and insisting "those responsible must be brought to justice".

"We call for an end to Israel's use of arbitrary detention and of broadly and vaguely defined terrorism legislation, inconsistent with international human rights law," he said.

"Israel must also end its blockade on Gaza, and allow and facilitate the entry of humanitarian assistance to the besieged Palestinian strip, in sufficient amounts," he added.

'No evidence'

On Tuesday, Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares said there was "no evidence" to justify the "illegal" arrest of Keshek and Avila.

"This is a completely illegal detention; no Israeli agent has jurisdiction in international waters," he told public broadcaster RTVE.

Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva demanded on Tuesday that Israel release the two activists.

"Our government, together with that of Spain ... demands that they be fully guaranteed their safety and immediately released," he said in a post on X.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian government on Tuesday condemned Israel's approval of about $300 million for settlement roads in the occupied West Bank, calling it a "flagrant violation" of international law.

It said more than 1,600 settler and Israeli force attacks were recorded last month, including assaults, crop damage and home demolitions.

AGENCIES—XINHUA

Small ball, wide door: Ping-Pong Diplomacy lives on

By **YANG HAN** in Hong Kong
kelly@chinadailyapac.com

Fifty-five years after United States table tennis players made a historic visit to China, the spirit of Ping-Pong Diplomacy continues to live on as people-to-people exchanges remain a cornerstone in bilateral relations.

That is the view of Bill Einreinhofer, a three-time Emmy Award-winning US film producer and director of the public television documentary *Your Serve or Mine*.

An Asian premiere of the documentary was held at the Asia Society Hong Kong Center on Tuesday to coincide with the 55th anniversary of Ping-Pong Diplomacy this year.

"Contemporary observers typically refer to the 'bad' relationship between the United States and the People's Republic of China. But in the early 1970s, there was no relationship," Einreinhofer told China Daily.

Yet, the leaders of both countries wanted to find a way to talk and they discovered it through a "remarkable accident" — when somebody got on the wrong bus and opened the door that most people did not even know existed, he said.

At the 1971 World Table Tennis Championships in Nagoya, Japan, US player Glenn Cowan accidentally boarded the Chinese team's bus. He was warmly greeted by China's Zhuang Zedong, who gave Cowan a Huangshan Mountain silk tapestry as a gift.

On April 10 that year, at China's invitation, nine players from the US table tennis team made their historic trip to China, becoming the first US nationals to visit the country in more than 20 years.

The trip was the beginning of "Ping-Pong Diplomacy", paving the way for high-level China-US diplomatic talks, with then-US president Richard Nixon visiting China in 1972 and the formal establishment of diplomatic ties in 1979.

Einreinhofer's documentary, shot on locations in China and the US, not only interviews athletes who took part in the 1971 exchange, but also explores people-to-people exchanges between China and the US in recent times, and how the spirit of Ping-Pong Diplomacy continues to live on.

"The visit of American table tennis players to China made communication possible. The same holds true today," Einreinhofer said. People-to-people exchange plays an important role away from the glare of the media spotlight as it gives both countries an opportunity to communicate candidly, he said.

As he talked to people of different generations for the documentary, Einreinhofer said he found that young people remained eager to explore their counterparts' culture and "daily routines", which could give them deep insights into similarities and differences.

Bridging cultures

"Years ago, I was a young scholar studying in the US ... that is why I feel so compelled to bring this film to Hong Kong and to audiences across the Chinese mainland," said Ziheng Wang, who coproduced the documentary.

The film was first shown on US public broadcaster PBS in April last year and has been broadcast on more than 250 local stations, Wang said. The team hopes to bring the documentary to other cities where it was filmed at, including Beijing and Shanghai, she said.

The team also developed free learning resources and lesson plans for US public high school students to learn about Ping-Pong Diplomacy, saying exchanges of ideas among the next generation are becoming an important link in people-to-people diplomacy in this era.

Chan Tin-yan, 20, an undergraduate student in Hong Kong who plans to study in the US in two years' time, said he was amazed to learn the history of Ping-Pong Diplomacy and how the city served as a bridge for US players to enter the Chinese mainland.

"My biggest takeaway is this kind of cultural connection between two different countries is really good," Chan said.

"It is so vital to see all the communications and exchange what we have in different cultures."

Reflecting on growing up in an era when China was often referred to as "Red China" and diplomatically unrecognized in the US, Einreinhofer said the conditions for bilateral exchanges at that time were far worse than the tensions today.

That is why he remains deeply optimistic, he added.

"It is because of the nature of the American people, the nature of the Chinese people. We are two very welcoming cultures," he said.

Spain to allow virus-hit ship to dock in Canary Islands

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

Authorities in Spain have granted permission for a Netherlands-flagged luxury cruise ship hit by a deadly hantavirus outbreak and anchored off Cape Verde to sail to the Canary Islands.

In a statement late on Tuesday, Spain's Health Ministry said the World Health Organization had explained that Cape Verde, in West Africa, could not receive the 147 passengers and crew of the MV *Hondius*.

"The Canary Islands are the closest location with the necessary capabilities," the ministry said. "Spain has a moral and legal obligation to assist these people, among whom are also several Spanish citizens."

Arrival in the Canary Islands was expected in "three to four days", it said, without specifying the port.

"Once there, the crew and passengers will be duly examined, cared for, and transferred to their respective countries," it said.

Since departing Argentina about a month ago for an Atlantic Ocean crossing, three passengers have died.

The WHO is investigating how hantavirus appeared on the ship, noting that the first victim developed symptoms on April 6 and possibly contracted the virus before boarding.

The rare disease, typically transmitted from infected rodents via urine, droppings or saliva, was suspected in the deaths of the three passengers. The WHO has said it had been told that "there are no rats on board" the ship.

As additional cases emerged, passengers and crew were placed in isolation after Cape Verde authorities barred the ship from docking. The vessel is anchored just off Praia, the island nation's capital.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said three patients with suspected hantavirus infections have been evacuated from the ship and are on their way to the Netherlands.

After the evacuations, the ship would "continue its route", said Ann Lindstrand, the WHO representative in Cape Verde.

Oceanwide Expeditions, the operator, confirmed it plans to send the ship north to the Canary Islands, either Gran Canaria or Tenerife.

Passengers told The Associated Press that they were coping well with the isolation.

"Our days have been close to normal, just waiting for authorities to find a solution," said Qasem Elhato, 31. "But morale on the ship is high and we're keeping ourselves busy with reading, watching movies, having hot drinks and that kind of things."

Veteran of victory



World War II veteran Nikolai Golubtsov, 99, holds flowers as he is honored on Tuesday in Sevastopol, Crimea, Russia, ahead of Victory Day, which marks the defeat of Nazi Germany. ALEXEY PAVLISHAK / REUTERS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:27 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:27 PM

WORLD

Chinese display firms showcase innovation, resilience at exhibition

By **RENA LI** in Los Angeles
renali@chinadailyusa.com

Major Chinese display technology companies showcased a broad range of new products and next-generation applications at the 2026 Display Week hosted by the Society for Information Display in Los Angeles, highlighting continued investment in innovation, research and development, and global industrial cooperation amid evolving global trade conditions.

The event, taking place Sunday to Friday at the Los Angeles Convention Center, featured more than 200 exhibitors and a record-setting 675 technical papers and sessions, providing attendees with a chance to see the latest displays and measurement tools.

Chinese display manufacturer BOE made its 12th consecutive appearance at the event, presenting more than 30 new technologies and products, including several global and industry-first launches. According to the company, many of the exhibits were developed under its three core technology brands.

In an interview with China Daily, BOE's Chief Brand Officer Si Da said that research and development remains central to the company's long-term strategy and competitiveness.

"Geopolitical factors are something we must consider, but before considering geopolitics, we must first focus on our own technological capabilities and innovation capacity, because that is the core competitiveness behind BOE's success," Si said.

BOE invests approximately 7 percent of its annual revenue into research and development, with expected R&D spending reaching nearly 14 billion yuan ($2.06 billion) in 2025.

The company also emphasized an open innovation strategy involving collaboration with universities, research institutions, developers and industrial partners globally.

"We believe technological development requires coordinated collaboration across industry, academia, research institutions and application partners," Si said, adding that it also demonstrates the openness of Chinese technology companies.

Global partners also highlighted cooperation with the Chinese display maker. Yulia Kern of Dawar Technologies said the company values rapid communication and collaboration on customized applications.

"We like that if there's a unique application with some custom features that BOE always responds and says, here's what we could do," Kern said.

At the same exhibition, TCL CSOT, a subsidiary of TCL Technology, introduced its APEX Pixel framework, which the company said is designed to unify pixel-level innovation across LCD, OLED and other display technologies.

Industry representatives attending the exhibition pointed to growing applications for advanced display technologies across entertainment, transportation and agriculture.

Bram Desmet, chief executive officer of Flanders Scientific, which supplies professional displays for filmmaking and broadcasting applications, said customers in the industry require high-performance monitors with strong color accuracy.

"It's a very niche market, very small but very demanding customers. Customers expect almost perfect performance," Desmet said.

He said he was particularly interested in tandem OLED-related technologies presented at the exhibition.

"It's very promising," he said. "I'm particularly excited about the tandem of lead products displayed here. I think that that's a very interesting future technology."

Advanced display technologies are also expanding into agricultural equipment and industrial vehicles.

Fred Haddad, technical product manager at CNH Industrial, said the company is exploring the use of OLED heads-up displays in vehicle windshields for agricultural machinery.

"We are looking at applications for displaying vehicle information, oil pressure, speed, RPM, on the windshield of our vehicles," Haddad said.

According to him, technologies such as high-brightness displays and windshield-integrated systems could help improve efficiency in farming operations by assisting with seeding, watering, spraying and crop monitoring.

The exhibition also reflected ongoing concerns surrounding tariffs and supply chain adjustments.

Tianma, another Chinese display manufacturer, presented ruggedized displays designed for aviation and marine environments, including products capable of operating under direct sunlight and extreme temperatures.

Dale Maunu, director of marketing at Tianma, said tariffs continue to affect customers and supply chain decisions.

"The tariffs definitely affect customers," Maunu said. "For customers that we ship to directly from our warehouse in Southern California, every invoice just has one more line for tariffs. Customers always pay the tariffs. It dramatically affects the supply chain."

According to Maunu, some assembly operations have gradually shifted to countries such as Vietnam and Thailand as companies seek to manage tariff-related costs and maintain competitiveness in international markets.

Maunu also reflected on broader structural changes in global manufacturing over the past two decades. He said the movement of production capacity overseas was accompanied by a decline in specialized industrial skills within the United States.



'May the 4th be with you'

A *Star Wars*-themed drone show held in the night sky celebrates *Star Wars* Day at a park along the Han River in Seoul, South Korea, on Tuesday. Fans around the world come together every year on May 4 to celebrate the day, which is a pun on the famous line, "May the force be with you". AHN YOUNG-JOON / AP

Japan's moves imperil peace

PM's visits may encourage groupings in region, undermine stability: Experts

By **LIU JIANQIAO**
liujianqiao@chinadaily.com.cn

CROSS CURRENTS

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's recent visit to Australia, which has hyped up so-called supply chain resilience and critical minerals security, may encourage the formation of exclusive groupings in the Asia-Pacific and undermine regional peace and stability, experts said.

During her visit to Canberra, the two countries signed four separate agreements, including statements on defense, energy and critical minerals cooperation, as well as a joint declaration on "economic security cooperation".

The two sides have also signed a new agreement on critical minerals, saying they would elevate it to a "core pillar" of the economic relationship and identifying six rare earths "strategic projects" that they can support to diversify supply chains.

Last month, Japan and Australia signed contracts to deliver the first three of a $6.5 billion fleet of Japanese-designed Mogami-class frigates.

In her talks with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, Takaichi expressed hope that Japan and Australia will take on a leading role in promoting regional stability under the updated "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" vision, noting that their growing cooperation is effectively evolving into what could be seen as a "quasi-alliance".

She said she discussed issues, including China, with Albanese. However, according to an official statement released on his official website, the Australian prime minister made no mention of the topic.

The Japanese prime minister arrived in Australia on Sunday following a three-day visit to Vietnam, where she held talks on energy and critical minerals.

Japan's efforts to deepen institutionalized energy security cooperation with Australia, effectively forming a "small-circle" framework, can be seen as a geopolitical maneuver under the banner of "economic security", said Liu Shuliang, an associate researcher at the Tianjin Academy of Social Sciences.

"Japan's push to deepen cooperation with Australia appears focused on economic security, but also carries a clear geopolitical dimension aimed at China," he said.

Multiple elements of Japan-Australia collaboration suggest a clear alignment with the United States' "Indo-Pacific Strategy", particularly in the efforts to restructure critical mineral supply chains, consistent with the objectives of the US-led "Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity", he added.

In their joint declaration on economic security cooperation, Japan and Australia emphasized concerns about "economic coercion" and committed to "building resilient supply chains".

"This reflects a broader push to align with US-led efforts to diversify and rebalance control over strategic resources," Liu said.

Framed as "economic security", the mechanism risks becoming an exclusive regional bloc that politicizes economic issues, potentially disrupting global supply chains and deepening regional divisions, he added.

Broader objective

Chen Hong, director of the Australian Studies Centre at East China Normal University in Shanghai, said Japan is using supply chain diversification as a rationale, but its broader objective appears to be to deepen ties with Australia and align more closely with US strategic efforts in the region.

He said Japan is seeking to leverage Australia's natural resources to address its own strategic constraints, while simultaneously advancing security and defense cooperation with Canberra.

"This approach risks blurring the line between economic and security domains, potentially fostering bloc dynamics that could undermine the foundations of long-term open and cooperative development in the Asia-Pacific," he said.

Chen said that from earlier warship contracts to deepening defense and security cooperation, these developments underscore Japan's ongoing push to stretch the constraints of its post-World War II pacifist constitution, expand arms exports, and redefine its role in overseas security, with a view to strengthening its military footprint.

"Under this backdrop, Takaichi's call for strengthening the quasi-alliance between Japan and Australia would send a dangerous signal and risk heightening security concerns across the Asia-Pacific region," he said.

Japan's move is likely to accelerate regional bloc formation, fuel an arms race, undermine peace and stability, and heighten the risk of division and confrontation in the region, Liu from Tianjin added.

Experts said that given the evolving international landscape, Australia must maintain strategic autonomy.

Australia-China relations are in a relatively positive phase, and Australia should take an objective view of China's growing role in promoting peace and development, while avoiding being drawn into geopolitical rivalry and ideological narratives, Liu said.

Australia should place greater emphasis on sustaining pragmatic economic and trade cooperation with China, rather than align with the decoupling attempts in supply chains that risk undermining its own interests, Chen said.

It should support multilateral cooperation and avoid alignment with confrontational frameworks, he added.

Agencies contributed to this story.

Briefly

SOUTH KOREA

Judge in ex-first lady's case found dead

A South Korean judge who presided over the appeal trial of former first lady Kim Keon-hee's Deutsch Motors stock manipulation and other charges was found dead early on Wednesday, Yonhap News Agency reported. Shin Jong-oh, a judge at the Seoul High Court, was found in a flower bed near the court building in Seoul. A suicide note was found at the scene, and police are investigating the exact cause of death. A special counsel team on Monday appealed to South Korea's Supreme Court against an appellate court ruling that sentenced Kim, the wife of South Korea's former president Yoon Suk-yeol, to four years in prison over charges including stock manipulation and graft.

AFRICA

Ethiopia, Sudan accuse each other of attacks

Ethiopia and Sudan traded accusations on Tuesday, each claiming the other had violated its territory. The Ethiopian government on Tuesday rejected Sudan's recent accusation of drone strikes as "baseless". Sudan recalled its ambassador to Ethiopia after accusing Addis Ababa of a series of drone attacks that hit its international airport on Monday. Sudan's Foreign Minister Mohi El-Din Salem said in a statement on Tuesday that his country is "ready to enter into an open confrontation with Ethiopia". In a statement issued on Tuesday, the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs rejected Sudan's "baseless accusations".

UNITED STATES

2 killed and 3 injured in back-to-back shootings

A man shot five people, killing two, in back-to-back shootings on Tuesday at a shopping center and then an apartment building because he was angry over business dealings, police said. The first shooting happened just before 10 am at a shopping center in a neighborhood in a suburb north of Dallas, the police department said. When police arrived, they found four adults who had been shot. While they were investigating, another shooting was reported at an apartment complex roughly 6 kilometers away, and responding officers found a dead man inside one of the apartments.

XINHUA—AGENCIES

President flexes control in primary state elections

COLUMBUS, Indiana — Elections in the US states of Indiana, Michigan and Ohio on Tuesday made a picture increasingly clear — that President Donald Trump still dominates the Republican Party, and Democrats seem to have the momentum ahead of November's midterm elections.

The biggest test of the president's power came in Indiana, where he backed primary challenges against seven Republican state senators who rejected his redistricting plan in December. Five of the president's candidates won.

"Big night for MAGA in Indiana," US Senator Jim Banks wrote on social media, adding that he was "proud to have helped elect more conservative Republicans to the Indiana State Senate".

It's been a costly and unprecedented intraparty battle that has exacerbated tensions among Republicans ahead of the November midterm elections that will determine control of Congress.

State Senator Travis Holdman, one of the incumbents to lose his primary, said he was at peace with his defeat. He voted against redistricting and faced more than $1.3 million in attack advertising funded by organizations tied to Banks and Governor Mike Braun.



Donna Wooten (right) votes across from her husband, Jerry Wooten, at a vote center during a primary election on Tuesday, in West Lafayette, Indiana. CARA PENQUITE / AP

"I did what my constituents asked me to do and it cost me my job," he says. "But that's OK."

Holdman warned that a more aggressive style of campaigning was arriving in his state.

"Welcome to DC politics in Indiana because this means that's what's coming," he said.

The race that was too close to call was the most expensive of the seven primaries.

The fundraising groups led by Banks and Braun combined to spend more than $2.2 million on advertising attacking Senator Spencer Deery, according to the ad-tracking firm AdImpact.

Trump began leaning on Republican-led states last year to redraw their congressional maps to make it easier for his party to hold its thin majority in the US House. Although redistricting is normally done once a decade, after a new census, the president wanted to abandon tradition to gain a political edge.

Texas was the first to follow through, and the White House pressured Indiana to go along, too. Vice-President JD Vance met with state politicians in Washington and Indianapolis, and Trump weighed in by conference call.

Meanwhile, in Michigan, Democrat Chedrick Greene won a special election on Tuesday, securing the party's control of the state Senate through the remainder of Governor Gretchen Whitmer's term.

Over in Ohio, primaries locked in candidates for two major races with national implications.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:27 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:27 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Cessation of hostilities a prerequisite to address Strait of Hormuz deadlock

While Washington insists it is working to "secure" passage through the Strait of Hormuz for the world, recent reports describe mounting tensions. The framing is as revealing as the facts: the United States attempts to portray its actions as "a public good", even as the origins of the crisis lie on its doorstep.

Prior to the escalation started by the US-Israeli strikes on Iran the strait was not at the center of a crisis. This causal sequence should not be obscured by Washington's altruistic claim. If someone sets alight a house and then seeks credit for trying to extinguish the blaze, the applause is likely to be muted.

Washington argues that the US itself does not depend on the Strait of Hormuz. Yet inflation in the US remains stubborn, with energy costs a persistent driver. Declining approval ratings for the US administration and the looming pressure of midterm elections underscore the domestic stakes.

In this light, when Washington alleges that Iran is on the verge of collapse, Iran desperately wants a deal, or that Tehran has more to lose from a closure of the strait, it is not unreasonable to infer the opposite.

The diplomatic theater of Washington, which tries to exert pressure on China over the Middle East crisis, adds another layer of obfuscation to the proceedings. Some US officials, including the treasury secretary, have publicly urged China to "step up" its role in persuading Iran to keep the strait open. The treasury secretary told the media, "if they want to be good global citizens", Beijing could join hands with other countries at the United Nations, in reference to an April UN Security Council draft resolution allegedly aimed at "protecting" commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz that China and Russia vetoed for its lack of fairness and justice.

Yet this request distorts China's role. Beijing has, in fact, been engaged in responsible diplomatic efforts aimed at de-escalation. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's meeting with his Iranian counterpart in Beijing on Wednesday was the latest move in a broader push to encourage dialogue and restraint.

As Wang stressed in the meeting, China believes that a comprehensive cessation of hostilities is urgently needed, that a relapse into conflict is even more inadvisable, and that continued adherence to negotiation is of paramount importance.

On the issue of the Strait of Hormuz, the world shares a common concern over the restoration of safe and normal passage. As Wang said, Beijing hopes the parties involved will respond as promptly as possible to the strong calls of the international community.

China encourages Iran and other Gulf states to engage in dialogue aimed at fostering neighborly relations, and supports the establishment, by regional countries themselves, of a regional peace and security architecture based on shared participation, the safeguarding of regional interests, and the realization of common development.

The pro-peace endeavors of China are grounded in a framework articulated in a four-point proposal it put forward last month on peace and stability in the Middle East, which emphasizes peaceful coexistence, respect for sovereignty, adherence to international law and the coordination of development with security.

It is unrealistic for Washington to press Beijing to endorse the premise that military action lacking UN authorization and legitimacy can be retrospectively legitimized as a contribution to global common interests. Nor should Washington expect the world to accept the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz — under the US' military pressure — as an altruistic act by those who precipitated the crisis in the first place.

The US may declare to its domestic audience that its Epic Fury operation has concluded with desired effects. But the costs of disruption in the Strait of Hormuz are borne not just by the protagonists, but by the world as a whole.

If Washington genuinely seeks to uphold the world's common interests as it professes, it should begin by recognizing its role in shaping the current predicament. It should also accept that diplomatic efforts by others will not serve as a post hoc endorsement of the US-Israeli attacks on Iran. What the US administration seeks to do now is to pressure others to clear up a mess of its own making while taking the credit if any breakthrough is made.

Stability in critical global arteries cannot be secured through unilateral forces. It requires consistency, restraint and a willingness to place shared interests above immediate political gain. Until that lesson is absorbed, the Strait of Hormuz will remain not just a strategic choke point, but a mirror reflecting the misjudgment of some.

Service sector driving high-quality growth

The 2026 Beijing International Automotive Exhibition, the world's largest auto show, was a testament to the rapid internationalization and quality upgrade of China's service sector, and compelling evidence of how China pursues high-quality development through innovation and openness.

With automakers from 21 countries and regions displaying more than 1,400 vehicles, the industry showcase, held from April 24 to May 3, highlighted China's role as a competitive player in electric vehicles and the transition of some global brands from "in China, for China" to "in China, for the world" as they deepen cooperation with local partners and leverage China's supply chain to optimize global production and sales. The mutual learning and co-evolution of Chinese and foreign companies in the Chinese market demonstrate that openness is two-way empowerment.

The event also offered the world a window through which to observe the development of China's convention and exhibition economy, a vital and integral part of the broader service trade industry.

Take the capital city as an example. With the construction of high-capacity, smart and green venues, Beijing's exhibition industry has become a key driver of the local economy. From automotive shows to energy storage expos and medical health fairs, the theme of the city's exhibition calendar is becoming increasingly innovative, intelligent and sustainable, reflecting its efforts to build itself into a globally influential convention and exhibition hub.

Shortly after the annual gatherings of China's top legislature and political advisory body in March, the State Council, the country's Cabinet, has twice specifically emphasized the development of the service industry in its meetings, sending a clear signal that the service industry is an important part of the modern industrial system, relating to the overall high-quality development and modernization.

The policymakers have unambiguously stated the need to actively plan and promote the expansion and improvement of the service industry.

In April, China held its first national conference on the service sector, which called for fostering new growth points, enhancing the digital and intelligent transformation of the sector, strengthening producer and consumer services, and cultivating more "China Services" brands, while also promoting broader opening-up of the service industry.

These pragmatic policy signals underscore a recognition that as China's economy transitions from a phase of rapid growth to one of high-quality development, modern services should play a major role in driving innovation, employment and consumption.

The numbers speak for themselves. In 2025, the added value of China's service sector exceeded 80 trillion yuan ($11.65 trillion), accounting for 57.7 percent of GDP and contributing 61.4 percent to economic growth. The industry also provided around half of the country's jobs and accounted for 46.1 percent of per capita spending by urban and rural residents, making it a key engine for expanding domestic demand.

China's expansion of its service sector also provides numerous shared opportunities and benefits for the world at large. The country's industry, economy and market will continue to contribute to global growth and certainty in the process. Instead of clinging to the zero-sum game mentality peddled by some naysayers of the Chinese economy, a pragmatic choice for multinational corporations is to embrace the opportunities presented by the superlarge Chinese market and foster win-win cooperation.

The service industry is the cornerstone of a thriving economy, serving as a barometer of a nation's development stage and a driver of global competitiveness. And China's thriving exhibition industry is a prime example of how the service sector is driving the country's high-quality economic growth.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Fan Jianping



Opinion Line

Politicized fragmentation is the wrong prescription

According to Reuters, G7 countries, led in part by France, have convened discussions aimed at curbing what they describe as China's "grip" on critical mineral supply chains, even considering the creation of a permanent coordinating mechanism. Parallel reports by Euronews highlight cooperation among the European Union, the United States and Japan to restructure supply chains for the crucial raw materials.

Yet this is putting prescription before diagnosis.

The modern global supply system is facing obstacles at a time when the world's largest economy has increasingly embraced tariffs, export controls and financial sanctions as instruments of statecraft. Trade has been weaponized; interdependence, once celebrated as a stabilizing force, is now treated as a vulnerability. Inevitably, such actions reverberate across supply chains that were built on assumptions of relative openness and predictability.

However, rather than acknowledging this underlying disease and strengthening their immunity, some developed economies are spreading the contagion. The implicit belief seems to be that disengaging from China will naturally deliver "security".

This belief is, at best, incomplete. Within the EU itself, there is growing recognition that excessive reliance on the US — be it in energy, defense, finance and now industrial policy — poses its own strategic vulnerabilities.

Moreover, the premise that interdependence is inherently dangerous misreads how global markets function. Within a rules-based system, mutual dependence is precisely what disciplines behavior. It creates incentives for stability, predictability and cooperation. The risks arise not from interdependence itself, but from its politicization.

Unlike many economies, China is simultaneously a major importer of raw materials, a processor and exporter of refined inputs and a crucial market for high-end manufacturing equipment and semiconductors. Being so deeply embedded across multiple nodes of global supply chains, it has no appetite for causing systemic disruption.

To suggest, therefore, that China is the principal source of "instability" in global supply chains is to overlook both data and logic. The fragmentation now underway risks harming all participants. Resource-exporting countries would face collapsing demand if markets were artificially segmented and manufacturing hubs would struggle to sustain output without access to large, integrated markets.

The more uncomfortable question for some policymakers in the G7 and beyond is whether the "partners" they are now prioritizing truly represent more reliable, rule-abiding alternatives. Trust in international economic relations cannot be declared; it should be demonstrated through consistent adherence to agreed norms, which, in recent years, have been eroded not by emerging economies, but by the very actor that once championed them.

Within Europe, a cohort of policymakers has adopted a de facto adversarial stance toward China. Yet this stance often coexists with a willingness to acquiesce to pressure from Europe's transatlantic ally. The result is a policy posture that is neither strategically autonomous nor analytically coherent.

A rational approach tells one that supply chain resilience cannot be achieved through bloc formation or ideological alignment. It requires restoring confidence in the openness and predictability of the global trading system. That, in turn, demands a recommitment to multilateralism.

This doesn't imply passivity. Economies are entitled to safeguard legitimate security interests. But the indiscriminate expansion of "security" to encompass broad swaths of economic activity risks becoming self-defeating. China, for its part, has signaled that it will continue to pursue mutually beneficial economic relations with partners that engage on the basis of equality and respect. At the same time, it has made clear that discriminatory measures will invite proportionate responses. Such reciprocity is not evidence of risk; it is a predictable feature of sovereign interaction and rules defense.

The choice facing some developed economies is therefore not between dependence and independence, but between managed interdependence and unmanaged fragmentation. The former requires discipline, humility and analytical clarity. The latter offers only the illusion of control, at the cost of stability.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Industry still the foundation for development

Editor's note: *China's economy is witnessing the emergence of new drivers. Zheng Yongnian, dean of the School of Public Policy at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen, spoke to Economic Daily about why it shouldn't abandon low-end industries. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

Currently, a new wave of technological revolution and industrial transformation is making breakthroughs at a greater speed. New growth drivers are emerging for the Chinese economy, which shows no sign of peaking.

China strives to harmonize economic and social progress and balance the roles of the government and the market. This approach highlights both efficiency and equity, and integrates vitality with order. The country continues to deepen reforms in key fields to improve the socialist market economy system, and adheres to the approach of combining an efficient market with a capable government.

On the one hand, China recognizes that the government cannot manage everything on its own, and acknowledges that further efforts are required to unleash economic vitality. On the other hand, it has drawn lessons from other economies to avoid disorderly capital expansion and the structural imbalances that may follow. These institutional arrangements are conducive to sustaining long-term growth.

A robust manufacturing industry is an important advantage for China's economic development. The country is not only upgrading its traditional industries, but also fostering emerging industries and industries of the future. It is accelerating efforts to build a modern, comprehensive, advanced and secure industrial system.

China enjoys a complete industry chain and a huge market thanks to its all-encompassing manufacturing industry. The country needs to continue developing the real economy and the manufacturing industry, and advancing the integration of scientific and technological innovation with industrial innovation.

Some traditional businesses, such as rebar and cement, remain vital for the manufacturing industry, and should not be abandoned simply because they are not "high-end".

High-value-added and high-technology sectors have only a limited share in the overall economy. Also, many high-technology sectors require collaboration and support from other industries. In some fields, the capacity of different sectors to coordinate with each other matters more than individual technological breakthroughs.

A modern industrial system includes traditional, emerging and future industries. The three do not replace one another, but support and reinforce each other. A truly strong economy needs not only high-end manufacturing, but also some low-end and mid-level sectors. Only in this way can the economy achieve greater resilience and competitiveness.

Under the new circumstances, China needs to boost not only its GDP but also the "Chinese people's economy", or gross national income. GNI, which includes the country's overseas earnings, embodies the open way in which China pursues development. For instance, as Chinese enterprises make investments abroad under the Belt and Road Initiative, China's production capacity, technologies and development experience are "going global".

The country doesn't seek a monopoly or intend to stop other countries from developing as some Western countries have done. Nor will it impose its own development pattern on other countries.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:27 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:27 PM

VIEWS

Erik Solheim

Ecology and economics are allies, not rivals

For most of modern history, the world operated on the conviction that if you want to develop your economy, you will damage the environment. The two move in opposite directions, so you can choose one.

This was not the view of ignorant or careless people. It was the lived experience of industrialization.

Global Lens

The British knew that sending children into coal mines during the Industrial Revolution was harmful. But they did it anyway, because they saw no other path to prosperity.

That model spread from Britain to Germany, to the United States, to Japan, to the Republic of Korea, to China, and eventually to every corner of the world that wanted to grow. For nearly two centuries, the trade-off between development and nature was not a debate. It was a fact of life.

That fact has changed only in the past few years, and the agent of change was not idealism. It was price. Twenty years ago, the world took an entire year to add one gigawatt of solar capacity.

Today the same gigawatt is added in half a day. Solar energy costs have fallen by around 90 percent in a decade. Wind costs have followed a similar trajectory. Batteries are now doing the same. When clean energy becomes the cheapest option in most of the world, the old trade-off dissolves.

You no longer have to choose between growing your economy and protecting your environment, because the tools that grow your economy are increasingly the same tools that protect it. The debate that defined two centuries of development has not been won by one side or the other. It has simply been overtaken by technology and economics.

Any nation replacing a drop of oil from the Strait of Hormuz with solar energy saves money, and becomes more energy independent.

This shift changes everything about how we should read what is happening in China.

What looks from the outside like a collection of separate environmental policies is actually something more coherent: a systematic attempt to prove, at scale and over time, that the old trade-off was a historical condition rather than a permanent truth.

I have been watching this unfold for two decades. Earlier this year, I took a boat along the Lijiang River in Guilin, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region.

That river was once heavily polluted, widely reported as one of China's most polluted rivers. But what I saw from the water settled something for me.

The water is so clean you can go for a swim, maybe even drink it. It shows that protection and prosperity can advance together, and that the decision to treat nature as an asset rather than a sacrifice is one that pays back. Beautiful nature invites tourists and brings prosperity.

The Yellow River, the Yangtze and the Lancang-Mekong rivers sustain hundreds of millions of people across Asia. China is now building a national park at their origin in the Qinghai plateau to protect these watersheds for the long term. On the Talatan grassland nearby, vast solar installations cover what was once barren desert. The panels generate electricity for the national grid while their shade slows the wind, reduces evaporation, and allows grass to grow beneath them.



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

Herders now graze their sheep underneath what has become the largest solar installation on earth.

Energy production and ecological restoration are not competing here. They are the same project.

This is what makes the concept of ecological civilization genuinely significant. As articulated by Chinese President Xi Jinping, "Lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets." The argument is not that China will sacrifice economic growth to protect nature, but that protecting nature is itself a sound economic strategy. The Yangtze River basin is the proof. A decade ago, a landmark commitment was made in Chongqing to prioritize ecological protection along the river over large-scale development. In 10 years, around 96.5 percent of the river's water meets the high-quality standards.

Over the same period, the region's GDP has more than doubled.

The tiger population in the Northeast China Tiger and Leopard National Park has grown from 27 to around 70.

Nearly 50,000 people have got jobs connected to China's first five national parks.

Managed well, nature generates wealth rather than competes with it.

This March, China adopted the Ecological and Environmental Code, consolidating 30 separate environmental laws into a single statutory framework. It is the second formal code in Chinese law after the Civil Code. It shows that while some other countries are retreating from environmental commitments, China is embedding those commitments in legal foundations.

The message is that this direction will hold, regardless of short-term economic pressures. That kind of institutional continuity is precisely what makes ecological recovery possible. You cannot restore a river or a tiger population in one political cycle. You can only do it by committing over decades and meaning it.

This matters beyond China because the old trade-off weighed most heavily on the countries that could least afford it. The logic of pollute first and clean up later was, in practice, a sentence passed on poor nations, not a strategy chosen by them. Clean up later turned out to mean never, or not until enormous damage had already been done.

But developing countries no longer face that sentence. Clean energy is not a luxury technology available only to wealthy nations.

It is, increasingly, the cheapest technology available to anyone. In Rwanda, protecting mountain gorillas generates around $1,500 per hour-long visitor experience, making conservation one of the country's most important economic assets. The gorillas are worth more alive in their habitat than they could be in any other form.

India, the home of around 75 percent of the world's tigers, has doubled its tiger population, not only for animal welfare but as an economic strategy. That is the logic that China is applying to its rivers, its forests, and its wildlife at a scale the world has not seen before.

The debate whether a country must choose between development and nature shaped two centuries of industrial history. Many still have that old mindset. But the economics of clean energy and the practical experience of ecological restoration have now answered that debate. The choice was never as fixed as it seemed.

And for the nations still at the beginning of their development paths, it is no longer a choice at all.

The author is a diplomat and former minister of international development and minister of environment of Norway. He was also the under-secretary-general of the United Nations and executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

China and the World Roundtable | Global Collaboration on Maritime Governance

Editor's note: *The Shared Oceans Shanghai Forum 2026 was held at Shanghai Maritime University in April. Launched in 2025, the forum promotes joint efforts to build a maritime community with a shared future. Experts from various countries and international organizations discussed maritime security, connectivity and other issues at the forum. Below are excerpts from the comments of some of the participants.*

Building a maritime community with a shared future

Improved global maritime governance needed



Mao Ruipeng is the director of the Institute for Global Governance at the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies.

The United Nations has a leading position in global maritime security governance, serving as the overarching framework for shaping and safeguarding the modern international maritime order.

Oceans play a fundamental role in global trade transport, data transmission, energy supply and food security.

In recent years, the strategic significance of oceans has heightened, causing maritime security to gradually shift from a marginal issue to a core topic of discussion within the UN.

Yet maritime security is confronted with increasingly diverse threats and challenges, ranging from traditional risks, such as piracy and illegal fishing, to emerging hazards, including plastic pollution, climate change, ecological crises and threats to submarine cables. These challenges require comprehensive solutions.

Although maritime security has become a key topic of discussion within the UN, the organization is facing several challenges in handling the various threats.

The first hurdle is the stance taken by major countries. The United States' maritime policies, which emphasize key waterways and seek to control them, are steering UN discussions on maritime security away from international cooperation.

The second issue is the deep-seated differences between countries regarding the scope of maritime security.

There are vastly different views on which specific maritime security issues should be deliberated at the UN Security Council. Indeed, maritime security has become a battleground for rivalry and contention among various parties.

The third challenge comes from the UN itself. While many international organizations are involved in maritime security affairs within the UN system, they should have had an effective leading and coordinating mechanism.

As a result, some countries and think tanks have called for the UN to set up a dedicated institution to address maritime issues in a coordinated manner. Despite these challenges, the UN is expected to make slow but steady progress in placing greater emphasis on maritime security.

Inclusivity critical for maritime public goods



Wang Bocheng is an associate professor at the School of Marxism in Shanghai Maritime University.

The world has a wide variety of maritime public goods, but there is a structural imbalance in the provision of these goods.

There is considerable international cooperation and public goods in fishery resources.

But in other fields, such as maritime security and polar governance, the interests of different countries collide, leading to a shortage of relevant public goods.

Another problem lies in the imbalance of participants. There is a divide between the Global North and the Global South. Developed countries tend to follow the approach of "small yards, high fences", which effectively denies most developing countries access to the maritime public goods they provide.

A public good is defined by non-excludability and non-rivalry in nature. But many maritime public goods around the world fall in the category of quasi-public goods or club goods — goods that only a limited number of countries can use.

A typical example is the provision of public goods by some Western countries. These goods are highly exclusive, and often marked by attempts to impose stringent standards and high thresholds to keep China out.

China launched the Belt and Road Initiative and proposed the building of a maritime community with a shared future. It has provided maritime public goods — such as institutional frameworks, technological support and deep-sea data — which are available to all countries.

Guided by the vision of a maritime community with a shared future, China contributes to ocean conservation, maritime resource utilization and maritime security by offering its own solutions.

But China is facing unprecedented challenges, especially the intensifying geopolitical competition. It is therefore essential for the country to strengthen cooperation with other BRICS countries and other countries of the Global South.

Through this cooperation, it can demonstrate the openness, stability and inclusiveness of its supply of global maritime public goods.

Global collaboration will ensure stability at sea



Thong Viro is the deputy director-general of administration management at Sihanoukville Autonomous Port in Cambodia.

More than 80 percent of global trade is carried by sea. A stable maritime order is, therefore, the cornerstone of the global economy. However, today's international landscape has become increasingly complex due to geopolitical shifts, regional conflicts and non-traditional security threats.

When the maritime order is disrupted, the impact on maritime transportation is immediate. Shipping costs rise, supply chains fracture, and ultimately the pace of global economic recovery slows.

As a port administrator in Sihanoukville, I witnessed how sensitive international trade is to the global security environment. Without security, there is no efficiency, and without stability, there is no prosperity.

In an era of economic globalization, a country's interests are no longer confined to its own borders, especially when it comes to maritime and shipping. No single country can protect these growing overseas interests alone. The following steps can help in this direction.

First, we must uphold international laws and respect the established maritime order. A fair and rules-based international framework provides fundamental legal protection for our overseas assets and personnel.

Second, we must strengthen collaborative security mechanisms. Protecting overseas interests means sharing information, conducting joint patrols along critical waterways, and providing mutual assistance in times of crisis. Through international cooperation, we can build a robust safety net for global shipping lanes.

Third, we must embrace the vision of a maritime community with a shared future, a vision that captures the reality of modern trade with great clarity. All stakeholders and partners in the maritime industry should collaborate closely and continue harnessing advanced technologies, intelligent port systems and green initiatives to make international shipping safer and more resilient.

Also, when we help secure a shipping lane, we are not merely protecting one country's overseas investments. We are protecting the entire global supply chain for the world economy.

Aligning growth with green responsibilities

Two years ago, the Red Sea was closed to commercial shipping. Major carriers rerouted around the Cape of Good Hope. Freight costs surged. Supply chains that had linked Asia, Africa and Europe through the Suez Canal for over a century were severed almost overnight.

For Egypt, the impact was immediate. The Suez Canal, a lifeline through which roughly 12 percent of global trade passed, saw its revenues drop by nearly half.

This episode revealed a critical truth. While more than 80 percent of global trade moves by sea, the governance structures that underpin maritime security remain fragmented. Shipping lanes are global, but the mechanisms to protect them are not. This gap poses a key challenge, and the stakes go far beyond shipping alone.



Kazem Agamy is the dean of the Arab Research Institute for Sustainable Blue Economy at the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport.

The ocean economy, spanning fisheries, coastal tourism, offshore energy and marine biotechnology, is valued at roughly $2.5 trillion annually. Egypt, with coastlines on both the Mediterranean and the Red Sea and more than 50 working ports, is deeply embedded in that economy. For its people, the sea means jobs, food, and opportunity. But they cannot capture those benefits if the ocean itself is degraded.

Illegal fishing depletes stocks. Plastic and industrial pollution erode coastal habitats. Submarine cables, which carry over 95 percent of the world's intercontinental data, remain inadequately protected. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea provides the legal framework, but governance is only as strong as its implementation.

In this context, three priorities require urgent and sustained attention. First, there should be better maritime awareness. We need shared surveillance, stronger regional coordination and joint operations that are equal to the threats we face.

Second, blue economy strategies must align with environmental responsibilities. Economic growth that undermines the ecosystems upon which it depends is inherently unsustainable. Lasting development requires balance, responsible stewardship, and a long-term vision.

Third, we must invest in knowledge and human capital.

The path forward lies in partnership, grounded in international law, guided by science and measured by concrete results.

Greater connectivity crucial for regional growth



Azhar Jaimurzina Ducrest is the chief of the Transport Connectivity and Logistics Section of the Transport Division of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

This year, ESCAP member states are preparing their new regional action program for sustainable transport development which will cover the period from 2027 to 2031.

Similar to the previous regional action program, this will be a unique strategic framework designed to address the evolving challenges of our times in the field of transport.

In 2021, member countries recognized maritime connectivity as one of the seven thematic areas of utmost priority for the region. They also established a key mechanism for regular regional dialogue on sustainable maritime connectivity for Asia and the Pacific.

The new regional action program is expected to build on these achievements to set a clear road map for collective action. In this context, the pivotal role of the Asia-Pacific region as the engine of global trade and the efforts of ESCAP countries in advancing maritime connectivity must be recognized.

Numerous national and regional initiatives, of which China's Maritime Silk Road is a flagship example, helped us achieve significant progress in more efficient and resilient transport operations.

These efforts have done more than just build infrastructure; they have created vital arteries for economic flow and people-to-people exchanges. By enhancing port efficiency and fostering intermodal connectivity, these initiatives have significantly contributed to the development of maritime transport across Asia and the Pacific, leading to tangible results in shortened lead times, more integrated supply chains, and a stronger, more unified regional market.

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

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:27 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:27 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

ZHOU WEISHENG

Dynamic medium of interaction

The Chinese language is evolving from a communication tool into a key carrier of global public value

Promoting mutual understanding and people-to-people ties through language has become a pressing priority for the international community. China's Global Civilization Initiative aligns closely with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, offering new theoretical and practical pathways for the international dissemination of the Chinese language.



Conceptually, the Global Civilization Initiative, first proposed in March 2023, advocates respect for the diversity of civilizations, emphasizes the importance of the inheritance and innovation of civilizations, upholds the common values of humanity, and promotes international people-to-people exchanges and cooperation.

It echoes the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, which states that cultural diversity is the common heritage of humanity. Within this framework, language is not merely a tool for transmitting information but a core mechanism for generating cultural meaning and enabling civilizational interaction. As one of the world's most spoken languages, Chinese has become a vital medium for diverse civilizations to coexist and interact.

Traditionally, however, Western views on language dissemination have been confined to cultural export or even cultural competition. Such perspectives often emphasize one-way communication and the expansion of influence, which can easily lead to the polarization and the instrumentalization of cultural relations. In today's complex, volatile world, this paradigm no longer meets practical needs. It is therefore necessary to steer the international dissemination of Chinese culture toward "cultural symbiosis" and realize a more effective provision of public value. Cultural symbiosis means the interaction, integration and coevolution of different civilizations; while public value supply refers to providing the global community with institutional resources for understanding, trust and cooperation through language and cultural exchanges.

On the practical front, the global reach of the Chinese language has expanded dramatically in recent years. Statistics show that over 180 countries and regions offer Chinese language education. More than 80 countries have integrated Chinese language teaching into their basic national education systems. Digital platforms have also lowered barriers to language learning, driving sustained growth in the number of online Chinese language learners. These figures show that Chinese has evolved from a regional language into a globally influential one — what might be called international Chinese language.

In terms of cultural influence, the international dissemination of the Chinese language features a distinctive "embedded" trait. Unlike mere cultural product exports, language learning itself fosters cultural understanding. For example, when learners study Chinese concepts such as *he er bu tong* (harmony in diversity) and *tianxia datong* (universal harmony), they gain not just vocabulary but also the relational thinking and holistic perspectives rooted in traditional Chinese philosophy. This kind of culturally embedded learning through language helps reduce cognitive biases and deepens cross-cultural understanding.

Language plays a fundamental and structural role in promoting people-to-people bonds. International relations depend not only on institutional arrangements but also on societal cognitive and emotional foundations. As more people learn Chinese, non-Chinese speakers can access first-hand linguistic resources to better understand Chinese society. This "disintermediated" access to information helps reduce misunderstandings and biases.

As a key vehicle for the international dissemination of Chinese culture, the Confucius Institute offers a representative case. Since its founding in 2004, it has been going beyond language teaching to include cultural activities, teacher training and academic exchanges. Despite differing institutional environments and public opinions in various countries, it remains vital for promoting Chinese language education and cultural exchange. More importantly, these institutes have developed a practical collaborative dissemination model — partnering with local educational institutions to share resources and facilitate cultural interaction, which fully embodies the vision of cultural symbiosis.

Meanwhile, technological progress is reshaping the ways in which the Chinese language is disseminated globally. Artificial intelligence translation, online education platforms and social media are shifting language dissemination from institution-led to multi-actor participation. For example, Chinese-language content creators on short-video platforms are presenting culture in more everyday and diverse ways. This decentralized model of dissemination enhances the diversity and authenticity of cultural expression, increasing international audiences' acceptance.

Admittedly, the global dissemination of the Chinese language still faces challenges such as cultural context differences, discourse system transformation and the international public opinion environment. Thus, future efforts should focus on three key dimensions: first, strengthening localized expression by integrating Chinese language teaching with local cultures; second, promoting two-way exchanges to avoid cognitive biases that can arise from one-way communication; third, reinforcing language's role as a public good to deliver more shared value to the world.

Guided by the Global Civilization Initiative and the principle of cultural diversity, the global dissemination of the Chinese language is moving toward cultural symbiosis. By fostering civilizational mutual learning and people-to-people ties with language as a bridge, Chinese is evolving from a communication tool into a key carrier of global public value. Driven by continued institutional innovation and technological progress, the Chinese language is poised to play a more active and profound role in building an inclusive, diverse and sustainable global civilizational system.

The author is a foreign academician at the Japanese Academy of Engineering, and the honorary dean of the Confucius Institute at Ritsumeikan University, Japan. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY



YANG MEINI / FOR CHINA DAILY

ZHAI KUN AND LIN HANDONG

Certainty amid volatility

China and ASEAN should strengthen the resilience of their comprehensive strategic partnership to maintain regional stability

The year 2026 marks the fifth anniversary of the establishment of the comprehensive strategic partnership between China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, at a time when the global order is undergoing the most intense fragmentation since the end of the Cold War. Amid this new period of turbulence and transformation, China-ASEAN relations have not only withstood the test but also demonstrated robust resilience, showing clearer planning, more pragmatic cooperation and enhanced mutual trust. The continued deepening of this partnership reflects both an outcome of upgraded bilateral cooperation and a shared regional choice favoring stability, development and strategic autonomy.



Zhai Kun



Lin Handong

Through institutional alignment and planning coordination, ASEAN and China have crafted a highly predictable blueprint for regional development. The Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-China Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2026-30) explicitly supports ASEAN community building and integration, including efforts toward the ASEAN Community Vision 2045 and its strategic goals, and reaffirms China's support for ASEAN centrality in the regional architecture and ASEAN-led mechanisms. This demonstrates that advancing relations is not about creating parallel structures but about upgrading cooperation within ASEAN's established institutional context.

Furthermore, China has aligned its own development planning with regional cooperation. China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) clearly calls for expanding high-standard opening-up and promoting the implementation of the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area 3.0. By institutionalizing and itemizing their cooperation agenda, both sides have preserved a rare and valuable mid-to-long-term certainty during an otherwise volatile period.

Practical cooperation is increasingly showcasing the deepening of China-ASEAN relations. Politically, China and ASEAN maintain high-level strategic communication through annual leaders' meetings, while foreign ministers' meetings, senior officials' consultations and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus form a multi-tiered cooperation mechanism. Economically, ASEAN has been China's largest export market for three consecutive years and its largest source of imports for seven consecutive years. The upgrading of the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area to version 3.0 means bilateral cooperation is moving toward higher-level rules connectivity, and it now incorporates emerging fields such as the digital economy, the green economy and supply chain interconnectivity.

On the security front, as of April 18, China and ASEAN had held 54 meetings of the joint working group on the implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, advancing consultations on a Code of Conduct for the waters. In 2025, China mediated the Cambodia-Thailand border conflict, playing a key role through shuttle diplomacy that culminated in the Fuxian consensus. The China-Cambodia-Thailand Track II dialogue has also preserved vital communication channels for the rebuilding of mutual trust. Meanwhile, China and ASEAN countries have carried out efficient joint law enforcement in non-traditional security areas, jointly combating cross-border online gambling, telecom fraud and other crimes, effectively responding to the demand of people in the region for security.

Greater regional trust has become a force behind stronger China-ASEAN relations. According to the State of Southeast Asia: 2026 Survey Report released by Singapore's ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, trust in China among ASEAN respondents in this survey had reached a historic inflection point since the annual report's release in 2019, with trust levels (39.8 percent) exceeding distrust for the first time. In hypothetical "taking sides" scenarios, those choosing China (52 percent) surpassed those choosing the United States (48 percent). Among ASEAN's dialogue partners, China, with an average score of 9.1, remains the most strategically important partner.

The results reflect ASEAN's recognition of China's economic performance and policy continuity. It is noteworthy that a clear majority, over half at 55.2 percent, identified "strengthening ASEAN's resilience and unity" as the primary approach to navigating the competition between the US and China, underscoring that strategic autonomy remains ASEAN's core principle. In this sense, the key to the continuous deepening of China-ASEAN relations lies in China's consistent respect for the autonomous demands of ASEAN and joint efforts to expand the region's stability, development space and institutional resilience.

Both sides face fresh historical opportunities and notable challenges. Over the next five years, China and ASEAN need to seek common ground while shelving and narrowing differences, and find targeted, practical solutions to the difficulties hindering deeper relations.

On the one hand, the State of Southeast Asia: 2026 Survey Report shows that ASEAN's political concern over the South China Sea situation, at 48.2 percent, has declined, but it remains the top geopolitical issue involving China. In 2026, as conditions for concluding the Code of Conduct become increasingly favorable, all parties must guard against disruptive external interference.

China can also address the South China Sea issue within the broader framework of strategic bilateral cooperation to prevent it from overshadowing overall relations. Functional security projects, such as joint search and rescue exercises and maritime law enforcement capacity building, could help stabilize expectations. In addition, by strengthening China-ASEAN cooperation in the blue economy, including marine fisheries, marine biological resource development and marine renewable energy, the two sides can provide support for the handling of sensitive issues.

On the other hand, the survey shows that 41.9 percent of respondents are confident or very confident in China as a Global South leader. As a natural member of the Global South, China's positioning consistently aligns with that of other developing countries. In practice, China should focus more on poverty alleviation, climate change and digital transformation through localized and perceptible grassroots actions. For instance, most ASEAN respondents (60 percent) view climate change and intensifying extreme weather events as the most pressing challenge, but their underlying logic differs fundamentally from that of the European Union. Climate change directly affects agricultural output, freshwater security, coastal livelihoods and vulnerable rural groups in ASEAN. Therefore, China should not stop at general discussions of climate issues, but respond to the survival pressures behind them. Only by doing so can China better support the collective empowerment and self-strengthening of the Global South.

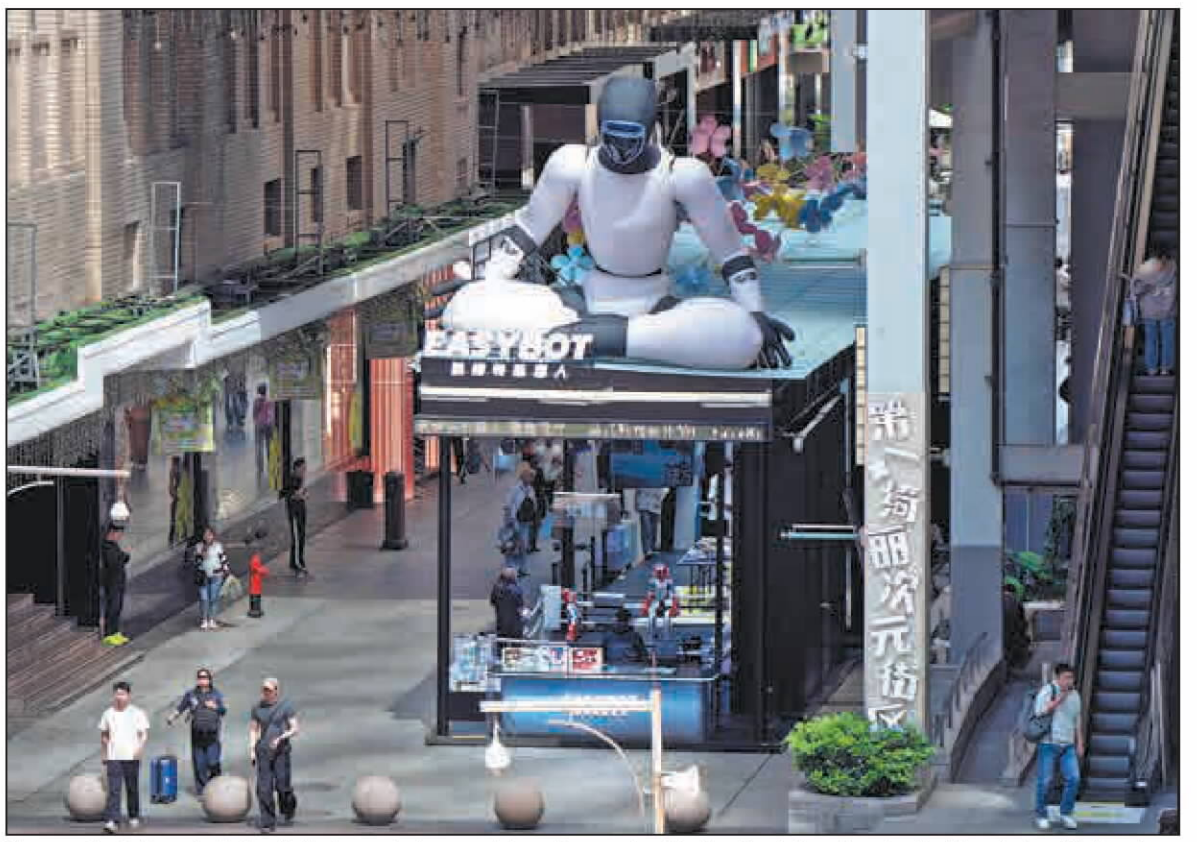
Zhai Kun is a professor at the School of International Studies and the deputy director of the Institute of Area Studies at Peking University. Lin Handong is a doctoral student at the Belt and Road Research Institute of Yunnan University and at the Southwest United Graduate School. The authors contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:27 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:27 PM

BUSINESS

No coffee breaks



Humanoid robots work at a booth during a robot pop-up interactive event on Nanjing Road shopping street in Shanghai on Wednesday. The Digital China Summit said the country accounts for 84.7 percent of global humanoid robot shipments, with 14,400 domestic units shipped in 2025 out of the worldwide total of 18,000 units. WANG GANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Debut of full-spectrum hyperspectral satellite to empower commercial aerospace innovation

By **REN QI**
renqi@chinadaily.com.cn



Kuaizhou-11 Y7 rocket launches at 12:12 pm on March 16 from Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in Gansu province, deploying eight domestic satellites into scheduled orbits in a flawless mission. CCTV+

A significant milestone in China's commercial aerospace sector, the recent successful launch and precise orbital insertion of the Xiguang-1 06 satellite reflect the development of China's industry, underscoring the robust support provided by the local government, experts said.

Developed by Xi'an Zhongke Xiguang Aerospace Technology Group Co Ltd, based in Xixian New Area of Shaanxi province, the satellite was launched aboard the Kuaizhou-11 Y7 carrier rocket from Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in Gansu province.

As China's first and currently the only in-orbit commercial hyperspectral remote sensing satellite with full-spectrum coverage of the 400–2500 nanometers band, the satellite ushers in a new industry era of "full-spectrum precise perception".

Covering the visible to shortwave infrared bands with 26 independent spectral bands, the satellite managed to transmit clear images within 24 hours of entering orbit.

"The satellite functions as if it is performing CT scans on the planet. It doesn't just look at surface morphology, but can analyze material composition, monitor crop health and predict ecological hidden dangers," said Kou Yimin, chief engineer at Zhongke Xiguang Aerospace.

Supported by the Xi'an Institute of Optics and Precision Mechanics of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the development team achieved independent control over core technologies, adopting an integrated design to significantly reduce weight, lower costs and shorten the development cycle.

The satellite's applications have already been implemented broadly. In Sichuan and Yunnan provinces, it monitors the growth of characteristic cash crops like tea and traditional Chinese medicinal herbs. In northwestern China's mining areas, it provides early warnings for geological disasters such as landslides, ensuring safe production.

Behind this single satellite's success is the collaborative support of an entire industrial chain. With Zhongke Xiguang Aerospace as the leading enterprise, Xixian New Area has built a complete commercial aerospace ecosystem encompassing upstream new materials, midstream core component manufacturing and downstream data application services.

In the upstream, Shaanxi Pulimei Material Technology Co Ltd focuses on aerospace composite materials.

"We specialize in aerospace-grade heat-resistant and structural materials, with multiple product performances reaching leading domestic levels," said Zhang Xinhang, chairman of the company.

For midstream manufacturing, Shaanxi Weixing Zhihang Technology Co Ltd possesses the capacity to produce 50,000 aerospace boards annually in its 100,000-class clean room. General Manager Zeng Xuan noted their products meet stringent aerospace standards and have supported multiple satellite models with a 100 percent qualification rate.

Downstream, Shaanxi Baota Xingkong Aerospace Technology Co Ltd operates the "Yan'an Constellation" and a big data center, providing standardized products for over 30 industries nationwide and boosting data interpretation efficiency by over 60 percent.

Such an achievement is inseparable from strong policy guarantees. Xixian New Area has rolled out measures to strengthen policy supply and financial empowerment to back up such projects. Currently, the area hosts 34 enterprises in the aerospace industry chain, achieving an output value of 5.69 billion yuan ($835.29 million) in 2025.

"The success of this satellite sets another benchmark for the new area to cultivate a more modernized industrial system with new quality productive forces," a spokesperson for Xixian New Area told China Daily.

"We will use this to accelerate the linkage of commercial aerospace, high-end equipment and new materials, contributing the 'Xixian experience' to China's high-quality manufacturing development."

High-income status seen around corner

Official data put China's '25 per capita GNI above World Bank's '24 benchmark

By **ZHOU LANXU** and **OUYANG SHIJIA**

China is on track to reach high-income status within one to two years, as steady growth and structural upgrading place the country on the cusp of a key developmental milestone, even as external uncertainties add complexity to the outlook, economists said.

"Taking a relatively conservative view, China is likely to reach the threshold of a high-income economy within the next one to two years," said Sun Xuegong, director-general of the department of policy study and consultation at the Chinese Academy of Macroeconomic Research. The academy is affiliated with the National Development and Reform Commission.

Sun said that crossing the threshold would mark "an important milestone" and signal a new phase of development characterized by upgrades to industrial structures and shifts in household consumption patterns, in line with the country's broader push for high-quality growth.

The outlook comes as China is now very close to this key milestone. In the World Bank's classification in July last year, China was ranked as an upper-middle income economy with 2024 per capita gross national income (GNI) at $13,660, versus the 2024 high-income benchmark of $13,935.

In 2025, the country's GNI reached 139.4 trillion yuan ($19.2 trillion), the National Bureau of Statistics said. Using NBS figures, China Daily estimates per capita GNI at 99,109 yuan for 2025, or about $14,503 at current exchange rates — exceeding the 2024 threshold of $13,935.

The final classification depends on the updated benchmarks for 2025 and exchange rate adjustments based on the World Bank's calculation method, allowing the next round of income group updates to be released in July to provide a key observation window for assessing whether China formally enters the high-income category.

International institutions share a cautiously optimistic view. Marshall Mills, senior resident representative of the International Monetary Fund in China, said he saw significant potential for further expansion of China's economy as reforms to improve resource allocation and boost consumption could lift annual GDP growth by nearly 0.5 percentage point.

This will help address the challenges of a shrinking labor force and slowing productivity growth and support the country's prospects of reaching high-income status within the next five years, he said.

Beyond headline income levels, economists and policy advisers stressed that sustaining growth after reaching high-income status will be critical. Some economies have struggled with slowing momentum after crossing the threshold.

Sun, from the Chinese Academy of Macroeconomic Research, said the key lies in strengthening innovation capacity, which China has prioritized as a strategic priority. The country's steady rise in the Global Innovation Index rankings — where it ranked 10th in 2025 — reflects significant progress that could help it avoid the so-called middle-income trap.

> "Taking a relatively conservative view, China is likely to reach the threshold of a high-income economy within the next one to two years."
>
> **Sun Xuegong,** director-general of the department of policy study and consultation at the Chinese Academy of Macroeconomic Research

$19.2 trillion
gross national income of China in 2025, according to the National Bureau of Statistics

Equally important is maintaining social stability and improving income distribution, Sun said, adding that advancing common prosperity will be crucial to ensuring long-term, sustainable development after achieving higher income levels.

The outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) has demonstrated China's determination of achieving steady mid-to-long-term growth, reiterating China's goal of achieving "mid-level developed country" status by 2035.

With first-quarter GDP growth resilient at 5 percent despite rising external headwinds, Mao Shengyong, deputy head of the NBS, said that growth driven by technological progress and industrial upgrading will be sustainable going forward.

Zhang Bin, deputy director at the Institute of World Economics and Politics under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said that given China's current level of industrialization and production capacity, reaching the World Bank's high-income threshold would be a natural outcome.

Crossing the line does not mark the end of development, Zhang said, adding that China's per capita GNI remains far behind the more than $80,000 in leading advanced economies such as the United States.

"China still faces gaps in frontier technologies and advanced capabilities, requiring continued efforts to catch up with leading economies," he said.

Contact the writers at zhoulanxv@chinadaily.com.cn

Tech firms spending big on strategic land buys

By **CHENG YU**
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

China's internet giants are ramping up land purchases in major cities, committing more than 15 billion yuan ($2.2 billion) since late last year in a strategic shift from asset-light leasing to owning property tied to core operations.

Companies including ByteDance and JD have led a fresh wave of land purchases in hubs such as Beijing and Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, signaling a deeper transformation in how China's tech sector manages capital and growth.

The new buying spree is not a traditional real estate play but reflects a broader move toward heavy-asset ownership. Firms are increasingly seeking to anchor research, data and headquarters functions in self-owned facilities, aligning with long-term industrial strategies rather than short-term property gains, industry experts said.

JD has been among the most active. Last month, a unit of JD spent 1.76 billion yuan to acquire two parcels of land in Beijing E-Town, adjacent to its existing headquarters. The purchase came just one day after its other subsidiary paid 663 million yuan for a commercial site in Hangzhou.

In late 2025, JD secured land in Nanjing and acquired office space in Hong Kong's Central District for HK$3.47 billion ($442.9 million), underscoring a multi-city footprint built in rapid succession.

Other tech majors are following suit. Alibaba Group acquired office space in Hong Kong's Causeway Bay in October 2025 for HK$7.2 billion, while ByteDance has spent roughly 6.1 billion yuan this year alone on two prime sites in Beijing's Haidian district, a core technology hub.

The pace of investment has accelerated markedly since 2025, with purchases becoming more concentrated and strategic. Unlike earlier, scattered acquisitions of office buildings, the latest deals feature high self-use ratios, strong links to industrial activity and long-term operational horizons.

Yan Yuejin, deputy head of the E-House China R&D Institute in Shanghai, said: "This is about optimizing balance sheets and hedging against uncertainty. Holding high-quality real estate in core locations can provide stable asset appreciation, especially as property prices have adjusted."

The shift also reflects a redefinition of land use by tech firms. Rather than speculative holdings, companies are developing integrated campuses for research and development, digital industry parks and artificial intelligence computing centers — infrastructure viewed as critical to future growth, Yan said.



A file photo shows a horse-themed setup by ByteDance's Douyin in Shanghai on Jan 27. CHEN YUYU / FOR CHINA DAILY

"Demand from internet companies — often linked to what policymakers called new quality productive forces — is emerging as a rare source of certainty, particularly in the commercial and R&D segments of major cities still grappling with a property slowdown," he added.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:27 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:27 PM

BUSINESS

Restaurant chains eye rapid growth

Country's catering industry experiencing acceleration in franchised development

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn


People wait to dine at a Haidilao hotpot restaurant in Shanghai on May 2. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



A humanoid robot interacts with people at Luckin Coffee's exhibition booth during the 2026 Shanghai International Coffee Culture Festival on April 30. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The country's catering sector is experiencing sustained acceleration in chain store development, driven by market consolidation and operational quality upgrades, according to the 2026 White Paper on the Development of Restaurant Chains in China released by the China Chain Store & Franchise Association and Meituan.

The report shows that the percentage of restaurants in the country that are part of a chain rose from 21 percent in 2023 to 25 percent in 2025, an average annual increase of 2 percent. This growth highlights the sector's resilience in adapting to evolving consumer preferences and operational challenges. Across segments — including beverages, fast foods, snacks and marinated flavors — leading chain enterprises with national influence have emerged in every category.

"This is exactly why we upgraded the 'Top 100 Catering Franchises' to the 'Top 300 Chain Restaurants' this year," said Peng Jianzhen, CCFA director. "With the chain rate rising, more brands are emerging, and as niche categories diversify, benchmark chains are appearing across every sector — Chinese, Western, casual dining, fast food, beverages and baking."

The white paper identified a clear divergence among brands of different sizes, according to the Meituan Research Institute. Top-tier brands with over 10,000 outlets continue to consolidate leadership through standardized operations and strong brand influence.

Chains with between 101 and 500 stores increased store count in 2025 by 28.3 percent year-on-year, while chains boasting between 501 and 1,000 outlets also expanded rapidly, increasing store numbers by 32.6 percent year-on-year. The smallest chains, typically with three to 10 outlets, shrank sharply, with an 18.5 percent year-on-year reduction, largely due to limited risk resilience and underdeveloped supply chains.

Xiaocaiyuan, a "Top 300" Chinese chain restaurant brand, stands as a prime example of high-quality growth. Founded in 2013, Xiaocaiyuan has expanded to over 800 directly operated stores. According to its first interim report following its public listing in August 2025, the company achieved revenue of 2.71 billion yuan ($397.5 million) during the reporting period, a year-on-year increase of 6.5 percent, with the growth driven by the steady expansion of its store network. Net profit reached 382 million yuan, representing a surge of 35.7 percent compared to the same period in 2024.

Overall, the total number of catering outlets in the country remained largely stable, with 7.47 million stores nationwide by the end of 2025 — a 0.1 percent decline from the previous year.

Category differentiation is a defining feature of the market.

Beverage chains, in particular, have become the primary growth engine, with a chain rate of 54 percent, far above the industry average. These brands benefited from high platform subsidies and booming takeaway demand, allowing rapid replication of standardized operations.

Top-tier brands, leveraging mature operating systems and strong management, are the backbone of China's chain development.

Luckin Coffee is an example of this trend. Its 2025 financial report shows a net addition of 8,708 stores, bringing the total to 31,048 — a 39 percent year-on-year increase. Self-operated stores alone exceeded 20,000. Luckin also prioritized product innovation, launching over 140 new items in 2025, driving a 39 percent increase in freshly prepared beverage sales to 4.1 billion cups.

Other segments, including Chinese and Western cuisine, face more complex operational challenges, said the report. High unit costs, intricate supply chains, and difficulties in standardization have prompted operators to focus on service quality and menu innovation rather than rapid expansion. Consumer demand for value and quality favors standardized, cost-effective categories.

The consumer market remains robust. Total retail sales of consumer goods reached 50.12 trillion yuan in 2025, up 3.7 percent year-on-year, while catering revenue totaled 5.79 trillion yuan, up 3.2 percent. Although slightly below overall retail growth, this demonstrates the sector's resilience amid intensified competition and evolving consumer expectations.

Macroeconomic indicators provide additional context: GDP growth reached 5 percent in 2025, disposable income rose by 5 percent, and the service industry producer index increased by 5.5 percent. Catering revenue could have grown around 5 percent without subsidy-driven "takeaway battles", indicating that competitive pricing pressures slightly suppressed revenue, though market fundamentals remain strong, said the report.

While competition has intensified, operational quality is improving. Meituan and Dianping data show a decline in low-rated outlets in 2025, while mid-tier scores rose, reflecting enhanced service stability and operational excellence. Market shakeouts have accelerated improvements in management standards, menu consistency and customer experience, laying the foundation for sustainable medium-term growth.

Technology adoption is also increasing. The 2026 white paper on the Development of China's Catering Ingredients, released by catering research unit NCBD and Expo Fine-food Shanghai, reported that the cooking robot market exceeded 3.5 billion yuan in 2025 and is projected to surpass 12 billion yuan by 2030. These robots are being deployed in group meals, fast food and regional cuisines, helping restaurants standardize operations and improve efficiency.

Chain penetration is higher in major cities. First-tier cities such as Beijing; Shanghai; Guangzhou and Shenzhen of Guangdong province, have a chain rate of 33.2 percent. Lower-tier cities are catching up, with fifth-tier cities reaching 21 percent, reflecting accelerated chain expansion into less developed markets, said the report. But a rising number of catering brands is shifting to lower-tier markets with localized strategies.

Taking Miss Xiaogu, a brand which focuses on three core categories — spicy hotpot, *malatang* (numbing, spicy and hot) and *malaxiangguo* (numbing, spicy and fragrant pot) — as a prime example, the brand has now surpassed 1,200 stores globally.

Targeting the lower-tier market, Miss Xiaogu has specifically engineered a profitable single-store model characterized by low costs and high repurchase rates, deeply aligning with community consumption needs. By leveraging the core advantage of low rental costs in these markets, the brand practices deep community-based operations. It has precisely anchored two core positioning strategies: as the "family backup kitchen" and as a "convenient canteen for young people". This approach has allowed it to rapidly gain a foothold in smaller cities, establishing itself as a benchmark case for the downward expansion of restaurant chains.

Peng of CCFA suggested key priorities for the industry should include trade-in subsidies for catering equipment. He said catering equipment should be included after automobiles and home appliances in trade-in policies.

Expanding subsidies would facilitate digital and intelligent transformation, improving equipment standards and productivity, he added.

Peng also suggested in the report ideas for opening domestic listing channels, allowing catering companies to access domestic capital markets. Additionally, he called for specific policies to support the international expansion of Chinese cuisine in order to enhance global influence and market share.

Online
Unlock China's Treasures: Shop, Explore, Enjoy.

Walmart's Chengdu store turns prototype for nationwide upgrades

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**

Walmart China's recently revamped Chengdu, Sichuan province, store marks the launch of its next-generation store model in the country, signaling a rising trend of proximity-focused formats in retail.

The 20-year-old location has been overhauled with a new merchandise layout, spatial design and enhanced omni-channel experience, reflecting the company's strategy to deliver fresh, high-value and convenient shopping for urban consumers.

The Chengdu store will serve as a prototype for a nationwide upgrade. Walmart plans to renovate more than 100 existing stores and open five to 10 new locations this year, signaling a renewed push for high-quality growth in the retail market in the country.

The new store format targets urban middle-income families and single shoppers. Walmart has optimized a compact footprint of roughly 3,000 square meters with around 10,000 stock keeping units, emphasizing fresh food and groceries.

Zhu Jun, senior vice-president of Walmart China, said: "The Chengdu reopening represents the company's response to changing consumer habits and will serve as a blueprint for similar renovations in other cities this year."

Fresh food is central to the new model. Walmart has intensified sourcing from local suppliers and enhanced production, display and shelf-life management standards. Short-shelf-life items, including fresh-cut beef, sashimi, chilled fish and fruit platters, have been expanded, while Chengdu-specific offerings such as a "Sichuan Hot Pot Fresh Ingredients Zone" cater to local tastes.

The stores also feature digital shelf-life monitoring systems, seasonal product corners, and flower and fruit zones, designed to maximize freshness and provide a dynamic shopping experience.

Walmart's refreshed "Marketside" private label has expanded its portfolio of bakery, beverages, snacks and fresh food. The label underscores Walmart's strategy to differentiate through simplicity, freshness and local sourcing.

The Chengdu reopening comes as the retailer continues to rebalance its portfolio. While Walmart China is consolidating to about 300 stores nationwide, its membership format Sam's Club has become the primary growth engine.


Customers shop on April 24 at Walmart's newly opened Chengdu store in Sichuan province, marking the launch of its next-generation store model in China. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Sam's Club has opened 10 new locations over the past year and plans at least 14 more in 2026. The recent opening of the Wuxi, Jiangsu province, store marked its 64th location in China, highlighting the company's focus on its membership warehouse format while quietly refining neighborhood Walmart stores.

This expansion mirrors a broader reshaping of the country's offline retail market, according to Worldpanel by Numerator's first quarter 2026 analysis. The data underscore a widening gap between traditional modern trade channels and community-focused, high-value formats.

Hypermarkets, supermarkets and convenience stores faced headwinds in the first quarter, according to Worldpanel. Factors include the post-holiday "reverse migration", stronger foodservice recovery, a rebound in travel spending and continued online penetration.

Modern trade sales fell 3.2 percent year-on-year, highlighting the challenges of large-format retail in an increasingly fragmented market, Worldpanel's analysis shows.

Smaller, proximity-focused formats bucked the trend, posting a 2.7 percent year-on-year increase, driven by higher purchase frequency and everyday convenience. These results underscore the resilience of urban and community-oriented retail, a space where Walmart's compact "new generation" store model seeks to gain traction.

Among China's top 10 retailers, Walmart China and Hema Fresh stood out for growth and market adaptation. Walmart China pursued a dual-line strategy, focusing on neighborhood markets and Sam's Club membership stores. Strengthened product capabilities and localized supply chains helped both Walmart and Sam's Club private labels achieve rapid growth, reflecting a strategy consistent with the Chengdu store prototype, Worldpanel stated.

Hema Fresh increased its market share by 1.2 percentage points, overtaking CR Vanguard Group. Its dual-format expansion strategy improved both efficiency and scale, with penetration rates approaching 8 percent in the first quarter. Hema's value-for-money private label leveraged supply chain advantages to increase penetration by 4.6 points in the eastern region and achieve breakthroughs in the southern region.

Yonghui Superstores saw a 1 percentage point decline in market share, but reported strong rebounds in sales and private label performance, aided by initiatives in product quality and scene-driven sales.

JD Seven Fresh expanded offline, leveraging logistics and supply chain advantages to attract in-store traffic. Its northern region penetration rate rose 1.2 points year-on-year in the first quarter.

Worldpanel highlighted an emerging trend of ecosystem integration between online and offline retail. High-efficiency formats, including small supermarkets and discount stores, continue to perform, while online channels grow through content commerce and instant retail.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:27 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:27 PM

CHINA

Coming of age



Senior students cheer under an "Adulthood Arch" during their coming-of-age ceremony at a high school in Kuqa, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, on Wednesday. The event saw over 1,200 students honoring their transition to adulthood through a series of activities like Constitution oath-taking and exchanging letters with parents.
YUAN HUANHUAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Prosecutors pledge to tighten marine protection oversight

Advanced tech, better governance to be used to safeguard ocean ecosystems

By YANG ZEKUN
yangzekun@chinadaily.com.cn

China's top procuratorate has pledged to strengthen legal oversight in marine environmental protection by leveraging advanced technologies and enhancing coordinated governance, as the country steps up efforts to safeguard ocean ecosystems and support sustainable development.

The Supreme People's Procuratorate said it will intensify case handling in key areas such as marine water quality, coastline changes and control of invasive species.

The move aligns with the country's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), which advocates for stronger prevention of marine environmental risks at the source and greater efforts in pollution control and ecological restoration in key coastal regions.

Xu Xiangchun, director of the SPP's public interest litigation department, said procuratorial organs in coastal regions have made notable progress in recent years by leveraging geographic advantages and actively performing their public interest litigation functions.

"Protecting marine ecological resources is also closely linked to safeguarding people's livelihoods," Xu said, noting that improving marine environmental quality directly supports coastal communities and industries.

> "Protecting marine ecological resources is also closely linked to safeguarding people's livelihoods."
>
> **Xu Xiangchun,** director of the SPP's public interest litigation department

Xu acknowledged that balancing ecological protection with economic development remains a challenge, particularly in cases involving historical issues and complex local conditions. "It is important to properly handle this relationship to address problems at their root," he said.

He added that many long-standing and complex issues in marine protection require coordinated efforts across different levels of procuratorial organs and government departments, rather than relying on a single authority.

One case released by the SPP illustrates this approach. In Xiangshui county, Jiangsu province, an agricultural company converted 300 hectares of saline land along the Yellow Sea into aquaculture ponds and leased them to 106 shrimp farmers. Untreated wastewater was discharged into the sea, affecting coastal water quality and harming public interests.

The local procuratorate identified the case during a campaign to protect the Yellow Sea and launched a public interest litigation investigation in April 2023. It then convened authorities overseeing water resources, agriculture and rural affairs, and the environment.

Although all parties agreed the discharge was illegal, enforcement proved difficult. Farmers had already invested heavily, an immediate shutdown risked social tensions, departmental responsibilities overlapped, and the large aquaculture area posed technical challenges.

The procuratorate issued recommendations urging coordinated enforcement, better management of discharge outlets and standardized wastewater treatment. Following joint enforcement efforts, more than 60 drainage outlets were removed and dynamic monitoring was introduced.

To balance environmental protection with economic stability, local authorities invested more than 10.7 million yuan ($1.5 million) in wastewater treatment facilities, ensuring compliant discharge while maintaining production. An ecological education base was also built.

The case later revealed broader problems. In 2024, prosecutors found similar issues across more than 9,300 hectares of coastal aquaculture areas and issued recommendations to promote unified treatment. A centralized tailwater treatment area covering more than 833 hectares was established, 40 monitoring points were added, and an ecological aquaculture community of more than 8,000 hectares was developed.

By April last year, more than 24,600 hectares of aquaculture areas in Yancheng, Jiangsu, had completed rectification and achieved compliant discharge. The Xiangshui experience has since been promoted across the province.

Xu said prosecutors will focus next on key areas of marine ecological protection and intensify case handling. Led by an ongoing public interest litigation campaign around the Bohai Sea, prosecutors will guide local authorities to strengthen oversight in major marine environmental and resource protection cases and develop region-specific models.

Technology will play a larger role, Xu said. Given the fluid and complex nature of marine ecosystems, traditional methods of identifying clues and collecting evidence are no longer sufficient. Prosecutors will make greater use of satellite remote sensing and big data models.

He added that prosecutors will deepen cooperation with departments overseeing ecology and environment, natural resources and maritime affairs, improve information-sharing and joint case-handling mechanisms, and issue guidance to address practical issues such as damage assessment and compensation management.

Supercomputer reconstructs evolution of the universe

By LI MENGHAN
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese scientists and international collaborators have used one of the largest cosmological simulations ever created to "fast-forward" the universe from the "Big Bang" all the way to the present day inside a supercomputer.

The project, called HyperMillennium and led by the National Astronomical Observatories of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, simulates a cubic volume of space with a side size of 12 billion light years. That is roughly equivalent to lining up about 120,000 Milky Way galaxies end to end.

Inside this digital universe, 4.2 trillion virtual dark matter particles evolve under gravity, reproducing 13.8 billion years of cosmic history. Dark matter refers to an invisible form of matter that does not emit or absorb light but is believed to make up about 85 percent of all matter in the universe and to provide the gravitational "framework" on which galaxies form.

"Due to the vast scale of the universe and the long course of its evolution, the distant galaxies observed through telescopes are actually static snapshots dating billions or even tens of billions of years ago, making it impossible to track their evolution in real time," said Gao Liang, a professor at the CAS' National Astronomical Observatories who leads the project.

Gao said ordinary matter that emits light represents only the "visible surface" of the cosmos, while dark matter forms its "invisible skeleton". Because dark matter does not interact with electromagnetic radiation, it cannot be directly observed with telescopes.

"Cosmological simulations are the key to solving this puzzle. By calculating the gravitational interactions among vast numbers of virtual dark matter particles, they can reconstruct — with high precision — the evolution of the universe from its early days to the present, allowing us to directly 'see' how dark matter particles cluster, distribute, and form structures over time," he said. "By comparing simulated virtual universes with real telescope observations, scientists can test and refine theoretical models of dark matter and dark energy."

Wang Qiao, a researcher at the observatory, said next-generation sky surveys are increasing demand for such simulations. These include the European Space Agency's Euclid mission and the China Space Station Telescope.

He said simulations must balance two competing requirements: a large enough volume to match the scope of sky surveys and extremely fine resolution to capture the formation of small galaxies.

"The emergence of ultra-large-scale cosmological simulations like the HyperMillennium aims to bridge the gap driven by observational progress, providing a crucial link in humanity's quest to understand the universe's ultimate mysteries," Wang said.

Globally, he noted, there are now three major simulations tracking trillions of dark matter particles: Japan's Uchuu simulation, Europe's Flagship 2, and China's HyperMillennium. The Flagship 2 emphasizes large cosmic volume, while the Uchuu focuses on high resolution. According to Wang, the HyperMillennium combines both strengths.

Wang added that the HyperMillennium runs on China's ORISE supercomputer, using software optimized for that system.

The simulation of 4.2 trillion particles produced about 13 petabytes of data — roughly equivalent to 13 million high-definition movies. A petabyte is 1,000 trillion bytes of data. Processing this dataset required 16,000 accelerator computing cards working for 18 days, underscoring advances in high-performance computing.

The first academic paper from the project was recently published in the Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society. It focused on Abell 2744, a giant galaxy cluster known for its complex structure and extreme gravitational interactions. The study found that the simulation closely matches real observations, supporting its accuracy in simulating rare and complex cosmic systems. The first batch of data will be made available worldwide later.

Mike Boylan-Kolchin, a professor at the University of Texas in the United States, described the simulation as "a computational marvel that will help unlock fundamental physics from observations of the cosmos".

"It has an unprecedented range of volume and mass resolution, enabling detailed predictions about how huge numbers of relatively common galaxies are distributed across the cosmic web and the properties of inherently rare and interesting objects that are inaccessible with smaller volumes. The HyperMillennium simulation will be a touchstone for the galaxy formation and cosmology communities for years to come," he said.

Volker Springel, director of the Max Planck Institute for Astrophysics in Germany, said he was struck by the simulation's scale and precision, adding that it "redefines what is nowadays possible in numerical cosmology".

BLCU aims for 16,000 intl students by 2030

By ZOU SHUO
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

Beijing Language and Culture University plans to expand its international student population to 16,000 by the end of the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30), with degree-seeking students expected to reach 8,000, according to university president Duan Peng.

In an exclusive interview with China Daily, Duan said BLCU currently hosts 12,000 international students for the 2025 academic year — a 3.5-fold increase from 2023. Among them, 4,300 are undergraduate, master's or doctoral candidates, marking a fivefold rise in degree-seeking students over the same period. The university now ranks first in China for both total international enrollments and degree-pursuing international students.

"Our historical peak was in 2009, with about 8,000 to 9,000 international students. Today we have surpassed that," Duan said. "Back then, degree students numbered around 1,500; now we have over 4,300 — more than double."

Since its founding in 1962, BLCU has cultivated 300,000 international alumni, including 300 ambassadors. Among them are 11 current foreign ambassadors to China who are BLCU graduates.

"These alumni serve as enduring bridges of friendship and understanding," Duan said.

To achieve its 2030 target, BLCU is leveraging its global network of 29 Confucius Institutes and classrooms, four China institutes, Tokyo College of BLCU, Beijing Language and Culture University Bangkok College, BLCU Kazakhstan and the BLCU Saudi Arabia program.

The university has diversified its academic offerings beyond language education to include business, artificial intelligence, computer science and joint engineering programs.

Looking ahead, Duan said the university will broaden its outreach to attract outstanding students worldwide.

"The goal of making China a top study destination is one that all of us in higher education should strive for," he said.

Andriantina Princie Fandresena, a 21-year-old doctoral student from Madagascar, said she has been in China for nearly three years and considers BLCU her second home.



Duan Peng

"I share my daily life on social media — the campus, the scenery, even Chinese songs I've translated into Malagasy — to help more people understand China. I am also researching how to introduce Malagasy culture to Chinese friends," she said.

She added that she often posts practical tips for prospective students from Madagascar, helping them navigate the application process.

"I want more people from my country to experience studying in China," she said.

Another student, Zechariah Werner Levi from the United States, gave up a career in commercial real estate to study at BLCU.

"I wanted to improve my Chinese and understand the Chinese market," he said. "China is hyperfocused on the future — AI, electric cars, consumer services. I hope to work between the US and China someday."

He has since invited his father, mother, brother, sister and best friends to visit China.

"Showing the real China is the best way," he said.

He also posts on social media to give US citizens a more authentic picture of daily life in China.

"I haven't felt any discrimination — people are super nice and welcoming. And the digital ecosystem here — WeChat, delivery, even calling taxis — makes the US feel so slow when I go back," he added.

2 Guangdong museums win global design prize

By QIU QUANLIN in Guangzhou
qiuquanlin@chinadaily.com.cn





Top: Xuelei Fragrance Museum. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY
Above: Shenzhen Science and Technology Museum.
REN XIAOXIAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

Two museums in southern China's Guangdong province have been recognized in the Prix Versailles, a global architecture award established by UNESCO and the International Union of Architects, highlighting the country's advances in contemporary design.

The two are the Shenzhen Science and Technology Museum in Shenzhen, a hub of China's reform and opening-up, and the Xuelei Fragrance Museum in Guangzhou, the provincial capital.

"The award showcases the systematic construction, contemporary expression and cultural confidence of China's fragrance culture to the world," said Weng Haocong, director of the Xuelei Fragrance Museum.

Widely regarded as a major prize in architecture and design, the 2026 list of the world's most beautiful museums — commonly known as the Prix Versailles — was announced in France on Monday.

The award recognizes outstanding contemporary architecture and spatial design projects worldwide, emphasizing how architecture responds to urban, cultural, ecological and public life challenges.

According to the organizers, the award values innovation, local cultural expression, ecological efficiency, social interaction and public engagement.

The Shenzhen museum, with a building area of about 128,300 square meters, features a 38-meter-high atrium and permanent exhibition halls covering 35,000 sq m.

Its exterior incorporates cutting-edge technology that creates visual illusions, changing appearance with different weather conditions and times of day. Because of its futuristic design, it has been dubbed "the big spaceship" by locals and visitors, and has become a new landmark for science and culture in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

The Guangzhou-based fragrance museum received the honor after being certified by the Guinness World Records in November as the largest fragrance museum.

Located in Baiyun district, it has an immersive space of over 9,500 sq m, with 18 themed exhibition areas, more than 50 interactive installations and over 300 scent points.

The structure is composed of clusters of red-brick cylinders inspired by the distillers used in modern perfume-making, resembling a "fragrance castle" that appears to breathe.

Unlike traditional museums that focus primarily on visual experiences, it offers a sensory journey centered on smell, providing visitors with a distinctive immersive experience.

For Guangzhou, the recognition signals an expansion of the city's cultural and tourism offerings beyond sightseeing and cuisine to more nuanced sensory experiences, Weng said.

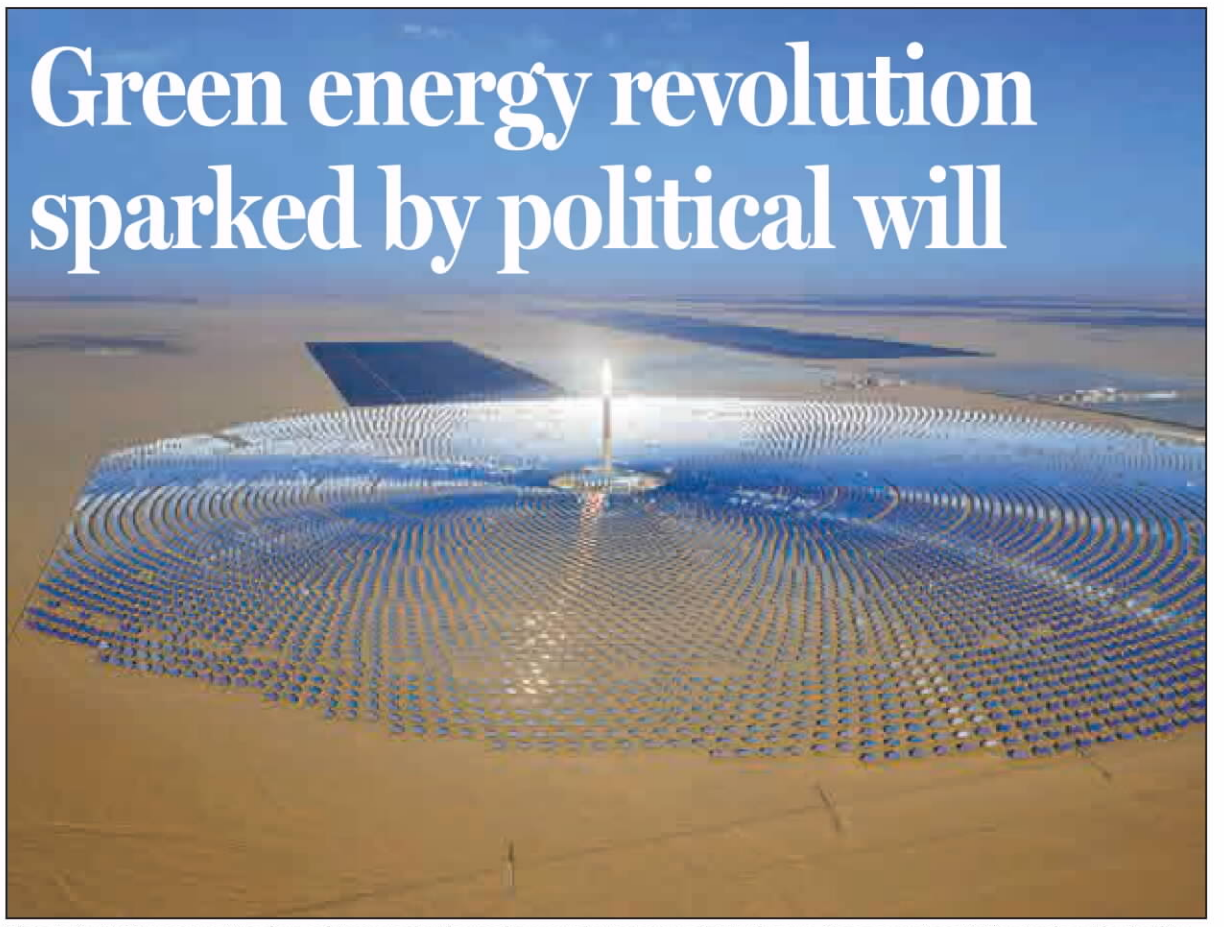
Chen Shaofeng, chairman of the Guangdong Provincial Museums Association and deputy director of the Guangdong Museum, said the fragrance museum, as a specialized institution, plays an important role in promoting fragrance culture.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:27 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:27 PM

Editor's note: *As protection of the planet's flora, fauna and resources becomes increasingly important, China Daily is publishing a series of stories to illustrate the country's commitment to safeguarding the natural world.*

Green energy revolution sparked by political will



China's first 100-megawatt molten salt tower solar thermal power plant operates in Dunhuang, Gansu province, in September. The facility, completed in late 2018, is able to generate some 390 million kilowatt-hours of green electricity every year. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Adaptive legal framework supercharged nation's renewable network rollout

By HOU LIQIANG
houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

When the Renewable Energy Law took effect in 2006, China's clean tech sector was a fraction of its current size, struggling to compete as the country wrestled with severe, localized power shortages.

Two decades later, the transformation is staggering. By 2025, renewable electricity generation in China reached approximately 4 trillion kilowatt-hours, exceeding the total consumption of the European Union's 27 member states. More than 60 percent of China's installed power generation capacity comes from renewable sources.

This meteoric rise from a marginal player to the global leader in renewables was not an accident of the market; it was engineered by forward-thinking legislation. According to energy experts, the 2006 law provided the vital regulatory foundation required to transform an energy crisis into an economic opportunity.

Zhou Dadi, executive vice-chairman of the China Energy Research Society, explained that the law was enacted against the backdrop of severe domestic electricity shortages and intensifying international climate negotiations.

Accelerated economic development following the country's reform and opening-up in 1978 further worsened the electricity supply, making rolling blackouts a frequent occurrence, he told China Energy News. On the international front, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, signed in 1992, established the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities".

Although developed countries accounted for 60 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions at that time, and China's emissions remained far lower than those of developed economies, the country's total energy consumption — given its vast population — could no longer be overlooked, Zhou said.

The enactment of the Renewable Energy Law proved to be the decisive answer. It established renewable energy as a priority category, granted it policy preferences, and provided the legal guarantees required to launch the industry.

In 2003, the National People's Congress, China's top legislature, listed renewable energy legislation on its priority agenda.

Wang Zhongying, a key participant in drafting the law, recalled 2004 as a critical turning point that sped up its passage. That year, China announced to the world that it would enact the law at the International Conference for Renewable Energies in Bonn, Germany.

Wang highlighted the important role of international cooperation in shaping the law.

"Through renewable energy research projects with the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme, as well as group study tours organized by different departments to Germany and Denmark, we deepened our understanding of renewable energy and accelerated the law's drafting," he said.

The efforts of Wang and his team saw the law, featuring classified pricing, guaranteed purchase and special funds, adopted in February 2005.

Qiao Liming, former head of Asia at the Global Wind Energy Council, said that while the law initially provided the framework and policy direction, it was the subsequent series of implementation rules that truly drove the market.



A spiral case stay ring is fixed at a pumped storage hydropower station in Hami, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, last month. CAI ZENGLE / FOR CHINA DAILY



A worker installs photovoltaic panels on a hillside in Anqing, Anhui province, last month. WU JUNQI / FOR CHINA DAILY

She pointed to the fixed feed-in tariff policy — borrowed from the German model — as the most critical element. "It allowed renewable power to be stably connected to the grid and sold, thus opening the door to the market," she said.

China's feed-in tariff mechanism — with classified price levels for different technologies and resource regions — requires grid operators to purchase renewable electricity at government-set prices, a guaranteed above-market rate funded through a small surcharge on electricity bills.

After six adjustments to subsidies for wind power and eight for solar, newly approved onshore wind and solar projects in China have achieved grid parity, with their on-grid tariffs set at the same level as local coal-fired power since 2021.

For the first decade after the law's enactment, China's wind power capacity grew 120-fold, from 1.26 million kilowatts to 150 million kW, while solar module prices fell to just one-tenth of their original cost.

However, as the industry expanded, challenges emerged. By the first half of 2016, the volume of curtailed wind and solar power had already surpassed the total for all of 2015. To address this, authorities replaced the full-guaranteed purchase mechanism with renewable portfolio standards in 2019, setting out binding targets for renewable consumption in each province.

In 2017, the Green Electricity Certificate was launched to provide a standardized way for businesses to track and verify that the power they consume comes from clean energy.

Dimitri de Boer, director for China at ClientEarth, an environmental law organization, noted that legislation must not remain static in order to be effective.

"Over time, the law, together with supporting policies, has gradually optimized the framework from administratively set prices, to competitive allocation, to full market integration and grid parity," he said.

De Boer said the second and current revision of the law provides an opportunity to further enhance its effectiveness in light of new and emerging trends.

He said further incentives for energy storage, demand-side response and flexible electricity pricing, for example, can help the energy system to adapt to the next stage of the energy transition, especially as China moves toward very high renewable penetration scenarios.

Equally, it's important to clarify the role of coal in the new system, repurposing it from base-load power to peaking power provision, he added.

De Boer suggested the circular economy and recycling in renewable energy industry chains, especially as the early installations begin to retire, become key focuses of the revision.

"At the same time, we need to ensure that renewable energy doesn't have an excessive impact on biodiversity," he said.

Beyond its domestic impact, China's rapid expansion of clean energy spurred by this legislation has had global significance. By driving down component costs and turning climate action into an economic opportunity, China has made the global energy transition faster, more efficient and far more accessible to developing nations.

De Boer said the share of oil and gas in China's primary energy needs is now only half that of the United States or the EU, meaning China is better insulated from global energy price shocks than many other major economies.

Reducing exposure to volatile fossil fuel markets, he suggested, offers a practical lesson for other nations.

The incredible progress in renewable energy sectors in China is one of the greatest contributions to climate action globally, as it provides the solutions needed by the entire world, De Boer said.

"China has helped to turn climate action from a burden into an economic opportunity," he said.

"Without China's clean energy achievements, the global energy transition would be more expensive, less efficient and take much longer."

Law just one part of key drivers of power transition



Hou Liqiang
Reporter's log

This year marks the 20th anniversary of China's Renewable Energy Law coming into force — a milestone many developing nations now turn to for reference as they scramble to accelerate their own energy transitions.

And rightly so. The law signaled strong political will and kicked off one of the fastest energy transitions in history — one that started almost from scratch. Today, renewable energy accounts for over 60 percent of China's total installed power generation capacity, with total installed renewable capacity surpassing 1,800 gigawatts in 2025.

China's experience in promoting energy transition holds significant potential for many developing nations, as it is not far from other developing states in terms of development stages. As Nigeria's Minister of Environment, Balarabe Abbas Lawal, once stressed in an interview with China Daily, China "understands what we are going through because they have just gone through it".

Yet, we must be careful not to over-romanticize China's experience in renewable energy development — particularly the law's role. Doing so risks missing some key drivers of China's success: its vast domestic market and complete industrial chain. These are precisely what many developing countries lack.

Consider China's geography — from 1.3 million square kilometers of desert in the northwest to 4.73 million square kilometers of maritime territory, spanning multiple climate zones from tropical to cold temperate. This diversity allowed China to test and scale a wide range of renewable technologies under different conditions. Its massive population and industrial base created unparalleled economies of scale, driving down the cost of solar panels and wind turbines to record lows.

But for many much smaller nations with limited land, fragmented infrastructure, or a small electricity market, copying the law without these structural advantages may lead to disappointment.

The hard truth? No amount of legislation can substitute for market scale or an integrated industrial ecosystem. Even China succeeded not by law alone — but through intense bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

The country learned from Germany and Denmark through demonstration projects, welcomed international investment, and trained a generation of policymakers, entrepreneurs and skilled workers. That cooperation — not the law in isolation — built today's giants, such as wind turbine giant Goldwind and BYD, the latter selling 4.6 million new energy vehicles in 2025.

Therefore, developing countries cannot go it alone. They must deepen South-South cooperation — sharing regional markets, jointly building supply chains, and co-investing in manufacturing. Some capacity may be outdated for China but remains highly useful elsewhere, as it can help developing nations start to build their own industrial chains — the key to future takeoff.

Thus, developing nations should set ambitious goals, but begin with humility. The law offers a compass, but only cooperation can pave the road.

Contact the writer at houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

Report: China, Philippines cooperation on electricity a 'win-win'

By HOU LIQIANG

The Philippines and China could benefit from a wealth of untapped potential in renewable energy cooperation, capitalizing on the Philippines' natural resources and Chinese know-how, according to a recently released report.

By partnering with China on renewables, the Philippines could fast-track its shift to clean energy and unlock a strategic market for Chinese companies, creating a "win-win" scenario, the report said.

The Bridging Opportunities: A Roadmap for China–Philippines Renewable Energy Cooperation report was compiled and released in April by People of Asia for Climate Solutions, a Manila-based NGO, and global nonprofit New Energy Nexus.

The report comes as the Philippines strives to raise the share of renewables in its energy mix to 35 percent by 2030 and 50 percent by 2040, while fossil fuels continue to dominate at roughly 78 percent.

The country's energy transition has become more urgent amid the ongoing fossil fuel crisis, as it remains heavily reliant on crude oil imports, the study said.

The Philippines imports 98 percent of its crude oil from the Middle East, according to the country's Department of Energy.

Today's oil crisis is a reminder that the Philippines remains highly exposed to global fuel shocks. What this report shows is that the solution is already within reach, said Brenda Valerio, country director for the Philippines at New Energy Nexus.

"With the right partnerships, we can accelerate deployment while building domestic capability, jobs, and more affordable energy for households and businesses," she said.

While diplomatic ties between the Philippines and China span five decades, collaboration in renewable energy remains limited. The study found that the opportunity is not simply in increasing capital flows, but in structuring partnerships that drive shared growth, including joint ventures, local manufacturing partnerships, knowledge transfer and technical capacity development that anchor value within the Philippines.

Valerio said the Philippines has abundant renewable resources from solar and wind to geothermal. With clear policy direction for energy transition, the country's electricity demand continues to grow, creating a strong market for new capacity.

Despite this, however, she pointed out several important concerns that make international companies, especially those from China, hesitate to engage in the country's renewable energy development.

She noted policy inconsistency as the most frequently cited challenge. "Not necessarily the absence of policies, but gaps in implementation. So processes can be slow or unclear, which creates uncertainty for investors," she said.

She added that the complexity of permitting and regulatory requirements — which can lengthen project timelines and increase costs — along with infrastructure constraints, are also factors to blame.

Chinese renewable energy companies bring extensive experience in technology, manufacturing, and large-scale deployment. The study found that collaboration should expand to distributed and community-based solutions such as rooftop solar and microgrids, which can be deployed faster and help address grid constraints.

"This can be a perfect match. The Philippines has rich renewable resources and urgent needs, while China has strong capacity and readiness. Together, we can deliver clean, safe and affordable electricity for Filipino communities," said Wang Xiaojun, executive director at People of Asia for Climate Solutions.

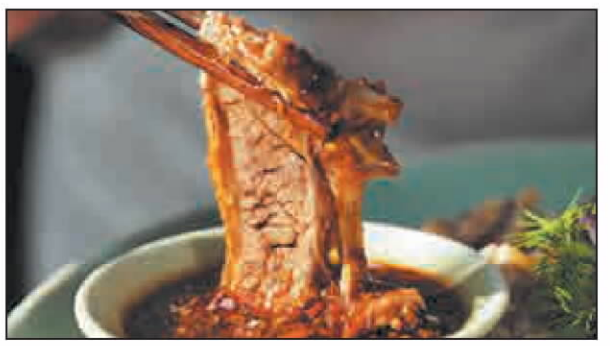
"The longer we hesitate, the more we lose," he said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:27 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:27 PM

LIFE







From top: Dishes Sun Lixin has taught the public via video, including Huaishan Four Treasures Soup (made with Chinese yam, cauliflower mushroom, cordyceps flower and chicken), beef ribs with dipping sauce, and braised pork knuckle.



Sun Lixin, former executive chef of a century-old restaurant and a veteran of state banquets.

Banquet halls to home stoves

Once a master of state dinners, Sun Lixin now teaches cooking to millions online, proving that even the most refined dishes can live on in everyday, family kitchens, **Li Yingxue** reports.







From top: More of Sun's creations include blueberry Chinese yam, a chicken dish, and a fish dish. PHOTOS BY ZHANG WEI AND PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Deep in the maze of Beijing's *hutong* (alleyways), inside a lived-in *siheyuan* (enclosed courtyard), the air is thick with steam and the steady crackle of fire. A wok flashes over an open flame. Oil shimmers, spits, and releases a familiar, irresistible aroma.

Leaning toward a slightly trembling phone camera, a nearly 70-year-old chef speaks in a warm Beijing drawl: "Watch this step carefully — this is called coating. Don't lose focus."

To millions online, he is simply "Second Uncle". In real life, he is Sun Lixin — once the executive chef of the century-old restaurant Bianyifang, best known for its Peking duck, and a veteran of countless state banquets.

In 2019, alongside Zheng Xiusheng, the former executive chef of the Beijing Hotel, he co-founded "Lao Fan Gu", a moniker meaning veteran master chefs. The duo's account has since amassed a Douyin (a social media platform) following of more than 16 million.

But Sun's journey to internet fame was anything but overnight.

Born in 1956, Sun stepped into the kitchen straight out of middle school. His formative years were shaped by Tuo Dailiang, a revered Sichuan cuisine master who once oversaw a massive national banquet marking the 10th anniversary of the People's Republic of China (in 1959).

At 16, Sun learned his first dish, Kung Pao Chicken, and never strayed far from its disciplined principles: a balance of numbing spice, heat, savoriness, freshness, and a subtle sweet-sour finish; precision in knife work; and harmony in texture.

"My master cooked for top leaders, but he was always extremely low-key," Sun recalls. "He told me not to chase fame, just focus on making every meal well."

That philosophy would later define Sun's own career. By his 20s, he had already risen to head chef at one of China's earliest foreign-affairs hotels. Over decades, he became known not only for preserving tradition but also for quietly pushing its boundaries.

One of his most unlikely legacies is a dish now found on menus across China: blueberry yam.

The idea emerged from thrift. While preparing a traditional dish of osmanthus yam strips, Sun found that scraps were inevitably discarded. Unwilling to waste them, Sun steamed and mashed the leftovers.

The result was bland — until he borrowed from Western pastry techniques, adding whipped cream and condensed milk, piping the mixture into delicate mounds, and finishing it with blueberry sauce. What began as an anti-waste experiment became a nationwide staple.

If blueberry yam was an inspired improvisation, Sun's reinvention of roast duck was a deliberate, years-long pursuit.

After taking on a leadership role at Bianyifang, he noticed a shift in diners' expectations toward healthier eating. Roast duck, an iconic dish of Chinese cuisine, was synonymous with richness. Sun wanted to change that without losing its soul.

Starting in 2003, he worked with nutrition experts to overhaul the process. Vegetable juices replaced traditional marinades. Even the liquid poured into the duck cavity — once spiced water — was reimagined. The result was a technique he describes as "roasting outside, simmering inside", producing a duck that was lower in fat and oil while retaining its signature depth of flavor.

The innovation earned a national patent and industry acclaim. But for Sun, the goal was never recognition. It was continuity.

"Preserving tradition doesn't mean refusing changes," he says. "You keep the roots, but give them new life for today."

Having already modernized state banquet dishes for changing tastes, Sun soon realized the medium for sharing them also needed to evolve. In 2019, he turned to a different audience: home cooks.

"Lao Fan Gu" began modestly on Douyin. Early videos were sprawling, sometimes stretching a single dish across dozens of episodes. Viewers quickly lost patience. The team adapted, condensing lessons into concise, digestible segments. Then came a breakthrough: a meticulous re-creation of a historic state banquet menu sparked a surge in followers.

What sets "Lao Fan Gu" apart is not production polish, as there are no studio lights or staged backdrops, but authenticity. Filmed in a real, working home kitchen, the videos capture Sun and Zheng in constant motion, joking like crosstalk performers as they cook. Fans have dubbed it "the crosstalk kitchen".

Yet beneath the humor lies rigor. When demonstrating a smooth walnut dessert once served at state banquets, Sun pauses to emphasize a point: even a stray piece of jujube skin, he notes, would count as a serious mistake in a professional kitchen.

As their audience grew, so did its diversity. Some viewers were complete beginners; others were seasoned chefs. Striking a balance became a challenge.

"If it's too technical, beginners can't follow it," Sun says. "If it's too simple, professionals don't learn anything."

The solution was a dual-layered approach: precise breakdowns of advanced techniques alongside plainspoken explanations in everyday language. Complex methods like stock-making or battering are dissected step by step, while timing and heat are explained in a way that anyone with a home stove can grasp.

The impact is tangible. Viewers often return with updates — moving from tentative first attempts to proud successes — as the once-intimidating kitchen becomes a space of growing confidence.

One user, "yuanfangchuanlaifengdi", commented under a braised pork ribs video: "So detailed! I followed your recipe today — my ribs are stewing now, can't wait." Hours later, he returned with an update: "It's delicious. I used to add so many seasonings, but this simple version tastes even better."

Sun recalls a letter from a woman whose marriage had been on the verge of collapse. Her husband, once disengaged from household life, began cooking after watching "Lao Fan Gu". Gradually, he became more involved at home. "You saved my family," she wrote.

For Sun, the message was clear. "Cooking is a kind of glue for family harmony," Sun reflects. "That's the real meaning behind our motto: we cook well, and you eat well."

Today, "Lao Fan Gu" extends beyond short videos. The team develops ready-to-eat products, visits university campuses, and hosts livestreams demonstrating intricate regional dishes. Their audience's questions — about nutrition, relationships, daily life — have broadened the scope of what began as a cooking channel.

In 2022, Zheng passed away, marking a profound loss. However, the project continues, joined by other veteran chefs, including 75-year-old master chef Hou Yurui, a national judge and expert in Hunan cuisine. Known for his gentle demeanor and focus on health, Hou excels at explaining the underlying logic behind cooking techniques.

Alongside these seasoned masters, younger apprentices increasingly appear on camera, continuing the intergenerational relay of culinary knowledge. Sun remains at the center, steady as ever.

From a teenage apprentice to a master of state banquets, and now a mentor to millions of home cooks, his journey reflects a quiet arc of return. The techniques may be refined, the platforms modern, but the purpose is unchanged.

"In fact, banquet menus are quite simple, with many dishes using everyday ingredients," Zheng once said. "We hope people can learn them and re-create them at family gatherings, passing them down through generations."

That vision endures. In kitchens far from Beijing's *hutong*, in the glow of phone screens and the rhythm of home stoves, Sun and the "Lao Fan Gu" team continue to translate the grandeur of the banquet table into something intimate, repeatable and alive — one dish, one family, one generation at a time.

Contact the writer at liyingxue@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

From indigo dye to dough art, Xinzhou turns tradition into experiences

TAIYUAN — In an ancient courtyard in Xinzhou city, in North China's relic-rich Shanxi province, Cui Yafei saw a plain white silk scarf turn lush green after it was soaked in dye for 10 minutes, and watched as it then turned indigo within minutes of being exposed to the air.

"Everyone is a designer here. Every piece is a unique memory shared between us and the traditional natural dyeing technique," says Cui.

For her, the hands-on process is far more rewarding than simply taking "check-in" photos at famous landmarks.

The "magic" is part of a traditional natural dyeing technique, a municipal-level intangible cultural heritage project in Xinzhou. The indigo dye is extracted from the leaves of isatis root, a herb that Zhao Hui, the local inheritor, treats with profound respect.

"If maintained well, the dye could outlive me," Zhao says, noting that her workshop in Xinzhou ancient city now offers over 100 different color variations, which are attracting a growing number of young visitors.



Steps of Dong ethnic embroidery (left) and indigo dyeing (middle and right) captured on April 21 in Liping county, Guizhou province. PHOTOS BY XINHUA

The rise of the "handmade economy" marks a shift in Chinese consumption trends, where travelers increasingly seek cultural experiences and emotional value over material purchases.

Xinzhou, known in ancient times as Xiurong, with a history dating back to the late Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220), has transformed into a living folklore museum, integrating cultural heritage protection with high-quality tourism development.

Just steps away from the dyeing workshop, another group of tourists was busy kneading dough at a traditional *huamo* (steamed buns with elaborate decorations) shop. Under the guidance of Gao Juan, a district-level inheritor of the local *huamo*-making techniques, a lively fish-shaped *huamo* took form in seconds.

"Beyond traditional shapes, we now offer tourists an experience of making cartoon-style buns," Gao says, adding that her business has significantly benefited from the "heritage plus experience" travel model.

Local government support has played a crucial role in the revival. To date, 30 creative cultural shops have opened on a dedicated street in Xinzhou ancient city, including 12 intangible cultural heritage projects.

The trend is resonating across China. In Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province, young people are lining up to try their hands at the pottery wheel; in Jiangsu province's Suzhou, crowds gather to craft unique lacquer fans using mineral pigments; and in the tea workshops of Fujian province, visitors learn the 1,000-year-old art of tea making from master craftsmen.

Experts believe the shift reflects a profound change in consumer demand. "Consumers are no longer satisfied with passive reception; they are more willing to pay for unique emotional value, social experiences, and memories of the process," says Yan Chun, a folklore scholar and associate professor at Shanxi Normal University.

The rise of the "handmade economy" has taken ancient traditions out of deep alleys and brought them to the public, activating new consumption momentum, Yan adds.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:27 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:27 PM

CULTURE

Sketching from memories

Picture book artist taps her inner child and grandmother's stories to create award-winning works, report **Li Muyun** and **He Chun** in Changsha.

"Everyone has a child inside," says Cai Gao, the 79-year-old renowned picture book artist who has spent decades nurturing her inner child and her work. "Anything that stops me from being a child, I cut it loose. No mercy," she asserts.

This unwavering inner child has propelled her to the pinnacle of her career. On April 13, Cai became the first Chinese illustrator to receive the Hans Christian Andersen Award, the highest international accolade given every other year to writers and illustrators of children's books. The announcement was made at the annual news conference of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) during the Bologna Children's Book Fair in Italy.

The night she received the news, Cai's thoughts were not on the prize or herself, but on the people and the land that shaped her.

Born in 1946 in Changsha, the capital city of Central China's Hunan province, Cai grew up during the last days of an era when stories were passed down orally from generation to generation. Her worldview was profoundly influenced by the tales her grandmother shared with her while sitting in the courtyard, sewing by hand.

She fondly recalls her grandmother in an immaculate plain blue cotton gown with a fresh flower — either a jasmine or gardenia — pinned to her collar.

"She loved life, and made our daily existence feel like a celebration," Cai reminisces, adding that her grandmother often took her to see both local and visiting opera troupes. This exposure allowed Cai to sketch the characters and preserve the performances in her memory.

Despite never having the opportunity to attend art school, Cai considers her childhood experiences — playing in the courtyard of pomegranate trees, listening to her grandmother's nursery rhymes, and watching theater plays — as the "best education".

"My childhood cannot be replicated," she says. "I'm lucky to have had all of that."

Many of her books echo her childhood memories, including *Where the Moon Goes, I Go*.

"The girl picking the pomegranate in that book is me," she says with a broad smile. "It's easy to illustrate your own childhood. Art is not such a big deal for me because it is never far from life."

Graduating from Hunan First Normal School (now Hunan First Normal University), Cai began her career as a rural teacher. Despite the challenges of rural life, she found beauty in her surroundings and never abandoned her passion for art. Reflecting on her six years working and living in the countryside, she describes herself as a "Sunday artist", seizing any spare moment outside of her teaching duties to pick up her brush.

In 1982, at 36, Cai started working as an editor for children's books at Hunan Juvenile and Children's Publishing House in Changsha. This position allowed her to delve deeply into the world of picture books, both editing and illustrating. Her talent was internationally recognized in 1993 when her book, *Bao'er*, won the Golden Apple Award at the 14th Biennial of Illustration Bratislava, making her the first Chinese artist to receive this prestigious accolade.



Cai Gao (right) interacts with readers at a book sharing and signing session in Changsha, Hunan province, on April 18.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



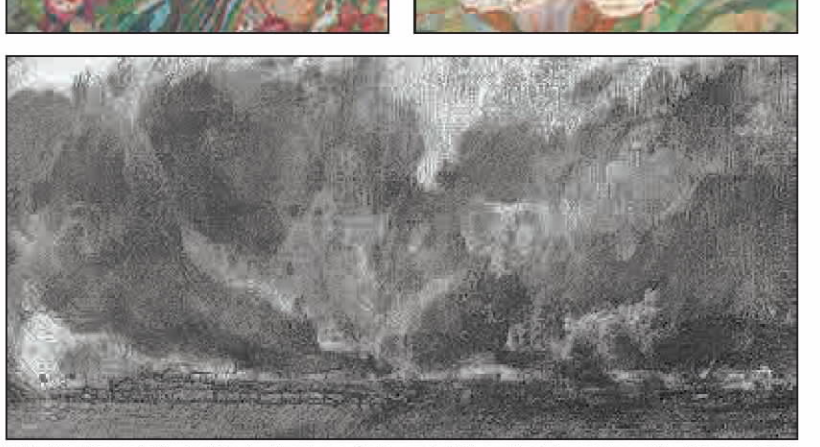
> "The girl picking the pomegranate in that book is me ... Art is not such a big deal for me because it is never far from life."
>
> **Cai Gao,** the first Chinese illustrator to receive the Hans Christian Andersen Award











Top: Illustrations from Cai's work *How I Came to Be Me*. **Above left:** An illustration from Cai's work *Where the Moon Goes, I Go*. **Above right:** Another illustration from Cai's *Blazing City 1938*.

The story of *Bao'er* is adapted from a tale by Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) novelist Pu Songling's masterpiece *Liaozhai Zhiyi* (Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio). Cai selected the only story featuring a child as the protagonist and reimagined it, focusing on a boy's love for his mother and his courage in confronting evil and darkness.

In Cai's book, when the boy focuses intensely, his eyes turn a clear blue, symbolizing his determination and insight. "Blue is the color of enchanting, clear water, with sunlight lingering deep inside," Cai explains. "Children's eyes are clear and innocent, allowing them to see through to the essence of things."

Like *Bao'er*, many of Cai's works are deeply rooted in Chinese folk traditions and classical literature.

The picture book *The Land of the Peach Blossom* is inspired by the classic essay and poem *The Peach Blossom Spring* by Tao Yuanming from the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-420), reflecting the Taoist vision of life. Published in 2001 by Fukuinkan Shoten Publishers in Japan, the book's first edition of 5,000 copies sold out within a month. In 2003, two illustrations from the book were selected for inclusion in Japanese sixth-graders' Chinese textbooks.

Tan Fengxia, a professor at Nanjing Normal University and a member of the 2026 Hans Christian Andersen Award jury, praised Cai's work as a powerful model for how Chinese stories can transcend borders.

"She has embraced Western artistic influences with an open mind, blending them into a visual language that is distinctly rooted in Chinese tradition, yet speaks across cultures," Tan says. "She crosses cultural barriers by touching on universal themes: the love for our children and the desire to offer them something bright."

"I love Chinese culture. I love every written character of the Chinese language," Cai says. "I hope the world can see more of the finest Chinese works and, through them, gain a better understanding of China."

Among the works that most impressed the HCA jury was the 2023 edition of *Blazing City 1938*, a wordless, black-and-white picture book created by Cai and her daughter Xiao Aozi, who is also a painter. Through the eyes of a little girl, the book revisits the Wenxi Fire, a devastating catastrophe in Changsha during the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45). The fire destroyed over 90 percent of the houses in Changsha, leaving the city in ruins.

Shereen Kreidieh, president of the HCA Jury, describes Cai's work as "amazing".

"With just two colors and no words, it tells a complete story of war, allowing any child anywhere in the world to have a feeling of what's happening," Kreidieh says.

With her books, Cai hopes to convey the Chinese people's love for peace, a message she believes is increasingly important in today's global context.

"Our picture books should serve as bridges of understanding, bringing more harmony to the world," she says.

Contact the writers at limuyun@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese animation selected for prestigious film festival

By ZHANG KUN in Shanghai
zhangkun@chinadaily.com.cn

The Chinese animated feature *Nobody* has been selected for the Annecy International Animation Film Festival's official feature film competition, one of the festival's most prestigious sections, organizers announced in late April.

The festival, which was established in 1960, is held annually in France and is globally recognized as the premier animation film festival.

The 2026 edition is scheduled to take place from June 21 to June 27.

Produced by Shanghai Animation Film Studio and Shanghai Film Infinity, *Nobody*, or *Langlang Shan Xiao Yaoguai* in Chinese (The Little Monsters of Langlang Mountain) is a feature-length spin-off of the acclaimed animated short film anthology *Yao-Chinese Folktales*. It was released domestically on Aug 2 and achieved phenomenal success with a cumulative box office of 1.72 billion yuan ($252 million), setting a new all-time record for Chinese 2D animated films.

Written and directed by Yu Shui, the film follows a little pig monster, an outcast neglected by his boss, who inadvertently forms a grassroots counterfeit-pilgrimage team.

The group embarks on an absurd, self-styled journey to the West, hoping to receive immortality from Buddha. The film explores universal themes of family, friendship, growth, and dreams.

The competition section of the Annecy Festival is renowned for its stringent artistic standards and forward-looking industry vision, representing one of the highest benchmarks in global animation.

According to Shanghai Film Infinity, a subsidiary of Shanghai Film Group, the selection of the film is a significant milestone that not only marks another prominent showcase for Chinese animation artistry on the world stage but also opens a core channel to the global market, promising broader international attention and potential cooperation opportunities.

Following its domestic triumph, *Nobody* has begun its international release, opening in markets including Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand and the North American countries.

Its overseas performance has been notably strong in Vietnam, where it has already entered the top five highest-grossing Chinese-language films of all time.

Nobody continues a historic connection between Chinese animation and the Annecy Festival that dates back to 1962, when *Tadpoles Looking for Mother*, one of the world's first ink-wash animated short films, produced by Shanghai Animation Film Studio, amazed audiences with its unique techniques and won the Children's Film Award at Annecy.



A poster for the Chinese animation film *Nobody*.
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:27 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:27 PM

CULTURE



From left: Pianist Zhang Haochen; violinist Lyu Siqing (left) and cellist Li-Wei Qin (center); and violinist Ning Feng are performing during the NCPA May Festival. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Mozart takes center stage at NCPA May Festival

Beijing's flagship chamber music event returns with a star-studded lineup, marking the composer's 270th anniversary with global collaborations, **Chen Nan** reports.

Every spring, the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing presents a grand celebration of chamber music — its annual NCPA May Festival.

Running until May 24, the festival is showcasing a diverse array of performances including new works, international ensembles, and the multifaceted forms of chamber music.

This year's festival is especially significant as it marks the 270th anniversary of the birth of Mozart. His works are being featured throughout the event, including at the opening concert last Friday.

Titled *Bows and Strings VI*, the concert saw an impressive ensemble of 10 distinguished artists, including renowned violinist Lyu Siqing, cellist Li-Wei Qin and clarinetist Wang Tao, joining forces with the China NCPA Orchestra under the baton of resident conductor Lai Jiajing.

Together, they performed several of Mozart's iconic masterpieces, including a groundbreaking version of his *Serenade in C Major, K 648*, newly adapted to include brass instruments and piano, which is a departure from traditional string arrangements. Referred to as "A Very Little Night Music", the serenade for two violins and bass is a previously unknown piece. Composed by Mozart when he was in his early teens, the piece dates back to the mid-to-late 1760s and consists of seven miniature movements for a string trio.

"This sense of collaboration and artistic exploration is at the heart of the NCPA May Festival, making it one of the most anticipated musical events of the year in China and beyond," said Lyu, the NCPA May Festival's artistic director, at the NCPA in Beijing on April 15. "With a diverse and star-studded lineup, the 2026 festival promises to be an unforgettable celebration of music, talent, and cultural exchange."



Beyond the opening concert, Lyu, who is also a leading performer at the festival, is presenting several more performances. On Monday, he collaborated with cellist Qin and pianist Chen Sa as a trio in a chamber music concert titled *Dawn and Echo in Vienna*, with music pieces such as Mozart's *Piano Trio in B-flat Major, K 502* and Franz Schubert's *Piano Trio No 2 in E-flat Major, Op 100 (D 929)*.

Then, on May 21, he will take the stage again with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra in a symphonic performance, paying tribute to the grandeur of classical music with pieces including Tchaikovsky's *Polonaise*, an excerpt from *Eugene Onegin*, Act 3, Scene 1, Op 24, and Jean Sibelius' *Violin Concerto in D Minor, Op 47*.

The festival will also feature an outstanding lineup of international and Chinese soloists, including violinist Ning Feng, pianist Zhang Haochen, and renowned ensembles such as the Berlin Philharmonic Piano Quartet, Cappella Andrea Barca, the Concertgebouw Chamber Orchestra, and the Hong Kong String Orchestra.

A highlight of the festival will be the performance by violinist Ning and his mentor, the esteemed German musician Antje Weithaas, who will perform alongside I Musici, which was founded in 1951 in Rome, Italy, and is one of the oldest active chamber music groups in the world. The duo will also join forces with the China NCPA Orchestra and conductor Lyu Jia for a performance of Mozart's *Symphony No 36 in C Major, K 425 (Linz)* on May 15, where Ning will take on the viola part, bridging the gap between violin and viola in a fascinating crossover.



Top: Violinist Lyu Siqing (third from right), the artistic director of the NCPA May Festival, announces this year's edition in Beijing on April 15. **Above:** The Berlin Philharmonic Piano Quartet will perform in Beijing on May 16.

For those who appreciate the richness of European chamber music, the festival offers an exciting opportunity to experience the Kodaly Quartet's 60th anniversary celebration, showcasing the unique flavors of Hungarian chamber music.

The Concertgebouw Chamber Orchestra will bring a poetic touch to the festival with its program, embodying the exquisite aesthetics of European chamber music. Additionally, the China NCPA Orchestra will collaborate with pianist Zhang Haochen in a unique fusion of works by composer Chen Qigang and Mozart.

The festival will close with a touch of jazz featuring the legendary Grammy winner Kurt Elling, one of the world's foremost jazz vocalists.

Cellist Qin, who has participated in previous editions of the NCPA May Festival, underscored the significance of chamber music in a recent interview. He highlighted how chamber music offers a unique opportunity for musicians to express their artistry beyond solo performances.

"In chamber music, the cello often plays the 'heartbeat' role, providing rhythmic support," he said at the NCPA in Beijing on April 15. "At first, this may seem monotonous or even boring, but as I gained more experience, I came to appreciate the flexibility of chamber music, the way it allows multiple musicians to combine their voices into a rich, multilayered performance. It's like being both a lead character and a supporting role in a film, and that complexity brings something special to the audience."

In keeping with its community engagement, the festival will once again feature its public performances, bringing music into the heart of the city. These concerts will reach audiences in urban spaces, such as factories, campuses and public areas, providing an opportunity for frontline workers and local residents to experience the joy and warmth of music.

Contact the writer at chennan@chinadaily.com.cn

Literature and learning bridge China and Greece

By **TAN YINGZI** and **DENG RUI** in Chongqing





Left: The 3rd Global Forum on Mutual Learning Among Civilizations began on April 16 at Southwest University in Chongqing. **Right:** A Greek guest tries traditional Chinese painting under the guidance of a teacher at the event. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The cultural ties between Greece and China are growing ever stronger, highlighted by a series of collaborative events and initiatives held in Southwest China's Chongqing recently to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the two countries' comprehensive strategic partnership.

Amid the buzz of these celebrations, Greek author and Chinese literature translator Dimitris Sotakis shared his excitement at the 3rd Global Forum on Mutual Learning Among Civilizations, held in mid-April. "We now have many possibilities for collaboration in China in the field of literature that I represent," Sotakis told China Daily.

He added that over the past year, his literary works have found a receptive audience in China, with his second book translated and published on the Chinese mainland. His invitations to major book fairs and events in China further underscore the growing interest in Greek literature.

"Contact with the Chinese language and its way of thinking also acts as a mirror for Greek. It forces us to reevaluate concepts we take for granted, to see our language not as something static, but as a dynamic system that evolves through encounters with differences. This interaction is not one-way, but a continuous dialogue that enriches both sides," he said, adding that there are still many significant contemporary Chinese writers whose works remain unknown in Greece, emphasizing the need for translation programs to bridge this gap.

Held from April 14 to 16 at the Center for Chinese and Greek Civilizations, also known as the Chinese KELKIP, at Southwest University in Chongqing, the forum brought together experts in the Greek language and culture from Greek universities and Chinese institutions with Greek studies departments across China, serving as a crucible of ideas and cultural exchange.

A highlight of the event was the launch of the Sino-Hellenic University Alliance for Mutual Learning Among Civilizations, which unites universities from both nations to foster educational exchange. This initiative promises to be a cornerstone for future scholarly collaboration.

The forum also saw the release of two book series aimed at enhancing mutual learning. One is the Contemporary Greek Legal Classics Translation Series — the first collection in China focused on Greek law. The other, the Documentary Series on Sino-Foreign Medical Exchanges Along the Silk Road, features Sino-Arab and Sino-Persian volumes.

Cui Yanqiang, director of the Chinese KELKIP, noted that the Greek law series was a collaborative effort between legal scholars and university professors from both countries.

In a video speech, Shahbaz Khan, director and representative of the UNESCO Regional Office for East Asia, commended the center for its efforts to promote dialogue, educational exchange, and deeper understanding between cultures. "By bringing together two rich intellectual traditions, the center has created a meaningful platform for reflection and cooperation," he said.

The celebrations continued on April 18 with a salon in honor of World Greek Language Day. The Ambassador of Greece to China, Evgenios Kalpyris, awarded representatives of nine centers of Greek studies at Chinese universities for their outstanding contributions to promoting Greek studies in China. He highlighted the Greek language's 4,000-year history and its "undeniable global dynamism".

Greece established the Greek KELKIP in Athens in 2021, while Southwest University, with its strong background in humanities and philosophy, especially in Chinese and Greek civilizations, collaborated with other Chinese universities to set up the Chinese KELKIP two years later to engage in comprehensive cooperation with Greece.

Contact the writers at dengrui@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:27 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:27 PM

SPORTS

ICE HOCKEY





Above: Team China's young stars are jubilant after beating Estonia in a penalty shootout and claiming the silver medal at the International Ice Hockey Federation Men's World Championships Division I Group B tournament in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, on Tuesday. **Below:** China's Hou Yuyang celebrates scoring a goal during the match. XINHUA

CHINA CLAIMS HISTORIC SILVER

Young, all-Chinese roster reaches heights not seen in three decades

By **SUN XIAOCHEN**
sunxiaochen@chinadaily.com.cn

From having to rely on naturalized troops at its home Olympics to securing a silver medal at the worlds with an all-Chinese roster, China's men's ice hockey has come a long way over the past four years.

With gloves tossed in the air and the crowd on its feet roaring, pucksters in red and white collided in bear hugs, as the wild celebration at the Universiade Center Arena in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, on Tuesday sent a strong message to ice hockey's elite — the long-overdue rise of China's men's program is happening for real and, remarkably, on its own.

The elation was triggered by the host squad's 3-2 penalty shootout win (4-3 overall) over Estonia in its fifth and final round-robin game at the International Ice Hockey Federation Men's World Championships Division I Group B tournament to clinch a silver medal at the third-tier event in the IIHF Worlds system. It marked the Chinese men's best result since the current multi-division worlds format was adopted in 2001.

The awe-inspiring podium finish, witnessed by a rapturous home crowd, is expected to place Team China at 24th overall in IIHF's 2026 standings, after the completion of the top- and second-tier championships at the end of May, giving the country its highest-ever ranking in the traditionally Western-dominated sport since it claimed 20th place way back in 1994.

Team China's strong campaign at the six-nation Shenzhen tourney — eventually won by Estonia with four straight regulation wins, two more than the host — has produced a more profound boost, beyond just statistical feats, for the game domestically, given its dramatic shift of strategy over the past four years.

Rather than recruiting North American-born players with Chinese heritage, like the country did around the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics, this current national program has put together a new breed of young talent all born and raised in China, yet nurturing their hockey prowess in overseas minor leagues, and mixed them up with the best of the domestic league to represent their nation on the international stage.

Ten of Team China's 23 players in Shenzhen are currently honing their game in overseas programs, such as the US college league, the Japan-based Asian league and Canada's Ontario Hockey League.

The untapped potential of this young cohort, and the camaraderie among them, have created a more united squad with greater pride in representing their home country than the naturalized Olympic squads of four years ago, where over half of China's men's and women's lineups were born either in the United States or Canada.

And, arguably, nobody has embodied the program's new approach more than China's teen prospect Wang Haoxi.



The 18-year-old, 1.96-meter Beijing native, who became the highest-selected Chinese player in NHL history after being picked by the San Jose Sharks at 33rd overall in the 2025 draft, lived up to his billing as the new face of Team China by winning the tournament's Best Defenseman award.

Wang, who goes by the name Simon in Canada where he plays in the OHL, made no secret of Team China's ambition, throwing down the gauntlet to the world's elite.

"No, it did not exceed our own expectations, because we know how good a team we are," Wang said after the penalty shootout victory over Estonia.

"Our team is very strong, and we fought our hardest in every game. If we hadn't needed overtime to beat Romania (in the second game), we could've secured the gold and the promotion," said Wang, who appeared in 57 games in the 2025-26 OHL season, recording 26 points between the Oshawa Generals and Niagara IceDogs.

Tying with Estonia on the total number of wins, Team China had to settle with a runner-up finish, three points shy of the European side, due to, as Wang pointed out, its two overtime wins.

With an upbringing and development path similar to Wang's, 17-year-old goalie Tu Yueran couldn't hold back his pride after making his senior international debut for Team China in Shenzhen, having stood out in Canada's minor program.

Tu's composure beyond his years and solid skills took over in the critical shootout as he denied three of Estonia's five attempts to help secure the win together with teammate Zheng Mingju, who sent the crowd into frenzy by scoring China's final and fifth penalty to close out the match.

"Being able to represent China is the best feeling in the world (for us). I am glad we got the job done," said Tu, who goes by the name Eric in Canada and, somewhat appropriately, has an image of the impenetrable Great Wall on the back of his helmet.

"To play for your country with so many people rallying behind you feels so different from playing for a club overseas," said Tu, who made 1035 saves representing the Calgary Hitmen in 45 games in the 2025-26 Western Hockey League season.

"Winning the game gave us a lot of confidence. We had that belief in the room already, and winning has just added to that."

China's head coach Perry Pearn, a Canadian former assistant coach with the NHL's Vancouver Canucks, said the trajectory of China's young core is fascinating.

"It's exciting, because we let some young players go (without being called up) that are pretty close to being here, who are playing pretty good junior hockey in North America," said the 74-year-old, who coached Canada's women's national team and Japan's men's squad before taking the China's men's team job in 2025.

"I don't think it will be long before they are ready to come here. Of course, Eric (Tu) and Simon Wang are pretty good kids from the standpoint of hockey in general. I think that really bodes well for the Chinese game."

BASKETBALL

Thunder strikes first against Lakers as Pistons down Cavs

The Oklahoma City Thunder overpowered LeBron James and the Los Angeles Lakers 108-90 on Tuesday to grab a 1-0 lead in their NBA Western Conference semifinal series.

A balanced offensive performance and steely defensive display from the reigning NBA champion were enough to seal victory over the depleted Lakers, which started brightly, but trailed for the final three quarters.

Chet Holmgren led the Thunder with 24 points and 12 rebounds, while reigning NBA Most Valuable Player Shai Gilgeous-Alexander and Ajay Mitchell added 18 points apiece.

"We were a little choppy, a little rusty, but offensively we just stuck with it," Gilgeous-Alexander said, saluting a Thunder defense that restricted the Lakers to their lowest score in a playoff game since 2021.

"We just try to make people play outside their comfort zone, as simple as that," Gilgeous-Alexander said of the Thunder defense. "Whatever guys like to do, we like to take that away from them."

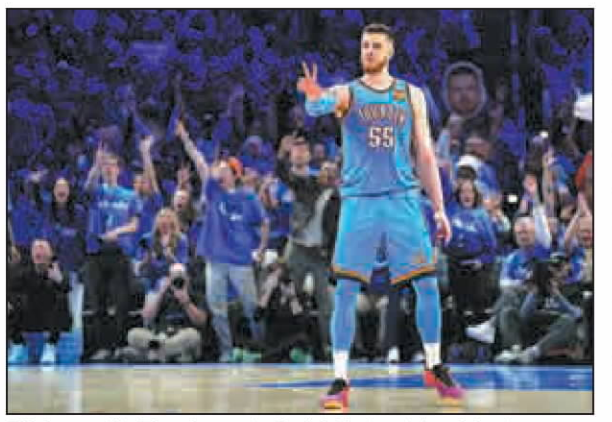
The commanding Thunder victory underscored the size of the task facing the fourth-seeded Lakers if they are to defy the odds and upset the champion in the best-of-seven series.

Oklahoma City completed a 4-0 regular-season sweep over the Lakers, winning each game by an average margin of 29.3 points.

Tuesday's series-opener at Oklahoma City's Paycom Center echoed the Thunder's regular-season dominance, with the champion pulling away down the stretch to score an emphatic win.

James, who had defied his 41 years to lead the Lakers to a surprise 4-2 upset of the Houston Rockets in the first round, led Los Angeles with 27 points in a losing effort.

Rui Hachimura added 18 points with Marcus Smart bagging 12 and Deandre Ayton 10.



Oklahoma City Thunder center Isaiah Hartenstein celebrates as fans react to his basket during a second-round NBA playoffs series game against the Los Angeles Lakers in Oklahoma on Tuesday. AP

Detroit quells late rally

In Tuesday's other playoff game, Cade Cunningham scored 23 points as the Detroit Pistons held off a second-half rally to beat the Cleveland Cavaliers 111-101 in their NBA Eastern Conference semifinal series opener.

The top-seeded Pistons looked to be cruising to a comfortable win after dominating in the first half and taking a 17-point lead in the third period.

But, a spirited Cleveland rally saw the Cavaliers close to within four points before Detroit finally pulled clear again in the fourth quarter.

Jalen Duren had three dunks, two rebounds and a block in a 67-second stretch to break open a tied game.

Cunningham was one of six Detroit players to finish in double figures, with Tobias Harris adding 20 points while Duncan Robinson bagged five three-pointers on his way to a 19-point haul at the Pistons' Little Caesars Arena.

Daniss Jenkins added 12 points from the bench with Ausar Thompson and Duren scoring 11 points apiece.

Donovan Mitchell led Cleveland with 23 points, including four three-pointers, while James Harden scored 22 points with eight rebounds and seven assists.

"It was a great team win — defending the ball, rebounding the ball," Cunningham told broadcaster NBC.

"We've got a great system in place. You've got somebody that will come in behind you whenever you get tired.

"But it's one win, we've got to come back and do it again."

Detroit had battled into the conference semifinals after coming back from 3-1 down to defeat Orlando 4-3 in the first round.

Cunningham said the Pistons are anxious to avoid a repeat.

"You've got to protect home court. We didn't do that in the last series, so we want to do that this series," Cunningham said.

"They want to come in and steal one, so we've got to do this again the day after tomorrow."

AFP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:27 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:29 PM

New concern
Dozens left hantavirus-hit vessel without tracing
WORLD, PAGE 5



Chinese battery tech on display at auto show
AMERICA FOCUS, PAGE 16



Durian express
Efficient logistic networks fuel growing appetite for tropical fruit
BUSINESS, PAGE 10

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 FRIDAY, MAY 8, 2026

Stable Sino-US ties linked to global growth

Sound relations protect supply chains and support trade flows, say observers

By **ZHONG NAN**
zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

Expanded cooperation between China and the United States will help reinforce the stability of global industrial and supply chains, while generating fresh momentum in advanced manufacturing, premium consumption and innovation-driven industries, said analysts and business executives of both sides.

They also said that stable China-US economic ties are vital to safeguarding global supply chains, and the two countries have shared interests in sectors including frontier technologies that far outweigh any tariff game.

Companies are also eyeing emerging business opportunities, as the two economies remain highly complementary. China maintains strengths in manufacturing capacity, supply chain integration and industrial efficiency, while the US continues to lead in high-end consumption, technological innovation and service-related demand.

Da Wei, a professor of international relations at Tsinghua University, said that amid rising geopolitical and economic uncertainties, stable China-US economic ties are crucial to safeguarding global supply chains, supporting trade flows and strengthening industrial ties.

He Weiwen, a senior fellow at the Beijing-based think tank Center for China and Globalization, said the two countries should place greater emphasis on cooperation in artificial intelligence and other frontier technologies, as China and the US have enormous shared interests and opportunities in trade and investment related to open-source AI, big data, quantum computing, 6G, robotics, green transformation and biotechnology.

Speaking at a sub-forum of the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2026 in Boao, Hainan province, in late March, Carlos Gutierrez, former US secretary of commerce, said the world would benefit from a more stable and constructive economic relationship between China and the US, with both sides ensuring that opportunities remain open and mutually accessible. If the two sides can find ways to manage differences and establish a framework for coexistence, it could provide a model for the global system, he said.

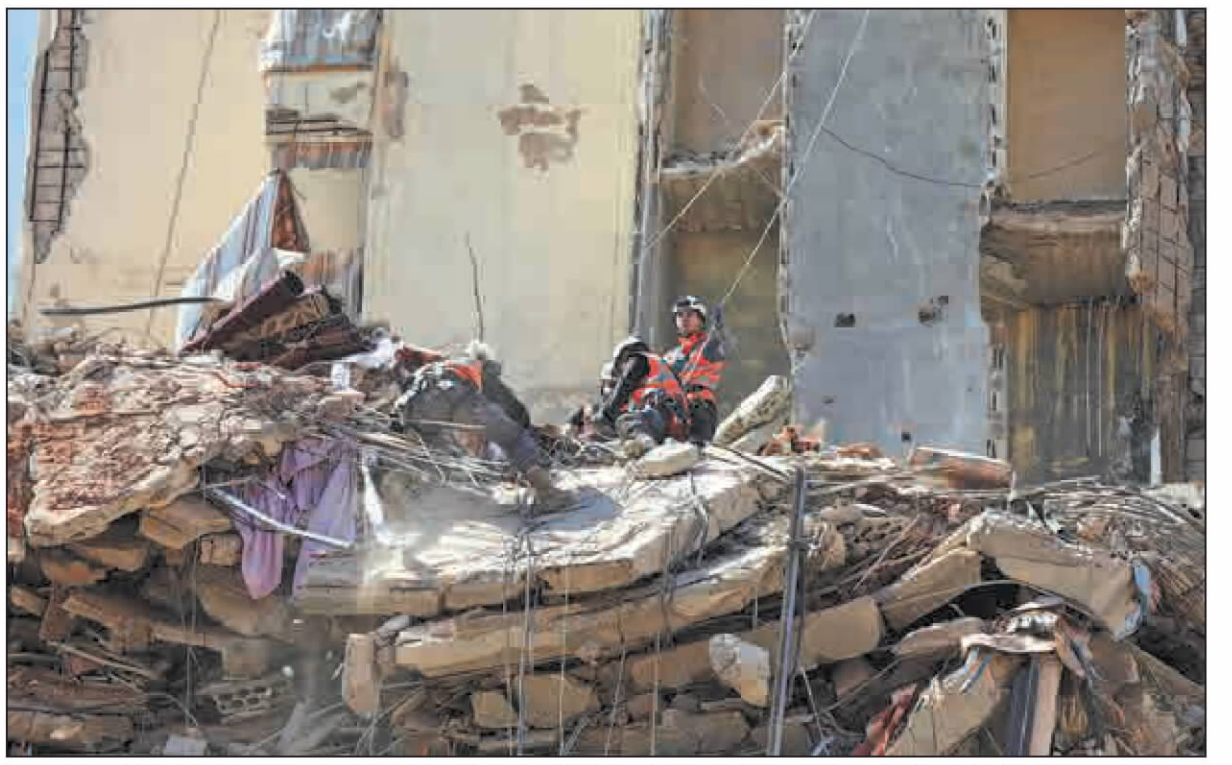
China's strategic role in the global supply chain and its vast market are becoming increasingly prominent for US companies. Nathaniel Madarang, president for Asia-Pacific region at Goodyear Tire & Rubber, said China is not just a market or a production base, but a vibrant market, a competitive manufacturing base and an innovation hub.

Noting recent visits to China by several US business leaders — including Ray Dalio, founder of asset management firm Bridgewater Associates, and Stephen Schwarzman, chairman of investment firm Blackstone Inc — Wang Guannan, spokeswoman for the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, said that despite mounting external uncertainties, business communities in both China and the US continue to favor cooperation over confrontation, underscoring strong demand for deeper economic ties.

See ***Trade,*** *page 3*

Inside

- Editorial, **page 6**
- See more, **page 3**



Rescuers work on Thursday at the site of an Israeli strike in the southern suburbs of Beirut, Lebanon. Israel launched its first airstrike on Beirut on Wednesday since a ceasefire with Lebanon took effect in mid-April. MOHAMAD AZAKIR / REUTERS

Tehran, Washington inch toward limited agreement

By **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE
and **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong

The United States and Iran are edging toward a limited, temporary agreement to halt their war, Reuters reported on Thursday, quoting sources and officials, with a draft framework that would stop the fighting but leave the most contentious issues unresolved, even as US President Donald Trump said a deal to end the war was "very possible".

The Saudi Arabia-based news outlet Al Arabiya cited sources as saying that discussions surrounding the Strait of Hormuz are on, though there was no immediate confirmation from Iran or the US.

In another development on Thursday, Tehran denied attacking a South Korean cargo ship in the Strait of Hormuz earlier this week. The Iranian embassy in Seoul said Iran "firmly rejects and categorically denies" allegations that its armed forces were behind a blast on Monday aboard the Panama-flagged HMM *Namu*, with 24 crew members on board. Trump later claimed that Iran had "taken some shots" at the vessel and urged South Korea to join the so-called Project Freedom initiative to reopen the vital waterway.

Despite that incident, hopes of progress have emerged after weeks of stalemate.

"We've had very good talks over the last 24 hours, and it's very possible that we'll make a deal," Trump told reporters on Wednesday. But he warned earlier that if Iran fails to honor any agreement, bombing would resume "at a much higher level and intensity".

Launched by the US and Israel in late February, the conflict has seen Iran launch retaliatory strikes across the Gulf and impose effective control over the strait, roiling global energy markets.

Meanwhile, Iran is yet to formally respond to Washington's new proposal. Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said the US aims to force Tehran to surrender through "a naval blockade, economic pressure and media manipulation designed to destroy the country's cohesion".

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei confirmed that the US proposal remains under review, adding that Tehran will relay its official stance to mediator Pakistan once internal deliberations are finalized, Iran's ISNA news agency reported.

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Wednesday his country is ready to pursue diplomatic paths to end the war, while insisting on safeguarding the nation's rights.

In a phone call with French President Emmanuel Macron, Pezeshkian voiced deep distrust of the US over recent provocative acts, including wartime strikes on Iran amid indirect negotiations.

US media outlet Axios, citing unnamed officials, reported on Wednesday that both sides were close to reaching a one-page memorandum of understanding to end hostilities and set a framework for future nuclear negotiations.

Meanwhile, Israel pummeled southern parts of Lebanon on Thursday, Lebanese state media and AFP correspondents said, a day after it targeted a Hezbollah commander in its first strike on Beirut's southern suburbs since a truce sought to end weeks of fighting.

The Israeli army said on Thursday that the strike on the southern suburbs killed "the Commander of Hezbollah's elite 'Radwan Force' Unit".

According to Mohamad Elmasry, a professor at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies in Qatar, Washington appears more serious about striking a peace deal with Iran, yet major questions remain over the concessions it is prepared to make.

The draft memorandum omits several longstanding US demands that Iran has repeatedly rejected, including curbs on Tehran's missile and nuclear programs. "That may be seen as a negative sign — the proposal fails to address some of Iran's core concerns in an acceptable way," Elmasry told Al Jazeera.

Prospects of a potential detente buoyed global markets. Tokyo's Nikkei index surged more than 4 percent on Thursday, leading broad gains across Asian equities. China's benchmark Shanghai Composite Index rose 0.48 percent on Thursday after gaining 1.17 percent the previous day.

Meanwhile, global oil prices slid to a two-week low on Wednesday, with benchmark Brent crude falling around 11 percent to near $98 a barrel at one stage.

Contact the writers at cuihaipei@chinadaily.com.cn

Human connections nurture long-term links with Africa

WORLD WATCH
By Balew Demissie

Over the past seven decades, China-Africa relations have expanded significantly, driven by growing trade, major infrastructure investments and closer diplomatic engagement. Platforms such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation have played a key role in formalizing and guiding this partnership, creating mechanisms for sustained economic and political collaboration. Building on this foundation, it is now time to further strengthen China-Africa people-to-people exchanges.

Such exchanges represent a strategic shift toward a more people-centered relationship, recognizing that sustainable China-Africa relations require more than infrastructure, trade and investment; they also need strong social and cultural connections. This is closely aligned with the African Union's Agenda 2063, which emphasizes cultural renaissance, youth empowerment and knowledge exchange as drivers of long-term development.

Direct interactions between African and Chinese people build mutual trust, deepen understanding of each other's cultures, values and perspectives, and challenge stereotypes. These exchanges enhance academic and scientific collaboration, as universities and research institutions work together through joint studies, knowledge sharing and capacity-building initiatives.

These interactions also promote entrepreneurship, tourism and creative industries, generating new economic opportunities. Ultimately, they foster human connections that support long-term partnerships. From advancing the China-Africa Vocational Education Cooperation Plan to establishing 17 Luban Workshops in 15 African countries, China has helped train tens of thousands of skilled professionals, providing solid intellectual support for Africa's development.

See ***Relations,*** *page 3*



INSIDE
New discourse to uphold multilateralism
Global Views, page 8

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

www.chinadailyglobal.com

A member of ANN

China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

GUANGXI HAS BECOME A GREAT PLACE TO HANG OUT

Region's karst landscapes now a magnet for the world's climbing community

By **XING WEN** in Beijing,
and **SHI RUIPENG** and **ZHANG LI** in Guilin, Guangxi

The arch of Shegeng Cave rose before He Chuan, a 47-year-old climber from Beijing, like a stone cathedral dropped into the karst peaks of the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region. A winding path snaked through its vast opening and, 70 meters above, the limestone ceiling hung — raw, ridged, pockmarked with cavities and streaked with subtle mineral lines. For a moment, he simply stood still.

Then he saw natural handholds scattered across the wall, like a challenge laid down by Mother Nature. His pulse quickened. "I have found a place that could rewrite Chinese climbing history," he later recalled. He was right.

From May 2024, Chinese and international route setters began descending on the cave in the Leye-Fengshan UNESCO Global Geopark, working in three rounds to carve 110 routes into the living rock. Based on the Yosemite Decimal System, a grading system for rating the difficulty of the climb, the routes range in difficulty from a welcoming 5.8 to a savage 5.15b.

The hardest line is named She Diao (The Eagle Shooters), a 30-meter route up the inner left wall of the north entrance. It follows a steep, overhanging parabola that demands elite-level fingertip strength.

After completing the route, French climber Seb Bouin noted that the crux moves demand extremely difficult fingertip-pulling power. Yet when he paused and looked up through the cave's opening, he could see green mountains and drifting clouds. He said the climbing process is complex, but "enjoying the scenery while climbing" makes it utterly exhilarating.

Graded as China's hardest route to date, She Diao has vaulted Shegeng Cave in this remote corner of Guangxi into the world's top climbing destinations.

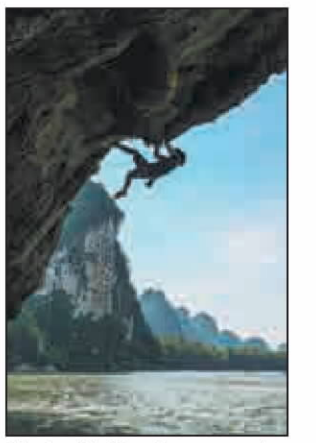
On May 15 last year, the cave officially opened as a pilgrimage site for enthusiasts chasing the planet's most extreme vertical challenges.

But Guangxi's rocks don't belong only to the elite. Further south, a different rhythm hums in the fabled karst landscape of Yangshuo county. Here, the stone is for everyone.

For generations, Yangshuo has been where the Lijiang River winds through arched peaks. Now, a growing community is swapping river cruises for chalk bags.

"For most Chinese and international tourists, Yangshuo is the true international climbing destination," said Liu Yongbang, vice-president of the Yangshuo Climbing Association. "It boasts routes for beginners, and intermediate and advanced climbers, along with a unique climbing lifestyle."

That lifestyle is a world away from the urban grind. Climbers from across the globe rent modest guesthouses or quiet rural rooms, hop on scooters each morning, and spend hours on the natural limestone faces. Once there, they practice moves, control the tightness of rope for partners, and swap route beta.



Climber Liu Yongbang ascends a steep rock wall in the mountains of Guilin, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, in 2024. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

See ***Guangxi,*** *page 3*

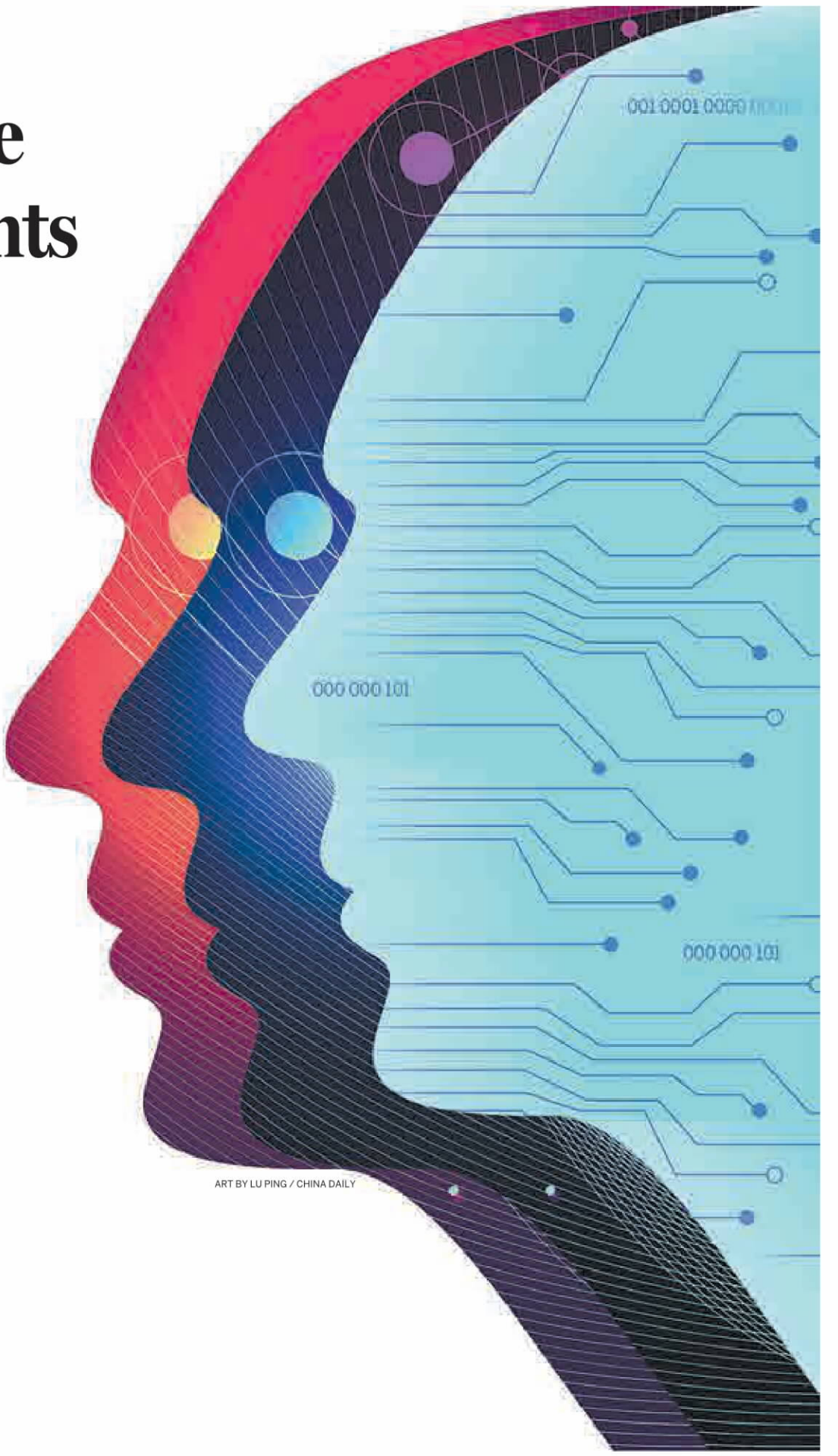
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:29 PM

INDEPTH

Face-off over AI dramas' illegal use of personality rights

Ethical issues in short videos and infringement complaints under scrutiny by courts, experts



ART BY LU PING / CHINA DAILY

By **CAO YIN**
caoyin@chinadaily.com.cn

Artificial intelligence is rapidly transforming China's short-drama industry, significantly boosting production efficiency and output. However, this surge is also causing concern among actors, voice artists, and even ordinary viewers, as the ethical and legal implications of AI's capabilities come under scrutiny.

In late March, several bloggers, including models and devotees of traditional Chinese attire, accused a popular AI-generated series, *Peach Blossom Hairpin*, of using technology to replicate facial features, outfits, and makeup without permission. These characters were widely distributed on short-video platforms, sparking a debate about the ethical use of AI in media production.

As a result of these complaints, the micro-drama platform Hongguo removed the show and banned its producer from uploading new content for 15 days due to insufficient proof of compliance with regulations on facial imagery. The decision underscored the growing tension between technological innovation and personal rights, highlighting the need for clearer guidelines and regulations, experts said.

This incident is not isolated. A number of celebrities, including actors Yi Yangqianxi and Yang Zi, have recently expressed their concerns, stating that they had never authorized the use of their images or voices in any AI-related dramas. They said AI-generated characters closely mimicking their appearance or voice constitute infringement.

Some cases have already reached the courts, with producers facing legal consequences for infringing upon personal rights.

Short dramas, or micro-dramas, typically shot in a vertical format with episodes lasting just a few minutes, have become immensely popular across China in recent years. By February, the short drama industry had 718 million monthly active users, with over 3,200 new short dramas released nationwide during the Spring Festival holiday alone, according to internet analytics firm QuestMobile. The explosive growth has been partly fueled by the convenience and accessibility of short-form content, which caters to the fast-paced lifestyles of modern audiences.

Generative AI is altering the production of these dramas. Industry analytics company DataEye reported that AI-powered animated shorts accounted for 38 percent of the top 100 comic-style dramas in January, up from 7 percent a year earlier.

The cost of producing a short drama has dropped from 50,000 yuan ($7,320) to 5,000 yuan per episode, and production time has been cut from two to four weeks to three to seven days. This dramatic reduction in cost and time has allowed more content creators to enter the industry.

However, the push for speed and cost reductions has led to mounting controversies. In the first quarter of this year, Hongguo removed 1,718 policy-violating animated short dramas, with 670 suspected of using people's facial information without consent.

These incidents highlight the challenges of balancing innovation with ethical considerations, as the technology outpaces the legal frameworks designed to regulate it. Legal experts said technological advancement should not come at the expense of personal rights.

More frequent

Zhao Qi, a judge at the Beijing Internet Court, said disputes over AI-related infringements of portrait and voice rights are becoming more frequent as the technology evolves.

Some defendants claimed they had used AI face-swapping technology just for fun, not profit.

But Zhao said that publicly broadcasting someone else's facial features without permission is prohibited under the Civil Code. "The distinction between personal use and public distribution is crucial, as the latter can have significant implications for the individuals involved," she said.

On March 23, the court disclosed details of a notable case in which Zhao ruled in favor of an actress whose images were violated by two companies that used AI face-swapping tech in a short drama. The court ordered the defendants to apologize on their video platforms and pay compensation to the actress.

The dispute began when the actress found her likeness mapped onto a character in a 90-minute drama, misleading audiences into thinking she had performed in it, and sparking online discussion. The series also appeared on another company's platform, leading her to sue both platforms for unauthorized, profit-driven use of her image.

Zhao said the production company argued the AI-generated character coincidentally resembled her. It claimed it only used prompts like "pretty journalist" without directly referring to her, and that the resemblance was "statistically probable". The production company said it quickly removed the segment after her complaint, causing no harm.

The streaming company argued that it legally obtained distribution rights and was not responsible for content creation.

However, when asked to demonstrate their AI production processes during the trial, the companies failed to do so due to technical and account issues, Zhao said.

"Even if an AI-generated face differs slightly from the original, it's still infringement if the public can recognize the person and no permission was given," the judge said.

"The streaming platform, despite having distribution rights, was also held accountable for failing to review content and prevent infringement."

Similar disputes have been ended through negotiation.

In March, for instance, an AI-generated fantasy short drama with over 23 million views sparked controversy for allegedly misappropriating a model's likeness and makeup style designed by a photographer. After the model, surnamed Ma, and the photographer filed complaints with the streaming platform, the series was taken down. Following negotiations, the two sides reached a settlement regarding compensation for the infringement of portrait rights and copyright.

Growing concerns

Only a year ago, AI-generated videos were rough, choppy, and visibly artificial, said Chen Peng, a short-video industry professional. They mainly consisted of single images or clips lasting just a few seconds, according to reports.

"But today, the technology has been completely transformed. It has leapfrogged in both the efficiency and quality of image and video generation," Chen said.

"Powered by next-generation large generative models, it can now produce complete short dramas with visuals, scenes, background music, and voice overs," he said.

"Thanks to breakthroughs in character consistency, long-text understanding, and fine-tuning by creators, the image quality, motion, and details are now virtually indistinguishable from real footage," he added.

The rapid development of technology has also lowered the barriers to becoming a creator and reduced production costs.

Zheng Ning, head of the law department at the Communication University of China's Cultural Industries Management School, said AI-generated short dramas can now achieve full-process generative AI coverage — from scriptwriting and character generation to scene rendering, voice overs and music production, editing and promotional distribution.

"This comprehensive integration of AI into the creative process is reshaping the industry making it more accessible, but also more complex," she said.

According to her, this compresses traditional film and television production timelines from months or even years to days or hours. With the barriers to entry removed, amateurs and tool providers — non-professionals — can also get involved in creation.

Zheng also pointed out that traditional film and television strictly follow a "review before release" principle, requiring creators and producers to go through a full process of content filing, review, and access approval, keeping the distribution scope and release cadence under control.

"But with AI-generated short dramas, the cumbersome review process has been simplified, enabling dozens of episodes to be updated in a single day, and hundreds of pieces of content to be generated in bulk, spreading extremely fast in cyberspace," she said.

The weak legal awareness of AI users has led to infringements of portrait and voice rights, Zheng said. Internet platforms, faced with the overwhelming output of AI-generated short dramas, have also failed to fulfill their responsibility to review content, while their review technologies still have significant shortcomings.

"Many platforms often rely on a reactive approach — removing content only after receiving complaints — rather than proactively identifying infringements. As a result, by the time an infringement is addressed, the short drama has already gained massive viewership and generated substantial revenue," she added.

Way forward

Zheng and Zhao both believe comprehensive governance of the short drama industry is needed, as frequent infringement issues not only violate creators' rights but also hinder the sector's long-term development.

"AI users should strengthen their legal awareness," Zheng said, advising them to conduct self-reviews to ensure their content does not infringe others' rights, and to obtain authorization before use.

"Platforms also need to prioritize preventive measures and provide easier reporting channels for users to protect their rights," she said. This could be achieved, she suggested, by enhancing the review process and applying cutting-edge technology to block infringing content more accurately and efficiently.

> "AI makes it easy to produce a short drama that 'looks good', but harder to create work that 'truly moves people'. This urges all creators to resist the inertia of algorithms and remain committed to observing humanity. The focus on the way of promoting the industrial development should shift from 'using AI to replace creation' to 'using AI to empower creation'."
>
> **Zheng Ning,** head of the law department at the Communication University of China's Cultural Industries Management School

Judge Zhao said platforms cannot shirk their responsibilities by using the high volume of uploads as an excuse. "Technological advancements have raised the legal duty of care expected of platforms as content distribution hubs," she said, noting that the increased responsibility requires platforms to adopt more sophisticated tools and strategies to manage content effectively.

Both Zheng and Zhao support platforms establishing more convenient complaint reporting systems, and taking stronger actions against users who repeatedly post infringing content.

Zheng proposed a blacklist for infringing parties and an industry ban on repeat violators.

She also emphasized stronger enforcement of regulations that require AI-generated content to be labeled and filed on record before release. Industry associations should also strengthen self-regulation, while technologies to detect voice imitation and face-swapping should be continuously upgraded, she added.

"AI makes it easy to produce a short drama that 'looks good', but harder to create work that 'truly moves people'. This urges all creators to resist the inertia of algorithms and remain committed to observing humanity," Zheng said.

"The focus on the way of promoting the industrial development should shift from 'using AI to replace creation' to 'using AI to empower creation'," she said.

By prioritizing human-centric storytelling, creators can harness AI's potential while preserving the artistic integrity of their work, she added.

Zhao said the courts will continue to balance technological innovation with the protection of personality rights, ensuring neither is compromised. This delicate balance will be crucial in navigating the future of AI in the creative industries, as both innovation and ethical considerations continue to evolve.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:29 PM

TOP NEWS

Trade: Business with EU, ASEAN up

From page 1

With global trade flows changing and regional demand increasing, China's trade with the US dropped 16.6 percent year-on-year to $128.68 billion in the first quarter of 2026. At the same time, trade with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations rose 18.4 percent in US dollar terms, and trade with the European Union increased 17.6 percent, data from the General Administration of Customs showed.

Huang Kai, vice-president of Fujian Zhongjing Petrochemical Co, the largest private petrochemical company in Fujian province in terms of production capacity, said that stable China-US trade ties are important for the company to ensure operational stability and support steady business growth.

The company imported 308,000 metric tons of propane from the US in the first four months of this year, accounting for 34.8 percent of its total propane imports, according to Fuzhou Customs.

JAC Auto Parts (Ningbo) Co, an automotive parts manufacturer based in Ningbo, Zhejiang province, counts the US among the company's core export markets. Its exports to the US rose 30 percent year-on-year to 40 million yuan ($5.88 million) in 2025, said Ningbo Customs.

Yang Weiguo, the head of the company's foreign trade unit, said, "The US is not only a major automotive market, but also one of our most important export destinations, and a key import source of core auto components such as rollers and anti-collision beams."

Guangxi: All levels of climbers welcomed

From page 1

In climbing, "beta" means a specific sequence of moves, holds and techniques used to complete a particular route. During evenings, climbers share meals and swap stories, living a slow, simple and voluntary life that binds a global community.

Liu is one of them. Born in Hengyang, Hunan province, he chose to settle in Yangshuo for its endless natural rocks and the promise of its climbing future.

"Yangshuo has gathered climbers from all over the world," he said. "Every Chinese climber who wants to learn outdoor climbing comes here. We have over 600 practitioners, 2,000 routes and 74 crags, and new routes are still being developed. Many experience their first ascent as visitors, then become climbers, and some eventually settle down as residents."

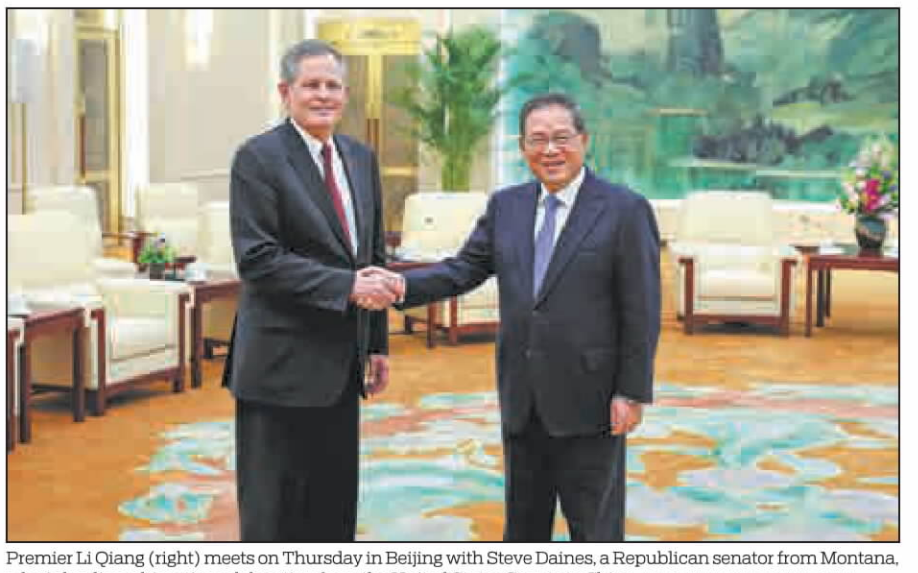
Foreigners can access most crags after registering with the local association. For beginners, Yangshuo's 37 certified clubs, all with high-risk operation permits, offer safe, reliable gateways into the vertical world.

Then there is 12-year-old Zhou Zhou, who arrived in 2024 from Changsha, Hunan, afraid of bugs, the sun and the dark.

Under Liu's instruction, she began to climb. A year later, her mother saw the change. "She has become brave and independent," her mother said. "It seems that the rock remakes her."

From the soaring arch of Shegeng Cave to the crags of Yangshuo, Guangxi's limestone is no longer just scenery. It is a canvas for human daring, a global crossroads, and for those who linger, a way of life.

Contact the writers at xingwen@chinadaily.com.cn



Premier Li Qiang (right) meets on Thursday in Beijing with Steve Daines, a Republican senator from Montana, who is leading a bipartisan delegation from the United States Senate to China. WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY

China, US urged to work for more practical results

Premier, officials meet bipartisan delegation from Senate, call for strengthening dialogue

By **MO JINGXI**
mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn

China called on the United States to work with it in the same direction, engage in more dialogue rather than confrontation, and pursue more mutually beneficial cooperation rather than zero-sum competition, as it hosted on Thursday the first bipartisan delegation from the US Senate since US President Donald Trump took office in 2025.

The delegation, led by Steve Daines, a Republican senator from Montana, is visiting Beijing and Shanghai this week to meet with Chinese officials and tour technology companies, according to a statement released by his office.

Premier Li Qiang and Zhao Leji, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, China's top legislature, met separately with the delegation on Thursday.

Li said that China is willing to work with the US to implement the important consensus reached by the two heads of state, strengthen dialogue and communication, foster a favorable atmosphere for exchanges at all levels and cooperation in various fields, and strive for more practical results.

Experience has repeatedly shown that adhering to mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation is the right way for the two major countries to get along with each other, Li added.

Zhao called on the US side to look at China and its development rationally and objectively, welcoming more US lawmakers to visit China.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who also met with the delegation on the same day, called on the two countries to stabilize and improve bilateral relations for the benefit of both countries and the world. "Face-to-face communication is the prerequisite for enhancing mutual understanding and the starting point for building trust," he said.

Noting that the visit carries symbolic significance, Wang said he hopes the delegation will experience the new dynamism of China's development, build new bridges of communication, explore new areas of cooperation, and inject fresh momentum into the stable, healthy and sustainable development of China-US relations.

"China's policy toward the US remains consistent," he said, emphasizing that the two countries should take mutual respect as the foundation, peaceful coexistence as the guiding principle and win-win cooperation as the goal.

Over the past year and more, China-US relations have experienced "twists and turns", but overall stability has been maintained under the strategic guidance of head-of-state diplomacy, Wang said.

"Since President Trump assumed office, President Xi Jinping has held multiple phone calls and meetings with him, helping to calibrate the direction of bilateral relations at critical moments," he said.

Wang noted that the key to finding the right way for China and the US to get along lies in continuously addressing misunderstandings in each other's perceptions, just like the first button of a shirt that must be placed right.

China and the US have different social systems and development paths, but both are rooted in their respective historical and cultural traditions and chosen by their own peoples, he said.

Quoting an ancient Chinese saying that "all living things grow together without harming one another", Wang said the two sides should seek "harmony without uniformity" and be partners rather than rivals.

China will not follow the obsolete model of a country seeking hegemony when growing stronger, he said, emphasizing that the country will remain committed to peaceful development and to the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Members of the US delegation shared their impressions of the China visit and exchanged views on the development of US-China relations, according to the Foreign Ministry. The two sides also exchanged views on international and regional issues of common concern.

This trip marks Daines' seventh visit to China since he was elected to the US Congress. The senator last visited China in March 2025, becoming the first senior Republican to visit the country after Trump began his second term in office.

Diao Daming, a professor at Renmin University of China's School of International Studies, said, "If Trump comes to China as planned, Daines' trip takes place at an important preparatory stage and could be seen as a preliminary communication to convey positions for subsequent high-level interactions."

Diao added that the inclusion of Democratic senators in the delegation sends a positive signal that both US political parties still see value in strengthening communication with China.

Two former defense ministers given suspended death sentences for graft

By **YANG ZEKUN**
yangzekun@chinadaily.com.cn

The Chinese military court separately handed down on Thursday death sentences with two-year reprieves to two former defense ministers of China over graft charges.

Wei Fenghe and Li Shangfu are both former members of the Central Military Commission and former state councilors. They were stripped of their political rights for life and all their personal assets were seized as Wei was convicted of accepting bribes and Li of both accepting and offering bribes.

The court rulings said that no further commutation or parole will be allowed after their penalties are commuted to life imprisonment in accordance with the law upon the expiration of the two-year reprieve period.

Wei, 72, a native of Shandong province, enrolled in the military in 1970 and joined the Communist Party of China two years later. He became a member of the CMC in 2012 and was appointed as a state councilor and minister of national defense in 2018.

In September 2023, disciplinary and supervisory authorities of the CMC launched an investigation into Wei for serious violations of Party discipline and national laws. It was found that he failed to fulfill his political responsibilities, resisted investigation, sought personnel benefits for others, and accepted large sums of money as bribes. Other serious violations were also identified.

The investigation statement said that Wei experienced a collapse of faith and a loss of loyalty. His actions betrayed the trust placed in him, severely damaged the political environment of the military, and caused significant harm to the Party's cause, national defense, military development and the image of senior leadership, it added.

Li, 68, a native of Jiangxi province, joined the CPC in 1980 and enrolled in the military two years later. He became a member of the CMC in 2022, and was appointed as a state councilor and minister of national defense in March 2023.

Li was placed under probe in August 2023. Authorities found that he failed to fulfill his political responsibilities, resisted investigation, violated organizational discipline by seeking personnel benefits for himself and others, and accepted and offered large sums of money as bribes. Other serious violations were also identified.

The investigation statement said that Li abandoned his original aspiration and ignored Party principles. His actions severely damaged the political environment within the military's equipment sector and the industry's ethos, causing significant harm to the Party's cause, national defense, military development and the image of senior leadership, it said, describing the nature of Li's misconduct as extremely serious.

The cases against Wei and Li were transferred to military procuratorial authorities for review and prosecution after they were expelled from the CPC in June 2024. Before that, the CMC had decided to expel Wei from the military and revoke his rank of general in the Rocket Force, and to expel Li from the military and revoke his rank of general in the Army.

A commentary published by PLA Daily in February said the military will continue to deepen political rectification and advance efforts to improve conduct and fight corruption. It said the task of removing the breeding grounds and conditions for corruption remains difficult and demanding.

The article added that the concentrated investigations into corruption do not indicate that corruption is worsening, but rather that anti-graft efforts are becoming more thorough.

Relations: Reinforcing societal connections critical

From page 1

In addition, China has signed bilateral tourism cooperation agreements with over 30 African countries, increasing the number of African destinations for Chinese tourist groups to 34.

At the 2024 FOCAC summit in Beijing, it was announced that China and Africa had agreed to designate 2026 as the China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges. Following this commitment, the Chinese government released the "Concept Paper of the 2026 China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges" in June 2025, highlighting the central role of the amicable ties between the people of both sides in strengthening bilateral relations. Throughout the year, China and Africa will organize nearly 600 activities across both sides, focusing on areas including education, technology transfer, youth exchanges, tourism and trade, and aligning people-to-people engagement with broader long-term development priorities.

As part of these efforts, Ethiopia and China are actively strengthening people-to-people exchanges, recognizing that education, cultural engagement, media collaboration and youth programs are essential to building a resilient China-Africa community.

Ethiopian viewers now have access to a variety of Chinese television content — including dramas, documentaries and animation. In addition, the China Film Festival, held at Addis Ababa University from March 6 to 28, provided a platform to deepen Ethiopian understanding and appreciation of Chinese culture.

Ultimately, resilient China-Africa people-to-people exchanges will be built not only by governments but also by students, artists, scholars, entrepreneurs and travelers whose cross-cultural connections create enduring bridges for sustainable, inclusive and mutually beneficial relations. Long-term alumni networks further strengthen diplomatic, business and policy collaboration. It is expected that both sides will assess the initiative's impact using quantitative indicators such as exchange programs, scholarships, cultural events, joint research projects, student mobility and academic partnerships, along with qualitative measures such as surveys on public perception.

Despite significant progress in China-Africa people-to-people exchanges over the past decades, practical barriers continue to limit these interactions.

First, language remains a challenge. Strengthening Mandarin proficiency in Africa and establishing African studies institutes in China are essential to bridging this gap.

Second, visa and mobility challenges — such as complex application processes, high fees, lengthy processing times and limited categories for researchers and cultural practitioners — further restrict travel.

Third, problems with travel and accommodation logistics, including online booking difficulties and the lack of integrated digital platforms, impede exchanges. Gaps in digital infrastructure — such as limited internet access and SIM card availability, and incompatible banking systems — further affect communication and the overall travel experience.

To address these challenges, both sides can expand language education by strengthening Mandarin programs in Africa, promoting African studies in China and supporting language exchange initiatives. Visa procedures should be simplified through digital applications, reduced fees for selected applicants and multi-entry visas for students, researchers, academics and entrepreneurs. Travel and digital infrastructure should be improved with integrated online booking platforms, reliable internet access, easy SIM card acquisition and accessible digital payment systems.

Deepening China-Africa connections requires a strategic, multidimensional approach that integrates education, culture, digital innovation and community engagement. Institutionalized scholarships, joint degree programs, visiting scholar exchanges, collaborative research and long-term academic, artistic and professional exchanges provide a strong foundation, while digital platforms enable virtual conferences, online cultural events and digital storytelling. Media cooperation through journalism partnerships, documentaries and forums fosters balanced narratives and cross-cultural understanding.

At the grassroots level, cultural festivals, artistic collaborations, sports exchanges and youth programs strengthen interpersonal ties. Key sectors for engagement include education, which drives knowledge production and professional development; culture and the arts, which deepen mutual understanding through film, literature and residencies; tourism, which encourages direct interaction and heritage preservation; youth engagement through leadership programs and innovation competitions; and community groups, which advance grassroots collaboration in public health, environmental protection and social development. Together, these strategies provide a comprehensive framework for sustained, people-centered China-Africa cooperation.

Now is a strategic time to deepen China-Africa people-to-people exchanges. Africa's growing youth population and largely agrarian society are eager for skills development, education and international exposure. Strengthening technology transfer and vocational training creates opportunities for mutual learning, while Africa's cultural industries and tourism sector offer significant potential for economic growth and cross-cultural exchange. At this stage, reinforcing societal and cultural connections is critical, as the future of China-Africa cooperation will increasingly depend on strong people-to-people exchanges, youth engagement and mutual understanding.

China-Africa people-to-people exchanges represent a forward-looking initiative that places human connections at the center of international cooperation. By promoting educational collaboration, cultural dialogue, think tank forums, youth engagement and media partnerships, Africa and China can foster relationships based on mutual respect, understanding and trust. As global challenges become more complex, partnerships must move beyond transactional interactions toward deeper societal engagement, emphasizing mobility, language learning and cultural exchanges.

The author is a communication and publication consultant at the Ethiopian Policy Studies Institute. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Protest in Seoul



Protesters call for the suspension of military cooperation between the Republic of Korea and Japan during a rally held on Thursday in Seoul against the first vice-ministerial-level security talks between the two nations. JEON HEON-KYUN / EPA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:29 PM

WORLD

C-drama craze sweeps across Southeast Asia

Polished plots, fine costumes, cultural familiarity win over young viewers

By **YANG WANLI** in Bangkok
yangwanli@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese costume dramas are gaining immense popularity on Southeast Asia's streaming platforms, driven by polished production values and cultural familiarity.

In Thailand, conscription posters featuring characters from a historical romance series have gone viral on social media, highlighting the genre's growing cultural reach.

Recruitment posters, released by the Royal Thai Army on its official Facebook account a few weeks ago, highlighted characters from *Pursuit of Jade* — a recently released Chinese costume drama that boasts beautiful visuals and dramatic plot twists.

"Do you want a boyfriend full of heroic spirit like the Marquis of Wu'an in *Pursuit of Jade*? Ask your mate to join the cavalry!" read one of the posters referring to the male lead, Xie Zheng, in the Chinese drama. It earned about 100,000 likes online, with many praising the creativity involved.

Since its premiere in March, Google Trends showed that *Pursuit of Jade* ranked first in search volume for Chinese dramas across 15 markets, such as Thailand, the United States, Canada, Malaysia, South Korea and Singapore. The drama gained record-breaking popularity on iQIYI International, became the first mainland Chinese costume drama on Netflix's global non-English TV charts, and trended in multiple Asian regions, driven by strong viewer engagement and high MyDramaList ratings.

"I have followed Chinese dramas for years, and *Pursuit of Jade* is my latest favorite," said Amy Chen, 34, a Malaysian Chinese who works in Kuala Lumpur.

Apart from cultural proximity, Chen attributed her enthusiasm for Chinese TV series and short films to "opulent production design, actors' exquisite makeup and costumes, well-designed storylines, and high-quality streaming platforms".

Weaving traditional cultural elements such as Qin Opera and shadow puppetry, *Pursuit of Jade* showcases the unique charm of Chinese culture while its success serves as a microcosm of the growing popularity of Chinese dramas overseas.

China's export revenues from television series increased from $24 million in 2012 to $70 million in 2023 — an approximate threefold growth, according to a report by the Chinese National Radio and Television Administration.

Among the various offerings, costume dramas, one of the earliest genres to attract overseas audiences, continue to be the most popular type of Chinese television drama in the international market, according to the NRTA.

As a core market for Chinese TV series, Southeast Asia's growing market potential has attracted leading Chinese online video platforms such as WeTV, iQIYI, Youku and Mango TV to launch overseas services.

Following the craze for Korean dramas, their Chinese counterparts have won over a large number of Thai viewers in recent years, said Sirisak Koshpasharin, vice-chairman of Thailand's National Federation of Motion Pictures and Contents Associations.

In the past, he said, the older generations in Thailand loved classic dramas such as *Justice Pao* because many Thais were Chinese immigrants. "But what is more surprising is that a growing number of young people now also like Chinese series too," he said, attributing the new trend to cultural and lifestyle similarities between the two countries.

"Now many Chinese dramas have good stories, production value and hooks that make Thai people like them," Sirisak added.

Fertile ground

Apart from TV series, Southeast Asia's growing number of internet users also offers a fertile ground for the overseas expansion of Chinese micro-dramas, which commonly run one to 10 minutes per episode and series can run into hundreds of episodes.

According to data analytics firm DataEye, paying micro-drama users in the region last year increased by 28 percent year-on-year, solidifying the region as a core market with both commercial viability and a solid audience foundation.

Beyond entertainment, watching Chinese dramas or short films has also sparked interest among younger generations overseas in exploring China further, both online and in person.

"Chinese dramas as well as video products had a strong impact on me during my childhood," said a 21-year-old Thai college student, who wanted to be known only as Chompoo. A fan of the Chinese costume drama *My Fair Princess*, she now also follows *Pursuit of Jade*.

"I have never been to China before and really want to (visit) in the future. Its scenery, new trends and food are all attractive to me. China's technologies and innovations are also awesome," Chompoo added.

Kampol Piyasirikul, head of the Chinese Studies Program at Thammasat University, said: "Beyond TV series, boy bands, pop singers and fashion toys from China are also popular among young Thais. Such cultural exchanges will play an increasingly important role in enhancing mutual understanding and trust between the people of China and the rest of the world," he said.

Jan Yumul in Hong Kong and Jantarawan Thrakulphiw in Bangkok contributed to this story.

Beached giant



A man walks next to a dead sperm whale that washed up at Melaya beach in Jembrana Regency, Bali, Indonesia, on Wednesday. JOHANNES CHRISTO / REUTERS



OpenAI attorney William Savitt speaks outside a US federal courthouse in Oakland, California, on Monday over Elon Musk's lawsuit against OpenAI's for-profit conversion. MANUEL ORBEGOZO / REUTERS

AI risks loom over Musk-OpenAI trial

OAKLAND — Concerns over the risks posed by artificial intelligence have loomed large over a US trial pitting Elon Musk against OpenAI chief executive Sam Altman, even as the court focuses on a business dispute rather than the technology itself.

At the center of the case is the breakdown of a partnership once built on a shared goal: ensuring that increasingly powerful AI benefits humanity rather than any single company or individual.

Musk, a cofounder of OpenAI, filed the case accusing his fellow cofounder of breaking promises to keep the company a nonprofit. Altman, in turn, accuses Musk of trying to hobble the ChatGPT maker for the benefit of his own AI company, xAI.

The trial is being held in federal court in Oakland, California, and centers on the 2015 birth of OpenAI as a nonprofit startup primarily funded by Musk.

Both Musk and Altman have said they wanted OpenAI to safely develop artificial general intelligence for the benefit of humanity and not under any one person's control. Both camps allege that it's the other side that was trying to control it.

A jury of nine people selected from the San Francisco Bay Area will decide which side holds merit.

Early on, Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers warned lawyers, particularly Musk's team, not to turn the case into a broader debate on AI safety.

"This is not a trial on whether or not AI has damaged humanity," Gonzalez Rogers told lawyers before jurors arrived at the federal courthouse.

Still, Musk managed to skirt the judge's guidance in his testimony. Musk said he has "extreme concerns" about AI and has had them for a long time. "I was concerned AI would be a double-edged sword," he said.

Witness testimony has touched on concerns over AI risks, including workforce disruption, racial and gender discrimination, job displacement, misinformation and emotional attachments that take some AI chatbot users down a spiral of psychosis.

Musk also told the court he could have founded OpenAI as a for-profit company like his other ventures, but "deliberately chose this", saying, "for the public good".

The judge expressed skepticism, noting that Musk is now building in the same field through his AI company xAI, launched in 2023.

OpenAI's side also defended its position. Cofounder and president Greg Brockman, a defendant in the lawsuit along with Altman, said the technology under development at OpenAI was "transformative" and "about humanity as a whole".

Brockman testified that his No. 1 goal was always the OpenAI "mission", and that Musk sought unilateral control over the company. He recalled a meeting where at first Musk seemed open to Altman being CEO, but later, "he said people needed to know he was in charge".

Musk is seeking damages and Altman's removal from OpenAI's board. If he wins, it could derail OpenAI's plans for a potential initial public offering.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Guzheng combine tradition, innovation

By **MINGMEI LI** in New York
mingmeili@chinadailyusa.com

As the hall fell quiet, the last few notes from testing strings slowly faded. Forty *guzheng* stood in staggered rows across the stage, forming a gentle arc under the lights. The polished wooden instruments caught the glow. The performers settled into position, some glancing toward the conductor, others keeping their eyes on the strings, waiting for the cue to begin.

The 40 *guzheng* players then performed in unison, their sound flowing as one and filling the hall with a powerful, continuous wave of music.

The special concert by the Gu Zheng Tianxia Ensemble, held at Olin Hall at the Bard College Conservatory of Music on Saturday night, at the end of the US-China Music Institute's eighth annual conference on Chinese music in the West.

This is one of the largest *guzheng* conferences in the United States, hosted by the US-China Music Institute at Bard College Conservatory of Music. The three-day program, which also kicked off celebrations for Asian Heritage Month, featured the sound of Chinese traditional music. The conference brought together renowned *guzheng* masters from China, musicians from across North America and young student performers for artistic exchange, collaboration and performance.

The name "Tianxia", meaning "under heaven" in Chinese, reflects the idea of connection across regions and generations, as well as the growing global presence of the *guzheng*, according to Cai Jindong, director of the US-China Music Institute and a professor of music and arts at Bard College.

The *guzheng*, one of China's most recognizable traditional instruments, typically built with 21 nylon-wrapped steel strings and movable bridges, has gradually expanded far beyond its origins, appearing increasingly on international stages.

The growing presence of the *guzheng* reflects both cultural continuity and contemporary relevance. With a long history in China, the instrument has become increasingly popular in China and the West, as musicians explore new techniques and forms of innovation while maintaining its traditional character, Cai said.

"The beauty of the traditional *guzheng* does not lie in the fixed notes themselves, but in the space between them like water flowing around stones, with its own curves, pace and movement," said Han Mei, a professor of music and director of the Center for Chinese Music Culture at Middle Tennessee State University.

"This reveals the essence of the instrument: the traditional left-hand techniques of the *guzheng* transform sound from a series of separate points into a continuous process. That is what fundamentally defines the *guzheng*," she said.

Influenced by traditional Chinese music, she added, Western contemporary composers have also incorporated this fluid approach to sound into new music, electronic music and electroacoustic works.

"I've always been drawn to the sound of the resonating strings," said musician and guitarist Kevin Barker, who is learning the *guzheng*. "It's very different from the guitar, where you fret the strings, so the notes don't overlap in the same way as they do with the *guzheng*. It's always been an interesting sound to me."

His daughter is learning the *erhu*, a traditional Chinese bowed instrument.

"So seeing the instrument presented in this kind of academic setting is really interesting. It is also interesting to see the rigor with which people are thinking about it," he said.

Wang Yixin, the first graduate of the *guzheng* major in Bard College's undergraduate dual-degree program, said that traditional Chinese music needs innovation and younger generations to help carry it forward.

"Many music groups in New York place a strong emphasis on traditional training, including classical repertoire. We need to innovate while staying rooted in tradition," she said.

Wang added that in the process of sharing the music more broadly, it is important to give audiences access to authentic traditions and help them develop a deeper understanding of the culture.

"The *guzheng* carries Chinese culture within it," said Yuan Sha, a *guzheng* professor at China Central Conservatory of Music.

"Seeing the instrument performed in so many different styles in the US, Western audiences are also able to feel the emotions and love conveyed through *guzheng* music. The emotion behind the *guzheng* is universal, and sincere emotion matters far more than technical skill," she said.

She added that Chinese *guzheng* performers and educators have conducted in-depth studies of the instrument, but these explorations should not be limited to China.

"We should have greater exchange and engagement with international musicians," she said.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily

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

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1823

Brussels talks on EU-US deal make no progress

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

Facing US pressure, including tariff hikes on European cars, negotiators from the European Parliament and EU Council, who were trying to conclude the EU-US trade deal, made no breakthrough after six hours of talks in the Belgian capital on Wednesday night.

The European Parliament and the Cypriot presidency of the EU Council failed to finalize a deal to scrap EU tariffs on US industrial goods, as agreed by the European Union and the United States in the framework of current negotiations in Scotland last summer.

The setback comes days after Washington threatened 25 percent tariffs on EU cars, which are above the 15 percent cap on US tariffs for EU goods set by US President Donald Trump and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in the deal made in Turnberry, Scotland in July.

The Cypriot presidency said while exchanges produced "positive momentum" between the two sides, negotiators had made "progress".

With the US turning up the pressure, negotiators agreed to meet again in 10 days, reported Euronews.

EU Trade Commissioner Maros Sefcovic met US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer on the sidelines of a G7 trade ministers' meeting in Paris on Tuesday and Wednesday, briefing him on progress toward scrapping EU duties on US industrial goods, which is now unlikely before June.

In March, the European Parliament approved the Turnberry accord with conditions, pending sign off by EU governments. On Friday, Trump accused the EU of breaching the accord and vowed to raise tariffs on cars, while also pressing the bloc to drop tariffs on US goods.

The EU said it was "fully committed to delivering on our shared commitments" and has kept Washington "fully informed throughout the process".

EU member states remain divided over the next steps, raising tensions within the bloc. As a condition for approval, European Parliament members are seeking safeguards, tying any EU tariff cuts to US compliance, plus a sunset clause that would end the deal in March 2028 unless renewed.

France backs adding safeguards, but a German-led bloc, including the Baltic states, Greece, Ireland, and Sweden, prefers last year's deal as agreed.

EU member states broadly agree on shielding the accord from future Trump threats, including those over EU cars or Greenland earlier this year.

The European Commission is pushing for a swift implementation of the EU-US deal, and there is added pressure from leaders of the conservative European People's Party, Parliament's largest group, who say businesses need certainty.

Cypriot Trade Minister Michael Damianos sought to reassure them, saying "the Council is committed to moving swiftly with the implementation" of the deal, adding, "We are fully committed to continuing our constructive engagement with the European Parliament."

An EU diplomat told Euronews the aim of Wednesday's meeting was largely to set out political positions, with technical talks to follow.

German socialist Member of the European Parliament Bernd Lange said, "We made good progress on the issue of the safeguard mechanism and the review and evaluation of the main regulation, but there is still some way to go."

Negotiators are now aiming for a new round of talks on May 19.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:29 PM

WORLD

Airing dirty laundry



A worker hangs from a rope beside a billboard draped in discarded clothes during the installation of the *Baleboard* art project in Accra, Ghana, on Tuesday. Ghanaian artist Emmanuel Aggrey Tieku transformed advertising billboards into towering piles of textile waste to spotlight the environmental toll of fast fashion in a country flooded with millions of secondhand garments each week, many of which end up unsold in markets or dumped into landfills and waterways. CLAUDIA LACAVE / AFP

Briefly

BRAZIL

Chinese citizens to gain visa-free entry

The Brazilian government announced on Thursday that it will grant visa-free entry to Chinese citizens holding ordinary passports starting on Monday, Xinhua News Agency reported. According to a statement published by Brazil's Foreign Ministry, eligible travelers can stay in Brazil for up to 30 days per visit. The move follows an announcement in late January by Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva to grant visa-free entry for certain short-term visits by Chinese citizens, in what analysts viewed as a reciprocal gesture to China's own visa-free policy for Brazilian nationals. China's policy, effective from June 1, 2025, to May 31, 2026, allows Brazilian passport holders to enter China visa-free for up to 30 days for business, tourism, family visits and transit.

UNITED KINGDOM

Voters cast ballots in local elections

British voters cast ballots on Thursday in local and regional elections that could shake up the country's politics and heap more pressure on embattled Prime Minister Keir Starmer. Starmer's center-left Labour Party is bracing for big losses in polls that would choose about 5,000 local councilors and a handful of mayors across England, as well as semiautonomous parliaments in Scotland and Wales. They are the biggest set of elections since Labour swept to power in a landslide in July 2024. Polls would close at 10 pm (Friday morning, Beijing time). Some results were expected overnight, but most would not come until Friday.

FRANCE

Bill gets nod to return ill-gotten artifacts

The French National Assembly on Wednesday approved, following a new round of debate, a draft law on the restitution of cultural property acquired through illicit appropriation. The lower house of parliament passed the bill with 141 votes in favor and none against, though turnout was relatively low compared with the total 577 seats. The bill seeks to establish a clearer and simpler legal framework for returning cultural assets acquired by France through illicit means, including looting, theft and sales conducted under coercion. It applies to cultural property acquired between 1815 and 1972, excluding military items and certain archaeological objects.

CHINA DAILY—XINHUA—AGENCIES

Japan's missile launch shatters pacifist stance

Move raises remilitarization fears and heightens regional tensions: Analysts

CROSS CURRENTS

By YANG RAN
yangran1@chinadaily.com.cn

Japan has, for the first time since World War II, fired offensive missiles on foreign soil, a move that experts say has effectively gutted the country's pacifist constitution and marks a critical escalation in its accelerating remilitarization, posing threats to regional stability.

During the "Balikatan" joint military drills with the United States and the Philippines on Wednesday, Japan launched Type 88 missiles overseas for the first time since the end of World War II. The exercise also marked Tokyo's first participation as a full member rather than an observer, with hundreds of Japanese troops deployed.

Lian Degui, director of the Center for Japanese Studies at Shanghai International Studies University, said the overseas deployment of Japan's Self-Defense Forces, alongside the use of offensive weapons, constitutes a major breakaway from the country's exclusively defense-oriented policy.

"This completely shatters the military red lines framed by Japan's postwar pacifist constitution and poses a major shock to regional peace," Lian said.

Da Zhigang, a research fellow at the Heilongjiang Provincial Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of Northeast Asian Studies, said Japan's live-fire use of offensive missile systems in a combat-simulated environment signals a fundamental shift in its military posture.

"This signifies that Japan no longer intends to remain merely a logistical or supporting role militarily, but hopes to possess active offensive strike capabilities," Da said. "This could disrupt the security balance in the Asia-Pacific and fuel a regional arms race."

Analysts noted that beyond military implications, Japan's use of domestically produced missiles also serves as a showcase for its military industry, aimed at attracting export orders and accelerating its military buildup.

Arms exports

Lian said arms exports are a key pillar of Japan's remilitarization strategy. "Increasing weapons sales can bring economic benefits while promoting the growth of the military-industrial complex, thus strengthening the country's overall military capabilities," he said.

Zhang Yulai, a professor at the Japan Institute of Nankai University in Tianjin, echoed the view, saying Japan has long sought to revitalize its military-industrial complex through expanded arms exports.

"Since former prime minister Shinzo Abe's second term, Japan has steadily chipped away at restrictions on weapons exports, trying to revive its military-industrial complex and profit from the business of war," he said.

The drill is the latest in a series of moves that reflect Japan's accelerating remilitarization. Last month, Tokyo revised the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology, along with related implementation guidelines, to allow overseas sales of weapons, including those with lethal capabilities.

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi has also reaffirmed her intention to revise the constitution, particularly Article 9, the clause widely regarded as the cornerstone of Japan's postwar pacifist stance.

"Japan is systematically hollowing out its pacifist constitution through a series of legal revisions, breaking through the military constraints established under the postwar international order," Da said. "This expansionist military tendency raises the risk of regional disputes and undermines peace and development in the Asia-Pacific."

The pattern of exchange and cooperation built in Northeast Asia over recent decades may be replaced by challenges and friction, he said. "Many actions by the Japanese government have effectively opened Pandora's box for the revival of militarism, which has aroused high vigilance from the international community."

Commenting on Japan's overseas missile launch, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian warned on Wednesday that right-wing forces in Japan are pushing for accelerated remilitarization.

"The serious lack of education on true history, the fundamentally wrong historical views, compounded by strategies for military rearmament and preparation for war, have led to the malevolent emergence of neomilitarism in Japan and put regional peace and stability under threat," Lin said.

Da said Japan's historical revisionism, coupled with its arms modernization efforts and overseas troop deployments, is eroding trust among people in the region and the world.

Xinhua contributed to this story.



Beating the heat

A white lioness bites into a block of ice packed with meat treats to cool off during a heat wave in Guadalajara, Mexico, on Wednesday, as temperatures climb to 37 C. Zoos across Mexico have been giving animals frozen food blocks to help them endure the extreme heat. ULISES RUIZ / AFP

Canadian firms eye new opportunities under 15th Five-Year Plan

By YANG GAO in Toronto
gaoyang@chinadailyusa.com

China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-2030) is prompting renewed interest among Canadian businesses as companies reassess opportunities in sectors including energy, agriculture and advanced technology, speakers at a Toronto business forum said.

The event, hosted by the Canada China Business Council on Wednesday, brought together business leaders and officials to discuss how China's development blueprint could transform commercial engagement between the two countries.

"We are entering a new phase after several years of uncertainty," said Bijan Ahmadi, executive director and chief operating officer of CCBC.

"Companies are once again exploring opportunities and looking more seriously at where engagement, market demand and policy priorities are beginning to align," he said.

Ahmadi said the relationship between Ottawa and Beijing has "shifted" since Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney formed government last year.

"Canada has re-engaged with China and started the process of recalibrating bilateral ties toward a more pragmatic and constructive relationship.

"This engagement has already contributed to stronger trade performance and renewed business confidence," he said.

Luo Weidong, Chinese consul general in Toronto, described the new five-year plan as "a treasure trove of development opportunities in China".

"The plan is not only a growing blueprint for China's economic and social development over the next five years, but also a guiding document that clarifies national strategy, identifies government priority, and guides and regulates the behavior of market entities," Luo said.

Both Luo and Ahmadi said China and Canada remain economically complementary, with businesses in both countries continuing to seek new areas of cooperation.

"Complexity is not a reason to disengage. It is a reason to be more precise," Ahmadi said.

He said Canadian companies need to understand "where opportunities are real, where constraints remain, and where commercial strategies can align with policy priorities and market demand".

According to Ahmadi, three themes in the 15th Five-Year Plan are especially relevant for Canadian businesses: high-quality growth, food and energy security, and stronger domestic consumption.

"These priorities translate into real opportunities," he said. "They reinforce the value of quality, reliability, safety and technical expertise, and the trustworthiness associated with Brand Canada in the Chinese market."

Luo also highlighted energy cooperation as a major area for future growth.

"Against the backdrop of the Iran crisis, there is both necessity and urgency to deepen cooperation in this field," Luo said.

He said China's next development phase would prioritize "the clean and efficient utilization of fossil fuels" while accelerating development of solar, wind, hydrogen and nuclear power.

Ahmadi noted that Canada's expanding export infrastructure could support deeper engagement with Asian markets, including China.

"Developments such as the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion, LNG Canada and several ongoing and upcoming energy projects are enabling increased flows of crude oil, LNG and LPG to Asia, with China among the leading Asian destinations for Canadian energy products," he said.

He added that China's decarbonization goals are also creating opportunities for Canadian companies specializing in carbon capture, methane reduction and environmental services.

Agriculture and food security emerged as another major focus.

"Canada's high-quality agricultural products, meats and seafood will enjoy expanded market opportunities," Luo said.

Ahmadi said Chinese demand is increasingly shifting toward "premium, safe, traceable and reliable food products".

"For Canadian producers, this means opportunities to re-establish and expand market access in areas such as canola, seafood, beef, pork, pulses, grains and other high-quality food products," he said.

Beyond commodities, he said Canadian firms could also compete through "traceability systems, product customization, nutrition and wellness food products".

The speakers also pointed to growing opportunities tied to changes in China's demographic structure and the expansion of its middle class.

Luo said sectors including eldercare, childcare, tourism and cultural consumption could become "new blue oceans" for Canadian investment.

Ahmadi similarly said demand in China is increasingly shifting toward "trusted and premium products and services".

"China's aging population is also creating new needs in healthcare services, rehabilitation, elder care, insurance, wealth management and pension-related services," he said.

On advanced manufacturing and emerging industries, Luo said sectors such as quantum technology, aerospace, hydrogen energy and sixth-generation mobile communications could become major new growth drivers.

29 passengers got off ship after 1st hantavirus fatality

THE HAGUE — More than two dozen passengers left a cruise ship hit by a deadly hantavirus outbreak on April 24 without contact tracing, nearly two weeks after the first passenger died on board, the ship operator and Dutch officials said on Thursday.

The news raised concerns that the virus could spread as travelers returned home, though experts say the risk to the wider public is considered low.

The Netherlands-based operator, Oceanwide Expeditions, had previously said the body of the Dutch man who died on April 11 was taken off the ship on the South Atlantic island of St. Helena on April 24, when his wife also disembarked. She then flew to South Africa a day later and died there.

The company said on Thursday that 29 passengers left the vessel at St. Helena, while the Dutch Foreign Ministry put the number at about 40. The company had not previously acknowledged that dozens more left the ship at that time.

The World Health Organization said on Thursday it had informed 12 countries that its nationals had disembarked the ship on St. Helena.

The first confirmed case on the ship was only on May 2, the WHO had previously said. That was in a British man evacuated from the ship to South Africa from Ascension Island three days after the St. Helena stop.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on Thursday that there were now five confirmed hantavirus cases from the outbreak, with three more suspected, and warned more cases were possible.

The vessel is now sailing to Spain's Canary Islands, a voyage that is expected to take three or four days, with more than 140 passengers and crew members still on board.

Authorities in South Africa and Europe are trying to trace contacts of any passengers who previously got off the ship.

It emerged on Wednesday that a man tested positive for hantavirus in Switzerland after he also disembarked at St. Helena and flew home, though his precise movements are not clear.

Dutch authorities did not confirm where other passengers who disembarked are now.

The WHO said on Thursday it expected the hantavirus outbreak on the ship to be "limited", as long as public health measures and "solidarity" are implemented.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:29 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

US should reciprocate China's readiness to work to stabilize and improve relations

Chinese Premier Li Qiang, top lawmaker Zhao Leji and Foreign Minister Wang Yi held separate meetings with a bipartisan delegation of US senators led by Republican Senator for Montana Steve Daines in Beijing on Thursday.

The three meetings conveyed a consistent message from the Chinese side: China and the United States should strengthen communication, properly manage differences and work toward a stable and healthy bilateral relationship.

At a time when uncertainty continues to cast long shadows over the world economy, stable China-US relations bear directly on the well-being of the peoples of both countries and on world peace and prosperity.

It was emphasized in the meetings that the key to stable relations is to keep working on bridging the perception gaps between the two sides. The two countries should endeavor to seek "harmony without uniformity" and choose to be partners instead of rivals.

Since Daines' previous visit to China in March 2025, considerable changes have taken place in not only China-US relations but also the broader international situation.

Through their direct interactions with the Chinese side and firsthand observations in China, the members of the delegation have had an opportunity to better appreciate the importance of China-US ties and the vital role both countries can play in promoting global stability and development.

In his meeting with the US delegation, Li expressed China's readiness to enhance dialogue and communication, and create a favorable atmosphere for exchanges at all levels and cooperation in various fields, so as to strive for more practical achievements between the two countries.

It was stressed in the meetings that the Taiwan question is the first and inviolable red line in China-US relations.

Both the US legislature and government should realize that the Taiwan question concerns the very core of China's core interests and constitutes the bedrock of the political foundation of China-US relations. China's resolve to safeguard its territorial integrity is unwavering and must not be underestimated. If the US side really cares about peace across the Taiwan Strait, it should stop sending wrong signals to the "Taiwan independence" forces on the Chinese island.

Adhering to the one-China principle and the three Sino-US joint communiques, as well as honoring the commitments made by successive US administrations regarding the Taiwan question, are prerequisites for the stable development of Sino-US relations. These are international obligations that the US side must fulfill.

Li urged the US lawmakers to bear in mind the broader interests of China-US friendship and cooperation, and view and handle China-related issues with prudence, thereby playing a constructive role in the sustainable development of bilateral relations.

Zhao signaled the willingness of China's top legislature to strengthen engagement with the US Congress, facilitate increased exchanges and mutual visits, extending a welcome to more US lawmakers to visit China.

It is hoped that the US senators, who play a key role in influencing US lawmaking and policymaking, will view China objectively, understand China rationally, respect China's core interests earnestly, manage differences properly and join hands to do more major, practical and good things that are beneficial to both countries and the world, as Wang stressed.

The visiting US senators should comprehend Beijing's stance that mutual respect is the foundation for bilateral ties, peaceful coexistence the guiding principle and win-win cooperation the objective. The hard-won stability in bilateral relations should be cherished, so that the two sides can work together to explore a proper way for major countries to get along with one another.

Regulatory overreach masks EU's malaise

The European Union's instinctive response to technological anxiety is paperwork, suspicion and the politicizing of economic relationships.

The latest manifestation of this tendency is a revised EU Cybersecurity Act proposed by the European Commission, which would allow Brussels to classify certain countries as states of "cybersecurity concern" and designate companies as "high-risk suppliers" based on vaguely defined "non-technical risks". Suppliers from targeted countries could effectively be excluded from entire supply chains across 18 critical sectors.

This is nothing more than pride and prejudice.

According to a report released by the China Chamber of Commerce to the EU and KPMG on Wednesday, replacing Chinese equipment under the proposed framework could cost the EU as much as €367.8 billion ($432.6 billion) over the next five years. That is equivalent to the GDP of a mid-sized EU economy. Yet Brussels appears willing to absorb the economic pain in pursuit of a strategic doctrine that remains deeply subjective.

The problem lies in how the EU is defining risk. Technical vulnerabilities can be tested, audited and corrected. "Non-technical risks", by contrast, are inherently ambiguous and elastic. Once security becomes detached from verifiable engineering standards, regulation risks becoming an ideological instrument.

As a spokesperson for China's Ministry of Commerce said, the draft law introduces arbitrary standards that weaponize supply chains under the banner of "security", while undermining the principles of market competition and nondiscrimination that the EU itself once championed.

If "high-risk supplier" becomes a geopolitical label, rather than a technical assessment, then any foreign company can theoretically be excluded at any moment in accordance with which way Brussels decides the political wind is blowing.

Former European Central Bank president Mario Draghi's warnings about the EU's competitiveness crisis — a widening productivity gap, slow growth and weakening industrial power that risk a "slow and agonizing death" of the EU's economic model — have not been subtle. Yet they have not been heeded.

Instead, Brussels increasingly behaves like "a regulatory overlord" presiding over a shrinking estate that is being sold off to pay for the upkeep of the manor. The EU is already struggling with sluggish growth, industrial erosion, energy insecurity and declining global competitiveness. It should pause before traveling too far down this road.

As the EU is debating sweeping supplier exclusions, German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul has reportedly advanced proposals for broad institutional reform within the EU itself, arguing that Europe must adapt more effectively to geopolitical and economic realities. It can't keep centralizing more regulatory authority while becoming further detached from industrial realities.

Some of the EU's lawmakers appear astonishingly distant from the sectors they regulate. Technology legislation is frequently written through the narrow lens of political symbolism rather than operational practicality. Industrial policy becomes performance geopolitics. Business considerations become moral theater.

The consequences are visible. The EU wants green transition leadership while burdening manufacturers with costs competitors do not face. It wants digital sovereignty while depending heavily on imported technologies. It wants strategic autonomy while reducing supplier diversity. The contradictions grow sharper with each new regulatory package it unveils.

The revised EU Cybersecurity Act risks becoming another example of the EU confusing strategic caution with economic self-harm. The irony would be particularly acute in telecommunications and digital infrastructure. Chinese suppliers became deeply embedded in the EU's markets thanks to their high cost-performance and proven reliability. Retrofitting or dismantling large portions of these systems will not magically create stronger European alternatives overnight. It will simply increase the costs for consumers, delay infrastructure upgrades and deepen Europe's investment burden during a period of already weak economic momentum.

The EU speaks the language of openness while practicing selective exclusion. That inconsistency damages its credibility in the world market, where many emerging economies see growing European enthusiasm for "de-risking" as little more than a softer euphemism for economic protectionism.

There is a distinction between rigorous standards and politically expandable categories that can be stretched to fit shifting strategic anxieties. Brussels should reconsider the most problematic aspects of the draft law: the designation of countries of "cybersecurity concern", the ambiguous "non-technical risk" criteria and the sweeping restrictions attached to "high-risk suppliers".

If the EU truly wishes to adapt to a harsher global era, it must reconnect its policymaking and lawmaking with economic realities rather than ideological abstraction. Otherwise, the EU may discover too late that its greatest vulnerability was not foreign technology but its regulatory addiction.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

FIFA pricing risks alienating premium product-making fans

The 2026 FIFA World Cup has already been sold as the biggest ever: 48 teams, three host nations, a projected $13 billion in revenue and a corporate footprint sprawling across North America like a traveling trade expo. Somewhere in between lies the faint outline of an actual soccer tournament, watched by actual people, many of whom are increasingly being priced out of it.

It is as if FIFA were standing in the middle of the world's most popular sport like a luxury landlord rattling a velvet donation bucket insisting that the rent must go up again because demand is "historic".

Negotiations over China's broadcasting rights for the 2026 World Cup remain stalled, with FIFA demanding $300 million, 17 times what it is charging India, a country with a comparable population. This despite the fact that China's men's national team did not qualify. That absence alone dramatically alters the economics of the tournament in China. Without the Chinese team, domestic enthusiasm has inevitably softened. Advertisers know this. Sponsorship appetite has cooled. The longer FIFA clings to fantasy valuations, the more sponsors will simply turn their attention elsewhere.

Besides, this is not 2002, when families gathered around television sets at dawn, or even 2010, when live broadcasting still held sway. The death of CNN founder Ted Turner on Wednesday is itself an elegy for the decline of the television network. Chinese viewers now consume soccer through fragmented streams, mobile highlights, social clips and flexible digital platforms. Younger audiences are perfectly comfortable catching goals after they have been scored rather than sacrificing sleep for group-stage kickoffs. In that environment, FIFA's pricing model looks more like figures plucked out of the ether.

There is another layer of absurdity here. Chinese journalists have reportedly faced prolonged visa delays that have prevented many outlets from securing on-site studios, commentary positions and working facilities in time for the tournament, which kicks off in the United States on June 11. Reduced access inevitably means reduced broadcast quality. Yet FIFA still appears determined to charge champagne prices for watered-down beer.

And then there are the tickets.

This week the FIFA chairman defended soaring World Cup ticket prices by arguing they reflect the US market. It's difficult to track exact 1994 US World Cup ticket prices, but according to ESPN, prices ranged from $25 to $475 per match. For the final between Brazil and Italy, some tickets exceeded $1,500. Adjusted for 2026 inflation, that means tickets roughly ranged from $55 to $1,050, with the final costing the equivalent of about $3,300 today. In sharp contrast, attending eight matches at the 2026 World Cup (one per round) costs roughly $6,900 for the cheapest category tickets — and up to $16,400 for the most expensive, as per BBC Sport.

Soccer has always sold dreams. FIFA has decided to sell exclusivity instead. This is the danger of overcommercializing a sports spectacle. The World Cup is not the Super Bowl. It is not Coachella with shin pads. It belongs, at least morally, to billions of people who invest themselves emotionally in the game every four years.

FIFA should understand the risks of overestimating its hand. This is, after all, the same organization whose recent history includes the 2015 FIFAgate, a scandal that revealed systemic bribery, opaque governance and industrial-scale self-interest inside soccer's ruling structures. Yet the institution survived, repainted itself in the language of reform, then resumed accumulating money with renewed enthusiasm.

Which raises the obvious question. Who watches over FIFA now?

Because soccer governance increasingly resembles a closed financial ecosystem answerable mainly to itself. Even former insiders have openly criticized FIFA's lack of accountability.

The World Cup should be the great festival of sport for the world. Instead, FIFA risks transforming it into a gated premium product wrapped in the rhetoric of global unity.

China's broadcasters are right to resist unrealistic pricing. Fans everywhere are right to complain about ticket costs. And FIFA would do well to remember a simple truth: soccer made FIFA rich. FIFA did not make soccer beloved.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

APEC crucial cohesion platform in Asia-Pacific

Editor's note: *The second Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Senior Officials' Meeting and related events will be held in Shanghai from Monday to May 19. People's Daily Overseas Edition spoke to Tu Xinquan, dean of the China Institute for World Trade Organization Studies at the University of International Business and Economics, and Zhang Jingjia, an associate researcher at the APEC Study Center of Nankai University, on China's role in the forum. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

At a time when geopolitical conflicts are disrupting global value chains and multilateral mechanisms are under strain, APEC is one of the few frameworks where economies can still sit down together to discuss trade and economic cooperation pragmatically. This gives the mechanism practical significance.

By promoting upgraded connectivity initiatives and striving for tangible results in physical, institutional and people-to-people connectivity, APEC economies can better withstand external shocks and enhance regional economic resilience.

At the same time, APEC can accelerate the green and innovation-driven transformation across the region. Greater cooperation in clean energy, green minerals and environmental protection will help member economies move toward smarter, greener and more digital growth while reducing dependence on traditional fossil fuels. Innovation-led transformation is essential for the long-term sustainable development of the Asia-Pacific. It can also create new engines of growth in times of uncertainty.

The Asia-Pacific region still holds enormous potential for economic growth and trade cooperation. China is the largest trading partner for nearly all the APEC members, giving it an important role in regional cooperation. Despite frictions between China and the United States and Japan, economic and trade ties remain a vital bridge. They continue to play an irreplaceable role in maintaining relations and supporting regional stability.

In this context, APEC serves as both a stabilizer and a source of cohesion for the Asia-Pacific region. More importantly, it provides a valuable platform for leaders and officials at different levels to engage in practical discussions and sustained communication. Even when differences and disputes persist, dialogue remains essential to regional stability and economic certainty. This is precisely why APEC's role cannot easily be replaced.

China's three priorities for APEC 2026 — openness, innovation and cooperation — can help reinforce the focus on regional shared development. They also reflect both China's strengths and its vision for the future of APEC and the wider world.

The country has demonstrated a firm commitment to expanding opening-up through a series of concrete measures this year. It is also a strong supporter of the multilateral trading system and the World Trade Organization. Regarding innovation, China has become one of the world's major innovation hubs, particularly in manufacturing, and is well-positioned to contribute more to APEC's innovation-driven development. When it comes to cooperation, China has consistently advocated partnership rather than confrontation, a position that aligns closely with APEC's core principles.

Although China remains a developing country, it is making tangible contributions to global development and regional prosperity by expanding market access, increasing outward investment, deepening supply chain cooperation and strengthening technological collaboration. It also advocates stronger connectivity and more resilient supply chains.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:29 PM

VIEWS

Jiang Jianguo

China's right path to human development

China is promoting the well-rounded personal development of its people and the all-around advancement of human rights. These goals were part of the Communist Party of China Central Committee's recommendations for formulating the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), as well as the plan's outline approved by national lawmakers.

Together, the two documents provide guidance for the country to put into practice the idea that "living a happy life is the primary human right".

"Putting the people first" is the fundamental principle guiding China's pursuit of well-rounded personal development of the people and advancement of human rights in all fields in the new era.

Chinese modernization is ultimately measured by the growth and development of the people. Its purpose is to stimulate the people's initiative and creativity by enhancing their capabilities and competence.

Promoting well-rounded personal development essentially means following a people-centered approach and upholding the commitment to respect, empower and support the people and facilitate their progress while advancing human rights.

Human rights are interdependent and must be advanced comprehensively through a systematic approach.

China's pursuit of all-around advancement of human rights is reflected in its efforts to build a human rights protection system covering all fields, improve the protection of all rights, and channel more public resources into core areas of personal development.

Both the recommendations for the 15th Five-Year Plan and the plan's outline place emphasis on investment in human capital that is key to promoting both well-rounded personal development and all-around advancement of human rights, as people themselves are the fundamental goal of modernization.

On the one hand, more public resources are being directed to sectors related to livelihoods, such as education, employment, healthcare and social security.

On the other hand, the country is aligning investment priorities to ensure that resources are allocated to safeguard and promote people's rights.

The focus is on meeting people's basic subsistence needs, boosting the quality of life, and ensuring people live a life of security, stability and dignity.

By improving the basic public service system and the social security system, the aim is to establish a network to protect subsistence rights that covers all people and ensures their well-being throughout their lives.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Unlocking people's potential is another major goal. Investment in human capital will help enhance people's ability to grow, participate and create. The documents emphasize removing barriers to personal development and call for improving the lifelong learning system, optimizing human resource development, and refining the country's employment support mechanisms so that different groups of people enjoy greater parity of opportunities.

The recommendations and the outline lay a solid institutional foundation for the advancement of human rights. They call for continued improvement in the institutions, standards and procedures for whole-process people's democracy as well as coordinated efforts to promote sound legislation, strict law enforcement, impartial administration of justice and observance of the law by all.

The documents also aim to facilitate upward mobility of people. They attach importance to creating an environment of fair competition, making rules and policies more fair to ensure equal opportunities, and improving the institutions for coordinated development among different regions and between urban and rural areas.

As China's human rights cause starts a new chapter, the country needs to develop human rights theories based on its own practice and accelerate the building of its own human rights knowledge system.

China's human rights cause has given rise to new concepts such as "living a happy life is the primary human right" and "the rights to subsistence and development are the primary and basic human rights".

There is an imbalance between human rights knowledge provided by the Global North and that provided by the Global South.

Continued efforts are therefore needed to draw inspiration from Chinese modernization, build China's human rights theoretical framework and help address that imbalance.

China also has to build a more vivid narrative, allowing the world to know better about its human rights achievements.

Chinese modernization provides both the material and a solid foundation for the country to tell its human rights story. Since it entered the new era, China has made remarkable achievements in human rights.

Human rights have been promoted through development, protected through reform and improved through governance. These macro-level achievements should be translated into multi-dimensional and relatable stories.

By sharing with the world its human rights stories and insights, China can help make global human rights governance more just, equitable and inclusive.

At present, global human rights development still faces many challenges, including hegemonism, regional conflicts and extreme poverty. China has adhered to inclusive development, pursued the common human aspiration of "human rights for all" and created favorable conditions for developing countries to share in development gains.

Going forward, the country needs to continue strengthening international human rights and building a community with a shared future for humanity.

The author is the executive vice-president of the China Society for Human Rights Studies.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Asit K. Biswas, Wang Hao and Cecilia Tortajada

Flood of opportunities in ecological preservation

The idea of ecological civilization was first introduced during the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2007, marking a new direction in the country's social and economic development. In 2012, it became even more central when it was included in the "five-in-one" framework, placing environmental protection alongside economic, political, cultural, and social development.

Global Lens

The importance of the concept has continued to grow. In 2017, ecological civilization was described as a long-term goal for China's future, and, in 2018, it was written into its Constitution.

Today, it is a key concept shaping how the country approaches development.

In recent years, China has made remarkable progress in embedding ecological civilization effectively into its development planning.

A major challenge to the country's continuous socioeconomic development during the post-2020 era has been that the climate, as in the rest of the world, has been changing much faster than scientists had expected. Fortunately, the concept of ecological civilization has provided an important framework within which the issues associated with climate change can be properly addressed.

One of the clearest signs of climate change is the shifting patterns of rainfall.

Since the early 2000s, northern China, traditionally a water-scarce area, has been receiving more rainfall than before, while some areas along the Yangtze River have been recording less rain.

This climate shift is gradually changing China's ecological landscape.

These changes are closely linked to the increase in global warming. Rising temperatures are making extreme weather conditions more frequent and intense, and sometimes for longer durations.

For example, more typhoons are moving faster northward in the country, increasing the risk of heavy rainfall, and thus increasing economic losses in inland regions.

As a result, areas that once faced regular droughts now have to face new challenges such as severe storms and floods.

Against this backdrop, ecological civilization is helping China respond to both new opportunities and unfamiliar challenges. Increased rainfall is easing water shortages in northern and northwestern regions.

Across the Mongolian Plateau, for example, surface water bodies and wetlands have shown clear signs of recovery since 2010. These changes are opening up new environmental and economic possibilities.

In Inner Mongolia autonomous region, this trend can already be observed. East Juyan Lake, which disappeared in the late 20th century, has reappeared in recent years. Wuliangsuhai Lake has begun to stabilize after years of steady decline. Hongjiannao Lake, the largest desert freshwater lake in China, is also gradually recovering, helped not only by increased rainfall but also by the implementation of stronger environmental policies and better water and land management practices.

These environmental improvements are also improving agriculture and local economies. In northeastern provinces like Heilongjiang and Jilin, warmer temperatures and more rainfall are extending growing seasons and supporting the expansion of maize and rice production.

In the North China Plain, more rainfall and effective groundwater management have significantly reduced pressure on aquifer depletion. This process is helping farmers maintain stable production of wheat and maize, which ensures food security and increases rural household incomes.

At the same time, recovering ecosystems are creating new economic opportunities for people. Proper management of wetlands and lakes is supporting fisheries, eco-tourism and several green industries. In this way, ecological improvements are being increasingly linked with socioeconomic development.

In cities, ecological civilization is also changing how climate risks are managed.

Places such as Wuhan, Hubei province and Shenzhen, Guangdong province, among others, have developed "sponge city" programs, which allow rainwater to contribute to groundwater recharge.

This means water can be used instead of causing floods and economic damage.

Major infrastructure projects, including the South-North Water Transfer, are also helping to balance water resources across regions, and contributing to the country's economic development.

Recent extreme weather events have further pushed these efforts forward. Cities have further improved monitoring systems and inter-institutional coordination, making adaptation to climate change more effective, proactive and less damaging.

However, challenges remain. More intense rainfall is putting added pressure on flood control systems and urban drainage networks that were designed for the more stable climate conditions in the past.

Adaptation is an ongoing process that requires continuous improvements.

Ecological civilization offers a clear direction for this effort. It connects environmental protection with economic and social planning, helping China adapt to changing climate conditions while continuing its steady social and economic development.

By improving water and land management practices, supporting agriculture, and strengthening resilience in cities and regions, China is turning climate challenges into opportunities for more sustainable growth.

In other words, ecological civilization is not just an ideological concept but also a practical way forward in a changing climate.

Asit K. Biswas is a distinguished visiting professor at the University of Glasgow in the UK; Wang Hao is an academician at the Chinese Academy of Engineering and a professor at the China Institute of Water Resources and Hydropower Research; Cecilia Tortajada is an honorary professor at the University of Glasgow in the UK.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Li Juncheng

Young urban ears increasingly tuning into podcasts

A subway ride, a treadmill, a late-night walk home: all these are places where podcasts have quietly taken root. For many young urban people, listening has become part of the daily rhythm.

An episode on the morning commute, another at the gym, one more before bed — this is not a niche habit, but simply how people live now.

The rise of podcasts can be traced back to around 2020. The pandemic changed how people moved through daily life. Commutes shrank, travel stopped, and working from home became routine for many.

Time once used for socializing, commuting, or light entertainment needed a new home. Podcasts stepped into that space with unusual ease. They were easy to access, easy to fit into daily routines, and rich enough to offer both information and company.

The growth has been fast. China is now one of the world's fastest-growing podcast markets. By 2025, the number of Chinese-language podcast listeners was expected to cross 150 million, while the total market revenue may have exceeded 5 billion yuan ($733.5 million). In the competition for attention, podcasts have claimed something rare: uninterrupted time.

That is one reason podcasts feel different from so much of today's content. Short-form video is built for speed and surprise. Podcasts ask for something else. A conversation can stretch across 40 minutes, an hour, or sometimes even longer. There is no rush to the punchline, no need for visual fireworks. The human voice carries the experience. It can sound casual, intimate, thoughtful, even reassuring. That is a big part of the medium's power.

In a world crowded with noise, they offer a different kind of attention. In a world driven by speed, they make room for thought.

Podcasts also fit naturally into moments when the eyes are busy but the mind is free. Walking, running, cooking, driving, folding laundry — these are all times when audio makes sense. A podcast can turn spare minutes into something fuller and make a daily routine feel less empty.

Still, the appeal of podcasts goes beyond convenience. They also answer a quieter emotional need.

A listener who cannot sleep at night may listen to a familiar host talking about a book, a film or simply the events of the day. The effect can be surprisingly comforting. Research suggests that listening to the human voice can prompt the release of oxytocin, often called the "trust hormone", which is linked to reduced stress and a greater sense of closeness. Podcasts make use of that effect in an understated way. Over time, the relationship between host and listener can become almost personal.

The boom has been helped by the range of people making podcasts. In August 2025, public figures such as Luo Yonghao and Chen Luyu entered the field with video podcasts. At the same time, independent creators have continued to bring their own voices, expertise and obsessions into the mix.

The result is a broad soundscape that now includes culture, science, dialects, folklore, philosophy, and new occupations. On Xiaoyuzhou, a major platform, 2025 saw more than 64,000 new podcast shows and nearly 700,000 new episodes.

That is where podcasts start functioning as an alternative publishing world. In the traditional book market, many subjects never find a strong commercial home. They may matter deeply to a small audience, but they are too specialized to justify a print run. Podcasts remove that barrier. With a smartphone, a microphone, and a quiet room, a creator can speak to thousands of people who care about the same narrow subject.

That helps explain why podcasts are becoming culturally important in ways that are easy to overlook. In Lyuliang, Shanxi province, a group of Jin dialect enthusiasts launched a podcast to explore and preserve their local dialect. In Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, several podcasts have moved offline, turning digital conversations into live cultural gatherings.

These examples are small, but they point to something larger. Podcasts can strengthen connections between people and places and turn shared interests into real communities.

Of course, the industry still has real problems. Content quality varies widely, business models are uneven and regulation is still catching up. But new cultural forms often look less important than they later prove to be.

Online literature once seemed like a side current; it later fed a much larger IP economy. Podcasts may follow a similar path. As more high-quality original content moves toward sustainable paid models, the medium could become a stable part of the digital cultural landscape.

The appeal of podcasts lies in depth, sincerity, and voice. They are rooted in ordinary life, shaped by ordinary people, and carried by ordinary moments. That is precisely why they matter.

In a world crowded with noise, they offer a different kind of attention. In a world driven by speed, they make room for thought. And in the space between one voice and another, they are helping shape a new kind of mass culture.

The author is an associate researcher at the Institute of Finance and Banking of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and a senior research fellow at the National Institution for Finance and Development.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:29 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

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

ZHANG MING

Pressure point

Volatility in global financial asset prices is expected to remain persistently elevated throughout the year



More than two months have elapsed since the outbreak of the Iran crisis. The trajectory of the situation remains highly uncertain. This prolonged standoff is likely to reinforce global stagflation and exert significant influence on the pricing dynamics of various financial assets.

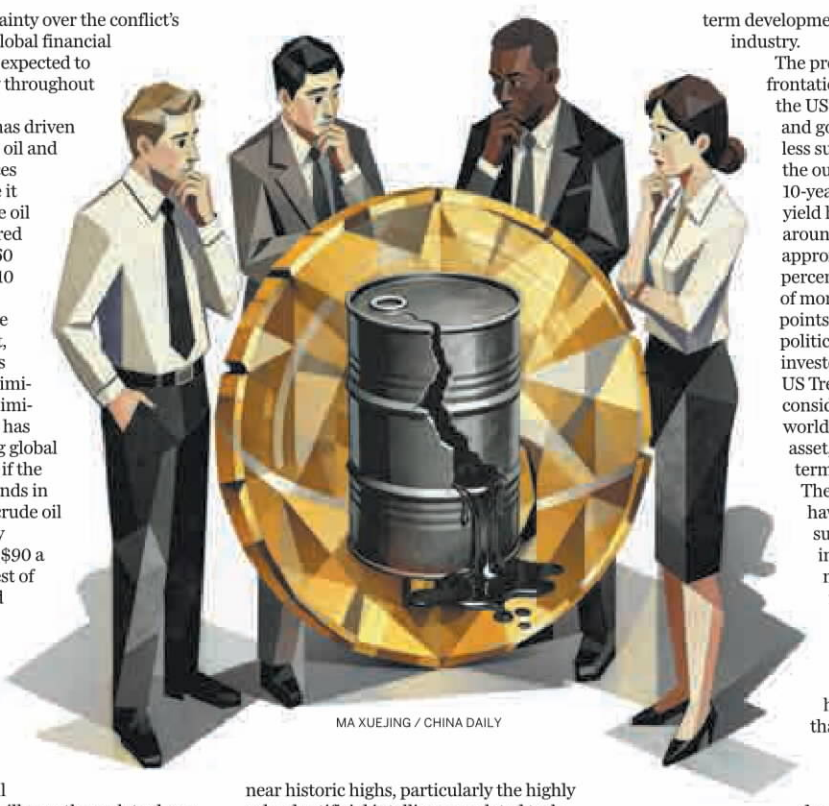
Since 2022, the global growth landscape has shifted from prolonged stagnation to stagflation. The former features "three lows and one high" (low growth, low inflation, low interest rates and high government debt), while the latter features "one low and three highs" (low growth, moderately high inflation, relatively high interest rates and high government debt). The key difference between the two lies in inflation, which in turn determines the divergence in interest rate trends.

The marked rise in global inflation since 2022 stems, on the supply side, from disruptions to global industry and supply chains caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukraine crisis; on the demand side, it reflects the unprecedented macroeconomic policy easing adopted by various countries after the pandemic, which boosted household consumption.

Over the past two to three years, global inflation has moderated to some extent. However, the ongoing Iran crisis and the resultant surge in global commodity prices represent yet another major supply-side shock to the world economy — following the pandemic and the Ukraine crisis. With aggregate demand unchanged, this results in lower economic growth and higher inflation, thereby further entrenching global stagflation. For instance, in its latest World Economic Outlook released in April, the International Monetary Fund revised down its global growth forecast for the year from 3.3 percent to 3.1 percent.

The Iran crisis has already roiled global financial markets since its eruption. Given the high uncertainty over the conflict's future course, global financial asset prices are expected to fluctuate wildly throughout 2026.

The conflict has driven up global crude oil and natural gas prices markedly. Since it broke out, crude oil prices have soared from around $60 to as high as $110 a barrel — an increase of more than 80 percent, with natural gas prices posting similar gains. A preliminary consensus has emerged among global investors: Even if the confrontation ends in the near term, crude oil prices will likely remain around $90 a barrel for the rest of the year. Should the confrontation persist, prices may break through the $110 to $120 range. More importantly, higher oil and gas prices will pass through to downstream goods, including electricity, chemicals, fertilizers and food. Rising pesticide and food prices would place noticeable pressure on emerging markets and developing economies, potentially triggering humanitarian crises.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

The confrontation has sharply increased volatility in global equity markets, and the overvalued US stock market could tip into a bear market. Since the outbreak, major global equity indices have all corrected to varying degrees. The US market remains near historic highs, particularly the highly valued artificial intelligence-related tech stocks. Even before the confrontation, some analysts had argued that US stocks faced considerable downward pressure this year. The outbreak has amplified the likelihood of a sharp correction for three reasons. First, the conflict will push up US inflation, interrupting the Federal Reserve's rate-cut cycle and possibly even forcing a return to rate hikes; second, it has dampened risk appetite and heightened risk aversion among global investors; third, it could drive up electricity prices, constraining the near-term development of the AI industry.

The prolonged confrontation could make the US' fiscal deficits and government debt less sustainable. Since the outbreak, the 10-year US Treasury yield has risen from around 4 percent to approximately 4.3 percent — an increase of more than 30 basis points. Normally, geopolitical conflicts lead investors to buy more US Treasuries, widely considered the world's premier safe asset, pushing long-term yields down. The fact that yields have risen instead suggests that investors are now questioning the safe-haven status of these instruments and are less motivated to hold them. If that safe-haven status continues to erode, and if domestic US inflation rises significantly, the possibility that 10-year yields will remain persistently high cannot be ruled out. Given that US federal debt has already exceeded 120 percent of nominal GDP, persistently high long-term yields imply a sharp increase in future debt service burdens. Moreover, the confrontation itself will substantially widen the current US fiscal deficit. Taken together, the US-Israel-Iran conflict is likely to aggravate the unsustainability of the US' fiscal deficits and government debt.

As the confrontation grinds on, gold prices are likely to reverse their recent decline and move higher. Gold had fallen from around $5,400 to $4,400 per ounce, before recovering to roughly $4,700. The initial price drop — despite heightened geopolitical tensions — mainly reflects the enormous run-up in gold prices over 2024 and 2025, which had already priced in much of the future uncertainty. In addition, gold exchange-traded funds, which are increasingly behaving like speculative investments rather than long-term investments, have grown in scale and influence. Nevertheless, if the confrontation drags on longer than markets expect, and if US Treasuries are no longer seen as a trustworthy safe asset, gold's unique status as a store of value could drive its price back up — although even in an upward trend, volatility will remain high.

For major economies of the Global South — particularly energy importers — the Iran crisis could lead to higher import costs, slower growth, rising inflation and greater asset price volatility. These countries should consider the following countermeasures: First, if domestic energy prices rise too rapidly, authorities could release strategic petroleum reserves or impose temporary price controls to cushion the impact; second, strengthen monitoring of short-term cross-border capital flows and take steps to prevent excessive outflows; third, prepare policy contingency plans to boost domestic growth based on national circumstances and comparative advantages, so as to cope with the uncertainty stemming from the evolving confrontation.

The author is the deputy director at the Institute of World Economics and Politics at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and a researcher at the National Institute for Global Strategy at the CASS. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

CHEN WENXIN

New discourse to uphold multilateralism

While the US' withdrawals from multilateral organizations upset world cooperation, China will continue to contribute to global governance through initiatives



The United States announced on Jan 7 its withdrawals from 66 international organizations that "no longer serve American interests", 31 of them being the United Nations bodies. Although the US' withdrawals from multilateral institutions are nothing new, the scale of this move is unprecedented and carries far-reaching implications for global governance and the international order.

The withdrawals reflect deliberate strategic planning. The 66 organizations were identified through a comprehensive review mandated by President Donald Trump's Executive Order 14199. Each decision was shaped by a mix of strategic calculation and political considerations to serve the "America First" agenda.

Moreover, unlike earlier withdrawals that were confined to a single domain, the organizations that have been hit this time cut across a wide range of core areas of global governance, such as climate change, human rights and cultural cooperation. Therefore, the withdrawals this time will have far-reaching and complex implications for the multilateral system.

By withdrawing from international organizations, the US is not abandoning global governance, but seeking to redefine its role within it.

One objective is to concentrate power in a handful of priority domains. Consistent with its national security strategy, the Trump administration seeks selective engagement in global governance to sharply reduce investment in non-strategic areas while preserving dominance in the global economy, advanced technology and military security.

Another aim is to minimize constraints and advance unilateral hegemony. By systematically dismantling the existing global system and exerting pressure in international interactions, Washington seeks fewer institutional checks and greater freedom of action to force through its agenda unilaterally.

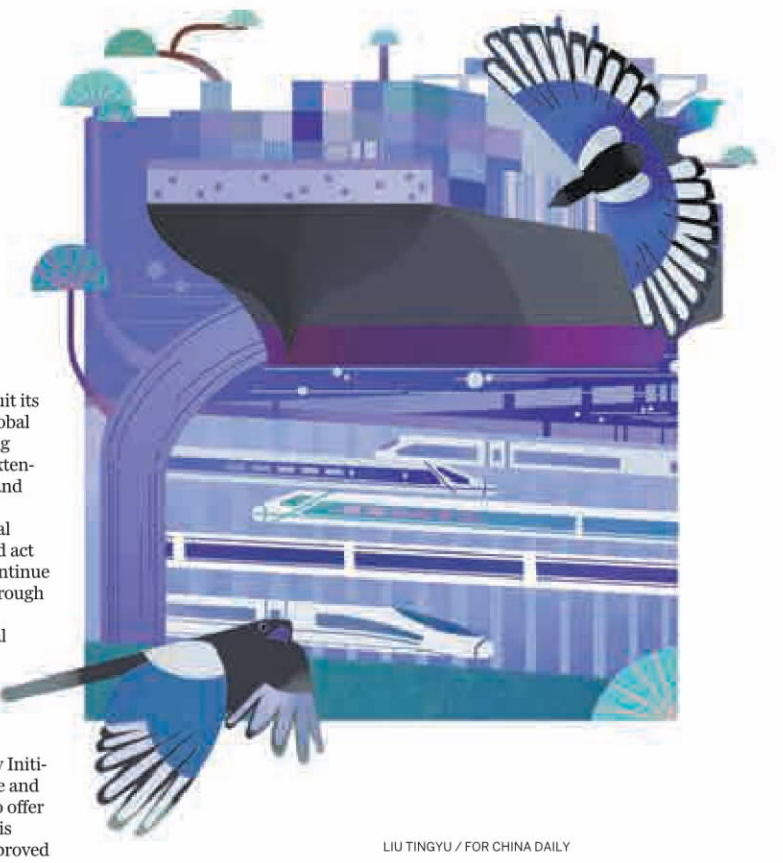
A third goal is to scale back investment in global governance. The US increasingly evaluates global engagement through a cost-benefit lens and reshapes its global role accordingly. Continued cuts to funding for international organizations are intended to reduce external burdens, reflecting a utilitarian approach.

Following the sweeping US withdrawals, the global governance system and the international order will face more challenges.

The foundations of the global governance structure have been eroded. The US' exit from UN-related bodies and mechanisms such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change has disrupted the existing global system and weakened the authority and effectiveness of multilateral mechanisms, pushing the UN-centered governance structure into a crisis of trust.

The withdrawals have also weakened global coordination and deepened fragmentation in global governance. Cooperation in climate action, public health and security has been disrupted, leading to the under-provision of global public goods, stalled regional collaboration and rising difficulties in policy alignment. As a result, global governance will become ever more divided.

The US' withdrawals from multilateral organizations as a tool for power politics and selective application of rules to suit its interests have deepened divisions. Global cooperation also faces the risk of being steered away from the principles of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits.



LIU TINGYU / FOR CHINA DAILY

In response to this, the international community must build consensus and act collectively. China, for its part, will continue to contribute to global governance through global initiatives.

First, the central role of multilateral institutions can be strengthened. By upholding the UN as the core platform of global governance, China has put forward four global initiatives — the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, the Global Civilization Initiative and the Global Governance Initiative — to offer Chinese solutions to the world. On this basis, China can further advocate improved decision-making and financial mechanisms to ensure continuity on critical agendas. Reforming these institutions will allow China to deepen cooperation with other Global South countries, amplify the voice of developing nations and help address long-standing imbalances in Western-dominated governance. China can also use multilateral platforms to promote the enforcement of international law, establish multilateral mechanisms to ensure compliance and bolster resilience against unilateralism.

Second, more diversified and coordinated cooperation networks can be built. Linkages can be deepened among regional mechanisms such as BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, creating synergies through policy coordination, resource sharing and mutual recognition of outcomes. Furthermore, China will continue to leverage the Belt and Road Initiative to align national development strategies with regional cooperation plans. At the same time, emerging economies and developing states can be encouraged to develop new forms of multilateral cooperation to strengthen cross-regional resilience.

Third, a global consensus for collective action should be reached. Global issues can be prioritized to foster broad-based cooperation. In climate governance, China will continue to uphold the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities to advance more inclusive implementation pathways. In public healthcare and food security, it is essential to build global platforms to facilitate technology exchanges, joint responses to emergencies and coordination on raw resources. Moreover, China can also work to promote a new discourse on global governance, to ensure equity, justice and shared responsibility are embedded in rule-making. This is key to upholding multilateralism, building consensus to address global challenges and injecting certainty into global governance.

The author is the director of the Institute of American Studies at the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:29 PM

BUSINESS

Rules eased to boost cross-border financing

PBOC, SAFE hike lending leverage ratios to support corporate overseas expansion

By **JIANG XUEQING**
jiangxueqing@chinadaily.com.cn

China has stepped up policy support for cross-border financing by raising leverage ratios for overseas lending by foreign banks in the country and the Export-Import Bank of China, in a move aimed at boosting the real economy, facilitating trade and investment, and accelerating the global use of the renminbi.

The adjustment comes as banks' overseas lending has expanded steadily in recent years, with the share of renminbi-denominated loans continuing to rise, even as some banks have seen their outstanding overseas loans approach existing regulatory caps.

Under the new regulations, the overseas lending leverage ratio for wholly foreign-owned banks, Sino-foreign joint venture banks and branches of foreign banks in China has been raised from 0.5 to 1.5, while that of the Export-Import Bank of China, also known as China Eximbank, has increased from 3 to 3.5.

In a recently issued joint notice, the People's Bank of China, the central bank, and the State Administration of Foreign Exchange also said that domestic banks extending loans with maturity exceeding one year in renminbi and foreign currencies to overseas enterprises indirectly — such as through overseas banks — can now have those loans processed in accordance with regulations of their respective jurisdictions, simplifying procedures and improving cross-border financing efficiency.

Western Securities estimated that the adjustment will increase the aggregate overseas lending ceiling of 41 locally incorporated foreign banks in China, including wholly foreign-owned and JV banks, by 497.5 billion yuan ($73.13 billion), and raise China Eximbank's overseas lending ceiling by 194.8 billion yuan. Together with expanded quotas for domestic branches of foreign banks, the total increase in overseas lending capacity is expected to reach between 700 billion and 800 billion yuan.

Zhou Antong, an analyst at Western Securities, said in a research report that China Eximbank will benefit the most from the policy change, with its share of overseas lending assets expected to rise further. The second tier of beneficiaries include large foreign banks operating in China. In addition to higher overseas lending quotas, the simplified procedures for indirect lending will also benefit their global networks by strengthening cross-border coordination and boosting income from international business.

The report said that the policy adjustment aligns with the goals of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30). It will provide financial support for the global expansion of China's "new three" industries, namely electric vehicles, solar panels and lithium-ion batteries, and other competitive sectors, while meeting the capital-intensive needs of high-end manufacturing going abroad.

Moreover, companies engaging in on-lending through overseas banks or participating in international syndicated loans can now proceed directly in accordance with local regulations, significantly reducing cross-border compliance costs.

Analysts said Chinese banks still have considerable room to expand their global footprint, making the role of China Eximbank especially important in areas such as overseas trade financing and cross-border guarantees. At the same time, as the internationalization of the renminbi accelerates and China's exports have grown rapidly in recent years, foreign banks are playing an increasingly vital role in cross-border payment services. Against this backdrop, expanding the business scale of foreign banks and strengthening their role as key partners in foreign trade has become an urgent priority.

Wesley Yang, deputy CEO of Standard Chartered China, said: "Raising the overseas lending leverage ratio for foreign-funded banks in China to 1.5 provides concrete and effective policy support for their further development."

Yang said that as Chinese companies expand overseas at a faster pace, demand for cross-border financial services, particularly cross-border loans, has risen significantly.

"The new policy will not only allow foreign banks to further leverage their strengths and deepen involvement in cross-border lending, but also effectively expand key channels for renminbi funds to go global, supporting the currency's broader use in international credit and investment," Yang said.

Standard Chartered will seize the opportunity presented by this new policy to continue leveraging its global network and extensive experience in cross-border financial services. The bank is dedicated to providing efficient financial support to both Chinese and foreign enterprises — particularly Chinese companies expanding overseas — including comprehensive cross-border RMB solutions, to help them navigate their global expansion with confidence and achieve long-term success, he added.

Dong Ximiao, chief economist at Merchants Union Consumer Finance, said the policy adjustment will further ease overseas financing difficulties for companies "going global", while encouraging greater use of the renminbi by overseas entities and advancing the currency's internationalization.

Zeng Gang, chief expert and director of the Shanghai Institution for Finance and Development, said the move will significantly enhance financial institutions' ability to serve the real economy.

On the one hand, raising the leverage ratios will substantially expand banks' lending capacity, addressing constraints such as limited overseas financing quotas and high funding costs. This will enable greater support for cross-border industrial chains, overseas infrastructure and livelihood-related projects, helping overseas entities maintain stable operations. On the other hand, simplifying indirect lending procedures encourages banks to conduct business in a compliant and more autonomous manner, improving the convenience of cross-border investment and financing, Zeng said.

The measures will also help balance cross-border capital flows and promote deeper integration of Chinese financial institutions into the global financial system, he added.



Rail drill

Staff members monitor real-time data during an emergency drill for nonstandard train receptions and departures at Taiyuan North Station in Shanxi province, under China Railway Taiyuan Group, on Wednesday. As a core node on China's major coal transportation corridor, the station handles the marshalling of freight trains on multiple trunk lines, including Shijiazhuang-Taiyuan Railway and Datong-Taiyuan Railway, with a total coal transport volume of 9.75 million metric tons in 2025.
LIU YUXUAN / FOR CHINA DAILY



A face-changing performance draws visitors at Konggang flower field in Chengdu, Sichuan province, on Sunday. LI XIANGYU / FOR CHINA DAILY

Immersive, emotion-driven experiences redefine May Day holiday tourism mkt

By **LI JING**
lijing2009@chinadaily.com.cn

When visitors arrived at the ancient city wall of Nanjing in Jiangsu province during the May Day holiday, many expected a typical historical tour. Instead, they were greeted by actors portraying Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) figures strolling along the ramparts, inviting tourists into improvised scenes, posing for photos and weaving vivid stories about the site's centuries-old past.

"I originally came just to see the city wall relics," said Wu Jiaying, a tourist from Zhejiang province. "But the interactive performance made history come alive."

Across China during the just-concluded five-day holiday, such immersive encounters became increasingly common, reflecting a broader shift in the country's tourism market. Travelers — particularly younger ones — are moving away from traditional "checklist" sightseeing toward experiences that offer atmosphere, storytelling and emotional engagement.

"Tourism today is less about visiting the most famous sites and more about whether the experience creates emotional resonance," said Wu Liyun, a professor at the China Academy of Culture and Tourism at Beijing International Studies University.

"What travelers seek is emotional value — the feeling of being relaxed, understood and connected with a place."

Cities across China experimented with new tourism formats during the holiday, combining cultural heritage with interactive storytelling.

In Chengdu, Sichuan province, themed "city walk" routes linked more than 500 cultural and lifestyle venues, from historic streets and parks to music venues and food markets. Historical characters appeared along popular walking routes, interacting with visitors through improvised performances and poetry recitals.

Meanwhile, in Anshun, Guizhou province, the 600-year-old Yunfeng Tunpu — often described as a "living relic" of Ming Dynasty military settlements — reimagined traditional sightseeing by turning the entire village into a live-action role-playing game. Rather than passively listening to tour guides, visitors adopted character identities to solve a historical mystery, hunting for clues and interacting with NPCs inside ancient military tents and batik workshops.

> "Tourism today is less about visiting the most famous sites and more about whether the experience creates emotional resonance."
>
> **Wu Liyun,** a professor at the China Academy of Culture and Tourism at Beijing International Studies University

For local businesses, such interactive formats help extend visitor stays and encourage spending on accommodation, dining and entertainment rather than relying solely on ticket revenue.

Travel platform data suggest that younger travelers are driving the shift, prioritizing personal interests over generic itineraries.

According to a report jointly released by online travel platform Fliggy and lifestyle app Xiaohongshu, also known as RedNote, around 69 percent of surveyed users chose their holiday destinations primarily based on personal interests rather than traditional sightseeing priorities.

Concerts, sporting events and festivals have also become major tourism drivers. Online platform Tongcheng Travel said city soccer tournaments boosted visitor flows to destinations including Nanjing and Suzhou in Jiangsu province, Shenzhen in Guangdong province and Hangzhou in Zhejiang province.

Also an online travel services provider, Qunar said hotel bookings near Zhengzhou Olympic Sports Center in Henan province rose 214 percent year-on-year during the May Day holiday as concerts attracted visitors from across the country.

Analysts say these diverse interests are reshaping travel flows, drawing visitors well beyond traditional tourism hot spots.

Reflecting this structural change in tourism consumption, Wu said: "In the past, tourism relied largely on natural or historical resources and ticket sales. Today, destinations must combine those resources with creative products and local lifestyles to build deeper, more memorable experiences."

Local neighborhood culture, markets and interactive performances are increasingly becoming tourism attractions themselves, she added.

Economists say the phenomenon highlights the rise of the "emotion economy".

"The object of consumption is shifting from the utility of goods to the symbolic and experiential value they carry," said Tian Lihui, a professor of finance at Nankai University.

According to consultancy iiMedia Research, China's emotion-driven consumption market reached 2.72 trillion yuan ($377 billion) in 2025 and is projected to exceed 4.5 trillion yuan by 2029.

The trend is also providing fresh momentum for domestic consumption and economic growth.

In January, the State Council, China's Cabinet, issued a work plan to guide efforts in optimizing and expanding the supply of services, including experience-based and emotion-driven services.

This model allows businesses to move beyond price competition toward higher-value offerings, Tian said.

"Businesses are no longer just selling products — they are curating experiences," he said. "A cafe sells a moment of quiet, a hotel sells rest and a tourism destination becomes the stage for emotional storytelling."

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism said local governments organized around 13,700 cultural and tourism events nationwide during the holiday while issuing more than 280 million yuan in consumer subsidies and vouchers.

As competition between destinations intensifies, the shift toward immersive and lifestyle-oriented tourism is likely to accelerate.

"What attracts visitors now is not only landmarks," Wu said. "It is the opportunity to experience a city's culture, lifestyle and emotional atmosphere."

Coca-Cola posts robust Q1 results driven by biz in China

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn

The Coca-Cola Company reported first-quarter results that exceeded market expectations, with revenue and profit rising on steady global demand and stronger momentum in emerging markets, including China.

Net revenue climbed 12 percent to $12.47 billion, beating analysts' estimates of $12.23 billion. Organic revenue grew 10 percent, while net income increased 19 percent to $3.97 billion.

Global unit case volume expanded 3 percent in the quarter, driven by growth in China, the United States and India. The Asia-Pacific region posted a 5 percent increase in volume, underscoring its role as a key growth engine for the beverage giant.

By category, sparkling soft drinks grew 2 percent globally. Coca-Cola grew 2 percent, driven by growth in the Asia-Pacific and North America. Coca-Cola Zero Sugar grew 13 percent. Sparkling flavors grew 3 percent, while water, sports drinks, coffee and tea grew 5 percent.

CEO Henrique Braun said during the results announcement that the Asia-Pacific is one region that the company is definitely developing for the future.

Braun said volume growth was recorded across all operating units in the region, alongside gains in market share. In China, he said the company's focus on categories with a competitive advantage is beginning to deliver results.

"We're not going to play in every category," Braun said. "We are focusing on quality, scale and segments where we believe we have the right to win — and that is now starting to pay back."

Coca-Cola China continues to lead on sparkling in the domestic market, said the company.

The company has expanded its product portfolio to capture evolving consumer preferences. New offerings in the quarter included Coca-Cola's new prebiotic soda, Sprite + Tea, and functional beverages such as Minute Maid Vitamin C Citrus, targeting consumption scenarios ranging from meals to sports.

The company has stepped up efforts to connect with consumers through culturally tailored marketing and product innovation. During the Chinese New Year holiday, the beverage giant launched an AI-enabled campaign inspired by traditional Chinese art, allowing consumers to create personalized digital portraits via connected packaging.

The company also introduced a limited-edition "Year of the Horse" fireworks can packaging, incorporating zodiac imagery and embroidery-inspired design elements.

To better serve the local market, Coca-Cola China continues to collaborate with its bottling partners and accelerate supply chain expansion. Over the past three years, the Coca-Cola China system has invested in upgrading five production facilities, encompassing facility construction, capacity expansion and smart upgrades, supporting sustainable business growth.



A visitor takes a bottle of Coca-Cola from a robotic arm during a high-tech expo in Shanghai on March 28. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

In April, Coca-Cola's Jinwan New Plant in Zhuhai, Guangdong province, was officially inaugurated. As a key production and sales base in southern China, the facility represents a total investment of about 835 million yuan ($122.75 million), with 15 planned production lines.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:29 PM

BUSINESS

Durian boom ripening into supply chain story

Cold chain, efficient cross-border e-commerce make China global trade hub for tropical fruit







Left: A staff member weighs durians at a fruit distributor's operating center in Guangzhou, South China's Guangdong province, on Oct 17. DENG HUA / XINHUA
Below left: A consumer selects fresh durians at an imported durian distribution center in Chengdu, Sichuan province, on April 26. ZHANG LANG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE
Below right: An employee sells durians via livestreaming at an imported durian distribution center in Chengdu on April 26. ZHANG LANG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

> "The industry is still expanding rapidly, but already entering a period of structural differentiation."
>
> **Liu Junhong,**
> a businessman from Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region

BEIJING — When durian season arrives, it makes a grand entrance to China via railway wagon, cold-chain container and express vessel, bringing with it a fruit whose distinctive aroma may divide opinion, but whose commercial appeal is unmistakable.

In the space of about 24 hours from the morning of April 25, three "durian express" vessels carrying 356 containers and more than 6,300 metric tons of fresh Thai durians arrived at Nansha Port in Guangzhou, South China's Guangdong province. The fruit was to be distributed across China in time to add to supplies for the May Day holiday. Since April 15, Nansha Customs has supervised the import of more than 9,500 tons of fresh durians.

The railway picture is just as telling. From Jan 1 to April 26, the China-Laos Railway transported 50,300 tons of imported durians, up 94.2 percent year-on-year, according to China Railway Kunming Group. The figures show not only that Chinese consumers are buying more durians, but also that the supply routes serving this growing demand are becoming faster and more efficient.

Durians have long occupied an unusual place in China's fruit market. For devoted buyers, it is the "king of fruits", rich, creamy and worth paying for. For others, its unique smell remains a barrier.

Yet that traditional divide is narrowing as durians move beyond boutique supermarkets and first-tier urban consumers. Better cold-chain logistics, more efficient cross-border supply chains and the spread of e-commerce have brought durians into community group-buying channels, lower-tier cities and county-level markets.

That expansion has made China the center of gravity for the global durian trade. Customs data show that China imported about 1.87 million tons of fresh durians in 2025, making it the world's most important consumer market for the fruit. Industry participants say the consumer base has grown rapidly. Rising incomes, larger supply and improved cold-chain infrastructure have all helped enlarge the market.

For ports and railways, the challenge is speed, as fresh fruit is an unforgiving cargo. At Mohan railway port, the core hub for China-Laos Railway international freight, the authorities have deepened coordination with Laos' Boten port, streamlined customs procedures and worked to keep cross-border logistics flowing.

Railway departments, customs and companies have formed special teams for the transport of fresh fruit. Green channels for inspection give priority to entry, inspection and testing, linking arrival, clearance and transfer more smoothly and sharply reducing the time fruit spends at the port.

Nansha, China's largest seaborne port for durian imports, is making a similar effort. As Southeast Asia's main producing areas enter peak season, its durian imports are expected to keep rising between April and June.

Yet scale has not reduced scrutiny. For the concentrated arrivals in late April, customs officers carried out targeted inspection and quarantine, checking for harmful organisms and taking samples for pesticide residues, heavy metals and other safety indicators.

"Visible pest risks can be checked by the eye, but invisible microbes and contaminants must also be strictly guarded against," said Lin Xiaojing, an official with Nansha Customs.

As a result, the market is expanding not only in size, but also in standards. Niti Pratoomvongsa, commercial counselor at the Royal Thai Consulate-General in Nanning, capital of South China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, said Chinese consumers are shifting from a focus on price toward a stronger concern for quality, food safety, production standards and traceability. This change is raising the bar for competition.

Southeast Asian suppliers are responding. As planting areas expand in Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia and Cambodia, industry participants say the competition among Southeast Asian suppliers in China is still being reshaped.

Chinese capital and business operators are also moving further upstream. Liu Junhong, a Guangxi businessman who shifted from engineering and agricultural irrigation into durians five years ago, has inspected markets in Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam and invested in a planting project in Cambodia's Kampot province.

"The industry is still expanding rapidly, but already entering a period of structural differentiation," Liu said. His answer is to focus on higher-end varieties such as "Black Thorn" to avoid future homogenized competition.

Growth, however, does not guarantee easy profits for everyone. Wang Zhengbo, chairman of Guangxi TWT Supply Chain Management, a trading company specializing in Thai durians, noted that the durian chain is long and layered, from planting to retail, with costs accumulating at each stage. Large traders and those controlling upstream resources are relatively stable, while some smaller players are more exposed to price volatility.

At the production end, Nicholas Lui, a durian grower from Malaysia's Pahang state, said rising fertilizer, fuel and labor costs — together with stricter procurement standards, are narrowing margins.

Even so, the direction of travel remains clear. China's market is widely seen by industry participants as far from saturated, but it is becoming more selective. Poor quality fruit, uneven standards and inefficient supply chains will find it harder to survive.

The boom is also creating new forms of consumption. In Nansha, a port-side fresh market model allows fruit to be unloaded, containers opened and products sold directly. A durian carnival on April 30 offered Thai Monthong, Malaysian Musang King and other varieties to consumers. In producing countries, some businesses are exploring durian tourism, combining picking experiences with agricultural travel. Processed products, from frozen pulp to cakes and snacks, are also extending the value chain.

The fruit's flavor may not have changed. But from orchard to port, railway and dinner table, the business around it is becoming faster, stricter and more regional. For China and Southeast Asia, the durian season is no longer just a seasonal rush. It is a vivid example of how consumer demand can reshape the routes, standards and economics of a whole supply chain.

XINHUA

Nation's innovative bamboo goods going global



A view of furniture and office supplies made from bamboo at a homestay in Anji county of Huzhou, East China's Zhejiang province, on Aug 16, 2023. ZHU HAN / XINHUA

KUNMING — Under the spring sunshine, vast stems of bamboo are shooting up in the mountains of Southwest China's Yunnan province. Hundreds of kilometers away, a batch of exquisitely packaged bamboo chairs passed customs inspection at the China-Vietnam border, bound for customers in Hanoi, Vietnam.

Since the first order in February this year, bamboo products from Yunnan's Daguan county, including chairs and canes, have been in high demand in Vietnam, with orders continuing to grow.

"We believe high-quality bamboo products can cross borders and let overseas friends feel the charm of Chinese bamboo culture," said Ou Xianqin, chairperson of a local bamboo culture technology company, adding that their bamboo products are exported to Australia, Japan, the United States, Singapore and other countries, with export value reaching about 2 million yuan ($294,000) over the past three years.

Daguan county, with its favorable climate and geography, is a core bamboo production area. By 2025, the county's bamboo planting area had reached 68,000 hectares, with total bamboo industry output exceeding 3.1 billion yuan.

China has the world's richest bamboo resources and is the most developed in its utilization, earning it the title "Kingdom of Bamboo". Figures from the National Forestry and Grassland Administration show the country has nearly 8 million hectares of bamboo forests, producing 150 million metric tons of bamboo each year. The bamboo industry generates over 520 billion yuan annually, with more than 15,000 types of bamboo products available.

As China seeks to replace wood and plastic products with bamboo alternatives to reduce pollution and carbon emissions, Chinese bamboo enterprises are accelerating their global expansion, tapping overseas markets and contributing to sustainable development worldwide.

Known as the "hometown of bamboo", Anji county in East China's Zhejiang province has about 66,700 hectares of bamboo forests and nearly 1,000 bamboo enterprises. In 2025, the county's bamboo industry output exceeded 20 billion yuan.

At Zhejiang Fenghui Bamboo and Wood Co Ltd in the county, a dazzling variety of bamboo tableware, packaging and lighting fixtures are displayed.

General Manager Liang Fenghui, who took over the business from his father, said the company turns bamboo trunks, branches and even scraps into daily necessities that replace plastic, offering more than 3,000 kinds of related products.

Several years ago, Liang's company developed a series of tableware from discarded bamboo shoot shells. The products later became a hit online, with the bamboo shoot shell lunchboxes alone generating over $500,000 in overseas sales last year.

The company exports 70 percent of its products to markets such as the US, Japan and European countries, achieving 185 million yuan in sales in 2025.

"Don't underestimate these daily necessities that replace plastic — they represent a huge market," said Liang.

According to China Green Times, a forestry industry newspaper, bamboo straws alone have an annual production capacity exceeding 1.2 billion units in the country. Bamboo tableware and lunchboxes are exported to nearly 110 countries and regions, including Japan, South Korea and the US.

"When I took over from my father, we mostly waited for orders, satisfied with 10 percent annual growth," Liang said. "But now, it's time to expand outward."

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:29 PM

CHINA

BLUEPRINT INTO ACTION

Jilin's hubs to modernize production

Industries centered on advanced manufacturing seen as growth drivers

By **LIU MINGTAI** in Changchun and **ZHOU HUIYING**

Northeast China's Jilin province will accelerate the development of a modern industrial system centered on advanced manufacturing, highlighting the province's distinctive advantages, Governor Hu Yuting said on Thursday.

"Jilin is a major agricultural and industrial province, as well as a hub for science, education and culture," Hu said at a news conference on Jilin's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30). "Moreover, Jilin has significant comparative advantages in fields such as optoelectronic information, satellite manufacturing, new materials and healthcare."

The province is home to national-level research institutions and teams such as Jilin University and the Changchun Institute of Optics, Fine Mechanics and Physics.

"These institutions have advantages in fields like intelligent cerebellum, dexterous hands and polyetheretherketone, or PEEK, materials, with outstanding capabilities in high-end precision manufacturing," Hu said.

In the aerospace information sector, the Changguang Satellite Technology, based in Changchun, has led the industry in satellite manufacturing technology, offering low-cost, mass-production capabilities.

"The company has launched 152 Jilin-1 family satellites, making it the world's largest sub-meter-level commercial remote-sensing satellite constellation," Hu said.

"We will focus on promoting the integration of communication, navigation and remote sensing, harnessing vast amounts of data to drive the development of the digital economy and satellite internet," he added.

In 2025, Changguang developed and launched 24 satellites and sold 18, generating more than 1 billion yuan ($147 million) in revenue.

Its rapid development of aerospace data services has spurred the coordinated development of more than 1,000 upstream and downstream enterprises.

"After more than 20 years of dedicated effort, Changguang has achieved a qualitative leap," said Jia Hongguang, the company's deputy general manager. "As China's first full-industry-chain commercial remote-sensing satellite enterprise, we have established a complete commercial aerospace industry layout."

In the high-end optoelectronic chip sector, Gpixel Changchun Microelectronics Inc, a global leader in high-performance complementary metal-oxide semiconductor, or CMOS, image sensors, was officially listed on the main board of the Hong Kong Stock Exchange on April 17, marking a critical milestone in the high-quality development of Changchun's optoelectronic industry.

Since its establishment in 2012, the company has launched more than 40 high-performance CMOS image sensor models across nine series, with chip production exceeding 600,000 units and sales surpassing 800 million yuan.

During the 15th Five-Year Plan period, the province will promote the transformation of the automotive industry toward intelligent connected new energy vehicles, with a strong emphasis on hydrogen fuel cell vehicles.

Efforts will also be made to accelerate the transition to all-solid-state battery vehicles.

"FAW Group's all-solid-state battery vehicles have already been launched, effectively addressing the issue of reduced battery discharge efficiency in low-temperature conditions," Hu said.

Jilin will also promote the petrochemical industry's transition toward fine chemical new materials. "Ethylene, a key raw material for fine chemicals, for instance, is produced at a newly built 1.9 million-metric-ton ethylene project, with more than 40 supporting projects under construction," Hu said. "The next step is to extend the industrial chain, increase added value and create new advantages."

"The key to building a modern industrial system lies in developing new quality productive forces tailored to local conditions," he said. "We will focus on promoting the deep integration of technological innovation and industrial innovation, streamlining the path from technology to sample to commodity to industry, and reinforcing the role of enterprises as the mainstay of technological innovation."

Located at the world's golden latitude for ice and snow, Jilin boasts rare resources such as powder snow, calm winds, warm sunshine and hot springs.

During the past snow season, Jilin saw strong momentum in its ice and snow economy, with the number of detachable ropeways and ski visitors ranking first in the country.

Jin Yuhui, a member of the Jilin Provincial Government Party Leadership Group, said: "Next, we will continue to amplify the effects of the ice and snow economy and use the hosting of the 33rd Winter Universiade, which will be held in January 2027, as an opportunity to comprehensively shape and enhance new advantages in the ice and snow industry."

Contact the writers at zhouhuiying@chinadaily.com.cn



Spring pastures

Sheep graze on a spring pasture in Altay, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, on Wednesday. As a cornerstone of Altay's rural vitalization strategy, the annual "transhumance" — the movement of livestock between seasonal grazing grounds — involves over one million animals. Currently, the livestock have completed the trek to spring pastures, before moving to mountain pastures in June.
ARDAK BEYISKAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Guangzhou targets medical tourism

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

Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong province, is sparing no effort to build a globally competitive destination for international medical tourism, with the launch of the Guangzhou International Medical Tourism Service Center recently.

The center will collaborate with the city's 17 pilot hospitals to offer international medical services for foreign patients, including authoritative diagnosis and treatment.

Leveraging the cultural, commercial and tourism resources of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, it will also engage in international brand marketing, medical agency services, travel arrangements, as well as wellness and healthcare, promoting the synergy and integration of medical, tourism and urban service resources.

Lai Zhihong, vice-mayor of Guangzhou, said international medical tourism has recently become an important growth driver in the global health industry.

Relying on its high-quality medical resources, unique Lingnan culture, open environment and advantages as a transportation hub, demand for medical treatment and healthcare in Guangzhou has continued to grow in recent years, Lai said at the launch ceremony of the center.

He urged medical personnel across the city to treat foreign patients with excellent medical services, exquisite expertise and noble medical ethics to help build the city into an international consumption hub with high-quality and distinctive medical services.

Official data shows that inbound passenger visits by foreigners to Guangzhou in 2025 exceeded 3.2 million, with foreign residents' demand for medical services growing rapidly.

Chen Bin, director of the Guangzhou Municipal Health Commission, said Guangzhou has introduced 12 innovative measures to support the development of international medical services. "The new innovative measures will focus on key areas such as building an international medical service brand, optimizing industrial spatial layout, constructing an international medical center, and fostering strengths in specialized medical disciplines and technologies," Chen said.

The innovative measures facilitate multisite practice in Guangzhou for foreign doctors and nurses as well as those from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, while supporting pilot medical institutions in setting up specially appointed positions to recruit high-end international medical talent and attract high-level professionals through multiple channels.

Chen said medical institutions and hospitals are urged to further promote traditional Chinese medicine and build high-level acupuncture diagnosis and treatment centers to strengthen international services, offering foreign patients featured TCM medical services.

According to Wang Zilian, vice-president of the First Affiliated Hospital of Sun Yat-sen University, the measures provide a strong guarantee for the delivery of efficient and high-quality international medical services.

"Based on their existing international medical centers, hospitals will continue to improve their independent diagnosis and treatment environments and multilingual service systems, enhance multidisciplinary diagnosis and treatment capabilities, and further provide high-quality medical services to patients from Hong Kong, Macao, Southeast Asia, and countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative," Wang said.

Wu Chen, general manager of the Guangzhou International Medical Tourism Service Center, said the center not only serves medical tourism functions but also focuses on integrating Guangzhou's high-quality medical resources, distinctive cultural tourism assets and cross-border commercial insurance to support the city's development into an international consumption hub and cultivate new drivers of health consumption.

"The center will focus on strengthening comprehensive service capabilities, promoting integrated industrial development, and expanding global cooperation networks to create a product system that deeply integrates medical care, wellness and tourism in the following months," she said.

Meanwhile, the center will also collaborate with major local hospitals to provide overseas patients with one-stop international medical services covering visa assistance, remote pre-consultation, multilingual translation, travel and accommodation arrangements, as well as postoperative follow-up, Wu added.



Dance across cultures

Performers of a song and dance ensemble from Kazakhstan entertain spectators during a flash mob event for the 36th Macao Arts Festival in the Three Lamps district of the Macao Special Administrative Region on Thursday. The festival is organized by the Cultural Affairs Bureau of Macao.
CHEONG KAM KA / XINHUA

Briefly

Central environmental inspections launched

Teams involved in China's high-profile central environmental inspection campaign will conduct monthlong inspections in seven provincial-level regions, the Ministry of Ecology and Environment said in a news release on Thursday. Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang and Guangdong provinces, the Guangxi Zhuang, Xizang and Xinjiang Uygur autonomous regions, as well as the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, will be covered in the sixth batch of the third round of inspections, it said. The inspections were launched following approval by the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council, in accordance with regulations on central ecological and environmental protection inspections. Inspection teams are typically led by ministerial-level officials and report to a central leading group headed by a vice-premier of the State Council, the country's Cabinet.

Ex-senior adviser sentenced for bribery

Zhou Xi'an, a former senior political adviser in Anhui province, was sentenced to death with a two-year reprieve for taking bribes worth about 134 million yuan ($19.6 million), a court in Fujian province said on Thursday. The Zhangzhou Intermediate People's Court also imposed a lifelong deprivation of political rights and confiscation of all personal assets against Zhou, who previously served as vice-chairman of the Anhui Provincial Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. The court ordered that Zhou's illegal gains and related proceeds already seized be turned over to the State treasury, while the remainder will continue to be recovered. According to the ruling, between 2012 and 2025, Zhou used his previous positions, including mayor of Bazhong in Sichuan province, Party chief of Ziyang in Sichuan, and vice-governor of Anhui, as well as the influence derived from his authority and status, to help certain organizations and individuals in matters such as project contracting, fund allocation and land-use approvals. In return, he illegally accepted money and valuables totaling more than 134 million yuan.

CHINA DAILY

Ocean warming threatens penguins in Antarctica

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

Climate change and shifts in the food web are continuing to threaten the survival and reproduction of penguins in Antarctica, a Chinese expert has warned.

"The loss of sea ice has imposed breeding pressure on emperor penguins, which rely on stable sea ice for chick rearing," said Liang Qi, an associate professor at the School of Geospatial Engineering and Science at Sun Yat-sen University.

"Meanwhile, as ocean temperatures rise, Antarctic krill — their key prey — have shifted their distribution toward higher latitudes. This has lengthened the foraging distance of penguins to some extent, increasing their energy expenditure during the breeding season," Liang said.

Liang recently carried out research and multiple unmanned aerial vehicle, or UAV, survey flights in the penguin breeding area on Adelie Island in Antarctica as part of a Chinese Antarctic expedition.

The expedition team returned to Shanghai aboard the polar icebreaker *Xuelong*, or Snow Dragon, in April following a 160-day voyage to Antarctica. It was part of the country's 42nd Antarctic expedition to the world's southernmost region and achieved fruitful scientific research outcomes.

"Previously, we mainly monitored penguin populations using remote-sensing satellite data. Now remote sensing methods face several limitations in penguin identification, fine characterization of habitats and population inversion due to poor algorithm generalization and a lack of ground observation validation samples," Liang said.

In addition to measuring individual penguins' body size, Liang also accurately identified and mapped penguin nests. "In the past, we mainly relied on satellite monitoring, but satellites operate at a long distance and are easily affected by weather conditions. The application of drones has provided solutions to these problems," he said.

The number of penguin nests, or breeding pairs, is a key indicator for assessing the current population size in penguin habitats and predicting future population dynamics. It is also one of the core parameters recorded in on-site Antarctic penguin surveys.

Under normal circumstances, expedition team members must endure harsh Antarctic conditions and make repeated trips to penguin breeding colonies to obtain data through manual counting.

By using drone photography, however, Liang achieved accurate identification and counting of penguin nests in the colonies.

During the expedition, Liang completed more than 60 drone flights and obtained various observational data on penguin habitats, including visible light, multispectral, thermal infrared and Light Detection and Ranging, or LiDAR, data.

In addition, he conducted ground-based Simultaneous Localization and Mapping, or SLAM, scanning to measure penguin morphology. Penguins are widely distributed across the Fildes Peninsula, Liang said.

To implement the integrated space-air-ground observation system, Liang sometimes had to hike 10 kilometers through the field to reach penguin habitats for spectral measurements and manual population counts, with a total round trip spanning 20 km.

"The survey conducts penguin habitat observations simultaneously on satellite, unmanned aerial vehicle and ground-based platforms, enabling more refined satellite remote-sensing observations of Antarctic penguin populations," he said.

"This survey will provide important support for the subsequent establishment of a large-scale spatial and long-term time-series monitoring network for Antarctic penguin population dynamics," he added.

Liang said he can currently only reveal some preliminary data because final data analysis is still underway and requires more time.

According to Liang, Antarctica has four of the most common penguin species — emperor penguins, Adelie penguins, chinstrap penguins and gentoo penguins — with a total population of roughly tens of millions.

Liang said protecting penguins requires an urgent, two-pronged approach of monitoring and emission reduction.

A large-scale, high-frequency monitoring network should be established using multisource satellites and unmanned aerial vehicles to gain a deeper understanding of changes in penguin population distribution and habitat conditions, he said.

Meanwhile, slowing the rate of ocean warming and maintaining the physical stability of the Antarctic sea ice and fast-ice system would buy valuable time for the restoration of penguin breeding habitats, he added.

Hu Xiaotong contributed to this story.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:29 PM

CHINA

Aerial firefighter



Visitors view a 2-metric-ton electric vertical takeoff and landing, or eVTOL, aircraft designed for firefighting and rescue at the 5th Yangtze River Delta International Emergency Disaster Reduction and Rescue Expo in Shanghai on Thursday. The event focuses on building grassroots emergency capacity, promoting a safety culture, coordinating responses, and more. YIN LIQIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Novel mass printing material developed

By LI MENGHAN
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

Have you ever wondered how a peacock's tail shimmers with brilliant blues and greens, or why a butterfly's wings flash colors that never fade? These are not paints or dyes, but "structural colors" — hues created entirely by microscopic structures that trap, bend and scatter light.

For years, scientists have tried to copy nature's approach to create vivid, long-lasting colors for uses that range from anti-counterfeiting labels to flexible displays. Now, researchers have taken a major step forward by developing a new type of optical metamaterial that gives them more precise control over microscopic structures, along with a production method that is as fast and inexpensive as printing a newspaper. Their findings were published in the journal Nature on April 22.

An optical metamaterial is a man-made material engineered to control light in unusual ways. Instead of relying on the natural properties of ordinary materials, scientists build tiny patterns smaller than a human hair that can bend, reflect and guide light with extreme precision.

One important use is structural coloration, whereby microscopic patterns create colors without pigments or dyes. The technology could lead to fade-resistant paints, secure holograms and energy-efficient displays. Scientists also see optical metamaterials as an important technology for future advances in optics, communications, high-end manufacturing and defense.

However, most earlier studies focused on structures built at only one scale, limiting scientists' ability to control light. Manufacturing also depended on highly specialized, but slow and expensive equipment. As a result, producing a sample as small as a fingernail could take days, keeping the technology largely confined to laboratories.

Now, a research team from the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the National University of Singapore says it has overcome the long-standing challenge of balancing quality, customization and low cost.

The team designed a new multi-scale structure made of tiny dome-shaped surfaces combined with nanoscale crystal-like patterns. The researchers likened the design to a symphony orchestra, where different parts work together to control different properties of light. This gives scientists a multitude of ways to fine-tune how light behaves.

The researchers also developed a roll-to-roll nanoprinting system. It works much like newspaper printing: a flexible plastic sheet moves continuously through a high-precision printer that stamps nanoscale patterns onto the surface before rolling up as a finished product.

Using the method, the team expanded production from millimeter-sized test samples to sheets measuring meters wide — a thousandfold increase — without sacrificing quality.

Reviewers at Nature praised the breakthrough, saying the printing strategy is both novel and attractive.

Song Yanlin, the study's corresponding author and researcher at the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Institute of Chemistry, said the work combines materials science, optics and advanced manufacturing.

"Our roll-to-roll nanoprinting technology makes producing optical metamaterials as simple and efficient as printing a newspaper or a book," Song said. "It not only lowers costs and improves production efficiency, but also allows us to customize the optical properties of each metamaterial pixel on demand, opening new possibilities for micro-nano optics research."

Li Kaixuan, the study's first author and a doctoral graduate of the Institute of Chemistry, said a metamaterial film measuring 1 meter long and 30 centimeters wide can be printed in just 10 minutes. The process requires only 1 milliliter of a special nanoparticle ink, costing no more than 10 yuan ($1.5) per ml.

Li also highlighted the technology's broad potential applications. These include highly sensitive biosensors that can strengthen optical signals from viruses, helping detect infections that are otherwise difficult to identify, as well as photonic chips for VR and AR devices that could improve data transmission efficiency.

Rice-fish co-culture system hikes yields, study finds

By ZHOU WENTING in Shanghai
zhouwenting@chinadaily.com.cn

In collaboration with scientists from 18 countries, a research team from Shanghai-based East China University of Science and Technology has confirmed the benefits of the ancient rice-fish co-culture farming method, offering a scientific pathway for ecological agriculture and food security.

Their study validated that the traditional practice not only boosts rice yields, but also controls pests and diseases through ecological regulation. Rice yields in rice-fish co-culture systems increased by an average of 12.5 percent compared with traditional rice monoculture, according to their global data analysis.

Notably, the presence of fish nearly doubled the number of invertebrate predators and parasitoids in the fields, while pests decreased by 24.1 percent, diseases by 38.8 percent and weeds by 45.7 percent.

"Such research results provide a scalable solution with high ecological and production benefits to address global challenges such as food security, pesticide reduction, agricultural non-point source pollution and biodiversity loss," said Wan Nianfeng, a lead scientist on the research team and a professor at the university's School of Pharmacy.

A paper on the research, conducted by Chinese researchers in collaboration with peers from countries including the United Kingdom, France, the United States, Switzerland and Spain, was published as a cover article in Current Biology, a Cell Press journal, on Monday.

The practice of integrating rice cultivation with fish farming dates back 2,000 years to the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220), with archaeological evidence supporting its historical use.

The rice-fish co-culture system in Qingtian county of Lishui city, Zhejiang province, was the first in China to be designated as a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in 2005.

The research team said it discovered how the rice-fish co-culture mechanism enhances production through pathway analysis. In the two-trophic-level relationship between rice and pests, the method directly suppresses harmful organisms to boost yields. In the three-trophic-level relationship among rice, pests and natural enemies, it increases the number of natural enemies to suppress pests, achieving indirect yield enhancement.

"Remarkably, this top-down control effect persists across organic and nonorganic systems and in both temperate and tropical regions, forming a clear ecological chain in which rice-fish co-culture promotes natural enemy populations, which suppress pests and ultimately enhance rice productivity," Wan said.

To further verify the global effect, the team conducted a four-year field experiment. The results showed that compared with rice monoculture areas, rice-fish co-culture areas had significantly fewer pests, while the number of predatory spiders increased.

The researchers also found that both the thousand-grain weight and overall yield of rice improved. Pathway analysis reconfirmed that rice-fish co-culture enhances natural enemy populations to suppress pests, achieving indirect yield enhancement.

Pot behavior experiments further clarified the mechanism. The research team observed that fish species such as crucian carp and red carp prefer feeding on pests like brown planthoppers, but do not prey on predatory spiders.

"It suggested that fish play the role of 'precision regulators' in rice fields, directly reducing pests while protecting and reinforcing the natural 'pest control army', thereby establishing an efficient cooperative network for pest control," Wan said.

New action plan bolsters family farms

Growers will be encouraged to develop modern, green agricultural businesses

By ZHAO YIMENG
zhaoyimeng@chinadaily.com.cn

China has unveiled a new action plan aimed at improving the quality and efficiency of modern agricultural business entities, encouraging smallholder farmers to develop green and efficient family farms while boosting rural incomes.

The plan, released this week by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, calls for stronger support for family farms and closer integration between smallholder farmers and modern agriculture.

Local authorities are encouraged to guide willing farmers toward developing moderately scaled, intensive, green and efficient family farms, the plan said.

China has been promoting new agricultural operators such as family farms, cooperatives and agricultural service providers to improve productivity and advance modern agriculture, according to central documents related to agriculture and rural affairs.

Local governments will adopt differentiated support measures for family farms at different stages of development, while encouraging farms to determine appropriate operating scales based on land conditions, industrial characteristics and local agricultural services, the plan said.

The ministry also pledged to improve management of a national registry for family farms and encourage qualified operators to formally register as business entities.

A digital service system will be promoted to allow farms to display information about their operations and products to consumers while connecting them with supply-chain companies and financial institutions.

Authorities also plan to broaden the platform's functions by integrating logistics, weather alerts and product traceability services, according to the plan.

To improve agricultural productivity, the ministry said it would expand socialized agricultural services, particularly in grain and major agricultural product production, with a focus on supporting smallholder farmers and addressing weak links in agricultural production.

China also plans to strengthen digital management systems for agricultural operators and improve monitoring of grain- and oil-producing family farms and cooperatives that receive government financial support.

The plan highlighted the importance of technology and innovation, encouraging agricultural operators to work with universities, research institutes and enterprises to promote new crop varieties, technologies, equipment and production models.

It also supports the development of leisure agriculture, rural tourism and e-commerce. Agricultural operators are expected to establish regional and independent brands and improve cold-chain logistics, storage and processing capacity.

The ministry said it would support broader financing channels for agricultural operators, including the use of agricultural facilities and livestock as collateral for loans and leveraging the national agricultural credit guarantee system.

To strengthen income growth among small-scale farmers, authorities will encourage family farms and cooperatives to establish closer benefit-sharing mechanisms with rural households through land-use rights, employment opportunities and dividend distribution.

Local governments are expected to link policy support with the effectiveness of agricultural operators in increasing farmers' incomes, including the number of households assisted and the income growth achieved, according to the plan.



Farmers harvest rapeseed in the fields in Dazhou, Sichuan province, on Wednesday. DENG LIANGKUI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Gene therapy can address congenital deafness

By ZHOU WENTING in Shanghai
zhouwenting@chinadaily.com.cn

All congenital deafness patients who completed the effective 2.5-year follow-up in a nationwide multicenter clinical study experienced hearing restoration to the level of understanding everyday conversations after receiving a gene therapy.

Among them, 57 percent were able to recognize the sound of pages turning in a quiet library, and 43 percent could hear whispers.

Led by the Shanghai-based Eye and ENT Hospital of Fudan University, the clinical study involved 42 patients in the 9 months to 32 years age range. The gene therapy requires just a single injection.

Globally, it is the earliest, largest and longest-followed clinical study in the field of gene therapy for deafness, encompassing both the youngest and oldest patients reported worldwide.

A paper on the study, conducted jointly by eight hospitals across the country, was published on the website of the journal Nature on April 22.

Experts said that among the 26 million congenital deafness sufferers worldwide, the DFNB9 type caused by the OTOF gene mutation is particularly severe, often resulting in profound bilateral hearing loss from birth. The condition significantly affects language and cognitive development.

The team, led by Shu Yilai at the Shanghai hospital, has long focused on gene therapy for deafness and developed a safe and effective OTOF gene therapy system, pioneering the first clinical trial in 2022.

Published in journals including The Lancet in 2024, their work has been praised by international peers, who say it could open a new era for treating hearing impairment and other diseases through gene therapy.

The multicenter clinical research published this time aimed to reveal long-term patterns of improvement in patients' hearing and speech and identify key factors influencing treatment efficacy.

The research found that younger patients, particularly those aged 5 months to 3 years, showed more significant improvements than adults. Additionally, patients who exhibited responses in Distortion Product Otoacoustic Emissions, or DPOAE, before treatment tended to have better hearing recovery.

The therapy also proved effective for adult patients, researchers said. Among the three trial participants over 20 years old, two showed marked hearing improvement.

Zhang Wenxi was 32 when she underwent the treatment in 2024. She had congenital profound deafness and received a cochlear implant at age 6.

"On the second morning after receiving the gene therapy, it was the first time in my life that I heard the sound of running water from a faucet," she said, adding that her hearing improved from being able to detect sounds at 100 decibels before treatment to about 55 decibels now.

"The sounds I had never heard before opened the door to a new world for me. It is truly an incredible journey of rebirth," said Zhang, a mother of a 4-year-old child.

She added that the natural sounds she now hears are very different from those perceived through the cochlear implant, particularly in distinguishing sounds in noisy environments and locating their source.

Shu, the lead scientist of the research and a co-corresponding author of the paper, said that as patients' hearing improves, their speech abilities also improve.

"In particular, their enhanced ability to recognize speech in noisy and complex auditory environments will allow them to better integrate into everyday social, educational and life scenarios, and truly enjoy natural hearing," he said.

The study also included three international patients from the United States, South Korea and India, Shu said, adding that the work has attracted global attention, with patients across the world contacting the team via email.

Zhou Xingtao, president of the hospital, said the institution will continue to support efforts to develop and optimize the treatment and expand it to more types of deafness, as well as to fields such as vision and olfaction — the sense of smell.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:29 PM

CULTURE



The artist behind the author

Prominent writer returns to painting and presents new exhibition depicting scenes from youth and memory across many years of work, **Lin Qi** reports.

When Yung Liu, widely known as Liu Yong, talks about observing begonias, he doesn't just describe them. He performs them. He extends his forearms, bends his wrists, and lets his body sway, tracing the arc of branches and the quiet tension of leaves unfurling. The gesture is instinctive, almost childlike. His eyes light up as he drifts into memory — Taipei night markets alive with open-air opera, food stalls steaming under dim bulbs, and the hum of a city that shaped him. Then, unexpectedly, his voice falters. He recalls fishing trips with his father, and emotion breaks through.

At 77, Liu is not discussing his literary career — the one that made him a household name across Chinese-speaking communities.

Instead, he is revealing a parallel life that has long run beneath the surface: painting. Now, that side of him has taken center stage. At the National Museum of China in Beijing, Liu presents *Poetic Years: Dreams Flow into Paintings*, an exhibition of 89 works in traditional Chinese ink styles, on display through June 8. The show charts decades of exploration — from flower-and-bird compositions and tranquil moonlit scenes to lively reinterpretations of urban life reminiscent of the 12th-century classic *Qingming Shanghe Tu* (Along the River During the Qingming Festival), but filtered through a modern sensibility.

The exhibition also marks a personal return. More than 30 years ago, Liu frequented the same institution — then known as the National Museum of Chinese History — gathering material as a television scriptwriter exploring Chinese civilization.

"I visited many times, for there were so many artifacts of great importance here," he says, adding that the "serendipity" and "decades of hard work" have brought him back, so that he can rekindle his link with the national museum and, this time, with his own art.

Liu's reputation as a writer is formidable. Since the 1970s, he has produced best-selling essays, fables and art theories, often drawing on everyday life to distill reflections on human nature, resilience, and time.

"His prose is known for its philosophical clarity, wit and understated humor, qualities that also permeate his paintings," says Huang Xiaojiao, the exhibition's curator at the National Museum of China.

For Liu, the connection is inseparable. "These paintings are my heart and soul," he says. "When I look at them, I feel renewed."

He is keen, however, to correct a common assumption: writing may be what most people know him for, but painting came first.

"I want people to see the whole of my world," he explains. "Writing is familiar to readers. But painting — that's my true profession."

That claim is not rhetorical. Liu showed early promise as a painter in his teens. He studied under Hu Nianzu (1927-2019), a respected figure in the mountain-and-water style of classical Chinese painting who hailed from Hunan province. And he won prizes in school art competitions.

His technical foundation was solid from the start. One of the earliest works in the exhibition — a 3.5-meter handscroll of historical figures completed in 1964 when he was just 15 — demonstrates both discipline and ambition.

Another early piece, created in 1966, captures cascading mountain springs shrouded in mist. It was inspired by a grueling winter hike. "It rained heavily. The paths were muddy and dangerous," Liu recalls. "I came home soaked. But instead of resting, I painted it and finished in about an hour.

"When I see it now, I remember that feeling — the energy and enthusiasm of a 17-year-old."

Liu went on to study fine arts at Taiwan Normal University, graduating in 1972 before taking a position as a high school art teacher.

Throughout the 1970s, he exhibited and wrote about Chinese painting in Taiwan, as well as cities in Europe and the United States.

Even as his literary career gained prominence, he never abandoned painting. Instead, the two practices evolved in parallel — each informing the other.

While his artistic influences are rooted in the Song Dynasty (960-1279), widely considered the pinnacle of Chinese art, Liu has never been content with imitation. Living and working in the West exposed him to new ideas, prompting him to experiment with unconventional techniques.



Top: Veteran artist Yung Liu (center) at the exhibition opening, noting that nature has long nourished his landscape paintings. **Above:** Liu being interviewed in front of his work *Night Hunt*. PHOTOS BY JIANG DONG / CHINA DAILY







Clockwise from above left: *Shujuan* (Volumes of Books), one of four paintings Liu has donated to the National Museum. *Celebrating the Lantern Festival at Longshan Temple.* A painting by Liu depicting night-blooming cactus. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

One such method involves spraying ink through a tube — a practice inspired by a childhood chore. As a boy, he helped his mother smooth wrinkled bedsheets by blowing water across the fabric. He also manipulates paper, repeatedly wrinkling and ironing it to create textured surfaces that interact unpredictably with ink.

These experimental approaches are evident in a series of large-scale works, including four paintings donated to the National Museum of China in 2025 that are now on show: *Chenxi* (Morning Glow), *Shuiyue* (Moon on Water), *Shujuan* (Volumes of Books), and *Jiangshan* (The Land).

Each vertical scroll rises more than 3.6 meters, echoing classical landscape traditions while subtly dismantling them. Details are pared down. Colors recede. What remains are distilled forms — mountain silhouettes, luminous moons, flowing lines — rendered through delicate contrasts of light and shadow. The effect is meditative, almost austere, inviting viewers into a space of stillness and introspection.

Liu says painting "not only captures a view, or shows a space, but also carries the weight of time in passing". That idea finds poignant expression in a pair of works displayed side by side. Both depict a porcelain vessel of flowers under moonlight, yet each tells a slightly different story.

Come Back in the Morning with a Harp if You'd Like shows a lotus pot in an empty classical Chinese garden, with a hollowed rock mountain on one side and a stone table and stools on the other side. *Beautiful Moon, Light Breeze, Night-Blooming Cactus* shows a vigorous cactus in an empty room, with curtains on both sides.

Liu says neither painting includes human figures. Yet traces of human activity are everywhere — an open book, a partially unrolled scroll, a toppled wine bottle, and curtains swaying.

Liu often works in pairs like this, exploring variations on a theme. The approach reflects his broader philosophy: that art should create a space where viewers feel compelled to linger, a long-held core value of Chinese painting.

"I want to paint scenes that people can enter," he says, "places where they can rest — not just physically, but emotionally."

In recent years, Liu has turned increasingly toward studying classical masterpieces. After turning 70, he began copying iconic works such as *Zaochun Tu* (Early Spring) by Guo Xi and *Xishan Xinglyu Tu* (Travelers among Mountains and Streams) by Fan Kuan, both living in the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127). The process is rigorous and physical.

"I kneel on the floor and re-create each stroke," he says.

"One has to move forward boldly," Liu reflects, "but also look back and examine oneself."

Contact the writer at linqi@chinadaily.com.cn

What's on



Poetry of textiles

The Tsinghua University Art Museum is home to a rich collection of vintage textiles. Its ongoing exhibition, *Creating a Poetic Realm with Silk*, features a curated selection of embroidered and woven pieces from ancient times. Running through April 2027, the show celebrates the varied history of textiles from a fresh perspective, highlighting the craftsmanship behind intricate designs where colorful threads and fine fabrics form calligraphic characters and painterly compositions in classical styles.

The themes range from popular motifs of flowers, fruits and birds to moral teachings and social etiquette, as well as symbolic objects reflecting the spiritual pursuits of ancient scholars and wishes for longevity and prosperity. Together, these works reveal the cultural depth, vigorous vitality and timeless charm of traditional handicrafts.

9 am-5 pm, closed on Mondays. Tsinghua University, Haidian district, Beijing. 010-6278-1012.

Modern landscapes

The 20th century saw growing exchanges between Eastern and Western artistic traditions in China. Artists experimented with blending classical mountain-and-water (*shanshui*) aesthetics with oil painting techniques. *Beyond the Mundane*, now on view at the He Xiangning Art Museum in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, reflects the institution's long-standing focus on modern Chinese art. The exhibition traces how artists over the past century reimagined landscape painting, pushing stylistic boundaries while engaging with tradition.

On view through May 31, it brings together works by 20 artists, including



Xu Beihong (1895-1953) and Dai Ze (1922-2023). Despite the challenges they faced, these artists turned to China's mountains and rivers as sources of national spirit and identity, capturing them with expressive, dynamic brushwork.

9 am-5 pm, closed on Mondays. 9013 Shennan Dadao, Nanshan district, Shenzhen, Guangdong province. 0755-2660-4540.

Graduation show

Awakening in Colors, now open at the Art Museum of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, marks the launch of the academy's annual "graduation season". The program, featuring exhibitions and campus bazaars, has become a major event for both professionals and the public. The current exhibition showcases works by master's and doctoral students graduating next month, on view through May 14, followed by an undergraduate presentation.

Once limited to the art community, CAFA's graduation shows have in recent years drawn large public crowds, with visitors often waiting in line outside the museum, many traveling from other cities. Guided tours for companies and cultural institutions are also organized, helping graduates connect with potential employers.

9:30 am-5:30 pm, closed on Mondays. 8 Huajiadi Nan Jie, Chaoyang district, Beijing. 010-6477-1575.



Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:29 PM

Brewing ideas into fashion

A new generation of designers blends heritage with fresh perspectives to reach wider audiences, **He Qi** reports.



The final stage of the New Wave Fashion Awards, launched by the Shanghai Fashion Designers Association, was held during Shanghai Fashion Week Autumn/Winter 2026. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY





Beneath the century-old red-brick arched windows of the former Gibb, Livingston & Co building at 100 Dianchi Road, the warm, mellow aroma of Fujian tea lingers in the air.

A century ago, this building was a key departure point for Chinese tea exports to the United Kingdom.

This March, designer Wang Fengchen transformed the building into Fengji Old Teahouse, a limited-time installation that bridges past and present. Inside, curated Fujian tea leaves from 2015 — the founding year of her eponymous label Feng Chen Wang — are displayed alongside the brand's landmark designs from the past decade.

For Wang, 2026 marks a pivotal moment. Ten years after establishing her brand in London, she returns with a clearer sense of direction and identity. As the first Chinese graduate to earn a master's degree in menswear from the Royal College of Art, she built her reputation through a distinctive deconstructed aesthetic that draws on Eastern cultural references while engaging global audiences. Her collections have appeared on the runways of Paris and New York, and her brand became the first Chinese designer label to enter the core retail zone of Galeries Lafayette in Paris.

For her brand's 10th anniversary, she chose to stage this landmark showcase in Shanghai with its first independent runway show in China.

"In the past, tea served as a cultural language connecting the world. Today, our design speaks as a language from the East to the world," Wang explains. "I set out from here a decade ago, and now I'm back. Shanghai is the root of my brand."

Her installation, which draws on the building's history of Sino-Western trade, is one of six curated creative spaces presented in the final stage of the inaugural New Wave Fashion Awards. Organized by the Shanghai Fashion Designers Association, the competition seeks to "identify creative directors for a new era".

Breaking from the traditional ready-to-wear-only judging model, it challenges six finalists to build full brand narrative spaces in Shanghai's key landmarks, testing their ability to turn design concepts into tangible experiences. Designers are required to coordinate resources, manage budgets and oversee every stage of execution, simulating the real-world responsibilities of a creative director.

As juror Cui Dan explains, the role today extends beyond design itself. "A creative director of the new era must not only convey a brand's worldview but also evoke public empathy through meticulous details."

If Wang's space is a narrative of heritage, brand motoguo's *We Eat Fear for Breakfast!* display at the Somekh Building is an emotional adventure — and among Angelo Flaccavento's top picks. Flaccavento, a renowned international fashion critic, traveled especially from Milan to serve as a core juror for the competition.

Centered on the metaphor of "devouring fear", the space by designers Keek Wen Han and Eng Khai Wai mixes surreal, playful installations to build a bold brand universe. It transforms anxiety into courage and delivers emotional healing, while showcasing the brand's iconic, unisex designs and 10-year creative ethos.

Founded in 2015, motoguo has gained international recognition as the first Southeast Asian brand shortlisted for the LVMH Prize. Known for its whimsical, gender-neutral designs, the brand has appeared on international runways and chosen Shanghai as its core development base. Over the past decade, the duo has navigated industry challenges and downturns, ultimately cultivating a loyal community in Shanghai.

"Shanghai is a place where people can pursue their dreams, and it has given us so much support," Keek says.

"A creative director must have a comprehensive brand worldview, and we hope to deliver emotional value and healing to people," Eng says. The duo received the Future Force Award, recognizing both their creative direction and sustained development.

Other finalists present equally distinct narratives through their installations. Gong Li's project for 8ON8 continues his long-standing exploration of "comfortable avant-garde", balancing experimentation with wearability. Angus Chiang marks the 10th anniversary of his brand with *PARC*, a playful, park-like environment featuring interactive elements and signature works.

Li Wen, who transitioned from architecture to fashion, brings a spatial perspective to her installation *Where Shadows Rest* for MAYALI. Her work treats clothing as "architecture for the human body".

Among the finalists, Chen Sifan stands out as the youngest participant. His *Keting-LivingRoom* space at Film Park on Jiashan Road brings design into a familiar, domestic setting, making it more accessible to a broader audience. His project earned the Public Impact Award. "Thank you to the competition for giving creators like us, without funding or a platform, a chance to speak out," he says.

"It's a very interesting competition," says Flaccavento. Over five days, he visited all six installations, experiencing the works within their intended contexts rather than through the conventional runway format.

"What I liked about this award is that we were not shown just clothes, but clothes in an environment that was built to express the vision of the designers." In his view, the competition's greatest vision is its accurate understanding of the core role of a modern creative director. "They're acknowledging the role of the creative director in contemporary fashion, and sourcing from local designers. It's a visionary idea."

Flaccavento also highlights the strength of Chinese designers in building communities: "The clientele is someone who shares your values and vision, and then buys your clothes — it's more organic." He adds that this value-driven, organic bond is the enduring lifeblood of the fashion industry.

"Fashion is a global language. Chinese fashion is part of a broader movement, reflecting local culture while contributing to global dialogue," Flaccavento points out. "While not all Chinese designers achieve international competitiveness, those who do are sophisticated, refined, and their way of working with local crafts and culture can be showcased in Paris."

The broader industry context reinforces this momentum. Since its establishment in 2003, Shanghai Fashion Week has supported nearly 1,000 independent Chinese designers. In the 2026 autumn/winter season, it showcased around 1,000 brands and hosted 92 debut shows, achieving an 18.7 percent increase in business transactions and record-high orders for designer labels. These figures point to both growth and increasing influence.

This competition is just the beginning, says Lyu Xiaolei, secretary-general of Shanghai Fashion Week Organizing Committee. She adds that the SFDA will keep launching systematic talent support, including a new designer competition with the social media platform Douyin, to offer full-chain help for Chinese creative talents.

"The new wave of Chinese design is just setting sail," Lyu says.

Contact the writer at heqi@chinadaily.com.cn

International opera collaborations strike power chord

By **ZHANG KUN**
zhangkun@chinadaily.com.cn





Left: Katharina Wagner, Richard Wagner's great-granddaughter and artistic director of the Bayreuth Festival, speaks about the new opera production of *Die Walkure* in Shanghai. **Right:** Scenes from the Shanghai Opera House production of *Turandot*, which was performed at Shangyin Opera House from April 24 to 26. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The recent premieres of two major opera productions in Shanghai have underscored audiences' growing enthusiasm for classic opera while highlighting the city's emergence as an international hub for opera creation and production.

From April 24 to 26, a new production of Richard Wagner's *Die Walkure* premiered at Shanghai Grand Theatre under the direction of Katharina Wagner, great-granddaughter of the composer and artistic director of the Bayreuth Festival, one of the world's most prestigious Wagner festivals.

The opera is the second installment of the Bayreuth in Shanghai Three-Year Opera Project, which will stage three major Wagner works — *Tristan and Isolde*, *Die Walkure* and *Tannhauser* — between 2025 and 2027.

Featuring a stage design inspired by video-game aesthetics, the production seeks to attract younger audiences by presenting the characters as players in *The Ring Game*. The physically demanding staging requires performers to climb structures as high as nine meters while maintaining vocal control throughout the five-hour opera.

Die Walkure, the second part of Wagner's monumental *Der Ring des Nibelungen* cycle, is conductor Xu Zhong's favorite Wagner opera.

"From the theatrical, musical and character perspectives, *Die Walkure* is my favorite as a conductor," says Xu, who also serves as artistic director of Shanghai Opera House. "The complex emotional dynamics among the characters provide immense space for collaboration between singers and orchestra."

According to Zhang Xiaoding, general manager of Shanghai Grand Theatre, the production signals a broader shift from being primarily a performance venue to becoming a center for opera creation and production.

The Bayreuth in Shanghai project was realized because the German festival is "optimistic about Shanghai", she says, "from the city's cultural temperament to the audience's familiarity with classical music, they believe the future opera market lies in China, in Shanghai".

At the same time, Shanghai Opera House staged three sold-out performances of Giacomo Puccini's *Turandot* at Shangyin Opera House to commemorate the centenary of the opera's premiere in Italy.

According to Zhang Qingxin, vice-president of Shanghai Opera House, even additional temporary seats sold out a week before opening night.

"I never expected this could happen with opera performances here," says Shi Yijie, president of Shanghai Opera House.

"It's just a coincidence that two big opera productions are staged in the city at the same time," he tells the media before the premiere. "I was told that both operas are sold out already. This is absolutely beyond expectations."

Such strong box-office performance not only confirms Shanghai audiences' passion for classic opera, but also reflects that high-quality coproductions between China and foreign countries are becoming an important driving force for the city's cultural vitality, he says.

The new *Turandot* retained the stage design created by Roberto Ando for the 2018 production and featured tenors and sopranos from China, Italy and Norway.

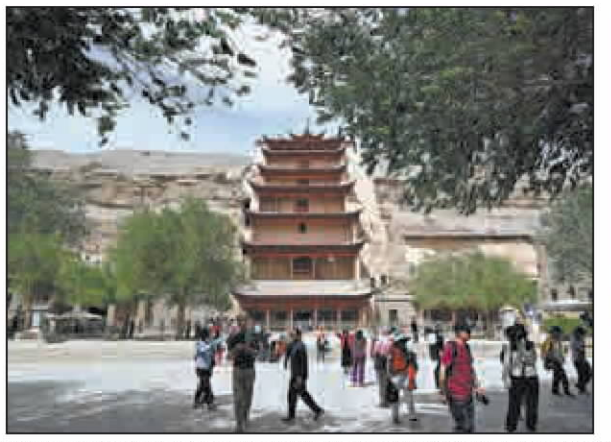
Director Marco Gandini describes the production as especially meaningful because the opera's story is set in China.

This is the fifth time Gandini has created a production of *Turandot*. "I brought together all the experience and knowledge I've gained over 40 years of opera production around the world," he says, praising the dynamic stage performance, passionate acting and depth of the interpretation.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:29 PM

LIFE


From left: Tourists enjoy spring blossoms near the Big Air ski slope in Shougang Park in Beijing. LI WENMING / FOR CHINA DAILY Visitors explore the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang, Gansu province, a classic example of "living heritage". ZHANG XIAOLIANG / XINHUA Exterior view of Shougang Park's No 3 Blast Furnace, which has been converted into a digital museum. CHEN ZHONGHAO / XINHUA

Keeping the fires burning

More than a decade after its furnaces fell silent, Beijing's Shougang Park is reigniting its industrial past through digital technology and exploring what it truly means for heritage to stay alive, **Yang Feiyue** reports.

Inside Shougang Park's No 3 Blast Furnace, a digital film named *Salute to Steel* is playing, projecting bright and roaring flames onto the furnace core, which has not burned for more than a decade.

In 2010, after more than 90 years of continuous operation, Shougang's steelmaking came to a halt. The sprawling industrial complex on the western edge of Beijing was relocated to neighboring Hebei province.

But people today are not leaving it idle. They are using artificial intelligence to reconstruct historical footage, projection mapping to turn the furnace walls into screens, and immersive surround sound to transform visitors from spectators into witnesses of a lost industrial age.

On April 15, three days before the International Day for Monuments and Sites, a group of heritage experts, retired steelworkers, and academics gathered at the RE Blast Furnace No 3 Digital Museum. The event, organized by the digital heritage committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites China, was timed to this year's global theme "Living Heritage".

Its purpose was to examine how digital technologies might support the active preservation and intergenerational transmission of industrial heritage — and to ask what it truly means for a heritage site to be "alive".

"Living heritage is not about the physical objects you can touch and measure. It is about the ongoing relationship between people and those objects," says Song Xinchao, chairman of ICOMOS China.

"Break that relationship, and the heritage dies, even if the building still stands, even if the furnace has not been torn down."

Over the course of its long history, China has witnessed many classic cases of living heritage — sites that never died because they were never abandoned by the people who used them.

Song urges relevant parties to draw inspiration from Dujiangyan in Southwest China's Sichuan province, an irrigation system built during the Warring States Period (475-221 BC) that tamed the Minjiang River without a dam. Its designer, Li Bing, used the natural landscape to divert water, remove sediment, and control flooding. More than 2,000 years later, Dujiangyan still waters the fields of the provincial capital Chengdu.

"It has never been a ruin or a museum piece," Song notes. "It has simply worked, continuously, for over two millennia. That is living heritage."

He also considers the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang, in Northwest China's Gansu province, a classic model. They are best known as a treasure house of Buddhist art — thousands of murals and sculptures carved into a cliff face along the ancient Silk Road.

But the grottoes are not only to be viewed from behind a rope, he elaborates.

Every year on the eighth day of the fourth month in the Chinese lunisolar calendar, local residents enter the caves to pray, a tradition dating back more than 1,000 years.

"The Dunhuang Academy, which manages the site, charges only a symbolic five-yuan (74 cents) admission on that day — not because it cannot charge more, but because the relationship between the caves and the surrounding community is itself a piece of heritage worth protecting," Song says.

The ritual keeps the caves alive in a way that climate control and security cameras never could, he adds.

In addition to war and the natural decay that threaten these heritages, Song warns that overcommercialization risks turning culture into a disposable product, and sealing heritage behind glass turns it into a museum specimen. Both approaches, he believes, can break the chain between people and place.

At Shougang Park, efforts have been underway to keep those heritage bonds alive. At the mid-April event, three retired employees donated personal items to root the place more deeply in its own history.



Retired Shougang employees donate personal memorabilia to the RE Blast Furnace No 3 Digital Museum in Beijing during a mid-April gathering. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Zhang Shijun, a retired Shougang worker, presents French newspapers from 1988 reporting on a 45-member Shougang delegation to France.

Zhang Shijun, in his 70s, walked up to the front and center of the themed day event, holding a few old French newspapers that he had kept for 38 years. He entered Shougang in 1980 after finishing metallurgical machinery and electrical engineering studies in college. In his younger days at work, he won just about every award a young employee could win.

"I can't document the past 100 years — I wasn't born yet," Zhang says with a smile. "But I can document 50 years."

The newspapers reported on a Shougang team that was sent to the northern French city of Calais in 1988 on a mission to dismantle an entire steel plant and ship the equipment back to China for reassembly. The timeline was pressing, and the 45 men of the team worked around the clock.

The coverage emphasized their exceptional efficiency, technical expertise, and strong work ethic, noting that they dismantled thousands of tons of equipment in months for immediate reassembly in China. The French report also framed Shougang's actions as evidence of China's impending economic rise.

By then, they could not have known that by 1994, Shougang would produce 8.24 million tons of steel annually, ranking it first in China, Zhang says with pride. Although the French newspapers are no longer in his hands, he says it gives him great comfort to see them enter the museum's collection.

Zhang's bond with Shougang is personal, forged over decades inside the plant. But today, Shougang's bond with its former employees has expanded to the public.

Shougang Park received over 13 million visitors in 2024, an 8 percent increase from the previous year.

But average spending per visitor was below the citywide average, and the park's service area is limited, considering daily visitors reached 150,000 during the 2022 Winter Olympics, according to Fu Fan, a professor at Beijing University of Civil Engineering and Architecture. Fu has conducted extensive research in the park area.

He notes that the official strategy blends culture, commerce, sports, tourism, technology, and science education, but says there are always ways to improve the visitor experience.

Fu suggests further tapping into the site's history, architecture, and nostalgia to develop a vessel — something that can be consumed, experienced, and shared — so the public and the industrial site can build a closer relationship.

Bu Xiting, a professor at the Communication University of China, offers a way forward, which he calls "cultural reproduction".

He points to the Tate Modern in London, a power plant built in the mid-20th century and now a world-famous museum that deliberately preserved its industrial space.

The lesson for Shougang, he says, is clear: "Instead of waiting 20 years for it to become waste, why not treat it today as an industrial design and an artistic statement?"

He emphasizes immersive experiences that invite visitors to step inside and take it all in.

"The space must wrap around them. The narrative must invite participation. The experience must engage all the senses: hearing, smell, touch, temperature," he says.

Besides envisioning Shougang as a new stage for cultural consumption, an incubator for technological innovation, and a laboratory for the digital economy, Bu says the key is to turn distant collective memory into personal experience — something that can be touched and felt.

At Shougang Park, the furnace no longer burns, but the event's participants concur that something else is burning now.

"The difficulty of preserving living heritage is that it depends on people — on oral transmission, on hand-me-down stories," Song says.

"But that is also its value. It is not a museum specimen. It is life still unfolding."

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

Charting the world: China renews a tradition of global study

By **WANG RU**
wangru1@chinadaily.com.cn




Left: The first eight books of the new edition of *Guide to the World Nations and International Organizations Surveys*, a major academic program studying countries and key global organizations. **Right:** A seminar organized by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences to promote the first set of books. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

More than a century ago, in 1843, *Haiguo Tuzhi*, or the *Illustrated Treatise on the Maritime Kingdoms*, a Chinese gazetteer mainly compiled by scholar-official Wei Yuan (1794-1857), was printed and published in present-day Yangzhou, Jiangsu province. The publication was one of the earliest works compiled by modern Chinese people that introduced foreign countries, covering topics related to their politics, economics, military affairs, history, geography and culture.

The collection was so important because it broke the ideological shackles of the isolationism of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), allowing the Chinese of that era to open their eyes to the world through this book.

Wei's work laid the foundation for China's understanding of the world. Building on that spirit of openness, later scholars have continued to expand and deepen such research, culminating in the new edition of the *Guide to the World Nations and International Organizations Surveys*.

This is an academic program that aims to conduct systematic studies of the humanities and history, political economy, social governance, security and diplomacy of sovereign states around the world, as well as the historical evolution, institutional development and international influence of major organizations.

The first batch of eight books, as the first phase of the program, has now been published, said the organizers of a seminar in Beijing on April 20. The new edition is based on an earlier version launched by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in the 1990s, covering 174 countries and 42 international organizations. The new edition expands this to 196 sovereign states and 60 major international organizations.

"The program is a large-scale, multivolume academic book series with a long history, grand scope, and distinctive representativeness in the fields of area and regional studies, both within the CASS and across China as a whole," says Yao Zhizhong, head of the bureau of international cooperation at the academy.

Zhao Rui, deputy director of the academy, says the new edition was written to meet the needs of the new era. "As we enter this new age, the world is undergoing unprecedented and accelerating transformations, the likes of which have not been seen in a century. Therefore, we must seek a more comprehensive, multidimensional, and in-depth understanding of the world to better serve the cause of building a community with a shared future for humanity."

Currently, 66 projects under the framework have been launched, involving invited experts from across China. The first batch of eight books includes volumes introducing the United States, Japan, Indonesia, Nigeria, the Czech Republic, Fiji, the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Zhao Chuandong, deputy director of the National Office for Philosophy and Social Sciences, says the new edition, while being informative and readable, aims to place greater emphasis on the academic nature and research value of the collection.

"Efforts should be made to achieve a balance between academic rigor and general readability," he says.

Liu Chenyang, head of the project to study the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, says that on the basis of a true, systematic and comprehensive introduction of APEC's progress and influence, their project will conduct an in-depth analysis of the role the organization can play in promoting cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region and global governance in the new era.

"APEC brings together major political and economic powers from around the world. Its 21 member economies together account for half of global economic and trade volume. Not only does APEC play a primary role in regional cooperation in the Asia-Pacific, but its influence in the global governance system is also steadily increasing," he says.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:29 PM

AMERICA FOCUS



Visitors check a BYD Seagull electric vehicle on display at the Beijing International Automotive Exhibition, or Auto China, in Beijing on April 26. XIAOYU YIN / REUTERS

Auto giants plug into China's battery power

Carmakers tap nation's cell chemistry, manufacturing scale and engineering talent

By MAY ZHOU in Houston, Texas
mayzhou@chinadailyusa.com

Tesla has recently added Sunwoda Electronic as its fifth global power battery supplier, according to a report by 36kr, a Chinese technology and new economy platform.

Sunwoda manufactures third-generation lithium iron phosphate (LFP) cells known for fast charging speed, and has begun shipping them to Tesla's Shanghai Gigafactory, according to the report. Those cells are going into Tesla cars built in Shanghai for export.

Tesla has a long-running relationship with China's CATL (Contemporary Amperex Technology Company), a global leader in renewable energy technology and the world's largest manufacturer of LFP and energy storage. It also sources LFP cells from BYD —including roughly 20 percent of the cells for its Shanghai Megafactory.

In September, Tesla signed a deal with China's EVE Energy to supply energy-storage cells for its European subsidiary from 2026 to 2030.

Industrial analyst Fred Lambert from Electrek said that by adding Sunwoda, "Tesla is prioritizing cost leverage over vertical integration" — the opposite of what CEO Elon Musk envisioned in 2020.

But Lambert considered Tesla's move "the right call" because Chinese LFP suppliers have been so efficient that it makes it "unnecessary" for Telsa to engineer its own.

Tesla is widely recognized as the largest single non-Chinese customer of the Chinese battery industry.

From multibillion-dollar joint ventures in Spain, Germany and Hungary to technology-licensing deals reshaping production in Michigan, the world's largest legacy automakers are increasingly dependent on Chinese cell chemistry, manufacturing scale and engineering talent.

They are racing to license, co-develop and source from Chinese battery champions — a realignment of the EV supply chain that puts Chinese chemistry, manufacturing know-how and capital at the center of the global EV transition.

European automakers have enjoyed the densest concentration of Chinese battery partnership outside Asia.

Global automotive group Stellantis formed a 50-50 joint venture with CATL to build a 4.1 billion euro ($4.8 billion) LFP gigafactory in Zaragoza, Spain. It is set to come online in late 2026 with capacity scaling toward 50 gigawatt-hours.

Stellantis makes American brands including Jeep, Ram, Dodge and Chrysler; European brands including Peugeot, Fiat, Citroën, Opel and Vauxhall; and luxury brands such as Maserati, Alfa Romeo, DS Automobiles, Lancia and Abarth.

Volkswagen has gone further by becoming the largest shareholder of Gotion High-Tech, a major Chinese battery manufacturer. It recently expanded its holding to more than 26 percent with a roughly $1 billion investment to fund a 2 GWh solid-state battery line targeted at next-generation VW and Audi vehicles.

In November, Gotion began mass production of the "unified cell" that VW selected as the standard format across most of its EV lineup. It is the cornerstone of Volkswagen's strategy to reduce battery costs by up to 50 percent across its entire vehicle lineup.

Thomas Schmall, chief technology officer of Volkswagen, speaking at Gotion's Unified Cell delivery ceremony in China last November, said that with the LFP unified cells now being produced in China and Germany, Volkswagen is "prepared to supply next-generation, highly competitive battery technologies across all Volkswagen brands".

"This makes Gotion a cornerstone of our global 'make-and-buy' battery strategy," he said.

A separate joint venture with Slovakia-based InoBat, in which Gotion owns 25 percent, is building a 20 GWh European plant scheduled to open in 2026.

BMW's largest cell partner since 2018 has been CATL. It has pivoted to all-electric models with its launch of Neue Klasse from 2025, and relies heavily on three Chinese manufacturers — SVOLT, CATL and EVE Energy — for battery supply.

According to industrial reports, the three Chinese battery companies have been building plants in Germany and Hungary to exclusively supply its next-generation cells in cylindrical 46 millimeter format that was designed by BMW.

It's estimated that BMW's Chinese cell content will exceed 60 percent of its global battery volume by 2027 when SVOLT, CATL and EVE are all fully ramped.

> "Combining our strengths allows us to develop products that set new standards globally."
>
> **Oliver Zipse,** chairman of the board of management of BMW AG

Oliver Zipse, chairman of the board of management of BMW AG, told Xinhua News Agency in September at the International Motor Show Germany in Munich that China's innovation is crucial for BMW's global strategy.

"Currently, the biggest innovations we see come out of China. Combining our strengths allows us to develop products that set new standards globally," Zipse said. "We have companies like CATL or EVE where we develop, blend and manufacture cells for our vehicles in China, but also outside of China."

In February, BMW and CATL signed an agreement to jointly develop and pilot the EU's Battery Passport — a digital traceability framework that will be required for European battery sales under the EU Battery Regulation from 2027 onward.

This is significant because it's an infrastructure-grade collaboration that goes beyond cell supply into shared compliance and sustainability tooling, industrial experts pointed out.

Another German automaker, Mercedes, formed a relationship with China's EV battery industry by acquiring an equity stake in China's Farasis Energy, which supplies batteries for Mercedes' flagship electric models. It also gets battery supplies from CATL's factory in Hungary.

In the US, Mercedes builds its EVs using cells from Envision AESC, a Chinese-owned battery maker.

In Asia, major automaker Toyota has a standing agreement with BYD to jointly develop battery-electric vehicles leveraging BYD's Blade Battery technology. Their partnership has produced China-market BEVs and is informing Toyota's broader LFP and solid-state roadmap.

It's another story in the US, where automakers are facing political pressure when it comes to using China's battery technology. That has led to far fewer US battery projects involving Chinese technology, compared to Europe.

In early 2023, Ford announced plans to build a $3.5 billion EV battery factory in Marshall, Michigan by licensing CATL's battery technology.

The deal immediately met challenges from US politicians who said that the deal could make an American company reliant on a Chinese company with links to the Chinese military. In 2025, CATL was listed as a Chinese military company by the US Department of Defense.

The battery factory, known as BlueOval Battery Park Michigan, also faced legal challenges from a group of local residents who argued against the project over issues of environment, rural identity, public participation in decision-making and national security.

Ford later scaled back the project and reduced its production capacity from 35 GWh to 20 GWh. Consequently, jobs were reduced to 1,700 from the planned 2,500.

Ford executives have repeatedly defended the project as the only viable path to building affordable LFP cells in the US at scale.

Lisa Drake, former VP at Ford and now president of Ford Energy, defended Ford's BlueOval Battery Park Michigan on various occasions.

She told Axios last June that "it probably would have taken us a decade to catch up and have LFP technology on our own with our own R&D."

"It's hard to innovate something when you've never seen it with your own eyes. That's why we need to bring it here," she said. "I'm convinced this is the right thing to do for the United States."

In December, Drake confirmed that Ford is widening the CATL relationship beyond automotive cells — Ford will use CATL-licensed LFP technology to manufacture stationary energy storage batteries at its Kentucky BlueOval SK facility.

"We have a licensing agreement, but we feel it's better to build these batteries in the United States with American workers, with our own Ford workers, and understand the IP, than import them like they're being done today," Ford CEO Jim Farley recently told Bloomberg. "The best way to compete with China is to get close to the IP and then run the plants at Ford."

In August, General Motors confirmed it will import CATL LFP cells to power the second-generation Chevrolet Bolt, which begins production at GM's Fairfax, Kansas plant in late 2025 and arrives in dealerships in 2026 at roughly $30,000.

GM said this deal was a stopgap before American production of LFP batteries can pick up the pace and replace the Chinese imports.

Representative John Moolenaar from Michigan publicly attacked the deal, calling GM's decision "disappointing to not only its customers and employees, but also to the American people."

In January, GM said its Fairfax plant will be transitioned to make other vehicles in mid to late 2027. The Bolt will be a limited-run model, and its production will end once the Fairfax facility transition is complete.

The US lost more than $34 billion in clean energy investment in 2025, of which $21 billion came from the EV battery sector, according to an analysis by E2, a US policy advocacy group of business leaders, investors and professionals.

While US politicians are finding ways to restrict China's battery technology to be employed by US automakers, the recent 2026 Beijing Auto Show revealed that China's EV battery technology has taken another big step forward.

Industrial experts attending the show said that a dozen battery manufacturers participated the event with massive booths — some larger than automakers — indicating the importance and central role of batteries in EV production.

CATL revealed six new battery technologies, and BYD unveiled Blade Battery 2.0 with a 625-mile (1,000 kilometer) range. They, along with EVE Energy, revealed new EV batteries that can be fully charged in five to 10 minutes.

BMW chair Zipse was at the Beijing Auto Show. He said in an TV interview that the auto show was "innovative" and "future oriented".

Zipse told Reuters in February that ignoring China, the world's top auto market, would put at risk future economic success, and cooperation with Beijing was fundamental.

"Those who close their minds to China's enormous market and innovation potential are missing out on great opportunities for global growth and economic success," he was quoted as saying.

The Iran war boosts Brazil's oil exports to China

By HÉLIO ROCHA
in Juiz de Fora, Brazil

Brazil's oil exports to China doubled in the first quarter as a result of the Iran war, according to federal government data compiled by the Brazil-China Business Council.

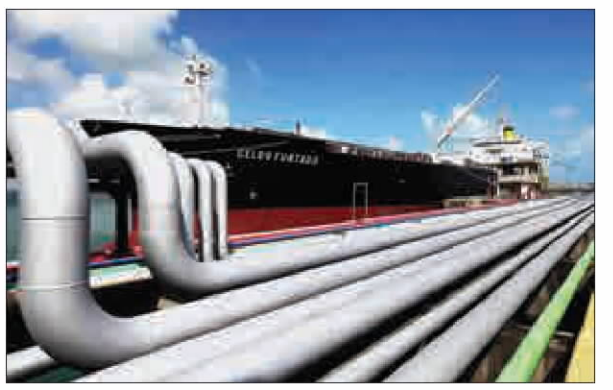
Oil export volume in the first three months totaled $7.2 billion, compared with $3.7 billion in the same period of 2025, an increase of 94.6 percent. In all, 16 million metric tons were shipped, a growth of 122 percent from the previous year.

The main reason, cited by producers and geopolitical experts, is the ease of shipping Brazilian oil compared with oil leaving the Persian Gulf. The war in the Middle East led Iran to close the Strait of Hormuz, through which most oil from Arab countries passes. Iran's war strategy appears to have offset the distance Brazilian oil must travel to reach China.

Marcio Felix, president of the Brazilian Association of Independent Oil Producers, told China Daily the sector was caught off guard.

"It's important to note that recent geopolitical events have indeed generated volatility and demand spikes in the international oil market," Felix said. "For independent producers in Brazil, the ability to respond to these moves is limited in the short term, since oil production is not easily adjustable on short notice, especially in mature assets."

Felix said, however, that "companies have sought to maximize operational efficiency, reduce unscheduled downtime and optimize their assets to capture market opportunities whenever possible" to cope with the unexpected increase in demand.



Oil tanker *Celso Furtado* destined for China is being loaded with oil off the Brazilian coast. TRANSPETRO / FOR CHINA DAILY

"The sector has acted with caution and planning. Facing a more uncertain international scenario, independent producers stress the importance of regulatory predictability and institutional stability, essential factors to enable medium and long-term investments."

Other sectors also grew in the wake of the Iran war, which indirectly affects the United States and the European Union. Beef sales totaled $1.3 billion, up 33.8 percent, while in the mining sector, iron alloys more than doubled in value to $478 billion, with niobium up 63 percent and nickel up 29 percent.

Felix explained that Brazil is reliable suppliers of raw materials and industrial goods to the world.

Brazil's Ministry of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade said in a statement: "China is Brazil's top trading partner. In 2025, exports reached $100 billion, and total trade flow reached $171 billion. Seasonality is a common factor in foreign trade for various products and destinations, but the trade level with China, especially exports, has remained high over the last 20 years, at a steady growth rate. Moreover, since 2013, China has been the top buyer of Brazilian oil."

Geopolitical analyst Marco Fernandes, a member of the BRICS Civil Council — the economic group bringing together the five emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa — argued that Brazil's oil exports also exposed some weaknesses in Brazil's oil industry.

"Brazil benefits from higher oil export values," Fernandes said. "Given that the price per barrel has doubled from December 2025 levels, Brazil could set an export record this year, especially if the war drags on. However, this situation also exposes a Brazilian weakness: the country's insufficient oil refining capacity."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:31 PM

Scarred forever
40 years after Chernobyl, safety questions remain
GLOBAL LENS, PAGE 4



Once ailing, Greek port now a major hub
BUSINESS, PAGE 9



Grit and glory
Table tennis teams defend world titles despite many challenges
SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中國日報 TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2026

Special delivery



A Long March 7 rocket carrying the cargo spacecraft Tianzhou 10 blasts off from Wenchang Space Launch Center in South China's Hainan province on Monday. Tianzhou 10 is carrying supplies and propellants to China's Tiangong space station. The cargo craft successfully docked with the space station later on Monday. YANG ZHIYUAN / FOR CHINA DAILY **See story, page 3**

Trade dialogue key to global stability and growth

By ZHONG NAN
zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

A new round of China-US economic and trade talks is vital to reducing business uncertainties and improving global economic confidence amid persistent geopolitical and trade challenges, experts and business executives said on Monday.

According to information released by the Ministry of Commerce, Vice-Premier He Lifeng, who is also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, will lead a delegation to hold economic and trade consultations with the United States in the Republic of Korea on Tuesday and Wednesday.

As the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced on Monday that US President Donald Trump will pay a state visit to China from Wednesday to Friday, market watchers said the high-level interactions in the ROK are expected to further stabilize bilateral economic ties and keep the channels of effective communication open.

According to the Ministry of Commerce, the two sides will be guided by the important consensus reached between the two heads of state at their meeting in Busan and during previous calls, and will hold consultations on economic and trade issues of mutual concern.

Experts said the consultations between the world's largest and second-largest economies are likely to focus on trade, technology and supply chain concerns amid heightened global tensions.

Zhang Yilun, a research associate at the Washington-based Institute for China-America Studies, said the talks might help to create a smoother atmosphere ahead of the leaders' meeting in Beijing.

Raj Subramaniam, chairman of the US-China Business Council, said that direct and sustained dialogue between the US and China is critical for addressing complex economic challenges and advancing long-term stability and growth.

Zhao Minghao, a professor and deputy director of Fudan University's Center for American Studies, said the US leader's visit to China will provide an important opportunity for both sides to explore channels of engagement.

Zhao said that these interactions not only contribute to greater stability in the China-US relationship, but also improve expectations for restoring efficiency and predictability across global industrial and supply chains, underscoring that dialogue remains essential for managing differences and supporting practical cooperation.

Edgard Kagan, senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington and former US ambassador to Malaysia, said that Washington's priorities include securing expanded Chinese rare earth supplies and establishing a framework for future bilateral discussions on artificial intelligence risks and safety, while Beijing seeks more stable ties and predictable US tariff policies.

Wu Xinbo, dean of Fudan University's Institute of International Studies, said the Middle East conflict has heightened concerns over global energy security, shipping routes and regional stability, and both China and the US have strong incentives to prevent further escalation.

"Any consensus reached by the two sides on maintaining regional stability could carry broader global implications," Wu said.

Against this backdrop, Mei Xinyu, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation in Beijing, said that stable China-US business ties would support international trade flows, ease supply chain disruptions and improve investor confidence amid intensifying strategic competition.

Echoing the sentiment, Ian Shih, president for China at US industrial automation company Rockwell Automation, said that China's vast market, complete industrial ecosystem and continued high-level opening-up provide strong support for companies seeking long-term growth and diversified application opportunities.

Lin Chunmei, president and general manager of Corning China, said the US industrial materials manufacturer will deepen localized manufacturing and innovation in sectors including display, optical communications and automobiles in China.

Head-of-state diplomacy to guide relations

Xi to hold in-depth exchanges with Trump during US president's state visit to China

By ZHAO JIA in Beijing
and **YIFAN XU** in Washington

Beijing said on Monday that it was ready to work with the United States to expand cooperation, manage differences and inject more stability and certainty into a turbulent and changing world as it confirmed that US President Donald Trump will pay a three-day state visit to China starting from Wednesday.

According to Foreign Ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun, President Xi Jinping will hold in-depth exchanges with Trump on issues concerning China-US relations as well as major issues related to world peace and development.

The visit will mark Trump's first trip to China during his second term in office and the first visit to China by a US president in nine years.

Noting that head-of-state diplomacy has played an irreplaceable strategic guiding role in China-US relations, Guo told a regular press briefing that China is willing to work with the US in the spirit of equality, respect and mutual benefit to expand cooperation, manage differences and provide more stability and certainty for a transforming and volatile world.

Since Trump was reelected in November 2024, the two heads of state have spoken five times over the phone and held one face-to-face meeting, maintaining regular communication as Beijing and Washington seek to keep bilateral relations on a stable track.

Speaking on a television program on Sunday, Trump said that he was looking forward to visiting China again and believed the upcoming trip would be "amazing", adding that his relationship with President Xi was "very good".

Su Xiaohui, deputy director of the Department for American Studies at the China Institute of International Studies, said head-of-state diplomacy has consistently served as the "anchor" of China-US relations.

Direct communication between the two leaders, she said, can help both sides better understand each other's intentions, avoid miscalculation, grasp the overall direction of bilateral ties and explore ways to build a stable relationship.

Diao Daming, a professor at Renmin University of China, said that given the complexity of China-US relations, the significance of Trump's visit lies not in resolving all issues at once, but in whether the two sides can use top-level communication to address each other's concerns and send more positive signals to the world.

Washington should view China objectively, develop a rational perception of China and work with Beijing in the same direction, rather than approach bilateral ties from a position of strength, he added.

He said that both sides should expand areas of cooperation, reduce the list of problems, and ensure that economic and trade ties continue to serve as a ballast and driver of bilateral relations rather than a source of friction and conflict.

Regarding the technological landscape, experts have pointed out a current "truce" that offers a window for structured dialogue.

Martin Chorzempa, a senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, said during an event last week that "the technology front looks relatively calm compared to past administrations".

Chorzempa suggested that high-level engagement could help cement this atmosphere, noting that many restrictive measures have been "walked back or paused" over the last year.

Sourabh Gupta, a senior fellow at the Institute for China-America Studies, told China Daily that extending the trade and technology truces established at earlier high-level meetings remains a top priority.

*See **Visit,** page 3*

Inside

• Editorial, **page 6**
• Views, **page 7**

STRAWBERRY ADDS FLAVOR TO SUMMER MUSIC SCENE

As festival season arrives, events across the country tap into the beat of China's creative pulse

By CHEN NAN
chennan@chinadaily.com.cn

On a bright morning on the outskirts of Beijing's Yanqing district, a dusty field was already stirring. Tents were being pitched, food stalls rolled into place, and festivalgoers arrived in small clusters, backpacks slung over their shoulders and sneakers dusted with dirt.

The Strawberry Music Festival, which has grown into a staple of China's summer music scene, was about to begin its three-day run on May 2.

Attendees, who had traveled from across the country, carried homemade banners, while others shared snacks on picnic blankets.

Among the visitors was Stephanie Daniels, a British musician who performs under the name SCAPA. It was her first visit to China. After a week of exploring Beijing's studios and collaborating with local artists, she found that the festival offered a more visceral indicator of the country's creative pulse.

"It felt very genuine," she said. "People were there for the music, for the vibe."



Audiences watch a performance at the Strawberry Music Festival in Dongguan, Guangdong province, on May 4. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The festival featured bands fusing local traditions with global influences. Daniels was particularly impressed by Sound Fragment, a six-member ensemble blending brass with traditional Chinese instruments.

Fans, many in their 20s, absorbed the performances with rapt attention.

"Even if I don't know the lyrics, I feel it in the beat," Daniels said.

By the late afternoon, the festival ground was abuzz with creative activity. Attendees tried out instruments at workshops, contributed to art installations and joined impromptu games of cards and badminton.

As the music shifted toward the evening sets, the air grew thick with energy, laughter and the smell of street food. Daniels moved through the crowd, observing, sampling snacks and soaking in the communal atmosphere.

"To my surprise, there was even a health pop-up at the festival," wrote Jiu Yue, who attended the festival on May 2, on her social media. "As people who love having fun, but also don't want to get exhausted, we discovered a completely different kind of music festival experience here. At the pop-up, we could get a health checkup and even try out a massage."

For many, the Strawberry Music Festival and events of its kind are living laboratories of youth culture — where global sounds meet local traditions, and temporary communities form out of shared curiosity and joy. By sunset, the field was a sea of blankets, instruments and smiling faces — messy, loud and imperfect, yet buzzing with a sense of life and artistry.

*See **Festival,** page 3*

Inclusive tech a must for common progress

WORLD WATCH
By Moiz Farooq

China has entered a new chapter in which innovation stands at the center of national progress. Once known mainly for its manufacturing strength, China has emerged as one of the world's key players in technology.

From artificial intelligence to next-generation communication networks, and from advanced industrial systems to green technology, China is making great contributions to global progress.

These achievements are not accidental. They are the result of long-term planning, stable governance and a national vision that prioritizes science, technology and innovation as a core driver of economic and social advancement.

In an increasingly competitive world, China's growing technological strength is creating new opportunities both at home and across the international community.

China's approach to innovation is guided by a clear vision for long-term development.

The country understands that high-quality growth requires strong scientific foundations and advanced technological capacity.

*See **Innovation,** page 3*

INSIDE
African quick step
Global Views, page 8



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

www.chinadailyglobal.com

A member of ANN

China Daily Global

©2026 All Rights Reserved

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:31 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:31 PM

INDEPTH





A vet examines recovering Chief Huang at Xuancheng Chongfuxin Pet Hospital on Friday. WEN QIN / FOR CHINA DAILY





Left: A screenshot from a video about the rescue shows a taxi driver carrying the injured stray Chief Huang from the bushes after the accident near Xuancheng Railway Station in Anhui province in April.
Middle: Visiting tourists pose with a cardboard image of Chief Huang at the station on Friday. WEN QIN / FOR CHINA DAILY
Right: Another screenshot from the video shows the list of donations made by taxi drivers with their license plate numbers and donation amounts.

Taxi drivers' dog rescue triggers tourism boom

Story of kindhearted efforts to save injured stray touches netizens nationwide

By **ZHU LIXIN** in Hefei
zhulixin@chinadaily.com.cn

Xuancheng — a city in Anhui province best known for producing quality paper — is experiencing a mini tourism boom thanks to a stray dog and a group of kindhearted taxi drivers who came to its rescue.

The story of "Chief Huang" a gentle rural mutt that had made Xuancheng Railway Station its home, has captured the country's imagination with tens of millions of online views.

On one platform, Douyin, a local animal rescue blogger Wang Mingxuan posted a video he filmed about the rescue, which received 368,000 likes and 100,000 shares and comments.

The dog was nearly killed after being hit by a car in mid-April, but was eventually saved by a group of local taxi drivers who banded together to pay the medical bill.

In what they have dubbed "boomerang love" tourists traveled to Xuancheng, a city of some 2.7 million people, during the May Day holiday, to return the act of kindness.

"It brought tears to my eyes," wrote one netizen. "In this fast-paced society, it's already a touching story that there's a group of people willing to stop and help a little dog. Moreover, these are people who rely on every minute to earn a living for their families. I'm grateful that there is such goodness in this world."

Little yellow dog

Taxi driver He Wei said he first noticed the little yellow dog hanging around the railway station in August or September of last year.

"At that time, it was very small and skinny, sometimes staying in the taxi waiting area, sometimes wandering around the square, quiet and gentle, never barking or running around," He said. "Over time, this little dog became fixed in many people's hearts."

Taxi drivers coming and going often played with it and brought it eggs and sausages to eat.

"As soon as one of the drivers called it, it would happily run over, wagging its tail," said He.

At first, the drivers called the puppy Xiaohuang, literally "little yellow". But as it grew, they gave it a more majestic name — Chief Huang.

By January, some of the local taxi drivers had pooled enough money to have the female dog spayed in a pet hospital. If the stray dog got pregnant, her life would become harder, the drivers reasoned.

"Chief Huang was a ray of light in my gloomy days," said He, who runs a poster design business online during the day, and drives for a ride-hailing service at night.

"One night, I parked my car near the square, lit a cigarette in frustration, and Chief Huang came to sit beside me. We sat quietly together for a long time," He said.

Every time he drove a taxi, He would go to the square to find the dog. Only after seeing it and playing with the dog, "just like an old friend," would he feel at ease.

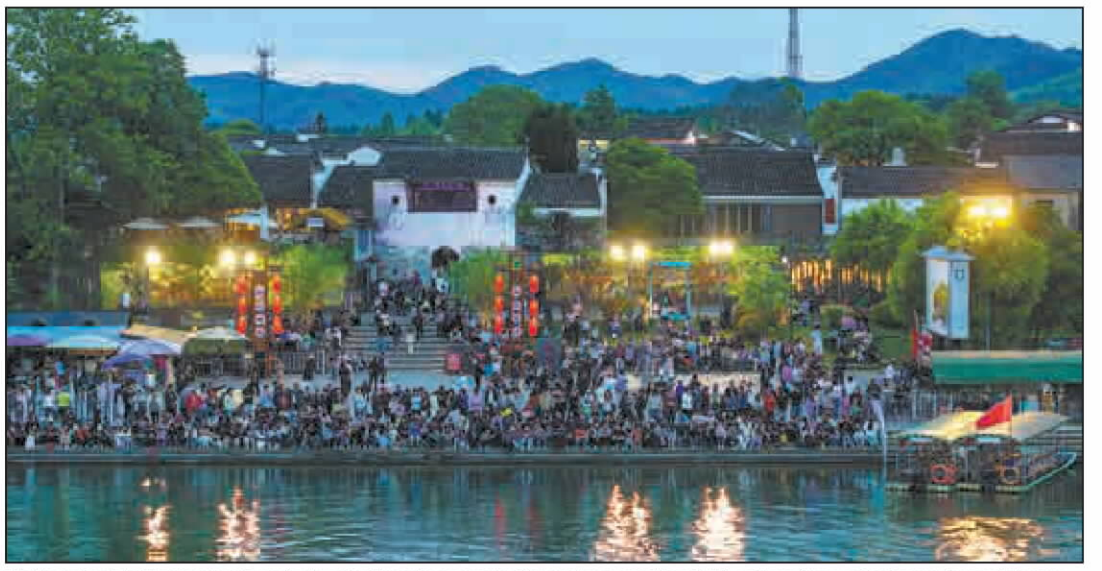
On the evening of April 15, He went to look for the dog but couldn't find it. He went back the next day but couldn't see Chief Huang.

"We wait for passengers at the station every day. Chief Huang quietly keeps us company. Over time, it has become like family to us," said Fan Bin, a taxi driver.

"Seeing it there each day gives us peace of mind; if we don't see it for one day, everyone starts asking each other about it," said Fan.

The accident

On April 17, Wang received a message online asking for help: a yellow dog near the Xuancheng Railway Station had been hit by a car and was unable to move, eat or drink.



Visitors flock to Taohuatan Scenic Area in Jingxian county, Xuancheng, on May 3. The city witnessed a boom in tourist numbers during the May Day holiday this year. ZHAO MING / FOR CHINA DAILY

"On April 18, I arrived at the station and was surprised by the scene," said Wang.

On the station square, a row of taxis was parked beside a traffic island covered in green shrubs. Dozens of drivers had gathered, not waiting for passengers, but anxiously discussing the little yellow dog curled up in front of them.

At one point, Fan took out a stack of cash and a handwritten donation list. The list had no names, only a series of license plate numbers and donation amounts varying from 20 yuan ($2.94) to 1,000 yuan ($147.10).

Several days earlier, the dog had been hit by a passing vehicle. After the taxi drivers found it, they took it to a pet hospital and were told it needed immediate surgery, costing more than 10,000 yuan.

"(It had) three fractures in the front and hind limbs. The right hind leg was the most severely injured, with bone dislocation requiring immediate surgery, or it would face amputation or even death," said taxi driver Zhang Xinming.

One of the initiators of the donations, Zhang personally gave 1,000 yuan. His monthly income from operating a taxi is about 3,000 yuan.

In the taxi waiting area at the west square of the railway station, two pieces of paper were eventually posted on the bulletin board, recording total donations of more than 4,000 yuan by 48 taxi drivers and eight generous individuals.

"Despite these donations, it was still not enough for the treatment, so after a simple anti-inflammatory treatment, we took the yellow dog back to the train station and continued to find ways to help," Zhang said.

The dog was in so much pain that it wouldn't eat or drink. The drivers were afraid it would be hit by another car, so they moved it into the shrubbery.



Taxi driver He Wei displays his handmade keychain and fridge magnet souvenirs dedicated to Chief Huang. WEN QIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Deeply moved

Wang had contracted pneumonia and was worried that sudden coughing might stress the yellow dog, so he asked a friend to remove the dog from the shrubs. He recorded the entire rescue with his phone camera and posted it online.

Wang and his friend took the dog to another animal hospital — Xuancheng Chongfuxin Pet Hospital — with a group of taxi drivers following closely behind.

Because there were too many people on-site, they finally selected four driver representatives to enter the hospital.

Upon learning about the donations raised by the taxi drivers, hospital director Zhu Jun was deeply moved and decided to do everything possible to treat the dog.

"We have been in pet medical care for many years, and this is the first time we have seen so many taxi drivers spontaneously raise money and wait outside the hospital for a stray dog," Zhu said.

The hospital decided not to charge more than 4,000 yuan for the operation. The subsequent treatment and recovery costs were all covered by the hospital.

On April 20, after two days of being treated with anti-inflammatories, Zhu and his colleague performed orthopedic surgery on Chief Huang. They successfully repaired three fractures and implanted an artificial ligament in the severely injured right hind leg.

After the surgery, the drivers left the hospital.

"In the following days, we drivers took turns visiting the hospital, bringing Chief Huang's favorite food, and quietly staying by her side, afraid she would feel lonely," Zhang said.

Spreading kindness

Chief Huang is still recuperating in the hospital, but her popularity has rocketed. Many people have not seen her online again.

He Wei has used his design expertise to make refrigerator magnets, key chains, and ornaments with images of the dog at his own expense. Initially, he gave them away for free to local taxi drivers and tourists who showed concern for the dog. But as more people asked for the merchandise, he started selling them at cost.

During the May Day holiday, many people came to Xuancheng and chose taxis as their preferred mode of transportation.

"A young passenger said he was touched by the story of this city. When he reached his destination, he was supposed to pay 13 yuan, but he quietly paid 20 yuan when getting out. When I reminded him, he ran off with his suitcase," said Fan.

The drivers said business during this year's May Day holiday was much busier than last year. It is roughly a three-hour drive from Shanghai, Hangzhou, and Nanjing, and its proximity makes it ideal for micro vacations.

To show their appreciation to local taxi drivers, some scenic spots offered them and their families free admission during the holidays.

Tourists who took taxis to scenic spots like Jingting Mountain and Shibawan Scenic Area were allowed to enter for free with a taxi receipt from the same day.

A number of restaurants and hotels offered discounts or reimbursed tourists' taxi fares. At the local Longquan Cave Scenic Area, taxi passengers had their taxi fare deducted from the ticket price.

From April 30 to May 5, Xuancheng Railway Station averaged 21,000 passengers per day, an increase of nearly 5 percent year-on-year.

The Xuancheng City Planning Museum received a total of 19,701 visitors from May 1 to May 5, with a single-day peak of 4,946, setting a new holiday record.

Serious considerations

Wang continues to rescue stray dogs almost every day. He said he did not intend to produce videos updating Chief Huang's condition, but is responding to enthusiastic requests from his followers about the dog's well-being.

"My original intention was to rescue stray animals, not to chase fame. The fame from Chief Huang's story belongs to our city," said Wang.

The dog's celebrity status has also posed some tough questions for the taxi drivers who love her so much — the chief one being someone's proposal to adopt her and their reluctance to part with the animal.

"She has been with us for so long, like family," Zhang said.

His life story is one of struggle and change. He was once a teacher, later worked for a State-owned enterprise, and after the enterprise went bankrupt, became a taxi driver.

"Adoption is possible, but the adopter must guarantee to treat Chief Huang well for her whole life," Zhang said.

Wang believes that if people want Chief Huang to return to the railway station, they should complete the adoption procedures, obtain a dog license, and comply with regulations.

Meanwhile, some government insiders revealed that after the May Day holiday, cultural and tourism proposals related to Chief Huang's fame had been stopped due to concerns about her welfare and overall stray dog management.

Some netizens have suggested the city should capitalize on Chief Huang's fame. "This is more effective than however many advertisements Xuancheng's cultural and tourism department could run. Who could resist such a warm city?" wrote one.

Another said: "Put Chief Huang's logo on the cars of these kindhearted drivers. From now on, choose them when you need a ride!"

Wang said there is a deeper issue to be addressed in the management of the city's stray animals. According to the Xuancheng government's dog management regulations, urban management departments are responsible for supervising and managing dog shelters and capturing stray dogs.

Stray cats and dogs caught by city officers should be neutered and then placed in appropriate institutions, such as stray animal placement centers cooperating with the government, to reduce the explosive growth of stray cats and dogs caused by uncontrolled breeding, Wang said, adding the government should establish public pet hospitals.

"In fact, the proliferation of stray cats and dogs largely stems from abandonment," Wang said, adding that the government should impose a stricter ban on abandoning domestic cats and dogs and raise the threshold for pet ownership as fundamental solutions to the problem.

Wen Qin of Anhui Daily contributed to this story.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:31 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:31 PM

TOP NEWS

Cargo vessel to help advance space research

Tianzhou 10 delivers experimental supplies, equipment to country's Tiangong orbital post

By ZHAO LEI
zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

China launched on Monday the Tianzhou 10 cargo spacecraft to deliver scientific equipment and experimental supplies, including artificial human embryos, ultra-thin solar cells and a greenhouse gas monitor, to its orbiting Tiangong space station.

A Long March 7 rocket, carrying the cargo vessel, blasted off at 8:14 am from the Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site in Hainan province, according to the China Manned Space Agency.

After a short flight, the Tianzhou 10 spacecraft separated from the carrier rocket and entered its designated orbit. At 1:11 pm, the cargo vessel docked with the Tianhe core module of the Tiangong space station, paving the way for Shenzhou XXI astronauts to enter the vessel and transfer payloads as scheduled.

Later in the day, Shenzhou XXI mission commander Senior Colonel Zhang Lu, spaceflight engineer Major Wu Fei and payload specialist Zhang Hongzhang entered the cargo vessel and began arranging the transfer of the payloads.

Tianzhou 10, which is the 20th spaceship and the ninth cargo vessel to dock at the space station, has delivered nearly 6.2 metric tons of daily necessities, scientific equipment and experimental supplies, as well as about 700 kilograms of fuel. The cargo includes a spacewalk suit, a treadmill and many instruments for scientific experiments and technological tests.

Mission planners at the China Academy of Space Technology said the Tianzhou 10 is designed to dock with the Tiangong space station for a whole year, making it the longest cargo mission in the history of China's space industry.

According to the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Technology and Engineering Center for Space Utilization, which is responsible for scientific missions on board China's space station, the Tianzhou 10 has delivered 67 sets of devices, experimental expendables, samples and spare materials, which have a combined weight of 768.2 kg and will be used to conduct 41 experiments.

The experimental cargo includes zebrafish embryos, mouse embryos and stem cell-derived artificial human embryos. The human embryos, although not true life forms, will help simulate the earliest stages of human development, according to reports from China Central Television.

The experiments in orbit will help establish a space-based embryo research system spanning lower vertebrates to higher mammals. The biological research will provide insights into how the space environment, specifically microgravity and radiation, affects reproduction and development, laying the foundation for long-term human habitation in space.

Among the payloads are flexible solar cells. With a thickness of just 80 micrometers — roughly the same as a human hair — these cells can be folded and rolled, allowing a greater number of solar panels to be packed into a given amount of space. Subjecting this new technology to the extreme space environment will help verify and improve its long-term power-generation stability, paving the way for supplying energy to China's large-scale satellite internet constellations.

The greenhouse gas monitor, developed under the leadership of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, is designed to track concentrations of carbon dioxide and methane across global middle and low latitudes.

Xinhua contributed to this story.

Activist returns



Spanish activist Saif Abu Keshek, from a Gaza-bound aid flotilla, is welcomed on Sunday upon arrival at Barcelona airport after being released by Israeli authorities. Israeli forces had intercepted the Global Sumud Flotilla in international waters off Greece last week and detained Abu Keshek and Brazilian activist Thiago Avila, accusing them of having links with a "terrorist group". MANAURE QUINTERO / AFP

Hands-on experience



Children try their hand at Chinese-style painting on Sunday in Rome, Italy, during a traditional Chinese cultural experience event. Visitors not only enjoyed performances such as Chinese folk music and lion dance, but also participated in activities including calligraphy, paper-cutting and tea art. WANG KAIYAN / XINHUA

Visit: Risk management in AI could figure in talks

From page 1

Gupta said that artificial intelligence has emerged as a significant area where both nations recognize a mutual interest in risk management.

Scott Kennedy, senior advisor and trustee chair in Chinese business and economics at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in the US, said during a news briefing earlier that the current trajectory reflects a period of relative confidence. He said that as the two sides prepare for senior-level dialogues, "China has the right to be confident that they are doing very well bilaterally".

While both sides are seeking to expand cooperation, managing differences and sensitive issues — particularly the Taiwan question — is also expected to be high on the agenda.

During a phone conversation with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio in late April, Foreign Minister Wang Yi said the Taiwan question concerns China's core interests and remains the biggest risk in China-US relations.

Bonny Lin, director of the China Power Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said that stability in the overall relationship is predicated on mutual understanding. Referring to official positions, Lin pointed out that fulfilling international obligations on this question is viewed as "a necessary prerequisite for the stable, sound and sustainable development of China-US relations".

Contact the writers at zhaojia@chinadaily.com.cn

Innovation: Nation plays essential role in sharing technological achievements

From page 1

This is why China has invested heavily in research institutions, national laboratories, high-tech zones and innovation clusters that bring together industry, academia and government. These systems support a continuous cycle of research, invention, industrialization and global expansion.

This shift indicates a deeper transformation in which innovation is not merely a sector, but the main engine of national power.

One of the most striking examples of China's technological progress is its rapid advancement in artificial intelligence and intelligent computing. China is developing cutting-edge platforms in machine learning, deep neural networks, autonomous systems and supercomputing. Its research institutes and companies are building intelligent algorithms that can manage transportation systems, financial operations, healthcare diagnostics, smart cities and governance services. This progress demonstrates China's ability to integrate science with practical solutions for society, while AI is becoming a strategic resource for China's overall development and is also transforming global industry and digital ecosystems.

Furthermore, China is among the world's leaders in new-generation communication technologies.

After setting global standards in the expansion of fifth-generation networks, China is now moving forward with research and trials for sixth-generation systems. These technologies promise extremely fast communication speeds, stronger internet connectivity, and new possibilities in virtual reality, smart manufacturing and remote sensing. China continues to invest in satellite-based internet services, optical fiber networks and advanced communication equipment. These achievements enable the country to play an important role in building future global information infrastructure, and nations around the world are deepening cooperation with China to build reliable and affordable digital networks.

High-tech manufacturing is another area in which China is achieving robust growth. The country has become an important global hub for robotics, drones, electric vehicles, battery production, new materials, biotechnology and precision engineering. China's industrial transformation is supported by advanced equipment, skilled human capital and efficient supply chains. This new industrial system strengthens national competitiveness and enhances the country's ability to contribute to global markets. In addition, the progress in electric vehicles and battery technology is helping reshape the global transportation landscape, as Chinese innovation has made clean and smart vehicles more accessible to consumers across the developing world.

China's focus on green technology further strengthens its technological edge and global cooperative influence. The country is the world's largest producer of solar energy equipment, wind turbines and battery storage systems. It has built massive renewable energy bases, modern power grids and eco-friendly industries that reduce carbon emissions, and the country's approach demonstrates that technological advancement and environmental responsibility can progress together.

Through green innovation, China is offering solutions to global climate challenges and supporting the transition toward cleaner and more sustainable economies. This progress is of great significance for developing nations that need affordable and reliable green technology for long-term growth.

What's more, China also plays an essential role in sharing technological achievements and innovative experience with developing countries. Through cooperation projects in Asia, Africa and Latin America, Chinese companies provide modern technology, training and digital tools for nations' development. The affordable cost of Chinese equipment makes advanced technology accessible to countries that would otherwise struggle to adopt modern systems.

China's approach is based on partnership, respect and shared benefits. It helps build digital infrastructure, renewable energy capacity, industrial systems and modern knowledge-based economies. These contributions demonstrate the country's belief in global common progress and its willingness to support an inclusive technological ecosystem.

For Pakistan, China's growing strength in technology presents major opportunities.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is not only about roads and energy projects. It is evolving into a powerful platform for digital transformation, AI cooperation, smart agriculture, advanced manufacturing and innovation-based industries. Pakistan can benefit from China's experience in financial technology, e-commerce, telecommunications, climate-smart agriculture, digital governance and high-tech manufacturing.

The next phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor will provide opportunities for technology transfer, research partnerships, joint innovation centers and capacity building programs. With China's support, Pakistan can build a modern economy that is competitive, sustainable and deeply connected to global technological trends.

China's advancements in AI can be particularly valuable for Pakistan. Intelligent systems can support urban planning, financial regulation, healthcare delivery and agricultural management. Cooperation in robotics, digital education and high-tech manufacturing can generate employment and modernize industrial capacity. Furthermore, China's experience in digital governance and smart cities can help Pakistan improve public services and strengthen transparency. These areas of partnership show that China's technological rise is not only beneficial for its own future, but also contributes to the progress of friendly countries that share a vision for common development.

China's global technological impact extends beyond products and industries. It represents a broader philosophy of cooperation, peaceful development and shared prosperity. The country encourages other nations to work together in scientific research, environmental protection, digital trade and modern industrial systems. The idea of a community with a shared future for humanity guides China's approach to technology and development. It promotes unity, fairness and mutual respect in international relations, and this is a refreshing alternative to competition-based narratives that create divisions and hinder global progress.

The author is executive editor of Pakistan Economic Net and Daily Ittehad media group. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Festival: People don't come just for music

From page 1

Over the course of the summer, the Strawberry Music Festival will make stops in a number of Chinese cities, including Taiyuan in Shanxi province on May 23 and 24, Changsha in Hunan province on May 30 and 31, and Harbin in Heilongjiang province on June 13 and 14.

The Strawberry Music Festival is just one of several music events that define China's summer landscape. Across the country, festivals have developed distinct identities. The Youth Music Festival, held in Dezhou and Weifang, both in Shandong province, focuses on rock bands, attracting fans who mosh and trade stickers. The Northward Music Festival in Changchun, Jilin province, highlights hip-hop and rap, providing a platform for underground artists to reach new audiences.

For attendees, these festivals are about more than music. Market stalls sell band merchandise, pop-up art projects invite participation, and picnic blankets and sofas create informal social spaces.

Shen Yue, vice-president of Modern Sky, the company behind the Strawberry Music Festival, described the event as a cultural space for a new generation.

"People come not just for music, but to meet friends, experiment with fashion and express themselves," he said. "For many young people, festivals are a temporary escape — a place to feel free, to belong and to create."

China, US jointly cut off drug trafficking corridor

By YANG ZEKUN
yangzekun@chinadaily.com.cn

Narcotics control authorities from China and the United States recently cracked a cross-border drug smuggling and trafficking case, arresting five suspects and cutting off a transnational drug route, China's Ministry of Public Security said on Monday.

Inside
Views, **page 7**

In early April, the ministry's Narcotics Control Bureau and the US Drug Enforcement Administration jointly handled the case, according to a statement issued by the ministry. Coordinated operations were carried out in Liaoning and Guangdong provinces in China, as well as the states of Florida and Nevada in the US. Five suspects — two Chinese nationals and three US nationals — were arrested.

The ministry said the operations successfully dismantled a drug smuggling and trafficking route covering China and the US. It added that the case marked another major result of practical cooperation between Chinese and US antidrug agencies, demonstrating the two countries' shared determination to control drug-related crimes.

The China-US antidrug cooperation has continued to advance in recent years through intelligence sharing, joint case handling, technical exchanges and tighter control of narcotics-related substances and chemicals.

On Jan 30, 2024, the two nations launched the China-US Counternarcotics Working Group in Beijing, identifying priority areas for cooperation. On July 31 the same year, a Chinese interdepartmental delegation visited the US for the first senior officials' meeting of the working group, helping to build mutual trust and advance practical cooperation. Since 2024, China's Narcotics Control Bureau has maintained routine hotline contact and regular exchanges with US antidrug agencies. The two sides have exchanged more than 100 intelligence leads.

Technical cooperation has also deepened. Since 2024, China and the US have held several meetings of antidrug technical experts and established a scientist exchange mechanism. Experts from Chinese and US agencies have shared drug-testing experience and discussed ways to strengthen technical support for addressing the fentanyl issue.

In February, cross-departmental antidrug delegations from the two countries held the 11th China-US antidrug intelligence exchange meeting in the US. They discussed issues including the global and regional drug situation, removal of online illicit information, joint case handling, chemical control, and anti-money laundering efforts related to drug crimes.

Joint case handling has produced concrete results. In February 2025, Chinese antidrug authorities and the China Coast Guard, acting on tips from the DEA, seized more than 4,900 kilograms of methamphetamine and arrested seven suspects in waters near Huangyan Island in the South China Sea.

China has also strengthened control of narcotics-related substances and precursor chemicals. In July 2024, the nation placed 46 new psychoactive substances under control, while in September that year, it added seven chemicals, including three fentanyl precursors, to its controlled precursor chemicals list.

In November 2025, China adjusted its export management catalog for precursor chemicals to specific countries and regions, adding the US, Mexico and Canada to the list and placing 13 additional precursor chemicals under export controls for those destinations.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:31 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:31 PM

GLOBAL LENS







Left: Workers who helped clean up contamination from the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant disaster hold flowers before placing them on a monument to their fallen comrades near the plant in Ukraine on April 21.
Right from top: Volodymyr Vechirko (center), 62, one of the workers sent to clean up contamination from the Chernobyl plant, pours vodka during lunch near the plant on April 21.
Vechirko rides in a bus with fellow workers for a visit to the region ahead of the 40th anniversary of the disaster in Chernobyl on April 21. PHOTOS BY EVGENIY MALOLETKA / AP

SCARRED FOR LIFE

40 years on, Chernobyl still questions humanity on how to safely harness nuclear energy

Radioactive Contamination! No Entry!

The warning sign at the entrance to the Polesie State Radiation-Ecological Reserve in Belarus' southern Gomel Region, near the Ukrainian border, is impossible to miss.

Its bold lettering and stark trefoil radiation symbol seem to fix their gaze on every visitor, discouraging any attempt to proceed.

On April 26, 1986, Reactor No. 4 at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in the former Soviet republic of Ukraine exploded, releasing more than 8 metric tons of highly radioactive material. Over 60,000 square kilometers of land were contaminated, and more than 3.2 million people were affected to varying degrees. It remains the most severe nuclear disaster in the history of civilian nuclear energy.

Belarus, itself a former Soviet republic at the time, suffered the brunt of the nuclear fallout.

As the iron gates of the exclusion zone at the Polesie State Radiation-Ecological Reserve in Belarus creaked open, the vehicle moved slowly along a narrow village road, as if crossing a boundary between present and past.

The road was scarred by years of neglect. Fallen trees lay scattered through the forest, while nameless wildflowers bloomed quietly in the marshes. The hum of the tires felt intrusive, breaking the heavy, almost unnatural silence.

"This was a school — a place where visitors now come to take photos," said Alexey Kazakov, head of the reserve's information department. After the disaster, then-Soviet authorities evacuated all settlements within a 30-kilometer radius of the plant, including the village of Dronki, where the school once stood.

Inside the abandoned classrooms, shattered glass and crumbling plaster covered the floor. Yellowed textbooks lay open to lessons frozen in time, and dusty backpacks still waited for children who never returned. A faded slogan — "Long Live May Day!" — hung on the wall, a haunting reminder that the joy of the 1986 holiday was abruptly stolen by radiation. For residents in the contaminated zone, life was permanently divided into "before" and "after".



An abandoned classroom in the village of Dronki in the Polesie State Radiation-Ecological Reserve in Gomel Region, Belarus, on April 22. HENADZ ZHINKOV / XINHUA

As the vehicle moved deeper into the exclusion zone, the radiation monitor's reading climbed, and its beeping warning grew increasingly urgent.

"There is no completely safe place here; we are always exposed to some radiation," explained Maxim Kudin, deputy director of the reserve. However, because tourist areas are grass-covered and relatively dust-free, short visits carry limited risk.

Revisiting history

To this day, what lingers most deeply from this disaster are the people who came to help back then. Four years after the disaster, 600,000 people joined the dangerous cleanup.

Helicopters hovered above the exposed radioactive core, dropping sand and other materials to smother the fire. Workers washed radioactive dust from buildings and roads, buried poisoned machinery, cleared forests and hunted animals to slow the spread of radiation.

A group of the workers who live in Ukraine's Poltava region returned ahead of the 40th anniversary of the accident for a one-day trip to Chernobyl.

Volodymyr Vechirko, 62, was sent to Chernobyl in summer 1986 to clear away topsoil, clean buildings and make the other still-functioning reactors on the site safe. He has been ill for much of his life, which he attributes to working at the disaster site, including chronic dizziness, weakness and frequent pain.

Because of his poor health, he said, he lost touch with colleagues. "Being back here now, the emotions are overwhelming," he said. "It's incredibly sad to compare what this place was to what it is now."

Oleksii Harbuz, 72, a medical officer during that time, was close to the human costs of the disaster. Returning for the first time in decades, he recalled colleagues who have since died and the bonds formed among survivors.

"This 40th anniversary represents both a deep tragedy and a vital chance to reunite with my brothers-in-arms," he said. "So many of our colleagues have passed away over the years, but those of us remaining hold on."

Scientific research

Since 2018, about 5,000 people have visited the reserve. Scientists accompany visitors, helping them understand the radiation levels, risks, and the gradual recovery of the ecosystem.

Over four decades, Belarus has worked to mitigate the disaster's impact. By 2025, it had implemented multiple national programs, significantly reducing contamination; about half of the affected agricultural land had been restored.

Advances in research have also improved detection and monitoring of radioactive elements, with the reserve's laboratories ranked among the world's best in this regard.

Experimental economic activities — including horse breeding, forestry, and beekeeping — have been introduced into less-contaminated areas. Researchers study how radioactive elements transfer through ecosystems while ensuring strict safety controls. According to Kudin, it is possible to produce goods that meet national safety standards under controlled conditions. The goal is to develop models for safe economic use of affected land.

In the reserve, horses graze calmly, and apiaries produce several tons of honey each year, "just as sweet as anywhere else", a beekeeper noted.

From a fire watchtower, the distant outline of the Chernobyl plant is visible, its reactor encased beneath a gleaming arch. Around it, forests have returned to life.

Yet the scars of the disaster remain. Environmental healing could take centuries, and the question of how to harness nuclear energy safely continues to challenge humanity.

XINHUA—AGENCIES







From top: Stanislav Tolumnyi, 65, a firefighter who worked to decontaminate areas near the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant after the 1986 disaster, poses for a photo in a nearby abandoned town, on April 21. Volodymyr Vechirko, 62, also one of the workers, poses for a photo near the plant on April 21. Workers who were sent to clean up contamination after the disaster pass through a radiation inspection point during a gathering on April 21. PHOTOS BY EVGENIY MALOLETKA / AP







From left: A worker tests samples on April 22 in the Polesie State Radiation-Ecological Reserve, a radioecological reserve in Belarus' southern Gomel Region created to enclose the territory most affected by radioactive fallout from Chernobyl plant. A radiation monitor in the reserve on April 22. Warning signs at the entrance to the reserve on April 22. PHOTOS BY HENADZ ZHINKOV / XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:31 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:31 PM

WORLD

US dismisses 'unacceptable' Iran demands

Uncertainty persists, tensions deepen as Washington rejects Tehran's terms

By **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong and **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE

Washington has dismissed Tehran's response to its peace proposal as "totally unacceptable", likely complicating talks to end a war that has significantly ruptured the global economy and prompting a rethink on regional security.

"I don't like it — totally unacceptable," United States President Donald Trump said in a social media post on Sunday, without giving further details.

Iran's state broadcaster IRIB reported that the response included the necessity for the US to pay war damages to Iran, the recognition of Iran's sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz, the lifting of US sanctions, and the release of Iran's blocked assets by the US.

While more details have yet to emerge from the US side, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has outlined three of Iran's postwar strategic options, according to the Mehr News Agency.

Pezeshkian said Iran faces three distinct paths — entering negotiations with dignity and strength to claim Iranian rights; remaining in a state of neither war nor peace; or continuing on a path of conflict and confrontation.

He framed Iran's openness to diplomacy not as a concession but as a calculated posture, citing the words of Imam Ali in *Nahj al-Balaghah* — if an enemy calls for peace, one should not reject it, but equally should never become complacent, optimistic or trusting of that enemy after peace is established.

Nahj al-Balaghah is a collection of sermons, letters and sayings attributed to Ali ibn Abi Talib, the fourth Rashidun caliph and the first Shia imam.

"The rational and logical preference, grounded in national interest, is for the victory secured by the Armed Forces on the battlefield to be completed in the diplomatic arena, with the rights of the Iranian people established from a position of dignity and authority," Pezeshkian said.

On Monday, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei defended Tehran's proposals as "reasonable and generous" and blamed the US for insisting on "unreasonable demands", Iran's Tasnim News Agency reported.

Baghaei told reporters that Iran uses both military and diplomatic tools as needed to secure its national interests, without seeking others' approval, adding that the country has participated in the diplomatic processes "with good faith and reason".

The US must prove its seriousness, he said, highlighting its record of breaking commitments. He cited the 2018 withdrawal from the nuclear deal and the US attacks over the past year, while negotiations were underway, Mehr reported.

"We fight whenever necessary and we use the weapon of diplomacy whenever we deem it right," Baghaei said.

War 'not over'

While the US and Iran iron out their differences in reaching a deal, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the Iran war "is not over" in an interview with US media CBS aired on Sunday.

"It's not over, because there's still nuclear material — enriched uranium — that has to be taken out of Iran. There are still enrichment sites that have to be dismantled," he said.

When asked how the uranium could be removed, Netanyahu suggested, "You go in, and you take it out."

Meanwhile, Seoul condemned an attack on a South Korean cargo ship in the Strait of Hormuz, saying it plans to respond once the source of the attack is identified, Reuters reported.

Namu, the vessel operated by the shipper HMM, was not in violation of any rules in effect at the time in the waters off the United Arab Emirates, according to the report.

Contact the writers at jan@chinadailyapac.com

Making heads turn



Participants in the World Hat Walk — an international event held in up to 60 cities worldwide to promote creative headwear — pose for photographs in Bucharest, Romania, on Sunday. VADIM GHIRDA / AP

Beijing leads way in improving entry policies as visa-free travel burgeons

By **LIU JIANQIAO** and **GUO JIATONG**

China continues to expand its visa-free travel options, resulting in a growing number of foreign arrivals.

Immigration authorities across the country are rolling out ways to streamline the customs process and accommodate the increase in travelers, aiming to make a more convenient experience.

During the May Day holiday, border inspection authorities nationwide processed more than 11 million cross-border trips by Chinese and foreign nationals, averaging 2.26 million trips a day, up 3.5 percent year-on-year, according to the National Immigration Administration.

China currently grants unilateral visa-free entry to citizens of 50 countries, has mutual visa-free arrangements with 29 countries, and has expanded its 240-hour visa-free transit policy to travelers from 55 countries.

From May 1 to 5, Beijing's ports of entry recorded 111,000 inbound and outbound trips by foreign nationals, up 20.5 percent year-on-year, according to official data.

Among them, more than 37,000 people entered China under visa-free policies or the 240-hour temporary entry permit arrangement, accounting for 74.7 percent of all foreign arrivals during the period, a year-on-year increase of 50.2 percent.

In response, the Beijing General Station of Immigration Inspection has introduced a series of measures to ensure efficient and orderly entry.

"To actively cope with the surge in inbound and outbound passenger flows during the May Day holiday, we've continued to optimize our service measures to ensure smooth and efficient clearance for all travelers," said Zhao Kun, captain of a patrol unit at the station.

"By monitoring passenger flows at ports of entry in real time and dynamically adjusting inspection channels in response to traffic volumes, we ensure staff resources are allocated in line with passenger demand," she said.

"During peak hours, inspection channels are opened in advance and operated at full capacity to reduce passenger wait times."

Fast-track inspection channels operate around the clock and provide on-site registration services, enabling eligible travelers to complete clearance more efficiently, she said.

"We are also fully implementing facilitation measures, such as the 24-hour visa-free transit policy and online entry card processing for foreign nationals, while optimizing the one-stop processing system for temporary entry permits and immigration clearance procedures to further improve efficiency for travelers," she added.

Providing help

The station has also strengthened passenger guidance and traffic management outside inspection counters, while promptly assisting elderly passengers, children and other travelers in need.

"Multilingual service teams have been fully mobilized to provide on-site policy consultation services for international travelers, further enhancing the overall clearance experience," Zhao said.

Phuc Huynh Thien, a visitor from Vietnam, said the convenient policies provided "a perfect start to my trip to Beijing".

"The airport's multilingual services also offered clear policy guidance, making the customs clearance process even smoother," he said.

Popova, a Russian tourist who only provided her surname, was visiting China for the first time with her child. She said police officers helped them throughout the process, from arrival to customs clearance.

"I didn't expect everything to go so smoothly, and my child is very happy," she said. "This experience of clearance has made me even more excited about the rest of our trip in China."

International flights to Beijing's airports continue to grow since the start of the summer-autumn schedule.

Beijing Capital International Airport has gradually increased flight frequencies on more than a dozen European routes, including Brussels, Istanbul and Dublin, while further enhancing connectivity across Asia.

Meanwhile, Beijing Daxing International Airport plans to operate routes to 44 international and regional destinations, aiming to better meet the diverse demands of travelers.

An Australian athlete said he was in the country to compete in a diving event.

"I've been to China before under the visa-free policy, and the entry process was very smooth," he said. "Policies like this can attract more international visitors to China."

He added that he was particularly interested in experiencing Chinese culture. "The culture here is quite different from Australia's, and that's something I really enjoy because I like experiencing new things," he said.

Contact the writers at liujianqiao@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
See more by scanning the code.

PM Starmer vows to stay on after loss in local polls

By **JULIAN SHEA** in London
julian@mail.chinadailyuk.com

United Kingdom Prime Minister Keir Starmer has vowed to stay in office and take action on "the big challenges facing the country" after his Labour Party suffered huge losses in last week's local elections, with voter unhappiness at his leadership being identified as a vital factor.

Local elections have no effect on the makeup of the national parliament, but the results, coming after nearly two years of Labour rule, are a clear expression of nationwide sentiment toward the central government.

Across England, hundreds of Labour councilors lost their seats. In elections for the Welsh Parliament, known as the Senedd, the party suffered its worst-ever results. In Scotland too, it performed poorly, prompting Scottish Labour leader Anas Sarwar to repeat his call, first made in February, for Starmer to step down.

In a speech to Labour members of parliament on Monday, Starmer acknowledged that he had "doubters" and "some people are frustrated with me ... I know I need to prove them wrong and I will".

The government would "face up to the big challenges" and "make the big arguments" to try and persuade voters that theirs was the best way forward, he said.

He also picked out the populist policies of the left-wing Green Party and right-wing Reform UK, which enjoyed significant success in the local elections, saying: "We're battling the despair on which they (play), despair that they exploit and amplify. And so analysis matters, argument matters, but so too does emotion ... people need hope."

One Labour member, Paula Barker, has said she will challenge Starmer unless he steps aside. She told *BBC Breakfast* that the UK "had stopped listening" to him and that he was "a very nice man but he's an awful politician".

"It's becoming increasingly clear that our Labour government can no longer succeed if we have Keir at the helm," she said.

Barker has never held a senior position, so her challenge would be symbolic rather than meaningful, but if she goes through with her threat, it will give Starmer's opponents an opportunity to make their position clear.

The person regarded as his most serious rival, Andy Burnham, who stood as a candidate to be Labour leader in 2015, is currently not a member of parliament, having quit Westminster in 2017 to seek election as mayor of Greater Manchester, a post in which he is serving his third term.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108
529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1825

Pavilion bridges past, future at Venice event

VENICE, Italy — The China pavilion at the 61st International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia in Venice, Italy, is drawing crowds with a presentation that bridges the past and the future.

Since joining the Venice Biennale in 2003, the China pavilion has become an important platform for Chinese contemporary art to meet an international audience.

Themed "Dream Stream", the pavilion this year tries to deliver a sense of crossing time and space. The theme was named after *Dream Stream Essays*, an encyclopedia written by Shen Kuo in the Song Dynasty (960-1279).

The exhibition combines calligraphy, video, digital art, multimedia installations and a robot display to present Chinese tradition in new forms.

Artist Xu Jiang said Dream Stream includes elements from the treasure house of Chinese culture, which are presented through imagination.

One of the highlights was a robot that writes the Chinese characters of Dream Stream with a writing brush. Its mechanical arm guides the brush with rhythm across the paper, showing the force and beauty of Chinese calligraphy, with visitors gathering around to take pictures.

Italian visitor Vanna Rossetti said Chinese calligraphy moved her deeply, calling it "a beautiful form of communication".

Matteo Salvini, Italian deputy prime minister and minister of infrastructure and transport, said he admires Chinese culture and praised the exhibition as "wonderful", noting that it showed both China's historical culture and its vision for the future.

After receiving the robot-written calligraphy, he said he liked the fragrance of Chinese ink and would place it in his office.

Laura Fincato, former Italian deputy foreign minister, said the China pavilion reflects openness, dialogue and connection, as well as the creativity of the artists.

Art and culture remain important forces in building bridges when the world needs more communication and mutual understanding, she said.

Li Xiaoyong, charge d'affaires of the Chinese embassy in Italy, said China and Italy, both ancient civilizations, will continue to deepen exchanges in art, cultural heritage protection and other fields, strengthening people-to-people exchanges to develop bilateral ties.



A robot writes a character at the Chinese pavilion during the pre-opening of the 61st International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia in Venice, Italy, on Wednesday. MARCO BERTORELLO / AFP

The China pavilion's exhibition will run through November.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:31 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:31 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Head-of-state diplomacy can continue to chart stabilizing course for Sino-US ties

The upcoming visit by US President Donald Trump, scheduled from Wednesday to Friday, will be the first to China by a US president in nine years. Such top-level face-to-face exchanges are essential for the stable development of bilateral ties.

Over recent years, head-of-state diplomacy has played an irreplaceable role in guiding the development of China-US relations. The multiple telephone conversations between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Trump, and their meeting in Busan, the Republic of Korea, in October last year provided strategic direction for the management of differences and the expansion of cooperation.

Under the guidance of head-of-state diplomacy, the two sides have carried out six rounds of economic and trade consultations since May 2025 — in Geneva, London, Stockholm, Madrid, Kuala Lumpur and Paris — and are holding the seventh round in Seoul from Tuesday to Wednesday immediately ahead of the summit meeting.

The frequency of the trade discussions reflects both sides' recognition that coordination on economic and trade issues between the world's two largest economies remains among the most important stabilizing factors in bilateral relations. Since economic and trade frictions escalated last year, maintaining close communication has become essential to prevent the broader relationship from being damaged by negative spillover effects.

It is noteworthy that the United States imposed sanctions on three Chinese companies on Friday, accusing them of "assisting Iran". China firmly opposes such illegal unilateral sanctions that lack a basis in international law and it will protect the companies' legitimate rights, as Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said on Monday.

The top priority should be to make every effort to prevent the resumption of hostilities in the Middle East, rather than exploiting the conflict to smear or entangle other nations, Guo added.

China and the US have common interests in promoting early and proper resolutions of hotspot issues, which is in line with the world's expectations.

They also have common interests in making joint efforts to reduce trade and investment barriers to each other in some sectors, and exploring more stable and institutionalized frameworks for long-term cooperation.

Such endeavors could potentially pave the way for broader tariff suspensions, more confidence-building measures in some key fields and reciprocal reductions of restrictive policies, so as to help stabilize supply chains.

It should be borne in mind that pragmatic cooperation between China and the US has continued in other areas despite the existing differences between them. A joint counternarcotics operation carried out by related departments of the two sides in early April underscored the shared determination of both countries to combat drug-related crimes and safeguard public security through practical cooperation.

What matters is not that the two major countries have differences and their respective core concerns — that is only natural — but rather how they perceive and approach those differences, and how they show due concern to each other's core concerns. Among them, the Taiwan question is the most important and sensitive issue in China-US relations. The US should handle it with utmost prudence.

Stable China-US relations are not only in the interests of the two countries, but also vital to global peace, stability and development. The momentum with which the two sides maintain their exchanges and sustain their coordination on issues of common concern has sent a positive signal: dialogue and cooperation remain the mainstream aspiration on both sides of the Pacific.

As Guo said on Monday in reply to questions on Beijing's expectations for the upcoming visit by Trump, China stands ready to work with the US to expand cooperation and properly manage differences, based on the principles of equality, mutual respect and reciprocity.

Confrontation does not serve the interests of either side. Guided by a commitment to mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation, China and the US can sustain their communication, expand the space for collaboration, and increase the areas where their interests converge.

Lai taking dead-end path at cost of Taiwan

The Democratic Progressive Party authorities of China's Taiwan region have been at the center of a heated debate over their proposed arms procurement bill. Initially seeking to allocate a staggering NT$1.25 trillion ($40 billion) for military spending, the DPP authorities' ambitions met with strong resistance from opposition parties and the public alike.

The passage on Friday of a revised bill, with the budget reduced to NT$780 billion, once again demonstrated that the "Taiwan independence" forces cannot ignore mainstream public opinion on the island.

Taiwan's taxpayers are still footing the bill for the gamble of the DPP's push for "Taiwan independence". There is growing anxiety within Taiwan society over the dire consequences of the DPP authorities' secessionist policies.

Lai Ching-te, the secessionist-minded head of the DPP authorities, has pledged to raise the island's security budget to 5 percent of GDP by 2030, describing the initiative as a "necessary investment" aimed at addressing "regional security challenges" and strengthening so-called "asymmetric warfare" capabilities.

Critics within Taiwan have rightly argued that Lai is attempting to justify his secessionist policies with lies falsely framing Taiwan as a "vulnerable" entity.

During a hearing of the Senate Committee on Armed Services last month, Admiral Samuel Paparo, head of the US "Indo-Pacific" Command, bluntly stated, "It's not a chicken and the egg, because you're not going to get chicken or eggs if you starve the chicken." He urged Taiwan to pass its stalled defense budget as soon as possible to avoid starving the US military-industrial complex.

The DPP's planned military spending is akin to paying "protection fees" to the US at the cost of the island's education, healthcare and social welfare.

The DPP authorities are also actively aligning with Japan, aiming to leverage its support for their secessionist cause. Lai has frequently made shameless shows of reverence for symbols of the Japanese colonial era, even going so far as to kneel in gratitude before a statue of a de facto Japanese occupier during a public ceremony over the weekend.

The Lai authorities intentionally downplay the impact of Japanese colonial rule — it is estimated over 600,000 people in Taiwan lost their lives in the struggle against Japan's colonial rule and in the broader effort to restore the Taiwan region to China from 1895 to 1945 — to sever the island from its cultural and historical roots.

Lai portrayed Japanese invaders and colonizers as "saviors", when in fact they were killers and robbers. He also characterized US arms dealers as "protectors", though they are nothing more than exploiters.

Such words and deeds are evidence of the deceptive nature of the DPP authorities, whose diehard secessionist stance means the political foundation for Taiwan to participate in the World Health Assembly does not exist, as the spokesman for the Foreign Ministry said on Monday.

To uphold the one-China principle and defend the seriousness and authority of the relevant United Nations General Assembly and World Health Assembly resolutions, the Chinese mainland has decided not to agree to Taiwan's participation in this year's WHA as an observer.

Notably, to advance the peaceful development of cross-Strait relations and enhance the kinship and well-being of compatriots across the Strait, the mainland has recently rolled out a package of 10 policies and measures — spanning infrastructure, travel, trade and culture.

The DPP authorities have been going to great lengths to smear the aforementioned policies and measures that serve the common interests of both sides of the Taiwan Strait. Their actions are a blatant attempt to call black white.

Taiwan's future lies not in relying on external forces, but in advancing peaceful development and deepening dialogue and cooperation across the Taiwan Strait. That represents the rational path forward and the shared aspiration of compatriots on both sides of the Strait.

Any attempt by "Taiwan independence" forces to seek separatist agendas through foreign support is doomed to failure.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Jin Ding



Opinion Line

Restitution law recognition that respect begins at home

France's decision last week to simplify the restitution of cultural artifacts acquired through illicit appropriation is an admission that history leaves debts that must be honored.

The French Parliament's overwhelming approval of the legislation — 343 votes in favor and none against in the Sénat, following unanimous passage in the Assemblée Nationale — shows the country's willingness to reconcile itself with its past.

The importance of this law lies not only in what it permits, but in what it dismantles. For generations, France's doctrine of the "inalienability" of public collections functioned almost as a secular catechism of the republic. Once an object entered the national collection, it became virtually untouchable, requiring painstaking parliamentary intervention for every single restitution. The Louvre, Quai Branly and countless provincial museums became guardians not merely of art, but of imperial memory itself.

Now, for the first time, France has established a legal framework enabling the return of cultural objects acquired through looting, coercion or colonial expropriation between 1815 and 1972.

Across the West, debates over colonial history have grown increasingly polarized. The United Kingdom continues its endless evasions over the Parthenon Marbles and the Benin Bronzes. It is not surprising that Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian expressed China's appreciation that France has stepped up to its responsibility in returning lost artifacts to their countries of origin, regarding the issue as an opportunity for dialogue and "mutual learning between civilizations".

These remarks point toward something deeper. Cultural restitution is not merely about objects. It is about the right of nations to tell their own stories through the artifacts that embody their memory.

Few episodes symbolize this more vividly than the destruction of the Old Summer Palace in Beijing in 1860 by Anglo-French Alliance Forces during the Second Opium War (1856-60). The looting of that palace, which is called Yuanmingyuan Park today, remains one of the traumas in modern Chinese historical consciousness.

In 1861, French writer Victor Hugo wrote a letter to his friend Captain Butler, one of the leaders of the Anglo-French forces, describing the looting of the Old Summer Palace as a crime against civilization, damning it as the act of "two bandits" — "One plundered, the other burned".

"The day will come," he wrote, "when France, once freed and cleansed, will return this plunder to China."

Although the sentence now reads like prophecy, the step toward its realization took more than one and a half centuries. And France is not now emptying its museums. The law excludes military objects and certain archaeological materials, and restitution cases will still require extensive review. Nor does this legislation erase the asymmetry of centuries of colonial extraction.

But symbols matter in diplomacy. What France has recognized is that cultural diplomacy cannot survive on nostalgia alone. A museum is not morally neutral simply because it is beautiful.

This is why French Senator Catherine Morin-Desailly captured the significance of the legislation when she said the law "opens a path where memory is no longer confiscated but shared, where the wounds of history become the foundations of a renewed dialogue between nations".

France at least understands something that many of the Western colonial powers still struggle to accept: that status comes not from the trappings of display but from respect.

And respect cannot be earned by displaying heirlooms stolen from others.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Social assistance upgraded to help more in need

Editor's note: *The country's new law on social assistance will come into effect on July 1. China.org.cn spoke to Yang Lixiong, a professor in the School of Labor and Human Resources at Renmin University of China, to gain insights into the new legislation. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

Until now, social assistance in China was limited to those facing extreme hardship or qualifying for minimum living allowances. The new law expands coverage to include special hardship support for families close to qualifying for minimum living allowances and those facing difficulties in paying rigid expenditures, as well as other groups identified by local governments as needing assistance.

A significant change in the new law is the recognition of diverse assistance needs and the introduction of new forms of support. One notable development is the inclusion of service-based assistance, which will now include basic living necessities, essential nursing services, medical care and burial services.

In the past, social assistance mainly relied on the distribution of goods or cash payments. The new law recognizes service-based assistance as a legal right, significantly broadening the scope of social assistance. The challenge now lies in effectively providing such services, which will be a key issue in the development of the social assistance system.

The property ownership criteria have also been revised. In the past, many people with incomes at or below the minimum living standard were unable to qualify due to strict property rules. Some local governments have now lowered the asset threshold, allowing more people to receive assistance.

The methods for verifying income and assets have also become more diversified. Previously, social assistance staff members mainly relied on home visits and neighborhood inquiries, but such methods often proved inaccurate. In today's society, it is much harder to obtain reliable information through such traditional approaches. Therefore, verification methods have become more varied. Digital verification platforms not only reduce the workload for staff members but also improve the accuracy of the process.

At present, different forms of social assistance overlap, particularly because minimum living allowance status is tied to many other welfare benefits. The new legislation therefore stresses the importance of self-reliance among beneficiaries. However, without concrete supporting measures, which include broader welfare reform, achieving this goal will be difficult.

For now, the law mainly sets out broad principles and clarifies government responsibilities. The staff members can be held accountable if they fail to provide assistance to those who qualify or ensure basic support where needed. At the same time, they will also bear responsibility for incorrectly approving assistance.

However, the law remains relatively vague when it comes to the rights and obligations of aid recipients themselves, making implementation more challenging in practice. Defining a clear balance of rights, responsibilities and obligations for recipients will likely require further detailed rules.

The next step involves drafting implementation regulations, since the law itself sets out broad principles. Many provisions need clearer definitions. The immediate priority, therefore, is for the relevant departments to formulate detailed implementation rules for the law on social assistance.

Another priority is strengthening training at the grassroots level. The quality of frontline personnel determines the quality of social assistance work. Conditions and challenges vary widely across regions, and the capabilities of local staff members also differ considerably.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:31 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:31 PM

VIEWS

Zhang Yongan

Partners needed in war against drugs

More than a century ago, China and the United States learned a critical lesson: drug trafficking is a global problem and no country, however powerful, could fight it on its own.

One of the earliest steps toward international cooperation came in 1909, when representatives from 13 countries gathered in Shanghai for the International Opium Commission.

It was the first time the international community collectively addressed the opium issue. The meeting adopted a set of resolutions aimed at restricting opium cultivation, limiting production and controlling distribution. In that effort, US advocacy and China's active participation became key drivers of the emerging international drug-control framework.

This momentum continued with the signing of the International Opium Convention in The Hague in 1912, which established international rules governing opium production and trade and called on countries to limit opium use strictly to medical and scientific purposes.

Both China and the US remained important contributors to subsequent international conventions aimed at regulating the manufacture and trade of narcotics.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the Chinese government launched a nationwide campaign against drug abuse and trafficking.

Within a few years, the widespread narcotics problem that had plagued the country was effectively eliminated. China has maintained a zero-tolerance policy toward drugs.

Modern China-US counternarcotics cooperation began following the normalization of bilateral relations in the 1970s. During the then US president Richard Nixon's visit to China in 1972, the two sides held their first discussions on drug control cooperation.

After diplomatic relations were established in 1979, practical collaboration soon followed, including exchanges on customs interdiction techniques and law-enforcement training.

In the following decades, bilateral cooperation deepened and counternarcotics efforts became one of the most constructive and stable pillars of China-US relations.

Yet the drug landscape has evolved. Between 2012 and 2024, new synthetic drugs and psychoactive substances spread rapidly and potent synthetic opioids, particularly fentanyl, moved to the center of global counternarcotics discussions.

In the US, opioid abuse escalated into a major public health crisis, placing immense pressure on medical systems and social governance. China and the US maintained close technical communication on drug trends, with regular exchanges on investigative leads, counternarcotics policies and emerging challenges.

In October 2017, the eighth China-US counternarcotics intelligence meeting discussed issues of mutual concern, including fentanyl and new psychoactive substances.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

At the G20 summit in Buenos Aires in 2018, Chinese President Xi Jinping and US President Donald Trump reached important consensus on strengthening law enforcement cooperation in drug control.

China then took a significant step. On May 1, 2019, it became the first country in the world to impose full control over fentanyl-related substances. According to the US International Narcotics Control Strategy Report of 2025, there have been no seizures of fentanyl-related substances directly entering the US from China since then.

The two countries also advanced collaboration in law enforcement. In 2017 alone, China's National Narcotics Control Commission shared more than 400 investigative leads related to fentanyl procurement and over 500 concerning US customers purchasing new psychoactive substances. Joint investigations helped crack several transnational drug cases.

Information exchange and case coordination became central to bilateral cooperation, making fentanyl governance a model of international counternarcotics cooperation.

However, cooperation was disrupted when the US imposed sanctions on China's National Narcotics Laboratory over what it described as "human rights issues" in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.

In August 2022, after then US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan, China-US counternarcotics cooperation was suspended.

As China-US ties stabilized in 2023, drug control was one of the first areas where dialogue resumed. Both sides agreed to establish a China-US counternarcotics working group, bringing cooperation back on track.

At its first meeting in Beijing in January 2024, the working group identified priority areas for cooperation. China subsequently placed 46 new psychoactive substances under control and strengthened oversight over seven chemicals used in fentanyl production.

However, new challenges emerged when the US imposed an additional 20 percent tariff on imports from China in early 2025, citing concerns over fentanyl precursor chemicals. The unilateral move disrupted not only global trade but also the fragile framework of anti-drug cooperation.

China responded with restraint while continuing to strengthen regulatory controls. In March 2025, it released a white paper outlining its policies and achievements in regulating fentanyl-related compounds. Gradually, cooperation regained momentum.

During the China-US economic and trade consultations held in Malaysia in October 2025, the two sides reached an important consensus on fentanyl governance.

High-level engagement soon followed. After the two presidents met in the Republic of Korea, the US lifted the additional "fentanyl tariffs", while China tightened controls over exports of specific precursor chemicals to the US, Mexico and Canada.

In November 2025, FBI Director Kash Patel visited China to discuss drug control cooperation.

It was the first time in over a decade that an FBI director had visited the country, marking the restoration of key communication channels. Shortly afterward, cross-agency teams from both countries held online consultations to coordinate future efforts to address the fentanyl challenge.

The resumption of cooperation demonstrates the resilience of China-US counternarcotics collaboration.

Looking back over more than a century of interaction — from the Shanghai International Opium Commission to today's fentanyl challenge — China-US counternarcotics cooperation has evolved from early diplomatic dialogue into a practical law enforcement partnership.

The lesson is clear: Unilateral pressure cannot stop the flow of drugs or dismantle transnational production and distribution networks.

The China-US experience demonstrates that cooperation, rather than confrontation, is the most effective way forward.

Going ahead, China-US counternarcotics cooperation will continue to face complex conditions. But as long as both sides remain committed to mutual respect, equality and the shared goal of protecting human well-being, cooperation can withstand uncertainties and sustain positive momentum in global governance.

Working together toward a drug-free, healthier and more peaceful world, the two countries can open a new chapter in international counternarcotics cooperation.

The author is the director of the International Center for Drug Policy Studies at Shanghai University.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Online
Scan the code to read the full article.

Denis Simon

China-US engagement conducive to global stability

Global Lens

At a time of mounting geopolitical uncertainty and economic fragmentation, renewed high-level engagement between China and the United States remains essential for global stability. As the world's two largest economies and most consequential technological giants, their relationship continues to shape the trajectory of the international system.

Even amid strategic competition, pragmatic cooperation between Beijing and Washington is not only possible but necessary.

A comparison between US President Donald Trump's visit to China in 2017 and the upcoming visit in 2026 illustrates how profoundly the structural foundations of the bilateral relationship have changed — and why engagement today carries different but significant possibilities.

First, renewed China—US engagement can contribute to global stability by reestablishing channels of high-level dialogue and reducing the risks associated with unmanaged strategic competition.

In a world marked by regional conflicts, supply-chain disruptions, and energy volatility, ongoing communication between major countries is a critical stabilizing mechanism.

Recent diplomatic contacts between US and Chinese officials ahead of Trump's visit have focused on trade disputes, agricultural exports and strategic materials such as rare earths, signaling that both sides recognize the value of dialogue in preventing further escalation.

Such engagement has implications beyond the bilateral relationship.

When China and the US communicate effectively, they help anchor the global economy and mitigate the risk of geopolitical shocks cascading into systemic crises.

Cooperation on issues such as energy security, climate governance, and financial stability is essential because the two nations have considerable influence over international institutions. Even limited progress in bilateral relations can generate positive spillover effects for the global system.

Second, despite persistent tensions, there are opportunities for cooperation in trade, science and technology and education.

Trade and investment ties between the two countries remain deep and resilient, reflecting decades of integration.

Even during periods of heightened friction — including the tariff escalation of recent years — both governments have continued negotiating arrangements designed to stabilize economic relations.

In 2025, for example, the two sides agreed to a temporary trade truce that reduced tariffs and export restrictions while encouraging increased Chinese purchases of agricultural products from the US.

This shows that both countries have an incentive to pursue cooperation in areas where interests converge. There are three main benefits of this approach.

The first is trade stabilization. Businesses on both sides want predictability rather than further tensions.

Maintaining tariff ceilings, reducing non-tariff barriers, and reopening suspended economic dialogue mechanisms could gradually rebuild confidence.

The second is supply-chain resilience. The pandemic and geopolitical tensions have exposed vulnerabilities in global production networks.

Rather than pursuing complete decoupling that is costly and disruptive, Washington and Beijing could work toward "smart openness" by continuing cooperation in key sectors while diversifying risk.

The third is cooperation in global economic governance. From energy markets to financial stability, the world economy requires coordination among major powers.

The current volatility in oil supply and shipping routes underscores how disruptions in one region quickly affect the entire global system.

In this context, even limited coordination between China and the US can stabilize markets and reassure investors.

Yet the nature of engagement today differs fundamentally from that of a decade ago. Trump visited China in 2017 when economic interdependence defined the core of China-US relations.

Although concerns about trade imbalances and technology competition were emerging, the relationship remained largely cooperative.

The visit in 2017 featured extensive ceremonial diplomacy, including meetings in Beijing and cultural events at the Forbidden City, reflecting an atmosphere that emphasized partnership and economic opportunity.

The context of the upcoming 2026 visit is far more complex. The bilateral relationship has seen a shift toward more pronounced strategic competition, set against a backdrop that has always included both integration and tensions.

At the same time, the continuing dialogue shows that competition has not eliminated the need for cooperation.

Unlike the Cold War rivalry between the US and the former Soviet Union, the China-US relationship is deeply embedded in the global economy.

Trade flows, financial interdependence, and scientific collaboration continue to link the two countries in ways that make complete disengagement impractical.

The difference between Trump's first visit and his upcoming second visit is expected to reflect a broader transformation: from engagement driven primarily by economic globalization to engagement aimed at managing strategic competition.

In 2017, the goal was to expand economic ties and resolve trade disputes within a framework of partnership.

Now, the objective is more modest but also more urgent — preventing rivalry from spiraling into confrontation while preserving areas of mutually beneficial cooperation.

This evolution does not imply that the bilateral relationship is declining. Rather, it suggests that China and the US must adapt their diplomatic approach to a new reality.

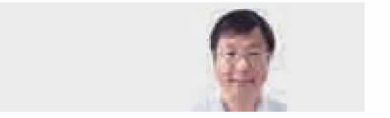
Engagement today not only involves building trust through direct negotiation and consultation, but also includes establishing guardrails that prevent competition from destabilizing the international system.

In this sense, a renewed China-US engagement is indispensable. The world's two largest economies may compete in technology, security and influence, but they also share the responsibility to ensure global stability.

By sustaining dialogue, pursuing pragmatic economic cooperation, and acknowledging the structural changes that have reshaped their relationship, Beijing and Washington can keep competition within bounds and ensure that the international system continues to function in ways conducive to enhanced global peace and prosperity.

The lesson from the past decade is clear: even in an era of sustained competition, engagement is not a concession but a strategic necessity.

The author is a senior research fellow at the Quincy Institute.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Kang Bing

The author is former deputy editor-in-chief of China Daily.
kangbing@chinadaily.com.cn

No-waste cities will turn trash into treasure

The city of Shenzhen has reportedly started mining a landfill long believed to be the largest in China. Since 1983, the landfill served as Shenzhen's primary dumping place.

By the time it stopped operations in 2005, it had accumulated some 2.55 million cubic meters of trash that rose to a 110-meter-high hill. That towering pile of rubbish is located barely a kilometer away from a high-speed train station now under construction.

According to the new plan, about 6,000 cubic meters of trash will be excavated from the landfill daily. The reusable stuff will be recycled while the remainder will be sent to a power plant as fuel.

In a few years, the trash hill will get removed, and the venue will be turned into a science and technology zone focused on artificial intelligence and the digital economy. I look forward to witnessing how Cinderella turns into Snow White.

The Shenzhen project is part of China's efforts to develop no-waste cities, a program that aims to significantly decrease solid waste in urban centers. When the program kicked off in 2019, 16 cities and regions, including Shenzhen, were chosen as pilot zones.

Public awareness campaigns were rolled out, urging people to prioritize environmental protection. Waste classification drives were conducted, free plastic bags were restricted and excessive packaging was curbed. At the same time, a central government-owned company was established to strengthen the recycling sector.

The efforts proved fruitful, and within three years, the pilot program was expanded to 121 cities and regions. Today, nearly 200 urban centers are part of the program and plans are to cover the entire country by the end of 2035.

The Shenzhen project is part of China's efforts to develop no-waste cities, a program that aims to significantly decrease solid waste in urban centers.

Since China embarked on its reform and opening-up nearly 50 years ago, the authorities have followed a trial-first approach to solving major issues in the country. With a population of over 1.4 billion and great disparity in development levels and cultural backgrounds, sweeping programs cannot be rolled out at one go.

The same is true for the manner in which the no-waste city program is being implemented.

Turning waste into a national resource is not an easy task, especially because the project requires full cooperation from the public.

It needs people to change their waste disposal habits, which may affect the interests of different social and economic groups.

When waste classification was introduced about 10 years ago, we were told to classify household waste into four categories — recyclable, hazardous, kitchen waste and others — and throw them into four different bins. Initially, compliance was high.

But after some time, when we realized that nobody was supervising our garbage disposal and when we saw neighbors breaking the rules without getting punished, we lazybones followed suit. There are four trash bins at the exit of our apartment building though we have long given up the classification at home.

That, however, does not mean the waste goes without being classified.

The garbage collector in our compound meticulously searches all the bins to ensure that plastic bottles, packaging boxes, clothes and metallic items are set aside for sale before he takes the remaining waste to the community collection station on his electric tricycle.

With recyclable materials collected from a dozen or so trash bins in our complex for over a decade, the garbage collector has not only raised his family in Beijing but also supported his son's higher education.

To the middle-aged collector, the trash bins are a small but steady source of income. And he allows no interference from outsiders in his livelihood. I once saw him confront an outsider who attempted to "mine" the bins without his permission.

Most of the waste coming out of China's households is now classified not by families but by the waste collectors.

This is very different from the original design of the classification campaign, though the end result is acceptable if all reusable items are sent for recycling and lead to a decrease in solid waste.

We still have a long way to go to realize the dream of no-waste cities. On the way, we may even go astray sometimes. But now that we are aiming in the right direction, I firmly believe we will eventually get there. Trust me.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:31 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:31 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

EHIZUELEN MICHAEL MITCHELL OMORUYI

Practical enabler

In a world where trade is increasingly politicized, China's zero-tariff approach offers an alternative vision — one based on openness, partnership and shared development



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY



At a time when protectionism, geopolitical fragmentation and industrial rivalries are impacting the global economy, China's decision to grant zero-tariff treatment to the 53 African countries with which it maintains diplomatic relations stands out as both strategic and consequential. It is more than a trade adjustment — it is a clear signal about the future direction of South-South economic cooperation. China's approach signals a move away from traditional North-South hierarchies toward more horizontal, partnership-based models of cooperation that emphasize mutual benefit, market access and shared growth.

Global trade is under growing strain. The World Trade Organization reports continued uncertainty in trade policies into 2026, alongside uneven and fragile growth. Against this backdrop, China's move to eliminate tariffs on exports from the 53 African countries it has diplomatic ties with offers a clear alternative: It reaffirms that openness — rather than fragmentation — remains significant to sustainable growth.

Recent WTO monitoring trends indicate new tariffs and other import measures increased more than fourfold from mid-October 2024 to mid-October 2025 compared to the prior 12-month period, marking the highest coverage in over 15 years of WTO trade monitoring. China's zero-tariff policy therefore can function as a stabilizing countermeasure, preserving export opportunities for African economies in an increasingly restrictive global trade environment.

This policy reinforces China's role as a leading practitioner of South-South cooperation, shifting the emphasis from assistance to market-driven opportunity. It aligns with broader development goals while giving African economies direct access to one of the world's largest consumer markets.

The scale of China-Africa engagement underscores the importance of this initiative. According to China's General Administration of Customs, bilateral trade between Africa and China exceeded $348 billion in 2025, with continued expansion into 2026 driven by commodity exports and manufacturing linkages. Africa is deepening its integration into global value chains, with China acting as a central partner. Removing tariffs strengthens this trajectory by lowering costs, improving competitiveness and encouraging export growth. Moreover, China's increasing share of African exports in some key sectors means that the tariff removal not only boosts trade volumes but also reduces price volatility risks for exporters, enabling more predictable planning and investment decisions.

For African economies, the implications are immediate. In agriculture, duty-free access enhances the competitiveness of products such as cocoa, coffee, sesame, tea and fresh produce. China's middle-income group — now numbering more than 400 million — continues to drive demand for high-quality imports, creating opportunities for African exporters. The expansion of agricultural exports, including products such as Kenyan avocados, shows how improved market access can generate tangible gains.

At the same time, a core challenge persists across the "farm to market" system: Many African farmers produce more than ever but capture limited value because they remain confined to fragmented local markets, dependent on intermediaries and disconnected from global pricing and demand. By eliminating tariffs, China's policy can help transform this dynamic into a "farm to global market" system, creating stronger demand signals, improving price competitiveness and encouraging investment in logistics, processing and digital trade platforms that connect producers directly to international buyers. This shift is particularly significant for smallholder farmers, who constitute the majority of Africa's agricultural workforce.

In the minerals sector, the impact is even more strategic. Africa holds significant reserves of lithium, copper and rare earth elements — resources essential for the green transition and advanced manufacturing sectors. Zero tariffs improve price competitiveness and can attract further investment in extraction and processing in Africa. However, long-term benefits will depend on whether some African countries can move beyond raw material exports to value-added production, which underscores the importance of industrial policy coordination.

Manufacturing also stands to gain. Light industries such as textiles, garments and leather goods can leverage tariff-free access to enter the Chinese market, supporting job creation. Those African countries investing in industrial parks and export-oriented production are particularly well positioned to benefit. Emerging sectors, including processed foods, pharmaceuticals and consumer goods, offer additional opportunities for diversification. Historical experience from export-led economies suggests that preferential market access can serve as a catalyst for industrial take-off when combined with supportive policies such as skills development, infrastructure investment and access to finance.

Beyond sectoral gains, the policy has broader developmental implications. By facilitating trade, it supports industrialization, employment and income growth. It also complements existing cooperation frameworks, including infrastructure investment and industrial partnerships, creating a more integrated model linking trade, investment and capacity-building. This reflects a broader shift toward development ecosystems, where trade policy, infrastructure, finance and technology interact to produce cumulative economic effects rather than isolated gains.

Yet a deeper challenge remains: coordination across fragmented markets. In some African economies, increased production and trade integration have not translated into proportional gains in income or value capture. This is because producers, exporters, logistics providers, financiers and regulators operate in poorly aligned systems marked by information gaps and weak linkages. As a result, companies struggle to scale production, meet standards and move up value chains.

In this context, China's zero-tariff policy goes beyond conventional trade liberalization. By guaranteeing large-scale market access, it reduces uncertainty, anchors demand and creates stronger incentives for coordination. Lower tariffs make it possible for companies to invest more in logistics, quality upgrading and market integration, aligning incentives across supply chains. When combined with digital tools — such as e-commerce platforms, digital payments and logistics tracking systems — this can help overcome coordination failures and connect fragmented markets. Digital coordination infrastructure further enhances this process by enabling real-time communication, improving transaction efficiency and increasing transparency across supply chains.

To fully benefit, however, African countries must address structural constraints. Logistics inefficiencies, high transport costs and non-tariff barriers — including certification requirements and customs procedures — continue to restrict trade potential.

Maximizing the benefits of zero tariffs will therefore require complementary policies. African countries must invest in productive capacity, strengthen their regulatory systems and deepen regional integration through initiatives such as the African Continental Free Trade Area. Upgrading value chains and improving export quality will also be essential to translate market access into sustained growth.

Therefore, China's zero-tariff policy should be seen not as an endpoint, but as an enabling framework. It opens the door to deeper economic engagement and practical regional cooperation.

The author is an associate professor and the executive director of the Center for Nigerian Studies at the Institute of African Studies at Zhejiang Normal University. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

MA HANZHI

African quick step

China's zero-tariff initiative exemplifies its sustained support for developing countries both in multilateral trading system and industrial development





WU PING / FOR CHINA DAILY

Starting May 1, China extended zero-tariff treatment to the 53 African countries that have diplomatic relations with China. Concurrently, it will advance the negotiation and signing of China-Africa Economic Partnership for Shared Development and upgrade green lanes to further expand the access of African agricultural exports to the Chinese market.

According to an announcement by the Customs Tariff Commission of the State Council, from May 1, 2026 to April 30, 2028, China will apply zero-tariff treatment to in-quota goods imported from 20 African countries that have established diplomatic ties with China and are not classified as the least developed countries, provided they comply with the rules of origin and hold the required certificate of origin.

For the 33 least developed African countries that have diplomatic ties with China, the Chinese government has extended zero-tariff treatment to 100 percent of their tariff lines, effective Dec 1, 2024. This makes China the first major economy in the world to grant unilateral, full-coverage zero-tariff treatment to all African countries that have diplomatic relations with it, and to all least developed countries that have diplomatic ties with it. This initiative is key to upgrading China-Africa trade and economic cooperation.

First, the zero-tariff treatment meets Africa's strong desire to expand exports to China. For too long, some African goods have faced unstable export channels and relatively high market access barriers, making it difficult to reach markets consistently. China's zero-tariff policy can help smooth these channels and share the opportunities of the Chinese market with the continent. This move can also help enhance the competitiveness of local African products and create profits for businesses on both sides.

In the short term, zero-tariff treatment will notably help African agricultural, mining and light industrial products enter the market more easily. Countries with production advantages in agriculture, such as Kenya, South Africa and Cote d'Ivoire, are particularly well-positioned to benefit directly.

For example, China and Kenya have signed the Early Harvest Arrangement of the Agreement on Economic Partnership for Shared Development. Under this arrangement, Kenyan tea, coffee and avocados entered the Chinese market duty-free and quota-free starting May 1. Similarly, under the early harvest arrangement between China and the Republic of the Congo, 100 percent of tariff lines were zero-rated for Congolese goods, allowing agricultural specialties such as tuckahoe, peanuts and cocoa beans to enter the market more quickly, while the Republic of the Congo will also further open its market to Chinese goods.

As the largest developing member of the World Trade Organization, China has long actively supported the integration of developing countries into the multilateral trading system. The zero-tariff initiative is undoubtedly the latest example of this effort.

Second, the zero-tariff initiative opens new doors for Africa to better harness its critical mineral wealth. Against the backdrop of the global green energy transition, Africa's rich deposits of cobalt, platinum group metals, and other key minerals have made it a vital hub for resource supply. Yet, due to limited processing capacity, fragmented industrial chains and poor infrastructure, some African nations remain trapped in the "resource curse" — exporting raw materials with low value addition while struggling to achieve economic transformation.

The zero-tariff policy can inject new dynamic into the upgrading of African mineral resources. Previously, Chinese companies preferred to import raw ores from Africa, as processed mineral products faced high tariff barriers, making local processing economically unappealing. Now, under the zero-tariff framework, processed African minerals — such as refined metals and precursors — can enter China duty-free, provided they meet the rules of origin. The requirement of "regional value content of not less than 40 percent" is achievable, since local ores, African-origin materials, and even Chinese-origin inputs exported to Africa all count toward the threshold.

This differential cost makes deep processing in Africa more profitable than simply exporting raw ores, thereby incentivizing Chinese companies to shift from "buying ores" to "investing in processing chains" — building complete mineral supply chains in Africa, from exploration and extraction to processing, along with integrated upstream and downstream industrial parks. This transformation not only enhances Africa's local processing capacity but also helps turn its resource advantages into genuine development strengths.

Third, this preferential access paves the way for a closer shared China-Africa market. Zero tariffs mark only the beginning of deeper pragmatic cooperation. The ultimate goal is to move both sides toward a free trade-oriented partnership. So far, China has signed new framework agreements on economic partnership for shared development with 34 African countries, creating long-term, stable and predictable institutional safeguards for deepening China-Africa trade and investment.

As the benefits of zero tariffs fully materialize, each side will come to better recognize the value of the other's market. That growing recognition will, in turn, accelerate the implementation of existing framework agreements, pave the way toward bilateral free trade agreements and eventually lead to a free trade area between China and African countries.

Against the backdrop of building a China-Africa shared market, cooperation on production capacity between the two sides is poised for unprecedented major opportunities. China has the world's most complete industry chains, while Africa is home to the largest number of developing countries. They are highly complementary in their industry and supply chains.

Zero-tariff policies and institutional arrangements will work in tandem, helping Chinese enterprises go deeper into the African market.

From a market access perspective, zero tariffs will lower the export costs of products made by Chinese-invested factories in Africa. Locally processed goods that meet rules of origin can enter the Chinese market duty-free, improving the expected profitability and economic viability of value-added processing investments in Africa.

From an investment security standpoint, signing agreements on economic partnership for shared development gives Chinese companies stronger legal protections when investing in or building factories across Africa. This reduces risk and creates a stable, predictable environment for long-term operations. Together, these two forces will help the continent build its own manufacturing base. The result is a collaborative model — Chinese technology plus African resources, localized production — that raises Africa's position in the global industry chains.

The deep integration of Chinese capital and technology with African resources will give rise to more "Made in Africa" goods. This will not only meet Africa's own development needs, but also keep such goods flowing into the Chinese market, helping the continent attract investments from China and other countries, move toward a new height in global manufacturing and establish itself as the next world production hub. In this sense, one important role of zero tariffs is to build confidence in the deep integration of the two large markets of China and Africa for a shared future in multilateral trade.

The author is an assistant research fellow at the Department for Developing Countries Studies at the China Institute of International Studies. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:31 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:31 PM

BUSINESS

Qwen-Taobao integration to boost 618 shopping

By **CHENG YU**
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese tech company Alibaba Group said on Monday it has fully integrated its artificial intelligence chatbot Qwen with its super e-commerce platform Taobao, allowing users to search for products, compare items and complete purchases through natural language conversations.

The move marks a major step from Chinese tech firms toward turning AI chatbots into full-scale shopping gateways and intensifying the global race in AI commercialization, especially when there are only a few days ahead of China's annual 618 shopping festival.

Under the new move, users can open the Qwen app and ask the AI assistant to recommend products, compare prices and place orders directly on Taobao. Within the Taobao app itself, users can also access Qwen, offering functions such as AI-powered virtual try-ons, discount calculations and automatic low-price deal hunting.

In a trial, China Daily found that the Qwen app was able to handle multi-turn conversations and refine recommendations based on evolving user preferences, signaling how AI systems are moving beyond chat interfaces into tools capable of executing real commercial transactions and services.

In March, ByteDance began testing the integration of its Doubao AI chatbot with Douyin e-commerce, enabling users to complete purchases and payments directly inside the Doubao app without jumping to the short-video platform.

The timing is significant. China's annual 618 shopping festival, one of the country's largest online retail events, is about to begin, with both Alibaba and ByteDance positioning AI as the front door to online shopping.

According to QuestMobile data for the first quarter, ByteDance's Doubao had 345 million monthly active users, compared with 166 million for Qwen. The gap has increased pressure on Alibaba to secure a foothold in AI-driven shopping by tightly integrating Qwen with Taobao's vast product ecosystem, helping prevent users from drifting toward rival AI platforms.

The integration also marks a broader restructuring inside Alibaba aimed at accelerating AI commercialization. In March, the company established the Alibaba token hub business group to unify AI model development, platform services and consumer applications under a more coordinated strategy.

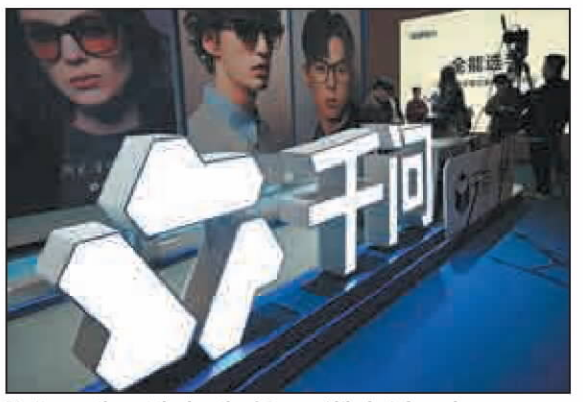
Alibaba has been laying the groundwork for AI commerce for months. During this year's Spring Festival holiday, it launched a heavily promoted campaign offering billions of yuan in subsidies, allowing users to order items such as milk tea through AI voice commands for as little as 1 fen (0.15 cent).

According to the 2026 Government Work Report delivered at this year's two sessions, China will "advance and expand the AI Plus Initiative", and for the first time, the country will "create new forms of smart economy".

The country will also promote faster application of new-generation intelligent terminals and AI agents and encourage large-scale commercial application of AI in key sectors and fields, so as to foster new forms and models of AI-native business, the report said.

Lu Ming, an economist and a member of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, said AI-powered products and services are lowering the cost of making purchasing decisions by simplifying interactions between users and digital platforms in China.

"AI is breaking the traditional boundaries of consumer groups and geographic regions. It is evolving from a chat tool into an assistant that can actually complete tasks," Lu said. "To some extent, AI is also driving consumption by expanding user groups."



Visitors gather at the booth of Qwen, Alibaba's large language model, during a high-tech expo in Shanghai on March 12.
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



An aerial image shows Piraeus Port in Greece. The port's annual throughput has exceeded 5.6 million TEUs so far, ranking 25th globally. XINHUA

Piraeus Port rises on back of stronger ties

Efforts from major SOE bear fruit as Greek trade terminal reverses losses

By **REN QI**
renqi@chinadaily.com.cn

> "These 10 years mark the decade in which the port of Piraeus moved from a corner of the Mediterranean to a global hub."
>
> **Han Chao,** chairman of Piraeus Port Authority

Since China COSCO Shipping Corp officially took over its operations a decade ago, Piraeus Port in Greece has transformed from an aging facility into a highly coordinated global hub, achieving remarkable growth in capacity, revenue and technological advancement.

In 2016, the annual container throughput of the port was approximately 680,000 TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units), ranking 93rd globally with outdated facilities and limited capacity. Today, it has become one of the busiest ports in the Mediterranean, with annual throughput exceeding 5.6 million TEUs, ranking as high as 25th globally.

Over the past decade, the transformation of the port's "hard power" has been the most intuitive. Terminals have been continuously extended, deep-water channels dredged, automated equipment gradually put into use, and bridge cranes and yard systems constantly upgraded. The once scattered and inefficient operational scenes have gradually transformed into a highly coordinated modern operating system.

Piraeus Port has now become the fourth-largest container port, the second-largest cruise homeport, and the largest ferry port in Europe, as well as an important roll-on/roll-off automobile hub and ship repair center in the Eastern Mediterranean.

"These 10 years mark the decade in which the port of Piraeus moved from a corner of the Mediterranean to a global hub," said Han Chao, chairman of the port operator Piraeus Port Authority SA.

In recent years, the port's revenue and profit have continued to grow, reversing a long-term trend of losses. COSCO Shipping has invested over 10 billion yuan ($1.47 billion) locally, creating thousands of direct jobs and generating tens of thousands of indirect employment opportunities.

"It has changed not only the port itself, but also the relationship between the city and its people," said Yannis Moralis, mayor of Piraeus.

According to the recently released financial report of Piraeus Port Authority, the company's total revenue in 2025 reached approximately 251 million euros ($295.5 million), a year-on-year increase of 8.6 percent; operating profit stood at 132 million euros, up 2.2 percent year-on-year.

Savvas Sanozidis, secretary of the board of directors of Piraeus Port Authority, said the transmission and integration of COSCO Shipping's corporate values have effectively strengthened supervision over management, promoting transparency, prudence and a high sense of responsibility in all aspects of work, providing a strong guarantee for the company's long-term sustainable development.

Stefanos Gkikas, deputy minister of maritime affairs and insular policy of Greece, stated that the fruitful cooperation between COSCO Shipping and Piraeus Port Authority over the past decade has significantly enhanced the port's competitiveness and further consolidated Greece's position in the international shipping sector.

The development path of the port is also quietly transforming. Stepping into the office building of the container terminal, one can see large screens displaying vessel dynamics, operational progress, and equipment status in real time.

According to Han, the port has built a digital monitoring platform covering the entire port area and introduced 5G and artificial intelligence technologies, driving the production organization method to evolve from "manual planning" to "intelligent coordination".

Looking ahead to the next decade, the development blueprint for Piraeus Port is clearly defined.

"The future port will be smarter and greener," Han added.

According to Han, the construction of the COSCO Shipping Piraeus Port park project was officially launched in April. Once completed, it will become a modern center integrating sports, leisure, and social activities.

Saint Laurent restarts sales in Hangzhou

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn

Luxury fashion brand Saint Laurent has resumed normal sales to an area in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, previously reported as "blacklisted" amid concerns over high return rates and livestreaming-driven consumption patterns.

Tests conducted by The Paper on the brand's official Tmall flagship store on Monday showed that addresses in the Yingfeng Street area of Xiaoshan district, which had previously been denied service, could once again place orders.

A report on Sunday by The Paper found that 20 addresses in Yingfeng were rejected for sale by Saint Laurent, while changing the shipping address to other Hangzhou districts allowed orders to go through.

Yingfeng subdistrict, dubbed the "Manhattan of Hangzhou", was established in mid-2020 and spans 23.1 square kilometers. It hosts a dense cluster of cultural media companies and livestreaming e-commerce agencies. The area has become a focal point of the fast-growing livestreaming economy in the e-commerce capital.

Earlier reports highlighted that some merchants, facing behaviors such as "wear and return" by livestreaming consumers, had implemented self-protective measures including regional blacklisting.

The story quickly attracted widespread attention. The controversy over Saint Laurent has now drawn attention to other luxury brands. The Paper also found that Miu Miu, the Italian label under the Prada Group, also limits sales of some items on its Tmall flagship store to at least three Hangzhou subdistricts.

Some merchants defend such measures as risk management, citing high return rates and disputes. Yingfeng's permanent population exceeds 220,000, with roughly 15,000 registered enterprises and a youth demographic of around 70 percent, far above local averages — factors that may contribute to elevated return activity. Courier staff told The Paper that the concentration of livestreaming businesses in Yingfeng may explain the region's high return incidence.

Industry experts stress the fine line between business autonomy and consumer rights.

Cheng Weixiong, a fashion analyst and founder of Shanghai Liangqi Brand Management Co Ltd, said from the merchant's perspective, facing repeated instances of malicious and abnormal returns from the region, blacklisting is indeed a last resort.

However, Cheng noted that from the consumer's standpoint, implementing a blanket ban that punishes everyone for the actions of a few is fundamentally unfair.

Cheng said: "Of course, platforms cannot simply wash their hands of the matter.

"They must promptly halt such regional blacklisting while implementing precise risk controls. The goal should be to prevent a minority from acting badly, ensuring that everyone else does not have to foot the bill."

A clothing goods seller, Cathy Huang said that blacklisting entire subdistricts was often their self-protective measure after individuals kept breaking restrictions via alternative accounts. "As a seller, I can only avoid risks this way," she said.

Some e-commerce operators described frequent returns of worn items, sometimes bearing perfume or makeup. "Some consumers treat returns as a free way to showcase clothes in livestreams, leaving merchants to clean items for resale," Huang said.

Brazil's visa waiver to enhance bilateral partnership

By **LI JING**
lijing2009@chinadaily.com.cn

> Brazil is the most distinctive destination in South America for Chinese tourists, and its cultural attractions such as football and Carnival have long appealed to Chinese visitors."
>
> **Xu Ning,** general manager of the Australia, Americas and Africa division at Beijing-based travel agency UTour

Brazil's decision to grant short-term visa-free entry to Chinese citizens is expected to do more than stimulate tourism demand. Analysts say the move lowers barriers for business travel and will help deepen trade and investment ties between the two major developing economies.

The Brazilian government announced on Thursday that holders of ordinary Chinese passports would be allowed to enter the country visa-free for stays of up to 30 days starting Monday. The policy will remain in effect through Dec 31.

Following the announcement, Chinese online travel platforms reported an immediate rise in interest in Brazil. Data show searches for Brazil-related destinations climbing sharply within hours, with cities such as Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Salvador among the most searched by Chinese travelers.

"Brazil has become one of the fastest-growing long-haul destinations for Chinese travelers in recent years," said Yang Han, a researcher at Chinese travel platform Qunar's big data research institute.

During the just-concluded May Day holiday, Brazil ranked among the top 10 outbound destinations for Chinese tourists, with flight bookings from China to Brazil rising 95 percent year-on-year, Yang said.

Travel agencies expect the visa waiver to further boost demand, particularly during the upcoming summer travel season and the Mid-Autumn Festival and National Day holiday period later this year.

"Brazil is the most distinctive destination in South America for Chinese tourists, and its cultural attractions such as football and Carnival have long appealed to Chinese visitors," said Xu Ning, general manager of the Australia, Americas and Africa division at Beijing-based travel agency UTour.

Because Brazil often serves as a gateway to the region, Xu added that easier entry could also encourage multi-country trips across South America, including itineraries covering countries such as Argentina, Chile and Peru.

Beyond tourism, analysts say the visa waiver could reduce frictions in commercial exchanges between China and Brazil, where face-to-face visits remain important for negotiations, site inspections and investment discussions.

"Visa-free travel will facilitate the entire commercial process — from market research and negotiations to factory inspections and post-investment personnel mobility," said Zhou Mi, a senior researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, during an earlier interview with China Daily.

The policy comes as economic ties between the two countries continue to deepen. Data from the Brazilian Ministry of Development, Industry, Trade and Services show bilateral trade volume reached $171 billion in 2025, an increase of 8.2 percent year-on-year. The figures cement China's status as Brazil's largest trading partner for 17 consecutive years.

Brazilian businesses are also viewing the policy as a practical step toward smoother commercial engagement.

"Local companies, especially in tourism, trade, services and real estate, see the policy change as positive, as it reduces administrative barriers and facilitates short-term travel from China," said Gabriela Lima, a labor partner at Brazilian law firm TozziniFreire.

Businesses that rely on international mobility see the measure as enabling exploratory visits, negotiations and client engagement, she said.

Lima added that easier travel could increase the frequency of site visits and early-stage investment discussions, helping companies move projects forward more quickly.

Analysts say sectors where China and Brazil have strong economic complementarities may benefit most from easier travel.

China has advantages in manufacturing, equipment supply and infrastructure construction, while Brazil is a global powerhouse in agricultural exports such as soybeans, beef and iron ore.

As companies seek new partnerships, sectors including infrastructure, energy, agribusiness and technology may see more dynamic engagement, Lima said.

Beyond goods trade, analysts say easier mobility may also support growth in service-sector cooperation, such as finance and education, areas where bilateral exchanges remain relatively limited.

Despite the expected boost to exchanges, analysts caution that visa facilitation alone will not remove deeper structural barriers affecting bilateral commerce.

Under the policy, visa-free entry is limited to stays of up to 30 days and does not permit work activities.

"In practice, more regulated sectors are likely to remain attentive to the limits of the measure, particularly the restriction on work activities under visitor status," Lima said.

The temporary nature of the policy could also limit long-term planning for some firms, requiring companies to monitor whether the arrangement will be extended beyond the end of 2026.

"Visa facilitation is not a cure-all," Zhou said. "But it is a clear signal — and an important step toward stronger bilateral cooperation."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:31 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:31 PM

BUSINESS

Real estate shows signs of rebound

Sector's strengthening being driven by second-hand home sales in key cities

By JIANG XUEQING
jiangxueqing@chinadaily.com.cn

China's real estate market is navigating a pivotal transition toward more sustainable growth, with early signs of stabilization emerging as policy support gains traction and market confidence gradually strengthens.

While the sector's adjustment has weighed on home sales and mortgage demand, the moderation in lending reflects a broader shift toward improved asset quality and more prudent risk management.

Against this backdrop, annual reports from listed banks show that by the end of 2025, the combined outstanding balance of residential mortgages at China's six largest State-owned commercial lenders stood at about 24.48 trillion yuan ($3.6 trillion), down 711.52 billion yuan from the end of 2024, a year-on-year decline of 2.82 percent.

Among them, the outstanding balance of residential mortgages at Industrial and Commercial Bank of China fell by 207.31 billion yuan to 5.88 trillion yuan; China Construction Bank declined by 196.53 billion yuan to 5.99 trillion yuan; Agricultural Bank of China dropped by 168.24 billion yuan to 4.82 trillion yuan; Bank of China declined by 106.48 billion yuan to 3.98 trillion yuan; Bank of Communications fell by 24.15 billion yuan to 1.44 trillion yuan; and Postal Savings Bank of China decreased by 8.81 billion yuan to 2.37 trillion yuan.

These six major banks are the backbone of China's mortgage lending market. According to the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, the outstanding balance of residential mortgages across financial institutions stood at 37.01 trillion yuan at the end of the fourth quarter of 2025, down 1.8 percent year-on-year, with a full-year decrease of 676.8 billion yuan.

All six banks reported negative growth in mortgage balances last year, though to varying degrees. The smallest decline was at PSBC (0.37 percent), followed by BOCOM (1.65 percent) and BOC (2.6 percent), while larger declines were seen at ICBC (3.41 percent), ABC (3.38 percent) and CCB (3.18 percent).

Xue Hongyan, a special researcher at Jiangsu Su Merchants Bank, said the decline in mortgage balances is a natural result of the real estate cycle adjustment, reflecting both weak demand for new mortgages and the runoff of existing loans.

Wang Pengbo, chief analyst at market consultancy Botong Analysys, echoed this view, noting that the decline was driven by a combination of early mortgage repayments by households and subdued homebuying demand last year.

Affected by macroeconomic conditions and the downturn in the property sector, nonperforming mortgage loan ratios have generally risen across the banking industry. By the end of 2025, among the six largest State-owned commercial lenders, only BOC saw its nonperforming mortgage loan ratio edge down by 0.01 percentage point to 0.6 percent, while the other five recorded increases. ICBC's ratio rose by 0.33 percentage point to 1.06 percent, and BOCOM's ratio increased by 0.43 percentage point to 1.01 percent.

Wang Jingwu, senior executive vice-president of ICBC, said that amid economic restructuring, property market adjustment and temporary imbalances between supply and demand, the bank's nonperforming residential mortgage loan ratio has entered a short-term upward trend, which is broadly in line with the banking industrywide trend.

However, he emphasized that China's economic fundamentals remain solid, with strong resilience and significant potential, and that the long-term positive outlook remains unchanged. Risks in personal lending are therefore manageable. He added that ICBC is closely monitoring real estate market trends and implementing national policies aimed at establishing a new development model for the property sector, promoting better housing and stabilizing the market.



Potential homebuyers examine floor plans, prices and promotional offers in front of a model of a residential complex in Huizhou, Guangdong province, on May 1. ZHOU NAN / FOR CHINA DAILY



Clients apply for personal housing provident fund loans at a branch of Industrial and Commercial Bank of China in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region on Sept 19, 2024. FAN SHAOGUANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Wu Jian, executive vice-president of BOC, said that despite increasing external uncertainties, the underlying conditions supporting China's long-term growth remain intact. BOC will strengthen forward-looking risk assessment, firmly guard against systemic risks, further optimize its credit structure, and enhance risk management in areas such as real estate, local government debt and structural imbalances in key industries.

Zhang Hui, president of BOC, said the bank supported efforts to stabilize the property market last year by issuing more than 500 billion yuan in residential mortgages. This year, it is steadily expanding both mortgage lending and non-housing consumer loans, promoting coordinated development across products, customer segments and consumption scenarios to build a comprehensive consumer ecosystem.

From late 2025 to early 2026, the real estate market exhibited new characteristics: on the one hand, the reduction in interest rates for existing mortgages and housing provident fund loans has pushed the cost of home purchases to a new low; on the other hand, further targeted, effective and sustainable policy support is still needed to bolster market confidence, said Li Yong, an analyst at Soochow Securities.

Zhou Wanfu, executive vice-president of BOCOM, noted that while the real estate market experienced a brief upswing in the first quarter of last year, with mortgage loans growing year-on-year, it remained in a period of deep adjustment in the first quarter of this year, and BOCOM saw mortgage repayments exceed new disbursements, resulting in negative growth. However, he also pointed out that the volume of mortgage applications at the bank has risen significantly since March, up around 15 percent compared with both the first two quarters and the latter half of last year.

Zhou believes this signals a stabilization in the property market. If the trend continues, mortgage lending could gradually return to positive growth this year, helping drive retail loan growth toward target levels.

Supported by a series of ongoing policy measures, China's real estate market showed a trend of steady improvement in the first quarter. Transaction volumes for existing homes in some major cities have rebounded significantly since March.

On March 22, the number of contracts signed at second-hand home agencies in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, hit a five-year high for a single day. On April 11, Shanghai's daily online transaction volume for second-hand homes also reached a five-year high. Some institutions view this as a positive signal that the real estate market is likely to bottom out by the end of 2026.

Data from real estate information provider CRIC show that the transaction area for second-hand homes in 20 major cities nationwide reached about 17.97 million square meters in March, up 117 percent month-on-month and 6 percent year-on-year. In April, the transaction area for second-hand homes in the 20 key cities was approximately 17.93 million sq m, up 17 percent year-on-year. The cumulative transaction area for the first four months in these cities was approximately 59.18 million sq m, an increase of 8 percent year-on-year.

Analysts said this is not merely a short-term rebound from an oversold market, but rather a sign that market confidence is steadily strengthening as mortgage rates are gradually lowered and home purchase policies are gradually relaxed. Furthermore, this trend is likely to continue into the second quarter.

Nation's 'Big Six' banks upgrading consumer credit business

By JIANG XUEQING

Guided by policies aimed at expanding domestic demand and stimulating consumption, the personal credit business of China's six largest State-owned commercial banks has undergone notable structural changes.

Personal consumer loans and personal business loans at several banks have achieved double-digit growth, becoming key drivers of overall personal lending expansion, while personal mortgage loans and credit card businesses have contracted to varying degrees.

By the end of 2025, the outstanding balance of personal consumer loans at China's "Big Six" lenders totaled approximately 3.34 trillion yuan ($491.3 billion), an increase of 569.71 billion yuan from the previous year-end, up 20.56 percent year-on-year. Outstanding personal business loans reached 9.36 trillion yuan, increasing by 1.26 trillion yuan from the previous year-end, up 15.63 percent year-on-year.

This trend broadly aligns with the People's Bank of China's statistical report on the credit structure of financial institutions. By the end of the fourth quarter of 2025, outstanding household loans in renminbi and foreign currencies totaled 83.28 trillion yuan. Specifically, outstanding operating loans grew by 4 percent year-on-year to 25.11 trillion yuan, recording an increase of 937.8 billion yuan. Outstanding consumer loans excluding personal housing loans totaled 21.16 trillion yuan, up 0.7 percent year-on-year, marking an increase of 180.2 billion yuan.

In contrast, outstanding RMB property loans fell to 51.95 trillion yuan by the end of the fourth quarter, down 1.6 percent year-on-year. Among them, outstanding personal housing loans totaled 37.01 trillion yuan, down 1.8 percent year-on-year, with a full-year decline of 676.8 billion yuan.

Yang Haiping, a nonresident research fellow with the Beijing Wealth Management Industry Association, said that despite continued policy support for the property market and signs of recovery in housing sales, the share of residential mortgages in banks' asset allocation is still likely to trend downward.

By the end of 2025, the outstanding balances of personal consumer loans and personal business loans at the "Big Six" banks had both recorded strong year-on-year growth. In personal consumer lending, with the exception of Postal Savings Bank of China, the other five largest banks all achieved double-digit growth. China Construction Bank posted the fastest growth rate at 29.41 percent, followed by Bank of China and Agricultural Bank of China at 28.35 percent and 26.95 percent, respectively.

In personal business lending, four of the "Big Six" banks achieved double-digit growth. CCB again recorded the fastest growth rate at 28.77 percent, followed by ABC and Industrial and Commercial Bank of China at 19.92 percent and 15.03 percent, respectively.

Notably, the growth rates of personal consumer loans and personal business loans at the six largest State-owned commercial lenders were significantly higher than the average growth rate for financial institutions disclosed by PBOC, China's central bank.

Dong Ximiao, chief economist at Merchants Union Consumer Finance, said that large banks, backed by extensive branch networks and strong brand recognition, are able to attract deposits at relatively low costs. This gives them a competitive advantage in offering consumer and business loans at interest rates that small and medium-sized banks struggle to match.



A staff member at the personal loan center of a China Construction Bank branch in Hai'an, Jiangsu province, processes a personal mortgage loan for clients on May 17, 2024. XU JINGBAI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Since 2024, large banks have seen a marked acceleration in personal consumer lending growth, while some small and medium-sized banks have experienced sharp declines in consumer and business lending due to factors such as new regulations on loan facilitation. This reflects the growing divergence in the retail credit structure across China's banking sector, Dong said.

In terms of asset quality, the nonperforming loan ratios for personal consumer loans among the "Big Six" banks showed mixed trends last year. By the end of 2025, CCB's nonperforming personal consumer loan ratio had fallen from 1.09 percent at the end of 2024 to 1.07 percent, while ABC's ratio had declined from 1.55 percent to 1.46 percent, indicating improved asset quality. Meanwhile, the nonperforming personal consumer loan ratios at Bank of Communications, ICBC, BOC and PSBC all increased. BOCOM recorded the largest increase, rising 0.65 percentage point to 1.77 percent.

During the same period, except for CCB, whose nonperforming personal business loan ratio edged down from 1.59 percent to 1.58 percent, the other five large State-owned commercial lenders all reported increases in their nonperforming personal business loan ratios. BOCOM saw the sharpest rise, climbing 0.73 percentage point to 1.94 percent.

Li Jianjiang, executive vice-president and chief risk officer of CCB, said that in response to rising risks in the retail banking sector in recent years, CCB has significantly optimized its retail credit risk management mechanisms, strengthened risk controls at key stages of the lending process and advanced centralized retail risk management practices. These measures began to show results in 2025, with the pace of increase in nonperforming personal loans narrowing year-on-year.

Li added that risk prevention and control in the retail segment will remain one of the bank's key priorities going forward. As various control measures are further implemented and refined, the bank's asset quality is expected to remain generally stable.

Wang Jingwu, senior executive vice-president and chief risk officer of ICBC, said that with the implementation of policies such as trade-in programs for consumer goods and interest subsidies for personal consumer loans — along with the accelerated rollout of broader policy support measures — the market foundation for personal lending is expected to gradually improve, and the asset quality of personal loans should return to more reasonable levels.

Wang said ICBC has adjusted its internal organizational structure and functions by establishing a dedicated personal credit business department, promoting greater centralization and specialization in personal lending operations. The bank has also strengthened digital and intelligent risk management tools, expanded product innovation and supply in consumer and business lending, actively resolved hidden risks and intensified efforts in the disposal of nonperforming assets.

Through coordinated efforts, the deterioration trend in the bank's personal loans has already begun to slow, he said.

Leading national joint-stock commercial lenders are also stepping up risk management for consumer loans. China Merchants Bank, known for its strong retail banking business, reported a nonperforming loan ratio of 1.22 percent for its small and micro business loans as of the end of 2025, up 0.43 percentage point from the previous year-end. In its 2025 annual report, the bank stated that it will closely monitor market developments, improve its ability to assess risk trends, continuously enrich risk monitoring data dimensions, and iteratively upgrade quantitative risk control models to enable early identification, early warning and early resolution of risks in high-risk businesses.

At the same time, CMB has actively responded to consumption-boosting policies and adopted multiple measures to support consumer spending, resulting in steady growth in its consumer lending business with risks remaining generally manageable.

By the end of last year, the bank's consumer credit business, including credit card loans and consumer loans, had outstanding nonperforming loans totaling 20.72 billion yuan, an increase of 46 million yuan from the previous year-end. However, the NPL ratio declined by 0.02 percentage point to 1.52 percent.

Xu Mingjie, executive vice-president of CMB, said risks in retail lending are still on the rise in 2026, and the asset quality of credit card loans continues to face certain pressures.

CMB emphasized in the report that it will continue to improve its refined risk management strategy for the consumer credit business. The bank will maintain differentiated customer selection standards before loan issuance, focusing on quality customers with stable long-term incomes while continuously expanding data sources and rapidly upgrading risk assessment strategies. It will also strengthen post-loan monitoring, enrich monitoring dimensions, upgrade its models to improve the accuracy of risk identification and closely track changes in customer risk profiles through big data-driven quantitative risk control technologies.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:31 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:31 PM

CHINA

Swan haven



A mute swan forages and frolics with several cygnets at Beilong Lake wetland park in Zhengzhou, Henan province, on Sunday, creating a lively early summer scene that attracted many curious citizens. Since the migration of seven mute swans in 2019, the park has become home to about 120 of the elegant birds, including seven nests of newly hatched cygnets this spring. HAN ZHANGYUN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Military official emphasizes innovation, self-reliance

By **JIANG CHENGLONG**
jiangchenglong@chinadaily.com.cn

A senior official at one of China's top military universities has called for stronger efforts in emerging and frontier technologies to secure breakthroughs in core technologies and "fundamentally reverse dependence on others".

Zhang Zhan, political commissar of the National University of Defense Technology, made the remarks in an article published on Wednesday in Study Times, a newspaper administered by the Party School of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.

He said China should integrate high-quality innovation resources and strengths to achieve that goal, noting that the country is facing a severe and complex innovation environment and security situation in high-tech fields.

Zhang said China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) outlines the need to accelerate the building of strategic capabilities in emerging fields and promote the efficient integration and mutual reinforcement of new quality productive forces and new quality combat capabilities.

He said this is a major step to "address complex security threats and secure national strategic advantages", and an important guarantee for achieving the centenary goal of the People's Liberation Army on schedule.

A new round of technological and military revolutions is accelerating worldwide, Zhang said, noting that emerging technologies such as quantum information and bio-interdisciplinary technologies are making breakthroughs in multiple areas, driving the reorganization of global resources, the reshaping of economic structures and changes in the military landscape.

"We must firmly seize the opportunity, build on the momentum, coordinate and allocate resources from all sides, and advance deployment and development in emerging fields," he said.

The senior official called for the vigorous development of new industries, forms of business, models and capabilities in frontier and emerging fields such as artificial intelligence, quantum information, aerospace science and technology, and deep-earth and deep-sea exploration, in order to continuously strengthen the country's economic and defense capabilities.

Zhang also highlighted the importance of supplying high-end talent, calling for integrated development of education, science and technology, and talent cultivation in emerging fields.

He suggested optimizing disciplines and talent training models in line with scientific and technological innovation, industrial development and national strategic needs in emerging fields.

China should accelerate the development of basic, emerging and interdisciplinary disciplines in key areas such as integrated circuits, AI, new energy and new materials, he said.

He also encouraged enterprises to increase investment in basic research in emerging fields and improve their participation and influence in major scientific and technological innovation decision-making for the country and the military.

Separately, the Chinese navy has recently commissioned several types of new warplanes that can be integrated into the combat system of aircraft carrier groups, drawing widespread attention on Chinese social media.

The aircraft include stealth carrier-based fighter jets, multipurpose catapult-launched carrier-based fighter jets, fixed-wing carrier-based early warning aircraft, fixed-wing electronic warfare aircraft and anti-submarine helicopters.

Defense Ministry spokesman Jiang Bin said at an online news briefing on Saturday that the new aircraft are an important part of building systematic combat capabilities for aircraft carrier groups and a major achievement in the Chinese navy's accelerated transformation.

Since entering the new era, the modernization of the Chinese navy has advanced steadily and rapidly, he said.

From the air to underwater, and from near seas to far seas, various weapons platforms have continued to improve in type and function, providing stronger support for safeguarding national sovereignty, security and development interests, Jiang said.

"Whether in escort missions in the Gulf of Aden, international humanitarian rescue, or the hospital ships' Mission Harmony operations, practice has proved that a strong Chinese navy is always an anchor of peace and a bridge of cooperation for the world," he said.

China is ready to work with the navies of other countries to make new and greater contributions to maritime security and world peace, Jiang added.

Taiji gravitational wave program makes breakthrough

A Chinese research team has announced a key breakthrough in the space-based gravitational wave detection program named Taiji, according to the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Institute of Mechanics.

The team designed a full-function interferometer optical bench for the Taiji program, constructed a first-generation Taiji interferometer OB and ground test system, and conducted preliminary testing and calibration.

The research program Taiji aims to study gravitational waves from the merging of binary black holes and other celestial bodies, according to the institute.

The full-function interferometer OB can effectively mitigate interference from temperature fluctuations in the measurement. Boasting picometer-level measurement accuracy, it can detect tiny variations equivalent to one ten-thousandth of the diameter of a human hair, the research team said.

Also, tests show that the equipment's noise level has been greatly reduced and its measurement stability has been enhanced tenfold, with key indicators fully meeting the requirements for the Taiji-2 mission, according to the research.

The relevant findings were recently published in the international academic journal Research, providing technical support for China's future space-based gravitational-wave detection.

CAS set out a three-step strategy to implement the Taiji program. Taiji-1, China's first satellite in the program, was launched in August 2019 and has been performing well in orbit, according to the institute.

XINHUA

Experts mull over AI role in education

Digital conference participants agree tech cannot replace human qualities

By **ZOU SHUO** in Hangzhou
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

Leading officials and experts gathered in Hangzhou on Monday for the 2026 World Digital Education Conference to discuss how artificial intelligence is reshaping learning, while emphasizing that it cannot replace human qualities such as moral judgment, creativity and social interaction.

Themed "AI+ Education: Transformation, Development and Governance", the two-day event aims to build an open and inclusive global dialogue platform and promote consensus on AI governance in education.

In his opening address, Vice-President Han Zheng said China has implemented a national strategy on digital education, accelerating the transformation of education through digital technologies and sharing high-quality digital education resources with learners around the world. China is also working with all parties to build a fairer, more inclusive and more sustainable global digital education ecosystem, he said.

Han noted that the integration of digital technologies such as AI with education represents both a major opportunity for global education development and a common challenge for all countries.

China stands ready to work with all sides to explore the vision and governance approaches for digital education, improve rules and standards and jointly promote the transformation and innovation of digital education, he said.

Han made four suggestions: first, a people-centered approach that stays true to the essence of education; second, inclusive and equitable access that ensures education is accessible to all; third, AI for good with safe and orderly development, ensuring AI truly serves learners' holistic growth; and fourth, open collaboration to promote mutual learning among civilizations.

The United Kingdom's Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State Olivia Bailey said the UK government is determined to ensure AI safety supports teachers. "AI and tech must also earn the trust of parents," she said.

Minister of Education Huai Jinpeng said AI can help students acquire knowledge, master skills and broaden thinking, but it cannot replace the ability to tell right from wrong, address conflicts or shoulder responsibilities. Nor can it replace physical exercise, labor practice or social interaction, he added. "The more AI evolves, the more precious human-specific qualities become," he said.

Huai also posed a fundamental question: when machines may surpass humans in learning and memory, and knowledge shifts from scarcity to abundance, where does human wisdom originate? "Knowledge matters, but cultivating wisdom and innovation matters more. Knowledge can be copied, but thinking cannot; answers can be generated, but creativity cannot," he said.

John Michael Kosterlitz, a Nobel laureate in physics and professor at Brown University and Soochow University, gave an example of his granddaughter using ChatGPT to solve geometry problems. "AI can present several ways of thinking about the same problem — it's very powerful," he said. However, he expressed concerns about plagiarism and assessment, noting that with AI, a student's homework may be partly or entirely written by a machine, making detection difficult. "If AI changes learning, we must also reconsider assessment," he added.

Kosterlitz noted that AI is becoming part of the discovery process itself, as seen in recent Nobel prizes in physics and chemistry. This prompts a larger question: "If machines become better at calculation, explanation and discovery, what should we learn to do best? My answer is this — we must become more responsible in judgment, ethics, imagination and purpose."



Guests attend an exhibition on digital education achievements during the 2026 World Digital Education Conference, which opened in Hangzhou on Monday. LIN YUNLONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Meteorologists warn of hotter, wetter summer ahead

By **LI MENGHAN**
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

China is expected to experience higher-than-average temperatures during the upcoming flood season, with a precipitation pattern characterized by flooding in the north and drought in the south — trends that warrant attention but not excessive concern against the backdrop of global warming, meteorologists said.

According to the National Climate Center, temperatures across large parts of the country will be higher than normal from June to August, with highs exceeding 35 C, especially in southern China and the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.

Floods and droughts are expected across different regions during this period. Areas such as Hebei, Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang, Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong and Hainan provinces, as well as Beijing and Tianjin, are predicted to receive 20 to 50 percent more precipitation than usual, with the potential for extreme heavy rainfall and flood disasters. Meanwhile, periodic drought conditions may affect Hubei and Hunan provinces, as well as Chongqing and Xinjiang.

Responding to recent online assertions that 2026 will see "the hottest summer with persistent extreme heat across large areas", Chen Lijuan, a senior forecaster at the National Climate Center, said such claims are exaggerated and that subjective expressions like "collapsing heat" have unnecessarily fueled public anxiety.

Chen said above-average temperatures do not indicate an uncontrollable situation, as heat waves are limited in both space and time. Some areas in northern China, for instance, are expected to experience high-temperature days in early summer, while southern China will see notable heat and drought in midsummer. During those periods, there may still be occasional cooling spells or rainfall events.

This aligns with recent weather forecasts, which suggest a periodic heat wave.

Cities in the provinces of Shandong, Henan, Shanxi, Shaanxi and Hebei are expected to experience maximum temperatures above 35 C between May 9 and 13. If the forecast proves accurate, the high temperatures will arrive more than 10 days earlier than average. However, a cold spell is expected to interrupt the heat later this week.

El Nino factor

Zheng Fei, a researcher at the Institute of Atmospheric Physics of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, said high temperatures and precipitation patterns expected over the next three months are part of the broader trend of global warming.

"While this is expected, it still requires attention, as the global average surface temperature increased around 0.6 C over the past century, with a 0.24 C rise in 2023 alone," he said.

Zheng said the potential development of El Nino conditions could be a major factor influencing climate patterns from June to August.

El Nino — a climate phenomenon marked by unusually warm sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern tropical Pacific — is highly likely to emerge this month, contributing to rising global average temperatures. It is expected to bring a slightly stronger-than-normal East Asian summer monsoon and a more intense western Pacific subtropical high extending farther west and north, resulting in increased moisture transport from the ocean and pushing the rain belt farther north.

"The El Nino event is expected to intensify during summer and autumn, reach moderate-to-strong intensity, peak this winter and then weaken the following spring. However, the probability of it developing into a super El Nino — comparable to the extreme events of 1997 or 2015 — is only about 10 percent," Zheng said.

"It is currently predicted that the global mean surface temperature in 2026 will be between 1.43 C and 1.52 C above preindustrial levels, and it is highly likely to exceed 2025 levels, ranking among the top three warmest years since 1850," he said.

Notably, El Nino typically affects regions around the tropical Pacific first, with its thermal effects taking several months to reach Asia. Therefore, "the global mean surface temperature is predicted to reach a record high in 2027, making it the warmest year on record," Zheng said.

Cheng Lijing, a researcher at the Institute of Atmospheric Physics, also warned of more frequent and extreme weather disasters associated with El Nino, as substantial heat accumulated in the eastern tropical Pacific is released through evaporation and atmospheric circulation during such events.

"Weather disasters in recent years have been characterized by high intensity and short duration, so the possibility of destructive severe convective weather, like the heavy rainstorm in Beijing in 2025, cannot be ruled out," Cheng said.

Although such weather events remain extremely difficult to predict, the monitoring network is being continuously improved with artificial intelligence-driven technology, enabling more accurate forecasts, earlier warnings and better preparedness, he said.

"Therefore, the public need not be overly concerned," he added.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:31 PM

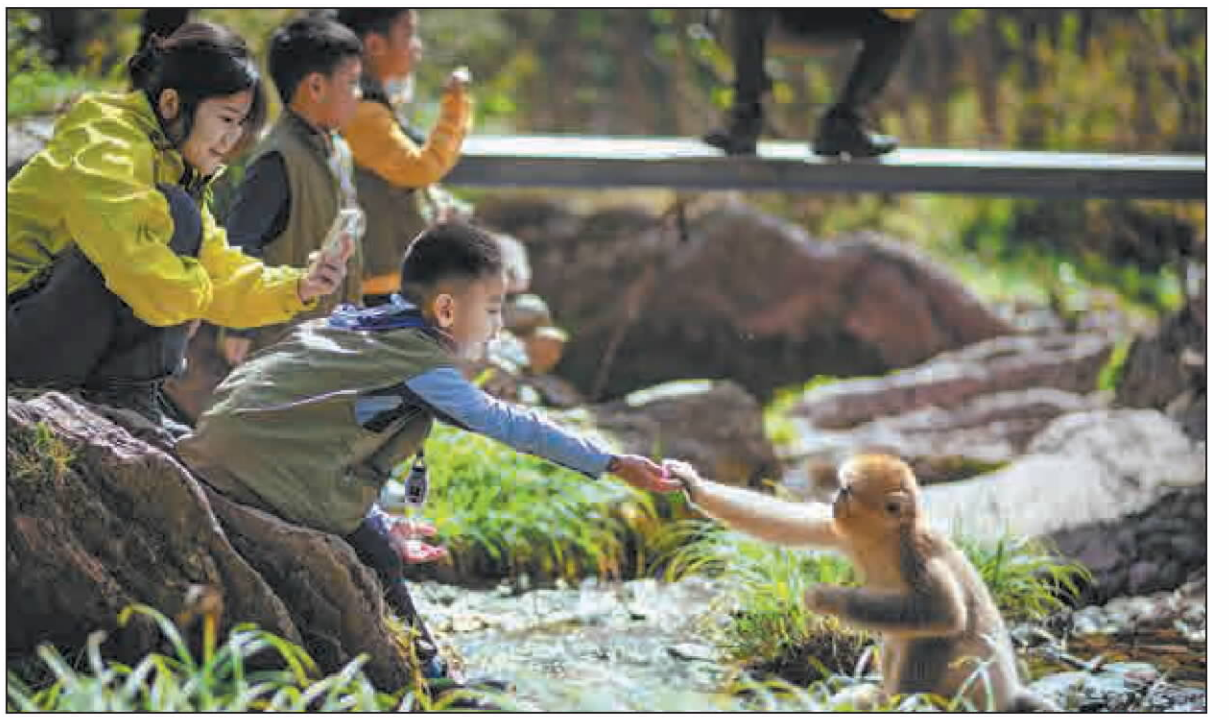
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:31 PM

Editor's note: *As protection of the planet's flora, fauna and resources becomes increasingly important, China Daily is publishing a series of stories to illustrate the country's commitment to safeguarding the natural world.*

Shennongjia's monkeys make golden return

Caretakers help in bringing secretive subspecies back from the brink

By LI MENGHAN
in Shennongjia, Hubei
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn







Clockwise from top: A child interacts with a golden snub-nosed monkey at Dalongtan Golden Snub-nosed Monkey Research Base in Shennongjia, Hubei province, in September 2024. WANG CHUNYANG / FOR CHINA DAILY Researchers record monkeys' behavior at Shennongjia National Nature Reserve. LI SHUHANG / FOR CHINA DAILY A researcher observes monkeys at the Dalongtan base in May 2024. LIU KANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Attracted by the caretaker's closed fist, a 65-centimeter-tall golden snub-nosed monkey swings gracefully through the branches of Shennongjia in Central China's Hubei province.

When the fist reveals nothing, the monkey — a 25-kilogram male named Beike (meaning "conch") — taps the caretaker and tugs at his sleeve. He eventually finds two peanuts in the other hand, swiftly seizing and cracking the rare treat.

"This monkey recently won a battle to become the new head of his family," said Yang Jingyuan, director of the scientific research institute at the Shennongjia National Nature Reserve. He looks on as dozens of monkeys dart through the canopy, grooming one another and occasionally tussling in the dappled sunlight.

After four decades of conservation, the Shennongjia golden snub-nosed monkey, the rarest subspecies of the golden snub-nosed monkey, has bounced back from near invisibility.

Its population has tripled to 1,618 individuals across 11 groups, roaming a habitat of 401 square kilometers — a resurgence made possible by policy support, scientific management and technological empowerment.

The comeback

With a life span of around 20 to 25 years, the golden snub-nosed monkey is classified as a first-class State-protected wildlife species.

In 1978, the belief that golden snub-nosed monkeys did not inhabit Hubei due to the region's climate and geographical conditions was challenged when a group of Chinese scientists unexpectedly collected two specimens in Shennongjia.

In 1980, Professor Liu Minzhuang from East China Normal University in Shanghai confirmed the presence of golden snub-nosed monkeys in Shennongjia, extending the species' distribution eastward by around 500 km from Sichuan province into Hubei.

However, the discovery coincided with a period of severe deforestation and hunting. By the 1980s, the population of this subspecies had plummeted to just 501 individuals clinging to a mere 85 sq km of habitat. To stem the tide, Shennongjia was designated a provincial reserve in 1982 and upgraded to national status in 1986. In 2024, the subspecies was officially designated as an independent conservation management target, reflecting its unique genetic diversity and morphology, including its iconic upturned nose and a tail that often exceeds its body length.

"The 2024 designation recognized both the culmination of decades-long field research and the species' protection value," caretaker Yang said. As early as 2005, scientists had selected one of the 11 groups — the very group that includes the family Beike now leads — as their focal study group for long-term behavioral and ecological monitoring.

At that time, the group had 105 individuals and inhabited a natural valley in Dalongtan, northeast Shennongjia. The group had a well-organized social structure of eight family units and one all-male unit.

Golden snub-nosed monkeys typically have a hierarchical social structure. Each group consists of dozens to hundreds of monkeys, organized into several family units and one or more all-male units. Each family unit is led by an adult male, who lives with its wives and kids. The all-male unit, made up of adult males who have lost their position as family head and those who have left their families after the age of four, is responsible for the security of the whole group and for training the younger males.

For close observation, researchers built simple living quarters, set up monitoring plank walks and established the Dalongtan Golden Snub-nosed Monkey Research Base in 2005. Through continuous tracking and observation, they identified winter food shortages as one of the key factors driving the population toward endangerment.

To address the problem, the research team conducted a diet supplement experiment, where apples, oranges and pine nuts were stuck onto branches and coated with moss to mimic wild fruits. But no monkey dared to approach — a stalemate that was finally broken when a male, later named Dadan (meaning "bold"), became the first to take the food.

A few months later, the monkey group began to regularly accept the supplemental food, which opened the door for researchers to systematically observe their feeding, reproduction, social behavior and even individual personalities.

Yao Hui, deputy director of the scientific research institute, said that the Shennongjia golden snub-nosed monkey typically lives at altitudes above 1,600 meters, where vegetation is limited — about 60 percent of their diet is tree bark and lichen, supplemented by bird eggs, insects and soil for protein and trace elements.

"As a result, during winter when food intake is severely insufficient and nutrition is lacking, their fur turns grayish; around July and August, however, it becomes a beautiful golden color," Yao said.

Yao underscored that human intervention remains minimal — researchers only provide a small amount of supplemental food during extreme winter shortages. The overall approach is to let the monkeys live as naturally as possible while working to restore their natural habitat.

Measures included the construction of 25 ecological corridors, which facilitate the reconnection of fragmented habitat patches and promote gene exchange among different monkey populations. Additionally, more than 20 sq km of degraded habitat has been restored to expand their living area.

For residents living in areas where the monkeys are distributed, the reserve has relocated them and organized skills training to help them transition to new livelihoods. Training programs focus on ecotourism, herbal medicine cultivation and green agriculture, empowering former forest dwellers to step out of the deep mountains and embrace sustainable lives.

For those living in peripheral regions, they receive alternative energy subsidies to replace coal and firewood with electricity, reducing the human impact on the monkeys' habitat. Additionally, a comprehensive electrification transformation project at the Dalongtan base was completed in 2024, with a large number of photovoltaic panels installed to power most daily needs such as cooking and heating. This initiative not only reduced fire risks but also further minimized human disturbance to the monkeys' habitat.

"Most rescue cases at the local rescue station are reported by villagers — a vivid microcosm of the shift from loggers to guardians," Yao said.

Tech empowerment

Peng Linpeng, director of the information management center at the Shennongjia reserve, highlighted the importance of a rounded, three-dimensional monitoring network for the recovery of the Shennongjia golden snub-nosed monkey population.

Established in 2025, the network goes beyond regular patrols, integrating satellite remote sensing to monitor broad habitat changes like forest pests and diseases. Drones, being more precise and cost-effective, support routine comparative monitoring, deter illegal activities, and collect high-definition three-dimensional geographic data for emergency command and dispatch.

"Considering the species' lofty living requirements, we have set up water quality monitoring stations at the sources and outlets of rivers flowing into the Yangtze and Hanjiang rivers, as well as air quality monitoring stations at elevations ranging from 600 to 3,000 meters," Peng said, adding that highly sensitive smoke detectors have been installed to warn of fire risks.

For real-time wildlife tracking, high-altitude cameras equipped with artificial intelligence have been deployed, offering a detection range of up to 1,000 meters to automatically track, identify and record animals upon their appearance. Over 700 infrared cameras have been installed, with 50 of them capable of real-time transmission. Supplemented by acoustic detectors, monitoring has turned from manual tracking in the past to a highly efficient, precise and automated approach.

"All technological means are designed and deployed for the sole purpose of wildlife protection, rather than for purely academic research," Peng said.

As a flagship species, the recovery of the Shennongjia golden snub-nosed monkey from the brink reflects the ecological prosperity of the reserve — which, with just 0.03 percent of the national land area, is home to more than one-tenth of China's vascular plant and vertebrate species — a thriving reality under the watchful eyes of caretakers, local villagers and cameras.

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.



A golden snub-nosed monkey breastfeeds her infants in Shennongjia, Hubei province. LI MENGHAN / CHINA DAILY

Yunnan model creates biological sanctuary for province's wildlife

By YAN YUJIE and **LI YINGQING**
in Kunming



White-browed gibbon Dingding sits on the head of Fu Ziqian, a worker at the Taiyanghe National Forest Park in Pu'er, Yunnan province. WANG YUEDING / FOR CHINA DAILY

A 21-year-old white-browed gibbon named Dingding has become the latest international face of China's conservation achievements. A video of the primate "chatting" with staff at the Taiyanghe National Forest Park recently garnered over 44 million views on global social media platforms, highlighting a burgeoning era of harmonious coexistence between humans and endangered species in Southwest China.

While the video touched netizens with its heartwarming interaction, experts say the scene is a microcosm of a much larger ecological shift in Yunnan province.

The tranquil life enjoyed by Dingding and his peers is underpinned by rigorous policy. During the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25), Yunnan adopted the "forest chief" system, a centralized strategy that has established one of the country's most extensive wildlife protection networks.

According to the Yunnan Forestry and Grassland Administration, the province serves as a sanctuary for 928 key wild animal and plant species under State protection. At Taiyanghe, this protection translates into a sprawling 216.23-square-kilometer habitat with a forest coverage rate of 97.45 percent.

Taiyanghe has evolved into more than just a forest; it is a center for rescue and mutual healing. Among its residents is Yuanyuan, a white-cheeked gibbon whose presence is a testament to the vigilance of local forest police. After being rescued from life-threatening conditions in its early years, Yuanyuan now thrives alongside other rare species, such as Zhaocai and Jingbao — a pair of binturongs classified as national first-class protected wildlife.

"The animals here enjoy being close to people because they feel secure," said Xu Yanfang, a staff member who works closely with "Princess" Nana, one of the park's rhinoceroses. "Working with them is a healing experience. It's a fascinating dynamic where the caretakers and the animals support each other's well-being."

The park's success is also visible in the longevity of its inhabitants. At 21, Dingding is considered an elderly gibbon, equivalent to over 90 human years. His playful interactions — insisting on being carried or demanding peeled grapes — reflect a level of care usually reserved for domestic seniors.

Fu Ziqian, a veteran staff member, noted that the dietary preferences of the animals often mirror the region's rich natural offerings. "Dingding enjoys local specialties like fish mint and gotu kola," Fu said. "It shows how well-integrated these animals are into the local Yunnan ecosystem."

The conservation effort has moved beyond government agencies and into the hearts of the public. Supporters like 42-year-old Wang Xueyun travel hundreds of kilometers from Xishuangbanna every month to bring fresh fruit to the gibbons.

"I wish for Dingding, Shanshan and Yuanyuan to remain healthy," Wang said. "I hope the other animals can live freely and happily on this land."

As Yunnan prepares to transition into future conservation frameworks, the high-definition cameras and livestreamed sessions led by young operators like 23-year-old Lou Zihan ensure that the message of protection reaches a global audience. For Lou, the mischievous antics of the binturongs she monitors are not just content for social media, but proof that China's "green revolution" is working — one nuzzle at a time.

Contact the writers at yanyj@chinadaily.com.cn

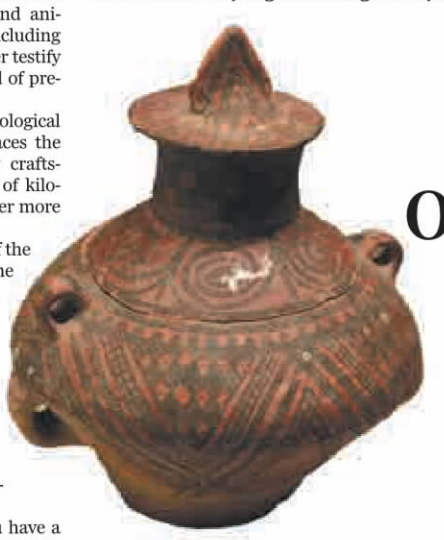
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:31 PM

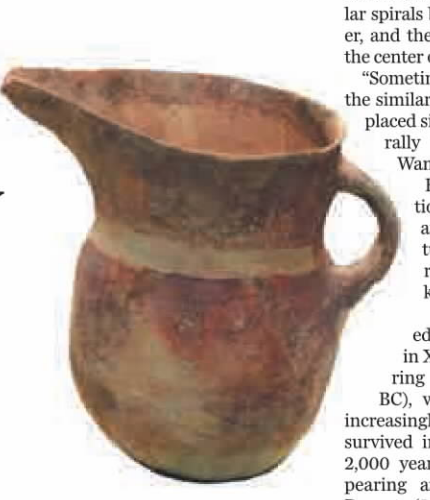
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:31 PM

CULTURAL HERITAGE



Above: Pottery items demonstrating the westward spread of prehistoric craftsmanship from the Yellow River Basin to today's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region are on show. **Below:** A pottery jar (left) from the Siba culture, in Gansu province, and a Bronze Age pottery jar unearthed in Xinjiang are among the objects on display. PHOTOS BY FANG AIQING / CHINA DAILY





The journey of painted clay

Exhibition reveals how prehistoric ceramic traditions traveled to shape early civilization, report **Fang Aiqing** and **Mao Weihua** in Urumqi.

Thousands of years ago, Neolithic painted pottery culture from the middle and upper reaches of the Yellow River traveled westward along the Hexi Corridor — in today's Gansu province — before spreading across the northern and southern foothills of the Tianshan Mountains in what is now the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. Here, it blended with local traditions and continued radiating further west.

Artifacts demonstrating this remarkable journey are on display in an exhibition that opened on April 10 at the Xinjiang Museum.

The exhibition, *From the Yellow River Basin to Tianshan Mountains: Tracing the Westward Journey of Prehistoric Painted Pottery*, features 175 sets of pottery from the collections of the Gansu Provincial Museum, Xinjiang Museum, and 13 other cultural heritage institutions across the two provincial-level regions. The exhibition, running through July 10, was previously displayed at the Gansu museum.

Against ocher and reddish-brown surfaces, ancient craftspeople expressed extraordinary creativity.

Delicate geometric grids, flowing spirals, fish motifs, petals and abstract deity patterns reveal a striking command of line and form. Elegantly curved vessels and animal-shaped decorations, including eagle and goat heads, further testify to the imagination and skill of prehistoric artisans.

Based on years of archaeological findings, the exhibition traces the spread of painted pottery craftsmanship across thousands of kilometers from east to west over more than 3,000 years.

Wang Nannan, director of the exhibition department at the Gansu Provincial Museum and one of the exhibition's curators, says Gansu and Xinjiang are geographically linked and share deep cultural roots, exemplified by the westward expansion of painted pottery culture, which carried early people's aesthetic ideals and passion for life.

Both Xinjiang and Gansu have a significant east-west expanse: Xinjiang stretches nearly 2,000 kilometers and Gansu about 1,500 km.

The upper reaches of the Yellow River flow some 900 km in eastern Gansu. To the west, the long and narrow Hexi Corridor — "Hexi" means "west of the Yellow River" in Chinese — has served, since ancient times, as a key route linking the Central Plains with the country's western regions and beyond.

Wang notes that the prehistoric routes of painted pottery transmission through the Hexi Corridor largely overlapped with the ancient Silk Road, as both relied on the same geographical artery.

Building on this geographical and archaeological reality, scholars have named the east-to-west expansion of early Chinese culture — represented by painted pottery — the "Painted Pottery Road".

Han Jianye, professor at the School of History, Renmin University of China, has studied this topic for years and published a collection of essays on it.

According to Han, painted pottery from present-day Shaanxi and Gansu provinces spread westward from the 4th to the 1st millennium BC. Divided by the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, the routes branched into a northern path — spreading to Central Asia and beyond via Xinjiang — and a southern path toward the Kashmir region.

"The Painted Pottery Road was the primary channel for early cultural exchanges between China and the West and can be regarded as a precursor to the Silk Road," he writes.

The ongoing pottery exhibition highlights the evolution of painted patterns and vessel shapes, offering a visual thread for understanding this westward transmission.

The middle and upper reaches of the Yellow River were among the birthplaces of prehistoric painted pottery. At the Dadiwan archaeological site in Qin'an county, eastern Gansu, archaeologists have unearthed pottery dating back around 8,000 years. These vessels are typically round-bottomed, or tripod bowls decorated with red bands around the rim, with pigments usually applied before firing. They are among the earliest decorated pottery discovered in China.

Between 7,000 and 5,000 years ago, the Yangshao culture flourished in the Central Plains. Its pottery featured black-painted patterns of straight lines, geometric shapes, fish, petals, and leaves. Around 5,500 years ago, its iconic petal patterns — seen on Miaodigou-type pottery of the mid-Yangshao period — had already spread across much of present-day Gansu and eastern Qinghai provinces.

In eastern Gansu, Yangshao traditions evolved into the Majiayao culture, which thrived some 5,300 to 4,000 years ago. During this period, painted pottery reached an artistic peak.

On display at the exhibition are pieces featuring exquisitely intricate patterns such as lozenges, spirals, gourd-shaped grids, birds and deities, which cover the entire vessels.

During the late Majiayao period, painted pottery — along with the agricultural culture that produced and used it — kept advancing into multiple regions.

The branch that extended toward the Hexi Corridor developed into the Siba culture. Dating back around 3,900 to 3,400 years, it marked the transition from the Neolithic period to the Bronze Age. Its western reach stretched to the Hami Basin in eastern Xinjiang, where it interacted with the local Tianshanbeilu culture.

Double-handled jars unearthed from the Tianshanbeilu cemetery site feature hanging straps and large grid patterns similar to those found in Siba culture pottery. Square spirals and fret motifs seen on late Majiayao and Siba wares also appear in Iron Age relics discovered in Hami.

Around 3,000 years ago, painted pottery flourished in central Xinjiang cultures, including Subeixi in the Turpan Basin and Chawuhu, mainly distributed in the Bayingolin Mongolian autonomous prefecture. Artifacts from these areas provide evidence of eastern influences and local adaptation.

The small-mouthed, bulging-bellied design of Subeixi single-handled jars retained the influence of the Yellow River Basin. At the Chawuhu ancient tomb complex, pottery with red paint on a light background featured a bottom design better suited for hanging and carrying, reflecting the needs of nomadic life.

In Xinjiang, many vessels were found with a *liu* (spout) for easy and smooth pouring.

Wang notes that compared with Yangshao and Majiayao pottery, Xinjiang's prehistoric ceramics featured simpler decorative patterns but more practical functions.

"As painted pottery spread westward, the vessels became smaller but more practical," he says, adding that this change reflected adaptation and integration — evidence of the strong inclusiveness of Chinese civilization.

He explains that the exhibition is organized around geographical nodes, allowing visitors to easily trace the deep connections between ancient communities in Xinjiang and the Central Plains. For example, visitors can observe striking similarities between two single-handled vessels — one from a late Majiayao site in Gansu and another from Bronze Age remains in Xinjiang.

The late Majiayao piece is barrel-shaped, with the handle attached near the top. Its upper part outlines triangular layouts with bold lines, set apart by three horizontal lines, while the lower part features vertical zigzag patterns.

The Xinjiang artifact, on the other hand, has triangular patterns above horizontal dividing lines and circular spirals below; its body is rounder, and the handle is positioned at the center of one side.

"Sometimes it's hard to describe the similarities in words, but when placed side by side, one can naturally feel the resemblance," Wang says.

He adds that the exhibition presents a complete and tangible chain of cultural transmission that requires little specialist knowledge to appreciate.

It is believed that painted pottery began to decline in Xinjiang around the Warring States Period (475-221 BC), with patterns becoming increasingly cursory. This art form survived in the region for nearly 2,000 years before almost disappearing after the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 24).

Li Zheng, director of the Xinjiang Museum's exhibition department and another curator of the exhibition, says the emergence, spread, and development of painted pottery fully demonstrate Xinjiang's important role in the cultural development of Chinese civilization.

"Although these artifacts were scattered across a vast expanse along the Painted Pottery Road, they shared similar aesthetics and craftsmanship," Li says.

"The routes connected the Yellow River Basin and the Tianshan Mountains in a millennia-long dialogue, vividly illustrating how Chinese civilization is diverse yet unified, continuous, and enduring," he adds.

The exhibition will travel to Bayingolin and later to Hami.

Marbuya Abdureyim contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at fangaiqing@chinadaily.com.cn

Yangshao discovery fills gap in Shanxi history

By **DENG ZHANGYU**
dengzhangyu@chinadaily.com.cn





From left: Wang Shuang, an archaeologist, identifies an ash pit belonging to the Neolithic Yangshao culture in Yirang village, Yangquan, Shanxi province; an uncovered pottery shard preserves distinctive red grid patterns. PHOTOS BY LIU SHENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Archaeologists working in the dusty fields of Yirang village, Yangquan, in North China's Shanxi province, have uncovered a major discovery that offers fresh insight into the region's Neolithic past.

In March, a small team of researchers used traditional Luoyang spades — long-handled tools designed to extract soil samples — to probe the earth. Among the soil layers, they recovered fragments of painted pottery, weathered but clearly marked with distinctive red grid patterns.

According to Han Lizhong, director of the Yangquan Archaeological Research Center, these fragments date to the late Yangshao culture, a Neolithic civilization that flourished along the middle reaches of the Yellow River roughly 7,000 to 5,000 years ago. The culture is famous for its painted pottery, often decorated with geometric motifs and occasional human or animal figures.

This marks the first confirmed discovery of a Yangshao culture site in Yangquan.

"It fills a gap in the region's Middle Neolithic cultural record, expands the known distribution of the Yangshao culture, and demonstrates close cultural exchanges between Yangquan and areas that are now Jinzhong in Shanxi as well as parts of Henan," says Han.

The site lies on the northern bank of the Taohe River, where local farmers had previously uncovered ancient stone axes. "Our ancestors would have found this spot ideal for settlement," Han adds.

Han recalls that archaeologists had surveyed the area several times since the 1990s without success. That changed in March when researchers stumbled upon painted pottery fragments near a newly dug grave. As they expanded their search, they found layers containing pottery from different periods, including pits dating to the Yangshao era.

The site now covers an area of approximately 129,000 square meters — roughly the size of 20 football fields.

"When the first painted shard was found, everyone almost jumped for joy," says Wang Shuang, one of the six field team members. Over the past months, the team repeatedly trekked across hills and valleys, studying the terrain and interviewing villagers for clues about possible artifacts.

The archaeological survey began in November 2024 as part of a special initiative to explore Yangquan's early cultures.

So far, the team has identified three ash pits and one kiln, along with a remarkably continuous cultural sequence spanning the Yangshao culture, Longshan culture, Xia Dynasty (c. 21st century-16th century BC), Shang Dynasty (c. 16th century-11th century BC), and Eastern Zhou Dynasty (770-256 BC).

In Yirang village, time appears layered in the earth: painted pottery from 5,000 years ago, black Longshan pottery from 4,000 years ago, and Shang and Zhou pottery from 3,000 years ago. Together, they reveal a settlement that appears to have remained inhabited for thousands of years without interruption.

Han says Yirang village has a long history, with multiple cultural relic sites still visible. In October 2024, the team had already excavated two Jin Dynasty (1115-1234) tombs there, and recovered 34 artifacts. The current survey, launched the following month, aims to systematically investigate the region's early cultural layers.

The recovered artifacts include pottery, stone tools and bone-and-shell objects. Painted pottery makes up a high proportion, with fine red grid-and-band patterns. Researchers have also identified vessel forms, such as bowls, jars and basins, alongside smaller objects including pottery rings and perforated shell knives.

By comparing these artifacts with discoveries from similar sites, archaeologists have preliminarily dated the settlement to the late Yangshao period.

"The discovery of remains here from the Yangshao culture, Longshan culture, Xia and Shang dynasties, and Eastern Zhou periods establishes a continuous cultural sequence from the Neolithic era onward," Han says.

"It provides valuable clues for understanding the evolution and development of prehistoric societies in the Taihang Mountains."

Zhu Xingxin in Shanxi province contributed to this story.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:31 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:31 PM

LIFE

Tang canal rises as a glowing destination

Once the cradle of China's industrial revolution, site gets a makeover, turning it into a hub of tourism and tradition, **Yang Feiyue** reports in Tangshan.



The boat glides slowly along the Tangjin Canal, a waterway that once connected the industrial cities of Tangshan in Hebei province and Tianjin. On either side, hundreds of Tang Dynasty-styled lanterns rise in formation, their crimson glow chasing away the last chill of an April evening as it illuminates the countless bricks and latticed windows lining the streets.

A massive Ferris wheel with playful expressions flashing across its digital screen looms ahead. The air is filled with the distant melody of Pingju Opera, a centuries-old folk tradition born in this very region.

For a moment, it is easy to believe you have traveled back in time to the Tang Dynasty (618-907), an era celebrated as the golden age of Chinese art, culture and cosmopolitan ambition.

But this is not Xi'an in Shaanxi province, the ancient capital most associated with the Tang. It is Hetou Laojie (Hetou Old Street), a water town in the city, better known as a cradle of China's modern industrial revolution.

And, just a few years ago, this waterway was silent.

"Please lower your head," boat guide Shi Jia gently cautions her guests as the vessel approaches a low bridge adorned with a glowing light belt.

It is a practical safety reminder. But for the creative team behind the old street, it has become something of a metaphor.

After more than a decade of lying "low" as a lackluster commercial project, this place has raised its head, blossoming into one of the most dazzling nighttime tourism destinations in the province.

In 2025, the street welcomed 8 million visitors, with a single day reaching 166,000. On a typical Monday night in April, the street is crowded with travelers as if it were a holiday.

Since opening in 2023, it has been recognized as a national tourist and leisure street and received the 2025 China Cultural Tourism Pioneer Award from the China Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions.

The 2,000-*mu* (133-hectare) site is the result of a partnership between the Fengnan district government and Kaige'er Group, a local cultural tourism enterprise. It now offers a fully immersive Tang experience, where visitors can eat, stroll, shop, and watch performances in a meticulously re-created historical atmosphere.

As the boat continues its journey, passengers pass multiple performance installations along the banks, where singers, dancers, acrobats, and actors in Tang-era costumes create vivid scenes that unfold as a scroll painting brought to life.

"The performers are inheritors of intangible cultural heritage, and they perform to audiences' reactions," Shi emphasizes.

She often recommends her guests stay for a short Pingju Opera performance, which originated from Tangshan.

In addition to the dynamic performance, the giant lanterns are eye-catching, each standing about 7 meters tall and featuring patterns from *The Court Ladies Adorning Their Hair with Flowers*, a Tang Dynasty painting now housed in the Liaoning Provincial Museum.

About half an hour's drive from Hetou Old Street, Tangshan Feast, also known as the Tangshan Food Culture Museum, pleases the palate of even the most discerning gourmand.

The 40,000-square-meter indoor complex features 150 varieties of Tangshan snacks and more than 20 types of foods crafted with intangible cultural heritage skills, all spread across "five streets, two alleys, and one river" on its ground floor.

"Tangshan Feast is what we call 'an edible museum'," says Wang Caitong, a guide at the complex.

"It was originally a disused shopping mall. The creative team reshaped the space and built a 'super scene' with cultural tourism appeal — small bridges, flowing water, pavilions, towers, and the hustle and bustle of traffic," she adds.

In 2025, it attracted 5.5 million visitors, 70 percent of whom came from outside Tangshan. On its busiest day, it welcomed 50,000 people.

Old wooden houses, some more than a century old, have been dismantled and reassembled here. In re-creations of some "grandpa" or "grandma" shops, elderly artisans demonstrate traditional crafts.

"We collected six century-old houses from the countryside," Wang says. "Every brick and tile carries the trace of time. These scenes are designed to evoke childhood memories and to make people feel something."

On the second floor, a replica of Xiaoshan'er, a commercial district that once rivaled Beijing's Dashilar and Tianjin's Quanyechang in the 1930s, has been rebuilt.





From top: One of the highlights of a night show at Hetou Old Street in Tangshan, Hebei province, features performers suspended from cables, gliding across the sky on mechanical phoenixes while molten iron showers down around them. Acrobatic performances have helped transform Hetou Old Street into a bustling tourist destination. A giant Ferris wheel draws visitors taking in the view during a nighttime boat ride along the canal in Tangshan. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Literally meaning "Little Hill", Xiaoshan'er rose to prominence in the late 19th century as the northern terminus of the Tangxu (Tangshan-Xugezhuang) Railway, China's first standard-gauge railway. A commercial explosion then ensued, with department stores, bathhouses, theaters, teahouses, and restaurants packed into just a 500-meter-long stretch.

"In those days, if you came to Tangshan and didn't visit Xiaoshan'er, you hadn't really been to Tangshan," she says.

Every snack at Tangshan Feast has a story. For instance, *gezha*, a mung-bean pancake, is said to have been named by the Empress Dowager Cixi.

"The Empress had a habit of taking at most two bites of any dish. When she tried *gezha*, she liked it so much that she took a second bite and said '*ge zhe*' — meaning 'set it aside'. The eunuch thought she was naming the dish — and the name stuck," Wang recounts.

The "Fourteenth Prince" dry-braised chicken derives its name from Emperor Kangxi's 14th son, who was sent to guard the Qing tombs in Tangshan.

"He didn't have much appetite until the palace chef took a local dry-braised chicken recipe and combined it with imperial roast chicken techniques. The prince ate with great pleasure, and the dish has been passed down for 300 years," Wang says.

The success of Hetou Old Street and Tangshan Feast did not happen in a vacuum. They are the products of a deliberate, province-wide strategy to turn Hebei into a weekend destination for the 110 million people living in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region.

For years, Hebei was overlooked by tourists despite being home to several UNESCO World Heritage sites and containing all seven major landform types, notes Wang Rongli, deputy director of the Hebei provincial department of culture and tourism.

That began to change in 2022, when Hebei launched a strategic push to become the "weekend leisure destination of choice" for residents of Beijing and Tianjin. The slogan, "So close, so beautiful — spend your weekend in Hebei", was elevated to a provincial development strategy.

But traffic comes and goes quickly. "For a brand to last, it must rely on products and services," Wang emphasizes.

Since 2023, Hebei has become one of the first provinces to offer free expressway for tour buses traveling on weekends and public holidays. By 2025, the policy had saved tour operators more than 510 million yuan ($75 million) and covered more than 3.4 million buses, local authorities report.

"The fee reduction isn't large for any single tourist, but it sends a signal that Hebei genuinely welcomes you, and we're even willing to save you the tolls," she explains.

The province has also launched a luggage delivery service called "Easy Hebei Tour", allowing visitors to check in their bags at Beijing West Railway Station and find them already waiting at their Hebei hotel.

"The most durable, most powerful, and most cost-effective marketing is always word-of-mouth," Wang says.

Midway through Hetou Old Street, the night erupts. Along a stretch of the canal transformed into a battlefield, six former fishing boats have been refashioned into Tang Dynasty warships. On and around them, more than 500 performers charge on horseback, spin towering flags, and hurl themselves into staged combat.

From both ends of the canal, actors suspended from cables glide across the night on mechanical phoenixes, their robes streaming behind them as they pass through cascades of molten iron. The iron, heated to 1,600 C, is flung by hand against a brick wall, a thousand-year-old folk tradition called *da tie hua*. It explodes into a blizzard of white-orange sparks that rain down over the water, the boats and the upturned faces of the crowd.

For Shi Jia, the boat guide, the performance captures something essential about Hetou Old Street.

"For 12 years, this place was nothing. Now people come from Shanghai and Guangzhou, Guangdong province, just to see this," she says.

The low bridges are still there. So is her warning: "Please lower your head." But when the phoenixes fly, no one is looking down.

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

Female storyteller carries forward invaluable cultural legacy

By **PALDEN NYIMA** and **DAQIONG** in Lhasa



Nestled in the high-altitude pastures of Tsonyi county in Nagchu, Xizang autonomous region, Sinchung's life has been one of courage, resilience, and an unyielding commitment to preserving an ancient cultural legacy.

A female storyteller of King Gesar — a rarity in itself — Sinchung has overcome social challenges and geographical relocations to bridge the mythical Tibetan hero king, Gesar, with modern-day audiences.

Born to a nomadic family reliant on herding yaks and sheep, storytelling formed an integral part of Sinchung's childhood. Though King Gesar storytellers were virtually absent in her community, inspiration came closer to home through her father, himself a King Gesar storyteller.

King Gesar is a legendary figure in Tibetan culture, immortalized in the *Epic of King Gesar*.

"When herding together, my father would narrate the fascinating tales of King Gesar," recalled Sinchung. "The stories captivated me so much, I memorized them after hearing them just once."

It was from these herding expeditions that her love for the epic began to take root. By the age of 12, she would hum verses to herself, unaware of their meaning at times, yet deeply influenced by the themes of heroism and spirituality.

A turning point came when Sinchung's mother took in a blind, childless elderly woman.

"This grandmother would often share proverbs and folktales with me, leaving a lasting impression that prepared me for storytelling later in life," she says.

Curiosity about the epic grew further during her teenage years as her family owned a cherished copy of *Horse Race Norbu Chadun*, a King Gesar book.

Unable to read the Tibetan language at the time, Sinchung would pore over the book's illustrations, feeling a personal connection to the legendary characters. "Although I couldn't read, the images felt alive — like family members I had yet to meet," she says.

Determined to learn, Sinchung taught herself the Tibetan alphabet at 14. Scribbling letters into the sand while tending to livestock, she grew proficient over the years.

Reading books about King Gesar became a natural progression, even as she faced skepticism from her community.

"At first, elders appreciated my storytelling, but others mocked me or insisted that such tales were not meant to be sung by a woman," says Sinchung, describing challenges that ranged from societal taboos to outright hostility.

"Some even cursed my family, warning of disastrous consequences," she says.

For a time, the criticism silenced her. Public storytelling stopped, but in solitude, she carried on, practicing Gesar's tales while herding. The process, she says, brought her solace and happiness during those trying years.



Left: Sinchung (third from right) was invited to present her storytelling of King Gesar at an art performance show in Sinpori, Gongkar county, Xizang autonomous region in 2025. **Right:** Sinchung gets ready for her performance. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Between the ages of 17 and 25, Sinchung dove deeper into the epic. Borrowing books from other storytellers, she expanded her knowledge of the king's journey from his celestial birth and struggles on Earth to his victorious battles against enemies.

During this time, she endured mysterious illnesses that seemed to ebb only when she immersed herself in the poetic verses of King Gesar.

Her marriage at 26, followed by the responsibilities of family life, led to another hiatus. Storytelling took a backseat, especially under her husband's disapproval.

However, WeChat rekindled her passion, providing a new platform to share her art. Singing and rapping Gesar's tales in group chats garnered widespread recognition and won over audiences.

In 2020, Sinchung's family relocated to Sinpori, an ecological resettlement community in Xizang's Gongkar county, as part of a government program to improve the living conditions of high-altitude nomads.

The move to a more community-oriented environment gave her a new platform.

"With my neighbors living close by, it was easy to gather people for storytelling," says Sinchung. The teahouses of Sinpori welcomed her performances, and she eventually established a dedicated King Gesar Storytelling House.

Visitors from near and far listened to her accounts of the heroic king's exploits, bridging ancient glory and contemporary life.

However, Sinchung believes her storytelling alone is not enough to protect this intangible cultural treasure. Embarking on a new mission, she is documenting her knowledge in writing to ensure its preservation for future generations.

With government policies emphasizing the protection and promotion of cultural heritage, she found the encouragement she needed.

"By publishing books, I am ensuring that this invaluable cultural legacy doesn't perish with me," she says. "These stories will serve as an inheritance for future generations, enabling them to connect with and celebrate their identity."

Plans for additional publications are already in motion, ranging from collections of proverbs to compilations of Tibetan riddles.

For Sinchung, storytelling transcends entertainment; it is a living, breathing link to a storied past, and an enduring gift to posterity.

"If I live longer, I hope to contribute more. These stories are not just history, they're a part of us."

Contact the writers at palden_nyima@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:31 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:31 PM

CULTURE



The curiosity and passion of actress Juliette Binoche

French star discusses her love of movies and China, **Xu Fan** and **Shi Futian** report.

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

Juliette Binoche, the French actress who served as jury president of the 16th Beijing International Film Festival's Tiantan Awards, shares her thoughts on cinema and her impressions of the country with China Daily. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Relaxed, easygoing, and always passionate about cinema — that sums up the first impressions of Juliette Binoche, the French screen legend who recently seized the spotlight in China as jury president of the 16th Beijing International Film Festival's Tiantan Awards.

At the climax of the festival's closing ceremony, Binoche walked onstage alongside iconic Chinese director Zhang Yimou to present the Best Feature Film award — one of the biggest Tiantan Awards — to the British film *Dragonfly*. In a sudden burst of energy, the 62-year-old actress slapped her trouser legs and exclaimed, "Let's find out who the winner is!" — a spontaneous gesture that drew applause from the audience.

After eight days of intense viewing and discussions, she and her six fellow jurors, including French-Vietnamese director Tran Anh Hung and British composer Simon Franglen, voted on 10 awards in total from 16 shortlisted films, selected from a record 1,826 submissions spanning 139 countries and regions.

"I felt great. We watched all the films. I almost forgot I was the jury president, because I was so in touch with the films. I forgot myself," Binoche said, describing her experience.

The festival also reflected the industry's growing preoccupation with artificial intelligence, establishing an AIGC Unit — the first of its kind in the world to focus on AI-generated films. This year, the section received nearly 2,840 submissions from 14 countries and regions — an 89 percent increase from the previous year.

Binoche is unworried about the emergence of AI in filmmaking, believing that it is simply a new tool and that plot and characterization are still the most important aspects.

"At the end of the day, AI is a way of telling a story. When you watch a film, it stays in your mind, heart and body somehow. Technique is just there to help the story. You have to go back to the core of making a film."

For Binoche — the first figure in cinema history to have won Best Actress honors at all three major European festivals: Venice, Berlin and Cannes — enthusiasm remains central to her approach to cinema. Fame and success, it seems, have never dulled her curiosity.

In an interview a few days before the closing ceremony, she discussed the jury's task with China Daily. "What we're trying to do in the festival is to find a diamond of a film — something that people have never seen before. It can be the story, the way it's done, or the acting — but it's something that is going to enrich the viewers and take them somewhere they've never been before."

That search for the unfamiliar has guided her through a remarkable range of collaborations over an acting career spanning more than 40 years: Polish director Krzysztof Kieslowski's *Three Colors: Blue* (1993), in which she played a woman undone by grief; British filmmaker Anthony Minghella's *The English Patient* (1996), where she portrayed a dynamic army nurse; and Swedish director Lasse Hallstrom's *Chocolat* (2000), starring her as a single mother skilled at making chocolate.

Binoche also worked with the late director Hou Hsiao-hsien on *Flight of the Red Balloon*, a 2007 film recounting the story of a French family through the eyes of a Chinese student.



Above: Binoche and director Zhang Yimou present the Best Feature Film award to the British movie *Dragonfly* during the festival's closing ceremony. **Below:** Several of Binoche's films have been aired on China Movie Channel, captivating local fans.



In an attempt to accurately portray the role — a harried single mother who runs a small avant-garde puppet theater and performs all the voices — Binoche devoted a full month to preparation. She took classes at a puppet theater, underwent voice training, and even suggested dyeing her hair blonde.

She recalled that Hou once asked her to bring personal objects from her own home to the set, so that the space would feel lived-in — as if she were staying in her own quarters.

"You just have to dare to open the door to find the magic inside of you," she said, describing her philosophy of performance. "The actor has to believe deeply in their own being and in their heart, gut, cells and mind. There has to be a layer of spirituality."

Binoche has visited China many times since 2009 — attending the Festival Croisements that year, making a guest appearance on Hunan Television's popular variety show *Happy Camp* in 2018, and sharing insights about her directorial debut, *In-I In Motion*, during the 2025 Beijing Culture Forum.

Asked what has impressed her most, she replied without hesitation: "Just meeting people. What are their lives and everyday experiences? Basically, there's a story in each of us. I've traveled to different places, and I'm always moved because some places are still unchanged.

"I love seeing villages where there is this sense of kindness and simplicity, and there are also some traditions that I really love in China."

Binoche also talked about the countryside, the mountains and Taoist legends. "For me, it brings so much awareness of why we are here on Earth. It's a way to prolong your thoughts and to connect with nature and the beauty of nature."

She even confessed an unexpected fondness for the Chinese *kang* — the traditional heated brick platform that serves as a bed, table and social anchor of the northern Chinese home. "I slept in it. I loved it. It was so peculiar and special," she said, recalling her visit to a house that had one.

As an actress with more than 60 films to her name, Binoche has worked with a stellar lineup of international stars, including Ralph Fiennes in *The English Patient*, Johnny Depp in *Chocolat*, and Ethan Hawke in *The Truth*. She has also stepped behind the camera, making her directorial debut with *In-I In Motion*, distilled from 170 hours of raw and archival footage documenting her dance-theater collaboration with British choreographer Akram Khan.

So what kind of role still draws her — actress or director?

"I have experienced so many. I have been very lucky. I have worked with wonderful directors and actors. As an actor, you have to give a lot of yourself, otherwise nothing will come out," she said.

For all her accolades, Binoche admitted to moments of doubt. Sometimes, she wakes at 6 am and asks herself the same question: "Why did I choose this work?"

The answer, even after all these years, returns with quiet clarity. "At the end of the day, it's worth it because it gives a sense of purpose. It makes you happy and lighter in a way. The lightness comes from being really on your own path and choosing a path that is meaningful to you and to others as well," she says.

Contact the writers at xufan@chinadaily.com.cn

Spy thriller *Black Silk* deepens cross-border film ties with Russia

MOSCOW — On the outskirts of Moscow, the set of the spy thriller *Black Silk* is more than a filming location — it offers a glimpse into a growing cinematic partnership between China and Russia.

During a recent visit to the set, Russian Minister of Culture Olga Lyubimova described such large-scale international cooperation as "unimaginable" a decade ago. She noted that the task now is to employ modern cinematic language to create emotional resonance for audiences in both countries.

The collaboration is underpinned by a strategic action plan signed in May 2025, in which film authorities from China and Russia committed to a long-term road map for cooperation through 2030. The plan prioritizes joint productions and cross-border film exchanges to deepen cultural ties through cinema.

At the production site, actors from China, Russia, Serbia, Japan and Germany are preparing for their roles. Costumes from different eras and regions coexist, while scripts annotated in multiple languages reflect the multilingual nature of the set.

Black Silk follows the success of its predecessor, *Red Silk*, a flagship project under the China-Russia Years of Culture framework. With earnings of $1.8 million, *Red Silk* topped the rankings of the highest-grossing Russian films of 2025 at the foreign box office.

The new production aims to build on that momentum with enhanced scale and quality.

Set in 1930s Shanghai, *Black Silk* unfolds against a backdrop of international intrigue, centering on a high-stakes search for a mysterious cargo.

While rich in action, the film also draws on historical narratives. Screenwriter Maria Nefedova said the creative team seeks to present history in a way that resonates with contemporary audiences. "Russia and China share a long history of good-neighborly relations. We have faced challenges together, and I hope the film reflects the mutual support between our peoples," she said.





Left: A moment from the opening ceremony of the 16th Beijing International Film Festival in Beijing on April 16. XIE HAN / XINHUA **Right:** A still from the film *Red Silk*. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

To re-create scenes at sea, the production team constructed a large vessel mounted on a hydraulic platform, equipped with a water discharge system to simulate waves and storms. The set allows for dynamic, immersive filming conditions.

Chinese actress Zheng Hanyi, who also appeared in *Red Silk*, said the experience goes beyond filmmaking. "It is also a process of cultural exchange. You can feel the two cultures learning from each other," she said, expressing hope for more joint projects in the future.

Lyubimova said films play an important role in cultural exchange. She expressed confidence that *Black Silk* will further advance cooperation between filmmakers of the two countries.

Production is currently ongoing, with the film slated for release in 2027.

According to Svetlana Balanova, CEO of National Media Group in Russia, film projects jointly produced by Russia and China are strengthening bilateral ties and promoting cultural dialogue.

Balanova highlighted *Red Silk* as a milestone in advancing a systematic approach to jointly promoting national cinema and producing works that reflect shared values.

Last year marked the 80th anniversary of the victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the Soviet Union's Great Patriotic War. According to Balanova, Russian audiences were drawn to the film's dynamic storyline and performances, while Chinese viewers were attracted by its portrayal of resilience in harsh Siberian conditions.

She added that the sequel will retain key elements that appealed to audiences in the original while expanding its narrative scope, visual style and production capabilities. "*Black Silk* is an independent story with new mysteries and characters, accessible to fans of the first film and those just getting to know the story, both in Russia and abroad," she said.

Following the success of the first installment, Balanova expressed optimism that the sequel would achieve a strong box-office performance and attract a wider global audience.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:31 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:31 PM

SPORTS

TABLE TENNIS

CHINA RALLIES FOR GLORY

Despite tough early going, resilience and squad depth see teams through to victory in London



Wang Chuqing (left) and Sun Yingsha proved instrumental as the Chinese men's and women's teams defended their titles at the World Team Table Tennis Championships in London on Sunday. XINHUA

By **SUN XIAOCHEN**
sunxiaochen@chinadaily.com.cn

Despite a double delight at the world team championships, China's mighty table tennis squad has refused to revel in complacency, as it braces for a challenging lead-up to LA28 with sobering takeaways from London.

With a convincing defeat of archrival Japan in both finals, China's formidable national program has left the sport in awe of its resilience and depth, both of which proved vital and are still unrivaled, for securing its seventh women's and 12th men's team titles in a row at London's OVO Arena Wembley on Sunday.

As Chinese fans celebrate widely for both squads having lifted their respective trophies — the Corbillon Cup for women and Swaythling Cup for men — for a record-extending 24th time, China's top paddlers know it was anything but a smooth sail, hailing the test along the way as being equally valuable to the silverware lifted in the end.

"The result eventually went our way today, but the process was far more challenging than the outcome," world No 1 women's star Sun Yingsha said after helping China outlast Japan 3-2 in a close final.

"We'd prepared the hardest as we could to face such a competitive opponent, and we really had to stay extremely focused (to clinch the victory)," said the 25-year-old who won both her rubbers in the final.

Having racked up 20 world titles at the World Cup, world championships and Olympics, Sun's composure, experience and seamless game proved critical, as she twice leveled the battle for Team China by beating Hina Hayata and Miwa Harimoto in the second and fourth matches, following teammates Wang Manyu's opening loss to Harimoto and Kuai Man's defeat by Honoka Hashimoto in the third rubber.

With the title on the line, Wang delivered under pressure by routing Hayata in straight sets to complete China's comeback win, while clinching its sixth straight final win over Japan at the team worlds since 2014.

The victory was built as much on resilience as on quality, as Sun reckoned, with Team China pushed harder by its East Asian neighbor than in any previous encounter between the two nations.

"There were a lot of ups and downs in today's final. The Japanese team has developed comprehensive strength and is really performing better and better. The battle between us could really have gone either way," said Sun.

"Our strength lies in our depth, and we proved that, collectively, Team China is always the best."

The progress of the ambitious Japanese women, though, shouldn't be overlooked, underlined by teen sensation Harimoto's fearless style that stunned the experienced Wang in the opener, and the unique game of chopper Hashimoto that disrupted Kuai's pace in the third matchup.

"Credit to Sha Sha who steadied the ship," Wang said of Sun's pivotal role. "She gave me a chance of redemption ... Overall, we had a tough final that we should learn from to help us get better."

On the men's side, Team China also got the job done, but not before a bumpy ride that tested its grit and rebuilt its confidence en route to meeting Japan, which was contesting its first team worlds final in 10 years.

With reigning singles Olympic champion Fan Zhendong opting to skip the London showdown, the young Chinese men's squad, led by current world No 1 Wang Chuqin, suffered rare group-stage defeats to South Korea and Sweden, raising concerns over its gold-defending mettle, even before the knockout round kicked off in London.

Thanks to Wang's consistency, and the maturing game of teammates such as Liang Jingkun, Team China regrouped and responded like a champion during the high-stakes knockout stage, saving its best for last to demolish the Japanese side 3-0 in the final, after successfully avenging its earlier group loss to Korea in the quarterfinals and ousting European power France in the semis.

Citing the team's strong mental edge under pressure, Wang said he takes extra pride from being able to hit back at the doubters on the table.

"A lot of people said they didn't know that would happen with Team China before the championships, and I said: 'Bring it on and we will show you what we've got!' This is how we responded," Wang said after the final.

"Of course, the international competition we are facing is getting stronger. We have to prepare for each and every international event with utmost caution, like treading on thin ice," said Wang, who celebrated his 26th birthday on Monday, a day after the final.

Still, the absence of Fan's finesse was felt, with both Liang and another teammate, Lin Shidong, proving not yet as dominant as Wang on the biggest international stage.

Making his team worlds debut, the 21-year-old Lin, despite his potential, had his lack of consistency fully exposed with four losses in London, while Liang's slow start, which saw him have to battle back the hard way from 2-0 down against Japan's Tomokazu Harimoto to deliver Team China's opening win in the final, has emerged as a concern for future major events.

Their respective old injuries, on Lin's shoulder and Liang's waist and knee, should be taken into perspective, yet Team China refuses to make any excuses.

"Our young athletes have gained major experience and have learned lessons about their weakness," Wang Liqin, president of the Chinese Table Tennis Association, said in his review of the championships.

"Looking ahead, we should carry forward the fighting spirit of the Chinese table tennis program, identify our weakness in training and improve them for future competitions in order to strive for more honors in the buildup to the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics," said Wang.

SPORT CLIMBING

Zhao continues his meteoric rise, smashes another record

By **LI YINGXUE**
liyingxue@chinadaily.com.cn

In barely the blink of an eye, 16-year-old Chinese climber Zhao Yicheng had already slammed the buzzer — and rewritten the world record yet again.

At the World Climbing Series Wujiang 2026 on Sunday night, Zhao stormed to victory in the men's speed event with a time of 4.54 seconds, breaking his own world record for the second time in a month and defeating former record holder Samuel Watson of the United States in a much-anticipated semifinal showdown.

For the climbing world, it was more than a race. It was a direct duel between two of the sport's brightest young stars.

Watson, born in 2006, emerged during the Paris Olympic cycle as one of speed climbing's defining talents, becoming the first athlete to push the discipline into the "4.70-second era".

Yet since the Paris Games, global attention has increasingly shifted toward Zhao, his younger Chinese counterpart, who has already claimed three world youth titles and repeatedly produced times faster than previous world records.

Just weeks before arriving in Wujiang, Jiangsu province, Zhao had lowered Watson's mark to 4.58 seconds at the Asian Beach Games. In Wujiang, he went even faster.

Once the starting signal sounded, both climbers exploded up the wall almost simultaneously. Zhao produced the fastest reaction time of the day and maintained his advantage throughout the climb, stopping the clock at 4.54 seconds.

Yet Zhao insisted afterward that the climb was far from perfect.

"I think everyone performed at a high level in this competition, but my performance was definitely not perfect," he said. "I still saw a lot of details I can improve upon, and I feel I can climb even faster in the future."

Despite being labeled a "genius" by many observers, Zhao credited both talent and hard work for his rise.

"I have to admit that I do have talent, because talent makes my hard work more effective," he said. "But I also don't think I work any less hard than others. Talent gives me a higher starting point, while hard work allows me to go further."

The teenager said elite competition motivates rather than intimidates him.

"Honestly, without him, I probably wouldn't have climbed such a fast time today," Zhao said of Watson. "I didn't feel pressure facing him — more motivation than anything."

That motivation was evident in his explosive semifinal start, where Zhao recorded the quickest reaction time of the day.



Zhao Yicheng of China and Samuel Watson of the United States in action during the semifinal of the World Climbing Series Wujiang 2026 on Sunday night. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"My opponents don't actually affect me that much personally. I focus more on myself," he said. "Before competitions, I usually listen to music to help myself relax and get into the rhythm of the event."

Adding another layer of significance, Zhao's breakthrough performance came in his hometown of Suzhou, Jiangsu province.

For years, he had attended the Wujiang event as a spectator. On Sunday night, he stood center stage as champion.

"From being a spectator to becoming an athlete, I've been watching the Wujiang competition for three or four straight years," Zhao said. "Last year, I was already looking forward to doing something on this stage.

"But, today, I actually felt more relaxed. Maybe people outside have certain expectations of me, but I think the enthusiasm of the crowd allowed me to completely be myself."

Watson, who eventually took bronze, also offered glowing praise for the Chinese teenager.

"He is undoubtedly the most talented speed climber I've ever seen," the 20-year-old American said. "I knew I had to give 100 percent against him."

Watson revealed that the two climbers had already become familiar with each other and even chatted about basketball beside the podium before the medal ceremony.

Chinese climber Long Jianguo claimed silver in the men's speed competition.

Wujiang in limelight

Beyond the headline duel, the Wujiang leg highlighted broader changes reshaping competitive climbing ahead of the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, where speed, lead and boulder will each become standalone medal events.

Specialization is accelerating across the sport, with athletes pushing single-discipline performances to new extremes. In Wujiang, the overall standard in speed climbing rose dramatically. The men's cutoff time to reach the finals improved from 5.07 seconds at last year's world championships to 4.94 seconds, while the women's mark improved from 7.18 to 6.67 seconds.

The sport is also becoming an increasingly youthful pursuit.

China's entire lead climbing squad at the event consisted of athletes born after 2000, with the oldest only 25 years old.

Eighteen-year-old Chinese climber Hu Junzhe advanced to the semifinals in the lead discipline after an impressive qualification performance.

Meanwhile, Wujiang continues to strengthen its status as one of China's climbing strongholds.

Since first hosting the event in 2013, the city has staged the international competition 11 times. This year's event again embraced the "Climbing+" model, combining competition with tourism, cultural activities, local markets and outdoor experiences as part of a broader push to integrate sports, culture and regional development.

From a once niche pursuit to an Olympic discipline constantly redefining human limits, climbing's rapid rise in China has unfolded alongside Wujiang's transformation into one of the sport's key hubs.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:31 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:34 PM

Oil on the boil
Crude prices climb as Mideast peace hopes dim
WORLD, PAGE 5



Youth find calm in fidget toys, gourds
Z WEEKLY, PAGE 14



All things soccer
Production fires up for gear, fan merchandise as World Cup nears
BUSINESS, PAGE 9

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2026

Sino-Tajik bilateral ties enter new phase

Xi and Rahmon sign treaty on permanent good-neighborliness

By **CAO DESHENG**
caodesheng@chinadaily.com.cn

China and Tajikistan signed a treaty of permanent good-neighborliness, friendship and cooperation on Tuesday, ushering in a new phase in bilateral ties.

President Xi Jinping and visiting Tajik President Emomali Rahmon signed the treaty at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. Rahmon is in China on a four-day state visit, which started on Monday.

During their talks, Xi said that firmly supporting each other is the core essence of China-Tajikistan relations.

He said that regardless of changes in the external environment, China and Tajikistan will always remain good neighbors who help each other, good friends who trust each other with sincerity, and good partners who join hands for development.

The signing of the China-Tajikistan Treaty on Permanent Good-Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation will fully demonstrate the high level of political mutual trust between the two countries, providing a solid guarantee for everlasting friendship from one generation to another, Xi said, adding that China is willing to work with Tajikistan to promote the building of a closer community with a shared future to better benefit the people of both nations.

Rahmon hailed the signing of the treaty, saying that it marks the start of a new historical stage in the countries' relations, and will open up new prospects for their long-term cooperation.

The treaty came amid the steady growth of bilateral ties guided by the two heads of state in recent years. In 2023, the two countries announced the building of a China-Tajikistan community with a shared future featuring everlasting friendship, solidarity and mutual benefit. In 2024, the two countries elevated their ties to a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership in the new era.

Xi paid three state visits to Tajikistan — in 2014, 2019 and 2024. Rahmon visited China 22 times, and his last trip to China was to attend the 25th Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit in Tianjin and the grand gathering to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War in Beijing last September.



President Xi Jinping holds a welcoming ceremony for President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon in Beijing on Tuesday. Rahmon is in China on a four-day state visit, which started on Monday. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

Inside
See more, **page 11**

During the talks on Tuesday, Xi called on the two countries to deeply align their development strategies under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative to assist each other in achieving their development goals.

He underlined the need to consolidate the positive momentum of economic and trade cooperation between the two countries to explore cooperation potential, and simultaneously enhance the scale and quality of trade and investment.

It is essential to ensure the implementation of key projects, expand cooperation in areas such as green energy, the digital economy, smart cities and artificial intelligence, and boost technological innovation, Xi said.

Xi highlighted the need to strengthen law enforcement and security cooperation in order to resolutely combat the "three evil forces" of terrorism, separatism and extremism, and jointly maintain regional stability.

Rahmon hailed the development of bilateral ties and fruitful cooperation in such fields as trade, investment, transportation and agriculture. He reiterated Tajikistan's commitment to the one-China principle, saying that Taiwan is an inseparable part of China.

Tajikistan looks forward to strengthening practical cooperation with China in key areas such as critical minerals, AI and technological innovation, facilitating mutual visits and enhancing educational exchanges to further advance the relationship between the two countries, he said.

Rahmon said the Global Governance Initiative, proposed by President Xi, holds significant importance for the world. Tajikistan highly appreciates China's relentless efforts to promote the political settlement of international hotspot issues and its important role in easing tensions in the Middle East, he said.

After the talks, the two heads of state signed a joint statement of the two countries on deepening the comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership in the new era. They also witnessed the signing of multiple cooperation documents in areas such as political party exchanges, trade and investment, AI, green minerals and media.

Economic and trade cooperation has been a steady driver of China-Tajikistan ties. China has become Tajikistan's largest trading partner and remains its top source of investment. Bilateral trade reached $790 million in the first quarter of this year, a year-on-year increase of over 50 percent, according to China's Foreign Ministry.

Liu Yitong, an assistant research fellow at the Department for World Economy and Development of the China Institute of International Studies, said that amid growing uncertainties and instability in the international situation, strengthening high-level exchanges and deepening strategic mutual trust between China and Tajikistan are of great practical and exemplary significance.

Rahmon's China visit is expected to solidify political mutual trust, deepen practical cooperation, enhance cultural exchanges and strengthen security collaboration between the two countries, Liu said.

Xi navigates China-US relations amid global uncertainty

By **XINHUA**

The Chinese capital will soon become the setting for one of the most closely watched, high-stakes diplomatic encounters of the year, as the leaders of the world's two largest economies prepare to meet face-to-face.

This will be US President Donald Trump's first state visit to China since his reelection, and the second time President Xi Jinping has hosted him in the country — their last such meeting in the country took place nearly a decade ago.

Against the backdrop of a complex international landscape and shared global challenges, expectations are high: How can President Xi and Trump manage differences between the two sides? How can they navigate the most consequential bilateral relationship?

"You and I are at the helm of China-US relations," Xi told Trump during their talks in Busan, South Korea, in October 2025. Lasting more than 100 minutes, the meeting was another moment of direct engagement between the two leaders as they sought to steer China-US ties through uncertainty.

Using a maritime metaphor that is a recurring theme in his remarks, Xi asked Trump to help keep the "giant ship" of bilateral ties sailing steadily forward.

Over the years, head-of-state diplomacy has anchored China-US relations, serving as a stabilizing force amid shifting global currents. Since Trump's reelection, Xi has spoken with him by phone five times, maintaining close communication on ties and global hotspot issues.

*See **Diplomacy,** page 2*

Inside
- Comment, **page 6**
- Views, **page 7**
- See more, **pages 2, 3**

Stable Sino-US ties linked to global outlook

By **PRIME SARMIENTO**
in Hong Kong
prime@chinadailyapac.com

US President Donald Trump's upcoming state visit to Beijing and his meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping are fueling a high sense of anticipation across the Asia-Pacific and beyond, with analysts noting that stable China-US ties will benefit the regional and global outlook.

Trump is scheduled to visit China from Wednesday to Friday. Analysts expect that discussions on the US tariffs — which have been weighing on Asian economic growth — will be part of the closely-watched dialogue between the presidents.

"International eyes will be on this summit between Xi and Trump, what they will be discussing, whether any new deals will be made and (whether they will cover) certain deals that have been discussed previously and whether that would continue," said Mustafa Izzuddin, an international analyst at Solaris Strategies Singapore.

He said that what is important is that there is a channel of communication between the two major powers.

"I think we have to be realistic about what can be achieved," Mustafa said. "But I think at the same time, there is hope and some degree of optimism that because the two leaders have agreed to meet, that in itself is a positive step".



US President Donald Trump boards Air Force One on Tuesday at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland, for a state visit to China. ALEX WONG / GETTY IMAGES / AFP

Mustafa said that Asian countries would like to see trade tensions between the world's top two economies "kept as minimal as possible".

"What happens between the US and China will have huge ramifications for the rest of Asia," he said.

Amitendu Palit, a senior research fellow at the Institute of South Asian Studies at the National University of Singapore, said that most Asian economies are hoping that US-China tensions "are not going to flare up in a way that becomes damaging to the prospects of the Asian economy which leads to disruptions in Asian supply chains".

"So I think this is where the Asian economies really have a very high stake," Palit said.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said on Monday that Xi will have an in-depth exchange of views with Trump on major issues concerning China-US relations and world peace and development.

Irreplaceable role

In a news briefing, Guo pointed out that head-of-state diplomacy plays an irreplaceable role in providing strategic guidance for China-US relations.

Trump's visit this week will mark his first trip to China during his second term in office, and the first visit to China by a US president in nine years.

Xi and Trump last met in October 2025 in Busan, South Korea, on the sidelines of the APEC summit.

Lu Ting, chief China economist at Nomura Securities, said the meeting this week between the leaders "represents a critical moment in US-China relations".

"The meeting offers both sides an opportunity to stabilize relations and secure short-term wins," Lu said in his latest research note.

He expected trade issues to dominate the discussions, with negotiations on tariffs to be heavily influenced by the US Supreme Court ruling in February that invalidated several of the tariffs imposed under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act.

Palit said the US tariff issue is a key concern in Asia owing to its huge impact on international trade and supply chains.

"This is again an area of deep uncertainty," he said. Unresolved conflict between the US and China over tariffs would create "a lot of uncertainty" over the management of supply chains, Palit added.

Beijing, Washington should lead way to peace, development

WORLD WATCH
By Alessandro Golombiewski Teixeira

At a time of intensifying geopolitical tensions, economic fragmentation, climate vulnerability and rapid technological change, the roles of China and the United States are globally significant. As the world's largest economies and most influential actors, their relationship is a core pillar of global stability.

US President Donald Trump's three-day state visit to China from Wednesday to Friday provides a timely opportunity to recalibrate this relationship through renewed dialogue and strategic restraint. The trajectory of China-US relations will shape both bilateral outcomes and global development, particularly across the Global South.

Today's interconnected risks exceed any single state's capacity. Armed conflicts destabilize regions, while supply chain vulnerabilities and financial volatility expose structural weaknesses in the global economy.

Concurrently, rising inflation and unsustainable debt burdens constrain policy space in developing countries.

Climate change compounds these pressures, disproportionately affecting low-income regions.

Across Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Pacific, policy priorities remain centered on economic recovery, poverty alleviation, food security, infrastructure and technological access.

These concerns contrast sharply with the growing strategic competition between major powers.

Against this backdrop, China and the US bear a heightened responsibility to manage their differences within a framework of strategic stability.

*See **Visit,** page 4*

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

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN

China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:34 PM

SINO-US SUMMIT

Diplomacy: Seeking the right path for relations

From page 1

The two presidents first met in 2017, a year marked by an exchange of state visits that set the tone for their interactions. In April that year, Xi and his wife, Peng Liyuan, visited Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in the US state of Florida, where the two presidents dined together and Xi met Trump's family, including his grandchildren.

It was during that visit that Xi delivered a line often recalled in discussions of bilateral ties: "There are a thousand reasons to make the China-US relationship a success, but not a single reason to break it."

Several months later, in November, Trump traveled to Beijing, where Xi hosted him during a series of special events. The two leaders and their spouses toured the Forbidden City along its central axis, visiting the Hall of Supreme Harmony, the Hall of Central Harmony and the Hall of Preserving Harmony — an experience imbued with the Chinese cultural ideal of "harmony" reflected in the names of the three grand halls.

Walking inside the ancient royal palace, Xi told Trump that China's history can be traced back more than 5,000 years, or even earlier, and its culture has been passed down in an unbroken continuum.

During a chat over tea on that trip, Trump showed Xi a video of his granddaughter, Arabella Kushner, singing and reciting classical poems in Mandarin. Xi said her performance deserved an A-plus. The clip quickly resonated with Chinese netizens and went viral online.

Those early exchanges were widely seen as helping to build a personal rapport between the two leaders, offering a channel to understand each other, manage differences and prevent the relationship from sliding into outright confrontation. "I have a lot of respect for President Xi," Trump has often said.

The past years have seen Xi's meetings with US leaders using this approach — from the Mar-a-Lago summit and the Yingtai evening talks in the Zhongnanhai compound to the long conversation by China's West Lake — often remembered as defining moments in bilateral ties.

The upcoming meeting is expected to continue the tradition of high-level engagement. "The real significance of this meeting may not lie in any grand deal," said Denis Simon, a senior fellow at the Quincy Institute. "Instead, it will test whether the United States and China can establish an equilibrium."

Earlier this year, on Feb 4 — "*lichun*", the traditional Chinese marker for the beginning of spring — Xi spoke with Trump by phone for the first time in 2026, returning to the metaphor that has come to define his messages on bilateral ties.

"In the year ahead," Xi said, "I look forward to working with you to steer the giant ship of China-US relations through winds and waves, keep it on a steady course, and achieve more major and positive outcomes."



President Xi Jinping and his wife Peng Liyuan, and US President Donald Trump and his wife Melania Trump visit the Palace Museum in Beijing on Nov 8, 2017. LAN HONGGUANG / XINHUA

Avoiding miscalculations

In recent years, China-US relations have experienced twists and turns. Some observers fear that China and the United States may repeat the historical pattern of major-power rivalry known as the "Thucydides Trap." Yet, Xi has rejected this notion: "There is no such thing as a 'Thucydides Trap' in the world. But repeated strategic miscalculations between major countries could create one for themselves."

Avoiding such miscalculations, therefore, has become a critical task for China and the United States, which requires both sides to engage in candid dialogue on several key issues.

Foremost is the Taiwan question. President Xi has repeatedly and unequivocally conveyed China's fundamental stance to the US side. In the Feb 4 phone conversation with Trump, Xi once again stressed that the Taiwan question is the most important and sensitive issue in China-US relations, urging the US side to handle arms sales to Taiwan with utmost prudence.

Trade is another critical issue. In the face of unilateral US tariff offensives, China, under Xi's leadership, has taken resolute countermeasures.

At the same time, Beijing has kept channels of engagement open. Xi has dispatched economic and trade teams that have held six rounds of talks with the US side, seeking to narrow differences step by step while expanding common ground. Currently, trade ties between the two countries remain roughly steady. The two sides are holding a new round of trade talks in South Korea from May 12 to 13.

During their Busan meeting, Xi underscored the broader perspective needed to manage such frictions.

"Both sides should take a broader and longer-term view," Xi told Trump, "focusing on the lasting benefits of cooperation instead of falling into a vicious cycle of retaliation." Trump described Xi as a great leader and a firm negotiator.

How, then, does Xi envision the direction of bilateral ties leading into the future? In a speech delivered in San Francisco in 2023, he posed what he described as the number-one question: "Are we adversaries, or partners?"

"If one sees the other side as a primary competitor, the most consequential geopolitical challenge and a pacing threat," he warned, "it will only lead to misinformed policy making, misguided actions, and unwanted results."

Xi also stressed that China has no intention of challenging or unseating the United States. "China never bets against the United States," he said. "Likewise, the United States should not bet against China."

Drawing on the experience of China-US relations, Xi has outlined three principles — mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation — as the right path forward for the two countries.

'Small ball moves big globe'

This April, Xi sent a congratulatory letter to an event commemorating the 55th anniversary of China-US Ping-Pong Diplomacy, recalling the historic 1971 episode often described as "a small ball moving the big globe."

In 1971, a US table tennis team visited Beijing, a breakthrough that thawed more than two decades of estrangement, and helped pave the way for then US President Richard Nixon's landmark visit to China in 1972, and later the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries in 1979. Its impact extended far beyond the bilateral sphere, profoundly reshaping the global landscape.

More than half a century on, Xi referred to the story not merely as a historical memory, but as a reminder of the profound influence stable China-US relations can have on the wider world.

In a 2024 meeting with Antony Blinken, former US Secretary of State, Xi invoked a concept inspired by traditional Chinese culture — "*tong qiu gong ji*" ("working together for the common good on the same planet").

"Planet Earth is only this big, and humanity is faced with so many common challenges," Xi said. "As an old Chinese saying goes, 'Passengers in the same boat should help each other.' Today, as I see it, 'dwellers of the same planet should help each other'."

During their meeting in Busan, Trump also acknowledged the importance of cooperation between the two countries, saying that China and the United States can get many great things done for the world and have many years of success.

"There is no geopolitical relationship more important than the China-US bilateral relationship ... with by far the largest impact on global affairs," said Robert Lawrence Kuhn, chairman of the Kuhn Foundation.

For both countries, a stable China-US relationship helps remove obstacles to domestic development. More broadly, it carries profound significance for global stability and prosperity, according to Kuhn.

The timing adds further weight to the relationship. In 2026, China is embarking on its 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), while the United States marks the 250th anniversary of its founding. The two countries will respectively host major global gatherings, the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in Shenzhen and the G20 Leaders' Summit in Miami, which will place them at the center of the international agenda.

Beyond red-line and trade issues, observers also point to several areas where cooperation remains vital for both sides, including climate change, counternarcotics and artificial intelligence.

For Xi, it is precisely these countless small acts of cooperation that carry lasting significance.

He once reminded Trump that for China and the United States, "it is always right to do a good thing, however small, and always wrong to do a bad thing, however small."

Just as the Chinese leader has noted on many occasions, China and the United States, as two major countries, can shoulder their responsibilities and work together to accomplish more great and concrete things for the good of both countries and the whole world.



The First Senior Officials' Meeting and Related Meetings are held in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, from Feb 1 to 10, 2026. DENG HUA / XINHUA

> In the year ahead, I look forward to working with you (Donald Trump) to steer the giant ship of China-US relations through winds and waves, keep it on a steady course, and achieve more major and positive outcomes."
>
> **President Xi Jinping** on Feb 4





Left: A China-US table tennis friendly match is played at Shanghai University of Sport in Shanghai on April 13. WANG XIANG / XINHUA **Right:** A cargo ship loaded with foreign trade containers docks at a berth at Qingdao Port in Shandong province on Saturday. YU FANGPING / XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:34 PM

SINO-US SUMMIT



Players from Lincoln High School in Tacoma, Washington state, the United States, and Capital University of Physical Education and Sports participate in a friendly flag football match in Beijing on April 9. FU TIAN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Exchanges among young people exceed expectations

By **ZOU SHUO**
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

More than 48,500 young people from the United States have visited China for exchange and study programs since the launch of the "50,000 in Five Years" initiative more than two years ago, according to the latest data released by the Ministry of Education.

The initiative, which was announced by President Xi Jinping in San Francisco in November 2023, aims to encourage more exchanges among young people of the two countries.

Yang Dan, head of the Department of International Cooperation and Exchanges of the Ministry of Education, said the initiative has been widely applauded by Chinese and US communities as a means to boost people-to-people ties and inject youthful vitality into bilateral relations.

"The initiative's implementation has seen progress, exceeding expectations in terms of speed, outcomes and global impact," Yang said.

As of early March, the number of young people from the US visiting China had surpassed 48,500, he said, adding that they traveled from all 50 states of the US and visited 31 provincial-level regions on the Chinese mainland, as well as the Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions.

> "The initiative's implementation has seen progress, exceeding expectations in terms of speed, outcomes and global impact."
>
> **Yang Dan,** head of the Ministry of Education's Department of International Cooperation and Exchanges

The groups comprised students from institutions ranging from primary schools to universities in the US, and many of them set foot in China for the first time, gaining a vivid and multidimensional understanding of the country, Yang said.

The projects and activities they participated in ranged from cultural experiences and language learning to summer and winter camps, science and technology exchanges, sports competitions, academic credit programs and degree courses.

"Seeing is believing," Yang said, noting that by touring China, these young people from the US have been able to closely engage with their Chinese peers on topics such as global governance, environmental protection, cultural heritage preservation and innovative development.

He said that young people from the US returned home with lively stories about China, becoming rational and objective voices with regard to China-US ties.

Fifty thousand young people means 50,000 friendships and 50,000 channels of communication, Yang said, emphasizing that they could turn the inclusive, open, trusting and win-win spirit cultivated through peer activities into a solid foundation for the positive growth of bilateral relations.

They can become a lasting source of strength for the stable, healthy and sustainable development of China-US relations, he added.

Moving forward, Yang said, China will explore more diverse forms of exchange, build more platforms and introduce stronger social support to encourage sustained and institutionalized mutual visits.

When more and more young people from China and the US become envoys of friendship and when heart-to-heart communication forms a mighty force, the China-US relationship will be built on a stronger foundation and have a brighter future, Yang said.

One notable example of such an exchange took place at Jiaxing University in Zhejiang province in May last year, when 11 students and faculty members from Missouri State University attended a business administration exchange program.

During the weeklong event, the US delegation visited Alibaba and Hormel Foods to learn about cross-border e-commerce and localized product innovation.

As part of an in-depth exploration of Jiaxing's specialty industries, the participants studied how local woolen sweater enterprises have adopted cross-border e-commerce and artificial intelligence-driven solutions to upgrade their operations and boost exports.

Cultural activities included making traditional pastries, dumplings and *zongzi*, or sticky rice wrapped in leaves with various fillings, as well as visits to Nanhu Lake in Jiaxing and West Lake in Hangzhou, the capital of Zhejiang.

"This trip to China, to Jiaxing, will be an unforgettable memory for the rest of my life. I will tell my classmates back in the US about the different China I have experienced," said Michael James Guilfoy, a student from Missouri State University.

Anthony Lakin, another student from the university, who documented his journey on camera, called it "the best experience" of his life, adding that he would definitely ask his family members and friends to visit China.

Daezia Cymone Smith, a Missouri State University faculty member, said that she will tell her family about "the real China", which is "a very cool experience".

China, US can inject impetus into recovery

Structural complementarity of nations helps benefit businesses on both sides, say experts

By **WANG KEJU** and **MA SI**

As the world's two largest economies, China and the United States can benefit businesses on both sides and inject fresh momentum into global economic recovery by finding more common ground and working together to manage differences, said economists and business executives.

The structural complementarity between the two nations, which spans manufacturing, technology and services, is too significant to be disrupted by trade frictions, they added.

"American companies are continuing to invest. American companies aren't going anywhere," said Sean Stein, president of the US-China Business Council, countering the narrative that US businesses are leaving China.

"It's not just the China market anymore; it's the China platform," he said, noting that the platform encompasses everything — from consumer access and partnerships with local enterprises to research and development and supply chain resilience — which is "only becoming more important".

Stein emphasized that coming to China will help US business leaders develop a clearer view and a more realistic understanding of where China stands. Until that happens, it is easy to imagine dangers and concerns that may not be as serious as they seem, he said. "Twenty-five years ago, no one came to China to do R&D. Now what I'm seeing is that the best companies are coming and doing some of their most important R&D," he added.

According to data from the Ministry of Commerce, foreign direct investment in China's high-tech industries surged 30.7 percent year-on-year to 102.73 billion yuan ($15.12 billion) in the first quarter of 2026, pushing the sector's share in total FDI to 41.2 percent.

Eric Zheng, president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai, said that if US companies want to remain globally competitive, they should invest in China. "A US company that can thrive in China can succeed in many other markets around the world. The experience and capabilities built here can be directly applied elsewhere," he said.

Zheng added that the complementarity of the US-China economic relationship means that stable and predictable bilateral trade ties serve the fundamental interests of both nations and greatly benefit businesses on both sides.

Geoff Martha, chairman and CEO of the US-based medical technology company Medtronic, said that China is not only a market with the potential to become the world's largest market for medical technology, but also a valuable partner.

"That commitment is reflected in our long-term investments," he said. "We see strong alignment between China's focus on new quality productive forces and Medtronic's work to develop next-generation technologies that can improve care and expand access for patients."

Surveys indicate that US businesses prefer stability over confrontation. In late April, a white paper released by the American Chamber of Commerce in China noted that more than half of US companies in China still rank the country among their top three global investment destinations.

Liao Fan, director of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of World Economics and Politics, said that despite years of trade tensions and escalating rhetoric, the underlying economic logic of China-US cooperation remains intact.

"You cannot decouple two economies that have been interwoven together over decades through investment, supply chain integration and market interdependence. The cost of separation would be measured in trillions of dollars and millions of jobs," Liao said.

Zhang Yansheng, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Macroeconomic Research, noted that China and the US are not only very important for each other, but their relationship is of utmost importance for the world.

According to the International Monetary Fund, the combined nominal GDP of China and the US accounted for nearly 45 percent of the global economy in 2025. A report released in March by the US-based McKinsey Global Institute also showed that the decline in US-China trade reduced global trade growth by around 10 percent last year.

He Weiwen, a senior fellow at the Beijing-based think tank Center for China and Globalization, said that for the relationship to be truly fair and mutually beneficial, the US must remove the unreasonable restrictions it has imposed on China.

Contact the writers at wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Duo builds bridge of friendship across time, weaving new threads of Kuliang stories

By **JI HAISHENG**
jihaisheng@chinadaily.com.cn

Nestled in the green hills near the coastal city of Fuzhou, the capital of Fujian province, is a village called Kuliang, which was once home to a vibrant international community. After the foreign residents left in the mid-20th century, people largely forgot about the thriving community that once called Kuliang home.

Decades later, the stories are being revived thanks to a trans-Pacific partnership. Using old photos, personal networks and new technology, a Chinese professor and a cultural researcher from the United States are rebuilding human connections lost to time.

The collaboration began in 2015, when Elyn MacInnis, a US citizen with strong family ties to China, traveled to Fuzhou with her husband to fulfill two wishes. The first was to scatter her father-in-law's ashes in the Minjiang River, which flows through Fuzhou, thereby honoring his wish to return to the city where he once lived and taught. The second, and more challenging task, was to find the family's old home in Kuliang.

To help with the search, they brought with them a collection of faded color photos taken in the 1940s. Among those who tried to help was Lin Yinan, a Fuzhou native and an associate professor at the Shanghai-based East China University of Science and Technology. "We got the photos and tried to identify the house, but we couldn't pinpoint its location," Lin recalled. "That's where the story began."

Sense of connection

That visit instilled a renewed sense of connection in MacInnis. Upon returning to the US, she delved deeper into the archives to uncover Kuliang's stories and began reaching out to other US families with connections to the mountain village, leading to the establishment of the Kuliang Friends group. The breakthrough came in 2016, when MacInnis found a map of Kuliang and a name list. But it was written in an incomprehensible script: English phonetic approximations of the Fuzhou dialect.

Lin stepped in to bridge the gap. "I'm a local," Lin explained. "I can understand the dialect, and I speak both English and Chinese, so I could help decode it."

Lin's and MacInnis' skills proved complementary. In the US, MacInnis took on the role of archival detective, scouring libraries, family collections and online databases for photographs, letters and diaries. Lin in China became the decoder and field researcher, using his knowledge to translate names and verify locations on the ground.

"We instantly became the team — the Kuliang research team — the two of us," said MacInnis. The duo leveraged the time difference to work around the clock, joking that they simply took turns to sleep while the other worked, since they were on opposite sides of the world. "We worked basically 24 hours a day, seven days a week," MacInnis said, "as hard as we could — in archives, on the internet, with other people."

As the flow of information grew, a new challenge emerged: how could the unnamed faces in the old photographs be identified? Lin and his team of students engineered an innovative solution. They developed the Kuliang Genealogy system, which is China's first digital archive for an overseas community. Using facial recognition technology, the system scans old photos, identifies individuals and reconstructs family trees and social networks.

One of the human connections restored by the system led to an unusual reunion. It gave 85-year-old Gail Harris, whose family once spent their summers in Kuliang, the first-ever glimpse of her mother as a 21-year-old, as captured in a Fuzhou college faculty photo. For Lin, such moments strengthened his sense of mission: to rebuild a severed social fabric. "When I see old photos of Chinese and Americans staying together, I just want to tell their descendants, 'Look, your ancestors were good friends'," he said.

With their joint efforts, Lin and MacInnis have traced at least 80 families and 120 houses with links to Kuliang, and the Kuliang Friends network has expanded to comprise more than 50 members. Notable discoveries include the families of Ruth Hemenway, a US physician who served mothers and children in Minqing, Fujian, for 12 years, and Bruce Hayes, a Fuzhou-born hero who served in a coast-watching unit in support of the Flying Tigers during World War II.

"We keep coming across new stories," said MacInnis. "It will never be rote or boring because we find new people and new stories all the time."

Tangible reality

For her, the power of Kuliang lies in its tangible reality. "Kuliang is not abstract or idealized. It's real," she said, citing the true stories and returning descendants as living proof. The community, she noted, was made up of real people — teachers, doctors, scientists and farmers — who had lived, worked and built trust alongside their Chinese neighbors over generations.



Lin Yinan (right), an associate professor at Shanghai-based East China University of Science and Technology, introduces to Elyn MacInnis the genealogical system to search for foreigners who lived in Kuliang, Fujian province, and their descendants during a meeting in the village on June 21, 2024. LIN SHANCHUAN / XINHUA

This is not something automatic, MacInnis reflected. "The story really is seeing what happens when you take the time to be friends and to work together."

She added that the whole Kuliang bond program has been a joy. For her, it is not only about the historical discovery, but also the chance to share it with a new generation, so they could inherit that spirit.

"It is that friendship that is one of the anchors of peace," she said. "We're all looking for that."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:34 PM

WORLD

Envoys call for deeper China-California ties

Trade, innovation and green development emphasized at Los Angeles business forum

By **RENA LI** in Los Angeles
renali@chinadailyusa.com

Chinese envoys to the United States on Monday highlighted the importance of deepening China-California cooperation in trade, innovation and green development, while calling for mutual respect, openness and practical cooperation to help stabilize China-US relations amid global uncertainties.

The 2026 China-California Business Forum, themed "Better Understanding Better Business," brought together local US business leaders and a Chinese delegation consisting of more than 150 business leaders and trade officials from dozens of Chinese provinces. Hainan participated as the forum's guest province of honor.

In a video address to the forum, Chinese Ambassador to the United States Xie Feng said California's trade with China approached $90 billion last year, leading all US states, and noted that "two out of every five containers moving between China and the United States passed through California ports".

Xie said China's economy had maintained strong momentum despite a "fluid external environment", adding that China's recently adopted 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) outlined a strategic blueprint for Chinese modernization and higher-quality growth.

Xie said more people had come to recognize that China, with stable policies, dynamic growth and greater openness, is "an anchor of stability for the global economy" and "a window of opportunity for all parties to share in China's development dividends".

Calling California "a natural partner for China", Xie proposed four suggestions for advancing bilateral cooperation, including focusing on people's well-being, embracing green growth, upholding openness and unleashing innovation.

In particular, Xie said China and California could deepen cooperation in clean energy, green materials, carbon capture, utilization and storage, as well as green finance including green bonds, climate funds and carbon markets, helping build "a cleaner, more beautiful and more sustainable world".

Xie also stressed the importance of stable China-US relations, saying that "the more turbulent the world becomes, the more important China-US relations are". He reiterated that "mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation should be the direction of our joint efforts".

Echoing Xie's remarks, Chinese Consul General in Los Angeles Guo Shaochun said the forum's development over the past decade demonstrated the significance of sub-national cooperation between China and California.

Guo said China and California maintained highly complementary economies and close cooperation in trade, ports, shipping, education, film and television, among other sectors.

He also highlighted the growing role of Chinese companies in California's economy. Guo said China ranked as the ninth-largest source of foreign investment in California in 2025, supporting more than 25,000 jobs.

At the same time, California-based companies including Apple, Qualcomm and Skechers continue to deepen cooperation with Chinese supply chain partners, he said.

Guo also pointed to cooperation between the ports of Los Angeles, Long Beach and Shanghai on green shipping corridors and low-carbon development in the global shipping industry.

On educational exchanges, Guo said Southern California hosts more than 50,000 Chinese students annually, contributing over $4 billion to the local economy each year.

He also noted the success of Hollywood films in the Chinese market, citing *Zootopia 2* as an example. According to Guo, the film generated nearly 4.6 billion yuan ($637 million) at the Chinese box office, accounting for about half of its global revenue.

Guo said the business community remained "the most dynamic, pragmatic and resilient force in China-US relations" and called for expanded cooperation in modern agriculture, green transition, artificial intelligence, biomedicine and energy storage.

Local business leaders at the forum emphasized the significance of maintaining California-China cooperation.

Bay Area Council President and CEO Libby Schaaf expressed her appreciation for learning about China's trade policies and climate leadership.

"May our example of collaboration and cooperation for our shared benefits be an example and inspiration for all," she said.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional infowmation is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave. Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1826



France's President Emmanuel Macron (second from right) and Kenya's President William Ruto (second from left) sing and dance with choir members upon their arrival ahead of the Africa Forward Summit in Nairobi on Monday. LUDOVIC MARIN / AFP

France seeks to strengthen relations with Africa

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

France is seeking to rebuild and strengthen its partnerships with African nations as it reassesses its strategy on the continent following strained relations with several West African countries, analysts said.

For the first time, France hosted the Africa Forward Summit in an English-speaking country, a move experts described as a strategic attempt to regain influence in Africa.

The two-day summit in Kenya's capital Nairobi from Monday to Tuesday drew participation from business leaders and some 30 heads of state from Africa, with France stressing "equal partnerships" with Africa, and announcing investments worth $27 billion for the continent.

The shift comes amid France's deteriorating ties with parts of West Africa, driven by rising anti-French sentiments, military coups, and growing calls to end colonial-era security arrangements in recent years.

Aly-Khan Satchu, a Kenyan investment banker, said the traditional "Francafrique" model has reached its end.

Satchu said that global trends point toward greater local ownership in partnerships, and urged African governments to negotiate stronger deals.

"It remains the responsibility of African governments to negotiate in the best interests of their citizens if we are to see the birth of genuinely equal partnerships," he said.

However, Gordon K'achola, founder of the Africa Center for Diplomatic Affairs, said France is trying to rebuild trust without directly apologizing.

"This strategy may not work for them but with woke African young leaders, they are getting into partnerships knowing what they actually want," he said, adding that France's historical legacy remains a major obstacle, particularly in Anglophone Africa, which refers to English-speaking regions in the continent.

He noted a deep trust deficit: "They shall cooperate with African countries with almost zero trust. It will be based on regaining the lost opportunity Africa has had to experience for all these years under the French manipulation."

Speaking at the summit opening, Kenya's President William Ruto said shifting global trade is reshaping the world economy.

"Fragmentation cannot be the answer, nor isolation the strategy," he said, calling for cooperation based on sovereign equality, mutual respect, and shared responsibility.

Ruto said Africa must move beyond aid and dependency toward investment, innovation, and value creation.

"Africa is not part of the global problem but part of the solution," he said, highlighting the continent's natural resources, young population, and renewable energy potential.

Antonio Guterres, secretary-general of the United Nations, said Africa is now leading key global debates on reforming a financial system designed in 1945.

He said African leadership is building new tools such as the borrower's platform so that countries can speak with one voice and negotiate from a position of strength. "It is challenging credit rating systems that prevent many countries from accessing the borrowing tools they need," Guterres said.

He noted African-led efforts to strengthen collective bargaining, reform credit rating systems, and expand the lending capacity of development banks, while easing debt pressures.

Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, the chairman of the African Union Commission, said Africa must take a leading role in global affairs.

Emmanuel Macron, the president of France, said Africa is now viewed as a full partner rather than just a source of raw materials.

"We are working toward a transformation of investment relations, focusing on value chains, energy, and sustainable development," he said, adding that future cooperation will emphasize financial reform, taxation, and debt restructuring.

Starmer vows to stay amid growing calls to resign

By **JULIAN SHEA** in London
julian@mail.chinadailyuk.com

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer has told his Cabinet he has no intention of stepping down despite coming under increasing internal pressure following last week's hugely disappointing local election results for the ruling Labour Party.

Three junior ministers have resigned from the government as of press time and they called for a change in leadership, but no candidate has yet come forward to challenge Starmer directly.

Earlier on Tuesday, the BBC reported that 78 of Labour's 403 members of parliament had called on him to go, with some senior ministers reported to be among them, but his message to the Cabinet was defiant.

"As I said yesterday, I take responsibility for these election results and I take responsibility for delivering the change we promised," he reportedly told them.

He went on to call the previous 48 hours "destabilizing for government", having an economic impact on the lives of voters, and added, "The Labour Party has a process for challenging a leader and that has not been triggered.

"The country expects us to get on with governing. That is what I am doing and what we must do as a Cabinet." Writing on X, Housing Secretary Steve Reed gave Starmer his backing, repeating the point about voters paying the price for party infighting.

"This instability has consequences for people's lives," he said.

"The people who will be hurt most will be those that elected us less than two years ago. We must unite behind the prime minister."

Starmer gave a speech to Labour MPs on Monday where he hoped to regain control of the situation, but a statement from one of the new 2024 election intakes, Paul Foster, said this had not succeeded.

Rebuilding confidence

"Unfortunately, after much reflection, the prime minister's speech yesterday did little to reassure me that he has the vision needed to reconnect with the country and rebuild public confidence under his leadership," he said.

"It pains me to say this because I am a loyal person by nature, and I do not come to this conclusion lightly. But it is with great regret that I believe the party now needs a change of direction and, ultimately, a new leader."

If Starmer were to leave his post, it would not automatically trigger a general election as the Labour Party has a large majority in parliament, but it would continue a decade-long pattern of leadership change at the top of British government, with previous Conservative Party prime ministers David Cameron, Theresa May, Boris Johnson and Liz Truss all having been replaced midterm, for differing reasons, and only Rishi Sunak leaving office after a general election defeat.

Agencies contributed to this story.

Visit: An open, rules-based and inclusive order essential

From page 1

History demonstrates that major power confrontation generates negative externalities falling disproportionately on developing economies. Trade disruptions, capital market instability and geopolitical risks erode investor confidence and constrain long-term growth. A predictable China-US relationship is, therefore, a global public good.

High-level political engagement is indispensable. Trump's visit underscores the continuing relevance of top-level diplomacy in stabilizing expectations and reducing misperceptions. Institutionalized dialogue serves as a mechanism for crisis management, trust building and policy coordination.

While structural differences will persist, they can be managed through communication and bounded competition rather than escalating confrontation. Moving beyond zero-sum frameworks toward pragmatic cooperation is essential in addressing transnational challenges.

Three principles should underpin this relationship: peace, mutual respect and development.

First, peace is the precondition for systemic stability and long-term economic growth. Disruptions in China-US relations have immediate spillover effects on global trade, investment and technological collaboration. In a fragile global economy, such disruptions impose severe costs on developing countries with limited resilience.

Second, mutual respect is necessary for sustainable engagement. This entails recognizing differences in political systems, development models and strategic interests, while avoiding policies that escalate tensions. A stable relationship requires both sides to exercise strategic restraint and prioritize long-term systemic stability over short-term tactical gains.

Third, development must remain central to global governance. China has advanced this priority through the Global Development Initiative, which refocuses international cooperation on poverty reduction, food security, climate action and innovation-driven growth. Increased China-US coordination in development financing and resource alignment would strengthen implementation, particularly in under-resourced regions.

This approach is consistent with the broader concept of a community with a shared future for humanity, which emphasizes interdependence, shared prosperity and cooperative security. It rejects zero-sum competition in favor of collective responses to transnational challenges, placing coordination and mutual benefit at the center of international engagement.

The implications of China-US relations extend deeply into the international system. For developing countries, preserving an open, rules-based and inclusive order is essential. Multilateral institutions remain critical platforms for coordination. As leading stakeholders, China and the US share a responsibility to strengthen these institutions rather than fragment them.

Climate change illustrates the strategic necessity of such cooperation. As the world's two major carbon emitters with different historical responsibilities and development stages, China and the US are indispensable to any credible global climate strategy. Coordinated action in clean energy deployment, climate finance and technological innovation can generate substantial positive spillovers. Conversely, policy divergence can significantly undermine global mitigation efforts.

Equally critical is the stability of the international financial and trading system. Fragmentation into competing blocs reduces efficiency and heightens systemic risk. Constructive engagement between China and the US can help sustain international order principles while mitigating the risks of strategic decoupling.

While strategic differences remain a structural feature, substantial scope exists for functional cooperation in areas such as public health, scientific research, poverty reduction and sustainable development. Expanding such cooperation generates tangible benefits while serving as a stabilizing force.

For developing countries, the stakes are immediate. Their core priorities are directly shaped by the external environment created by major powers. Stability in China-US relations is a practical determinant of development outcomes.

Trump's visit to China represents a timely opportunity to reaffirm shared responsibilities and advance a constructive relationship. By institutionalizing dialogue, exercising strategic restraint and prioritizing development-oriented cooperation, China and the US can move beyond destabilizing frictions. By doing so, they will contribute to a more stable, inclusive and development-focused international order.

The author is a former minister of tourism of Brazil, a distinguished professor at Tsinghua University and a professor at Chinese University of Hong Kong (Shenzhen). The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:34 PM

WORLD

Peace deal hopes dim as deadlock continues

Nuclear tensions deepen amid stalled US-Iran negotiations, surging oil prices

By **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE, and **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong

Hopes for a peace deal with Iran faded on Tuesday after the United States said a truce was "on life support", as Tehran rejected a US proposal and hinted that a possible retaliation over further US-Israeli strikes could be uranium enrichment to 90 percent purity.

US President Donald Trump said on Monday Iran's counteroffer has put the April 8 ceasefire at severe risk.

"I would call it the weakest right now, after reading that piece of garbage they sent us. I didn't even finish reading it," he told reporters.

"The ceasefire is on massive life support," he said.

In response, Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said his country's armed forces stand ready to deliver a lesson-teaching response to any act of aggression.

"There is no alternative but to accept the rights of the Iranian people as laid out in the 14-point proposal," he said in a post on X on Tuesday.

Also on Tuesday, Ebrahim Rezaei, spokesman for the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission, said Iran could enrich uranium up to 90 percent purity — a level considered weapons-grade — if its territory faces fresh military attacks. "We will review it in Parliament," he said.

The latest twists further roiled global energy markets, already disrupted by the Middle East crisis and the overlapping blockades around the Strait of Hormuz — a critical oil and gas transit route that carries about 20 percent of the world's oil shipments.

The benchmark Brent crude oil futures extended gains on Tuesday, climbing to almost $108 a barrel.

"The energy supply shock that began in the first quarter is the largest the world has ever experienced," Amin Nasser, CEO and president of Saudi Arabia's oil giant Aramco, told investors, warning it would take months for markets to rebalance even if the strait opens immediately.

"If its opening is delayed by a few more weeks, then normalization will last into 2027," he said.

The US Department of Energy said on Monday it is releasing 53.3 million barrels of crude from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to energy firms under a global arrangement aimed at easing supply tightness, Reuters reported.

Respective demands

Washington had proposed an immediate halt to fighting before negotiating more divisive issues, including Iran's nuclear program. Tehran, however, demanded a full end to hostilities across all fronts — including in Lebanon, where Israel was continuing military strikes.

Iran also insisted on its sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz, compensation for war damages and an end to the US naval blockade, among other preconditions.

Negotiations between Iran and the US are stuck in a deadlock amid an extremely dangerous situation, Giorgio Cafiero, a Washington-based political analyst, told Al Jazeera.

"The understatement of the century is that the ceasefire is very fragile," he said, adding any "slight miscalculation" could trigger a protracted conflict that could eventually spiral into a messy quagmire.

Iran, the US and Israel reached a ceasefire last month following 40 days of hostilities sparked by joint US-Israeli strikes on Feb 28.

Following the truce, Iranian and US delegations held one round of peace talks in Pakistan on April 11 and 12, which yielded no breakthrough. In recent weeks, the two sides have exchanged multiple proposals aimed at ending the conflict, mediated by Pakistan.

In Lebanon, local leaders have urged the US ambassador in Beirut to press Israel to halt its aerial bombardment. Israeli strikes on a town in southern Lebanon killed six people and wounded seven others, the National News Agency reported on Tuesday, as fighting continued despite a ceasefire agreement.

Lebanon's Health Ministry told Agence France-Presse on Tuesday Israeli strikes have killed 380 people since the ceasefire began on April 17.

A ministry official said that "380 people, including 22 children and 39 women, have been killed in strikes on Lebanon since the ceasefire came into effect", out of a total of around 2,900 people killed since the war erupted on March 2.

Meanwhile, US Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee said on Tuesday that Israel sent its homegrown Iron Dome anti-missile batteries, along with personnel to operate them, to the United Arab Emirates. The UAE did not immediately comment on his remarks.

Contact the writers at cuihaipei@chinadaily.com.cn

Love amid ruins



Palestinian brides and grooms gather for a mass wedding organized by Turkiye's IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation in Gaza City on Monday, offering a rare moment of celebration amid the devastation of conflict. MAJDI FATHI VIA GETTY IMAGES

Briefly

RUSSIA

Moscow welcomes EU discussions on dialogue

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Monday that discussions in Europe on the need for dialogue with Russia were a positive development, though the situation is still in initial stages. Russian President Vladimir Putin, while responding to questions on Saturday over a potential negotiation mediator between Russia and Europe, said he would prefer former German chancellor Gerhard Schroeder for the role. Putin said Europeans should choose their own leader, one they trust and who has not made hostile remarks against Russia. "It is noteworthy that there is growing talk in Europe about the need for dialogue with Russia," Peskov told state media RIA Novosti. "We welcome this; it is a positive development, but we are still only at the beginning. We will see how things develop from here."

SPAIN

'Work not over' after hantavirus evacuation

World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on Tuesday that "our work is not over" to contain the hantavirus after evacuations from a cruise ship hit by a deadly outbreak of the illness. The fate of the MV *Hondius* has sparked international alarm after three passengers died in an outbreak of the rare virus, for which no vaccines or specific treatments exist. Yet, health officials have stressed that the global public health risk is low and rejected comparisons to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. "There is no sign that we are seeing the start of a larger outbreak," Tedros told a joint news conference in Madrid with Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez. "But of course the situation could change, and given the long incubation period of the virus, it's possible we might see more cases in the coming weeks," Tedros said of the Andes variant, which is transmissible between humans.

AGENCIES—XINHUA

Chengdu Hi-Tech Industrial Development Zone forging global ties

By **YUAN SHENGGAO**

Located beneath snow-capped mountains in Sichuan province, Chengdu is evolving into an international gateway for modern China. At the forefront of this transformation is the Chengdu Hi-Tech Industrial Development Zone, or the CDHT, a pivotal force driving the park city's emergence as a major hub for international exchanges.

The 2026 World Mayors Dialogue is being held in Chengdu until Friday, gathering representatives from 32 cities across 26 countries and five international organizations. Some participants will visit iconic sites such as Tianfu Long Island and Tiexiangsi Water Street in the CDHT to experience the progress of Chinese modernization.

On Thursday, the 2026 Chengdu International Friendship Cities Cooperation and Development Conference will kick off in the zone. Under the theme of "Openness for Win-Win Cooperation, Partnership for Shared Progress", the delegates will conduct in-depth discussions on the future development of cities.

These two high-profile international events further highlight the CDHT's growing significance as a hub for global engagement.



The Business and Innovation Centre for China-Europe Cooperation, or the CCEC, in the Chengdu Hi-Tech Industrial Development Zone in Chengdu, capital city of Sichuan province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Founded in 1988, the CDHT spans an area of 237.2 square kilometers and was the first national innovation demonstration zone in western China. The zone's integrated circuit industry boasts the largest scale in central and western China. It produces over 60 percent of the world's iPads and 50 percent of MacBooks.

In 2025, the zone achieved a regional GDP of 366.15 billion yuan ($53.87 billion), marking a 6.1 percent year-on-year growth. Its foreign trade reached 550.8 billion yuan, accounting for 53.4 percent of Sichuan's total. It is home to a quarter of Sichuan's listed companies.

International cooperation

In 2025, the CDHT actively engaged with the international community to attract investment and talent. The zone organized or participated in 28 international delegations involving 164 representatives. These focused on key sectors such as electronic information, biomedicine, high-end equipment manufacturing and the digital economy, engaging with regions including Europe and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

The CDHT prioritized upgrading its international cooperative parks in 2025. The zone sent six specialized delegations abroad, including three visits to Singapore to facilitate agreements between its Singapore-Sichuan Hi-Tech Innovation Park, or the SSCIP, and five Singaporean organizations, such as Singapore Polytechnic.

A milestone was reached in October with the inauguration of the SSCIP Singapore Innovation Cooperation Center in Singapore, establishing a dual-center cooperation model between the city-state and Sichuan. The center signed cooperation agreements with more than 30 Singaporean organizations, including DBS Bank and InnoForge Ventures, to foster closer bilateral ties.

Collaboration with South Korea also deepened last year. The CDHT hosted the Golden Panda Innovation and Entrepreneurship Global Competition in the country and established an offshore incubator system by signing agreements with 19 South Korean innovation centers. This year will see the launch of a Seoul product pavilion in the CDHT and the establishment of an innovation exchange center in Seoul, fostering two-way industrial and market collaborations.

The zone has also ramped up activities in Japan, organizing more than 30 China-Japan trade and culture events in 2025. These efforts led to partnerships including one between China's National Innovation Center for UHD Video Technology and Japan's Canon.

The Business and Innovation Centre for China-Europe Cooperation in the CDHT introduced more than 10 new initiatives in 2025, including partnerships with organizations such as the Sichuan Philharmonic Orchestra and Complutense University of Madrid.

Supporting enterprises

In 2025, the CDHT addressed businesses' needs to "go global" and attract international resources through its innovative Foreign Affairs Supporting Enterprises Program. The program provided comprehensive policy outreach, delivering 11 workshops on APEC Business Travel Cards, consular protection, invitations for foreign nationals and more.

Business travel services were streamlined through a "green channel" with dedicated personnel and full-process tracking. This facilitated the issuance of more than 60 APEC Business Travel Cards and 290 foreign expert invitations, ensuring smooth talent mobility.

In addition, enterprise support was extended directly to companies. The CDHT has established a robust response mechanism by collaborating with the local foreign affairs office, immigration and police. In 2025, it provided tailored solutions for over 300 export-oriented businesses through on-site visits.

The Singapore-Sichuan Hi-Tech Innovation Park hosts more than 16,000 high-tech enterprises. These include 100 foreign-invested companies such as NCS and Medtronic.

A representative from the CDHT's international cooperation and investment promotion bureau said: "In the process of supporting enterprise development, we have identified several common challenges, such as low efficiency in connecting local resources and the lack of an internationalized community atmosphere." To address these issues, the CDHT launched an international service center in January to enhance services.

The center integrates government, industry and lifestyle functions into a 3,500-square-meter space. It enables more accessible administrative services by consolidating municipal, district and neighborhood-level service items, covering immigration, tax registration and property documentation. Nearly 350 processes can be completed through one service window, which provides bilingual services.

A key feature of the center is its cross-border industrial service corridor, which houses six platforms for trade services, cross-border finance, international talent and intellectual property. It offers life-cycle support for local companies expanding abroad and foreign enterprises entering Chengdu.

The center also prioritizes cultural exchanges and lifestyle services by establishing spaces for exhibition and communication. Southeast Asian-style markets, cafes and a dedicated section featuring Southeast Asian books have been set up to foster a sense of belonging. A Singapore-Sichuan academy, an innovative art space and a singles club will also be launched.

For expatriates, the CDHT is continuously improving their quality of life through its international service center. Integration programs, such as the Home in CDHT series, hosted over 20 events such as Dragon Boat Festival celebrations and fashion salons in 2025. Hundreds of foreigners participated.

Gateway to China

The CDHT has developed dedicated programs to elevate its role in international exchanges. These include the industry-focused CDHT Dialogue, the culture-oriented CDHT Salon and the CDHT Tour for foreign delegations. By hosting over 170 high-profile events in 2025, including investment promotions in Singapore, London and Frankfurt, the CDHT's international influence and appeal as a hub for business and culture have grown further.

In 2025, the zone played host to important dignitaries, including heads of state, and delegations of government officials and business executives from Central and Eastern Europe. This year, the zone organized industrial exchange activities, such as the China (Chengdu)-Switzerland biomedical industry exchange in January. Cultural events included a theater performance of Shakespeare and a Joan Miro art exhibition in April, celebrating the diverse collaborations between China and Europe.

In a historic first, the CDHT established a sister-city relationship with Municipio I of Rome, Italy, marking its initial step into formalized international city partnerships. This development further solidifies the zone's position in global cooperation networks.

As the CDHT continues to push the boundaries of international communication, it stands as a shining example of China's progress on the world stage. The zone's focus on cross-border partnerships, enterprise empowerment and cultural exchange ensures it will remain a key player in fostering international cooperation and driving global engagement.

ADVERTORIAL

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:34 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

'Gray rhino' of Japan's remilitarization is wildly charging over regional order

There is something revealing about the debate now convulsing Japan's ruling establishment over whether China should formally be called a "threat" in the drafting of the country's new security documents that are scheduled to be deliberated next month.

Tokyo's political class already behaves as though China is a "threat". The unresolved question is whether Japan is ready to say aloud what its policies already presume.

Officially, the Sanae Takaichi government still speaks the language of a "strategic relationship of mutual benefit" with Beijing. Japanese diplomats continue to invoke the old formula of pursuing a "constructive and stable relationship" with China. Takaichi herself insists she is trying to keep the channels of dialogue "open".

Yet governments are judged by budgets, deployments, doctrines and alliances. And on that score, Japan's trajectory does not accord with its words.

Worse, Tokyo even attempts to hold Beijing accountable for tensions in bilateral relations that are, in fact, of its own making.

Against that backdrop, the current dispute inside the Liberal Democratic Party over whether China should be labeled a "threat" resembles less a substantive policy disagreement than an exercise in political cosmetics. In 2022, Japan's National Security Strategy already described China as "the greatest strategic challenge" Japan has ever faced. In its Diplomatic Bluebook released in April, the Japanese government effectively downgraded China-Japan relations.

But the more important reality is that Tokyo's conduct has long since outrun its rhetoric.

That is why the supposedly "moderate" voices inside the Japanese establishment deserve closer scrutiny. Those warning against provocative wording targeting China might not be voicing rationality. Their concern may be with avoiding a backlash that could complicate Japan's advancing of its neo-militarism.

In other words, they object not to the destination, but to the visibility of the journey. This matters because Japan has traveled this road before.

The parallels with the ideological evolution of Japanese militarism in history are difficult to ignore. Japan's descent into catastrophe did not begin with Pearl Harbor. It started much earlier — with the gradual fusion of nationalism, historical mythmaking, elite insecurity and militarized politics.

Today's rhetoric is simply old wine in a new bottle. After all, the Takaichi government has already expanded offensive military capabilities, promoted missile cooperation abroad, relaxed arms-export rules and openly discussed preparedness for a prolonged "emergency", including setting up a centralized, prime-minister-led command hub for intelligence gathering and analysis. Japanese officials are now pushing for restoring wartime-style military ranks inside the Self-Defense Forces.

Viewed collectively, these moves reveal something larger: the erosion of Japan's postwar system that emerged from the ashes of Japanese imperialism. That is precisely why the 80th anniversary of the opening of the Tokyo Trials — which fell on May 3 this year — matters.

The tribunal's significance was never confined to punishing individual war criminals such as Hideki Tojo. Its deeper purpose was to delegitimize the ideological machinery that had enabled militarism itself: emperor absolutism, historical revisionism, expansionist nationalism and the mythology of victimhood.

The pattern of the Takaichi government's fomenting of neo-militarism is historically familiar: cultivate fear, centralize authority, glorify sacrifice, exaggerate external threats and redefine expansion as self-defense.

In history, Japan's invasion of its neighbors obstructed the region's development; today the right-wing forces in Japan again threaten the very order on which the Asia-Pacific has prospered after the war. As Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun warned on Tuesday, the "gray rhino" of Japan's remilitarization is charging straight toward the region.

The right-wing forces in Japan shamelessly portray the nation not as a historical aggressor requiring vigilance, but as a perpetually endangered "democracy" forced into reluctant militarization by "hostile neighbors". That narrative inversion — aggressor recast as victim — is central to their obfuscation of intent. The danger for Japan is therefore not primarily external but from within: the erosion of historical memory, the normalization of ideological nationalism and the steady abandonment of postwar restraint in favor of the romanticism of assertive "self-defense".

History rarely repeats itself precisely. But nations that convince themselves they have transcended history and therefore no longer need to reflect on it are often the ones most vulnerable to reenacting it.

Code of conduct requires sincerity to finalize

The 48th Summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations concluded in Cebu, the Philippines, last week with the release of a statement underscoring the need for a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea grounded in international law.

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr, at a subsequent news conference, expressed optimism that this long-sought agreement could be finalized within the year.

While the COC is welcome, achieving it requires unwavering focus and, crucially, an end to actions that undermine the very trust the document seeks to build.

Over the past year, cooperation in the South China Sea has maintained stable momentum with peace, cooperation and friendship being the general consensus of regional countries. Provocations and attempts to undermine that consensus go against the regional will.

China insists that peace, cooperation and friendship constitute the new narrative for the South China Sea. It has engaged in in-depth discussions with Indonesia regarding joint maritime development, held bilateral dialogues on maritime issues with Malaysia, and carried out cooperation on the sustainable development of fisheries with Vietnam.

Apart from such concrete actions, robust institutional safeguards are still needed. Building upon the continued and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, consultations on the COC have now entered a critical stage, with all parties looking forward to concluding the negotiations.

As Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said on Monday, formulating the COC is an important measure for implementing the DOC, and also an important agreement between China and ASEAN countries. It will help the parties better manage differences, advance cooperation and keep the South China Sea peaceful and stable.

China is engaging in close consultations with ASEAN countries on the text of the COC and is determined to work alongside all parties — by overcoming external interference and bridging differences while seeking common ground — to reach a consensus as soon as possible, thereby establishing a practical and effective framework for all parties to manage differences, enhance mutual trust and promote cooperation.

To reach an agreement on the COC at an early date, the parties concerned need to stick to the shared goals of peace and development, focus on common ground and resist disruptions from parties outside the region.

China also hopes that the Philippines — during its tenure as this year's rotating chair of ASEAN — will recognize the responsibilities it bears, resist the temptation of pursuing narrow self-interests, demonstrate the sense of responsibility expected of it, and play a positive and constructive role in promoting regional peace and stability.

As China's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Fu Cong has stated on several occasions at the UN Security Council, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, together with relevant international treaties and customary international law, form the basis of the modern international maritime order. States should interpret and apply the convention in complete good faith and refrain from selectivity and double standards.

China has always been a defender and builder of the rule of law in the international maritime sphere, defending the integrity and authority of the convention with concrete moves.

A code of conduct that truly serves the region cannot be built on consensus when the Philippines persists with its provocative territorial incursions. The upcoming months offer a narrow window of opportunity. Manila should make the correct choice between walking down a path of escalating tension with the collusion of outside forces or translating its optimism into real actions aimed at completing the COC this year.

The COC will be a common roof that can shelter all only if it is built by everyone. The region has waited too long. The time for sincere cooperation is now.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

Peace, development, win-win cooperation trends of the times

At a moment when much of the international system appears trapped between geopolitical fragmentation and economic uncertainty, US President Donald Trump's three-day state visit to China starting on Wednesday offers something fundamental: a chance for the world to consider what kind of diplomacy effectively answers the call of the times.

China's answer is diplomacy that upholds the principles of peace, development and win-win cooperation.

Beijing's foreign-policy vocabulary, such as mutual respect, equity, shared benefits, common development and peaceful coexistence, reflects its perspective that peace, development and win-win cooperation are the unstoppable trends of the times.

The world is suffering from multiple deficits simultaneously: a deficit of development, as inequality widens between and within nations; a deficit of peace, as wars and proxy conflicts proliferate; a deficit of governance, as international institutions struggle to keep pace with technological and geopolitical change; and perhaps most dangerously, a deficit of trust.

Looking back at history, each era has produced its own dominant diplomatic philosophy.

The Westphalian system established sovereign equality as the organizing principle of international relations. The multilateralism and economic interdependence of the post-1945 order arose from the ashes of World War II.

The Cold War era, by contrast, was largely governed by ideological rivalry and bloc confrontation.

Today's world faces a complex set of challenges: climate change, technological disruption, uneven development and distrust between major powers.

That reality helps explain why China's emphasis on communication and the managing of differences resonates with so many countries. Peace, development and win-win cooperation benefit all countries. These principles answer the genuine need for an international framework that privileges coexistence over confrontation and shared growth over zero-sum rivalry.

Modern international relations were not built on the fantasy of absolute victory. The Westphalian system rested on a simpler insight: sovereign states must coexist despite profound differences. Stability depended not on uniformity, but on mutual recognition.

The post-1945 international order deepened that logic. The United Nations system, imperfect though it remains, was founded on the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, multilateral cooperation and peaceful dispute resolution. Its central lesson was painfully earned: attempts to secure absolute security for some produce insecurity for others.

That is why China's principled emphasis on mutual understanding, fair global governance, shared security and inclusive development as set out in the global initiatives it has put forward have been welcomed by so many countries across the world.

The diplomatic framework of Beijing aligns with a broad international desire for stability over confrontation and development over ideological crusades.

Meanwhile, the development of China provides other economies, including the United States, with opportunities. The commitment to innovation and opening-up enshrined in the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) indicates that China will continue to share its development dividends with the world.

Despite the divisive attempts of some forces, the world's two largest economies remain deeply intertwined and the two countries are still interconnected and globally consequential in science and technology. The global challenges of climate change, artificial intelligence governance, financial stability, supply chain stability and the energy transition cannot be meaningfully addressed without cooperation and coordination between China and the US.

Both countries understand this, as does the rest of the world. In these turbulent times, the world is looking for reassurance that cooperation remains not only possible but more importantly necessary between the two countries, as the stable and healthy development of Sino-US relations serves the common interests and expectations of the international community.

The choice facing Washington is cooperation grounded in communication or competition driven by miscalculation. The world looks to it to answer the call of the times with a reciprocal commitment to peace, development and win-win cooperation.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Potential of sports events industry to be fully tapped

Editor's note: *The sports events industry is booming in China. Li Hai, dean of the School of Economics and Management at Shanghai University of Sport, spoke to Economic Daily about the growth of the industry, and what needs to be done to address the challenges it faces. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

Data from the Chinese Professional Football League show that its three-tiered leagues attracted a total attendance of 8.96 million in 2025, a year-on-year increase of 18 percent. Attendance at the Chinese Super League matches was more than 6 million, a 32.54 percent year-on-year increase.

The Formula 1 Chinese Grand Prix 2026, which was held in Shanghai, attracted more than 230,000 spectators, with ticket revenue increasing by over 30 percent year-on-year. Grassroots sports events, such as the Jiangsu Football City League, or "Suchao", have also gained widespread popularity, driving marked growth in consumption in local tourism, catering and accommodation sectors.

The booming consumption of sports events in China is a result of the synergy of multiple factors. The government is striving to build the sports industry into a pillar of the economy. According to a 2025 guideline on unleashing the potential of sports consumption and further promoting high-quality development of the sports industry, China aims to nurture a number of globally influential sports companies and events and increase the value of the industry to over 7 trillion yuan ($1.03 trillion) by 2030.

The attitude of people toward sports events has also changed. Watching and participating in sports have become popular leisure activities. The number of international and domestic sports events hosted by China has also increased. In 2025, Shanghai hosted 182 sports events, 69 of which were international games. The use of digital technology has made these events more accessible to the public.

Unleashing the potential of the development of sports events in China still faces challenges. There is a need for better integration of sports with culture, tourism and commerce. Event approval procedures are complicated, and not many domestic sports events are truly influential and sustainable.

To achieve the 2030 goals, strengthen the sports industry and advance the high-quality development of sports events industry, several measures are needed. A multi-department collaborative mechanism led by the sports authorities should be set up to offer better services, strengthen the supervision of sports events and promote the upgrade of relevant consumption. The government needs to continue supporting the sustained growth of top-tier international events, fostering domestic events and building a system that covers multiple types and levels of sports.

Greater efforts are also needed to cultivate event management talent, improve the standards and rules for event operation, and enhance the ability of referees. Also, sports events should be combined with other sectors to boost their business. Local authorities should be encouraged to leverage their cultural resources and create special sports events, operate the events in a "whole-process" manner, and make them cultural symbols that drive the local economy.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:34 PM

VIEWS

Marcus Vinicius De Freitas

Sino-US meeting with global implications

United States President Donald Trump's visit to China and his expected meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping will inevitably generate headlines centered on tariffs, trade balances, semiconductors, technological contention, and the question of strategic competition between Washington and Beijing.

Yet interpreting this encounter solely through the prism of bilateral tensions would be to misunderstand its deeper historical significance.

What is truly at stake is not merely the future of Sino-US relations, but the gradual emergence of a different understanding of the international order itself.

This is not a meeting between two big countries situated in the Northern Hemisphere, but in many respects a North-South encounter.

Although geographically located in the north, China is widely seen as a leading voice of what might be called the "New South."

Its historical trajectory, developmental experience, and civilizational memory place it closer to many of the aspirations, anxieties, and ambitions of developing nations than to the traditional Western powers that shaped the post-World War II order.



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

China remembers poverty, fragmentation, foreign occupation and underdevelopment not as distant historical abstractions but as important components of its modern national identity. That memory continues to influence how Beijing approaches the world today.

For many nations across Africa, Latin America, Southeast Asia, and parts of the Middle East, China's rise demonstrates that economic modernization outside the traditional Western political model is possible.

The expansion of BRICS, the growing attraction of alternative financial institutions such as the New Development Bank, and the demand for Chinese infrastructure investment across the developing world all reflect a broader search for greater strategic autonomy in international affairs.

Beijing's international discourse resonates across much of the developing world because it is anchored primarily in the language of development, connectivity, sovereignty, and long-term economic transformation rather than ideological conversion.

In many capitals of the Global South, the central geopolitical question is no longer which power offers the most attractive political doctrine, but which partnerships are best positioned to deliver infrastructure, industrial growth, technology transfer, educational opportunities, and economic stability.

Development itself has increasingly become the new language of sovereignty.

That is why the significance of the Trump-Xi meeting extends far beyond bilateral negotiations.

The world today confronts enormous collective challenges: the future of free trade, the preservation of global peace, the governance of artificial intelligence, climate adaptation, energy security, supply-chain resilience, and the ethical dilemmas generated by the rapid expansion of scientific and technological frontiers.

None of these questions can be resolved through unilateralism or through geopolitical domination that characterized international politics earlier.

The great strategic question of the 21st century is no longer who possesses the strongest army, but whose vision of the future is more attractive, more inclusive, and more capable of producing prosperity. China understands this transformation very well.

Beijing has consistently promoted concepts such as the "community with a shared future for humanity", an idea frequently dismissed in parts of the West as rhetorical abstraction.

Yet behind the slogan lies an attempt to articulate an alternative philosophical foundation for global governance — one less centered on ideological universalism and more focused on coexistence, economic integration, connectivity, and civilizational pluralism.

Naturally, critics question whether Chinese practice always aligns with Chinese discourse. Across large parts of the developing world, there is growing fatigue with an international order that is excessively concentrated in a limited number of Western capitals.

Many emerging nations increasingly seek participation rather than subordination; partnership rather than tutelage.

The appeal of multipolarity stems not necessarily from anti-Western sentiment, but from the perception that the existing system has failed to adequately accommodate the aspirations of the broader developing world.

This does not signal the decline or irrelevance of the US. American innovation, financial influence, military reach, scientific leadership, and cultural power remain extraordinary assets.

Nor should the Trump-Xi encounter be romanticized as a coherent ideological dialogue between North and South.

The US president hardly represents the traditional liberal internationalist establishment that dominated Western diplomacy after the Cold War.

Political rise of the US president, in many respects, reflects growing dissatisfaction within the West itself regarding the costs and contradictions of globalization.

The growing inequality within Western societies is driven more by the societies' uneven wealth distribution than by the effects of globalization.

That is precisely what makes this meeting historically revealing. Both countries, in different ways, embody competing responses to a world in transition.

For the Global South, the symbolism of the meeting matters as much as any agreement eventually signed behind closed doors.

It reflects the growing recognition that emerging nations can no longer be treated as peripheral actors in the global conversation.

The world is entering a new phase in which legitimacy will depend less on the capacity to instill fear and more on the ability to inspire confidence, deliver development, and accommodate others' aspirations.

That may ultimately prove to be the deeper significance of the encounter between presidents Trump and Xi — and perhaps one of the defining lessons of the emerging international order of the 21st century.

The author is a visiting professor at the China Foreign Affairs University, and a senior fellow at the Policy Center for the New South.
The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.

Ker Gibbs

What Xi-Trump meeting could achieve

When United States President Donald Trump arrives in Beijing on May 13 for the summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping, it will mark his second visit to China as president, following his first trip in 2017. The symbolism is significant.

I have spent most of my adult life in China, and served as president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai during the Barack Obama, Trump, and Joe Biden administrations.

I have watched the US-China relationship from close range — through periods of genuine cooperation and periods of serious strain.

I have seen what works and what doesn't. And I have tried to capture those lessons in my recent book about China.

The most important lesson is also the simplest: when the US and China cooperate, both countries benefit, and the global economy prospers. When they don't, everyone loses.

The summit comes at a difficult moment that is becoming even more complicated. A trade war that began years ago has damaged both sides more than either is ready to admit.

Tariffs have disrupted supply chains, raised costs for consumers and businesses, and generated uncertainty that keeps investors on the sidelines. China has adapted — its exports have diversified, its domestic market has absorbed some of the pressure — but the costs are real. US farmers, retailers, and technology companies have felt them too.

The conflict in Iran has added a new layer of complexity. The war has reshaped the diplomatic landscape in ways that cannot be ignored.

The Strait of Hormuz, through which around 20 percent of the world's oil and gas supplies passed, has been effectively closed.

China and the US have different approaches to the crisis. That is an uncomfortable position for a relationship that needs stability.

Beijing has made its intentions clear: Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi in Beijing last week and called for a comprehensive ceasefire.

Beijing does not want chaos in the Middle East. It does not want a closed Strait of Hormuz. It does not want the disruption to global trade that this conflict produces. On these points, Chinese and US interests are more aligned than the headlines suggest.

This is important, because the two countries have worked constructively together in the past, including on Iran.

In 2015, the US, China, Russia and European partners negotiated an Iran nuclear agreement known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. After the deal was signed, the then US president Barack Obama's Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz made a stop in Shanghai, where he met with a group from the American Chamber of Commerce.

Moniz was one of the key negotiators, along with the then US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman and then-Secretary of State John Kerry, and told us that China had played an important and constructive role throughout more than two years of difficult negotiations.

This example demonstrates that the US and China can work together to resolve difficult problems of mutual concern even in an environment defined by competition and mistrust.

On the conflict in the Middle East, as Iran's largest trading partner, Beijing's voice carries weight in Tehran.

When China's foreign minister makes it clear that a resumption of hostilities is unacceptable, it conveys a distinct and constructive perspective.

Beijing has demonstrated a willingness to use this influence positively. The summit represents an opportunity to build on this role.

What are the realistic expectations from the talks?

A tactical trade agreement is the most likely outcome: agricultural purchases, energy commitments, adjustments to tariffs in specific categories, perhaps progress on rare earth supply chains. These are useful and genuinely important.

Businesses on both sides need predictability. Markets need stability. The Busan agreement of October 2025 provided a framework; the Beijing summit can build on it.

Progress on structural questions is important. Neither side has yet articulated a plan for how the two economies are supposed to coexist over the long term — the role of US companies in the Chinese market, the governance of technology competition, the rules by which two very different economic systems can coexist without constant friction.

We need a mutual understanding of what the relationship is for, and where it is supposed to go.

During the earlier days of reform and opening up, the path forward seemed clear: integration, mutual prosperity, and growing interdependence. The context of the relationship has evolved fundamentally.

The absence of a shared map is, in my view, the biggest obstacle to a stable relationship — more than any specific trade dispute or technology restriction.

The vacuum is filled with suspicion, and suspicion produces exactly the kind of zero-sum thinking that makes every problem harder to solve.

I have spent four decades watching this relationship evolve — from the optimism in the past to the competition of today.

The relationship is more resilient than its worst moments suggest, and more fragile than its best moments imply.

The two countries are bound together by trade, by history, and by the shared reality that neither can afford the consequences of genuine rupture.

The summit can help do something valuable: demonstrate that both sides prefer management to confrontation, stability to chaos, and dialogue over angry isolation.

In a relationship so consequential, that is not a small achievement. It is the foundation on which everything else must be built.

The author is the former president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai and an executive-in-residence at the Center for Asia Pacific Studies in the University of San Francisco.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Yu Minming and Yan Xuedong

Chinese expertise supports high-quality BRI cooperation

By bringing world-class experts to Southwest Jiaotong University, Danish scholar Frede Blaabjerg, a 2025 recipient of the China Friendship Award and chief expert of the university's "111" innovation base for railway electrification and automation, has helped build a premier international academic team.

For an institution with a 130-year legacy in rail transportation, internationalization has become a two-way track: it involves welcoming global talent while projecting its own expertise onto the global stage.

In advancing the Belt and Road Initiative, universities need to transcend their roles as mere classrooms or technical exporters. They have to become dynamic nexuses that weave together education, innovation, talent and global standards.

To this end, Southwest Jiaotong University has engineered a multi-dimensional global strategy, a five-fold framework that integrates education, science, talent, standards and services into a singular engine for international development.

The success of high-quality BRI cooperation rests upon coordinated development, and at the heart of that coordination are people.

As the primary engines of talent cultivation, universities must respond to the needs of partner countries by establishing prestigious educational brands and cross-border training platforms.

In doing so, they enable the fluid flow of resources, fostering the high-level, interdisciplinary talent essential for today's mega-projects.

For universities specialized in rail, this necessitates capitalizing on their unique heritage and technical prowess. Such institutions should center their efforts on consolidating premier educational resources to pilot an open, "one-to-many" model of international cooperation.

In tandem, they need to address the demand for railway professionals in BRI partner countries by developing joint training systems anchored in dual institutions, dual supervisors and dual certification. This framework ought to span the entire academic spectrum, from undergraduate to doctoral studies, while also encompassing non-degree training and professional development.

Education is at its core a commitment to people-to-people connectivity, which serves as the social foundation of high-quality BRI cooperation. In this mission, universities provide far more than professional expertise. They align perspectives and bridge cultural divides, building the human trust that ensures lasting international cooperation.

For these reasons, international talent cultivation belongs within the wider landscape of China's diplomacy and national talent strategy.

This calls for offering rigorous international degree programs. As a vanguard of this mission, Southwest Jiaotong University has spearheaded national initiatives to train elite transportation engineering talent for BRI partner countries.

As the sole institution in Sichuan province authorized by the Ministry of Commerce to nurture BRI talent, the university has trained over 7,000 international students from 58 countries and regions through its English-medium programs. Many graduates have since emerged as leaders in their home countries' transportation sectors, serving as vital links of friendship with China.

Beyond the cultivation of talent, high-quality BRI cooperation requires more than capital and infrastructure. It demands the harmonization of rules and standards. Just as the university prepares the professionals to lead these projects, it also provides the technical frameworks that make cross-border partnership possible.

Through their technical depth and research capacity, universities are uniquely positioned to support the entire value chain from standard-setting to validation, certification, and technical services.

In this capacity, universities can actively support China's pursuit for standards connectivity under the BRI and help establish regional platforms for railway standards coordination. Such efforts allow standards to move past mere regulation, acting instead to facilitate technological compatibility and industrial integration.

The viability of BRI cooperation hinges not only on infrastructure but also on the development of local skills to sustain it. Universities excel at translating China's modernization experience and technical expertise into local capacity. This shift represents the essential transition from providing short-term assistance to driving long-term, self-sustaining growth.

Rail-focused universities need to support capacity building in developing countries by instituting multi-level training systems for government officials, technical specialists and frontline workers.

Such programs reinforce the international railway training network while diversifying cooperation across emerging sectors and collaborative models, ensuring that the BRI partnerships deliver tangible and lasting benefits to local communities.

Scientific and technological innovation is a primary driver of high-quality BRI cooperation. As hubs of research and innovation, universities should utilize their specialized infrastructure and expertise to provide technical advisory services and practical solutions for major projects. In doing so, they transform Chinese scientific achievements into shared progress for the global railway sector.

Achieving this requires deeper integration into global innovation networks. Rail-focused universities are expected to play a more active part in international bodies such as the International Union of Railways (UIC) and the Organization for Co-operation between Railways (OSJD), contributing to the formulation of international railway training standards and building joint laboratories with leading overseas institutions. Through sustained cooperation and technical support, they can resolve complex engineering challenges in BRI projects, positioning Chinese railway technology to further advance global development.

High-quality BRI cooperation is a systemic undertaking. The value of universities surpasses the delivery of resources and technology, as it stems from their capacity to build platforms, bring together partners, and maintain the long-term sustainability of collaborative efforts.

Far from being peripheral actors, these institutions stand as architects in building a global community with a shared future.

Moving forward, universities, especially those with distinctive rail expertise, should remain dedicated to national strategic goals while expanding the scope of their international reach.

By doing so, they can bolster high-quality BRI cooperation and help build a more interconnected and prosperous world.

Yu Minming is Party secretary and Yan Xuedong is president of Southwest Jiaotong University.
The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:34 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

LIU WEN AND GUAN ZHONGQI

Real-world solutions

China's cooperation with Belt and Road partners in affordable and adaptable AI paves way for more inclusive and integrated digital governance

As the global artificial intelligence landscape evolves at breakneck speed amid intense races, China is emerging as a key driver of inclusive, affordable digital cooperation. Under the Belt and Road Initiative, it is forging a new model of complementary and mutually beneficial collaboration that links technological strengths with real-world development needs.



Liu Wen



Guan Zhongqi

China's AI industry has expanded rapidly over the past two years, building two core advantages that underpin its growing role in global digital cooperation.

The first is its complete industry chain, supported by massive computing power and vibrant AI application activities that can effectively meet surging global demand.

Data from OpenRouter — a platform widely used by developers to access AI models — for the week from April 6 to 12 show that the weekly token consumption of China's large-scale AI models reached 10.3 trillion, compared with 2.95 trillion of the United States and ranking first worldwide. Notably, Chinese models — Qwen 3.6 Plus, DeepSeek V3.2 and Step 3.5 Flash — are among the world's top AI models. Token consumption serves as a key measure of real-world model deployment, user adoption and industrialization scale.

The second, and more critical, advantage is the unmatched cost efficiency in computing power. Leading Chinese large models deliver performance on a par with top global peers at a fraction of the cost. For example, the inference cost — the core expense of running generative models — of Chinese models such as MiniMax M2.5 and DeepSeek can be less than 20 percent of that of leading international counterparts.

This superior cost-performance ratio forms the cornerstone of China's global AI competitiveness, drastically lowering the threshold for developing countries to access cutting-edge AI technologies. Backed by integrated computing and power supply systems, this breakthrough eases the financial and technical burden of digital transformation, allowing developing economies to embrace digital progress at sustainable and affordable costs.

These advantages align well with a growing global need for AI technologies. On the demand side, the global appetite for AI applications is rising rapidly. Gartner projects that global AI spending could surge to $2.52 trillion in 2026, creating enormous market opportunities for China's growing and scalable AI industry.

China's AI industry has been going global in recent years, with a clear shift in its international focus. Its early global presence focused on infrastructure and hardware, including power facility construction and exports of intelligent robotic products. According to Chinese customs data, in 2025, the country's exports of industrial robots surged 48.7 percent year-on-year, making China a net exporter of industrial robots for the first time.

A defining structural shift took place in 2025, as China moved from hardware exports to delivering full-stack AI-powered services and solutions worldwide. Chinese cloud and AI enterprises have accelerated their global presence, with expanding overseas computing infrastructure and surging international business.

Major Chinese cloud providers have achieved high triple-digit growth in overseas AI-related revenue for consecutive quarters, with rapid expansion in international markets including Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Latin America. By the first quarter of 2026, numerous Chinese AI enterprises had established a commercial presence in more than 170 countries and regions, providing affordable computing services, intelligent applications and industry solutions for global users.



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

This trend confirms that China is exporting not just physical equipment, but AI solutions that embody large models, intelligent hardware and industry-specific applications, thereby laying a solid foundation for deeper, more integrated global AI cooperation.

For China's AI globalization, economies involved in the BRI represent the most dynamic and promising frontier, especially in Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Latin America. AI spending in these markets, including local investment in hardware, industry-specific smart solutions and cloud services, is projected to grow at an annual rate above 25 percent in the coming years. This robust demand aligns with China's technological strengths, industrial maturity and practical experience in large-scale AI applications, creating ideal conditions for deepened cooperation.

Unlike traditional one-way technology transfer, China's AI cooperation with partners engaged in the BRI is problem-oriented and tailored to local needs.

To help partners avoid the heavy cost of building independent data centers, China provides flexible token-based computing services customized to national conditions. It deploys targeted AI solutions for key industries and livelihood sectors, and coordinates the planning of computing, network and power infrastructure to support sustainable digital development.

In practice, China's cost-efficient AI has delivered tangible economic benefits and markedly improved operational efficiency across BRI markets. At key China-Europe freight train hubs such as Xi'an International Port Station and Manzhouli Port, AI-powered intelligent scheduling, automated container handling and cross-border digital clearance systems have cut transit times by more than 30 percent, according to China State Railway Group. On Silk Road e-commerce platforms, the use of AI tools has helped small and medium-sized enterprises in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Central Asia and the Middle East increase sales by 30 to 80 percent and significantly improve their profitability, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Beyond short-term economic gains, China's AI partnerships are helping BRI countries build long-term technological capacity and independent digital industries.

Chinese AI solutions can sharply reduce large model training costs for developing countries, enabling them to skip massive upfront infrastructure investment and catch up rapidly in the digital era, according to industry white papers and public data from leading Chinese AI enterprises.

China's AI cooperation also advances inclusive development and public welfare, helping narrow the global digital divide. China has carried out extensive digital technology training and capacity-building programs for partner countries. These programs cover AI agriculture, smart healthcare and cross-border e-commerce, supporting the growth of local digital industries.

Looking ahead, AI cooperation among the BRI partners will advance toward higher quality, sustainability and scalability. Token-based computing services are set to become a core growth engine. JP Morgan predicts in a report published in February that China's AI token consumption will increase by a staggering 369 times by 2030, unlocking huge long-term cooperative potential.

China's AI cooperation with its BRI partners has pioneered a win-win model for global digital governance that is affordable, adaptable and inclusive. By enabling developing nations to fully share in the dividends of AI progress, China also gains vital overseas market feedback that drives continuous technological iteration and industrial innovation.

Together, China and its BRI partners can build an open, inclusive and equitable global digital ecosystem, advance the integrated development of the global digital economy and promote shared prosperity for all countries in the digital age.

Liu Wen is an associate professor at Nanning Normal University and a PhD researcher at Beijing Foreign Studies University. Guan Zhongqi is a member of the Chinese Association for Artificial Intelligence. The authors contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

MAO KEJI

Punching above its weight

India's AI Impact Summit demonstrates its knack for turning weakness into diplomatic edge



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

When Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government hosted the India Artificial Intelligence Impact Summit in New Delhi in February, the event was billed as a global gathering for the greater good. Under the theme "Prosperity and happiness for all", it drew world leaders and tech tycoons alike. By the end, 91 countries and international organizations had signed the New Delhi Declaration on AI Impact. For a country whose AI industry remains heavily dependent on imported GPUs, whose foundational models lag behind those of the United States and China, and which suffers acutely from a brain drain and automation's disruptions, the feat was impressive. India had somehow seized the agenda on one of the defining technologies of the age.



The same pattern is visible elsewhere. In 2015, India, together with France, launched the International Solar Alliance. Today the organization, headquartered in India, counts more than 100 states as members and is the first intergovernmental body with its secretariat on Indian soil. Yet India's own solar industry, though growing fast in installed capacity, remains technologically dependent — above all on Chinese components and supply chains. Once again, limited hard power has not stopped New Delhi from claiming a prominent seat at the table.

The contrast is striking. In both artificial intelligence and solar energy, India's material capabilities fall well short of its diplomatic reach. What explains this ability to set the global agenda despite modest underlying strength? The answer lies in a deliberate strategy of narrative-shaping, geopolitical positioning and skillful packaging — what might be called India's "diplomatic wrapping" technique.

India's shortcomings in AI are no secret. The country imports virtually all its high-end computing power, its home-grown large language models trail international pioneers, and many of its best engineers work abroad. Yet during the New Delhi summit, the government turned these vulnerabilities into assets through a carefully orchestrated campaign.

First, it leaned heavily on its credentials as a heavyweight of the "Global South". By emphasizing AI applications tailored to developing countries and promoting the idea of "AI dividends for all", India positioned itself as a counterweight to Western-dominated rule-making. The widespread endorsement of the final declaration was partly the result of this framing: many poorer nations saw New Delhi as a more sympathetic interlocutor than Washington or Brussels.

Second, Indian officials shrewdly addressed the "technological anxiety" felt across much of the developing world. Talk of "sovereign AI" — national models attuned to local languages and data-privacy concerns — resonated strongly with countries wary of over-reliance on a handful of dominant platforms. Where Western discourse often dwells on existential risks or cutting-edge competition, India offered a friendlier, more inclusive vision.

Third, the summit served as an investment prospectus. By repeatedly touting India's vast market, youthful population and long-term potential, the government lured commitments from Google, OpenAI, Microsoft and others, as well as domestic conglomerates such as Adani, Reliance and Tata. Plans for massive data-center investments and the allocation of thousands of GPUs to local researchers were presented as proof of seriousness. In effect, India was trading political convening power and future market access for the capital and technology it currently lacks.

Finally, the event was wrapped in symbolism. India cast itself as a trailblazer for the Global South: the first developing country to host a major AI summit on this scale. The message was clear — technological leapfrogging is possible even from a position of relative weakness.

The playbook was tested earlier with the International Solar Alliance. Although India's solar capacity has surged past 100 GW, the industry still relies heavily on imported panels and equipment, much of it from China. The alliance, launched on the sidelines of the 2015 Paris climate conference, aims to mobilize $1 trillion in investment for solar deployment across the "sunshine belt" of developing nations. India provides the headquarters and political leadership, but the financial burden is shared through voluntary contributions and private-sector involvement — a "light-asset" model that minimizes New Delhi's own exposure.

Here too, India skillfully deployed the Global South narrative. It framed solar power as a tool for energy security, poverty reduction and climate resilience, while highlighting the financing and technology barriers faced by poorer countries. Initiatives such as "One Sun, One World, One Grid" helped extend India's reach. Even though China leads the manufacturing of solar hardware, India succeeded in positioning the International Solar Alliance as a Southern-led platform for cooperation rather than a mere technical contest.

India's approach is neither accidental nor confined to these two domains. Four elements stand out. The first is the identity leverage. With its huge population, political credentials and developing-country status, India is unusually well placed to speak for the Global South at a time when trust in Western-led institutions has frayed. By championing "inclusion", "sovereignty" and "equitable access", New Delhi converts numerical weight and moral framing into bargaining power.

The second is narrative dexterity. India has a talent for reframing weakness as virtue. In AI, it presents "sovereign" models as a democratic alternative to great-power dominance. In solar energy, it portrays itself as a fellow traveler rather than a technological laggard. At the same time, it sells a compelling vision of future returns to attract today's investment.

The third is geopolitical opportunism. India exploits the strategic movements of major powers and Western unease, to widen its room for maneuver. It courts Western capital and technology while burnishing its non-aligned credentials.

The fourth is timing. Both AI governance and the global energy transition are still in flux. New Delhi has moved quickly to occupy the institutional vacuum, building low-cost platforms that deliver high symbolic returns.

India's "packaging strategy" demonstrates that in an era of fluid global governance, soft power, narrative control and convening ability can amplify limited material resources. By creating forums, shaping the conversation and mobilizing coalitions, a country can achieve influence disproportionate to its technological or industrial heft.

Yet there are clear limits. Packaging cannot indefinitely substitute for genuine capability. India's brain drain continues, its technological dependence remains, and the gap with the US and China in frontier AI is wide. The real test for India will be whether it can convert the diplomatic spotlight into durable domestic progress — whether the data centers and laboratories materialize, whether talent begins to flow home, and whether "sovereign AI" becomes more than a slogan.

For other emerging powers, particularly China, the Indian example offers both inspiration and caution. Hard strengths in manufacturing, supply chains and cost control remain formidable assets. But they must be married to persuasive storytelling and institutional entrepreneurship if they are to be fully translated into agenda-setting power. In the contest for global influence, presentation matters — but so does the product inside the wrapping.

The author is an associate researcher at the Department of International Cooperation under the National Development and Reform Commission of China. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:34 PM

BUSINESS



Vehicles await export from a port in Yantai, Shandong province, on Monday. TANG KE / FOR CHINA DAILY

Car exports maintain strong momentum in April

By LI JIAYING
lijiaying@chinadaily.com.cn

As the country's auto industry further deepens its global footprint, China's automobile exports maintained strong momentum in April, driven by steady shipments of new energy vehicles and accelerated overseas expansion by major domestic carmakers.

China exported around 901,000 vehicles in April, up 74.4 percent year-on-year, including 430,000 NEVs, whose exports more than doubled from a year earlier, according to data released by the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers on Monday.

Chen Shihua, deputy secretary-general of the association, said vehicle exports have continued to grow rapidly this year, providing stable support for the broader auto industry. Chen added that the NEV market has maintained steady momentum, with NEVs accounting for 53.2 percent of total new vehicle sales in April.

The export growth comes as Chinese NEV makers continue to play a contributing role in the global market. Data from the China Passenger Car Association show that Chinese brands accounted for 61 percent of the global new energy passenger vehicle market in the first quarter.

"Although lower than the 68 percent peak recorded in 2025, the figure still reflects the country's leading position worldwide," said Cui Dongshu, secretary-general of the CPCA.

The association said the top 10 overseas markets for Chinese NEV exports in the first quarter were Brazil, Belgium, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates, Italy, Australia, Germany, Thailand, Spain and South Korea. South America, Europe, the Middle East and Southeast Asia emerged as the main sources of incremental growth.

The rapid rise of Chinese NEVs, combined with elevated global fuel prices, is accelerating the global shift toward greener consumption solutions. According to CPCA data, the global penetration rate of NEVs continued to rise, reaching 20.2 percent in the first quarter.

The growing demand is also reflected in overseas consumer markets. According to a report by The Straits Times, inquiries for electric vehicles priced below 30,000 euros ($35,241) on Germany's major automotive marketplace Mobile.de jumped 87 percent since early March.

Meanwhile, in the UK, demand for used electric vehicles also surged. Data from Autotrader, the country's largest automotive marketplace, show that inquiries for EVs aged between five and seven years tripled in April compared with a year earlier, significantly outpacing interest in newer and more expensive models.

Against this backdrop, leading Chinese automakers are accelerating their overseas expansion, with the focus transferring from simply exporting products to building localized industrial ecosystems.

BYD is advancing production projects in Hungary and Malaysia, while Chery Automobile recently launched its first overseas regional operation center in Barcelona, Spain. XPeng also said it plans to expand overseas manufacturing capacity this year, targeting markets including Europe, Southeast Asia and Latin America.

At the same time, carmakers are stepping up overseas research and development plans. Xiaomi Auto has identified Europe as its first major overseas market, while Leapmotor and Geely have recently expanded engineering and innovation operations in Germany and other parts of Europe to support long-term global growth.

Firms fire up production for FIFA World Cup

By ZHONG NAN
zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

With less than a month remaining before the FIFA World Cup 2026 kicks off in Mexico City, a wave of Chinese-made products, from footballs and flags to fan jerseys and drinkware, is already flowing into the tournament's host countries and beyond.

The tournament between June 11 and July 19 will be the first World Cup to feature 48 teams, with matches across 16 cities in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

In April, workers at the production workshop of Qingdao Wonderful Flag Industry Co, a Qingdao, Shandong province-based flag maker, were busy sewing and assembling national flags of countries participating in the World Cup.

"On April 1, right after the final World Cup qualifying match concluded and the list of the 48 teams was confirmed, orders flooded in almost immediately," said Xiao Chang'ai, chairman of the company.

According to Xiao, the company is now running at full capacity to fulfill orders for national flags, covering both traditional soccer powerhouses such as Brazil, Argentina and Germany, as well as newly qualified teams making their World Cup debut.

"By the end of March, most flags for traditional powerhouse teams had already been produced and shipped," she said. "But the real challenge for us will begin once the tournament starts in June."

As the competition unfolds, overseas buyers closely track match results and place orders almost in real time, often demanding delivery within just one or two days, Xiao added.

To keep pace with the surge in last-minute demand, the company has all production lines running round the clock, with daily output now exceeding 100,000 flags of various sizes, according to Qingdao Customs.

Ningbo Eco-will Technology Co, a manufacturer of luggage tags, ceramic cups and insulated tumblers in Ningbo, Zhejiang province, saw its exports to the US, Canada and Mexico jump 47 percent year-on-year to 40 million yuan ($5.89 million) in the first four months of 2026, as local sellers actively stocked up on merchandise ahead of the World Cup sales season.

Qiu Chunmiao, the company's foreign trade manager, said the World Cup has significantly boosted the firm's exports of sports-themed products this year, especially insulated tumblers carrying officially licensed soccer team logos.

Ningbo Customs said exports of sporting goods and equipment through Ningbo's ports reached 5.74 billion yuan between January and April, up 11.34 percent on a yearly basis.

Wang Xiaohong, a researcher at the China Center for International Economic Exchanges in Beijing, said China's flexible manufacturing ecosystem offers exporters a clear advantage in responding to short-cycle demand generated by major sporting events.

Wen Congjian, chairman of Yiwu Danna Silk Import and Export Co, a Yiwu, Zhejiang-based apparel maker that designs patented soccer fan jerseys, said Chinese companies are no longer competing solely on volume, but are placing greater emphasis on value-added products.

"With patent protection, we can better protect our designs and lift product prices by around 20 percent," Wen said, adding that the company has secured overseas patents for more than 40 fan jersey designs related to the World Cup.

Yiwu's exports of sporting goods and equipment reached 2.83 billion yuan in the first quarter, up 12 percent year-on-year, data from Yiwu Customs showed.

Recovery of consumer mkt seen accelerating

By WANG ZHUOQIONG
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn

Indicators that the country's consumer market is beginning to recover are emerging, and one unlikely measure is the price of fried chicken. At a financial seminar on May 8, Wu Mianqing, CEO of BigOne Lab, said the so-called "KFC Index", which tracks average transaction prices at the fast-food chain across China, is showing signs of recovery nationwide.

Over the past two years, KFC's per-transaction spending has steadily declined, reflecting broader consumer caution: shoppers were purchasing more but paying less. That trend began to stabilize in the fourth quarter of 2025, and Wu sees potential for positive growth in 2026.

"If pricing trends at a foundational food and beverage leader shift, it is often an early signal of consumption recovery," he told the Shanghai Observer.

Macroeconomic data provide further support. Total retail sales of consumer goods in China rose in the first quarter by 2.4 percent year-on-year, accelerating by 0.7 percentage point when compared with that of the fourth quarter of 2025. Economists have debated a "downgrading" of Chinese consumption in recent years, yet the rebound in retail data has prompted a reassessment of that narrative.

Qin Shuo, a financial commentator, told the Shanghai Observer that the apparent softness is more structural than cyclical. While headline CPI growth has remained subdued, he said that consumption is not shrinking — its volume, diversity and complexity continue to expand. Shoppers are spending across a broad range of goods, from high-end imported items to local lifestyle brands.

"Looking at the market in terms of physical goods, there is no downgrade," Qin said. Micro-level indicators also point to recovery in high-end consumption. Wu said that international luxury brands have experienced strong growth in China since the second half of 2025. Warming capital markets and diversified sources of consumer confidence are fueling renewed spending.

Luxury brands are increasingly treating China as a global testing ground. In the third quarter of its fiscal year 2026, ending March 28, Tapestry Group, the parent of Coach, reported 30 percent growth across the Asia-Pacific, with China surging 55 percent year-on-year. The company's net sales rose to $1.92 billion, up 21 percent, while net income jumped 69 percent to $344 million.

China is now Tapestry's largest market outside the United States.

Last quarter, Coach added 2.4 million new customers worldwide, with over 35 percent in the Generation Z segment. The brand has opened more than 350 stores across 90 Chinese cities, spanning tier-1 to tier-4 markets, with plans to expand into another 200 cities.

In addition, Liu Gongrun, deputy director at the CEIBS Lujiazui International Institute of Finance, told the Shanghai Observer that traditional metrics overlook the rapid growth of service consumption. In cities like Shanghai, where services make up roughly 80 percent of GDP, residents are spending on immersive experiences, cross-border livestreaming and other high-engagement offerings. Younger consumers, Liu added, are increasingly driven by cultural resonance and experience rather than by purely purchasing products.

Qin said that the combination of local innovation and demographic shifts has created a new rhythm for Chinese consumption: diversified, rational and innovative.

Nation vows to further trim local govt debt

10 trln yuan bond swap program helps cut hidden arrears to 7.4 trln yuan by '25

By WANG KEJU
wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn

China has pledged to accelerate local government debt resolution, declaring that the current five-year 10 trillion yuan ($1.38 trillion) bond swap program is on track and will be completed on schedule.

The latest announcement follows an executive meeting of the State Council, the country's Cabinet, on Saturday, which reviewed progress on the sweeping debt-relief package launched in 2024.

The program, designed to run through 2028, allows local governments to issue bonds to replace outstanding hidden debt — a legacy of off-balance-sheet borrowing that had ballooned to 14.3 trillion yuan by end-2023.

By end-2024, data from the Ministry of Finance showed that hidden debt had fallen to about 10.5 trillion yuan, and according to estimates by Luo Zhiheng, chief economist at Yuekai Securities, it further dropped to roughly 7.4 trillion yuan by late 2025.

As of early May this year, more than 1.3 trillion yuan of local government refinancing bonds had been issued to swap for remaining hidden debt, said local financial authorities.

"The debt-reduction effort has moved to routine supervision. Hidden debt has been sharply reduced, with several provinces completing their annual targets ahead of schedule and some achieving a 'zero hidden debt' goal," Luo said.

The average interest cost on swapped debt has fallen by more than 2.5 percentage points, and the share of high-interest and non-standard debt has declined, freeing up fiscal space for local governments, said the ministry.

The State Council meeting acknowledged that while initial results are encouraging, challenges remain.

Two priority areas for the next phase were identified: clearing overdue payments to enterprises — a persistent drag on business confidence — and managing the operating debt of local government financing vehicles (LGFVs).

"Local governments are still under financial strain, and some are unable to fully resolve arrears owed to businesses," said Wang Qing, chief macroeconomic analyst at Orient Golden Credit Rating International.

Wang called for continued use of special bonds and other fiscal tools to settle these obligations,

> "Hidden debt has been sharply reduced, with several provinces completing their annual targets ahead of schedule and some achieving a 'zero hidden debt' goal."
>
> **Luo Zhiheng,** chief economist at Yuekai Securities

which he said are essential to "smooth the economic circulation and thus help stabilize the macroeconomy".

Policymakers are also turning greater attention to the operating debt of local government financing vehicles — a new front in the country's campaign to defuse financial risks.

Unlike hidden debt incurred implicitly by local governments, the operating debt of LGFVs arises from market-oriented investment and project activities, and is classified as standard corporate debt. The primary tool for resolving such debt is financial restructuring through banking and capital market institutions, not direct fiscal swaps, Luo said.

"Financing platforms have relatively weak cash flow and profitability. Under certain conditions, their operating debt could require implicit government guarantees. It is necessary to proactively resolve this through financial tools that lengthen maturities and optimize structures."

China, in this year's Government Work Report, has called for greater financial and fiscal support for debt restructuring, along with measures to facilitate the reform and transformation of LGFVs. Under the current resolution plan, many localities are pushing to complete the exit of all financing platforms by June 2027 — a key step to curb new hidden liabilities.

But Luo cautioned that the task is far from finished.

"Exiting the platform in name is not enough. The real challenge is the transition from financing platforms to industrial investment firms. That requires injecting quality assets, integrating local resources and building market-oriented incentives so that these entities can stand on their own."

Road to success



An aerial view shows the newly opened eight-lane elevated section of the G3 Beijing-Taipei Expressway crossing over railway lines in Anhui province, on Monday. The 107-kilometer Hefei-Xuzhou South Section expansion project, partially built by China Railway 24th Bureau Group Corp, officially opened to traffic on Saturday, upgrading the once-congested four-lane highway. As a key national transportation corridor connecting North China and the Yangtze River Delta, the project doubles the expressway's traffic capacity to over 80,000 vehicles per day, easing long-standing congestion and providing critical infrastructure support for the revitalization of northern Anhui and the integrated development of the Yangtze River Delta region. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:34 PM

BUSINESS

Embodied intelligence enters real-world tests

Rapid advances in humanoid robotics moving sector away from technical showcases to commercialization

By LI JIAYING
lijiaying@chinadaily.com.cn

China's embodied intelligence sector is moving from technical showcases toward tougher tests of real-world commercialization, as rapid advances in humanoid robotics performance fuel both investor enthusiasm and rising expectations for practical industrial applications.

The trend was on full display at a humanoid robot half marathon in the tech hub Beijing E-Town, where autonomous robot "Lightning" completed the race in April in a net time of 50 minutes and 26 seconds.

The time was faster than the human men's half-marathon world record and cut nearly two-thirds off the 2:40:42 result posted by Tiangong Ultra, last year's robot champion.

The 21.0975-kilometer course featured flat roads, steep slopes, consecutive bends, speed bumps and other complex urban road conditions, including 22 regular curves and several near-90-degree turns, placing high demands on the robots' balance, path planning and joint response speed.

"A marathon on an urban course is an extreme stress test for core robot capabilities including motion control, autonomous navigation, endurance, heat dissipation, environmental adaptability and system reliability," said Liang Hongjun, an official of the intelligent manufacturing and equipment industry division at the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Economy and Information Technology.

Liang said the marathon provides a standardized task that allows teams to improve technologies around a common goal, complete a full technical route through competition and accelerate the application of results.

At the inaugural event a year ago, 20 teams took part and only six finished, with a completion rate of less than 30 percent. This year, the number of teams surged to more than 100, nearly five times the previous level, while the completion rate exceeded 45 percent.

"The leap in performance is essentially a comprehensive validation of hardware reliability, algorithmic stability and systems engineering capability," said Yan Weixin, chief scientist at Shanghai Artificial Intelligence Research Institute, adding that this is not a single-point breakthrough of any one technology, but rather the co-evolution of all relevant technical dimensions.

A clear trend seen at this year's half-marathon was the shift from remote-controlled running to autonomous navigation, with robots increasingly able to read the road, avoid obstacles and plan routes without human control.

Among more than 300 participating robots this year, autonomous-navigation entries accounted for nearly 40 percent. By contrast, last year, apart from the champion Tiangong Ultra, which used follow-based semi-autonomous navigation, all other teams relied on remote control.

To encourage more autonomous teams to finish, the race recorded real-time results for autonomous entries, while remote-controlled teams had their times multiplied by a factor of 1.2.

Zhao Mingguo, a researcher at the Department of Automation of Tsinghua University, said this year many teams had successfully transferred autonomous driving technologies from vehicles to robots, using lidar, pure-vision navigation and antennas to improve environmental perception.

"Which technological route will ultimately adapt best to different demands still requires further testing through more real-world tasks," Zhao said. "Over the next one to two years, indoor and outdoor robot navigation technologies are likely to advance even faster."

Behind the robots' improved performance lies rapid progress in core technologies. The winning Lightning robot developed by Chinese smartphone brand Honor delivered a maximum motor torque of 600 newton-meters, compared with about 420 newton-meters for last year's competitors.

In addition, its battery system supported more than 10 kilometers of running on a single charge, requiring only one battery replacement during the entire race.

Thermal management technologies have also advanced significantly. While many robots in last year's half marathon relied on simple air-cooling systems, Lightning adopted a liquid-cooling system capable of sustaining motor speeds above 20,000 revolutions per minute while circulating more than four liters of coolant per minute, similar to how blood circulation regulates human body temperature.

"Judging from the race performance, China's humanoid robots have moved beyond the entry-level stage of 'being able to run' and entered a more practical stage of 'running steadily and farther'," said Hao Lulu, a senior analyst at CCID Consulting.

Hao said some humanoid robots can now handle slopes and sharp turns independently, while leading autonomous-navigation models have real-time obstacle avoidance capabilities and dynamic balance algorithms that support stable posture adjustment at high speed.

Beyond the racetrack, momentum is also building in capital markets. According to the Embodied Intelligence Development Report 2025 released by the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology, China's embodied intelligence and robotics sector recorded 744 investment deals in 2025, with total financing reaching 73.54 billion yuan ($10.82 billion).

Since the start of 2026, total financing in embodied intelligence has climbed to more than 34.5 billion yuan, according to financial information platform Sina Finance, with as many as 23 companies entering the "10-billion-yuan club".

Notably, the national AI industry investment fund made its first move in the embodied intelligence track by participating in a 2.5 billion yuan financing round for major humanoid manufacturer Galbot — a move widely viewed by the industry as a sign that embodied intelligence is increasingly a key component of the country's national AI strategy.

"The robust growth of China's robotics industry is the result of multiple factors working together, including top-level national strategic planning, industrial policy support, and capital market responsiveness," said Yu Huan, a fund manager at Great Wall Fund.

Meanwhile, a growing number of robotics companies are preparing for capital market listings. Unitree Robotics had its STAR Market IPO application accepted by the Shanghai Stock Exchange in March, while companies including Leju Robotics, Deep Robotics and Galaxea are also accelerating restructuring plans ahead of potential listings.

However, even as investment enthusiasm rises, commercialization remains a major challenge for the industry.

According to consultancy firm IDC, global humanoid robot shipments exceeded 18,000 units in 2025, led largely by Chinese manufacturers. Yet more than 85 percent of shipments were concentrated in entertainment performances, education, scientific research and exhibition-oriented applications focused mainly on technology demonstrations and interaction.

Jiang Han, a senior analyst at market consultancy Pangoal, echoed that the current challenge remains that although leading companies have announced large-scale deliveries, many shipments still go to universities and research institutions for algorithm research, rather than entering industrial or commercial settings as production tools.

"The industry has yet to form scaled purchasing based on productivity demand," Jiang said.

"In 2025, many so-called commercial orders in the industry were essentially display purchases for public relations and data-collection partnerships, rather than true productivity replacement," said Liu Yang, co-founder of humanoid robot manufacturer Infiforce, in an earlier interview.

"The harsh reality of 2026 is that industrial clients are no longer satisfied with watching your robot do a somersault," Liu said. "They want to know whether a humanoid robot can operate continuously in their factory for three months or six months, whether it can cut costs and improve efficiency, and whether it can generate repeat purchases ... Frankly speaking, no company in the industry has fully passed this proof-of-concept stage. This is a matter of survival."

Liu Dong, founder of XYZ Embodied AI Co, predicted that the industry will see growing divergence in application scenarios this year.

"Applications in industrial and specialized settings are poised for a small-scale boom. In these scenarios, customers are highly willing to pay, and the solutions offer high reusability and fault tolerance," Liu Dong said.

"We may see the emergence of 'hidden champions' in some vertical sectors in this field," he added. "However, for commercial and household scenarios, there is still a final stretch to complete before large-scale adoption truly arrives."





Above: Humanoid robots participate in a half marathon in Beijing E-Town, a hub for high-tech industries, on April 19. The race placed high demands on the robots' balance, path planning and joint response speed. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY
Left: A man trains humanoid robots at a 4S store for heterogeneous humanoid robots in Zhengzhou, Henan province, on May 6. LI JIANAN / XINHUA

Robot rentals set path for mass-market adoption

By LI JIAYING

As humanoid robots increasingly move into real-world settings such as tourism, transportation, retail and security, robot rental services are emerging as a fast-growing business model that many in the industry see as one of the earliest scalable paths toward commercialization.

"Rental services are currently the most suitable entry point," said Li Yiyan, CEO of Botshare, a domestic robot rental platform backed by robotics manufacturer AgiBot. Li said that while humanoid robots still face limitations in generalized capabilities and large-scale commercial adoption remains in its early stages, the long-term opportunities could extend far beyond the hardware itself.

"In the future, when robots enter homes, factories and security services on a larger scale, an enormous aftermarket ecosystem will emerge," Li said. "Secondhand robot trading, maintenance, repair and door-to-door services could all eventually be completed through robot rental platforms."

The rapid rise of the sector is already reflected in business registration data. According to Chinese corporate database platform Qichacha, China registered 38,200 robot rental-related enterprises in 2025 alone, up 55.7 percent year-on-year and marking the highest annual total in the past 10 years. As of April 2, another 9,114 related companies had already been registered nationwide this year.

Pan Helin, a member of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology's Expert Committee for Information and Communication Economy, said humanoid robot leasing has only emerged as a new business model over the past year, but is already creating a new form of the sharing economy.

"Although the user market remains relatively small for now, robot leasing helps expand application scenarios while also generating valuable operational data," Pan said. "That data can in turn help optimize humanoid robot algorithms and product design."

As the market heats up, more platform companies are entering the race.

Late last year, Botshare surpassed 200,000 registered users within three weeks of launch and recorded more than 200 orders per day on average. Chinese e-commerce giant JD has also expanded into self-operated robot leasing services, covering embodied robots, robot dogs and exoskeleton robots.

Yet despite growing attention surrounding the sector, profitability pressures are also becoming increasingly evident.

Daily rental prices for humanoid robots have fallen sharply from around 30,000 yuan ($4,415) in the early stages of the market in early 2025 to roughly 3,000 yuan today, with some entry-level models renting for less than 1,000 yuan per day.

For example, Unitree's G1 humanoid robot is typically rented out at a daily rate ranging from 2,500 yuan to 3,500 yuan, while its dancing-capable U2 model costs around 4,000 yuan per day. The company's robotic dogs are generally priced at 400 to 500 yuan per day for rental services.

At the same time, many companies still rely on an operational model that pairs each robot with a dedicated technician, pushing up labor, logistics and maintenance costs.

"Competition in the industry is no longer simply about who can secure more short-term orders," Li of Botshare said. "The real challenge is who can first establish nationwide service coverage, delivery standards and risk-control systems, becoming the preferred gateway for both clients and manufacturers entering real-world scenarios."

Against this backdrop, the company is already accelerating overseas expansion in search of higher-margin markets.

In April, Botshare initiated its global network covering key regions including Europe, North America, Asia-Pacific and the Middle East. The first phase of the expansion spans 13 countries, including Germany, France, the United States, Malaysia, Thailand and the United Arab Emirates.

Li said the average daily rental price for a humanoid robot in European countries ranges from 2,000 to 3,000 euros ($2,350-3,525), while prices in North America can reach as high as $6,000 per day.

"Regions with higher labor costs naturally have stronger demand for robots to replace human labor," Li said. "Labor costs in Europe and North America are far higher than in China, which means demand for robotics applications could also be greater there."

According to industry analysts, the rise of robot leasing platforms signals accelerating commercialization across the sector.

Li Junlan, senior analyst for robotics and the internet of things at global market consultancy IDC, said the rental model can significantly lower trial and procurement barriers for customers.

"It allows small and medium-sized industry players, as well as companies still in the observation stage, to access and test robotic products more easily, which helps the market expand more quickly," Li said.

Looking ahead, she expects China's robot leasing market to continue expanding in 2026, supported by favorable policy conditions and growing enterprise demand for cost reduction and labor substitution.

"Companies facing pressure to improve efficiency and cope with labor shortages are expected to be most willing to explore human-machine collaboration," she said.

Still, hurdles remain before the sector can achieve sustainable large-scale growth.

Pan said that the industry continues to face challenges such as insufficient standardization in delivery and maintenance services, limited adaptation to specific use scenarios, exaggerated marketing claims and lengthy repair cycles.

"The key to scaling up the industry lies in whether it can build a stable and trustworthy service system," he said.



A boy learns to use a remote control to operate a robot dog developed by Unitree Robotics at a shopping mall in Shanghai on May 5. CHEN YUYU / FOR CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:34 PM

CHINA

More educators embrace AI as a teaching aid

Report shows digital divide between rural and urban teachers is narrowing

By **ZOU SHUO** in Hangzhou
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

A report on primary and secondary school teachers' digital literacy shows that artificial intelligence is rapidly becoming a routine teaching aid in China, while the urban-rural gap in digital skills continues to narrow.

The report, released on Tuesday at the 2026 World Digital Education Conference in Zhejiang province's Hangzhou, is based on a large-sample assessment of 530,000 teachers across 19 provincial-level regions. It found that 14.77 percent of teachers use AI tools every day, while only 3.41 percent have never used them.

According to the report, 85.17 percent of teachers believe AI helps expand teaching resources, and 81 percent say it saves lesson preparation time. AI tools embedded in smart teaching platforms are the most popular, used by 82.68 percent of teachers, followed by general-purpose large language models, used by 76.2 percent.

Most teachers, however, are still in the early stages of exploration. About one-third use AI only for simple assistance, while another third use AI in targeted ways during specific teaching segments. Fewer than 20 percent integrate AI throughout the entire teaching process, and only about 10 percent use AI to innovate teaching models.

The report also highlights a narrowing digital divide between urban and rural educators. On 13 indicators, the gap between the two groups is less than 5 percentage points. In eastern regions, more than 90 percent of teachers hold a positive attitude toward AI, while in central and western regions, the figure exceeds 70 percent.

With regard to training needs, most teachers want practical guidance on resource development, basic operations and application scenarios. Nearly half have called for regulations and ethical guidelines for AI in education.

"When AI handles routine tasks, teachers can focus on nurturing people," said Wang Wei, head of the education bureau of Futian district in Shenzhen, Guangdong province.

The district has created hands-on AI toolkits for all 19 subjects and uploaded them to the national smart education platform for teachers in other regions to share. More than 80 workshops have generated over 1,170 AI application cases covering 20 provincial regions, he said.

Futian is also developing a teacher AI literacy framework with 43 observation points and has issued guidelines outlining encouraged, restricted and prohibited AI uses.

"Preparing future teachers for future schools is not simply teaching them how to use tools," Wang said. "It is helping them complete a profound role transformation — from transmitters of knowledge to designers of learning, from followers of technology to trendsetters in human-machine collaboration, and from single-subject teachers to cross-disciplinary innovators."

"What truly determines a nation's competitiveness in the next two decades?" asked Zhao Yixin, a senior executive at Chinese tech giant Huawei.

His answer: the "AI talent dividend", whose foundation lies in classrooms and on teachers' podiums.

Zhao warned of a growing "AI generation gap" — students are using AI while many teachers still explain AI concepts with slides. Huawei has proposed a "teachers first" strategy and built an AI teaching practice platform to help teachers become AI designers, collaboration nodes and decision-makers.

The company has also partnered with Zhejiang Normal University to embed AI literacy into preservice teacher training, compressing days of lesson preparation into hours.

"Teachers will not be replaced," Zhao said. "But teachers who do not use AI may be replaced. The responsibility to educate will always remain in teachers' hands."

Selfless service



The nursing school of Shandong Medical and Pharmaceutical University in Yantai, Shandong province, holds a capping ceremony on Monday to promote the noble spirit of saving lives and selfless devotion. This event preceded the 115th International Nurses Day on Tuesday.
TANG KE / FOR CHINA DAILY

Portraits preserve memories of Long March martyrs

NANCHANG — For more than nine decades, Zhong Xindi knew her father mostly through fading memory. He left home when she was 3 to join the Red Army, and later died during the Long March, the historic military maneuver in modern Chinese history. There were no photographs to remember him by, no familiar face for the family to hold onto, only a name, and the knowledge that he never returned.

Then, a little more than a month ago, students from Anhui Normal University brought the 94-year-old a portrait of her father, Zhong Yanzhu, when he was young.

"Dad, I finally saw your face again," Zhong said, stroking the painted cheek with a trembling hand as tears ran down her face.

In Ruijin, East China's Jiangxi province, absences like Zhong's are woven into the memory of the Long March. Over 90 years ago, the county had a population of about 240,000. Some 113,000 people joined the Red Army, and more than 30,000 local soldiers set out on the Long March. More than 10,800 of them died along the way. Many left no photograph behind for loved ones.

Now, a project to paint portraits of Red Army martyrs is giving some families a face to attach to stories passed down for generations. The first batch included 151 portraits, created by college students, not from imagination, but from careful reconstruction.

Qiu Tian, one of the Anhui Normal University students involved in the project, said the team first contacted the relatives of martyrs and studied photographs of their children to determine basic facial contours. They then revised the portraits repeatedly, drawing on family descriptions of the martyrs' eyes, expressions and habitual looks, until relatives felt the likeness was right.

"I thought he would surely smile when he 'met' his family again, so I gave him a slight grin," Qiu said.

Each portrait, he said, was a dialogue across generations, and a form of human care that technology alone could not provide.

The portrait project is part of a broader effort in Jiangxi to bring names, faces and family ties back to Red Army martyrs whose traces were long obscured by war. For decades, finding a martyr's relatives often meant searching genealogies, combing through archives, and interviewing elderly villagers — work that could take years and still yield no results.

That, however, is beginning to change. Big data comparison, DNA identification, cross-provincial archive sharing, and social media have created new paths for verifying long-fragmented records.

Located less than 80 kilometers from Ruijin, in Yudu county, best known as the starting point of the Long March, over 80,000 Red Army soldiers crossed the Yudu River and embarked on a roughly 12,500-km trek later described by American journalist Harrison Salisbury as "a great human epic".

The martyrs' memorial hall in Yudu has registered more than 16,000 identified martyrs. Hundreds of other names, scattered along the Long March route, are still being checked.

In the past, information on a single Jiangxi martyr might have been dispersed across archives in several provinces, making verification slow and uncertain. With a shared database along the Long March route, the process can now be shortened. In 2024, Yudu verified the identities of 47 martyrs who died in the Battle of Xiangjiang River through the mechanism.

Social media has also helped turn once-improbable searches into possible reunions.

After seeing a short video of volunteers searching for the relatives of martyr Yang Yanting, Zhong Baoqing, curator of the Ruijin revolutionary martyrs memorial hall, began reviewing historical documents. He eventually confirmed Yang's hometown and relatives. In September 2025, Yang's nephew came to Ruijin and touched his uncle's name on the martyrs' wall.

"My father had always hoped his elder brother would come home," he said.

According to incomplete statistics, among the over 100,000 martyrs in the province's Ganzhou city, more than 40,000 have been marked as whereabouts unknown. In March, the city launched a campaign to verify more martyrs' information by establishing a unified database after integrating resources from multiple departments.

As this year marks the 90th anniversary of the Long March victory, Jiangxi has pledged to step up efforts to verify martyrs' information and help more of them regain their names, family ties and portraits, according to the provincial veterans affairs department.

At the end of the martyrs' wall in Yudu's memorial hall, a large blank space remains. An inscription explains that tens of thousands of martyrs are still without verified names, and that the emptiness stands for their sacred memory.

Each new nameplate added to the wall and each portrait delivered to a family fills a small part of that blank.

XINHUA

Tajik president honored by Peking University

By **ZHAO YIMENG**
zhaoyimeng@chinadaily.com.cn

> "We hope more Tajik students will be encouraged by the president's visit to study in China."
>
> **Rustamov Badriddin,** sophomore majoring in sociology at Peking University

Tajikistan's President Emomali Rahmon was awarded an honorary professorship by Peking University on Tuesday in a ceremony highlighting growing academic and people-to-people exchanges between China and Tajikistan.

During the ceremony, He Guangcai, chair of the Peking University Council, conferred a commemorative plaque, while Gong Qihuang, the university's president, presented Rahmon with the honorary certificate.

The honor recognizes Rahmon's role as a national leader and seasoned statesman in advancing bilateral friendship, promoting regional peace and development, and supporting reforms in global and regional governance, according to the university.

Since 2005, Peking University has admitted a total of 47 students from Tajikistan, with six currently studying under Chinese government scholarships, Rahmon said in his speech.

During his visit to China, scheduled to conclude on Thursday, the two sides are expected to sign an agreement to establish a new Confucius Institute at Dangara State University, adding to existing platforms for cooperation, Rahmon said.

Rustamov Badriddin, a sophomore majoring in sociology at Peking University who studied Chinese at the Confucius Institute at Tajik National University, said the number of Tajik students at top Chinese universities remains limited.

"We hope more Tajik students will be encouraged by the president's visit to study in China and enroll in more universities in the future," he said, adding that universities in his home country have been promoting Chinese-language learning and motivating students to pursue further studies in China.

According to Rahmon, 13 universities now offer Chinese-language majors, while a Luban Workshop — a hands-on training center for technical education — has been established at Tajik Technical University.

Liu Qi, a doctoral candidate at the university whose research focuses on Central Asia, said the expansion of student exchange programs and the planned Confucius Institute would provide substantial momentum for youth exchanges.

"President Rahmon's visit sends a strong signal of friendship and helps Chinese students better understand neighboring countries' history, culture and development," she said.

In his speech, Rahmon also expressed hope that more Chinese universities would establish campuses in Tajikistan and deepen cooperation in fields such as engineering, natural sciences and agriculture.

"Agriculture is a highly promising area for collaboration," Liu said, adding that her dissertation will feature agricultural development in Central Asia.

For instance, China has introduced advanced agricultural technologies, including drip irrigation systems and newly developed cotton seeds, at a cotton plantation established in Tajikistan by a company based in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.

China's achievements in agricultural development are increasingly being shared with Central Asian countries, helping boost local agriculture and strengthen regional cooperation, she added.



Tajik President Emomali Rahmon (center) addresses the audience during a visit to Peking University in Beijing on Tuesday.
WANG JING / CHINA DAILY

Paraguay urged to recognize one-China principle

By **ZHANG YUNBI**
zhangyunbi@chinadaily.com.cn

Beijing has blasted Paraguayan President Santiago Pena's recently concluded visit to China's Taiwan region, warning that "rejecting the one-China principle will only isolate oneself from the international community".

Pena visited the island from Thursday to Sunday, met with Taiwan leader Lai Ching-te on Friday in Taipei, and signed several so-called cooperation documents.

The Paraguayan leader claimed that the South American country supported Taiwan's "participation in international multilateral systems", that "the international community should recognize Taiwan", and that Taiwan does not need to worry about changes in bilateral ties.

In response, Foreign Ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said on Tuesday that "China firmly opposes and condemns such moves made by the Paraguayan side" and that "the wheels of history wait for no one".

"There is but one China in the world. Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory, and the one-China principle is a basic norm governing international relations and a prevailing consensus in the international community," Guo said.

"Over the years, we have heard time and again the strong call of people from various sectors in Paraguay to develop relations with China," he added.

Guo cited a poll in Paraguay showing that nearly 90 percent of respondents supported establishing diplomatic ties with China.

"This fully demonstrates that establishing diplomatic relations with China serves the fundamental and long-term interests of the Paraguayan people, and that colluding with the Taiwan authorities wins no support," he said.

The spokesman said relevant Paraguayan political figures had not only turned a blind eye to this, but had also blatantly visited Taiwan to endorse Lai Ching-te and his followers in defiance of global criticism, willingly serving as chess pieces for "Taiwan independence" separatist forces.

"It is apparent to all whether this is truly for the benefit of the Paraguayan people or driven by ulterior motives," Guo said.

At a daily briefing last week in Beijing, Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian urged Paraguay's authorities to stand on the right side of history at an early date and sever the so-called "diplomatic ties" with the Taiwan authorities.

On Tuesday, Guo said, "We urge the Paraguayan government to change course at an early date, see where the arc of history bends, follow the will of its people, and make the right political decision to recognize the one-China principle."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:34 PM

CHINA

CROSSING THE STRAIT

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

Influencers dispel DPP disinformation

Taiwan netizens shown actual conditions on Chinese mainland

By **LI SHANGYI**
lishangyi@chinadaily.com.cn

A growing number of Taiwan social media influencers are crossing the Strait to document the Chinese mainland's rapid development, sparking a "reality-check" trend that has caught the Democratic Progressive Party off guard despite its tightened restrictions on exchanges.

In February, Fan Chi-fei, a former correspondent for several Taiwan media outlets, shared her experience of traveling to Chengdu, Sichuan province, on her YouTube channel, describing the trip as "very interesting" and praising the local cuisine and giant pandas.

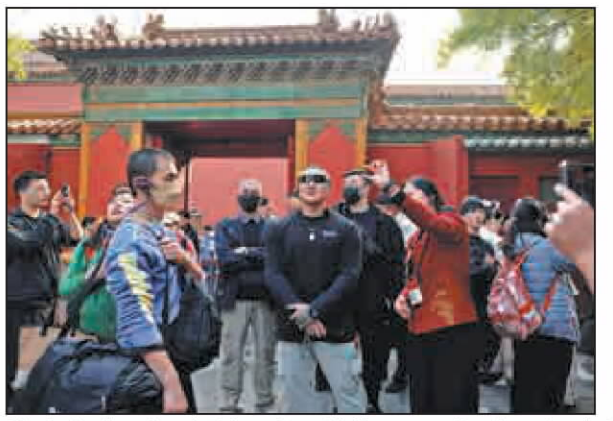
Speaking about the motivation behind the trip, Fan said in the video that "after reporting on the mainland for so long, it would make little sense not to visit and see it for myself".

Her trip has caught attention on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, as she was previously labeled as a "pro-green" figure who supported the DPP's political stance and made negative reports about the mainland.

Fan joins a number of Taiwan social media influencers who have visited the mainland for the first time in recent years. Other prominent online influencers, including Chen Chih-han, known as "Guan Zhang", and Chung Ming-hsuan, both of whom have more than 1.3 million YouTube followers, and have also made their first trips to the mainland over the past two years.

Through livestreams and vlogs, these content creators have presented the mainland's actual conditions, leading some viewers to reassess narratives on the island and realize that the reality differs from the image portrayed by the DPP authorities.







Clockwise from top: A Taiwan-based influencer writes characters in the style of oracle bone scripts — the earliest mature writing system in China — at the National Museum of Chinese Writing in Anyang, Henan province, in August. KAN LI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE Taiwan-based influencers visit Longmen Grottoes in Luoyang, Henan, in August. KAN LI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE Chen Chih-han (center), a Taiwan-based influencer known as "Guan Zhang", visits the Palace Museum in Beijing in October. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Out of the 'cocoon'

Chen, born in 1979 and formerly a supporter of the DPP, first visited the mainland in June last year to see it for himself. He livestreamed his six-day trip to Shanghai and Hangzhou in Zhejiang province.

Before departure on the first day, he admitted that he had felt uneasy, saying that many people on the island had tried to discourage and intimidate him.

Upon arrival, Chen said: "I had been influenced by the narratives on the island my whole life, believing whatever others told me. It wasn't until I came here in person today that I realized I had been completely misled."

Some narratives promoted on the island by certain media outlets have attempted to portray the mainland as "backward", including claims such as the "high-speed rail seats have no backrests" and the "toilets have no doors".

Chen challenged these claims through firsthand experiences shared during his livestreams, describing them as "lies spread by the DPP". During his trip, he used high-speed rail and mobile payment services in multiple cities while showcasing authentic street scenes and the daily lives of ordinary people.

To his surprise, he was warmly welcomed by people on the mainland, with some even politely asking to take photos with him.

"The trip completely overturned my negative impression of the mainland," Chen said, adding that he was astonished by the mainland's rapid development. Online, some who watched the livestream commented that they had misunderstood the mainland as well, and Chen's trip gave them a chance to know the realities.

Four months later, Chen made his second visit to the mainland, covering stops including Beijing, Shenyang in Liaoning province and Xiamen in Fujian province. This time, he offered a more direct acknowledgment of the mainland's progress, along with outspoken criticism of disinformation spread by the DPP.

"I originally thought I would never come to the mainland in my lifetime," the 47-year-old said, while encouraging young people in Taiwan to come and see the mainland for themselves.

Since taking office in 2016, the DPP authorities have steadily tightened restrictions on cross-Strait people-to-people exchanges. In 2024, the Lai Ching-te authorities raised the travel alert for the mainland to an "orange" level, advising people to avoid nonessential travel while highlighting what they described as the risks of visiting the mainland.

Fan, who visited the mainland for the first time in December last year, said many people tried to discourage her from making the trip. "They were worried that I might be detained and unable to return," she said.

The stark contrast between the DPP's portrayal of the mainland and what these influencers experienced firsthand led to a noticeable shift in their attitudes toward the mainland.

The DPP authorities have scaremongered and intimidated influencers who have visited the mainland, saying such trips are part of a "united front trap" or "cognitive warfare", while intensifying scrutiny of the funding sources and backgrounds of related groups.

Those who shared positive impressions after traveling to the mainland have faced personal attacks from DPP supporters and have been accused of engaging in "cognitive warfare".

Public reactions to these trips have therefore been polarized, with some expressing support while others criticizing them as being "brainwashed" by the mainland.

"I will continue to visit the mainland and bring the actual conditions back to Taiwan in an effort to help more people gain a more direct understanding," Chen said after his second visit.

Affinity and curiosity

"If you haven't visited a place, then you have no right to criticize it," said Chung, the 26-year-old travel YouTuber. Since first visiting the mainland in 2024, he has traveled to destinations including Beijing, Shanghai, Chongqing, and the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.

During his latest trip to Xinjiang in February, Chung drove alone for more than 1,600 kilometers across the region, visiting Sayram Lake and sharing a meal with a local family. In the video, he described Xinjiang's scenery as very beautiful and said the people there were "warm and kind". The video has attracted more than 1.4 million views on YouTube.

Chung also praised the mainland's convenience and well-developed infrastructure in his travel videos, a contrast that drew attention given his previously perceived pro-DPP stance. A video interview he conducted with Tsai Ing-wen, the former Taiwan leader from the DPP, remains featured on the front page of his channel.

Another Taiwan YouTuber, known online as "Boboyu", used his trip to Hangzhou to explain why more people in Taiwan are becoming interested in traveling to the mainland, citing affordable taxis and accommodation, as well as the convenience of a shared language across the two sides.

He said that while the shared language makes the trip much easier, the use of simplified characters, different payment methods and distinct accents still provide the sense of novelty that Taiwan travelers look for.

Notably, compared with travel videos filmed in other destinations, content about the mainland tends to attract far greater attention. Chen's livestreams during his mainland tour set multiple YouTube records in the Taiwan region, including the platform's highest livestream viewership, with total views reaching as high as 20 million.

Cai Zhuofeng, general manager of the Haixi multichannel network base in Xiamen and a veteran livestreaming industry practitioner, said people in Taiwan are eager to learn what the mainland is really like, while audiences on the mainland are interested in seeing how Taiwan visitors experience life there. "This has made content created by Taiwan visitors receive significantly more attention," Cai said.

More mainland-related content has been emerging across Taiwan's social media landscape, following a growing trend of influencers such as Chung and Chen visiting the mainland. Fan has expressed the hope of traveling to Yunnan province in the future.

As accessible online content has offered a more direct view of life on the mainland, the DPP authorities have not only tightened restrictions on cross-Strait personnel exchanges, but also moved to curb the social media app RedNote, or Xiaohongshu, which features genuine content related to the mainland.

In December last year, Taiwan's "interior affairs department" announced a one-year ban on the app. The mainland-based lifestyle-sharing platform has more than 3 million users in Taiwan, around 70 percent of whom were born after 1990.

Jhuang Yi-chang, founder of an online gaming startup in Taiwan, who took part in a digital media training camp held in Wuhan, Hubei province, in March, said: "Because so many positive stories and experiences continue to circulate on Xiaohongshu, people in Taiwan who come across them begin to realize that the mainland may not be as it is portrayed by the DPP authorities. As a result, more of them become interested in visiting the mainland to see it for themselves."

Gradually, Jhuang said, people in Taiwan, regardless of their political stance, are becoming more inclined to see the mainland's realities for themselves.

Despite restrictions and warnings issued by the DPP authorities, 306,900 Taiwan residents made their first trips to the mainland last year, up 34.6 percent year-on-year.

According to the National Immigration Administration, in the first quarter, applications for mainland travel permits by Taiwan residents increased 11.8 percent year-on-year, while the number of Taiwan residents entering the mainland rose 27.6 percent.

The mainland has introduced measures aimed at facilitating cross-Strait exchanges. From July 1, 2025, to Dec 31, 2027, Taiwan residents applying for mainland travel permits for the first time will be exempt from application fees. Since 2024, first-time permit holders from Taiwan have also been eligible for free or discounted admission to scenic areas and tourist attractions on the mainland within one year of entry.

Among the 10 policy measures introduced by the mainland in April are steps to promote the full resumption of cross-Strait passenger flights to further facilitate personnel exchanges. The mainland has also called on Taiwan to restore direct cross-Strait passenger flights.

At a news conference in March, Zhu Fenglian, a spokeswoman for the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, welcomed Taiwan compatriots, including influencers and media practitioners, to come to the mainland, saying that the mainland will continue to create favorable conditions for their travel and exchanges.

Shi Xuefan contributed to this story.

Wenzhou welcomes island's aspiring entrepreneurs

By **LI SHANGYI**

The entrepreneurial spirit found in the city of Wenzhou in Zhejiang province has left a profound impression on Pan Po-chuan, a 35-year-old from Taiwan who has dedicated his career to helping Taiwan startups scale and thrive within the Chinese mainland ecosystem.

Born in Taipei, Pan has served as director of the Wenzhou-Taiwan Integrated Development Youth Entrepreneurship Base in Wenzhou since 2021. While studying on the mainland in 2015, he was struck by the city's rapid development and its strong support for young entrepreneurs from Taiwan.

"Entrepreneurs from Wenzhou and Taiwan are both highly driven and entrepreneurial," Pan said. "Why not join forces to become even stronger together?"

Covering more than 1,000 square meters, the entrepreneurship base is home to around 50 companies founded by young Taiwan entrepreneurs. It is equipped with startup workstations, livestreaming studios and e-commerce training facilities.

As part of Wenzhou's support policies for Taiwan entrepreneurs, the base provides two months of free hotel-style accommodation, helps newcomers secure affordable long-term housing in youth apartments, and offers free business registration and office space without utility or property management fees.

To help young entrepreneurs from Taiwan launch their businesses smoothly, the base also assists them in finding free or low-cost retail spaces to connect directly with consumers, Pan said.

"You have to take the first step to understand the mainland market, which has introduced many preferential policies for Taiwan compatriots," Pan said, encouraging more young people from Taiwan to pursue opportunities on the mainland.

Beyond entrepreneurship services, Pan has also established an influencer incubation center focused on livestreaming and digital content creation. The center has signed 40 influencers, including nine young people from Taiwan.

According to 10 policy measures introduced by the mainland in April to promote cross-Strait exchanges, Taiwan industry professionals can participate in the production of mainland micro-dramas and web dramas through various channels.

In recent months, Pan has invited directors and actors from Taiwan to Wenzhou to build a cross-Strait performing arts talent platform. He said the initiative aims to combine the resources of Zhejiang's web series industry and artificial intelligence technologies with creative talent from both sides of the Strait.

Speaking about his broader mission, Pan said many aspects of life on the mainland are not fully understood in Taiwan because of restrictions on information flows and media communication. As a result, Taiwan youth who have established themselves on the mainland play an important role in fostering mutual understanding across the Strait, he added.

"We need to translate our message into expressions that people in Taiwan can understand and relate to," he said. "That way, they can experience the mainland's friendliness firsthand and develop a genuine understanding through personal experience."



Pan Po-chuan participates in a seminar on information technology in Beijing via video feed in June 2022. YI HAIFEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Looking ahead, Pan expressed one particular hope: "I hope direct flights between Wenzhou and Taiwan can resume as soon as possible. Wenzhou was once the mainland city with the shortest flight distance to Taiwan, and restoring direct flights would greatly facilitate cross-Strait exchanges."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:34 PM

Z WEEKLY

All about Gen Z

Z WEEKLY

Social Media Digest

Viral vendetta

During this year's Labor Day holiday, while crowds flocked to major tourist attractions, a very different kind of sensation was taking shape online. The micro-short drama series *Enemy* went viral on May 4, garnering over 760 million views on Douyin.

At first glance, *Enemy* seems like a survival-game thriller, with two protagonists cast as fated enemies. Yet beneath that surface lies a tragic love story from another lifetime.

In their past lives, the two characters were childhood companions and lovers. Set against the backdrop of the Nanjing Massacre, the historical storyline follows these two traditional Chinese opera performers as they are forced by Japanese invaders to perform in a propaganda play. Feigning obedience, they secretly resist, ultimately choosing to poison themselves and their captors, dying together onstage.

Remarkably, the viral hit was created by just two young content creators, Zhang Wenchu and Yang Xiyun. With a limited budget, they handled nearly every aspect of production themselves — even handmaking costumes to recreate Republican-era China.

The popularity of *Enemy* reflects young audiences' growing appetite for sincere storytelling. In an era increasingly saturated with AI-generated content, viewers are still drawn to stories shaped by emotional depth and genuine creative devotion.



Chinese cultural elements, like traditional opera, continue to captivate young audiences. VCG

Weirdly useful

When travelers visit China, the list of must-buy souvenirs is no longer limited to museum collectibles, silk scarves, or embroidered fans. In recent years, a wave of quirky, humorous everyday Chinese products has found unexpected popularity overseas, turning ordinary household items into practical yet playful lifestyle goods.

Lotus-shaped birthday candles, once a familiar sight at children's birthday parties in China in the 2000s, are now appearing at parties abroad. Glow-in-the-dark toilet mats and colorful showerheads have also gone viral online, praised for transforming ordinary bathrooms into cozy and whimsical spaces.

Another unlikely hit is the "dried-rat doll", a deliberately rough-looking plush toy with a skinny, scrappy shape. Often customized to resemble celebrities, these quirky dolls have become a form of social currency for young overseas fans, who bring them to concerts and even Formula One events.

Beyond novelty and humor, more practical Chinese-made products are also gaining ground. According to FastMoss data, a mini clip-on fan sold more than 11,600 units on TikTok Shop US in the past month, generating over $182,000 in sales.

Behind this steady stream of viral products is the speed, flexibility, and responsiveness of China's manufacturing ecosystem. Yiwu International Trade Market, home to tens of thousands of booths, offers a vivid example of how quickly Chinese suppliers can capture niche consumer demand and turn it into mass-market goods.

As Huang Liuying, an associate professor at the School of Management, Zhejiang University, wrote in Zhejiang Daily, "Behind these seemingly small trinkets is Yiwu's supply chain, which precisely captures emotional demand and demonstrates a deep integration of emotional value with the real economy."

GUO JIATONG



Quirky Chinese products are winning fans around the world. VCG



Young builders deepen Belt and Road ties

Through daily interactions and shared experiences, Chinese youth overseas are turning development projects into bridges of friendship and trust.

Yang Meihang visits the Edge of the World near Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on June 7, 2025. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By GUI QIAN
guiqian@i21st.cn

At a humble street food stall in Luanda, Angola, Yang Xin sat sipping local drinks with her driver, an Angolan colleague. Despite his modest income, he treated her to a meal and asked sincerely about her well-being.

This simple gesture of kindness became a quiet testament to friendship during Yang's time as an expatriate. It also reflects the broader spirit of many young Chinese working abroad under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), building bridges of connection overseas.

Yang, a young woman from Guangzhou, Guangdong province, is a veteran contributor to the initiative. Since arriving in Angola in 2014, she has been involved in clean energy planning, water resources management, infrastructure development, and housing construction. Although her main role is as a translator, her responsibilities extend far beyond language interpretation.

"I handle almost all cross-cultural communication and inter-agency coordination. I've traveled to nearly every province in Angola," she said, highlighting the wide range of skills required for work overseas.

Over the years, Yang has witnessed the evolution of Chinese enterprises in the country. After Angola's infrastructure was devastated by civil war, Chinese firms were among the first to step in to help rebuild. Private companies specialized in civil engineering and housing, while larger, state-owned enterprises handled major projects in water, power, and renewable energy.

More recently, the presence of Chinese businesses in Angola has diversified. Beyond large corporations, individual Chinese-run retail stores have spread across Luanda, and new ventures like milk tea shops and food delivery services have emerged. The local Chinese culinary scene, once dominated by Sichuan restaurants, now features a variety of regional cuisines, including Cantonese dim sum, Fujian snacks, southern-style rice noodles, and northern dumplings.

"As a native of Guangzhou, enjoying authentic home cooking abroad gives me a deep sense of belonging," Yang said.

Unlike Yang Xin, who chose to settle in one place, Yang Meihang, a young man from Shangrao, Jiangxi province, moves across different countries and cultures, gaining a rich understanding of global diversity and thriving in a rapidly changing world.

Yang Meihang has a background in electronic information engineering and translation. In 2024, he was stationed in the Philippines working in energy business development. He later traveled to Oman, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia, leading market expansion efforts across the Middle East.



People watching a televised soccer match at a restaurant in Angola.
YANG XIN / FOR CHINA DAILY



"The BRI is more than construction projects and contracts — the genuine connections between people we build along the way are just as important."

Yang Xin, a former translator and expatriate in Angola



"In their eyes, Chinese people 'only do business and do not fight'. There are no ideological conflicts. Our interactions are always peaceful and sincere."

Yang Meihang, a market expansion specialist in the Middle East

He observes that market conditions differ widely by region. "The Philippine market is relatively mature while the Middle East offers tremendous potential for infrastructure investment and attracts significant foreign capital, which brings both opportunities and challenges," he said.

Amid the grand narrative of the BRI, Yang Meihang finds that the warmth of everyday interactions leaves the deepest impression. He experiences this warmth not only in personal encounters but also through the local people's appreciation of Chinese culture and products.

"Local shops in Middle Eastern countries are full of products made in China, and many people are eager to learn Chinese. In Saudi Arabia, parents often encourage their children to greet Chinese visitors in Chinese — I've experienced this several times," he recalled.

"In their eyes, Chinese people 'only do business and do not fight'. There are no ideological conflicts. Our interactions are always peaceful and sincere," he added.

The same goes for Yang Xin. "The BRI is more than construction projects and contracts — the genuine connections between people we build along the way are just as important," she said.

She remembers a school principal in Angola, passionate about Chinese history, who once gifted her a book he had written on Chinese cultural studies. On another occasion, when no company drivers were available for an urgent trip, a local client offered her a ride on his motorcycle.

"Being stationed abroad isn't a one-way export; it's about mutual understanding. We brought steel and concrete, and in return, we gained friendship," she said.

Growing abroad

Overseas experiences have not only made these two young people active participants in the BRI but have also led to significant personal growth.

For Yang Meihang, the five-hour time difference between Saudi Arabia and China amplified his sense of isolation each evening. Spending long hours alone, he taught himself Arabic and established a running routine.

Living in a completely different environment also strengthened his sense of responsibility and helped him better understand himself. At first, the differences in appearance, culture, and cuisine made him feel like a stranger. Over time, as he connected with locals and fellow Chinese expatriates, he gradually found his footing and embraced his new life.

"As a member of the new generation of overseas builders, you must have the determination to navigate unfamiliar environments," he reflected. "An open mind and curiosity are essential for understanding local customs — only then can you truly thrive abroad."

Yang Xin brings a female perspective to her overseas experiences. She acknowledges that women often face additional societal pressures around marriage, childbirth, and personal safety, but she believes that working abroad can empower women, giving them courage and broadening their horizons.

"Overseas salaries are competitive, and many of my female colleagues have even bought their own apartments, achieving financial independence for the first time," she said. "This freedom allows us to make choices confidently and live life on our own terms."

Now back in China, Yang Xin has transitioned from full-time employment to freelancing. She occasionally takes on overseas translation projects, manages a social media account where she shares reflections on her time in Angola, and offers consulting to young people interested in overseas postings.

Through these efforts, she continues to apply the lessons and confidence she gained while working abroad.

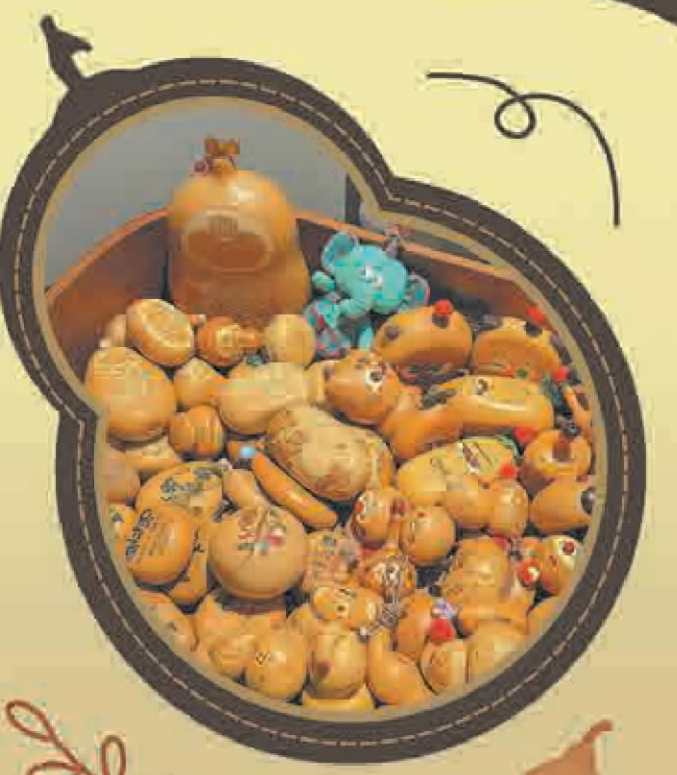
On her social media account, she wrote: "Experiences like these show young people that the world is vast, challenges can become opportunities, and life offers far more possibilities than we often imagine."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:34 PM

Hands-on hobbies calm young minds

How fidget toys, traditional gourds, and diorama stickers are reshaping stress relief among China's youth.



By **XIONG XINYI** and **GUI QIAN**

While reviewing documents with her right hand, 26-year-old Zhouzhou (pseudonym) from Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, absently twists a small, colorful toy in her left hand.

"It's like spinning a pen in class when we were kids," she said. "The movement doesn't require much attention, but it helps you relax."

The object is a Tangle fidget toy, made of connected curved pieces that can be twisted into different shapes.

Zhouzhou discovered the toy in late summer 2025, before it became popular online. She bought several items to film an ASMR video and posted it on her social media account, Meishi Zhouzhou. The video quickly gained traction, with more than half of the viewers asking what the toy was.

As Zhouzhou observed, the Tangle appeals to people visually and through its sound. "Most versions make a crisp sound, like ice cubes dropping into an Americano," she said.

Touch adds another layer to the experience, with materials ranging from firm to soft. Some users rely on the toy to replace habits such as picking at their skin or nails. Others simply enjoy the ritual of it.

Zhouzhou enjoys collecting and neatly arranging the colorful pieces. "I find that neatness really satisfying," she said.

What began as a personal interest gradually became something she wanted to share with others. She now sells the toy through livestreams, too.

One student customer bought 22 pieces — not all at once, but one by one after each livestream demonstration.

"For many students, comfort doesn't come from expensive bags or gadgets," Zhouzhou said. "Unlike adults who save up for a big purchase, students see these stress-relief toys as little indulgences."

According to China Youth Daily, more than 1 million units had been sold in China by the 2026 Spring Festival after the toy was launched in March 2025.

Tradition brings comfort

While trendy stress-relief toys dominate e-commerce today, the desire for comfort through touch is far from new. Throughout many generations, people have turned to small objects to create moments of quiet reflection.

The history of Chinese bottle gourds can be traced back to ancient times, when they were cherished for their symbolic meanings of harmony and prosperity. Over the centuries, gourds evolved from ritual vessels to handheld companions.

Now, these old objects have sparked a new fervor among young people. Li Yajuan is one of them.

After work, Li picks several gourds from her collection, places them on a tray, and rubs them while watching TV. She carries one during her commute and takes one to doctor's appointments. She also kept one close during a recent hospital stay when she felt frightened and alone.

Working in e-commerce and design, she first bought gourds for a design project. The hobby soon replaced drawing and tearing paper as her preferred stress relief. Since autumn 2024, she has spent more than 100,000 yuan ($14,703) building her collection.



> "Compared with the fast pace and intensity of mobile games, we enjoy the slower process of building our own ideal little worlds."
>
> **Liang Jie,** a diorama sticker lover



> "Playing with gourds is about calming your mind and accepting the process, along with whatever changes happen naturally, whether they occur in a day or over the course of a year."
>
> **Li Yajuan,** a gourd collector

"Playing with gourds is about calming your mind and accepting the process, along with whatever changes happen naturally, whether they occur in a day or over the course of a year," she said. Some gourds can be polished quickly, while others require weeks of sun exposure.

When she feels angry, she rubs harder, and the gourds become shinier. To Li, those changes are positive feedback — turning something negative into something better.

But for collectors, the real excitement comes from the chase, with 500 people sometimes competing for just 10 items.

Once, Li lost her internet signal in an elevator while trying to buy a rare gourd and assumed she had missed out. Moments later, right after stepping out of the elevator, she found she'd successfully secured the limited piece.

"I just crouched in the hallway in disbelief," she recalled. Over time, the hobby taught her to accept that some things are out of one's own control. "If something is meant to be yours, it will come," she said.

Her hobby has since grown into a small business selling polishing cloths and pouches. In fact, the gourd industry has already become a sizable market. In Dongchangfu district of Liaocheng, Shandong province, gourd cultivation generates annual gross revenues of 2.6 billion yuan, accounting for 75 percent of the national market, according to Liaocheng city authorities.

Tiny worlds heal

Not all stress-relief hobbies rely on touch alone. For some young people, comfort comes from carefully constructing miniature worlds that offer a temporary escape from daily pressures.

Without needing scissors or glue, users can place diorama stickers of characters, buildings, furniture, flowers, and other motifs onto a pre-designed background board to create tiny bedrooms, grand castles, and city streets.

Liang Jie, from Zhejiang province, shares videos of herself putting together miniature scenes on her social media account, Lucia Sticker Channel.

Liang turned to diorama stickers during a transitional period after leaving her job at a large corporation. Before bed, she works on stickers while listening to podcasts, treating the process as a form of meditation — a way to reflect on the day and stop thinking about the future.

The crisp peeling sound and the gradual layering of scenes make each diorama immersive. "It's like a flat version of Lego — more affordable — and also like a puzzle, but more structured and three-dimensional," she said. "Diorama stickers are a way to erase bad moods."

Liang and many of her followers have basically stopped playing online games since discovering diorama stickers. "Compared with the fast pace and intensity of mobile games, we enjoy the slower process of building our own ideal little worlds," she explained.

By early May, the hashtag "diorama stickers" had attracted 730 million views on Xiaohongshu, also known as RedNote, and nearly 1.43 billion plays on Douyin, the Chinese version of TikTok.

As the hobby grows in popularity, Liang has noticed sticker brands exploring a wide range of new styles and concepts.

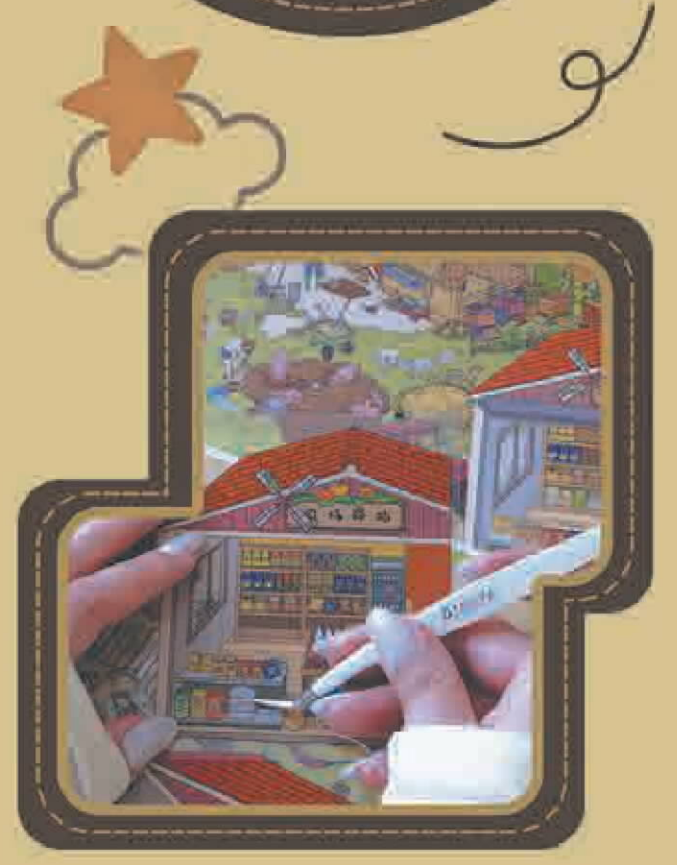
Some brands are focusing on Chinese aesthetics, drawing inspiration from intangible cultural heritage and traditional opera. Others are creating soothing, story-driven scenes that capture the warmth of everyday life — such as a spring courtyard or a winter island — the kinds of spaces many young enthusiasts long for. Some are also experimenting with gaming-style experiences, allowing users to step into pixel-art worlds.

"Unlike the happiness that comes from simply buying something, diorama stickers offer the satisfaction of creating joy with your own hands," Liang said.

Whether twisting a plastic loop, polishing a gourd, or layering stickers onto miniature scenes, these activities share a common feature: repetitive hand movements that participants say help them find a controllable, calming rhythm amid uncertainty.

Contact the writers at xiongxinyi@i21st.cn





Top: Li Yajuan's gourd collection. **Middle:** Zhouzhou (pseudonym) creates an ASMR video with Tangle toys. **Bottom:** Liang Jie plays with diorama stickers as a pastime. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:34 PM



Cosplay unites generations

Amid wigs, costumes and fantasy characters, a mother's support for her daughter becomes a bridge between parents and children.

Jiang Fuchun, owner of a cosplay photo studio in Shanghai, brings anime and video game characters to life with her intricate creations. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By MENG WENJIE
mengwenjie@i21st.cn

Four years ago, Jiang Fuchun rarely wore makeup. Today, in her Shanghai photo studio, she stands beside a vintage piano in a pink wig and Rococo-style dress, her eyes framed by glittering makeup and layers of lace cascading from her skirt.

The look is inspired by *Identity V*, a popular game by China's NetEase Games — one of many anime and video game characters Jiang has learned to recreate since stepping into the world of cosplay.

Jiang, 49, is the owner of Mofa Riji, or Magical Diary, a cosplay-themed photo studio. Over the past four years, the studio has attracted an online following of nearly 1.1 million.

Her transformation began with a simple request from her daughter.

"At the end of 2021, my daughter had just started middle school and was going through some emotional struggles," Jiang recalled.

The teenager showed little interest in many things but was drawn to fashion inspired by ACG (anime, comics, and games) culture. Then, one day, her daughter brought up an idea that would change the family's course: opening a photo studio devoted to cosplay.

"I just wanted to support her," Jiang said. "At that time, her happiness was the most important thing for our family."

After discussing it with her husband, Jiang decided to give it a try. With a background in IT and later experience in insurance sales, she admitted she knew little about cosplay at the time. But her daughter, then 14, helped choose locations, design interiors, source props, and plan nearly every photo shoot.

"She understood this world much better than I did," Jiang said. "I was just trying to keep up with her ideas."

What began as a family project gradually opened a new stage for Jiang herself. Mofa Riji has since expanded from a single space in Shanghai to a second location in Chengdu, Sichuan province. It has welcomed nearly 30,000 visitors, about 80 percent of them under 30, with middle school students forming the largest group.

Where generations meet

Over time, Jiang began to see the studio as more than a place for costumes and photographs. It had become a space where parents and children found new ways to connect.

One encounter stayed with her. A mother brought her 10-year-old daughter to the studio for a birthday photo shoot. The girl wanted to dress as a cute zombie character, but her mother strongly objected, saying it was unlucky to dress like a zombie on her birthday. Instead, she insisted on a bright red outfit, which she felt was more festive. The disagreement lasted throughout the session, and the shoot did not go smoothly.



"Seeing that change — from rejection to active support — moved me deeply. It showed me that parents can learn to understand, too."

Jiang Fuchun, owner of Mofa Riji, a cosplay-themed photo studio

To Jiang's surprise, the girl returned a year later. This time, her mother had already prepared her favorite outfits and wigs and accompanied her to another session.

"Seeing that change — from rejection to active support — moved me deeply. It showed me that parents can learn to understand, too," Jiang said.

Stories like this unfold frequently at Jiang's studio. She has come to see her role as more than running a business. She often takes time to speak with parents, helping them see cosplay from their children's point of view.

Some parents, for example, are initially unsettled by the pale makeup. Jiang explains that once the makeup, wig, and costume come together, the overall look becomes much more beautiful and natural.

"Cosplay allows young people to fully inhabit a character and gain joy and confidence through that process," she often tells parents.

But Jiang also draws on her own perspective as a mother. On one occasion, when a mother objected to her 11-year-old daughter wearing colored contact lenses, Jiang supported the decision, knowing that the girl was still too young to wear them safely.

"At the same time, I made sure the mother understood that the hobby itself wasn't wrong," Jiang said. "Even if families only spend a few hours here, I hope parents leave feeling a little closer to their children."

What has surprised Jiang most is how many parents are now willing to step into their children's world.

Some mothers even join cosplay sessions with their daughters, letting the children choose their characters for them.

"They may not know much about the culture, but they are willing to try," Jiang said.

Today, Jiang's daughter is an adult with other interests and only occasionally helps out at the studio. Jiang, however, continues to run the business — no longer as a mother nervously entering an unfamiliar world for her child, but as someone who has found her own sense of purpose and fulfillment in that creative space.

Online, fans affectionately call her "Auntie Jiang". Many young followers share similar stories with her: "My parents didn't understand my cosplay hobby at first, but after watching your videos, they finally got it."

"When I read comments like that, I feel the studio carries something many young people are looking for — the chance to be understood by their parents," Jiang said.

From Venezuela to China: *wushu* dreams realized

By YAN DONGJIE in Tianjin
yandongjie@chinadaily.com.cn

At the athletes' entrance area of the 10th World Junior Wushu Championships in Tianjin, Hernando Dudamel, coach of the Venezuelan *wushu* team, gave last-minute instructions to his 14-year-old daughter, Valeria Dudamel, before she entered the competition area.

His eyes showed both the focus of a coach and the quiet pride of a father.

It was the second time Hernando had accompanied Valeria to the World Junior Wushu Championships as her coach, but the first time the father and daughter had visited China. For Valeria, competing in the birthplace of *wushu* was not only an important step in her athletic career, but also a chance to feel closer to the culture behind the sport she loves.

Held in Tianjin from March 25 to 30, the championships were a key qualification event for the 2026 Youth Olympic Games in Dakar, where *wushu* will make its debut as an official sport.

At the event, Valeria competed in *changquan*, *qiangshu*, and *daoshu* — *wushu* events featuring bare-hand routines, spear techniques, and broadsword routines — and secured her place at the Games, becoming one of only two *wushu* athletes from South America to qualify, according to the Venezuelan team.

"*Wushu* is an elegant sport full of culture and tradition," Hernando said. "It is deeply rooted in Chinese heritage and brings together people from around the world who share the same passion."

Hernando's own connection with Chinese martial arts began in the 1990s, when kung fu films became popular across Latin America. As a young man, he was drawn to the movements, spirit, and culture behind the films. He began practicing at a friend's gym and never stopped.

At that time, training conditions in Venezuela were limited.

"We lacked proper training equipment and had to use simple gear like fitness mats," he recalled.

Still, he kept going. Over the past 25 years, *wushu* has grown from a personal passion into a way of life.



Valeria Dudamel (left) practices with a US athlete at the 10th World Junior Wushu Championships in Tianjin, held from March 25 to 30, 2026. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Valeria grew up in this environment. Influenced by her father, she started practicing *wushu* at the age of 8 and later joined Venezuela's national youth *wushu* team.

During training, Hernando treats her like every other athlete. He sets strict standards, corrects her movements carefully, and expects the same discipline from her as he would from the rest of the team.

"He is my coach during training and my father at home," Valeria said. "*Wushu* has given us a very special family bond."

In Hernando's view, *wushu* is not just about movements or medals. It is also about personal growth.

"Discipline and respect are the qualities I hope she can develop most," he said. "*Wushu* helps shape character, which is far more important than competition itself."

From mastering her first routine at 8 to winning three gold medals at the South American Wushu Championships and now qualifying for the Dakar Youth Olympic Games, Valeria has grown through years of training and competition.

"Watching her become independent, responsible, and determined is my most precious reward," Hernando said.

Their journey is also part of a wider story of inheritance in Latin America's *wushu* community. Many athletes who once competed alongside Hernando have now become coaches, referees, and mentors.

"Decades ago, we competed side by side. Now our athletes compete and learn from one another," Hernando said. "We bonded over Chinese *wushu*, and this connection is truly special."

Despite the language barrier after arriving in Tianjin, Hernando and Valeria said they quickly felt welcomed by the people around them.

"Although we don't speak Chinese, the warmth and kindness of the people we met — from volunteers at the venue to local residents — made us feel at home," Hernando said.

Their tight schedule did not allow them to visit more Chinese cities, but both father and daughter said they hoped to return and learn more about China's culture, history, and food.

"I have practiced *wushu* for 25 years, but this was my first visit to its birthplace," Hernando said. "More than the competition itself, what I will remember most is watching Valeria grow through this journey."

Zhong Aiyamei contributed to this story.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:34 PM

SPORTS

BASKETBALL



Detroit Pistons' Cade Cunningham (left) attempts to stop Cleveland Cavaliers' Donovan Mitchell during Game 4 of a second-round NBA playoffs series on Monday in Cleveland. The game saw Mitchell tie the NBA playoff mark of 39 points in the second half. AP

Mitchell ties playoff mark, as Cavs rally to level it up

Standout second half sees Cleveland star post 39 in Game 4 win over Pistons

CLEVELAND — The Cleveland Cavaliers are back on an even footing in their second-round series after a huge second half from Donovan Mitchell in Game 4.

Mitchell tied an NBA playoff mark with 39 points in the final two quarters, as he rallied the Cavaliers to a 112-103 victory over the Detroit Pistons on Monday night.

"What a shift, right? Really struggled in the first half, and then a big-time second-half performance by Don," Cavaliers coach Kenny Atkinson said.

"It's pretty impressive. I'm not sure I've seen in the playoffs a turnaround like that, where a guy is struggling and just absolutely turns the switch and is the complete opposite of the first half."

The home team has won all four games in the series, which shifts to Detroit for Game 5 on Wednesday night.

Mitchell matched the mark of Eric "Sleepy" Floyd on a free throw with 27.6 seconds remaining. He had a chance to break the record, set in 1987 when the Golden State Warriors faced the Los Angeles Lakers, but missed his second foul shot.

"Everybody let me know that I missed a free throw to break the record, though," said Mitchell, who finished with 43 points. "I will say that, but we're two and two headed to Detroit.

"That was what we came home to do, and that is all that matters."

James Harden had his 40th playoff double-double with 24 points and 11 assists. Evan Mobley had 17 points as Cleveland remained unbeaten at home in six playoff games.

"I airballed the first layup and was missing shots short," Mitchell said. "Sometimes it's natural, right? I wasn't really trying to get in there and force it, and, then, just doubling down on the defensive end, trying to take whoever I'm guarding, take them out of the equation. I'm not tripping, we were down four at the half.

"I always tell y'all it's not just about the scoring, it's about your overall impact on the game. And for me, it was just like, 'OK, now I have an opportunity to try to get downhill' and then started going in."

Caris LeVert had a season-high 24 points for Detroit. Cade Cunningham scored 19, the first time he has been held under 20 in 11 playoff games this season, and Tobias Harris added 16.

Pistons coach JB Bickerstaff, who takes pride in the physical style his team plays, was not pleased with the free throw disparity. Mitchell had more trips to the foul line (15) than the whole Detroit roster (12).

"There is no way one guy on their team should have more free throws than our team. We're not a settling for jump shots team," he said. "We didn't do enough to help ourselves, but ever since we came to Cleveland, the whistle has changed."

Even though Mitchell struggled in the first half and the Cavaliers shot 15 of 38, with most of their shots being 3-pointers, the Cavaliers felt pretty fortunate to only be down by four at halftime.

Atkinson's message at halftime was to play with more pace and attack downhill, which opened things up.

Mitchell scored 15 during Cleveland's 24-0 run that went from the last 12 seconds of the first half to the first six minutes of the third quarter. Cleveland trailed 56-52 at halftime before taking control.

The Cavs were 10 of 12 from the field and made three 3-pointers. They also converted five turnovers by the Pistons into nine points.

"When (Mitchell) sees a gap, he's going to go. We've got to eliminate his touches and catches on the run," Cunningham said.

"That run, we just never caught our footing again. That was the first time they really got loose in the series."

The 24-0 run was the longest in an NBA playoff game since Minnesota also scored 24 straight in Game 6 of its Western Conference semifinal series against Denver in 2024. It was also the longest spurt by Cleveland in a postseason game since play-by-play stats started being kept in 1997-98. The previous high was 19 in an Eastern semifinal series game against Boston.

"We understood that if we could just get some stops, get out in transition and get some easier looks, we'll be in good shape. We were doing a solid job, we just weren't scoring," Mitchell said.

"I think understanding that we were in a good spot, we did a good job of weathering a storm."

Mitchell and Harden accounted for 49 points apiece with their points scored and points off assists. Mobley was a force on both ends of the court, with eight rebounds, five assists, three steals and five blocked shots.

"Don's going to get all the flowers, but we should give a lot of flowers to Mobley for tonight's performance," Atkinson said.

"Donovan Mitchell was killing us, and that's pretty much it," Pistons center Paul Reed said.

It was Mitchell's eighth playoff game with at least 40 points, his fourth with the Cavaliers. He has at least 30 points in three straight games.

Cleveland is still looking for its first road playoff win this season, and will need at least one if it hopes to make the Eastern Conference finals for the first time since 2018.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Thunder holds off tenacious Lakers for another series sweep

LOS ANGELES — Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 35 points, Chet Holmgren made a tiebreaking dunk with 32.8 seconds to play, and the Oklahoma City Thunder swept the Los Angeles Lakers out of the second round of the NBA playoffs with a 115-110 victory in Game 4 on Monday night.

Ajay Mitchell scored 10 of his 28 points in the frantic final period, as the Thunder, in its toughest victory of the season, overcame the Lakers' tenacious effort and improved to 8-0 in the playoffs.

"We've done our job so far, that's all it really means," Gilgeous-Alexander said. "We've gone out there, we've executed, we've played at a high level and we've been able to win eight tough games against really good opponents. That's all it means. Nothing is guaranteed."

LeBron James, the top scorer in NBA history, had 24 points and 14 rebounds in the final game of his unprecedented 23rd season, but he missed a driving bank shot with 20 seconds left that would have put the Lakers ahead.

The 41-year-old James has repeatedly said he hasn't decided whether to play next season, so there was no ceremony or momentousness around this game. Instead, the Lakers desperately tried to extend their year, only to lose to Oklahoma City for the eighth time this season.

"I don't know what the future holds for me, obviously, as it stands right now, tonight," James said. "I've got a lot of time. I'll go back and recalibrate with my family and talk with them, and when the time comes, obviously you guys will know what I decide to do."

Austin Reaves scored 27 points before missing a tying 3-point attempt with eight seconds left for the Lakers, who advanced one round farther than almost anybody expected after losing NBA scoring champion Luka Doncic and Reaves to significant injuries a month ago.

Los Angeles still lost six of its final seven playoff games and fell well short of the conference finals for the third straight season.

"I didn't want our season to end," Lakers coach JJ Redick said. "I wanted to keep this thing going. I enjoyed every bit of this year."

Oklahoma City faced its first fourth-quarter deficits of the entire playoffs in Game 4, as the Lakers repeatedly refused to fold. The Thunder still got it done, and has earned at least the rest of the week off before it opens the conference finals against the winner of San Antonio's second-round series with Minnesota. The Spurs and the Timberwolves were all tied up heading into Game 5 on Tuesday.

"They won more of the minutes tonight than we did, and that hadn't been the case (earlier in the series)," Oklahoma City coach Mark Daigneault said. "They outplayed us for stretches. They're a really good team with prideful players. We did not expect them to give us an unearned win, and we went out and earned it."

Oklahoma City went 8-0 against the Lakers this season, winning all four regular-season matchups as well — but this one was the toughest. The Lakers took the lead and kept it close down the stretch with big buckets from Reaves and Rui Hachimura, who scored nine of his 25 points in the fourth quarter.

Holmgren's dunk with 2:03 left put the Thunder up 109-103, but Hachimura coolly converted a four-point play. Marcus Smart then drove the lane and hit a layup while being fouled in the final minute, converting a three-point play for a 110-109 Lakers lead.

But Holmgren got the ball inside and triple-pumped for a dunk with 32.8 seconds left, and James missed on his drive. After Gilgeous-Alexander hit two free throws, Reaves missed again, and the Thunder hung on to secure its sixth berth in the Western Conference finals in the last 16 seasons.

The Thunder won the first two games of the series at home by 18 points apiece, and they routed the Lakers 131-108 in Game 3.

Doncic missed the final 15 games of the Lakers' season after incurring a grade-two hamstring strain on April 2 in Oklahoma City, and he watched the season finale on the bench in a black sweatsuit. The Slovenian superstar apparently didn't get close to returning from the injury, which often requires two months of recovery.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA



Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James goes up for a dunk during Game 4 of a second-round NBA playoffs series on Monday in Los Angeles. AP

SOCCER

Leeds draw keeps Spurs mired in relegation fight

LONDON — Mathys Tel went from hero to villain as Tottenham drew 1-1 at home to Leeds on Monday — a result that leaves the north London club's Premier League future hanging in the balance.

The Frenchman broke the deadlock early in the second half to ease the tension at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, but then gave away a penalty with a reckless clearance attempt.

In the dying minutes, Spurs were grateful to Antonin Kinsky, who produced an astonishing save to deny the visitor a win.

Tottenham is now two points clear of 18th-placed West Ham with just two games left this season.

The Hammers lost 1-0 to Arsenal on Sunday — a result that guaranteed the safety of Leeds and Nottingham Forest, but left Spurs and West Ham scrapping it out for the final relegation spot.

Wolves and Burnley are already down.

Spurs boss Roberto De Zerbi, who only arrived in late March, pledged his players would "fight until the end".

"(When) we lost to Sunderland, it was impossible to see ourselves two points above the relegation zone with two games to go," he said.

"Now, we have to be positive and work. We have the quality to win other points and stay up. I think we deserve to stay up. We will fight until the end.

"When you are fighting relegation, you have to fight harder with the legs than with the head. We have to push until the end. Even if we had won today, it wouldn't have been finished yet."



Dominic Calvert-Lewin celebrates scoring Leeds United's equalizer in a 1-1 Premier League draw against Tottenham Hotspur in London on Monday. REUTERS

Dire home record

Tottenham came into Monday's match with just two home wins in the league under its belt all season.

Kinsky got down smartly to his right to keep out Joe Rodon's header in the 21st minute, and, at the other end, Joao Palhinha fired over from close range.

Tottenham broke the deadlock five minutes into the second half when Tel controlled the ball beautifully after it fell to him following a Pedro Porro corner.

The Frenchman picked his spot, curling the ball past a diving Karl Darlow.

But, with about 20 minutes of normal time to go, Tel attempted an overhead kick to clear the ball from his own penalty area, making contact with the head of the onrushing Leeds captain Ethan Ampadu.

Referee Jarred Gillett ruled that it was a penalty after a VAR check and Dominic Calvert-Lewin smashed the ball home.

Midfielder James Maddison was given a rousing welcome by the home crowd when he was introduced as a late substitute — his first match of the season after recovering from an anterior cruciate ligament injury.

Then, the referee signaled 13 minutes of added time — a decision that lifted the home crowd further.

But Leeds came agonizingly close to a winner, with Kinsky producing a remarkable save onto the crossbar in the 98th minute from a point-blank range strike to deny Sean Longstaff.

In a frantic finale, Spurs had a last-gasp penalty claim turned down after Lukas Nmecha got the faintest of touches to the ball before Maddison went to ground.

The point lifts Spurs to 38 — two clear of West Ham, which has an inferior goal difference.

De Zerbi — the third manager of an injury-blighted and shambolic season for Spurs — was appointed with a brief to save the club from a first relegation since 1977.

His team is now unbeaten in four games, but the specter of the drop still hangs over the club, which won the Europa League just 12 months ago.

Spurs still have two potentially tough games to come against Chelsea and Everton, while West Ham faces Newcastle and Leeds.

AFP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:36 PM

Winning brew

American turns passion for Chinese tea into profit

LIFE, PAGE 14



Guideline helps protect growth of gig economy

POLICY REVIEW, PAGE 12



Star dilemma

Neymar's chances of spot in Brazilian team hang in balance

SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2026

WORLD WATCH
By Tom Watkins

Visit comes at pivotal juncture

United States President Donald Trump started his three-day state visit to China on Wednesday.

Here we are again, yet another pivotal moment as the world revolves around US-China relations.

Once again, we have arrived at a point where action or inaction will shape the direction of trade, technology, global security, the economy and geopolitical stability of the US, China and the rest of the world.

Peace and prosperity should be our goal.

The last thing either side and the world need now is greater instability. The world cannot afford a new Cold War, or worse, and wise choices must be made to ensure a peaceful and prosperous future for all of humanity.

We collectively need to seek "win-win" solutions rather than treat this vital relationship as a zero-sum game where one party's success requires the other's failure.

Perhaps at no other time in the modern US-China engagement has it been as imperative that we avoid unnecessary confrontation and conflict by keeping dialogue open and engaging in constructive, government and nongovernmental exchanges at the highest levels, as well as rebuilding and strengthening people-to-people, educational and cultural exchanges that have waned in recent years, particularly student exchanges, which are a foundation for long-term understanding between our two peoples.

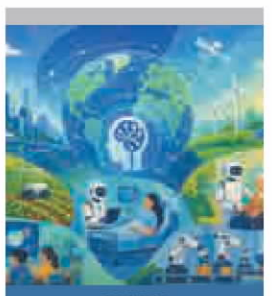
Dialogue between US and Chinese leaders must have a "trickle-down" effect that improves the overall relationship, reduces distrust and produces positive, tangible results for average citizens on both sides of the Pacific.

Change is inevitable. Progress should not be optional when it comes to US-China geopolitical relations.

Going forward, all major world issues will intersect at the corner of Beijing and Washington, DC. Are we going to swing for the win or strike out?

Both nations have work to do at home to better serve our respective peoples.

*See **Visit,** page 3*

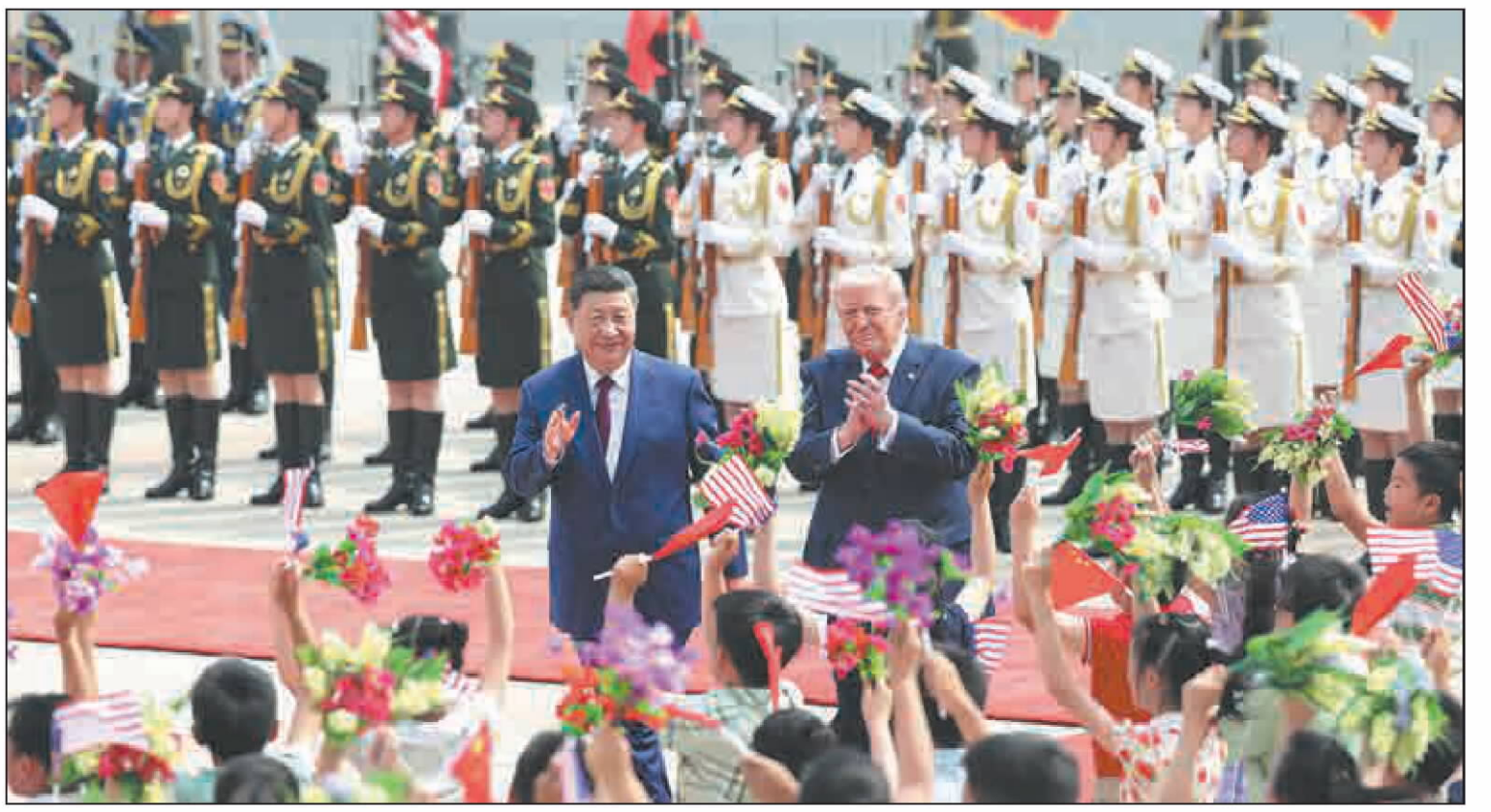


INSIDE
From AI visibility to developmental leadership
Global Views, page 8

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN

China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

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



President Xi Jinping holds a welcoming ceremony on Thursday morning outside the Great Hall of the People in Beijing for United States President Donald Trump, who is on a state visit to China. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

Xi: China, US should be partners

Success in one is opportunity for the other, stable bilateral relationship good for world

By CAO DESHENG
caodesheng@chinadaily.com.cn

China and the United States should find the right way for major countries to get along well with each other in the new era, President Xi Jinping said on Thursday.

Xi made the remarks during his talks with visiting US President Donald Trump at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

Xi stressed that the two countries have more common interests than differences, success in one is an opportunity for the other, and a stable bilateral relationship is good for the world.

He expressed the hope that 2026 will be a "historic, landmark year" that opens up a new chapter in China-US relations.

"China and the United States both stand to gain from cooperation and lose from confrontation. We should be partners, not rivals. We should help each other succeed and prosper together," he said.

Noting that transformation not seen in a century is accelerating across the globe and the international situation is fluid and turbulent, Xi said that the world has come to another crossroad.

"Can China and the United States overcome the Thucydides Trap and create a new paradigm of major-country relations? Can we meet global challenges together and provide greater stability for the world? Can we build a bright future together for our bilateral relations in the interests of the well-being of the two peoples and the future of humanity? These are the questions vital to history, to the world, and to the people. They are the questions of our times that the leaders of major countries need to answer together," Xi said.

Xi stressed that the Taiwan question is the most important issue in China-US relations. If it is handled properly, the bilateral relationship will enjoy overall stability. Otherwise, the two countries will have clashes and even conflicts, putting the entire relationship in great jeopardy, he said.

"Taiwan independence" and cross-Strait peace are as irreconcilable as fire and water, he said, adding that safeguarding peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait is the biggest common denominator between China and the US.

On China-US economic and trade relations, Xi said that they are mutually beneficial and win-win in nature, and trade wars have no winner.

He said that where disagreements and frictions exist, consultation conducted on an equal footing is the only right choice.

Xi noted that the talks between economic and trade teams of the two countries, held in the Republic of Korea on Wednesday, produced generally balanced and positive outcomes, adding this is good news for the people of the two countries and the world. The two sides should jointly sustain the good momentum that they have worked hard to create, he said.

In his speech, Trump hailed his "fantastic" relationship with Xi, saying Xi is "a great leader".

He said that the relationship between the US and China is going to be better than ever before.

Before the talks, Xi held a welcoming ceremony for Trump outside the Great Hall of the People.

Beijing rolls out red carpet for Trump

By MO JINGXI
mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn

Beijing rolled out the red carpet to welcome US President Donald Trump for a much-anticipated summit with President Xi Jinping, as the world looks to the two largest economies for greater stability.

Inside

• Editorial, **page 7**
• See more, **pages 2-5**

Xi held a welcoming ceremony for Trump on Thursday morning outside the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, before they held talks.

Trump arrived in the Chinese capital on Wednesday evening, beginning his three-day state visit to China. Vice-President Han Zheng greeted him at the airport.

The trip marks the first state visit to China by a sitting president of the United States in nearly nine years and follows Xi and Trump's meeting in Busan, Republic of Korea, last October, which helped to set the tone for efforts to stabilize and improve China-US relations.

The Xi-Trump summit is seen as another important moment in head-of-state diplomacy, which has played a strategic guiding role in China-US relations.

Over the years, Xi has repeatedly stressed that the China-US relationship is among the most important bilateral relationships in the world, and that the two countries must find the right way to get along.

His message has been consistent: While China-US cooperation can enable the two countries to achieve major undertakings serving their own interests and those of the world, confrontation would spell disaster for both countries and the wider world.

Analysts said the high-level engagement between Xi and Trump will be closely watched as to whether the two sides can keep the "giant ship" of China-US relations on a steady course, manage differences through dialogue, and expand practical cooperation, thereby injecting greater certainty into a turbulent world.

For a relationship as significant and complex as that between China and the US, direction matters as much as momentum.

During the meeting with Trump in Busan, Xi said, "You and I are at the helm of China-US relations. In the face of winds, waves and challenges, we should stay the right course, navigate through the complex landscape, and ensure the steady sailing forward of the giant ship of China-US relations."

In their phone conversation last year, Xi said that recalibrating the direction of the giant ship of China-US relations requires the two sides to take the helm and set the right course, adding that it is particularly important to steer clear of various disturbances and disruptions.

Zhiqun Zhu, a professor of political science and international relations and director of the China Institute at US-based Bucknell University, said the "giant ship" metaphor highlights both the complexity of the relationship and the importance of guiding it in the right direction.

"It's a top-down approach, with leaders on both sides playing a pivotal role," Zhu said. "Only when the general direction is set can the relationship move forward."

Zhu said that maintaining the momentum of high-level engagement is crucial for the stability and predictability of China-US relations. Leaders on both sides, he said, should be commended for overcoming difficulties, lowering tensions and moving the relationship forward.

But setting the course also requires a clear understanding of the nature of the relationship.

At a welcome dinner in San Francisco in November 2023, Xi said that he had long been thinking about "how to steer the giant ship of China-US relations clear of hidden rocks and shoals, navigate it through storms and waves without getting disoriented, losing speed or even having a collision".

"In this respect, the number one question for us is: Are we adversaries, or partners? This is the fundamental and overarching issue. The logic is quite simple. If one sees the other side as a primary competitor, the most consequential geopolitical challenge and a pacing threat, it will only lead to misinformed policymaking, misguided actions and unwanted results," Xi told participants from across American society.



People wave Chinese and United States flags to welcome US President Donald Trump, as he arrives in Beijing on Wednesday. Trump is on a three-day state visit to China. WANG JING / CHINA DAILY

Sun Chenghao, a fellow at Tsinghua University's Center for International Security and Strategy, said the "giant ship" metaphor speaks to the extraordinary weight of the relationship.

"China-US relations are too large and too consequential to be allowed to drift off course, or even capsize due to temporary storms," Sun said.

China and the US are the world's two largest economies and permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, and both play major roles in regional and global affairs.

Despite the twists and turns in bilateral ties, China-US economic relations remain deeply intertwined. Chinese customs data showed that bilateral trade in goods reached 4.01 trillion yuan ($590 billion) in 2025, accounting for 8.8 percent of China's total foreign trade.

"China's view that the relationship concerns not only the well-being of the two peoples but also the future of humanity is not merely diplomatic rhetoric," Sun said. "Rather, it is a judgment based on real interests and the stability of the international system."

That judgment has run through Xi's remarks on China-US relations over the years.

When meeting with Trump during his first term as US president in 2017 at the latter's Florida resort, Xi said there are a thousand reasons to make China-US relations a success, and not a single reason to break them.

*See **Summit,** page 3*

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:36 PM

SINO-US SUMMIT

Nations' friendship still bouncing along

From Ping-Pong Diplomacy to sports and youth exchanges, China and US continue building bridges

By **ZHANG YUNBI**
zhangyunbi@chinadaily.com.cn



Young people from China and the United States take a group photo during an event to commemorate the 55th anniversary of China-US Ping-Pong Diplomacy in Beijing on April 10. ZHAO WENYU / CHINA NEWS SERVICE



Members of the Whiffenpoofs a cappella choir from Yale University learn to play the *pipa* (a traditional lute) of the Dong ethnic group in Liping county, Guizhou province, on March 23. YANG WENBIN / XINHUA



Students from Muscatine High School in Iowa practice Chinese calligraphy at Shijiazhuang Foreign Language School in Hebei province on March 18. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Deliah Autry, 30, is a member of the United States Women's National Flag Football Team, a three-time world champion, and a doctor of physical therapy specializing in pediatrics.

Last August, she made her first trip to China, attending the 12th World Games hosted by Chengdu in Sichuan province. The souvenirs that impressed her most included a Labubu doll and the games' medals, she said.

"The medal itself is so intricate and detailed, and has a little necklace. It is something that I would love to show my kids one day," she said.

The cultural events also impressed her. At the athletes' village, Chinese college students helped them try immersive cultural activities.

"We got to do arts and crafts, learn how to write our names in Mandarin. We got to try on traditional Chinese clothing, so it was just an awesome way for us to learn from them ... a great experience and a way for us all to connect," Autry said.

She made her second trip to China last month. In Beijing, she took part in the commemoration to mark the 55th anniversary of China-US Ping-Pong Diplomacy and the launch ceremony of the China-US Youth Sports Exchange Events, which received a congratulatory message from President Xi Jinping.

Autry said she now has a better and deeper connection to and understanding of Chinese culture.

"I am impressed by the people, how genuine and kind-hearted everybody is, and I think it is something that I have personally attached to you (China) because you see the true humanity and love, especially for sports," she said.

In Beijing, she watched a high school flag football team from Tacoma, Washington state, playing against a Chinese student team.

Autry said flag football is a great avenue to continue making connections between the cultures, despite language barriers and differences in cultures and politics.

"There were a lot of handshakes, high-fives, and smiles, and I think that just brings the positivity forward ... It was just an awesome display of how sports bring everybody together," she added.

"There is a mutual understanding and respect for these athletes, and we all know that we are playing with the same passion and love for the game," she said.

Autry said sporting events and exchanges are a great way to show young people how cultural differences and language barriers are just small things and "what the true purpose is in life, which is to find a deeper connection with other humans across the world".

Last year, Autry met a lot of the players from the Chinese women's national team at flag football tournaments.

"I follow a lot of them on social media, and we are able to connect. And there have been times throughout the year where we have seen each other outside in other tournaments and it is just really awesome to build that connection," she said.

Reaching out

Justin O'Jack, chief representative of the University of Virginia's Pacific Asia Office, encourages young Americans to engage in more trips outside the US.

"These kinds of trips, where students can travel abroad and spend time in a country like China, really have a transformative impact on a young person's life," he said in an interview with China Daily, "... if their only impression of China is through the media that they consume, of course it's going to be different than experiencing it as a person here in China," he added.

O'Jack studied abroad when he was a college student, first in India and then in China.

"That experience as a student studying abroad in China definitely has influenced me in many ways, one of which is in the career that I chose — first running study abroad programs in Shanghai for American students and now representing an American university."

He said Chinese students represent the majority of international students applying to his university's undergraduate program for the current class graduating in 2030.

"Chinese students by far make up the majority of applications we received — I would say, (there are) over 10,000 applications from around the world. Over 40 percent of those were from students here in China," he said.

"The interest in studying abroad in the US continues to be very strong, especially among the undergraduate student population," he added.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a hiatus in the number of American students from his university studying in China, and now "we are seeing that start to grow and rebound", O'Jack said.

"We are not at the pre-pandemic levels yet, but we are still working and heading in the right direction," he said.

Sharing ideas

In 2023, President Xi proposed an initiative to invite 50,000 young Americans to China for exchange and study programs over a five-year span.

O'Jack noted that the program has largely focused on high school and younger groups of students, and "that is important because the youth are our future".

Anders Ibsen, 40, who was sworn in as mayor of Tacoma in January, hosted a Chinese ping-pong delegation at Lincoln High School in the city, a school that Xi visited in 2015.

Ibsen said it is very important to "give young people an understanding about what it means to have greater partnerships, especially with our growing global economy".

"That's the basis of shared prosperity as well as peace ... in someone's life. If they can understand that it's a big world and that there are a lot of other different ideas out there, then we're all better off," he added.

Last month, Ibsen traveled to China with Tacoma high school students, his second visit to the country. "I first visited here in 2018. I visited Fuzhou (in Fujian province), which is one of Tacoma's four sister cities."

"To give you some reference, the city of Tacoma is a major port city on the west coast ... About half of our total trade comes from China. As a result, we very strongly value the partnership," he said.

Chinese trade will continue to be very important to the port of Tacoma, as well as the investments it has seen in the local economy, Ibsen said.

During the trip, Ibsen said the group was also able to learn more about innovative programs the government is working on. "There's always something to learn. We should always continue being students," he said.

When asked about what impressed him most in China, he said it was "the people".

"In the case of the city of Tacoma, my primary concern is keeping my residents safe and prosperous ... and by having these cultural exchanges, we can focus on the results, we can dispense with noise, we can dispense with politics," he said.

"We can just focus on what makes things better for people, what makes for a happier, more peaceful world. And that is the strength of cooperation. That's why we're here," he added.

Lasting impact

The first US table tennis delegation arrived in China in April 1971, for the icebreaking visit that helped boost the launch of bilateral diplomatic ties.

At that moment, Jan Berris had been in her position at the US consulate in Hong Kong for just two years "as a very junior consular official working on cultural affairs". However, she said she knew that "the event would have repercussions on the US and China as well as the rest of the world".

"But I had no idea that it would have such a huge impact on my own life," said Berris, who is now vice-president of the National Committee on US-China Relations, a nonprofit organization and advisory body founded in 1966 to encourage understanding and cooperation between the two nations.

When she returned to the US the month after the historic visit, two of her former professors at the University of Michigan asked if she would consider working at the committee based in New York.

The committee was then preparing to co-host with the US Table Tennis Association the visit of the Chinese ping-pong team to the US.

"My professors were on the board of the national committee and they felt that my diplomatic experience, brief as it was, would be helpful," Berris said.

She said she was not quite sure that she really wanted to live in a big city as "it was formidable".

"Actually, my undecided state was resolved by another major announcement that was made just a few months later, when President Richard Nixon went on national television and announced that Dr Henry Kissinger had made a secret visit to China," she explained.

One of the results of that visit was the Chinese ping-pong team's visit to the US in April of 1972.

"That helped me make my decision," Berris said. The next day, she asked the US State Department if she could work on the planning for the Chinese team's visit.

What began with a small ping-pong ball — slowly at first, and then in leaps and bounds — grew into a "broad and eventually very deep" network of relations between the two countries in every profession, and every field imaginable that brought all levels in the two societies together, she said.

"Now, a lot of people ask me how I can work in the same job for 55 years. But for me it has been easy, because I love my job," she said.

The first exchanges and the visits of the two ping-pong teams, with the hundreds and thousands of exchanges that followed, "serve to help people from both countries humanize the other" side, she said.



US youngsters experience traditional Chinese opera culture at the National Academy of Chinese Theatre Arts in Beijing on July 14, as part of the Bond with Kuliang: 2025 China-US Youth Choir Festival. WANG ZIRU / CHINA NEWS SERVICE



Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:36 PM

SINO-US SUMMIT



Visitors taste wine from California at the food and agriculture pavilion of the United States on Nov 8 during the 8th China International Import Expo in Shanghai. The pavilion covered 350 square meters and featured 19 exhibitors, both record highs for the event. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

CEOs upbeat on China market

Presence of business leaders shows nation remains highly important for US companies

By **WANG KEJU, JIANG XUEQING, MA SI** and **ZHONG NAN**

Business leaders from the United States have voiced their confidence in the Chinese market and pledged to expand investments in what they consider as one of the world's most significant engines of future growth, given the market's vast scale, ability to innovate rapidly and resilient supply chains.

A high-profile business delegation comprising top US executives from sectors including technology, finance, aviation and agriculture arrived in Beijing on Wednesday as part of US President Donald Trump's entourage. The delegation's presence signals that commercial ties binding the two economies remain too deep to sever, economists and business executives said.

Among the top business leaders and CEOs visiting with Trump are Jensen Huang of Nvidia, Tim Cook of Apple, Elon Musk of Tesla and SpaceX, Cristiano Amon of Qualcomm, Larry Fink of BlackRock and Kelly Ortberg of Boeing, according to a Truth Social post by Trump. Also on the list are executives from GE Aerospace, Goldman Sachs, Citi, Mastercard, Visa, Blackstone, Cargill and more.

Speaking to China Daily, Mastercard CEO Michael Miebach said: "China is one of the world's most dynamic economies, and Mastercard is committed to the market for the long term.

"Since we began processing domestic transactions in May 2024, we've made strong progress — expanding acceptance, deepening local partnerships and bringing simple, secure 'tap and go' experiences to everyday life."

Looking ahead, he added, "We will continue to invest in China and bring more products and services that support both businesses and consumers."

According to experts, the lineup of CEOs from some of the US' most influential companies sends a clear signal that despite years of tariff impositions, export controls and heated talks of decoupling, China remains a highly significant market for US businesses.

"The economic gravity between the two countries remains immense," said Chen Wenling, a senior researcher at the Academy of Contemporary China and World Studies. "Even as trade tensions and geopolitical risks cast a shadow, the fundamental forces of China-US complementarity have not disappeared."

Chen noted that the US leads in financial markets and retains significant high-tech advantages, while China's edge in market scale, supply chain depth and rapid innovation is equally real.

Sean Stein, president of the US-China Business Council, said: "If you just say they're the two largest economies, you're missing the most important part. They're also the two most dynamic and most innovative economies."

"It is when you add the innovation and dynamism pieces that you truly recognize the need for the two countries to find ways to work together more effectively," Stein said.

Data released in November by the Chinese embassy in the US showed that more than 80,000 US companies have invested in China, while 7,000 Chinese firms operate in the US.

On Wednesday, a spokesperson for the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade said that the council welcomes representatives from the US business community to visit China, adding that there is plenty of scope for, and tremendous potential in, practical cooperation between Beijing and Washington.

"We look forward to the business communities of both countries further deepening exchanges and cooperation, and making new contributions to the stable, healthy and sustainable development of China-US relations," said the spokesperson.

In addition to the companies in the delegation, US businesses across industries continue to demonstrate their confidence in the Chinese market through tangible action.

Henry Ding, president of 3M China, said: "In recent years, 3M has continued to expand its domestic manufacturing footprint, strengthen local R&D innovation capabilities, and accelerate the localization of its full value chain in China, spanning R&D, testing and manufacturing."

He added that today, more than 50 percent of the products 3M sells in China are manufactured locally.

Ding said that 3M China will continue to increase its local R&D investment this year and plans to achieve more than 30 percent growth in new product launches compared with 2025, significantly outpacing other global markets.

Ian Shih, president of Rockwell Automation China, said that China's vast market, complete industrial ecosystem and continued high-level opening-up provide strong support for companies seeking long-term growth and diversified application opportunities.

At the 8th China International Import Expo held in Shanghai last November, US companies claimed the largest exhibition area, with their pavilions collectively covering more than 50,000 square meters, marking the seventh consecutive year that US companies have led all foreign participants.

Contact the writers at wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn

Collaboration in energy sector expected to expand

By **ZHENG XIN**
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

Expanding energy ties between China and the United States will contribute to broader bilateral economic cooperation amid shifting global market dynamics, industry experts said.

Liu Jia, chief expert at the Economics & Technology Research Institute, a think tank of China National Petroleum Corp, or CNPC, said that the world's two largest economies share a complementary dynamic, with the US' energy export growth aligning with China's substantial market demand.

The push for closer cooperation comes as the US rapidly expands its liquefied natural gas infrastructure, with export capacity projected to reach 150 million metric tons per year by 2028, according to the research institute.

Liu said that this expansion creates a structural necessity for partnerships, as new US liquefaction projects require the security of long-term buyers to obtain necessary financing and make final investment decisions. "China offers the world's most predictable demand growth, providing the scale needed to anchor these US infrastructure investments," he said.

According to figures released by the institute, China imported 68.43 million tons of LNG in 2025 and is expected to maintain its position as the world's top LNG importer this year.

This synergy has already been evident in the market for years, with major Chinese State-owned enterprises such as China Petroleum and Chemical Corp, or Sinopec, and CNPC signing long-term purchase agreements with leading US exporters, including Cheniere Energy and Venture Global LNG.

According to the institute, energy has always been an important component of the broader trade balance between the two nations, highlighting the sector's role in addressing trade disparities.

In addition to direct trade, the two countries have also established investment links.

US oil major ExxonMobil began operating its mega ethylene project in Huizhou, Guangdong province, last year. It is one of the largest foreign investment projects in China, and the first major petrochemical project constructed in China solely by a US company.

According to Liu, US and Chinese companies have jointly invested nearly $200 billion in third-party oil and gas projects across the Middle East, Central Asia and Africa.

To maintain this momentum, Liu suggested that both sides should expand cooperation into emerging fields such as energy storage and power grid technology.

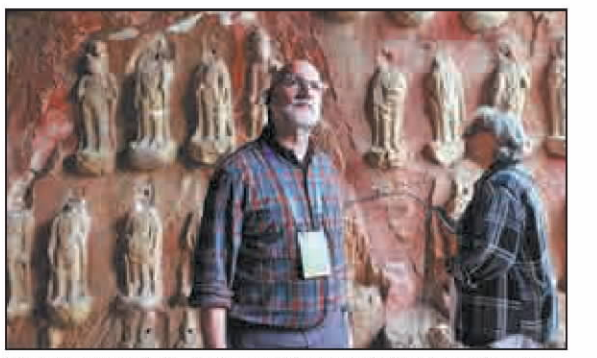
Lin Boqiang, head of the China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xiamen University, said that stable and predictable energy trade has provided an important area of mutual benefit.

As China's demand is predictable and the US supply is expanding, energy can serve as a bridge through which both sides can achieve tactical gains, Lin said.

Experts also recommended strengthening ties in traditional industrial sectors, including the supply of chemical feedstocks such as ethane and propane, as well as uranium mining.

"Establishing regular dialogue mechanisms between think tanks and industry bodies in both countries will be essential for stabilizing market expectations and deepening mutual consensus," said Liu from the Economics & Technology Research Institute. "This framework is necessary to ensure that energy cooperation remains a robust cornerstone of the bilateral relationship, even amid broader geopolitical shifts and profound changes in the global landscape," he added.

Heritage tour



Steve Carpenter (left), chairman of the Central China Executive Committee of the American Chamber of Commerce in China, admires carvings at the Thousand Buddha Cliff in Guangyuan, Sichuan province, on March 25. More than 30 scholars and business representatives from China and the United States explored this largest grotto complex in Sichuan, which boasts over 7,000 Buddhist statues. The work started in the late Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534) and flourished during the Tang Dynasty (618-907). WANG LEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Visit: Both sides should be beacons for building bridges

From page 1

I have advocated, over decades, that the best way for the US to compete with China is to invest in our own people, infrastructure, technology and education, rather than trying to "knock China down". Pushing a strategy to hold China back will be as effective as starting to build a chain-link fence as a tsunami is coming ashore.

Worldwide, people are closely watching the development of the US-China interaction, hoping that agreements would be reached to promote a more stable world order.

China-US economic and trade cooperation has brought benefits and challenges to both countries for over half a century.

We are at an inflection point. A miscalculation or mistake will have a devastating global impact.

While we need to continue to work toward building sensible economic, cultural and military ties, it is vital that China and the US continue to follow a seven Cs framework to help manage this delicate bilateral relationship, which is critical to the world:

- Communication (Open, high-level and subnational channels)
- Collaboration (On global issues like health and climate)
- Cooperation (To seek win-win solutions)
- Coordination (On regional and global issues)
- Competition (Managed and constructive)
- Contextual Understanding (Grasping the history and perspectives of both nations)
- Avoiding confrontation, conflict and casualties

Worldwide, people are closely watching the development of the US-China interaction, hoping that agreements would be reached to promote a more stable world order.

As the 21st century unfolds, both the US and China should be the beacons for building bridges.

It is imperative that we find ways to develop a shared vision and common agenda in areas that are in our collective national interests while we have open dialogue on topics where we disagree.

Chinese and US activists, not just governments, should work to create and endow a robust international exchange, a people-to-people organization that connects students, artists, writers, athletes, tourists, educators, health and behavioral healthcare professionals, poets, sub-national government officials and NGOs between our two countries to listen, to understand and build bridges that will help sustain peace and prosperity for all.

These kinds of global connections lay the groundwork for meaningful dialogues, thoughtful synergy, mutual respect, joint prosperity and peaceful collaboration.

We need to get along and jointly prosper peacefully.

The author was deputy chief of staff to former Michigan governor James Blanchard, president and CEO of the economic council of Palm Beach County, Florida. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Summit: Cooperation is a realistic choice

From page 1

In March 2024, when meeting in Beijing with representatives from the US business, strategic and academic communities, Xi said that whether the two countries can find the right way to get along bears on the well-being of the two peoples and the future of humanity.

Sun said the most immediate benefit of a stable and predictable China-US relationship is that it reduces uncertainty for both sides.

"If tensions continue to rise, those affected first are often not abstract strategic interests, but ordinary businesses, farmers, consumers, international students and researchers," Sun said.

He added that trade barriers would push up costs, technology restrictions would narrow the space for innovation cooperation, and fewer people-to-people exchanges would weaken mutual understanding between the two societies.

Beyond the bilateral level, China-US cooperation is also closely watched in terms of its implications for global governance at a time when the world faces sluggish growth, geopolitical tensions and mounting challenges requiring international coordination.

In Busan last year, Xi told Trump: "The world today is confronted with many tough problems. China and the US can jointly shoulder our responsibility as major countries, and work together to accomplish more great and concrete things for the good of our two countries and the whole world."

According to Sun, many global challenges — from climate change and artificial intelligence to public health, financial stability and regional security — cannot be effectively addressed without sustained communication between the two countries.

Zhu, of Bucknell University, echoed that view, saying that if the two most powerful nations cannot get along well, the global economy will suffer and international cooperation on critical issues such as climate change and AI governance will become difficult.

The resilience of the relationship also depends on whether the two societies can maintain direct contact and mutual understanding.

David Chong, founder and president of the US-China Youth and Student Exchange Association, said that he has become increasingly aware that keeping the giant ship of China-US relations moving steadily requires joint efforts from both countries at all levels.

Since 2015, Chong's association has helped bring more than 2,000 young Americans to China for exchange programs. Through activities ranging from cultural and sports exchanges to experiencing cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence, young Americans have been able to see, hear and experience China firsthand in concrete and everyday settings.

"People-to-people organizations may not be in the 'cockpit' of the giant ship," Chong said, "but they can serve as 'connectors' and 'road builders' by strengthening the cultural and social foundation for the steady development of China-US relations".

Sun, the researcher, said that cooperation remains the most realistic and responsible choice.

"The reason is simple: Competition cannot erase interdependence, and differences cannot eliminate shared risks," Sun said. "China and the US cannot expect a voyage without winds and waves, but they must not allow the storms to decide the course."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:36 PM

SINO-US SUMMIT

Summit to chart path for Sino-US ties

Head-of-state diplomacy essential for restoring trade stability: Experts

By **BELINDA ROBINSON** in New York and **RENA LI** in Los Angeles

As the heads of state of the world's two largest economies start their meetings in Beijing this week, trade experts and economists said they expected the summit to chart the course for the future of bilateral ties and help restore stability to global trade.

Chinese President Xi Jinping and US President Donald Trump will meet in Beijing, as Trump arrived on Wednesday for a three-day state visit to China.

China said on Monday that it was ready to work with the United States to expand cooperation, manage differences and inject more stability and certainty into a turbulent and changing world.

During a Port of Los Angeles media briefing on Monday, former US trade representative Katherine Tai described the meeting as "a really important moment for the US-China trade relationship".

Responding to a China Daily question on what is most needed to help reduce global uncertainty surrounding tariffs, supply chains and broader trade relations — including lower tariffs, clearer rules, or greater predictability — Tai, who served as the principal trade adviser and negotiator on US trade policy during the administration of former president Joe Biden, emphasized the importance of policy clarity and long-term planning.

"I think that what we need most — and I say 'we' in the real collective sense, because this relationship impacts everybody around the world — is some clarity around the principles that the United States wants to put out there and to enforce in the relationship with China," Tai said.

She said uncertainty in recent trade policies and market expectations has affected governments, businesses and global supply chains, adding that clearer communication and more consistent policy direction would help support long-term economic planning and cooperation.

Tai further noted that strategic pressure alone cannot sustain a functional trade relationship despite the fact that both nations have the capability to "choke" each other in strategic sectors.

"Once you have each other's attention, then you actually need to have an agenda and a plan in place for the short term, the medium term and the long term, for making this very important, complicated and challenged trade relationship work," Tai said.

Jerry Nickelsburg, director & senior economist at the UCLA Anderson Forecast, said the meeting between Chinese and US leaders could help provide a more stable environment even as longer-term shifts continue.

Despite recent adjustments in global trade flows, the interdependence of the two markets remains significant. China continues to serve as the third-largest export market for the United States, following Canada and Mexico, according to US trade figures.

"There seems to be an interest in preserving the stability of the current situation in US-China economic relations on both sides," Nickelsburg said.

Gene Seroka, executive director of the Port of Los Angeles, said that Chinese factories and exporters continue to operate steadily despite ongoing trade tensions.

Mitigating uncertainty

During recent visits to Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Guangzhou, Seroka noted that order volumes remained stable, even as China expanded its exports to other global trading partners to mitigate uncertainty.

Jim Sutter, CEO of the US Soybean Export Council, expressed hope that the meeting would reaffirm China's purchase of US agricultural goods, including soybeans, calling soybeans an "important indicator" of the strengthening ties between the two nations.

US industry leaders and local officials have echoed the call for cooperation.

Jeffery Jones, chairman of the Council for Trade and Investment Promotion in New Jersey, said that trade and business development should remain a priority.

"I'm a former mayor. On the political side of things, I don't have to go to the presidential level to say that from one town to another, municipal level, if we don't work together, nothing good happens," he added.

Daniel Mabey, Asia Region President for the United Natural Products Alliance, noted that because China is a major supply chain partner for numerous industries, it is essential that "dialogue continues and continues to move forward" to get the relationship back on a productive track.

"Most of the US-China relationship is based on trade and China is a big supply chain partner for a lot of industries, not just our industry," Mabey said.

"I used to live in Beijing for a long time ... I have had lots of industry dialogue. We need to get the tracks straightened again and work together."

Contact the writers at belindarobinson@chinadailyusa.com.



A visitor interacts with a robot from the Chinese robotics company Fourier during the 2026 Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, the United States, on Jan 8. The 2026 CES, the world's premier technology event, attracted thousands of exhibitors from more than 155 countries and regions, according to the US Consumer Technology Association, the organizer of CES. ZENG HUI / XINHUA

Eye on the ball



Enthusiasts from the US visit a pickleball production company in Shangyou county in Jiangxi province, on Sunday. The county has launched a comprehensive three-year plan for 2024 to 2026 that includes 13 million yuan ($1.8 million) in subsidies to support the sport and a special fund for hosting tournaments. ZHU HAIPENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Leaders' interactions offer 'irreplaceable strategic guidance' for US-China ties

By **ZHAO HUANXIN** in New York
huanxinzhao@chinadailyusa.com

Beijing's top envoy in Washington has said that interactions between the heads of state provide "irreplaceable strategic guidance" for China-US ties, expressing hope that this week's summit will be a "successful one" that will chart the "right course" for future relations.

At the invitation of Chinese President Xi Jinping, US President Donald Trump is visiting China from Wednesday to Friday.

In an interview with Newsweek published on Tuesday, Ambassador Xie Feng said that with the joint efforts of both sides, the summit will hopefully see the two countries expand cooperation and properly manage differences, while exploring ways to get along in the "new era" based on mutual respect and peaceful coexistence.

"In an increasingly turbulent world, the strategic value of China-US relations becomes more prominent," Xie said. "A stable and constructive China-US relationship not only serves the fundamental interests of both our peoples, but also meets the shared expectation of the international community."

On the Taiwan question, Xie said that he believed the American people, who faced the danger of division and had a civil war in the past, can understand China's will and determination to safeguard national unity.

The Chinese side urges the US side to commit to the one-China principle, the three China-US joint communiques with concrete actions, make the right choice as early as possible, fundamentally remove the biggest obstacle to China-US relations, which is the Taiwan question — a burden that risks dragging the two countries into confrontation and conflict — and open up broader room for developing bilateral ties, Xie said.

Xie also said that history has proven once and again that a tariff war or trade war produces no winner, damages the interests of both sides, and hurts the whole world.

He noted that under the guidance of the two leaders, China and the United States have reached a series of common understandings through economic and trade consultations, and have stabilized bilateral economic and trade relations.

"This has not come easily and should be cherished. But it is still far from enough. We hope the US side will move further ahead and completely remove the unilateral tariffs and other restrictive measures," he said.

Xie said competition between the United States and China should be viewed as a "track-and-field race toward mutual excellence" rather than a "zero-sum boxing match".

"Let our two countries compete to offer more public goods to the world, to better help developing nations reduce and eliminate poverty, and to contribute more to the sustained and inclusive development of the global economy," the envoy said.

Turning to the fentanyl issue, Xie noted that the fentanyl crisis in the US was not created by China, but "out of the humanitarian spirit and for the sake of China-US friendship", China is providing assistance to combat the "common enemy of humanity".

He noted the current US administration has strengthened legislation, law enforcement and regulatory control to combat fentanyl, and the number of fentanyl-related deaths in the US has dropped by 37.5 percent, to which China also made important and positive contributions.

He urged Washington to appreciate and cherish China's goodwill, view bilateral cooperation outcomes in a just manner, stop shifting the blame for the fentanyl issue, avoid imposing alternative tariffs as substitutes for fentanyl-related tariffs, and remove China from the list of so-called "major drug source countries" as soon as possible.

On artificial intelligence, Xie said that the world does not want to see an "Iron Curtain" in AI, nor attempts at technological enclosure, let alone a Star Wars-style rivalry.

"China-US coordination on AI bears on the future of both our countries and the entire humanity. We hope the US side will work with us in the same direction, to enhance dialogue, manage competition and conduct cooperation, so that AI will become a new frontier for China-US cooperation and a new ladder for human progress," Xie said.

Chinese Americans welcome leaders' meeting

By **LIA ZHU** and **CHELSEA GE** in San Francisco

US President Donald Trump's state visit to Beijing from Wednesday to Friday, the first visit to China by a US president in nine years, has sparked enthusiasm among Chinese Americans, who view the meeting between the two heads of state as an important moment for dialogue, cooperation, and understanding between the two countries.

During the visit, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Trump are expected to have in-depth discussions on major issues, including China-US relations, world peace and international development.

"I'm excited at this opportunity for President Trump to go to China and visit President Xi," Phillip Chen, a California Assembly member, told China Daily. "I believe that this world right now is a very large village, and that the relationship between China and the United States will continue to blossom."

"I personally think that as it stands right now, we've been cooperating for many, many years. We have to make sure that we work closely together to make sure that our mutual interests are served sufficiently," he said, adding that he hoped the meeting would help open up opportunities for more exchanges and cooperation.

William Zhang, a San Francisco-based community leader and an ardent advocate for peaceful cross-Strait relations, called the meeting "a long-awaited conversation between the two heads of state".

"President Trump will hopefully learn firsthand how much importance the Chinese government places on the peaceful reunification of the nation," he said, adding that Washington should uphold the one-China principle. "It is a prerequisite for the stable and healthy development of China-US relations," Zhang said.

Lei Wang, a Chinese culture advocate in Southern California, sees the leaders' meeting as an opportunity to promote and expand understanding of Chinese culture at the federal level.

"This is a good thing. There's a popular song in China right now called *Better to Meet in Person* and I believe that a meeting between the two countries' leaders will help deepen mutual understanding," he told China Daily.

Wang, also a small-business owner, said he hoped the meeting would help promote business interaction, trade activities and business investment between the two countries.

California, located on the Pacific coast, is an important gateway for Chinese goods entering the US, said Wang. "If China-US relations aren't good and trade relations don't flow smoothly, it will seriously affect California's foreign trade, imports and exports, which in turn affects many people's employment and how businesses operate."

"We need the trade to continue to support the employment and the society here in the US," Wang said. "Therefore, I really hope that both sides can deepen understanding in trade and economic relations, reach consensus, and push the relationship toward a more positive and stable direction."

Despite differences and frictions that have marked bilateral relations, Hu Lirong, CEO of CW Bearing USA, expressed confidence in dialogue between the presidents.

"These are challenges that can ultimately be worked through under the leadership of the two countries' leaders," he told China Daily.

Hu said the company has focused on localized operations, creating jobs for the community, with young employees accounting for about 30 percent of its workforce. He added that the company places strong emphasis on technical expertise and cross-cultural communication.

Chang Jun in San Francisco and Li Mingmei in New York contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at liazhu@chinadailyusa.com.

Observers in Europe pin hopes on dialogue

By **ZHANG ZHOUXIANG** in Brussels
zhangzhouxiang@chinadaily.com.cn

As US President Donald Trump began his visit to China on Wednesday — his second state visit to China following his previous trip in November 2017 and his first during his second presidential term — European political and business figures are closely watching the bilateral relationship.

The meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Trump comes at a time of heightened global uncertainty, marked by geopolitical tensions, economic fragmentation, supply chain disruptions and slowing growth across major economies. Some observers in Europe believe that stable China-US relations are increasingly seen not only as a bilateral necessity, but also as a prerequisite for global economic predictability and international stability.

Ondrej Dostal, a Czech member of the European Parliament, described Trump's visit as a recognition of China's global importance and of the limits of confrontation-based policies.

Dostal argued that unilateral pressure and economic coercion have undermined international trust and damaged global trade. The world needs stable trade, mutual respect, diplomacy, infrastructure, development, and coexistence between civilizations.

According to Dostal, the leaders' meeting may also encourage European governments to reassess their own approach toward China. "If even Washington now recognizes that it must negotiate with Beijing, then European governments should finally stop pretending that confrontation with China serves European interests," he said.

Former director-general for international affairs in the German state of Hessen Michael Borchmann said the meeting carries significance far beyond bilateral ties.

Quoting a US research institute's description of the meeting as "Managing the World's Most Important Relationship", Borchmann said the phrase "absolutely fits" the current geopolitical environment.

Enhancing communication

"At a time when the world is facing growing uncertainty and fragmentation, enhancing communication, managing differences and maintaining stable China-US relations also benefits the world," he said.

Borchmann said the meeting follows last year's temporary trade truce reached in Busan, South Korea, where both sides attempted to halt escalating tariff retaliation. He expressed hope that the meeting would deepen consensus on trade and issues including the Middle East and global development.

He also referenced Xi's long-standing emphasis on stable bilateral ties. "There are a thousand reasons to make the China-US relationship a success, but not a single reason to break it," Borchmann quoted Xi as saying.

From the European business community, Bernard Dewit, chairman of the Belgian-Chinese Chamber of Commerce, stressed the importance of constructive engagement between the world's two largest economies.

Speaking from a European perspective, Dewit described stable China-US relations as "very important" for global economic and geopolitical certainty.

He noted that many European countries are facing economic recovery challenges, inflationary pressures and security concerns, and said improved China-US ties could help reduce tensions, restore investor confidence and strengthen international cooperation.

Dewit also emphasized Europe's preference for dialogue over bloc confrontation. Europe, he said, does not want to see the world divided into opposing camps and instead supports multilateralism, predictability and strategic autonomy.

As the leaders' meeting unfolds in Beijing, many in Europe will be watching closely for signs that the two major powers can stabilize relations and provide a measure of certainty to an increasingly fragmented world.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:36 PM

SINO-US SUMMIT

Harley Seyedin

Strengthening bilateral ties for global stability

The relationship between the United States and China remains one of the most important bilateral relationships in the world. As US President Donald Trump is visiting Beijing, both countries have an opportunity to strengthen cooperation, stabilize economic ties and promote prosperity for their peoples and the global economy.

Despite years of trade tensions and tariffs, the two economies are deeply interconnected. Research by the Stanford Center on China's Economy and Institutions emphasizes that the two nations benefit enormously from trade, investment, innovation, and educational exchange.

US consumers and businesses benefit from affordable goods and integrated supply chains, while Chinese consumers and businesses benefit from access to US technology, agricultural products, financial services, and higher education.

Millions of jobs in both countries are linked directly or indirectly to this economic relationship.

One major development in recent years has been the significant reduction in the US-China trade deficit.

According to data from the Office of the US Trade Representative and the US Bureau of Economic Analysis, the US goods trade deficit with China fell to approximately $202.1 billion in 2025, down from $295.5 billion in 2024. This represents a 31.6 percent reduction in just one year.

The decline was due to changes in supply chains, increased domestic manufacturing in some sectors, diversification of trade partners, and evolving tariff policies. Yet even with these adjustments, bilateral trade remained enormous. Total China-US goods trade still exceeded $414 billion in 2025, demonstrating that the two economies continue to rely on each other in many areas.

Global Lens

By focusing on practical cooperation and long-term mutual benefit, the two countries can build a more positive and productive relationship that benefits not only themselves, but the entire world.

Trump's visit provides an opportunity to move beyond confrontation and toward practical cooperation.

Both nations share common interests in global economic stability, energy security, climate resilience, public health, artificial intelligence governance and financial market stability.

Cooperation between Washington and Beijing is not simply beneficial for US and Chinese citizens; it is essential for global growth and international confidence.

There are many areas where positive collaboration can expand. In agriculture, China remains an important market for US farmers exporting soybeans, corn, beef and other products. Increased agricultural purchases can help support rural communities across the US while ensuring food security and stable supplies for Chinese consumers.

In technology, both countries can cooperate on standards for AI safety, cybersecurity and advanced manufacturing. Joint research partnerships between universities and companies have historically produced breakthroughs in medicine, engineering and clean energy.

Climate and energy cooperation also present major opportunities. The US and China are the world's two largest economies and energy consumers.

By working together on renewable energy, battery storage, carbon reduction technologies, and electric vehicles, both countries can accelerate innovation while creating jobs and investment opportunities. Cooperation in these sectors could help reduce global emissions while improving energy affordability and reliability.

Educational and cultural exchanges are equally important. Hundreds of thousands of Chinese students have studied in US universities over the past two decades, contributing billions of dollars to local economies while building people-to-people ties.

Academic collaboration and tourism help reduce misunderstandings and strengthen mutual respect. Business leaders, students, scientists, and cultural organizations all benefit when relations are stable and constructive.

The global economy also benefits from open communication between the US and China. Financial markets react positively to signs of dialogue and predictability between the two powers.

Businesses on both sides want stable policies, clear regulations, and reduced uncertainty. A cooperative atmosphere encourages investment, strengthens supply chains, and supports economic growth worldwide.

While differences will remain on trade, security, and geopolitical issues, history shows that engagement produces better outcomes than isolation. Strong diplomacy and mutual respect can help manage disagreements while preserving areas of common interest. The US and China are competitors in some areas, but they are also partners in maintaining global prosperity and stability.

Trump's visit could become an important moment to reset the tone of the relationship.

Constructive discussions on trade, investment, market access and economic cooperation could create new momentum for both nations.

The US and Chinese peoples both seek economic opportunity, stable growth, innovation, and peace.

By focusing on practical cooperation and long-term mutual benefit, the two countries can build a more positive and productive relationship that benefits not only themselves, but the entire world.

The author is the president of the American Chamber of Commerce in South China, and the winner of the 2017 Oslo Business for Peace Award, which is awarded by a committee consisting of Nobel laureates in peace and economics. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Jack Midgley

When friends far away can share daily life in real time

Young Chinese creators on Xiaohongshu post a smart study nook or a city workout routine, and peers from the United States quickly take notice.

They borrow the idea, tweak it for their own lives, and share it right back.

This digital back-and-forth links millions of young people, quietly building the trust and practical know-how that enables real innovation.

Global Lens



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

These are the new "people-to-people" exchanges. They happen daily without long flights or months of planning.

Free, effortless and constant, these digital connections are shaping an inclusive future of innovation among people in China and the United States.

Presidents Xi Jinping and Donald Trump have an important opportunity to amplify these connections when they meet in Beijing.

Together, they can help transform the grassroots energy into productive China-US ties that are already growing at the speed of digital connections.

Xiaohongshu's explosive growth brings this to life. The platform's lifestyle content routinely generates massive engagement domestically, while its cross-border search functionality has captured a multi-million-strong audience in the US.

US students respond to Chinese posts with duets and adaptations, often tagging back with comments like "Xiaohongshu changed my set-up!" as tips on lighting, storage, and focus zones flow freely.

President Xi captured the heart of this dynamic when he said that the hope of China-US relations lies in the people.

The numbers reinforce this statement. Xiaohongshu racked up around 3.7 million US downloads in early 2025 and is projected to hit double digit millions this year, while already serving over 300 million monthly users worldwide.

A vast majority of these users are young people.

TikTok connects with 170 million US users, many of them young people sharing news and ideas, while in 2026 duets between Chinese and US creators have attracted hundreds of millions of views.

These platforms keep the innovative exchanges flowing constantly and cheaply, shrugging off diplomatic ups and downs in the relationship.

Miranda Qu, Xiaohongshu's co-founder, laid the groundwork for this trend by turning community input into viral lifestyle solutions that now draw global audiences.

The platform stands out because young Chinese creators blend personal stories with actionable advice on focus-boosting study setups, apartment-friendly fitness routines, and smart daily hacks.

US youth have joined in, blending Chinese precision with their own creative twists to build sharper, more intentional habits on both sides of the Pacific.

These real people-to-people exchanges build habits of cross-cultural innovation.

TikTok's Khaby Lame adds speed to the mix with his silent takedowns of overcomplicated life hacks that resonate universally, while Xiaohongshu provides the depth that makes these exchanges truly transformative.

What makes these digital exchanges so potent is their role in providing the secret sauce of innovation: an intuitive feel for what clicks with users.

When a Chinese creator's dorm organization trick reshapes a US student's space, or Khaby's simplicity sharpens a video edit, they are co-creating that shared sense in real time.

A joint summit statement pledging support for digital youth exchanges would encourage young people both from China and the US to build on today's rapidly-growing interactions.

The benefits can go far beyond feel-good moments.

These connections humanize people on both sides of the Pacific and equip the next generation with important skills to tackle global opportunities such as climate tech, supply chains, artificial intelligence and even the exploration of space.

Above all, they demonstrate that real cooperation can hum along even when global politics does not.

Curiosity has a way of outpacing the need for total agreement every time.

The real story of China and US relations is playing out on screens everywhere.

Young creators are already linking people and cultures across the Pacific.

The summit of the two leaders is helping to endorse those bridges and ensure they grow into the enduring ties that define a bright future for the countries that young people will lead one day.

The author is principal consultant at Midgley & Company and an adjunct associate professor in the Security Studies Program at Georgetown University. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Zhu Feng

Only cooperation with China serves US interests

US President Donald Trump's visit to China, and expected head-of-state meetings, are drawing a lot of attention at a time when the world is seeing conflicts in Ukraine and the Strait of Hormuz. A key task for both Beijing and Washington is to sustain a stable, manageable and enduring bilateral relationship.

Although geopolitical experts often refer to the "Thucydides Trap" theory — a phenomenon whereby a rising power can cause fear in an established power, escalating to war — to interpret Sino-US relations, China has taken a different approach.

This is evident in the strategies it employed to counter the tariff war initiated by Washington last year, and its vision of building a community with a shared future for humanity, which is supported by four global initiatives and guided by principles of mutual respect and win-win cooperation.

This approach has worked, producing steady, positive outcomes in bilateral interactions, while acting as a stabilizing force in a turbulent, ever-changing world.

In this context, Washington should take advantage of the opportunity for dialogue presented by the US leader's visit, to seek closer cooperation with China.

While some in the US who view China as their greatest "strategic competitor" and seek to contain it have done little to conceal their intentions, the broader trend of China-US exchanges and collaboration remains unstoppable.

This disconnect on the US side needs to be addressed with an objective understanding of Beijing.

After the US Supreme Court ruled in February that the US administration's imposition of reciprocal tariffs on trading partners under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act was illegal, the US side levied an additional 10 percent import surcharge on all trading partners under Section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974.

As the Chinese side has repeatedly emphasized, China and the US need to enable each other's success as interests converge and pursue mutually beneficial cooperation.

The US also introduced a series of negative measures concerning China, including the Section 301 investigations, aimed at undermining China's production capacity advantages and reducing dependence on Chinese industry and supply chains.

However, Washington should have been aware that, given China's 35 percent share of global industrial output, a rapid and complete decoupling is unattainable.

Although the US administration is trying to keep a relatively low profile on the Taiwan question and disputes in the South China Sea, its arms sales to the Chinese island in late 2025 were the largest since 1979.

Additionally, joint military exercises with the Philippines and other external forces in the South China Sea have significantly increased in frequency.

The US should not treat softened rhetoric as a short-term, tactical measure to stabilize bilateral relations.

A US-led rare earths supply alliance designed to reduce dependence on China's rare earths is closely tied to technological innovation and access to critical resources. The same is true of Washington's ambition to revitalize and expand its manufacturing sector.

However, the path to "make America great again" is not necessarily contradictory to China's great rejuvenation. China's significant growth potential, as revealed in its 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), can offer US enterprises many opportunities to cooperate with their Chinese counterparts.

For China-US relations to continue providing mutual economic benefits, fostering exchanges across various social sectors, and enhancing complementary security through normal engagement and cooperation, the US side needs to foster a correct perception of China within its broader strategic framework.

Despite some challenges, Sino-US relations have remained generally stable, thanks to head-of-state diplomacy, with the two leaders maintaining frequent communication and dialogue, and recalibrating the direction of ties at critical junctures.

As the Chinese side has repeatedly emphasized, China and the US need to enable each other's success as interests converge, and to pursue mutually beneficial cooperation.

Both China and the US should make mutual respect the cornerstone, peaceful coexistence the principle and win-win cooperation the goal.

This approach will help the two countries explore the appropriate way to interact, jointly contributing to global peace and stability.

China will never follow the obsolete model of a country seeking hegemony when growing stronger. It will instead remain committed to peaceful development.

Beijing hopes that Washington can respect China's core interests and work together to properly manage differences.

In a world facing increasing turmoil, a stable China-US relationship not only serves the fundamental interests of both nations but also aligns with the widespread expectations of the international community.

The author is the dean and a professor of the School of International Studies, Nanjing University. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:36 PM

WORLD

Star power



From left: New Zealand filmmaker Peter Jackson, United States actor Elijah Wood, Chinese actress Gong Li, US actress Jane Fonda and South Korean director Park Chan-wook wave during the opening ceremony and premiere screening of *The Electric Kiss* at the 79th Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, France, on Tuesday. SAMEER AL-DOUMY / AFP

Iran hardens stance on strait

Tehran moves to draft new regulations for key waterway as oil flows dwindle

By JAN YUMUL in Hong Kong and **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Tuesday that Tehran is currently in consultations to develop regulations governing arrangements for the Strait of Hormuz based on international law.

Araghchi made the remark during a meeting in Tehran with Norway's Deputy Foreign Minister Andreas Motzfeldt Kravik, formalizing what senior officials have been signaling in recent weeks — that Iran intends to establish a new legal order for the waterway.

Last month, International Maritime Organization Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez said that countries have no right to blockade international straits or impede the freedom of navigation through straits used for international transit.

Iran's arrangements for the Strait of Hormuz could face setbacks as a United Nations Security Council draft resolution calling for freedom of navigation in the strait is gaining traction with 112 cosponsors, Al Jazeera reported on Wednesday.

Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have joined Bahrain and the United States as principal sponsors, according to the report. India, Japan, South Korea, Kenya, Argentina and most European Union member states have also signed on, it added.

More than one month after a tenuous ceasefire took effect, US and Iranian demands to end the war remain far apart.

Washington has called for Tehran to scrap its nuclear program and lift its chokehold on the strait, while Iran has demanded compensation for war damage, an end to the US blockade and a halt to fighting on all fronts, including in Lebanon.

The Lebanese Health Ministry said Israeli drones struck three vehicles on the main highway south of Beirut on Wednesday, killing eight people, including a woman and her two children.

Iran has urged the United States and Israel to accept its rights and demands, warning that any new aggression would be met with a swift and regretful response.

Iranian Brigadier General Reza Talaei-Nik told reporters that the US and Israel would have to submit to Iran's legitimate and definitive rights, either on the battlefield or at the diplomatic table.

"If the enemy does not yield to Iran's rightful demands in diplomacy, it should expect a repeat of its past defeats on the military field," Talaei-Nik said, the Mehr News Agency reported.

The conflict is weighing heavily on global energy markets. Global oil supply will fall by around 3.9 million barrels per day across 2026 and undershoot demand because of disruptions caused by the crisis, the International Energy Agency said on Wednesday, with more than 1 billion barrels of Middle East supply already lost.

Brent crude futures edged down slightly to around $107 per barrel, after a three-day rally driven by the Hormuz deadlock.

Energy deals

Meanwhile, Iraq and Pakistan have cut deals with Iran to ship oil and liquefied natural gas from the Gulf, according to five sources with knowledge of the matter, Reuters reported.

In a deal between Baghdad and Tehran that has not been previously reported, Iraq secured safe passage for two very large crude carriers, each carrying about 2 million barrels of crude, that passed through the strait on Sunday.

Iraq is working to secure Iran's approval for more transits, an Iraqi oil ministry official familiar with the initial deal and current talks told Reuters, as the government seeks to safeguard the oil revenues that make up 95 percent of its budget.

A second ministry official and a shipping industry source also confirmed the talks with Tehran. All of the sources requested anonymity as they were not authorized to speak on the matter.

Similarly, two tankers loaded with Qatari liquefied natural gas are headed to Pakistan following a separate bilateral agreement between Islamabad and Tehran, two industry sources with knowledge of the matter told Reuters, also asking not to be named as they were not permitted to speak with media.

In another development, the Arab League urged Iran on Tuesday to cease all hostile acts against Arab states and condemned the alleged infiltration of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps into Kuwait's Bubiyan Island, which resulted in the injury of one of the Kuwait Armed Forces' personnel.

Arab League Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul Gheit said the armed infiltration of Kuwaiti territory "constitutes a dangerous precedent that cannot be tolerated and represents a serious escalation".

Iran's Foreign Ministry rejected the claims as "baseless", saying four Iranian officers had entered Kuwait's territorial waters because of a navigation system disruption during a routine maritime patrol mission and called on Kuwaiti authorities to resolve the issue through official channels.

Agencies and Xinhua contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at jan@chinadailyapac.com

US Senate approves Warsh to Federal Reserve board

NEW YORK — The United States Senate on Tuesday confirmed Kevin Warsh to a 14-year term as a Federal Reserve governor, marking a pivotal step toward his expected ascension as the next leader of the central bank.

The confirmation passed with a 51-45 vote. In a notable break from party lines, Senator John Fetterman of Pennsylvania was the sole Democrat to join the Republican majority in supporting the appointment. Warsh will succeed Stephen Miran on the board, with his term retroactively beginning on Feb 1.

Following the vote, the Senate immediately initiated the confirmation process for Warsh's concurrent four-year term as Fed chair. The transition comes as the term of incumbent Jerome Powell is set to expire on Friday.

Warsh, 56, is a lawyer and financier who previously served as a Federal Reserve governor from 2006 to 2011, playing a key role in navigating the global financial crisis during that time. His return to the board comes amid heightened scrutiny of the central bank's political independence.

Powell has announced he intends to remain on the board as a governor after his chairmanship ends, saying he plans to keep a low profile.



Kevin Warsh testifies on Capitol Hill in Washington on April 21 during his nomination hearing to be a member and chairman of the Federal Reserve Board of Governors. JOSE LUIS MAGANA / AP

For his part, Warsh signaled a shift in direction for the Fed, calling for "regime change". His proposed strategy includes tighter coordination with the Treasury Department and the administration on nonmonetary policies.

However, the economic landscape remains challenging. A surge in global oil prices since the outbreak of the US-Israeli war against Iran has fueled domestic inflation, significantly dampening investor expectations for rate cuts this year.

Financial markets are currently pricing in a one-in-three chance of a rate hike by December. The Fed's current target range for short-term borrowing costs stands at 3.5 percent to 3.75 percent.

The Federal Open Market Committee is scheduled to hold its next policy-setting meeting on June 16-17.

Data released on Tuesday by the Bureau of Labor Statistics showed US prices for most goods and services surged in April.

The Consumer Price Index increased at a seasonally adjusted 0.6 percent month-on-month and 3.8 percent year-on-year. Stripping out food and energy, the core CPI ticked up 0.4 percent and 2.8 percent, respectively.

The year-on-year headline rate of inflation hit the highest level since May 2023.

Analysts said the war in Iran is to blame, as prices have increased because of higher oil prices stemming from the situation in the Strait of Hormuz, through which some 20 percent of the world's oil flows.

Dean Baker, cofounder of the Center for Economic and Policy Research, said the war has sent oil prices higher and "we are beginning to see ripple effects in other areas".

"Prices are now outpacing wages, meaning that workers are on average worse off than they were a year ago," he said.

XINHUA

Australia extends EV tax breaks as fuel fears grow

By ALEXIS HOOI in Sydney
alexishooi@chinadaily.com.cn

Australia has extended an electric vehicle purchase incentive program as it aims to cut dependence on fossil fuels amid the Middle East crisis, a move expected to benefit Chinese automakers that have been gaining ground in the country in recent years.

The federal budget, unveiled by Treasurer Jim Chalmers on Tuesday, keeps in place current tax exemptions for EVs under the Electric Car Discount policy until March next year, before the discounts — which go back to July 2022 — are wound down starting April 2027.

The ongoing support for EVs is part of measures to strengthen "fuel resilience", as the conflict in the Middle East has been "pushing up prices, pushing down growth, and punishing Australians", Chalmers said in his budget speech.

Hussein Dia, a professor of transport technology and sustainability at the Swinburne University of Technology in Melbourne, told China Daily that "one of the clearest signals" of the budget announcement is that "Australia is moving from early EV adoption toward a broader transport system transition".

"The focus is gradually expanding beyond short-term incentives toward longer-term resilience, infrastructure, productivity and energy security," Dia said.

"The continuation, but gradual recalibration, of the Electric Car Discount suggests the government believes the EV market is now maturing. The policy has played an important role in normalizing EVs in Australia and accelerating early uptake," he said.

Recent fuel disruptions and geopolitical uncertainty in global oil markets have also reinforced the importance of reducing dependence on imported liquid fuels, he added.

"In that sense, transport policy is increasingly becoming energy policy. Electrification is now being viewed not only through an environmental lens, but also through economic resilience and national security lenses," he said.

The continuation of the EV discount comes amid record sales, with EVs accounting for 16.4 percent of all new vehicle sales in Australia in April, according to the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries.

"The Electric Car Discount has provided important stimulus to the market, and its continuation will support the growth of EVs," the chamber's chief executive, Tony Weber, said.

Chinese players' role

The purchase incentive is expected to benefit Chinese automakers, which made up four of the top 10 selling brands in April, with one of BYD's best-selling EV models alone recording 1,780 units, or an increase of 139.6 percent year-on-year, according to the chamber.

Dia said Chinese EV makers are playing an increasingly important role in the Australian market.

"Brands such as BYD have helped expand the range of more affordable EV models available to Australian consumers, particularly during a cost-of-living period where price remains one of the biggest barriers to adoption," he said.

"Increased competition is helping make EVs more mainstream and accelerating the transition away from imported fossil fuels."

Aman Gaur, head of legal, policy and advocacy at the Electric Vehicle Council, likewise referred to the growing role of Chinese carmakers in Australia, which has a "competitive automotive market with over 60 brands providing a variety of cars for all lifestyles".

"Chinese manufacturers have added more options for Australians with a great range of electric cars on offer," he said.

Labour divisions in UK overshadow King's Speech

By JULIAN SHEA in London
julian@mail.chinadailyuk.com

United Kingdom Prime Minister Keir Starmer sought to shift the focus from personalities to policy on Wednesday as the King's Speech to Parliament set out his government's legislative agenda for the coming year.

The speech, written by the government but delivered with royal pageantry by King Charles III, outlined new initiatives on energy security, defense, immigration and education reform, but it was the internal wranglings of the governing Labour Party that continued to dominate the headlines across the UK.

Starmer, who has been in office for less than two years, has faced mounting pressure following Labour's dismal performance in last week's local elections, with his leadership being picked out as one of the main causes of voter rejection.

On Tuesday, four ministers resigned in protest against Starmer's continued leadership. The most high-profile departure was Health Secretary Wes Streeting, widely regarded as a serious contender to replace him.

Another possible candidate would be Andy Burnham, though the Greater Manchester mayor would first need to return to Parliament before mounting a leadership bid, likely requiring a sitting Labour lawmaker to vacate a seat and trigger a by-election.

On Wednesday morning, Streeting was called in to Starmer's Downing Street office for a face-to-face meeting, leaving less than 20 minutes later.

Around lunchtime, The Daily Telegraph reported that Streeting was set to quit his post, with an ally saying he was "going to go for it" after the meeting, and that a leadership contest could be triggered as soon as Thursday.

Starmer's spokesperson, meanwhile, told reporters on Wednesday that "the prime minister has full confidence in the health secretary".

The BBC's political editor, Chris Mason, quoted a Starmer loyalist as saying that Streeting lacked sufficient backing to trigger a formal leadership challenge, while Burnham "doesn't have a seat, for all this noise". "Wes has bottled it and caused massive damage and instability in the process," the ally added.

Sky News reported that more than 100 Labour lawmakers have added their names to a letter saying the party needs to focus on "working together to deliver the change the country needs ... this is no time for a leadership contest", but it is believed that around 90 others have come out and called on Starmer to go.

In a further blow to his authority, 11 major trade unions affiliated with the Labour Party have issued a joint statement calling the local election results "devastating", and saying they have no confidence in Starmer's continued leadership.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1827

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:36 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

China ready to work with US in spirit of equality, respect and mutual benefit

While global turbulence does not always stem from shifts in major-country relations, stable and healthy ties between the world's two largest economies can help facilitate the easing of international turmoil as their intertwined economic relationship is a stabilizer for the world economy.

Under such circumstances, US President Donald Trump's state visit to China from Wednesday to Friday has naturally attracted wide attention as head-of-state diplomacy plays an irreplaceable and strategically vital role in guiding China-US ties.

As Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said on Wednesday, China welcomes Trump's visit, during which the two leaders will have in-depth exchanges of views on key issues concerning bilateral ties and global peace and development.

The Sino-US economic and trade consultations held in the Republic of Korea on Wednesday also serve to highlight the two sides' commitment to managing their differences through dialogue and negotiation. The candid, in-depth and constructive exchanges on economic and trade issues of mutual concern, as well as on further expanding practical cooperation, carry on the momentum of the previous six rounds of talks and show the complementarity of Sino-US economic ties.

It is precisely this pragmatism that — despite their differences — has enabled practical cooperation between China and the United States to continue demonstrating vitality and potential under the guidance of head-of-state diplomacy over the past years — even in the face of attempts by some to derail it.

The business delegation led by Trump on his visit to China, which consists of business leaders of some big-name companies in a wide range of strategic sectors, including semiconductors, finance and artificial intelligence, further illustrates the willingness of the US business community to expand mutually beneficial cooperation with China.

The two countries possess broad space for cooperation in fields such as AI, health, green development, advanced manufacturing and supply-chain stability during China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period and beyond.

Experience has proved that China and the US stand to gain from cooperation and lose from confrontation. It is imperative that they strengthen their dialogue and cooperation in strategic sectors, particularly AI governance. The initiative on AI governance Beijing has put forward reflects China's commitment to promoting international cooperation on AI governance and ensuring that the era-defining technology benefits all humanity.

China's cooperative spirit is embodied in its four global initiatives — the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, the Global Civilization Initiative and the Global Governance Initiative.

These initiatives underpin the country's international engagement across key areas, including its major-country diplomacy with the US. The four global initiatives respond to the common aspirations of the international community for peace, development, fairness, justice and mutual respect. And they are public goods China has contributed to advance world peace and development.

China does not seek spheres of influence, ideological confrontation or cliques. It should be clear that no country can address the grave global challenges the world faces today on its own, no matter how strong it is. Still less can any country achieve security through confrontation or "decoupling", not to mention at the cost of others' security or crossing others' red lines.

China supports multilateralism and an open world economy. Such concepts are rooted not only in China's diplomatic practices, but also in the principles of the modern international order established after World War II, including sovereign equality, peaceful coexistence and multilateral cooperation.

The world does not need a new Cold War — it needs peace and development achieved through dialogue and cooperation, grounded in responsible major-country diplomacy. When China and the US work together to promote peace, development and win-win cooperation, they serve not only their shared interests but also those of the entire world. Against this backdrop, Trump's visit to China has raised expectations that, even with their differences, China and the US can still engage in candid communication, expand practical cooperation and jointly shoulder responsibilities for global peace and development.

As Guo said in reply to questions about the first visit by a US president in nine years, China stands ready to work with the US in the spirit of equality, respect and mutual benefit — expanding cooperation and managing differences — so as to bring greater stability and certainty to the world.

The more volatile the world situation becomes, the more major countries should work together to function as stabilizers. China is willing to work with all countries, including the US, to strengthen communication, properly manage differences and deepen win-win cooperation.

Country's innovation boon to the world

China's continuous efforts in scientific and technological innovation and its high-standard opening-up are having marked effects on both its economy and international cooperation.

Recent data indicate a shift in China's manufacturing industry toward high-end production. This reflects the country's transition to innovation-driven growth.

The country has made rapid progress in the development of emerging industries, with some strategic sectors, including artificial intelligence, intelligent robots, integrated circuits, advanced materials, new energy and biomedicine, growing rapidly. Future industries, including quantum technology, biomanufacturing, hydrogen and nuclear fusion energy, brain-computer interfaces, embodied intelligence and 6G, are also gaining momentum.

The technological innovation in the field of AI is transforming the Chinese economy while having a profound effect globally. China is rapidly emerging as a major force in global AI advancement. As of early this year, the country's core AI industry was projected to be worth more than 1.2 trillion yuan ($176.71 billion), with an annual growth rate nearing 30 percent. China now holds 60 percent of the world's AI patents.

Chinese scientists unveiled six major achievements at the 2026 World Digital Education Conference that concluded on Wednesday in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province. Among them was a generative genomic large model named Carbon, which is being hailed as the "DeepSeek" for the life sciences field due to its nearly hundredfold improvement in computational efficiency.

The rapid development of China's AI sector is bolstered by both policies and strategic planning. In the outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), AI is identified as a key driver of new quality productive forces. The government has launched a comprehensive "AI Plus" initiative. This policy framework supports AI research and accelerates its application across sectors.

Thanks to the progress made, AI and other technologies are empowering industries across the board. China has established tens of thousands of "smart factories" nationwide and accounts for more than half of the global increase in industrial robot installations. According to the World Economic Forum, China now boasts the world's highest number of "lighthouse factories", accounting for 40 percent of the world's total. These factories employ cutting-edge technologies to achieve more efficient and sustainable production processes.

China's experience in applied AI, particularly in sectors such as manufacturing and healthcare, offers a reference for global industry transformation. The improvement in China's technological innovation capabilities has led to a substantial increase in its industrial competitiveness, enabling the country to transition from "running after" to "running together" and even "leading the way" in some fields. China's intelligent computing power was second only to the United States last year.

China's competitiveness in the open-source path for algorithmic models and its position in computing hardware capabilities further solidify its status as a major force in the AI industry.

The scale and network advantages of China's digital infrastructure are equally impressive. By 2025, the country had 4.84 million 5G base stations, accounting for about 60 percent of the world's total, and a staggering 74.99 million kilometers of optical fiber cables.

Additionally, as the world's largest producer of solar and wind power, China has a reliable and low-cost supply of green energy for power-intensive computing centers, further enhancing its role in the global AI ecosystem.

By sharing its innovation and experiences with the world, China is offering a new development path that emphasizes collaboration and openness, encouraging other countries to engage with AI in a way that promotes shared growth and mutual benefit. This is a vision of a connected world, where technology serves as a bridge rather than a barrier.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Asier Sanz



Opinion Line

Collaboration, science effective defenses against hantavirus

The recent outbreak of the Andes hantavirus aboard the cruise ship MV *Hondius* is a reminder to the international community that humanity's battle against infectious diseases is far from over.

While the World Health Organization has assessed that the overall global public health risk is low, the incident has nevertheless triggered concern because the Andes virus is currently the only known hantavirus strain capable of limited human-to-human transmission.

As of early this week, multiple confirmed and suspected cases linked to the cruise ship have been reported across several countries, and multiple deaths were recorded. Coordinated by WHO and relevant national authorities, international medical evacuations, quarantine arrangements and contact-tracing efforts are underway.

China's disease-control authorities have responded promptly. According to the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, no cases of human infection with the Andes virus have been reported in China as of early this week, nor has any natural host capable of carrying the virus been identified within the country. Wang Shiwen, deputy director of the National Institute for Viral Disease Control and Prevention under China CDC, told the media that the risk of imported transmission and large-scale outbreaks in China remains extremely low.

Experts further clarified an important scientific fact often overlooked amid sensational headlines: human-to-human transmission is not a common characteristic of hantaviruses in general. Under normal circumstances, hantavirus infection mainly occurs through contact with infected rodents or exposure to contaminated urine, feces and saliva. While the Andes virus represents a rare exception, transmission generally requires close and prolonged contact in enclosed environments. Existing evidence indicates that such transmission remains limited and controllable with proper public health measures.

Since the COVID-19 outbreak, the international community has learned that panic, politicization and disinformation can spread faster than the virus itself, thus undermining global prevention and control efforts.

The current hantavirus incident once again demonstrates the importance of adhering to science in the face of disease outbreaks. Yet climate factors have made it harder to respond by expanding rodent habitats and extending transmission seasons. Countries must strengthen their early warning systems, improve cross-border information sharing and enhance emergency coordination mechanisms. Infectious diseases do not respect national boundaries. The multinational response surrounding the outbreak aboard MV *Hondius* illustrates the importance of timely information sharing among governments, public health agencies and international organizations.

Equally important is the need to uphold the coordinating role of the WHO. Throughout the current outbreak, WHO has worked within the framework of the International Health Regulations to facilitate information exchange, coordinate contact tracing and provide scientific risk assessments. WHO has consistently stressed that the overall public risk remains low while urging continued vigilance and monitoring.

Professionalism and multilateral coordination are precisely what the world needs to confront future health threats. Attempts to stigmatize countries, float conspiracy theories or undermine international cooperation would only weaken the collective capacity to respond effectively.

At the same time, the outbreak underscores the importance of strengthening public health literacy. Public health experts note that ordinary preventive measures — such as avoiding contact with rodents and contaminated environments, maintaining hygiene standards and seeking timely medical treatment if symptoms arise — remain effective. WHO's hantavirus guidance also highlights the importance of rodent control, sanitation and rapid clinical management. Severely unwell patients can significantly improve their prognosis through early intensive medical care.

Humanity has paid a heavy price during past pandemics. Only through scientific response, openness, solidarity and strengthened global governance can the world better safeguard public health security. The hantavirus outbreak should serve as another reminder that international cooperation and respect for science remain humanity's strongest defenses against infectious diseases.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Experience economy will help upgrade businesses

Editor's note: *China's experience market reached 18.4 trillion yuan ($2.7 trillion) in 2025, a 22.6 percent year-on-year increase. China.org.cn spoke to Wei Xiang, a researcher in the National Academy of Economic Strategy at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, about the development of the experience economy. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

The shift from buying goods to buying experiences marks a structural evolution driven by a growing demand for personalized and emotionally resonant consumption. The experience economy thrives on anticipation and the lasting memories created afterward.

Two major forces are fueling the rise of the experience economy. The first is the transformation of the broader economic structure. Demand for purely functional consumption has largely matured. What is growing now is demand for higher-level services and emotionally engaging experiences. People increasingly seek meaning, individuality and emotional resonance through consumption.

The second force is demographic change. Aging societies are reshaping consumption patterns. Older consumers tend to favor slower, more immersive forms of spending that emphasize enjoyment, health, culture and emotional fulfillment. This demographic shift also aligns with the development of experience-based industries.

The rise of the experience economy offers a broader lesson for both governments and businesses. The boundaries between production, consumption, services and experiences will increasingly blur. Future industries should create participatory experiences in which consumers themselves become part of the value-creation process.

The experience economy also generates new forms of personal value. One is cognitive value. Experiences expand people's horizons and reshape their understanding of the world. Personal growth does not result solely from meeting influential people or receiving external opportunities. Often, it is the direct experience itself that encourages individuals to improve their own perspectives and capacities.

Another is social value. Social interaction increasingly includes teamwork, openness, organizational abilities and other forms of noncognitive skills developed through shared experiences. In the future, social interaction may extend beyond human relationships to include interaction with intelligent machines and digital environments, creating entirely new forms of connection.

For the experience economy to remain sustainable, two capabilities are especially important. First, businesses must understand the relationship between functionality and emotion. Future competition will not depend solely on marketing, but also on the ability to measure, detect and respond to emotional change during production and service delivery.

Second, companies must develop stronger flexible customization capabilities. Businesses must have the ability to transform diverse emotional and experiential needs into scalable production systems.

Ultimately, the development of the experience economy will accelerate the transition toward higher-value service sectors and help drive the broader upgrading of economic structures. On the social side, it will enhance public well-being. Through thoughtfully designed experiences, individuals can enjoy a stronger sense of fulfillment, identity and emotional satisfaction. Such experiences do not necessarily need to be expensive.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:36 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

TARIQ H. MALIK

From AI visibility to developmental leadership

Turning technological strength into governance credibility and cross-border cooperation



Artificial intelligence is often framed as a race for models, chips and market share. However, discussions at the Forum on the Development of International Science and Technology Organizations and Global Science and Technology Governance, held on March 28 during the Zhongguancun Forum in Beijing, emphasized that the more important question goes beyond technological competition. For China, the central challenge is not simply whether the country is visible in AI, but whether that visibility can be converted into stronger governance, more credible international leadership and deeper cross-border cooperation. That is where the next phase of China's AI story will be decided.

China's strength in AI should be understood through its broader development path. Its developmental narrative could be described through four qualities: an equalizer, a bricoleur, a systemizer and a socioeconomic weaver. These are more than rhetorical labels. Together, they capture a development logic that widens access, combines tools pragmatically, organizes complexity at scale and links technology to broader social and economic transformation. This helps explain how a technological field becomes embedded in the wider fabric of production, administration and modernization.

This also helps clarify what is distinctive about China's position today. Many countries can develop advanced technologies, but few can connect them to long-term developmental coordination. China's historical policy trajectory, including the cumulative discipline of the five-year plans, has given it an unusual capacity to link technological ambition with industrial scaling and organizational follow-through. Over successive five-year plans, priorities have evolved in a structured manner — from early emphasis on informatization and industrial digitization, to the integration of digital technologies with the real economy, and more recently to the elevation of AI as a strategic driver of modernization.

In that sense, China's rise in AI reflects a deeper developmental logic: the ability to move from experimentation to infrastructure, from innovation to production and from technical potential to system-wide application. The more pressing question now is what comes next. If earlier stages of development focused on catching up, scaling up and building industrial capacity, the next stage requires China to play a stronger role in shaping the governance language around AI itself.

Governance should therefore move to the center of the discussion. AI is a matter of legitimacy, rules, institutions and cooperation. The narrative alignment theory helps explain this shift. Narratives are not decorative additions to technology; they shape the categories through which technology is understood, justified and accepted. They influence whether AI is seen as a source of fear or trust, fragmentation or cooperation, exclusion or development. They also affect whose rules, organizations and standards gain authority internationally. At this stage, leadership can no longer be measured only by who builds the most advanced technology. It should also be measured by who can connect technology to legitimate and credible governance frameworks.

This has direct implications for China. The country already has substantial material strengths: scale, industrial capacity, digital ecosystems and a strong policy commitment to scientific and technological advancement. But technological strength alone does not automatically generate narrative authority. A country may be highly capable in production and application, yet still remain less influential in defining the interpretive framework through which that capability is understood globally. China now faces a strategic transition. To move from AI visibility to developmental leadership, it should present AI not only as a field of innovation, but as part of a broader story of public value.

China's next task is to institutionalize AI through clearer governance pathways. One is rule-making: contributing more actively to technical standards, ethical protocols, data governance principles and cross-border interoperability. Another is organizational leadership: embedding AI in durable, credible and cooperative institutions, including international science and technology organizations, university networks, professional associations and public-private platforms linking research, industry and policy. A third is narrative clarity: communicating AI not only as a driver of growth, but also as a contributor to order, inclusion and long-term development. This requires a language that is internationally intelligible as well as institutionally persuasive.

Global science and technology governance is increasingly shaped by legitimacy and coordination, not by technology alone. If China wants to play a more prominent role in this environment, it should build frameworks in which innovation and governance develop together. That means showing how AI can support public administration, industrial resilience, the green transition, healthcare, education and cross-regional learning. It also means engaging more deeply in international cooperation, so that China is seen not merely as a powerful producer of technology, but as a constructive participant in shaping the rules and organizational architectures through which technology serves development. The future of leadership in AI will depend not only on invention but on the ability to align innovation with legitimate governance.

There is also a deeper historical lesson here. Successful economies often decline when they become imbalanced. Why did technological spirit and innovative capacity shift from one country to another, leaving once-successful economies behind? The answer points to an imbalance. Development weakens when institutions and structures no longer align with new realities. This lesson matters for AI as well. The danger is not only technological lag; it is also the failure to balance invention with meaning, production with legitimacy and capability with trust. China's opportunity is that it can still build this balance. It can connect technological advances with governance design before deeper misalignment takes hold.

China's position between the Global North and the Global South further strengthens this possibility. It is unusually placed to act as a bridge: learning from industrialized economies while also speaking to the developmental aspirations of emerging ones. This gives China a distinctive opportunity in AI governance. It can help formulate AI not simply as a luxury of the richest economies, but as a developmental instrument that can be adapted across different institutional contexts. In that sense, China's contribution could be larger than national advancement alone. It could help widen the global conversation from technological competition to developmental inclusion.

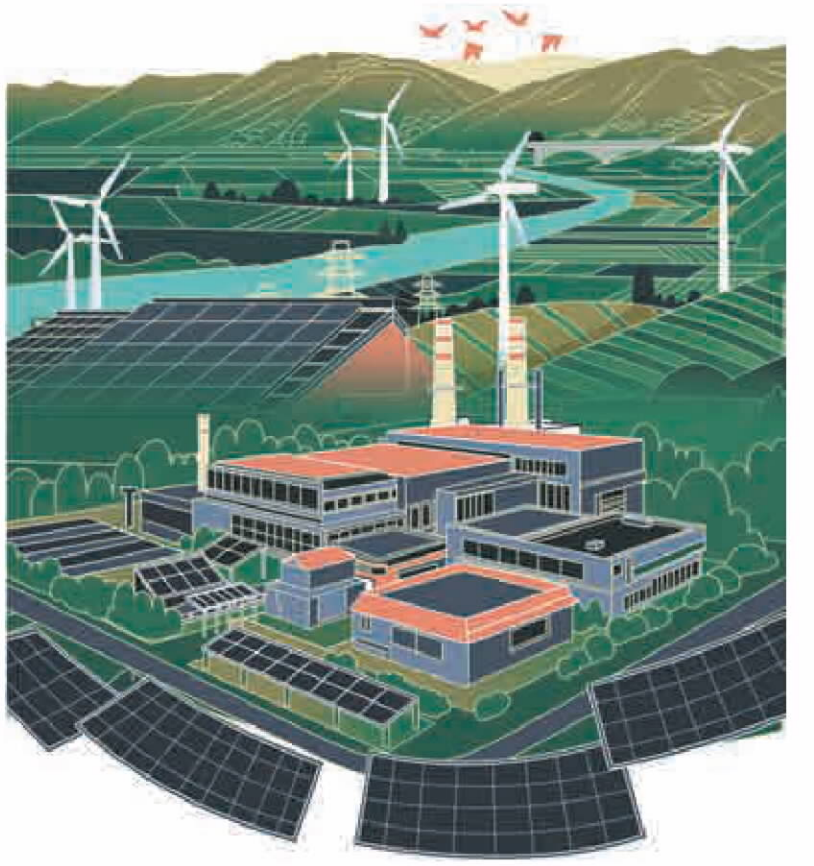
For this reason, the most important transition is conceptual as much as technical. China does not need only more AI. It needs stronger alignment between AI, governance and development, building on the basis of Beijing's series of provisional regulations over the past years and its five-year industrial projections. It must translate technological capability into governance credibility, industrial strength into institutional trust and national achievement into cross-border collaborative leadership. This is not a soft addition to hard technology. It is the condition under which technological strength gains lasting authority.

In the end, the countries that matter most in AI will not be those that simply build powerful systems. They will be the ones that embed those systems in legitimate institutions, credible rules and cooperative international relationships. China has already demonstrated considerable capacity in development and innovation of smart technologies. Its next challenge is to show that this capacity can also help shape a stable, trusted and development-oriented governance future for AI.

The author is a professor of innovation studies at Liaoning University. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

ZHANG FANG

Integrating smart tech and green innovation

Digital technology and systematic governance pave the way for high-quality green development

The green transition is no longer a matter of choice but a defining imperative for high-quality development in China. The outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) for national economic and social development, approved during the 2026 National People's Congress, sets a binding target of reducing carbon dioxide emissions per unit of GDP by 17 percent, while raising the share of the core digital economy industries in GDP to 12.5 percent.



In terms of industrial development, the outline introduces a new strategic direction centered on "intelligent and green development, and integrated innovation of industries and technologies". Compared with the earlier five-year plan, which emphasized "upgrading of industry and value chains, in addition to intelligent and green development", the shift toward integrated approaches signals the entry into a new stage of development that has systemic integration as its core feature, as China accelerates its green and low-carbon transition to form a new low-carbon innovation paradigm driven by artificial intelligence technologies.

The integrated innovation of industries and technologies in the 15th Five-Year Plan period can be found in the deep coupling of electricity and computing power. With the rapid advancement of AI technologies, demand for clean computing power is surging.

According to the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology, electricity consumption by computing centers in China reached 150 billion kilowatt-hours in 2023, a year-on-year increase of 15.4 percent, with a projection to reach above 400 billion kWh by 2030 in the medium to high growth scenario. Against this backdrop, the 15th Five-Year Plan explicitly calls for the coordinated deployment of green electricity and computing power, while the 2026 Government Work Report has, for the first time, included "computing-power and electricity synergy" as part of the new infrastructure initiative.

Computing power and electricity synergy refers to the systemic integration of computing infrastructure with the electricity power system through digital technologies, intelligent algorithms, and information networks. On the one hand, models such as direct green power supply and integrated source-grid-load-storage systems help tap into the abundant clean energy in the western part of China, effectively reducing energy costs. On the other hand, some computing tasks are flexible, and can be interrupted and migrated by intelligent scheduling. This approach shifts the increased consumption of electricity to phases with lower electricity costs or lower network utilization through peak load shifting. It substantially transforms data centers from passive electricity consumers into active regulation units, thereby improving the utilization of renewable energy. This model addresses the curtailment of renewable energy and meets the growing green energy demand of computing power, achieving a mutually reinforcing balance between the environmental value of green electricity and the economic value of computing power.

Accurate carbon emissions accounting driven by precise data is the foundational pillar of carbon governance. The effectiveness of carbon reduction efforts depends critically on the transparency and verifiability of carbon accounting systems. China is accelerating the development of a unified national factor database of greenhouse gas emissions, while building an integrated "space-air-ground" monitoring network using satellite remote sensing, drones and ground sensors to ensure that carbon emissions and carbon sinks can be accurately measured and effectively managed.

Progress is also being made in tracing carbon emissions from electricity consumption. By establishing a provincial-level, time-of-use and location-specific factor database of electricity carbon emissions, companies can trace the sources and destinations of their carbon emissions. This technical pathway is expected to upgrade green development evaluation from traditional annual average indicators to higher-frequency, more granular metrics, providing scientific support for precise carbon reduction.

This data-driven foundation enables a broader transformation: moving beyond isolated improvements to achieve intelligent, systemic integration. The most compelling manifestation of this shift is occurring within the industrial sector, particularly in the realm of energy-saving equipment.

In March 2026, four central government departments, including the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, rolled out a three-year action plan to accelerate the high-quality development of energy-saving equipment. The core thrust of the plan is to shift from optimizing equipment-level energy efficiency to achieving energy conservation. This policy orientation reflects three significant shifts: Technological innovation extends from equipment efficiency to the full chain, and from materials to processes; operating system coordination upgrades from stand-alone operation to wide-range high efficiency and precise matching; and digital empowerment advances from passive response to active optimization, using AI to enable cluster-level intelligent scheduling of energy-consuming units.

This direction is propelling China's energy-saving equipment industry from a single focus on individual equipment efficiency to a new stage characterized by system integration, intelligent drive and cross-sectoral convergence. It signifies a transformation in value creation from equipment sales to system services and a shift in technical pathways from local optimization to global optimization.

The new paradigm for China's green and low-carbon development, with computing-power-electricity synergy as a key pathway, data-driven carbon governance as a foundational pillar, and system-level intelligent integration as its technological signature, is accelerating a profound shift from granular, isolated optimization to system-wide integration innovation. This paradigm represents not only a strategic response to intensifying global green competition, but also a distinctive contribution of Chinese wisdom to global decarbonization efforts.

The author is the vice-director of the Center for Science, Technology and Education Policy at Tsinghua University and an associate professor at the School of Public Policy and Management at Tsinghua University. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:36 PM

BUSINESS

Striking the right chord



Visitors check out handcrafted acoustic guitars at a guitar industrial park in Yongzhou's Dong'an county, Central China's Hunan province, on Monday. The park boasts a complete guitar manufacturing chain, home to more than 30 musical instrument manufacturers and supporting upstream and downstream enterprises. The industrial base produces a full range of guitar products with an annual output of over 500,000 guitars in 2025 that were exported to more than 60 countries and regions worldwide. ZHAO ZHONGZHI / XINHUA

Metis TechBio records HK's largest healthcare IPO in '26

Company's float signals maturing AI pharma with diversified biz models

By **LI JING**
lijing2009@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese mainland's artificial intelligence drug-delivery developer Metis TechBio Co Ltd raised more than HK$2.1 billion ($270 million) in its Hong Kong initial public offering on Wednesday, marking the largest healthcare listing in Hong Kong so far this year and underscoring strong investor interest in how AI could reshape pharmaceutical development.

Founded six years ago, the Beijing-based biotech firm issued about 201.2 million H shares in its global offering. Chris Lai, the company's co-founder and CEO, said the listing would help accelerate the company's goal of applying AI-driven nanotechnology to enable targeted drug delivery and new therapeutic approaches.

The listing places Metis alongside two earlier Hong Kong-listed peers — XtalPi Holdings Ltd and Insilico Medicine Cayman TopCo — referred to as Hong Kong's "AI drug discovery trio", though the companies pursue different commercial strategies in the rapidly evolving sector. XtalPi is a Shenzhen, Guangdong province-based AI drug discovery company, while Insilico Medicine is a global AI-driven biotech firm with strong research roots in China.

AI has attracted billions of dollars globally as pharmaceutical companies seek to shorten drug development timelines, but the industry is still testing whether these technologies can generate sustainable revenues.

China's AI drug discovery sector is moving from laboratory experimentation toward early commercial validation, said Tian Lihui, a finance professor at Nankai University.

According to consultancy iiMedia Research, the sector's revenue expanded from about 70 million yuan ($9.7 million) in 2019 to more than 600 million yuan by 2025, reflecting rapid growth in AI-driven drug development in China.

Early financial milestones among industry peers reflect that shift. XtalPi reported its first annual profit in 2025, while Insilico — though still loss-making — has begun generating tens of millions of dollars in revenue from licensing deals and research collaborations.

"The key question for the industry is no longer whether the technology works," Tian said. "It is how to turn it into scalable profit."

Metis has taken a different route from its peers by focusing on nanotechnology-based drug delivery, a technically complex step in turning promising molecules into effective medicines.

Efficient delivery systems determine whether drugs can reach targeted tissues while minimizing side effects — a challenge highlighted during the development of mRNA vaccines and other next-generation therapies.

"Large-molecule drugs are becoming increasingly important, and effective delivery is a core bottleneck," said Liu Jing, professor of accounting and finance at Cheung Kong Graduate School of Business.

"AI gives companies like Metis an opportunity to narrow the technological gap with established Western leaders."

Metis' core platform, NanoForge, combines AI models, molecular simulation and high-throughput screening to design lipid nanoparticles and other nanomaterial drug carriers.

According to its prospectus, the platform has generated more than 10 pipeline programs, including several clinical-stage candidates. Its most advanced candidate, MTS-004, has completed Phase III clinical trials in China for pseudobulbar affect, a neurological disorder for which there are currently limited treatment options domestically, said the company.

Like many biotech startups, Metis is still in a heavy investment phase.

Revenue rose to 105 million yuan in 2025 from 1.5 million yuan a year earlier, largely due to an upfront payment tied to licensing rights for MTS-004.

The company reported a net loss of 392 million yuan in 2025, narrowing from 499 million yuan the previous year.

The company said about half of the IPO proceeds will fund expansion of its AI infrastructure and nanomaterial platform, while roughly 20 percent will fund ongoing and planned clinical trials.

Metis' listing also highlights how the AI pharma sector is diverging into several business models.

One approach, represented by XtalPi, treats AI primarily as a tech platform, providing computational research services and automated laboratory capabilities to pharmaceutical clients.

Insilico has adopted an AI-biotech strategy, using algorithms to design new drug candidates and advancing them into clinical trials before licensing them to pharmaceutical partners — a strategy with higher potential rewards but also higher financial risks.

Metis represents a more specialized strategy, applying AI specifically to the drug-delivery layer rather than the entire discovery pipeline.

"These paths reflect a broader debate between platform strategies and vertical specialization," Tian said, adding that companies capable of integrating both approaches may ultimately build stronger competitive advantages.

Despite renewed enthusiasm for AI drug development, analysts say capital markets are becoming more selective.

"Valuations are no longer driven purely by technological narratives," Tian said. "Investors are increasingly looking at clinical pipelines, partnerships with major pharmaceutical companies and tangible commercial contracts."

Metis' IPO attracted heavy demand, with the Hong Kong public tranche more than 6,900 times oversubscribed and the international placement 82 times oversubscribed, the company said.

The offering drew several cornerstone investors, including BlackRock, which subscribed about $50 million, as well as a State-backed investment fund under China Reform Holdings, which made its first investment in an AI pharma company.

Zero-tariff policy boosts Hunan-Africa biz ties

CHANGSHA — When more than 6,000 bottles of South African wine cleared customs at Changsha Huanghua International Airport in Central China's Hunan province on May 1, the importer received an immediate benefit from China's expanded tariff-free treatment for African goods, which amounted to 21,000 yuan ($3,093) in duty savings.

According to Zhang Xin, chairman of Hunan Express Wisdom Information Technology Co Ltd, South African wine was previously subject to a 14 percent tariff in China. Now that the tariff has been slashed to zero, the company anticipates an annual cost reduction of about 5 million yuan.

This shipment was among the first in Hunan to benefit after China expanded zero-tariff treatment to goods from all 53 African countries with which it has diplomatic relations, broadening an earlier policy that covered the least-developed countries among them.

Under the upgraded policy, China has become the first major economy to offer unilateral, across-the-board zero-tariff treatment to all its African diplomatic partners and to all least-developed countries with which it has diplomatic relations.

For this inland Chinese province, one of the country's busiest regional players in terms of trade with Africa, the tariff cut is more than just a customs adjustment. Local officials and companies see it as a way to lower import costs and draw more African raw materials and consumer goods through Hunan, including some products bound for re-export.

Hunan has spent years trying to position itself as an inland gateway for China-Africa commerce, using the China-Africa Economic and Trade Expo and pilot zone for in-depth China-Africa economic and trade cooperation as its main platforms. The province's trade with Africa has grown by an average of 15 percent a year to 58 billion yuan, ranking first among provinces in central and western China.

The latest move follows an earlier policy that took effect on Dec 1, 2024, when China granted zero-tariff treatment on all tariff lines to the least-developed countries with which it has diplomatic ties, including 33 African countries.

From that day to March 31, Changsha Customs processed around 26.98 million yuan in tariff reductions for Hunan imports from those least-developed African countries.

The policy has, notably, coincided with stronger import growth. Hunan's imports from Africa rose 27.2 percent year-on-year to 30.92 billion yuan in 2025. In the first four months of 2026, its total trade with Africa reached 18.16 billion yuan, up 8.8 percent from a year earlier, with imports increasing 29.4 percent to 10.41 billion yuan.

The new broader coverage could have a bigger effect because it involves several of Hunan's main African suppliers, including Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria, Morocco and Tunisia. Between January 2025 and March 2026, imports from these five countries accounted for 98.1 percent of the total tariffs collected from Hunan's imports from Africa.

Lan Shengbin, deputy head of Changsha Customs, said some Hunan manufacturers had previously paid tariffs of 7 to 10 percent on components from countries such as Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt. Removing such duties will lower production costs and help companies diversify their supply chains, he said.

Hunan is trying to turn its tariff savings into a broader trade model, using the province as a point for importing, processing and redistributing African goods, including some products re-exported overseas.

One example came in July 2024, when 400 fresh roses from Kenya were imported into Changsha and then re-exported through the Changsha Huanghua Comprehensive Bonded Zone to Uzbekistan. It was China's first re-export transaction involving African fresh flowers, according to Changsha Customs.

Hunan Xiyue Culture Media Co Ltd, the importer, now brings in flowers, fruit and ornamental fish from Africa, some of which are shipped on to overseas markets.

Huang Zinan, a company executive, said the tariff cuts would reduce import costs, improve cash flow and allow African products to be sold at more competitive prices.

Consumer goods are another target. During the May Day holiday, an African goods market in Changsha drew approximately 89,000 visitors over six days. Organizers said lower import costs for raw materials had allowed prices to be reduced on some products, including chocolate made with Ghanaian cocoa, shea-butter products from Mali and coffee from Zambia.

Hunan Yufei Industry Investment Co Ltd, which helped organize the market, said its Quality African Products brand now covers more than 400 products from 13 African countries, ranging from coffee and avocados to spices.

Hunan authorities are seeking to turn the tariff change into a wider trade push. In late April, the provincial commerce department announced seven measures covering expanded imports from Africa, overseas warehouse services, industrial capacity cooperation and more China-Africa Economic and Trade Expo activities in African countries.

XINHUA — CHINA DAILY



An African goods market is pictured during the May Day holiday in Changsha, Hunan province, on May 1. DENG YILIN / XINHUA

Major PV project launched to directly power computing facilities

By **ZHENG XIN**
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

China has officially launched its first large-scale computing-electricity synergy project with direct green power supply, marking a milestone in the nation's massive commitment to building a unified, nationwide computing network by physically linking desert renewable energy directly to digital infrastructure.

The 500,000-kilowatt photovoltaic power station located in the Ningxia Hui autonomous region began operations recently. It signifies the first time that wind and solar resources from China's vast deserts are being funneled directly into data center loads through dedicated transmission lines, bypassing the traditional detours of the national power grid.

The facility is part of a larger 2-million-kW first-phase development involving a total investment of 8.7 billion yuan ($1.28 billion), which includes 1.5 million kW of wind power scheduled for full integration by September.

China established the "East Data, West Computing" initiative in 2022, a mega data project aimed at accelerating the development of an integrated national computing network.

Once the first phase is fully operational, it will provide 2.29 billion kilowatt-hours of green electricity annually to the large computing base in Zhongwei, Ningxia.

At the heart of this project is the concept of "direct green power supply". Traditionally, renewable energy is fed into the public grid, where it mixes with coal-fired power before reaching consumers. Direct supply, however, utilizes dedicated "point-to-point" transmission lines and "dual-track" supply systems.

In the Zhongwei project, new data center loads are served via physical direct lines, while existing loads utilize bilateral market trading. This setup allows data centers to achieve a high "green power ratio" while significantly reducing transmission costs and carbon footprints.

To ensure stability, the project employs a wind-solar complementary model that sees PV power dominate during the day, while wind power takes over at night. It is supported by on-site energy storage to smooth out fluctuations.

The launch coincides with the nation's efforts to synchronize energy and digital strategies. The National Energy Administration recently said it would permit renewable energy projects to supply green electricity directly to multiple users via dedicated lines.

According to the NEA, new policies will be released in the near future to perfect these synergy frameworks, guiding the relocation of energy-intensive computing facilities to regions rich in renewable resources, such as Ningxia Hui and Inner Mongolia autonomous regions.

Experts believe the Zhongwei project provides a blueprint for the rest of the country.

"By establishing a direct physical link between the energy source and digital load, we are solving the geographical mismatch between where energy is produced and where data is processed," said Lin Boqiang, head of the China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xiamen University. "This not only lowers the power usage effectiveness of data centers, but also insulates the digital economy from electricity price fluctuations."

Looking ahead, the Zhongwei project plans a second phase that will bring total capacity to 4.6 million kW with a total investment of nearly 20 billion yuan.

As China continues to expand its digital infrastructure, the synergy between "bits" and "watts" is set to become the primary engine driving the nation's high-quality, low-carbon development, Lin said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:36 PM

BUSINESS

New mall aims to meet evolving needs

Site's owner takes different approach, mixing commerce, culture and community together

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn

Visitors entering Westlake 66, the newly opened mixed-use complex in the bustling Wulin central business area of Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, might be surprised to find that luxury brands are not front and center.

Instead, the first floor is mainly dominated by lifestyle and experiential retailers, including collective toy companies Pop Mart and Jellycat, as well as the folding bicycle brand Brompton. The second floor features sports and outdoor labels alongside e-commerce brands founded by online influencers, reflecting a shift in consumer preferences toward experiences rather than prestige alone.

The 390,200-square-meter project, developed by Hang Lung Properties Ltd, is the company's 11th venture in the Chinese mainland. Known for managing luxury shopping malls in cities such as Shanghai and Wuxi, Jiangsu province, Hang Lung is taking a different approach in Hangzhou — integrating commerce, culture and community to establish Westlake 66 as both a commercial hub and a social destination.

"Modern consumers don't just want to shop — they seek diverse scenarios, from coffee breaks and dining experiences to social interaction," said Derek Pang, Hang Lung's senior director of Chinese mainland business operation, during an interview. "We are building a platform where locals, tourists and different community groups can interact — whether cycling from West Lake or exploring the city's newly renovated shops."

Hangzhou has long attracted young professionals and technology-driven industries. Its economic mix of finance, professional services and tech, combined with steady population growth, makes it a compelling retail and office market. "The city's consumption power is immense," Pang said.

According to Cushman & Wakefield's Hangzhou 2025 Commercial Real Estate Annual Report, three malls — Hangzhou MixC, Hangzhou Tower and Yintai in77 — each generated over 10 billion yuan ($1.47 billion) in sales in 2025. This underscores Hangzhou's position as one of China's few cities with multiple high-performing shopping centers.

Westlake 66 occupies the Wulin business area, the city's most prosperous commercial hub, which welcomed 189 million visitors last year. While Hangzhou Tower and the other two department store operators have dominated the high-end luxury segment, Westlake 66 is expected to complement existing projects, offering a fresh, lifestyle-driven alternative.

Hang Lung sees Westlake 66 as a long-term investment. Despite a development cost of 16 billion yuan, the company has focused on operational efficiency from day one. "Opening well is crucial. Only then can long-term development and subsequent expansion be realized," Pang said.

The mall does maintain a luxury presence, though it is secondary to experiential offerings. Several high-end brands have opened on the first floor, with additional openings planned for the latter half of 2026. By 2028, Hang Lung aims to expand the retail footprint, reflecting confidence in the city's consumption potential and Westlake 66's appeal as a lifestyle destination.

At its soft opening in April, Westlake 66 was home to around 250 stores, over a third of which are first-to-market in Hangzhou. Janice Cheung, director of mainland business operation at Hang Lung, said the project targets a new generation of consumers, for whom shopping and dining are experiences defined as much by social interaction as by product consumption.

"The project aims to connect people across different circles, creating more social interaction," Cheung said. The office lobby, located on the fourth floor with direct access to the mall, hotel and park, exemplifies this philosophy. "We are rethinking traditional layouts to foster engagement and a richer experience for office tenants and visitors alike," she added.

To stand out in a crowded market where tenant mixes often overlap, Westlake 66 emphasizes operational capability and innovative concepts.

Lifestyle-oriented retailers such as Ole supermarket debuted its "Ole Lifestyle" concept, while Chinese brands like Truuzen, a leather bag brand from Foshan, Guangdong province, are provided a platform to grow alongside global names.





Above: A staff member cuts fresh fish for customers in the Ole Lifestyle supermarket at Westlake 66, the newly opened mixed-use complex in the bustling Wulin central business area in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, during the mall's soft opening on April 28.
Left: People shop at Westlake 66 in Hangzhou on April 28.
PHOTOS BY LIN YUNLONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

390,200
square meters
floor space of Westlake 66 shopping mall in Hangzhou

"We are pleased that many domestic brands are making an impact nowadays. We'd love to offer platforms for them to develop sustainably," said Cheung.

Cheung also highlighted the importance of bridging online discovery with offline engagement. Pop-up stores featuring debut or exclusive products offer a rotating experience for repeat visitors. "Consumers may discover a brand online, but physical stores allow them to fully experience it and build long-term loyalty," she said, citing AmandaX, an apparel brand for women aged 30-50, as an example. AmandaX started on Taobao in 2019 and opened its first offline store in Shanghai last year.

Hang Lung executives expressed optimism about Hangzhou's consumption climate. After a slow start in early 2025, retail sales rebounded sharply in the fourth quarter, returning to double-digit growth. The company forecast that the momentum will continue in 2026, partly supported by Westlake 66's dynamic retail mix and immersive experiences.

"Westlake 66 is designed to be the new pulse of the city," said Weber Lo, CEO of Hang Lung. "By creating a community-centric hub with first-to-market brands and memorable experiences, we are confident to set a new regional benchmark while contributing to the city's broader economic ecosystem."

Looking forward, Hang Lung plans to expand the retail area by 40 percent and triple prime street frontage to over 200 meters through its partnership with Baida Group. The next phase is scheduled for 2028, reinforcing the company's commitment to long-term urban development in Hangzhou.

Leading commercial operators have reported positive signals that the country's consumption market is on an upward trend. According to Swire Properties' first quarter report, retail sales at HKRI Taikoo Hui Shanghai rose 81.5 percent, while Taikoo Li Sanlitun in Beijing grew 56.2 percent. Its commercial estates in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, and Chengdu, Sichuan province, expanded by 17.6 percent and 18.4 percent, respectively.

Cushman & Wakefield said that Shanghai's retail leasing market remained active in early 2026, with foot traffic and sales surging during the Spring Festival holiday. Lifestyle, food and beverage, and entertainment sectors performed particularly well, signaling a broad-based recovery.

Online
Unlock China's Treasures: Shop, Explore, Enjoy.

Luxury outlets drive niche consumption experiences

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**

Luxury outlet retail in China is demonstrating vitality and resilience as the sector capitalizes on the growing demand for cultural, lifestyle and vacation experience-centered shopping.

Among luxury outlet retail operators, Florentia Village Beijing-Tianjin Luxury Design Outlet leads the way.

The flagship project of Italy's RDM Group reported a 6 percent year-on-year increase in sales and a 7 percent rise in visitor traffic in 2025, signaling sustained consumer demand despite broader market headwinds.

On May 10, Florentia Village Beijing-Tianjin celebrated its 15th anniversary. The shopping complex has contributed to the diversification of the country's outlet market, integrating culture, commerce, tourism, sports, and exhibitions into a unified "micro-vacation" retail experience, said the company.

The shopping complex has established a 180,000-square-meter commercial footprint, hosting more than 200 internationally renowned brands. This includes national outlet exclusive brands such as Roger Vivier, Abercrombie & Fitch, and Peak Performance, as well as North China exclusives like Acne Studios, Mulberry, Mackage and Stone Island.

Jacopo De Vena, managing director of Florentia Village & RDM Asia, said the company has pioneered a "micro-vacation" model, combining authentic Italian architecture, a holiday-style setting, and immersive experiences.

Over the years, FV has adapted to shifting consumer preferences from transactional shopping toward lifestyle-oriented and experiential shopping, said the director. Notably, the sports and outdoor category has emerged as a critical revenue pillar, increasing nearly 20 percent in contribution to the revenue from 2024 to 2025.

Recent upgrades, including expanded VIP lounges, Italian espresso bars and new landscaped pathways, reinforce the shopping complex's signature "La Dolce Vita" atmosphere.

"Consumers today increasingly prefer relaxed, lifestyle-oriented scenarios. We've adapted to the trend and have seen these categories becoming a vital pillar of our revenue structure," De Vena said.

According to Bain & Company's 2025 China Personal Luxury Goods Report, 65 percent of Chinese luxury consumption occurred in the Chinese mainland market in 2025. The report anticipates moderate growth for the Chinese personal luxury market in 2026, with the region poised to remain the cornerstone of global luxury market growth.


A gondolier glides along the canal at Florentia Village Beijing-Tianjin Luxury Design Outlet in Wuqing, Tianjin, as people stroll across the Venetian-style bridge on May 10. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Driven by the continued expansion of the middle-income group, a rebound in consumer confidence, and supportive policy measures, further repatriation of luxury spending to the Chinese mainland is expected. However, the degree of growth will remain highly dependent on specific product categories and individual brand performance.

The China Commerce Association for General Merchandise's 2024-2025 China Outlet Industry White Paper estimates that in 2025 there were about 251 outlet projects in operation nationwide, with a total sales scale of about 239 billion yuan ($35.2 billion).

The development of China's outlet industry is undergoing a strategic shift — moving away from sheer scale expansion toward a focus on achieving extreme operational efficiency, said the report.

Against this backdrop, Florentia Village Beijing-Tianjin, which is located within the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei one-hour economic circle, leverages high-speed railway and expressway access to capture intercity passenger flows.

This has allowed the outlet to convert transient visitors into a loyal customer base with high repurchase rates, said the director. Seasonal cultural and experiential programming has further boosted Florentia Village Beijing-Tianjin as a dual-city micro-vacation destination, with nearly 80 million visitors to date.

"We broke free from the traditional outlet logic of over-reliance on discounts. By connecting deeply with consumer groups from both Beijing and Tianjin, we converted regional transit passenger flow into a stable consumer group with high stickiness and high repurchase rates," he said.

De Vena added that RDM Group continues to consolidate its market leadership by focusing on six strategic dimensions: scenario creation, high-end merchandising, stock iteration, digital operations, membership deepening, and regional integration.

Through immersive holiday environments, exclusive brand collaborations, and a mature digital ecosystem — encompassing 7.8 million registered members nationwide — the group has built a standardized model capable of replication across all Florentia Village's projects.

Looking ahead, RDM Group is expanding its national footprint with Shanghai third phase and Chongqing second phase, aiming to transform Florentia Village into localized micro-vacation cultural landmarks.

The group emphasizes high brand completeness, cross-border consumption facilitation, and multi-dimensional upgrades to brand matrices, experiential offerings, and commercial value.

Despite increasing competition, national projects achieved an 8 percent year-on-year increase in visitor traffic and 6 percent sales growth in 2025, demonstrating strong resilience and market recognition, said the company.

"Today's outlet is not just a shopping destination; it is a lifestyle and leisure experience," said De Vena. With strategic location, differentiated offerings, and refined operations, Florentia Village continues to be optimistic about the luxury retail and experiential consumption across the country.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:36 PM

CHINA

Global South teachers to get digital skills training

By **ZOU SHUO** in Hangzhou
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

The world's first international action plan specifically designed to improve the digital skills of teachers in developing countries has been unveiled, aiming to systematically assist Global South nations tackle common challenges in the digital transformation of education.

The action plan for enhancing digital literacy of teachers in the Global South was released during a parallel session of the 2026 World Digital Education Conference in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, on Tuesday.

The plan, initiated by the Africa division of the Institute of Global Teacher Development, reflects China's practical efforts to deepen South-South cooperation and participate in global education governance.

The plan identifies four interlinked structural challenges: insufficient network and device access, a shortage of high-quality and locally adapted multilingual resources, weak foundational teacher skills coupled with a lack of systematic professional development, and fragmented coordination mechanisms. It argues that piecemeal interventions are no longer sufficient.

Key measures include establishing a collaborative mechanism for digital literacy among teachers in the Global South by engaging international organizations, education authorities, universities and enterprises.

The initiative will align with authoritative platforms such as UNESCO's Global Teacher Campus to provide tiered training programs.

The plan also leverages existing overseas platforms such as Confucius Institutes and Luban Workshops to deliver localized support for teachers.

According to the plan, Zhejiang Normal University will lead implementation efforts. Over the next three years, priority flagship projects will be launched, including the establishment of collaboration mechanisms, the joint development of advanced courses and the piloting of lighthouse schools, or model schools.

The lighthouse schools will be established in two or three host Global South countries, with initial design work and resource allocation set to begin in an effort to achieve early tangible outcomes.

Liu Hongwu, director of the College of African Area and Country Studies at Zhejiang Normal University, said the action plan directly addresses key challenges in improving digital literacy among teachers in the Global South during a critical period for the global digital transformation of education.

"The plan addresses four structural challenges widely faced by Global South countries: weak infrastructure, scarce localized resources, lack of training systems and fragmented cooperation mechanisms," Liu said.

He said the plan adopts a systematic four-dimensional framework that creates a closed loop spanning coordination mechanisms, training, demonstration schools and on-the-ground support networks.

"By focusing on teachers' digital literacy, the initiative represents a strategic shift from hardware construction to human capacity building in developing countries," Liu said.

He also acknowledged implementation challenges, including complex coordination among multiple stakeholders and insufficient adaptation of resources for low-bandwidth environments in many Global South countries.

Nevertheless, Liu described the action plan as a pragmatic step that contributes Chinese wisdom and feasible solutions in bridging the global digital divide and promoting equitable education.

Meanwhile, the Hangzhou Initiative on AI and Education, which was also released on Tuesday at the conference, stresses equitable access to the benefits of artificial intelligence and calls for greater use of smart education platforms to share quality resources and intelligent tools to help bridge the global digital divide.

The initiative proposes establishing a global network for teacher training and capacity building, with special attention given to children with special needs.

It also supports UNESCO's leadership role in using digital technologies for post-crisis remedial education, especially for girls and women.

Hidden city reopens



Visitors explore a museum about Beijing's civil air defense history in Qianmen area on Wednesday. Originally built in 1969 and once known as the Beijing underground city, the former civil air defense tunnel complex reopened to the public as a museum on Tuesday, after extensive renovations. HOU YU / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Smart steps forward



A robotic guide leads a staff member acting as a visually impaired pedestrian during an intelligent robot application competition in Mianyang, Sichuan province, on Tuesday. Designed to assist with safe travel, the robot can identify road conditions and respond to obstacles, sounds and route changes in real time. HAO FEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

BLUEPRINT INTO ACTION

Yunnan to promote lifestyle businesses

Better living conditions, policy support reshape province's tourism economy

By **YAN YUJIE** and **LI YINGQING** in Kunming

Yunnan is positioning itself as a destination not only for tourism, but also for long-term living and entrepreneurship, as the southwestern Chinese province recorded sharp growth in overnight international visitors and long-stay residents in 2025, Governor Wang Yubo said on Wednesday.

Speaking at a briefing on Yunnan's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), Wang said the province is looking to attract more people to "travel, settle and start businesses" in Yunnan, as improving living environments and lifestyle appeal reshape the province's tourism economy.

Yunnan received 8.64 million inbound tourist visits in 2025, up 30 percent year-on-year, according to official data.

Among them, overnight inbound visitors rose 51.8 percent to 4.95 million, outpacing overall growth and signaling rising demand for deeper travel experiences.

The province also saw a surge in long-stay visitors, locally referred to as "sojourners".

More than 5.5 million people chose to live temporarily in Yunnan last year, up 41.4 percent year-on-year, with an average stay of 83 days.

"Many visitors came as tourists but stayed on because they fell in love with the place, becoming new residents of Yunnan," Wang said.

He attributed the trend partly to sweeping improvements in urban and rural living conditions in recent years. According to Wang, all counties, cities and districts in Yunnan now meet national sanitary standards, while all natural villages have reached the top-tier standard for rural living environments.

"With better environments and more beautiful cities and villages, tourists from across China and around the world are flocking to Yunnan," he said.

Earlier this year, Alexandra Solovey, a 46-year-old tourist from the United States, visited Kunming with her husband and daughter. She said the pleasant weather, local cuisine, friendly residents and sense of safety made Yunnan "a fantastic destination".

Among those choosing to stay longer is Zhang Boai, a 35-year-old former flight attendant from Beijing. After traveling across Lijiang, Dali, Kunming, Pu'er and Xishuangbanna in mid-2025, Zhang and her husband relocated to a village in Pu'er with their 3-year-old son later that year.

"I want my son to have a happy childhood close to nature, where he can play freely," Zhang said.

The long-stay trend is also giving rise to new business models.

In Laozhuaqing village in Pu'er, 32-year-old Ying Xixi from Wenzhou, Zhejiang province, has launched a digital nomad community, offering shared workspaces for remote workers.

Since opening in late February, the site has already hosted dozens of digital nomads.

"Yunnan has rich resources, diverse ethnic cultures and a great climate, which are all attractive to entrepreneurs like us," Ying said, adding that she hopes for more supportive policies for startup communities and lifestyle-based businesses.

Wang said the province plans to expand policy support, diversify business scenarios and cultivate more sectors suited to lifestyle entrepreneurship. Yunnan also aims to build a number of "cities of entrepreneurship" and "cities of thriving industries" to attract more innovators and business founders.

The growing sojourn economy is already bringing tangible benefits to rural communities.

Yan Di, Party branch secretary of Manhena village in Xishuangbanna, said long-stay tourism has increased significantly since 2024. Last year, the village received more than 10,000 sojourn visitors, many staying for more than 10 days at a time.

The village, home to 109 households and 486 residents, reported an average household income of 80,000 yuan ($11,780) last year, with tourism contributing more than 60 percent.

"Life is steadily getting better," Yan said.

In Lijiang's Yulong county, 57-year-old Fan Hongyan, originally from Xiangxi in Hunan province, opened a guesthouse in September after traveling to more than 50 countries.

"The first time I came here, I was deeply captivated by the scenery and environment," she said. "I knew this was where I wanted to live."

Contact the writers at yanyj@chinadaily.com.cn

HK's emissions detector to aid climate research from Tiangong

By **WU KUNLING** in Hong Kong
amberwu@chinadailyhk.com

The world's first lightweight, high-resolution, high-precision carbon dioxide and methane point-source detector, developed by Hong Kong scientists, has arrived at the Tiangong, making it the city's first scientific payload aboard the orbiting national space station.

The project, hailed as proof of Hong Kong's ability to support the nation's space development and carbon neutrality drive, is able to detect over 99 percent of CO2 emissions from the nation's coal-burning power plants and CH4 emissions from its coal mines, providing precise and reliable data for policymakers in China and around the world, said Su Hui, co-leader of the project and chair professor of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, on Wednesday.

The Hong Kong-made payload, the Multi-Spectral Imaging Carbon Observatory, nicknamed "eye for space", arrived at Tiangong at 1:11 pm on Monday aboard the Tianzhou-10 cargo craft. It was part of a consignment of essential deliveries such as artificial human embryos and ultra-thin solar cells, and supplies including an extravehicular spacesuit.

The MUSICO will participate in China's first Earth observation project under its human spaceflight program.

Weighing less than 80 kilograms and smaller than a domestic washing machine, the payload is capable of accurately measuring CO2 and CH4 — two major greenhouse gases — from space, with extra-high spectral resolution and 100-meter spatial resolution, said the research team.

By analyzing intensity changes in sunlight over specific spectral bands as it passes through the atmosphere and reflects off the Earth's surface, the payload identifies gas-specific absorption features to determine gas concentrations and pinpoint individual emission sources, enabling effective monitoring of key facilities such as power plants and landfills.

Su said the detector's observation range covers latitudes from 42 degrees south to 42 degrees north — encompassing most of the world's densely populated and industrially active regions. The data it collects will be shared with government departments and research institutions in China and abroad under the nation's data management policies.

She added that recipients include the nation's Ministry of Ecology and Environment, and the United Nations Environment Programme which will add it to an open global dataset for researchers and authorities worldwide.

Zhang Limin, another co-lead of the project and head of HKUST's Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, said that while the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region has participated in many of the nation's space projects in the past, this payload is the first mission led by the SAR — a milestone.

He highlighted that the project's results will also provide a scientific basis for cross-regional climate research and emissions reduction efforts in economies involved in the Belt and Road Initiative, contributing to the global response to climate change.

HKUST President Nancy Ip Yuk-yu said the project proves that Hong Kong's research capabilities can make substantial contributions to the nation's highest-level aerospace platforms.

It also supports the nation's dual-carbon goals and provides scientific backing for the Beautiful China Initiative and global climate governance, Ip said.

Soundbites

Editor's note: *The State Council Information Office held a group interview on Wednesday featuring outstanding teachers to discuss advancing the spirit of educators and accelerating the building of China into a leading country in education.*



On Cuiying Mountain in Lanzhou, we established China's first semi-arid climate change observation station of international standards. I often take my students into the field, trekking across deserts, traversing glaciers and climbing plateaus. They are trained and tested in harsh natural environments, strengthening both their character and resilience. I like the saying along the Taklimakan Desert highway: "There is only a desolate desert, not a desolate life." I often tell my students the same: how could our research be anything but world-class, when we write our papers on the vast land of our motherland and pursue knowledge in the great deserts of the northwest?
Huang Jianping, *an academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and a professor at Lanzhou University in Gansu province*



Labor education is not a decorative add-on, but a source of nourishment and energy for children's all-round development. To help children develop a love for work from an early age, we have designed a curriculum based on the 24 solar terms, encouraging them to engage in hands-on activities in tune with the seasons. Only when teachers remain curious about the world will children long to explore it. I hope our children will feel a spark of excitement at the sight of wild chrysanthemums, and pause to listen when they hear birds singing. Education, at its heart, is about nurturing the ability to perceive happiness and to create it.
Zhang Zhenle, *principal of Fuchun No 7 Primary School Education Group in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province*



I have always worked on the front line of teaching. Together with my institution, I have helped deepen the integration of industry and education, as well as school-enterprise cooperation. I hope to support companies in solving technical challenges while personally guiding students in developing practical skills. Watching them grow from novices to skilled professionals, then step out of campus and into major aviation enterprises, contributing to China's domestically developed aircraft and other critical national projects, gives me a deep sense of fulfillment.
Zhou Shuqiang, *professor at Chengdu Aeronautic Polytechnic University*



The essence of nurturing both intellect and character lies in "seeing every individual". At our school, each class is assigned a psychological counselor, and we have launched a smart mental health platform to support the well-being of both students and teachers. We focus not only on students' academic progress, but also on their emotional needs and individual differences. At the same time, we recognize the dedication of every teacher, providing practical support to help address real challenges, so that everyone on campus is seen and respected.
Xie Wei, *principal of Yinchuan No 15 Middle School, Ningxia Hui autonomous region*



We support teachers in defining clear development goals based on their individual circumstances, whether they are newly recruited or experienced backbone teachers. Taking into account teachers' years of experience and professional strengths, we design stage-specific learning content and practical opportunities, enabling them to grow steadily and continuously. We aim to ignite teachers' inner drive, helping them feel the nobility of the profession and sustain their intrinsic passion, while also strengthening their professional competence. There is only one character's difference between a "profession" and a "vocation", but it transforms teachers' mindset, energizes the entire team, and eventually benefits tens of thousands of children.
An Huixia, *principal of Xinghua Preschool Education Group in Taiyuan, Shanxi province*

ZHAO YIMENG

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:36 PM

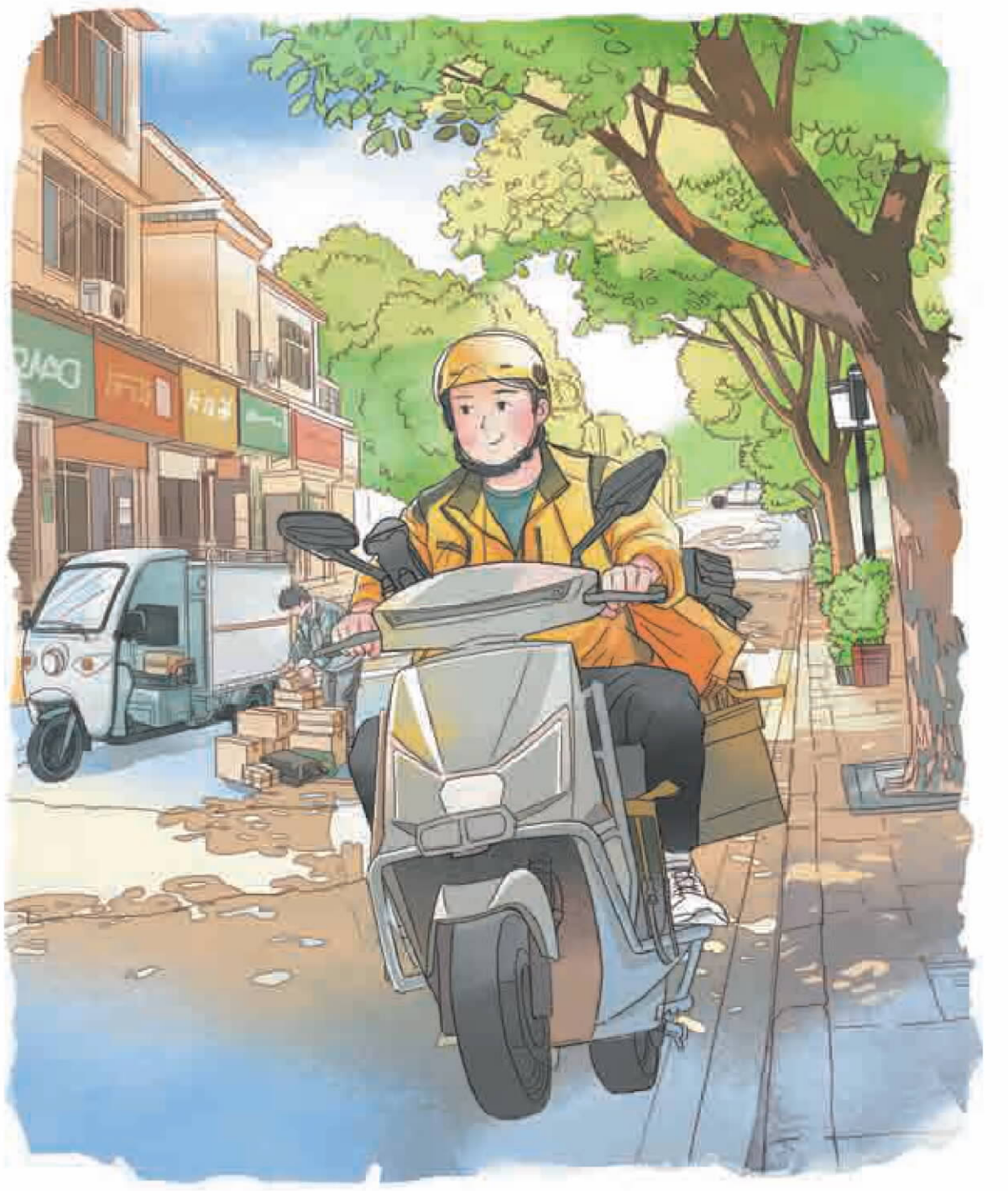
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:36 PM

POLICY REVIEW

Guideline boosts gig worker protections

Government policy provides growing oversight over new employment types

By JI HAISHENG
jihaisheng@chinadaily.com.cn



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

During campus breaks, Xiao Tang, a university student from Hebei province, takes to Beijing's streets as a ride-hailing driver. A driving enthusiast, he has turned his time off campus into a source of income and a tangible sense of autonomy. "I enjoy it. It gives me control over my time," he said.

His experience is a snapshot of a much larger trend. "Young people across China are increasingly turning to digital platforms for work, forming the backbone of the country's expanding 'new forms of employment,'" said Zeng Yanbo, a researcher at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of Sociology.

"New forms of employment" are distinct from traditional full-time work, referring to jobs where tasks are matched, assigned, managed and compensated via internet platforms, such as online service provider Meituan, ride-hailing platform Didi and short-video app Douyin.

More than 70 percent of such workers are aged between 18 and 35, according to Zeng. "Young people are drawn to these jobs mainly for the low entry barriers, the quick settlement of income, and the freedom to set their own schedules," she said.

As this workforce continues to grow, the country has introduced a series of policy measures designed to safeguard these workers' rights, improve services and steer the high-quality development of the sector.

In April, the general offices of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council, China's Cabinet, issued a set of policy measures on strengthening service and management for new employment groups. Experts said that this marks the first central-level policy framework dedicated exclusively to platform-based workers.

They added that it signals a decisive shift for China's digital economy — from a phase of rapid expansion to a new stage of standardized development that balances innovation with labor dignity and security.

According to a survey on China's workforce in 2023, the country has approximately 84 million workers engaged in new forms of employment, accounting for 21 percent of its total workforce. Projections indicate the figure may surpass 100 million this year.

"The new employment group is an important component of China's workforce and an indispensable force for socioeconomic development. It has now become a crucial pillar of the job market," said Zhang Dandan, a professor of economics and vice-dean at Peking University's National School of Development.

Li Yan, 37, from Yuncheng in Shanxi province, has spent a decade delivering food in Beijing. For most of those years, he worked as a freelance courier on major platforms, appreciating the flexible hours but lacking any form of employment security.

A pivotal shift came in March of last year, when he joined e-commerce company JD as a full-time delivery rider.

Despite it currently being a low season for orders, Li said he still earns around 8,000 yuan ($1,180) per month. Beyond the pay, a transformative benefit has been his enrollment in a social security program, with JD covering the employer's mandatory contribution and subsidizing employees' personal contributions. For Li, this security has become a tangible foundation for his future. He said he is committed to building a long-term career with the company, with plans to stay until retirement.

While individual stories highlight the search for security, the sector's overall vitality remains robust. A recent report by Jinan University's Institute for Economic and Social Research in Guangdong province and recruitment portal Zhaopin showed job postings in new forms of employment rose 15.1 percent year-on-year in 2025, while job seekers rose 11 percent year-on-year, with over 80 percent of positions offering monthly salaries between 8,001 yuan and 15,000 yuan.

For years, the explosive growth of platform jobs, hailed for creating employment, outpaced the development of corresponding safeguards. "The core challenge lies in the mismatch between a new, flexible employment model and a social protection system designed for traditional, stable jobs," Zhang said.

The newly issued policy document provides a comprehensive, two-phase blueprint to bridge this gap. The primary goal is to standardize labor practices and ensure robust rights protection by 2027, followed by the establishment of a sound service and management system within the next three to five years.

It has urged internet platforms and express delivery companies to set reasonable wages for workers based on work tasks and labor intensity, and to ensure full and timely payment. Another pillar of the reform is bringing transparency and accountability to the algorithms that govern such work. Platforms are now required to disclose rules for order assignment, pricing, assessment and penalties, according to the document.

While the policy direction is clear, experts caution that its implementation faces deep-seated economic challenges. Zhang identified income as the primary, underlying concern. "For riders, the core issue is earnings from each delivery," she said.

Citing a widespread belief that any new cost levied on platforms — for social insurance subsidies or safety incentives — will be passed down to workers, Zhang said, "Real, sustainable security for workers must be built on a foundation of adequate earnings in the first place."

Alongside safeguards, she stressed that it is essential to introduce measures that curb cutthroat competition and strictly prevent the infringement of workers' rights and interests.

Yin Yu, a senior partner at Guangdong-based Guanghe Law Firm, urged lawmakers to expedite dedicated legislation to protect the rights of workers in new employment forms.

She told Legal Daily that the next critical step is to translate the proven measures outlined in the policy document to binding legal statutes. This legislation, she said, should systematically define the nature of employment relationships, the rights and obligations of all parties, liability divisions, and regulatory oversight responsibilities, thereby solidifying the institutional safeguards for this workforce.

Zeng emphasized the urgency of establishing comprehensive skill standards and structured promotion pathways for delivery riders and similar professions. She advocated benchmarking against the technical worker grading system, a strategic move aimed at elevating these roles from temporary positions to viable lifelong careers.

This transformation, she noted, is essential for providing workers with long-term growth opportunities and fundamentally reshaping the perception and stability of platform-based employment.

Delivery platform reforms prioritize riders' safety over speed

By JI HAISHENG

The removal of late-delivery penalties in early 2026 has marked a turning point for China's gig economy, signaling a shift from speed-first algorithms to worker safety.

For veteran riders like Li Xincang, 39, who has navigated Beijing's streets for over a decade, the shift represents the professionalization of a sector once defined by high-risk labor and social insecurity.

When Li, a native of Puyang in Central China's Henan province, arrived in the capital over two decades ago, he started working on construction sites like many other rural migrants.

"The wages were often delayed, and there were no social security benefits at all," he said.

Seeking a more predictable income, he switched to food delivery in 2014 and has worked for consumer services platform Meituan for almost nine years.

Today, the veteran leads a team of over 110 riders and earns more than 10,000 yuan ($1,470) a month. Earnings are deposited quickly, he said, explaining that part-time riders get paid the next day, while full-time team members receive weekly wages.

"Delivery work won't make you rich, but it can support a family steadily," Li said. The reliable and timely income allowed him to pay off debts of over 100,000 yuan and build a decent house back in his hometown.

Beyond the paycheck, Li cherishes the flexibility. "I can choose to work mornings, evenings, or nights, and manage my own schedule. I can even take a moment to relax if I need, or scroll through my phone during a break," he said. "This is something you hardly get on a factory floor or a construction site."

Li said that the most crucial improvement he has witnessed is the reform of the delivery algorithm, the system that organizes his daily work.

"In the past, we could get up to 12 orders at a time, with very tight deadlines. We had to rush and sometimes even risk traffic violations," he said. Now, influenced by the government and stakeholders, the system limits trips to six or seven orders with more reasonable time windows. "The algorithm now puts safety before speed," he added.

The platform reinforces this by issuing warnings or short-term account restrictions for repeated traffic violations. A pivotal relief came in early 2026 when penalties for late deliveries were removed.

"Riders no longer feel forced to risk their lives on the road," Li said. "This shift has significantly reduced the danger of accidents caused by overwork or rushed deliveries."

This growing sense of security extends from the daily grind to long-term planning. A key milestone was the introduction of a pension subsidy program late last year. Li and his teammates are now covered by the program that subsidizes their participation in basic pension insurance for gig workers.

"Compared with construction work that offers no proper social security, this job gives us a greater sense of security," Li said. "This pension scheme will protect us after we retire. Having it makes my family feel truly at ease."

Support on the ground has also been upgraded. Li praised the launch of hubs dedicated to delivery riders, which offer 24/7 shelter, charging ports and seasonal supplies. However, he is critical of commercial outlets that hang similar signs for show without providing real service and suggests resources should be directed toward stations that genuinely help workers.

For Li, the past decade traces a clear path — from chasing immediate wages to building a stable, secure life with a future to look forward to. He acknowledged his own story as part of a broader shift where the nation's policy direction and corporate initiatives are converging to provide millions with not just an income, but a growing sense of dignity.

Li said he may continue riding for a few more years, or he might return to his hometown to promote local farm produce online, leveraging a following he has built on social media.

He added that his plans remain flexible, while his next steps will ultimately depend on his family's needs.

Policy Digest

Roadmap to cultivate global textile leaders

China will cultivate no fewer than 25 leading textile and apparel brands by 2028 as part of efforts to significantly enhance the competitiveness and market influence of the sector, according to an action plan issued by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology and four other departments that was recently publicized.

The action plan for the cultivation of excellence in textile and apparel brands (2026-28) sets out six key tasks, including the categorized cultivation of leading brands across supply chains, industrial ecosystems and consumer markets. Enterprises will be guided to focus on specialized market segments and consumer scenarios to create a group of supply-chain brands and consumer-facing brands.

The plan calls for stronger development of smart textiles, including smart wearables, intelligent home textiles, and products related to healthcare and medical applications.

To promote digital and intelligent upgrading, the plan encourages the release of innovative application scenarios for "AI plus textiles" across the entire industrial chain. It also supports the use of human-computer interaction and virtual interaction to better understand personalized consumer demand, while improving the technological level and wider application of virtual fitting, intelligent outfit recommendations and virtual anchors.

Campaign to uplift rural culture, health services

The Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and 12 other departments recently issued a notice launching the 2026 campaign to bring culture, science and health services to the countryside, aiming to deliver more high-quality resources directly to rural communities.

Under the campaign, cultural and artistic services will be brought to rural areas by mobilizing literary and artistic teams to provide cultural services. Support will also be given to mass cultural and sports activities.

Legal services will be strengthened through regular rural-themed public legal education activities, while agricultural technology services will focus on the needs of rural industrial development.

The campaign will expand science outreach in rural communities through innovative science popularization demonstration activities and high-quality public science content.

Medical resources will be sent to rural communities via free clinic weeks, visits by renowned doctors to grassroots areas, and stationed or mobile medical services at township and village levels, and public welfare services will also be expanded.

Tap water coverage in countryside hits 96%

China's rural tap water coverage reached 96 percent by the end of 2025, the Ministry of Water Resources said on Tuesday.

By the end of last year, large-scale water supply projects covered 71 percent of the rural population, while 72 percent of counties had adopted unified county-level management for rural water supply, the ministry told a press conference.

China had nearly 3.82 million rural water supply projects by the end of 2025, forming a supply network covering 850 million rural residents. The number of people relying mainly on water cellars and water storage tanks for water supply had dropped by 79 percent by the end of last year from the level at the end of the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20) period.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-25), areas lifted out of poverty completed 914.9 billion yuan ($133.71 billion) in water conservancy investment, including 145.5 billion yuan in key counties.

China aims to raise rural tap water coverage to 97 percent by the end of 2026, with large-scale water supply projects covering 73 percent of the rural population, according to the ministry. By 2030, the country aims to lift rural tap water coverage to 98 percent.

CHINA DAILY—XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:36 PM

CULTURE



Pearls of perspective

Growing up in China, award-winning novelist worked throughout her life to strengthen cross-cultural understanding, **Yang Yang** reports.

In the history of Sino-US exchanges, Nobel Prize-winner Pearl S Buck, a writer from the United States also known as Sai Zhenzhu, stands prominently as "the most influential Westerner to write about China since the 13th century's Marco Polo", as described by late US historian James C Thomson Jr.

Buck's true significance lies in her approach to cross-cultural understanding, says Guo Yingjian, a specially appointed professor at Renmin University of China, one of the earliest Chinese scholars to research Buck.

"She shows us that effective cultural exchange doesn't start with labels, ideological judgments, or demonization. Instead, it begins with understanding people's lives: their suffering, dignity, and shared emotions," he says.

Through reading her popular and sympathetic novels, particularly *The Good Earth*, Americans' perceptions of China changed significantly in the 1930s and 40s.

"The majority of Chinese were seen for the first time in literature as honest, kindhearted, frugal-living, hard-working, deity-fearing farmers who are much the same as American farmers," wrote Chinese scholar Liao Kang in 1997.

Buck's empathy went beyond pity, reflecting an understanding of others' circumstances, says Guo.

She captured both the hardships and resilience of Chinese farmers, writing about not only poverty but also dignity, not only backwardness but also human complexity, he says. Consequently, the China she depicted, though not a full picture, was warm, textured, and humane, he adds.

One important reason Buck was able to represent Chinese characters with empathy and compassion lies in the fact that "she did not view China as a foreign tourist on a brief visit; rather, she lived and grew up in China, and spent a long time sharing the same world with ordinary Chinese people," says Guo.

Her writing about China did not stem from an abstract "Oriental imagination", but from everyday life, land ethics, family relationships, and basic human emotions, he notes.

A daughter of Southern Presbyterian missionaries, Buck left her hometown of Hillsboro, West Virginia, for China in 1892, when she was about four months old. In 1896, her family moved from Huai'an to Zhenjiang, Jiangsu province, where they lived for the next 18 years.

Unlike other missionaries, Buck's parents, Absalom and Caroline Sydenstricker, chose to live among Chinese people to fully immerse themselves in local culture rather than in isolated Westernized compounds.

Life in Zhenjiang greatly influenced Buck and her writing, especially the daily interactions with her nanny and tutor, says Lu Zhangping, director of the Zhenjiang Pearl S Buck Research Association.

In Zhenjiang, a local Chinese woman surnamed Wang cared for Buck for 18 years. Wang, kind and diligent, often cooked her delicious meals and snacks. Their relationship went far beyond that of servant and master. Wang treated her like her own child. Whenever Buck was punished by her mother for disobedience, Wang would quietly help her with the chores and offer guidance. From a young age, Buck had developed a deep respect and admiration for Chinese women.

Wang often told Buck tales about the famine during her own childhood, her family, and bandits; martial arts stories about standing up to the powerful; fighting injustice; and Chinese classics set in Zhenjiang, including *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, *The Legend of the White Snake* and *The Water Margin* (or Outlaws of the Marsh).

Her parents hired a traditional scholar, 50-year-old Mr Kung, to teach Buck classical Chinese literature and thought. Mr Kung, originally from Beijing, moved to Zhenjiang after his house was burned down by German soldiers.

Every afternoon at 2 pm, Mr Kung arrived at Buck's home for two-hour lessons. He taught her about Confucius, Bodhisattva, Chinese history, classical literature, life maxims, and local customs and traditions. When answering her questions, he went beyond mere book knowledge, emphasizing the connection between the "source" and the "flow" that links the past, present and future. He also encouraged young Buck to study Chinese classical novels and taught her about the "Complete Library of the Four Treasuries" that was stored in Zhenjiang's Wenzong Ge, an ancient library.

For 10 years, through reading classical texts and practicing calligraphy, She not only became well-versed in traditional Chinese classics and familiar with Chinese history, culture and geography, but also developed a beautiful regular-script style of writing, spoke fluent Mandarin, and even learned to carve seals. In Zhenjiang, she also witnessed the miserable lives of victims of the 1905 Yangtze River flood, which provided first-hand material for *The Good Earth*.

In 1910, Pearl Buck returned to the United States to attend Randolph-Macon Woman's College and, shortly after graduating in 1914, returned to China. She taught English in middle schools in Zhenjiang for two years and, after marrying John Lossing Buck in 1917, the couple went north to live in the countryside of Suzhou, Anhui province, to research life and agriculture in rural areas.







Top: Pearl S Buck (right) at a United China Relief fundraising event in the US in 1941. She played an active role in encouraging and organizing fundraising efforts in the US. **Middle left:** Buck speaking at the National Press Club in Washington. **Middle right:** A photo taken on August 17, 2025, in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, shows a Western-style building, which is now home to the Pearl S Buck Memorial House. **Above:** *The Patriot*, released in New York in 1939, was the first novel Pearl S Buck published after receiving the Nobel Prize in literature in 1938. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"During her four to five years in Suzhou, Pearl Buck learned about the rural areas and farmers in China more profoundly," Lu says.

From 1919 to 1934, the Bucks both taught at the University of Nanking. In the house located at No 3 Pingcang Alley, now in the Gulou Campus of Nanjing University, she completed her first novels, including *East Wind, West Wind* (1930), *The Good Earth* (1931), *Sons* (1933), and *The Mother* (1933), as well as a translation.

In 1933, Buck published the first English translation of *The Water Margin*, one of Chinese literature's Four Great Classic Novels of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), giving it the title *All Men Are Brothers*, a line she learned from the Confucian classic *The Analects*.

In 1938, when Buck received the Nobel Prize in literature, she gave a lecture, *The Chinese Novel*, in which she said, "My earliest knowledge of story, of how to tell and write stories, came to me in China". She also mentioned the "Complete Library of the Four Treasuries" she learned from Mr Kung.

The Good Earth, featuring a poor Chinese farmer's family caught in the tides of history, became an instant best-seller in the US and was translated into more than 30 languages. It won the Pulitzer Prize in 1932. In 1937, a film adaptation was produced and won an Oscar for Best Actress the following year.

In 1934, with much reluctance, Pearl Buck left China, but her connection with the Chinese people was never severed.

Since the 1920s, she had been writing articles for US magazines, including The Atlantic, Asia, The Chinese Recorder, and The Nation, on Chinese farmer's life, culture, the shifting roles of women, and China's social dynamics.

In the United States, Buck fully committed herself to humanitarian and cultural endeavors related to China.

In 1941, she became president of Asia magazine to promote modern Chinese literature, aiming to create vibrant, multidimensional Chinese characters that challenged Western stereotypes.

The same year, the East and West Association was established, and as the president, Buck utilized lectures, publications, broadcasts, and translations to spread Chinese culture and provide crucial international support for wartime China.

In 1943, Buck joined the Citizens Committee to Repeal Chinese Exclusion as a key spokesperson, publicly criticizing the exclusion laws. Her efforts contributed to the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act later that year.

During the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression (1931-45), Buck steadfastly supported China's mission. Since the September 18th Incident in 1931, she had openly condemned Japanese militarism and consistently informed the American public about the realities of the war in China.

To aid China, she initiated the Book of Hope fundraising campaign in 1940 and subsequently led the China Emergency Relief Committee and the United China Relief agency, organizing large-scale fundraising efforts to provide medical supplies, build hospitals, and aid civilians and war orphans.

Throughout the war, she frequently used media platforms to voice her support. In 1938, she reviewed the book *Red Star Over China*, predicting China's revolutionary victory and in another article published later that year she praised Chinese guerrilla tactics. In 1942, she published the novel *Dragon Seed*, set against the backdrop of the Nanjing Massacre in 1937, during which 300,000 Chinese soldiers and civilians were killed, making it one of the most horrific atrocities of World War II.

In 1938, in the Banquet Speech of the Nobel Prize, Buck said: "I have never admired China more than I do now, when I see her uniting as she has never before, against the enemy who threatens her freedom. With this determination for freedom, which is in so profound a sense the essential quality in her nature, I know that she is unconquerable."

In 1945, she witnessed Japan's surrender to the Allies, marking the end of the war. In 1973, Buck died in Danby, Vermont, at 80. According to her will, her tombstone at Green Hills Farm in Pennsylvania bears no English name, no birth or death dates, and no epitaph — only three Chinese characters in seal script, handwritten by Buck herself: *Sai Zhen Zhu*, her Chinese name.

In the Statement on the Death of Pearl S Buck in 1973, former US president Richard Nixon said: "In life, Pearl Buck was a human bridge between the civilization of the East and West."

Today, China is quite different from the one depicted in Buck's works. Characterized with modernity, urbanization, globalization, and digitalization, modern China is a far cry from the one focused on land, villages, and family ethics in *The Good Earth*, Guo, the professor, says.

"If we still read Buck solely as a way to understand China's reality, we're missing the point," Guo says.

"In today's context of challenging Sino-US relations, her significance is in her reminder that even if relations between countries are tense, the possibility for understanding between individuals should remain," Guo says, adding, "It is an agreement we reached after discussing the significance of Pearl Buck with the Ministry of Education's China Center for International People-to-People Exchange in current cultural exchanges.

"No matter how dominant political narratives become, they cannot completely obscure the reality of ordinary people's lives. While the China she wrote about is in the past, the method she represents — understanding people through their humanity — is still relevant today," he stresses.

Contact the writer at yangyangs@chinadaily.com.cn

A well-versed exchange between Chinese and Arab writers

GUANGZHOU — Young poets, writers and scholars from China and Arab countries have gathered in South China's Guangzhou, Guangdong province, for a poetry festival aimed at deepening literary dialogue and people-to-people exchanges.

A China-Arab States special session of the 2026 International Youth Poetry Festival began over the weekend in the southern metropolis, drawing more than 40 young poets, Sinologists and writers from 13 Arab countries, including Morocco, Syria and Egypt, alongside more than 40 young Chinese poets.

The event will run through Sunday. In the coming days, Chinese and Arab poets will take part in a series of cultural exchange activities in Guangzhou, Shenzhen, both in Guangdong province, and Beijing, including poetry readings, academic dialogues, poetry seminars, and field visits.





The opening ceremony of China-Arab States special session of the 2026 International Youth Poetry Festival in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, on May 9. PHOTOS BY LU HANXIN / XINHUA

"Though separated by thousands of miles and different languages, the two great poetic traditions of China and the Arab world have become both the root and soul of their civilizations, with condensed language, profound wisdom, and sincere emotion," says Zhang Hongsen, chairman of the China Writers Association.

Zhang says he hopes young poets from both sides will draw inspiration from one another while staying rooted in their own cultures, allowing poetry to flourish through exchanges between tradition and modernity, and the local and the global.

For Egyptian poet Yahia Mohamed Wagdy Lotfy Omar, poetry can travel across languages and borders.

"When I write a line of poetry, a friend on the other side of the world who speaks a different language can still be moved by it and understand it. That is poetry," he says, adding that translation serves as an important bridge, and such gatherings can help poets break through their own limitations.

Launched by the China Writers Association in 2024, the International Youth Poetry Festival has previously held special sessions for BRICS countries and China-Latin America exchanges.

Organizers say the platform is growing into an international venue for young writers to promote literary dialogue and mutual learning among civilizations.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:36 PM

LIFE



Blending tea culture with travel

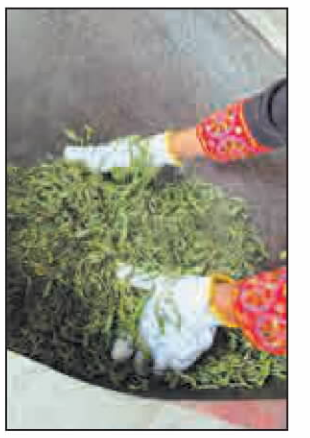
Enthusiast-turned-entrepreneur shares his appreciation for the drink along with his sourcing adventures, report **Zheng Zheng** and **Wu Wanzhen** in Shanghai.

When Derek Poskin first arrived in the historic canal city of Yangzhou, Jiangsu province, in 2016, he was tracing a poem by Tang Dynasty (618-907) poet Li Bai and developing a growing appreciation for Chinese tea culture. Nearly a decade later, the American, born in 1988, has become a tea entrepreneur, sourcing premium leaves across China and selling them to customers worldwide.

"Coffee is for work. Tea, though, is for life. I've always been passionate about Chinese tea," Poskin says from Empty Cup, his renovated tea house nestled in Yangzhou's old quarter, where he introduces visitors from around the world to China's tea traditions.

"I started drinking and buying more, and eventually turned my house into a warehouse. I had to share it somehow, and that's how the business began."





From passion to business

Poskin launched his tea venture in 2018 as a side project, aiming to connect Western tea enthusiasts with the traditions behind it. However, the early years were challenging.

"The first three or four years were really slow," he admits, recalling how only family members purchased his products initially. "I still remember the first time I got an order from somebody I didn't know. I was like, 'Oh my gosh'. That was the moment I knew I was making it. It's been a long, long process."

Navigating China's tea landscape is no simple feat. The country produces thousands of varieties across six main categories — green, white, yellow, oolong, black, and dark teas like Pu'er.

Rather than working through middlemen, Poskin travels directly to tea-growing regions across China, from the ancient forests of Yunnan province in the southwest to the oolong gardens of Fujian province along the eastern coast.

"One of the reasons I came to China was to live the tea culture. The best way to do that is to go where the tea is made," he explains. "Before coming to China, I had been drinking tea for a long time but had never actually seen a tea plant. Now I've hiked through some of the country's most remote tea mountains."

Connective expeditions

One of Poskin's most memorable expeditions took him to Guafengzhai, a remote village of the Yao ethnic group in Yunnan's Yiwu town, about two kilometers from the border with Laos. Renowned for its high-quality Pu'er tea, the village had long been a bucket list destination for the entrepreneur.

The journey began with a leap of faith — connecting through social media with a young, local farmer named Zhao Xiaoyun. "I had this prearranged date with a person I'd never met, in a town I'd never been to, to venture to the borders of China," Poskin recalls. "But as soon as I met her, I knew we were on the same page. We both spoke the language of tea."

The four-day expedition immersed him in every aspect of tea production. Joining Zhao, her mother, sister, and friends deep in the tea forests, he picked leaves, laid them out to sun-dry, and helped with the roasting.

"We've hosted foreign tea merchants who have visited our plantation for business before, but Derek stands out for his exceptional knowledge of tea," says Zhao. "When we taught him the leaf fixation process, a critical step that halts oxidation and preserves flavor, he learned it immediately."

The primeval forests, with tea trees hundreds of years old growing wild among other vegetation, left an enduring impression. "Walking through those ancient groves felt like stepping into another world," Poskin describes. "The farmers would point out edible herbs along the way, letting me taste spicy leaves that would numb my mouth like Sichuan peppercorns.

"That's one of the most magical aspects — experiencing the land with the people who live on it," he adds.

Pieces of a puzzle

Poskin's dedication to understanding tea goes beyond sourcing trips. He spent a year in Chaozhou, Guangdong province, studying the art of making clay teapots used for *gongfu cha* (tea with skill). This method uses small pots and cups to bring out complex flavors through multiple short infusions.

He has participated in some local customs and festivals during his trips, often as the only foreigner. "One time, around Qingming Festival, I was invited to join a family's tomb-sweeping ritual," he recounts. "We killed chickens, burned incense and paper money, and set out meals for the ancestors. It was incredible to be part of that living tea culture."

The tea is just the surface, he emphasizes. "When I experience the world through the eyes of the people in the mountains, I realize how deep tea culture really is. The leaves themselves are just a piece of the puzzle."

Through his travels across different provinces, Poskin's understanding of the drink itself has shifted from a search for correctness to an appreciation for diversity.

"I came thinking there was one correct way to drink tea," he explains. "But I've learned that Chinese tea culture is incredibly fluid and varies by region." For example, people might drink green tea straight from a glass jar in Yangzhou, while in Chaozhou, elaborate *gongfu cha* sets are the norm.

"Chinese tea culture is fluid, more Taoist," he says. "Every place has its own style, and any way you drink tea is the right way. I find that very welcoming and liberating."

Bridging East and West

These experiences have become central to his business model. Poskin documents his sourcing journeys through videos and photographs, sharing them with customers to create transparency and a connection between consumers and producers.

His content creation extends to a podcast called Tea Soup, a YouTube channel, and an active social media presence through which he has built a following of enthusiasts eager to learn about authentic Chinese tea culture.

Most of his customers are based in the United States, with significant sales to Germany and other EU countries. To introduce premium flavors to a wider audience, he utilizes blending techniques that maintain high quality while remaining affordable.

"I buy some really good tea and blend it with a less expensive tea that complements it, so people can try something high-quality at an affordable price," he explains. For each product, he creates detailed tasting notes, origin information, and brewing instructions.

Unlike many e-commerce businesses, Poskin operates exclusively through his own website, maintaining full control over the customer experience — from freshly coined tea names to packaging designs. "It's something I have complete control of. For me, this is a creative expression," he says.

Looking ahead, Poskin envisions his business evolving into a social enterprise that gives back to farming communities. His new teahouse project in Yangzhou aims to create a physical space where people can experience Chinese tea culture firsthand.

"The business is doing well. My partner and I are interested in making it a social enterprise — giving back to the farmers and doing something positive," he reflects. "I don't need to make endless money. I'd rather cap it and use the excess for good.

"From the start, this has been a passion project," he emphasizes. "I want a deeper understanding of Chinese tea, to source better tea, and to awaken more people to Chinese tea culture."

Reflecting on a decade in China, Poskin offers fellow entrepreneurs a perspective of patience. "China is a world of opportunities. There are so many people who can help you. But don't rush it," he notes. "Great things take years, and then they happen all at once."



Clockwise from top: Derek Poskin on the tea mountain in Guafengzhai, which is located on the southwest border of Yunnan province and is renowned for its high-quality Pu'er tea;
The leaf fixation process;
Poskin shows fresh and sun-dried tea leaves;
Poskin and Zhao rolling tea leaves. PHOTOS BY ZHENG ZHENG / CHINA DAILY

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

Contact the writers at zhengzheng@chinadaily.com.cn

Salon and music strengthen Sino-New Zealand friendship

WELLINGTON — Featuring a concert by the Amber Quartet, the "Tea for Harmony: Yaji Cultural Salon" in late April integrated Chinese tea culture with classical Western music in Auckland, New Zealand's largest city.

Organized by the China Cultural Center in Auckland, the event opened with tea tasting, traditional tea preparation, tea appreciation, and storytelling about tea culture, creating an elegant, harmonious atmosphere. Participants were invited to make a personalized cup of tea using an ancient Chinese style in which tea powder is applied to "draw" pictures on the tea's foam.

The Amber Quartet was founded in 2005 and has become an internationally influential string quartet in China. During the event, Debussy's *String Quartet* and works featuring the ethnic cultures of both countries were performed. "They were truly amazing," Sharon Ann from the audience says, speaking of the performers' superb skills.





Left: A participant experiences traditional Chinese tea culture during the "Tea for Harmony: Yaji Cultural Salon" in Auckland, New Zealand, in April. **Right:** Auckland people enjoy traditional Chinese tea culture at the event organized by the city's China Cultural Center. PHOTOS BY WU JIAXIANG / XINHUA

Chen Shijie, Chinese consul general in Auckland, says that the event uses music as a bridge and tea as a bond to convey the friendship of the Chinese people, helping deepen mutual understanding and relations between the people of China and New Zealand, and strengthening the public foundation of bilateral relations.

Bob Harvey, former mayor of Waitakere, says he values the historical ties and current cooperation with China. "This night is cemented with tea for harmony and peace. It is such a special moment."

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:36 PM

LIFE

An island's women on wheels

On remote Qushan in Zhejiang province, a team of female delivery drivers is reshaping traditional roles, balancing motherhood and work while forging independence and solidarity, **Chen Nan** reports.

Part of the Zhoushan Islands in China's Zhejiang province, hundreds of kilometers from the mainland, lies Qushan Island, home to fewer than 100,000 residents.

Life here revolves around a main road, which is a narrow stretch lined with schools, a clinic, a handful of shops, four bubble-tea cafes, and a lone coffeehouse. This modest cluster forms the island's "central business district". Yet, in the past year, it has become the stage for an extraordinary cast of women.

They are mothers averaging 40 years of age who have traded the predictable rhythms of domestic life for the hum of electric scooters and the uniform of the island's delivery service. Day after day, clad in orange and black, they navigate winding lanes and stair-stepped alleyways, threading the island together one takeout order at a time.

Once tied to roles defined by family and circumstance, such as wives awaiting fishermen at sea, and mothers trapped in part-time work, they now claim a new agency in these small, daily movements, quietly "rebuilding themselves" with every delivery.

From February to March this year, renowned Chinese photographer Xie Hailong, whose work has chronicled ordinary lives for 35 years, visited Qushan, drawn by curiosity.

"On an island surrounded by wind and sea, I wanted to see how these women could seize their own lives," he says. More than 10 of his photographs are being displayed in an exhibition titled *Seeing: Cities and Riders*, running from April 17 to the coming Sunday at public locations across 12 cities nationwide, capturing these women, who root themselves in a life defined not by circumstance, but by choice, against the rhythm of waves and wind.

Xie, 75, is known for a photo that he took in 1991, telling the story of Su Mingjuan, then 8 years old, with great sparkling eyes and a pencil in hand, in rural Jinzhai county, Anhui province. The photo became a household image after it was used as a poster for Project Hope, which was launched by the China Youth Development Foundation in 1989 and is dedicated to helping underprivileged children get an education.

Xie was inspired by a video online that he watched in 2025, featuring this group of women whose optimism, smiles and authenticity shone through every frame.

"I was captivated by their energy and found myself curious about this unique team — how, in such an isolated place, surrounded only by wind and sea, could they courageously choose their path, work tirelessly, and hold tightly to the life they wanted to live," the photographer says.

The first time he saw them in person, their vibe instantly drew him in. They were a diverse group of women, aged between 30 and 50, all dressed in bright orange uniforms. They gathered at the "CBD" of the island and chatted and laughed together.

"Their electric bikes were parked nearby, and they were like a burst of color against the backdrop of the island. When an order came in, one of them would zip off to deliver it, only to return afterward and join the group once again," says Xie.

During the days when their husbands were out at sea, these women became each other's family, supporting one another through thick and thin. When one of them had fewer orders, the others would step in and share theirs. If a newcomer was unfamiliar with the island's streets, the experienced riders would patiently guide her. Between orders, they would pull out little mirrors and lipsticks to touch up their makeup, reminding each other that, even in their uniforms, they never forgot the importance of feeling beautiful.

"It is a life that is both modest and deeply connected, where community comes first, and every little act of kindness carries weight. These women aren't just making deliveries; they are building lives for themselves and each other, grounded in determination, sisterhood and joy," the photographer says.

Among these women is Chen Lirong, born in 1997 and the youngest and fastest of Qushan's female riders. She is also the navigator, the one steering the small team through the chaos of rising orders. Each day begins at 7 am with the routine of family: delivering her two daughters to school. By 8:30 am, her delivery box is already brimming with orders. She rides until mid-afternoon, pauses to pick up her children, and then continues the cycle — juggling work and motherhood with the precision of someone who has spent years learning to adapt.

For Chen, deliveries are more than a job; it is the first work she has ever held that allows her to earn a living while tending to her children. Even at the busiest moments, she can glance at her phone, or quickly dash out an order and return home to care for her daughters.

In April 2025, when Taobao Shangou, or Taobao Instant Commerce, an online daily life services platform, officially launched operations on Qushan Island, Chen's reliability earned her the trust of Hu Gaoyang, the logistics manager. She became the leader of the all-female riders, guiding new mothers into the unfamiliar, physically demanding world of delivery work.

Initially, both Chen and Hu worried that the women, many long accustomed to full-time childcare or household work, might not adapt to the harsh rhythms of outdoor delivery. But as the first surge of orders hit, those doubts quickly vanished.

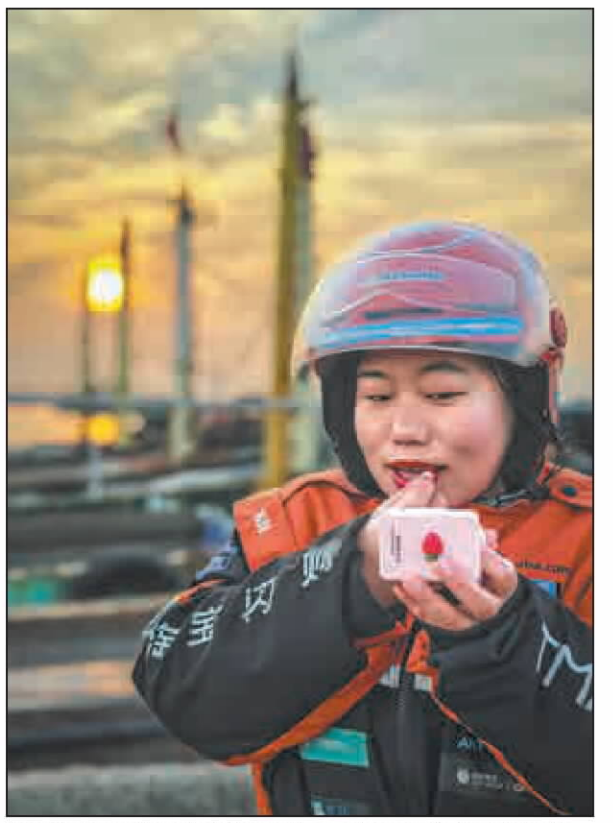
During the summer of 2025, order volumes skyrocketed by more than 1,000 percent. Some riders, brand-new to the job, handled 189 deliveries in a single day, and over the course of a month, completed more than 2,000.







> These women aren't just making deliveries; they are building lives for themselves and each other, grounded in determination, sisterhood and joy."
>
> **Xie Hailong,** veteran photographer



Top: A group of female delivery riders gathers on Qushan Island's wharf for a photo. **Middle left:** In the rapeseed fields outside their homes, team member Wang Jinrong (left) picks a yellow flower, placing it on team leader Chen Lirong's head. **Middle right:** On an island with almost no elevators, these female delivery riders climb four to five floors per order — sometimes scaling hundreds of stairs in a single day. **Above:** Thirty-three-year-old Xu Limei loves bright lipstick. PHOTOS BY XIE HAILONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Chen herself was no stranger to struggle. Born in Anhui, she had drifted from factory work in Guangdong province to follow her husband to Jiangsu province. By 2016, marriage and childbirth brought her to Qushan, where her husband became a fisherman and she a homemaker, bound to domestic responsibilities while he went out to sea. Early one March morning, photographer Xie captured a photograph of her sending her husband off at 4 am, the harbor dark and silent.

"There was no dramatic embrace," Xie recalls. "Just a quiet farewell. The silent care between them hit me harder than any posed shot. I found myself tearing up behind the camera."

Raising two daughters while managing household repairs, medical trips and family errands, Chen's desire to work and earn never waned. A previous job in a local factory ended when it shut down, leaving her life once again in a transitional state. But as a delivery rider, she found not only an income, but also her calling. She schedules her team around childcare needs: mothers with younger children ride the mid-shift, those with older children the early shift, while those without children cover the late hours. In high season, she stays late to help manage orders herself, ensuring no one is overburdened.

At 46, Hu Yingrong became the first female delivery rider to join Chen's team. Having lived on the island for nearly 20 years, she's seen her life unfold in ways she never expected. Her eldest daughter is now in college, while her youngest son is still in middle school.

For nearly a decade, Hu Yingrong searched for work on the island that would allow her to balance earning an income with taking care of her children. Before she became a delivery rider, she tried various jobs but found herself doing the laborious task of mending fishing nets.

For a decade, she was bound to those nets. While the men of the island used fishing nets to bring in the harvest, Hu believed that women on the island had their own "mission" — the work of repairing and maintaining them. When the boats returned from fishing, they were filled with nets that needed mending: some torn and some covered in small fish and shrimp that had to be removed.

When her children were on vacation or at school, she would work in a fishnet factory surrounded by piles of discarded nets alongside other women just like her. They worked from sunrise to sunset, often losing track of time.

Then, in 2025, a new opportunity appeared. She became the second female delivery rider on the island, marking the beginning of a new chapter in her life. Finally, she had a job with a base salary, and the harder she worked, the more she earned.

However, the transition wasn't easy. Unlike younger riders like Chen, Hu Yingrong struggled at first. When she joined the team, she was faced with the busy periods of July and August — times when the number of orders was overwhelming. She couldn't even read the delivery routes on her phone's navigation system because they looked like a tangle of branches and twigs, constantly splitting and extending. But with persistence and a willingness to learn, she quickly adapted.

The island is full of buildings without elevators, and she often found herself climbing staircases, sometimes multiple flights in a row.

"My legs would hurt so much," she says, recalling the physical toll. Yet, she pushed through and excelled during the peak seasons, earning over 10,000 yuan ($1,472) a month — figures she had never dreamed of while working in the factory. During the off-season, she could still make 7,000 to 8,000 yuan — an amount that once seemed impossible.

Now, she has carved out some time for herself. After sending her son to school in the morning, and finishing her deliveries, she returns home to do housework or tend to her small vegetable garden.

The exhibition also features photos of other delivery riders taken by other photographers. According to the photo exhibition's curator Yang Han, more than 2,000 works were submitted for the event, with nearly 100,000 riders participating in the voting to select 200 images to be exhibited. The total number of votes surpassed 1 million.

Alongside Xie, more than 50 other photographers are featured, including Zhang Boyuan who has taken pictures of Tang Qi, a rider in Chengdu, Sichuan province, who twice jumped into an icy river to save people.

"Many photographers and ordinary people pick up their cameras and phones to document the riders around them," Yang notes.

"If your pictures aren't good enough, you aren't close enough," Xie says, quoting famous war photographer Robert Capa. "The same applies to portrait photography — this 'closeness' refers to how close you are to the life and heart of the person you're photographing.

"During this shoot, I was moved to tears several times by the passion and optimism of these mothers. Each of them faces various difficulties at home, yet they still wear a smile on their faces. In the past, I've often revisited the children I photographed for Project Hope, checking in on them every few years to see if they're still in school. I hope that in the future, I'll have the chance to return to this small island, to the 'CBD' they've been waiting for, to that little milk tea shop, and see them still wearing smiles on their faces, with their lives getting better and better," Xie says.

Contact the writer at chennan@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:36 PM

SPORTS

SOCCER

Ancelotti: Neymar call to be made on form, not sentiment



As Brazil's coach gets set to announce his World Cup squad, questions remain over inclusion of 34-year-old Santos star

Neymar (center) of Brazilian side Santos fights for the ball with Matias Reali (left) and Manuel Insaurralde of Argentine club San Lorenzo during a Copa Sudamericana group-stage match at the Pedro Bidegain stadium in Buenos Aires in April. AFP

Carlo Ancelotti will walk into Monday's Brazil squad announcement with a nation peering over his shoulder and one burning question hanging in the Rio de Janeiro air: Neymar, or no Neymar?

The 34-year-old forward is Brazil's all-time leading scorer, but his place at the 2026 World Cup, which kicks off next month, hangs in the balance after years of injury troubles and an underwhelming return to Santos.

That leaves Ancelotti weighing romance against the cold, practical demands of fitness, as he lays out his high-intensity blueprint for the record five-time champion.

"When you have to choose, you have to consider many things," Ancelotti told reporters on Tuesday.

"Neymar is an important player for this country because of the talent he has always shown, but he has had problems and is working hard to recover. He has improved a lot recently, and is playing regularly. It is, obviously, not such an easy decision for me. We have to weigh up the pros and cons carefully."

Ancelotti hosted reporters at the Brazilian Football Confederation's headquarters in Rio, overlooking Barra da Tijuca, and spoke about the delicate selection call with the calm that has defined one of soccer's most decorated managerial careers.

The Italian is the only coach to have won league titles in all of Europe's big five leagues and has lifted a record five Champions League trophies as a manager, in addition to two as a player.

'Much loved'

Yet, few selection decisions will be picked apart quite like this one. Teammates have publicly lobbied for Neymar's inclusion, while supporters remain split between affection and anxiety over whether his body can still keep pace with his imagination.

"I know full well that Neymar is much loved, not only by the public, but also by the players," Ancelotti said.

"This is also a factor, because we have to consider the atmosphere that will surround Neymar's call-up. It's not as if I'm going to drop a bombshell in the dressing room. He's very well-liked, he's very much loved.

"I think it's normal for the players to express their opinion. I'm grateful to everyone who has given me advice; I thank you all.

"But, ultimately, the right person to make this decision, the one best placed to do so, is me."

Asked whether the players' appeals had influenced him, Ancelotti said they mattered only in one respect: they underlined that Neymar would not disrupt the group.

For Ancelotti, the dressing room is not the concern. The circus outside it may be.

"The internal atmosphere, I don't think it will affect the team at all. The atmosphere is a very positive, very clean one, and no matter which player is in the squad, it will remain positive and clean right to the end," Ancelotti said.

"But I can't control the external atmosphere and what the media says."

'Improved'

The bigger question may be whether or not Neymar still fits the soccer Ancelotti wants: four forwards who can run, press and track back, a demanding template for a player who has struggled to string together a sustained run of matches.



Carlo Ancelotti

The Italian, however, said Neymar had shown signs of progress.

"He has improved his fitness a lot in recent matches," Ancelotti said.

"He has played some very good matches lately and he can maintain a high intensity in a match, but there are matches and matches..."

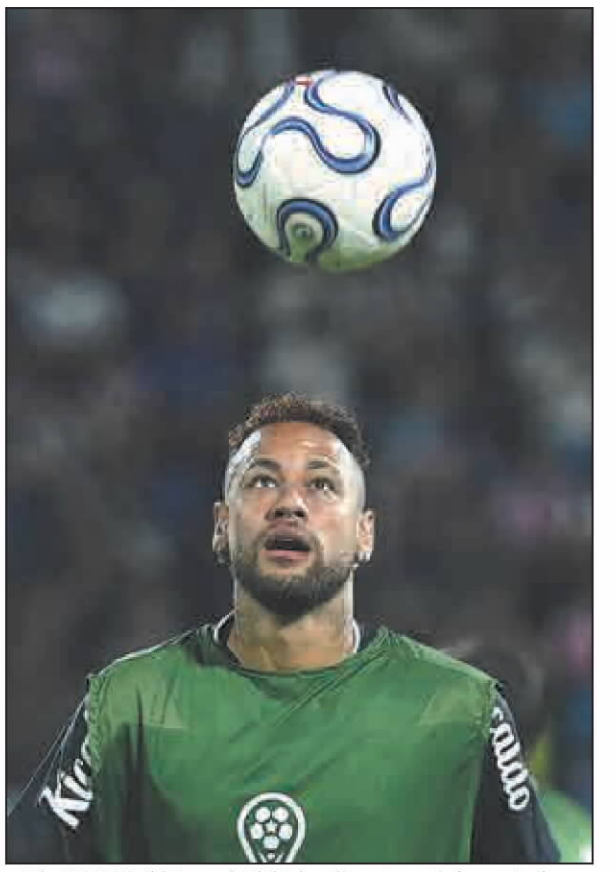
Ancelotti said the decision whether or not to select Neymar would be his alone.

"I haven't been pressured by anyone to call up Neymar. I have complete autonomy," he said. "The decision will be 100 percent professional. I will only take into account how he is performing as a footballer. Nothing else.

"Can I draw up a perfect squad? Impossible! But I can draw up a squad with fewer mistakes than others who might do so. Of that I am certain."

REUTERS





The 34-year-old Neymar is Brazil's all-time leading scorer, but his place at the 2026 World Cup, which kicks off next month, hangs in the balance after years of injury troubles and an underwhelming return to Santos, though he has shown signs of progress recently. REUTERS / AFP

With 30 days to go, LA has everything in place for the World Cup — except the pitch

INGLEWOOD, California — With 30 days to go until its first World Cup match, Los Angeles has the transportation and food nailed down. The playing surface, though? Not just yet.

The United States opens its campaign at SoFi Stadium (to be known as Los Angeles Stadium) against Paraguay on June 12, the first of eight matches to be played at the NFL stadium in Inglewood.

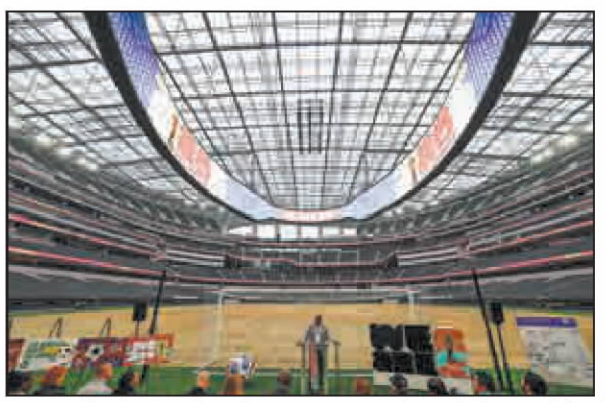
On Tuesday, though, the field was still dirt.

That was set to change on Wednesday, when, after a 1,600-mile trip in refrigerated trucks from Washington state, sod was due to arrive, ready to be laid over the next two days.

"This surface is the players' stage," said Otto Benedict, senior vice-president of facilities and campus operation for SoFi Stadium.

Construction on the field began April 13 after the stadium hosted a Monster truck event.

The stadium modified the field shared by the NFL's Los Angeles Rams and Los Angeles Chargers in two phases. Auxiliary space and wider dimensions were created by removing corner seats to meet FIFA specifications, and a sophisticated irrigation system was installed to maintain the grass.





Los Angeles' SoFi Stadium hosts an event marking 30 days until the World Cup on Tuesday, featuring themed desserts of a World Cup trophy made of chocolate mousse and a soccer ball filled with vanilla mousse, that will be available to fans during the tournament. AFP / AP

"To be the place where the energy first ignites, where the home crowd gets to set the tone for the rest of the tournament is a responsibility we don't take lightly," Benedict said.

Construction, landscape, grass and engineering crews were applauded by local World Cup organizers and community ambassador Magic Johnson, who pointed out his suite where he'll be watching.

"When you think about the financial impact it's going to have on Los Angeles, it's going to be amazing," said Johnson, who is a co-owner of LAFC in Major League Soccer and the Washington Spirit of the National Women's Soccer League.

Tours of the stadium during the tournament are being sold for $86.50 and premium seats, suites and hospitality packages are still available.

Fans availing themselves of those tickets will have access to a variety of food and drink options, from lime marinated shrimp and spiced lamb rack, to aged ribeye cap with bordelaise and mashed potatoes.

There is also a range of themed desserts, including a World Cup trophy made of chocolate mousse, raspberry, chocolate crunch and chocolate sponge.

Metro debuted special edition TAP cards featuring three FIFA-themed designs, 17 country-specific designs, four FIFA collector cards, including a light-up card, and a collector's box.

"We want to provide a system that is safe, fast and fun," LA Metro CEO Stephanie Wiggins said.

Metro is working with 11 other transit lines in the region to offer direct-to-stadium bus services for $3.75 from 15 park-and-ride lots in the LA and Orange counties. Reserved parking lots range in price from $55 to more than $100. Fans can access 300 dedicated buses to every match in an effort to avoid disrupting regular services.

The official FIFA Fan Festival will be held from June 11-14 at Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum with big screens showing games. Ten fan zones around LA county will host activities and watch parties.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:38 PM

Power of one
AI tools fuel rapid growth of single-person entities
BUSINESS, PAGE 11



New quantum computer breaks speed record
CHINA, PAGE 12



Matching steps
Ballet production blends classical dance with Uygur folk heritage
LIFE SHANGHAI, PAGE 14

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日報 FRIDAY, MAY 15, 2026



President Xi Jinping hosts a banquet at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Thursday to welcome US President Donald Trump, who is on a state visit to China. YAN YAN / XINHUA

China, US set out new vision for ties

Building constructive bilateral relations of strategic stability agreed to at Beijing summit

By **CAO DESHENG** and **ZHANG YUNBI**

China and the United States will work toward building a constructive bilateral relationship of strategic stability, a new vision that President Xi Jinping and visiting US President Donald Trump agreed was how the world's two largest economies should handle their relations.

The two leaders on Friday met for tea at the Zhongnanhai compound, which Xi said is the place where the Chinese leaders work and live, "including myself".

The compound used to be part of the imperial garden, and there is a lot of history here, Xi said, adding that one of the trees he and Trump admired during their walk is 490 years old.

Xi said he would send the seeds of the Chinese roses they saw in the garden to Trump as a gift.

During their summit on Thursday at the Great Hall of the People in the Chinese capital, Xi said that China is committed to the steady, sound and sustainable development of China-US relations.

The new vision will provide strategic guidance for China-US relations over the next three years and beyond, and should be welcomed by the people of both countries and the international community, he said.

Xi said that "constructive strategic stability" means positive stability with cooperation as the mainstay, sound stability with moderate competition, constant stability with manageable differences, and enduring stability with promises of peace.

Building a constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability should not be a mere slogan, but concrete action taken by both sides toward the same goal, he added.

Xi expressed his readiness to work with Trump to set the course and steer the giant ship of China-US relations, in order to make 2026 a historic and landmark year that opens a new chapter in bilateral ties.

He also urged the US to handle the Taiwan question with extra caution, saying that it is the most important issue in China-US relations.

He emphasized that if it is handled properly, the bilateral relationship will enjoy overall stability. Otherwise, the two countries will have clashes and even conflicts, putting the entire relationship in great jeopardy, he said.

Xi also called on both countries to make better use of communication channels in the political, diplomatic and military-to-military fields, and expand exchanges and cooperation in areas such as the economy and trade, health, agriculture, tourism, people-to-people ties and law enforcement.

Trump called Xi "a great leader" and China "a great country", saying that he has tremendous respect for the Chinese president and the Chinese people.

Noting that the meeting between Xi and himself was the biggest summit the world was watching, Trump said he will work together with Xi to strengthen communication and cooperation, properly handle differences, make bilateral relations better than ever and embrace a "fantastic" future.

He said that the US and China are the most important and most powerful countries in the world. Together they can do a lot of big and good things for the two countries and the world, Trump said.

Su Xiaohui, an associate research fellow at the China Institute of International Studies, said that the Sino-US summit once again served as a testament to the pivotal role of head-of-state diplomacy, and showed the remarkable importance both countries attach to bilateral relations.

The new vision of building a constructive relationship of strategic stability is the latest reminder of China's proactive approach in shaping its ties with the US, she said.

Diao Daming, professor with Renmin University of China, said the new vision could usher in a new phase in China-US relations and help the two nations explore the right way to get along with each other in the new era.

Diao pointed out that bilateral ties are expected to remain generally stable for a period of time if the US manages to carry forward and keep endorsing this new vision as a bilateral consensus.

Su said that both countries shared a need for strategic stability.

"Constructive strategic stability does not mean that China and the US have no differences. Given the different national conditions of the two countries, differences are inevitable," Su said.

"However, when it comes to managing these differences and maintaining strategic stability, both sides need to work together toward the same goal. This is a test of wisdom for both nations."

Diao said that taking cooperation as the mainstay of the relationship means that although both sides have their own economic and trade interests, the relationship is generally mutually beneficial.

"We believe that competition in these areas should remain within reasonable bounds. The competition should be healthy, allowing both sides to achieve development while supporting each other, instead of a life-and-death struggle or a battle for victory," he said.

Seeking "sound stability with moderate competition" means the entire landscape of China-US relations should not be defined by "strategic competition", Diao said.

"In recent years, bilateral relations have remained generally stable and avoided a free fall. The next step should be to build on this progress," he added.

Meanwhile, the Chinese Foreign Ministry reiterated its position on the Iran situation in a press release on Friday. The statement was released after the two heads of state exchanged their views on major international and regional issues, including the situation in the Middle East, during the summit.

The ministry's spokesperson said that finding an early way out of the conflict serves the interests of both the US and Iran, as well as countries in the region and the rest of the world.

China always believes that dialogue and negotiation are the right way forward, and the use of force is a dead end, the spokesperson said.

It is important to reach a comprehensive and lasting ceasefire as soon as possible, enable peace and stability to return to the Middle East and Gulf region at an early date, and lay the foundation for building a sustainable security architecture for the region, the spokesperson added.

Contact the writers at caodesheng@chinadaily.com.cn

Inside

• Editorial, **page 10**
• See more, **pages 2-7**

Heritage site visit adds another dimension to dialogue

By **MO JINGXI**
mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn

The more than 600-year-old Temple of Heaven in Beijing provided a symbolic setting on Thursday for President Xi Jinping and US President Donald Trump as they posed for photos at the site after their closely watched talks earlier in the day.

The visit to the UNESCO World Heritage site added a cultural dimension to the summit between the leaders of the world's two largest economies.

Built in 1420 during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), the architectural marvel welcomed the two leaders on an early summer afternoon, as ancient cypresses stood in quiet grace and a gentle breeze refreshed the air.

Xi greeted Trump outside the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests, the Temple of Heaven's iconic, triple-eaved, blue-tiled landmark.

The two presidents walked up the steps and entered the hall, where they viewed its architectural features, from the precise fittings of its mortise-and-tenon joints and interlocking wooden brackets to the seamless integration of astronomical calendar concepts with its structure.

In the hall, they appreciated the concept of harmony among all things and respect for the law of nature.

Xi noted that in 2017, he and Trump toured the Palace Museum along Beijing's Central Axis.

The Temple of Heaven dates from the same period as the Palace Museum and embodies the idea that Heaven is round and Earth is square, reflecting the view of the universe and guiding philosophy of the Chinese people, he said.

Xi told Trump that ancient Chinese rulers would hold prayer ceremonies at the site for prosperity of the nation, happiness of the people and favorable weather for good harvests. It embodies the traditional Chinese ethos that people are the foundation of a country and only when the people lead a good life can the country thrive, he said.

*See **Summit,** page 2*

www.chinadailyglobal.com

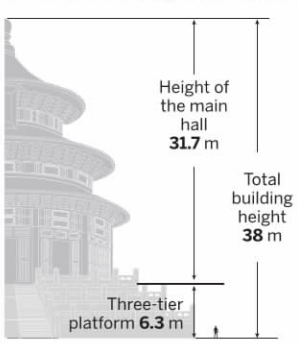
A member of ANN

China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

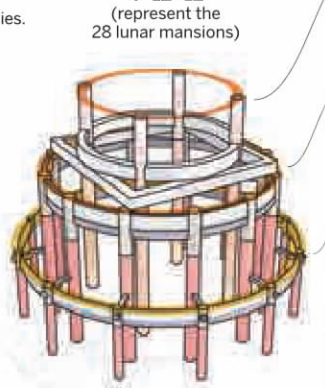
Newsstand prices:
US $1 Canada C$1; UK 1£ EU 1€ Kenya 50 Kenya Shilling Asia Pacific: Thailand 120 thb; Philippines 120 php; Myanmar 2000 kyat; Japan 210 yen; Dubai 10 dirham; Pakistan 300 rupee

CULTURAL MEANINGS OF THE TEMPLE OF HEAVEN

First built in 1420, the Temple of Heaven is China's largest and best-preserved Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) era complex, meant for heaven-worshiping rituals and ceremonies.



The 28 columns
4+12+12
(represent the 28 lunar mansions)



4 Inner Ring Dragon Well Columns
(represent the four seasons)
Height **19.2** m
Column diameter **1.2** m

12 Middle Ring Golden Columns
(represent the 12 lunar months)
Height **15** m
Column diameter **1** m

12 Outer Ring Eaves Columns
(represent the 12 two-hour periods)
Height **12** m
Column diameter **0.8** m

Together they represent the **24** solar terms.

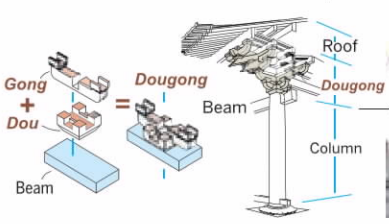
The three-tier platform is made of marble.



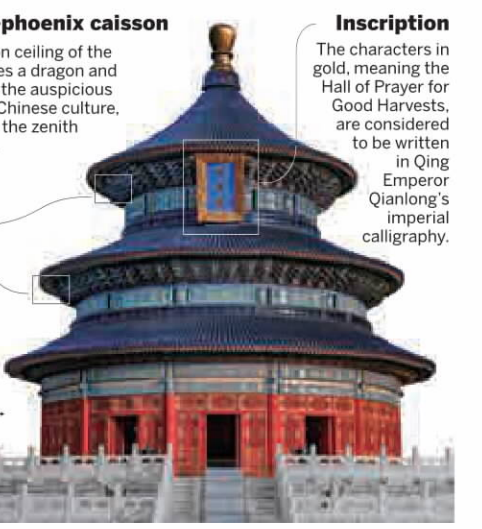


Dragon-phoenix caisson
The caisson ceiling of the hall features a dragon and a phoenix, the auspicious totems in Chinese culture, flying over the zenith of heaven.

Dougong
Interlocking wooden brackets assembled without nails showcase ancient Chinese craftsmanship.



Inscription
The characters in gold, meaning the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests, are considered to be written in Qing Emperor Qianlong's imperial calligraphy.



GRAPHICS BY TIAN CHI, JORGE CORTES, MUKESH MOHANAN, WANG KAIHAO / CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:38 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:38 PM

SINO-US SUMMIT

Xi: As partners, China and US can help each other succeed

Nations 'must make it work' to advance global well-being, he says

By ZHAO JIA
zhaojia@chinadaily.com.cn





Left: President Xi Jinping addresses a banquet held on Thursday to welcome US President Donald Trump at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. LI XIANG / XINHUA **Right:** US President Donald Trump makes a speech at the welcoming banquet on Thursday in Beijing. BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI / AFP

Achieving the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and making America great again can go hand in hand, President Xi Jinping said on Thursday, adding that China and the United States can help each other succeed and advance the well-being of the whole world.

Xi made the remarks when delivering a toast at a welcoming banquet hosted at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing in honor of visiting US President Donald Trump.

As this year marks the start of China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) for economic and social development, Xi said that over 1.4 billion Chinese people, drawing on the rich heritage of the nation's more than 5,000-year-old civilization, are advancing Chinese modernization on all fronts through high-quality development.

He noted that this year marks the 250th anniversary of US independence, and over 300 million people in the US are reinvigorating the spirit of patriotism, innovation and enterprise, embarking on a new journey for the development of their country.

"The peoples of China and the US are both great peoples," Xi said.

Looking back on the history of China-US relations, Xi emphasized that 55 years ago, the two countries engaged in Ping-Pong Diplomacy. "The door that had remained frozen for over 20 years was opened," he said, describing that diplomatic endeavor as a milestone in contemporary international relations.

Since then, through numerous examples of mutual openness and cooperation, China and the US have continuously written tales of friendship, he added.

Under the new circumstances, Xi said that he and Trump have held multiple meetings and phone calls, working to maintain the overall stability of China-US relations.

He said they both believe that the China-US relationship is "the most important bilateral relationship in the world", and that the two countries "must make it work and never mess it up".

"Both China and the US stand to gain from cooperation and lose from confrontation," Xi said, emphasizing that the two countries should be partners, not rivals.

Xi added that he and Trump have agreed to promote steady, sound and sustainable development of bilateral ties and bring more peace, prosperity and progress to the world.

Reviewing the history of China-US relations, Xi said that the key to the steady development of bilateral relations lies in whether the two sides can uphold mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation.

The China-US relationship concerns the well-being of more than 1.7 billion people in both countries and affects the interests of over 8 billion people across the world, Xi noted. "Both sides should rise up to this historic responsibility and steer the giant ship of China-US relations forward steadily and in the right direction," he said.

Trump, in his toast, thanked Xi for the gracious reception accorded to him. He described the day as "fantastic" and the visit as important, adding that both sides engaged in positive and constructive conversations.

The people of the US and China share mutual appreciation and respect, and their friendship goes back a long way, Trump said.

He said the relationship between the US and China is the most consequential bilateral relationship in the world and that, together, the two countries have the opportunity to create a better future for the world.



Business leaders from the United States, including Tim Cook (left) of Apple and Jensen Huang (second from left) of Nvidia, arrive on Thursday at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing to attend a group meeting with Premier Li Qiang. WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY

Country to open door wider to foreign businesses

By CAO DESHENG
caodesheng@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping said on Thursday that China will open its door wider to the world, and it welcomes more mutually beneficial cooperation with the United States.

Xi made the remarks when meeting with US entrepreneurs accompanying US President Donald Trump on his state visit to China. The meeting took place during talks between Xi and Trump at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

Trump asked each of the leaders to present themselves to Xi, saying that he encourages them to expand their cooperation with China.

Xi noted that US enterprises are deeply involved in China's reform and opening-up, and both sides benefit from this engagement.

He said that US companies will have even broader prospects in China going forward.

The business leaders accompanying Trump include Chief Executive Officer of Tesla and SpaceX Elon Musk, Apple CEO Tim Cook, Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang, BlackRock CEO Larry Fink, Boeing CEO Kelly Ortberg and Goldman Sachs CEO David Solomon, among others.

On Thursday afternoon, Premier Li Qiang also met with the US entrepreneurs. He emphasized that a stable and predictable economic and trade relationship between China and the US serves the interests of both countries and the world.

Li said that amid growing instability and uncertainty in the current international situation, it is of great significance for both countries to maintain open and unimpeded dialogue and communication to sustain a stable and healthy bilateral relationship, as this injects certainty and positive energy into global peace and development.

Noting that the economic and trade cooperation between China and the US is large scale, Li said that strengthening cooperation can promote mutual benefit and win-win outcomes and contribute to global economic growth.

As the world's two largest economies, he said, China and the US should work together to lead in promoting open cooperation, manage their differences properly and maintain their economic and trade relationship, serving as a stabilizing and constructive force in the world.

A Chinese economy with steady growth will provide more opportunities for enterprises from all countries, the premier said.

Li highlighted the prominent feature of the Chinese market in terms of scale, growth and stability, saying that new demands are being rapidly unleashed and the new drivers of growth are being strengthened, leading to sustained and positive momentum for economic growth.

The nation welcomes more foreign enterprises to explore the Chinese market and share in the development opportunities, he said.

The premier expressed the Chinese government's unwavering commitment to upholding a stable and open policy environment, and said that China will continue to expand high-standard opening-up, provide high-quality services to foreign enterprises and improve policies.

He expressed the hope that more US enterprises will continue to expand their presence in the Chinese market, strengthen the bond of mutually beneficial China-US cooperation and serve as a bridge to promote communication and dialogue between the two countries, and help US people from all walks of life view China's development more objectively and rationally.

The US business executives emphasized the critical importance of US-China relations, saying that the successful meeting between the leaders of the two countries has injected new momentum into US-China economic and trade cooperation.

The US business community is optimistic about China's development prospects and positively views China's ongoing efforts to advance high-standard opening-up and create a world-class business environment, they said, adding that they are willing to expand cooperation with China and make greater efforts to enhance mutual understanding and cooperation between the two countries.

New vision of stability guiding relationship

WORLD WATCH
By Anthony Moretti

What people all over the globe want to see during this state visit is the identification of areas of cooperation that will advance bilateral stability between the two nations and boost global peace prospects.

The smiles that could be seen when United States President Donald Trump arrived in Beijing on Wednesday for a state visit were again on display hours later when he met with President Xi Jinping.

The world wants China and the US to be partners. Therefore, what people all over the globe want to see during this state visit is the identification of areas of cooperation that will advance bilateral stability between the two nations and boost global peace prospects. After the meeting, there is every reason to believe that such a framework is being created.

At one point, the Chinese president said that the two countries should work together to make 2026 "a historic and landmark year" for China-US relations.

Chinese officials have consistently noted that ideas such as mutual respect and win-win cooperation are essential ingredients of diplomacy in the modern world. The global community will respond positively knowing that respect was regularly on display during the state visit.

China has shown time and time again in recent years that it is committed to stable, healthy and sustainable China-US relations. Due to the "strategic guidance" that President Xi said both presidents could offer their governments and other officials, there is more reassurance.

This is exactly what the global community wanted to see: China and the US creating the necessary structure as they have agreed to work toward building a bilateral relationship of "constructive strategic stability" to make the world a better place.

As Xi said, the "constructive strategic stability" should be positive stability with cooperation as the mainstay, sound stability with moderate competition, constant stability with manageable differences, and enduring stability with promises of peace.

Such a structure is crucial at a time when the world is facing fragmentation, unilateralism, tensions and even wars.

The foundation for that structure? Willingness for cooperation; competition that is managed creatively and not destructively; an understanding that differences must be discussed openly; and a firm commitment to peace.

Similarities, not differences, should define the bilateral relationship and allow for a brighter future. Moving forward, it is incumbent on both governments to consistently deliver a message that as major powers, they are determined to be positive stewards for the world for this generation and future generations.

President Trump said that he expects a positive future for China-US relations as well. The global community will breathe easier if it is convinced that the two countries can work toward closer cooperation and more commitments in resolving differences, which will benefit bilateral relations and contribute to the stability of the world at large.

This state visit, if it remains on its trajectory, could very well be remembered for giving people the hope that new vision of constructive strategic stability will provide well-needed guidance for bilateral relations and the well-being of the international community.

While the atmosphere in Beijing was positive on Thursday, concrete results were expected to follow as the state visit continues.

It is important that the two sides first work through equal-footed consultations to bridge their differences and find more fields of common interest. As the Chinese president said in a meeting with US business leaders accompanying Trump, US businesses have been deeply involved in China's reform and opening-up, which benefits both sides. He promised that China's opening-up will be deepened, and China welcomes business cooperation from the US side on the basis of mutual benefit.

Moreover, what might a "historic and landmark year" look like? Imagine China and the US creating an environment in which they unceasingly work together to tackle the world's most challenging problems: global unrest, climate change, food insecurity, the potential for improper use of artificial intelligence, income inequality, the next world health crisis, barriers to free trade and more. Granted the two presidents will not find solutions to all of those issues in just two days, but they can — and so far have — set the right tone. Sustaining the positive momentum displayed at Thursday's meeting in Beijing will be critical. The world is eager to see that it does.

As always, the open hand of friendship prevails over confrontation and estrangement.

The author is an associate professor in the Communication and Organizational Leadership Department at Robert Morris University in the US state of Pennsylvania. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily or Robert Morris University.

Summit: Temple of Heaven visit continues a tradition in diplomacy

From page 1

Xi said the Communist Party of China has inherited and carried forward the people-centered philosophy rooted in Chinese civilization, and has always adhered to its fundamental commitment of serving the people wholeheartedly, thereby gaining the firm support and heartfelt endorsement of the people.

Trump said he still has vivid memories of his 2017 visit to the Palace Museum.

The Temple of Heaven, which has stood magnificently for more than six centuries, showcases the fine art of classical Chinese architecture as well as the splendid and profound traditional culture, he said.

"It's great. Great place. Incredible. China is beautiful," Trump said.

Both the United States and China are great countries, and their peoples are both great and wise, Trump said, adding that the two countries should deepen mutual understanding and enhance friendship between their peoples.

The Temple of Heaven visit on Thursday continued a tradition in China-US diplomacy in which culturally significant venues are used to convey messages beyond the formal agenda.

Trump's visit to the Temple of Heaven marked the first time in 51 years that a sitting US president had visited the landmark since then-US president Gerald Ford toured it during his visit to China in 1975.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:38 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:38 PM

SINO-US SUMMIT



President Xi Jinping and US President Donald Trump pose for a photo on Friday at the Zhongnanhai compound in Beijing. EVAN VUCCI / REUTERS

HISTORIC BEIJING SUMMIT



President Xi and US President Trump pose for a photo in front of the Qiniandian, or the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests, while visiting the Temple of Heaven in Beijing on Thursday. SHEN HONG / XINHUA



President Xi greets US President Trump outside the Great Hall of the People prior to their talks in Beijing on Thursday. HUANG JINGWEN / XINHUA



President Xi holds a welcoming ceremony for US President Trump outside the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Thursday. ZHAI JIANLAN / XINHUA



President Xi holds talks with US President Trump at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Thursday. YIN BOGU / XINHUA



Members of the delegation accompanying US President Trump on his state visit to China wait ahead of the welcoming ceremony in Beijing on Thursday. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:38 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:38 PM

SINO-US SUMMIT

Exchange programs offer youths firsthand experience

By **XU LIN** in Beijing
and **CHEN YE** in Hangzhou



US students experience traditional Chinese rubbing in April during the 3rd Sino-US Youth Connect Season launched by Wenzhou-Kean University. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

University students from the United States are making rubbings from inscriptions on wooden tablets. They carefully apply ink and press paper to create prints, experiencing the intangible cultural heritage firsthand.

Over the years, Wenzhou-Kean University in Wenzhou, Zhejiang province, has offered various exchange programs. Students from the US visit museums, companies, and villages, experience cultural heritage, join handicraft workshops and interact with Chinese peers.

"My exchange experience in China was life-changing. I've come to not only love Chinese culture but also the hospitable people," said Zinnyah Nutornti, who's an undergraduate in an exchange program at Wenzhou-Kean University.

Nutornti from Kean University in the US joined a two-week summer exchange program at Wenzhou-Kean University in 2025 and eager to experience more of life in China, she later applied for a semester-long exchange.

She recently took a weekend trip to Hangzhou in Zhejiang province with her roommate.

"Words can't even begin to describe the immeasurable amount of joy, exploring the mountains and West Lake. I became so overwhelmed with emotion. There were multiple moments when I had to stop in the middle of our trip to think about how much more life has to offer. After returning, I began to consider moving to China to settle down," she said.

She said such opportunities open doors for the younger generation to explore the world and build real connections.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the official signing of the cooperation agreement between Wenzhou University and Kean University to jointly establish Wenzhou-Kean University.

Back in 2006, President Xi Jinping, then secretary of the Communist Party of China Zhejiang Provincial Committee, witnessed the signing ceremony in the US.

In November 2023, Xi announced an initiative to invite 50,000 young people from the US to China for exchange and study programs over a five-year period.

In early 2024, the university responded to the call with a plan to welcome 1,000 teenagers from the US to China over the next five years, and it has already hosted 501 young people from the US.

Pan Jianzhong, chair of the board of directors of the university, said China-US youth exchanges have shifted from "having exchanges" to "willing to engage", and from "visiting China" to "immersing themselves in China". It proves that when young people challenge stereotypes and reach out to each other, their connection can become the most vibrant and solid foundation for China-US people-to-people friendship.

Taishun county in Wenzhou is known for its well-preserved wooden arch bridges, built with traditional Chinese mortise-and-tenon joints that require no nails or rivets.

In 2024, traditional designs and practices for building Chinese wooden arch bridges were transferred from UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding to its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

In 2021, Wenzhou-Kean University started the Kean Twin Bridge Program to promote the culture of Chinese arch bridges abroad. The university has organized students from the US to visit Wenzhou's covered bridges, produced a bilingual short video about them, and held an artificial intelligence video contest on covered bridges.

"Through this concrete cultural symbol, we aim to give young people from the US a more direct sense of the Chinese culture," Pan said. He added that they encourage joint research on the culture and protection of covered bridges, with resources from both universities in China and the US.

Matthew Wood, lecturer of graphic design at Wenzhou-Kean University, teaches students to create three-dimensional reconstructions of the ancient covered bridges in Wenzhou. "Students can learn practical skills, local history and the importance of preserving cultural heritage at the same time," he said.

"China boasts rich and unique regional cultures. Wenzhou's covered bridges are aesthetically pleasing and integrated into the surrounding mountains and rivers; they still function as social hubs for locals."

Contact the writers at xulin@chinadaily.com.cn

US martial arts enthusiast makes the right moves

By **CHEN MEILING** in Beijing
and **LIU KUN** in Wuhan



Jake Pinnick practices tai chi at the Wudang Mountain in Shiyan, Central China's Hubei province, in October.
CAO LINGLING / FOR CHINA DAILY

"Time is silent, yet it never fails those who keep moving forward," Jake Pinnick said on RedNote.

Wearing a loose-sleeved training uniform with a flowing black beard and a topknot tied up with a hairpin, Pinnick, 36, from the United States, told an unusual story of "Becoming Chinese".

At Wudang Mountain in Shiyan, Hubei province, Pinnick was seen guiding a group of students practicing martial arts. The mountain is one of China's most famous and sacred Taoist sites, where Pinnick is known as a famous foreign coach.

He first demonstrated the sword routines once, then let the students follow along. He moved among the crowd, correcting each one's posture one by one.

In his view, Wudang martial arts are never meant to compete against or defeat others, but to achieve balance between inner spirit and outer strength, and integrate hardness with softness.

"They are supposed to develop you into a morally better person through some kind of character building," said Pinnick, whose fans have surpassed 2 million online.

Over the last decade in China, Pinnick has completely adapted to local culture. Now he likes drinking hot tea. He plays a vertical bamboo flute instead of the piano. He refuses waiters' kind offers of a knife and fork. Over the years, even his hair and beard have turned black, which, in his explanation, is that "each land shapes its people". He is proud of his Chinese name Li Zigen, which was given by his master.

Though facing doubts from some netizens, he never regrets his choice.

"I hope that, as a foreigner who has studied and inherited traditional Chinese culture in China, I can promote understanding and exchanges between different cultures. I want to let people from all over the world appreciate the charm of traditional Chinese culture and benefit from it," he said.

And his experience has proven that what began with a teenager's kung fu dream has borne fruitful results in promoting China-US friendship.

A fan of Jackie Chan and Bruce Lee, Pinnick had always wanted to learn "real kung fu from its roots". Fascinated by Yuan Shimao's graceful movements with the Eight Immortals Staff, a classic long weapon routine in Wudang martial arts, on YouTube, he finally made up his mind to come to China and explore the world of martial arts in 2010.

At that time, Yuan, the 15th-generation inheritor of the Wudang Sanfeng School, was recruiting students for a five-year international traditional martial arts program. He spent over a year arranging his university studies and flew to China.

"Back then, I could only speak a few simple Chinese (sentences). I could neither read nor understand the language. Every time the train stopped at a station, I grew extremely nervous and kept asking others: 'Is this Wudang Mountain?'" he said.

Twenty-four students from countries, including the US, Australia, Canada and Germany, were admitted to this class.

"It was so hard to begin with," Pinnick said, adding he had a hard time meeting the demands of the training because of his lack of flexibility and suppleness. "I couldn't straighten my back, and I couldn't do the splits at all."

He woke up at 5:30 am every morning to practice, irrespective of rain or shine, had his body hit with bamboo strips to build resilience, and was punished with palm strikes and horse stance squats for making mistakes.

By repeating every move dozens, or even hundreds of times each day, putting in far more effort than most people, Pinnick gradually realized martial arts are not merely a set of routines, but a philosophy of cultivating both inner character and physical form.

"In the past, I always insisted on winning every argument. Now I am able to control and calm my emotions. My master taught me: Cultivate virtue before practicing martial arts. For example, the tai chi opening form requires moving with both arms as if holding water. Though it looks like simple physical training, it actually teaches humility and tolerance."

Yuan, his teacher, said many students learn kung fu out of temporary curiosity. Over the years, he had seen countless students arrive full of excitement, only to leave dejected and discouraged.

Despite the language barrier and vast cultural differences, Pinnick's burning passion for martial arts as well as his perseverance deeply moved Yuan.

During this period on the mountain, he met his future wife, a Chinese woman. They got married in 2014. They have a daughter.

After completing the program, he went back to the US with his family, only to find himself "suspended between Chinese and American culture", so he decided to go back to Wudang Mountain in 2018 to teach and promote Wudang culture.

With encouragement from his wife, in 2020 Pinnick started posting videos about martial arts, vertical bamboo flute performances, and interpretations of Taoism philosophy, which went viral on social media platforms, attracting a lot of fans.

By now, he has taught some 700 foreign students, with the oldest studying for 8 years. Some visited Wudang Mountain to seek in-person instruction.

In April last year, he secured China's Foreign Permanent Resident ID Card.

Currently, he is busy preparing for a new international summer camp. "I hope my own experience can inspire more people to pursue their dreams. Whether it is a passion for martial arts or a desire to explore different cultures, everyone should try and persist," he said.

Contact the writers at chenmeiling@chinadaily.com.cn

WWII legacy honors peace and friendship

Internment camp's painful history also shows resilience in shared humanity

By **YANG RAN** in Beijing
and **ZHAO RUIXUE** in Jinan

While the name Auschwitz echoes through history as a grim symbol of Nazi atrocities during World War II, another camp, half a world away in China's Shandong province, holds a story less known.

In the city of Weifang, once known as Weixian or Weihsien, stands the Courtyard of the Happy Way. Established as a church, school and hospital complex by a US missionary in 1882, Japanese forces converted it into the Weihsien Internment Camp to imprison foreign nationals in China during WWII.

Unlike the well-documented concentration camps of Europe, the camp in China has remained largely obscure, even for the families of those who endured it.

For John Stanley, a history professor at Kutztown University of Pennsylvania, the journey into this forgotten history began in 1991, when he accompanied his father, Charles A. Stanley, on a visit to the Weihsien Internment Camp site.

Charles A. Stanley was interned at Weihsien with his parents in 1943 when he was just 10 months old. He remained there until US soldiers and a Chinese translator liberated the camp in 1945.

But this part of his family's history had been shrouded in silence. "The camp wasn't discussed when I was growing up and, according to my father, it didn't come up much with his mother or father either," John Stanley explained. "I believe that many have left that part of their lives behind and do not wish to engage with it."

Stanley's own journey to uncover this history began in 1991 during a visit to the site to dedicate a memorial to Eric Liddell, the 1924 Olympic 400-meter champion who died of illness in the camp. Liddell was one of at least 31 internees who died during imprisonment due to a severe shortage of supplies and medical care.

"It was that trip that started my interest in studying China and East Asia more generally," said Stanley. "In all of my research, I learned much more about the makeup of the internees and the role of the local Chinese population."

The camp was set up in retaliation for the US internment of Japanese nationals and Japanese Americans following the attack on Pearl Harbor. Over 2,000 civilians from 25 Allied nations were rounded up across China and imprisoned in the largest internment camp in Asia.

The internees include some prominent figures like Arthur W. Hummel Jr, who later became the second US ambassador to China. Hummel managed to escape before the camp's liberation with the aid of local Chinese.

Stanley emphasized that the help from the local Chinese "served to keep up the spirits of the internees as news became harder to find during the later years of the war".

Most notable were their efforts to communicate with the internees and set up a 'Black Market' for foodstuffs they could not get at the camp store, or they were short on, he said.

"Eggs were the most famous, but I believe that at one point, a live chicken was thrown over the camp wall," he added.

Touching story

Zhang Zhiren, a Europe-based writer who spent years researching and writing a book on the camp, said: "The bravery of the local Chinese, who risked their lives to help the foreign internees, is the most touching part of the story."

Zhang's book, *Weihsien West Civilians Concentration Camp: 1943-1945*, documents the cruel treatment of Allied civilians in the camp, their efforts to survive in extreme conditions and the acts of bravery and kindness of local Chinese to help the foreigners.

Zhang highlighted the story of Zhang Xingtai, a local villager who worked as a latrine cleaner in the camp. "The Japanese thought of him as just an ordinary farmer, not a threat, but didn't realize he became a 'bridge of information'," Zhang said. The internees were cut off from news of the outside. "Risking their lives, Zhang Xingtai and his son brought news from the outside in and smuggled information out. The news of Japan's defeat was passed on by them at great risk."

Despite their own hardships, the local people gathered food to send to the starving internees, risking everything to cross the Japanese-controlled barbed wire and electric fences, Zhang said. He shared the tragic story of a local child who was electrocuted on the camp's perimeter fence while trying to deliver food, with the Japanese forbidding the retrieval of the body.

"The people of Weifang didn't care what nationality the internees were," Zhang said. "They only knew that people were suffering and that they had to help. This kindness transcended war and national boundaries."

> "The bravery of the local Chinese, who risked their lives to help the foreign internees, is the most touching part of the story."
>
> **Zhang Zhiren,** writer of *Weihsien West Civilians Concentration Camp: 1943-1945*

Zhang stressed the importance of remembering the history of the Weihsien Internment Camp. "The memories of the camp are so painful that for decades, survivors were almost silent. As time passes, the survivors of the camp are dwindling, and fewer and fewer people know about this history."

His book is an attempt to rescue this shared memory, said Zhang. "Eighty years ago, Chinese people and foreign nationals helped each other through thick and thin. This story is the best footnote to the concept of a community of shared future for humanity."

The history of the Weihsien Internment Camp led the International Cities of Peace, a nonprofit organization promoting the global peace movement, to designate Weifang as the 308th International City of Peace in 2021, making it the second such city in China after Nanjing, the capital of Jiangsu province.

In celebration of Weifang's fifth anniversary as an International City of Peace, J. Frederick Arment, chair of the International Cities of Peace, said Weifang has consistently moved forward in the profound and healing steps of building peace from historical trauma with future hope.

In 2024, as China and the US marked the 45th anniversary of diplomatic relations, the story of the Weihsien Internment Camp made its way to San Francisco in the form of a special exhibition. Stanley also attended the opening ceremony as a representative of the descendants of former camp internees.

"I believe their (Weifang's) efforts to maintain the buildings and their efforts to create a traveling exhibition that went to San Francisco show a commitment to raising awareness about war and its consequences," Stanley said.

Speaking of the relevance of the spirit of peace from the Weihsien Internment Camp history, Stanley expressed hope that this history would encourage diplomacy and the use of international institutions to resolve conflicts rather than resorting to violence or other pressure tactics.

Contact the writers at yangran1@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:38 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:38 PM

SINO-US SUMMIT

Music underscores shared quest for harmony

Educators, students, players united by bonds of curiosity, common goals

By **CHEN NAN**
chennan@chinadaily.com.cn



Young musicians from different countries perform during a concert conducted by David Robertson at The Tianjin Juilliard School on May 30, 2025. XINHUA

It began with a *dizi*, the traditional Chinese small bamboo flute with a tone both piercing and plaintive, capable of sliding effortlessly between virtuosic runs and tender fragile whispers.

Born and raised in San Antonio, Texas, 37-year-old composer Niccolo Athens, a faculty member at The Tianjin Juilliard School, vividly recalls the first time he heard *dizi* music played at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. It felt like discovering a new musical universe, he said.

"It was fluent, sophisticated, and completely unfamiliar to me," Athens said of hearing a piece for three *dizi* composed by Guo Wenjing. "It combined modern compositional techniques with a deep understanding of the instruments."

A graduate of Cornell University in New York, Athens was awarded a Fulbright grant, and spent an academic year in residence at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing in 2014, beginning a China journey that would also include Shanghai and Tianjin.

In 2019, he was appointed to the inaugural faculty of The Tianjin Juilliard School.

As the first overseas branch of the renowned New York Juilliard School, the Tianjin campus broke ground in 2017 and offers a US-accredited master's degree from the prestigious school. The Tianjin school's graduate program opened in the fall of 2020 with the first intake of students.

Instrumental changes

Two of Athens' new works are going to be premiered at the Tianjin school. He recently composed *Five Classical Lyrics*, based on classical poetry from the Tang (618-907) and Song (960-1279) dynasties chosen by his students, and featuring music drawing inspiration from lesser-known Sichuan folk songs preserved in provincial songbooks from the 1980s.

He believes music carries a unique capacity to foster connection. "There's really nothing that bridges these two countries right now in the same way music can," he said.

He still vividly recalls his time at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. Athens said he encountered intense dedication to performance and an unexpected embrace of contemporary composition, which inspired him to compose his own works. Unlike Western music conservatories, where classical repertoires often dominate, Chinese musicians actively sought new works from living composers, creating a vibrant culture of collaboration and innovation.

"The people I met are what really sticks with me," Athens said. Friendships formed in classrooms, concerts, and workshops became as formative as any formal instruction.



Above left: Niccolo Athens, a faculty member at The Tianjin Juilliard School, conducts during Festival Connect, Tianjin Juilliard's flagship performance festival, in Tianjin on Jan 16. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY





Above right: Violist Molly Carr exchanges performance techniques with a student during a masterclass session on Nov 4. XINHUA

Right: Athens lectures students during a class at the school. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

> "There's really nothing that bridges these two countries right now in the same way music can."
>
> **Niccolo Athens,** a US composer and faculty member at The Tianjin Juilliard School

Learning to compose music for Chinese instruments proved a gradual process. His early attempts involved the *pipa* (a traditional lute) and *sheng* (a free-reed wind instrument), which he mostly learned about from video tutorials and guidance from friends abroad.

"I had to adapt my writing to the character of the instruments," he said. "It wasn't about capability — they (musicians) could play all the notes — but about understanding the way the instrument wants to speak."

He said the first piece he wrote that he felt truly reflected both his voice and the instrument's spirit was for the *guqin* (traditional Chinese zither) and string quartet, a milestone in his creative journey.

Language, too, was a path of careful immersion. Athens began studying Chinese while at the Juilliard in New York, where he received his Bachelor of Music in composition in 2010, motivated by a desire to engage fully with the culture.

"Some people ask me how I feel in China now, and I just tell them it feels like home," he said.

Beyond language

For the students at Tianjin Juilliard, the bridging of cultures is not theoretical — it is a daily practice.

When the 23-year-old Manou Magdalena Chakravorty arrived in Tianjin from Chicago last August to study cello, she expected the city to feel foreign and overwhelming.

During her undergraduate study, her professor was He Sihao, a former faculty member at the Robert McDuffie Center for Strings at Mercer University. But instead of being overwhelmed, she found herself captivated by Tianjin.

"The campus was incredibly beautiful. Sometimes I just walk along the river and take it all in — it's very calming," said Chakravorty, who grew up in a multicultural family that embraced the cultures of both Europe and Asia.

Chakravorty, who started playing cello at the age of 4, has embraced Chinese music as part of her studies.

Performing pieces with flowing melodies and microtones that differ from Western compositions, she has learned the subtle art of Chinese music.

"Music here allows you to communicate across language barriers. Even when words fail, playing together creates understanding," she said.

"Before I came to China to study at the Tianjin Juilliard, I planned to go back home after graduation. But now, I am thinking about working here," she added.

Apollo Rayme Parish Mitchell, 23, born and raised in San Francisco, shares the same sentiment.

Drawn to Tianjin's historic streets and lively rhythm, Mitchell has immersed himself in both Chinese culture and rigorous musical study. He has attended concerts, explored historic sites in Shanghai and Xi'an, Shaanxi province, and engaged deeply with Chinese musical traditions.

In 2024 and 2025, he also toured with the Tianjin Juilliard Orchestra, with concerts performed in Beijing, Guangzhou of Guangdong province, and Hong Kong.

"Even when language was limited in rehearsals, we communicated through music. It's immediate, visceral, and universal," said Mitchell, who studied with the oboist Mingjia Liu at the school in Tianjin.

"Living here has taught me that music can communicate even when words fall short. That's the real power of what we do," Mitchell said.

Shanghai Quartet basks in memories, plaudits during return tour

By **CHEN NAN**

From April 9 to 19, the Shanghai Quartet embarked on a highly anticipated tour across the United States, performing in Washington DC, Boston, Maine, Florida, and concluding at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center in New York.

Their program was a delicate interplay of Eastern and Western musical traditions, featuring composer Tan Dun's evocative *Feng Ya Song*, Franz Joseph Haydn's *String Quartet in G minor, Op. 74, No. 3,* or *"Rider"*, George Gershwin's *Lullaby*, and Antonin Dvorak's *American Quartet*.

But beyond the music itself, this tour became a poignant reflection on time, mentorship, and the enduring power of cultural exchange.

Formed at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music in 1983 by first violinist Weigang Li and his brother, viola player Honggang Li, the Shanghai Quartet has toured worldwide and joined The Tianjin Juilliard School in the fall of 2021.

The quartet now consists of cellist He Sihao, violinist Yu Xiang and the two founding members.

For second violinist Yu, Boston, the capital of Massachusetts, has always held a special place in his heart. Yu first experienced the Shanghai Quartet as a student at the New England Conservatory, sitting in the audience during a performance of Johannes Brahms' *Piano Quintet* with pianist Hung-Kuan Chen.

It was only his second live encounter with the quartet, the first having been in Shanghai. Years later, Yu returned — not as a student, but as a performer, stepping onto the same Jordan Hall stage at the conservatory as a member of the ensemble he once admired.

The Shanghai Quartet's program elegantly reflected a dialogue between cultures. Tan's *Feng Ya Song* brought contemporary Chinese textures to United States audiences, merging traditional tonalities with modern compositional techniques.

Haydn's *String Quartet in G minor Op. 74, No. 3* and Gershwin's *Lullaby* offered Western classical and US sensibilities.

Czech composer Dvorak's work served as a mirror of cultural exchange. The *American Quartet* was composed in 1893 when Dvorak was in the US, serving as director of the National Conservatory of Music of America in New York. He was inspired by the music he encountered there, but he composed it through a European classical lens, with the piece a blend of cultural influences.

Joseph Polisi, president emeritus of the Juilliard School, who now serves as its chief China officer, attended the performance, underscoring the deep bonds connecting Chinese and US musical institutions.

Reviewed by Lee Eiseman in The Boston Musical Intelligencer, "angelic" Yu was praised for his inner voice, He and Weigang for matching tones "marvelously", while the young cellist "brought an extravagantly romantic sensibility to the bottom line with the ever-elegant Honggang".

New York, however, carried the weight of history for Weigang who reflected on his journey back to the city. The quartet's New York debut in 1987 launched their international careers.

Weigang said the quartet arrived in the US in August 1985 to continue their music studies. From September 1985 to May 1987, they were enrolled at Northern Illinois University. During that time, the school offered them a remarkable opportunity: their very first performance in New York. The concert took place on March 2, 1987.

"We prepared diligently for that performance. I remember our program included Mozart's *String Quartet No. 19 in C major, K. 465* and *String Quartet No. 3* by Bela Bartok, followed in the second half by Brahms' *String Quartet No. 1, Op. 51, No. 1,*" Weigang recalled.

"Looking back, that concert probably captured the Shanghai Quartet at its finest, just four years after our founding. Oddly enough, when we finished playing, we didn't feel anything extraordinary," he said.

He also fondly remembers that after the concert, a woman in her 50s came backstage, introduced herself as Patricia Winter, and asked a simple question: "Are you looking for a manager?"

"We had never met her before, but her timing was perfect. Naturally, we were very interested, and that marked the beginning of our connection with her, which would become a pivotal part of our career," said Weigang.

In 2020, the Shanghai Quartet members returned to China and began teaching at The Tianjin Juilliard School.

"After living and working in the US for almost 40 years, this is our first performance in New York since returning to develop our careers in China. At the same time, this is also the Shanghai Quartet's first New York appearance with the new lineup featuring Yu Xiang and He Sihao, which makes it especially significant," he said.





Left: Members of the Shanghai Quartet pose for a photo after their performance in Boston, Massachusetts, with Cathy Chan (center), presenter of the concert, on April 10. **Right:** The Shanghai Quartet performs during the concert. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:38 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:38 PM

SINO-US SUMMIT



Zhao Minghao

New vision for stable, constructive ties

The summit between the leaders of the world's two largest economies on Thursday is widely expected to inject stability into the turbulent world, as both sides agreed to build a constructive relationship of strategic stability.

The new vision is designed to provide strategic guidance for bilateral relations over the next three years and beyond.

The "constructive strategic stability" is interpreted to be a positive stability with cooperation as the mainstay, a sound stability with moderate competition, a constant stability with manageable differences, and an enduring stability with promises of peace.

No wonder the meeting between President Xi Jinping and his US counterpart Donald Trump will open a new chapter in Sino-US ties.

The goal to make 2026 a historic and landmark year for US-China relations is crucial, as historically, landmark years have typically included events like former US president Richard Nixon's visit to China in 1972 and the establishment of Sino-US diplomatic ties in 1979.

The questions about whether the two countries can overcome the Thucydides Trap and create a new paradigm of major-country relations need both countries to answer.

Since the beginning of the US leader's second term in office, China-US relations have transitioned from intense tensions — after Washington launched a tariff war — to gradual stabilization.

Both sides need to grasp the precious opportunity presented by the summit to preserve this hard-won stability.

US policymakers have come to realize that China is not as vulnerable as they had once assumed, and that even extreme pressure would not force Beijing to yield.

Despite the repercussions of the tariff war, China remains firmly established as the world's second-largest economy, with its domestic growth and exports showing remarkable resilience.

In 2025, China reported a trade surplus of nearly $1.2 trillion, a 20 percent increase year-on-year. In the first quarter of 2026, China's GDP grew by 5.0 percent year-on-year, calculated at constant prices.

Recent developments prove that Beijing's tactics of "fighting for talks" and "struggling for stability" in its dealings with Washington have been effective.

Some senior US officials have abandoned their previous arrogance and recognized that China is a strong player; making exorbitant demands and bluffing won't work.

In areas such as rare earths, China has continued to strengthen its national economic security system and advance legislation on counter-sanctions and anti-long-arm jurisdiction, thereby enhancing its tool kit for responding to US pressure.

According to an analysis by Bloomberg Economics, approximately 4 percent of US GDP, or about $1.2 trillion, is generated in industries that use rare earths, and most of these industries lack effective alternatives to Chinese suppliers.

The Economist has pointed out that more than a year after the US administration initiated the tariff war, countries around the world are seeking new markets and forging new trade deals, gradually shifting the center of gravity in global trade away from the US.

In contrast, China has remained committed to an open world economy and worked to promote universally beneficial and inclusive globalization.

Starting May 1, China removed tariffs on 53 African countries with which it has diplomatic relations, becoming the first major economy to grant unilateral zero-tariff treatment to Africa.

This move reflects Beijing's willingness to pursue shared development with Global South countries.

China has remained the largest trading partner of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations since 2009, with bilateral trade exceeding 7.55 trillion yuan ($1.11 trillion) in 2025.

Notably, a trilateral cooperation mechanism among ASEAN, China and the Gulf Cooperation Council has been established, leveraging the strengths of all parties to create synergy for win-win development.

Clearly, in a contest defined by openness and certainty, China has gained the upper hand.

Over the past few years, China has notably strengthened its ability to steer Sino-US relations, consistently adhering to the approach of "if forced to fight, China will fight to the end, and for talks, the door is open".

The White House's new National Security Strategy describes China as a "near-peer" and proposes building a "genuinely mutually advantageous economic relationship with Beijing".

Importantly, US public opinion on China is also showing positive signs.

A Pew Research Center poll released in mid-April found that around 27 percent of people in the US hold a favorable view of China, a 6 percentage-point increase from 2025 and double the lowest point recorded in 2023.

Many US residents are skeptical about the effectiveness of confrontational policies such as tariffs and express concern about blowback on the US economy.

Additionally, survey data from Chatham House, an independent London-based policy institute, show that more than half of respondents support their government purchasing China's clean technology products.

Within the US strategic community, there is a growing chorus supporting a pragmatic and flexible approach to Sino-US relations.

Lyle Goldstein, director of the Asia Program at Defense Priorities, a think tank, has argued that the current international context presents an opportunity to stabilize Sino-US ties.

He has even suggested the need for a new political document to establish a model of peaceful coexistence between the two countries — a "fourth joint communiqué".

Deep-seated differences between Beijing and Washington undeniably persist in areas such as the economy, trade, military affairs, and technology.

The Taiwan question — at the core of China's core interests — is the most important issue in Sino-US relations.

If it is handled properly, the bilateral relationship will enjoy overall stability.

Otherwise, the two countries will have clashes and even conflicts, putting the entire relationship in great jeopardy, Xi said, urging the US side to exercise extra caution in handling the Taiwan question.

In this context, the Xi-Trump summit not only provides an important opportunity for both sides to explore more constructive ways of engagement, fostering conditions for increased face-to-face communication between the two heads of state, but may also prove to be historic if the new vision of Sino-US ties can be heeded and acted on.

This is important for the two countries, the world and humanity.

The author is a professor at the Center for American Studies at Fudan University and a China Forum expert.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Dennis Wilder

Educational bridges vital for two largest economies



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Global Lens

Since joining the faculty at Georgetown University in Washington in 2016, I have been deeply involved in academic exchanges between the United States and China at the university level. Georgetown's connection with China dates back to 1885 when the then US president Grover Cleveland appointed Georgetown alumnus Charles Denby as the US minister to China.

Denby once remarked, "There is no country in the world more underrated than China."

Over the years, Georgetown has proudly welcomed thousands of Chinese students, including Wang Yi, the current director of the Office of the Central Commission for Foreign Affairs, and Minister of Foreign Affairs, who spent time as a visiting scholar at the Walsh School of Foreign Service.

As the oldest Catholic and Jesuit university in the US, Georgetown draws inspiration from the legacy of the great Jesuit priest Matteo Ricci. Ricci mastered the Chinese language and became the first European to enter the Forbidden City of Beijing in 1601.

He was invited by the Wanli Emperor, who sought his services in matters such as court astronomy and calendrical science.

One of my favorite ways to introduce Chinese and US students to each other is by asking them how their lives are different from their grandparents'.

Chinese students often recount the vast changes their parents experienced during the reform and opening-up period.

They describe a transition from a more traditional, resource-constrained lifestyle to the modern conveniences of today. Many families had no running water and the only machines they typically had were bicycles and sewing machines.

US students remember that their grandparents had only black-and-white televisions with three channels — ABC, NBC and CBS. Many grandparents had vivid memories of the Vietnam War, with some being veterans of that conflict.

Through these reflections, students can gain a deeper understanding of how different their family heritages are and why they have different perspectives on various issues.

I also ask students what they share in common today.

Not surprisingly, since most of them never let their phones out of their hands, both Chinese and US students emphasize the centrality of social media in their lives.

Living in cyberspace, this generation is not just aware of the trends in their own country, but also of global youth culture.

Indeed, my students, while still citizens of their home countries, are also distinctly a generation of global citizens. They are eager to make a better world and are impatient with the failures of past generations to deal with problems such as climate change and food insecurity in the Global South.

From personal experience, I know that interactions between Chinese and US students can be life-altering.

In 1975, US students could not study in China, so I did the second-best thing.

I applied for the Yale-in-China Program at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. From the rooftop of my dorm in the New Territories in Hong Kong, I could see the Chinese mainland, which I vowed to visit someday.

As a member of the university swimming team, I bonded with a teammate from Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong province.

We would spend hours comparing our family histories and hoping that the opening that Chairman Mao Zedong and the then US president Richard Nixon had initiated would flourish.

I never imagined that a few years later, on a cold January morning in 1979, I would stand on the White House lawn as a student representative to witness the ceremonial welcome accorded to the late Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping by the then US president Jimmy Carter.

Today, I regret that fewer Chinese and US students have the same opportunities to expand their mindsets. The number of US students studying in China and the number of Chinese students studying in the US are both declining.

Although we can initiate virtual dialogues to keep the interaction going, they are not substitutes for the kind of experience that comes only with immersive programs of language and cultural study.

Hopefully the US and Chinese leaders can open the doors wider for academic exchanges to flourish once again, enabling the shared benefit of all humanity.

The author is a senior fellow in the Initiative for US-China Dialogue on Global Issues at Georgetown University. He previously served as the National Security Council's director for China.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Rattan Lal

China and US can partner on soil health for global prosperity

China and the United States may differ in geography, demography and political systems, but in agriculture they share a remarkable distinction: both are global breadbaskets whose success has an impact far beyond their borders.

China, with a population of over 1.4 billion and 129 million hectares of arable land, produced about 724 million tons of food-grain in 2025. The US, with around 350 million people and roughly 150 million hectares of arable land, produced around 546 million tons in 2025. Together, they demonstrate that feeding the world is not merely an economic activity, but also a civilizational achievement through science -based agriculture.

However, the challenge of the 21st century is not simply to produce more food but to do so while restoring the soil health that sustains it.

Agriculture in both countries needs to be transformed from being part of the environmental problem into becoming part of the solution.

This evolution is key to achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals under Agenda 2030. Key agriculture-related SDGs include ending poverty, eliminating hunger, ensuring good health, combating climate change, protecting life on land, strengthening institutions for peace and justice and fostering global partnerships.

Particularly important is the concept of "One Health", which recognizes that the health of soil, plants, animals, people, ecoregions and the planet is interconnected and inseparable.

For this reason, China and the US must cooperate to strengthen agroecosystems and address global challenges. There are a range of strategies that are of common interest for China and the US.

A promising approach is eco-intensification, which applies ecological principles to agriculture instead of relying on the heavy use of fertilizers and pesticides. The concept focuses on "producing more from less" by enhancing the efficiency of inputs and reducing leakage into the environment.

Global Lens

For this reason, China and the US must cooperate to strengthen agroecosystems and address global challenges.

Fertilizers and pesticides are not enemies of agriculture, but they should be used as supplements or medicine. Their indiscriminate use makes them poisonous. The difference between poison and medicine is the dose, formulation, timing and method of application.

The world must also get over the outdated obsession with high yields. Adopting nutrition-sensitive agriculture is more important than harvesting record yields.

Dietary diversity and complex farming and cropping systems can alleviate malnutrition and hidden hunger problems not only in China and the US but also around the world.

In addition, greater attention should be given to so-called "forgotten" or "orphan" crops that were largely marginalized by the Green Revolution of the 1960s which focused on rice, wheat and corn.

The emphasis should be on growing diverse crops of native origin such as sorghum, millet, cowpeas, beans, pulses and root crops. They require less water, tolerate climatic stress and enrich soils naturally through biological processes.

Equally important is the re-carbonization of soils and terrestrial agroecosystems by capturing atmospheric carbon dioxide and storing it in soil, trees and other landscape units.

The organic matter content in soils should be 2 to 3 percent in the root zone.

However, most soils of the agroecosystems in China and the US have lost their soil organic matter stock due to excessive plowing, accelerated soil erosion and extractive farming practices. Re-carbonization of the soil is a win-win strategy because it mitigates climate change, restores soil and environmental health and boosts biodiversity above and below the ground.

Soils can also be viewed metaphorically as a "bank", with carbon as its currency. This requires continuous deposition of carbonaceous biomass — such as compost, manure and crop residue mulch — at rates exceeding losses from decomposition, respiration, soil erosion and leaching.

To increase carbon stocks in this "soil bank", the deposits must consistently exceed the withdrawals.

From a policy perspective, it is also important to move beyond traditional subsidies and instead pay land managers for providing key ecosystem services through the adoption of best management practices.

Until the carbon market develops for trading carbon credits, it is important to pay farmers for carbon sequestration in soil and trees. The rate of payments must be equivalent to the social value of soil carbon which may be equal to $50 per credit, or the equivalent of one metric ton of carbon dioxide computed by converting methane and nitrous oxide into carbon dioxide.

At the institutional level, a stronger soil protection policy is needed to safeguard the finite and irreplaceable soil resources. Some agricultural land in China and the US is being converted to urban and industrial uses. Prime agricultural land must be mapped and designated as protected against urbanization and other uses. Prime soil must be saved for future generations.

Education reform is also essential. The curricula in schools should include soil and environmental health education at all levels.

It is important to attract the best and the brightest to study agriculture, soil sciences and environmental conservation at an early age. Even children's alphabet books must be soil and environment-oriented.

Beyond production systems, saving land and water for nature should become a guiding principle, supported by dietary choices that promote planetary health, reductions in food waste, and the return of agriculturally marginal lands to natural ecosystems. The objective is to live in harmony with nature rather than dominate and exploit it.

Ultimately, the restoration of soil health is critical for sustaining terrestrial life. Access to adequate, healthy and nutritious food is essential for human well-being. An empty stomach leads to violence, civil strife, political unrest and war.

War and hunger are both human-made tragedies that must be tackled urgently. While war destroys soil and its life-support system, peace restores soil health.

In that sense, science-based and nutrition-sensitive agriculture is the foundation of long-lasting peace and tranquility in the world. Let us therefore promote the food-energy-water-soil nexus for human well-being and living in harmony with nature.

The author is the laureate of the 2020 World Food Prize and 2024 Gulbenkian Prize for Humanity and is a Distinguished University Professor of soil sciences at Ohio State University.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:38 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:38 PM

SINO-US SUMMIT



JIN ZHEN

Substantial ballast

The stock of China-US cooperation accumulated over many years remains substantial, deeply rooted and resilient



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

In discussing today's relations between China and the United States, an important reality should not be overlooked: The stock of bilateral cooperation accumulated over many years remains substantial, deeply rooted and resilient. This is reflected in economic and trade exchanges, subnational engagement, corporate presence and global governance collaboration. These long-standing economic ties serve as a key pillar of the bilateral relationship. The weight of China-US economic ties is evident in their sheer scale and deep integration. The economic relationship is mutually beneficial and win-win in nature, just as President Xi Jinping pointed out when holding talks with US President Donald Trump in Beijing on Thursday.



According to China's General Administration of Customs, the country's total imports and exports with the US reached 4.01 trillion yuan ($590.5 billion) in 2025, accounting for 8.8 percent of its total foreign trade value. Based on US statistics, in the first 10 months of 2025, the US' total imports and exports with China stood at $373.64 billion, representing 7.8 percent of the US' total foreign trade value. China counts as the US' third-largest partner for both exports and imports, while the US is China's top goods export market and its third-largest import source.

Early 2026 has evidenced some changes in China's trade structure. China's General Administration of Customs data released in May showed that in the January-April period, China-US trade totaled 1.25 trillion yuan, a 12.9 percent drop year-on-year, while China's trade with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the European Union and members of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership grew over that period. This suggests that China is diversifying its trade ties and building a more balanced mix of partners, which will boost its resilience to external shocks.

But China's diversifying market footprint does not mean its cooperation with the US is becoming less important. Beijing has consistently called for stable and mutually beneficial economic exchanges. Even under maximum external pressure and high tariff rates, two-way trade held above the trillion-yuan mark — a sign of the deep complementarity between the two economies. Their economic ties — spanning consumer markets, manufacturing systems, supply chains and the industrial division of labor — are not easily replaceable in the short term.

Over the longer term, China-US economic and trade relations have transcended simple commodity transactions. US companies remain deeply embedded in China's market, while key segments of Chinese supply chains have forged long-term synergies with the US market. This decades-old cooperation network has become an integral part of the economic fabric of both countries.

Despite periodic fluctuations in China-US relations, local exchanges and business cooperation have remained resilient, acting as a stabilizing force in the relationship. As of August 2025, China and the US had established 288 pairs of sister provinces/states and sister cities, covering large populations and economically vibrant regions in both countries. In April this year, Shenzhen's Nanshan district and Tacoma, Washington, held their first in-person exchange event since establishing a friendly city partnership. Participants in the Ping-Pong Diplomacy 55 years ago took up their bats once again. Chinese Ambassador to the US Xie Feng said on social media platform that 55 years later, the friendship continues to thrive, and grow across generations.

The corporate side tells a similar story. According to the US-China Business Council's 2025 Member Survey, almost all the surveyed companies recognize that they cannot remain globally competitive without their China operations.

In April this year, the US-China Business Council led its largest and most broadly representative delegation to visit Guangzhou and Shenzhen, with dozens of companies making up the delegation.

Meanwhile, the 2026 Special Report on the State of Business in South China, released by the American Chamber of Commerce in South China, also revealed that 95 percent of participating companies report a commitment to maintaining their operations in China.

Beneath the surface, this reflects the logic of market dynamics and the pragmatic choices of enterprises. China's vast market, complete industrial system, mature supply chains and continuous opening-up have long held strong appeal for multinationals. The brand influence, local partnership networks and industrial footprint many US companies have built here are pivotal cooperative assets in bilateral relations.

The existing stock of bilateral cooperation also manifests in the two sides' governance capacity, industrial strengths and technological edge. As the world's two largest economies, the two nations have major influence over global issues spanning climate change, artificial intelligence, public health and financial stability. Few of these challenges can be addressed by either side alone. Maintaining sound bilateral coordination will add greater certainty to the global landscape.

The energy sector best exemplifies this dynamic. Though the US is now refocusing on fossil fuels, energy independence and a revival of traditional manufacturing, it retains clear strengths in energy technology, green finance, grid modernization and energy storage. AI advances are also driving up US power demand.

China, for its part, is in a critical energy transition phase during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period. It has formed a complete industry chain and secured economies of scale across photovoltaics, power batteries, electric vehicles and the wider green supply chain. Should both sides maintain long-term cooperation in specific areas such as energy storage, power grids, energy efficiency and green investment, their respective strengths can fuel the global green transition.

The same holds true in the AI domain. Both China and the US stand as key players in global tech innovation, boasting strong research capabilities, enormous markets and abundant application scenarios. Challenges brought by this technology — including energy consumption, data security, technology misuse and standards alignment — have gone beyond any single country's capacity to address. Maintaining necessary communication amid competition and exploring cooperation on technological security, risk prevention and regulatory coordination serve both sides' interests and help mitigate risks in global tech governance.

Global governance is evolving into a far more complex era. The more complicated global challenges become, the more major powers should step up to shoulder responsibilities; the further technological influences extend, the more imperative it is for leading innovators to enhance coordination.

China and the US each boast comparative advantages. By leveraging their respective endowments to scale up cooperation, the two can deliver tangible global public goods and unlock new space for bilateral collaboration.

The author is an assistant research fellow at the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University of China. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

CAI CUIHONG

Shared safety responsibility

Sino-US cooperation is crucial for developing the practical guardrails that are imperative in a world in which AI races and risks are increasingly intertwined

As the development of artificial intelligence reshapes industries, intensifies corporate competition and creates shared risks, building guardrails and setting credible rules and public-safety foundations for technological development are global responsibilities shared by China and the United States.



In today's AI landscape, the US still holds a comparative advantage in multiple fields. That advantage is reflected not only in the continued release of frontier models by companies such as OpenAI, Google, Anthropic and Meta, but also in advanced GPUs, cloud platforms, foundational software, model-evaluation systems, standards bodies, alliance networks and the ability to export a global technology stack. Stanford University's 2026 AI Index Report shows that in 2025, US institutions produced 59 notable AI models, compared with 35 from China. The US remains the leading force in frontier model innovation, computing ecosystems and platform capacity, and it is increasingly converting these technological edges into rule-shaping power.

China, however, boasts its own advantages instead of playing catch-up. China possesses a vast domestic market, rich industrial applications, a complete manufacturing base, strong engineering and deployment capacity, a fast-growing open-source ecosystem and significant room for digital cooperation with other Global South countries. The Stanford report shows that China ranks first worldwide in AI paper output, citations and granted patents, reflecting deep research accumulation and a sustained innovation base. In recent years, China has advanced its "AI Plus" initiative, accelerating AI adoption in manufacturing, healthcare, education, transportation and urban governance, while expanding access through open-source models and low-cost deployment. China's strength does not lie in a single frontier breakthrough; it lies in application, implementation, cost efficiency and the ability to translate technology into industrial capacity.

This is why China-US AI relations cannot be reduced to a simple choice between cooperation and confrontation. The US is unlikely to loosen its grip on key technology chains, frontier model ecosystems or international rule-setting power. China, for its part, will not accept being folded passively into risk-assessment, technology-review or compliance frameworks defined unilaterally by the US. Acknowledging competition is not a rejection of cooperation. It is the necessary starting point for any serious cooperative governance effort.

AI needs governance guardrails because its pervasive reach magnifies the costs of competition. Even when traditional technologies have strategic significance, their impact often remains concentrated in specific sectors or dimensions of national power. Once AI is widely deployed, however, it will be embedded in products, services, manufacturing processes, infrastructure and daily life. In this context, without a basic framework of trust between China and the US, trade in AI-enabled products, technological cooperation and industrial ties could all be consumed by security concerns, while the lack of trust would directly impede industrial cooperation and the functioning of global markets.

AI also creates threats that neither country can manage alone. In a recent column, Thomas Friedman argued that the new common threat facing the US and China is not another state, but the risk created by "the malign uses of artificial intelligence". Agentic AI, automated hacking tools and deepfake systems could give "small, malign actors" destructive capabilities once available only to states. They could launch cyberattacks, spread false information, manipulate public perception and disrupt critical infrastructure at far lower cost. Autonomous weapons, unmanned systems and automated military decision-making could also heighten the risk of miscalculation, loss of control and crisis escalation. These dangers do not respect geopolitical blocs. Both countries are potential targets.

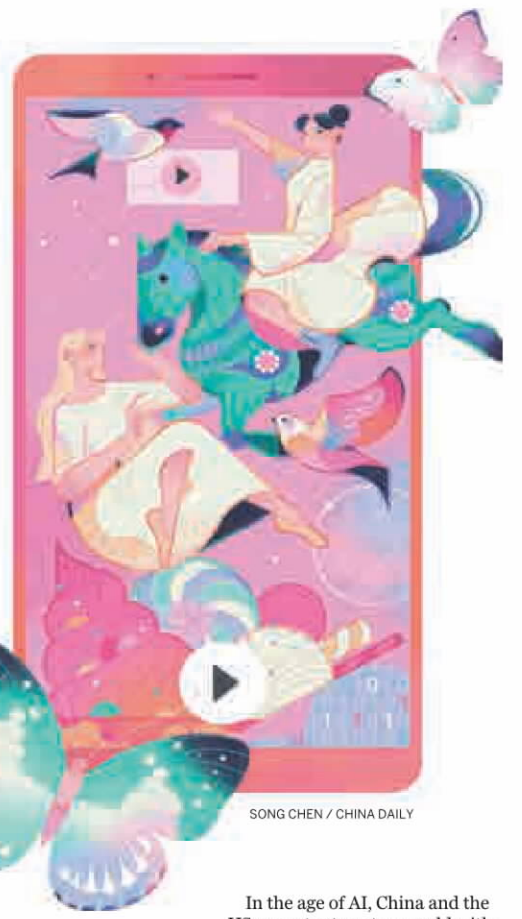
Compounding these risks is a serious governance lag. Model capabilities, agentic behavior, autonomous decision-making, content generation and algorithmic integration are advancing faster than rules can be written. Many risks will not be visible at the moment of invention; they will emerge only through deployment at scale and cross-border diffusion. That is the deeper paradox of China-US AI competition: the harder each side tries to secure itself through technological advantage, the more insecurity both may create if there is a lack of shared guardrails.

Guardrails mean creating mechanisms — risk alerts, incident reporting, interoperable technical standards, crisis communication and boundaries around high-risk uses — to prevent AI competition from sliding into miscalculation, loss of control or systemic risk. Such guardrails should rest on three principles: reciprocity, boundaries and openness.

First, cooperation should be reciprocal. Washington and Beijing can exchange views on risk classification, safety-incident reporting, model-evaluation methods, red-teaming, deepfake detection and content provenance. These are areas with clear public-safety implications and some room for technical consensus. AI governance cannot become a process in which one side writes the standards and the other submits to inspection. China can support interoperable evaluation formats, shared risk terminology and exchanges on testing methods. It cannot accept one country's unilateral testing results as the equivalent of international compliance standards, nor should safety evaluation become a pretext for intrusive audits of model weights, training data or core engineering parameters.

Second, cooperation should also have boundaries. The purpose of guardrails is to prevent risks from spiraling out of control, not to create new technology barriers. The two countries can discuss high-risk issues such as cyberattacks, AI-enabled fraud, loss of control in autonomous systems, critical-infrastructure protection and AI-related red lines in nuclear command. They can also explore mechanisms for incident reporting, crisis communication and early warning. But AI security should not become an all-purpose justification for securitizing civilian AI, open-source models, cloud services, scientific exchange or talent mobility. If governance is over-securitized, the space for cooperation will shrink and global AI development will become artificially fragmented.

Third, governance can remain open. Global AI governance cannot become a closed club of a few technological powers. The United Nations, the International Telecommunication Union, the International Organization for Standardization, BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and some Global South platforms all have roles to play. Countries in the Global South should not be mere rule-takers; they should be participants in, and beneficiaries of, AI governance. The US, China and other major AI-capable actors should work together to help developing countries close the gaps in computing power, data, talent and infrastructure. Through open-source tools, low-cost deployment, training programs, compliance templates and applications that serve basic development needs, they can help ensure that AI truly serves development and creates replicable public goods in areas such as agriculture, healthcare, education, disaster warning and edge AI.



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

In the age of AI, China and the US cannot return to a world without competition, nor can they accept competition without guardrails. Both countries can build a consensus on the basis of reciprocity, prevent risks from spiraling out of control within clear boundaries, and expand cooperation through open governance, thereby providing a more stable and secure foundation for global AI development.

The author is a professor of international relations at the Institute of International Studies at Fudan University and the deputy director of the Center for Global AI Innovative Governance. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:38 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:38 PM



Tourists enjoy a "dragon-of-boats" tour on the Salt Lake in Yuncheng city in southeastern Shanxi.
LAN LIQIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Host of beauty spots and historical sites teems with visitors from across the country



Tourists visit the famed Guanque Tower — or Stork Tower — in Yongji city on May 3. CHENG YONGREN / FOR CHINA DAILY



Peony flowers bloom at Yongzuo Temple — or Twin Pagodas Park — in Taiyuan during the May Day holiday.
ZHANG QI / FOR CHINA DAILY

TOURISM BOOMS IN SHANXI DURING MAY DAY HOLIDAY

By YUAN SHENGGAO

During the May Day holiday, spanning from May 1 to 5, the North China province of Shanxi again welcomed a great number of tourists.

Tourists to Shanxi were offered impressive experiences thanks to local practices that integrate natural wonders with cultural and historical assets, as well as enriched offerings such as camping, cycling, boating and other sports and cultural activities.

Nanzhai Park in the provincial capital of Taiyuan, for instance, has a dedicated camping site for tourists from both Shanxi and the rest of the country.

Wang Youpeng, a resident in Taiyuan, arrived at the campsite before 9 am on May 2. With the help of his family members, a tent was set up in the leafy shade, with a hammock strung between two willow trees nearby.

"We are pleased with this site," Wang said. "There is free parking, drinking water and toilets — the services and facilities are complete."

"My child loved this place very much," he said. "As it is located along a flowing stream, he could feed ducks and geese here." Wang said his family planned to stay in the park for a whole day. "This is a perfect place for my child to get close to nature."

Prior to the May Day holiday, Taiyuan's tourism authorities recommended nine traveling options for tourists and camping was one of them. These camping sites also include the Xishan Ecological Park and the scenic area along the Fenhe River.



Visitors attend a pop music show at Taiyuan's Bell Tower Street during the May Day holiday. ZHANG QI / FOR CHINA DAILY



Tourists can take a boating tour of the lake in Taiyuan's Jinci Park.
LIU TONG / FOR CHINA DAILY



An open-air market is held in the county of Quwo during the May Day holiday. YAN RUIPENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Cycling tours

Cycling tours were also popular among not only local tourists in Taiyuan but travelers from the rest of the country because shared bicycles are easily available.

In mid-April, Wang Wenbin, China's ambassador to Cambodia, recommended Taiyuan's cycling trails on his overseas social media account.

A short video showed people cycling along two trails by the Fenhe River. "The cycling trails are just like two silk ribbons in the sea of trees and flowers," he wrote.

The two trails, with a total length of 88 kilometers, connect 16 Fenhe River bridges and 11 riverside viewpoints, and were opened to the public on May 1, 2021.

"We made a cycling tour along the trails again because of Ambassador Wang's recommendation," said a Taiyuan resident surnamed Zhang. "In the past, we were proud of such Taiyuan landmarks as Jinci Temple and Tianlongshan Grottoes. Now we are pleased to see the addition of the Fenhe River cycling trails, which are a grand showcase of the ecological improvements of the river and the city."

The cycling trails are part of the Fenhe River scenic area, which was developed over several decades.

The Fenhe River, the second-longest river in Shanxi, flows through Taiyuan for 188 km. For thousands of years, the river has irrigated the land and nurtured the people of Taiyuan.

With enhanced governance and ecological restoration, the water quality of the Fenhe River has improved significantly, restoring much of its former beauty.

Hundreds of types of trees and flowers have been planted in the Fenhe River scenic area along the riverbanks, and dozens of cultural attractions have been laid out. The area offers a habitat for hundreds of bird species and has become a destination for tourists and a place for locals to relax.

Yuncheng Salt Lake

During the May Day holiday, various water sports and entertainment activities throughout Shanxi also attracted a great number of tourists.

In the southeastern Shanxi city of Yuncheng, for instance, many tourists were offered an opportunity to take part in a "dragon-of-boats" tour on the famed Yuncheng Salt Lake.

When evening approached, dozens of tourists boarded several illuminated boats, which were connected in a chain to form a "dragon". While those on board had an impressive view of the lake and the city, the boats, with their lights reflected on the water, presented a spectacular sight for people on the shore.

Zhang Lei, an executive at the Yuncheng Salt Lake Scenic Area, said the boat tour is a highlight of the city's tourism industry. "With this new option, we aim for tourists to have a new experience of the beauty of the lake."

Covering an area of 132 square kilometers, Yuncheng Salt Lake is one of the three famed inland lakes with sodium sulfate in the world.

Serving as a salt production base for about 4,600 years, the lake has become a tourist destination in Shanxi province over the past few decades.

The local tourism industry highlights both the historical tradition of salt mining and innovative scenarios, meeting the taste of modern tourists.

In summer, experiencing floating on the surface of this lake, known as the Chinese version of the Dead Sea, is an unforgettable experience that one cannot find elsewhere in the country.

In recent years, the lake has again become a hit on social media because of eye-catching aerial photos of its colorful surface. As temperatures begin to rise in early summer, the multicolored lake becomes a busy attraction for tourists and photographers.

The lake is also a habitat for birds and other wildlife species. More than 200 bird species have been recorded in recent years, including such rare varieties as flamingo, swan, pied avocet and great bustard, according to local environmental officials.



Tourists watch a folk dance in the ancient city of Shuozhou on May 1. LI XIAOLONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Historical assets revived

In Shanxi, a great number of historical and cultural assets — especially ancient buildings and relics — are at the top of every tourist's agenda.

During this year's May Day holiday, tourists' expectations to explore these places were better met with the use of various shows and high-tech means.

In Taiyuan's Yongzuo Temple, which is known for two landmark pagodas built during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), the 2026 Taiyuan Twin Pagodas Peony Cultural Month opened on April 25 and will last for about four weeks.

During the holiday, tourists were offered an opportunity to see the 8,000-plus peony plants blooming at the temple. Among them are seven rare peony trees named Zixiaxian. Each of them is more than 400 years old, dating back to the period when the pagodas were built.

Surrounding the Zixiaxian trees, a variety of shows including a *hanfu* show, traditional dances, poem recitals and an intangible cultural heritage fair were staged.

The show of *hanfu*, or ancient Chinese garments, attracted the attention of many tourists. Donning ancient *hanfu*, performers danced to the melodies of a concert of Chinese musical instruments including *guzheng*, *guqin* and *pipa*, helping tourists see what rituals looked like more than 400 years ago.

Yungang Grottoes, a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site in the northern Shanxi city of Datong, again welcomed a peak tourist flow during the May Day holiday.

After a tight day's schedule touring Yungang and the ancient city of Datong, a tourist surnamed Chen, who was from Shanghai, joined a crowd of people in a square near the eastern city wall. They were waiting for the opening of a light-rendered sculpture show titled The Light of Yungang Grottoes.

In the evening, the show started with images of Buddha statues, musical instrument-playing figurines and lotus patterns commonly seen in the grottoes projected onto the city wall. These were accompanied with words explaining the details of the artistic works and stories about the history. "The show offered us a perfect review of what we saw in the day," Chen said.

Yungang Grottoes, with construction starting in the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534), represents the highest level of Buddhist cave art, along with such famed sites as Mogao in Dunhuang, Gansu province, and Longmen in Luoyang, Henan province. It was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2001.

"This show, leveraging modern digital technologies and a novel narrative style, presented vivid stories about what makes Yungang a cultural landmark and Datong an enticing tourist attraction," Chen said.

New options

During the May Day holiday, while presenting its ancient cultural legacy, Shanxi had other options on offer to meet the modern tastes of tourists.

On May 3, for instance, a singing show featuring Chinese singer Joker Xue was held at Taiyuan Sports Center. It attracted tens of thousands of people from across the country.

According to an official at the Taiyuan culture and tourism bureau, the "performance economy" is an emerging engine driving the growth of local tourism and consumption.

The bureau's latest information shows that it has issued licenses for 27 large-scale performing shows for 2026, with the number of audience members expected to surpass 700,000.

It anticipated that there will be more than 40 such shows this year, which are expected to draw about 1.2 million visitors in total.

In addition to large-scale, licensed performances, smaller-scale shows were held at various locations in Shanxi during the holiday.

On May 5, the last day of the public holiday, Bell Tower Street in Taiyuan welcomed flocks of visitors. They were there to hear an open-air concert featuring traditional Chinese musical instruments. The event was held in a more informal manner — people stood on the street or moved among food stalls, tasting some local snacks while listening to the music.

Bell Tower Street is a site in Taiyuan where people can experience both local culture and life, while exploring history.

Also known as Zhonglou Street, it is named after a bell tower built during the Ming Dynasty. It has been a commercial market for more than a century.

Bell Tower Street has a lot of historical buildings, including the Dazhong Temple and Kaihua Temple, both of which were originally built during the Song Dynasty (960-1279). Local authorities have been making efforts to restore and protect important historical buildings and relics along the street.

The street was renovated in 2017 and reopened to the public in 2021 with a new look. It features many cultural relics, ancient buildings and time-honored brands.

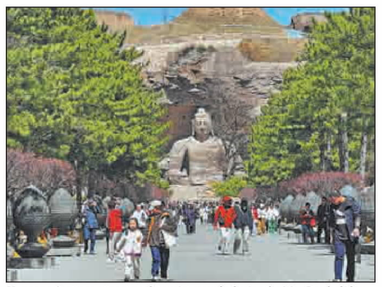
After its renovation, this 700-meter-long street saw many new stores retaining their ancient architecture. What's more, many modern leisure spots, such as restaurants, bars, exhibition areas and tourist facilities were created, lending the area a sense of dynamism.

Many local specialties and handicrafts can be found on the street, like dough carvings, mature vinegar, paper-cuttings and more. Visitors can watch craftsmen create various paste figurines with their bare hands. Meanwhile, local mature vinegar, which is one of the famous Chinese varieties and a perfect match for noodles and dumplings, is something that foodies cannot afford to miss.

As a landmark, the upgraded Bell Tower Street boasts a perfect combination of ancient and modern elements, showcasing local history and culture. Its unique charm and relaxing vibe attract many visitors every year to explore the area.

Local statistics show that the street received about 152,000 visits on May 2, a record number.

Zhang Qi contributed to this story.



Yungang Grottoes attract peak tourist crowds during the May Day holiday.
LI PEIJING / FOR CHINA DAILY



People camp at Nanzhai Park in Taiyuan on May 4. ZHANG QI / FOR CHINA DAILY



A poster of *A Date with Taiyuan*, a series of plays featuring Taiyuan's tourist attractions as backdrops. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

ADVERTORIAL

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:38 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:38 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

New vision for constructive relationship of strategic stability should guide Sino-US ties

The meeting between President Xi Jinping and his US counterpart Donald Trump in Beijing this week will help the two sides jointly answer the defining questions facing China-US relations — questions posed by history, by the world and by the peoples of both countries.

The new vision for building a constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability agreed by the two leaders shows how the two nations can answer the questions of whether China and the United States can overcome the Thucydides Trap and create a new paradigm of major-country relations.

As Xi stressed, the "constructive strategic stability" should be a positive stability with cooperation as the mainstay, a sound stability with moderate competition, a constant stability with manageable differences, and an enduring stability with promises of peace.

That vision will provide strategic guidance for bilateral relations over the next three years and beyond, and should be welcomed by the people of both countries as well as the international community, as Xi said.

The China-US relationship involves multiple dimensions, including politics, economy, trade, security and people-to-people exchanges. The new vision for relations is pertinent to the practical needs of the development of Sino-US relations in the new era.

The building of a constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability should not be a mere slogan, but concrete action taken by both sides toward the same goal.

The vision can help the two sides explore more practical frameworks to implement the consensus reached in the head-of-state diplomacy, transforming initiatives and agreements into actions and results. This would enable them to more effectively build common ground, expand areas of converging interests and manage differences.

China stands ready to work with the US to turn the new vision for their relations into concrete, joint actions, and to jointly foster stable, healthy, and sustainable development in bilateral ties, as a spokesman for the Chinese Foreign Ministry stressed at a news conference on Thursday.

History has shown that China-US economic ties are mutually beneficial and win-win in nature. Differences should not be allowed to define the overall relationship. Given the size of the two economies, their different stages of development and differing national conditions, disagreements and frictions are natural. What matters is that the two sides address them through equal-footed consultation, the only correct path toward resolving differences and maintaining stable bilateral relations.

That the economic and trade teams of the two countries produced generally balanced and positive outcomes in the latest round of bilateral trade talks in the Republic of Korea on Wednesday is a testament to this, and the two sides should strive to sustain the good momentum they have worked hard to create.

China's pursuit of high-quality development, its commitment to high-standard opening-up and the vast potential of its economy and market help explain the willingness of US businesses to deepen cooperation with China. This underscores a broader reality: mutually beneficial cooperation remains the shared aspiration on both sides.

The productive exchanges between the US business delegation led by Trump and the Chinese side during the visit demonstrate that both countries possess not only the capacity, but also the sincerity, to translate China-US economic and trade cooperation into more tangible benefits for their two peoples.

Yet realizing the new vision will require both countries to fully respect each other's core concerns and legitimate interests. In particular, the US side should exercise due prudence, and refrain from crossing the red line on the Taiwan question.

As Xi emphasized, the Taiwan question is the most important issue in China-US relations, and if it is handled properly, the bilateral relationship will enjoy overall stability. Otherwise, the two countries will have clashes and even conflicts, putting the entire relationship in great jeopardy.

Safeguarding peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait constitutes the greatest common denominator between China and the US. If the US side truly seeks peace across the Strait, it should stop sending wrong signals to the "Taiwan independence" separatist forces on the Chinese island, as "Taiwan independence" and cross-Strait peace are fundamentally irreconcilable.

Whether 2026 can become a historic and landmark year for the world's most consequential bilateral relationship will depend on whether the US is prepared to meet China halfway and work toward shared objectives. The world's two largest economies have far more common interests than differences. They should be partners that help each other succeed and prosper together.

EU must heed Beijing's stern warning

China regards the European Union as a key partner willing to uphold multilateralism and free trade. However, this perspective is now facing challenges due to the European Commission's multiple unilateral restrictive policies, bills and sanctions that mainly target China.

A recent strongly-worded statement from a Chinese diplomat in Madrid cautioned that the EU's planned investment restrictions might compel China to "close its doors" to EU companies. The recent EU protectionist actions have prompted China to review its economic relations with the bloc.

Speaking in an unusually straightforward tone, Qu Xun, a diplomat at China's embassy in Spain, said that the "controls, limitations, and sanctions" introduced by the European Commission toward China in the past three months have pushed China into a corner, leaving it with no option but to close the door if it persists with its protectionism.

To a large extent, the catalyst for this blunt message was the EU's proposed Industrial Accelerator Act and the revision of its Cybersecurity Act. The IAA seeks to impose onerous restrictions on foreign investment in strategic sectors with the goal of reducing dependence on so-called "subsidized" imports from China.

Likewise, the EU's plan to revise its Cybersecurity Act also targets China by proposing to enforce strict controls on EU ownership in critical industries and limit "high-risk" cybersecurity suppliers, identified as primarily Chinese by the European Commission. These actions indicate that the EU's restrictive measures have shifted from targeting specific Chinese companies to broad legal and regulatory barriers targeting Chinese companies and investments.

In the past few months, China's Ministry of Commerce has repeatedly expressed its opposition to the EU's politicization and over-securitization of trade and economic issues and its discriminatory treatment of Chinese enterprises.

Aside from that, Beijing has been remarkably patient. It has urged settling differences through dialogue and negotiation. However, its patience is wearing thin. The rare warning of the Chinese diplomat that it will "close the door" is a signal that if the EU proceeds with this discriminatory legislation, Beijing will have no choice but to fight back.

The European Commission's approach contradicts its commitment to openness and the genuine needs of the bloc. As an open economy, the EU should offer a nondiscriminatory business environment. However, its executive arm's actions have erected barriers, which undermine this goal and will ultimately harm the EU's own interests. Weakening economic ties with the Chinese market is detrimental to the currently sluggish EU economy and the bloc's long-term competitiveness.

The EU's anxiety over its competitiveness has prompted calls for "de-risking" based on the misguided perception that China is a "rival".

But the market tells a different story. In the face of a complex geopolitical environment, European companies have embraced the "in China, for China" strategy, expanding their investments and deepening technological innovation collaborations with Chinese enterprises. This partnership has not only enhanced the global competitiveness of European and Chinese companies but also revived and upgraded European manufacturing, creating a win-win scenario for both sides.

The European Commission can continue along the protectionist path it is taking under the illusion that it can isolate the EU from Chinese competition while retaining Chinese cooperation. Or it can listen to the concerns of both China and the EU's own pragmatic member states and business community, drop the stigmatizing "high-risk" label it is pinning on Chinese enterprises and investments, and engage with China on the basis of mutual respect and nondiscrimination.

It is hoped that the EU will approach economic competition and exchanges with China in an objective and rational manner, acknowledging the necessity and significance of maintaining stable economic and trade relations.

The stern warning issued by the Chinese side should be taken seriously.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

Consumption, production data reflect rise up the value chain

China's April inflation data tell two stories. The first is that consumer prices are again rising modestly, and factory-gate prices have returned to positive territory. The second, more important, story is structural: China is shifting from an export-and-investment growth model toward one driven by domestic demand, technological upgrading and industrial resilience, all while navigating a very harsh global environment.

That makes April's consumer price index and producer price index figures more significant than they might first appear.

According to data released by the National Bureau of Statistics, China's CPI rose 1.2 percent year-on-year in April, while the PPI climbed 2.8 percent, marking the strongest factory-gate price hike in nearly four years.

Viewed from China's perspective, April's data reflect a positive change, as the composition of the numbers matters.

Consumer inflation remains relatively subdued and manageable. Food prices continued to decline, while core inflation stayed stable. The more remarkable movement came from producer prices, driven partly by rising global energy and commodity costs, but also by stronger demand in advanced manufacturing sectors such as nonferrous metals, high-end equipment and computing-power-related industries.

That distinction is crucial because it reveals how China's economy is evolving. The growth impulses are increasingly concentrated in sectors of strategic importance: artificial intelligence infrastructure, green technology, advanced manufacturing and industrial upgrading.

Overseas, China's industrial policy is often portrayed as merely a supply-side story. But Beijing's longer-term strategy is not simply about producing more goods. It is about climbing the value chain while simultaneously building a larger and more resilient domestic consumer market.

Recent policy discussions in China increasingly emphasize the creation of a "new balance" between supply and demand. The old model relied heavily on property investment, local government borrowing and low-cost exports. The new one aims to strengthen household consumption, technological self-sufficiency and middle-income purchasing power.

That transition is crucial.

In the short term, China still needs to boost confidence in parts of the private sector, and ease lingering pressure in real estate and external uncertainty stemming from geopolitical tensions and trade frictions. Some of April's producer-price rebound was clearly imported through higher global energy costs linked to instability in the Middle East. But focusing only on those pressures misses the broader transformation underway.

Chinese policymakers are now more focused on improving the quality of growth rather than merely maximizing headline expansion.

This helps explain why the official discourse has increasingly stressed high-quality development, technological upgrading and domestic demand. The goal is to create a more internally sustainable economic system that is less vulnerable to external shocks, sanctions and geopolitical fragmentation.

There is also a larger global implication here. As the country moves into higher-end production and cleaner energy systems, it may become an exporter of industrial upgrades and technological advancements.

That shift might unsettle some Western economies already struggling with deindustrialization and stagnant productivity. Yet it also reflects a deeper reality: the age of hyper-globalization built on cheap Chinese labor, land, raw materials and environmental factors is ending. China is no longer merely the world's factory floor. It is trying to become something much more complex — a technologically advanced continental economy with its own consumer base, industrial ecosystem and strategic autonomy.

This transition will not be easy. Structural problems remain obvious, and global demand conditions are fragile. However, the April figures suggest that China's economy is gradually moving away from the deflationary psychology that has worried some policymakers for much of the past two years.

In an era when much of the world economy feels trapped between inflation, stagnation and geopolitical fragmentation, that alone is worth paying attention to.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Knowledge-intensive services key growth driver

Editor's note: *The service sector in China is a key pillar of high-quality economic development. Li Jun, deputy secretary-general of the China Association of Trade in Services, spoke to the 21st Century Business Herald on why China is focusing on its service sector. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

The service sector, especially producer services and knowledge-intensive services, has become a key driver of high-quality development.

As the middle-income group expands, the demand for high-quality services such as education, healthcare, culture, elderly care, tourism and sports is rapidly growing. Efforts to expand the capacity and improve the quality of services are essentially aimed at restructuring domestic supply and making consumption a genuine driver of economic growth.

Global value chains are being reshaped. Trade in services has emerged as a competitive international arena. Developed economies in Europe and North America have long dominated these global value chains due to their strengths in the service sector.

China, however, has a large deficit in trade in services, which represents both a weakness and an opportunity for growth. The country needs to strengthen its service sector to foster a new development pattern and boost its competitiveness.

Currently, a core theme of China's industrial policies is integrating advanced manufacturing with modern services. A challenge is that the two sectors have long been governed by different policies, statistical methods and regulatory frameworks, creating barriers to integration.

To overcome these barriers, efforts are required to utilize the industrial internet to connect data silos. It is necessary to accelerate the cloud migration of manufacturers' data on production, equipment and orders and attract service companies to develop services tailored to specific needs based on such data.

Statistical standards also need to be improved. Currently, service departments of manufacturing companies, such as R&D, design and logistics, are still classified under the manufacturing sector. This underestimates the scale of the service sector and limits its ability to benefit from favorable policies.

Additionally, manufacturing companies should be given more support to transition from merely providing products to also offering services and solutions. The global service industry is undergoing an important change, with artificial intelligence and the green economy driving trade in services. This presents a strategic opportunity for China to boost its trade in services.

The green transition has led to the emergence of a range of new businesses. Global market demand for services such as carbon verification, carbon asset management and environmental, social and governance consulting is expanding rapidly. China can leverage its experience in new energy, energy storage and green building by exporting green services.

Artificial intelligence is transforming trade in services by reducing the marginal cost of knowledge-intensive services, and making it easier for companies to offer services that used to be highly demanding for providers. This transition has empowered small and medium-sized Chinese companies to export their services globally.

More importantly, China is exporting AI technology, such as large AI models and intelligent applications. These goods will be key growth drivers of knowledge-intensive service exports during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:38 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:38 PM

BUSINESS

A shares seen as promising despite pullback

Thursday mkt adjustments not altering mid-term upward trend, experts say

By **SHI JING** in Shanghai
shijing@chinadaily.com.cn

While the A-share market underwent some adjustments on Thursday, experts are still upbeat on the A-share market performance in the following months, which is supported by China's continued industrial restructuring and economic recovery.

The benchmark Shanghai Composite Index shed 1.52 percent to close at 4177.92 points on Thursday, while the Shenzhen Component Index dropped 2.14 percent. Trading remained active, with total trading value of the three major exchanges topping 3 trillion yuan ($442 billion) for the seventh consecutive trading day.

Experts from China International Capital Corp Ltd said they are firmly confident of an upward trend in the A-share market in the mid-term, though fluctuations may be unavoidable. The country's stability amid global uncertainties and China's industrial innovation will serve as the core drivers, they said.

Xia Fanjie, a strategist at China Securities, said that a slow bull market driven by structural opportunities will typify A-share market performance in the second half.

Rising demand for computing power will be a major theme, as it is still too early to declare a bubble in the sector. Investors are recommended to look for opportunities in sectors of optical modules, printed circuit boards, advanced packaging, memory chips, liquid cooling and heat dissipation, data center power supply, computer power leasing and cloud services, Xia said.

Economic recovery is another major reason for a positive outlook on the A-share market in the coming months. The producer price index is expected to recover on a quarterly basis, while external demand will remain strong. In such a context, resource companies specializing in oil and gas production, coal, chemicals and nonferrous metals are the most likely to see their profitability improve. Opportunities can also be found among new energy manufacturers with global competitiveness, he said.

Morgan Stanley analysts said in a recent report that A-share company earnings will improve moderately in the following months.

Their optimism is supported by China's stronger exports amid an accelerating artificial intelligence and energy capex cycle, near-term reflation signs, Chinese currency appreciation against the US dollar, and a cooling down in large-cap platform companies' price competition amid strict government regulations.

The investment bank continues to prefer the A-share market over offshore alternatives mainly because of the higher concentration of high-end upstream manufacturing and hard-core tech companies in China. There is a high likelihood that A-share initial public offerings will trigger greater domestic investor participation, according to the report.

"We do believe that the sheer size of opportunities in China's equity market at the single stock and thematic level — fueled by solid fundamentals and promising themes such as tech localization and high-end manufacturing — should allow investors to construct a targeted Chinese portfolio that outperforms other peers," said Laura Wang, the investment bank's chief China equity strategist.

The tech-heavy ChiNext board in Shenzhen topped the 4000-point level on Wednesday to reach a record high. This has shown the market's recognition of China's ongoing industrial restructuring and upgrading, said Guo Yiming, head of investment advisory at Jufeng Investment.

Companies specializing in power equipment, communications, electronics, pharmaceuticals, biotech and computers — which make up most of the ChiNext's constituents — have fueled the recent rally. This is in line with the structural opportunities in the current A-share market, which is supported by the continued rising demand for AI computing power and the development of new energy industries, Guo said.

Amid ample market liquidity and continued policy support for emerging industries, the ChiNext is expected to receive a relatively high level of attention, he added.

But it should be noted that a structurally diverged performance is implied in ChiNext's recent bull. The index has been mainly propelled by the market leaders, as the index's top 10 heavyweights now take up 57 percent of the board's entire market cap.

Therefore, individual investors should avoid being overly affected by market sentiment, but rather focus on the prosperity and profitability of the companies they have chosen, said Guo.



A display shows Chinese stock indices in Shanghai on Wednesday. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



A one-person company owner works at an industrial park designated for OPC businesses in Lianyungang, Jiangsu province, on March 25. GENG YUHE / FOR CHINA DAILY

AI drives boom in one-person companies nationwide

By **LI JIAYING**
lijiaying@chinadaily.com.cn

As artificial intelligence tools become cheaper, smarter and easier to use, they are helping more Chinese entrepreneurs turn personal expertise and online followings into one-person companies (OPCs), building lean businesses powered by digital platforms and AI-driven productivity.

For Wang Yao, founder of an OPC built around her online personal channel "Wiley", the appeal lies not in scale, but in flexibility and low risk.

Through social media content sharing personal growth, life abroad and cost-effective ways to improve productivity, Wang's channel has attracted over 100,000 followers on Chinese social media platform Xiaohongshu, and has built a business centered on consulting services and brand partnerships.

"The company operates in a very healthy way because it has zero debt, low costs and high flexibility," Wang said, describing her business model as the monetization of "trust-based traffic".

> "The growing abundance, accessibility and usability of AI tools are key to one person becoming a team."
>
> **He Xia,** a former chief engineer at the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology

Wang said more people are beginning to realize that entrepreneurship no longer necessarily requires large teams, venture capital or corporate backing.

"People are gradually discovering that you don't have to join a major company or pursue fundraising and IPOs," she said. "One person can still build a decent business through their own skills and influence."

The content creator added that the rapid development of AI tools has become a major factor behind that shift.

"I do not need to hire copywriters, designers or video editors. AI has taken on these roles. That keeps the marginal cost of running my OPC extremely low and allows me to test new content directions or business models with very low risk," she said.

"The growing abundance, accessibility and usability of AI tools are key to one person becoming a team," said He Xia, a former chief engineer at the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology.

Current AI tools can cover functions from software development and daily searches to image generation and audio-video production, and AI agents such as OpenClaw are also lowering the coding threshold and bringing opportunities for entrepreneurs with little technical background, said He.

The trend is now reshaping China's entrepreneurial landscape. According to the China OPC development trends report (2025-30) released by the Zhongguancun Talent Association in February, the number of OPCs nationwide had exceeded 16 million by June 2025, accounting for 27.4 percent of all enterprises in China.

In the first half of 2025 alone, China registered 2.86 million new OPCs, up 47 percent year-on-year and accounting for nearly a quarter of all newly registered businesses.

Still, analysts also cautioned that AI alone cannot guarantee long-term business success.

"Many people focus only on AI's impact on productivity while overlooking that in the 'human plus AI' model, the human remains the core competitive factor," said Zhou Guangsu, a professor at Renmin University of China's school of labor and human resources.

Zhou said that while AI can help entrepreneurs rapidly build products and applications, commercialization still depends heavily on business judgment, market insight and resilience under pressure.

Pan Helin, a member of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology's Expert Committee for Information and Communication Economy, said OPCs should not become a purely symbolic trend.

"What matters is substance over form," Pan said, adding that lowering transaction costs, improving the business environment and strengthening talent-support policies will be key to the sector's sustainable development.

EU cybersecurity law revision seen as loss-making move

By **WANG KEJU**
wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn

Excluding Chinese suppliers under the European Union's proposed revision of the Cybersecurity Act will not deliver the security gains Brussels desires, but could instead weaken the bloc's digital competitiveness and crowd out innovation investment, experts have warned.

The warning comes as the EU reviews its draft legislation, which would identify "countries posing cybersecurity concerns" and "high-risk suppliers" and exclude them from 18 sectors, including energy, transport, and information and communications technology.

Earlier this month, the bloc restricted funding for renewable energy projects using inverters from suppliers in its list of "high-risk countries" such as China, in an attempt to tackle its so-called cybersecurity threats.

According to a joint report released last week by the China Chamber of Commerce to the EU (CCCEU) and global advisory firm KPMG, the EU could face an estimated loss of as much as 367.8 billion euros ($430.54 billion) over the next five years if Brussels excludes Chinese suppliers.

The cumulative economic losses for EU member states would be "equivalent to nearly two full years of the EU's annual budget", the report said, noting that Germany would bear the largest burden, with estimated losses of 170.8 billion euros, followed by France and Italy.

"The criteria for identifying so-called 'high-risk suppliers' appear to be politically targeted," said CCCEU Chairman Liu Jiandong. "This approach politicizes commercial decision-making and runs counter to the EU's own principles of equality and non-discrimination."

According to the report, there has been no substantiated evidence so far of "technical backdoors" or violations of EU cybersecurity rules by Chinese companies operating in the bloc, and the origin-based screening measures could violate WTO rules, breach bilateral investment treaties and trigger compensation claims.

He Yongqian, a spokeswoman for the Ministry of Commerce, said in late April that formal comments were submitted to the European Commission, the EU's executive arm, voicing serious concerns over relevant provisions in the draft.

"We hope the EU will attach great importance to and seriously consider the comments and proposed revisions submitted by the Chinese side," said He.

The spokeswoman stressed that should Chinese companies face discriminatory treatment as a result of the revision, China may take measures to safeguard its legitimate rights and interests.

China believes that dialogue and cooperation are the right approach to resolving issues facing both sides, and is willing to work with the EU to properly handle differences through consultations and jointly safeguard the stability and smooth operation of global industrial and supply chains, added He.

The report stresses that mandatory replacement of Chinese suppliers is "unlikely to achieve meaningful security gains". Instead, it warns of systemic negative effects: innovation budgets could be crowded out, fiscal burdens on member states increased and household incomes eroded.

Losing the European market would be a blow to Chinese companies, but many of them have already pivoted their focus toward the domestic market and the Global South, where demand for digital infrastructure remains strong, said Zhou Mi, a senior researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation.

"Worse still, the EU could lose its strategic autonomy in the ongoing restructuring of global industrial chains," Zhou said, adding that such efforts will only bring limited benefits to the EU.

Envision bags wind energy project in Canada

By **ZHENG XIN**
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

Envision Group, a leading Chinese green technology firm, has signed a strategic cooperation agreement with Cape Breton China Corp (CBCC) to develop a 300-megawatt integrated wind and energy storage project in Nova Scotia, Canada.

The deal, finalized in Shanghai earlier this week, represents a milestone in the global expansion of China's "wind-storage integration" model.

Beyond mere hardware exports, the partnership underscores a shift toward providing holistic zero-carbon solutions that combine cutting-edge artificial intelligence-driven energy systems with local capacity building, according to the Shanghai-based green technology giant.

The project, designed as a zero-carbon demonstration site, integrates 300 MW of wind power with an advanced battery energy storage system. It aims to enhance the flexibility and stability of the local power grid, supporting the province's transition toward a cleaner, digital-driven energy architecture, it said.

"By leveraging Envision's leading AI-driven storage and smart wind solutions, alongside CBCC's strong local resources and development capabilities, we will build a more robust renewable energy ecosystem," said Zhu Yi, senior business director of Envision Energy Canada. "Starting from Nova Scotia, we aim to expand our footprint across the North American market."

Envision's overseas expansion is indicative of a broader momentum among Chinese green technology enterprises, which are rapidly scaling up their global deployments to meet surging international demand for integrated renewable solutions.

Global battery energy storage capacity is on track for monumental growth, with projections from the China Energy Storage Alliance (CNESA) indicating an eight- to 17-fold increase between 2024 and 2035.

However, the sector — currently spearheaded by China, the United States and Europe — is moving away from its initial explosive boom and entering a stabilizing, transitional phase, said Chen Haisheng, chairman of the CNESA and director of the Institute of Engineering Thermophysics at the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Between 2026 and 2030, the industry's compound annual growth rate is forecast to reach 20.7 percent under conservative estimates, with the potential to hit 25.5 percent in a best-case scenario, Chen said.

Amid this industry shift, Envision's competitive edge lies in its long-term commitment to localization and research and development. Since 2010, the company has built a comprehensive international ecosystem, including the largest R&D center established by a Chinese firm in Denmark, as well as battery cell factories in Japan, the United Kingdom, France and Spain.

In addition, there has been a rapid acceleration of Chinese energy storage enterprises globally.

In the first quarter, China's energy storage battery shipments reached 209 gigawatt-hours, a 115 percent year-on-year increase, with major players like Envision and Contemporary Amperex Technology remaining the preferred partners for GWh-scale projects across Europe, North America and the Middle East.

The global push is fueled by the plummeting cost of renewable energy. A recent report from the International Renewable Energy Agency indicates that in resource-rich regions, the cost of solar-plus-storage has dropped to between $54 and $82 per MWh — significantly lower than the $100+ per MWh required for new gas-fired power plants.

Francesco La Camera, director-general of the International Renewable Energy Agency, recently emphasized that the argument regarding the "unreliability" of renewables no longer holds water.

"The ability to provide 24/7 renewable power is now cost-competitive with fossil fuels," he said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:38 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:38 PM

CHINA

China builds fastest quantum computer

Speed of Jiuzhang 4.0 prototype is a result of use and control of photons

By **LI MENGHAN** and **ZHU LIXIN**



A partial view of Jiuzhang 4.0. ZHOU MU / XINHUA

A team of Chinese scientists has developed the world's fastest quantum computer prototype, named Jiuzhang 4.0, capable of solving complex mathematical problems in less than the blink of an eye — tasks that even for the world's most powerful supercomputer would take longer than the age of the entire universe to crack.

The findings, published in the journal Nature on Wednesday, push the quantum advantage in computing to an unprecedented level, demonstrating China's leading position in the field.

A quantum computer operates on the laws of quantum mechanics. Its basic building blocks, called quantum bits or qubits, can exist in a superposition of both 0 and 1 simultaneously — unlike conventional bits, which are either 0 or 1.

This allows quantum computers to explore many computational paths in parallel, providing exponential speedup for certain tasks, such as solving some mathematical problems and simulating quantum systems.

Current mainstream quantum computing technological routes include superconducting, ion trap, photonic, and neutral atom systems. The Jiuzhang series, photonic quantum computers, encodes information in particles of light, and its speed depends on the ability to manipulate and control these photons.

However, in the development of large-scale photonic quantum processors, inevitable photon loss — a major source of computational error — has long been a serious constraint. As the optical network grows larger and more complex, photons can easily get "lost" in the maze, significantly degrading computational power.

To address the problem, the research team, led by the University of Science and Technology of China, developed a high-efficiency optical parametric oscillator light source and a spatiotemporally hybrid-coded interferometer, laying the groundwork for building a fault-tolerant photonic quantum processor.

They integrated 1,024 high-efficiency squeezed-state optical fields into a spatiotemporally hybrid-coded circuit with 8,176 modes, achieving a source efficiency of 92 percent and an overall system efficiency of 51 percent.

These represent major breakthroughs in low-loss photonic quantum information processing.

Moreover, the spatiotemporally hybrid-coded architecture allows photons to interact across both time and space dimensions, greatly improving the connectivity of the entire network while keeping the physical device scale under control.

Based on these advancements, the team achieved the manipulation and detection of up to 3,050 photons — a significant leap from the 255 photons achieved with the previous Jiuzhang 3.0, as published in 2023.

Experiments showed that the most complex data sample generated by Jiuzhang 4.0 takes only 25 microseconds to produce — where a microsecond is one-millionth of a second.

In contrast, the world's most powerful supercomputer, El Capitan, developed by the United States, would require more than 10 to the power of 42 years to calculate the same result.

In 2020, scientists from the University of Science and Technology of China successfully developed the Jiuzhang photonic quantum computing prototype with 76 photons, making China the second country in the world to achieve the quantum computational advantage, and the first to achieve it in an optical system.

Quantum technology is emphasized in the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) as both a future industry and a strategic frontier that requires sustained reinforcement.

The plan stresses the need to advance basic theories and foundational technologies while accelerating their industrial application, with goals set for the development of fault-tolerant universal quantum computers and scalable, special-purpose quantum computers.

Contact the writers at limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

Voices build bridges



International students perform Chinese songs at the Nigerian booth during an international youth cultural festival at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing on Thursday. Featuring booths from countries around the world, the event brought together students as "cultural ambassadors" showcasing traditional costumes, handicrafts and cuisine. WU XIAOHUI / CHINA DAILY

Experts focus on Austronesian history

By **LIU BOQIAN** and **HU MEIDONG**

Discussions in Pingtan, Fujian province, have renewed attention on Austronesian history and cross-Strait cultural ties, as experts, scholars and representatives of Taiwan's indigenous communities called for broader recognition of what they described as shared heritage.

"We should face the historical fact that today's Austronesian speakers trace their origins to the Chinese mainland, though many people are still unaware of this," said Xu Guirong, vice-president of the Pingtan International Institute of Austronesian Research, during a roundtable held as part of the 2026 Cross-Strait Marine Cultural Exchange Platform recently.

Austronesian-speaking communities span a vast area from Southeast Asia to the Pacific islands, including many of Taiwan's indigenous groups.

Xu cited a 2020 study published in the journal Science by researchers from the Chinese Academy of Sciences, which said early Austronesian-speaking populations emerged in Fujian and nearby areas of southern China about 8,400 years ago.

He also called for greater inclusion of Austronesian history in school curricula and stronger efforts to challenge what he described as distorted historical narratives.

One roundtable examined cultural origins and heritage, with participants discussing Austronesian traditions, the preservation of indigenous customs and historical links.

"The Chinese nation has long been shaped by cultural integration," said Liao Shih-chieh, a representative of Taiwan's Pingpu people and an advocate of intangible cultural heritage preservation.

"For people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait to live peacefully on this beautiful and united land and build a prosperous and harmonious China together is a blessing for both sides," he said.

Kimi Sibal, a historian based in Hualien, compared tattooing traditions among indigenous groups in Taiwan with those of ethnic communities on the Chinese mainland, including the Li people in Hainan province, saying they shared similarities in creation myths and cultural practices.

An exhibition on maritime civilization opened on Tuesday alongside the forum, featuring archaeological displays, indigenous artifacts and immersive audio exhibits that highlighted shared maritime cultural heritage across the Strait.

Contact the writers at liuboqian@chinadaily.com.cn

Building compliant digital bridges across the Pacific

By **YUAN SHENGGAO**



A group photo of GOIP. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



From left: Luo Sean, CEO of Eton InfoComm Technology. Leung Chi-yuen, chairman of GOIP. Lok Lian, general manager of Eton InfoComm Technology.

Securing cross-border data flows has become a strategic priority for enterprises expanding between China and the United States, where differing regulatory frameworks create complex operational challenges, according to Leung Chi-yuen, chairman of GOIP.

Founded in 2012, GOIP is an international telecommunications and managed service provider, serving as a critical link between the Asia-Pacific region and North America. The company facilitates secure and compliant data transit across the Pacific, acting as a managed digital bridge for businesses.

"Our role is to build the infrastructure and governance frameworks that allow enterprises to focus on their core business rather than regulatory complexities," Leung said.

Two-way growth

GOIP's services encompass the full spectrum of needs for enterprises establishing operations in new markets, from initial planning through ongoing management. The company's "one-stop" service model aims to simplify global IT management by providing coordinated solutions across network infrastructure, security compliance and operational support.

For Chinese companies expanding in the US, GOIP provides local support for infrastructure, compliance and operations. Similarly, for US businesses entering China, the company addresses connectivity, security and regulatory needs including compliance with the Personal Information Protection Law.

"Many providers are purely virtual; when a router fails or a cable is cut in a US data center, they open a ticket and wait. GOIP is different," Leung said.

"We have local offices and a professional team in the US, complemented by our long-term partner Eton InfoComm Technology. This partnership allows us to offer implementation excellence. If a Chinese client opens a new branch in the US, our local engineers are there to manage the rack and stack, the cabling and the configuration."

Unified protection

At the core of GOIP's value proposition is an integrated approach to network security and management. The company provides a unified platform encompassing network infrastructure, security protocols and operational monitoring. This integration allows for coordinated management of different system components, potentially improving responsiveness and reducing compatibility issues that can arise when using multiple service providers. The company's software-defined wide area network solutions are specifically engineered for trans-Pacific connectivity, addressing latency and reliability challenges that commonly affect cross-border communications.



> "Our role is to build the infrastructure and governance frameworks that allow enterprises to focus on their core business rather than regulatory complexities."
>
> **Leung Chi-yuen,** chairman of GOIP

The company's service model includes continuous monitoring through its proprietary network operations center capabilities. This approach aims to identify and address potential issues before they affect operations, providing enterprises with additional oversight of their cross-border digital infrastructure. Through 24/7 monitoring and response capabilities, GOIP seeks to minimize downtime and performance degradation for mission-critical applications such as enterprise resource planning and customer relationship management systems.

"Traditionally, companies hire one vendor for their network and a separate vendor for security. This creates 'blind spots,'" Leung noted. "GOIP manages VAPT (vulnerability assessment and penetration testing) and SIEM (security information and event management) directly, meaning our security protocols are built into the fabric of the network, not bolted on as an afterthought. Our VAPT is performed by our in-house experts who know the network's architecture intimately. Once we harden the perimeter, our SIEM provides 24/7 surveillance. Because GOIP manages the entire stack, if a threat is detected by our SIEM, our NOC (network operations center) can act instantly to mitigate it within the network."

Navigating rules

With governments worldwide implementing new data protection regulations and cross-border data flow requirements, enterprises face an increasingly complex compliance environment. GOIP's services include advisory support to help companies navigate these regulatory requirements while maintaining efficient operations. The company positions itself as a strategic adviser, assisting clients in developing data governance frameworks that address multiple jurisdictional requirements. This advisory function extends beyond technical implementation to include strategic planning for data localization, cross-border transfer mechanisms and compliance documentation.

Recent developments in regional cooperation frameworks, such as the memorandum of understanding on facilitating cross-boundary data flow within the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, have created new opportunities for service providers specializing in cross-border data solutions. These frameworks aim to facilitate data flows while maintaining appropriate protections, requiring specialized expertise for effective implementation.

GOIP has developed specific service offerings tailored to leverage these regulatory developments, helping clients optimize their data management strategies within approved frameworks.

"The traditional model of hiring local IT teams in every city is inefficient and costly. GOIP solves this through our integrated ITSM (IT service management) and NMS (network management system) ecosystem," Leung said. "Because we have our own proprietary network operations center team and in-house engineers, we act as the client's extended department. We handle the 24/7 monitoring, incident response and performance tuning. Our AI-empowered NOC automates the analysis of network logs and performance data, which significantly increases operational efficiency and reduces human error and risk. This, in turn, allows clients to streamline their on-site IT manpower requirements. Our NMS identifies bottlenecks before they cause downtime, and our ITSM framework ensures every request is handled with professional precision. This 'Lean IT' model provides a smooth, fast and low-cost operation."

GOIP's integrated solutions are built upon a foundation of internationally and nationally recognized credentials. The company's information security management is certified to the ISO 27001 standard, while its security services hold the China Cybersecurity Review Technology and Certification Center's Information Security Service Qualification. Its operational capabilities are validated by Singapore's Cybersecurity Services Regulation Office, its accredited Penetration Testing Service, its System and Organization Controls certification, and its authority to operate as a facilities-based carrier in the US under Federal Communications Commission Section 214 & 499. Service delivery is guided by Information Technology Infrastructure Library 4 Foundation's best practices, and its strategic advisory team includes professionals with a Certified Information Systems Security Professional certification.

ADVERTORIAL

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:38 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:38 PM

WORLD



Members of Iran's national soccer team attend a farewell ceremony in Tehran on Wednesday ahead of their departure for the 2026 FIFA World Cup. ATTA KENARE / AFP

UAE rejects Israeli visit claim

Dispute deepens diplomatic strain as ceasefire faces mounting pressure

By **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE, and **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong

The United Arab Emirates has flatly rejected an Israeli claim of a "secret visit" by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during the war with Iran, labeling it as "baseless".

This development adds complexity to the already strained diplomatic efforts aimed at preventing the collapse of the tenuous ceasefire between Washington and Tehran.

In a statement released on Wednesday night via state news agency WAM, the UAE said its relations with Israel "are public and conducted within the framework of the well-known and officially declared Abraham Accords, and are not based on nontransparent or unofficial arrangements".

The statement also denied receiving any Israeli military delegation.

The reaction came hours after Netanyahu's office announced the visit on social media and branded the meeting a "historic breakthrough".

The Times of Israel, citing an informed source, said on Thursday that the visit took place in the city of Al Ain near the Omani border on March 26 and lasted several hours.

The UAE and Israel normalized relations under the US-brokered Abraham Accords signed in September 2020.

Palestinian leaders have long condemned the deal as a "stab in the back". Iran has also criticized the agreement and for years alleged that Israel has maintained a military and intelligence presence in the UAE.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on social media that Israel "publicly revealed" what was already known by the Iranian security services, warning that "collusion" with Israel is "unforgivable".

The UAE and other Arab countries were targeted by Iranian missile and drone attacks after the US and Israel launched airstrikes against Iran in late February. A fragile ceasefire involving Iran, the US and Israel has been in place since April 8.

According to WAM's reports earlier this month, UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan received calls from several regional leaders after Iranian attacks on the country on May 5, including from Netanyahu.

US Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee also revealed this week that Israel had sent Iron Dome air-defense weapons, along with personnel to operate them, to the UAE.

Political solutions

However, Anwar Gargash, an adviser to the UAE's president, said on Wednesday that the Gulf nation remained committed to political solutions and diplomacy amid regional tensions, while stressing the country's right to defend its sovereignty.

Relations between Arab states and Iran should not be defined by confrontation, he added.

Meanwhile, US Vice-President JD Vance said on Wednesday that he believes progress is being made in negotiations with Iran to end hostilities, after US President Donald Trump rejected Tehran's latest proposal as unacceptable.

"The red line is very simple," Vance said. "He (the president) needs to feel confident that we have put a number of protections in place such that Iran will never have a nuclear weapon."

Nevertheless, an Iranian Army spokesman said the armed forces are maintaining "the highest level of readiness", warning that "there is no room for retreat" as tensions with the US persist.

Iranian First Vice-President Mohammad Reza Aref said the country's "right to the Strait of Hormuz is established, and the matter is closed".

Iran's ISNA news agency quoted him as saying that Iran's plans "were tailored to the sanctions and pressures of our enemies, but now we must plan for the security and well-being of our country and the region".

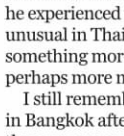
Even amid simmering tensions, Iran held a send-off ceremony on Wednesday for the national soccer team ahead of the 2026 World Cup, cohosted by the US, Mexico and Canada.

At a square in central Tehran, people waved flags, chanted slogans and some held placards honoring the late supreme leader Ali Khamenei, who was killed during the war.

Contact the writers at cuihaipei@chinadaily.com.cn

Thailand's embrace of its youngest treasures

FIRST PERSON VIEW



Yang Wanli
Reporter's log

While foreigners often praise Thailand for its hospitality, I've come to believe children may be the group the country cherishes most. Few countries devote an entire national celebration so wholeheartedly for children — not as a commercial occasion, but as a deeply rooted social value.

Rather than observing the International Children's Day on June 1, Thailand celebrates Wan Dek, or National Children's Day, on the second Saturday of January each year. Across the country, the message is unmistakable: children are the nation's most precious resource.

The celebrations begin even before the holiday arrives. Schools organize performances, games and community events, with children receiving gifts from teachers.

On Children's Day, youngsters are showered with affection by family members and strangers alike. Shopping malls host concerts, while public attractions lower ticket prices or open free of charge to families. Streets fill with children clutching balloons and snacks, walking with a rare sense of collective joy.

Yet, what struck me most was not the festivities themselves, but the seriousness with which Thai society treats childhood.

On the day, children are invited to the Government House, where they can sit in the prime minister's office — a symbolic gesture affirming that they matter.

Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul introduced this year's slogan "Love Thailand, Care for the World", emphasizing civic responsibility, environmental awareness and global citizenship.

The Royal Thai Air Force opens its bases to the public for large-scale celebrations featuring aircraft displays, military demonstrations, interactive games and live performances.

Last year, I took my son to one of the events, and it felt less like a military showcase than a nationwide carnival. Tens of thousands attended. Children climbed onto aircraft cockpits as smiling air force personnel lifted them up for photos.

Shuttle buses moved between parking areas and the venue. Volunteers distributed free bottled water. Temporary stalls sold food and toys at modest prices. The atmosphere was orderly yet warm — a public celebration designed not only for children, but also for the people around them.

My son talked about the event for weeks afterward. But the kindness he experienced that day was not unusual in Thailand. It reflected something more ordinary — and perhaps more meaningful.

I still remember our initial weeks in Bangkok after we moved there three years ago. Our son was only 4, and every morning we walked him to the kindergarten. Along a route of barely 10 minutes, four or five strangers would smile, wave or greet him warmly — security guards, fruit vendors, lottery sellers, people we had never met before.

That openness is evident in daily life. Market vendors often slip extra fruit into his hands. Staff at the shopping malls and play centers offer him snacks or candy. On Bangkok's elevated Skytrain, passengers routinely offer him a seat, even now, at 7, when he's perfectly capable of standing.

Over time, I have watched my once shy and sensitive child change. Thailand has rewarded his attempts to engage with the world rather than discouraging them. When he speaks to restaurant staff, people praise him. When he helps carry luggage at the airport, fellow passengers compliment his manners. Encouragement comes easily and naturally from strangers.

Perhaps, most revealing is the patience that Thai society shows toward children when they are not at their best.

Young children cry. Six-year-olds can be loud, restless and impulsive. Parents sometimes lose their cool. These are universal realities. Yet, I've rarely seen adults glaring at misbehaving children with rage, scolding them or humiliating the parents struggling to calm them down.

There's a familiar saying in China that children are the flowers of the motherland, reflecting a long-standing belief that the younger generation embodies the nation's future.

In many ways, China has made extraordinary progress in caring for children, with the health of children continuing to improve in recent years. Official data showed that the net enrollment rate for primary school-aged children remained at 99.9 percent, covering around 160 million students nationwide.

With the rise in social media platforms such as Douyin — China's TikTok — and Xiaohongshu, or RedNote, parenting bloggers have attracted huge audiences. Videos capturing children's innocence, humor and candid remarks have won the hearts of countless adults.

For many, children offer a rare sense of purity and wonder amid the pressures of modern life. Yet, online debates over "wild children" — those seen as disruptive or badly behaved — also emerge from time to time.

While people continue to adore these lovable children, such conversations have also prompted deeper reflection on how parents and society should guide the next generation — so that the kindness, sincerity and innocence of childhood can continue into adulthood.

My observations are deeply personal. Still, I wonder whether Thailand offers a small but meaningful answer.

The core value of Children's Day in Thailand underscores a simple social philosophy: parents should lead by example, while children should grow up with gratitude, respect and emotional security. The idea is straightforward — the way society treats children shapes how those children eventually treat the world.

To be raised with love means far more than hearing the words "I love you". It means growing up feeling emotionally safe, accepted without constant judgment, listened to rather than being dismissed, and disciplined with patience rather than humiliation.

Children raised with respect often learn to respect others. Those treated with kindness tend to pass on that kindness. Perhaps, that is the quiet wisdom behind Thailand's affection for children: a society that makes space for its youngest members ultimately produces gentler adults too.

The author is chief correspondent at China Daily Asia-Pacific Bureau based in Bangkok.

Contact the writer at yangwanli@chinadaily.com.cn

UN agency hails China's green development

By **SHARON NAKOLA** in Nairobi, Kenya
sharon@chinadailyafrica.com

Developing countries facing rapid urbanization and rising housing demand can draw on China's experience with green construction and low-carbon development, United Nations officials say.

Speaking at a media briefing on Wednesday ahead of the 13th session of the World Urban Forum, to be held in Baku, Azerbaijan, between May 17 and 22, UN Environment Programme officials warned that rapid urban growth, particularly in Africa and Asia, is piling pressure on countries to expand housing and infrastructure while also cutting emissions and improving climate resilience.

Martin Krause, director of Climate Change Division at UNEP, said many developing countries are confronting a "dual challenge" of expanding infrastructure while reducing emissions, particularly in regions where housing shortages and inadequate living conditions remain widespread.

He highlighted China's large-scale urban development over recent decades as an example worth studying.

"The work that China has done in this particular sector is certainly impressive," Krause said, adding that African countries facing growing housing and infrastructure needs could learn from such experiences through international platforms that share best practices on sustainable construction and climate action.

Krause said buildings are increasingly becoming central to the climate crisis because they sit at the intersection of emissions, affordability and resilience.

Inefficient buildings lock in high energy demand and increase household costs, while climate-smart buildings can reduce energy bills, strengthen energy security and provide protection against rising temperatures and extreme weather, he said.

Energy efficiency

China's urban expansion demonstrated how countries can pursue large-scale infrastructure development while improving building practices and energy efficiency, lessons that the UNEP said are becoming increasingly relevant as urban populations continue to grow worldwide.

Over the past decades, China has invested significant resources in its transition to an inclusive green economy, and it has proved that the shift would be beneficial for economic growth, climate change mitigation, job creation and improving people's living standards, according to a previous UNEP report.

The nation has been a major innovator and producer of renewable energy, producing the world's largest amount of solar panels and wind turbines, which have been extensively adopted in urban development nationwide.

The UNEP officials also presented the findings of the Global Status Report for Buildings and Construction 2025/2026, to be released next week. The report provides a comprehensive assessment of how the sector can reduce emissions, manage climate risks and maintain affordability while expanding rapidly to meet growing global demand for housing and infrastructure.

Oliver Rapf, executive director of the Buildings Performance Institute Europe, said global building floor space continues to expand rapidly, but efforts to decarbonize the sector remain far behind what is needed to meet international climate goals.

Operational emissions from buildings have increased by 6.5 percent since 2015, even though emissions would need to decline by more than 30 percent to stay aligned with the Paris Agreement pathway, Rapf said. "The world is building fast, falling short as climate risks rise and cities grow."

Hanane Hafraoui, program management officer at the Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction, said governments must move from climate pledges to implementation by making low-carbon and resilient buildings central to national climate plans.

"The task now is to move from pilots to scale, from commitments to implementation, and from climate ambitions to having better homes and better lives for people," she said.

"We cannot solve the climate crisis without making homes more affordable, more climate resilient, and energy efficient."

Paralyzed by rain



Vehicles move through waterlogged streets in front of a market in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on Wednesday, as relentless rains cause severe flooding and traffic congestion in the area. SONY RAMANI VIA GETTY IMAGES

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036

Telephone: 212-537-8888

Fax: 212-537-8898

editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com

Subscription: 212-537-8899

Advertising: 212-537-8916

Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily

usa.chinadaily.com.cn

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

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108
529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1828

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:38 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:38 PM



A dialogue with the Americas

Exhibition dives deep into Latin civilizations in its largest showcase worldwide, with nearly 3,000 artifacts, many of which are making their China debut, **Zhang Kun** reports.

The Shanghai Museum announced the opening of ticket sales for its upcoming exhibition on May 8, *On Top of the World Tree: Ancient Civilizations of the Americas*, which will be the world's largest showcase of ancient American civilizations.

The museum launched sales of 200,000 early-bird tickets through its official WeChat platform and the travel service Trip.com on the same day. More than 10,000 tickets were sold in 40 minutes, breaking the presale record for the massively successful Egyptian exhibition hosted by the museum last year.

Scheduled to run at the Shanghai Museum on People's Square from July 9 to Nov 14, 2027, the *Americas* exhibition will display nearly 3,000 artifacts from Mexico and Peru. According to Chu Xiaobo, director of the Shanghai Museum, it will be one of "the world's largest, most authoritative, most comprehensively narrated, and latest presentations of ancient American civilizations".

At the global launch on May 8, Chu, wearing a shirt specially designed for the exhibition featuring signature plants and animals of the Americas, described it as "a once-in-a-lifetime experience".

The exhibition is the sixth installment of the Shanghai Museum's A Dialogue with the World Exhibition series. Last year, the fifth event, *On Top of the Pyramid: The Civilization of Ancient Egypt,* attracted more than 2.77 million visitors and generated over 30 billion online views, setting a new record for the highest attendance at a single paid exhibition in museums worldwide.

More than 70 percent of the visitors were from overseas and other parts of China outside Shanghai. The exhibition generated revenue of more than 760 million yuan ($111.9 million).

Following the great success of the Egyptian exhibition, the Shanghai Museum has collaborated with leading archaeological institutions in Mexico and Peru, as well as top Chinese scholars, to create a panoramic presentation of ancient American civilizations, including the Olmec, Maya, Aztec, and Inca.



Shanghai officials and diplomats from Peru and Mexico on May 8 launch *On Top of the World Tree: Ancient Civilizations of the Americas*, one of the museum's flagship exhibitions of the year. GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

The museum will dedicate all its galleries at its People's Square venue to the exhibition. Spanning over 7,000 square meters, the exhibition will be designed in two parts.

Galleries on the first and second floors will be jointly presented by the Shanghai Museum, and the Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia and the Museo Nacional de Antropologia in Mexico. Showcasing more than 2,600 cultural relics from 13 Mexican institutions, this part will highlight the distinct pantheon system and power structures of major Mesoamerican civilizations, focusing on their complex spiritual beliefs and material achievements.

The third-floor, jointly organized with Peru's Larco Museum and NEON Group, which specializes in experimental and large-scale immersive experiences, will feature 325 treasured artifacts from Peru, 116 of which will make their overseas debut. This will be the largest showcase of the Andean civilization in China and one of the most extensive international displays of Andean gold and silver artifacts ever presented by Peru.

One of the largest exhibits will be the *Olmec Colossal Stone Head 4* from the Museo de Antropologia de Xalapa, Mexico. Weighing approximately 4.5 tons, it symbolizes the power of the Olmecs, one of the earliest known civilizations of the Americas.

The tallest exhibit will be *Calakmul Stela 51* from the Museo Nacional de Antropologia. One of the most outstanding portrait works of Mayan art, it depicts Yuknoom Took' K'awiil, the great ruler of the Kaan kingdom based in Calakmul. Due to its 4-meter height, the Shanghai Museum will construct a specially designed, climate-controlled glass case and display it outdoors on People's Square.

To ensure the safe and timely transportation of these artifacts, the Shanghai Museum will charter two large cargo aircraft from China Eastern Airlines. The planes, adorned with motifs inspired by the patterns of ancient Mexican ruins and depicting the *Feathered Serpent*, will travel nearly 30,000 kilometers round-trip to deliver the cultural relics to Shanghai.

Beyond common labels of "mysterious" and "primitive", the Americas possess a complete and profound civilizational system, Chu says. Moreover, there are deep archaeological and cultural connections between it and Asia. To highlight these links, the museum will also display selected Chinese cultural relics on loan from domestic institutions from seven provinces.

According to David Gamarra, consul general of Peru in Shanghai, most of the cultural relics in the exhibition are making their China debut. These artifacts vividly illustrate the artistic style and spiritual life of Andean civilizations, reflecting the exquisite artistry and highly developed culture of ancient Peru.

Gamarra says the exhibition will further strengthen cultural exchange between Peru and China; and hopes it will attract more Chinese tourists to visit the country.

Rodrigo Topete Maza, acting consul general of Mexico in Shanghai, notes the profound friendship and long histories shared by China and Mexico. He hopes that through the exhibition, visitors will sense the deep connections between the two nations and the shared spiritual core of their civilizations.

Zhong Xiaomin, director of the Shanghai Municipal Administration of Culture and Tourism, said at the global launch: "We want to take this exhibition as an opportunity to further build a platform for cultural exchange between China and Latin America and introduce more high-quality Latin American cultural resources to China."

Contact the writer at zhangkun@chinadaily.com.cn



Selected artifacts from Shanghai Museum's new exhibition on the civilizations of the Americas, many of which are being shown overseas for the first time. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Online Scan the code to watch the video.

Fused with ballet, Muqam carries Uygur heritage forward

By **ZHANG KUN**

The Shanghai Ballet premiered its latest production, *The Heartbeat of Muqam*, with two performances at the Shanghai International Dance Center on Saturday and Sunday. Inspired by the folk music and dance of the Uygur ethnic group from northwestern China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, the work represents a creative exploration of intangible cultural heritage through dance.

Muqam, recognized by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage of humanity, is a traditional performing art that combines the singing, music and dance of the Uygur ethnic group. "Muqam carries the imprint of cultural exchange and integration along the Silk Road, embodying the shared memories and deep emotions of the Chinese nation," says Ji Pingping, director of the Shanghai Ballet.

Founded in 1979, the Shanghai Ballet has long been committed to presenting Chinese culture through the international language of ballet. "We have discovered many connections between ballet and Xinjiang songs and dances," Ji notes.





Scenes from Shanghai Ballet's latest production *The Heartbeat of Muqam*. Inspired by the folk music and dance from Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, the work represents a creative exploration of intangible cultural heritage through ballet. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The Heartbeat of Muqam not only marks an innovative breakthrough for the Shanghai Ballet but it also represents the use of dance in telling Chinese stories, she adds.

Creating the ballet spanned three years and involved six research trips to Xinjiang. During their visits, the dancers observed that "Muqam lives in the melodies, rhythms and movements of the local people. It is a natural part of their lives and an intuitive expression of emotion," shares principal dancer Qi Bingxue, who plays the protagonist in the production.

The ballet tells the story of a young musician of the Uygur ethnic group who returns to her hometown to retrace childhood memories and cultural roots, and rediscovers the contemporary vitality of Muqam.

In the dance-theater piece, the heroine livestreams a Xinjiang wedding via mobile devices, sharing the charm of Muqam with a global audience. "It reflects the real-life setting of today's Xinjiang, where Muqam resonates with the people rather than being confined to ancient books," Qi explains.

Ding Wei, former director of the China Song & Dance Ensemble, praises the production for its "outstanding integration of classical ballet and China's intangible cultural heritage".

"The stage design is beautiful, and the dancers deliver top-tier performances," he says, describing the work as "representing the highest level of dance art in Shanghai, and also in China".

He notes that Xinjiang folk dance is improvisational, quite distinct from ballet's structured vocabulary. "I saw a remarkable fusion of the two styles in this production, and the director has done an excellent job," he says.

Director Wang Ge emphasizes the fusion's organic nature: "You can't simply stitch together ballet footwork and folk dance's upper-body movements. It's important to maintain a fine line that keeps it authentically ballet rather than turning into a folk dance show."

Playwright Luo Huaizhen notes that this unprecedented blend significantly enriches the vocabulary of classical ballet and will make a meaningful contribution to the dance world.

A Xinjiang native surnamed Lu, who attended the opening night, recalled her childhood experiences with her friends of Uygur ethnic group: "We would sing and dance whenever people gathered. The pot-bellied character reminded me of uncles back home, and I recognized those dance moves, too!" she says in excitement.

She also commends the presentation of Xinjiang's cultural heritage through ballet. "There are many ways to introduce Muqam to the public. While folk dance is accessible to many, ballet conveys it more vividly to international audiences. We need more efforts like this to share Xinjiang with the world."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:38 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:38 PM

LIFE







From left: Produced with the joint contributions of over 60,000 experts and scholars, the print and online editions of the *Encyclopedia of China (Third Edition)* have become important vehicles for showcasing Chinese culture. As part of the event, the *Encyclopedia of Emergency Safety for Chinese Schools* was launched. A band performs during the "Night of the Encyclopedia". PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Encyclopedia of China enters AI era

Scholars and publishers gather in Beijing to examine how emerging technologies are transforming public access to trusted information, **Yang Yang** reports.





Above: The *Encyclopedia of Chinese and Italian Culture: Art* was highlighted at the conference as a key achievement. The book introduces the representative accomplishments in the fields of art from both China and Italy. **Left:** The conference also features an exhibition of outstanding popular science books.

The inaugural China Encyclopedia Conference, hosted by the Encyclopedia of China Publishing House, took place in Beijing from April 23 to 24, as part of the activities for the country's first National Reading Week after the State Council regulation to promote reading among the public took effect on Feb 1.

The *Encyclopedia of China* is the country's first and most authoritative comprehensive modern encyclopedia. Launched in 1978 and published by the Encyclopedia of China Publishing House under the China Publishing Group, it stands as a landmark national cultural project.

The latest edition, the third one, pioneered a new approach by prioritizing the online version while creating a concise print edition, establishing a knowledge system with professional, thematic, and general sections. By the end of 2025, the online version had 519,000 entries, and the print version was published in 43 volumes, marking significant progress, according to Yang Muzhi, chief editor of the *Encyclopedia of China (Third Edition)*.

"Thanks to the efforts of more than 60,000 experts and scholars, the print and online versions of the *Encyclopedia of China (Third Edition)* have become significant platforms for showcasing Chinese culture and confidence," said Mao Yuansheng, general manager and deputy secretary of the Party Committee of the China Publishing Group, in his speech at the main forum of the conference on April 23.

The China Encyclopedia Conference, themed "Empowering Thousands of Industries, Reaching Thousands of Households", attracted over 600 guests from various sectors. It offered a rich array of activities, including a main conference, forums, a science popularization exhibition, and a music-sharing session, creating a grand celebration of knowledge for the public.

The theme of the conference reflects the trend of digital integration, making authoritative knowledge more accessible, said Mao.

The rapid development of technologies such as AI and big data is profoundly changing the paradigm of knowledge production and dissemination.

Encyclopedias should embrace technology by forming a "human-machine collaboration" model that combines experts, AI, and platforms to solve the challenges of traditional compilation, while steadfastly upholding the spirit of science and the essence of humanity, thereby strengthening the foundation of the national knowledge system, said Bai Chunli, vice-chairman of the editorial board of the third edition of the *Encyclopedia of China* and editor-in-chief of the chemistry section.

Li Yang, a member of the editorial board of the encyclopedia's third edition and editor-in-chief of the economics section, emphasized the critical importance of philosophy and social sciences. In the AI era, cultivating talent requires philosophical thinking and social science literacy. "The encyclopedia must undertake the important task of 'clarifying the source' by providing accurate, systematic, and authoritative knowledge", he said.

However, while new technologies like AI unleash innovative potential, they also pose challenges to copyright protection.

Zhou Huilin, president of the China Copyright Association, pointed out that copyright protection is crucial for promoting the dissemination of encyclopedic knowledge. As a high-quality source of authoritative knowledge, the copyright protection of encyclopedias is particularly important. He proposed three initiatives: adhering to the original source of knowledge, improving institutional safeguards, and deepening cross-disciplinary collaboration.

Gao Shiyi, president of the Encyclopedia of China Publishing House, highlighted that, as a major national cultural project, the encyclopedia focuses on five key areas: digitalization, platform development, intelligence, branding, and systemization to make encyclopedic knowledge accessible to every household. Future efforts will emphasize content quality and collaboration with research institutions, the education sector, and tech companies to build a reliable and engaging knowledge ecosystem, empowering various industries, he said.

Wang Wei, an editorial board member of the third edition of the encyclopedia and editor-in-chief of the archaeology section, said that the archaeology volume is based on Chinese practices and breaks through the constraints of the Western "three elements of civilization" comprising writing systems, urban settlements and metallurgy, proposing new definitions for civilization.

Currently, there is a need to integrate encyclopedic resources with digital technology to support innovation in industries such as cultural tourism and manufacturing, bringing knowledge to life and contributing Chinese wisdom to human civilization, he added.

As a core component of the conference, the Encyclopedia of China Publishing House unveiled and introduced several significant achievements.

Among these, the print version of the *Encyclopedia of China (Third Edition)* and the China Encyclopedia Online represent not just the digitization of books, but also the networking and dynamic upgrading of the national authoritative knowledge system, serving as the "knowledge foundation of the digital age".

The Encyclopedia of Basic Education Network is aimed at the education sector, building a student-centered, technology-supported integrated education ecosystem based on the concept of "borderless learning and comprehensive resource education", striving to provide strong support for teaching and learning in schools.

The Digital-Intelligence Integration Achievement Matrix includes the *China Through Time and Space* digital exhibition, VR youth digital classrooms, and XR science popularization films allowing users to learn and acquire knowledge in an immersive, interactive way, making the learning process enjoyable.

The unveiling of the *Encyclopedia of Chinese and Italian Culture: Art* introduces representative achievements in the field of art from both China and Italy. It aims to deepen exchange and interaction in art and culture between the two countries, which are jointly committed to the protection of cultural heritage and the better promotion of cultural development. It is compiled by the Encyclopedia of China Publishing House and the Italian Institute of the Encyclopedia (Treccani Institute).

On the afternoons of April 23 and 24, six parallel forums were held. The forums included the Encyclopedia Future Path Seminar, Encyclopedia Education Forum, Brand and Cultural Development Forum, Home and School Emergency Safety Development Forum, the launch of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Science Reading Activity, and the release of the List of Outstanding Chinese Popular Science Books along with the New Era Popular Science Publishing and Nationwide Reading Promotion Forum. Each forum aimed to create a "knowledge service solution" for a specific field.

Contact the writer at yangyangs@chinadaily.com.cn

Ancient porcelain city embraces global openness and creative innovation





Left: Spanish potter Jaume Ribalta (left) and his friends display porcelain at a fair in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province. XINHUA **Right:** A foreign artist looks at ceramics at a carnival held on the sidelines of the 2025 China Jingdezhen International Ceramic Expo in Jingdezhen on Oct 17 last year. ZHOU MI / XINHUA

NANCHANG — With a 3D printer nozzle rotating as it smoothly extrudes clay, a delicate ceramic work is gradually taking shape — a scene that would once have been unimaginable to earlier generations of artisans in Jingdezhen.

It is happening in a studio in the ancient Chinese porcelain capital, a city in East China's Jiangxi province with a porcelain-making history of more than 1,700 years.

The studio's owner, Michael May, a 38-year-old ceramic artist from the United States, believes this new way of "printing" ceramics can greatly expand both the possibilities and efficiency of ceramic production.

"I originally thought that Jingdezhen would reject new technologies, but I didn't expect that there would be 3D printing factories everywhere. The equipment can be rented even in a village," he says.

May adds that the ancient city's openness and inclusiveness led him to stay, continue his experiments and creations, and offer courses to share his techniques and ideas.

Since the Song Dynasty (960-1279), ceramics crafted in Jingdezhen have been exported to Central Asia, West Asia, Europe and Africa. Today, the city still retains its global appeal, drawing more than 5,000 ceramic enthusiasts like May from around the world at peak times.

"Jingdezhen is like an unfolding world map of ceramic culture, and every person who loves ceramics can find a place of their own," says Qurat ul Ain from Pakistan, who is pursuing a doctoral degree at Jingdezhen Ceramic University.

She says she once struggled to decide on a research direction. "Pakistan also has an ancient history of pottery-making, but there are no local doctoral programs related to ceramics, nor much systematic research in the field.

"It was my mentor who encouraged me to focus on the research of ceramic culture in my country," she says. "Jingdezhen not only has a profound history but also an open international exchange program."

As early as 2015, the Taoxichuan cultural and creative district in Jingdezhen launched the Migratory Bird Program, an international artist residency initiative. The program has sent invitations to art institutions in more than 50 countries and regions, attracting 3,600 artists from around the world.

The district holds fairs of various sizes regularly. About 28,600 craftspeople have set up stalls there, with an average age of just 28.

Matt Watterson, a 31-year-old American ceramic artist, enjoys strolling through the city's fairs, where he often finds old ceramic fragments to incorporate into his own creations.

"I can turn my creativity into works by collaborating with the locals here, which is very fulfilling," he says. In his view, the locals' openness and friendliness represent the vibe of this city.

Jingdezhen, with a population of more than 1.6 million, has recorded a net population inflow of 136,000 over the past decade. Among those who have started long-term businesses in the city, more than half come from outside Jiangxi province or even from overseas.

Thanks to increasingly convenient visa-free policies, Jaume Ribalta, a Spanish potter born in the 1990s, was able to invite his parents from his hometown in Spain to Jingdezhen.

"This is the farthest journey my parents have traveled so far. I entertained them in my rural studio in Xianghu village," he says. "I also took them to decorate their own ceramic works and helped them understand the culture of the millennia-old porcelain capital."

After traveling to 20 countries, May finally chose Jingdezhen as the place to realize his ideas. Recently, he has been working to expand his studio.

"I sold all my belongings and came to this city," he says. "I never thought that this place was so inclusive before I came here."

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:38 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:38 PM

SPORTS

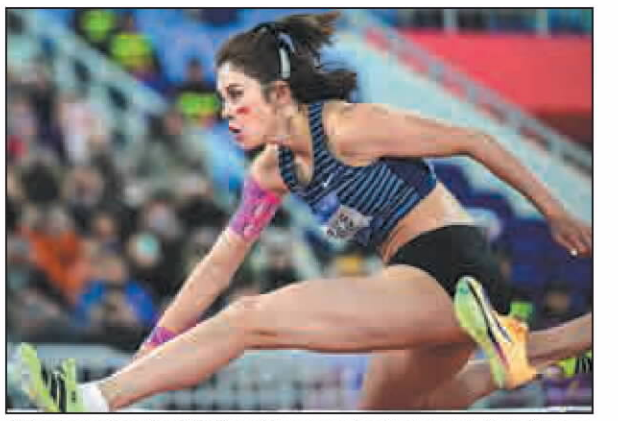


China's Chen Yujie will take on Jamaica's Shericka Jackson and Sha'Carri Richardson of the US in front of her home crowd. XINHUA

ATHLETICS

SET FOR A SPARKLING CONTEST

Chinese talent ready to challenge global elites at Diamond League doubleheader



China's star hurdler Wu Yanni has promised to try and close the gap with the international pack at the Diamond League opener. XINHUA

By SUN XIAOCHEN
sunxiaochen@chinadaily.com.cn

With talented young Chinese athletes all laced up and ready to pit themselves against a stacked field of elite champions, the world's premier track and field series has guaranteed fans a thrilling season opener in China.

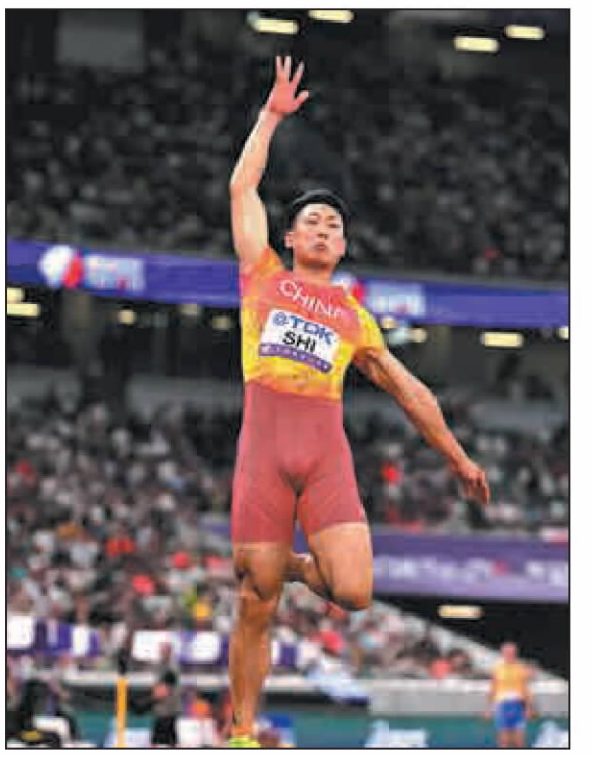
The World Athletics Diamond League's 2026 curtain-raiser, to be held in Keqiao of Shaoxing city, Zhejiang province, on Saturday, promises to deliver a spectacular showpiece, with China's best sprinters, jumpers and throwers raring to challenge the world's top stars — more than 20 Olympic and world champions, including as many as six world record holders — in front of a home crowd.

And, offering just enough time for pulses to return to normal, a week later in Xiamen, Fujiang province, on May 23, they do it all again, capping off the season's tone-setting doubleheader.

Leading the star-studded international cast confirmed for the Shaoxing leg are Sweden's two-time pole vault Olympic champion Armand "Mondo" Duplantis, men's 400m hurdles world record holder Karsten Warholm of Norway and the fastest women's 100m hurdler in history Tobi Amusan of Nigeria.

A highly popular overseas star among Chinese fans, Duplantis, who just set his 15th and latest world record of 6.31m at an indoor meet in southeastern Swedish city Uppsala in March, will open his outdoor season in a loaded men's field that also includes Greece's Emmanouil Karalis, who moved to second on the athletes' world ranking in February with a 6.17m clearance in Athens, and two-time world champion Sam Kendricks of the United States.





World record pole vaulter Armand "Mondo" Duplantis of Sweden (left) will look to produce another memorable performance in front of the Chinese fans, while defending long jump champion Shi Yuhao is hoping to land on the top of the podium again. XINHUA

Having triumphant memories of China, including his then-world-record-setting feat of 6.24m at last year's Xiamen leg, Duplantis, who has stayed unbeaten since 2023, will be keen to extend his winning streak and maybe just give fans another unforgettable moment this weekend.

Warholm will also kick-start his season hoping to carry on the momentum from his last visit to Shaoxing, when he clocked a 2025 world-leading 47.28 to win the 400m hurdles. This year though, he will be competing in the series-special 300m format, which was added to the league program last season and has replaced the traditional 400m in Shaoxing this year. He will be up against 2022 world champion Alison dos Santos of Brazil and world bronze medalist Trevor Bassitt of United States.

"I am so excited to return to Keqiao again this year," said the 30-year-old Norwegian, who set the 400m world mark of 45.94 with his golden finish at Tokyo 2020. "Winning here for the first time in my career last year was such a great feeling. I look forward to a great battle."

Women's track is expected to provide even greater intrigue, with local favorites ambitious to make their presence felt against their mighty international counterparts in both the 200m sprint and 100m hurdles.

Loaded with star power from Jamaica's two-time world champion Shericka Jackson and 2023 world 100m champion Sha'Carri Richardson of the US, the 200m race in Shaoxing is a dream stage for China's teen prodigy Chen Yujie, a Zhejiang native, to measure her meteoric rise against the world's fastest in front of her home crowd.

Chen, a 17-year-old high school student born and developed in Ningbo, shot to fame by winning both the 100m and 200m finals at the 2025 Chinese National Games, becoming the youngest ever to win both sprint titles in the domestic Games' history.

With a personal best of 22.97, and setting a new Asian U18 record at a South Korean meet in May last year, Chen is the only Asian athlete currently ranked in the 200m top 50.

The 100m hurdles will feature an even stronger lineup, bringing together winners of the past three outdoor worlds – Ditaji Kambundji, Danielle Williams and Amusan – along with reigning Olympic champion Masai Russell.

Nigerian great Amusan leads the field with her world record dash of 12.12, set in 2022 in Eugene, Oregon, yet faces an unpredictable test in Shaoxing with the starting blocks stacked with talent.

China's own star hurdler Wu Yanni, a celebrity among the sport's community domestically, is determined to at least try to keep up with the pack.

"I won't set any limit for myself, despite the gap between myself and the world's best," said Wu, who set her PB of 12.74 at the 2024 national championships.

"I will give my best for sure."

Shaoxing will also host a thrilling men's 100m sprint, where reigning 200m Olympic champion Letsile Tebogo of Botswana, South Africa's Akani Simbine and the US trio of Christian Coleman, Kenny Bednarek and Trayvon Bromell are pushing the bar high enough for an Olympic-caliber showdown.

In men's long jump, the Chinese combo of Shi Yuhao, the meet's defending champion, and Zhang Mingkun, who had to withdraw last year due to injury, are both expected to leap onto the podium on home soil.

After the Chinese doubleheader, the Diamond League will travel to another 12 cities across four continents en route to the series finale in Brussels in September.

SOCCER

How Paris Saint-Germain won its record-extending 14th Ligue 1 title

PARIS — Paris Saint-Germain ended up with the title again, but at least it had a rival for most of the season this time.

The defending champion secured its fifth straight French league crown — and record-extending 14th overall — by beating its closest chaser Lens 2-0 on Wednesday.

It finally ended the resistance of Lens, which held its own until the penultimate round, despite having a much smaller squad and budget than PSG, one of the world's most valuable clubs.

"It's the first time in my three seasons here that there's been a genuine rival," PSG boss Luis Enrique said, praising Lens and its coach Pierre Sage. "It has been motivating, they have shown their level."

Last season saw PSG wrapping up the title with six games to spare — and the only two league defeats of that campaign came after the title was sealed. PSG finished 19 points clear of second-place Marseille and scored a whopping 92 goals.

It was not so easy this time.

PSG has lost five league games so far and is nine points ahead of one-time champion Lens heading into Sunday's final round.

Sage's far smaller squad was hit by fatigue and the team — however willing — could not realistically sustain the challenge over 34 matches. It was PSG's fifth straight league title since Lille's championship victory in 2021.

Here's a closer look at how it was won.

Sharing the goals

PSG relied heavily on the scoring of Ousmane Dembele last season, when he netted 21 league goals.

This season, no PSG player was near the top of the scoring charts and the goals have been spread around.

Dembele and winger Bradley Barcola have netted 10 each, with Khvicha Kvaratskhelia (8), Desire Doue (7) and Goncalo Ramos (6) all contributing at key moments.

Kvaratskhelia's impact

In years to come, Kvaratskhelia may eventually be seen as the best signing in the club's history. The Georgia winger has been inspirational for PSG all season.

Not only does he provide incredible speed, finishing and dribbling from the left wing — even though he can play with almost equal efficiency on the right — his tireless running and relentless tracking back marks him out as a brilliant defender.

No wonder Enrique was delighted to sign him from Napoli in January last year, having failed in a previous bid.

Although he paid a large transfer fee of 70 million euros (then $72 million), it is starting to look like a bargain.

Ruthless selections

Enrique showed a ruthless streak by dropping goalkeeper Lucas Chevalier — a summer signing to replace Gianluigi Donnarumma — and swapping him out for Matvey Safonov, who made several saves against Lens on Wednesday.

Enrique sent a clear message to his players that status and reputation do not offer them any guarantees of first-team soccer.

He did the same last season when he dropped Dembele for a crucial Champions League game on disciplinary grounds, and the season before, when he sold Neymar and Marco Verratti in order to rebuild the side in his own way.

In an era of increasing player power, Enrique showed that his authority could not be eroded.

He also maintained a close bond with the fans, constantly praising them — and even singing one of the club anthems with them following the Champions League semifinals when PSG overcame German juggernaut Bayern Munich.

He also managed the fatigue levels of his players well in a season that began with recurring injuries.

While he regularly rested captain Marquinhos and Dembele in Ligue 1, he kept midfielders Vitinha and Warren Zaire-Emery in the side as near ever-presents.

"We always look for what's best for each player individually. If you play less or more, it doesn't mean you're weak or strong, but that you have different needs," Enrique explained. "I always aim to get the three points, but also to protect the players' health."

He was also magnanimous in a rare defeat — namely when Sage won the award for the French league's coach of the year.

"He deserves to win this trophy, Enrique said. "Because what he's done with Lens is incredible."

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Jingzhou Intermediate People's Court of Hubei Province

Announcement

(2026) E 10 P No. 1

The Court, upon the application of Ultinon Motion Technology (Hubei) Co., Ltd., ruled on April 2, 2026 to accept the case of bankruptcy reorganization of Ultinon Motion Technology (Hubei) Co., Ltd., and on April 30, 2026, appointed Beijing Dacheng Law Offices, LLP (Wuhan) as the administrator of Ultinon Motion Technology (Hubei) Co., Ltd. (hereinafter referred to as the "Administrator").

Creditors of Ultinon Motion Technology (Hubei) Co., Ltd. shall file their claims with the Administrator (mailing address: No. 17 Philips Road, Xinjiangkou Town, Songzi City, Hubei Province; postal code: 434200; contact person: Fu Sailun; tel.: +86 1857-2830-083; email: sailun.fu@dentons.cn) by 24:00 (Beijing time) on July 15, 2026, providing a written statement of the amount of the claim, whether the claim is secured, and whether it is a joint and several claim, along with relevant supporting documents. Specific document requirements and filing methods are subject to the Notice on Filing of Claims published by the Administrator on the National Enterprise Bankruptcy Information Disclosure Platform (https://pccz.court.gov.cn).

Creditors who fail to file their claims within the aforementioned period may make supplementary filings before the draft reorganization plan is submitted to the creditors' meeting for discussion, provided that they shall bear the costs incurred for reviewing and verifying such supplementary filed claims. Creditors who fail to file their claims in accordance with the law shall not exercise their rights during the implementation of the reorganization plan. After the implementation of the reorganization plan is completed, they may exercise their rights in accordance with the repayment conditions for similar claims as stipulated in the reorganization plan. Debtors or property holders of Ultinon Motion Technology (Hubei) Co., Ltd. shall promptly settle debts or deliver property to the Administrator.

The Court has scheduled to hold the first creditors' meeting of Ultinon Motion Technology (Hubei) Co., Ltd. at 10:00 (Beijing time) on July 30, 2026, via the National Enterprise Bankruptcy Information Disclosure Platform (https://pccz.court.gov.cn). Creditors who file their claims in accordance with the law have the right to attend the creditors' meeting. If an attending creditor is a legal person or any other organization, the documents evidencing its legal person status shall be submitted; if an attending creditor is a natural person, the individual identification documents shall be submitted; if an agent is appointed to attend the meeting, a power of attorney shall be submitted. The identification documents and powers of attorney submitted by a creditor that has no domicile within the territory of the People's Republic of China shall be notarized by a notarial institution in the country where the documents are issued and authenticated by the embassy or consulate of the People's Republic of China in that country, or shall undergo the certification procedures stipulated in the relevant treaties concluded between the People's Republic of China and that country.

It is hereby announced.

Jingzhou Intermediate People's Court of Hubei Province
May 12, 2026

湖北省荆州市中级人民法院

公 告

（2026）鄂 10 破 1 号

本院根据奥途科技（湖北）有限公司的申请于 2026 年 4 月 2 日裁定受理奥途科技（湖北）有限公司破产重整一案，并于 2026 年 4 月 30 日指定北京大成（武汉）律师事务所担任奥途科技（湖北）有限公司管理人（以下简称管理人）。

奥途科技（湖北）有限公司的债权人应在 2026 年 7 月 15 日 24 时（北京时间）之前，向管理人（通讯地址：湖北省松滋市新江口镇飞利浦路 17 号；邮政编码：434200；联系人：傅律师，联系电话：+86-1857 2830 083，电子邮箱：sailun.fu@dentons.cn）申报债权，书面说明债权数额、有无财产担保及是否属于连带债权，并提供相关证据文件，具体申报文件要求及申报方式以管理人在全国企业破产重整案件信息网（https://pccz.court.gov.cn）发布的《债权申报通知》为准。

未能在上述期限内申报债权的债权人，可以在重整计划草案提交债权人会议讨论前补充申报，但要承担为审查和确认补充申报债权所产生的费用。未依法申报债权的，在重整计划执行期间不得行使权利，在重整计划执行完毕后可以按照重整计划规定的同类债权的清偿条件行使权利。奥途科技（湖北）有限公司的债务人或者财产持有人应尽快向管理人清偿债务或交付财产。

本院定于 2026 年 7 月 30 日 10 时（北京时间）通过全国企业破产重整案件信息网（https://pccz.court.gov.cn）召开奥途科技（湖北）有限公司第一次债权人会议。依法申报债权的债权人有权参加债权人会议，出席会议的债权人系法人或其他组织的，应提交企业主体资格证明文件；债权人系自然人的，应提交个人身份证明文件；如委托代理人出席会议的，应提交授权委托文件。在中华人民共和国领域内没有住所的债权人提交的身份证明文件及授权委托文件，应当经所在国公证机关公证，并经中华人民共和国驻该国使领馆认证，或者履行中华人民共和国与该所在国订立的有关条约中规定的证明手续。

特此公告。

湖北省荆州市中级人民法院
二〇二六年五月十二日

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:38 PM

Winning brew

American turns passion for Chinese tea into profit

LIFE, PAGE 14



Guideline helps protect growth of gig economy

POLICY REVIEW, PAGE 12



Star dilemma

Neymar's chances of spot in Brazilian team hang in balance

SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日報 FRIDAY, MAY 15, 2026

WORLD WATCH
By Tom Watkins

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:42 PM

Visit comes at pivotal juncture

United States President Donald Trump started his three-day state visit to China on Wednesday.

Here we are again, yet another pivotal moment as the world revolves around US-China relations.

Once again, we have arrived at a point where action or inaction will shape the direction of trade, technology, global security, the economy and geopolitical stability of the US, China and the rest of the world.

Peace and prosperity should be our goal.

The last thing either side and the world need now is greater instability. The world cannot afford a new Cold War, or worse, and wise choices must be made to ensure a peaceful and prosperous future for all of humanity.

We collectively need to seek "win-win" solutions rather than treat this vital relationship as a zero-sum game where one party's success requires the other's failure.

Perhaps at no other time in the modern US-China engagement has it been as imperative that we avoid unnecessary confrontation and conflict by keeping dialogue open and engaging in constructive, government and nongovernmental exchanges at the highest levels, as well as rebuilding and strengthening people-to-people, educational and cultural exchanges that have waned in recent years, particularly student exchanges, which are a foundation for long-term understanding between our two peoples.

Dialogue between US and Chinese leaders must have a "trickle-down" effect that improves the overall relationship, reduces distrust and produces positive, tangible results for average citizens on both sides of the Pacific.

Change is inevitable. Progress should not be optional when it comes to US-China geopolitical relations.

Going forward, all major world issues will intersect at the corner of Beijing and Washington, DC. Are we going to swing for the win or strike out?

Both nations have work to do at home to better serve our respective peoples.

See ***Visit,*** *page 3*



INSIDE
From AI visibility to developmental leadership
Global Views, page 8

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN ASIA NEWS NETWORK

China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

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



President Xi Jinping holds a welcoming ceremony on Thursday morning outside the Great Hall of the People in Beijing for United States President Donald Trump, who is on a state visit to China. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

Xi: China, US should be partners

Success in one is opportunity for the other, stable bilateral relationship good for world

By CAO DESHENG
caodesheng@chinadaily.com.cn

China and the United States should find the right way for major countries to get along well with each other in the new era, President Xi Jinping said on Thursday.

Xi made the remarks during his talks with visiting US President Donald Trump at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

Xi stressed that the two countries have more common interests than differences, success in one is an opportunity for the other, and a stable bilateral relationship is good for the world.

He expressed the hope that 2026 will be a "historic, landmark year" that opens up a new chapter in China-US relations.

"China and the United States both stand to gain from cooperation and lose from confrontation. We should be partners, not rivals. We should help each other succeed and prosper together," he said.

Noting that transformation not seen in a century is accelerating across the globe and the international situation is fluid and turbulent, Xi said that the world has come to another crossroad.

"Can China and the United States overcome the Thucydides Trap and create a new paradigm of major-country relations? Can we meet global challenges together and provide greater stability for the world? Can we build a bright future together for our bilateral relations in the interests of the well-being of the two peoples and the future of humanity? These are the questions vital to history, to the world, and to the people. They are the questions of our times that the leaders of major countries need to answer together," Xi said.

Xi stressed that the Taiwan question is the most important issue in China-US relations. If it is handled properly, the bilateral relationship will enjoy overall stability. Otherwise, the two countries will have clashes and even conflicts, putting the entire relationship in great jeopardy, he said.

"Taiwan independence" and cross-Strait peace are as irreconcilable as fire and water, he said, adding that safeguarding peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait is the biggest common denominator between China and the US.

On China-US economic and trade relations, Xi said that they are mutually beneficial and win-win in nature, and trade wars have no winner.

He said that where disagreements and frictions exist, consultation conducted on an equal footing is the only right choice.

Xi noted that the talks between economic and trade teams of the two countries, held in the Republic of Korea on Wednesday, produced generally balanced and positive outcomes, adding this is good news for the people of the two countries and the world. The two sides should jointly sustain the good momentum that they have worked hard to create, he said.

In his speech, Trump hailed his "fantastic" relationship with Xi, saying Xi is "a great leader".

He said that the relationship between the US and China is going to be better than ever before.

Before the talks, Xi held a welcoming ceremony for Trump outside the Great Hall of the People.

Beijing rolls out red carpet for Trump

By MO JINGXI
mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn

Beijing rolled out the red carpet to welcome US President Donald Trump for a much-anticipated summit with President Xi Jinping, as the world looks to the two largest economies for greater stability.

Inside

• Editorial, **page 7**
• See more, **pages 2-5**

Xi held a welcoming ceremony for Trump on Thursday morning outside the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, before they held talks.

Trump arrived in the Chinese capital on Wednesday evening, beginning his three-day state visit to China. Vice-President Han Zheng greeted him at the airport.

The trip marks the first state visit to China by a sitting president of the United States in nearly nine years and follows Xi and Trump's meeting in Busan, Republic of Korea, last October, which helped to set the tone for efforts to stabilize and improve China-US relations.

The Xi-Trump summit is seen as another important moment in head-of-state diplomacy, which has played a strategic guiding role in China-US relations.

Over the years, Xi has repeatedly stressed that the China-US relationship is among the most important bilateral relationships in the world, and that the two countries must find the right way to get along.

His message has been consistent: While China-US cooperation can enable the two countries to achieve major undertakings serving their own interests and those of the world, confrontation would spell disaster for both countries and the wider world.

Analysts said the high-level engagement between Xi and Trump will be closely watched as to whether the two sides can keep the "giant ship" of China-US relations on a steady course, manage differences through dialogue, and expand practical cooperation, thereby injecting greater certainty into a turbulent world.

For a relationship as significant and complex as that between China and the US, direction matters as much as momentum.

During the meeting with Trump in Busan, Xi said, "You and I are at the helm of China-US relations. In the face of winds, waves and challenges, we should stay the right course, navigate through the complex landscape, and ensure the steady sailing forward of the giant ship of China-US relations."

In their phone conversation last year, Xi said that recalibrating the direction of the giant ship of China-US relations requires the two sides to take the helm and set the right course, adding that it is particularly important to steer clear of various disturbances and disruptions.

Zhiqun Zhu, a professor of political science and international relations and director of the China Institute at US-based Bucknell University, said the "giant ship" metaphor highlights both the complexity of the relationship and the importance of guiding it in the right direction.

"It's a top-down approach, with leaders on both sides playing a pivotal role," Zhu said. "Only when the general direction is set can the relationship move forward."

Zhu said that maintaining the momentum of high-level engagement is crucial for the stability and predictability of China-US relations. Leaders on both sides, he said, should be commended for overcoming difficulties, lowering tensions and moving the relationship forward.

But setting the course also requires a clear understanding of the nature of the relationship.

At a welcome dinner in San Francisco in November 2023, Xi said that he had long been thinking about "how to steer the giant ship of China-US relations clear of hidden rocks and shoals, navigate it through storms and waves without getting disoriented, losing speed or even having a collision".

"In this respect, the number one question for us is: Are we adversaries, or partners? This is the fundamental and overarching issue. The logic is quite simple. If one sees the other side as a primary competitor, the most consequential geopolitical challenge and a pacing threat, it will only lead to misinformed policymaking, misguided actions and unwanted results," Xi told participants from across American society.



People wave Chinese and United States flags to welcome US President Donald Trump, as he arrives in Beijing on Wednesday. Trump is on a three-day state visit to China. WANG JING / CHINA DAILY

Sun Chenghao, a fellow at Tsinghua University's Center for International Security and Strategy, said the "giant ship" metaphor speaks to the extraordinary weight of the relationship.

"China-US relations are too large and too consequential to be allowed to drift off course, or even capsize due to temporary storms," Sun said.

China and the US are the world's two largest economies and permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, and both play major roles in regional and global affairs.

Despite the twists and turns in bilateral ties, China-US economic relations remain deeply intertwined. Chinese customs data showed that bilateral trade in goods reached 4.01 trillion yuan ($590 billion) in 2025, accounting for 8.8 percent of China's total foreign trade.

"China's view that the relationship concerns not only the well-being of the two peoples but also the future of humanity is not merely diplomatic rhetoric," Sun said. "Rather, it is a judgment based on real interests and the stability of the international system."

That judgment has run through Xi's remarks on China-US relations over the years.

When meeting with Trump during his first term as US president in 2017 at the latter's Florida resort, Xi said there are a thousand reasons to make China-US relations a success, and not a single reason to break them.

See ***Summit,*** *page 3*

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:42 PM

Don't miss any China Daily stories.



$49.99 / ANNUALLY ~~$59.99~~

Subscribe to China Daily SmartEdition at chinadaily.pressreader.com

SINO-US SUMMIT

Nations' friendship still bouncing along

From Ping-Pong Diplomacy to sports and youth exchanges, China and US continue building bridges

By ZHANG YUNBI
zhangyunbi@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:42 PM



Young people from China and the United States take a group photo during an event to commemorate the 55th anniversary of China-US Ping-Pong Diplomacy in Beijing on April 10. ZHAO WENYU / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Deliah Autry, 30, is a member of the United States Women's National Flag Football Team, a three-time world champion, and a doctor of physical therapy specializing in pediatrics.

Last August, she made her first trip to China, attending the 12th World Games hosted by Chengdu in Sichuan province. The souvenirs that impressed her most included a Labubu doll and the games' medals, she said.

"The medal itself is so intricate and detailed, and has a little necklace. It is something that I would love to show my kids one day," she said.

The cultural events also impressed her. At the athletes' village, Chinese college students helped them try immersive cultural activities.

"We got to do arts and crafts, learn how to write our names in Mandarin. We got to try on traditional Chinese clothing, so it was just an awesome way for us to learn from them ... a great experience and a way for us all to connect," Autry said.

She made her second trip to China last month. In Beijing, she took part in the commemoration to mark the 55th anniversary of China-US Ping-Pong Diplomacy and the launch ceremony of the China-US Youth Sports Exchange Events, which received a congratulatory message from President Xi Jinping.

Autry said she now has a better and deeper connection to and understanding of Chinese culture.

"I am impressed by the people, how genuine and kind-hearted everybody is, and I think it is something that I have personally attached to you (China) because you see the true humanity and love, especially for sports," she said.

In Beijing, she watched a high school flag football team from Tacoma, Washington state, playing against a Chinese student team.

Autry said flag football is a great avenue to continue making connections between the cultures, despite language barriers and differences in cultures and politics.

"There were a lot of handshakes, high-fives, and smiles, and I think that just brings the positivity forward ... It was just an awesome display of how sports bring everybody together," she added.

"There is a mutual understanding and respect for these athletes, and we all know that we are playing with the same passion and love for the game," she said.

Autry said sporting events and exchanges are a great way to show young people how cultural differences and language barriers are just small things and "what the true purpose is in life, which is to find a deeper connection with other humans across the world".



Members of the Whiffenpoofs a cappella choir from Yale University learn to play the *pipa* (a traditional lute) of the Dong ethnic group in Liping county, Guizhou province, on March 23. YANG WENBIN / XINHUA



Students from Muscatine High School in Iowa practice Chinese calligraphy at Shijiazhuang Foreign Language School in Hebei province on March 18. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Last year, Autry met a lot of the players from the Chinese women's national team at flag football tournaments.

"I follow a lot of them on social media, and we are able to connect. And there have been times throughout the year where we have seen each other outside in other tournaments and it is just really awesome to build that connection," she said.

Reaching out

Justin O'Jack, chief representative of the University of Virginia's Pacific Asia Office, encourages young Americans to engage in more trips outside the US.

"These kinds of trips, where students can travel abroad and spend time in a country like China, really have a transformative impact on a young person's life," he said in an interview with China Daily, "... if their only impression of China is through the media that they consume, of course it's going to be different than experiencing it as a person here in China," he added.

O'Jack studied abroad when he was a college student, first in India and then in China.

"That experience as a student studying abroad in China definitely has influenced me in many ways, one of which is in the career that I chose — first running study abroad programs in Shanghai for American students and now representing an American university."

He said Chinese students represent the majority of international students applying to his university's undergraduate program for the current class graduating in 2030.

"Chinese students by far make up the majority of applications we received — I would say, (there are) over 10,000 applications from around the world. Over 40 percent of those were from students here in China," he said.

"The interest in studying abroad in the US continues to be very strong, especially among the undergraduate student population," he added.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a hiatus in the number of American students from his university studying in China, and now "we are seeing that start to grow and rebound", O'Jack said.

"We are not at the pre-pandemic levels yet, but we are still working and heading in the right direction," he said.

Sharing ideas

In 2023, President Xi proposed an initiative to invite 50,000 young Americans to China for exchange and study programs over a five-year span.

O'Jack noted that the program has largely focused on high school and younger groups of students, and "that is important because the youth are our future".

Anders Ibsen, 40, who was sworn in as mayor of Tacoma in January, hosted a Chinese ping-pong delegation at Lincoln High School in the city, a school that Xi visited in 2015.

Ibsen said it is very important to "give young people an understanding about what it means to have greater partnerships, especially with our growing global economy".

"That's the basis of shared prosperity as well as peace ... in someone's life. If they can understand that it's a big world and that there are a lot of other different ideas out there, then we're all better off," he added.

Last month, Ibsen traveled to China with Tacoma high school students, his second visit to the country. "I first visited here in 2018. I visited Fuzhou (in Fujian province), which is one of Tacoma's four sister cities."

"To give you some reference, the city of Tacoma is a major port city on the west coast ... About half of our total trade comes from China. As a result, we very strongly value the partnership," he said.

Chinese trade will continue to be very important to the port of Tacoma, as well as the investments it has seen in the local economy, Ibsen said.

During the trip, Ibsen said the group was also able to learn more about innovative programs the government is working on. "There's always something to learn. We should always continue being students," he said.

When asked about what impressed him most in China, he said it was "the people".

"In the case of the city of Tacoma, my primary concern is keeping my residents safe and prosperous ... and by having these cultural exchanges, we can focus on the results, we can dispense with noise, we can dispense with politics," he said.

"We can just focus on what makes things better for people, what makes for a happier, more peaceful world. And that is the strength of cooperation. That's why we're here," he added.

Lasting impact

The first US table tennis delegation arrived in China in April 1971, for the icebreaking visit that helped boost the launch of bilateral diplomatic ties.

At that moment, Jan Berris had been in her position at the US consulate in Hong Kong for just two years "as a very junior consular official working on cultural affairs". However, she said she knew that "the event would have repercussions on the US and China as well as the rest of the world".

"But I had no idea that it would have such a huge impact on my own life," said Berris, who is now vice-president of the National Committee on US-China Relations, a nonprofit organization and advisory body founded in 1966 to encourage understanding and cooperation between the two nations.

When she returned to the US the month after the historic visit, two of her former professors at the University of Michigan asked if she would consider working at the committee based in New York.

The committee was then preparing to co-host with the US Table Tennis Association the visit of the Chinese ping-pong team to the US.

"My professors were on the board of the national committee and they felt that my diplomatic experience, brief as it was, would be helpful," Berris said.

She said she was not quite sure that she really wanted to live in a big city as "it was formidable".

"Actually, my undecided state was resolved by another major announcement that was made just a few months later, when President Richard Nixon went on national television and announced that Dr Henry Kissinger had made a secret visit to China," she explained.

One of the results of that visit was the Chinese ping-pong team's visit to the US in April of 1972.

"That helped me make my decision," Berris said. The next day, she asked the US State Department if she could work on the planning for the Chinese team's visit.

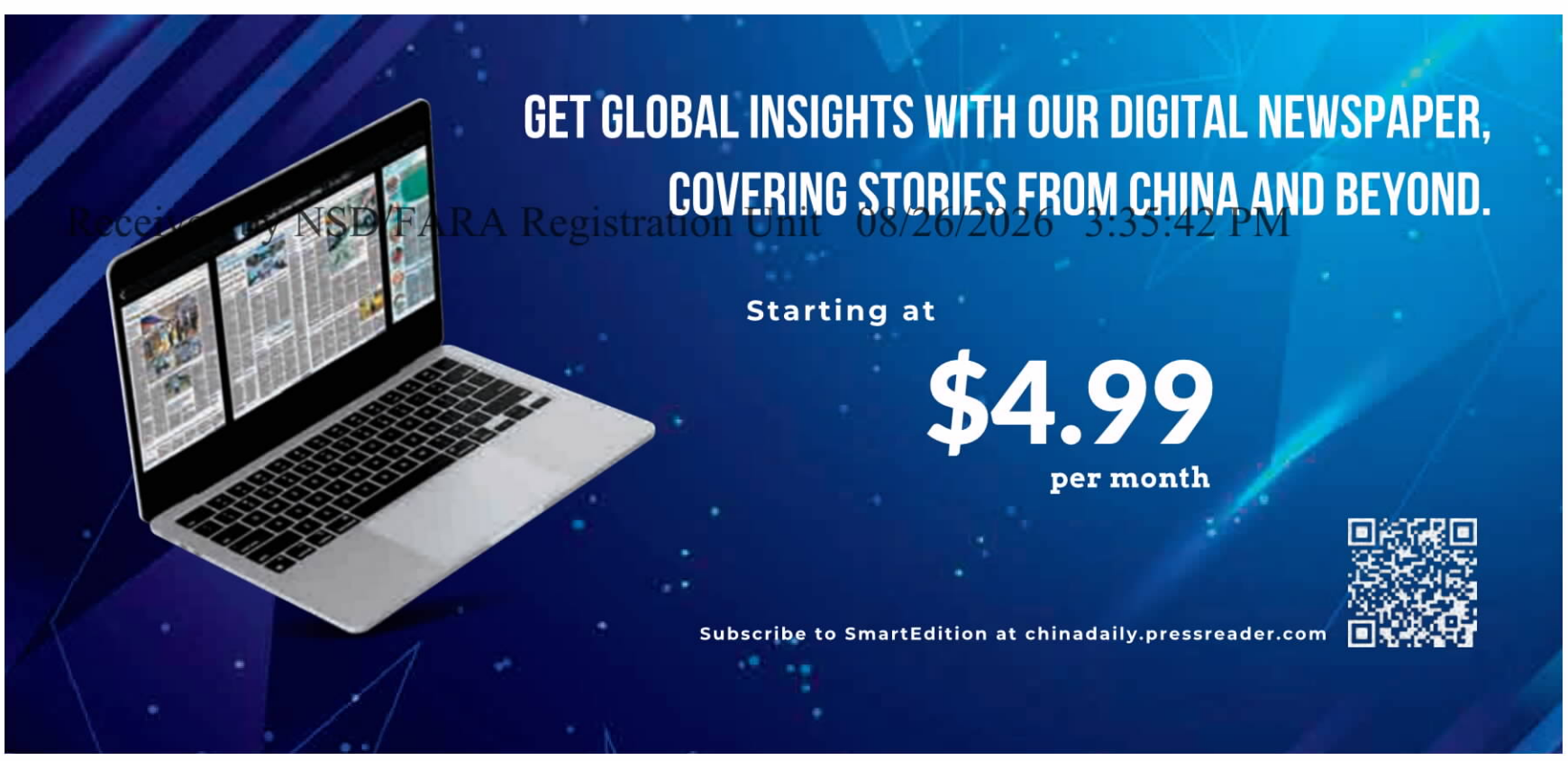
What began with a small ping-pong ball — slowly at first, and then in leaps and bounds — grew into a "broad and eventually very deep" network of relations between the two countries in every profession, and every field imaginable that brought all levels in the two societies together, she said.

"Now, a lot of people ask me how I can work in the same job for 55 years. But for me it has been easy, because I love my job," she said.

The first exchanges and the visits of the two ping-pong teams, with the hundreds and thousands of exchanges that followed, "serve to help people from both countries humanize the other" side, she said.



US youngsters experience traditional Chinese opera culture at the National Academy of Chinese Theatre Arts in Beijing on July 14, as part of the Bond with Kuliang: 2025 China-US Youth Choir Festival. WANG ZIRU / CHINA NEWS SERVICE



SINO-US SUMMIT



Visitors taste wine from California at the food and agriculture pavilion of the United States on Nov 8 during the 8th China International Import Expo in Shanghai. The pavilion covered 350 square meters and featured 19 exhibitors, both record highs for the event. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:42 PM

CEOs upbeat on China market

Presence of business leaders shows nation remains highly important for US companies

By **WANG KEJU, JIANG XUEQING, MA SI** and **ZHONG NAN**

Business leaders from the United States have voiced their confidence in the Chinese market and pledged to expand investments in what they consider as one of the world's most significant engines of future growth, given the market's vast scale, ability to innovate rapidly and resilient supply chains.

A high-profile business delegation comprising top US executives from sectors including technology, finance, aviation and agriculture arrived in Beijing on Wednesday as part of US President Donald Trump's entourage. The delegation's presence signals that commercial ties binding the two economies remain too deep to sever, economists and business executives said.

Among the top business leaders and CEOs visiting with Trump are Jensen Huang of Nvidia, Tim Cook of Apple, Elon Musk of Tesla and SpaceX, Cristiano Amon of Qualcomm, Larry Fink of BlackRock and Kelly Ortberg of Boeing, according to a Truth Social post by Trump. Also on the list are executives from GE Aerospace, Goldman Sachs, Citi, Mastercard, Visa, Blackstone, Cargill and more.

Speaking to China Daily, Mastercard CEO Michael Miebach said: "China is one of the world's most dynamic economies, and Mastercard is committed to the market for the long term.

"Since we began processing domestic transactions in May 2024, we've made strong progress — expanding acceptance, deepening local partnerships and bringing simple, secure 'tap and go' experiences to everyday life."

Looking ahead, he added, "We will continue to invest in China and bring more products and services that support both businesses and consumers."

According to experts, the lineup of CEOs from some of the US' most influential companies sends a clear signal that despite years of tariff impositions, export controls and heated talks of decoupling, China remains a highly significant market for US businesses.

"The economic gravity between the two countries remains immense," said Chen Wenling, a senior researcher at the Academy of Contemporary China and World Studies. "Even as trade tensions and geopolitical risks cast a shadow, the fundamental forces of China-US complementarity have not disappeared."

Chen noted that the US leads in financial markets and retains significant high-tech advantages, while China's edge in market scale, supply chain depth and rapid innovation is equally real.

Sean Stein, president of the US-China Business Council, said: "If you just say they're the two largest economies, you're missing the most important part. They're also the two most dynamic and most innovative economies."

"It is when you add the innovation and dynamism pieces that you truly recognize the need for the two countries to find ways to work together more effectively," Stein said.

Data released in November by the Chinese embassy in the US showed that more than 80,000 US companies have invested in China, while 7,000 Chinese firms operate in the US.

On Wednesday, a spokesperson for the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade said that the council welcomes representatives from the US business community to visit China, adding that there is plenty of scope for, and tremendous potential in, practical cooperation between Beijing and Washington.

"We look forward to the business communities of both countries further deepening exchanges and cooperation, and making new contributions to the stable, healthy and sustainable development of China-US relations," said the spokesperson.

In addition to the companies in the delegation, US businesses across industries continue to demonstrate their confidence in the Chinese market through tangible action.

Henry Ding, president of 3M China, said: "In recent years, 3M has continued to expand its domestic manufacturing footprint, strengthen local R&D innovation capabilities, and accelerate the localization of its full value chain in China, spanning R&D, testing and manufacturing."

He added that today, more than 50 percent of the products 3M sells in China are manufactured locally.

Ding said that 3M China will continue to increase its local R&D investment this year and plans to achieve more than 30 percent growth in new product launches compared with 2025, significantly outpacing other global markets.

Ian Shih, president of Rockwell Automation China, said that China's vast market, complete industrial ecosystem and continued high-level opening-up provide strong support for companies seeking long-term growth and diversified application opportunities.

At the 8th China International Import Expo held in Shanghai last November, US companies claimed the largest exhibition area, with their pavilions collectively covering more than 50,000 square meters, marking the seventh consecutive year that US companies have led all foreign participants.

Contact the writers at wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn

Collaboration in energy sector expected to expand

By **ZHENG XIN**
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

Expanding energy ties between China and the United States will contribute to broader bilateral economic cooperation amid shifting global market dynamics, industry experts said.

Liu Jia, chief expert at the Economics & Technology Research Institute, think tank of China National Petroleum Corp, or CNPC, said that the world's two largest economies share a complementary dynamic, with the US' energy export growth aligning with China's substantial market demand.

The push for closer cooperation comes as the US rapidly expands its liquefied natural gas infrastructure, with export capacity projected to reach 150 million metric tons per year by 2028, according to the research institute.

Liu said that this expansion creates a structural necessity for partnerships, as new US liquefaction projects require the security of long-term buyers to obtain necessary financing and make final investment decisions. "China offers the world's most predictable demand growth, providing the scale needed to anchor these US infrastructure investments," he said.

According to figures released by the institute, China imported 68.43 million tons of LNG in 2025 and is expected to maintain its position as the world's top LNG importer this year.

This synergy has already been evident in the market for years, with major Chinese State-owned enterprises such as China Petroleum and Chemical Corp, or Sinopec, and CNPC signing long-term purchase agreements with leading US exporters, including Cheniere Energy and Venture Global LNG.

According to the institute, energy has always been an important component of the broader trade balance between the two nations, highlighting the sector's role in addressing trade disparities.

In addition to direct trade, the two countries have also established investment links.

US oil major ExxonMobil began operating its mega ethylene project in Huizhou, Guangdong province, last year. It is one of the largest foreign investment projects in China, and the first major petrochemical project constructed in China solely by a US company.

According to Liu, US and Chinese companies have jointly invested nearly $200 billion in third-party oil and gas projects across the Middle East, Central Asia and Africa.

To maintain this momentum, Liu suggested that both sides should expand cooperation into emerging fields such as energy storage and power grid technology.

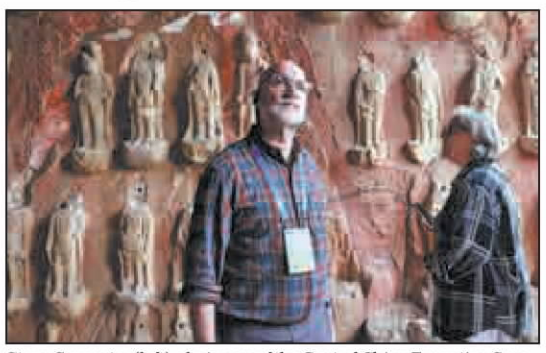
Lin Boqiang, head of the China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xiamen University, said that stable and predictable energy trade has provided an important area of mutual benefit.

As China's demand is predictable and the US supply is expanding, energy can serve as a bridge through which both sides can achieve tactical gains, Lin said.

Experts also recommended strengthening ties in traditional industrial sectors, including the supply of chemical feedstocks such as ethane and propane, as well as uranium mining.

"Establishing regular dialogue mechanisms between think tanks and industry bodies in both countries will be essential for stabilizing market expectations and deepening mutual consensus," said Liu from the Economics & Technology Research Institute. "This framework is necessary to ensure that energy cooperation remains a robust cornerstone of the bilateral relationship, even amid broader geopolitical shifts and profound changes in the global landscape," he added.

Heritage tour



Steve Carpenter (left), chairman of the Central China Executive Committee of the American Chamber of Commerce in China, admires carvings at the Thousand Buddha Cliff in Guangyuan, Sichuan province, on March 25. More than 30 scholars and business representatives from China and the United States explored this largest grotto complex in Sichuan, which boasts over 7,000 Buddhist statues. The work started in the late Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534) and flourished during the Tang Dynasty (618-907). WANG LEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Visit: Both sides should be beacons for building bridges

From page 1

I have advocated, over decades, that the best way for the US to compete with China is to invest in our own people, infrastructure, technology and education, rather than trying to "knock China down". Pushing a strategy to hold China back will be as effective as starting to build a chain-link fence as a tsunami is coming ashore.

Worldwide, people are closely watching the development of the US-China interaction, hoping that agreements would be reached to promote a more stable world order.

China-US economic and trade cooperation has brought benefits and challenges to both countries for over half a century.

We are at an inflection point. A miscalculation or mistake will have a devastating global impact.

While we need to continue to work toward building sensible economic, cultural and military ties, it is vital that China and the US continue to follow a seven Cs framework to help manage this delicate bilateral relationship, which is critical to the world:

Worldwide, people are closely watching the development of the US-China interaction, hoping that agreements would be reached to promote a more stable world order.

- Communication (Open, high-level and subnational channels)
- Collaboration (On global issues like health and climate)
- Cooperation (To seek win-win solutions)
- Coordination (On regional and global issues)
- Competition (Managed and constructive)
- Contextual Understanding (Grasping the history and perspectives of both nations)
- Avoiding confrontation, conflict and casualties

As the 21st century unfolds, both the US and China should be the beacons for building bridges.

It is imperative that we find ways to develop a shared vision and common agenda in areas that are in our collective national interests while we have open dialogue on topics where we disagree.

Chinese and US activists, not just governments, should work to create and endow a robust international exchange, a people-to-people organization that connects students, artists, writers, athletes, tourists, educators, health and behavioral healthcare professionals, poets, sub-national government officials and NGOs between our two countries to listen, to understand and build bridges that will help sustain peace and prosperity for all.

These kinds of global connections lay the groundwork for meaningful dialogues, thoughtful synergy, mutual respect, joint prosperity and peaceful collaboration.

We need to get along and jointly prosper peacefully.

The author was deputy chief of staff to former Michigan governor James Blanchard, president and CEO of the economic council of Palm Beach County, Florida. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Summit: Cooperation is a realistic choice

From page 1

In March 2024, when meeting in Beijing with representatives from the US business, strategic and academic communities, Xi said that whether the two countries can find the right way to get along bears on the well-being of the two peoples and the future of humanity.

Sun said the most immediate benefit of a stable and predictable China-US relationship is that it reduces uncertainty for both sides.

"If tensions continue to rise, those affected first are often not abstract strategic interests, but ordinary businesses, farmers, consumers, international students and researchers," Sun said.

He added that trade barriers would push up costs, technology restrictions would narrow the space for innovation cooperation, and fewer people-to-people exchanges would weaken mutual understanding between the two societies.

Beyond the bilateral level, China-US cooperation is also closely watched in terms of its implications for global governance at a time when the world faces sluggish growth, geopolitical tensions and mounting challenges requiring international coordination.

In Busan last year, Xi told Trump: "The world today is confronted with many tough problems. China and the US can jointly shoulder our responsibility as major countries, and work together to accomplish more great and concrete things for the good of our two countries and the whole world."

According to Sun, many global challenges — from climate change and artificial intelligence to public health, financial stability and regional security — cannot be effectively addressed without sustained communication between the two countries.

Zhu, of Bucknell University, echoed that view, saying that if the two most powerful nations cannot get along well, the global economy will suffer and international cooperation on critical issues such as climate change and AI governance will become difficult.

The resilience of the relationship also depends on whether the two societies can maintain direct contact and mutual understanding.

David Chong, founder and president of the US-China Youth and Student Exchange Association, said that he has become increasingly aware that keeping the giant ship of China-US relations moving steadily requires joint efforts from both countries at all levels.

Since 2015, Chong's association has helped bring more than 2,000 young Americans to China for exchange programs. Through activities ranging from cultural and sports exchanges to experiencing cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence, young Americans have been able to see, hear and experience China firsthand in concrete and everyday settings.

"People-to-people organizations may not be in the 'cockpit' of the giant ship," Chong said, "but they can serve as 'connectors' and 'road builders' by strengthening the cultural and social foundation for the steady development of China-US relations".

Sun, the researcher, said that cooperation remains the most realistic and responsible choice.

"The reason is simple: Competition cannot erase interdependence, and differences cannot eliminate shared risks," Sun said. "China and the US cannot expect a voyage without winds and waves, but they must not allow the storms to decide the course."

EXPERIENCE CHINA DAILY, DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR AND PHONE

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:42 PM

Print + digital package starting at

$49.99 per three months | $149.99 per year

Visit chinadailyusa-store.com for more



SINO-US SUMMIT

Summit to chart path for Sino-US ties

Head-of-state diplomacy essential for restoring trade stability: Experts

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:42 PM

By **BELINDA ROBINSON** in New York and **RENA LI** in Los Angeles

As the heads of state of the world's two largest economies start their meetings in Beijing this week, trade experts and economists said they expected the summit to chart the course for the future of bilateral ties and help restore stability to global trade.

Chinese President Xi Jinping and US President Donald Trump will meet in Beijing, as Trump arrived on Wednesday for a three-day state visit to China.

China said on Monday that it was ready to work with the United States to expand cooperation, manage differences and inject more stability and certainty into a turbulent and changing world.

During a Port of Los Angeles media briefing on Monday, former US trade representative Katherine Tai described the meeting as "a really important moment for the US-China trade relationship".

Responding to a China Daily question on what is most needed to help reduce global uncertainty surrounding tariffs, supply chains and broader trade relations — including lower tariffs, clearer rules, or greater predictability — Tai, who served as the principal trade adviser and negotiator on US trade policy during the administration of former president Joe Biden, emphasized the importance of policy clarity and long-term planning.

"I think that what we need most — and I say 'we' in the real collective sense, because this relationship impacts everybody around the world — is some clarity around the principles that the United States wants to put out there and to enforce in the relationship with China," Tai said.

She said uncertainty in recent trade policies and market expectations has affected governments, businesses and global supply chains, adding that clearer communication and more consistent policy direction would help support long-term economic planning and cooperation.

Tai further noted that strategic pressure alone cannot sustain a functional trade relationship despite the fact that both nations have the capability to "choke" each other in strategic sectors.

"Once you have each other's attention, then you actually need to have an agenda and a plan in place for the short term, the medium term and the long term, for making this very important, complicated and challenged trade relationship work," Tai said.

Jerry Nickelsburg, director & senior economist at the UCLA Anderson Forecast, said the meeting between Chinese and US leaders could help provide a more stable environment even as longer-term shifts continue.

Despite recent adjustments in global trade flows, the interdependence of the two markets remains significant. China continues to serve as the third-largest export market for the United States, following Canada and Mexico, according to US trade figures.

"There seems to be an interest in preserving the stability of the current situation in US-China economic relations on both sides," Nickelsburg said.

Gene Seroka, executive director of the Port of Los Angeles, said that Chinese factories and exporters continue to operate steadily despite ongoing trade tensions.

Mitigating uncertainty

During recent visits to Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Guangzhou, Seroka noted that order volumes remained stable, even as China expanded its exports to other global trading partners to mitigate uncertainty.

Jim Sutter, CEO of the US Soybean Export Council, expressed hope that the meeting would reaffirm China's purchase of US agricultural goods, including soybeans, calling soybeans an "important indicator" of the strengthening ties between the two nations.

US industry leaders and local officials have echoed the call for cooperation.

Jeffery Jones, chairman of the Council for Trade and Investment Promotion in New Jersey, said that trade and business development should remain a priority.

"I'm a former mayor. On the political side of things, I don't have to go to the presidential level to say that from one town to another, municipal level, if we don't work together, nothing good happens," he added.

Daniel Mabey, Asia Region President for the United Natural Products Alliance, noted that because China is a major supply chain partner for numerous industries, it is essential that "dialogue continues and continues to move forward" to get the relationship back on a productive track.

"Most of the US-China relationship is based on trade and China is a big supply chain partner for a lot of industries, not just our industry," Mabey said.

"I used to live in Beijing for a long time ... I have had lots of industry dialogue. We need to get the tracks straightened again and work together."

Contact the writers at belindarobinson@chinadailyusa.com.



A visitor interacts with a robot from the Chinese robotics company Fourier during the 2026 Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, the United States, on Jan 8. The 2026 CES, the world's premier technology event, attracted thousands of exhibitors from more than 155 countries and regions, according to the US Consumer Technology Association, the organizer of CES. ZENG HUI / XINHUA

Eye on the ball



Enthusiasts from the US visit a pickleball production company in Shangyou county in Jiangxi province, on Sunday. The county has launched a comprehensive three-year plan for 2024 to 2026 that includes 13 million yuan ($1.8 million) in subsidies to support the sport and a special fund for hosting tournaments. ZHU HAIPENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Leaders' interactions offer 'irreplaceable strategic guidance' for US-China ties

By **ZHAO HUANXIN** in New York
huanxinzhao@chinadailyusa.com

Beijing's top envoy in Washington has said that interactions between the heads of state provide "irreplaceable strategic guidance" for China-US ties, expressing hope that this week's summit will be a "successful one" that will chart the "right course" for future relations.

At the invitation of Chinese President Xi Jinping, US President Donald Trump is visiting China from Wednesday to Friday.

In an interview with Newsweek published on Tuesday, Ambassador Xie Feng said that with the joint efforts of both sides, the summit will hopefully see the two countries expand cooperation and properly manage differences, while exploring ways to get along in the "new era" based on mutual respect and peaceful coexistence.

"In an increasingly turbulent world, the strategic value of China-US relations becomes more prominent," Xie said. "A stable and constructive China-US relationship not only serves the fundamental interests of both our peoples, but also meets the shared expectation of the international community."

On the Taiwan question, Xie said that he believed the American people, who faced the danger of division and had a civil war in the past, can understand China's will and determination to safeguard national unity.

The Chinese side urges the US side to commit to the one-China principle, the three China-US joint communiques with concrete actions, make the right choice as early as possible, fundamentally remove the biggest obstacle to China-US relations, which is the Taiwan question — a burden that risks dragging the two countries into confrontation and conflict — and open up broader room for developing bilateral ties, Xie said.

Xie also said that history has proven once and again that a tariff war or trade war produces no winner, damages the interests of both sides, and hurts the whole world.

He noted that under the guidance of the two leaders, China and the United States have reached a series of common understandings through economic and trade consultations, and have stabilized bilateral economic and trade relations.

"This has not come easily and should be cherished. But it is still far from enough. We hope the US side will move further ahead and completely remove the unilateral tariffs and other restrictive measures," he said.

Xie said competition between the United States and China should be viewed as a "track-and-field race toward mutual excellence" rather than a "zero-sum boxing match".

"Let our two countries compete to offer more public goods to the world, to better help developing nations reduce and eliminate poverty, and to contribute more to the sustained and inclusive development of the global economy," the envoy said.

Turning to the fentanyl issue, Xie noted that the fentanyl crisis in the US was not created by China, but "out of the humanitarian spirit and for the sake of China-US friendship", China is providing assistance to combat the "common enemy of humanity".

He noted the current US administration has strengthened legislation, law enforcement and regulatory control to combat fentanyl, and the number of fentanyl-related deaths in the US has dropped by 37.5 percent, to which China also made important and positive contributions.

He urged Washington to appreciate and cherish China's goodwill, view bilateral cooperation outcomes in a just manner, stop shifting the blame for the fentanyl issue, avoid imposing alternative tariffs as substitutes for fentanyl-related tariffs, and remove China from the list of so-called "major drug source countries" as soon as possible.

On artificial intelligence, Xie said that the world does not want to see an "Iron Curtain" in AI, nor attempts at technological enclosure, let alone a Star Wars-style rivalry.

"China-US coordination on AI bears on the future of both our countries and the entire humanity. We hope the US side will work with us in the same direction, to enhance dialogue, manage competition and conduct cooperation, so that AI will become a new frontier for China-US cooperation and a new ladder for human progress," Xie said.

Chinese Americans welcome leaders' meeting

By **LIA ZHU** and **CHELSEA GE** in San Francisco

US President Donald Trump's state visit to Beijing from Wednesday to Friday, the first visit to China by a US president in nine years, has sparked enthusiasm among Chinese Americans, who view the meeting between the two heads of state as an important moment for dialogue, cooperation, and understanding between the two countries.

During the visit, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Trump are expected to have in-depth discussions on major issues, including China-US relations, world peace and international development.

"I'm excited at this opportunity for President Trump to go to China and visit President Xi," Phillip Chen, a California Assembly member, told China Daily. "I believe that this world right now is a very large village, and that the relationship between China and the United States will continue to blossom."

"I personally think that as it stands right now, we've been cooperating for many, many years. We have to make sure that we work closely together to make sure that our mutual interests are served sufficiently," he said, adding that he hoped the meeting would help open up opportunities for more exchanges and cooperation.

William Zhang, a San Francisco-based community leader and an ardent advocate for peaceful cross-Strait relations, called the meeting "a long-awaited conversation between the two heads of state".

"President Trump will hopefully learn firsthand how much importance the Chinese government places on the peaceful reunification of the nation," he said, adding that Washington should uphold the one-China principle. "It is a prerequisite for the stable and healthy development of China-US relations," Zhang said.

Lei Wang, a Chinese culture advocate in Southern California, sees the leaders' meeting as an opportunity to promote and expand understanding of Chinese culture at the federal level.

"This is a good thing. There's a popular song in China right now called *Better to Meet in Person* and I believe that a meeting between the two countries' leaders will help deepen mutual understanding," he told China Daily.

Wang, also a small-business owner, said he hoped the meeting would help promote business interaction, trade activities and business investment between the two countries.

California, located on the Pacific coast, is an important gateway for Chinese goods entering the US, said Wang. "If China-US relations aren't good and trade relations don't flow smoothly, it will seriously affect California's foreign trade, imports and exports, which in turn affects many people's employment and how businesses operate."

"We need the trade to continue to support the employment and the society here in the US," Wang said. "Therefore, I really hope that both sides can deepen understanding in trade and economic relations, reach consensus, and push the relationship toward a more positive and stable direction."

Despite differences and frictions that have marked bilateral relations, Hu Lirong, CEO of CW Bearing USA, expressed confidence in dialogue between the presidents.

"These are challenges that can ultimately be worked through under the leadership of the two countries' leaders," he told China Daily.

Hu said the company has focused on localized operations, creating jobs for the community, with young employees accounting for about 30 percent of its workforce. He added that the company places strong emphasis on technical expertise and cross-cultural communication.

Chang Jun in San Francisco and Li Mingmei in New York contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at liazhu@chinadailyusa.com.

Observers in Europe pin hopes on dialogue

By **ZHANG ZHOUXIANG** in Brussels
zhangzhouxiang@chinadaily.com.cn

As US President Donald Trump began his visit to China on Wednesday — his second state visit to China following his previous trip in November 2017 and his first during his second presidential term — European political and business figures are closely watching the bilateral relationship.

The meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Trump comes at a time of heightened global uncertainty, marked by geopolitical tensions, economic fragmentation, supply chain disruptions and slowing growth across major economies. Some observers in Europe believe that stable China-US relations are increasingly seen not only as a bilateral necessity, but also as a prerequisite for global economic predictability and international stability.

Ondrej Dostal, a Czech member of the European Parliament, described Trump's visit as a recognition of China's global importance and of the limits of confrontation-based policies.

Dostal argued that unilateral pressure and economic coercion have undermined international trust and damaged global trade. The world needs stable trade, mutual respect, diplomacy, infrastructure, development, and coexistence between civilizations.

According to Dostal, the leaders' meeting may also encourage European governments to reassess their own approach toward China. "If even Washington now recognizes that it must negotiate with Beijing, then European governments should finally stop pretending that confrontation with China serves European interests," he said.

Former director-general for international affairs in the German state of Hessen Michael Borchmann said the meeting carries significance far beyond bilateral ties.

Quoting a US research institute's description of the meeting as "Managing the World's Most Important Relationship", Borchmann said the phrase "absolutely fits" the current geopolitical environment.

Enhancing communication

"At a time when the world is facing growing uncertainty and fragmentation, enhancing communication, managing differences and maintaining stable China-US relations also benefits the world," he said.

Borchmann said the meeting follows last year's temporary trade truce reached in Busan, South Korea, where both sides attempted to halt escalating tariff retaliation. He expressed hope that the meeting would deepen consensus on trade and issues including the Middle East and global development.

He also referenced Xi's long-standing emphasis on stable bilateral ties. "There are a thousand reasons to make the China-US relationship a success, but not a single reason to break it," Borchmann quoted Xi as saying.

From the European business community, Bernard Dewit, chairman of the Belgian-Chinese Chamber of Commerce, stressed the importance of constructive engagement between the world's two largest economies.

Speaking from a European perspective, Dewit described stable China-US relations as "very important" for global economic and geopolitical certainty.

He noted that many European countries are facing economic recovery challenges, inflationary pressures and security concerns, and said improved China-US ties could help reduce tensions, restore investor confidence and strengthen international cooperation.

Dewit also emphasized Europe's preference for dialogue over bloc confrontation. Europe, he said, does not want to see the world divided into opposing camps and instead supports multilateralism, predictability and strategic autonomy.

As the leaders' meeting unfolds in Beijing, many in Europe will be watching closely for signs that the two major powers can stabilize relations and provide a measure of certainty to an increasingly fragmented world.



SINO-US SUMMIT

Harley Seyedin

Strengthening bilateral ties for global stability

The relationship between the United States and China remains one of the most important bilateral relationships in the world. As US President Donald Trump is visiting Beijing, both countries have an opportunity to strengthen cooperation, stabilize economic ties and promote prosperity for their peoples and the global economy.

Despite years of heavy tensions and tariffs, the two economies are deeply interconnected. Research by the Stanford Center on China's Economy and Institutions emphasizes that the two nations benefit enormously from trade, investment, innovation, and educational exchange.

US consumers and businesses benefit from affordable goods and integrated supply chains, while Chinese consumers and businesses benefit from access to US technology, agricultural products, financial services, and higher education.

Millions of jobs in both countries are linked directly or indirectly to this economic relationship.

One major development in recent years has been the significant reduction in the US-China trade deficit.

According to data from the Office of the US Trade Representative and the US Bureau of Economic Analysis, the US goods trade deficit with China fell to approximately $202.1 billion in 2025, down from $295.5 billion in 2024. This represents a 31.6 percent reduction in just one year.

The decline was due to changes in supply chains, increased domestic manufacturing in some sectors, diversification of trade partners, and evolving tariff policies. Yet even with these adjustments, bilateral trade remained enormous. Total China-US goods trade still exceeded $414 billion in 2025, demonstrating that the two economies continue to rely on each other in many areas.

Global Lens

By focusing on practical cooperation and long-term mutual benefit, the two countries can build a more positive and productive relationship that benefits not only themselves, but the entire world.

Trump's visit provides an opportunity to move beyond confrontation and toward practical cooperation.

Both nations share common interests in global economic stability, energy security, climate resilience, public health, artificial intelligence governance and financial market stability.

Cooperation between Washington and Beijing is not simply beneficial for US and Chinese citizens; it is essential for global growth and international confidence.

There are many areas where positive collaboration can expand. In agriculture, China remains an important market for US farmers exporting soybeans, corn, beef and other products. Increased agricultural purchases can help support rural communities across the US while ensuring food security and stable supplies for Chinese consumers.

In technology, both countries can cooperate on standards for AI safety, cybersecurity and advanced manufacturing. Joint research partnerships between universities and companies have historically produced breakthroughs in medicine, engineering and clean energy.

Climate and energy cooperation also present major opportunities. The US and China are the world's two largest economies and energy consumers.

By working together on renewable energy, battery storage, carbon reduction technologies, and electric vehicles, both countries can accelerate innovation while creating jobs and investment opportunities. Cooperation in these sectors could help reduce global emissions while improving energy affordability and reliability.

Educational and cultural exchanges are equally important. Hundreds of thousands of Chinese students have studied in US universities over the past two decades, contributing billions of dollars to local economies while building people-to-people ties.

Academic collaboration and tourism help reduce misunderstandings and strengthen mutual respect. Business leaders, students, scientists, and cultural organizations all benefit when relations are stable and constructive.

The global economy also benefits from open communication between the US and China. Financial markets react positively to signs of dialogue and predictability between the two powers.

Businesses on both sides want stable policies, clear regulations, and reduced uncertainty. A cooperative atmosphere encourages investment, strengthens supply chains, and supports economic growth worldwide.

While differences will remain on trade, security, and geopolitical issues, history shows that engagement produces better outcomes than isolation. Strong diplomacy and mutual respect can help manage disagreements while preserving areas of common interest. The US and China are competitors in some areas, but they are also partners in maintaining global prosperity and stability.

Trump's visit could become an important moment to reset the tone of the relationship.

Constructive discussions on trade, investment, market access and economic cooperation could create new momentum for both nations.

The US and Chinese peoples both seek economic opportunity, stable growth, innovation, and peace.

By focusing on practical cooperation and long-term mutual benefit, the two countries can build a more positive and productive relationship that benefits not only themselves, but the entire world.

The author is the president of the American Chamber of Commerce in South China, and the winner of the 2017 Oslo Business for Peace Award, which is awarded by a committee consisting of Nobel laureates in peace and economics. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Jack Midgley

When friends far away can share daily life in real time

Young Chinese creators on Xiaohongshu post a smart study nook or a city workout routine, and peers from the United States quickly take notice.

They borrow the idea, tweak it for their own lives, and share it right back.

This digital back-and-forth links millions of young people, quietly building the trust and practical know-how that enables real innovation.

Global Lens

These are the new "people-to-people" exchanges. They happen daily without long flights or months of planning.

Free, effortless and constant, these digital connections are shaping an inclusive future of innovation among people in China and the United States.

Presidents Xi Jinping and Donald Trump have an important opportunity to amplify these connections when they meet in Beijing.

Together, they can help transform the grassroots energy into productive China-US ties that are already growing at the speed of digital connections.

Xiaohongshu's explosive growth brings this to life. The platform's lifestyle content routinely generates massive engagement domestically, while its cross-border search functionality has captured a multi-million-strong audience in the US.

US students respond to Chinese posts with duets and adaptations, often tagging back with comments like "Xiaohongshu changed my set-up!" as tips on lighting, storage, and focus zones flow freely.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

President Xi captured the heart of this dynamic when he said that the hope of China-US relations lies in the people.

The numbers reinforce this statement. Xiaohongshu racked up around 3.7 million US downloads in early 2025 and is projected to hit double digit millions this year, while already serving over 300 million monthly users worldwide.

A vast majority of these users are young people.

TikTok connects with 170 million US users, many of them young people sharing news and ideas, while in 2026 duets between Chinese and US creators have attracted hundreds of millions of views.

These platforms keep the innovative exchanges flowing constantly and cheaply, shrugging off diplomatic ups and downs in the relationship.

Miranda Qu, Xiaohongshu's co-founder, laid the groundwork for this trend by turning community input into viral lifestyle solutions that now draw global audiences.

The platform stands out because young Chinese creators blend personal stories with actionable advice on focus-boosting study setups, apartment-friendly fitness routines, and smart daily hacks.

US youth have joined in, blending Chinese precision with their own creative twists to build sharper, more intentional habits on both sides of the Pacific.

These real people-to-people exchanges build habits of cross-cultural innovation.

TikTok's Khaby Lame adds speed to the mix with his silent takedowns of overcomplicated life hacks that resonate universally, while Xiaohongshu provides the depth that makes these exchanges truly transformative.

What makes these digital exchanges so potent is their role in providing the secret sauce of innovation: an intuitive feel for what clicks with users.

When a Chinese creator's dorm organization trick reshapes a US student's space, or Khaby's simplicity sharpens a video edit, they are co-creating that shared sense in real time.

A joint summit statement pledging support for digital youth exchanges would encourage young people both from China and the US to build on today's rapidly-growing interactions.

The benefits can go far beyond feel-good moments.

These connections humanize people on both sides of the Pacific and equip the next generation with important skills to tackle global opportunities such as climate tech, supply chains, artificial intelligence and even the exploration of space.

Above all, they demonstrate that real cooperation can hum along even when global politics does not.

Curiosity has a way of outpacing the need for total agreement every time.

The real story of China and US relations is playing out on screens everywhere.

Young creators are already linking people and cultures across the Pacific.

The summit of the two leaders is helping to endorse those bridges and ensure they grow into the enduring ties that define a bright future for the countries that young people will lead one day.

The author is principal consultant at Midgley & Company and an adjunct associate professor in the Security Studies Program at Georgetown University. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Zhu Feng

Only cooperation with China serves US interests

US President Donald Trump's visit to China, and expected head-of-state meetings, are drawing a lot of attention at a time when the world is seeing conflicts in Ukraine and the Strait of Hormuz. A key task for both Beijing and Washington is to sustain a stable, manageable and enduring bilateral relationship.

Although geopolitical experts often refer to the "Thucydides Trap" theory — a phenomenon whereby a rising power can cause fear in an established power, escalating to war — to interpret Sino-US relations, China has taken a different approach.

This is evident in the strategies it employed to counter the tariff war initiated by Washington last year, and its vision of building a community with a shared future for humanity, which is supported by four global initiatives and guided by principles of mutual respect and win-win cooperation.

This approach has worked, producing steady, positive outcomes in bilateral interactions, while acting as a stabilizing force in a turbulent, ever-changing world.

In this context, Washington should take advantage of the opportunity for dialogue presented by the US leader's visit, to seek closer cooperation with China.

While some in the US who view China as their greatest "strategic competitor" and seek to contain it have done little to conceal their intentions, the broader trend of China-US exchanges and collaboration remains unstoppable.

This disconnect on the US side needs to be addressed with an objective understanding of Beijing.

After the US Supreme Court ruled in February that the US administration's imposition of reciprocal tariffs on trading partners under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act was illegal, the US side levied an additional 10 percent import surcharge on all trading partners under Section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974.

As the Chinese side has repeatedly emphasized, China and the US need to enable each other's success as interests converge and pursue mutually beneficial cooperation.

The US also introduced a series of negative measures concerning China, including the Section 301 investigations, aimed at undermining China's production capacity advantages and reducing dependence on Chinese industry and supply chains.

However, Washington should have been aware that, given China's 35 percent share of global industrial output, a rapid and complete decoupling is unattainable.

Although the US administration is trying to keep a relatively low profile on the Taiwan question and disputes in the South China Sea, its arms sales to the Chinese island in late 2025 were the largest since 1979.

Additionally, joint military exercises with the Philippines and other external forces in the South China Sea have significantly increased in frequency.

The US should not treat softened rhetoric as a short-term, tactical measure to stabilize bilateral relations.

A US-led rare earths supply alliance designed to reduce dependence on China's rare earths is closely tied to technological innovation and access to critical resources. The same is true of Washington's ambition to revitalize and expand its manufacturing sector.

However, the path to "make America great again" is not necessarily contradictory to China's great rejuvenation. China's significant growth potential, as revealed in its 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), can offer US enterprises many opportunities to cooperate with their Chinese counterparts.

For China-US relations to continue providing mutual economic benefits, fostering exchanges across various social sectors, and enhancing complementary security through normal engagement and cooperation, the US side needs to foster a correct perception of China within its broader strategic framework.

Despite some challenges, Sino-US relations have remained generally stable, thanks to head-of-state diplomacy, with the two leaders maintaining frequent communication and dialogue, and recalibrating the direction of ties at critical junctures.

As the Chinese side has repeatedly emphasized, China and the US need to enable each other's success as interests converge, and to pursue mutually beneficial cooperation.

Both China and the US should make mutual respect the cornerstone, peaceful coexistence the principle and win-win cooperation the goal.

This approach will help the two countries explore the appropriate way to interact, jointly contributing to global peace and stability.

China will never follow the obsolete model of a country seeking hegemony when growing stronger. It will instead remain committed to peaceful development.

Beijing hopes that Washington can respect China's core interests and work together to properly manage differences.

In a world facing increasing turmoil, a stable China-US relationship not only serves the fundamental interests of both nations but also aligns with the widespread expectations of the international community.

The author is the dean and a professor of the School of International Studies, Nanjing University. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:42 PM

STAY INFORMED, ANYWHERE, ANYTIME.

Enjoy unlimited access to the China Daily SmartEdition website and ipaper app.

$4.99 per month | $49.99 per year



Subscribe to SmartEdition at chinadaily.pressreader.com

WORLD

Star power



From left: New Zealand filmmaker Peter Jackson, United States actor Elijah Wood, Chinese actress Gong Li, US actress Jane Fonda and South Korean director Park Chan-wook wave during the opening ceremony and premiere screening of *The Electric Kiss* at the 79th Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, France, on Tuesday. SAMEER AL-DOUMY / AFP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:42 PM

Iran hardens stance on strait

Tehran moves to draft new regulations for key waterway as oil flows dwindle

By JAN YUMUL in Hong Kong and **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Tuesday that Tehran is currently in consultations to develop regulations governing arrangements for the Strait of Hormuz based on international law.

Araghchi made the remark during a meeting in Tehran with Norway's Deputy Foreign Minister Andreas Motzfeldt Kravik, formalizing what senior officials have been signaling in recent weeks — that Iran intends to establish a new legal order for the waterway.

Last month, International Maritime Organization Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez said that countries have no right to blockade international straits or impede the freedom of navigation through straits used for international transit.

Iran's arrangements for the Strait of Hormuz could face setbacks as a United Nations Security Council draft resolution calling for freedom of navigation in the strait is gaining traction with 112 cosponsors, Al Jazeera reported on Wednesday.

Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have joined Bahrain and the United States as principal sponsors, according to the report. India, Japan, South Korea, Kenya, Argentina and most European Union member states have also signed on, it added.

More than one month after a tenuous ceasefire took effect, US and Iranian demands to end the war remain far apart.

Washington has called for Tehran to scrap its nuclear program and lift its chokehold on the strait, while Iran has demanded compensation for war damage, an end to the US blockade and a halt to fighting on all fronts, including in Lebanon.

The Lebanese Health Ministry said Israeli drones struck three vehicles on the main highway south of Beirut on Wednesday, killing eight people, including a woman and her two children.

Iran has urged the United States and Israel to accept its rights and demands, warning that any new aggression would be met with a swift and regretful response.

Iranian Brigadier General Reza Talaei-Nik told reporters that the US and Israel would have to submit to Iran's legitimate and definitive rights, either on the battlefield or at the diplomatic table.

"If the enemy does not yield to Iran's rightful demands in diplomacy, it should expect a repeat of its past defeats on the military field," Talaei-Nik said, the Mehr News Agency reported.

The conflict is weighing heavily on global energy markets. Global oil supply will fall by around 3.9 million barrels per day across 2026 and undershoot demand because of disruptions caused by the crisis, the International Energy Agency said on Wednesday, with more than 1 billion barrels of Middle East supply already lost.

Brent crude futures edged down slightly to around $107 per barrel, after a three-day rally driven by the Hormuz deadlock.

Energy deals

Meanwhile, Iraq and Pakistan have cut deals with Iran to ship oil and liquefied natural gas from the Gulf, according to five sources with knowledge of the matter, Reuters reported.

In a deal between Baghdad and Tehran that has not been previously reported, Iraq secured safe passage for two very large crude carriers, each carrying about 2 million barrels of crude, that passed through the strait on Sunday.

Iraq is working to secure Iran's approval for more transits, an Iraqi oil ministry official familiar with the initial deal and current talks told Reuters, as the government seeks to safeguard the oil revenues that make up 95 percent of its budget.

A second ministry official and a shipping industry source also confirmed the talks with Tehran. All of the sources requested anonymity as they were not authorized to speak on the matter.

Similarly, two tankers loaded with Qatari liquefied natural gas are headed to Pakistan following a separate bilateral agreement between Islamabad and Tehran, two industry sources with knowledge of the matter told Reuters, also asking not to be named as they were not permitted to speak with media.

In another development, the Arab League urged Iran on Tuesday to cease all hostile acts against Arab states and condemned the alleged infiltration of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps into Kuwait's Bubiyan Island, which resulted in the injury of one of the Kuwait Armed Forces' personnel.

Arab League Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul Gheit said the armed infiltration of Kuwaiti territory "constitutes a dangerous precedent that cannot be tolerated and represents a serious escalation".

Iran's Foreign Ministry rejected the claims as "baseless", saying four Iranian officers had entered Kuwait's territorial waters because of a navigation system disruption during a routine maritime patrol mission and called on Kuwaiti authorities to resolve the issue through official channels.

Agencies and Xinhua contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at jan@chinadailyapac.com

US Senate approves Warsh to Federal Reserve board

NEW YORK — The United States Senate on Tuesday confirmed Kevin Warsh to a 14-year term as a Federal Reserve governor, marking a pivotal step toward his expected ascension as the next leader of the central bank.

The confirmation passed with a 51-45 vote. In a notable break from party lines, Senator John Fetterman of Pennsylvania was the sole Democrat to join the Republican majority in supporting the appointment. Warsh will succeed Stephen Miran on the board, with his term retroactively beginning on Feb 1.

Following the vote, the Senate immediately initiated the confirmation process for Warsh's concurrent four-year term as Fed chair. The transition comes as the term of incumbent Jerome Powell is set to expire on Friday.

Warsh, 56, is a lawyer and financier who previously served as a Federal Reserve governor from 2006 to 2011, playing a key role in navigating the global financial crisis during that time. His return to the board comes amid heightened scrutiny of the central bank's political independence.

Powell has announced he intends to remain on the board as a governor after his chairmanship ends, saying he plans to keep a low profile.



Kevin Warsh testifies on Capitol Hill in Washington on April 21 during his nomination hearing to be a member and chairman of the Federal Reserve Board of Governors. JOSE LUIS MAGANA / AP

For his part, Warsh signaled a shift in direction for the Fed, calling for "regime change". His proposed strategy includes tighter coordination with the Treasury Department and the administration on nonmonetary policies.

However, the economic landscape remains challenging. A surge in global oil prices since the outbreak of the US-Israeli war against Iran has fueled domestic inflation, significantly dampening investor expectations for rate cuts this year.

Financial markets are currently pricing in a one-in-three chance of a rate hike by December. The Fed's current target range for short-term borrowing costs stands at 3.5 percent to 3.75 percent.

The Federal Open Market Committee is scheduled to hold its next policy-setting meeting on June 16-17.

Data released on Tuesday by the Bureau of Labor Statistics showed US prices for most goods and services surged in April.

The Consumer Price Index increased at a seasonally adjusted 0.6 percent month-on-month and 3.8 percent year-on-year. Stripping out food and energy, the core CPI ticked up 0.4 percent and 2.8 percent, respectively.

The year-on-year headline rate of inflation hit the highest level since May 2023.

Analysts said the war in Iran is to blame, as prices have increased because of higher oil prices stemming from the situation in the Strait of Hormuz, through which some 20 percent of the world's oil flows.

Dean Baker, cofounder of the Center for Economic and Policy Research, said the war has sent oil prices higher and "we are beginning to see ripple effects in other areas".

"Prices are now outpacing wages, meaning that workers are on average worse off than they were a year ago," he said.

XINHUA

Australia extends EV tax breaks as fuel fears grow

By ALEXIS HOOI in Sydney
alexishooi@chinadaily.com.cn

Australia has extended an electric vehicle purchase incentive program as it aims to cut dependence on fossil fuels amid the Middle East crisis, a move expected to benefit Chinese automakers that have been gaining ground in the country in recent years.

The federal budget, unveiled by Treasurer Jim Chalmers on Tuesday, keeps in place current tax exemptions for EVs under the Electric Car Discount policy until March next year, before the discounts — which go back to July 2022 — are wound down starting April 2027.

The ongoing support for EVs is part of measures to strengthen "fuel resilience", as the conflict in the Middle East has been "pushing up prices, pushing down growth, and punishing Australians", Chalmers said in his budget speech.

Hussein Dia, a professor of transport technology and sustainability at the Swinburne University of Technology in Melbourne, told China Daily that "one of the clearest signals" of the budget announcement is that "Australia is moving from early EV adoption toward a broader transport system transition".

"The focus is gradually expanding beyond short-term incentives toward longer-term resilience, infrastructure, productivity and energy security," Dia said.

"The continuation, but gradual recalibration, of the Electric Car Discount suggests the government believes the EV market is now maturing. The policy has played an important role in normalizing EVs in Australia and accelerating early uptake," he said.

Recent fuel disruptions and geopolitical uncertainty in global oil markets have also reinforced the importance of reducing dependence on imported liquid fuels, he added.

"In that sense, transport policy is increasingly becoming energy policy. Electrification is now being viewed not only through an environmental lens, but also through economic resilience and national security lenses," he said.

The continuation of the EV discount comes amid record sales, with EVs accounting for 16.4 percent of all new vehicle sales in Australia in April, according to the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries.

"The Electric Car Discount has provided important stimulus to the market, and its continuation will support the growth of EVs," the chamber's chief executive, Tony Weber, said.

Chinese players' role

The purchase incentive is expected to benefit Chinese automakers, which made up four of the top 10 selling brands in April, with one of BYD's best-selling EV models alone recording 1,780 units, or an increase of 139.6 percent year-on-year, according to the chamber.

Dia said Chinese EV makers are playing an increasingly important role in the Australian market.

"Brands such as BYD have helped expand the range of more affordable EV models available to Australian consumers, particularly during a cost-of-living period where price remains one of the biggest barriers to adoption," he said.

"Increased competition is helping make EVs more mainstream and accelerating the transition away from imported fossil fuels."

Aman Gaur, head of legal, policy and advocacy at the Electric Vehicle Council, likewise referred to the growing role of Chinese carmakers in Australia, which has a "competitive automotive market with over 60 brands providing a variety of cars for all lifestyles".

"Chinese manufacturers have added more options for Australians with a great range of electric cars on offer," he said.

Labour divisions in UK overshadow King's Speech

By JULIAN SHEA in London
julian@mail.chinadailyuk.com

United Kingdom Prime Minister Keir Starmer sought to shift the focus from personalities to policy on Wednesday as the King's Speech to Parliament set out his government's legislative agenda for the coming year.

The speech, written by the government but delivered with royal pageantry by King Charles III, outlined new initiatives on energy security, defense, immigration and education reform, but it was the internal wranglings of the governing Labour Party that continued to dominate the headlines across the UK.

Starmer, who has been in office for less than two years, has faced mounting pressure following Labour's dismal performance in last week's local elections, with his leadership being picked out as one of the main causes of voter rejection.

On Tuesday, four ministers resigned in protest against Starmer's continued leadership. The most high-profile departure was Health Secretary Wes Streeting, widely regarded as a serious contender to replace him.

Another possible candidate would be Andy Burnham, though the Greater Manchester mayor would first need to return to Parliament before mounting a leadership bid, likely requiring a sitting Labour lawmaker to vacate a seat and trigger a by-election.

On Wednesday morning, Streeting was called in to Starmer's Downing Street office for a face-to-face meeting, leaving less than 20 minutes later.

Around lunchtime, The Daily Telegraph reported that Streeting was set to quit his post, with an ally saying he was "going to go for it" after the meeting, and that a leadership contest could be triggered as soon as Thursday.

Starmer's spokesperson, meanwhile, told reporters on Wednesday that "the prime minister has full confidence in the health secretary".

The BBC's political editor, Chris Mason, quoted a Starmer loyalist as saying that Streeting lacked sufficient backing to trigger a formal leadership challenge, while Burnham "doesn't have a seat, for all this noise". "Wes has bottled it and caused massive damage and instability in the process," the ally added.

Sky News reported that more than 100 Labour lawmakers have added their names to a letter saying the party needs to focus on "working together to deliver the change the country needs … this is no time for a leadership contest", but it is believed that around 90 others have come out and called on Starmer to go.

In a further blow to his authority, 11 major trade unions affiliated with the Labour Party have issued a joint statement calling the local election results "devastating", and saying they have no confidence in Starmer's continued leadership.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn

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

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel.206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1827



COMMENT

Editorials

China ready to work with US in spirit of equality, respect and mutual benefit

While global turbulence does not always stem from shifts in major-country relations, stable and healthy ties between the world's two largest economies can help facilitate the easing of international turmoil as their intertwined economic relationship is a stabilizer for the world economy.

Under such circumstances, US President Donald Trump's state visit to China from Wednesday to Friday has naturally attracted wide attention as head-of-state diplomacy plays an irreplaceable and strategically vital role in guiding China-US ties.

As Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said on Wednesday, China welcomes Trump's visit, during which the two leaders will have in-depth exchanges of views on key issues concerning bilateral ties and global peace and development.

The Sino-US economic and trade consultations held in the Republic of Korea on Wednesday also serve to highlight the two sides' commitment to managing their differences through dialogue and negotiation. The candid, in-depth and constructive exchanges on economic and trade issues of mutual concern, as well as on further expanding practical cooperation, carry on the momentum of the previous six rounds of talks and show the complementarity of Sino-US economic ties.

It is precisely this pragmatism that — despite their differences — has enabled practical cooperation between China and the United States to continue demonstrating vitality and potential under the guidance of head-of-state diplomacy over the past years — even in the face of attempts by some to derail it.

The business delegation led by Trump on his visit to China, which consists of business leaders of some big-name companies in a wide range of strategic sectors, including semiconductors, finance and artificial intelligence, further illustrates the willingness of the US business community to expand mutually beneficial cooperation with China.

The two countries possess broad space for cooperation in fields such as AI, health, green development, advanced manufacturing and supply-chain stability during China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period and beyond.

Experience has proved that China and the US stand to gain from cooperation and lose from confrontation. It is imperative that they strengthen their dialogue and cooperation in strategic sectors, particularly AI governance. The initiative on AI governance Beijing has put forward reflects China's commitment to promoting international cooperation on AI governance and ensuring that the era-defining technology benefits all humanity.

China's cooperative spirit is embodied in its four global initiatives — the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, the Global Civilization Initiative and the Global Governance Initiative.

These initiatives underpin the country's international engagement across key areas, including its major-country diplomacy with the US. The four global initiatives respond to the common aspirations of the international community for peace, development, fairness, justice and mutual respect. And they are public goods China has contributed to advance world peace and development.

China does not seek spheres of influence, ideological confrontation or cliques. It should be clear that no country can address the grave global challenges the world faces today on its own, no matter how strong it is. Still less can any country achieve security through confrontation or "decoupling", not to mention at the cost of others' security or crossing others' red lines.

China supports multilateralism and an open world economy. Such concepts are rooted not only in China's diplomatic practices, but also in the principles of the modern international order established after World War II, including sovereign equality, peaceful coexistence and multilateral cooperation.

The world does not need a new Cold War — it needs peace and development achieved through dialogue and cooperation, grounded in responsible major-country diplomacy. When China and the US work together to promote peace, development and win-win cooperation, they serve not only their shared interests but also those of the entire world. Against this backdrop, Trump's visit to China has raised expectations that, even with their differences, China and the US can still engage in candid communication, expand practical cooperation and jointly shoulder responsibilities for global peace and development.

As Guo said in reply to questions about the first visit by a US president in nine years, China stands ready to work with the US in the spirit of equality, respect and mutual benefit — expanding cooperation and managing differences — so as to bring greater stability and certainty to the world.

The more volatile the world situation becomes, the more major countries should work together to function as stabilizers. China is willing to work with all countries, including the US, to strengthen communication, properly manage differences and deepen win-win cooperation.

Country's innovation boon to the world

China's continuous efforts in scientific and technological innovation and its high-standard opening-up are having marked effects on both its economy and international cooperation.

Recent data indicate a shift in China's manufacturing industry toward high-end production. This reflects the country's transition to innovation-driven growth.

The country has made rapid progress in the development of emerging industries, with some strategic sectors, including artificial intelligence, intelligent robots, integrated circuits, advanced materials, new energy and biomedicine, growing rapidly. Future industries, including quantum technology, biomanufacturing, hydrogen and nuclear fusion energy, brain-computer interfaces, embodied intelligence and 6G, are also gaining momentum.

The technological innovation in the field of AI is transforming the Chinese economy while having a profound effect globally. China is rapidly emerging as a major force in global AI advancement. As of early this year, the country's core AI industry was projected to be worth more than 1.2 trillion yuan ($176.71 billion), with an annual growth rate nearing 30 percent. China now holds 60 percent of the world's AI patents.

Chinese scientists unveiled six major achievements at the 2026 World Digital Education Conference that concluded on Wednesday in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province. Among them was a generative genomic large model named Carbon, which is being hailed as the "DeepSeek" for the life sciences field due to its nearly hundredfold improvement in computational efficiency.

The rapid development of China's AI sector is bolstered by both policies and strategic planning. In the outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), AI is identified as a key driver of new quality productive forces. The government has launched a comprehensive "AI Plus" initiative. This policy framework supports AI research and accelerates its application across sectors.

Thanks to the progress made, AI and other technologies are empowering industries across the board. China has established tens of thousands of "smart factories" nationwide and accounts for more than half of the global increase in industrial robot installations. According to the World Economic Forum, China now boasts the world's highest number of "lighthouse factories", accounting for 40 percent of the world's total. These factories employ cutting-edge technologies to achieve more efficient and sustainable production processes.

China's experience in applied AI, particularly in sectors such as manufacturing and healthcare, offers a reference for global industry transformation. The improvement in China's technological innovation capabilities has led to a substantial increase in its industrial competitiveness, enabling the country to transition from "running after" to "running together" and even "leading the way" in some fields. China's intelligent computing power was second only to the United States last year.

China's competitiveness in the open-source path for algorithmic models and its position in computing hardware capabilities further solidify its status as a major force in the AI industry.

The scale and network advantages of China's digital infrastructure are equally impressive. By 2025, the country had 4.84 million 5G base stations, accounting for about 60 percent of the world's total, and a staggering 74.99 million kilometers of optical fiber cables.

Additionally, as the world's largest producer of solar and wind power, China has a reliable and low-cost supply of green energy for power-intensive computing centers, further enhancing its role in the global AI ecosystem.

By sharing its innovation and experiences with the world, China is offering a new development path that emphasizes collaboration and openness, encouraging other countries to engage with AI in a way that promotes shared growth and mutual benefit. This is a vision of a connected world, where technology serves as a bridge rather than a barrier.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Asier Sanz



Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:42 PM

Opinion Line

Collaboration, science effective defenses against hantavirus

The recent outbreak of the Andes hantavirus aboard the cruise ship MV *Hondius* is a reminder to the international community that humanity's battle against infectious diseases is far from over.

While the World Health Organization has assessed that the overall global public health risk is low, the incident has nevertheless triggered concern because the Andes virus is currently the only known hantavirus strain capable of limited human-to-human transmission.

As of early this week, multiple confirmed and suspected cases linked to the cruise ship have been reported across several countries, and multiple deaths were recorded. Coordinated by WHO and relevant national authorities, international medical evacuations, quarantine arrangements and contact-tracing efforts are underway.

China's disease-control authorities have responded promptly. According to the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, no cases of human infection with the Andes virus have been reported in China as of early this week, nor has any natural host capable of carrying the virus been identified within the country. Wang Shiwen, deputy director of the National Institute for Viral Disease Control and Prevention under China CDC, told the media that the risk of imported transmission and large-scale outbreaks in China remains extremely low.

Experts further clarified an important scientific fact often overlooked amid sensational headlines: human-to-human transmission is not a common characteristic of hantaviruses in general. Under normal circumstances, hantavirus infection mainly occurs through contact with infected rodents or exposure to contaminated urine, feces and saliva. While the Andes virus represents a rare exception, transmission generally requires close and prolonged contact in enclosed environments. Existing evidence indicates that such transmission remains limited and controllable with proper public health measures.

Since the COVID-19 outbreak, the international community has learned that panic, politicization and disinformation can spread faster than the virus itself, thus undermining global prevention and control efforts.

The current hantavirus incident once again demonstrates the importance of adhering to science in the face of disease outbreaks. Yet climate factors have made it harder to respond by expanding rodent habitats and extending transmission seasons. Countries must strengthen their early warning systems, improve cross-border information sharing and enhance emergency coordination mechanisms. Infectious diseases do not respect national boundaries. The multinational response surrounding the outbreak aboard MV *Hondius* illustrates the importance of timely information sharing among governments, public health agencies and international organizations.

Equally important is the need to uphold the coordinating role of the WHO. Throughout the current outbreak, WHO has worked within the framework of the International Health Regulations to facilitate information exchange, coordinate contact tracing and provide scientific risk assessments. WHO has consistently stressed that the overall public risk remains low while urging continued vigilance and monitoring.

Professionalism and multilateral coordination are precisely what the world needs to confront future health threats. Attempts to stigmatize countries, float conspiracy theories or undermine international cooperation would only weaken the collective capacity to respond effectively.

At the same time, the outbreak underscores the importance of strengthening public health literacy. Public health experts note that ordinary preventive measures — such as avoiding contact with rodents and contaminated environments, maintaining hygiene standards and seeking timely medical treatment if symptoms arise — remain effective. WHO's hantavirus guidance also highlights the importance of rodent control, sanitation and rapid clinical management. Severely unwell patients can significantly improve their prognosis through early intensive medical care.

Humanity has paid a heavy price during past pandemics. Only through scientific response, openness, solidarity and strengthened global governance can the world better safeguard public health security. The hantavirus outbreak should serve as another reminder that international cooperation and respect for science remain humanity's strongest defenses against infectious diseases.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Experience economy will help upgrade businesses

Editor's note: *China's experience market reached 18.4 trillion yuan ($2.7 trillion) in 2025, a 22.6 percent year-on-year increase. China.org.cn spoke to Wei Xiang, a researcher in the National Academy of Economic Strategy at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, about the development of the experience economy. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

The shift from buying goods to buying experiences marks a structural evolution driven by a growing demand for personalized and emotionally resonant consumption. The experience economy thrives on anticipation and the lasting memories created afterward.

Two major forces are fueling the rise of the experience economy. The first is the transformation of the broader economic structure. Demand for purely functional consumption has largely matured. What is growing now is demand for higher-level services and emotionally engaging experiences. People increasingly seek meaning, individuality and emotional resonance through consumption.

The second force is demographic change. Aging societies are reshaping consumption patterns. Older consumers tend to favor slower, more immersive forms of spending that emphasize enjoyment, health, culture and emotional fulfillment. This demographic shift also aligns with the development of experience-based industries.

The rise of the experience economy offers a broader lesson for both governments and businesses. The boundaries between production, consumption, services and experiences will increasingly blur. Future industries should create participatory experiences in which consumers themselves become part of the value-creation process.

The experience economy also generates new forms of personal value. One is cognitive value. Experiences expand people's horizons and reshape their understanding of the world. Personal growth does not result solely from meeting influential people or receiving external opportunities. Often, it is the direct experience itself that encourages individuals to improve their own perspectives and capacities.

Another is social value. Social interaction increasingly includes teamwork, openness, organizational abilities and other forms of noncognitive skills developed through shared experiences. In the future, social interaction may extend beyond human relationships to include interaction with intelligent machines and digital environments, creating entirely new forms of connection.

For the experience economy to remain sustainable, two capabilities are especially important. First, businesses must understand the relationship between functionality and emotion. Future competition will not depend solely on marketing, but also on the ability to measure, detect and respond to emotional change during production and service delivery.

Second, companies must develop stronger flexible customization capabilities. Businesses must have the ability to transform diverse emotional and experiential needs into scalable production systems.

Ultimately, the development of the experience economy will accelerate the transition toward higher-value service sectors and help drive the broader upgrading of economic structures. On the social side, it will enhance public well-being. Through thoughtfully designed experiences, individuals can enjoy a stronger sense of fulfillment, identity and emotional satisfaction. Such experiences do not necessarily need to be expensive.



Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:42 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

TARIQ H. MALIK

From AI visibility to developmental leadership

Turning technological strength into governance credibility and cross-border cooperation

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:42 PM

Artificial intelligence is often framed as a race for models, chips and market share. However, discussions at the Forum on the Development of International Science and Technology Organizations and Global Science and Technology Governance, held on March 28 during the Zhongguancun Forum in Beijing, emphasized that the more important question goes beyond technological competition. For China, the central challenge is not simply whether the country is visible in AI, but whether that visibility can be converted into stronger governance, more credible international leadership and deeper cross-border cooperation. That is where the next phase of China's AI story will be decided.



China's strength in AI should be understood through its broader development path. Its developmental narrative could be described through four qualities: an equalizer, a bricoleur, a systemizer and a socioeconomic weaver. These are more than rhetorical labels. Together, they capture a development logic that widens access, combines tools pragmatically, organizes complexity at scale and links technology to broader social and economic transformation. This helps explain how a technological field becomes embedded in the wider fabric of production, administration and modernization.

This also helps clarify what is distinctive about China's position today. Many countries can develop advanced technologies, but few can connect them to long-term developmental coordination. China's historical policy trajectory, including the cumulative discipline of the five-year plans, has given it an unusual capacity to link technological ambition with industrial scaling and organizational follow-through. Over successive five-year plans, priorities have evolved in a structured manner — from early emphasis on informatization and industrial digitization, to the integration of digital technologies with the real economy, and more recently to the elevation of AI as a strategic driver of modernization.

In that sense, China's rise in AI reflects a deeper developmental logic: the ability to move from experimentation to infrastructure, from innovation to production and from technical potential to system-wide application. The more pressing question now is what comes next. If earlier stages of development focused on catching up, scaling up and building industrial capacity, the next stage requires China to play a stronger role in shaping the governance language around AI itself.

Governance should therefore move to the center of the discussion. AI is a matter of legitimacy, rules, institutions and cooperation. The narrative alignment theory helps explain this shift. Narratives are not decorative additions to technology; they shape the categories through which technology is understood, justified and accepted. They influence whether AI is seen as a source of fear or trust, fragmentation or cooperation, exclusion or development. They also affect whose rules, organizations and standards gain authority internationally. At this stage, leadership can no longer be measured only by who builds the most advanced technology. It should also be measured by who can connect technology to legitimate and credible governance frameworks.

This has direct implications for China. The country already has substantial material strengths: scale, industrial capacity, digital ecosystems and a strong policy commitment to scientific and technological advancement. But technological strength alone does not automatically generate narrative authority. A country may be highly capable in production and application, yet still remain less influential in defining the interpretive framework through which that capability is understood globally. China now faces a strategic transition. To move from AI visibility to developmental leadership, it should present AI not only as a field of innovation, but as part of a broader story of public value.

China's next task is to institutionalize AI through clearer governance pathways. One is rule-making: contributing more actively to technical standards, ethical protocols, data governance principles and cross-border interoperability. Another is organizational leadership: embedding AI in durable, credible and cooperative institutions, including international science and technology organizations, university networks, professional associations and public-private platforms linking research, industry and policy. A third is narrative clarity: communicating AI not only as a driver of growth, but also as a contributor to order, inclusion and long-term development. This requires a language that is internationally intelligible as well as institutionally persuasive.

Global science and technology governance is increasingly shaped by legitimacy and coordination, not by technology alone. If China wants to play a more prominent role in this environment, it should build frameworks in which innovation and governance develop together. That means showing how AI can support public administration, industrial resilience, the green transition, healthcare, education and cross-regional learning. It also means engaging more deeply in international cooperation, so that China is seen not merely as a powerful producer of technology, but as a constructive participant in shaping the rules and organizational architectures through which technology serves development. The future of leadership in AI will depend not only on invention but on the ability to align innovation with legitimate governance.

There is also a deeper historical lesson here. Successful economies often decline when they become imbalanced. Why did technological spirit and innovative capacity shift from one country to another, leaving once-successful economies behind? The answer points to an imbalance. Development weakens when institutions and structures no longer align with new realities. This lesson matters for AI as well. The danger is not only technological lag; it is also the failure to balance invention with meaning, production with legitimacy and capability with trust. China's opportunity is that it can still build this balance. It can connect technological advances with governance design before deeper misalignment takes hold.

China's position between the Global North and the Global South further strengthens this possibility. It is unusually placed to act as a bridge: learning from industrialized economies while also speaking to the developmental aspirations of emerging ones. This gives China a distinctive opportunity in AI governance. It can help formulate AI not simply as a luxury of the richest economies, but as a developmental instrument that can be adapted across different institutional contexts. In that sense, China's contribution could be larger than national advancement alone. It could help widen the global conversation from technological competition to developmental inclusion.

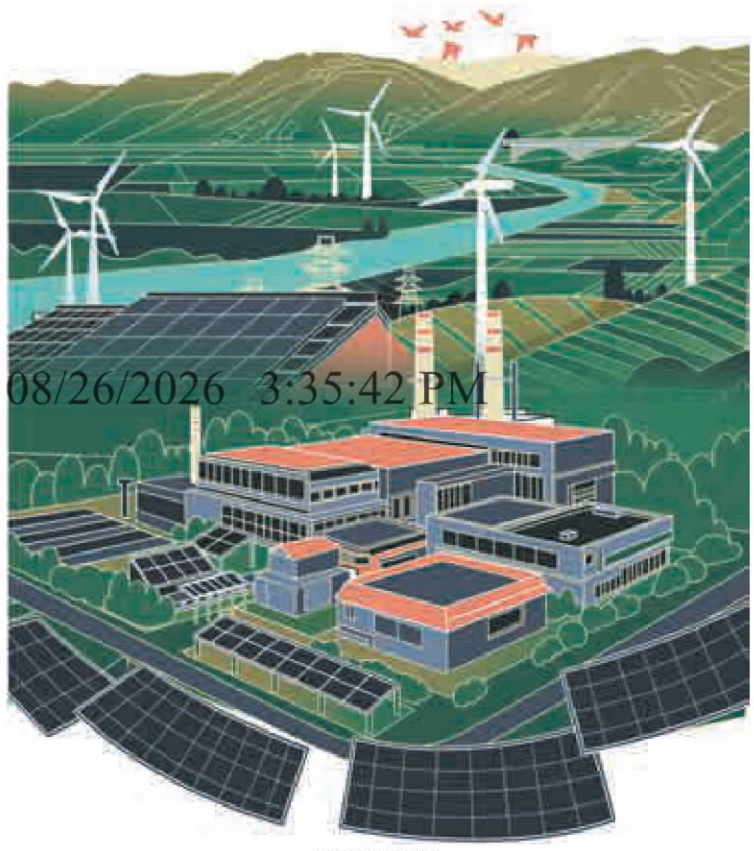
For this reason, the most important transition is conceptual as much as technical. China does not need only more AI. It needs stronger alignment between AI, governance and development, building on the basis of Beijing's series of provisional regulations over the past years and its five-year industrial projections. It must translate technological capability into governance credibility, industrial strength into institutional trust and national achievement into cross-border collaborative leadership. This is not a soft addition to hard technology. It is the condition under which technological strength gains lasting authority.

In the end, the countries that matter most in AI will not be those that simply build powerful systems. They will be the ones that embed those systems in legitimate institutions, credible rules and cooperative international relationships. China has already demonstrated considerable capacity in development and innovation of smart technologies. Its next challenge is to show that this capacity can also help shape a stable, trusted and development-oriented governance future for AI.

The author is a professor of innovation studies at Liaoning University. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

ZHANG FANG

Integrating smart tech and green innovation

Digital technology and systematic governance pave the way for high-quality green development

The green transition is no longer a matter of choice but a defining imperative for high-quality development in China. The outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) for national economic and social development, approved during the 2026 National People's Congress, sets a binding target of reducing carbon dioxide emissions per unit of GDP by 17 percent, while raising the share of the core digital economy industries in GDP to 12.5 percent.



In terms of industrial development, the outline introduces a new strategic direction centered on "intelligent and green development, and integrated innovation of industries and technologies". Compared with the earlier five-year plan, which emphasized "upgrading of industry and value chains, in addition to intelligent and green development", the shift toward integrated approaches signals the entry into a new stage of development that has systemic integration as its core feature, as China accelerates its green and low-carbon transition to form a new low-carbon innovation paradigm driven by artificial intelligence technologies.

The integrated innovation of industries and technologies in the 15th Five-Year Plan period can be found in the deep coupling of electricity and computing power. With the rapid advancement of AI technologies, demand for clean computing power is surging.

According to the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology, electricity consumption by computing centers in China reached 150 billion kilowatt-hours in 2023, a year-on-year increase of 15.4 percent, with a projection to reach above 400 billion kWh by 2030 in the medium to high growth scenario. Against this backdrop, the 15th Five-Year Plan explicitly calls for the coordinated deployment of green electricity and computing power, while the 2026 Government Work Report has, for the first time, included "computing-power and electricity synergy" as part of the new infrastructure initiative.

Computing power and electricity synergy refers to the systemic integration of computing infrastructure with the electricity power system through digital technologies, intelligent algorithms, and information networks. On the one hand, models such as direct green power supply and integrated source-grid-load-storage systems help tap into the abundant clean energy in the western part of China, effectively reducing energy costs. On the other hand, some computing tasks are flexible, and can be interrupted and migrated by intelligent scheduling. This approach shifts the increased consumption of electricity to phases with lower electricity costs or lower network utilization through peak load shifting. It substantially transforms data centers from passive electricity consumers into active regulation units, thereby improving the utilization of renewable energy. This model addresses the curtailment of renewable energy and meets the growing green energy demand of computing power, achieving a mutually reinforcing balance between the environmental value of green electricity and the economic value of computing power.

Accurate carbon emissions accounting driven by precise data is the foundational pillar of carbon governance. The effectiveness of carbon reduction efforts depends critically on the transparency and verifiability of carbon accounting systems. China is accelerating the development of a unified national factor database of greenhouse gas emissions, while building an integrated "space-air-ground" monitoring network using satellite remote sensing, drones and ground sensors to ensure that carbon emissions and carbon sinks can be accurately measured and effectively managed.

Progress is also being made in tracing carbon emissions from electricity consumption. By establishing a provincial-level, time-of-use and location-specific factor database of electricity carbon emissions, companies can trace the sources and destinations of their carbon emissions. This technical pathway is expected to upgrade green development evaluation from traditional annual average indicators to higher-frequency, more granular metrics, providing scientific support for precise carbon reduction.

This data-driven foundation enables a broader transformation: moving beyond isolated improvements to achieve intelligent, systemic integration. The most compelling manifestation of this shift is occurring within the industrial sector, particularly in the realm of energy-saving equipment.

In March 2026, four central government departments, including the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, rolled out a three-year action plan to accelerate the high-quality development of energy-saving equipment. The core thrust of the plan is to shift from optimizing equipment-level energy efficiency to achieving energy conservation. This policy orientation reflects three significant shifts: Technological innovation extends from equipment efficiency to the full chain, and from materials to processes; operating system coordination upgrades from stand-alone operation to wide-range high efficiency and precise matching; and digital empowerment advances from passive response to active optimization, using AI to enable cluster-level intelligent scheduling of energy-consuming units.

This direction is propelling China's energy-saving equipment industry from a single focus on individual equipment efficiency to a new stage characterized by system integration, intelligent drive and cross-sectoral convergence. It signifies a transformation in value creation from equipment sales to system services and a shift in technical pathways from local optimization to global optimization.

The new paradigm for China's green and low-carbon development, with computing-power-electricity synergy as a key pathway, data-driven carbon governance as a foundational pillar, and system-level intelligent integration as its technological signature, is accelerating a profound shift from granular, isolated optimization to system-wide integration innovation. This paradigm represents not only a strategic response to intensifying global green competition, but also a distinctive contribution of Chinese wisdom to global decarbonization efforts.

The author is the vice-director of the Center for Science, Technology and Education Policy at Tsinghua University and an associate professor at the School of Public Policy and Management at Tsinghua University. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

NEWS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08

Download the China Daily iPaper App, and start the in-app subscription today.

As low as

$9.99

per month



BUSINESS

Striking the right chord



Visitors check out handcrafted acoustic guitars at a guitar industrial park in Yongzhou's Dong'an county, Central China's Hunan province, on Monday. The park boasts a complete guitar manufacturing chain, home to more than 30 musical instrument manufacturers and supporting upstream and downstream enterprises. The industrial base produces a full range of guitar products with an annual output of over 500,000 guitars in 2025 that were exported to more than 60 countries and regions worldwide. ZHAO ZHONGZHI / XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:42 PM

Metis TechBio records HK's largest healthcare IPO in '26

Company's float signals maturing AI pharma with diversified biz models

By LI JING
lijing2009@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese mainland's artificial intelligence drug-delivery developer Metis TechBio Co Ltd raised more than HK$2.1 billion ($270 million) in its Hong Kong initial public offering on Wednesday, marking the largest healthcare listing in Hong Kong so far this year and underscoring strong investor interest in how AI could reshape pharmaceutical development.

Founded six years ago, the Beijing-based biotech firm issued about 201.2 million H shares in its global offering. Chris Lai, the company's co-founder and CEO, said the listing would help accelerate the company's goal of applying AI-driven nanotechnology to enable targeted drug delivery and new therapeutic approaches.

The listing places Metis alongside two earlier Hong Kong-listed peers — XtalPi Holdings Ltd and Insilico Medicine Cayman TopCo — referred to as Hong Kong's "AI drug discovery trio", though the companies pursue different commercial strategies in the rapidly evolving sector. XtalPi is a Shenzhen, Guangdong province-based AI drug discovery company, while Insilico Medicine is a global AI-driven biotech firm with strong research roots in China.

AI has attracted billions of dollars globally as pharmaceutical companies seek to shorten drug development timelines, but the industry is still testing whether these technologies can generate sustainable revenues.

China's AI drug discovery sector is moving from laboratory experimentation toward early commercial validation, said Tian Lihui, a finance professor at Nankai University.

According to consultancy iiMedia Research, the sector's revenue expanded from about 70 million yuan ($9.7 million) in 2019 to more than 600 million yuan by 2025, reflecting rapid growth in AI-driven drug development in China.

Early financial milestones among industry peers reflect that shift. XtalPi reported its first annual profit in 2025, while Insilico — though still loss-making — has begun generating tens of millions of dollars in revenue from licensing deals and research collaborations.

"The key question for the industry is no longer whether the technology works," Tian said. "It is how to turn it into scalable profit."

Metis has taken a different route from its peers by focusing on nanotechnology-based drug delivery, a technically complex step in turning promising molecules into effective medicines.

Efficient delivery systems determine whether drugs can reach targeted tissues while minimizing side effects — a challenge highlighted during the development of mRNA vaccines and other next-generation therapies.

"Large-molecule drugs are becoming increasingly important, and effective delivery is a core bottleneck," said Liu Jing, professor of accounting and finance at Cheung Kong Graduate School of Business.

"AI gives companies like Metis an opportunity to narrow the technological gap with established Western leaders."

Metis' core platform, NanoForge, combines AI models, molecular simulation and high-throughput screening to design lipid nanoparticles and other nanomaterial drug carriers.

According to its prospectus, the platform has generated more than 10 pipeline programs, including several clinical-stage candidates. Its most advanced candidate, MTS-004, has completed Phase III clinical trials in China for pseudobulbar affect, a neurological disorder for which there are currently limited treatment options domestically, said the company.

Like many biotech startups, Metis is still in a heavy investment phase.

Revenue rose to 105 million yuan in 2025 from 1.5 million yuan a year earlier, largely due to an upfront payment tied to licensing rights for MTS-004.

The company reported a net loss of 392 million yuan in 2025, narrowing from 499 million yuan the previous year.

The company said about half of the IPO proceeds will fund expansion of its AI infrastructure and nanomaterial platform, while roughly 20 percent will fund ongoing and planned clinical trials.

Metis' listing also highlights how the AI pharma sector is diverging into several business models.

One approach, represented by XtalPi, treats AI primarily as a tech platform, providing computational research services and automated laboratory capabilities to pharmaceutical clients.

Insilico has adopted an AI-biotech strategy, using algorithms to design new drug candidates and advancing them into clinical trials before licensing them to pharmaceutical partners — a strategy with higher potential rewards but also higher financial risks.

Metis represents a more specialized strategy, applying AI specifically to the drug-delivery layer rather than the entire discovery pipeline.

"These paths reflect a broader debate between platform strategies and vertical specialization," Tian said, adding that companies capable of integrating both approaches may ultimately build stronger competitive advantages.

Despite renewed enthusiasm for AI drug development, analysts say capital markets are becoming more selective.

"Valuations are no longer driven purely by technological narratives," Tian said. "Investors are increasingly looking at clinical pipelines, partnerships with major pharmaceutical companies and tangible commercial contracts."

Metis' IPO attracted heavy demand, with the Hong Kong public tranche more than 6,900 times oversubscribed and the international placement 82 times oversubscribed, the company said.

The offering drew several cornerstone investors, including BlackRock, which subscribed about $50 million, as well as a State-backed investment fund under China Reform Holdings, which made its first investment in an AI pharma company.

Zero-tariff policy boosts Hunan-Africa biz ties

CHANGSHA — When more than 6,000 bottles of South African wine cleared customs at Changsha Huanghua International Airport in Central China's Hunan province on May 1, the importer received an immediate benefit from China's expanded tariff-free treatment for African goods, which amounted to 21,000 yuan ($3,093) in duty savings.

According to Zhang Fan, chairman of Hunan Express Wisdom Information Technology Co Ltd, South African wine was previously subject to a 14 percent tariff in China. Now that the tariff has been slashed to zero, the company anticipates an annual cost reduction of about 5 million yuan.

This shipment was among the first in Hunan to benefit after China expanded zero-tariff treatment to goods from all 53 African countries with which it has diplomatic relations, broadening an earlier policy that covered the least-developed countries among them.

Under the upgraded policy, China has become the first major economy to offer unilateral, across-the-board zero-tariff treatment to all its African diplomatic partners and to all least-developed countries with which it has diplomatic relations.

For this inland Chinese province, one of the country's busiest regional players in terms of trade with Africa, the tariff cut is more than just a customs adjustment. Local officials and companies see it as a way to lower import costs and draw more African raw materials and consumer goods through Hunan, including some products bound for re-export.

Hunan has spent years trying to position itself as an inland gateway for China-Africa commerce, using the China-Africa Economic and Trade Expo and pilot zone for in-depth China-Africa economic and trade cooperation as its main platforms. The province's trade with Africa has grown by an average of 15 percent a year to 58 billion yuan, ranking first among provinces in central and western China.

The latest move follows an earlier policy that took effect on Dec 1, 2024, when China granted zero-tariff treatment on all tariff lines to the least-developed countries with which it has diplomatic ties, including 33 African countries.

From that day to March 31, Changsha Customs processed around 26.98 million yuan in tariff reductions for Hunan imports from those least-developed African countries.

The policy has, notably, coincided with stronger import growth. Hunan's imports from Africa rose 27.2 percent year-on-year to 30.92 billion yuan in 2025. In the first four months of 2026, its total trade with Africa reached 18.16 billion yuan, up 8.8 percent from a year earlier, with imports increasing 29.4 percent to 10.41 billion yuan.

The new broader coverage could have a bigger effect because it involves several of Hunan's main African suppliers, including Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria, Morocco and Tunisia. Between January 2025 and March 2026, imports from these five countries accounted for 98.1 percent of the total tariffs collected from Hunan's imports from Africa.

Lan Shengbin, deputy head of Changsha Customs, said some Hunan manufacturers had previously paid tariffs of 7 to 10 percent on components from countries such as Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt. Removing such duties will lower production costs and help companies diversify their supply chains, he said.

Hunan is trying to turn its tariff savings into a broader trade model, using the province as a point for importing, processing and redistributing African goods, including some products re-exported overseas.

One example came in July 2024, when 400 fresh roses from Kenya were imported into Changsha and then re-exported through the Changsha Huanghua Comprehensive Bonded Zone to Uzbekistan. It was China's first re-export transaction involving African fresh flowers, according to Changsha Customs.

Hunan Xiyue Culture Media Co Ltd, the importer, now brings in flowers, fruit and ornamental fish from Africa, some of which are shipped on to overseas markets.

Huang Zinan, a company executive, said the tariff cuts would reduce import costs, improve cash flow and allow African products to be sold at more competitive prices.

Consumer goods are another target. During the May Day holiday, an African goods market in Changsha drew approximately 89,000 visitors over six days. Organizers said lower import costs for raw materials had allowed prices to be reduced on some products, including chocolate made with Ghanaian cocoa, shea-butter products from Mali and coffee from Zambia.

Hunan Yufei Industry Investment Co Ltd, which helped organize the market, said its Quality African Products brand now covers more than 400 products from 13 African countries, ranging from coffee and avocados to spices.

Hunan authorities are seeking to turn the tariff change into a wider trade push. In late April, the provincial commerce department announced seven measures covering expanded imports from Africa, overseas warehouse services, industrial capacity cooperation and more China-Africa Economic and Trade Expo activities in African countries.

XINHUA — CHINA DAILY



An African goods market is pictured during the May Day holiday in Changsha, Hunan province, on May 1. DENG YILIN / XINHUA

Major PV project launched to directly power computing facilities

By ZHENG XIN
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

China has officially launched its first large-scale computing-electricity synergy project with direct green power supply, marking a milestone in the nation's massive commitment to building a unified, nationwide computing network by physically linking desert renewable energy directly to digital infrastructure.

The 500,000-kilowatt photovoltaic power station located in the Ningxia Hui autonomous region began operations recently. It signifies the first time that wind and solar resources from China's vast deserts are being funneled directly into data center loads through dedicated transmission lines, bypassing the traditional detours of the national power grid.

The facility is part of a larger 2-million-kW first-phase development involving a total investment of 8.7 billion yuan ($1.28 billion), which includes 1.5 million kW of wind power scheduled for full integration by September.

China established the "East Data, West Computing" initiative in 2022, a mega data project aimed at accelerating the development of an integrated national computing network.

Once the first phase is fully operational, it will provide 2.29 billion kilowatt-hours of green electricity annually to the large computing base in Zhongwei, Ningxia.

At the heart of this project is the concept of "direct green power supply". Traditionally, renewable energy is fed into the public grid, where it mixes with coal-fired power before reaching consumers. Direct supply, however, utilizes dedicated "point-to-point" transmission lines and "dual-track" supply systems.

In the Zhongwei project, new data center loads are served via physical direct lines, while existing loads utilize bilateral market trading. This setup allows data centers to achieve a high "green power ratio" while significantly reducing transmission costs and carbon footprints.

To ensure stability, the project employs a wind-solar complementary model that sees PV power dominate during the day, while wind power takes over at night. It is supported by on-site energy storage to smooth out fluctuations.

The launch coincides with the nation's efforts to synchronize energy and digital strategies. The National Energy Administration recently said it would permit renewable energy projects to supply green electricity directly to multiple users via dedicated lines.

According to the NEA, new policies will be released in the near future to perfect these synergy frameworks, guiding the relocation of energy-intensive computing facilities to regions rich in renewable resources, such as Ningxia Hui and Inner Mongolia autonomous regions.

Experts believe the Zhongwei project provides a blueprint for the rest of the country.

"By establishing a direct physical link between the energy source and digital load, we are solving the geographical mismatch between where energy is produced and where data is processed," said Lin Boqiang, head of the China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xiamen University. "This not only lowers the power usage effectiveness of data centers, but also insulates the digital economy from electricity price fluctuations."

Looking ahead, the Zhongwei project plans a second phase that will bring total capacity to 4.6 million kW with a total investment of nearly 20 billion yuan.

As China continues to expand its digital infrastructure, the synergy between "bits" and "watts" is set to become the primary engine driving the nation's high-quality, low-carbon development, Lin said.



BUSINESS

New mall aims to meet evolving needs

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:42 PM

Site's owner takes different approach, mixing commerce, culture and community together

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn

Visitors entering Westlake 66, the newly opened mixed-use complex in the bustling Wulin central business area of Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, might be surprised to find that luxury brands are not front and center.

Instead, the first floor is mainly dominated by lifestyle and experiential retailers, including collective toy companies Pop Mart and Jellycat, as well as the folding bicycle brand Brompton. The second floor features sports and outdoor labels alongside e-commerce brands founded by online influencers, reflecting a shift in consumer preferences toward experiences rather than prestige alone.

The 390,200-square-meter project, developed by Hang Lung Properties Ltd, is the company's 11th venture in the Chinese mainland. Known for managing luxury shopping malls in cities such as Shanghai and Wuxi, Jiangsu province, Hang Lung is taking a different approach in Hangzhou — integrating commerce, culture and community to establish Westlake 66 as both a commercial hub and a social destination.

"Modern consumers don't just want to shop — they seek diverse scenarios, from coffee breaks and dining experiences to social interaction," said Derek Pang, Hang Lung's senior director of Chinese mainland business operation, during an interview. "We are building a platform where locals, tourists and different community groups can interact — whether cycling from West Lake or exploring the city's newly renovated shops."

Hangzhou has long attracted young professionals and technology-driven industries. Its economic mix of finance, professional services and tech, combined with steady population growth, makes it a compelling retail and office market. "The city's consumption power is immense," Pang said.

According to Cushman & Wakefield's Hangzhou 2025 Commercial Real Estate Annual Report, three malls — Hangzhou MixC, Hangzhou Tower and Yintai in77 — each generated over 10 billion yuan ($1.47 billion) in sales in 2025. This underscores Hangzhou's position as one of China's few cities with multiple high-performing shopping centers.

Westlake 66 occupies the Wulin business area, the city's most prosperous commercial hub, which welcomed 189 million visitors last year. While Hangzhou Tower and the other two department store operators have dominated the high-end luxury segment, Westlake 66 is expected to complement existing projects, offering a fresh, lifestyle-driven alternative.

Hang Lung sees Westlake 66 as a long-term investment. Despite a development cost of 16 billion yuan, the company has focused on operational efficiency from day one. "Opening well is crucial. Only then can long-term development and subsequent expansion be realized," Pang said.

The mall does maintain a luxury presence, though it is secondary to experiential offerings. Several high-end brands have opened on the first floor, with additional openings planned for the latter half of 2026. By 2028, Hang Lung aims to expand the retail footprint, reflecting confidence in the city's consumption potential and Westlake 66's appeal as a lifestyle destination.

At its soft opening in April, Westlake 66 was home to around 250 stores, over a third of which are first-to-market in Hangzhou. Janice Cheung, director of mainland business operation at Hang Lung, said the project targets a new generation of consumers, for whom shopping and dining are experiences defined as much by social interaction as by product consumption.

"The project aims to connect people across different circles, creating more social interaction," Cheung said. The office lobby, located on the fourth floor with direct access to the mall, hotel and park, exemplifies this philosophy. "We are rethinking traditional layouts to foster engagement and a richer experience for office tenants and visitors alike," she added.

To stand out in a crowded market where tenant mixes often overlap, Westlake 66 emphasizes operational capability and innovative concepts.

Lifestyle-oriented retailers such as Ole supermarket debuted its "Ole Lifestyle" concept, while Chinese brands like Truuzen, a leather bag brand from Foshan, Guangdong province, are provided a platform to grow alongside global names.

"We are pleased that many domestic brands are making an impact nowadays. We'd love to offer platforms for them to develop sustainably," said Cheung.

Cheung also highlighted the importance of bridging online discovery with offline engagement. Pop-up stores featuring debut or exclusive products offer a rotating experience for repeat visitors. "Consumers may discover a brand online, but physical stores allow them to fully experience it and build long-term loyalty," she said, citing AmandaX, an apparel brand for women aged 30-50, as an example. AmandaX started on Taobao in 2019 and opened its first offline store in Shanghai last year.

Hang Lung executives expressed optimism about Hangzhou's consumption climate. After a slow start in early 2025, retail sales rebounded sharply in the fourth quarter, returning to double-digit growth. The company forecast that the momentum will continue in 2026, partly supported by Westlake 66's dynamic retail mix and immersive experiences.

"Westlake 66 is designed to be the new pulse of the city," said Weber Lo, CEO of Hang Lung. "By creating a community-centric hub with first-to-market brands and memorable experiences, we are confident to set a new regional benchmark while contributing to the city's broader economic ecosystem."

Looking forward, Hang Lung plans to expand the retail area by 40 percent and triple prime street frontage to over 200 meters through its partnership with Baida Group. The next phase is scheduled for 2028, reinforcing the company's commitment to long-term urban development in Hangzhou.

Leading commercial operators have reported positive signals that the country's consumption market is on an upward trend. According to Swire Properties' first quarter report, retail sales at HKRI Taikoo Hui Shanghai rose 81.5 percent, while Taikoo Li Sanlitun in Beijing grew 56.2 percent. Its commercial estates in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, and Chengdu, Sichuan province, expanded by 17.6 percent and 18.4 percent, respectively.

Cushman & Wakefield said that Shanghai's retail leasing market remained active in early 2026, with foot traffic and sales surging during the Spring Festival holiday. Lifestyle, food and beverage, and entertainment sectors performed particularly well, signaling a broad-based recovery.





Above: A staff member cuts fresh fish for customers in the Ole Lifestyle supermarket at Westlake 66, the newly opened mixed-use complex in the bustling Wulin central business area in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, during the mall's soft opening on April 28.
Left: People shop at Westlake 66 in Hangzhou on April 28.
PHOTOS BY LIN YUNLONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

390,200 square meters
floor space of Westlake 66 shopping mall in Hangzhou

Online
Unlock China's Treasures: Shop, Explore, Enjoy.

Luxury outlets drive niche consumption experiences

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**

Luxury outlet retail in China is demonstrating vitality and resilience as the sector capitalizes on the growing demand for cultural, lifestyle and vacation experience-centered shopping.

Among luxury outlet retail operators, Florentia Village Beijing-Tianjin Luxury Design Outlet leads the way.

The flagship project of Italy's RDM Group reported a 6 percent year-on-year increase in sales and a 7 percent rise in visitor traffic in 2025, signaling sustained consumer demand despite broader market headwinds.

On May 10, Florentia Village Beijing-Tianjin celebrated its 15th anniversary. The shopping complex has contributed to the diversification of the country's outlet market, integrating culture, commerce, tourism, sports, and exhibitions into a unified "micro-vacation" retail experience, said the company.

The shopping complex has established a 180,000-square-meter commercial footprint, hosting more than 200 internationally renowned brands. This includes national outlet exclusive brands such as Roger Vivier, Abercrombie & Fitch, and Peak Performance, as well as North China exclusives like Acne Studios, Mulberry, Mackage and Stone Island.

Jacopo De Vena, managing director of Florentia Village & RDM Asia, said the company has pioneered a "micro-vacation" model, combining authentic Italian architecture, a holiday-style setting, and immersive experiences.

Over the years, FV has adapted to shifting consumer preferences from transactional shopping toward lifestyle-oriented and experiential shopping, said the director. Notably, the sports and outdoor category has emerged as a critical revenue pillar, increasing nearly 20 percent in contribution to the revenue from 2024 to 2025.

Recent upgrades, including expanded VIP lounges, Italian espresso bars and new landscaped pathways, reinforce the shopping complex's signature "La Dolce Vita" atmosphere.

"Consumers today increasingly prefer relaxed, lifestyle-oriented scenarios. We've adapted to the trend and have seen these categories becoming a vital pillar of our revenue structure," De Vena said.

According to Bain & Company's 2025 China Personal Luxury Goods Report, 65 percent of Chinese luxury consumption occurred in the Chinese mainland market in 2025. The report anticipates moderate growth for the Chinese personal luxury market in 2026, with the region poised to remain the cornerstone of global luxury market growth.

Driven by the continued expansion of the middle-income group, a rebound in consumer confidence, and supportive policy measures, further repatriation of luxury spending to the Chinese mainland is expected. However, the degree of growth will remain highly dependent on specific product categories and individual brand performance.

The China Commerce Association for General Merchandise's 2024-2025 China Outlet Industry White Paper estimates that in 2025 there were about 251 outlet projects in operation nationwide, with a total sales scale of about 239 billion yuan ($35.2 billion).

The development of China's outlet industry is undergoing a strategic shift — moving away from sheer scale expansion toward a focus on achieving extreme operational efficiency, said the report.

Against this backdrop, Florentia Village Beijing-Tianjin, which is located within the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei one-hour economic circle, leverages high-speed railway and expressway access to capture intercity passenger flows.

This has allowed the outlet to convert transient visitors into a loyal customer base with high repurchase rates, said the director. Seasonal cultural and experiential programming has further boosted Florentia Village Beijing-Tianjin as a dual-city micro-vacation destination, with nearly 80 million visitors to date.

"We broke free from the traditional outlet logic of over-reliance on discounts. By connecting deeply with consumer groups from both Beijing and Tianjin, we converted regional transit passenger flow into a stable consumer group with high stickiness and high repurchase rates," he said.

De Vena added that RDM Group continues to consolidate its market leadership by focusing on six strategic dimensions: scenario creation, high-end merchandising, stock iteration, digital operations, membership deepening, and regional integration.

Through immersive holiday environments, exclusive brand collaborations, and a mature digital ecosystem — encompassing 7.8 million registered members nationwide — the group has built a standardized model capable of replication across all Florentia Village's projects.

Looking ahead, RDM Group is expanding its national footprint with Shanghai third phase and Chongqing second phase, aiming to transform Florentia Village into localized micro-vacation cultural landmarks.

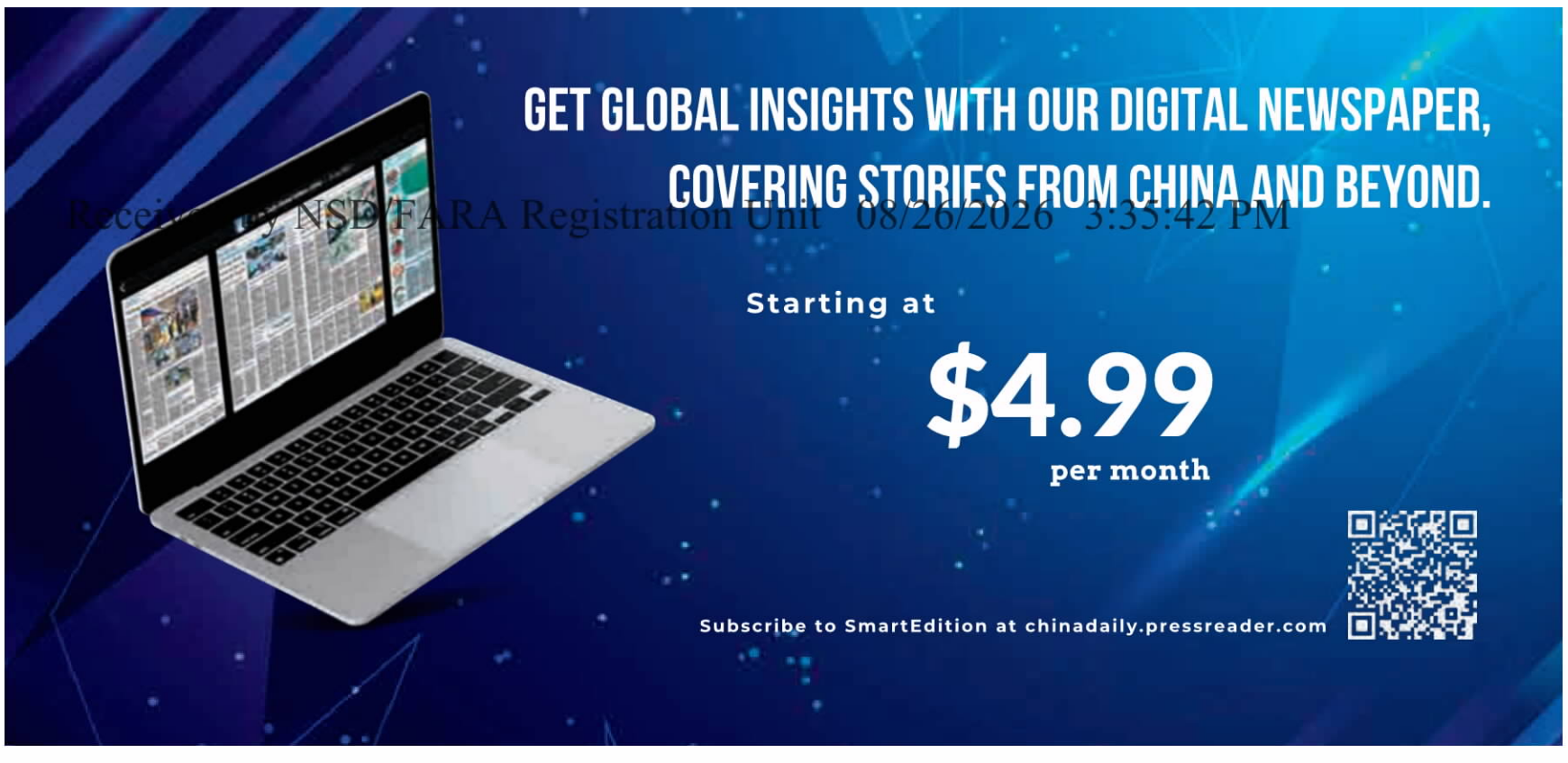
The group emphasizes high brand completeness, cross-border consumption facilitation, and multi-dimensional upgrades to brand matrices, experiential offerings, and commercial value.

Despite increasing competition, national projects achieved an 8 percent year-on-year increase in visitor traffic and 6 percent sales growth in 2025, demonstrating strong resilience and market recognition, said the company.

"Today's outlet is not just a shopping destination; it is a lifestyle and leisure experience," said De Vena. With strategic location, differentiated offerings, and refined operations, Florentia Village continues to be optimistic about the luxury retail and experiential consumption across the country.



A gondolier glides along the canal at Florentia Village Beijing-Tianjin Luxury Design Outlet in Wuqing, Tianjin, as people stroll across the Venetian-style bridge on May 10. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



CHINA

Global South teachers to get digital skills training

By **ZOU SHUO** in Hangzhou
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

The world's first international action plan specifically designed to improve the digital skills of teachers in developing countries has been unveiled, aiming to systematically assist Global South nations tackle common challenges in the digital transformation of education.

The action plan for enhancing digital literacy of teachers in the Global South was released during a parallel session of the 2026 World Digital Education Conference in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, on Tuesday.

The plan, initiated by the Africa division of the Institute of Global Teacher Development, reflects China's practical efforts to deepen South-South cooperation and participate in global education governance.

The plan identifies four interlinked structural challenges: insufficient network and device access, a shortage of high-quality and locally adapted multilingual resources, weak foundational teacher skills coupled with a lack of systematic professional development, and fragmented coordination mechanisms. It argues that piecemeal interventions are no longer sufficient.

Key measures include establishing a collaborative mechanism for digital literacy among teachers in the Global South by engaging international organizations, education authorities, universities and enterprises.

The initiative will align with authoritative platforms such as UNESCO's Global Teacher Campus to provide tiered training programs.

The plan also leverages existing overseas platforms such as Confucius Institutes and Luban Workshops to deliver localized support for teachers.

According to the plan, Zhejiang Normal University will lead implementation efforts. Over the next three years, priority flagship projects will be launched, including the establishment of collaboration mechanisms, the joint development of advanced courses and the piloting of lighthouse schools, or model schools.

The lighthouse schools will be established in two or three host Global South countries, with initial design work and resource allocation set to begin in an effort to achieve early tangible outcomes.

Liu Hongwu, director of the College of African Area and Country Studies at Zhejiang Normal University, said the action plan directly addresses key challenges in improving digital literacy among teachers in the Global South during a critical period for the global digital transformation of education.

"The plan addresses four structural challenges widely faced by Global South countries: weak infrastructure, scarce localized resources, lack of training systems and fragmented cooperation mechanisms," Liu said.

He said the plan adopts a systematic four-dimensional framework that creates a closed loop spanning coordination mechanisms, training, demonstration schools and on-the-ground support networks.

"By focusing on teachers' digital literacy, the initiative represents a strategic shift from hardware construction to human capacity building in developing countries," Liu said.

He also acknowledged implementation challenges, including complex coordination among multiple stakeholders and insufficient adaptation of resources for low-bandwidth environments in many Global South countries.

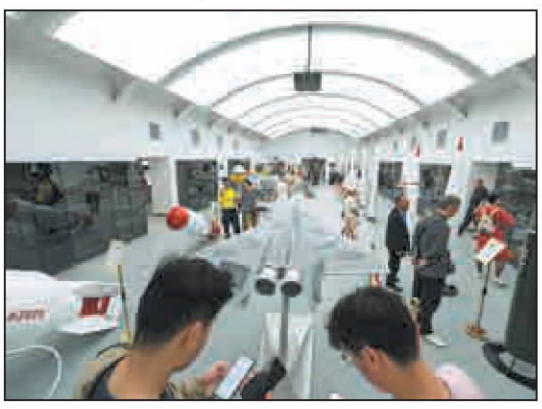
Nevertheless, Liu described the action plan as a pragmatic step that contributes Chinese wisdom and feasible solutions in bridging the global digital divide and promoting equitable education.

Meanwhile, the Hangzhou Initiative on AI and Education, which was also released on Tuesday at the conference, stresses equitable access to the benefits of artificial intelligence and calls for greater use of smart education platforms to share quality resources and intelligent tools to help bridge the global digital divide.

The initiative proposes establishing a global network for teacher training and capacity building, with special attention given to children with special needs.

It also supports UNESCO's leadership role in using digital technologies for post-crisis remedial education, especially for girls and women.

Hidden city reopens



Visitors explore a museum about Beijing's civil air defense history in Qianmen area on Wednesday. Originally built in 1969 and once known as the Beijing underground city, the former civil air defense tunnel complex reopened to the public as a museum on Tuesday, after extensive renovations. HOU YU / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Smart steps forward



A robotic guide leads a staff member acting as a visually impaired pedestrian during an intelligent robot application competition in Mianyang, Sichuan province, on Tuesday. Designed to assist with safe travel, the robot can identify road conditions and respond to obstacles, sounds and route changes in real time. HAO FEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

BLUEPRINT INTO ACTION

Yunnan to promote lifestyle businesses

Better living conditions, policy support reshape province's tourism economy

By **YAN YUJIE** and **LI YINGQING** in Kunming

Yunnan is positioning itself as a destination not only for tourism, but also for long-term living and entrepreneurship, as the southwestern Chinese province recorded sharp growth in overnight international visitors and long-stay residents in 2025, Governor Wang Yubo said on Wednesday.

Speaking at a briefing on Yunnan's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), Wang said the province is looking to attract more people to "travel, settle and start businesses" in Yunnan, as improving living environments and lifestyle appeal reshape the province's tourism economy.

Yunnan received 8.64 million inbound tourist visits in 2025, up 30 percent year-on-year, according to official data.

Among them, overnight inbound visitors rose 51.8 percent to 4.95 million, outpacing overall growth and signaling rising demand for deeper travel experiences.

The province also saw a surge in long-stay visitors, locally referred to as "sojourners".

More than 5.5 million people chose to live temporarily in Yunnan last year, up 41.4 percent year-on-year, with an average stay of 83 days.

"Many visitors came as tourists but stayed on because they fell in love with the place, becoming new residents of Yunnan," Wang said.

He attributed the trend partly to sweeping improvements in urban and rural living conditions in recent years. According to Wang, all counties, cities and districts in Yunnan now meet national sanitary standards, while all natural villages have reached the top-tier standard for rural living environments.

"With better environments and more beautiful cities and villages, tourists from across China and around the world are flocking to Yunnan," he said.

Earlier this year, Alexandra Solovey, a 46-year-old tourist from the United States, visited Kunming with her husband and daughter. She said the pleasant weather, local cuisine, friendly residents and sense of safety made Yunnan "a fantastic destination".

Among those choosing to stay longer is Zhang Boai, a 35-year-old former flight attendant from Beijing. After traveling across Lijiang, Dali, Kunming, Pu'er and Xishuangbanna in mid-2025, Zhang and her husband relocated to a village in Pu'er with their 3-year-old son later that year.

"I want my son to have a happy childhood close to nature, where he can play freely," Zhang said.

The long-stay trend is also giving rise to new business models.

In Laozhuaqing village in Pu'er, 32-year-old Ying Xixi from Wenzhou, Zhejiang province, has launched a digital nomad community, offering shared workspaces for remote workers.

Since opening in late February, the site has already hosted dozens of digital nomads.

"Yunnan has rich resources, diverse ethnic cultures and a great climate, which are all attractive to entrepreneurs like us," Ying said, adding that she hopes for more supportive policies for startup communities and lifestyle-based businesses.

Wang said the province plans to expand policy support, diversify business scenarios and cultivate more sectors suited to lifestyle entrepreneurship. Yunnan also aims to build a number of "cities of entrepreneurship" and "cities of thriving industries" to attract more innovators and business founders.

The growing sojourn economy is already bringing tangible benefits to rural communities.

Yan Di, Party branch secretary of Manhena village in Xishuangbanna, said long-stay tourism has increased significantly since 2024. Last year, the village received more than 10,000 sojourn visitors, many staying for more than 10 days at a time.

The village, home to 109 households and 486 residents, reported an average household income of 80,000 yuan ($11,780) last year, with tourism contributing more than 60 percent.

"Life is steadily getting better," Yan said.

In Lijiang's Yulong county, 57-year-old Fan Hongyan, originally from Xiangxi in Hunan province, opened a guesthouse in September after traveling to more than 50 countries.

"The first time I came here, I was deeply captivated by the scenery and environment," she said. "I knew this was where I wanted to live."

Contact the writers at yanyj@chinadaily.com.cn

Soundbites

Editor's note: *The State Council Information Office held a group interview on Wednesday featuring outstanding teachers to discuss advancing the spirit of educators and accelerating the building of China into a leading country in education.*



On Cuiying Mountain in Lanzhou, we established China's first semi-arid climate change observation station of international standards. I often take my students into the field, trekking across deserts, traversing glaciers and climbing plateaus. They are trained and tested in harsh natural environments, strengthening both their character and resilience. I like the saying along the Taklimakan Desert highway: "There is only a desolate desert, not a desolate life." I often tell my students the same: how could our research be anything but world-class, when we write our papers on the vast land of our motherland and pursue knowledge in the great deserts of the northwest?
Huang Jianping, *an academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and a professor at Lanzhou University in Gansu province*



Labor education is not a decorative add-on, but a source of nourishment and energy for children's all-round development. To help children develop a love for work from an early age, we have designed a curriculum based on the 24 solar terms, encouraging them to engage in hands-on activities in tune with the seasons. Only when teachers remain curious about the world will children long to explore it. I hope our children will feel a spark of excitement at the sight of wild chrysanthemums, and pause to listen when they hear birds singing. Education, at its heart, is about nurturing the ability to perceive happiness and to create it.
Zhang Zhenle, *principal of Fuchun No 7 Primary School Education Group in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province*



I have always worked on the front line of teaching. Together with my institution, I have helped deepen the integration of industry and education, as well as school-enterprise cooperation. I hope to support companies in solving technical challenges while personally guiding students in developing practical skills. Watching them grow from novices to skilled professionals, then step out of campus and into major aviation enterprises, contributing to China's domestically developed aircraft and other critical national projects, gives me a deep sense of fulfillment.
Zhou Shuqiang, *professor at Chengdu Aeronautic Polytechnic University*



The essence of nurturing both intellect and character lies in "seeing every individual". At our school, each class is assigned a psychological counselor, and we have launched a smart mental health platform to support the well-being of both students and teachers. We focus not only on students' academic progress, but also on their emotional needs and individual differences. At the same time, we recognize the dedication of every teacher, providing practical support to help address real challenges, so that everyone on campus is seen and respected.
Xie Wei, *principal of Yinchuan No 15 Middle School, Ningxia Hui autonomous region*



We support teachers in defining clear development goals based on their individual circumstances, whether they are newly recruited or experienced backbone teachers. Taking into account teachers' years of experience and professional strengths, we design stage-specific learning content and practical opportunities, enabling them to grow steadily and continuously. We aim to ignite teachers' inner drive, helping them feel the nobility of the profession and sustain their intrinsic passion, while also strengthening their professional competence. There is only one character's difference between a "profession" and a "vocation", but it transforms teachers' mindset, energizes the entire team, and eventually benefits tens of thousands of children.
An Huixia, *principal of Xinghua Preschool Education Group in Taiyuan, Shanxi province*

ZHAO YIMENG

HK's emissions detector to aid climate research from Tiangong

By **WU KUNLING** in Hong Kong
amberwu@chinadailyhk.com

The world's first lightweight, high-resolution, high-precision carbon dioxide and methane point-source detector, developed by Hong Kong scientists, has arrived at the Tiangong, making it the city's first scientific payload aboard the orbiting national space station.

The project, hailed as proof of Hong Kong's ability to support the nation's space development and carbon neutrality drive, is able to detect over 99 percent of CO2 emissions from the nation's coal-burning power plants and CH4 emissions from its coal mines, providing precise and reliable data for policymakers in China and around the world, said Su Hui, co-leader of the project and chair professor of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, on Wednesday.

The Hong Kong-made payload, the Multi-Spectral Imaging Carbon Observatory, nicknamed "eye for space", arrived at Tiangong at 1:11 pm on Monday aboard the Tianzhou-10 cargo craft. It was part of a consignment of essential deliveries such as artificial human embryos and ultra-thin solar cells, and supplies including an extravehicular spacesuit.

The MUSICO will participate in China's first Earth observation project under its human spaceflight program.

Weighing less than 80 kilograms and smaller than a domestic washing machine, the payload is capable of accurately measuring CO2 and CH4 — two major greenhouse gases — from space, with extra-high spectral resolution and 100-meter spatial resolution, said the research team.

By analyzing intensity changes in sunlight over specific spectral bands as it passes through the atmosphere and reflects off the Earth's surface, the payload identifies gas-specific absorption features to determine gas concentrations and pinpoint individual emission sources, enabling effective monitoring of key facilities such as power plants and landfills.

Su said the detector's observation range covers latitudes from 42 degrees south to 42 degrees north — encompassing most of the world's densely populated and industrially active regions. The data it collects will be shared with government departments and research institutions in China and abroad under the nation's data management policies.

She added that recipients include the nation's Ministry of Ecology and Environment, and the United Nations Environment Programme which will add it to an open global dataset for researchers and authorities worldwide.

Zhang Limin, another co-lead of the project and head of HKUST's Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, said that while the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region has participated in many of the nation's space projects in the past, this payload is the first mission led by the SAR — a milestone.

He highlighted that the project's results will also provide a scientific basis for cross-regional climate research and emissions reduction efforts in economies involved in the Belt and Road Initiative, contributing to the global response to climate change.

HKUST President Nancy Ip Yuk-yu said the project proves that Hong Kong's research capabilities can make substantial contributions to the nation's highest-level aerospace platforms.

It also supports the nation's dual-carbon goals and provides scientific backing for the Beautiful China Initiative and global climate governance, Ip said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:42 PM

EXPERIENCE CHINA DAILY, DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR AND PHONE

Print + digital package starting at

$49.99 per three months | $149.99 per year

Visit chinadailyusa-store.com for more

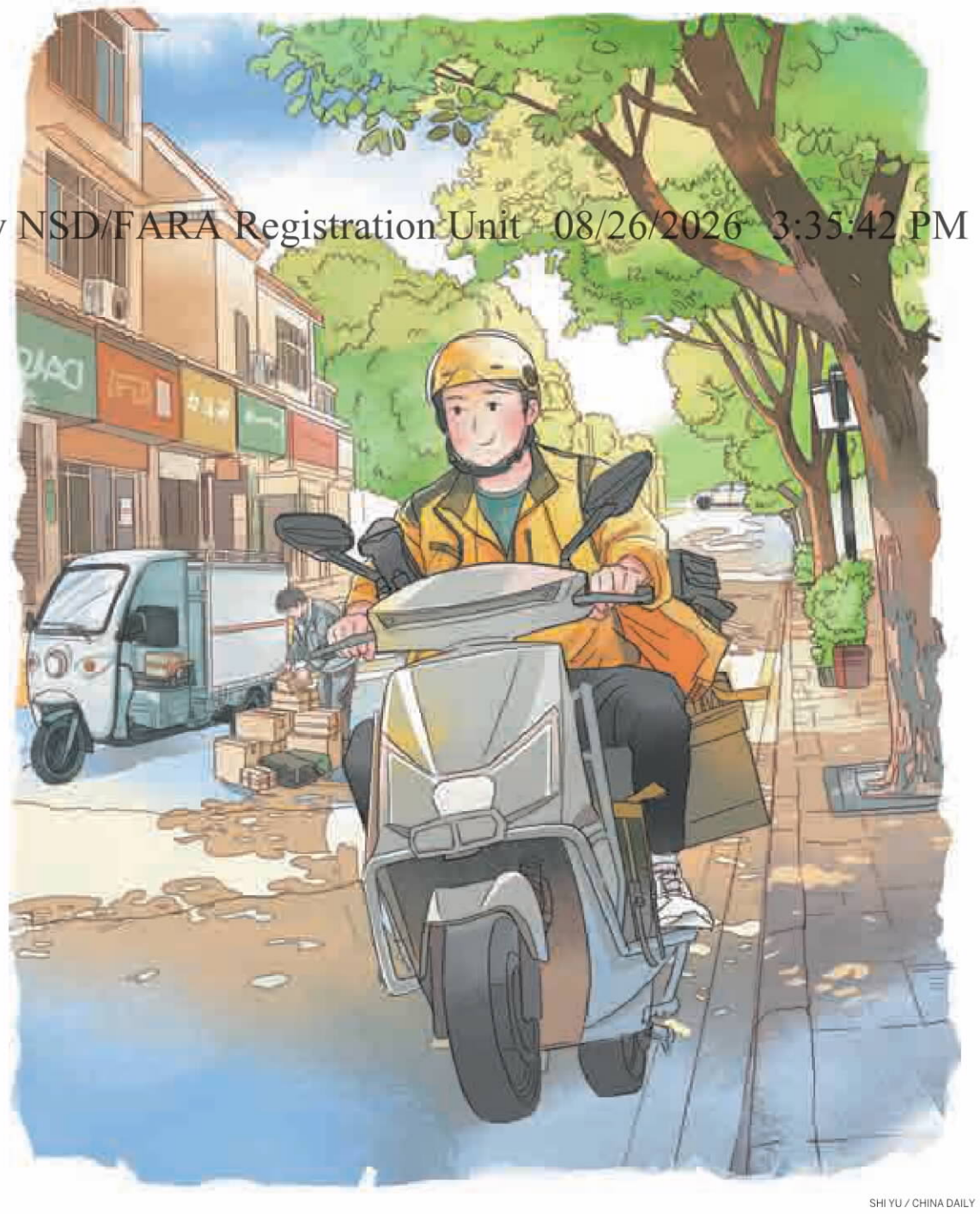
POLICY REVIEW

Guideline boosts gig worker protections

Government policy provides growing oversight over new employment types

By JI HAISHENG
jihaisheng@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:42 PM



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

During campus breaks, Xiao Tang, a university student from Hebei province, takes to Beijing's streets as a ride-hailing driver. A driving enthusiast, he has turned his time off campus into a source of income and a tangible sense of autonomy. "I enjoy it. It gives me control over my time," he said.

His experience is a snapshot of a much larger trend. "Young people across China are increasingly turning to digital platforms for work, forming the backbone of the country's expanding 'new forms of employment," said Zeng Yanbo, a researcher at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of Sociology.

"New forms of employment" are distinct from traditional full-time work, referring to jobs where tasks are matched, assigned, managed and compensated via internet platforms, such as online service provider Meituan, ride-hailing platform Didi and short-video app Douyin.

More than 70 percent of such workers are aged between 18 and 35, according to Zeng. "Young people are drawn to these jobs mainly for the low entry barriers, the quick settlement of income, and the freedom to set their own schedules," she said.

As this workforce continues to grow, the country has introduced a series of policy measures designed to safeguard these workers' rights, improve services and steer the high-quality development of the sector.

In April, the general offices of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council, China's Cabinet, issued a set of policy measures on strengthening service and management for new employment groups. Experts said that this marks the first central-level policy framework dedicated exclusively to platform-based workers.

They added that it signals a decisive shift for China's digital economy — from a phase of rapid expansion to a new stage of standardized development that balances innovation with labor dignity and security.

According to a survey on China's workforce in 2023, the country has approximately 84 million workers engaged in new forms of employment, accounting for 21 percent of its total workforce. Projections indicate the figure may surpass 100 million this year.

"The new employment group is an important component of China's workforce and an indispensable force for socioeconomic development. It has now become a crucial pillar of the job market," said Zhang Dandan, a professor of economics and vice-dean at Peking University's National School of Development.

Li Yan, 37, from Yuncheng in Shanxi province, has spent a decade delivering food in Beijing. For most of those years, he worked as a freelance courier on major platforms, appreciating the flexible hours but lacking any form of employment security.

A pivotal shift came in March of last year, when he joined e-commerce company JD as a full-time delivery rider.

Despite it currently being a low season for orders, Li said he still earns around 8,000 yuan ($1,180) per month. Beyond the pay, a transformative benefit has been his enrollment in a social security program, with JD covering the employer's mandatory contribution and subsidizing employees' personal contributions. For Li, this security has become a tangible foundation for his future. He said he is committed to building a long-term career with the company, with plans to stay until retirement.

While individual stories highlight the search for security, the sector's overall vitality remains robust. A recent report by Jinan University's Institute for Economic and Social Research in Guangdong province and recruitment portal Zhaopin showed job postings in new forms of employment rose 15.1 percent year-on-year in 2025, while job seekers rose 11 percent year-on-year, with over 80 percent of positions offering monthly salaries between 8,001 yuan and 15,000 yuan.

For years, the explosive growth of platform jobs, hailed for creating employment, outpaced the development of corresponding safeguards. "The core challenge lies in the mismatch between a new, flexible employment model and a social protection system designed for traditional, stable jobs," Zhang said.

The newly issued policy document provides a comprehensive, two-phase blueprint to bridge this gap. The primary goal is to standardize labor practices and ensure robust rights protection by 2027, followed by the establishment of a sound service and management system within the next three to five years.

It has urged internet platforms and express delivery companies to set reasonable wages for workers based on work tasks and labor intensity, and to ensure full and timely payment. Another pillar of the reform is bringing transparency and accountability to the algorithms that govern such work. Platforms are now required to disclose rules for order assignment, pricing, assessment and penalties, according to the document.

While the policy direction is clear, experts caution that its implementation faces deep-seated economic challenges. Zhang identified income as the primary, underlying concern. "For riders, the core issue is earnings from each delivery," she said.

Citing a widespread belief that any new cost levied on platforms — for social insurance subsidies or safety incentives — will be passed down to workers, Zhang said, "Real, sustainable security for workers must be built on a foundation of adequate earnings in the first place."

Alongside safeguards, she stressed that it is essential to introduce measures that curb cutthroat competition and strictly prevent the infringement of workers' rights and interests.

Yin Yu, a senior partner at Guangdong-based Guanghe Law Firm, urged lawmakers to expedite dedicated legislation to protect the rights of workers in new employment forms.

She told Legal Daily that the next critical step is to translate the proven measures outlined in the policy document to binding legal statutes. This legislation, she said, should systematically define the nature of employment relationships, the rights and obligations of all parties, liability divisions, and regulatory oversight responsibilities, thereby solidifying the institutional safeguards for this workforce.

Zeng emphasized the urgency of establishing comprehensive skill standards and structured promotion pathways for delivery riders and similar professions. She advocated benchmarking against the technical worker grading system, a strategic move aimed at elevating these roles from temporary positions to viable lifelong careers.

This transformation, she noted, is essential for providing workers with long-term growth opportunities and fundamentally reshaping the perception and stability of platform-based employment.

Delivery platform reforms prioritize riders' safety over speed

By JI HAISHENG

The removal of late-delivery penalties in early 2026 has marked a turning point for China's gig economy, signaling a shift from speed-first algorithms to worker safety.

For veteran riders like Li Xincang, 39, who has navigated Beijing's streets for over a decade, the shift represents the professionalization of a sector once defined by high-risk labor and social insecurity.

When Li, a native of Puyang in Central China's Henan province, arrived in the capital over two decades ago, he started working on construction sites like many other rural migrants.

"The wages were often delayed, and there were no social security benefits at all," he said.

Seeking a more predictable income, he switched to food delivery in 2014 and has worked for consumer services platform Meituan for almost nine years.

Today, the veteran leads a team of over 110 riders and earns more than 10,000 yuan ($1,470) a month. Earnings are deposited quickly, he said, explaining that part-time riders get paid the next day, while full-time team members receive weekly wages.

"Delivery work won't make you rich, but it can support a family steadily," Li said. The reliable and timely income allowed him to pay off debts of over 100,000 yuan and build a decent house back in his hometown.

Beyond the paycheck, Li cherishes the flexibility. "I can choose to work mornings, evenings, or nights, and manage my own schedule. I can even take a moment to relax if I need, or scroll through my phone during a break," he said. "This is something you hardly get on a factory floor or a construction site."

Li said that the most crucial improvement he has witnessed is the reform of the delivery algorithm, the system that organizes his daily work.

"In the past, we could get up to 12 orders at a time, with very tight deadlines. We had to rush and sometimes even risk traffic violations," he said. Now, influenced by the government and stakeholders, the system limits trips to six or seven orders with more reasonable time windows. "The algorithm now puts safety before speed," he added.

The platform reinforces this by issuing warnings or short-term account restrictions for repeated traffic violations. A pivotal relief came in early 2026 when penalties for late deliveries were removed.

"Riders no longer feel forced to risk their lives on the road," Li said. "This shift has significantly reduced the danger of accidents caused by overwork or rushed deliveries."

This growing sense of security extends from the daily grind to long-term planning. A key milestone was the introduction of a pension subsidy program late last year. Li and his teammates are now covered by the program that subsidizes their participation in basic pension insurance for gig workers.

"Compared with construction work that offers no proper social security, this job gives us a greater sense of security," Li said. "This pension scheme will protect us after we retire. Having it makes my family feel truly at ease."

Support on the ground has also been upgraded. Li praised the launch of hubs dedicated to delivery riders, which offer 24/7 shelter, charging ports and seasonal supplies. However, he is critical of commercial outlets that hang similar signs for show without providing real service and suggests resources should be directed toward stations that genuinely help workers.

For Li, the past decade traces a clear path — from chasing immediate wages to building a stable, secure life with a future to look forward to. He acknowledged his own story as part of a broader shift where the nation's policy direction and corporate initiatives are converging to provide millions with not just an income, but a growing sense of dignity.

Li said he may continue riding for a few more years, or he might return to his hometown to promote local farm produce online, leveraging a following he has built on social media.

He added that his plans remain flexible, while his next steps will ultimately depend on his family's needs.

Policy Digest

Roadmap to cultivate global textile leaders

China will cultivate no fewer than 25 leading textile and apparel brands by 2028 as part of efforts to significantly enhance the competitiveness and market influence of the sector, according to an action plan issued by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology and four other departments that was recently publicized.

The action plan for the cultivation of excellence in textile and apparel brands (2026-28) sets out six key tasks, including the categorized cultivation of leading brands across supply chains, industrial ecosystems and consumer markets. Enterprises will be guided to focus on specialized market segments and consumer scenarios to create a group of supply-chain brands and consumer-facing brands.

The plan calls for stronger development of smart textiles, including smart wearables, intelligent home textiles, and products related to healthcare and medical applications.

To promote digital and intelligent upgrading, the plan encourages the release of innovative application scenarios for "AI plus textiles" across the entire industrial chain. It also supports the use of human-computer interaction and virtual interaction to better understand personalized consumer demand, while improving the technological level and wider application of virtual fitting, intelligent outfit recommendations and virtual anchors.

Campaign to uplift rural culture, health services

The Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and 12 other departments recently issued a notice launching the 2026 campaign to bring culture, science and health services to the countryside, aiming to deliver more high-quality resources directly to rural communities.

Under the campaign, cultural and artistic services will be brought to rural areas by mobilizing literary and artistic teams to provide cultural services. Support will also be given to mass cultural and sports activities.

Legal services will be strengthened through regular rural-themed public legal education activities, while agricultural technology services will focus on the needs of rural industrial development.

The campaign will expand science outreach in rural communities through innovative science popularization demonstration activities and high-quality public science content.

Medical resources will be sent to rural communities via free clinic weeks, visits by renowned doctors to grassroots areas, and stationed or mobile medical services at township and village levels, and public welfare services will also be expanded.

Tap water coverage in countryside hits 96%

China's rural tap water coverage reached 96 percent by the end of 2025, the Ministry of Water Resources said on Tuesday.

By the end of last year, large-scale water supply projects covered 71 percent of the rural population, while 72 percent of counties had adopted unified county-level management for rural water supply, the ministry told a press conference.

China had nearly 3.82 million rural water supply projects by the end of 2025, forming a supply network covering 850 million rural residents. The number of people relying mainly on water cellars and water storage tanks for water supply had dropped by 79 percent by the end of last year from the level at the end of the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20) period.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-25), areas lifted out of poverty completed 914.9 billion yuan ($133.71 billion) in water conservancy investment, including 145.5 billion yuan in key counties.

China aims to raise rural tap water coverage to 97 percent by the end of 2026, with large-scale water supply projects covering 73 percent of the rural population, according to the ministry. By 2030, the country aims to lift rural tap water coverage to 98 percent.

CHINA DAILY—XINHUA



CULTURE



Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:42 PM

Pearls of perspective

Growing up in China, award-winning novelist worked throughout her life to strengthen cross-cultural understanding, **Yang Yang** reports.

In the history of Sino-US exchanges, Nobel Prize-winner Pearl S Buck, a writer from the United States also known as Sai Zhenzhu, stands prominently as "the most influential Westerner to write about China since the 13th century's Marco Polo", as described by late US historian James C Thomson Jr.

Buck's true significance lies in her approach to cross-cultural understanding, says Guo Yingjian, a specially appointed professor at Renmin University of China, one of the earliest Chinese scholars to research Buck.

"She shows us that effective cultural exchange doesn't start with labels, ideological judgments, or demonization. Instead, it begins with understanding people's lives: their suffering, dignity, and shared emotions," he says.

Through reading her popular and sympathetic novels, particularly *The Good Earth*, Americans' perceptions of China changed significantly in the 1930s and 40s.

"The majority of Chinese were seen for the first time in literature as honest, kindhearted, frugal-living, hard-working, deity-fearing farmers who are much the same as American farmers," wrote Chinese scholar Liao Kang in 1997.

Buck's empathy went beyond pity, reflecting an understanding of others' circumstances, says Guo.

She captured both the hardships and resilience of Chinese farmers, writing about not only poverty but also dignity, not only backwardness but also human complexity, he says. Consequently, the China she depicted, though not a full picture, was warm, textured, and humane, he adds.

One important reason Buck was able to represent Chinese characters with empathy and compassion lies in the fact that "she did not view China as a foreign tourist on a brief visit; rather, she lived and grew up in China, and spent a long time sharing the same world with ordinary Chinese people," says Guo.

Her writing about China did not stem from an abstract "Oriental imagination", but from everyday life, land ethics, family relationships, and basic human emotions, he notes.

A daughter of Southern Presbyterian missionaries, Buck left her hometown of Hillsboro, West Virginia, for China in 1892, when she was about four months old. In 1896, her family moved from Huai'an to Zhenjiang, Jiangsu province, where they lived for the next 18 years.

Unlike other missionaries, Buck's parents, Absalom and Caroline Sydenstricker, chose to live among Chinese people to fully immerse themselves in local culture rather than in isolated Westernized compounds.

Life in Zhenjiang greatly influenced Buck and her writing, especially the daily interactions with her nanny and tutor, says Lu Zhangping, director of the Zhenjiang Pearl S Buck Research Association.

In Zhenjiang, a local Chinese woman surnamed Wang cared for Buck for 18 years. Wang, kind and diligent, often cooked her delicious meals and snacks. Their relationship went far beyond that of servant and master. Wang treated her like her own child. Whenever Buck was punished by her mother for disobedience, Wang would quietly help her with the chores and offer guidance. From a young age, Buck had developed a deep respect and admiration for Chinese women.

Wang often told Buck tales about the famine during her own childhood, her family, and bandits; martial arts stories about standing up to the powerful; fighting injustice; and Chinese classics set in Zhenjiang, including *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, *The Legend of the White Snake* and *The Water Margin* (or Outlaws of the Marsh).

Her parents hired a traditional scholar, 50-year-old Mr Kung, to teach Buck classical Chinese literature and thought. Mr Kung, originally from Beijing, moved to Zhenjiang after his house was burned down by German soldiers.

Every afternoon at 2 pm, Mr Kung arrived at Buck's home for two-hour lessons. He taught her about Confucius, Bodhisattva, Chinese history, classical literature, life maxims, and local customs and traditions. When answering her questions, he went beyond mere book knowledge, emphasizing the connection between the "source" and the "flow" that links the past, present and future. He also encouraged young Buck to study Chinese classical novels and taught her about the "Complete Library of the Four Treasuries" that was stored in Zhenjiang's Wenzong Ge, an ancient library.

For 10 years, through reading classical texts and practicing calligraphy, She not only became well-versed in traditional Chinese classics and familiar with Chinese history, culture and geography, but also developed a beautiful regular-script style of writing, spoke fluent Mandarin, and even learned to carve seals. In Zhenjiang, she also witnessed the miserable lives of victims of the 1905 Yangtze River flood, which provided first-hand material for *The Good Earth*.

In 1910, Pearl Buck returned to the United States to attend Randolph-Macon Woman's College and, shortly after graduating in 1914, returned to China. She taught English in middle schools in Zhenjiang for two years and, after marrying John Lossing Buck in 1917, the couple went north to live in the countryside of Suzhou, Anhui province, to research life and agriculture in rural areas.







Top: Pearl S Buck (right) at a United China Relief fundraising event in the US in 1941. She played an active role in encouraging and organizing fundraising efforts in the US. **Middle left:** Buck speaking at the National Press Club in Washington. **Middle right:** A photo taken on August 17, 2025, in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, shows a Western-style building, which is now home to the Pearl S Buck Memorial House. **Above:** *The Patriot*, released in New York in 1939, was the first novel Pearl S Buck published after receiving the Nobel Prize in literature in 1938. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"During her four to five years in Suzhou, Pearl Buck learned about the rural areas and farmers in China more profoundly," Lu says.

From 1919 to 1934, the Bucks both taught at the University of Nanking. In the house located at No 3 Pingcang Alley, now in the Gulou Campus of Nanjing University, she completed her first novels, including *East Wind, West Wind* (1930), *The Good Earth* (1931), *Sons* (1933), and *The Mother* (1933), as well as a translation.

In 1933, Buck published the first English translation of *The Water Margin*, one of Chinese literature's Four Great Classic Novels of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), giving it the title *All Men Are Brothers*, a line she learned from the Confucian classic *The Analects*.

In 1938, when Buck received the Nobel Prize in literature, she gave a lecture, *The Chinese Novel*, in which she said, "My earliest knowledge of story, of how to tell and write stories, came to me in China". She also mentioned the "Complete Library of the Four Treasuries" she learned from Mr Kung.

The Good Earth, featuring a poor Chinese farmer's family caught in the tides of history, became an instant best-seller in the US and was translated into more than 30 languages. It won the Pulitzer Prize in 1932. In 1937, a film adaptation was produced and won an Oscar for Best Actress the following year.

In 1934, with much reluctance, Pearl Buck left China, but her connection with the Chinese people was never severed.

Since the 1920s, she had been writing articles for US magazines, including The Atlantic, Asia, The Chinese Recorder, and The Nation, on Chinese farmer's life, culture, the shifting roles of women, and China's social dynamics.

In the United States, Buck fully committed herself to humanitarian and cultural endeavors related to China.

In 1941, she became president of Asia magazine to promote modern Chinese literature, aiming to create vibrant, multidimensional Chinese characters that challenged Western stereotypes.

The same year, the East and West Association was established, and as the president, Buck utilized lectures, publications, broadcasts, and translations to spread Chinese culture and provide crucial international support for wartime China.

In 1943, Buck joined the Citizens Committee to Repeal Chinese Exclusion as a key spokesperson, publicly criticizing the exclusion laws. Her efforts contributed to the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act later that year.

During the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression (1931-45), Buck steadfastly supported China's mission. Since the September 18th Incident in 1931, she had openly condemned Japanese militarism and consistently informed the American public about the realities of the war in China.

To aid China, she initiated the Book of Hope fundraising campaign in 1940 and subsequently led the China Emergency Relief Committee and the United China Relief agency, organizing large-scale fundraising efforts to provide medical supplies, build hospitals, and aid civilians and war orphans.

Throughout the war, she frequently used media platforms to voice her support. In 1938, she reviewed the book *Red Star Over China*, predicting China's revolutionary victory and in another article published later that year she praised Chinese guerrilla tactics. In 1942, she published the novel *Dragon Seed*, set against the backdrop of the Nanjing Massacre in 1937, during which 300,000 Chinese soldiers and civilians were killed, making it one of the most horrific atrocities of World War II.

In 1938, in the Banquet Speech of the Nobel Prize, Buck said: "I have never admired China more than I do now, when I see her uniting as she has never before, against the enemy who threatens her freedom. With this determination for freedom, which is in so profound a sense the essential quality in her nature, I know that she is unconquerable."

In 1945, she witnessed Japan's surrender to the Allies, marking the end of the war. In 1973, Buck died in Danby, Vermont, at 80. According to her will, her tombstone at Green Hills Farm in Pennsylvania bears no English name, no birth or death dates, and no epitaph — only three Chinese characters in seal script, handwritten by Buck herself: *Sai Zhen Zhu*, her Chinese name.

In the Statement on the Death of Pearl S Buck in 1973, former US president Richard Nixon said: "In life, Pearl Buck was a human bridge between the civilization of the East and West."

Today, China is quite different from the one depicted in Buck's works. Characterized with modernity, urbanization, globalization, and digitalization, modern China is a far cry from the one focused on land, villages, and family ethics in *The Good Earth*, Guo, the professor, says.

"If we still read Buck solely as a way to understand China's reality, we're missing the point," Guo says.

"In today's context of challenging Sino-US relations, her significance is in her reminder that even if relations between countries are tense, the possibility for understanding between individuals should remain," Guo says, adding, "It is an agreement we reached after discussing the significance of Pearl Buck with the Ministry of Education's China Center for International People-to-People Exchange in current cultural exchanges.

"No matter how dominant political narratives become, they cannot completely obscure the reality of ordinary people's lives. While the China she wrote about is in the past, the method she represents — understanding people through their humanity — is still relevant today," he stresses.

Contact the writer at yangyangs@chinadaily.com.cn

A well-versed exchange between Chinese and Arab writers

GUANGZHOU — Young poets, writers and scholars from China and Arab countries have gathered in South China's Guangzhou, Guangdong province, for a poetry festival aimed at deepening literary dialogue and people-to-people exchanges.

A China-Arab States special session of the 2026 International Youth Poetry Festival began over the weekend in the southern metropolis, drawing more than 40 young poets, Sinologists and writers from 13 Arab countries, including Morocco, Syria and Egypt, alongside more than 40 young Chinese poets.

The event will run through Sunday. In the coming days, Chinese and Arab poets will take part in a series of cultural exchange activities in Guangzhou, Shenzhen, both in Guangdong province, and Beijing, including poetry readings, academic dialogues, poetry seminars, and field visits.





The opening ceremony of China-Arab States special session of the 2026 International Youth Poetry Festival in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, on May 9. PHOTOS BY LU HANXIN / XINHUA

"Though separated by thousands of miles and different languages, the two great poetic traditions of China and the Arab world have become both the root and soul of their civilizations, with condensed language, profound wisdom, and sincere emotion," says Zhang Hongsen, chairman of the China Writers Association.

Zhang says he hopes young poets from both sides will draw inspiration from one another while staying rooted in their own cultures, allowing poetry to flourish through exchanges between tradition and modernity, and the local and the global.

For Egyptian poet Yahia Mohamed Wagdy Lotfy Omar, poetry can travel across languages and borders.

"When I write a line of poetry, a friend on the other side of the world who speaks a different language can still be moved by it and understand it. That is poetry," he says, adding that translation serves as an important bridge, and such gatherings can help poets break through their own limitations.

Launched by the China Writers Association in 2024, the International Youth Poetry Festival has previously held special sessions for BRICS countries and China-Latin America exchanges.

Organizers say the platform is growing into an international venue for young writers to promote literary dialogue and mutual learning among civilizations.

XINHUA



LIFE



Blending tea culture with travel

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:42 PM

Enthusiast-turned-entrepreneur shares his appreciation for the drink along with his sourcing adventures, report **Zheng Zheng** and **Wu Wanzhen** in Shanghai.

When Derek Poskin first arrived in the historic canal city of Yangzhou, Jiangsu province, in 2016, he was tracing a poem by Tang Dynasty (618-907) poet Li Bai and developing a growing appreciation for Chinese tea culture. Nearly a decade later, the American, born in 1988, has become a tea entrepreneur, sourcing premium leaves across China and selling them to customers worldwide.

"Coffee is for work. Tea, though, is for life. I've always been passionate about Chinese tea," Poskin says from Empty Cup, his renovated tea house nestled in Yangzhou's old quarter, where he introduces visitors from around the world to China's tea traditions.

"I started drinking and buying more, and eventually turned my house into a warehouse. I had to share it somehow, and that's how the business began."





From passion to business

Poskin launched his tea venture in 2018 as a side project, aiming to connect Western tea enthusiasts with the traditions behind it. However, the early years were challenging.

"The first three or four years were really slow," he admits, recalling how only family members purchased his products initially. "I still remember the first time I got an order from somebody I didn't know. I was like, 'Oh my gosh'. That was the moment I knew I was making it. It's been a long, long process."

Navigating China's tea landscape is no simple feat. The country produces thousands of varieties across six main categories — green, white, yellow, oolong, black, and dark teas like Pu'er.

Rather than working through middlemen, Poskin travels directly to tea-growing regions across China, from the ancient forests of Yunnan province in the southwest to the oolong gardens of Fujian province along the eastern coast.

"One of the reasons I came to China was to live the tea culture. The best way to do that is to go where the tea is made," he explains. "Before coming to China, I had been drinking tea for a long time but had never actually seen a tea plant. Now I've hiked through some of the country's most remote tea mountains."

Connective expeditions

One of Poskin's most memorable expeditions took him to Guafengzhai, a remote village of the Yao ethnic group in Yunnan's Yiwu town, about two kilometers from the border with Laos. Renowned for its high-quality Pu'er tea, the village had long been a bucket list destination for the entrepreneur.

The journey began with a leap of faith — connecting through social media with a young, local farmer named Zhao Xiaoyun. "I had this prearranged date with a person I'd never met, in a town I'd never been to, to venture to the borders of China," Poskin recalls. "But as soon as I met her, I knew we were on the same page. We both spoke the language of tea."

The four-day expedition immersed him in every aspect of tea production. Joining Zhao, her mother, sister, and friends deep in the tea forests, he picked leaves, laid them out to sundry, and helped with the roasting.

"We've hosted foreign tea merchants who have visited our plantation for business before, but Derek stands out for his exceptional knowledge of tea," says Zhao. "When we taught him the leaf fixation process, a critical step that halts oxidation and preserves flavor, he learned it immediately."

The primeval forests, with tea trees hundreds of years old growing wild among other vegetation, left an enduring impression. "Walking through those ancient groves felt like stepping into another world," Poskin describes. "The farmers would point out edible herbs along the way, letting me taste spicy leaves that would numb my mouth like Sichuan peppercorns.

"That's one of the most magical aspects — experiencing the land with the people who live on it," he adds.

Pieces of a puzzle

Poskin's dedication to understanding tea goes beyond sourcing trips. He spent a year in Chaozhou, Guangdong province, studying the art of making clay teapots used for *gongfu cha* (tea with skill). This method uses small pots and cups to bring out complex flavors through multiple short infusions.

He has participated in some local customs and festivals during his trips, often as the only foreigner. "One time, around Qingming Festival, I was invited to join a family's tomb-sweeping ritual," he recounts. "We killed chickens, burned incense and paper money, and set out meals for the ancestors. It was incredible to be part of that living tea culture."

The tea is just the surface, he emphasizes. "When I experience the world through the eyes of the people in the mountains, I realize how deep tea culture really is. The leaves themselves are just a piece of the puzzle."

Through his travels across different provinces, Poskin's understanding of the drink itself has shifted from a search for correctness to an appreciation for diversity.

"I came thinking there was one correct way to drink tea," he explains. "But I've learned that Chinese tea culture is incredibly fluid and varies by region." For example, people might drink green tea straight from a glass jar in Yangzhou, while in Chaozhou, elaborate *gongfu cha* sets are the norm.

"Chinese tea culture is fluid, more Taoist," he says. "Every place has its own style, and any way you drink tea is the right way. I find that very welcoming and liberating."

Bridging East and West

These experiences have become central to his business model. Poskin documents his sourcing journeys through videos and photographs, sharing them with customers to create transparency and a connection between consumers and producers.

His content creation extends to a podcast called Tea Soup, a YouTube channel, and an active social media presence through which he has built a following of enthusiasts eager to learn about authentic Chinese tea culture.



Clockwise from top: Derek Poskin on the tea mountain in Guafengzhai, which is located on the southwest border of Yunnan province and is renowned for its high-quality Pu'er tea; The leaf fixation process; Poskin shows fresh and sun-dried tea leaves; Poskin and Zhao rolling tea leaves. PHOTOS BY ZHENG ZHENG / CHINA DAILY

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

Most of his customers are based in the United States, with significant sales to Germany and other EU countries. To introduce premium flavors to a wider audience, he utilizes blending techniques that maintain high quality while remaining affordable.

"I buy some really good tea and blend it with a less expensive tea that complements it, so people can try something high-quality at an affordable price," he explains. For each product, he creates detailed tasting notes, origin information, and brewing instructions.

Unlike many e-commerce businesses, Poskin operates exclusively through his own website, maintaining full control over the customer experience — from freshly coined tea names to packaging designs. "It's something I have complete control of. For me, this is a creative expression," he says.

Looking ahead, Poskin envisions his business evolving into a social enterprise that gives back to farming communities. His new teahouse project in Yangzhou aims to create a physical space where people can experience Chinese tea culture firsthand.

"The business is doing well. My partner and I are interested in making it a social enterprise — giving back to the farmers and doing something positive," he reflects. "I don't need to make endless money. I'd rather cap it and use the excess for good.

"From the start, this has been a passion project," he emphasizes. "I want a deeper understanding of Chinese tea, to source better tea, and to awaken more people to Chinese tea culture."

Reflecting on a decade in China, Poskin offers fellow entrepreneurs a perspective of patience. "China is a world of opportunities. There are so many people who can help you. But don't rush it," he notes. "Great things take years, and then they happen all at once."

Contact the writers at zhengzheng@chinadaily.com.cn

Salon and music strengthen Sino-New Zealand friendship

WELLINGTON — Featuring a concert by the Amber Quartet, the "Tea for Harmony: Yaji Cultural Salon" in late April integrated Chinese tea culture with classical Western music in Auckland, New Zealand's largest city.

Organized by the China Cultural Center in Auckland, the event opened with tea tasting, traditional tea preparation, tea appreciation, and storytelling about tea culture, creating an elegant, harmonious atmosphere. Participants were invited to make a personalized cup of tea using an ancient Chinese style in which tea powder is applied to "draw" pictures on the tea's foam.

The Amber Quartet was founded in 2005 and has become an internationally influential string quartet in China. During the event, Debussy's *String Quartet* and works featuring the ethnic cultures of both countries were performed. "They were truly amazing," Sharon Ann from the audience says, speaking of the performers' superb skills.

Chen Shijie, Chinese consul general in Auckland, says that the event uses music as a bridge and tea as a bond to convey the friendship of the Chinese people, helping deepen mutual understanding and relations between the people of China and New Zealand, and strengthening the public foundation of bilateral relations.

Bob Harvey, former mayor of Waitakere, says he values the historical ties and current cooperation with China. "This night is cemented with tea for harmony and peace. It is such a special moment."





Left: A participant experiences traditional Chinese tea culture during the "Tea for Harmony: Yaji Cultural Salon" in Auckland, New Zealand, in April. **Right:** Auckland people enjoy traditional Chinese tea culture at the event organized by the city's China Cultural Center.
PHOTOS BY WU JIAXIANG / XINHUA

XINHUA



Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:42 PM

LIFE

An island's women on wheels

On remote Qushan in Zhejiang province, a team of female delivery drivers is reshaping traditional roles, balancing motherhood and work while forging independence and solidarity, **Chen Nan** reports.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:42 PM



Part of the Zhoushan Islands in China's Zhejiang province, hundreds of kilometers from the mainland, lies Qushan Island, home to fewer than 100,000 residents.

Life here revolves around a main road, which is a narrow stretch lined with schools, a clinic, a handful of shops, four bubble-tea cafes, and a lone coffeehouse. This modest cluster forms the island's "central business district". Yet, in the past year, it has become the stage for an extraordinary cast of women.

They are mothers averaging 40 years of age who have traded the predictable rhythms of domestic life for the hum of electric scooters and the uniform of the island's delivery service. Day after day, clad in orange and black, they navigate winding lanes and stair-stepped alleyways, threading the island together one takeout order at a time.

Once tied to roles defined by family and circumstance, such as wives awaiting fishermen at sea, and mothers trapped in part-time work, they now claim a new agency in these small, daily movements, quietly "rebuilding themselves" with every delivery.

From February to March this year, renowned Chinese photographer Xie Hailong, whose work has chronicled ordinary lives for 35 years, visited Qushan, drawn by curiosity.

"On an island surrounded by wind and sea, I wanted to see how these women could seize their own lives," he says. More than 10 of his photographs are being displayed in an exhibition titled *Seeing: Cities and Riders*, running from April 17 to the coming Sunday at public locations across 12 cities nationwide, capturing these women, who root themselves in a life defined not by circumstance, but by choice, against the rhythm of waves and wind.

Xie, 75, is known for a photo that he took in 1991, telling the story of Su Mingjuan, then 8 years old, with great sparkling eyes and a pencil in hand, in rural Jinzhai county, Anhui province. The photo became a household image after it was used as a poster for Project Hope, which was launched by the China Youth Development Foundation in 1989 and is dedicated to helping underprivileged children get an education.

Xie was inspired by a video online that he watched in 2025, featuring this group of women whose optimism, smiles and authenticity shone through every frame.

"I was captivated by their energy and found myself curious about this unique team — how, in such an isolated place, surrounded only by wind and sea, could they courageously choose their path, work tirelessly, and hold tightly to the life they wanted to live," the photographer says.

The first time he saw them in person, their vibe instantly drew him in. They were a diverse group of women, aged between 30 and 50, all dressed in bright orange uniforms. They gathered at the "CBD" of the island and chatted and laughed together.

"Their electric bikes were parked nearby, and they were like a burst of color against the backdrop of the island. When an order came in, one of them would zip off to deliver it, only to return afterward and join the group once again," says Xie.

During the days when their husbands were out at sea, these women became each other's family, supporting one another through thick and thin. When one of them had fewer orders, the others would step in and share theirs. If a newcomer was unfamiliar with the island's streets, the experienced riders would patiently guide her. Between orders, they would pull out little mirrors and lipsticks to touch up their makeup, reminding each other that, even in their uniforms, they never forgot the importance of feeling beautiful.

"It is a life that is both modest and deeply connected, where community comes first, and every little act of kindness carries weight. These women aren't just making deliveries; they are building lives for themselves and each other, grounded in determination, sisterhood and joy," the photographer says.

Among these women is Chen Lirong, born in 1997 and the youngest and fastest of Qushan's female riders. She is also the navigator, the one steering the small team through the chaos of rising orders. Each day begins at 7 am with the routine of family: delivering her two daughters to school. By 8:30 am, her delivery box is already brimming with orders. She rides until mid-afternoon, pauses to pick up her children, and then continues the cycle — juggling work and motherhood with the precision of someone who has spent years learning to adapt.





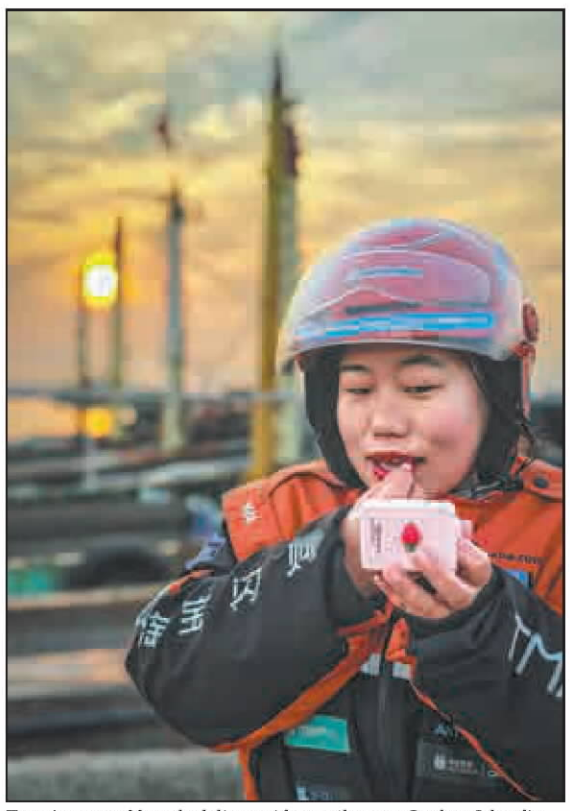
> "These women aren't just making deliveries; they are building lives for themselves and each other, grounded in determination, sisterhood and joy."
>
> **Xie Hailong,** veteran photographer

For Chen, deliveries are more than a job; it is the first work she has ever held that allows her to earn a living while tending to her children. Even at the busiest moments, she can glance at her phone, or quickly dash out an order and return home to care for her daughters.

In April 2025, when Taobao Shangou, or Taobao Instant Commerce, an online daily life services platform, officially launched operations on Qushan Island, Chen's reliability earned her the trust of Hu Gaoyang, the logistics manager. She became the leader of the all-female riders, guiding new mothers into the unfamiliar, physically demanding world of delivery work.

Initially, both Chen and Hu worried that the women, many long accustomed to full-time childcare or household work, might not adapt to the harsh rhythms of outdoor delivery. But as the first surge of orders hit, those doubts quickly vanished.

During the summer of 2025, order volumes skyrocketed by more than 1,000 percent. Some riders, brand-new to the job, handled 189 deliveries in a single day, and over the course of a month, completed more than 2,000.



Top: A group of female delivery riders gathers on Qushan Island's wharf for a photo. **Middle left:** In the rapeseed fields outside their homes, team member Wang Jinrong (left) picks a yellow flower, placing it on team leader Chen Lirong's head. **Middle right:** On an island with almost no elevators, these female delivery riders climb four to five floors per order — sometimes scaling hundreds of stairs in a single day. **Above:** Thirty-three-year-old Xu Limei loves bright lipstick. PHOTOS BY XIE HAILONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Chen herself was no stranger to struggle. Born in Anhui, she had drifted from factory work in Guangdong province to follow her husband to Jiangsu province. By 2016, marriage and childbirth brought her to Qushan, where her husband became a fisherman and she a homemaker, bound to domestic responsibilities while he went out to sea. Early one March morning, photographer Xie captured a photograph of her sending her husband off at 4 am, the harbor dark and silent.

"There was no dramatic embrace," Xie recalls. "Just a quiet farewell. The silent care between them hit me harder than any posed shot. I found myself tearing up behind the camera."

Raising two daughters while managing household repairs, medical trips and family errands, Chen's desire to work and earn never waned. A previous job in a local factory ended when it shut down, leaving her life once again in a transitional state. But as a delivery rider, she found not only an income, but also her calling. She schedules her team around childcare needs: mothers with younger children ride the mid-shift, those with older children the early shift, while those without children cover the late hours. In high season, she stays late to help manage orders herself, ensuring no one is overburdened.

At 46, Hu Yingrong became the first female delivery rider to join Chen's team. Having lived on the island for nearly 20 years, she's seen her life unfold in ways she never expected. Her eldest daughter is now in college, while her youngest son is still in middle school.

For nearly a decade, Hu Yingrong searched for work on the island that would allow her to balance earning an income with taking care of her children. Before she became a delivery rider, she tried various jobs but found herself doing the laborious task of mending fishing nets.

For a decade, she was bound to those nets. While the men of the island used fishing nets to bring in the harvest, Hu believed that women on the island had their own "mission" — the work of repairing and maintaining them. When the boats returned from fishing, they were filled with nets that needed mending: some torn and some covered in small fish and shrimp that had to be removed.

When her children were on vacation or at school, she would work in a fishnet factory surrounded by piles of discarded nets alongside other women just like her. They worked from sunrise to sunset, often losing track of time.

Then, in 2025, a new opportunity appeared. She became the second female delivery rider on the island, marking the beginning of a new chapter in her life. Finally, she had a job with a base salary, and the harder she worked, the more she earned.

However, the transition wasn't easy. Unlike younger riders like Chen, Hu Yingrong struggled at first. When she joined the team, she was faced with the busy periods of July and August — times when the number of orders was overwhelming. She couldn't even read the delivery routes on her phone's navigation system because they looked like a tangle of branches and twigs, constantly splitting and extending. But with persistence and a willingness to learn, she quickly adapted.

The island is full of buildings without elevators, and she often found herself climbing staircases, sometimes multiple flights in a row.

"My legs would hurt so much," she says, recalling the physical toll. Yet, she pushed through and excelled during the peak seasons, earning over 10,000 yuan ($1,472) a month — figures she had never dreamed of while working in the factory. During the off-season, she could still make 7,000 to 8,000 yuan — an amount that once seemed impossible.

Now, she has carved out some time for herself. After sending her son to school in the morning, and finishing her deliveries, she returns home to do housework or tend to her small vegetable garden.

The exhibition also features photos of other delivery riders taken by other photographers. According to the photo exhibition's curator Yang Han, more than 2,000 works were submitted for the event, with nearly 100,000 riders participating in the voting to select 200 images to be exhibited. The total number of votes surpassed 1 million.

Alongside Xie, more than 50 other photographers are featured, including Zhang Boyuan who has taken pictures of Tang Qi, a rider in Chengdu, Sichuan province, who twice jumped into an icy river to save people.

"Many photographers and ordinary people pick up their cameras and phones to document the riders around them," Yang notes.

"If your pictures aren't good enough, you aren't close enough," Xie says, quoting famous war photographer Robert Capa. "The same applies to portrait photography — this 'closeness' refers to how close you are to the life and heart of the person you're photographing.

"During this shoot, I was moved to tears several times by the passion and optimism of these mothers. Each of them faces various difficulties at home, yet they still wear a smile on their faces. In the past, I've often revisited the children I photographed for Project Hope, checking in on them every few years to see if they're still in school. I hope that in the future, I'll have the chance to return to this small island, to the 'CBD' they've been waiting for, to that little milk tea shop, and see them still wearing smiles on their faces, with their lives getting better and better," Xie says.

Contact the writer at chennan@chinadaily.com.cn

NEWS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08

Download the China Daily iPaper App, and start the in-app subscription today.

As low as

$9.99

per month



SPORTS

SOCCER

Ancelotti: Neymar call to be made on form, not sentiment

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:42 PM

As Brazil's coach gets set to announce his World Cup squad, questions remain over inclusion of 34-year-old Santos star



Neymar (center) of Brazilian side Santos fights for the ball with Matias Reali (left) and Manuel Insaurralde of Argentine club San Lorenzo during a Copa Sudamericana group-stage match at the Pedro Bidegain stadium in Buenos Aires in April. AFP

Carlo Ancelotti will walk into Monday's Brazil squad announcement with a nation peering over his shoulder and one burning question hanging in the Rio de Janeiro air: Neymar, or no Neymar?

The 34-year-old forward is Brazil's all-time leading scorer, but his place at the 2026 World Cup, which kicks off next month, hangs in the balance after years of injury troubles and an underwhelming return to Santos.

That leaves Ancelotti weighing romance against the cold, practical demands of fitness, as he lays out his high-intensity blueprint for the record five-time champion.

"When you have to choose, you have to consider many things," Ancelotti told reporters on Tuesday.

"Neymar is an important player for this country because of the talent he has always shown, but he has had problems and is working hard to recover. He has improved a lot recently, and is playing regularly. It is, obviously, not such an easy decision for me. We have to weigh up the pros and cons carefully."

Ancelotti hosted reporters at the Brazilian Football Confederation's headquarters in Rio, overlooking Barra da Tijuca, and spoke about the delicate selection call with the calm that has defined one of soccer's most decorated managerial careers.

The Italian is the only coach to have won league titles in all of Europe's big five leagues and has lifted a record five Champions League trophies as a manager, in addition to two as a player.

'Much loved'

Yet, few selection decisions will be picked apart quite like this one. Teammates have publicly lobbied for Neymar's inclusion, while supporters remain split between affection and anxiety over whether his body can still keep pace with his imagination.

"I know full well that Neymar is much loved, not only by the public, but also by the players," Ancelotti said.

"This is also a factor, because we have to consider the atmosphere that will surround Neymar's call-up. It's not as if I'm going to drop a bombshell in the dressing room. He's very well-liked, he's very much loved.

"I think it's normal for the players to express their opinion. I'm grateful to everyone who has given me advice; I thank you all.

"But, ultimately, the right person to make this decision, the one best placed to do so, is me."

Asked whether the players' appeals had influenced him, Ancelotti said they mattered only in one respect: they underlined that Neymar would not disrupt the group.

For Ancelotti, the dressing room is not the concern. The circus outside it may be.

"The internal atmosphere, I don't think it will affect the team at all. The atmosphere is a very positive, very clean one, and no matter which player is in the squad, it will remain positive and clean right to the end," Ancelotti said.

"But I can't control the external atmosphere and what the media says."

'Improved'

The bigger question may be whether or not Neymar still fits the soccer Ancelotti wants: four forwards who can run, press and track back, a demanding template for a player who has struggled to string together a sustained run of matches.



Carlo Ancelotti

The Italian, however, said Neymar had shown signs of progress.

"He has improved his fitness a lot in recent matches," Ancelotti said.

"He has played some very good matches lately and he can maintain a high intensity in a match, but there are matches and matches..."

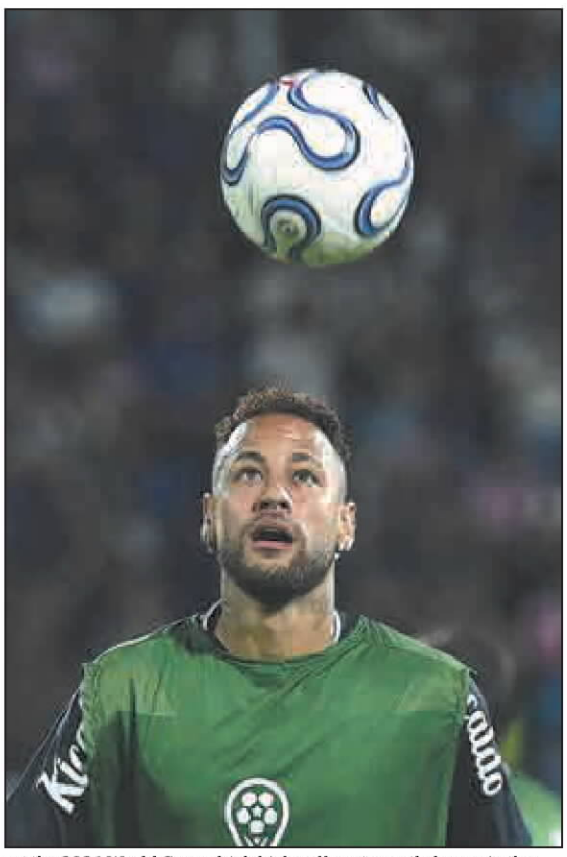
Ancelotti said the decision whether or not to select Neymar would be his alone.

"I haven't been pressured by anyone to call up Neymar. I have complete autonomy," he said. "The decision will be 100 percent professional. I will only take into account how he is performing as a footballer. Nothing else.

"Can I draw up a perfect squad? Impossible! But I can draw up a squad with fewer mistakes than others who might do so. Of that I am certain."

REUTERS





The 34-year-old Neymar is Brazil's all-time leading scorer, but his place at the 2026 World Cup, which kicks off next month, hangs in the balance after years of injury troubles and an underwhelming return to Santos, though he has shown signs of progress recently. REUTERS / AFP

With 30 days to go, LA has everything in place for the World Cup — except the pitch

INGLEWOOD, California — With 30 days to go until its first World Cup match, Los Angeles has the transportation and food nailed down. The playing surface, though? Not just yet.

The United States opens its campaign at SoFi Stadium (to be known as Los Angeles Stadium) against Paraguay on June 12, the first of eight matches to be played at the NFL stadium in Inglewood.

On Tuesday, though, the field was still dirt.

That was set to change on Wednesday, when, after a 1,600-mile trip in refrigerated trucks from Washington state, sod was due to arrive, ready to be laid over the next two days.

"This surface is the players' stage," said Otto Benedict, senior vice-president of facilities and campus operation for SoFi Stadium.

Construction on the field began April 13 after the stadium hosted a Monster truck event.

The stadium modified the field shared by the NFL's Los Angeles Rams and Los Angeles Chargers in two phases. Auxiliary space and wider dimensions were created by removing corner seats to meet FIFA specifications, and a sophisticated irrigation system was installed to maintain the grass.

"To be the place where the energy first ignites, where the home crowd gets to set the tone for the rest of the tournament is a responsibility we don't take lightly," Benedict said.

Construction, landscape, grass and engineering crews were applauded by local World Cup organizers and community ambassador Magic Johnson, who pointed out his suite where he'll be watching.

"When you think about the financial impact it's going to have on Los Angeles, it's going to be amazing," said Johnson, who is a co-owner of LAFC in Major League Soccer and the Washington Spirit of the National Women's Soccer League.

Tours of the stadium during the tournament are being sold for $86.50 and premium seats, suites and hospitality packages are still available.

Fans availing themselves of those tickets will have access to a variety of food and drink options, from lime marinated shrimp and spiced lamb rack, to aged ribeye cap with bordelaise and mashed potatoes.

There is also a range of themed desserts, including a World Cup trophy made of chocolate mousse, raspberry, chocolate crunch and chocolate sponge.

Metro debuted special edition TAP cards featuring three FIFA-themed designs, 17 country-specific designs, four FIFA collector cards, including a light-up card, and a collector's box.

"We want to provide a system that is safe, fast and fun," LA Metro CEO Stephanie Wiggins said.

Metro is working with 11 other transit lines in the region to offer direct-to-stadium bus services for $3.75 from 15 park-and-ride lots in the LA and Orange counties. Reserved parking lots range in price from $55 to more than $100. Fans can access 300 dedicated buses to every match in an effort to avoid disrupting regular services.

The official FIFA Fan Festival will be held from June 11-14 at Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum with big screens showing games. Ten fan zones around LA county will host activities and watch parties.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA





Los Angeles' SoFi Stadium hosts an event marking 30 days until the World Cup on Tuesday, featuring themed desserts of a World Cup trophy made of chocolate mousse and a soccer ball filled with vanilla mousse, that will be available to fans during the tournament. AFP / AP

STAY INFORMED, ANYWHERE, ANYTIME.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/202 :35:42 PM

Enjoy unlimited access to the China Daily SmartEdition website and ipaper app.

$4.99 per month | $49.99 per year



Subscribe to SmartEdition at chinadaily.pressreader.com

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:44 PM

Ebola emergency
WHO warns of the virus' cross-border spread risks
WORLD, PAGE 5



Desert museum reveals dunes' hidden wonders
LIFE, PAGE 14



Smart caregivers
AI helps elderly citizens address health concerns from home
CHINA, PAGE 12

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 MONDAY, MAY 18, 2026

WORLD WATCH
By Michael Dunford

Country moving toward common prosperity

Since reform and opening-up, China has emphasized a development-oriented approach to poverty alleviation. In contemporary China, labor is the main determinant of distribution, with individuals paid according to their work. For this reason, poverty reduction is achieved primarily by enabling people to earn income through useful employment.

At the same time, China has balanced its development-driven measures with welfare-oriented tools.

For example, as not all rural households could support themselves through work, the minimum living allowance system, known as the *dibao* system, was extended to rural areas in 2007. This program provided unconditional cash transfers to the rural poor.

In 2003, a new rural cooperative medical system — an affordable public insurance program for rural residents that covers inpatient services and catastrophic illnesses, with rising reimbursement rates — was put in place. By 2013, this program had covered nearly 99 percent of the rural population.

The targeted poverty alleviation program, launched in 2013, continued along this path.

In particular, members of poor households were identified not just in terms of livelihood circumstances and income-generation capabilities, but also in terms of their access to education and healthcare. Attention was also paid to targeted support for people whose special circumstances, such as illness and disability, prevented participation in paid work.

By the end of 2020, the targeted poverty alleviation campaign had eradicated absolute poverty. The 98.99 million people who remained under the threshold in 2012 were lifted out of poverty, with many moving well above the threshold. All the 832 impoverished counties and 128,000 poor villages were lifted out of poverty. As a result, living standards of the people involved improved significantly.

With the completion of the program in 2020, the goals changed to addressing the risks that people might fall back into poverty, as well as rural vitalization, the normalization of support, enhanced social assistance and continuing efforts to equalize the provision of public services.

China also is moving toward the broader goal of achieving common prosperity, and the country's development philosophy has evolved in a more multidimensional direction, in which its high-quality development incorporates environmental sustainability, social well-being, human-centered development and public participation.

See ***Welfare,*** *page 3*

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved
Newsstand prices:
US $1 Canada C$1;
UK 1£ EU 1€
Kenya 50 Kenya Shilling
Asia Pacific: Thailand 120 thb; Philippines 120 php; Myanmar 2000 kyat; Japan 210 yen; Dubai 10 dirham; Pakistan 300 rupee





Light-rail launch

Above: A light-rail train runs in Astana, Kazakhstan, on Saturday. The first phase of the Astana Light Rail Transit project, undertaken by the China State Construction Engineering Corp, commenced operations the same day.
Left: Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev (center) rides the light-rail line. He took a ride from the airport station to the National Museum station.
PHOTOS VIA XINHUA

Trade talks achieve positive outcomes

By ZHONG NAN
zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

The outcomes achieved by China and the United States in their latest round of economic and trade consultations could help bring more certainty and confidence to global industrial and supply chains, and may contribute to stabilizing the world economy amid rising geopolitical and trade uncertainties, market observers and executives said.

The Ministry of Commerce announced on Saturday that China and the US agreed to establish trade and investment councils to address their respective concerns in trade and investment. Through the trade council, the two countries will discuss issues such as tariff reductions on specific products and have agreed in principle to lower tariffs on products of respective concern on an equivalent scale.

The two countries agreed to advance two-way trade through arrangements such as mutual tariff reductions on a range of products, including agricultural goods, while also reaching arrangements on China's purchase of US aircraft and arrangements for the US to ensure the supply of aircraft engines and related parts to China, the ministry said.

The two sides also agreed to resolve or make substantial progress toward resolving nontariff barriers and market access issues involving some agricultural products. For example, the US will actively work to address Chinese concerns including automatic detention measures targeting dairy and aquatic products, while China will actively advance solutions to US concerns regarding beef facility registration and poultry exports from certain US states to China.

Business leaders said the latest outcomes could help create a more stable environment for cross-border business operations and long-term trade and investment planning.

Sean Stein, president of the US-China Business Council, said that on this basis, the two sides can expand dialogue across more areas and create a more favorable environment for US companies operating in China and vice versa.

Observers said the establishment of trade and investment councils could help institutionalize communication at a time when businesses on both sides are seeking greater regulatory certainty and clarity.

Denis Depoux, global managing director at German management consultancy Roland Berger, said that whatever communication platform is established would be a positive step, helping move the relationship away from the short-term volatility and uncertainty that has characterized it in recent years.

"That does not mean tensions cannot flare up again overnight. But at the very least, it provides a clearer outlook and the prospect of relative stability in the coming months," he said.

Zheng Yongnian, dean of the School of Public Policy at The Chinese University of Hong Kong (Shenzhen), said the essence of China-US economic and trade relations is not a "zero-sum game", but mutually beneficial cooperation built on each side's comparative advantages. The key is to expand cooperation, manage differences and balance openness, development and security, he said.

"The economies of China and the US are highly complementary," Zheng said, adding that as long as mutual demand exists, the scope for cooperation can continue to grow.

US executives from sectors including agriculture and advanced manufacturing said that stable China-US economic ties remain essential for long-term supply chain cooperation and market development.

Brian Sikes, board chair and CEO of US agribusiness group Cargill Inc and a member of the US business delegation that visited Beijing last week, said that he remains optimistic about collaboration with Chinese partners, noting that "food can be a bridge to better relationships".

Achim Loeffler, global business leader of US advanced materials manufacturer Gore-Tex Brand, said that China has become one of the company's most important and fastest-growing markets, driven by rising consumer demand, faster product development cycles and a well-developed supply chain ecosystem.

China-Russia Expo seen as key platform

Xi and Putin send congratulatory letters to event ahead of Russian leader's state visit

By ZHANG YUNBI in Beijing
and **ZHOU HUIYING** in Harbin

President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin have each sent a congratulatory letter to the 10th China-Russia Expo ahead of the Russian leader's upcoming state visit to China.

The expo opened on Sunday in Harbin, the capital city of Heilongjiang province in Northeast China.

In his message, Xi noted that this year marks the 30th anniversary of the China-Russia strategic partnership of coordination and the 25th anniversary of the signing of the China-Russia Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation.

Bilateral cooperation in various fields has been continuously deepened and solidified, achieving fruitful results thanks to the joint efforts of the two countries, Xi said.

It is hoped that the expo will serve as an opportunity for various sectors of the two countries to leverage their geographical proximity and complementary advantages, deepen all-round practical cooperation, further promote economic and social development, and continuously enhance the well-being of the two peoples, he said in the letter.

The goal is to make contributions to the steady and long-term development of the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era, Xi said.

Putin said in his message that the expo has evolved into the largest exhibition event between the two countries, providing a platform for direct and in-depth dialogue between the two sides.

It is believed that this expo will achieve positive results, plan for new prospects of mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries and bring benefits to the two peoples, Putin said.

Last year, bilateral trade totaled $227.9 billion. In the first four months of this year, bilateral trade reached $85.2 billion, a year-on-year increase of 19.7 percent, according to the Chinese Foreign Ministry.

Aleksandr Sergeevich Kalashnikov, deputy mayor of Blagoveshchensk, said the expo has seen the number of exhibitors grow year by year, while the lineup of sectors involved continues to expand and diversify, and there are a growing number of agreements in the areas of high technology, joint production and green energy.

Inside
Editorial, **page 6**

"In the economic sphere, we look forward to an increase in cross-border trade and the creation of new logistics chains. In terms of cultural exchanges, we look forward to expanding student exchanges and joint cultural festivals to strengthen the friendship between our two peoples," he said.

On Saturday, the Chinese Foreign Ministry announced that Putin will pay a two-day state visit to China starting from Tuesday.

Observers have expressed the hope that the visit will enhance bilateral coordination and mutual trust, help inject more certainty and positivity to the world's peace and security, and offer a greater boost to global prosperity and growth.

Since 2013, Xi and Putin have met more than 40 times. Xi has visited Russia 11 times, while Putin has visited China 13 times, according to Xinhua News Agency.

Zhang Hanhui, China's ambassador to Russia, said that cooperation between the two countries has "yielded fruitful results" and "reached new heights one after another".

The two heads of state have led the deepening of political mutual trust and "maintained close communication and coordination on bilateral relations and major international and regional issues", Zhang wrote in an article published on Thursday.

"This is not only a vivid illustration of the profound friendship between the two heads of state, but also a clear manifestation of the maturity and resilience of China-Russia ties. This provides the most fundamental and reliable guarantee for the long-term, healthy and stable development of China-Russia relations," he added.

Chen Wenling, a veteran economist and senior researcher at the Academy of Contemporary China and World Studies, said the two countries work closely together within multilateral frameworks such as the United Nations, BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and they both oppose hegemony, power politics and unilateralism.

"As two major countries, China and Russia should further play their constructive and leading roles," she said.

Contact the writers at zhangyunbi@chinadaily.com.cn

SONG BROCADE WEAVES ITS WAY BACK INTO MODERN LIFE

Once preserve of nation's elites, the traditional textile is now fabric of everyday use

By DENG ZHANGYU
in Suzhou, Jiangsu
dengzhangyu@chinadaily.com.cn

China Vibes 国潮风尚 GIFTS

When London-based fashion designer Brandon Choi walked into Shi Yi's boutique in downtown Shanghai, he did not expect to leave with plans for the following day.

Captivated by the Song brocade pieces on display, he learned that the centuries-old fabric came from Suzhou, Jiangsu province, where Shi's studio is based.

"See you in Suzhou tomorrow afternoon," he told Shi, who back then assumed it was merely a polite remark — but it was not.

Choi showed up the next day, eager to understand the fabric underneath the shimmer of soft colors and ancient motifs.

Shi has seen that reaction before. During Shanghai Fashion Week in late March, a design team from fashion house Maison Margiela wandered into her shop and ended up buying nearly everything they could carry.

"This is the allure of Song brocade," said the 30-year-old Shi. "Once people see it, it's hard to resist buying it."

That kind of enthusiasm helps explain why Song brocade — once associated with imperial taste and collectors' cabinets — is finding a new audience.

Originating in Suzhou during the Song Dynasty (960-1279), the silk-based fabric has long been prized for its intricate structure, refined patterns and understated grandeur. It was used to mount precious calligraphy and paintings and, at times, to dress the elite.

See ***Brocade,*** *page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.



Shi Yi, a Song brocade designer, helps Nikola Chovancova, a Slovak student, try on Song brocade clothing in Shi's studio in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, on Wednesday. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:44 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:44 PM

INDEPTH

The art of resistance in a time of war

Book documents artists' inspiring true tales of survival and sacrifice in countering acts of Japanese aggression



Left: The cover of LIFE magazine in April 1945 that published the article *Woodcuts Help Fight China's Battles*.

Below: Artist Wang Zhaowen sculpts a statue for a soldier at Lu Xun Academy of Arts, or Luyi, in Yan'an, Shaanxi province, in 1942.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY





A poignant work by Wu Zuoren of his deceased wife.

By **ZHAO XU**
zhaoxu@chinadaily.com.cn

"You left me less than three hours ago, and already I am enveloped by a sense of emptiness ... I would not have the strength to endure such loneliness were it not for your future ... I believe you are on the right path," wrote Celina Deprez, a Belgian woman, on June 21, 1938.

Deprez, who had taken the Chinese name "Li Na", was writing to her husband Wu Zuoren, who had set out as a front-line artist to record what he would witness in trenches, field hospitals and refugee camps.

Almost a year earlier, on July 7, 1937, Imperial Japan — already entrenched in northeastern China — escalated its aggression into a nationwide invasion with the Marco Polo Bridge Incident. Within days, China was plunged into the second stage of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45).

Wu was later recognized as a defining figure in twentieth-century Chinese art, and his sketches would endure as records forged in the immediacy of war — of struggle and sacrifice.

Those struggles and sacrifices were not confined to the front. On Dec 21, 1939, Deprez, amid acute wartime shortages and the absence of adequate medical care, died at the age of 28, after giving birth to the couple's son 20 days earlier. The newborn followed four days later, on Christmas Day.

Wu was devastated, but not undone.

Five months later, he published an article in which he wrote: "Our contemporary artists, myself among them, have been fortunate to be born into this heroic age ..." — words that seem to carry the indelible undertone of his late wife.

Their story forms part of the newly-published book *Art in Service of the Nation — Artists During China's War of Survival*. Author Qin Jianping wrote the book based on her interviews with the artists and their offspring.

"To retrace their journey — both outward and inward — is to relive an era in which a profound humanity converged with an urgent commitment to social reality, a synthesis often absent from earlier Chinese art," she said.

"Out of this charged intersection of conflict and personal trial, modern Chinese art — and, by extension, a vital dimension of the nation itself — took shape."

Enduring tradition

For Qin, to delve into this history is also to trace the origins of her own institution, the Beijing-based Central Academy of Fine Arts, which go back to the National Peking (Beijing) Art School founded in 1918.

Following the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, the two leading art schools of the time — the Peking Art School and its southern counterpart, the National Hangchow (Hangzhou) Art School — were forced into a prolonged wartime exodus. Over the course of eight years and some 8,000 kilometers, they relocated across the country, merging in January 1938 in Hunan province before continuing together through Yunnan and eventually into Sichuan.

They endured relentless aerial bombardment by Japanese forces. On Feb 4, 1939, Wu Guanzhong — then a student at the merged school — watched enemy planes sweep low, releasing their bombs "like a black blizzard into a raging sea of fire". In the aftermath, he made his way back through smoke-choked streets, past bodies strewn along the roads. Thighs were caught on wooden poles, flesh burned, and bone laid bare, he would later recall. He and his fellow students survived only because they had been out of town, sketching.

"Given the extremity of the circumstances, the standards of artistic training they maintained were remarkable," said Qin.

During their 10-month stay in Anjiang village, on the outskirts of Kunming in Yunnan province, the school — consisting of some 250 people — was housed in seven temples, which served as makeshift classrooms.

Qin said discipline did not falter. In an oil painting by faculty member Chang Shuhong local villagers were engaged as nude models — "an extraordinary practice in so conservative a milieu".



Mass Bombings in Chongqing by artist Chang Shuhong.

"What these artists — many trained overseas — sought to do was, in the words of Wu Zuoren, to 'bring inner vision into form through technical command' in order to 'create works at once deeply personal and expressive of a nation under strain'," said Qin.

Between August and November 1937, Chinese forces committed their best troops to meet the Japanese head-on in Shanghai, fighting a brutal street battle that ended in withdrawal at immense cost.

In the immediate aftermath, 18-year-old Zhou Lingzhao painted two large anti-Japanese works, which he and fellow artists carried through the streets of the southern coastal city Guangzhou, Guangdong province, beside a wooden coffin — a stark, galvanizing declaration of a refusal to yield.

In the late summer of 1938, while the Battle of Wuhan in Hubei province was raging, Zhou was in the city, working with a team of artists on a monumental fresco — 45 meters long and 12 meters high — painted on the exterior wall of the city's landmark Yellow Crane Tower as part of the campaign for national resistance.

"I was the youngest, and was therefore assigned the highest section of the fresco, which I painted from a ladder suspended in midair," Zhou recalled in 2014, at the age of 95, in an interview with Qin.

"The fresco stood for less than a month. When Wuhan fell on Oct 25, 1938, after more than four months of fighting, it was destroyed with the tower in the battle's final stages. Yet there was never any doubt: those who had seen it, however briefly, would not forget," said Qin.

Brave performers

Around this time, theater troupes were formed under the direction of Zhou Enlai, who would become premier in 1949 with the founding of the People's Republic of China.

Taking along his eight younger siblings and cousins, Zhou Lingzhao joined the theater troupes and followed them across the wartime front — from Wuhan to Yunnan province on the southwestern Chinese border and on to Burma, where, following the United States' entry into the war after Pearl Harbor, the China-Burma-India Theater was established in early 1942.

Zhou recalled to Qin one harrowing incident in Yunnan.

"On one occasion, I needed to reach the mountaintop trenches. The soldiers led me along a winding path, but I chose a direct route up the steep slope. Climbing on all fours, I grasped what I thought were tufts of grass — only to realize they were the hair of fallen soldiers," he said.

Many of the fallen were no older than Zhou, with some younger. In western Yunnan, where the fiercest fighting of the Allied counteroffensive unfolded in 1944, a memorial now marks the presence of underage soldiers, many in their mid-teens, who volunteered for a victory they believed in but would never see.

Traveling with Zhou was Feng Fasi, a member of the theater troupes attached to the Chinese Expeditionary Force in the China–Burma–India Theater. Like Zhou, he served as an actor, set designer, and poster painter, while also recording the front-line fighting and the troupes' routines and rehearsals with charcoal sticks and brushes.

On one march, Feng came upon a fleeting scene deep in a forest — smoke rising from cooking fires, figures at the water's edge — that was so arresting that he longed to stop and draw. He waited until the troupe made camp more than 20 km away, then secured a horse and rode back alone, a drawing board strapped to his back. Reaching the spot, he set to work at once, and continued until the piece was complete some six hours later. The charcoal drawing, titled *Cooking and Washing in the Forest*, is suffused with an idyllic calm that seems to deny the war beyond it.

"A sense of beauty endured in these men — and from it came their strength to answer the call of their time, and stay hopeful," Qin said.

Safeguarding heritage

In April 1945, four months before Emperor Hirohito announced Japan's surrender in a radio broadcast on Aug 15, LIFE magazine published an article titled "Woodcuts Help Fight China's Battles".

The article introduced US readers to Chinese artists who used woodcuts to disseminate wartime messages among the masses, lifting morale, and mobilizing resistance across the vast nation.

"It is an enlightenment, in the sense that art became a decisive force in shaping modern China and in the emergence of a new artistic language," said Qin.

"The turn to realism in Chinese art carried a sense of inevitability — born of a historical moment defined by destruction and national crisis, in which art was called upon to bear witness and to sustain the nation."

When news of Japan's surrender reached Chang Shuhong, he had already spent nearly two and a half years at the Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes in the forbidding hinterland of northwestern China. It was a commitment forged in Paris in the late 1920s, where he first encountered reproductions of Dunhuang murals and manuscripts — treasures removed from China and preserved in European collections. Confronted with his own heritage in exile, he grasped both its artistic significance and its fragility; what began as an aesthetic awakening became a moral imperative. In early 1942, he carried that conviction to Dunhuang, devoting himself to the preservation and study of the Mogao Grottoes — working in relative isolation even as much of the nation remained at war.

"It was his way of safeguarding his country — not by carrying his work to the front, but behind the lines," said Qin. Upon hearing of China's triumph, Chang climbed to the top of a nine-story wooden structure, its tiers set into the mountainside to house a colossal Buddha, and rang its bell in a burst of elation.

With the war's end, the National Peking Art School and the National Hangchow Art School were reestablished in their original homes.

In 1946, Xu Beihong, a towering figure in modern Chinese art education and mentor to both Wu Zuoren and Feng Fasi, became president of the Beijing school, which would be renamed the Central Academy of Fine Arts in 1950. During the war, Xu vowed to "build a temple of art"— but "not before the war's won".

In 1939, after the death of Wu's wife, Xu wrote to the artist with a quiet injunction. Xu told him to go on "in the spirit of the boat tracker", a reference to Wu's 1933 oil painting, *The Boat Tracker*, painted as a metaphor for national endurance.

Wu, who painted his wife in the hours after her passing, did as his mentor had urged, and carried on for the next half century. During the war, he sketched, painted, and exhibited without pause, devoting himself to the creation of what he called "the art of our tempestuous time".

In 1958, he would assume the presidency of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, stepping into the path first laid by his mentor. In 1988, King Baudouin I of Belgium conferred upon Wu the Order of the Crown in recognition of his artistic achievements.

In that letter she penned in 1938, hours after her husband had left home, for the front line Deprez told Wu: "Fulfillment and happiness are yours no less than mine, nor less than those of your mother, your siblings, and all your loving family. And even as you do so, you devote yourself to your country at a moment of grave urgency, when she calls upon the dedication and labor of her sons more than ever."





Left: Artist Wu Zuoren and his wife Li Na, or Celina Deprez, in their home in Chongqing.
Right: *Cooking and Washing in the Forest* painted by Feng Fasi in 1942 is suffused with an idyllic calm that seems to deny the war beyond it.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:44 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:44 PM

TOP NEWS

Xi, Trump sent clear warning to separatists

Taiwan opposition parties criticize DPP's policies, saying meeting shattered illusions

By **ZHANG YI**
zhangyi1@chinadaily.com.cn

The China-United States summit has dealt a severe blow to the "pro-independence" stance of Taiwan's ruling Democratic Progressive Party and sent a clear warning to separatist forces, experts said.

During his talks with US President Donald Trump on Thursday, President Xi Jinping underscored that safeguarding peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait remained the biggest common denominator between China and the US.

Noting that the Taiwan question is the most important issue in China-US relations, Xi told Trump that if it is handled properly, the bilateral relationship will enjoy overall stability. Otherwise, the two countries will have clashes and even conflicts, putting the entire relationship in great jeopardy. Xi emphasized that "Taiwan independence" and cross-Strait peace are as irreconcilable as fire and water.

In an interview with Fox News on Friday, Trump said: "I'm not looking to have somebody go independent," adding that Taiwan should not expect a "blank check" from the US military.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi, while briefing the media about the summit on Friday, said: "During the meeting, we felt that the US side understands China's position, attaches importance to China's concerns, and, just like the international community, does not stand for or accept Taiwan moving toward independence."

Liu Kuangyu, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of Taiwan Studies, said that at the landmark summit, China made clear its stance, its bottom line, propositions, and also sincere goodwill regarding Taiwan-related affairs.

"Rather than letting hostile sentiments spiral upward, the pragmatic exchanges reflected a shared readiness to reduce strategic miscalculations, mitigate cross-Strait tensions, and eliminate the risks of unintended military clashes," Liu said.

He added that the proper and positive handling of the Taiwan question will substantially shape the outcomes achieved at the summit and determine how effectively the two sides can sustain constructive, strategic stability going forward.

Liu said that if China and the US aim to solidify a major-country relationship over the coming years, the Taiwan question must serve as the primary entry point.

Meanwhile, opposition parties and politicians in Taiwan severely condemned the ruling authorities for fabricating cross-Strait crises.

Cheng Li-wun, chairwoman of the major opposition Chinese Kuomintang party, slammed the DPP's cross-Strait strategy, saying that "Taiwan independence" is a dead end that leads nowhere and the summit has shattered the DPP's international illusions.

> "Rather than letting hostile sentiments spiral upward, the pragmatic exchanges reflected a shared readiness to reduce strategic miscalculations, mitigate cross-Strait tensions, and eliminate the risks of unintended military clashes."
>
> **Liu Kuangyu,** a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of Taiwan Studies

Inside Editorial, **page 6**

KMT lawmaker Niu Hsu-ting told reporters that the summit's ripple effects will gradually surface, and the US clearly signaled conflict reduction, pouring "cold water" over the DPP's long-held separatist stance and its flawed narrative of guaranteed military defense from the US.

In a statement, Taiwan's Labor Party also warned that the DPP's separatist line remains the primary source of risk driving regional volatility.

The party condemned the administration's continuous military expansion, specifically referencing the newly passed defense budget, of which NT$780 billion ($24.7 billion) has been earmarked for procuring arms from the US.

It said that pouring vast public resources and taxpayers' money into endless weapon purchases directly sacrificed the livelihood of the grassroots.

Looking ahead, Liu of the Institute of Taiwan Studies warned that the US must exercise the utmost prudence to prevent triggering a great-power confrontation and refrain from maintaining illicit ties with the Taiwan authorities across political, military, legal, economic and ideological domains.

"They must recognize that the past tactics of using Taiwan as a so-called pawn or tool to contain China have actually done more harm than good in the long run and ultimately boomeranged," he said.

Only by translating political commitments into tangible actions can both nations consolidate the foundation of strategic mutual trust, he added.

Angry workers



Striking Long Island Rail Road workers demonstrate outside Penn Station, a major rail hub in New York City, on Saturday. Thousands of LIRR workers struck work after unions failed to reach an agreement with railroad management on wages and work rules on Friday. HEATHER KHALIFA / AP

Deadly collision



A crane lifts the charred skeleton of a bus that collided with a train on Saturday in Bangkok, Thailand. The train traveling from Chachoengsao Province to Bang Sue in Bangkok struck the bus at a railway crossing in central Bangkok, triggering a fire that engulfed several cars and motorcycles. The accident left eight people dead and 32 injured, authorities said in a statement. ATHIT PERAWONGMETHA / REUTERS

Experts hail focus on stability after summit

By **LIU JIANQIAO** in Beijing and **ZHANG ZHOUXIANG** in Brussels

The meeting between the leaders of China and the United States in Beijing last week marked another important round of high-level strategic communication between the two countries at a pivotal moment in history.

Observers said they believe the candid and in-depth exchanges helped further strengthen mutual trust, manage differences, expand common ground and advance cooperation. The summit also provided a clearer direction for the future development of China-US relations and sent positive signals to the international community.

President Xi Jinping held talks with visiting US President Donald Trump in Beijing on Thursday. Xi said he has agreed with President Trump on a new vision of building a constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability.

The "constructive strategic stability" should be positive stability with cooperation as the mainstay, sound stability with moderate competition, constant stability with manageable differences, and enduring stability with promises of peace, Xi said.

"We are very glad the summit concluded on a positive note," said John E. Drew, chairman of the board of directors of the World Trade Centers Association. "While the terms of the constructive strategic stability were more of a broad vision for US-China bilateral relations, they mean a lot for the rest of the world, particularly the global business community."

The commitment to greater stability reached by the leaders of the world's two largest economies will help lay a solid foundation for the ongoing restructuring of global supply chains and benefit economies and businesses worldwide, he added.

Park Soong-chan, chairman of the Korea-China Association and a professor of Chinese studies at Yong In University in South Korea, said the meeting between the leaders of China and the US was meaningful and constructive, with both sides agreeing that stable management of bilateral ties and healthy competition serve the interests of both countries.

China and the US together account for about 40 percent of global GDP. Deeper and broader economic and trade cooperation between the two countries will have a positive impact on economic development across the Asia-Pacific region, he said.

"In particular, if supply chain cooperation between the two countries is strengthened, it could become a new turning point for the current fragmented industry and value chain," Park added.

The summit carries significant importance at multiple levels. As major global powers, China and the US both exert far-reaching influence through their domestic and foreign policies, said Hussein Askary, cofounder and vice-president of the Belt and Road Institute in Sweden.

"A stable and responsible relationship between China and the United States must also contribute to a more stable and prosperous world. The actions of both countries affect the entire international community, and, therefore, they must work together constructively on major global issues," he said.

From a European perspective, the summit is also of great significance. Both China and the US are key partners of the European Union and wield considerable influence in different ways. The US remains Europe's most important security and political partner, while China is one of the EU's largest economic partners, he said.

"For these reasons, it is in the EU's interest for China and the United States to find ways to cooperate, stabilize the international situation, and support a stable global trading system," Askary added.

Michael Schumann, chairman of the German Federal Association for Economic Development and Foreign Trade, said Trump's visit to China, accompanied by a high-profile delegation of US business leaders, sends an important message: despite strategic competition, the world's two largest economies remain deeply interconnected.

"From a German business perspective, this is encouraging. Stable and improving economic ties between China and the United States are not only in the interest of both countries, they are also essential for global confidence, investment and supply-chain security," he said.

The new vision of "constructive strategic stability" is, therefore, highly relevant. It can gain real credibility only when supported by practical economic cooperation. This reflects what is often referred to in Germany as economic diplomacy: building trust through business ties, dialogue and long-term engagement, Schumann added.

Yang Han in Hong Kong, Yifan Xu in Washington, and Xinhua contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at liujianqiao@chinadaily.com.cn

Brocade: Pursuit of elegance embodied

From page 1

Its rarity was no accident.

According to Shen Hui, a national-level inheritor of Song brocade weaving techniques, the craft is so demanding that two weavers must operate the loom together, producing only a few centimeters a day.

"During the Song Dynasty, scholars and artists pursued elegance in every aspect of life," Shen said. "Song brocade was the perfect expression of that spirit."

Now, that same spirit is being translated into daily life.

Shi is among a younger generation of designers bringing Song brocade out of museums and formal wardrobes into modern, everyday accessories and clothing.

Her viral, best-selling brooch featuring a Tang Dynasty (618-907) woman playing polo is just one example. She also produces brocade-covered notebooks and headphone cases, which cost less than 100 yuan ($14.7), while her brocade garments are priced at several thousand yuan.

Shi attributes the surge in popularity partly to the rise of "new Chinese style".

"These fashionable items make an ancient imperial fabric accessible to ordinary people," she said.

For many buyers, the appeal is both visual and emotional.

Nikola Chovancova, a Slovak student at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University in Suzhou, was astonished when she tried on a *qipao* made of Song brocade at Shi's shop. "Gorgeous," Chovancova said. "I love the patterns and colors, so rich and layered. I'm completely in love."

At the Saint Joy center, known for its Song brocade products, the three-story boutique fills up on weekends with shoppers from across China looking for *qipao* and new Chinese-style clothing, some of which can cost tens of thousands of yuan.

"Consumers in their 20s to their 60s all find patterns they love," said store manager Ren Lin.

That broad appeal suggests something larger than a passing fashion trend.

For devotees like 42-year-old Li Xiaojing, Song brocade has moved from special-occasion wear into everyday life. She now pairs brocade jackets and waistcoats with jeans for work, and uses small, brocade accessories daily.

"Song brocade is no longer something I just admire in my closet. It's truly part of my life. I love the unique layering of colors and the traditional patterns that symbolize good fortune. It's something machine-made textiles can never replicate," Li said.

Welfare: Approach development-oriented

From page 1

The concept of common prosperity emerged in the 1950s. At the end of the 1970s, China decided to let some people and places prosper first, and at that time the late Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping repeatedly insisted that the people and places that did prosper must then help everyone else and all other regions to join them.

China addresses this challenge in a number of ways. As in the case of the poverty alleviation campaign, it invests in infrastructure, skills and industries, and mobilizes cadres to generate employment that increases primary real wage incomes. It also mobilizes collective urban and rural assets to generate property income.

At their core, these measures reflect China's development-oriented approach that common prosperity ultimately depends on people's ability to earn, and not just on redistribution.

Although income from work will remain the mainstay, in the years ahead, one can anticipate significant changes in the secondary distribution of income as a result of changes in taxation, public services, social security, social assistance and transfer payments.

Furthermore, China's system of counterpart assistance — under which well-off cities contribute to the development of less well-off places as one aspect of tertiary distribution — will continue to play an important role.

Every prefecture in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, for example, is paired with a more developed city, which must provide resources to help every tier of local government enhance local development, services and prosperity.

The international discussion around China's poverty alleviation achievements is methodological but also driven by political ideologies and narratives.

In China, the right to subsistence and right to development are considered fundamental human rights. Moreover, the nation's approach is scientific, employing comprehensive data rather than individual case studies whose representativeness cannot be established.

Its strategy involves institutional mechanisms that integrate a clear overall central design, subnational responsibility and decentralized implementation at the city, county and local levels, alongside an extraordinary mobilization of financial and human resources.

In many capitalist countries, explanations of poverty differ, and more emphasis is placed on market mechanisms, private property rights and nongovernmental organizations.

On the methodological side, poverty lines are usually expressed in terms of real income and change over time.

China has entered the ranks of upper-middle-income economies while remaining the world's largest developing country. The World Bank recently substantially increased the poverty line for such economies, first introduced in 2017, to $8.30 per person per day in 2021 purchasing power parity terms. By this higher benchmark, 21.3 percent of China's population fell below the line in 2022, compared with 48.3 percent worldwide.

However, this measure is based primarily on household cash income and may not fully capture China's property ownership and social entitlements, including food and clothing needs, access to compulsory education, basic medical services and safe housing — the core criteria of its poverty alleviation framework, known as the "Two Assurances and Three Guarantees".

At the same time, according to the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), the pursuit of common prosperity will now pay attention not just to expanding the middle-income group, but also to raising low incomes.

The powerful narrative that China constructed therefore broadly holds, even if one should exercise great care in extrapolating backward.

The author is a professor emeritus at the University of Sussex in the United Kingdom. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:44 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:44 PM

GLOBAL LENS



Hantavirus disease survivors Isabel Diaz (left) and her father Victor Diaz, identified by health authorities as patient zero during the 2018-19 outbreak that killed 11 people, including her mother and his wife, pose at their farm in the La Rinconada area, near Epuyen, Chubut Province, Argentina, on May 9. JUAN MABROMATA / AFP

OLD WOUNDS REOPENED

Hantavirus outbreak on cruise renews painful memories for residents of Argentine village

Mailen Valle lost her father and two sisters during a hantavirus outbreak more than seven years ago in Epuyen, a village in Argentina's Patagonia region.

With the recent hantavirus outbreak on the MV *Hondius* cruise ship, hard memories have resurfaced for the 33-year-old.

"Losing my dad and my two sisters in less than a month ... Nobody was prepared to see how, in a matter of days, a family table was left empty," she said.

While the outbreak onboard the ship has left three people dead, it has yet to surpass the Epuyen outbreak, which recorded 34 cases and 11 fatalities between December 2018 and March 2019 in the town of 2,400 residents, situated in a part of the Andes where hantavirus is endemic.

Mailen's father, Aldo Valle, came down with it after attending a birthday party.

"The person with the virus was just sitting at the same table as my dad. And at that table there were several people who got infected, and people died," Mailen recalled.

The wake for Valle was another locus of infection, where all three of his daughters got sick.

One sister died "within hours" of showing symptoms, while for the other, "we had to take her to the cemetery without a wake", Mailen said.

Jorge Diaz, an epidemiologist with Chubut Province's health department who worked on the Epuyen hantavirus outbreak, told AFP that "we knew very little about the disease" in 2018.

Human-to-human transmission of hantavirus was first discovered in 1996 in the neighboring town of El Bolson, and it was later found to have happened in Epuyen.

Hantavirus cases in Argentina have almost doubled in the past year, with the country recording 32 deaths alongside its highest number of infections since 2018.

The current season, which started in June 2025, has already seen more than 100 confirmed hantavirus cases, Argentina's health ministry said — compared with just 57 during the same period last season.

Not only did the country record an unusually large number of cases this year, but it also recorded one of the highest casualty rates in recent years, with the number of deaths marking an increase of 10 percentage points compared to the previous year.

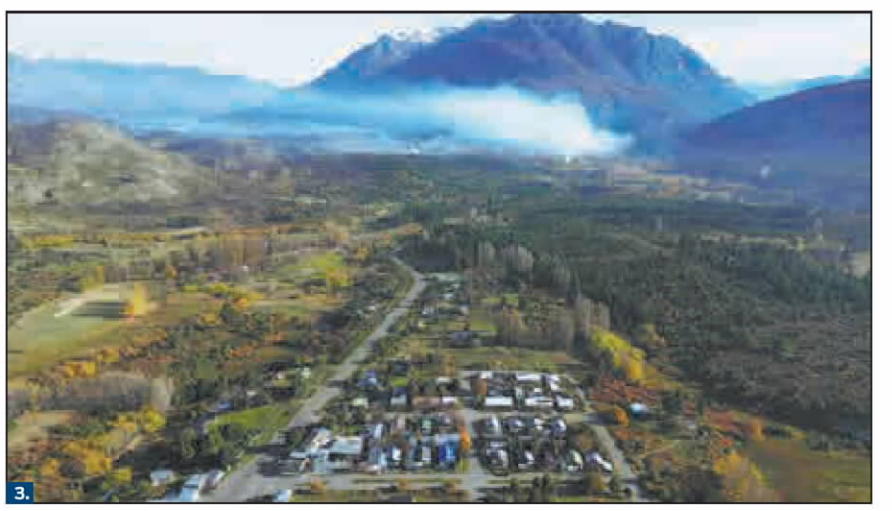
"Increasing human interaction with wild environments, habitat destruction, the establishment of small urbanizations in rural areas, and the effects of climate change contribute to the appearance of cases outside historically endemic areas," the ministry said.



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.

1. A scientist from the Malbran Institute handles containers to diagnose the Andes virus in Buenos Aires on May 6. **2.** A scientist from the institute detects the virus on May 6. **3.** An aerial view of the village of Epuyen, in Chubut Province, Argentina, on May 9, where a hantavirus outbreak that killed 11 people took place in 2018-19 outbreak. **4.** A container used to diagnose the Andes virus. PHOTOS VIA AFP
5. A fruit harvester wearing a face mask looks out the window of his car in Epuyen on Jan 11, 2019, after the outbreak. GUSTAVO ZANINELLI / AP

Experts blame climate change and habitat destruction for the rise in number of cases of the disease, which is usually caused by exposure to the urine or feces of infected rodents.

Extreme weather phenomena, such as droughts and episodes of intense rainfall in recent years, are also fueling the trend, according to experts.

Temperature rises trigger changes in the ecosystem that affect the presence of the long-tailed mouse, the main carrier of the virus in Argentina and Chile.

"These rodents are better able to adapt to climate changes, which could facilitate the higher number of cases we are seeing," said Eduardo Lopez, an infectious disease specialist and adviser to the Argentine government during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Forest fires have prompted both humans and wildlife to move to new places, increasing the risk, said Roberto Debbag, vice-president of the Latin American Society of Vaccinology, while tourism trends have also had an impact.

The health ministry said technical health teams will travel to Ushuaia in Argentina's Tierra del Fuego Province to capture and analyze rodents in areas linked to the route of the Dutch couple believed to have been exposed to the virus.

Concerns voiced

Citizens of Spain's Canary Islands had expressed concern ahead of MV *Hondius*' arrival.

The World Health Organization's Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus posted a letter on his X account earlier in May.

"I know you are worried," he said, "I know that when you hear the word 'outbreak' and watch a ship sail toward your shores, memories surface that none of us have fully put to rest."

Nevertheless, Mailen remembers the stigma. "We felt very discriminated against," she said.

Others recall being banned from shops in nearby towns.

Isabel Diaz, 53, survived the outbreak with a different stigma — her father, Victor Diaz, was labeled "patient zero", and attended the birthday party while displaying the early symptoms of hantavirus.

Her father, for his part, recalled how it felt to come down with hantavirus, causing body aches and a bitter taste that even made sipping water unpleasant.

"It started with a feeling of weakness. I didn't feel like eating. And I started to get purple spots," he said. "That same day, I lost consciousness."

"People looked poorly at my father. It's not his fault he got sick," she told AFP, her eyes welling up.

"Nobody chooses to get sick, much less infect others, much less lose a mother."

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA







From left: Mailen Valle, whose father and two sisters were killed by the 2018-19 hantavirus outbreak, sheds tears when speaking with reporters in a square in Epuyen, Argentina, on May 9.
Victor Diaz, identified as patient zero in the 2018-19 outbreak, feeds chicks and sheep at his farm in the La Rinconada area, near Epuyen, on May 9. PHOTOS BY JUAN MABROMATA / AFP
A man wearing a mask waits for clients at his shop, with a sign reading in Spanish "We are all family in Epuyen, be supportive, use a mask", on Jan 11, 2019. GUSTAVO ZANINELLI / AP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:44 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:44 PM

WORLD

US state keen to break into China market

Oregon, Inner Mongolia explore trade opportunities to strengthen partnership

By **LIA ZHU** in San Francisco
liazhu@chinadailyusa.com

The US state of Oregon, which is keen to strengthen its economic partnership with China, hosted a trade delegation from the Inner Mongolia autonomous region last week to explore business opportunities.

The delegation and agricultural stakeholders in Oregon have agreed that more than 50 farms from the US state will supply 80,000 metric tons of hay to Inner Mongolia.

"We heavily rely on exports for profitability. So trade with China is very beneficial for our own farm, and it's very beneficial for a lot of the alfalfa farms in Eastern Oregon," said Mark Owens, a member of the Oregon House of Representatives and a farm owner.

Alfalfa is a plant that is used for feeding farm animals.

Oregon's agricultural sector is closely linked to Chinese markets. According to Owens, the state produces more than 220 agricultural products, of which approximately 80 percent are destined for export, making market diversification and expansion critical to farmer profitability.

"Hay exports are very important to alfalfa farmers in Oregon," Owens said. "Deals like this, at 80,000 metric tons, are very important. Oregon is very reliant on exports, just not alfalfa hay, but many agricultural products."

He stressed the importance of identifying markets and strengthening already established ones.

David Goracke, president of the Oregon Seed Council and owner of Cala Farms, emphasized that China is the most important export market for the state's seed industry.

"China is our largest export market. It is a very important and integral market to the Oregon seed industry," he said, adding the state is optimistic that China would continue to be a big user of its agricultural products.

He said Oregon is known as the grass seed capital of the world and he hoped it would maintain that reputation and become a major supplier to China.

In addition to agriculture, Oregon offers Chinese investors and business partners opportunities across multiple sectors. The state's location and established trade infrastructure make it an attractive hub for Asian commerce, said Nick Triska, head of Business Development at Greater Portland Inc, a regional economic development organization.

He viewed the footwear and apparel industry as an area that binds the economies of Oregon and China.

Cultural, economic ties

"Being a trade-dependent state in the US, our ability to build and maintain cultural and economic ties with other parts of the world is really important," Triska said. "Nike's world headquarters is based in Oregon. Adidas' North American headquarters is here. Columbia Sportswear and many other brands design a lot of their footwear here that then gets made in other parts of the world, including China."

He said a lot of intellectual property in the footwear space is tying the two markets together. "We also have some really great examples of international companies from China that are establishing a presence here in Oregon. Recently, we supported SBS Zipper (from China's Fujian province) in establishing a formal presence here in Oregon."

The timing of Oregon's trade outreach coincides with high-level diplomatic engagement between China and the US.

"We are thankful that the leaders from the two largest economies were meeting at the same time" as the meeting with the Inner Mongolia delegation to strengthen ties was happening, said Owens from the Oregon House of Representatives.

"How our two countries are investing in the future of industry and enabling really great people with great ideas and helping them realize those ideas into businesses that can change the world — there's an opportunity for that," he said. "I'm listening very intently."

Owens noted his own engagement in relationship-building, citing his visit to China in October. "We met some of the dairy folks and government people for person-to-person relationship building. … I'm very appreciative that they took the time and continue to build those relationships," he said.

Goracke, who traveled to Inner Mongolia in early November, said, "I think open communication is essential. We were able to get Chinese delegates and business officials out onto a farm tour so they could see firsthand how our family farmers are producing the seed and handling the seed."

Briefly

NIGERIA

President says senior IS commander killed

Nigeria's President Bola Tinubu confirmed on Saturday that Abu-Bilal al-Minuki, second-in-command of the Islamic State globally, was eliminated in an overnight operation carried out by Nigeria and the United States. Tinubu described the operation as "a significant example of effective collaboration in the fight against terrorism" and dealing a heavy blow to the ranks of the IS. Earlier on Friday, US President Donald Trump said on Truth Social that the IS leader was killed by US and Nigerian forces.

ITALY

8 injured as driver plows into pedestrians

A driver plowed into pedestrians in the northern Italian city of Modena on Saturday, injuring eight people — four of them critically — before trying to flee and being detained by police, authorities said. They said the man had a history of mental health issues. Authorities identified the driver as Salim El Koudri, 31, who is unemployed. He was detained and questioned by police as investigators tried to determine whether he acted deliberately.

XINHUA—AGENCIES

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1829



Buildings are damaged by Israeli airstrikes in Tyre, southern Lebanon, on Saturday. XINHUA

Israel strikes south Lebanon day after truce extension

BEIRUT — Israel launched massive airstrikes on southern Lebanon on Saturday, despite an extension of the truce between the two countries.

Israel said it was targeting Lebanese militant group Hezbollah and that the strikes were preceded by an evacuation warning covering nine villages.

The continuing bombardment has only increased skepticism about the truce among the thousands of Lebanese driven from their homes in the south.

Lebanon's National News Agency reported strikes on more than two dozen villages on Saturday, including one more than 50 kilometers from the border. It also reported a new exodus of residents toward the southern city of Sidon and the capital Beirut.

Later on Saturday, Hezbollah announced it had struck a military target in northern Israel. It said its fighters had targeted "the Ya'ara barracks … with a swarm of attack drones", after having announced multiple operations against Israeli forces in southern Lebanon.

On Friday, the two countries agreed to extend a ceasefire — which began on April 17 but has been marred by numerous violations — by another 45 days.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Saturday that he "welcomes" the extension and "urges all actors to fully respect the cessation of hostilities".

Despite the truce, Israel continues to conduct strikes in Lebanon, and its forces are occupying territory near the border.

Hezbollah, meanwhile, regularly claims attacks on northern Israel and against the Israeli military in southern Lebanon, including multiple attacks on Israeli forces on Saturday.

Israel's military said on Saturday that one of its soldiers died in combat in southern Lebanon, bringing its losses to 21 personnel since the conflict with Hezbollah began in early March.

In the Gaza Strip, an Israeli airstrike killed the chief of Hamas' military wing, the most senior official from the Palestinian militant group killed by Israel since a ceasefire agreement in October that was meant to halt fighting.

The Israeli military said on Saturday that Izz al-Din al-Haddad was killed in what it described as a precise strike on Gaza City on Friday.

AGENCIES—XINHUA

Ebola outbreak in Africa declared health emergency

By **SHARON NAKOLA**
in Nairobi, Kenya
sharon@chinadailyafrica.com

The World Health Organization has declared the Ebola outbreak linked to the Bundibugyo virus strain in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda a public health emergency of international concern, warning of rising cross-border transmission risks and major gaps in containment.

The Bundibugyo strain of Ebola was first identified in Uganda in 2007 and is one of several Ebola virus species known to cause severe hemorrhagic fever in humans. Unlike the *Zaire ebolavirus* species, for which vaccines and treatments are available, there are currently no licensed vaccines or targeted therapeutics for the Bundibugyo virus, according to the WHO.

In a statement issued on Sunday, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus described the outbreak as "an extraordinary event" requiring urgent international coordination because of its rapid spread, insecurity in affected regions and the absence of approved medical countermeasures specifically targeting the strain.

"The high positivity rate of the initial samples collected, the confirmation of cases in both Kampala and Kinshasa, the increasing trends in syndromic reporting of suspected cases and clusters of deaths across the province of Ituri all point toward a potentially much larger outbreak than what is currently being detected and reported," the WHO said.

As of Saturday, health authorities had reported eight laboratory-confirmed Ebola cases, 246 suspected infections and 80 suspected deaths in Ituri Province in eastern DR Congo, concentrated in the Bunia and Mongbwalu health zones. A confirmed case was also detected in Kinshasa involving a traveler returning from Ituri.

Uganda has separately confirmed two Ebola cases in Kampala within 24 hours, including one death, both linked to travelers arriving from the DR Congo. The WHO said the two cases appeared unrelated, raising fears of undetected transmission chains. Both patients were admitted to intensive care units in Kampala.

Health officials have also reported unusual clusters of community deaths with symptoms consistent with the Bundibugyo virus strain in several areas of Ituri and neighboring North Kivu Province.

At least four healthcare workers have died in circumstances suggestive of viral hemorrhagic fever, increasing concerns that infections may be spreading inside health facilities amid weak infection prevention and control measures.

The WHO said international coordination would now be critical to strengthen surveillance, improve infection prevention, scale up emergency operations and prevent wider regional spread.



A man is carried from an ambulance into a hospital after the confirmation of an Ebola outbreak in Bunia, Democratic Republic of Congo, on Saturday. VICTOIRE MUKENGE / REUTERS

Petrochemical crunch hits supply chains across Asia

By **YANG HAN** in Hong Kong
kelly@chinadailyapac.com

More than 11 weeks into the US-Israeli war against Iran, economic disruptions are reverberating across Asia's industrial supply chains as shortages of petrochemical products, including naphtha, deepen in the region.

Before the war, "almost 100 percent of the Middle East's naphtha exports land in Asia", said Darryl Xu, Singapore-based principal analyst for base chemicals and feedstocks at ICIS Analytics.

Middle Eastern supplies make up almost 65 percent of Asia's naphtha imports, but disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz have effectively cut off most shipments, with alternative sources unable to fully bridge the gap, Xu said.

A key petroleum derivative, naphtha is widely used to produce solvents and resin for printing ink. Supply shortages could affect sectors ranging from packaging and consumer goods to medical supplies and infrastructure materials.

Japanese snack maker Calbee said last week that it would switch some potato chip products to minimalist black-and-white packaging marked "packaging for conserving petroleum materials".

"The company will revise the packaging specifications of some of its products as an interim measure, with the highest priority placed on ensuring a stable supply of products," Calbee said on Tuesday.

However, Japanese Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Kei Sato said the government had received no reports of immediate disruptions to naphtha or printing ink supplies and believed the country had secured sufficient volumes, Reuters reported.

In the Republic of Korea, concerns are also rising in the food packaging industry, with the government working to stabilize supplies. Companies said material costs have soared 40 to 50 percent since the war began.

The ROK and Japan are among the most vulnerable economies in Northeast Asia to naphtha supply shocks, said Kwon Seok-joon, an associate professor of chemical engineering in Sungkyunkwan University.

In the first half of this year, the ROK imported about 45 to 47 percent of its naphtha, with more than three-fourths of those imports coming from the Middle East, he said.

'Structural weakness'

However, the bigger problem is the structural weakness of the ROK's petrochemical industry, which is centered on refining naphtha, Kwon said.

While Japan is also highly exposed, the ROK's vertically integrated petrochemical sector is more dependent on naphtha refineries, leaving downstream industries such as plastics, rubber, packaging and paints especially vulnerable, he said.

"If the current situation continues for several more months, the sustainability of these industries could become very fragile," he said.

Even if the Strait of Hormuz returns to normal now, naphtha supplies will not immediately recover to prewar levels because of shipping delays, permanently higher freight and insurance costs, and mismatches between existing Middle East contracts and new alternative supplies, he added.

Xu said buyers were paying premiums of up to $150 per ton for naphtha after the crisis started, while Asian producers of plastics and olefins — the building blocks of the industry — were being forced to run at minimum rates, which could still mean more than 150,000 tons of naphtha for a large olefins producer.

Kwon said the crisis would likely push Asian countries toward long-term adjustments.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:44 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:44 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Head-of-state diplomacy will guide further development of China-Russia relationship

At the invitation of President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin will pay a state visit to China from Tuesday to Wednesday, which is expected to further consolidate ties between the two countries.

That Xi and Putin sent congratulatory letters to the 10th China-Russia Expo on Sunday highlights the importance the two leaders attach to strengthening bilateral exchanges and cooperation.

Pointing out that this year marks the 30th anniversary of the China-Russia strategic partnership of coordination and the 25th anniversary of the signing of the China-Russia Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation, Xi said in his letter that bilateral cooperation in various fields had been continuously deepened and solidified, achieving fruitful results thanks to joint efforts of the two countries.

Noting that the expo provides a platform for direct and in-depth dialogue between the two sides, Putin in his message expressed the expectation that the expo will produce positive outcomes, help plan for new prospects of mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries, and bring benefits to the two peoples.

Thanks to the strategic guidance of head-of-state diplomacy, China-Russia relations exhibit a high level of mutual trust, and have withstood the turmoil in the international landscape, serving as a stabilizer of the postwar world order.

Last year, the two sides issued three joint statements on deepening their relations, strengthening global strategic stability and upholding the authority of international law.

At a time when global security is becoming ever more volatile, it is important for China and Russia, both permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, to work together to bolster the status of the UN and continue coordinating with each other on major international and regional issues.

During the upcoming visit, it is anticipated that both sides will build on the outcomes of high-level exchanges in the past and plan together the future development of relations, which matters not only to the two countries, but also to the world.

China has been Russia's largest trading partner for 16 consecutive years, with the bilateral annual trade volume registering more than $200 billion for the last three consecutive years. And statistics from China's Ministry of Commerce show that bilateral trade reached $61.2 billion in the first quarter of this year, a 14.7 percent increase year-on-year.

The two countries are also stepping up their pragmatic cooperation in fields such as energy, artificial intelligence and agriculture, and increasing people-to-people exchanges. These exchanges and collaboration are forming strong support for the two neighbors to weather multiple challenges and further consolidate bilateral ties.

This year marks the beginning of China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, which presents fresh opportunities for the two countries to deepen their win-win cooperation, better align their development strategies and further unleash their growth potential.

Equality, mutual respect and structural complementarity between the two economies explain the resilience of China-Russia economic ties.

The two countries not only collaborate closely but also show strategic independence in the process. As has long been pointed out, China-Russia relations are based on non-alliance, non-confrontation and not targeting any third party, forming a new type of relationship between major countries. Under this type of relationship, win-win cooperation that brings tangible benefits to the two nations is the focus.

It's important for China and Russia, which share common ground in their views of many major international and regional affairs, to leverage their robust relationship to safeguard existing international rules. In the face of rising unilateralism, the two countries need to continue shouldering their responsibilities as major countries to advance multipolarity and globalization. Their cooperation in multilateral organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS will play an important role in this regard.

It is hoped that the upcoming visit by Putin will promote further development of China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era, so that it can inject more stability into world affairs and provide a stronger impetus for global development and prosperity.

Remove stumbling block in Sino-US ties

The exchanges between the Chinese and US leaders on Thursday and Friday have provided much-needed strategic guidance for the future of China-US relations.

The two sides agreed to build a "constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability". The "constructive strategic stability" means positive stability with cooperation as the mainstay, healthy stability with competition within proper limits, constant stability with manageable differences and lasting stability with expectable peace.

The new vision for relations between the world's two largest economies indicates that both sides recognize the need to prevent confrontation and manage differences prudently. The Taiwan question remains the most important one among all the issues affecting bilateral ties. If it is handled properly, the Sino-US relationship will enjoy overall stability. Otherwise, China and the United States will have clashes and even conflicts, putting the entire relationship in great jeopardy.

Yet certain forces in Washington continue to treat the Taiwan question as a "card" they can play to maximize US gains while claiming they value peace and stability in the region. Moves such as arms sales, political collusion and military signaling send the wrong message to "Taiwan independence" separatist forces on the Chinese island. "Taiwan independence" and cross-Strait peace are as irreconcilable as fire and water. The more external forces embolden separatist elements, the greater the risks to regional stability.

The recent remarks made by the secessionist-minded leader of Taiwan, Lai Ching-te, via virtual link at a so-called "democracy summit" in Copenhagen, once again exposed the separatist nature of the Democratic Progressive Party authorities. By attempting to portray his authorities as fighting for the "values" of the West, Lai sought external support for his separatist agenda while deliberately provoking cross-Strait tensions.

The timing of Lai's remarks was particularly telling. They were delivered shortly before the US president's visit to Beijing.

However, US President Donald Trump, in an interview with Fox News aired on Friday, warned the Taiwan authorities against pursuing "independence" under the illusion of unconditional US backing.

"They have somebody there now that wants to go independent," he said. "They want to get into a war" because "they figure they have the US behind them".

Trump poured cold water on that, saying he is not looking to fight a war thousands of miles away.

Yet the US leader also described Taiwan in the interview as "a very good negotiating chip" in dealing with Beijing — a remark that reflects a transactional and exploitative approach to the Taiwan question.

For China-US relations to achieve steady, sound and sustainable development, the stumbling block of "Taiwan independence" must be decisively removed. The US should recognize the true nature of "Taiwan independence" forces — as alterers of the status quo in the Taiwan Strait, disruptors of cross-Strait peace, and troublemakers in regional affairs.

Policymakers in Washington need to realize that the historical trend of the national reunification of China is irresistible. They should demonstrate genuine respect for China's core interests and major concerns. Beijing has made it clear that the Taiwan question is a red line in China-US ties that cannot be crossed.

The outcomes achieved during the latest China-US economic and trade consultations, held in the Republic of Korea on Wednesday, demonstrate once again that despite differences and competition, China and the US still share extensive common interests and broad space for cooperation.

No one should underestimate the complexity of managing China-US relations. Competition will continue to exist. Differences will not disappear overnight. But what matters most is whether both sides can manage these differences rationally, avoid strategic miscalculation and uphold the broader interests of peace and development.

China and the US have more common interests than differences. The US has much to gain from a healthy Sino-US relationship and much to lose from playing unilateral tricks, zero-sum games or the "Taiwan card".

Only when both sides address each other's core concerns, and especially when the US handles the Taiwan question with due prudence, can they jointly turn the agreed vision for bilateral ties into reality.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Li Min



Opinion Line

Some in Brussels should wake up to reality, or EU will pay for overreach

The European Union likes to see itself as the defender of "rules-based" globalization. Yet by increasingly weaponizing its Foreign Subsidies Regulation against Chinese entities, it risks turning its claim into a parody.

The latest case in which the European Commission, the EU's executive body, has launched an "anti-subsidy" probe against the Chinese company Nuctech is a revealing snapshot of how Brussels is shifting toward a model of extraterritorial overreach that it once criticized Washington for.

The case dates back to 2024, when the European Commission carried out its first unannounced inspections, under the FSR, at Nuctech's offices in Poland and the Netherlands.

Brussels spent a long time complaining about Washington's long-arm jurisdiction — from sanctions enforcement to the extraterritorial use of domestic laws. Now it appears eager to replicate the same US playbook against China.

The FSR itself emerged during the high tide of transatlantic political alignment under the previous Democratic administration of the US, with China being the primary target.

But 2026 is not 2023, when the FSR took effect. The geopolitical landscape has changed a lot across the Atlantic. The EU's economic stagnation is now impossible to ignore, and many of its problems have little to do with China, but its own policies.

Former European Central Bank president Mario Draghi's report on European competitiveness warned that the continent suffers from chronic underinvestment, fragmented capital markets, high energy costs, regulatory overcomplexity and technological dependence on the US.

In other words, the EU is falling behind in some sectors because its own policy architecture has become too internally contradictory.

That raises an uncomfortable question for Brussels: does it really believe US technology giants dominate artificial intelligence, cloud infrastructure, semiconductors and digital platforms without massive state support — direct or indirect?

From Pentagon contracts and industrial policy to tax incentives and strategic procurement, the US has mastered subsidy politics while preaching free markets abroad.

The US administration openly boasts that it uses tariff revenues to subsidize domestic companies, citing this as proof of its tariff policy's success. Its predecessor, meanwhile, sought to lure European enterprises to the US with subsidies substantial enough to tilt the market — under the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022. Yet the European Commission remained mute in response.

The result is an increasingly politicized trade framework of the US masquerading as neutral regulation.

The EU's so-called "anti-subsidy" investigations into Chinese electric vehicles poisoned China-EU economic relations for a considerable time, triggering retaliatory tensions, before eventually edging back toward negotiation and pragmatic compromise on the part of the EU. That episode should have served as a lesson on the costs of weaponizing trade instruments.

As for the Nuctech case, the EU's executive arm demanding sweeping China-based information from Chinese entities and financial institutions inevitably raises legal and political red lines.

China's Ministry of Justice declared on Friday that the European Commission's cross-border investigative demands constitute "unlawful extraterritorial jurisdiction". The accompanying statement from China's Ministry of Commerce opposes Brussels forcing Chinese banks and companies to hand over unrelated domestic information, disrupting their normal business activities and undermining legal certainty for companies operating in Europe.

The European Commission has become increasingly reckless in launching lose-lose probes, while the economic and diplomatic consequences are left for others in the bloc to absorb. European manufacturers want market access. European consumers want affordable products. European industries want stable supply chains. Yet policymakers and policy executors in Brussels often appear driven more by ideological signaling than commercial reality.

The EU does not need more economic confrontation with China. It needs serious reflection about why its own innovation engine is sputtering, why energy costs remain punishingly high, and why dependence on technology and security structures of an unreliable ally continues to deepen.

The FSR was conceived during a transatlantic honeymoon that is over. The question now is whether there is enough wisdom in Brussels to recognize the bloc faces a harsher economic reality before regulatory overreach leaves a major economic partner no choice but to fight back.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

All involved accountable for AI-related IP violations

Editor's note: *China recently released a road map aimed at promoting efforts to build itself into an intellectual property powerhouse. Xinhua Daily Telegraph spoke to some researchers about the importance of IP protection. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

The battle over IP in the AI era is about the restructuring of an entire innovation order. The contributors to AI-generated content are no longer just individual creators. Data providers, computing infrastructure suppliers, model trainers and application developers all play a role, and much of the resulting value falls into legal grey areas. The most obvious weakness in today's system is the lack of a workable framework for allocating benefits and responsibilities among the multiple actors. Responsibility in the AI ecosystem should not be determined solely by who controls the technology. It should also depend on who benefits from it. Profit distribution must become the primary benchmark for assigning legal obligations.

Contrary to some claims, society is not entering a legal vacuum. China's Civil Code, copyright law and regulations governing deep synthesis technologies have already established basic boundaries around personality rights, copyright protection and platform responsibilities.

The deeper problem is that enforcement mechanisms cannot keep pace with the speed at which infringement takes place, while coordination across platforms remains weak and public understanding is often inaccurate. Many people still mistakenly believe that "noncommercial use is exempt" or that labeling content as AI-generated removes liability. Neither is true.

For ordinary citizens, however, the most immediate threat does not come from abstract disputes over training data. It comes from AI face-swapping, voice cloning and other forms of personality-rights infringement. Such technologies are inexpensive to deploy, spread rapidly online and can inflict irreversible damage on personal dignity and reputation.

Rights protection is undeniably difficult, but placing the entire compliance burden on a single party is not the solution. Shifting all responsibility either on the platforms or on those who developed the application would undermine the long-term sustainability of the content industry.

A practical approach is shared responsibility. Rights holders should make fuller use of notice and takedown mechanisms, platforms should provide low-cost verification and complaint tools and application developers should bear responsibility when they "know or should know" that infringement is taking place. Only a layered system of responsibility can ensure that every line of defense is covered.

The issue of training data is unavoidable. Requiring prior authorization for data training would make one-on-one negotiations nearly impossible and significantly restrict innovation. Yet allowing unrestricted data scraping would effectively turn original creators into unpaid fuel for AI development. The challenge is to draw workable boundaries between these two extremes while introducing compensation mechanisms that protect creators' interests.

The music industry offers a useful lesson. Collective licensing provides a more realistic path. Platforms could pay annual blanket licensing fees to collective management organizations, which would then distribute revenue to rights holders according to usage proportions. Extending collective management systems into AI training could dramatically reduce transaction costs while ensuring creators receive compensation without having to negotiate separately.

The purpose of IP protection was never to prevent innovation, but to sustain it through credible incentives. The real test in the AI era is whether society can build a system in which creators receive fair benefits without crushing innovators under excessive compliance costs.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:44 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:44 PM

VIEWS

China and the World Roundtable | Driving China's Small and Micro-Businesses Forward

Editor's note: *Peking University's Guanghua School of Management released a survey report on China's small and micro-business operators at a recent seminar. The seminar brought together scholars, industry experts and practitioners to discuss the current state of small businesses, the pressures they face, the changes brought by artificial intelligence and digital tools, and the policies needed to support their growth. The following are excerpts from their remarks.*

Small businesses need more support for growth

Supporting small enterprises through stable expectations



Tian Xuan is the dean of Guanghua School of Management, Peking University.

Small and micro-businesses are the deepest foundation of China's economy and the broadest micro-level base of its growth.

Understanding their operating conditions, responding to their policy expectations and paying attention to their survival and development is not only an academic task, but also a responsibility of our time.

China's GDP grew by 5 percent in 2025 despite a complex external environment and insufficient domestic demand. This was no easy achievement. For 2026, setting the growth target as a flexible range reflects an effort to reduce the emphasis on a single numerical level and shift attention toward high-quality development.

It also leaves more room for structural adjustment, risk prevention and livelihood improvement.

The logic of expanding domestic demand is changing. It is moving away from direct policy stimulus and toward activating the market's own internal momentum.

The key is to stabilize employment so that people have money to spend, strengthen social security so that people dare to spend, and create new consumption scenarios so that people have places and reasons to spend.

To foster new growth drivers, China needs to upgrade traditional industries, develop strategic emerging industries, make early plans for future industries, and improve the quality of the service sector so as to extend both ends of the "smile curve".

For small, medium and micro-enterprises, two macro-level supports are especially important. The first is a sound legal environment.

China should strengthen the implementation of the Private Economy Promotion Law, advance legislation on a personal bankruptcy system, and give "honest but unfortunate" entrepreneurs a real chance to start again. Stronger intellectual property protection is also essential, as it can provide clear incentives for private and small businesses to innovate.

The second is a stable macro-policy orientation. Research shows that policy orientation itself does not have a significant impact on corporate innovation, but policy uncertainty can seriously discourage long-term investment. It is therefore crucial to maintain policy continuity, stability and consistency, so that the market can form steady expectations. This is vital for encouraging small and micro enterprises to invest, innovate and grow over the long term.

Reading the economy through small businesses



Zhang Xiaobo is the chair professor at Guanghua School of Management, Peking University.

China's small and micro-business operators offer a valuable window into the real economy. Our long-running survey has collected nearly 250,000 questionnaires, including a large number of unregistered self-employed businesses.

These operators are highly sensitive to macroeconomic changes. Their profit margins, cash flow and confidence readings are closely correlated with indicators such as PMI, CPI and unemployment.

The main pressure facing small businesses today is no longer on the production side. It is weak market demand. Costs are rising, but many small businesses have limited room to raise product prices or wages, which has intensified competition and price pressure. At the same time, their expectations for macroeconomic growth and CPI remain relatively low.

Yet small businesses have shown strong resilience. Many respond by working longer hours and adopting digital tools. Digitalization is bringing structural changes. Online sales and the use of information systems have continued to rise after the pandemic, and roughly one in four small and micro-businesses have already adopted AI.

Digitalization has also helped expand female entrepreneurship. Over the past five years, the share of female entrepreneurs among small business operators has more than doubled from 17 percent to 36 percent.

One important reason is the equalizing effect of online credit: women often enjoy credit-score advantages in digital lending, which has improved their access to financing.

Future policy should shift more toward inclusive measures that improve livelihoods and expand demand. Raising the basic pension for rural elderly residents, for example, could more effectively stimulate consumption and market vitality. At the same time, entrepreneurs need a more stable and enabling environment for development.

AI is also accelerating a trend toward smaller organizations. This will fundamentally reshape employment and social security. China's existing social insurance, medical insurance and related legal systems were largely designed around traditional employment in large companies.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

They are increasingly out of step with the rise of flexible work, one-person companies, delivery riders and other new forms of employment.

The social security system therefore needs a more fundamental adjustment. A more inclusive protection mechanism would allow residents, including small and micro-business operators, to share more fully in the benefits of technological innovation and development. Only when people feel more secure can they consume with greater confidence and help form a healthier cycle of demand and growth.

Small businesses must be able to share AI's gains

For small and micro-enterprises, sharing in the opportunities created by artificial intelligence is especially important. AI is a major new source of total factor productivity growth. By using data and algorithms, it can sharply reduce waste in resource allocation and turn the reallocation of resources from broad, block-level shifts into a more detailed and precise process. Its potential is enormous.

But AI also brings "creative destruction". It can accelerate the birth and death of businesses, as well as the destruction and creation of jobs. Small and micro-enterprises are often the first to feel this pressure. They are relatively more vulnerable and may face shorter survival cycles. This could worsen structural employment mismatches and widen income gaps.



Cai Fang is an academician of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

The future path of employment destruction and creation is likely to follow a "J-shaped" curve. In the short term, job losses may happen before new jobs are created. Whether the creation effect materializes, and how strong it becomes, will depend on how proactive and effective the policies are.

The policy logic should therefore change: businesses may compete and be selected by the market, but people should not be divided into winners and losers. The zero marginal cost and open-source nature of AI should be used to narrow the digital and intelligence divide facing small businesses and workers, so that they can share in the gains from higher productivity.

To achieve this, investment in physical assets must be better combined with investment in people.

More resources should go into inclusive social protection and human capital, giving entrepreneurs basic support even after business failure. Policies should also adapt to the fact that new forms of employment are becoming the new normal.

Social security and labor market systems need to be updated to support small businesses and workers caught in the cycle of creative destruction.

Whether AI becomes a blessing or a burden for small and micro-enterprises depends on whether its empowering features can be fully utilized. This is an external technological change that no individual business can avoid. To help small businesses share the benefits, they need targeted support.

For example, the government can coordinate with large technology companies to use AI's zero marginal cost advantage by sharing models, platform APIs, tokens and other technical resources, helping close the digital divide.

Using the empowering capability of technology to offset its disruptive effects is necessary to help small and micro-enterprises survive. It is also essential for keeping the overall economic cycle sustainable.

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

Kitty van der Heijden

Investing more in children is the right thing to do

Global Lens

The world has demonstrated that it is possible to make progress for children on an extraordinary scale. Child mortality was reduced by around 50 percent in two decades, based largely on a simple recipe with three ingredients. First, a safe start. One in four children is now born in a UNICEF-supported health clinic. Second, immunization.

Over the past 50 years, vaccines have saved around 154 million lives — nearly half of all children under five have been reached by UNICEF. And third, safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene — which we have been able to deliver to 2 billion people in the past two decades.

These gains go beyond saving young lives. They ripple into families, communities and the whole of society. Many of the results achieved for children are the foundation of human progress.

These impressive results, achieved working hand-in-hand with national governments and local partners, should propel all of us to continue and to step it up to achieve the sustainable development goals. Sadly, we are seeing the opposite: international development and humanitarian response are currently under severe strain, with Official Development Aid declining by 23.1 percent in the past year alone — the largest contraction ever.

At the same time, challenges for children are rising rapidly. This year alone, UNICEF estimates that more than 200 million children will need humanitarian assistance in 133 countries and territories. Furthermore, around 1 billion children — nearly half of the world's child population — live in countries classified as at "extremely high risk" of climate change impacts, from drought to floods, from tropical cyclones to glacier lake outbursts. The debt crisis and recent macro-economic shocks are pushing families back into poverty.

Children are often the most affected by this — even if they are the least responsible — and they pay the highest price. After decades of sustained decline, child mortality is now rising.

It is not that we do not know what is needed to achieve the SDGs. We know what needs to be done. We have shown what can be done.

But all relevant stakeholders, from governments to UN organizations and local partners, need to be enabled to do it — and resourcing these efforts is a key part of that.

The annual financing gap to achieve the SDGs is now in the order of $3 to $4 trillion. This is not merely a shortfall in financial capital — it is an appalling deficit in maximizing human capital.

We see this in the life of a child without light to study; in a mother walking for hours to fetch water; in the levels of stunting in the first years of life, leading to lifelong cognitive disabilities that a child can never recuperate from; and in a school cut off from electricity and the digital world. But the impact goes beyond the individual child.

Because when children lose access to vaccines, diseases spread across borders. When they go without nutrition, education or protection, the desperation that follows fuels instability and displacement.

We have seen it over and over again: the more fragile children's lives become, the more fragile the world becomes. People may think that investing in children is "charity", or something "nice to have". But investing in children is one of the best investments we can make, supporting security and stability as well as peace and prosperity.

When resources are scarce, it is even more important to look at "what works" to ensure every dollar is yielding maximum results. At UNICEF, we know that investing in children yields a high economic return on investment.

For every dollar invested in children, countries see up to a tenfold return through stronger economies and more resilient societies.

If this would be your stock portfolio, you would run to invest your money here. Every dollar invested in education, brings $20 in future GDP growth, with important co-benefits. It helps to avoid, among other things, young girls getting married.

It also helps to avoid the recruitment of young boys by armed groups and terrorists. Every dollar invested in water and sanitation yields $5.5 of return in diseases prevented, saving public health budgets.

Investing in children isn't just the morally right thing to do, it is also politically smart and economically rational. It is one of the most powerful investments we can make in shaping the future we all want.

Yet today we are facing a brutal financial paradox: even as the needs of children grow, our ability to invest in their future — and hence, our own collective future — is severely constrained.

We have more conflicts now than we have ever experienced since UNICEF was established, yet humanitarian funding went down by around 33 percent last year.

We have more children than ever at risk from the impacts of climate change. Yet a mere 2.4 percent of climate finance from multilateral climate funds is child-responsive, leaving children exposed.

Compounding this is the debt crisis, with many developing countries spending more on debt servicing than on social sectors such as education, health and nutrition that children's lives and well-being depend on.

This has real consequences. When a debt crisis lasts up to three years, infant mortality increases by 2.2 percent. When that crisis exceeds three years, infant mortality increases by 11.4 percent.

The debt trap becomes a death trap for children, and the financial impact of the current crisis will exacerbate this.

We must change course. Safeguarding children's present and future is a worthy cause and a smart choice.

We need new global momentum to ensure resources flow to where the needs are the greatest and the return on investment the highest: children. We need governments in the Global North and the Global South to step up.

We need private sector entities around the world, as well as financial institutions and multilateral development banks, to engage. We need to innovate to ensure we go faster and further.

As an example, UNICEF is now exploring child-focused debt solutions with multilateral development banks and policy banks, creating fiscal space for enhanced social sector spending — including with institutions here in China.

Last year, we worked with the Export-Import Bank of China to launch a project in Nigeria on climate-resilient health, safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and signed a multi-year partnership to explore child-focused financing models in more countries and sectors. Recently, we also signed a new agreement to strengthen WASH and energy resilience for children in climate-stressed areas of Bangladesh.

But we must do more. We must unlock new capital and align investments with impact. Beyond grants, the scale of need requires pioneering more forward-looking and innovative financing mechanisms.

That's why UNICEF is also working with development impact funds, SDG-aligned bonds, outcome-based financing, parametric climate risk insurance and child-focused debt solutions that tie financing more closely to measurable results for children.

Every public and private sector actor has a role to play. Together, we can make a difference in the lives of children anywhere and everywhere. Their future is not a matter of chance. It is a matter of choice.

The world is a tough place to be a child today. But it doesn't have to be that way.

What is possible for children tomorrow will be shaped by the decisions all of us take today.

The author is the deputy executive director, partnerships, UNICEF, and assistant secretary-general, UN.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:44 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:44 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

DAVID GOSSET

Close encounters with history

China's museum fever is a collective recognition that the material traces of the past are a mirror for the future



The recent release of the second edition of the China Museums Annual Report — following the presentation of its inaugural volume in Paris in 2025 — signals that China's museum transformation has moved beyond a domestic feature to become an object of international attention. What was once seen as a policy success story is now examined as a structural cultural shift with global implications.

Few recent phenomena have reshaped China's public life as visibly as the surge of enthusiasm for museums. Popularly described as "museum fever" and referenced in President Xi Jinping's 2026 New Year address as *wenbo re*, denoting heightened interest in museums and cultural heritage, this development exceeds the boundaries of leisure or lifestyle. It represents the convergence of cultural tourism, heritage protection, technological modernization and civic engagement. At its center lies a profound change: museums have become pivotal arenas in which China narrates its past and situates its future.

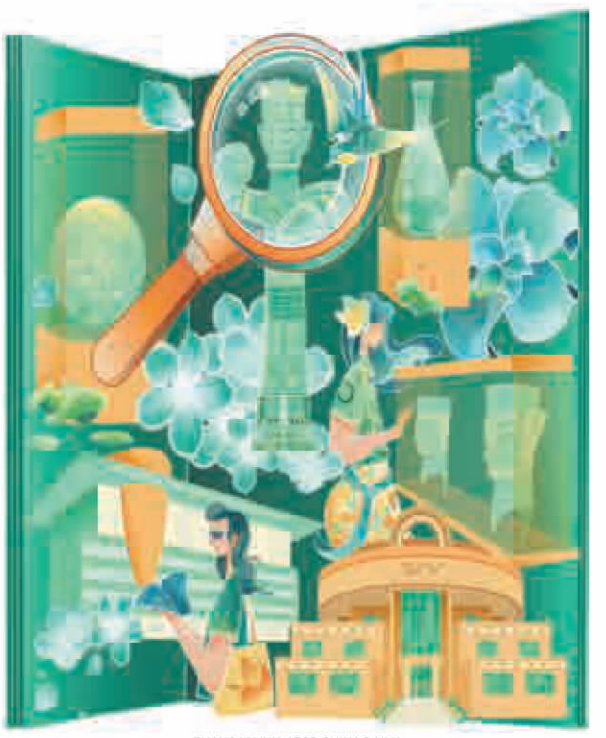
The scale of museum-driven tourism is striking. Record attendance, extended holiday queues, sold-out special exhibitions, and sustained social media engagement reflect broad, cross-generational appeal. Families travel across provinces to see archaeological discoveries; students approach exhibitions as intellectual pilgrimages; and young professionals engage with immersive displays combining digital projection and ancient artifacts. Museums now anchor domestic tourism circuits, revitalizing historic districts and redirecting travel toward culturally grounded destinations.

Yet this surge cannot be reduced to just consumption. Unlike entertainment complexes, museums cultivate reflective forms of leisure experiences. Visitors enjoy not only spectacle but orientation — an encounter with a civilizational narrative spanning millennia. Cultural tourism thus becomes an instrument of cultural literacy. To travel to a museum is simultaneously to participate in identity formation and historical interpretation.

This development aligns with China's evolving heritage strategy. Over the past two decades, the country has expanded its museum network — public, private, university-based and hybrid institutions — while strengthening legal frameworks for archaeological research and conservation. The emphasis has shifted from quantitative growth to qualitative consolidation: professional training, conservation laboratories, collection digitization and international collaboration. The museum system is increasingly integrated, technologically equipped and globally engaged.

Tourism and preservation are often perceived as competing forces. Large visitor flows can endanger fragile artifacts and historical sites. In China's current museum ecology, however, public enthusiasm increasingly reinforces conservation. Revenue from ticketing and cultural products supports restoration projects; strong attendance legitimizes further investment in safeguarding relics and intangible traditions. When newly excavated artifacts draw large crowds, preservation becomes a visible social priority rather than a bureaucratic mandate.

Museums function here as both guardians and mediators. They not only protect objects through scientific conservation, but also preserve meaning. Curatorial practice translates artifacts into narratives that illuminate regional diversity, dynastic change and intercultural exchange. The result is not a static portrait of antiquity but a presentation of civilization as plural and evolving. Museums frame China's past as dynamic — shaped by migration, adaptation and global contact.



ZHANG YUJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Technology has become integral to this transformation. Digital archives, high-resolution scanning, artificial intelligence, immersive installations and data-driven management systems are embedded in institutional practice. Virtual reconstructions revive archaeological sites, interactive platforms contextualize artifacts and online exhibitions extend access beyond physical walls. These tools attract younger audiences while strengthening documentation and research capacity.

Crucially, digitalization enhances protection. Three-dimensional modeling records endangered sites; visitor-flow analytics mitigate overcrowding; and artificial intelligence supports restoration and authentication. Technological modernization does not dilute tradition; it fortifies it. The juxtaposition of ancient bronzes and immersive projections symbolizes a broader synthesis of continuity and innovation within Chinese modernization.

The museum boom has also recalibrated domestic travel patterns. As internal mobility intensifies, cultural depth increasingly shapes destination choices. Provincial museums highlighting Silk Road exchanges, maritime history, or ethnic heritage anchor regional revitalization strategies. They connect exhibitions with surrounding historic neighborhoods, crafts and culinary traditions. The museum visit often initiates a broader engagement with place-based heritage, integrating economic development with cultural memory.

Internationally, museums operate as platforms of dialogue. Traveling exhibitions, joint conservation projects and multilateral research initiatives position Chinese institutions within global debates on restitution, ethics and interpretation. In a fragmented geopolitical landscape, museums provide comparatively stable arenas for intellectual exchange. Cultural tourism, when international visitors encounter Chinese heritage directly, fosters nuanced understanding beyond political narratives.

The deeper significance of the museum fever, as emphasized in the 2026 Annual Report, lies in its epistemic dimension. Museums are not passive repositories; they are laboratories of knowledge production. They shape how history is categorized, narrated and visualized. The rise of museum culture contributes to an emerging form of New Sinology — one attentive not only to China's historical record but also to contemporary modes of interpreting that record.

Rapid expansion nonetheless presents challenges. Balancing mass attendance with conservation standards, ensuring professional expertise keeps pace with growth, addressing regional disparities and navigating contested historical representations require sustained governance. Heritage protection is an ongoing process rather than a completed achievement. Yet the visibility of these debates indicates institutional maturity. Public engagement generates scrutiny, and scrutiny strengthens accountability.

Ultimately, China's museum-centered tourism reveals a society engaging with its material past as a resource for navigating modernity. The energy captured in *wenbo re* expresses curiosity, confidence, and a search for continuity amid transformation. Museums respond by staging temporal dialogue: Neolithic pottery alongside digital simulations, classical calligraphy adjacent to interactive interfaces. Time becomes layered rather than linear.

To enter a Chinese museum today is to observe a civilization actively curating itself. Tourism brings audiences; conservation safeguards substance; technology expands reach; and scholarship reframes meaning. Together, they constitute a cultural infrastructure anchoring civilizational renaissance in lived experience.

The measure of this transformation, however, lies not in visitor statistics but in encounters. When a bronze vessel, silk manuscript, or contemporary installation dissolves temporal distance, tourism becomes reflection and preservation becomes shared responsibility. China's museum fever is ultimately less about crowds than about consciousness — a collective recognition that the material traces of the past remain vital to the imagination of the future.

The author is a Sinologist, founder of the China-Europe-America Global Initiative and editor of the China Museums Annual Report. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

ZHANG LI AND YUN QIBURI

Shared resource, shared future

Lancang-Mekong water governance has evolved beyond its technical roots into a strategic issue that can help shape regional development



Zhang Li



Yun Qiburi

The Lancang-Mekong River — a waterway nourishing six countries — sustains not only riverside villages, cities, rice paddies and fishing grounds, but also the shared development prospects of China, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. Water governance has shaped the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation mechanism from its inception, binding the six countries together and sustaining their shared prosperity.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the first LMC Leaders' Meeting. Over the past decade, the LMC has placed water resources cooperation at the core of its five priorities. Significant strides have been made in modernizing various facets of water governance, including cooperation platforms, navigable waterways, information sharing, capacity building and ecological protection. These achievements have become crucial pillars for the building of a Lancang-Mekong community with a shared future.

The cooperation platforms for Lancang-Mekong water governance have been continuously improved and upgraded. A basin-wide governance framework has been established, centering on the LMC leaders' meetings, ministerial meetings and the Lancang-Mekong Water Resources Cooperation Center, delivering institutionalized and regularized synergy. Meanwhile, the hydrological information sharing mechanism has been steadily enhanced, with China consistently providing hydrological data to riparian countries. A significant milestone was reached in 2025 when the six countries agreed to mutually provide upstream and downstream hydrological information, marking a crucial shift from China's unilateral provision to multilateral sharing among all basin states. The modernization of Lancang-Mekong water governance has thus evolved from simple information exchange toward joint action.

The Lancang-Mekong countries have advanced interconnected water networks, a secure environment and digital intelligence. The modernization efforts place a premium on waterway improvement, coordinated patrols and law enforcement, and the digitization of shipping information, thereby further unlocking both the economic and security values of this "golden waterway". According to Kunming Customs, over the past decade, the navigable tonnage of vessels on the Lancang-Mekong waterway has increased from 300 to 500 metric tons, a 66.7 percent increase in single-trip capacity. A total of over 9,400 voyages have been completed, moving 1.57 million tons of imports and exports valued at 12.72 billion yuan ($1.87 billion), with an average annual growth rate of 7.6 percent. Furthermore, as of April 20, China, Myanmar, Laos and Thailand had conducted 164 Mekong River joint patrol and law enforcement missions, focusing on merchant vessel escort, search and rescue, and combating cross-border crime. In parallel, the six Lancang-Mekong countries are actively introducing digital and smart technologies into basin water resource management. These tools sharpen governance precision and visibility, while strengthening responses to extreme weather and emergencies.

The Lancang-Mekong countries have put a sustained focus on "small and beautiful" water projects that tangibly benefit local communities. With financial and technical support from China, 65 such collaborative projects have been implemented. Covering flood and drought management, rural drinking water safety, dam safety, agricultural production and grassroots capacity building, these projects directly address the most pressing needs of basin residents. Among them, the Lancang-Mekong Sweet Spring Action has built 110 rural water supply projects in Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar, providing safe drinking water to over 13,000 rural residents and earning a spot among the Fifth Global Solicitation on Best Poverty Reduction Practices. These changes — from clean drinking water to reliable power — profoundly embody a people-centered governance philosophy, building a solid foundation of public support for the Lancang-Mekong region.

Despite these notable achievements, the Lancang-Mekong water governance is entering a new and more complex phase as it embarks on its next "golden decade".

The first challenge is climate change. Extreme droughts, floods, salinization, sediment shifts and ecosystem degradation affect the basin's agriculture, fisheries, energy and public safety. For vulnerable areas — such as the Mekong Delta, the Tonle Sap Lake region, hydropower development zones and cross-border shipping hubs — water fluctuations directly threaten food security, energy security and social resilience.

The second lies in divergent development needs. Persistent tensions exist between energy development and ecological protection, as well as between agricultural irrigation and shipping demands. Balancing these competing priorities requires close coordination among the basin states.

The third is the persistent governance deficit in water ecosystems. Uneven capacities for water ecosystem protection among basin countries and significant disparities in progress toward the water-related targets of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development add complexity to basin-wide governance.

In response, the six Lancang-Mekong countries should seize the opportunity presented by the new "golden decade" and the "LMC 2.0" framework to drive high-quality, iterative upgrades in water governance — making it more targeted, resilient and inclusive. This will help forge an even closer Lancang-Mekong community with a shared future.



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

First, build a high-quality platform for synergy in water governance modernization. The six countries could leverage the Lancang-Mekong Water Resources Cooperation Center to gradually establish a water governance modernization hub with sub-branches dedicated to top-level design and regional implementation. These would coordinate local water management, data sharing and project execution, enhancing both basin-wide strategic coordination and on-the-ground delivery, and ensuring that strategic plans translate into tangible regional benefits.

Second, turn "small and beautiful" water projects into a "people-to-people connectivity" initiative of Lancang-Mekong water cooperation. In the new "golden decade", the six countries could develop replicable, maintainable and evaluable project packages, covering rural drinking water safety, school water purification facilities, small-scale irrigation, community flood control, fishery resource protection and grassroots water quality monitoring. Greater emphasis should be placed on post-project management and maintenance, upgrading "demonstration sites" into "demonstration chains". At the same time, participation from local governments, enterprises, research institutions and social organizations should be encouraged to forge an integrated cooperation model encompassing funding, technology, training and operation, ensuring that more people share the benefits of modernized Lancang-Mekong water governance.

Third, safeguard the autonomous cooperation of basin countries in water governance. Lancang-Mekong water cooperation is open to extra-basin partners, but water governance must not become an arena for geopolitical zero-sum games. The six countries can remain open to cooperation that genuinely contributes to technological progress, capacity building and ecological improvement. Meanwhile, they need to remain clear-eyed about agendas that seek to incite confrontation, stoke anxiety or erode mutual trust. The 10th LMC Foreign Ministers' Meeting proposed building an LMC 2.0 characterized by solidarity, cooperation, openness, win-win outcomes, green innovation, peace and tranquility. The key lies in keeping basin countries firmly in the driver's seat of regional affairs.

Guided by the LMC 2.0 framework, the six Lancang-Mekong countries will continue to turn water connectivity into people-to-people bonds, integrating national needs into regional advantages. In doing so, Lancang-Mekong water governance will infuse fresh vitality into the building of a peaceful and prosperous regional community with a shared future.

Zhang Li is an associate professor and a PhD supervisor at the Institute of Belt and Road & Global Governance at Fudan University. Yun Qiburi is a PhD candidate at the School of International Relations & Public Affairs at Fudan University. The authors contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:44 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:44 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

Fiscal, monetary tools to boost consumption

Central, local authorities roll out comprehensive policy package to lower financing costs

By **ZHANG CHENXU** in Hangzhou, **SHI RUIPENG** and **ZHANG LI** in Nanning

China is ramping up coordination between fiscal and monetary tools to further unleash consumption potential and energize private investment, in a bid to fuel a broad expansion in domestic demand, officials and business executives said.

With stronger support from the central government, local fiscal authorities are stepping up the rollout of a comprehensive policy package that combines loan interest subsidies, financing guarantees and risk compensation to lower financing costs and channel more resources into the real economy.

Xu Yong, a 34-year-old resident of Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, recently took out a personal consumption loan to furnish his new apartment.

The loan offered a credit line of up to 300,000 yuan ($43,886) and originally carried an annual interest rate of 3 percent. Thanks to the latest interest subsidy policy, his effective borrowing rate was reduced to 2 percent.

"The subsidy will save me about 3,000 yuan in interest payments over a year, which came as an unexpected bonus," Xu said, adding that the application process was smooth and took only a few minutes.

The reduction in Xu's effective borrowing rate came after the central government announced in January that it would allocate 100 billion yuan this year to support a broader fiscal-financial coordination package aimed at spurring consumption and private investment.

The package comprises six policies — four aimed at supporting private investment and two focused on household consumption — designed to reduce financing costs and improve access to credit for consumers, service providers and private businesses.

The interest subsidy policy for personal consumption loans will be extended through the end of 2026, while credit card installments will be included and sectoral restrictions removed to expand consumer choice.

Service-sector businesses are also receiving stronger financial support to better meet consumer demand.

Fei Peng, who runs a music training and instrument sales company in Hangzhou, secured a 1 million yuan loan from a local bank in March to purchase instruments and support business expansion.

With a 1 percentage point fiscal interest subsidy, the loan is expected to reduce the company's annual interest payments by about 10,000 yuan.

"I hope the policy support can be sustained over the long term," Fei said.

Extending the loan cycle for cultural and creative businesses to three to five years will help ease funding pressure more effectively, Fei added.

The fiscal interest subsidy program for service-sector businesses has been further expanded this year to cover digital, green, and retail sectors. Meanwhile, the maximum subsidized loan amount per borrower has been increased from 1 million yuan to 10 million yuan, with the subsidy cap raised to 100,000 yuan, offering stronger financial support to service-sector enterprises.

According to Hangzhou United Bank, which issued the loan to Fei, the financing is expected to generate at least 5 million yuan in consumption.

Lin Shiyi, chairman of the bank, said that under the guidance of fiscal policy support, Hangzhou United Bank extended 9.38 billion yuan in loans to service-sector businesses in the first quarter, mainly in retail, cultural and entertainment, and healthcare sectors.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

At the provincial level, newly issued loans linked to interest subsidy policies in Zhejiang have topped 1 trillion yuan since the beginning of the year, data from the Zhejiang Provincial Department of Finance showed.

Wu Dagui, deputy head of the department's financial division, said the rollout has amplified the leverage effect of fiscal-financial coordination, channeling fresh liquidity to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises as well as service-sector businesses.

Private investment is another major focus of the package.

The measures feature broad coverage, stronger support and a diversified set of tools, with several policies working in tandem to stabilize private investment, Liao Min, vice-minister of finance, said at a news conference in January.

"The newly introduced interest subsidy policy for loans to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, together with the optimized subsidy policy for equipment renewal loans, can both provide eligible borrowers with subsidies equivalent to 1.5 percentage points of the loan amount," Liao said.

The arrangement is helping companies lower the cost of equipment upgrades and project investment.

Nine Dragons Paper Industries (Beihai) Co, a private paper manufacturer based in Beihai, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, said its second-phase pulp-and-paper integration project was included this year in the interest subsidy program for equipment renewal loans.

From 2023 to 2025, the company received 64.21 million yuan in fiscal interest subsidies through a combination of local financing support measures and the equipment renewal loan subsidy program.

"Fiscal policy and funding support have strongly supported project construction and production, accelerated our digital and intelligent transformation, and effectively reduced investment and operating costs," said Zhang Yi'an, general manager of the company.

Zhang said the company's sales revenue exceeded 9 billion yuan in 2025 and is expected to surpass 12 billion yuan this year.

Beyond interest subsidies, the policy package also includes a special guarantee plan for private investment, designed to improve financing access for smaller private firms that often face collateral constraints.

A Guangxi-based dairy breeding unit of Royal Group Co is one of the businesses expected to benefit from the plan as it moves from project construction to operational expansion.

With its breeding base entering operation, the company has seen rising demand for working capital, while large upfront investment and the long cash conversion cycle in animal husbandry have added to short-term liquidity pressure.

Local financing guarantee institutions and a rural commercial bank in Guangxi have designed a tailored financing plan under the special guarantee mechanism, using the company's core breeding assets and intelligent farming equipment as counter-guarantee measures to support a three-year, 5 million yuan special loan.

The loan is expected to ease funding pressure during the expansion phase and help sustain the company's breeding program.

Data from the Finance Department of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region showed that by the end of April, new lending under the region's special guarantee plan for private investment had reached 1.79 billion yuan.

Together with interest subsidies and risk compensation, such guarantee support is designed to amplify the role of fiscal funds in mobilizing credit for the real economy.

Finance Minister Lan Fo'an has said previously that preliminary estimates suggest that every 100 billion yuan in fiscal funds can support up to 1 trillion yuan in credit, achieving a "four-ounce leverage moving a thousand-pound weight" multiplier effect.

That leverage effect is also reflected in first quarter lending.

Li Nan, deputy director-general of the Financial Affairs Department of the Ministry of Finance, said newly issued loans under the related programs exceeded 8.8 trillion yuan in the first quarter, up 4.2 percent year-on-year. The loans covered micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, equipment renewal projects, service-sector businesses and personal consumption.

On the investment side, the policies supported about 330 billion yuan in corporate financing during the same period, up 12.8 percent year-on-year, and helped generate around 480 billion yuan in investment. This has helped fixed-asset investment return to growth and narrowed the decline in private investment, Li said.

Luo Zhiheng, chief economist and head of the research institute at Yuekai Securities, said stronger consumption and investment cannot rely on fiscal support alone, but also require policies that improve incentives for households and businesses.

"By using targeted fiscal funds to lower costs and share risks, the policy can better align government support with market-based decisions, making fiscal spending more efficient and policy transmission more effective," Luo said.

Contact the writers at zhangchenxu @chinadaily.com.cn

Policy package aiding in major spending decisions

REPORTER'S LOG

By Zhang Chenxu

While tracking the rollout of China's coordinated fiscal and financial measures, I found that their impact is becoming visible not just in headline funding figures, but in the everyday economic decisions of households, companies and lenders.

The policy package is being tested not only by the amount of funds it mobilizes, but by whether it helps people spend, firms invest and banks lend.

On the consumer side, that effect is becoming tangible through lower borrowing costs and easier access to policy support, helping some households make major spending decisions with less financial strain.

Li Bin, a resident of Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, who had been planning to travel to Antarctica for long, decided to finally go ahead with the trip during a rare extended break this year.

Much of his money, however, was invested in medium- and long-term wealth management products. Redeeming them ahead of schedule could have disrupted his financial arrangements and caused losses.

However, the fiscal interest subsidy policy for personal consumption loans offered another option.

After confirming that his travel expenses were eligible for policy support, Li took out a 300,000 yuan ($43,886) consumption loan. The loan qualified for a 1 percentage point fiscal interest subsidy, capped at 3,000 yuan, enabling him to cover the travel expenses without disrupting his existing financial arrangements.

Hangzhou United Bank, which provided the loan, has also made the policy easier to access. In February, the bank launched a dedicated section for fiscal interest subsidies on its mobile banking app.

Subsidy-related applications are now largely processed automatically, covering steps from application handling to post-loan management, the bank said.

Among businesses, I found that easing financing pressure can also change the timing of investment and the confidence behind such decisions.

Zhejiang Jinhua CONBA Bio-Pharm Co, a pharmaceutical subsidiary of Chinese drugmaker CONBA, recently upgraded a production line with an annual capacity of 20 million vials of freeze-dried penicillin products.

Huang Jianghua, chief financial officer of the company, said the project was financed by a 39 million yuan equipment renewal loan. The loan's interest costs are estimated at around 1 million yuan, of which about 700,000 yuan is expected to be covered through the central government's interest subsidy policy.

Huang said the subsidy has eased the company's financial pressure and made it more willing to tap credit financing, allowing it to speed up intelligent and digital transformation and invest more in high-end, smart and green equipment.

Beyond traditional manufacturers, the policy support is also reaching asset-light technology firms, many of which still face credit constraints while expanding.

Guangxi Dayuan Technology Co, a tech-oriented small and medium-sized enterprise based in Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region specializing in OLED and LCD display modules, found itself in such a situation as rising orders put pressure on its production capacity.

With limited collateral, the company encountered financing difficulties during a critical expansion period.

With support from a special guarantee program for private-sector investment, Guangxi Financing Guarantee Group worked with banks to provide the company with 7.9 million yuan in guaranteed loans, according to the company.

Of the total, 1.6 million yuan has been issued in 2026 under the program to support equipment renewal and technological transformation, the company said.

Yang Tao, deputy director of the National Institution for Finance and Development, said fiscal-financial coordination is an innovative policy instrument that uses measures such as interest subsidies, risk compensation and financing guarantees to channel targeted support to private investment and household consumption.

The approach can help reduce financial risks through fiscal credit enhancement while sending a clear signal to stabilize expectations and boost market confidence, Yang said.

During this reporting trip to Zhejiang and Guangxi, the impact of fiscal-financial coordination came into focus through small but telling decisions: a household going ahead with a long-planned trip without disrupting its financial arrangements, a manufacturer pressing ahead with an upgrade, and an asset-light firm securing the credit support it needed to grow.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:44 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:44 PM

BUSINESSINSIGHT

EAGLE EYE
By Huang Qunhui

Driving development with new quality productive forces

Editor's note: *China Daily's Business Insight section has launched a column devoted to an in-depth interpretation of Xi Jinping's economic thought, with this article serving as the debut piece of the new series.*



CAI MENG / CHINA DAILY

The 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30) is a crucial timeframe for laying a solid foundation to basically realize socialist modernization. The fourth plenary session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China requires remarkable results in advancing high-quality development, and major breakthroughs are needed in developing new quality productive forces, fostering a new development pattern and building a modernized economic system.

This requires a thorough understanding of the important discourses by Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, on new quality productive forces.

It is crucial for us to understand the relationship between new quality productive forces and high-quality development.

Xi characterized new quality productive forces as an advanced productivity state, in which innovation plays the leading role. The forces break away from traditional economic growth modes, feature high technology, high efficiency and high quality, and align with the new development philosophy. Developing new quality productive forces is an intrinsic requirement and an important focus for promoting high-quality development.

Productivity is the fundamental driving force of human social development. High-quality development requires the guidance of new productivity theories. Because new quality productive forces have already taken shape in practice and demonstrated strong driving power, they serve as the guiding theory and robust driving force for high-quality development.

In the new era, China has liberated productive forces through comprehensively deepening reform and high-standard opening-up, positioning innovation as the primary driver. Integrating ecological civilization into national development and asserting that protecting the environment means protecting productive forces are vital theoretical outcomes. Grasping this principle is essential to propel high-quality development during the modernization journey.

It is also important for China to accelerate new quality productive forces through innovation.

The distinguishing feature of new quality productive forces is innovation, which encompasses aspects of technology, business models, management styles and institutional innovation. It is imperative to excel in this major task to accelerate their development.

The basic path involves advancing sci-tech innovation for revolutionary breakthroughs and driving industrial innovation for deep transformation, thereby significantly increasing total factor productivity. As China embarks on a new modernization journey, focus must be placed on four aspects.

First, it is necessary to catalyze new quality productive forces guided by high-level sci-tech self-reliance and strength. During the 15th Five-Year Plan period, China must improve its new system for mobilizing resources nationwide, optimize basic research and development, and strengthen original innovation. Extraordinary measures are needed to achieve decisive breakthroughs in core tech across key fields like integrated circuits, industrial machine tools, high-end instruments, basic software, advanced materials and biomedicine.

Second, accelerated development by deeply integrating sci-tech and industrial innovation is needed. It is crucial to fuse real economy innovation with digital and green technologies. Enterprises' principal role in innovation must be strengthened, resources channeled toward them and support provided for them to lead innovation.

Third, it is necessary to accelerate green productive forces by innovating development modes. Guided by carbon peak and neutrality goals — carbon reduction, pollution reduction, green expansion and economic growth should be synergistically advanced. Deepening pollution prevention, building a new energy system, and expediting the formation of green production modes and lifestyles are necessary steps.

Fourth, constructing compatible relations of production by advancing integrated institutional innovation in education, science and technology and talent is needed. Mechanisms that comprehensively support innovation must be improved to enhance the national innovation system's overall efficacy, focusing on nurturing strategic scientists, leading talents, outstanding engineers and highly skilled personnel.

Building a modernized industrial system is important to support development according to local conditions.

To firmly grasp high-quality development as the primary task, it is necessary to develop new quality productive forces according to local conditions. Facing the new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation, opportunities must be seized to intensify innovation efforts, cultivate emerging industries, make plans for future industries and improve the modernized industrial system.

Crucially, developing new quality productive forces does not mean ignoring or abandoning traditional industries. It is necessary to prevent headlong rushes and bubble formations, and avoid adopting a single model. All localities must proceed from reality, establish the new before abolishing the old, customize measures to local conditions and provide categorized guidance. Based on local resource endowments, industrial foundations and scientific research conditions, they should selectively promote new industries, use new technologies to transform traditional industries, and actively promote high-end, intelligent and green industrial development.

Promoting industrial innovation through sci-tech innovation is essential for building a modernized industrial system and developing new quality productive forces. The two are interdependent. New quality productive forces are the core capability elements for the modernized industrial system, which serve as their effective carrier. Building this system translates sci-tech achievements into real productive forces, while the system's construction ensures practical economic needs guide sci-tech innovation.

On the one hand, new quality productive forces are achieving a leap in optimizing production factors. Intensive innovation is generating clusters in next-generation information technologies, life sciences, clean energy and advanced manufacturing. These accelerate the iterative leap of productive forces.

On the other hand, the modernized industrial system is developing toward digitalization, intelligence, greening and integration. New quality productive forces are directly reflected in highly penetrative digital and intelligent technologies applied across all sectors and throughout the entire value chain.

China's leadership has emphasized the "consolidation and upgrading" of traditional industries during the 15th Five-Year Plan, calling for enhanced competitiveness in mining, metallurgy, chemicals, light industry, textiles, machinery, shipbuilding and construction. Traditional industries are the "basic fundamentals" of the real economy, accounting for about 80 percent of value-added. To build a modernized industrial system and consolidate the real economy, they must never be abandoned.

The writer is a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and a researcher at the Institute of Economics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.
The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Domestic demand improves, exports performing well

MAIN STREET
By Wang Yiming

China's economy got off to a strong start in the first quarter with major economic indicators for January-February exceeding expectations, and the economy is showing positive developments on multiple fronts.

First, industrial production and services maintained robust growth momentum. In the first two months, growth rates of value-added industrial output above designated size — and the services production index — both accelerated from December. In particular, industrial output growth picked up by 1.1 percentage points from December, driven by exports, indicating continued strength on the supply side.

Second, exports demonstrated strong resilience, growing 19.2 percent in the first two months — far exceeding market expectations. While the delayed Chinese Lunar New Year holiday and a low comparison base from a year earlier contributed to the rapid growth, improved manufacturing competitiveness was a key factor supporting export expansion.

Third, domestic demand improved noticeably. Driven by a strong rebound in infrastructure investment, fixed-asset investment rose 1.8 percent year-on-year in January-February, reversing a 3.8 percent decline for full year 2024. Retail sales of consumer goods increased 2.8 percent year-on-year, 1.9 percentage points faster than in December. In particular, services retail sales grew 5.6 percent year-on-year, outpacing the 2.5 percent growth in goods retail sales, indicating that services consumption is becoming an important driver of overall consumption.

Fourth, marginal improvement in demand outpaced supply-side recovery, helping support a moderate rise in prices. In January-February, the consumer price index rose 0.8 percent year-on-year, while core CPI increased 1.3 percent.

Driven by external factors and rapidly growing demand for computing power, the producer price index decline narrowed to 0.9 percent year-on-year in February, while month-on-month PPI rose for five consecutive months. Based on this trend, PPI may return to positive territory earlier than previously expected. These developments have created conditions for the economy to break free from persistently low inflation throughout the year.

Fifth, industrial profits recovered. In January-February, profits of industrial enterprises above designated size rose 15.2 percent year-on-year, 14.6 percentage points faster than the full-year growth rate in 2025. Profits of State-controlled enterprises rebounded from a 3.9 percent decline last year to 5.3 percent growth. Among 41 major industrial sectors, 24 recorded profit growth. The recovery in prices, especially the narrowing decline in PPI, was an important contributor to the rise in industrial profits.

The strong economic start this year was largely attributable to front-loaded macroeconomic policies. Since the beginning of the year, proactive fiscal policy has been implemented early, with central government budgetary investments and funding for key projects aimed at implementing major national strategies and building up security capacities in key areas disbursed in advance. Fiscal spending at all levels accelerated, supporting early launch and implementation of these projects.

Monetary policy also remained accommodative. By the end of February, outstanding aggregate financing to the real economy and the broad money supply, or M2, grew 8.2 percent and 9 percent year-on-year, respectively. Meanwhile, local governments seized the opportunity presented by the launch of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) to accelerate infrastructure construction projects, supporting investment growth and economic stabilization.

China should seize the current window of increasingly positive factors to consolidate and strengthen the momentum of economic recovery. At the same time, it should be noted that uncertainties in the external environment are increasing.

The conflict in the Middle East has driven international oil prices sharply higher. Market institutions have outlined baseline, adverse and extreme scenarios for Brent crude oil prices based on different conflict outcomes. Taking UBS Securities' forecast as an example, if shipping disruptions through the Strait of Hormuz continue, under adverse and extreme scenarios, oil prices could rise to $130 and $150 per barrel in the second quarter, with annual average prices reaching $100 and $132.5 per barrel in 2026, respectively.

China's relatively low dependence on crude oil in its energy consumption structure, together with ample oil reserves, means the country is less vulnerable to supply shortages. However, soaring global oil prices will still raise production costs. If end-user demand remains weak, upstream cost increases may be difficult to pass downstream, potentially squeezing profit margins for midstream and downstream enterprises.

In addition, uncertainty persists in global trade conditions. A report released by the World Trade Organization on March 19 forecast that under a baseline growth scenario excluding energy price shocks, global merchandise trade growth would slow to 1.9 percent in 2026 from 4.6 percent in 2025. If both crude oil and liquefied natural gas prices remain elevated throughout 2026, merchandise trade growth could fall further to 1.4 percent.

A slowdown in the expansion of external demand will increase pressure to boost domestic demand. In 2025, net exports of goods and services contributed 32.7 percent of China's economic growth, boosting GDP growth by about 1.6 percentage points. If external demand weakens in 2026 and net exports contribute less to growth, maintaining stable economic expansion will require higher contributions from final consumption and capital formation.

At present, the imbalance of "strong supply but weak demand" remains prominent in China's economy, reflected in much faster expansion on the supply side than on the demand side. In the first two months, value-added industrial output and the index of services production grew 6.3 percent and 5.2 percent year-on-year, respectively, while retail sales of consumer goods and fixed-asset investment increased only 2.8 percent and 1.8 percent, indicating significantly weaker demand-side performance.

Weak demand mainly stems from three factors. First, consumer demand remains subdued. Although retail sales growth of consumer goods accelerated to 2.8 percent in January-February, up 1.9 percentage points from December, it was still below last year's full-year growth rate of 3.7 percent.

Second, the property market has yet to stabilize. Real estate development investment fell 11.1 percent in January-February, while new home sales floor space and sales value dropped 13.5 percent and 20.2 percent, respectively. Large inventories and slow destocking mean the market remains in a bottoming-out phase.

Third, private investment remains weak. Private fixed-asset investment fell 2.6 percent in January-February, and excluding property investment, growth was only 1 percent. Weak market demand and sluggish corporate profitability continue to dampen private investment appetite.

From a longer-term perspective, the "strong supply, weak demand" problem reflects not only cyclical factors, but also structural and institutional issues.

Since 2012, China's economy has entered a "new normal" characterized by slower growth, shifting from double-digit to single-digit GDP expansion. Discussions of the new normal have often focused on the supply side and declining potential growth. However, after 2012, demographic changes — including a shrinking labor force and accelerated aging — have also profoundly affected demand. Both consumption and investment growth slowed significantly, making demand an increasingly important constraint on economic growth.

The COVID-19 pandemic severely affected both supply and demand, but the demand-side shock was more pronounced, while deeper structural contradictions also became more visible.

First, the deep adjustment in the property sector caused a major contraction in demand. New commercial property sales fell from a peak of 18.2 trillion yuan ($2.67 trillion) in 2021 to 8.4 trillion yuan in 2025. Second, falling property prices reduced household assets, prompting some families to reduce mortgage debt in order to repair balance sheets, which in turn restrained consumption. Third, declining land-sale revenues and rising debt-repayment burdens have forced local governments to focus on resolving existing debt in recent years, therefore constraining investment expansion.

Insufficient demand is also due to institutional factors. China has long maintained a production-oriented fiscal and tax system, with a relatively high share of taxes levied during the production process. This has encouraged local governments to prioritize production over consumption, causing consumption growth to lag behind supply expansion. Therefore, expanding effective demand requires not only stronger policy support, but also deeper reforms.

Against this backdrop, China should combine stronger policy support with deeper reforms to sustain economic recovery and improvement.

China should intensify the implementation of proactive fiscal policy. Although the scale of new government debt this year has reached a record high, the increase from last year remains relatively limited, and broad fiscal spending growth is still below nominal GDP growth.

Moving forward, fiscal policy implementation should be strengthened and accelerated. Fiscal expenditure structures should also be adjusted, redirecting some funds used for investment toward public services and livelihood spending. A plan to raise household incomes should be launched more quickly.

The article is an English translation of remarks delivered by Wang Yiming, former deputy head of the Development Research Center of the State Council, at the CMF Quarterly Forum in the first quarter.
The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:44 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:44 PM

CHINA

Institute to boost STEM education

China, UNESCO partnership to drive innovation, global resource sharing

By **WANG XIN** in Shanghai
wangxin2@chinadaily.com.cn

STEM education is vital for humanity and essential to addressing major global challenges, including climate change, biodiversity loss, health, energy, food systems and digital transformation, UNESCO Director-General Khaled El-Enany said recently in Shanghai, calling for joint efforts to advance inclusive and accessible STEM education globally.

El-Enany made the remarks on Thursday at a high-level symposium on STEM education held at the UNESCO International Institute for STEM Education, or UNESCO IISTEM, which formally began operations following the inaugural meeting of its governing board held on the same day.

Unveiled in September in Shanghai, the Category I institute was established with a mandate to promote inclusive, equitable and quality education for all in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, or STEM, from early childhood to adulthood.

El-Enany said the inauguration of the institute marks renewed momentum in the long-standing cooperation between China and UNESCO, a strong and comprehensive partnership spanning the full scope of the organization's mandate and networks.

He said the institute will provide high-level expertise across strategic fields, focusing on curriculum development, teacher capacity-building, lifelong learning, educational planning and policy support.

"Our collective prosperity, resilience and well-being depend on educated, creative and forward-looking minds capable of imagining and building solutions that do not yet exist. STEM education will only fulfill its promise if it is inclusive and accessible to all," El-Enany said.

He noted the many challenges affecting STEM education globally, including shortages of laboratories, equipment, connectivity and trained teachers. Many countries also lack the capacity to fully engage in scientific and technological innovation.

With the new institute, UNESCO aims to tap into vast potential and help bridge divides, especially in Africa and Small Island Developing States, or SIDS.

"With China's support, UNESCO is already leading a $3 million program to strengthen STEM education in both Africa and SIDS — including Mali, Uganda, Samoa and the Solomon Islands — with a focus on curriculum reform, teacher training and innovative learning resources," El-Enany said.

Calling the new institute a global hub serving all people, he urged greater efforts to bring science closer to classrooms, technology closer to teachers, and innovation closer to those who need it most.

John Michael Kosterlitz, a Nobel laureate in physics and honorary professor at Soochow University, also underscored the importance of the institute, saying that "humanity needs STEM" to contribute to society.

"STEM education is not only about producing more scientists and engineers. It is about cultivating a way of thinking ... Humanity today faces serious challenges, and they require people who can cross boundaries, think clearly and act responsibly," he said.

Efim Zelmanov, a Russian-American mathematician and Fields Medal laureate who currently serves as chair professor at Southern University of Science and Technology, praised China's sustained efforts to promote STEM education.

"I find the support for mathematical and, more generally, STEM education in China breathtaking and amazing. It is the support at all levels of society. This is the reason why I moved to China in 2022 and have not regretted it for a second," he said.

China is continuing its efforts to cultivate STEM talent and improve scientific literacy while working toward a shared future for humanity.

"To build a peaceful, sustainable and prosperous future for all, we must deepen global cooperation and urgently improve STEM education worldwide. This will empower everyone to benefit from technological advances and industrial transformation," said Ren Youqun, vice-minister of education and chairperson of the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO.

China looks forward to working with UNESCO and all partners to develop the IISTEM into a laboratory for new STEM concepts and approaches, a global hub for policy dialogue and cooperation, an innovative platform for sharing high-quality STEM resources, and a key driver of capacity-building, especially in developing countries, Ren added.

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Shanghai sets target to build intl shipping hub

By **WANG YING** in Shanghai
wang_ying@chinadaily.com.cn

As Shanghai moves from scale expansion to capacity enhancement in building an international shipping center during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, demand for talent with cross-disciplinary expertise is rising, according to experts.

The port of Shanghai, the world's largest container port for 16 consecutive years, handled 55.06 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) throughout 2025, and is targeting an annual container throughput of 58 million TEUs during the 15th Five-Year Plan period, Chu Beiping, president of Shanghai Maritime University, said at the Shanghai International Shipping Center Capacity Enhancement Think Tank Forum held recently in Shanghai.

"The growth in scale is merely part of the capacity enhancement in the development of the Shanghai International Shipping Center. More important are talent supply, rule-making capacity and competition for international discourse influence, which are key to elevating the center's status and capability," Chu said at the forum, which was jointly held by the Shanghai Federation of Social Science Association and Shanghai Maritime University.

Chu said future efforts should focus on the emerging needs of the shipping industry by developing new interdisciplinary fields, jointly cultivating professionals with cross-disciplinary integration capabilities, and building a knowledge hub that is demand-driven, collaboration-based and underpinned by standards development.

Against this backdrop, Shanghai Maritime University launched the country's first undergraduate program in international cruise management in 2025, enrolling 31 students, a move expected to help address Shanghai's shortage of high-end maritime service talent, said Wu Xianhua, dean of the university's School of Economics and Management.

"Through the integration of industry and education, the bachelor's program aims to sharpen students' practical skills, foreign-language proficiency and international outlook," Wu said.

According to Wu, the program is in response to China's fast-developing cruise economy, which is evolving from a pure cruise consumer market into a comprehensive industrial chain spanning construction, independent design and operations.

"The undergraduate program is designed to fill the significant gap in medium- to high-end cruise management talent in China, and is expected to become a stable source of high-quality talent supporting Shanghai's development as an international shipping center," Wu said.

"Taking a medium-sized cruise ship as an example, there are at least 1,000 crew members onboard on a regular basis, with mid- to high-level management talent accounting for more than 5 percent," Wu added.

Representing the highest level of China's shipping center development, Shanghai serves as a stabilizer in global port and shipping development, supporting China's opening-up and supply chain stability, said Liu Xin, director of the Transport Planning and Research Institute.

"To become a globally leading international shipping center, Shanghai should strengthen its soft power during the 15th Five-Year Plan period," Liu said.

According to Liu, the focus will be on enhancing four key capabilities: facility resilience and safety, global shipping resource allocation, leadership in intelligent and green development, and comprehensive financial and legal support.

"Shanghai should strive to achieve comprehensive leadership in scale and efficiency, resilience and security, integrated services, intelligent and green development, and economic vitality," Liu added.



Guests pose for a photo in front of China's second domestically built large cruise ship, *Adora Flora City*, before its departure from Shanghai on Saturday for a 12-day sea trial. The vessel can accommodate up to 5,232 passengers and is scheduled for delivery in November 2026. YIN LIQIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Learning tea traditions



International students learn traditional tea-making techniques under the guidance of local producers at a tea culture park in Jurong of Zhenjiang city, Jiangsu province, on Sunday. More than 70 international students from universities including Nanjing Normal University and Jiangsu University took part in tea picking, tea processing and tea ceremony activities to experience Chinese tea culture firsthand. ZHONG XUEMAN / XINHUA

Study reveals how westerlies deliver moisture to the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau

By **PALDEN NYIMA** and **DAQIONG** in Lhasa

A groundbreaking study has unveiled how massive, high-altitude wind currents — known as the westerlies — deliver essential moisture to the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. Often called the "Asian Water Towers", this region serves as a critical freshwater source for nearly two billion people downstream.

The research, led by Gao Jing and Yao Tandong from the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Institute of Tibetan Plateau Research, alongside international scientists, solves a long-standing puzzle: how these high-altitude winds pump moisture into the local environment even when it is not raining or snowing.

The findings were published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences on May 6.

As rising temperatures accelerate glacier retreat and change river flows, understanding how the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau gets its water is vital for predicting future water supplies.

To map this hidden water cycle, the team combined real-world field data with advanced computer weather models. They launched specialized, helium-filled "Jimu balloons" to collect 32 vertical atmospheric profiles at two key locations on the plateau. These sites included Lulang, a forested valley that acts as a moisture pathway, and Nam Co, a high-altitude saltwater lake.

These balloons measured temperature, humidity, and the unique chemical "fingerprints" of water molecules, known as stable isotopes. By tracking these isotopes, scientists can trace exactly where water vapor came from and how it has changed over time.

> The results showed that moisture carried by the westerlies undergoes significant phase changes — turning from invisible vapor into tiny water droplets — as it sinks."
>
> **Gao Jing,** deputy director of the national key laboratory of earth system and resource environment on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau

At the heart of the discovery is a nighttime process called atmospheric "decoupling".

During the day, solar heating mixes the air near the ground with the air high above. But at night, the ground cools rapidly, creating a highly stratified, three-layer atmospheric sandwich over the plateau.

This structure is divided into the boundary layer closest to the ground, a middle buffer zone called the mixed layer, and the free troposphere, which acts as the high-altitude highway where the westerlies blow.

As the ground cools, these air layers separate, or "decouple", allowing the moisture carried by the high-altitude westerlies to sink toward the plateau.

"The results showed that moisture carried by the westerlies undergoes significant phase changes — turning from invisible vapor into tiny water droplets — as it sinks," said Gao Jing, deputy director of the national key laboratory of earth system and resource environment on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau.

As this sinking moisture cools, it forms a "thermal inversion cap" — a layer of warm air trapping cooler air beneath it. This cap stops the air from mixing aggressively, allowing the water vapor to quietly condense into the lower atmosphere instead.

"Remarkably, around 30 percent of the moisture transported by the westerlies is integrated into the local cycle through these nighttime phase transitions," Gao said.

The study provides a crucial breakthrough for climate science. By revealing exactly how the westerlies feed the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, the research gives scientists a more accurate benchmark to improve weather forecasting models and optimize climate projections for the region.

Furthermore, understanding this modern process helps scientists better interpret historical climate data locked away inside ancient ice cores, offering a clearer picture of how Asia's water supply has fluctuated over centuries and how it might change in the future.

Contact the writers at palden_nyima@chinadaily.com.cn

Chang'e 6 findings challenge Earth water theories

By **LI MENGHAN**
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

When asteroids struck the Earth-moon system, they devastated ancient landscapes, triggered global catastrophic events and delivered water and organic compounds essential for life, leading scientists to long believe that carbonaceous asteroids from the outer solar system were a major source of the building blocks for life on Earth.

Now, a study on lunar samples from China's Chang'e 6 mission is challenging conventional theories about this cosmic process. By analyzing tiny metal grains in lunar soil, Chinese scientists have reconstructed changes in asteroid impacts between 4.3 billion and 2.8 billion years ago.

The findings were published on April 27 in the Journal of Geophysical Research: Planets.

Frequent geological activity on Earth, such as plate movement and erosion, has erased most traces of ancient asteroid impacts. As a result, meteorites — fragments of asteroids that fall to Earth — mainly preserve records from only the past 2 million years.

In contrast, the moon, which formed around the same time as Earth but has remained largely inactive geologically, serves as a well-preserved "diary of the solar system", retaining impact records spanning nearly 4 billion years.

"When an asteroid strikes the moon, the impactor vaporizes and breaks apart under extreme heat, leaving behind tiny fragments, including iron-nickel metal grains," said Liu Xiaoying, first author of the study and a postdoctoral researcher at the Institute of Geology and Geophysics, Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Liu said these metal grains are chemically different from the moon's native rocks and contain distinct trace elements depending on the type of asteroid involved. These differences act like "chemical fingerprints", allowing scientists to identify what kinds of asteroids struck the moon.

Using these "fingerprints", the research team examined 40 fragments of impact debris from the Chang'e 6 lunar samples.

Among them, 13 were found in ancient lunar highland rocks and recorded impacts dating back 4.3 billion years. The other 27 were preserved in relatively more recent volcanic rock debris, recording impacts accumulated about 2.8 billion years ago.

The study found that the 13 older fragments mainly came from ordinary rocky asteroids and iron-rich meteorites originating in the inner solar system. Metals from carbonaceous asteroids accounted for less than 8 percent.

By comparison, among the 27 fragments, the proportion linked to carbonaceous asteroids rose to about 26 percent.

The findings suggest impacts from carbonaceous asteroids became significantly more frequent between 4.3 billion and 2.8 billion years ago.

However, this increase occurred during a relatively late stage, when overall asteroid bombardment had already declined, possibly limiting the total amount of water and other volatile substances delivered to the Earth-moon system.

The team proposed several scenarios for the change in asteroid types, including giant-planet migration that scattered carbonaceous asteroids inward, the Yarkovsky effect gradually shifting them into new orbits, or the breakup of one or more large carbonaceous bodies into numerous fragments.

"The study may challenge existing theories about the origin of Earth's water," said Lin Yangting, the study's corresponding author and a researcher at the institute.

Lin added that with more lunar samples expected from future missions, follow-up studies will focus on different periods in lunar history to further uncover the mysteries of asteroid impacts and the evolution of the solar system.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:44 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:44 PM

CHINA

Editor's note: *The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence is reshaping nearly every facet of human existence. This series will take an in-depth look at this transformative force, examining how AI is redefining the way we live, work and interact.*



Seniors operate a mechanized vehicle that helps them move around at a smart elderly care center in Beijing in March. JU HUANZONG / XINHUA



An elderly woman practices a *baduanjin* exercise routine at a robot-assisted elderly care center in Beijing in March. JU HUANZONG / XINHUA



An elderly woman conducts a basic checkup at a community center in Huzhou, Zhejiang province, in January. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

AI tools enable seniors to 'triage at home'

Digital technologies increase potential scope of healthcare access among aging population

By **WEI WANGYU**
weiwangyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Ye Cuihua, 79, doesn't head to the county clinic when she feels a flutter in her chest. She glances at her wrist. Within seconds, her smartwatch syncs with an app called Ant AQ telling her that her blood pressure is slightly elevated. It follows by providing advice to reduce her salt intake, keep monitoring, and call her doctor if the symptoms persist.

"It feels like having someone at home who can always answer," Ye said.

Across China, this scene is playing out with increasing urgency. As the nation's population aged 65 and above doubled from 7 percent to 14 percent in just 23 years — a demographic shift that took France a century to endure — the medical system is hitting a breaking point. The solution isn't just more hospitals; it is "triage at home" powered by artificial intelligence.

China's medical system has long suffered from a basic imbalance: the best doctors and equipment cluster in big cities, while smaller towns and the countryside make do with less.

"For older patients like us, getting care often means a long bus ride, hours of waiting, and the nagging uncertainty of not knowing whether a symptom is serious enough to justify the trip," Ye said.

AI does not fix all of that, but it is beginning to reshape a critical moment that comes before any hospital visit, that is, the moment a person decides whether to go at all.

"For many older adults, the hardest question is not what treatment do I need, but do I need to see a doctor in the first place," Ye added.

AI tools are able to cross-reference symptoms, health records and basic readings from wearable devices, offering preliminary guidance that can turn vague aches and worries into something a person can act on.

Cai Juan, a caregiver at Taikangzhijia, a senior care facility in Wuhan, Hubei province, has witnessed a noticeable change in health awareness among residents in recent years. "Residents who once ignored mild discomfort or panicked over minor symptoms now tend to consult a digital tool first," she said.

"It doesn't replace the doctor," she added. "But it eases the anxiety and sometimes catches things that would have been left too long."

For elderly users, though, the meaning of these tools runs deeper than efficiency. They also introduce a new kind of presence into daily life.



A senior woman participates in setting up and testing an elderly care robot that can perform basic health checkups, monitor health status and offer companionship at a welfare center in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, in March last year. YAO YINGKANG / FOR CHINA DAILY



A man learns about smart glasses during an expo of senior care products in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, in September. LIANG XU / XINHUA



A senior woman tries a physical therapy robot in Beijing in March. JU HUANZONG / XINHUA

At Kangyuxuan, a private elderly care home in Beijing, some residents have built routines around their digital assistants, including checking medication schedules, logging sleep, or simply asking questions about a twinge in the knee.

Staff members say these interactions, while practical on the surface, carry an emotional undertone as well.

"They are not just using a tool," said Cui Xiaohan, a caregiver at the elderly care home. "They are getting used to being responded to."

In a country where family structures are changing fast and millions of elderly people live alone or with minimal daily company, that responsiveness matters. AI systems — always available, never impatient — can partially fill the silences left by absent children or overworked caregivers. This does not mean technology replaces human relationships. But it suggests that care, as older people actually experience it, is increasingly a hybrid affair — part human, part machine.

None of this, however, is seamless.

Although smartphone adoption among Chinese adults aged 60 and above has grown rapidly — with internet penetration reaching 53.7 percent by the end of 2025 — digital literacy remains a barrier, with many seniors struggling to navigate cluttered app interfaces, fragmented platforms and unfamiliar interaction patterns.

"A system can be brilliant under the hood, but if a 75-year-old cannot figure out how to use it, that brilliance counts for little," Cui said.

Some platforms have begun introducing simplified layouts, voice commands and even dialect recognition — adjustments that sound minor but determine whether a tool actually gets used.

"In February, Ant AQ, an app developed to help the elderly with health checks and medical consultation, started to provide a mode that is more suitable for the elderly," said Shen Yunfang, head of communications at Ant Health.

"Specifically speaking, we developed a mode that is able to understand different dialects, considering that many of the elderly could not speak in standard Mandarin," she said.

Compared with younger users, however, many older adults remain wary of advice delivered by an algorithm.

In Wuhan, Ye described her approach plainly, "I read what it tells me, but I still need a doctor to confirm."

AI may serve as a useful first step, but for most elderly users it does not carry the authority of a physician. It operates within a broader ecosystem in which human judgment still has the final word.

The rise of health AI is forcing a rethink of what "access" means. For decades, access to healthcare was measured in physical terms — how many hospitals, how many doctors, how far to the nearest clinic. Increasingly, it also has a digital dimension, that is, whether people can obtain, understand and act on health information.

For older populations, this opens real possibilities — medical knowledge delivered directly to the home, reducing the need for travel. But it also risks creating new kinds of exclusion, shutting out those who cannot navigate the technology.

The upshot is that the success of health AI may depend less on how smart it gets, and more on how accessible it is to use.

For seniors like Ye, she monitors her health more often now and seeks guidance earlier than she once did. "I used to wait and see," she said. "Now I check first."

At a systemic level, though, the transformation is still unfinished. AI can speed things up, widen the net and support better decisions. But it cannot resolve the inherent uncertainties of medicine, and it is in no position to shoulder complex clinical judgment.

The future of AI in elderly care may lie not in replacement but in coexistence — algorithms alongside physicians, digital tools alongside lived experience.

As China continues to age, that coexistence will likely become a defining feature of its healthcare landscape.

Medical progress presents opportunities, challenges

By **WEI WANGYU**

China's push to integrate artificial intelligence into its healthcare system has highlighted bottlenecks in its rollout, from elite urban hospitals to rural clinics.

The application of the technology in the medical field has so far proved uneven, with caution coming to the fore in its use.

"That has put imaging — radiology in particular — at the front of the line," said Wu You, an associate professor at the School of Healthcare Management at Tsinghua University. "In these specialties, AI systems help process the flood of CT and MRI scans, improving both speed and consistency."

Digital pathology and hospital quality management have followed. "Tools that review prescriptions, audit medical records, and flag irregularities in disease-specific protocols are increasingly part of the daily workflow at major hospitals," Wu said.

But these applications remain concentrated in large, well-resourced institutions — the kind of places that already have the infrastructure and expertise to absorb a new technology.

When AI moves closer to the patient, and especially to elderly patients, things get more complicated.

One underappreciated issue is the uneven capacity for working alongside machines. Research has shown that less experienced doctors sometimes lean too heavily on AI outputs, which can lead to more false positives or a kind of passive decision-making.

"How well they work depends heavily on who is using them. In primary care settings — often understaffed, undertrained, and far from the top-tier hospitals where these tools are first tested — that dependency can limit what AI actually delivers," Wu said.

A second challenge is the gap between lab conditions and the real world. Regulatory approval in China ensures that AI systems meet baseline standards under specific, controlled circumstances. But once a tool lands in a busy rural clinic or a community health center with aging equipment, outcomes can look quite different.

"How the system is integrated, how long it has been running, and how comfortable the staff is with it all shape performance in ways that no test environment can fully predict," said Mo Kai, a senior consultant at the Singapore-based regional association APACMed.

Some experts have begun arguing that governance needs to extend well beyond the moment of approval, into ongoing monitoring and adjustment.

Data governance adds yet another layer. Medical records are sensitive, and hospitals — understandably — are cautious about sharing them with outside technology companies. Encryption, data isolation and contractual safeguards help, but institutional trust builds slowly.

"For elderly care, all of these structural issues converge with a more basic question, that is 'can the people who need these tools most actually use them'," Mo said.

"Looking ahead, the next chapter of AI healthcare in China will probably be defined less by dramatic leaps in what models can do and more by the hard, unglamorous work of integration," he said.

"The important questions are: How do you fit AI into existing clinical routines? How do you make it work across a healthcare system that ranges from world-class urban hospitals to bare-bones village clinics? And how do you keep it accessible to people who did not grow up with smartphones?"

For a country where the population is aging at a pace that few systems have ever had to absorb, these are not abstract questions. The answers will shape not just the future of technology in medicine, but what it means to be cared for in old age.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:44 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:44 PM

CULTURE



Handmade stories from the highlands

Ancient Tibetan crafts reach Beijing, where visitors watch artisans work and learn about heritage through engaging experiences, **Yang Feiyue** reports.





A diverse array of artifacts, including *thangka* paintings, glazed porcelain panels and carved wooden blocks created by artisans from Rangtang county, Sichuan province, is on display at Beihai Park in Beijing. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY











The event at Beihai Park features (from top) a live demonstration of *thangka* painting, hands-on workshops and traditional Tibetan music and dance performances.

Inside Beihai Park in downtown Beijing, beneath the shade of ancient cypress trees, a horse appears frozen mid-stride, its muscles taut and mane lifted as if caught in the wind. But the image has been fixed in fire.

Painted in mineral pigments yet sealed in glaze, it belongs neither entirely to the world of *thangka* (Tibetan Buddhist painting or scroll) nor to traditional ceramics. Instead, it exists somewhere in between.

The piece is part of a newly unveiled series at the *Cultural Homeland — Blessed Land Rangtang* exhibition, which opened in late April at Chanfu Temple in the park.

Now in its third year, the event has become an annual meeting point between the remote Rangtang county in southwestern Sichuan province and one of Beijing's most historic imperial gardens.

This year's exhibition, which runs through May 25, adds a new dimension to that dialogue.

Among the most striking works on display are porcelain panels inspired by the epic of King Gesar — a centuries-old oral tradition often described as one of the world's longest epic narratives, recounting the heroic deeds of a legendary Tibetan ruler and his warriors.

The porcelain series depicts more than 30 generals in elaborate armor, each rendered with distinct expressions and movements. Created by *thangka* artists from Rangtang, who work in China's porcelain capital, Jingdezhen in Jiangxi province, the pieces are the result of years of experimentation.

Translating *thangka* imagery onto porcelain involves bridging two very different artistic systems, as traditional *thangka* painting is typically created on cloth using mineral pigments, while porcelain requires high-temperature firing, the exhibition organizers note.

Artists have to adapt Tibetan painting techniques to ceramic surfaces. The finished works retain the detailed linework and storytelling associated with *thangka* while taking on the glazed depth and luminosity of porcelain.

Crossing distances

The journey from Rangtang to Beijing is not an easy one. Located deep in the Aba Tibetan-Qiang autonomous prefecture, the county is more than 500 kilometers from the provincial capital, Chengdu, often requiring over 10 hours of travel by road.

Yet, that remoteness has also helped preserve Rangtang's remarkable concentration of intangible cultural heritage. The county is home to 143 registered heritage items and dozens of training workshops, where artisans spend years mastering crafts passed down through generations.

For three consecutive years, those traditions have traveled beyond the plateau. Artisans, performers and cultural practitioners have made their way to Beihai Park, turning what began as a one-time exhibition into a recurring cultural exchange.

Inside the temple halls, visitors move between rows of *thangka* paintings, glazed porcelain panels and carved wooden blocks, while conversations about the history and techniques behind the exhibits fill the space.

In one corner, artisans demonstrate how horse motifs are printed onto Tibetan paper using hand-carved plates. At another, visitors trace gold lines onto black ceramic pieces under the guidance of instructors. Nearby, shelves of crafts and food products, from hand-shaped pottery cups to woven textiles and highland snacks, invite visitors to browse, touch and purchase.

"There are exhibitions, but also experiences," says Ren Kai, deputy director of Beihai Park.

"Visitors can see, participate and even take something home."

This shift, he adds, reflects a broader change in how the exhibition is designed, moving away from passive viewing toward hands-on participation, where cultural objects become part of a lived experience rather than distant artifacts.

Cao Fei, who is in charge of the interactive programs, guides visitors to press their fingers carefully on a sheet of fibrous Tibetan paper at a long wooden table. Beside them, a local artist lifts a carved wooden block from a tray of ink, then steadies each visitor's hand as the paper meets the surface.

When the paper is peeled away, a vivid horse image emerges.

"It is a wind horse, a traditional motif symbolizing luck and the carrying of prayers," Cao says.

"This year we introduced more hands-on activities. We want people not only to see these traditions, but also to understand how they are made."

The paper itself carries a story. Made from the roots of the wolfsbane plant, it is produced through a labor-intensive process of lifting pulp from water by hand, sheet by sheet.

"It is highly durable and resistant to water, insects and decay, which is why it has long been used for printing important scriptures," she says.

Around the corner, another group gathers around a table of dark matte pottery. Visitors dip fine brushes into gold pigment and carefully trace characters across curved surfaces.

Cao sees the distance between the plateau and the capital dissolving through these interactions.

For Wang Zhen, general manager of the Beijing Tourism Group's subsidiary BTG Tourism Development, this shift reflects something larger than exhibition design.

"It's about helping people understand the deeper value of these crafts. They are not simply artifacts, but living art forms that still resonate in contemporary life," Wang says.

He sees the exhibition as part of a broader effort to transform cultural heritage into an emotional and intellectual journey shared by both creators and audiences.

> "When visitors understand the stories, techniques and meanings behind these artifacts, they stop seeing them as distant objects from another time and place and begin to see them as part of their own cultural fabric."
>
> **Wang Zhen,** general manager of BTG Tourism Development

"When visitors understand the stories, techniques and meanings behind these artifacts, they stop seeing them as distant objects from another time and place and begin to see them as part of their own cultural fabric," Wang says.

Over the past three years, BTG Tourism Development has worked with Rangtang to build a pathway linking exhibitions with tourism routes, study programs and product development.

The county's remoteness, once viewed as a disadvantage, has increasingly become part of its appeal, Wang says. Many visitors, he notes, are urban professionals seeking a slower, quieter experience.

"When they arrive, they don't feel the journey was long, and most believe it was worth it," he says.

Outside the exhibition halls, that value becomes tangible.

Growing interest

At a small stall, Badanlam arranges rows of handmade pottery while speaking with visitors who stop to test the texture and weight of her work.

"People have been showing strong interest in our handcrafted items," says the woman in her 20s.

Her coffee cups, adapted for modern use, are among the most popular items. Familiar in function, they still carry the marks of handwork, featuring slight ridges along the rim, faint thumb impressions in the clay, and small variations in thickness that reveal the rhythm of the potter's hands.

Last year, Badanlam stayed in Beijing for a week and sold hundreds of pieces. This year, she notices that the interest has continued.

But for her, the change runs deeper than sales. Growing up in Rangtang, her life was once defined by physical labor — long days spent digging for caterpillar fungus and medicinal herbs in the mountains. "Back then, we depended on labor," she says.

As a teenager, Badanlam joined a local training center and spent years learning language skills and traditional crafts. The process was slow, repetitive, and at times uncertain. Now, she makes pottery, creates traditional clay works, and explains their meanings to visitors at places she never imagined visiting. Her income has increased by about 30 to 40 percent.

"But more importantly, I can come here. I can travel. I can let people understand where we are from," she says.

Luo Xianquan, an official of Rangtang, notes that the county has been selected as one of the first national pilot counties for cultural industries empowering rural vitalization. With 46 intangible cultural heritage training workshops, the county has helped over 3,000 local farmers and herders find employment close to home, increasing annual incomes by an average of 4,000 yuan ($588) per person.

Young Tibetan women like Badanlam reflect "how 'fingertip skills' are being turned into real economic returns across Rangtang", Luo points out.

Around Badanlam, visitors continue to browse. Some leave carrying small objects ranging from a printed sheet to a lamp and a cup still bearing the imprint of a hand.

Modest as they are, they carry with them a journey that begins in the highlands, passes through fire, paper and clay, and settles quietly into everyday life.

"I'm happy that I can let people understand where we are from this way," she says.

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:44 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:44 PM

LIFE





Left: Children explore the recently opened Qianhai Nature Center in Shenzhen, Guangdong province. **Middle:** A visitor interacts with a local musical instrument at the Taklimakan center. **Right:** Visitors take photos of the front of the Qianhai center. **Bottom:** The desert center has recently risen from the earth against the blue sky, its color indistinguishable from the dunes around it, next to a layered red frame, which is the signature of the Chinese National Geography magazine.

Treasures that make the Taklimakan tick

The Chinese National Geography magazine's new nature center allows visitors to learn about and connect with the country's largest desert, **Yang Feiyue** reports.

East of Alar in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, across the Tarim River, the city's green landscape gives way to an expanse of ocher. This is the northern edge of China's largest desert, the Taklimakan, one of the thresholds where ancient Silk Road travelers once stepped into the sea of sand.

Here, a new building has recently risen from the earth, its color indistinguishable from the dunes around it. Next to the building is a layered red frame, the signature of the Chinese National Geography magazine, standing against an expanse of ocher sand and brilliant blue sky — this is the Taklimakan Nature Center.

"Nature centers are small-to-medium integrated experience spaces, mostly under 1,000 square meters, that use scientific and artistic means to offer a deep, systematic interpretation of nature," says Guo Yingqian, general manager of the Chinese National Geography Camp.

Three narrative threads — The Realm of Life, The Way of Survival, The Path of Ecology — unfold across the exhibition space, offering a systematic decoding of what makes the Taklimakan tick.

Approaching it, a nine-layer topographical model meticulously carved from contour data brings the region's scale into focus. The snow-capped Tomur Peak, the highest point of the Tianshan Mountains, rises to 7,443 meters, while the desert floor lies at an elevation of just over 1,000 meters. A glowing globe reveals that even from space, this sandy expanse is unmistakable.

Surrounding mountains trap moisture, leaving the desert with an average annual rainfall of just 26 millimeters. At the center, visitors can turn the device and watch sand swirl, creating their own miniature dust storm. Additionally, a massive interactive thermometer lets visitors feel the region's wild swing between scorching days and freezing nights.

But one of the most astonishing revelations is when a mirror installation shows visitors a staggering amount of meltwater from surrounding peaks seeping underground, accumulating over eons into a subterranean sea beneath the sand.

Other artfully reproduced images include snow-brushed dunes and the ancient cities of Loulan and Niya buried beneath the sand.



Three narrative threads — The Realm of Life, The Way of Survival, The Path of Ecology — unfold across the exhibition space, offering a systematic decoding of what makes the Taklimakan tick. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"The Realm of Life chapter opens with the Extreme Realm exhibits, reshaping people's perception of the desert," Guo explains.

It then moves into the Desert Creatures section, which systematically presents the survival strategies of dozens of endemic animals and plants that have evolved to survive drought and high temperatures.

Among them, the wild camel takes center stage. Visitors can stand beside a life-size model to touch its head and hip, then push a button to hear the sound of a *satar*, a Uygur bow-stringed instrument.

"The idea is to make learning tactile and memorable," she says.

Visitors learn that wild and domestic camels diverged 800,000 years ago. Fewer than 1,000 wild camels remain today, making them rarer than giant pandas.

Many have found it fascinating that these wild camels' oval red blood cells keep flowing even in extreme dehydration, and their specialized coats deflect the desert's searing heat, Guo says.

Nearby, a massive dune-shaped installation teems with hand-drawn, meticulously detailed life.

Tarim hares and foxes use oversized ears to radiate heat. Desert beetles have fused wing covers that function like personal "air conditioners", capturing exhaled moisture. Long-eared jerboas are the desert's "jumping stars", while great gerbils, or "desert rats", build sprawling underground cities with distinct quarters for sleeping and storage.

"We've added interactive elements throughout," Guo notes, adding that 30 scientific models are on display.

The nature center's staff expect visitors to find the most delightful surprise in the Shifting Dunes section, where six classic dune types, ranging from crescent and linear to parabolic, transverse and dome, have been reimagined as sculptural "little cakes" displayed in jewel cases.

The nature center also weaves in human stories in a colorful reconstructed Oasis Dwellers area that re-creates domestic life along the desert's edge.

Patterns of almonds, pomegranates and grapevines bloom on fabric stamped by traditional wooden molds. Local distinctive Atlas silk shimmers, while four traditional housing models, such as the wind-resistant *Ayiwan* (a square, protruding-top structure), depict daily life.

Recordings of the Muqam suite fill the air, featuring eight instruments. An interactive backdrop invites visitors to "join" the ensemble, reaching through cutouts to strum a *dutar*, a two-stringed lute that is characterized by its long neck and pear-shaped body, alongside illustrated musicians.

The Way of Survival chapter then turns to the wisdom of coexistence between people and the desert.

"The 'Alar Miracle' section shows how the local residents created agricultural miracles on the Gobi Desert, ingeniously using saline-alkali water to cultivate 'inland seafood'," Guo says.

Seventy years ago, though this area was barren, locals managed to grow cotton and farm blue crabs and prawns to ship across China.

"The people here didn't just endure. They created beauty, music and poetry," she notes.

The final section, Desert Arteries, celebrates the roads and railways that now traverse the sands. It exposes visitors to the challenges in building those engineering marvels on shifting dunes and defending against relentless erosion.

The exhibition's showstopper is the Green Belt display, one of humanity's longest-running desert-containment projects. Over 46 years, multiple generations have built a 3,046-kilometer-long green belt around the Taklimakan. Satellite imagery shows the once-barren land now encircled by green.

Visitors can literally touch the belt. A strip of Xinjiang long-staple cotton invites handling, and they can stamp a card with images of the plants that made it possible — poplar, saxaul, tamarisk, and calligonum.

"Put on the green scarf, and feel the desert's embrace," the display says.

The Taklimakan Nature Center is part of a broader vision that extends far beyond Xinjiang.

On the opposite edge of the country, another Chinese National Geography project has taken shape — the Qianhai Nature Center in Shenzhen, Guangdong province.

Sitting along the shores of Lingdingyang Bay, the center transforms the daily drama of dusk into a hands-on science experience. Visitors can use dark filters to safely watch the sun sink into the sea, flatten the solar disc with a curved prism that mimics Earth's atmosphere, and learn about the elusive "green flash" that sometimes crowns the vanishing sun.

A large interactive screen offers real-time sunset forecasts and simulations that show the timing and position of the sunset's shift throughout the year along the bay's 68-km coastline.

The two centers represent a growing network of the Chinese National Geography Camp's aim to transform how people experience the natural world, according to Guo.

The Xinjiang center is already resonating with local officials.

Dan Hong, director of the local culture, sports, radio, television, and tourism center, notes that the nature center allows visitors to experience both the unique natural beauty of the Taklimakan Desert and the vibrant cultural atmosphere of the oasis.

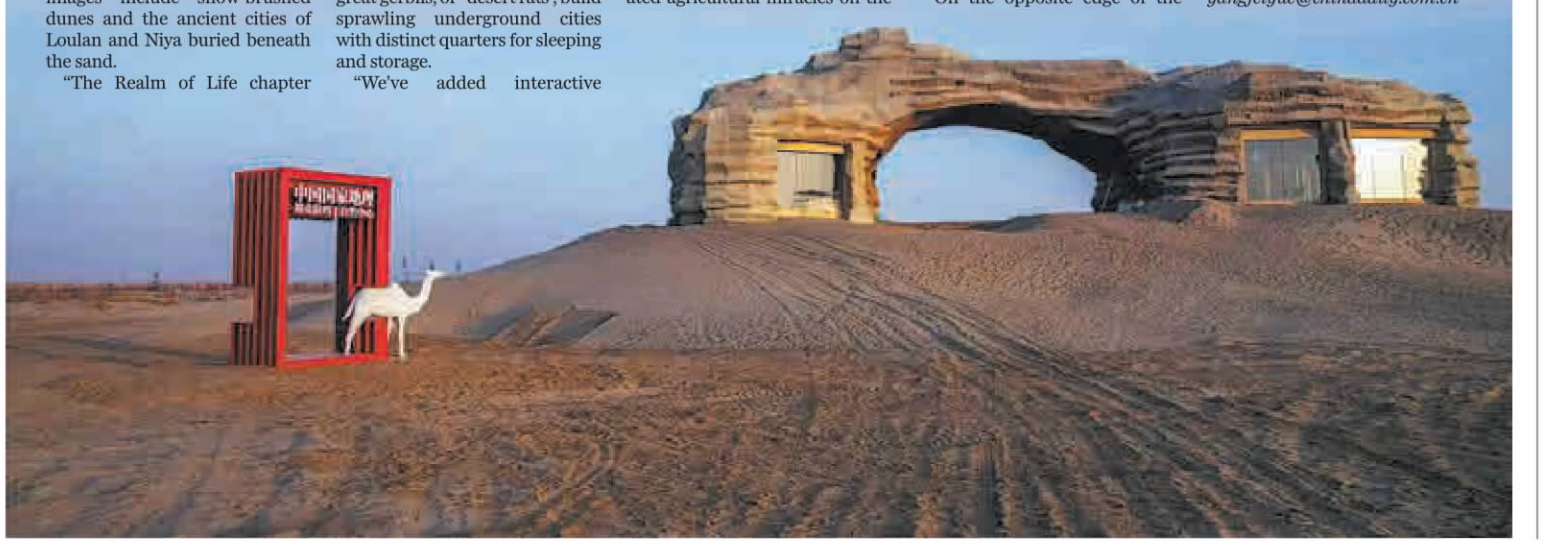
It offers a relaxing, enjoyable, and educational experience, and visitors can gather more information here before heading out to other local attractions, Dan says.

At the same time, visitors can learn about how the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps is developing the frontier region in Alar and gain a new understanding of this young city, Dan adds.

The center will connect with the nature imaging center in Kashgar and other nature centers in Aksu, as well as in Makit county, all of which contribute to a growing network of southern Xinjiang's scattered landscapes and deep heritage.

The ultimate goal is to enable visitors to systematically understand and experience how mountains shape the desert, how oases nurture civilization, and how humans wisely coexist with extreme environments, Guo says.

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn



Watsons pop-up indicates island upgrade

GUANGZHOU — What if you could step into a 19th-century pharmacy and find today's most popular skincare and sparkling water on the shelf? That is an experience Watsons is re-creating at its new pop-up store on Shamian Island in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, near one of its earliest locations from about two centuries ago.

The store, spanning over 100 square meters, is designed to evoke the atmosphere of a century-old pharmacy. The initiative coincides with the AS Watson Group's 185th anniversary. The company traces its origins to the Hong Kong Dispensary, founded in 1841, with Alexander Skirving Watson, a British pharmacist, serving as one of its first managers.

The pop-up showcases a wide range of health, body care and beauty products. Items on display include everything from early-era Vaseline to modern skincare lines, as well as a retro version of Watsons soda water for visitors to sample. The brand's iconic bottled water has evolved into a Chinese lifestyle symbol that reflects changing consumer habits.

> "Encouraging century-old enterprises to return to Shamian is part of this plan."
>
> **Li Chen,** project operator

According to the company, the pop-up is not only a tribute to its history but also a response to China's consumption upgrade, aiming to offer more tailored and diversified services in the health and beauty sector. Since re-entering the Chinese mainland market following the reform and opening up in 1978, Watsons has expanded to nearly 3,500 stores.

The move demonstrates foreign investors' confidence in China's development. From 2021 to 2025, the province saw the establishment of 113,800 new foreign-funded enterprises, a 31.3 percent increase from the previous five years. In 2025, Guangzhou, the provincial capital, recorded 11,000 newly established foreign-invested enterprises, with paid-in foreign capital growing by 9.1 percent year-on-year. As China pursues high-quality economic development, the appeal of its vast market continues to strengthen.

The pop-up store's return to Shamian Island was made possible by the area's recent revitalization. Once a French and British concession, the island is home to 49 historical buildings, including the original site of Watsons. Efforts have been made to restore and upgrade the area, aiming to turn it into an international hub for consumption and cultural exchange.

"Encouraging century-old enterprises to return to Shamian is part of this plan. Apart from Watsons, we hope to see dozens of other companies that once operated here, such as HSBC and Standard Chartered, return," says Li Chen, the project operator of Guangzhou New Shameen Industrial Development Co.

Guangzhou has long served as a gateway for Sino-foreign exchanges. As early as the Tang Dynasty (618-907), the city established the *fanfang*, a government-designated residential unit for foreigners.

"This project will showcase a more open, inclusive and modern Guangzhou, while offering people new possibilities for a better quality of life," says Yi Zhaozhao, a researcher with the Guangzhou Urban Planning and Design Survey Research Institute.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:44 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:44 PM

CULTURE







Quiet drama finds powerful audience

A film in the Chaoshan dialect about *qiaopi* letters has become the surprise hit of the May Day holiday season, **Zheng Caixiong** reports in Guangzhou.

A low-budget Shenzhen-produced movie centered on *qiaopi* (overseas Chinese remittance letters) has earned widespread acclaim and emerged as one of the biggest surprise hits of the May Day holiday box-office season.

Dear You follows a series of letters tied to Ye Shurou, a grandmother who spent decades waiting for her husband, Zheng Musheng, while her grandson searches for the truth behind their family's past.

The journey gradually uncovers the hidden story of Xie Nanzhi, a Thai woman of Chaoshan, or Teochew, descent who was Zheng's sworn sister and trusted confidante.

After Zheng's death, Xie quietly cared for Ye Shurou from afar, secretly writing letters and sending money in his name for 18 years. Years later, Xie's adopted son, Xie Zehua, reads those letters aloud to Grandma Ye, revealing a long-buried story.

The film received a rating of 9.0 out of 10 on Douban, a major review platform — the highest among all new releases during the holiday — underscoring its broad audience appeal.

By Thursday, the movie had grossed about 227 million yuan ($33.5 million), with ticketing platforms Maoyan and Beacon projecting its final box office revenue could reach 725 million yuan.

Written and directed by Lan Hongchun, a native of eastern Guangdong's Chaoshan region, *Dear You* is deeply rooted in local culture and *qiaopi* history.

The story revolves around a Chaoshan grandmother who spends half a century waiting for letters. Through old correspondence, the younger generation retraces family memories and gradually uncovers the intertwined lives of two women shaped by endurance, sacrifice and longing.

Featuring authentic Chaoshan dialect throughout, the film weaves together local customs, family bonds and the historical experience of overseas Chinese communities.

Without relying on sensational plot twists or formulaic storytelling, *Dear You* adopts a restrained, lifelike narrative style, portraying the emotional weight carried by ordinary people during waves of migration of Cantonese people to Southeast Asia.



Above: (From left) Xie Nanzhi's son, Xie Zehua, reads aloud the letters she once wrote to grandma Ye Shurou. After years of misunderstandings melted away, grandma Ye Shurou gazes at the kapok flowers sent along with her husband Zheng Musheng and Xie Nanzhi's handwritten note, quietly savoring the feeling of being deeply loved. An elderly Xie Nanzhi spends the quietest moment of her day reading the letters. **Left:** The film's protagonist, Ye Shurou, gets a new bicycle and happily learns to ride it with her daughter beneath the sprawling banyan tree.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

> "The emotional power and dramatic tension in those real stories made me feel that these experiences had to be brought to the screen."
>
> **Lan Hongchun,** director

Released during the fiercely competitive May Day holiday season, the Chaoshan-dialect *Dear You* achieved an impressive breakthrough, despite lacking major stars.

Driven by its solid artistic quality, audience word-of-mouth, and a carefully planned distribution strategy expanding from Guangdong to the entire country, the movie defied market headwinds and stood out.

The film held advance screenings in selected cities ahead of the May Day holiday. Officially released on April 30, it gradually expanded its run from a full release across Guangdong province to nationwide screenings.

As audience praise continued to grow, cinemas increased the number of screenings. By Thursday, cumulative admissions had reached 5.98 million.

Facing competition from big-budget action, comedy and suspense films, *Dear You* maintained steady box-office growth and became the season's standout emotional dark horse.

Industry observers believe the film could continue performing strongly long after the May Day holiday period ends.

Compared with more commercially driven genre films released during the same period, including suspense, action and comedy productions, *Dear You* takes a realistic and heartfelt approach. Through themes of hometown nostalgia, family ties and the lives of overseas Chinese, it resonates with audiences through simple and grounded storytelling, observers say.

A viewer surnamed Chen in Shantou says the film reminded her of her grandmother.

"The movie portrays the authentic daily lives of Chaoshan people in those years," she says, adding that she has seen the movie twice.

Director Lan says the story of *Dear You* is 90 percent authentic, and 100 percent sincere.

"In the childhood memories of the Chaoshan people, Grandma is always the warmest and most comforting presence," he says.

"The original idea was simple — I just wanted to tell audiences a pure story about grandpas and grandmas," says Lan.

Lan, a Chaoshan native, has long been deeply passionate about depicting rural stories from his hometown.

The generation portrayed in the film lived through major historical periods, including the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45), the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, and the country's reform and opening-up beginning in the late 1970s.

Lan says the Chaoshan people endured hardship for generations as they left home and crossed the seas to make a living, while many overseas Chinese later returned to support their hometowns after the reform and opening-up.

He says that over 90 percent of the plot in the film is based on real events.

"For various reasons, many people could not return home decades ago. Their families and friends would hide the news of their passing, keep sending remittances, and write letters as if they were still alive," he says.

"The emotional power and dramatic tension in those real stories made me feel that these experiences had to be brought to the screen," he adds.

Zheng Runqi, who plays the grandson, says he hopes more filmmakers will create movies in the Chaoshan dialect because the region contains countless stories worth telling.

Contact the writer at zhengcaixiong@chinadaily.com.cn

The human bridges and personal histories of China-US relations

By JOSEPH TSE-HEI LEE
for China Daily

People with extraordinary experiences tell the most compelling stories. This is evident in Xiamen University professor of management William N. Brown's collection of narratives about Americans who lived and worked in China and developed deep affective ties with the people they encountered.

Against a scholarly literature that has long prioritized states, institutions and policy outcomes — whether in studies of educational networks, or Cold War diplomacy — Brown recenters individuals as moral actors who navigated uncertainty, risk and political transformation in pursuit of meaningful human connection. What is often missing from both academic and policy-oriented analyses is closer attention to the voices of individuals — state and non-state actors alike — who adapted to shifting circumstances and advanced cross-cultural exchange as a lived humanistic practice.

Brown's book, *West Meets East: Stories of Americans in China*, addresses this gap by foregrounding the moral dimensions of everyday encounters: trust amid distrust, respect and responsibility toward others, and the willingness to act selflessly under difficult conditions. These qualities have quietly but persistently sustained Sino-American relations in moments when formal diplomacy faltered.

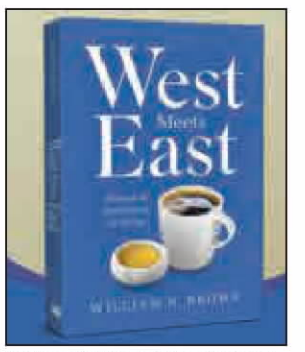
Brown begins with early 20th-century American missionary educators and their families in Kuliang, Fujian province, including figures such as Donald MacInnis and his descendants, as well as Joseph Stilwell, who contributed to China's war efforts against Japan despite tensions with Chiang Kai-shek over military strategy, and John Service, the China-born son of missionaries who later served in the US Foreign Service and fell victim to McCarthy-era persecution. These stories illuminate how educational and diplomatic infrastructures functioned not only as channels for cultural transmission but also as ethical communities grounded in humility and relational responsibility. Brown is attentive to the moral complexity of these encounters, in which power relations often coexisted with genuine efforts at partnership and care.

One of the most moving episodes in the book illustrates this intimacy at its most elemental. During severe flooding in the Minjiang River region, a Chinese boatman chose — at considerable risk — to ferry Methodist missionary educator Harry Russell Caldwell so that he could visit his wife in a Fuzhou hospital. This generous act was rooted in trust and shared humanity during wartime. Such moments, often absent from grand historical narratives, suggest that cross-cultural engagements involved ordinary individuals making extraordinary choices in moments of need.



William N. Brown, Xiamen University professor of management.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The narrative does not end with the political transition in 1949. Brown extends his accounts into the Reform era and beyond, tracing the experiences of Americans who arrived in China in the 1980s and 1990s. Some experimented with creative pedagogies — using songs and visual aids — to make learning Chinese more accessible, while others organized badminton camps, established international schools, or embedded themselves in local communities through teaching and mentorship. He further brings the story into the present, including millennial and post-COVID travelers who came to China to study, teach, produce online content, build careers as songwriters and influencers, and, in some cases, establish families.



William N. Brown's book, *West Meets East: Stories of Americans in China.*

This multigenerational arc is revealing. Across distinct historical moments — missionary China, wartime assistance, socialist transformation, reform and opening-up, and post-COVID rebuilding — Americans have continued to be drawn to China's history and culture. Page after page, Brown highlights faithful friendships forged through war and peace, ideology and disillusionment. While not immune to political rupture, these relationships were grounded in ethical commitments that transcended short-term calculations. One enduring lesson of these stories is that genuine friendships can embody a cross-cultural version of internationalism that emphasizes mutual



Joseph Tse-hei Lee, professor of history, Pace University, New York, United States.

flourishing rather than instrumental gain. The individuals in Brown's book — missionaries, teachers, doctors, students, families — thus leave behind a legacy of selfless service and moral imagination that continues to resonate with humanistic values of cross-cultural engagement.

The book also reflects on the changing directionality of humanistic ties. In the early 20th century, it was largely unidirectional, shaped by American missionary educators, diplomats and military advisers engaged in China's modernization and wartime resistance, particularly during World War II. By the late 20th and early 21st centuries, exchange became more reciprocal, as increasing numbers of Americans traveled to China to study, work, and live, even as Chinese migration to the United States remained far more extensive. This shift points to a more complex and layered landscape of transpacific exchange.

Although Brown's book is not a conventional monograph, its narrative form makes a valuable contribution by restoring the personal dimension to the discussion. By focusing on lived experience, it challenges dominant media narratives that reduce the bilateral relationship to economic competition or geopolitical contest. Instead, it reveals the importance of non-state actors whose moral and cultural commitments often buffered the transnational ties from collapsing entirely into confrontation. Importantly, the book does not romanticize this history. It acknowledges the fragility of these cross-cultural ties. Across the decades, friendships have been disrupted, educators expelled, institutions closed, and channels of dialogue severed. Yet these humanistic ties, once formed, often leave enduring memories.

At a moment of renewed geopolitical uncertainty, *West Meets East* reframes the development of Sino-American relations as a moral history — one empowered by people who repeatedly chose compassion, dialogue and partnership in uncertain times. Their cumulative acts of dedication have long tempered the harsher edges of global politics.

The author is a professor of history at Pace University in New York, United States.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:44 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:44 PM

SPORTS

ENDURANCE RACING

Journey through the west

More than a thousand participants from nearly 40 leading global business schools embark on an epic trek through the Gobi desert



On May 4, the 2026 business school Gobi friendship race, also known as "Gobi to West 2026", concluded after four days and three nights across 121 kilometers of desert terrain. More than 1,100 participants from nearly 40 leading business schools worldwide took part, following a route once traveled by Tang Dynasty (618-907) Buddhist monk Xuanzang more than 1,300 years ago. PICTURES PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY









Thinking of doing it yourself?

Transportation: Take a high-speed train from hubs like Lanzhou or Xi'an to Guazhou Railway Station (or the nearby Liuyuan South High-Speed Station). Alternatively, fly to Dunhuang Mogao International Airport, followed by a 1.5- to 2-hour taxi or bus ride to Guazhou.

Best time to visit: May to October offers the most comfortable weather for outdoor activities and desert sightseeing. Spring and early autumn are particularly suitable for hiking and Gobi-crossing experiences.

What to see: Key cultural sites within Guazhou include the stunning Yulin Caves (the "sister caves" to Mogao) and the Suoyang City ruins, a UNESCO World Heritage site along the Silk Road featuring the adjacent Ayuwang (Ashoka) Temple. You will also see ancient beacon towers scattered across the Gobi. Most visitors combine this trip with a visit to nearby Dunhuang to see the Mogao Caves and Crescent Spring.

Local specialties: Guazhou literally translates to "Melon City", so do not miss its famously sweet honeydew melons. The region is also known for Provence tomatoes and locally raised lamb.

Tips: Desert temperatures can vary sharply between day and night, so layered clothing, sun protection and sturdy hiking shoes are highly recommended. Strong winds and dry conditions make sunscreen, sunglasses and constant hydration essential for outdoor activities.

By **LI YINGXUE**
liyingxue@chinadaily.com.cn

As dusk settles over the black Gobi Desert in Guazhou county, Gansu province, rows of towering wind turbines stretch across the horizon.

Nearby, ancient beacon towers stand silently against the evening sky — relics of the Silk Road once traveled by Tang Dynasty (618-907) Buddhist monk Xuanzang on his westward pilgrimage more than 1,300 years ago.

This spring, that ancient route became the setting for a very different kind of pilgrimage.

On May 4, the 2026 business school Gobi friendship race, also known as "Gobi to West 2026", concluded after four days and three nights across 121 kilometers of desert terrain. More than 1,100 participants from nearly 40 leading business schools worldwide — including China's Tsinghua University, Shanghai Jiao Tong University and China Europe International Business School (CEIBS), Britain's University of Cambridge and Harvard University in the United States — crossed the finish line at the No 1 beacon tower ruins in Baidunzi.

Yet the event was about far more than endurance.

As business executives, entrepreneurs and MBA students gathered in this remote county in northwestern China, the race became an immersive experiment in sportsmanship, cultural exchange, ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) practices and rural revitalization.

"Before leaving Xi'an, many team members still understood the Silk Road only through textbooks," said Xie Xiaoyan, executive team leader of Xi'an Jiaotong University's delegation and chairwoman of the university's international outdoor club.

"They imagined the Gobi as endless emptiness."

That perception quickly changed.

As participants crossed the black desert near Ayuwang (Ashoka) Temple, and passed by historical sites such as the Suoyang City ruins and the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) Shuangdunzi remains, history became tangible.

For many participants, accustomed to office towers and boardrooms, the journey became deeply introspective.

"When you are surrounded by endless wilderness and feel there is no end in sight, you can only calm yourself and keep moving forward," Xie said. "You begin to have a dialogue with yourself."

The race route intentionally overlapped with Xuanzang's westward journey.

For many participants navigating uncertainty in business, Xuanzang's perseverance carried modern relevance.

"His belief — 'I would rather die heading west than return east alive' — is very inspiring for modern entrepreneurs," Xie said.

She compared the desert crossing to leading a company through uncertainty.

Under exhaustion and extreme weather conditions, people are easily shaken by external pressure. The Gobi, she said, strips away professional identities and forces participants to rediscover inner resilience.

That sense of transformation was also felt by the trek's international participants.

Twenty-three-year-old Ukrainian MBA student Dima Vasylenko from the CEIBS arrived with limited expectations or preconceptions about western China.

"Do you know tea was exported in two ways? One by boat and one by the Silk Road," Vasylenko said.

"The tea exported by boat from Hong Kong or Guangzhou ports is called 'te', but in all the countries where it was exported via the Silk Road, the name is 'cha'.

"In our country, it is 'chai', which is very similar to 'cha.'"

Following Xuanzang's route made the continuity of civilizations feel tangible to him, but Guazhou's modernity surprised him just as much as its history.

On the third day of the race, participants encountered vast fields of wind turbines stretching across the desert.

"Here in China, there are a lot of wind turbines working very well. Even in not so internationally well-known places, it's already very developed. It's the same as Shanghai. The roads and infrastructure are good."

For organizers, showcasing both "historical China" and "modern China" was central to the event's vision.

Zhou Haibin, preparatory chairman of the event's sports committee, said the race attracted overseas alumni and scholars from Cambridge and Harvard.

After the race, Cambridge professor Simon Taylor delivered a "Gobi lecture" beneath the stars, where participants from different countries exchanged ideas on business and life.

"It became more than a race," Zhou said. "It became a cultural gathering."

But bringing more than 1,500 people, including support staff, into the heart of the fragile Gobi also raised questions about how to balance human activity with environmental protection.

Organizers responded with low-carbon operations, zero-waste practices and biodegradable materials at campsites and supply stations, while also supporting local ecological restoration projects.

"Guazhou receives little more than 100 millimeters of annual rainfall, while evaporation exceeds 2,000 millimeters," Zhou said.

"The native vegetation here is extremely fragile."

He said the event aimed not only to minimize ecological impact, but also to raise broader awareness of environmental protection in western China.

Vasylenko was struck by the long-term vision reflected in the desert's development.

"They are not just taking care of the next 100 years, but thinking about 1,000 years into the future," he said.

Beyond its cultural and environmental significance, the race also brought tangible economic benefits. Guazhou's relatively small county seat saw a sharp increase in demand for hotels, restaurants and transportation services during the event.

"After such intense physical exhaustion, many participants were deeply impressed by the local food," Zhou recalled.

"The lamb, melons and Provence tomatoes — made especially sweet by the dramatic temperature differences between day and night — became unforgettable memories."

Many participants chose to extend their stay after the race, traveling onward to nearby landmarks such as the Mogao Caves and Crescent Spring in Dunhuang.

The event also boosted local employment through logistics, campsite construction and rescue support services.

At the opening ceremony, organizers donated computers and multimedia equipment to local schools and launched an education assistance fund.

As exhausted runners crossed the finish line at Baidunzi — covered in dust but still determined — many left with more than medals.

They carried away a renewed understanding of endurance, history and connection.

In Guazhou, along a Silk Road once defined by caravans and pilgrimage, the race is creating a new form of exchange — connecting sports, culture, sustainability and the future of China's western regions.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:44 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:45 PM

Gaza strikes

Israeli attacks kill 8 as ceasefire efforts falter

WORLD, PAGE 5



Departure tax refund policy upgraded

BUSINESS, PAGE 9



Drawing a line

Performer's intimate act sparks debate on immersive tourism

LIFE, PAGE 14

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2026

XI'S VISION | A SHARED FUTURE

Ties bolstered by high-level meets

Frequent head-of-state diplomacy by Xi, Putin shapes momentum of key bilateral relationship

By **MO JINGXI**
mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn

"Is it not a joy to have friends come from afar?" Confucius once said.

The ancient Chinese saying offers a fitting note as China welcomes Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday for his 14th visit to the country since 2013.

Putin used the same phrase when recalling his first meeting with Xi Jinping, then Chinese vice-president, in Moscow in March 2010. The meeting, he wrote in a signed article published in People's Daily in 2023, was held in a "business-like and at the same time sincere and friendly" atmosphere — a style of communication that he said he personally liked.

Three years following the early encounter, Xi chose Russia as the destination of his first overseas trip after taking office as Chinese president in 2013, underscoring the special weight of China-Russia relations in China's foreign policy.

During that visit, President Xi said that a high-level and strong China-Russia relationship serves not only the interests of both countries, but also the international strategic balance as well as world peace and stability.

More than a decade later, the two leaders are meeting again at another important moment.

Putin's two-day state visit, at the invitation of Xi, comes in a landmark year marking the 30th anniversary of the China-Russia strategic partnership of coordination and the 25th anniversary of the signing of the China-Russia Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation.

Inside
Views, page 7

"China-Russia relations are standing at a new historical starting point. The two sides are entering a golden period of opportunity marked by stronger political trust, deeper economic integration, closer people-to-people ties and greater global influence," said Li Yonghui, a research fellow of Russian studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

She said that Putin's visit is not only a review of decades of neighborly friendship and strategic coordination, but also an opportunity for the two sides to plan the next stage of cooperation under the guidance of the two heads of state.

Andrey Denisov, first deputy chair of the Russian Federation Council Committee on Foreign Affairs and former Russian ambassador to China, said that Putin's upcoming visit will once again demonstrate the high level and stability of Russia-China relations.

He said Russia-China relations are not an alliance in the traditional sense, but the two sides maintain a high degree of mutual trust and close coordination on major international issues, which he described as the essence of the relationship.

The momentum of China-Russia ties has been shaped by more than a decade of frequent head-of-state diplomacy. Since 2013, Xi has visited Russia 11 times, while Putin has traveled to China 13 times for state visits or major events. Last year, the two leaders paid state visits to each other's countries, underscoring the intensity and continuity of top-level exchanges.

In a signed article published in Russian media in 2023, Xi said that high-level interactions have played an important strategic guiding role in China-Russia relations.

*See **Visit,** page 3*

The winning team



French rider Valentin Debise (center) of Chinese motorcycle manufacturer ZXMOTO celebrates with his team after winning Race 2 of the World Supersport category at the Czech Round of the 2026 FIM Superbike World Championship on Sunday. With his fifth win of the season, Debise moved up to second place in the riders' standings with 147 points. ZXMOTO remained third in the manufacturers' standings with 149 points, underscoring the growing impact of the Chinese bike maker in the championship. XINHUA

Foundational paradigm to guide Sino-US relations

WORLD WATCH
By Ong Tee Keat

The state visit by the President of the United States to China was widely seen as an urgently needed stabilizer in Sino-US ties that was facing unpredictability.

This diplomatic confidence was bolstered by President Xi Jinping's declaration that he and US President Donald Trump had reached a consensus to construct a relationship of "constructive strategic stability" between China and the US.

This formulation is intended to serve as a new foundational paradigm for bilateral ties in a rapidly shifting global order.

From the Chinese perspective, it is hoped the year 2026 is elevated to a historic, landmark year fundamentally redefining the trajectory of Sino-US engagement.

While the Chinese host made clear an unwavering commitment to nurturing stable, healthy and sustainable relations with the US, he explicitly sought to avoid the perilous "Thucydides Trap" that historically plagued rising and established powers.

This newly articulated paradigm marks a vital cornerstone, which is strategically designed to provide robust guidance for relations between the two major global powers over the next three years and beyond, provided the relationship stays undistracted by peripheral geopolitical shocks.

However, despite this grand vision, the Sino-US summit is still being watched carefully by the international community. Both China and the US possess diverging priorities, and their bilateral dynamic is shaped by a mixture of strategic rivalry and deep, structural economic interdependence.

President Xi commenced the summit by striking a high and unambiguous note regarding Chinese preparedness to instill a positive, enduring stability into the ties.

He emphasized that cooperation must remain the absolute mainstay of Sino-US engagement, working alongside the careful management of inevitable competition and ideological differences in the pursuit of sustainable global peace.

Furthermore, Xi astutely framed his aspirations for the collaboration of these two great powers through a broader global perspective, emphasizing their shared responsibility in addressing overarching transnational challenges.

In stark contrast to Beijing's focus on long-term strategic frameworks, Trump approached the summit driven by acute domestic political imperatives.

The US president was visibly preoccupied with the pressing urgency to score immediate, tangible economic victories.

His focus was on ensuring Chinese commitments to purchase American goods, specifically targeting agricultural produce and Boeing aircraft.

Agricultural exports have a direct, disproportionate bearing on his core vote bank sprawling across the agro-based states of the American Midwest.

Plainly put, the driving force behind the US administration's negotiating posture was the severe risk of losing Republican control in both the Senate and the House of Representatives; securing the legislature is the metric that matters most to Trump.

Simultaneously, fierce technological rivalry remains a paramount sticking point.

*See **Relations,** page 3*



INSIDE
Rural development
Global Views, page 8

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN

China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

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

Economy stays resilient as industrial output expands

By **ZHANG CHENXU** and **WANG KEJU**

China's economy displayed continuing resilience in the first four months of the year, though some indicators pointed to the need for more targeted policy support to boost domestic demand and put growth on a firmer footing, officials and analysts said.

While higher energy costs stemming from geopolitical tensions weighed on economic activity in April, robust expansion in high-end manufacturing and resilient exports pointed to a steady outlook for China, they added.

Figures released on Monday by the National Bureau of Statistics showed that the country's industrial output expanded 5.6 percent year-on-year in the first four months.

Retail sales increased 1.9 percent year-on-year. In April, retail sales rose 0.2 percent year-on-year, slowing from 1.7 percent in March, the figures showed.

Wen Bin, chief economist at China Minsheng Bank, said the moderation in retail sales was partly due to slightly smaller subsidies being offered under this year's consumer goods trade-in program and a relatively high base for comparison from the same period last year.

While consumption of goods softened, service consumption remained resilient. Retail sales of services rose 5.6 percent year-on-year in the first four months, 0.1 percentage point faster than in the first quarter, the NBS said.

Fu Linghui, spokesman and chief economist of the NBS, said that strong demand for cultural tourism and sports events had emerged as a new growth driver in the sector.

Fixed-asset investment fell 1.6 percent year-on-year in the first four months, reversing the 1.7 percent growth recorded in the first quarter, according to the NBS.

"The moderation in some April indicators reflects normal month-to-month fluctuations," Wang Guanhua, a spokeswoman for the bureau, said on Monday.

Despite headwinds, Wang said that China's underlying economic stability remains intact, as innovation-driven growth drivers and resilient exports are expected to sustain amid favorable conditions.

The data showed that equipment manufacturing and high-tech manufacturing expanded at robust rates of 8.7 percent and 12.6 percent year-on-year, respectively, in the January-April period.

China's exports of goods, meanwhile, rose 11.3 percent year-on-year in renminbi terms, with April exports up 9.8 percent from a year earlier, the bureau said.

Robin Xing, chief China economist at Morgan Stanley, said that China's export strength is expected to persist, with the sector's resilience likely to create positive spillovers for industrial upgrading.

On the back of robust exports as well as strong capital expenditure related to artificial intelligence and green sectors, Morgan Stanley recently raised its full-year growth forecast for China to 4.8 percent.

However, Xing cautioned that recovery remains uneven, with domestic demand continuing to lag, as factors such as the ongoing adjustment in the real estate sector still weigh on consumption.

Zhang Bin, deputy director at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of World Economics and Politics, said that China's economy is on an upward recovery trajectory, but the limited strength of its self-sustaining recovery underscores the need for stronger countercyclical policy support.

Contact the writers at zhangchenxu@chinadaily.com.cn

DALIAN REELS IN THE BENEFITS AS BIG-GAME FISHING THRIVES

For visitors angling for a thrilling ocean experience, Zhangzi Island is a place to catch

By **ZHANG XIAOMIN**
in Dalian, Liaoning
zhangxiaomin@chinadaily.com.cn

China Vibes

It's 5 am, and as the first rays of sunrise touch the waters north of Dalian, Liaoning province, several fishing enthusiasts board a yacht bound for a "sea ranch", hoping to land some big game fish.

Near Changhai county's Zhangzi Island, one of the fishermen, surnamed Li, once landed a Japanese amberjack weighing 17.5 kilograms.

"The thrill of fighting a giant fish — that heart-pounding duel with the sea — is something only those who have experienced it can truly understand," he said, still vividly recalling the moment.

"It's a story I can keep telling until I catch an even bigger one," he said.

Li describes himself as an ordinary hobbyist using affordable gear. His catch, he said, owes much to the location, a premier big-game fishing spot.

"Since the bait fish are mostly active in the upper water, it is possible to land large fish with ordinary light tackle and thin lines," he said.

On the eastern side of the Liaodong Peninsula, Changhai county consists of 195 islands, 18 of which are inhabited.

*See **Fishing,** page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.



Contestants display their catch during the 2025 Changhai sea fishing elite challenge in August. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:45 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:45 PM

INDEPTH

By LI YINGXUE
liyingxue@chinadaily.com.cn





Left: Former Scottish world champion Stephen Hendry plays at a local snooker club in Shuangfeng county, Hunan province, on March 14, 2025. NAI JIHUI / FOR CHINA DAILY **Right:** A young player competes in the CBSA Chinese Snooker Junior Series Hefei Open in the capital of Anhui province on Oct 1. YUAN BING / FOR CHINA DAILY

Chinese snooker on cue for global dominance

With consecutive world champions, booming interest, nation tilts sport's balance of power

In the narrow backstage corridor of snooker's most storied arena, the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield, an unusual scene unfolded during the 2026 World Snooker Championship as three Chinese players from different generations prepared for another night on the sport's biggest stage.

Ding Junhui, 39, the pioneer of Chinese snooker, Zhao Xintong, 29, the then defending world champion, and Wu Yize, 22, one of the sport's rising stars, stood side by side in silence, waiting to walk out.

A backstage photograph captured the moment. It quickly resonated across China, where it was widely interpreted as a reflection of Chinese snooker's shift from isolated breakthroughs to generational continuity of excellence.

That belief was reinforced days later.

On May 4, Wu defeated England's Shaun Murphy 18-17 in a dramatic World Championship final. The match went to a deciding frame for the first time in more than two decades, highlighting both the tight competition at the elite level and the emergence of new contenders from China.

Under immense pressure in the final frame, Wu opted for an aggressive long shot on a red ball. The gamble paid off, shifting momentum in his favor.

"I have been trying to go for this for ages," Wu said after the match. "For the past few months, I have been living the same life. I am so happy that I could play well today."

Former world champion Murphy, a veteran of the professional circuit, acknowledged the quality of Wu's performance. "I played the best shots I could and as a snooker player that's really all you can do," he said. "I don't feel like I lost the match — he won the match."

Wu's victory marked China's second consecutive world title, following Zhao's defeat of Mark Williams 18-12 last year.

Zhao became the first Asian player to win the World Snooker Championship. Zhao's breakthrough ended more than a century of European dominance, predominantly British, at the Crucible, while Wu's win confirmed that the result was not an isolated outcome.

The 2025-26 season has so far confirmed a clear shift in the balance of power, with Chinese players chalking up tournament wins on the World Snooker Tour circuit and climbing the player rankings.

Zhao, who won four titles, was named Player of the Year and inducted into the sport's Hall of Fame. Wu received the fans' Player of the Year award, while Chang Bingyu won Breakthrough Player of the Year.

Collectively, Chinese players claimed seven titles — the strongest single-season performance in the country's history.

At the Crucible Theatre, 11 Chinese players entered the main draw of 32, the highest representation to date. Alongside established names were younger players including Fan Zhengyi, Lei Peifan and others who emerged through qualifying routes.

Inside the venue, Mandarin was increasingly heard in practice rooms and corridors, while Chinese flags appeared among traveling supporters.



Wu Yize receives his winner's trophy after beating English player Shaun Murphy in the 2026 World Snooker Championship final in Sheffield, the United Kingdom on May 4. LI YING / XINHUA

Early breaks

In the early 2000s, Ding Junhui emerged as China's first global snooker star.

In 2005, the then 18-year-old defeated superstar Stephen Hendry at the China Open, a landmark victory and a turning point in raising the sport's visibility in China.

At the time, China had only a small number of professionals playing abroad. Ding's early career was marked by isolation and limited support in Sheffield. But he established a path that later generations of Chinese snooker professionals would follow.

"Without Brother Hui, there would be no current generation of Chinese snooker players," Zhao has previously said.

Ding now works informally with younger Chinese players in Sheffield.

"From Zhao Xintong to Wu Yize, Chinese players have stood on the top podium for two consecutive years," Ding wrote after Wu's world title. "This is not just a breakthrough — it shows our time is coming."

Unlike earlier generations, today's players are supported by a growing domestic network of academies, training centers and professional pipelines.

The shift from family-driven investment to institutional support is now widely recognized as key to the newfound success. Earlier players often relied on significant personal sacrifice.

Ding, for instance, began playing at age 8 in his father's grocery store. Once his talent was recognized, his father sold the family home and moved to Dongguan, Guangdong province, where Ding trained for more than 10 hours a day.

Wu followed a similar path. Born in 2003 in Lanzhou, Gansu province, he moved with his family to Dongguan at age 13 to join the Ding Junhui Snooker Academy, winning a national junior title the following year. He later won the World Junior U21 Championship in 2018, and was named Rookie of the Year in 2022.

From 16, he trained in the United Kingdom with his father, who supported him financially by working outside the sport. After his world title win, Wu said: "Since I made the decision to drop out of school, my dad has been by my side. My mum has not been in very good health. Since we have been in Sheffield, she has been staying a long time in hospital. She has sacrificed everything for me.

"My parents are the true champions … They are the source of my strength," he said.





Left: Zhao Xintong celebrates with his trophy after winning the 2026 World Grand Prix in Hong Kong on Feb 8. LU BINGHUI / XINHUA **Above:** Wu poses for photos with his parents after winning the final on May 4. LI YING / XINHUA **Below:** Ding Junhui competes with Shaun Murphy during the 2025 World Snooker Tour International Championship in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, on Nov 5. LIU ZHENRUI / XINHUA



Expanding ecosystem

China currently has nearly 300,000 billiards clubs and an estimated 80-100 million enthusiasts nationwide, said Qiao Bing, vice-chairman of the Small and Medium Commercial Enterprises Association and president of the Billiards Industry Branch.

This massive grassroots base directly feeds the country's growing presence on the professional circuit. Over the past five years, junior participation in cue sports has surged, reflecting broader access to coaching and deepening of the nation's talent pool.

China has also become integral to the sport's competitive calendar. In 2005, the country hosted a single event, but now the scale and prize money of Chinese tournaments are redefining the professional game.

"Genius is everywhere, but we need the talent spotters more," said Xingpai Billiards general manager Gan Jialin.

Chinese cue sports have a well-established talent development system and training infrastructure that is world-leading.

"For Chinese snooker, this is only the beginning. In the years ahead, it will become increasingly common for Chinese players to win the World Championship and other major titles," Gan said.

Once a national training base for young talent, Dongguan has evolved into one of the country's snooker strongholds, combining player development, equipment manufacturing, and tournament operations in areas like Changping and Tangxia.

A cluster of billiards equipment manufacturers has formed a complete industrial chain covering table components, slate production, and cue manufacturing.

Institutional investment further strengthened the city's talent infrastructure. In 2022, the Guangdong branch of the CBSA WPBSA Academy was established in Changping to standardize player cultivation. The academy provides a direct route from youth training to professional competition.

Players emerging from this environment often arrive on tour with stronger fundamentals and greater composure. Zhao, Wu and women's world champion Bai Yulu all completed key stages of their development within this framework.

Related industries in event operations, broadcasting, refereeing and youth tournaments have continued to mature in the city.

Slated for success

If Dongguan represents China's talent pipeline, then Yushan in Jiangxi province is the sport's industrial base.

The county, located at the intersection of Jiangxi, Fujian and Zhejiang provinces, originally developed through slate production for billiard tables. Over the past two decades, it has transformed into a comprehensive billiards industry cluster spanning manufacturing, events, training, refereeing and branding.

It's estimated that China accounts for the majority of the world's billiards tables and related equipment, with Yushan a key production hub.

Yushan International Billiards Culture City includes a modern 4,000-seat arena built to professional tour standards in lighting, broadcasting and event production. Adjacent to it, the World Billiards Museum traces the evolution of cue sports from their origins to globalization, giving the city both manufacturing and cultural significance.

Since 2016, the World Snooker Open and other major tournaments have been regularly staged in Yushan, establishing it as one of Asia's leading snooker destinations. All-time snooker great Ronnie O'Sullivan lost the World Open to Thailand's Thepchaiya Un-Nooh there in March.

Just as importantly, Yushan has become a major source of emerging talent.

The Yushan International Billiards Academy introduced international coaching methods and standardized curricula, creating a direct route to the professional tour.

Wu completed a key stage of his training there at the age of 11 under renowned Australian coach Rodney Leighton, focusing on fundamentals and match rhythm.

Leighton recalled of young Wu: "Just a few weeks later, he made a break of 86. I said to him, 'That's fantastic, incredible!' But he replied, 'It's no good, because if it was Ronnie (O'Sullivan), he would have cleared the table.'"

The intensity of the training culture has led many in the sport to describe Yushan as the "cradle of Chinese snooker champions".

The city has also accelerated the integration of technology into the sport, including digital refereeing, performance analytics and smart tournament management tools designed to improve accuracy and transparency.

Changing of the guard

The emergence of Chinese champions has redrawn the boundaries of what nations and regions dominate the sport.

For decades, the sport was headed by players from England, Scotland and Wales. Names such as Stephen Hendry and Mark Williams defined different eras of professional dominance.

Today, Chinese players are consistently competing at the highest level, with multiple competitors ranked in the top tier.

This shift has been accompanied by increased international scheduling of events in Asia, particularly in China, where tournaments now account for a significant number.

The commercial structure of the sport has also taken a new direction, with China becoming a key market for broadcasting rights, sponsorship and audience engagement.

Meanwhile, snooker's long-standing ambition to be included in the Olympic Games has been revived by the shifts in the sport. After Zhao's and Wu's world titles, senior officials within the sport have suggested that momentum for a future Olympic bid has strengthened, with the Brisbane 2032 Olympics often cited as a potential starting point.

Jason Ferguson, chairman of the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association, has noted that China's standing within the Olympic movement will be a significant factor in any future application.

"China is a very important country to the IOC (International Olympic Committee) — it has been a host of the Games on many occasions and they are heavily invested in sports, in IOC terms," he told The Associated Press. "So the fact that China is a key market for snooker is a really important part about any Olympic bid."

With cue sports gaining broader international recognition, stakeholders view the coming decade as a potential window for inclusion.

Players such as Chang Bingyu, Fan Zhengyi and Lei Peifan now represent the next wave rising behind the current crop of stars. As Ding noted when witnessing the collective rise of Chinese players: "The threshold I crossed back then has now become the runway for everyone."

China is no longer simply producing world-class players. It is increasingly shaping how snooker is played, financed, promoted and globalized. For decades, the sport's center of gravity rested firmly in Britain.

Now, the ball is rolling eastward.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:45 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:45 PM

TOP NEWS

Envoys honored



Foreign Minister Wang Yi (center) poses for a group photo on Monday with eight current and former ambassadors who received the Outstanding Diplomat Medal during a presentation ceremony in Beijing. The medals recognize their extraordinary contributions to promoting friendship and cooperation between China and their respective countries.
WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY

Satellite navigation sector eyes 1 trillion yuan mark

By ZHAO LEI
zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

The overall market value of satellite-enabled navigation and positioning services in China, especially those based on the Beidou Navigation Satellite System, is expected to surpass 1 trillion yuan ($147 billion) before the end of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, according to an industry leader.

Zhang Huifeng, president of the Global Navigation Satellite System and Location-Based Services Association of China, said the next few years will be crucial for Beidou to fully unleash its potential and value.

During the current plan period, the Beidou system will empower all public and business sectors, he said, as the annual report on Beidou-related businesses was unveiled on Monday at a meeting of the association.

"It will be deeply integrated into our daily life, and will continuously improve user experience. Nearly all smartphones, electric vehicles and passenger cars manufactured in China now come with Beidou as a standard feature, meaning that members of the public use Beidou-enabled services on a daily basis," Zhang said.

In the international market, users will be given greater access to Beidou-enabled services to facilitate their work and improve their lives, he said, noting that Beidou-based services and related products have been exported to more than 140 countries and regions.

Through localized cooperation, Chinese enterprises have established more than 20 overseas service centers in countries and regions involved in the Belt and Road Initiative, continuously expanding the service network, he added.

By the end of the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period, Beidou-enabled products and services gained ground in countries and regions involved in the BRI, achieving a 58 percent market share in such places, Zhang said.

According to the association's report, by the end of 2025, the overall value of satellite-enabled navigation and positioning services in China was about 629 billion yuan, up 9.24 percent year-on-year.

Nearly 2 million Chinese people now work at more than 30,000 domestic institutions and companies doing business related to Beidou and other satellite-based navigation and positioning services, the report said.

In 2025, more than 410 million terminal devices with satellite-based positioning and navigation functions were sold in China, including about 280 million smartphones supporting Beidou-enabled services, it said.

By the end of last year, there were over 2.2 billion devices, such as smartphones, computers and vehicle-mounted terminals, on the Chinese mainland that could use Beidou-enabled services, the report added.

Beidou is China's domestically developed satellite navigation system and the fourth such system in the world alongside the United States' GPS, Russia's GLONASS and the European Union's Galileo.

Starting in 2000, as many as 64 Beidou satellites, including four experimental ones, have been launched using 47 Long March 3 rockets from the Xichang Satellite Launch Center in Sichuan province. The satellite-based navigation system was declared complete in July 2020, and it began providing full-scale global services.

Currently, more than 50 Beidou satellites are in active service, operating in multiple types of orbits.

Relations: Fruits likely in realms of commerce

From page 1

The easing of stringent US restrictions on advanced semiconductor exports and the comprehensive rolling back of administrative measures aimed at blocking China's access to critical, next-generation chip-manufacturing technology remain absolutely central to the interests of Beijing.

This newly articulated paradigm marks a vital cornerstone, which is designed to provide robust guidance for relations between the two major global powers.

Consequently, the most realistic, low-hanging fruits of this high-stakes diplomatic summit will likely manifest in the more easily quantifiable realms of commerce. We can expect increases in the bulk purchase of US goods by Chinese enterprises, operating alongside a mutual de-escalation of the damaging "tit-for-tat" tariff war, and the diplomatic reaffirmation of the US' one-China policy.

All in all, regardless of the granular details of the agreements reached, which are still largely under wraps, the public outcome of the summit will be meticulously curated by both sides.

The author is president of the Belt and Road Initiative Caucus for Asia Pacific. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Visit: Years of Education to be launched

From page 1

Xi noted that he and Putin had maintained close working contact and met 40 times on bilateral and international occasions, drawing blueprints for bilateral ties and cooperation in various fields, and maintaining timely coordination on major international and regional issues of common concern.

In his New Year greetings exchanged with Putin on Dec 31, 2025, Xi said he was ready to maintain close contact with Putin and jointly lead China-Russia relations in the new era toward new achievements.

During a virtual meeting on Feb 4 this year, Xi noted that the day coincided with the Beginning of Spring on the Chinese calendar, which represents a new start, and expressed his readiness to work with Putin to chart a new blueprint for bilateral ties.

Xi also called on the two sides to increase high-level exchanges and strengthen pragmatic cooperation in various fields.

Li, from the CASS, said the frequent interactions between the two presidents have helped the two sides build consensus, set the direction of the relationship and maintain strategic steadiness despite fluctuations in the international situation.

"Each meeting helps reaffirm mutual support on issues concerning sovereignty, security, territorial integrity and independent development paths," she said, adding that such political mutual trust serves as a key anchor for the steady and long-term development of China-Russia relations.

The close communication between the two heads of state has also helped translate political trust into practical cooperation, Li added.

One notable example is trade, where top-level consensus has been translated into measurable progress. China-Russia trade exceeded $240 billion in 2024, meeting ahead of schedule the $200 billion target set by the two heads of state.

People-to-people ties

The two sides have also continued to expand cooperation in areas such as energy, agriculture, connectivity, education and people-to-people exchanges. The China-Russia Years of Education, to be launched this year, are expected to provide another platform for closer exchanges between young people from both countries.

Denisov, the Russian diplomat, noted that China and Russia once set a goal of increasing two-way student exchanges to 100,000. "At the time, it seemed almost out of reach, but today it has become a reality," he said.

Youth exchanges carry special significance for the long-term development of bilateral relations, he said, adding that he hopes that more young people from the two countries will participate in educational and cultural cooperation, and deepen mutual understanding and friendship through such exchanges.

Andrey Kortunov, former director-general of the Russian International Affairs Council, wrote in a recent CGTN commentary that trust defines what is possible in relations among major powers.

In the case of China-Russia relations, he said that strong personal relations between the two top leaders add to the stability and predictability of bilateral ties.

Li, the CASS researcher, said that at a time of geopolitical conflicts and global uncertainty, the steady development of China-Russia relations serves as an important pillar for global strategic balance.

Close communication between the two heads of state allows the two sides to exchange views in a timely manner, coordinate positions, manage differences and safeguard their core interests, she said. It also helps translate top-level consensus into cooperation across various fields.

"Such high-level engagement uses the certainty of head-of-state diplomacy to offset the uncertainty of the international environment," Li said, adding that it helps consolidate the foundation for regional and global peace and development.

Fishing: Anglers of all levels welcomed

From page 1

The islands are collectively known as the Changshan Archipelago, which is the country's first island-based national tourist resort.

Nestled within one of the country's most productive fishing grounds, the archipelago offers pristine marine resources and serves as critical habitat for large migratory species such as yellowtail amberjack and Japanese amberjack.

The yacht carrying the fishing enthusiasts belongs to Liu, a seasoned angler with fishing experience across the world's top big-game destinations. He runs a high-end homestay and owns two specialized yachts, allowing him to pursue his own passion while hosting tourists.

Liu's proudest catch came in the waters off Komodo Island in Indonesia, where he battled a giant trevally for 2.5 hours, eventually landing a specimen measuring more than 1.5 meters and weighing 62 kg.

Yet for him, Changhai's waters hold a unique charm, with each season offering different species for anglers of all skill levels.

"Visitors start arriving from mid-April, when the weather warms, and the season lasts until December," Liu said.

During last summer's peak tourist season, Liu said that he once saw more than 200 people on the same stretch of water, all bent over their rods, tirelessly working their jigs.

"A bit crazy, but spectacular," he said. "The moment a fish suddenly strikes, the nerves fire. While you're reeling it in, you have no idea what will come up. That feeling is highly addictive," he said.

In recent years, the slogan "to catch big fish, come to Dalian — head to Changhai" has spread widely, attracting professional anglers from far and wide.

In 2023, the county launched an elite sea fishing challenge, and last year's event attracted about 140 competitors from home and abroad. This year's tournament is scheduled for August.

Zhang Shengzu, the county chief of Changhai, said the local government aims to build the annual event into a stage for top anglers to demonstrate their prowess.

"Beyond their exceptional natural endowments, another major advantage of Changhai's fishing grounds is their proximity to land," he said.

It takes only 20 minutes by yacht to reach the fishing spots, allowing anglers to return to shore easily. Last year, Changhai saw sea fishing visitors exceed 190,000, driving a revenue increase of more than 30 percent for homestays, restaurants and fishing-tackle shops.

Given the rapid growth of sea fishing, the tourism service infrastructure is in urgent need of an upgrade, and a standardization system for the sea fishing industry is also being expedited, Zhang said.

"With safety as a prerequisite, the sector will further strengthen the capacity of tourism services," he said.

Dalian is transforming into northern China's marine leisure hub. In March, the city signed a 15-billion-yuan ($2.2 billion) agreement for a yacht manufacturing base — a signal that the harbors may soon welcome even more boats.

Growing role of China's capital market stressed

Pakistan's first panda bond sets precedent for other Belt and Road economies, experts say

By ZHOU LANXU
zhoulanxv@chinadaily.com.cn

The first sovereign panda bond issuance by Pakistan — priced at a historically low coupon rate — highlights the growing potential of China's capital market to provide diversified and lower-cost financing channels for developing economies, experts said.

The issuance not only opened an avenue for Pakistan to secure continued access to renminbi financing, it may also set a precedent for more Belt and Road economies to lower financing costs through China's bond market at a time when energy-related inflation pressures are driving up global borrowing costs, they said.

A panda bond is an RMB-denominated debt instrument issued by overseas governments or institutions in China's onshore capital market. Pakistan issued its first sovereign panda bond on Thursday, becoming the first South Asian economy to do so.

The issuance totaled 1.75 billion yuan ($257 million), with a three-year maturity and a coupon rate of 2.5 percent. China Economic Net reported that the coupon rate was "the lowest Pakistan had achieved on a sovereign bond". This was also confirmed by China International Capital Corp, or CICC, the lead underwriter and book runner for the deal.

The issuance, the proceeds of which will finance sustainable development projects in Pakistan, was oversubscribed more than five times and marked the first tranche under Pakistan's newly established 7.2 billion yuan panda bond program.

Pakistan's Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb said he is confident that the program would provide his country with a strong platform for future issuances, further deepening financial connectivity and sustainable economic cooperation with China.

Liu Chunsheng, an associate professor of international economics at the Central University of Finance and Economics, said the issuance highlighted the unique role China's bond market plays in providing lower-cost financing and diversified funding channels for international issuers.

"With China's interest rates remaining relatively low and RMB assets increasingly showing safe-haven attributes, the panda bond's 2.5 percent coupon rate was far below the cost of Pakistan's US dollar bonds, which could reach roughly 7 to 8 percent under some circumstances," Liu said.

Despite Pakistan's long-term sovereign credit rating being kept in the speculative grade category of B- by S&P Global Ratings, the bond received an issue rating of AAA, supported by an innovative partial guarantee structure, under which the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Asian Development Bank provided guarantees covering 95 percent of the bond's principal and interest payments.

Analysts said the enhanced credit profile helped significantly lower the bond's coupon rate and improve investor acceptance.

Paul Rui, director at the investment banking department of CICC, said the partial guarantee arrangements — the first of their kind in China's onshore bond market — could offer a replicable model for other developing economies.

"Emerging market economies have strong financing demand in infrastructure, green transition and livelihood development, but face challenges such as ratings, investor recognition and issuance structures when entering a new market for the first time," Rui said.

"This transaction combined a sovereign issuer, multilateral development institution-backed credit enhancement, sustainable development-oriented funding purposes and access to China's renminbi bond market, providing a reference model for more Belt and Road economies seeking to enter China's bond market," he added.

Ji Haisheng and Xu Wei contributed to this story.

Civilizational exchange



Visitors admire artifacts on Sunday at an exhibition, titled *Maize, Gold, Jaguar: A Grand Exhibition of Ancient Maya and Andean Civilizations*, at the Capital Museum in Beijing. It features about 800 treasures from more than 20 cultural institutions in Mexico and Peru, and sets new records for the museum in terms of both the number of exhibits and international partners. The exhibition officially opened on Monday, which marked International Museum Day, and runs through Oct 18. JIANG DONG / CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:45 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:45 PM

ASIAFOCUS

Editor's note:

In this weekly feature China Daily gives voice to Asia and its people. The stories presented come mainly from the Asia News Network (ANN), of which China Daily is among its 20 leading titles.

Scam crackdown creates new problem

Experts welcome Cambodia's actions while also noting risks of displacement



More than 300 Indonesians who had fled from fraudulent activities wait for repatriation procedures at a factory in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on March 26. PHOTO VIA AP

As Cambodia pushes forward with its effective crackdown on scam centers, a new problem has emerged.

On April 24, Cambodia declared that the authorities had cracked down on more than 250 online scam locations and closed 91 casinos between July 2025 and mid-April this year.

However, the shutdown of these centers has left thousands of foreigners without jobs or shelter, and they are unable to return to their home countries without passport or money.

Analysts warn these people could end up being recruited back into new scam centers, become a source of social disorder, or even trigger a humanitarian crisis.

In the last two months, hardly a week has gone by without reports about Cambodian authorities cracking down on scam operations. In early March, Prime Minister Hun Manet vowed to shut all scam centers in the country by the end of April to restore tourist and investor confidence.

Besides the capital Phnom Penh, other scam hot spots include border areas with Thailand, such as O'Smach town and Poipet city in northwestern Cambodia, as well as border cities with Vietnam, including Bavet and Kampot in the south.

On a weekday in April, about 70 men were seen milling around a park opposite the Indonesian embassy in Phnom Penh. At night, many slept on straw mats on pavement outside shops that had shuttered for the day.

Marco Lem, 28, said he had been sleeping on the street outside the Indonesian embassy for the last two months while seeking help to obtain a passport and return to Jakarta. The father of two claimed he was lured to work in a casino but was subsequently led to Sihanoukville and forced to scam people.

Sihanoukville, a coastal port city in southwestern Cambodia, is known as a global hot spot for gambling, cybercrime and reported cases of human trafficking tied to such activities.

"I don't know whether I will be arrested when I return to Indonesia. But I've seen friends who went back and were not arrested," Marco said.

Another Indonesian, David Butar, 23, has also been left on the street to fend for himself. The father of a two-year-old daughter said he was tricked into working in a scam compound in Bavet, Svay Rieng Province bordering Vietnam.

On the street for two months now, he is waiting for the Indonesian embassy's help to return home. He said he needs official documents to be repatriated, as he had overstayed in Cambodia while being holed up in the scam compound.

$442 billion

was lost to scammers in 2025 across the globe, according to estimation of the Global Anti Scam Alliance.

The Straits Times was unable to independently verify both men's claims of being tricked into scam compounds. The Indonesian embassy has yet to reply to queries on the matter.

The crackdown has raised concerns that large numbers of scam workers — both voluntary and forced — could be left stranded.

It is difficult to estimate the number of workers involved in scam operations in Cambodia, as the centers operate like a revolving door, with workers recruited regularly and moved to different locations in the country.

While some joined willingly for the pay, others were deceived with job offers, and many ended up trapped after their passports were seized by operators.

In the update on April 24, the government said that 241,888 individuals had left the country voluntarily between mid-January and April 19.

But many former scam center workers remain in Cambodia, with some housed by nongovernmental organizations or in temporary holding facilities like the one near the old Phnom Penh airport.

"If thousands of displaced workers are left homeless or scattered without a clear plan for repatriation or protection, the country risks a secondary security crisis," said independent Phnom Penh-based analyst Vanly Seng, referring to the possibility that these workers may turn to crime out of desperation.

Reports have also surfaced online of some former female scam workers claiming they were raped after being left to fend for themselves on the streets.

"It's quickly turned into a humanitarian disaster, with both the local authorities and international organizations struggling to keep up," said John Wojcik, a senior threat researcher with cybersecurity firm Infoblox.

Beyond borders

The scourge of scams is not just a Cambodian issue.

The Global Anti Scam Alliance estimates that across the globe, $442 billion was lost to scammers in 2025. A UN report in 2026 said the scam industry in the Mekong region alone is worth over $43.8 billion a year.

Cambodia's intensive crackdown on scam compounds has not gone unnoticed by neighboring Thailand.

Thailand's Foreign Affairs Ministry said there may be a risk of the scam centers moving to neighboring countries as Cambodia intensifies its operations.

The ministry said Bangkok has strengthened its controls and surveillance, with security agencies on high alert.

Despite strained relations after their border clashes in 2025, Thailand said it remains committed to working with Cambodia to combat online scams.

The Cambodian government has identified combating online scams as a top national priority, saying the illicit activities have affected its economy and image.

Phnom Penh said it wants to dismantle entire criminal networks and sever all the scam syndicates' financial sources in Cambodia to ensure a lasting solution.

While analysts largely welcome Cambodia's efforts, they say these are not enough to root out the problem of scams.

Seng, the analyst, said, "Raiding physical buildings is only half the battle.

"Without a sustained effort to dismantle the financial pipelines and the encrypted communication networks they use, I suspect we are seeing a displacement of the problem rather than its total eradication."

As part of its enforcement efforts, the Cambodian government has filed 112 cases in court involving 1,089 individuals linked to scam operations.

But Bunna Vann, head of research and advocacy program at the Cambodian Youth Network Association, said the government has largely taken action against low-level perpetrators. Many influential figures and those with political backing behind the scam activities remain at large.

Wojcik of Infoblox said today's highly sophisticated and hypermobile syndicates operate more like transnational corporations, making them difficult to eradicate completely.

He advised countries to devise better ways to tackle the fast-evolving and sophisticated online scamming activities. One strategy is to implement national Protective Domain Name Service programs, which will make networks more secure by preventing access to malware, phishing attacks and viruses at the source.

Meanwhile, David remains hopeful even though he has been sleeping rough for weeks.

"I'm happy now because I'm free from the scam compound. I want to go back to Indonesia."

THE STRAITS TIMES, SINGAPORE

Bangkok set to be SE Asia's hottest major city by 2050

Bangkok is set to become the hottest major city in Southeast Asia by 2050, with temperatures projected to rise above 38 C as climate change and the urban heat island effect intensify across the region.

The warning comes from the report "Roadmap for Extreme Heat Protection through Passive Cooling in ASEAN Region" by the ASEAN Centre for Energy, which says Thailand's capital faces a far more severe heat crisis in the decades ahead.

In 2025, Bangkok had around 45 "extreme heat days" a year, defined as days when temperatures exceed 35 C. By 2050, that number is expected to rise to 120 days a year, meaning residents could face almost three times as many days of accumulated extreme heat within just a few decades.

The report also projects that Bangkok's average daily maximum temperature will climb to 38.1 C by midcentury, up nearly 5 C from 33.3 C in 2000.

Compared with other major ASEAN cities, Bangkok is forecast to record the highest temperature in 2050, followed by Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam at 37.7 C, Manila in the Philippines at 37.2 C, Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia at 36.9 C, Jakarta in Indonesia and Singapore at 36.1 C.

Such conditions could push the city's infrastructure, public health system and economy toward unprecedented limits.

The report identifies climate change and rapid urbanization as the two main forces driving ASEAN's worsening heat crisis. In Bangkok, the urban heat island effect is a major factor, as concrete and asphalt absorb heat during the day and release it at night.

Data from the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, or ADPC, shows that dense central areas of Bangkok can be up to 3 C hotter than greener outer areas. Rising heat directly threatens public health by increasing the risk of heatstroke, chronic fatigue and sleep problems that damage quality of life.

Economically, severe heat could hit labor productivity, especially among more than 1.3 million outdoor workers in Bangkok. The report says that without proper adaptation, economic losses from heat and humidity could reach 6 percent of the city's gross product by 2050.

Households are also facing higher electricity costs. Some 90 percent of survey respondents said their energy bills rose by 10 to 50 percent during heat waves. Low-income residents in congested communities are among the most affected, as many live in poorly ventilated buildings.

As heat intensifies, air conditioning is becoming more essential, widening inequality in access to cooling. At the same time, heavy use of air conditioners releases more heat outdoors, creating a cycle that further worsens urban heat.

Irma Ramadan, a senior officer at the ASEAN Centre for Energy, said urbanization was pushing heat toward almost unbearable levels, while current policies were failing to keep pace with the changing climate.

Effective measure

Pornphrom Vikitsreth, adviser to the Bangkok governor on environment and the city's chief sustainability officer, agreed that expanding green space was a low-cost, high-impact measure that must be taken urgently.

"In the long term, we need to significantly increase green space. This is a relatively low-cost measure but offers major benefits. At the same time, preserving existing green areas and preventing them from being replaced by concrete structures is also essential," Pornphrom told Singapore broadcaster CNA.

Peeranan Towashiraporn, director of geographical information at ADPC, said Bangkok was right to treat heat as a disaster, rather than merely a seasonal condition. He said the city needed cooling shelters across all areas, along with public alerts during periods of extreme heat.

The report says the most sustainable solution is to integrate passive cooling into building design and urban planning. Measures include natural ventilation, tree shade and heat-reflective roof colors.

Building upgrades and high-performance glass could cut cooling energy demand by 35 to 70 percent. The government also needs to revise building regulations to require passive cooling features in new developments.

The report adds that public awareness and training for experts in tropical building design will be crucial for long-term change, alongside public-private cooperation, funding support and tax incentives to encourage the real-world use of cooling technologies.

THE NATION, THAILAND



Tourists wearing traditional Thai clothing shield themselves from the sun with umbrellas and cool off with fans during hot weather at Wat Pho temple in Bangkok, Thailand, on April 14. EPA

Elephants in Indonesia critically endangered as habitat areas dropped by half

Sumatran and Kalimantan elephants are now critically endangered as their habitat areas have been reduced from 42 to 21, Indonesian Forestry Minister Raja Juli Antoni told a meeting with various nongovernmental organizations in Jakarta earlier in May.

The government will issue a presidential instruction on rescuing the populations and habitats of Sumatran and Kalimantan elephants.

Raja Juli said the progressive step was taken as a response to the conditions of Sumatran and Kalimantan elephants and their reduced habitat.

The policy serves as an operational basis for interagency work. The presidential instruction draft is currently being circulated among ministries.

"The presidential instruction shows a strong commitment from (Indonesian) President Prabowo Subianto to save our elephants. Our focus is on how to execute those ideas in the field," Raja Juli said.

"Future governance must provide full orientation to conservation."

One crucial point in the presidential decree is the integration of infrastructure with animal living space.

Raja Juli provided an example that if the Public Works Ministry is building toll roads, then it must consider elephant home range maps, which have been prepared by the Forestry Ministry.

Technical solutions such as tunnels or underpasses will be mandatory to allow elephant herds to still roam their home range without being disrupted by human activities.



Staff members from the Riau Natural Resources Conservation Center install a GPS collar on a wild elephant that has been blindfolded to reduce visual stimulation, in Riau, Indonesia, on Nov 6. AFP

The minister also directed that the 21 remaining elephant habitat areas be maintained and their ecosystem quality improved. The main strategy is to build a corridor uniting all fragmented habitats because of illegal activities and changes in land use.

"It is important for us to have accurate data. There must be a clear target to increase the (elephant) population in the Conservation Strategy and Action Plan," he said.

"If there is no increase in population, we must find the problem and solve it."

Handling conflicts

As part of the long-term solution, Raja Juli also highlighted the handling of the conflict between elephants and humans in Way Kambas, Lampung, which has been ongoing for some 40 years.

He said that Prabowo suggested constructing an effective barrier to prevent casualties among both humans and elephants, while continuing to repair elephant habitats.

Experts estimated that there were some 2,800 to 4,000 Sumatran elephants in the 1980s. The Forestry Ministry estimated in 2007 that the population decreased to between 2,400 and 2,800 and further reduced to between 1,694 and 2,038 in 2017.

Forest encroachment and deforestation for oil palm plantations have further cornered the Sumatran elephant in its habitats.

Rampant deforestation and land conversion for various economic activities such as mining, plantation and energy development, are also believed to have contributed to the natural disasters in northern Sumatra in November 2025.

THE JAKARTA POST, INDONESIA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:45 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:45 PM

WORLD

US warns Iran over deal delay amid war fears

Talks hang by a thread as Gulf states unite against strike on nuclear plant

By **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE, and **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong

The United States has issued a fresh warning to Iran, urging it to move quickly toward a deal or "there won't be anything left of them", as Gulf nations rallied in solidarity after the Arab world's only nuclear power plant was targeted for the first time.

With diplomacy struggling, military preparations intensifying and inflammatory rhetoric escalating, fears are growing that the region risks sliding into a wider, potentially more dangerous phase of the conflict.

"For Iran, the clock is ticking, and they better get moving, fast, or there won't be anything left of them," US President Donald Trump wrote on Truth Social shortly after a call with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

According to media reports, the two leaders discussed the possibility of renewing military operations against Iran.

On Monday, Israel's Channel 13 reported that dozens of US cargo planes carrying ammunition from bases in Germany had landed in Tel Aviv, Israel's commercial hub, in the past 24 hours, as Netanyahu told a Cabinet meeting on Sunday that the country was "prepared for any scenario" over Iran.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei said on Monday that Iran has submitted its response to US revisions of the conflict resolution plan, as talks are ongoing through Pakistan. Iranian and Omani technical teams have met to negotiate a mechanism for safe transit in the Strait of Hormuz, he added.

A Pakistani source told Reuters on Monday that Pakistan has shared the revised proposal with the US.

"We don't have much time," the source said, when asked if it would take time to close gaps, adding that both countries "keep changing their goalposts".

Baghaei said Tehran was prepared for all scenarios.

"As for their threats, rest assured that we are fully aware of how to respond appropriately to even the smallest mistake from the opposing side," he told a televised weekly news conference.

The renewed tensions have raised concerns across the Gulf, particularly after Sunday's drone strike near the United Arab Emirates' Barakah Nuclear Power Plant, which is vital to the country's clean energy goals, supplying about 25 percent of its electricity needs.

The International Atomic Energy Agency said on Sunday that the strike had caused a fire in an electrical generator and that radiation levels remained normal in the four-reactor plant.

Brought online in 2020, the $20 billion Barakah plant — the Arab world's only nuclear power station — sits 200 kilometers west of Abu Dhabi and operates on US-supplied nuclear fuel.

The UAE Defense Ministry said three drones entered from its western border with Saudi Arabia, two of which were intercepted. Officials said they were investigating the source of the strike, adding that the UAE reserves the full right to respond to such "terrorist attacks".

Although no one was immediately blamed, UAE presidential adviser Anwar Gargash said it represented a dangerous escalation, whether carried out by "the principal perpetrator" or one of its proxies.

So far, Kuwait, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Egypt have condemned the attack and reaffirmed full solidarity with the UAE.

On Sunday, Ebrahim Rezaei, spokesman for the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission, said Tehran has not "closed the door to friendship in dealing with the UAE, but they should know that Iran's patience has limits".

"The UAE should not become entangled in Israel's plots and schemes," he said, as reported by Iran's ISNA news agency.

Hormuz management

Regarding the Strait of Hormuz, Iran's Supreme National Security Council announced on Monday the formation of a new body to manage the strategic waterway.

On its X account, the council shared a post for the Persian Gulf Strait Authority, saying it would provide "real-time updates on the #Hormuz_Strait operations and latest developments".

The account of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps navy shared the same post.

It was not immediately clear what the new body would do, but earlier this month, Iranian English-speaking broadcaster Press TV said it constituted a "system to exercise sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz" and that ships passing through the strait were sent "regulations" from the email info@pgsa.ir.

Amid escalating tensions, international airlines remain cautious in their response to the regional security situation.

American Airlines said on Sunday that it was extending the suspension of nonstop flights between New York and Tel Aviv until Jan 6, 2027, citing ongoing instability linked to the Iran conflict.

Agencies and Xinhua contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at cuihaipei@chinadaily.com.cn



Children line up to receive food cooked in large pots and distributed for free in Gaza City on Sunday. AHMAD HASABALLAH VIA GETTY IMAGES

Israeli airstrikes kill 8 in Gaza as protest boats seized

CAIRO — Israeli strikes killed at least eight Palestinians in the Gaza Strip on Sunday, health officials said, as ceasefire efforts meant to end fighting between Israel and the Hamas militant group falter.

In the weeks since halting its joint bombing with the United States in Iran, Israel has stepped up its attacks in Gaza. Medics said an Israeli strike killed one Palestinian near a police post and another at a tent encampment in Khan Younis in the enclave's south.

The Israeli military said it killed a militant who posed an immediate threat to forces in the area.

Separately, Gaza medics said another Israeli airstrike killed at least three people at a community kitchen near Al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir al-Balah, in the central Gaza area. The Israeli military said the strike targeted a Hamas commander developing anti-tank missiles.

Gaza medical officials said three more Palestinians were killed, one in a shooting incident in Khan Younis and two others in an Israeli airstrike near a bakery in Deir al-Balah.

In addition, the Israeli military said it had killed Bahaa Baroud, a Hamas Operations Headquarters commander, in an airstrike on Saturday, accusing him of planning multiple imminent attacks against troops and Israeli civilians in recent weeks.

The United Nations demanded on Monday that Israel take measures to prevent acts of "genocide" in Gaza.

In a report, the UN rights office said Israel's actions in Gaza since the start of the conflict in October 2023 involved "gross violations" of international law, amounting in many cases to "war crimes and other atrocity crimes".

UN rights chief Volker Turk urged Israel to ensure compliance with a 2024 International Court of Justice order that it take measures to prevent acts of genocide in Gaza.

Meanwhile, the Israeli military intercepted on Monday boats off the coast of Cyprus, part of the latest wave of flotilla activists attempting to break Israel's blockade of Gaza.

More than 50 vessels departed from the port in Marmaris, Turkiye, last week in what the organizers of the Global Sumud Flotilla described as the final leg of their planned journey to Gaza's shores.

The organization's livestream on Monday showed activists aboard several vessels putting on life jackets and raising their hands before a boat carrying Israeli troops approached. Wearing tactical gear, they boarded the ship, and the livestream abruptly ended. Many of the ships are currently off the coast of Cyprus.

In a statement issued on Monday, Turkiye's Foreign Ministry said, "We condemn the intervention by Israeli forces in international waters against the Global Flotilla ... which constitutes a new act of piracy."

AGENCIES—XINHUA

Trade show highlights China-Canada business ties

By **YANG GAO** in Toronto
gaoyang@chinadailyusa.com

The expanding 2026 Toronto Trade Show highlighted renewed momentum in China-Canada business ties, as organizers, officials and exhibitors pointed to growing interest among Chinese companies seeking opportunities in the Canadian market.

Held in Toronto over the weekend, the event brought together more than 100 exhibitors from sectors ranging from artificial intelligence and healthcare to manufacturing and green technology.

"This year, for the second edition, I feel full of confidence," said Lena Xu, president of the Canada-China Enterprise Overseas Service Center and the event's organizer.

Xu told China Daily that the inaugural event last year faced pressure as organizers worked to establish the platform, but this year's exhibition expanded significantly in size and participation.

"We started recruiting exhibitors earlier, and our whole system is now AI-powered," she said, adding that companies were able to register and participate more efficiently through the platform.

According to Xu, about 80 percent of exhibitors came from China, while participants also arrived from Mexico, the United States and South America.

"The variety of exhibitors is much richer this year," she said.

Xu described the event as more than a temporary exhibition.

"It's not a one-time trade show," she said. "It's a long-term bridge for cooperation."

She said the platform aims to connect China and Canada in trade, tourism, education and cultural exchange while helping Chinese companies establish themselves in Canada.

Xu also linked the stronger turnout this year to improving China-Canada relations.

"The warming of China-Canada relations has certainly promoted many Chinese enterprises going abroad," she said.



Visitors browse exhibition booths during the 2026 Toronto Trade Show in Toronto, Canada, on Saturday. The two-day event attracted more than 100 exhibitors from sectors including artificial intelligence, healthcare, manufacturing and green technology. YANG GAO / CHINA DAILY

She added that improved visa conditions and policy support had made overseas expansion easier for Chinese businesses.

"Prime Minister Carney's visit to China also brought back many positive results," Xu said, referring to Canadian PM Mark Carney.

Chinese officials attending the event also emphasized the economic potential between the countries.

Cheng Hongbo, deputy consul general of China in Toronto, said the strong presence of Chinese exhibitors demonstrated the competitiveness of Chinese manufacturing and brands.

"We are glad to see that in recent years more and more Chinese products have found their way into Canadian households," Cheng said.

He described the trade show as "a very important platform" for strengthening economic and trade cooperation between the countries.

"China and Canada, although separated by vast oceans, are highly complementary economically," Cheng said. "There are very broad opportunities for our cooperation."

He also pointed to China's large consumer market and Canada's push to diversify its foreign economic ties.

"I think China is the best partner for Canada to diversify its foreign economic relations for economic resilience," he said.

For many businesses attending the exhibition, however, entering North America also requires adapting to a very different commercial environment.

Chen Kai, who advises Chinese companies entering the Canadian and North American markets, said many firms initially approach overseas expansion with a domestic sales mindset.

"Most Chinese companies come with a sales mentality," Chen told China Daily. "But North America is more about the chain of responsibility."

He said companies must adapt to stricter expectations involving consumers, distributors and supply chains.

"The supply chain is actually a responsibility chain," he said. "Chinese manufacturers need to think more about responsibility rather than just finding agents or focusing only on sales."

Chen said many Chinese firms remain heavily focused on the United States, but often underestimate the complexity of the North American market.

"People who really understand North America know the US is not a unified market," he said, noting that regulations can vary widely between states and cities.

"Canada is relatively easier," Chen added. "Entering the Canadian market is one of the best first choices for Chinese companies entering North America."

He said Toronto's large Chinese business community and service sector also provide strong support for newcomers from China.

The trade show also attracted Canadian and European entrepreneurs seeking closer cooperation with China.

Matteo Merla, whose business imports fast-growing trees from Germany and plants them in Canada for lumber production, said China remains an important long-term market for his business during his second time attending the trade show.

"We're growing the fastest tree in the world, 18 meters in six years," Merla said. "We now have 15,000 trees planted in Dunnville, Ontario."

Merla said his company was seeking investors and partners to help expand the business.

"We believe in nature, we believe in resources," he said.

Having worked with Chinese partners for years, Merla described his experience with the Chinese market positively.

"They're very reliable. They know what they want," he said.

Merla said China's demand for lumber products makes cooperation especially important for his business.

"I think this tree, specifically in the lumber industry, having a resource for China, is very important," he said.

He also expressed support for stronger China-Canada cooperation.

"I hope they stick together," Merla said. "Going a different way without working with China is a big mistake for everybody."

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108
529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1830

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:45 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:45 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

It's time G7 members looked at themselves rather than blaming China for their woes

The gathering of G7 finance ministers in Paris from Monday to Tuesday has been framed, predictably, as another exercise in diagnosing the ailments of the developed economies through the prism of "imbalances". Yet what stands out clearly is not China's trade surplus as claimed, but the growing inability of some developed economies to confront the structural contradictions within their own economic systems.

Before the meeting, French officials spoke of an "unsustainable" global economy in which China "under-consumes", the United States "over-consumes" and Europe "under-invests".

The US runs chronic fiscal and current-account deficits because it has long chosen debt-fueled growth over fiscal discipline. Europe's investment weakness, meanwhile, reflects years of strategic hesitation, demographic stagnation and energy insecurity. Japan worries about bond-market volatility because decades of ultra-loose monetary policy dictated by Washington have left it exceptionally exposed to shifts in global capital flows.

To hold China accountable for that is scapegoating to avoid self-correction. Trade balances are shaped by industrial structures, comparative advantages, corporate investment decisions and the international division of labor. China's trade surpluses with the G7 members, as well as the European Union, are the de facto objective result of policies designed and practiced by some advanced economies themselves.

For years, multinational corporations shifted production to China in pursuit of lower costs, industrial clustering and market access. The profits from these operations flowed overwhelmingly back to shareholders and corporations in developed economies. Yet the products manufactured in China and exported to Western markets are statistically counted as Chinese exports.

Some developed economies have systematically constrained their own export potential to China. Restrictions on high-tech exports have become increasingly expansive over the past decade. Advanced semiconductors, aerospace technologies, industrial software and precision equipment have all been subject to tightening controls. One cannot simultaneously suppress exports and lament trade deficits.

Indeed, China's own technological progress increasingly reflects this reality. The latest data on the BeiDou Navigation Satellite System offer a telling example. According to an industry white paper released on Monday, China's satellite navigation sector reached an output value of 629 billion yuan ($92.34 billion) in 2025, while the broader BeiDou spatial-temporal industry exceeded 1.3 trillion yuan. The system's products and services have expanded to more than 140 countries and regions.

What this illustrates is not merely industrial scale, but technological substitution. As some developed economies narrowed technology exports to China, the country accelerated indigenous innovation. Domestic supply chains have emerged with increasing levels of self-sufficiency.

The same pattern is unfolding in artificial intelligence, green energy and advanced manufacturing. China's preparation for the AI era, including the integration of AI across industrial production, logistics and services, is advancing at remarkable speed. So too is its transition toward renewable energy, electric vehicles and intelligent infrastructure. China's industrial upgrading has proceeded faster and more coherently than in many advanced economies.

This raises a deeper question for the G7. Has "de-risking" from China become a political slogan masking internal weaknesses?

Ironically, much of the "anxiety" voiced within the G7 club concerns instability emanating from the US — from its fiscal deficits and trade tensions to its sanctions policy and the geopolitical volatility it is engineering. For many developed economies, the more immediate form of "de-risking" increasingly involves reducing overdependence on US financial and strategic unpredictability.

China, meanwhile, continues to expand its high-standard opening-up. It is already the world's second-largest import market, and its future import potential remains enormous as its industrial upgrading continues. New demand for services, consumer goods, advanced manufacturing and green technologies will create opportunities for trading partners.

The tragedy is that parts of the developed world still interpret China's rise primarily as a "threat" instead of an opportunity. The intent of globalization should not be that the prosperity of one side is at the expense of another. It should be that interconnected growth can enlarge the economic pie for all. If the G7 wishes to address its "imbalances", it should begin with a more uncomfortable exercise in self-examination.

Chinese EVs a boon to world consumers

The first shipment of 24,500 Chinese-made electric vehicles has been cleared for import in Canadian ports recently. The anticipation, excitement and positive feedback from Canadian car dealers, consumers and auto market analysts make it clear that Chinese EVs are by no means the "threat" to industry or security some Western politicians have portrayed them to be. On the contrary, they are a boon to the market.

The decision by the Mark Carney government of Canada to slash tariffs on Chinese EVs and introduce an import quota system is a departure from the protectionist policies adopted by its predecessor. In October 2024, the then Justin Trudeau government imposed a 100 percent tariff on Chinese EVs, effectively shutting Chinese manufacturers out of the Canadian market. This move followed the lead of the then US administration.

However, with the new policy announced during Carney's visit to China in January, Canada has opened its market to 49,000 Chinese EVs annually, with a reduced most-favored-nation tariff rate of 6.1 percent. This shift not only reflects a pragmatic approach to trade but also signals a willingness to engage with China on mutually beneficial terms.

The import of Chinese EVs comes at a juncture for Canada, which is striving to meet its climate goals. Ottawa has set ambitious targets to phase out internal combustion engines and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. Chinese EVs, with their technology, competitive pricing and proven performance, can play a big role in helping accelerate Canada's transition to green mobility.

Canadian Minister of Industry Melanie Joly has emphasized the potential of joint-venture partnerships with Chinese EV companies to help boost domestic manufacturing and competitiveness. "The idea is to be able, in North America, to adopt new technology," Joly told the media on the sidelines of the Public Policy Forum's 2026 Canada Growth Summit in Toronto early this month. "If other countries don't necessarily want to adopt them right now, we can adopt them first."

As some observers say, Canada can gain access to cutting-edge technologies, improve its industrial competitiveness, and create jobs in the clean energy sector by collaborating with Chinese EV companies. The partnership is not a one-way street; it offers opportunities for Canadian companies to integrate into global supply chains and benefit from China's vast market.

The import of Chinese EVs can help address the affordability gap in Canada's EV market. Chinese EVs, known for their affordability without compromising on quality, can make EVs more accessible to a broader segment of the population.

Canada's practical approach is in stark contrast to the shortsightedness of some developed economies that still impose hefty tariffs on Chinese EVs under the excuse of safeguarding "security" and protecting local enterprises. Protectionism only harms consumers by raising prices and stifles the technological progress of domestic industries by removing the incentive to be competitive.

That explains why the European Union — under growing pressure from its enterprises and consumers to open the market to Chinese EVs — has chosen to resolve its self-created problem with them through negotiations with China. The energy shortage triggered by the Middle East crisis has further driven consumers worldwide toward EVs.

Protecting inefficient industries only breeds stagnation; while embracing competition breeds innovation. The policymakers of the EU should heed the experience of Canada and view China's EV sector with objectivity.

The competitiveness of Chinese EVs stems from market dynamics. The technological edge of Chinese EVs lies in the country's complete industry chain, innovation and fierce market competition. The ability to source almost all the battery components within a single city cluster allows manufacturers to produce high-quality vehicles at lower costs.

Chinese EVs lower the barrier to green mobility for consumers worldwide, and support global climate goals. By embracing this, the Canadian government has made a rational choice to join many other economies in the world and opt for a path of shared prosperity and sustainable development.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Shi Yu



Opinion Line

Aviation engineers give wings to soaring aerospace industry

In the realm of military aviation, few developing countries have made as remarkable a leap as China. From relying on imported aircraft to developing cutting-edge, world-class fighter jets, China's journey in aerospace is a testament to its engineering prowess and manufacturing capabilities.

The J-10 was China's first independently designed advanced fighter jet, heralding the beginning of a new era for the country's aviation industry. The J-10 was more than just an aircraft; it was a statement of China's intent to shed its reliance on foreign technology and carve out its own path in the skies.

The development of the J-10 was a groundbreaking achievement. It not only elevated China's technological and manufacturing capabilities but also nurtured a generation of engineers. These engineers, driven by patriotism and a commitment to excellence, laid the foundation for China's future aerospace endeavors. The J-10 proved that China could compete with the best in the world, ending the long history of the People's Liberation Army Air Force relying on imports and modified variants.

Building on the success of the J-10, the Chengdu Aircraft Design and Research Institute and Chengdu Aircraft Industry Group unveiled the J-20 in 2011, making China the second country in the world, after the United States, to develop and manufacture a fifth-generation stealth fighter.

The J-20 is a marvel of modern engineering, equipped with advanced stealth capabilities, supercruise and integrated avionics.

The J-20 has revolutionized China's aerial combat capabilities, providing the PLAAF with reliable long-range strike capabilities and enabling the construction of a modern combat system centered on stealth fighters.

Its success has not only boosted national pride but also symbolized China's growing comprehensive national strength.

The J-10 and J-20 have undergone significant upgrades, with variants such as the J-20A and J-20S leading the way. The J-20S, the world's first two-seater stealth fighter jet, represents a new frontier in aerial combat, capable of cooperating with drones to launch long-range attacks undetected by enemy forces.

In addition to its domestic success, China's aviation industry has made waves in the international arms market. The J-10CE, the export version of the J-10C, has proven its mettle in real combat.

This impressive performance has solidified China's status as a global player in the aerospace industry, attracting foreign buyers seeking powerful and reliable aircraft.

During a recent visit to the Chengdu Aircraft Design and Research Institute and Chengdu Aircraft Industry Group, I had the privilege of witnessing the J-20 and J-10CE up close. The high quality of the manufacturing is a testament to the dedication and expertise of China's aviation engineers.

As a journalist covering military affairs and defense technology, and as a military enthusiast, I am genuinely delighted by these achievements. The progress China has made in aerial combat capabilities is a source of national pride and a reminder of the incredible talent and determination of its people.

China's journey from lagging behind global powers to the current achievements of its modern aerospace industry is a remarkable story of innovation and perseverance. The J-10 and J-20 are symbols of China's growing strength and its ability to protect its skies.

To the aviation engineers who have made this possible, we extend our deepest gratitude. Your work has not only strengthened our nation's defense but also inspired a new generation of engineers and enthusiasts. Here's to many more advancements and a future filled with even more powerful aircraft to protect our motherland.

— ZHAO LEI, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Strategic mineral security critical for country

Editor's note: *The outline of China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) calls for stronger efforts to prospect, develop and ensure reserves of strategic mineral resources. Liu Gang, a professor at the College of Urban and Environmental Sciences in Peking University, spoke to the 21st Century Business Herald about what these resources are and how China's mineral security can be ensured. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

Strategic mineral resources are crucial minerals that serve as the core foundation for economic and industrial development. A country's list of strategic minerals may change as its economy and society evolve.

For example, petroleum has been regarded as a strategic mineral since the Industrial Revolution. Oil and natural gas resources power aircraft and road transport, and serve as essential raw materials for daily products such as chemical fibers, plastics and textiles.

A host of new technologies are being rapidly developed to replace petroleum both as an energy source and as a basic chemical material. For example, solar and wind power technologies can replace fossil fuels in power generation while bio-based materials can substitute traditional petroleum-based products.

Yet despite the rapid growth of clean energy capacity in China in recent years, fossil energy remains the mainstay of the country's energy consumption. It is relatively easy to diversify oil imports thanks to the wide distribution of oil-producing regions worldwide.

However, as the transition to clean energy and green, low-carbon growth advances, the emphasis has shifted to metals such as lithium, cobalt and nickel, which are important raw materials for electric vehicle batteries. Additionally, the development of artificial intelligence has led to an increase in the strategic importance of metals such as gallium and germanium, which are essential for semiconductors, integrated circuits and chips.

To enhance China's strategic mineral security, efforts could focus on four key areas: domestic prospecting, increasing reserves, diversifying imports and promoting recycling.

The country also needs to closely follow upgrades in technology. For example, though lithium, cobalt and nickel are all important for the lithium batteries in electric vehicles, the high prices of cobalt and nickel have spurred the development of lithium iron phosphate batteries, which are more economical. Such emerging technological routes driven by resource constraints and the need to stay cost-efficient deserve closer attention.

Efforts are needed to advance technology and promote the circular economy to reduce the consumption of these minerals, enhance their recycling and even replace them entirely.

The growth of AI has increased the demand for rare earth elements, which are also widely used in areas such as magnetic materials, luminescent and laser materials, hydrogen storage and atomic energy.

After years of development, China has established significant advantages in the global rare earth industry supply chain. In recent years, other countries have intensified efforts to catch up with China in this industry. However, it's unlikely that they will overtake China in the near term.

To consolidate China's advantages in rare earths, it is crucial to promote high-quality utilization of these resources, particularly by nurturing the high-end permanent magnet industry.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:45 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:45 PM

VIEWS

Olga Migunova

Russia, China forge stronger ties in turbulent times



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

This year marks several milestones: the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the Russia-China strategic partnership of coordination, the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Russia-China Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation, the beginning of China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), and the opening of the cross-years of education between the two countries.

Thus, 2026 is a chronological convergence for Russia-China relations. Within just a few months, four distinct historical trajectories — each with its own meaning, ranging from the geopolitical agreements of the 1990s to technological and humanitarian planning for the 2030s — have intersected. These trajectories form a new historical configuration of political, economic, humanitarian and diplomatic cooperation.

At the center of this convergence is the state visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin to China from Tuesday to Wednesday. These four milestones effectively shape the agenda of the visit. Amid global turbulence, the visit serves as a moment that "fuses" these timelines together.

It is a mechanism for synchronizing the development strategies of both countries for decades ahead. Its historical significance will not be measured by the length of the final communique or the number of contracts signed, but by its ability to connect the past, present, and future — assessing the past 30 years, adapting the legal legacy of the 2001 treaty to new challenges, aligning national strategies through 2030, and launching long-term personnel cooperation.

Thirty years ago, Russia-China relations achieved a historic breakthrough.

Over three decades, they evolved from cautious rapprochement after the collapse of the Soviet Union into what is now described as a "comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination", often seen as a model of major country relations.

This transformation reflected Russia's shift toward a multipolar foreign policy and China's need for stability along its long shared border, as well as balance in its relations with the United States.

The political breakthrough of 1996 was preceded by important groundwork, including agreements on confidence-building measures and mutual force reductions along the border. These established a legal framework that fostered trust. Today's relationship is often described as a new model of international relations based on the principles of "non-alliance, non-confrontation, and not targeting third parties", helping both countries avoid the classic "great power dilemma".

The Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation formalized the legal foundation of bilateral relations in the 21st century, enshrining principles such as mutual respect for sovereignty, non-aggression, non-interference, equality, mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence. It committed both sides to resolving disputes peacefully and reaffirmed their pledge not to be the first to use nuclear weapons.

Originally valid for 20 years, the treaty was automatically extended in 2021 for another five years. The presidential visit is an ideal moment to reaffirm the commitment to its principles for the years ahead. Over the past 25 years, China and Russia have turned their coordination into a global factor. Their cooperation within the United Nations, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS has become a key pillar of international governance.

Both countries act as stabilizing forces in the UN Security Council, often coordinating positions and advocating reforms to global governance systems.

They have also played leading roles in expanding and strengthening alternative international frameworks, particularly among developing countries and the Global South.

President Putin's visit is not merely about marking anniversaries but about evaluating three decades of cooperation and defining the parameters of a new stage — one shaped by China's 15th Five-Year Plan. This plan, while domestic in nature, sets clear technological and industrial priorities that will influence bilateral cooperation.

It emphasizes breakthroughs in areas such as 6G networks, artificial intelligence, big data, quantum technologies, biotechnology, semiconductors and green energy, with the overarching goal of achieving a high degree of technological self-reliance.

For Russia, this opens broad opportunities. The alignment of China's plan with Russia's Far East development strategy creates a natural platform for cooperation. The launch of international priority development territories in several Far Eastern regions of Russia offers favorable conditions for large-scale Chinese investment, supported by long-term guarantees.

Energy cooperation will remain central. In 2025, Russia and China signed the memorandum on the construction of the Power of Siberia-2 gas pipeline project.

Transport infrastructure is another key focus. Projects such as the Central Eurasian Transport Corridor, linking Siberia, Mongolia and western China, could significantly enhance connectivity.

Financial cooperation is also advancing rapidly. Russia and China have largely shifted to national currencies in bilateral trade, reducing vulnerability to external financial pressures.

Both countries advocate reforms to global financial institutions to make them more equitable and less politicized.

Beyond economics, deeper industrial and technological integration is becoming the new priority. This includes aligning the Eurasian Economic Union with the Belt and Road Initiative, as well as promoting the concept of a Greater Eurasian Partnership.

Education and human capital development play a crucial role in this process. The years of education (2026-27) aim to expand academic exchanges, joint campuses, and dual-degree programs.

In a global environment marked by instability, Russia-China relations have emerged as a stable anchor. The partnership reflects not only economic interdependence but also a shared perspective that rejects hegemony and emphasizes balance.

President Putin's visit will likely reaffirm this vision, demonstrating that the Russia-China partnership remains a pillar of stability in an increasingly turbulent world.

The author is the academic supervisor of the Center for the Study of China and Asia-Pacific Countries at St Petersburg State University of Economics.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Alexander Lukin

Old friendship in new era vital beyond Far East

Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to China, from Tuesday to Wednesday, will be a commemorative occasion to some extent.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation between Russia and China as well as the establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

These two initiatives have laid the foundation for the rapid strengthening of cooperation between the two countries, now seen by the two sides as a comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era.

The strengthening of the partnership has yielded tangible results. Over the past 25 years, more than 300 intergovernmental treaties and agreements have been signed.

There are five intergovernmental commissions, covering all areas of cooperation: economics, trade, humanitarian affairs, investment, energy, and interaction between border regions.

This comprehensive structure of strategic partnership extends from annual meetings of heads of state and government to cooperation between regions, provinces, municipalities, universities and companies.

There's hardly any major organization in Russia or China that doesn't have partners in the other country.

According to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, deepening relations with China is a priority for Russia, and aligns with the objectives of strengthening good-neighborliness and mutual development.

Neither Russia nor China has such a comprehensive system of cooperation with any other country in the world.

The partnership is based not on the similarity of ideologies, but on the strategic interests in an emerging multipolar world.

Both China and Russia aim to be the new poles of global influence.

Since the Western center of power, dominant since the collapse of the Soviet Union, is unwilling to relinquish its supremacy, rising non-Western centers of influence find common ground in balancing Western influence.

The goal is to gradually improve the global governance system.

Several other countries, including India, Brazil, South Africa and Indonesia, are potential players in this multipolar order.

This explains the growing popularity and influence of non-Western international organizations and groups such as BRICS, SCO, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations among several others.

The development of many of these forums, such as BRICS and the SCO, was initially spurred by the Sino-Russian proposals and the two countries' shared vision for the world order.

However, contrary to Western narratives, Russia and China do not seek to undermine the existing "rules-based" international order.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the world order — based on the idea of sovereignty of states and the central role of the United Nations, where decisions were not made without the consensus of all permanent Security Council members — began to constrain the US and its allies' pursuit of complete dominance.

Theories such as the "responsibility to protect" emerged in the West, which, contrary to the UN Charter, effectively permitted interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states without their consent.

Russia and China rejected these ideas and advocated preserving the post-World War II international law.

Thus, Russia and China play a stabilizing role in international affairs.

This has been particularly evident in the policies of certain Western powers, which openly reject the principles of international law and proclaim the simple right of might, drawing mild criticism from their own allies that are accustomed to justifying their hegemonic goals with elaborate interpretations of international law.

At a meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on April 15 in Beijing, President Xi Jinping urged closer and stronger strategic coordination between China and Russia to firmly defend their legitimate interests and safeguard the unity of Global South countries.

Xi also called on the two countries to shoulder their responsibilities as major countries and permanent members of the UN Security Council.

It is necessary for the two sides to fully leverage the advantages of proximity and complementarity, deepen cooperation on all fronts, and enhance the resilience of their respective development.

Xi also emphasized the need to strengthen multilateral cooperation, firmly uphold and practice multilateralism, join hands to revive the authority and vitality of the UN, engage in closer coordination and cooperation within the frameworks of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS countries, and promote the development of the international order in a more just and reasonable direction.

These goals align with Russia's interests, and China exemplifies their successful implementation.

Despite some unfair criticisms from the West, China remains the most peace-loving and effective major power in the world.

For nearly half a century, its armed forces have not been deployed in any operation abroad, except for peacekeeping and UN-approved ones.

China does not participate in any regional conflict, but always expresses its principled position.

It has put forward peace initiatives, and even expressed a willingness to mediate in their resolution.

By focusing on domestic development, China has achieved unprecedented success, becoming the second-largest economy in the world.

It is approaching the status of moderately developed countries in per capita GDP, with a powerful and stable economy, a unique culture, and one of the best-equipped modern armies in the world.

Today, China is Russia's most important strategic and trade partner. Its role has grown particularly over the past four years, when Russia's ties with Europe have been curtailed.

At the same time, China is extremely interested in expanding cooperation with Russia, amid political and economic pressure from the US and its allies.

Under these circumstances, the strategic partnership between the two countries will only deepen.

The outcome of Putin's visit to Beijing will be closely watched around the world.

The author is the academic head at the Institute of China and Contemporary Asia of the Russian Academy of Sciences.
The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.

Bakhtizin Albert

Building stability in a fractured trading world

Current developments surrounding Iran, marked by sharp disruptions in trade flows and growing threats to the security of established maritime routes, are increasing uncertainty in global markets, national economies, and international supply chains. The question is, which countries are likely to be the worst affected and which are positioned to cushion the impact.

History offers a useful perspective. Local disruptions in major trade corridors have often produced consequences far beyond their immediate epicenters.

The Yom Kippur War of 1973, followed by the oil embargo, caused oil prices to surge, accelerated global inflation and pushed major economies into recession. The closure of the Suez Canal in 1956 and again in 1967 forced the restructuring of trade routes and raised transportation costs.

The current situation is considerably more complex, since supply chains have become longer, production systems are more sophisticated, and the density of the global trade network has increased.

To understand how the crisis unfolding in the Strait of Hormuz will affect different countries, it is important to examine the structure of the global trading system. There are three dimensions of global trade.

The first is a country's position within the trade network, which determines its connectivity with other economies. The key nodes here include the United States, China, Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Japan.

Their centrality means that disturbances reaching them can quickly affect large parts of the global economy.

The second is the scale of trade, or a country's share in global exports and imports. The leaders here are China, the United States and Germany. Their trade volumes are so substantial that fluctuations in their external demand or supply capacity are transmitted widely across markets.

The third is the breadth of trade ties, or the number of countries for which a given economy is among the principal trading partners.

By this measure, China is the clear leader. Its economic links extend across regions and development levels, making it one of the most deeply embedded participants in world trade.

Across all three characteristics, the leading economies are China, the US and Germany.

Within this space, China is the center of production and exports, the US is the financial center and a major consumption hub, while Germany is the core of European production chains.

The difference is that today such mechanisms can operate on a new technological foundation.

How do shocks spread through such networks? Typically, disruptions begin at a bottleneck, such as an important trade artery. Then the impulse spreads through the global network and reaches the central nodes, namely China, the US and Germany.

These countries act as shock absorbers and redistribute pressure across the network. The scale of their trade network makes it possible to redirect flows and compensate for supply disruptions. On the other hand, the peripheral nodes — countries that depend on a narrow range of suppliers, have limited trade structures and few alternative routes, and are not deeply integrated into the global network — suffer more from the disruption.

This fragility is reflected in global assessments. In April, the International Monetary Fund released its flagship report titled Global Economy in the Shadow of War in which it lowered its forecast for global GDP growth from 3.3 percent to 3.1 percent.

The report identified the escalation of the Iranian conflict, further fragmentation of the global trading system, and rising energy prices as among the main risks to future global development.

Other leading institutions such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development have also warned of global recession risks. The question is whether this applies to all countries and the mechanisms that each country has to escape stagnation and maintain steady development.

Interestingly, the answer comes from the IMF. In March, it published a paper titled Institutions for Industrial Policy: The Foundation of Economic Development.

An institution that for many years promoted minimal state intervention in the economy has finally acknowledged that market reforms alone are not enough. Citing the example of East Asian countries, the study notes that technological breakthroughs can be achieved through active industrial policies.

According to the researchers, long-term growth requires a dedicated agency for managing industrial policy. Its role would be to coordinate the state and business, support strategic sectors, align policy tools, and finance science and education. This would not be a traditional ministry functioning along rigid lines, but a flexible and learning-oriented development system.

Many elements of this model resemble Asian development institutions, especially those in China. They also have roots in the strategic planning traditions of the 20th century, including Japan's Ministry of International Trade and Industry and other successful historical experiences of state-led coordination.

The difference is that today such mechanisms can operate on a new technological foundation. Digital monitoring, modern balance systems and data analytics now make coordination more precise, timely and responsive.

In other words, the IMF has recognized the return of coordination tools once used by successful industrial states, particularly China.

The current global crisis may end not only in recession, but also in a reconsideration of the economic model itself.

But this alone may not be enough for sustainable development. Enhanced economic and technological collaboration between major economies, such as that between China and Russia, can bring greater stability. Their technological convergence, together with the combination of their resource capacities, could give rise to a resilient economic cooperation zone capable of maintaining stability amid global uncertainties and advancing as a new technological and industrial self-sustaining center in the evolving global governance landscape.

The author is the director of the Central Economics and Mathematics Institute in the Russian Academy of Sciences and a professor at the Lomonosov Moscow State University.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:45 PM

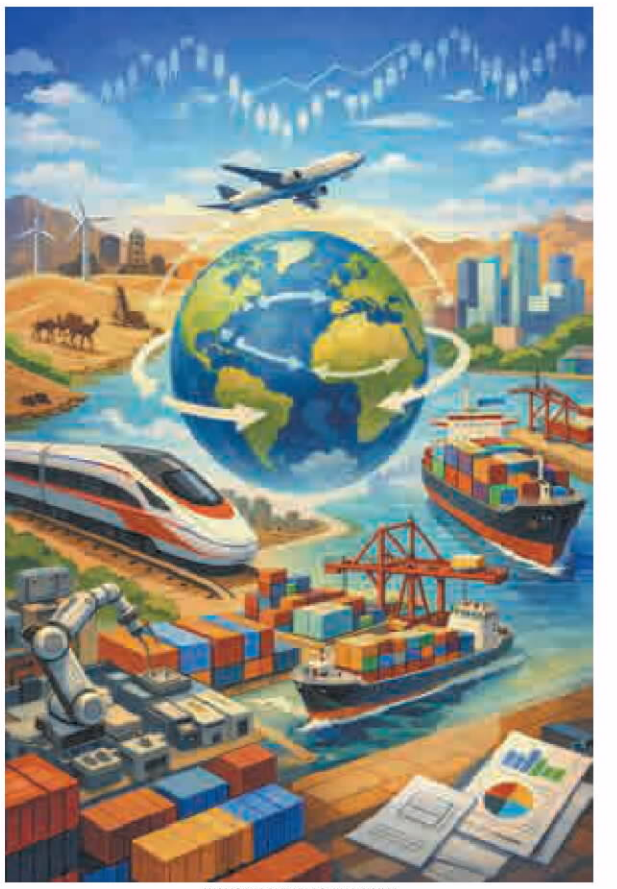
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:45 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

RONNIE LINS

Innovation as infrastructure

China's industrial modernization during the 15th Five-Year Plan period will bring about a shared endeavor for building technological capacity



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

The 2026 Government Work Report does more than review annual targets. It signals a structural shift in how China approaches development. The country now treats technological innovation and industrial upgrading not as isolated domestic priorities, but as core elements of a systemic development infrastructure.



The projected GDP growth rate of 4.5 percent to 5 percent for 2026 reflects a deliberate strategy. China is prioritizing resilience, quality and deeper integration between science, industry and markets. For countries across the Global South, this shift offers more than new trade opportunities. It introduces a governance model that supports development without producing ecological strain or structural dependency.

China has redefined productivity at its core. Instead of separating research, industrial scale and commercialization, the country now aligns these elements within a unified development framework.

This transformation already shows in the expansion of innovation capacity. China's R&D spending has reached around 2.8 percent of GDP, surpassing the average of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, while technology transactions continue to grow, strengthening the link between scientific research and economic application.

Public investment also plays a central role. Large-scale equipment upgrading programs do not simply modernize existing systems. They drive the digital transformation of traditional industries. Companies now deploy artificial intelligence, cloud computing and big data across manufacturing, logistics and supply chains. At the same time, China continues to strengthen advanced manufacturing clusters that combine quality standards, branding and intelligent production networks.

Beyond leading sectors, this transformation is increasingly reaching small and medium-sized enterprises, which are adopting digital tools to improve efficiency, reduce costs and integrate themselves into more advanced value chains. This diffusion of technology across different layers of the economy plays a central role in sustaining long-term productivity growth.

In parallel, the country is accelerating the development of future industries. It is making advances in fields such as quantum computing, next-generation telecommunications, advanced energy systems and brain-computer interfaces. Public and private capital supports these sectors through long-term investment structures designed to accommodate the longer cycles of deep-tech innovation.

This dual strategy ensures that productivity gains spread beyond high-tech sectors. The broader economy absorbs these gains, while new efficiency standards emphasize resource use, workforce capabilities and adaptability.

China has long recognized the gap between scientific discovery and large-scale application. The current framework addresses this challenge through institutional design rather than relying solely on funding.

The "AI Plus" initiative illustrates this approach clearly. The government is promoting large-scale deployment of AI across manufacturing, healthcare, logistics and public services. This creates stable demand for emerging technologies, reduces uncertainty and accelerates their commercial adoption.

In practice, this approach reduces the traditional fragmentation between innovation actors. Research institutions, technology companies and industrial producers now operate within more coordinated frameworks, supported by policy instruments that align incentives and reduce barriers to scale.

China has also elevated data to the status of a core production factor. Policymakers are supporting the development of high-quality data ecosystems, the expansion of computing infrastructure and improvements in mechanisms for valuing digital assets. Today, core digital economy industries already account for more than 10 percent of GDP, highlighting the central role of data in economic transformation.

At the same time, China strengthens intellectual property protection, improves capital market access for technology companies and encourages leading companies to organize innovation consortia. These measures connect research, production and commercialization more effectively.

As a result, innovation now operates within industrial standards, regulatory frameworks and public procurement systems. This integration accelerates market entry and ensures that domestic industries capture productivity gains before scaling internationally.

China does not regard external technological pressure as grounds for isolation. Instead, it pursues strategic autonomy while expanding openness in a more effective way.

The government continues to open sectors such as digital services, biotechnology and value-added telecommunications. At the same time, it strengthens domestic capabilities in key areas such as semiconductors, industrial software and advanced manufacturing equipment. This combination reduces vulnerability while maintaining international engagement.

Regional innovation hubs now play a central role in this strategy. Areas such as the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, the Yangtze River Delta and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area connect domestic innovation systems with global research networks. China is also promoting open-source AI ecosystems, joint laboratories and cross-border data governance initiatives.

This approach contributes to stabilizing global innovation systems by preserving channels for cooperation even under conditions of geopolitical uncertainty.

In the context of geoeconomic fragmentation, this model shows that technological sovereignty and international cooperation can reinforce each other. Shared infrastructure, transparent rules and mutual benefits create the foundation for stable collaboration.

China's transformation generates practical implications for developing countries. The 2026 Government Work Report points to concrete opportunities for cooperation.

First, integrating green transition and digitalization enables developing countries to bypass carbon-intensive stages of development. China has already scaled production in strategic sectors. Its output of new-energy vehicles has exceeded 16 million units, supported by expanding charging infrastructure.

Second, China's evolving approach to data governance and AI provides valuable reference points. Countries can adapt these frameworks to balance innovation, regulation and privacy within their own institutional environments.

For many developing countries, these opportunities go beyond access to technology. They also involve learning how to build institutional capacity, coordinate industrial policy and create long-term development strategies that integrate digitalization and sustainability.

Third, China does not frame cooperation as one-way technology transfer. It emphasizes co-creation, local capacity building and joint development. Platforms such as the Belt and Road Initiative, BRICS and the China-CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) Forum increasingly reflect this approach, focusing on projects that generate both immediate results and long-term institutional gains.

For the Global South, the key lesson lies not in copying China's model, but in adapting its principles. Sustainable development requires strong institutions, long-term financing and cooperative governance structures.

As China continues to advance the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), it will offer more than its national development experience. It will create a scalable framework for building technological capacity in a complex global environment. In this context, innovation-driven industrial upgrading no longer represents a competitive race. It becomes a shared endeavor.

The author is the director of the China-Brazil Center for Research and Business. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

SHU QUANFENG

Rural development

Digital platforms and AI tools are bridging the distance for China's migrant rural residents, fostering participation and governance in the countryside

As the waves of urbanization and industrialization surge forward, rural development and vitalization become a shared mission for nations worldwide. The effective utilization of digital technology can play a pivotal role in this mission by mitigating collective action dilemmas and governance vacuums caused by population outflow in rural areas. China's newly released outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) for national social and economic development explicitly calls for deepening the construction of a digital China and enhancing the level of digital-intelligent development, while the 2026 No 1 Central Document highlights the implementation of high-quality development actions for digital villages. According to the 57th Statistical Report on China's Internet Development, 5G networks cover all towns and 95 percent of administrative villages in China, with rural internet penetration reaching 69.5 percent as of December 2025. The digital landscape in rural China has leaped forward over the past decade, accumulating valuable experience for combating rural development challenges and fostering revitalization.





SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

On the one hand, the widespread adoption of digital rural governance platforms connects the floating population online, solving the problem of insufficient participation in rural governance. Spatial barriers and spatiotemporal dislocation were once core issues hindering the cohesion of mobile societies. However, digital technology has broken these shackles, allowing discrete mobile forces to converge online. For instance, as of March 2026, over 88,000 villages and 16 million villagers nationwide have joined the "village-level service platform", a digital governance mini-program. On this rural office automation system, every village has a dedicated home page featuring columns for village affairs disclosure, deliberation and consultation, grievance feedback and participation rankings. Villagers working or living anywhere in the world can follow their home village's page on their phones to stay updated on local dynamics. They can participate online in the consultation, decision-making and supervision of public affairs such as infrastructure construction, public service provision and collective resource management, and are incentivized to actively donate to collective activities that improve their hometowns.

On the other hand, digital-intelligent tools represented by large language models deeply empower grassroots cadres, effectively helping them govern villages and meet villagers' needs. By December 2025, the user base for generative artificial intelligence in China had reached 602 million. A 2025 survey by the China Institute for Rural Studies at Tsinghua University showed that 66.9 percent of village cadres now use AI tools such as Doubao and DeepSeek in their daily work to assist with decision-making and management. They utilize these tools to design public activity plans, produce promotional videos for local specialty products, draft rural revitalization project proposals and analyze data on public demands.

However, integrating digital technology into rural society is a complex process that is currently in a "running-in period", facing multiple constraints regarding subject capability, technology application and institutional norms.

First, the digital literacy of rural cadres and villagers needs improvement. According to a 2026 report by China Internet Network Information Center, as of December 2025, the digital literacy and skills of rural residents lagged behind those of urban residents by 24.6 percentage points. China Institute for Rural Studies data from 2025 indicates that 31.1 percent of village cadres can barely use office software, and 10.3 percent do not know how to use WeChat to issue notices or mobilize the public.

Second, the misuse of digital governance tools is prominent. The redundant construction of various digital governance tools is severe; most villages are required to fill out data for more than a score of apps, with some exceeding dozens. This leads to "digital burnout" among cadres, affecting their physical and mental health and their willingness to serve the public.

Third, lagging regulation has spawned a series of social risks. Government regulation often trails behind the iteration of digital technology, leading to increasing social risks in rural areas such as information cocoons, group polarization and even AI fraud. These risks can easily erode villagers' trust in digital technology.

The 15th Five-Year Plan emphasizes the importance of creating a beneficial, safe and fair environment in the development of digital technology. Given that high mobility will be a long-term structural feature of China's rural society, future digital transformation needs to accelerate into a new stage of high-quality development to provide continuous momentum for reversing rural decline and promoting comprehensive revitalization.

First, rural revitalization hinges on human resources. This means increased investment in improving the digital literacy and skills of villagers, implementing special actions to enhance the digital leadership of rural grassroots cadres and carrying out customized cultivation in digital services, governance, mobilization and marketing.

Second, technology is key to vigorously promoting innovation in digital governance tools. There should be increased research support for agriculture-friendly digital technology innovation to improve the utility and ease of use of rural digital governance platforms. The construction of an intelligent, standardized rural governance platform system should be accelerated, making digital platforms a smart hub that truly transcends time and space to efficiently aggregate rural resources.

Third, institutional backup is needed to strengthen the standardized management of digital applications. This includes adhering to the principle of balancing regulation and support, strengthening the governance of false and harmful information in cyberspace, and building an agile and efficient digital governance institutional system. Equally important are algorithmic value orientation and humanistic care, ultimately promoting technology for good to provide institutional guarantees for cohesion in a mobile society.

The author is an assistant professor at the School of Public Policy and Management and a research assistant at the China Institute for Rural Studies at Tsinghua University. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:45 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:45 PM

BUSINESS

Departure tax refund levels up for visitors

Upgrade to help convert inbound tourism boom into retail growth

By **LI JING**
lijing2009@chinadaily.com.cn

China has rolled out an upgraded nationwide departure tax refund policy aimed at making shopping easier for foreign visitors and converting rising inbound tourism into a new driver of domestic consumption.

The measures, jointly issued by the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Finance and the State Taxation Administration of China — alongside three other department bodies — represent a "2.0 version" of reforms first introduced in 2025 to improve China's departure tax refund system.

Officials say the latest upgrade focuses on expanding refund store coverage, reducing processing times and digitalizing procedures to improve the shopping experience for foreign visitors.

China's earlier reform package, released in April 2025, had already driven rapid growth in the program. National tax-refund sales nearly doubled in 2025 from a year earlier, while the number of foreign travelers claiming refunds rose to about 270,000, roughly three times the 2024 level.

"The departure tax refund system has entered a fast track," said Sheng Qiuping, vice-minister of commerce, at a conference on Monday.

Sheng said that the earlier measures, which lowered the minimum purchase threshold for refunds, raised the cash refund ceiling and expanded the number of participating retailers, combined with visa-free entry policies and improved payment services to boost inbound consumption.

The number of tax-refund stores nationwide has reached about 14,000, roughly four times the level at end-2024, Sheng added.

A major highlight of the upgraded policy is further optimization of the "buy and refund immediately" service, which allows overseas shoppers to receive their tax rebates directly at participating stores instead of waiting until departure.

Authorities plan to enable cross-regional recognition of the service, allowing travelers who obtain instant refunds at the point of purchase to complete verifications at a different departure port. The allowable departure period will also be standardized nationwide at 28 days.

Xie Wen, director-general of the goods and services tax department at the State Taxation Administration, said the program has already significantly boosted spending.

"After tourists receive tax refunds on the spot, it often stimulates further purchases," Xie said, adding that the number of users of the instant refund service surged 12.9-fold over the past year, while related sales and refund amounts rose more than ninefold.

The upgraded policy will also introduce a random inspection system for smaller claims. Starting July 1, purchases below 10,000 yuan ($1,380) will undergo spot checks instead of mandatory physical verifications — a move expected to shorten waiting times at departure ports.

> "More foreign visitors now come to China not only for sightseeing, but also to experience local lifestyles."
>
> **Yang Mu,** head of department of market operation and consumption promotion at the Ministry of Commerce

Authorities will also push forward paperless processing so that customs and refund agencies can verify refund applications and invoices online.

Experts say the policy marks a shift from merely simplifying procedures to strengthening the broader role of inbound consumption in China's economy.

"The core of the 2.0 reform is to move from 'process simplification' to 'value creation'," said Tian Lihui, a finance professor at Nankai University.

The reforms can reduce administrative friction while turning the tax-refund system into a platform for showcasing Chinese brands and culture to overseas consumers, Tian said.

The policy comes as inbound tourism to China continues to recover following a series of visa facilitation measures.

China has introduced unilateral visa-free policies for 50 countries and a 240-hour transit visa-free arrangement covering 55 countries in recent years.

In the first quarter, foreign nationals made roughly 8.32 million visa-free entries into China, making up 77.9 percent of all inbound foreign trips and representing an increase of 29.3 percent year-on-year, official data revealed.

Yang Mu, head of the department of market operation and consumption promotion at the Ministry of Commerce, said the surge in visitor numbers is changing consumption patterns.

"More foreign visitors now come to China not only for sightseeing, but also to experience local lifestyles," Yang said, adding that deeper cultural experiences and diversified consumption scenarios are becoming a growing part of inbound travel.

Officials say the upgraded tax-refund policy — together with improved payment services and expanded international flight connections — is expected to help convert the rising flow of visitors into sustained retail growth and strengthen the country's "Shopping in China" campaign aimed at attracting foreign consumers.



Inbound visitors line up for tax refunds at a Harmay store in Shanghai on April 23. CHEN YUYU / FOR CHINA DAILY

Landmark underway



China Railway Construction Corp Chairman Dai Hegen (second left) exchanges gifts with Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum (second right), chairman and CEO of Emirates Airline and Group, during the launch ceremony of the Emirates aircraft maintenance hangar project in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, on Monday. The $5 billion mega project, built by State contractor CRCC, is expected to be one of the largest civil aviation maintenance facilities globally. With a construction area of 1.21 million square meters in Dubai South, the project — inked under the Belt and Road Initiative — will include eight heavy maintenance hangars and two paint hangars, capable of providing full-range services for 28 wide-body aircraft simultaneously upon completion in 2030. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Telecom giants launch AI token services

By **CHENG YU**
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

China's telecom giants are racing to turn artificial intelligence into the country's next mass-market utility by selling tokens, the tiny units of computing consumption that power AI models, in a sign that the country's operators are trying to transform themselves from bandwidth providers into AI service brokers.

State-owned telecom carrier China Telecom announced on Sunday a series of trial token plans, offering consumers monthly AI usage packages starting at 9.9 yuan ($1.37) for 10 million tokens.

China Telecom's new plans cover both consumers and enterprise users. Small businesses and developers can purchase enterprise packages with up to 150 million monthly tokens for 39.9 yuan. The packages resemble mobile data plans, except the commodity being metered is AI computation instead of internet traffic.

In parallel, China Mobile launched a universal token service in Shanghai for consumer and office scenarios, allowing users to access different AI platforms under a single account and pay through phone bills.

The carrier partnered with Tencent Holdings to introduce an AI-native workspace platform targeting consumers and small businesses. The service offers 400,000 tokens for 1 yuan, with users able to switch between AI models under a unified pricing structure.

Wang Peng, a researcher of Beijing Academy of Social Sciences, said: "Chinese telecom operators are extending from selling connections to selling AI services. They are now competing to build integrated platforms combining computing power, AI models, intelligent agents and service gateways."

"Unlike AI startups, telecom operators do not necessarily compete on the lowest token prices. Their advantage lies in nationwide infrastructure, government-backed cloud networks and cybersecurity services," he said.

Xu Zhixin, director at the China Industrial Control Systems Cyber Emergency Response Team's software research division, said: "Cloud expansion is inevitable for operators. At its core, this is still resource-based supply. Chinese telecom operators are not simply trying to become an AI-era 'pick-axe seller'".

Telecom operators are embedding themselves deep into China's AI infrastructure stack. To make that model work, China Mobile is building a closed-loop AI ecosystem, aggregating AI models on one end while linking them to devices and applications on the other.

Its newly launched Mobile Model Management Platform (MoMA) connects not only China Mobile's in-house large language model, but also more than 300 mainstream AI models, including DeepSeek, Qwen, Doubao and GLM.

Using what the company calls a centralized token management system, MoMA dynamically routes user requests to different models depending on demand, helping reduce per-token costs by more than 30 percent while cutting computing resource usage by over 50 percent, according to the company.

Latest data from the National Data Administration showed that daily consumption of tokens had surpassed 140 trillion as of March, a more than 1,000-fold increase from the 100 billion recorded at the beginning of 2024 and over 40 percent higher than the 100 trillion recorded at the end of last year.

"The surge signals that China's AI industry is expanding quickly and evolving from basic chat functions to more sophisticated systems capable of decision-making and task execution," said Liu Liehong, head of the NDA.

Shanghai seen playing major digital role

By **WANG XIN** in Shanghai
wangxin2@chinadaily.com.cn

The Shanghai pilot program for international cooperation in the data sector was officially launched during the recent Tech Week Shanghai, where experts and business leaders from home and abroad called for more global exchanges and further ties in the fast-evolving artificial intelligence era.

With data becoming a key factor of production that drives economic and social development, digital cooperation is reshaping the landscape of global governance. As part of the global Tech Week series, the newly inaugurated Tech Week Shanghai aimed to build a platform that connects China and the rest of the world in data cooperation.

During the opening ceremony, Yu Ying, deputy head of the National Data Administration, said Shanghai stood among China's first batch of pilot cities for international cooperation in the data sector.

The city, which is aiming to become a global digital hub, has developed a substantive and well-defined implementation plan, outlining 17 specific tasks centered on leading infrastructure, mutual recognition of rules, platform empowerment and scenario integration.

Yu said she expects Shanghai to strengthen efforts in diverse aspects, including promoting interconnection with international data infrastructure, enhancing alignment of international rules and standards, fostering an international data service chain, supporting digital businesses in overseas expansion, and deepening opening-up and multilateral data cooperation mechanisms.

"China's digital economy is currently at a critical turning point in its global expansion, shifting from a focus on quantity to a focus on quality," said He Renlong, secretary-general of Shanghai Digital Enterprise Globalization Association.

Also, as overseas markets rapidly raise requirements for compliance, data sovereignty, localization and brand value, Chinese digital firms are changing their mindsets from merely selling products to participating in the globalization of industry chains, standards and the digital ecosystem, added He.

Southeast Asian countries continue to be the most popular destinations for digital companies in Shanghai to expand overseas, while Latin America and the Middle East are booming with rapid growth, followed by Central Asia, Africa, and Central and Eastern Europe, which are all emerging with great potential, said the association.

"Shanghai is home to a large number of global players, and is naturally well-connected with the world. For companies, going global is a long-term strategy. Amid the external uncertainties and various risks, we hope to support more local firms, especially small and medium-sized ones, to get rooted in overseas markets," said He.

Singapore has seen close international cooperation with Shanghai in the digital sector. Ville Kulmala, president of DAMA Singapore, sees the two sides as "similar" and the cooperation between them is "complementary and a very good match".

Kulmala said China has very good regulations, and is very smart with massive adoption and market management. Similarly, Singapore also has strong and transparent regulations. In the fast-moving AI era, one of the biggest challenges for companies in AI transformation lies in "data foundations and strategy".

"In China, you have companies natively born in the data era like Alibaba, and players like Huawei. They are doing huge business abroad, and helped companies become digitalized all over the world with their best practices," Kulmala added.

Milind, principal AI scientist at Mercedes-Benz, agreed with Kulmala that international data cooperation could find its way with technology to cross the existing "borders" or "national boundaries". They both see enormous common good and opportunities for all ahead, as the world today becomes more interconnected as a whole in the AI era.

"The speed of innovation in China is mind-blowing. We have to continuously keep learning from each other ... We learn together, grow together, and that is the most powerful way to move forward," said Milind.

China ends reliance on racing fuel imports

By **ZHENG XIN**
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

China's self-developed 103-grade racing gasoline was officially put into use in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region on Saturday, filling the domestic gap and ending reliance on imports for top races.

Previously dependent on imported fuel, China has now mastered the core technology needed to self-develop and manufacture racing fuel by China Petroleum and Chemical Corp, or Sinopec, which meets premier standards and has entered mass production.

This breaks China's long-standing reliance on imported fuels for top-tier motorsport events and fills the void in domestically produced high-performance racing fuel, said the State refining giant.

It serves as a major milestone, indicating that the nation's oil refining technology has reached world-class standards, it said.

Previously, China's high-end racing fuel market relied heavily on imports, with some teams blending their own oil, leading to high costs and unstable supply chains. The launch of this domestic product changes this situation, as it meets top racing standards and realizes industrial mass production, marking China's mastery of core technology in high-grade racing gasoline, it added.

> This strategic pivot not only meets the rising international demand for eco-friendly and premium-quality goods, but also safeguards profitability in an increasingly crowded market."
>
> **Lin Boqiang,** head of China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xiamen University

Experts believe the initiative marks a milestone in the refining industry, boosting related industrial chains, as China is securing higher profits by targeting the markets for specialized chemicals and cutting-edge materials.

"This strategic pivot not only meets the rising international demand for eco-friendly and premium-quality goods, but also safeguards profitability in an increasingly crowded market," said Lin Boqiang, head of the China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xiamen University.

Even with escalating global rivalry, Lin believes that China maintains a robust competitive edge thanks to its complete industrial supply chain, massive domestic consumer base, and continuous funding for new technologies and facilities.

According to Sinopec, the racing fuel is specifically designed to provide explosive power, rapid acceleration and smooth operation for high-speed, heavy-load motorsport engines.

Through integrated research and production, this premium fuel guarantees a stable, high-performance supply that aligns with rigorous professional racing and environmental standards.

A report by the China Petroleum and Chemical Industry Federation said the Chinese petrochemical sector will transform into a greener, more innovative and globally connected leader, as the nation navigates the worldwide shift in energy.

China's petrochemical industry has been investing heavily in green technologies and circular economy practices, aligning with the country's broad environmental goals and the global green push, said Fu Xiangsheng, vice-president of the federation.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:45 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:45 PM

BUSINESS

Pet-friendly travel demand on upswing

Report says 71% of furry friend owners show interest in traveling with their animals; about half have paid for such services

By LI JING
lijing2009@chinadaily.com.cn



Dog owners bring their pets to a park in Anji county, Zhejiang province, on May 5, to participate in a dog beauty pageant. Anji county has been making various tourist attractions pet-friendly in recent years. PAN XUEKANG / FOR CHINA DAILY





Left: Tourists with their dog take a cable car ride at the Jiuziyan Scenic Area in Qingyang county, Anhui province, on Feb 9. CHU WEIWEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE **Right**: A man and his dog walk through the streets of the old town of Linhai in Taizhou, Zhejiang province, on May 4. YI FAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

When Zhang Yi packed her bags for a recent holiday trip to the grasslands of the Inner Mongolia autonomous region, she made sure one companion was not left behind: her beloved Shiba Inu.

The Chongqing-based pet owner has traveled with her dog to more than 20 cities across China, usually by car. On this trip, the pair camped on the vast Hulunbuir grassland, where her dog ran freely around the prairie.

"I treat my dog as family," the 31-year-old said. "I'm busy with work most of the year, so traveling together is a way for us to spend more time together and for my dog to experience new environments."

Zhang is part of a growing wave of Chinese travelers who refuse to leave their "furry children" behind. Once considered a niche hobby among dedicated pet owners, traveling with animals is increasingly shaping China's tourism market, from hotels and campsites to transportation and destination services.

Data from online accommodation platform Tujia.com show that bookings for homestays labeled as "pet-friendly" during the five-day May Day holiday in 2025 rose more than 80 percent from a year earlier, while the number of such listings on the platform increased fivefold. Industry participants say the momentum has continued into 2026 as more travelers seek accommodations that allow pets.

The trend reflects a broader shift in consumer behavior as younger Chinese view pets less as animals and more as companions integrated into their daily lives.

"We see pet-inclusive travel as a structural trend rather than a short-term fad," said Kathy Jiang, a partner expert at consultancy Roland Berger. "It is driven by the growing perception of pets as family members and the consumption upgrade among younger pet owners."

China's tourism industry is now moving from simply allowing pets in certain venues toward actively designing services around them, Jiang said, although standards and supporting facilities remain uneven.

China's broader pet economy provides a powerful backdrop. The 2026 China Pet Industry White Paper (Consumer Report) said the number of pet dogs and cats in the country's urban areas exceeded 120 million, with the market for pet-related consumption reaching about 312.6 billion yuan ($45.92 billion) in 2025. The market is expected to expand further to 405 billion yuan by 2028.

The report found that 71 percent of pet owners expressed interest in traveling with their animals, and about half had already paid for pet-related travel services.

Tourism operators say the change is already visible in bookings. At the Hu Resort in Beijing, which began developing pet-friendly services in 2019, demand has risen sharply in recent years. Shang Li, the resort's marketing manager, said inquiries, visitor numbers and bookings for pet-friendly rooms during this year's May Day holiday all doubled from a year earlier.

Shang said most guests traveling with pets are young urban professionals aged 25 to 40, who treat their animals as family members and typically seek short leisure breaks in suburban destinations.

Compared with ordinary guests, these travelers often stay longer, return more frequently and spend more on dining and other services, she added.

Travel agencies are experimenting with niche offerings. Outdoor travel platform Youxiake.com launched a pet travel brand in 2024, offering short-distance hiking and holiday itineraries designed for travelers with pets.

Li Yunzi, the company's general manager, said professional pet travel involves far more than simply allowing animals to join a trip.

"It means designing the experience from a pet's perspective rather than treating them as passive companions," Li said in an interview with The Economic Observer, noting that routes are screened to ensure suitable terrain, rest stops and outdoor space for dogs.

Meanwhile, local governments and tourism operators are increasingly trying to capture a share of the growing market.

More than a dozen Chinese provinces and cities have introduced policies encouraging the development of pet-friendly tourism as part of the broader pet economy. Measures range from supporting pet-themed events to encouraging hotels, scenic areas and campsites to develop dedicated facilities.

For now, most pet travel in China remains short-distance and car-based. On highways and in suburban campsites during the May Day holiday, it was common to see pets accompanying their owners. Many travelers prefer driving to nearby destinations, which allows flexibility and avoids complicated transport restrictions.

Cross-province trips by air or train remain far less common.

Li Mengran, marketing manager at Beijing-based travel agency Utour, said the company's dedicated pet travel brand PetGo — launched in January — has seen steadily rising inquiries from travelers hoping to bring pets along.

However, actual bookings did not increase significantly during the recent May Day holiday because of soaring airfares.

"The main customer group for pet travel is young travelers, who tend to be price-sensitive," Li said. "During holidays, air ticket prices rise sharply. That filters out many potential customers even if interest is high."

Pet owners also tend to prioritize keeping their animals close throughout the journey. If airlines only allow pets to travel as checked cargo, many customers abandon the idea entirely.

"The possibility of pets staying in the cabin is often the first question travelers ask," Li said.

Transportation rules have long been one of the biggest bottlenecks for pet travel in China, though recent policy changes suggest gradual improvement.

In April, China expanded a pet transport service on its high-speed rail network, allowing pets that meet certain requirements to be checked as cargo on more than 200 train routes across more than 120 stations, according to China Railway Express.

Airlines are also experimenting with pet-friendly services. Carriers such as China Southern Airlines and Xiamen Airlines have launched limited trials allowing small pets in aircraft cabins on selected routes, while some airports in cities including Shenzhen and Guangzhou in Guangdong province have introduced pet lounges and specialized check-in counters.

These developments are gradually removing some of the logistical barriers for travelers hoping to bring pets along.

Industry experts say the impact of pet travel extends well beyond tourism itself.

Jiang of Roland Berger said the sector could stimulate a wider supply chain, from travel gear and in-car pet equipment to smart wearable devices and pet healthcare services.

At destinations, the trend may encourage scenic areas to develop pet-walking trails, campsites to offer dedicated facilities and local businesses to expand into services such as grooming, pet photography and post-trip health checks.

"In essence, travel spending shifts from 'one person' to 'one person plus one pet', which significantly raises the average spending per visitor," Jiang said. "It can also help destinations attract off-season traffic."

Despite the rapid growth, the industry still faces major challenges.

China lacks unified rules governing pet access to hotels, scenic areas and transportation, meaning travelers often have to confirm policies repeatedly before departure.

"In Europe and the United States, pet-friendly travel is already integrated systematically into transportation, accommodation and public spaces," Jiang said. "In China, the biggest problem is that policies remain inconsistent and sometimes change without clear notice."

Emergency services, transport connections and deeper experience offerings also remain underdeveloped, making it difficult for travelers to enjoy a seamless end-to-end journey with their pets.

For Zhang Yi, the Shiba Inu owner from Chongqing, the progress is nevertheless visible.

"China still has a long way to go in becoming fully pet-friendly," she said. "But compared with a few years ago, the environment for traveling with pets has clearly improved."

Booming Chinese pet sector driving innovative health, nutrition solutions

By LI JING



A scientist examines a sample with laboratory equipment in the office of Danish biosolutions company Novonesis in Beijing's Haidian district in 2025. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

As Chinese pet owners increasingly demand science-backed nutrition rather than traditional pet food, global biotechnology suppliers are moving to tap into a domestic pet economy projected to grow significantly by 2028.

Danish biosolutions company Novonesis has made China a priority market for its new pet business unit launched in 2025.

The company, formed in 2024 through the merger of enzyme producer Novozymes and probiotic specialist Chr. Hansen, positions itself not as a pet food brand, but as an upstream biotechnology supplier, providing enzymes and microbial solutions for pet nutrition and health.

Its entry reflects a broader shift in China's fast-growing pet economy, where global pet firms are increasingly targeting the country not only as a consumer market, but also as a base for research, production and partnerships with local brands.

"China is both a growth engine and an innovation testing ground for pet nutrition solutions," said Jack An, head of sales for animal biosolutions in the Asia-Pacific region at Novonesis.

China has become the world's second-largest pet market, fueled by rising urban incomes and shifting attitudes toward pet ownership among younger consumers who increasingly treat animals as family members.

The 2026 China Pet Industry White Paper (Consumer Report) stated that the number of pet dogs and cats in the country's urban areas exceeded 120 million in 2025. Spending on pet-related consumption reached approximately 312.6 billion yuan ($45.92 billion) in 2025 and is expected to grow to around 405 billion yuan by 2028.

The market is also evolving rapidly. "Consumers are moving away from marketing claims toward ingredients, scientific evidence and measurable benefits," An said. "That trend creates opportunities for upstream biotechnology."

Unlike multinational pet-food giants such as Mars Incorporated or Nestle Purina PetCare, Novonesis focuses on supplying functional ingredients, particularly enzymes and probiotics, that manufacturers incorporate into finished products.

Its first products launched in China target two common concerns among pet owners: digestive health and hairball management in cats.

One solution uses keratinase enzymes designed to break down ingested hair in cats' digestive systems, potentially reducing hairball formation. Another is a probiotic blend based on bacterial strains developed by Chr. Hansen, aimed at stabilizing gut microbiota and improving immunity in dogs and cats.

An said the dual "enzyme plus microbe" technology platform reflects the combined strengths of the merged companies. "The combination allows us to design more targeted functional solutions, from digestion to nutrient absorption," he said.

To stay competitive, foreign firms are increasingly localizing their supply chains, and Novonesis has expanded its manufacturing and innovation footprint in China.

Novonesis employs more than 1,000 people in the country and operates multiple facilities, including enzyme production sites in Tianjin and Suzhou, Jiangsu province, as well as a microbial manufacturing base in Shenyang, Liaoning province. Its regional headquarters and research center are located in Beijing.

Most products for the Chinese pet market are already produced locally, and the company is considering additional capacity expansion as demand grows.

Beyond production, An said collaboration with Chinese partners — from pet food brands to universities and research institutes — is increasingly central to its strategy.

"China's market moves very fast," he said. "Working with local partners allows us to translate laboratory science into scalable commercial solutions more quickly."

Industry analysts say China's pet sector is entering a more mature phase, characterized by stricter regulatory oversight and greater emphasis on scientific validation.

Research from Euromonitor International shows premiumization and functional nutrition are key drivers of growth in the global pet food market, a shift that is becoming increasingly evident in China as pet owners treat animals more like family members.

At the same time, competition is intensifying as domestic brands rapidly improve product development and marketing capabilities.

An acknowledged that the sector still faces challenges, including product homogeneity and the difficulty of translating laboratory research into stable, large-scale manufacturing.

"From the lab to mass production, maintaining consistent performance and compatibility with different formulations is one of the biggest technical hurdles," he said.

Still, he sees China's pet market as offering long-term structural growth rather than a short-term consumption trend.

"The shift toward more scientific and functional nutrition is only beginning," An said. "For biotechnology companies, China is one of the most dynamic places in the world to innovate in pet health."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:45 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:45 PM

CHINA

Celebrity kick-off



Former English soccer star Michael Owen carries a bamboo pole delivering lychees from the Maoming Team as a gift to the Guangzhou Team before their match held in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, on Sunday. Owen was invited to make a special appearance to kick off the match in the third round of the 2026 Guangdong City Football Super League, or Yuechao, which features 21 teams from across the province and includes over 800 players. CHEN JIMIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

BLUEPRINT INTO ACTION

Shanghai to step up efforts for robust GDP and tech growth

New quality productive forces to push city's development in next five years

By SHI JING in Shanghai
shijing@chinadaily.com.cn

Shanghai will step up support for new quality productive forces during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, as they are expected to serve as key engines for the city's high-quality development, the city's top officials said at a municipal news conference on Monday.

While Shanghai has set a target of 5 percent annual GDP growth over the next five years, its role as an international hub for technological innovation should be further consolidated, Shanghai Mayor Gong Zheng said.

Total social research and development expenditure will account for more than 5 percent of the city's GDP by 2030, he said.

To achieve these goals, Shanghai will further leverage enterprises to spearhead innovation, while improving the efficiency of transforming scientific and technological achievements into practical applications.

"Smart, green and integrated" will characterize the optimization and upgrading of the city's industrial structure, Gong said.

Shanghai will also build a pioneering zone for basic research. National-level laboratories based in the city will take the lead in advancing basic research, while mechanisms facilitating interdisciplinary coordination will be improved, he said.

Scientific data sharing and exchanges will also become more efficient so that Shanghai can better integrate into the global innovation network, Gong added.

As rapid advances in artificial intelligence are driving industrial transformation worldwide, Shanghai will seize the opportunity to build an economy powered by intelligent technologies, said Tang Wenkan, director of the Shanghai Municipal Commission of Economy and Informatization.

Key industries including integrated circuits, high-end equipment manufacturing and automobiles will each foster 10 benchmark enterprises, Tang said.

By the end of the 15th Five-Year Plan period, Shanghai's factories are expected to deploy at least 100,000 humanoid robots. The penetration rate of AI agents among industrial enterprises with annual sales revenue of at least 20 million yuan ($2.9 million) is expected to exceed 80 percent, he added.

Shanghai also aims to cultivate a number of blockbuster applications and professional service providers in knowledge-intensive sectors such as legal and accounting services.

As AI coding becomes another major trend, local companies specializing in AI-native industrial software and AI-upgraded traditional software are expected to emerge, Tang said.

In addition, the city plans to establish closed-loop laboratories for new materials and biomedical companies, incubating up to 100 star projects.

Shanghai will better coordinate the development of open-source foundational models, commercial foundational models and sector-specific models, while promoting the sound development of high-performance AI computing chips, high-quality datasets and high-efficiency AI computing clusters, according to Tang.

These efforts will support model iteration and upgrades, as well as the large-scale application of embodied AI, he said.

Shanghai will issue 1 billion yuan in vouchers for companies to access computing power, datasets and models through pay-after-use arrangements or automatic qualification mechanisms, Tang added.

Liu Jian, director of the Shanghai Municipal Development and Reform Commission, said the city will optimize the layout of computing power infrastructure to improve the efficiency of cross-regional computing power resource allocation amid growing demand.

More than 300,000 highly skilled professionals in related fields will be introduced to Shanghai over the next five years, Liu said.

Shanghai will also increase imports of high-end equipment, core components and materials, as well as advanced technologies and equipment, to better support the development of new quality productive forces and industrial upgrading, said Shen Weihua, director of the Shanghai Municipal Commission of Commerce.

Judicial authorities pledge to protect cultivated land

By CAO YIN
caoyin@chinadaily.com.cn

China's judicial authorities have committed to strengthening the protection of cultivated land as part of efforts to ensure food security and reinforce the legal foundation for sustainable agricultural development.

The Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate recently jointly issued a 21-article judicial interpretation aimed at addressing the illegal occupation of cultivated land, facilitating the efficient handling of related administrative, civil and criminal disputes, and further unifying adjudication standards, thereby effectively safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of farmers.

For example, the interpretation explicitly prohibits acts such as occupying cultivated land to build structures or graves, digging sand, quarrying, mining, taking soil, and contracting for the sale or lease of houses built on such land. It requires courts to void contracts involving such acts.

According to the interpretation, which took effect on Monday, if the illegal occupation of cultivated land causes environmental pollution or ecological damage that harms the interests of the state or the public, prosecutors are allowed to initiate public interest litigation.

It stipulates that those who commit the crime of illegal occupation of agricultural land while also engaging in environmental destruction or illegal mining should face harsher punishment. Acts such as refusing to rectify illegal land occupation after being ordered to do so by administrative authorities, violently resisting or obstructing government officers, or bribing the officers will also be deemed serious offenses, leading to more severe penalties.

In addition, the interpretation strengthens oversight of law enforcement personnel. It clarifies that government officers who engage in malpractice for personal gain or abuse their power by illegally approving the expropriation or occupation of cultivated land, causing serious consequences while also accepting bribes, should face harsher punishment for multiple crimes concurrently.

"Cultivated land is the backbone of food production, so stronger legal measures must be used to enhance its protection and improve its quality, as required by the central authorities," said Geng Baojian, a member of the judicial committee of the SPC. In January, the central leadership explicitly called for resolute action against the destruction of cultivated land and the illegal construction of houses on rural farmland.

Geng noted that Chinese courts have continuously strengthened the adjudication of cases involving cultivated land in recent years to ensure the security of land resources, food and the ecosystem. Data shows that between 2020 and 2025, courts countrywide concluded nearly 240,000 administrative cases, around 400,000 civil cases and more than 45,000 criminal cases related to this field.

To improve the efficiency and quality of adjudication, the top court has publicized a number of landmark cases and formulated various judicial policies and documents, including those addressing criminal cases involving damage to land, grasslands and forests, as well as rules on handling illegal structures on occupied farmland, according to Geng.

Yu Shuangbiao, deputy head of the legal policy research office of the SPP, highlighted the timeliness of the new judicial interpretation. He said allowing prosecutors to initiate public interest litigation against the illegal occupation and destruction of cultivated land is a significant step toward strengthening environmental protection through legal oversight.

He emphasized that the move also implements the Ecological and Environmental Code, which was adopted in March as China's second law titled a "code" and serves as the legal foundation in this field.

Yang Jianbo, head of the research office, revealed that Chinese prosecutors have also formed collaborative mechanisms to protect cultivated land by launching special campaigns with other government departments.

"For example, we've worked with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs to support the development of high-standard farmland," he added. "We've joined forces with the Ministry of Natural Resources to establish a land enforcement mechanism aimed at strengthening the protection of cultivated land and safeguarding public and state interests."

Chaoyang district plans a global hub for toy IPs

By YANG CHENG
yangcheng@chinadaily.com.cn

Beijing's Chaoyang district has unveiled a three-year action plan to turn itself into a global hub for trendy toy intellectual property, targeting industry revenue of more than 50 billion yuan ($7.35 billion) by 2028 with annual growth of no less than 20 percent.

The plan, released on Monday during the ongoing 2026 China New Cultural and Creative Market & Trendy Toy Carnival, outlines ambitions to incubate at least 10 blockbuster toy IPs and build the district into a center for leading companies, immersive consumer experiences and overseas brand expansion.

Yin Yuan, deputy district head of Chaoyang, said the government will introduce targeted support measures covering original design, enterprise cultivation, technological innovation, product launches and talent development.

"We aim to establish a full-chain support system spanning creation, commercialization, consumption, international expansion and related services," Yin said. "The policies are designed to help companies reduce costs, improve efficiency and strengthen their global competitiveness."

The district also announced on Monday the launch of an international industry organization aimed at bringing together leading companies and promoting cooperation across the trendy toy sector.

During the event, Hu Jian, vice-president of Pop Mart International Group and general manager of Pop Mart City Park, which is located within Chaoyang Park, said: "The park opened a new area in late April featuring the IPs of Labubu and Dimoo, along with captivating attractions and 17 new interactive games to enhance engagement and storytelling, creating a thematic world for visitors to fully immerse themselves in the vibrant narratives of its IPs."

The fully renovated Pop Mart City Park is set to open on July 30 with upgraded facilities, becoming a new engine driving the district's efforts to promote local IPs.

The carnival, regarded as China's first national-level event dedicated to cultural creativity and trendy toys, opened on May 15 at Chaoyang Park and will run through Sunday. Covering about 66,000 square meters, the event features exhibitions, creative products, intangible cultural heritage displays and digital technology showcases.

Several leading museums, including the Palace Museum, the National Museum of China and the Sanxingdui Museum, are participating in the event. In addition, examples of 43 national, provincial and municipal-level intangible cultural heritage crafts are on display.

China to study human embryo models in space

By LI MENGHAN
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

The successful launch of the Tianzhou 10 cargo spacecraft on May 11 carried human embryo models into space. This marks the world's first in situ experiment to explore how microgravity and cosmic radiation affect early human development under space conditions — a crucial step toward understanding whether humans can one day live and reproduce in space.

The mission is expected to help scientists establish a technical framework for studying artificial embryo development beyond Earth.

Rather than being real human embryos, these are "embryo-like structures" created in a laboratory using stem cells. They closely mimic the structure of a natural early human embryo but carry fewer ethical restrictions, can be produced in large quantities, and offer highly reliable, repeatable results.

Crucially, these models possess the ability to mimic early cellular growth and follow the most critical stages of early human development. However, they are not real embryos and cannot develop into a human being.

Yu Leqian, a professor at the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Institute of Zoology and head of the project aboard Tianzhou 10, said these models cover the developmental stage from day 14 to 21 after fertilization.

"This stage is a critical window in early human development, during which the building blocks for future organs begin to form, and the entire body axis — which determines the head and the tail — is established," Yu said. He noted that any disturbance at this stage could have a profound impact on an adult individual.

"Therefore, these models were brought to space to explore whether life, which has evolved under gravity for hundreds of millions of years, is affected by its sudden absence," he added.

Ground-based simulations cannot fully replicate the unique environment of space.

The Tianzhou 10 launch provides a rare, true microgravity environment complete with actual space radiation. The embryo models are expected to grow naturally in orbit. A preprogrammed system will automatically replace the liquid culture nutrients every day, allowing the models to complete five days of development. Afterward, the samples will be frozen and stored, ready for analysis upon their return to Earth.

Two specific types of models have been sent to the Chinese space station, Tiangong, to study key milestones in early life. The first is a peri-implantation model, which mimics the critical phase where an embryo attaches itself to the uterine wall. The second is a peri-gastrulation model, which replicates gastrulation, a fundamental event in early development where a single layer of cells reorganizes into the distinct layers that will eventually form different tissues and organs.

"By comparing embryo development in space with that on the ground, we can investigate how the space environment impacts critical events in human development," Yu said. "We can also assess how accurately these models can substitute for natural embryos in space studies, thereby laying a technical foundation for future research."

Yu highlighted that the study will help reveal the risks and challenges humans might face during long-term space habitation, particularly regarding reproduction. Furthermore, by comparing space-grown models with those on Earth, the research could provide fresh insights into which human diseases are linked to abnormalities during the earliest stages of life.

Icebreaker at home



The polar research icebreaker *Xuelong 2*, or *Snow Dragon 2*, returns and docks at its home base in Shanghai on Monday, marking the successful conclusion of China's 42nd Antarctic expedition. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:45 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:45 PM

POLICY REVIEW

Plan to supercharge services potential

State Council aims to grow scale, increase quality of promising consumption sector

By **WANG KEJU**
wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn



JIN DING / CHINA DAILY

China has rolled out a set of guidelines to upgrade its services sector, where significant consumption potential remains to be unlocked to help rebalance the world's second-largest economy and sustain its long-term growth, economists and executives said.

For Chinese consumers, the shift promises more choice, higher quality and greater convenience, they noted. For domestic and foreign service providers alike, China's fast-expanding services market means broader development opportunities.

In late April, the State Council, China's Cabinet, released plans to improve the capacity and quality of the services sector, with the goal of growing its total scale to 100 trillion yuan ($14.65 trillion) by 2030.

Dedicated efforts will be made to steer producer services toward "greater specialization and higher positions in the value chain", according to the plans, while making consumer services "more quality-oriented, diversified and convenient".

More "China services brands" will be fostered by 2030, with the sector's global competitiveness and influence significantly enhanced, and people's sense of gain steadily improving, the plans said.

In recent times, China has attached greater importance to the development of its services sector. The country held its first national conference on the services sector in early April, while its latest five-year plan also calls for improving the sector's quality, efficiency and competitiveness.

China's services sector has achieved steady growth in recent years, with its value-added reaching 80.9 trillion yuan in 2025, accounting for 57.7 percent of GDP and contributing 61.4 percent to economic growth, data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed.

Enhancing producer services has become a central pillar of China's services sector development, with executives pointing to significant untapped potential that could boost growth and drive industrial transformation.

China's producer services sector, which includes logistics, finance, R&D, design and IT services, accounted for less than 35 percent of GDP in 2025, said Jean Lu, Standard Chartered Bank's CEO for China, noting that in advanced economies, that figure typically ranges from 40 to 50 percent.

"This gap indicates that China's manufacturing supply chains still have substantial room to extend into service-related activities, offering considerable growth potential for the economy," Lu said.

Xu Shaofeng, senior vice-president of Schneider Electric, said that the services sector can help manufacturing move toward higher-end, smarter and greener production through technology empowerment, value enhancement and business model innovation.

This, in turn, boosts product value, brand visibility and supply chain efficiency, while manufacturing upgrading creates even broader space for service providers, Xu said.

"Many companies now face challenges in their transformation, making their need for professional services more urgent than ever. Services have shifted from a 'nice-to-have' to a 'must-have' for competitiveness and value creation," Xu added.

The value added of information transmission, software and information technology services rose 10.6 percent year-on-year in the January-March period, while leasing and business services expanded 12.2 percent, according to the NBS.

In addition to boosting producer services, emphasis should also be given to consumer services, as China's service retail sales grew 5.5 percent year-on-year in the first quarter, outpacing goods retail by 3.3 percentage points.

"In recent years, as living standards have risen, Chinese households have shifted from a goods-dominated consumption model to one where goods and services carry equal weight," Kong Dejun, director-general of the Ministry of Commerce's trade in services department, said at a February news conference.

From 2020 to 2025, per capita spending on services grew at an average annual rate of 8.5 percent, ministry data showed. Its share of total household expenditure rose by 3.5 percentage points over the same period, reaching 46.1 percent in 2025.

Mao Yibing, president of Marriott International Greater China, said that in the consumer services sector, China's market is unleashing new opportunities. Demand for quality consumption remains strong, and consumers are paying increasing attention to experiences.

The vast potential of China's leisure travel market is particularly evident, with weekend getaways, family trips, cultural exploration and sports entertainment emerging as key priorities for Chinese travelers, Mao said.

Mao noted that the hotelier will continue expanding its presence in first-tier and emerging first-tier cities, popular tourist destinations, and across business and leisure travel segments, aiming to capture a larger share of one of the world's fastest-growing service consumption markets, she added.

Greater openness is also imperative to advance the high-quality growth of the services industry, as the country will steadily expand its pilot opening-up programs in areas including value-added telecommunications, biotechnology and wholly foreign-owned hospitals, according to the State Council plans.

China will also improve the management of the negative list for cross-border trade in services and build demonstration zones for the innovative development of trade in services.

"By orderly guiding more foreign-funded enterprises to participate in the development of China's services sector, we can effectively improve the quality of service supply," said Zhou Mi, a senior researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation.

"Foreign companies entering the Chinese market gain vast opportunities, bring advanced concepts and technologies, and create complementarity and synergy with local firms," Zhou added.

Alex Gu, senior vice-president of Medtronic, said that China has been continuously improving the development environment for foreign-funded medical service providers and supporting their introduction of advanced overseas medical technologies and services to the Chinese market.

Last year, Medtronic launched its first digital medical innovation hub in China, focusing on the development of disease management solutions powered by artificial intelligence and big data.

"Leveraging this center, we hope to explore more personalized, intelligent and efficient treatment options, and transform Chinese medical practices into innovative models with global significance," Gu said.

Policy Digest

Blueprint to strengthen oversight of healthcare fund

The National Healthcare Security Administration has issued a five-year action plan for 2026-30 to enhance the supervision and efficient use of the healthcare security fund, with the goal of establishing a comprehensive regulatory system by 2030.

Key measures outlined in the plan include intensifying on-site inspections, empowering oversight using technology such as big data and artificial intelligence, and improving the long-term legal framework.

Official data shows that as of the end of 2025, China's basic medical insurance fund recorded 3.5 trillion yuan ($514 billion) in revenue and 3 trillion yuan in expenditure, with over 1.33 billion people enrolled nationwide.

Regulators put safety of new energy vehicles in spotlight

Chinese regulators have called for the strengthened safety management of new energy vehicles to ensure the sector's healthy development, according to a recent video conference jointly held by three government bodies.

The meeting was attended by officials from the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, the State Administration for Market Regulation, and the National Fire and Rescue Administration.

Relevant automakers and power battery enterprises are required to take primary responsibility for product quality and safety, as well as to strengthen risk prevention in research and development, production, supply chain and after-sales services, the conference heard. Companies were urged to avoid false or exaggerated promotion.

The regulators vowed to jointly conduct inspections on potential safety hazards and look into product defects, and severely crack down on violations to ensure sound industrial development.

Campaign launched to regulate certification bodies

The State Administration for Market Regulation has issued a work plan for a nationwide campaign aimed at raising the bar for certification bodies.

The campaign outlines 15 measures across four key areas: tightening market access, standardizing certification practices, enhancing professional capabilities, and strengthening supervision.

Key actions include stricter qualification reviews, unified national certification rules, support for leading certification bodies, and improved risk monitoring and smart regulation. The initiative seeks to promote the healthy and orderly development of the certification service industry.

Official data shows that as of the end of 2025, China had over 1,200 certification institutions.

Initiative guides survey, zoning of agricultural climate resources

China has launched a nationwide initiative to survey and zone its agricultural climate resources, following an implementation plan jointly issued by the China Meteorological Administration and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

According to the plan, the survey is scheduled to be largely completed by 2027, and the zoning is expected to be fully completed and put into use between 2026 and 2029. The three tasks — survey, zoning and application — will be carried out concurrently.

Key outcomes will include detailed climate zoning maps for five major agricultural categories — comprehensive agriculture, cropping systems, animal husbandry, fisheries, and facility agriculture — as well as for 25 key crops, covering national, provincial, city and county levels. The plan also calls for the establishment of a supporting database and an integrated service platform.

CHINA DAILY

Emotional spending key to balancing economy

By **WANG KEJU**

From blind boxes and concert tickets to anime merchandise and AI-powered companions, a wave of spending driven by emotional satisfaction is sweeping across China, reshaping the nation's consumer landscape from a niche trend into an important economic driver, analysts said.

The term "emotional consumption" refers to spending driven by feelings of pleasure, identity, social connection or stress relief, rather than basic functional needs.

Wei Jianguo, former vice-minister of commerce, said the trend is not a short-lived fad but a natural outcome of China's ongoing consumption upgrade.

"The days when consumption was simply about acquiring things are fading," Wei said. "The new consumer wants to feel something — joy, nostalgia, excitement. Delivering those feelings is not just good business; it is essential for macroeconomic balance.

"Emotional consumption is a trillion-yuan new growth pole to unlock China's future market," Wei added.

China's market for emotional consumption is projected to exceed 4.5 trillion yuan ($620 billion) by 2029, up from 2.72 trillion yuan in 2025, according to a report released by iiMedia Research in mid-May.

Multiple factors are fueling the rise. As consumers become more affluent, their spending priorities are shifting from basic goods to experiences, personal fulfillment and mental well-being, said Jiang Zhao, an associate researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation.

The concert economy, for example, has exploded. A three-show run by a top artist can draw hundreds of thousands of out-of-town fans, generating ripple effects on transportation, accommodation and dining, he added.

During the five-day May Day holiday earlier this month, Beijing staged 332 commercial performances totaling 1,684 shows, generating ticket revenue of about 260 million yuan, according to online travel platform Trip.com Group.

One act alone — the Taiwan rock band Mayday — played three concerts that attracted more than 150,000 fans. For many of those attendees, a three-hour show became the catalyst for a 72-hour in-depth exploration of Beijing, helping push the city's tourist arrivals and consumption to record highs.

Jiang also noted that the younger generations, in particular, are willing to pay a premium for products and services that deliver happiness, nostalgia or a sense of belonging.

Nearly nine out of 10 young Chinese have spent money on emotional consumption. Nearly 40 percent do so frequently and about one-fifth of young consumers report engaging in emotional consumption every day, according to a two-year tracking study by the Shanghai Youth and Children Research Center and the social platform Soul App.

The study found that the post-1995 and post-2000 generations together account for nearly 70 percent of emotional consumption, with the post-2000 cohort showing the highest frequency.

This year, for the first time, emotional consumption was explicitly mentioned in multiple local government work reports. Jiangxi province pledged to foster new business models and "formats for emotional consumption", for instance.

The policy shift signals that emotional consumption has evolved from a market-led phenomenon into a State-backed lever for expanding domestic demand, experts said.

Zhang Wenkui, a researcher at the Development Research Center of the State Council, said that China's consumption of goods is already on par with developed nations in many respects.

"The real gap lies in service consumption," Zhang said, noting that China's value-added services account for less than 60 percent of GDP, compared with about 70 percent in developed economies.

Zhang said that expanding service consumption — including but not limited to emotional spending — is "the critical breakthrough" for rebalancing China's economy and making growth more sustainable.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:45 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:45 PM

CULTURAL HERITAGE



Unearthing life in the mists of time

Archaeologists in Luoyang have uncovered the layout of an ancient residential neighborhood, shining light on politics, religion and society, **Wang Ru** reports.

History books record emperors, wars and political systems. But how did people actually live? Where did they sleep, walk, and pray? The answers often lie not in texts, but beneath the soil in the silent ruins of ancient cities.

Now, for the first time, Chinese archaeologists have fully uncovered the layout of a *fang* (traditional Chinese residential unit) from the Sui (581-618) and Tang (618-907) dynasties in Luoyang, Henan province, which was the eastern capital of the two dynasties.

The era saw the *lifang* system implemented by the rulers as an urban planning mechanism that divided the capital city into walled residential wards called *fang*, with strictly controlled access via gates and curfews to reinforce social order and administrative management.

Zhengpingfang was one of the 103 residential units in the capital then, located near the central axis of the city, south of the Luohe River. As the *fang* had records of what it contained in the Tang era, but no existing aboveground architecture when archaeologists started excavation in 2020, it provided an excellent chance for them to carry out an archaeological project around this area.

In the past six years, they have gained a panoramic view of the organization of the *fang* and the evolution of the architectural complexes within the area, thereby gaining a more thorough understanding of Sui and Tang governance, says Shi Zishe, head of the archaeological team at the site.

According to historical texts, a typical *fang* was square, with each side about one *li* (approximately 530 meters) long. Inside, east-west and north-south streets crossed like a chessboard, with walls on all four sides and a gate in the middle of each.

Zhengpingfang basically follows this layout, with its north-south side measuring 533.6 meters and its east-west side 464.6 meters. Archaeological investigations show that the inner road network changed over time, from a cross shape to a T-shape, with nearly half of the east-west road occupied by a large complex that covered the entire western half of the *fang* area in its later years.

Archaeologists also found that the complex's northern wall broke through the ward's original northern boundary, extending about two meters into a road. This was strictly forbidden in the early and middle Sui-Tang periods.

So who was powerful enough to break the rules? By consulting historical records, archaeologists believe it was a residential complex of Princess Taiping, the beloved daughter of Tang emperor Li Zhi and empress Wu Zetian.

"Although we haven't yet found direct evidence such as inscriptions, the layout of the complex, its specifications and the unearthed artifacts all match historical descriptions," says Shi. "Therefore, we believe it was the princess' residence as recorded."

Princess Taiping was the only daughter of the imperial couple who grew to adulthood. Just like her mother, she was ambitious and deeply involved in political struggles. For a time, she was one of the most powerful figures in the Tang court, although she would eventually lose a political struggle to her nephew, Li Longji.



The princess had gifted the complex to her elder brother Li Dan, who later changed the *fang* into a Taoist abbey named Anguo Temple after he ascended the throne. Under the reign of Emperor Li Longji, it was changed into a Taoist abbey for female priests, including Princess Yuzhen, a sister of Li Longji.

Shi says they have found that the Taoist temple as a whole features a multi-courtyard layout consisting of three parallel east-west parts. The central part is an axial courtyard centered around a large square hall, with well-proportioned buildings arranged in an orderly manner.

The southern part of the complex was a garden, in which there was a lake with three artificial hills.

"Since the Wei (220-265), Jin (265-420), and Southern and Northern Dynasties (420-581), people often created a garden in their residence. It became a popular tradition," says Zheng Guoqi, another team member from the Luoyang City Cultural Relics and Archaeology Research Institute.

The lake and three hills were not just decorative. Instead, they carried deep Taoist symbolism. The lake represented the East Sea, home to the immortals. The three hills stood as Penglai, Fangzhang and Yingzhou — the three mythical mountains where celestial beings are said to live. This tradition, which began in the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220), was often followed by the royal family to express their desire for immortality.

"This excavation has, for the first time, revealed the complete layout of an ancient garden built following this idea," Shi says.



Top left: A bird's-eye view of the Zhengpingfang site in Luoyang, Henan province.
Left: Technicians excavate a sacrificial pit containing animal bones at the site in 2023.
Middle and above: Part of a five-directional tomb-guarding stone and an eave tile found at the site.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

In the southeastern part of the site, archaeologists found special architectural foundations believed to be Guozijian (the Imperial College) and a Confucius temple. The northeastern part yielded well-organized courtyards, probably residences of officials, based on records.

"Altogether we have found remains of over 100 rammed earth buildings from the area and many daily necessities like ceramic and pottery vessels, suggesting the *fang* was once a populated place," says Zheng.

"It's a rare chance for us to excavate a *fang* from the Sui and Tang periods," says Shi. "Zhengpingfang boasts a rich array of buildings, from the government's ritual and religious complexes to residences of civil and military officials. With that diversity, it's a representative example of the many *fang* units that once made up the city."

He says that, in the past, they have excavated some parts of other wards, like the Longxing Temple in Ningrenfang and the old residence of Tang poet Bai Juyi in Lyudaofang, but they have never unveiled another *fang* as complete as this one.

"The ancient *fang* units were like modern subdistricts," says Shi. "No two were the same. Back then, each *fang* was unique, just like the subdistricts we see today."

From 605, when Emperor Yang of the Sui Dynasty ordered the construction of Luoyang as the Sui's eastern capital, Luoyang became an important city for the Sui and the subsequent Tang Dynasty.

The city further flourished under the rule of Empress Wu, who wanted to defy the tradition that only men could rule. She therefore distanced herself from the Tang royal family, which was based in Chang'an (present-day Xi'an, Shaanxi province), to establish a new political order. She chose Luoyang as her capital city and called it the "divine capital".

The archaeological dig at Zhengpingfang is another highlight of the studies carried out on Luoyang during the Sui and Tang periods, which archaeologists have worked on for decades.

Shi says their earlier efforts have basically provided knowledge about the layout and evolution of the ancient city, as archaeological work has previously been carried out on the ruins of the palace complex, one of Sui's largest granaries called Hanjia and the *lifang* areas to the south and north of the Luohe River.

Shi says the team will continue excavating the northeastern part of the *fang* to learn more. They also plan further work at Lyudaofang, a ward with no official buildings, but one where Bai Juyi's poems vividly capture the dynamism of everyday life.

"With the refined tastes of literati and the vibrant realities of everyday life, we believe that Lyudaofang is also well worth archaeological efforts," says Shi.

Contact the writer at wangru1@chinadaily.com.cn

Hidden *Diamond Sutra* found at Longmen Grottoes

By **WANG RU**

In the early morning of March 28, workers involved in a conservation project at the Liuzuota area of the Longmen Grottoes in Luoyang, Henan province, climbed onto scaffolding to inspect potentially dangerous rocks and crevices on the cliff face, as they did every day.

But this time, some of them noticed traces of characters on a vertical cliff face about 30 meters above the ground. They immediately reported the find to professionals at the Longmen Grottoes Academy, which oversees this UNESCO World Heritage site.

"I was very excited to hear the news," says Zhao Shumei, a researcher at the academy. "The engravings were so high up that people normally walked right past without knowing of their existence. We immediately searched our database to see if this site had been documented before."

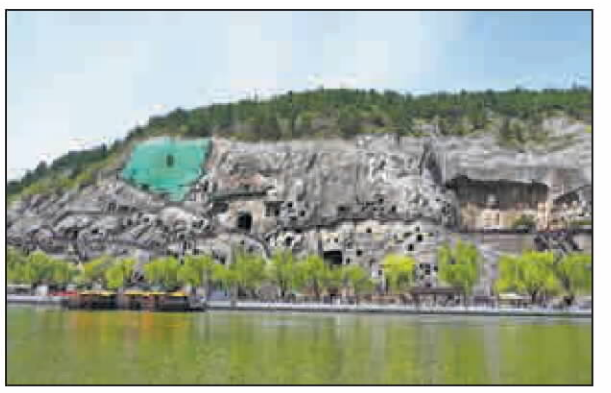
After careful identification and comparison, researchers confirmed a new engraving of *The Diamond Sutra* on the cliff face of the grottoes.

Located about 30 to 40 meters south of the iconic giant statue of the Lushena Buddha, the newly discovered text is written in *kaishu* (regular script) from the Tang Dynasty (618-907). The brushwork is vigorous and clearly visible. It records a version of *The Diamond Sutra* translated by the Buddhist scholar Kumarajiva from the Later Qin period (384–417) of the Sixteen Kingdoms (304–439), and its upper part remains well-preserved.

Zhao says that after careful analysis, they believe the engraving was probably originally in a niche, but over time, the niche gradually eroded away, leaving only part of its ceiling to protect the upper part of the carving from the wind and sun.

"From the early 5th century, when the sutra was first introduced to China, to the Tang Dynasty, six Chinese versions of it appeared, among which the Kumarajiva version was the earliest," says Ma Chaolong, deputy director of the academy's center for cave temple protection research and heritage monitoring.

Kumarajiva translated the sutra in Chang'an (present-day Xi'an, Shaanxi province) in 402. It was translated in simple yet eloquent words that even ordinary people could understand. Under the reign of Tang emperor Li Longji, the version was officially circulated throughout the dynasty and became widespread, Zhao says.



Next to the engraving are three grooves believed to have been used for burying the ashes of Buddhists, suggesting they were probably related. Zhao says they will explore the possible connection between the sutra and these grooves.

"Normally, carving sutras on the cliff, just like building Buddhist statues, shows Buddhist practitioners' faith in their religion," says Zhao. "We infer that the combination of the grooves and the carving may indicate the Buddhists' wish to attain enlightenment through spiritual practice, with the firm belief that upon rebirth, they will dwell alongside the Buddha."

As of now, the Longmen Grottoes have yielded five carvings of *The Diamond Sutra* and the newly discovered one is among the best-preserved.

"We previously found a carving of *The Diamond Sutra* in Grotto No 429, which contains mostly the latter part of the sutra. The new discovery mostly presents the first half, so it complements and enriches *The Diamond Sutra* findings at Longmen," says Zhao.

This discovery is the latest in a series of surprising finds during recent conservation efforts at the grottoes. Over the past years, Zhao says they have also found traces of gold on the face of the Lushena Buddha, suggesting the statue may have been covered in gold leaf. In addition, a Bodhisattva statue was found to have eyeballs made of glass.

"The discoveries are closely related to our careful checks of potential risks. Each year, in different areas of the grottoes, we inspect every inch of the cliff surface to check whether the unstable rocks have been reinforced and if crevices have been filled and protected. Otherwise, they could endanger both the caves and visitors," says Zhao.



Left: The west hill of the Longmen Grottoes in Luoyang, Henan province.
Above: The newly discovered carvings of *The Diamond Sutra* on the cliff face of the grottoes.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:45 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:45 PM

LIFE







Above: Performers with the Xixia Imperial Tombs resort in Yinchuan, Ningxia Hui autonomous region, interact with the audience on May 5. **Top right:** The roly-poly dancer attracts numerous excited visitors at Tang Paradise, a sprawling cultural theme park in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, in July 2024. **Right:** A tourist plays a game with NPC performers at the Xixia Imperial Tombs resort.
PHOTOS BY XINHUA

Lollipop sparks tourism debate

China's fast-growing NPC performances are under scrutiny after a performer's interactions with visitors triggered criticism over how far immersive experiences should go, **Yang Feiyue** reports.

A viral video of a costumed performer feeding candy to a tourist has forced China's immersive tourism industry to ask a difficult question: where does hospitality end and impropriety begin? A bell rings. A curtain parts. A young man in a crimson-and-black robe steps out, smiling. He lifts a red veil, bites a lollipop and leans toward a visitor.

Phones rise across the crowd.

The performer, known by the stage name Little Yellow Fish, became one of the most recognizable non-player characters (NPCs) at Gexian Village Resort in Shangrao, East China's Jiangxi province. His performances relied on improvisation and close interaction with visitors.

For young women, he might drape a red veil over their heads, lightly touch a lollipop to their cheeks or interlace fingers. For young men, the interactions were often more playful, including mock kisses through a veil or exaggerated teasing.

The formula worked. Clips spread rapidly across Douyin, China's version of TikTok, helping turn the resort into a viral tourist destination.

Then came the "blackfish". On May 1, People's Daily's Minsheng Weekly published a commentary citing Little Yellow Fish as an example of tourism performances that blurred the line between entertainment and inappropriate behavior in pursuit of online traffic. The following day, both the performer and the resort issued public apologies.

The changes were immediate. The lollipop is now handed directly to visitors rather than shared through physical interaction. The resort also announced revised performance guidelines, expanded cultural training for NPC actors and a long-term public feedback mechanism.

"We extend our sincerest apologies to netizens and tourists," the resort said in a statement.

The incident has drawn attention to one of the fastest-growing sectors in China's tourism industry: immersive NPC performances designed to turn scenic areas into interactive experiences.

The new economy

China's tourism market continues to expand. During the five-day May Day holiday, domestic trips reached 325 million, up 3.6 percent year-on-year, according to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Tourism spending rose 2.9 percent to 185.5 billion yuan ($27.1 billion).

At the same time, travelers are increasingly seeking interactive and emotionally engaging experiences rather than traditional sightseeing alone.

According to market consultancy iiMedia Research, China's "emotion economy" — consumer spending driven by emotional connection, social interaction and immersive participation — reached 2.31 trillion yuan in 2024 and is projected to grow to 4.5 trillion yuan by 2029.

NPC performers have emerged at the center of that trend. Scenic areas across China now employ actors portraying historical, literary or fictional characters who interact directly with tourists. A successful NPC can generate repeat visits and, in some cases, nationwide online attention.

The rapid growth of the industry has produced sharply different styles.

Some performances rely heavily on exaggerated physical interaction and short-video appeal. Others focus more on storytelling and cultural interpretation.

In Tangshan, in North China's Hebei province, for example, an NPC portraying the Tang Dynasty (618-907) poet Li Bai has become a popular attraction by improvising classical poetry, exchanging couplets with visitors and offering humorous advice to young tourists. The character has drawn repeat family visitors without relying on controversy or provocative interactions.

The commercial impact of successful NPC performances has been significant.

In Kaifeng, in Central China's Henan province, Wansui Mountain resort introduced a matchmaking character based on Wang Po from the classic Chinese novel *Outlaws of the Marsh*, also known as *The Water Margin*. The elderly matchmaker character became a viral sensation online. According to the resort, annual revenue reached 1.27 billion yuan in 2025, up sharply from three years earlier. The resort now stages more than 2,000 performances daily and employs over 1,000 NPC performers.

> "Not every destination has world-famous natural scenery. In a highly competitive market, relying only on landscapes is no longer enough."
>
> **Zeng Bowei,** researcher with Beijing Union University

In Changchun Zoological and Botanical Park, in Northeast China's Jilin province, a performer portraying the Monkey King from *Journey to the West* gained national attention after joking during a performance that snacks, including dry rice crackers thrown by visitors, were "too dry". The clip spread widely online, and the performer later became known as "Snow Cake Monkey" after those crackers. The park authorities expect annual attendance to reach 3 million visitors in 2025, compared with around 700,000 previously.

For Zeng Bowei, director of the research center for China's tourism economy and policy at Beijing Union University, the NPC boom reflects broader changes within China's tourism market.

"About 80 to 90 percent of China's roughly 16,000 A-grade scenic spots face a certain degree of homogenization," Zeng says. "Not every destination has world-famous natural scenery. In a highly competitive market, relying only on landscapes is no longer enough."

He points out that demand for immersive participation accelerated after the pandemic.

"Tourists no longer simply want to sightsee, they want interaction and participation. NPCs meet that demand," he explains.

At the same time, growing competition among scenic areas has increased pressure on operators to attract online attention.

"Trip numbers are increasing, but per capita spending is declining. Operators are under pressure to find lower-cost ways to generate visibility," he adds.

The boundary question

The debate surrounding Little Yellow Fish also revealed divided public opinion online.

While some commentators supported tighter oversight of tourism performances, many young social media users defended the interactions as voluntary and harmless.

Zeng believes the controversy reflects the lack of clear industry standards.

"Personally, I do not support this kind of performance style," he says bluntly.

"But the challenge is that there is no clearly defined boundary. Certain behavior may not violate regulations, yet some people still consider it vulgar or inappropriate."

He cautions against discouraging innovation altogether.

"If every attempt at innovation immediately becomes a public controversy, operators may become afraid to experiment at all," he says.

Industry observers say the rapid expansion of NPC tourism has outpaced the development of professional training and oversight systems.

Wu Guoping, a senior official with the China Tourism Association, has proposed formally recognizing NPC performance as a profession, including the establishment of training programs, industry standards, and stronger labor protections.

Experts concur that the most sustainable NPC performances are those closely tied to local culture and storytelling rather than short-lived online trends.

Zeng considers that successful characters should reflect the history and identity of their destinations while offering different forms of interaction for different visitor groups.

"Not every NPC needs to rely on exaggerated performances. Some can succeed through language, knowledge or cultural interpretation," he says.

In its apology letter, Gexian Village Resort claims that it will place greater emphasis on local cultural themes, including tea culture, Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279) poetry and traditional crafts.

For China's tourism industry, the debate surrounding a single lollipop performance has become part of a broader discussion about how immersive tourism should develop as the market continues to grow.

The lollipop was a warning, not a verdict. For China's fast-growing immersive tourism industry, it became a test of how far performance, intimacy and online attention can go before the experience stops feeling welcoming.

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

Holiday travel shifts to rural, industrial and cultural experiences

Long queues at famous tourist attractions are no longer the defining image of China's holiday travel season as more travelers seek immersive, personalized experiences beyond traditional sightseeing.

From county getaways and industrial heritage sites to museums and art galleries, China's tourism market during the recent May Day holiday showed growing signs of diversification, with travelers increasingly drawn to experiences that felt more interactive, immersive, and rewarding.

In Diaoyuan Village in east China's Jiangxi province, the holiday atmosphere was filled with the laughter of families participating in rural activities. Adults and children caught chickens and fish, harvested vegetables, and immersed themselves in pastoral life.

"No long lines, no crowds. Big cities rarely offer this kind of fun and relaxation. I wanted my child to experience the simple joys of rural life," says Zhang Qiongyi, a tourist from Guangdong province.

This experience reflects a broader trend in the rise of county tourism, as travelers increasingly bypass crowded metropolitan areas in favor of smaller, lesser-known destinations that offer a slower pace.

According to Tongcheng Travel, an online Chinese travel agency, bookings for travel products related to county-level destinations jumped 128 percent year-on-year during the holiday, outpacing growth in provincial capitals.

The growing demand has also spurred a supply-side upgrade. Counties are improving infrastructure and creating unique cultural tourism IPs, such as local cuisine, farm experiences and folk events, to offer distinctive travel options.

High-quality accommodation is rapidly expanding into lower-tier markets. Data from Tongcheng showed a 76 percent year-on-year increase in bookings for high-end hotels and a 92 percent year-on-year surge for homestays in county-level regions during the holiday, with some fully booked two weeks in advance.

This holiday, Zhou Junyu, a primary school student from Jiangsu province, marveled at the vintage cars and smart workshops in Changchun, Jilin province, which is widely known as the cradle of China's automobile industry.

"I love studying cars. Seeing the history and technology here is so cool," says Zhou, who was visiting China's leading automaker, FAW Group.

The company has transformed key industrial landmarks into an integrated tourism and educational program featuring automobile history, manufacturing processes, brand culture, and hands-on activities. Since July 2024, the tour routes have welcomed more than 350,000 visitors.



Visitors enjoy various activities at the Detian Transnational Waterfall Scenic Spot in Chongzuo, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, on May 4. ZHAO JINGWU / XINHUA

Jilin province is turning its industrial heritage into vibrant cultural attractions. It is not alone in China's latest travel trend, as once-dreary assembly lines filled with noise and machinery have evolved into must-see destinations for travelers nationwide.

Through interactive activities, science lectures and face-to-face discussions with engineers, visitors can dive deep into the workings of intelligent manufacturing.

Official data showed that by the end of 2025, China had 264 national-level and nearly 500 provincial-level industrial heritage projects.

The market size of the country's industrial tourism industry is expected to exceed 300 billion yuan ($44 billion) by 2029.

"Industrial tourism is a nexus where secondary and tertiary industries converge," says Chen Wei, an expert from Tsinghua University. "As a strategic move in building a modern industrial system, it can fuel consumption, expand domestic demand and promote industrial science education."

Driven by rising cultural tastes, many young Chinese are now turning museums and galleries into social spaces. Zhang Yutong, a student of Shenyang City University who often visits art galleries and museums, is one of them.

"Among my friends, the most popular way to hang out is going to exhibitions," she says. "It offers a chance to deepen our bond. Exploring the stories behind the exhibits together and sharing our thoughts is much more rewarding than ordinary entertainment, and it helps bring people closer together."

"For young people, visiting exhibitions is a lifestyle that integrates socializing, leisure and self-expression," says Si Yawei, an associate professor at Liaoning University. "It builds a relaxed bridge for social interaction based on shared cultural experiences."

The trend is also boosting the cultural economy, as young visitors sample venue-exclusive food and drinks and purchase creative souvenirs.

Data from a joint report by Dianping, a popular review platform in China, lifestyle platform Meituan, and ticketing platform Maoyan showed that user-generated content related to exhibitions and museums grew by 24 percent year-on-year in 2025.

Observers believe this year's holiday travel trends point to a growing appetite for deeper, more meaningful and diverse leisure experiences.

Value-added tax invoice data released on May 6 by China's State Taxation Administration showed sales revenue in consumption-related industries rose by 14.3 percent year-on-year during the May Day holiday, while cultural services surged by 42.3 percent.

According to Dai Bin, president of the China Tourism Academy, the integrated development of culture and tourism will be a focus for boosting the tourism sector during China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period. Efforts should be made to create new cultural experience venues and novel tourism consumption settings for visitors.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:45 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:45 PM

CULTURE

A young maestro on a global stage



After an electrifying mainland debut, Finnish conductor Tarmo Peltokoski launches his inaugural season with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra

By **CUI XIAOHUO**
for China Daily

Wearing a pitch-black dress shirt and dark-rimmed spectacles, 26-year-old Tarmo Peltokoski returned for his fifth curtain call before an enthusiastic audience that broke into sustained applause. It was an explosive mainland debut for the Gen Z conductor at the Xinghai Concert Hall in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, on April 26. Grasping the conductor's score of Dmitri Shostakovich's *Symphony No 11 in G Minor*, he held it high above his head before clutching it tightly to his chest. The audience reciprocated with passionate shouts of bravo.

The next day, pictures and videos of Peltokoski filled Chinese social media, but as if nothing had happened, the young star from Vaasa, Finland, appeared at The Peninsula Hong Kong where screens displayed huge posters of him. A special launch event marked the start of his inaugural season as music director of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, his third music director post since leading the Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse and the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra, first as music director, and then as conductor laureate.

"I'm mortified to be in a room with so many giant heads of myself," he says to enthusiastic attendees, including orchestra principals, board members and key sponsors. "I'm trying to bear with it. I'm honored and excited to present our first real season together," says Peltokoski, in casual business attire.

Starting to learn to conduct from the Finnish pedagogue Jorma Panula at barely 14, Peltokoski was dubbed "a talent of the century" by the German newspaper Tagesspiegel. Panula and Peltokoski come from the same region of South Ostrobothnia in Finland, Peltokoski says, and speak the same Finnish dialect.

"He's always been very warm to me. I think we've found some sort of familiarity of spirit," he adds. Most recently, the student visited the teacher in December 2025 at the 95-year-old's home, tucked among trees near Helsinki.

The son of a Filipino nurse and a Finnish engineer and sport shooter, Peltokoski broke new ground when he was named principal guest conductor of the prestigious Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen orchestra, the first person to hold such a position in its history. He was just 21.

In Hong Kong, a new odyssey set off in Asia. For the occasion, the April 27 launch event featured a cinematic video filmed on the top of the harbor-facing Peninsula hotel. Bernhard Fleischer, the orchestra's chief executive, did not want the video to resemble a "going to work" day, so orchestra members changed from dress attire to something smart and casual. In the musical background, the orchestra performed excerpts of *Siegfried und Brunnhilde* from Richard Wagner's *The Ring: An Orchestral Adventure*, arranged by Henk de Vlieger, and recorded live by Deutsche Grammophon. Peltokoski, in similar attire, figuratively "landed" on the helicopter pad and walked toward the orchestra members who gathered to meet the conducting star.

"I will lead six programs featuring masterpieces that are especially close to my heart," says Peltokoski about his new season's highly anticipated repertoire, featuring symphonic canons by Bruckner, Mahler, Strauss, and Wagner, whose musical world inspired his childhood dream of becoming a conductor 15 years ago.

Before learning to conduct with Panula, Peltokoski used to play Wagner's operas on his home piano and sing the German lyrics. His teacher trained him through the symphonic repertoire, which required a deep understanding of orchestral instruments, especially the strings. In the new season, music lovers will get a taste of his musicality in Anton Bruckner's *Symphony No 7 in E Major* and Richard Strauss' *Vier letzte Lieder* ("Four Last Songs"), with soprano Asmik Grigorian, scheduled for January 2027 in Hong Kong and Guangzhou. Another key highlight includes Gustav Mahler's *Symphony No 8 in E-flat Major* which marks the orchestra's completion of all of Mahler's symphonies.

Speaking of the upcoming European tour, Peltokoski says "the main dish" will be Wagner's *The Ring: An Orchestral Adventure*. The touring repertoire also includes Bruckner's *Symphony No 4 in E-flat Major*, and a newly commissioned *Waltz of the Rolling Giants* by composer Yao Chen. Peltokoski, no mean pianist himself, will join concert pianist Martin Helmchen in Camille Saint-Saens' *The Carnival of the Animals*. As a cultural ambassador, the orchestra will travel to eight cities in Spain, Germany, Finland and Austria, sponsored by the China National Arts Fund, making debuts at prestigious venues like Berlin's Berliner Philharmonie, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Vienna's Wiener Konzerthaus, and Musiikkitalo in Helsinki, where Peltokoski once learned how to conduct.

With 40-plus foreign members, the orchestra's Chinese mainland tour is another major highlight, marking the 30th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to China. Peltokoski will conduct for three nights in a row at the National Centre for the Performing Arts in April 2027 for his debut before a Beijing audience. A weighty program includes Mahler's *Symphony No 2 in C Minor*, *Resurrection*, collaborating with the China NCPA Orchestra and Chorus along with soprano Louise Kwong and contralto Wiebke Lehmkuhl. The Beijing programs also prominently feature Vaughan Williams' *Symphony No 4*, Esa-Pekka Salonen's *Cello Concerto* with Finnish cellist Senja Rummukainen, and Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde: Prelude* and *Lohengrin: Prelude*.





From top: Tarmo Peltokoski (center) joins orchestra members on top of The Peninsula Hong Kong during a photo shoot launching his inaugural season as music director of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra. KEITH SIN / FOR CHINA DAILY Peltokoski at the Xinghai Concert Hall in Guangzhou on April 26. Peltokoski (front) holds up the conductor's score of Shostakovich's *Symphony No 11 in G Minor* during the curtain call. PHOTOS BY DESMOND CHAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

For the Shanghai audience, the orchestra will join the Music in the Summer Air festival, led by the orchestra's principal guest conductor Yu Long, in 2027. For the entire season, as many as 12 orchestral concerts will showcase collaborations between the orchestra and major Chinese mainland cities.

With almost a full house, the concert on the afternoon of April 26 in Guangzhou was a prelude to upcoming excursions to the mainland. In the first half, Peltokoski and the orchestra collaborated with violinist Leila Josefowicz in the *Violin Concerto* written for her by renowned Finnish conductor and composer Esa-Pekka Salonen.

In a front-row seat, Salonen himself listened to the program, before taking the stage and thanking the overjoyed audience. Also a student of Jorma Panula, Salonen has taught Peltokoski in conducting master classes. "I'm a big fan of Tarmo," Salonen told attendees at a salon event at the concert hall. "He's a very interesting, thoughtful musician. And he's so young. What we are hearing now is already very, very good, but I cannot even imagine what it will be like 20 years from now."

In the second half, Salonen listened on, as Peltokoski led the orchestra in Shostakovich's *Symphony No 11, The Year 1905*. With his baton, Peltokoski built up the electrifying tension in the one-hour acoustic tragedy, gesturing like an Olympic fencer, bending and lunging. In the words of an orchestra member, it was an emotionally charged journey "from simmering chill to burning fire".

"His baton direction was meticulously precise right from the start," said Liu Zitong, a conducting student from Shanghai.

"This live performance was even more stirring than the recordings we've heard," said Fang Taozhi, 18, and Wu Anyi, 17, two local students who came together.

Xu Nuo, an engineer from Xi'an, wore a commemorative brooch to the concert to show her love for music. "I was moved to tears in several movements. The orchestra conveyed something indescribably depressing but touching. The final 40 seconds of the echoes simply seemed eternal," she said.

"When someone is so convincing, with a mind so deep, sharing knowledge that requires years and years of studying, you completely forget that he is actually 26," said Lorenzo Iosco, chairman of the artistic committee and associate principal bass clarinet of the orchestra. "It's just extraordinary, and this is just the beginning," he added.

Back in The Peninsula Hong Kong and surrounded by huge posters of his son, Peltokoski's father, Raine, is picked out of the crowd. "As a boy, he loved music. He just loved music. But he was — one word: shy. And it's hard to believe today," he says.

The author is a freelance writer for China Daily.

Performing arts academy blends tradition with digital innovation

HONG KONG — At the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, students are taught that to innovate, one must first master the ancient. As the institution climbs the global rankings, it is becoming a high-tech laboratory for the future of Asian culture.

In a city known for its vertical skyline and its role as a dynamic link bridging different regions, the HKAPA stands as a quiet yet powerful force for cultural integration. Here, the air is filled with the scent of sawdust from traditional carpentry workshops and the soft hum of high technology, a microcosm of Hong Kong's broader ambition to maintain its status as the world's "international education hub".

In March, the institution quietly achieved a milestone that extended far beyond its Wan Chai campus: the QS World University Rankings placed its performing arts program 10th globally and 1st in Asia. For Anna CY Chan, director of HKAPA, this is not just about prestige; it is a validation of a pedagogical philosophy that emphasizes both "deep roots" and "wide horizons".

While the global arts scene often pursues the "new" with great enthusiasm, the HKAPA operates on a principle of groundedness. "Students must first learn traditional skills to strike deep roots," Chan insists. "Only with sufficient artistic heritage can innovation have a soul."

This is not mere rhetoric. For Kelly Or, a fourth-year student in the School of Theatre and Entertainment Arts, the journey to the cutting edge began with the humble "mortise and tenon" joint and the manual crafting of coconut husk rope. These are the ancient foundations of stagecraft, taught with the same rigor as modern digital engineering.

The academy's curriculum is a deliberate integration of diverse cultures. In a recent crossover concert titled *Anime in Viaggio*, the piercing, melodic heights of Cantonese opera were paired with the rhythmic, improvisational vitality of jazz. It was a performance that served as a vivid metaphor for the city itself: two distinct musical languages not merely coexisting, but complementing one another.

In March, the HKAPA threw open its doors to the public, offering over 100 free performances and exhibitions that showcased this duality. In the main foyer, the classic opera *Divine Maiden Strewing Flowers* came to life; with a flick of her "water sleeves", a performer's graceful turns and subtle smiles captured the essence of traditional Eastern aesthetics.

Yet, only a few steps away in the School of Film and Television, crowds queued to experiment with AI-generative tools and virtual filming techniques. Here, technology translated touch into imagery in an instant, a moment where tradition and modernity did not just coexist, but quietly merged.



> "Students must first learn traditional skills to strike deep roots. Only with sufficient artistic heritage can innovation have a soul."
>
> **Anna CY Chan,** director of the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts

However, in the School of Film and Television, the "traditional" gives way to what the faculty calls "hardcore" art. Here, a hyper-realistic virtual simulation of the Yee Wo Street footbridge, a Causeway Bay landmark, comes to life. This is not just a student project; it is a collaborative platform for virtual production that allows filmmakers to move seamlessly from the neon-soaked streets of Hong Kong to a sci-fi dystopia in a single frame.

"We want students to master traditional filmmaking while simultaneously designing for the era of the miniseries and new media," explained Terry Lam, dean of the School of Film and Television.

Crucially, the academy is addressing a key concern of the 21st century: artificial intelligence. Lam proposes a "human-in-the-loop" philosophy. In a world of algorithmic generation, the HKAPA argues that empathy remains the unique trait that cannot be replicated by technology. "Work is for people," Lam notes. "Only humans can endow a piece of art with the empathy it requires."

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government is now establishing the "Study in Hong Kong" brand to further develop Hong Kong into an international hub for education. According to director Chan, the academy's nonlocal student body has consistently remained between 20 percent and 25 percent, attracting talent from the Chinese mainland and Southeast Asia, as well as Europe and North America. This global diversity is mirrored in the faculty, who hail from various countries and regions around the world.

The academy's influence is now extending toward the under-construction Northern Metropolis. The planned Northern Metropolis University Town is envisioned not just as a school, but as a "creative incubator" and a "green art theater".

The goal is a "complementary development" in the best sense, a campus that complements the Wan Chai headquarters by focusing on sustainability and resource sharing, serving as a gateway for Hong Kong's talent to flow into the Greater Bay Area and beyond.

For students like Dani Wen, a Master of Music student from the mainland, the appeal lies in this very spirit of breaking boundaries. "The atmosphere is inclusive, the teachers respect open creativity," she says. Before she writes for a Western symphony orchestra, she is tasked with composing for a Chinese orchestra, a cross-cultural training ground that ensures the next generation of artists are not just performers, but cultural communicators.

In a globalized arts landscape, the academy's value lies in its refusal to choose between the old and the new. By grounding its digital evolution in physical heritage, the institution demonstrates that the future of Asian culture is not found by moving away from tradition, but by looking deeper into it.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:45 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:45 PM

SPORTS

BASKETBALL

SGA's reign as league's MVP continues

OKC star wins top award for second straight season



Oklahoma City Thunder guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander celebrates with fans after Game 4 of a first-round NBA playoffs series against the Phoenix Suns on April 27 in Phoenix. AP

He's the best player on the best team. And the voters say he's the best player in the league, too. Again.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander of the reigning NBA champion Oklahoma City Thunder won the NBA's Most Valuable Player on Sunday for the second consecutive year. He became the 18th player to win at least two MVP awards, and the 14th to win them in back-to-back fashion.

"Basketball's obviously a team sport," Gilgeous-Alexander said Sunday night in a celebration at the Thunder practice facility, surrounded by teammates — all in new Burberry trenchcoats, a gift from the now two-time MVP.

"All the numbers, all the accolades, everything that I do on the court, if we won 10 games, I wouldn't be in this conversation. So, thank you guys so much. I love you guys."

The win for Gilgeous-Alexander, who is Canadian, marks the eighth consecutive time that the NBA's MVP was born outside the US. The run started with Milwaukee's Giannis Antetokounmpo (born in Greece, of Nigerian descent) in 2019 and 2020, then Denver's Nikola Jokic (Serbia) in 2021 and 2022, Philadelphia's Joel Embiid (born in Cameroon, but has since become a US citizen) in 2023 and Jokic again in 2024.

And in 2025 SGA was the MVP, as he is now in 2026.

"Who he is has never changed," Thunder coach Mark Daigneault said. "I think he's touched up the edges on his game, his leadership and on his perspective, just like anybody else that's coming of age."

Jokic was second and San Antonio's star French center Victor Wembanyama placed third.

Gilgeous-Alexander got 83 of a possible 100 first-place votes. Jokic received 10 and Wembanyama got five. Luka Doncic of the Los Angeles Lakers was fourth in the voting and Cade Cunningham of the Detroit Pistons was fifth.

Cunningham got two first-place votes — the first by a US-born player since 2021.

Jaylen Brown of the Boston Celtics was sixth, and Kawhi Leonard of the Los Angeles Clippers and Donovan Mitchell of the Cleveland Cavaliers tied for seventh with one fifth-place vote apiece.

International players went 1-2-3 in the voting for the fifth straight season:

- Last season the order was Gilgeous-Alexander first, Jokic second and Antetokounmpo third.
- In 2024, it was Jokic, then Gilgeous-Alexander and Slovenian Doncic.
- In 2023, it was Embiid, then Jokic, then Antetokounmpo.
- In 2022, it was Jokic, then Embiid, then Antetokounmpo.

"So many NBA players don't get opportunity," Gilgeous-Alexander said. "Who knows where I'd be without it."

Gilgeous-Alexander and Wembanyama will face off Monday night, when the Thunder and Spurs open Game 1 of the Western Conference finals in Oklahoma City. NBA Commissioner Adam Silver is expected at Monday's game to formally present Gilgeous-Alexander with a trophy for the third time in 12 months — the MVP award last May, the NBA Finals MVP award last June, and now this.



Shai Gilgeous-Alexander poses with teammates Jalen Williams (left), Isaiah Hartenstein (second from left), Chet Holmgren (center back), Jaylin Williams (second from right), and Jared McCain (right) in Burberry trenchcoats on Sunday in Oklahoma City. AP



Shai Gilgeous-Alexander holds his son Ares Alexander before a news conference after being named the NBA MVP on Sunday in Oklahoma City. AP



Shai Gilgeous-Alexander during Game 2 of a second-round NBA playoffs series against the Los Angeles Lakers on May 7. AP

Jokic not winning the award continues an odd trend: those who average a triple-double, often thought of as the holy grail of in-game accomplishments, almost never win MVP.

Jokic had the seventh instance of a player finishing a season averaging a triple-double — at least 10 points, 10 assists and 10 rebounds per game — by putting up 27.7 points, a league-best 12.9 rebounds and a league-best 10.7 assists per game.

It wasn't good enough for MVP. Russell Westbrook averaged a triple-double four times and won MVP only once in those years. Oscar Robertson averaged a triple-double in 1961-62; he didn't win MVP that season. And now, Jokic has done it twice — with no MVPs to show for it, though he has won the award on three other occasions.

Gilgeous-Alexander insists that he doesn't play for individual honors, but for team trophies.

"The way things are run in this organization and this city, it breeds success," Gilgeous-Alexander said. "It's no coincidence."

The MVP win is Gilgeous-Alexander's second major individual award this season; he was also voted the league's Clutch Player of the Year by an overwhelming margin — he got 96 of 100 first-place votes in that balloting, paying tribute to how great his performances tend to be in the final five minutes of close games.

Then again, he's pretty good no matter how much time is on the clock.

Gilgeous-Alexander was second in the league with 31.1 points per game, second only to Doncic and his 33.5-point average. He also extended his NBA-record streak of regular season games with at least 20 points to 140 and counting; it'll carry into next season as well.

He's delightfully boring — one of the few mid-range specialists in the game, someone who excels at drawing fouls, isn't a look-at-me type and gives some of the most thoughtful answers of anyone in the league. Emotions aren't worth his time; staying calm is always his preferred move.

And he believes in the Thunder way, that the sum of the parts is the only real key to winning.

"Some of it is just luck," Gilgeous-Alexander said. "As an NBA player, you have no control over other grown men in this business and I'm just lucky enough to be surrounded by great human beings, from the front office, coaching staff, to the guys that I play on the court with every night. We all want to see the next man win and do whatever it takes, ultimately, to win. We have that common goal. And, yeah, I can't take credit for that. It's more than me, it's bigger than me."

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Mitchell makes the breakthrough, helping the Cavs reach the conference finals



Cleveland Cavaliers guard Donovan Mitchell attempts a shot against Detroit Pistons guard Daniss Jenkins in Game 7 of a second round NBA playoffs series in Detroit, Michigan, on Sunday. REUTERS

For Donovan Mitchell, a breakthrough moment has arrived.

He's going to the conference finals for the first time, and the series will begin at Madison Square Garden — a bonus for the native New Yorker.

In his ninth season, Mitchell has reached the NBA's final four.

He and the Cleveland Cavaliers rolled past the Detroit Pistons 125-94 on Sunday night in Game 7 — on the road, no less — of their Eastern Conference semifinal series.

Their reward is a trip to New York for Game 1 of the East finals against the Knicks on Tuesday.

Mitchell had 26 points, seven rebounds and eight assists in Sunday's romp. And, when his night was over with 4:01 remaining, he had handshakes and hugs for anyone wearing Cleveland colors.

He leaned down to wrap his arms around a seated Cavs coach Kenny Atkinson, who said before the game that he wanted Mitchell to be himself in Game 7.

The result?

"It was better than Donovan Mitchell," Atkinson said. "Is that possible? It started with him, his defense, rebounding, and then when he gets in the paint and starts making other people better, you know, the dishes to our big guys, that was the key, I felt like, to the game. He had complete control of the game."

Mitchell was brought to Cleveland in September 2022 in a trade with Utah, with the Cavaliers betting — correctly, it turned out — that he would be the last piece of their post-LeBron James rebuild and help them return to the playoffs.

They got to the first round in 2023, then lost in the second round in 2024 and 2025. This year, the conference finals await after the third-biggest road win a team has ever had in a Game 7.

Mitchell has been an All-Star in each of the last seven seasons, was one of eight players to receive at least one vote in this year's MVP balloting and will likely be an All-NBA pick for the third time.

But there was a void — the deep playoff run.

Not anymore.

"Couldn't be happier for him, to make that next step," Atkinson said. "He's going home to New York. He kept this thing together this year when things weren't going great. He was the beacon, the light ... he carried us on the court."

The Cavs' Sam Merrill, who grew up in Utah and was a Jazz fan when Mitchell was there, added: "You're not going to find a guy more happy for him than I am, but I know he wants more. We all want more."

There were so many near-misses for Mitchell along the way. Mitchell's Utah team wasted a 3-1 lead in the 2020 playoff bubble against Denver in the West semifinals, falling in seven games. A year later, the Jazz were up 2-0 in the second round against the Los Angeles Clippers, who ended up winning in six. He got hurt at the same stage against Boston, as that series fell apart for Cleveland in 2024, and last year the Cavaliers went 0-3 at home in the second round against Indiana on the way to a five-game ouster.

He was part of a No 1 seed in 2021, part of a No 1 seed again last year, and never got out of the second round. Until now.

Jarrett Allen and Merrill each added 23, as the fourth-seeded Cavaliers ousted the East's top seed to set up the series with the third-seeded New York Knicks.

"We just knew that we had to get the job done. We knew that we had to bring a lot of force," said Allen. "It's a tough arena to win in, but we knew that every single possession, every single play was super important."

Evan Mobley had 21 points and 12 rebounds for the Cavaliers, who advanced to the conference finals for the first time since 2018 and the ninth time in team history. It's their deepest run since James' final season with the franchise.

Daniss Jenkins scored 17 points, and Cade Cunningham and Duncan Robinson each finished with 13 for the Pistons, who fell one win shy of their first conference finals appearance since 2008, after forcing the decider with a Game 6 victory on Friday.

The Cavs dictated the pace from the opening tip and never allowed the Pistons to gain traction, then blew open a convincing Game 7 performance when Mitchell scored 15 in the third quarter.

Detroit was outscored in the paint 58-34 and made only 35.3 percent of its field goal attempts, compared to Cleveland's 50.6 percent.

Cleveland capitalized on cold shooting by the Pistons in the opening quarter, turning missed shots into transition baskets, while building an early advantage. The Cavs led 31-22 going to the second, and after Detroit had the first two baskets, Cleveland quickly seized control with a 24-9 run. The Pistons' offensive struggles only deepened and the Cavs continued to shoot efficiently as they built a commanding 64-47 lead into halftime.

The Cavs kept rolling in the second half and led by as many as 35 points. The closest the Pistons were able to get in the half was within 17 in the third quarter.

AGENCIES

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:45 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:47 PM

In the name of duty
Surveyor braves harsh cold to secure vital data
NATURAL FRONTIERS, PAGES 8-9



Clean, healthy cyberspace urged at meeting
CHINA, PAGE 10



Educational shift
AI redefines learning priorities, empowers research, innovation
Z WEEKLY, PAGE 13

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 2026

Xi calls for even higher quality ties

Russian President Putin's state visit to address issues of mutual concern

By **MO JINGXI** and **ZHANG YUNBI**



President Xi Jinping holds a welcoming ceremony for Russian President Vladimir Putin outside the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Wednesday. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

President Xi Jinping called on China and Russia to drive the development and revitalization of their respective countries through comprehensive strategic coordination of even higher quality, and work to make the global governance system more just and reasonable.

Xi made the remarks on Wednesday when meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, who arrived in Beijing on Tuesday for a two-day state visit.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the China-Russia strategic partnership of coordination and the 25th anniversary of the signing of the China-Russia Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation.

Xi said China-Russia relations have come this far step by step precisely because the two sides have kept deepening political mutual trust and strategic coordination with unyielding tenacity, and expanded cooperation with a drive to always scale new heights.

It is also because the two countries have defended international justice and fairness and advanced the building of a community with a shared future for humanity with unflappable resolve, he said.

Xi noted that the international situation is fluid and turbulent, marked by resurging unilateralism and hegemonism.

Yet peace, development and cooperation remain the aspiration of the people and the prevailing trend of our times, he said.

As permanent members of the UN Security Council and important major countries in the world, China and Russia should take a strategic and long-term perspective, drive the development and revitalization of their respective countries through comprehensive strategic coordination of even higher quality, and work to make the global governance system more just and reasonable, Xi said.

The two heads of state also agreed to further extend the China-Russia Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation.

Xi said that 25 years ago, China and Russia signed the treaty, establishing in legal form the institutional foundation for long-term good-neighborliness, friendship and comprehensive strategic coordination. Since then, China-Russia relations have achieved leapfrog development, he said.

He noted that the international landscape has undergone profound changes, and the world faces the risk of sliding back into the law of the jungle. Against this backdrop, the advanced nature, scientific value and practical significance of the treaty have become even more prominent, Xi said.

Xi said that China supports the further extension of the treaty and is ready to work with Russia to uphold its spirit and firmly advance the two countries' back-to-back strategic coordination.

The treaty was last extended on June 28, 2021, when Xi and Putin held talks via video link and issued a joint statement ahead of the 20th anniversary of its signing.

Prior to his departure for Beijing, Putin delivered a video address in which he said, "I'm delighted to be visiting Beijing once again at the invitation of my longtime good friend, the President of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping."

On Sunday, both Xi and Putin sent congratulatory letters to the 10th China-Russia Expo, which opened on the same day in Harbin, the capital of Northeast China's Heilongjiang province.

Russia's TASS news agency quoted Putin as saying in his video address that regular mutual visits and Russia-China top-level talks "are an important and integral part of our joint efforts to promote the entire range of relations between our two countries and unlock their truly limitless potential".

Bilateral relations today "have reached a truly unprecedented level", Putin said.

The special nature of the ties "is reflected in the atmosphere of mutual understanding and trust, in the commitment to pursuing win-win and equitable cooperation, in conducting respectful dialogue, and in supporting each other on matters affecting the core interests of both countries, including protection of sovereignty and state unity", he added.

Addressing a regular news briefing on Tuesday in Beijing, Foreign Ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said that during the state visit, the two presidents "will exchange views on bilateral relations, cooperation in various fields, and international and regional issues of mutual interest".

A survey report on Sino-Russian youth friendship and cultural exchanges, which was released last week by Renmin University of China, showed that 87.5 percent of young people in Russia and 85.5 percent of young people in China view the two countries' relations as "friendly".

Guo said the findings illustrate the high level of China-Russia ties.

"Under the strategic guidance of President Xi and President Putin, the China-Russia everlasting friendship will enjoy even greater popular support, and the youth in both countries will join hands and inject fresh vitality into our comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era," he added.

Contact the writers at zhangyunbi@chinadaily.com.cn

Inside

- Editorial, **page 6**
- See more, **pages 2-3**

WORLD WATCH
By Warwick Powell

Relationship matures into cornerstone of security and stability

Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to Beijing on Tuesday and Wednesday marks the 25th anniversary of the signing of the 2001 Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation, which underscores a relationship that has matured into a strategic cornerstone of Eurasian — and by extension, global — security and stability.

Far from a mere tactical partnership born of convenience, the Russia-China partnership is deepening across economic, energy, security and multilateral dimensions, driven by shared interests in an emergent, yet unstable, multipolar world.

At its foundation lies robust economic complementarity and interdependence. Bilateral trade has expanded dramatically over the past decade. It surged after 2022, reaching a record $244.8 billion in 2024 before moderating to approximately $228.1 billion in 2025 amid shifting global energy prices and demand adjustments, according to statistics from China's General Administration of Customs. This represented a slight contraction of about 6.8 percent year-on-year, marking the first decrease in five years after a record-breaking period fueled by post-2022 Western sanctions.

Russia supplies critical energy resources. Crude oil exports to China exceeded 108 million metric tons in 2024, while China provides manufactured goods, vehicles and technology. Chinese exports to Russia include cars, electronics and machinery.

*See **Visit**, page 3*

Couples pick dates that sound like love to marry

By **LI LEI**
lilei@chinadaily.com.cn

Couples across China are rushing to tie the knot on Wednesday and Thursday — May 20 and May 21 — two dates that sound like "I love you" when said aloud in Mandarin, with marriage registration slots fully booked weeks in advance in several major cities.

In Chinese, "520" is pronounced similarly to the Mandarin equivalent of "I love you", making May 20 a sought-after day for registering marriages. The following day, May 21 — or "521" — carries a similar meaning, offering a popular and much-needed alternative.

All slots in the 15 marriage registration offices in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, were fully booked for May 20 by the first week of this month, as they were in Shenzhen. In Nanjing, Jiangsu province, more than 1,400 couples had reserved May 20 as their chosen date by late April, with scenic registration sites such as the Confucius Temple already at capacity. Some locations were fully booked for May 21 as well. Wuxi, another city in Jiangsu, has no online slots left for May 20, though local authorities said that couples could still register as walk-ins.

For one Beijing-based couple, securing a May 20 slot required a midnight digital scramble. Guo Xiangyu, 30, a doctoral student from Xi'an in Shaanxi province, and Yan Xin, 34, an internet worker from Baoji, also in Shaanxi, booked their appointment two weeks in advance. The couple and both sets of parents logged into the system at midnight across PCs and mobile devices, and Yan managed to secure a slot. "We expected it to be crowded, so we feel very lucky," she said.

*See **Marriage**, page 10*

INSIDE
Jointly realizing a clean and beautiful world
Global Views, page 7



www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved
Newsstand prices: US $1 Canada C$1; UK 1£ EU 1€ Kenya 50 Kenya Shilling Asia Pacific: Thailand 120 thb; Philippines 120 php; Myanmar 2000 kyat; Japan 210 yen; Dubai 10 dirham; Pakistan 300 rupee

SANYA BECOMES A TCM PARADISE

Holistic health practices holding sway over holidaymakers to the tropical city

By **XING WEN** and **CHEN BOWEN**
in Sanya, Hainan

For many foreign tourists, Sanya in southern China's Hainan province is a tropical dream: soft sandy beaches, coconut groves and a gentle sea breeze.

However, a growing crowd is discovering that the real Sanya comes with a twist — usually of muscles and joints.

Instead of lounging on a beach towel, they lie on a therapy bed; instead of sipping cold coconut water, they take slow sips of bitter herbal tea — all the while dotted with fine acupuncture needles. And somehow, they love it.

Five years ago, Alina Dudko from Saint Petersburg in Russia tried acupuncture for the first time to address some of her health issues.

"I felt a bit dizzy, which scared me," she recalled, adding that the doctor also prescribed a course of herbal decoctions to take, something she was skeptical about at first.

"But after about five acupuncture sessions, I noticed positive changes in my condition, so I decided to fully commit to the treatment," she added.

Today, Dudko, who now speaks fluent Chinese, has chosen to work as a therapy translator at a traditional Chinese medicine clinic near the Dadonghai scenic area in Sanya.



A Russian tourist takes a selfie by the seaside at Wuzhizhou Island scenic area in Sanya, Hainan province, last year. YUAN YONGDONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Acupuncture and herbal decoctions, which she once doubted, have become what she calls a self-care habit. "TCM teaches us to look at health in a holistic way, not to fix problems only after they appear, but to take care of ourselves in advance through lifestyle, diet, rest and emotional state. I really agree with this philosophy," she said.

Her daily work now includes talking with patients, accompanying them during consultations, facilitating communication between them and the TCM practitioners, and explaining the basic principles of their treatments in plain, accessible language.

"I place great importance on honest, smooth communication with the patients. I avoid complex terminology. I strive to be a bridge between practitioner and patient, to help people understand why a holistic approach to their health is so important," she said.

This is the sixth year since the 30-year-old settled down in the coastal city, which offers a perfect balance of work, health and quality of life.

"I really love the climate here. I love the feeling of being close to nature. I also love that I can combine work with plenty of rest. Here, people pay more attention to their physical condition, their health and their inner balance," she added.

With the development of the Hainan Free Trade Port and a visa-free policy now applicable to citizens of 86 countries, more foreign tourists, mostly from Russia, frequent the clinic, observed Wu Chunmei, a colleague of Dudko.

"Because winters in Russia are long, locals generally suffer from excessive cold and dampness in the body, rheumatic joint pain and back strain. They come to Sanya during the winter to escape the cold and enjoy the warm climate, so it's very convenient for them to get TCM treatments at the same time," Wu said.

According to Zang Jinpeng, a practitioner at Sanya Traditional Chinese Medicine Hospital, the city's unique environment is naturally suited for wellness and recovery. As early as the early 2000s, a large number of foreign tourists began visiting Sanya and gradually came to experience and appreciate TCM.

*See **Health**, page 3*

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:47 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:47 PM

CHINA-RUSSIA TIES

Sun Zhuangzhi

People's bonds strengthen bilateral relationship

As we commemorate the 30th anniversary of the China-Russia strategic partnership of coordination and the 25th anniversary of the China-Russia Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation in 2026, the timing of Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to China is particularly significant.

Over the years, people-to-people cooperation has been a vital component of bilateral relations between China and Russia, reflecting the evolution of ties from good-neighborliness and friendly cooperation to a comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era.

As China-Russia relations have grown stronger and cooperation has expanded, people-to-people exchanges have become essential for developing a new model of major-country relations. They have reinforced the social foundation for high-level cooperation.

Unlike China's commercially driven exchanges with Western countries, which can be disrupted by political factors, its people-to-people cooperation with Russia has consistently been government-led and worked seamlessly alongside political and economic collaboration.

In today's rapidly changing international landscape, where "public opinion warfare" and "information warfare" are constantly reshaping perceptions, China-Russia cooperation has shown remarkable resilience. People-to-people exchanges have played a key role, with advances in technology and transportation significantly enhancing cultural cooperation and interactions.

These exchanges have profoundly affected bilateral relations, including political and economic ties.

In fact, people-to-people exchanges have emerged as a new form of diplomacy, distinct from traditional diplomacy in participants, forms, concepts and objectives.

Alongside cultural diplomacy, this people-to-people diplomacy has gained prominence. Russian scholars note that China-Russia cultural and people-to-people cooperation is systematic and continually enriched with new content, representing a planned and comprehensive interaction.

Since establishing a comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era in 2019, China-Russia people-to-people cooperation has focused on in-depth, quality development, creating broader opportunities for growth.

In June 2021, the two heads of state issued a joint statement commemorating the 20th anniversary of the treaty, emphasizing the need to expand exchanges in education, academia and culture and enhance the role of cultural centers, friendship associations, and social organizations.

In recent years, both countries have strengthened collaboration in higher and vocational education, scientific research, culture, arts and sports, fostering the growth of cultural and educational endeavors.

New cooperation models and channels are being explored, such as using the internet to enhance media collaboration and cultural showcases, and increasing youth exchanges, especially among students, to cultivate talent with global perspectives and cross-cultural communication skills.

Tourism and public health exchanges have become new focal points.

As the international landscape and inter-state relations evolve, China-Russia bilateral cooperation has increasingly incorporated rich people-to-people elements at both global and regional levels.

The two countries have jointly opposed the politicization of health issues in multilateral forums, supported each other's initiatives internationally, and collaborated on ensuring biosecurity and building a global health infrastructure.

During their respective presidencies of the SCO and BRICS, China and Russia hosted hundreds of events, many of them focused on people-to-people exchanges.

Both countries have encouraged their youth to actively engage in multilateral activities organized by BRICS and the SCO.

Following the launch of the Belt and Road Initiative, its principles of people-to-people connectivity have gained Russian support, particularly the emphasis on mutual respect and learning among civilizations.

This approach lays the groundwork for broad partnerships and facilitates bilateral exchanges in education, sports, and culture.

As close neighbors, China and Russia benefit from geographical and cultural advantages that enhance their cooperation.

Extensive people-to-people exchanges have fostered closer ties between their populations. Polls indicate that mutual favorability is rising, which is crucial for stable and friendly state-to-state relations.

Data from the Levada Center show that Russian society's attitude toward China has undergone positive changes, with a consistently high proportion holding a favorable view of China for over a decade.

In May 2020, an online survey conducted by the China-Russia Committee for Friendship, Peace and Development showed that 93.1 percent of Chinese respondents held a non-negative view of Russia while 82.6 percent of Russians felt the same about China.

A 2024 Levada Center poll found that while Chinese goods remained the top interest for Russians at 29 percent, travel and natural scenery at 27 percent and traditional Chinese medicine, culture, art, literature and films at 25 percent, were close behind, with gaps narrowing significantly.

With the mutual visa exemption and the official launch of the China-Russia Years of Education, efforts to enhance people-to-people connectivity have received strong policy support. Various mechanisms have been established, and the number of councils under the China-Russia Committee for Friendship, Peace and Development has steadily grown.

Additionally, 15 university alliances in similar disciplines have been formed. Both sides are actively engaging in technological innovation cooperation, enhancing connectivity in the digital sector, and complementing each other's strengths.

This "new infrastructure" has emerged as a fresh growth point, marking a new stage in the development of bilateral relations.

People-to-people interactions are a crucial pillar of the China-Russia strategic partnership that guarantees everlasting friendship between the two countries.

A key indicator of this is the shift from a top-down approach to a dynamic, two-way interaction driven by both top-down and bottom-up forces.

This has led to comprehensive, wide-ranging and multi-level cooperation.

People-to-people exchanges and friendship can transcend differences in systems, civilizations and ideologies, providing stable and robust endogenous momentum for bilateral relations.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

The author is the director of the Institute of Russian, Eastern European and Central Asian Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.
The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.

Andrey Kortunov

Sino-Russian ties a boon for the world

State officials and prominent politicians from Beijing and Moscow have consistently tried to allay the enduring fear of some Western countries that China and Russia may forge a political and military alliance.

Neither China nor Russia has such a plan or aspiration. Both nations are more than happy with the current arrangement in their bilateral relations, with both sides attaching high value to their respective sovereignty.

Furthermore, China and Russia might hold different positions on some specific issues. The two might even be competitors in some international markets.

However, such disagreement or competition does not prevent Beijing and Moscow from working together on many other issues, where their interests and positions coincide or overlap.

One must also mention that in terms of bilateral trade, mutual investments, industrial cooperation, cultural and human interaction, China-Russia cooperation lags significantly behind that between China and both the European Union and the United States.

More Chinese tourists flock to the US than to Russia. There are many more Chinese students and scholars in Western universities than in Russian higher education institutions.

On the other hand, at least a part of the Russian political class and the intellectual community there consider their country to be an organic part of the European civilization. Finally, neither Beijing nor Moscow displays any intention to impose their respective values, political systems or principles of governance on Western nations or on anyone in the world.

And yet, the "ghost of a new axis" continues to haunt some Western statesmen.

Global Lens

Where does this fear come from? The most natural answer would be that this is a typical manifestation of the age-old conventional Western hypocrisy.

Indeed, the Western "ruling circles" have always needed an "external threat" to justify more military spending, to rationalize forging new military blocs and to ostracize those reaching out to their competitors and adversaries.

This old logic, however, cannot be taken for granted any longer.

Reference to an "emerging China-Russia axis" comes in handy when some politicians try to push for NATO's globalization; the trilateral AUKUS partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom and the US; the trilateral US-Japan-Republic of Korea security cooperation framework; or even the expansion of the Quad alliance among Australia, India, Japan and the US.

Scapegoats are always in demand in global politics, and some Western politicians can hardly find a better excuse than Moscow and Beijing to methodically and relentlessly consolidate against the vast Eurasian landmass. This fear apparently stems from an ancient vision in international relations that if any two nations are getting close, they must be doing so to oppose a third party. This is also the thinking of those who treat international politics as a zero-sum game.

This old logic, however, cannot be taken for granted any longer. By extending this strange logic, would the world be safer, more stable, secure and prosperous if the China-Russia strategic partnership were to fall apart?

Would the Western nations benefit from if they "succeed in" driving wedges between Beijing and Moscow? Instead, any such conflict would only become another source of regional and even global instability, generating many more risks and challenges for everyone in the world, including Western nations.

In an era marked by interconnectedness and interdependence, international relations cannot continue to be treated like a "zero-sum game", even if this was the case earlier. Today, we either win together or lose together.

No wonder, Beijing has always welcomed Moscow's efforts to reengage in bilateral dialogue with Washington, while in Moscow they have always been sympathetic to Beijing's attempts to resolve its trade disputes and geopolitical tensions with the US.

Besides, the whole assumption that Moscow and Beijing are working together to create more problems for some Western powers reflects an arrogant "West-centered" view of the world.

Even if the West did not threaten the two nations at all, Moscow and Beijing would still have many reasons to cooperate with each other. These are two big nations with a shared border, with complementary economies, and similar views on many regional and global problems.

It is worth mentioning that the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation Between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation, which opened a new era in bilateral ties, was signed way back in the summer of 2001 — long before Beijing and Moscow began encountering difficulties in their respective relations with some Western powers.

The aggressive posture of some Western powers is undoubtedly one of the factors shaping the China-Russia partnership, but this is by no means the only or decisive factor. One can assume that over time, the significance of this exogenous factor will go down, not up.

These days one can argue that a major problem in international relations is the absence of fear, which earlier used to act as a deterrent against military confrontation between major powers.

However, irrational and unfounded fears are no less dangerous — they can obscure vision, distort realities and trigger irrational impulsive decisions fraught with perilous repercussions for all humankind.

The author is a member and former director general of the Russian International Affairs Council.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Sergey S. Tsyplakov

Energy cooperation fuels growth amid uncertainties

Instability and uncertainty in the global economy and international trade continue to intensify, unilateralism and protectionism are on the rise, and the international trading system itself is facing serious challenges.

The escalation of tensions in the Middle East and the blockade of shipping in the Strait of Hormuz have demonstrated the vulnerability of global industrial supply chains and the unreliability of established transport corridors.

All these create serious global and regional risks, further increasing the urgency of ensuring economic security and enhancing economic resilience at both the national and multilateral levels.

Russia and China are the largest countries in Eurasia and share a long border.

Over the past 30 years, the two countries have deepened their comprehensive strategic partnership and cooperation.

The established multi-layered mechanisms of China-Russia cooperation — a key element of which is the guiding role of the two countries' leaders and the inherent economic complementarity between the two countries — create unique opportunities to jointly and effectively address risks in those key areas of economic security.

Global Lens

Energy security is a key aspect of economic security.

Within the overall framework of China-Russia economic cooperation, interaction in the energy sector and the large-scale joint projects currently underway, are of paramount importance for both countries.

A key feature of the China-Russia energy partnership is its multi-sectoral nature, with cooperation expanding in sectors such as oil, natural gas, coal and nuclear energy.

In the future, it could extend to renewable energy as well.

China has been Russia's largest trading partner for many years, while Russia has become one of China's major energy suppliers.

The importance of the Chinese energy market for Russian companies has always been high, but in recent years, amid the sharp deterioration of Russia-European Union relations, the forced disruption of years-old supply chains, and the wave of anti-Russian sanctions, this importance has increased even further.

Russia, in turn, remains an important external energy supplier for China, particularly in crude oil and natural gas and is also among the major coal suppliers to China.

Some experts say that Russia has one-sided dependence on China in the energy sector.

These opinions are, to put it mildly, biased and incorrect.

In reality, we see an interdependence that generally serves the interests of both countries, as it increases the resilience of their economies in the face of external shocks and serves as one of the pillars of the entire Sino-Russian partnership of strategic coordination.

The extensive material basis for a Russian-Chinese energy partnership has already been established, and the common goal for the next few years should be joint work on new projects and further improvement of existing cooperation mechanisms.

Given the strategic role of the energy sector in the economy, a necessary prerequisite for the further sustainable advancement of energy cooperation is its high degree of alignment with national economic development priorities and programs.

In this regard, it should be noted that China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) has generated considerable interest among Russian experts and business circles.

For the first time, the Five-Year Plan sets the strategic goal of transforming China into an energy powerhouse and outlines paths for the large-scale expansion of the new energy sector.

Both countries should continue measures to further deepen the energy partnership between the two sides.

At the same time, it would be a gross oversimplification to reduce the Russian-Chinese energy cooperation to increasing energy trade volumes.

The cooperation should be comprehensive, encompassing production and logistics chains along their entire length, as well as financing and payment systems.

Given persistent geopolitical tensions, the importance of ensuring the security and sustainability of transport routes is growing.

Both countries should jointly develop a cross-border pipeline network and alternative Arctic shipping routes.

The author is a professor at HSE University and a researcher at the Institute of China and Contemporary Asia of the Russian Academy of Sciences. He was the Russian trade representative in China from 2001 to 2013.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:47 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:47 PM

CHINA-RUSSIA TIES



Russian children make dumplings on Monday at a youth exchange center in Heihe, Heilongjiang province. The seventh edition of the China-Russia Youth Exchange Event opened in Heihe to promote the exchange and preservation of culture and the arts of the two countries. QIU QILONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Educational exchanges bear fruits

Student enrollments hit record, joint institutions thrive and research relations reach new heights

By ZOU SHUO
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

The expanding educational cooperation between China and Russia is delivering tangible results, with a record number of students crossing borders, new joint institutions thriving and collaborative research reaching new heights, which in turn is contributing to stronger mutual understanding and the building of a shared future, experts said.

As the China-Russia Years of Education unfold and bilateral student exchanges exceed 80,000, both countries are set to strengthen their educational partnership, transforming people-to-people exchanges into a foundation of enduring friendship, they added.

At the Harbin Institute of Technology, or HIT, in Heilongjiang province, which is a pioneer in China-Russia higher education cooperation, the number of Russian students reached a record high of 2,081 in 2025.

The university has established partnerships with 44 Russian institutions, including Lomonosov Moscow State University and Bauman Moscow State Technical University, and has signed 116 cooperation agreements to date. Over the past decade, HIT has admitted more than 9,000 Russian students, ranking it first among Chinese universities in terms of Russian student enrollment, according to the university.

"The university is committed to further deepening cooperation with Russia in the fields of education, science and technology, and talent cultivation, and to becoming a pioneer in China's new frontier of opening up to the north," said Chen Jie, Party secretary of HIT.

In 2011, HIT and Bauman Moscow State Technical University jointly initiated the establishment of the Association of Sino-Russian Technical Universities, the first such association between the two countries.

The association now comprises 80 member institutions and more than 2.2 million enrolled students. It has hosted nearly 100 major events focused on technology, innovation and youth exchanges, benefiting more than 100,000 students and faculty members from both countries, Chen said.

Shenzhen MSU-BIT University — the first Sino-Russian cooperative university jointly set up by the government of Shenzhen in Guangdong province, the Beijing Institute of Technology and Lomonosov Moscow State University — has seen remarkable growth since its official establishment in October 2016.

Li Hezhang, president of Shenzhen MSU-BIT University, said that enrollment went up from 899 to 4,458 during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period, marking a nearly fivefold increase. "The university is committed to cultivating high-quality, innovative talent proficient in three languages, familiar with both China and Russia, and strong in professional expertise," he said.

The institution has established five Sino-Russian joint research centers and two key laboratories under China's national key research and development program, Li said, noting that its faculty includes 20 academicians from China and abroad, and its students have won more than 500 awards in high-level academic competitions over the past five years.

He added that the university has sent about 1,200 students to Lomonosov Moscow State University for exchange programs, 167 of whom have received government scholarships.

Li Yuyao, 22, an economics major at Shenzhen MSU-BIT University, spent a semester at Lomonosov Moscow State University in 2025, thanks to a government-funded scholarship program. "The immersive environment with Russian professors and classmates helped me progress quickly," she said.

During her stay in Russia, she traveled to Moscow, St. Petersburg and Lake Baikal. "Most Russian people we met were very friendly. Some even asked to take photos with us on Red Square," she recalled.

Fluent in Chinese, English and Russian, Li Yuyao said she hopes to pursue a career in multinational trade.

For Viktoriia Dragun, a second-year chemistry student from Russia at Shenzhen MSU-BIT University, coming to China was a life-changing decision.

"I started learning Chinese at age 12 because I love the language — it sounds beautiful and mysterious," she said. "Chinese people are very warm and inclusive. They understand I'm a foreigner, so they're patient when my expression isn't perfect."

Dragun plans to apply for postgraduate studies at Tsinghua University. "As I have come to China, I want to experience studying at the best university here," she added.

Liu Limin, president of the China Education Association for International Exchange, who studied in Russia as a government-sponsored doctoral student in the 1980s, said that his more than 40 years of study and work have been closely related to China-Russia educational exchanges, and that he has dedicated his career to fostering bilateral educational ties.

"An educational exchange is the most lasting, the warmest and the most powerful form of people-to-people bond," he said. "The launch of the China-Russia Years of Education comes at a historic moment and provides a new window for the all-around upgrading of cooperation."

Liu said that his association has helped build a comprehensive cooperation network between the two countries, covering higher education, vocational training, basic education and youth exchanges.

Key achievements include the Luban Workshop, which aligns China's vocational education standards and training system with Russia's industrial demands; the "thousand schools hand in hand" initiative, which is planned to pair more than 1,000 primary and secondary schools over five years; and the China-Russia children's creative festival, which has received about 55,000 student submissions.

Looking ahead, Liu emphasized the need to transform short-term activities into long-term mechanisms. "True cooperation is not a passing trend, but a steady, lasting flow," he said.

Liu also called for aligning Russia's strengths in mathematics, physics, astronautics and art with China's advantages in artificial intelligence and digital education. "We must cultivate young talent to become ambassadors of China-Russia friendship for generations to come," he said.

Visit: Security and energy cooperation forms a vital pillar

From page 1

Infrastructure linkages reinforce these ties. The Power of Siberia pipeline has already transformed energy flows, and Power of Siberia 2 — with its potential annual capacity of 50 billion cubic meters via Mongolia — would promise further integration.

Investment flows, while fluctuating, demonstrate commitment. Cumulative Chinese direct investment in Russia has been estimated in the tens of billions of yuans, with sectors such as energy, manufacturing and logistics being prominent. Joint projects span high-tech, agriculture and aerospace.

People-to-people exchanges have increased. Tourism is rebounding strongly. Chinese visitors accounted for over 50 percent of foreign tourist trips to Russia in 2025 (around 834,000 trips), while Russian outbound travel to China rose 33.6 percent, according to Interfax Information Services Group. Mutual flows are projected to grow significantly.

Educational ties are equally promising. In the 2024-25 academic year, over 56,000 Chinese students studied in Russia and more than 21,000 Russians in China, Valery Falkov, Russian minister of science and higher education, told the media last year. Both sides aim for 100,000 total exchanges by 2030, supported by over 200 joint programs, he said. These exchanges foster mutual understanding and build the next generation of professionals invested in the partnership.

Security and energy cooperation through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization forms a vital pillar. Originally focused on countering terrorism, extremism and separatism, the SCO has evolved into a comprehensive platform for Eurasian stability. The 2025 Tianjin Summit marked a significant expansion of its remit, particularly in energy and development finance.

China drove the launch of dedicated SCO energy and green-industry cooperation platforms, alongside commitments to jointly add tens of gigawatts of solar and wind power capacity across member states over the next five years. Beijing pledged 2 billion yuan ($294 million) in grants for 2025 and 10 billion yuan in loans over three years to support these initiatives. The SCO Development Bank, agreed to at the Tianjin summit with seed capital and loans pledged by Beijing, is an emerging multilateral institution championed by China to fund regional infrastructure and provide an alternative to Western-led financial systems.

This builds on longstanding efforts. SCO frameworks have long facilitated coordination on oil, gas and resource development among countries like Russia, Kazakhstan and China. Traditional hydrocarbon projects — pipelines, exploration and joint infrastructure — now sit alongside a growing emphasis on renewables and green transitions, creating a balanced, resilient energy architecture for Eurasia. The Tianjin outcomes further institutionalize this collaboration, enabling financed cross-border projects enhancing connectivity and reducing vulnerabilities. Russia and China, as western and eastern bookends of the SCO, provide the strategic depth and resources to drive this consolidation, turning Central Asia and beyond into a zone of coordinated development rather than competition.

Multilaterally, BRICS and the SCO enable the quiet advancement of alternatives to Western-dominated institutions: National currency settlements, development financing and coordinated positions on global governance.

In a world of flux — shifting deterrence architectures, Middle East reconfiguration and Eurasian integration — the Russia-China strategic partnership provides continuity and predictability. It does not seek dominance but equilibrium — a stable Eurasia as the foundation for global security. By anchoring economic flows, diversified energy security through both traditional and emerging sources via SCO mechanisms and multilateral forums, this partnership mitigates instability on its peripheries and offers a counterweight to unilateral pressures.

As Putin visits Beijing, the message is clear, that this relationship is not reactive but constitutive of an emerging order. Eurasian consolidation is advancing not despite global headwinds but through them. Putin's Beijing visit is less about immediate headlines than about the quiet, steady forging of a framework that will shape international stability for decades. The deepening ties — measured in trade volumes, energy cooperation, student exchanges, SCO energy platforms and shared security visions — signal a partnership built to endure, benefiting not only the two nations but the broader quest for a balanced, multipolar world.

The author is an adjunct professor at Queensland University of Technology in Australia and former policy adviser to former Australian prime minister Kevin Rudd. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Veteran diplomat calls himself 'native of Beijing'

By JI HAISHENG
jihaisheng@chinadaily.com.cn

Minutes after Andrey Denisov, former Russian ambassador to China, received the Outstanding Diplomat Medal in Beijing on Monday, a group of journalists gathered around him seeking interviews.

The seasoned diplomat switched effortlessly among Chinese, Russian and English as he fielded questions — from his personal bond with China to the broader Sino-Russian relationship and the visit by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"I am happy to be in Beijing these days," said Denisov, who refers to himself as "a native of Beijing". Having lived and worked here for more than two decades, he said that a profound sense of hometown nostalgia feels only natural.

Beijing, he once said, remains his favorite among the many Chinese cities he has visited. In past interviews, he has spoken of strolling through the *hutong*, traditional alleys in Beijing, near the Bell and Drum Towers and the Houhai area, and of holding a special affection for Beihai Park — a quiet retreat in the heart of the bustling Chinese capital.

This connection is rooted in a journey that began half a century ago. Denisov first arrived in Beijing in 1973 as a young student-interpreter, and he served as Russia's ambassador to China from 2013 to 2022. At his inaugural news conference in May 2013, Denisov struck the audience with a disarmingly personal touch, when he opened his remarks with a warm everyday Chinese greeting, signaling his deep integration into the country.

Over the following nine years as ambassador, Denisov was a key figure in the bilateral relationship, working to advance cooperation across fields and strengthen people-to-people friendship and trust. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi once praised him as "a good friend, an old friend and a true friend of the Chinese people".

Denisov participated in nearly every interaction between the Chinese and Russian heads of state in recent years. Speaking of Putin's visit to China on Tuesday and Wednesday, Denisov said he has great expectations. "As the international situation is now tense, I hope this visit will contribute to easing international tensions," he said.

> "The world needs China, and it needs China's contribution to peace and peaceful development."
>
> **Andrey Denisov,** former Russian ambassador to China



"The fact that there are quite a number of visits here in China in spring underscores the role of China as both an actor and a key player in the international arena," Denisov said. "The world needs China, and it needs China's contribution to peace and peaceful development." He stressed that Putin's visit is part of that broader effort.

With bilateral relations, cooperation in various fields, and international and regional issues of mutual interest on the two leaders' agenda, Denisov said, "I'm quite sure, as a former ambassador, that everything will be accomplished in a real form."

Quoting the Chinese maxim that "practice is the sole criterion for testing truth", Denisov said that, based on his many years of stay in China and his sustained efforts to advance bilateral relations, he can affirm that this partnership is both broad and deep in its development.

"We are two big countries. We are not allies, but we are very close. In some areas, our relationship is even stronger than just an alliance," he said, adding that he is convinced the two countries will have a good future. He also expressed confidence that the partnership will yield more positive outcomes.

Looking ahead, Denisov pledged to continue "serving the people wholeheartedly", drawing inspiration from the fundamental purpose of the Communist Party of China.

Exploring the future



A visitor seeks information from exhibitors on Sunday at the 10th China-Russia Expo in Harbin, Heilongjiang province. The event, which opened on the same day and runs through Thursday, has gathered more than 1,500 enterprises from 46 countries and regions. The expo covers an area of 55,000 square meters and sheds spotlight on future industries such as intelligent equipment, digital security, green building materials and new energy storage. CAO JIANXIONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Health: Climate, TCM network draw intl visitors

From page 1

The proportion of days with excellent air quality exceeds 99 percent annually and the island boasts abundant coastal zones, forests and hot spring mineral resources, as well as over 133,000 hectares of land under cultivation for Chinese medicinal herbs.

In addition, TCM hospitals, therapy clinics and wellness institutions spread across urban and rural areas form a TCM network that covers everything from basic therapies to high-end services.

Sanya Traditional Chinese Medicine Hospital alone has served over 130,000 overseas visitors from more than 40 countries and regions.

Zang noted that the hospital has established a professional TCM health assessment center which uses the four diagnostic methods of TCM, namely inspection, auscultation and olfaction, inquiry and palpation, along with specialized instruments for constitution identification.

What travelers find here is no fleeting novelty, but a quiet cultural immersion that increasingly feels like a "very Chinese moment".

Lie down. Receive the fine needles. Sip the dark decoction. Experience the *tuina* massage. Then let the island do the rest.

Contact the writers at xingwen@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:47 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:47 PM

WORLD

UK's election swings signal European shift

Outcome reflects rightward drift and political fragmentation, experts say

By YANG RAN
yangran1@chinadaily.com.cn

The recent local and regional election results in the UK signal a notable shift in the nation's political landscape, with far-right parties making unprecedented gains at the expense of traditional powerhouses.

Experts note this outcome mirrors a broader trend of rightward drift and political fragmentation occurring across Europe, driven by growing public dissatisfaction with the political and social status quo.

The results from Britain's local and regional elections, released on May 9, saw far-right Reform UK score its biggest breakthrough yet. Across around 5,000 council seats in 136 English councils, the party gained over 1,400 seats and took control of 14 councils, while Labour lost almost 1,500 seats.

Cui Hongjian, a professor at Beijing Foreign Studies University's Academy of Regional and Global Governance, said the message from the election results is that the traditional two-party system in Britain is under strain, and political fragmentation and polarization are continuing to rise. He said this trend mirrors the broader rightward shift seen across European politics in recent years.

This phenomenon of surging far-right parties challenging established political forces is not unique to the UK alone. In Germany, the far-right Alternative for Germany has evolved from a fringe protest party into a major political force, with an INSA survey from April putting its support at a record 28 percent — ahead of Chancellor Friedrich Merz's conservative CDU/CSU bloc.

France, while exhibiting a slower transformation, is also witnessing a normalization of the far right. The far-right National Rally is now France's largest parliamentary party and enjoys high standing in the polls, signaling its potential to significantly influence future elections. Similarly, in Portugal, the far-right Chega party has experienced an impressive rise in popularity since its founding in 2019.

Sense of discontent

Wu Huiping, deputy director of the German Studies Center at Tongji University, said the rightward shift is a widespread and persistent trend across Europe in recent years. She attributed this trend to a widespread sense of social discontent.

Many countries are grappling with deep-seated problems in the social, economic, and security spheres, fueling public discontent with establishment parties and paving the way for rightwing populist and far-right forces to gain ground, she said.

She said even some center-right parties, sensing voter anger over issues like immigration, have shifted to the right to some extent, accelerating the overall political realignment. In some cases, even left-wing populist parties have adopted what she described as "left-wing conservatism" on certain sociocultural issues, further contributing to the rightward drift.

Jian Junbo, director of the Center for China-Europe Relations at Fudan University's Institute of International Studies, said the rise of far-right and populist parties reflects the failure of traditional parties to adequately address the pressing concerns of ordinary people.

"For example, economic stagnation, livelihood issues, and immigration issues are all major concerns for the people. Traditional parties have failed to solve these problems, which has led to the increasing popularity of these far-right parties," he said.

According to a report released in April by the Centre for Research and Analysis on Migration at RFBerlin, the number of immigrants living in the European Union reached a record 64.2 million in 2025, an increase of about 2.1 million from the previous year.

Experts also point to a growing trend of political polarization across Europe, making it increasingly difficult for centrist parties — once dominant in major European nations — to survive.

The results of the French municipal elections, held in March, showcased this dynamic, with left-wing alliances scoring victories, the far-right National Rally making local gains, and the ruling coalition suffering losses.

Jasna Plevnik, president of the Geoeconomic Forum Croatia, said this trend does not lead to optimism. "The centrists have given up their political identity, turned their neoliberal ideas into a soft right-wing framework and formed contradictory political coalitions to stay in power," she said. "In that context, voters would rather vote for true right-wing or left-wing parties."

Looking ahead, analysts anticipate a continued shift toward conservatism and even populism across Europe, with potentially complex implications.

Cui Hongjian suggested that the rise in conservative-populist governments, with their stance of prioritizing their own country, could lead to protectionist policies in trade and a more negative attitude toward international engagement.

Xinhua contributed to this story.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108
529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1831



World Health Organization workers mobilize essential medical supplies and emergency kits at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi, Kenya, on Monday, to support the regions affected by the Ebola outbreak. WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION VIA REUTERS

Africa ramps up Ebola response as cases rise

By SHARON NAKOLA
in Nairobi, Kenya
sharon@chinadailyafrica.com

Countries across Africa and beyond are intensifying measures to prevent and control the latest Ebola outbreaks in Central and East Africa, which have killed more than 100 people, following the World Health Organization's declaration of a public health emergency of international concern.

DR Congo's Health Minister Samuel Roger Kamba said on Tuesday that the death toll had risen to 131, with 513 suspected Ebola cases. Uganda has so far reported two confirmed cases and one death.

The outbreaks, linked to the Bundibugyo strain of the Ebola virus, have triggered heightened surveillance, emergency preparedness and border screening measures across the region.

Africa CDC warned that insecurity in eastern DR Congo, mining-related mobility, weak infection prevention systems and intense cross-border movement near Uganda, Rwanda and South Sudan could accelerate the spread of the virus if response efforts are not strengthened quickly.

Abdalla Hussein, Doctors Without Borders' desk manager for South Sudan, warned on Tuesday that insecurity and weak surveillance systems in conflict-affected areas could allow Ebola infections to spread undetected. He said fragile healthcare systems in affected countries would require strong international support to manage the outbreak effectively.

"All the conditions we have discussed today — armed conflict, limited access and poor surveillance in some areas — make detection and response much more difficult," Hussein said, adding that humanitarian agencies were preparing for the possibility of wider regional spread, including into South Sudan.

Africa CDC Director-General Jean Kaseya said: "The confirmation of the *Bundibugyo ebolavirus* in interconnected countries reminds us once again that Africa's health security is indivisible."

Action urged

"We must act early, act together and act based on science," he added.

Kaseya said Africa CDC had activated emergency coordination mechanisms to mobilize financial and technical resources, reinforce laboratory and surveillance systems and support preparedness activities in neighboring countries.

The African Union Commission Chairperson, Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, called for stronger continental solidarity and coordination to contain the outbreaks, describing them as a major public health concern requiring coordinated continental action.

"The protection of African lives and the safeguarding of our continental health security remain our highest priority," Youssouf said.

The WHO said on Monday that nearly 12 metric tons of emergency medical supplies had been delivered to support response efforts in DR Congo within 24 hours.

The WHO dispatched 4.7 metric tons of medical supplies and equipment to Bunia, while another 7 tons arrived from Kinshasa alongside 35 WHO experts and first responders deployed to affected areas.

Meanwhile, the East African Community Secretariat has urged member states to strengthen surveillance, improve emergency preparedness and intensify cross-border coordination following confirmation of the outbreak in eastern DR Congo.

In Kenya, the Ministry of Health has directed county governments and border authorities to heighten surveillance and screening measures, particularly in areas with significant cross-border movement and international travel.

Beyond Africa, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also announced enhanced travel screening measures after a US healthcare worker tested positive for the Bundibugyo strain.

Ebola is a severe viral disease transmitted through direct contact with bodily fluids of infected people, contaminated materials or infected animals.

Shooting in mosque leaves 5 dead

By RENA LI in Los Angeles
renali@chinadailyusa.com

Three worshippers and two teenage suspects were killed on Monday in a shooting at the Islamic Center of San Diego that authorities are investigating as a possible hate crime, according to police and local media reports.

The violence erupted shortly before noon at the mosque in San Diego's Clairemont neighborhood, prompting a large-scale law enforcement response and alarming Muslim communities across California.

San Diego Police Chief Scott Wahl said officers arrived within four minutes after receiving reports of an active shooter at the center. Police found three adults fatally shot outside the mosque, including a security guard whom officials credited with helping prevent additional casualties.

"The security guard played a pivotal role in keeping this from being much worse," Wahl told reporters at a news conference.

As officers searched the mosque and the surrounding area, additional reports of gunfire emerged several blocks away. Authorities later found the two suspects, aged 17 and 18, dead inside a vehicle from apparent self-inflicted gunshot wounds, police said.

Investigators are examining whether anti-Muslim extremism played a role in the attack. According to the Los Angeles Times, investigators discovered anti-Islamic writings, hate-related material and a suicide note referencing racial pride inside the suspects' vehicle. Authorities also believe that at least one of the firearms used may have belonged to a parent of one of the suspects.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation is assisting local police in the investigation, which authorities said is being considered a hate crime until proven otherwise due to the location of the attack.

The Islamic Center of San Diego, one of the region's largest mosques, also operates an accredited Islamic school. Police evacuated students and staff members during the incident, and community leaders later confirmed that no children were injured.

"This is obviously very alarming," said Deana Helmy, chair of the Islamic Shura Council of Southern California. "This is a house of worship. There's a school with children there who are trying to learn."

Taha Hassane, imam of the mosque, said the shooting had deeply shaken the local Muslim community.

"We have never experienced a tragedy like this before," Hassane said. "It is extremely outrageous to target a place of worship."

The attack occurred during a holy period in the Islamic calendar during which Muslims around the world prepare for the Hajj pilgrimage.

Civil rights groups, including the California chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, said they are working with mosques statewide to review security measures following the shooting.

California Governor Gavin Newsom and San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria said they had been briefed on the incident and thanked first responders for their efforts.

Authorities said the investigation remains ongoing as police seek to determine the circumstances and motives behind the attack.

Agencies contributed to this story.



Two women embrace following the shooting at the Islamic Center of San Diego in California on Monday. ZOE MEYERS / AFP

Household debt in US hits record $18.8 T

By BELINDA ROBINSON
in New York
belindarobinson@chinadailyusa.com

US household debt hit an all-time high of $18.8 trillion in the first quarter of the year, a report by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York found, as some Americans found it increasingly difficult to pay their bills and manage their debts.

The findings from the quarterly report on household debt and credit, released in mid-May by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York's Center for Microeconomic Data, found that Americans owed money on mortgages, credit cards, autos and student loans. The overall increase in debt was driven by higher balances on auto loans and mortgages.

"It's a struggle to keep our finances in check," Sarah, 39, a married mother-of-two from Brooklyn, New York, told China Daily. She admitted feeling "embarrassed" about how high her debt was.

"With our mortgage payment and what we owe on our credit cards, student loans and the cost of having two young kids under five, it's a lot. We feel like we're barely above water some months. My husband works full-time, I'm a freelancer. It gets me down, yes."

The New York Fed said that mortgage balances rose $21 billion in the first quarter and totaled $13.19 trillion at the end of March.

Credit card balances fell by $25 billion but stood at $1.25 trillion.

Auto loan balances increased by $18 billion to $1.69 trillion in the first quarter of the year.

Student loan balances were described as flat, decreasing by $6 billion to $1.66 trillion.

But 10 percent of student loan balances were delinquent, up from 9.6 percent in the fourth quarter of 2025.

"Student loan delinquencies are returning to pre-pandemic levels," Daniel Mangrum, a research economist at the New York Fed, said in a statement.

Despite this, the report found that, overall, Americans' credit was "stable".

However, it warned that those who will feel the most strain are the young and low-income households.

Carlos Savala, 71, originally from Costa Rica, lives in Manhattan, New York in subsidized housing. The retiree is fed up with the cost of everything, especially food, and gets free meals from a food pantry in midtown three days a week.

"Everything is expensive! It all costs more to me, especially food. I don't cook. This place helps me out on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. I'm very thankful to them for what they do," Savala said. "On the other days, when they're not open, I go to other places ... You've got to pull back on the nice things to afford the basics and your bills."

The rise in household debt came as inflation rose for a second consecutive month, data from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics shows.

The Consumer Price Index rose at a seasonally adjusted 0.6 percent in April, making the one-year pace 3.8 percent — its highest level since March 2023.

Rising gasoline and energy costs linked to tensions in the Middle East contributed to the increase in inflation, according to analysts.

The national average cost of a gallon of regular gas was $4.53, the highest level since 2022, the American Automobile Association said on Tuesday.

Arnold P., 55, an economist and financial advisor from Brooklyn, New York, withheld his surname to protect the anonymity of his clients. He advises clients on tight incomes to focus on paying the essentials first and then tackle their debt.

"I see a lot of people who have massive amounts of debt," he said. "It's usually a mortgage, or rent, credit card debt and college loans combined, which means they find that their debt-to-income ratio is too high, exceeding 40 to 50 percent. Some are in serious financial trouble. Many really need my help."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:47 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:47 PM

WORLD

Washington halts attack as talks gain pace

Standoff shifts toward diplomacy after Gulf push points to 'acceptable' offer

By **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong and **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE

US President Donald Trump said he was deferring a "planned" military attack on Iran, which was supposed to take place on Tuesday, following "serious negotiations" with Gulf states that would be "acceptable" to Washington and its allies.

In a social media post, Trump said he had been asked by the leaders of Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to "hold off" the strikes as "a deal will be made" that would be acceptable to the United States, its allies and "countries in the Middle East and beyond".

"This deal will include, importantly, no nuclear weapons for Iran!" he wrote on Monday, adding that he had instructed the defense secretary, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the US military "to be prepared to go forward with a full, large-scale assault of Iran, on a moment's notice, in the event that an acceptable deal is not reached".

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said a dialogue "does not mean surrender".

Iran enters into dialogue "with dignity, authority, and the preservation of the nation's rights", he said on X, adding that under no circumstances will Tehran retreat from the legal rights of the people and the country.

"We will serve the people with logic and with all our might, to the end, and safeguard the interests and honor of Iran," he said.

Major General Ali Abdollahi, commander of Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, warned the US and its allies not to repeat a "strategic mistake" and miscalculation against Iran, as a renewed act of aggression would be met with a "swift, decisive, powerful and extensive" response.

The US and Iran have been threatening each other as they tussle with one another over sticking points in a stalled ceasefire deal and control over the Strait of Hormuz.

Meanwhile, US Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer announced on X that Senate Democrats would force an eighth vote on a War Powers Resolution this week, which aims to curtail the president's capacity to wage war against Iran.

Schumer called for Republican support for the resolution and to "end the war (and) get our troops out of harm's way".

Trump's approval rating has dipped to a record low amid the war against Tehran, according to a New York Times/Siena poll published on Monday.

Overall, 64 percent of respondents said it was wrong for the US to go to war with Iran, while 30 percent said it was the right decision. The majority of Republicans polled thought it was the right decision, while 73 percent of independents considered it as the incorrect decision.

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi told the Parliament's national security commission that Iran is not going to give up on its right to enrich uranium, Al Jazeera reported. The US has insisted that Iran must stop enriching uranium for the next two decades.

Blockade of strait

Iran has also asked the US to end its blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, but the US has said that Iran must first reopen the strait before it will do so.

Farhan Haq, deputy spokesman for the United Nations secretary-general, had earlier said the UN does not want any particular entity to restrict access to the strategic waterway.

"Ultimately, for us, we want to make sure that there's no constraint to freedom of navigation on the high seas and on the Strait of Hormuz," he said.

Rasha Al Joundy, a senior researcher at the Dubai Public Policy Research Centre, told China Daily that it is "obvious" that the US does not want to restart the war, especially if there is a possibility for a deal with Iran.

"Trump has a very difficult situation. If he starts the war again, it would mean a more dangerous one, in terms of targets and reactions," she said. "Then, in terms of the global economy, he needs this deal to come through and to be valid."

Contact the writers at jan@chinadailyapac.com

Kicking up dust



A masked cyclist rides through a dust-choked street during a severe sandstorm in Najaf, Iraq, on Monday, as sweeping clouds of dust triggered more than 800 suffocation cases across the country. Dust storms are common in Iraq, often triggered by desertification, sparse vegetation cover and prolonged droughts. ANMAR KHALIL / AP

China's multilateral approach commended at forum

By **YANG HAN** in Hong Kong
kelly@chinadailyapac.com

China's initiatives to promote multilateral cooperation and governance contribute to global peace and development toward a shared future, experts said at a forum in Hong Kong on Tuesday.

"It is no doubt that we are living in a world where no single power can resolve all problems and that unilateralism is not an answer," said Irina Bokova, former director-general of UNESCO and a senior adviser to the Board of Directors of the Europe-Asia Center.

In her special address at the 2026 Hong Kong Forum on Cooperation and Development, Bokova said the China-proposed Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative, Global Civilization Initiative and Global Governance Initiative support multilateralism, a concept at the core of the United Nations Charter.

Romano Prodi, former prime minister of Italy and former president of the European Commission, said via video, "Peace must be built step-by-step from dialogue, through mutual respect and through the willingness to listen."

With Europe and China both playing crucial roles on the global stage, Prodi said he hopes the two sides will continue to cooperate to create a peaceful environment for the world.

In a keynote address, Ivan Polyakov, vice-president of the Russian International Affairs Council, said that multilateralism is of utmost importance for creating a new and sustainable information space. Ties between media networks lie in the existence of common channels, exchange and shared values, he said.

Polyakov, also chairman of TV BRICS, said the multilingual international platform has united more than 100 media outlets worldwide, with the materials distributed to about 80 countries.

Josef Gregory Mahoney, a professor of politics and international relations at East China Normal University in Shanghai, highlighted the significance of China's new internationalism in global affairs, saying it stands in sharp contrast to the binary, us-versus-them mindset of certain countries.

> "It is no doubt that we are living in a world where no single power can resolve all problems and that unilateralism is not an answer."
>
> **Irina Bokova,** former UNESCO director-general

China's initiatives have always aimed for a shared future for humanity and the actualization of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, he said.

Cheung Kwok-kwan, deputy secretary for justice of the government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, said the city can also contribute to the building of a community with a shared future for humanity under "one country, two systems".

For example, he said the launch of the International Organization for Mediation in Hong Kong last year is important for improving global governance and promoting world peace and stability, with the city ranking second-most preferred seat of arbitration globally in the 2025 International Arbitration Survey.

Echoing the view, Chow Man-kong, a professor of practice in the Department of Data Science at City University of Hong Kong, said he believes the city will be able to demonstrate to the world its strength and capabilities as an international legal and dispute-resolution hub.

"It will further promote the vision of win-win cooperation and shared development within the international community," said Chow, who is also chairman of the Greater Bay Area Development Foundation.

Themed "Cooperation and Development: Advancing the Building of a Community with a Shared Future for Humanity", the forum was organized by the Academy of Contemporary China and World Studies, Peace Research Institute Hong Kong, and China-Europe-America Global Initiative, bringing together more than 100 participants from nearly 10 countries.

Debris of disaster



Firefighters stand beside the rubble of a collapsed apartment building from the Wilhelmian era (1888-1918) in Goerlitz, Germany, on Monday, as rescue crews searched for three missing residents. Police said a gas explosion may have caused the collapse. PAUL GLASER / DPA

G7 finance chiefs meet in Paris to tackle energy crisis

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

Finance ministers and central bank governors from Canada, the European Union, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States met for a second day of talks in Paris on Tuesday, seeking solutions to high energy prices caused by the Iran war.

The G7 finance ministers' meeting came a year on from Washington's imposition of tariffs on Western allies and in the wake of an economic crisis of its making, with attendees saying they hoped the US would realize multilateralism was the way forward.

Roland Lescure, France's finance minister, told The New York Times that negotiations to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, which has been effectively closed because of the conflict, clearly need international cooperation.

"When we saw that, we felt that more than ever the G7 had a role to play, and that engaging in conversations, multilateral if possible, was the right way of addressing this," he said.

As he arrived for the talks, he added, "We're going to show that multilateralism is useful and that it works."

Lescure acknowledged on Tuesday that two days of talks were "sometimes difficult", even as the group agreed a statement committing to multilateral cooperation in combating growing economic risks.

"We have had frank, sometimes difficult, direct discussions to find long-term and short-term solutions to major global economic challenges in order to guarantee economic stability," he said after a meeting of the finance ministers, including US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent.

However, the final communique of the G7 ministers reaffirmed "our commitment to multilateral cooperation in addressing risks to the global economy".

Bessent led the US delegation at the talks, which included regular G7 members as well as Brazil, India, Kenya, Qatar, South Korea, Syria, the United Arab Emirates and Ukraine.

The meeting came in the wake of the International Monetary Fund warning that damage to global oil markets caused by the blockage of the Strait of Hormuz could slow growth, fuel inflation and cause a global recession.

At Monday's session, the ministers highlighted growing concern about a sell-off of bonds and public debt for fear of impending inflation caused by the war.

Joachim Nagel, the head of Germany's central bank, told Reuters that policymakers want to calm markets and give them positive momentum.

The finance ministers also planned to use the gathering to coordinate critical raw material supplies.

However, Tuesday's session began with the EU criticizing the US' new 30-day extension of its sanctions waiver, which allows purchases of Russian seaborne oil.

Washington said the move was aimed at lowering energy prices.

AFP contributed to this story.

Cuba warns US military action would cause 'bloodbath'

HAVANA — Cuba's President Miguel Diaz-Canel said on Monday that any US military action against Cuba would lead to a "bloodbath" with incalculable consequences for regional peace and stability.

"The threats of military aggression against Cuba by the world's most powerful country are well known," Diaz-Canel wrote on X. "Such threats already constitute an international crime."

Cuba "does not represent a threat, nor does it have aggressive plans or intentions against any country", he added.

Cuba is already suffering a "multidimensional aggression" by the United States and has the "absolute and legitimate right" to defend itself from any military action, he said.

The comments came after US outlet Axios reported on Sunday that Cuba had acquired more than 300 military drones and had discussed plans to use them to attack US targets, citing classified intelligence.

Havana said Washington was fabricating a case to justify potential military intervention.

Tensions between the two countries have risen sharply in recent days. The US government imposed sanctions on 11 Cuban officials on Monday, including the country's communications minister and several military leaders, and its main intelligence agency.

Washington had earlier imposed an oil blockade on Havana by threatening sanctions on countries supplying it with fuel.

Cuba has received no oil shipments since a Russian tanker delivered around 700,000 barrels — about two weeks' worth for the island country of 10 million people — in late March.

Diaz-Canel said on Monday that the US executive order that "pursues and threatens" third parties who wish to sell fuel to Cuba was "immoral, illegal and criminal".

Also on Monday, a ship laden with humanitarian aid from Mexico and Uruguay arrived in Havana to help ease the spiraling crises.

The ship, which departed from a Mexican port, includes personal hygiene items and 1,700 tons of grains, powdered milk and other food items, according to Cuban state media.

Cuba's food industry minister, Alberto Lopez Diaz, said the items arrive "at a time of great economic hardship".

AGENCIES—XINHUA



A ship laden with humanitarian aid from Mexico and Uruguay arrives in Havana, Cuba, on Monday. XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:47 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:47 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

China-Russia ties benefit both sides, and are stabilizing force in a turbulent world

Russian President Vladimir Putin's state visit to China on Tuesday and Wednesday carries practical significance for the future development of bilateral ties and for global stability.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of China-Russia strategic partnership of coordination, the 25th anniversary of the signing of the China-Russia Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation and the year to kick-start events of the China-Russia Years of Education. The steady advancement of relations between the two nations demonstrates the significance of the high-level exchanges between Beijing and Moscow.

In a video address delivered on Tuesday before his visit to China, Putin noted that "regular mutual visits and Russia-China top-level talks are an important and integral part of our joint efforts to promote the entire range of relations between our two countries and unlock their truly limitless potential".

Under the strategic guidance of head-of-state diplomacy, bilateral ties have maintained stability, continuously deepening practical cooperation across different sectors.

In the process, the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era has achieved sustained development, presenting itself as a reference for a new type of major-country relationship featuring non-alliance, non-confrontation and non-targeting of third parties.

Pragmatic cooperation remains one of the most dynamic pillars of bilateral relations. In recent years, China-Russia trade has maintained robust momentum despite a complex external environment. The structure of bilateral trade is also undergoing continuous optimization, with cooperation extending beyond traditional energy and raw materials to emerging sectors.

The political mutual trust and economic cooperation between the two neighbors reinforce one another in a virtuous cycle. The structural complementarity of the two economies is increasingly evident and is being effectively translated into tangible benefits for both peoples.

The people-to-people dimension of bilateral cooperation is also flourishing. Cultural exchanges between the two peoples have become increasingly vibrant, thanks to a series of new policies facilitating communication.

Chinese tourists are visiting Russia in growing numbers, while more Russian people are traveling to China for sightseeing, business and cultural exchanges. Such interactions further strengthen the social foundation of bilateral friendship and inject new vitality into the long-term development of the relationship.

Beyond bilateral cooperation, China and Russia maintain close coordination on international and regional affairs. The two countries share similar or convergent positions on many major global issues, firmly supporting the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, advocating a multipolar world order and promoting greater democracy in international relations. Within multilateral mechanisms such as BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, China and Russia work closely together to defend multilateralism, oppose unilateral actions and hegemonic practices, and promote greater representation for developing countries in global governance.

Against the backdrop of rising protectionism, unilateralism and geopolitical fragmentation, the China-Russia relationship serves as a stabilizing force in a turbulent world.

During Putin's visit, the two heads of state will exchange views on bilateral cooperation in various fields and on international and regional issues of mutual interest. As Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said, the two sides will take the opportunity of Putin's visit to continue deepening and elevating relations, so as to inject more stability and positive energy to the world.

The China-Russia relationship reflects the sovereign choices of two independent nations pursuing development, security and mutually beneficial cooperation based on their own national interests and the broader interests of regional and global stability.

As the two countries commemorate important historical milestones in bilateral ties, it is anticipated that Putin's visit will further deepen strategic coordination, expand practical cooperation and inject greater certainty and positive energy into a volatile world.

WHA's rejection of Taiwan proposal justified

No matter what the Democratic Progressive Party authorities of Taiwan say or do to whitewash their secessionist scheme, it does not change the fact that Taiwan is part of China, and the trend toward China's national reunification is irresistible.

The international community has consistently said no to any notion of "Taiwan independence". The latest decision by the 79th World Health Assembly to reject the proposal for the Chinese island to participate in its plenary session in Geneva as an observer underscores this.

For the 10th consecutive year the WHA has upheld the one-China principle, as enshrined in United Nations resolutions and other instruments of international law, by denying Taiwan's participation. This consistent stance of the WHA demonstrates the widespread recognition of China's sovereignty over the island and the importance of adhering to international law.

The refusal to entertain proposals that suggest Taiwan holds a status implying "statehood" is a testament to the organization's respect for China's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The DPP's separatist stance has eroded the political foundation necessary for Taiwan's participation in international organizations such as the WHA as an observer. Its attempts to "internationalize" the Taiwan question by pushing for the island's participation in global forums under the guise of being an "independent nation" have failed to gain traction. The few parties that support this are simply using the island as a card to serve their own narrow interests. "China's Taiwan region, unless given approval by the central government of China, has no basis, reason or right to participate in the WHA," a spokesperson for the Chinese Foreign Ministry said on Monday.

The rejection of Taiwan's participation in the WHA shows that the majority of the international community recognizes and upholds the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2758 and WHA Resolution 25.1, which affirm the government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legal government representing the whole of China.

The special arrangement allowing Taiwan to participate in WHA activities as an observer under the name "Chinese Taipei" was made on the basis of the 1992 Consensus, which embodies the one-China principle. This policy was upheld by the Ma Ying-jeou authorities from 2009 to 2016.

This political foundation facilitated Taiwan's participation in international organizations in a reasonable and appropriate manner, while extensive cross-Strait exchanges and cooperation conducted in various fields enhanced the well-being of residents on both sides.

Claims that Taiwan's exclusion from the WHA creates "gaps" in global health security are politically motivated falsehoods. Under the one-China principle, Beijing has made arrangements for Taiwan's participation in global health affairs. Health experts from Taiwan can attend the technical meetings of the World Health Organization, and there are mechanisms for information exchange under the International Health Regulations.

In the past year alone, 18 medical and health experts from Taiwan have participated in WHO technical activities, covering critical areas such as immunization strategy, vaccine development, mental health, and digital health. This demonstrates the central government's commitment to addressing the health concerns of Taiwan compatriots and ensuring their well-being.

Taiwan enjoys unimpeded and full-fledged information exchange mechanisms with the WHO and countries worldwide. This ensures that Taiwan can promptly access and report information related to health emergencies, allowing it to remain integrated in global health efforts.

Additionally, the two sides across the Taiwan Strait have established information-sharing mechanisms for infectious disease outbreaks and have held events such as the Hospital CEO Forum. The record shows that the central government cares deeply about the health and welfare of Taiwan residents and is prepared to do everything possible for their benefit.

If the DPP authorities want to return to the WHA, they must adhere to the 1992 Consensus and stop the reckless push for "Taiwan independence". The DPP authorities' current approach of seeking to tie their political goal to the well-being of Taiwan residents only leads to international isolation.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

Tokyo's draft defense white paper self-serving melodrama

Japan has always had a flair for melodrama. The draft of Tokyo's 2026 defense white paper, released this week, reads like a screenplay in which China looms in every Pacific wave and cloud.

The paper warns of China's "increasing military activities" and cites the simultaneous deployment of two Chinese aircraft carriers in the Pacific as though Beijing had parked them beside Tokyo Disneyland.

What Japan tries to portray as "menacing behavior" is nothing more than routine military exercises and legitimate maritime rights-protection operations carried out by China in proper sea areas.

But in Tokyo today fear is the cryptocurrency of choice. And no country in the region has learned to monetize fear more elegantly than modern Japan.

The right-wing forces in Japan have spent years polishing the "China threat" narrative the way a pottery master perfects the glazing on a cup: meticulously, obsessively and with spiritual devotion.

Every law enforcement patrol of China in its own waters becomes a "provocation". Every naval exercise on the high seas becomes an existential "threat". The result is a national atmosphere in which Japan's military expansion is presented as a "moral" necessity.

The irony, of course, is thick enough to spread on toast.

Japan — the nation whose Imperial Army once rampaged across the Asia-Pacific — now speaks with grave "concern" about regional militarization while steadily loosening the restraints of its own pacifist Constitution. Over the past decade, Tokyo has transformed its defense posture at breathtaking speed: bigger military budgets, missile exports, long-range strike capabilities, aircraft-carrier conversions, hypersonic weapons programs, stockpiles of nuclear materials.

Japanese leaders insist this build-up is "exclusively defensive". Yet, "defense" increasingly appears to involve aircraft carriers, offensive missile systems and regional military integration with the United States' geopolitical game. The language is technocratic, but the trajectory is unmistakable: Postwar restraint is quietly giving way to "normalized" remilitarization.

The US has long encouraged Japan to "do more" militarily in the region. Tokyo's draft defense white paper fits neatly into that script. China becomes the indispensable "villain" needed to justify Japan's moves.

But the public is not entirely convinced. Japan's military expansion has repeatedly triggered domestic unease and protests. The ghosts of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are not abstractions in Japan; they are family memories.

There is another uncomfortable truth buried beneath the draft defense white paper's alarmism: The international community sees very clearly that the current tension in Japan-China relations is caused by Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's dangerous and erroneous remarks on the Taiwan question made last November during a Diet session. The Japanese government's subsequent attempts to distort facts and pose as the victim have truly made it a disgrace in the eyes of other nations.

Japan condemns regional tensions while actively participating in increasingly assertive security arrangements with the US and the Philippines, with China as the intended target. It issues warnings about instability, even as its own policies risk accelerating an arms race across East Asia. It calls for peace, yet its politicians continue to pay tribute or offer sacrifices at the Yasukuni Shrine, where convicted World War II war criminals from Japan are openly honored. This is the geopolitical equivalent of throwing gasoline near a bonfire while lecturing others about fire safety.

The real danger is the emotional climate the Takaichi government is trying to create. Asia does not need another century organized around paranoia and military blocs. It certainly does not need Japan — a nation that inflicted one of the world's most painful wartime histories — edging toward remilitarization under the banner of "defense".

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Education must adapt to AI-led transformation

Editor's note: *The rapid rise of artificial intelligence has deeply affected the education system, the labor market and the training of talent. Redstar News spoke to Han Xibin, a senior fellow at the China Association for Educational Technology, on how AI education needs to consider the broader context of industrial change and economic restructuring. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

China is actively promoting AI education, but it emphasizes the need to proceed "prudently". For younger children, the use and study of AI should take place under the guidance of teachers and parents.

At the early stage, the goal is primarily to stimulate the curiosity and interest of the student. More structured and knowledge-based learning is introduced in high school, where education focuses on developing the ability to collaborate effectively with AI systems, alongside strengthening critical thinking and creativity.

One growing area of attention is the integration of science education with general AI literacy. Earlier phases of educational digitalization mainly leveraged technology to enhance students' learning and communication abilities. The current AI revolution, however, is reshaping the underlying logic of education itself. Students must be trained to use AI as naturally and easily as they use pen and paper.

Education has two core functions. One is to nurture children's intellectual and emotional development and support their healthy growth. The other is to prepare young people to meet the needs of society.

By the university stage, however, education must also address the employability of the student. In this sense, AI is less capable in areas related to the humanities and human development, and works more effectively in disseminating knowledge.

Education, however, is more like agriculture than industry. Agriculture depends on the right environment, such as temperature, sunshine and water. If universities focus only on delivering knowledge, AI might indeed do that more efficiently. But universities also bear the greater responsibility of cultivating top-tier talent. That requires providing students with personalized environments and long-term support that machines alone cannot offer.

From a broader perspective, AI has already become an unavoidable force shaping society. Its influence first emerged in the economy and industry, and is now profoundly transforming the labor market. On the one hand, major internet companies are streamlining their workforces. On the other, the rise of the one-person company model is accelerating. Both trends reflect how AI is reshaping work structures and redefining job requirements.

Traditionally, companies relied on standardized job systems built around fixed responsibilities assigned to individuals because such structures were easier to manage and evaluate. AI has disrupted this model by breaking jobs down into specific tasks.

At the same time, new forms of employment are emerging. These new roles often require hybrid skill sets such as combining technical expertise, management capabilities and proficiency in using AI tools.

Non-standardized jobs are generally more difficult to replace than standardized ones. After training AI systems to handle repetitive tasks, many companies find that replacing more flexible and complex work is often too costly or impractical given current application limits.

Whether education systems can keep pace with such rapid and complex transformations remains an open and deeply important question. Education, therefore, must be examined within the broader context of industrial change and economic restructuring.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:47 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:47 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

DIMITRI DE BOER

Code green

China's environmental codification provides a foundation for its continued green development



China passed the Ecological and Environmental Code in March, covering climate action, nature protection and pollution control. It lays a strong legal foundation for China's push toward green and low-carbon development. This is not just good for the environment; it's smart governance.

With the global supply of fossil fuels in disarray, China's rapid advances in the deployment of renewable energy are already helping shield the country from the worst shocks. The share of clean energy in China and the sector's contribution to economic growth have been rising consistently in recent years. Electric cars and scooters now dominate the streets, and are rapidly incorporating cutting-edge features such as self-driving technology. Modern public transport systems are also being rolled out at a rapid pace, reducing the reliance on personal vehicles. By now, the share of oil and gas in China's primary energy supply is substantially lower than that in the United States and the European Union.

China is proving to the world what environmental advocates have been saying for decades: Green and low-carbon development can be firmly intertwined with economic growth, innovation, energy independence, improvements in living standards and long-term sustainability.

China's adoption of the Ecological and Environmental Code provides a solid legal basis upon which it will continue on its green development path, no matter the external circumstances. It mandates the Chinese government to "actively participate in and play a leading role in global climate governance". This is significant, especially in the face of certain other major economies retreating from multilateralism and global environmental governance. The code also provides a much-needed legal basis for China's national carbon market, which is the largest in the world.

The code gives greater certainty to China's implementation of international conventions on climate change, biodiversity and desertification, by legally mandating the government to fulfill its obligations under international treaties. And it will promote new conventions, such as the one on plastics which is currently being negotiated, and the newly ratified treaty to protect the high seas, known as the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Agreement. China's role is indispensable in addressing the rapid loss of fish in the oceans.



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

I've lived in China for almost 25 years, and personally experienced the remarkable improvements in environmental quality.

The most obvious change has been the reduction in air pollution. In late 2013, the government started to disclose real-time air quality data. Back then, Beijing's sky would regularly turn gray and hazy, as the air quality index maxed out at 500. This went viral on newly available social media, sparking a national public outcry, which greatly strengthened the government's resolve to tackle the problem. An intense campaign followed, and the average annual PM2.5 density dropped from 89.5 micrograms per cubic meter in 2013 to 58 mcg/cu m in 2017, and further to 27 mcg/cu m in 2025.

Similarly, remarkable improvements have been made in surface water quality, afforestation, biodiversity conservation, waste management and more. Tangible progress is being made in the building of a "Beautiful China". Although there are still instances of pollution and much more work needs to be done, most of the time we can see blue skies and breathe fresh air.

And then there is the energy transition. Solar and wind are being deployed at truly astonishing rates. In 2025, China's clean energy electricity generation from hydro, nuclear, wind, solar and other sources reached 4.25 trillion kilowatt-hours, a year-on-year increase of 14.4 percent. To better manage the variable output of these new power sources, the deployment of grid-level energy storage is now a top priority. In the coming years, technological improvements and economies of scale are also expected to result in a rapid lowering of the cost of battery storage.

This combination of affordable renewables and power storage is poised to profoundly change the world. In the near future, building a brand new solar or wind power plant with storage capacity is going to be cheaper than running an existing coal-fired power plant. At that point, a large number of fossil fuel projects will become loss-making assets.

With all the upheaval in global energy markets, energy security has risen to the top of national priorities.

Structural dependence on fossil fuels is leaving societies and economies exposed to shocks that drive insecurity, higher costs and greater fragility. That dependence can be cut by accelerating the shift to clean, renewable and resilient energy systems.

Oil and gas markets are volatile, politicized and conflict-prone. Building more fossil fuel infrastructure perpetuates external dependence and carries increasing financial risk, on top of aggravating the climate disaster.

To my surprise, some in the international community argue that it would be risky for their economies to be dependent on imported solar panels, wind turbines or batteries. The current situation is a perfect illustration of how this argument doesn't make sense. Supply disruptions of oil and gas are leading to very real economic disruptions, especially in developing economies from Southeast Asia to Africa. High oil and gas prices are also driving up energy bills in the US and Europe.

By contrast, renewables, once installed, keep producing power at almost no cost, helping to shield against these impacts. Plainly put, a disruption in the supply of oil and gas risks grinding economies to a halt, whereas a shortage of solar panels only risks causing economies to miss their climate targets.

Renewables are also much more dependable in a situation of conflict. Fossil and nuclear power plants are large facilities, which makes them vulnerable to attacks. Nuclear is a very scary source of power in a conflict situation, given that damage to a facility could lead to a nuclear disaster with lasting regional consequences.

China's progress in green technologies has long been underestimated by policymakers and incumbent industries in advanced economies. However, it can no longer be ignored. Now is the time to take a clear-eyed view of these successes, and build upon China's experience.

Economies around the world, including developing and emerging ones, have the potential to play a greater role in rapidly growing global green tech supply chains. By working with China, some have the opportunity to leapfrog past fossil fuels, directly into resilient low-carbon economies.

There is much room for cooperation.

The author is the chief representative for China at ClientEarth, and the special advisor to the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

HU JUN

Jointly realizing a clean and beautiful world

China's vision of an ecological civilization provides thought leadership and practical solutions for global climate governance



Planet Earth is under strain from a "triple crisis" of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. However, rising unilateralism and protectionism have led to faltering multilateral cooperation, posing severe challenges to global environmental governance.

In response to the call for advancing sustainability worldwide, China has presented itself not only as a participant but also as a key contributor to global environmental governance guided by Xi Jinping Thought on Ecological Civilization.

Climate action has been integrated into China's broader ecological strategy and economic planning, as is concisely illustrated by the concept of "lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets". Under the overarching targets set for achieving carbon peaking before 2030 and carbon neutrality before 2060, China emphasizes both mitigation and adaptation, aiming to build a climate-resilient society, while coordinating efforts to cut carbon emissions, reduce pollution, pursue green development and boost economic growth.

As China accelerates its green transition, it has built the world's largest renewable energy system and the most complete new energy industrial chain. This has pushed the global cost of wind and solar power down by more than 60 percent and 80 percent, respectively, over the past decade. More than half of the world's electric vehicles are on Chinese roads, and the country accounts for roughly one-fourth of the world's newly added green space through afforestation. Together, these form a Chinese solution to climate change.



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

Against the backdrop of a turbulent international landscape, global climate governance is at a critical crossroads. China continues to back the multilateral framework centered on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement.

In September 2025, President Xi Jinping announced China's updated Nationally Determined Contributions climate pledge, including the first-ever absolute, economy-wide emissions reduction target covering all greenhouse gases. The renewed ambition signals China's commitment to addressing climate change in collaboration with other countries, providing the much-needed predictability amid geopolitical uncertainty.

Xi Jinping Thought on Ecological Civilization also provides theoretical contributions and practical leadership and has opened new avenues for global dialogue on environmental governance. International interest has shifted from observing China's progress to exploring the methodology and worldview behind it.

Some scholars have argued that President Xi's insight of treating lucid waters and lush mountains as "invaluable assets" is a reconceptualization of the relationship between economic growth and environmental protection. They are increasingly interested in how such ideas are translated into actionable, measurable and transferable policies. China's approaches are gaining attention as a development paradigm with universal value, particularly among other countries in the Global South seeking practical governance experience.

To that end, Chinese institutions have stepped up theoretical research on Xi Jinping Thought on Ecological Civilization and have summarized China's ecological conservation approaches and local best practices. A think tank report, titled "Lucid Waters and Lush Mountains for Beautiful China and World: China's Ecological Civilization Concept and Practice, and How They Inspire the World", highlights how environmental protection has fostered new drivers and advantages for development.

Eco-agriculture, forestry and ecotourism have emerged as new pathways to build green brands, boost product value and create opportunities to "turn green into gold".

By 2024, China had certified 78,000 green, organic, famous, special, high-quality, new and geographically indicated agricultural products, and identified 1,399 key rural tourism villages. By 2025, 19 villages, including Yucun in Zhejiang province, Xidi in Anhui province and Jingzhu village in Chongqing municipality, have been recognized as "Best Tourism Villages" by the UN Tourism. Such efforts have also contributed to broader rural revitalization.

Xi Jinping Thought on Ecological Civilization also promotes international cooperation and supports sustainability in other Global South countries. Through the Belt and Road Initiative and South-South cooperation, China's ecological conservation theories and practices have helped produce tangible benefits in multiple countries.

The Mombasa-Nairobi Railway in Kenya has corridors for wildlife to pass through, offering a visible example of how infrastructure development and conservation can go hand-in-hand. Solar photovoltaic projects in Mongolia can expand energy access while improving air quality. The Great Green Wall initiative along the southern edge of the Sahara has benefited from China's experience in combating desertification. The China-Africa Green Technology Park has emerged as a demonstration model, bolstering confidence in green development across the continent. At Lake Victoria in East Africa, Chinese expertise has been used to strengthen water management. Taken together, these projects illustrate how China's environmental policies and experiences are contributing to global green development.

With remarkable achievements in ecological conservation and green transition, China has become a source of practical solutions for advancing global sustainability.

Looking ahead, global environmental governance remains a formidable challenge. Guided by Xi Jinping Thought on Ecological Civilization and upholding multilateralism, China will continue to support and strengthen global environmental governance, emphasizing open international cooperation, practical approaches and compelling narratives. The aim is to turn shared aspirations into sustained, pragmatic collaboration to build a prosperous, clean and beautiful world.

The author is the director of the Research Center for Xi Jinping Thought on Ecological Civilization. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:47 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:47 PM

NATURAL FRONTIERS

Editor's note: *China Daily is publishing a series of stories highlighting China's efforts to understand, protect, and sustainably utilize natural resources across different fields and regions in support of national development. In this first installment, we present five exemplary individuals who have been honored as "Most Beautiful Natural Guardians" by the Ministry of Natural Resources for their outstanding contributions.*

Surveyor scales gargantuan heights to secure crucial resource statistics

By YANG ZEKUN
yangzekun@chinadaily.com.cn

At 7,500 meters on the slopes of Mount Qomolangma, Ren Xiubo made a choice that would define his 27-year career: he removed his thermal gloves. Ignoring a direct order to descend during a sweeping blizzard, the then-25-year-old surveyor worked bare-handed for 10 minutes in sub-zero winds to secure a critical gravity measurement. It is a moment of "instinctive" duty that underscores the extreme physical lengths China's surveying teams go to in order to provide the foundation for the nation's economic and ecological maps.

For Ren, a member of the First Geodetic Surveying Brigade of the Ministry of Natural Resources, surveying Mount Qomolangma, also known as Mount Everest and the world's highest peak, was the rarest of opportunities.

"I did not know whether I would ever have the chance to reach that height again," Ren said. "At that moment, I had only one thought: I had to get the data."

By the time the measurement was completed, his hands had lost all feeling. During the descent, he repeatedly struck them against an ice axe to stimulate the nerves. Only after several hours did sensation slowly return.

That day, Ren and his teammates pushed China's gravity measurement and satellite positioning work on Qomolangma to 7,790 meters, a record at the time.

Now a senior engineer, Ren does not describe the decision as heroic. To him, it was simply what the mission required.

"It was instinct, a natural reaction," he said. "It is also the kind of commitment rooted in the bones of our surveying team."

Born in 1979 in Yulin, Shaanxi province, Ren has spent much of his 27-year career in mountains, deserts, plateaus and remote areas. He has taken part in China's two Qomolangma elevation measurement missions, in 2005 and 2020, and more than 30 major national projects, including the national highway network, post-Wenchuan earthquake reconstruction and the West-East Gas Pipeline project.

His brigade has long been at the forefront of China's surveying work.



Ren Xiubo (right) displays a flag signed by his teammates during the geodetic measurement of Mount Qomolangma in 2005 at an altitude of 7,790 meters. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



The members of the 2020 Mount Qomolangma measurement team take a group photo after the descent to base camp at 5,200 meters at the end of the successful mission on May 28, 2020. JIGME DORJI / XINHUA

In 2015, President Xi Jinping sent a letter to its veteran Party members and former members, encouraging them to remain true to their mission and continue measuring the country's mountains and rivers with precision.

"What supports us in harsh field conditions is the original mission of surveying for the country," Ren said. "It is also the surveying spirit of loving the motherland and the profession, working hard and making selfless contributions."

To many people, surveying may seem far removed from daily life. Ren sees it differently.

"If national economic development is like constructing a building, surveying is the foundation and framework," he said.

Maps, navigation, location services, intelligent driving, food delivery, ride-hailing and express logistics all rely on basic surveying data. Such data also supports natural resource management, territorial spatial planning, major engineering projects, disaster relief and ecological protection.

"Surveying is a foundational undertaking for economic development, national defense and social progress," Ren said.

In 2005, Ren was still a young team member. He said he was "following the older generation", obeying commands, overcoming altitude sickness and completing his assigned tasks.

During that mission, he worked for more than 40 consecutive days in areas above 6,500 meters. At the 6,500-meter camp, strong ultraviolet rays darkened and cracked his face, while fierce winds cut into his skin day after day. At the 7,028-meter camp, on the eve of a summit measurement attempt, he solemnly wrote his application to join the Communist Party of China.

"I had prepared for everything, including the worst," he said. "Even if I had to leave my life on Qomolangma, I had to complete the surveying mission."

On May 22, 2005, the mountaineering survey team successfully reached the summit and completed the measurement mission. China later announced the rock-surface elevation of Qomolangma as 8,844.43 meters.

Ren did not reach the summit that year. Some later asked whether he felt regret.

"Perhaps there was regret," he said. "But surveying is our job, and completing the mission always comes first."

Fifteen years later, in 2020, Ren returned to Qomolangma. This time, he took on coordination, publicity and support work for the summit measurement mission, while passing on practical experience to younger colleagues.

Before the mission, Ren repeatedly reviewed possible emergencies, from equipment operation and resistance to extreme cold to contingency plans for bad weather after the summit team reached the peak.

"We had to anticipate every difficulty we could think of," he said. "Only then could we do our best to ensure the mission was foolproof."

The 2020 mission proved far more difficult than expected. The first summit attempt was halted near the North Col ice wall above 7,000 meters because of deep snow, strong winds and avalanche risks. A second attempt was forced back by a storm, leaving less than a week of suitable climbing time.

Ren said the team encouraged one another and kept refining the plan. On May 27, the summit team successfully reached the peak and completed the measurement. Coincidentally, the date was also the day China's older generation of surveyors had reached the summit in 1975.

But reaching the summit was only the first step. The summit marker had to be set up three times before the Beidou navigation satellite system receiver began working properly. The snow-depth radar also had signal problems, which the team members solved on site.

Only after two and a half hours of summit operations, and another 36 hours of waiting to confirm the data was valid, did Ren and his teammates feel relieved.

Beyond Qomolangma, Ren has also witnessed the growing role of surveying in emergency response and ecological protection.

In 2015, after a major landslide struck Shanyang county in Shaanxi, members of his brigade stayed in the core danger zone despite the risk of secondary landslides. Their monitoring data helped protect rescuers and provided support for scientific disaster relief.

The same year, the brigade set up an emergency surveying center focusing on drones, aerial remote sensing, image processing and 3D modeling. Ren helped build the team, train operators, produce orthophoto maps and formulate emergency response plans.

Ren said modern surveying must keep pace with new technologies such as Beidou navigation, satellite remote sensing and real-scene 3D modeling.

Ren is committed to working on new basic surveying, the construction of a real-scene 3D China and the building of spatiotemporal information databases, providing accurate support for natural resource monitoring, ecological change detection and territorial spatial planning.

"I will continue to visit schools, enterprises, institutions and communities," he said. "I want to share the stories of surveying for the country and plant the seed of responsibility for protecting nature."

'Land guardian' brings prosperity to village

Effective planning helps vitalize once-impoverished countryside

By LI MENGHAN
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn





Top: Wang Weimin transplants rice seedlings at a paddy field in Anji. **Above:** Wang discusses the landscape with colleagues in Anji. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

In the 15 years since Gaoyu village launched a pilot program to consolidate its fragmented "postage-stamp" plots into contiguous farmland, its collective economy has surged more than 80-fold, reaching 8.32 million yuan ($1.15 million) last year. This transformation, led by veteran land manager Wang Weimin, has turned a once-impoverished mountain community into a national model for China's rural vitalization and land-use efficiency.

Wang, deputy director of the natural resources and planning bureau in Anji county, prefers to call himself a "land guardian", a title rooted in his childhood and symbolic of his commitment over the past three decades.

"I grew up in the mountainous region of Anji, where we relied on ration coupons for essentials like rice and flour," the 54-year-old said. "Having experienced famine, my ancestors instilled in my mother a deep appreciation for food, which she passed on to me from a young age. One of her sayings that has left a lasting impression on me is: 'Even if rice falls to the ground, you should still eat it.'"

In Wang's memory, reaching the provincial capital Hangzhou meant traversing mountains, and most children studied hard for one reason: to leave. However, after graduating in land management in 1994, Wang decided to stay, driven by a deep bond with his homeland and a sense of duty to its fields.

To gain a deeper understanding of the local farmland, Wang set foot in every village and discovered that the primary problem was the fragmentation of plots, which resulted in low mechanization, poor returns and diminished motivation among farmers to cultivate the land. Rapid urbanization and economic development further exacerbated the situation, with large areas of high-quality farmland being built upon.

Holding the belief to "preserve the land inherited from our ancestors for future generations", Wang promoted the county's land consolidation efforts. After rounds of field research and in-depth discussions, Gaoyu village — where 313 hectares of farmland were sliced into tiny plots by scattered houses — was selected as the pilot site in 2012.

With a population of 6,000, the village's collective annual income at that time was less than 100,000 yuan.

To revitalize the inefficient areas, the local government planned four resettlement communities, with follow-up measures including re-demarcating the farmland, restoring soil fertility and leasing it to a cooperative for unified management.

However, the villagers were hesitant to be the first to try such an approach. To alleviate their concerns about moving old houses, land transfer and falling income, Wang and his colleagues visited each household, explaining how relocating would enhance their living conditions, how the land transfer would ensure a stable rental income, and how the cooperative would create additional job opportunities. After several months, all 726 households agreed.

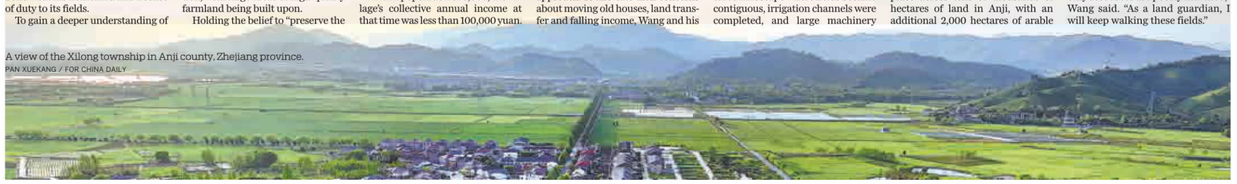
The efforts resulted in a restructured landscape where fields became contiguous, irrigation channels were completed, and large machinery could move freely, leading to increased crop output and economic returns. By last year, the village's collective economy had grown more than 80-fold.

"Seeing the villagers' satisfied smiles, I feel my work is truly worthwhile," Wang said.

Such transformations have taken place across tens of thousands of hectares of land in Anji, with an additional 2,000 hectares of arable land created, and land use tailored to local strengths.

These include Wukangqiao village, which has attracted agricultural tourism to its newly consolidated fields, and Hongmiao village, which turned an abandoned mine into a landmark cafe.

"No villages are poor by nature; only resources are poorly matched," Wang said. "As a land guardian, I will keep walking these fields."



A view of the Xilong township in Anji county, Zhejiang province. PAN XUEKANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Honoree insights



Wang Weimin (second from left), deputy director of the natural resources and planning bureau in Anji, Zhejiang province, shares his stories on using his skills to develop the county's infrastructure and agriculture during a news conference held by the State Council Information Office in Beijing on April 22. Together with him are Wang Shi (left), an official from the office, and Wang Weimin's fellow recipients of the "Most Beautiful Natural Guardian" honor — Ren Xiubo (third from left), Wang Guiling (third from right), Jiang Wenkai (second from right) and Niu Dongliang (right). PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Geologist's inner passion unlocks Earth's eternal heat

By LI HONGYANG
lihongyang@chinadaily.com.cn

For nearly four decades, Wang Guiling's "office" has been the most volatile terrain on the planet, from the boiling geysers of Yunnan province to the high-altitude hot springs of the Xizang autonomous region and western Sichuan province.

Wang, a researcher at the Institute of Hydrogeology and Environmental Geology in Shijiazhuang, Hebei province, affiliated with the Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences, is fascinated with the origins of thermal heat.

"It's not just a landscape," said the 62-year-old, referring to his geological surveys. "It's a conversation the planet is having with itself."

At the core of Wang's work is one of humanity's most pressing questions: Where will our energy come from when fossil fuels run out?

"Solar energy is an inexhaustible cosmic energy source, while geothermal heat is Earth's eternal gift from within," he said. "As long as the sun shines and the planet keeps moving beneath our feet, these two will never run out."

Wang's passion for his work goes far beyond earning a salary, in fact, in the 1990s his institute struggled to do exactly that. "I never wavered. I genuinely love this work. It comes from inside," he said.

What that work looked like in the early days is almost unimaginable in the age of digital mapping technology. Tasked with producing comprehensive maps of geothermal resources, Wang spent five years developing his method so painstaking it bordered on obsession. Armed with nothing more than a set square and paper maps, he plotted by hand more than 2,000 hot spring and geothermal well locations across China.

"I'd go through records — province, county, village — then get down on the map with a ruler until I found the exact spot," he said. "I'd mark it, and then I'd imagine the terrain. What did it look like there? Why was the water hot?"

Wang said geothermal exploration is similar to medical diagnosis. First comes the equivalent of a CT scan — geophysical surveys that detect anomalies in electrical signals beneath the surface, hinting at different rock types and structures. Then comes the biopsy — a test well used to measure underground temperatures.

Since 2011, the China Geological Survey has launched a national project to survey and evaluate geothermal resources. Led by Wang, the project has brought together hundreds of technicians from across the country to conduct systematic investigations of geothermal resources in each province.

Among the several types of geothermal resources, the potential of hot dry rock geothermal energy is especially pertinent. Wang and his team estimate that China's hot dry rock resources at depths of between 3 and 10 kilometers contain the heat equivalent of burning 856 trillion metric tons of coal.

"That figure is astronomically large. But it only tells us the heat is there. What we can actually extract is a different question," he said.

"To unlock it, we must artificially fracture the rock, pump cold water down, let it heat up in the cracks, and bring it back up again."

To Wang, his achievements do not come from individual brilliance alone. "Geothermal research is deeply interdisciplinary — geophysics, geochemistry, rock mechanics, hydrogeology, even mathematics and chemistry," he said.

"No person can be an expert in all of it. We need a team. And we need to give young people the conditions to settle down and really dig in.

"Working in geothermal exploration also requires the spirit of 'grinding a sword for 10 years'," he said.



Wang Guiling (right) identifies a rock and determines its heat-storage features during a mission in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region in May last year. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Tech utilized to transform Shanghai nature reserve

By LI MENGHAN
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

After a decades-long ecological battle against invasive species and poachers, bird populations at the Chongming Dongtan Nature Reserve in Shanghai have surged from 40,000 at its lowest to nearly 500,000 last year. Led by Niu Dongliang, the reserve has transformed from a "ravaged" wetland into a high-tech sanctuary where AI surveillance and innovative flooding techniques have restored a vital link in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.

When Niu, who now serves as the director of the reserve's management affairs center, arrived at the eastern tip of Chongming Island in 2004, it was a lawless frontier.

"When I first arrived at the reserve, some people hunted wild ducks — a single small packet of pesticide could poison hundreds of them. However, with no monitoring equipment back then, we had to walk through reeds and wade across tidal creeks for patrol, stopping them once found," Niu said.

He emphasized the difficulty of enforcement, noting that even if poachers were caught, they could claim to have merely "picked up" the dead birds rather than poisoned them, which prevented the police from taking action.

The tide turned in 2011. When Niu spotted a suspicious vessel through surveillance footage, he immediately organized an interception operation. Under stricter wildlife protection laws, eight individuals were prosecuted, and their convictions sent a strong deterrent message to other potential poachers.

"Now, more than 200 surveillance cameras are spread across the reserve, and infrared cameras set in key areas can capture people's movements even in the dark. Every access point is guarded, giving the wetland back to the wild plants and animals," he said, adding that the staff all wear camouflage or light-colored clothes to minimize human disturbance.

Beyond human activities, the rapid spread of invasive smooth cordgrass posed an even greater threat. Originating from the Atlantic coast of North America, this plant quickly encroached upon native vegetation, endangering wildlife food sources, habitats and the overall ecological function of the wetland. From the first discovery of a few scattered plants in 1995, by 2011 the reserve had more than 20 square kilometers of smooth cordgrass, accounting for one-tenth of the reserve's total area.

To address this, the reserve launched a large-scale ecological restoration project in 2013. Niu and his colleagues consulted experts, conducted experiments and finally developed a plan, involving building cofferdams to enclose the influenced area, cutting the smooth cordgrass above the water surface, and then flooding the area to submerge and rot the roots. Meanwhile, they also restored the damaged habitats and built ecological islands tailored to the living habits of different species, making these once-disappeared birds "frequent visitors".

"Birds are a very important indicator species for the health of an ecosystem," Niu said. "If they stop coming to an area, or if the variety of species declines, it means the environment has deteriorated. Everything we have done is to protect the biodiversity here."

With waterbird numbers gradually increasing, and State second-class protected tundra swans rising from just a few dozen to a record 5,216 this March, the birds themselves have delivered a clear verdict.





Top: Niu Dongliang introduces plants and animals that inhabit the Chongming Dongtan Nature Reserve to visitors in Shanghai. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY **Above:** Birds feed at a patch of wetland in the reserve. ZHOU GUKAI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Outpost veteran 'human anchor' of nation's marine safety

By LI SHANGYI
lishangyi@chinadaily.com.cn

On the uninhabited island of Qianliyan, guarding the country means guarding the data. For over four decades, Jiang Wenkai has served as the "human anchor" of the Yellow Sea, once spending 217 days a year on a barren outpost. Today, the veteran observer is the final link in a chain that has transformed a primitive observation post into a smart hub for offshore wind power and marine ranching, proving that even as technology becomes automated, the human spirit remains the foundation of China's marine safety.

Nearly 50 kilometers away from the shore, the tiny island, covering just 0.135 square kilometers and rising to a maximum elevation of 93 meters, is home to the Haiyang marine station of the Beihai Forecasting and Disaster Reduction Center of the Ministry of Natural Resources, one of China's national benchmark marine observation stations.



Jiang Wenkai carries supplies to the outpost on Qianliyan Island. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The station operates around the clock. Since taking on the job in 1983, Jiang has helped collect extensive marine hydrological and meteorological data that have been widely used in marine disaster prevention, mitigation and economic development.

In the early years, when technology was still underdeveloped, the island had no electricity, and the observation equipment was extremely primitive. Under such harsh conditions, Jiang and his colleagues carried out uninterrupted marine and meteorological observations day after day, year after year.

"Every drop of water and every grain of rice we used had to be transported by boat," Jiang recalled, describing both the working and living conditions as extremely difficult.

As equipment and infrastructure gradually improved, the number of staff stationed on the island was reduced from six or seven people in the early days to just two rotating staff members today. However, Jiang said the demands on workers have become even greater.

"Now, once you arrive on the island, you have to know how to do everything," Jiang said. "You cannot rely on others to take care of you. People trained here become versatile — cooking, washing clothes and repairing instruments all by themselves."

With advances in technology and upgrades in observation equipment, working conditions on the island have improved significantly over the years. Tasks that once required manual readings in harsh weather have now become increasingly intelligent and automated.

New technologies, including intelligent video inversion for wave monitoring, drone-based sea ice identification and smart red tide monitoring, are gradually being introduced into daily operations. The data collected provide strong support for marine disaster prevention and mitigation, offshore wind power, marine ranching and other emerging industries.

Over four decades on the island, Jiang has not only recorded waves, monsoons and other marine data, but also witnessed major changes in the marine ecological environment and environmental governance.

"We are no longer merely recorders of marine data, but also guardians of marine ecology and practitioners of harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature," he said.

Jiang, now 59, is scheduled to retire soon. Looking back on a lifetime spent enduring storms and lonely nights on the isolated island, he said he has no regrets about dedicating 40 years to guarding the outpost.

"Guarding the island means guarding the country; guarding the sea means guarding our home," Jiang said.



Qianliyan, a desolate island on the Yellow Sea about 50 kilometers off Haiyang, Shandong province, is where Jiang Wenkai has served for over 40 years.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:47 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:47 PM

CHINA

Calls to build clean, healthy cyberspace

Conference on internet civilization champions anti-bullying practices

By **CAO DESHENG** in Beijing and **ZHANG LI** in Nanning

Chen Lijun, a Yue opera performer, rose to fame across China after her captivating portrayal of a male character in the Yue opera production of *New Dragon Gate Inn* went viral online.

Speaking at the 2026 China Internet Civilization Conference in Nanning, capital of the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, on Tuesday, Chen shared her story to champion the benefits of a healthy internet environment and its vibrant online community.

Chen, who has nearly 4.6 million followers on her social media platform Douyin, the Chinese counterpart of TikTok, said she hopes to promote the development of Yue opera through the internet.

"I record the content I love and my practice sessions, edit them into short videos, and share them online. These works have been well received, and I've managed to attract some attention to Yue opera through the internet," she said.

As a young opera performer who has benefited from social media platforms, Chen said it is her duty to help build a civilized online community.

"Through every positive share and every kind response, we lift up a civilized and vibrant internet environment. This also gives each of us the opportunity to grow and realize our dreams through the internet. Let's work together to make our online home cleaner and warmer," she said to participants at the conference.

With the rapid development of the internet, China has attached great importance to cyberspace governance.

When the inaugural China Internet Civilization Conference was held in 2021, President Xi Jinping sent a congratulatory message, emphasizing that as a major component of social etiquette and civility under new circumstances, internet civilization remains a key area in enhancing China's strength in cyberspace.

China's internet user base reached 1.125 billion by December, with the internet penetration rate exceeding 80 percent, according to the 57th Statistical Report on Internet Development in China, released by the China Internet Network Information Center in February.

In a keynote speech delivered at Tuesday's conference, Li Shulei, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and head of the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee, underlined the need to foster a clean and upright cyberspace.

While calling for continued efforts to enrich the supply of high-quality online content and strengthen mainstream values, mainstream public opinion, and mainstream culture on the internet, Li said it is important to improve a long-term mechanism for cyberspace governance.

Issues such as online rumors and cyberbullying infringe upon societal and public interests and must be addressed with strong measures, he said.

Participants at the conference called for an integrated approach to promoting internet civilization, fostering a sound cyberspace, and enabling the internet to better enhance people's well-being.

Meng Man, a Chinese scholar and professor at the Minzu University of China's School of History and Culture, highlighted the progress brought to humanity through the internet, but emphasized that the question of how to build a healthy online environment has become increasingly important.

"This is because the internet profoundly shapes both the living environment and our mental landscape. Naturally, we hope that the internet not only creates attention for content creators, but also provides fertile ground for all users, serving not just as an information provider, but also as a platform of civilization," Meng said.

Contact the writers at caodesheng@chinadaily.com.cn

Helping hand



Immigration management officers and Red Cross workers assist Mongolian cataract patients at the Ereenhot railway port in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region on Tuesday as part of a program under the Belt and Road Initiative. GUO PENGJIE / FOR CHINA DAILY

Welcome dance



A dragon dance is performed to welcome approximately 2,800 South Korean travelers arriving aboard the *Costa Serena* cruise ship at the Shanghai Wusongkou International Cruise Terminal on Tuesday, which also marked the 16th China Tourism Day. The Shanghai International Cruise Tourism Resort hosted the welcome ceremony that also promoted tourism products. LIU XIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

China-Europe SMILE mission launch to enhance space weather forecasting

By **LI MENGHAN**
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn



A Vega-C rocket carrying the SMILE satellite blasts into the sky in Kourou, French Guiana, on Tuesday. XINHUA

The successful launch of the Solar wind Magnetosphere Ionosphere Link Explorer satellite on Tuesday, aimed at studying how streams of charged particles from the sun interact with Earth's magnetic field, marks a milestone in China-Europe space cooperation.

The satellite was launched by a Vega-C rocket from Europe's spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana. Following liftoff, the satellite entered its planned orbit, with solar arrays deployed and all systems operating normally. The mission is a collaboration between the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the European Space Agency.

"Earth is surrounded by an invisible magnetic field, the magnetosphere, which functions like a protective umbrella and deflects most of the solar wind — high-speed streams of charged particles from the sun. Without this protective shield, life on Earth would not be able to survive," said Wang Chi, a CAS academician and the Chinese principal investigator of the SMILE satellite.

Wang, who is also the director of the CAS National Space Science Center, said when some charged particles break through the magnetic shield and enter near-Earth space, they can disturb the space environment, threaten satellites in orbit, interfere with communication and navigation systems, and even trigger large-scale power outages.

Previous studies of Earth's magnetic environment have mainly relied on isolated observations from individual satellites, making it difficult for scientists to obtain a complete picture of how the system works.

With SMILE now in orbit, scientists will for the first time conduct panoramic imaging of Earth's magnetosphere, allowing them to observe its overall structure. Shaped by the pressure of the solar wind, the boundary of the magnetosphere resembles a smile, also the mission's name. The mission will also help scientists better understand how the solar wind interacts with Earth's magnetic field and improve space weather forecasting capabilities.

To achieve these goals, SMILE carries four advanced scientific instruments. The core payload is the Soft X-ray Imager, which detects X-rays generated when particles from the solar wind interact with particles in Earth's upper atmosphere. This allows scientists to observe the previously invisible boundary of the magnetosphere for the first time.

The three other instruments include: an Ultraviolet Aurora Imager for photographing auroras near Earth's polar regions, a Light Ion Analyzer for measuring charged particles, and a Magnetometer for monitoring changes in Earth's magnetic field. Together, these instruments will provide both large-scale images and direct measurements, providing scientists with new tools to study geomagnetic storms and other space weather events.

Beyond its scientific value, Dai Lei, chief designer of SMILE's science application system and a professor at the National Space Science Center, said the mission demonstrates an equal and mutually beneficial model of cooperation between China and Europe.

"Building upon the legacy of the Double Star Program — a China-led space cooperation project with ESA proposed in 2003 — SMILE has established a new model for international space collaboration. This is the first bottom-up, mission-level, full life-cycle partnership between CAS and ESA," Dai said.

CAS took primary responsibility for the satellite platform, mission operation and control, and the science application system, while ESA provided the payload module, launch vehicle, launch site, and ground tracking and emergency support.

The University of Leicester in the United Kingdom led the development of the Soft X-ray Imager, while CAS led the development of the other three instruments with support from European partners in key components and calibration work.

Over the past decade, the mission established an integrated engineering system involving six major subsystems. Scientists and engineers from both sides jointly addressed technical challenges such as cross-regional design coordination, system compatibility and joint testing, helping ensure the mission's timely and smooth implementation.

SMILE will spend about 42 days maneuvering into its final science orbit. It will then undergo a two-month in-orbit testing phase before beginning its planned three-year observation mission.

During its operational lifespan, scientists from China and Europe will jointly process and analyze the data collected by the satellite. All scientific data will be openly shared with the global research community to encourage wider international participation and research.

The long-term data gathered by SMILE is expected to deepen understanding of interactions between the solar wind and Earth's magnetic field, while also helping improve the accuracy of space weather forecasts and the safety of near-Earth space activities.

Looking beyond SMILE, Wang outlined broader plans for China-Europe cooperation in space science. He said the China-Europe space exploration program, which includes the SMILE mission, will launch a series of satellites during the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30).

These include the Hongmeng Project to study the universe's earliest period after the Big Bang, the Earth 2.0 mission to search for planets similar to Earth, and the enhanced X-ray Timing and Polarimetry space observatory (eXTP), which will explore extreme cosmic conditions such as black holes and neutron stars, Wang said.

Joint op to boost fish stocks in Beibu Gulf

By **ZHAO YIMENG** in Nanning
zhaoyimeng@chinadaily.com.cn

China and Vietnam conducted a joint marine stock enhancement operation in the Beibu Gulf on Tuesday, aiming to strengthen fisheries conservation and increase fishermen's incomes on both sides.

The latest release, held in Dongxing, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, involved about 272 million juvenile fish and shrimp, including yellowfin sea bream and red sea bream.

Fishery resources in the Beibu Gulf, one of the most biodiverse marine areas shared by the two countries, remain under pressure despite years of conservation efforts, said Zhang Dianchang, head of the South China Sea Fisheries Research Institute at the Chinese Academy of Fishery Sciences.

Long-term monitoring data shows fishery resource density in the eastern Beibu Gulf, including shared fishing zones, fell from 1,161 kilograms per square kilometer in 2006 to 317 kg in 2019.

Joint stock enhancement programs aim to replenish natural populations through artificial breeding and the release of species suited to the local ecosystem, Zhang said.

Since 2017, China and Vietnam have conducted nine joint stock enhancement operations in the Beibu Gulf, releasing about 770 million aquatic seedlings. Zhang said the recapture rate of released species has remained above 5 percent, while catches of key released species have increased by more than 10 percent year-on-year. Incomes of coastal fishermen have risen by more than 20 percent, he added.

Local fishermen say they have noticed visible improvements in fish stocks. "I've been fishing in this area for many years, and over the past few years I really feel there are more fish," said Ye Fengzheng, a fisherman in the region. He said catches that once required long trips offshore are now more common closer to shore, with 10 to 15 kg a day now relatively easy to achieve under favorable weather and tides.

Ye said he once caught a tagged fish released under the program. "I pulled up a fish with a small tag attached, and there was Vietnamese writing on it," he said, adding that he later reported the catch using the phone number on the tag.

China has expanded the use of tracking technologies, including external tags and molecular markers, to study migration patterns. Tagged sea bream released in the Beibu Gulf have been recaptured along both the Guangxi and the Vietnamese coastal waters.

Officials and scientists say the program emphasizes scientific management rather than large-scale indiscriminate release. Researchers have assessed the ecological carrying capacity of target waters, including food availability and water quality, to avoid ecological imbalance caused by excessive stocking.

"Released species are not simply any available seedlings. They need to have reliable genetics, suitable size and strong vitality," said Su Zhongxing, general manager of Guangxi Fuqun Marine Seedling Reproduction.

He said hatcheries gradually adjust water temperature and salinity to help juveniles adapt to marine conditions, while transport protocols carefully control oxygen levels, stocking density and temperature to improve survival rates after release.

Marriage: Mass weddings promote simple ceremonies

From page 1

In preparation, the couple had completed free premarital medical checks at a Beijing hospital, taken registration photos at a commercial studio and hired a photographer to document their special day near the civil affairs bureau.

The pair met via social media, bonding over photography and skiing, and dated for two-and-a-half years before deciding to marry. They chose May 20 partly because its homophone "520" is a declaration of love in Chinese and is often seen as a Valentine's Day equivalent. "We want to celebrate our anniversary and 520 together," Yan said.

Both originally from Shaanxi but living in Beijing for work and study, the couple benefited from a revised marriage regulation introduced in May 2025. The rule ended a decades-old restriction that required people to register their marriage in a place where either spouse's household registration was recorded. Now, couples can marry anywhere in the country without presenting their household registration booklet. "It saved us time and travel costs, and made us feel more connected to Beijing," Guo said.

Thursday or May 21 is the choice of many this year as it coincides with *xiao man*, or Grain Buds, a traditional Chinese solar term. Song Jian, an engineer from Sichuan province, chose this date over May 20. "The solar term carries a beautiful saying — a modest half-full state is better than perfection," he said. "That fits our relationship well. You don't have to pursue perfection in life; being content with what you have is enough."

Authorities across multiple provincial-level regions have also organized mass wedding ceremonies on and around the two dates to promote simple ceremonies.

In Hainan province, collective weddings will be held on Wednesday at coastal venues, including Coconut Dream Corridor in Sanya and the Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site. Zhejiang province hosted a ceremony on Saturday featuring 520 couples, with a main venue in Hangzhou linked to dozens of sub-venues across the province. Guangdong organized military-civilian collective weddings in Guangzhou on Monday, Zhaoqing on Sunday, Foshan on Friday and Zhongshan on Saturday, involving more than 1,000 couples.

"This collective wedding is a celebration that's both sweet and green, without the complicated preparations," one groom, Zhong Zhiyuan, who was part of the Guangzhou weddings, was quoted by the local media as saying.

But not everyone is keen on getting married on popular dates. Yang Xinran, a marketing professional from the Chinese mainland who now works in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, registered her marriage in Beijing last September and deliberately avoided peak days. "As working people, we have to prioritize our schedules," she said.

Yang and her husband picked several possible dates based on their work calendars, then let their parents take the final call. "Even booking a restaurant for an anniversary is hard enough on popular dates — no need to add to the trouble," she said.

In the past year, authorities processed more than 682,000 interprovincial marriages, official data showed. China saw a significant surge in marriage registrations in 2025, with 6.763 million couples registering, a 10.76 percent year-on-year increase.

Guo Yuhe contributed to this story.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:47 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:47 PM

BUSINESS

Stronger RMB seen stabilizing currency system

Yuan's expanded global role mitigates risks of unilateral financial disruptions

By **WANG KEJU** in Chengdu
wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn

A more multipolar currency landscape — in which the Chinese renminbi could play a much larger role — is gaining traction, as intensifying geopolitical tensions and the rapid rise of emerging economies strain the traditional international monetary system, economists said.

"The world needs a new and balanced monetary system," Zhu Min, former deputy managing director of the International Monetary Fund, told China Daily during the two-day Tsinghua PBCSF Global Finance Forum, which concluded on Tuesday in Chengdu, Sichuan province.

"A strong renminbi represents the needs of Global South countries, the needs of the global financial system, and also the needs of China's economy to further grow and strengthen," Zhu said.

> "A strong renminbi represents the needs of Global South countries, the needs of the global financial system, and also the needs of China's economy to further grow and strengthen."
>
> **Zhu Min,** former deputy managing director of the International Monetary Fund

He pointed to a fundamental imbalance in the current international monetary system. While the United States' share of global GDP has dropped to about 24.5 percent and its share of world merchandise exports is just about 9 percent, the US dollar still accounts for 58 percent of global reserve currencies — far exceeding its underlying economic weight.

In contrast, Zhu said, China now accounts for about 16.6 percent of global GDP and 14.4 percent of world merchandise exports, yet the renminbi's share in global reserves is merely 2.4 percent.

"The gap between China's real economy weight and its currency's international status is the core driving force for renminbi internationalization," Zhu said.

Djoomart Otorbaev, former prime minister of the Kyrgyz Republic, said that countries accept the greenback not because they prefer it, but because in times of crisis, the dollar can provide stable liquidity and expectations.

However, more and more financial tools have been weaponized, even used as weapons in geopolitical conflicts. This trust has been severely eroded, Otorbaev said.

The gradual erosion of the greenback's dominance is already visible. A Deutsche Bank research report released earlier this month said the dollar's share of global foreign exchange reserves has fallen from over 60 percent to just 40 percent.

Marc Uzan, executive director of the Reinventing Bretton Woods Committee, said that central banks around the world have diversified their reserves, more energy deals are being priced in non-dollar currencies and countries are increasingly settling bilateral trade in their own currencies.

That said, Uzan acknowledged that the dollar's structural advantages remain significant, and he cautioned against expecting a swift end to dollar hegemony.

Nevertheless, he expects the future international monetary system will be multipolar, with the US dollar, the euro and the renminbi all playing significantly larger roles. Regional currencies will also assume more functions in their respective neighborhoods.

In March, the renminbi ranked fifth in global payments with a share of 3.1 percent, up from sixth place in February, said global financial messaging services provider SWIFT.

Shi Kang, chair professor at the PBC School of Finance at Tsinghua University, said that the renminbi's participation in the reshaping of the global monetary order is "deliberate and measured".

"We do not want to replace the US dollar system, nor are we trying to develop a separate system," Shi said. "China's goal is to address the weak links in the current monetary system, allowing more currencies to participate and thus enhance global financial stability."

Cross-border renminbi settlement volume reached 6.4 trillion yuan ($941 billion) in 2024 and climbed further to 7 trillion yuan in 2025, Shi said.

To mitigate the risk of unilateral disruptions to the SWIFT messaging system, China has built its own Cross-border Interbank Payment System (CIPS), which has significantly improved the efficiency and security of cross-border settlements, he added.

China has also signed various bilateral currency swap agreements, providing liquidity support to emerging markets such as Argentina. These swaps act as a safety net for countries facing dollar shortages, reducing their dependence on a single currency, Shi said.

Looking forward, Shi said China will eventually open its current account in an orderly and prudent manner, offering more renminbi-denominated assets to global investors.



Sinopec employees inspect PV panels at a solar power station in Qingdao, Shandong province, on July 4. ZHANG JINGANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Nation's oil giants ramp up efforts in clean energy

By **ZHENG XIN**
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

China's State-owned oil majors are rapidly accelerating their pivot toward renewable energy, transforming from traditional fossil-fuel drillers into integrated green energy powerhouses to meet the nation's ambitious "dual carbon" goals.

Recent environmental, social and governance (ESG) reports from the country's three energy giants — China National Petroleum Corp, China Petroleum and Chemical Corp (Sinopec) and China National Offshore Oil Corp — reveal a decisive shift in capital allocation toward hydrogen, solar and offshore wind power.

Sinopec is currently spearheading the sector's clean transition with an aggressive push into the hydrogen economy. Aiming to become China's top hydrogen enterprise, the refiner now operates a world-leading network of 150 hydrogen refueling stations.

It has also leveraged its vast retail network to deploy 141,000 electric vehicle charging terminals, according to the company's latest filings.

CNPC is matching this momentum, investing a robust 41.46 billion yuan ($6.09 billion) into new energy and advanced materials in 2025. The company's wind and solar power generation surged 68 percent last year as it builds a comprehensive "oil, gas, heat, power and hydrogen" portfolio.

In the offshore sector, CNOOC is capitalizing on its maritime expertise to advance the Hainan CZ7 offshore wind project and the development of the world's first 16-megawatt floating wind platform. The company is also pioneering carbon capture, utilization and storage (CCUS) technologies, exemplified by its Enping 15-1 offshore facility, the first of its kind in China.

"The severe supply disruptions and soaring oil prices triggered by global crises are undeniably accelerating the pace of the global energy transition," said Lin Boqiang, head of the China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xiamen University.

Lin said this strategic pivot relies heavily on China's world-leading clean technology and manufacturing prowess, which further cements the nation's core position in the future global energy architecture.

These corporate milestones mirror a broader national trajectory. Official figures from the National Energy Administration show that by the end of March, China's combined installed capacity of wind and solar power had reached roughly 1.9 billion kilowatts, a 28.1 percent jump year-on-year.

A recent China Electricity Council report expects China's installed solar power capacity to surpass that of coal power for the first time in 2026, marking a historic tipping point in the country's energy mix.

While prioritizing green growth, the majors have maintained a dual-track strategy to ensure domestic stability.

China secured stable domestic oil and gas supplies in the first quarter, effectively cushioning the economy against external shocks from geopolitical tensions in the Middle East.

Output of crude oil and natural gas rose 1.3 percent and 3 percent year-on-year, respectively, during the first quarter, said Xing Yiteng, deputy director-general of the department of development and planning at the NEA.

Dong Xiucheng, a professor at the University of International Business and Economics, said the rapid implementation of major new energy bases has effectively stimulated industrial activity while securing long-term energy safety.

"Efforts to stabilize prices and secure supply have built a solid foundation," Dong said.

"It has helped hedge against international fluctuations and stabilize costs for both corporate production and people's livelihoods."

Track stewards



Technicians inspect electric locomotive equipment at a service workshop at Houma North Locomotive Depot, China Railway Taiyuan Group, in Houma, Shanxi province, on Tuesday. Regular and precise maintenance of the equipment is the cornerstone of railway safety, underpinning the reliable operation of China's over 165,000-kilometer national rail network — the world's largest — which carries about 4.6 billion passengers and 5.2 billion metric tons of freight annually, serving as the backbone of the country's transportation system.
WANG FANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Built by China, Central Asia's first fully automated driverless LRT opens in Astana

By **REN QI**
renqi@chinadaily.com.cn

22.4 kilometers
length of the first phase of the Astana light rail transit (LRT) system, Central Asia's first fully automated driverless light rail line built primarily by Chinese enterprises

The first phase of the Astana light rail transit (LRT) system, Central Asia's first fully automated driverless light rail line primarily built by Chinese enterprises using Chinese equipment, technology and standards, was officially launched in Kazakhstan on Saturday.

The LRT system saw its first train depart at 11 am local time. Enterprises from Tianjin played a significant role in this milestone, with the Tianjin-based centrally administered State-owned enterprise CSCEC 6th Bureau undertaking the construction of several stations.

Furthermore, Tianjin Rail Transit Group trained over 500 operational staff members who all assumed their posts on the launch day, following theoretical studies in Kazakhstan and practical training in Tianjin since last year.

Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev attended the inauguration ceremony in the Kazakh capital and became the line's first passenger, taking a test ride from the airport station to the National Museum station.

During the ceremony, Tokayev expressed gratitude to the Chinese side for the successful implementation of the project. He described the launch as an event of special significance for the country, saying the capital should eventually develop into a transportation hub of Eurasia.

Kazakhstan is also considering a second phase of the project to further develop public transport, according to the official website of the Kazakh presidential administration.

The newly launched first phase spans 22.4 kilometers and includes 18 stations, connecting major commercial centers and residential areas from Nursultan Nazarbayev International Airport in the south to the new railway station in the north.

Passing by landmarks and transport hubs such as Nazarbayev University, Abu Dhabi Plaza and the National Museum, the LRT system operates with a departure interval of five to six minutes. It is equipped with 19 trains manufactured by CRRC Tangshan, each capable of carrying over 600 passengers at full capacity with a maximum speed of 80 kilometers per hour.

Numerous passengers took the light rail for a trial ride on the first day of its operation, praising the Chinese equipment for its reliability and high level of comfort. An Astana resident named Yembergenov remarked upon seeing it in person that the Chinese automated driverless technology felt highly advanced, adding that the cabin interior was very modern and everything felt well-ordered.

Abat Shynybekov, deputy chairman of Astana's City Transportation Systems, said the project is of great significance in alleviating urban congestion and promoting public transport development.

He highlighted that the line adopted Chinese automated driverless technology and control systems, and that the Chinese side carried out targeted upgrades to the system's equipment, interior design and noise reduction, making it the most advanced LRT system in Central Asia today.

Yerkin Tukumov, director of the Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, said China and Kazakhstan are working together to advance key transport corridors, energy infrastructure and green technologies, enhancing the region's resilience and prosperity.

Under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, Chinese enterprises have been actively participating in the Central Asian country's infrastructure construction, Tukumov said. Last November, a highway reconstruction project undertaken by CITIC Construction Co Ltd was officially completed and delivered, adding another practical achievement to the joint construction of the BRI between China and Kazakhstan.

The project covers two national-level highways totaling 1,130 km with a designed speed of 120 km/h. During its construction, the project created local jobs and trained a group of professionals, including construction engineers and machinery operators, boosting the development of Kazakhstan's highway construction industry.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:47 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:47 PM

BUSINESS

Bright future ahead for Piraeus Port

Annual throughput exceeds 5.6 million TEUs, up from 680,000 TEUs in 2016



A ship under China's major shipping enterprise COSCO makes maiden call at Piraeus Port in Greece on June 25. XINHUA

By REN QI
renqi@chinadaily.com.cn

Located about 10 kilometers southwest of Athens, Greece, Piraeus Port is a vital gateway connecting Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Designed by architect Hippodamus of Miletus in the 5th century BC, Piraeus has long been one of the most prosperous ports in Greece and Europe. Historically, Chinese silk was transported by the Scythians via sea to Piraeus during its peak, before being sold throughout Greece.

However, the global financial crisis over a decade ago plunged the port into its "darkest hour". Shadowed by pay cuts and unemployment, the port suffered from strikes, blockades and sabotage. Equipment was left unmaintained, container yards fell into chaos and trucks jammed the port entrance for up to five kilometers. Shipowners abandoned the port, and clients were almost entirely lost.

The turning point came in 2016 when China COSCO Shipping Corp officially took over the port's operations. At the time, the annual container throughput of the port was approximately 680,000 twenty-foot equivalent units, ranking 93rd globally with outdated facilities and limited capacity.

Today, it has become one of the busiest ports in the Mediterranean, with annual throughput exceeding 5.6 million TEUs, ranking as high as 25th globally.

Upon taking over, COSCO Shipping issued a letter to employees, promising that the Chinese management team would not take a single blade of grass or stone from the port. They pledged that the port's past, present and future belong to the Greek people, with no more than seven Chinese nationals on the management team, leaving all other positions to Greek employees.

The management delivered on their promises. They worked alongside local employees to expand the international market, increase transit cargo and take the lead in repairing aging facilities.

To improve working conditions, the company provided free lunches and allowed employees to manage the canteen. Embracing a shared "family" culture similar to both Chinese and Greek traditions, they invited workers to new year parties and awarded scholarships to employees' children, transforming initial doubts into trust and a powerful synergy for development.

"They are not here to steal our jobs; instead, they have created more employment opportunities," said Tassos, the company's commercial manager who has worked at the port since he was 16. "In less than half a year, Piraeus Port began to achieve consecutive monthly profits. They did what we had wanted to do for years but couldn't."

Nikolaos, manager of the claims department, quoted a Greek proverb, "From the soil of wisdom grow three green shoots: good thoughts, good words, good actions." He said that COSCO Shipping perfectly combined Eastern wisdom with Greek culture, respecting and safeguarding the locals' millennia-old attachment to the port with advanced concepts, effective communication and solid actions.

Piraeus Port has now become the fourth-largest container port, the second-largest cruise homeport and the largest ferry port in Europe, as well as an important roll-on/roll-off automobile hub and ship repair center in the Eastern Mediterranean.

"These 10 years mark the decade in which the port of Piraeus moved from being a corner of the Mediterranean to a global hub," said Han Chao, chairman of the port operator Piraeus Port Authority SA.

The development path of the port is also quietly transforming. Stepping into the office building of the container terminal, one can see large screens displaying vessel dynamics, operational progress and equipment status in real time.

According to Han, the port has built a digital monitoring platform covering the entire port area and introduced 5G and artificial intelligence technologies, driving its organization to evolve from "manual planning" to "intelligent coordination".

In terms of energy, photovoltaic systems have begun supplying power to parts of the port. Shore power facilities are also being planned to allow docked ships to cut emissions, further increasing the port's share of green energy.

In recent years, the port's revenue and profit have continued to grow, reversing a long-term trend of losses. COSCO Shipping has invested over 10 billion yuan ($1.47 billion) locally, creating thousands of direct jobs and generating tens of thousands of indirect employment opportunities.


Trucks move containers at Piraeus Port on May 6, boosting regional logistics links via international connectivity cooperation. LYU YOU / XINHUA

> "These 10 years mark the decade in which the port of Piraeus moved from being a corner of the Mediterranean to a global hub."
>
> **Han Chao,** chairman of the port operator Piraeus Port Authority SA

"It has changed not only the port itself, but also the relationship between the city and its people," said Yannis Moralis, mayor of Piraeus.

As port revenues inject funds into the local economy, surrounding businesses have prospered. Once quiet streets are now bustling with cafes, shops and logistics companies. For locals, the port is no longer just a "distant dock", but a part of their daily lives.

According to the recently released financial report of the Piraeus Port Authority, the company's total revenue in 2025 reached approximately 251 million euros ($292 million), a year-on-year increase of 8.6 percent; operating profit stood at 132 million euros, up 2.2 percent year-on-year.

Savvas Sanozidis, secretary of the board of directors of the Piraeus Port Authority, said the transmission and integration of COSCO Shipping's corporate values have effectively strengthened supervision over management, promoting transparency, prudence and a high sense of responsibility in all aspects of work, providing a strong guarantee for the company's long-term sustainable development.

Stefanos Gkikas, deputy minister of maritime affairs and insular policy of Greece, stated that the fruitful cooperation between COSCO Shipping and the Piraeus Port Authority over the past decade has significantly enhanced the port's competitiveness and further consolidated Greece's position in the international shipping sector.

Looking ahead to the next decade, the development blueprint for Piraeus Port is clearly defined.

"The future port will be smarter and greener," Han added. The port plans to extend its industry chain to logistics, warehousing and comprehensive services, building a global logistics node with greater reach.

Meanwhile, social responsibility remains a priority. Public welfare projects and cultural exchanges continue to advance, making the port not just an economic hub, but a connection point for emotion and culture.

According to Han, the construction of the COSCO Shipping Piraeus Port park project was officially launched in April. Once completed, it will become a modern center integrating sports, leisure and social activities. It will not only benefit local residents, but also improve the infrastructure of the cruise terminal area and strengthen transport links with the city of Piraeus, providing a better experience for international tourists.

Over the past decade, Piraeus Port has achieved leapfrog development, serving as a vivid footnote to China-Greece cooperation. Today, amid the surging tides, this gateway to the Mediterranean is embarking on its next decade of intelligent, green and open growth.

Belt and Road Initiative's infrastructure projects improving lives abroad

By REN QI

Under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, China and various involved countries have continuously advanced global interconnectivity. A series of major infrastructure projects have taken root worldwide, supporting the dreams of people for prosperity and development while injecting fresh vitality into the global economy.

On April 1, 2023, the New Belgrade-Surcin section of the E-763 highway in Serbia, constructed by a Chinese enterprise, officially opened to traffic. Spanning 7.9 kilometers, this segment serves as the starting point of the highway, seamlessly connecting the urban area of Belgrade with the previously completed Surcin-Obrenovac section.

With the opening of this new segment, the total operational length of the E-763 highway has reached 140 km. This vital transport artery brings large and medium-sized cities in southwestern Serbia into the capital's one-hour economic circle. Benefiting a population of over 4 million, the highway not only facilitates convenient travel for locals, but also plays a crucial role in promoting interconnectivity and economic and trade exchanges across the entire Balkan region.

Over the past decade, Chinese enterprises have consistently offered Chinese solutions to overcome complex technical challenges in highway construction across BRI-participating countries. Through collaborative efforts, they have successfully built landmark projects such as Cambodia's first expressway and Bangladesh's first elevated expressway.

The momentum extends to rail networks. On Oct 2, 2022, the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway — the first of its kind in both Indonesia and Southeast Asia — officially commenced operations. Stretching 142 km with a maximum design speed of 350 kilometers per hour, the railway has drastically slashed travel time between Jakarta and Bandung from over three hours to just over 40 minutes now.

This transformative railway was jointly built and operated by a joint venture established by China Railway International Co Ltd and four Indonesian State-owned enterprises. As a flagship project of the BRI and a symbol of practical cooperation between China and Indonesia, builders from both nations worked in tandem over eight years, conducting comprehensive, all-element and full-system cooperation.


Passengers chat inside the dining car of an Ethiopia-Djibouti Railway train on Sept 9, 2023. WANG GUANSEN / XINHUA

From the Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway, East Africa's first electrified railway, to the Mombasa-Nairobi Standard Gauge Railway, a major artery for regional interconnectivity; and from the China-Laos Railway, which transformed Laos from a landlocked country into a land-linked hub, to the Jakarta-Bandung HSR, which achieved the "fastest speed" in Southeast Asia — the past decade has seen China and partner countries pave roads of development and revitalization.

Together, they have spurred economic growth, transferred advanced technology, increased employment opportunities and improved local livelihoods, steadily marching toward common development and shared prosperity.

Aviation infrastructure has also seen remarkable progress. In 2019, the new terminal of Bole International Airport in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, built by Chinese enterprises, officially opened. As part of the airport's expansion and upgrading project, construction of the new terminal began in 2015 and was completed after four years of dedicated efforts.

Following the terminal's successful operation, the Ethiopian government continued to invite Chinese enterprises to participate in further expansion projects, aiming to transform the airport into a premier aviation transport hub in Africa.

From New Gwadar International Airport in Pakistan to Siem Reap-Angkor International Airport in Cambodia, multiple modern airports have sprung up in BRI participating countries over the past decade, with Chinese enterprises frequently playing key roles in their investment and construction.

These achievements are microcosms of the deepening cooperation between China and BRI participating countries in the field of new infrastructure. In recent years, the overseas service networks of China's three major telecom operators have expanded to over 40 countries, paving "highways" for new digital infrastructure.

Meanwhile, enterprises such as the State Grid and China Southern Power Grid have also actively strengthened the alignment, mutual recognition and application of rules and standards with BRI participating countries. This has promoted the "going global" of Chinese technology, standards and equipment, helping to build the BRI into a road of innovation.

Andrey Ostrovsky, chief researcher at the Institute of China and Modern Asia at Russian Academy of Sciences, said the BRI proposed by China brings new development opportunities to participating countries and significantly aids global common development.

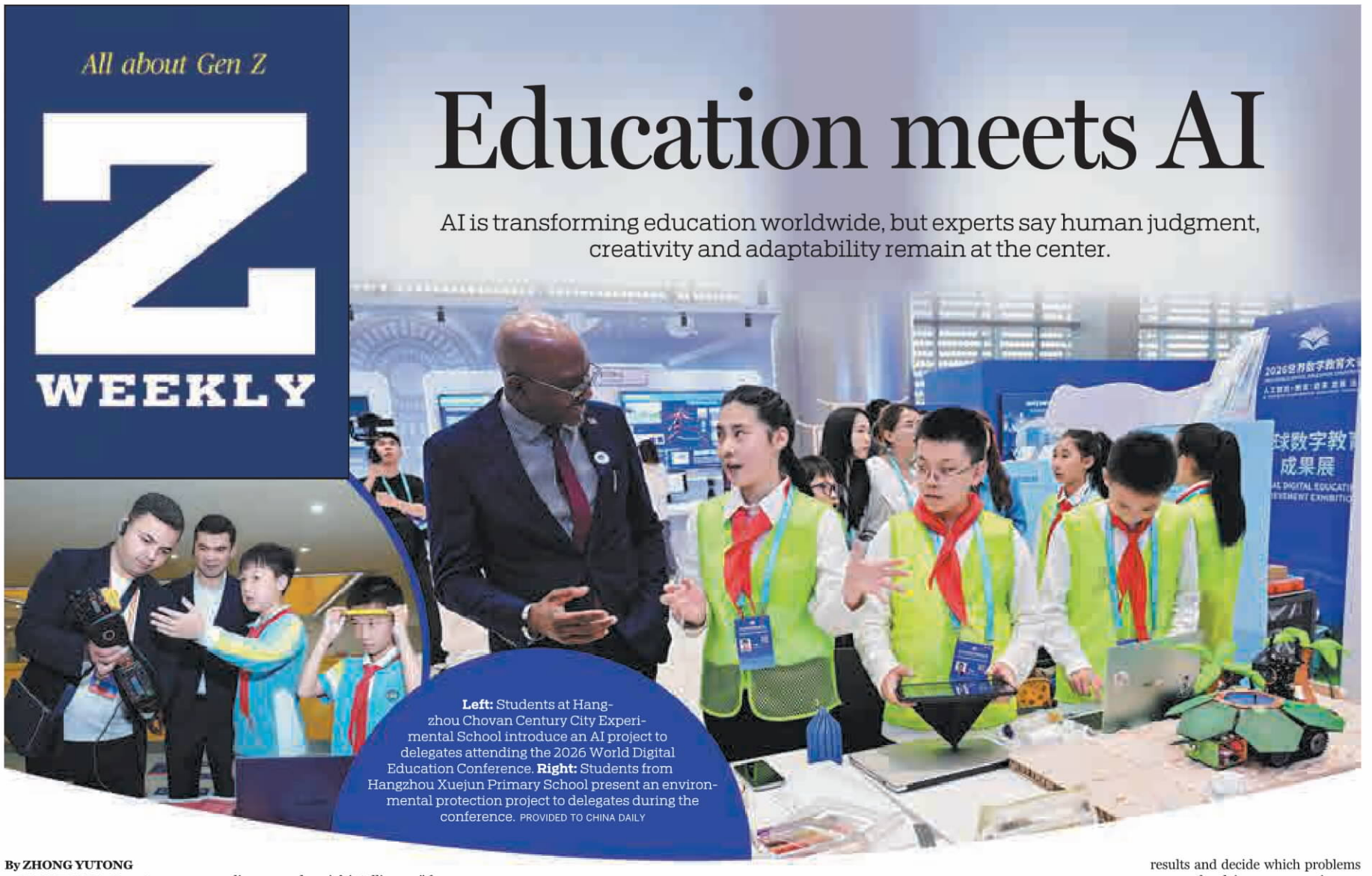
To ensure the successful implementation of the BRI, China has introduced a series of supportive policies and promoted the establishment of institutions such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Silk Road Fund.

Through this extensive cooperation, many countries have acquired vital facilities that would have been exceedingly difficult to build relying solely on their own capabilities, Ostrovsky said, adding that these projects have created excellent conditions for subsequent development and have become enduring sources of wealth for these nations.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:47 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:47 PM

Z WEEKLY



Education meets AI

AI is transforming education worldwide, but experts say human judgment, creativity and adaptability remain at the center.

Left: Students at Hangzhou Chovan Century City Experimental School introduce an AI project to delegates attending the 2026 World Digital Education Conference. **Right:** Students from Hangzhou Xuejun Primary School present an environmental protection project to delegates during the conference. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By ZHONG YUTONG
and **XU YIDAN** in Hangzhou
and **MENG WENJIE**

Gaspard Banyankimbona has seen the anxiety many young people feel as artificial intelligence advances.

As commissioner for education, science, technology and innovation at the African Union Commission, he arrived at the 2026 World Digital Education Conference in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, with a clear message for students and teachers facing the rise of intelligent technologies: AI is not something to fear or avoid, but a tool people must learn to use wisely.

"AI is already with us. We cannot run away from it. We need to learn how to work with it," he said.

Held from May 11 to 13 under the theme "AI + Education: Transformation, Development, Governance", the conference brought together government officials, scientists and education experts from around the world to discuss how AI is reshaping learning, teaching and research.

Drawing on years of experience in education, Banyankimbona said that as AI tools make knowledge easier to access than ever, educators must rethink their role in the classroom.

"Teachers should become collaborators with students and guide them in areas AI can never replace, such as critical thinking, emotional intelligence and social intelligence," he said.

That idea — that AI is pushing education beyond the simple delivery of knowledge — ran through the conference. It was also on display at Hangzhou Chovan Century City Experimental School, where delegates saw how AI tools are being woven into everyday school life.

There, students use AI-assisted learning platforms that generate exercises based on the areas where they need more practice. The system helps them review difficult topics more efficiently and allows teachers to see where students need extra help.

In physical education classes, data such as step counts, heart rates and movement patterns are collected and analyzed in real time, helping teachers build personalized fitness profiles for students. The goal is not simply to measure performance, but to better understand each child's physical development.

AI has also changed how students approach creative projects.

Before graduation, sixth-grade students at the school complete a project called "The First Book of My Life", in which they document memorable moments from their primary school years. In the past, students were responsible only for writing, while the layout and design were outsourced. Now, with the help of AI-supported tools, they can create their own e-books, bringing together text, images and design.

Tan Pengfei, the school's principal, said the changes reflect a broader shift in education.

"The abilities developed outside textbooks have become even more valuable today — communication, creativity, curiosity and problem-solving," Tan said. "The role of schools is to awaken and nurture these human qualities that are already present in children."

Tan's comments echoed Banyankimbona's view that the future of education will depend less on whether students can access information and more on whether they can use knowledge with judgment and creativity.

The same shift is also taking place in higher education and scientific research.

At the conference, Luo Jianlan, an associate professor at Shanghai Innovation Institute, discussed AI's role in research and innovation in a keynote speech on embodied intelligence.

Founded in 2024, the institute focuses on cultivating AI talent capable of addressing real-world challenges.

"It trains students to identify real problems, turn them into scientific questions and complete a full cycle of innovation," Luo said.

A graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, and a former researcher at Google and the Berkeley Artificial Intelligence Research Lab, Luo said AI has narrowed the gap between basic research and industrial application.

"In the past, translating research into real-world use could take 10 to 20 years," he said. "Today, for example, it took only about seven years for AlphaFold, an AI system that predicts protein structures, to progress from breakthrough research to a Nobel Prize-winning achievement."

Zhang Linfeng, founder and CSO of DP Technology, shared a similar view.

Having long worked in "AI for Science", an interdisciplinary field that uses AI to advance scientific research, Zhang recalled the first time he saw AI's transformative potential in science.

By using neural networks to model atomic interactions, he completed a molecular simulation on a laptop in less than a day — a task that would previously have required 200 million CPU-core hours and millions of dollars.

"That was when I truly understood what AI could bring to scientific advancement," he said. "In the future, when a scientific question arises, AI may be able to interpret it, review the literature, design experiments, carry them out and analyze the results."

> "As AI expands humanity's ability to explore the unknown, even more complex and interesting questions will emerge. That is why soft skills such as defining problems and finding solutions may become more important than expertise in any specific technical domain."
>
> **Zhang Linfeng,** founder and CSO of DP Technology

But Zhang stressed that this does not mean scientists will be removed from the process. On the contrary, he said, AI will make their ability to ask meaningful questions, evaluate results and decide which problems are worth solving even more important.

He also believes China has distinct advantages in this field, and that was one reason he chose to return to the country after graduating from Princeton University in 2020 to start his company.

"China has a strong industrial and manufacturing foundation, which makes it easier to connect scientific breakthroughs with industrial innovation," he said.

Turning from frontier science back to education, Zhang also reflected on how younger researchers are adapting to the fast-changing age of AI.

He noted that in the past, a PhD student might spend years steadily exploring a single research topic. Today, that path is far less predictable.

"With AI evolving so rapidly, entire fields can change within three to five years," he said.

That makes adaptability increasingly important, Zhang added.

"As AI expands humanity's ability to explore the unknown, even more complex and interesting questions will emerge. That is why soft skills such as defining problems and finding solutions may become more important than expertise in any specific technical domain," he said.

Contact the writers at zhongyutong@i21st.cn

Shining Wisdom

Bangladeshi scholar inspired by Chinese modernization

When I first arrived at Taiyuan University of Technology more than six years ago, I was a young man from Bangladesh carrying a suitcase, a dream and the values my father had instilled in me.

My father has long been active in the Communist Party of Bangladesh, and in our home, discussions about justice, equality and working people were part of everyday life. Those conversations shaped my earliest understanding of society.

My decision to come to China was practical at first. I wanted to learn from the country's achievements in infrastructure, power generation and technology. What I found, however, went far beyond technical knowledge, reshaping both my academic path and worldview.

During my first year, a professor recommended *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*.

I opened the book expecting formal political theory, but found a work that spoke to questions I had carried since childhood: What does it mean for development to serve the people? How can a country protect its independence while opening to the world? How can political ideals improve people's daily lives?

What struck me first was the emphasis on putting people first. In Bangladesh, I had often thought about obstacles facing developing countries: foreign interference, inequality, local elites and weak long-term planning.

President Xi's writings helped me see that national development cannot be reduced to economic growth alone. It requires clear vision, strong institutions, social stability and commitment to improving lives.

The idea of building a community with a shared future for humanity also moved me deeply.

Bangladesh is highly vulnerable to climate change, although it has contributed very little to global carbon emissions. For people from countries like mine, international cooperation is not an abstract slogan; it is a question of survival, dignity and justice.

President Xi's call for mutual respect and shared benefit gave me hope, a spirit I also saw in educational exchanges, friendships and development cooperation.

The more I read, the more I understood that Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era represents a living application of Marxism.

My father taught me that Marxism is not a fixed dogma, but a method for understanding society and guiding action. In *The Governance of China*, I saw that method applied to the 21st century: innovation and stability, opening up and cultural confidence, environmental protection, national rejuvenation and global responsibility.

Living in China allowed me to connect these ideas with real experience. I have visited communities where public services have improved people's lives. I have spoken with people in Shanxi who remember harder times and describe changes in daily life. These experiences helped me understand development not as a statistic, but as something visible in ordinary lives.


Riyadzh Mahmudh

President Xi's discussion of poverty alleviation also affected me deeply. In Bangladesh, despite progress, many people still face hardship. Learning how China lifted hundreds of millions out of poverty changed my understanding of what is possible.

What impressed me was not only the scale, but also the method: targeted policies, mobilization, measurable goals and a determination that no group should be forgotten. It showed me that poverty is not inevitable when political will, organization and people-centered policy work together.

My experience at Taiyuan University of Technology has reinforced these lessons. In renewable energy systems and power grid integration, I have come to see engineering not only as a technical discipline but also as a contribution to development and human well-being. The book helped me connect my research with a larger question: how knowledge can serve the people.

It has also helped me understand my identity more clearly. As a Bangladeshi communist studying in China, I once felt I stood between different worlds. Now I see that position as a responsibility. The vision of a community with a shared future for humanity teaches me that my education is not for personal advancement, but for preparation to contribute to my country and strengthen friendship among peoples.

The Governance of China has been an important guide in my transformation.

When I return to Bangladesh, I will carry more than a doctorate. I will carry the lessons I learned from China: that development must be people-centered, that independence and cooperation can strengthen each other, and that theory becomes meaningful when it improves real lives.

My father gave me my first introduction to communism. China has shown me how those ideals can be practiced in the modern world.

Written by Riyadzh Mahmudh, a PhD candidate from Bangladesh in the College of Electrical and Power Engineering at Taiyuan University of Technology. His research focuses on the evolving landscape of high-voltage engineering and power electronics.

Online
Watch the video by scanning the code.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:47 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:47 PM

Running toward the light

Student volunteers in Jiangxi guide runners with visual impairments, helping them build confidence, independence and lasting friendships through the shared power of running.



Top: Hu Liang (first from left) leads a visually impaired runner in warm-up exercises on June 2, 2024. **Middle:** Zhang Hongying (right) accompanies her running partner, Zhang Qian, on the track at Jinggangshan University on Dec 14, 2025. **Bottom:** Man Xinyuan (left) guides a friend with visual impairment during a run on Sept 8, 2024. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



At a running event for people with visual impairments in Nanchang, Jiangxi province, Chen Xinping (third from left) crosses the finish line on April 12 with guide runner Hu Liang (second from right). PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By **MENG WENJIE**
mengwenjie@i21st.cn

When Zhang Hongying first put on a blindfold to experience what it is like to be blind, she froze, her heart racing.

"I couldn't take a single step. There's an instinctive fear when you face the unknown," she recalled.

At the time, Zhang was training as a new volunteer with the Red Stars Charity Program, an initiative based in Ji'an, Jiangxi province, which supports runners who are blind or have low vision. Now 20, Zhang has been volunteering with the program for a year. Every Sunday morning, she joins a group of runners in a riverside park in Ji'an.

Before working with participants, volunteers complete a three-week guide-running course, including one session conducted entirely in darkness.

As a dental student, Zhang had had little contact with people with vision loss. At first, she assumed her role would be straightforward: point out obstacles and give clear directions so the runners could focus on their pace.

"But when I was plunged into darkness, I realized that these runners are placing not just their bodies, but their full trust in you," she said.

Hu Liang, the founder of Red Stars and an associate professor at Jinggangshan University (JGSU) in Jiangxi province, has visual impairment himself. Born to parents who were both completely blind, he developed severe myopia that gradually worsened until he could see little more than blurred shapes.

Hu said those years were extremely difficult until running helped him rebuild both his physical and mental strength. Later, when he learned that blind athletes at the Paralympic Games competed with the help of guide runners, he had a revelation: running could open new possibilities for people like him, who had lost their sight.

In 2022, Hu founded Red Stars. The name draws inspiration from the revolutionary history of the Jinggangshan area and symbolizes perseverance and hope. Most of the program's volunteers are JGSU students who come from all over China.

"They are like little stars, coming together to shine for a shared cause: supporting people with visual impairments," Hu said.

The program connects volunteers and runners through a guide rope — a sports neck gaiter twisted into a figure-eight.

"It's a clever design," said Chen Xinping, a runner who lost his sight in 2010. "If I drift off course, the rope tightens slightly and gently guides me back. It allows volunteers to lead us without taking over, so we can truly enjoy the run ourselves."

Before joining Red Stars, Chen rarely left home without the support of family members. But the program gave him the confidence to venture beyond his familiar surroundings.

Originally from Shangrao in Jiangxi province, Chen celebrated his 60th birthday in April by setting a personal record at a Red Stars event in Nanchang, the provincial capital, where he completed six kilometers.

"The lives of people with visual impairments are like a long march," Chen said. "Red Stars helped us find our starting point and take the first steps on a new journey."

> "They are like little stars, coming together to shine for a shared cause: supporting people with visual impairments."
>
> **Hu Liang,** the founder of the Red Stars Charity Program

Strengthening bonds

For many participants, the benefits of Red Stars go far beyond the running track, including physical strength, confidence, and independence.

One of them is Zhang Qian, who experienced depression after losing his eyesight in his 30s. Initially, he doubted whether running was even possible, given that he often bumps into things while walking. Despite his reservations, he decided to give it a try.

With the steady support of his guide runners, Zhang has made progress step by step. "I went from just a few kilometers at the beginning to 10 kilometers now," he said.

Zhang Qian's regular guide runner is Zhang Hongying, who has grown alongside him. Before joining Red Stars, she could barely run two kilometers. This past winter, she completed a half marathon.

"It's the determination of the runners that keeps me going. They treasure every opportunity to run and always give their best," she said. "We are not merely helpers and those being helped — we're friends who achieve things together."

Man Xinyuan, 23, a senior at JGSU and a volunteer with Red Stars, believes the runners need to be treated as equals and offered genuine companionship.

He recalled accompanying a runner with vision loss to a marathon in Zunyi, Guizhou province, in 2023. Man wanted to take photos for him, but his partner declined, explaining that his phone's screen reader can only read text, so images mean nothing to him.

"Don't worry — I'll help you 'see' them," Man replied. He later sent detailed text descriptions of each photo so his partner could imagine the event.

According to Man, Red Stars feels like a family, with people supporting each other both on and off the track. As an environmental design major, he drew inspiration from the program for his graduation project: an inclusive kindergarten designed with accessibility in mind. He also hopes to create a comprehensive visual identity for Red Stars.

"Students from different academic backgrounds contribute in many ways and grow through the experience," Hu said.

Design students create patterns for guide ropes and team uniforms, psychology students offer emotional support, and sports science students lead rehabilitation exercises.

"As a teacher, it is incredibly rewarding to watch students grow from freshmen into capable, confident, and determined young adults," Hu added.

Expanding reach

What began as a small campus initiative has since developed into a much broader support network.

Red Stars now has nearly 4,000 volunteers, has organized close to 300 events, and has served over 30,000 people who are blind or have low vision.

In 2024, Hu established a rehabilitation center to support people who lost their eyesight later in life, expanding the initiative far beyond running.

"This has been made possible by national policies," Hu said. He noted that in late 2023, the China Disabled Persons' Federation directed every province and region to establish at least one service center for each type of disability beginning in 2024.

Red Stars' center is located on the campus of JGSU, which provides space and equipment free of charge. The 1,000-square-meter facility includes tactile pathways, a sports zone, a Braille library, and life-skills spaces designed to help participants relearn daily tasks in a safe environment.

Zhang Qian benefited greatly from the center, gaining orientation and mobility skills that now allow him to travel independently. "I used to wait at home until my family had time to take me out," he said. "Now I can go wherever I need to on my own."

Zhang Qian now works as a trainer at the center, helping others learn how to navigate life without sight.

The Red Stars model is also expanding beyond JGSU. In Yudu county, also in Jiangxi province, a new running group for people with visual impairments has been launched with the program's support.

Several other universities have visited JGSU to learn from Red Stars and apply its approach to their own projects, such as audio-described films, accessible design projects, and hiking groups for people with visual impairments.

"The methods may differ, but we share the same goal: bringing society together to support people with disabilities," Hu said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:47 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:47 PM

Z WEEKLY



Russian actor lives Chinese stories

From extra roles to revolutionary dramas, a Russian actor discovers his place in China's storytelling world.



Above: Antonov Dmitry portrays a Soviet paratrooper in the Chinese film *Survival*. **Right:** Dmitry (third from left) plays the German communist revolutionary Otto Braun in the Chinese micro-drama *Bright Horizon*. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By DU AORAN
duaoran@i21st.cn

In the countryside of Le'an county, Jiangxi province, Russian actor Antonov Dmitry stood face-to-face with Chinese actor Chi Shuai on the set of the revolutionary historical micro-drama *Bright Horizon*.

Dmitry, 37, plays Otto Braun, also known in China as Li De, a German military adviser sent to China by the Communist International in the 1930s. In the scene, Braun insists on his own military judgment and demands full command of the troops, while Mao Zedong, played by Chi, argues for tactical adjustments based on the realities on the battlefield.

"This is one of the most emotionally charged scenes I've ever filmed," Dmitry said, recalling how he slammed the table so hard during shooting that he bruised his hand.

"But I didn't feel the pain," he said. "I was completely immersed in the role."

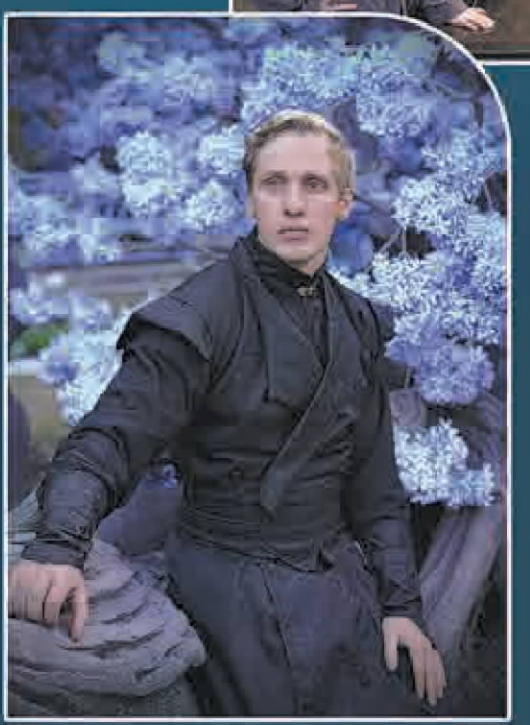
Even during camera adjustments and brief water breaks, the actors stayed in character, maintaining the emotional pressure throughout.

"If you relax for even a second, the tension disappears," he said.

Dmitry admitted that in recent years he has begun carrying heart medication with him on set as a precaution.

"It shows how physically and emotionally demanding historical roles can be," he said.

For Dmitry, the scene was more than just a performance. It reflected what has drawn him ever deeper into acting in China: the challenge of entering another history, another emotional world, and another way of storytelling.



Above: Dmitry takes part in a traditional Chinese-style photo shoot wearing *hanfu* at Hengdian World Studios in Zhejiang province. **Bottom:** Dmitry appears as a Russian police officer in the Chinese film *Moscow Mission*.
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Finding his rhythm

Dmitry did not originally plan to become an actor. He studied engineering at university, specializing in mining and natural gas. "It was a very technical and logical world," he said.

But art had always been part of his upbringing in Russia. Music, painting, and theater surrounded him from an early age, and at 18 he started teaching himself classical vocal performance, an experience that later helped him develop his voice, stage presence, and acting skills.

"That early exposure to art became an outlet that helped me balance the rigidity of engineering," he said.

His interest in Chinese culture deepened after he watched a Chinese stage performance in Moscow.

"It was completely different from what I knew," he said. "It was subtle, restrained, almost like an ink painting. It didn't explain everything, but it made you feel everything."

That impression stayed with him. Years later, Dmitry came to China for postgraduate studies. Then, in 2019, a friend working in media production offered him an unexpected opportunity: a small role as an extra in a television drama being filmed in Nanjing, Jiangsu province.

"That was my first time on a film set," he said. "I stood quietly at the edge with no lines, thinking, 'Where am I, and what am I supposed to do?'"

But as soon as filming began, the atmosphere changed.

"The director called 'Action!' and the set suddenly came alive," Dmitry recalled. By the third take, he began to understand the rhythm of filmmaking. "Even without any lines, I felt like I was part of something meaningful."

Over the next six years, Dmitry gradually built a career in China's entertainment industry, moving from extra roles to supporting parts and more complex characters in television dramas and films.

The work, he said, has often been physically demanding. He remembered one film shoot that lasted 21 hours, with long periods of waiting in the makeup room and only brief moments to rest.

As his experience grew, Dmitry began collaborating regularly with agents, casting directors, and production companies.

> "I understand how Chinese sets operate, how directors communicate, and how emotions are expressed in Chinese storytelling. Maybe I've become more of a *laonei* — an insider."
>
> **Antonov Dmitry,** a Russian actor

Most of his roles, he said, come through in-person auditions, online castings, or self-taped submissions. Sometimes, production teams contact him directly after seeing his portfolio.

Language skills and cultural understanding, he added, have been central to his progress.

"I don't really feel like a *laowai* anymore," he said, using the Chinese term for "foreigner". "I understand how Chinese sets operate, how directors communicate, and how emotions are expressed in Chinese storytelling. Maybe I've become more of a *laonei* — an insider."

For Dmitry, acting is not only about speaking lines. Costumes, lighting, and the surrounding environment all help him connect with a character.

He recalled filming at Hengdian World Studios in Dongyang, Zhejiang province, where he played a French envoy in a historical drama.

"The moment I put on the costume, the entire environment brought the character to life," he said. "A chair, a lantern, a beam of light — every detail helps you step into the role."

Working with experienced actors has also deeply influenced him. Earlier this year, he acted alongside Mei Ting — one of China's best-known actresses and a national first-class performer — in the film *Heart of Gold*.

Four years earlier, Dmitry had watched Mei's performance in *Blind Massage* (2014) and was struck by her precision and professionalism. On set, he said, he saw that same mastery up close.

"She is extremely focused and has a remarkable sense of the camera. In one scene, she conveyed complex emotions through very small movements, with perfect timing," he said. "That is not acting — it is living in the moment."

From screen to stage

Outside of filming, Dmitry balances several pursuits. He is a partner in a fitness club chain in Russia while also continuing to read extensively on acting theory and biographies of great performers.

But his main artistic goal now is to join a theater company.

That ambition grew stronger last May after he watched Canadian international students perform an opera adaptation of *Thunderstorm*, the classic drama written by Cao Yu in 1934.

"They crossed cultural boundaries and expressed pain, passion, and conflict with such sincerity that the audience burst into applause," he said. "I was completely captivated."

The performance made him think more seriously about theater. Unlike film, theater allows no retakes or editing. Everything depends on the actor's voice, timing, and direct connection with the audience.

Dmitry said he hopes to further develop his improvisation skills, voice control, and stage presence, and to better understand China through its classic works.

"Acting is no longer just my job. It is part of who I am," he said. "I cannot imagine my life without it."



An international student plays Go with a Chinese student at Fudan University on May 10.
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Ancient game connects global youth

By ZHENG YIRAN in Shanghai
zhengyiran@chinadaily.com.cn

Without Go, Filip Filipovic, Noah Lauder and Kseniia Shatarova might never have become friends in China.

The three international students come from different countries and have different reasons for taking up the ancient Chinese board game Go, known in Chinese as *weiqi*. But through the Shanghai International Student Go Training Program, they found a shared language on the board.

The program, hosted by Fudan University, was launched on May 10 as a side event of the upcoming 10th World Collegiate Weiqi Championship. It aims to teach international students in Shanghai the fundamentals of Go while offering them a deeper understanding of Chinese culture.

More than 200 students applied, and 86 were ultimately selected. Participants came from 35 countries across Asia, Africa, Europe, North America, South America and Oceania.

According to the organizers, the course provides systematic instruction, covering everything from the basic rules of Go to practical gameplay training. Bilingual teaching assistants are also on hand to help ensure smooth communication in the classroom.

Beyond the game itself, the program includes friendly matches, cultural workshops and *hanfu* (traditional Chinese attire) experiences, giving students the opportunity to learn about Chinese traditions firsthand.

Filipovic, a 29-year-old doctoral student from Serbia at Fudan University, first encountered Go while attending primary school in China.

"At first, I played chess with my schoolmates. Later, our school introduced Go classes, and that completely drew my attention," he said. "The rules are simple, but the possible variations are extremely complex. The real difficulty is much higher than that of many other board games."

Having completed both primary and middle school in China, Filipovic said Go has become an important part of how he understands Chinese culture.

"Every board game carries its own cultural heritage," he said. "Go is deeply connected to Chinese ideas of yin and yang, as well as ancient military strategy, including concepts found in Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*. That is what makes it so fascinating."

His Go idol is Nie Weiping, a Chinese Go master and honorary chairman of the Chinese Weiqi Association.

"I used to watch him play when I was a kid," Filipovic said. "I love his fuseki and his understanding of the game. For me, it is a kind of philosophy."

For Lauder, a freshman from Australia at Fudan University, Go became appealing through another part of Chinese culture: tea.

"When I came to China, I found it really interesting how tea and board games are often enjoyed together as part of everyday life," he said. "That was when I started playing Go."

Lauder said he sees Go as a hobby that can last a lifetime.

"It is easy to get started, but there is no ceiling," he said. "You can keep growing with the game."

Shatarova, a 20-year-old Russian student at Tongji University, said she was drawn to Go because of its complexity.

"Go is one of the toughest games in the world," she said. "I play it to challenge myself."

She often plays with Chinese friends and said each game gives her another way to understand Chinese culture. Given the chance, she hopes to introduce Go to people in her hometown.

Zhang Zhuo, a researcher at the Institute of Journalism at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, said Go can help young people connect across cultures.

"Go is a quiet form of communication because many of the ideas embodied in the game resonate with people from different cultural backgrounds," Zhang said. "The game reflects the Confucian concept of balance and moderation in Eastern philosophy, while also sharing similarities with ideas found in Western cultural traditions."

She said training programs and competitions can make traditional Chinese culture more accessible to young people worldwide.

"Go is a cultural symbol that transcends ideology and serves as an important bridge for exchanges between civilizations," she said.

The 10th Annual World Collegiate Weiqi Championship will be held at Fudan University from July 7 to 13. Players from across the globe will gather in Shanghai to compete and build friendships through the centuries-old board game.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:47 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:47 PM

SPORTS

BASKETBALL

Wemby dazzles as Spurs top Thunder

French star produces epic 41-point, 24-rebound display to give San Antonio a 1-0 lead in the Western Conference finals

OKLAHOMA CITY — The longest night of Victor Wembanyama's NBA career was over.

His postgame media responsibilities were done, and he had just seen his father and a few other people in a quiet hallway near the San Antonio Spurs locker room.

He didn't walk back to the room. He got a ride — in a wheeled office chair, pushed by a Spurs staffer.

"Save some steps," Wembanyama said.

To be fair, after the night he had, energy was probably in short supply anyway.

A 41-point, 24-rebound playoff game. Only a few people in the history of basketball have done that — Wilt Chamberlain eight times, Hakeem Olajuwon twice, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar once, Charles Barkley once.

Add Wembanyama to that list now, after his latest masterpiece — in a career-high 49 minutes — carried the Spurs to a 122-115 double-overtime win over the Oklahoma City Thunder in Game 1 of the Western Conference finals on Monday night.

"The best player in the (expletive) world," Spurs guard Stephon Castle announced for all the world to hear in a postgame interview on NBC.

Officially, no, that's not the case. The best player in the NBA world right now is Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, the player who got his second consecutive Most Valuable Player award in a pregame ceremony with Wembanyama looking on.

It was an award Wembanyama wanted — and still wants. Seeing Gilgeous-Alexander raise that trophy, though, had an effect on the 7-foot-4 French star.

"He's competitive. If you're a competitor and you see another competitor get rewarded with what you want. If that's motivation, we all get motivated by different things," Spurs coach Mitch Johnson said. "As a competitive person, that would be my approach and perspective."



San Antonio Spurs forward Victor Wembanyama celebrates after scoring a dunk during Game 1 of the Western Conference finals against the Oklahoma City Thunder on Monday in Oklahoma City. Wembanyama scored 41 points and pulled down 24 rebounds to lead the Spurs to an epic 122-115 double-overtime triumph. AP

Did it matter?

"I've still got a lot to learn," Wembanyama said. "And I want to get that trophy many times in my career."

Are you the best player?

"The world is eight billion people," Wembanyama said. "That's eight billion opinions."

Wembanyama's final line: 14 for 25 from the field, 12 for 13 from the foul line, and his lone 3-pointer came late in the first overtime, tying the game from well beyond the arc. Without that shot, there's probably no second overtime. There's probably a 1-0 series lead for Oklahoma City going into Game 2 on Wednesday night.

He blocked three shots and changed countless others. He dunked on the Thunder and flexed, more than once.

The Spurs outrebounded the Thunder 61-40. Wembanyama even smiled and posed for the cameras at times. This was his first conference finals game, on the road no less, and he was as comfortable as could be.

"I think he's a great player with high impact, obviously, and when you play against those players it's kind of an acquired thing," Thunder coach Mark Daigneault said. "You're learning as you go. We've gone through that with other great players."

This was a game that the Spurs were supposed to lose: underdogs, on the road, without injured point guard De'Aaron Fox, against the defending champion, a team unbeaten in the first two rounds of the playoffs. A 10-point lead in the fourth quarter was given away, and the Thunder isn't in the habit of losing leads in the final moments.

And none of that mattered, largely because of Wembanyama. The road to the NBA title now goes through San Antonio; if the Spurs win all their home games the rest of the way, they'll be NBA champions.

That's a long way off. But the Spurs aren't a rising team anymore, they're already here.

"The message would be that we, as a team, are ready to go into any environment, in any place, against anybody," Wembanyama said. "And even though we've still got a lot to learn, our effort should be over anybody else's. And tonight, we were relentless."

With the triumph at Oklahoma City's Paycom Center, the Spurs stole home-court advantage in the best-of-seven series that will send the winner to the NBA Finals.

Wembanyama admitted the sight of Thunder star Gilgeous-Alexander receiving his second straight MVP trophy before the game "for sure" made the clash more personal.

He was named Defensive Player of the Year, but finished third in the MVP voting announced on Sunday.

Rookie Dylan Harper, starting in place of the injured Fox, scored 24 points and snagged seven steals for San Antonio. Castle added 17 points and 11 assists as the Spurs extended their season dominance over the Thunder.

Oklahoma City, trying to become the first team to repeat as champion since Golden State in 2017 and 2018, piled up a league-best 64 regular-season wins, but dropped four of five contests against the Spurs — who won 62 regular-season games to return to the playoffs for the first time since 2019.

Gilgeous-Alexander was limited to 24 points after shaking off a sluggish start to spark the Thunder's rally from a 10-point fourth-quarter deficit.

Alex Caruso scored 31 points to lead the Thunder and Jalen Williams returned from a six-game injury absence to score 26.

Oklahoma City trailed by 10 in the fourth quarter, but the Thunder clawed back and it was knotted at 99-99 with 33.2 seconds left when Wembanyama spun in for a basket that put San Antonio up 101-99.

Gilgeous-Alexander then tied it up with a layup and Chet Holmgren blocked Wembanyama's potential game-winner at the buzzer.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

SOCCER

Neymar gets the World Cup nod from Ancelotti



Santos' Neymar reacts during a Brazilian Championship match against Coritiba. AP

RIO DE JANEIRO — Neymar has been named in Brazil's squad for next month's World Cup, manager Carlo Ancelotti said on Monday, handing the forward a chance to return to international soccer's biggest stage after an injury-disrupted cycle.

The 34-year-old, Brazil's all-time leading scorer, comes back following a prolonged absence due to a series of injuries that have kept him out for much of the qualifying campaign, as the five-time champion pursues a record-extending sixth title.

As dozens of journalists gathered at Rio de Janeiro's Museum of Tomorrow for a ceremony featuring musical acts and celebrity guests, all eyes were on Ancelotti's decision whether or not to include Neymar in the squad.

The 66-year-old Italian, who took charge of Brazil's men's national team last year, had not previously called up the former Barcelona and Paris Saint-Germain player. He told reporters earlier this month that Neymar's inclusion would be based on fitness and form, not sentiment.

"We evaluated Neymar throughout the year and noticed that, recently, he has been playing consistently and has improved his physical condition," Ancelotti said at a news conference on Monday.

"He has the same role and responsibilities as everyone else, but he is an experienced player.

"It's true that in some positions we prioritized experience."

Neymar, who has 79 international goals, but has not featured for Brazil since 2023, has faced questions about his fitness and form following an injury-marred spell at Al Hilal and an underwhelming return to his boyhood club Santos last year.

The forward said on Sunday he was satisfied that he had done all he could to prove he was fully fit and deserved a place in the squad.

"Physically, I feel great. I've been improving with every game," he told reporters after Santos' 3-0 defeat to Coritiba.

The rest of Brazil's squad was largely retained from the qualifying campaign and recent friendlies, with the likes of Vinicius Junior, Raphinha, Matheus Cunha and Endrick shouldering the attacking duties alongside Neymar.

Real Madrid striker Rodrygo, defender Eder Militao and Chelsea winger Estevao were left out due to injuries. Chelsea forward Joao Pedro and midfielder Andrey Santos, who had been called up on previous occasions, also surprisingly missed the final squad.

"Some of the players who were with us this year won't be happy with this list. I'm sorry, and I want to thank everyone who was with us," Ancelotti said.

Brazil will open its World Cup campaign against Morocco on June 13 in New Jersey. It also faces Haiti and Scotland in Group C.

REUTERS



A Neymar lookalike poses for a photo before the announcement of Brazil's squad on Monday. AP

Flying Kiwis flock to support their team in a uniquely New Zealand way

WELLINGTON, New Zealand — They call themselves the Flying Kiwis, an eclectic group of New Zealanders from around the world who, whenever their national soccer team plays a major match, assemble to provide raucous and usually outnumbered support.

The deliberate irony: Kiwis — the eponymous bird from which New Zealanders take their nickname — are flightless.

Since 2009 the Flying Kiwis have followed the New Zealand men's team at home and overseas, and they'll be at the World Cup, offering a small island of loud, proud and distinctly Kiwi support.

Small beginnings

In 2009, New Zealand played Bahrain in a two-game qualifying series, with the winner advancing to the 2010 World Cup in South Africa. After the first leg in Bahrain ended in a 0-0 draw, New Zealand needed a win in the return match at home to qualify for the World Cup.

Matt Fejos, who was then a university student and, he admits, not a hardcore soccer fan, wanted to lend as much spirit as possible to the New Zealand team.

"So I got a credit card with a $1,000 limit and I bought 32 tickets for my mates and we wanted to do all we could, so we got banners, we got the coveralls saying 'Flying Kiwis' and we got New Zealand flags," Fejos said. "That was a pretty memorable moment for anyone who was there and for football to arrive in New Zealand a little bit."

Now those friends are spread around the world and have recruited other friends to the ranks of the Flying Kiwis.

"I had 10 years living in the UK, so, with the Confederations Cup in Russia in 2017, there were 30 of us who went to that, and it was kind of a special experience," Fejos said.

Russian supporters "organized a friendly game between our fans and their fans, and it brought in another kind of meaning for me: that you're doing it for your team, but actually in far away places you might be the first New Zealanders they've ever met, so you're kind of representing your country.



New Zealand's players celebrate scoring during a Confederations Cup game against Mexico in Sochi, Russia, in June 2017. AP

"To connect with the world through the global language of football is a beautiful thing and a beautiful way to travel."

Local culture

The Flying Kiwis had to find their way to their own brand of fandom. Soccer is not the major sport in New Zealand, where rugby holds sway. The soccer traditions that are firmly fixed in the culture of other countries don't exist at home, so Fejos and his friends have made their own.

The Flying Kiwis support section is usually small in number compared with the fan bases of New Zealand's opponents, but, Fejos said, "There's advantage to being so small — we can be really unified."

The New Zealand team will probably need all the support it can get at the World Cup. Ranked No 85 in the world, it is drawn in Group G against No 9 Belgium, No 21 Iran and No 29 Egypt.

"There's so much more belief (among the New Zealand team) because of where the players are playing," Fejos said of the foreign-based national team members.

"There's so many more playing at a top, top standard and in these difficult environments, these really charged atmospheres with crazy passionate fans. So they're used to playing under that pressure as well."

The mascot

The kiwi isn't the most intimidating of national symbols compared with other mascots, such as eagles or lions.

"Sometimes it can seem a bit funny or deprecating, but it's a thing that means a lot," Fejos said.

"The kiwi is a flightless bird, but when you consider the challenges that we face: we're so isolated, so far away from the world, the professional game is very young here, there are not many professional academies or opportunities.

"Despite that, I think it's incredible for some of those (New Zealand) players to play in some of the best leagues of the world, and to take (their talent) to the world at a World Cup."

Fejos said the "metaphor means a lot, defying expectations overseas".

"People think of us as a rugby country, and probably as hobbits, but that allows us to go in with that underdog mentality, fearless," he said.

"We want to stamp our mark and show them something different."

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:47 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:49 PM

Industrial links
Testing grounds boosting innovation across regions
BUSINESS, PAGE 7



World classics conference to start in Athens
TOP NEWS, PAGE 3



Octagon win
Martial artist secures key victory at Macao ultimate fighting event
SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 TUESDAY, JUNE 2, 2026

VISIONARY PATHWAY | JINJIANG EXPERIENCE

Jinjiang model still shaping China's growth

Balanced, comprehensive development path has turned city into an apparel powerhouse

By **XU WEI** and **HU MEIDONG** in Jinjiang, Fujian

More than 47 years ago, Hong Zhaoshe started a clothing business with little more than a wooden door panel for a workbench, a single sewing machine and less than 300 yuan ($44) to his name. Like many small workshop owners in China at the time, he cut, sewed and sold garments himself, often sleeping just two hours a day.

"I always believe that by offering genuine goods at fair prices and doing business with integrity, the market would eventually recognize us," Hong said.

Today, his hometown of Jinjiang — a coastal city in Fujian province — manufactures one-fifth of the world's athletic shoes, one-fifth of its jackets and one-eighth of its slippers.

The transformation from clusters of family-run workshops into a global manufacturing center was not simply the by-product of globalization or low-cost labor. It was also shaped by an economic philosophy that emerged at a defining moment for China's private sector.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, as private businesses grappled with the uncertainties surrounding China's entry into the World Trade Organization in 2001, Xi Jinping — then serving in Fujian province — made seven extensive fact-finding visits to Jinjiang.

In 2002, Xi summarized and put forward the city's development model into what became known as the "Jinjiang Experience" — a framework emphasizing commitment to the real economy, market-oriented growth, industrial upgrading, entrepreneurial resilience and government support tailored to local conditions.

The framework held that sustainable growth depended not on speculative expansion, but on balancing traditional manufacturing with technological innovation, coordinating industrialization with urbanization, fostering both small businesses and major enterprises, and allowing government to guide — rather than replace — market forces.

More than two decades later, it remains influential as China seeks to steer its economy toward higher-quality growth. The country's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) calls for further developing the "Jinjiang Experience" and improving the comprehensive support system for private-sector development.

Hong, the businessman, now chairman of Fujian Seven Brand Fashion Technology, recalls a moment that tested those ideas.

By 1998, his company had accumulated modest capital, but the global apparel industry was rapidly shifting toward automation and standardization. Convinced that low-cost, semi-manual production would eventually become obsolete, Hong made what was then an enormous gamble: He invested $7 million to import advanced suit-production lines from Western Europe and establish rigorous quality-control systems.

During that transition, Xi, then deputy Party secretary of Fujian province, visited the company's production lines. Hong still remembers the visit vividly, describing Xi's manner as pragmatic and understated as he inspected the new equipment.

"His modest, down-to-earth and approachable manner deeply moved and inspired us," Hong said.

Xi encouraged the company to continue innovating, strengthen its brand and pursue international recognition. For Hong, the remarks amounted to a vote of confidence at a moment of financial uncertainty.

The once-humble workshop built around a wooden door panel has since evolved into one of China's best-known menswear brands.

"Since taking up leadership positions in the early years of China's reform and opening-up, I have worked in Hebei, Fujian, Zhejiang and Shanghai before coming to the central leadership," Xi, now China's top leader, said during a meeting with private entrepreneurs in February last year. "Throughout those years, I have consistently placed great importance on supporting the healthy development of the private economy and the growth of private entrepreneurs."

*See **Jinjiang**, page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Ebola recovery



A health worker in the Democratic Republic of Congo, who recovered from an Ebola virus infection, receives her discharge certificate at the Evangelical Medical Center in Bunia, Ituri province, on Sunday, in the presence of Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus (left), director-general of the World Health Organization. Four health workers and a patient have been discharged from the center, while agencies have intensified efforts to contain a new outbreak caused by the Bundibugyo Ebola strain. GRADEL MUYISA MUMBERE / REUTERS

Outbound investment regulation hailed

By **ZHONG NAN**
zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

China's latest move to regulate outbound investment will bolster high-level opening-up, expand international investment cooperation and better safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies operating overseas, said market watchers and business leaders.

On Monday, a new regulation on outbound investment was unveiled by the State Council, China's Cabinet, which will take effect on July 1.

The regulation, consisting of 34 articles, comes at a time when the nation's outbound investment is continuing to grow, with Chinese companies expanding their presence in sectors ranging from manufacturing to green energy and digital technologies.

Data from the Ministry of Commerce showed that China's nonfinancial outbound direct investment increased 1.3 percent year-on-year to $145.66 billion in 2025, while in the first four months of this year, such investment across all industries totaled 429.42 billion yuan ($63.5 billion), up 3.9 percent year-on-year.

Experts said the regulation is expected to provide a clearer institutional framework for overseas investment against a backdrop of rising protectionism and geopolitical uncertainties. The new rule will also help improve investment quality, deepen international cooperation and promote mutual benefits, they added.

Wei Jianguo, former vice-minister of commerce, said the regulation signals China's determination to be an active participant in global economic integration despite mounting geopolitical challenges.

Liu Ying, a researcher at Renmin University of China's Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies in Beijing, said, "By promoting high-quality outbound investment and strengthening regulatory safeguards, China aims to offer greater certainty for long-term business planning, deepen economic ties with overseas markets and help anchor global growth amid a volatile external environment."

According to the regulation, China will continue to advance high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, strengthen bilateral and multilateral investment cooperation mechanisms and play a more active role in shaping international investment rules.

The regulation also establishes clear safeguards for national security and development interests. Investors cannot export or use goods, technologies, services and related data that are prohibited from being exported under Chinese law. In addition, the export or use of restricted goods, technologies, services and related data requires prior authorization from relevant authorities.

Lyu Yue, a professor of economics at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing, said the regulation represents further refinement of China's outbound investment governance framework, and is aimed at helping companies pursue overseas opportunities while managing potential risks more effectively.

Xi Guohua, chairman of Chinese financial conglomerate CITIC Group Corp, said that clearer compliance requirements will help Chinese companies better identify sensitive sectors, avoid regulatory missteps and protect their long-term interests in overseas markets.

In a report released in late March, the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation said the need for stronger safeguards for outbound investment has increased because, in recent years, some countries have stepped up investment reviews and regulatory scrutiny of foreign companies on "national security" grounds.

In response to these challenges, the regulation also authorizes countermeasures against discriminatory restrictions, arbitrary business disruptions and other practices that undermine the interests of Chinese investors abroad.

Sherri He, managing director for China of Kearney, a United States-based management consultancy, said that as global markets become more complex and consumer demands evolve faster, Chinese companies need stronger risk management and governance capabilities to support sustainable, high-quality global expansion.

WORLD WATCH
By Fred S. Teng

Africa needs partners in its pursuit of stability

Africa should not be treated as a problem to be managed, but should be respected as a continent of sovereign nations, ancient civilizations, young populations, vast resources, expanding markets and historic potential.

For too long, much of the outside world has spoken about Africa through the language of crisis. Conflict, poverty, debt, migration, disease, corruption and instability often dominate the headlines. These realities cannot be ignored. But they are not the whole story. Africa is also a continent of creativity, resilience, entrepreneurship, culture, energy, agriculture, minerals, digital innovation and human ambition.

The central question is not whether Africa matters, as Africa clearly does matter. The real question is whether the international community will support Africa's stability and development in a way that respects African agency, strengthens African capacity and advances long-term peace and prosperity.

The stability and development of African countries do not constitute only an African issue. They are a global issue. A stable and prosperous Africa contributes to food security, energy security, climate resilience, public health, maritime safety, migration management, peacekeeping, industrial development and a more balanced international order. An unstable Africa, by contrast, creates human suffering, regional insecurity and lost economic potential.

No country can develop without a basic level of stability. Roads cannot be built if communities are constantly displaced. Schools cannot function if children are fleeing violence. Agriculture cannot expand if farmers cannot safely cultivate land. Investment cannot grow if the legal and security environment is uncertain.

*See **Continent**, page 10*



INSIDE
Transformative trajectory
Global Views, page 12

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved
Newsstand prices:
US $1 Canada C$1; UK 1£ EU 1€
Kenya 50 Kenya Shilling
Asia Pacific: Thailand 120 thb; Philippines 120 php; Myanmar 2000 kyat; Japan 210 yen; Dubai 10 dirham; Pakistan 300 rupee

BUILDING BONDS ACROSS BORDERS, ONE STITCH AT A TIME

Shanghai market for custom-fit clothes draws visitors with keen craftsmanship, speedy service

By **HE QI** in Shanghai
heqi@chinadaily.com.cn

A short video showing Tamara Vucic, wife of Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic, browsing for custom-fit clothes at Shanghai's South Bund Soft Spinning Material Market during their recent visit to China went viral on social media. But long before the high-profile guest turned the global spotlight on this market, it had cemented its position as a go-to sartorial destination among travelers from around the world.

Every day for nearly three decades, as rolling shutters creak open at 8:30 am, visitors from home and abroad line up at the market's entrance, many carrying large suitcases with ample room to take home custom-made clothes.



A tailor busy at work inside a shop at South Bund Soft Spinning Material Market in Shanghai last week. GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

"Many people make our market their first stop. Some come here even before they check into hotels," said Chen Xia, a second-generation tailor, who runs a shop owned by her in-laws, revealing a counterintuitive Shanghai tourism secret.

While many travelers flock to the Bund or Lujiazui's skyscrapers, a dedicated group heads straight to the three-story market located on Lujiabang Road in Huangpu district.

The market, which dates back to the 1990s, today boasts nearly 300 shops and sees over 1 million visitors annually. Foreigners account for 40 percent of these customers and contribute to 70 percent of the total sales, said Zhang Shengxiang, general manager of the market.

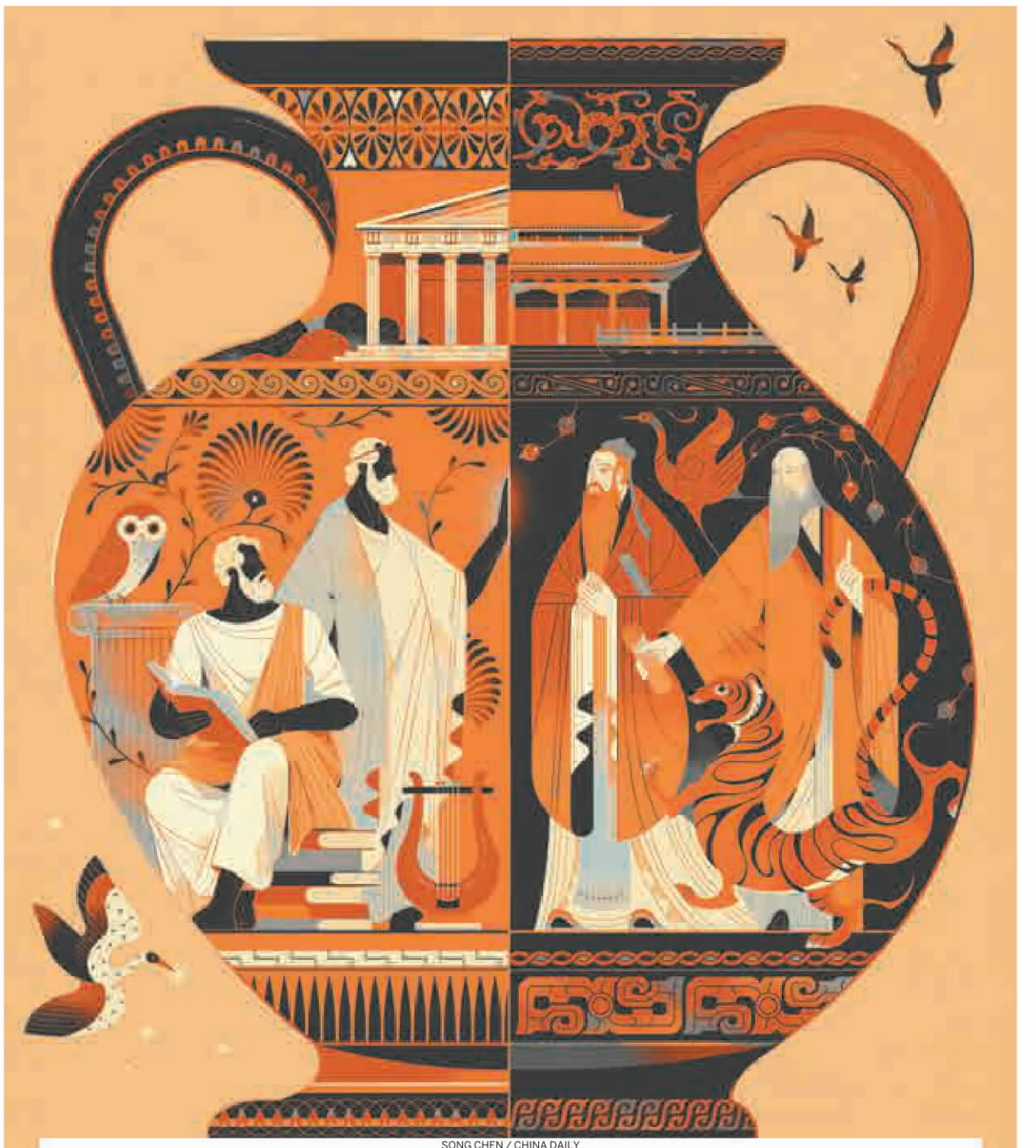
*See **Market**, page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:49 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:49 PM

INDEPTH



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

Confucius and Plato: the quest for modern relevance

Chinese scholars, overseas peers to attend world conference of classics in Athens

By **ZHAO XU**
zhaoxu@chinadaily.com.cn

In *The Odyssey*, Odysseus leaves Ithaca and journeys through a world of profoundly different city-states and cultures, encountering unfamiliar customs, political orders, and ways of life. The voyage becomes more than a long return home. By stepping beyond his own world, the wandering king gains the distance necessary to reflect upon it; travel becomes a form of learning, about others and self.

As Chinese scholars gather in Athens this year for the second World Conference of Classics, they will, in a sense, be embarking on a similar intellectual journey, said He Fangying, a classics professor closely involved in organizing the event, which was jointly initiated by China and Greece in 2024.

"The king, who 'saw the cities of many men and learned their mind' — to quote directly from Homer, is ultimately led to a single question: what is the best way to live? It is a question asked by our sages as well — one that has echoed across millennia and feels no less urgent today," she said.

Plato answered this question through the pursuit of justice, reason, and truth. Aristotle, meanwhile, saw the good life as one of human flourishing achieved through the cultivation of excellence and virtue, guided by practical wisdom and the "golden mean" — the balance between extremes in both personal conduct and civic life. For Chinese scholars, such ideas often resonate with the Confucian concept of "*zhongyong*" (Doctrine of the Mean), revealing striking echoes between the Greek and Chinese classical traditions in their shared search for moral and ethical order.

"The enduring influence of Homer's epics lies not simply in their antiquity, but in the fact that they helped shape the West's fundamental imagination of human nature, society, and political life," He said.

In 2017, He launched the first courses of ancient Greek and Latin for postgraduate students at the Institute of Foreign Literature, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, one of the conference's co-hosts alongside China's Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Greece's Ministry of Culture, and the Academy of Athens.

Having translated Plato's dialogue *Lysis* from Greek, her own path into the field began in 2002, when she enrolled in an ancient Greek class taught by Liu Xiaofeng, the philosopher-turned-classicist widely regarded as a leading figure in the revival of classical studies in China.

"Chinese classical studies and the study of the Western classics should not be treated separately, for the historical challenges confronted by modern China emerged, in large part, from its encounter with the West," said Liu in a previous interview.

According to He, what her mentor sought was to engage the Western classics on equal terms — neither venerating them from afar nor reducing them to instruments for contemporary use — but as traditions to be read seriously and respectfully from within his own horizon of thought.

In 2002, Liu co-launched the academic series *Classics and Interpretation*, organized around three main branches — Western Tradition, Chinese Tradition, and the Classics and Interpretation Journal. Since then, the series has expanded to 800 volumes.

Drawing in part upon the Chinese exegetical tradition, which dates back to around the second century BC, when Confucianism was canonized as a guiding moral foundation of Chinese society, Liu championed a method of close reading grounded in fidelity to the original language and textual precision. Moving beyond purely technical or ideological debate, it sought instead to return to the enduring questions posed by ancient thinkers from Plato to Confucius.

In the spring of 2000, Wu Fei, then a Ph.D. student in anthropology at Harvard, met Liu during the latter's visiting sojourn there. "He had only recently turned toward classical studies," recalled Wu, now a philosophy professor at Peking University.

Among the thinkers who most profoundly influenced Liu was German-American political philosopher Leo Strauss, whose work helped revive the study of classical political thought in the twentieth century.

"Strauss believed that modernity had not abandoned the idea of 'natural right', but fundamentally altered its meaning. For classical philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle, natural right referred to what is naturally just or proper — an objective standard for justice, political order, and the good life. Modern thought, by contrast, increasingly recast it as individual rights grounded in self-preservation," said Wu. "Strauss argued that this shift gradually gave rise to historicism, in which values became products of historical circumstance; and to relativism and nihilism, where objective truth and moral order themselves appeared uncertain."

"Having witnessed the rise of Nazi Germany before emigrating to the United States, Strauss responded not by calling for a return to antiquity, but by urging a renewed engagement with the concerns of the classical tradition," said Wu, referring to this year's conference theme, "Dialogue between Ancient and Modern: Contemporary Inspirations of Classical Wisdom".

"The question of how classical studies may still speak to modern life is, before all else, a question of whether modern people still trust in the wisdom of the ancients," said Liu, whose philosophical writings Wu first encountered in the 1990s as a sociology undergraduate at Peking University before later pursuing philosophy there as well.

> "It is this union of institutional order and inner virtue that I see as especially distinctive within the Chinese classical tradition."
>
> **Wu Fei,** philosophy professor at Peking University

"Those books were attempts to diagnose the spiritual and social tensions of the modern world, and it was precisely through that process that he was ultimately led to look further back," said Wu, who sees himself as having undergone a similar journey. His study of contemporary funerary practices in rural China gradually drew him into the world of traditional Confucian commentary centered on ritual, kinship, and moral cultivation, while also revealing the central role family played in both personal and political life across the ancient Chinese and Greco-Roman worlds.

Having translated into Chinese such works as Augustine's *City of God* — written in the aftermath of the Sack of Rome as the classical Roman world gave way to the Christian Middle Ages — and Plato's *The Apology of Socrates*, Wu is acutely aware of the layers of interpretation that have accumulated around classical Greco-Roman texts over centuries of Christian theology and modern Western thought.

"For Chinese scholars, the task is therefore not only to examine these established readings, but also to gradually peel back those layers in order to recover the original forms of thought beneath them," said Wu, who is the director of the Center for Nomos Studies at Peking University.

"The original Chinese concept is *li*, which can be understood on three levels. At its most basic, it refers to ritual or ceremony, something found in every civilization. More deeply, it extends to institutions and the normative ordering of political and social life. But *li* also carries an inward moral dimension: as Chinese philosopher Mencius suggested, human beings possess an innate ethical capacity that must be cultivated. It is this union of institutional order and inner virtue that I see as especially distinctive within the Chinese classical tradition," Wu said.

"I chose the ancient Greek word *nomos* because I believe it captures one of those striking moments of convergence in human thought. *Nomoi* — the title of Plato's final work, usually translated as *The Laws* — signifies more than law in the narrow legal sense; it also encompasses ritual, custom and normative order."

Reflecting on an intellectual life that has straddled the dual worlds of Western and Chinese classical studies, Wu said: "True immersion requires a degree of intellectual and moral identification, because classical studies are ultimately concerned not only with knowledge, but with the cultivation of character and the transformation of one's inner disposition."

In the 2024 volume of *In the Mind, in the Body, in the World*, scholars of early China and ancient Greece investigate how emotions were understood in philosophy, medicine, and literature from approximately the 5th century BC to the 2nd century AD. Topics covered range from equanimity in Taoism and Stoicism, to therapies of emotion in Greco-Roman and Chinese medicine, to the social function of contempt in Greek literature and Confucian thought.

Myrto Garani, a professor of Latin literature at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, spent three weeks teaching in Beijing last summer under a collaborative program between her university and the Center of Ancient Greek and Chinese Civilization in Athens, opened last year as China's first overseas high-level research center dedicated to classical studies.

Garani said that the Chinese scholars she was in touch with impressed her by "the seriousness of their scholarship, the strong philological training and the openness to comparative and interdisciplinary approaches", while her Chinese students stood out for "their critical perspectives, respect, and remarkable devotion".

"What I found particularly meaningful was the combination of academic professionalism with genuine human warmth," said Garani, who believes that "intercultural approaches in a global academic context demonstrate that the classics are not the exclusive inheritance of a single cultural world."

Last autumn, Wu traveled to Greece for the first time. Visiting Piraeus, the historic port of Athens, he found his mind returning to the opening line of Plato's *The Republic*: "I went down yesterday to the Piraeus with Glaucon the son of Ariston".

"The sight of Chinese cargo vessels," Wu said, "made me think about how civilizations continue to encounter one another across the same seas, and through memory, texts, and the lasting human search for meaning."

Both Wu and He will be among nearly 100 Chinese scholars attending this year's conference in Athens, scheduled for June 9 and 10.

"This is the first time Chinese classicists have appeared collectively in Athens, the cradle of the Western classical world," said He.

"For much of Chinese history, the study of canonical texts stood at the center of intellectual life. Deeply embedded within China's civilizational consciousness, this reverence for the wisdom of the past had persistently drawn generations of Chinese scholars toward classical studies — whether of their own tradition or others — as a way of engaging the foundational inheritances of the world's great civilizations: Greek, Chinese, Mesopotamian, Indian, and beyond."

One of them He had in mind was Luo Niansheng (1904–1990), who, having studied in Athens in the early 1930s, returned to China and devoted the rest of his life to translating the ancient Greek world into Chinese.

In 1986, a production of *Oedipus Rex* by Beijing's Central Academy of Drama was invited to the International Ancient Greek Drama Festival in Delphi and later performed in Athens. Luo, who first translated the play in 1935 while working with a Chinese archaeological team in northern China, attended as head of the Chinese delegation and later wrote an essay titled "Returning to Greece". A year later, the Academy of Athens awarded him its Highest Prize for Literature and Art.

When Luo died in 1990, his unfinished translation of Homer's *Iliad*, completed only halfway, was carried forward by another Chinese scholar, Wang Huansheng, who first learned ancient Greek through Russian in the former Soviet Union in the 1960s before completing Chinese translations of both *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*.

These days, He has joined Wang in sustaining the interpretation and study of Homer's epics, continuing across three generations a distinctly Chinese intellectual journey into the heart of the ancient Greek world.

In *The Odyssey*, Odysseus descends into the underworld to seek guidance from the prophet Tiresias on his journey home. There he encounters Achilles, the greatest hero of *The Iliad*, who confesses that "I'd rather slave on earth for another man ... than rule down here over all the breathless dead".

"Achilles is defined by glory and remembrance, Odysseus by endurance and return. Both represent the highest ideals of life held by ancient Greeks, and yet Homer seems to have given his final word to Odysseus," said He.

Two centuries after the composition of *The Odyssey*, Confucius was born in the mid-sixth century BC. Like Odysseus, who spent two decades away from Ithaca, Confucius traveled for 14 years among the competing states of his age, not by force of circumstance but by conscious choice.

If the Greek tradition often framed travel as a heroic encounter with difference, the Confucian tradition understood it as ethical and political learning, the search for moral order and wise governance. Yet both suggest that a culture comes to know itself more deeply through encountering another.

In *The Analects*, compiled by later generations after the death of Confucius, the sage once asks his disciples about the way of living they aspire. While the others speak of governing states and achieving distinction, the disciple Zeng Dian offers a quieter vision, one attuned to both nature and the self: in the warmth of late spring, to bathe in the river, stroll in the breeze, and return home singing.

Confucius responds simply: "I am with Dian."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:49 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:49 PM

TOP NEWS

Services seen as new growth driver in trade

Tech advantages well placed to turn into new competitive edge in global value chains

By **WANG KEJU**
wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn

As part of a broader effort to optimize the nation's trade structure, China's foreign trade is gaining fresh momentum, with services emerging as a new driver of growth, supported by a steady rise in exports of knowledge-intensive services and a surge in inbound tourism, experts said.

Their comments came on the heels of recent data showing that China's services trade deficit shrank in April to its smallest monthly level in over a year.

The deficit in services trade fell to $14.8 billion in April, down nearly 40 percent from $24.3 billion in March, according to data from the State Administration of Foreign Exchange. It was the narrowest monthly gap since December 2024.

China is doubling down on services exports, with policymakers having embedded "encouraging and supporting services exports" into the Government Work Report as a key task for this year.

China's services trade has run a persistent deficit for years, due to the country's relative weakness in exporting high-value services, said Zhao Jinping, vice-president of the China Association of Trade in Services.

But the gap is now closing at an accelerating pace, a shift that Zhao said points to "a huge improvement" in the quality of China's services sector supply.

Exports of telecommunications, computer and information services, which covers cloud computing, software development and data processing, have expanded rapidly. The surplus in this category widened to $5.5 billion in April, from $3.1 billion in March, data from the administration showed.

"As the global economy accelerates its digital transformation, China's technological advantages and digital application capabilities are well positioned to translate into a new competitive advantage in global value chains," said Zhu Caihua, a professor at the University of International Business and Economics.

Zhu also noted that China is negotiating or updating free trade agreements with multiple economies to push services and digital trade higher up the agenda.

Beyond knowledge-intensive exports, the travel services balance improved as inbound tourism rebounded, boosted by China's expanded visa-free policy covering 50 countries, and a 240-hour visa-free transit policy for travelers from 55 countries at 65 ports.

Cross-border trips made by foreign nationals increased 26.4 percent year-on-year in 2025 to more than 82 million, according to the National Immigration Administration.

The momentum has continued into 2026. China's travel service exports surged 32.3 percent year-on-year to 105.35 billion yuan ($14.6 billion) in the first quarter of 2026, the fastest growth among all service export categories, data from the Ministry of Commerce showed.

As countries around the world compete to attract travelers, China has emerged as a rising hot spot for global tourists, and policymakers are seizing the moment with a fresh wave of measures designed to facilitate every step of the journey, said Jiang Zhao, an associate researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation.

The government has also streamlined departure tax refunds and improved payment systems, making it easier for overseas tourists to spend in China.

The number of international travelers processing departure tax refunds in China tripled to 270,000 last year, and the value of those refunds for the year alone roughly equaled the cumulative total of the previous decade, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Travel services are not just an end in themselves, Jiang said, highlighting the inbound tourism push as a testing ground for deeper opening-up in finance, education, healthcare and other relevant services.

Medical outreach



A Chinese doctor examines the teeth of a local child on Saturday in Zanzibar, Tanzania. In collaboration with Zanzibar's Ministry of Health, the Chinese medical team provided free medical services to local residents during a one-day outreach clinic at Sinai Polyclinic. EMMANUEL HERMAN / XINHUA



Exhibit of progress

People visit a photo exhibition on the achievements of Chinese modernization on Saturday in Irkutsk, Russia, during a reception honoring Russian graduates who studied in China. The exhibition featured more than 20 selected photographs from Xinhua News Agency, showcasing China's progress in social and economic development, science, technology and culture.
FENG KAIHUA / XINHUA

International conference on classics set for Athens

By **CHEN JIE**
chenjie@chinadaily.com.cn

The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences announced on Monday that the second World Conference of Classics will be held on June 9 and 10 at the century-old Academy of Athens in Greece.

Under the theme "Dialogue between Ancient and Modern: Contemporary Inspirations from Classical Wisdom", the conference will explore the relevance of classical studies in today's world, the CASS announced at a news conference in Beijing on Monday.

Participants will examine how the enduring insights of classical wisdom can be reinterpreted to address contemporary challenges, inspire innovation and contribute to the progress of human society and civilization.

The event is jointly organized by the CASS, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Greek Ministry of Culture and the Academy of Athens. Around 200 scholars and experts in classical studies, civilization, culture, archaeology and related fields from 20 countries will attend.

Yue Yunxia, deputy director of the CASS Bureau of International Cooperation, said, "Through dialogue and scholarly exchange, attendees will discuss key issues related to classical civilizations and their contemporary significance, fostering greater understanding and consensus in the study of classical world civilizations."

The program will include an opening ceremony and a plenary session on the morning of June 9 and four parallel subforums running through the afternoon of June 9 and throughout June 10, followed by the closing ceremony that evening.

The four subforums will focus on "Virtue and Paideia: A Modern Interpretation of Classical Education"; "Friendship and Community: The Ethical Community in the Transition from Ancient to Modern Times"; "Peace and Order: Civilizational Solutions to the Shifting Global Landscape"; and "Technology and Civilization: Humanism in the Age of Digital Intelligence."

"Classical studies are not only about ancient thoughts that merit specialized research, but should also involve placing ancient wisdom within the context of contemporary global concerns," said Liu Zuokui, director of the CASS Institute of World History, which will host the "Peace and Order: Civilizational Solutions to the Shifting Global Landscape" subforum.

"This includes discussing how classical traditions can address current issues such as war and peace, power and justice, order and freedom, and the clash and mutual learning of civilizations," Liu added.

Li Guoqiang, deputy director of the CASS' Chinese Academy of History, which will host the subforum "Technology and Civilization: Humanism in the Age of Digital Intelligence", said: "Today, artificial intelligence and big data algorithms are deeply integrated into all aspects of our life, profoundly changing the way society operates."

"Therefore, our forum starts from the perspective of classical studies, linking technological transformations throughout history with the evolution of humanity, and connecting classical wisdom with contemporary humanistic spirit. We aim to use the classical humanistic spirit to respond to modern technological challenges, exploring the convergence between instrumental rationality and humanistic values."

The conference will release a joint initiative highlighting the role of classical wisdom in addressing global challenges, along with a new international visiting scholar program launched by the Chinese School of Classical Studies at Athens.

During the conference, an exhibition titled *Bringing Classics into the Modern World* will showcase classical texts and research publications from China and elsewhere, representative works of traditional Chinese art, achievements in archaeological science and cultural heritage preservation, and interactive experiences featuring intelligent technologies. Visitors will also be able to engage with traditional Chinese medicine through a range of immersive displays and activities.

Jinjiang: Establishing brand identity emphasized

From page 1

Li Ling, vice-president of Anta Group, said the company's rise into a global sportswear giant closely followed the direction laid out by Xi.

Li sees Anta's trajectory as reflecting a broader push for Chinese manufacturers to build globally competitive brands rather than remain anonymous contract producers.

When Anta was founded in 1991, Jinjiang's footwear industry was trapped in intense price competition, producing largely generic products. During a visit to the Jinjiang Footwear & Sports Industry International Exposition in 2001, Xi stopped at Anta's booth and urged the company to prioritize product quality and establish its own brand identity.

In 2019, during the annual session of the National People's Congress, and again at a symposium in 2024, Xi reiterated the same message to the company: Remain fully focused on the core business.

Guided by that philosophy, Anta spent more than three decades transforming itself from a local manufacturer into a global sportswear company — proof that industrial resilience is built through long-term accumulation rather than speculative capital.

Liao Meng, an associate research fellow at the Fujian Academy of Social Sciences, said the focus on the real economy did not emerge in isolation. "It also required close coordination between private enterprises and government support," Liao said.

He contends that the "Jinjiang Experience" remains relevant because it links industrial growth with broader social development, ensuring that the wealth generated by manufacturing translates into stronger infrastructure, narrower urban-rural gaps and more tangible prosperity for local residents.

The next stage of Jinjiang's industrial transformation is already underway.

Zhang Zhenxian, general manager of Fujian Yuanlyu Energy-Saving Technology, confronted a mounting environmental challenge in Neikeng township, China's largest slipper-manufacturing hub.

The town's factories, which produce one-eighth of the world's slippers each year, consume roughly 2 million metric tons of EVA material — a versatile copolymer known for its lightweight, durable and soft qualities — each year, generating about 100,000 tons of industrial scrap historically destined for landfills or incinerators.

Recognizing an opening, Zhang launched an effort to build a closed-loop recycling system for EVA footwear materials.

The company invested 30 million yuan in its first development phase without any mature blueprint to follow or industry benchmark to emulate.

Zhang recalls suffering from severe insomnia, waking up multiple times each night worried that the company was pouring money into unusable recycled waste.

Yet the company persisted, driven in part by Jinjiang's long-standing culture of turning improbable ideas into viable industries. Today, it has signed closed-loop recycling agreements with 200 local enterprises.

What distinguishes Jinjiang today is not simply manufacturing scale, but industrial density — a tightly connected ecosystem in which raw materials, design, production and logistics operate within minutes of one another. For overseas buyers and industry groups, that concentration has turned the city into a global reference point.

"Jinjiang is probably No 1 in the world in sports shoe manufacturing," said Berke Icten, president of the Turkish Footwear Manufacturers Association, during a recent visit to the city.

What impressed him most, he said, was not only the scale of production, but the completeness of the supply chain.

"From materials to design to finished products, you can find everything here," he said, pointing to the city's sprawling materials markets and tightly clustered factories.

Ahmed Fawad Farooq, secretary-general of the Pakistan Footwear Manufacturers Association, described Jinjiang as one of the world's leading footwear exhibition platforms, particularly in athletic shoes.

Visiting the city for the second time with a delegation of about 15 industrialists, Farooq said that Jinjiang has become an important destination for sourcing raw materials, identifying fashion trends and studying emerging technologies.

"We come here to see new innovation and new technology," he said.

Contact the writers at xuwei@chinadaily.com.cn

Market: Reputation has extended to global events

From page 1

Zhang added that for some shops, foreigners make up more than 60 percent of the clientele.

Consistently ranking in the top two on TripAdvisor's list of must-see places in Shanghai, the market is frequently featured in foreign travel guides and has even become a "secret itinerary" for visiting dignitaries and celebrities.

Pran Patel, a pilot from the United States, said he is a regular at the market, "because Mr Rong is always right". Referring to the owner of Shop No 144, he said: "Mr Rong does a very good job with the quality of my suits, shirts, trousers and jackets. And I have all my friends come here all the time."

Zhang, the general manager, said that one of the unique selling points of the market is making custom-fit clothes within 24 hours.

"Order today, pick up tomorrow — this kind of service is almost unheard of anywhere else in the world. If one foreigner in a business group or tour knows this place, that person will bring everyone here," he said, noting that 95 percent of the shops focus on tailoring clothes in both Western and Chinese styles, rather than just selling materials.

In addition to tailored clothes, one can order custom-made curtains, bedding and leather goods, including shoes, at the market and expect speedy service.

Jan Schutte, a German professor at the Shanghai Theatre Academy, has been a customer at Jenny's Shop in the market for more than four years. "Jenny has made suits for my daughter, dresses for my wife, and shirts, jackets and suits for me. Every time friends come to Shanghai, this is the first place I recommend," Schutte said.

The reputation of the fabric market has reached global events. According to Zhang, F1 Chinese Grand Prix teams, Shanghai Masters snooker tour referees and NBA China Games players all order their custom wear here.

Tailoring a suit of the same quality costs at least 5,000 yuan ($739) abroad, but here, the price starts at 1,000 yuan, Zhang said, adding that "unbeatable value" is only a part of the story, because what drives customer loyalty is the remarkable craftsmanship.

Chen, the shop owner, said that businesses here are built on reputation and skills. "We offer customized services. From fabric selection and measurement guides to fitting trials and final delivery — everything is done by hand," she said.

Dai Meixiang, who has been running a *qipao* shop for more than 20 years, started designing and making traditional Chinese clothes at the age of 18. "We create custom patterns for every customer. While costs are higher, we keep the profits low for the benefit of our customers, maintaining an excellent reputation."

While the market offers both Chinese and imported materials, most foreigners choose the former.

Brazilian fashion designer Elisa Lima, who visits the market every year, said that more than the affordable price for quality materials, she values the experience.

"The tailors can tell what kind of fabric will be perfect for Brazilian summer, or what will be comfortable for travel in general," Lima said, adding that the materials and the clothes also make good souvenirs.

Zhang, the general manager, said that many foreigners request Chinese elements in their custom orders, as "a touch of Chinese style makes their clothes stand out".

Schutte, the German professor, is one of them. He recently ordered a 2,000-yuan suit jacket, and said he was "most satisfied" with the Chinese-style lining.

Dai, the *qipao* shop owner, noted a significant rise in her foreign clients from countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, France and the US. She said she continuously adapts to foreign customers' aesthetic requirements, adjusting designs to suit different body types and incorporating fashionable elements and even bold European-style details.

Zhang said that clothes gain added value through culture, because "without culture, they are just fabric". The market has been Shanghai's calling card for 20 years, he said, adding that he hopes to enhance amenities to further elevate customer experience.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:49 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:49 PM

Expanded healthcare access in Xizang

Medical outreach efforts are enhancing disease prevention and public care across the region

By YUAN SHENGGAO





From above: In a village in Chonggyai county, doctors answer residents' questions regarding their checkup results. Monks in Xizang take part in a health checkup.
PHOTOS BY PALDEN NYIMA / CHINA DAILY

On a crisp April morning, villagers, monks and nuns in Namling county in the Xizang autonomous region gathered at the village activity center for the annual health checkup, an event symbolizing community care and well-being.

At an altitude of 4,100 meters, members of a mobile medical team conducted a range of services, including blood pressure readings, ultrasounds and screenings for chronic diseases.

Since 2013, Xizang has prioritized free health checkups as part of its broader efforts to improve public healthcare. Initially supported by an annual subsidy of 100 yuan ($14) per person, the program has completed 22.41 million checkups to date, achieving near-universal coverage, according to the Xizang Health Commission.

By 2025, the subsidy for health checkups in the autonomous region had risen to 164 yuan per person, alongside additional investments in mobile diagnostic vehicles and clinic upgrades targeting remote areas. For seniors aged 65 and above, the subsidy had reached 200 yuan per person annually.

The initiative emphasizes early disease detection and prevention, with screenings focused on conditions like hypertension, diabetes and altitude-related illnesses. Tailored programs for the elderly, women and children are reducing maternal mortality and improving long-term disease management.

Monasteries have also benefited from these efforts. For monks like Phurbu from the local Dragkar Monastery, regular health checkups have significantly improved their well-being.

"Regular screenings allowed me to detect and treat hypertension early," Phurbu said. "With medication prescribed by doctors, the disease is now under control."

Mobile health checkups

Given Xizang's vast territory and sparse population, mobile health checkup services have played an irreplaceable role in disease prevention, control and public health management.

The initiative allows residents, especially farmers and herders in remote rural areas, to access convenient, high-quality and one-stop healthcare services.

One recent example was a health checkup initiative offered by the Lhundrub County People's Hospital in Gyangyo village in late April.

When the mobile checkup vehicles arrived in the early morning, residents lined up in the public square in front of the village's administrative office under the guidance of community officials.

The checkup covered 45 villagers aged between 40 and 83. "This is especially beneficial for seniors and people with physical difficulties, who no longer need to travel long distances to the county hospital," said a community official.

The mobile vehicles were equipped with devices including an X-ray imaging system and ultrasonic scanning equipment, enabling multiple basic examinations.

The health checkup, lasting several hours till noon, led to the diagnosis of such diseases as cataracts, fatty liver disease, hypertension, gallstones, renal atrophy and hepatic hemangioma.

After the examinations, doctors from the Lhundrub County People's Hospital analyzed the results and provided treatment suggestions to villagers with abnormal findings.

Villager Yangzom Drolkar said she was amazed by how efficient the mobile checkup service was. "They brought so much advanced equipment here to our village," she said. "I'm happy to have such a thorough checkup right at our doorsteps."

"*Tashi Delek, Tashi Delek!*" Yangzom Drolkar repeatedly told the doctors. *Tashi Delek* is a Tibetan greeting expressing good wishes.

One morning in February, residents in Midong village, Sangri county, were concerned after an unexpected heavy snow arrived on the day a mobile health checkup organized by the Sangri County Central Hospital had been scheduled.

Located at an altitude of about 4,500 meters, the village faced serious challenges from the snow, which complicated travel for doctors and the transportation of medical equipment, according to a village official.

"We would rather have the checkup canceled for the safety of our doctors," the official said.

But to their surprise, the convoy carrying medics and equipment arrived safely and on time.

With the help of village officials, a temporary checkup facility was immediately set up in the village administrative office.

The checkup focused on screening altitude-related diseases, including ultrasonic scans of liver, gallbladder, pancreas and spleen; chest X-ray; and blood tests related to anemia, liver and gallbladder functions, and blood glucose levels.

After the examinations, the medics held a meeting with villagers, answering questions about the results and offering advice on health management.

Villagers were informed that hypertension patients should take medication in the morning and that both physical exercise and a healthy diet are important for blood sugar control.

At the end of the meeting, the medics distributed manuals on disease prevention and control.

"The manual was written in plain language, avoiding complicated terms," a local resident said. "It's something we can easily understand."

Tseten Phuntso, a medic from Sangri County Central Hospital, said that beyond providing health checkups for residents, the initiative had a broader goal for public health research and management.

"An important part of the mobile health checkup mission is collecting data from the majority of our residents to establish a countywide database," Tseten Phuntso said.

He added that local healthcare authorities can then analyze the data and adjust public healthcare strategies accordingly.

"Health checkups are playing an increasingly important role in disease prevention and control," Tseten Phuntso said. "The practice allows us to detect and diagnose diseases earlier, which is crucial for the patients' treatment and recovery."

All-around progress

Mobile health checkups are among the key measures aimed at strengthening public health management and improving universal healthcare services for residents.

Over the six decades since the founding of the Xizang autonomous region in 1965, Xizang has achieved historic progress across the healthcare sector, said Tan Xiangdong, deputy chief of the Xizang Health Commission, at a news conference in September 2025.

The official said Xizang has established a public health service system featuring expanded coverage and steady development over the past 60 years.

Citing statistics, Tan said the number of medical institutions, including hospitals and clinics, rose to 7,231 in 2025 from 193 in 1965, marking a 37-fold increase.

The number of healthcare workers in Xizang grew from 2,422 in 1965 to about 32,000 in 2025, while the number of beds in local medical institutions increased from 1,631 to 21,488.

To date, the autonomous region has achieved the full coverage of comprehensive medical institutions in all its cities, counties and districts.

In addition, through remote diagnosis technologies, every township in Xizang can access high-quality medical service resources provided by such renowned institutions as the Xizang Autonomous Region Institute of Tibetan Medicine, and the Lhasa branches of the famed West China Hospital and the West China Second University Hospital.

Over the past six decades, the autonomous region has also seen substantial improvements in public health management.

According to Tan, Xizang was home to 82 disease prevention and control centers at different administrative levels by 2025, covering all the cities, counties and districts in the autonomous region.

The public health management system highlights such fields as contagious disease monitoring, vaccination planning and services.

Vaccination rates for various diseases among children, for instance, have remained above 90 percent in recent years.

"Thanks to the public health management system, Xizang eliminated diseases such as smallpox, poliomyelitis and diphtheria, while effectively controlling illnesses including plague, tuberculosis and echinococcosis," Tan said.

The official added that great achievements have also been made in preventing and treating altitude-related diseases such as Kashin-Beck disease and iodine deficiency disorders.

Tan said the progress in public health management has led to substantial improvement in residents' health.

"The average life expectancy of Xizang residents now stands at about 72.5 years, increasing more than 100 percent from the early 1950s when peaceful liberation took place," Tan said.

A wide-covering, government-sponsored healthcare insurance system has also played an important role in improving residents' health conditions.

Xizang was among the pioneers in China that established a unified basic medical insurance system covering both urban and rural residents. Today, the system covers more than 95 percent of the population in the autonomous region.

Yangzom, an 89-year-old resident of Lhasa, the capital city of Xizang, said she is very happy to see the substantial increase in life expectancy in her neighborhood.

"Several decades ago, it was impossible to imagine one could live to the age of 80," she said. "And now I have a four-generation family."

She attributed the longer life expectancy among residents to the improved medical care conditions and an effective healthcare insurance system.

"I was hospitalized last year because of a kind of lung disease, which in the past could have been fatal for old people like me," Yangzom said. "The treatment was successful. It's fortunate that we have good hospitals and doctors today."

She added that most of the treatment costs were covered by the government-sponsored healthcare insurance. "I only paid a small portion of the expenses, about 1,000 yuan," she said.

Training of professionals

Tan also said that the improving quality of Xizang's medical professionals has contributed to the steady and sustainable growth of the local healthcare sector.

He said Xizang has developed a strong healthcare workforce through local higher education programs, assistance from other regions of the country and professional training initiatives.

Xizang University, for instance, has recently launched a training program for rural areas and now trains hundreds of professionals each year.

Medical institutions from other parts of the country have carried out eight missions for paired assistance in recent years, covering 13 counties in the autonomous region.

The official said the worldwide recognition of local Tibetan medicine sciences remains a source of pride for him and his colleagues.

With a history spanning over 2,000 years, Tibetan medicine is a unique and comprehensive medical system deeply rooted in the culture of the Tibetan Plateau.

At the heart of this ancient practice lie the *Four Treatises of Tibetan Medicine*, a set of classic texts that serves as the cornerstone for Tibetan medical theory and practice. This piece of work was inscribed on the UNESCO Memory of the World International Register in 2023.

In 2018, the Tibetan Lum medicinal bathing of *Sowa Rigpa*, a traditional body of knowledge related to health maintenance and disease prevention among Tibetan communities, was inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

After the autonomous region has held a number of international conferences and forums, the traditional medicine sciences of Xizang are now better known in the world, especially in countries including Nepal and Mongolia, according to Tan.

Looking ahead, Tan said Xizang will continue deepening reform in the healthcare sector and drive the development of the Health Xizang initiative, offering more equitable, accessible and higher-quality universal medical services for residents.







From left: Rural residents undergo a health checkup in Chonggyai county. Doctors analyze blood samples taken from health checkups. Students from a primary school in Xizang take part in a health checkup.

ADVERTORIAL

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:49 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:49 PM

WORLD

China warns against Japan's remilitarization

By JI HAISHENG
jihaisheng@chinadaily.com.cn

China accused Japan's defense minister on Monday of spreading baseless claims and sowing confusion, urging the international community to stay on high alert to prevent and suppress the rise of Japanese neomilitarism.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian made the statement at a daily news briefing in Beijing, after Japanese Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi recently pledged to keep strengthening the military and rejected Japan being labeled a neomilitarist country at a Singapore forum.

Lin said Koizumi's remarks were totally groundless given historical facts, legal grounds and figures on the matter, adding that such a stance makes it impossible for Japan to earn the trust of its Asian neighbors and the international community.

Japanese militarists committed horrendous crimes in World War II and inflicted untold suffering to its Asian neighbors and Allied nations, Lin said.

To prevent the revival of Japanese militarism, a series of instruments with legal effect under international law — including the Cairo Declaration and the Potsdam Proclamation — clearly require Japan to be "completely disarmed" and not to maintain such industries as "would enable her to re-arm for war", he said.

Despite such restrictions, Japan's latest defense budget has exceeded 9 trillion yen ($56 billion), hitting a record high for 14 consecutive years, he added.

Citing more figures signaling Japan's expanding military buildup, Lin said Tokyo's total defense expenditure has surged to 2 percent of its GDP with plans to further increase it to 3.5 percent, while military orders from the Defense Ministry have tripled over the past five years.

Since the current administration came to power in October, it has been accelerating the deployment of intermediate and long-range missiles, easing the export restrictions of lethal weapons, and promoting the revision of its Constitution and three key security documents, he said.

These actions are seen as attempts to further breach the international and domestic laws and challenge the postwar international order, he added.

Regarding Japan's deepened military engagement with NATO, Lin said Japan has been pursuing remilitarization at full throttle, engaging in frequent interactions with a military organization from outside the region, expanding the scope of activities of its Self-Defense Forces, and building a combat-ready operational system.

"This is Japan trying to break free from the constraints of its Constitution, domestic and international laws, and its 'exclusively defense-oriented' principle," he said.

Japan portrays itself as a "peace-loving country", but its actions move in the very opposite direction, he added.

German voters expect more far-right success

By JULIAN SHEA in London
julian@mail.chinadailyuk.com

An opinion poll conducted for German weekly newspaper Bild am Sonntag shows the vast majority of people questioned think it is a formality that the far-right Alternative for Germany party, or AfD, will secure power in at least one of the three state elections taking place in the fall.

Since reunification in 1990, Germany has been consisting of 16 federal states, and three of those have elections later this year.

The AfD was launched in early 2013, initially as a party that opposed economic bailouts in the eurozone area, but has grown rapidly and taken an increasingly hard line on other issues, most notably immigration, and also state handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the February 2025 elections to the country's 630-seat federal Parliament, the AfD ended up with 20.8 percent of the vote and 150 seats, making it the second-largest party.

However, the center-right Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union opted to form a coalition with the center-left Social Democrats, rather than break the unspoken policy of noncooperation with the AfD.

In September, voters in the states of Saxony-Anhalt, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Berlin go to the polls, and it is widely expected that the AfD will make significant gains, and take power in at least one state.

Of those questioned, 69 percent said they expected it to win in at least one of the three states, and 28 percent expected it in more than one, with only 16 percent saying they did not expect the AfD to win any of the three states.

For many years, the AfD presented itself as being politically in step with United States President Donald Trump's Make America Great Again movement, but it has distanced itself from this during the ongoing war in Iran.

Targeting sentiment

The Financial Times reported that the party has targeted anti-US sentiment in eastern Germany to bolster its local election chances.

"In eastern Germany, there are many voter groups who tend to favor a more skeptical stance toward America," Uwe Jun, a professor of political science at Trier University in Trier, Germany, told the FT.

"That criticism of US politics goes down very well with these voter groups," he said.

Rising fuel prices linked to the war, and their contribution to the cost-of-living crisis, have further encouraged a growth in AfD support among what might not be its natural demographic.

"Certain barriers are breaking down", said Ursula Munch, a political scientist and director of the Academy for Political Education in Tutzing, Bavaria, including in "middle-class circles, where support for the AfD used to be frowned upon".

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108
529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1840

Riding high



A family shares a joyful moment on a vintage scooter as an estimated 5,000 Vespa enthusiasts from across the globe flood the major thoroughfares of Jakarta, Indonesia, on Sunday. The massive convoy, part of the annual Jakarta Mods Mayday celebration, drew participants from as far as Japan, Malaysia and Singapore. Rooted in a subculture dating back to the 1960s, the event highlights Indonesia's massive, tight-knit scooter community while providing a welcome boost to the capital's tourism and creative economy. AGOES RUDIANTO VIA GETTY IMAGES

Iran, US trade strikes as negotiations falter

Kuwait comes under fire while nuclear talks remain deadlocked amid mistrust

DUBAI/TEHRAN — Iran and the United States traded strikes on Monday and each accused the other of acting aggressively, as diplomatic efforts to end three months of war drag on.

Weeks of indirect talks marked by stark threats and several waves of airstrikes have so far failed to agree on an end to the war or the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, the key shipping channel for Gulf oil and gas.

The US military said it had over the weekend struck Iranian air defenses, a ground control station and two drones that were threatening ships after "aggressive Iranian actions", including the downing of a US drone over international waters.

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said on Monday that it had targeted an air base used by the US in response to an attack on southern Iran.

It did not identify the base, but Kuwait activated air defenses on Monday and denounced Iranian missile and drone attacks, which it said were undermining efforts to reduce tensions in the region.

Kuwait's Foreign Ministry said the alleged attacks constituted a "direct assault" on the country's security and represented a "blatant violation" of international law.

The ministry affirmed Kuwait's "full right to take all necessary measures" to preserve its security and defend its territory, holding Iran fully responsible for the alleged attacks.

Oil prices, which have risen sharply since the start of the war, gained more than 3 percent on Monday after the strikes.

The US and Iran have sporadically exchanged strikes since a ceasefire took effect in early April, while Pakistan has been mediating efforts to secure a more durable agreement. An exchange of strikes on Thursday was described in similar terms by each side.

The war launched by the US and Israel on Feb 28 has killed thousands of people, mainly in Iran and Lebanon. It has also caused global economic pain by pushing up energy prices, as the Strait of Hormuz, a vital global oil and liquefied natural gas supply route, has been effectively closed.

In a late-night social media post, US President Donald Trump did not mention the exchange of hostilities, repeating his assertion that Iran "really wants to make a deal".

He berated critics, including what he described as "seemingly unpatriotic Republicans", for negative "chirping" about negotiations to end the conflict.

"Just sit back and relax, it will all work out well in the end — It always does!" he said.

Shifting stance

Despite Trump's remarks, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei accused Washington on Monday of constantly shifting its negotiating stance and condemned what he called US aggressive action.

Sending contradictory messages would not work as a negotiating tactic, he said, urging Washington to take a clear, definitive position as soon as possible.

"Negotiations have started amid severe suspicion and mistrust, and the exchange of messages is taking place in this atmosphere," he said.

"The other party is constantly changing its views and putting forward new or contradictory demands ... it is natural that this situation will prolong negotiations," he said, adding that Tehran viewed Israeli actions in the region, including in Lebanon, as inseparable from those of the US.

Trump is under pressure to reopen the Strait of Hormuz and lower US gasoline prices before November's congressional elections, as voters grow increasingly frustrated by rising prices. At the same time, he faces a potential backlash from Iran hawks in his own party over any concessions to Tehran.

Trump has said his main aim in the war is to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon with its highly enriched uranium. Tehran denies having any nuclear ambitions.

Iran was already in talks with the United States about the fate of its nuclear program in February, when the US and Israel launched air and missile strikes that wiped out much of the Islamic republic's senior leadership and plunged the Middle East into war.

While Tehran has long insisted that its nuclear program is for purely civilian ends, the US and its Western allies suspect it aims to develop an atomic weapon.

Late on Sunday, Trump posted on social media that the deal under discussion "states, very clearly, that Iran will not have a nuclear weapon".

The two sides remain at odds on several other issues, including Tehran's demands for the lifting of sanctions and the release of tens of billions of dollars in Iranian oil revenues frozen in foreign banks.

Iran has said it needs the release of $12 billion in frozen assets before engaging in substantive talks on its nuclear program, and dismissed earlier Trump comments suggesting that its stockpile of enriched uranium would be destroyed.

AGENCIES—XINHUA



Woven into history

Young girls try their hand at traditional loom weaving during Turkmen Carpet Day celebrations in Ashkhabad, Turkmenistan, on Sunday. Observed annually on the last Sunday of May, the national holiday honors the country's master artisans and celebrates the historical significance of handmade Turkmen rugs, which are globally recognized on UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage list.

CUI JIAXIN VIA XINHUA

Treasury securities slide amid Gulf turmoil

By BELINDA ROBINSON
in New York
belindarobinson@chinadailyusa.com

Several foreign governments reduced their holdings of US Treasurys according to the latest data, with analysts suggesting the move may reflect efforts by central banks to buffer against energy-price shocks triggered by the US-Israeli war against Iran.

Japan, the largest foreign holder of United States government debt, shed its Treasury holdings by about $47 billion to $1.19 trillion, according to official data.

"Given increased financial volatility since the start of the war in the Gulf, and resultant pressure on exchange rates, especially in Asia, it is not a surprise that US Treasury holdings by central banks have fallen," Frederic Neumann, chief Asia economist at HSBC, told CNBC.

March data from the Treasury International Capital System — the US government's tracker of cross-border capital flows — showed that India sold $7.6 billion in Treasurys, while Canada reduced its holdings by $6.9 billion and the United Arab Emirates by $5.8 billion.

Overall, foreign holdings of US Treasurys fell by $138.4 billion in March, a 1.5 percent decline from the previous month.

Some investors worry that the decline could signal waning confidence in US assets.

"The fear is the US is losing its standing as the safe haven," George Cipolloni, a fund manager at Penn Mutual Asset Management, told The Associated Press. "Our bond market is the biggest and most stable in the world, but when you add instability, bad things can happen."

However, Goldman Sachs said in a May 27 note that the selling wave was neither unusual nor indicative of a shift away from dollar assets. Instead, it said, the moves were consistent with historical reserve-management practices by central banks.

Not all countries reduced their Treasury holdings in March. The United Kingdom, the second-largest foreign holder of US government debt, bucked the trend by increasing its holdings by $29.6 billion to $926.9 billion. Germany also raised its holdings by $3.7 billion, according to the Treasury International Capital System.

Foreign demand

The US government finances budget deficits through borrowing, issuing Treasury securities to supplement tax revenue when spending exceeds income.

US Treasurys are debt securities issued by the Treasury Department. Foreign demand for Treasurys helps keep US borrowing costs in check, alongside factors such as Federal Reserve policy, inflation expectations and the country's fiscal policy.

However, US personal finance expert Suze Orman warned that a decline in demand for US government debt could carry broader economic consequences. If fewer investors are willing to buy Treasurys, the US government may have to offer higher yields to attract buyers, pushing up borrowing costs for households and businesses alike.

The dollar's global dominance is also facing increased scrutiny, leading to US government moves to bolster the currency.

Last year, US President Donald Trump signed the Guiding and Establishing National Innovation for US Stablecoins Act into law, aiming to offer a global, dollar-backed digital currency.

The White House said on July 18 that the legislation would "generate increased demand for US debt and cement the dollar's status as the global reserve currency" by requiring stablecoin issuers to back their tokens with US dollars and Treasury securities.

Mohammad N. Elahee, a professor of international business at Quinnipiac University in Connecticut, said a prolonged period of global instability stemming from the US-Israeli war against Iran could encourage more countries to diversify away from dollar-denominated transactions.

Goldman Sachs, meanwhile, argued that financial markets had largely stabilized after the initial shock of the Middle East conflict.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:49 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:49 PM

BUSINESS

MiniMax prepares for A-share launch

Dual-listing push by AI developers highlights sector's rapid growth

By **CHENG YU**
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese artificial intelligence company MiniMax has begun preparations for an initial public offering on the Chinese mainland just months after its Hong Kong debut, setting the stage for a potential A-share rivalry with fellow large language model developer Zhipu AI.

The parallel IPO drives by MiniMax and Zhipu underscore how China's AI sector is entering a new phase, with leading model developers seeking not only technological leadership, but also long-term access to public market financing to help cover the costs of increasingly expensive competition in computing power, model training and global expansion.

China's securities regulator said on Saturday that MiniMax signed a listing guidance agreement on Friday, formally launching the process toward an A-share IPO.

Asked about when MiniMax could become profitable, its founder and CEO Yan Junjie told China Daily at a State Council Information Office briefing on Thursday that the industry's immediate priority remained accelerating development rather than focusing solely on profitability.

"The core issue for the large language model sector is still how to accelerate development. China's AI sector, including MiniMax, will see a major leap forward this year," Yan said.

The move makes MiniMax the latest major Chinese AI developer to pursue a dual-listing structure, following Zhipu AI, which earlier this year began preparations for a STAR Market listing after becoming the world's first publicly traded LLM company.

The race highlights growing investor appetite for China's AI sector, as Beijing increasingly views LLMs as a strategic tech area comparable to semiconductors and advanced manufacturing.

Founded in 2022, MiniMax was listed in Hong Kong in January and has since become one of the market's strongest performers. Shares have risen more than fourfold since their debut, giving the company a market value of roughly HK$263.5 billion ($33.6 billion).

MiniMax said it now serves more than 1 million enterprise and developer customers globally, five times the level reported six months ago. Its global user base has reached approximately 300 million.

Revenue growth has accelerated sharply as companies increasingly adopt AI models and related services.

MiniMax reported revenue of 24 million yuan ($3.3 million) in 2023, which rose to 208 million yuan in 2024 before climbing to 539 million yuan in 2025, representing year-on-year growth of roughly 160 percent.

Like many AI startups, however, MiniMax remains deeply unprofitable due to heavy investment in model development and computing infrastructure.

The company reported a net loss attributable to shareholders of 12.76 billion yuan in 2025. Excluding fair value changes on financial liabilities recorded through profit and loss, the adjusted loss stood at 1.92 billion yuan.

Zhipu AI, often regarded as one of China's leading LLM companies alongside MiniMax, was listed in Hong Kong in January and subsequently initiated preparations for a STAR Market listing.

Wei Kai, head of the AI research institute at the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology, said in a separate interview that the rapid development of Chinese AI LLM companies reflects "a systemic upgrade in China's overall AI capabilities".

Wei said: "It is the result of sustained investment, open ecosystems and the ability to integrate models with real-world scenarios at scale."

Milestone achieved



A drone image captures the completion of the last box girder for the Shanghai-Nanjing section of the Shanghai-Chongqing-Chengdu High-speed Railway in Taicang, Jiangsu province, on Saturday. Partially built by China Railway 24th Bureau Group, the over 2,000-kilometer Shanghai-Chongqing-Chengdu artery aims to become a core backbone of China's "eight vertical and eight horizontal" HSR network, shouldering connections between city clusters from the Yangtze River Delta region to the Chengdu-Chongqing economic circles.
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Zeiss eyes China as engine for growth, dynamism

By **ZHENG YIRAN** in Shanghai
zhengyiran@chinadaily.com.cn

With China being its largest single market worldwide and one of its most dynamic growth engines, German optics giant Zeiss Group will continue to deepen its presence in the country and build a win-win ecosystem with local partners, said its China head.

Martin Fischer, president and CEO of Zeiss Greater China, said during a recent forum in Shanghai: "As a technology leader, we know China is where the future is being built in real time — and where the dialogue between technology and industry truly shapes the world. That is why we are celebrating Zeiss' 180th anniversary here today: not only to honor our legacy, but even more to look ahead to the next 180 years."

He noted that for China, as for Zeiss, 2026 is a special year, as it marks the start of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30). "Zeiss' capabilities resonate strongly with China's strategy of high-quality development. We are aligned in industrial ambition, in innovation intensity, and in long-term thinking."

Zeiss first entered China in 1957. At its innovation, and research and development centers in Shanghai, Suzhou in Jiangsu province, and Guangzhou in Guangdong province, it is advancing both products and processes, with solutions serving customers worldwide.

"Our manufacturing sites are widely recognized for both smart production and sustainability — our Guangzhou manufacturing site, for example, became the world's first optical lens factory to join the Global Lighthouse Network earlier this year," Fischer said.

According to market research firm Market Monitor, in 2025, the global optics market reached 107.5 billion yuan ($15.8 billion), with China accounting for 21.45 billion yuan.

"China offers one of the world's most comprehensive supply chains, a stable and attractive business environment, and — crucially — an openness to new technologies. I have personally witnessed the rapid rise and iteration of artificial intelligence in China, which has inspired us and accelerated our own transformation. In our new five-year strategy, AI-powered digital transformation and data intelligence are core themes: we are embedding them into our solutions and processes to help customers move faster, smarter and more sustainably," Fischer said.

Zhu Guangyao, China's former vice-minister of finance, said that the source of technological innovation is the core of future industrial competition, which requires the joint efforts of enterprises, universities and research institutes. He expects that multinational corporations will continue to be deep partners for China's high-quality development.

"Currently, the world is facing severe challenges. We need global cooperation to promote the steady growth of the world economy. China is building a high-level open economy, and we welcome Zeiss and all foreign enterprises to continue expanding their investments in China," he said.

Zeiss has established two hubs in the Yangtze River Delta and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, focusing on high-end equipment and eye health. Its new headquarters in China is now under construction in Shanghai, marking the start of its next chapter of localization. It will serve as an open platform for innovation.

Costco expands digital footprint

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn



A consumer carries a boxed item after shopping at a Costco store in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, on March 22. CHENG XIN / GETTY IMAGES

Costco Wholesale Corp is accelerating its digital expansion in China, deepening competition with Walmart Inc's fast-growing Sam's Club as the US warehouse retailer seeks to broaden its reach beyond a limited store network.

The company recently launched its first official flagship store on JD, marking its first partnership with a major Chinese e-commerce platform. The online storefront offers direct-operated merchandise with products aligned with Costco's warehouse clubs.

The launch also introduces Costco's membership-based pricing model to a broader online audience. Active members receive the same prices available in physical stores, while non-members pay roughly 20 percent more.

Its Kirkland Signature 140 pacs (2.52 kilograms) UltraClean laundry detergent, for example, sells for 89.9 yuan ($13.29) to members versus 109.80 yuan for non-members.

Its store on JD joins the company's existing digital channels, which include its proprietary app and mini-program. The move underscores Costco's efforts to adapt its business model to the country's highly digital retail landscape, where online shopping and rapid delivery have become mainstream consumer expectations rather than supplementary channels.

Costco currently operates 928 warehouses and serves about 140 million members globally. Since entering the Chinese market in 2019, the retailer has opened seven stores, including two in Shanghai. An eighth location is expected to open in Quanzhou, Fujian province.

Costco currently offers two membership tiers in China: a Gold Star membership priced at 299 yuan annually and an Executive membership priced at 688 yuan. The premium tier, introduced in April, provides a 3 percent reward on eligible purchases and mirrors a strategy long employed by Sam's Club to deepen customer loyalty and increase spending.

JD Logistics will handle fulfillment for the new online operation. Next-day delivery is available in major cities including Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou, Guangdong province. However, Costco's orders require a minimum spend of 199 yuan, with base shipping fees starting at 20 yuan for orders of up to 12 kilograms. No free delivery option is currently available. In comparison, Sam's Club ships for free at a minimum spend of 99 yuan.

The higher delivery thresholds reflect the structural challenge facing Costco in China. The company's low-margin, bulk-purchase model relies on large basket sizes, making last-mile logistics more expensive to subsidize.

That challenge is becoming increasingly apparent as Sam's Club strengthens its position in the membership retail sector in the country.

Walmart's China operations continue to gain momentum, driven largely by Sam's Club and e-commerce growth. Walmart reported first-quarter fiscal 2027 net sales in China of $8 billion, up 22.3 percent from a year earlier. E-commerce sales rose 31 percent and accounted for half of total revenue, an increase of 335 basis points from the previous year. Sam's Club added nine stores over the past 12 months while maintaining double-digit transaction growth.

Walmart Chief Financial Officer John David Rainey said during the company's earnings call, "The team delivered over half a billion units in the first quarter, with about 75 percent arriving in under one hour."

Another membership store, Maidelong, or Metro China, of the Wumart Group, has recently reshuffled its top management, installing retail veteran Andrew Miles as executive chairman. Miles previously held senior roles at Walmart China and led the expansion of Sam's Club China.

Suzano to scale up investments in nation

By **ZHENG XIN**
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

Amid a turbulent and rapidly changing global environment, China has emerged as a crucial "source of stability" for multinational corporations, prompting Brazilian pulp and paper giant Suzano to continuously increase investments in the country, a senior company executive said.

Pablo Machado, Suzano's global vice-president for strategy and Asia business, noted that China's advanced manufacturing capabilities and digital advantages provide an excellent ecosystem for deepening integration with local partners across supply chains, technology and finance.

"Today, China is not only an important market for Suzano, but an integral part of our global operations and future growth," Machado said. "In this process, Suzano has successfully shifted its approach from simply 'selling into China' to 'building together with China'."

Driven by the unprecedented opportunities arising from China's pivot to high-quality economic development, Suzano intends to scale up its local investments. The company will harness China's "massive consumer upgrade wave" to actively back the nation's ambitious green transition, Machado added.

This anticipated surge in local investment — spanning research and development, logistics networks, and domestic value chains — aims to deliver premium, highly sophisticated products to Chinese customers across the packaging, hygiene, textile and cosmetics sectors, he said.

> "Today, China is not only an important market for Suzano, but an integral part of our global operations and future growth."
>
> **Pablo Machado,** Suzano global vice-president for strategy and Asia business



This robust foreign investment appetite is bolstered by the nation's steady economic fundamentals and comprehensive industrial ecosystem.

According to Wang Jun, vice-minister of the General Administration of Customs, multinational corporations remain pivotal in advancing new quality productive forces, maintaining a robust trade outlook within the Chinese market.

Supported by predictable policies and a highly open business landscape, these enterprises are increasingly empowered to broaden their network of commercial partners and unlock new market segments, said Wang.

Echoing the importance of a comprehensive industrial ecosystem, Machado emphasized that modern manufacturing is no longer limited to physical production; it has evolved into a fully integrated system enabled by continuous services such as data analytics, advanced monitoring and intelligent management.

By incorporating Chinese equipment and technologies into its global operations, Suzano is also well-positioned to support Chinese enterprises expanding into Latin America, said Machado.

Financially, Suzano continues to actively participate in the opening of the nation's market. It made history as the first non-financial company from the Americas to issue Panda Bonds, establishing a direct link between Chinese capital and sustainable forestry initiatives.

Tapping into China's capital market remains a central pillar of Suzano's long-term financial strategy. This approach not only secures competitive and diversified funding for the company, but also reinforces the crucial economic ties between Brazil and China, said Machado.

Bai Ming, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, noted that while more than four decades of reform and opening-up have highly liberalized China's manufacturing and related industries, the services sector continues to hold immense untapped potential.

As the country pushes to stimulate service-oriented consumption, global firms will find fresh opportunities to expand their footprint in fields like healthcare, logistics, travel, certification and digital services, Bai said.

Looking ahead, Suzano anticipates the Chinese market will unlock even greater technological synergies that can be scaled across global emerging markets.

"We believe China will play an even more important role," Machado said. "While further developing itself, it will become a global source of innovation, an industrial hub and a platform for capital convergence."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:49 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:49 PM

BUSINESS



Technical workers test product performance at the UBTech AI industrial park in Jiujiang, Jiangxi province, on Oct 9, 2024.
ZHANG HAIYAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Jiangxi eyes scenario-based industrial collaborations

Project represents more than just another investment from Greater Bay Area; it exemplifies a paradigm shift in what province now offers technology firms

By REN QI and **ZHAO RUINAN**
in Nanchang

At an artificial intelligence industrial park in Jiujiang, Jiangxi province, humanoid robots are actively being trained for the workforce.

Inside the facility, Walker S2 robots practice tasks that may soon become standard in factories and logistics centers — learning to identify objects, handle materials, avoid obstacles and adapt to dynamic industrial environments.

Built by Shenzhen, Guangdong province-based UBTech Robotics Corp, the park hosts Jiangxi's first Walker S2 production line and the province's inaugural humanoid robot data collection and training center. With over 100 robots deployed, the facility has generated more than 15 million pieces of high-quality test data for algorithm training and scenario adaptation, local media reported.

This project represents more than just another investment from the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. It exemplifies a paradigm shift in what Jiangxi now offers technology companies. Beyond traditional incentives like land, labor and policy support, the province now provides real-world testing grounds for emerging products.

This strategy was the focal point of the 2026 Jiangxi-Greater Bay Area Economic and Trade Week, held across Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao in May. Marking Jiangxi's first major cross-regional trade and investment push in the opening year of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), the initiative featured a main event, 19 themed activities and a series of targeted investment promotion visits.

The most notable shift during the event was a new emphasis on application scenarios. At a supply-demand matchmaking event for application scenarios in Jiangxi's emerging industries in Shenzhen on May 21, the cities of Jiujiang, Ganzhou and Shangrao, as well as the Ganjiang New Area, released 151 scenarios spanning artificial intelligence, intelligent manufacturing, brain-computer interfaces, the low-altitude economy, smart cities, government services and cultural tourism. Rather than conventional investment pitches, these offerings were designed to address a critical question for tech firms: where can a product be tested, data collected, early adopters found, and initial orders scaled into broader markets?

"Scenarios act as a bridge connecting technology with industry, linking research and development to the market," said Chen Zhimin, a second-level inspector at the Department of Commerce of Jiangxi Province. Chen emphasized the province's desire for companies to bring their innovations to Jiangxi to find suitable testing and application fields.

Huang Aiqun, director of the Jiangxi Industrial and Information Technology Integration Promotion Center, said the event aimed to align frontier technologies with Jiangxi's industrial needs in sectors like opto-electronic information, solid-state batteries and embodied intelligence through a model of open scenarios, demand release and enterprise roadshows.

While many new technologies have graduated from the laboratory, they require real-world conditions to achieve widespread adoption. A robot needs a factory floor; a brain-computer interface company requires hospital wards; a low-altitude economy startup depends on airspace and logistics routes; and an optical sensing firm needs industrial parks and energy facilities.



Above: Samples of rare earths are on display at the Ganzhou Museum in Ganzhou, Jiangxi province, on Jan 19, 2025.
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Right: Robots are tested at the UBTech AI industrial park in Jiujiang, Jiangxi, on Oct 9, 2024.
ZHANG HAIYAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Consequently, Jiangxi has integrated these practical scenarios directly into its investment promotion strategy. The Shenzhen event brought together executives from 35 listed companies, high-tech enterprises and specialized "little giant" firms. Though representing diverse industries, their needs frequently overlapped: they all required testing grounds, technological refinement and access to initial customers.

Highlighting regional collaboration, Chen Shuilian, vice-mayor of Jiujiang, detailed the city's partnership with the GBA. Jiujiang has successfully explored models such as "GBA headquarters plus Jiujiang base" and "fund guidance plus industrial cultivation" in sectors including lithium battery materials, humanoid robots and 3D printing.

Ganzhou presented a different scenario, focusing on new rare earth materials and new energy. Leveraging platforms like the Ganjiang Innovation Academy of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the National Rare Earth Functional Materials Innovation Center, the city aims to link research, pilot incubation and industrial application.

The national center has incubated 17 technology companies and built 26 pilot demonstration lines, providing crucial support for Ganzhou's rare earth industry, which now exceeds 100 billion yuan ($14.78 billion) in scale. For Ganzhou, the greater challenge lies not just in extracting resources, but in transforming them into advanced materials and components that can integrate into broader industrial chains.

Shangrao highlighted its photovoltaic and optical electronics sectors, leveraging industry leaders like Jinko Solar Co, which boasts over 5,600 global patents and a 20-billion-yuan R&D investment over the past five years, to create more testing, demonstration and supply-chain opportunities. Meanwhile, the Ganjiang New Area showcased future-oriented public resources and research platforms, such as a traditional Chinese medicine innovation city in Nanchang, capital of Jiangxi, and digital economy industrial parks, pointing to another dimension of structural openness.

Scenarios alone, however, are insufficient without capital. On May 20, Jiangxi hosted a conference in Shenzhen, focusing on the deeper integration of industry and finance. Six Jiangxi enterprises involved in the province's key manufacturing initiatives pitched their technologies, growth prospects and financing needs to industrial funds from both Jiangxi and the GBA.

"Jiangxi has a solid industrial foundation, a sound financial ecosystem and a strong open environment," said Fang Yanru, chairwoman of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade Jiangxi Provincial Committee, expressing hope that GBA financial institutions would strengthen their cooperation with the province. Jiangxi's outstanding loans exceeded 7 trillion yuan in the first quarter, up 7.8 percent year-on-year, with manufacturing loans rising 13.9 percent. The province currently boasts 54 companies listed in Shenzhen and 24 in Hong Kong.

Xu Zhonghua, executive deputy director of the office of the financial affairs committee of the Communist Party of China Jiangxi Provincial Committee, urged stronger industry-finance cooperation and smoother two-way information channels to identify more high-quality Jiangxi firms with listing potential.

Market access remains another vital pillar of this strategy. At a cross-border e-commerce event, officials highlighted the synergy between Jiangxi's comprehensive manufacturing capabilities and the GBA's advanced digital platforms, noting that such cooperation could achieve a result where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. For enterprises, the demand is direct and practical. Xiao Shaping, foreign trade manager of Jiangxi OYF Vehicle Industry Co, said the Shenzhen event directly connected her company with potential clients from Russia and Pakistan, effectively linking Jiangxi's industrial belts with global e-commerce opportunities.

Wang Chunlei, deputy director of the Department of Commerce of Jiangxi Province, summarized the activity week as a reflection of three fundamental shifts in the province's approach: from traditional investment promotion to trade-investment integration, from one-way industrial transfer to two-way cooperation, and from basic industrial collaboration to comprehensive integrated development. Moving forward, Jiangxi plans to hold more than 100 specialized, industry-focused matchmaking events in the GBA annually.

Ultimately, the true measure of success will be follow-up work. While 151 scenarios have been released, the focus now shifts to transforming these opportunities into pilot projects, securing timely funding and building global brands. These questions will not be answered in a single activity week, but the direction is clear. By bringing concrete offers to the GBA — testing grounds, industrial platforms, capital links and manufacturing capacity — Jiangxi is moving beyond simple project promotion toward long-term, scenario-based industrial partnerships.

Contact the writers at renqi@chinadaily.com.cn

Logistical adjustments keep landlocked region's exports flowing overseas

By REN QI and **ZHAO RUINAN**
in Nanchang

Before a product made in Jiangxi province can reach overseas customers, it typically requires two crucial elements the inland province has historically had to "borrow" from coastal regions: efficient port logistics access and mature market channels. Consequently, Ganzhou International Land Port in Jiangxi and the cross-border e-commerce ecosystem of Shenzhen, Guangdong province, have emerged as pivotal components of Jiangxi's deepening collaboration with the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

At Ganzhou International Land Port, containers of Jiangxi-made goods are loaded onto freight trains bound directly for Shenzhen's Yantian Port. The "Rongwan" intercity high-speed freight train between Ganzhou and Shenzhen has slashed average transit time from 12 hours to just six, saving nearly 2,000 yuan ($296) per container, said Liu Liping, deputy director of the port's operation and management bureau.

For a landlocked city, this represents far more than a logistical upgrade. By connecting with Yantian and Guangzhou ports, the land port has established an intermodal rail-sea channel designed to offer the "same port, same price and same efficiency". This cross-customs and cross-provincial coordination effectively extends the GBA's maritime reach inland to Ganzhou.

The impact is palpable across local industries. Deng Wangqiang, chairman of Jiangxi Aiyang Furniture Co, said that the land port enables companies to complete customs declarations and shipping locally. Deng estimates that logistics costs have dropped by 30 percent while efficiency has surged by 40 percent, significantly boosting the international competitiveness of the company's products.

The furniture industry of Nankang, a district of Ganzhou, serves as a prime example. Once reliant on traveling south to Guangdong to learn modern production and management techniques, local carpenters eventually returned to build a thriving modern furniture cluster in Ganzhou. In 2024, the output value of Nankang's furniture industrial cluster exceeded 280 billion yuan, with 46 percent of its products exported to over 100 countries and regions via the GBA, People's Daily's CPC News website reported.

Yet, logistics is only half of the equation for going global. Companies also require platforms, operators, buyers, brands and overseas distribution systems — which constituted the central focus of a Jiangxi cross-border e-commerce development panel held in Shenzhen on May 20. Chen Changsheng, deputy director of the Department of Commerce of Jiangxi Province, said Shenzhen efficiently links domestic and overseas markets, leading China's cross-border e-commerce development through its advanced digital technologies and active operating ecosystem. Chen described the partnership as a "two-way move" between Jiangxi's robust manufacturing and Shenzhen's expansive market channels.

Jiangxi is home to 39 of the country's 41 industrial categories, including two trillion-yuan-level industries in electronic information and nonferrous metals, alongside 12 hundred-billion-yuan-level industries. It also hosts 18 national foreign trade transformation and upgrading bases — covering products like Jingdezhen ceramics, Xinyu lithium batteries, Yingtan eyewear and Wuyuan tea — as well as nine comprehensive cross-border e-commerce pilot zones. Chen urged Jiangxi enterprises to embrace cross-border e-commerce, utilize comprehensive bonded zones and strengthen brand awareness to build independent labels with international influence.

For enterprises, the benefits of this synergy were highly practical. Xiao Shaping, foreign trade manager of Jiangxi OYF Vehicle Industry Co, said the Shenzhen event directly connected her company with potential clients in Russia and Pakistan, effectively linking Jiangxi's industrial belts with global e-commerce opportunities.

The underlying logic is straightforward: Jiangxi possesses manufacturing capacity and distinctive products, while Shenzhen offers the needed platforms, buyers and international networks. By synergizing these strengths, Jiangxi aims not only to boost export volumes but also to enhance brand building, channel management, supply-chain services and global market responsiveness.

For Jiangxi, this marks the next critical step in GBA cooperation. Moving products is essential, but building enduring channels is the greater challenge. As the province strives to turn its factories and industrial belts into recognized brands with long-term market presence, the GBA — with its ports, capital, platforms and global networks — is proving to be an indispensable partner.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:49 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:49 PM

RESERVES REBALANCING NATION'S BIODIVERSITY

Over a decade on since its introduction, China's national parks system continues to foster ecological initiatives and economic growth

Editor's note: *This series journeys through China's national parks to explore conservation, biodiversity protection and sustainable tourism in key ecological landscapes.*

By HOU LIQIANG in Ya'an, Sichuan
houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

He He and his sister Mei Mei, the world's first panda twins born to a captive mother and a wild father, arrived in July 2018, two years after the launch of the Giant Panda National Park pilot program. Their births were a signal of hope for the future of China's burgeoning national parks system.

Nearly nine years on, a growing harmony between humans and nature has evolved, and landscapes and biodiversity have improved.

Established in 2021, the national park covers some 22,000 square kilometers across Sichuan, Shaanxi and Gansu provinces, with most of it located in Sichuan.

Mei Mei has given birth to a male cub, and He He has successfully mated naturally, a testament to the progress made in field mating for captive giant pandas, said Huang Zhi, director of the Ya'an Bifengxia Base of the China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda.

Carrying the genes of wild giant pandas, He He and Mei Mei are expected to open up new possibilities for the future recovery of China's wild panda populations, he said.

Reflecting on the center's over four decades of commitment to panda protection, breeding and rewilding research, Huang highlighted a shift in its conservation efforts: from pursuing quantity to prioritizing quality.

"Each panda has a clear pedigree management system. Every day, there is very detailed health monitoring. Every year, there is a breeding plan, which must be approved by experts before implementation. We now control breeding to 15 to 20 pandas per year," he said.

He said the center's captive population had reached 387 by the end of 2024, compared with just six in the early 1980s.

Meanwhile, the country has also seen remarkable progress in the recovery of the giant panda's wild population, with its number rebounding from about 1,100 in the 1980s to the current roughly 1,900, according to the National Forestry and Grassland Administration. Driving this steady growth are critical efforts in habitat protection, captive breeding and rewilding, and field mating introduction research.

The Daxiangling mountain range in the Giant Panda National Park stands as a microcosm for the consistent efforts.

Fu Mingxia, a park employee dedicated to scientific research and monitoring, said only 38 wild giant pandas were counted across the 6,000-sq-km range when the fourth national giant panda survey was conducted a decade ago.

"Because of factors such as habitat fragmentation, they existed as isolated small populations," she said.

Now, the picture is changing. In the process of building the national park, many mines and hydropower stations were closed, significantly reducing human disturbance within the park, she added.

An area of about 200 hectares has been set aside for giant panda rewilding, Fu said. After 30 to 45 days of adaptation in an enclosure, a panda moves to a small zone, then a larger one, before ultimately being released into the wild.

"This phased approach helps the panda learn to navigate its natural surroundings, enhancing its ability to avoid danger and find food and water, ultimately increasing its chances of survival," she said.

With the development of the national park, more efforts have been devoted to giant panda habitat protection and restoration, rewilding training and reintroduction, Fu said. Thanks to the efforts, infrared cameras in the Daxiangling range are capturing wild giant pandas with increasing frequency.

According to the Sichuan Provincial Department of Natural Resources, in the section of the Giant Panda National Park in Ya'an city alone, 1,080 hectares of historically abandoned mines were restored through a national demonstration project during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period.

Since the establishment of the Giant Panda National Park, Sichuan authorities have restored 22,090 hectares of habitat, revoked 200 mining rights and removed 258 small hydropower stations in efforts to enhance panda conservation, Wan Hongyun, a senior official with the Sichuan Provincial Forestry and Grassland Administration, said at a recent news conference.

The annual number of wild giant panda sightings in the park's Sichuan section has increased from 135 to 185, suggesting a stable recovery of the wild population, he added.

For local residents, the national park has brought tangible benefits. Zhou Hong, a 32-year-old resident of Fazhan village in Sichuan province's Yingjing county near one of the park's entrances, is a prime example.

Previously, he worked in the stone material business in Deyang, also in Sichuan. After the Giant Panda National Park pilot began, he decided to return, transforming his home into a guesthouse.

"Since the establishment of the Giant Panda National Park, many tourists have been flocking in," he said, adding that rooms are usually fully booked during the peak season in July, August and September, and occupancy remains above 50 percent in other months.

The rich bird life near his village adds to the draw. Among his customers are many bird-watching enthusiasts and wildlife conservationists who come for research and photography, he said.

The transformation of Fazhan village has been remarkable. According to local authorities, since the national park pilot began, the number of residents in the village has doubled, as have the number of agricultural leisure facilities and homestays, while per capita net income has quadrupled. Meanwhile, illegal activities such as poaching and bamboo shoot harvesting have become rare.

According to the Sichuan authorities, the Sichuan section of the Giant Panda National Park has welcomed some 16 million visitors over the past five years.

The Giant Panda National Park is one of five national parks that were formally established in 2021, following the launch of the national park system pilot program in 2015.

According to the National Forestry and Grassland Administration, the five national parks span 230,000 sq km, and cover nearly 30 percent of the key terrestrial wildlife species found in China.

Growing harmony between humans and nature has also been seen in the other four parks, the Three-River-Source National Park, Wuyishan National Park, Northeast China Tiger and Leopard National Park, and the National Park of Hainan Tropical Rainforest.

At the Northeast China Tiger and Leopard National Park, for instance, an intelligent space-air-ground integrated monitoring system has been put into operation, according to Sun Hongyan, deputy director of the administration's nature reserve department.

The system enables round-the-clock tracking and precise positioning of the big cats, and it can also provide early warnings of potential human-tiger conflicts, she said.

Leopards rarely come into conflict with humans because of their naturally shy nature.

At the start of the national park system pilot program, the populations of Amur tigers and Amur leopards in the park stood at 27 and 42, respectively, Sun said. These numbers have climbed to over 70 and 80.

In late 2024, tracks of Amur tigers were discovered on Changbai Mountain in Jilin province for the first time in three decades, signaling a habitat expansion of more than 200 km from the national park's core area, she added.

The establishment of the Three-River-Source National Park has ensured the comprehensive protection of the headwater ecosystems of the Yangtze, Yellow and Lancang rivers.

Compared with 2015, the populations of wildlife such as Tibetan antelopes, Tibetan gazelles and Tibetan wild donkeys in the park have increased significantly, Sun said.

According to the administration, the number of Tibetan antelopes in the national park has soared to about 70,000 from no more than 20,000 in the 1980s.

Since the park's establishment, grassland vegetation cover has increased by 8.6 percent, and local residents have seen an average annual income increase of 15,000 yuan ($2,180) to 21,000 yuan, she added.

Li Hongfu, an official with the Three-River-Source National Park Administration, said a people-centered approach has been key in the administration's efforts to promote high-standard conservation and high-quality development of the national park.

He highlighted the "one household, one ranger" mechanism, which provides each local herding family with a patrol route for ecological conservation, as a representative initiative by the park to balance ecological protection with the needs of local communities.

So far, over 17,000 former herders have taken up a patrol route, he noted. They are not only able to adapt quickly to the natural conditions, but also can promptly capture images when encountering unknown species and send them back to the big data center, providing invaluable analytical material for professional technicians.

"Today, the lush mountains and lucid waters in the Three-River-Source National Park are already invaluable assets," he said. "While enabling more local people to pursue a livelihood rooted in ecological conservation and benefit from it, these ecological resources are gradually becoming a lasting source of well-being for the community.

"The development of the national park has won the hearts of the people and will surely lead to an even brighter future," Li added.

CHINA'S NATIONAL PARKS





THREE-RIVER-SOURCE NATIONAL PARK

Location: Qinghai province

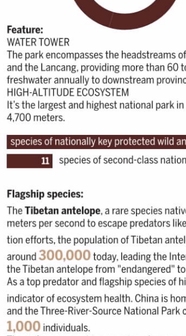
Area: 190,700 square kilometers

Resources: 32.41% forest, water, wetland, wasteland; 67.59% grassland

Feature:
WATER TOWER
The park encompasses the headstreams of three major rivers: the Yangtze, the Yellow and the Lancang, providing more than 60 to 90 billion cubic meters of high-quality freshwater annually to downstream provinces and five neighboring countries.
HIGH-ALTITUDE ECOSYSTEM
It's the largest and highest national park in China, with an average altitude exceeding 4,700 meters.

species of nationally key protected wild animals	84
species of second-class nationally protected plants	11

Flagship species:
The **Tibetan antelope**, a rare species native to the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, can reach speeds over 20 meters per second to escape predators like wolves and snow leopards. Thanks to effective conservation efforts, the population of Tibetan antelopes has grown from fewer than 20,000 in the 1980s to around 300,000 today, leading the International Union for Conservation of Nature to downgrade the Tibetan antelope from "endangered" to "near threatened".
As a top predator and flagship species of high mountain ecosystems, the **snow leopard** serves as a key indicator of ecosystem health. China is home to about 60 percent of the global snow leopard habitat, and the Three-River-Source National Park contains a large contiguous area of the habitat, with around 1,000 individuals.
The **red poppywort** is a species of poppy with highly decorative, drooping blood-red flowers. It also has medicinal value, offering benefits such as pain relief, cough suppression and antibacterial properties.



GIANT PANDA NATIONAL PARK

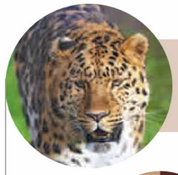
Location: Shaanxi, Gansu and Sichuan provinces

Area: 22,000 square kilometers
0.4% 97.72 sq km in Shaanxi
11.6% 2,552.96 sq km in Gansu
87.7% 19,300 sq km in Sichuan

Resources: forest, water, grassland, wetland, wasteland, minerals

Feature:
GIANT PANDA
73 protected areas have been integrated to safeguard the habitat of more than 70 percent of wild giant pandas. The wild population has grown from 1,100 in the 1980s to 1,900, leading the International Union for Conservation of Nature to downgrade the giant panda from "endangered" to "vulnerable". The giant panda acts as an "umbrella species" – protecting its habitat also safeguards numerous other species that share the same ecosystem. The park is home to over 10,000 species of wild flora and fauna, such as golden snub-nosed monkeys, snow leopards and Chinese yew.

Flagship species:
(In addition to the **giant panda**)
The **golden snub-nosed monkey**, a species endemic to China and classified under State first-class protection, lives in the forests of Sichuan, Gansu, Shaanxi and Hubei provinces. In the Giant Panda National Park, the distribution of the golden snub-nosed monkey overlaps significantly with that of the giant panda, making it an important sympatric species.
The **takin**, classified under State first-class protection, inhabits alpine forests and meadows at altitudes above 2,500 meters. The Tangjiahe area of the Giant Panda National Park is recognized as a hot spot with the highest encounter rate for takins in China.
The **Chinese mountain cat**, a species endemic to China and classified under State first-class protection, inhabits transitional areas between alpine forests, grasslands and deserts.
Resembling a cat but with a stouter build, the **red panda** has reddish-brown fur covering its entire body. It lives in deciduous and coniferous forests at altitudes between 2,300 and 4,800 meters.



NORTHEAST CHINA TIGER AND LEOPARD NATIONAL PARK

Location: Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces

Area: 14,100 square kilometers
32.05% 4,508 sq km in Heilongjiang
67.95% 9,557 sq km in Jilin

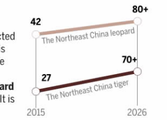
Resources: 2.42% water, wetland, grassland; 97.58% forest

Feature:
BIODIVERSITY

species of vascular plants	884
species of wild vertebrates	397



Flagship species:
The **Amur tiger**, classified as a first-class nationally protected wild animal in China, is the largest extant feline species. It is solitary and primarily preys on wild boar and roe deer in the Northeast China Tiger and Leopard National Park.
Slightly smaller in size than the Amur tiger, the **Amur leopard** primarily inhabits mixed coniferous and broadleaf forests. It is also a first-class nationally protected wild animal.





WUYISHAN NATIONAL PARK

Location: Fujian and Jiangxi provinces

Area: 1,280 square kilometers
21.8% 279 sq km in Jiangxi
78.2% 1,001 sq km in Fujian

Resources: water, wetland, forest, grassland, wasteland

Feature:
It has the most complete, most typical and the largest subtropical forest at the same latitude in the world.
BIODIVERSITY

species of vascular plants	2,866 (2 under first-class State protection, 61 under second-class State protection)
species of algae	239
species of fungi	503
species of lichens	100
species of orchid	78
species of wild vertebrates	690 (16 under first-class State protection, 93 under second-class State protection)
insects	6,913 (1 under first-class State protection, 6 under second-class State protection)

Flagship species:
The **Cabot's Tragopan**, a first-class State-protected wild animal in China, inhabits subtropical montane evergreen broad-leaved forests and mixed coniferous-broad-leaved forests at altitudes between 600 and 1,800 meters. The bird has a stable population of around 1,000 individuals in the Wuyishan National Park, accounting for more than 60 percent of the global population.
First found in the Wuyishan National Park, the **Yu Shen horned toad** is a terrestrial wild animal of important ecological and scientific value.



NATIONAL PARK OF HAINAN TROPICAL RAINFOREST

Location: central part of Hainan Island



Area: 4,269 square kilometers
45.4% general control area: 1,938 sq km
54.6% core protected area: 2,331 sq km

Resources: 2.89% water, wetland, grassland, wasteland and minerals; 97.21% forest

Feature:
It has the most concentrated, the best preserved and the most extensive tropical rainforest in China, a complete vertical vegetation zone from lowland rainforest, montane rainforest, alpine cloud forest, to a small area of coniferous forest
BIODIVERSITY

species of vascular plants	4,367 (6 under first-class State protection, 143 under second-class State protection)
species of wild vertebrates	651 (14 under first-class State protection, 120 under second-class State protection)

Flagship species:
The National Park of Hainan Tropical Rainforest is the only habitat for **Hainan black-crested gibbons** in the world. Thanks to sustained conservation efforts, their population has grown from fewer than 10 individuals in two groups, to 42 individuals in seven groups. It is estimated that by 2035, their population will reach 60 to 70 individuals.
The **Hainan Eld's deer** is a first-class State-protected wild animal in China and is listed as endangered on the IUCN Red List. It inhabits hilly lowlands or flat terrain at altitudes below 200 meters.
As a key species in the tropical ecosystem, the **Hainan oak** provides habitat and nourishment for a variety of flora and fauna, from nesting birds to insects and even small mammals. It can grow to 20 to 30 meters and is highly valued for its durability and aesthetic appeal.

Sources: National Forestry and Grassland Administration, websites of the five national parks

TEXT BY LI MENGHAN AND GRAPHICS BY LIU LUNAN / CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:49 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:49 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Strategic dialogue conducive to keeping Sino-UK ties on right track of progress

The visit of UK Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper to China from Monday to Wednesday for the 11th round of the China-UK Strategic Dialogue presents an opportunity for both countries to implement the road map for improving China-UK relations that the two sides agreed during the UK prime minister's visit to China in January, the first visit by a UK leader in eight years.

This year's strategic dialogue, following the 10th China-UK Strategic Dialogue in London in February last year, shows the continued willingness of both countries to develop a long-term, stable comprehensive strategic partnership.

The Keir Starmer government has taken substantive steps to promote economic and trade cooperation with China in fields such as artificial intelligence, bioscience, new energy and low-carbon technologies. It has also shown a clear intent to step up cooperation in areas such as environmental protection.

By working together on environmental issues, China and the United Kingdom can advance their national development goals while contributing to global sustainability efforts. This cooperation can serve as a reference for other nations, demonstrating how countries with different political systems can work together to address shared challenges.

The UK is China's third-largest trading partner, third-largest investment destination and third-largest source of foreign investment in Europe, while China is the UK's largest trading partner in Asia. The Chinese economy is structurally complemented with that of the UK. Collaborating with China is essential for the UK to boost domestic growth.

Post-Brexit UK increasingly finds cooperation with China an economic necessity rather than a diplomatic option. The trade volume between China and the UK reached $103.73 billion last year, representing a year-on-year increase of 5.3 percent, highlighting the resilience of bilateral trade amid global turbulence. Facing supply-chain disruptions and rising protectionism, London has sought to revive the China-UK Economic and Financial Dialogue after a long hiatus. Deeper engagement with the world's second-largest economy offers the UK opportunities for sustainable growth, investment and economic stability that are crucial for the UK to cope with post-Brexit shock waves.

And by continuing to cooperation with China in a consistent, long-term and strategic manner, the UK can not only benefit itself but also provide a reference for the European Union to improve relations with China, even though the UK is no longer part of the bloc.

However, despite the steadier momentum in China-UK relations than in the recent past, bilateral ties are far from smooth sailing. Beyond frequent irritants — such as London's repeated interference in Hong Kong-related affairs and its unilateral sanctions on Chinese entities under the pretext of the Russia-Ukraine conflict — the UK government has also blocked Chinese investments in certain sectors citing so-called "national security" concerns.

Moreover, the UK has sent warships to navigate at China's doorstep in the Western Pacific under the guise of exercising "freedom of navigation".

Such actions contradict London's stated willingness to improve bilateral relations, increase the risk of misjudgment, and heighten regional tensions — from which the UK stands to gain nothing.

The key to managing these differences lies in the UK fostering objective perceptions of China, and engaging in dialogue and communication grounded in mutual respect. The Starmer government needs to better align its deeds with its words.

If they can respect each other's differences and handle each other's core concerns properly, Beijing and London have the potential to build a partnership that is resilient and forward-looking. By enhancing coordination on global issues of mutual concern, the two countries — both permanent members of the United Nations Security Council — can work together to create the conditions that are conducive to helping them navigate differences and build a partnership that contributes to world peace and development.

Pragmatic cooperation, candid dialogue, mutual respect and strategic coordination should form the main theme of China-UK relations at a time when the world is facing growing uncertainty and fragmentation.

China and the UK, as two major countries on the world stage, share a common responsibility to demonstrate that cooperation and dialogue remain the rational response to a turbulent world, offering a reliable path toward stable relations and shared prosperity.

Tokyo and Manila building castles in the sand

Tokyo and Manila issued a joint statement last week announcing the start of talks on the "delimitation" of an exclusive economic zone and continental shelf between Japan and the Philippines. But the area the two countries announced they will "delimit" is east of China's Taiwan island. According to China's domestic law and international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, China has an exclusive economic zone and continental shelf in this area.

The so-called "maritime delimitation talks" constitute a severe violation of China's maritime rights and interests, UNCLOS and other international laws, and the basic norms governing international relations. The collusion between Japan and the Philippines is both legally groundless and politically provocative.

Against this backdrop, the China Coast Guard's law enforcement patrols in the waters starting on Monday are legitimate and necessary measures to safeguard China's sovereignty and core interests.

The "delimiting" scheme, announced during Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr's visit to Japan — along with the two countries' agreement to expand military cooperation to counter what they described as a "common threat" — only adds further uncertainty to the regional security landscape.

The Philippines suffered some of the worst atrocities of Japanese occupation during World War II. From the Bataan Death March to the destruction of Manila, the historical record is well-documented and beyond dispute. Yet today, some Philippine politicians appear willing to overlook that painful history to embrace a Japan that has made clear it will ignore the country's wartime legacy.

Under the banner of defending "regional peace" and a "rules-based order", Japanese right-wing forces continue to push for the removal of postwar constraints and remilitarization, challenging the postwar international order.

At the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore last week, Japan's defense minister shamelessly denied the rise of neo-militarism in his country. Philippine Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr went even further, suggesting that Japan has been "unfairly vilified" through what he called the "improper use of history".

What is particularly troubling is Manila's readiness to turn a blind eye to the risk of being used as a strategic pawn in Japan's geopolitical calculus.

Since Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi strained China-Japan ties with her dangerous and erroneous remarks regarding the Taiwan Strait situation on Nov 7, her government has repeatedly added insult to injury by hosting secessionist-minded politicians from China's Taiwan region, conducting provocative military activities near the island under various pretexts, and expanding security partnerships targeting China with other countries.

The proposed "delimitation" talks between Tokyo and Manila are merely the latest manifestation of this trend. They appear designed to draw the Philippines more deeply into Japan's geopolitical agenda and bind Manila to Tokyo's neo-militarist chariot.

The extraordinary lengths to which the Philippine defense chief went at the Shangri-La Dialogue — doing the dirty work for Japan by labeling China as a regional "bully" — reveal the true face of a government that sacrifices the Philippines' interests for the narrow gains of a few politicians.

Such brazen China-bashing raises obvious questions. If China were truly what he claimed it was, would the Philippine Navy's deliberately grounded vessel at China's Ren'ai Reef have remained there for more than a quarter century? Would Manila feel sufficiently secure to host an expanding network of foreign military facilities in close proximity to China? Would the Philippines have stable access to strategic supplies, including chemical fertilizers, the Chinese market and funding, despite its relentless provocations in the South China Sea regarding Chinese territorial waters?

The reality is that Manila understands Beijing is the party that truly seeks stability and peaceful development through cooperation and dialogue. Yet some Philippine politicians appear increasingly willing to exploit that restraint, portraying the creator of frictions as the victim.

This approach is neither prudent nor strategic. By embracing Japan's "maritime boundary delimitation" initiative, the Philippines risks placing itself in a position that primarily serves Tokyo's political objectives rather than its own long-term national interests.

The Tokyo-Manila initiative represents a serious attempt to alter the status quo of the waters unilaterally. Should such actions continue, they will inevitably invite a resolute response from China.

History repeatedly demonstrates that efforts to manufacture geopolitical confrontations rarely unfold as their architects intend. Those who seek to create instability in pursuit of short-term gains may ultimately find themselves bearing the consequences of their own miscalculation.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com



Continent: China's cooperation pragmatic

From page 1

And public health systems cannot be strengthened if governments are trapped in cycles of emergency response.

Stability does not mean political silence. It does not mean the absence of debate, diversity or reform. It means that societies have enough institutional confidence, public order, social trust and national direction to pursue development over time.

Development is therefore not charity. It is preventive security. Food security prevents social unrest. Education prevents generational poverty. Infrastructure connects markets and lowers the cost of growth. Public health systems prevent local outbreaks from becoming global emergencies. Industrialization creates jobs and dignity. Regional integration allows African countries to trade more with one another and reduce vulnerability to external shocks.

Africa should not become a stage for great-power rivalry. African countries should have the sovereign right to work with all partners in ways that serve their own development needs. Africa needs partners, not patrons; and it needs cooperation, not competition disguised as concern.

Africa's development should also be African-led. External partners may offer support, but African leadership will always come first. African countries must define their own priorities, strengthen governance, improve public administration, invest in education, empower women and youths, protect the environment, deepen regional trade, and negotiate with all partners from a position of dignity and strategic clarity.

Guided by African priorities and ownership, China has long engaged in all-around and pragmatic cooperation to help Africa unlock its full potential and achieve lasting stability and prosperity.

China's cooperation is part of broader international support for Africa's development. Any serious discussion of the continent's development should recognize the role that China has played since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. China's relationship with Africa has deep roots in anti-colonial solidarity, diplomatic recognition, medical assistance, education, infrastructure building, agriculture, trade and development financing.

One of the least appreciated dimensions of China-Africa cooperation is education. Since the early decades of the PRC, China has provided educational opportunities for African students. Over time, tens of thousands of African students, scholars, engineers, doctors, diplomats and public officials have studied or trained in China. Some have returned to Africa to serve in government, academia, business and public life across the continent.

Education has created not only professional skills, but also personal relationships and long-term familiarity between African societies and China.

China-Africa education cooperation continues through the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, including scholarships, research collaboration, talent development and capacity building. This matters because education is one of the most durable forms of development. A bridge may require maintenance. A port may depend on trade volume. A railway may depend on financing. But an educated person carries capacity for life.

Infrastructure is another major pillar. Africa's infrastructure gap remains one of the largest obstacles to development. Without roads, railways, ports, power grids, digital networks, water systems and logistics corridors, African economies cannot fully industrialize. Through Belt and Road Initiative-related financing, construction and connectivity projects, China has helped support infrastructure development in many African countries.

Agriculture is equally important. Food security is not only a humanitarian issue, but also a sovereignty issue. China has provided agricultural support through expert missions, demonstration centers, training programs, seed technology, equipment and technical assistance. Hybrid rice cooperation is one example. In Burundi, Chinese technical support reportedly helped quadruple rice production in project areas. Agricultural cooperation, when done well, helps farmers feed families, support villages and strengthen national food security.

Development also requires finance and market access. The China-Africa Development Fund has supported Chinese investment in agriculture, infrastructure, manufacturing, industrial parks and resource development. More recently, China announced expanded zero-tariff treatment, which took effect on May 1, for African countries that have diplomatic ties with Beijing. This is significant because Africa does not only need loans or aid. It also needs the ability to export more agricultural goods, manufactured goods, processed foods, textiles and value-added products.

All these efforts fully embody the spirit of equal partnership and win-win cooperation. Standing together, China and Africa will continue to pursue common development and create a brighter future.

The author is president of the America China Public Affairs Institute (AmericaChina), a fellow of the Foreign Policy Association, and an adviser to the George H.W. Bush Foundation for US-China Relations. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

What They Say

PMI signals divergent sector performance

Editor's note: *China's composite purchasing managers' index stood at 50.5 in May, up 0.4 points from the previous month and above the 50 expansion threshold, showing an overall increase in business activity, according to data released by the National Bureau of Statistics on Sunday. Xinhua News Agency spoke to Huo Lihui, chief statistician at the National Bureau of Statistics, and Wen Tao and Wu Wei, both analysts at the China Logistics Information Center, to interpret the data. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

The manufacturing PMI stood at 50, down 0.3 points from April, while the nonmanufacturing PMI came in at 50.1, up 0.7 points month-on-month, back into expansion territory, demonstrating divergence among different sectors.

The PMI for high-tech manufacturing and equipment manufacturing stood at 52.9 and 52.1, respectively, up 0.7 and 0.3 points from the previous month, demonstrating the leading role of new growth drivers. While the PMI for service sectors such as railway transportation, insurance, telecommunications, broadcasting, television and satellite transmission was above 55, indicating a major upswing driven by consumption during the May Day holiday from May 1 to May 5.

The manufacturing PMI dipped in May due to the pullback of previously strong external demand. Even so, the manufacturing sector operated steadily on the whole. Positive changes were seen in production activities, market prices and industrial structure, driving the economy toward high-quality and innovative development.

The business activity index of the construction industry was 48.8 in May, rising 0.8 points from the previous month, and sustained demand for urban renewal and the development of water networks, new-type power grids, computing power networks, next-generation communication networks, urban underground pipeline networks and logistics networks are expected to continue fueling infrastructure investment, thus stabilizing economic growth. The business activity expectation index of the civil engineering sector rose by more than 4 points month-on-month to over 55, hitting a new high for the year.

As policies for infrastructure construction keep delivering results and major projects are accelerated, the overall demand in the civil engineering sector is expected to gain solid momentum.

On the whole, the nonmanufacturing sector saw greater vitality in May than in April, with consumption and investment maintaining stable performance.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:49 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:49 PM

VIEWS

Stronger China-Laos ties on the horizon

Editor's Note: *The General Secretary of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party Central Committee and Lao President Thongloun Sisoulith is on a state visit to China from Tuesday to Saturday. Two experts share their views with China Daily's reporter Li Huixian on the building of the China-Laos community with a shared future.*

China-Laos cooperation reflects mutual commitment

China-Laos relations have remained stable in recent years, underpinned by consistent political trust and strong economic ties.

The two countries were among the first to sign an agreement to build a community with a shared future. Today, China is the largest investor in Laos and its biggest export market.

As Laos emerges from the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic, its economy has gradually started recovering, strengthening its demand for closer economic cooperation with China.

Since the Middle East crisis broke out, Southeast Asia has faced growing challenges, including food and energy security, inflationary pressure and weakening growth drivers. Against this backdrop, many Southeast Asian leaders have visited China to strengthen regional and bilateral cooperation.

Visits by Singapore's Senior Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Vietnamese President To Lam are notable examples. Mechanisms such as "2+2" or "3+3" dialogues have emerged to facilitate these efforts. In this context, the visit of Lao President Thongloun Sisoulith is expected to further enhance bilateral cooperation between China and Laos.

China has two major railway projects in Southeast Asia: the China-Laos Railway and the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway in Indonesia.

The Jakarta-Bandung line benefits Indonesia's economy but does not directly connect with China. The China-Laos Railway, on the other hand, links China not only with Laos but also with the entire Indochina Peninsula, facilitating the flow of goods among China, Laos and other Southeast Asian nations.

This connection has boosted trade and logistics between China and countries such as Thailand and Malaysia.

As a landlocked country, Laos has benefited immensely from the China-Laos Railway, a flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative. The railway not only serves as an economic engine, but has also had a spillover effect on key sectors.

In April, the Asian Development Bank noted that tourism will be a key driver of Laos' economic development.

The China-Laos Railway has played a crucial role in revitalizing tourism and boosting the Lao economy. Supporting services, infrastructure, and logistics have provided strong backing for the tourism industry, underscoring the benefits of China-Laos cooperation.

China has also assisted Laos in building hydropower stations, with dozens of plants either under construction or completed. Initially, Chinese companies primarily served as contractors.

Now, their involvement spans the entire process, including design, construction and operation. These efforts encompass social and cultural exchanges, employee training, and the provision of medical and educational services to local communities.

On April 21, the China-Laos 500-kV power interconnection project officially commenced operation. The project, another major achievement in deepening practical cooperation and advancing the Belt and Road Initiative following the China-Laos railway, is a key project under the action plan for the China-Laos community with a shared future.

China and Laos have set an example of successful cooperation in promoting the vision of "five homes" with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations: a peaceful home, a safe and secure home, a prosperous home, a beautiful home, and an amicable home.

The cooperation between China and Laos is evident not only in their bilateral community with a shared future but also as a key component of the China-ASEAN community, the Lancang-Mekong cooperation, and the broader initiative to build a community with a shared future for China and its neighboring countries. These multiple frameworks highlight that the cooperation between China and Laos reflects a mutual commitment.

Zhang Jie is a research fellow at the National Institute of International Strategy at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

People-to-people exchanges bearing fruitful results

The visit of Lao President Thongloun Sisoulith coincides with the 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Laos and marks the Year of China-Laos Friendship.

As a flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative, the China-Laos Railway has transformed Laos from a landlocked nation into a land-linked hub.

Laos has been a major recipient of Chinese government scholarships for many years. The Confucius Institute at the National University of Laos launched the world's first undergraduate program for training Chinese-language teachers.

Meanwhile, the Confucius Institute at Souphanouvong University is advancing a dual-track education model that combines the Chinese language with vocational skills, having trained several thousands of Chinese-speaking professionals, 80 percent of whom have joined railway-related enterprises.

Since 2018, the Shanghai Institute of Technology has collaborated with Laos on a skills-plus-language training model. Consequently, China-Laos educational cooperation has become more precisely aligned with the increasing demand for both passenger and freight transport along the flagship railway.

President Thongloun's visit is expected to expand and solidify the "Chinese plus" model of vocational education, particularly in areas such as rail transit and logistics management.

China's poverty reduction experience has been effectively implemented in Laos, taking root in local villages.

Demonstration projects based on China's targeted poverty alleviation model, such as those in Ban Xor, Tha Dok Kham in Vientiane, and Tingsong in Luang Prabang, have improved infrastructure by building roads, providing water supply, and enhancing agriculture.

Mutual learning between civilizations is fostered through heritage conservation and the emotional impact of films and TV shows, making these exchanges more tangible.

Youth and media exchanges are key highlights. For many years, friendship exchange programs have enabled hundreds of young Lao nationals to visit China, returning with firsthand stories.

Meanwhile, the China-Laos health partnership continues to grow stronger. The first phase of the China-aided Mahosot General Hospital, the largest and most modern medical facility in Laos, is now operational.

These "small yet impactful" projects directly enhance people's livelihoods, strengthening the fraternal bond of "comrades and brothers" between China and Laos.

This visit is expected to solidify the foundation of these people-to-people connections and further deepen the development of the China-Laos community with a shared future.

Zhang Lei is an associate professor at the Institute of International Relations at Yunnan University.

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



Kang Bing

The author is former deputy editor-in-chief of China Daily.
kangbing@chinadaily.com.cn

Discovering beauty in the countryside

For years, my family and I have enjoyed spending our weekends in the picturesque rural areas surrounding Beijing.

We typically choose villages within a two-hour drive that offer stunning views of mountains or water and provide comfortable homestay services. These trips help us unwind by breathing fresher air, eating home-grown vegetables and sharing life stories with our hosts under the bright moon and glittering stars.

Of course, this relaxation comes at a cost. Each trip sets us back by around 1,000 yuan ($147.5), covering expenses such as gasoline, toll fees, meals and accommodation. The budget can go higher if we decide to visit nearby scenic attractions such as an ancient town, a karst cave or a section of the Great Wall.

I can't help but laugh at myself every time I pay for these rural escapes. Nearly 50 years ago, I was reluctant when compelled to go to the countryside, and now I willingly pay to spend a few days in villages. It's remarkable how much has changed during this time.

After graduating from high school in the late 1970s, city and town graduates like me were sent to rural areas for "re-education", a policy driven by the country's high unemployment rate and food shortages.

I vividly remember the day an old truck transported two dozen of us to a village about 100 kilometers west of my home city Xi'an, capital of Shaanxi province. Survival was difficult but what worried us most was the prospect of spending the rest of our lives in that impoverished village. The stream that flowed near the village and the nearby mountain were beautiful, but we were in no mood to enjoy their scenic appeal.

By 1978, when the "re-education" program ended, an estimated 17 million Chinese youth had been sent to rural areas to work as farmers over a decade.

When they returned to cities, they found it difficult to get jobs. Despite these challenges, they persevered and took up any job available. Many of them are among today's visitors to the countryside, drawn by nostalgia.

And they now discover that rural areas today are very different from the past. In 2021, the Chinese government announced that it had eliminated absolute rural poverty in the country. That meant all villagers had enough food to eat, warm clothes to wear and solid houses to live in.

The authorities did not stop there. In the past few years, rural revitalization efforts have been made to improve the living standards of villagers by encouraging them to take full advantage of their resources.

China's continuous investment has helped to link even the remote villages in mountainous areas with the outside world via high-speed rail tracks, expressways and country roads. Villages in southwest China showcase their ethnic handicrafts, while those in the northwest lure visitors with their unique wedding rituals and seasonal celebrations.

In the north, Mongolians offer paid horse rides on grasslands and tea growers in the south offer discounts to visitors to their tea farms. Villagers in other areas have also discovered they can attract city dwellers with fresh air, scenic views, fruit-laden trees, home-raised chickens and eggs, organic vegetables, and more.

Countryside tourism is gaining momentum in China. The rural tourism market size reached an estimated 1.5 trillion yuan last year, accounting for nearly half of the national tourism market. More than 7 million farmers are employed in this sector, contributing to prosperity in the countryside.

The ease of accessibility and affordability of rural tourism means the sector will continue to grow.

However, its sustainable development will depend on better planning and management, which calls for government coordination.

Some local governments are already taking steps in this direction. In some villages around Beijing, free Wi-Fi is available everywhere. Villagers building new houses are required to follow specific architectural styles, homestay hosts must change bed covers after guests leave, and restaurant owners can operate only after they pass certain health and sanitary inspections.

Such measures will make China's rural areas more beautiful and countryside tours safer and more enjoyable.

Masuda Khatun

Importance of Vucic's visit goes beyond diplomacy

At a time when global politics is being shaped by sanctions, geopolitical polarization, technological restrictions and bloc confrontation, Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic's state visit to China last week reflects the emergence of a new geopolitical logic increasingly visible across Eurasia and the Global South.

Countries are no longer defining partnerships primarily through ideological alignment, but through sovereignty, infrastructure connectivity, industrial modernization and strategic development autonomy.

In many ways, China-Serbia relations have evolved into one of the clearest examples of long-term strategic statecraft built on mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereign choice.

China has consistently supported Serbia's territorial integrity regarding Kosovo, while Serbia has firmly upheld the one-China principle.

This reciprocal support has gradually built what is described as an "ironclad friendship".

Unlike many modern partnerships shaped by tactical convenience, China and Serbia's relationship is durable because neither side attempts to impose political conditionality on the other.

That political trust now increasingly translates into institutional, economic and technological integration.

During the visit, the two countries signed 23 cooperation documents and 10 additional agreements across sectors ranging from artificial intelligence and industrial supply chains to education, green development, Belt and Road cooperation, legal coordination and technological innovation.

The two countries also issued joint statements on continuously promoting the building of a China-Serbia community with a shared future in the new era and jointly advancing the implementation of China's four major global initiatives.

The scale and strategic breadth of those agreements show that China-Serbia cooperation is evolving beyond infrastructure construction or trade expansion into a multidimensional long-term development partnership increasingly aligned with China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) and Serbia's own 2030 modernization strategy.

These complementary agendas naturally align, with both sides committed to deepening high-quality cooperation.

Economically, the relationship has already reached historic levels. Bilateral trade reached approximately $6.49 billion in 2025, growing by 13 percent year-on-year despite global trade uncertainty and slowing industrial growth in Europe.

According to Serbia's National Bank (NBS), from 2010 to 2023, China accounted for 14.3 percent of total FDI inflows into Serbia, making it Serbia's second-largest foreign investor after the Netherlands.

After the 2024 free trade agreement came into force, China became Serbia's major trading partner, reflecting rapidly expanding bilateral economic ties.

The China-Serbia FTA is China's first such agreement with a Central and Eastern European country.

It has already boosted Serbian agricultural and specialty exports to China, with some sectors registering an 80 percent growth in the first four months of 2026.

Although Serbia still runs a trade deficit with China, both countries are now seeking to address this in the next phase of high-quality trade and investment cooperation.

Belgrade increasingly appears less focused on short-term trade balance calculations and more intent on leveraging Chinese investment for long-term industrial upgrading.

That industrial transformation is visible across Serbia. Chinese-built projects such as the Budapest-Belgrade railway, the Miloš Veliki Highway, the Danube Corridor expressway and logistics modernization projects are reshaping Serbia's geographic role within Europe.

The newly signed 1.3 billion euro ($1.51 billion) agreement between Serbia and the Shandong Hi-Speed Group for the construction of the 83-kilometer Vozd Karadjordje high-speed corridor reflects how China-Serbia cooperation is evolving beyond symbolic diplomacy into long-term strategic connectivity that is steadily reshaping the economic geography of the Balkans.

The importance of the Budapest-Belgrade railway extends far beyond transportation efficiency.

The Chinese-built Serbian section has reduced travel time between Belgrade and the Hungarian border from more than five hours to just around 79 minutes.

These connectivity projects effectively compress economic distance across the Balkans and strengthen a strategic corridor connecting the Greek port of Piraeus with Central Europe. In geopolitical terms, Serbia is gradually transforming from a historically peripheral Balkan state into a key logistical bridge linking Asia and Europe.

Perhaps the most important dimension of Vucic's visit lies in the next phase of cooperation both sides are now preparing for. Serbia increasingly wants to move beyond being merely a transit hub and become part of China's future industrial ecosystem.

During the visit, cooperation discussions expanded into robotics, new technologies, semiconductors, AI, electric vehicle supply chains, smart manufacturing, green industry and digital economy integration. Serbian cities such as Kragujevac, Sremska Mitrovica, Niš, Belgrade and Novi Sad are positioning themselves as future gateways for Chinese electric vehicle manufacturers entering European markets.

Vucic's visit to Xiaomi's advanced EV factory in Beijing was symbolic in this regard. After witnessing highly automated production systems involving thousands of robots, Vucic publicly invited Chinese technology firms to consider Serbia as a future European investment and production platform.

Serbia clearly understands that the next phase of globalization will not revolve around low-cost labor or commodity trade, but around technological ecosystems, intelligent manufacturing and supply-chain positioning.

This is precisely where China's long-term development model becomes increasingly attractive to many middle powers.

Unlike short-term speculative capital flows, China's overseas engagement often combines infrastructure, industrial investment, logistics, technology transfer and market access within a long-horizon strategic framework.

Serbia appears to have recognized this earlier than many European countries.

At the geopolitical level, Serbia's balancing strategy also reflects wider global changes. Although Belgrade remains formally committed to EU integration, it increasingly views China as a reliable development partner that respects Serbia's strategic autonomy and sovereign decision-making.

Vucic's remarks before departing for China, questioning why external actors should dictate who Serbia can cooperate with, reflected the frustrations shared by many countries navigating an increasingly polarized international environment.

For China, Serbia represents something equally significant.

Serbia has become one of China's most politically trusted European partners and an increasingly important gateway into the Balkans and the wider European market.

More importantly, the relationship offers China a demonstration that cooperation with Europe can still expand despite rising geopolitical tensions, provided partnerships are grounded in mutual benefit rather than ideological confrontation.

Vucic said Serbia hopes China-Serbia cooperation in humanoid robots, robot dogs and other high-tech sectors will soon enter production, highlighting growing bilateral innovation ties.

He also announced that Chinese companies will invest an additional €940 million ($1.1 billion) in Serbia from July, supporting future projects in AI, advanced industrial robotics, data factories, auto parts manufacturing and energy.

Ultimately, Vucic's visit demonstrated that China-Serbia relations represent a broader international trend in which middle powers and developing countries seek strategic partnerships centered on connectivity, industrial modernization, technological cooperation and development sovereignty rather than bloc politics or geopolitical coercion.

The relationship is an example of how pragmatic multi-polar cooperation can still function, not through ideological uniformity, but through railways, factories, technology partnerships, industrial planning and sustained political trust.

The author is an international affairs analyst, researcher and columnist from Bangladesh.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:49 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:49 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

JEAN-PAUL VARGAS

Clear choice to make

South-South cooperation and China's vision for high-quality development offer path to a shared future



WU HEPING AND CAO NAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Global society stands at a critical juncture. The world faces a fundamental choice: to advance profound reform of global governance rooted in international law and inclusive multilateralism, or to risk a fragmented future marked by strategic rivalry and exclusive blocs. In this pivotal moment, China's policy direction, as charted during the 2026 two sessions and articulated in the Government Work Report and the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), provides a compelling blueprint for collaborative, high-quality development. It offers a practical pathway for South-South cooperation, prioritizing shared prosperity over zero-sum competition.



China's policy directives are grounded in a proven record of resilient and forward-looking development. The 2026 Government Work Report reviews a robust 2025 where GDP grew by 5 percent, over 12.67 million urban jobs were created and new energy vehicle output surpassed 16 million units. This performance extends a remarkable five-year trend of an average 5.4 percent annual GDP growth, underpinned by the world's largest manufacturing sector in value added for 16 consecutive years.

Looking ahead, the 15th Five-Year Plan outlines a transformative vision for "high-quality development". Its goals are both ambitious and people-centered: maintaining GDP growth within an appropriate range, cutting carbon dioxide emissions per unit of GDP by 17 percent, raising the added value of core digital economy industries and increasing life expectancy to 80 years. Crucially, the plan emphasizes "investment in people" as much as in physical capital, with strategies to boost incomes, expand education and strengthen social security. This domestic focus on balanced, sustainable and innovation-driven growth — termed cultivating "new quality productive forces" — forms the bedrock of China's constructive international engagement.

A cornerstone of China's external strategy, emphatically reiterated in the 2026 Government Work Report, is to "further expand high-standard opening-up" and "steadily expand institutional opening-up". This moves beyond traditional market access to a deeper integration of rules, standards and governance practices. Key measures include advancing the upgraded China-Association of Southeast Asian Nations Free Trade Area 3.0 and actively promoting accession to high-standard pacts such as the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.

This commitment to "institutional opening-up", from between-the-borders trade and services to behind-the-borders alignment based on rules, is highly significant for the Global South. It provides a stable, predictable and rules-based framework for cooperation, aligning with the need for "demanding governance" in an increasingly fragmented world. By promoting the harmonization of standards in emerging fields such as the digital and green economies, China's approach helps partners integrate into modern supply chains, fosters technology transfer and creates a fairer business environment. It represents a shift from aid dependency to partnership based on mutual benefit and shared rules, a model that resonates with the development aspirations of Latin America, Africa and Asia, and charts a vision for reforming global governance.

China's domestic and foreign policies are coherently linked by a vision of reformed, inclusive global governance. The Government Work Report calls for "deepening multilateral, bilateral and regional economic cooperation" and upholding the multilateral trading system. This external policy complements the internal goal of building a "national unified market", which seeks to eliminate internal barriers and "rat-race competition" — a principle that, if applied globally, argues for reducing fragmentation and protectionism.

This implies, in a practical way, promoting South-South coalitions to raise common positions in multilateral forums, supporting procedural reforms, transparency, representativeness and clear rules, and promoting cooperative projects that produce tangible and measurable benefits.

At the center of the proposal is the spirit of pragmatism. Reforming global governance requires concrete tools: more accessible dispute resolution mechanisms for smaller economies, development financing less constrained by geopolitical conditions and robust platforms for technological cooperation on global public goods such as public health and climate adaptation. China's advocacy for these reforms, together with its commitment to South-South cooperation through platforms such as the China-CELAC Forum, demonstrates a practical approach. The forum's focus on solidarity, development and shared modernization exemplifies the principle of building a community with a shared future for humanity, based on mutual respect and benefit, not on pressuring third parties to take sides.

The heart of any crossroads is to make the right choice. In an environment of danger, that means choosing responsibly. At present, one path leads toward division and exclusive spheres of influence. The other, illuminated by the policy direction set at China's two sessions, leads toward integration, shared development and a reformed multilateral system. China's 15th Five-Year Plan and Government Work Report demonstrate that a nation can pursue high-quality domestic growth while simultaneously championing high-standard international cooperation.

For the Global South, this offers a relevant and actionable model. It is a vision where collaboration supplants confrontation, where common rules facilitate shared prosperity, and where the rightful pursuit of development and cultural identity is respected on the global stage. By choosing this path of "institutional opening-up" and South-South solidarity, the international community can navigate current uncertainties and build a more stable, equitable and prosperous future for all.

The author is the director and a PhD in public and business management at the Central American Institute of Public Administration, and a researcher at the Center for Historical Research of Central America at University of Costa Rica. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

LI XING

Transformative trajectory

Rise of China viewed through the lens of the "three worlds" nexus sheds light on the changing global political economy



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

China's rise and its impact on global politics and economics have undergone profound changes since the late 20th century. Different frameworks can be applied to explain the stratification of global power, including today's global power relations shaped by the competition between China and the United States. Three distinct yet historically interconnected articulations of the "three worlds" paradigm can be identified: the political "three worlds" framework advanced by Chairman Mao Zedong in the early 1970s; the economic "three worlds" stratification developed by US sociologist and historian Immanuel Wallerstein around the same time; and a contemporary "three worlds" configuration marked by strategic China-US rivalry, the constrained position of Europe and other middle powers, and the evolving role of the Global South.



These "three worlds" concepts should not be understood as sequential replacements of one another, but rather as interconnected analytical lenses — political, economic and technological, each illuminating a different dimension of the world system. Together, they underscore the extent to which China's political and economic trajectory since 1949 has reconfigured the architecture of global politics and economics.

In the early 1970s, at the height of the Cold War, Chairman Mao advanced the theory of the "differentiation of the three worlds". It was a distinctly geopolitical framework, reflecting the dynamics of bipolar confrontation. It classified states according to political alignment and their position in global power struggles. In Chairman Mao's formulation, the first world consisted of the two superpowers — the US and the Soviet Union — both characterized as rival hegemonic and imperialist powers competing for global dominance. The second world encompassed the industrialized US allies, such as Western European countries and Japan, which, despite their economic strength, lacked independent influence in the bipolar order and were perceived as potential partners in resisting hegemonic domination on some issues.

The third world included most developing countries across Asia, Africa and Latin America, many of which had newly achieved independence and were associated with the Non-Aligned Movement. Chairman Mao positioned the third world as the principal force of global revolution, emphasizing its central role in opposing imperialism and safeguarding national sovereignty, while China sought to play a leading and mobilizing role within it.

After launching reform and opening-up in the late 1970s, China became embedded in a different configuration of global power stratification, as conceptualized by Immanuel Wallerstein's World-Systems Theory. Rather than classifying state power according to political alignment, this framework analyzes the world economy as a single historical system structured by unequal exchange and hierarchical divisions of labor.

Within this model, the world economy is organized into three structural zones: core, semi-periphery and periphery. Core zones command advanced technologies, financial resources and high value-added industries. Peripheral zones are largely relegated to the provision of raw materials and low-cost labor under conditions of structural dependency. Semi-periphery zones occupy an intermediate, transitional position within this hierarchy.

China's economic ascent since the new millennium can be interpreted as a dynamic upward progression through the stratified layers of the world economic system. China progressively incorporated itself into the world economy, emerging as a central destination for foreign direct investment and the relocation of labor-intensive manufacturing.

By leveraging its vast labor reserves and integrating into global value chains, China rapidly expanded its industrial base, export capacity and technological capabilities. Its development trajectory illustrates how participation in global production networks can support upward mobility of a nation within the world system, enabling the accumulation of industrial expertise, technological knowledge and competitive export strength.

However, structural barriers to upward mobility remain significant. Advanced technology, financial power and institutional influence are concentrated in the core Western economies, constraining the potential of late-industrializing states. Even when emerging states have industrialized successfully, they often remain dependent on external markets, foreign technologies and global financial systems. China's rise challenges this pattern.

Over recent decades, China has become the world's largest manufacturing hub and an indispensable node in global supply chains, while also developing strong capabilities in infrastructure, digital technologies and advanced high-tech industries. Widely regarded as a major non-Western economy to have significantly risen from peripheral and semi-peripheral status and taken a substantial share of the core economic sectors, China is reshaping the global balance of power and producing a new configuration of strategic competition.

Today, global economic and technological rivalry has increasingly centered on the US and China. This shift signals a partial evolution beyond the traditional core-semi-periphery-periphery framework toward a more concentrated configuration of global power.

The US continues to dominate global finance, high-technology innovation and military alliances. Its financial institutions, currency system and research networks remain central to the architecture of the world economy. China, by contrast, has developed an unparalleled manufacturing ecosystem with extensive logistics networks and large-scale infrastructure capabilities. Competition between these two countries increasingly shapes the trajectory of the international system. Trade regimes, technological development, digital infrastructure and energy transitions are all influenced by their strategic rivalry. As a result, the contemporary world economy is often characterized as a dual-core structure, with the US and China occupying dominant positions within the global hierarchy.

Beneath this dual core lies a group of advanced economies often described as "middle powers", including most members of the European Union, Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom. Although these states possess sophisticated industries and high levels of development, their technological capacity and political leverage to shape the trajectory of global competition remain limited.

The structural constraint facing middle powers stems from their deep integration into both systems. Many remain embedded in US-centered financial infrastructure and security alliances, while simultaneously maintaining strong economic ties to Chinese supply chains and trade networks.

At the same time, the Global South is gaining new opportunities within this evolving order. Countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America are gaining more bargaining power and leveraging great-power competition to attract investment, infrastructure financing and technological cooperation, as well as supply chain diversification. Many Global South economies control critical raw materials, and rising demand for these resources is increasing their geopolitical and economic importance.

In recent years, de-risking strategies, tariffs and trade restrictions led by the US and its allies have encouraged China to deepen its engagement with developing countries. As a result, trade between China and other Global South countries has expanded rapidly. Chinese exports to other Global South countries now exceed $1.6 trillion, accounting for around 44 percent of its total exports. For the Global South, China represents not only an inspiring model of development but also a source of upward mobility, enlarging their room for maneuver while providing an alternative source of investment and serving as a significant trading partner. This, in turn, broadens the range of economic opportunities and reduces exclusive dependence on traditional Western economies.

In conclusion, China's rise is inseparable from its shifting position across different "three worlds" configurations over time — from Chairman Mao's geopolitical conception of the "three worlds" to Wallerstein's world economic stratification, and finally to the contemporary geo-technological configuration. The evolution of the "three worlds" nexus thus provides not only a framework for interpreting China's development trajectory, but also a lens for understanding the ongoing transformation of the global political economy.

The author is a Yunshan leading scholar and the director of the European Research Center at Guangdong Institute for International Strategies at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, and an adjunct professor of international relations at Aalborg University in Denmark. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:49 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:49 PM

CULTURAL HERITAGE



From left: Representative jade artifacts of the Hongshan culture (dating from roughly 6,500 to 5,000 years ago) on display include a C-shaped yellow jade dragon, a jade pig-dragon and a jade human figure. Golden Antler Step-Sway Crown Ornament, Northern Wei Dynasty (386–534). PHOTOS BY BAI SHUHAO / CHINA DAILY AND PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The alchemy of gold and jade across dynasties

From imperial crowns to Olympic medals, treasures reveal the evolution of Chinese civilization over millennia, **Bai Shuhao** reports in Hohhot.



Left: The Xiongnu King's Crown, dating to the Warring States Period (475–221 BC), is topped with an eagle featuring a turquoise head. LI HE / XINHUA
Above: The crown of Empress Xiao (replica), wife of Emperor Yang of the Sui Dynasty (581–618). The exhibition displays the two crowns facing one another. BAI SHUHAO / CHINA DAILY

In a dimly lit gallery, two jeweled crowns face one another, their gold surfaces glimmering in the darkness.

One, a ceremonial crown belonging to an empress of the Sui Dynasty (581-618), blossoms into 13 delicate floral sprays crafted from 10 different materials, its extravagance reflecting the wealth, sophistication and artistic refinement of southern China's agrarian civilization.

Opposite stands the crown of a Xiongnu tribal leader from the Warring States Period (475-221 BC). Topped with a golden eagle with a turquoise beak, it embodies the stark power of the northern steppe.

The rulers who wore them lived centuries apart, but their crowns now meet in a single exhibition, united by two materials that have shaped Chinese civilization for millennia: gold and jade.

The pairing has become one of the most striking moments in *Golden and Jade Brilliance: Diverse and Splendid China*, an exhibition at the Inner Mongolia Museum in Hohhot that runs through Aug 31.

"The way they face each other across the gallery perfectly echoes this year's Museum Day theme — 'Museums Uniting a Divided World'," says Zheng Chengyan, the exhibition's curator and deputy director of the museum.

Bringing together 386 artifacts from 58 museums and cultural institutions across China, the exhibition, which opened on May 18 for International Museum Day, traces nearly 9,000 years through jade carvings, bronze ware and gold objects, exploring how Chinese civilization emerged, evolved and flourished across vast regions and different cultural traditions.

"Gold symbolizes power and eternity, while jade embodies virtue and belief," Zheng says. "Together, they reflect how material culture shaped Chinese ideas of power, morality and the cosmos."

The exhibition argues that the histories of gold and jade did not develop separately, but gradually became intertwined as political authority and ethical ideals grew increasingly connected over time.

Upon entering the gallery, visitors first encounter three jade relics from the Hongshan culture of northeastern China, dating roughly from 6,500 to 5,000 years ago: a jade pig-dragon, a C-shaped yellow jade dragon and a jade human figure.

The pig-dragon, with the head of a pig and the coiled body of a dragon, was likely used in rituals seeking harmony and good harvests. The C-shaped jade represents one of the earliest dragon forms in Chinese art. The standing figure, just over seven inches tall, is believed to depict a praying shaman.

Nearby artifacts from the Liangzhu culture in Zhejiang province and Lingjiatan culture in Anhui province, both in the Yangtze River Delta, suggest that early societies across the country, despite regional differences, were already developing shared concepts of rituals and civilization.

"By the late Hongshan period, six major jade cultures had emerged," Zheng says. "What they shared was reverence for heaven, ancestors and nature."

Advances in metallurgy ushered China into the Bronze Age. During this period, the Chinese word for "gold" often referred not to precious metal, but to bronze ritual vessels.

Among the highlights are a gold-masked bronze human head from Sanxingdui, dating to the Shang Dynasty (c. 16th to 11th century BC), and the monumental "Zeng Zhong You Fu Hu", meaning Vessel Hu of You Fu, the second son of the Zeng family, a ritual bronze vessel from the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BC).

"From the moment metal objects began to flourish, jade never lost its sacred role," Zheng says.

Beginning in the Xia Dynasty (c. 21st-16th century BC), jade and bronze were frequently used together in elaborate ritual systems that regulated rank, conduct and political authority.

By the Warring States and Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220) periods, gold and jade had evolved from parallel traditions into a shared artistic language. Gold-and-jade objects became symbols of imperial grandeur and cosmopolitan culture.

At the center of the third section stands a replica of a Han Dynasty jade burial suit sewn with gold wire.

Fashioned from hundreds of polished jade plaques linked by gold threads, the suit was designed to preserve the body after death. Though the practice emerged earlier, it reached its height during the Han Dynasty.

"It was a cultural milestone and represents the ideas of immortality and eternity embedded in gold-and-jade culture," Zheng explains.

Alongside the suit are funerary objects excavated from ancient tombs, including hoof-shaped ingots from the tomb of the Marquis of Haihun in Jiangxi province, as well as jade mouthpieces and burial plugs used in funerary rites. Though the dethroned ruler only held the title of emperor for 27 days, his tomb has yielded a remarkable wealth of artifacts, historical clues and enduring legends.

One object deliberately breaks the exhibition's chronology: a jade cicada from the tomb of a Khitan princess of the Liao Dynasty (916-1125). Though jade burial customs originated in the Han Chinese heartland, Zheng says, they later spread to frontier cultures as well.

After the Han Dynasty, trade along the Silk Road flourished, bringing northern horsemen and Central Asian merchants into closer contact with China. Nowhere was that exchange more visible than in what is now Inner Mongolia, long situated between the agrarian civilizations of Central China and the nomadic cultures of the steppe.

That fusion defines the exhibition's fourth section, devoted to the period from the Wei and Jin dynasties (220-420) through the Song (960-1279) and Yuan (1271-1368) dynasties.

"When people think of the Yuan Dynasty, they immediately think of blue-and-white porcelain," Zheng says. "But nomadic peoples were also deeply devoted to gold ornaments."

The exhibition features numerous gold ornaments used on horseback, including saddles, stirrups and bridles.

In jade carving, nomadic influence appeared most clearly in the motifs known as "spring water" and "autumn mountain", scenes derived from seasonal royal hunts. One Yuan Dynasty jade belt ornament depicts an eagle attacking a swan, a reference to spring falconry expeditions once practiced by steppe rulers.

Over time, such imagery spread far beyond the grasslands, eventually appearing even in decorative ornaments atop Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) officials' hats.

By the Ming and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, the meaning of jade had broadened further, while colorful gemstones began appearing throughout the gallery.

"Those gemstones came to China through the Maritime Silk Road, bearing witness to the exchanges made possible by Zheng He's voyages," Zheng Chengyan says.

By this period, the fusion of gold and jade craftsmanship had reached its artistic peak. No longer merely precious materials, gold and jade had evolved into enduring symbols of beauty, prosperity, integrity, and moral virtue.

The exhibition closes with objects from the modern era: medals from the 2008 Beijing Olympics, whose designs deliberately combined gold and jade in homage to ancient Chinese traditions.

Zhou Huiwen, director of the Changsha Museum, whose institution loaned artifacts to the exhibition, says she is struck by both the refinement of the objects and how deeply the symbolism of gold and jade still resonates in China today.

"They have always represented status and the pursuit of a better life," she says.

Wang Ziyi, deputy director of the Xi'an Museum, says the most astonishing object for him is the jade pig-dragon.

"It's remarkable that people so many thousands of years ago could already combine the image of a dragon with that of a pig," Wang says.

"Gold and jade objects in ancient China took many different forms, and this exhibition reflects the richness and diversity of Chinese civilization."

China has an old saying: *qi yi zai dao* — "objects carry the way".

Gold and jade, the exhibition suggests, are more than precious materials or decorative crafts. One is forged by human hands; the other shaped by nature. One dazzles sharply; the other glows with quiet restraint.

Together, they form two sides of Chinese civilization.

Near the exit, the exhibition offers one final reflection: the union of gold and jade embodies an Eastern philosophy that values harmony, order and continuity. Though silent, their voices still echo across millennia.

Yuan Hui contributed to this story.

Contact the writer at baishuhao@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

New book reflects on defining decade of archaeology

By **WANG RU**
wangru1@chinadaily.com.cn





Left: Li Xinwei (right), director of the Chinese School of Classical Studies at Athens, visits the Minoan mountain village site on the Greek island of Crete with Greek archaeologist Yiannis Papadatos last year.
Right: Cover of the book, *The Past Decade of Chinese Archaeology (2016-26)*. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Archaeologist Peng Xiaojun of the Institute of Archaeology under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences recalls how, in 2013, he and his colleagues had to tether a hot-air balloon to themselves while taking aerial photographs of a site in Hubei province, worried it might drift away. By 2017, one of his colleagues had assembled a drone capable of capturing panoramic views. Today, drones are widely available and have become an essential tool in archaeological fieldwork.

"Over the past decade, advances have extended far beyond equipment and technology. China's archaeological research has made progress across many fronts," Peng said at a news conference in Beijing on Wednesday, where scholars presented the institute's latest academic achievements.

Among the highlights is a new book, *The Past Decade of Chinese Archaeology (2016-26)*, compiled by institute researchers. The volume provides a comprehensive review of the evolution of archaeological research in China over the past 10 years.

The book is divided into 12 chapters, covering not only major findings from different periods — such as the Neolithic, Xia (c. 21st century-16th century BC), Shang (c. 16th century-11th century BC) and Zhou (c. 11th century-256 BC), and from the Qin (221-206 BC) to the Qing (1644-1911) dynasties — but also cutting-edge topics, including the use of big data and artificial intelligence in archaeology, technological and scientific applications in archaeology, and archaeological work in border regions, according to Peng, who contributed to the volume.

Peng said two key themes have defined Chinese archaeology over the past decade: the origins of Chinese civilization and the question of "what makes China". These priorities reflect major national research programs aimed at demonstrating that China's history encompasses more than a million years of human activity, 10,000 years of cultural development, and over 5,000 years of civilization.

International collaboration has also become a defining feature of the field, according to the book. In addition to hosting academic forums and conferences, Chinese archaeologists have increasingly partnered with overseas counterparts on excavations abroad, contributing to a broader understanding of Chinese civilization in world history.

Another book highlighted at the conference, *Way of Wisdom That Bridges the East to the West*, examines Chinese archaeologists' collaboration with local professionals at five key sites of ancient civilizations, such as the Temple of Montu in Egypt, the Mingtepa and Munchaktepa sites in Uzbekistan, and the Dobrovat site in Romania.

Jia Xiaobing, head of the institute's world archaeology research office and a contributor to the book, said the five projects reflect China's growing role in international archaeology. They have produced valuable firsthand research materials while helping to fill important gaps in related academic fields.

"Over the past decade, China's overseas archaeological work has undergone a profound transformation — from occasional participation to systematic leadership, from exporting technology to jointly developing research concepts, and from following international trends to helping shape them," Jia said. "Chinese archaeological ideas, methods and technologies are now making a stronger contribution to global archaeological research."

The growing integration of science and technology is another major trend highlighted in *The Past Decade of Chinese Archaeology (2016-26)*. "Multidisciplinary research has become standard practice. Techniques such as ancient DNA analysis, high-precision dating, 3D modeling, and laboratory archaeology are now widely used, making collaboration across disciplines an integral part of archaeological research," Peng said.

For example, the conference also highlighted an essay compiled by field archaeologists and archaeometry (scientific methods and technology used in archaeological studies) professionals about the carbon dating of the Erlitou site in Luoyang, Henan province, widely believed to be a late capital of the Xia Dynasty.

Chen Xianglong, a researcher at the institute's research center for archaeological science and experiment, said the chronology of the site was once established mainly through comparisons of pottery forms. Today, researchers can analyze key remains and apply carbon-dating techniques to develop a far more precise understanding of the site's timeline and evolution.

"Archaeometry studies allow us to gain richer archaeological information, expand the scope of research, deepen our analysis, and improve the efficiency, depth and precision of our work," Chen said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:49 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:49 PM

LIFE



Capturing art's enduring power in the era of AI

With technology quickly advancing, writers and filmmakers explore and share how they continue to find inspiration to create works that resonate, **Xu Fan** reports.

Dear You, one of the biggest dark-horse blockbusters this year, has become a hotly debated example of how a resonant work rooted in real-life inspirations can soar to become a hit.



From left: Sub-forums of the Forum on Building up China's Cultural Strength 2026 brought together veteran creators, including director Lan Hongchun, scriptwriter He Jiping, novelist Ma Boyong, and writer Qiu Huadong. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

As a veteran writer and vice-chairman of the China Writers Association, Qiu Huadong says he has often been asked multiple versions of the same question: In an age shaped by artificial intelligence and information overload at ever-accelerating speed, where can literature continue to find its inspirational energy?

His answer remains consistent: the wellspring of artistic creation still rises from "the soil beneath our feet" and from the long cultural memory carried through 5,000 years of Chinese civilization.

Qiu delivers this resonant line in the opening of his speech at the Forum on Fostering the Development of Art and Literature, one of 11 sub-events of the Forum on Building up China's Cultural Strength 2026, the country's top-tier cultural gathering, held in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, in late May.

Bringing together writers, artists and scholars, the subforum wrestled with a question often discussed yet difficult to answer: how to preserve originality and create quality works in an era when technology is rapidly reshaping the way art is produced and consumed. Finding a solution is complicated.

Contemplating history

With a writing career spanning over 40 years, Qiu cites *Kong Cheng Ji* (The Chronicles of Empty Cities) as an example of how he puts his philosophy into practice.

Born in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, Qiu moved to Beijing after graduating from Wuhan University in Hubei province in the early 1990s. He revealed that he has made it a habit to return to Xinjiang every year in search of inspiration.

During his journeys, venturing deep into sparsely populated areas that preserve relics such as the Kizil Caves or that were once the sites of vanished kingdoms like Loulan, questions haunted him: "Could these silent artifacts speak? Could the lost ancient cities be brought back to life through imagination?"

This contemplation sparked the inspiration to pen his novel. Selecting six historic cities in Xiyu — a historical and geographical term referring to today's Xinjiang and surrounding Central Asian areas — the novel adopts an unconventional narrative method by making cultural relics and artifacts the storytellers. For instance, a Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220) bronze coin, a carved Buddha head, and a spotted horse from a rock painting become some of the protagonists.

"I hope through these small and focused entry points, history will no longer be a cold term in textbooks, but rather a collection of living moments that are warm and breathing with life," says Qiu.

Ma Boyong (Ma Li's pen name), a novelist known for embedding fictional thrillers in real historical settings, points to another key element in creating history-themed works: they should resonate with modern emotions.

Remaining loyal to major historical events while exercising imagination on minor details is a principle he follows. To further explain, he cites the famous historical event "Hongmen Yan" (Feast of Hongmen), which took place at a titular location outside Xianyang, the former capital of the collapsed Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC).

The banquet, hosted by the rebel army's leader, Xiang Yu, in honor of his rival Liu Bang, was designed as a deadly political trap. However, the arrogant Xiang hesitated to kill the seemingly humble Liu — a moment of mercy that led to Xiang's catastrophic downfall and altered the course of Chinese history.

"Why Xiang did not make his move cannot be found in historical records, but it can be inferred from human nature. The 26-year-old, high-spirited Xiang, facing the 50-something, aging Liu, could hardly have foreseen the latter's future glory," says Ma, who has used this event on multiple occasions to exemplify the space available for novelists to add their imaginations.



A scene from *New Dragon Gate Inn*, one of the most influential martial arts films, demonstrates how a conventional genre can be innovated.

He shares that many young readers fancy the cultures that prevailed during the Tang (618-907) and Song dynasties (960-1279), reflecting the country's growing national strength and cultural confidence. "Every era has its own distinct Chinese character, but those of us living in the present will naturally seek out the spirit of the age that mirrors our own," says Ma.

Pursuing authenticity

Another recurring theme at the forum was the importance of maintaining sincerity with audiences and grounding stories in real life.

Director Lan Hongchun, best known for the recent hit *Dear You*, says during the Forum on High-Quality Development of the Film Industry, held alongside the literature forum on May 22, that "pure, authentic and warm local stories will always have the power to move people's hearts".

The film, which concludes Lan's trilogy about families from the Chaoshan region of eastern Guangdong province, follows the daughter of a Chinese-Thai hostel owner who spends 18 years sending money and letters to the widow of a deceased family friend who once saved her father from an arson attack. The man, a Chaoshan native who fled his hometown to avoid forced conscription by the Kuomintang, was later killed in Thailand while trying to stop gangsters from robbing a fishing boat. To spare his widow the pain, the woman hides the truth and continues writing letters in his name.

Lan says the film marks a departure from his comfort zone, as he sought to realistically portray the history and lives of overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia.

To prepare for the production, he and his team traveled extensively, interviewing nearly 300 overseas Chinese families across Southeast Asia, Europe and the United States. Their research uncovered a wealth of historical details, ranging from the price of a movie ticket in 1960s Thailand to the era's licensing rules governing tricycle operators.

One of the film's emotional highlights is the featuring of *qiaopi* — remittance letters sent home by Chinese laborers who left China's southeastern coast to work abroad between the 19th and 20th centuries. Carrying homesickness, longing and familial affection, the letters have deeply resonated with audiences, especially when paired with the film's original version spoken in the Chaoshan dialect.

In an earlier review, Gao Shiming, vice-president of the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles, reflects on the emotional power of *qiaopi*, noting that more than 30 million such letters are estimated to have reached China over 150 years.

"Many of those who sent and received these letters could neither read nor write, yet the scribes they hired transformed ordinary daily matters and heartfelt concerns into elegant, meticulous and deeply moving words," Gao writes.

More importantly, he adds, *qiaopi* embodies not only separation and longing, but also the hardships and livelihoods of overseas Chinese laborers. Combining remittances with personal correspondence, the letters often carried small sums of money saved through frugal living abroad — funds that represented hope for buying rice, oil, salt, and firewood for family members left behind.

Veteran screenwriter He Jiping pushes the discussion further at the literature forum by emphasizing the deeper responsibility of artistic creation. Nearly four decades ago, He, already an acclaimed playwright, left Beijing to reunite with her family in Hong Kong, where she expanded from stage writing into film and television screenwriting.

In 1991, director Tsui Hark was drawn to her celebrated stage play *The First House Under Heaven*, and invited her to write the screenplay for *New Dragon Gate Inn*, the martial arts classic about swordsmen battling a ruthless eunuch and his henchmen in the remote desert during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).

The screenwriter reveals that her grounding in traditional Chinese culture and previous years living on the Loess Plateau in northwestern China inspired her to break away from the lush landscapes commonly associated with *wuxia* (martial arts) films. Instead, she chose the desert setting of shifting sands, which later became one of the movie's most distinctive visual elements.

Now 75, He remains demanding of her own writing. She says it is not enough for a script to simply offer a compelling story or memorable characters. "A good work should leave audiences carrying contemplation with them, not just applause, when they walk out of the theater," quoting the late playwright, Cao Yu.

She adds that writers also need what she calls a "second pair of eyes" — the ability to observe human nature from a broader perspective. Such awareness, she says, allows storytellers to infuse their works with greater humanity, emotional depth and lasting resonance.

Contact the writer at xufan@chinadaily.com.cn

Australian visitors give China study tours a 10

MELBOURNE — In a meeting room at the Chinese Consulate General in Melbourne in May, a group of Australians recently recalled their visits to China with visible excitement: "I give the China trip 10 out of 10!" "I went twice, so I give it 20!"

From the modern dynamism of Chongqing and the historical charm of Xi'an, Shaanxi province, to the vibrant atmosphere of Changsha, Hunan province, the memories were still fresh.

"After returning from China, I no longer bother arguing with people about the country. I just tell them: go and see it for yourself," says Robert Barwick, national chairman of the Australian Citizens Party.

In October 2025, Barwick joined 18 other Australians from different sectors in a 21-day study and goodwill tour to China, organized by Richard Yuan, chairman of the Australia China Entrepreneurs Club. The delegation visited Haikou, Hainan province; Nanjing, Jiangsu province; Shanghai; Hangzhou, Zhejiang province; Shenzhen, Guangdong province; and several other Chinese cities.

From March to April, the delegation organized another visit to more Chinese cities.

During the trips, delegation members held in-depth discussions with local officials, visited high-tech companies, experienced China's medical services, and learned about the history of the Communist Party of China at the Museum of the Communist Party of China and the Site of the First National Congress of the CPC.

For John Lander, in his 80s and who served as Australia's deputy ambassador to China from 1974 to 1976, the trip was also a journey of rediscovery.

During his visit, Lander met Xia Boyu, a Chinese mountaineer who reached the summit of Mount Qomolangma despite having lost both legs. To Lander, Xia embodied the Chinese spirit — "stand, endure, and succeed".

Noelene Isherwood, co-founder of the Australian Citizens Party, says the China trip felt "like walking from a blizzard into a warm room". What impressed her most was the spirit of the Chinese people.

"They are fast-paced and optimistic," she says, adding that what stood out to her was the country's "happiness, unity and sense of purpose".

Her husband, Craig Isherwood, national secretary of the Australian Citizens Party, was struck by the growth of Chinese enterprises. He notes that many companies that began as start-ups two decades ago have, with government support, grown into multinational firms worth billions of dollars.

"China's market economy is for the benefit of the people," he says, rather than for the benefit of large corporations.

For business strategy consultant Antony Hing, the visit awakened a deeper connection with his Chinese heritage. After returning to Australia, he began reading the CPC regulations and the Constitution of the People's Republic of China.

Hing says the CPC always "thinks into the future" and he was amazed by "how focused China is on bringing its entire population into the era of modernization".

At the discussion, participants spoke at length about what they had seen and felt in China. Yuan says there was a huge gap between people's real experiences in China and the narratives often presented by Western media.

He says he was determined to continue organizing study and goodwill tours, so that more Australians could see China with their own eyes.



Members of a group of Australians exchange views about their visits to China in a meeting room at the Chinese Consulate General in Melbourne on May 22. XU HAIJING / XINHUA

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:49 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:49 PM

LIFE







Clockwise from above: Svetlana Kobiakova at Chengdu Grand Theatre to watch an opera in May. Kobiakova strikes a traditional tai chi pose in front of the Chinese Tai Chi Museum in Chenjiagou village, Henan province, in October 2025. She practices tai chi fan in Yakutsk, the Republic of Sakha, Russia, in 2018. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Russian master follows tai chi to ancient roots

After leaving behind a career in physics, Svetlana Kobiakova has devoted herself to practicing and teaching the Chen-style martial art in its birthplace of Chenjiagou, **Qi Xin** and **Shi Baoyin** report in Zhengzhou, Henan.

In the pale light of dawn, a solitary figure stands in a courtyard in Chenjiagou village of Wenxian county, Henan province. With her legs bent and arms encircling the air, Svetlana Kobiakova, 59, from Russia's Yakutsk, holds a *zhanzhuang* (standing meditation) posture.

Several minutes later, she flows into the Chen-style *taijiquan* (tai chi boxing) routine. Her movements are silk-smooth, her breath deep.

Kobiakova, a disciple of Chen-style tai chi, has immersed herself in tai chi practice for 15 years. She now serves as a master at Chenjiagou Taijiquan School.

At a glance, you might mistake her for a local. Known by her Chinese name, Chen Yimei, Kobiakova belongs to the Sakha (Yakut) ethnic group of Russia, a people with ancient Siberian roots who share striking physical similarities with East Asians.

Over the years, she has visited Chenjiagou, the birthplace of Chen-style tai chi, 13 times. Last September, she started her longest journey, a full year of immersion in the village that has become her spiritual home.

"The philosophy, technique, and internal energy of tai chi have endless layers waiting for me to explore," she says.

Before tai chi, her life was a model of rationality. She worked as a physics teacher, a researcher at an institute, and a specialist studying the physical properties of diamonds. Her world was governed by data and logic.

She had tried other martial arts, such as karate and taekwondo, but none touched her heart.

Her introduction to tai chi came when she accidentally witnessed someone practicing the art, and she then learned the basics from a practitioner in Russia. However, she soon found herself unable to make progress.

"I reached a clear conclusion, to learn real tai chi, you must go to its root," she says.

So, she emailed the Chenjiagou Taijiquan School and received a warm invitation. Arriving there in 2011, she found something unexpected.

"I felt an unexplainable sensation of peace and joy," she says softly. "Tai chi gets deeper the more you learn. It's like climbing endless mountains. Every time you reach one peak, you see a higher one ahead. There is never an end to progress — and that is its greatest charm.



Svetlana Kobiakova practices tai chi with Chen Ziqiang, her master at the Chenjiagou Taijiquan School, in August 2024. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"I used to suffer from bronchitis. Practicing tai chi has helped me feel more balanced and relaxed physically," she says.

"I think tai chi also reshaped my temperament, making me calm, positive, and peaceful."

Chen Ziqiang, her master, head coach at the Chenjiagou Taijiquan School and a 20th-generation descendant of the Chen family, praises her dedication.

"She is diligent and hardworking, practicing and deepening her understanding of tai chi culture," he says.

"Tai chi is a vivid and concrete embodiment of traditional Chinese culture. While much of traditional Chinese heritage is abstract and profound, tai chi is observable and learnable, offering and showing the wisdom and philosophies of Chinese culture."

From 2012 to 2015, Kobiakova achieved outstanding results in major international tai chi competitions worldwide. She was the European champion five times and a silver medalist at the 1st World Taijiquan Championship held in Chengdu, Sichuan province, in 2014.

Furthermore, she serves as a certified referee for the Russian Wushu Federation.

Having taught both Chinese and Western students, Kobiakova offers unique insights into cross-cultural learning. She has resigned from her research career entirely and founded her own tai chi school in Russia.

Now, Kobiakova is the first foreign master to teach tai chi at Chenjiagou Taijiquan School.

"My students range from 6-year-old children to 80-year-old elders," she says, adding that nationalities approach the discipline differently.

"European learners are usually more relaxed in the beginning," she says, but once foreign learners truly immerse themselves in tai chi's inner logic and philosophy, they become equally devoted and persistent.

"Deep down, all people are the same," she insists. "Everyone who loves tai chi is seeking inner peace, balance, and self-improvement."

She draws a contrast between tai chi and entertainment such as music or other sports.

"Music comforts the soul, but tai chi heals the body and cultivates the spirit at the same time. It is a lifestyle, a philosophy, and a treasure that deserves to be shared worldwide."

Kobiakova devotes about eight hours a day to tai chi. "Evening training has a different quality," she explains.

"The busy day quiets down. The body has been awake and moving, and the mind is finally ready to absorb."

Dai Ruijun, 43, a Chinese student from Xinyang city, Henan province, followed her 15-year-old son to Chenjiagou four years ago.

She recalls noticing Kobiakova early on. "Her tai chi skills are exquisite, and she treats everyone with warmth and kindness," she says.

Dai's son is taught by Kobiakova. "She even uses English to teach him the moves, correcting his postures while helping him build a language foundation," Dai notes.

"My son has become calmer, more focused, and more resilient. Tai chi is wonderful for teenagers," she adds.

Kobiakova plans to continue promoting traditional Chen-style tai chi when she returns to Russia, aiming to introduce more people abroad to Chinese culture.

"Tai chi gave me a new life," she says. "I hope I can spend my whole life passing this treasure on to the world."

Contact the writers at qixin@chinadaily.com.cn

Harvard students explore China's culture and tech

Inside the Shenzhen headquarters of Chinese electric vehicle giant BYD, Harvard student Iseult Alice Fitzpatrick looked on in disbelief as a car rolled smoothly forward, balanced on just three wheels during a technology demonstration.

"This feels like the future," she said. Later, she climbed into several of the company's vehicles, trying out smart driving features and peppering engineers with questions about BYD's latest technology.

Over nine days from May 17 to 25, Fitzpatrick and fellow Harvard students and faculty members traveled from Shenzhen to the southwestern province of Guizhou and then to Beijing as part of a China-US exchange program with students from Peking University.

Along the way, they toured technology companies, stood atop the world's tallest bridge, and wandered through the courtyards of the Forbidden City (Palace Museum). For many of the students, the trip offered a new perspective on China.

The delegation's first stop was the Shenzhen Reform and Opening-up Exhibition Hall, where students traced the arc of a city that rose after China launched its reform and opening-up policies in the late 1970s and has since become a hub for advanced manufacturing and technology.

Inside the museum, exhibits demonstrated how a modest fishing village on China's southern coast changed over four decades into one of the country's most dynamic urban economies.

The pace of change left a strong impression on the visitors.

"Building a city like this in just a few decades is remarkable," said William Betts Wiltshire. "It speaks to the coordination and strategic thinking that shape how the country develops. I was deeply impressed."

From China's southern coast, the delegation continued inland to Guizhou, a province known for its steep mountains and deep valleys. Its rough karst terrain has long made travel difficult, requiring bridges and tunnels to connect the landscape.

Today, more than 32,000 bridges have been completed or are under construction across the province.

The Huajiang Grand Canyon Bridge, a steel-truss suspension bridge on the Liuzhi-Anlong Expressway, was a highlight of the visit. Certified by Guinness World Records in April 2026 as the world's highest bridge, it rises 626.01 meters above a deep gorge. It has also been developed as a tourist site, with glass elevators, bungee platforms and night light displays illuminating the canyon walls.

For many students, the view contrasted sharply with China's coastal cities, indicating how far development has spread into the interior.

"I expected this level of development in Shanghai," said Jose Enrique Vera Ortega. "But I didn't expect it here. It's not just the big cities. It feels like development is happening across the country at the same time."

In Beijing, the delegation moved into the country's cultural center of gravity.

At the Palace Museum, students moved through vast courtyards and along rigid imperial axes, guided past red walls and golden roofs that have framed centuries of dynastic life. Students paid close attention as guides described architectural intricacies and symbolism, pausing frequently to photograph carved beams and painted ceilings.

For some, the experience shifted history from abstraction to something physically present.

"History feels real here," said a Harvard student. "You're not just learning about it. You're standing inside it."

Earlier in Guizhou, students had tried their hands at traditional indigo dyeing, folding and binding cloth before dipping it into deep blue vats. The patterns slowly emerged as an ancient craft took shape in real time.

"It's beautiful, and it has depth," said Carla Isabel Gamarra Martinez, who took home dyed pieces for her family. In her view, closer engagement with another culture from the East could open up a broader perspective.

"The trip wasn't just sightseeing," said Liu Ziyi, an international student at Peking University who studies art. "It gave us a real sense of what culture can mean. I hope to build bridges between cultures with art."

The visit is part of a broader effort to bring 50,000 young Americans to China over five years for study and exchange. Since the initiative's announcement in November 2023, institutions on both sides of the Pacific have scheduled a variety of programs, including cultural trips, sporting events, and technology-focused seminars.

Doris Sommer, a Harvard University professor on the trip, said she hoped exchanges with Chinese counterparts would continue in the years ahead, deepening mutual engagement and expanding opportunities for collaboration and talent development.

"Future programs will be expanded to give more young people from both countries opportunities to engage and learn from one another," said Yu Changxue, director of the China Center for International People-to-People Exchange under the Ministry of Education.

XINHUA



International students visit the Huajiang Grand Canyon Bridge in Southwest China's Guizhou province on May 20. LIU XU / XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:49 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:49 PM

SPORTS

UFC

Fight Night on song

'Kung Fu Monkey' holds nerve in Macao despite pressure

By SUN XIAOCHEN
sunxiaochen@chinadaily.com.cn

Even marred by setbacks for the host contingent, the Ultimate Fighting Championship's return to Macao has proved to be a smashing success as the mixed martial arts promotion has elevated the combat sport's profile in China.

On what would otherwise be a disappointing night for Chinese fans, Song Yadong saved the best for last. The bantamweight striker capped off UFC Fight Night Macao with a bang by securing a submission victory over Brazil's former world champion Deiveson Figueiredo in their main event on Saturday.

Heading into the highly anticipated finale between Song and Figueiredo, the 13-bout Fight Night had turned deeply disappointing for the home crowd, with four other Chinese fighters having all lost in their respective bouts on the preliminary and main cards, leaving the sold-out Galaxy Arena in silence and Song under huge pressure to salvage the night.

Song, China's highest-ranked men's fighter in UFC across all divisions, did not disappoint.

Rising to the moment with poise and finesse, Song pulled off the fight of his career with a guillotine choke early in the second round that forced former flyweight titleholder Figueiredo to submit, sending the Macao crowd into a frenzy.

It was Song's 23rd career win as a professional MMA athlete, and his 12th under the UFC banner in 17 bouts in the Octagon since signing up with the Las Vegas-based promoter in 2017.

Entering the Macao event as the fifth-ranked contender in UFC's bantamweight, Song is expected to keep climbing the rankings, and has cemented himself as a serious challenger for the belt currently held by Petr Yan of Russia.

After witnessing his compatriots' earlier losses, particularly light heavyweight scrapper Zhang Mingyang's shocking TKO defeat to Alonzo Menifield of the United States, Song confessed he felt the heat as he walked into the arena accompanied by the theme song of the Chinese TV classic *Journey to the West*.

Inspired by the TV series' main character, Song is nicknamed the "Kung Fu Monkey" by his home fans. Song said afterward, he drew strength from the crowd's rousing reaction and the same music that played as prelude to his UFC debut in Shanghai in 2017.

After exchanging punches with the Brazilian veteran and fending off his opponent's takedown attempts, Song capitalized on an opening early in the second round by locking up a tight guillotine choke that forced Figueiredo to tap out at the 4:42 mark, securing Song the biggest win of his career.

"I did feel the pressure. I couldn't help but imagine seeing the headline of 'Total Loss for China' the next morning, so I told myself to do my best and focus on my fight," Song said during his post-fight news conference.

"I knew I have what it takes to win the bout and I'd prepared the best I could. So I just focused on executing my techniques. The opportunity (for a choke) came and I took it. The result just took care of itself," said the 28-year-old Heilongjiang native, who's been training at the Team Alpha Male club in Sacramento, California for years.

Asked whom he expects to fight in his next bout, Song shrugged off the hyped rivalry between him and the rest of the division, saying he is just focused on perfecting his own craft to be ready for whoever the UFC picks for him down the line.

"I don't care to be honest. My goal will be building my fight toward a shot at the division crown," said Song.

Song's victory capped off a three-day fighting series in Macao, where the UFC kicked off the Season 5 of its talent-selection tournament, the Road To UFC, on Thursday and Friday, before the blockbuster Fight Night main dish.

It's the second time in three years that Macao has hosted the world's premier MMA showpiece since the 2024 edition. In between the two events in Macao, the UFC also hosted a Fight Night and semifinal rounds of the RTU tournament in Shanghai last summer.

With over 12,600 spectators drawn to Saturday's main event, the impressive turnout at the Galaxy Arena, following the sought-after Shanghai event in August, has served up a strong testament to MMA's growing appeal to the Chinese market.

"Our commitment to this region and Greater China as a whole is reflected in the fact that we do more and more these events," Kevin Chang, UFC's senior vice-president and head of Asia, said of the organization's hosting of live events in China on a consistent basis.

"That's pretty important for what we're trying to do here to grow the fanbase and we've shown that we are committed to it and we are consistent. We expect more and more of these types of events to come."

Although not ready yet to be announced, Chang hinted in Macao that a return to Shanghai this year, quite possibly in late summer again, is being seriously discussed by the UFC and its Chinese partners.

"China is very, very important (for the UFC), just the scale of the country and the number of fans, and how passionate they are, and all of those things contribute to that," said Chang.



China's bantamweight fighter Song Yadong celebrates after winning his bout against Brazil's Deiveson Figueiredo during UFC Fight Night at the Galaxy Arena in Macao on Saturday. AFP



Song Yadong (lying on his back) locks his opponent Deiveson Figueiredo during their bout on Saturday. UFC



China's Song Yadong (left) in action against Brazil's Deiveson Figueiredo during their UFC bantamweight fight at Galaxy Arena in Macao on Saturday. UFC

TCM doctor swaps needles for punches

By SUN XIAOCHEN

Wearing gloves and mouthguard instead of white gown and stethoscope, China's doctor-turned-fighter Shi Ming proved in Macao she's as adept at fighting as she is treating patients at her clinic.

The emerging mixed martial artist, who's a full-time doctor at a hospital in Kunming, Yunnan province, made a statement of her pursuit of a career in the brutal world of combat sport with a thrilling first win in the Ultimate Fighting Championship, secured by a first-round submission of Indian opponent Puja Tomar on Friday.

In just her second Octagon appearance since signing up with the Las Vegas-based promotion in December 2024, Shi delivered a dominant and clinical performance by forcing Tomar to tap out via a tight arm-triangle choke just a minute and a half into the first round of their strawweight bout, which headlined the Road To UFC Season 5 opening round's day-two actions at the Galaxy Arena.

To clinch her first UFC win in front of her home crowd, and in compelling fashion, Shi has silenced doubts about her readiness to fight like a pro following her disappointing debut loss in Shanghai last summer.

"The loss last time was really frustrating, so this one feels like a great confidence boost that I need," said Shi, who had to work intensively overtime for a week at her hospital to make the trip to Macao during her off days.

"Throughout all the fights in my career, I've always been considered the underdog. Tonight was the first time that I entered a bout as the favorite," said the 31-year-old semi-pro, who trains three times a week at the China Catch Wrestling club in Kunming under guidance by the gym's Iranian coach Bagher Amanolahi.

"I am so glad that I proved I belong (in the top promotion). I feel even happier than when I got the UFC contract," said Shi, who was signed by the organization as the strawweight division winner of the RTU tournament's Season 3 in 2024.

Dubbed the "fighting doctor" by fans and fellow athletes, Shi's dual identity and amateur background sets her apart in the high-intensity combat sports community, resonating with ordinary combat sports enthusiasts.

When she is not perfecting her wrestling, grappling and striking skills at her fight club, Shi is known as a soft-spoken traditional Chinese medicine practitioner relaxing muscles and soothing pains with her specialty in acupuncture treatment.

Her priority, for now, is expected to shift to her fiercer alter ego.

"I am ready and I've been staying in good shape. I'd like to fight more frequently, so I wish the UFC would arrange more fights for me," said Shi, whose favorite fighter is China's former strawweight world champion Zhang Weili.

SOCCER

Paris celebrates Champions League triumph amid riot recriminations

PARIS — The French capital laid out a red, white and blue carpet on Sunday for Paris Saint-Germain players to mark their second straight Champions League title, amid bitter recriminations after hundreds of people were arrested and dozens of police hurt in a night of unrest.

Tens of thousands of flag-waving fans took to the streets again to see the team parade from Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport to the Champ de Mars plaza in the shadow of the Eiffel Tower.

The team flew back from Budapest where it beat English Premier League champion Arsenal 4-3 in a penalty shoot-out on Saturday night.

It was also received by French President Emmanuel Macron before returning to Parc des Princes stadium for a final encounter with more than 40,000 fans, bringing to a close a day of festivities.

The previous night of celebrations was blighted however by clashes between youths and police in Paris and other cities, cars set on fire and shops looted.

One man died riding his motorbike around the Paris ring road in celebration while authorities reported stabbings and other attacks. They said 57 police officers and 219 "participants" were injured. Eight of the injured were in critical condition.

Interior Minister Laurent Nunez said there were 780 arrests across France, nearly a third more than when PSG's triumph last year over Inter Milan also set off a night of disturbances. He said looting had taken place in around 15 cities across the country.

Municipal workers hurried Sunday morning to clear the Paris streets of broken glass, wrecked bus shelters, trash cans and burned out cars and bikes before PSG's return.

Macron called the violence "unspeakable".

He said PSG was an "immense pride" for France but said the country was "fed up" with the violence. "We will be ruthless with those who have been caught," he vowed.



PSG's Marquinhos lifts the trophy at Parc des Princes stadium in Paris on Sunday to celebrate their victory with supporters. AFP

Amid political recriminations over the troubles, Paris mayor Emmanuel Gregoire played down the severity, saying such incidents were nothing new.

"In the vast majority of cases, people celebrated with family and friends. And it was an extraordinary celebration," the mayor told BFM TV. "And incidents on the fringes of major events have been going on for centuries."

Gregoire blamed the "media coverage" of the unrest "and perhaps also the obsession of these troublemakers who come to cause trouble and show themselves on social media".

The town hall for the Paris district that includes the Champs-Elysees, where tens of thousands went after the soccer victory, called for a ban on such gatherings.

On Saturday night, the "Champs-Elysees avenue and its surroundings ceased to be a place of celebration and became an arena of urban guerrilla warfare", the town hall said in a statement.

Politicians from all sides lambasted the troubles and questioned the way they were handled.

Far-right figurehead Marine Le Pen wrote on X that "only in France does a football club's victory spark riots".

Valerie Pecresse, the head of the greater Paris council from the Republicans party, slammed "the brainless thugs who allow themselves to destroy everything, tarnishing the image of Paris and France!".

A spokesperson for the hard-left France Unbowed said: "We cannot be satisfied with the way last night's event was managed and organized by the government."

Nunez promised "strongarm" security for Sunday's celebrations and some 6,000 police were on duty across central Paris.

"We're still riding yesterday's high, so we want to keep the party going," said 25-year-old Abou, a PSG fan "since he was little".

"Paris, Paris" chanted supporters wearing the team colors and carrying flags, as they filtered through security checkpoints to get near a stage where the players appeared. The "*We Are the Champions*" pop song blared out on speakers.

PSG captain Marquinhos and striker Ousmane Dembele were among the most applauded as they lifted the trophy before the adoring crowds. "We will be back next year for the third," said Dembele.

AFP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:49 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:51 PM

Rehab tech leap
AI, robotics drive global medical recovery sector
BUSINESS, PAGE 11



Tankers cross strait as peace hopes revive
WORLD, PAGE 14



Eye on top prize
U17 soccer team stuns Australia to reach historic Asian Cup final
SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY
GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 THURSDAY, MAY 21, 2026

Xi, Putin agree to extend landmark treaty

Documents signed on economy, education and tech cooperation

By **MO JINGXI**
mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed on Wednesday to further extend the China-Russia Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation, while pledging to further strengthen political mutual trust, strategic coordination and practical cooperation between the two countries amid a fluid and turbulent international situation.

The agreement was reached during talks between the two heads of state at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, before Putin concluded his two-day state visit to China.

After their talks earlier on Wednesday, the two presidents signed a joint statement on further enhancing the comprehensive strategic coordination and deepening good-neighborliness and friendly cooperation between the two countries. They witnessed the signing of 20 cooperation documents in areas including the economy and trade, education, and science and technology.

The two sides also issued a joint statement on advocating a multipolar world and a new type of international relations, and reached 20 cooperation agreements in other areas.

When addressing the media together after their talks, Xi said this was Putin's 25th trip to China since he first assumed the presidential office in Russia in 2000, which fully demonstrates the high level and uniqueness of China-Russia relations.

Noting that this year marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the China-Russia strategic partnership of coordination, Xi said that over the past three decades, bilateral ties have reached the highest level in history as a comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era, setting an example for a new type of major-country relations.

This year also marks the 25th anniversary of the signing of the China-Russia Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation. The treaty was last extended on June 28, 2021, when Xi and Putin held talks via video link and issued a joint statement ahead of the 20th anniversary of its signing.

Xi said that over the years, the two countries have always abided by the treaty's established principle of non-alliance, nonconfrontation and not targeting any third party, while upholding equality, mutual respect, good faith and win-win cooperation.

The two countries have made important contributions to safeguarding international fairness and justice and promoting a new type of international relations, serving as a vital constant amid changes unseen in a century, he said.

Xi called on China and Russia to build on past achievements and further support each other firmly on issues concerning their respective core interests and major concerns, maintain close strategic communication and exchanges at all levels, and continuously consolidate the foundation of political mutual trust between the two countries.

In recent years, cooperation between China and Russia in various fields has advanced steadily and achieved many positive results. The value of bilateral trade has exceeded $200 billion for three consecutive years, and in the first four months of 2026, two-way trade increased nearly 20 percent, according to customs data.

Xi said the two sides should build on this momentum, deepen the alignment between China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) and Russia's development strategy through 2030, and upgrade mutually beneficial cooperation in various fields to better serve the development and revitalization of both countries.

Speaking about global governance, Xi noted that the world today is far from being peaceful, with unilateralism and hegemonism causing severe harm, adding that the world is facing the danger of returning to the law of the jungle.

As permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, China and Russia should firmly fulfill their responsibilities as major countries, uphold the authority of the UN as well as international fairness and justice, and oppose all acts of unilateral bullying and attempts to reverse the course of history, he said.

China and Russia should, in particular, oppose all provocative acts that deny the outcomes of World War II and seek to justify and revive fascism and militarism, Xi said, emphasizing that the two sides should jointly promote the building of a more just and equitable global governance system.

Putin, who received a welcoming ceremony with a 21-gun salute, quoted the Chinese saying that "one day apart feels like three autumns" when meeting with Xi, whom he described as his "dear friend".

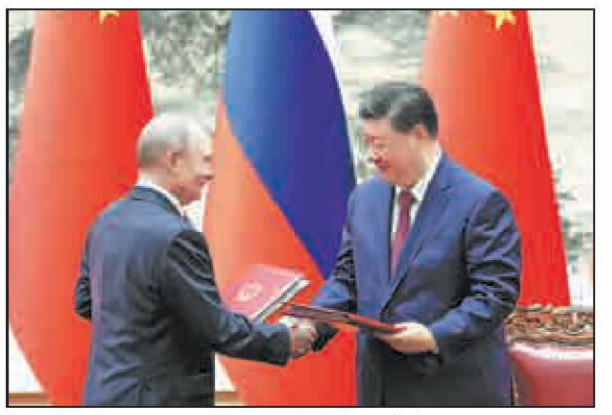
"Russia-China relations have reached a truly unprecedented level, and continue to develop. At the same time, our relations are self-sufficient; they do not depend on the current international situation and can serve as an example of relations between nations in this age," he said when addressing the media.

He said that Russia is full of confidence in the future of bilateral relations, adding that it will work with China to deepen the two countries' partnership and good-neighborly friendship, strengthen people-to-people bonds, and contribute to the development and revitalization of both countries and the well-being of their peoples.

See ***Meeting,*** *page 2*



President Xi Jinping holds a welcoming ceremony for Russian President Vladimir Putin, who is on a state visit to China, outside the Great Hall of the People before their talks in Beijing on Wednesday. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY



President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin exchange documents after signing a joint statement on further enhancing the comprehensive strategic coordination and deepening good-neighborliness and friendly cooperation between the two countries following their talks in Beijing on Wednesday. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

Inside

- Editorial, **page 7**
- Views, **page 8**
- See more, **pages 2-6**

China, US talks help stabilize bilateral trade ties

By **ZHANG CHENXU** and **ZHOU LANXU**

The preliminary outcomes achieved during the latest round of China-US economic and trade consultations will not only help stabilize bilateral economic ties, but also contribute to a more cooperative global economy at a time of rising uncertainties, officials and experts said.

The Ministry of Commerce announced on Wednesday that China and the United States have agreed in principle to discuss, under a trade council, a reciprocal tariff reduction framework on products of equivalent scale — worth $30 billion or more on each side.

Under the proposed arrangement, the products of respective concern as agreed by both sides are expected to enjoy most-favored-nation tariff rates or even lower rates, the ministry said.

Once implemented, the arrangement will not only help stabilize and expand bilateral trade between China and the US, but also serve as a useful reference for global open cooperation, a Commerce Ministry official said in a statement.

The ministry said that China and the US agreed to establish trade and investment councils to address respective concerns in trade and investment cooperation, a step that will help to shift bilateral economic and trade consultations from crisis response to mechanism-based management.

Dai Mingfeng, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, said the move will help to create more favorable conditions for stabilizing bilateral trade.

"It will provide practical support for stabilizing and steadily expanding China-US bilateral trade, while helping to promote a recovery in trade involving agricultural and industrial products," Dai said.

To translate the arrangement into concrete progress, the ministry called on the US to honor its commitments and ensure that, regardless of the reason or form of any future additional or replacement tariffs on Chinese goods, US tariff levels on Chinese goods will not exceed those set under the joint arrangement reached during the Kuala Lumpur economic and trade consultations in October last year.

See ***Talks,*** *page 12*

GRAIN BUDS BRINGS WITH IT THE SWEET TASTE OF SUMMER

Perfect moment for loquats and flavor of Jiangnan arrives with *xiao man*

By **LI YINGXUE**
liyingxue@chinadaily.com.cn

As wheat fields across northern China begin to swell with grain, the hillsides of Dongshan town in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, have already turned golden in the early summer sun.

Along the misty shores of Taihu Lake, loquats hang heavy on the branches. Beneath their fine golden fuzz, mellow sweetness meets gentle acidity against the floral backdrop of the rainy season in Jiangnan, the area south of the lower reaches of the Yangtze River.

As *xiao man*, or Grain Buds, arrives, so does the perfect moment for loquats.

The traditional Chinese solar term — meaning "small fullness" — marks the season when grains begin to fill but are not yet fully ripe. In Chinese food culture, it has long been associated with nourishment and relief from summer humidity.



Fresh loquats on display in Beijing on Tuesday. GENG FEIFEI / CHINA DAILY

Few fruits capture that seasonal transition more vividly than loquats.

For generations, loquat farmers in Dongshan have followed the rhythms of the 24 solar terms like clockwork. Traditionally, loquats are not harvested until around *xiao man*, when the fruit sheds its early acidity and develops a mellow sweetness.

China Vibes — FOOD —

But nature never follows a rigid calendar. "This year the harvest came about 10 days later than last year," said Song Furong, 58, a lifelong loquat farmer.

He said winter temperatures were not extremely low, but there was heavy frost and thick morning fog.

See ***Loquat,*** *page 12*

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Innovation helps nation spur growth

WORLD WATCH
By Digby James Wren

Over the past decades, China has delivered 30 percent of global economic growth on the back of its deployment of innovation at speed and scale. A key result is that China's stable prices and efficient supply chains have helped to mitigate global inflationary pressures amid elevated inflation in major advanced economies.

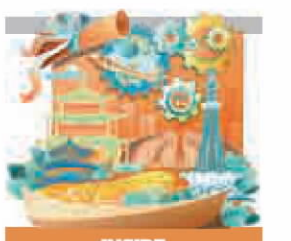
China's gross domestic product grew 5 percent in the first quarter of this year, beating expectations and displaying robust growth in exports and imports.

Factory activity remained resilient, with the official manufacturing purchasing managers' index standing at 50.3 in April, slightly easing from 50.4 in March but still holding above the 50-point expansion threshold. High-tech and equipment manufacturing continued to outperform, with PMI readings of 52.2 and 51.8 respectively, highlighting the ongoing structural transformation toward new growth drivers.

China's economic resilience rests firmly on its deep cooperation with Asian partners to create new opportunities for the region.

Despite external pressures, trade volumes paint a powerful picture of this integrated strength. In 2025, China's total goods import and export value reached a record high of $6.35 trillion. Driving this was its relationship with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which has remained China's largest trading partner. Trade between China and ASEAN reached 7.55 trillion yuan ($1.05 trillion) last year, surging 8 percent year-on-year. This growth is being formalized through agreements such as the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area 3.0 Upgrade Protocol.

See ***Growth,*** *page 12*



INSIDE
Link of friendship
Global Views, page 9

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved

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

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:51 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:51 PM

CHINA-RUSSIA TIES

Education seen as key bridge in relations

Leaders express hopes on collaboration in nurturing talent

By **ZHANG YUNBI** and **ZHAO JIA**



President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin attend the opening ceremony of the China-Russia Years of Education at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Wednesday. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed their hopes on Wednesday for future collaboration between the two countries in nurturing talent and fostering friendship among young people when they attended the opening ceremony of the China-Russia Years of Education (2026-27) in Beijing.

The two leaders delivered speeches and then jointly unveiled the emblem for the China-Russia Years of Education.

In his speech, Xi said that launching the China-Russia Years of Education was a strategic decision made by him and President Putin to enhance the long-term development of China-Russia relations.

Xi said that education is an important bridge connecting the hearts of the peoples and carrying forward friendship between nations, and it is a noble cause that benefits both the present and future generations.

China-Russia educational cooperation has deepened considerably, producing remarkable results and enriching the substance of the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era, he said.

Xi emphasized that both sides should take the China-Russia Years of Education as an opportunity to build further consensus on cooperation, expand its scope and raise its level.

Putin said that educational cooperation is an indispensable component of the two countries' comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination and underscored the milestone significance of launching the China-Russia Years of Education. Both countries attach great importance to education, which is crucial for individuals' development and serves as the foundation for a nation's economic and social development, he said.

The Russian president praised the China-Russia Years of Education for its rich content and large scale.

Currently, more than 80,000 students from both countries are studying in the other nation, and the two sides have established more than 150 joint educational institutions and programs, Zhang Hanhui, Chinese ambassador to Russia, wrote in an article published on Tuesday.

In his speech, Xi emphasized that thriving and strong education is the foundation of a thriving and strong nation. He said that China and Russia should deepen cooperation in talent cultivation, jointly nurture world-class professionals, strengthen national capabilities in strategic science and technology, work together to tackle cutting-edge scientific challenges, and boost the innovation-driven development of both countries.

The two countries should embrace the vision of mutual learning among civilizations, and promote the sharing of experience in terms of the inheritance of civilization and the governance of education, to improve their respective work in these fields, he said.

Both sides should carry forward the traditional friendship, further tap the potential of educational cooperation, encourage young people to cement friendship through in-depth exchanges, and nurture torchbearers who will carry forward China-Russia friendship for generations to come, he added.

Xi said that with these joint efforts, he believes the China-Russia Years of Education will surely be a complete success.

On Wednesday, Xi and Putin also toured a photo exhibition at the Great Hall of the People, celebrating the everlasting friendship between the two countries.

The exhibition vividly presented the close interaction between the two heads of state since the beginning of the new era.

Xi and Putin paused periodically to view the photos and listen to briefings, fondly recalling moments of friendly exchanges and cooperation between the two countries in recent years. The two leaders noted that the great cause of China-Russia friendship conforms to the course of history and the times, remains unbreakable, and will continue to move forward, writing new chapters.

On Wednesday evening, Xi and Putin had a tea chat before Putin departed for Russia.

Xi said that he and Putin reached a new and important consensus on advancing the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination.

Putin said that Russia looks forward to maintaining close communication with China and strengthening strategic coordination.

The two heads of state also exchanged views on issues including the Ukraine crisis.

Contact the writers at zhangyunbi@chinadaily.com.cn

Meeting: Both sides to extend visa-free policies

From page 1

"Moscow and Beijing will jointly uphold international law and the provisions of the UN Charter in their entirety ... and cooperate effectively within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, BRICS and other international structures, making a significant contribution to addressing pressing global and regional challenges," Putin said.

During their talks on Wednesday, Xi said the China-Russia relationship has entered a new stage of greater achievements and faster development.

Unswervingly promoting the long-term, sound, steady and high-quality development of the China-Russia relationship is a strategic choice made by the two sides based on the fundamental interests of the two countries and the global trends, he said.

Xi called on China and Russia to fully implement the important common understandings reached between him and Putin, seize the historic opportunities and further promote the mutual trust, cooperation and friendship between the two countries.

He emphasized that both sides should focus on the goals of national development and revitalization, fully leverage the comprehensive and well-established mechanisms of China-Russia cooperation and strengthen the overall planning for cooperation in all respects.

The two countries should also promote the upgrading of practical cooperation in trade and investment, energy and resources, transportation, and sci-tech innovation, as well as actively explore cooperation in frontier areas, in order to create new engines for growth with new quality productive forces, Xi said.

He added that efforts should be made to continue the long-standing friendship between the two sides, strengthen exchanges and cooperation in education, culture, film, tourism and sports, and consolidate the social and public support for bilateral friendship.

Also on Wednesday, China announced that it has decided to extend its visa-free policy for Russia until Dec 31, 2027. According to TASS news agency, Russian presidential press secretary Dmitry Peskov said in Beijing that Russia will also extend its visa-free policy for Chinese citizens.

During their talks, the two heads of state exchanged views on major international and regional issues, including the situation in the Middle East.

Xi emphasized that all hostilities in the Middle East must end immediately, renewed fighting should be avoided and, most important, negotiations should continue.

Noting that the situation in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf region is at a critical juncture between war and peace, he said that an early end to the conflict will help reduce disruptions to the stability of energy supplies, the functioning of industrial and supply chains, and the stability of the international trade order.

On Wednesday evening, Xi held a welcoming banquet for Putin in the Golden Hall of the Great Hall of the People.

Chinese 'boy' has heartwarming reunion with his 'foreign uncle'

By **LI MUYUN** and **HE CHUN** in Changsha



Left: Russian President Vladimir Putin (left) poses for a photo with Peng Pai (center), then a boy from Hunan province, at Beihai Park in Beijing on July 19, 2000. WU ZHIYI / CHINA DAILY **Right:** President Putin (left) meets at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing on Wednesday with Peng (center), now a 38-year-old engineer, and signs their photograph. VLADIMIR SMIRNOV / SPUTNIK

Twenty-six years ago, a "foreign uncle" walked up to a young boy seated on a balustrade along a lake in Beijing, spontaneously greeted him with a kiss on the forehead, and posed for a photo with him and his family.

Fast forward to 2026. The boy, Peng Pai, now 38 years old and a civil engineer specializing in bridge construction, rebuilt that heartwarming connection through a reunion on Wednesday with this uncle who is none other than Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The two met in Beijing during Putin's state visit to China. A video posted by Russia's RT television network shows Putin and Peng sharing a warm handshake, holding a brief conversation, and then Putin signing a copy of their group photo from the summer of 2000.

Peng, a native of Yueyang in Central China's Hunan province, who pursued his engineering studies in Moscow because his first meeting with Putin piqued his curiosity about Russia, said he never thought he would have the opportunity to meet the Russian leader again.

During their chat at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing, Putin asked Peng who the person standing beside the boy in the photo is. "Learning that the man standing beside me is my father, he asked me to give my father his regards," Peng said.

They hugged each other goodbye after the chat, and Peng presented Putin with a gift — a tea set made of porcelain from Liling, Hunan. "I will remember this day for the rest of my life," Peng said.

Back in 2000, Peng, then 12, and his family were touring Beihai Park during a trip to Beijing when they ran into Putin, who was making his first official visit to China as the Russian president.

The Russian leader made an impromptu stop at the park, indulged in some boating activities and greeted people. He approached the boy, picked him up and planted a kiss on his forehead. "It was completely spontaneous," Peng recalled. "I remember him as a kind, gentle uncle."

In an interview with the Russian television network before their reunion on Wednesday, Peng left a lighthearted message for the visiting leader. "Dear President Putin, you still look the same, but I have changed from a little boy into a middle-aged man with a bigger belly," he said.

While Peng didn't fully grasp the meaning of their encounter more than two decades ago, it certainly did increase his interest in Russia. After finishing high school, he decided to apply for higher studies in the Russian capital.

From 2007 to 2013, Peng studied bridge and tunnel engineering at the Moscow Automobile and Road Construction State Technical University, from where he earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees.

"During my years in Moscow, I gained a deeper understanding of Russia's vast territory, its rich history and culture," Peng said. The teachers and students he met along the way left a lasting impression, he said. "They were very kind to international students," he added.

After returning to China, Peng joined Hunan Construction Investment Group, a State-owned enterprise based in Changsha, which has projects in more than 60 countries.

Today, he is a senior engineer with the group, leading an engineering technology team. Among the projects he has worked on, a pedestrian bridge on the Liuyang River in Changsha received the National Quality Engineering Award for 2020-21.

Although Peng never went back to Russia, he has been keenly watching the development of China-Russia bilateral relations. "High-level exchanges between the two sides have been frequent in recent years, and interactions are happening in many fields, including at the grassroots and online levels," he said.

As a bridge engineer, Peng hopes to see more infrastructure cooperation between the two countries. Both sides have strengths that can complement each other for mutual benefit, he said.

Now a father of two, Peng hopes to take his family to Moscow one day, and walk through his old university campus. "I would tell the kids everything I know about Russia and its people," he said.

Peng Yixuan in Beijing contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at limuyun@chinadaily.com.cn

Beijing, Moscow to expand cooperation and people-to-people exchanges

By **JI HAISHENG**
jihaisheng@chinadaily.com.cn

Premier Li Qiang called on China and Russia to achieve a higher level of mutual benefit and win-win outcomes during his meeting on Wednesday with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Beijing.

Highlighting the strategic guidance of the two heads of state, Li noted that President Xi Jinping had met with President Putin earlier in the day to make further plans and arrangements for the development of China-Russia relations.

Li said that China is willing to work with Russia to further expand trade, implement the upgraded bilateral investment agreement, and deepen cooperation in areas such as energy, agriculture, connectivity, and green and low-carbon development.

Efforts should also be made to strengthen the alignment between the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative and the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union, and ensure the safe, stable and high-quality development of China-Europe freight trains, he said.

Li called on both sides to organize cultural events within frameworks such as the China-Russia Years of Education, and deepen exchanges and cooperation in areas including youth, culture, tourism and sports, thereby continuously fostering mutual understanding and friendship between the two peoples.

China is set to strengthen collaboration with Russia on multilateral platforms, actively implement the Global Governance Initiative and jointly uphold fairness and justice, he added.

On his part, Putin said that Russia is willing to maintain close high-level exchanges with China, fully leverage the mechanism of regular meetings between the two prime ministers, and advance exchanges and cooperation in areas such as trade, energy, agriculture, transportation, logistics, scientific and technological innovation and people-to-people exchanges.

He also expressed Moscow's readiness to strengthen cooperation with Beijing within multilateral frameworks such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS, to jointly promote world peace, stability and prosperity.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:51 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:51 PM

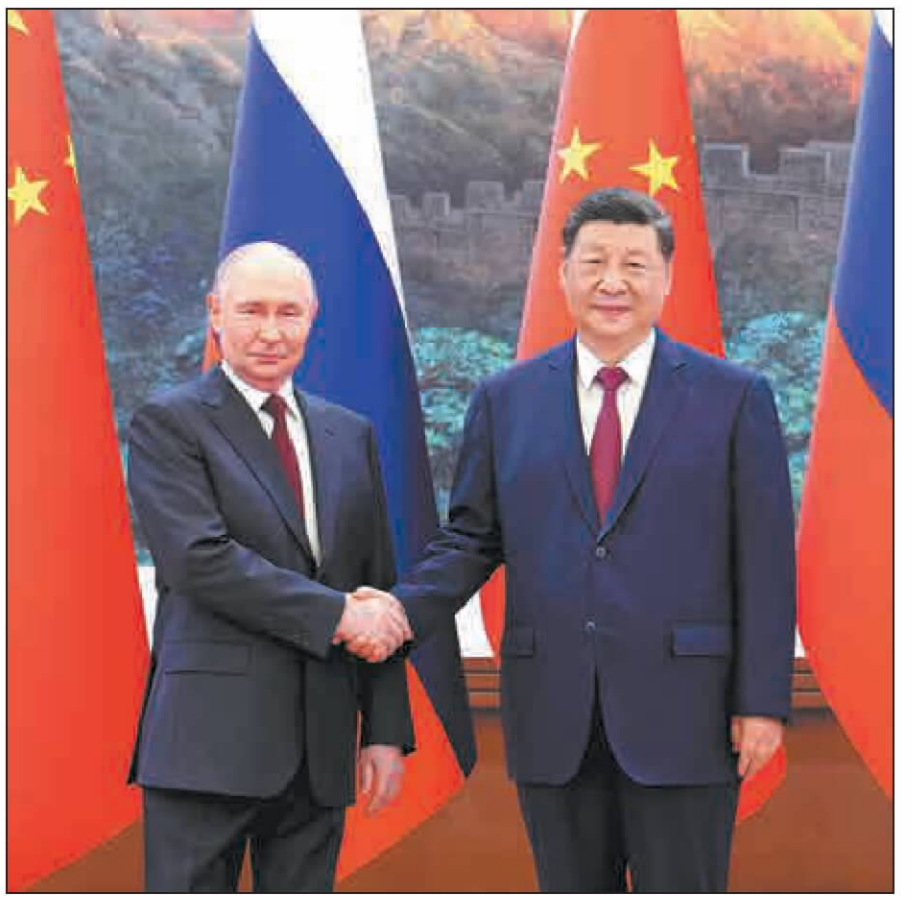
CHINA-RUSSIA TIES



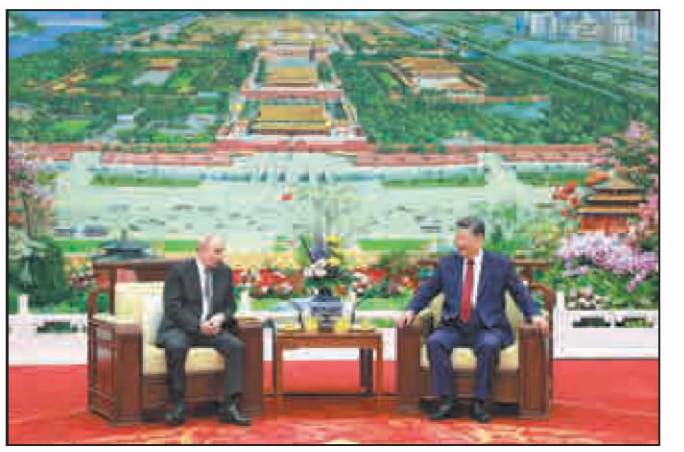


Above: President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin, who is on a state visit to China, visit a photo exhibition on the long-lasting friendship between the two countries at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Wednesday. **Right:** President Xi holds a welcoming ceremony for Russian President Putin outside the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Wednesday. PHOTOS BY HUANG JINGWEN / XINHUA

PARTNERSHIP ENTERS NEW STAGE



President Xi shakes hands with Russian President Putin at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Wednesday. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY



President Xi and Russian President Putin have a chat over tea at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Wednesday. DING HAITAO / XINHUA



President Xi holds talks with Russian President Putin at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Wednesday. WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:51 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:51 PM

CHINA-RUSSIA TIES



In April, Chinese and Russian youngsters along with their teachers pose for a photo during a camp in Harbin, Heilongjiang province, which was organized by the Association of Sino-Russian Middle Schools and focused on education, technology and sports. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Languages bind China, Russia closer

Young people's efforts to learn each other's tongues a testament to warm friendship, shared futures

By **WANG HAORAN**
wanghaoran@chinadaily.com.cn

Yi, er, san, si, wu, liu, qi,
Wo de li wu zai zhe li.

A jumble of strange sounds foreign to millions of Anastasia Prytkova's Russian compatriots slip off her tongue as effortlessly as if she had been uttering them since she was a baby. Throw in a delightful melody, and suddenly the Chinese language does not seem as intimidating and as difficult as it is usually cracked up to be.

What she speaks means "One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, my gift is here."

And what a gift this is, one that has put ninth-grader Anastasia from Novosibirsk, Russia, on a path that is likely to shape her life.

For the past three years she has been studying Mandarin online with a Russian teacher, cultivating her fascination with a country she has so far had no physical contact with.

"My favorite food is kung pao chicken," she said in Chinese. The dish is a favorite in Sichuan province, the home of spicy food, and is a place she dreams of visiting. Seeing the Great Wall and the Terracotta Warriors is also on her wish list, but for now, there is still plenty of Chinese learning to do.

Anastasia is aware of the challenge ahead, even as she senses the rich rewards that await her. Her aim is to become a transportation engineer and to pursue a master's degree at a Chinese university.

Her mother, Oksana Prytkova, views China as the ideal training ground for the skills Anastasia wants to master. Pointing to her daughter's passion for robotics and programming, she said: "In these disciplines it makes sense to study Chinese, because there is a lot worth learning in China."

Great enthusiasm

Tens of thousands of young Russians share that sentiment, one that is reciprocated in China, where many young people are increasingly drawn to learning Russian, seeing the benefits it offers.

In Anastasia's hometown, the Confucius Institute at Novosibirsk State Technical University is at the forefront of promoting Chinese language and culture. The institute, established in 2007 in partnership with Dalian University of Foreign Languages in Liaoning province, is stepping up its efforts to reshape how Mandarin is taught to the city's young people.

It offers a wide range of learning methods, from large lectures to one-on-one tutoring led by a mix of Russian and Chinese staff. This year and the next have been designated as the China-Russia Years of Education. In that context, the importance of these teachers and what they do has never been clearer.

Igor Khripunov, who has directed the institute since 2013, said collaboration in education is the bedrock of the two countries' partnership.

"Over the next two years I foresee a profound acceleration in such collaboration," Khripunov said. "This will do much more than catalyze our collaboration on academics, language and talent development. It will lay a solid foundation for a new generation of professionals equipped to meet the evolving needs of our countries' partnership."

The teaching of Mandarin and the way it is offered have improved markedly in Novosibirsk, and the number of those studying the language has increased in each of the past three years, he said.

"In many schools, Mandarin is now included in the curriculum as a second language and is being included in a state exam program. An increasing number of schoolchildren are taking part in the annual All-Russian Chinese Language Olympiad," he said.

Yulia Shchepina, a Mandarin instructor at the Confucius Institute, who has eight years' classroom experience, said foreign-language learning for children is less about rigid memorization and more about visual storytelling.

She tells of a lively fourth-grade class of 9 and 10-year-olds who gasped collectively when they opened their textbooks to see a dense sea of Chinese characters. Many of them exclaimed, "This is impossible".



Chinese and Russian students interact with each other during the camp in Harbin last month. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

> "It will lay a solid foundation for a new generation of professionals equipped to meet the evolving needs of our countries' partnership."
>
> **Igor Khripunov,** director of the Confucius Institute at Novosibirsk State Technical University

Seven months later the same children stood up to introduce themselves in Chinese, rattling off details about their families, hobbies and favorite colors.

Among them, three came to China to further their language studies. An ultimate test of their fluency came during a trip to the Palace Museum in Beijing, also known as the Forbidden City, when they approached local Chinese children and began chatting to them, and were understood perfectly.

They returned to Novosibirsk with even more passion for the language, Shchepina said.

Pop culture is also an important motivation for many teenage students who want to play Chinese video games and understand hit dramas and music in the original language.

Travel, Shchepina said, deepens this engagement, with family holidays to Asia becoming increasingly popular.

As Mandarin clubs sprout up in local schools, learning the language has evolved into a shared enthusiasm in which students inspire one another.

"Modern children have a clear vision of what they want to achieve. They are incredibly purpose driven," Shchepina said.

Collaboration continues

That drive is not the sole preserve of youngsters in Russia. Just as young people in Novosibirsk are both frustrated and charmed by the complexity of Chinese characters, their counterparts in China are delighting in the beauty of the Cyrillic script that helps them understand the language of Leo Tolstoy.

One such youngster is Shen Yu, a first-year student in the advanced Russian program at Harbin No 6 High School in Heilongjiang province. Her father also studied Russian in his youth, filling the family home with Cyrillic books. For Shen, learning Russian started as a daunting challenge of declensions and tongue twisters.

The study is punishing, but the payoffs are astronomical, she said. "Whenever I can fluently express a complete thought, or understand a Russian news broadcast or a song without relying on a translation, the sense of accomplishment is overwhelming."

While learning Russian with native-speaking educators every Friday at her high school, she is also developing a profound kinship with her Russian counterparts.

"They face exactly the same academic pressures that we do, with the same stress over exams, but they also have the same love for video games and music," she said.

Harbin No 6 High School has a rich history of teaching Russian that goes back more than 80 years, and it hosts the Chinese secretariat of the Association of Sino-Russian Middle Schools. The association was initiated by the school eight years ago, aiming to advance educational exchanges and collaboration at the secondary level and cultivate talent, with an emphasis on biculturalism.

Wu Xia, principal of the school, said the association had 30 schools as members when it was established. It now has 145, with 50 of them in China and 95 in Russia.

The association operates as a high-level, institutionalized dialogue platform, with annual meetings in both countries attracting thousands of educators who discuss collaboration in secondary education.

It also organizes training courses for Chinese educators who teach Russian, and Russian educators who teach Mandarin. More than 700 Chinese teachers have benefited from the courses.

Stewards of tomorrow

Fu Zhaoxia, a Russian-language instructor who has taught at Harbin No 6 High School for 34 years, said the expertise of Russian academics has helped her transform her classes, which were once top heavy with rigid rote learning, into spaces of vibrant, real-life communication.

The alliance has implemented more than 30 cultural initiatives, including youth art festivals, papercutting contests and a cross-border postcard exchange, engaging more than 4,000 students. A program called Air Classroom delivers Mandarin instruction to more than 500 students in 15 Russian regions.

"By taking part in these activities our young people break down the initial barriers of language and culture," Wu said. "It teaches them to respect differences and embrace a global vision. This is where genuine friendship takes root. Education is the bond, but friendship is the core."

Wu cites the example of a camp in Harbin last month that hosted students from Lensk No 3 School in the Sakha (Yakutia) Republic of Russia. The shared activities with Chinese students focused on education, technology and sports.

In addition to 3D printing and curling matches, the students were given the task of crafting *xiangnang*, decorative sachets traditionally filled with scented herbs.

The Chinese students, familiar with making the colorful sachets, patiently worked with their Russian counterparts, explaining the cultural symbolism in embroidered dragons and phoenixes that were being used, as well as the traditional herbal fillings.

The awkwardness the Russians first displayed gradually dissolved, and they began weaving symbols of Harbin, such as snowflakes and ice, into their own designs. When the students finally exchanged their handmade crafts, the gesture carried a weight beyond the herbs inside.

"The sachets were no longer just ordinary pouches, but became a bond," Wu said. "You could feel this cross-border goodwill quietly flowing through hearts."

Khripunov, director of the Confucius Institute at Novosibirsk State Technical University, said he sees this generation as the future stewards of China-Russia ties.

"We are planting the seeds, and these students will inherit the responsibility of sustaining our scientific, educational and cultural exchanges. They are the ones who will forge a deeper, more genuine trust between our peoples."

Zhang Xiaomin, Zhou Huiying and Pang Yingyuan contributed to this story.







Left: Chinese and Russian students share techniques during a friendly curling match in Harbin on April 6. **Middle:** Students actively engage in a Chinese cultural activity at the Confucius Institute at Novosibirsk State Technical University, Russia, in April. **Right:** Students from Lensk No 3 School write messages and stamp school-themed marks at the school museum of Harbin No 6 High School in April. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:51 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:51 PM

CHINA-RUSSIA TIES



Trucks line up to pass through the Manzhouli Land Port in Manzhouli, Inner Mongolia autonomous region, in December. XIAO JIANBO / XINHUA

Border policy converts grains into cash

By **YUAN HUI** in Hohhot
and **LIU BOQIAN**

Russian freight trains inch across the border into Manzhouli, their cars laden with grains and oilseeds from the fertile fields of Siberia and the Russian Far East. Within days, these raw imports are cleared, processed in towering local factories, and dispatched to kitchens across China.

Manzhouli in northern China's Inner Mongolia autonomous region is the country's largest land port city. It sits opposite Russia's Zabaykalsk, where the railway crossing handles more than 60 percent of China's rail trade with Russia, making the Chinese city a critical gateway for goods moving between the two nations.

For many Russian products, Manzhouli is both the first stop in China and the launchpad for nationwide distribution after processing.

"More than 90 percent of our raw materials come from Russia," said Yang Zhihong, manager of Xin Feng Grain and Oil, a local processing company. "The supply is stable and reliable."

Inside Xin Feng's production halls, workers wash, sort and refine imported crops into flour, oils and other finished goods.

"Siberian and Russian Far East crops grow under strict ecological standards, producing nutrient-rich grains," Yang said. He added that oils and flour made from these grains sell well in the domestic market.



A Manzhouli resident (right) learns about Russian handicraft at a fair in December. LIAN ZHEN / XINHUA

The company works with local residents through cooperatives. Under cross-border trade rules, each resident can enjoy a daily tax-free quota of 8,000 yuan ($1,170). The cooperatives handle the purchase and transport of imported goods to compliant grain and oil processors in Manzhouli, such as Xin Feng, where the products are processed before being sold across China.

The system cuts tariffs and value-added taxes, streamlines customs clearance and ensures a steady raw material supply. This means procurement costs are significantly lower than elsewhere. "The same quality Russian grains save 500 to 1,000 yuan per metric ton," Yang said. "It reduces production expenses and operational costs."

Local residents also share in the profits along with the enterprises under this model, creating a direct benefit for the community.

Imported Russian grains and potash have become a cornerstone of Manzhouli's processing industry.

"Since Manzhouli was designated an official import port for agricultural products in 2013, we now handle 12 crop types, including rapeseed, barley, wheat and soybeans," said Chen Rui, deputy director of the city's bureau of industry, information and technology. "Five processing enterprises operate here, with a combined annual capacity exceeding 1.35 million tons."

Manzhouli is also emerging as a cross-border tourism hub. In the first four months of the year, 7,723 visitors arrived, mostly for shopping. Some use the city as a transit point for the seaside resorts of Beidaihe or Qinhuangdao in Hebei province.

"Cross-border study tours are growing, too. Russian students visit for day trips or longer stays to experience life in a Chinese border city," said Huang Wei from the Manzhouli tourism bureau.

Contact the writers at liuboqian@chinadaily.com.cn

Fish-skin art creates bridge for cultural exchange

By **TIAN XUEFEI**
and **ZHOU HUIYING** in Harbin

Inside the bustling cultural exhibition hall of the 10th China-Russia Expo, a steady stream of international visitors found themselves huddled around a workshop table, handling a material few associated with fine art: raw, tanned fish skin.

Guided by 58-year-old Zhang Lin, Russian merchants, foreign tourists and local residents took up carving tools to cut and paste intricate shapes. Zhang's booth, showcasing the ancient fish-skin collage techniques of China's Hezhe ethnic group, has become a striking highlight of the expo, transforming an ancient hunting tradition into a medium for modern cross-border diplomacy.

"Intangible cultural heritage is a language without borders," said Zhang, a provincial-level inheritor of the endangered craft from Heilongjiang province. "As long as our neighbors come to understand this culture, my perseverance will have been worthwhile."

By the early 2000s, the grueling process of tanning, cutting, carving and sewing fish skin had nearly vanished. The craft's trajectory shifted in 2006 when it was officially listed as a Chinese national intangible cultural heritage, anchoring preservation efforts.

The Hezhe, one of China's smallest ethnic groups, have historically inhabited the river valleys of the Heilong River — known in Russia as the Amur River. Dating back to the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BC), their ancestors developed a unique lifestyle centered on fishing and hunting, utilizing salmon skins to construct durable clothing, daily utensils and sacred totems.

At this year's expo, Zhang brought two fish-skin garments and 16 collages, along with cultural and creative products made from fish skin.



Zhang Lin (left) teaches a Russian trader how to make a fish-skin collage at the 10th China-Russia Expo in Harbin on Monday. ZHOU HUIYING / CHINA DAILY

Zhang's fish-skin arrangements present lively, vivid images of divine deer, soaring eagles, ancient ethnic totems and distant landscapes that evoke China's northern regions.

The inheritor has been a fixture at the China-Russia Expo since its inaugural event in Harbin in 2014. Invited by the provincial department of culture and tourism to present three-dimensional, bas-relief fish-skin art, her work always finds an audience.

"It was a great opportunity to showcase our cultural heritage," she said. "Despite the language barrier, many foreign guests stopped to observe and touch," she added. Because China and Russia share a border, they also enjoy a certain cultural affinity. Intangible cultural heritage is a language without borders, Zhang said.

At past expos, Zhang incorporated Russian cultural elements into her traditional fish-skin works.

"Each expo gave me the opportunity to have face-to-face conversations with Russian artists," she said. "We would discuss fish-skin tanning, carving and pasting techniques, and I gave them detailed explanations of Hezhe history and folklore."

Over the years, Zhang has taken her fish-skin creations to multiple Russian cities for folk cultural exchange activities. At an event in Russia's Amur Oblast, her artwork received high praise. The craftsmanship and ethnic patterns impressed ordinary people and art aficionados alike, she said.

In July, Zhang donated 20 of her works to a Russian museum, displaying themes of the 12 Chinese zodiac signs, the flower of good fortune, spring swallows, autumn cranes and fish-skin clouds.

"I was happy to see that the intangible cultural heritage of Heilongjiang would be permanently rooted in the cultural halls of a foreign country," she said.

Zhang has also extended her reach to universities within Heilongjiang, allowing her ancient craft techniques to take root and flourish on campuses.

"In Zhang's classes, she never follows a script," said Alla Shulgan, a Russian student at the Harbin Institute of Technology. "Instead, she brings complete fish-skin materials, production tools and fine artworks, explaining the history of Hezhe fishing and hunting culture in simple terms, and breaking down the core techniques of fish-skin tanning, carving, pasting and coloring, allowing us to experience the charm of intangible cultural heritage from scratch."

Shulgan said that before coming to China, she was completely unfamiliar with the culture of the country's ethnic groups. "After a semester of diligent study and hands-on creation, I truly understood the charm of this ancient intangible cultural heritage — simple fish skin can be transformed into exquisite and beautiful paintings, carrying the local ethnic group's lifestyle characteristics and traditional customs."

Shulgan said she has shared her fish-skin artworks and learning experiences with family and friends back home.

For Zhang, intangible cultural heritage transmission cannot rely solely on the preservation of old skills, but must also reach young people in new generations.

"With craftsmanship as a bridge and culture as a bond, I hope to ensure that the beauty of this heritage will continue to shine," Zhang said.

Contact the writers at zhouhuiying@chinadaily.com.cn

Agricultural trade ripe for fresh harvest

Sino-Russian cooperation on farm products shows growing potential

By **REN QI**
renqi@chinadaily.com.cn

Agricultural cooperation is emerging as a key driver of economic synergy between China and Russia, further bolstering already robust growth momentum between the two nations, officials and experts said.

China has been Russia's largest trading partner for the past 16 years, with bilateral trade volume reaching $228.11 billion in 2025, according to data released by the General Administration of Customs.

In the first quarter this year, bilateral trade surged 14.7 percent year-on-year to $61.2 billion. During the period, China's exports to Russia grew by 22 percent, while imports rose by 9 percent, marking a solid start to the year.

Ma Chi, deputy director-general of the department of Eurasian affairs at the Ministry of Commerce, said the structure of bilateral trade between the two countries is continuously being optimized.

He noted that competitive Chinese products, such as automobiles, home appliances and machinery, have maintained strong export momentum, while Russia's supply of energy, minerals and agricultural products to China remains stable.

This national-level synergy is deeply felt at the regional level, particularly in Russia's Primorsky Krai, a crucial Far East region sharing a border with China.

Oleg Kozhemyako, governor of Primorsky Krai, has hailed China as a "reliable and stable partner", emphasizing that the cooperation is of paramount importance to the region. Primorsky Krai is eager to deepen collaboration in sectors including equipment manufacturing, deep processing of agricultural products and biomedicine, he said.

The Far East is a key region for China-Russia agricultural cooperation. To meet the storage and transportation needs of expanding grain exports to China, the two countries have collaborated in recent years to construct and upgrade transportation infrastructure in the Far East, including the Heihe-Blagoveshchensk highway bridge and the Tongjiang-Nizhneleninskoye railway bridge in 2022, which provided new international transportation corridors for future large-scale agricultural trade between the two countries.

Highlighting the strong connectivity between the two sides, Kozhemyako said that the region is linked to China through multiple border crossings and over 50 weekly flights. Russia is currently upgrading these border ports to enhance transit capacity. He also praised the high-quality work of Chinese enterprises that have successfully implemented agricultural planting and engineering construction projects in the region.

Kozhemyako reaffirmed the local government's full support for bilateral agricultural initiatives, highlighting the planned Sino-Russian agricultural cooperation experimental demonstration zone at Sukhodol Port. The zone will utilize modern technology for the deep processing of agricultural raw materials from Primorsky Krai, significantly enhancing the value-added of these products.

> "Russia boasts vast arable land, clean water sources and abundant agricultural resources, while China offers a massive consumer market and a mature processing and distribution system."
>
> **Wang Qun,** head of the Association of Entrepreneurs in the Field of Russian-Chinese Cooperation

Song Kui, president of the Contemporary China-Russia Regional Economy Research Institute in Heilongjiang province, echoed this optimism. He said that the two countries have immense potential for cooperation in energy and agriculture. The development of Russia's Far East will also inject vitality into the comprehensive revitalization of Northeast China, further promoting the socioeconomic development of both nations, Song said.

The highly complementary nature of Sino-Russian agricultural cooperation is a major catalyst for this development, according to Wang Qun, head of the Association of Entrepreneurs in the Field of Russian-Chinese Cooperation.

"Russia boasts vast arable land, clean water sources and abundant agricultural resources, while China offers a massive consumer market and a mature processing and distribution system," Wang said.

The expert noted that China has firmly established itself as the largest importer of Russian agricultural products, a milestone achieved through smooth policy communication and highly efficient customs clearance cooperation.

Wang said that both sides could further expand the trade of grains, oilseeds, meat, aquatic products and processed foods. This can be achieved by deepening the mutual recognition of agricultural quality standards — such as organic certification, and inspection and quarantine protocols — and improving cross-border cold chain and warehousing logistics networks at key ports like Suifenhe, Manzhouli and other cities in Heilongjiang province.

"Ultimately, this will help build a highly efficient 'from field to table' cooperation model," Wang added.



Tourists buy snacks at a night food market in Heihe, Heilongjiang province, last month. With visa-free entry, the market in the Sino-Russian border city attracts customers from both countries. HAN FEI / XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:51 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:51 PM

CHINA-RUSSIA TIES



Finding warmth in Beijing

Director Andrei Zaitsev brought his moving feature film to this year's international movie festival in the capital, where Chinese audiences surprised him with their emotional attentiveness, **Xu Fan** reports.





> "Because our two elderly actors tired easily, we usually filmed their scenes first. But when we started shooting, the dog would suddenly run into the frame ... it had practically become one of the lead actors."
>
> **Andrei Zaitsev,** Russian director

Top: Poster for the Russian film *Two People in One Life and a Dog*, which earned a nomination for the 16th Beijing International Film Festival's Tiantan Awards — the festival's highest honor. **Above:** Director Andrei Zaitsev shares behind-the-scenes stories from the movie with a Chinese audience during a festival post-screening session held in Beijing earlier this year. **Top right:** A scene from *Two People in One Life and a Dog*, a quiet and heartwarming Russian film, features the protagonists, two elderly intellectuals — a husband and wife — living in St. Petersburg. **Middle right:** While confronting loneliness after their adult children move abroad, their pet dog becomes the elderly couple's pivotal comfort. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Despite a grueling festival schedule packed with post-screening discussions and public appearances, Russian director Andrei Zaitsev rarely turned away an eager Chinese film fan.

Outside a crowded room in a downtown cinema during the 16th Beijing International Film Festival held late last month, he patiently signed posters one after another, pausing for selfies with a gentle smile. At one point, he even stopped an event organizer to ask fans to speed up the signing process and skip photos, so the long line could move more quickly.

For Zaitsev, 50, who brought his latest film, *Two People in One Life and a Dog*, to Beijing, the warmth of the reception came as an unexpected surprise. Chinese audiences, he said, often picked up on subtle details and emotional nuances that even Russian moviegoers had overlooked.

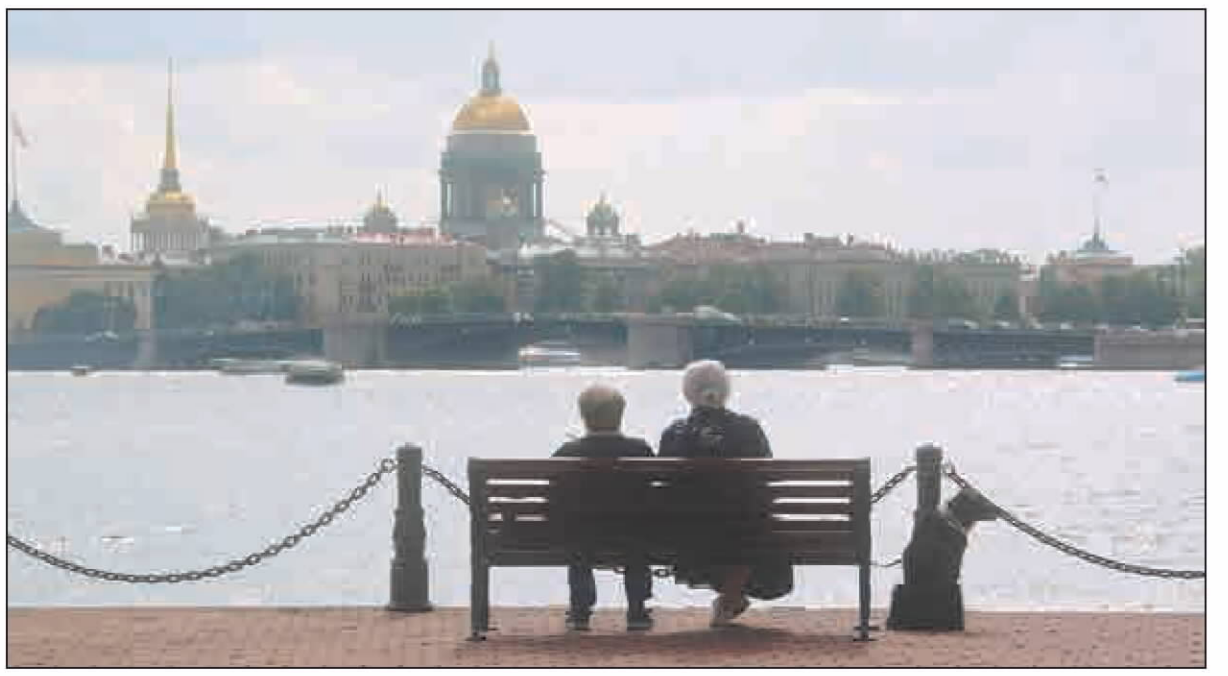
Such attentiveness became especially apparent during the film's post-screening exchanges. At one session, a female audience member raised her hand to ask about a scene that had clearly resonated with many local viewers. In it, one of the protagonists — a retired intellectual — meticulously copies an album of Song Dynasty (960-1279) fine-brush paintings in his study. The delicate depictions of birds and plants evoked a strong sense of familiarity among Chinese viewers.

"The inspiration came from the story of a renowned Russian philosopher and his wife," Zaitsev explained.

As the philosopher's birthday approached, his wife asked what gift he wanted most. He requested a rare and expensive album of Song Dynasty paintings, published in China in the 1950s. Finding a copy proved difficult. Determined to fulfill his wish, she went to bookstores in Moscow and, by luck, discovered the last remaining copy — which she purchased with the exact amount of money she happened to have on her at the time.

The scene, Zaitsev added, was also shaped by his friendship with the late Russian actor Sergey Dreyden (1941-2023), who acted in his 2020 directorial feature, *A Siege Diary*, about the brutal Siege of Leningrad during World War II. The historic feature earned Zaitsev the Tiantan Award for Best Director at the 11th Beijing International Film Festival in 2021.

"I became very close friends with Dreyden. We talked constantly, shared books and spent a lot of time together. He was a warm person. People naturally gravitated toward him, as if seeking warmth from his presence alone. I wanted that warmth to reach many viewers, not only the people around him," recalls the director with China Daily during an interview.



Dreyden loved sketching on electric trains or outdoors in nature. He often walked his dog through the streets of St. Petersburg, slowly wandering through the city he loved. "Many details in the film came directly from him," the director says.

That quiet tenderness permeates *Two People in One Life and a Dog*. Selected from 1,826 submissions from 139 countries and regions, the film was nominated for this year's Tiantan Awards, the festival's top honor. Following its screening, it received a score of 8.7 out of 10 on the Chinese review platform Douban.

Told in a restrained yet deeply humane tone, the story follows an elderly intellectual couple living in St. Petersburg. Having survived World War II as children, they confront loneliness after their adult children emigrate abroad. Accompanied by their pet dog, their quiet lives regain warmth when they befriend a young neighbor girl suffering under an abusive father.

The film lingers on seemingly trivial yet poetic moments. In one such memorable sequence, the husband becomes irritated by the vulgar commentary blaring from a tourist cruise ship along a river. Unable to tolerate it, he impulsively volunteers to serve as the guide himself, captivating passengers with stories about the literary giants who once lived and wandered along the riverbanks.



"The marriage in the film shows how difficult love can be. The elderly couple's affection for each other is unconditional. Their relationship is built on mutual respect and steadfast support through every hardship," says Zaitsev.

Yet while the film radiates warmth on-screen, its production was marked by setbacks. In 2023, just two months before filming was scheduled to begin, Sergey Dreyden, the actor originally chosen for the lead role, passed away, forcing production to be postponed for an extended period.

Even the film's canine star brought unexpected complications. The couple's pet, a border collie, was highly obedient and capable of performing complex actions on command. But the dog, interestingly, had a habit of stealing scenes.

"Because our two elderly actors tired easily, we usually filmed their scenes first. But when we started shooting, the dog would suddenly run into the frame. Later, during editing, we realized it had appeared so often that it had practically become one of the lead actors," recalls Zaitsev.

The festival marked Zaitsev's first visit to Beijing, a city he says reminds him in some ways of Moscow, as they serve as capitals of two vast countries. What impresses him most, however, is the greenery.

"I have noticed that Beijing has a large number of trees. Many of them are no longer young saplings but towering old trees. That shows China has been committed to environmental protection and urban greening for many years already," he says.

Like many first-time visitors, Zaitsev toured the Forbidden City and the Temple of Heaven. He was amused to discover that the bedrooms for emperors and their wives inside the sprawling palace complex were surprisingly modest in size.

But it was an ordinary human moment that stayed with him most vividly: in a narrow palace lane, an elderly man in a wheelchair slowly crossed paths with a baby sitting in a stroller — one face marked by age and weariness, the other filled with new life and curiosity. To the director, it felt like a fleeting scene that could be used in one of his future films.

Asked whether he would be interested in making a film in China, Zaitsev, who says he admires the works of Hong Kong auteur Wong Kar-wai, replies that the stories he most longs to tell remain simple ones — films about ordinary people, their emotions and the details of everyday life.

Contact the writer at xufan@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

In Harbin, the taste of Russian bread becomes a link to home

By ZHOU HUIYING in Harbin
zhouhuiying@chinadaily.com.cn





Left: Workers make *lieba* at the Churin Food bakery in Harbin, Heilongjiang province. **Right:** Churin *lieba* weighs around two kilograms and has a traditional European flavor. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

For international students studying abroad, the familiar taste of home often serves as the most tangible link between their homeland and a foreign country.

Viktoriia Poletaeva, a first-year master's student at Harbin Institute of Technology in Harbin, the capital city of Heilongjiang province, grew up with the aroma of Russian bread baked by her grandmother, and the scent of Russian rye bread has long been etched in her memory since she came to the city in 2022.

"The familiar Russian architecture in the city makes me feel at home," she says. "However, I always yearned for the authentic Russian bread from my hometown."

One day, by chance, she saw Churin *lieba* (which comes from the Russian word *khleb*, meaning bread) at a Churin Food store, and the familiar shape and aroma instantly triggered her homesickness.

"With one bite, the crispy crust paired with the soft interior and the slightly sour taste from the hops fermentation," she says. "At that moment, the longing for my distant homeland was gently soothed.

"In fact, Russian bread is generally more sour and harder, while Harbin *lieba* perfectly blends the rich wheat aroma of Northeast China," she says. "It is solid and chewy, with a long-lasting aftertaste. It retains the traditional essence of Russian baking while cleverly adapting to local tastes, making it a distinctive delicacy rooted in the black soil, combining flavors from both countries."

Poletaeva also visited the Churin Bread-Making Skills Exhibition Hall.

In the center of the hall stands a model of a loaf of Churin *lieba* sitting on a four-meter-long wooden paddle.

In the experience area, visitors were already lining up.

As the freshly baked *lieba* was unveiled, its soft interior and steaming warmth were handed to each visitor.

The traditional way to eat it is with butter and jam and another way is to pair it with slices of Russian-style sausage.

"These are authentic Russian ways of eating it," she says. "I'm delighted to see my hometown's food culture so welcomed in Harbin."

In 1900, Russian merchant Ivan Churin brought Russian bread-making techniques to Harbin.

Passed down through five generations of craftsmen, the large round bread, which weighs around two kilograms and has a traditional European flavor, has become a specialty of Harbin and a taste memory etched in the daily lives of local residents.

At 3 am, the fire in the Churin bakery is already lit.

Master Lei, the fifth-generation inheritor of Churin bread-making techniques, carefully records the room temperature.

His keen intuition, honed from years on the production line, allows him to accurately estimate fermentation based on variables like temperature and environment.

He adjusts the water temperature, kneads the dough, and gently awakens the century-old starter yeast.

Every detail affects the traditional flavor of *lieba*.

After three natural fermentations, manual shaping, and slow baking in a brick oven, the crispy-on-the-outside, soft-on-the-inside Churin *lieba* is ready, filling the air with the rich aroma of wheat.

"Churin *lieba* has been passed down through five generations, always using traditional Russian handmade techniques and facilities," says Lei. "Its three major processes are distinctive — using hops to make liquid yeast for fermentation, giving the bread an enticing hop aroma; employing a traditional three-stage fermentation to produce a rich variety of organic acids; and baking with hardwood, creating a slightly charred and crispy crust with a soft and tasty interior.

"Kneading and shaping by hand are the two key steps in the production process," he says. "Kneading by hand is a race against time; it requires speed and ensuring the dough is well-formed."

Lei says he spent over two years mastering the basic skill of kneading.

At the Churin bakery, the average age of the core worker team is over 35. Many of them entered the workshop when young and have been working on the front line for decades.

"In 2007, the Churin *lieba*-making technique was recognized as a provincial intangible cultural heritage. In 2009, we established the country's first Churin Bread-Making Skills Exhibition Hall," he says. "The exhibition hall is not only a simple reproduction of intangible cultural heritage techniques, but also an interpretation from a new perspective."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:51 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:51 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Sino-Russian ties have entered new stage of greater achievements, faster development

Russian President Vladimir Putin's 25th visit to China this week has once again drawn global attention to one of the world's most consequential major-country relationships. The steady development of China-Russia relations carries particular significance beyond the bilateral scope especially at a time marked by geopolitical turbulence.

During their meeting on Wednesday in Beijing, President Xi Jinping and his Russian counterpart exchanged views on bilateral ties, practical cooperation and major international and regional issues of mutual concern, injecting fresh momentum into the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination in its 30th anniversary year.

During Wednesday's meeting, the two sides also agreed to further extend the China-Russia Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation — this year marks the 25th anniversary of its signing — demonstrating the stability of bilateral relations and the high level of mutual trust between the two countries.

China-Russia relations have developed steadily because the two countries have continuously deepened their political mutual trust and strategic coordination. This is the result of long-time careful cultivation, mutual support and a shared commitment to respecting each other's core interests and development paths.

What makes China-Russia relations distinctive is that they have developed according to their own internal logic rather than external pressure. The bilateral relationship is characterized by non-alliance, non-confrontation and non-targeting of third parties. That also means the relationship is not subject to interference or manipulation by external actors.

That is particularly meaningful in today's world, where some countries still view international relations through the outdated prism of bloc confrontation and zero-sum rivalry.

In recent years, bilateral trade and investment have maintained stable and robust growth, showing the strong endogenous driving force behind the relationship.

The two neighbors' economies possess complementary advantages and their practical cooperation is a long-term strategic choice serving the interests of both peoples.

In the process of cooperation and communication, political mutual trust has further deepened, while exchanges in trade, investment, energy, science and technology, people-to-people and sub-national dialogues have continued to advance. The bonds between the two peoples have also grown stronger.

A recent survey among young people in both countries showed that more than 80 percent of respondents view bilateral relations positively and hope for stronger exchanges. Such findings reflect not only the vitality of people-to-people ties, but also the broader aspiration among younger generations for peace, cooperation and mutual understanding in a changing world.

Unswervingly promoting the long-term, sound, steady and high-quality development of China-Russia relations is a strategic choice made by both sides based on the fundamental interests of the two nations and broader global trends. In a turbulent era, mutual trust between major countries is increasingly valuable for world peace and stability.

The China-Russia relationship has entered a new stage of greater achievements and faster development, Xi said in his meeting with Putin.

In recent years, faced with a fluid and turbulent international situation, China and Russia have developed the comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era on the basis of equality, mutual respect, good faith, and win-win cooperation, as Xi pointed out.

This has enabled the two countries to expand practical cooperation at a time when unilateralism and protectionism are on the rise in some parts of the world. Such coordination also carries significance for safeguarding multilateralism and international fairness.

It is important for the two countries to work together in international organizations so as to make the global governance system more just and reasonable and jointly uphold international justice and fairness while advancing the building of a community with a shared future for humanity.

A stable and forward-looking China-Russia relationship is therefore not only beneficial to the two countries, but also contributes valuable certainty and positive energy to a volatile world.

As permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and major countries, China and Russia should continue to adopt a strategic and long-term perspective and work together to fully implement the important common understandings reached by the two leaders. The two countries should seize the historic opportunities for their respective development and revitalization and contribute to the common good of the world.

Secessionists common enemy of China and US

Lai Ching-te's tenure as the head of the Democratic Progressive Party authorities of China's Taiwan region has been marked by a series of missteps and failures that have not only strained cross-Strait relations but also undermined the island's development prospects.

Contrary to his shameless claim in a speech on Wednesday marking the two-year anniversary of his tenure that he has maintained the status quo of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, the DPP authorities have stubbornly adhered to a "Taiwan independence" stance, peddled separatist fallacies and obstructed cross-Strait exchanges.

That speech was a response, if not a desperate "don't desert me" plea, to US President Donald Trump's Friday interview, in which the US leader stated, "We're not looking to have somebody say, 'Let's go independent because the United States is backing us'." This remark dealt a heavy blow to Lai.

In his speech — yet another litany of lies and deceit — Lai openly groveled to Washington, begging for an opportunity to tell the US leader that he wishes to continue purchasing US weapons, which he misleadingly labeled as essential to peace. Ironically, he tried to assure his audience that the island's future would not be determined by external forces just moments after trying to solicit US support.

In an attempt to conceal his secessionist nature, Lai peddled a so-called "Taiwan subject mentality" in his speech, openly seeking to sever the island from the Chinese motherland.

This "soft independence" is hidden and pernicious, no less harming than the DPP authorities' overt political separatist sloganeering.

Evidently anxious over the US leader's remarks, Lai posted a so-called "five-point speech" on Facebook on Sunday, in which he called black white, barefacedly claiming that his authorities are the protectors of regional peace. Yet to his horror, that "carefully worded" message failed to elicit the hoped for response from Washington — explaining why Lai doubled down on his efforts to appeal to the US not to give up on him.

If Lai truly intends to show the world that he is not a secessionist and that he is committed to peace and stability, he should simply pledge his support for the 1992 Consensus and stop fawning over the US.

The true color of his secessionist feather is laid bare by the extraordinary lengths he has gone to in an attempt to conceal his separatist nature — and his fear of losing US support for his political agenda.

The predicament Taiwan faces today stems from the DPP authorities' long-standing practice of placing ideological manipulation above reality, staking the island's security on the will of the US, and tying the future of Taiwan people to the dangerous path of seeking "Taiwan independence" through reliance on external forces. Once Washington shows even signs of shifting priorities, that layer of illusion surrounding the DPP authorities' reckless approach will be stripped away. In short, "Taiwan independence" is a dead end.

Lai's latest remarks do not signal any abandonment of "Taiwan independence", but rather a repackaging of it in more carefully crafted rhetoric.

"Taiwan independence" is fundamentally incompatible with peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. The expansion of separatist forces advocating "Taiwan independence" will ultimately push Taiwan toward a dangerous abyss — a trajectory that runs counter not only to the interests of the Chinese nation, but also to the strategic interests of the US. In this sense, curbing "Taiwan independence" separatist activities and maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait serve the shared interests of both China and the US. Lai's remarks further underscore the reality that "Taiwan independence" has become a common challenge confronting both Beijing and Washington.

There is but one China in the world and that Taiwan is part of China. No matter what Lai says or does, he will not stop the historical trend toward reunification, which is unstoppable, as a spokesperson for the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office said on Wednesday.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

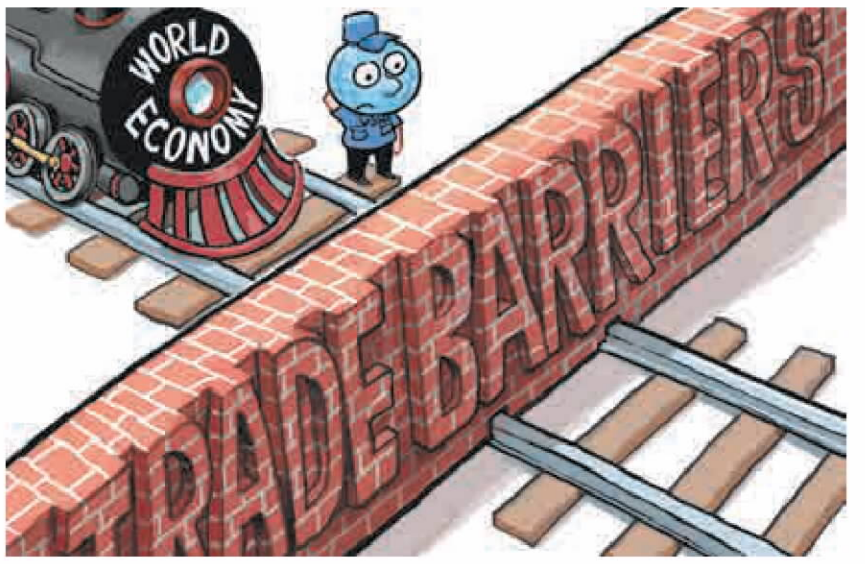
China Daily UK
90 Cannon St, London EC4N 6HA, UK
+44 (0) 207 398 8270
editor@chinadailyuk.com

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Luo Jie



Opinion Line

Redline conservation based on space-air-ground monitoring

In the run-up to the 25th International Day for Biological Diversity on Friday, the global community faces a sobering reality check.

According to a release from the United Nations Development Programme last August, only $121 billion is invested annually in conservation worldwide, leaving an estimated annual gap of over $700 billion.

Meanwhile, the recently unveiled UN Global Forest Goals Report 2026 reveals that the global forest area declined by more than 40 million hectares between 2015 and 2025, while financing for sustainable forest management remains far below estimated needs.

There are only two solutions going forward: either countries have to dramatically increase funding, or find smarter, more cost-effective ways to conserve nature. While dramatically increasing funding is no easy task, China may have found a way to achieve the latter. Its Ecological Conservation Redline strategy offers a way to protect biodiversity at remarkably low cost — and one that holds valuable lessons for the rest of the world.

Many nations, particularly those in the Global South, struggle with uncontrolled land encroachment and expansion. The default approach is often to develop first and clean up later — an expensive and frequently futile exercise.

China's redline strategy flips this logic on its head with a simple yet powerful principle: draw the baseline before the blueprint. Instead of spending billions to restore degraded wetlands or deforested lands at a later stage, the approach forces planners to first identify and cordon off areas that are ecologically vital or fragile. Only then is development permitted elsewhere.

This "defensive tool" is inherently low-cost and in doing so, it transforms biodiversity protection from an expensive afterthought into a preemptive safeguard, helping nations escape the zero-sum game between ecology and economy that traps so many developing countries.

The results speak for themselves. According to a blue book released by the Ministry of Natural Resources late last year, since the redlines were established nationwide in 2022, China has seen forest area within the redlines increase by 3,344 square kilometers, and water body area increase by 320 sq km. At the same time, construction area has shrunk by 6.5 sq km and mining area by 5.6 sq km.

Within marine ecological redlines, sea use area has reduced by 873 sq km, down 35 percent.

Perhaps the most innovative and budget-friendly aspect of this redline system is its administrative simplicity. Unlike traditional nature reserves, which often require dedicated management bodies, staff members and ongoing operational budgets for each site, China's redline strategy follows a different tack: there is no special management body for each of the areas encircled by its redlines.

Instead, the government oversees these vast zones using a combination of satellites, drones and targeted on-the-ground patrols — a three-dimensional "space-air-ground" monitoring network. This model dramatically drives down enforcement costs, allowing governments to protect more land with fewer resources, narrowing the gap between ambition and affordability.

Of course, the global biodiversity finance gap of over $700 billion is not a problem any country can solve alone. But China's Ecological Conservation Redline strategy offers a compelling, low-cost, and readily applicable model. It proves that effective biodiversity protection does not always require vast bureaucracies or unlimited budgets.

Sometimes, it takes nothing more than a clear line on a map, a satellite in the sky that shows it, and the political will to say: here, development stops, and life begins.

For any country seeking to protect its natural heritage without breaking the bank, that is a lesson worth learning.

— HOU LIQIANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Global cooperation launchpad for lunar exploration

Editor's note: *China's aerospace sector, especially its lunar exploration program, has made rapid progress in recent years. Yang Yuguang, chair of the International Astronautical Federation's Space Transportation Committee, spoke to China.com.cn about China's achievements and the importance of international cooperation in lunar exploration. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

China is a reliable partner in international lunar exploration, and that reliability is rooted largely in its sound technologies. Through the lunar missions from Chang'e-1 to Chang'e-6, the country has mastered exploration technologies of lunar orbiting, landing and sample return. These capabilities are essential for lunar exploration activities and will enable China to carry international payloads in future lunar missions.

China has a long history of international cooperation in outer space. For example, the resource satellites jointly developed by China and Brazil have been hailed as a model of South-South cooperation. International cooperation has been embedded in China's lunar exploration program from the very beginning. Deep-space tracking, telemetry and command communications depend on extensive support from ground stations. As China's territory cannot always face the moon, it needs assistance from stations located in other countries.

Throughout the orbiting, landing and sample return stages of the lunar exploration program, the missions from China carried experimental payloads from various countries.

Some lunar samples retrieved by Chang'e-5 and Chang'e-6 were given as State gifts to visiting heads of state from other countries. These samples given by China to other countries for scientific research are expected to yield valuable outcomes.

Scientists from both China and other countries can apply for access to lunar soil and rock samples brought back by Chang'e-5 and Chang'e-6. These samples will help scientists worldwide deepen their understanding of the evolution and history of the moon.

China is scheduled to launch the Chang'e-7 probe this year. Together with the subsequent Chang'e-8 probe, it will help form the basic model of the International Lunar Research Station. China is making a major contribution to the construction of the station, which will be built in the South Pole region of the moon. International payloads can be carried to the station by probes from both China and other countries to become part of the station.

Lunar exploration is no longer an endeavor reserved solely for national space agencies. Many commercial enterprises are now able to participate in it. Nevertheless, lunar exploration remains a megaproject that requires huge investments and a long period of time. Through international cooperation, participants can share the financial burden, making it easier to secure government support.

China has made extensive efforts to promote international cooperation in lunar and deep-space exploration. The country will remain committed to such cooperation in the future as well.

The formulation of common standards will be crucial for advancing international cooperation, especially in technological areas. Effective cooperation needs a shared "language". Without unified specifications for electrical, mechanical, signal and other interfaces, international cooperation will become too complicated to carry out. China is also beginning to formulate international standards in the field of aerospace.

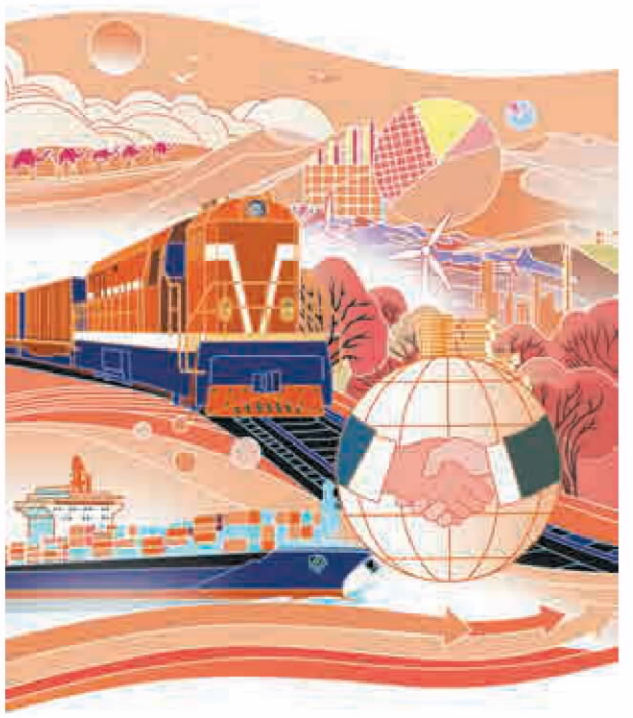
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:51 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:51 PM

VIEWS

Asif Ali Zardari

Seventy-five years of friendship: Pakistan and China step into the future



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

Pakistan and China began their remarkable journey of friendship and cooperation 75 years ago with the establishment of diplomatic relations.

Since then, we have built a partnership defined by trust, consistency, and the ability to stand together through difficult times and shifting global realities. What began as a diplomatic engagement has evolved into a model of enduring cooperation between our two nations.

This relationship is also deeply personal for me. My late father in law, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, believed strongly in building lasting ties with China and played pivotal roles in shaping our early cooperation.

That legacy continues into the third generation. My son, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, and daughter, Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, are both actively engaged in strengthening links between our two nations.

Our connection, however, predates modern diplomacy. For centuries, the regions that are now in Pakistan and China were linked through the ancient Silk Road — routes that crossed mountains and rivers, carrying goods, culture and ideas between our peoples. These exchanges have laid the foundation for a relationship that is both historic and natural.

Pakistan-China relations have never been transactional. They are rooted in mutual respect, trust and a shared understanding of each other's priorities.

Since 1951, we have supported each other on issues of core importance, including Pakistan's firm commitment to the one-China principle and our role in supporting China's rightful place at the United Nations in 1971.

What makes this partnership unique is how it has evolved. Regular high-level exchanges have kept it forward-looking, translating political understanding into practical cooperation, across infrastructure, energy, trade and agriculture — areas that directly impact people's lives.

I have witnessed this closeness firsthand. During my earlier tenure as President from 2008 to 2013, I visited China frequently.

These visits were not merely official engagements; they were opportunities to deepen trust, observe China's transformation and fortify our genuine friendship.

My visits again in 2025 brought those experiences full circle.

The scale of China's progress is extraordinary. Under the leadership of President Xi Jinping, China has consolidated its position as a leading global power and the world's second-largest economy.

This transformation reflects vision, discipline, and a sustained commitment to development that has reshaped the global economic landscape.

Through profound shifts in the international system — from the Cold War to today's more complex and fragmented world — Pakistan-China relations have remained resilient.

At a time when divisions often dominate global discourse, our partnership stands out for its consistency and clarity of purpose.

We do not view security and development as a race; we see it as a shared journey. This belief shapes our cooperation at the United Nations, within the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, and across the broader Global South, reflecting a shared commitment to multilateralism and dialogue.

This approach also guides our actions in times of crisis. During the recent war involving the United States, Israel and Iran, China played a constructive role by encouraging restraint and supporting dialogue, as well as resolutely backing Pakistan's mediation efforts, alongside its own compelling diplomatic engagement. This reflected our conviction that even the most complex disputes must be resolved peacefully.

China's Belt and Road Initiative has taken this philosophy of shared progress to a global scale. By investing in infrastructure and connectivity, it has opened new avenues for trade, strengthened economic linkages, and created opportunities for growth.

For many developing countries, it has demonstrated how connectivity can drive inclusive prosperity.

Within this broader vision, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) stands as a flagship of our cooperation. It has transformed Pakistan's infrastructure, reduced energy shortages, and created new economic opportunities.

As CPEC enters its next phase, our focus is increasingly on people-centered development — industrial cooperation, modern agriculture, job creation, and technology transfer — to ensure growth is both sustainable and inclusive.

Our defense partnership remains another key pillar of this relationship. Cooperation in defense technology, training, and joint exercises has reinforced Pakistan's capabilities while contributing to regional stability. It is defensive in nature and reflects our commitment to peace.

Yet, the true strength of Pakistan-China relations lies beyond governments and agreements. It rests in the bonds between our people.

Students, artists, entrepreneurs, and young people from both countries are building connections that transcend political cycles. These human ties give real meaning to the idea of an "all-weather friendship".

The symbolism of this year's Chinese zodiac — the Year of the Horse — captures the spirit of our partnership: energy, resilience, and forward momentum.

As we look ahead, our direction is clear: deepen cooperation, strengthen solidarity among Global South nations, and work together for a rule-based international order.

Our partnership is not directed against any country; it is rooted in mutual respect and shared progress.

Seventy-five years on, Pakistan-China relations remain strong, steady, and deeply humane — and that enduring spirit will continue to guide us into the future.

The author is the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Loh Wee Keng

China boosts shared prosperity in Asia-Pacific

The first five months of 2026 have seen intensified geopolitical rivalries and a turbulent global economy. To ensure businesses operate smoothly, major countries should take responsibility for stabilizing both regional and global markets.

As the host of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation 2026, China is working to inject stability and foster consensus for regional prosperity. Under the theme "Building an Asia-Pacific Community to Prosper Together", China has prioritized openness, innovation and cooperation to advance the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific.

Around 2017, China shifted its focus toward the Asia-Pacific region. This pivot shaped a new economic landscape characterized by closer ties and a stronger emphasis on regional integration.

That year, China's trade with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations countries crossed a record $500 billion.

In the following years, through the Belt and Road Initiative, APEC, the implementation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, and the signing of the China-ASEAN FTA 3.0 Upgrade Protocol, China has steered neighboring countries toward a new consensus. A standout result is that ASEAN became China's largest trading partner in 2020, while China has remained the association's largest trading partner since 2009.

Four years after its implementation, the RCEP has significantly impacted China's trade landscape. By 2025, China's trade with the other RCEP members reached $1.9 trillion, accounting for 44.2 percent of the country's total foreign trade growth and underscoring the agreement's role in fostering regional cooperation.

China's high-tech exports grew by 13.2 percent, with exports of specialized equipment, high-end machine tools, and industrial robots increasing by 20.6 percent, 21.5 percent and 48.7 percent respectively. This reflects China's growing export focus on high-end technology and advanced productive forces.

China is also steering sustainable growth in the Asia-Pacific through its green transition. In 2024, Asia accounted for 72 percent of the world's newly installed renewable energy capacity.

In 2025, Asia attracted 65 percent of global investment in solar, 64 percent in wind, and 41 percent in battery sectors, propelling the global shift toward clean energy.

The energy crisis sparked by the US-Iran conflict further underscored the foresight in China's new energy initiatives.

China's role is pivotal; in 2025, its clean energy capacity reached 2.4 billion kilowatts, about 45 percent of the global total. In just five years, its combined installed wind and solar capacity has surged from 530 million to 1.84 billion kilowatts.

Global energy transition investment reached a record $2.3 trillion in 2025, with the Asia-Pacific region leading the charge at 47 percent of the total. Although China's investment dipped slightly due to lower equipment costs, it continued to be the world's largest single market.

Emerging markets, particularly those in Southeast Asia, are also key drivers of the global energy transition. Vietnam's energy transition investment has exceeded $10 billion, while Indonesia's electric vehicle and energy storage markets are rapidly expanding.

Within the RCEP region, EV trade grew by 45.2 percent year-on-year, and exports of green products such as wind turbines and electric railway locomotives doubled, highlighting the significant green transformation fueled by regional cooperation.

However, Asia's energy transition still faces challenges such as reliance on fossil fuels and insufficient power grid infrastructure.

Li Baosen, deputy secretary-general of the Global Energy Interconnection Development and Cooperation Organization, notes that China's cooperation models and technical support can help address developmental disparities across the region.

By supplying photovoltaic cells, new energy vehicles, smart grids, and energy storage solutions, China is aiding regional and global decarbonization. The energy crisis sparked by the US-Iran conflict further underscored the foresight in China's new energy initiatives.

China is propelling regional smart development. In 2025, its trade with ASEAN surpassed $1 trillion — a milestone driven by both enormous shared development needs and vibrant opportunities in the digital and green economies and other emerging fields. China's expertise in 5G, cloud computing, and artificial intelligence aligns with ASEAN countries' needs for industrial upgrading.

Their cross-border e-commerce has maintained over 20 percent growth for years. The China-ASEAN FTA 3.0 Upgrade Protocol now includes the digital economy, enabling Chinese digital and new energy companies to deepen their presence in ASEAN markets. This supports collaboration in cloud infrastructure, AI and fintech, and promotes the integration of industry and supply chains.

China's regional AI cooperation has also yielded impressive results. At the 2025 SCO Summit in Tianjin, Beijing systematically outlined a strategic direction and pathways for regional AI cooperation and offered an SCO solution for global AI governance. As China and ASEAN strengthen ties in cross-border data flows, digital payments, and smart cities, a closely integrated digital economy community is emerging.

Consensus-building is inseparable from people-to-people exchanges, with tourism playing a crucial role. In 2025, China saw a record 697 million inbound and outbound crossings, while inbound trips reached 154 million, driven by incentives such as visa-free policies for 48 countries and expanded departure tax refunds.

Tourism between China and Asia-Pacific countries is advancing across five dimensions: scale, policy, technology, consumption structure, and regional coordination, aiming for high-quality, resilient, and integrated development.

RCEP and APEC have facilitated tourism by increasing flight routes and enhancing joint marketing, boosting visitor flows. Meanwhile, technology, particularly AI, is transforming the tourism service ecosystem by improving booking, personalized guidance, and other services.

Through economic cooperation organizations, advanced new energy technologies, innovative digital economy initiatives, and open tourism policies, China is injecting stability into the Asia-Pacific region on multiple fronts.

The author is the chairman of the Malaysian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in China.
The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.

Visit deepens good-neighborliness and friendly cooperation

Editor's note: *President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin, who was on a state visit to China, on Wednesday signed a joint statement on enhancing comprehensive strategic coordination and deepening good-neighborliness and friendly cooperation between the two countries. Two experts shared their views on this matter with China Daily's Li Huixian and Wang Qingyun.*

Deepened coordination beneficial to both

The high-level engagement between President Xi Jinping and visiting Russian President Vladimir Putin in Beijing on Wednesday and the signing of more than 20 cooperation agreements in areas such as education, technology and economic and trade relations by the two heads of state hold strategic significance on multiple levels.

First, both sides agreed to extend the China-Russia Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation, thereby maintaining the legal foundation for deep bilateral ties.

This extension allows the further development of their comprehensive strategic partnership, safeguarding their sovereignty, and developmental interests across the board, while advancing cooperation in various fields.

Notably, they leverage platforms such as the China-Russia Years of Education to unlock the potential of exchanges between their peoples.

The two countries can also leverage existing multilateral cooperation frameworks — including the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, BRICS, and the coordination mechanisms linking the Belt and Road Initiative with the Eurasian Economic Union — to jointly promote regional connectivity and cross-border trade, ensure the smooth operation of regional industry and supply chains, and foster a stable and orderly environment for regional development.

This collaboration will enable China and Russia to further expand cooperation in areas such as energy, cross-border logistics, local-currency settlements, and trade and economic exchanges.

Moreover, the Chinese side called for even higher quality development and revitalization of the comprehensive strategic coordination between China and Russia.

This approach has a solid practical foundation. Both countries are at a critical stage of industrial upgrading and are pursuing self-reliant development in their economic and technological systems. They face shared challenges, such as trade barriers and supply chain instability. By deepening their cooperation, the two nations can effectively complement each other's economic strengths.

For instance, Russia can leverage China's vast market, comprehensive manufacturing capacity, and infrastructure capabilities to broaden its development space and unlock the potential of its energy and other resources.

At the same time, China can draw on Russia's resource endowments, market and favorable geographical location to diversify its energy and resource supplies and smooth its westward-opening corridors.

This way, mutual reinforcement can serve each country's domestic revitalization needs.

From a long-term strategic perspective, by supporting each other's development and revitalization through cooperation, the two countries can steadily strengthen their development confidence, withstand external uncertainties, achieve stable growth, and further consolidate the foundation for bilateral relations.

Globally, both countries can continue working together to promote a multipolar world, advance multilateralism and implement the four global initiatives proposed by China and counter hegemony, unilateralism and bloc confrontation.

The commitment of Beijing and Moscow to promoting a more just and equitable international order through the United Nations is a stabilizing force, and can help safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Global South countries.

Zhao Huirong is a researcher at the Institute of Russian, Eastern European and Central Asian Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

An enduring partnership for mutual growth

The heads of state of China and Russia held talks in Beijing on Wednesday, guiding the two countries' efforts to conduct comprehensive strategic coordination of even higher quality.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination and the 25th anniversary of the signing of the China-Russia Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation.

Over the past 25 years, China and Russia have followed the spirit of the treaty and maintained close coordination in political, economic, cultural and other fields.

In 2019, bilateral relations were elevated to a comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era, placing cooperation across all fields on the fast track.

Both sides agreed to extend the treaty on Wednesday, which further consolidates the legal foundation for permanent good-neighborliness and friendly cooperation between the two countries.

Under the strategic guidance of the heads of state of China and Russia, the two countries have developed a mature relationship that has become an example for a new type of major-country relations.

China and Russia are each other's good neighbors, friends and partners. They pursue a partnership rather than an alliance, and their relations are not targeted at any third party.

Both nations respect each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, continuously deepen mutually beneficial and win-win cooperation in various fields, and work hand in hand on international affairs.

Over the past decade, economic cooperation between China and Russia has achieved rapid growth.

The two countries are each other's important trading partners. Sub-national cooperation between the two sides is thriving.

The China-Russia Expo, which is being held in Harbin, Northeast China's Heilongjiang province, has become an important platform for connecting enterprises of both sides, deepening supply chain cooperation and boosting people-to-people exchanges.

This year is also the beginning of the China-Russia Years of Education. Both sides have seen more than 80,000 people studying in each other's country, and cooperated to establish more than 150 educational institutions and projects.

Coordination between China and Russia has weathered changes in the international situation, and become a "stabilizer" in a world fraught with uncertainty.

Chen Yurong is a senior research fellow in the Department for World Peace and Security Studies at the China Institute of International Studies.

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

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:51 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:51 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

POU SOTHIRAK AND HIM ROTHA

Building up the Lancang-Mekong community

This cooperation mechanism linking countries through which the river flows holds huge potential for deepening ties between China and Southeast Asia



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

The Lancang-Mekong Cooperation, launched in 2016, is one of the most successful subregional cooperation mechanisms backed by strong political will, deep financial support and shared vision among the six member countries, namely China, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam and Thailand.



Pou Sothirak



Him Rotha

With an expressed commitment to deepening mutual trust, LMC has set out to promote cooperation, with the member countries' leaders pledging to boost the economic and social development of subregional countries, enhance people's well-being, narrow the development gap among regional countries and support the Association of Southeast Asian Nations community in facilitating the implementation of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and advancing South-South cooperation.

Although there are plenty of Lancang-Mekong mechanisms, the LMC is known to be among the most robust subregional platforms, as it operates through all-round and broad-based cooperation with a government-guided and project-oriented model.

As this year marks the 10th anniversary of the first Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Leaders' Meeting, it is worth reflecting upon the decade-long achievements and the way forward.

The LMC is one of the most institutionalized Lancang-Mekong mechanisms. It possesses long-term goals driven by a development strategy, focusing on three priority areas, namely political and security issues, economic and sustainable development, and social, cultural and people-to-people exchanges, as enshrined in the Joint Press Communique of the First Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Foreign Ministers' Meeting in 2015.

Based on the Sanya Declaration adopted in 2016, the LMC states decided to make the three aforementioned areas the cooperation's pillars with a specific scope of prioritizing connectivity, production capacity, cross-border economic cooperation, water resources, agriculture and poverty reduction.

Since its inception, this subregional mechanism has established deep engagements between China and other Lancang-Mekong countries through frequent meetings, ranging from leaders' summits to foreign ministers' meetings, and a wide range of working group engagements. This has not only fostered trust and confidence among the leaders of these subregional countries, but also regularized interactions among line officials across LMC working groups and relevant stakeholders in the LMC region.

Moreover, the institutionalization of the LMC deepened with the launch of the LMC Special Fund in 2017. Since then, nearly 1,000 "small yet smart" projects have been carried out. Cambodia, specifically, has received over 100 projects, covering diverse sectors, including rural development, water resource management and agriculture. This special fund has not only improved livelihoods but also strengthened national connectivity, enhanced rural development and reinforced the effectiveness of the LMC model, deepening the bonds between China and Cambodia.

With the special fund allocated to projects that boost local livelihoods and the well-being of the people in the region, the LMC frameworks have been able to contribute to common development and prosperity for all LMC countries.

The LMC has also addressed the challenges. In 2016, the Lancang-Mekong countries witnessed a severe drought caused by a number of factors, such as climate change and the El Nino phenomenon. China released water from the Jinghong Hydropower Station in Yunnan province, providing other Lancang-Mekong countries with huge relief.

Water cooperation has been significantly enhanced since 2020, when China and other Lancang-Mekong countries agreed to establish an information-sharing platform, through which China has shared full-year hydrological data of the river.

Water cooperation is also linked with energy cooperation. So far, energy cooperation under the LMC framework has focused only on functional cooperation, such as capacity building and technical support. Although this has supported soft infrastructure, such as knowledge and information sharing on green energy promotion, it could be an area LMC countries can explore further amid the energy crisis caused by an unstable geopolitical environment, including the current conflict in the Middle East.

The LMC holds promising potential to deepen ties between China and countries in Southeast Asia. Nonetheless, challenges remain, from geopolitical uncertainties and flash points in the region and beyond, to the need to improve the functional structure of this mechanism. For that it is crucial that the LMC countries work together.

First, the setting up of the LMC should serve as a catalyst to bring about further development along the Lancang-Mekong River. As such, LMC should not be seen as a competitor but rather an inclusive complement to the already-existing Lancang-Mekong mechanisms. Since some of these existing mechanisms seem to have limited capacity in terms of financial assistance and limited areas of work and cooperation, LMC should be seen as a prime framework that could complement other mechanisms such as the Mekong River Commission, Greater Mekong Subregion Cooperation and the Mekong-United States Partnership, just to name a few.

Second, as a platform with better political will, leadership and funds availability, the LMC should explore whether there are projects proposed by other Lancang-Mekong mechanisms that are stuck because of limited fund capacity or other reasons. The LMC should consider joint collaboration with such projects. The LMC's credibility can be built through joint collaborations with various existing mechanisms, as long as misunderstandings are kept to a minimum.

Third, some countries in the region have their own issues to deal with, such as domestic problems and interstate border conflicts. Therefore, LMC countries could consider compartmentalizing political issues while maintaining overall achievable and robust cooperation. This would serve the interests of the livelihoods and well-being of the people in the region.

Other than that, as the world is facing a multitude of challenges, such as the energy crisis and other emerging issues, LMC countries should build upon existing frameworks and work together to explore alternative solutions, including investment in green energy infrastructure, and prepare themselves for potential future non-traditional security issues, such as transnational crime.

To become a vital institution that can achieve what other existing mechanisms cannot, the LMC should try to be more inclusive and open, and inject vitality into regional integration.

Pou Sothirak is a distinguished senior advisor at the Cambodian Center for Regional Studies. Him Rotha is the deputy director of the Cambodian Center for Regional Studies. The authors contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

MUHAMMAD ASIF NOOR

Link of friendship

The CPEC is a practical outcome of China-Pakistan cooperation that has steadily strengthened over the past 75 years based on long-term mutual trust



ZHANG YUJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

This year marks 75 years of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan. The anniversary comes at a time when the global landscape is unsettled. Economic fragmentation, an uneven recovery and uncertainty over development paths dominate international debates. Against this backdrop, the China-Pakistan relationship stands out for its steadiness, clarity and practical results. It reflects a partnership built on long-term mutual trust, development-first thinking and mutual respect, shaped by decades of cooperation and a shared outlook on the future.



What has defined China-Pakistan diplomacy over the years is consistency. From the earliest days of recognition through shifting regional and global circumstances, both sides have treated sovereignty, strategic autonomy and development as shared priorities. Political trust was established early and has been carefully maintained across leadership changes. Regular high-level exchanges have created a rhythm of cooperation that has remained stable even during periods of regional uncertainty. This is why the relationship has evolved into a genuine all-weather strategic cooperative partnership, supported by public confidence in both countries.

A major turning point came in 2015, when President Xi Jinping's visit to Pakistan translated political trust into a concrete economic vision through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Conceived under the Belt and Road Initiative, the CPEC was never meant to be just a set of projects. It was designed as a long-term development plan aimed at addressing Pakistan's structural challenges. Pakistan's consistent support for China's core interests has been matched by China's firm backing of Pakistan's sovereignty, stability and development goals. This mutual understanding has given the partnership depth and lasting credibility.

The importance of this year was underscored right at its start. On Jan 4, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar visited Beijing to co-chair the seventh round of the China-Pakistan Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. The discussions reinforced strategic trust, reaffirmed support for each country's core interests and set the direction for advancing a high-quality CPEC 2.0. The focus on industry, agriculture and mining signals a shared commitment to the next phase of cooperation.

The impact of this partnership is most visible in economic outcomes. Chinese investment flows have picked up pace. It is estimated that net inflows from China surged to $1.22 billion in the 2024-25 fiscal year, accounting for nearly half of Pakistan's total foreign direct investment of around $2.5 billion. These figures reflect renewed investor confidence, supported by better connectivity, improved energy availability and steady progress under the CPEC.

Since its launch in 2013, the original phase of the CPEC focused on Pakistan's most pressing challenges, especially energy shortages and weak connectivity. Through a mix of coal, hydropower, wind and solar projects, more than 8,000 megawatts were added to the national grid. Urban load shedding, once as high as 18 hours a day, has largely faded, restoring industrial activity and improving daily life for households. At the same time, over 1,500 kilometers of modern highways, including the Multan-Sukkur Motorway, have reduced logistics costs and connected regions that had long remained on the margins of economic activity.

The CPEC has also broadened employment opportunities. By late 2025, special economic zones such as Rashakai had generated tens of thousands of jobs in textiles, manufacturing and information technology businesses, with growing participation by young workers. Security challenges remain in parts of Balochistan, yet dedicated protection measures have helped maintain continuity and investor confidence. At the same time, the presence of Chinese companies has accelerated technology transfer and productivity improvements across domestic industries.

Humanitarian cooperation has been equally significant. China's assistance during Pakistan's devastating floods in 2022 exceeded $57.36 million, followed by continued support for climate resilience. These efforts went beyond emergency relief, deepening people-to-people ties and reinforcing a sense of solidarity during difficult times.

As the CPEC moves into its upgraded phase as the CPEC 2.0, the emphasis has shifted from infrastructure to high-quality, sustainable development. Formalized in September 2025 at the 14th Joint Cooperation Committee Meeting of the CPEC, this phase aligns with Pakistan's "5Es": Exports, E-Pakistan, Equity and Empowerment, Environment and Food Security, and Energy and Infrastructure — a framework designed to tackle economic challenges proposed in the country's National Economic Transformation Plan 2024-29.

The CPEC 2.0 introduces five thematic corridors covering growth, livelihoods, innovation, green development and regional connectivity, including links to Afghanistan and Central Asia.

Industrial cooperation draws on China's experience in relocating manufacturing capacity, with appliance parks and textile hubs expected to create large-scale employment. Digital cooperation has expanded quickly, with agreements worth $8.5 billion in artificial intelligence, e-commerce and connectivity, alongside advanced training programs for thousands of Pakistani professionals in China. Planned upgrades to the Main Line-1 railway project and the Karakoram Highway aim to improve trade efficiency, while mineral development and precision agriculture offer new paths for diversification and food security.

China's four global initiatives provide a wider governance framework for this partnership. The Global Development Initiative emphasizes inclusive growth and poverty reduction, reflected in the CPEC's focus on livelihoods and sustainability. The Global Security Initiative promotes dialogue and cooperative security, evident in China-Pakistan coordination on counter-terrorism and regional stability. The Global Civilization Initiative encourages mutual respect through education, media and people-to-people exchanges. The Global Governance Initiative highlights sovereign equality and fair participation in global decision-making, offering developing countries a stronger voice in international affairs.

Seventy-five years after diplomatic ties were established, the China-Pakistan partnership is defined more by outcomes than by statements. The foundation is strong, decades of trust have built resilience, and a shared development vision offers clear direction. At a time when the world feels increasingly divided, the China-Pakistan experience shows how long-term cooperation, rooted in development and mutual respect, can deliver real benefits and contribute to a more balanced and inclusive global order.

The author is the director of the Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies, Pakistan. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:51 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:51 PM

BUSINESS

Chipmaker YMTC seeks Shanghai float

Listing seen as milestone for nation's cutting-edge semiconductor sector

By **MA SI** in Haikou
masi@chinadaily.com.cn

China's leading flash memory maker, Yangtze Memory Technologies Co (YMTC), has officially begun its initial public offering process with plans to list on Shanghai's STAR Market, marking a major milestone for the country's semiconductor industry.

The filing showed that YMTC has no controlling shareholder and features a diversified ownership structure led by State-backed entities. Its largest shareholder, Hubei Changsheng Development — wholly owned by the administrative committee of Wuhan Optics Valley in Hubei province — holds 26.54 percent of the company.

$44 billion
expected market value of Yangtze Memory Technologies Co for its planned IPO on Shanghai's STAR Market

Other key investors include phases I and II of the National Integrated Circuit Industry Investment Fund, as well as local State-owned capital and industry funds.

Guosheng Securities said in a research note that YMTC is expected to submit its listing application as early as mid-June, with market forecasts valuing the company at around 300 billion yuan ($44 billion) for the IPO.

YMTC is China's only company capable of end-to-end 3D NAND flash chip manufacturing. NAND is a type of high-end nonvolatile memory chip used for data storage in data centers, smartphones and other tech gadgets.

By the third quarter of 2025, YMTC held roughly 13 percent of the global NAND flash market, securing a top-tier position, the filing citing third-party market research said.

Guosheng Securities said that YMTC launched construction of its third phase base in Wuhan in September. By early 2026, the facility had entered the equipment installation phase for its cleanrooms.

Once the third phase base reaches full production, YMTC's market share of the global NAND flash sector is expected to exceed 15 percent. The company plans to build two more wafer fabs thereafter, which would double its total production capacity when fully operational, Guosheng Securities said.

Driven by surging demand from artificial intelligence-powered data centers, the company's revenue exceeded 20 billion yuan in the first quarter, doubling year-on-year.

The IPO plan comes as the rapid development of large AI models and computing infrastructure has ushered in a "supercycle" for the memory chip market.

Market research firm Gartner said global chip sales are expected to approach 9 trillion yuan in 2026, up 64 percent year-on-year, with memory chip sales estimated at around 4.3 trillion yuan.

Roger Sheng, vice-president of research at Gartner, said that YMTC has made significant progress, but there remains a significant capacity gap between Chinese memory leaders and their global counterparts, pointing to substantial room for expansion.

Soochow Securities said in a research note that South Korea's Samsung and US firm Western Digital each commanded around 410,000 and 400,000 wafers per month in the second quarter of 2025, while YMTC's monthly capacity stood at only 140,000 wafers.



Visitors gather at YMTC's booth during a high-tech expo in Wuhan, Hubei province, on April 19. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Finishing touches


Construction workers conduct welding work on joints of the steel space grid structure of Xuanhan South Railway Station on the Xi'an-Chongqing High-speed Railway in Dazhou's Xuanhan county, Sichuan province, on May 14. The integral jacking of the station building's 1,800-metric-ton steel grid, undertaken by China Railway 24th Bureau Group, was successfully completed the same day, marking its full transition to the interior decoration and exterior finishing phase. A key passenger node on the Beijing-Kunming corridor of China's national high-speed railway network, the station will enable the line to further optimize the railway network in central and western China.
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

State-backed investors eye nation's top AI startups

By **CHENG YU**
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

China's powerful State-backed investors are piling into the country's top artificial intelligence startups, turning the efforts over large language models from a venture capital frenzy into a strategic national move over technological self-sufficiency.

Moonshot AI, a leading Beijing-based startup behind the Kimi chatbot, has added a cluster of State-backed funds and government-linked investors to its shareholder roster, sources confirmed to China Daily.

The new investors include State-owned platforms such as Beijing AI Industry Investment Fund and a State-backed investment fund under Shanghai Guosheng Group, alongside State-owned enterprise telecom giant China Mobile, marking one of the clearest signs yet that China's "national team" is consolidating around a select group of domestic AI champions.

The move comes as DeepSeek is seeking to raise more than 50 billion yuan ($7.35 billion) in a financing round that could push its valuation above 350 billion yuan, with China's State-backed semiconductor investment fund in talks to lead the deal, according to media reports.

"Such investments extend far beyond commercial returns and also the strategic value of technological self-sufficiency," said Wang Peng, a researcher at the Beijing Academy of Social Sciences. "State-backed investors are increasingly stepping in not just with capital, but with access to computing power, data resources and industrial ecosystems."

Wang pointed to DeepSeek's reported migration onto Huawei's Ascend AI chips as an example of how capital could help domestic AI firms reduce dependence on foreign hardware and software stacks.

On the other hand, Moonshot AI's latest funding round is being led by the venture arm of food delivery giant Meituan.

Since the beginning of 2026, the company has raised more than $3.9 billion in total, making it one of China's fastest-rising AI startups by valuation.

Prior to the latest round, Moonshot AI's shareholder roster already included Chinese internet giants such as Alibaba and Tencent, social media platform Xiaohongshu, as well as major venture capital firms.

China Mobile's involvement is drawing particular attention among investors and industry experts because of the State-owned telecom operator's massive cloud infrastructure and nationwide distribution network.

"Cooperation between the two companies could eventually embed Kimi's AI agent capabilities into telecom services, giving Moonshot AI access to hundreds of millions of users while securing more stable computing resources," Wang said.

Smart tech reshaping hiring trends, workplace dynamics

By **LI JIAYING**
lijiaying@chinadaily.com.cn

The accelerating adoption of artificial intelligence is increasingly reshaping hiring trends and workplace dynamics, as companies race to recruit AI talent while workers scramble to adapt to the technology's growing influence, a recent report showed.

According to a 2026 spring recruitment report released by recruitment platform Maimai this month, job postings in China's new economy sectors rose 22.6 percent year-on-year in the first four months, while AI-related positions surged 8.7-fold during the same period.

The new economy sector refers to industries driven by technologies such as the internet, big data, cloud computing and AI, which give rise to new products, business models and formats.

The rapid rise of AI also drives broader changes in China's labor market, with more than 20 of the 72 new occupations identified over the past five years being directly related to AI, data from the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security showed in March.

Against this backdrop, competition for AI talent has intensified across the country's technology sector as companies speed up AI deployment.

"Demand for AI application talent is definitely set to surge," said Lin Fan, founder and CEO of Maimai. "We have seen that it is no longer just major technology companies and large-model developers competing for talent. Firms in embodied AI, smart hardware and intelligent driving have also joined the race."

In this regard, the report also showed that the competition for talent has gone beyond established tech giants to rising players. Companies such as ByteDance, DJI, Xiaohongshu, Tencent and Meituan remained among the hottest recruiters this spring, while AI startups such as MiniMax and smart appliance company Dreame Technology also entered the top 20 most active recruiters.

High-end AI positions are also commanding significantly higher salaries. AI scientists and AI leadership roles topped the salary rankings with an average monthly salary of 132,796 yuan ($19,521), becoming the only category exceeding 100,000 yuan per month. Other high-paying roles included AI infrastructure engineers, large-model algorithm researchers and AIGC (AI-generated content) algorithm engineers, the report showed.

By contrast, programmers are among the first groups feeling the pressure brought by AI-driven development. According to the report, 38.51 percent of surveyed programmers said their companies have incorporated AI capabilities into performance evaluations, with 54 percent having already experienced workforce adjustments at their companies in the past year. In response, 39.1 percent chose to stay in their current positions and improve their skills, while 25.7 percent planned to move into AI development roles.

"The proportion of AI-assisted coding in my work has reached 90 percent, or even higher," said Chen Feng, a backend engineer at a major tech company, adding that he has felt the shift becoming particularly evident since the beginning of this year.

"In this sense, the ability to come up with ideas has become especially important," Chen said. "As AI continues to evolve, what the industry really needs are people who know how to effectively work with AI."

Despite the hiring boom, however, competition for jobs has eased somewhat overall. The Maimai report showed that the talent supply-demand ratio in the new economy sector fell from 2.45 to 2.09, meaning that roughly two candidates compete for one position. Meanwhile, average monthly salaries rose 12.13 percent year-on-year to 49,600 yuan.

Riding AI boom, NW China emerges as key computing hub

URUMQI — A new kind of hub is emerging in the landscape of energy-rich Northwest China. Instead of oil derricks, these centers are filled with rows of server racks.

Inside a 200-square-meter room at the Tianshan Smart Valley Advanced Computing Cluster in Hami, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, hundreds of servers hum day and night. In just over a year, the likes of telecom giants, cloud computing service providers and tech firms have moved into the city.

"Since March, we have had companies visiting almost every day for talks," said Paruq Yehya, head of a local digital development bureau. "Three clients are vying for one server company's computing power."

Artificial intelligence's soaring power demand has made Xinjiang and neighboring provinces such as Gansu attractive destinations for AI firms.

With abundant solar and wind reserves, Xinjiang offers green power at roughly one-third the price of coastal industrial electricity. Operating costs for a computing company in Hami are more than 40 percent lower than in the eastern regions of China. In Qingyang, Gansu, one of the northwestern region's flagship computing hubs, a branch of telecom giant China Mobile has revealed that monthly savings can reach 4 million yuan ($585,000).

The region's cooler climate and cheaper land add to the appeal, lowering air-conditioning and operational costs below those of first-tier eastern cities.

For these computing centers, the core mission is to convert green power into computing power, via AI training and reasoning, resulting in tokens, the smallest unit of information processing in AI models.

"Just as oil is the lifeblood of industry, tokens are the most fundamental fuel for AI development," said Tang Shuheng, head of the Xinjiang International Integrated Supercomputing Center.

Major AI models based in eastern cities process reasoning requests on servers located in the northwest. Some of these requests serve overseas businesses in North America, Europe and the Asia-Pacific. The clients of these AI model providers pay for token consumption, and the resulting revenue covers electricity, wages and equipment costs. In this way, token flows contribute directly to the local economy.

In Qingyang, more than 500 AI-related firms had been set up by 2025, generating $1.28 billion in revenue and creating job opportunities, local authorities said.

In 2026, the concept of "computing power and electricity synergy" made its debut in China's Government Work Report, and earlier this month, several departments released an action plan, setting a 2030 goal to significantly improve clean energy supply security for AI computing facilities and AI applications in the energy sector.

Northwestern regions are also a testing ground for domestic chips. Huawei and other homegrown AI chips are now deployed at scale. At a computing center in Qingyang, a massive Enflame cluster successfully handled a peak-season surge of billions of image requests for photo-editing app Meitu's AI virtual try-on during the 2026 Chinese New Year holiday in February.

More than China's energy backyard, the northwest has become an AI hub, with its computing power being exported westward.

Many Central Asian countries lack large-scale computing facilities but face urgent data processing demand in sectors such as satellite remote sensing, agriculture and energy infrastructure inspection. The computing power center in Xinjiang will function as a "digital post station" — satellite data arrives via dedicated links and reaches customers in tailor-made services after being processed by AI models.

Tang, the Xinjiang computing center's head, said the facility will enable high-precision monitoring of the China-Kazakhstan oil pipelines and cut the warning time to 15 minutes should pipeline deformations, even tiny, occur. Meanwhile, a satellite-linked AI crop farming system, supported by the Xinjiang center, is expected to help boost wheat yields and cut fertilizer use in Kazakhstan.

However, not all workloads can move west. Web access, e-commerce and online gaming, which demand extremely low latency, have to stay in the east.

From Hami to Chongqing in Southwest China, network latency is about 50 milliseconds, exceeding the 30-millisecond threshold for real-time uses like autonomous driving and telemedicine. In addition, information infrastructure in Hami still lags behind coastal regions, while talent is scarce.

"Right now it is something like machines 'waiting for' people," Paruq Yehya said, adding that equipment has arrived, but staff with expertise in tech, operations and the market are not in place. Rapid construction of large-scale computing centers also strains local equipment supply chains and logistics.

Still, the future looks promising. A Morgan Stanley report earlier this year predicted that data centers in China's far-flung regions will contribute 2.4 gigawatts of new orders in 2026, further increasing to 3.3 GW in 2027, accounting for about 70 percent of new orders.

XINHUA — CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:51 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:51 PM

BUSINESS

Smart robotics driving rehab breakthroughs

Pursuit of comprehensive solutions boosting global demand for Chinese robot applications

By **WANG XIN** in Shanghai
wangxin2@chinadaily.com.cn

With China firmly at the forefront of artificial intelligence and robotics, the nation's technology companies are targeting opportunities in the global rehabilitation sector as advances in Chinese robotics gain increasing recognition worldwide, experts and business executives said at a recent summit.

The Global Rehabilitation & Assistive Technology Network Summit 2026 convened in Shanghai on May 13, offering a platform to showcase real-world application scenarios of breakthrough technologies. AI and robotics are rapidly advancing to make a difference with great potential in the rehabilitation sector.

Robert Riener, full professor for sensorymotor systems at ETH Zurich, pointed out that the application of such advanced technologies is playing a vital role in areas with large incidences and high numbers of new cases where rehabilitation is needed.

"Now we have large neural networks based on large databases and deep structures with more computational power, which give us huge potential (in the rehab sector). We also have a lot of data about patients that enable us to monitor their physiological data, social behavior, and sleep wake rhythms. Using AI, the data can help predict certain symptoms or diseases," he said.

He especially highlighted strokes, as they show one of the highest numbers of cases each year, making patients suffer from hemiplegia and other problems. Many Chinese robotics are used for stroke therapy and neurorehabilitation, such as rehab robots, exoskeletons and intelligent systems from Chinese robotics company Fourier.

Founded in 2015, Fourier has evolved from exoskeleton robots into a diverse portfolio of humanoid robots and intelligent rehabilitation systems. As an industry-leading proactive AI robotics company dedicated to enriching human life through full-stack robotic technologies, the company's products are serving over 2,000 institutions across 40 countries, including hospitals, communities, manufacturing and everyday environments.

Owen Teoh, managing director of Fourier rehab international division, has been working in the rehabilitation robots sector for over 15 years. He shared that in the past two years, the company has seen rapidly growing demand in its overseas markets including Europe, North America and Southeast Asia. Last year, its sales doubled compared to 2024.

"The popularity of Chinese robotics represents the rise of China's high-end manufacturing. What I have observed is that the overseas market's recognition of Chinese robotics is rapidly growing. The need for rehabilitation robots is clear, and overseas acceptance of Chinese rehabilitation robots is among the highest in the industry," said Teoh.

The development trend is shifting from single products to comprehensive solutions, from passive execution to active embodied intelligence, and from hospital settings to widespread access in community and home environments, he added.



A Fourier employee demonstrates a brain-computer interface combined with a lower-limb exoskeleton robot in Shanghai on May 13. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

40
countries
served by Fourier's products including hospitals, communities, manufacturing and everyday environments

Behind the growing demand for rehab robots, Teoh saw several key drivers, including the continuous demand spurred by global aging and rehabilitation, and the increasing application of robotics in clinical rehabilitation settings. With technological exploration made in 2025 such as embodied intelligence and rehabilitation training integration, the application of embodied intelligence technology in the health and wellness sector began to garner wider attention.

"In the rehab sector, I think that the game changing thing will come when we are able to embody intelligence in the robotics system," said Professor Jose Luis Pons, who leads a research team at Shirley Ryan AbilityLab to apply the most advanced methods for measuring and restoring lower-limb function in diverse patient populations.

He indicated that it doesn't mean building an autonomous intelligent entity or agent to interact with patients or with clinicians. Instead, it requires understanding basic principles of rehabilitation, and then to synthesize those principles by using AI techniques in robotics, so they become more intelligent but have collaborative technologies with a human expert.

"Our robots are often evaluated as a 'warm-hearted' robot. In terms of application and interaction with patients, we are better attached to the needs of both patients and therapists," Teoh said.

He further explained that, for example, when it comes to human-robot interaction, traditional robots tend to rely heavily on repetitive movements, but Fourier's game design and user experience are tailored more closely to actual needs. Additionally, featuring the company's force feedback technologies, the robot can sense the patient's muscle strength and provide corresponding assistance. This is perceived as a more human-like interaction, making it easier for them to use.

"China is among the world's leaders in robotics and its intelligent applications possess a technological foresight that other countries and regions lack ... In addition to hospitals and communities, we hope our robotics can reach households in need, to help improve their quality of life," Teoh added.



Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:51 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:51 PM

CHINA

Growth: Nation's regional cooperation highlighted

From page 1

In January and February this year, the total trade value between China and ASEAN reached 1.24 trillion yuan, growing 20.3 percent year-on-year. This robust growth was driven primarily by an increase in Chinese exports to ASEAN.

This strong momentum was sustained throughout the first quarter. From January to March, bilateral trade expanded to 1.97 trillion yuan, a year-on-year increase of 15.4 percent and representing 16.6 percent of China's total foreign trade. The key top trading partners among ASEAN members in the first quarter were Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia.

Record GDP and export growth in Malaysia and successful initiatives such as the China-Indonesia implementation of QR cross-border payments, and connectivity enhancement with Vietnam, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia, are, in large part, due to the stability of China-ASEAN relations.

Health diplomacy, energy integration, the digital economy, institutional partnerships and climate finance initiatives are transforming the region.

Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Industry Cooperation Committee Chairperson Xu Ningning has projected that total China-ASEAN bilateral trade for 2026 is expected to surpass 8 trillion yuan, representing a year-on-year growth of 5 percent to 8 percent. The steady growth in early 2026 underscores the deepening trade ties and high complementarity between China and RCEP countries.

China's resilience as the world's largest oil importer has been tested, and validated, by the spillover from Middle East conflicts.

In 2025, about 42.3 percent of China's crude oil imports were from the Middle East. However, China's deep strategic ties with Central Asian and Russian partners have created a crucial buffer. By increasing overland pipeline imports, tapping into massive State oil stockpiles, and prioritizing domestic supply over exports, China has successfully absorbed the external shock, proving that its regional cooperation is a genuine pillar of energy and supply chain security.

Moreover, on May 1, new opening-up policies such as zero tariffs on goods from African countries that have diplomatic ties with China and a loosening of export limits on refined oil products such as jet fuel came into force.

Other examples of China's stabilizing role include growing investment inflows from the Persian Gulf states. Reports also indicate the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's increasing attraction for international capital seeking market stability and sound institutional arrangements. Growth in the European Union's bilateral trade with China also continued to expand. China's deep, institutionalized cooperation with its Asian neighbors has also created new opportunities, achieving a strong first quarter in 2026 with early data pointing to sustained momentum for China and the region.

China is signaling to its global trade partners that ... economic development can best be delivered through deep cooperation and discussion, not extra-regional political coercion or economic and military threats.

Amid global turbulence and uncertainty, China has maintained strong diplomatic influence, consistent with its high ranking in the Lowy Institute's global diplomacy index. China's ability to withstand trade frictions and geopolitical conflicts is a direct result of a deliberate strategy to forge deep and mutually beneficial supply chains with Asian partners.

This economic architecture transforms regional cooperation from a simple trade zone into a powerful platform for shared growth and collective stability.

As the world transitions toward multipolarity, China has continued opening its economy, ensured a stable currency and financial markets, and green investments in global infrastructure. As such, China is signaling to its global trade partners that local, regional and global economic development can best be delivered through deep cooperation and discussion, not extra-regional political coercion or economic and military threats.

The author is the chair of the Belt and Road Capital Partners (BRCP) Geopolitical Risk Advisors, and a visiting professor at ICES - Institut Catholique de Vendee in France. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Loquat: Fruit made into wine, flowers into pastes

From page 1

"Some mornings, the trees looked as though they had been dusted with snow," Song said.

In Dongshan, farmers understand what it means to rely on the weather. During droughts, water from Taihu Lake is pumped uphill to irrigate the orchards. Hailstorms and heavy rain can scar the fruit or knock it from the trees altogether.

But after a long winter of frost, this year's loquats have grown especially plump and juicy — nature's quiet reward for patience.

Among China's many varieties of loquats, Dongshan's white jade loquat remains one of the most prized. Behind its reputation lies decades of painstaking cultivation.

Huang Jichuan, 70, from Dongshan, has worked in the orchards since he was a teenager. His family has grown loquats for generations. According to Huang, today's celebrated white jade variety can be traced back to a single exceptional tree discovered decades ago by his father, Huang Jiyu. Through years of cultivation, the variety gradually spread across Dongshan.

Producing premium loquats requires meticulous care. In spring, farmers thin fruit clusters by hand, cutting away young fruits, so that the remaining can absorb more nutrients to grow large and sweet.

The fruit may last only seconds on the palate, but the work behind it stretches across an entire year.

Around *xiao man*, Dongshan enters its busiest season. Before dawn breaks, farmers climb steep orchard slopes to begin harvesting. After hours of picking, the fruit is sorted, packed into foam trays by hand and prepared for overnight shipment across the country.

Yet despite the exhausting labor, the farmers speak about their trees with unmistakable affection.

"It's like raising children," Song said. "If the trees get sick, you treat them. If the leaves turn yellow, you nourish them. Only careful tending can bring out the best."

Beyond fresh consumption, loquats have long been woven into daily life in Dongshan. Excess fruit is preserved as syrup or transformed into loquat wine, while flowers and leaves are traditionally simmered into herbal pastes to soothe coughs.

Today, that seasonal sweetness is also inspiring chefs far beyond Jiangnan. As seasonal Chinese ingredients gain renewed attention among urban diners, loquats are also making their way onto contemporary restaurant menus.

At the Waldorf Astoria Beijing, chef Wang Chunzeng recently introduced a chilled *qingbuliang* sweet soup with fresh loquat, combining the fruit with traditional Cantonese ingredients such as Job's tears, glehnia root and red dates.

"Hot and humid summer days call for something light, gentle and refreshing," Wang said. "Fresh loquat brings natural sweetness and a soft floral note that perfectly captures the feeling of early summer."

Mass weddings



Couples dressed in traditional Chinese wedding attire take part in a mass wedding ceremony at Luogang Park in Hefei city, Anhui province, on Wednesday. The event, held simultaneously in four cities across the province, promotes traditional marriage customs while encouraging modern, simplified wedding practices. WU FANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Mainland slams Lai for hostile remarks

Continued separatist stance blamed for escalating cross-Strait tensions

By LI SHANGYI
lishangyi@chinadaily.com.cn

The Chinese mainland, on Wednesday, condemned Taiwan leader Lai Ching-te's speech marking his second anniversary in office as deceptive and confrontational, blaming his "Taiwan independence" separatist stance for escalating tensions across the Taiwan Strait.

Chen Binhua, spokesman for the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, said Lai's remarks were "filled with falsehoods and deception, hostility and confrontation". He criticized Lai for stubbornly adhering to the erroneous "Taiwan independence" stance, promoting the fallacies of so-called "sovereign independence" and "mutual non-subordination", and hyping the "mainland threat" narrative.

Chen said Lai's comments have further escalated cross-Strait tensions and confrontation, reflecting an attempt to pursue "Taiwan independence" through military means and external support, and thereby undermining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.

He said the remarks once again confirmed Lai's role as a "peace destroyer" and "crisis creator" in the Taiwan Strait.

In his speech on Wednesday morning, Lai said Taiwan's future could not be determined by "foreign forces" and should be decided solely by its 23 million people. He also claimed to promote dialogue and exchanges with the Chinese mainland under the principle of "equal dignity", while rejecting what he called "united front tactics" aimed at achieving "reunification under the guise of peace".

Chen dismissed such statements as "hypocritical", saying Lai continues to advocate "Taiwan independence" separatism and stir up anti-mainland sentiment. He accused Lai of attempting to mislead the public in Taiwan and deceive international opinion.

"These familiar tactics have been increasingly seen through by people in Taiwan," Chen said, adding that Lai's deceptive and provocative actions will inevitably face firm opposition from compatriots on both sides of the Strait and from the international community, and are destined to fail.

Chen added that the Taiwan question is a legacy issue of the Chinese civil war in the 1940s.

"No matter what form of elections have been held in Taiwan or who has been elected there since 1949, this cannot change Taiwan's status as part of China," he said, stressing that Taiwan's future can only be jointly decided by all Chinese people, including Taiwan compatriots.

He reaffirmed the unwavering resolve of all Chinese people to defend national sovereignty and territorial integrity. "We will never allow anyone or any force, under any pretext, to pursue separatist schemes for 'Taiwan independence'," Chen said.

In response to a media question on Lai's speech, Guo Jiakun, spokesman for the Foreign Ministry, said the true status quo across the Taiwan Strait is that both sides belong to one China.

Guo said moves by "Taiwan independence" separatist forces cannot change the fundamental nature of the Taiwan question as purely China's internal affair or undermine the international community's firm commitment to the one-China principle. He stressed that the historical trend toward China's national reunification is unstoppable.

Although Lai did not directly mention "Taiwan independence" in his speech, Zhu Fenglian, a spokeswoman for the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, said during a regular news briefing on Wednesday that the Democratic Progressive Party authorities have been playing word games to deceive people in Taiwan and the international community while refusing to recognize that both sides of the Taiwan Strait belong to one China.

She said only by completely abandoning the "Taiwan independence" stance, ceasing provocations aimed at seeking "independence", and returning to the political foundation of the 1992 Consensus can the DPP authorities truly safeguard peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait as well as improve and develop cross-Strait relations.



Evacuation in progress

Firefighters help evacuate flood-affected residents in Shimen county of Changde city, Hunan province, on Wednesday, after days of heavy rainfall triggered widespread flooding across the region. Authorities said 23 townships have been affected, with rescue, recovery and resettlement efforts continuing.
CHEN ZIDE / FOR CHINA DAILY

Talks: Agricultural trade to expand

From page 1

The two sides also agreed to expand two-way agricultural trade and resolve nontariff barriers and market access issues involving some agricultural products. For instance, the US pledged to address Chinese concerns including automatic detention measures targeting dairy and aquatic products, while China will advance solutions to US concerns regarding beef facility registration and poultry exports from certain US states to China, according to the ministry.

Noting that China is the world's most important agricultural market, the ministry official said that expanded US agricultural exports to China could help meet structural demand in the Chinese market, while China's vast consumer base could provide stable demand and income prospects for farmers in the US.

Zhou Mi, a senior researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, said the outcomes could play a positive role in improving market expectations. Such progress will allow both sides to better leverage their strengths in agricultural trade, bringing tangible benefits to companies and the broader market, Zhou said.

The outcomes also included aviation, a sector that has long been part of China-US commercial ties. Based on its air transport development needs, China will purchase 200 Boeing aircraft in accordance with commercial principles, while the US will ensure sufficient supplies of engines and related parts to China, the ministry said.

Zhang Yansheng, a senior economist, said: "China and the US are both too important to the world. When their relationship is good, the world benefits; when it is not, the world feels the shock."

Contact the writers at zhangchenxu@chinadaily.com.cn

Consensus on tackling maritime challenges

By ZHANG YI in Quanzhou, Fujian
zhangyi1@chinadaily.com.cn

Amid increasingly diverse regional maritime challenges, delegates from Asian coast guard agencies reached a broad consensus on strengthening multilateral law enforcement cooperation to safeguard maritime security.

The consensus was reached at the conclusion of the 22nd Heads of Asian Coast Guard Agencies Meeting Working Level Meeting on Wednesday in Quanzhou, Fujian province.

Hosted by the China Coast Guard, the four-day event brought together more than 50 foreign delegates from 18 countries and regions, as well as representatives from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre, to discuss ways to address maritime security threats.

Summarizing the meeting's achievements, Zhang Jianzhong, head of the Chinese delegation and director-general of the China Coast Guard's law enforcement department, said discussions focused on maritime security trends, search and rescue operations, and environmental protection.

All parties expressed willingness to deepen communication, enhance joint law enforcement capabilities, expand blue partnerships, and promote universal security, Zhang said.

Liu Zhixu, head of the China Coast Guard's international cooperation division, said the meeting remains the most influential multilateral maritime law enforcement cooperation mechanism in the pan-Asia-Pacific region and serves as an important platform for the China Coast Guard to participate in global and regional ocean governance.

As an active practitioner of the Global Security Initiative, the China Coast Guard advocates practical cooperation to turn regional law enforcement visions into reality, Liu said.

By hosting the event, China shared its experience in combating maritime crimes and advancing law enforcement related to marine carbon sinks, offering Chinese solutions for sustainable maritime development, he added.

Fu Yanxiao, deputy head of the China Coast Guard's criminal investigation division, said participants focused on transnational maritime risks and explored ways to establish an expert consultation mechanism.

The meeting also introduced maritime counterterrorism cooperation arrangements and invited member agencies to explore pathways for preventing and combating maritime terrorist activities, he said.

In addition to working group sessions on maritime search and rescue, environmental protection, information sharing and joint exercises, the event also facilitated a series of bilateral talks among member agencies.

Pongsak Somboon, deputy secretary-general of the Thai Maritime Enforcement Command Center, said the Thai delegation held bilateral talks with the China Coast Guard to enhance cooperation in training and law enforcement. "We share the same goal, and we want to help each other improve maritime capabilities," he said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:51 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:51 PM

WORLD

Shift in Japan's military policy raises concern

Moves reveal offensive orientation and undermine peace, experts say

By **LIU JIANQIAO**
liujianqiao@chinadaily.com.cn

Although many of Japan's recent military initiatives have been framed as keeping pace with developments in defense equipment and technology, they, in fact, reveal a growing offensive orientation in the country's security strategy, which points to a significant shift in Japan's defense policy that could undermine regional peace and stability, experts said.

Thousands of demonstrators gathered outside Japan's National Diet Building on Tuesday evening to protest against the government's efforts to weaken the country's pacifist constitution through constitutional revision and military expansion policies.

Japanese media reported on Monday that the ruling Liberal Democratic Party had drafted proposals to revise the country's three key national security documents.

The proposals reportedly call for strengthening Japan's air defense systems and sustained combat capabilities, as well as accelerating the deployment of submarines equipped with advanced propulsion systems and capable of carrying long-range missiles to enhance Japan's so-called "counterstrike capabilities".

On April 21, the Japanese government officially revised the "Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology" and related implementation guidelines to allow the export of weapons, including those with lethal capabilities, despite waves of large-scale protests, local media reported.

The revision scraps rules that limit Japan's military equipment exports to five noncombat categories, namely rescue, transport, warning, surveillance, and minesweeping.

Instead, military equipment will be divided into "weapons" and "non-weapons" categories, based on whether they have lethal or destructive capabilities, Kyodo News reported.

The revision maintains unrestricted exports of non-weapon equipment, such as warning and control radar systems, while also permitting the export of previously banned weapons, including destroyers and missiles, to countries that have signed agreements with Japan on the protection of classified defense equipment and technological information.

Under the revision, export of weapons will not require prior parliamentary approval. Instead, the National Security Council will make the decisions, with the Diet informed only after approval.

Consequently, a poll released by Kyodo News on Sunday showed that 57.2 percent of respondents opposed allowing exports of lethal weapons, while 37.1 percent supported the move.

In a similar poll conducted by NHK on May 11, 32 percent of the respondents said they were in favor of the move, 53 percent said they were against it, and 15 percent said they were undecided or gave no response.



People protest against the Japanese government's attempts to undermine the pacifist constitution through constitutional revision and military expansion policies in Tokyo, on Tuesday. ZHU CHENXI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

CROSS CURRENTS

"These measures are seen as concrete manifestations of the Japanese government's ongoing efforts to accelerate the country's remilitarization process," said Liu Shuliang, an associate researcher at the Tianjin Academy of Social Sciences.

Major step

Japan is actively advancing the development of unmanned systems and automated military infrastructure. From a technical perspective, these efforts are in line with trends in modern warfare and are intended to enhance precision-strike and long-range combat capabilities. Strategically, however, they represent another major step in Japan's accelerated "remilitarization", he said.

"This has long since gone beyond the self-imposed constraints of its pacifist constitution and the framework of an 'exclusively defense-oriented policy'," Liu said.

In essence, they reflect an attempt to use technological innovation as a vehicle to accelerate the expansion of offensive military capabilities, marking a serious departure from Japan's self-proclaimed identity as a "peace-loving nation" and the defense principles it has long emphasized, he added.

Chen Hong, director of the Asia-Pacific Studies Centre at East China Normal University in Shanghai, said the Japanese government's decision to press ahead with its "remilitarization" process despite significant domestic controversy reflects a fundamental shift in the country's security strategy.

Previous poll results have shown that a majority of the Japanese public supports a pacifist approach. However, despite public opposition, the Japanese government appears determined to continue expanding its military capabilities, a move that could push Japanese society further toward the dangers of war and conflict, he said.

Experts noted that Japan continues to actively foster "exclusive cliques" and promote bloc confrontation in the region, with arms exports serving as a key instrument in this process.

"The country is trying to make the development of unmanned combat systems a key new pillar in strengthening defense cooperation with countries such as Australia and the Philippines," Chen said.

Japan aims to deepen coordination with these partners, gain greater influence in regional security cooperation, and enhance its own operational capabilities in the Asia-Pacific region, he added.

"This move could have significant implications for the security landscape in the region," Liu said.

Xinhua contributed to this story.

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Californian farmers eye stronger China ties

By **RENA LI** in Los Angeles
renali@chinadailyusa.com

Representatives from California's agriculture and food industries are calling for greater trade stability and stronger bilateral cooperation between China and the United States, saying demand in China for high-quality agricultural and food products remains strong despite trade tensions and shifting global supply chains, with many companies continuing to view the Chinese market as a long-term strategic priority.

Lindsay Tello, senior advisor for trade policy at the Almond Board of California, said California almond exports to China have been affected by tariffs introduced during the trade dispute between the two countries, but Chinese demand for California almonds has remained "important".

"China remains an extremely important market, and we're really proud of our long partnership," Tello told China Daily.

According to Tello, the Almond Board of California has operated in China for more than 30 years and invested over $75 million in market development and research. She said California almond exports to China previously reached between $200 million and $300 million annually before the trade tensions, when China was among the industry's top export markets. By 2025, however, China had fallen from the top-five spot due to rising tariffs and shifting trade flows.

At the same time, Tello noted, overall almond consumption in China has continued to rise, reaching a record 160,000 metric tons last year.

Tello said that California's almond farming community is largely made up of multigenerational family farms that remain committed to long-term cooperation with Chinese partners.

Remaining steadfast

"We continue to remain invested and steadfast in our China engagement," she said, adding that maintaining positive relations with Chinese government agencies, importers, manufacturers and consumers remains a key priority for the industry.

Tello also said tariffs and policy certainty are essential for agricultural trade.

Despite this, Tello said California almonds continue to maintain strong competitiveness because of their quality and reputation in the Chinese market.

California's dairy industry also expressed strong interest in expanding cooperation with China.

Matt Henderson, director of international sales at California Dairies, said the company represents around 300 family-owned dairy farms and produces approximately 7.7 million tons of milk annually, exporting dairy products to more than 50 countries, including China.

Henderson, who lived in Shanghai between 2012 and 2015 and traveled extensively across China, said California Dairies had completed the certifications necessary to begin exporting milk and cream products to China.

"That is going to be an emphasis and an objective of ours here this year and moving forward," he said.

According to Henderson, growing middle-class demand in China for nutrition-focused and value-added products such as butter, cheese and cream presents major opportunities for California exporters. He said Asian markets are increasingly focused on food security, supply chain resilience, sustainability and nutrition.

"We're attempting to export nutrition," Henderson said. "In Asia, that's something they are demanding, and something that we can supply here in California."

Liu Chunxi, senior executive president of Chinese dairy producer Yili Group, said stable and predictable trade policies are essential for sustaining long-term cooperation between Chinese and US dairy companies.

Cool shower


A zoo worker gives an elephant a refreshing shower to help it cool off on a harsh sunny afternoon at the National Zoological Park in New Delhi on Tuesday. The capital and much of North India are currently witnessing an intense heat wave with temperatures having already crossed 44 C in New Delhi. SANJEEV VERMA VIA GETTY IMAGES

Samsung faces strike after pay talks with union fall apart

SEOUL — The management and union leaders at Samsung Electronics failed to reach a last-minute deal on wages on Wednesday, raising the prospect of a strike at the South Korean electronics giant that could rattle global semiconductor supplies and the country's trade-dependent economy.

Government officials have threatened to invoke rarely used emergency powers to force a settlement at Samsung, where the union representing more than 70,000 workers says the company has failed to offer adequate compensation despite its soaring profits fueled by the global boom in artificial intelligence.

After the latest round of talks ended without a breakthrough on Wednesday, union leader Choi Seung-ho told reporters that unionized workers are set to begin an 18-day strike on Thursday.

Both the union and the management held each other responsible for a failure to reach a deal. Choi accused management of refusing to accept a government-mediated proposal, the details of which he refused to disclose. The management accused the union of calling for excessive compensation packages for workers at loss-making units.

The two sides said they will continue efforts to reach a deal. The two sides met again on Wednesday afternoon at the arrangement of Labor Minister Kim Young-hoon, according to Kim's ministry.

Samsung and its crosstown rival, SK Hynix, together produce about two-thirds of the world's memory chips, which are seeing surging demand driven by AI. Samsung said its operating profit for the January-March quarter jumped eightfold to a record 57.2 trillion won ($38 billion).

Union leaders have demanded a compensation structure in which Samsung would commit to spending 15 percent of its annual operating profit on employee bonuses and scrap bonus caps, which are currently set at 50 percent of annual salaries. The company says the demands are excessive, citing the highly cyclical nature of the semiconductor business. The strike is expected to hurt operations of Samsung's production of smartphones and other consumer electronics as well, observers say.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

EU avoids tariff threats as it reaches consensus on trade deal with US

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

The European Union is finally ready to implement the trade deal it struck with the United States almost a year ago, heading off a slew of new tariffs that Washington had threatened to introduce on July 4.

The breakthrough came early on Wednesday, after five hours of talks, when EU lawmakers and member states struck a compromise among factions in the bloc that dislike the deal and factions that feel they can agree on a way forward.

The EU-US trade deal, which was agreed upon by US President Donald Trump and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in Scotland on July 27, calls for 15 percent import taxes to be levied on most imports into the US from the 27-nation bloc, while a zero percent tariff will be applied to US exports to the EU.

The deal, which many EU lawmakers saw as lopsided, has since sat in the EU Parliament awaiting implementation, while lawmakers haggled over possibly amending it. It was also held up by EU lawmakers protesting against US plans to take control of Greenland.

> "Maintaining a stable, predictable, and balanced trans-Atlantic partnership is in the interest of both sides."
>
> **Michael Damianos,** minister of energy, commerce and industry in Cyprus

Michael Damianos, minister of energy, commerce and industry in Cyprus, which holds the EU's rotating presidency, said the compromise reached on Wednesday shows the bloc "delivers on its commitments".

"Maintaining a stable, predictable, and balanced trans-Atlantic partnership is in the interest of both sides," he added.

Trump had earlier said that if the trade deal was not ratified by July 4, he would increase tariffs on EU vehicles from 15 percent to 25 percent and also bring in other "much higher" tariffs.

His introduction of tariffs, both real and threatened, especially on aluminum, steel, and auto parts, has pushed the EU to find new trading partners elsewhere. But the bloc has also been careful not to jeopardize bilateral trade with the US, its largest trading partner, which amounts to around 1.6 trillion euros ($1.9 trillion) a year.

Bernd Lange, the chair of the parliament's trade committee, helped bridge the gap between the disparate EU factions on Wednesday and said that while the EU will abandon some proposed amendments, "parliament has prevailed with its demands for a comprehensive safety net".

"There is a suspension mechanism if the US does not abide by the deal, a monitoring mechanism for (measuring) the impact on our economy, provisions for unjustified tariffs on certain products, an expiration date for the legislation, and strong involvement of the European Parliament," he said, summarizing the compromise.

Von der Leyen said it means "we will soon deliver on our part", with the EU-US trade deal set to be formally implemented soon.

"Together, we can ensure stable, predictable, balanced, and mutually beneficial trans-Atlantic trade," she added.



Moment of silence

Community members mourn victims killed a day earlier in a shooting at the Islamic Center of San Diego, California, on Tuesday. Police said a pair of gunmen, aged 17 and 18, are suspected of killing three people outside the mosque on Monday and were later found dead in a car from apparent self-inflicted gunshot wounds. Authorities said they are investigating the attack as a possible hate crime.
ZOE MEYERS / AFP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:51 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:51 PM

WORLD

Tankers pass strait as truce hopes revive

US and Iran exchange warnings over possible return to war amid fragile calm

By **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE, and **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong

Two Chinese tankers laden with oil passed through the Strait of Hormuz on Wednesday, shipping data showed, brightening hopes that the regional conflict may soon be resolved despite the warring sides continuing to trade threats.

US President Donald Trump said on Tuesday the war would be over "very quickly" while Vice-President JD Vance talked up progress in negotiations with Iran about an agreement to end hostilities.

However, Israel's Kan TV reported that the United States and Israel have completed joint preparations for a possible resumption of military operations against Iran, citing a US security official.

"We're in a pretty good spot here," Vance told reporters, hours after Trump said he had come within an hour of ordering fresh strikes and gave Tehran "two or three days" to reach an agreement.

Vance, who negotiated with Iran in failed talks in Pakistan, added that Washington was "locked and loaded" to restart military strikes if no deal is reached.

In response, Iran's army spokesman Mohammad Akraminia warned that the Islamic republic would "open new fronts against" the US if the White House resumes its attacks. Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi said the US leadership was "calling a 'threat' a 'chance for peace'".

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said early on Wednesday that Iranian forces had been confirmed as the first to down a US F-35 fighter jet, citing a US official report on aircraft combat losses.

"With lessons learned and knowledge we gained, a return to war will feature many more surprises," he said on social media.

The conflict, which began on Feb 28, has caused the worst disruptions to global energy supplies, blocking hundreds of tankers from leaving the Persian Gulf.

The two Chinese ships — among a handful of supertankers carrying Iraqi crude that have exited the gulf this month — passed through the narrow strait carrying around 4 million barrels of crude, according to data from London Stock Exchange Group and Kpler.

South Korean Foreign Minister Cho Hyun said on Wednesday that a South Korean-operated vessel carrying 2 million barrels of crude oil is also passing through the strait in coordination with Iranian authorities.

Oil prices eased on the positive signals, with the benchmark Brent crude falling to as low as $110.16 a barrel, before regaining much of its losses.

Trump had indefinitely extended the truce and made clear he wants to exit the war, which has proved to be a political liability with US people paying more at the pump and growing frustrated with the war.

> "Targeting an active educational institution during school hours constitutes a grave violation of international humanitarian law and is a clear war crime."
>
> **Esmaeil Baghaei,** spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry

The US Senate on Tuesday advanced a war powers resolution to halt the campaign unless Trump obtains congressional authorization. The move represented a distinct challenge to the Republican leader's executive authority, marking the first time the chamber voted in favor of the measure.

Despite the political significance of the vote, the resolution still needs a majority in the House of Representatives — after which it faces Trump's presidential veto — to take effect.

School attack update

Meanwhile, the US military again avoided taking responsibility for an attack on a school in Iran that killed about 170 people, mostly schoolchildren, on the first day of the war.

Brad Cooper, commander of US Central Command, told a congressional panel that the probe was "complex", claiming the school was located on an Iranian cruise missile base.

Hours after, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei described the claim as a "baseless fabrication".

"Targeting an active educational institution during school hours constitutes a grave violation of international humanitarian law and is a clear war crime," he said on X.

In another development, Russia joined other United Nations Security Council members on Tuesday to condemn an unclaimed drone strike on the United Arab Emirates' Barakah Nuclear Power Plant, which Abu Dhabi said originated from Iraq.

The drone struck a generator on Sunday near the Arab world's first nuclear power plant, triggering a fire but causing no injuries or radiation leaks. The UAE Defense Ministry said on Tuesday its air defense systems had detected six drones from Iraq over the past 48 hours.

Agencies and Xinhua contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at cuihaipei@chinadaily.com.cn

Serbian president to visit China to deepen relations

By **ZHOU JIN**
zhoujin@chinadaily.com.cn

Serbia's President Aleksandar Vucic will pay his first state visit to China starting Sunday, a five-day trip expected to deliver more tangible outcomes in building a community with a shared future for the new era between the two countries.

President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang will meet Vucic separately to exchange views on bilateral relations and regional and international issues of mutual interest, Foreign Ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said on Wednesday.

Beijing stands ready to work with Belgrade to take the visit as an opportunity to consolidate ironclad friendship, expand mutually beneficial cooperation, enrich people-to-people and cultural exchanges, and strengthen coordination on multilateral affairs, he said.

In an address to the nation on Saturday, Vucic highlighted "the exceptional honor of paying an official state visit to China", saying that "we expect a great deal from it", as reported by Russia's Tass News Agency.

Serbia, the first European country to agree with China on building a community with a shared future for the new era, is an important partner for China in Southeast Europe, Guo said.

The two presidents have maintained close interactions, he said. Xi paid a state visit to Serbia in May 2024. In September last year, Vucic attended the commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression (1931-45) and the World Anti-Fascist War in Beijing.

Under the leaders' strategic guidance, China-Serbia relations have been moving forward at a high level in recent years, Guo said.

Earlier this month, a $1.5 billion contract to build a highway in Serbia was signed by the Serbian government and Shandong Hi-Speed Group.

In 2025, their bilateral trade reached $6.49 billion, marking a 13 percent year-on-year increase, according to the Foreign Ministry.



Palestinian children prepare to fly kites inscribed with their hopes and dreams in Khan Younis, southern Gaza, on Tuesday, during an event titled "My Sky, My Kite" organized by a local charity. ABED RAHIM KHATIB VIA GETTY IMAGES

Israel intercepts Gaza-bound flotilla, detains over 400

JERUSALEM — Israel said on Tuesday it had intercepted all boats in a Gaza-bound aid flotilla, detaining hundreds of activists and transporting them to Israel.

Organizers of the Global Sumud Flotilla said all boats in their humanitarian convoy were intercepted after Israeli naval vessels surrounded them in international waters, about 250 nautical miles from the coast of Gaza.

Israel began intercepting the ships on Monday morning.

Around midnight on Tuesday, the Israeli Foreign Ministry said all 430 activists "have been transferred to Israeli vessels and are making their way to Israel", adding that they would be allowed to meet their consular representatives.

Video from the flotilla's livestream showed Israeli soldiers firing shots at two of the boats. The type of ammunition fired was not clear.

"At no point was live ammunition fired," the Israeli Foreign Ministry said. "Following multiple warnings, nonlethal means were employed toward the vessels — not toward protesters — as a warning."

The ministry said Israel would not allow any breach of what it called the "lawful" naval blockade of Gaza. It described the flotilla as "a PR stunt at the service of Hamas".

Israeli rights group Adalah said on Wednesday that the activists had been "detained at Ashdod port" and "taken into Israel against their will as Adalah attorneys enter for legal consultations".

The flotilla's organizers said the activists would be taken to Ketziot prison in Israel's southern Negev desert.

On Wednesday, Israel's National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir posted a video on X showing detained activists kneeling with their hands tied behind their backs and foreheads on the ground. The post was captioned "Welcome to Israel".

Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni slammed the treatment of activists as "unacceptable".

"It is intolerable that these protesters, among whom there are many Italian citizens, are subjected to this treatment, which violates human dignity," Meloni said, calling for the immediate release of any detained Italian citizens and demanding an apology from Israel.

The flotilla set sail from Turkiye's Marmaris coast on May 14 in a third attempt to break the blockade and deliver aid to Palestinians in the war-devastated enclave.

Turkiye and Spain have condemned the interception.

A previous flotilla, comprising about 20 boats and 175 activists, was intercepted by Israeli forces on April 30 near the southern Greek island of Crete.

Two of the activists were detained for days before being released. Dozens of activists said they were mistreated, abused and beaten by Israeli forces.

XINHUA—AGENCIES

Dialogue only right path forward in Mideast: Envoy

By **MINLU ZHANG**
at the United Nations
minluzhang@chinadailyusa.com

China's ambassador to the United Nations briefed the Security Council on Tuesday to voice concerns over the situation in the Middle East and called for joint efforts to restore stability in the region at an early date.

Fu Cong, China's permanent representative to the UN, made the remarks while commenting on a Sunday drone attack on facilities at the Barakah Nuclear Power Plant in the United Arab Emirates. Although the incident did not cause any casualties or affect radiation safety levels, this "dangerous and irresponsible act" has sounded the alarm for the international community, he said.

China expresses great concern over the incident, opposes armed attacks on nuclear facilities for peaceful purposes, and calls on all parties to abide by international law, including the Convention on Nuclear Safety, and to effectively safeguard the safety and security of nuclear power plants, Fu said.

The sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of countries in the Middle East and the Gulf must be fully respected, and civilians and nonmilitary objects should be protected, he said.

As long as the armed conflict continues, the safety risks it poses to regional nuclear facilities will persist, he said.

The war originated from the illegal military attacks by the United States and Israel against Iran, Fu said. Since its outbreak, the conflict has inflicted severe losses on the people across the region, severely disrupted global economic development and harmed the shared interests of the international community.

"This war should never have happened in the first place. To find an early way to resolve the situation is in the interest of not only the US and Iran, but also regional countries and the rest of the world," Fu said.

"I wish to make three points," he said. First, there is a strong call for cessation of hostilities, and any resumption of fighting must be avoided. For some time now, the US and Iran have, on the whole, maintained a ceasefire, but the risk of escalation remains.

"At this critical stage between war and peace, all parties must exercise maximum restraint, uphold the ceasefire arrangements, refrain from irresponsible threatening rhetoric and military adventurism, and make efforts to prevent a relapse into conflict and further escalation of tensions," he said.

Second, military means offer no way out, and dialogue and negotiation are the only right path forward. The recent US-Iran truce and efforts to explore resolving issues through negotiation are welcomed by regional countries and the international community.



The Barakah Nuclear Power Plant sits in the western desert of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. ARUN GIRIJA VIA AP

Political solution

"China encourages both sides to stay committed to a political solution and to continue settling their differences and disputes through negotiation, including on the nuclear issue, with a view to reaching a solution that accommodates the concerns of all parties," Fu said.

China commends Pakistan for its mediation efforts and supports all parties in reaching a comprehensive and lasting ceasefire as soon as possible, he added.

Third, priority should be given to solving pressing issues and preventing the spread of negative effects. "The situation in the Strait of Hormuz is a demonstration of the spillover of the conflict," Fu said.

"Disruptions to this vital shipping lane have severely affected global supply chains, international trade order and energy security, with countries of the Global South bearing significant livelihood costs," he said.

China calls for reopening the strait as soon as possible on the basis of a continued ceasefire, Fu said.

Since the outbreak of the conflict, China has been actively working to end hostilities and promote peace, he said. China will continue to work with the international community to play a constructive role in bringing an early end to hostilities and restoring peace and development in the Middle East, he added.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1831

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:51 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:51 PM

LIFE



Mountains teeming with tea

A county in Southwest China is boosting economy and the beverage's industry, leading to innovation and tourism opportunities, **Yang Feiyue** reports in Mabian, Sichuan.

The drive from Southwest China's Sichuan province's Mabian county seat to Baixiang village is a test of one's limit for car sickness, full of sharp turns that wind upward for 11 kilometers. But roll the car windows down and everything is worth it: the sweet air permeated by the terraced tea bushes following the mountain's contours like the whorls of a giant fingerprint.

Before you lies 1,600 *mu* (107 hectares) of contiguous tea gardens, cascading down from 1,100 to 1,400 meters. Tea pickers dot the hillside, bamboo baskets on their backs, hands fluttering across the leafy surface to pinch off the most prized early spring buds in late March.

"Our tea garden sits at a high altitude, so the tea is just starting to sprout," says He Yingjun, who presides over the sprawling plantation.

"With the big temperature swing between day and night, the tea accumulates more beneficial compounds. The secret to good Mabian tea is right here," he says as he pinches a plump bud.

Four decades ago, this was a barren hillside without so much as a path. Then his father began planting. Today, it has become a calling card for the tea industry in the Mabian Yi autonomous county, and a lifeline for the people who live here.

His father did not start from nothing. Historical accounts show tea has been grown on these mountains for almost 2,000 years, since the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220). Nestled in the Xiaoliangshan Mountains, home to the Yi ethnic group, Mabian was a key node on the ancient tea-horse route, where people of the Yi and Han ethnic groups lived side by side, trading tea for horses.

In the early 1980s, as China's reform and opening-up gained momentum and market demand for tea outweighed supply, He's father contracted a 70-*mu* collective tea garden in his hometown. He spent more than a decade learning from local tea masters.

They traveled far and wide together, even going to the provincial capital Chengdu to meet clients from abroad, He says.

"His mentor treated him well and took him everywhere," He adds. When the tea master passed away in the 1990s, his father inherited both his mentor's business connections and approach to tea cultivation.

The family's full commitment to tea came in 2006, when He's father set his sights on the barren hillside in Baixiang village.

"There was nothing — no road, no electricity, just wasteland," He recalls. The choice was simple, because it was only 11 km from the county seat, meeting the "half-hour rule" for tea processing. Fresh leaves must reach the factory within 30 minutes after picking. If they sit longer, they begin to heat up and ferment in unwanted ways, turning the bright green leaves dull and muddying the flavor, He explains.

"You then lose the freshness. Once that happens, no amount of skill or processing in the factory can bring it back," he adds.

When He was discharged from military service in 2008, he returned to Mabian. "My father was getting older, and someone had to carry on," he says.

He now manages the tea plantation and production. His father, with a knack for distinguishing Mabian tea from any other, oversees quality. Over the years, the family has witnessed the transformation of Mabian tea from backyard production to modern plantations.

Today, their family business employs 30 to 40 people year-round. During peak harvest, they have 400 to 500 pickers, and pay over 2 million yuan ($294,286) in wages annually.

In 2020, Mabian was designated "the home of Yi tea" by the China International Tea Culture Institute, and the Yi tea brand was formally established.

Five incomes, one leaf

In Mabian, growing tea pays dividends in more ways than one.

Li Min, a local official with rural affairs, points out that a farming family can earn five separate incomes from working on a tea plantation — renting land, selling fresh leaves, wages from labor-intensive work, collective village dividends, and tourism spillover from neighborhood homestays, where tourists buy directly from farmers and some villagers find work.



Top: A tea-picking celebration is staged at a tea plantation in Baixiang village of Sichuan province's Mabian county in late March. **Above:** Tea workers pick off fresh tea leaves at Xiangyang tea garden in Mabian. **Below:** The tiered tea plantation landscape and neighboring spring flowers form a picture at Mabian, attracting visitors from far and wide. PHOTOS BY HE WEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

"A family of four, including grandparents in their 60s and 70s, can pick tea and earn 800 or 900 yuan a day," He says. "That's better than leaving town to work, and they can look after the children and pick them up from school."

Across the county, about 80,000 people are directly or indirectly employed in the tea industry, with per capita fresh-leaf income of about 6,000 yuan, according to local authorities.

"One leaf enriches one people," says Like Haomao, deputy head of Mabian, adding that the tea industry truly plays a leading role in increasing farmers' income.

However, the major bottleneck constraining local tea development is the lack of market recognition.



"Our tea output in Sichuan is very high, but our brands are not much," He says bluntly, adding that a large part of Mabian tea is sold as raw material or processed leaves to brand owners in other provinces.

Additionally, the underutilization of summer-autumn tea has traditionally been the county's weak spot. After the spring harvest, many gardens are left fallow.

Summer heat speeds up the tea plant's growth, producing leaves that are larger, tougher and higher in bitter compounds, He explains.

The resulting tea is more astringent and fetches lower prices, making it hardly worth the labor to pick, he adds.

Breaking new ground

Local officials say the county is now tackling the problem head-on and has been exploring new avenues in recent years.

"We've brought in a company from Hubei province to produce matcha, and we're collaborating with Anhui Agricultural University to develop mellow yellow tea, constantly innovating summer-autumn tea processing," Like Haomao says.

He Yingjun is also experimenting. On part of his plantation, shade nets have been installed to produce the raw material for matcha.

"We signed a contract with a major tea company, producing tea to their standards. If summer-autumn tea is done right, it could account for half our income," he anticipates.

He has already seen summer-autumn tea prices rising. New processing techniques have opened new markets hungry for the raw material to make novel tea drinks or functional extracts.

Beyond the product innovation conducted by tea planters like He, Mabian is also pushing tea tourism.

Kashasha Homestay is the flagship project, consisting of 10 Yi-style courtyards scattered across the tea hills of Fulai village, about an hour's drive from He's tea plantation.

Open the window, and you look out over a sea of clouds and tea fields. The only sounds are the wind and the birds. Rooms are not cheap, but during peak season, they are hard to come by.

"Kashasha Homestay relies entirely on the tea gardens. Without the tea gardens, that place would be barren. There wouldn't be much to see," Like Haomao says.

In 2025, the county's tea-tourism integration project attracted about 45,000 visitors and generated 32 million yuan in revenue, according to local authorities.

Standing in the Baixiang village tea garden, He Yingjun points to a construction site in the distance.

"That's our new factory. Once it's completed, we won't sell any fresh leaves. We'll process everything ourselves and pay taxes here," he says.

The new factory will give him control over the entire process, from fresh leaf to finished product. It will also allow him to experiment with new processing methods without relying on outside facilities. Whether that solves the brand problem, he does not know.

"You do it because you're in it, and you can't just stop," he says.

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese humanoid robots ready to work in Central, Eastern Europe





Left: A drone photo taken on May 2 shows robots performing at a park during the May Day holiday in Wuzhou city, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region. **Right:** An intelligent traffic management robot makes a "heart" gesture for pedestrians at an intersection in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, on May 11. PHOTOS BY HE HUAWEN AND HUANG ZONGZHI / XINHUA

WARSAW — The steady hum of robotic arms filled the exhibition hall as automated welding machines from FAIRINO operated with precise movements. Nearby, visitors gathered around a humanoid robot made by Unitree Robotics, taking photos as it greeted them with animated gestures.

Many of the robots attracting visitors are made by these Chinese firms and others participating in the International Trade Fair for Industrial Automation and Robotics held in Warsaw in mid-May.

At the booth of Polish company Positive Machines, logistics robots moved smoothly between simulated warehouse shelves, demonstrating cargo handling and transport functions. Product manager Michal Zdrada says his company primarily purchases logistics and transportation robots from China and has sold more than 500 units to date.

According to him, Chinese-made robots stand out for their cost-effectiveness, with comparable products from Poland or Germany often priced three to four times higher.

Also opting for Chinese-made robotics products, Polish company ELTRON showcased industrial robotic arms produced by FAIRINO. The machines are used for tasks such as welding, laser marking, and industrial safety inspection.

ELTRON's regional sales manager, Jacek Slusarek, says the company chose the Chinese brand for its competitive pricing and reliable quality. He says the robotic arms have already received positive feedback after entering the market, prompting continued cooperation.

A large share of exhibitors at the fair are using Chinese robotic products. Among them, the Polish company Tech4Business showcased China-made floor-cleaning, food-delivery and humanoid robots, attracting crowds of visitors. Project manager Piotr Kozynacki says the company's founding team has spent nearly 15 years working in cleaning services before establishing Tech4Business last year.

After extensive market research and supplier screening, the company selected Chinese brands including AgiBot, KEENON Robotics and Lens Technology. "These were simply the best solutions we found," Kozynacki says.

He notes Chinese manufacturers often adopt suggestions and customize products based on local customers' feedback. "That is something we are very satisfied with when working with Chinese companies," he says.

According to Tech4Business, given China's rapid development in the robotics industry, the company is seeking cooperation with more Chinese robotics suppliers, while European firms are competing to become distributors of Chinese robotics brands.

The appeal of and faith in Chinese automation technology has extended beyond Poland.

Czech-headquartered ITS-AIM discusses its cooperation with Jiangsu Bozhiwang Automation Equipment Co in the trade of industrial automation and wire-processing equipment in Central and Eastern Europe. Co-founder Szymon Kohut says Chinese firms possess clear manufacturing and cost advantages in the wire-harness automation sector, which enables them to focus on Asia-Europe trade.

Dariusz Plewik, regional sales manager of the German company Beckhoff Automation, describes Chinese robotics manufacturers as increasingly influential players in the global market.

Noting that he has observed Chinese robotics companies' significant presence at the recent Hannover Messe, Plewik says China is one of Beckhoff Automation's key markets, accounting for nearly 10 percent of its total sales, with sales in China rising by about 10 percent from 2024 to 2025.

"China's industrial and robotics industries are developing at a pace that cannot be ignored," he says.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:51 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:51 PM

SPORTS

SOCCER

A FINAL COUNTDOWN

China sets up title showdown with Japan at the AFC U17 Asian Cup, while securing its spot at November's World Cup in Qatar



China defeated Australia 2-0 in the semifinals of the 2026 AFC U17 Asian Cup in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on Tuesday, reaching the final for the first time in 22 years. **Below left:** Substitute Xie Jin celebrates scoring China's second goal in stoppage time on Tuesday. XINHUA

By SUN XIAOCHEN
sunxiaochen@chinadaily.com.cn

China's youth soccer revival has netted another morale boost, with its men's under-17 squad's unexpected Asian Cup final run relieving fans, at least for now, from the disappointment of having no home side to root for at the upcoming FIFA World Cup.

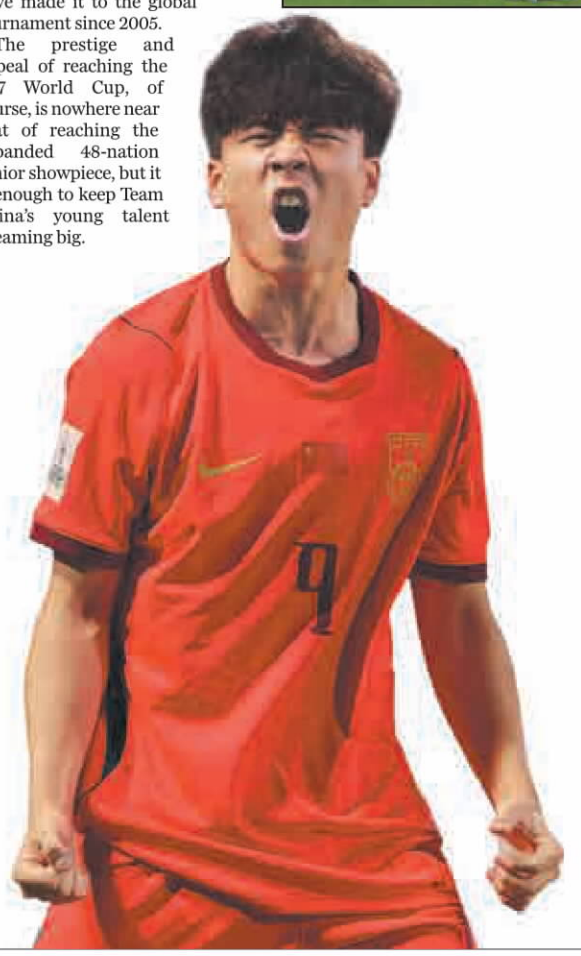
As the whole world prepares to tune in the marquee tournament next month, Chinese fans will have to watch on as bystanders again, but not before enjoying a Cup final relevant to their team's future ambitions, thanks to China's recent breakout performance at the AFC U17 Asian Cup in Saudi Arabia.

They will also have a World Cup of their own to look forward to at the end of the year.

The Chinese U17 squad, arriving in Jeddah only eyeing the knockout stage as a marker of success, has pulled off one of the most inspiring turnarounds on the continental stage in recent years after stunning Australia 2-0 on Tuesday to reach the tournament final for the first time in 22 years — all the way from the brink of elimination in the group stage.

The team's deeper-than-expected run, which culminates with a title showdown against powerhouse Japan on Friday, has also helped secure its berth at the FIFA U17 World Cup, to be held in Qatar from Nov 20-Dec 14, marking the first time the Chinese men's U17s have made it to the global tournament since 2005.

The prestige and appeal of reaching the U17 World Cup, of course, is nowhere near that of reaching the expanded 48-nation senior showpiece, but it is enough to keep Team China's young talent dreaming big.



"My dream is to play in the FIFA World Cup. I want to keep improving every day, work hard and continue challenging myself against the best players in the world," forward Shuai Weihao, who scored the critical opening goal against Australia, said after the semifinal at the King Abdullah Sports City Stadium.

"I don't think there was a big difference between the two teams. Maybe, we just showed a bit more fight and determination than our opponents," the 17-year-old Sichuan province native said of the result, which came as a shock to many.

"We've proved that we can compete with the best in Asia at this level, so why not keep going and see what we can do in the final."

In a fine example of the team's high-pressing, quick counterattacking style of play, China's captain Zhou Yunuo dispossessed Aussie midfielder Oliver O'Carroll and threaded the ball to Shuai, who completed his bursting run down the middle with an easy finish that broke the deadlock five minutes into the second half.

Chinese substitute Xie Jin put the result beyond any doubt in the first minute of stoppage time, when he pounced on a loose ball inside the box, sealing the deserved win with a close-range strike and sending the vocal Chinese supporters into raptures in the stands.



China's Shuai Weihao (second from left) slots the ball past diving Australian keeper Charlie Wilson-Papps to score the opening goal of the AFC U17 Asian Cup semifinal on Tuesday. XINHUA

"We didn't expect that we would be here before the tournament, to be honest," said Zhou. "We will allow ourselves to celebrate tonight, and then we will move on to prepare for the final with our utmost focus."

It's the second time in just four months that a Chinese squad has fought its way into a continental youth final, following the men's U23 team's final-match appearance, also against Japan, at its respective Asian Cup in the same Saudi city.

China's U23 squad was thrashed 4-0 by Japan in that final, played at the same stadium on Jan 24, signing off its Saudi campaign with a sobering reminder of the task that lies ahead.

The U17 unit, however, has a bigger advantage this time around, with Japanese coach Bin Ukishima barking instructions from the Chinese dugout.

Ukishima, who took over the reins of the Chinese junior program in 2024, attributed his team's breakthrough to its collective focus and resilience.

"Soccer is always about the team. Whether we score or defend, everyone is involved. I don't see it as an individual performance above the group," the 58-year-old former J-League player and coach said.

After opening its tournament with two straight round-robin losses to Indonesia (0-1) and Japan (1-2) in Group B, Team China stayed mentally strong and dug itself out of the mire with a crucial 2-0 win against Qatar in its final group fixture to edge out the Gulf nation and advance into the knockout phase.

A solid 3-1 effort over the host Saudis in the quarterfinals boosted Team China's confidence, while rekindling long-suffering Chinese fans' hopes for their national program's future.

The young squad is drawing huge attention from the nation's soccer community, where long-term commitment to youth cultivation is the consensus when it comes to figuring out how to turn around the fortunes of the underachieving senior side.

"Having twice reached a continental youth final in the first half of 2026, and to challenge Japan again, good job Team China! It's time, perhaps, for a turn of fortunes," veteran soccer journalist Ma Dexing with Titan Sports posted on Weibo.

Ukishima agrees. "We have done our research on this Japanese team after losing to them in the group, and we understand their weakness and strengths," he said. "I have my notes prepared to give our players when facing them again.

"Although I am Japanese, I am Team China's coach now. I will fight on my team's side with my best effort (to ensure the win)."

Cherries bomb City's title bid, handing Arsenal first Premiership crown in 22 years

Arsenal's decades-long wait is over.

Mikel Arteta's team was crowned Premier League champion for the first time since 2004 on Tuesday after Manchester City drew 1-1 with Bournemouth.

"I told you all. it's done," Arsenal midfielder Declan Rice posted on social media with a photo of him and his teammates celebrating.

The result put an end to what might be Pep Guardiola's final title challenge with City, after the decorated manager didn't dismiss reports he was set to leave the club at the end of the season.

City needed to win at Bournemouth to take it down to the final game of the campaign on Sunday, but the draw left Arsenal with an unassailable four-point lead at the top, ending its 22-year wait for the title.

Arsenal fans celebrated wildly outside the Emirates Stadium, setting off flares and partying in the street. There were celebrations at the club's training ground, too, where the players had gathered to watch the match.

City threatened another twist in an engrossing title race when Erling Haaland scored in stoppage time to equalize, neutralizing Junior Kroupi's first-half strike, but it was too late to find a winner.

Arteta's players can now stand alongside club icons Thierry Henry, Dennis Bergkamp and Ian Wright, who previously reached the summit of English soccer. And Arsenal's current class could yet break new ground by winning the Champions League for the first time in its history later this month.

Thoughts of the May 30 final against defending champion Paris Saint-Germain can be put on the back burner for now.

Now is a time for celebration and relief for Arteta, after finishing runner-up in the league three years in a row.

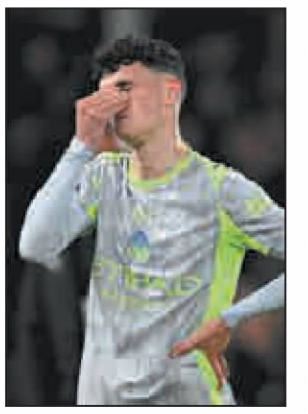
In back-to-back seasons in 2023 and '24, he watched as Guardiola's City chased down Arsenal's lead to be crowned champion.

Another chance was missed last year, when the Gunners finished second to Liverpool.

Once again, Arsenal has led the way for most of this campaign and, despite seeing its points advantage ebb away during a gripping run-in, it has finally managed to get over the line.

Arsenal's last championship-winning side was the so-called "Invincibles" team of 2004, which went an entire campaign without losing in the league.





Arsenal fans celebrate winning the league title for the first time in 22 years, while a dejected Phil Foden rues Manchester City's missed title opportunity after Tuesday's draw with Bournemouth. AP / REUTERS

Since then, it has seen Chelsea, Manchester United, City, Leicester and Liverpool all take the title. This is the first time since 2017 that a team other than City or Liverpool has been crowned champion.

It is Arsenal's 14th title, and Arteta will hope it is the beginning of a new era of dominance.

He has finally got the better of Guardiola, to whom he was once an assistant at City.

The Spaniard took over at Arsenal in December 2019 — his first role as a manager. After winning the FA Cup in that first season, it has been a frustrating wait for more honors. Even still, at 44 he is the second-youngest coach after Jose Mourinho to win the Premier League.

While his team has not maintained the attractive playing style of former manager Arsene Wenger, it has powered its way to the title with the best defense in the league and earned a reputation as a specialist for set-piece goals.

Time will tell if Arteta adopts a more expansive style in the future, more in-keeping with Guardiola's City.

How City will look going forward is a bigger question, with Enzo Maresca widely considered the front-runner to replace Guardiola.

The future of City's greatest manager overshadowed the buildup to the game. "I should talk with my chairman first," Guardiola said.

"After that, when I talk with my chairman, we will decide. We will talk in the coming days."

He was aiming to win a seventh English title and a second domestic treble after winning the League Cup and FA Cup this term, but Kroupi's curling shot in the 39th minute left City with a mountain to climb.

Bournemouth wasted further chances to extend its lead, and Haaland ensured a tense finish for Arsenal fans when he leveled in the fifth minute of added time.

Ultimately, it wasn't enough and Guardiola has gone two years without winning a league title for the first time in his coaching career.

Relegation battle

The title fight might be done, but the relegation battle will go down to the final day, after Chelsea beat Tottenham 2-1. Spurs are two points ahead of West Ham, which is in the final relegation spot.

West Ham needs to beat Leeds on Sunday to have any chance of leapfrogging Tottenham and escaping the drop zone.

Tottenham hosts Everton, and a win would guarantee safety, though a draw would likely be enough thanks to its superior goal difference.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:51 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:53 PM

Cultural bridge
African nations display rich heritage in Beijing
GLOBAL LENS, PAGE 4



Stable Sino-US military ties sought at forum
TOP NEWS, PAGE 3



Grateful journey
Descendants of WWII survivors visit China to honor rescuers
LIFE, PAGE 15

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 MONDAY, JUNE 1, 2026



Students interact with a bionic robotic hand at the second Shandong Provincial Science and Innovation Education Conference for Primary and Secondary Schools in Jinan, Shandong province, on Saturday, ahead of International Children's Day on Monday. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

XI'S VISION | CARE FOR CHILDREN

Children's growth a priority for Xi

President has consistently emphasized that they represent hope of the Chinese nation

By **JI HAISHENG**
jihaisheng@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping has called on student docents at the memorials of the birthplaces of the Communist Party of China in Shanghai and Zhejiang province to carry the baton of history forward on the new journey, as he extended festive greetings to children nationwide.

Xi, who is also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, made the remarks in a reply letter, dated Saturday, two days ahead of International Children's Day, which falls on Monday.

The Young Pioneers recently penned a letter to Xi, sharing what they had learned and gained while volunteering as guides at the Memorial Hall of the First National Congress of the CPC in Shanghai, and the Nanhu Revolutionary Memorial Museum in Jiaxing, Zhejiang.

In the reply, Xi said he was pleased to learn that the students had fostered a deep affection for the Party, the country and socialism by recounting the Party's history, revolutionary stories and heroic deeds.

Noting that this year marks the 105th anniversary of the CPC and the Party's cause calls for unremitting efforts across generations, Xi encouraged the students to follow the Party's lead, carry forward the revolutionary legacy, enhance their knowledge and skills, and build their will and character.

The reply letter once again showed that the growth of children is always a priority for Xi, who has consistently emphasized that children represent the future of the country and the hope of the Chinese nation.

Despite his tight schedule, Xi has always made time for children. This commitment was evident as early as on Children's Day in 2013, when he first extended festive greetings to youngsters across the nation "as an older friend".

Since then, he has engaged with children in various ways, such as presenting plush toys to children at a welfare home in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region and accepting candy from youngsters in Liaoning province, wishing that their lives be as sweet as the treats.

Through such genuine interactions, Xi has become not only a caring friend to children, but also the kind and approachable one they warmly call "Grandpa Xi".

For 14 consecutive years, Xi has participated in voluntary tree-planting activities with students in Beijing. To him, these events are not only an occasion to work alongside children — digging pits and watering saplings — but also an opportunity to communicate with them and express hope that the children will grow big and strong, just like the young trees they plant together.

"President Xi has often used the metaphor of 'saplings' to describe children and referred to adolescence as a 'jointing and booting period', drawing a clear parallel between the growth cycle of trees and plants and the cultivation of talent," said Liu Jia, an associate professor at Beihang University's School of Marxism in Beijing.

See ***Children,*** *page 3*

Moderating PMI reinforces calls to shore up demand

By **ZHANG CHENXU**
zhangchenxu@chinadaily.com.cn

China's factory activity moderated slightly in May, with the official purchasing managers' index holding at the determining point between contraction and expansion after two straight months of growth, reinforcing analysts' calls for more targeted policy support to shore up domestic demand and sustain growth momentum.

With some countercyclical measures already in place and ample policy space still available, the world's second-largest economy remains well-positioned to consolidate the recovery as midyear approaches, analysts said.

The assessment came as data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed on Sunday that China's PMI for the manufacturing sector in May stood at 50.0 — the threshold between expansion and contraction — despite edging down 0.3 percentage point from April.

According to Wang Qing, chief macroeconomic analyst at Orient Golden Credit Rating International, the marginal pullback was mainly driven by softer market demand during the month.

The subindex for production stood at 51.2 in May, easing 0.3 percentage point from April but remaining above the 50-point mark, while the new orders gauge edged down 0.7 percentage point to 49.9, suggesting some moderation in market demand, the NBS said.

Wang said the gap between production and new orders remained notable in May, as earlier export resilience helped to support factory output while domestic demand remained in recovery mode. "This points to a continued imbalance between external and domestic demand," he added.

Beneath the headline moderation, new growth drivers continued to gather strength. High-tech manufacturing, for instance, posted a PMI reading of 52.9 in May, while equipment manufacturing recorded a PMI of 52.1, both outperforming the overall manufacturing sector, the NBS reported.

Huo Lihui, a statistician with the bureau, said the PMI for high-tech manufacturing, in particular, had remained above the threshold line for 16 consecutive months, highlighting the increasingly prominent role of new growth drivers as related industries maintained sound growth momentum.

Wen Tao, an analyst at the China Logistics Information Center, said the strength of such sectors was partly supported by resilient external demand, as the rapid development of artificial intelligence continued to inject momentum.

However, Wang from Orient Golden Credit Rating International warned that export resilience could face more tests in the coming months, as the prolonged conflict in the Middle East weighs on global growth and adds to external uncertainties.

To better cushion such headwinds in the second half of the year, Wang said that macro policies may introduce additional support in due course to boost household consumption, accelerate infrastructure investment and stabilize the real estate market. "There is still ample policy room in these areas," he said.

Looking ahead, manufacturing activity is likely to improve modestly in June, with the sector expected to remain in mild expansion, said Wen from the China Logistics Information Center.

Analysts said the latest data suggested that some structural divergence remained. New growth drivers continued to support factory output while domestic demand required further strengthening, underscoring the need to unlock consumption potential as a key growth driver.

Mao Zhenhua, chief economist at China Chengxin International Credit Rating Co, said that pressure remains on small and medium-sized enterprises and household consumption. "Policymakers should make stronger efforts to expand domestic demand, and further unleash the potential of private investment and household consumption," Mao added.

Zhang Bin, deputy director of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of World Economics and Politics, called for "stronger countercyclical policy support".

He said that fiscal policy should ensure that public spending grows faster than nominal gross domestic product, while monetary policy should focus on lowering real interest rates to send stronger signals for investment and home purchases, thereby activating endogenous growth momentum.



INSIDE
At the top of the game
Global Views, page 8

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

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN

China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

Global prosperity matters more than ever today

WORLD WATCH
By Dominic Lee

Walking into the third edition of the Global Prosperity Summit, which was held from May 19 to 21 in China's Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, I was struck not by the grandeur of the setting or the caliber of the names on the speaker list, but by something quieter: the sound of conversation.

Diplomats from China were exchanging cards with European executives. Shanghai think-tank scholars were debating Malaysian strategists. United States investors were leaning in to hear a Hong Kong banker explain the offshore renminbi market.

In an age when the world's great capitals increasingly seem to be talking past one another, here was a room in which they were, at last, talking to one another. That, more than any communique, is the measure of what Hong Kong is and what it can yet become.

The event, jointly convened by the Savantas Policy Institute, the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies and the European Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong, has matured remarkably since its inception in 2024. This year's gathering opened with a keynote speech from Han Zhiqiang, vice-president of the China Public Diplomacy Association, who offered forward-looking insights into the China-proposed Global Governance Initiative. He noted that the international landscape is beset by mounting instability and uncertainty, unilateralism and protectionism are on the rise, geopolitical conflicts continue to flare up, and development gaps are widening. These developments, he said, have made reform of global governance an urgent task for all peoples.

Few would disagree with the diagnosis. The harder question is where the work of repair can credibly begin. And here, Hong Kong's case is not merely rhetorical but structural.

Consider the substance. Under the "one country, two systems" principle, with the staunch support of the central government, Hong Kong's role as an international financial center has continued to develop, its status steadily reinforced and elevated — which is why the country chose this city to host the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Finance Ministers' Meeting in October. This is not a ceremonial honor. Heads of finance departments of APEC member economies and representatives of international organizations will gather in Hong Kong, experiencing firsthand the city's advantages of enjoying the strong support of the motherland while being closely connected to the world. Furthermore, in November, leaders themselves will convene in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, for the 33rd APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting. Together, these two events will form the most significant diplomatic moment of the year in Asia.

That sequencing — Hong Kong before Shenzhen, finance before leaders — is not an accident of the calendar. It reflects a sophisticated thinking that, in a fractured world, China's southern coast can serve as the most credible meeting ground available.

See ***HK,*** *page 3*



People watch the launch of a Long March 12 carrier rocket at the Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site in Hainan province on Jan 19. LUO YUNFEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

ROCKET CHASING: FROM RARE SPECTACLE TO LIFESTYLE PASSION

Space tourism blends tech, travel and leisure at Wenchang launch site in Hainan

By **CHEN BOWEN**
in Wenchang, Hainan
chenbowen@chinadaily.com.cn

It was close to midnight on Tuesday when British travel blogger John Michael Chapman, 48, scanned the Wenchang Yaoguang rocket launch observation deck in Wenchang, Hainan province, scouting for the perfect spot. He took selfies and videos with his phone and sent them to his son back home while waiting for "the moment".

Minutes later, at 12:16 am on Wednesday, a modified Long March 7 carrier rocket, carrying a new communication technology test satellite, blasted off from the Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site and tore through the night sky, its tail flame turning darkness into daylight. The ground shook. The crowd erupted in cheers.

For most people, the idea of a perfect tropical getaway conjures up images of sandy beaches and swaying palms. But for Chapman and thousands of others like him, Wenchang's seaside offers a different thrill: watching a rocket take to the sky with an earsplitting roar.

"I am a 48-year-old man, and I feel like a little boy at the moment," Chapman said after watching the rocket launch. "My son, everyone's sons and daughters, we all dream of space travel. It's this magical thing."

See ***Wenchang,*** *page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:53 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:53 PM

INDEPTH



Changsha rappers (from left) "D-Shine" Sheng Yu, "Key. L" Liu Cong and "Kungfu-Pen" Shi Yifan form C-Block, one of the most popular rap groups in China. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY





Left: Rapper Xia Zhiyu(left) from Sichuan province and musician Jin Yuhan, or Dizkar, from Yunnan province, perform on stage during the *Everybody loves hip-hop* tour. **Right:** Shi Yifan stands at the railway station in Changsha, Hunan province. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Above: Liu Liangji (center), or Mr. weezy, and other rappers from the Wu dialect region in the Yangtze River Delta, shoot a music video in Shanghai in 2019. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Right: Ye Runze, or Ranzer, blends diverse Hunan cultures with international elements in his music. His hit *Hometown, Wind* impressed millions of people on TV shows in 2025. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Nation's fading tongues find voice in rap revival

Dialects featured in hip-hop promote understanding of cultures, customs

By WANG XIN in Shanghai
wangxin2@chinadaily.com.cn

At the recent Space Romance music festival in Chengdu, Sichuan province, thousands of fans enthusiastically rapped along in the Changsha dialect to one act, even though most cannot understand the language.

On stage, C-Block from Changsha, Hunan province, was rocking the audience with their distinctive dialect rap during the festival, which took place on May 2-3.

But C-Block are far from alone in remapping rap's language boundaries. In recent years, dialect rap has become increasingly popular in China's booming hip-hop scene, driving a growing number of rappers to dive deep into their cultural roots and explore their identities, in the process connecting with fans nationwide and across the world.

According to a list compiled by the popular online music critic, New Music Industry Observer, seven out of the 10 most acclaimed rap albums in China last year used local dialects, emanating from Sichuan, Shandong, Henan and Hubei provinces, as well as cities such as Chongqing and Changsha.

The story of rap in China, and how it tapped into local voices and culture, dates back to its earliest days and a belief it could help revive local languages.

Liu Liangji, or Mr. weezy, a 41-year-old rapper from Shanghai, is clear about his cultural mission.

He insists on making rap songs not for money or fame, but to save and promote local dialects and cultures.

Liu started performing in the Shanghai dialect in 2014. At that time, he noticed that many young Shanghai residents could barely speak the local dialect, which he believed was one of the city's main cultural pillars.

He also discovered the problem of disappearing local dialects was not confined to Shanghai. In many cities across the Yangtze River Delta region, a growing number of people were unable to speak the predominant Wu dialect.



Cantonese rapper Chen Zhuoheng, or SoulHan, is a native of Guangzhou, and presents almost all of his rap songs in Cantonese.

To make a difference, Liu gathered rappers from four other cities across the region in 2018, and formed the group JZH League. With the shared goal of promoting local dialects, they released six songs that integrated their respective dialects, attracting extensive attention online.

"I love hip-hop, love our country and cultures. These songs stand for not only hip-hop, but also showcase our cultural roots and its diversity. I want them to be well kept, better understood and widely shared," said Liu.

The positive early feedback motivated Liu to broaden his goals. In October 2019, he initiated the Chinese Languages project to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, inviting 20 rappers from across the nation to rap their messages in 20 dialects.

Two years later, in July 2021, Liu spent four months organizing 32 rappers from 28 provinces and cities nationwide, co-creating the *Rap A Song for the Party*. All rappers joined in with their own dialects to mark the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China.

Listen to the fans

By 2017, rap music had burst onto the cultural scene in China, as the viral reality TV show *The Rap of China* thrust the musical genre into the nation's mainstream pop culture. Clips from the show attracted a staggering 3 billion online views.

Its sequel and similar rap shows have kept the scene flourishing, producing a growing number of rap stars, enthusiasts and fans.

The New Music Industry Observer placed the album *Everybody loves hip-hop*, released under the label Mintone Records, in second place on its all-time chart.

Mainly performed in Sichuan and Yunnan dialects, the album was co-created by rapper Xia Zhiyu and musician Jin Yuhan, or Dizkar. Other rap parts in the dialects of Beijing, Cantonese, Guizhou and Tibetan language are featured on the recording.

Xia, 37, said he used to lack confidence in speaking the dialect of his birthplace — Baolun town, Guangyuan, Sichuan province. Now living in Sichuan's Chengdu, Xia often reflects his life experiences in his works.

His previous album *Young Fresh Chin II*, released in 2023, is highly acclaimed for stories based on his past, that reflect challenging times and a youth's personal growth.

"My hometown is located at the junction of three provinces, with gold and coal mines. There is a large floating population and many hard life stories amid the chaos. They gave me inspiration to create, and I hope to shed light on them," said Xia.



The cover photo of *My Family Picture*, the fifth solo album of Shi released in February. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

For 32-year-old Jin, Kunming's pleasant weather, slow pace of life and locals' philosophy of "going with the flow of nature" are reflected in his free and inclusive music.

"If it were 15 or 10 years ago, I might be worried if dialect rap songs can connect with others. But now, we can hear fans rap with us in shows across the nation. We are creating our own hip-hop," said Jin.

Southern exposure

Last year, Cantonese rapper Lan Lao's hits from his second album *Ba Fang Lai Cai* went viral globally online. Combining Cantonese rap with accented Mandarin, other dialects, and culturally specific references, his vibrant local images captivated listeners around the world.

Veteran Cantonese rapper Chen Zhuoheng, or SoulHan, sees this spreading popularity as solid evidence of Chinese rappers' and hip-hop fans' growing cultural confidence and identity.

The 30-year-old from Guangzhou, Guangdong province, performs almost all of his rap songs in Cantonese.

"Although hip-hop is an imported culture, we Chinese have our own cultural background, a safe society, and different music preferences. Cantonese culture has a long and evolving history, including the internationally brilliant Hong Kong culture. The infusion of these diverse cultures can spark tremendous creativity," said Chen.

Cantonese is undoubtedly a force to be reckoned with among China's huge number of dialects and local cultures, boasting a history of more than 2,000 years, he said.

Featuring unique tones and cultural richness, Chen describes the Cantonese hip-hop scene, which started in the 1980s, as a vibrant "melting pot of cultures".

"Hip-hop is inclusive. It gave me knowledge, new perspectives on the world and shaped my values," he said.

"It's good to see more rappers, hip-hop fans and market opportunities in China. But I, like many other rappers, would still prioritize doing hip-hop for self expression and fun, before money and fame," he said.

Feeling like a hero

Consisting of "Kungfu-Pen" Shi Yifan, "D-Shine" Sheng Yu and "Key. L" Liu Cong, C-Block is one of the most popular rap groups in China and this year celebrates its 20th anniversary. Drawing inspiration from traditional culture and urban life, the trio focuses on a mixture of Hunan culture and street narratives to craft a bold and unique rap style under the Sup Music label.

Shi, 34, said it was the movie *8 Mile* — that follows the exploits of a young rapper in Detroit — that changed the life of a "soulless boy" when a music teacher played it to him in middle school.

"I completely knew what I would like to do after that day," said Shi. "What attracted me most about rap and hip-hop music was that it made me believe that anyone can be a hero. And I want to be a hero too," he said.

Shi started writing his own rap songs. The Changsha dialect he uses in everyday life naturally became part of his rap creations, helping him develop a distinctive style with local cultural roots.

It was shortly after C-Block began writing rap music in the local dialect that they made the hit song *Talk About Changsha*. With the whole track performed in the Changsha dialect, it presents the diverse local culture and lively everyday scenes of the city, such as landmarks, food delicacies, social conventions, traditional operas, nursery rhymes and more. "The dialect words just came together so intuitively and smoothly, without deliberate efforts to think about them," said Shi.

With lyrics that resonate and catchy rhythms, the song went viral after being released online in 2007. It also became the theme song of a popular TV show, reaching a wider national audience.

The musical trajectory of Shi and his group has taken off since then. In addition to local dialect songs, he also uses Mandarin to delve into universal topics, which has helped him gain wider popularity nationwide.

Despite his success, he refuses to label himself as a "dialect rapper" only.

"Dialects will still be there in the right place, but hip-hop itself is free with no boundaries. I come from Changsha, and the city has so much to offer. I love here, belong here. But I'm not confined here," Shi added.

He added that "revolution" is deeply carved in the city's history and the people's blood, which echoes with the spirit of hip-hop culture. As rappers, they stay true to themselves, oppose values that they see as incorrect, shoulder social responsibility, and speak up for the unseen in the hope of making a difference.

In November 2020, Shi held a free show in Wuhan, Hubei province. It was a special time for the city — where Shi spent four years at college — as it slowly began recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. The performance, one of the city's first indoor live shows after the virus outbreak, attracted thousands of enthusiastic fans. Its exuberance cleared clouds of doubt and fear hanging over the city.

"I could hardly sleep the night after the show. That was the exact moment I felt like a hero," said Shi, who is currently on a national tour for his new album.

Rice-noodle superstar

Shi's friend "Ranzer" Ye Runze, 34, is also striving to blend Changsha dialect, life experiences, personal stories and local culture with hip-hop music.

According to his fans, Ye's music flows easily like the city's Xiangjiang River. Cleverly combining Changsha dialect, Mandarin, rap and folk ballads, Ye's songs are more melodic and accessible to a broader audience.

Last year, his hit *Hometown, Wind* impressed millions of people and introduced his hometown and its melodies in a refreshing way.

Learning the Chinese *zhudi* (bamboo flute) from age 8, he has been motivated by American rapper Kanye West through the years. Ye said folk songs, which he has listened to since he was a kid, have also become a source of inspiration and added a unique color to his sound.

For example, *A Bamboo Pole* from his first solo album in 2020, was adapted from a Hunan folk song. It conveys the message of "unity", as one single bamboo pole might be easy to bend, but when three or more of them are bound together, they can drive a big boat and ride the waves. The idea, in Ye's eyes, aligns with the concept of crew, squad and community in United States hip-hop culture.

"We may speak different languages and live different lives from rappers on the other side of the world, but essentially, we share similarities in culture, spirit and human nature," said Ye.

He refers to his music offerings as bowls of "rice noodles" by the roadside, a Changsha specialty popular with almost everyone. They are simple, pure, and warm, and a conduit for lively local stories.

"Hip-hop is free. It's about breaking down boundaries and exploring new possibilities. I want to be a 'superstar' in my way, which is to take my personal style to the extreme — maybe like a Chinese version of 'Post Malone'," said Ye.

Abler Liu contributed to this story.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:53 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:53 PM

TOP NEWS

Key Sino-US consensus highlighted

Stable and sustainable military-to-military relationship stressed by scholars at forum

By JIANG CHENGLONG
jiangchenglong@chinadaily.com.cn

China and the United States should implement the important consensus reached by the two countries' leaders and work toward a stable and sustainable military-to-military relationship, Chinese scholars said at a high-level security forum in Singapore, as global security faces rising risks from hegemonism, disorder of global governance and emerging technologies.

Major General Meng Xiangqing, a professor at China's National Defense University, made the remarks on Saturday during a parallel session of the three-day Shangri-La Dialogue, which concluded on Sunday.

His remarks came after US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth referred to the recent China-US top leaders' meeting in Beijing and their consensus, during a plenary speech earlier on Saturday.

Meng said the level of attention the two leaders' meeting received at the forum showed that stability in China-US relations serves not only the interests of the two peoples, but also regional stability and world peace.

The most important political consensus reached by the two sides is to build a constructive relationship of strategic stability between China and the US, Meng said.

"We expect China and the US to meet each other halfway, translate the consensus into concrete actions, and push military-to-military relations toward healthy, stable and sustainable development," he said.

Responding to a question from a member of the Chinese delegation after his speech, Hegseth said the new vision of building a constructive US-China relationship of strategic stability is "real, substantive and meaningful for the history of peace in the region and the world".

Hegseth said he was present when the leaders discussed constructive strategic stability. "I think that was a great framing from both leaders about what they want from that relationship," he said, adding that there is "a mutual respect, a recognition of capabilities and power and how that could be most usefully leveraged in the world today".

Wang Dong, a professor at Peking University's School of International Studies, said that Hegseth's speech this year contained far fewer negative references to China compared with speeches by US defense chiefs in previous years, and did not mention Taiwan or the South China Sea, two hot topics that had often been cited in the past.

Wang, who participated in the security summit, said the change in Hegseth's tone reflected a more cautious approach by the US in handling relations with China after the two countries agreed to build a constructive relationship of strategic stability.

"Over the past year or so, China, through engagement and struggle, has made the US realize that it cannot gain an advantage in a trade war with China, and may even face countermeasures from China," he said. "The US is working with China to build a new paradigm, which is very important for the two countries to find the right way to get along."

In his speech, Meng, the PLA professor, also warned that global strategic stability faces unprecedented challenges, including the impact of hegemonism on regional security, rising risks of global nuclear conflict, serious erosion of international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation systems, and disorder in global governance.

Some countries are engaging in power politics, seeking absolute strategic superiority and provoking bloc confrontation, he said, adding that such moves have intensified arms races and regional conflicts.

"These risks are intertwined and mutually reinforcing, making current strategic stability highly fragile," Meng said, noting that countries, especially major powers, should shoulder their due responsibilities in safeguarding strategic stability.

He called for firmly defending the postwar international order, saying that it is essential to building the political foundation for strategic stability.

"As the world again stands at a crossroads, countries must stay alert to any revival of militarist thinking and firmly safeguard the outcomes of World War II and the postwar international order," Meng said, criticizing recent actions by the Japanese side in the security and military fields.

On emerging technologies, the scholar warned against a "rules vacuum" in their military use.

"Allowing algorithms to control matters of life and death could very likely lead to technological loss of control," he said. "At all times, control over war and related weapon systems must be firmly kept in human hands."



Major General Meng Xiangqing (center) attends a meeting with the British delegation on the sidelines of the Shangri-La Dialogue 2026, Asia's premier defense and security summit, on Friday in Singapore. EDGAR SU / REUTERS

Hong Kong and Macao hail milestone yacht policy

By LU WANQING in Hong Kong
wanqing@chinadailyhk.com

The Hong Kong and Macao special administrative region governments and tourism industry leaders on Sunday welcomed a new policy that allows private yachts from both regions to enter or exit nine Chinese mainland cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area with ease.

The policy, rolled out on Saturday, was hailed as a "milestone" for yacht economy and tourism. Stakeholders expressed hope that the next phase would open up the southern route for mainland yachts heading to the two special administrative regions, ease customs requirements and enable mutual recognition of credentials.

According to the State Council's announcement, it approved with immediate effect the exemption from the guarantee requirement and the implementation of temporary ship nationality registration for Hong Kong and Macao yachts, when they temporarily enter and exit the Chinese mainland through designated ports in the nine GBA cities and navigate only within those cities.

Yachts from Hong Kong and Macao can now enter and exit the mainland through designated ports in Guangdong province's Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Foshan, Huizhou, Dongguan, Zhongshan, Jiangmen and Zhaoqing.

Hong Kong's Transport and Logistics Bureau and Macao's Marine and Water Bureau welcomed the move, saying the new guarantee-free and temporary registration measures will significantly reduce the financial burden of yacht owners from the two SARs. The temporary ship nationality registration allows Hong Kong and Macao yachts to obtain temporary ship nationality certificates issued by the mainland without affecting their original ship registration, enabling individual yacht travel within the waters of the nine mainland cities.

Previously, yacht owners from Hong Kong and Macao whose vessels entered mainland waters had to make a mandatory deposit and apply for a license, which would cost several hundred thousand yuan, while applications for a permit could take months.

In his 2025 Policy Address, Hong Kong Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu highlighted major moves to expand the city's high-end yacht industry, including an individual travel system for yachts entering the GBA, as well as measures to facilitate Hong Kong yachts heading north and those from the mainland in the opposite direction.

Timothy Chui Ting-pong, executive director of the Hong Kong Tourism Association, called the latest policy a "full demonstration" of the central authorities' strong support for integrated tourism in the bay area and regional growth.

He hoped for a regional individual travel program for yachts, saying it's crucial for making the region a global destination for high-spending travelers, and turning Hong Kong into a hub for yacht leasing, trading and tourism.

Chui said the travel industry needs to implement more steps to encourage mainland yachts to enter Hong Kong, as having more high spenders is vital for the city's tourism expansion.

Legislator Priscilla Leung Mei-fun applauded the policy as a "milestone" that would spur marine recreation by leveraging each city's strengths — Hong Kong's marinas, maritime and high-end tourism services, and financial support, as well as Guangdong's coastlines, islands and coastal leisure facilities.

She said that faster cross-border yacht traffic is just the first step, envisioning deeper innovation, including mutual recognition of yacht licenses and smoother border inspections.

Lo Wai-kwok, chairman of the Business and Professionals Alliance for Hong Kong, urged the SAR to work with other cities in the region to simplify customs procedures for cruise vessels, yachts and tourists. He plans to meet with industry leaders to discuss how the new policy can drive tangible growth for the SAR's yacht economy.

Saying no to tobacco



Medical workers hold placards on Saturday to mark World No Tobacco Day at a private hospital in Kolkata, India. Observed annually on May 31, the day brings together governments, health organizations, civil society groups and youth worldwide to raise awareness about the dangers of tobacco use. NURPHOTO VIA GETTY IMAGES

HK: City stands out as oasis of stability

From page 1

Regina Ip Lau Suk-yee, convenor of the Hong Kong Executive Council, captured the logic precisely in her welcoming remarks. She observed that amid uncertainties, Hong Kong continues to stand out as an oasis of stability, connectivity and opportunity, and that the Global Prosperity Summit can serve as a platform for dialogue, exchange and pragmatic cooperation.

Yet platforms, however polished, are useless without traffic. And here is where Hong Kong's recent figures speak louder than any communique. The economy expanded 5.9 percent year-on-year in the first quarter of 2026, a meaningful acceleration from the 4 percent of the preceding quarter. Hong Kong has reclaimed its place as the world's fifth-largest merchandise trading entity. The International Monetary Fund has reaffirmed the city's role as an international financial center and super-connector. These are not the numbers of a city in retreat; they are the numbers of a city that has chosen its lane and is pulling ahead.

Equally important is what is being built behind the headlines. The San Tin Technopole and the Hetao Hong Kong Park sit at the heart of the Northern Metropolis, a HK$224 billion ($28.6 billion) infrastructure project that will develop roughly 30,000 hectares — about a third of Hong Kong's territory — along the Shenzhen border. Authorities have said the development will create 650,000 jobs and help ease the city's housing crisis by providing homes for 2.5 million people.

Roughly 80 technology companies and institutions have already established a presence in the Hong Kong Park of the Hetao Cooperation Zone, which officially began operations in December, and nearly 90 percent of the space in the park's two finished wet-lab buildings has been leased, with another five buildings due for completion this year.

Meanwhile, Hong Kong Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu has said the government plans to complete dedicated legislation for the Northern Metropolis this year to speed up the megaproject's development.

Pair this hardware with the soft infrastructure now taking shape — a third medical school, the Northern Metropolis University Town, the Greater Bay Area Clinical Trial Collaboration Platform, a forthcoming Hong Kong Centre for Medical Products Regulation — and the picture sharpens. We are not, as some foreign commentators continue to insist, merely a financial entrepot — a warehouse or distribution center for goods — clinging to past glories. We are becoming an innovation economy with Chinese characteristics and global reach.

One of the event's most compelling contributions was the institutional vision it placed on the table. Ip and Li Kaisheng, a professor at the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies, jointly proposed an "APEC Global Cities Network", an APEC Chinese Cities' network of cities that have hosted APEC meetings, and a council of APEC think tanks — networks designed to establish the foundation for building greater global regional cooperation and prosperity. This is precisely the kind of forward-looking architecture that multilateralism now requires. Leaders' meetings will continue to be photographed; but the deeper, enduring work of cooperation happens between them, at the level of cities, scholars and practitioners — and Hong Kong is positioning itself to anchor exactly that work.

Critics, of course, will argue that Hong Kong's pivot toward national strategy diminishes its international character. The evidence on the ground says the opposite. More than 40 countries from six continents have already signed the Convention on the Establishment of the International Organization for Mediation, which was inaugurated in Hong Kong as a new platform for advancing the rule of law in global governance. A city that hosts the world's mediators, the world's finance ministers, the world's Olympic federations and the world's police chiefs in a single calendar year is not a city turning inward.

The author is convener at China Retold, a member of the Legislative Council, and a member of the Central Committee of the New People's Party. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Children: All-around development seen as vital

From page 1

Over the years, Xi has emphasized the importance of children's all-around development, framed cultivating the younger generation as a strategic and fundamental task, and called for joint efforts to foster a healthy social environment for the growth of minors. "Those serve as the overarching guideline and fundamental principles for advancing the work on children in the new era," Liu said.

According to the latest estimates released by the National Bureau of Statistics in May, China's population of children, defined as those through age 14, stands at 214.36 million, accounting for 15.25 percent of the total population.

In an effort to safeguard the healthy growth of Chinese children, the nation has rolled out the Outline for Children's Development in China (2021-30), which sets out a comprehensive framework covering children's health, safety, education, welfare, family, environment and legal protection.

"It is the greatest wish of everyone that all children can grow up strong and healthy," Xi once said, calling on the Party and the government to ensure that they care about children and juveniles of all ethnic backgrounds and create better conditions for their study and development.

This care is woven into national strategies as well as Xi's personal gestures that transcend time and distance. In 2004, Xi, then secretary of the CPC Zhejiang Provincial Committee, attended the foundation-laying ceremony for the new campus of Zhijiang Primary School in Sichuan province. Originally located halfway up a mountain, with dilapidated buildings, the school was rebuilt with assistance from Zhejiang.

Two decades later, students of the school wrote to Xi, and ahead of Children's Day in 2024, they received a reply. In the letter, Xi said he was delighted to hear that the school was doing very well and the students were thriving.

Wang Fang, an associate researcher at the Institute of Sociology of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, said that supporting children's growth has evolved from a traditional family matter to an issue of national importance, now integrated into the broader national development agenda.

"In recent years, China has continuously stepped up its efforts to safeguard and support children, leading to the steady expansion of a protective ecosystem for them," Wang noted.

This includes building a robust legal framework through measures such as amending the Law on the Protection of Minors and enacting the Family Education Promotion Law, she said.

Wenchang: Destination also offers immersive science experiences

From page 1

On social media, searches for "rocket" and "aerospace" have surged. In April alone, more than 3 million users engaged with such topics on Chinese lifestyle platform Xiaohongshu, or Red Note.

What was once a rare spectacle is more routine and accessible now, fueling a lifestyle passion.

People drive miles to the site even on weekdays, camp on beaches until midnight and aim telephoto lenses at the launch tower.

Wenchang, on Hainan's northeast coast, is China's only coastal space launch site and home to the nation's sole commercial space launch base. The site now hosts launches nearly every month.

French social media influencer Jean-Bernard Corazzi was awestruck after witnessing a rocket launch for the first time on Wednesday. "I think it's a good idea to link the two — space technology and tourism," he said.

The destination now offers more than just a momentary spectacle. Visitors can tour the Wenchang Aerospace Supercomputing Center to learn how satellites collect data and how that information is transmitted, processed and applied to sectors such as agriculture and transportation. The center and other venues aim to turn "launch watching" into a full-day science immersion experience.

For Celestino Guerra Ng, a freshman at the Academy of Public Security Forces of China's Macao Special Administrative Region, the view of both the operational and new launchpads left a deep impression. "Next time I will choose a daytime launch to enjoy the coconut groves in the foreground," he said, adding that he will share his experience back in Macao.

For British blogger Chapman, the moment was pure wonder. But like many of the new "rocket chasers", he also appreciated what came after the launch: quiet beaches, fresh coconut water and the easy rhythm of tropical Hainan.

The rocket is the adrenaline. The island is the calm. And in Wenchang, travelers no longer have to choose.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:53 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:53 PM

GLOBAL LENS



People dance together at the 2026 Africa Day Cultural Festival in Beijing on May 23. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY



African youths take a group photo at the 2026 Africa Day Cultural Festival in Beijing on May 23. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

Rhythm *of* relations

Diplomats highlight growing importance of people-to-people exchanges in China-Africa ties

The African diplomatic community in Beijing launched the 2026 Africa Day Cultural Festival during an opening ceremony held at the Jintai Art Museum in Chaoyang Park on May 23 ahead of Africa Day on May 25.

Organized jointly by African embassies in China, the 2026 Africa Day Cultural Festival was opened to the public as a full-day cultural celebration aimed at promoting friendship, cultural exchange, and people-to-people connectivity between Africa and China.

The festival featured country pavilions representing different regions of Africa, showcasing the continent's rich cultural diversity, tourism potential, artistic traditions, creative industries, and contemporary dynamism through exhibitions, performances, and interactive experiences.

Throughout the day, visitors enjoyed cultural and artistic performances, including traditional music and dance presentations from across Africa, alongside exhibitions of arts, crafts, fashion, cultural heritage, tourism, and investment promotion.

A dedicated children's activity zone also offered interactive experiences introducing young visitors to African culture through traditional African games, painting activities, drumming sessions, storytelling, and hands-on cultural engagement.

In a recent diplomatic reception at the China World Hotel in Beijing to commemorate Africa Day 2026, Miao Deyu, vice-minister of foreign affairs of China, congratulated African countries on the successful commemoration of Africa Day in Beijing. He noted the special significance of 2026 as the China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges and the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and African nations.

Miao highlighted the long-standing friendship and solidarity between China and Africa and reaffirmed China's commitment to strengthening practical cooperation under the framework of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation.

He underlined cooperation in areas including development, education, healthcare, poverty reduction, connectivity, and cultural exchanges, noting that China and Africa have consistently supported one another throughout their respective development journeys.

Telesphore Irambona, Burundian ambassador to China, representing the Chair of the African Union, highlighted the importance of cultural exchanges in strengthening understanding and friendship between Africa and China.

Martin Mpana, dean of the African Diplomatic Corps in China, emphasized the enduring importance of people-to-people exchanges in China-Africa relations.

"Today's celebration reminds us that the strongest partnerships are ultimately built between people. Through culture, dialogue, and shared experiences, we deepen understanding and strengthen the bonds of friendship between Africa and China," he said.

Speaking on behalf of the cultural festival coordinating committee, Hodan Osman Abdi, Somali ambassador to China, emphasized the significance of this year's event.

"This year, given its significance as the year of people-to-people exchange, we wanted to celebrate Africa Day differently. We wished to move beyond simply commemorating a date on the calendar and instead create a space where people can genuinely encounter Africa ... through experience, interaction, and human connection".

CHINA DAILY



A Chinese girl learns to play an African drum at the 2026 Africa Day Cultural Festival in Beijing on May 23. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY





From left: Chinese attendees try African braided hairstyles at the 2026 Africa Day Cultural Festival in Beijing on May 23. A Chinese attendee tries Ethiopian coffee at the cultural festival on May 23. PHOTOS BY WU XIAOHUI / CHINA DAILY



People from Africa and China dance together at the 2026 Africa Day Cultural Festival in Beijing on May 23. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY



People from Sierra Leone perform a traditional dance at the 2026 Africa Day Cultural Festival in Beijing on May 23. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:53 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:53 PM

WORLD

Victory marred by violence



A car burns as fireworks light the sky near the Eiffel Tower in Paris on Saturday as supporters of Paris Saint-Germain celebrate the soccer club's UEFA Champions League triumph over Arsenal. French authorities announced 780 people were arrested across the country after celebrations descended into violence, leaving dozens of police officers injured and businesses damaged. THOMAS PADILLA / AP

US seeks changes to Iran deal

Trump delays final approval as Tehran and Washington exchange warnings

By JAN YUMUL in Hong Kong and **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE

US President Donald Trump has deferred making a final decision on a truce with Iran after a meeting with advisers on Friday amid reports he was requesting several amendments to a deal his envoys negotiated.

Trump wants the deal and expects to finalize it soon, but was keen to strengthen several points, particularly regarding Iran's nuclear program, according to a report by United States media outlet Axios. Trump also wants to edit wordings around the full opening of the Strait of Hormuz.

Citing two sources, Axios reported that Trump asked his team to make changes to the draft on clauses about Iran's nuclear program. Currently, the memorandum of understanding is said to include a commitment from Iran not to pursue a nuclear weapon, but no specific concessions beyond that.

It also states that there will be a 60-day window to negotiate on nuclear commitments from Iran and sanctions relief from the US, with the first issues on the docket being how to dispose of Iran's enriched uranium stockpile and limit further enrichment, the report said.

US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said at a Singapore forum on Saturday that Trump was "patient" and wanted to make a "great deal" that ensures Iran does not get a nuclear weapon.

The US was ready to restart attacks on Iran if a deal could not be reached, he said, adding that US stockpiles were "in a very good place".

"We can do two things at one time. We're supercharging our defense industrial base so that we're building 2X, 3X, 4X the munitions very soon to ensure that all of our (operation) plans are properly funded throughout the world," he said.

On Sunday, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps announced their interception and destruction of a US MQ-1 drone that entered Iranian territory early in the morning, the Mehr News Agency reported.

Following the interception, the IRGC Air Defense issued a direct warning: Iranian airspace over the country's territorial waters is under full control, and any incursion will be met with a decisive response.

The IRGC warned on Saturday that any US interference in the "management" of the Strait of Hormuz would be met with a "strict military response".

Situation in strait

According to recordings from a public maritime radio channel provided to Xinhua News Agency by crew members aboard vessels stranded near the strait, the IRGC Navy issued a warning to ships operating in the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman.

The IRGC stated that the strait remains closed and that transit is permitted only with authorization from the IRGC Navy and through routes designated by Iran.

The warning added that any violations of the regulations would seriously jeopardize maritime security.

In a video broadcast on state television, Iran's chief negotiator, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said on Sunday that Tehran will not agree to any deal with the United States that fails to secure the rights of the Iranian people.

On Friday, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said reaching a final agreement hinges on the US abandoning its expansionist approach and its shifting, contradictory positions.

In a phone call with his Omani counterpart, Araghchi also stressed that Iran remains serious and steadfast in pursuing its rightful interests and legitimate rights.

Agencies and Xinhua contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at jan@chinadailyapac.com

China Institute celebrates 100 years of bridging ties

By MINGMEI LI in New York
mingmeili@chinadailyusa.com

The China Institute of America marked its centennial with a gala in New York on Thursday, bringing together prominent families, business leaders, international artists and academics with long-standing ties to US-China exchanges.

Founded in 1926, the institute is the oldest nonprofit organization in the United States focused on cultural and educational exchanges between China and the US.

Over the past century, it has supported a range of exchange programs and cultural initiatives, including sponsoring Mei Lanfang's 1930 North American tour and Broadway performances in New York, and helping secure scholarship aid for Chinese students studying in the US in 1938.

The institute now hosts public discussions on US-China education, art, innovation and business exchanges, organizes exhibitions of Chinese art, and offers Chinese language and cultural programs.

This year's gala honored individuals and families recognized for their contributions to US-China relations and cross-cultural exchanges, including the Nixon family, Bush family and Rockefeller family; former Hong Kong chief executive Tung Chee-hwa; entrepreneurs and philanthropists Ming Hsieh and Eva Hsieh; and professors Li Kai and Cui Yi.

"This centennial is not only a celebration of 100 years of history — it is a declaration of our commitment to the next 100," said Yue-Sai Kan, cochair of the institute. "We are honored to gather tonight with extraordinary individuals and families who have given so much to the cause of understanding between our two nations."

Chinese Ambassador to the US Xie Feng attended the gala. He said both the Chinese and US people have upheld the mission of bridging cultures despite the ups and downs in bilateral relations.

"These efforts added a profound and moving chapter to the friendship between our two peoples, a friendship tested through blood and fire," Xie said.

Under the new vision of building a constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability, the two countries are once again at a "historic crossroads" and need greater efforts to expand common ground, move forward together and strengthen people-to-people exchanges, he said.

Peter Walker, a board trustee of the institute, a senior partner emeritus at McKinsey & Company, and a long-time China observer who has visited China more than 90 times, told China Daily why he has remained committed to the organization.

"We focus on the soft cultural things — education, arts, culinary exchange, travel, fashion, sports, the places where people connect," he said.

Walker emphasized youth exchanges as "a top priority".

"We have a whole effort around the next generation of people who we want to get involved," he said.

More than 50,000 young people from the US have visited China under China's "50,000 in Five Years" initiative, achieving the target two and a half years ahead of schedule.

Continuing the legacy

The next generations of families involved in US-China exchanges also highlighted a long-term commitment to continuing the legacy.

Christopher Nixon Cox, representing the Nixon family, said people from the two countries are able to bridge their differences.

"Tonight, our two countries face tensions, new questions, new uncertainty," he said in a speech. "The work of bridge-building has never been finished, and in some seasons it feels harder than ever."

Steven Rockefeller Jr, representing the Rockefeller family, told China Daily that the family's engagement in US-China relations reflects a long-standing tradition of supporting cross-cultural understanding and exchanges.

"There's so much opportunity for everyone to contribute in their own way," he said. "It's a vast landscape with such spectacular history, and so much art, culture and literature. Whatever you're interested in, there's so much to share."



An Israeli flag flies over the medieval Beaufort Castle as seen from the Marjayoun area of southern Lebanon on Sunday. AFP

Israel captures strategic castle in south Lebanon

BEIRUT — Israeli troops have captured a strategic mountain topped with a Crusader-built castle in southern Lebanon in the deepest incursion of the country in 26 years, the military said on Sunday.

The capture of Beaufort Castle, near the city of Nabatieh, came after days of airstrikes and intense fighting in nearby villages where Israeli troops fought Hezbollah militants in the rugged area.

Its capture marks a major development in the latest conflict, despite a ceasefire that has been in place since April 17.

The Israeli military's spokesman Avichay Adraee posted a photograph on X showing Israeli troops walking outside the castle, and Defense Minister Israel Katz wrote on X that they had raised an Israeli flag over the castle.

Israeli troops previously captured the castle in 1982 and held it until they withdrew from Lebanon in 2000.

The Beaufort fortress, perched high atop Lebanon's rolling green hills and overlooking the Litani River, has been a strategic military asset for many armies over almost 1,000 years.

Built as a Crusader castle around the 12th century on top of previous fortifications, it has been used by the Crusaders, Saladin's Jerusalem army, Mamluks, Ottomans, the French mandate, the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Israeli military until 2000, when it was partially restored and opened to visitors.

The Crusaders named it Beaufort, which is Old French for "beautiful fortress".

The Israeli military said in a statement that it launched an operation a few days ago in the Beaufort Ridge and the Suluki Valley farther south with the aim of dismantling Hezbollah infrastructure and removing direct threats to Israeli civilians.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a videotaped statement on Sunday that he had instructed the military to deepen and expand its grip on Lebanese areas held by Hezbollah.

He described the seizure of the Beaufort as "a dramatic stage and a dramatic shift in the policy we are leading".

AGENCIES—XINHUA

Study finds racial bias in AI hiring

By LIA ZHU in San Francisco
liazhu@chinadailyusa.com

A new study has found that artificial intelligence tools used to screen job applicants in the United States exhibit significant racial bias against Black and Asian candidates, raising concerns about algorithmic discrimination at a moment when the US labor market is already under strain.

Researchers from Stanford University, Chapman University and Northeastern University tracked 3.4 million people who submitted 4 million job applications to 1,700 job postings across 150 employers and 11 industry sectors. Every application in the dataset was assessed by an AI hiring tool built by a single third-party vendor.

The authors describe their paper as the first to offer large-scale empirical evidence of racial disparities in high-stakes hiring decisions made by algorithmic systems.

"Our new paper offers a rare look inside the 'black box' of algorithmic hiring, showing that these tools increase racial bias and shut the same people out of jobs everywhere they apply," they wrote in an article published on the website of the Stanford Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence.

The researchers explain the hiring AI pipeline as follows: job seekers submit applications, which are routed to a hiring AI vendor; the vendor's machine learning models generate predictions; and the resulting labels of "recommend" or "do not recommend" are sent back to the employer to guide decisions.

The study, titled Algorithmic Monocultures in Hiring, found that 26 percent of Black applicants and 15 percent of Asian applicants submitted applications to positions where the AI system discriminated against their racial group, as measured by US employment discrimination standards.

If Black and Asian candidates had been recommended at the same rate as the most-favored group, typically white applicants, 40,000 more of their applications would have advanced to the next round, according to the study.

Asian applicants experienced the largest shortfall. If Asian candidates had been selected at the same rate as the most-selected racial group for each position, 29,000 additional applications from Asian job seekers would have been forwarded to employers, the study found.

The researchers stressed that the method used to measure adverse impact matters, because broad averages can mask discrimination that is occurring at the level of individual job postings. For example, if an AI tool that frequently recommends Black applicants for warehouse positions but rarely recommends them for finance roles, it would seem like there is no discrimination on average, but it still produces discriminatory outcomes position by position.

The US labor market has seen hiring slow, while AI tools have made it easier than ever for applicants to submit large numbers of applications. The combination has driven the volume of applications for entry-level positions to nearly three times the levels seen in 2022, according to the paper.

The concentration of the AI hiring industry has caused another problem. They found that more than 60 percent of Fortune 100 companies rely on algorithms built by HireVue. When a significant share of employers across an industry use the same vendor's system, the researchers warned, a single algorithmic bias can ripple across the entire job market, creating what they call systemic rejection.

Among applicants who submitted four applications to positions screened by the same algorithmic vendor, 10 percent were rejected from every single one. As one vendor comes to dominate screening for an industry, the researchers said, candidates become increasingly likely to be shut out entirely rather than simply passed over for a particular role.

The study does not identify what caused the racial biases observed in the hiring algorithms. The researchers acknowledged that much of the technology's impact remains poorly understood by the public.

The researchers are calling on regulators and auditors to measure adverse impact at the individual job-posting level rather than in aggregate, and they are urging agencies to strengthen monitoring mechanisms to prevent systemic rejection in algorithmic hiring.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1839

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:53 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:53 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

European Commission needs to handle China policy with prudence, rationality

The European Commission held an orientation debate on Friday to explore a range of policy tools aimed at addressing the European Union's trade "imbalance" with China, citing the country's so-called "overcapacity".

"The current state of the trade and investment relationship is not sustainable," reads a statement issued by the commission following the debate. "As economic and security interests become ever more intertwined, both dimensions will require a more robust and coherent response."

The statement indicates that the commission, misled by certain politicians, is attempting to make China a scapegoat. In doing so, it risks ignoring the EU's underlying diseases.

As a report on Europe's development (2025-26), released by the Institute of European Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences on Friday, said, Europe is experiencing its deepest transformation since the end of the Cold War. Strategic anxiety is replacing developmental confidence and security concerns increasingly dominate economic policymaking.

It is not the European Union's trade with China that is "not sustainable" but the EU's own policies and practices in related sectors. Over the past decade, European businesses have faced high energy costs, regulatory burdens have multiplied, compliance requirements have expanded, and new layers of environmental, digital and competition regulations have raised costs across sectors.

None of these challenges were created by China. The EU's trade deficit with China is largely attributable to Brussels' restrictive export policies on high-tech products, as well as the fact that goods produced by EU companies in China and exported to the European market are counted as exports by China. If trade surplus alone constitutes evidence of "overcapacity", then many of Europe's own globally successful industries would face the same accusation. European automobiles, pharmaceuticals, wine and luxury products have long generated substantial trade surpluses worldwide. Competitive exports are not, by themselves, proof of market distortion.

Evidence comes from the very issue that has dominated China-EU trade relations over the past two years: electric vehicles. After a lengthy political theater, escalating rhetoric and tariff threats, Brussels eventually returned to what should have been the starting point as Beijing urged from the beginning: negotiation. The ongoing efforts to reach a mutually acceptable settlement regarding Chinese-made EVs entering the European market demonstrate a reality: dialogue can produce practical solutions; trade weaponization cannot.

Had Brussels chosen consultation earlier, considerable political capital, business uncertainty and market disruption could have been avoided. The lesson should not be lost on European policymakers now contemplating new instruments targeting China.

Indeed, Brussels' recent actions suggest a growing tendency to substitute regulatory activism for genuine policies to promote industrial renewal. On Thursday, the European Commission launched an investigation under the Foreign Subsidies Regulation into JD.com's proposed acquisition of German retailer Ceconomy, while continuing an expanding series of investigations into Chinese companies operating in Europe.

The China Chamber of Commerce to the EU has rightly warned that such measures risk conflating legitimate market competitiveness with alleged distortions. Innovation, logistics efficiency, supply-chain integration and operational excellence are increasingly viewed through a geopolitical lens by the EU. What should be normal commercial competition is becoming a matter of suspicion.

Some EU policymakers appear increasingly determined to imitate Washington's trade playbook, ignoring the willingness many major EU economies have expressed to strengthen economic relations with China during their leaders' and business delegations' visits to Beijing.

The EU should not overlook the irony that many advocates of tougher measures against China remain relatively silent on the United States' unilateral practices targeting the bloc. For some of them, targeting China is a way to deflect pressure arising from their own perceived softness toward the US.

While remaining open to dialogue, China has made it clear that any discriminatory measure will trigger countermeasures.

The European Commission should examine the EU's own institutional constraints — bureaucratic inertia, excessive regulation, high energy costs, and declining industrial productivity — rather than mistaking China for a "threat".

The future of China-EU economic relations should be determined not by which side can devise the next trade weapon, but by whether the EU can show the wisdom to put aside its ideological bias and focus on cooperation and exchanges to expand the two sides' common interests.

Competitive economies become what they are by striving to become a better version of themselves through openness and competition, rather than by embracing protectionism and unilateralism.

Regional brakes on neo-militarism necessary

The extraordinary efforts made by Japanese Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi during the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore over the weekend — seeking "security assurances" from the United States — lay bare Tokyo's anxiety: as Japan's remilitarization becomes increasingly blatant, it risks facing growing opposition from the region.

During their talks on the sidelines of the security forum, Koizumi and his US counterpart reached a series of agreements, including accelerating the joint production of missiles. The Japanese side announced these outcomes in a high-profile manner, as if they were the latest testament to the "solidarity" of its military cooperation with the US.

If Japan truly sought peace, Koizumi would not have gone to such lengths to deliver his telling performance before the nations of the region — countries all too familiar with Japan's old trick of saying one thing while doing another.

Data from the Japanese government reveal that orders from the Japanese Ministry of Defense have tripled over the past five years, and now constitute half of the government's public procurement orders. Historically, this military-industrial complex played a significant role in Japan's militarist expansion. That machines are roaring once again in the system indicates the dangerous direction in which the Sanae Takaichi government is leading the country.

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the opening of the Tokyo Trials, which delivered historical justice after World War II. It serves as a reminder of the consequences of a Japan ruled by de facto militarists. Meng Xiangqing, head of the People's Liberation Army expert delegation at the Shangri-La Dialogue, rightly questioned Japan's qualification to speak about "defense" cooperation, warning against any resurgence of militarism and attempts to challenge the post-WWII international order.

Is a country that has not thoroughly reckoned with the legacy of militarism truly qualified to speak about "defense" cooperation on the international stage? Can it win the trust of the international community — especially the Asian countries that once suffered from its aggression? These questions, raised by Meng during a panel discussion at the dialogue, deserve the full attention of the entire region.

The worrisome actions of Japan extend well beyond its borders. In Singapore, Koizumi also met with Philippine Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr to finalize the transfer of decommissioned Japanese military vessels to Manila, aiming to better equip the Philippines for its provocative actions against China in the South China Sea.

On Thursday, the two countries announced they would hold talks on delimiting a so-called "exclusive economic zone" in the waters to the east of China's Taiwan island where China has an exclusive economic zone and continental shelf.

This constitutes a severe violation of China's maritime rights and interests, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and other international laws, and basic norms governing international relations, as Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said.

There is no doubt that Japan stands at a crossroads again. The series of institutional constraints established in the postwar era — designed to prevent Japan from repeating the mistakes of its past — are now being systematically dismantled, step by step, by the right-wing forces in Japan. While the tactics employed by them are nothing new, for a nation that has never truly engaged in thorough self-reflection over its heinous wartime history, these methods serve to effectively reawaken the ambition, greed and hubris of a war machine that has long lain dormant beneath a veneer of peace.

During the war, Japanese society succumbed to a state of collective unconsciousness. Established moral compasses were arbitrarily altered, and the Japanese people could only toil diligently to facilitate the cruel objectives dictated by the militarists. Today, Japan seems once again ready to tread that same path.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Li Min



Opinion Line

Ottawa should respect core concerns to ensure cooperation sustainable

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met respectively with Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, Foreign Minister Anita Anand and former prime minister Jean Chretien in Ottawa on Friday. The discussions struck a pragmatic tone, focusing on cooperation, exchanges and the need to properly manage differences. This suggests that the atmosphere necessary for forging a new strategic partnership between the two countries is gradually improving.

Months after Carney's January visit to China, the results are becoming visible. Exchanges between some government departments have resumed, and trade and investment discussions have regained momentum.

The numbers tell a revealing story. According to Chinese statistics, total China-Canada goods trade in 2025 stood at $89.59 billion, down 3.7 percent year-on-year. Canadian exports to China fell by 10.5 percent to $41.66 billion, while imports from China declined by 3.7 percent to $47.93 billion. Yet even amid these declines caused by the previous Canadian government's ill-advised China policy, China remained Canada's second-largest trading partner, behind only the United States.

The numbers also demonstrate the resilience of underlying commercial ties. Despite years of diplomatic tensions caused by the Justin Trudeau government, neither side could simply replace the other with any other trading partner. This explains why the Carney government has moved with notable speed to recalibrate the relationship. During his visit to China, Carney spoke of building a strong and enduring new strategic partnership with China. In his meeting with Wang on Friday, Carney reiterated Canada's willingness to deepen cooperation in energy, finance, agriculture and fisheries. These sectors sit at the heart of Canada's comparative advantages.

Wang noted that the improvement in bilateral relations serves the interests of both countries and that there is no clash of fundamental interests between them.

It means that the China-Canada relationship should not be burdened by irreconcilable strategic rivalry.

Indeed, the convergence extends beyond economic and trade relations. Carney's support for China's hosting of this year's Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Economic Leaders' Meeting is welcome. It aligns with his broader argument that countries should defend multilateral cooperation in an increasingly fragmented world.

In his much-discussed speech in Davos in January, Carney delivered perhaps one of the clearest diagnoses yet of the international environment confronting what he called "middle powers". He warned that a "world of fortresses" would become poorer, more fragile and less sustainable. "Middle powers", like Canada, needed strategic autonomy while continuing to support open trade, international law and practical cooperation, he argued.

Those views resonate with the world's needs for multilateralism and an open economy. While China and Canada may disagree on some issues, they share an interest in preventing global economic fragmentation and resisting the logic of bloc confrontation.

The restoration of strategic dialogue mechanisms announced during Wang's visit therefore reflects the recognition on both sides that sustained communication is indispensable in an era of uncertainty.

Yet one cautionary caveat remains.

If Ottawa wishes to preserve the positive momentum that is now emerging, it must handle the Taiwan question with due prudence and care. The timing of the recent transit of the Canadian frigate HMCS *Charlottetown* through the Taiwan Strait, shortly before Wang's visit, on May 22 and 23 as part of a so-called "routine operation", contradicts the Canadian side's stated willingness to improve ties. China has made clear that while it respects freedom of navigation under international law, it opposes actions that undermine its sovereignty and security under that banner.

A sustainable China-Canada relationship requires Ottawa to manage differences responsibly rather than allow its symbolic gestures to overshadow substantive cooperation.

Chretien, who initiated what many Canadians still regard as the "golden decade" of bilateral relations, understood this reality well. His enduring belief that the two economies are highly complementary remains as relevant today as it was two decades ago.

In an era of geopolitical volatility, Canada would do well to recognize that pragmatic cooperation with China serves its interests better than ideological distance. If Ottawa can reciprocate Beijing's approach while carefully managing their differences, this year's bilateral trade figures will show that such a course is worthwhile.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

New urban renewal plan prioritizes safety

Editor's note: *The Chinese government recently released an urban renewal plan, outlining key targets, major tasks and projects, as well as policy measures for the country's urban renewal efforts during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period. China Central Television spoke to Zheng Degao, vice-president of the China Academy of Urban Planning and Design and Tang Daizhong, deputy head of the construction management and real estate department at Tongji University, to discuss the sustainable development aspects of this plan. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

China's urban development is shifting from a model focused on expansion to a more intensive and quality-oriented approach. This new stage of development emphasizes the construction of modern cities that are innovative, desirable to live in, beautiful, resilient, culturally advanced and smart. These principles must translate into concrete actions, projects and real-life scenarios to deliver tangible results.

The urban renewal plan identifies six major tasks: fostering new drivers of urban development, creating high-quality urban living spaces, advancing the green and low-carbon transition, building safer and more resilient cities, promoting urban culture, and enhancing urban governance capabilities. It also stresses the need to optimize underutilized land, introduce full life-cycle safety management systems for housing, construct or renovate "quality homes" and upgrade urban municipal infrastructure.

Urban renewal is fundamentally a safety project. Risks are often concentrated in large cities, so it is essential to focus on safety. Aging infrastructure, deteriorating buildings and outdated public facilities pose risks, necessitating renewal and upgrades.

At the same time, managing urban safety requires a systematic approach. Cities are increasingly expected to leverage digital technologies and monitoring systems to detect risks early, issue timely warnings and respond before problems escalate.

A comprehensive urban assessment is the critical first step in the renewal process. By examining the condition of buildings and residential compounds, cities can identify existing problems and residents' needs. For example, there may be a shortage of parking facilities, structural risks in an aging building or insufficient public services for seniors and children.

However, identifying problems is only the beginning. The real challenge lies in addressing them through targeted renovation, upgrades and quality improvement. This is why the principle of "no renewal without assessment" has become a core component of the urban renewal framework. It creates a closed-loop process in which assessments uncover problems, and those findings guide the design and implementation of renewal projects.

According to the plan, future urban renewal projects are expected to draw on three major sources of funding: public finance, financial capital and private capital, with each serving a distinct function.

Public funding will provide the foundation and serve as a safeguard, particularly for projects with strong public-interest characteristics. Public finance can also act as seed capital to attract additional financing.

Financial capital is to play a leveraging role, addressing the mismatch between the long investment cycles of urban renewal projects and the slower pace of returns. Since many renewal projects require years to generate stable revenue, long-term financing is essential to bridge the gap and ensure that future cash flows cover the current investment costs.

The third crucial source of funding is private capital. Some private capital, such as real estate developers and professional operators can revitalize projects, improve efficiency and create sustainable business models where future operating revenues help offset the initial investment.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:53 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:53 PM

VIEWS

Massoud Amin

Beyond megawatts, coordination is civilization



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

For 40 years, I have watched the world count megawatts and then act surprised when the lights begin to flicker. Power generation is easy to photograph. Grids are harder.

A new wind farm makes for a better picture than a new transformer, so national scorecards happily tally how much clean power a country has generated, and much less happily ask whether that power can actually reach a person, a factory, or a hospital when it is needed.

This is not a small oversight. It is the central misunderstanding of energy transition.

Electricity is the only product in modern times that has zero "shelf life".

It must be produced and consumed in the same instant — unless we have massive storage capacity. A cargo ship of grain can wait in a harbor. An electron cannot.

The moment a kilowatt leaves a turbine, it has less than a second to find a load, or the system destabilizes. That second — and the coordination that governs it — is the real infrastructure.

It also decides whether a terawatt-hour is a public good or a stranded asset.

The most important number in the energy transition is not installed capacity.

It is the grid's coordination capacity that carries it.

Consider the region that, on paper, should have the least energy problems on Earth.

The Inner Mongolia autonomous region holds roughly 57 percent of China's onshore wind resources and about a fifth of its solar resources.

In 2025, it added 35 gigawatts of new renewable energy capacity, bringing its total installed renewable capacity to over 170 GW.

Wind power capacity alone surpassed 100 GW for the first time, making it the first region in China to exceed that threshold. Ten-megawatt onshore turbines, unheard of a decade ago, are spinning at scale.

None of that works without the second sentence of the story.

As of Dec 28, 2025, Inner Mongolia had transmitted a cumulative 834.765 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity to 11 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities via eight ultra-high-voltage power transmission corridors, ranking first in China.

Twelve more UHV projects are planned for the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, and the region's outbound electricity over those five years is expected to exceed a trillion kilowatt-hours.

The megawatts are the flag. The coordination is the country.

Inner Mongolia's renewable build is impressive because it is attached to long-haul transmission, coal-fired flexibility, growing storage capacity and dispatch logic that can balance a system whose primary fuel is weather.

A desert photovoltaic array with nowhere to send its output is an expensive curiosity.

The same array sitting behind a UHV corridor, digital substations, forecasting, storage, and a control room that coordinates across time zones is a national asset.

Compare that with places that built capacity but deferred the grid.

Germany raced ahead on wind and solar and paid for it in years of curtailment and redispatch charges.

Texas froze in February 2021 because capacity alone could not anticipate a storm.

California has prolonged blackouts during heat waves; its capacity charts insist it should not have relied so heavily on new energy sources.

In each case, the megawatts were there. The coordination was not.

What the 20th century built was an electro-mechanical grid: copper, iron, oil, and operators reading dials.

What we are now building is a cognitive grid — sensing at every node; forecasting at every substation; dispatching decisions, or resource planning at a power plant by the plant's operator, in milliseconds; and cyber defenses running alongside physical ones.

The hardware still matters. The intelligence layered on top decides whether a renewable-heavy system is resilient or fragile.

I have argued for four decades — created and led the Complex Interactive Networks/Systems Initiative (CIN/SI), a $30 million joint EPRI/US Department of Defense program from 1998 to 2002 — that a grid must be smart, secure, self-healing, and trusted, not just large.

"Trusted" is a technical word. It means the system must keep serving society irrespective of storms, attacks, component failures and ordinary human error.

Capacity without trust is a brittle machine. Trust without capacity is a slogan.

The playbook is now visible for any region aiming to do what Inner Mongolia is doing: Build generation and transmission as a single project; integrate storage and flexibility from day one; harden the cyber and physical layers together; and train operators for a grid that behaves nothing like the one they trained on.

Accept that the grid is no longer a passive delivery pipe.

It is an active participant in economic development. A nation that grasps this is not just decarbonizing. It is upgrading its civic infrastructure for the next century.

The most underappreciated object in the energy transition is the transmission line. It is also the most honest.

It records, in copper and steel, exactly how serious a region is about integrating its own ambitions.

Capacity targets are easy to write. Corridors are not. A region that has built both is telling you something about how it intends to grow.

So when another ranking of renewable capacity crosses my desk, I note the number and ask a different question: Where is the coordination?

Where is the grid that can actually carry it? That, more than any megawatt count, is the real competitive advantage of the twenty-first century.

Civilizations that master coordination — of electrons, of data, of capability, of trust — tend to do well.

Those that only master capacity tend to hear a lot of celebratory speeches, right up until the lights begin to flicker.

The author is an IEEE and ASME fellow, chairman and president of Energy Policy and Security Associates, CTO of Renewable Energy Partners, and a professor emeritus, former director, and Honeywell/H.W. Sweatt Chair in Technological Leadership at the University of Minnesota.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Henry Wai-chung Yeung

Asia's strategic shift from dominance to diversity

Imagine a world where your latest iPhone bears the inscription, "Designed by Apple in California, assembled in California".

Such a scenario would not only bypass the enormous growth of China as the key assembly hub for billions of iPhones since 2007, but also prevent the emergence of Chinese smartphone giants such as Huawei, Xiaomi, Oppo, Vivo and Honor among others.

What's more, without China's involvement, consumers in the United States and across the world would not be able to afford iPhones designed and made in California due to their prohibitive costs.

When I was growing up in Hong Kong during the 1980s, brands such as Motorola, Nokia, and Sony dominated the mobile phone market.

It was the time when Japanese electronic products and cars were conquering world markets, reinforcing the "Flying Geese" model of economic development propounded by Japanese economist Kaname Akamatsu. The model depicting Japan as the leading goose and other East Asian economies as its followers was popular in academic and policy circles.

But this "Flying Geese" model has now evolved into a more complex yet resilient economic landscape, where regional and national economies are steering their industrial transformation and economic development through strategic coupling with global production networks.

In today's interconnected world, no single national economy can control and dominate an entire value chain because production networks now stretch across many regions and continents.

Taking the iPhone as an example, its emergence as the smartphone that replaced Motorola from the United States, Nokia from Finland, and Sony (Ericsson) from Japan by the early 2010s was not merely because it was "designed in California", but also due to the incredible production efficiency and strong supply chain ecosystem developed by its main "assembler" Foxconn in Shenzhen and elsewhere in China.

These resilient supplier networks were strategically coupled with Apple to support its phenomenal rise.

In fact, the growth and development of the global smartphone industry, including key components such as advanced semiconductors, is largely due to the strategic coupling of Foxconn and other key suppliers with global leaders such as Apple, Huawei, and Xiaomi.

Their inter-firm networks, driven by economic efficiency and mutual interests, have spurred regional growth in Guangdong, Taiwan and other parts of China.

While Japan and Japanese firms (for example Sony and its sensors and lenses for smartphone cameras) continue to play a significant role in global smartphone production networks, the center of gravity in this industrial segment has clearly shifted from Japan to China and the Republic of Korea.

This supply-side story, however, masks an even more significant shift in the Asia-Pacific region — the rise of East Asia as a major market since the mid-2010s. This trend is evident across smartphones, personal computers, consumer electronics and electrical appliances.

Hong Kong, the place where I grew up, relied heavily on the US and Western Europe as key markets. But today, Northeast and Southeast Asia have become important consumers of global smartphones. It's not just Japan that has lost its lead goose status in technology. The US is also no longer the world's largest market.

What lessons can we draw for under standing the resilience of supply chains in an increasingly uncertain world?

First, the Asia-Pacific region will continue to play a pivotal role in building resilient supply chains, particularly in the electronics industry.

Instead of fragmenting and decoupling from global production networks, leading firms and their ecosystems will likely adopt a resilient symbiotic approach, shifting from a US-centric model to one more focused on the Asia-Pacific.

This shift will present more opportunities for East Asian businesses, particularly in China, to establish production networks that are less reliant on the US.

In the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, significant opportunities exist in the electronics industry along the technology corridor comprising Shenzhen, Dongguan-Foshan, Hong Kong, and Guangzhou.

Second, as Japan's technological dominance during the "Flying Geese" era has been eclipsed by China and other East Asian economies, geopolitical rivalries and techno-nationalism will create new opportunities for regions to engage in strategic coupling with Asia-based global production networks.

My earlier book *Strategic Coupling* highlighted how East Asian Tiger economies developed by aligning domestic firms with global leaders across industries.

In today's new era of geopolitical uncertainty, I foresee more regional economies in the Asia-Pacific aligning with Asia-based leading firms in their diversification and resilience strategies.

This flexible reorganization of Asia-based global production networks will unlock new development opportunities within the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. But unlike the 1980s, it will not be dominated by one leading goose.

Instead, it will be a new geographical mosaic of multi-nodal networks and development patterns that are more resilient and capable of absorbing risks.

This regional resilience and production network diversification will serve the world economy far better than one that champions "Designed in California, assembled in California". De-globalization and decoupling are outdated; the world should now engage with re-globalization and recoupling!

The author is a leading economic geographer and the Choh-Ming Li Professor of Geography and Resource Management at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Yu Haiyan and Zhou Xinyu

Using AI to protect mental health

As the world marks International Children's Day on June 1, it's a time for joy and anticipation for children across the country.

While parents get ready to celebrate this occasion, they should also remember the significance of another day that just passed. May 25 was National Student Mental Wellness Day.

Beyond the gifts and the fun at amusement parks on International Children's Day, how can we lay a strong foundation for our children's mental health?

The solution extends beyond doctors and hospitals. It requires a collective effort to address a growing crisis in our schools and colleges.

A 2025 study of middle school students in Chongqing revealed troubling statistics: about 26.34 percent of the 12,367 children showed signs of depression.
Consider the case of "Qi Qi" (not her real name), a 14-year-old student from a middle school in Chongqing.

At school, Qi Qi always kept to herself and rarely communicated with her classmates.

Everyone thought she was just shy, but her sadness grew wildly inside her. One day, after a math test, Qi Qi broke down crying and said she didn't want to go to school anymore — she didn't want to exist in this world anymore.

Qi Qi's story is a wake-up call. We live in an age of artificial intelligence and digital footprints.

These tools should be used to protect our children. This is where "digital phenotyping" comes in.

The concept may sound complex, but it simply means using data from devices — such as phones and watches — to understand a child's behavior.

This is not science fiction, but a necessary measure.

AI can look for small changes that parents or teachers might miss. For example, a sudden drop in messages or calls, and more late-night screen time than usual. These can be early warning signs.

This is not about surveillance, but about stepping in early to help.

At the First Affiliated Hospital of Chongqing Medical University, a national regional medical center for mental health disorders, physicians are exploring how to combine data — such as facial expressions and voice tones — with AI to build models that can identify emotional issues early.

Such technological innovations alone are not enough. We must also look at the underlying causes that are troubling children.

The pressure to get good grades in academics and the erosion of close family support are genuine problems.

The Ministry of Education's "double reduction" policy was a good first step to ease school stress, but a broader shift in mindset is needed.

We must value emotional strength as much as we value academic achievements.

The family can become the "charging station" for a child's emotional well-being. Simple daily habits can make a big difference. Turn lectures into conversations.

Instead of asking, "Why did you fail?", try "You look upset. Want to talk about it?" Create "magic time" for the family by setting aside 15 minutes after dinner to disconnect from devices and engage in playful activities. Dance like silly people, play with Lego, or just laugh.

Let the stress melt away. Have "failure parties" to celebrate mistakes as learning moments.

When children see that a wrong answer or poor grades are not the end of the world, it reduces their fear of failure.

This is not empty talk. Real action is underway. As part of the "Sunshine Mind Regional Collaborative Alliance for Youth Development", we are launching six projects, including the "Sunshine Mind Volunteer Service Team", "Adolescent Sleep Health Promotion Project" and the "Care Plan for Children in Need".

These programs bring mental health services directly to schools, communities and families. They move us from random, disconnected efforts to a clear, organized system of care.

Qi Qi's story ends well. With counseling, her parents' loving support, and a school program that encouraged outdoor play, she slowly found joy again.

As we celebrate June 1, let us remember that the best gift we can give our children is not a toy, but the tools to understand and manage their inner world.

By using ethical AI, strong family bonds, and community support, we can help every child not just survive — but truly thrive.

Yu Haiyan is the principal investigator at the First Affiliated Hospital of Chongqing Medical University; and Zhou Xinyu is the dean and a physician at the same institute.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:53 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:53 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

EDSON PRESTES

Answering shared needs

China and Brazil are working together to establish an AI ecosystem that can promote sustainable development and social progress



China is an excellent example of how to make science, technology and education a driving force for economic and social progress.

In 2025, China's research and development spending exceeded 3.9 trillion yuan ($576 billion), with the R&D spending intensity reaching 2.8 percent of GDP, according to the National Bureau of Statistics. The total number of R&D personnel in the country ranked first in the world in 2024. During the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period, China achieved a series of significant breakthroughs in fields such as quantum technology, life sciences, material sciences and space sciences. According to China's Ministry of Science and Technology, in the field of artificial intelligence, China has developed several general-purpose models reaching international advanced levels, with some models achieving accuracy rates exceeding 95 percent, and it has created over 100 benchmark application scenarios. AI has empowered a wide range of industries, contributing to China's high-quality development. This progress is closely linked to the development of China's education sector during the 14th Five-Year Plan period. According to the Ministry of Education, over this period, China's higher education system produced 55 million graduates. Vocational education supplied over 70 percent of the new high-quality, highly skilled personnel for modern industries, supporting the cultivation and development of new productive capacities.

These achievements are the outcomes of the enormous investment that China has made in technology, science and education for the benefit of its society in the past several decades. What China has achieved in its economic and social development deserves attention and should be shared as best practices worldwide.

In the spirit of sharing best practices and collaborating for the common good, China has been an incredible partner for Brazil in domains such as health, industry, green energy, telecommunications and AI. In April, China and Brazil signed a memorandum of understanding on AI research and development, human capacity building programs and the technological infrastructure for AI. Among the planned activities are the development of AI solutions adapted for the Brazilian context such as language translator systems, cybersecurity solutions and the creation of an interoperable data platform in a cloud environment. Furthermore, the MoU aims to promote exchanges of researchers, technical visits and development of joint courses and programs.

Collaboration and cooperation are the best ways to move forward. No one can aspire to a better future without collaborating and cooperating with others, especially in the digital domain, where AI knows no borders.

Another remarkable collaboration was established in October 2025, between the National Institute of the Semi-Arid and China Agricultural University. This collaboration seeks to leverage the best competency and expertise of both countries in a complementary way for their mutual benefit. Brazil is one of the world's largest food producers, with vast experience in tropical agriculture and knowledge of diverse soils and biomes, while China has a huge capacity for innovation and high-tech manufacturing. Therefore, Brazil and China are natural and complementary partners to develop solutions for family farming based on high-end technology powered by AI and joint human capacity building programs.

China and Brazil have collaborated in this area for several years, producing meaningful results. For example, some rural producers who used to spend over 20 days harvesting a hectare of rice now complete the operation in one day using Chinese agricultural machinery. In 2025, an MoU was signed between the Institute for Digital Economy and Artificial Systems in Xiamen, China, and the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, focusing on AI policy development, joint research and talent cultivation to address common challenges faced by both countries such as the shortage of AI specialists in fields such as AI governance and safety, development of standardized protocols for data sharing, and certification programs for algorithmic transparency, among other things.

Beyond these examples, there are networks and laboratories involving Brazil and China, such as the China-BRICS AI Development and Cooperation Center, which includes representatives from BRICS countries and aims to leverage AI technologies to promote sustainable development, economic growth and social progress among the BRICS members. Furthermore, in 2025, China and Brazil inaugurated China-Brazil Belt and Road Joint Laboratory on Tropical Microbiology for the prevention and research of infectious diseases. This initiative aims to strengthen bilateral cooperation in the health field to combat existing and future infectious diseases through prevention, preparedness and response.

The aforementioned examples demonstrate the collaborative relationship between China and Brazil as well as their shared commitment to creating win-win solutions in a sustainable way. Although the projects currently focus on both countries, their results can be shared globally, since the issues addressed, such as the shortage of AI specialists and the lack of frameworks that allow the development of AI or the creation of an AI ecosystem, are pervasive among Global South countries. These countries are generally absent from debates regarding some regulations and frameworks for AI that are currently being created by the West and used as templates for the rest of the world. The problem is that these "global" frameworks do not correctly reflect the reality of some developing countries.



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

Some Global South countries face unequal realities, exhibiting different levels of maturity in AI, whether in terms of technical capacity, infrastructure or regulation. The cooperation between China and Brazil is very beneficial as it involves two major Global South countries working together to find ways to address their own problems that are also problems of other developing countries.

Collaboration and cooperation are the best ways to move forward. No one can aspire to a better future without collaborating and cooperating with others, especially in the digital domain, where AI knows no borders.

The author is the head of the Phi Robotics Research Group at the Informatics Institute at Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

TOMAS CHAMORRO-PREMUZIC

At the top of the game

The rapid adoption of AI is changing how leadership is defined, assessed and developed



Nearly four years after the mainstream arrival of generative artificial intelligence, most organizations are still struggling to understand what it actually means for work. The dominant narrative has focused on job displacement: which roles will disappear, which will survive, and which new ones will emerge. This framing is intuitive, but incomplete. The real impact of AI is not primarily about eliminating jobs. It is about redefining them.

AI is transforming work at the level of tasks, not roles. It is unbundling jobs into their component parts, automating some, augmenting others, and leaving a smaller but more critical subset firmly in human hands. In doing so, it is quietly reshaping the nature of human contribution at work. The implication is not that humans are becoming obsolete, but that the bar for what constitutes valuable human input is rising.

This shift has profound consequences for leadership, talent and the broader labor market.

Many organizations are confusing activity with progress. According to survey findings presented by Nicholas Bloom of Stanford University, most surveyed firms reported using some form of AI technology, with overall adoption at about 69 percent across the sample. Yet these impressive figures often mask a more sobering reality: there is little evidence of corresponding productivity gains. Employees are frequently doing the same work as before, only faster or with less effort. Crucially, the time saved is rarely reinvested in higher-value activities.

This is not a productivity revolution. It is, at best, a more efficient version of the status quo. At worst, it is what one might call performative productivity, where the appearance of progress substitutes for actual value creation.

The underlying issue is that most organizations have not redesigned work. They have layered AI onto existing processes rather than rethinking those processes from first principles. As Peter Drucker famously observed, there is nothing so useless as doing efficiently what should not be done at all. AI risks amplifying precisely this problem, enabling organizations to do more of the wrong things, faster.

This is where leadership becomes critical.

If AI is the defining technological challenge of our time, then leadership is the defining organizational challenge. Leaders must decide not only how to deploy AI, but what work should exist in the first place. They must move beyond adoption metrics and focus on value creation. This requires a level of judgment that no algorithm can substitute for.



WANG JUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Paradoxically, as AI becomes more capable, the importance of human judgment increases. One reason is that AI generates what might be called artificial certainty. Large language models produce answers that are coherent, confident and often persuasive, even when they are incorrect. The risk is not that people will distrust AI, but that they will trust it too much.

Distinguishing between high-quality insight and plausible nonsense is fast becoming a core professional skill. It is also a leadership skill.

This raises an uncomfortable question. If the value of human work is shifting toward judgment, decision-making and problem framing, how well equipped are today's leaders to meet that standard?

The evidence is not encouraging. For decades, leadership selection has been driven by flawed assumptions. Organizations tend to overvalue past performance, even though success is often context-specific and difficult to replicate. They place excessive emphasis on experience and technical expertise, despite strong evidence that personality and cognitive ability are more robust predictors of long-term potential. And they continue to reward confidence and charisma, traits that are easy to observe but only weakly related to effectiveness.

These biases help explain why so many organizations end up with leaders who look impressive but underperform. In an AI-enabled world, this problem is likely to become more visible, not less. When information and technical expertise are widely accessible, the marginal value of leadership shifts to areas where humans still have an advantage: setting direction, exercising judgment, building teams and influencing others.

This has important implications for how organizations identify and develop talent.

First, talent identification must become more data-driven. AI can play a useful role here, not as a replacement for human decision-making, but as a tool for improving it. By analyzing large datasets on leadership behavior and outcomes, organizations can identify patterns that are difficult to detect through intuition alone. This can help reduce bias and improve the accuracy of selection decisions.

However, data is only as useful as the framework used to interpret it. Without a clear understanding of what drives performance, more data can simply lead to more noise. This is where science matters. Decades of research in organizational psychology have identified a relatively small set of variables that reliably predict leadership effectiveness, including cognitive ability, personality traits and learning agility. Integrating these insights with AI-driven analytics offers a powerful way to improve talent decisions.

Second, leadership development needs to be rethought. Traditional approaches often focus on building strengths, under the assumption that maximizing what individuals are already good at will drive performance. In reality, many leadership failures are caused not by a lack of strengths, but by the presence of unaddressed weaknesses, particularly those linked to personality derailers. Traits such as overconfidence, volatility or excessive risk-taking can undermine effectiveness, especially under pressure.

In this context, the most effective development strategies are those that help leaders manage their risks, not just amplify their strengths. This is especially important in an AI-enabled environment, where the consequences of poor judgment can be magnified.

Third, organizations need to reconsider which capabilities are uniquely human and therefore worth investing in. As AI takes over routine cognitive tasks, the comparative advantage of humans lies in areas such as critical thinking, creativity, social influence and ethical reasoning. These are not new skills, but they are becoming more valuable.

Unfortunately, education systems and corporate training programs have been slow to adapt. They continue to emphasize knowledge over thinking skills, and technical proficiency over judgment. This mismatch risks producing a workforce that is not prepared for tomorrow's challenges.

Finally, there is a broader societal dimension to consider. The transformation of work driven by AI raises important questions about governance, inequality, and social stability. Policymakers face the difficult task of balancing innovation with regulation, ensuring that the benefits of AI are widely shared while mitigating its risks.

This will require a more nuanced approach than the binary debates that often dominate public discourse. Overregulation can stifle innovation, while underregulation can lead to unintended consequences and negative ethical and societal outcomes. The goal should not be to control AI, but to shape its application in ways that enhance human capability and societal well-being.

In this sense, the challenge is not technological, but institutional. It is about how organizations and societies adapt to a new distribution of human and machine capabilities. The same is true at the business level. AI will not replace leaders but will expose them. It will make it easier to see who adds value and who does not. It will reduce the returns to superficial competence and increase the premium on genuine expertise and sound judgment.

For organizations willing to rethink how they define, assess and develop leadership, this represents an opportunity. For those that are not, it represents a risk.

The future of work will not be determined by AI alone. It will be determined by how effectively humans choose to use it. This is why effective leaders will be an integral part of the future.

The author is the chief science officer at Russell Reynolds Associates. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:53 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:53 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

Tokens are China's next goldmine

As service exports, they are seen offsetting traditional trade risks

By CHENG YU
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

In a small apartment somewhere in Southeast Asia, a designer taps a phone screen and asks an artificial intelligence tool to sharpen a blurred product photo, soften the lighting and remove a messy background.

The request looks weightless. It travels as text and pixels, invisible and almost instant. But behind it is a new kind of Chinese export: not a toy, a solar panel, an electric vehicle or a container of electronics, but a string of AI "tokens" produced by servers running in China and sold as a digital service to overseas users.

In April, South China's port city of Shantou, Guangdong province, had completed China's first city-level closed-loop verification for token exports. It was a full process covering offshore data centers, token generation, overseas application programming interface requests and compliant cross-border data transmission and meant that overseas users in parts of Southeast Asia had begun calling AI services powered by tokens generated in Shantou.

The language is technical, but the ambition is straightforward: China wants to turn domestic electricity, data centers and large-language-model capability into a high-value export product.

Under this model, the power stays inside China. The servers stay inside China. The models run inside Chinese intelligent computing centers. What crosses borders is the AI service itself — inference results delivered through an API.

That makes "token exports" a new form of services trade. Traditional computing-power globalization often meant heavy investment abroad: building data centers, laying fiber, securing local energy supply and operating networks in foreign markets. Token exports promise something different: electricity does not leave the grid, computing power does not leave the country, but value flows globally.

Liu Xiaoge, deputy director of research at the development strategy and regional economy department of the Development Research Center of China's State Council, said: "Token exports have become the deep integration of artificial intelligence technology and digital trade in China. They have become a completely new form of digital services trade."

"At a time when China's traditional trade faces geopolitical and tariff challenges, token exports, with their purely digital and zero-logistics delivery model, provide a new way to offset the risks of traditional trade frictions and drive growth in services trade. They will reshape the position of China's digital services in the global value chain," Liu said.

The experiment also offers a glimpse of how China is trying to rewire its export economy for the AI age. For decades, the country's growth was powered by factories, ports and container ships. The next phase may depend as much on offshore cable landing stations, green electricity, GPUs, compliance zones and APIs.

For instance, Shantou's international submarine cable landing station gives it a direct route into Southeast Asia. Shantou carries a large share of China's international outbound bandwidth and provides a low-latency direct node to Singapore, making it one of the fastest Chinese gateways to the region.

The city also sits near large offshore wind resources, giving its token-export story a green-energy narrative that matters to global clients under pressure to meet environmental, social and governance standards.

That is why China's policymakers are paying attention. In the 2026 Government Work Report, Beijing called for new infrastructure projects involving large-scale smart computing clusters and the coordinated development of computing capacity and electricity supply. It also pledged integrated monitoring and distribution of computing capacity across the country and support for public cloud services.

The logic is already visible in China's northwestern regions. In Qingyang, Gansu province, white wind turbines turn slowly over ochre hills, and rows of blue-black photovoltaic panels catch the hard northwestern sun. Instead of being pushed entirely through ultra-high-voltage lines to distant factories and cities, part of that green electricity can be consumed nearby by data centers.

The current runs into racks of servers. GPUs turn electrons into matrix multiplication. The model produces tokens. A user thousands of miles away sees an edited image, a generated paragraph, a line of code or a customer-service answer.

From outside the China Energy Engineering Corp project area in Qingyang, data center buildings operated by Kingsoft Cloud, China Telecom and Chindata can be seen rising nearby. Qingyang has already built 11 data centers, created a domestic 10,000-card computing cluster and surpassed 140,000 petaflops of computing scale.

In the old export economy, a city needed factories. In the token economy, it needs power, fiber, servers, regulation and an ability to guarantee low-latency service.

Now, Shantou and Qingyang do not need to become the next great AI model laboratories. They can become AI trade infrastructure: the service desk for computing power, the customs broker for tokens, and the bonded zone for cross-border data flows.

Wang Peng, a researcher of Beijing Academy of Social Sciences, said: "Token exports are a concentrated expression of China's combined competitive advantages in energy, data, infrastructure and engineering talent. In the context of a deeply reshaped global trade landscape, supporting token exports will help extend China's trade competitiveness into intelligent computing power and has major, far-reaching significance for shaping new drivers of foreign trade."

The timing is important. Global AI spending is surging, and the most expensive layer is infrastructure. Gartner forecast worldwide AI spending would reach $2.52 trillion in 2026, up 44 percent from 2025. It estimated AI infrastructure spending alone would rise from about $965 billion in 2025 to $1.37 trillion in 2026.

That scale creates a massive opportunity for countries that can provide cheap, reliable and increasingly green computing capacity. China sees a chance to sell not merely applications, but the underlying intelligent service.

The demand signal is already visible in developer behavior. OpenRouter, a global AI model API aggregation platform, reported that Chinese-developed open-source models rose from a tiny share of weekly token volume in late 2024 to nearly 30 percent in some weeks in 2025, with growth concentrated in the second half of the year. DeepSeek, Qwen, MiniMax and Moonshot AI were among the Chinese model families gaining traction in its dataset.

In early 2026, Chinese model token calls continued to climb with Chinese models overtaking US rivals in token usage for the first time.

For Chinese telecom operators and tech companies, that creates a new business line.

State-owned telecom carrier China Telecom announced in late April a series of trial token plans, offering consumers monthly AI usage packages starting at 9.9 yuan ($1.46) for 10 million tokens. Small businesses and developers can purchase enterprise packages with up to 150 million monthly tokens for 39.9 yuan.

Alibaba has announced a new Alibaba token hub business group, defining tokens as a strategic asset and setting out three missions: creating tokens, transmitting tokens and applying tokens.

It has said it will invest more than 380 billion yuan over three years to build a global cloud computing network, using full-chain capabilities in models, computing power and chips to support token exports.

Rao Shaoyang, director of the industry and enterprise strategy at China Telecom's research institute, said such efforts change the nature of Chinese digital globalization.

"In the past, China's digital industries went overseas through apps, software or complete systems. Token exports allow overseas customers to directly call the inference capability, interface capability and intelligent services of Chinese models," he said.

"The model could also alter the economics of China's renewable energy buildout. China has installed vast amounts of wind and solar power, especially in western and northern provinces," he added.

Wang Linwei, an engineer at China Energy Engineering Corp's Qingyang big data center, added that computing-power and electricity coordination has already formed several clear and feasible paths.

These include direct green-power purchases and direct green-power connections, integrated source-grid-load-storage dispatch, flexible peak-shifting of computing loads, and linked regulation between energy storage and computing power, he explained.

"Whether through one-way regulation or two-way interaction, computing-power and electricity coordination has a broad development space," he emphasized.

Wuxi giving AI something new: a factory address

REPORTER'S LOG

By Cheng Yu

A phrase that recently gave me pause is "token factory", as Wuxi, one of China's most seasoned manufacturing cities, is preparing to give artificial intelligence something it has rarely had before: a factory address.

Not a factory that stamps metal parts, assembles circuit boards or loads containers onto trucks, but one designed to produce the measurable units consumed by large AI models — tokens.

On May 15, Honflex signed an agreement with the local government to build Jiangsu province's first Huawei Ascend 384 super-node computing cluster. On top of that infrastructure, Hongxin Electronics plans to establish a large-scale token factory in the city.

The first phase will deploy four Huawei Ascend 384 super-node servers. Each server carries 384 AI accelerator cards, and the four will be connected into one super cluster. In China's emerging market-facing token factory sector, that scale is being described as among the largest.

At first, the phrase sounds almost theatrical. But the more I followed the logic, the more industrial it became. A token is the basic unit processed by an AI model. Every chatbot reply, AI coding request, image-editing command or automated report consumes tokens.

A token factory is an industrialized production facility dedicated to producing the basic units of AI generation — tokens. Inside the token factory are computing-power infrastructure, models and algorithms, scheduling and distribution systems, and a MaaS — model-as-a-service — platform.

This is where Wuxi's story becomes larger than one data-center project. China's AI debate has long revolved around who has the smartest model. Wuxi is asking a more industrial question: can intelligence be supplied continuously, reliably and at scale?

Shen Yang, a professor of Tsinghua University's School of Journalism and Communication, said: "A token factory is the most important factory of the intelligent age. It can turn electricity and data into cognitive productive capacity."

The value of the concept, Shen said, is that it shifts the AI industry's narrative from "how smart the model is" to "whether intelligence can be continuously supplied."

That line captures the real significance of the Wuxi project. The city is not merely adding another computing cluster. It is trying to insert itself into China's next industrial chain — one built around domestic chips, domestic models and domestic applications.

Honflex said the project marks a key step in its domestic AI computing-power layout and an important breakthrough for Wuxi in implementing China's East Data, West Computing strategy and building a domestic computing ecosystem.

Shen added one more condition: global delivery.

"The token factory means it faces not a single market, but global division of labor," he said. "In the future, a country that truly qualifies as a world factory will certainly not be one that keeps models only at home, but one that can export intelligent services to the world."

Standing before this idea, I saw the old Chinese factory model being rewritten. The assembly line has not disappeared. It has become invisible. Its output moves not by truck or ship, but through an application programming interface call. The customer may never see Wuxi. But if the city succeeds, a piece of machine intelligence somewhere on a screen may begin here — inside a token factory.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:53 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:53 PM

BUSINESSINSIGHT

Stabilizing Asia-Pacific economic, trade foundation

EAGLE EYE
By Zhao Zhongxiu



CAI MENG / CHINA DAILY

The global economic and trade landscape is undergoing profound restructuring, with geopolitical tensions becoming increasingly complex and a new round of technological revolution and industrial transformation gathering pace.

As challenges such as climate change and demographic shifts become increasingly intertwined, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation economies face a shared imperative — to build a fair, rational and sound rule-based system, stabilize the Asia-Pacific's economic and trade fundamentals, and strengthen the resilience of industrial and supply chains.

Against such a backdrop, advancing the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific, or FTAAP, represents a viable pathway and strategic choice to address development bottlenecks, consolidate the foundation for coordinated regional development and foster sustainable economic growth across the Asia-Pacific.

As the most inclusive regional cooperation mechanism in the Asia-Pacific, APEC has adopted flexible and diversified cooperation modalities and continued to focus on emerging areas such as the digital economy and green development.

Yet APEC is not a legally binding framework for a free trade agreement, and still faces constraints in rules enforcement, institutional enforceability and implementation effectiveness. This has limited its ability to serve as the anchor for deeper regional economic and trade integration.

It is against such a backdrop that APEC has identified building the FTAAP as a core strategic theme and has steadily advanced the process since 2004. Nevertheless, given its large membership, diverse development stages and divergent interests among members, it has been challenging to build consensus across all parties, and no major breakthrough has yet been achieved toward the realization of the FTAAP.

Fortunately, APEC economies share long-standing economic and trade ties and have maintained relatively stable bilateral and multilateral relations over the years. This has cemented a solid economic foundation and a sound basis for political mutual trust for FTAAP consultations and negotiations.

The key to advancing the FTAAP process lies in exploring innovative pathways and building a practical cooperation framework.

Its development should fully leverage and build on existing regional cooperation initiatives, and advance in a phased and iterative manner. The APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting has delivered a wealth of valuable, forward-looking cooperation themes, which should be systematically and effectively incorporated into the rule-based system of the FTAAP.

In terms of implementation, the FTAAP development process should combine bottom-up and top-down approaches, with the former serving as the mainstay and the latter as a complement.

The bottom-up approach — driven by voluntary and independent initiatives among member economies — can help accurately identify practical pain points and bottlenecks in Asia-Pacific economic and trade cooperation. The top-down approach, meanwhile, can provide overarching regional guidance, facilitate early breakthroughs in areas where consensus is strong and offer forward-looking insights on emerging themes, including digital trade and green trade.

Moreover, the development of the FTAAP should fully draw on the cooperative spirit embodied in APEC's Pathfinder Initiatives and further translate it into FTAAP pathfinder modules.

Under such an approach, interested member economies could conduct pilot thematic negotiations in selected sectors. Outcomes reached by consensus could then be incorporated into a future FTAAP legal framework, creating binding rule-based obligations for participating parties.

Participating parties may proceed with implementation and pilot application upon completing domestic legislative approval and relevant procedural reviews. Should the pilot achieve notable outcomes, relevant practices may be replicated and extended to other economies, paving the way for the gradual accession of new member economies.

For underperforming pilots, the participation scope may be appropriately scaled back, and relevant member economies may withdraw, so as to preserve institutional flexibility and maintain leeway for adjustment.

China's practical explorations in advancing institutional opening-up also tell us the importance of remaining process-oriented and advancing pragmatically for fostering FTAAP cooperation.

For instance, China has formally applied to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership and Digital Economy Partnership Agreement. Although accession is still under negotiation and consultation, China has already used its pilot free trade zones to proactively benchmark against the open, inclusive and high-standard rules embodied in the two agreements, while carrying out pilot programs and stress tests.

Through this process, China has worked to drive deeper reforms and deliver concrete results. Proven and effective measures have also been replicated beyond the pilot free trade zones.

FTAAP cooperation is, by nature, a long-term process involving a broad agenda and complex interests. In this context, a pragmatic approach — adopting useful rules first, implementing while negotiating and expanding successful pilots over time — may offer a more efficient and practical pathway for advancing FTAAP cooperation.

Looking ahead, efforts to build the FTAAP should take a forward-looking approach to strengthening institutional competitiveness.

First, institutional opening-up should serve as an anchor for improving rule-based systems that promote trade and investment liberalization and facilitation in traditional sectors.

In goods trade, efforts could start with reducing nontariff barriers and advancing mutual recognition of standards and rules. Services trade could then be further opened through a negative-list approach, supported by whole-chain rules covering fair market access, fair competition in business operations and orderly market exit.

On investment, economies could explore a communication and coordination mechanism for dispute settlement, with consultation, mediation and joint expert panels serving as priority channels.

Second, as new drivers of growth continue to take shape, the Asia-Pacific should develop more refined rules for the digital economy and green, low-carbon development.

In the digital economy, efforts could focus on building an Asia-Pacific digital trade framework that clearly defines data-related sovereignty, facilitates orderly cross-border data flows, lowers market barriers and helps narrow digital divides.

Third, greater emphasis should be placed on rules that strengthen the resilience and security of industrial and supply chains.

The region could work toward an Asia-Pacific supply chain community underpinned by stability, diversification, coordination and emergency response capacity. Such a framework should encourage APEC economies to avoid excessive concentration in key industrial chains, and enhance the overall stability of supply chains.

It could also explore a regional reserve-sharing and reallocation mechanism for key components, energy resources, food and medical supplies, so as to better cushion short-term shocks arising from supply shortages.

Finally, stronger rules are also needed to support small and medium-sized enterprises, with a view to fostering a more enabling institutional environment for business growth across the Asia-Pacific.

APEC economies could advance the development of a one-stop service platform for SMEs, providing end-to-end services such as policy information, market matching, cross-border settlement, legal consultation and credit-enhancement support for financing.

Exclusive incentives and simplified procedures for SMEs in the areas of tariff reductions, customs clearance facilitation, government procurement, digital transformation, and green certification could also be promoted.

To conclude, Asia-Pacific economies are deeply interconnected, with shared interests and a common future. The realization of the FTAAP will be a long-term and demanding task. All member economies should remain committed to openness, inclusiveness, mutual benefit and win-win cooperation, seek common ground while shelving differences, and take pragmatic steps forward.

The writer is president of the University of International Business and Economics.
The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Creating new jobs amid evolving tech key

MAIN STREET
By Cai Fang

The relationship between technological change and employment expansion is an old topic, yet one that has not lessened in importance over time. When disruptive technological revolutions occur, whether job creation can ultimately outweigh job destruction remains an unresolved puzzle in economic theory.

Fundamentally, the shock that technological change brings to employment is not that occupations, positions and jobs are only destroyed and never created. The real problem is that job creation and job destruction are often misaligned across space, uneven across time, unequal in scale, and mismatched in terms of skills supply and demand.

Looking back at economic history, these asymmetries have haunted generation after generation of workers like a recurring curse ever since the First Industrial Revolution. Therefore, in an era of rapid artificial intelligence development, the key to ensuring that job creation outpaces job destruction lies in achieving better alignment between the two in terms of timing, geography, scale and skills.

New ways of thinking

To better understand the creative and destructive forces that AI may unleash, we should first look at what is already happening in the labor market.

Many economists believe China's economy has crossed the so-called Lewis Turning Point and machines and robots accelerate the replacement of human labor. The pace of job destruction increases significantly and the number of lost positions rises sharply.

A Lewis Turning Point occurs when a country's surplus labor evaporates, pushing up wages, consumption and inflation rates.

Based on official data estimates, China's urban labor market created a cumulative 154 million new jobs between 2013 and 2024. But not all of them translated into net employment gains. During the same period, cumulative job losses reached 53.62 million.

On the one hand, the spread of AI is expected to amplify this destructive effect on employment. On the other hand, it may also create the possibility for job creation to surpass job destruction.

This places much higher demands on policymakers. In line with an employment first strategy, technological innovation and employment expansion must be made as compatible as possible. At the same time, gains in labor productivity must be transformed into new opportunities, strengthening both the scale and the momentum of job creation.

If we break free from traditional frameworks of understanding and conventional development models, technology aimed at raising labor productivity does not necessarily lead to a net decline in jobs. On the contrary, rising productivity can itself become the catalyst for entirely new employment space.

Create new jobs

In reality, many new occupations do not suddenly appear out of thin air overnight. They have often existed quietly, existing within economic activity for years. But because the market remained too small, the number of jobs they created was negligible.

Only when labor productivity rises dramatically, and when the benefits of that productivity are broadly shared across the society, do more people become consumers of the products and services tied to those occupations. At that point, new professions and new jobs begin to emerge on a meaningful scale.

For decades, neoliberal economics tried to convince people that productivity gains achieved by a handful of large corporations would naturally spill over into society and benefit broader populations — a variation of so-called trickle down economics. Yet the experiences of both developing and developed countries show that this phenomenon is not really effective or beneficial for the society at large.

The lesson here is clear: new occupations, new positions and new forms of employment do not emerge automatically.

Only through a fundamental shift in how we think about development can the immense power, scale, and potential of AI driven productivity gains be turned into broad employment growth. That means starting with a fairer distribution of productivity dividends and tackling structural contradictions in the labor market.

Only then can job creation grow faster and larger than job destruction, breaking what has long been the "century-long curse" of asymmetry between the two.

Breaking century-long asymmetry

Several areas should become central priorities for policy expansion and intervention.

First, while improving the social security system and labor market institutions, governments must significantly strengthen public employment services and make related systems more adaptable to the times and more targeted in their policy tools.

Under the growing penetration and disruption of AI, labor markets will inevitably become more uncertain and more volatile. This is the natural response to the creative destruction brought by disruptive technological change.

Yet one principle must remain clear: people themselves, as the agents of labor, must not become the casualties. Human well being must not be weakened in the slightest.

After all, allowing everyone to share the gains of rising labor productivity is not only an inherent part of technological progress, but increasingly its defining purpose.

This means social security systems must provide more universal and equal welfare protections. Labor market institutions must defend workers' rights to a higher degree. Public employment services must help workers transition into new roles with greater intensity and frequency.

The structural contradictions are already present in the labor market and likely to worsen under AI, meaning job vacancy rates and unemployment rates may rise at the same time.

As a result, public employment services centered around training cannot merely keep pace with changes. They must anticipate trends and changes, and stay one step ahead of them.

Judging from the share of urban workers currently receiving subsidized vocational training, investment still does not match the upward trend in urban unemployment. More public resources should be committed on a long term and normalized basis, making employment training one of the essential public services of the artificial intelligence era.

Second, on the basis of fairly redistributing gains from rising productivity, the society must redefine occupations, positions and work itself, while promoting social mobility and broader human development.

As labor productivity rises sharply and the constraints created by resource scarcity gradually weaken, social wealth will become far more abundant. Under such conditions, the creation of occupations and jobs will no longer be strictly limited by the size of consumer markets, and workers' incomes will no longer necessarily remain tightly linked to productivity alone.

From this perspective, the principles governing the distribution of economic output and social wealth may gradually shift away from a strict "payment according to work" model toward one increasingly shaped by the idea of "meeting people's needs".

Such a transformation is not only an inherent requirement of Chinese modernization. It is also a fundamental path toward addressing the employment shocks brought by AI.

Finally, when it comes to sharing productivity gains and responding to the impact of AI, the most effective institutional tool comes from both the lessons of economic history and the urgent demands of reality: significantly expanding redistribution, so that a growing share of people's livelihoods and well being comes from redistribution, especially through basic public services.

The writer is a member of the Academic Division of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.
The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:53 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:53 PM

CHINA

China renews efforts to assist migrant and left-behind minors

By LI LEI
lilei@chinadaily.com.cn

Central authorities have called for the better tracking of distressed migrant children — those who move from rural to urban areas with their parents — and stronger guarantees of equal access to public services, such as education and healthcare in cities, ahead of International Children's Day, observed annually on June 1.

The move comes as migrant children have surpassed left-behind children — minors who remain in rural hometowns while their parents work in cities — as the main group affected by China's internal migration. Official data from the 2020 national census showed that the number of migrant children age 17 and under stood at 71 million, nearly double the figure recorded in 2010, and exceeded the 66.9 million left-behind children nationwide.

The directives were outlined in a circular jointly released on Saturday by 27 central government departments, including the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the Supreme People's Court and the Ministry of Education.

The document described the renewed effort to identify and assist distressed migrant and left-behind children as part of broader measures to build a child-friendly society.

According to the circular, local authorities are required to carry out "precise screening, accurate filing and targeted services" for millions of vulnerable children.

By September, existing data must be cross-checked with records from education, health and public security authorities, the circular said. Any missing information will trigger door-to-door visits by village-level child welfare workers.

Local civil affairs departments must ensure that these workers dynamically register newly identified migrant and left-behind children through routine visits and public feedback mechanisms. Provinces with a large population of such children should prioritize registration during peak migration periods, such as the spring job-hunting season and school holidays, to avoid omissions.

Authorities are also required to establish key care files for children facing the greatest hardships, including those lacking access to education, healthcare or proper guardianship, and to update the records regularly based on home visits.

The directive mandates equal access to public services for migrant children, including school enrollment based on residency permits and improved cross-regional healthcare coordination.

For left-behind children, the focus will be on addressing guardianship gaps, preventing accidents and abuse, and providing mental health support.

In line with a new risk response mechanism, frontline workers such as teachers and doctors are required to report signs of neglect or abuse.

In cases involving violence or other emergencies, response protocols involving public security authorities, healthcare providers and local women's federations will be activated.

"Local authorities and relevant departments must strengthen supervision and guidance for work involving these two groups of children," the circular said, warning that localities and departments showing weak implementation will face closer oversight.

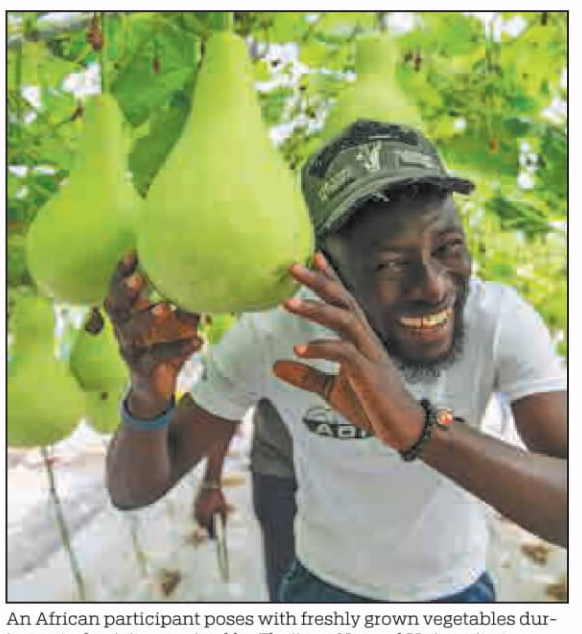
The Ministry of Civil Affairs will incorporate the dynamic case management system into future performance evaluations, the circular added.

Wedding day together



Couples take part in a mass wedding ceremony for doctoral students at Harbin Institute of Technology in Heilongjiang province on Sunday. A total of 187 couples participated in the event, which has become a university tradition since its launch in 2013. WANG SONG / XINHUA

Seeds of exchange



An African participant poses with freshly grown vegetables during a study visit organized by Zhejiang Normal University to a China-Africa agricultural innovation park in Jinhua, Zhejiang province, on Sunday. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Universities target healthy weight loss

More institutions introduce courses to help students achieve fitness goals

By ZOU SHUO
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

A growing number of universities are introducing weight management courses to help students achieve healthier body compositions and develop sustainable lifestyle habits.

The latest to join the trend is Jiangnan University in Jiangsu province. In early April, the university issued a student physique enhancement action plan, which includes mandatory weight management courses for students with a body mass index exceeding 28, as well as fitness courses for those with weaker physical fitness.

The university has also added a 2,000-meter run for female students and a 2,400-meter run for male students as part of its physical education assessment.

Meanwhile, China Agricultural University has been running a successful weight management program for three and a half years.

Launched in the autumn semester of 2022, the university's "fat reduction and health enhancement" series has attracted 707 student enrollments over eight semesters, according to Wu Min, deputy head of the university's physical education department.

The 16-week course begins with a health screening, followed by theoretical lessons on obesity classification, diagnostic criteria, causes and risks, as well as scientific dietary approaches to fat reduction, Wu said.

During the eight-week intensive intervention period, students attend classes three times a week, with each 90-minute session combining strength and aerobic training.

Outside class, students are required to complete aerobic exercise two to three times a week, with each session lasting at least 40 minutes, while managing their own dietary intake. After the intervention period, students continue with four weeks of self-directed exercise and nutrition management before a final assessment, she said.

The course has produced notable health benefits. In 2025, participants in the spring semester lost an average weight loss of 6.09 kilograms, including an average of 5.08 kg of fat, while reducing their body fat percentage by 3.08 percentage points. Their physical fitness test scores improved by an average of 12.70 points.

Results from the autumn semester were also impressive. Participants lost an average of 5.34 kg and 4.23 kg of fat, reduced their body fat percentage by 2.33 percentage points and improved their fitness test scores by an average of 7.76 points.

For many students, the most valuable outcome is not the weight they lose but the healthy habits they gain.

Li Jiajun, a first-year mechanical engineering student at China Agricultural University, said he enrolled in the course to improve his endurance for the university's fitness test and to address postural problems developed during years of sedentary study in high school.

"The biggest takeaway isn't how many kilograms I lost, but the regular exercise and healthy eating habits I've developed — and the healthier body composition I've achieved," Li said.

The weekly strength and aerobic training sessions have helped him overcome his reluctance to exercise. Li added that he has also learned how to plan balanced meals instead of resorting to blind dieting, while his energy levels and physical fitness have improved significantly.

Zhou Zehao, a third-year agricultural science student, weighed about 110 kg at his heaviest. Poor lifestyle habits — including staying up late and consuming high-fat, high-sodium meals — had taken a toll on both his immune system and self-esteem.

"The greatest gain is that I have regained confidence and resilience," Zhou said. "The biggest takeaway from losing weight has never been how many kilograms I shed, but the courage to challenge life's deepest desires for laziness and comfort."

Before joining the program, Zhou said, he would order takeout rather than leave his dormitory. He also felt "invisible" to female students because he lacked the confidence to communicate with them.

After enrolling, he adjusted his diet and began exercising daily for about 40 minutes in a small public workout area in his dormitory building.

"The biggest advantage of this course is that you have a group of friends who encourage each other and keep each other accountable — workout buddies who tease you when you slack off but lend a hand when you truly need it," Zhou said, adding that such genuine human connection is something no online program or fitness influencer's boot camp can replicate.

Parents urged to shun 'digital babysitting' trend

By ZOU SHUO
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

The Ministry of Education has recently launched the 2026 National Preschool Education Publicity Month campaign, urging kindergartens nationwide to ensure that play remains the primary activity for young children and discourage an overreliance on digital devices.

The ministry has also called on parents to adopt child-rearing practices that emphasize companionship, play, sports and time in nature, while discouraging so-called digital babysitting.

It stressed that digital products — such as reading companions, chat-based tools and interactive games — must not replace physical picture books and toys.

Digital tools should also not be used to directly generate child observation records or assessments.

According to the ministry, there are persisting misunderstandings about the role of digital applications in early childhood education, alongside misleading marketing by some commercial entities and the improper or excessive use of digital products by some local authorities and kindergartens.

During the campaign period, a series of public awareness activities will be held nationwide, bringing together professional and social resources to focus on protecting the rights and interests of preschool children in the digital era.

Su Jing, director of Beijing Academy of Educational Sciences' early education research institute, said surveys show that it is common for parents to use electronic devices to keep children occupied.

"In many scenarios, we see young children swiping screens, rapidly switching content, or playing games on tablets and phones," she said.

> "Too much screen time is not good even for adults, let alone little children."
>
> **Shi Xu,** a father of a kindergarten student in Changsha, Hunan province

Addressing growing concerns over so-called digital babysitting — the practice of using digital devices, including artificial intelligence applications, to manage young children's behavior — Su said: "Children aged 3 to 6 are in a stage of concrete thinking and embodied cognition. Their learning relies on physical perception, hands-on activities and real-life social interaction — things that AI products cannot replace."

She also warned of the potential harm of excessive screen time to children's developing vision. Early exposure to blue light and electronic screens is a major contributor to myopia, she said.

"Beyond vision, it can also lead to attention disorders, physical health issues caused by a sedentary lifestyle and other health risks," she added.

Su warned that many parents still turn to digital devices as a quick fix to calm a fussy child, creating a vicious cycle.

"Children learn best through real-life play and hands-on experiences. When that happens, their eyes light up, they are fully engaged and they develop very well," she said.

To safeguard children's healthy development, Su recommended a cautious approach to the use of AI in early childhood settings.

Young children should not use AI products, she said, adding that their learning must be grounded in rich sensory experiences and real-world interactions. Relevant authorities should strictly control the introduction of AI into kindergartens, and AI should not replace the role of teachers.

"A teacher's warmth, care, eye contact and sensitivity to a child's emotions cannot be replaced by algorithms," she said.

Shi Xu, the father of a kindergarten student in Changsha, Hunan province, said he and his wife have established strict rules limiting their daughter's exposure to digital devices.

Although digital devices have become ubiquitous, he said she can learn to use them when she gets older.

"We try to take her out more and let her play with other children. Too much screen time is not good even for adults, let alone little children," he said.

Top court reinforces its strict stance on child abuse

By CAO YIN
caoyin@chinadaily.com.cn

The Supreme People's Court has reinforced its "zero tolerance" policy toward the abuse and mistreatment of minors, underscoring the urgent need for severe penalties to fully safeguard children's health and safety.

The court said that severe punishment is necessary in cases of prolonged abuse, especially those involving cruel methods that result in a minor's death. It urged judges nationwide to take a firm stance against crimes targeting children.

In a landmark case released by the court last week, a woman surnamed Wen was sentenced to death for abusing and injuring a 2-year-old girl.

According to the court, Wen lived with a married man surnamed Tian and his biological daughter from February to December 2023. During that period, Wen and Tian repeatedly abused the child by tying her up, hanging her, forcing her to stand for long periods, and subjecting her to cold and hunger. They also beat her with their fists, slippers, spatulas, wooden sticks and other objects.

On Dec 21, 2023, after Tian left for work, Wen severely beat the girl with a phone charging cable and other objects for wetting the bed, causing her to convulse and collapse. Wen then called Tian, and they took the child to a hospital, where she died.

The lower court found that Wen, acting in collusion with Tian, had committed both abuse and intentional injury. Her long-term and repeated actions, coupled with the beating on the day of the incident directly caused the rupture of the victim's right atrium, leading to her death, the court ruled.

"The woman's behavior severely violated social morality and fundamental human principles," the court said.

Given the heinous nature of the crimes, the cruel methods used and the severe social impact, Wen was sentenced to death for intentional injury and abuse, with lifelong deprivation of political rights. Following review and approval by the court, Wen was executed.

The court added that Tian, as the victim's father, not only failed to stop Wen's abuse but also condoned and participated in it, making him a principal offender. For his role in the crimes, Tian was sentenced to life imprisonment for intentional injury and abuse.

In another case disclosed by the SPC, a teacher promptly reported suspected abuse to a local court after noticing wounds on a teenage girl's face and body. Subsequent investigations found that the girl had been abused by her mother, who was later sentenced to seven years in prison.

The SPC said that child abuse inflicts lasting damage to minors' physical and mental development, disrupts family bonds and erodes social morality. It stressed that such acts are "not merely domestic issues" but are "violations of the law and breaches of basic human ethics".

The court emphasized that the family should be a haven of love, the "first lesson" in a child's healthy development and the "first line of defense" in safeguarding children's rights.

However, some guardians neglect their responsibilities, mistakenly justifying abuse as being "for the child's own good", or even participating in harm following changes in family relationships, the SPC said.

"Such actions turn the family into a place of distress for minors, severely infringe upon their rights, and cross both legal and moral boundaries," it said.

The SPC called for a stronger crackdown on crimes against minors and stressed that guardians must fulfill their responsibilities in caring for, educating and supervising children.

It also urged various sectors of society, including civil affairs departments, women's federations, community committees and public security organs, to strengthen child protection efforts and provide more comprehensive safeguards.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:53 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:53 PM

Editor's note: *As protection of the planet's flora, fauna and resources becomes increasingly important, China Daily is publishing a series of stories to illustrate the country's commitment to safeguarding the natural world.*

Bird on a wire

Ecological engineering improves outcomes for wildlife as nation's electricity grid expands

By **HU YUMENG** and **MA JINGNA** in Lanzhou



A more than decadelong ecological engineering project by the nation's electricity supplier is mitigating the conflict between a rapidly expanding grid network and the habitats of wild birds.

At the Zhangye Heihe Wetland National Nature Reserve in Northwest China's Gansu province, transmission towers have been adapted to become a safe part of the ecosystem for birds such as storks, swans, egrets and herons, that call the wetland home for all or part of the year.

As Gansu lies at a key junction on the Central Asia–India migratory flyway, the province serves as a breeding and wintering ground for hundreds of thousands of migratory birds of more than 300 species.

Wetlands such as the Heihe River basin and forest–grassland zones like Ziwuling are critical ecological corridors.

Transmission networks have expanded across these landscapes in the city of Zhangye, now stretching over 16,000 kilometers in total.

As the grid expanded, a persistent conflict emerged. Birds nesting on towers or perching on conductors could trigger outages, while exposed wires posed lethal risks.

State Grid Gansu Electric Power Co has spent over 10 years adapting its equipment located in wildlife areas, using ecological engineering and smart technologies, so that the two can peacefully coexist.

"Bird nests on transmission towers used to give us headaches," said Liang Xingguang, a transmission line inspector in Zhangye. "Now, we take the initiative to build homes for them."

National electricity supplier State Grid launched the Life Nest project in 2016, with the aim of installing artificial nests and platforms so that wild birds would not be harmed by the grid's infrastructure.

Rolled out initially in the Sanjiangyuan region of Qinghai province, the project was later expanded across seven provinces including Gansu. By 2024, the program had completed nearly 6,600 km of field surveys, installed 5,314 artificial nests and 16 raptor platforms, and helped support the hatching of nearly 4,000 chicks.

In Zhangye, since 2022, engineers have deployed artificial nesting facilities across six high-risk transmission corridors. Around 140 artificial nests have been installed, with an occupancy rate of 26 percent, along with 12 relocated nests.

Developed with ornithologists, the artificial nests are tailored to species such as black storks, gray herons, kestrels and magpies. Built from natural rattan and lined with soft palm fiber, they are wind-resistant, insulated and positioned 20–30 meters above ground — close to natural nesting preferences, but safely away from live conductors.

"In the past, seeing a nest on a tower meant trouble," Liang said. "Now, we build them on purpose."

When nests appear in hazardous positions, crews conduct live-line "gentle relocation", carefully transferring entire nests while preserving their structure and minimizing disturbance.

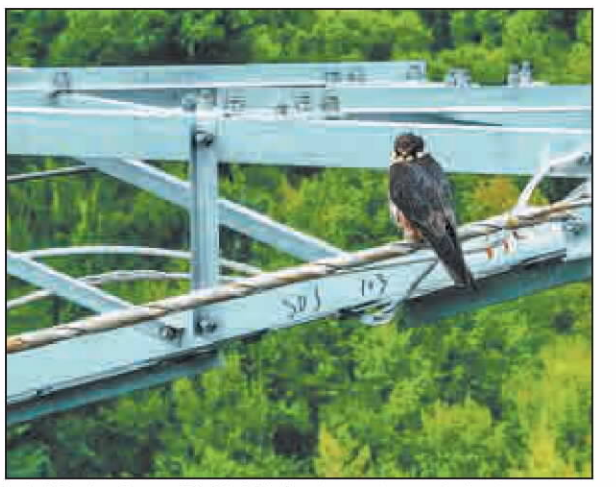
In cooperation with wildlife authorities in Zhangye's Ganzhou district, the program has also supported the release of 53 rehabilitated birds, reinforcing the shift from conflict mitigation to ecological facilitation.





Clockwise from top left: A gray heron, a bird species under second-class state protection, flies over Ziwuling Forest in Qingyang, Gansu province. A State Grid worker hangs an artificial nest in Baiyin, Gansu. Gray herons build a nest in Ziwuling. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY





Left: A flock of ruddy shelducks takes flight over the reeds of Qingtu Lake in Minqin, Gansu. **Right:** A bird rests on a transmission tower cable in Linxia, Gansu.

Across key corridors, more than 30 km of transmission lines in the Heihe Wetland core zone have been wrapped in weather-resistant insulating sheaths — described by workers as "protective suits" for the grid.

"These materials withstand strong ultraviolet radiation and extreme temperature swings," said Shen Qi, a Zhangye transmission line inspector. "They fully cover exposed conductors and eliminate electrocution risks."

Since 2021, the State Grid has surveyed over 5,800 km of bird migration routes, organized nearly 1,300 joint patrols, and rescued more than 15,000 protected birds nationwide.

In Zhangye, these ecological standards have been embedded into grid planning, with transmission routes adjusted to avoid key migratory corridors through field investigations and wetland surveys.

Precision protection

On high-altitude lines above 3,000 meters in Gansu's Gannan Tibetan autonomous prefecture, dual-radar ultrasonic devices are deployed to detect approaching birds within a 100-meter range. The system emits variable-frequency acoustic signals and soft light to gently guide birds away without harm.

A digital monitoring platform known as the "Silverline Sentinel" also provides continuous oversight of both grid conditions and bird activity.

Alongside the "Silverline Sentinel" platform, an upgraded monitoring system known as the "Silverline Scout" has further enhanced real-time ecological protection capabilities, State Grid said.

The system uses artificial intelligence, infrared sensing and nighttime projection technologies, enabling 24-hour continuous monitoring of both transmission line operations and bird activity. Its built-in algorithms can identify more than 200 common bird species, analyze nesting locations and behavioral patterns in real time, and issue early warnings of potential risks.

State Grid said that by combining visual, thermal and acoustic data streams, the system allows operators to detect approaching birds and infrastructure anomalies with greater precision, strengthening preventive maintenance across high-risk corridors.

"Previously, we relied on manual patrols and could only inspect all lines once a month," said a technician in Gannan. "Now we can monitor in real time and respond immediately."

Since deployment, maintenance efficiency across Gansu's grid has tripled, while ecological datasets collected by the system have become valuable inputs for migratory bird research.

In sensitive forested areas such as Ziwuling, patrol teams have adjusted cable routes to avoid nesting zones, while drones equipped with infrared imaging conduct inspections with minimal disturbance.

Across Gansu, more than 20,000 sets of bird-friendly devices — including flexible anti-perching structures, insulating covers and epoxy barriers — have been installed. Unlike earlier rigid designs, these prevent contact without harming birds and also reduce flashover risks caused by droppings.

In Zhangye's Heihe Wetland corridor, these combined measures have reduced bird-related outages by 13 percent, while enabling safer movement through previously high-risk zones.

Living with nature

Electricity infrastructure is increasingly becoming part of wider ecological governance.

In the Qilian Mountains, spanning Qinghai and Gansu, the rich yet fragile ecosystems are home to 48 nationally protected wildlife species, including snow leopards and golden eagles. The vast terrain and complex geography have long limited traditional monitoring.

In many core conservation zones, the absence of stable electricity has also constrained digital management tools, making continuous ecological observation difficult.

This gap led to the introduction of the Green Power Ark project, a national initiative launched in 2022 to integrate clean energy with biodiversity protection. By 2023, the project encompassed 13 ecological sites across China.

At the Gucheng conservation station in Tianzhu, a remote area of Gansu, the project installed a solar-powered microgrid system. The system, operating from 2024, integrates photovoltaic generation, battery storage, infrared cameras and 4G data transmission, forming a zero-carbon forest monitoring platform.

It enables continuous monitoring of wildlife activity, vegetation change and fire risks — shifting conservation from periodic patrols to permanent observation.

"In the past, monitoring depended largely on people," said a project engineer. "Now, technology allows continuous observation across vast and complex terrain."

State Grid Gansu said it is working closely with forestry departments, wetland authorities and local governments through joint patrols, data sharing and coordinated planning, to align grid operations with ecological priorities.

Conflict to coexistence

In Zhangye, up to a quarter of a million birds now stop over in the wetlands annually, including the black stork, a species with extremely strict habitat requirements. According to data from the National Forestry and Grassland Administration, a record 675 black storks were sighted in the wetlands in September 2024, followed by 455 in 2025.

In Jiuquan's Yanchiwan Wetland, also in Gansu, populations of rare species such as black-necked cranes continue to grow.

At the Hequ Horse Farm Wetland in Gannan Tibetan autonomous prefecture, dozens of brown-headed gulls, a nationally protected species, have been observed for the first time in recent years.

Across Gansu, bird-related outages have declined while biodiversity indicators improve steadily.

State Grid said that transmission towers still carry electricity across vast distances, but increasingly, they also function as ecological infrastructure, supporting migration, enabling monitoring and connecting fragmented conservation zones.

Contact the writers at huyumeng@chinadaily.com.cn

State Grid power line inspector carries teenage passion for nature into career

By **HU YUMENG** and **MA JINGNA**

At the Heihe Wetland in Zhangye, Northwest China's Gansu province, Shen Yang has walked the same transmission line patrol routes for 25 years.

The circuit stretches roughly 20 kilometers across reed beds, riverbanks and open wetlands. For most of his career, the job meant checking towers, inspecting conductors and ensuring the safe operation of the grid.

But over time, something else began to share that route with him.

"I've always liked birds since I was a teenager," said Shen, a 56-year-old transmission line inspector with State Grid Gansu Electric Power Co.

That early interest gradually merged with his daily work. Today, Shen is not only a line inspector but also an informal field observer of the wildlife living alongside the grid.

"On patrol, I often see kestrels, doves and magpies," he said. "If I'm lucky, I might also see peregrine falcons or golden eagles."

He keeps mental and sometimes written records of what he sees along the line corridor.

Zhangye's Heihe Wetland sits along a key migratory flyway, where more than 240 bird species have been recorded up to 2023, including black storks, golden eagles and swans. Transmission towers here are no longer seen only as infrastructure, but as part of a shared landscape.

The black stork has left a lasting impression on Shen. The nationally protected species is the "panda of birds", he said.

Shen is often seen observing the species through a high-powered telescope, recording its movements in detail in his field notes.

His connection to wildlife became more direct in November 2020, during a routine patrol near the wetland. Shen encountered an injured kestrel and contacted a wildlife rescue station in Zhangye, helping transport it for treatment.

He visited the bird repeatedly during its recovery, bringing food and monitoring its condition. Over time, the kestrel grew more comfortable, even resting briefly on his shoulder. "At that moment, I felt both excited and a strong sense of achievement," said Shen.

When it fully recovered, it was released back into the wild. He still remembers the moment clearly, not as an isolated incident, but as part of what his work had quietly become.

In recent years, Shen and his colleagues have helped rescue and raise 53 young birds, often in cooperation with local wildlife stations.

This change is also visible in field practice. In high-risk corridors, workers have installed artificial nests and bird-friendly facilities, transforming transmission towers into safer nesting spaces. In Zhangye alone, around 140 artificial nests have been installed, along with thousands of protective devices designed to reduce bird-related risks to the grid.

"For nests in particularly sensitive locations, we now use a combination of artificial relocation and 'migratory bird stations' to preserve birds' natural living environment as much as possible," said Shen.

The shift is not unique to Zhangye.

In the Ziwuling Forest of Qingyang in eastern Gansu, gray herons nest along forested riverbanks near transmission lines. Their presence is managed through coordination between forestry departments and power crews.

Young patrol workers are trained to identify protected species before entering work sites, while senior inspectors adjust patrol routes during breeding seasons to avoid disturbance.

"We used to focus on keeping birds away from the lines," Shen said. "Now we think about how to protect both."

Even when the wetlands fall silent in winter, Shen continues his rounds.

"Sometimes there are no birds," he said. "But I still go and look."

After 25 years on the same route, the transmission lines remain his responsibility. But so, increasingly, do the birds above them.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:53 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:53 PM

CULTURE

Wayfarer of distant highlands

An exhibition revisits artist's lifelong journey across mountains and spiritual landscapes, **Lin Qi** reports.



1.

The Xizang autonomous region has entered one of its most pleasant, travel-friendly seasons of the year. If he were still alive, artist Li Xiaoke would likely be strolling beneath the sun near the Potala Palace in Lhasa and sipping traditional sweet tea at a corner shop in the bustling Barkhor Bazaar. Or, he would join groups of people trekking the sacred mountains and lakes.

Li regarded Xizang as his "second hometown" and a spiritual sanctuary, says his wife, Liu Ying.

In the late 1980s, Li developed a deep connection with the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. He traveled extensively in Xizang and highland areas in Qinghai and Gansu provinces, reaching the Bayan Har Mountains in Qinghai where the Yellow River originates, and the Tangula Mountains along the Qinghai-Xizang border, the source of the Yangtze River.



Li Xiaoke on a journey in 2016.

He journeyed to the highlands more than once a year. Yet, he often described it as a distant destination that remained just beyond reach, no matter how closely he attempted to approach it.

His effort to narrow that distance — which he believed represented change, loss and eternity — came to an end in April 2021, when he passed away at age 76.

Since then, his family has held a commemorative exhibition every spring at the Ke Space run by the Li Keran Art Foundation. Li hailed from a prominent family of artists. His father, Li Keran (1907-89), is considered one of the foremost reformers of classical Chinese painting in the 20th century while his mother, Zou Peizhu (1920-2015), was a sculptor and dedicated educator.

This year, the Li family is presenting *Far Horizons · The Wayfarer — In the Footsteps of Li Xiaoke*, running until June 21 at the Culture and Art Center of Fangzhuang, nestled in a quiet neighborhood in southern Beijing.

The exhibition features dozens of snapshots Li Xiaoke took in the highland areas over nearly three decades, alongside prints and ink paintings. His images portray blooming peach trees and vast green fields beneath snowcapped mountains, riverside salt wells, and white-walled Tibetan-style homes perched along mountain slopes.

Li Xiaoke said photography allowed him to express how profoundly the plateau moved him spiritually, and that it was, in some ways, "no less significant than painting".

According to Liu, Li Xiaoke visited the plateau 34 times after his first trip at the age of 44.

"Every time he went there, he felt exhilarated and refreshed as if it were his very first time," she says.

She says that to capture the sublime beauty of the highlands, Li Xiaoke trekked for 11 days to reach the uninhabited land near the source of the Yangtze River. On a journey to the source of the Yellow River, he used a bicycle pump to inflate a car tire at an altitude of over 4,000 meters.

Through his lens, viewers are taken to Mount Kailash, also known as Mount Gang Rinpoche, in Ngari prefecture of Xizang, the mysterious ruins of the ancient Guge kingdom, and Mount Qomolangma base camp, where silence and stillness define the world's highest peak.

Liu says he also built close friendships within local artistic and cultural circles during his stays in highland areas. He "worked tirelessly" to promote Tibetan art and culture by organizing exhibitions and training programs for local painters.

In the 1970s, Li Xiaoke spent much of his time accompanying his father on travels and public engagements. It was during an early expedition to the source of the Yangtze River with friends that he discovered his identity as an artist. His repeated journeys to the plateau also reflected his father's belief that "an artist should study two great books attentively — nature and tradition".

At the current exhibition, a large moving image is projected on a long wall, combining Li Xiaoke's paintings of snowy mountains and drifting clouds with footage of the artist walking alone along a snowy mountain trail, his back turned to the audience as he leaves footprints behind him.

"The snow-covered land is vast, boundless, and magnificently beautiful, yet stark and harsh. When one steps into it, one is inexplicably moved," Li Xiaoke once said.

Contact the writer at linqi@chinadaily.com.cn



2.



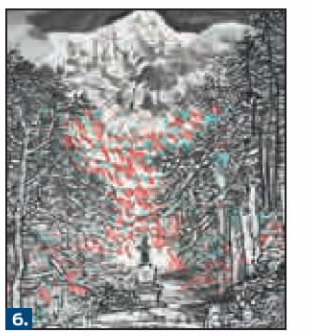
3.



4.



5.



6.

1. An exhibition showcases Li Xiaoke's profound connection with highland areas in western China through art and photography at the Culture and Art Center of Fangzhuang in Beijing. **2.** Li's photo of Mount Gang Rinpoche in Ngari prefecture of the Xizang autonomous region. **3.** Li's photo of Lake Manasarovar in Ngari prefecture, Xizang. **4.** A snapshot of a Tibetan woman taken by Li. **5.** *Window*, a print by Li. **6.** *Faraway*, an ink painting by Li. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Merging Silk Road artifacts with contemporary art

By **ZHANG KUN** in Shanghai
zhangkun@chinadaily.com.cn



The exhibition *How Long Is the Silk Road?* at the Dunhuang Contemporary Art Museum in Shanghai blends ancient artifacts and contemporary works to trace cultural exchanges and historical journeys. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

A new exhibition at the Dunhuang Contemporary Art Museum in Shanghai brings together cultural relics excavated along the ancient Silk Road and new creations by contemporary artists from China and abroad.

Running until Oct 31, the exhibition *How Long Is the Silk Road?* is organized by the Shanghai museum and the Gansu Jiandu Museum, with support from the Lanzhou City Museum, Dunhuang Museum, and China Daily Culture Channel.

It features 65 precious cultural relics dating from the late Warring States Period (475-221 BC) to the Tang Dynasty (618-907), alongside 26 newly created artworks produced by artists who participated in a residency program in Dunhuang, Gansu province, in northwestern China.

Du Chenyan, director of the Dunhuang Contemporary Art Museum, stated at the opening on May 23 that the exhibition is not merely an inquiry into the length of a historical route, but a re-examination of the Silk Road's cultural exchanges through the lived experience of each artist. By juxtaposing ancient artifacts with contemporary art, the exhibition aims to immerse viewers in the historical context of the Silk Road and reflect on the continuous evolution of ancient civilizations in a modern context.

Dunhuang, a desert oasis, was an important trading town on the ancient Silk Road, where merchants traveling across Central Asia brought horses, glassware and spices eastward, and carried silk, porcelain and tea westward. The city is home to the renowned Mogao Caves, a network of ancient cave shrines built over centuries. Designated a UNESCO World Heritage site, the Mogao Caves are described by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre as "the largest, most richly endowed and longest-used treasure house of Buddhist art in the world".

During his residency in Dunhuang, artist Guo Hongwei followed in the footsteps of ancient painters into the mountains to learn how they made pigments from ground minerals.

He would spend an entire day at the mining pit, as if he were an ancient painter. But once he stepped out to where his mobile phone regained signal, "all of a sudden, you are overwhelmed by the flood of news and information, which pours over you like a wave of water but freezes, solidifying as it hits you … I want to capture that moment with my painting", he says of his inspiration.

The exhibition is arranged in five chapters. The first chapter presents the expanse of the Silk Road. Among the exhibits are *jiandu* — wooden and bamboo slips used in China for writing before paper was invented — excavated along the Silk Road.

On loan from the Gansu Jiandu Museum, which boasts the largest collection of Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220) *jiandu*, these slips record the route and actual distance from one courier station to the next along the stretch of the Silk Road between Dunhuang and Chang'an (today's Xi'an, capital of Shaanxi province).

A hemp sandal dating to the same period is displayed beside a map and wooden documents. Xin Ran, one of the exhibition's curators, says, "We want to give a vivid impression of how people traveled before the transportation we know today came into existence."

The sandal is presented alongside a copy of an ancient painting depicting the Buddhist monk Xuanzang's pilgrimage to India. "You can clearly see that Xuanzang's sandals look very much the same as this one here," she says.

The second chapter explores the theme of journey, followed by three chapters that highlight the Silk Road's transcription, sounds and shadows. The exhibition uses *guan* (pass) as its spatial motif, transforming the ancient Silk Road's function as an interface for identity verification and information exchange into a physical installation that guides visitors to use their own bodily scale to perceive ancient interactions, according to curator Xu Huanzhi.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:53 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:53 PM

LIFE



Province strives to strike a delicate balance

Zhejiang follows millennia-old standardization while maintaining creative, innovative and emotional tourism, **Yang Feiyue** reports in Hangzhou.

Zhang Yan still remembers the first time she picked up a tea whisk. Her hand trembled. The slender bamboo tool felt awkward in her fingers, and no matter how hard she tried, the tea refused to foam.

That was in 2022, shortly after she joined the Da Jingshan Tourist Information Center at the foot of Jingshan, a mountain in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, renowned for its thousand-year-old tea culture.

Before taking the job, Zhang had never worked in tourism, nor had she practiced the Song Dynasty (960-1279) method of whisked tea preparation known as *diancha*.

"They taught me everything from scratch — how to whisk, how the foam should look, even how to taste the tea properly," she says.

"The key is keeping your hand steady while maintaining speed and strength. If the force is uneven, the foam will collapse."

Today, Zhang demonstrates the technique to visitors from around the world, guiding them through a ritual once popular among Song Dynasty scholars and literati.

"At first, many guests can't get it," she says with a laugh. "But once they understand the rhythm, they can whisk a beautiful bowl themselves."

Her transformation reflects a broader shift underway in Zhejiang, where officials and tourism workers are trying to balance standardized services with deeply local cultural experiences.

At the Da Jingshan center, free shuttle buses run continuously up the mountain. Staff members provide multilingual assistance in Chinese, English, Japanese, and Korean. Last year, the buses transported 2.6 million passengers.

The center's operations align with ISO 14785, the international standard for tourist information services.

Yet for Liu Yanli, the center's deputy manager, the goal is not simply efficiency.

"Standards should help visitors experience the culture better," Liu says. "They are not meant to make every destination the same."

That idea lies at the heart of Zhejiang's tourism development strategy.

"Tourism services need standardization, but they cannot be completely standardized," says Chen Guangsheng, director of the Zhejiang Provincial Department of Culture, Radio, Television, and Tourism.

"Otherwise, every city becomes identical. We need to find the balance between standards and individuality."

He points to rural homestays as an example. Zhejiang has established unified requirements for hygiene, safety and service quality, while encouraging villages to preserve their own architectural styles, customs and local traditions.

"That is the balance we are striving for," Chen says. He believes the province's emphasis on standards has deep historical roots.

The *Kaogongji*, a Chinese crafts manual compiled more than 2,000 years ago, documented precise specifications for the production of tools and vehicles. In Zhejiang, Tang Dynasty (618-907) celadon production followed strict technical systems, while the mortise-and-tenon structure of Ningbo's Baoguo Temple later became a reference point for traditional Chinese architecture.

"The genes of standardization have been here since ancient times," Chen says.

But Zhejiang's tourism officials also insist that modern standards should leave room for creativity and emotional connection.

That philosophy is on display at the Tourism College of Zhejiang in Hangzhou.

During a recent class, associate professor Zhang Chunli guided students as they arranged themed tea tables inspired by traditional aesthetics and modern lifestyles.

One design drew inspiration from *A Panorama of Rivers and Mountains*, the famed Song Dynasty landscape painting in blue-green tones. Silk fabrics in jade and turquoise tones surrounded a single celadon teacup.

Another installation, titled *Forest Time*, abandoned conventional tea settings altogether. Glass cups, white lace and soft green accents created a relaxed atmosphere that felt closer to a contemporary cafe than a traditional tea room.

"People today are under a lot of pressure," Zhang says. "Tea gives them a moment to slow down."

She explains that students must earn three national certifications before graduation, covering tea art, tea evaluation and tea beverage preparation.

"They first learn the standards," she says. "Then they learn how to innovate based on those."

A short drive away, Jingshan village has turned those ideas into a thriving rural tourism business. Visitors can pick tea leaves with local farmers, roast them in woks using traditional methods, and take the finished tea home.

"What tourists experience is exactly the same process we use," says Sheng Dong, the village's Party secretary.

When the village began promoting tourism in 2019, most villagers simply sold tea leaves.

"Tourists came, but they didn't know what to do," he recalls.

Now, nearly every household participates in tourism-related businesses. Children wearing bamboo hats carry tea baskets through the hillsides, while families gather around roasting stoves to teach visitors the craft.

The village has received tourists from more than 50 countries, with over 30,000 people participating in tea-related experiences last year alone.

"More visitors come through word of mouth," Sheng says. The province's efforts have also caught the attention of international tourism experts.

Alexandre Garrido, a Brazilian specialist in smart tourism, visited Hangzhou in May during an international tourism standards meeting. It was his first trip to China.

"The people here are incredibly welcoming," Garrido says. "And everything was very well organized, from transportation to cultural activities."

Persi Leonardo, another Brazilian expert focusing on adventure tourism, paid particular attention to accessibility facilities at the Da Jingshan center.

He noticed entrance ramps, multilingual signs and facilities designed for elderly travelers and families with young children.

"The spaces think about all kinds of visitors," Leonardo says.

What impressed him most, however, was how visitors were encouraged to participate rather than simply observe.

"It's not just showing tourists the tea-making process," he says. "It's letting them become part of it."

Maria Velasco Gonzalez, a tourism policy scholar from Spain, had a similar impression after trying her hand at making whisked tea.

"They guided us through every step," she says. "I could understand not only how to do it, but also why it mattered." For her, that combination of professionalism and cultural warmth left a lasting impression.

Authorities in Zhejiang say the province has built a system that trains students to meet national certification requirements, guides villages in turning tea leaves into tourism products, and runs information centers that serve millions of visitors each year.

Those working in tourism businesses also insist that what visitors remember most is something harder to quantify, such as a bowl of whisked tea, a village story, or the warmth of the people serving them.

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn







From top: An international visitor tries traditional tea whisking during a cultural experience session at the Tourism College of Zhejiang in Hangzhou in mid-May. International visitors tour an art center in Qingshan village, Zhejiang. A local artist teaches international visitors how to weave bamboo handicrafts in the province. An overseas visitor poses for a photo with staff members at a recreational park in Zhejiang. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Russian artist boosts ties using brush and ink

MOSCOW — As dusk fell, a soft, warm glow gently flooded a painting studio in the China Cultural Center in Moscow. Holding a Chinese writing brush dipped in ink, Russian artist Anna Donchenko subtly adjusted tonal gradations before letting the brush glide across the paper.

With her brushwork shifting from delicate touches to bold strokes, distant landscapes gradually took shape, breathing life into mountains and rivers on China's traditional Xuan paper, originally produced in Xuancheng, Anhui province.

"I hope I can keep painting for the rest of my life and inspire more people to take an interest in China," says Donchenko. "That would be the most meaningful to me."

For her, Chinese painting is far more than an artistic craft; it is an everlasting emotional and spiritual bond with China.

Donchenko began painting as a child and was originally trained in realism. In her middle school years, a visit to the State Museum of Oriental Art in Moscow opened the door to the realm of Chinese painting. "I was instantly captivated," she says.

In her adolescence, the scarcity of Chinese painting supplies in Russia only strengthened her resolve. "I would linger repeatedly before museum display windows just to closely study the paintings," she says.

Her first trip to China in 2007 marked a turning point in her life. The moment she set foot in China, she purchased calligraphy and painting books, brushes and mineral pigments. She filled her suitcase with these items and took them back to Russia.

In 2014, she enrolled at the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, to pursue systematic academic training in Chinese painting. During her stay, she traveled extensively across the country, immersing herself in local folk customs, natural landscapes and time-honored traditions. Over time, she gained a deeper insight into the philosophical wisdom and humanistic essence embedded in traditional Chinese fine arts.

"What moves me most about Chinese painting is its focus on sentiment, its rhythmic charm and the subtle spiritual resonance between humanity and nature," she notes, adding that Chinese ink painting prioritizes imagination, blank space aesthetics and the sincere expression of the artist's inner feelings, rather than rigidly pursuing lifelike likeness.

Known to the public by her Chinese name, Dong Qingguo, Donchenko works as a researcher at the Center for Chinese Culture Studies, part of the Institute of China and Contemporary Asia at the Russian Academy of Sciences.

"*Dong* stands for winter, a reminder of the long, cold winters in my homeland, Russia. *Qing* embodies youth and vitality, while *Guo* carries my sincere blessings for my motherland," she explains with a warm smile.

In her view, practicing ink wash painting has also reshaped her cognition of self and the world. "The philosophy of harmony between man and nature embodied in Chinese painting is not merely an artistic technique, but also a way to perceive and embrace life," Donchenko says.

"I have been studying Chinese painting for 20 years and teaching it for 12 years," she says. "The artistic conception conveyed by Chinese painting strikes a chord with people from all cultural backgrounds."

In her artistic creations, she depicts Russia's white stone castles, wooden cottages and onion-shaped church domes through fluid Chinese ink painting techniques, perfectly integrating Eastern aesthetic charm with distinctive Russian pastoral scenery.

Over the years, she has also observed a growing enthusiasm among Russians for Chinese ink painting.

The China Cultural Center hosts Chinese painting classes three evenings a week. In class, students learn to sketch plum blossoms, paint natural landscapes, and create paintings of the persimmon tree that symbolize good fortune.

> "What moves me most about Chinese painting is its focus on sentiment, its rhythmic charm and the subtle spiritual resonance between humanity and nature."
>
> **Anna Donchenko,** Russian artist

Under Donchenko's patient guidance, Anastasia Smirnova, one of her students, captured two hedgehogs carrying apples on their backs with just a few vivid brushstrokes. "Chinese painting can convey emotions in such an intuitive way," Smirnova says. "Learning this art has offered me a brand-new perspective on the world."

Beyond classroom teaching, Donchenko has spared no effort to popularize Chinese painting across Russia by holding exhibitions in museums, public libraries and local communities. Over the past two decades, she has participated in or curated more than 30 art exhibitions in China and Russia.

In April, she hosted a Chinese painting exhibition paired with on-site demonstrations at Moscow No 69 Library, drawing hundreds of visitors on its opening day.

Yulia Zharkova, the organization's director, said these paintings bring audiences inner peace and tranquil contemplation.

"Standing in front of these artworks, people feel their worldly worries drift away," she says. "This is the unique artistic charm and profound artistic conception of Chinese painting. We are deeply honored that Donchenko chose our library to hold this exhibition, which has greatly enlivened our cultural venue."

Against the backdrop of in-depth people-to-people cultural exchanges during the China-Russia Years of Education, Donchenko hopes more people will discover the sheer joy hidden in traditional Chinese arts.

"Art teaching is far more than imparting professional skills," Donchenko says. "It is about passing down the passion you truly cherish. I wish more people could embrace joy and perceive beauty through learning Chinese painting, just as I once did."

XINHUA



Visitors experience Chinese calligraphy at the China Cultural Center in Moscow on Jan 25, 2025. CAO YANG / XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:53 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:53 PM

LIFE







From left: Twenty descendants of the *Lisbon Maru* POWs from the United Kingdom arrive at Dongji Island, Zhejiang province, where the British prisoners were rescued by local fishermen. They plant trees of friendship on the island as part of the commemorative event. A descendant lays a wreath at the Memorial for Dongji Fishermen's Rescue of British Prisoners of War on Dongji Island. PHOTOS BY XING WEN / CHINA DAILY

Bravery of fishermen remembered

Descendants of British POWs rescued by Chinese islanders gathered to commemorate the sinking of the *Lisbon Maru* and those who risked their lives trying to save them, **Xing Wen** reports in Zhoushan, Zhejiang.

Josephine Duff McIntosh Olsson searched intently for a man's name on the *Lisbon Maru* survivors' memorial wall at Zhoushan Marine Cultural and Art Center in Zhoushan, Zhejiang province — a man she had never met in person.

When she finally found it, she pointed to the name for those around her, tears streaming down her face.

"That's my great-uncle, Joseph Duff!"

In October 1942, Joseph Duff was among the 1,816 British prisoners of war being transported from Hong Kong to Japan aboard the Japanese cargo ship *Lisbon Maru*.

The vessel was not marked as carrying POWs, and it was torpedoed by a US submarine off the coast of Zhejiang province.

Japanese guards sealed the prisoners below deck, and those who managed to escape were met with gunfire. In all, 828 men died.

In the midst of the chaos, local fishermen from Dongji Island in Zhoushan risked everything to launch their small boats and rescue 384 survivors under Japanese gunfire.

On the island, they gave the starving prisoners their own meager supplies of fresh water and food.

Later, when Japanese troops landed to search for escapees, the fishermen hid three British POWs in a seaside cave, secretly bringing them food every day.

In time, they safely transferred the men all the way to Chongqing, where the survivors used a radio broadcast to reveal the truth about the sinking of the *Lisbon Maru* to the world.

Joseph Duff was among those rescued by the fishermen, but he was later recaptured by Japanese forces and taken to Japan.

It was not until November last year that his descendants, including Olsson, learned the truth: Joseph Duff had actually survived the sinking, only to die at the age of 28 in a Japanese POW camp in March 1945.





Top: Descendants of the *Lisbon Maru* POWs stand alongside the Memorial for Dongji Fishermen's Rescue of British Prisoners of War.
Above: Josephine Olsson (far right) and her older sister Pamela Allison search for the name of their great-uncle Joseph Duff on the *Lisbon Maru* survivors' wall. PHOTOS BY XING WEN / CHINA DAILY

"We didn't know what had happened to him except that we thought he had died on a ship," Olsson says.

While compiling her family tree, the 56-year-old Scottish woman conducted extensive research into her great-uncle.

But it was only at a screening of Chinese director Fang Li's documentary *The Sinking of the Lisbon Maru* in Edinburgh last year that she finally came to understand the full story of this little-known chapter of World War II.

"He died before I was born, but I'm his namesake," she says emotionally.

"That means my name will carry forward his name and memory."

Recently, she and her sister Pamela Allison traveled to Zhoushan with 18 other descendants of the *Lisbon Maru* prisoners of war to visit the very island where her great-uncle was rescued.

"I really want to say thank you for giving him a bed, food and clothes. Thank you for giving him 24 hours of hope," she says.

She compiled the materials she had gathered during her research on Joseph Duff into a folder and donated it to the Lisbon Maru Rescue Memorial Hall on the island.

James Murphy, approaching 78, is also the namesake of his father.

His father served with the Hong Kong Company of the Royal Corps of Signals and was among the survivors rescued by Chinese fishermen. Murphy recalls that the few days his father spent on the island gave him a lifelong love of Chinese food.

As a child, he was often taken to Chinese restaurants by his father.

"None of us would be alive without the selfless courage and compassion of the fishermen and villagers who saved so many people," he says.

He traveled all the way from Plymouth to Zhoushan with his wife, Susan Murphy, to attend a series of commemorative events, including laying flowers at the memorial, planting trees, visiting the Lisbon Maru Rescue Memorial Hall on Dongji Island, and meeting with the descendants of those fishermen who took part in the rescue.

"It's been a real highlight of my life to come here, to meet all these wonderful people," he says.

"It's important that we hand that story and memory down, and it's pleasing to me, very touching, to hear that the Chinese generations, generation after generation, are similarly carrying the story on."

Christopher Borge, who made the trip with his sister Kirsteen Dugan, is the grandson of *Lisbon Maru* survivor John Borg.

He believes it is vital to share this story with a wider population.

"At school, they teach about the war in Europe and the UK, but not much about what happened in China and Japan," he says.

"We also need to focus on the details that reveal humanity, kindness, and cross-border friendship."

He is also the great-nephew of Duncan Edward Cameron, another *Lisbon Maru* survivor who was a friend of Borg.

After the rescue, the two were later taken by Japanese soldiers to Kobe House war camp in Japan, where they remained prisoners of war until the conflict finally ended.

As the two finally made their way back home, their families were anxiously waiting for their return at Edinburgh train station.

On that day, Borg fell in love at first sight with one of Cameron's sisters, Margaret.

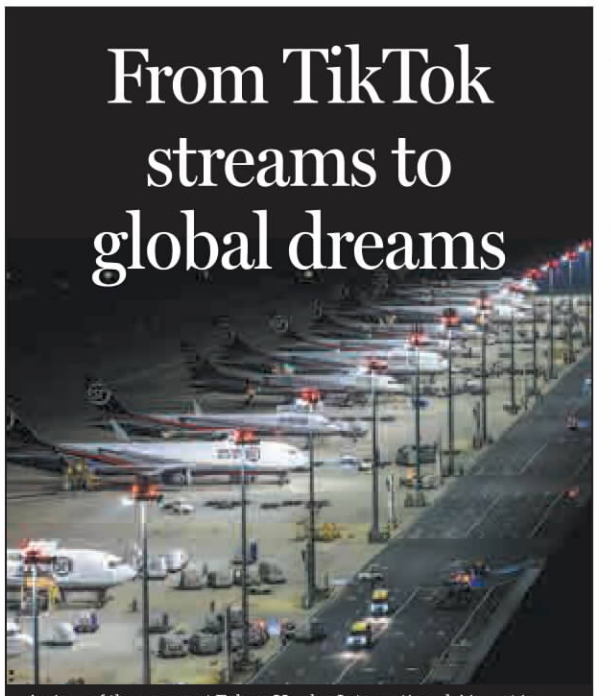
They later married and had four children among whom the youngest son is the father of Borge and Dugan.

"Those moments of friendship, courage, and love are the very reason my sister Kirsteen and I are able to stand here.

"So, we remember not only the suffering of war, but the bonds it has created. We must carry on this bond between us in the UK and our friends here in China," says Borge.

Contact the writer at xingwen@chinadaily.com.cn

From TikTok streams to global dreams



A view of the apron at Ezhou Huahu International Airport in Ezhou, Central China's Hubei province. One of China's largest cargo airports, it has ensured fast shipping services, a key factor in cross-border e-commerce business. XIAO YIJIU / XINHUA

Beneath bright studio lights, Mohamed Issa Omar speaks fluently to the camera, introducing a sleek pair of AI-powered glasses to viewers tuning in from across the globe.

Omar is in the cross-border e-commerce comprehensive pilot zone in Ezhou, Central China's Hubei province. It is past midnight in the United States, but orders still pour in as the Somali influencer and CEO of Ezhou Shahai Business Bridge Trading Co breaks down the product's features, such as music playback, hands-free calls and one-click photography, tailored carefully to match overseas consumer habits.

"I shifted from engineering to e-commerce back in 2021," Omar recalls. He started building a social media presence and amassed over 1 million followers across Instagram, YouTube and TikTok. "That's when I saw the future: selling products online, and no place does it better than China."

What drew this foreign entrepreneur deep into China's inland province of Hubei is not just the allure of the world's most dynamic e-commerce ecosystem, but also its strategic logistics advantages.

"The Chinese e-commerce ecosystem is massive, robust and offers endless possibilities — far more than what you'd find abroad," Omar explains. "About 80 percent of the products in our warehouse originate from China. Being here, at the source, is the ultimate advantage."

His confidence is also rooted in Ezhou's unparalleled advantages in transportation. "We have Ezhou Huahu International Airport, one of China's largest cargo airports, on our doorstep," he says, noting that fast shipping serves as a key factor in today's cross-border e-commerce business landscape.

The speed of China's logistics evolution continues to impress him. "Three or four years ago, delivery times were longer. But now, China has mastered rapid manufacturing and lightning-fast shipping. Everything is accelerated."

A keen observer of global platforms, Omar notes an efficiency gap. "On Douyin, you get your order in three to four days. TikTok used to take a week, but now it's catching up to three days — driven by Chinese sellers pushing for speed."

For Omar, operating from China is not just about speed, but about forging ties between Chinese suppliers and global markets.

"The way Chinese merchants market and do business online is fundamentally different from that of their foreign counterparts. It must be a balanced fusion," he says. "Foreigners need to understand Chinese marketing strategies, and Chinese businesses must adapt their systems to global mindsets. That's the synergy we create."

This philosophy is why he insists on having Chinese partners to build a powerful e-commerce platform. "Success in this industry requires collaboration. Foreigners like me bring the international perspective, while our Chinese partners provide the local expertise and access to the supply chain."

His daily sales reflect this successful fusion. "It depends on livestreams. Right now, we get 40 to 50 orders per stream, and our prerecorded videos consistently drive sales — at least 100 units of our top-selling AI glasses every day."

Omar's success story is a microcosm of Hubei's booming cross-border e-commerce scene, anchored by Ezhou's strategic rise. Since the launch of the cross-border e-commerce comprehensive pilot zone in Ezhou in April 2025, the park has attracted 258 enterprises, including top sellers from TikTok and Amazon, driving total trade value to $310 million.

This inland opening-up miracle is further amplified by the Qipanzhou Comprehensive Bonded Zone in Huangshi, Hubei. Leveraging its proximity to Ezhou Huahu International Airport, it has built a multimodal transport system covering road, rail, water and air. By establishing "forward cargo stations", this region has revolutionized logistics, allowing goods to be declared locally and flown directly from the airport.

The results are transformative. The Qipanzhou Comprehensive Bonded Zone saw its foreign trade value soar to 10.74 billion yuan ($1.58 billion) in 2025, a year-on-year increase of 107 percent, jumping from zero to a 10-billion-level player in just two years, local data revealed.

For Omar, the future is limitless. "In the next five years, our business will boom beyond expectations. The scale is already growing faster than I imagined. After two to three years of testing and slow growth, we are poised for massive expansion."

With China's inland regions deepening their opening-up endeavors, foreign entrepreneurs like Omar are no longer outliers but pioneers. In the studios of Ezhou, with a world map of cargo routes overhead, they are turning Hubei's inland advantage into a global edge, proving that China's high-standard opening-up is no longer exclusive to coastal regions, but is flourishing steadily in inland areas.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:53 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:53 PM

SPORTS

SOCCER





With no prior professional managerial experience, Lionel Scaloni took over the Argentina job on an interim basis in 2018 and ended up leading it to victory at the 2022 World Cup and to two Copa America titles. AP

A calming presence under pressure

Argentina boss Scaloni is unfazed by high expectations back home

After Gonzalo Montiel scored the decisive penalty in the final of the 2022 World Cup, giving Argentina its third star with a victory over France, coach Lionel Scaloni didn't celebrate, remaining still, silent, as if oblivious to the feat he himself had helped to accomplish. Several minutes later, he broke down when one of his players approached him, hugged him, and whispered: "We are world champions."

Scaloni almost never loses his cool. He didn't when he was bombarded with criticism for his lack of experience while leading Argentina. Nor did he when Kylian Mbappe's goals threatened the country's World Cup hopes four years ago. And he remains the same today, as he faces the challenge of trying to repeat as a World Cup champion.

Those who know him say Scaloni learned to control his temper thanks to a hobby outside of soccer. Since retiring as a player, he dedicates two to three hours a day to cycling through the mountains of Mallorca, the Spanish island where he lives, or along the trails of his hometown of Pujato in Argentina's northwest.

"On the bike, you can think about your team, your opponent, how to prepare for the match. It really clears my head. I use it as therapy," Scaloni said in several interviews.

In less than two weeks, Scaloni will become the third coach to lead Argentina into consecutive World Cups, following in the footsteps of Cesar Luis Menotti (1978 and 1982) and Carlos Bilardo (1986 and 1990), both also champions. But the youngest of the three doesn't believe he deserves comparisons to the others.

"I don't think we're on the same level. They have established careers, they defined an era," Scaloni has said repeatedly.

Earning his place

With no prior experience of managing professional teams, Scaloni took over the team on an interim basis in 2018 after Argentina's debacle in Russia, where the side was eliminated in the round of 16. Meanwhile, the Argentine Football Association (AFA) was considering Mauricio Pochettino or Diego Simeone as candidates for the senior national team.

"Scaloni? He can't even direct traffic," Diego Maradona, who was instrumental in Argentina winning the title in 1986, said at the time.

The inexperienced coach got the nod, and Argentina went on to win the 2021 Copa America and successfully navigated the qualifiers for the 2022 World Cup.

In Qatar, Scaloni weathered a storm of criticism after a disappointing opening match against Saudi Arabia, revamped the team mid-tournament with the addition of then-rookies Enzo Fernandez, Alexis Mac Allister, Julian Alvarez, and, most importantly, unleashed the best version of Lionel Messi.

"The criticism was normal, I hadn't coached anywhere. (Maradona) wasn't far off," Scaloni acknowledged shortly after lifting the cup.



Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni embraces team captain Lionel Messi following a quarterfinal victory over the Netherlands at the 2022 World Cup in Doha, Qatar. AP

Scaloni knows the demands will now be the same or even greater. He will have to defend the title with his star player nearing retirement at 38, while also dealing with turmoil within the Argentine soccer organization. Brazil was the last world champion to repeat in 1962.

"The World Cup is very, very difficult. To win a World Cup, a lot of things have to come together, not just playing well," Scaloni said in a recent interview with CONMEBOL. "It's very difficult, but not impossible."

Scaloni made it clear to his players that being world champions didn't guarantee them a place on the national team and demanded they never let their guard down.

"I don't dwell on past achievements; you always have to keep looking ahead," he said in late 2025. "With this jersey, you don't have time to relax and think your place is secure."

The Albiceleste again won the Copa America in 2024 and finished first in the South American qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup, overcoming the absence of Messi, who missed several matches due to physical problems.

All but six of the 2022 squad were included by Scaloni in his preliminary 55-player World Cup roster.

An attempt to resign

After the victory over Brazil in the World Cup qualifiers in November 2023, Scaloni shocked fans when he cast doubt on his future.

"It's not goodbye, but I need to think, because the bar is set very high and it's difficult to continue."

Scaloni, however, remained in his position, but rumors circulated of alleged discontent between him and some players due to their unprofessional behavior during the team's training camp before an earlier loss to Uruguay in the qualifiers.

Meanwhile, the AFA leadership faces accusations of corruption and growing internal discontent over changes to the league format and refereeing decisions.

World Cup preparations have also been questioned, with the AFA organizing friendlies against low-ranked teams like Indonesia, Puerto Rico, Angola, Mauritania and Zambia. Argentina's last two tests will be this week against Honduras and Iceland, neither of which qualified.

The coach, who is negotiating a contract extension, avoided complaining publicly. "Playing against the best doesn't guarantee anything, and neither does this. We have to face whatever comes and be positive," he said. "The results will show whether we made the right call or not."

Argentina will open in Kansas City against Algeria on June 16 in Group J. They will face Austria on June 22 and Jordan on June 27.

Scaloni remains calm, just as he did four years ago. He knows full well the expectation on him to defend the title.

"We're aware that our opponents will play us differently because we're the reigning champions. The important thing is that we'll be there. After that, it's football, and anything can happen."

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Brazil pins hopes on Ancelotti to end long wait for World Cup glory

SAO PAULO — Brazil's biggest hope to end a 24-year World Cup title drought is not a clinical striker, a creative midfielder or a dribbling winger like at previous editions of the tournament. This time Brazilians are pinning their hopes on a 66-year-old Italian, who will be sitting on the bench.

Carlo Ancelotti, one of the most successful coaches of his generation, left Real Madrid to take over Brazil's national team last year, a rare example of a foreign coach in charge of the Selecao. Even though his results have been mixed — five wins, three losses and two draws — the country is optimistic he can elevate a squad that is seen as far less star-studded than Brazil's iconic teams of the past, despite high-profile players like Neymar and Vinicius Junior.

While Brazil has won the World Cup five times — more than any other team — it hasn't lifted the trophy since 2002, an eternity for a soccer-obsessed nation that produced some of the most brilliant players in history, such as Ronaldo, Ronaldinho and Pele.

Since 2002 it has only advanced beyond the quarterfinals once — as World Cup host in 2014 — and even that tournament ended in disappointment after an embarrassing 7-1 semifinal loss to eventual champion Germany.

Brazil's self-confidence hasn't been helped by the success of archrival Argentina, the defending World Cup champion and back-to-back Copa America winner.

"It is allowed to believe," Ancelotti says in a World Cup-themed advertising campaign, acknowledging the self-doubt that has crawled into Brazil's national soccer psyche.

The Neymar question

Brazil begins its World Cup campaign at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey on June 13 against Morocco, semifinalist at the 2022 World Cup and controversial AFCON winner. Other Group C opponents are Haiti and Scotland.

Surviving the group stage is taken for granted in Brazil — anything else would be disaster in a World Cup expanded from 32 to 48 teams. How deep Brazil can go against stronger opponents in the knockout phase is less obvious.

"I am aware and reliant that this team can compete against the best in the world. Can we win the World Cup and reach the final? Yes, we can reach the final. But I don't know if that is enough, it is best for us to get there and win the final," Ancelotti has said.

One of the biggest questions facing Ancelotti is what to do with 34-year-old Neymar, who was Brazil's brightest star until he moved to the big-spending Saudi league in 2023. He hardly played there due to a string of knee injuries, and last year returned to boyhood club Santos in Brazil, where he dealt with even more physical problems.

Ancelotti included Neymar in his World Cup squad despite concerns about his fitness, calling him an "important player" for the team. Barcelona winger Raphinha also sees Neymar as key to the squad, recently describing him as "the man of our sixth World Cup title".

If that happens it will be with a more structured approach than the free-flowing style of play that once made Brazil stand out in global soccer.

With a reputation as a master tactician, Ancelotti has made Brazil a team that is happy to sit back and wait for moments to attack rather than dominate ball possession. He often opts for a compact 4-4-2 formation that can quickly turn into an attacking 4-2-4.

'Best thing that happened'

Brazilians are generally satisfied with Ancelotti, even though his record so far is uneven. After he took over, Brazil won two World Cup qualifiers, drew one and lost one, finishing fifth in South American qualifying after Argentina, Ecuador, Colombia and Uruguay.

In recent friendlies, Brazil beat Croatia — which eliminated Brazil from the 2022 World Cup in a quarterfinal shootout — but lost to 2022 runner-up France.

Former Brazil left-back Filipe Luis, who has recently started a coaching career, in April called Ancelotti "the best thing that happened" to the national team.

"It is not a sure thing we will win anything," he said. "But we needed someone big, with enough support to make decisions. A man people respect, who knows Brazil has gone through many years not winning the World Cup."

Ancelotti took over after a tumultuous time for Brazil.

The team had struggled in qualifying for the 2026 World Cup, losing twice to Argentina, and was knocked out by Uruguay in the quarterfinals of the 2024 Copa America. Three coaches came and left — caretakers Ramon Menezes and Fernando Diniz and full-time coach Dorival Junior were all fired after poor results.

Meanwhile, Brazil pursued Ancelotti, whose second stint at Real Madrid appeared to heading toward an end, despite the team winning both the Champions League and La Liga in 2024.

So confident is the Brazilian soccer confederation that it has made the right choice that it has already extended Ancelotti's contract until the 2030 World Cup.

"We have a beast taking care of our national team, a man who is respected by everyone," Luis said.





As part of his bid to return Brazil to the World Cup winners' circle, coach Carlo Ancelotti (right) has included Neymar in his 26-man squad despite concerns about his fitness, calling him an "important player" for the team. AP

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:53 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:55 PM

Perfect vision

City's affordable eyewear attracts foreign tourists

LIFE SHANGHAI, PAGE 14



Nation taps ultra-deep shale gas reserves

BUSINESS, PAGE 9



Chinese connections

US students find language learning aids understanding

AMERICA FOCUS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 FRIDAY, MAY 22, 2026

China, Pakistan eye stronger cooperation

Xi and Zardari exchange congratulatory messages on 75th anniversary of ties

By **ZHAO JIA**
zhaojia@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping called on Thursday for stronger strategic communication, continued traditional friendship and deeper all-around cooperation between China and Pakistan, as the two Asian neighbors marked the 75th anniversary of diplomatic ties.

In a congratulatory message sent to Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari, Xi emphasized that he attaches great importance to the development of bilateral relations and stands ready to work with Zardari to accelerate the building of an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in the new era, so that bilateral ties bring greater benefits to the two peoples and contribute to regional peace and development.

Xi said that China and Pakistan are good friends and all-weather strategic cooperative partners, linked by mountains and rivers and sharing weal and woe.

Over the past 75 years, the friendship between the two countries has remained rock-solid and unbreakable despite changes in the international landscape, he said.

The two countries have long maintained a high level of political mutual trust, practical cooperation, security collaboration and international coordination, setting an example for state-to-state relations, Xi added.

In his congratulatory message to Xi, Zardari said the Pakistan-China all-weather strategic cooperative partnership has become a firm pillar of regional peace, stability and development. Pakistan highly appreciates the far-reaching global initiatives proposed by Xi and deeply values his firm commitment to deepening Pakistan-China relations, he added.

Zardari expressed Pakistan's sincere gratitude for China's firm support toward safeguarding his country's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and promoting its economic and social development.

Pakistan will continue to support China on issues concerning its core interests and further elevate the Pakistan-China friendship to new heights, he said.

To mark the occasion, Premier Li Qiang exchanged congratulatory messages on Thursday with Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, saying that China is ready to work with Pakistan to actively build an upgraded version of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

Sharif said that Pakistan remains firmly committed to advancing high-quality CPEC development and opening up new areas of cooperation with China.

In a separate message released by the Pakistani prime minister's office to mark the anniversary, Sharif said that CPEC's next phase will place greater emphasis on "industrialization, agriculture, information technology, science and technology, green development, and stronger people-centered cooperation".

"It is encouraging to witness Pakistan-China cooperation expanding into new frontiers, including the digital economy, innovation, space cooperation, education and cultural exchanges," he added.

Sharif said that from the Karakoram Highway to cooperation in outer space, Pakistan-China friendship continues to demonstrate how enduring strategic trust can be translated into meaningful progress and shared prosperity for the two peoples.

The two countries are set for another round of high-level engagement, with Sharif set to pay an official visit to China starting Saturday, less than a month after Zardari visited China in April. In addition to Beijing, the four-day trip will also take Sharif to East China's Zhejiang province.

Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong said in a signed article published in the People's Daily on Thursday that frequent high-level exchanges have provided political guidance and strong momentum for the development of bilateral relations.

Beyond political engagement, he noted that high-level practical cooperation between the two countries has become a model that delivers broad benefits to the people.

China is Pakistan's largest trading partner and the second-largest destination for Pakistani exports.

According to Jiang, CPEC, a flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative, has garnered over $25.9 billion in direct investment and created over 260,000 jobs.

The emphasis on shared development was echoed by Pakistani Ambassador to China Khalil Hashmi, who said that China's development has created wider opportunities for other developing countries, especially those in the Global South.

Hashmi said that Pakistan-China relations carry significance beyond the bilateral level, particularly at a time of growing global uncertainty.

Pakistan and China have made valuable contributions to the global system, he said, noting that the two countries "closely coordinate, communicate and consult" at the United Nations, the World Trade Organization and many other multilateral platforms.

He described China's vision of building a community with a shared future for humanity, together with the BRI and the four major global initiatives — the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, the Global Civilization Initiative and the Global Governance Initiative — as an action-oriented approach to addressing global challenges. These ideas, he said, reflect Chinese wisdom in a modern context and provide a comprehensive plan for a more peaceful, secure and prosperous world.

Inside

See more, **page 4**



INSIDE
Unity or division
Global Views, page 8

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

www.chinadailyglobal.com

A member of ANN

China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved

Sino-Russian statements help shore up unity, stability

By **ZHANG YUNBI**
zhangyunbi@chinadaily.com.cn

Inside

See more, **page 4**

Russian President Vladimir Putin's two-day whirlwind state visit to China concluded on Wednesday night. Although brief, it was highly productive, with analysts impressed by the results, including two joint statements and a long list of outcomes.

In particular, the two statements — one about international relations and the other about bilateral cooperation — are constructive contributions to global peace and growth, as both nations strive to inject stability into a world plagued by turmoil, analysts said.

On Wednesday, following talks between Putin and President Xi Jinping in Beijing, the two heads of state signed and issued a joint statement on further strengthening comprehensive strategic coordination and deepening good-neighborliness and friendly cooperation.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the signing of the China-Russia Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation.

In the statement, the two leaders agreed to further extend the treaty and pledged future joint efforts in various fields.

Wang Fan, a professor at China Foreign Affairs University, said that the statement and the extension of the treaty show that the two countries "have succeeded in developing a new approach for two major countries to get along with each other — no alliances, no conflicts and no confrontation".

"The treaty's extension is legally binding in securing the lasting friendship between China and Russia," he said.

Wang said that the ties have shown great strategic resilience and remained unaffected by shifting international circumstances, and interference and provocation by third parties.

"The two countries have consistently maintained the stability of their relationship, and their political mutual trust has grown ever deeper," he added.

Li Yongquan, academic committee director at the Euro-Asian Social Development Research Institute of the State Council's Development Research Center, said that the first joint statement provides clear guidance on how to continue to deepen the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries in the bilateral, regional and global contexts.

During the visit, the two leaders also issued a joint statement on advocating a multipolar world and a new type of international relations.

*See **Visit,** page 3*

Creative carnival



Foreign envoys and expatriates visit the inaugural China New Cultural and Creative Market & Trendy Toy Carnival at Chaoyang Park in Beijing on Thursday. The event running from May 15 through Sunday brings together top-tier cultural products, toys, intangible cultural heritage items and digital technologies from across the country. ZHANG WEI / CHINA DAILY

A win-win map for relations with US

WORLD WATCH
By Erik Solheim

Some of the most powerful business leaders of the United States came to Beijing last week. For years, many in Washington have talked about decoupling, about pulling the two economies apart. These corporate leaders gave their answer to that idea, and their answer was to come to Beijing. They came because they can read a balance sheet. And the balance sheet tells them that the future runs through China, not around it.

That is part of the real story of the head-of-state summit between China and the US. The gap exists between what Washington often says and what American business does. And that gap tells us something important.

All US attempts to contain China's development have failed to reach their objectives. Tariffs did not weaken Chinese industry. Export controls did not slow China down. The result has been the opposite. Denied the best US chips, Chinese engineers learned to do more with less, and the gap between the best US and Chinese systems closed from years to months. This is not a story of China winning and the US losing. The containment strategy did not work out because it was built on a false picture of what these two countries are to each other.

This false picture has a name. It is the zero-sum idea. It is the belief that whatever China gains, the US loses, and whatever the US gains, China loses. It often runs through Western newspapers and Western foreign policy unchallenged. It should be challenged, because it is wrong. In the early Cold War, it fit the world well enough. The US and the Soviet Union shared almost no real trade and no shared prosperity. In that world, one side's gain often was the other's loss. But that world is gone. The US and China are among each other's largest trading partners. Their factories, their universities and their capital are bound together at every level. To bring the zero-sum map into this relationship is to navigate a new century with an outdated zero-sum mindset.

Actually, China and the US have more common interests than differences.

The cost of the zero-sum habit is real. When every gain for the other side is marked as your defeat, cooperation starts to look like surrender. A sensible compromise looks like a betrayal. Problems that two serious governments could solve together are left to rot, because to solve them would be to let the other side win.

*See **Cooperation,** page 3*

SMART DEVICE SEEDS A GROWING PASSION FOR BIRDS

Livestreaming feeding stations fuel soaring interest in the lives of our feathered friends

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn

It's peak bird season, and for many, bird-watching no longer requires expensive equipment and weekends camped out in the woods.

A recent video that went viral on social media shows an automated backyard feeder capturing images of everything from the first twig laid in a nest to fledglings taking their maiden flight.

"Every time I get a notification (from the feeder), I run to check who showed up," a user wrote online, marveling at the solar-powered, livestreaming feeder that has transformed their backyard into a miniature wildlife observatory.

At the heart of this surge in backyard birding are Netvue's bird-feeding devices. Best known for its smart video doorbells and home security systems, the company based in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, has repurposed its home-safety technologies for bird enthusiasts, launching its Birdfy brand in 2020.

While Europe and North America have long enjoyed a mature bird-watching culture, traditional outdoor birding and wildlife photography are expensive.

*See **Birding,** page 3*





Left: A bird looks at the camera of a Birdfy smart bird-feeding device. **Right:** The solar-powered AI feeder can monitor bird activity in real time and identify species. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:55 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:55 PM

INDEPTH





Left: A primary school student undergoes an abdominal ultrasound screening for echinococcosis during government-funded free health checkups for residents in Chonggyai county, Xizang autonomous region, in March. **Right:** Primary school students in Chonggyai have free health checkups in March. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Xizang navigates road to better healthcare

Mobile services provide free checkups in variety of locations

Editor's note: May 23 marks the 75th anniversary of the peaceful liberation of the Xizang autonomous region. Over the decades, healthcare has continuously improved, with enhanced access and infrastructure significantly boosting health outcomes and quality of life for residents in the region.

By **PALDEN NYIMA** and **DAQIONG** in Lhasa

On a crisp spring morning, residents of a high-altitude village in the Xizang autonomous region were filled with anticipation as they waited for the arrival of a mobile medical team.

In Namling county, at an elevation of 4,100 meters, the April chill was still in the air. However, it didn't dampen the enthusiasm of local residents, including monks and nuns, who lined up outside the village activity center for their annual health checkups.

A mobile health bus had navigated the rugged village roads, bumping and jostling the medical professionals inside. Its arrival in the village heralded the start of health-themed activities for the day and was indicative of the region's commitment to healthcare equity, even in Xizang's remote corners.

The medics' cups of tea had long gone cold as they worked throughout the day, but they carried out each task with precision and care. The team worked quickly to measure people's blood pressure, monitor heart rhythms, perform abdominal ultrasounds and draw blood for testing.

More improvements

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the peaceful liberation of Xizang, and throughout the decades, healthcare in the region has undergone continuous improvement.

Between 2021 and 2025, Xizang's healthcare sector experienced notable expansion, Xinhua News Agency reported.

The number of healthcare institutions climbed from 6,938 to 7,231, while bed capacity saw an increase from 18,942 to 21,488. The total number of healthcare professionals rose from 40,899 to 50,766.

Total funding allocated to the health sector in the region reached 60.89 billion yuan in the 2021-2025 period, marking an increase of 64.19 percent over the previous five-year period.

Since 2013, Xizang's regional health committee has made steady efforts to promote health checkups for urban and rural residents. Around 22.4 million health checkups have been completed over the period — covering the entire population.

The government provides an annual subsidy for each resident, which was increased to 164 yuan ($24.12) this year, to cover the cost of the checkups. Residents over age 65 receive 200 yuan. Beyond that, many of the subsequent medical services, such as some medications to treat long-term illnesses, are free.

This year, further efforts will be made to expand access to medical services through the deployment of additional mobile health diagnostic vehicles. Upgrades to existing onboard equipment are also planned, along with the distribution of motorcycles and portable diagnostic kits to village clinics, enabling grassroots health workers to deliver faster and more efficient basic checkups.

These efforts have already shown positive results at the county level. In Chonggyai county, for example, 14,000 residents have had health checkups this year, with the participation rate exceeding 88 percent.

"Health checkups for rural residents are an important element of our livelihood project," said Pasang Phenthok, head of Chonggyai County Central Hospital.

The checkups cover liver and kidney function, test blood sugar levels, and include chest X-rays and ultrasounds.

This year, free prenatal health checkups were introduced, along with screenings for major infectious diseases such as hepatitis B, HIV and tuberculosis.

Illnesses common in Xizang are being monitored for early detection. They include hypertension and polycythemia, a blood disorder that farmers and herders can develop at high altitudes because of reduced oxygen. The condition results in the thickening of blood and increases the risk of blood clots, strokes and heart attacks.

Early detection is key

In Chonggyai, health professionals have developed a system to quickly deal with serious illnesses identified during the health checkups.

Emergency treatment is conducted on-site, while patients with long-term conditions, such as diabetes or hypertension, are enrolled in a management system for ongoing care.

"We are forming a closed-loop health management process that prioritizes early detection and intervention," said Pasang Phenthok, adding that routine health checkups can reveal common health problems such as high blood pressure, fatty liver, gallstones, and cardiovascular diseases.

High salt intake in the diets of rural residents, especially from butter tea, is one of the major causes of these conditions.

Efforts to strengthen the medical network span multiple administrative levels. Chonggyai boasts a robust three-tier system at county hospitals, township clinics and village facilities. Currently, 20 village clinics provide medical services that meet national standards.

The mobile health checkup vehicles have become a lifeline for residents in widely dispersed communities, reducing costs and alleviating challenges in obtaining services.

This year, vehicles will be dispatched to seven remote townships for free health checkups, according to the Namling county health commission. The mobile service aims to cover more than 71,800 people. About 23 percent of the checkups have already been completed.

"This program allows for the early detection of problems to prevent severe illnesses and reduce health-related poverty," said Tsetan Drolkar, deputy director of the commission. The goal is to shift from treatment to active prevention, with farmers and herders encouraged to adopt healthier lifestyles.

Screenings tailored for the elderly, women, children and patients with chronic conditions are also improving people's quality of life, and reducing maternal and infant mortality rates in Xizang.

Sogchen Township Branch Hospital in Namling bridges the gap between grassroots patients and more advanced hospitals. Residents of the Tibetan Plateau region often face high-altitude polycythemia, diabetes and echinococcosis, a parasitic infection often transmitted through dog feces.

The hospital maintains a strict diagnostic process for chronic conditions, providing affordable medication to patients and guiding lifestyle adjustments to reduce risks.

Phurbu, a monk at Namling's Dragkar Monastery, recounted how regular checkups helped him detect and manage hypertension and significantly improve his health.

"Around 2021, during a checkup, the doctor advised me to take antihypertensive medication long-term. Now, after years of medication, my blood pressure has returned to normal," Phurbu said.

Similarly, Phurbu Tsering, a monk from Chonggyai, praised the benefits of annual health screenings: "These checkups are effective tools that allow for timely treatment and prevention of more severe complications."

Contact the writers at palden_nyima@chinadaily.com.cn





Left: Monks receive an annual free health checkup at the Chonggyai County Central Hospital in April. **Right:** Phurbu Tsering(right), a Buddhist monk from the Thangpoche Monastery of Chonggyai, has his lymph nodes examined at the hospital in April. PHOTOS BY PALDEN NYIMA / CHINA DAILY

50,766 people
The total number of healthcare professionals in Xizang in 2025

22.4 m health checkups
The approximate number of health checkups completed in Xizang since 2013

60.89 billion yuan
Total funding allocated to the health sector in the region in the 2021-25 period

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Tibetan weaving: A new thread for rural prosperity

By **PALDEN NYIMA** in Lhasa

In Gangba village of Lhundrub county, Xizang autonomous region, a group of Tibetan women are weaving age-old traditions with modern commercial demands.

Their deft hands turn locally sourced fine wool into exquisite Tibetan rugs, scarves and other handcrafted textiles. Their craft has also brought fresh development opportunities to this rural community.

Once a hobby practiced mainly during farming off-seasons, Tibetan weaving has grown into a flourishing industry, becoming a driver of rural revitalization, according to local authorities.

Long reliant on animal husbandry, Gangba village boasts its own weaving tradition. For generations, women wove textiles for family members, handing down techniques between generations. Yet without standardized production or market access, these skills lay dormant, yielding little economic benefit for locals.

A turning point came in 2015 with the founding of the local weaving cooperative.

"We started with just 16,000 yuan ($2,350) and confronted numerous hurdles in the early days," said Basang Tsering, Party secretary of Gangba village.

"But we sank deep roots in the village to preserve this time-honored craft and pass on local culture. More importantly, we aimed to help rural women secure jobs and boost their income without traveling far from home," Basang Tsering said.

With professional support and village authorities' guidance, the cooperative has made good progress in recent years. It has overcome bottlenecks, expanded its sales, and developed modern designs, which include hats, embroidered pouches and decorative key chains.



Tashi Lhamo (left), the head of a women's federation and a weaving cooperative in Lhundrub county of Xizang, displays a Tibetan carpet produced by her staff in April. SAMTEN NGODRUB / FOR CHINA DAILY

These commercial efforts have empowered women through stable incomes while renewing cultural pride.

Tashi Lhamo, chairperson of the village women's federation, said the cooperative rolls out a wide range of products, from classic Tibetan rugs to colorful scarves.

Local herdsmen supply high-quality semi-fine wool, which the women refine into items that reflect traditional charm while fitting modern practical needs, said Tashi Lhamo.

Strategic cooperation has broadened the cooperative's market reach. Its debut exhibition at the annual Lhundrub county commodities fair drew wide attention, marking the first showcase of "Gangba Weaving" as a regional cultural brand.

The exposure resulted in bulk orders and strong demand, contributing an additional 20,000 yuan to the village's economy this year, according to local authorities.

Eight women work full-time at the cooperative, while many others work flexible hours at home, striking a balance between household duties, farming and their craft.

"Every piece we make embodies the essence of Tibetan culture," said Tashi Lhamo.

"This is not merely about heritage preservation. It is about building women's confidence and creating a platform for them to pursue better lives," she noted.

"The invaluable craftsmanship inherited from our ancestors should be well preserved rather than left stagnant; it needs to keep pace with the times and embrace modern aesthetics to resonate with wider audiences in the new era," she added.

Looking ahead, the cooperative plans to increase production by recruiting women from neighboring villages to weave.

"More professional training programs and product innovations will be launched to keep the time-honored Tibetan weaving tradition dynamic and well-adapted to modern market demands," she said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:55 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:55 PM

TOP NEWS

Birding: Users pay for 'thrill' of greeting new visitor

From page 1

According to the 2025 State of the Birds report, the United States now boasts nearly 100 million bird-watchers. Annual spending by these enthusiasts — including travel, equipment, apparel and photography gear — has reached $108 billion.

Birdfy offers a new perspective: the view from one's own backyard. The company describes the strategy as a leap from "home security" to "human-nature connection", and it's paying off.

Expanding into markets including the US and Europe, with products priced between $119.99 and $279.99, Birdfy has quickly become an Amazon best-seller in its category.

"It started when we noticed users were sharing unexpected bird footage captured by our security cameras," said Hu Youle, chief technology officer of Netvue. "Backyard birding with smart cameras wasn't just a novelty. It reflected a real human desire to reconnect with nature."

The company's philosophy is simple: Nature doesn't have to be distant. Unlike standard cameras for safety purposes, these smart feeders are engineered for wildlife with features including 4K imaging, dual-camera systems, lowlight adaptability and solar power.

To enable fast, dynamic recording under various lighting conditions, the company has trained vertical artificial intelligence models capable of identifying species, tracking movements, and even distinguishing males from females. Plans are underway to predict potentially sick birds, providing enthusiasts with a conservation tool alongside their hobbies. The product line continues to expand into smart birdhouses and birdbaths.

Documenting sightings is also part of Birdfy's business model. Birdfy has cultivated an international ecosystem where enthusiasts share rare captures, fueling ongoing engagement. "Users aren't paying for cloud storage," Hu said. "They're paying for the thrill of discovering a new visitor in their yard."

In China, RedNote's 2025 Birdwatching Trend Report highlighted a dramatic rise in birding among younger consumers. According to the report, searches for "birding" surged 19-fold year-on-year, and users around the age of 25 have become the dominant demographic driving online content.

Liu Feng, CEO of Birdfans.com, which has more than 400,000 registered users, explained the broader forces behind this growth. "Young people today seek a deeper connection with nature," Liu said.

"Birding has become a fashionable, emotional lifestyle connected to the natural world. Coupled with online social sharing platforms, it's creating a thriving digital ecosystem for enthusiasts."

Birding tourism is also taking flight, with remote areas such as Mingxi county in Fujian province attracting European and US visitors.

With smart technology, AI and community engagement converging, companies such as Netvue see enormous market potential.

Flooding in Turkiye



An aerial view shows a collapsed section of the Antakya-Samandag highway after heavy rainfall on Thursday in Hatay, Turkiye. Five parked vehicles were damaged in the collapse, while one person was killed as flooding caused a house to collapse. MEHMET BAYRAK / GETTY IMAGES

Wider opening-up to draw more foreign investment

Multinational firms ready to deploy resources in high-end manufacturing, service industries

By **ZHONG NAN** and **CANG WEI** in Suzhou, Jiangsu

Inside

Global Views, **page 8**

China will remain a prime long-term destination for global investors, driven by its vast consumer market, deeper opening-up and rapid advances in digital and green technologies, which are reshaping industries and generating fresh growth opportunities, government officials and business executives said on Thursday.

Speaking at a business conference ahead of the 32nd Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Ministers Responsible for Trade Meeting, which will be held in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, on Friday and Saturday, Li Chenggang, China international trade representative with the Ministry of Commerce, said the nation will continue to remove restrictive measures beyond the negative list.

The negative list outlines the specific industries in which foreign investors are either restricted or prohibited from operating.

Li, who is also a vice-minister of commerce, said that China expects all parties attending the meeting in Suzhou to engage in in-depth discussions on advancing regional economic integration, supporting the multilateral trading system, strengthening digital cooperation and promoting green economic development.

To create a more attractive investment environment for multinational companies, China will further expand its opening-up in service-related industries, such as telecommunications, healthcare and education, while also promoting the orderly opening-up of the internet and cultural sectors, he added.

According to information released in March by the National Development and Reform Commission, China has dynamically updated its negative list for foreign investment access, with reduction of special management measures in the services sector becoming a major priority.

The nation has also increased platforms for expanding services opening-up. The number of comprehensive pilot areas established for expanding the opening-up of the services sector has so far reached 20.

Henry Ding, senior vice-president of 3M, said the United States-based industrial conglomerate will further scale up research and development investment in China this year, and it is targeting more than 30 percent growth in new product launches compared with 2025 — a pace significantly higher than in most other global markets.

"These investments help us respond faster to market upgrades, shorten innovation cycles and build a complete local industrial chain from research to testing and manufacturing. This establishes a solid foundation for our stable and long-term growth in China," said Ding, who is also a director of the American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai.

Rob Iuppa, chief financial officer of Technimark LLC, a US manufacturer of high-value packaging products for the healthcare, consumer and industrial sectors, said the company expects its investment in China this year "to exceed the level of any of the past three years".

"As long as our customers continue to grow in China, we will continue increasing our investment in the country," he said.

Lee Hyuk-joon, president for China at Hyundai Motor Group, said that China's rapid development in sectors such as new energy vehicles, intelligent connected vehicles and digital technologies aligns closely with the group's global transformation strategy.

The South Korean automaker plans to deepen cooperation with Suzhou in areas including smart mobility, R&D, supply-chain integration and green technologies, while expanding collaboration with Chinese partners and increasing its participation in China's industrial upgrading.

Mirroring this momentum, high-tech industries accounted for 32.3 percent of foreign direct investment in China in 2025, with inflows into sectors including e-commerce services, medical equipment manufacturing and aerospace posting strong growth, while returns for foreign-invested companies remained stable, data from the Ministry of Commerce showed.

According to the ministry, foreign-funded companies account for one-third of China's foreign trade, one-quarter of industrial output value and one-seventh of tax revenue, and they support more than 30 million jobs.

Contact the writers at zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

Visit: Building a multipolar world stressed

From page 1

"The second joint statement outlines how China and Russia will strengthen cooperation in building a multipolar world, and this cooperation itself is conducive to maintaining international stability and world peace," said Li.

The statement called on the international community to remain committed to four principles — upholding openness, inclusiveness and mutually beneficial cooperation; upholding equality and indivisibility of security; upholding the democratization of international relations and improving the global governance system; and upholding the diversity of world civilizations and values.

The two sides concluded by stating their commitment to continuing to develop a shared vision for building a multipolar world and a new type of international relations characterized by greater fairness.

Su Xiaohui, an associate research fellow at the China Institute of International Studies, said that the second statement shows that both China and Russia are committed to practicing genuine multilateralism.

"Both countries recognize that today's world is fraught with turmoil and uncertainty, and that many people fear the return of the law of the jungle when it comes to global stability," she said.

Su said that the two countries have established a model for bilateral relations, practicing mutual respect and refraining from imposing their own will or agenda on one another.

Boeing plan eases aviation ties after years of strain

By **LI JING**
lijing2009@chinadaily.com.cn

Inside

Views, **page 7**

China agreeing to purchase 200 aircraft from Boeing is expected to bolster commercial ties between China and the United States, especially in the aviation sector, as industry analysts said the agreement represents a partial easing of strained industrial ties after nearly a decade.

The Ministry of Commerce announced on Wednesday that China will purchase 200 Boeing aircraft "in accordance with its air transport development needs and on commercial principles", responding to a question regarding US President Donald Trump's recent remarks on the deal.

An official from the ministry said that aviation is a key sector for mutually beneficial and win-win cooperation between the two countries.

The US will also guarantee sufficient supplies of engines and spare parts for Chinese operators, according to a statement published on the ministry's website.

The comments came days after Boeing said that it had made progress in reopening the Chinese market during Trump's state visit to Beijing, where he was accompanied by a delegation of senior US business executives, including Boeing CEO Kelly Ortberg.

"We had a very successful trip to China and accomplished our major goal of reopening the China market to orders for Boeing aircraft," Boeing said in a statement to China Daily.

If finalized, the deal would mark Boeing's first major aircraft commitment from China in nearly a decade. The last major deal came during Trump's previous visit to China in 2017, when Chinese buyers signed agreements for 300 Boeing aircraft worth more than $37 billion.

Since then, Boeing has struggled to secure large orders from Chinese airlines amid geopolitical tensions and the grounding of the Boeing 737 MAX after two fatal crashes in 2018 and 2019.

China was once one of Boeing's most important overseas markets, with Chinese airlines accounting for roughly a quarter of the company's global deliveries before 2019. But the US manufacturer's presence has since weakened sharply as European rival Airbus expanded its footprint in China.

Airbus now holds roughly 55 percent of China's commercial aircraft market and has secured multiple large orders from Chinese carriers, including hundreds of Airbus A320neo family aircraft.

"Aviation has traditionally been a key link in China-US economic relations, and aircraft orders often serve as a barometer of bilateral ties," said Zhu Keli, founding director of the China Institute of New Economy.

The Boeing commitment signals a shift toward more pragmatic engagement, with both sides returning to cooperation based on commercial interests, Zhu said.

"It shows that the global aviation supply chain remains deeply interconnected," he said. "High-end manufacturing such as commercial aircraft is difficult to separate from the global division of labor."

For China, the move also signals continued openness and commitment to maintaining stable global industrial supply chains, Zhu added, while for the US, it reflects recognition of the importance of the Chinese market.

Beyond geopolitics, analysts said the proposed purchase also addresses the pressing operational needs of Chinese airlines.

Over the past nine years, Airbus has steadily expanded its dominance in China, leaving airlines increasingly dependent on a single supplier. Reintroducing Boeing aircraft into the market could help rebalance the supply structure and improve resilience, Zhu said.

At the same time, Chinese airlines are facing aging fleets and strong demand for capacity growth, while production of the domestically developed C919 by the Commercial Aircraft Corp of China is still ramping up and Airbus order backlogs remain long.

"In that context, 200 Boeing aircraft could help fill near-term capacity gaps and ensure stable operations on major routes," Zhu said.

US commitments to ensure supplies of engines and components could also ease maintenance pressures for airlines and reduce operational risks, he added.

However, Zhu cautioned that the deal represents only a partial thaw rather than a full recovery in China-US aviation cooperation.

While aircraft purchases and supply chains may expand, barriers remain in areas such as airworthiness certification, core technology sharing and deeper industrial integration. In particular, certification of the C919 by Western regulators remains a key hurdle, highlighting continued technological competition between the two countries, he added.

Zhu said that future cooperation is likely to follow a pattern of "strong commercial cooperation but cautious technological engagement", as sensitive technologies such as aircraft engines and advanced avionics remain tightly controlled.

Both Boeing and Airbus expect China to become the world's largest aviation market by around 2043, with a commercial fleet of roughly 9,000 to 10,000 aircraft.

Ebola outbreak



Congolese children read an advocacy poster on Wednesday as aid agencies step up efforts to contain a new outbreak of the Bundibugyo strain of Ebola in Bunia, Ituri province, Democratic Republic of Congo. On Tuesday, DRC Health Minister Roger Kamba said that 543 suspected cases had been recorded, including 32 laboratory-confirmed infections, while the death toll had reached 136. GRADEL MUYISA MUMBERE / REUTERS

Cooperation: Summit in Beijing can become a new start

From page 1

But almost none of the great problems of our time are zero-sum. Instead, consider: A stable climate, a generation in Africa or South Asia lifted out of poverty and into school and decent health, and a bigger global economy to share. None of these has a winner and a loser. The whole world rises together or it does not rise at all.

I have worked across Asia for decades, and I can tell you plainly that China, India and much of the continent do not reach instinctively for the zero-sum lens. It is a Western habit. Habits can be unlearned.

Iran shows what unlearning it would make possible. Set the reflex aside and look only at the interests on the table. Everyone wants the Strait of Hormuz kept open. No one gains from a wider war.

If the zero-sum map is the wrong one, the right one can be drawn. This is some substance I would read into President Xi Jinping's call for a "constructive strategic stability" relationship. Stability of that order rests on institutions. It is the patient construction of the channels through which a misunderstanding can be disarmed before it ever becomes a war.

So the real question in Beijing was never who won the better deal. It was whether two great powers can set down the old map. More than half a century ago, former US president Richard Nixon and former US secretary of state Henry Kissinger, Chairman Mao Zedong and Premier Zhou Enlai began the diplomacy that ended a generation of hostility. The week changed the world. I would ask people to remember how it was actually done. By refusing to pretend the differences away, the two sides made the common ground they did find believable. That is what optimism without naivety looks like.

That is the spirit this moment asks for. The summit in Beijing can become a new start, followed by a meeting in Washington later this year.

Standing in Beijing in 1972, Nixon raised his glass and borrowed a line from one of Chairman Mao's poems. So many deeds cry out to be done, he said, and always urgently. Ten thousand years are too long. Seize the day, seize the hour.

More than 50 years later, with the climate, with artificial intelligence, with the security of the world's energy, none of which either nation can solve alone, the hour presses again. China's success and the US' success need not be bought at each other's expense. Each can be the making of the other. That is a truer description of the world than the zero-sum story the West has told itself for far too long.

The author is the chair of the Europe-Asia Center and the former undersecretary-general of the United Nations. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:55 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:55 PM

WORLD

Battling the blaze



Crew members combat the Sandy Fire as it continues to burn in the hills near a residential area in Southern California, on Wednesday. The wind-driven brush fire broke out on Monday in Simi Valley, a city of around 125,000 residents about 48 kilometers northwest of Los Angeles, spreading rapidly and prompting authorities to issue evacuation orders for thousands of people. APU GOMES / AFP

Role of collaboration emphasized

China-Russia cooperation seen as vital in helping bolster multilateralism

By YANG RAN in Beijing and **XU WEIWEI**, **YANG HAN** in Hong Kong

Global experts said that cooperation between China and Russia is vital in today's volatile world, highlighting the role of their collaboration in helping bolster multilateralism and foster stability.

Russian President Vladimir Putin paid a state visit to China from Tuesday to Wednesday, which also marked his 25th trip to the country. President Xi Jinping and Putin held talks, chatted over tea, visited a photo exhibition, and witnessed the signing of a slew of cooperation documents in Beijing.

The two presidents hailed a "new stage" in bilateral ties as they agreed to further extend a China-Russia friendship treaty and pledged to work together for a more just and equitable world order.

Maarij Farooq, deputy editor-in-chief at Daily Ittehad Media Group & Pakistan Economic Net, said the growing strategic coordination between China and Russia is becoming increasingly important in today's changing global environment.

Stronger cooperation between two major global powers like China and Russia can play a constructive and stabilizing role in the region and beyond, Farooq said. "Their coordination on global issues reflects the emergence of a more balanced and multipolar world order where countries seek dialogue, development, and cooperation instead of confrontation and pressure politics."

Karori Singh, former director of the South Asia Studies Centre at the University of Rajasthan in India, said that China and Russia, being founding members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and BRICS, are endowed with greater responsibility to ensure fairness and justice in global governance.

Commitment reiterated

As the world shares deep concerns about the deteriorating global economic situation, China and Russia "reiterated their commitment to the United Nations' purposes and principles, international law, multilateralism and global governance", he said.

During Putin's visit, China and Russia issued a joint statement, advocating for a multipolar world and a new type of international relations.

Vasily Kashin, director of the Center for Comprehensive European and International Studies at the National Research University Higher School of Economics, said the declaration of Russia and China can be considered an alternative proposal on the architecture of global security, showing it's realistic to gather a wide group of developing countries that are afraid of unpredictable actions by some countries.

Lawrence Freeman, a US political-economic analyst and writer, said the geopolitical dynamic in the world is changing, with the Global South set to become the focus.

Anthony Moretti, an associate professor in the Department of Communication and Organizational Leadership at Robert Morris University in the US, said the leaders' summit comes at an important time.

"A multipolar world is inevitable. It would benefit the world if other nations or blocs were willing to acknowledge reality and end any commitments to undermining the trend of the times," Moretti said.

This year marks the launch of the China-Russia Years of Education, which is the 10th national theme year of the two countries.

On the same day, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun announced that, to continue facilitating personnel exchanges, China has decided to extend the visa-free policy to Russia until Dec 31, 2027.

Ilia Yampolsky, senior researcher at the Shemyakin and Ovchinnikov Institute of Bioorganic Chemistry of the Russian Academy of Sciences, said the visa-free policy has helped remove travel barriers for scholars and greatly facilitates the exchange of people and ideas.

Alexander Vladimirovich Pikover, senior researcher at the Institute of China and Contemporary Asia of the Russian Academy of Sciences, said, "Now more than ever, it is important for Russia and China to develop mutually enriching humanitarian, scientific and educational contacts and cooperation. It is here that the prospects and development paths will open up, giving hope to the very community with a shared future for humanity."

Yifan Xu in Washington, Liu Hongjie in Moscow, and Xinhua contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at yangran1@chinadaily.com.cn

Long-standing Sino-Pakistani relationship valued

By XU WEIWEI in Hong Kong
vivienxu@chinadailyapac.com

As China and Pakistan marked the 75th anniversary of diplomatic ties on Thursday, political leaders, diplomats and analysts in Pakistan have highlighted the long-standing, multifaceted Sino-Pakistani relationship, emphasizing its economic, social, cultural and diplomatic dimensions.

China's significant investments, particularly through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, have not only transformed Pakistan's economy and boosted its infrastructure but also helped Pakistan make substantial strides toward sustainability and green energy, they said.

Pakistan and China established diplomatic relations in 1951, and their partnership has since expanded into multiple sectors, including trade, infrastructure, defense, and cultural exchanges.

On Thursday, Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif sent a message on the 75th anniversary of ties with Beijing, saying that his nation "deeply appreciates" China's cooperation in "multifaceted fields".

The CPEC, as a flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative, has made a tremendous contribution toward Pakistan's infrastructure development, energy security, industrial cooperation, and regional connectivity, said the prime minister.

On Wednesday, the Senate of Pakistan unanimously passed a resolution reaffirming Pakistan-China friendship on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of diplomatic ties between the two nations.



Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong (fourth from left) and Pakistan's Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal (third from right) pose for a photo with Pakistanis who won the award for Outstanding Pakistani and Chinese Staff of CPEC Projects 2026 in Islamabad, on March 31. AHMAD KAMAL/XINHUA

The resolution was moved by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, who described Pakistan-China ties as a model of mutual trust, respect and shared aspirations. He said the relationship has continued to strengthen over the past 75 years and remains a cornerstone of regional peace, stability and development.

Dar reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further expanding cooperation, while emphasizing the shared resolve of the two countries to carry forward their iron-clad friendship for future generations.

Zafar Uddin Mahmood, former special assistant to the prime minister of Pakistan, noted that Pakistan was the 17th country and the first Muslim nation to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. Since the establishment of ties on May 21, 1951, the two countries have built a deep bond characterized as an all-weather strategic cooperative partnership.

The economic underpinning of the relationship evolved significantly, highlighted by the CPEC, which has driven major investments in infrastructure, energy and other projects, Mahmood said.

In the meantime, the acceleration of people-to-people connections, cultural and educational exchanges, scientific cooperation, frequent high-level visits, consensus and cooperation on major international issues and mutual support on core issues strongly bonded the countries, he said.

Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, a former prime minister of Pakistan, said implementing solar power, electric motorcycles and other electric vehicle projects with Chinese investment will help Pakistan reduce the amount of gas and diesel imported into the country while also cutting carbon emissions and greenhouse gas emissions.

Looking ahead, Mahmood told China Daily that facilitating more social contacts and exchanges, and promoting the study of the Chinese language and cultural understanding, are important for Pakistan. Meanwhile, the nation can learn from China's development and governance model to meet the challenges and move forward.

"China's development model for industrialization, poverty alleviation, education, health and other areas" is something that Pakistan can benefit from, he said.

Salman Bashir, a former foreign secretary of Pakistan, said the bonds of friendship between Pakistan and China are everlasting and each succeeding generation has contributed to making this relationship ever more special.

"It's good to see that the next generation is doing so well to give additional meaning to the relationship," he said. "This process of renewal is what makes the ties enduring. This process has continued over the ages and will continue."

Xinhua contributed to this story.

Deeper exchanges on human rights stressed

By ZHANG ZHOUXIANG in Paris
zhangzhouxiang@chinadaily.com.cn

The right to development and the relationship between national stability and the protection of human rights emerged as key themes of the 2026 China-Europe Seminar on Human Rights held in Paris on Thursday, where scholars and experts from China and Europe called for a more inclusive and development-oriented understanding of human rights amid growing uncertainty.

The seminar was launched in 2015 at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, France. For a whole decade, it has brought together academics, diplomats and policy experts to discuss the challenges facing global human rights governance in an increasingly multipolar world.

Hussein Askary, vice-chairman of the Belt and Road Institute in Sweden, said the right to development should be understood as a fundamental human right.

"Human beings must, first of all, have enough food, clothing, housing, healthcare and education. These are the basic rights people should enjoy," Askary said.

He argued that human rights should not be reduced to abstract political concepts detached from material conditions.

"Once people are educated and healthy, they become productive members of society," he said. "The highest level of human existence comes in the ability to practice our creative powers and contribute through science, culture and philosophy."

Askary also criticized what he described as double standards in Western human rights discourse, pointing to conflicts in Iraq, Libya and Gaza.

"Human rights can become less of a genuine universal principle and more of a geopolitical tool serving the interests of major powers," he said.

Adrian Severin, former deputy prime minister and foreign minister of Romania, stressed that effective human rights protection depends on the existence of a stable and functioning state.

"Individuals naturally seek freedoms and rights, but those rights can only become real if the state is strong enough to protect them," Severin said. "If the state and the community are weak, then individual rights also become weak, fragile and largely symbolic."

Historical traditions

He said human rights systems are shaped by each country's historical traditions and cultural foundations, and warned against imposing a single model on all societies.

Richard Trappl, former director of the Confucius Institute at the University of Vienna, also emphasized the importance of development and social cohesion in safeguarding human rights. "If a political system can provide people with development, stability and solidarity, then human rights are embedded within that system itself," he said.

Tian Feilong, vice-dean of the Law School of Minzu University of China, said both China and Europe have long histories of contributing to human civilization and global governance.

He said China-Europe human rights dialogue should move beyond ideological confrontation and help build "a new form of human rights" based on civilizational diversity, equality among nations and peaceful development.

Tang Jianjun, secretary-general of the China Society for Human Rights Studies, stressed the importance of China and Europe exchanging views on human rights at the seminar, expressing hope that it will play a bigger role in the future.

If China and the EU stick to equal dialogue, respect differences, and expand human rights cooperation, they can narrow disputes, strengthen cooperation, and support global human rights progress, the conference concluded.

Nature-based solutions key to cities: UN official

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

Anaclaudia Rossbach, executive director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, or UN-Habitat, says cities must place housing, resilient infrastructure and nature-based solutions at the center of urban planning to withstand growing climate threats such as floods, heat waves and droughts.

In an interview with China Daily on the sidelines of the 13th session of the World Urban Forum, or WUF13, being held in Baku, Azerbaijan, Rossbach said rapid and often unplanned urbanization is concentrating people and infrastructure in highly climate-vulnerable areas, exposing millions of residents, especially low-income communities, to escalating climate risks.

She said more than 1 billion people live in informal settlements, often located in flood-prone or environmentally fragile areas globally, while nearly 3 billion people face some form of housing inadequacy.

"Without stronger climate action, inequality and housing insecurity will only deepen," Rossbach said.

She stressed that urban planning must become more "housing-first and resilience-driven", aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

"This means investing in affordable, climate-smart housing with resilient building standards, passive cooling, water-resistant materials and secure tenure, while upgrading informal settlements," Rossbach said.

She said cities should address climate risks in informal settlements through community-centered upgrading rather than forced displacement.

Rossbach said that participatory risk mapping can help identify areas where relocation may be unavoidable, emphasizing that any resettlement must follow due process to protect livelihoods.

"When cities align housing, land management, infrastructure and social protection policies, they can reduce climate risks while keeping communities connected to jobs, schools and services," Rossbach said.

Looking ahead, Rossbach said a truly climate-smart city will balance lower emissions, stronger climate resilience and improved access to services, while ensuring better housing conditions for all residents.

The forum running through Friday, and themed "Housing the World: Safe and Resilient Cities and Communities", is the largest to date, attracting more than 40,000 participants from more than 180 countries.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1832

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:55 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:55 PM

WORLD

Paths open for US-Iran pact despite strains

Regional mediation efforts gain fresh momentum as escalation risks loom

By **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong and **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE

Iran said it has consistently honored its commitments, and all paths remain open to a diplomatic solution as the United States claimed it is in the "final stages" of securing a deal with Tehran, but the situation could also "escalate quickly".

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian defended his country's strategy amid the ongoing war — triggered by the US and Israel attacks on Feb 28 — saying Tehran has "explored every avenue to avert war".

"All paths remain open from our side. Forcing Iran to surrender through coercion is nothing but an illusion. Mutual respect in diplomacy is far wiser, safer, and more sustainable than war," said Pezeshkian.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei said in a televised interview on Wednesday that Iran and the US have been exchanging messages through Pakistan.

In the latest developments, Pakistan's army chief Asim Munir is said to be traveling to Tehran on Thursday, according to Iran's ISNA News Agency.

On Wednesday, Pakistan's Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi traveled to Iran, marking his second trip to the country in a week.

"Many times, intermediary parties prefer to be present alongside the texts being exchanged and help with the process," Baqaei was quoted as saying by Iran's Nour News Agency. He said Iran is currently focused on "ending the war on all fronts, including Lebanon", while reiterating Tehran's longstanding demands.

Baqaei said that "our demands are clear", citing the release of Iran's blocked assets, issues related to US "maritime piracy", and harassment of Iran's shipping activities.

"We view the other side with intense suspicion and entirely based on our right to do so, because of their very bad record over the past year and a half," Baqaei was quoted as saying by Nour News Agency.

"At the same time, we are pursuing the discussions with full capability and complete goodwill," he added.

US President Donald Trump told reporters on Wednesday that the situation was "right on the borderline" and could escalate quickly.

He reiterated his determination not to allow Iran to acquire a nuclear weapon. "We're in the final stages of Iran (talks). We'll see what happens. Either (we) have a deal, or we're going to do some things that are a little bit nasty, but hopefully that won't happen," Trump told reporters.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan said in a post on X that Riyadh appreciates Trump's willingness to find a diplomatic end to the war and also praised Pakistan's mediation efforts.

Faisal also said Saudi Arabia is looking forward to Iran seizing the opportunity to avoid the dangerous implications of escalation and urgently responding to efforts to advance negotiations toward a comprehensive agreement to achieve lasting peace in the region and the world.

Strategic miscalculation

Arhama Siddiqa, a research fellow at the Pakistan-based Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad, told China Daily that the latest diplomatic activity suggests that Trump is seeking to contain the consequences of a war that increasingly appears to have been a strategic miscalculation.

"The decision to use force against Iran may have been intended to compel concessions, but it has instead increased regional instability, exposed Gulf energy and maritime vulnerabilities, and created diplomatic pressure on Washington to find an exit without appearing to retreat," said Siddiqa.

She said Pezeshkian's statement that Iran remains open to diplomacy is therefore "significant", as it gives the regional mediators a basis to press for a negotiated settlement.

Further, Siddiqa noted that Trump's claim shows that Washington is trying to preserve coercive leverage even as it explores de-escalation.

"The reported role of Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkiye, and Egypt in refining a proposal to bridge US-Iran differences indicates a wider regional consensus that prolonged conflict would damage regional stability, energy security, and trade routes," she said.

Contact the writers at jan@chinadailyapac.com

Reduced to rubble



Lebanese civil defense workers search through the rubble in the southern Lebanese village of Deir Qanun al-Nahr on Wednesday, a day after Israeli strikes. Tuesday's Israeli airstrikes across southern Lebanon killed 19 people, the health ministry said, as Hezbollah reported clashes with Israeli troops despite a truce. ADRI SALIDO / GETTY IMAGES

Uganda's electric buses drive green shift

KAMPALA — On the busy streets of Kampala, Uganda's capital, a quiet transformation is unfolding. Sleek, locally manufactured electric buses are becoming part of the city's daily rhythm, marking the country's accelerating drive toward greener and more sustainable urban transport.

Since their introduction, the green-and-gray 40-seater electric buses have quickly drawn growing public attention. Equipped with onboard WiFi, they allow passengers to share photos and videos of their journeys on social media in real time.

Uganda's journey into electric mobility dates back to 2016, when it unveiled Africa's first solar-powered electric bus, the Kayoola electric vehicle, a name loosely translated as "mass carrier".

At the heart of this transition is Kiira Motors Corporation, or KMC, and its subsidiary E-Bus Xpress Kiira Ltd, which are spearheading efforts to scale up electric mobility across the country.

During a recent media tour of the company's production plant, managing director Ian Kyeyune said the number of buses operating on city routes is set to rise from 16 to 45 within a month.

He added that Uganda plans to produce more than 1,500 electric buses over the next year, forming part of a broader national e-mobility strategy targeting 15,000 electric vehicles by 2030.

To support the shift, city authorities are reshaping urban traffic management — removing roadside parking in downtown areas and introducing dedicated bus lanes, aimed at easing congestion and prioritizing public transport in a city long dominated by fuel-powered vehicles.



An engineer stands inside an electric bus at the Kiira Vehicle Plant in Jinja, eastern Uganda, on Monday. HAJARAH NALWADDA / XINHUA

The government is also expanding the sector through a campaign that encourages private participation. Under the initiative, transport operators can own buses, while investors may purchase seats for fixed periods under franchise arrangements.

KMC engineers say the electric buses offer clear economic advantages over diesel-powered alternatives, particularly in acquisition, servicing, and maintenance costs.

"We save over 60 percent of energy costs. While an ordinary taxi would spend 1,800 shillings ($0.48), we only spend 800 shillings on energy costs per kilometer," Kyeyune said.

He added that studies indicate operators can recover their investment within about three years, thanks to lower fuel expenses. The batteries can later be reused for applications such as solar energy storage.

Richard Madanda, KMC's director of production, said the batteries used in the buses, with an estimated lifespan of 12 years, are imported from China and that the company is working closely with Chinese partners to develop local technical expertise in electric vehicle technology.

"We are working with a partner from China because their auto industry, in terms of electric vehicles, is the best in the world. We want to learn from the best," Madanda said.

Uganda is also testing its electric mobility ambitions beyond its borders. Late last year, Uganda launched an African expedition featuring a locally manufactured electric bus that traveled 13,000 km across five African countries — Tanzania, Zambia, Botswana, Eswatini, and South Africa.

XINHUA

Indonesia steps up coal gasification amid fuel shocks

By **PRIME SARMIENTO** in Hong Kong and **LEONARDUS JEGHO** in Jakarta

As the Middle East crisis rattles global fuel markets, Indonesia needs to pull in more investments and technology transfers to accelerate a coal gasification program that can shield its economy from the import costs of volatile liquefied petroleum gas, or LPG, analysts said.

Indonesia is a net exporter of coal and one of Asia's largest coal consumers. Its vast coal resources enable it to produce higher-value products like dimethyl ether, or DME — a colorless gas synthesized from coal-derived methanol that can be used as an alternative to LPG, a widely used cooking fuel.

However, there is still no coal-to-DME project operating commercially in Indonesia due to high operating costs.

Ahmad Erani Yustika, secretary-general of Indonesia's Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, said on Tuesday that the government is developing domestic energy sources to cut Indonesia's reliance on imported fuels and strengthen national energy independence.

Yustika said a coal gasification-based DME project remained under consideration for investment by Danantara, Indonesia's sovereign wealth fund.

Fahmy Radhi, a lecturer and energy economist at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, called for the government to issue policies to attract investors in the coal gasification industry. Radhi cited Indonesia's Domestic Market Obligation policy, which requires producers of coal and other resources to allocate a portion of their production for domestic use before exporting it.

He said a clear tax mechanism for coal exports is also needed to ensure a sufficient supply of coal for local needs.

Elias Ginting, chairman of the Association of Indonesia Coke Industry, said Indonesia can cooperate with China on coal downstreaming, such as converting coal into DME.

"We need innovation and technology, we need technology transfer. And at this time, the best of them come from China," Ginting told China Daily.

In March 2025, Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto met with the Task Force for Accelerating Downstreaming and National Energy Resilience to discuss the development of coal gasification projects on the islands of Sumatra and Borneo. By producing its own DME, Indonesia can cut its reliance on imported LPG. Indonesia imports over 7 million tons of LPG each year, about 20 percent of which is sourced from the Middle East.



Workers unload frozen fish at Juwana fishing port, as rising diesel prices leave many fishing boats docked, in Pati, Central Java Province, Indonesia, on May 8. WILLY KURNIAWAN / REUTERS

Tri Winarno, director general of Minerals and Coal at Indonesia's Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, said coal downstreaming is part of the country's strategy to develop local energy resources.

"Indonesia views the energy transition as needing to be carried out in a realistic, gradual, and just manner," Winarno said on May 11 during the opening of the Indonesia Coal and Energy Expo in Jakarta.

He said China is becoming increasingly central to Indonesia's downstream strategy.

Lei Huang, vice-president of China Coal Technology & Engineering Group, said at the expo that Indonesia "has a solid industrial foundation and huge development potential" as a major coal producer and exporter, and that there are opportunities to deepen China-Indonesia cooperation on coal downstream projects.

Promoting coal gasification, however, may not align with Indonesia's climate commitments. At the G20 Summit held in Brazil in November 2024, Prabowo announced that Indonesia will achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, phase out coal plants within the next 15 years and build 75 gigawatts of additional renewable energy.

But according to Putra Adhiguna, managing director of the Energy Shift Institute, an Australia-based energy finance think tank, climate mitigation measures such as carbon capture and storage may help reduce emissions, but they will also come at an extra cost. He added that DME is expensive to produce, casting doubt on the economic viability of such plants.

Leonardus Jegho is a freelance journalist for China Daily.

Contact the writers at prime@chinadailyapac.com

China's UN envoy urges protection of civilians

By **MINLU ZHANG** in the United Nations
minluzhang@chinadailyusa.com

China called for ceasefires, political dialogue and civilian protection during a UN Security Council annual debate on the protection of civilians on Wednesday, as the United Nations reported rising civilian deaths, displacement and attacks on hospitals in conflicts worldwide.

"Only by ending conflicts can civilians be fundamentally protected," Fu Cong, China's permanent representative to the UN, said while chairing the Security Council meeting on the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

On Iran, Fu said the conflict "has already caused serious losses to people across the region, including in Iran itself". He called on the parties concerned to respond to international appeals, reopen shipping routes, and safeguard the stability and smooth functioning of global industrial and supply chains.

Iranian state media IRNA said on Sunday that around 3,468 people were killed during the 40-day war with Israel and the United States, including 1,460 civilians.

On Gaza, Fu said it "should not remain a permanent battlefield" and called for "a comprehensive and lasting ceasefire" and expanded humanitarian access.

The UN secretary-general's annual report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, circulated on May 7, recorded more than 37,000 civilian deaths across 20 armed conflicts last year, compared with 36,000 civilian deaths across 14 armed conflicts in 2024.

"Even war has rules," Fu said, calling for upholding international law and safeguarding the bottom line of civilian protection. He noted that methods of warfare "continue to break basic norms", with schools, hospitals and towns full of civilians becoming targets of military operations, while humanitarian workers, medical personnel and peacekeepers are subjected to attacks.

Humanitarian action

China, together with France, Brazil, Jordan, Kazakhstan, South Africa and the International Committee of the Red Cross, or ICRC, jointly launched the "International Humanitarian Law Initiative" in 2024.

The initiative aims "to renew firm commitment to international humanitarian law", the Chinese ambassador said, calling on more countries to join it.

Fu said China appreciates the contributions made by humanitarian organizations such as the ICRC, and called on the international community to "provide greater political and financial support for humanitarian action and ensure the safety and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance".

Fu also warned that the misuse of technologies such as artificial intelligence and drones was creating new risks for civilians in conflict zones.

China believes weapons systems using artificial intelligence "must remain under human control" and comply with international humanitarian law, he said.

Fu added that governments bear the primary responsibility for protecting civilians and cautioned against "external interference" and unilateral sanctions imposed without Security Council authorization, saying such measures weaken governance capacity and worsen civilian suffering.

Edem Wosornu of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said one civilian was killed approximately every 14 minutes in armed conflicts in 2025, adding that the true toll was likely higher.

Violence against journalists and aid workers has also intensified, according to UN officials.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:55 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:55 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Passing on cultural heritage and tradition, pursuing cultural innovation and creativity

As China advances toward the goal of building a modern socialist country in all respects, culture is emerging not only as a new driver of economic growth and high-quality development, but also as a source of national confidence and social vitality.

The Forum on Building up China's Cultural Strength 2026, which opened in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, on Thursday reflects this broader shift. The forum focuses on passing on cultural heritage and tradition, and pursuing cultural innovation and creativity.

Coming at the start of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, the forum underscores the growing recognition that cultural prosperity, service-sector upgrading and innovation-driven development are becoming increasingly interconnected with the country's modernization.

China's per capita GDP surpassed the $10,000 threshold in the mid-2010s. Since then, cultural consumption has accelerated significantly. Official data show that domestic tourism trips in 2025 exceeded 6.5 billion, up more than 16 percent year-on-year, while tourism expenditure reached 6.3 trillion yuan ($875 billion), both record highs. Meanwhile, the value-added output of tourism and related industries accounted for about 4.35 percent of China's GDP.

The 15th Five-Year Plan treats culture as a horizontal policy instrument embedded across the broader economy. Through "culture plus industry" models, cultural resources are being integrated into manufacturing, tourism, urban renewal and technology development. Historical districts, heritage sites and museums are no longer viewed merely as preservation projects, but as economic zones capable of generating consumption, employment and innovation. This marks a structural shift from "culture as industry" toward "culture for economic transformation".

China's rapid expansion of public cultural services reflects this. By the end of 2025, the country had established more than 70,000 public libraries nationwide, while museums, reading spaces and digital cultural platforms have become increasingly accessible to ordinary citizens.

At the same time, digital technology is reshaping cultural creation and participation on an unprecedented scale. The integration of artificial intelligence, immersive technologies, digital publishing and short-video platforms is expected to become one of the core growth engines of China's cultural sector.

By lowering the production and distribution costs of cultural goods, digital platforms and AI technologies are accelerating cultural participation and human capital formation. Online literature, micro-dramas, interactive entertainment and AI-assisted content creation are expanding access to cultural products while creating new service-sector business models.

This transition is already visible across China's booming digital economy. Chinese online literature now has around 200 million active overseas users, while Chinese micro-drama applications have expanded into more than 160 countries and regions. Movie productions such as *Ne Zha 2* and the global popularity of Chinese short-video content demonstrate how the fusion of traditional culture and digital innovation is enhancing both economic value and the country's international cultural influence.

In knowledge-based economies, highly skilled talent gravitates toward cities and regions with strong cultural ecosystems, vibrant creative industries and high-quality public services. By leveraging cultural amenities to attract creative talent, China is strengthening the interaction between cultural vitality and innovation-driven growth.

Meanwhile, related efforts to build an independent Chinese knowledge system in philosophy and social sciences are becoming increasingly important as China seeks to provide intellectual frameworks rooted in its own development experience while contributing new perspectives to global governance, modernization and civilizational exchanges.

Culture carries the memory of a civilization, but it also shapes future productivity, creativity and social cohesion. As China moves toward the goal of becoming a cultural powerhouse by 2035, the interaction between cultural prosperity, technological innovation and service-sector transformation is likely to form a new virtuous cycle. Rising incomes stimulate cultural consumption, cultural participation strengthens human capital and creativity, and stronger innovation capacity in turn generates new momentum for high-quality development.

In that sense, culture is no longer merely a reflection of development. It is increasingly becoming one of its engines.

Restrictions serve no party's interest

In a recent interview, Christophe Fouquet, chief executive officer of ASML, compared US chip restrictions on China to cutting off food supplies in a desert. "If I put you in a desert and tell you that you're not going to have access to food anymore — how long does it take you to make your own garden?" he asked. "It's a matter of survival."

This analogy underscores a critical point: While the United States' escalating export controls might disrupt markets in the short term, they are also pushing China to accelerate its own innovation. This shift from a passive recipient of technology to a proactive innovator highlights China's resilience and determination in the face of the technological walls the US is trying to erect.

The global semiconductor industry is undergoing profound changes. The rise of artificial intelligence, 5G communications and autonomous driving has fueled a surge in demand for high-end chips. Market research suggests that by 2030, the global chip market could reach $1.5 trillion. In response to these trends, the US seeks to curb China's growth by restricting advanced semiconductors and fabrication equipment and urging its allies to do the same. However, such protectionist policies, shortsighted as they are, threaten global supply chain stability and may cause the US to miss out on key opportunities in the semiconductor sector.

As the world's two largest economies, cooperation and mutual benefit are the best choices for both China and the US, and attempts to use technological restrictions to halt China's innovation progress will lead nowhere.

China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) places technological innovation at the core of the national development strategy. The plan states that accelerating high-level technological self-reliance and self-improvement is the key to leading the development of new quality productive forces.

Through systematic measures such as enhancing original innovation, tackling core technologies and strengthening the role of enterprises, the plan presents a clear road map for China's technological progress.

Recent China-US economic and trade consultations in the Republic of Korea produced generally balanced and positive outcomes, as the two sides reached a consensus on major issues such as tariff arrangements, councils to manage trade and investment disputes, and agricultural trade, showcasing a spirit of mutually beneficial cooperation. This cooperation model, grounded in mutual respect, equality and reciprocity, is the rational way to handle trade and technology disputes between the two sides.

Both countries and the global tech industry have much to gain from their collaboration.

In particular, the two sides agreed in principle to discuss a framework for reciprocal tariff reductions on products of equal value under the trade council, with each side committing to $30 billion or more. This will help the two countries establish a stable trade framework. The agreements will bring greater certainty and stability to the next phase of China-US economic and trade relations, and to the global economy as well.

China is building a comprehensive innovation ecosystem, spanning from basic research to industrial applications. This enhancement in self-innovation capability serves as the best defense against technological blockades. Consequently, China is accelerating breakthroughs in several "choke point" technologies, ranging from lithography machines to AI chips.

Recently, China's three major telecom operators launched AI token packages, marking a new step in the country's AI development. This innovative model not only lowers the barriers to AI technology use, but also provides strong momentum for industrial upgrading. It has injected new vitality into global technological progress as well.

While US restrictions will continue to pose challenges, they also present incentives for China to innovate and thrive independently.

Yet the path forward lies in cooperation, not confrontation. By working together, China and the US can create a more stable and prosperous global tech landscape. But this requires dialogue, mutual understanding and a commitment to shared goals.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

Bloc politics divorced from reality of alliance relations

Speaking at a forum hosted by the Center for American Progress on Tuesday, shortly after US President Donald Trump concluded his second visit to China in nine years, former US secretary of state Antony Blinken warned that the United States must rally allies into a broad coalition against China as it could not compete with China alone.

The irony was difficult to miss. Rather than reflecting on the failure of the policy he helped design, Blinken merely prescribed more of the same medicine: more alliance-building, more geopolitical mobilization and more zero-sum thinking.

That outlook is deeply rooted in the Cold War mentality that has long shaped sections of Washington's foreign policy establishment. For many in that circle, the US' triumph over the Soviet Union became not merely a historical episode but a permanent intellectual template. They continue to see international relations through the prism of ideological confrontation and strategic containment, believing any rising power must inevitably be treated as an adversary to be weakened and isolated.

However, the global economy is now profoundly interconnected and the challenges facing humanity — climate change, public health crises, energy security, technological governance and economic recovery — demand cooperation rather than bloc confrontation.

Despite the loud rhetoric about "small yard and high fences", trade between China and the US under the Joe Biden administration, for which Blinken served as the top diplomat, remained sizable. What emerged was not "decoupling", but selective restrictions in a handful of strategic sectors by the US alongside continued cooperation across much of the broader economy.

And even as Washington urged allies to reduce economic ties with China, it preserved its own extensive commercial relationship with the world's second-largest economy — a contradiction that did not go unnoticed by US partners.

Blinken's latest call for rebuilding the "united front" also conveniently overlooks the costs that US allies and partners were forced to bear under the previous administration's ill-advised policies. Washington repeatedly demanded strategic alignment against China while pursuing economic measures that primarily benefited the US.

The Inflation Reduction Act and the CHIPS and Science Act were promoted as pillars of industrial renewal, yet many US allies viewed them as unmistakably "America First" policies in new packaging. European governments openly criticized US subsidies and "Buy American" provisions that diverted investment away from Europe toward the US. Concerns spread from Paris to Berlin that Washington was effectively weaponizing economic policy against friends.

In other words, some allies increasingly felt they were being asked to provide the oil to keep the US' engine running while absorbing the economic losses themselves. This exposes the inherent weakness of Blinken's coalition logic. Partnerships cannot endure if they are built primarily around pressure, fear and asymmetric sacrifice, which the former US administration branded as a moral imperative. Nor can strategic stability emerge from attempts to divide the world into opposing camps.

The reality is that China is not an enemy. It is a major partner with which the US should learn to coexist. That is precisely why the new vision jointly advanced during Trump's visit to China last week — of building a constructive bilateral relationship of strategic stability — deserves serious attention. It reflects valuable lessons drawn from decades of Sino-US engagement.

The "constructive strategic stability" is a positive stability with cooperation as the mainstay, a sound stability with moderate competition, a constant stability with manageable differences, and an enduring stability with promises of peace.

Those who still cling to outdated bloc politics should do their homework carefully. Until those like Blinken in Washington's policy circle step out of their "comfort zone", it will be difficult for US policymaking to shed the musty odor of the Cold War playbook.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Stable supply chains smooth economic circulation

Editor's note: *China released regulations for industry and supply chain security in April. China Economic Times spoke to Wei Jigang, a researcher at the Development Research Centre of the State Council, on the resilience and security of the country's supply chain system. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

Supply chains represent a form of core competitiveness, reflecting a country's ability to coordinate production, match supply with demand, manage risks and improve efficiency. Supply chains have increasingly become a governance tool tied to industrial development, security guarantees and international cooperation.

Domestically, supply chains are critical to ensuring smooth economic circulation and unlocking the advantages of China's vast domestic market. Internationally, they are a strategic instrument for participating in global competition, expanding development space and safeguarding national interests.

For industries, they serve as the driving force behind technological upgrading and high-quality growth. From a security perspective, they protect against external shocks and ensure stability in critical sectors.

The development of high-quality industry chains requires coordinated efforts across strategic planning, technological innovation, digital transformation, security protection and ecosystem building.

First, China should strengthen its top-level institutional design and improve its strategic support systems. Supply chain development should be incorporated into national development plans, while cross-regional and cross-sector coordination mechanisms should be enhanced.

The legal and regulatory framework needs improvement. Greater support should be provided in finance, technology, talent and industrial policy to foster globally competitive leading enterprises as well as specialized and innovative small and medium-sized firms.

Second, China should focus on key sectors and strengthen both weak and competitive links. Tailored policies should be introduced for major industries such as manufacturing, energy, food security, information technology and transportation. For bottleneck technologies such as semiconductors, machine tools and critical components, resources should be concentrated on achieving technological breakthroughs and greater self-reliance.

Meanwhile, China should consolidate its advantages in areas such as new energy, 5G, high-speed rail and construction machinery to strengthen its position in the global industrial competition.

Third, digital and intelligent technologies should drive supply chain modernization. Under the national action plan for digital and intelligent supply chains, technologies such as big data, artificial intelligence, the internet of things and blockchain should be more deeply integrated into supply chain management.

Fourth, development and security must be advanced together. China should establish a multilevel supply chain security framework featuring risk monitoring, early-warning systems, stress testing and emergency response mechanisms for critical sectors.

Strategic reserves and emergency production capacity for key products should also be improved. In addition, legal and policy tools should be strengthened to address external risks and safeguard China's supply chain security against containment and disruption.

Finally, green and open development should remain central to the country's future supply chain strategy. China should accelerate the transition toward low-carbon supply chains by promoting green procurement, green manufacturing and environmentally friendly logistics systems.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:55 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:55 PM

VIEWS

China and the World Roundtable | China-US Relations of Strategic Stability

Editor's Note: *The symposium on the Future of China-US Relations was conducted by China Daily's Opinion Channel, the Institute of American Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the Chinese Association of American Studies on Thursday. Several experts from both China and the United States shared their views on the theme. Below are excerpts of their speeches.*

Sailing Sino-US relations with stabilizing levers



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Cooperation is the 'why not' moment for China and US



Siddharth Chatterjee is the CEO of Global Neighbours and former United Nations Resident Coordinator in China.

Today, we face five major challenges unprecedented in the postwar era.

First, the pandemic has exposed the fragility of human health and global health systems.

Second, we are grappling with a triple climate crisis: climate change, loss of biodiversity, and climate refugees.

Third, there are around 80 ongoing conflicts in the world. Fourth, 800 million people are suffering from hunger. Fifth, inequality is widening, whether it is digital, income or quality of life.

A mother in Beijing, Washington, Nairobi or Mali shares the same aspirations for her children: better education, improved nutrition and greater opportunities.

For the first time after World War II, over 170 million people have been displaced because of conflicts, climate change, poor governance, despondency, poverty and other factors.

Having served for 30 years in the United Nations, I firmly believe that the Global Development Initiative presents a massive opportunity for companies from the United States, China and Europe to come together and transform Africa.

The potential is boundless, and limited only by our imagination. Consider how Russia and the US collaborated on the vaccine that eradicated smallpox.

If scientists from the US, China, Germany, India, Russia and other countries work together, we could probably develop vaccines that can prevent future pandemics.

The Sino-US relationship, the most consequential relationship of the 21st century, has the capacity to manage these global challenges that affect everybody across the world.

I speak not as an American and not as a Chinese but as a global citizen with three decades in the UN.

If the US and China can collaborate on the Global Governance Initiative proposed by China at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization meeting last year, the potential is promising.

So why not? Why don't we see the Build Back Better Act of the US and the Global Development Initiative and Global Governance Initiative of China coming together for a transformative change?

To conclude with the remarks of George Bernard Shaw, who said: "You see things; and you say 'Why?' But I dream things that never were; and I say 'Why not?'"

This is the "why not" moment for China and the US.

Summit helps to strengthen responsible major-power relations



Fred Teng is the president of the America China Public Affairs Institute.

The May 14 Beijing meeting between the two heads of state represents a serious attempt to move China-US relations from confrontation management to strategic stability.

Confrontation can lead to uncertainties and severe repercussions, with farmers, students, researchers, manufacturers, and consumers all paying the price.

That is why this summit matters.

A "constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability" does not mean the two countries agree on everything — they clearly do not — but that they recognize that unmanaged rivalry is dangerous.

The goal is not to eliminate competition but to discipline it.

There are five important outcomes of the summit.

First, trade and tariffs. The reported extension of the tariff truce sends a direct signal to the markets. Politicized tariffs have become weapons triggering higher costs, disrupting supply chains and damaging confidence.

Easing tariffs, especially on agricultural products, supports US farmers, helps Chinese importers and consumers and reduces one of the most visible sources of economic friction.

Second, institutional mechanisms. The proposed economic, trade and investment review channels matter because they replace sudden escalation with structured negotiation.

A mechanism does not solve every dispute, but it creates space to talk before disputes become crises. That is how serious great-power relations must be managed.

Third, technology. This remains the hardest area.

High-end AI chips, advanced lithography machines, and military-related technologies might remain restricted.

But the reported easing of certain mid-range chips and equipment restrictions suggests a more practical distinction between strategic technology and normal commercial technology.

That distinction is essential to avoid a technological Cold War, from which neither country benefits.

Fourth, people-to-people exchanges. This may be the most overlooked achievement.

Visas, flights, students, scholars, businesspeople and tourists are not side issues.

They are the human foundation of the relationship. Restoring direct flights and longer-term visas is not symbolic but practical diplomacy to foster trust.

Fifth, crisis management. Restarting fentanyl-related law enforcement cooperation moves the issue from accusation to action.

Restoring military communication channels helps reduce the risk of miscalculation in the South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait.

Hotlines are not signs of weakness but signs of strategic maturity.

Of course, this is not a full reset. But diplomacy should not be judged only by whether it solves everything.

It should also be judged by whether it prevents the worst outcomes.

The real choice before China and the US is not friendship or confrontation but managed competition or unmanaged rivalry.

If these understandings reached in Beijing are implemented seriously, this summit may mark an important step toward stability, predictability, and responsible major-power relations.

And in today's world, that is a major advance.

Beijing summit matters more than immediate headlines



Einar Tangen is a commentator on US current affairs.

For years, the dominant assumption surrounding US-China relations was that deterioration had become irreversible and the world's two largest economies were drifting toward a modern version of the Thucydides Trap, the historical pattern where rising and established powers slide into conflict.

Yet what unfolded in Beijing last week may force us to reconsider that assumption.

The easy interpretation is to dismiss the summit between the two heads of state as just optics: Washington received Boeing headlines and export announcements and Beijing gained goodwill while projecting confidence and stability.

But the reactions afterward suggest something more substantial may be emerging — the outline of a "grand bargain", a strategic understanding where both sides continue competing, but within mutually recognized limits designed to avoid systemic rupture.

The agreement to define a "constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability" reflects concepts that Beijing has pursued for years: managed competition, coexistence, and recognition that neither side can eliminate the other from the international system.

For China, stability is the prerequisite for peace and progress.

The appeal of a broader bargain also exists on the US side, especially for the Donald Trump administration.

A grand bargain with China offers it the ability to reframe its policy as the mechanism that produced peace and strategic advantage — reduced tensions between the world's two largest economies, expanded US exports to China, and stabilized global supply chains.

This explains why the Beijing summit may matter far more than the immediate headlines suggest.

The deeper issue is whether Washington and Beijing are beginning to accept a common reality — that neither side can achieve absolute dominance without imposing catastrophic costs on itself and the world; that China is not collapsing; and that the US remains indispensable to global finance, technology, consumption, and security architecture.

And most importantly, both countries now require stability more than escalation.

If Beijing and Washington are now exploring ways to manage global strain together rather than intensify it, historians may eventually look back at this summit very differently from the way contemporary commentators initially framed it.

Truly seismic shifts in geopolitics rarely announce themselves clearly and more often first appear as optics.

Peoples' bonds timeless pillar for Sino-US ties



Zhao Mei is a research fellow at the Institute of American Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

At an international symposium commemorating the victory in the World Anti-Fascist War late last year, I spoke about the Flying Tigers, General Joseph Stilwell, and the rescue of the Doolittle Raiders.

The United States moderator, with tears in her eyes, added that her father was one of the US pilots rescued by Chinese soldiers and civilians.

The attendees were deeply moved by this heartfelt bond between the Chinese and US people.

The friendship across the Pacific spans over two centuries.

In 1784, the US merchant ship Empress of China arrived in Guangzhou, initiating the first exchange.

In 1879, Ge Kunhua, a scholar from the late Qing Dynasty, taught the Chinese language at Harvard University.

In 1901, a Chinese laborer named Dean Lung donated $12,000 to support the establishment of East Asian Studies at Columbia University.

Among the Chinese students studying in the US, Zhou Peiyuan, Zhu Kezhen, Qian Xuesen, Qian Weichang, and Liang Sicheng made significant contributions to the development of science, education and culture in China.

Richard Sears, known as "Uncle Hanzi", founded the website named Chinese Etymology, which now features nearly 100,000 ancient Chinese character forms.

The website has ignited a passion for learning Chinese characters and culture among many foreigners.

Such "cultural ambassadors" have made significant contributions to enhancing mutual understanding and learning between the two civilizations.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the US, Sino-US relations have weathered twists and turns but have generally remained stable.

Throughout this period, people-to-people exchanges have been a crucial pillar supporting the steady development of the bilateral relationship.

However, since 2018, headwinds have emerged, causing more than 100 dialogue and exchange mechanisms to largely come to a halt.

The number of students studying in both countries has also declined.

In April 2024, a US newspaper warned that the decrease in US students in China could result in a lost generation of China experts in the US.

History shows that mutual engagement between the Chinese and US people has repeatedly helped the bilateral relationship overcome its low points.

In 1971, ping-pong diplomacy broke the ice of estrangement.

In 1979, Deng Xiaoping, then Chinese leader, attended a welcoming event hosted by the US side, where he warmly interacted with US children singing a Chinese song, an exchange that was met with applause and was hailed as an iconic moment in China-US relations.

Today, dialogue, exchanges, and cooperation continue to provide a steady stream of positive energy for deepening mutual understanding and promoting the healthy development of the bilateral relationship in a complex international landscape.

Scientific cooperation and educational exchanges mutually beneficial



Denis Simon is a senior research fellow at the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft.

After the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1979, the United States and China built one of the world's largest bilateral scientific and educational relationships.

The 1979 US-China Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement became one of the most important scientific partnerships in modern history and provided the institutional foundation for decades of collaboration.

At the same time, educational exchanges exploded.

Hundreds of thousands of Chinese students studied in the US, while thousands of US students studied in China.

Joint research programs connected universities, laboratories, companies and government agencies.

This relationship accelerated China's modernization, strengthened US universities and research labs, increased scientific productivity globally, and created deep people-to-people ties between the two societies.

For nearly four decades, scientific collaboration and educational exchanges remained among the most stabilizing and constructive dimensions of the US-China relationship. The benefits were real and mutual.

Chinese students and scholars became deeply integrated into the US innovation system.

Many remained in the US and contributed significantly to the development of US universities, Silicon Valley, biotechnology, semiconductors and entrepreneurship.

At the same time, Chinese students returning home helped build China's research universities, technology sector, AI ecosystem, and industrial innovation capacity.

The relationship was never a one-way transfer of knowledge. Instead, it became an interdependent innovation ecosystem. However, since roughly the late 2010s, the relationship has shifted.

Mutual concerns of both countries have led to declining trust, reduced institutional cooperation, greater scrutiny of researchers and the fragmentation of global science networks.

Concerns emerged in Washington over issues such as intellectual property protection, technology transfer, export controls and dependency in critical technologies as policymakers concluded that advanced technologies could no longer be separated from national security considerations.

China, in turn, became concerned about technological containment, semiconductor restrictions, visa scrutiny, limitations on academic collaboration, and barriers to accessing US research ecosystems.

A realistic assessment suggests that the era of broad, optimistic engagement is over.

The future of US-China scientific relations is unlikely to return to the openness of the 1990s or 2000s.

But a complete scientific divorce is neither realistic nor desirable. It will be defined by how successfully the two countries manage a difficult coexistence.

I remain cautiously optimistic about the future. Strategic competition in science and technology may continue for years to come.

Yet history also shows that scientific collaboration and educational exchange can create channels of communication and reduce misperceptions even during periods of geopolitical rivalry.

The central challenge for both countries is whether they can protect legitimate national security interests while preserving enough openness to sustain innovation, academic inquiry, and global problem-solving.

The stakes are not simply bilateral but global.

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

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:55 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:55 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

DARYL GUPPY

Unity or division

The APEC meeting in Suzhou is a key point to reaffirm multilateral rules prior to the leaders' meeting



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

The 32nd Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation trade ministers' meeting in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, convenes at a critical time when many businesses and organizations fear that the rules governing the global trading environment are fraying. The fears have been compounded by the unrest in the Strait of Hormuz, which has exposed the fragility of international rules and the vulnerability of global supply chains.



With its focus on major economic and trade issues in the Asia-Pacific, the meeting in Suzhou on Friday and Saturday is an important part of this year's APEC cooperation process and provides a platform for determined action to support the multilateral trading system based on the World Trade Organization rules.

The trade ministers' meeting aligns with the theme of the APEC "China Year", "Building an Asia-Pacific Community to Prosper Together", which emphasizes openness, innovation and cooperation.

According to China's Ministry of Commerce, the major focus of the APEC trade ministers' meeting in Suzhou is on strengthening regional cooperation amid slowing global growth and increasing trade uncertainty. Such regional cooperation can provide a counterbalance to the disruptions in the trade environment.

The Suzhou meeting is a key decision point, allowing the APEC middle powers and smaller economies in the Global South to focus on supporting the basis of international trade. Reaffirmation of a common unity and determined support for multilateral solutions in preference to unilateral action will send a message to those forces that are disrupting global trade. The proposals from the Suzhou meeting will help set the agenda for the future of trade relations within the APEC region.

The catalyst for distraction is the security of oil and product supply chains from the Middle East. Although the media focus is on oil supplies, the impact of the obstructions in the Strait of Hormuz is far more diverse, including disruptions to the supply of agricultural fertilizer, the feedstocks for the production of plastics and the specialist gases required for semiconductors and other industries.

These are important supplies whose disruption has the potential to trigger social dislocation, but it is important that they do not detract from the strategic issues that the APEC meeting in Suzhou also needs to consider. These include a cluster of trade development issues and the broader question of support for the international trade environment.

Li Chenggang, China's international trade representative with the Ministry of Commerce and vice-commerce minister, highlighted this strategic task when he noted that China will work with all APEC members to promote consensus on building an open and predictable regional and multilateral economic and trade order.

The emphasis on an "open, predictable and multilateral economic and trade order" provides the basic logic for the Suzhou meeting. Reaching consensus on this objective would further enhance the status of APEC.

Consensus would signal a commitment to supporting multilateral solutions and rejecting unilateral diktat. Such consensus would explicitly deny arbitrary orders or settlements imposed by a superior authority which are typically without negotiation or consent.

It is this multilateral framework that will enable and empower the trade ministers' discussions on deepening cooperation in emerging sectors including the digital economy, green development and supply-chain resilience. These objectives are only achievable by creating a more open, stable and predictable trade environment.

Support for these objectives is consistent with China's long-term support for the authority of the United Nations, as demonstrated by the four global initiatives that China has put forward.

These initiatives are designed to help reform the international governance systems and promote a community with a shared future. They address global challenges through cooperation, development, and enhanced multilateralism with the UN at the center. APEC is consistent with these proposals because it strengthens regional economic and trade cooperation amid slowing global growth and increasing trade uncertainty.

These global objectives can be placed within a regional context via the Suzhou meeting, which is expected to help push forward regional economic integration and reinforce support for the rules-based multilateral trading system.

In the fast-moving world of artificial intelligence, quantum computing and digital economy, it is essential that trade ministers consider ways to enhance digital cooperation, which goes hand-in-hand with the development of the green economy.

APEC has a record of introducing practical measures that boost economic productivity. The Suzhou meeting can consider policy proposals including the wider and coordinated use of electronic bills of lading and digital port networks. Standardization in these areas would improve port and trade efficiency with faster customs clearances and shipping processes.

Moreover, one of APEC's most important gatherings of the year can prove decisive by reaching a key consensus to observe multilateral unity and reject the path of balkanization and fragmented self-interest.

As a member economy of APEC, Australia places great importance on the stable and positive trade performance with other APEC economies. In 2024, bilateral trade in goods between China and Australia reached $211.27 billion, marking an 85.6 percent increase from 2015, and accounting for 24 percent of Australia's total foreign trade.

According to the "China Business Environment Brief" released by the China-Australia Chamber of Commerce, 70 percent of Australian companies view China as their top investment destination, with half planning to expand their presence there. China's vast market of 1.4 billion people, with a growing middle-income group, has a strong demand for high-quality Australian food, health products and services. This is a "big pond" that no forward-thinking business can afford to overlook.

The APEC trade ministers' meeting in Suzhou presents a fresh opportunity for China-Australia cooperation. In the future, there can be deeper collaboration in optimizing trade structures and promoting trade diversification, fully leveraging the APEC cooperation mechanism to inject lasting vitality into the economic prosperity and stability of the Asia-Pacific region.

The author is an international financial technical analysis expert and a former national board member at the Australia China Business Council. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

ZHANG YUN

Restorative process

APEC ministerial meeting can help revive confidence in regional economic integration and globalization



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

The 32nd APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade Meeting takes place in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, on Friday and Saturday. It serves as a key preparatory session for the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting, scheduled to be held in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, in November. The meeting comes against the backdrop marked by last year's tariff war launched by the United States, and the US-Israeli war against Iran, which has produced intense shocks to energy markets and global supply chains.



The current international situation is arguably the most volatile and uncertain since the end of the Cold War. Regional conflicts and disputes are flaring up. Trade protectionism in the name of economic security is spreading. And confidence in the post-World War II multilateral global governance framework has been severely shaken.

In these times of compounding turmoil, Asia-Pacific economies need to return to APEC's founding mission and reaffirm their confidence in regional economic integration and globalization. As President Xi Jinping emphasized at the 2025 APEC meetings in Gyeongju, the Republic of Korea: "We should stay true to APEC's founding mission to promote economic growth and improve people's lives." As the world's second-largest economy, China is the top trading partner of nearly all APEC members. Its rapid development model illustrates how opening-up and shared growth with other economies can work. China has economic and trade ties with almost all countries and regions worldwide, pursuing equal and mutually beneficial development under World Trade Organization principles. It has achieved remarkable success through openness, inclusiveness and sharing.

China is willing to share its development opportunities with other countries. It is hosting the APEC meetings for the third time, which is testament to its commitment to development through opening-up and sends a strong message that it continues to uphold free trade and inclusive development.

This year also marks the start of China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period. The country will make moves to expand its openness and strengthen its global economic connectivity. With high-quality development goals in place, China's market will expand in scale and improve in quality, offering a counterweight to the sluggish growth trend in international trade, especially for the Asia-Pacific region. China is the world's second-largest consumer market and import market, at nearly 50 trillion yuan ($7.35 trillion) and about 20 trillion yuan, respectively. Rising incomes, expanding demand and consumption upgrading will provide sustained momentum for regional economic integration.

As a major economic powerhouse, Jiangsu province has benefited from China's opening-up drive and its integration into the world economy. According to statistics from customs authorities, the province's foreign trade volume reached 5.95 trillion yuan in 2025, accounting for 13.1 percent of China's total. And in the first two months of this year alone, Suzhou's total imports and exports surged by 27.3 percent to 514.51 billion yuan, accounting for 6.7 percent of the national total and 49.8 percent of Jiangsu province's total. In short, Jiangsu province and Suzhou exemplify China's open economy and the country's steady push toward institutional opening-up and international cooperation in the new era.

The APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade Meeting in Suzhou can help channel positive energy into trade frictions management through equal consultation, and prevent normal economic activities from being overly politicized or securitized. In recent years, there have been growing claims that economic globalization and interdependence undermine national security and harm domestic economies. In the name of economic security, some economies have adopted various legislative measures and investment restrictions, leading to a decline in cross-border investment and rising risks facing industry and supply chains. These protectionist measures, in essence, reduce economic efficiency and dampen confidence in free trade and investment.

Yet the process of economic globalization will not be stopped, nor reversed. The current international economic turbulence reflects a deeper transition in global trade rules and order. As core stakeholders, Asia-Pacific economies must shoulder the responsibility of improving those rules and order. Just as in international politics, disputes and differences among countries are normal. Trade frictions and disputes are not inherently fearsome; the key lies in how they are handled. During complex transitions, destructive factors — such as erecting walls and barriers — are on the rise. But constructive forces are also at work, building consensus, strengthening connectivity, and countering fragmentation and bloc formation through integration. The former are driven by short-term self-interest; the latter are rooted in long-term strategic planning.

The APEC trade ministers' meeting in Suzhou can answer a long-term strategic question: What kind of trade and economic order should the Asia-Pacific region build? The Asia-Pacific economies vary greatly in size, systems, cultures and development levels. Their achievements in economic development and integration have been built on the principles of equality, inclusiveness and mutual benefit. In 2025, China initiated and promoted the establishment of the International Organization for Mediation in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, offering an Asia-Pacific solution and wisdom for resolving international trade disputes.

As the host of this year's APEC meetings, China will rally efforts toward the ambitious goal of building an Asia-Pacific community. Faced with rising protectionism, Asia-Pacific economies cannot afford to merely worry about the global outlook or retreat into self-protection. Instead, they must work to solidify consensus and prevent the region's trade order from sliding into the law of the jungle.

The theme for the APEC "China Year" is "Building an Asia-Pacific Community to Prosper Together". This is about answering the question of where the Asia-Pacific is heading. Setting the goal of building an Asia-Pacific community will provide clear direction and stability for regional development. As Foreign Minister Wang Yi stated at the APEC Senior Officials' Meeting in Guangzhou in February, "China will focus on the three priorities of openness, innovation and cooperation", and "we should reaffirm the original aspirations of Asia-Pacific cooperation, focus on the future of APEC and work toward a clear, substantive outcome document at this year's leaders' meeting", holding high "the banner of building an Asia-Pacific community, and exploring objectives and a road map for community-building in the period ahead".

The APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade Meeting in Suzhou and the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in Shenzhen will play a critical role in restoring confidence and effectively helping reform the multilateral trade governance system across the Asia-Pacific region and the wider international community.

The author is a professor at the School of International Studies at Nanjing University. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:55 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:55 PM

BUSINESS

Nation ramps up ultra-deep gas development

Domestic AI solutions help unlock reserves buried 4,500 m underground

By **ZHENG XIN**
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

As global energy markets grow increasingly volatile, China is looking deeper underground to insulate its economic engine.

The ability to unlock massive, ultra-deep subterranean reserves is no longer just an engineering triumph, but has become a vital geopolitical shield, allowing the world's second-largest economy to steadily replace vulnerable foreign gas imports with a homegrown "ballast stone" of energy security.

At the heart of this strategic shift is the newly certified Ziyang Dongfeng shale gas field in the Sichuan Basin, China's first ultra-deep shale gas field of this scale.

Operated by State-owned energy giant China Petroleum and Chemical Corp, or Sinopec, the field passed the Ministry of Natural Resources' review on May 13 with proven geological reserves totaling 235.69 billion cubic meters.

Tapping into this immense energy reservoir pushed Chinese exploration into uncharted territory. The gas lies trapped within the Earth's oldest commercially discovered shale layer, formed over 540 million years ago. To extract these resources, engineers had to drill to punishing depths ranging from 4,500 to 5,200 meters, said Sinopec.

Operations at this subterranean level present world-class geological challenges, including complex accumulation mechanisms, thick and difficult-to-drill rock formations, and extreme high-temperature and high-pressure conditions, it said.

By integrating artificial intelligence into geophysical imaging and developing fully proprietary ultra-deep drilling and fracturing systems, domestic engineers successfully cracked these global bottlenecks to turn theoretical reserves into commercially viable yields.

Industry experts emphasize that unlocking these staggering reserves substantially elevates China's domestic natural gas self-sufficiency.

In an era marked by severe geopolitical unpredictability and sharp fluctuations in international oil and gas prices, heavy reliance on imported energy can expose a country to imported inflation and supply disruptions, said Lin Boqiang, head of the China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xiamen University.

Tapping into domestic mega-reserves like Ziyang Dongfeng effectively cushions Chinese industrial supply chains and consumer markets from these external shocks. By lowering the nation's overall external dependence, the newly proven reserves act as a crucial stabilizing force, ensuring that energy supply remains uninterrupted despite global market turbulence, Lin added.

This achievement strongly aligns with the broader strategic framework outlined by the National Energy Administration.

For decades, China's fundamental resource endowment has been officially characterized by the NEA as being "rich in coal, poor in oil and short of gas". To bridge the domestic supply gap and enhance self-reliance, the NEA has systematically prioritized the exploration of unconventional oil and gas resources.

According to the NEA's ongoing assessments, as homegrown exploration technologies have matured over the past decade, shale gas has emerged as an indispensable pillar for the country's sustainable reserve growth.

Securing massive, stable domestic outputs is considered vital to accelerating China's broader green energy transition while maintaining economic stability, it said.

The NEA has consistently stressed that in the face of increasingly complex global geopolitical dynamics, national energy security must be anchored by robust, autonomous production capabilities.

Overcoming these ultra-deep hurdles provides a replicable technical pathway to expand China's development frontier. Moving forward, the accelerated capacity growth of the Ziyang Dongfeng field will ensure that China retains firm control over its energy destiny, reinforcing the nation's resilience amidst a complex and shifting global landscape, said Sinopec.



Consumers gather at a Mixue store in Bangkok, Thailand, on March 21. Mixue is a Chinese beverage brand. PATRICK CHENGZHI WANG / LIGHTROCKET VIA GETTY IMAGES

Beyond EVs, electronics, more Chinese brands surge across ASEAN markets

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn

4,153
number of Mixue's overseas stores by April

Chinese consumer brands are rapidly expanding across Southeast Asia, moving beyond electronics and electric vehicles into sectors such as beauty, food service and home appliances, according to a report by Euromonitor International.

Its "Rise of Chinese Brands in Southeast Asia" report found that the ASEAN economies of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam account for 95 percent of the region's $4 trillion GDP. The region has become the largest and fastest-growing export destination for Chinese goods.

In 2024, China's exports to Southeast Asia reached $587 billion, up 12 percent year-on-year. More than 70 percent of Chinese companies operating in ASEAN plan further expansion, citing strong performance and untapped consumer demand, said the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade.

With a population exceeding 650 million, 63 percent under 40 and a median age of 31, Southeast Asia's consumer market is thriving. This demographic fuels demand for e-commerce, livestreaming shopping, fintech solutions and affordable premium products.

Countries like Vietnam and Indonesia are outpacing China in GDP growth, offering Chinese brands a rapidly expanding consumer base with rising disposable incomes and accelerating urbanization, said the report.

Chinese companies have long dominated sectors such as EVs, consumer electronics and home appliances. In EVs, BYD is now the top brand in most Southeast Asian markets and the number-one car brand in Singapore, surpassing Toyota. In home appliances, Chinese brands' share of the air conditioner market rose from 9 percent in 2015 to 25 percent in 2024. Haier, Midea and Gree have become household names. In smartphones, Chinese brands' market share has increased from 21 percent in 2014 to over 60 percent today.

Now, Chinese companies are breaking into sectors once considered difficult for foreign entrants. In beauty and personal care, mass-market skincare brands achieved a 115 percent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) from 2019 to 2024. In the consumer food and beverage sector, chains such as Mixue, Luckin Coffee and Chagee are expanding aggressively. Mixue outlets grew 80 percent between 2019 and 2024, and by April 2026, Mixue had 4,153 overseas stores, while Chagee reached 262, said the China Chain Store and Franchise Association.

Nathanael Lim, APAC insight manager for beverages at Euromonitor International, said: "Chinese coffee and tea chains maintain consumer interest through relentless product innovation, often unveiling new menu items monthly. Significant investment in research and development and direct ingredient sourcing allows them to craft unique flavors that resonate with local palates."

Partnerships with local players are also central to expansion. In January, Eastroc Beverage signed a cooperation agreement with Indonesia's Salim Group to establish a joint venture, with investments of up to $200 million. Since 2021, Eastroc has exported products to 30 countries and regions.

Euromonitor said deep localization is key to Chinese brands' success, surpassing mere price competition. Many beauty and F&B companies register as local entities, adapt products for tropical climates and employ local teams for livestreaming and marketing activities.

"To move beyond transactional entry points, Chinese companies must transition from exporters to long-term ecosystem participants. Embedding within local value chains, adapting to cultural and economic contexts, and cultivating trust — through local manufacturing, customer service and community engagement — will be essential to sustaining growth," the report said.

China-Africa corridor enters new era of industrial, green cooperation

By **JIANG XUEQING**
jiangxueqing@chinadaily.com.cn

The China-Africa corridor is emerging as one of the world's most important economic partnerships as cooperation shifts beyond traditional resource trade toward industrial development, green investment and deeper supply-chain integration, business and financial leaders said at a forum in Beijing.

Speaking at the China-Africa Financial Bridges Forum 2026 on Wednesday, Youssef Rouissi, deputy CEO of Attijariwafa bank, said the bank recognized years ago that the China-Africa corridor would become "one of the defining economic realities of our era".

As Morocco's largest bank and one of Africa's leading financial groups, Attijariwafa bank is ready to serve as the financial bridge between China and Africa, he said.

Rouissi said China's decision to implement zero tariffs for 53 African countries with diplomatic ties to China, effective May 1, signals a long-term strategic commitment rather than simply a trade measure.

"It is the clearest signal that China sees Africa not as a supplier of raw materials, but as a partner in a shared economic future," he said, adding that the policy is expected to create new momentum for trade finance and improve the competitiveness of African industries and small businesses.

> "It is the clearest signal that China sees Africa not as a supplier of raw materials, but as a partner in a shared economic future."
>
> **Youssef Rouissi,** deputy CEO of Attijariwafa bank

Bill Feng, APAC regional contributor relations senior manager at London Stock Exchange Group, said China-Africa cooperation is increasingly focused on balanced trade and industrial collaboration. He noted that the zero-tariff policy will not only encourage African exports to China, but also help retain more processing, manufacturing and value-added activities within Africa.

Feng said Chinese companies' acquisitions and investments in African industrial assets have become a new driver of bilateral economic and trade cooperation, particularly in resources, energy and power sectors. Over the past five years, Chinese companies' mergers and acquisitions in Africa have highlighted three major trends: a growing focus on new energy resources and critical minerals such as lithium and gold; expansion of the building materials sector to support infrastructure, urbanization and industrial parks; and a shift from simple trade procurement toward deeper participation in local assets and industrial development.

"Africa is becoming one of the centers of global supply-chain restructuring, competition for critical minerals, green transition and infrastructure financing," Feng said. "The next stage of China-Africa cooperation will focus not only on infrastructure connectivity, but also on green development, industrial-chain integration and the co-creation of long-term value."

Lyu Xiaohui, vice-president of the China-Africa Development Fund, said Africa's demand for sustainable, high-quality and green investment is both urgent and far greater than previously expected.

"In the past, we thought Africa's greatest needs were infrastructure such as transportation and electricity. In fact, we have found that what Africa urgently needs is local processing capacity, the establishment of local industrial chains and the development of self-sustaining capabilities. There is a pressing need to implement green energy, high-end manufacturing and industrial cooperation in Africa," Lyu said.

He added that the strengths China has developed through its modernization and industrialization over the years align closely with Africa's needs, creating strong long-term opportunities for both sides.



Youssef Rouissi, deputy CEO of Attijariwafa bank, speaks at the China-Africa Financial Bridges Forum 2026 in Beijing on Wednesday. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Rouissi highlighted Morocco's role as a manufacturing and logistics hub, particularly in the electric vehicle and renewable energy sectors.

"We are seeing more industrial projects entering Morocco, with Chinese investors leveraging the country's strategic position as a gateway for global trade and investment, particularly through its logistics network and access to European markets," he said.

Rouissi also emphasized the growing importance of technology, innovation and services in Africa, noting that startups and fintech companies are flourishing across the continent, creating significant opportunities for Chinese companies to invest and expand.

Attijariwafa bank serves more than 12 million clients through a network of over 8,000 branches. The bank has established a strong presence in North, West and Central Africa, where it is enhancing partnerships and synergies with Chinese financial institutions to help provide Chinese investors and banks with a stronger local presence, he said.

Quectel sues US DoD over blacklisting

By **CHENG YU**
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese wireless communications module maker Quectel Wireless Solutions sued the US Department of Defense recently after Washington placed the company on a blacklist of firms allegedly linked to China's military.

"Quectel has always operated with integrity, transparency and full compliance with the laws and regulations of every jurisdiction in which we do business," the company said in a statement, strongly denying any ties to the Chinese military.

The lawsuit challenges the Pentagon's January decision to add Quectel to a list of so-called Chinese military companies. Quectel is one of the world's largest suppliers of wireless communication modules used in IoT (the internet of things) devices, ranging from smart cars and industrial equipment to logistics systems and consumer electronics.

The Pentagon has increasingly expanded its blacklist of Chinese technology firms in recent years as Washington seeks to curb Beijing's rise in technology. The latest list of Chinese companies, mandated under US law as the "Section 1260H list", designated 134 companies, including chipmaker ChangXin Memory Technologies, Quectel Wireless Solutions and drone maker Autel Robotics.

In fact, the move came just weeks after the Pentagon removed two companies, including Advanced Micro-Fabrication Equipment Inc China, a leading Chinese chip equipment manufacturer, from the blacklist.

> "Their goals have been unmasked, that is, to suppress emerging Chinese companies and industries and curb China's tech rise at minimal cost."
>
> **Tu Xinquan,** dean of the University of International Business and Economics' China Institute for WTO Studies

AMEC, which said it has never been involved in military activities, filed a federal lawsuit against the decision in August. The court ruled in December that there was "insufficient evidence" to justify the decision.

In 2021, Chinese smartphone maker Xiaomi filed a lawsuit against the US DoD over the same blacklist. Four months later, Xiaomi was removed from the list.

Last year, the Pentagon also removed six companies it said no longer met the requirements for the designation, including artificial intelligence company Beijing Megvii Technology, China Railway Construction Corp, China State Construction Group and China Telecommunications.

Tu Xinquan, dean of the University of International Business and Economics' China Institute for WTO Studies, said that US suppression has become increasingly unreasonable and lacks legitimacy.

"Their goals have been unmasked, that is, to suppress emerging Chinese companies and industries and curb China's tech rise at minimal cost," Tu said.

"However, the more Washington escalates its measures against China, the less effective these measures prove to be, and the more they reveal their underlying fears," he said.

Brian Tycangco, an editor and analyst at Stansberry Research, posted on social media platform X, "It's turning out that if you're an innovative Chinese business making money, you're likely to be considered a threat to US national security."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:55 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:55 PM

BUSINESS



A staff member (right) promotes Wonderful Pistachios at an event in Daly City, California, on Feb 7. ALEXANDER TAMARGO / GETTY IMAGES

Growing demand for US pistachios

Country imported fruits, nuts worth $5.88 bln in first four months of 2026

By **ZHONG NAN**
zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

Driven by rising demand for healthy snacks among Chinese consumers, nut growers in California, the United States, are expected to export 111,000 metric tons of pistachios to China in the 2026 crop year (Sept 1, 2026 to Aug 31, 2027), according to a major US industry player.

Wonderful Pistachios and Almonds LLC, or Wonderful Pistachios, the largest pistachio producer by production volume and sales revenue in the US, projected that total California pistachio shipments to China by the company and other growers could reach 110,000 tons in the 2025 crop year (Sept 1, 2025 to Aug 31, 2026), up 3.8 percent from 106,000 tons in the previous crop year.

Anita Lam, managing director for China and chief representative for Asia Pacific at Wonderful Pistachios, said the industry remains confident about the long-term growth potential for Californian pistachios in the Chinese market, and her company will continue leveraging its vertically integrated supply chain and longstanding operations to deepen its presence in the country.

Lam said the Los Angeles-based company is well-positioned to meet growing demand from the Chinese market, backed by more than 500,000 acres (202,300 hectares) of pistachio orchards in California and over $1 billion invested in next-generation processing facilities, while pistachio acreage in the state continues to expand at an annual rate of 6 to 10 percent.

Having cultivated the Chinese market for nearly two decades, Wonderful Pistachios has developed strong local expertise. Its local team closely tracks consumer preferences, allowing it to tailor products and marketing strategies to evolving demand, particularly as consumption shifts beyond major cities.

To create new channels for foreign products entering the Chinese market, the Ministry of Commerce launched the "Big Market for All: Export to China" initiative in November, a move business experts said underscores China's commitment to further unilateral opening-up and consumption upgrading.

Against this backdrop, Lam said opportunities are expanding as health awareness spreads from top- and second-tier cities to lower-tier markets. Younger consumers, in particular, are showing a growing appetite for nutritious snacks, with pistachios gaining traction due to their high protein and dietary fiber content.

"At the same time, digital platforms such as Douyin and WeChat are accelerating the shift from seasonal gifting to everyday consumption," said Lam, adding that through short videos and collaborations with key opinion leaders, pistachios are increasingly positioned as snacks for fitness, office breaks and outdoor activities.

She said younger consumers' rapidly evolving tastes and growing expectations for interactive brand engagement are pushing companies to innovate in marketing formats and pursue more cross-industry collaborations.

According to the outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) for national economic and social development, China will strengthen coordination between imports and exports, place equal emphasis on trade in goods and services, and better integrate efforts to attract foreign investment and promote outbound investment.

"We will deepen cooperation with industry partners in China by ensuring stable supply, promoting diversified applications and jointly building a stronger ecosystem for category growth," said Lam.

China imported fruits and nuts worth $5.88 billion in the first four months of 2026, up 0.1 percent year-on-year, said the General Administration of Customs.

Sino-Russian trade riding cross-border trains

By **REN QI**
renqi@chinadaily.com.cn

From Manzhouli Port in North China's Inner Mongolia autonomous region to Russia's Zabaykalsky Krai and Irkutsk Oblast, bustling cross-border trains and a steady two-way flow of tourists highlight thriving industrial cooperation in grain processing, timber production and cultural tourism, serving as a vivid microcosm of upgraded and more efficient bilateral economic ties.

In the workshop of Manzhouli Xinfeng Grain and Oil Industrial Limited Company, the aroma of raw grain fills the air as fully automated production lines operate smoothly. Flaxseeds and oats from Russia undergo hulling, pressing and grinding, transforming into high-quality edible oils and premium coarse cereals before being dispatched across China.

"Following the closed-customs operation of the China-Russia Border Residents' Mutual Trade Zone at Manzhouli railway port in 2024, our 'mutual trade plus' import model has significantly reduced raw material costs and notably boosted profits," said Yang Zhihong, the company's deputy general manager. In 2025, the enterprise's agricultural imports from Russia surged to 19,000 metric tons from about 7,400 tons.

"Border residents enjoy a daily tax-free mutual trade quota of 8,000 yuan ($1,176), and enterprises purchase these imported agricultural products through cooperatives, which lowers procurement costs and provides locals with doorstep income," said Pei Xintong from the zone's economic development bureau.



People learn about Russian handicrafts during a cultural exchange event in Manzhouli, Inner Mongolia autonomous region, on Dec 20. LIAN ZHEN / XINHUA

This trade relies on Russian hubs like the Zabaykalsk grain terminal. As a flagship facility of the Sino-Russian New Land Grain Corridor, it features dual-gauge railways for efficient transfer and dispatch.

Chinese enterprises have formed a complete chain of overseas planting, cross-border logistics, and domestic processing and distribution. Alexander Osipov, governor of Russia's Zabaykalsky Krai, highlighted broad prospects for supplying organic agricultural products to China.

At Manzhouli Tianwang Wood, the sound of sawing echoes as imported Russian timber is cut, polished and assembled into various solid structures.

General Manager Wang Wei recounted the company's evolution from a small workshop in 2010 to a 47,000-square-meter facility with over 60 employees, producing cabins, biomass pellets and solid wood flooring. Recently, the company opened new avenues through livestreaming and customized tourism products.

Forestry is a pillar industry in Russia's Khabarovsk and Zabaykalsky Krais. Welcoming Chinese joint ventures in timber harvesting and processing, Osipov said Zabaykalsky is a major timber supplier to China.

"We use high-quality Russian timber to build zero-formaldehyde solid wood cabins," Wang said. Targeting ecological tourism, the company partners with herdsmen to build tourist spots, integrating timber processing with cultural tourism.

This cooperation has formed an industrial cluster in Manzhouli integrating imports, processing, manufacturing and sales, achieving a multiplication of timber value.

The mutual visa-exemption policy has invigorated cross-border tourism. Inner Mongolia's Hulunbuir, bordering Zabaykalsky Krai, launched a "Tracing the Great Tea Road" route in May 2025, while study tours and activities like the "China-Russia Friendship, Argun Journey" have become prominent calling cards for cultural exchanges.

Russian resources are equally attractive, said Igor Kobzev, governor of Irkutsk Oblast, adding that nearly 40,000 Chinese citizens visited last year. In 2026, the Russian federal government approved a tourism and recreation special economic zone in Baikalsk, offering settled enterprises preferential tax and infrastructure policies.

To attract Chinese tourists, restaurants in Chita and Irkutsk offer Taiga forest and Siberian cuisines, while some mining enterprises have launched industrial tourism featuring factory tours and shopping.

Mineral cooperation remains a crucial direction for industrial integration. Kobzev said resource-rich Irkutsk seeks Chinese partners to jointly develop resources and advance high-end manufacturing, adding that exports of edible oils and mineral water to China will also be expanded to broaden cooperation.

Magnum pins growth on Chinese cravings for sweet indulgence

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn

At a sprawling factory in Taicang, Jiangsu province, Peter ter Kulve, CEO of The Magnum Ice Cream Company, watched as a robot dog patrolled the factory complex. Nicknamed *Ne Zha*, the robot conducts 24/7 safety inspections — monitoring temperatures, checking compressor systems and feeding real-time data to the team.

"I want that dog everywhere," he joked.

This mix of cutting-edge automation reflects TMICC's broader strategy. "We have created a business that is very much China for China. But when it comes to technology and innovation, we now take a lot of innovations from here to the rest of the world," ter Kulve said.

While products are tailored to Chinese tastes, the technological advances — like artificial intelligence-driven production — are shared with TMICC operations worldwide.

For ter Kulve — who first arrived in China in 1982 and later led Wall's China from 1999 — the encounter with *Ne Zha* symbolized the dramatic transformation sweeping the country's supply chains. On a recent two-week trip, he observed firsthand how AI, robotics and automation are reshaping production, logistics and retail operations.

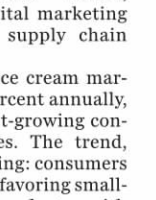
Leveraging technology and innovation is key to balancing high quality with affordability, particularly for a leading ice cream company like TMICC, he said. Precision manufacturing has also helped narrow the price gap with local competitors by minimizing waste and optimizing ingredient usage. For example, innovative products such as the Cornetto seven-layer ice cream stick now retail for just six yuan ($0.88).

Yet, the transformation isn't just technological. Chinese consumers themselves have evolved. "People used to want something cheap and large or foreign," he recalled of 25 years ago. "Now, they are sophisticated, discerning and exposed to the best from around the world. Yet, they also want the best to be Chinese."

TMICC has embraced this shift. China remains a strategic market for the company. Since being demerged from Unilever in 2025 and its subsequent global listing, TMICC has operated as a standalone company, positioning China as a key hub. Earlier this year, its Asia headquarters officially opened in Shanghai, signaling a deepened commitment to the market.

The company's numbers back up this strategy. TMICC holds a 21 percent share of the global retail ice cream market and manages four of the five largest global ice cream brands, including Wall's, Magnum, Cornetto and Ben & Jerry's. In China alone, nearly 30 new products have been launched this year, driving high-single-digit growth in the first quarter of 2026.

Ter Kulve attributes the company's success in China to a mix of high-quality production, strong local management, premium branding and relentless innovation — a formula that ensures sustainable growth.



> "Everyone can afford a little happiness. Our job is to make life taste better with ice cream — making these brands exciting through joy, entertainment and a touch of luxury."
>
> **Peter ter Kulve,** CEO of The Magnum Ice Cream Company

Despite per capita consumption of ice cream being lower than the global average, competition in China remains fierce. Euromonitor reports that in 2025, Yili led the market, TMICC was among the top five players along with Mengniu, General Mills and Deshi China. Meanwhile, snack and beverage companies are entering the ice cream category, adding pressure with offerings ranging from high-end to budget-friendly products.

To stay ahead, TMICC's China unit has announced plans for this year, including expanding freezer deployment, accelerating local innovation through the China research and development center, investing in digital marketing and advancing supply chain digitization.

Globally, the ice cream market grows 3-4 percent annually, one of the fastest-growing consumer categories. The trend, however, is shifting: consumers are increasingly favoring smaller, premium products with superior ingredients, flavors and health benefits. Magnum aims to lead this transformation, using China as both a testing ground and a launchpad for global innovation.

The CEO highlighted the entertainment side of the ice cream business over mere convenience. "Online offers convenience, but it can't replicate the joy of experiencing ice cream in person," he said. Pop-up stores, influencer events and sampling campaigns are becoming integral to the ice cream shopping experience.

For example, from April 30 to May 10, the company launched the Magnum pleasure store pop-up in Hangzhou's iconic West Lake, attracting large crowds and becoming one of the city's standout summer lifestyle destinations. Visitors could co-craft their own limited-edition Magnum ice creams and beverages.

For ter Kulve, ice cream is more than a product — it's a cultural statement. "Ice cream is fashion — it's the 'lipstick' of the food world. Everyone can afford a little happiness," he said. "Our job is to make life taste better with ice cream — making these brands exciting through joy, entertainment and a touch of luxury."



A boy enjoys ice cream at a Magnum pop-up store on Hubin commercial street in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, on May 4. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:55 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:55 PM

CHINA

China bucks global trend, curbs dengue

Country willing to share effective and low-cost strategies with intl partners

By **WANG XIAOYU**
wangxiaoyu@chinadaily.com.cn

China has successfully curbed the domestic spread of dengue fever despite rising global infection rates, and the country stands ready to work with international partners to share effective, low-cost control strategies and technologies with regions in need, a senior health official said this week.

Dengue fever has spread rapidly in recent years and is now endemic in more than 100 countries. The number of global infections surged to a record high of 14.4 million in 2024 and remained at elevated levels in 2025, according to data shared on Monday at an event on the sidelines of the World Health Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland, which concludes on Saturday.

Shen Hongbing, vice-minister of the National Health Commission and administrator of the National Disease Control and Prevention Administration, said local outbreaks in China are usually triggered by imported cases.

"In 2025, even as imported cases rose by 89 percent, locally transmitted outbreaks fell by 65 percent compared with the previous year — a notable achievement in disease control," Shen, who is also deputy head of the Chinese delegation to the assembly, said at the event hosted by the GX Foundation, a Hong Kong-based NGO.

At the heart of the nation's effective disease control efforts are comprehensive strategies that include government leadership, intensified surveillance, vector surveillance and control, prompt outbreak responses and growing public health awareness, he said.

Shen said that since 2005, China has established special dengue control funds and steadily increased investment over the years.

To strengthen surveillance and early warning, authorities have established mechanisms for public health cooperation and cross-border coordination at ports and border areas. Intelligent software has also been deployed at medical institutions to facilitate syndromic surveillance and active case finding.

Efforts have also been made to deepen the integration of climate monitoring with disease early warning systems to predict epidemic trends and upgrade prevention measures in advance.

Because dengue fever is transmitted to humans through the bites of infected mosquitoes, China has established a national surveillance network on the ecology, pathogens and insecticide resistance of mosquito vectors. The country has also carried out environmental management to reduce mosquito density and applied automated, digital, intelligent and other novel technologies.

In response to local outbreaks, measures such as designating risk zones, intensifying vector control, activating emergency surveillance and risk assessments, and enhancing treatment and isolation management are being implemented to curb further spread of the viral disease, Shen said.

The country also provides public health education to improve awareness of the disease and preventive measures. Inbound and outbound travelers are encouraged to voluntarily report symptoms and adopt personal protective measures.

On global cooperation, Shen said China has held an international conference on sustainable management of vector insects for 10 consecutive years and offered training to professionals from around the world, demonstrating the nation's commitment to building a global community of health for all.

"Looking ahead, China will continue to strengthen dengue prevention and control under the coordination of the World Health Organization and support GX Foundation and other nongovernmental actors in playing their role," he said.

Shen added that through communication and exchanges, it is hoped that effective prevention and control experience, as well as efficient and low-cost technologies, will benefit more regions and contribute to building a global community of health for all.

In April, the GX Foundation released a consensus statement on the physical control of dengue fever, introducing a Chinese solution that uses tools such as mosquito lamps, bed nets and sticky fly traps to curb the spread of the viral disease.

Shen said the strategy introduces convenient and safe control measures and is particularly valuable in endemic areas with limited resources.

Arthur Li Kwok-cheung, a member of the Executive Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and a board member of the GX Foundation, said during the side event that the strategy has proved sustainable, well accepted by communities and environmentally friendly. It has already yielded tangible results in Timor-Leste and Honduras.

He added that the strategy is now being promoted further in Cambodia and Vanuatu. The foundation plans to further upgrade mosquito lamps and other devices based on practical needs, promote solar-powered and intelligent systems, enhance the accuracy of rapid test kits, and deepen supply chain cooperation.

Revving up trade



Visitors view a replica of the champion ZXMOTO 820RR-RS bike from the Superbike World Championship at the Eighth Western China International Fair for Investment and Trade that opened in Chongqing on Thursday. The fair highlights the participation of nearly 1,400 enterprises from 50 countries and regions.
HE PENGLEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Bilateral concert



Chinese and Russian musicians perform the accordion duet *Tango pour Claude* accompanied by the Central Conservatory of Music symphony orchestra during the opening concert of the China-Russia art education exchange series, part of the China-Russia Years of Education (2026-27), in Beijing on Thursday evening.
ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

Young Russian builds biz bridges in Xi'an

By **REN QI**
renqi@chinadaily.com.cn

Every year, more than 1.5 million Russians cross the border into China, a country they see as full of opportunities. More than 50,000 Russians have already settled across the nation.

From the chilly province of Heilongjiang to the tropical island of Hainan, from the bustling metropolis of Shanghai to the historic capital of Beijing, an increasing number of Russians are quietly blending into China's urban landscape.

Among them is Anna Samodolova, a 27-year-old Russian entrepreneur who is determined to stay in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, and continue developing her startup.

"Currently, my career in China is very important to me. Starting a business in China has made me more independent and confident," she told Chinese media.

While at university, Samodolova noticed China's rapid economic development and abundant entrepreneurial opportunities, prompting her to choose Chinese as her second foreign language. In 2019, she came to China for the first time to study Chinese for a semester at Heilongjiang International University.

"From the airport to the city, everything was very clean and highly modern," she said. "China was completely different from what I had imagined before."

In 2022, carrying her dreams with her, Samodolova returned to China to pursue a master's degree at Xi'an Jiaotong University. After graduation, she decided to stay in Xi'an and start her own business, registering a consulting company aimed at building a bridge for cultural and people-to-people exchanges between China and Russia.

"Xi'an is an international tourist city and an important node city of the Belt and Road Initiative. There are many foreigners and abundant opportunities here," she said.

Her first project involved facilitating business cooperation between a Moscow ice cream manufacturer and three Chinese enterprises. Taking charge of a large-scale business negotiation for the first time, she made extensive preparations in advance, helping arrange meetings between the Moscow manufacturer and the three Chinese companies in one day.

"The Chinese companies needed localized flavors, while the Moscow manufacturer had cost considerations, so a deal was ultimately not reached," Samodolova said. "But this experience made me realize that I was somewhat reserved in social interactions and lacked certain language and business etiquette skills."

To improve communication with Chinese and foreign business people, she began studying business Chinese and Chinese etiquette online.

In August 2024, a Russian producer approached her for help in arranging performances in China for the Russian band Garage Dayz. Although unfamiliar with Xi'an's performing arts market, Samodolova immersed herself in finding venues, connecting with Chinese performance companies and applying for performance permits.

Thanks to her meticulous work, Garage Dayz successfully performed in Xi'an in April this year.

Having lived in China for more than three years, Samodolova said she has quickly integrated into local life and become more mature and confident. On Sept 23, she attended the "2025 Euro-Asia Youth Elite Dialogue" during the Euro-Asia Economic Forum in Xi'an, where she delivered a speech highlighting the opportunities created by China's rapidly developing digital economy.

"In China, the rapid development of technologies such as AI and mobile payments has made Sino-foreign cooperation much more convenient," she said in her speech.

Living in the ancient capital of Xi'an, Samodolova has also developed a deep appreciation for local cuisine and intangible cultural heritage.

Inspired by her daughter, Samodolova's mother has also begun learning Chinese online. The pair now greet each other in Chinese during phone calls.

As exchanges between China and Russia become increasingly convenient, Samodolova's business projects have continued to grow.

Guideline calls for human-centric AI

By **JIANG CHENGLONG** in Beijing and **SHI RUIPENG** in Nanning

China has released a technical guideline on the ethics and safety of artificial intelligence applications, offering a Chinese approach that emphasizes human-centered development, AI for good, and human leadership over AI systems.

The document, titled "Ethics-Safety Guidelines for Artificial Intelligence Applications 1.0", was released on Tuesday at a subforum of the 2026 China Internet Civilization Conference in Nanning, capital of the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region.

Issued by the National Technical Committee 260 on Cybersecurity, China's key body responsible for cybersecurity standardization, the guideline is described as a "principle-based and reference technical document". It covers AI application development, service provision and use, and provides guidance for organizations and individuals carrying out AI-related activities.

The document was drafted by leading Chinese institutions and companies, including Tsinghua University, the China Electronics Standardization Institute, technology giants Alibaba Group and Huawei Technologies, and DeepSeek, a well-known AI enterprise.

It outlines major principles including reasonable risk control, openness and transparency, privacy and security protection, controllability and trustworthiness, agile co-governance, and inclusive sharing.

Fan Kefeng, vice-president of the China Electronics Standardization Institute, said AI applications are expanding from content generation to assisted decision-making, interactive control and other fields. With the emergence of new forms such as intelligent agents and integrated AI systems, AI applications are becoming increasingly autonomous, complex and influential, he said.

"While improving production efficiency, AI has also made ethical and safety issues such as job displacement, decision-making responsibility and emotional dependence more prominent," Fan said, adding that such changes are bringing new challenges to human agency, social trust and public order.

The guideline states that AI applications should always serve "the common well-being of humanity", calling for ensuring that "the leadership over AI applications belongs to humans", with mechanisms for human control, emergency response and intervention established at key stages.

The document also urges relevant parties to retain "human judgment, supervision, intervention and correction" in key processes to avoid excessive replacement of human decision-making by AI.

For users, it advises moderate AI use and a proper understanding of AI emotional services. It states that AI should be treated as "a tool to assist real life", urging users to avoid excessive dependence, addiction, or replacing real interpersonal communication and activities with AI.

For information and communication services, the guideline calls for stronger risk governance of AI-generated and recommended content, warning against "information cocoons, cognitive misleading and cognitive degradation".

The guideline also encourages building an open-source innovation ecosystem, while improving the security capabilities of the open-source ecosystem.

Zhang Linghan, director of the institute of AI law and governance at China University of Political Science and Law, said the guideline provides detailed pathways and a Chinese approach to preventing ethical and safety risks at a time when AI is increasingly embedded in production and daily life, reshaping human-machine relations and being applied in more complex scenarios.

She said the guideline emphasizes that human leadership must not be weakened.

Beyond interpersonal and socio-political relations, it also addresses ecological concerns. "It also takes into account AI's consumption of energy and resources," said Zhang, who is also an expert with the United Nations High-Level Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence.

Zhou Jingren, a partner at Alibaba Group and senior AI executive, said AI technology and large language models are still undergoing rapid development. From the outset, Alibaba established an ethics committee for large language models and invited experts from different fields to jointly explore solutions in this emerging area, he said.

Cheng Zixin contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at jiangchenglong@chinadaily.com.cn

APEC exhibitors shine at intl fair

By **ATLAS SHAO**
in Shenzhen, Guangdong
atlasshao@chinadailyhk.com

With the debut of a dedicated APEC exhibition zone, the 22nd China (Shenzhen) International Cultural Industries Fair opened on Thursday, serving as a premier showcase for the nation's cultural and technology trends while fostering global ties.

Spanning 160,000 square meters, the event — China's largest cultural expo — has drawn more than 6,300 exhibitors across 65 countries and regions. Running until Monday, this year's fair spotlights innovative retail models, tech-driven products and the rich cultural and tourism resources of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation economies, offering a preview as Shenzhen prepares to host the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in mid-November.

At the APEC exhibition zone, coffee from Vietnam, Thailand's creative cultural products, Malaysian handicrafts, snack foods produced by South Korean companies, wine from Chile, Peru's alpaca products and Canada's tourism offerings have attracted visitors, transforming the exhibition zone into an area for cultural exchange and cooperation across the Asia-Pacific region.

Viann Ye, administrative executive of the MayCham China Guangdong office, said this is the first time the Malaysian Chamber of Commerce has participated in a culture-themed exhibition. Instead of selling products, she hopes to enhance public recognition of Malaysia through the fair, and thereby attract more travelers to the country.

Ye told China Daily that the chamber would like to participate in the November APEC meeting in Shenzhen if there are themes of mutual interest, and hopes to find more opportunities for Malaysian products to go global.

"The exhibition's scale and diversity have amazed me," said Hartanto W. Tanto, an Indonesian exhibitor who attended the event at the invitation of the Indonesian consulate general in Guangzhou.

He brought specialty products to the event, including batik silk scarves and sambal sauce, and received inquiries from buyers within the first hour of the opening.

He owns six restaurants in Xiamen and Fuzhou in Fujian province, and said Chinese consumers have a high level of enthusiasm for Indonesian cuisine.

Given that the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area is a region he has hoped to tap into, he said the fair is providing him with the opportunity to better understand the Shenzhen market.

Under the theme "Unboxing Hong Kong", the Hong Kong Pavilion at this year's cultural fair is displaying more than 100 exhibits to showcase Hong Kong's design capabilities.

A pop-up store has been opened for the first time in the pavilion, making Hong Kong cultural and creative products available for on-site purchase.

During the exhibition, the Hong Kong Pavilion will also host multiple cultural activities, including a lecture on the transformation of neon lights and mahjong craftsmanship, as well as a seminar exploring the use of emotional language in design.

The Macao Pavilion features enterprises from the Macao SAR's film production, advertising, large-event organization and technology sectors.

This year's cultural fair has also set up three major exhibition areas showcasing AI technology products.

Duan Chao, senior marketing manager at DexForce Technology Co, an enterprise specializing in embodied intelligence technology, said several cultural and tourism government departments and overseas chambers of commerce had visited his booth and shown strong interest in the company's products.

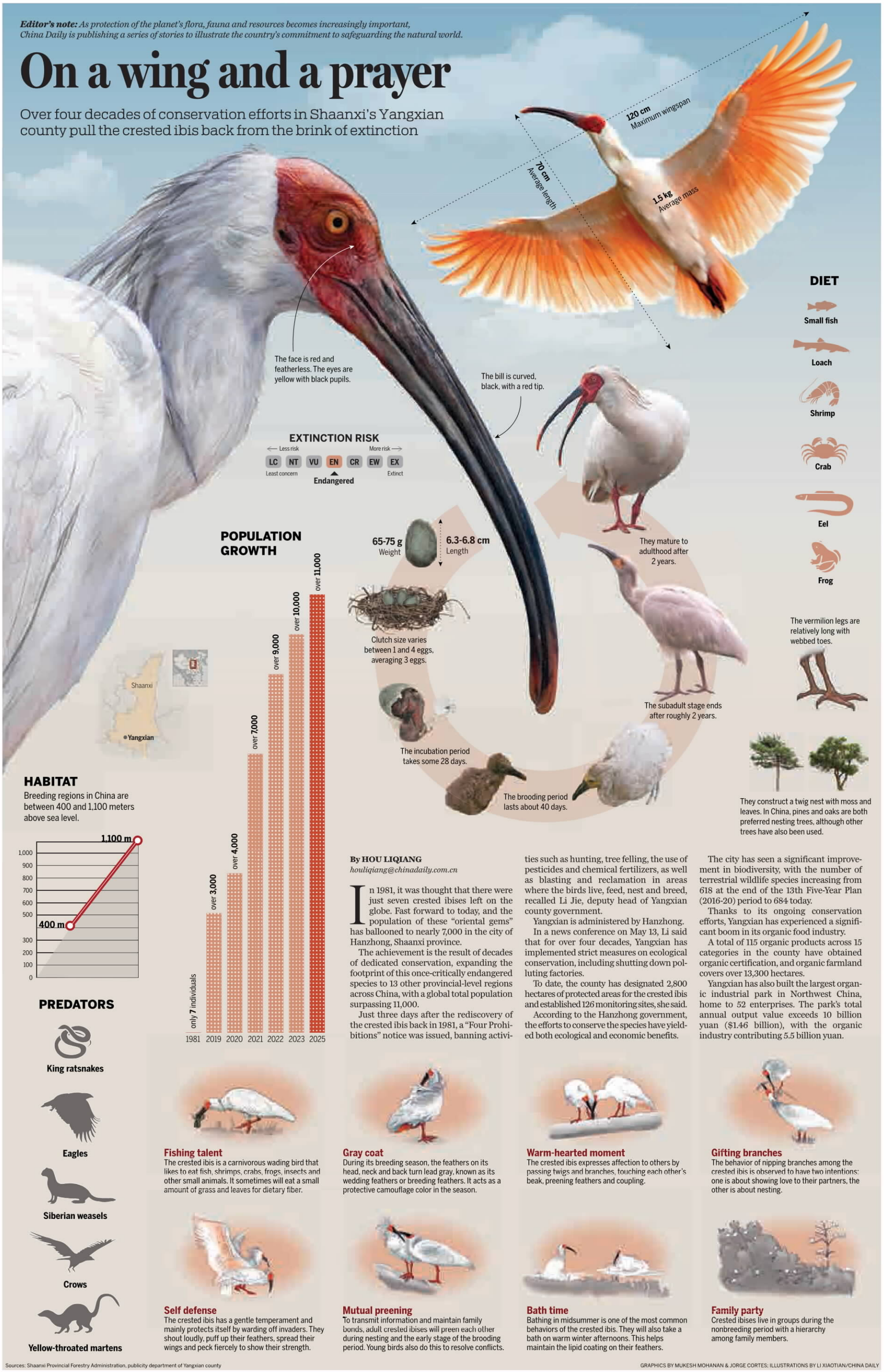
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:55 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:55 PM

Editor's note: *As protection of the planet's flora, fauna and resources becomes increasingly important, China Daily is publishing a series of stories to illustrate the country's commitment to safeguarding the natural world.*

On a wing and a prayer

Over four decades of conservation efforts in Shaanxi's Yangxian county pull the crested ibis back from the brink of extinction



By **HOU LIQIANG**
houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

In 1981, it was thought that there were just seven crested ibises left on the globe. Fast forward to today, and the population of these "oriental gems" has ballooned to nearly 7,000 in the city of Hanzhong, Shaanxi province.

The achievement is the result of decades of dedicated conservation, expanding the footprint of this once-critically endangered species to 13 other provincial-level regions across China, with a global total population surpassing 11,000.

Just three days after the rediscovery of the crested ibis back in 1981, a "Four Prohibitions" notice was issued, banning activities such as hunting, tree felling, the use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers, as well as blasting and reclamation in areas where the birds live, feed, nest and breed, recalled Li Jie, deputy head of Yangxian county government.

Yangxian is administered by Hanzhong.

In a news conference on May 13, Li said that for over four decades, Yangxian has implemented strict measures on ecological conservation, including shutting down polluting factories.

To date, the county has designated 2,800 hectares of protected areas for the crested ibis and established 126 monitoring sites, she said.

According to the Hanzhong government, the efforts to conserve the species have yielded both ecological and economic benefits.

The city has seen a significant improvement in biodiversity, with the number of terrestrial wildlife species increasing from 618 at the end of the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20) period to 684 today.

Thanks to its ongoing conservation efforts, Yangxian has experienced a significant boom in its organic food industry.

A total of 115 organic products across 15 categories in the county have obtained organic certification, and organic farmland covers over 13,300 hectares.

Yangxian has also built the largest organic industrial park in Northwest China, home to 52 enterprises. The park's total annual output value exceeds 10 billion yuan ($1.46 billion), with the organic industry contributing 5.5 billion yuan.

Fishing talent
The crested ibis is a carnivorous wading bird that likes to eat fish, shrimps, crabs, frogs, insects and other small animals. It sometimes will eat a small amount of grass and leaves for dietary fiber.

Gray coat
During its breeding season, the feathers on its head, neck and back turn lead gray, known as its wedding feathers or breeding feathers. It acts as a protective camouflage color in the season.

Warm-hearted moment
The crested ibis expresses affection to others by passing twigs and branches, touching each other's beak, preening feathers and coupling.

Gifting branches
The behavior of nipping branches among the crested ibis is observed to have two intentions: one is about showing love to their partners, the other is about nesting.

Self defense
The crested ibis has a gentle temperament and mainly protects itself by warding off invaders. They shout loudly, puff up their feathers, spread their wings and peck fiercely to show their strength.

Mutual preening
To transmit information and maintain family bonds, adult crested ibises will preen each other during nesting and the early stage of the brooding period. Young birds also do this to resolve conflicts.

Bath time
Bathing in midsummer is one of the most common behaviors of the crested ibis. They will also take a bath on warm winter afternoons. This helps maintain the lipid coating on their feathers.

Family party
Crested ibises live in groups during the nonbreeding period with a hierarchy among family members.

Sources: Shaanxi Provincial Forestry Administration, publicity department of Yangxian county

GRAPHICS BY MUKESH MOHANAN & JORGE CORTES; ILLUSTRATIONS BY LI XIAOTIAN/CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:55 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:55 PM

CULTURE







Above left: Director Chen Yi oversees the full-cave digital scanning of the Binyang Central Cave at the Longmen Grottoes in Henan province. **Above:** Chen interviews an expert at the Longmen Grottoes. **Left:** Chen examines fragments of the *Emperor and Empress Paying Homage to the Buddha* alongside an expert in the storeroom of the Longmen Grottoes Research Institute. **Below left:** Chen films ancient cultural relics at the Longmen Grottoes. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The hunt for an emperor's face

Documentary captures the decades-long search for Longmen fragments scattered overseas after historic looting, **Yang Feiyue** reports.



Inside the Binyang Central Cave at the Longmen Grottoes in Central China's Henan province, a researcher from the Longmen Grottoes Research Institute holds a small 3D-printed fragment against a weathered stone wall. For a moment, nothing happens. Then the piece clicks into place, its curve fitting perfectly into a shallow groove carved 15 centuries ago.

The data show a 93.3 percent match.

"It was the most unforgettable moment," recalls Chen Yi, the documentary filmmaker who witnessed the discovery. "Completely unexpected. We found the face of Emperor Xiaowen."

In the past, it could take cultural heritage workers years to relocate a single Buddha head to its original position. This time, the documentary team helped accelerate the process, completing it in just 14 months.

"The key was finding the right method," Chen says.

That breakthrough and the years of detective work behind it lie at the heart of Chen's new documentary, *How I Miss "Her"*, which aired on China Central Television's documentary channel on Sunday.

The film traces the century-long odyssey of the *Emperor and Empress Paying Homage to the Buddha*, a pair of carved stone reliefs from the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534), regarded as masterpieces of Chinese Buddhist cave art.

In the 1930s, the reliefs were violently dismantled.

Working on orders from overseas buyers, a Beijing antiquities dealer named Yue Bin organized the systematic chiseling of the two panels into more than 6,000 fragments. Around 4,000 pieces made their way to the United States, split between the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, Missouri. The remaining 2,300 or so were kept in Longmen's storerooms.

No one could determine with certainty which fragments were authentic. Looters had mixed genuine pieces with fakes to inflate prices, according to historical records of Yue Bin's confession cited in the film.

Abroad, the fragments were also subjected to questionable restoration practices. At the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, then-curator Laurence Sickman — whose teacher, Langdon Warner, remains controversial for removing murals from the Dunhuang caves — spent two to three years patching the broken pieces together with plaster. The restored panels, scholars point out, carried the fingerprints of their modern reconstruction as much as their ancient origins. At the Met, when the documentary team requested restoration records, very little was provided.

"The result became a huge mystery in Chinese art history," Chen notes.

The film introduces Wen Yucheng, the 87-year-old honorary director of the Longmen Grottoes Research Institute, who first began sorting the fragments in 1965 shortly after graduating from Peking University's archaeology department. He was on a three-person team investigating the looting.

Six decades later, he appears in Chen's documentary as a living bridge between the original crime and the ongoing effort to repair its damage.

Xiao Guangyi, a documentary studies teacher at Chengdu College of Arts and Sciences in Sichuan province, says she was deeply moved by Wen's lifelong devotion to the Longmen caves.

"Hearing an elderly scholar say that — how he missed the stones when he was away — is deeply moving. We see a tourist site. But generations of people have devoted their lives to protecting our civilization," Xiao says.

For Xiao, the documentary's most powerful moment comes when researchers test the fragment against the cave wall.

"Piece by piece, centimeter by centimeter — until it clicked. Suddenly you feel that all those efforts, all those generations of dedication, have finally found hope."

A chance encounter

Chen first heard about the project by chance in 2022, while filming at the Yungang Grottoes in North China's Shanxi province for the second season of *Hello AI*, her documentary series on artificial intelligence and cultural heritage. It is a follow-up to the 2019 film that marked one of the country's first documentaries dedicated entirely to AI.

On set, she ran into an old collaborator, Huang Xianfeng, a remote sensing expert from Wuhan University. They had previously worked together on digital restoration projects at Dunhuang in Gansu province and the Jiankou section of the Great Wall in Beijing.

She asked him whether his work had ever extended to artifacts that had been looted and taken overseas. That was when Huang mentioned the Longmen reliefs.

Chen started digging. What she found was a detective story spanning continents and decades, with smuggling rings and a paper trail buried in archives from New York to Cambridge, Massachusetts. As shown in the film, a key piece emerged from the Harvard University archives — a letter from Sickman to Alan Priest of the Met, accompanied by a sketched male head. The drawing proved that American curators had been searching for the same specific missing piece, providing crucial historical corroboration for fragments later found in Longmen's storeroom.

For years, Chen had worked with two seemingly separate tool kits. Her early career was focused on cultural documentaries, such as *The Forbidden City, Kunqu of Six Centenary* and *Taipei Palace Museum*. Later, she directed *A Century with Cars*, a 12-part series examining Western industrial civilization through what she describes as "the eyes of a Chinese documentary filmmaker".

That was followed by *Hello AI*, where she learned to visualize invisible algorithms while tackling the challenge of projecting data streams onto server racks and using crosscutting techniques to keep otherwise static code visually alive on-screen.

"One foot in the humanities, one foot in technology. I'd been waiting for a subject that could bring them together," she recalls.

She realized that the emperor and empress reliefs offered exactly that opportunity.

In 2024, the Longmen Grottoes Research Institute launched a full-scale digital restoration project, led by senior researcher Gao Junping. The first challenge was separating authentic fragments from fakes.

Tian Hengci, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Sciences who usually analyzes lunar samples, applied nondestructive testing technology to the Longmen fragments. His device can detect trace elements at concentrations as low as one part per million — a geological fingerprint precise enough to distinguish different stone sources.

As documented in the film, of the five candidate pieces, only one cataloged as H05 matched the chemical composition of the original cave wall. The rest were counterfeit.

Yet, finding the correct fragment solved only part of the puzzle. The cave wall stands two meters high and four meters wide. H05 is roughly the size of a palm. Somewhere on that vast, weathered surface, the tiny piece needed to find its home.

The documentary reveals how researchers combined high-precision 3D scanning, AI-assisted surface matching, and what some scholars call "digital reunion": scanning overseas collections and virtually reassembling scattered fragments without physically moving them.

"Academically, 'digital reunion' isn't quite accurate, but it helps people understand what we're trying to do," Chen emphasizes.

Privately, she prefers another phrase: "civilization backup".

"For people 200 years from now, these digital models will be a heritage of their own — a record of how we, in our time, tried to save what we could," she explains.

Xiao sees this fusion of technology and humanity as essential to the documentary's success.

"Hard technology plus soft humanities is the soul of this kind of film, and a growing trend," she says.

"Without technology, Wen Yucheng's regret might have remained just regret. But without humanities, the film becomes a boring engineering log. You need both — technology as the engine, humanities as the heart. Neither works alone," she elaborates.

For Xiao, the idea of "reunion" defines the film.

"It's not only about reassembling broken stones," she says. "It's also about reuniting hearts and reconnecting civilizations." She adds that researchers, scientists, curators and scholars from China and abroad are all participating in an effort to restore a fragmented cultural legacy.

"We're using hands that reached for the moon to touch the missing pieces left behind a thousand years ago," she says.

The film's title *How I Miss "Her"* comes from a line by early 20th-century poet Liu Bannong. The Chinese character *ta* (her) was once reserved in Chinese documentary captions for national treasures, a grammatical gesture that imbued stone and bronze with something like soul.

"This film is an innovative work that uses contemporary thinking to question history and technological artistry to empower imagery," says Tan Xue, the film's producer.

In recent years, artificial intelligence has opened new narrative possibilities for cultural heritage, giving rise to many moving stories of "reunion", Tan notes.

The film allows those who have missed "her" to see how cultural heritage researchers, represented by the team at the Longmen Grottoes Research Institute, are using contemporary wisdom to heal the wounds of history, she says.

The title also raises the question: how do you miss something that may never come back?

Chen's answer lies less in sentiment than in action.

"Science and art part ways at the foot of the mountain. But they meet again at the summit," she says.

At the foot of that mountain, a sixth-century artisan carved an emperor's face into stone. At the summit, a laser originally developed for lunar exploration scans a fragment no larger than a hand while algorithms search for patterns invisible to the human eye.

"That's where we are now," Chen says.

"Not because we have all the answers. But because, for the first time, we have a way to ask the right questions."

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

Ancient volumes reunite across the strait with digital vision

LANZHOU — Inside a climate-controlled repository in Northwest China's Gansu province, Fung Ming-chu leans toward a display case, her eyes fixed on a rare surviving set of ancient Chinese texts.

For the former director of the Taipei Palace Museum, the moment carried the weight of decades.

"My wish has finally come true," Fung says. After spending years guarding the Wenyuange copy, she has now seen with her own eyes all the surviving three-and-a-half copies of the *Siku Quanshu*.

Known in English as *The Complete Library of the Four Treasuries*, the *Siku Quanshu* is regarded as one of the most comprehensive collections in Chinese history. The monumental compilation was produced during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911).

Of the seven copies originally produced, only three and a half survive today. The Wenyuange copy is housed at the Taipei Palace Museum, the Wenjinge copy at the National Library of China in Beijing, and the Wensuge copy in Lanzhou, the capital city of Gansu.

Chu Hui-liang, a former researcher at the Taipei Palace Museum, shares Fung's excitement while looking at the neatly stacked 1,128 camphorwood book chests containing the Wensuge copy.

"As descendants of the Chinese nation, it is a source of great pride to witness this monumental work with our own eyes," Chu says.

"We often call the stains on ancient texts 'age spots'. But the Wensuge copy is nearly free of such marks. That shows how carefully generations of guardians in Gansu have preserved it," Chu adds.



Fung Ming-chu (center), former director of the Taipei Palace Museum, visits the Gansu Provincial Library in Lanzhou, Gansu province, on May 13. LIU KEYING / XINHUA

Xiao Xuezhi, director of the Gansu Provincial Library where the repository is located, says local authorities have invested heavily in preservation efforts since the Wensuge copy arrived in the province. Dedicated institutions and specialist staff have also been established to ensure its long-term protection.

Over the years, the library has developed preservation methods suited to local conditions. The building's structure and natural ventilation help regulate temperature and humidity, while the camphorwood chests protect the texts from insects and mildew.

Another former Taipei Palace Museum researcher, Lin Tieng-jen, gently touched the pages and the wooden case with gloved hands under the guidance of museum staff members. A specialist in ancient Chinese cartography, Lin had systematically studied the Wenyuange copy but had rarely had the chance to touch it.

"I can't bear to let go, yet I'm afraid to touch it too much," he says. The Wensuge copy, he notes, is similar to the Wenyuange version in the calligraphy, line spacing and even the design of the wooden cases.

"The *Siku Quanshu* is a monumental collection that preserves the very essence of Chinese heritage," Fung says, emphasizing its growing research value. She expresses hope for future joint exhibitions.

After learning that the Wensuge copy has been digitized and is set for facsimile publication, Fung envisions a "digital reunion" of the copies from both sides of the Strait.

Fung also expects more cross-Strait efforts to help wider audiences engage with classical texts through digital platforms and cultural products.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:55 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:55 PM

LIFESHANGHAI

Travelers take in city through new lenses



An eyeglasses market benefits from visa exemptions as international tourists seek better services than their home countries provide, **Zhou Wenting** reports.

Swiss tourist Mia Bernauer's first trip to China in mid-May included a stop that may seem unexpected to many: getting prescription glasses in Shanghai. She bought glasses for myopia in two different styles to switch between.

While planning her trip to Shanghai, Bernauer found through online research that the city offers affordable, high-quality eyewear. She was also influenced by TikTok videos featuring foreign tourists sharing their shopping experiences at the Shanghai International Glasses City, located in the heart of the city.

"The shops here have a really nice selection, and they have world-famous brands that are good quality. But the price is half, or even less, than in Switzerland," says Bernauer, 24, who spent five days in Shanghai.

"It's a great bonus that some of the shop managers speak English," she says.

Bernauer is not alone. Many international tourists are adding the eyeglasses market to their Shanghai itineraries these days, alongside traditional attractions, such as custom-made *qipao* at the clothing market near the Bund, and trying local delicacies like *xiaolongbao* (steamed buns).

On TripAdvisor, a popular travel review site, the four-story Shanghai International Glasses City on Zhongxing Road ranks among the city's top five landmarks, following the Bund, Yuyuan Garden, and Xintiandi. Opened in 2007, this eyeglasses market, which began in wholesale markets, offers retail prices generally half of those at other optical shops and has recently gained popularity on overseas social media platforms.

Many shop owners at the market noted an increase in foreign customers starting last year, with more this year. They said some foreign tour guides have been spontaneously bringing tour groups in.

In 2024, China significantly upgraded its visa-free transit policy. By 2025, the number of countries with unilateral visa exemptions increased to 48, and the number of countries with mutual visa exemptions expanded to 29, with 65 ports allowing 240-hour visa-free transit.

Riding this wave of inbound travel, Shanghai has continued to establish itself as a first stop for international tourists arriving in China. According to the Shanghai Municipal Administration of Culture and Tourism, the city received over 9.36 million inbound travelers last year, a nearly 40 percent increase year-on-year, setting a new record. In the first two months of 2026, international tourist arrivals in Shanghai reached nearly 1.15 million, up 21.4 percent compared with the same period last year.





Left: Sofiia Pavlova and her husband from Russia visit Tong Qingying's shop at the Shanghai International Glasses City on May 15. **Top above:** Swiss tourist Mia Bernauer, who was on her first trip to China, bought two pairs of prescription glasses at the Shanghai store on May 15. PHOTOS BY ZHOU WENTING / CHINA DAILY **Above:** New Zealander Chris picks eyeglasses frames at the Shanghai store, during his visit there on May 16. GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

> "The shops here have a really nice selection, and they have world-famous brands that are good quality. But the price is half, or even less, than in Switzerland."
>
> **Mia Bernauer,** Swiss tourist

Hua Xiaochun, owner of one of the eyeglass shops in the market, says that the number of visitors arriving from Russia increased noticeably at first, and now international customers hail from around the world, mainly from Europe, North America, and Southeast Asia. Many come well-prepared, with a large proportion bringing their existing prescriptions, avoiding an on-site eye exam, he says.

"Customers from Europe and the United States have strong purchasing power. Some are satisfied with a particular style and directly calculate the price to make a purchase. Others will bargain, which the guides probably taught about negotiating with individual businesses in China," says Hua.

According to foreign customers, what attracts them is not just the price but also the quality and the speed of service. In many countries, getting glasses requires first seeing a doctor for a prescription and then having the glasses made, which sometimes takes a week. As a result, many people have experienced the embarrassment of having to temporarily fix broken glasses with tape.

They praise the shopkeepers at the market for their friendliness and professionalism, and they also appreciate the wide range of options available.

There are hundreds of shops in the market, each with a different selection based on the shop owner's buying preferences. Hua says his preference focuses on trendy styles.

"Foreigners usually have a different aesthetic preference from our local customers. They prefer trendy, bold designs. Most Chinese customers accept recommendations from shopkeepers, but foreigners are often confident in their own choices," he adds.

Many shopkeepers recall having experienced groups of foreign tourists buying more than 20 pairs of glasses at once. Hua notes that foreigners like sunglasses a lot, mentioning a recent customer from the US who bought several pairs one day and returned two days later to purchase more, totaling over a dozen pairs, likely as gifts for his family and friends.

Getting glasses at the market usually takes only 30 minutes to an hour from order to pickup. During this time, shopkeepers recommend that customers visit the shopping center across the street, and many return with bags full of items, such as blind box toys, hair accessories, power banks, and hairdryers.

More complex lenses, like progressive and multifocal, take two to three days to customize. Some customers return to pick them up, while others opt for express delivery to their hotel to save time.

On May 15, at Tong Qingying's counter, more than 20 pairs of custom-made glasses were awaiting foreign customers to pick up over the weekend. She had already sent another 20 to customers' hotels via express delivery that day.

Tong speaks some English and has learned the professional terms for the glasses-fitting process. Her shop is one of the market's most popular with foreign customers, who make up a huge proportion of her clientele.

The recent increase in foreign business at her shop is partly attributed to a Russian customer who bought glasses and posted a video sharing her experience on Instagram in April, which received over 100,000 views.

Sofiia Pavlova, a Russian customer who visited Tong's shop on May 15, was brought there by this video.

"Eyeglasses are far more expensive in Russia, almost two to three times the price here. Also, it takes a week to get them in Russia, but here I get them within 30 minutes," says Pavlova, 27, who was visiting China with her husband for the first time. Their plans in Shanghai also included checking out a Chinese brand hybrid car and getting trendy clothes for their dog.

Tong, 42, says some foreign customers send her photos on WeChat after returning home, expressing satisfaction with the glasses and wanting to order more for themselves or family members.

"I send international shipments weekly to countries like Germany, Denmark and Russia," she says.

To better accommodate international customers, the market has suggested that shops prepare reading test cards in English and accept international bank card payments. It also plans to install multilingual signs in the mall and enhance foreign-language services at the information desk.

Experts agree that Shanghai's inbound tourism is evolving from merely visiting typical scenic spots to a dual focus on service and consumption. The city's competitive edge lies in its combination of productive service industries, such as finance and shipping, and daily life service industries, including eyewear and dining.

Wang Hong, a city-level lawmaker in Shanghai, says it is necessary to make full use of the benefits of visa-free inbound tourism and turn them into opportunities for consumption and service upgrades. Among these, the key lies in providing high-quality city services, such as improved payment systems, tax refunds and multilingual services.

Contact the writer at zhouwenting@chinadaily.com.cn

Attraction to DIY handicrafts beads to the urban surface

By **ZHENG YIRAN**
zhengyiran@chinadaily.com.cn





Consumers create on fuse-bead crafts at "San Qian Zao Wu She" (also called 3000 DIY Store) in May. As part of the emerging "handmade economy", bead-craft stores are tapping into younger consumers' growing appetite for emotionally rewarding experiences. PHOTOS BY GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

On a weekday night at a DIY store on Nanjing East Road, William Brook, an 11-year-old visitor from the United Kingdom in Shanghai, finally finished his peach blossom tree fuse-bead handicraft.

He worked on his "masterpiece" over two days. With the last pink bead pressed on the 50 by 50 centimeter plastic baseplate, the vivid peach blossom tree artwork was completed.

"I came to China for a piano competition. Yesterday, my mother and I were walking past this hobby store. I was fascinated by the fuse-bead handicraft. I love Chinese culture, so I decided to make a peach blossom tree as a special gift to take home," William says.

His mom also made over 100 heart-shaped fuse-bead handicrafts at "San Qian Zao Wu She", or 3000 DIY Store, as gifts for relatives and friends. She feels the handmade craft symbolizes sincerity.

Fuse bead art, also known overseas as Perler beads, is a handicraft that involves arranging small plastic beads into patterns and fusing them with heat. It is usually marketed as a toy for children, but is now widely practiced by adults as a stress-relieving hobby.

Wu Yuyan, a customer working in advertising, says she was bombarded with work-related text messages day and night, which exhausted her. "When I put my phone away and focused on making fuse-bead art, I could feel relaxed joy.

"I love the concentration and serenity," the 32-year-old says.

"Modern people are usually under great stress. It's hard to concentrate. The charm of fuse beads helps people concentrate and relax. When they are immersed in handicrafts, they don't think about anything else," says Qian Mengyao, a young shop assistant born after 2000.

"In addition, they can use fuse beads to make patterns they like, such as idols or cartoons, which demonstrate their creativity," she says.

Fuse bead art can be traced back to the 1970s, when it was not originally intended for personal enjoyment, but for rehabilitation training in nursing homes. In the 1980s, Perler, in the United States, improved it into a children's puzzle toy, which later spread worldwide.

At the end of 2024, a young Chinese actor showcased a homemade fuse-bead brooch during a live promotional broadcast, thus igniting the "fuse bead craze" in China.

Subsequently, with the continued support of numerous popular IPs, the trend grew stronger: in Taobao's "top 10 products of 2025", fuse bead art ranked second, with year-on-year search volume increasing by nearly 500 percent. The hashtag "I'm addicted to fuse beads" on the social media platform Xiaohongshu exceeded 6.9 billion views. The 2026 Spring Festival consumption data of Douyin, China's TikTok, show that the number of orders placed by Generation Z (those born between 1995 and 2009) for group purchases of beads is up by 9,018 percent year-on-year, much higher than the 348 percent growth rate of the second-rated group buy, pet foster care.

In Luer King, a handicrafts store on Daxue Road in Shanghai, customers stay for the whole afternoon or even till evening working on their handicrafts, and there are consistently team-building activities with over 20 people in the store.

Lin Xianping, associate professor of Hangzhou City University, says: "Fuse beads' rapid popularity lies in its precise alignment with the consumption and emotional needs of young people today. Its creation threshold is low and does not require professional skills. The time-consuming and focused assembly process allows young people to break away from electronic devices, achieve emotional and stress relief, and after completing exclusive works, they can also gain a strong sense of achievement."

As promising as the market is, Lin says that in the long run, the "handmade economy" needs to continuously innovate gameplay, create differentiated content, and deepen IP integration to overcome the limitations of trends. Overall, if the demand for emotional consumption remains unchanged, the "handmade economy" has long-term growth potential and is on a high-quality track for consumption upgrading, according to Lin.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:55 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:55 PM

CULTURE





From left: Tianjin Conservatory of Music stages *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Rustic Chivalry), an outdoor production of the opera by Italian composer Pietro Mascagni, in Tianjin during the May Day holiday; Zheng Xiaoying gives a master class at the Tianjin school on May 8; Wang Hongwei, tenor and president of Tianjin Conservatory of Music, announces the school's plans on May 12. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

A legend returns home

At 97, pioneering conductor Zheng Xiaoying heads back to Tianjin, the city where her artistic journey began, **Chen Nan** reports.



Ninety-seven-year-old Chinese conductor Zheng Xiaoying leads a two-week master class at Tianjin Conservatory of Music, guiding young conductors and opera performers in the art of Chinese-language opera.

At 97, most people might retire into quiet reflection, but Zheng Xiaoying, China's first female opera and symphony conductor, is boarding flights, stepping onto stages, and returning to her roots to teach.

Invited by Tianjin Conservatory of Music, she has returned to the city that she calls her artistic homeland to lead a two-week master class that began on May 8, guiding young conductors and opera performers in the art of Chinese-language opera.

The two-week master class culminated in a concert performance of Mozart's comic opera *The Marriage of Figaro* on Thursday at Tianjin Grand Theatre, showcasing the results of Zheng's teaching and the enduring vitality of Chinese-language opera.

"Tianjin is my 'old home'," Zheng says. "When I was invited to teach here, I didn't hesitate. This is where my formal music education began, and where my artistic journey truly started."

In 1952, Zheng began her studies at what was then the Tianjin campus of the Central Conservatory of Music. Three years later, she was selected to study choral conducting in Beijing. By the end of 1955, she returned to Tianjin to become one of the first teachers of China's newly founded conducting department, simultaneously continuing her composition studies.

"Walking into this school, the building on my right housed the country's first conducting department," she recalls. "That period of hard work laid the professional foundation for my entire career and shaped my respect for art and dedication to teaching."

Zheng has devoted decades to Chinese opera. She recounts the early days of opera education in Tianjin with pride.

"The first opera we staged was Verdi's *La Traviata*, performed in Chinese. It brought Western classics to Chinese audiences for the first time," she says.

In 1982, Zheng and the China National Opera House staged Verdi's *La Traviata* in Tianjin, performing 39 consecutive sold-out shows. Before each performance, she gave a 20-minute public lecture explaining the music, characterizations, and dramatic techniques, ensuring audiences could not only hear, but also understand the operatic storytelling. These efforts cemented her belief that "singing foreign operas in Chinese" is a great way for Western classics to resonate with Chinese audiences.

For this master class in Tianjin, Zheng selected *The Marriage of Figaro*, teaching students how to interpret, rehearse, and perform Western operas in a way that is authentically Chinese in language, expression, and cultural understanding.

"The story isn't just about a wedding ceremony," she tells the students. "It's about the conflict between the aristocracy and commoners, about interference and negotiation. The translation reflects the work's core themes, not just its surface plot."

This opera has long been a cornerstone of Zheng's teaching. In 1983, a Chinese-language production of *The Marriage of Figaro* became the graduation showcase for the Central Conservatory's vocal department, later refined by Zheng into a model teaching production. With the Chinese adaptation of *The Marriage of Figaro*, Chinese audiences were able to enjoy the performance without the language barrier, which helped make opera popular in the country.

"Chinese-language operas serve as the best practical training for young vocalists," she says. "I hope this master class can plant a seed here, so that systematic, high-quality opera education continues in Tianjin."

For the students, every gesture of this silver-haired maestro carries weight. In the very building where she once learned, practiced, and taught, Zheng is not just instructing technique but passing on a lifetime of experience, dedication, and love for opera, planting seeds that will shape China's musical landscape for generations to come.

"For students, stage experience is the most important. It's only on stage that they can truly discover their own shortcomings," says veteran tenor Wang Hongwei, the president of the Tianjin Conservatory of Music, who invited Zheng to deliver the master class to students of the conservatory.

Wang says that from May to July, the conservatory will take center stage during the 2026 Tianjin Music Festival, offering a spectacular lineup of 100 concerts, performances, and academic lectures across the city.

Audiences will enjoy operas staged in unique urban spaces in Tianjin, as well as concerts featuring works by Shi Guangnan (1940-90) — one of the most famous and prolific songwriters in the country — student-teacher recitals with soprano Lei Jia, and performances by tenor Yan Weiwen and his students.

Besides *The Marriage of Figaro*, on the operatic front, the conservatory will present a dynamic mix of classics, original works, and beloved revivals. Highlights include *Xiao Erhei Gets Married*, *Knot of Togetherness* and *Erquan*.

Knot of Togetherness will be staged at the National Centre for the Performing Arts on June 13 and 14 in Beijing, while *Erquan* will embark on tours nationwide.

Throughout the year, Tianjin Conservatory of Music's traditional Chinese music department will hold a total of 107 events featuring traditional Chinese musical instruments. Besides concert halls, shows will be staged in public schools, communities, and at scenic destinations nationwide.

"As a music school, besides teaching our next generation of musicians, we want to bring music directly to the general public, making music more accessible, engaging, and connected to everyday life," says Wang.

Wang notes that earlier this year, Tianjin Conservatory of Music launched a memorial hall for the composer Shi Guangnan, allowing the public to learn about the creative life of this musician, who graduated from Tianjin Conservatory of Music, and is known for compositions such as *Toast Song* and *On the Fields of Hope*. Over the decades, these songs have been performed by generations of singers, resonating deeply with listeners.

The collection includes more than 13,000 items, such as his enrollment certificate, examination papers, original manuscripts, clothing, personal belongings, and collectibles.

"We believe in a 'campus without walls', connecting with the wider community and sharing the joy of art with everyone," says Wang.

Contact the writer at chennan@chinadaily.com.cn

Immersive attractions spark interest in literary masterpieces




Left: A performance is staged at the Unique Dream of Red Mansion theater complex in Langfang, Hebei province, last month. REN LIYING / XINHUA **Right:** A play inspired by *Outlaws of the Marsh* is staged at the Wansuishan Martial Arts City in Kaifeng, Henan province, last month. REN ZHUORU / XINHUA

BEIJING — Wang Zixuan's fascination with classic Chinese novels was sparked by a recent trip to a bustling theme park.

During his visit to Kaifeng in central China's Henan province, the 10-year-old boy watched plays inspired by the Chinese classic *Outlaws of the Marsh*. Afterward, he asked his mother to find him audio recordings to delve deeper into the story, and eventually, he lost himself in the print books.

"Every character in the book captivates me," Zixuan says. "Reading the book after school is the happiest moment of my day, and it allows me to learn about society and the history of that era."

Wansuishan Martial Arts City is a Disney-style theme park that features many scenes and plays inspired by *Outlaws of the Marsh*. Not far from its entrance stands a sculpture of the literary masterpiece written about 700 years ago.

In a nearby pub, a well-known scene from the classic novel was brought to life, as Lin Chong, one of the book's main characters, engaged in a spirited duel with another martial arts master, deftly wielding a stick as he moved with agility. The audience erupted in thunderous applause.

Zixuan's mother never expected that the trip could transform her child from a passive reader into a bookworm. But after watching the shows, she was impressed. "Incredible! They have perfectly re-created the iconic scenes from the original work."

Lin Chong, an official-turned-rebel, was portrayed by 25-year-old Zhao Yunze. "During the early rehearsals, the director told me repeatedly that I wasn't capturing the essence of the character. So I immersed myself in the book and watched the TV adaptation over and over again, delving deep into Lin's personality," he recalls.

In the theme park, there are over 100 such shows a day, catering to an enthusiastic audience. During the three-day Qingming Festival holiday last month, a show depicting an epic siege in the novel attracted nearly 4,000 spectators per performance. It was staged three times daily by over 100 actors, including 20 cavalrymen.

It represents a new approach to inspiring youngsters to read the sometimes obscure literary classics in the era of short videos. Wansuishan Martial Arts City has become a social media sensation with vibrant live-action shows and charismatic performers. Still, many visitors like Zixuan say such an "influencer hot spot" has nevertheless motivated them to dive into the original texts.

"Our programs aim to honor the original work while ensuring that audiences can easily grasp and connect with the story," says Yu Liuyi, director of the performances. "Our performance style is more like a cinematic presentation than a traditional stage play, and we enhance the visual impact with special effects like pyrotechnics."

More than 500 kilometers away from Kaifeng, an attraction in Langfang, in North China's Hebei province, draws inspiration from yet another Chinese magnum opus and has amassed 14 million visits since its launch in 2023.

Named Unique Dream of Red Mansion, this theater complex features 21 innovative plays, including those inspired by the seminal 18th-century book *A Dream of Red Mansions*, as well as independent plays. In one theater, the audience members stand onstage while characters from the book observe them from spectator seats as if gazing upon the afterlife, while in another show, female figures from the novel confront the author over the cruel twists of fate he penned for them.

Among the visitors were about 270 10th-grade students from Hua Chen School in the neighboring city of Tianjin, who are currently studying the novel that chronicles the rise and fall of an aristocratic Chinese family. Yang Zhuqing, 16, was visiting the theater complex for the second time.

"I used to find the book hard to comprehend, but the plays here helped me better understand the characters," she says. "Now we even playfully liken our classmates to characters from the book."

Han Shiyan, a Chinese-language teacher at the school, believes that the social atmosphere for reading classics is improving, noting that schools are encouraging students to read classic literature. She says that a dedicated class on the novel is held every two weeks, and continues for an entire semester.

Many new media formats, including short videos and immersive plays, are also fueling this wave of classic reading. Han says such content can spark interest, encouraging more children to pick up physical books. "Once they become interested in a certain story, they will probably explore the entire book," she says.

Wang Zuoquan, who is in charge of the Unique Dream of Red Mansion brand, says that they have forged partnerships with more than 100 schools, resulting in approximately 150,000 visits from teachers and students.

He notes that one primary objective of this attraction is to ignite people's interest in the original work. "Through our performances, we plant a seed in the hearts of the audience. The director of the plays envisions these theaters as a starting point, encouraging audiences to open the book once again," he says.

China has made nationwide reading a national strategy. In the Outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) for national economic and social development, it is stated that the country will further promote nationwide reading to build China into a nation of avid readers.

To enhance institutional support, a regulation on promoting nationwide reading, which took effect in February, designates the fourth week of April as National Reading Week, observed for the first time this year.

Hui Dong, an associate professor at the School of History and Culture at Henan University, agrees that performance-based attractions help with the reading trend, as they translate static texts into dynamic experiences, rendering ancient books more approachable and comprehensible to modern readers.

"This is mutual empowerment between tourism and literature," Hui says.

"Classics are those that transcend their times and touch upon universal human nature," says Wang Zuoquan. "Engaging in a dialogue with classics is akin to engaging in a dialogue with human nature. The reading of classics by successive generations ensures the inheritance and continuity of civilization."

At the end of a 65-minute play at the Unique Dream of Red Mansion, characters from the original novel appeared onstage to remind readers to go back to the original book.

Dowager Lady Jia, a pivotal character in *A Dream of Red Mansions*, thanked the audience: "We have lived for 270 years (since the book was written). We will continue to be alive as long as you keep reading this book."

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:55 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:55 PM

AMERICAFOCUS

A BIGGER WORLD THROUGH CHINESE

American youths discover language learning provides opportunities for wider communication and understanding other cultures

By **RENA LI** in Los Angeles
renali@chinadailyusa.com



Luca Pole (center), an elementary school student from Denver, Colorado, poses with his parents during the 2026 Chinese Bridge Chinese Proficiency Competition regional final in Los Angeles on May 9. RENA LI /CHINA DAILY

For many young American students, learning Chinese began at an early age and gradually became part of their identity, family life and understanding of the world.

This shared passion for language and cultural exchange recently brought students from across the western United States together in Los Angeles, where they exchanged stories, performances and experiences centered around their journey of learning Chinese.

Luca Pole, an elementary school student from Denver, Colorado, said he enjoys both the Chinese language and culture.

"I like the Chinese culture and language because I can learn writing, reading, et cetera," Luca told China Daily during the 2026 Chinese Bridge Chinese Proficiency Competition Los Angeles regional final held on May 9.

"Chinese Bridge is like a place where everyone is brought together to learn Chinese, and it's a really friendly competition," he said.

Luca, whose Chinese name is Lu Ke, performed the song *Xin Nian Hao* and shared the traditional Chinese New Year legend of Nian during the competition. His parents said they enrolled him in a Chinese immersion school when he was 4 years old to help him develop his language skills and broaden his worldview.

"I think it's great for him to become a global citizen and recognize other cultures," his father Larry Pole said. His mother Traci added that she hopes Luca will "understand and appreciate other cultures".

For some families, learning Chinese is closely connected to preserving family heritage and cultural roots.

Jacob Hegedus, whose Chinese name is Zhao Zhuoran, said he enjoys speaking Chinese because his mother's family speaks the language.

"I am proud to be part of a Chinese family," he said.

Jacob's mother, Zhao Jing, said she has spoken Chinese with him since he was very young because she wanted to "pass down Chinese culture and language". His father, who is Hungarian, also encourages multilingual learning at home.

"For us, our family roots are very important," Jacob's father said. "That's why I really encourage him to speak his mother's language Chinese, and my language Hungarian."

Other students described Chinese as a bridge to understanding the wider world and building friendships across cultures.

Lewis Green, a student from Cedar City, Utah, attended the competition wearing traditional Chinese dragon-themed clothing. His Chinese name is Guo Luyi.

"I love the pattern of the traditional Chinese dragon," Green said. "I feel great to wear it."

Green said his interest in Chinese began after a professor from China visited his home and shared meals and conversations with his family.

"I really enjoy communicating with people from different countries," Green said. "It made me feel that the world is very big, but people are still closely connected."

Now able to speak Chinese with his father and older sister, Green said the language has opened a new perspective on the world. He also expressed excitement about an upcoming family trip to China.

"I want to see what China is like, try Chinese food and talk with Chinese children so we can learn from each other," he said.

For Vesper Gaines from Hawaii, Chinese has become much more than a school subject. Gaines, who won first place in the middle school division of the Hawaii regional preliminary competition, said learning Mandarin has shaped much of her life.

"Learning Mandarin has been like all I've ever known my whole life," Gaines said.

She described her Chinese teachers as being "more like aunties than teachers", and said Chinese language learning introduced her to a broader community and different ways of seeing the world.

"Chinese has enveloped me into a community that I didn't know," Gaines said. "Chinese culture taught me so much about how to view the world in different ways and value diversity."

For some students, visiting China transformed their understanding of the language from a classroom subject into a real-life cultural experience.

Students from Mountain Ridge High School in Utah shared how their trips to China changed their perspectives on communication and cultural exchange.

Chase Glenn, who has studied Chinese for 12 years, said his first visit to China helped him realize the practical meaning of the language.

"For a long time, Chinese was just a subject to me," Glenn said. "All that changed when I went to China for the first time."

After giving a speech in China and being understood by the audience, Glenn said he realized language could become "a connection between people".

"That moment changed everything for me," he said. "It was my first real intercultural exchange."

Scott Tolman said he hopes to become "a bridge between Chinese and American cultures", while fellow student Max Warren said learning Chinese has given them "a bigger world".

"We are not just learning Chinese," Warren said, "we're building bridges."

The students also shared how they created a Chinese-language music video during one of their trips to China, combining singing and musical performances in Mandarin. The project later won second place in a national competition.

"I was able to express myself through singing, performing, playing the piano and guitar, all in Chinese," Warren said. "It wasn't about trying to impress people. It was about expressing who we are and telling our story."

Educators at the gathering also emphasized the growing role of Chinese language programs in promoting cultural understanding and youth exchanges.

Shana Tong, president of Maryknoll School in Honolulu, Hawaii, said the school's Mandarin immersion program, launched in 2017, remains the only program of its kind in Hawaii.

Students spend half of the school day learning in Chinese and half in English, studying subjects including mathematics and science in both languages.

The school has also organized cultural events celebrating the Mid-Autumn Festival, Spring Festival and Lantern Festival, while expanding exchanges with China through youth cultural programs and student visits.

"Through these trips, students not only improve their Chinese, but also develop a greater understanding of contemporary China," Tong said. "Seeing is believing."

Tong said educational exchanges have helped build friendships and understanding across cultures.

"When education connects people, the Pacific Ocean is no longer a distance — it becomes a bridge of friendship and understanding," she said.

Students find real connection in China through Mandarin studies

By **LIA ZHU** in San Francisco
liazhu@chinadailyusa.com

A cloth tiger toy. A miniature framed calligraphy. A transparent phone case holding a Polaroid photograph of two smiling teenage girls — one American, one Chinese.

To 16-year-old Beatrix Leonards, a high school student in Berkeley, California, these souvenirs from a summer trip to China are reminders of a friendship forged across the Pacific and kept alive through weekly video calls, where the two girls practice each other's languages and laugh at pronunciation mistakes.

More than 100 kilometers away in Sacramento, California, 14-year-old Sam Fine recalled a shared meal with a stranger that helped him understand what communication could accomplish.

It was Thanksgiving break last year in China's Guilin, a city in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, known for its beautiful landscapes. He and his family had hired a rideshare driver who pulled over because he was hungry. The driver invited them to join him for Guilin rice noodles at a small roadside stand.

"Rather than just a driver, I felt he was more like a tour guide," Sam said in an interview conducted in Chinese.

Sam first visited China with his parents at age 6. He started learning Chinese in first grade at an elementary school with a Chinese immersion program in Sacramento.

"My father felt that we had gone to China so many times but still could not talk to people there, and he felt like we were letting them down," Sam said in fluent Chinese. "So I started learning Chinese. That way, we could chat with our friends and also gain a deeper understanding of China."

By the time he graduated from elementary school, Sam had committed fully to his studies. Now he takes Chinese lessons entirely online, including composition classes, mathematics instruction in Chinese and even debate courses. His younger brother, Thomas, has followed the same path, taking lessons several times daily.

The shift in how Sam experienced China struck him most powerfully during the 2024 Chinese Bridge competition in Beijing.

"After I learned Chinese, the overall experience changed. Compared with before, I could talk to the people around me, and it was as if the experience had gained a little more color," he said.

During the competition, held at the Forbidden City, Sam looked at the classical characters inscribed on the ancient structures.

"If I had just been a foreign tourist like before, I definitely would not have known how to read them," he said. "But as someone who knows Chinese, I could read them."

For that competition, Sam won the Americas championship in the fourth Chinese Bridge Chinese Show for Foreign Primary School Students in October 2024.

That ability to read the language opened doors to understanding the country itself. After visiting multiple Chinese cities, Sam absorbed the weight of Chinese history, such as the Sanxingdui ruins and the legends of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

He also began to feel frustrated with stereotypes he heard back home.

"Some people around me still do not understand China very well and have some stereotypes, so I tell them that the real China is completely different from what they imagined," he said. "That is why I definitely hope they can visit China. To me, China is a very interesting country."

His motivation deepened during that Thanksgiving trip to Guilin. The driver who invited them over for rice noodles told Sam something that stayed with him.

"He said he had picked up many foreign tourists before but could only translate simple phrases on his phone," Sam recalled. By contrast, the driver spoke freely with Sam and his family about Guilin's beauty, local life and his own experiences.

"Thank you for talking with me. I hope I can be your driver again next time," the man said when they arrived at their destination, Sam recounted. "He said no foreign tourists had chatted with him before, so he really treasured the experience of driving and talking with me and my family."

That encounter helped Sam understand why communication matters. "I feel like learning Chinese has helped me understand how Chinese people feel, and how different people feel," Sam said.

Beatrix took a different path into Chinese studies. Now a junior at a high school in Berkeley, she became drawn to the language at a cultural event in Chinatown in Oakland, California.

"I really love learning languages, and I think the really interesting thing about Chinese is that it is so different from English. That was one of the reasons I wanted to learn it," Beatrix said.

The tonal system, the character-based writing and the grammar being fundamentally distinct from English all appealed to her sense of intellectual adventure. She committed to her studies, and several years of dedication paid off when she was accepted into a summer exchange program in China.

Last summer, Beatrix traveled to Beijing, Shanghai and several other Chinese cities. She visited historical sites and, more importantly, spent time with Chinese students her own age. Among them was a girl whose face appeared in the Polaroid photograph she carries in her phone case.

What began as a summer friendship has endured across the Pacific. The two young women video call regularly, switching between English and Chinese as they practice pronunciation and trade stories about their lives.

The friendship surprised her with its ease. During the exchange, she and her Chinese friends encountered moments when one struggled to express a thought in the other's language. Rather than abandon the conversation, they simply used English when Chinese fell short, or Chinese when English did not quite capture the meaning.

Both Sam and Beatrix have thought deeply about what their cross-cultural friendships mean at a time of geopolitical tension.

"When you have two groups of people who are on opposite sides of the world, like the United States and China, it can be very hard to learn about each other and see what life is actually like for a person in the other country," said Beatrix.

Geopolitical tension, she suggested, can seep into personal relationships if people allow it to. But direct contact, genuine friendship and real conversations can disrupt that dynamic.

"Cultural exchange is so important, because it reminds you that the relationship between two countries' governments should not affect people's ability to bond with each other, get to know each other, really learn about each other and have a good relationship," she said.

Sam observed that American and Chinese young people have much in common.

"To young Chinese people, I would tell them America is similar to China in a lot of ways," Sam said. "Both places are big, they have a lot of cities and you can explore a lot once you understand the languages."







Left: Beatrix Leonards, a high school student in Berkeley, California, holds a miniature framed calligraphy she received as a gift during her summer trip to China. LIA ZHU / CHINA DAILY **Middle:** Sam Fine (left) is learning *bian lian*, a rapid mask-changing technique that is part of Sichuan opera, during a recent trip in China. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY **Right:** At age 6, Sam Fine (right) reads his favorite picture book about the magical brush of Ma Liang, in Shanghai during his first visit to China, as a local man photographs him. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:55 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:57 PM

Electric drive

NEV exports surge amid global green transition

BUSINESS, PAGE 9



A baker's daily bread builds up cross-Strait bond

Z WEEKLY, PAGE 15



Passing the baton

New stars to shine at World Cup, veterans to make their final bows

SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3, 2026



Students enjoy their break at China-Laos Friendship Nongping Primary School in Vientiane, the capital of Laos, on May 21. YANG WANLI / CHINA DAILY

VISITS OF VISION

Enduring ties grow ever stronger

China-Laos collaboration, connectivity yield fruit as Xi promotes development assistance

By **YANG WANLI** in Vientiane
yangwanli@chinadaily.com.cn

Along the banks of the Mekong River in Vientiane, the capital of Laos, stands a recently expanded modern medical complex — Mahosot Hospital, Laos' first hospital when established in 1910 and now its largest.

Financed by Chinese funds and with a total investment of about $92 million, the expanded hospital now spans three hectares, with 600 beds and a rooftop helicopter pad.

In 2017, President Xi Jinping made a state visit to Laos — the first by a Chinese head of state and top leader of the Communist Party of China in 11 years.

Since then, there have been frequent mutual visits between Chinese and Lao leaders. In the latest development, General Secretary of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party Central Committee and Lao President Thongloun Sisoulith arrived on Tuesday in Hangzhou, the capital of eastern China's Zhejiang province, formally starting a five-day state visit.

The visits have led to closer cooperation between the two countries in areas such as infrastructure, energy, trade, agriculture and people's livelihoods, including the Mahosot Hospital project.

The groundbreaking ceremony in 2017 for the hospital's expansion was attended by Xi and then Lao president Bounnhang Vorachit.

The hospital's director, Susa Vongphachan, who served as deputy director at that time, still remembers Xi's visit.

"There were several meters (distance) between President Xi and me, but I was deeply impressed by his presence," Susa recalled.

"Tall and dignified, he projected both confidence and approachability," Susa said, adding that whenever he sees Xi in the news today, memories of that visit immediately return.

Susa recalled Xi visiting Lao patients receiving free cataract surgery from Chinese ophthalmologists as part of a medical assistance program, while encouraging Chinese medical teams to continue supporting the Lao people.

In 2024, the expansion project was completed, doubling the hospital's treatment capacity. Susa said that the hospital recorded around 220,000 patient visits last year, an increase of 40 percent compared with the number before the renovation.

In addition to funding hospital infrastructure, the Chinese government has supplied medical equipment to Mahosot Hospital. Over the years, more than 10 Chinese hospitals have carried out training programs and exchanges with the Lao medical staff.

During Xi's state visit to Laos in 2017, the two countries agreed to strengthen cooperation to improve Lao people's livelihoods and advance the building of a China-Laos community with a shared future.

Since Xi's visit, connectivity between the two countries has undergone a dramatic transformation. Connectivity has paved the way for win-win cooperation, and the China-Laos Railway stands as a landmark of friendship, unleashing the efficiency of the China-Laos Economic Corridor.

The China-Laos international freight train service was launched in December 2021. Data from China Railway Kunming Group shows that more than 71,000 freight train trips had operated along the route as of March this year, while transportation costs had dropped by 30 to 50 percent.

Passenger service on the railway, which is more than 1,000 kilometers long, has also expanded rapidly since cross-border operations began in April 2023, according to the group. As of mid-May, the railway had handled 73.38 million passenger trips, including more than 840,000 cross-border journeys.

In northern Laos, the Luang Prabang station has emerged as the busiest passenger hub on the railway line. As of April, it had served more than 4.36 million domestic and international passengers, helping drive local economic and social development, according to Laos-China Railway Co.

"The number of hotels has nearly tripled over the past three years because of booming tourism," said Wongporapi Mengho, owner of a local family-run hotel. "Improved connectivity has created jobs and increased incomes for local residents.

"Now the city has a wide range of restaurants, from Chinese to Italian cuisine," he added. "The growing number of international tourists has also boosted cultural exchanges and mutual understanding."

See ***Visit,*** *page 3*

SCENT OF A GUANGXI CITY CAPTIVATES THE WORLD

Hengzhou's jasmine vines powering wellness and tourism sectors, generating billions in revenue

By **LIN QI, ZHANG LI** and **SHI RUIPENG** in Nanning

"What a beautiful jasmine flower!
Fragrant and enchanting you are, blooming on the stems,
Incredibly sweet and purely white, you are admired by all,
Let me pluck you and gift you to someone else."

This folk song, one of the best-known Chinese melodies in the world, is believed to have originated in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) and was featured in *Turandot*, an opera with Asian influences that the great Italian composer Giacomo Puccini left unfinished at the time of his death. As the opera was staged around the world, jasmine became an iconic cultural symbol of China, embodying romantic sensibilities.

Today, the starry white blossom inspires not only poetry, music and love, but also a wide range of products, including flavored drinks and snacks, incense sticks and sachets, and personal care products that soothe the body and mind.

A major source of this rich scent is Hengzhou in South China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region. Hailed as the global jasmine capital, the city boasts a history of cultivating jasmine vines for more than 500 years. However, large-scale production and processing began in the 1980s.

Over the past four decades, Hengzhou has worked to become one of the world's largest jasmine production bases and a prominent exporter of the exotic fragrance.

According to Guangxi's Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, the city produces over 80 percent of China's jasmine flowers and jasmine tea, as well as more than 60 percent of the world's total jasmine flower output.

Irish travel blogger Luke O'Farrell and his British partner, Alexander Short, were among the foreigners who recently visited the lesser-known city, which is blessed with fertile soil and a climate conducive to growing jasmine. They learned from local farmers how to pick the flowers and witnessed how those were processed on factory lines.

See ***Jasmine,*** *page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Chinese team to support Ebola response in DRC

By **WANG XIAOYU**
wangxiaoyu@chinadaily.com.cn

A Chinese medical team arrived in Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo, on Tuesday for a three-month mission to support the Central African country's response to an Ebola outbreak.

The five-member team includes experts in epidemiology, clinical diagnosis and treatment, research, and traditional Chinese medicine, according to the National Health Commission, which organized the mission along with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Chinese embassy in Kinshasa and other government agencies.

Lu Ming, an official from the commission's department of international cooperation, who is leading the team, said that all members have extensive experience in their respective fields and have participated in previous global medical aid missions and Ebola responses.

"We plan to establish communication and cooperation mechanisms with local governments, healthcare institutions and international organizations under the guidance of the Chinese embassy," Lu said.

"We also aim to obtain the latest, accurate information on the outbreak to formulate a targeted and detailed response," he added.

Furthermore, the team of experts will provide training in disease prevention and treatment for local medical institutions, Chinese-funded enterprises and local Chinese communities.

On May 17, the World Health Organization declared the Ebola outbreak in the DRC "a public health emergency of international concern". The cause of the outbreak is the Bundibugyo strain, which has no approved vaccine and treatment. This strain of Ebola can kill up to 50 percent of those it infects.

The WHO said on Tuesday that there were 321 confirmed cases and 116 suspected ones in the DRC. The confirmed death toll is 48, while six people have recovered, it added.

Lu, the Chinese team leader, said the outbreak poses a bigger challenge due to poor access to the affected areas, risks of cross-border transmission and a lack of funding.

"Sending a high-level medical team demonstrates China's commitment to participating in international action against the epidemic and working hand in hand with other countries to fight the virus," he said.

Jiang Rongmeng, a team member and vice-president of Capital Medical University's Beijing Ditan Hospital, noted that China has accumulated decades of experience in tackling infectious diseases, particularly through low-cost, easily accessible methods.

In the face of the Ebola outbreak, it is crucial to quickly identify suspected cases through screening for typical symptoms and carry out epidemiological investigations into possible contacts with confirmed cases or deceased victims, he said.

On Monday, the commission and the National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine released updated diagnosis and treatment guidelines for Ebola. China has so far not reported any domestic or imported infections, it said.



A Chinese medical team, mobilized to assist the Democratic Republic of Congo in its fight against the Ebola virus, prepares for departure at Beijing Capital International Airport late on Monday. ZHANG DAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Sino-US cooperation can benefit from wider scope

WORLD WATCH
By Park Seung-chan

In his dinner speech following the recent summit between China and the United States, President Xi Jinping mentioned that the Chinese Dream and US President Donald Trump's push to "Make America Great Again" can go hand in hand.

If MAGA and the Chinese Dream of achieving the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation are viewed from the perspective of cooperation and symbiosis, rather than conflict and confrontation, the two countries could grow and develop in the direction of win-win cooperation rather than a zero-sum game in the future.

While the meeting concluded without a joint statement, this vision offers a hopeful blueprint. But since differences and competition between the two countries remain, a pragmatic understanding of each other's strategies and a concerted effort to foster cooperation will be required instead of escalating confrontation.

Beijing believes that in the medium to long term, although strategic competition with the US is already an unavoidable reality, China can manage the current tense situation and expand its global role without a possible head-on confrontation with the US. However, the current US administration is running out of time, as it must demonstrate, within the remainder of Trump's term, tangible achievements and results for his "Make America Great Again" approach.

However, the strategic competition between the impatient US and the relaxed China must be observed from a long-term perspective.

The US and China are within a complex framework of relationships, in which they must maintain structural strategic competition to avoid a catastrophic scenario for both, and must protect their respective national interests.

See ***Ties,*** *page 6*

INSIDE
Forging a new era
Global Views, page 8



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

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN

China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:57 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:57 PM

INDEPTH

Chinese aerospace leaders engage industrial thrust

Viability, speedier launches and mass production prioritized by developers

By **REN QI**
renqi@chinadaily.com.cn

Driven by an increase in orbital filings and successful launches, China's commercial aerospace sector is steadily transitioning from a phase of technical verification to large-scale deployment of its achievements.

Advancements in satellite mass production, in-orbit services and reusable rocket technologies are fueling this expansion. As satellite services integrate into consumer markets and various industries, China is also propelling its position in the competitive domain of low-Earth orbit.

This progress is reflected in recent industry figures. According to the China National Space Administration, the sector conducted 50 commercial launches in 2025, accounting for 54 percent of the country's total space launches for the year.

Meanwhile, 311 commercial satellites were placed into orbit, representing 84 percent of the national total. The newly operational Hainan Commercial Space Launch Site facilitated nine of these missions, demonstrating a turnaround capability of "seven days for launch, and seven days for recovery" at its primary pad.

Alongside physical deployment, China submitted filings to the International Telecommunication Union in late December for up to 203,000 additional satellites. However, the practical execution of this strategy relies heavily on a maturing domestic supply chain.









Clockwise from top left: A Lijian-2 Y1 carrier rocket with three satellites onboard blasts off from the Dongfeng commercial space innovation pilot zone in northwestern China on March 30. WANG JIANGBO / FOR CHINA DAILY Lihong-1 Y1, China's commercial recoverable spacecraft designed for space tourism, successfully completes its suborbital flight test mission on Jan 12. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY Visitors observe a model of China's space station at a commercial space exhibition in Beijing on Jan 24. CHEN XIAOGEN / FOR CHINA DAILY A visitor explores a commercial space exhibition in Shanghai on March 12. ZHANG JIANSONG / XINHUA

Fresh focus

Key industry leaders note that the focus has shifted toward mass production and the urgent development of heavy-lift launch capabilities.

Lin Guangrong, a constellation communication system architect at GalaxySpace, said his company has successfully transitioned from a "custom workshop" model to a "digital factory" approach.

Recognized as China's first unicorn company in the commercial aerospace and satellite internet sector, GalaxySpace has established a complete manufacturing chain for satellites weighing 100 to 2,000 kilograms. The company's annual production capacity for medium-sized satellites has stabilized between 100 and 150 units, with the manufacturing cycle shortened by 80 percent compared with traditional models. This efficiency is driven by a "smart brain", where algorithms continuously optimize industrial processes based on data from front-line engineers.

Industrialization extends to launch vehicles, with the aim of turning aerospace equipment into standard industrial products. For example, the Lijian-2 Y1 carrier rocket, which recently had a successful launch, shares an almost identical design for the core stage and two boosters.

Lian Jie, deputy chief designer of the Lijian-2, said this "universal booster core" configuration allows major components to be mass-produced.

Making rockets is becoming akin to assembling building blocks; simplifying the manufacturing process and enabling rapid replacement of parts can support high-frequency, airline-style launch schedules, Lian said.

Space 'gas station'

Chinese commercial space enterprises are also pushing the boundaries of in-orbit capabilities.

A prime example is the Yuxing-3 06 satellite, recently launched from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in Northwest China. It carried out a series of complex in-orbit operations hundreds of kilometers above the Earth, including simulated propellant refueling tasks using a robotic arm.

Developed by Suzhou Sanyuan Aerospace Technology Co, a subsidiary of Beijing Aerospace Yuxing Technology, the satellite is intended to serve as a "space gas station".

Equipped with a flexible robotic arm, it is China's first commercial experimental satellite designed to perform high-difficulty in-orbit operations.

Chen Jing, chief technology officer of Sustain Space, said the satellite utilizes three control modes for refueling: autonomous path planning, remote manual control, and visual servo-guided docking.

Cao Meng, vice-president of Beijing Aerospace Yuxing Technology, envisions a future where satellites swiftly locate targets, perform precise docking, and refuel them. "We hope to build the future 'Space 4S shop' to provide one-stop maintenance and repair solutions for space assets," Cao said.

Meanwhile, computing power is also heading to the stars.

In a low-Earth orbit approximately 500 km above the ground, 12 computing satellites are operating to form a space computing network. Spearheaded by the Zhijiang Lab, this "Three-Body Computing Constellation" aims to bring artificial intelligence directly to space.

Wang Jian, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering and director of the Zhijiang Lab, said nearly 90 percent of satellite data is currently discarded before reaching the ground due to limited onboard processing. By deploying AI models in orbit, the constellation can process data locally.

The team has already successfully deployed 10 AI models in orbit, including an 8-billion-parameter space-based remote sensing model 80, and a 150-million parameter Fuxi weather model 1.5, ensuring data timeliness for critical applications like disaster relief and urban governance.

Technological innovation is also driving the efficiency of communication payloads.

Lin, from GalaxySpace, highlighted the development of payloads using the Q/V band, which combines the Q and V bands to cover frequencies from 47 to 52 gigahertz, more than doubling the bandwidth of current satellite systems.

Lin compared traditional frequency bands to congested city streets and the Q/V band to a new, wider superhighway essential for high-speed satellite internet.

GalaxySpace has developed its fourth-generation Q/V antenna, reducing its weight from over 7 kg to just 3.2 kg, allowing engineers to stack more satellites inside a single rocket fairing, or protective shell. In September, the company also launched the world's first satellite equipped with large flexible solar wings.

These breakthroughs are being tested in the Little Spider Web, China's first low-Earth-orbit broadband trial constellation. The network has verified the ability to provide continuous broadband communications for 30 minutes at a time. It has successfully conducted tests in diverse environments, from verifying power grid connectivity in Yunnan province to enabling maritime emergency communications. Through satellite internet, drones have successfully conducted firefighting missions, and humanoid robots have achieved "remote perception" via synchronized visual data transmission.

Tian Feng, deputy director of the technology research and development center at the Innovation Academy for Microsatellites of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, said low-Earth orbit satellites act as a space-based information highway, eliminating "information silos" in deserts and oceans.

Li Xiayu, chief engineer at the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology, said satellite communications are accelerating their expansion into consumer fields like smartphones and smart vehicles, opening new consumer markets.

Consumer integration

While GalaxySpace focuses on infrastructure, other industry players are concentrating on the downstream ecosystem.

Wang Hui, general manager of BeiDou Satellite Communication Co, a subsidiary of China North Industries Group (Norinco Group), has emphasized that applications are being rapidly integrated into consumer life.

Pan Ying, deputy chief engineer of the company, highlighted the integration of the BeiDou short message service into mass-market consumer devices. Unlike standard GPS, BeiDou allows users to send their location and status without ground-based mobile signals.

By forming joint ventures to develop new chips, the company has integrated this capability into standard smartphones. Since 2022, hundreds of millions of such phones have been shipped. Beyond phones, the company is collaborating with outdoor apparel brands like Bosideng and Phoenix to embed satellite communication modules directly into outdoor gear.

Pan believes Chinese companies are carving out a unique market position. While Western competitors like SpaceX employ a "vertical integration" model, controlling everything from chips to rockets, the Chinese system is defined by specialization — a "letting a hundred flowers bloom" approach.

Rocket manufacturers focus on launch vehicles, and satellite makers focus on spacecraft. Pan said this model concentrates resources to achieve high-quality system completion in a short time frame.

This specialized approach has been heavily supported by local governments, with the building of comprehensive industrial clusters.

In Beijing, a dedicated satellite town and Rocket Avenue are under construction. In Haiyang, Shandong province, the Oriental Aerospace Port connects manufacturing facilities directly to launch craft.

A standout example of this local empowerment is the Xixian New Area in Northwest China's Shaanxi province. The recent successful launch of the Xiguang-1 06 satellite, developed by the Xi'an Zhongke Xiguang Aerospace Technology Group, underscores the robust support provided by the local government.

As China's first and only in-orbit commercial hyper-spectral remote-sensing satellite with full-spectrum coverage of the 400-2,500 nanometers band, it ushers in a new era of "full-spectrum precise perception". Covering 26 independent spectral bands, the satellite functions like a CT scanner for the planet.

"It doesn't just look at surface morphology, but can analyze material composition, monitor crop health and predict ecological hidden dangers," said Kou Yimin, chief engineer at Zhongke Xiguang Aerospace.

The satellite is already monitoring the growth of tea and traditional Chinese medicine herbs in Sichuan and Yunnan provinces, and providing early warnings for landslides in northwestern China's mining areas.

Behind this success is a complete commercial aerospace ecosystem cultivated in the Xixian New Area. Hosting 34 enterprises in the aerospace industry chain, the area achieved an output value of 5.69 billion yuan ($835.29 million) in 2025.

"The success of this satellite sets another benchmark for the new area to cultivate a more modernized industrial system with new quality productive forces," a spokesperson for the Xixian New Area said, adding that they aim to contribute the "Xixian experience" to China's high-quality manufacturing development.

'Use it, or lose it'

The realization of these vast commercial ambitions, however, depends heavily on the physical capacity to launch hardware into space.

The International Telecommunication Union's "first come, first served" regulatory principle comes with strict "use it or lose it" deadlines. Once filed, an applicant must launch the first satellite within seven years and deploy 10 percent of the constellation within nine years.

This regulatory clock places immense pressure on China to increase launch capacity and reduce costs.

The industry is aggressively pursuing reusable rocket technology. In 2025, the Zhuque-3 reusable rocket completed its maiden flight, successfully placing its second stage into orbit and verifying core technologies for first-stage reentry and return.

Furthermore, the "Gravity-2" (Yinli-2) carrier rocket is undergoing intensive hot-fire tests for its "Force-110" liquid oxygen kerosene engine, with a maiden flight and recovery technology verification expected in the second half of the year. The "Blue Flame" 220-ton liquid oxygen methane full-flow staged combustion cycle engine has also completed full-system long-duration test runs.

The Tianlong-3 rocket, designed for large-scale constellation deployment with a "one rocket, 36 satellites" configuration, is preparing for upcoming missions. Experts estimate that reusable technology could slash total launch costs by 40 to 60 percent.

As domestic capabilities mature, Chinese companies are also looking abroad. GalaxySpace is expanding its footprint in Southeast Asia, partnering with local operators in Thailand to build ground stations and test satellite internet applications, marking the first time low-Earth-orbit broadband has been utilized there. Similar agreements have been signed in Hong Kong to explore applications in the Middle East and Africa.

Pan, from Norinco, stressed the importance of international compliance, calling for clearer government guidance to help companies navigate the complex legal landscapes of international operations. Services like the BeiDou short message could find widespread use in global search and rescue, Pan said.



A Long March-12 rocket carrying the 19th group of low-orbit internet satellites blasts off from the Hainan Commercial Space Launch Site in Hainan province on Jan 19. YANG GUANYU / XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:57 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:57 PM

TOP NEWS

Lebanon conflict rages despite partial truce

By **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE and **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong

Israeli drone strikes in southern Lebanon on Tuesday killed eight people, including a father and his two children, a day after United States President Donald Trump said that Israel and Hezbollah had agreed to dial back fighting.

Lebanon also announced a partial ceasefire between Hezbollah and Israel, marking limited de-escalation in a conflict that has killed thousands. However, fighting persists, and the flare-up has complicated the wider standoff between the US and Iran, with peace negotiations remaining stalled for weeks.

Hostilities in southern Lebanon, which Israel invaded in March, raged on Tuesday. Lebanon's National News Agency reported Israeli airstrikes targeting multiple places, including a "very violent detonation" in the town of Debbine. The Israel Defense Forces also confirmed that it had intercepted two projectiles launched from Lebanon into northern Israel.

According to Lebanon's embassy in Washington, Hezbollah has accepted a US-proposed "mutual cessation of hostilities", demanding that Israel suspend all strikes targeting Beirut.

Trump said that Hezbollah had pledged via intermediaries to stop attacking Israel. No sitting US president has ever held direct or mediated talks with Hezbollah, which Washington has termed a terrorist organization since 1997.

He added that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had agreed to pull back troops poised to assault Beirut. However, Netanyahu later said that Israel would resume military operations if Hezbollah failed to halt cross-border assaults.

Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir also publicly pressed Netanyahu to resist US pressure over the ceasefire in Lebanon. "Time to say no to Trump," he said on X.

At an emergency United Nations Security Council meeting on Monday, all council members except the US urged Israel to withdraw troops from southern Lebanon and avert further escalation, The New York Times reported.

A spokesperson for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said: "We are deeply alarmed by the escalation in military activities across southern Lebanon and beyond."

The Israel-Hezbollah conflict erupted on March 2 as a spillover of the broader US-Iran war and has remained intertwined with core bilateral negotiations ever since. Iran has made an end to Israeli military assaults in Lebanon a prerequisite for any comprehensive peace accord, while Washington insists that two conflicts should be treated separately.

Lebanon's Ministry of Public Health confirmed that Israeli strikes have so far killed 3,433 and left 10,395 wounded nationwide. Amid the mounting casualties, Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf warned that continued Israeli "aggression against Lebanon" would prompt Tehran to suspend negotiations with the US and escalate tensions into a direct confrontation.

Iran's Tasnim News Agency reported on Monday that Tehran was putting indirect US peace talks on hold and might end a ceasefire that has largely held since early April, citing Israeli operations in Lebanon.

However, Trump said late on Monday that bilateral negotiations with Iran were advancing at a "rapid pace", predicting a formal accord to prolong the truce and reopen the Strait of Hormuz would be clinched "over the next week".

In Washington, US Congresswoman Ilhan Omar condemned Israel's actions in Lebanon and called for an immediate end to US military aid to Israel. "The lesson Israel has learned, time and again, is that it can commit genocide and other atrocities with near-total impunity. Now it's exporting the Gaza playbook to Lebanon," she said in a post on X.

Since mid-March, Trump has repeatedly claimed that he was on the verge of finalizing a peace deal without delivering on the pledge. Even with the tentative Lebanese ceasefire in place, Iran and the US have traded tit-for-tat strikes multiple times in the past seven days.

Meanwhile, Esmaeil Qaani, head of the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, warned that Tehran may extend its Strait of Hormuz blockade to the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, another vital maritime chokepoint at the Red Sea's entrance, Tasnim reported.

Crude oil futures clung to multimonth highs on Tuesday amid simmering geopolitical risks, with US WTI crude hovering around $92 a barrel and global Brent benchmark near $95 per barrel.

"While markets had hoped to shake off uncertainty on the back of prospective peace talks, oil fundamentals remain unchanged as of this morning," Priyanka Sachdeva, a senior market analyst at Phillip Nova, a financial services company in Singapore, told Al Jazeera.



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi meets with British Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper during the 11th China-UK Strategic Dialogue on Tuesday in Beijing. Cooper arrived in Beijing on Monday for a visit that concludes on Wednesday. YUE YUEWEI / XINHUA

China, UK to enhance relations

Pledges made during Beijing talks on high-level exchanges and strategic communication

By **JI HAISHENG** in Beijing and **WANG MINGJIE** in London

China and the United Kingdom have vowed to maintain high-level exchanges, enhance strategic communication and consolidate positive momentum in bilateral relations amid growing global uncertainty and economic headwinds.

These pledges were made on Tuesday during UK Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper's separate meetings in Beijing with senior Chinese officials.

Cooper's three-day trip, starting Monday, follows British Prime Minister Keir Starmer's visit to China in January — the first by a UK leader in eight years — during which both sides agreed on a road map to stabilize and advance ties. Following her stay in the Chinese capital, Cooper is scheduled to visit the southern technology hub of Shenzhen in Guangdong province.

Noting that improving bilateral ties serves the interests of the people of both sides, Vice-President Han Zheng told Cooper that both sides should work together to practice true multilateralism, jointly advance global governance reform, and bring greater stability and certainty to the world.

During the 11th China-UK Strategic Dialogue on Tuesday, Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that bilateral exchanges and cooperation across all sectors have fully resumed and are gradually getting back on track, and that it is all the more important to cherish this momentum.

Wang said China hopes the British side will provide Chinese enterprises with a fair, just and nondiscriminatory business environment and reasonably define the boundaries of security concerns.

Cooper said the UK is willing to work with China to advance institutional dialogues and deepen cooperation in areas such as the economy and trade, finance, energy, artificial intelligence, and addressing climate change.

She said the UK's policy on Taiwan, which has been in place since the establishment of its diplomatic relations with China, has not changed and will not change.

The UK is willing to continue to engage in candid dialogue with China, constructively handle differences, and promote the sound and stable development of UK-China relations, she said.

In 2025, bilateral trade reached $103.73 billion, representing a year-on-year increase of 5.3 percent, according to the Chinese Foreign Ministry. China remains the UK's largest trading partner in Asia, while the UK is one of China's major trade and investment partners in Europe.

Wang Zhanpeng, director of the British Studies Centre at Beijing Foreign Studies University, said the China-UK Strategic Dialogue serves as a broader high-level platform emphasizing the overall development of bilateral relations.

He highlighted that the two sides' mutual commitment to fostering a long-term and consistent comprehensive strategic partnership provides a crucial anchor for stabilizing bilateral ties.

Jim O'Neill, former commercial secretary to the UK Treasury, described the high-level engagement as an important opportunity to further improve bilateral relations.

"Any visit by a British prime minister, chancellor or foreign secretary presents an opportunity to advance bilateral relations," said O'Neill, adding that he believes the UK should continue making long-term efforts to deepen ties with China.

Tom Harper, a lecturer specializing in China's international relations at the University of East London, said the meeting represents "a step in the right direction" and reflects the broader stabilization of China-UK relations in recent years. "As a result, it is possible that the meeting will further build upon that momentum," he added.

Against the backdrop of global economic uncertainty, analysts said that closer China-UK cooperation carries significance beyond bilateral ties. Both countries are permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and share responsibilities in addressing global challenges, including climate change, economic recovery and international security, they said.

Wang, the British studies expert, said that enhanced strategic communication between the two nations is crucial for navigating today's turbulent international situation.

Harper said that recent visits to China by senior officials from various countries reflect a growing recognition of China's role in the global economy and international diplomacy.

"There has been a recognition that China is an important part of the global economy, which means that it cannot be ignored nor shunned," he said. "Cooperation with China will be an imperative for wider global economic stability."

Contact the writers at jihaisheng@chinadaily.com.cn

Jasmine: Flower exported to more than 70 countries

From page 1



People pick jasmines during the opening ceremony of a festival marking the start of the jasmine harvest season on April 30 in Hengzhou, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region. LI LIPING / FOR CHINA DAILY

"It was so cool. The workers really put a lot of effort into the whole process. It's also a beautiful location; the environment is so fresh and smells amazing," said O'Farrell.

Diversified products, including jasmine-flavored beverages, had them wanting more. "These taste really delicious, especially the milk tea," he said, adding that despite being coffee lovers, they have been drinking tea and other jasmine-flavored beverages.

Among Chinese entrepreneurs who are elevating Hengzhou's profile to a new level is Wu Yuming. After completing his studies in the United Kingdom in 2023, Wu, who hails from Taiwan, moved to Hengzhou to run a tourism-related farm and factory called Aroma Garden. The mission, as he puts it, is "to build a high-end industry chain for jasmine products, integrating the fragrance of jasmine into people's daily lives — into what they eat, drink and use".

Wu works together with farmers to learn how jasmine grows and to better understand market requirements, and he helps them upgrade their planting techniques in order to extend the flowering season, standardize varieties and increase the yield. The improved quality of the flowers boosts Wu's business in return, as his team develops a range of high-quality products including personal care items and daily necessities.

Wu's Aroma Garden has mapped out a "jasmine fragrance trail" to attract tourists. During the flowering season in spring and summer, visitors can walk through a vast sea of blooming jasmine, pick flowers, and seek a hands-on experience in extracting essential oil and creating their own signature scent.

Data from the local government shows that Hengzhou's jasmine plantation area of around 12,000 hectares produced over 150,000 metric tons of fresh flowers in 2025, with the output value surpassing 19 billion yuan ($2.81 billion).

Most flagship domestic and international beverage brands source their raw materials from Hengzhou. A complete industrial chain centered on jasmine has been established, incorporating potted plants, dining, health and wellness services, and tourism.

Meanwhile, leveraging the China-ASEAN Expo, Hengzhou's jasmine has entered the broader market of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and is exported to more than 70 countries and regions.

"Jasmine embodies the quintessence of Eastern elegance," said Wu, the entrepreneur. "Hengzhou offers one of the finest jasmine resources. We aim to extract and preserve this natural fragrance and create a scent that belongs to China."

Contact the writers at linqi@chinadaily.com.cn

Visit: Education partnership deepening

From page 1

Thanks to the strengthened connectivity, economic and trade cooperation between Laos and China has yielded fruitful results for mutual benefit, and practical cooperation has benefited the people of both countries.

Statistics from China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs show that last year, bilateral trade between Laos and China soared to $9.82 billion, a year-on-year increase of 19.3 percent. In 2017, it was $3.1 billion, according to China's General Administration of Customs.

Furthermore, China remained Laos' largest foreign investor, with cumulative investment exceeding $18 billion, according to the Laos-China Cooperation Committee, highlighting deepening economic ties between the two countries.

Beyond infrastructure, China and Laos have also expanded cooperation in several fields, such as industrial capacity, finance, agriculture, energy, telecommunications and healthcare.

Education is also an example of the deepening cooperation between the two countries.

Every time distinguished visitors arrive at Nongping primary school in Vientiane, Phanthong Khamthongdee, the principal, proudly points to a framed letter hanging prominently on the wall of her office.

Carefully preserved behind glass, the letter bears the personal signature of Xi. It was sent in reply to the school's teachers and students in 2019 — a moment that remains one of the school's proudest memories.

Founded in 1964 with a capacity for about 50 students, the school was rebuilt in 2012 with support from the China Foundation for Peace and Development. Since then, the foundation has provided volunteer teachers and educational materials, and the school was renamed the China-Laos Friendship Nongping Primary School.

In April 2019, teachers and students from the school were invited to attend a subforum of the second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing. Before departing, the students wrote a letter to Xi expressing gratitude for China's support in rebuilding their school.

"We gathered thoughts from both teachers and students, and spent several days perfecting every detail," Phanthong recalled, taking out the original four-page handwritten letter.

Just four days after it was sent, Xi replied.

In the reply letter, Xi thanked the Lao students and teachers for writing to him, saying he was impressed by their happiness and aspiration for a good life and moved by the heartfelt feeling toward the Chinese people demonstrated in their letter.

To achieve common development and to make people's lives better in the countries participating in the Belt and Road are what prompted him to propose the initiative, Xi noted in the letter.

Xi welcomed the students to travel to Beijing via the China-Laos Railway, which was then under construction, and expressed his hope that more organizations like the China Foundation for Peace and Development would join efforts to benefit communities participating in the Belt and Road.

Phanthong, the principal, said the school had never imagined that China's top leader would respond to a letter from an obscure primary school in Laos.

"All the teachers and students were incredibly excited," she said. "His words gave us courage. They became like seeds for a brighter future planted in our hearts."

Today, thanks to continued Chinese support, the school serves nearly 200 children between the ages of 3 and 13. Chinese companies have also helped fund a basketball court and donated computers and books.

"Our school is now one of the best-equipped in the district," Phanthong said. "We also have volunteer teachers from China who teach Mandarin, which has attracted many local families to send their children here."

For many students, China is not only a friendly neighbor but also a place tied to their dreams and imagination.

Saengchan Saiyakhom, an 11-year-old student at the school, hopes to visit China one day. "Beijing is at the top of my wish list because I want to try Peking duck," she said with a smile. "I saw it on social media. It looks very different from Lao food and extremely delicious."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:57 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:57 PM

WORLD

Roaring rainbow



Italian Air Force aerobatic demonstration team flies over the Altar of the Fatherland during the 80th anniversary celebrations for Republic Day (Festa della Repubblica) at the Imperial Fora in Rome, Italy, on Tuesday. EPA

Japan's remilitarization slammed

Moves to bolster defense, intelligence 'repeat prewar mistakes', critics warn

By **HOU JUNJIE** in Tokyo and **YANG HAN** in Hong Kong

Japan's recent efforts to strengthen its security and defense capabilities, including plans to expand its intelligence framework and revise key security policies, have sparked concerns at home and abroad over the country's remilitarization.

Critics have urged Japan to uphold the principles of its pacifist constitution and warned against repeating its prewar mistakes.

Within Japan, critics argue that legislation passed last week to establish a national intelligence council and a national intelligence bureau could significantly expand government surveillance powers and return the country to the dangerous path it once followed.

Before and during World War II, Japan's Special Higher Police, known as Tokko, and military police organizations actively suppressed anti-government movements and civil society groups.

The newly passed legislation is aimed at building a national system to centralize intelligence information, the first of its kind since World War II.

With the national intelligence council at its core and the national intelligence bureau serving as its implementing body, the system will coordinate intelligence activities.

Following the law's passage, the Ryukyu Shimpo warned in an editorial that the national intelligence council and related measures, including proposed anti-espionage legislation, could fundamentally alter Japan's political and institutional character and echo the country's prewar system.

The editorial argued that as intelligence and national security bodies continue to expand, government agencies could gain broader powers, potentially threatening citizens' privacy and freedom of expression.

Calling for oversight

The editorial called for stronger oversight of government authority and democratic checks and balances on national intelligence institutions.

At a protest in Tokyo on May 29, two days after the legislation was approved, demonstrators voiced concerns over what they described as Japan's accelerating military buildup.

A protester named Matsuzawa said he strongly felt that the country was moving toward greater militarization.

He said that moves by the administration of Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi to revise Article 9 of the constitution and promote anti-espionage legislation evoke memories of prewar Japan.

"My children are still in elementary school," he said. "If things continue in this direction, I don't believe we will be able to leave them a peaceful Japan."

According to the Shimbun Akahata newspaper, Gyo Ishii, a senior staff writer for Kyodo News, also expressed concerns during deliberations on the legislation.

He noted that prewar Japan steadily strengthened its intelligence and secrecy systems through a series of laws and argued that the current government's efforts to establish a national intelligence council and strengthen anti-espionage legislation bear similarities to that process.

Ishii said the Takaichi administration is seeking to transform Japan into a country capable of waging war by expanding its intelligence apparatus.

He warned that the issue concerns not only the pacifist principles enshrined in Article 9 of the constitution but also the freedoms of speech and the press guaranteed under Article 21.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea recently published a series of articles slamming the rising militarism in Japan.

The attempts by the Japanese government to revise the pacifist constitution, legitimize the "Self-Defence Forces", and even restore the military ranks used by the former imperial Japanese army indicate the current government's attempt to remake Japan into a "war state", the DPRK's state newspaper Rodong Sinmun said in a commentary piece on May 23.

The article said the attempts are an extension of Japan's move toward militarization, including increased military spending, revision of three security-related documents, and discussions of abandoning the three nonnuclear principles.

The article pointed out that Japan, an ally of the United States in Northeast Asia with deep military ties to NATO, fired offensive missiles during a joint military practice in early May for the first time since World War II.

These developments offer no assurance that the island nation will refrain from again attacking neighboring countries despite its loud calls for peace, the article added.

While history gave Japan a chance at rebirth after its defeat in World War II, the Japanese ruling party has instead used the generosity of the international community to revive militarism, it said.

"If Japan rushes madly down the path of remilitarization and attempts a new round of invasion, it will end up in far more severe self-destruction than in the past," the article warned.

Contact the writers at houjunjie@chinadaily.com.cn

From ping-pong to pickleball, friendships endure

By **SHI GUANG** in Washington
shiguang@chinadailyusa.com

The Chinese embassy in Washington hosted an evening celebrating youth friendship and "pickleball diplomacy" on Saturday, with the premiere of a documentary following a trip by US students to China during Spring Festival earlier this year.

The event brought together about 200 US students, their families, teachers and guests. In the pre-event warm-up activities, participants tried on traditional Chinese outfits such as *hanfu* and viewed photo exhibitions. They also tried their hand at *zongzi* by carefully folding bamboo leaves and filling them with sticky rice and dates.

Chinese Ambassador to the US Xie Feng delivered remarks at the event emphasizing the role of sports in building connections.

He said that through pickleball, youth in China and the US have developed a sincere friendship. They learned from each other and experienced an open China, connecting with one another and building bridges of communication.

"From ping-pong to pickleball, the paddles have changed. But our peoples' shared wish for friendship remains as strong as ever," Xie said.



Participants share their experiences in China at the Chinese embassy in Washington on Saturday. CHEN MENGTONG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

"China and the US are like two players on the same sports court. We play by the rules and respect one another," he said.

Xie noted that half a month ago, Chinese President Xi Jinping and US President Donald Trump held a historic meeting in Beijing and "agreed on a new vision of building 'a constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability'".

That, he said, "provides strategic guidance for our bilateral relationship over the next three years and beyond".

Xie also highlighted President Xi's recent reply to a letter from Chinese and US students taking part in "A Shared Voyage: China-US Youth Friendship Program".

In the letter, Xi noted that the initiative to invite 50,000 US students to China for exchange and study over five years has reached its goal two and a half years ahead of schedule.

Unforgettable trip

The documentary, which premiered at the event, chronicled the February 2026 trip by the youth pickleball delegation from Montgomery, Maryland, to China. The students visited Guangdong, Jiangxi, Henan provinces, and Beijing during Spring Festival.

Jeffrey Sullivan, director of Systemwide Athletics for Montgomery County Public Schools, spoke about the program's growth.

He said the February delegation added an additional layer of student leadership, pointing out that the students "helped prepare for the trip, leading cultural sessions and pickleball practices".

During the story-sharing session, one student described the trip as "a very pleasant experience ... It was definitely a big difference from what we see in the media. It was very nice to see. It was very beautiful."

Coach Stacy Azizirad noted the sport's unique bonding power. "They bond over pickleball or any other sport like ping-pong, and it's really unique in the way that we've had some kids not even play pickleball that came on this trip before, and they learned to love it," she said.

A parent shared the deep personal impact. "The impact of these last two years ... to say life-changing, it truly has been life-changing. The friendships that my children have made ... have truly been heartwarming."

She mentioned her son is now teaching his Chinese friends English on WeChat and recently booked a family trip back to Beijing and Shanghai.

Lychee demand in China drives Vietnam's exports

HANOI — At 1 am local time, while most of the village was still asleep, farmer Tran Van Bon was already in his lychee orchard in Vietnam's northern province of Bac Ninh, moving between rows of trees heavy with ripening fruit.

Working under the glow of headlamps, Bon and his family carefully picked bunches of bright red lychees before dawn, when the fruit is at its freshest.

A few hours later, the fruit would begin its journey to China, Vietnam's largest export market for lychees.

In late May, the first container trucks carrying lychees departed from Bac Ninh, bound for China, marking the start of this year's export season and bringing renewed hope to thousands of growers across the province.

Bac Ninh is Vietnam's largest lychee-producing province, with 29,800 hectares of orchards, according to the Vietnamese Ministry of Agriculture and Environment.

For Bon, who has cultivated lychees for two decades in Nam Duong commune, the Chinese market has become increasingly vital for his family's livelihood.

China has remained the major export destination for Bac Ninh lychees for many years.

According to the provincial Department of Agriculture and Environment, the province currently has 243 lychee-growing area codes covering more than 17,450 hectares that have been approved for export to various international markets.

Of these, over 120 growing area codes, covering over 16,190 hectares, are registered for exports to the Chinese market this year.

Pham Van Thinh, vice-chairman of the Bac Ninh Provincial People's Committee, estimated that lychee exports to China could reach between 40,000 and 50,000 metric tons this year.

Harvest season

Across Nam Duong commune, the harvest season has transformed quiet rural roads into busy trading routes. Trucks line up near collection points while farmers rush to pick, sort and pack fruit for cross-border shipment.

Local farmer Tran Van Binh shares the same optimism.

Binh expects to earn between 200 million and 300 million Vietnamese dong ($7,600 to $11,400) through lychee exports to China this season.

Despite lower yields, growers like Bon and Binh said stable demand from China has helped sustain their incomes and ease concerns over finding buyers.

China has been Vietnam's top trading partner for more than two decades. In 2025, Vietnam's fruit and vegetable exports to China exceeded $5 billion, accounting for more than 64 percent of its total fruit and vegetable exports. Vietnam's durian and fresh coconut are highly sought-after in China.

"Now that Chinese traders are buying lychees in large quantities, we no longer worry about the market for our fruit. We can focus on growing and caring for lychees to meet export standards," Binh said.

XINHUA

Breathing fear



A man hidden behind a wall looks at smoke and flames rising from garages damaged during massive missile and drone strikes, in Kyiv, Ukraine, on Tuesday. ROMAN PILIPEY / AFP

Bangladesh's Rahman new president of 81st UNGA

By **MINLU ZHANG** at the United Nations
minluzhang@chinadailyusa.com

Bangladesh's Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman was elected president of the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly on Tuesday, winning a vote in the 193-member world body.

With 190 UN member states casting votes, Rahman received 99 votes, defeating Andreas S. Kakouris, special envoy of Cyprus' foreign minister for multilateralism, who secured 91 votes.

Following his election, Rahman pledged to rebuild trust among member states and promote consensus-building within the UN.

"As your president, I will dedicate myself to rebuilding trust, nurturing consensus and opening space for good-faith negotiations that will lead to outcomes owned by all," he said.

Rahman said his presidency would focus on six pillars of action: peace and security; the 2030 agenda; climate action and environmental protection; human rights; emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence; and UN reform.

The theme of the 81st session will be "Restoring Trust, Managing Transformation: A United Nations That Delivers for All."

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres congratulated Rahman on his election, saying he would take the reins of the General Assembly "at a moment of deep challenge but also profound possibility" for the United Nations.

"But the hard work of diplomacy, dialogue and collaboration that happens each and every day here at the General Assembly gives me renewed hope that we can transform divisions into determination to work in common purpose," he said.

Annalena Baerbock, president of the 80th session of the General Assembly, said Rahman would serve during what were "certainly not ordinary times", noting that the role of president has evolved in an era when consensus can no longer be taken for granted and defending the UN Charter has become a daily necessity.

She said the Assembly would continue addressing major intergovernmental processes, including implementation of the Pact for the Future and ongoing reform efforts under the UN80 Initiative. Baerbock said Rahman is "more than prepared" for the position, citing his decades of diplomatic and multilateral experience.

Rahman, born in 1954, joined Bangladesh's diplomatic service in 1979 and later served at the country's Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York.

In 1999, he joined the UN Secretariat as a special adviser at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in Geneva. Over the next 25 years, he held senior positions in New York and Geneva and contributed to several major UN flagship publications.

Rahman will assume the presidency for a one-year term when the 81st session of the General Assembly opens on Sept 8.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:57 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:57 PM

WORLD

Zero-tariff policy boosts export power

Experts see Egypt among beneficiaries as measure enhances competitiveness

By SARA EL ASHRAFY in Cairo
For China Daily

China's zero-tariff policy toward African countries marks a shift that goes beyond traditional trade considerations, reshaping global economic relations through deeper integration and stronger links to international value chains, Egyptian analysts say.

With China-Africa trade exceeding $348 billion last year, the policy signals a new phase in the economic repositioning of 53 African countries within the global economy by boosting export competitiveness, attracting investment and promoting export-oriented industrialization, they said.

The move also opens wider prospects for deepening China-Egypt relations at a symbolic moment, coinciding with the 70th anniversary of diplomatic ties between the two countries, they added.

"This policy represents a structural shift in the philosophy of trade relations between China and Africa, moving toward a more long-term economic partnership," said Nermeen Tawfik, coordinator of the Pharos Center for Strategic Studies and Consultations.

The measure underscores Beijing's efforts to further strengthen its relations with Africa, secure supply chains and institutionalize a cooperation model based on mutual benefit and deeper integration into global value chains, Tawfik said.

The elimination of tariffs is expected to enhance the competitiveness of Egyptian and other African goods in the Chinese market, one of the world's largest in terms of both scale and demand, she added.

The decision comes at a time of growing divergence in global trade policies among major countries and stands in contrast to approaches marked by protectionism, reflecting China's commitment to openness and free trade, Tawfik said.

"Egypt is strategically positioned to capitalize on this shift, particularly through its industrial base and geographic advantage as a regional trade gateway," she said.

Tawfik said the policy will boost joint projects, especially the Chinese industrial zone in Ain Sokhna within the Suez Canal Economic Zone. Serving as a key manufacturing and export platform, the zone helps integrate Egypt-based production into Chinese-led supply chains while attracting investment in sectors such as textiles and manufacturing.

The development is expected to further strengthen Egypt's role as a strategic hub linking Africa, Asia and Europe, she added.

"The Ain Sokhna industrial zone is emerging as a key platform for export-oriented manufacturing integrated into Chinese supply chains," she said.

She cautioned, however, that the extent to which African countries benefit from the tariff-free policy will depend on their ability to undertake structural economic upgrades and enhance industrial capacity.

Structural shift

Ghada Kamal, an Egyptian expert in international affairs and African studies, said China's zero-tariff policy, which took effect on May 1, represents a structural transformation in economic relations between Beijing and the Global South.

The decision reflects China's strategic orientation toward deepening economic integration with Africa by fully opening its market to African products, Kamal said.

"China is deliberately repositioning African economies within the global trading system through full and unconditional market access," she said.

Egypt stands out as one of the leading candidates to benefit from this shift because of its unique geoeconomic advantages, she said. "Egypt combines industrial capacity, infrastructure development and strategic location, making it one of the strongest beneficiaries of this policy shift."

On sectoral effects, Kamal highlighted the immediate gains for Egyptian exports. "The removal of tariffs ... creates an immediate and measurable competitive advantage for Egyptian goods in the Chinese market," she said.

The policy also enhances Africa's appeal to foreign direct investment by combining competitive production costs with guaranteed access to the Chinese market, she added.

The initiative complements the African Continental Free Trade Area by strengthening regional value chains and promoting economic integration across Africa, she said.

The writer is a freelance journalist for China Daily.



Customs officers inspect a shipment of fresh Egyptian oranges at Shanghai's Waigaoqiao Port on May 1. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1841



Demonstrators protest a proposed United States-backed Ebola quarantine facility in Nanyuki, Kenya, on Monday, with a sign that reads, "Laikipia is not a dumping site. Take back that money, we do not want Ebola in Kenya." JOHN MUCHUCHA / REUTERS

US-backed Ebola facility in Kenya draws protests

By SHARON NAKOLA
in Nairobi, Kenya
sharon@chinadailyafrica.com

Hundreds of residents in Kenya's central town of Nanyuki protested on Monday against a proposed Ebola quarantine facility backed by the United States, days after a court temporarily suspended the project amid growing concerns.

The demonstrators marched through parts of the town carrying placards and chanting slogans, opposing the planned facility at Laikipia Air Base, about 200 kilometers north of Nairobi.

Protest organizer Patrick Wahome said two people were killed by gunshot wounds after police opened fire. A security source also said two people had died but did not specify the cause of death, Reuters reported.

Police spokesman Michael Muchiri said he was not aware of the deaths.

Local media reports of increased activity at the base have fueled speculation that preparations are underway, though authorities have not publicly confirmed that construction has begun.

President William Ruto confirmed on Monday that Kenya had agreed in principle to support the initiative following discussions with the US.

The decision reflected decades of cooperation between the two countries in public health and disease control, he said.

Many residents said they feared the facility could expose local communities to Ebola, despite government assurances that the project is intended to strengthen preparedness against potential regional outbreaks.

Others questioned why Kenya should host a quarantine center for individuals potentially exposed to the virus when the country has not recorded any active Ebola cases, while the number of suspected cases in the Democratic Republic of Congo topped 100, with more than 300 confirmed cases.

"We have started seeing planes going that way, and it is like that quarantine area has already been built. We are very angry," Nanyuki resident Nick Karari said during the protests.

The proposal has become politically sensitive as the planned facility would reportedly receive US citizens exposed to Ebola, while Kenya has no active cases. Critics argue that the country's health system should not assume additional risks.

On Friday, Kenya's High Court issued orders temporarily suspending the establishment of the quarantine, isolation or treatment center and blocking the arrival of any foreign patients pending the hearing of a petition filed by civil society groups.

The petitioners argue that the arrangement raises legal and public health concerns and should undergo greater public scrutiny before implementation.

High Court Judge Patricia Nyaundi on Tuesday issued an order barring the government from taking any steps to build or begin operations at the facility before the case is resolved.

The judge also ordered the government to disclose all agreements and operational protocols related to the facility within seven days and scheduled the next hearing for June 23.

The controversy has also drawn criticism from professional bodies. Last week, the Kenya Medical Practitioners, Pharmacists and Dentists Union questioned whether the country's health system is adequately prepared to manage highly infectious diseases.

The Health Ministry has defended the initiative, saying the planned facility is part of broader preparedness measures and would serve public health needs rather than any single nationality.

Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale said the center was intended for "everyone" and not exclusively for US citizens.

Duanwu celebration brings cultures together

By RENA LI in Los Angeles
Renali@chinadailyusa.com

The fragrance of freshly wrapped *zongzi* filled the hall as bronze chime music from China's Hubei province echoed through a cultural gathering in Los Angeles, where Chinese and American residents came together to celebrate the traditions of Duanwu Jie, also known as the Dragon Boat Festival.

Decorated with *zongzi*, a sticky rice dumpling, traditional sachets filled with herbs for blessings, and other festive symbols, the venue hosted the launch ceremony for the first California Duanwu Jie on Saturday. The festival is scheduled to be celebrated on June 19 following a resolution adopted by the California State Assembly that recognizes the fifth day of the fifth lunar month on June 19 as the inaugural Duanwu Jie in California. It describes the holiday as having more than 2,000 years of history and deep cultural significance.

"We traveled from the banks of Yangtze River to Los Angeles, aiming to introduce the traditions and cultural heritage of Hubei province to California through the Dragon Boat Festival celebration," Yu Hui, deputy manager of Hubei Cultural and Tourism Group, told China Daily.

Yu described Hubei as the birthplace of the esteemed statesman and patriotic poet Qu Yuan during the Warring States Period (475-221 BC) and an important cradle of Chu culture and Dragon Boat Festival traditions, including dragon boat racing and the eating of *zongzi*.

He introduced cultural and tourism landmarks including the Three Gorges, Mount Wudang, Shennongjia and the Enshi Grand Canyon, while inviting American visitors to experience Hubei's history, cuisine and cultural heritage firsthand.



Guests from Hubei province and California unveil the logo for the inaugural California Duanwu Jie celebration during a cultural exchange event in Los Angeles on Saturday. RENA LI/ CHINA DAILY

Immersed in the festive atmosphere, Bob Weis, former president of Walt Disney Imagineering, said cultural exchanges continue to strengthen people-to-people ties between China and the United States despite geopolitical tensions.

"I think it's great for California. There's such a strong connection between Chinese culture and the people here, and California culture," Weis said. "To have this great Dragon Boat Festival, which is so well known across China, and so important to the culture, brought here — it's great."

Weis said California has long maintained an open environment for cultural exchange and noted that modern travelers are increasingly seeking authentic cultural experiences and meaningful human connections. Weis said the recognition of Duanwu Jie reflected a growing appreciation of Chinese heritage in California.

"This is more than a symbolic gesture," Weis said. "It reflects a growing appreciation for Chinese heritage and an understanding that cultural traditions enrich all of our communities."

According to Phillip Chen, the California assembly member who proposed the resolution, recognizing Dragon Boat Festival helps promote cultural understanding and strengthens community connections across California's diverse population.

"It's significant because it brings culture and understanding," Chen said, adding that the festival highlights the importance of people coming together across cultural backgrounds.

Wang Lei, president of the Jingchu Culture Foundation of America, noted that the California resolution incorporated the Chinese pinyin name "Duanwu" directly into legislative text and explicitly referenced Qu Yuan and the festival's traditional values.

"For more than 2,000 years, the values embodied by Qu Yuan — love of country, cultural confidence, integrity and the pursuit of ideals — have inspired generations of Chinese people around the world," Wang said.

"Today, by launching the first California Duanwu Festival, we are not only celebrating a traditional holiday, but also carrying forward a cultural spirit that transcends time, geography and generations," he added.

Huang Hongjiang, deputy Chinese consul general in Los Angeles, emphasized the importance of cultural and educational exchanges between China and California.

"Our relations require not only government-to-government linkage, but also people-to-people exchanges," Huang said. "Today's event is a good example that we are working together to deepen cultural, educational and people-to-people exchanges."

Zhou Min, a professor of sociology and Asian American studies and director of the UCLA Asia Pacific Center, said the recognition carries broader symbolic significance related to cultural diversity and inclusion.

"I am not surprised that California would recognize the festival," Zhou said. "The symbolism behind it is that California recognizes cultural diversity, and recognizing ethnic holidays is part of that process."

Zhou added that food and festivals often serve as important cultural connections across communities. She noted that many of her students enjoy *zongzi* and view the Dragon Boat Festival as part of a broader celebration of multiculturalism and Asian cultural traditions in California.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:57 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:57 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

To show its sincerity for talks, US should rein in its allies to prevent misjudgment

Representatives from the Chinese and US militaries held a working group meeting of the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement in Hawaii on Thursday and Friday. That was the first formal naval and air force working group exchange since the US president's visit to China from May 13 to May 15.

The two sides had candid and constructive exchanges on the current China-US air and maritime safety and security situation, evaluated the execution of the Rules of Behavior for Safety of Air and Maritime Encounters since the MMCA in 2025, and discussed measures to improve China-US military maritime safety and security, according to a release of the People's Liberation Army.

On Thursday, the Chinese Ministry of Commerce announced that the Chinese and US teams have agreed in principle to discuss, under the trade council, a reciprocal tariff reduction framework arrangement on products of equivalent scale and worth $30 billion or more on each side. Whether it is military communication or progress in the economic and trade fields, both demonstrate the shared willingness of China and the United States to translate the outcomes of the US leader's visit to China into concrete actions and tangible results.

Multiple rounds of China-US economic and trade consultations have already taken place, and bilateral trade relations have shown signs of stabilization in recent months. Yet direct military engagement between the two sides has remained far less frequent. Meanwhile, tensions in the Asia-Pacific region have persisted due to a variety of factors. As a result, the Hawaii meeting has drawn widespread attention. That also reflects the region's broader expectation that China and the US will properly manage their military relationship, as well as the general hope for peace and stability in the region.

As agreed by the two sides in Hawaii, effective communication and exchanges between the two militaries can help frontline troops perform tasks in a more professional manner, deepen mutual understanding and avoid misperception and miscalculation. But apart from that, it is hard to ignore that the PLA stressed in its release on the meeting that China firmly opposes any action that undermines China's sovereignty and security under the pretext of "freedom of navigation and overflight", and opposes any infringement, provocation and close-in reconnaissance and harassment targeting China. It added that China will continue to firmly safeguard national territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests, and uphold regional peace and prosperity.

The timing of the Hawaii meeting could hardly be starker, which explains the PLA's reiteration of its principled stance. On the day before the Hawaii meeting opened, China's military drove away the Dutch frigate, HNLMS *De Ruyter*, which had illegally entered Chinese waters around the Xisha Islands. While Japan and the Philippines announced on Thursday they will hold talks to "delimit an exclusive economic zone and continental shelf" east of China's Taiwan island. And five days before the meeting, the Canadian frigate, HMCS *Charlottetown*, conducted a spuriously described "routine transit" through the Taiwan Strait.

The Netherlands and Canada have both defended their respective actions as exercises of "freedom of navigation". Meanwhile, Japan and the Philippines are cloaking their provocations against China under the guise of safeguarding a "free and open Indo-Pacific". These narratives are all "intellectual property" of the US, and all such actions are taken within the broader "Indo-Pacific" strategy framework engineered by Washington. This says nothing of the considerable efforts the US has made to revive the Quad, most notably through last month's foreign ministers' meeting in New Delhi.

Thus, China is experiencing an increasingly contradictory approach: a US that professes its desire for communication and de-escalation, as reflected in US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's toned-down remarks at last week's Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, set against an increasingly reckless and provocative cohort of US allies and partners.

In other words, while Washington has signaled a desire to stabilize ties with China and expand communication channels, some actions by US allies and partners continue to create tensions and complicate efforts to build mutual trust. This divergence between diplomatic messaging and developments on the ground remains a source of concern for regional stability. In the process, Japan has emerged as the most enthusiastic. Under the logic laid out by the US — that the free-riding era is over as Hegseth underscored again in Singapore — Tokyo is buying US missiles and expanding military cooperation in return for US tolerance of its remilitarization. For Washington, this is convenient burden-shifting. But Japan is the real beneficiary, using US support to break free of historical constraints.

If military mutual trust between China and the US is to have any substance, the US is obliged to curb the actions of its regional allies. The repeated harassment and provocative military activities on China's doorstep only serve to raise the risk of misjudgment. The region's most dangerous trigger for conflict might be the US' unwillingness to rein in a Japan that is increasingly acting as a loose cannon. The US cannot on the one hand prepare the table for dialogue, and on the other hand permit its allies and partners to recklessly try to usher its guest away from the table.

New rules to protect overseas investments

In the first four months of this year, China's outbound direct investment across all industries was 429.42 billion yuan ($63.50 billion), an increase of 3.9 percent year-on-year. And the country's total outbound direct investment reached $174.38 billion last year, with over 50,000 enterprises having overseas investments.

But recent events, such as the decision by the Dutch government late last year to take over Nexperia, a Chinese-owned semiconductor company, on the grounds of "national security", and a Panamanian court's ruling earlier this year that annulled Hong Kong-based CK Hutchison's contract to operate two ports at the Panama Canal, highlight the challenges Chinese enterprises are encountering abroad amid rising unilateralism, protectionism and heightened geopolitical tensions.

A new regulation is therefore a timely response to safeguard the legitimate rights of Chinese companies with investments overseas, and help protect the nation's sovereignty, security and development interests. The regulation on outbound investment, issued by the State Council, China's Cabinet, and set to take effect on July 1, marks China's first administrative rule specifically targeting the overseas investment activities of Chinese enterprises. The regulation, comprising 34 articles, aims to promote the country's high-standard opening-up and enhance the quality of its outbound investments.

First and foremost, it provides a comprehensive protective shield for Chinese enterprises at various stages of their overseas investments. These include risk assessment and early warning systems based on the security situations in target countries before investments begin, as well as consular protection and assistance during major emergencies.

Additionally, if Chinese investors encounter trade-related investment barriers in the host country or region, the relevant departments of the State Council will conduct investigations and, based on the results of these investigations, may adjust country-specific investment policies and implement measures such as import or export bans or restrictions on certain goods and technologies.

While encouraging enterprises to resolve disputes related to their outbound investments through various means such as negotiation, mediation, arbitration and litigation, the regulation offers an enhanced legal "toolbox" that enables a precise and robust response to any discriminatory measure taken by a foreign government.

Additionally, the new regulation emphasizes service guidance for outbound enterprises. The government will establish a comprehensive overseas service system, coordinating resources across areas such as foreign affairs, law, finance, taxation, logistics, customs and trade promotion to offer comprehensive service guarantees.

The regulation states that China will actively align with international high-standard economic and trade rules, promote high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, participate in the formulation of international investment rules, and foster international cooperation in industry and supply chains. This will be conducive to opposing unilateralism and protectionism, and to the construction of an open world economy.

The new rules mark a milestone in the legal framework for China's outbound investment sector. They are expected to help improve China's foreign investment management system, enhance oversight of direct investments overseas and strengthen risk prevention and control.

The measures markedly elevate the quality of China's outbound investments, paving the way for new opportunities in mutually beneficial international cooperation.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

Synergy conducive to unity and development of Global South

The fifth China-Brazil Foreign Ministerial-Level Comprehensive Strategic Dialogue in Beijing on Monday is a reminder that the future international order may depend more on how major developing countries align their interests and actions.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry's readout of the strategic dialogue between Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Brazilian Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira indicates that China and Brazil are seeking to build a partnership that extends well beyond bilateral diplomacy.

The relationship has evolved steadily over the past three decades. China and Brazil established a strategic partnership in 1993, upgraded ties to a comprehensive strategic partnership in 2012, and jointly elevated relations to a China-Brazil community with a shared future for a more just world and a more sustainable planet in 2024.

International institutions face mounting strain as conflicts, trade disputes and geopolitical fragmentation have intensified demands for stability. In an era when hegemony, unilateralism and protectionism are once again on the rise in various parts of the world, the rationale for deeper coordination among major developing countries has never been more compelling.

Vieira said that Brazil looks forward to consolidating strategic mutual trust with China, deepening practical cooperation, cementing public support for bilateral ties and achieving common prosperity, expressing Brazil's readiness to work with China to enhance multilateral coordination, jointly advance the reform of the global governance system, uphold the authority of the United Nations and promote international fairness and justice.

The foundation for the development of relations in that direction is solid. China is Brazil's largest trading partner, while Brazil is China's ninth-largest trading partner. Bilateral trade reached nearly $188 billion in 2025. Chinese exports to Brazil range from machinery, telecommunications equipment and chemical products to transportation equipment and steel. Brazilian exports to China include iron ore, soybeans, crude oil and pulp. Such complementarities provide an important degree of stability for global supply chains.

The signing in 2023 of a memorandum establishing renminbi clearing arrangements in Brazil and the 2024 agreement aligning Belt and Road cooperation with Brazil's Growth Acceleration Program, New Industry Plan, Ecological Transformation Plan and South American Integration Routes Plan point to an increasingly deeper economic partnership featuring development and strategic alignment.

Yet perhaps the most underappreciated dimension of China-Brazil relations lies in people-to-people ties. Exchanges in education, tourism, media, youth affairs and subnational cooperation continue to expand, and the two governments are preparing for the 2026 China-Brazil Cultural Year.

Sport offers a particularly vivid example. For more than three decades, Brazilian footballers have played for Chinese clubs. Chinese football supporters cannot forget that several key members of China's historic 2002 FIFA World Cup squad emerged from a training program in Brazil during the 1990s. Many later became coaches, passing a Brazilian influence to younger generations. When the 2026 World Cup kicks off, many in China will be rooting for Brazil.

Such connections matter because durable international partnerships require public support, not merely governmental agreement.

The broader significance of the dialogue on Monday lies in its recognition that reforming global governance can no longer be postponed. Wang urged the two countries to jointly promote the development of a more just and equitable global governance system.

If major Global South countries such as China and Brazil can maintain strategic mutual trust, deepen practical cooperation and strengthen coordination through mechanisms including the United Nations and BRICS, they will help inject a measure of predictability into an increasingly volatile world. In an age increasingly defined by uncertainty in some parts of the world, that may be one of the most valuable public goods any major-country engagement can provide.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

Ties: Cooperation key for tackling global issues

From page 1

The competition and confrontation between them have been established not merely as an issue for the two countries, but as a key factor having a direct or indirect impact on global economic growth.

The combined nominal GDP of the US and China already accounts for more than 43 percent of the global economy, with the two economies playing a very important role in global economic growth. Furthermore, global supply chain fragmentation and competition for technological leadership are exacerbating global geopolitical and geo-economic uncertainty. Under these circumstances, discussions between the two countries to establish a relationship of "constructive strategic stability" can serve as a foundation for a new vision for US-China relations.

In particular, the stable management of US-China relations and restrained competition are essential for addressing transnational challenges, such as maintaining peace, achieving economic prosperity and responding to climate change in the Asia-Pacific region, which is the hub of the global economy and supply chains.

This is because a conflict between two superpowers would inevitably lead to economic damage and security instability for countries in the region. To realize the vision of the Chinese Dream and MAGA coexisting harmoniously, both countries must expand the scope of cooperation rather than conflict in three major areas of international order and security.

First, the strategic space for global supply chains and economic prosperity must be expanded.

The restructuring of global supply chains and deglobalization have a negative impact on the world economy, as trade conflicts and tariff barriers between the two countries fragment global supply chains and increase production costs. If global supply chains collapse, production and investment in neighboring countries will also continuously shrink. This would inevitably affect the interests of both the US and China. Therefore, the strategic scope for cooperation must be expanded for the sustainable economic growth of the US and China and countries in the Asia-Pacific.

Second, mutual communication channels must be expanded for global geopolitical stability.

Geopolitical conflicts and clashes in the Middle East and Ukraine are inflicting shocking damage on global security and the economy, so responsible risk management by the US and China, which are engaged in strategic competition, is crucial for minimizing global geopolitical conflicts.

Diplomatic compromise and communication between the two countries can play a key role in stabilizing the global economy and mitigating supply chain risks. Furthermore, efforts need to be made to prevent accidental clashes and to establish a relationship of strategic stability, which can also prevent regional instability and foster a peaceful diplomatic environment.

Third, the US and China can play a leading role in jointly responding to global issues such as climate change. Climate change and changes in the marine environment are interconnected — core global issues that cause ecosystem destruction, food insecurity and extreme weather events. Only when the two countries cooperate can such transnational issues be effectively resolved.

While the relationship between the US and China is based on the fundamental axis of "strategic competition", it can also be a relationship of competitive collaboration, in which they can cooperate to avoid unnecessary conflict while pursuing their own interests. It is crucial for the two nations to cooperate for economic interdependence and the resolution of global issues, while simultaneously engaging in strategic competition for national interests.

The author is chairman of the Korea-China Association and a professor of China studies at Yongin University in South Korea. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:57 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:57 PM

VIEWS

Chang Yen-Chiang and Zhou Siyu

Maritime delimitation talks have no legal basis

During the visit of the Philippine President Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos Jr to Japan from May 26 to 29, both nations announced the start of bilateral negotiations on the delimitation of exclusive economic zones and continental shelves, directly targeting the maritime areas east of China's Taiwan Island.

This provocative move violates China's legitimate maritime rights and interests, and runs counter to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and basic norms of international relations.

The negotiations signify a deepening maritime security alliance and escalating geopolitical coordination between Japan and the Philippines.

Beneath the diplomatic surface lie clear strategic calculations. Japan is leveraging its alliance with the United States to break free from postwar pacifist constraints and expand its maritime control footprint across the Western Pacific.

The Philippines, meanwhile, is seeking external support to counterbalance China's legal sovereign claims in the South China Sea and the waters off eastern Taiwan.

By negotiating and disposing of maritime areas that are under China's jurisdiction, the two sides are attempting to undermine China's maritime rights and interests. The move is closely linked to the broader geopolitical pattern of the Western Pacific, and poses significant risks.

First, it threatens China's maritime rights and interests. Should Japan and the Philippines reach a formal delimitation agreement, they will unilaterally allocate rights for fishing, oil and gas exploration, marine scientific research and other maritime activities in the targeted waters. Such a deal would establish an illegal status quo, forcing China into a passive position and substantially driving up the cost of future rights protection. It would also undermine China's long-established lawful practices of maritime management, resource development and sustainable utilization in these traditional waters.

Second, the move fuels geopolitical tensions across the Taiwan Strait.

By focusing on the sea areas east of China's Taiwan island, Japan and the Philippines are pushing for the "internationalization" of the Taiwan question.

They aim to fabricate a false perception of maritime separation across the Taiwan Strait, collude with the separatist "Taiwan independence" forces on the island and disrupt China's national reunification process. Their geopolitical manipulation adds volatility to the regional security landscape.

Third, it endangers regional maritime governance. If this backdoor maritime delimitation by Japan and the Philippines is tolerated by the international community, it will set a dangerous precedent.

Other states may follow suit, forming small cliques to privately divide overlapping maritime domains. Such trends would marginalize the dispute settlement mechanisms under UNCLOS and weaken China's regional framework which prioritizes sovereignty and bilateral consultation in maritime disputes.

Fourth, it creates room for external powers to interfere in regional affairs. Both Japan and the Philippines are embedded in the US-led Asia-Pacific alliance system, and have received implicit support from Washington.

The US may try to take advantage of this development to scale up patrolling east of Taiwan and establish a formal trilateral maritime coordination mechanism with Japan and the Philippines to further compress China's strategic space in the Western Pacific.

China has solid legal grounds to reject these illegitimate negotiations. At the domestic level, China's Law on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone and Law on the Exclusive Economic Zone and the Continental Shelf explicitly stipulate that Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory, with all adjacent maritime areas under China's jurisdiction.

On the international level, China enjoys complete sovereign rights over the exclusive economic zone, as well as inherent jurisdiction over continental shelf exploration, exploitation and governance in these waters.

No third state is entitled to conduct private maritime delimitation, resource distribution or jurisdiction partition negotiations without approval by China.

Thus, the Japan-Philippines negotiations lack legal legitimacy.

Under the natural prolongation doctrine of UNCLOS, China's continental shelf extends to cover the sea areas east of Taiwan. China holds sovereign rights over the seabed, subsoil and natural resources of these waters.

UNCLOS also makes it clear that wherever there are overlapping sovereign claims involving a third party, relevant states shall not bypass the entitled sovereign state to separately finalize delimitation arrangements.

Only adjacent or opposite states can undertake maritime boundary negotiations without any third-party sovereign involvement. Therefore, the Japan-Philippines negotiations violate the core spirit of UNCLOS and have no international legal validity whatsoever.

Above all, national sovereignty is non-negotiable. As an administrative region of China, Taiwan has no independent maritime sovereignty.

Any state handling maritime affairs surrounding Taiwan must recognize the one-China principle and respect China's full sovereignty over Taiwan and its affiliated maritime spaces.

By excluding China and arbitrarily arranging marine affairs east of the Taiwan Strait, Japan and the Philippines are attempting to divide China's territorial and maritime sovereignty.

Their actions cross the red line of the one-China principle and China will never tolerate such infringement upon its core national interests.

Chang Yen-Chiang is a professor at the School of Law at Dalian Maritime University; Zhou Siyu is a postgraduate at the same school.
The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.

Amitendu Palit

Innovation fuels investor trust in Asia-Pacific

The year 2026 has so far been marked by turmoil and chaos in the global economy.

The Iran conflict has created an unprecedented energy crisis, driving up prices of commodities and services. Asia has been hit hard because it is heavily dependent on imports from the Middle East. As the crisis deepens and economic difficulties increase, concerns are beginning to arise about investments.

Economic instability is bad news for investors, as uncertainty clouds the economic outlook and undermines investor confidence. Both long-term investors committed to foreign direct investment and short-term investors focusing on gains from the capital market are impacted by uncertainty. For Asian economies, this uncertainty has become a serious issue as investors are hesitating to commit funds.

Global Lens

Investor sentiments can improve significantly if they are convinced that major Asian economies can withstand the current crisis and remain committed to their development plans. Though much depends on the outlook for China, it is not the only economy that matters. China's ability to grow along with the other economies of Southeast Asia is equally important.

Investment decisions are significantly influenced by investor confidence in the resilience of economies. China is actively working to enhance the long-term resilience of its economy by positioning itself as an innovation hub.

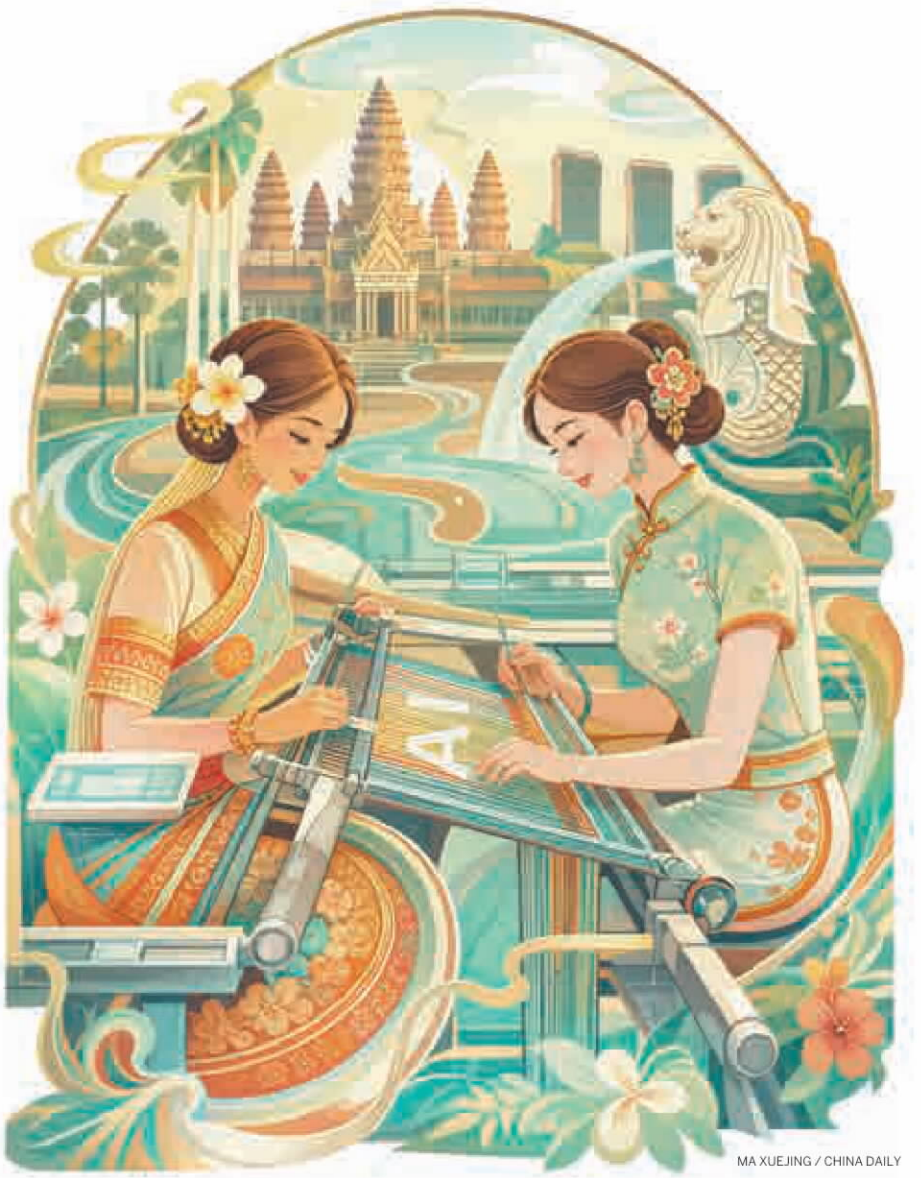
How does becoming an innovation hub improve economic resilience? Innovation provides solutions to complex problems. It does not always have to be path-breaking and phenomenal; incremental progress is equally valuable. An economy's capacity to innovate determines its ability to adapt its industries and institutions to withstand future shocks.

Globally, most economies are using artificial intelligence to transform industrial processes, thereby increasing efficiency and boosting productivity.

However, rapid adoption requires access to AI content, an area dominated by countries that have the edge in foundational and generative AI. Countries that have enterprises owning and running large language models (LLMs) are at the forefront of innovative AI production. The United States and China are global leaders in this regard.

China has invested substantially in both foundational and embodied AI. While the former involves training LLMs to conduct research and propose solutions for new problems, the latter emphasizes the use of robots to raise industrial productivity.

Both contribute to increasing the resilience of the country's economy.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Frontier LLMs, capable of complex reasoning and advanced code generation, offer innovative solutions for potential crises. At the same time, the use of industrial robots, combined with deep learning technologies such as image recognition and automated driving, is not only increasing productivity in traditional industries, such as textiles, chemicals and machinery, but also enabling better management of process logistics.

These improvements help industries to better handle shortages when supply chains are disrupted and overcome logistics challenges caused by pandemics or similar events.

China's innovation capabilities are complemented by its collaboration with the broader region, particularly Southeast Asia. Regional economies such as Vietnam and Malaysia have developed expertise in semiconductor assembly, testing, packaging and fabrication.

These economies, along with others in Southeast Asia, are working on formalizing the digital economy framework agreement, which will establish regional rules for the digital economy.

Coupled with the focus on training workers in AI, including integrating AI into school curricula, this initiative should provide the region with a workforce skilled in AI.

The existing economic synergies between China and the region, as already seen through various industry supply chains, can become more resilient as China's innovation outcomes combine with the region's ability to absorb them.

Understanding the Chinese strategy of becoming an innovation hub, and extending the reach of the hub to Southeast Asia for developing a wider regional innovation ecosystem, is important for investors.

This understanding is likely to generate more confidence among investors as they closely monitor how Asian economies are navigating external shocks.

The military conflicts in Ukraine, Gaza and Iran have created new stress tests for Asian economies. Traditional solutions are no longer enough to build resilience. Innovation outcomes and their collective application can be a game changer.

The author is a senior research fellow and research lead (trade and economics) at the Institute of South Asian Studies in the National University of Singapore. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Ma Junchi and Sun Yanhong

CEE navigating changes with strategic diversification

In the rapidly shifting geopolitical and geoeconomic landscape, Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) finds itself at a crossroads. Whether the region can defuse the crisis it faces and turn challenges into opportunities will determine the trajectory of its economic development.

Traditionally, the CEE region's economic model has leaned heavily on Europe for investment, Russia for energy and the United States for security.

For decades, CEE nations, such as Hungary, have leveraged their European Union and NATO memberships and access to low-cost Russian energy to attract substantial Western European investments, cementing their position as Europe's backyard of manufacturing.

However, these foundational pillars are now teetering. A sluggish European economy has dampened market demand and investment in Western Europe, and the spillover has hit CEE enterprises that were key suppliers to that market. Surging energy prices have squeezed profit margins for the CEE's energy-intensive industries.

And the US has pulled back from its security commitments, urging CEE countries to shoulder more responsibility.

Faced with these headwinds, CEE countries have adopted a three-pronged strategy: diversifying investment sources, energy supplies and security guarantees to offset the waning role of Western Europe, Russia and the US in driving economic growth.

First, the region is making a concerted push to attract Asian capital to accelerate its integration into the new energy vehicle industry chain.

Traditional automotive manufacturing is the cornerstone of the CEE economy, contributing 7 to 14 percent to the region's GDP. But Western European automakers are grappling with hurdles in their electrification transition, forcing downstream CEE economies to turn to Asian investment in NEV and battery manufacturing.

The Republic of Korea has emerged as a leading non-EU investor in recent years and China has been Hungary's largest source of FDI since 2023.

It was precisely to meet the need for investment diversification that Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic visited China last month, announcing that Chinese enterprises across various sectors — including automotive parts manufacturing, humanoid robotics, energy, and artificial intelligence — will invest €940 million in Serbia.

Second, CEE countries are broadening the sources of their energy imports and boosting domestic supply to safeguard energy security and price stability. Norway, the US, Qatar and Central Asia are new energy suppliers. Most CEE nations have either phased out or drastically cut oil and gas imports from Russia. Although Hungary and Slovakia continue to purchase Russian energy, they are also scaling up imports from Azerbaijan and Central Asia.

Romania, with its Black Sea natural gas reserves, is poised to become energy self-sufficient. Other CEE countries are enhancing the interconnection of energy pipelines or ramping up the development of nuclear energy, wind power and photovoltaic power to increase electricity supply.

Third, the region is bolstering its domestic defense industry to foster new economic growth drivers.

With the Russia-Ukraine conflict continuing to escalate and the US scaling back its strategic presence in Europe, CEE countries have no choice but to strengthen their self-defense capabilities. Czechoslovak Group, a major Czech defense manufacturer, has signed a seven-year ammunition procurement deal worth up to €58 billion ($67 billion) with the Slovak government.

Defense firms from Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and other CEE states are engaging in joint production with international players such as Germany's Rheinmetall, ROK's Hanwha Aerospace and Hyundai Rotem.

Furthermore, CEE countries are utilizing funds from the EU's Connecting Europe Facility to improve north-south vertical infrastructure interconnection, thereby bolstering the defense capabilities of NATO's eastern flank.

The CEE's diversification strategy not only aims to maintain economic growth, but also to seize the opportunity for structural adjustment to enhance the added value of local industries.

Many CEE countries are linking investment incentives to local production and high-value-added R&D activities. For example, Slovakia requires Gotion High-tech to collaborate with local R&D teams at Inobat and establish a research center in the country.

The Czech Republic has shifted its investment incentives from job creation to high-value-added creation, successfully attracting automation giants such as Japan's Fanuc to set up technical support centers. The Polish government has mandated that ROK defense enterprises conduct production, assembly and post-sales maintenance in the country, and transfer production technologies to local firms.

Given this backdrop, China and CEE countries can strengthen economic cooperation in four major fields.

First, both sides can deepen collaboration in the NEV industry chain, with Chinese NEV manufacturers exploring partnerships with local CEE enterprises for conducting research and training programs with universities and institutions, and investing in local battery recycling and reuse.

Chinese NEV manufacturers can also continue to strengthen cooperation with local suppliers in CEE, leveraging technology spillover effects to facilitate the upgrading of CEE's local automotive industry.

Second, both sides can consolidate cooperation in renewable energy. Chinese enterprises can continue to develop projects with CEE counterparts and provide battery energy storage systems, virtual power plants, and other cost-effective solutions for the region's green economic transition.

Third, China and CEE countries can implement an integrated infrastructure project management model covering investment, financing and construction to promote market-oriented operation and sustainable development of infrastructure projects.

Fourth, scaling up the China-CEE Investment Cooperation Fund can finance green energy, digital economy, logistics and other sectors. By combining syndicated loans with equity financing, the fund can provide full-cycle financial support for major investment projects.

Ma Junchi is an assistant research fellow at the Institute of European Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and Sun Yanhong is a senior research fellow at the same institute. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:57 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:57 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

SAMUEL KOFI DARKWA

Forging a new era

China-Africa cooperation represents a vital partnership that holds great potential for mutual growth and development

The relationship between China and Africa is deeply rooted in a shared historical context marked by struggles against colonialism, neocolonialism and imperialism. This bond has evolved significantly over the years, driven by both historical ties and contemporary needs. Chairman Mao Zedong and Ghana's first president Kwame Nkrumah played pivotal roles in establishing early cooperation, highlighting solidarity that transcends borders. Today, the China-Africa partnership is not merely an extension of historical alliances; it has transformed into a multifaceted and dynamic collaboration aimed at addressing new challenges in development, sustainability and globalization. This modern partnership is characterized by strategic collaborations that focus on sustainable development, industrialization and local empowerment, while navigating the complexities brought about by geopolitical shifts and increasing global interdependence.



In recent years, the China-Africa partnership has increasingly centered on economic development and the urgent need for job creation. According to China's General Administration of Customs, bilateral trade between Africa and China exceeded $348 billion in 2025. Africa is experiencing swift demographic changes, predominantly comprising a youthful demographic eager for employment opportunities. In this context, the necessity for job creation and skills development has never been more critical. China offers a robust model of accelerated industrialization — one that African nations are eager to emulate as they seek to foster their own economic growth. Through initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative, China has made substantial investments in infrastructure projects across the continent. These initiatives not only lay the physical groundwork for economic advancement but also enhance regional connectivity, bolstering intra-African trade and encouraging cooperation among nations that face similar developmental challenges.

Moreover, as African nations confront the imperative of enhancing their economic independence, the push for local processing and value addition to raw materials becomes pivotal. Many African countries seek to move from merely exporting raw materials to developing their own production capabilities. This transition is essential for ensuring that they retain a significant share of the value generated from their natural resources. China stands out as a key partner in this endeavor, providing not only capital investment but also expertise in manufacturing and technology. By facilitating joint ventures in diverse industries such as agro-processing, textiles, and renewable energy, both sides can create significant job opportunities and provide essential skills training for local workforces. This collaboration can lead to a more sustainable economic future, where African nations can thrive independently while benefiting from China's industrial expertise.

China's commitment to Africa extends to a shared focus on sustainable development, particularly in light of the pressing environmental challenges faced globally. Both parties recognize the urgent need to address climate change and its repercussions on their respective economies and populations. Investments in renewable energy projects, including solar, wind and hydroelectric facilities, have become focal points of cooperation between China and African nations. These partnerships not only aim to fulfill rising energy demands but also align with global environmental goals. Through concerted efforts to develop clean energy infrastructure, both China and African countries can collaboratively combat climate change while fostering economic resilience, demonstrating that sustainability and economic development can reinforce each other.

Despite advancements in cooperation, many observers have pointed to challenges that could hinder equitable partnerships. Key issues include debt sustainability, contract transparency and fair benefit sharing. While concerns over a potential debt trap related to Chinese financing often dominate discussions in Western-led media, it should be noted that some African nations carry heavy debts to traditional creditors such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, surpassing the scale of their debts to China. Therefore, it is vital to adopt a balanced view of China's role in Africa's overall indebtedness, acknowledging the broader landscape of external borrowing. Additionally, China's involvement can empower African leaders to negotiate better terms with other partners. Ultimately, sustainable debt management and a focus on developmental outcomes are essential to ensure that cooperation yields real benefits for local communities and ordinary citizens.

As discussions about the future of China-Africa ties continue to evolve, African nations should make use of their collective power to forge agreements that mutually benefit their economic and social development. It is essential to continually update and enhance existing cooperation frameworks, particularly in areas such as technology transfer, promoting people-to-people exchanges and establishing comprehensive dialogue platforms. These platforms should continue to engage a broad range of stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society. By adopting a holistic approach, the partnership can ensure inclusivity and incorporate diverse perspectives, ultimately leading to more equitable outcomes for all parties involved.

Moreover, the ongoing digital revolution provides an unprecedented opportunity for both China and African nations to enhance the effectiveness of their collaboration. Digital technologies, including e-commerce, fintech innovations and digital training initiatives, can pave the way for more inclusive economic growth, particularly in areas where traditional infrastructure may be lacking. By investing in digital infrastructure, China and African countries can unlock new markets and opportunities, further embedding their economic ties. This can also empower local entrepreneurs and promote job creation in sectors where digital solutions can fill existing gaps, thereby driving growth in a manner that is sustainable and equitable.

Looking ahead, a strategic focus on regional integration will be essential for maximizing the benefits of China-Africa cooperation. By strengthening institutions such as the African Union and regional economic communities, African nations can expand their commitments in negotiations with external partners. This cohesive strategy can align with the continent's long-term developmental goals, ensuring that the partnerships formed today serve the interests of future generations. By working together, African countries can realize their potential, enhancing their economic agency and capability to navigate the complexities of global markets.

By emphasizing industrialization, job creation, sustainability and regional integration, both sides can effectively navigate the challenges ahead while building a more resilient economic framework. As Africa seeks to harness its immense potential, it should aim to engage with China and the global community in ways that prioritize local needs of different sides, ensuring that this partnership, built over many years, not only benefits the present but also lays a robust foundation for the future. The pursuit of shared goals, equitable partnerships and a commitment to collective progress will ultimately determine the success of this relationship in the years to come.

The author is a researcher in area studies at Fujian Jiangxia University. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

XU GUOQING

Meaningful engagement

China-Africa cultural exchanges are presenting a new paradigm for global civilizational diversity

In an era marked by escalating geopolitical tensions and a widening deficit of trust, humanity confronts complex transnational challenges, from climate change and public health crises to developmental disparities. These global issues necessitate a departure from zero-sum mentalities, urging the international community to forge new pathways for harmonious coexistence.



In this context, China and Africa — pivotal voices of the Global South, representing nearly one-third of the global population — are collectively demonstrating a compelling alternative through their deepening engagement.

The year 2026, commemorating both the 26th anniversary of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation and the inauguration of the China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges, provides a unique opportunity to deepen the relations. This dual milestone underscores the two sides' commitment to fostering exchanges rooted in equality, mutual learning and win-win cooperation, thereby making indispensable contributions to global civilizational diversity. Their collaborative practice across three interconnected dimensions — values, public goods and future pathways — shows that civilizations thrive through dialogue and mutual enrichment, not conflict.

Historically, inter-civilizational interactions have often been marred by unequal power dynamics, manifesting as a hierarchical "center-periphery" framework that prioritized one-way cultural export. China-Africa cultural exchanges fundamentally challenge this paradigm. Their engagement is predicated on mutual respect and genuine appreciation, fostering dialogue between equals. This is exemplified by the profound resonance between China's philosophy of "harmony in diversity", which advocates embracing differences while seeking common ground, and Africa's widely cherished spirit of Ubuntu, encapsulated by the principle "I am because we are", underscoring the essential bond of collective coexistence.

The 2026 China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges, through its various forums and art festivals, showcases this shared ethos. Together, China and Africa champion a value system that transcends extreme individualism, prioritizing social harmony and collective well-being. This collaborative approach offers invaluable intellectual resources for addressing pressing global challenges such as social fragmentation.

Furthermore, China-Africa exchanges challenge the long-dominant but outdated narrative that conflates modernization with Westernization. Through burgeoning media and audiovisual cooperation, China effectively shares its unique modernization journey with African audiences, while vibrant African cinema, music and literature gain broader exposure via Chinese platforms. This reciprocal showcase powerfully demonstrates that modernization is not a monolithic path but a pluralistic landscape of diverse experiences. The mutual recognition of endogenous development trajectories, deeply rooted in distinct cultural lineages, empowers nations across the Global South to explore models best suited to their specific national conditions, thereby adding new dimensions to the global tapestry of civilizations.

China-Africa cultural exchanges extend beyond theoretical advocacy, actively generating tangible and accessible cultural public goods that significantly enrich the global cultural ecosystem. A prime example is the joint archaeological project in Kenya's Lamu Archipelago. Since the 2005 cooperation agreement, Chinese and Kenyan archaeologists have collaborated extensively, conducting underwater and terrestrial excavations that have unearthed invaluable ancient Chinese blue-and-white porcelain and other artifacts. These discoveries provide concrete evidence of the prosperity of the ancient Maritime Silk Road. The knowledge derived from this two-decade-long collaboration is a shared heritage for all humanity, filling critical gaps in the historical understanding of global maritime trade and China-Africa relations. The digital preservation of African cultural heritage has emerged as a significant new area of cooperation. China is sharing its expertise, honed through projects such as "Digital Dunhuang" with African partners, applying advanced technologies such as 3D scanning, virtual archiving and artificial intelligence-assisted restoration to safeguard Africa's endangered cultural heritage. The global dissemination of these digital achievements allows people worldwide to transcend geographical and temporal barriers, appreciating the splendor of African civilizations.

Moreover, China-Africa media cooperation is actively redressing the long-standing imbalances in global information flows. For too long, Western mainstream media have predominantly shaped narratives concerning China and Africa, often perpetuating prejudice and stereotypes. Initiatives such as the "United in Heart, Path and Action — 2026 China-Africa Partnership Empowerment Action Plan" promote joint interviews, content sharing and personnel training. These efforts significantly amplify the voice of the Global South in the international discursive arena, enabling the world to access more first-hand narratives from diverse perspectives and thereby contributing powerfully to the diversity of the global information ecosystem.

The ultimate significance of civilizational exchange lies in its capacity to shape the future. The most forward-looking contribution of China-Africa cooperation is its proactive cultivation of a new global relational landscape through the empowerment of the younger generation. The 2026 China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges places youth at its core, launching flagship programs such as the "Youth Navigator" initiative. Among these, the China-Africa Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition, which has been successfully held for several editions, is particularly noteworthy. This competition focuses on cutting-edge fields including the digital economy, green technology, modern agriculture and comprehensive health. It encourages Chinese and African youth to form transnational teams and collaboratively develop innovative solutions to real-world problems. The deeper dividends of this initiative extend far beyond mere business partnerships; they foster profound emotional bonds and shared values, shaping a common vision for the future that champions inclusive growth, technology for good and sustainable development. This collaborative and forward-looking approach stands in stark contrast to the obsolete zero-sum and bloc-confrontation mentalities that regrettably persist in certain international quarters.

The 2026 China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges represents far more than a mere collection of scheduled events. It is a milestone that elevates China-Africa relations to a new level. Having successfully navigated stages of political mutual trust and economic mutual benefit, this relationship is now deepening into the highest realm of mutual civilizational appreciation and emotional resonance. Crucially, this resonance does not aim to erase differences. Instead, it embodies the profound vision of renowned sociologist Fei Xiaotong, who urged humanity to "value our own beauty, appreciate the beauty of others and let all beauties coexist in shared harmony".

In a world fraught with multifaceted challenges, China and Africa, two civilizations home to more than 2.8 billion people, are collectively sending a clear and resonant message: civilizational diversity is not a catalyst for conflict but an inexhaustible engine for human progress. Dialogue and exchanges among civilizations are not threats but an essential path toward a safer, more prosperous and more inclusive world. Through their concrete and heartwarming actions, China and Africa are actively translating the vision of a community with a shared future for humanity into tangible reality. It is imperative for the broader international community to observe, understand and draw lessons from this successful model with openness, equality and humility. Only when all civilizations set aside arrogance and prejudice and move toward mutual understanding and learning can humanity truly dispel the shadow of conflict and advance toward a future characterized by rich diversity and lasting peace.

The author is a professor at the Institute of West-Asian and African Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:57 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:57 PM

BUSINESS



New energy vehicles await shipment to overseas markets in Jinhua, East China's Zhejiang province, on Monday.
HU XIAOFEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Global green push spurs demand for nation's NEVs

By **LI JIAYING**
lijiaying@chinadaily.com.cn

430,000 units
China's NEV exports in April, according to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers

Boosted by the growing global appetite for electrified transportation and a rebound in major overseas markets, China's new energy vehicle exports keep gaining momentum, playing an increasingly important role in accelerating the global automotive transition.

According to data from the China Passenger Car Association (CPCA), new energy passenger vehicles accounted for more than half of China's total passenger vehicle exports for the first time in April, reaching 52.7 percent.

The China Association of Automobile Manufacturers (CAAM) also reported that the country's NEV exports reached 430,000 units during the month, up 110 percent year-on-year.

The strong performance comes as consumers worldwide increasingly embrace electric vehicles amid persistently elevated fuel costs.

"The sustained rise in global oil prices has directly increased fuel costs and, in turn, strengthened consumers' willingness to purchase EVs, thus creating favorable market conditions for China's NEV exports," said Gong Min, head of China auto research at UBS.

Cui Dongshu, secretary-general of the CPCA, also said NEV sales outside China totaled 2.63 million units during the first four months, representing a 25 percent year-on-year increase and approaching the average growth rate recorded over the previous two years.

The rebound has been especially visible in major overseas automotive markets. Data released by the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association at the end of May showed that battery EV deliveries in Europe jumped 38 percent year-on-year in April. Meanwhile, figures from Australia's Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries showed that EVs accounted for a record 16.4 percent of the country's auto market in April, while hybrid and plug-in hybrid vehicles together represented nearly one-third of total sales.

Against this backdrop, Chinese brands are gaining increasing traction among overseas consumers amid the accelerating shift toward automotive electrification.

BYD ranked second in the Australian market with an 8.3 percent market share in April, while Chinese automakers collectively accounted for around 30 percent of total vehicle sales in the country during the month. In Europe, Chinese brands' share of the EV market also exceeded 15 percent for the first time in April, according to market research firm Dataforce.

China's leading role in the global NEV sector also remains intact. Latest CPCA data showed that China accounted for 61 percent of the world's new energy passenger vehicle market during the first four months. The country's share of the global battery EV market stood at 56 percent, while its share of the global plug-in hybrid segment reached 71 percent.

Supported by advantages in batteries, electric powertrain technologies and cost competitiveness, Chinese NEVs are becoming increasingly attractive to overseas consumers while helping drive the international automotive industry's transition toward electrification, Gong said.

"China's NEV exports are not only serving the country's own development needs, but are also helping the global market accelerate its electrification transition and achieve greater energy security and independence," he said.

Looking ahead, the CAAM forecasts that the combined scale of Chinese automakers' exports and overseas production is expected to exceed 10 million vehicles annually by the end of the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30), with a compound annual growth of over 10 percent.

Private companies eye larger role in strategic energy

By **ZHENG XIN**
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

China is stepping up efforts to integrate private capital into its strategic energy infrastructure, creating a robust ecosystem for innovation that will power the nation's green transition and its booming digital economy.

The National Energy Administration recently announced plans to better formulate investment guidelines for private enterprises in major energy projects, including hydropower and oil and gas pipelines. This push aligns with the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) for the energy sector, which aims to roll out landmark projects across new energy bases, power grids and technological initiatives.

Private companies have already become a vital force in energy technology innovation. In 2025, all 10 approved nuclear power units introduced private capital, with private shareholding reaching up to 20 percent.

Furthermore, private firms account for 60 percent of newly approved direct green power projects, 45 percent of the nation's 535 virtual power plants, and operate nine of the country's top 10 electric vehicle charging networks.

The success of this mixed-ownership model was recently cemented by the start of commercial operations at Unit 1 of the San'ao Nuclear Power Plant in Zhejiang province. Managed by China General Nuclear Power Group, the region's first Hualong One reactor marks a historic watershed as the country's first privately backed nuclear power project.

Geely Technology Group holds a 2 percent stake in the megaproject, which has collaborated with approximately 2,000 private enterprises since its inception. This sweeping partnership localized 24 key pieces of core equipment for the first time, including nuclear-grade pressure and temperature switches, demonstrating the fierce competitiveness of China's domestic supply chain, said its operator CGN.

The milestone unit is expected to generate over 9 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity annually, meeting the residential demands of more than 1 million people. Crucially, it provides the zero-carbon baseload power necessary to sustain the Yangtze River Delta's energy-intensive data centers.

"The region has the nation's most vigorous demand for computing power and the most complete industrial supply chain, creating an urgent, sustained need for stable, clean and efficient baseload electricity," said Lin Boqiang, head of the China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xiamen University.

As the region accelerates its shift toward an artificial intelligence-driven economy, intermittent renewables like wind and solar alone cannot sustain the immense, 24/7 power requirements of massive data centers, experts noted.

The San'ao project breaks the traditional model of exclusive State investment in nuclear power, Lin added. It proves that mixed-ownership models can inject new financial vitality into strategic infrastructure while allowing private capital to share in the long-term dividends of the green transition.

Energy investment maintained robust growth in the first quarter, with private enterprises deepening their participation in key national energy research initiatives, said Xing Yiteng, deputy director-general of the department of development and planning at the NEA.

To sustain this momentum, the NEA is accelerating the formulation of standard rules for emerging fields, such as computing power and electricity synergy, to enhance the participation of private enterprises in setting industry standards. Market supervision will also be strengthened in sectors like photovoltaics to guide companies toward fair and orderly competition.

Chagee reaps sweet Q1 gains buoyed by overseas biz

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn

Chagee Holdings Ltd reported higher first-quarter revenue as rapid growth in overseas markets and an expanding store network helped offset weakness in domestic sales momentum.

The beverage chain operator said its revenue rose 4.7 percent to 3.55 billion yuan ($525 million) in the three months ended March 31, compared with 3.39 billion yuan a year earlier. Operating income fell 33.3 percent to 547.2 million yuan from 820.8 million yuan in the same period last year.

Chagee continues to expand its footprint, with 7,531 teahouses across China and overseas markets including 7,157 in China and 374 overseas as of March 31, up 12.7 percent from a year earlier. The growth reflects the company's push to strengthen its presence both domestically and internationally amid intensifying competition in the beverage sector.

Apart from its presence in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam and the United States, the company entered the South Korean market in April.

"Our overseas teahouse network maintained a steady growth pace with operating performance in line with our expectations," said Yin Dengfeng, chief operating officer and director of Chagee.

Total gross merchandise value (GMV) generated during the quarter reached 7.92 billion yuan. Overseas markets emerged as a key growth engine, with GMV surging 139 percent year-over-year to 426.4 million yuan. In contrast, GMV in China declined to 7.49 billion yuan from 8.05 billion yuan a year earlier, highlighting increased competition in the company's core market.

Despite the decline in regional GMV, operating metrics in China showed signs of improvement. Average monthly GMV per teahouse climbed to 356,080 yuan during the quarter, a 5.5 percent increase from 337,358 yuan in the fourth quarter of 2025, suggesting stronger sales productivity at existing locations.

The company said the new product launches helped as there were 12 new products that debuted in the first quarter, contributing to sequential growth in both volume and GMV.

In the overseas market, the company launched locally tailored products in different markets, which have played a positive role in improving overall same-store performance. For example, its caramel oolong tea latte in Singapore captured an 18 percent cup share during the campaign period.

Chagee also continued to see growth in memberships. Active members reached 50 million during the quarter, up 11.7 percent from the previous quarter, underscoring the brand's growing customer base and loyalty.

The company's international expansion strategy is beginning to contribute meaningfully to growth. Overseas markets accounted for about 5.4 percent of total GMV during the quarter, compared with a much smaller share a year earlier.

On May 28, the board authorized a $150 million share repurchase program that commenced on Monday.

100 trln yuan govt debt seen as controllable

Nation's 68.2% debt-to-GDP ratio far below Japan's 200%, US' 120%

By **WANG KEJU**
wangkuju@chinadaily.com.cn

China's outstanding government debt has likely topped the 100 trillion yuan ($14.8 trillion) mark, though despite the scale, experts said the overall risk remains "safe and controllable" as the debt burden is moderate by global standards and funded projects are mainly quality assets.

According to the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, the stock of government bonds stood at 99.37 trillion yuan at end-April.

By the end of May, data from Financial China Information and Technology Co showed the figure had climbed to about 101.15 trillion yuan, fueled by years of proactive bond issuance to counter economic headwinds and swap out hidden local debt.

Luo Zhiheng, chief economist at Yuekai Securities, said the country's debt-to-GDP ratio — the most widely used gauge of debt sustainability — stood at 68.2 percent at end-2025, well below that of major developed economies.

Japan's government debt-to-GDP ratio stands at above 200 percent, while the United States' national debt has reached roughly 120 percent of its GDP, said the International Monetary Fund.

"The risk is manageable and sustainable," Luo said. He also pointed out that Chinese government debt is mostly used to build infrastructure such as transport, energy and water conservation infrastructure, creating productive assets that generate long-term returns.

"Those assets both support high-quality development and serve as a source of repayment," he added.

Yuan Haixia, dean of the research institute at China Chengxin International Credit Rating, said China's debt is overwhelmingly domestic, with the household savings rate above 44 percent, providing a stable funding base. Foreign currency debt accounts for only about 5 percent of the total, limiting external vulnerability.

Nevertheless, the experts highlighted region-specific and structural weaknesses that warrant closer attention.

"Some less-developed regions with weak fiscal capacity face liquidity pressure, especially from interest payments," Yuan said. "The resolution of hidden debt is still in a tough phase."

Yuan added that another concern is the diminishing returns on special-purpose bonds, where project revenues often fall short of expectations. "This mismatch reduces the efficiency of debt-financed investment," she said.

Wen Laicheng, a professor at the Central University of Finance and Economics, cautioned that while the current debt level is safe, the rapid growth rate should not be ignored. "We must watch fiscal sustainability," Wen said, adding that China's outstanding government debt has been expanding at an annual rate of more than 10 percent in recent years, outpacing both the country's economic growth and its fiscal revenue growth.

To maintain a balance between economic growth and fiscal health, experts cautioned that the focus must shift from the sheer size of debt to its structure and productivity.

Luo said a reasonable debt scale should be assessed based on three factors: the gap between nominal GDP growth and the interest rate, the returns on the projects funded by debt, and a dynamic fiscal sustainability framework.

"Keeping growth above interest rates is key to preventing a debt spiral," he said.

Yuan called for moving the center of debt management from "adding leverage" to "optimizing leverage". She suggested that the central government should take on more borrowing — through ultra-long term special treasury bonds, for instance — to relieve pressure on local finances.

Within local debt, the share of general bonds should be raised, while special-purpose bonds should be strictly tied to projects with self-sustaining revenues, Yuan said.

Wen emphasized that debt efficiency is equally important. Too much debt has been channeled into physical infrastructure, while spending on health and education — investments in people — has lagged.

"We need to shift from focusing solely on physical assets to a more balanced approach that places equal emphasis on people," Wen said, adding that such a move would boost the multiplier effect of public spending.

Ground-up checks



Employees from the Hudong electric locomotive depot of China Railway Taiyuan Group conduct safety inspections on rail equipment to ensure the safe operation of heavy-haul trains on the Datong-Qinhuangdao Railway as flood season begins. ZHANG LUFEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:57 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:57 PM

BUSINESS



A visitor walks through the international healthcare consumption section of the sixth China International Consumer Products Expo in Qionghai, Hainan province, on April 16. GAO JING / XINHUA

Hainan tropical island hub for global investment

Unique policies, improving infrastructure, coordinated governance and growing openness attracting companies from far and wide

By **MASI** and **CHEN BOWEN**
in Haikou

For Michael Heilig, who is from Germany's federal association for small and medium-sized enterprises, his trip to Hainan province last week felt almost destined.

His Chinese name, "Hai Li Ge", carries a special meaning. "Hai" means sea, "Li" means reason and trust, while "Ge" means character and taste. "I believe these qualities — facing the sea, rationality, character — can be transported to Hainan and reflected in our cooperation," Heilig said.

Heilig was one of more than 100 executives from 19 countries and regions who landed in Hainan on May 25-26 for the International Life and Health Enterprises Hainan Visit event, co-hosted by CITIC Group and the Hainan provincial government. Among them were 80 foreign life-health companies and 105 senior executives from global giants such as Siemens, Pfizer and Novo Nordisk, as well as a host of German "hidden champions".

What brought them here, in the heat of late May, was not the island's famous beaches, though those were a welcome bonus, but the accelerating dividends of the island-wide special customs operations, which kicked off in Hainan Free Trade Port on Dec 18.

For Heilig, the most eye-catching policy is the 30-percent value-added processing rule. "German SMEs are often called 'hidden champions'. The policy we learned about today — 30 percent value-added processing in Hainan allowing tariff-free access to China's mainland — is particularly innovative and appealing," he said.

"Given Hainan's strategic location, it can connect to the huge Chinese mainland market as well as the broader Asia-Pacific and Southeast Asia. This will be very important for German SMEs as they restructure their supply chains under the current economic situation," Heilig added.

More than 20 European companies accompanied Heilig on the trip. "The feedback has been very positive. They are very interested in Hainan, find the policies attractive and are considering the possibility of establishing a presence here — finding their own place in Hainan," he said.

Peter Burnett, chief executive of the China-Britain Business Council, who has visited Hainan several times, put it more bluntly. "Hainan is not just a free trade zone — it's a free trade port, the only one in China. That means the whole island is included, with very low tax rates and low tariffs," Burnett said. "Once you're in Hainan, you're free to operate and you have the ability to access the mainland — it's a launch pad."

Burnett, who led a delegation of British companies, said the 30-percent value-added policy is "of great interest". "Some companies have already set up in Hainan. Success will breed success. I expect more companies to realize the potential."

"For the United Kingdom, 80 percent of our economic output is in services. Many companies in our delegation to Hainan this time are in services — not just financial services, but also engineering, publications, media and creative industries," Burnett added.

The event was not merely a gathering of foreign firms, it was also a demonstration of how Chinese enterprises are facilitating global cooperation. Xi Guohua, chairman of CITIC Group, called Hainan Free Trade Port the highest-level form of China's opening-up.

"The full implementation of Hainan's policies presents historic opportunities for the bio-health industry to integrate into global industrial chains," Xi said. He added that CITIC will leverage its strengths as a multinational conglomerate to serve as a bridge between China and the world, deepening cooperation with Hainan in biomedicine, high-end medical care and wellness services.

To put words into action, CITIC has provided a financing support package exceeding 39 billion yuan ($5.76 billion) to facilitate win-win cooperation during this trip, Xi disclosed.

The success of this event, Xi said, confirms that China is a grand stage and a vast market for investment, Hainan is a new highland and a new gateway for open cooperation, and CITIC is a reliable guide and bridge for global partners.

Xi made three proposals: first, to build an open and win-win island by establishing multi-level cooperation mechanisms; second, to create an innovative and dynamic island by integrating financial resources and strengthening the Hainan-Hong Kong dual-hub linkage; and third, to foster a culturally charming island through publishing, think tanks and media to enhance international cultural exchanges.

While policies attract, execution matters. Li Tao, vice-president of Siemens Healthineers Greater China, said what made this trip different from many others he had attended was the sequencing: site visits first, then discussions.





Middle: Company executives sign contracts at the International Life and Health Enterprises Hainan Visit event in Haikou, Hainan province, on May 26.
Above: Foreign executives talk at the Hainan event in Haikou on May 26. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"In many other events, it is usually meetings first and then site visits. Today, during the discussions, we were able to have very good conversations because we had visited three areas — Haikou, Boao and Sanya — which made the process much more efficient: see first, then discuss," Li said. He summed up Hainan's approach in three words: pragmatic, effective and professional — with an emphasis on efficiency.

On Dec 18, Siemens Energy became the first foreign-invested enterprise to complete registration after receiving its business license at the Yangpu administrative service center in Danzhou, Hainan. The company simultaneously broke ground on a new gas turbine assembly base and service center, a project it described as its first project of its kind in China.

The move marked a milestone manufacturing project demonstrating investor confidence, and came as Hainan launched island-wide special customs operations on the same day.

Joern Schmuecker, senior vice-president, Gas Services Central of Siemens Energy, said: "Establishing a gas turbine assembly base and service center in Hainan aligns perfectly with the free trade port's vision of becoming a new high ground for openness and international cooperation. Together with our partners, we will drive collaborative innovation across the industry value chain, continuously enhance equipment delivery and service capabilities, and build an industrial ecosystem that contributes to energy resilience in China and across the world."

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Meanwhile, French pharmaceutical company Mayoly has also established a presence on the island, while Singapore-based Fullerton Health Group opened Hainan's first wholly foreign-owned hospital.

Companies' enthusiasm is backed by hard data. Since the special customs operations started on Dec 18, Hainan had added 1,004 new foreign firms up to April 29, up 35.86 percent year-on-year.

As of the end of April, Hainan had 12,300 foreign-invested enterprises, with investment sources covering 180 countries and regions.

Feng Fei, Party secretary of Hainan, told a conference last week that the life and health industry is a key pillar of the Hainan Free Trade Port, and the province's excellent ecology, open industrial policies and vast market potential make it uniquely positioned.

"The island province is becoming a new frontier of China's opening-up, a hotbed for mutually beneficial cooperation and a new engine for economic globalization," Feng said. "Choosing Hainan means choosing opportunities. Investing in Hainan means investing in the future."

He emphasized the importance of developing "two bases" — one for Chinese enterprises expanding globally and another for foreign companies seeking access to the Chinese market.

Hainan's negative list for foreign investment is the shortest in the country, Feng said, extending a warm welcome to international investors.

Sean Stein, president of the US-China Business Council, offered a concrete example of how Hainan's new policies are changing investment decisions. "Previously, a major US company that refurbishes used products from Southeast Asia and Japan could not do so in China due to regulations. Now, after the kickoff of island-wide special customs operations, the company is setting up a base in Hainan to renovate and re-export the products globally," Stein said. "That's a big, encouraging change."

Tesla has also seen a surge in activity across its Hainan outlets. A Tesla spokesperson told China Daily that Hainan's ecological advantages and open policy environment make it "an ideal base for promoting green mobility worldwide". Due to the new customs policies and local government subsidies, foot traffic at Tesla's stores in Haikou has risen 20 percent month-on-month.

The influx of foreign businesses is not accidental. Hainan has been systematically improving its business environment. Chen Shuying, an official of the Hainan provincial market supervision administration, said that a series of reform measures have shortened the preparation time for foreign-funded enterprises to invest in Hainan.

The process for foreign enterprises has been changed from "separate handling by different departments" to "integrated processing", compressing the number of procedures from five to one and reducing paperwork by more than 77 percent, Chen said.

In late April, Hainan issued a three-year action plan to improve foreign-related services and the international business environment, introducing 30 specific measures in seven areas. These include extending Hainan's enterprise registration window to Hong Kong and offering customized "one enterprise, one policy" services for key industries.

He Jifeng, deputy director of the Hainan Provincial Department of Business Environment Development, said the action plan aims to create a precise foreign investment service system covering the entire lifecycle of enterprises.

"We will refine annual plans, clarify timelines, strengthen coordinated implementation and put every reform measure and every service scenario into practice — so that more foreign enterprises can invest with confidence, operate with ease and develop with focus in Hainan," said He.

For Heilig, Hainan's progress is still in the early stages, but he is optimistic. "We are watching closely. For German companies, our needs include not only open policies, but also important international infrastructure — education, medical resources and most importantly talent to support business development," he said. "Much work is being done. We believe Hainan will develop well."

When asked whether Hainan could become a new center or model for China-Germany cooperation, Heilig did not hesitate. "I hold a very positive attitude. I believe it will certainly become a new model or benchmark."

That confidence is shared by many. Burnett from the China-Britain Business Council, after a beach walk at sunset, put it simply: "You sometimes forget that you're in an industrial zone. So you can come to work, invest in Hainan and feel like you're on holiday."

Behind that pleasant feeling lies a serious business case. With its unique policies, improving infrastructure, coordinated governance and growing openness, Hainan is steadily transforming from a tropical resort into a genuine hub for global investment, experts said.

Contact the writers at masi@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:57 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:57 PM

CHINA

HK, Almaty to restore direct air ties in 2027

By **ATLAS SHAO** in Hong Kong and **WU KUNLING** in Astana

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region will resume direct flights with Almaty, Kazakhstan's largest city, in the first quarter of 2027 and establish a blood purification product manufacturing base in the Central Asian country.

The agreements were among 43 memorandums of understanding and cooperation deals signed by a high-level trade delegation comprising 40 Hong Kong business and professional leaders and 30 representatives from Chinese mainland enterprises.

Led by Hong Kong SAR Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu, the delegation arrived on Sunday in Kazakhstan, the first stop on a weeklong Central Asia trip.

Speaking to the media on Tuesday in Astana, Kazakhstan's capital, Lee said the 43 MOUs cover the economy and trade, investment, financial services, technology, education, aviation and green finance.

Among the key outcomes was the relaunch of direct flights between Hong Kong and Almaty. Lee said the resumption of flights will make it easier for Hong Kong passengers to travel to Central Asia, the Caucasus region and Eastern European cities via Almaty.

Following Lee's announcement, Hong Kong's flag carrier Cathay Pacific said it plans to launch three flights a week to Almaty in the first quarter of next year.

Lee said the SAR government will also negotiate with Kazakhstan to expand visa-free access for SAR passport holders from the current 14 to 30 days, to facilitate business and tourism.

A Hong Kong capital company and Samruk-Kazyna, Kazakhstan's sovereign wealth fund and national holding company, will jointly invest $100 million to establish a regional blood purification product manufacturing center in Kazakhstan, Lee said.

Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Ltd will assist the Astana International Financial Centre, a leading financial hub in Central Asia and Eastern Europe, in exploring cross-border listings and developing its green finance ecosystem.

Kazakhstan has agreed to accelerate consultations with the Hong Kong SAR on a comprehensive double taxation avoidance agreement and will begin formal negotiations on an investment promotion and protection agreement, laying the foundation for long-term cooperation.

On Tuesday afternoon, the delegation attended a business luncheon aimed at strengthening ties.

Serik Zhumangarin, Kazakhstan's deputy prime minister and national economy minister, said the signed documents form an important basis for further cooperation between Kazakhstan and the Hong Kong SAR.

Li Xiaojun, chairman of Guangzhou Pharmaceutical Holdings Limited, said the delegation could serve as a bridge to the Central Asian market, enabling parties to jointly advance economic development through cutting-edge technologies and biomedicine.

Baidaulet, a 37-year-old Astana resident who studied Chinese in China and regularly uses Chinese social media apps such as WeChat, said he has observed increasingly close relations between China and Kazakhstan. He added that the Hong Kong SAR delegation's visit will bring new opportunities for cooperation, particularly in investment.

Lee will lead the delegation on Wednesday to visit the National Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan and Nazarbayev University. Two Hong Kong universities will sign MOUs with Nazarbayev University to expand exchanges with higher education institutions.

Contact the writers at atlasshao@chinadailyhk.com

Wuhan wall wonder



Visitors take photos at the newly unveiled red wall near the Yellow Crane Tower in Wuhan, Hubei province, on Monday. Positioned much closer to the historic landmark tower, the wall, spanning 40 meters, offers picturesque views of the tower through traditional Chinese-style garden frames, attracting numerous tourists and locals. SONG ZHENTAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

SPP cracks down on Yangtze belt pollution

Yearlong public interest litigation drive will support protection and development

By **YANG ZEKUN**
yangzekun@chinadaily.com.cn

China's procuratorial organs have launched a yearlong public interest litigation campaign to strengthen water pollution control in the Yangtze River Economic Belt, part of broader efforts to protect the country's most important river basin and support high-quality development.

The Supreme People's Procuratorate said on May 20 that the campaign, running from May 2026 to April 2027, will focus on major pollution risks in areas such as agricultural and aquaculture waste, urban and industrial wastewater, tailings management and illegal disposal of solid waste.

The announcement came as the SPP and the Ministry of Ecology and Environment held a seminar in Yibin, Sichuan province, on procuratorial services for the high-quality development of the Yangtze River Economic Belt. The SPP also released a white paper reviewing procuratorial work in the region during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Yangtze River Economic Belt development strategy. The belt covers 11 provincial-level regions, accounting for about one-fifth of China's land area and roughly half of the country's population and economic output.

Ying Yong, prosecutor-general of the SPP, said procuratorial organs should help maintain security and stability along the river and support high-quality development with high-level security.

He urged strict punishment for crimes damaging the Yangtze River Basin's ecology, continued enforcement of the 10-year fishing ban and sustained crackdowns on illegal fishing. He also called for stronger use of damage compensation and punitive compensation systems, as well as coordinated ecological restoration.

Ying said procuratorial organs should better integrate into the broader framework of Yangtze River protection, strengthen coordination between law enforcement and judicial authorities, and improve links between administrative law enforcement, criminal justice, public interest litigation and ecological damage compensation.

"Serving the high-quality development of the Yangtze River Economic Belt is a shared responsibility of law enforcement and judicial organs," Ying said, adding that prosecutors will continue to work with relevant departments and the public to build stronger legal support for Yangtze River protection.

According to the white paper, procuratorial organs handled 274,000 environment and resources cases over the past five years. They approved the arrests of 32,000 people for damaging environmental resources and handled prosecutions involving 169,000 people.

Through specialized case-handling mechanisms and ecological restoration procedures, prosecutors helped protect or restore 23,133 hectares of polluted farmland, forestland, grassland and wetlands, and urged the recovery or cleanup of 15.4 million metric tons of industrial solid waste.

The white paper highlighted that procuratorial organs have increasingly used technology to address difficulties in dealing with tip-offs related to crimes and collecting evidence in river basin cases. A support system combining satellite remote sensing, drones and rapid testing has been improved, while more than 500 rapid-testing laboratories have been built nationwide, basically covering city-level procuratorates in the Yangtze River Economic Belt.

Public participation has also expanded. The SPP's "Yixinweigong" volunteer cloud platform has recruited 126,000 volunteers nationwide, who have submitted 38,000 tip-offs and participated in 40,000 activities, including case consultation, public hearings and follow-up observation.

Focusing on key environmental problems, the SPP has worked with other departments to crack down on illegal fishing in the Yangtze River Basin. It has also carried out special operations with the Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of Ecology and Environment for five consecutive years against hazardous waste crimes and falsified automatic monitoring data.

Because river basin governance involves multiple regions, departments and regulatory links, prosecutors have strengthened integrated case handling and cross-regional cooperation. The white paper said such efforts have helped form a Chinese approach to cross-regional river basin governance through procuratorial public interest litigation. Related experience has also been presented at international forums, including side events at the United Nations Climate Change Conference, and has won widespread attention and high praise.

During the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30), procuratorial organs will maintain strict enforcement against illegal industrial wastewater discharge, illegal dumping of solid waste and other environmental crimes. They will also continue to support the 10-year fishing ban, strengthen biodiversity protection, prevent invasive species, protect farmland and improve supervision over illegal land occupation along the river.

The SPP said prosecutors will also deepen public interest litigation to support green and low-carbon development, while stepping up case handling on issues affecting people's daily lives, including black and odorous water bodies, noise and light pollution, cooking fumes, unpleasant odors and livestock breeding pollution.

Aviation pioneer behind J-8 fighter jet dies at 96

By **ZHAO LEI**
zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

Gu Songfen, one of China's leading aircraft designers and a pioneer in the nation's aviation industry, died of illness on Sunday. He was 96.

Born in February 1930 in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, Gu came from a well-educated family as the second child of two intellectual parents.

At age seven, he witnessed Japanese bombers flying over his home to attack nearby Chinese military barracks. He saw flames and smoke billowing after the raid, and the windows of his home were shattered by blast waves.

"After witnessing those scenes, I formed a wish: to learn to design aircraft when I grow up to help defend my motherland's skies," Gu said in an article he wrote and published in People's Daily in November.

He further wrote that his interest in aviation deepened after his older brother, then a middle school student, brought home a cardboard glider. Gu later began making paper planes with him. At age 10, his uncle gave him a model aircraft as a birthday gift, further strengthening his enthusiasm for aviation.

In 1947, after graduating from middle school, Gu was accepted by Tsinghua University in Beijing, Zhejiang University in Hangzhou and Shanghai Jiao Tong University, all of which he had applied to for studying aeronautical engineering. He chose Shanghai Jiao Tong University due to his brother's death in 1939, which made his mother reluctant to see her only son leave Shanghai.

After graduating in 1951, he was assigned to the central government's aviation industry bureau in Shenyang, Liaoning province, beginning his career in aviation.

Initially, he worked on repairing combat jets damaged during the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea (1950-53), and participated in the reverse engineering and licensed production of Soviet aircraft.

In August 1956, China's first aircraft design organization, the Shenyang Aircraft Design Office, was established. Gu was appointed head of the aerodynamics team, responsible for aerodynamic design of the JJ-1 trainer jet, China's first domestically developed aircraft.

"Before the JJ-1, all Chinese-made aircraft were copies of Soviet models produced under Soviet experts' guidance using original Soviet blueprints with no room for design revisions. Along with veteran aviation experts, I believed that mere replication meant full reliance on foreign technology and the loss of independent initiative. We had to develop China's own aircraft," Gu said in the November article.

However, his university training had focused on propeller aircraft, leaving him with little knowledge of jet design. He had to search for reference materials and teach himself, despite the scarcity of technical publications at the time. Through persistent study, he overcame these challenges and completed his work successfully.

Beginning in 1964, Gu joined the development of the J-8 fighter jet as deputy chief designer and became its chief designer in 1972.

Although the aircraft completed its maiden flight in July 1969, it was plagued by multiple technical problems and was not ready for certification or delivery. One major issue was severe vibration during transonic test flights, posing serious safety risks.



Gu Songfen

When ground tests and simulations failed to identify the cause, Gu flew in the rear cockpit of a chase aircraft, using binoculars and a camera to observe and photograph the J-8 prototype in flight. After three flights, he identified the source of the vibration and proposed targeted fixes. The J-8 was officially approved for production in late 1979.

In 1986, Gu stepped down as chief designer of the J-8II fighter and director of the Shenyang Aircraft Design and Research Institute after being transferred to Beijing by the then Ministry of Aviation Industry. He became deputy head of its science and technology commission.

His work shifted toward strategic research in aviation technology development. He contributed to planning for future advanced aircraft, participated in decision-making for major national projects, and served as a technical consultant or chief expert on multiple programs.

In this role, he led conceptual research on advanced stealth fighters, large passenger aircraft and strategic transport aircraft, helping lay the groundwork for the rapid development of China's aviation industry in the 21st century.

In recognition of his contributions, Gu was elected an academician of both the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Chinese Academy of Engineering in the 1990s. In 2021, he received the State Preeminent Science and Technology Award, China's highest honor for scientists and engineers.

Art treasures



A visitor previews artifacts during a special exhibition at the Hong Kong Palace Museum on Tuesday. The exhibition showcases collections from the Palace Museum, the Hong Kong Palace Museum and the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha. ANDY CHONG / CHINA DAILY

Study maps how human organs form

By **ZHOU WENTING** in Shanghai
zhouwenting@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese researchers have mapped the world's first complete, time-lapse genetic map of human embryos during a critical one-month window of development. The breakthrough allows scientists to move past limited, localized observations to a comprehensive, moving picture of how human organs form.

The study, published recently in the journal Nature, focuses on the period between four and eight weeks after fertilization. Researchers say this data will provide a vital guide for pinpointing the exact origins of birth defects.

The project was a joint effort by Fudan University in Shanghai, Zhejiang University in Hangzhou, and the BGI Life Science Research Institution in Shenzhen, Guangdong province.

Experts have long considered the four-to-eight-week window a research "blind spot". It is notoriously difficult to sustain embryos in a lab at this stage, and standard medical imaging cannot capture precise developmental details.

Yet, the genetic instructions sent during this phase dictate the entire trajectory of human development. Mistakes during this time can result in congenital heart defects, brain development issues, and other conditions. Thus far, older gene-sequencing technologies could not provide a seamless, complete picture of this crucial timeframe.

By analyzing 13 human embryo samples, the team examined 50 organs or anatomical regions and 198 smaller sub-compartments. They successfully mapped how major organs — including the heart, brain, liver, kidneys, and skeleton — grow from scratch. The map answers fundamental scientific questions about exactly when and where specific cells appear, and what chemical signals trigger them to grow.

When looking closely at the heart's pacemaker — the specialized zone that controls the heartbeat rhythm — the study discovered two previously unknown genes, named RORA and KIAA1324L. Lab tests on zebrafish and mice confirmed that these genes are essential for creating pacemaker cells and keeping the heart beating steadily. This finding opens a new door for researching inherited heart rhythm disorders.

The study also redrew the map of early brain development, revealing that neurons — the brain's signaling cells — develop much earlier than previously taught.

"This is a textbook-changing discovery," said Huang Hefeng, a lead scientist on the team and an expert in reproductive medicine with the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

"We also identified the genetic communication networks linked to intellectual development issues," Huang said. "This gives us new insights into the microscopic foundation of neurodevelopmental disorders."

In addition, the research mapped out exactly where and when viral receptors — the specific cellular "docking stations" that viruses use to invade cells — appear in the growing embryo. Huang noted this explains why different organs are vulnerable to specific viral infections at different points in a pregnancy, a finding that carries major clinical value for protecting unborn babies.

Jiang Hua, director of the Obstetrics and Gynecology Hospital of Fudan University, compared the study to a high-precision GPS navigation map. He said it provides vital genetic coordinates for understanding early organ growth and the roots of congenital diseases, which will help doctors improve how they monitor early pregnancies.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:57 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:57 PM

CHINA







Left: Members of the public tour the wheelhouse of *Xin Hong Zhuan*, the world's first intelligent ship that integrates remote control, autonomous sailing and teaching experience, in Haikou, Hainan province, in July last year. LUO YUNFEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE **Center:** An underwater maintenance robot is hoisted to conduct inspection work on a bridge of the Xinxiang-Yanzhou Railway in Jining, Shandong province, in February. GUO XULEI / XINHUA **Right:** A train driver practices in a simulator at a depot in Beijing in December 2024. JIA TIANYONG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Testing out the future of transport

Chinese research teams use digital tools to develop new era of movement

By **LUO WANGSHU**
luowangshu@chinadaily.com.cn

After decades of rapid infrastructure expansion, China is placing greater emphasis on making its vast transport network safer, more efficient and more intelligent through the application of digital technologies.

These developments, including those in the research stage and those already rolled out in the real world, are causing major operational shifts in how things are moved via land, sea and air.

From highways and ports to waterways and deep-sea equipment, researchers are working to solve how to better manage large-scale traffic flows, how to identify risks earlier, how to support safer navigation in complex waters, and how to make critical equipment more reliable and self-dependent.

Roads reading traffic

At the State Key Laboratory of Intelligent Transportation Systems in Beijing's Tongzhou district, researchers are exploring how roads can be made safer, more efficient and less congested.

By using sensing networks and cloud platforms, the researchers are able to enable roads themselves to become an active, responsive participant in the transport network. Via these sensors, roads can provide instant updates to connected vehicles and drivers informing them of accidents, traffic, weather conditions and detours.

"Road to vehicle coordination is not simply about connecting vehicles and roads," said Wang Lin, deputy director of the laboratory and director of the intelligent transport research center at the Ministry of Transport's highways research institute. "It is about changing the way people travel."

Wang said the goal is to make "vehicles understand roads, and roads remind vehicles", so that common bottlenecks in road transport can be mitigated and even avoided altogether.

"In the past, roads were mainly 'read' by people," Wang said. "Now, we are using machines and automated systems to read roads, so that vehicles, roads and cloud platforms can work together."

Another major factor in connecting roads and vehicles together is the reduction of risks caused by human error.

"Human factors are involved in about 95 percent of all traffic accidents," Wang said.

He gave the example of vehicle platooning — "The distance between vehicles may be reduced from the current level of around 200 meters to 20 meters or even 10 meters, which could greatly increase the capacity of a single lane," he said.

Despite China having built one of the world's largest road networks, congestion hot spots are an inevitability, so researchers are working on a shift from building roads to managing them better.

At the Tongzhou laboratory, researchers are testing out these intelligent transport systems to make them reliable enough for real-world use.

In a 250-meter tunnel, rain can be made to fall at the push of a button, while fog, low visibility and water-covered road surfaces can be repeatedly recreated.

Li Zhenhua, a senior engineer at the laboratory, said the facility allows researchers to bring dangerous weather conditions indoors, instead of waiting for them to appear on real roads.

"Extreme weather on real roads is difficult to predict and even more difficult to test safely," Li said. "Here, we can reproduce the same scenario again and again, compare the data and improve the system step by step."

An eight-degree-of-freedom traffic safety simulator with a 360-degree panoramic projection system, surround sound and a motion platform, is used to recreate different vehicle types, roads and weather conditions, including rain, snow, fog and wind. This system allows the researchers to test driving behavior and intelligent transport technologies without exposing vehicles or people to real danger.

The lab also has an automated driving test track covering road scenarios including expressways, urban roads, national and provincial highways, and rural roads. It includes intersections, ramps, toll stations, bus stops and a simulated tunnel, supporting the research, evaluation and demonstration of automated driving technologies.



A robot directs traffic at a crowded crossroad near the West Lake in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, last month. LONG WEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Predicting the way of water

In the port city of Tianjin, researchers are applying a similar logic to water transport by making risks visible before they potentially turn into accidents.

At the Ministry of Transport's Tianjin Research Institute for Water Transport Engineering, a huge wave flume stretches 450 meters long and 5 meters wide. With a water depth of 8 to 12 meters, the flume can produce waves as high as 3.5 meters, simulating some of the most extreme sea conditions.

The flume is used to study coastal engineering disaster prevention, sediment transport, wave-structure interaction and the dynamic response of large floating structures.

Chen Hanbao, chief scientist at the institute, said the flume is useful because coastal engineering projects can develop unexpected problems that can be avoided with wave impact testing.

"Large-scale tests allow researchers to better understand how ports, breakwaters and offshore structures behave under real wave conditions," Chen said.

The same facility also supports the development of intelligent dredging robots.

In the past, dredging often meant removing sediment after it had already accumulated. With a better understanding of tides, currents and sediment transport, precise preventive measures can be enacted.

Dangerous goods

Another lab at the Tianjin institute is looking into ways that the transport of dangerous goods can be handled more safely.

China transports more than 1.4 billion metric tons of dangerous goods through its waterways each year, accounting for about 40 percent of the country's total dangerous goods transport volume.

While they are essential for industrial production and economic activities, these goods also bring risks, especially when cargo is falsely reported, concealed or transported under unsuitable conditions.

According to Lu Linlin, an associate researcher on the institute's safety team, the lab has built a full-process technical support system covering material properties, transport conditions, risk warning and emergency response.

Researchers can simulate temperatures ranging from -40 C to 80 C to test the strength and sealing performance of dangerous goods packaging. A handheld identification device can determine the identity of a liquid within seconds, helping inspectors screen risks earlier.

For port safety, the key is not to find out what a dangerous material is after something goes wrong. Rather, it is to know before the cargo enters the transport chain what it is, whether it can be transported, how it should be packed and under what conditions it may become unsafe.

At the Tianjin institute's navigation safety lab, data on adjacent Bohai Bay's wind, waves, currents and tides are displayed in real time. An intelligent platform supports safe port entry for fully loaded 400,000-ton vessels, night navigation for 200,000-ton vessels and emergency night entry for liquefied natural gas carriers.

Smart technologies are steering waterway management from experience-based judgment to data-driven coordination.

Ship to shore

At Dalian Maritime University in Dalian, Liaoning province, this focus has extended from ports and waterways to intelligent shipping and deep-sea equipment.

The university and China COSCO Shipping have co-developed the *Xin Hong Zhuan*, the world's first intelligent ship that integrates remote control, autonomous sailing and teaching practice.

In June last year, the vessel embarked on a landmark 4,000-nautical-mile mission to test its smart systems, as well as the university's shore-based digital platform.

The platform serves as a "shore-based cockpit" for intelligent vessels. In open waters, ships can rely more on autonomous systems; in narrow waterways, bad weather or emergencies, shore-based operators can provide remote support or take control.

Yin Yong, a professor at Dalian Maritime University's Navigation College, said the system can give captains real-time advice on speed and course, while also supporting autonomous navigation in open seas.

"It is not just a system on shore," Yin said. "The laboratory has one set, and the vessel has one set as well. The two sides can work together. The system can advise the captain what speed to take, what course to follow and, when the ship reaches the open ocean, support autonomous navigation."

Yin said intelligent shipping is not simply about installing sensors on vessels or removing crews overnight. Instead, it is about building coordination among ships, shore-based platforms, AI systems and human operators.

In deeper waters, Chinese researchers are also pushing forward with domestically developed deep-sea equipment. A full-ocean-depth winch system developed by a team led by Li Wenhua, a professor at Dalian Maritime University, is providing a "lifeline" connecting scientific research vessels with deep-sea equipment.

"Lowering equipment into the deep sea is like flying a kite at a depth of 10,000 meters," Li said. The cable must be light, strong, stable and orderly, while also transmitting power, control signals and images, and safely retrieving samples.

The technologies seen in these laboratories are not confined to research papers or demonstration screens. Many have already been applied in highways, ports, waterways, ship operations and deep-sea exploration, offering practical solutions to real challenges facing China's transport system.

As AI, intelligent sensing, digital platforms and advanced equipment move into real transport scenarios, China's transport development is entering a stage focused on extending infrastructure networks and improving the intelligence, safety and resilience of the entire system.

Dalian university trials latest marine technology

By **LUO WANGSHU**
in Dalian, Liaoning

In waters near Zhangzi Island in Dalian, Northeast China's Liaoning province, a yellow underwater robot moves steadily beneath the surface. With 12 thrusters, binocular cameras and a flexible robotic arm, it identifies sea cucumbers, sea urchins and scallops, then completes a grab within seconds.

The experiment, supported by Dalian Maritime University's smart ocean information technology innovation platform, shows how laboratory research is being applied to real production scenarios.

For marine ranches, such machines could change a long-standing model that relies heavily on divers, who are constrained by depth, weather and safety risks.

Researchers said one vessel equipped with several robots could support round-the-clock operations with fewer workers, reducing both labor intensity and operational risk.

"Pain points in marine production are exactly where new quality productive forces can play a role," said Yuan Guoliang, a faculty member at the university's School of Information Science and Technology.

The team is developing underwater optical communication technology, using LED light to transmit data and video over short distances — a system researchers describe as a form of "underwater Wi-Fi". Such technology could help underwater robots work together more efficiently and reduce their dependence on heavy cables.

The same push toward practical application is being seen in intelligent shipping.

At the university's shore-based digital operation and control center for intelligent ships, the navigation status, engine data and surrounding sea conditions of China's *Xin Hong Zhuan* are displayed in real time. The vessel is the world's first intelligent ship designed for both research and maritime teaching practice.

Yin Yong, a professor at the university's Navigation College, said the system is not meant to replace captains, but to provide an additional layer of support.

"It can advise the captain on speed and course in real time," Yin said. "In open waters, it can also support autonomous navigation. The shore side and the ship side each have a system, and the two can work together."

This model of ship-to-shore coordination is viewed as a practical step toward intelligent shipping.

For ship operators, the value lies not only in remote control but also in better information. A vessel's operating condition could be monitored continuously, its route could be optimized, and risks could be assessed before they developed into emergencies.

Beyond intelligent ships, Chinese researchers are also working to reach deeper waters.

Li Wenhua, a professor at the university's Marine Engineering College, leads the development of full-ocean-depth winch systems that have already been used in China's deep-sea scientific research. The systems support seabed sampling, deep-sea towing and remotely operated underwater vehicle operations — tasks that are essential for marine research but difficult to carry out reliably in extreme conditions.

A winch system that his team has developed has retrieved samples from 7,762 meters below the sea surface. The team has also developed a full-ocean-depth electro-optical cable winch system and a full-ocean-depth trace metal CTD winch system, which have been tested in deep-sea and polar missions.



The *Xin Hong Zhuan* ship is delivered to Dalian Maritime University at a shipyard in Dalian, Liaoning province, in July 2024. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

During one Arctic operation, the cable froze in temperatures of around -30 C, and the equipment jammed. Li and his team worked in wind and snow for nearly two hours before the system was fixed. He later wrote a few words in his log: "Polar verification passed".

The note was brief, but captured the larger meaning of the work. Testing advanced maritime equipment not only in laboratories, but also in real conditions where it is expected to operate.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:57 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:57 PM

All about Gen Z

Z WEEKLY

From smart port to shared future

Young representatives from more than 10 countries explore Rizhao's maritime development, cultural heritage and industrial innovation.



Students and media professionals from more than 10 countries take part in the 2026 China-Overseas Gen Z Dialogue and Exchange Event, held in Rizhao, Shandong province, from May 26 to 29. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By ZHAO RUIXUE
in Rizhao, Shandong
zhaoruixue@chinadaily.com.cn

Before visiting Rizhao Port in Shandong province, Yoosadiang Thamonwan from Thailand had imagined a typical industrial port: noisy, gritty and dominated by steel and heavy machinery.

But what she saw instead was a fully automated container terminal operating in near silence: driverless trucks moved steadily across the wharf while remote-controlled cranes loaded and unloaded containers with precision.

Yoosadiang, an economics student at Zhejiang University, was one of the young representatives, journalists and content creators who joined the 2026 China-Overseas Gen Z Dialogue and Exchange Event, held in Rizhao from May 26 to 29. Participants came from more than 10 countries, including Germany, Russia, the United States, Myanmar, Mongolia, Madagascar and South Africa.

Co-hosted by China Daily 21st Century Media and the Rizhao municipal authorities, the four-day program took participants to the city's port, coastline, sports venues, tea gardens and factories. Through these visits, they explored how Rizhao is trying to turn its maritime resources into a platform for trade, ecological restoration, cultural exchange and youth dialogue.

"May global youth share Rizhao's inspiring journey of maritime development from their own generational perspective and let cross-cultural exchanges take root and flourish along this blue coast," said Zeng Qingkai, secretary-general of China Daily, at the opening ceremony.

That ambition came into focus at Rizhao Port, where participants watched containers being lifted, transferred and sorted with little visible human intervention.

"In textbooks, I often learn terms like tariffs and supply chains. But standing here today at the port, I finally see how it connects people's daily lives with global trade," said Ye Kyaw Thu from Myanmar, an international trade student in China.

From the port, the group cycled along the Rizhao Sunshine Coast Greenway, a 28-kilometer coastal path running between beaches, pine forests and wetlands. Along the way, they saw residents collecting seafood, camping and playing beach volleyball.

It was hard to imagine that just five years ago the area had been a barren stretch of saline-alkali wasteland, scarred by gullies.

"During construction of the greenway, local builders worked with great care, following the principles of not disturbing a single pine tree, polluting the beach, damaging the reefs or disrupting the surrounding waters," said Wang Yaping, a young resident who took part in the project.

Today, Zhangbei Bay, which adjoins the greenway, maintains excellent nearshore water quality year-round. The local population of the critically endangered Chinese crested tern has grown to 46, while more than 2,000 fishing families have shifted from traditional fishing to tourism-related businesses such as guesthouses, turning the restored bay into a source of sustainable income.

> "In textbooks, I often learn terms like tariffs and supply chains. But standing here today at the port, I finally see how it connects people's daily lives with global trade."
>
> **Ye Kyaw Thu,** a Myanmar student in China

The same coastline has also helped shape Rizhao's identity as a city of water sports. At the Rizhao Olympic Water Sports Town, the group tried dragon boat rowing, an activity that quickly became a lesson in coordination.

As the drumbeats quickened, participants from different cultural backgrounds gripped their oars and paddled across the lagoon. Their strokes were uneven at first, and the boat rocked from side to side. But they soon found their rhythm under the drummer's command.

"Although we come from different countries, rowing the dragon boat made us feel like family in an instant," Yoosadiang said.

Rizhao is also expanding its wider sports calendar. According to the city government, it plans to host more than 100 provincial- and national-level sporting events this year, spanning ball games, track and field, cycling, road running, water sports, and ice and snow sports. The goal, officials said, is to build a year-round sports scene that involves residents of all ages.

The cultural part of the program took participants to a local tea garden, where they walked through terraced fields and tried their hand at picking "one bud and one leaf" — the standard for high-quality green tea.

They also watched the hand-frying technique used to make Rizhao Green Tea, a provincial-level intangible cultural heritage practice, and learned how young tea artists are presenting traditional tea culture in new forms, including charcoal-stove brewing and tea-based mixed drinks.

"From picking to frying to drinking, the intangible cultural heritage of Chinese tea gardens reflects long-term cultural, ecological and social sustainability," said Veldesen Yaputra from Indonesia. He noted that it offers a model of sustainable development worth further exploration.

The group also visited one factory of Wuzheng Group, a manufacturing company. There, they watched industrial robots carry out precision welding, saw intelligent assembly lines in operation and viewed products including high-horsepower tractors.

"I truly admire how 'Made in China' can satisfy so many people," said Sophie Steinecke from Germany. "Chinese manufacturing gives many people the opportunity to buy the products they need."

By the end of the trip, Rizhao was no longer just a stop on an exchange program, but a living example of how a coastal city can connect industry, nature, culture and people across borders.

Deep Dive

As AI companions become increasingly common worldwide, their emotional and social implications have drawn growing public concern.

In China, the recent release of the Interim Measures for the Administration of Anthropomorphic AI Interactive Services (2026) marks a national effort to regulate AI companions and protect users, especially minors and older adults.

This commentary introduces the Human-Machine Sociality Quadrants, a digital literacy framework designed to help young people identify the differences between humans and AI in providing social connection, and to navigate a healthy digital life with AI companions.

Teaching youth to navigate AI companionship

AI companions have become part of daily life worldwide. Platforms such as Replika and Character.AI, as well as Chinese apps including Doubao, Xingye and Maoxiang, are popular among young users seeking emotional support amid digital loneliness.

Unlike social media, AI companions offer direct, round-the-clock support and constant affirmation, creating a form of seemingly conflict-free and unconditional companionship.

It is against this backdrop that China recently issued the Interim Measures for the Administration of Anthropomorphic AI Interactive Services (2026). The document aims to balance regulation and innovation by advocating an inclusive and prudent approach, with categorized and tiered rules to guide anthropomorphic AI interactive services toward healthy and positive development.

For both administrators and educators, the boundary between the benefits and risks of AI companions remains under discussion.

Our ongoing research on human-AI relationships reveals distinct relational patterns with both clear benefits and hidden costs. For young people facing mental distress, loneliness or family conflicts, AI companions can help them through moments of crisis. One user noted, "The love I received from AI is actually the love from all humankind," seeing AI as a product of human civilization rather than something alien.

Yet long-term reliance also brings risks. Users may make one-sided emotional investments, develop unrealistic feelings of safety while overlooking data privacy concerns and apply impossibly high AI standards to human relationships.

Globally, some extreme cases involving youth suicide linked to AI interactions have also emerged, highlighting dangers that cannot be ignored.



Jindong Liu

Regulation is vital, but it is not enough. Education must complement regulation by helping young people relate to AI with awareness and critical understanding. Schools and families need to cultivate a new form of AI literacy that goes beyond technical competence and focuses on social competence.

In our latest study, we introduced the Human-Machine Sociality Quadrants (HMSQ), which can be a useful tool for educators and regulators in developing AI literacy and addressing AI-related risks.

The framework maps social capabilities across four categories: what both humans and AI can do socially; what humans can do but AI cannot; what neither humans nor AI can do; and what AI can do socially while humans cannot.

For example, in our study of mainstream chatbot companions, including ChatGPT and Doubao, we found that social capabilities can be classified as human-only, AI-only or shared by humans and AI.

Human-only capabilities include reciprocity, shared life experiences and physical intimacy. AI-only capabilities include unlimited availability, endless patience and constant affirmation. Shared capabilities include active listening, understanding and conflict resolution.

These categories can be clearly mapped in the HMSQ diagram to show the differences and similarities between humans and machines.

This framework helps educators, regulators and young people think through several critical questions: How do humans and AI overlap in areas where they share similar social functions? How can educators highlight what makes human relationships unique? And how should AI-only capabilities be regulated?

Educational initiatives should also expose the commercial motives behind these platforms. Many AI companions are designed to maximize engagement, not well-being. Schools and families should therefore create spaces where young people can practice essential relational skills: navigating disagreement, tolerating uncertainty and sustaining mutual effort. These are capacities no algorithm can teach and no meaningful relationship should lack.

Written by Jindong Liu, assistant professor, and Liang Cao, postdoctoral fellow, at The Education University of Hong Kong; Shuyi Pan, lecturer at Shanghai International Studies University; Bibo Lin, assistant professor at Texas A&M International University; and Angel M. Y. Lin, chair professor at The Education University of Hong Kong.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:57 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:57 PM

Z WEEKLY

Editor's note:

From exploring the depth of Chinese history at the Great Wall to discovering the flavors of Cantonese cuisine in Guangdong province, young Americans have captured their impressions of China through their own eyes.

These moments are part of the second "My Trip to China" Short Video Contest, hosted by the Chinese Consulate General in San Francisco. The contest attracted more than 400 teachers and students from schools across the United States, with over 50 videos submitted.

The five stories featured here offer a glimpse into young Americans' firsthand observations, personal connections and the growing influence of China-US youth exchanges.

Seeing China through young eyes

Young Americans share firsthand impressions of China through videos highlighting culture, history and people-to-people exchanges, **Gui Qian** reports.

Online
Watch the video by scanning the code.

A book comes alive

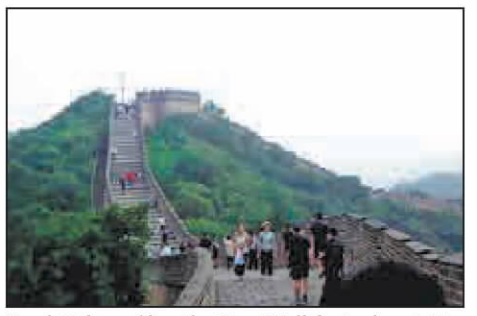
For Sarah Golovey, her journey to China began not only with a plane ticket, but also with a book.

Her video opens with a volume about China, filled with pictures and descriptions of famous landmarks and cultural landscapes. But the story soon moves beyond the printed page and into real life: Golovey, an Asian studies major, travels to China herself and sees what she had previously only learned from textbooks.

"To study a place and to know it intimately are two different things," she said in the video. She explained that people are often warned not to meet the things they have long admired, for fear that reality may disappoint them. But for her, China proved the opposite.

Her video presents China through a lens that is both academic and emotional. She visits a *hanfu* shop, enjoys a *guzheng* performance, walks through the high-rise streets of Beijing's CBD and climbs the Great Wall. She also takes in mountains, rivers and a multi-arch stone bridge that reflects the elegance of classical Chinese bridge-building.

After experiencing what she describes as "magic" moments in China, Golovey concludes her video by saying the country exceeded her expectations. The more China revealed itself, she said, the more she felt that seeing it in person had deepened rather than diminished her admiration.



Sarah Golovey films the Great Wall during her visit to Beijing.

Between worlds, finding home

Samantha Tsang was invited to China through a youth exchange program inspired by the legacy of the Flying Tigers.

During World War II, the Flying Tigers, formally known as the American Volunteer Group, became a powerful symbol of China-US cooperation in the face of shared adversity. Today, youth programs seek to carry that spirit forward through people-to-people exchanges.

Tsang's video traces an emotional journey. As a first-generation Chinese American, she used the two-week trip to explore what it means to live "between worlds". Her reflection centers on identity, capturing both the excitement and nostalgia of encountering a country that felt at once familiar and unfamiliar.

For her, China was not just a destination but also a mirror. From traditional folk dances to an advanced suspended monorail, she saw how "the past, present and future can coexist in a single moment".

"In a reality that often feels intangible and ever-changing, people-to-people exchanges rooted in our shared humanity matter more than ever," she said in the video.



Samantha Tsang visits the Guishan TV Tower in Wuhan, Hubei province.



Jonah Tan (center) spends Christmas with friends in Beijing. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Winter deepens cultural roots

At the end of 2024, Jonah Tan took part in a camp program at Tsinghua University that combined academic study with travel. Looking back on the experience, Tan described the trip as "nothing short of amazing".

The program gave him a close look at academic life at one of China's top universities. At Tsinghua, he attended a dozen lectures on subjects ranging from artificial intelligence to psychology. He also had the chance to speak with senior Tsinghua students, who shared advice on future plans and academic paths — guidance that proved valuable to him.

The experience extended far beyond the classroom. Tan traveled to Northeast China and visited Changbai Mountain in Jilin province, where the winter scenery left a deep impression. In his video, the snowy landscape is paired with a poetic lyric: "After drinking from the Songhua River and witnessing the beauty of rime ice, I long for that dazzling world of pure white."

Tan also spent Christmas in Beijing, celebrating with local friends, a moment that made the trip feel even more personal.

As someone who is half-Chinese, he said the journey deepened his connection to Chinese culture "in ways he had never imagined".

Contact the writer at guiqian@i21st.cn

A city full of surprises

For Liam Wilcox, Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong province, was once little more than a mysterious name. But after spending a summer there, the young American was surprised to discover what he described as "an indispensable metropolis" — and a place he would "never forget".

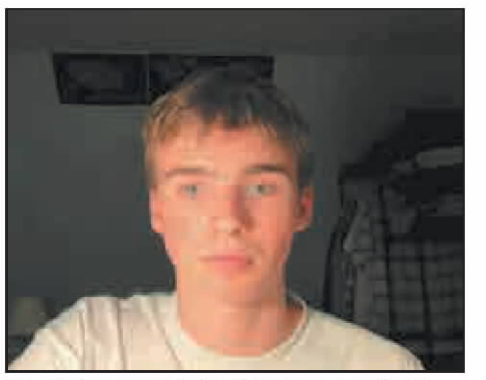
Wilcox joined an international exchange program at South China University of Technology in Guangzhou. In his video, he recounts his trip in fluent Chinese, making the language itself one of the most impressive parts of his story.

Reflecting on Guangzhou's history, he highlights the city's location along the Pearl River and its long-standing role as a center of trade. He also learned that many Cantonese people migrated to the US during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), helping shape the Chinese cuisine that many Americans know today.

"I had not expected Guangzhou to be so deeply connected with my own country," Wilcox said in the video.

Food became one of the strongest threads running through his memories of the city — from hot soy milk in the morning to afternoon tea with friends and late-night snacks.

"Guangzhou is full of surprises around every corner," he said.



Liam Wilcox recounts his China journey in fluent Chinese on camera.

Reading China through motion

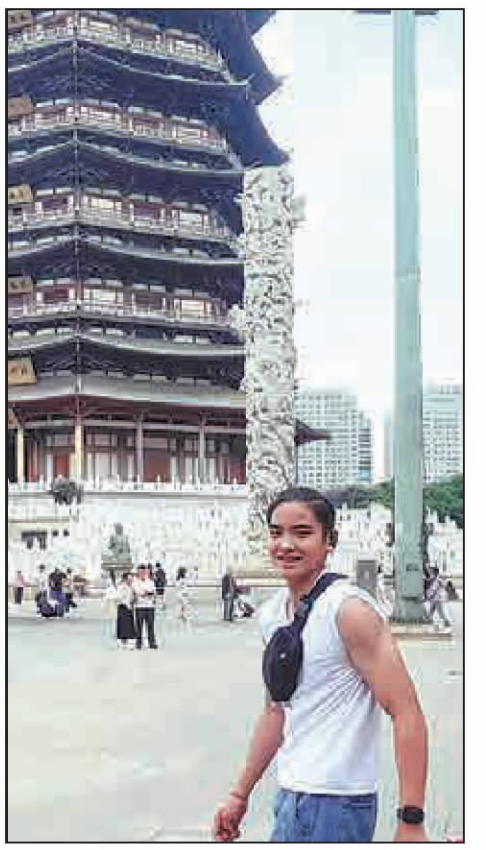
While many travelers remember a trip through food, sightseeing or shopping, Joshua Saul found himself recording China through movement. Rather than treating exercise as separate from travel, he used walking, stretching and brief pauses for reflection as a way to feel the rhythm of each city.

In Suzhou, Jiangsu province, for example, he moved slowly through classical gardens and along slightly wet stone-paved paths. At quiet moments during the visit, he added simple movements such as push-ups and stretching, using them less as a workout than as a way to stay present in the setting.

In Shanghai, he chose to meditate near the Oriental Pearl Tower by the Huangpu River, closing his eyes amid skyscrapers and the energy of the modern city.

"This trip to China made me understand fitness isn't limited to the gym," Saul said.

For him, every step became part of the journey, helping him remember "the temperature of each city, its heights and its story". He came to see that movement could be another way of reading a place — through its landscapes, history and everyday pace.



Joshua Saul exercises at scenic spots during his trip across China.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:57 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:57 PM

Z WEEKLY



Lin Yu-chi (left) sits outside the bakery he runs with his wife, Tao Jiabao, in Wuhan, Hubei province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Baking becomes belonging

Through Taiwan-style bread and local Wuhan flavors, a baker creates quiet connections across the Taiwan Strait.

By LIU KUN in Wuhan
and **XIONG XINYI**

At around 4:30 am, while much of the city is still asleep, Lin Yu-chi, a baker from Tainan, Taiwan, begins his day alongside his wife, Tao Jiabao. Together, they run a small bakery in Wuhan, Hubei province. Over the years, Lin's life has come to revolve around flour and yeast.

At the bakery, Lin takes on the most physically demanding tasks: mixing, kneading and controlling fermentation. Tao prepares ingredients, manages orders and bakes. With no employees, the couple handles every step themselves, from flour to shelf, each task tightly linked, leaving little room for pause.

The rhythm now feels natural to Lin, though it was not what he had expected when he first arrived on the Chinese mainland in 2015.

Lin landed in Shanghai with only 900 yuan ($130.41) and many misconceptions shaped by media reports, imagining the mainland as underdeveloped and inconvenient. But his first impression quickly challenged those assumptions.

"The city was filled with skyscrapers, and mobile payments and ride-hailing services were incredibly convenient," he recalled.

Lin eventually chose to settle in Wuhan because of love. His relationship with Tao, a Wuhan native, gave him a reason to stay and build a life there.

The bakery began in a community garage. The first loaf they sold was a simple toast, and their earliest customers were neighbors. It was that support, Lin said, that gave him the confidence to carry on.

Later, Lin and Tao scraped together savings and borrowed money to move the business into a proper commercial storefront. In 2025, they opened their shop on Taibei Road.

For Lin, the location held a special familiarity. As someone from Taiwan, the street name — written with the same Chinese characters as Taipei — felt close to home. The surrounding neighborhood, where many Taiwan residents live, also had the kind of community atmosphere he wanted for the bakery.

That sense of familiarity also shaped what he baked. The shop's best-sellers include Taiwan-style crispy chicken and sausage bread, rice bread and shrimp roll bread made with ingredients brought from Taiwan.

Lin also tried to combine Taiwan flavors with local Wuhan tastes, but not every experiment succeeded. In one early attempt, he followed a popular trend and turned Wuhan's *reganmian* (hot dry noodles) and crayfish into bread. But the dough absorbed too much oil from the noodles, and the crayfish filling fell out of place.



> Seeing them bring their children in to buy bread, catching up on their lives, and feeling that sense of human connection — that is the warmest motivation that keeps me going every day."
>
> **Lin Yu-chi,** a baker from Taiwan

Tao's local palate also helped guide him. She often encouraged Lin to tone down the sweetness he was used to.

After testing many versions with regular customers, Lin gradually found a more balanced approach, using Taiwan ingredients as a foundation while incorporating the salty, savory and mildly spicy flavors preferred by local tastes.

One standout success was his tomato, cumin and pineapple bread, paired with cuttlefish and shrimp cakes sourced from Taiwan — a combination that quickly became a favorite.

Yet for Lin, the most meaningful part of the day is not the business itself.

"The moment I look forward to most is running into familiar faces who stop by to chat," he said. "Seeing them bring their children in to buy bread, catching up on their lives, and feeling that sense of human connection — that is the warmest motivation that keeps me going every day."

Over the years, Lin has built lasting relationships with many of the people who walk through his bakery doors.

One longtime customer, a Wuhan local who has supported the bakery since its early days, still visits every week or two after its move to Taibei Road. When things get busy, she even helps with packing, sales and checkout.

Another story that stays with him is that of a woman who works in Kenya. Whenever she returns to China, she makes a special trip to the bakery and buys bread to have it shipped to Kenya via Guangzhou. She once told Lin that the familiar taste was her greatest comfort whenever she felt homesick.

Through his years in Wuhan, Lin has witnessed not only the development of the city's infrastructure and innovation capacity, but also its growing support for young entrepreneurs from Taiwan. He has also felt its cultural atmosphere become more open and welcoming.

"I have gone from being a stranger to feeling that this place is truly home," he said.

For Lin, that feeling extends beyond his own experience. Taiwan residents often visit his bakery, finding the taste of home in his bread while sharing stories of their own lives on the Chinese mainland. In those conversations, Lin sees a quiet sense of mutual support among people living far away from where they began.

He often thinks of Wuhan in the early morning: steaming bowls of hot dry noodles, people hurrying through the streets, ordinary scenes filled with purpose.

To young people from Taiwan considering opportunities on the mainland, Lin's message is simple. "Don't overthink it — just come and do it," he said. "Set aside any sense of superiority and immerse yourself in local life. With your own two hands, you can build a future here."

Contact the writers at liukun@chinadaily.com.cn

Young performers celebrate Children's Day at Beijing gala

By MENG WENJIE
mengwenjie@i21st.cn

On the evening of May 31, 13-year-old Yang Guangyu lifted a *lusheng*, a traditional Miao reed-pipe instrument, and took a deep breath. Moments later, those clear, resonant notes echoed through the National Center for the Performing Arts in Beijing.

"The cultures of China's ethnic groups are all beautiful," Yang said. "I'm proud to share the traditions of my own with more people."

Yang was among the young performers at the eighth annual "We Grow Together: My Country and Me" gala celebrating International Children's Day.

Jointly organized by the China Soong Ching Ling Foundation, the China Welfare Institute and the NCPA, the program brought together more than 1,000 children and teenagers.

Yang was one of 10 students from Zhouxi Primary School in Kaili in the Qiandongnan Miao and Dong autonomous prefecture, Guizhou province. They performed the Miao Lusheng Dance, a practice listed as part of China's national intangible cultural heritage in 2006.

Though only 13, Yang has spent the past two years learning the instrument. To prepare for the gala, he and his classmates rehearsed for nearly six months.

"The venue is so large and impressive," he said. "The moment I arrived, I felt all the hard work had been worthwhile."

At Zhouxi Primary School, the Lusheng Club has been running for 11 years, said instructor Pan Fujian.

"Students begin learning the instrument and the dance in first grade. Even their between-class exercises include the distinctive dance steps," Pan said.

Among the youngest performers was 10-year-old Wu Xingqiao, who said she initially found practice difficult.

"The movements must be bold and energetic, otherwise the dance loses its natural beauty," she said.

When Wu learned she would perform in Beijing, she was "both surprised and excited". It was her first time away from her hometown and parents.

Pointing to her costume, she said the embroidery was hand-stitched, the phoenix-shaped headdress was made of silver ornaments, and the fabric was dyed using traditional techniques.

"These crafts are not easy to make. I hope more people can see the effort behind them," she said.

The gala also featured children from Uygur, Kazak, Tujia and other ethnic groups. Through music and dance, they showcased ethnic traditions, revolutionary heritage, cultural diversity and China's modern achievements.



Students from Fu Luen School in Macao perform a space-inspired dance during the "We Grow Together: My Country and Me" gala at the National Center for the Performing Arts in Beijing on May 31. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

In the final chapter, the performance turned toward the future, as children from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan presented technology-themed performances.

Among them were 22 dancers from Fu Luen School in Macao. Aged 8 to 12, they performed a modern dance inspired by space exploration. Nine-year-old Chan Puicheng played a curious girl traveling through space, while 12-year-old Lao Chi-kei portrayed an astronaut accompanying her across the solar system.

For Lao, it was her second appearance in the gala. "The last time I came, I was being taken care of by older students," she said. "This year, I'm helping younger teammates. I feel I've become more independent."

Eighteen-year-old breakdancer Oscar Kwok, born in Hong Kong and raised in Beijing for nine years, attended with eight dancers from Youth Outreach, a Hong Kong youth service organization.

"My mother is from Beijing. This event gave me a chance to return to my hometown, so I'm very excited," Kwok said.

During rehearsals, he met two 11-year-old dancers from a mainland troupe who had already trained for five years. He was struck by their dedication.

"The communication really brought us closer," Kwok said. "I couldn't believe children much younger than me were already so experienced."

Chen Yan, an 18-year-old breakdancer from Hong Kong, agreed. In Hong Kong, she usually measures her progress against familiar peers. "But coming to Beijing gave me a much broader stage," she said. "I've seen more dancers and styles, which helped me understand where I can keep improving."

Beyond rehearsals, the young performers also visited cultural, technological and historical landmarks in Beijing, including the Palace Museum, tech company Tencent and the Former Residence of Soong Ching Ling.

Chan Ka-ling, executive director of Youth Outreach, said the Beijing trip went far beyond the performances themselves.

"Back in Hong Kong, students learn about history from textbooks, but here they experienced it firsthand," she said. "The event also gave them an opportunity to express their love for the motherland through shared dance and music, creating memories that will become a meaningful part of their growth."

Online
Watch the video by scanning the code.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:57 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:57 PM

SPORTS

SOCCER

10 TO WATCH AT WORLD CUP

Two of soccer's all-time greats will likely make their final bows on the sport's biggest stage at the 2026 World Cup. Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo can finally pass the baton on to a new generation including Spain's Lamine Yamal. Kylian Mbappe — who was only 19 when he won the World Cup with France in 2018 — will be hoping to confirm his place as the heir-apparent to Messi and Ronaldo. Here are 10 players to watch at this year's World Cup.



Lionel Messi

The magnificent Messi finally achieved his career ambition in Qatar four years ago by leading Argentina to World Cup glory and emulating national icon Diego Maradona.

With it, Messi effectively completed the soccer grand slam, winning the top titles for club, country and individually. Since Qatar, he has moved to the United States to make Inter Miami the dominant force in MLS, winning the MLS Cup last year.

His status as the greatest player of all time is still debated, with Maradona and Pele considered his main rivals for that title. But back-to-back World Cups — which Pele achieved in 1958 and '62 —would further strengthen his case.

Messi, however, has given Argentina a scare just two weeks ahead of the World Cup. The 38-year-old was substituted in an Inter Miami game and diagnosed with "an overload associated with muscle fatigue in his left hamstring". No timeline was given for his recovery.

Cristiano Ronaldo

Ronaldo is still waiting for the one trophy that has eluded him in his glittering, record-breaking career.

The Portugal star heads to the World Cup after leading Saudi club Al Nassr to the domestic league title this season. That trophy adds to league titles with Manchester United in England, Real Madrid in Spain and Juventus in Italy, along with five Champions League trophies (four with Madrid, one with United).

He has also won the European Championship with Portugal and two UEFA Nations League titles. His 143 goals is a record in men's international soccer and nobody has scored more than his 41 in World Cup qualifiers.

Even at the age of 41, his hunger for trophies and records shows no sign of relenting.



Kylian Mbappe



Ousmane Dembele



Erling Haaland



Lamine Yamal

Kylian Mbappe

Mbappe has long been considered the player to take over the title as the best player on the planet after Messi and Ronaldo.

Some would say the Real Madrid striker has already done that as a World Cup and multiple title-winner, but the fact that he has yet to win the Champions League or Ballon d'Or leaves a big question mark hanging over his career.

He should have a good shot at this year's Ballon d'Or — awarded annually to the best player in the world — if he can lead France to another World Cup title after topping the scoring charts in Spain and leading the way in the Champions League.

Mbappe is often judged on what he hasn't won, rather than what he has. In two years at Madrid, he is still waiting for major titles in Spain.

Ousmane Dembele

The current Ballon d'Or holder and a two-time Champions League winner.

The France forward has reignited his career since joining Paris Saint-Germain three years ago, helping it secure its first Champions League title last season and clinch a back-to-back trophy this year.

Having been touted as one of the brightest prospects in Europe earlier in his career, Barcelona bought Dembele for $173 million in 2017. An underwhelming time in Spain led many to think he would never realize his potential.

No one is saying that now.

Erling Haaland

The Manchester City striker is playing in his first major international tournament after smashing records at club level.

Haaland, 25, is well on his way breaking scoring records in the Champions League and Premier League and has already surpassed benchmarks set by Messi in terms of the speed with which he's amassing goals.

Norway is an outsider at this year's World Cup, but in Haaland it has arguably the most lethal forward at the tournament.

Lamine Yamal

Spain's teenaged sensation was the star of its triumph at the European Championship in 2024 despite not turning 17 until the eve of the final.

He was the youngest-ever scorer at a men's Euros and with mesmerizing speed and footwork. Yamal is earning comparisons to Messi, with whom he was once photographed when he was still a baby.

Yamal has arguably overtaken Mbappe as the man most likely to fill void when Messi and Ronaldo retire and an impressive World Cup could strengthen that argument.

Jude Bellingham

He's the midfielder virtually every top team wanted when Real Madrid sealed his signature in 2023. He went on to lead the club to its 15th Champions League title and the Spanish title in his first season at the club before driving England to the final of the Euros with one of the goals of the tournament on the way.

Bellingham is a match-winner capable of unforgettable moments on the biggest stage and despite an underwhelming season at Madrid, he will be one of England's biggest hopes as it aims to win a major title for the first time since 1966.

Neymar

Brazil's all-time record goalscorer has carried the weight of a nation on his shoulders throughout his career.

Despite winning the biggest honors as a player, he is yet to lead Brazil to a record-extending sixth World Cup title.

Neymar, now 34, has been called up by Brazil coach Carlo Ancelotti for his fourth World Cup after enduring injuries and an underwhelming move to Saudi Arabia since the last edition in Qatar four years ago.

Mohamed Salah

The Egyptian icon is leaving Liverpool after a disappointing campaign, but remains his country's talisman.

Egypt will just have to hope the 33-year-old striker has saved his best for the World Cup.

Salah scored 257 goals in 442 matches and won a full set of trophies with Liverpool — including the Champions League and two Premier League titles.

With Egypt he has been runner-up in two African Cup of Nations.

Christian Pulisic

From an early age Pulisic was seen as capable of becoming American soccer's biggest overseas star.

He has gone on to play for some of Europe's biggest clubs in Germany, England and Italy, winning top honors along the way and none bigger than the Champions League with Chelsea.

Now at AC Milan the forward has discovered some of his most consistent form and will be an important part of Mauricio Pochettino's hopes to go far with the US Men's National Team in its home World Cup.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA



Jude Bellingham



Neymar



Mohamed Salah



Christian Pulisic

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:57 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:58 PM

Amazing spectacle

Smart eyeglasses boost efficiency of police force

BUSINESS, PAGE 10



Friendship across decades grows in desert

TOP NEWS, PAGE 3



From fan to champ

Liu Yujie, 16, once spectator, wins Beijing Women's Open golf title

SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 TUESDAY, MAY 26, 2026



President Xi Jinping awards Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic the Friendship Medal of the People's Republic of China in Beijing on Monday. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

Xi hails Sino-Serbian bond

President calls for stronger alignment of growth strategies, enhanced cooperation

By **MO JINGXI**
mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping called on China and Serbia, bonded by their unique ironclad friendship, to strengthen the alignment of development strategies, expand cooperation in emerging sectors, enhance youth and people-to-people exchanges, and step up coordination in international affairs, as he held talks with visiting Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic in Beijing on Monday.

Xi awarded Vucic the Friendship Medal of the People's Republic of China, the country's highest state honor for foreigners.

The two sides also issued a joint statement on Monday on continuously promoting the building of a China-Serbia community with a shared future for the new era, as well as a joint statement on jointly promoting the implementation of the four major global initiatives.

During the meeting, Xi recalled his state visit to Serbia in 2024, when the two countries agreed to build a China-Serbia community with a shared future for the new era, making Serbia the first European country to join China in building such a community.

Xi called on the two countries to strengthen exchanges, consolidate mutual trust, deepen cooperation and support each other, in order to jointly follow a bright path toward a shared future and common prosperity and promote the China-Serbia comprehensive strategic partnership to a new height.

Xi stressed that the ironclad friendship between China and Serbia is unique, with profound historical logic and a strong foundation in reality, and he urged the two sides to continue to firmly support each other.

Inside
Editorial, **page 6**

China supports Serbia in pursuing a development path suited to its national conditions, and is ready to strengthen exchanges with Serbia on governance experience, Xi said.

Noting that China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) has made comprehensive arrangements for high-quality development goals, Xi said the two sides should implement the midterm action plan for Belt and Road cooperation and continue to advance cooperation in areas including transportation and energy infrastructure.

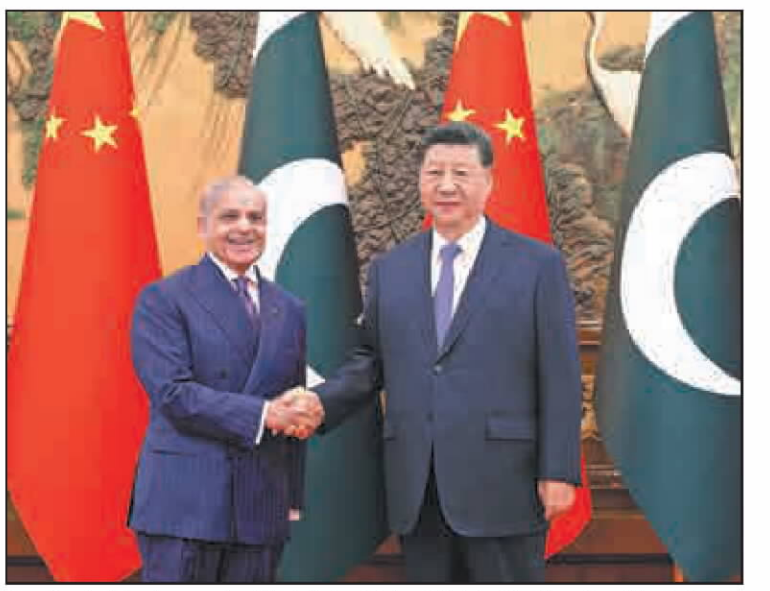
Facing a new scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation, the two sides should expand cooperation in emerging sectors such as artificial intelligence, the digital economy, green energy and advanced manufacturing to foster new growth drivers, Xi said.

On youth and people-to-people exchanges, Xi said the two sides should make good use of the multidimensional framework of their visa-free policies, free trade agreement and direct flights, expand cooperation across the board in culture, education, sports, tourism and subnational exchanges, and carry forward the traditional friendship between the Chinese and Serbian peoples.

Against the backdrop of a turbulent and changing international situation, China and Serbia should continue to strengthen coordination and cooperation in international affairs, practice true multilateralism, and make joint efforts to promote an equal and orderly multipolar world and universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization, as well as the building of a community with a shared future for humanity, Xi said.

Vucic, in his speech, congratulated China on the successful formulation and implementation of its 15th Five-Year Plan.

See ***Bond,*** *page 3*



President Xi Jinping meets with Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Beijing on Monday. Sharif is in China on an official visit that started on Saturday and will run until Tuesday. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

Closer China-Pakistan ties urged for better outcomes

By **ZHAO JIA**
zhaojia@chinadaily.com.cn

Inside
Views, **page 7**

President Xi Jinping said on Monday that China and Pakistan should accelerate the development of an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in the new era and deliver more outcomes from their all-weather cooperation to better benefit the two peoples, contribute to regional peace and stability, and set a fine example for building a community with a shared future with neighboring countries.

Xi made the remarks during a meeting in Beijing with Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, who is on a four-day official visit to China, as the two countries mark the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties.

Over the past 75 years, China and Pakistan have enjoyed mutual understanding, trust and support, and forged an unbreakable traditional friendship, Xi said, adding that their strategic mutual trust and practical cooperation have strongly promoted the development of both nations.

No matter how the international landscape may evolve, Beijing will always place priority on the development of China-Pakistan relations in its diplomacy with neighboring countries, he noted.

Xi emphasized China's firm support for Pakistan in safeguarding its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and expressed readiness to maintain high-level exchanges, strengthen strategic communication and steer the relationship forward in the right direction.

The two sides should advance both major signature projects and "small and beautiful" livelihood programs, and deepen all-around cooperation in areas such as agriculture, industry, artificial intelligence and talent cultivation, he said.

Xi also shared his pleasure in receiving a letter from Pakistani students at Tianjin University, in which they expressed their aspiration to become builders of cooperation, promoters of exchanges and guardians of friendship between the two countries.

Xi added that he was truly heartened to see that the cause of China-Pakistan friendship has dedicated young successors.

Sharif described President Xi as a great friend of the Pakistani people and of all peace-loving people around the world, saying that the ironclad friendship between Pakistan and China "is growing ever stronger and is next to none".

Sharif reaffirmed Pakistan's firm commitment to the one-China principle and its support for China's position on all issues concerning its core interests.

He expressed Pakistan's readiness to learn from China's governance experience, deepen Belt and Road cooperation, advance the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, and further develop bilateral relations for the benefit of the two peoples.

On multilateral affairs, Xi said the two countries should conduct higher-level security cooperation over a broader area and jointly safeguard regional peace and stability.

See ***Relations,*** *page 3*

OVERSEAS GAMERS BLOWN AWAY BY WUXIA GAME

Where Winds Meet introduces concepts embedded in Chinese storytelling traditions

By **BAI SHUHAO**
baishuhao@chinadaily.com.cn

The concepts of *wuxia* and *jianghu* have for centuries carried some of the deepest ideals in Chinese culture.

Wuxia refers to wandering martial heroes who possess otherworldly powers and hone their skills to protect the vulnerable. *Jianghu* — literally "rivers and lakes" — is the world that *wuxia* inhabit, shaped by loyalty, bonds and a belief in justice.

Perhaps the simplest way to understand them is to step inside *Where Winds Meet*, an open-world role-playing game that has became one of China's most unexpected global hits.

Ahead of the overseas launch of *Where Winds Meet* in November, there was concern that without the cultural context, the game might remain a niche historical fantasy.

Instead, it exceeded expectations, becoming a worldwide sensation, climbing into the top three on Steam's global best-seller list and attracting tens of millions of players.

"We thought foreign players would connect with it," said Wen Jie, the game's publishing director, who prefers to go by Eric. "But we never imagined how far it would travel."

Part of the surprise lies in the game's subject matter. Drawing heavily from Chinese history and culture, the game is set during the transition from the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms (907-960) period to the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127) — an era unfamiliar even to many Chinese players, let alone overseas audiences.

However, this historical complexity gives players even more to explore.

One of the game's most beloved characters among overseas players, Tian Ying, was inspired by a real historical episode known as the Qingfeng Post Station Incident, a political assassination that took place during the early years of the Northern Song Dynasty.

In the story, Tian assassinates a Khitan envoy and frames a rival state to stop an alliance that threatens his homeland. Foreign players praised the plot's intrigue and moral ambiguity, with some calling it "an entire game within the game".

To build the world, developers studied historical records, conducted field research and collaborated with scholars and cultural institutions.

Beyond grand quests and heroic sacrifices, players can also slow down and enjoy quieter pleasures such as house decoration or customizing characters.

Eric said he hopes that, by playing the game, overseas players will become curious about *wuxia* and *jianghu* — concepts deeply embedded in Chinese storytelling traditions — and will be encouraged to further explore Chinese culture.

This March, the game held its first fan gathering in the United States. Some attendees carefully peeled posters from the venue walls to take them home as keepsakes.

"*Wuxia* and *jianghu* trace their roots to ancient China," Eric said, "but their values belong everywhere — protecting what you love, staying true to your beliefs, growing through hardship and defending the place you call home."



A poster of the open-world role-playing game *Where Winds Meet*. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Integration of services, production key to future

WORLD WATCH
By Ronnie Lins

China's 2026 Government Work Report introduces a directive that may sound technical but signals a deeper structural development: The country will "press ahead with trials to promote the integrated development of advanced manufacturing and modern services".

In a world shaped by reconfigured supply chains and rapid technological change, this is not just an industrial policy. It reflects the recognition of the broader transformation in how economies generate and capture value.

The line between producing goods and delivering services no longer holds. China is combining both into a coordinated, data-driven system. This shift moves the country beyond scale-based competition toward ecosystem-based competitiveness, whereby production, services and digital intelligence operate together.

For decades, structural change has been framed by some as a trade-off, in which services would expand as manufacturing declined. China's recent trajectory challenges that assumption. In 2025, China's GDP surpassed 140 trillion yuan ($20.6 trillion) for the first time, with growth at 5 percent, and its core digital economy industries contributed more than 10.5 percent of GDP.

See ***Growth,*** *page 3*

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

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:58 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:58 PM

INDEPTH

Chinese varieties of flower in global spotlight after leaders' Beijing meeting

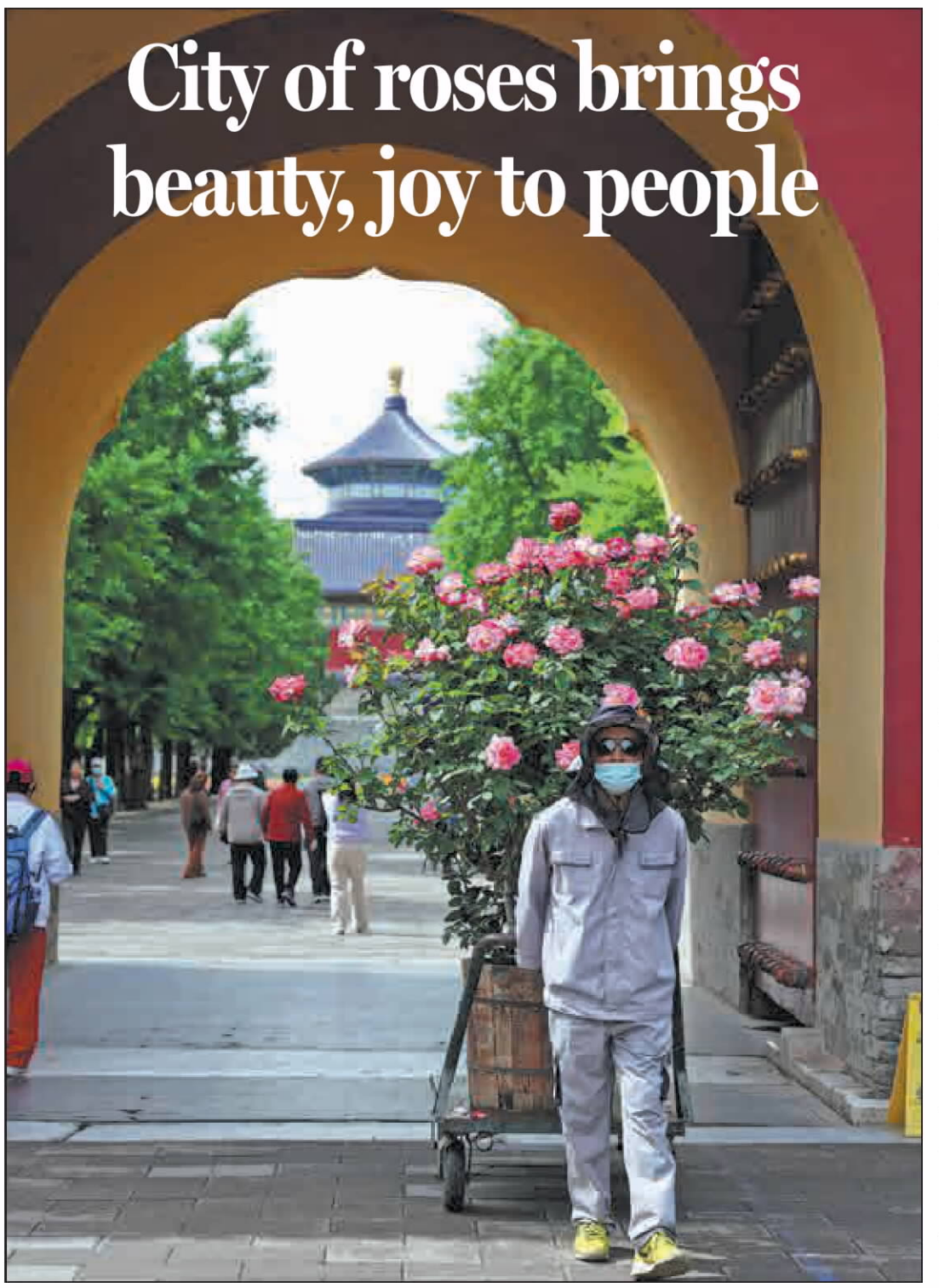
By **CHEN NAN**
chennan@chinadaily.com.cn





Left: Horticulturist Fu Yinghui prunes roses at the Temple of Heaven Park in Beijing on May 19. WANG JING / CHINA DAILY
Right: A visitor photographs roses at Taoranting Park, Beijing, on May 13. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

City of roses brings beauty, joy to people



A staff member transports roses at the Temple of Heaven Park in Beijing on May 19. WANG JING / CHINA DAILY





Roses are seen in bloom near the East Second Ring Road (left) and Sihui Bridge (right) in Chaoyang district, Beijing, on May 7.
PHOTOS BY JU HUANZONG / XINHUA

Even world leaders can be captivated by the simple charm of a rose.

During his recent visit to Beijing, US President Donald Trump paused to admire Chinese roses while walking through Zhongnanhai, the historic leadership compound, alongside President Xi Jinping. The roses — growing in what was once an imperial garden — caught the attention of both leaders.

Xi told Trump that one of the trees they admired during their walk was 490 years old, and that he would send the seeds of the Chinese roses they saw in the garden to Trump as a gift. "I love that; it's great," Trump said.

This fleeting moment of shared appreciation reflects what generations have long known: the Chinese rose, or *yueji*, is more than a decorative plant.

From imperial gardens to neighborhood parks, these resilient, fragrant flowers embellish cultural and urban landscapes around the country, with Beijing the most famous example.

But Chinese roses are not confined to the capital's grand gardens or neighborhood parks. They are widely acknowledged by scientists as the foundation of the modern rose, one of the world's bestselling ornamental plants.

The Chinese rose has a history stretching over 2,000 years, according to the National Forestry and Grassland Administration and the National Park Administration.

Records date back to the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220), but it was during the Tang (618-907) and Song (960-1279) dynasties that rose cultivation flourished. In those periods, gardeners cultivated a number of ancient, treasured varieties.

When these Chinese roses reached Europe, they sparked a horticultural revolution. European breeders crossed them with local roses, solving long-standing challenges of short flowering seasons and weak fragrances. This exchange set the stage for centuries of hybridization. Today, over 40,000 rose varieties thrive around the world, thanks largely to their Chinese predecessors.

Over the millennia, poets and scholars have celebrated the beauty of Chinese roses. Tang Dynasty poet Bai Juyi wrote, "Late to bloom after spring departs, it alone flourishes in the courtyard's heart."

Song Dynasty writer Su Shi praised the longevity of its flowering: "Peonies are rare in late spring, and peonies bloom too briefly in early summer, yet this flower blooms without end, claiming all four seasons as its own."

Ringed with floral 'necklace'

Early summer in Beijing brings a floral spectacle along the city's ring roads. Chinese roses are now in full bloom along the median strips of the Fourth Ring Road, drawing commuters to admire their vibrant colors and heady fragrance.

Social media is buzzing with posts recommending the best spots, with netizens calling the green belts "May's romantic highlight". One commuter remarked, "I usually rush home after work, but lately I stop to enjoy the flowers. The city feels more romantic."

Landscaping of the Fourth Ring Road is being upgraded this year, the Beijing Municipal Forestry and Parks Bureau said.

New rose varieties now complement the established ones, offering longer blooming cycles and more abundant flowers. The flowering season has been extended from May through late October. When completed in November, the 65.3-kilometer-long project will create a continuous "rose necklace" of an estimated 710,000 plants citywide.

In Beijing's *hutongs*, roses flourish — climbing walls, spilling over fences, and softening the edges of small gardens. For locals, these flowers are not a luxury; they are a familiar presence, a splash of beauty in everyday life.

Wang Meng, 38, was born and raised in the *hutong* area of Hufangqiao, in the southern part of the city. One of her favorite places to enjoy Chinese roses is Taoranting Park near her home.

After obtaining a master's in gardening from China Agricultural University, Wang started working at the park in 2013. She now serves as a senior engineer in landscape architecture.

"Growing up in the *hutongs*, Chinese roses were always around," she recalled. "They're part of the neighborhood, part of our memories. This park lets me see them in full bloom, and it feels like the city itself is celebrating with me."

Established in 1952, Taoranting Park was one of the first large public parks in Beijing after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

Unlike imperial gardens, which were private and formal, Taoranting Park was intended as a place for ordinary citizens to relax, socialize and enjoy nature, earning its reputation as the "People's Park".

Stepping into the rose garden, known as the Shengchun Shan Fang Rose Area, feels like entering a world made entirely of colors and scents.

Wang said with more than 19,000 plants of 20 varieties, the garden is a living tapestry that constantly changes with the seasons, filling the air with layers of fragrance.

"It's not just a garden — it's a space crafted for strolling, lingering and losing oneself amid Beijing's most beloved roses," she said. "Ubiquitous yet essential, Chinese roses are the subtle color running through the heart of Beijing."

Every morning, Zhang Xin walks the paths of the rose garden, his eyes scanning almost every leaf and bud.

Zhang, 38, is a specialist in Chinese rose care. But his work doesn't end in the garden. He also spends hours in the park's greenhouse cultivation area, carefully nurturing roses according to their blooming cycles and monitoring plants. "Each plant has its own schedule, and I have to guide it patiently so that when it reaches the garden, it can shine at its best," he said.

> "It's wonderful to see everyone enjoying them. Flowers like these aren't just for beauty — they make people slow down, breathe, and remember what's good in life."
>
> **Fu Yinghui,** horticulturist at the Temple of Heaven

Zhang said the most important part of tending roses isn't watering, fertilizing, or even planting, but pruning. "If you want the plant to flourish, pruning is everything," he said.

The roses are also a bridge between the gardener and visitors. Zhang loves seeing people pause on the paths, lingering over colors or inhaling the fragrant bouquets. Feedback shapes his work: some people prefer traditional blooms, others are drawn to retro or artistic varieties. Each opinion, he said, informs the garden's evolution.

The Temple of Heaven, a short distance from Taoranting Park, boasts a vast Chinese rose garden, where blooms complement centuries-old architecture. Here, roses are not only cultivated for public enjoyment — they are entwined with ceremonial landscapes and imperial heritage.

"I come here almost every week," said Liu Mingfang, 67, who lives nearby.

"After the rain, the roses seem brighter, fresher. The light after the rain is perfect for photos," she said while taking photos of the flowers with her phone. "You can see every color in the petals. It feels alive."

When Liu was a girl, Chinese roses climbed over the courtyard walls of her home, she recalled. Seeing the roses today "feels like coming home", she said.

"Each color has its own charm. The pale pinks are delicate, the reds are bold — it lifts the spirit. Even the soft smell reminds me of my childhood."

Fu Yinghui, the team leader of the Chinese rose section of the historical site's flower center, has worked at the rose garden for nearly 40 years. The story of the Temple of Heaven's rose garden started in the mid-20th century, when city planners sought to bring color and fragrance to the capital's green spaces.

The park introduced Chinese roses from southern China in 1956. In 1960, the rose garden received a significant boost when Jiang Endian, a female horticulturist affectionately known as the "Lady of Roses", returned to China from overseas and was hired as a consultant.

With her expertise, the Temple of Heaven began building a proper rose garden, selecting superior varieties and laying the groundwork for what would become one of the country's premier public rose displays.

By 1963, the rose garden spanned approximately 13,000 square meters, making it the largest open-access rose garden in China at the time. In May of that year, the park welcomed its very first rose season, with the grounds filled with the colors and sweet smells of the carefully cultivated blooms.

By 1966, more than 3,000 Chinese rose varieties had been planted at the Temple of Heaven site.

In 1988, aged just 17, Fu, whose father was a historic building restorer at the Temple of Heaven, joined the rose team. "In 1987, the Chinese rose, along with chrysanthemums, was officially designated one of Beijing's city flowers," he recalled. "Roses were becoming incredibly popular — so many varieties, such vivid colors, and so versatile in how they could be cultivated and displayed. I happened to start my career at the perfect time."

With large-scale promotion and planting in the early 1990s, roses began appearing across the city.

"Before that, roses were considered high-end flowers — too costly for urban landscaping. Streets were mostly lined with pansies or scarlet sage. During the 1990 Asian Games, the streets began to bloom with bright, beautiful roses. Slowly, they became a part of people's everyday lives and even their homes," Fu said.

In harmony with history

Beyond symbolism, the rose is remarkably adaptable. Easy to propagate and resilient to cold, drought, and challenging environments, it thrives across much of China and many parts of the world.

In Beijing, the Chinese rose has found a fitting home. Blooming from late spring to early winter — and sometimes even braving the first snow — the flowers mirror the city's enduring spirit.

Known as *Yueyuehong* (red every month), Chinese roses at the Temple of Heaven bloom in May and repeat at least two times more. Today, thanks to skillful cultivation, they can even thrive through autumn and winter.

Fu makes this possible with precision and patience.

Early bloomers are placed in warmer areas; after leaves appear, they are moved for optimal sunlight. Buds are trimmed to synchronize their growth with others, while overly prolific stems are pared down to concentrate nutrients on the strongest flowers. Every pot receives a balanced water and fertilizer mix, with temperature and humidity closely monitored.

"The secret," Fu said, "is not just care — it's guiding the roses to bloom beautifully, exactly when they should."

Fu said viewing the roses at the Temple of Heaven is a different experience from any other park.

Here, the blooms unfold against a backdrop of towering ancient cypresses and ginkgo trees, some hundreds of years old, their twisted trunks and sweeping branches carrying the weight of history. Beyond the greenery, the crimson and gold roofs of the temple halls rise gracefully, their ornate eaves and carved beams adding a sense of grandeur and timelessness.

Visitors wander along winding paths that curve around these venerable trees and historic structures, pausing to admire not just the roses but the harmony between cultivated beauty and the enduring architecture of imperial China. Here, every bloom seems to carry a story, not only of nature but of centuries of human care and cultural legacy.

Every morning at seven, Fu arrives at the rose garden. He takes a moment to watch the visitors as they wander among the blooms, smiling at their delight.

"It's wonderful to see everyone enjoying them. Flowers like these aren't just for beauty — they make people slow down, breathe, and remember what's good in life," he said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:58 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:58 PM

TOP NEWS

Growth: Services embedded in industry

From page 1

Those trends point to convergence rather than substitution.

This approach is quite different from those seen in some advanced economies, where service expansion has often coincided with industrial weakening or stagnant productivity. China is avoiding that outcome by directly embedding services in industrial processes. It now stands among the few major economies maintaining industrial depth while upgrading through service integration.

Manufacturing is no longer a stand-alone activity. It anchors a broader system in which software, logistics, data analytics and after-sales services drive value creation. Services no longer support production from the margins. They tend to shape productivity, differentiation and long-term competitiveness.

The new-energy vehicle sector illustrates this shift with clarity. China produced and sold more than 16 million units in 2025, while its national electric vehicle charging network surpassed 20 million units by the end of 2025, according to the National Energy Administration. The country currently has the world's largest and most rapidly expanding EV charging infrastructure. But scale alone no longer defines leadership. Competitiveness now depends on how effectively enterprises integrate hardware with digital services.

Ultra-fast charging networks, real-time battery monitoring, artificial intelligence-based predictive maintenance and continuous software upgrades turn vehicles into connected platforms. Value moves away from the factory floor and concentrates across the product life cycle.

This transformation is not confined to mobility. It is spreading to sectors such as industrial equipment, consumer electronics and smart infrastructure. As the "AI Plus" initiative advances, companies increasingly treat physical products as service nodes within broader digital ecosystems.

The integration of manufacturing and services is also reshaping industrial entities.

China is moving away from highly vertical structures toward distributed innovation networks. Small and medium-sized enterprises now play specialized roles across the value chain. They deploy computer vision in quality control, design certified testing systems, optimize logistics algorithms, and secure industrial networks.

Competitiveness now depends less on scale concentration and more on coordination across specialized actors. This marks a shift from scale-driven industrialization to coordination-driven competitiveness.

In addition, data has become a core production factor. Digital governance has become a central arena of global governance. China is actively engaging in international digital frameworks, including efforts to join the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Other Global South countries and emerging markets can draw a clear lesson from this model. Sustainable competitiveness will not come from choosing between industry and services. It will come from integrating both within a coherent institutional framework. Future competitiveness will depend less on where goods are produced and more on how effectively economies connect manufacturing, services and data in unified systems.

In the emerging global landscape, the ability to connect systems will matter more than the ability to scale them.

The author is the director of China-Brazil Center for Research and Business. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



President Xi Jinping and his wife, Peng Liyuan, pose for a group photo with Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic and his wife, Tamara Vucic, on Monday in Beijing. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

Bond: Serbia grateful for contributions

From page 1

"Esteemed President Xi, dear friend, over the past 10 years since we established the strategic partnership between the People's Republic of China and Serbia, we have achieved major and significant results," Vucic told his host.

He said the Serbian people will never forget China's support for the European country in safeguarding its independence and sovereignty, and in independently exploring a development path suited to its own conditions. Serbia is grateful to Chinese companies for participating in its national development and making important contributions, Vucic said.

According to a social media post of the Serbian president, nearly 40,000 people in his country now work for Chinese companies, and four of the top six exporting enterprises in Serbia are from China.

Serbia attaches great importance to developing relations with China and firmly supports China's core interests, he said. Belgrade looks forward to working with Beijing to deepen high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, advance major projects, enhance people-to-people exchanges and achieve more tangible results in bilateral relations, Vucic said.

He noted that China, as a major country, has always treated small countries with equality and respect and abided by international law, setting an example for the world.

Vucic arrived in Beijing on Sunday for a five-day state visit, his first to China as Serbian president.

Premier Li Qiang and Wang Huning, chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, held separate meetings with him on Monday.





Left: Yin Yuzhen speaks with Ronald Sakolsky over phone on May 18.
Above: Yin (center) and Sakolsky (third from right) pose for a group photo during a formal funds donation ceremony in 2000.
PHOTOS BY XINHUA

Desert fighter reconnects after years with 'American friend' who supported her work

By **DUAN JINXIAN** and **YUAN HUI** in Hohhot

A voice from afar spoke through the cellphone in the hands of 60-year-old Yin Yuzhen in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region: "It's amazing! It's amazing to me! I can't believe we are talking."

The voice belonged to Ronald Sakolsky, 69, a retired high school teacher in the United States.

Yin asked: "When will you return to China to see the green forest that has grown from the $5,000 you contributed years ago?" It had been decades since they last spoke, but like many such conversations between friends, it seemed perfectly natural to be picking up where they had left off. "I will be waiting for you in the desert," she added.

A video of their interaction, which was recently released online by a local media group, has touched the hearts of millions across China.

Yin, a resident of Wushen Banner in Ordos, is a national model worker widely acclaimed as one of China's afforestation heroes. Starting in the mid-1980s, she spent four decades reversing desertification and greening a stretch of Maowusu, the fourth-largest sandy area in China, by planting trees.

Yin had long been searching for her "American friend" who raised money to support her afforestation work. Earlier this month, she sought the help of local media to find him. In an online video post on May 16, she said, "Sakolsky, if you see this, I would like to invite you to come back to China, where your $5,000 has grown into a large forest."

Netizens, including Sakolsky's former students and colleagues, responded enthusiastically, which resulted in their brief reunion over phone on May 18.

As part of a teacher exchange program, Sakolsky taught English at a school in Luoyang, Henan province, from 1999 to 2000. During that time, he saw a television program about Yin's sand control work and was moved by her resilient, unyielding spirit. Hoping to fund her afforestation efforts, Sakolsky wrote to many institutions in the US. An institution in Boston, Massachusetts, agreed to donate $5,000 for Yin's work. The money was sent to her in cash through a Chinese organization.

In 2000, Sakolsky traveled to Maowusu to meet Yin in person. What he saw was inspiring. Yin was planting trees in the desert using just a shovel and traditional shoulder poles. She tied young saplings, which were as thin as fingers, with hemp rope and carried them in bundles to be planted on the uneven ground. Between 1985 and 1999, Yin and her husband planted saplings across nearly 2,667 hectares.

Yin spent most of the money on buying saplings, but kept $1 as a souvenir. When Sakolsky left China after completing his teaching assignment, the two lost touch.

Over the years, Yin stayed in Maowusu, planting trees each day. Her persistent work earned her recognition as a national model worker and national hero of desert prevention and control. In 2017, she shared her experience at the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

Maowusu covers about 42,200 square kilometers. Two-thirds of it is located in Ordos, and the rest extends to Shaanxi province and the Ningxia Hui autonomous region. With the Great Wall lying in the south, the sandy land has long resisted reclamation. Through the efforts made by Yin and others, more than 559,000 hectares are now blanketed in green, and the forest coverage rate is about 33 percent.

Speaking to China Daily, Sakolsky was full of praise for Yin. "She is committed to her dream. She never gave up." He told People's Daily, "It really is a miracle to get back in touch."

Yin told China News Service that Sakolsky helped her buy saplings "at the most difficult time", and that she has "never forgotten and will never forget" his kindness.

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said on Monday that the friendship between Yin and Sakolsky is a microcosm of the positive people-to-people exchanges between China and the US.

"We are confident that the two peoples will keep adding new chapters of friendship and injecting fresh vitality into bilateral ties," Mao said.

Contact the writers at duanjinxian@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Strengthened China-US AI ties stressed

Nations urged to step up cooperation to better manage technology's potential risks

By **WANG KEJU**
wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn

As China and the United States race to expand their artificial intelligence capabilities, economists said the two countries need closer cooperation on global governance and safety standards in order to better manage the potential risks of the technology.

While the US continues to lead in frontier AI research, large-scale models and computing power, economists said that China is rapidly catching up and has developed strengths in integrating AI into manufacturing, consumer services and other parts of the real economy, reflecting different development priorities in the two countries.

"There are two main players in the development of frontier AI — China and the US," economist and Nobel laureate Michael Spence told China Daily. "There's almost no measurable difference between them now in terms of performance. Whatever difference there was, China has caught up."

According to Stanford University's Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence, US and Chinese AI models have traded places at the top of performance rankings multiple times since early 2025.

As of March, the top US model led by only 2.7 percent, with a marginal gap that fluctuated over the past year while remaining in single digits, according to the institute's 2026 AI Index Report.

"The models of AI innovation pursued by China and the US are actually quite different," said Zhu Min, former deputy managing director of the International Monetary Fund.

"The US focuses on large models, massive computing power and a strong foundational base, aiming for what we call 'artificial superintelligence'. What the US pursues is the development of intelligence itself," he said.

China, according to Zhu, measures AI development by a different yardstick.

"China, in contrast, emphasizes applying AI to the real economy. When assessing whether AI is good or not, China places greater weight on the benefits and convenience it can bring to the real economy and to people's daily lives," he added.

Spence noted that China's systematic approach to deployment gives it an edge that the West currently lacks.

"China has, in my view, in the context of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), a better set of either plans or intentions to make sure that AI is deployed by and adopted across a wide range of the economy, both in manufacturing and services," Spence said.

"We talk a lot about the diffusion challenge, but we are just talking about it. We are not doing anything," he added.

As both China and the US, along with other economies, are scrambling to scale up their AI capabilities, the risks are increasing too — and not just economic ones.

"AI carries significant uncertainty, including risks related to society, the environment and potential military uses," Zhu warned.

"Therefore, establishing a governance framework and safety 'guardrails' for AI is, I believe, the most critical imperative for China and the US as the two leading players in this field, and it is also what the world expects of them," he added.

"The US tends to favor exogenous governance — building external oversight frameworks for monitoring and compliance," Zhu said. "China emphasizes an endogenous approach, embedding safeguards from the very beginning, even before model deployment, to ensure that AI benefits humanity."

Zhu noted that "both approaches are valid, open to discussion, and could together shape the future of AI governance".

Spence said the US and China "can probably cooperate on certain aspects of regulation, such as not using the technology for highly destructive purposes".

China and the US agreed to launch an intergovernmental dialogue on AI, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun announced at a news conference earlier this month.

Guo said that China and the US need to work together to promote the development and improve the governance of AI to ensure that it will better contribute to the progress of human civilization and the common welfare of the international community.

Relations: Pakistan's mediating role praised

From page 1

China commends Pakistan for taking the initiative to play a mediating role in restoring peace in the Middle East, Xi said, calling on the two sides to maintain close communication and coordination, jointly oppose unilateralism and Cold War mentality, promote an equal and orderly multipolar world and an economic globalization that is universally beneficial and inclusive.

Sharif thanked China for supporting Pakistan's mediation efforts in talks between the United States and Iran, saying that Xi's four propositions on the Middle East situation offer guidance for achieving peace in the region.

Pakistan is willing to coordinate closely with China to jointly contribute to world peace and stability, he added.

Also on Monday, Premier Li Qiang held talks with Sharif, and said that China is ready to work with Pakistan to further advance the construction of the CPEC, import more high-quality Pakistani products and actively build an upgraded version of the bilateral free trade agreement.

Li expressed the hope that Pakistan will continue to take necessary measures to protect the safety of Chinese personnel, projects and institutions in the country.

Sharif welcomed Chinese companies to invest and thrive in Pakistan, pledging that the country would continue to take strong measures to provide a safer and better business environment.

After the talks, Li and Sharif witnessed the signing of multiple cooperation documents covering trade, science and technology, agriculture and food, human resources and other areas.

China is Pakistan's largest trading partner and the second-largest destination for Pakistani exports. Statistics show that the CPEC has garnered over $25.9 billion in direct investment and created over 260,000 jobs.

Ahsan Iqbal, Pakistan's minister for planning, development and special initiatives, said on Sunday that Pakistan-China relations are entering a new era of high-quality development, technological cooperation, agricultural and industrial modernization, and deeper regional integration.

He described the CPEC as a symbol of the two countries' shared vision for peace and prosperity, saying that the relationship has never experienced an "autumn" but has always remained in "spring", with new waves of cooperation emerging year after year.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:58 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:58 PM

Trade, investment fuel China-Pakistan ties

Expanding projects and rising volumes reinforce long-term economic cooperation

By HAO NAN
haonan@chinadaily.com.cn



A stall holder gives a thumbs-up to visitors at the Pakistan exhibition of the ninth China-South Asia Exposition in June 2025. HU CHAO / XINHUA

As all-weather strategic cooperative partners, China and Pakistan have made economy and trade a central pillar of their relationship. Over decades of steady growth, their bilateral cooperation has expanded in scale, broadened in scope, and achieved marked improvements in quality and efficiency.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan. Both nations are working to build a closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future by enhancing economic and trade interactions and fostering industrial synergy.

China-Pakistan economic and trade cooperation has a long history, supported by a solid foundation and stable institutional frameworks. The two countries established trade relations in the early 1950s and signed their first trade agreement in January 1963, laying the groundwork for regulated development of bilateral trade.

Furthermore, the China-Pakistan Joint Committee of Economy, Trade and Technology was established in 1982. It has convened 15 sessions so far, providing a long-term platform for communication and coordinated advancement.

Driven by joint efforts, bilateral economic and trade cooperation has made remarkable progress with trade volume rising steadily. Data from China's General Administration of Customs showed that bilateral trade reached $23.06 billion in 2024, up 11.1 percent year-on-year. Of this, China's exports to Pakistan stood at $20.23 billion, a 17 percent increase from 2023.

According to Pakistani statistics, China has been the country's largest trading partner, top source of imports, and second-largest export destination since the 2015-16 fiscal year, further cementing the bilateral economic and trade bond.

Core projects

Energy cooperation is a cornerstone of China-Pakistan practical cooperation and has yielded significant outcomes over the decades.

With Chinese investment and technical support, Pakistan has put 46 energy projects into operation, including seven coal-fired power plants, five new energy stations, two hydropower plants and one transmission line, with a combined investment exceeding $13 billion.

This cooperation has not only eased Pakistan's power shortage, but also trained nearly 40,000 technical professionals and more than 7,400 management personnel, establishing a strong talent base for the sustainable growth of Pakistan's energy sector and ongoing economic and trade cooperation.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, or CPEC, a flagship project under the Belt and Road Initiative, serves as the core engine of bilateral economic and trade cooperation.

Since its launch in 2013, the CPEC has delivered fruitful results. By the end of 2024, 77 cooperation projects had been identified under its framework, 54 of which had been launched or completed. Total investment reached $25.5 billion, directly creating 248,000 jobs, including 188,000 for Pakistani workers.

The two sides are now advancing the CPEC into its upgraded phase, shifting focus to livelihood improvement, agricultural modernization and high-tech sectors, in line with the goal of enhancing bilateral economic and trade cooperation.

New momentum

Zafar Uddin Mahmood, special representative of the prime minister of Pakistan on China affairs, noted that as a major agricultural country, Pakistan has deepened cooperation with China in agricultural technology, seed research and development, and agro-processing in recent years.

He also highlighted the growing momentum in new energy cooperation. For example, Chinese photovoltaic and wind power technologies are widely applied in Pakistan, benefiting numerous households. Additionally, more than 10 Chinese new energy vehicle manufacturers have established presence in Pakistan, bringing cutting-edge technologies and quality products to support industrial upgrading and green transition.

Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, a Pakistani senator and former caretaker prime minister, stated that the CPEC has profoundly boosted Pakistan's economic and social development and enhanced the well-being of its people. It has driven progress in infrastructure, livelihood and technology, deepening the friendship between the two nations in the hearts of the Pakistani people.

"In my home province of Balochistan, the CPEC has improved energy supply, transport infrastructure, and the development of Gwadar Port, greatly enhancing connectivity," he said.

Kakar expressed hope that China and Pakistan will further strengthen cooperation in agriculture, climate action, information technology, and other sectors to deliver more benefits to the Pakistani people and make bilateral friendship more tangible and popular.

This year marks the beginning of China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) and it is a critical year for Pakistan to implement its "Uraan Pakistan", the five-year economic strategy for 2024-29 focusing on exports, e-Pakistan, environment, energy, equity and empowerment.

Jiang Zaidong, Chinese ambassador to Pakistan, said China stands ready to align its development strategy with Pakistan, accelerate the building of a closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future, and bring more tangible benefits to the two peoples.

Industrial cooperation, a key pillar of bilateral ties, is at a crucial stage of quality upgrading. China's 15th Five-Year Plan aims to build a modern industrial system oriented toward intelligent, green and integrated development, upgrade traditional industries, expand emerging industries, and plan for future industries. This is highly compatible with "Uraan Pakistan", which prioritizes manufacturing, information technology and digital transformation.

"We are pleased to see more Chinese new energy vehicles on the streets of Pakistan. They help to ease energy shortages and enable Pakistani people to adopt green travel and lower living costs," Jiang said.

As economic and trade cooperation deepens, Chinese enterprises in Pakistan have grown into a major force in bilateral business exchanges. Their operations cover energy development, infrastructure construction, telecommunications, wholesale and retail, and are deeply integrated into Pakistan's economic fabric.

To better support Chinese businesses, the Association of Chinese Enterprises in Pakistan was established in 2004 and now boasts three regional branches, seven industrial chapters and five working committees.

In 2024, guided by the Chinese embassy in Pakistan, the association developed a business climate index system for Chinese enterprises in Pakistan and completed three surveys. Results showed that Pakistan's macroeconomy has been stabilized and improved since 2025.

Chinese enterprises in Pakistan have enjoyed rising confidence in Pakistan's economy, steady operations and stronger investment appetite, injecting stable expectations into bilateral economic and trade cooperation.

"The Pakistani government will fully protect the safety and interests of Chinese citizens and institutions in Pakistan. This is not only due to our extensive cooperation projects and the huge influence of the Chinese market, but also because China and Pakistan are all-weather strategic cooperative partners and iron brothers with decades of unwavering friendship," Kakar said.

Looking forward, China and Pakistan will strive to build a community with a shared future characterized by stronger political mutual trust, closer economic and trade ties, deeper security cooperation, and firmer public support.

The two countries will continue to deepen economic and trade cooperation, expand collaboration areas, scale up investment and enhance industrial synergy, ensuring that the fruits of cooperation better benefit both peoples, officials said.

Copper glows across the desert, forging paths of industry

By YUAN SHENGGAO







Clockwise from top: A flag-raising ceremony ushers in the dawn of 2026 at the Saindak Copper-Gold Project. Molten copper is cast at the mine. The newly operational beneficiation system supports efficient production at the mine. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

As a flagship mining project of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, the Saindak Copper-Gold Project operated by MCC Tongsin Resources, or MCCT, is writing a new chapter of high-quality development in the desert of Balochistan Province. As Pakistan's first large-scale nonferrous mine integrating mining, beneficiation and smelting, the project contributes to the high-quality development of the Belt and Road Initiative through full-chain lean operation, systematic management innovation and deepened local integration.

Addressing challenges

MCCT has developed a comprehensive management model with "Safety Integrity System plus Amoeba Management plus 5S Standardization plus Local Talent Development", driving the project from stable production toward optimized efficiency and high-yield output.

In response to challenges including ore grade fluctuations and complex mining conditions, the project has adopted advanced processes such as multilevel mining development, three-stage closed-circuit crushing for mineral processing, and converter heat exchange in smelting.

In addition, intelligent systems for materials management and production scheduling have been implemented to enable scientific control over the entire production chain.

Capacity leap

Through list-based production management, standardized equipment maintenance and cost control underpinned by the Amoeba Management model, the project has achieved steady year-on-year breakthroughs in production efficiency.

Its annual ore processing capacity has risen from 5 million metric tons in the initial stage to 8.9 million tons, representing a 70 percent increase.

In 2025, its output of blister copper hit 25,000 tons, a 30 percent rise compared with that in 2021. The Amoeba Management mechanism has helped to cut annual costs by 1 percent, fostering a virtuous cycle of higher output, greater efficiency and lower costs.

Resource breakthrough

Adhering to the philosophy that "resources are king", the exploration team worked tirelessly in the desert with temperatures of up to 50 C, overturning the judgment of "ineffective exploration" and confirming substantial mineral reserves at the Siah Diq prospect.

The hourly processing capacity of the ball mill in the 275 System of Concentrator has been raised from 364 tons to 446 tons.

By leveraging technological innovation to develop low-grade resources, the Saindak Copper-Gold Project has showcased the overseas brand of "China Intelligent Manufacturing".

Safety first

The Saindak project integrates the safety integrity system and construction related to public security into the entire production process, adhering to the "zero accident" target and achieving consecutive years of safe production, according to the project's management. Its public security prevention work was selected as a pilot unit for overseas project security by a department at the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council of China. In addition, the project's central laboratory has become the first laboratory in Pakistan accredited by the Pakistan National Accreditation Council in the field of mining analysis.

Local integration

Upholding the philosophy of "teaching people how to fish rather than giving them fish", the project has created more than 2,000 local jobs and trained a large number of local technical and management professionals. It has boosted the coordinated development of upstream and downstream industries, with a total of $720 million paid in taxes and profit shares to the host country. Through concrete actions, the project has won wide recognition and high praise from the Pakistani government and local people, according to MCCT.

As the project enters its next phase, MCCT will continue to optimize the operation of the Saindak project with higher standards, while expanding its presence in Pakistan's mining sector.

It will systematically advance the efficient development and operation of the Duddar Lead-Zinc Mine and the Siah Diq Copper Mine.

The company said it is committed to supporting the growth of Pakistan's nonferrous metal industry and improving local livelihoods. With greater efforts to advance technological innovation and concrete measures to deepen China-Pakistan cooperation, MCCT strives to build a world-class overseas mining enterprise that leads in management, performance and social responsibility.

It will contribute to the steady and sustained development of the BRI and the enduring friendship between China and Pakistan, according to MCCT.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:58 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:58 PM

WORLD

Pivotal breakthrough hangs in the balance

Iran, US play down expectations of quick deal despite some progress

ISLAMABAD/WASHINGTON/TEHRAN — Iran and the United States played down hopes for an imminent breakthrough in the three-month-old conflict on Monday, with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio saying there will either be a good agreement or Washington would deal with the country in "another way".

Rubio told reporters in New Delhi that the US would give diplomacy every chance to succeed before exploring "alternatives", after President Donald Trump said on Sunday he had told his representatives not to rush into any Iran deal.

There was a "pretty solid thing on the table in terms of their ability to open up the strait, get the strait open, enter into a very real, significant, time-limited negotiation on the nuclear matter, and hopefully we can pull it off," Rubio said.

Trump said in a post on Truth Social on Monday that the deal will either be "great and meaningful, or there will be no deal at all".

He also urged Muslim-majority nations including Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Pakistan, to normalize relations with Israel as part of the Iran peace deal.

Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei said on Monday that Iran was negotiating an end to the conflict and was not currently discussing nuclear issues.

He said a framework had been reached but no one could say an agreement between the United States and Iran was imminent. The potential memorandum of understanding contained no specific details about the management of the Strait of Hormuz, which belongs to the coastal countries, he said.

The ministry also said that Iran would not take tolls for passage through the vital waterway, but added that it was "normal for services provided to require a price".

Before the conflict, the strait had carried a fifth of global shipments of oil and liquefied natural gas.

A day earlier, Trump wrote on Truth Social that the US blockade of Iranian ships in the Strait of Hormuz would "remain in full force and effect until an agreement is reached, certified, and signed".

He added, "Both sides must take their time and get it right."

Trump raised expectations of an imminent deal on Saturday when he said Washington and Tehran had "largely negotiated" a memorandum of understanding on a peace agreement that would reopen the strait.

Domestically in the US, lawmakers appearing on Sunday morning talk shows split sharply over a potential deal to end the Iran conflict, with Republicans mostly backing the publicly reported contours of an agreement being negotiated by Trump and Democrats dismissing it as accomplishing little.

Still at odds

Washington and Tehran remain at odds on several difficult issues, such as the nuclear issue, Israel's fighting in Lebanon with Hezbollah and Tehran's demands for the lifting of sanctions and the release of tens of billions of dollars of Iranian oil revenues frozen in foreign banks.

Iran's central bank chief Abdolnaser Hemmati traveled to Qatar following talks with a Qatari delegation in Tehran regarding Iran's frozen funds, Iranian media reported on Monday.

Iranian top negotiator Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi were leading the delegation in Doha.

On Sunday, a senior US official said that the proposed framework would give negotiators 60 days to reach a final deal.

Iranian sources told Reuters that in future stages, "feasible formulas" could be found to resolve the dispute over its highly enriched uranium stockpile, including diluting the material under the supervision of the UN nuclear watchdog.

Any deal reinforcing the current fragile ceasefire, which has held since early April, would bring relief to markets but not immediately defuse a global energy crisis, which has driven up costs of fuel, fertilizer and food.

The US-Israeli bombing of Iran killed thousands of people in Iran before it was suspended in early April. Israel has also killed thousands more and driven hundreds of thousands from their homes in Lebanon, which it invaded in pursuit of Hezbollah. Iranian strikes on Israel and neighboring Gulf states have killed dozens.

Amid the latest developments in US-Iran talks, the Israeli military said it is prepared to resume combat operations against Iran, the army chief said on Sunday.

Chief of the General Staff Eyal Zamir made the remarks during a situational assessment at the military's Northern Command, the military said in a statement.

AGENCIES—XINHUA

Fandom and fanfare



Former Mexican national soccer team players pose with certificates for setting the world record for the largest brush-painted mural, in Mexico City, Mexico, on Sunday. Mexican artists put the final touches on the masterpiece as part of activities in the lead-up to the 2026 World Cup. It spans more than 200 square meters, earning a Guinness World Record. DANIEL CARDENAS VIA GETTY IMAGES

Briefly

JAPAN

PM's team accused of smear operation

More details have emerged about allegations that the team of Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi hired individuals to produce online smear videos targeting political rivals, with the weekly magazine Shukan Bunshun reporting on Sunday that it possesses evidence supporting these allegations. According to a report in the online edition of the magazine, Takaichi's camp focused much of its campaign attacks on rival politician Shinjiro Koizumi during last year's ruling Liberal Democratic Party leadership race, portraying him as an "incompetent puppet" through videos online. Numerous videos praising Takaichi were disseminated online during the same period, the report said. Although Takaichi's side has denied involvement, the magazine said it had obtained substantial evidence supporting the allegations. The report identified Takaichi aide Takeshi Kinoshita as a central figure in this operation. Neither the Japanese prime minister's office nor Kinoshita had responded publicly to the latest allegations by press time.

SWITZERLAND

Suspected Ebola cases cross 900 in DRC: WHO

More than 900 suspected Ebola cases have been identified in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the World Health Organization chief has said. "As surveillance efforts have been scaled up in the DRC Ebola response, more than 900 suspected cases have been identified so far, including 101 confirmed cases," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a Sunday social media post that gave no update on the death toll. Ebola is a deadly viral disease that spreads through direct contact with bodily fluids. It can cause severe bleeding and organ failure. The country declared an outbreak on May 15 caused by the Bundibugyo strain, which has no approved vaccine or treatment. Ebola has killed more than 15,000 people across Africa in the past half-century. This round of the outbreak has resulted in 220 suspected deaths, according to the WHO.

XINHUA—AGENCIES

Pakistan special

Best of friends: countries deepen bilateral ties via culture and language

By **HAO NAN**
haonan@chinadaily.com.cn

Over the past 75 years, China and Pakistan have forged increasingly close and institutionalized cultural and educational cooperation, laying a foundation for their all-weather strategic cooperative partnership.

Since establishing diplomatic ties in 1951, the two countries have engaged in frequent people-to-people and cultural exchanges. Early visits by cultural groups and joint exhibitions set the stage for enduring collaboration.

In 1965, the two sides signed a cultural agreement in Rawalpindi, a major city in Pakistan's eastern Punjab province, and launched their annual cultural exchange plan that same year. By late 2025, 14 such plans had been signed, providing an institutional framework for bilateral cultural interactions.

Progress has been steady in building exchange platforms. In 2010, the two countries signed a memorandum of understanding to establish cultural centers, and 2015 was designated as the China-Pakistan Year of Friendly Exchanges.

Furthermore, the China Cultural Center in Pakistan was officially inaugurated in Islamabad in April 2017, serving as a symbol of the friendship and a platform for cultural exchange and mutual understanding between the two peoples.

Recognizing language as a vital bridge for connection, Beijing Language and Culture University and Pakistan's National University of Modern Languages jointly established Pakistan's first Confucius Institute in Islamabad in 2005.

The institute features an impressive statue of Confucius and Chinese cultural elements, such as red papercuttings and posters. It regularly hosts cultural experiences and summer camps, helping Pakistani students appreciate the charm of Chinese culture.

By December, China had set up five Confucius Institutes and two independent Confucius Classrooms across Pakistan. Growing interest in the country has led to a significant increase in institutions offering Chinese language courses.

China began accepting Pakistani students in 1964 and by December 2024 had welcomed approximately 25,000 Pakistani students.

In 2022, China and Pakistan signed an agreement on the mutual recognition of higher education degrees and diplomas, creating a pathway for talent development and deepening cross-cultural understanding.



Pakistani students participate in training at a modern agriculture practice center at Bailie Vocational College in Zhangye city, Gansu province. FAN PEISHEN / XINHUA

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a flagship project under the Belt and Road Initiative known for its role in infrastructure development, has also helped take educational cooperation to new heights, extending cooperation from higher education to vocational training and industry-education integration.

With Pakistan aiming for 30 percent of its vehicles to be electric by 2030, there is an urgent need for skilled workers in battery manufacturing, management systems and recycling. Pakistani officials have expressed hope for joint training centers and enterprise-led apprenticeships to nurture local talent under the CPEC framework.

People-to-people events have also strengthened bonds. On April 18, a children's gala was held in Islamabad to celebrate the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan. Around 500 people attended, including Pakistani government officials, representatives from Chinese diplomatic missions in Pakistan, leaders of the overseas Chinese community, and children from both countries.

Zafar Uddin Mahmood, special representative on China of the prime minister of Pakistan, said that Chinese culture is profound and unique, and it is worthwhile for Pakistani children to learn about and understand it.

He expressed hope that more Pakistanis would learn Chinese, using language as a bridge to enhance mutual learning and understanding.

Chen Peng, cultural counselor at the Chinese embassy in Pakistan, confirmed that the embassy would continue to deepen cultural and educational exchanges between Chinese and Pakistani youth and support various people-to-people friendship activities.

As the two countries celebrate their 75th diplomatic anniversary, cultural and educational cooperation will keep deepening, fostering greater friendship and supporting the steady growth of China-Pakistan relations.

CSAIL celebrates 75 years of China-Pakistan diplomatic relations

By **YUAN SHENGGAO**

The year 2026 marks the 75th anniversary of China-Pakistan diplomatic relations and the two countries have established an all-weather strategic cooperative partnership. At the forefront of this collaboration stands China Three Gorges South Asia Investment Ltd, or CSAIL, the investment arm of China Three Gorges Corp in Pakistan, aiming to shape a more sustainable and prosperous Pakistan by pioneering clean energy.



An aerial view of the 720-megawatt Karot Hydropower Project in Pakistan. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Hydropower project

Commissioned in June 2022, the 720-megawatt Karot Hydropower Project on the Jhelum River is a major facility in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor that has reached commercial operation. It is also an early large-scale hydropower investment project under the Belt and Road Initiative.

A living symbol of what both countries can build together, the project has generated a cumulative 11 billion kilowatt-hours of clean and green energy so far, with an average of 3,206 gigawatt-hours of clean electricity annually. It meets the annual energy needs of more than five million Pakistanis, and prevented approximately 12 million metric tons of cumulative carbon dioxide emissions — equivalent to roughly 3.5 million tons every year.

Developed under a Build-Own-Operate-Transfer model with a 30-year concession period, Karot will ultimately be handed over to Pakistan as a permanent national asset.

CSAIL also operates three wind farms — TGF, TGS and TGT — in Jhimpir, Sindh, with a combined installed capacity of 148.5 megawatts. Together they deliver approximately 443 GWh of clean electricity to Pakistan each year, meeting the power needs of more than 600,000 people.

Looking ahead, the 1,124 MW Kohala and 640 MW Mahl hydropower projects being developed by CSAIL will consolidate a "Clean Energy Corridor" along the Jhelum River. They will reduce Pakistan's reliance on imported fuels and strengthen long-term energy security, according to the company.

Environment, community

CSAIL's vision extends beyond power generation. At Karot, a biodiversity management plan protects the Jhelum River ecosystem, including monitoring the vulnerable mahseer fish in collaboration with Margalla Hills and Jhelum Valley national parks.

Karot and the wind power projects' community investment plans have delivered new and improved public infrastructure projects spanning roads, bridges, water systems, hospitals, schools, drinking water access, environmental awareness and tree plantation programs.

On the education front, CSAIL supports scholarships at universities such as National University of Sciences and Technology, Multan University of Science and Technology, and University of the Punjab, nurturing the next generation of Pakistani energy professionals.

Iron brothers

The depth of China-Pakistan friendship is most visible in adversity, according to CSAIL. During COVID-19, China Three Gorges Corp donated a substantial amount of essential medical supplies and medical equipment to Pakistan. Following the devastating 2022 floods in the country, which affected over 33 million people, CSAIL contributed $650,000 to the Prime Minister's Flood Relief Fund. In 2025, the company again stepped forward for flood-affected communities in Punjab. These acts reflect the enduring spirit of "iron brotherhood" — a solidarity defined by shared commitment, not convenience, according to CSAIL.

Next 75 years

As both countries mark the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations, CSAIL remains steadfast in its commitment to their extraordinary partnership. Its growing pipeline of clean energy projects promises additional sustainable megawatts alongside new employment, skills development, and community advancement.

Seventy-five years ago, diplomatic relations laid the foundation for one of the defining bilateral relationships of the modern era. Today, that foundation has blossomed into a partnership anchored in trust, strengthened by shared purpose, and illuminated by a common vision for a greener future. CSAIL is proud to be a part of its story, according to the company.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:58 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:58 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Broadening of cooperation will consolidate iron-clad friendship between China, Serbia

The five-day state visit to China by Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic, which began on Sunday and which he described as "undoubtedly the most important trip abroad" in his political career, stands as a testament to the two countries' commitment to building the China-Serbia community with a shared future in the new era and elevating it to a new height.

The ironclad friendship between China and Serbia is rooted in both historical logic and practical realities. Serbia is China's first free trade partner in Central and Eastern Europe and occupies a special place in China's diplomacy toward Europe. Over the years, the mutual support between the two countries has remained steadfast, their cooperation has grown ever closer, and their exchanges and mutual learning have become increasingly substantive, especially after President Xi Jinping's state visit to Serbia in 2024.

The meeting between Xi and Vucic in Beijing on Monday covered a wide range of issues spanning the historical evolution of relations, development strategies, strategic coordination, economic cooperation and people-to-people exchanges. It underscored the solid foundations and great potential of bilateral relations.

That both leaders emphasized deepening bilateral pragmatic economic, trade and technology cooperation during China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period demonstrates a common understanding that the two countries should further align their development strategies, open up new areas of cooperation and strengthen strategic coordination so as to bring greater tangible benefits to the two peoples while jointly safeguarding international fairness and justice.

The two leaders witnessed the signing of more than 20 cooperation documents on Monday that provide a clear road map and institutional framework for transforming their consensus into concrete platforms, projects and outcomes. This will help advance the mid-term action plan for their Belt and Road cooperation, build more flagship projects and further unlock the potential of the China-Serbia free trade agreement.

Thanks to the free trade agreement, which came into force in 2024, trade between the two countries reached $6.49 billion in 2025, up 13 percent year-on-year. Serbian products are gaining broader access to the Chinese market, while Chinese investment continues to support Serbia's industrial modernization and infrastructure development.

China-Serbia cooperation is no longer confined to traditional areas such as transport and energy infrastructure. The two countries are looking to cultivate new growth drivers and expand cooperation into emerging frontiers, including advanced manufacturing, green energy, the digital economy and artificial intelligence. That will be conducive to injecting fresh vitality into bilateral collaboration.

Exchanges in various fields have further strengthened the friendship between the two peoples fostering mutual understanding and reciprocal public goodwill.

Xi called on both countries to leverage visa exemption policies, the free trade agreement and direct flights to expand all-round cooperation in culture, education, sports, tourism and sub-national exchanges.

On Monday, the two sides also issued a joint statement on continuously promoting the building of a China-Serbia community with a shared future in the new era and a joint statement on jointly promoting the implementation of the four global initiatives put forward by Xi.

This reflects the resilience and forward-looking nature of bilateral relations. As iron-clad friends, close economic and trade partners and defenders of world peace, China and Serbia share similar positions on many major international and regional issues. In the face of growing global instability and uncertainty, the two countries should strengthen their coordination and cooperation within the United Nations and other multilateral frameworks, advocate an equal and orderly multipolar world and promote universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization.

China-Serbia ties demonstrate that countries with different histories, cultures and social systems can respect each other's sovereignty and independently chosen development paths while pursuing common prosperity together. China stands ready to work hand in hand with Serbia to translate their shared aspirations into concrete progress and make the China-Serbia community with a shared future shine even more brightly in the new era.

Quad against regional need for stability

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio is scheduled to meet with his counterparts from India, Australia and Japan in New Delhi on Tuesday. The meeting is intended as preparation for a summit of the Quad leaders in November. However, the prospects of that have diminished due to changing geopolitical dynamics and strained relations stemming from differences among the group's members. The Quad foreign ministers' meeting therefore appears more symbolic than substantive.

Since its inception in 2007, the so-called Quadrilateral Security Dialogue has been much like a choir seeking harmony but never quite achieving it, leaving the group struggling to find its voice. While it operates under the banner of promoting a "free and open Indo-Pacific" — a dubious notion given that the region has been free and open — its core function is often perceived to be containing China. By fostering bloc politics, this exclusionary approach directly contradicts the region's need for openness and inclusiveness.

The Quad's vulnerabilities have become increasingly evident. The United States' unilateral foreign policies, prioritizing US interests, appear to have eroded the political support essential for the Quad's cohesion. The US administration's imposition of high tariffs on India has strained ties between the two countries. This transactional attitude toward allies seems to have destabilized the Quad's already fragile framework.

Additionally, each Quad member's separate economic ties with China further complicate the group's dynamics. The recent visit by the US leader to China helped to stabilize the bilateral relationship. And China has again overtaken the US to become India's largest trading partner, with bilateral trade surpassing $155 billion last year. Moreover, China-Australia trade has entered a renewed growth phase after several years of tension.

Divergences among the four nations on security, economic and geopolitical fronts present challenges to forging a unified strategy within the Quad. Each country has different national interests and priorities, which often lead to conflicting approaches. The US' shifting strategic priorities, including its skepticism toward multilateral institutions and security alliances, have also diluted its commitment to the Quad. Meanwhile, India's emphasis on maintaining its strategic autonomy and its historical nonalignment policy sometimes result in hesitance to fully commit to collective security measures that might compromise its "independent stance". Even if the Quad manages to continue in some form, it risks becoming a symbolic presence.

The very existence of the Quad runs counter to the peace and stability that are in the fundamental interests of regional countries. The peace and prosperity of the region do not require, nor can they rely on, exclusionary mechanisms. Genuine regional development is driven by cooperation and mutual benefit, not confrontation and division. In light of the Quad's dilemma, the international community should recognize that any mechanism attempting to divide the world will ultimately fail.

The Quad is a relic of a bygone era — one that prioritizes geopolitical maneuvering over genuine multilateral engagement. Yet special attention should be paid to Japan, a country eager to promote neo-militarism and skilled at hyping up regional tensions. The Sanae Takaichi government has been actively seeking cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and alignment with the Philippines in the South China Sea. It would come as no surprise if Japan attempts to reinvigorate the Quad.

Japan's defense expenditure increased by 9.7 percent in 2025, reaching a record high. Its weapons imports have grown by 76 percent over the past five years. Although Japan's defense budget has been rising for 14 consecutive years, right-wing forces in the country continue to clamor for even greater military spending. This once again reveals that Japan's "nation of peace" mask is slipping, as the country drifts toward neo-militarism.

In this context, the Quad stands as a ready-made zombie — one that the Takaichi government might be interested in reanimating to revive its militarist ghost. Should Tokyo indeed play a major role in breathing life back into this geopolitical tool, its ulterior motives would undoubtedly warrant regional caution.

Jin Ding



Opinion Line

Innovation ecosystem driving rapid battery advancements

In April, the retail penetration rate of new energy passenger vehicles in China surpassed 60 percent for the first time, reaching 61.4 percent. Internal combustion vehicles are increasingly becoming the minority technology in one of the world's largest automobile markets.

This transformation is being driven by simultaneous advances in multiple battery technologies in China. While lithium iron phosphate batteries continue to dominate the sector because of their lower costs and improving safety profile, research is accelerating in solid-state batteries, sodium-ion batteries and iron-based flow batteries for large-scale energy storage.

Over the past five years, the unit cost of power batteries in China has decreased by 30 percent, their lifespan has increased by 40 percent, and charging speeds have more than tripled. The country is transforming the battery — the most expensive and technologically sensitive component of an electric vehicle — into a mass-market commodity with rapidly improving performance. It's a story of scale, chemistry and market selection.

China's power battery output reached 310 gigawatt-hours in the first two months of 2026, up 22 percent year-on-year. Lithium iron phosphate batteries alone accounted for nearly 115 gigawatt-hours of production in February, far exceeding ternary lithium batteries. This reflects the emergence of a manufacturing ecosystem capable of relentless innovation and continuous cost compression.

Meanwhile, researchers at the Chinese Academy of Sciences recently reported progress in iron-based flow batteries that are capable of more than 6,000 charging cycles without measurable degradation. Because iron is far cheaper and more abundant than lithium, such technologies could become important not only for electric vehicles but also for grid-scale electricity storage as renewable energy capacity expands globally.

The consequences for traditional automakers are profound. Many foreign automotive brands have lost their market share in China. The problem is not merely slower adaptation. Many foreign manufacturers are struggling to match the speed of innovation, cost efficiency and software integration achieved by Chinese EV makers. The International Energy Agency expects electric and hybrid vehicles to account for nearly 30 percent of global car sales this year, driven partly by fuel price pressures and falling battery costs.

China's advantage in the sector lies in integration. Chinese companies are competitive in large segments of the industry, including battery materials, cell manufacturing, software systems and vehicle assembly. This vertical integration enables faster iteration cycles, lower marginal costs and quicker commercialization of innovation.

More important, China has embedded the EV industry within a broader national system organized around data, digital infrastructure and industrial coordination. EVs in China are increasingly becoming mobile computing platforms connected to payment systems, mapping services, charging networks, logistics chains and urban management technologies.

This reflects a distinctive combination of government policy and market competition. Industrial policies created the initial conditions through subsidies, charging infrastructure and research funding. What transformed the sector was the interaction between enormous domestic demand and highly competitive companies forced to innovate constantly on cost, efficiency and technology.

China's EV ecosystem also benefits from unmatched industrial clustering; battery makers, software developers, semiconductor suppliers and assembly plants operate within tightly integrated regional supply chains. Data generated by millions of connected vehicles feed directly into the AI-driven optimization of battery management, autonomous driving systems and energy efficiency.

Such system-level integration may ultimately prove even more consequential than low battery prices. For instance, on Monday, Huawei unveiled the Tau Scaling Law — a new semiconductor principle that uses logic-folding technology to continuously compress signal propagation delays. By 2031, high-end chips developed under this breakthrough — which integrates national strategy, enterprise R&D, and industrial clusters — could reportedly achieve a transistor density equivalent to the 1.4-nanometer process.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Computing power a strategic resource in AI era

Editor's note: *Increasing artificial intelligence inference has led to greater demand for computing power than can be supplied. Shen Jianguang, chief economist at major e-commerce platform JD.com, discussed possible solutions to the problem in a commentary in People's Daily. Below are excerpts of the article. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

A severe shortage of computing power has gripped countries and regions across the world. While the crunch is partly linked to physical bottlenecks such as chip manufacturing and power grid capacities, a more important driver is the massive increase in AI demand, which has outpaced the existing supply capabilities.

This surge in demand stems from a fundamental shift in the way AI applications are being used.

First, AI is evolving from a "helpful assistant" into an "autonomous agent". In the past, AI was mainly being used for simple tasks such as text generation and basic question-and-answer interactions. But today, new AI agents can directly operate computers by writing code, organizing files and collaborating across different software programs.

This evolution from merely "suggesting ideas" to "taking action" has drastically increased the computing power required for a single task, sometimes by several orders of magnitude.

Second, top developers are relying on massive computing power to achieve higher levels of intelligence. To make AI more reliable and accurate, leading global models typically use inference-time scaling technology.

Before generating a response, the AI pauses to analyze, reason and check its work in the background, much like a human would. For example, when tasked with researching an industry and writing a comprehensive report, the AI needs to autonomously browse websites, read financial statements and run analysis tools. This single task can run continuously for hours, consuming millions of tokens.

Third, the commercial application of AI has crossed a critical tipping point. Thanks to breakthrough improvements in stability and accuracy, AI is now delivering tangible returns in sectors such as finance, healthcare and core business operations. As a result, companies are more willing to deploy these models on a larger scale, transforming AI demand from experimental tech trials to an absolute business necessity.

Faced with this challenge, tech companies worldwide are actively seeking solutions. In the short term, optimizing allocation is key, with many AI providers focusing their computing resources on business segments that produce direct revenue.

Chinese companies on the other hand are seeking to improve the output efficiency per unit of computing power through technological innovation as an effective way to alleviate the computing power pressure.

In the long run, expanding capacity and exploring innovations will be equally important. Tech giants worldwide are accelerating the construction of data centers and increasingly purchasing high-end chips. At the same time, more efficient model architectures and next-generation storage and interconnect systems are gradually maturing, which will help relieve the pressure on computing resources.

In the AI era, computing power has become a foundational strategic resource, much like water or electricity. Only by balancing short-term optimization with long-term planning, and aligning tech upgrades with capacity building, can the industry ensure steady growth and maintain a competitive edge on the global stage.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:58 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:58 PM

VIEWS

Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif

Closer Pakistan-China ties for a shared future

May 21 marks the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China.

On behalf of the Government of Pakistan, as well as on my own behalf, I extend my heartfelt felicitations to the peoples of Pakistan and China, on the historic occasion of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China.

As we commemorate this historic milestone, in a befitting manner, it would enable our peoples, particularly the younger generations, to better appreciate the depth, breadth, vitality, and future-oriented character of Pakistan-China relations.

The people of Pakistan hold the people of China in the highest esteem and affection.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations on 21 May 1951, the friendship between Pakistan and China has steadily evolved into an All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership.

Built on mutual trust, sovereign equality, and shared aspirations for peace and development, our bilateral relations have continued to grow in strength, substance, and strategic significance, amidst changing regional and global circumstances.

Pakistan highly values the visionary leadership of President Xi Jinping and appreciates China's remarkable achievements in economic development, technological advancement, poverty alleviation, and global connectivity.

From the Karakoram Highway to cooperation in outer space, Pakistan-China friendship continues to demonstrate how enduring strategic trust can be translated into meaningful progress and shared prosperity for our peoples.

Under President Xi's visionary leadership, China has achieved remarkable progress in modernization, innovation, poverty alleviation, and national rejuvenation.

China's progress and transformation continue to inspire the developing world and contribute significantly to global peace and prosperity.

The commitment of the Chinese leadership to strengthen Pakistan-China relations and advance the shared vision of building a closer "Pakistan-China Community of Shared Future in the New Era" is most commendable.

Pakistan deeply appreciates China's cooperation with Pakistan in multifaceted fields. Pakistan remains firmly committed to the one-China principle and will continue to support China on issues concerning its core interests.

China's robust support for Pakistan's socio-economic development and national priorities has played a phenomenal role.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), as a flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative, has made tremendous contribution toward Pakistan's infrastructure development, energy security, industrial cooperation, and regional connectivity.

Pakistan remains firmly committed to the high-quality development of CPEC as it enters its next phase, with greater emphasis on industrialization, agriculture, information technology, science and technology, green development, and enhanced people-centered cooperation.

It is encouraging to witness Pakistan-China cooperation, expanding into new frontiers including digital economy, innovation, space cooperation, education, and cultural exchanges.

From the Karakoram Highway to cooperation in outer space, Pakistan-China friendship continues to demonstrate how enduring strategic trust can be translated into meaningful progress and shared prosperity for our peoples.

The 75th anniversary of the establishment of Pakistan-China diplomatic relations is not only about remembering the past; it is about shaping the future.

At a time of increasing global uncertainty and transformation, Pakistan and China remain committed to multilateralism, peaceful coexistence, and inclusive development.

Our All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership continues to serve as a positive force for regional stability and international cooperation.

May the enduring friendship between Pakistan and China continue to grow stronger with every generation!

Pakistan-China friendship zindabad.

The author is the prime minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Huo Wei and Zhu Detao

Xizang's journey from chains of feudalism to gains of freedom

Seventy-five years ago, Xizang autonomous region experienced a turning point in its history. The peaceful liberation of the region in 1951 marked the beginning of a new era for generations of Tibetan people who had long been trapped under a rigid feudal serfdom, allowing them to reclaim their lives.

Far from championing the masses, the 14th Dalai Lama was the principal serf-owner in a system that enslaved over 95 percent of the Tibetan population, with interests fundamentally at odds with those he supposedly represented.

Before it was liberated, Xizang was governed by a feudal system more oppressive than even medieval Europe. Less than 5 percent of the population — including the aristocracy, senior government officials, and monastery elites — controlled the farmland, pastures, forests and livestock.

Over 95 percent of Tibetan people were serfs or slaves, bound to estates for generations with no freedom, no property and no legal rights.

The 14th Dalai Lama's family epitomized this system. Historical records show they owned 27 estates and 30 pastures, overseeing more than 6,000 serfs.

Each year, they extracted 460 tons of barley, 35 tons of butter, over 2 million taels of silver and 300 cattle and sheep.

The personal wealth of the Dalai Lama included 160,000 taels of gold, 95 million taels of silver, more than 20,000 pieces of jewelry and over 10,000 luxury garments.

Under old Tibetan law, human life was valued by rank.

The value of a top-ranking person was equal to the weight of a corpse in gold, while a low-ranking person was worth only a straw rope. Serfs who infringed the interests of their lords faced barbaric punishments administered by private courts maintained by monasteries and aristocrats.

Serfs were considered no more than "talking livestock". One folk song captured their misery: "Even if snow mountains turned into butter, it belongs to the serf-owners; even if rivers ran with milk, we cannot taste a drop."

For the Dalai Lama and his family, this system was paradise; for the vast majority, it was hell.

Democratic reforms after the Agreement of the Central People's Government and the Local Government of Tibet on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet (17-Article Agreement), ended this oppression. The central government gave Xizang six years to initiate reforms.



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

Roads, railways, and air routes now connect the plateau in ways unimaginable in 1959, shrinking the travel time of journeys that once took months into hours.

However, the Dalai Lama and his inner coterie refused and staged an armed rebellion in 1959 to preserve their privileges.

But the revolt was suppressed, and democratic reforms redistributed land, freed over one million serfs, and restored their dignity. More than 187,000 hectares of land were confiscated or purchased from serf-owners and handed to 800,000 serfs and slaves across 200,000 households.

An average of over 0.23 hectares of land was redistributed per capita. Freed serfs received land and livestock for the first time, their debts were waived, and generations of oppression came to an end.

The results were transformative. Xizang's population grew from 1.228 million in 1959 to 3.74 million by 2025, a staggering threefold increase.

Life expectancy doubled from 35.5 to 72 years. Maternal and infant mortality fell dramatically, and severe diseases such as smallpox, poliomyelitis, and diphtheria were eradicated.

Education, once reserved for monks and aristocrats, became universal: Xizang now has over 3,600 schools serving nearly a million students, with compulsory education completion at 97.86 percent.

The GDP of the autonomous region grew from 174 million yuan ($25.6 million) in 1959 to over 303 billion yuan in 2025, a 1,740-fold increase.

Per capita income rose to 33,600 yuan, with both urban and rural income growth rates ranking first in the country. Roads, railways, and air routes now connect the plateau in ways unimaginable in 1959, shrinking the travel time of journeys that once took months into hours.

These numbers are not abstract — they reflect the real lives of over 3.7 million Tibetan people. The era when "a straw rope was worth a human life" is gone forever.

Yet these numbers only tell part of the story. Witnesses vividly recall life under serfdom. Ninety-five-year-old Bai Mu remembers walking barefoot across thorny fields, enduring injury in silence. Ninety-two-year-old Suo Za said, "We did all the work, but the harvest belonged to serf-owners. If there was any displeasure, they beat us at will."

These accounts confirm that democratic reform did more than redistribute land — it restored humanity. Ordinary people, once seen as "talking livestock", became the masters of their own destiny.

The Dalai Lama, in contrast, has never advanced the welfare of ordinary Tibetan people. Since fleeing abroad, he has engaged in separatist activities, inciting unrest while protecting the privileges of the aristocracy he once led. His claim to represent the people is contradicted by both history and living memory.

Xizang's 75-year journey demonstrates that liberation, not feudalism, served the people. The paradise the Dalai Lama sought to preserve rested on the blood and tears of millions of Tibetan people.

Today, Tibetan people are building a prosperous, harmonious, and modern society. The future of Xizang is being written by those who live there, not by figures clinging to the past.

History has clearly chosen its side.

Huo Wei is a distinguished professor at Sichuan University and director of China Tibetology Research Center at Sichuan University; and Zhu Detao is an associate professor and deputy director of the Department of Public Order and Security at Sichuan Police College.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Kang Bing

The author is former deputy editor-in-chief of China Daily.
kangbing@chinadaily.com.cn

We need to give new life to old clothes

Winter is over and it is time for families to store heavy winter wear deep in wardrobes and bring out lighter clothes for the warm season ahead.

During this seasonal migration of garments, I found that roughly one in every five garments has not been used for many years — either because it no longer fits, has gone out of fashion or is simply not liked anymore.

Many such clothes had become useless for my family but we hesitated to throw them away. People of my generation, who experienced the hard times of running short of food and clothes, feel guilty when discarding any usable item, be it clothes, packaging boxes or plastic bags.

"Keep them till I can wear them after I lose some weight," my wife has said for the past 20 years whenever I wanted to dispose of some of her dresses. I agreed because I myself have the same arrangement for my tight sweaters, jackets and pants.

As a result, our four wardrobes were packed with clothes, and it took me a whole day to complete the seasonal adjustment.

That's when I decided to clear out some of the old clothes. The timing was just right — my wife was away in Hainan province.

Together with my son, I sorted out more than 40 kilograms of used clothes — a number of down coats, a dozen or more woolen sweaters and several jackets, pants and shirts. After I contacted an online waste collector, a young man came to our house and took away our harvest, paying a symbolic 20 yuan ($2.93).

As a result, used clothes either find their way into trash bins or, as in our case, are taken away by collectors.

We could have simply thrown the clothes away in the trash bins in our apartment compound but I could not bear the thought of my once-beloved garments lying among rotting vegetables and chicken bones.

I prefer to believe that the young collector who took the clothes would sell them to recycling plants or find new owners for them. After all, some of the clothes had hardly been used because they failed to keep pace with our weight gain.

I believe many Chinese families share the same dilemma when it comes to getting rid of used clothes.

About 50 years ago, this was not a problem. In times of scarcity, one would be lucky to have even a second set of clothes. Later, for many years, used clothes were collected by government departments and sent to poor rural families and disaster-hit areas as relief.

Today, the situation is different. Rural areas have eliminated absolute poverty since 2020 and the government has stocked sufficient supplies — tents, down coats and blankets — for emergencies. As a result, the government's collection of used clothes has been suspended. While this is good news and reflects the country's progress, it has blocked an important channel for disposing of old but usable clothes.

The number of shops selling second-hand clothes, once common across the country, has also decreased. Many well-off Chinese consider it beneath their dignity to step into such shops. There are some online second-hand trading platforms, but they mostly deal in luxury goods — ladies bags, Swiss watches and expensive toys. If any clothes change hands, they are usually wedding dresses or branded suits valued at thousands of yuan. You must be joking if you think you can sell your used clothes on such platforms.

Some communities organize weekend flea markets for second-hand goods. Toys, electrical appliances, books, furniture and home ornaments are well-received at such places, but used clothes are the least welcome.

After all, it would be embarrassing if one were seen wearing an overcoat discarded by one's neighbor.

As a result, used clothes either find their way into trash bins or, as in our case, are taken away by collectors. What becomes of them is not entirely clear.

I believe a large portion is sent to recycling plants and turned into new materials. If that is true, it is at least an acceptable destiny for worn-out clothes. However, when I imagine my brand-new clothes being thrown into large pools filled with chemicals, my heart aches.

It would be better if there were some mechanism that separates used clothes that are in good condition, disinfects and irons them, and then gives them a new life in families that truly need them.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:58 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:58 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

POLINA RYSAKOVA AND IGOR KHODACHEK

From rails to classrooms

The architecture of Sino-Russian educational partnership is adopting more hybrid forms as cooperation deepens

Russia and China are bound by decades of relations in which political and economic interactions have traditionally occupied the leading place. In recent years, however, another dimension of the bilateral dialogue has come into sharper relief — the humanitarian one. This is evidenced by growing Russian interest in Chinese popular culture, literature, music, theater and cinema, as shown by the success of Chinese television series on Russian streaming platforms, translations of contemporary Chinese prose and poetry, and touring performances by Chinese musical and theatrical ensembles. The humanitarian dimension is no longer merely supplementing the traditionally dominant economic and political relationship — it is becoming an independent and significant channel through which the two countries come to know each other.



Polina Rysakova



Igor Khodachek

As national cultures interpenetrate ever more closely, what defines the present moment is the consolidation of hybrid forms of cultural interaction. Productive partnership gives rise to fundamentally new formats that cannot be reduced to either of the originating traditions. Such hybrids are emerging in the sphere of Russian-Chinese cultural contacts as well: one need only think of Russian feature films and literary works set in China, or tourist itineraries that bring together the cultural heritage of both countries.

Hybrids of this kind are taking shape in education too — against the backdrop of intensifying Russian-Chinese humanitarian ties and an accelerating exchange of visits. In 2025, around 21,000 Russians studied at Chinese universities, while Russian universities hosted approximately 66,000 Chinese students. Throughout the 2020s, Russia has been gradually becoming one of China's most important partners in higher education, alongside the traditional leaders from the Western world. This is demonstrated by the growing number of joint educational programs established through the efforts of Russian and Chinese universities. The momentum of Russian engagement is striking. Whereas around 120 new Russian-Chinese programs were launched during the 2010s, today the number of active partnerships has reached 150, involving around 90 Russian and 150 Chinese universities. The geography is expanding too: universities of the Urals, the Volga region, St Petersburg and Moscow are joining the traditionally active institutions of the Russian Far East and Siberia.

Joint educational programs are precisely the kind of cultural hybrids described above. They have absorbed the best of the educational traditions of both countries while remaining oriented toward the future — toward creating the conditions for a sustainable partnership. At the foundation of this partnership lie both a shared humanitarian dimension and a complementarity of skills and competencies. This is reflected in the diversity of Russian-Chinese educational cooperation.

While technical disciplines dominate in most Chinese-foreign joint projects, the Russian-Chinese partnership is distinguished by the way that a technological agenda is organically combined with a humanitarian one. Engineering disciplines occupy a significant place — mechatronics, electrical engineering, and automation — as do programs related to transport infrastructure, above all railways, including railway power supply, transport management and signaling systems. This cooperation carries strategic importance for the development of regional and global connectivity infrastructure. At the same time, the humanities remain an integral part of Russian-Chinese educational projects — Russian language study, musical performance and arts education. It is precisely these programs that transform the educational dialogue into a fully-fledged cultural exchange, extending well beyond applied technological cooperation.

Notably, the hybrid character of the educational partnership is expressed not only in program content but in its physical, spatial embodiment. Russia has become one of the countries — alongside the United States, the United Kingdom and Israel, among others — to have established a joint university on Chinese soil: MSU-BIT in Shenzhen, a non-profit Chinese-foreign cooperative university jointly founded in 2016 by the Shenzhen municipal people's government, Lomonosov Moscow State University and Beijing Institute of Technology. Another unique and remarkable establishment is the international campus of St Petersburg State University and Harbin Institute of Technology (SPbU-HIT) in Harbin. This project reflects the deep historical and cultural ties between the two countries. The educational function here acquires an additional dimension — the preservation and reinterpretation of a shared heritage.

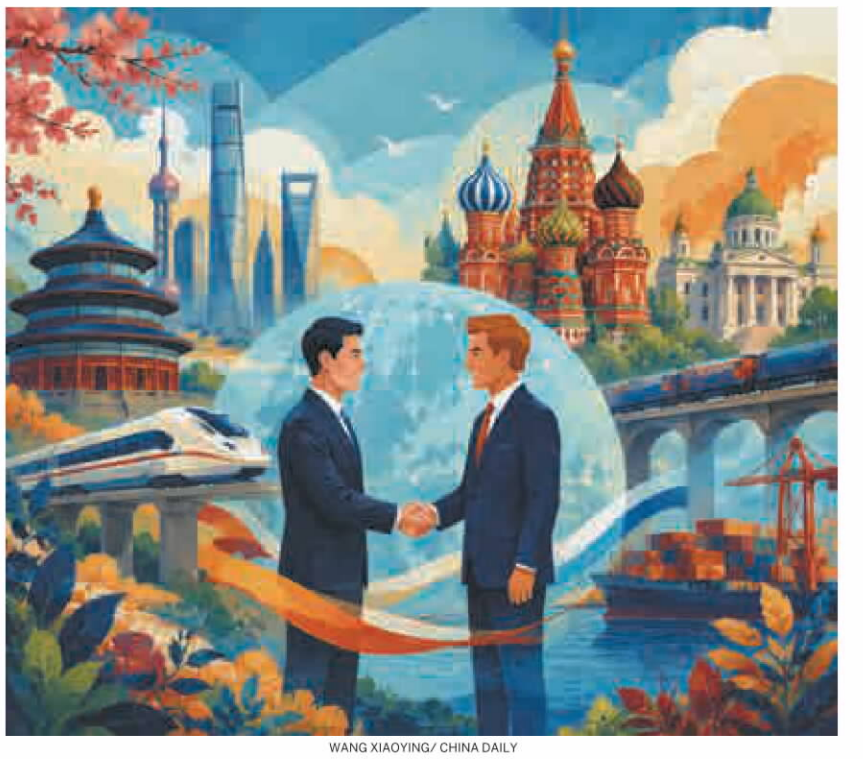
This kind of reading becomes possible through the "city as text" approach, which is gaining ground in urban research today. By treating planning documents, social media posts, real estate advertisements, news archives and topographic inscriptions as a single body of evidence open to computational analysis, the approach allows researchers to trace how the meaning of a place evolves across actors and across time. Applied to Harbin, it makes visible how official, academic, and everyday voices have repositioned shared heritage from a contested footprint to a shared resource, providing the empirical foundation that such a project deserves.

What the Harbin campus demonstrates in concentrated form is true of the partnership more broadly. The China-Russia Years of Education, spanning 2026 to 2027, open genuine opportunities for a qualitative renewal of the partnership. The two sides have a historic chance to build a sustainable model of long-term educational cooperation in which technical and humanitarian directions develop in balance. It is precisely this breadth — from railway technologies to the Russian language, from musical performance to arts education — that makes the Russian-Chinese educational dialogue both unique and full of promise.

Polina Rysakova is a researcher at the Center for Eurasian Studies at European University, St Petersburg. Igor Khodachek is the director of the Center for Eurasian Studies at European University. The authors contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY



WANG XIAOYING/ CHINA DAILY

LONG CHEN

Mutual supporters

Three ever-broadening 'paths' underpin the consolidation and extension of China-Russia cooperation

At the invitation of President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin paid a state visit to China on May 19 and 20. The deep-seated accumulation of China-Russia cooperation has continued to grow despite the turbulent international landscape. Steadily extended and consolidated, it has become a paradigm for major-country coordination in today's world. Looking back at the highlights of China-Russia cooperation in recent years, the secret to the steady progress in bilateral exchanges lies in three increasingly broadening "paths".



Amid current major issues such as the international energy security, the in-depth communication and coordinated positions between China and Russia are helping to jointly safeguard the authority of the United Nations Charter and international fairness and justice, steadily advancing the building of a more equal and orderly multipolar world.

The path of people-to-people exchanges is becoming increasingly smooth. The thermometer of China-Russia relations is, first and foremost, reflected in the footsteps of ordinary people from both nations. As a major outcome of the strategic guidance by the two heads of state, the trial mutual visa-free policy launched in 2025 responds to the expectations of both peoples.

Data from the Heilongjiang General Station of Exit and Entry Frontier Inspection show that after just over eight months of the trial visa-free policy, ports across Heilongjiang province received over 650,000 Russian travelers, a year-on-year increase of nearly 70 percent. Among them, the number of tourists entering through visa-free channels surged more than twofold. Cross-border weekend visits between Chinese and Russian families and Russian tourists shopping at Chinese markets have become the new normal.

Meanwhile, Chinese tourists' enthusiasm for visiting Russia is equally high. According to the Association of Tour Operators of Russia, the number of Chinese tourists visiting Russia increased by 44 percent in the first quarter of 2026, firmly securing China's leading position in terms of foreign tourist arrivals in Russia. According to forecasts by the Russian Ministry of Economic Development, the number of Chinese tourists to Russia is expected to reach 5.5 million annually by 2030.

The path of physical connectivity is accelerating its extension, making the "steel arteries" of economic and trade exchanges more resilient and robust. If the "heart path" is the underlying emotional bond of China-Russia cooperation, the "hard path" supports the backbone and lifeblood of their economic and trade interactions. According to the Russian Ministry of Transport, the freight volume of trade in goods between China and Russia reached 47 million metric tons in 2025, up 3 percent year-on-year, with vehicles passing through border ports increasing by more than 20 percent compared to 2024.

The accelerated upgrading of cross-border infrastructure and logistics, along with the step-by-step implementation of border port renovations, has emerged as a new highlight in bilateral economic and trade exchanges. Specifically, the Kanikurgan-Heihe highway port has completed its upgrade, increasing daily vehicle clearance capacity to 862 vehicles. The traffic capacity of the Kraskino-Hunchun and Pogranichny-Suifenhe highway ports has also increased to 750 and 1,300 vehicles respectively, upon completion.

Beyond highways, progress is being made in tandem across railways, aviation and maritime shipping. Cross-border waterway passenger transport is becoming increasingly busy. As the terminus of the Pacific Railway, the coal marine terminal at Port Elga and its supporting railway are under intensive construction. Once fully completed, Russia will be able to transport an additional 30 million tons of coal by water annually.

Furthermore, the development of the Russian Far East and Northeast China is not only a regional priority but also a crucial lever to stimulate growth across the entire Eurasian continent. These crisscrossing "hard paths" are tying the economic lifelines of the two countries ever tighter, serving as a powerful engine for the shared development of the region and the continent as a whole.

The path of participating in global governance is widening, providing greater confidence for practical cooperation to counter anti-globalization. The significance of China-Russia cooperation has long transcended the bilateral scope. Through platforms such as BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, China and Russia are providing more diverse international public goods to the Global South.

At the 2024 BRICS Kazan Summit, President Xi put forward five suggestions: building a BRICS committed to peace, innovation, green development, justice and closer people-to-people exchanges. Both China and Russia expressed their readiness along with other BRICS members to promote strategic cooperation across three pillars — politics and security, economy and finance, and people-to-people exchanges — and to strengthen ties with other developing countries through "BRICS Plus" and outreach dialogues.

In recent years, the New Development Bank and alternative payment systems under the BRICS framework have gradually emerged as beneficial complements to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

In September 2025, President Xi proposed the Global Governance Initiative at the SCO Plus Meeting. President Putin expressed immediate support, saying that the Global Governance Initiative put forward by President Xi is very timely and relevant, and will play an important role in closing the global governance deficit. On May 9, President Putin further pointed out at a news conference after the Victory Day celebrations that China-Russia coordination has become "a key pillar in deterring conflicts and safeguarding global strategic stability".

Amid current major issues such as the international energy security, the in-depth communication and coordinated positions between China and Russia are helping to jointly safeguard the authority of the United Nations Charter and international fairness and justice, steadily advancing the building of a more equal and orderly multipolar world.

The author is an assistant researcher at the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University of China. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:58 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:58 PM

BUSINESS

Report: Firms investing more in Europe

More than an export market, continent seen as a strategic base, say analysts

By **LI JING**
lijing2009@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese corporate investment in Europe surged to its highest level in seven years in 2025, with a sharp rise in factory construction, as Chinese companies accelerated efforts to localize operations amid global supply chain shifts and rising trade protectionism.

Chinese foreign direct investment in Europe, including the United Kingdom, climbed 67 percent year-on-year to 16.8 billion euros ($19.6 billion), the highest level since 2018, according to a recent study by Rhodium Group and other industry trackers.

The automotive sector remained the dominant investment destination, drawing 7.6 billion euros, with 93 percent tied to electric vehicle supply chains.

"The core driver is the globalization push by Chinese automakers," said Ron Zheng, a senior partner at Roland Berger and head of its automotive practice in Asia.

"At the same time, Europe's trade barriers and industrial policies are accelerating the shift toward localized production, as companies seek to mitigate tariff risks and meet local production requirements."

Greenfield investment — where companies build new production facilities rather than acquire existing firms — jumped 51 percent from a year earlier to nearly 9 billion euros, setting a record high, the report found.

Analysts say the rebound highlights that Chinese companies are increasingly turning to Europe not only as an export market, but also as a strategic production base.

"The rise in FDI reflects strong complementary demand on both sides," said Zhou Mi, a senior researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation.

"Chinese companies have technology and manufacturing experience, while European markets want investment, especially in sectors linked to industrial upgrading and green transition," Zhou said.

He said greenfield investment has become the dominant model partly because Europe lacks sufficiently mature industrial assets in some emerging sectors that Chinese firms can directly acquire.

Europe's share of China's total global FDI rose from 17 percent to nearly a quarter in 2025, according to the report.

Hungary remained the largest recipient of Chinese FDI, attracting 3.9 billion euros, although its lead narrowed as other major European economies regained momentum, the study found.

Chinese FDI in Germany nearly tripled to 2.5 billion euros, while investment in France quadrupled to 1.9 billion euros, according to the report. Combined, France, Germany and the UK accounted for 34 percent of total Chinese investment in Europe in 2025, up from 23 percent a year earlier.

Spain, Sweden and Cyprus also each attracted more than 1 billion euros, helped by large renewable energy and entertainment deals, including China Three Gorges Corp's acquisition of the Mula solar plant in Spain and Tencent Holdings' purchase of mobile game developer Easybrain in Cyprus.

Zheng from Roland Berger said China's EV sector now possesses the world's most complete supply chain, strong cost-control advantages and fast technology iteration capabilities, making overseas expansion a natural next step as growth in China's domestic auto market moderates.

"Europe is still the global technological center of the combustion engine era and remains a premium, strategically important market. For Chinese automakers to become truly global brands, they must establish themselves in Europe," he said.

Zheng added that localized manufacturing allows companies to move closer to customers, satisfy local content rules and improve brand perception, while reducing exposure to tariffs and antisubsidy probes.

Chinese investment is also reshaping Europe's industrial landscape, Zheng said. While local suppliers may face near-term competitive pressure, deeper integration with Chinese battery and component makers could accelerate Europe's EV transition and strengthen supply chain resilience over the longer term.

"European carmakers including Volkswagen, Mercedes-Benz and BMW are already deepening cooperation with Chinese supply chains to benefit from China's cost advantages and innovation speed," he said.

Zheng added that Chinese automakers are increasingly moving beyond simple vehicle exports toward full-scale localization strategies that include factories, research centers, supplier ecosystems and after-sales networks.

"The model is no longer just about selling cars in Europe. It is about embedding entire industrial chains locally."

Huawei unveils cutting-edge chip-development framework

By **MA SI**
masi@chinadaily.com.cn

Huawei Technologies Co expects its premium chips to achieve transistor density equivalent to 1.4-nanometer processes by 2031 under a new semiconductor development framework, the company announced on Monday at a conference in Shanghai.

He Tingbo, Huawei board member and president of its semiconductor business, formally introduced the "Tau Scaling Law" in a keynote speech titled "New Semiconductor Path in Practice".

Unlike traditional approaches that rely on miniaturizing transistors — an industry paradigm increasingly challenged by physical limits and diminishing cost benefits — the new methodology prioritizes reducing signal propagation time across devices, circuits, chips and systems, said He, adding that Huawei has already designed and mass-produced 381 chips based on the Tau Scaling Law over the past six years, covering industries from smartphones to artificial intelligence computing.

This autumn, the company will launch a new Kirin smartphone chip that adopts a multilayer circuit architecture which shortens critical path wiring and improves transistor density and energy efficiency.



A visitor checks out Huawei's computing equipment during a high-tech expo in Shanghai. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The announcement underscores China's push to circumvent US export restrictions that have limited domestic access to advanced lithography tools and cutting-edge semiconductor manufacturing.

China is widely seen as unlikely to reach 1.4 nm capabilities through conventional fabrication alone, but a successful application of the Tau Scaling Law could offer a way to improve performance and chip density despite equipment constraints, experts said.

Huawei's projection places it on a competitive timeline with TSMC, the world's largest advanced chip foundry. TSMC currently produces chips on 2 nm technology and plans to begin mass production of its A14 (1.4 nm) process in 2028.

Beyond Huawei's internal roadmap, Chinese AI developers are increasingly turning to domestic chips. In its DeepSeek-V4 technical report, DeepSeek listed Huawei's Ascend NPU alongside Nvidia GPUs within the same hardware validation framework — the first time the company has positioned a Chinese AI chip on equal footing with Nvidia in an official document. The model has already completed inference adaptation on Huawei's Ascend platform.

Meanwhile, Kimi's recent research paper on cross-data center inference architecture has also hinted at exploring domestic chip-based token cost reduction.

As overseas advanced computing procurement tightens, the shift toward domestic AI chips is accelerating. He from Huawei said the semiconductor industry's future depends on open collaboration, adding that no single company can independently find all the answers.

"With the Tau Scaling Law, we look forward to working closely with scientists, engineers and industry partners around the world to drive the sustainable development of the semiconductor industry," she said.

Huawei's progress comes as a string of Chinese semiconductor companies are making inroads into chip supply chains, including chip materials, packaging, manufacturing processes and chipmaking equipment.

Roger Sheng, vice-president of research at Gartner, said amid mounting challenges, Chinese chip firms are showcasing their resilience and growing innovation capabilities.

Xing Ziqiang, chief China economist at Morgan Stanley, said China is making breakthroughs in technological innovation, driven by three core advantages — industrial clusters, a demographic dividend of science and engineering talent, and an ultra-large market — that are difficult for other economies to replicate.

"My colleagues estimate that by 2027 or 2028, China is expected to achieve a 50 percent localization rate in GPUs, marking a significant leap forward," Xing said.

Stronger green ties key to China, Russia

By **ZHENG XIN**
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

Green energy collaboration between Beijing and Moscow holds immense potential, opening a vital strategic frontier as both nations seek to uplift their traditional fossil-fuel business into a high-tech, low-carbon value chain.

This structural complementarity — pairing China's world-leading clean technology with Russia's vast resource endowment — is increasingly viewed by industry experts as a driving force not only for bilateral energy security but for a more balanced global energy transition.

"There is massive room for cooperation in the new energy sector," said Yuan Liuyan, director of the energy strategy research department, China National Petroleum Corp (CNPC) Economics and Technology Research Institute.

Yuan pointed out that while Russia boasts abundant wind and solar resources, local development costs remain roughly five times higher than those in China.

> "There is massive room for cooperation in the new energy sector."
>
> **Yuan Liuyan,** director of energy strategy research department, China National Petroleum Corp Economics and Technology Research Institute

"By leveraging China's world-leading technology, industrial capabilities and cost advantages, the two nations have a vast arena to jointly develop wind and solar power bases," Yuan said, adding that bilateral nuclear cooperation could also extend into cutting-edge fields like small modular reactors, fast-neutron reactors and thermonuclear fusion.

According to Yuan, this clean energy synergy is also accelerating across cross-border manufacturing sectors. China has become the leading supplier of new energy vehicle technologies and components to Russia, bolstering its local electric vehicle engineering and domestic brand development.

Conversely, Russia — a top global producer of low-carbon primary aluminum via inert anode technology — is embedding its ultra-low-carbon metals into China's NEV, electronics and packaging industries, she said.

This "green materials to green manufacturing" synergy is paving the way for deeper cooperation across the broader advanced manufacturing supply chain, Yuan added.

While the green transition accelerates, traditional energy remains the bedrock of bilateral trade, characterized by the continuous optimization of traditional supply lines. Following agreements between CNPC and Russia's natural gas distribution company Gazprom, the Power of Siberia 1 pipeline — which reached its full design capacity of 38 billion cubic meters in 2025 — is undergoing expansion to further elevate long-term natural gas supplies.

Wang Hongzhi, head of the National Energy Administration, stated earlier this year that energy cooperation is a vital component of practical Sino-Russian relations.

It plays a foundational role in promoting high-quality economic and social development for both countries, he said, expressing high expectations for the partnership to scale new heights moving forward.

"Against the backdrop of ongoing Middle East crises, Russia continues to prove its role as a reliable supplier, while China remains a responsible energy consumer."

Keeping it cool



A railway employee inspects a freight train at Taiyuan North Railway Station in North China's Shanxi province, on Sunday. Amid scorching temperatures, maintenance workers conduct round-the-clock inspections to ensure the safe passage of freight trains. The station is a key marshalling hub connecting the Shijiazhuang-Taiyuan and northern Datong-Puzhou trunk lines, handling over 150 freight trains daily. ZHANG ZHIJIE / FOR CHINA DAILY

DeepSeek to maintain steep discounts

By **CHENG YU**
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese artificial intelligence startup DeepSeek said it will permanently maintain steep discounts on its DeepSeek-V4-Pro model API pricing, pushing inference costs to new industry lows and escalating a price war across the global AI sector.

DeepSeek said the promotional pricing for its V4-Pro model, previously offered at 25 percent of the standard rate and originally scheduled to end on Sunday, would now become permanent. The company said the revised pricing effectively sets the model's official price at one quarter of the originally planned level.

Under the new pricing structure, input costs for cached requests will fall to 0.025 yuan ($0.0037) per million tokens, while input costs will be 3 yuan per million tokens and output costs 6 yuan per million tokens, according to the company. The pricing ranks among the lowest globally for mainstream large-language-model APIs.

The move comes as AI infrastructure costs are rising worldwide due to what industry experts describe as structural imbalances across the AI supply chain.

DeepSeek's decision to cut prices against that backdrop signals that competition in China's AI market is increasingly shifting from raw computing scale toward efficiency and ecosystem expansion, industry experts said.

Wang Peng, a researcher at the Beijing Academy of Social Sciences, said: "DeepSeek's willingness to cut prices against the market trend is absolutely not simple cash-burning subsidization. It is a cost advantage achieved through reconstruction of the underlying technology architecture."

Wang said DeepSeek had adapted its models to domestic Chinese computing platforms including Huawei's Ascend chips, reducing dependence on overseas high-end computing hardware and lowering procurement costs.

"It will create a low price-user growth-ecosystem prosperity, which will further decline cost and form a cycle that strengthens DeepSeek's competitive position," he added.

The move also reflects a broader shift in China's AI industry, where firms are increasingly attempting to differentiate themselves not only through model capability but through deployment efficiency, infrastructure optimization and lower-cost inference.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:58 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:58 PM

BUSINESS

Smart glasses upgrading police efficiency

Technology is used for traffic management, street patrols, urban governance

By **YAN DONGJIE** in Tianjin
yandongjie@chinadaily.com.cn



The booth of an AI glasses company draws a large crowd of visitors at the sixth China International Consumer Products Expo in Haikou, Hainan province, in April. LUO YUNFEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE





Left: Zhao Baoxin (left), a police officer in Tianjin, demonstrates the use of smart glasses to another officer on Friday. YAN DONGJIE / CHINA DAILY
Right: Police officers patrol alongside a humanoid robot and a robot dog in Chengdu, Sichuan province, on Feb 15. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

With the assistance of smart glasses equipped with cameras, recognition systems and real-time internet connectivity, police officers can walk the streets and quickly identify objects, signs, license plates and more. By leveraging big data for real-time comparisons, they can proactively detect anomalies in a way that was once confined to sci-fi movies, but is now unfolding for real on the streets of Tianjin.

"These glasses make our patrols and checks much more efficient, helping us proactively detect and respond to emergencies," said Zhao Baoxin, a police officer at the Jiefang Road police station of the Heping district public security subbureau in Tianjin.

The first made-for-police-use smart glasses in China have been independently developed by the Tianjin public security system — with all software and hardware made domestically. They are changing traffic management, routine patrols and urban governance.

In the past, patrolling relied primarily on visual observation. Today, smart glasses are widely employed in scenarios such as traffic management, street patrols and locating missing people, continually improving urban governance and public services. This technology enables law enforcement to respond with greater precision and speed.

While violent crime is rare in China, the use of smart glasses goes far beyond making arrests — they are often used to serve residents, manage traffic and locate lost elderly people.

Showcasing the city's advances in smart policing equipment, these and other typical examples of intelligent technology empowering social governance and public services will be on display at the 2026 World Intelligence Expo in Tianjin from Thursday to Sunday.

Zhao recalled one patrol experience: "We found an elderly man at an intersection in Heping district. He couldn't speak clearly or tell us his name and address. The glasses quickly identified him and within 20 minutes we had reached his family and got him home safely."

Connected to a networked platform, the smart glasses feature text recognition, voice recognition and voice-command control. They can search and provide feedback information in real time, such as verifying a person's identity or finding family contact details. Officers can complete identity checks and information inquiries on the spot through the glasses, improving response efficiency.

The glasses not only assist officers in their daily work, but also give traffic police a major helping hand.

Traffic congestion around schools during peak drop-off and pick-up hours is a common challenge across China. At Tianjin No 21 Middle School in Heping district, parents can now register through a miniprogram co-developed by the public security system. Their license plate information is linked to the glasses' back-end system.

Wearing the glasses, officers can quickly identify authorized vehicles and guide them to stop briefly and leave promptly, while directing other vehicles away in time.

Sun Yinghua, a police officer of the mobile policing detachment of the science, technology and IT division of the Tianjin Municipal Public Security Bureau, said the glasses achieve a recognition accuracy of over 95 percent and can capture data and return results within milliseconds — faster than the blink of an eye. Powered by OCR visual capabilities and artificial intelligence large model technology, the camera on the glasses can quickly identify objects, signs and license plates.

In terms of battery life, the second-generation glasses last two to three times longer than the first generation, supporting 1.5 to 2 hours of continuous wear — enough to cover a standard patrol shift. The temple arms are equipped with specialized sensors: putting the glasses on activates them automatically, and taking them off switches them to standby mode, effectively reducing power consumption.

Unlike body-worn cameras clipped to the chest, the smart glasses offer a first-person perspective, so the footage does not shift when the officer bends or turns. The device weighs about 40 grams, lighter than an average pair of sunglasses.

The push toward smart policing is accelerating across China. In December, a national public security technology work conference called for in-depth implementation of the strategy of strengthening the police force through technology, and comprehensively advancing the use of digital and intelligent tools to empower police operations. According to a 2026 industry report by Zhiyan Consulting on China's public security IT market, the sector grew from 10.8 billion yuan ($1.59 billion) in 2015 to 25.5 billion yuan in 2025, with a compound annual growth rate of 8.96 percent.

Smart glasses, police robots, drones and other equipment have now entered the multipoint application stage. In Jinyun county, Zhejiang province, traffic police using AI glasses have improved the efficiency of roadside key vehicle checks by about 300 percent. In Haikou, Hainan province, AI glasses deployed by traffic police can complete the whole process from identification to alert within 30 seconds. In Chengdu, Sichuan province, humanoid robots, robotic dogs and smart glasses have been integrated to build a three-dimensional prevention and control system covering "air, ground and individual officers". Shenzhen, Guangdong province, explicitly called for "deepening the practical application of new technologies and equipment such as robots and AI glasses" in its 2026 public security work plan.

Police-use smart glasses are also being added to the equipment lists of law enforcement agencies in other countries.

In January, Delhi police in India deployed AI smart glasses for security during Republic Day celebrations. The Dutch national police force began piloting Vuzix Blade augmented reality glasses in 2020 to provide information support to patrol officers.

Zhao said: "During large-scale security operations or holiday crowd management at scenic spots, the glasses work in coordination with drones. The devices can cover areas that personnel cannot reach."

Yan Jinghao, head of the mobile policing detachment of the science, technology and IT division of the Tianjin Municipal Public Security Bureau, said future plans include linking robotic dogs, smart connected police vehicles, humanoid robots and other terminals to achieve multidevice coordination — "to enhance the intelligence level of policing and urban management".

Zhong Aiyamei contributed to this story.

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Advances in exoskeleton tech may provide answers for enhancing mobility

By **YAN DONGJIE** in Tianjin



A tourist wearing a smart exoskeleton device crosses a bridge in Tianjin earlier this year. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

At 60 years of age, Liu Na has always loved sports. However, in recent years, every time she goes hiking, she has increasingly felt that her knees and legs are no longer as strong as when she was younger.

Not long ago, during a trial experience event at Duishan Park in Tianjin, she put on an exoskeleton device for the first time.

"I was a little worried at first. I thought this thing would be particularly heavy," Liu said.

But after she put it on and started climbing, she quickly found that her legs seemed to be gently lifted by a mild force.

"Walking became noticeably easier, as if I had regained the feeling of my youth," she said.

Today, exoskeleton devices that once only appeared in science fiction films are gradually entering ordinary people's outdoor sports and daily lives.

Qiu Xiaoning, general manager of Tianjin Industrial Research Technology Development Co, said the newly developed exoskeleton weighs just 2.4 kilograms and can be folded for storage.

To reduce the burden of wearing the device, the research and development team used 3K carbon fiber to build the force arm structure, allowing the device to maintain stable power output while remaining lightweight.

"When I first saw the device, I thought it would definitely be heavy," Liu said. "But after wearing it for a while, I gradually forgot it was there."

During uphill climbs and long-distance walks, the exoskeleton can automatically adjust its power output according to the body's movements. When the wearer starts to go uphill, lifts a leg or accelerates, the device rapidly senses the change in motion and provides corresponding assistance.

The research and development team at Tianjin Industrial Research Technology Development Co explained that the core lies in an "adaptive system".

"You don't need to consciously coordinate with it; it will actively adapt to your pace," said Li Yue, an electronic control algorithm engineer involved in the exoskeleton's development.

Behind this system is an algorithm framework of "large model with small model" built on the gait data of Chinese people.

The so-called "large model" corresponds to general data on height, stride length and gait patterns of a large number of Chinese people, while the "small model" refines the differences between individuals.

With the help of multidimensional sensors and real-time algorithms, the device can complete motion recognition and gait synchronization within 30 milliseconds.

This exoskeleton device will be showcased at the 2026 World Intelligence Expo in Tianjin, which is scheduled to take place at the National Convention and Exhibition Center (Tianjin) from Thursday to Sunday. The event is expected to attract over 700 exhibitors and will see the unveiling of more than 200 innovative achievements and research reports.

Globally, exoskeleton devices are also gradually moving from laboratories to more everyday application scenarios.

In the past, such equipment was primarily used in military, industrial or medical rehabilitation fields. However, in recent years, with advances in lightweight motors, artificial intelligence recognition and wearable technologies, outdoor assisted movement has emerged as a promising new direction.

Several international brands have begun applying technologies such as artificial intelligence terrain recognition and adaptive power systems to mountaineering and hiking scenarios.

For instance, an outdoor exoskeleton device named Vigx Pi6 can analyze ground conditions in advance via an AI terrain camera and dynamically adjust power assistance accordingly.

Another product, the Hypershell X Ultra, is capable of switching modes to adapt to different environments including snow, sand and uphill climbs.

Meanwhile, the R&D team at Tianjin Industrial Research Technology Development Co focuses more on the core question of whether ordinary people are actually willing to wear such devices on a daily basis.

"Many exoskeletons have powerful functions, but average people won't go out carrying a heavy device every day," said Qiu. "What we aim to create is a product that can truly integrate into daily life."

Currently, this exoskeleton has completed research and finalization and entered small-batch trial production.

The R&D team has conducted tests in settings such as parks and nursing homes, and plans to further open up experience opportunities at Tianjin's Panshan Scenic Area.

For the development team, outdoor sports are just the starting point.

As population aging deepens and rehabilitation demand continues to grow, it is hoped exoskeletons will further expand into senior care, medical treatment and community services in the future.

In clinical rehabilitation applications, exoskeletons have been widely used for gait training of patients with hemiplegia, paraplegia and stroke.

Developed by the Haihe Laboratory of Brain-Computer Interaction and Human-Machine Integration at Tianjin University, the "Shengong" series has become one of the most representative achievements in the field of brain-computer interface exoskeletons both domestically and globally. Among them, "Shengong-Shenxing" was officially launched at the 2024 World Intelligence Expo in June 2024, and its innovative walking assistance technology has broken the long-standing international monopoly in the traditional electromyography-driven exoskeleton sector.

Tianjin University's "Shengong" series of exoskeletons have also creatively integrated noninvasive brain-computer interfaces with exoskeleton technology. The developed devices have provided rehabilitation training for more than 3,000 stroke patients in local hospitals in Tianjin and trial services for the elderly in communities.

According to data released by the National Bureau of Statistics, by the end of 2025, the population in China aged 60 and over had reached 323.38 million, accounting for 23 percent of the total population. On Sept 20, 2022, Wang Haidong, director-general of the National Health Commission's department of aging and health, said at a news conference that the population aged 60 and over is expected to exceed 400 million by around 2035, accounting for more than 30 percent of the total population, marking China's entry into the severe aging stage.

A growing number of people are beginning to rethink a fundamental question: Can people continue to walk and move freely as they grow old? Embodied intelligence products such as exoskeletons may offer a new answer.

Meng Jiarui contributed to this story.

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:58 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:58 PM

CHINA

Mission head plans to grow petunias in space

Shenzhou XXIII commander's passion for the sky blossoms aboard Tiangong

By **ZHAO LEI**
zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

Colonel Zhu Yangzhu, commander of the Shenzhou XXIII mission, said he plans to grow petunias in space during his stay aboard the Tiangong space station.

"I will bring some petunia seeds with me. I plan to plant them once I get aboard the space station and see if they can bloom. I hope they will grow into lovely blossoms.

"I picked petunias because they are fairly easy to grow, and their flowers are quite beautiful. What's more, the blooms give off a vibrant and uplifting vibe, which can cheer people up. Just as we feel delighted seeing flowers and plants growing on home balconies, the same pleasure is even stronger in space. The view of green vegetation, along with blossoms and fruits if they grow, can tremendously brighten our spirits," he said in an earlier interview with reporters at the Astronaut Center of China in Beijing before setting out for the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwestern China for the launch on Sunday night.

Zhu, 39, said Chinese astronauts have a "space garden" inside the Tiangong space station. Recalling his participation in the Shenzhou XVI mission, he said he and his crewmates grew plants, mostly lettuce and green onions.

"We ate them after they matured," he added.

According to Zhu, new planting equipment was sent to Tiangong after his flight, enabling astronauts to harvest more vegetables and fruits.

The astronaut noted that the Shenzhou XXI crew has harvested cherry tomatoes three times in orbit. They also planted wheat, which has begun to form ears. In addition, they have grown three generations of mint.

"We will continue to take care of those plants, and will cultivate carrots during our stay," Zhu said.

Earth vistas

Recalling his first and only spacewalk during the Shenzhou XVI mission, Zhu described the eight-hour activity on July 20, 2023, as "an experience that will stay with me for life".

"The awesome vistas of Earth seen outside the space station are very different from those viewed from inside. Floating out into space, anyone would be instantly overwhelmed by the breathtaking scenery. The blue sky and oceans lie directly beneath me. As we orbited above the atmosphere, blue skies spread out both ahead and underfoot, with clusters of white clouds drifting far below.

"I also gazed upon deep blue oceans and lush green lands. When passing over deserts, sharply defined stretches of brown and tan terrain came into my sight. Countless rivers were clearly visible as well," the astronaut said.

What struck Zhu the most was a gigantic typhoon eye he observed when the space station flew across the Atlantic Ocean.

"Suspended amid the endless expanse of space, our home planet appears small, yet breathtakingly beautiful in its blue hue. All these magnificent sights have filled me with even greater reverence for life, nature and the universe," he said.

During the spacewalk, the astronauts also soared over the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. The landscape unfolded clearly before Zhu's eyes, with towering snowcapped mountains and the estuary of the Yellow River visible from orbit.

"The land of our motherland lay right in front of me. At that moment, I couldn't help wondering what made our space journey possible. It is our great motherland that sent us into space. Countless space industry workers toil behind every space mission, lifting us high toward the stars," he said.

Flight path

As one of the first two members of China's third group of astronauts to take part in a space mission, Zhu said he was destined for flight.

When he was a middle school student, Zhu often used pilot training equipment at his school, which cooperates with the People's Liberation Army Air Force in selecting students for flight school.

In his fifth year in middle school, Zhu planned to apply for an Air Force flight training program. However, his head teacher believed he had great potential for scientific research and persuaded him to reconsider. Still, his passion for the sky never faded.

"I said to myself: 'If I can't fly into the sky myself, I'll dedicate myself to researching flight technologies instead,'" Zhu said.

Before taking the national college entrance examination in 2005, he applied for a major in spacecraft systems and engineering at the National University of Defense Technology. His second choice was aircraft design and engineering at Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics.

Thanks to his high scores, Zhu was admitted to the College of Aerospace Science and Engineering at the National University of Defense Technology in Changsha in the summer of 2005.

After obtaining a bachelor's degree, he went on to pursue master's and doctoral degrees in fluid mechanics at the same university.

After a decade of study, Zhu graduated in 2015 with the highest academic score in his major.

He was then assigned to an infrastructure construction unit of the PLA, where he assumed his first engineering post. In the position, he led a group of soldiers working at construction sites in remote mountainous areas. He also took part in a postdoctoral program run by the Army Engineering University of PLA in Nanjing, Jiangsu province.

In 2017, Zhu was transferred to the Space Engineering University under the former PLA Strategic Support Force to help establish a mechanics laboratory.

In the summer of 2018, he learned about the selection of China's third-generation astronauts and decided to apply.

"I didn't make it into the Air Force to fly fighter jets in blue skies, but then came this opportunity for me to fly spacecraft outside Earth's atmosphere, so I was determined to try my best to chase it," he said.

After many rigorous tests, Zhu stood out among thousands of applicants and was recruited by the PLA Astronaut Division in October 2020.

Due to his lack of flight experience, Zhu found it difficult at first to learn spacecraft control operations at the Astronaut Center of China.

To master the skills as quickly as possible, he made full use of a desktop simulator for manual rendezvous and docking installed in his apartment, conducting extra training after daily sessions. After thousands of hours of practice, he developed solid muscle memory and eventually achieved precise manual rendezvous and docking operations.

On May 30, 2023, Zhu was launched into space, beginning a five-month orbital mission as the spaceflight engineer for the Shenzhou XVI mission.

"I think the experience of my first mission is very important because it let me know exactly what and how I should work in space," Zhu said before setting out on the Shenzhou XXIII mission.

High spirits





Above: The crew members of the Shenzhou XXI, Zhang Lu (front left), Zhang Hongzhang (left) and Wu Fei (second from left) and those of the Shenzhou XXIII, Zhu Yangzhu (front right), Lai Ka-ying (right) and Zhang Zhiyuan (second from right) meet and pose for a photo aboard the Tiangong space station on Monday.
JIN LIWANG / XINHUA

Left: The crew members of the Shenzhou XXIII engage in a training session on March 4. XINHUA

Spaceflight fulfills childhood dream

By **ZHAO LEI**
zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

Colonel Zhang Zhiyuan, an astronaut of the Shenzhou XXIII mission, grew up fascinated by the wonders of navigating the skies.

"When I was a little boy, my friends and I usually played in the farm fields. Back then, we would often hear military aircraft roaring past overhead. We would run after the planes and shout excitedly. At that time, I held pilots in great admiration and thought this profession was an exceptionally noble calling," said the Gansu province native, who will celebrate his 40th birthday aboard the Tiangong space station next month.

Memories of the astronaut's passion for flying remain vivid in the mind of his father, Zhang Jukun, a retired schoolteacher.

"One day, his mother and I were working in the fields while he played beside the ridge. A plane flew across the sky, and he spotted it and kept chasing after it, running about 400 meters," Zhang Jukun told Gansu Daily. "I pulled him back and told him he could never catch up with an aircraft. Right away he asked me, 'When can I get to fly a plane myself?' And I answered him, 'If you keep working hard, you will make it someday.'"

In the years that followed, Zhang Zhiyuan grew into a caring and sensible young man. He often helped with farm work on the family's land after school.

He studied diligently throughout his primary and middle school years, consistently achieving above-average grades, while never letting go of his dream of flying.

When Zhang Zhiyuan turned 19, a long-awaited opportunity arrived: recruitment officers from the People's Liberation Army Air Force came to his school, Baiyin No 1 High School.

He decided to try and soon stood out among the more than 200 candidates. After passing a series of rigorous tests, he became the only student from his school admitted to the Aviation University of Air Force in Changchun, Jilin province.

Throughout his university years, he trained to high standards, noting that "the path from a flight student to a qualified pilot is filled with tough elimination rounds. To attain outstanding physical fitness, I stuck to extra training every single day".

After graduating, he was assigned to a fighter jet unit and rose through the ranks. He took part in numerous combat exercises, accumulating more than 1,200 hours of flight operations.

In the summer of 2018, Zhang was playing basketball with his comrades when a fellow officer rushed over with news that China was recruiting its third generation of astronauts.

He and his teammates immediately stopped the game. After reviewing the recruitment criteria, he signed up without hesitation.

"I have paid close attention to China's manned space program ever since the Shenzhou V mission. I was deeply impressed by how perfectly every mission concluded. Still, I never dared to dream that I could get the chance to become an astronaut myself before that day," he said.

Zhang advanced through successive selection rounds, undergoing strict medical examinations, psychological evaluations, and an unforgettable first experience in centrifuge training.

"Inside the centrifuge cabin, a massive pressure crashed over me, and my body resisted instinctively. My head swayed back and forth and side to side, yet I had to stay conscious and answer questions at any time," he said.

"Long after that, I grasped the skills for centrifuge training and realized how futile it was to rely on physical strength alone."

Apart from physical conditioning, mastering complex spaceflight theory felt like a long-distance endurance run. He pushed himself to understand and memorize every formula, principle and data set.

As a result of his dedication and perseverance, he was selected for the Shenzhou XXIII mission, finally realizing his dream of flying beyond the atmosphere.

"The dream of flying into space is built upon endless learning, rigorous training and steady accumulation of know-how. There are no shortcuts on this journey.

"Over the past years, I have encountered training bottlenecks and felt disappointed after failing to be selected for previous crews. It is exactly these experiences that have taught me the essence of perseverance. True devotion lies in giving it your all even when you fully understand how tough pursuing a dream can be," he said at the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center on Saturday, a day before embarking on his maiden space journey.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn

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

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1835

Robots in Hubei to get life-cycle tracing ID numbers

By **CHEN MEILING** in Beijing
and **LIU KUN** in Wuhan

Some humanoid robots in Hubei province are set to become the first in China to receive their own identity card numbers, allowing their full life-cycle activities to be recorded, in a move aimed at ensuring full traceability and clear accountability amid the rapid development of the industry, experts said.

The number, consisting of 29 numerals and English letters, identifies a robot's brand nationality, company, product model and serial number, covering key information such as the manufacturer, hardware parameters, intelligence level and factory filing records.

Like Chinese citizens' ID card numbers, each robot's number is unique, though it contains 11 additional characters.

Beyond basic static data, the digital ID card enables full life-cycle tracking of information including equipment maintenance records and application scenarios. Real-time data such as joint wear and tear, battery status and operational accuracy can also be accessed at any time through a management platform, said Liu Chuanhou, chief operating officer of the Hubei Humanoid Robotics Innovation Center in Wuhan that is leading the project.

"If the robot breaks down, we can check its operational logs and maintenance records through its unique ID to locate the malfunction, determine liability and carry out efficient maintenance," he said.

A new user can also verify the robot's performance and service records through its ID without repeated testing, which is expected to improve the efficiency of robot reuse, Liu added.

On May 11, the center completed filing applications and coding tests for the first batch of enterprises and products with the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology. The enterprises include leading companies across Hubei's humanoid robot industrial chain, such as Optics Valley Dongzhi, GLRoad, Hubei Qirobotics, Jingchu Humanoid Robot, HandX, Guanggu Haribit and Maxnova.

Liu Jieni, business director at Maxnova, said several of the company's flagship humanoid robots had completed unified coding and filing. The robots are mainly used in industrial manufacturing, commercial services and demonstration training.

She said the company joined the initiative to align with the industry's standardization trend, highlighting the smooth process involved.

"Taking part in this initiative not only helps us address compliance gaps and reduce operation and maintenance costs, but also promotes large-scale market expansion of our products," she said. "Meanwhile, it enables us to accumulate valuable data assets and further strengthens our core competitiveness and brand influence in the industry."

Global shipments of humanoid robots reached about 17,000 units in 2025, with a market size of 2.88 billion yuan ($424 million). Benefiting from advantages in supply chains, technologies and application scenarios, China ranks first globally in the humanoid robot industry, according to a report released in March by Beijing CCID Publishing and Media and China Electronics News.

China has more than 140 humanoid robot manufacturers, with shipments totaling 14,400 units, accounting for 84.7 percent of the global total. Its market size reached 1.55 billion yuan, representing 53.8 percent of the global market, the report said.

Amid the rapid development of China's humanoid robot industry, many enterprises still operate in isolation with incompatible technical standards. There is also a lack of unified norms for product traceability, safety supervision and data circulation, according to Liu.

He said the initiative is expected to promote standardization and strengthen the institutional foundation for large-scale, high-quality development of humanoid robots.

At the same time, as high-end intelligent equipment becomes increasingly integrated into production and daily life, humanoid robots also pose potential risks related to operational safety, data security and ethical compliance.

"In cases involving safety incidents or potential data hazards, the ID number can support rapid traceability and liability confirmation, helping prevent risks such as technology abuse and information leakage," Liu said.

Contact the writers at chenmeiling@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:58 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:58 PM

CHINA

China's cold climb to winter sports peak

Systematic support sends nation's disabled athletes to top of Paralympic table

By **WANG XIAOYU** in Tesero, Italy
wangxiaoyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Two decades ago, when Chinese Paralympic athlete Fu Chunshan moved around on his crutches, the national flag on his skiing jacket would often peel at the edges or fall off entirely. With few resources and little funding, his team had no official outfitter and had to stick the flag on with adhesive tape.

"Before each competition, athletes from around the world would gather and gear up together in the preparation tent. We could not help looking on with envy as some European teams arrived with a full army of wax technicians, coaches, guides, team doctors and equipment managers," Fu said.

That memory, from the Turin 2006 Winter Paralympic Games in Italy, has stuck with him for 20 years. In that time, he has transitioned from a para cross-country skiing athlete to a coach, and has witnessed his nation's steady progress in bringing more people with disabilities into winter sports and achieving athletic excellence on the international stage.

At the Milan-Cortina 2026 Winter Paralympics, held from March 6 to 15 in Italy, the Chinese delegation topped the medal table with 15 gold, 13 silver and 16 bronze medals. It was China's best performance at an overseas Winter Paralympics since its debut in Salt Lake City in the United States in 2002.

Chang Zheng, vice-president of the China Disabled Persons' Federation and deputy head of the Chinese delegation, said China sent 70 para athletes to compete in 73 of the 79 events across six sports. "The extensive participation reflects a boom in engagement in ice and snow sports among people with disabilities," he said.

"Behind the team's sporting excellence lies the indomitable spirit of our para athletes, as well as a large group of skilled coaches, support staff, guides, technicians, medical and rehabilitation personnel, and scientific researchers," Chang added.

Of the 15 gold medals, the para cross-country and biathlon team that Fu coaches contributed 11.

"Foreign athletes now acknowledge our arrival with remarks like 'Here comes China'. During races, rival coaches will push their own athletes by pointing out that a Chinese competitor is ahead of them," Fu said. "The team's sporting success this year is beyond my dreams."

Fu, 42, lost his right leg in a childhood accident. He began training as a cross-country skier in the early 2000s and was one of eight athletes on China's delegation at Turin 2006. His best performance as an athlete came at the Vancouver 2010 Winter Paralympics, where he finished ninth.

"At that time, I was shy, intimidated and tended to crouch in a little corner to prepare for the race quietly," he said. "The mere arrival of some foreign teams, slick and well-equipped, was a formidable sight in itself."

What Chinese para athletes relied on, Fu said, was primarily mental toughness. "Regardless of inclement weather or poor snow conditions, we just went out, gave it everything and hoped to demonstrate what we had trained for," he said.

"At the same time, our early experiences overseas enabled us to observe and learn the drills of the world's best athletes firsthand — what equipment they used, how they waxed and how they maneuvered on the snow," he added.

Sometimes, Fu questioned himself: "Is it that we Asian athletes are somehow inherently incapable of rivalling Western athletes?" "But I soon waved off my doubts and concluded that the gap came down to inadequate training and support," he said.

A turning point came in 2015, when Beijing and the neighboring city of Zhangjiakou in Hebei province won the bid to host the 2022 Winter Olympics and Paralympics. "At the time, I set a goal of drafting a batch of athletes and helping them stand on the Paralympic podium," Fu said.

According to the China Disabled Persons' Federation, China's para snow sports entered a rapid development phase in 2016, bolstered by systematic support covering talent cultivation, venue construction, upgrades to training systems and hosting of competitions.

Since then, the number of winter Paralympic athletes nationwide has grown from fewer than 50 to over 1,000, and the number of technical officials has increased from zero to more than 100. The number of categories the delegation participates in has grown from just two to all six major Winter Paralympics events.

A key milestone was the opening of the National Ice Sports Arena for People with Impairments in late 2020, "which ends the longtime embarrassment of training in borrowed facilities during empty time slots".

Training has also become more diverse, integrating summer and winter sessions with both domestic and overseas programs, while a number of domestic para winter sports competitions are now held regularly, according to the federation.

The effort also includes greater public engagement. For instance, a winter sports season for people with disabilities, launched by the federation in 2016, attracts more than 300,000 visits annually.

For para cross-country and biathlon skiers, Fu said that they now have access to two year-round ski centers in the provinces of Jilin and Hebei, as well as overseas venues in Chile and Argentina for out-of-season training.

"My coach used to be in charge of everything — waxing the skis, driving us around, managing recovery and psychological therapy. And as an athlete, my mind wasn't just on the race. I was also preoccupied with tiny details, like whether a screw on my sit-ski might be loose," Fu said.

At the 2026 Winter Paralympics, Fu said China's para cross-country and biathlon team arrived with a support team of more than 40.

"Each athlete wears a heart rate watch or chest strap. Through a monitoring system, we calculate the optimal training heart rate and communicate with them in real time to ensure they can ski within a scientific heart rate zone," he said. "We also conduct blood lactate and morning urine tests regularly and adjust training plans based on their physical condition."

In winter para sports, equipment is essential. It determines whether athletes can navigate rough terrain at high speed, protect themselves in high-impact events, and push their limits.

Fu said the rapid development of China's manufacturing industry and long-term cooperation with a domestic company have turned his vision of equipping athletes with quality, homegrown pieces into reality.

"Taking sit-skis for example, we used to rely on equipment imported from Norway or Russia," he said. "Over the years, we have gradually switched to domestically made ones — first made with stainless steel, then later more advanced materials like aluminum and titanium."

At para biathlon competitions, athletes race different distances around a looped course and stop between laps to shoot. In preparation, Fu said the team trained six days a week. "In the evening, we also arranged for them to handle the rifle to maintain a feel for shooting," he said.

Athletes with visual disabilities use an electronic rifle guided by acoustic signals. To experience what it feels like to aim and shoot based on the pitch of the sound transmitted into their headphones, Fu and other coaches practiced the same way.

"The headphones give off a very noisy sound. After practicing for a long time, my ears will start ringing. This made me truly understand how difficult it is for athletes with visual disabilities," Fu said.

This system of people and programs, combined with the grit and adaptability of the athletes, has removed critical barriers for para athletes and helped them achieve high performances on the international stage.

Cai Jiayun, who won three gold medals in the standing class at the 2026 Winter Paralympics, was trailing in the final stretch of the men's sprint pursuit event but overtook the leading Ukrainian skier to win by 0.2 seconds.

"There seemed to be no way I could catch up given the distance between us and the short time left," Cai said. "But at that moment, I relied on my willpower. I just kept following, kept chasing and did my best."

Beyond willpower, Fu said that the Chinese athletes' explosive sprints at the end of races were partly due to a weekly training session dedicated to improving this specific capability — incorporating lunges for standing-class athletes and hyperextensions for sitting athletes.

Yu Shuang, who finished third in the qualification round of the men's sprint pursuit for the blind and partially sighted, asked the team's wax technician to adjust the wax on his skis according to the snow conditions.

"After getting a feel for the course during the qualification round, I believed that a deficit of over 10 seconds could be made up by changing the wax," he said. He later won the gold medal in the event.

Guo Yujie, 22, left this year's Paralympics with regrets, missing the podium in all her events. Still, she said she learned a valuable lesson in self-confidence and tenacity.

"We Chinese athletes train nearly 11 months each year, and our training is scientifically formulated and supported by high-performance equipment. Despite the relatively warm temperatures and the slushy, grabby snow here in Italy, we have adapted well," she said.

On a personal level, Guo said she has overcome injuries, as well as the frustrations and doubts raised by lackluster results ahead of the Paralympics, just to stand at the starting line.

"The silver lining is that I feel my shooting has become more stable," she said. "More importantly, going through setbacks this time has toughened me up. If I can rise from disappointment on a stage like the Paralympics, then there is no difficulty in life that I cannot overcome."







Clockwise from top: Cai Jiayun celebrates on the finish line after the para biathlon men's sprint standing event during the Milan-Cortina Paralympic Winter Games in Tesero, Italy, on March 7. ELETTRA AZZOLIN / OIS Guo Yujie competes on the shooting range in the para biathlon women's individual standing event during the Games on March 8. JOEL MARKLUND / OIS Fu Chunshan (right) coaches Zheng Peng during a training session in Tesero on March 9. HOU ZHAOKANG / XINHUA

Discovering white-knuckle thrills in an unlikely place



Wang Xiaoyu
Reporter's log

As a sports fan, I grew up watching the Olympics, but I had never paid much attention to the Paralympics. That was probably because I rarely encountered visibly disabled people in my daily life, and I also assumed that Paralympic events lacked the same drama and excitement as able-bodied competitions.

So when I went to the 2026 Milan-Cortina Winter Paralympics in early March as a reporter, I had few expectations for the rivalries, the twists and turns, or the adrenaline-pumping, heart-clutching moments that make live sports so gripping.

However, what I witnessed and experienced on the snow and ice shattered my stereotypes about the athleticism in the Paralympics.

When Chinese para snowboarder Wu Zhongwei was nearly thrown off balance by two colliding competitors ahead of him, I felt my heart leap into my throat and couldn't help clenching my fist tightly in the mixed media zone.

Even more thrilling was watching Wu edge closer and closer to the front-runner, overtaking on the final bump and raising his arms high in triumph. Though we journalists had already been standing and waiting through the long qualification rounds for over three hours that day, we jumped up and down like schoolchildren, clapping and yelling at his success.

In para alpine skiing, athletes hurl themselves down slopes with a gradient as steep as 64 degrees, reaching speeds of up to 130 kilometers per hour. Watching them swoosh down while navigating twists, turns, gates, bumps and dips in less than two minutes kept me on the edge of my seat.

When Zhang Mengqiu, a gold medalist from Beijing 2022, missed a pole and slid off the track in one race, she pounded her thigh with her fists in desperation and regret. Her dismay was felt by all of us on the scene.

At the Cortina Curling Olympic Stadium, the atmosphere during the wheelchair curling semifinals and finals was electric. Loud, raucous fans from competing countries cheered on their teams, responding to every stone with applause when it hit its target or a collective sigh when it missed.

I still remember when Yang Jinqiao threw his stick into the air after winning the mixed doubles gold medal with his teammate Wang Meng, firing up the Chinese spectators gathered in one block, who erupted in thunderous yells.

Thanks to intensified support in recent years, China's para winter sport athletes have access to advanced gear, scientific training regimens and world-class coaches — including some who have transitioned from able-bodied competitions and renowned foreign coaches.

As a result, their performances have improved significantly, adding to their overall competitiveness at the Paralympics.

For any sports fan, I recommend watching the Paralympics above all because it is just as captivating and thrilling as any other sporting event. You'll see all the speed, power, accuracy, stamina, coordination and grit that define mainstream sports, only in a different and maybe less familiar form.

On a personal level, I also find it fascinating to learn the history, rules and tactics of each sport. Why is there no sweeping in wheelchair curling? How is banked slalom in snowboarding different from snowboard cross? How do athletes with visual disabilities manage shooting in biathlon?

As much as I am looking forward to the 2028 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, I am equally ready to tune in to the 2028 Summer Paralympics — something I have never watched before.

Contact the writer at wangxiaoyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:58 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:58 PM

CULTURAL HERITAGE







Clockwise from above left: Part of the scroll on display by Song Dynasty (960-1279) painter Li Gonglin, which was created as an interpretation of an earlier work by Tang Dynasty (618-907) artist Wei Yan depicting an imperial horse pasture of the Tang era. People view a monumental horse painting by Italian Jesuit missionary Giuseppe Castiglione, created during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). A painting by Jin Dynasty (1115-1234) court artist Zhao Lin, portraying one of the six favored warhorses of Tang emperor Li Shimin. PHOTOS BY JIANG DONG / CHINA DAILY

Galloping through Chinese history

An exhibition of rare artworks in Beijing explores the long relationship between people and horses, **Wang Ru** reports.

In the ancient Chinese classic *Journey to the West*, the Monkey King is appointed *bimawen*, a title that sounds like "avoiding horse plague" in Chinese and is associated with caring for horses in the heavenly court. Though often treated as comic, the role reflects a genuine ancient belief: keeping monkeys in stables could protect horses from disease.

The custom appears repeatedly in historical texts and ancient brick reliefs. Yet in surviving paintings, it is known from only one work — a massive scroll portraying dozens of grooms tending nearly 100 horses. The painting is now on display at the new exhibition *Divine Steeds: The World of Horses in the Palace Museum's Painting and Calligraphy Collections* at the Palace Museum, the former imperial palace that served Chinese emperors from 1420 to 1911.

Running through June 21, the exhibition brings together 55 horse-themed paintings and calligraphy works from the museum's collection. Among them, 28 are being shown publicly for the first time, while 20 are classified as China's highest-grade cultural relics.

According to Zeng Jun, head of the museum's Department of Paintings and Calligraphy, horse paintings occupy a special place in the history of Chinese art because they reflect not only artistic achievement, but also broader historical and spiritual ideals.

"From the simplicity and vigor of the Qin (221-206 BC) and Han (206 BC-AD 220) dynasties, to the fully developed techniques of Tang (618-907) and Song (960-1279) paintings, and through the inheritance of the Yuan (1271-1368), Ming (1368-1644), and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, horse painting has remained closely connected to the evolution of the times, the spirit of the nation, and the aspirations of the literati," she says.

For curator Ma Shunping, the exhibition also tells the story of the enduring bond between Chinese people and horses. "Chinese people began domesticating horses in the late Neolithic era," Ma says. "Since then, horses have remained deeply connected to daily life and social development."

From the Qin and Han dynasties, innovations such as saddles and stirrups transformed transportation and mobility. Horse riding gradually replaced carriage travel and spread beyond the aristocracy into broader society, Ma says.

"Officials and scholars traveled on horseback for leisure and duty, while merchants journeyed for their livelihood," Ma says. "With horses beside them, people crossed mountains and rivers and left their footprints across the country."

That close relationship appears throughout the exhibition in paintings depicting seasonal journeys.

One featured work by Ming Dynasty painter Qiu Ying portrays official Tang Yi's imagined return to his hometown in today's Shanxi province after years serving in Suzhou, Jiangsu province.

Unable to return home for a long period, Tang became increasingly homesick. Sympathetic local scholars invited Qiu to paint the homecoming he longed for.

In the painting, Tang rides beside the Fenhe River in a bright red official robe. Ma describes Qiu's technique as both meticulous and fluid, with a refined composition and vivid yet restrained colors that create a peaceful atmosphere.

What makes the work particularly intriguing is that Qiu had never visited Tang's hometown. "Some of the scenery was imagined," Ma explains. "That makes this painting a fascinating blend of reality and imagination."

Beyond personal life, horses also played a decisive role in state power and military preparedness. Maintaining cavalry forces required enormous resources, making horse breeding a major national undertaking in many dynasties.

The exhibition's centerpiece is an authentic scroll painted by Song Dynasty painter Li Gonglin, created as an interpretation of an earlier work by Tang Dynasty painter Wei Yan under the auspices of Emperor Shenzong of the Song Dynasty.

"Wei was a famous horse painter in the Tang era. His authentic work was kept in the Northern Song (960-1127) court. Therefore, the emperor ordered Li, regarded as one of the greatest painters of the Song era, to re-create it," says Ma.

But such imitation was not a mere copy. While Li retained the original subject of official horse pastures containing 1,247 horses, he transformed the artistic style entirely through his own aesthetic vision.

"Unlike the powerful and imposing horses common in Tang painting, Li's horses appear restrained, elegant and introspective, qualities that reflected the Song Dynasty's artistic taste," says Ma.

"The enormous scroll balances hundreds of human and animal figures without descending into visual chaos. The composition remains orderly and harmonious despite its scale," he adds.

"The painter seemed completely immersed in the world of horses," Ma says. "Each horse and each person carries a distinct expression and personality. From the painting, it's easy to see why Li deserved the title of one of the greatest artists in Song painting, as he showed the pinnacle of horse painting in ancient China."







From top: Visitors admire Li Gonglin's scroll at the ongoing exhibition *Divine Steeds: The World of Horses in the Palace Museum's Painting and Calligraphy Collections* at the Palace Museum in Beijing. A painting on display shows a man riding a horse by Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) artist Zhao Mengfu. Another painting by Zhao Lin portrays one of Tang emperor Li Shimin's six favored warhorses. PHOTOS BY JIANG DONG / CHINA DAILY

Ma says that although Li was already famous in the Northern Song Dynasty, he was known for his quiet and introverted nature. Historical accounts describe him as spending long periods observing horses in imperial gardens, sometimes becoming so absorbed that he failed to notice people calling his name.

"That intense observation gave his horses extraordinary vitality," Ma says.

The work also reveals the scale of official horse breeding in ancient China. Historical records suggest that during the height of the Tang Dynasty, the government maintained around 700,000 horses. On average, one groom cared for about 10 animals, meaning tens of thousands of people were involved in horse rearing across the dynasty.

The exhibition also examines horses as symbols of military achievement and imperial legitimacy. Among the highlights are six paintings depicting the favorite warhorses of Tang emperor Li Shimin.

Historical records state that six horses helped save Li during the campaigns that unified the Tang Dynasty. To honor them, he commissioned stone carvings of the animals for his mausoleum in present-day Xianyang in Shaanxi province. The paintings displayed in the exhibition were produced centuries later by Jin Dynasty (1115-1234) court painter Zhao Lin and are the only surviving works attributed to him.

"The basic style of the paintings follows the carvings, but the painter introduced his own artistic interpretation by rendering the horses with softer, fuller forms that make them appear more animated and lifelike," says Ma.

"These paintings show the reverence ancient Chinese society held for horses. Because of their heroics on the battlefield, horses were memorialized in stone, celebrated in literature, and immortalized in art," he adds.

The exhibition also explores the spiritual qualities embodied by horses in ancient China and their rich cultural connotations.

For example, in classical Chinese thought, exceptional people were often compared to fine steeds. Just as a great horse requires a knowledgeable judge to recognize its value, talented individuals also depend on wise leaders who can identify and nurture ability.

Several paintings in the exhibition reflect this metaphor directly.

One portrays a neglected horse filled with frustration at never being appreciated. Another depicts a thin, exhausted horse that is nevertheless recognized by an expert as a rare and valuable steed. Also on display is a calligraphy work by Qing emperor Qianlong encouraging one of his officials to become a perceptive judge of talent and help discover capable individuals for the state.

"Over time, the relationship between the fine horse and the discerning judge became deeply embedded in Chinese culture," Ma says. "It evolved into a metaphor that encouraged rulers to remain open-minded and recognize exceptional talent."

Contact the writer at wangru1@chinadaily.com.cn

Ancient climate study reframes origins of millet farming

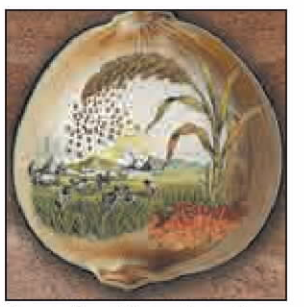
By **WANG QIAN** and **QIN FENG** in Xi'an

A new high-resolution climate study from China's Loess Plateau suggests that soil temperature, not just air temperature or rainfall, played a decisive role in shaping the spread of millet farming during the Neolithic period.

Published earlier this month in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, the study offers new insight into a long-standing question surrounding early Chinese civilization: why millet agriculture, which emerged about 8,000 years ago, remained limited for nearly two millennia before expanding rapidly around 6,000 years ago.

Researchers from the Institute of Earth Environment of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, in collaboration with Lanzhou University, the Institute of Geology and Geophysics, the British Museum, Washington University, and South Korea's Institute for Basic Science, reconstructed soil temperature fluctuations from 12,300 to 2,800 years ago at Longgugou, a fossil site with a typical loess deposit profile (4 meters deep), near Qingyang in the central Loess Plateau.





Left: Foxtail millet cultivated on the northern Loess Plateau, in present-day northern Shaanxi province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY **Right:** An illustration shows how soil temperature in Neolithic East Asia helped shape the development of millet-based farming societies. DONG GUANGHUI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Using 18 optically stimulated luminescence dates and 14 bulk organic carbon-14 dates combined with biomarker analysis, the team produced the first high-resolution continuous soil temperature record yet available for East Asia.

According to the study, early Chinese civilization experienced a notable slowdown between its origins around 8,000 years ago and its acceleration about 6,000 years ago. Millet farming followed a similar pattern.

The researchers noted that millet agriculture became an important source of subsistence in the Yanshan-Liaoning region around 8,000 years ago, but it did not expand rapidly until roughly 6,000 years ago, when its center shifted toward the Loess Plateau.

The slowdown puzzled researchers because both temperature and precipitation in northern China were relatively favorable during that period, and the environmental engine behind it remains unclear.

The newly reconstructed record appears to resolve that paradox. Between 8,000 and 7,500 years ago, relatively warm soil conditions created favorable environments for millet cultivation in the Yanshan-Liaoning region, a semiarid area spanning parts of present-day Liaoning and Hebei provinces and the Inner Mongolia autonomous region. In those conditions, communities facing subsistence pressure increasingly adopted millet farming, while populations on the Loess Plateau still relied largely on hunting.

Then came a critical shift. From 7,500 to 6,000 years ago, expanding vegetation cover and soil moisture significantly lowered soil temperatures across the Yanshan-Liaoning region. Simulation models of millet habitat suitability conducted for the study indicate that large areas gradually became unsuitable for millet cultivation during this period. As a result, the center of millet farming shifted southward to the Loess Plateau, where soil temperatures remained warmer and more suitable for agriculture.

Afterward, around 6,000 years ago, a return to relatively warm and stable soil temperatures, coupled with reduced vegetation cover, triggered the rapid expansion and intensification of millet farming across northern China. This agricultural boom, the researchers argue, laid the economic foundation for the flourishing of late Neolithic cultures in the region.

Millet agriculture, dominated by foxtail millet and broomcorn millet, known in Chinese as *su* and *shu*, is widely recognized as the primary economic basis for the emergence and early development of Chinese civilization.

The findings may also contribute to broader research tracing the origins of Chinese civilization. By establishing a direct link between subsurface thermal conditions and agricultural decision-making in prehistory, the study adds a new dimension to paleoenvironmental reconstruction, an area that has traditionally focused more heavily on air temperature and monsoon rainfall.

Contact the writers at wangqian@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:58 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:58 PM

LIFE



Above: A stunning night view of the Zhongnanmen historical and cultural tourist area in Tongren city, Guizhou province, with ancient architecture and Jinjiang River. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY **Below:** The Red Cloud Golden Summit of Fanjing Mountain in Tongren, Guizhou, is crowned by a pair of Buddhist temples perched on two stone pillars connected by an arched stone bridge. QIU YONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Tongren rises as a worthy tourist area for its mountainous heritage preservation, breathtaking landscapes and local matcha products, **Xu Lin** reports.

Fanjing Mountain in Tongren city, Southwest China's Guizhou province, is an ideal place to admire the breathtaking scenery, including the swirling mist of waterfalls and a sea of clouds. The mountain is shrouded in mystical clouds and mist more than 200 days a year. In such weather, hikers often feel as if they are adrift on an endless sea as they trek up its rocky paths to discover this heaven on earth.

As a sacred Buddhist mountain, it preserves several restored ancient temples now open to the public. It is also dotted with ancient villages of ethnic groups such as the Miao and Dong.

Fanjing Mountain received over 44,000 tourist visits during the recent five-day May Day holiday.

"I had to climb on all fours along a narrow, steep mountain trail to reach the summit, but the view made every bit of effort worthwhile," says tourist Wu Ming from Zhengzhou, Henan province.

Such popularity is no accident, as the mountain's global status and ecological uniqueness have long been recognized.

In 2018, Fanjing Mountain was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

With 97 percent forest coverage, the mountain is home to a rich biodiversity of flora and fauna, including bears and snakes. Among them is the rare Guizhou snub-nosed monkey, or Guizhou golden monkey, which is protected at the highest level in China. Fanjing Mountain serves as its only habitat in the world.

What attracts visitors most is the mountain's breathtaking beauty, which transforms with every season.

"In spring, it is covered with blooming azaleas, and it serves as an ideal summer destination to escape the heat. In autumn, visitors can enjoy red leaves as well as the spectacular sea of clouds," says Wang Xiaojie, general manager of the Beijing Happy Tour online travel agency.

"During the winter off-season, visitors enjoy a peaceful wonderland of snow-covered peaks and glittering rime. After descending the mountain, they can sample hotpot and soak in Tongren's iconic hot springs," she says.

Thanks to its rich natural and cultural resources, the mountain attracts tourists from home and abroad, making tourism a pillar industry for Tongren city.

Wang notices that visitors have more diverse needs and are seeking in-depth, high-quality experiences on the mountain, including local folk customs and cuisine.

"We take all these needs into account when designing our travel products. Our core products include wellness tour packages for senior travelers and study tours for young people," she says.

Elderly visitors are encouraged to travel at a relaxed pace and enjoy greater comfort and freedom while staying at a single hotel in Tongren city. They can join optional one-day or two-day local in-depth tours and hands-on cultural experiences. Study tours allow young students to observe nature, participate in biodiversity surveys, and explore Fanjing Mountain's local geology.

In addition, to encourage tourists to extend their stays in Tongren, she says the next step is to develop well-connected regional tour packages linking Tongren with neighboring Hunan province and Chongqing municipality.

Matcha products are also a major attraction. Tongren, also known as the "City of Matcha", exported matcha products to over 50 countries and regions, including Japan, the United States, and European countries, in 2025, according to official statistics.

Matcha is made from tender tea leaves that are steamed, refined, and dried. Visitors can sample matcha craft beer, lattes and cookies.

"Both domestic and inbound visitors like to participate in matcha-themed experiences, where they can learn how to make pastries and beverages using local Tongren matcha to fully experience the city's unique food culture and local charm," Wang says.

She says inbound tourists are impressed by the city's magnificent landscapes of cascading peaks and waterfalls, as well as the rich biodiversity and Buddhist culture of Fanjing Mountain. They prefer visiting authentic, unspoiled villages that preserve their original natural charm and intact traditional folkways.

Fanjing Mountain's main inbound tourist countries are Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, and the US, according to Yang Haisha, general manager of Fanjing Mountain Scenic Area Management Co.

"They enjoy hiking in the ecologically preserved mountain, taking photos of the scenery, visiting Buddhist temples, and tasting organic local dishes," he says.

The scenic area provides multilingual tour guides and signage in Chinese, English, Japanese, and Korean, plus foreign currency exchange services to make things more convenient for inbound tourists.

Despite its great fame, Fanjing Mountain has never compromised on conservation. Strict rules ensure that tourism development does not come at the cost of its fragile ecology.

Yang says that tourism development is prohibited in the core zone of Fanjing Mountain's national nature reserve, which is strictly limited to scientific research and conservation.

In tourist areas, visitors must follow designated routes and stay on marked trails. At the foot of the mountain, tourist centers, homestays, commercial facilities, and experience zones are centrally located.

Fanjing Mountain's daily visitors are capped at 9,000 via advance reservations, with real-time visitor counts monitored across all zones. When the number of visitors in any zone exceeds the limit, staff will guide tourists to other areas.

These efforts have laid a solid foundation for sustainable tourism. Looking ahead, Tongren city has set its sights on even higher goals.

In 2026, the city aims to develop ecotourism by focusing on positioning itself as a wellness-oriented extended-stay destination.

It will also fully leverage the 240-hour transit visa exemption policy and steadily enhance the facilitation of inbound tourism services to attract more overnight international visitors.

Besides hiking Fanjing Mountain and then soaking in hot springs, travelers to Tongren can also explore ancient architecture at the Zhongnanmen historical and cultural tourist area and discover the former mercury mine site in the ancient town of Zhusha, which means cinnabar.

Contact the writer at xulin@chinadaily.com.cn



Tea, opera and friendship brew cultural connections in Los Angeles

By RENA LI in Los Angeles
renali@chinadailyusa.com

For Ghaffar Pourazar, the legendary Monkey King from the Chinese classic *Journey to the West* is more than a stage character — it is a reflection of his own life journey.

Born with Azerbaijani and Iranian roots and raised in Britain, Pourazar once worked as a computer animator in London. But after watching Peking Opera for the first time in 1993 at the age of 32, he decided to completely change his life.

"I put away my other life. I said goodbye to my friends and my family. I said I want to do this," Pourazar told China Daily during a celebration of International Tea Day hosted by the Chinese Consulate General in Los Angeles on Friday.

"The monkey follows the dream, and so that's why I love this character, but also that is why Chinese people love this character," he said.

For decades, Pourazar has dedicated himself to studying and performing Peking Opera, becoming widely known as the "Western Monkey King". He said Chinese opera combines martial arts philosophy, acrobatics, music and drama in a unique way.

"For hundreds of years, Chinese culture has brought the philosophy of martial arts like tai chi together with opera action," he said. "The actors are not only able to sing and dance, but they're also martial acrobats."

His deep connection with Chinese culture has gradually become part of his identity.

"I am Azerbaijani, Iranian, British, I was raised in England, but I feel more Chinese than others," Pourazar said.

The celebration in Los Angeles brought together officials, artists, experts and local residents to experience Chinese culture through tea ceremonies, traditional performances and cultural demonstrations. Organizers said tea serves as both a cultural symbol and a platform for dialogue and mutual understanding between China and the United States.

Guo Shaochun, Chinese consul general in Los Angeles, highlighted the cultural significance of tea and expressed hope that more Americans could gain a deeper understanding of Chinese culture and the Chinese people's pursuit of a better life.



Ghaffar Pourazar, known as the "Western Monkey King", performs an excerpt from the classic Peking Opera production *Uproar in Heaven* during an International Tea Day celebration hosted by the Chinese Consulate General in Los Angeles on Friday. RENA LI /CHINA DAILY

Among the teas served during the event was Pu'er tea from Yunnan province, known for its distinctive aging process in which flavor deepens over time. Guo introduced guests to Yunnan's diverse ethnic cultures and tea traditions.

"The people of China and the United States are both great peoples," Guo said. "Just as the Chinese people love tea and Americans love coffee, we all have our own cultures, lifestyles and feelings."

He added that cultural differences should become a source of mutual appreciation and understanding rather than division.

"It is these differences that make our world rich and colorful, and inspire us to better understand and appreciate one another," he said.

Guo also referred to the recent meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and US President Donald Trump during Trump's state visit to China, saying the two sides agreed to promote a "constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability."

Leticia Perez, a member of California's Kern County Board of Supervisors, said she values the role of China in the region's economy.

"I'm a big fan of Chinese culture," Perez said. "I want to reaffirm my own commitment to be part of the ongoing conversation of peace building and mutually beneficial economic cooperation between the United States and China."

Perez praised China's continued calls for peace and cooperation despite global tensions.

The event also featured performances of Peking Opera, Chinese folk songs and traditional instruments including the *pipa* and bamboo flute, alongside demonstrations of Chinese calligraphy and dough figurine art.

Luo Ping, a senior tea master and cultural ambassador for Chinese tea culture, guided guests through a traditional tea ceremony while explaining categories of Chinese tea and their cultural and health significance.

Joshua Goldhaber, vice-dean of graduate research education at Cedars-Sinai Health Sciences University, said he appreciated learning about the cultural meaning of tea and the values of friendship and cooperation between the two countries.

"It was a very warm feeling," Goldhaber said. "I look forward to more opportunities to immerse in Chinese culture and educational exchange."

Douglas Smith, a visual effects supervisor who has worked on both Hollywood and Chinese film productions, also expressed optimism about future cultural and creative cooperation between the two countries.

"Communication between countries is always the best thing that can happen," Smith said. "Misunderstandings happen with the lack of communication, so whenever that can happen, it's a very positive thing."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:58 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:58 PM

CULTURE

Pakistani blockbuster hits China

Eighteen years after first experiencing Olympic-era Beijing as a young tourist, Bilal Lashari returns as the filmmaker behind a record-beating movie, **Xu Fan** reports.

During his first trip to Beijing, Bilal Lashari was a 27-year-old Pakistani traveling with his parents. It was the summer of 2008, when the Chinese capital was swept up in the euphoric atmosphere of the 29th Olympic Games.

Late one night, the family wandered onto a broad avenue in search of something to eat. They stumbled into a sea of people gathered beneath giant outdoor screens, cheering wildly as Chinese athletes competed live on television. Lashari remembered the energy as almost cinematic — strangers shouting in unison, waving flags. Caught up in the excitement, he found himself cheering as well.

"It was so emotional to watch so many people feeling proud of their country and celebrating together. And then, within just a few minutes, the street was completely cleared," Lashari recalls in an interview with China Daily, describing the Chinese public as "disciplined".

Now, 18 years later, Lashari has returned to Beijing for his fourth visit to China. This time, he arrived not as a tourist, but as the director of *The Legend of Maula Jatt*, Pakistan's highest-grossing blockbuster of all time.

The film was released across the Chinese mainland on Thursday, a date carrying symbolic significance as it marks the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan.

At the Beijing premiere on May 19, Pakistani Ambassador to China Khalil Hashmi said that the movie's release, coinciding with the anniversary, is a testament to the enduring ties and gives Chinese audiences a unique opportunity to experience the richness of Pakistani cinema.

He said that Pakistan boasts a vast film market and advanced cinema facilities, which not only provide a solid foundation for the production of high-quality content but also reflect a growing demand for diverse films. He added that he looks forward to seeing more films enter each other's markets.

A reboot of the 1979 Lollywood classic *Maula Jatt*, the 133-minute epic is set in medieval Punjab. The story follows Maula Jatt, a fierce prizefighter haunted by childhood trauma after a rival clan massacres his family. When he uncovers the truth about his lineage and reclaims his ancestral weapon, he embarks on a quest for revenge against Noori Natt, the clan's most feared warrior, ultimately leading to a deadly final confrontation.

Lashari says the original 1979 film has become deeply embedded in Pakistani popular culture. "The original movie was a huge hit in the 1970s. Since then, many films have been made around the character of Jatt," he adds.

Like Arnold Schwarzenegger's iconic "I'll be back" line in the sci-fi classic *The Terminator*, the characters of Jatt and Natt are well-known in Pakistan, evidenced by their most famous catchphrases repeated by audiences for decades. As a result, some of those lines have been re-created in the new movie with a few twists, adds Lashari.

"What interests me most is the dubbed Mandarin version," he says, explaining that he has been curious about whether the Chinese translation could preserve the power and charm of the original Punjabi dialogue.

The influence of Jatt also gave rise to what became known as "*gandasa* cinema", a hyper-violent Punjabi subgenre built around rural honor codes, bloody vendettas and the *gandasa* — an ax-like agricultural tool that became the defining weapon of many films during the 1980s and 1990s.

However, Pakistani audiences grew weary of the genre, much as American viewers drifted away from traditional Westerns. That decline, Lashari admits, has made rebooting the Jatt film a daunting proposition. Raising the budget for a large-scale reboot meant persuading investors that a genre once dismissed as outdated could still resonate with modern audiences.

"But we had a revival," he says. "It's similar to Chinese kung fu films. They continue evolving and modernizing while still staying connected to tradition and their roots."

As an admirer of action cinema like that of Bruce Lee, Lashari says his favorite Chinese-language film is director Zhang Yimou's 2002 martial arts epic *Hero* — which he first watched while attending college in the United States.

"I remember everyone was talking about the film. Someone played it in our dormitory, and all the students gathered to watch it," he recalls. "It transported us, especially the cinematography. We were used to a certain kind of Hollywood action, but *Hero* felt poetic in a completely different way. It had a huge impact on me."

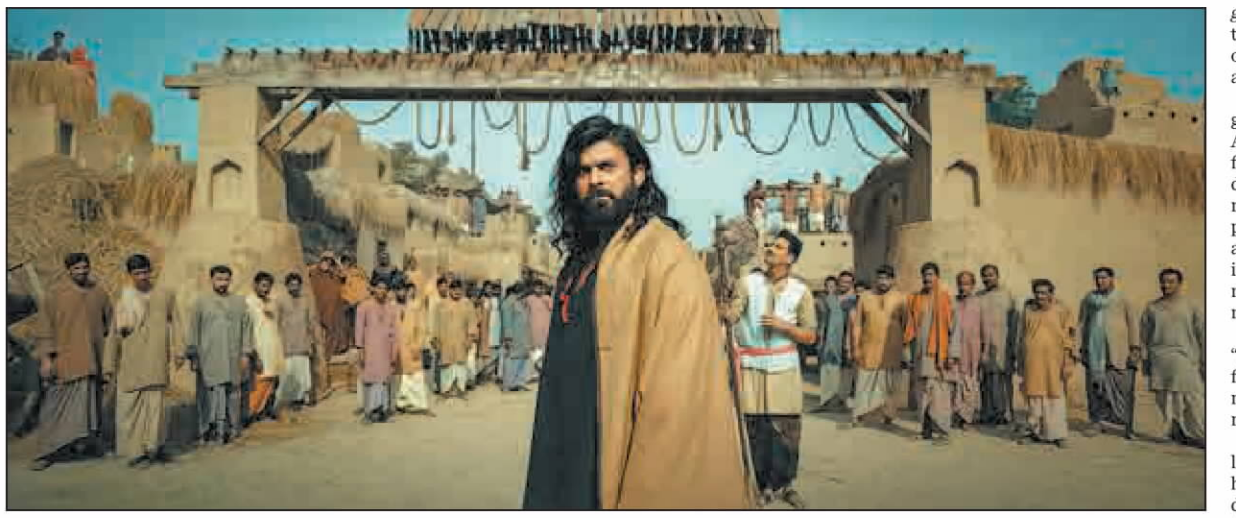
When asked whether he hopes to collaborate with Chinese filmmakers in the future, Lashari pauses for a moment before answering carefully. "People often talk about coproductions as if they're simply about sharing resources or facilities. But a true coproduction should come from story and culture."

China and Pakistan, he observes, are both ancient civilizations shaped by long histories, trade routes, and layered traditions. Given the opportunity, he says he would like to imagine creating a fantasy epic inspired by the Silk Road — a story in which characters from both countries meet not as symbols, but as fully realized people inhabiting the same cinematic world.

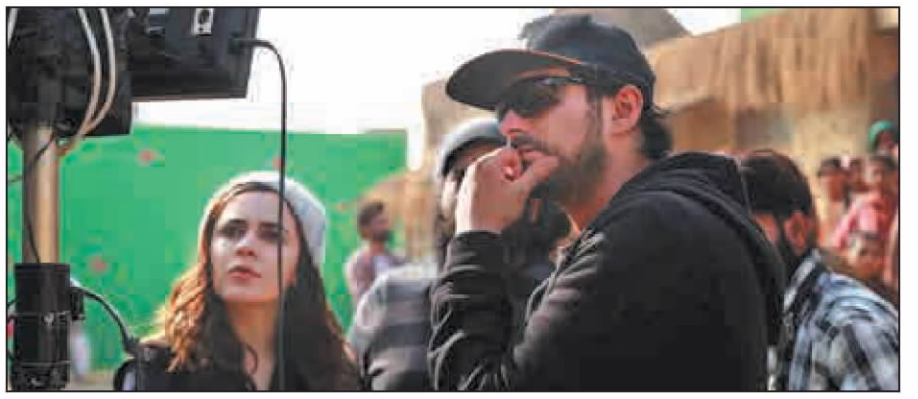
Having already learned Punjabi while making *The Legend of Maula Jatt*, Lashari adds that he would gladly attempt to learn some Chinese for such a project. The real challenge, he believes, lies not in basic conversation, but in understanding the subtleties hidden within language itself.

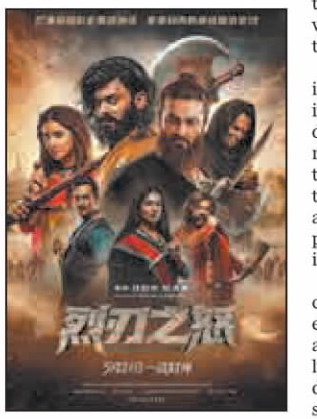
"Learning basic communication is different from learning the deeper meanings. Each community, each city, each area will have slight differences. Even in China — because it's so big — if you keep moving to different areas, the culture and language start to mean something else. So, it would be interesting to learn those nuances," says the director.

Contact the writer at xufan@chinadaily.com.cn









Top: *The Legend of Maula Jatt*, Pakistan's highest-grossing blockbuster of all time, features the titular hero, portrayed by Fawad Khan.
Middle left: Director Bilal Lashari shares behind-the-scenes stories during the blockbuster's China premiere held in Beijing on May 19.
Above: A poster of the film.
Bottom left: Lashari at work on the set of the film.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

> "People often talk about coproductions as if they're simply about sharing resources or facilities. But a true coproduction should come from story and culture."
> **Bilal Lashari,** Pakistani director

365 days to achieve a dream for Vietnamese singer

By **XING WEN**
xingwen@chinadaily.com.cn

"You have 365 days."

That was the deal Trang Phap's parents made with her after she graduated from the University Lumiere Lyon 2 in France in 2011.

Only one year to prove that music, which they had always called "just a hobby", could be something more.

After that, she would go back to pursuing a master's degree in economics in Brussels, where her parents live, and then follow an established career path.

For years, every time the deadline approached, she would call them and ask for another 365 days, like applying for a visa to stay in her own dream.

But it wasn't until 2023, when the Vietnamese adaptation of the Chinese music reality show *Ride the Wind* — which brings together female celebrities aged over 30 to perform in groups and win votes — called *Chi Dep*, reached out to her, that she finally stopped having to renew that visa.

The first season of *Chi Dep* was a hit in Vietnam. After airing on VTV3, it ranked first in its time slot among variety shows and set a record for the most sponsors — 33 in total — in Vietnamese television variety show history. Phap claimed the winner's title, which earned her a spot in the five-girl pop group Lunas.

"The first season was very impactful. I felt like *Chi Dep* was something completely new in Vietnam," says Phap, adding that the show appeals to viewers of all ages, from grandparents to young children.

That audience includes her own parents, a professor and a diplomat living in Europe. "When they watched the show, they could actually see what I do every day, how I work to make a performance, write songs, and work with the sisters. They could see the friendships in the field.

"The show actually helped me bridge the generational gap between my parents and me by showing how show business works and how the music industry operates," Phap says.

Phap started playing the piano at 6 and tried her hand at writing some melodies on her keyboard at 9. At that time she had to leave Vietnam, where she had grown up, leaving all her childhood friends on a Christmas night.

"Writing songs was something so natural for me, something that always helped me deal with my emotions."

After graduating from university, instead of following her parents' wishes to continue studying economics, she chose to return alone to Ho Chi Minh City, where she broke into the music industry as a soloist.





Above: (From left) Uygur host Vinina Ahmet, Vietnamese singer Trang Phap and Taiwan singer-actress Jessie Chiang perform together in *Ride the Wind 2026*. **Above right:** Vietnamese singer Trang Phap wins the Vietnamese adaptation of *Ride the Wind* in 2023. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

After five years of negotiations with her parents, both sides made concessions. She could stay in the industry, but not as a singer on stage — instead, as a behind-the-scenes songwriter, which in her parents' view offered a safer work environment and a healthier lifestyle.

So from 2017 until 2023, when she received the invitation from *Chi Dep*, she was in the studio writing songs for movies or for other artists.

"I think the invitation was a sign from the universe in some way, because I wanted to go back on stage. I wanted to perform for people, I wanted to sing my songs for the audience, and I said yes right away," she recalls.

"There was never a show where we had 30-plus artists come together, a show that sends a message about strong women, sisterhood, and women collaborating to work toward the same goal. It's actually very inspiring for people."

Recently, she appeared as the only Vietnamese singer on *Ride the Wind 2026*, debuting with a powerful 90-second performance that combined multilingual singing, piano playing and dancing.

Growing up, she listened to Jay Chou's songs and says he is the Chinese artist who has influenced her the most.

She also expresses hope that one day she will have the chance to collaborate, write or sing a Chinese-Vietnamese song, to make even the smallest contribution to the cultural exchange between the two countries.

"I feel like music and art in general have no borders. It's a universal language. If we can use that to connect people, connect families, connect people from different nations — that's a beautiful thing. That's something I will try hard to do."

She started with 365 days. Now, she has a lifetime to pursue her passion.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:58 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:58 PM

SPORTS



GOLF

Liu proves that CLPGA is on the right path

From 8-year-old spectator to Beijing Open champion, teen embodies Tour's vision of long-term talent development

From top: Feng Shanshan, Lin Xiyu and Yin Ruoning all started on the China LPGA Tour, before finding success representing China on professional tours in the US and Europe. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By **LI YINGXUE**
liyingxue@chinadaily.com.cn

Eight years ago, Liu Yujie sat in the gallery at Beijing Orient Pearl Golf Club as an eight-year-old spectator, watching Shi Yuting hold her nerve in a playoff to win the Beijing Women's Open.

Back then, Liu excitedly posed for photos with older players such as Yin Ruoning and Du Mohan, never imagining she would one day stand among them.

Now 16, the Beijing native has returned to the same course not as a fan, but as a champion.

Liu captured the 2026 Orient Master-Beijing Women's Open by two strokes on Saturday, claiming her second China LPGA Tour title with a composed performance that belied her years.

The daughter of former table tennis world champion and Olympic gold medalist Liu Guoliang said the victory carried a significance far beyond another trophy.

"Winning at Beijing Orient Pearl Golf Club feels very different for me," she said.

"In 2018, I came here as a little girl and a spectator to watch the older players compete. That was also the first time I met Sui Xiang."

"Today, being able to compete alongside those same players, on the same course — and win — is a truly special feeling."

Sui finished runner-up at 10-under par, while Ren Yijia — the youngest six-time winner in China LPGA Tour history — placed third to remain atop the season standings.

Held from May 21 to 23 with a purse of 800,000 yuan ($117,949), the tournament attracted 132 players from 10 countries and regions, including China, Thailand, Malaysia, South Korea, Japan and Canada.

Yet the significance of the week extended beyond the leaderboard.

For Liu, Beijing Orient Pearl Golf Club has also been a place of painful lessons.

Two years ago, at just 14, she entered the final round tied for the lead before a disastrous back nine dropped her into a tie for 10th, while Ren stormed back to win in a playoff.

Returning to what she called "the place where the dream began," Liu appeared transformed this time around — calmer, steadier and far more comfortable with both pressure and expectation.

That resilience has become a hallmark of the new generation developing through the China LPGA Tour, a circuit that has steadily grown into the foundation of Chinese women's golf.

Over the past 18 years, the Beijing Women's Open has never missed a single China LPGA Tour season, making it one of the circuit's most enduring events.

Over nearly two decades, Beijing Orient Pearl Golf Club has continuously upgraded its fairways, bunkers and greens, while the tournament has become part of Beijing's sporting identity.



Liu Yujie, winner of the 2026 Orient Master-Beijing Women's Open, poses with the trophy following her two-stroke victory on Saturday at the Beijing Orient Pearl Golf Club. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

A 'home-port' for Chinese players

Fan Yue, executive vice-chairman and secretary-general of the Beijing Golf Association, said the event had helped cultivate long-term golf culture and public awareness in the capital.

"Because the Beijing Women's Open has remained rooted here for so many years, it has created lasting sporting memories for the city," Fan said. "People have come to know golf, approach golf and appreciate golf through the tournament."

Three-time tournament champion Liu Wenbo, competing in the event for the ninth time, said the venue had become closely tied to different stages of her career.

"I started playing here in 2017, and this course holds many precious memories from different periods of my life," she said. "Every time I come back, I feel grounded and comfortable. And the course gets better every year."

In the eyes of Wei Qingfeng, secretary-general of the China Golf Association, the tournament's greatest achievement lies in how it has accompanied the growth of Chinese women's golf itself.

"When the first edition was held, many of today's young players had not even been born," he said. "This is not simply persistence across time. It is continuous support across generations.

"We have witnessed the passing of the torch in Chinese women's golf here. Generation after generation of Chinese players have left unforgettable moments and honors on this course."

Wei added that the association hopes the China LPGA Tour can further strengthen its role as a "mothership" or "home port" for players, nurturing talent before sending them onto the world stage.

That long-term philosophy has been central to the tour's development since its earliest days.

Li Hong, managing director of the China LPGA Tour and head of the women's professional events department at the China Golf Association, recalled that, when the circuit was founded 18 years ago, Chinese women's professional golf had barely 30 players, little funding and almost no understanding of international operational standards.

Great accomplishments

Today, she believes the tour's greatest accomplishment is proving that Chinese women's professional golf can sustain a viable long-term pathway.

"For 18 years, we resisted the temptation to chase quick success," Li said.

"Even in a very impatient environment, we focused on doing just one thing step by step: building a home for Chinese women golfers."

More importantly, it filled the developmental gap between junior and professional golf.



> "Seeing players like Feng Shanshan and Yin Ruoning emerge from this system and reach the top of world golf gives us tremendous satisfaction."
>
> **Li Hong,** managing director of the CLPGA Tour

"Seeing players like Feng Shanshan and Yin Ruoning emerge from this system and reach the top of world golf gives us tremendous satisfaction," Li said.

"More than 20 Chinese players have now excelled on the international stage. Recognition from partners such as the LPGA and the Ladies European Tour proves that long-term commitment truly matters."

Li also highlighted the growing international profile of the tour, noting that overseas players now account for 45 percent of registered members, with competitors coming from 12 countries and regions including Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Myanmar and the Philippines.

Looking ahead, she acknowledged that the tour hopes to accelerate both international expansion and digital development. Before the pandemic, the 2019 schedule featured 18 tournaments, evenly split between domestic and overseas events.

Although rebuilding that international calendar remains a challenge, Li said it remains a key objective. The tour also plans to deepen cooperation with the LPGA and the Ladies European Tour while strengthening pathways for junior players.

As the sun set over Beijing at the conclusion of the 2026 Orient Master-Beijing Women's Open, Liu Yujie's victory offered perhaps the clearest symbol yet of what the China LPGA Tour has spent nearly two decades trying to build.

The little girl once sitting in the stands, emulating her heroes had returned to become a champion herself, thus carrying Chinese women's golf into the next generation.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:35:58 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:00 PM

A Yangtze ferry tale
River city Wuhan thrives on rich cultural heritage
LIFE, PAGE 13



Rare diseases sector finds a strategic window
BUSINESS, PAGE 9



Sacred soccer
Latin American fans turn club devotion into rituals and beliefs
SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 THURSDAY, JUNE 4, 2026

Leaders' visits offer view of China's future

Zhejiang, among stops, reflects global allure of country's modernization, innovation drive

By MO JINGXI in Beijing and **CHEN YE** in Hangzhou

Humanoid robots performing martial arts, robotic dogs demonstrating their agility and robots dancing to foreign folk music have become some of the more unusual scenes on foreign leaders' trips to China this year.

Behind the eye-catching moments is a broader trend: China's vast market and technological strength are drawing visiting leaders beyond formal talks in Beijing.

The latest is Thongloun Sisoulith, general secretary of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party Central Committee and Lao president, who is currently making a five-day state visit to China.

During a trip to DEEP Robotics in Hangzhou, the capital of Zhejiang province, shortly after his arrival in China on Tuesday, Thongloun operated a robotic dog and praised it as "very good" and "very flexible".

He also visited the headquarters of Chinese tech company Alibaba Group, where he learned how e-commerce platforms help Lao products reach consumers across the Chinese market.

Thongloun is not alone. Earlier this year, Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic, Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz also included Zhejiang in their China itineraries.

The province, long seen as an important window on China's reform and opening-up, is also one of the first places where the country's digital economy took root and flourished.

Observers said the visits are more than lighthearted moments or technology showcases on packed diplomatic itineraries. Against the backdrop of global industrial transformation, the trips reflect a conscious choice by countries to embrace China's innovation drive and connect with its strengths in the digital economy, they said.

Zhejiang has become one of the most visible stops in this process because it allows visiting leaders to see, in one place, how digital platforms, artificial intelligence, robotics and advanced manufacturing are being applied in real industries.

Jian Junbo, a researcher with the Institute of International Studies at Fudan University in Shanghai, said the visits reflect foreign leaders' recognition of China's high-tech development, as well as their countries' desire to work with China and benefit from the momentum of its technological progress.

"They hope to carry out deeper and broader cooperation with China in areas such as sci-tech innovation, education and the application of technological achievements," Jian said.

See ***Itineraries,*** *page 3*



People climb the 168-meter "sky ladder", part of a via ferrata in Zhangjiajie, Hunan province, in April. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

ADVENTURERS SCRAMBLE TO EXPERIENCE 'SKY LADDER' IN HUNAN

Completing Qixing Mountain via ferrata has become popular after video goes viral

By LI MUYUN and **HE CHUN** in Changsha

A shaky chest-cam video, a mist-shrouded iron ladder and one trembling question — "Is this the way to heaven?" — have propelled the 168-meter "sky ladder", part of a via ferrata, or a secure climbing route, in Zhangjiajie, Hunan province, into the global spotlight.

Posted on social media platform RedNote in March, the first-person clip captures a climber inching up metal rungs that vanish into clouds. The ladder sways with the movement of people above and below. "I'm almost there," she whispers, sounding both frightened and unbowed.

The video was an instant hit, receiving more than 29,000 comments.

"My legs turned to jelly just from watching it," one viewer wrote. Another one said, "It feels like I'm the one standing on that sky ladder."

The buzz has traveled far beyond China.

By May, YouTube videos about the attraction had racked up more than 50 million views, while Instagram clips topped 100 million.

See ***Ladder,*** *page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.



Water begins flowing on Wednesday through the Madao navigation hub of the Pinglu Canal in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Nation's first river-to-sea canal enters key test phase

By CHEN MEILING in Beijing and **ZHANG LI** in Qinzhou, Guangxi

The Pinglu Canal, a megaproject designed in South China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region to handle vessels of the 5,000-metric-ton class, entered the water-testing phase on Wednesday, bringing it a step closer to its official opening in September.

As the first canal built in the country to connect a river system directly to the sea since the founding of the People's Republic of China, the landmark infrastructure project is expected to establish a convenient and cost-effective passage between China and the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Guangxi is the only region that links China to the ASEAN market by both land and sea. "The canal will enable ASEAN members to connect more efficiently and conveniently with China's inland market," Wei Tao, chairman of Guangxi, told China Daily in an earlier interview.

The 134.2-kilometer-long waterway, which stretches from the Xijin reservoir in the city of Hengzhou to Qinzhou port in the Beibu Gulf, is a key project on the New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor that connects China's western regions to global markets.



Source: Pinglu Canal Group CHINA DAILY

On Wednesday morning, the canal's Madao and Qishi navigation hubs were filled with water, which allowed it to achieve full-channel connectivity and launch comprehensive water-fed commissioning.

With more than 96 percent of the project now complete, the waterway is scheduled to open to traffic during the China-ASEAN Expo scheduled for September in Nanning, the capital of Guangxi, according to Pinglu Canal Group.

Local authorities said that upon completion, the canal will reduce the inland shipping distance for export-quality goods from southwestern China by more than 560 km, compared with the previous route through Guangzhou port, and save around 5.2 billion yuan ($768 million) annually in logistics costs.

Inside
Editorial, **page 6**

Wu Tao, a professor of history at Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, said that without convenient access to sea lanes, it was difficult to export goods from western China to global markets through maritime shipping.

By opening a direct river-to-sea link, the Pinglu Canal eliminates developmental bottlenecks and facilitates the gradual shift of western China's economy from an inward-looking inland model to an export-oriented maritime economy, driven by integrated land and sea transportation, he said.

"Despite highly developed road, air and railway transportation systems, inland waterway shipping routes remain irreplaceable. Large cargo capacity and low transportation costs make such routes ideal for bulk outbound shipment of agricultural produce and mineral resources," Wu added.

Ni Yuping, vice-president of the School of Humanities at Tsinghua University in Beijing, said the canal will help to improve China's cross-border logistics systems, and accelerate economic and trade growth in its southwestern hinterland.

"ASEAN member states having economic relations with China can deepen their trade with the country, realizing mutually beneficial outcomes," he said.

The Pinglu Canal inherits the functional quality of ancient waterways to spur endogenous growth of domestic regional economies while drawing on the development concepts behind the Suez Canal and the Panama Canal, which connect global maritime shipping and help expand cross-border trade, Ni added.

According to customs data, from January to April, China's trade with ASEAN economies reached 2.75 trillion yuan, up 15.7 percent year-on-year, accounting for 16.9 percent of the nation's total foreign trade volume. Among ASEAN member states, Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia ranked as China's top three trading partners, the data showed.

China has been ASEAN's largest trading partner for 17 consecutive years, while ASEAN has been China's largest trading partner for six years.

Shi Ruipeng in Nanning contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at chenmeiling@chinadaily.com.cn

Building a Laos-China community with a shared future

WORLD WATCH
By Thongloun Sisoulith

This year marks the 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the People's Republic of China. The two sides have designated 2026 as the "Laos-China Friendship Year" and have jointly organized a wide range of meaningful activities to commemorate this historic occasion.

Over the past six-and-a-half decades, our bilateral relations have withstood the tests of global transformations and uncertainties. Regardless of how the international landscape has evolved, the Laos-China friendship has remained steadfast, resilient, and ever stronger, demonstrating the ideological values, and the remarkably stable and vibrant strategic cooperation that characterize Laos-China relations.

Guided by the spirit of the "Four Goods", namely good neighbors, good friends, good comrades and good partners, our two countries elevated relations to a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership in 2009. This important milestone laid a solid political foundation conducive to expanding cooperation across all fields. In 2017, our two Parties and States further enhanced cooperation and established the Laos-China Community with a Shared Future, opening a new chapter of deeper solidarity, greater mutual trust and closer strategic coordination.

Today, the Laos-China relationship stands at its highest point in history, serving as a model of equality, mutual respect and mutually beneficial cooperation. High-level political trust and shared ideals have continuously delivered tangible benefits to the peoples of both nations.

In the field of economic cooperation, China has become the largest investor and the second-largest trading partner of the Lao PDR. Key sectors of shared potential include energy, mining, agriculture and infrastructure development. Most notably, the Laos-China Railway stands as a landmark symbol of this successful cooperation and a flagship project of the high-quality Belt and Road Initiative. This project has become a "golden corridor" connecting the two countries and the wider region, transforming the Lao PDR from a landlocked to a land-linked country, bringing transformative changes and new development opportunities to the Lao PDR. China remains an important development partner, providing financial assistance to the Lao PDR. In particular, the Party, government and people of China have extended generous support through the "Eight Major Projects for Laos", announced by President Xi Jinping in 2017, which have made significant contributions to the development of healthcare, human resources and the improvement of living standards for the Lao people.

At the regional and international levels, in the current uncertain global situation, it is increasingly important for developing countries to stand united, uphold multilateralism and build a more just, fair and equitable global order. Laos and China share a common commitment to promoting development and ensuring that the benefits of globalization are more equitably shared. The Lao PDR fully supports the global initiatives proposed by Xi, such as the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, the Global Civilization Initiative and the Global Governance Initiative.

See ***Ties,*** *page 3*

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

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved

INSIDE
Funding the fintech future
Global Views, page 8



Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:00 PM

INDEPTH

Rewriting rural stories

Editor's note: *To mark the fifth anniversary of China eradicating absolute poverty, China Daily is publishing a series of stories on how the country's poverty alleviation experience has not only helped the country wipeout severe deprivation, but has also taken root and made an impact around the world.*

Sister villages embrace for poverty fight

Chinese model targets local issues, improves livelihoods in remote Laos settlement

By LI LEI and **HE CHUN**
in Shibadong, Hunan



Online
See more by scanning the code.

Children peer through a window of a small library built by China International Water & Electric Corp in Thinsom village, Luang Prabang province, Laos. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

On a laptop screen inside a meeting room in a rural area of Hunan province, the face of Padith flickers to life.

The 54-year-old village chief of Thinsom — a small hamlet nestled in the mountains of Laos' Luang Prabang province — waves from his computer in a local government building, a translator seated beside him. Grinning, he asks in Lao, "Secretary Lu, can you hear me? Very happy to see you!"

On the other end, Lu Chuntao, first Communist Party of China secretary of Shibadong in Huayuan county — China's model anti-poverty village — leans toward the camera.

"Hi, village chief. Spring has come to Shibadong. How is Thinsom?" he replies. Then the two begin exchanging the latest developments in their respective villages.

The exchange, recorded in early April, was part of a regular video call between two villages that became "international sister villages" in 2023.

But what makes this unusual is not the call itself — rather, what it represents: China is now exporting the playbook that has lifted Shibadong, and countless villages like it across the country, out of poverty since 2013.

When the sister village pact was signed in late 2023, Thinsom was a remote settlement of wooden houses reached by dirt roads. There was not a single kindergarten. Farmers coaxed just one rice harvest a year from parched fields.

Today, an 8.6-kilometer-long irrigation canal has been cleared. A bright new preschool stands next to a reading room. And villagers talk of a second annual rice crop.

"The new classroom gives children a safe place to learn — and parents now care more about education. The repaired canal has made farming more productive," Padith told his counterpart during the call. He added that the village plans to explore rural tourism and specialty products, following Shibadong's example.

China's export model

Officially introduced in 2013 at Shibadong, "targeted poverty alleviation" rejects one-size-fits-all aid. Instead, it assesses local problems — commonly scarce land, missing industries, or failing infrastructure — before designing customized solutions, ranging from building new schools to fostering new businesses. The approach lifted 98.99 million rural Chinese out of abject poverty between 2013 and 2020, according to official data. That meant an average of more than 12 million people a year — roughly the population of a medium-sized country.

Lu, assigned earlier this year to oversee Shibadong's industrial development, has become the idea's latest ambassador. In late March, shortly after taking up his post, he traveled to Laos for a weeklong exchange. He visited three Lao cities, including the capital Vientiane, for face-to-face meetings with officials and community leaders — recounting Shibadong's path out of poverty and encouraging them to follow suit.

"We also want to bring them here — to walk through Shibadong and see it with their own eyes," Lu said. "More exchanges, more mutual visits. That's how we share our experience and help them advance their own fight against poverty."

By sharing Shibadong's hard-won lessons in poverty eradication, Lu is following the path blazed by Shi Jintong, the village's Party secretary. Born in Shibadong in 1979, Shi inherited a village with no roads, no industry, and no visible future.

For Shi, the core of Shibadong's success lies in replicable principles. "First, you must accurately measure the extent of poverty and understand its causes," he said.

Every country defines poverty according to its own development context, Shi noted. China's 2013 standard — 2,300 yuan ($340) per year at 2010 rates, adjusted for inflation since — may differ from other nations' benchmarks, but the diagnostic method behind it is transferable.

A second factor, he said, is stimulating "internal motivation" — the poor's own willingness to change. "People need both policies and a sense of support," Shi explained, calling this a model worth borrowing.

Third, solutions must fit local realities. "Shibadong's method seeks truth from facts, adapts to conditions, and offers targeted guidance," he said. Unlike the indiscriminate "flooding" of past relief efforts, the new approach is precise — identifying what a community lacks and helping it get exactly that.

Shi traveled to Thinsom twice. "The first time was to learn — to see their geography, living conditions, industries, and incomes," he said. "Later, we sat down with Lao officials and villagers to discuss development — and that's how our partnership began." He noted that Thinsom's infrastructure, education, industries, and living environment closely resembled those of China's villages before poverty alleviation.

From diagnosis to delivery

Turning principles into practice fell to China International Water & Electric Corp, a subsidiary of the State-owned China Communications Construction Group.

Wang Jiang, CWE's Laos branch general manager, said his team spent weeks in early 2025 doing door-to-door surveys.

"The essence of targeted poverty alleviation is precision — we want to avoid the 'flood irrigation' approach," Wang said via a video call from Vientiane. "We believe that actually going out and surveying what the people wish for today are the prerequisite for making our follow-up work precise and effective."

"Villagers said the canal had silted up, and parents worried who would watch their toddlers while they worked elsewhere," he added. "So we tackled those two things first."

By June 2025 — ahead of the rainy season planting — the 8.6-kilometer canal was dredged and reinforced. Water from the famous Kuang Si waterfall now flows steadily to the paddies. "After we opened up the irrigation system, farming could go from one season to two," Wang said.

In September 2025, a new kindergarten opened, built by CWE with input from Shibadong's team. About 40 children — many left behind by migrant parents — now learn basic Lao and occasionally a Chinese nursery rhyme.

Next to the kindergarten, a small library stocked with picture books was added under an educational program named after the Lancang-Mekong River. Known as the Lancang River in China and the Mekong in Laos, the shared name symbolizes the friendship between the two countries.

"On the opening day, our volunteers sang with the kids. (When you hear) the laughter — that's when you know it's real," Wang said.

Lesson worth learning

Since 1978, China has lifted more than 800 million people out of poverty, according to the World Bank's international standard, accounting for over 70 percent of global poverty reduction in that period and making it the largest anti-poverty campaign in history.

China reached the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal of ending poverty a full decade ahead of the 2030 target. A World Bank report noted that, largely due to China's contribution, the global poverty rate fell from 38 percent in 1990 to 8.5 percent in 2024.

After eradicating extreme poverty at home, China has applied its proven methods to help other countries like Laos fight poverty.

By last year, China had run 15,000 training programs for more than 180 countries and international organizations, the China International Development Cooperation Agency said. The courses covered 17 fields and over 100 specialized areas, with more than 500 sessions focused specifically on governance and poverty reduction. In total, more than half a million people from around the world have been trained.

The Laos village chief Padith has come to understand the philosophy behind these projects.

"China's poverty alleviation model is not just about handing out supplies," he said. "It makes concrete plans based on the village's real situation. This approach builds our own ability to sustain progress — what they call 'hematopoietic ability' — rather than relying on outside help."

He hopes to deepen ties beyond infrastructure. "I hope we can increase mutual visits — for example, exchange and study trips for village cadres," Padith said. "We can also cooperate on agricultural technical training and share experiences in rural tourism development. We welcome Chinese friends to come to Thinsom, to see our progress and changes for themselves, and to explore together a sustainable development path that suits both sides."

Wang's team is now studying small-scale projects for Thinsom, such as homestays for tourists heading to Kuang Si waterfall. "We want Thinsom to develop its own 'hematopoietic ability' — to make its own money," Wang said.

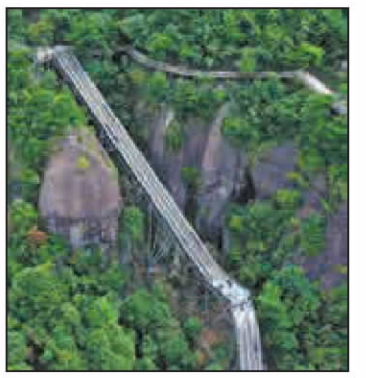
Back in Shibadong, Shi remains confident about the future success of the Chinese model. "I believe that under the correct leadership of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, and with the joint efforts of the Lao people, combining Shibadong's poverty-alleviation experience with Laos' own realities ... I am confident that Thinsom's future will be just like Shibadong's today."

Contact the writers at lilei@chinadaily.com.cn





Left: Primary school students sit in their new classroom in Thinsom. **Right:** Children read in the village library.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Tourists take escalators in the mountains of Shibadong village in Hunan province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Beekeeper sells sweet success

By LI LEI and **HE CHUN**
in Shibadong, Hunan

Long Xianlan, 39, used to be known as Shibadong village's "three ghosts" — drunkard, beggar and lazybones. Today, with more than 300 beehives and a honey packaging workshop, he is the "Bee Master".

His story is now being told to young Lao farmers who see in him a reason to stop waiting and start working.

"I drank every day because poverty left me without hope," Long said in a recent interview, sitting on the porch of his two-story wooden house in Shibadong, Hunan province.

Orphaned at a young age, he was fed by neighbors and slept where he fell.

In 2014, when a targeted poverty alleviation team arrived in Shibadong, they did not hand him cash. Instead, they took him on a study tour to a neighboring county. "I saw a young man my age with a sheep farm, a new brick house and a beautiful wife. I thought: he did it — why not me?" he recalled.

Long's turnaround started when a friend took him to study under a beekeeper in a neighboring county who earned over 100,000 yuan ($14,790) a year.

"If I could make 70,000 or 80,000 yuan, that would be a huge change," Long said. He became an apprentice, climbing the mountain two or three times daily to learn how to master beehives. But he worried no one would buy his honey.

The village's poverty alleviation team assured Long that tourists would buy whatever he produced. To prove the point, the officials gave Long some honey to sell at a tourist stop in Shibadong. It sold out immediately.

"That's when I gained confidence," he said, adding that he later obtained a bank loan with the villagers' committee acting as a guarantor.

In 2016, Long earned 50,000 yuan from honey production, officially shaking off poverty.

The following year, he found a wife and launched a beekeeping cooperative that now includes 118 households.

In 2019, he bought a new home in the county seat. A year later, his daughter Si'en — whose name signifies gratitude for one's roots — was born.

In 2023, a team from a Laos national television station came to Long's home. They filmed him walking among his hives, selling honey, and chasing his daughter around the yard.

Long, who still wakes before dawn to check his hives, is unfazed by his cross-border fame.

He keeps a photograph of the Lao journalists who filmed him on his wall, next to a picture of his wedding day.

"I want to use my own life's hardships to reach young people in their country — those who are hanging around, doing nothing, just waiting for handouts. I hope to influence them ... not to lose heart, not to give up, to keep working hard, and to create a new life — a life of value — while they are still young," he said.



Long Xianlan and his wife collect honey in Shibadong village, Hunan province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:00 PM

TOP NEWS

Ties: Laos supports efforts to coordinate development strategies

From page 1

Within the framework of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Laos and China have closely supported each other through the implementation of the Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-China Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2026-30), covering the three pillars of the ASEAN Community and ASEAN Connectivity.

The Lao PDR highly values the fifth anniversary of the ASEAN-China Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2021-26), which will be jointly commemorated, and expresses its deep appreciation to the People's Republic of China for its steadfast support during Laos' three ASEAN chairmanships.

In addition, in 2027, the Lao PDR stands ready to assume the role of the ASEAN-China Coordinating Country for the period 2027-30 to further advance the ASEAN-China Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and continuously deepen Laos-China bilateral relations.

Within the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation Framework, Laos and China, together with other countries in the river basin, have jointly created a new era in transforming the Lancang-Mekong River into a river of peace, friendship and sustainable development, becoming an efficient and effective cooperation mechanism capable of translating shared visions into tangible and lasting results for the peoples of the region.

The Lao PDR reaffirms its unwavering commitment to closely cooperate with the People's Republic of China, in supporting efforts to coordinate comprehensive joint development strategies, advance mutual development, deepen reform and broaden international cooperation, and jointly pursue the path of socialist development in accordance with their respective national conditions.

We will further strengthen the traditional friendship, the stable and long-term comprehensive strategic partnership guided by the "Four Goods" spirit, and advance the building of a Laos-China community with a shared future toward higher standards, higher quality and higher levels, to truly bring greater civilization and prosperity to the people of our two nations.

The author is general secretary of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party Central Committee and president of the Lao PDR. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Airport reopens



A health worker disinfects passengers on Tuesday before they board a World Food Programme aircraft in Bunia, Democratic Republic of the Congo. The airport has been reopened after the number of suspected Ebola cases in the region declined. Last month, the government in Kinshasa suspended passenger flights to Bunia, the main airport in Ituri province, where the first Ebola cases were confirmed. MOSES SAWASAWA / AP

Itineraries: Visits help put aside stereotypes

From page 1

"The main purpose, and also their expectation, is to help drive the growth and development of their own domestic economies," Jian added.

Li Xiaopeng, a professor at Hangzhou City University, said: "Effective home-ground diplomacy is not just about meetings, group photos and signing ceremonies. It also requires letting guests see things for themselves — to see a country's development, its capabilities and where its future is heading."

Taking Hangzhou as an example, Li said the city has become a highly concentrated example of Chinese modernization. In 2025, Hangzhou's GDP exceeded 2.3 trillion yuan ($340 billion), while the added value of its core digital economy industries reached 678 billion yuan, official data shows.

Behind the figures is an ecosystem that includes platform companies, robotics enterprises, AI startups and advanced manufacturers, forming a broader industrial chain that allows visiting leaders to see more than individual companies, Li said.

Zhejiang is not the only place where such out-of-capital trips have taken place.

Foreign leaders visiting China have also traveled to places such as Shanghai, an international financial center; Xiong'an New Area in Hebei province; and Fujian, Shaanxi and Sichuan provinces — places that showcase Chinese modernization, coordinated regional development, poverty reduction and connectivity.

Jian, the researcher, said that in-person visits by foreign leaders play an irreplaceable role in helping them better understand the reasons behind China's economic success and its future development trends.

"Such visits help them see China more objectively, dispel the interference of certain Western narratives, and put aside prejudice and stereotypes about China," he said.

While the Lao top leader was visiting Zhejiang, Yvette Cooper, the United Kingdom's foreign secretary, traveled to Shenzhen, the technology hub in South China's Guangdong province, on Wednesday for a trip focused on science and technology, after meetings in the Chinese capital.

If Beijing is where diplomacy is conducted, Shenzhen is where China's industrial innovation takes shape on the ground, experts said.

"Shenzhen now stands in the global spotlight, as it will host an important international meeting this year," said Cui Hongjian, a professor at Beijing Foreign Studies University's Academy of Regional and Global Governance.

The city is set to host the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Economic Leaders' Meeting in November.

Cui said that Cooper's visit to the city and to technology companies shows that Britain's diplomacy toward China has a clear and targeted agenda — to make economic diplomacy a main thread of its China policy.

Contact the writers at mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn

Ladder: Dual-cable system guarantees safety

From page 1

Dubbed "China's highest via ferrata", the ladder is attached to Qixing Mountain, a karst tableland around 13 kilometers from downtown Zhangjiajie.

With an average height of 1,328 meters above sea level, the mountain's dramatic landscape of sheer cliffs, deep gorges, seas of clouds and waterfalls has now been transformed into a thrilling outdoor adventure playground, complete with metal cables, ladders and steps that safely guide visitors up the vertical terrain.

According to Tian Jianbing, general manager of the Zhangjiajie Qixing Mountain Scenic Area, the via ferrata, or "iron path", has welcomed nearly 150,000 visitors since its opening in November 2024, including more than 27,000 foreign guests from 42 countries and regions.

In July, the attraction was featured on French television channel TF1's flagship evening news.

For Oleksii Lisianskyi, a Ukrainian outdoor enthusiast, via ferratas are nothing new, but after tackling Qixing Mountain on a sunny Saturday morning in April, the 35-year-old was left buzzing with an excitement like never before.

"This one in Zhangjiajie is definitely the biggest and most challenging I've ever experienced," Lisianskyi said. "Higher, longer, more obstacles — it really pushes you."

Setting out around 8 am, helmet and harness on, he looked up at the rock face melting into the mist. "OK … this is real," he recalled thinking. On the wall, strangers quickly became teammates. "You help each other, share stories, take photos together. It becomes more than just a challenge."

Climbers from around the world made it feel, in his words, "very international". Unlike the intimidating videos, the real journey was a mix of pure fun and adrenaline, with plenty of picture-perfect moments.

Safety is paramount. The climbing route features a dual-cable system comprising a 12-millimeter main lifeline and a second cable linking every handhold. Climbers are secured with two locking carabiners that can be opened with a special tool. As the designers put it, "You can't fall, even if you want to".

Lisianskyi and his companions finished before noon. At the top, a small ritual awaited: ringing a bell three times to mark their achievement. "After that, everyone shares their experience — the hardest part, the most exciting moment," he said.

Finishers will receive a certificate in Chinese and English, a trophy and — unexpectedly — drone footage capturing their ascent.

"Totally worth it," Lisianskyi said with a grin. And if an even bigger challenge comes? "I'll definitely go again."

Contact the writers at limuyun@chinadaily.com.cn

Solar firms eye space-based energy frontier

Shift will gradually eliminate the need for land grids and enable instant power supply

By ZHENG XIN
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

In order to build on their leadership in the global arena and unlock next-generation growth channels, China's leading photovoltaic firms are eyeing space-based solar energy production as the industry's next technological frontier.

By expanding into this field, they hope to diversify their business, break conventional market constraints and create high-end applications for China's substantial solar production capacity.

At the opening ceremony of the 19th International Photovoltaic Power Generation and Smart Energy Conference and Exhibition in Shanghai on Tuesday, a consortium of 13 tier-one solar and technology enterprises officially launched the Space Energy Development Alliance.

The alliance aims to integrate resources across the entire supply chain, including solar power, energy storage, hydrogen power, computing and charging, in order to bridge the boundaries between aerospace and green energy.

Company executives and industry analysts regard this as a pivotal and strategic move for Chinese solar power manufacturers seeking to escape intense domestic competition and tap into massive incremental markets.

Zhu Gongshan, chairman of GCL Group, said, "If the first half of the photovoltaic industry's paradigm revolution is the symbiosis of watts and bits, the second half is the dance between materials and aerospace."

He described the shift as "an epic expansion of energy scenario boundaries", extending from the land and oceans to extraterrestrial orbits.

"Simultaneously arriving with the photovoltaic paradigm revolution is a cross-sectoral composite technology cluster covering power electronics, digital technology, advanced materials, aerospace engineering, communication technology, wireless power transmission and synthetic biology, far exceeding the industry's traditional technological road map," he said.

According to Zhu, gathering solar energy in the near-ideal cosmic environment enables systems to escape the effects of atmospheric filtering and the day-night cycle of the Earth, resulting in a highly efficient and constant form of closer-range photosynthesis.

"Reusable rockets continuously lower launch costs, and giant commercial constellations create large-scale demand, pushing space-based photovoltaics into the realm of engineering economics," Zhu said.

> "If the first half of the photovoltaic industry's paradigm revolution is the symbiosis of watts and bits, the second half is the dance between materials and aerospace."
>
> **Zhu Gongshan,** chairman of GCL Group

He projected that once radiation-resistant packaging passes rigorous testing, related technologies could be used for active space applications within five to 10 years.

The long-term outlook for the industry is that space-to-Earth wireless power delivery will replace conventional generation-transmission-consumption chains, eliminating the need for lengthy land grids and enabling instant power supply to remote outposts, islands and emergency sites.

Zhu noted that space will maximize the synergy between on-site energy production and real-time computing.

Prominent energy experts praised the alliance as a visionary step toward long-term industrial evolution, while also taking a pragmatic view of current market dynamics.

Lin Boqiang, head of Xiamen University's China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy, said that setting up such an alliance is a highly commendable initiative.

"While commercial operations remain on the distant horizon, pioneering this path is vital. Space-based solar power will likely be significantly more expensive than terrestrial alternatives for at least the next decade, meaning ground-based solar installations will remain our primary reliance for a long time to come," Lin said.

"However, the domestic ground-based market still holds significant growth potential, and initiating early layouts in space-based technology is a farsighted strategy worth advocating."

Tan Youru, a solar analyst at BloombergNEF, echoed this sentiment, adding that these corporate initiatives represent vital forward-looking technical developments and highly anticipated frontier applications.

While the long-term vision of space-based photovoltaics remains an exciting prospect for future technological leadership, he added that the industry must stay focused on resolving its immediate challenges, such as the issue of overcapacity.

Electric three-wheelers gaining traction overseas

By ZHONG NAN
zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

At a workshop owned by Jiangsu Zhufeng Electromechanical Technology Co in Xuzhou, Jiangsu province, a buyer evaluated an electric three-wheeler model destined for Indonesia, discussing modifications with engineers, who took detailed notes on the customer's requirements.

As concerns over fuel costs and energy security grow globally, China's electric three-wheelers, widely used to transport people and goods, have seen a surge in demand in overseas markets in recent months.

Jiangsu Zhufeng Electromechanical Technology Co produced nearly 30,000 units in 2025, with exports mainly destined for the United States, Turkiye, Cambodia and Indonesia. With its products having entered Brunei, Vietnam and Laos this year, the company expects its annual production to surpass 50,000 units.

From January to April this year, exports of electric three-wheelers from Xuzhou reached 168 million yuan ($24.8 million), up 87.1 percent year-on-year, while exports of related parts and components totaled 115 million yuan, an increase of 29.6 percent from a year earlier, according to data from Xuzhou Customs.

Dai Hui, deputy head of Xuzhou Customs, said that three-wheelers made in Xuzhou have reached more than 130 countries and regions.

"In addition to emerging markets, the next frontier is North America, Western Europe and Northern Europe, where exporters are stepping up efforts to expand their presence," said Dai.

Ni Xiaofeng, president of Jiangsu Guowei Motorcycle Co, another three-wheeler manufacturer based in Wuxi, Jiangsu, said the growing appeal of low-cost, energy-efficient transportation solutions, coupled with stricter environmental regulations and efforts to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, have further boosted demand for Chinese three-wheelers in overseas markets.

"A standard electric three-wheeler and similar models typically sell for $3,000 to $6,000 in European and North American markets," he said.

Li Chengyun, head of the technical unit of Xuzhou Zhibo Locomotive Co in Xuzhou, said most electric three-wheelers on the market offer a driving range of 80 to 100 kilometers with standard lithium batteries. For an additional cost, customers can choose larger battery packs, which increase the range to as much as 180 to 220 kilometers.

"More overseas customers are demanding higher power output, prompting us to equip vehicles with larger motors," Li said. "Buyers are also requesting larger and wider tires and wheel rims, leading the company to adopt aluminum alloy wheels to better meet customers' specifications."

Zhang Hui, president of Xuzhou Zhibo Locomotive Co, said that in the long run, concerns over fuel supply disruptions and the search for affordable transportation alternatives will continue to drive the global adoption of electric three-wheelers.

Beyond traditional cargo and passenger-carrying three-wheelers, manufacturers are increasingly branching into specialty and recreational vehicles to diversify their product offerings.

He Shan, sales director at Jiangsu Shanming Shuixiu Environmental Protection Technology Co in Xuzhou, said the company's business originally focused on manufacturing cargo three-wheelers, but shifted toward developing and exporting specialty vehicles such as road sweepers after spotting growing demand in niche markets.

"We are now rolling out upgraded models that can sweep streets, wash surfaces, spray water mist and suppress dust. A single sweeper can do the work of more than a dozen people," said He.



Workers load electric three-wheelers for shipment at the parking lot of a manufacturing unit in Xuzhou, Jiangsu province, on Oct 16, 2025. MAO JUN / XINHUA

Household-use three-wheelers, passenger shuttles and leisure vehicles designed for tourist attractions and golf courses have become key growth segments for many traditional electric three-wheeler manufacturers, said Chen Bin, deputy director of the expert committee of the Beijing-based China Machinery Industry Federation.

Chen said the growing popularity of electric three-wheelers reflects a broader shift toward affordable, energy-efficient mobility solutions, creating new opportunities for Chinese manufacturers in global markets.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:00 PM

WORLD

Deadly blaze



Local people rescue a foreign national from a hotel fire in New Delhi, India, on Wednesday. The fire broke out in a building in the Malviya Nagar neighborhood in the southern part of the city. At least 21 people have been killed, police said. MANISH SWARUP / AP

PATH TO PROGRESS

Croatia eyes green partnership

Zagreb ready to expand synergy with Beijing in sustainable growth, envoy says

By **SHAO XINYING** and **LIU TIANYUN**

Croatia sees growing opportunities for deepening cooperation with Beijing in green development as China enters a new stage of growth, the Croatian envoy said.

Croatian Ambassador to China Dario Mihelin highlighted sustainability as an increasingly important pillar of bilateral ties, saying the two countries are well-positioned to expand synergy in areas ranging from ecological conservation to clean energy.

"I've been here (in China) for several years, since the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20). This is my third five-year plan to follow," Mihelin told China Daily. "Certainly, in the niche (areas) of sustainable development and ecological transition, I sense a strong potential for cooperation between Croatia and China."

As for sustainable development, "it's something that immediately brings us to reflect on the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), with a strong focus on making this country more beautiful and healthier", the ambassador said, adding that the emphasis on green development offers new opportunities.

Mihelin said the two countries have already translated partnerships into tangible results, including major infrastructure projects that have incorporated sustainability considerations.

He pointed to the landmark Peljesac Bridge, set to celebrate the fourth anniversary of its opening in July. Since its inception, the project has prioritized marine conservation through eco-friendly engineering and construction.

"This bridge is a true symbol of our cooperation and partnership," he said of the 2.4-kilometer-long bridge.

Built by a Chinese consortium led by the China Road and Bridge Corporation and mainly funded by the European Union, the bridge connects the Croatian mainland with the Peljesac Peninsula, slashing the transit time from up to three hours to just minutes.

"It's a unique example of cooperation between an EU member state ... in this case, Croatia, the European Union and China," he said.

"Chinese companies participated in the public procurement and bidding process and won that bid, and then executed the project in line with all the EU regulations and standards."

While the bridge is often associated with the Belt and Road Initiative, Mihelin stressed it represents something broader: a successful model of practical joint efforts between China and Europe. He said that future opportunities increasingly lie in low-carbon development.



Dario Mihelin

"The color of cooperation between China and the European Union is green," said Mihelin, adding that the description also applies to relations between Croatia and China, as evidenced by the Senj Wind Farm, built by China's Norinco International and one of the largest Chinese investments in Croatia.

"The cooperation and investment in the field of renewables certainly point to the fact that our cooperation is green," he said. "It's further strengthened by the cooperation that exists between our national parks."

The Plitvice Lakes National Park in Croatia and Jiuzhaigou National Park in China's Sichuan province, "really look like twins" and "have fantastic cooperation in the preservation of the special geological features", Mihelin said of the two tourist hot spots.

People exchanges

People-to-people exchanges also remain an important part of bilateral relations. Before the pandemic, nearly half a million Chinese tourists visited Croatia annually, Mihelin said, adding that tourism numbers are steadily recovering.

Infrastructure links created through projects such as the Peljesac Bridge have also helped improve access to surrounding areas such as Korcula, frequently visited by Chinese tourists interested in legendary explorer Marco Polo, and Dubrovnik, known for the filming location of the television series *Game of Thrones*.

This momentum is further propelled by China's decision to extend the unilateral visa-free policy for Croatian citizens until the end of this year.

The positive trajectory in people-to-people exchanges was on full display in Beijing last week. To mark Croatia's Armed Forces Day and Statehood Day, a cultural evening was held in the Chinese capital, where traditional music from the Hrvatsko Zagorje region, north of the capital Zagreb, took center stage. This celebration also comes as the two nations commemorate the diplomatic ties established 34 years ago.

Mihelin also expressed hope that direct flights between China and Croatia could be launched in the future.

"Certainly, a direct flight connection between China and Croatia would bring more people-to-people contacts, more Chinese friends to Croatia and more Croatians visiting China," he said.

Contact the writers at shaoxinying@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
See more by scanning the code.

FM's visit signals pragmatic relations

By **YANG GAO** in Toronto
gaoyang@chinadailyusa.com

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's visit to Canada signals an effort by both sides to strengthen ties as Ottawa seeks to diversify trade and navigate growing uncertainty in its economic relationship with the United States, experts say.

Wang met with his counterpart Anita Anand and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney during his three-day visit last week, the first by a Chinese foreign minister to Canada in a decade.

For Jiang Wenran, founding director of the China Institute at the University of Alberta and president of the Canada-China Energy and Environment Forum, the visit signals a shift in the broader trajectory of the relationship.

"This visit ... signals a deliberate shift from confrontation to pragmatic engagement," Jiang said. "Meeting both Anand and Carney underscores high-level commitment to turning the recent thaw into durable institutions."

He described the visit as a test of the "new strategic partnership" announced earlier this year, with both China and Canada seeking progress on long-standing trade and policy issues.

Economic cooperation remains central to that effort.

During Wang's meeting with Anand, the Canadian government reiterated its goal of continuing to increase exports to China.

Jeff Mahon, former deputy director of the China division at Global Affairs Canada — a government department responsible for foreign affairs and international trade — said stronger economic ties are supported by the complementary nature of the two economies.

"Canada and China have complementary opportunities to increase trade in a range of goods and services," Mahon said.

"Given the size of Canada's economy, its current exports are relatively low. Therefore, it is a realistic objective for Canada to increase its exports (to China) by 50 percent by 2030," he said.

Jiang said the goal is driven by complementary strengths — agricultural exports, energy and cleantech cooperation.

Both experts linked the interest in economic cooperation to Canada's broader effort to diversify trade relationships.

"Increasing exports to China will play a critical role in Canada's diversification agenda given China's large market size and ongoing transformation to a consumption-driven economy," Mahon said.

Jiang said Canada's need to diversify has become more urgent as uncertainty surrounding the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement review approaches.

"With 75 percent of Canadian exports flowing to the US and the USMCA renegotiation looming, Canada faces acute pressure to diversify," he said.

"This uncertainty makes deeper economic engagement with China and other markets not just desirable but essential for sovereignty," he added.

Canada sent a letter to the US and Mexico on Tuesday outlining its recommendations to renew the trilateral trade deal for 16 years, while seeking parallel talks on sectoral tariffs ahead of the meeting between Canadian and US trade negotiators later in the day, Reuters reported.

The upcoming USMCA review may also prove to be the most significant challenge facing future China-Canada cooperation, Mahon said, adding that Canada will likely face pressure from Washington to align policies in certain sectors if it wishes to maintain preferential access to the US market.

"This political pressure demonstrates that we are entering a new era where politics will play a larger role in international commercial relations," he said.

Balancing act

Both Mahon and Jiang said the future of China-Canada relations will depend on Ottawa's ability to balance deeper engagement with Beijing while maintaining close ties with Washington.

Mahon emphasized the importance of pragmatism and trust-building.

"For Canada-China relations to continue on a positive trajectory, the two sides will need to deepen and expand political trust," he said.

Despite the challenges, both experts expressed cautious optimism that bilateral ties can continue to improve.

"If Ottawa can keep promises amid external pressure, the relationship can evolve into a stable, interest-driven partnership," Jiang said.



Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney (right) meets with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Ottawa on Friday. LI HAITAO / XINHUA

New Danish government to stand firm over Greenland

By **JULIAN SHEA** in London
julian@mail.chinadailyuk.com

Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen has put the future of Greenland at the top of her political agenda after ending months of uncertainty by securing a center-left coalition to govern the country.

Her Social Democratic Party won 21.9 percent of the vote and 38 parliamentary seats in the March election, leaving it with the most votes but well short of the 90 seats needed for a majority.

After two months of negotiations, she has reached a deal with the Socialist People's Party, the center-left Radikale Venstre and the centrist Moderates, which will allow her to have a third term in office, and addressing the United States' designs on the Danish overseas territory will be one of her priorities.

US President Donald Trump first expressed a territorial interest in Greenland during his first term of office, and in December 2024, after his reelection, he said "the ownership and control of Greenland is an absolute necessity".

He suggested that he might want to buy the world's largest island, which is strategically important and believed to have vast mineral deposits. He repeated his interest at the start of the year, saying the US would take over the island "one way or the other".

The issue was a dominant theme in the election campaign, with the threat credited with a pre-polling surge in support for the Social Democrats after they put on a poor performance in local elections at the end of last year, and helping keep Frederiksen in office.

Carolin Hjort Rapp, a political scientist from the University of Copenhagen, told media that the Greenland crisis had played a role in keeping Frederiksen, and also Moderates leader Lars Lokke Rasmussen, in position when voters may otherwise have had reservations about their performance.

"They kind of survived, but at the same time, the voters were not satisfied with what the government had been doing before, so they wanted to move to other parties," she said. "You see smaller parties (of the left and far right) that gained way more votes than before."

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn

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

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1842

Voice cloning scams on the rise in US

WASHINGTON — Liz Benz still believes the distressed caller's voice was her son's — the tone, enunciation and cadence all matched her 16-year-old.

But it was an AI clone, making the mother yet another victim of a growing wave of impersonation scams in the United States.

Rapidly evolving artificial intelligence technology has demolished the boundaries between reality and fiction, handing cybercriminals strikingly convincing voice cloning tools to steal from people by mimicking loved ones.

Benz, who's located in Buffalo, a city in New York, was jolted from her couch by a call from an unknown number. On the line was someone sounding like her son Fred, crying for help.

She was told Fred's friend had been shot and killed, and her son — who was out at a local football game — was being held hostage.

The 46-year-old insurance broker and mother of six was instructed to deliver cash to a nearby Walmart to pay off the man holding him.

Eventually, a selfie from Fred smiling at the game returned her to reality: the call, she realized, was an elaborate scam.

"Nothing could have convinced me that this was a scam until I saw my son with my own eyes," Benz said, her voice trembling. "It was a good 20 minutes of terror."

US authorities and consumer advocates are increasingly warning of scams built around impersonating family members.

The FBI said US people over the age of 60 lost more than $7.7 billion to scams last year, a significant jump over 2024.

In April, US people lost over $893 million last year to AI-enabled hoaxes, including voice cloning scams, the FBI said.

Simple internet searches can surface a wide array of voice cloning apps, many available for free, that create realistic AI replicas using small samples — sometimes only seconds — of a person's real voice.

"It used to be somewhat hard to make these things. Now anyone can do it in seconds," said Brian Long, chief executive of Adaptive Security, a company offering training on AI fraud protection.

Since taking her story public, Benz said she has received a flood of messages from other victims, many of whom opt to stay anonymous because of the shame attached.

Elderly people are particularly vulnerable, with experts warning of rising cases of "grandparent scams".

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:00 PM

WORLD

Showcasing culture



Handicrafts and cultural products are on display at a booth of the Chinese Permanent Mission to the United Nations at a charity sale held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on Tuesday. WANG FAN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Fresh strikes stoke Gulf jitters

Renewed US-Iran hostilities raise doubts over ceasefire as Mideast tensions spiral

By **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong and **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE

Renewed military strikes involving Iran and the United States rattled the Gulf region on Wednesday. At least one death was reported in Kuwait from the attacks, while Bahrain intercepted missiles and drones allegedly targeting civilian sites.

Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement on X that it condemned the Iranian attacks using ballistic missiles and drones, which, it said, occurred at dawn on Wednesday, "targeting once again civilian and vital facilities, including Kuwait International Airport, resulting in the death of one individual, injuries to others, and damage to vital facilities, including diplomatic missions".

"The ministry affirms the State of Kuwait's categorical rejection of Iran's overt aggressive attacks, which lead to increased escalation, heightened tension, and undermine the security and stability of the region, constituting a flagrant violation of the rules of international law, the United Nations Charter, and Security Council Resolution 2817 of 2026," it said.

The foreign ministry stressed that "Kuwait's sovereignty, and the safety of its citizens and residents on its territory are a red line that cannot be crossed".

"The ministry affirms that the State of Kuwait reserves its full and inherent right to take appropriate measures in response to these sinful and repeated Iranian aggressions, in accordance with international law," it said.

Kuwait's Directorate General of Civil Aviation said on Wednesday that flights were suspended until further notice and that it had activated its emergency plan at Kuwait International Airport. It said Terminal 1 was subjected to targeting by drones and missiles from the "Iranian aggression", resulting in significant damage to several airport facilities, as well as injuries.

The agency's spokesman Abdullah Al-Rajhi said the authorities handled the incident in accordance with approved procedures, and were committed to ensuring the safety of workers and passengers, and securing the airport's facilities.

In Bahrain, the General Command of the Bahrain Defence Force said Iran continued its systematic hostile approach through its attacks with missiles and drones that targeted civilian properties in Bahrain. The command said its air defense systems had destroyed three missiles and a number of drones. It said the deliberate use of missiles and drones to target civilian sites and private property constituted a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law, Bahrain News Agency reported.

Retaliatory move

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said in the early hours of Wednesday that it carried out retaliatory missile and drone attacks against the headquarters of the US Fifth Fleet and other US military targets in response to repeated acts of aggression by the US, Tasnim News Agency reported.

In a statement released on Wednesday, the IRGC Public Relations Office said that late on Tuesday, the US military struck an Iranian oil tanker near the Strait of Hormuz with an aerial projectile, causing damage to the vessel in the engine room area.

Further, the IRGC said that "in a renewed act of aggression, the American enemy targeted an IRGC communications tower in the south of Qeshm Island with aerial projectiles".

Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the alleged targeting of an Iranian oil tanker in the strait and the attack on a telecommunications tower on Qeshm Island.

The ministry noted the attacks were launched in the early hours of Wednesday from the territories of two regional countries.

The US Central Command denied the allegations and said all attacks on its forces had failed and that they remained ready to defend themselves against unwarranted Iranian aggression.

"An additional wave of Iranian drones attempting to attack US forces in Kuwait failed to impact intended targets tonight. US Central Command air defenses successfully downed multiple drones and ensured no American personnel or assets were harmed," it added.

In Washington, US President Donald Trump said Iran has agreed not to have a nuclear weapon and that he would probably meet with Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei at some point if things "work out".

"They've already agreed they're not going to have a nuclear weapon," Trump told *Pod Force One* in an interview broadcast on Wednesday, while speaking about Iran.

Asked about Khamenei's involvement in talks with the US on ending hostilities, Trump said, "He's involved, absolutely. ... I think they have a lot of respect for him."

Agencies contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at jan@chinadailyapac.com.

Israel, Hezbollah trade blows as envoys meet in Washington

BEIRUT — Israel and Hezbollah exchanged fire on Tuesday while Lebanese and Israeli envoys met in Washington for direct talks.

The meeting lasted all day on Tuesday, a CNN report said, citing an Israeli official.

US Deputy National Security Adviser Mike Needham and State Department Counselor Dan Holler reportedly led the talks on the US side on Tuesday.

"We are trying to view the Lebanon-Israeli talks as separate and distinct from Iran, and what Iran wants to do is mix it all together," US Secretary of State Marco Rubio told a Senate hearing earlier on Tuesday.

Rubio also accused Iran of "trying to stymie any effort in which Israel and Lebanon can work together" and prolonging their negotiations.

He added, "Israel has no territorial claims in Lebanon. Hezbollah is the impediment."

State Department spokesman Tommy Pigott said on X that "progress continues on the political and security tracks" after the first day of talks ended. Another round was scheduled for Wednesday.

Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam called the talks, which are strongly opposed by Hezbollah, "the least costly choice for Lebanon".



People swim at a public beach as smoke rises in the background after an Israeli airstrike that hit a village, as seen from the southern port city of Tyre, Lebanon, on Tuesday. MOHAMMED ZAATARI / AP

Meanwhile, Lebanon's state-run National News Agency reported Israeli strikes, some of them deadly, on around 30 locations across the south on Tuesday.

The fighting came after US President Donald Trump declared on Monday that he had brokered a partial ceasefire deal, which the Lebanese embassy in Washington said would at first only cover Israeli attacks on Beirut and Hezbollah attacks on Israeli territory, before expanding in scope.

Israel has been fighting Hezbollah since the group dragged Lebanon into the wider Middle East conflict on March 2.

A senior Hezbollah official said on Tuesday that the group will not accept any partial ceasefire with Israel, rejecting the reported US-backed proposal demanding that Hezbollah halt attacks against northern Israel in exchange for Israel sparing Beirut's southern suburbs.

Hezbollah, meanwhile, said it had attacked Israeli troops in southern Lebanese lands they occupy, but had not claimed attacks in Israel.

The Israeli military said it intercepted two projectiles from Lebanon, without reporting any injuries.

On Wednesday and ahead of a second day of talks in Washington, Lebanese state media reported an Israeli strike near Beirut. The state-run National News Agency reported the targeting of a car on the Khaldeh-Naameh road, referring to an area at the southern entrance to the capital.

Meanwhile, a medical source in south Lebanon's Tyre told AFP that Israeli strikes near the coastal city on Wednesday killed six people, as Israel keeps up attacks on the country's south.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has written to UN Security Council members, stressing the need for a continued uniformed UN presence in Lebanon after the mandate of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon, or UNIFIL, expires at year's end.

Guterres outlined three options to replace the 7,500-strong UNIFIL in a letter to the 15 members of the Security Council dated on Monday and seen by Reuters.

They ranged from a light presence with limited capabilities to a more robust force with broader monitoring and de-escalation capabilities, and from around 1,980 to 5,525 uniformed personnel members.

AGENCIES—XINHUA

Technology, participation mark Ethiopia's election

By **SHARON NAKOLA** in Nairobi, Kenya
sharon@chinadailyafrica.com

Regional election observers have praised Ethiopia's adoption of new electoral technologies and strong voter participation in its seventh general election, describing the process as a notable step in the country's efforts to strengthen democratic institutions despite persistent security challenges.

The polls on Monday were the second general election held since 2018 after Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed was elected. As one of Africa's most populous nations and a key diplomatic player on the continent, developments in Ethiopia are closely watched by regional governments and international partners.

Preliminary assessments released on Wednesday by observer missions from the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development highlighted improvements in election administration, voter registration and electoral inclusion, while acknowledging that insecurity continued to affect parts of the country.

According to the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia, more than 50.5 million citizens registered to vote, surpassing the board's initial target and marking a significant increase from the previous general election. More than 5.5 million voters registered through digital platforms under a hybrid digital-analog registration system.

The observer missions hailed the use of technology as one of the election's defining features, including GIS-based mapping that leverages geographic information systems to digitize, analyze, and visualize voting centers, digital voter registration tools and special voting arrangements for internally displaced people and members of the security services.

The board was hailed for its administrative and operational capacity, with the observer team saying the measures helped improve accessibility, transparency and efficiency in the management of the vote.

Commendable way

"The way the election board conducted the 7th General Election is commendable," the AU and IGAD observer teams said during a media briefing on Wednesday, citing the institution's neutrality, technological preparedness, inclusiveness and election administration.

According to the observer missions, voting was successfully conducted in 501 constituencies, although polling did not take place in the Tigray region and parts of Oromia and Amhara due to security and operational challenges.

Overall, while more than 50,000 polling stations were operational, 143 failed to open due to security issues, according to media reports.

Speciosa Wandira-Kazibwe, head of the IGAD Election Observation Mission, described the level of public engagement as one of the most remarkable she had witnessed during election observation assignments across Africa.

"We have never encountered the level of public participation we saw in Ethiopia in other countries," she said.

Former Kenyan president Uhuru Kenyatta, who led the AU Election Observation Mission, also welcomed the conduct of the polls and praised efforts undertaken by Ethiopian authorities to strengthen election processes.

Final election results are expected to be announced within one to two weeks after voting concludes, in accordance with Ethiopia's electoral law.

Derailed disaster



Employees of the THW technical relief organization work on the recovery of a derailed streetcar in Berlin, on Wednesday. There were 20 casualties in the accident, three of whom were seriously injured. CHRISTOPHE GATEAU VIA AP

Briefly

CHINA

Myanmar's foreign minister to pay visit

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning announced on Wednesday that Myanmar's Foreign Minister Tin Maung Swe will begin a three-day official visit to China on Thursday. The visit follows Foreign Minister Wang Yi's trip to Myanmar in late April and marks Tin Maung Swe's first visit to China since he was appointed foreign minister in April. Tin Maung Swe previously served as Myanmar's ambassador to China from November 2022 to January 2026.

UNITED STATES

Bill Pulte named as acting intel chief

US President Donald Trump on Tuesday appointed Bill Pulte, the director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency, as acting director of national intelligence. Trump said in a Truth Social post that Pulte "has deep experience managing the most sensitive matters in America, the safety and soundness of the markets". He added that Pulte would remain director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency and chairman of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac while serving in the acting role. Pulte will replace Tulsi Gabbard, who announced on May 22 that she was resigning from her post after her husband was diagnosed with an extremely rare form of bone cancer. The director of national intelligence is responsible for the oversight and direction of 18 elements of the country's intelligence community.

NIGERIA

Gunmen kill 37 in two attacks on one village

Criminal gangs have killed at least 37 people in two days of attacks on a rural community in northwest Nigeria's Sokoto state, a security report and residents said. Gunmen on motorbikes, believed to be "bandits", killed at least 17 people and looted shops in Dangulbi village, according to a security report prepared for the UN and seen by AFP. The attackers returned to the village early on Tuesday, killing at least 20 more residents who were mourning the 17 people killed in the Sunday raid, a local official told AFP on Wednesday. "The victims were sheltered under sheds, following an earlier attack on the community on May 31," the report said.

CHINA DAILY—XINHUA—AGENCIES

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:00 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Implementation road map to expedite agricultural and rural modernization

China's newly unveiled plan for agricultural and rural modernization during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period represents a shift to managing complex structural transformation related to a sector of strategic importance to the nation.

The plan issued by the State Council, China's Cabinet, on Tuesday signals rural modernization is entering a crucial phase in which goals, timelines and responsibilities have become more clearly defined.

China's countryside faces two demographic forces: aging and urbanization. Labor mobility has been one of the engines of China's economic rise. The challenge now lies in managing its consequences. The country's urbanization rate has reached 67 percent and is expected to touch 70 percent by the end of the decade. The question is no longer how to encourage migration from villages to cities, a process that creates jobs and growth. It is how to ensure that rural residents enjoy rising incomes, quality public services and more self-improvement opportunities.

The urban-rural income ratio remains above 2.3, meaning rural residents still earn less than half as much as their urban counterparts on average, despite the gap narrowing considerably. The plan's focus on raising farmers' incomes through county-level industrial development, stronger property rights protection, wage growth for migrant workers and other targeted support policies therefore reflects a development imperative that is central to the modernization of people.

Yet that is only one part of the challenge.

The productivity model that supported China's agricultural development over the past decades is also approaching a point with diminishing marginal effects. As the country enters a stage of deepening rural reform, the focus is shifting to high-quality, comprehensive structural optimization. Future growth should increasingly come from improvements in total factor productivity rather than from additional inputs.

This is where the challenge becomes more complex. The country must feed about 17 percent of the global population with less than 9 percent of the world's arable land, while rising labor costs, tightening environmental constraints and increasingly strict protection of water resources make a transition from labor-intensive growth toward technology-driven efficiency gains a pressing task.

Faster adoption of technology has continued to lift agricultural productivity in China in recent years. In 2025, China's grain production reached about 714.9 million tonnes, marking the second straight year when grain output stayed above 700 million tonnes. Last year, the contribution rate of agricultural scientific and technological progress exceeded 64 percent, while the comprehensive mechanization rate of crop cultivation and harvesting reached 76.7 percent.

The new plan has set an anticipatory target of raising the contribution rate of sci-tech progress in boosting agricultural development to 67 percent by 2030. New generations of agricultural technologies should therefore become more land-saving, resource-efficient and environmentally sustainable. Yet such innovations require substantial investment, long development cycles and widespread adoption by farmers.

Land reform presents another difficult test. Greater efficiency requires more effective land-use arrangements and more mature land-transfer markets. Yet the rural reality in many regions remains characterized by fragmented landholdings, part-time farming and short-term land transfers. Achieving economies of scale without changing that pattern is no simple task.

For many elderly rural residents, farmland remains their major source of income. Policymakers must balance productivity gains against the need to protect vulnerable groups from losing land.

Environmental constraints add another layer of complexity. Agriculture sits at the intersection of food production, resource use, extreme weather responses and emissions reduction. Higher yields often require greater inputs, while greener production methods can involve higher costs and slower adoption. Balancing food security, farmer incomes and environmental sustainability will require careful policy coordination.

Perhaps the most difficult challenge lies in implementation itself. Rural modernization increasingly depends on institutional innovation. Technological progress, financial reform, land policy, social security, environmental protection and public service provision should operate as an integrated system in the process.

The next round of reform necessitates deeper adjustments to land institutions, rural finance and social welfare systems. These are inherently more challenging because they touch upon entrenched interests and long-standing structural arrangements. The new plan, if well implemented, will be conducive to better enabling the country to tackle the above challenges so as to create a rural economy that is systematically productive, environmentally sustainable, socially inclusive and resilient to external uncertainties and risks.

Key infrastructure unlocks trade potential

A crucial component of the New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor, the Pinglu Canal is a monumental Chinese infrastructure project designed to enhance trade connectivity between China and the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. The completion of the canal's full water filling on Wednesday represents a key step toward its planned opening for full navigation in September.

The flagship project with an investment of $10.2 billion under China's strategy to develop the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region and Yunnan province is a gateway to and for ASEAN. Stretching 134.2 kilometers from Nanning to Qinzhou Port facing the Beibu Gulf, the canal is the first direct river-to-sea canal project since the founding of the People's Republic of China. Connecting the upper reaches of the Xijiang River system directly to the sea, the canal provides a more cost-effective alternative route to the traditional, longer route via Guangdong province for vessels up to 5,000 tonnes. It is estimated that it will save 5.2 billion yuan ($753 million) a year in logistics costs.

The canal's effect on Guangxi and the broader southwestern interior will be transformative, as it will give the landlocked provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan and Guizhou more convenient access to the sea, accelerating their integration into global value chains, enabling Guangxi to better leverage its geographic advantage as a connector of Southeast Asia.

As logistics costs decrease, port-oriented industries focused on bulk raw materials, heavy chemical industries, and equipment manufacturing are expected to gather along the canal. Convenient transportation via the canal will help meet the increasing needs of the fast-developing manufacturing in Southeast Asian countries, such as Vietnam, which have a growing demand for equipment and raw materials. The canal will thus serve to strengthen supply chains in the region. And since the canal covers major agricultural production areas, it will also contribute to agricultural modernization and rural vitalization. All this will help upgrade the regional development landscape during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period.

The Pinglu Canal fits into the broader picture of China's infrastructure development strategy, which aims to enhance internal connectivity and strengthen international trade routes. Aligned with the country's long-term commitment to investing in infrastructure that supports both domestic development and international cooperation, the ambition of the Pinglu Canal invites comparison with another Guangxi marvel: the Lingqu Canal, constructed in 214 BC. As one of China's oldest canals, Lingqu played a crucial role in connecting the Yangtze and Pearl river systems, fostering cultural and ethnic integration.

But while the Lingqu Canal facilitated internal connection, the Pinglu Canal project promotes regional integration. Once fully operational, the canal is expected to alter trade dynamics in the region. It will present opportunities for businesses and industries that rely on trade between China and ASEAN countries, leading to anticipated increases in trade volumes and economic growth.

In essence, the Pinglu Canal is not merely a new route on a map. It is a strategic instrument that converts geographic proximity into economic gravity, promising to accelerate China's "dual circulation" development pattern while forging a more integrated, prosperous and interconnected future for Southeast Asia.

The scale of the project is extraordinary. An engineering feat that showcases China's capabilities in large-scale infrastructure development, Pinglu is the highest-grade navigable canal in China and one of the largest earth and rockwork projects of its kind in the country in recent years. It required the excavation of approximately 315 million cubic meters of material. When fully operational, the canal has the potential to shape a more connected and prosperous future for the region.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Luo Jie



Opinion Line

Tokyo's possible fighter jet funds offer revealing of ulterior motive

Japan, the United Kingdom and Italy joining forces to build a sixth-generation fighter jet by 2035 was supposed to be a "win-win partnership" for the three. Yet the UK's reported funding troubles have exposed an inconvenient truth. The so-called Global Combat Air Program increasingly looks less like an equal "partnership" and more like a vehicle for Japan's military ambitions.

Tokyo has generally kept a low profile about the deeper implications of the GCAP. Officially, the program is presented as a response to a "deteriorating security environment" and what Tokyo calls "the need to deter China". Yet as the UK struggles with budget constraints and Italy weighs its role, Japan appears prepared to shoulder a larger share of the burden, particularly during the critical early development phase, as some Japanese officials implied in recent interviews, showing Tokyo's anxiety about the "premature death" of the program.

That raises an obvious question: What exactly is Japan buying? The answer may not simply be an aircraft.

The GCAP offers Japan something it has sought for decades: advanced European aerospace know-how, experience in cutting-edge fighter development and the industrial foundation necessary for long-term self-reliance in military aviation. For a country seeking to emerge from postwar constraints, the attraction is obvious.

Japanese officials increasingly talk of expanding weapons exports. Restrictions that once limited overseas arms sales have been steadily loosened. The fighter program is therefore not merely about replacing aging F-2 aircraft. It is about creating the technological and industrial infrastructure necessary for Japan to become a major exporter of more advanced weapons in the future. With its strengths in shipbuilding and advanced manufacturing, the country is already exporting warships.

But history suggests that the world must be cautious whenever Japan markets its military expansion as a purely "defensive" exercise.

Invoking "external threats" to justify military buildup has long been a recurring tactic of Japanese militarism. Japan's military budget has reached record levels. Missile deployments are expanding, export restrictions on lethal weapons are being relaxed and constitutional revisions remain a persistent objective among Japanese right-wing politicians.

What makes the GCAP particularly significant is its expanding international scope. Canada, Australia, Germany, Sweden, Saudi Arabia and others have all been mentioned as potential participants or customers. If the UK's financial difficulties create a vacuum, Japan might seek additional partners to sustain momentum and expand the manufacturing program into a manufacturer-consumer complex, which is essentially a sophisticated technology acquisition strategy backed by generous Japanese funding.

Given the rise of neo-militarism in Japan, foreign governments would be wise to ask hard questions about the consequences of exposing some of their most advanced military technologies to Japan. Countries joining the GCAP are not entering a politically neutral project. They are participating in a strategic endeavor that regional countries in the Asia-Pacific view through the lens of Japan's past aggression.

The GCAP is deliberately designed to be outside the US military-industrial complex despite Japan's decades-long dependence on US weapons platforms and security guarantees. For Washington, that should be a revealing signal. The fighter program is about acquiring the technological and industrial independence necessary to reduce reliance on US arms in the future. For the right-wing forces advocating the "normalization" of Japan, the ultimate objective is to restore Japan as an autonomous military power capable of acting independently of the US. Japan rarely remains content as a junior partner indefinitely.

The question facing Japan's partners is whether they fully understand the destination before helping finance the journey with their experience and technology that will actually help reboot Japan's war machine.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Quota reform will help bolster IMF's credibility

Editor's note: *The reform of international organizations, including financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, has become a major topic of multilateral discussions due to the changing global economic landscape and the growing volatility in the international order. Lin Jianhai, former secretary of the IMF, told Securities Times that it is imperative to advance the organization's quota reform. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

The international economic governance system has evolved over the past several decades, but its inherent contradictions and structural problems have not been resolved.

This is mainly reflected in the growing underrepresentation in the governance structure, increased fragmentation of multilateral mechanisms, the growing effect of geopolitical competition on global cooperation, and the higher demands imposed on the existing governance system by the rapidly developing emerging sectors.

Against such a backdrop, promoting the reform and restructuring of the global governance system, rebuilding consensus for international cooperation and enabling emerging markets and developing countries to secure a more influential voice have become central topics of international economic governance.

Various international organizations, especially financial institutions, need to accelerate the reform of their governance structures and properly adjust the voting power and representation of their members.

It is essential to establish a fairer financing mechanism geared toward sustainable development, and pay greater attention to developing countries' access to financing and the sustainability of their debt.

Efforts should focus on modernizing and aligning rules related to areas such as the digital economy, climate governance, green finance and energy transition. It's also necessary to strengthen coordination of macroeconomic policies to enhance the resilience of the global economy.

Institutions such as the IMF, World Bank and the World Trade Organization should play a core role in this process. They need to adapt to the changes occurring in the global economy, and collaborate with developing countries in global economic governance, instead of simply providing assistance to these countries.

Emerging economies, for their part, should play a more active role in governance reform and implement relevant policies more vigorously to help build a fairer and more effective governance system.

Understanding how quotas work is central to comprehending the IMF's operations. Each member state is assigned a quota upon joining the organization. This quota is denominated in special drawing rights, or SDRs, and reflects the country's position in the global economy. The quota also determines the member's contribution commitment to the IMF. By the end of 2025, the countries with the largest quotas were the United States, Japan and China.

The quota caps the amount a member can borrow from the institution, determines its voting power, and sets its share in the allocation of SDRs. The larger the quota, the greater the voting power. That explains why quota reform helps elevate the voice and representation of emerging markets and developing countries.

While intensified geoeconomic competition presents substantial challenges to the IMF's quota and governance reform in the short run, such reform is imperative. As the significance of emerging markets and developing countries in the global economy increases, the IMF should grant them matching representation and voting powers. This reform will benefit not only these economies but also bolster the IMF's legitimacy, credibility and effectiveness, thus facilitating sustained and robust growth of the global economy.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:00 PM

VIEWS

Asit K. Biswas, Cecilia Tortajada and Li Peiyue

Iran war pushing focus away from fossil fuels

The Iran war has led to many unintended consequences. The US and Israeli airstrikes have left more than three thousand Iranians dead and many more injured. In addition, the bombings have caused extensive economic damage. Lebanon has also suffered numerous casualties and substantial economic losses.

While the United States and Iran are discussing a proposed 60-day extension of an uneasy ceasefire, its failure would likely have many consequences, affecting not only the countries directly involved but also others beyond the conflict. In fact, the conflict has already contributed to one of the greatest energy disruptions in modern history.

Before the war, in late February, Brent crude oil, the global benchmark, was trading at around $70-73 per barrel. In recent days, prices have exceeded $100 per barrel. As a result, energy import bills have skyrocketed. Moreover, since many Asian countries depend heavily on oil imports passing through the Strait of Hormuz, their energy supplies have been severely disrupted.

China, because of its long-term planning, maintains substantial oil and gas reserves and has been managing import shortages relatively effectively.

However, other Asian economies are now under severe strain due to rising energy prices and major supply chain disruptions.

Consequently, they are experiencing declining foreign exchange reserves, weakening currencies, higher inflation and reduced economic activity. This has forced governments to implement energy rationing, raise retail fuel prices and seek more expensive alternative energy sources.

For example, in Bangladesh, manufacturing costs for garments have reportedly risen by around 40 percent. Liquefied natural gas prices have nearly doubled compared to prewar levels, costing the country approximately $880 million.

The longer the war continues, the greater the likely economic, social and political damage for oil-importing countries. Much of the world was already transitioning toward renewable energy for both economic and environmental reasons.

However, the energy insecurity resulting from the Iran war, especially due to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, has focused global attention on the importance of domestic control over electricity generation and reducing dependence on oil and gas imported from volatile regions through risky transportation routes.

Not surprisingly, Republic of Korea President Lee Jae-myung observed that the ROK needs to transition to renewable resources quickly. Lee stated that the future may be extremely risky, if the country relies on fossil fuel energy.

Many other countries have reached similar conclusions. Vietnam, for example, has already shelved plans for a major new liquefied natural gas terminal, while proposals for renewable energy expansion are now under consideration.

Pakistan has become a major user of rooftop solar electricity systems because electricity supplies have long been unreliable and millions of people still lack access to the national grid.

As electricity prices continue to rise because of the war, an increasing number of households are likely to adopt rooftop solar power generation.

In India, solar energy accounted for 9 percent of electricity generation in 2025, compared to only 0.5 percent a decade earlier. Considering that fuel prices in the country have increased at least three times in less than three weeks, its adoption of solar energy, electric vehicles and battery technologies is likely to accelerate further.

The Iran war has also imposed major costs on US consumers. According to The New York Times, the additional amount US citizens collectively spent on gasoline and diesel following the US and Israeli attacks on Iran reached an estimated $44.8 billion.

However, the US remains the only major country actively resisting the transition to clean energy while continuing to promote fossil fuels and coal.

In China, the government made EV research a national priority in 2001. A quarter-century later, China's long-term investments in green technology appear highly astute.

China, which now has between 60 and 85 percent of the global renewable energy equipment market, is rapidly evolving into an electrostate, while the US appears increasingly committed to remaining a petrostate.

Continuous innovation has also made EVs increasingly cost-competitive relative to conventional vehicles, after taking charging times and the distance vehicles can travel before recharging or refueling into account.

In the US, the average price of a new EV now exceeds $50,000, compared to $36,000 only a decade ago. In contrast, Chinese companies such as BYD and Geely offer some vehicles priced below $12,000. BYD, the world's largest EV manufacturer, reduced its average selling price from 143,000 yuan ($21,107) in 2021 to 119,225 yuan in 2025 because of continuous innovation, strict cost control, streamlined manufacturing and intense competition.

Interestingly, BYD's electric bus plant in California can reportedly produce buses at costs 30 percent lower than comparable US manufacturers, even though each bus contains approximately 70 percent US content by value.

In 2025, China's EV exports nearly doubled to 2.6 million units compared to the previous year. Nearly half of these vehicles were produced overseas in one of the 16 countries where Chinese companies either already operate or are planning manufacturing facilities. By 2035, these overseas plants are expected to produce 3.4 million units annually.

The International Energy Agency estimates that global EV sales surpassed 20 million units in 2025, representing nearly a sevenfold increase since 2020. Following the Iran war, global EV demand is likely to accelerate even more rapidly.

Chinese automotive companies are now actively exploring the establishment of manufacturing plants in Canada, Mexico, the European Union and several Asian, African and Latin American countries. These developments reflect a growing global perception that dependence on oil, once referred to as "black gold", has become increasingly incompatible with sustainable economic development and environmental protection.

China's long-term commitment to clean energy is now generating enormous economic returns.

China has transformed one of humanity's greatest challenges, climate change, into a major economic opportunity from which it is likely to derive significant economic and environmental benefits for decades to come.

Asit K. Biswas is director of Water Management International Pte Ltd, Singapore; Cecilia Tortajada is an honorary professor, University of Glasgow, UK, and adjunct senior fellow, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore; and Li Peiyue is professor and executive director of Department for International Affairs at Chang'an University, Xi'an, China.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

Zhao Jing

Classrooms are the original diplomacy

On May 16, I found myself at the Gies Memorial Stadium at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, watching my daughter's graduation ceremony. The commencement speaker was Sean Evans, host of *Hot Ones* and a recent addition to TIME magazine's inaugural TIME100 Creators list of the 100 most influential digital voices.

The next day, I attended a more intimate ceremony at the Krannert Center, where graduates were called by name one by one. What struck me, and every parent there, was the frequency of Chinese names being called.

Families cheered, grandparents who had crossed the Pacific lifted their phones with trembling hands, mothers wept and fathers waved orange-and-blue banners. For a few days, the cornfields of central Illinois resonated with the sound of Mandarin and the unmistakable language of pride.

Such scenes are not surprising at UIUC. With nearly 6,000 Chinese students enrolled last year, it hosts one of the largest Chinese student communities at any university in the United States. Chinese students make up roughly half of UIUC's entire international population, and about one in 10 of all students on campus.

These scenes are replicated across campuses from Boston to Los Angeles, and from New York to Chicago. They may get overlooked because tariffs and summits dominate the headlines, but they are, in their own quiet way, the most important interactions between China and the US.

For nearly 30 years, I have worked to build bridges between the two countries through students, scholars, business delegations, and people who have grown up with very different assumptions.

Throughout this time, I have seen the relationship between Beijing and Washington fluctuate between warmth, suspicion, hope, and tension. What I have learned is that policies shift with each election cycle, but the human bonds formed in classrooms and dormitories endure. They are the strongest infrastructure of peace we have.

This is why US President Donald Trump's remarks during his recent state visit to Beijing deserve more attention. In a Fox News interview broadcast from Beijing, the US president countered voices within his political base by saying, "It's a very insulting thing to tell a country we don't want your people in our schools." He noted that if Chinese students stopped coming, lower-tier US universities would be hit hardest. His proposal to admit up to 600,000 Chinese students — more than double the current enrollment — may be ambitious, but it is based on a sound principle.

The numbers tell a sobering story. According to the Institute of International Education's Open Doors report, the US hosted a record 1.18 million international students in the 2024-25 academic year, contributing nearly $55 billion to the US economy and supporting more than 355,000 jobs in the country.

But within that record total, Chinese enrollment has been declining. At its peak in 2019-20, roughly 372,000 Chinese students were studying in the US. By 2024-25, that figure had fallen to 265,919 — a decline of nearly 29 percent in five years. For the first time since 2009, India has surpassed China as the largest source of international students, with 363,019 students. New international enrollments in fall 2025 dropped 17 percent year over year.

The reasons for the decline are complex: the pandemic, visa issues, public discourse that often treats Chinese students as suspects rather than guests, the rise of excellent Chinese universities at home, and families' concerns about whether their children will be safe and welcomed.

For the US, this drop is not abstract. In Illinois alone, international students contributed $2.4 billion to the state economy in 2023-24. Their tuition dollars subsidize US classmates, they fill graduate programs in fields such as engineering, computer science and mathematics, and their research contributes to US patents and companies.

However, the deeper loss is not financial, but human. Over the decades, I have witnessed countless friendships between Chinese and US students — friendships that have outlasted graduations, weddings, career changes, and the chill of headlines. None of these relationships made the news. But all of them are the news, if we know how to read it.

In November 2023, President Xi Jinping invited 50,000 young Americans to visit China on exchange programs over five years. Thousands have already made the journey, learning the language, meeting families, and exploring places their grandparents could never have imagined visiting. This is the architecture of peace being built, one student at a time.

Education is the original form of diplomacy. It predates treaties and outlasts them. A trade agreement can be renegotiated in an afternoon; a friendship formed in a freshman dormitory can last 50 years, quietly shaping decisions in boardrooms and government offices long after the diploma is framed.

The graduation ceremonies taking place across the US this month are not just personal milestones. They are evidence of a partnership that, despite every obstacle, refuses to break. Each Chinese graduate who walks across that stage carries home a piece of the US. Each US classmate who waves goodbye carries home a piece of China. These exchanges do not eliminate disagreements between the two governments, but they form the human ballast that keeps disagreements from hardening into hostility.

President Trump was right to highlight this issue in Beijing. The challenge now, on both sides of the Pacific, is to ensure that words lead to open doors, fair visas, and the unassuming work of welcoming young people who have come a very long way to learn.

When my daughter's name was called at the Krannert Center, I thought of all the families around me. The future was sitting in those seats. We owe it to them — and to ourselves — to keep the doors open.

The author is the founder and CEO of the Global CSR Foundation.
The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.

Dan Steinbock

The inconvenient truths about the Ebola crisis

For weeks, the latest Ebola outbreak in Central Africa was seen as a regional emergency. But now there is mounting evidence that the outbreak may be broader, more fragmented and entrenched than initially believed. On Saturday, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus visited Bunia in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where the virus is spreading faster than the response.

The crisis is centered in eastern Congo, with spillovers into Uganda and rising concern across neighboring countries. Official numbers remain uncertain because surveillance systems in conflict zones are incomplete.

The outbreak circulated for weeks, perhaps longer, before it was fully recognized. By the time authorities moved aggressively, transmission chains may have spread across borders, refugee corridors and informal trade networks.

The danger does not lie primarily in the current number of cases, which is far lower than COVID-19 or the 2014-16 Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

The danger is that the present crisis is unfolding under unusually adverse conditions: war, displacement, urbanization, weak public health systems, declining international aid capacity and growing mistrust of authorities.

"Never before has an Ebola outbreak recorded so many cases so soon after its declaration," the medical charity Médecins Sans Frontières has warned.

Historically, Ebola outbreaks have remained geographically concentrated. Although the virus is highly lethal, it is relatively difficult to transmit compared with airborne respiratory diseases.

Eastern Congo is one of the most difficult environments in the world for epidemic control. Armed militias, population displacement and attacks on medical facilities undermine contact tracing and isolation efforts. Informal border crossings are extensive.

Urban growth has accelerated faster than health infrastructure. In some affected regions, public trust in government and foreign health interventions is extremely weak.

Moreover, the current outbreak involves the Bundibugyo strain of Ebola, for which no fully established licensed vaccine exists comparable to those deployed against the Zaire strain during previous outbreaks. That sharply complicates containment.

One of the least understood aspects of the present outbreak concerns contagion linkages beyond immediate epidemiology. Let's start with physical contagion networks. Eastern Africa's transport corridors increasingly connect local outbreaks to regional and global mobility systems.

Cities like Kampala, Kigali and Nairobi are no longer isolated peripheral centers. They are integrated into international aviation and trade flows linking Africa to the Gulf, Europe and Asia.

Then comes the institutional contagion effect. Fragile health systems already weakened by debt burdens, inflation and post-pandemic exhaustion are struggling to absorb another major shock, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

The psychological and economic contagion adds to the problem. Financial markets, tourism flows, commodity exports and investment patterns can react violently even to limited outbreaks if fears of wider transmission intensify. The 2014-16 Ebola crisis demonstrated how panic itself can generate severe economic damage regardless of the actual epidemiological scale.

Finally, geopolitical contagion can be devastating. In a fragmented multipolar world, global health crises increasingly intersect with strategic competition, sanctions, debt restructuring and security concerns. Epidemics no longer operate outside geopolitics; they amplify it.

One of the most consequential dimensions of the current Ebola crisis concerns the partial retreat of the US and Western international health support over recent years.

US funding cuts and shifting priorities have weakened several pillars of global epidemic preparedness, including surveillance systems, laboratory support, emergency logistics and NGO operations across vulnerable regions. The abrupt manner in which these cuts were executed compounded the negative effects.

The retreat of preventive international health capacity increases the probability of far costlier future global emergencies.

The first and most likely scenario is a severe but regionally contained epidemic. The outbreak could produce thousands or even tens of thousands of cases regionally, while devastating local economies and healthcare systems.

In this case, intensified international response efforts eventually stabilize transmission through traditional Ebola control measures: isolation, tracing, border monitoring and behavioral adaptation. For now, this is the most likely scenario.

The second scenario involves a wider multinational African epidemic. This becomes plausible if transmission becomes embedded along mobility corridors linking Congo, Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania and beyond. Refugee flows, mining routes and informal commerce networks could facilitate wider regional spread.

In this case, Ebola would remain primarily an African crisis, but one with major global economic, humanitarian and geopolitical repercussions.

The third scenario — a true global pandemic transition — remains unlikely but cannot be dismissed entirely. Sustained international spread would likely require repeated exportation into major cities combined with failures in hospital containment and perhaps viral adaptation toward easier transmission.

There is currently no evidence of such adaptation. Nevertheless, prolonged uncontrolled transmission increases evolutionary opportunities and magnifies systemic risk.

The failure to contain the Ebola crisis in its early stages suggests that the lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic have not been learned.

The present Ebola crisis has not become a global pandemic threat comparable to COVID-19, and public health officials hope it will remain regionally concentrated despite severe humanitarian consequences.

However, the world today is less institutionally cohesive, less politically cooperative and less strategically prepared for transnational crises than it was just a decade ago.

Pandemic fatigue, geopolitical rivalry and fiscal retrenchment have weakened the mechanisms needed for early containment.

Infectious disease containment operates on a simple principle: outbreaks are cheapest to stop at the periphery.

Once they reach major urban systems and international mobility corridors, costs rise exponentially. It is a rule the international community can ignore at its peril.

The author is the founder of Difference Group and has served at the India, China and America Institute (USA), Shanghai Institutes for International Studies (China) and the EU Center (Singapore).
The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:00 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

NISIT PANTHAMIT, PAISARN PANTHAMITR AND NITCHANAT PHENGPHUM

Funding the fintech future

China's digital finance is oriented toward the real economy, shedding light on that of other Global South countries



MA HUI / FOR CHINA DAILY



Nisit Panthamit



Paisarn Panthamitr



Nitchanat Phengphum

The next phase of global development will not be decided by trade corridors alone. It will be determined by how effectively financial systems integrate with technology. In this respect, China's outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) for national economic and social development sends a clear signal: finance is becoming an active engine of economic growth.

This shift matters far beyond China. For other countries across the Global South, the real question is no longer whether to adopt digital finance, but how to do so in a way that is inclusive, resilient and aligned with domestic development priorities. China's experience offers a compelling answer — not as a template to copy, but as a framework to adapt.

For decades, one of the biggest challenges for developing economies has been financial exclusion. Traditional banking systems are costly to build, slow to expand and often concentrated in urban areas. As a result, millions remain outside formal financial networks, limiting both household welfare and business growth.

China has made substantial progress in overcoming this constraint. Through mobile payments, digital platforms and data-driven credit systems, it has transformed financial access into a scalable public good. This is a transformation driven not by market forces alone, but by deliberate national strategy embedded in successive five-year plans.

The lesson for other Global South countries is straightforward but powerful: digital finance does not just complement traditional banking — it can function as a transformative force to improve the whole banking system. Thailand and Indonesia have already demonstrated this potential. Thailand's PromptPay system and Indonesia's QRIS infrastructure have significantly reduced transaction costs and expanded access to financial services. In October 2025, Thailand launched a direct cross-border QR payment service with China — a milestone linking the two countries' instant retail payment systems to foster greater integration in trade, investment and tourism. Yet deeper transformation lies ahead: integrating these systems into a broader digital financial architecture that reaches informal sectors, rural communities and small enterprises.

The global financial system is entering a period of fragmentation. Geopolitical tensions, risks of sanctions and currency volatility are reshaping how countries think about financial dependence. For many developing economies, reliance on external clearing systems, particularly those dominated by the US dollar, creates vulnerabilities that are increasingly difficult to ignore.

China's response has been proactive. By expanding cross-border renminbi settlement, advancing the digital renminbi and developing independent fintech platforms, it is building alternative channels for financial interaction. According to the People's Bank of China, as of the end of November 2025, China had recorded 3.48 billion cumulative digital renminbi transactions worth approximately $2.37 trillion — this is no longer an experiment.

For other Global South countries, the ability to diversify payment systems, settle trade in local currencies and reduce exposure to external shocks enhances both economic resilience and policy autonomy. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations' growing emphasis on local currency settlement reflects this shift. Technology is the enabler that makes it viable at scale, and Thailand and Indonesia — as two of the region's most digitally advanced economies — are well positioned to lead.

Perhaps the most important aspect of China's fintech policy is its orientation toward the real economy. Unlike models that prioritize financial liberalization or speculative innovation, China emphasizes the role of finance in supporting industrial upgrading, technological innovation and rural development.

Many developing economies have experienced the risks of premature financialization, where financial expansion outpaces productive capacity. China's approach suggests a different path: fintech is not an end in itself, but a tool to channel capital into sectors that generate long-term value.

In Thailand, this could mean leveraging digital finance to strengthen small and medium-sized enterprises, agricultural supply chains and tourism-related services, sectors that form the backbone of the economy. In Indonesia, it could involve deeper integration between fintech platforms and manufacturing or green energy initiatives. The ASEAN-China Free Trade Area Version 3.0 goes beyond tariff reduction to address digital integration, with e-payment systems taking center stage. Successful tech-finance ecosystems are not imported, but built around local economic structures.

China's role in global fintech is not confined to its domestic market. Through the Belt and Road Initiative, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and BRICS cooperation, it is actively sharing financial technology solutions with other developing economies. In May 2026, China and ASEAN launched the China-ASEAN Artificial Intelligence Industry Innovation Center, aimed at building a shared digital ecosystem with harmonized data governance and interoperability.

What distinguishes this model is its pragmatism. It is typically demand-driven, focused on implementation and less constrained by the policy conditionalities that have traditionally accompanied development assistance. In Southeast Asia, Chinese fintech firms have already contributed to improving efficiency in local financial systems. The next step is to move from bilateral projects to integrated regional ecosystems.

ASEAN is uniquely positioned to translate these ideas into reality. The region combines high digital adoption, strong trade linkages and ongoing policy coordination. Initiatives such as regional payment connectivity are already laying the groundwork for deeper financial integration.

Thailand and Indonesia stand out as key nodes in this process. Thailand's interoperable payment systems, anchored by PromptPay and its cross-border QR linkage with China, and Indonesia's rapidly expanding digital economy provide complementary strengths. Together, they illustrate how tech-finance can move from concept to implementation at a regional scale.

The opportunity now is to scale up. This means going beyond payments to include digital identity systems, cross-border credit frameworks and regulatory harmonization. The broader lesson from Southeast Asia's payment revolution is clear: Seamless small-value transactions make trade and commerce more efficient, and the region is developing an ASEAN-wide QR framework with the potential to make paying abroad as easy as paying at home.

China's financial development during the 15th Five-Year Plan period can mark a shift from financial expansion to financial transformation. Technology is no longer peripheral — it is central to how finance operates, evolves and contributes to growth.

For the whole Global South, this may represent a strategic inflection point. The tools for building inclusive and resilient financial systems are more accessible than ever. The cost of inaction, however, is rising. Countries that fail to integrate into emerging digital financial architectures risk falling further behind.

The choice is not between adopting China's model and maintaining the status quo. It is between engaging with a rapidly evolving financial paradigm and being constrained by outdated systems. Fintech is not a future possibility — it is a present reality.

In this new landscape, those who move first will shape the rules; those who hesitate will follow them.

Nisit Panthamit is the director of the Center for ASEAN Studies at Chiang Mai University, Thailand. Paisarn Panthamitr and Nitchanat Phengphum are researchers at the Center for ASEAN Studies at Chiang Mai University. The authors contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

LU JIAJUN AND WANG SHANGYU

Beyond buildings to neighborhoods

Quality homes should anchor China's property transition toward better standards, stronger renewal and more sustainable growth



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY



Lu Jiajun



Wang Shangyu

The call for "quality homes" in this year's Government Work Report represents an important policy shift. But without institutional changes, the concept risks remaining a policy slogan or, worse, being absorbed into the marketing language of high-end projects.

At present, the gap is clear: While demand has upgraded toward housing that is safe, comfortable, green and smart, the supply system remains largely anchored in the old model of scale expansion and rapid turnover, including land allocation, development incentives and financing structures. As a result, the policy emphasis on "quality" risks being diluted by mechanisms still rewarding quantity.

The first priority, therefore, is to embed quality into the rules of supply, rather than leaving it to voluntary developer behavior. Land transactions should move beyond price competition and incorporate binding quality indicators, including design standards, environmental performance and livability metrics. Planning and approval processes should shift their focus accordingly, from floor area and density to aspects such as layout efficiency, sound insulation, ventilation and age-friendly design.

More importantly, regulatory oversight should extend to the delivery stage, ensuring that quality commitments made at the planning phase are enforceable and verifiable. Without such institutionalization, the "quality homes" policy cannot form a stable expectation in the market. A useful international reference is Singapore, where sustainability and quality benchmarks are integrated into land supply and development requirements from the outset. The key lesson is not replication, but sequencing: Quality must be defined ex ante in the system, not added ex post in sales narratives.

The second priority is to avoid narrowing "quality homes" to only new, premium housing supply. Such an interpretation would significantly limit its policy relevance. In China's current stage of urbanization, the marginal improvement in living standards increasingly comes from upgrading existing neighborhoods rather than building entirely new ones. This implies a necessary shift from a "new construction-centered" approach to a "stock optimization-centered" model. Urban renewal, renovation of aging residential compounds, redevelopment of urban villages and age-friendly retrofitting should become the main carriers of "quality improvement". In this context, housing quality is inseparable from community quality. The experience of Chongqing's Taping renewal project illustrates this direction. Covering 44 residential buildings and benefiting 1,487 households, the project took some of the residents' most pressing concerns as its main targets, including undergrounding overhead utility lines, removing safety hazards and separating rainwater from sewage, while also advancing housing renovation, the construction of small public activity squares and the provision of a community canteen. This case shows how broad policy goals can be translated into concrete, resident-oriented interventions at the neighborhood level. This highlights a critical point: Quality housing is increasingly delivered through systemic neighborhood improvement, not isolated building upgrades.

The third priority is to realign financial structures with the new development logic. The traditional financing model, which is heavily reliant on presales and rapid capital turnover, was built for an era of high-speed expansion, but it is poorly suited to a system now centered on delivery assurance, long-term operation and gradual renewal. What is needed is not simply more financing, but a fundamentally different kind of financing, one that prioritizes stability over liquidity and long-term value over short-term returns. Both medium- and long-term capital should be systematically directed toward project completion, urban renewal, energy-efficiency upgrades and community infrastructure. Achieving this requires financial instruments such as infrastructure investment funds, green bonds and long-term leasing vehicles, as well as regulatory frameworks that incentivize patient capital and support longer investment horizons with more stable, predictable returns.

Recent policy signals are moving in this direction. The further use of the "white list" mechanism and guidance from the National Administration of Financial Regulation suggest an effort to improve financing support for viable projects under the new model. Meanwhile, practices in Guangzhou demonstrate a shift from "sales-driven finance" to "delivery- and renewal-oriented finance". Fifty-two approved special-loan projects for urban village redevelopment have already entered the stage of substantive construction, with total credit reaching 409.6 billion yuan ($59.3 billion). The funds have been directed toward early-stage project work, compensation and resettlement, the construction of resettlement housing and supporting infrastructure for resettlement communities. What matters here is not simply the scale of funding, but the fact that financing is being channeled toward delivery, resettlement and supporting facilities rather than short-term sales expansion. This transition is essential if quality improvement is to be sustained rather than episodic.

Ultimately, the significance of the "quality homes" policy lies in whether it can serve as a structural anchor for the real estate sector's transition and whether it can connect micro-level well-being with macro-level objectives such as urban renewal, new-type urbanization and high-quality development. This connection will not materialize automatically. It depends on whether the concept is translated into binding supply rules, a rebalanced focus on stock renewal and a compatible financial system. If these three dimensions advance together, "quality homes" can move beyond rhetoric and become the foundation of a more resilient and sustainable real estate model. Otherwise, it risks becoming just another policy phrase in a sector still searching for its next equilibrium.

Lu Jiajun is a researcher at the Academy of Financial Research at Zhejiang University and an assistant professor at Zhejiang University International Business School. Wang Shangyu is a research assistant at Zhejiang University International Business School. The authors contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:00 PM

BUSINESS

Rare disease seen as innovation frontier

Diagnosis network nationwide, policy incentives boost sector's progress

By ZHANG CHENXU
zhangchenxu@chinadaily.com.cn



Doctors provide rare disease medical consultation at a free clinic in Guiyang, Guizhou province. TAO LIANG / XINHUA

China's rare disease sector is entering a strategic window for biomedical innovation, as the country's expanding diagnosis network and relatively large unmet medical needs create new momentum for drug development, clinical translation and payment support mechanisms, a top rare disease expert said.

Zhang Shuyang, president of Peking Union Medical College Hospital (PUMCH), told China Daily that rare diseases should not be seen only as a public health and livelihood issue, but also as a promising field for biomedical innovation, with the potential to support new growth drivers in healthcare and advance the Healthy China 2030 initiative.

To seize that opportunity, China needs stronger policy incentives, more efficient clinical translation and a more sustainable payment mechanism to ensure innovative therapies can better help patients, Zhang said.

The challenge is acute. About 95 percent of rare diseases still lack effective therapies, leaving many patients with limited treatment options while pointing to a large unmet need for drug innovation, she said.

"Rare disease drug research and development is not only about addressing the needs of a small patient group. A deeper understanding of rare disease mechanisms can offer important clues for tackling major diseases, chronic conditions and aging," Zhang said.

China has built up an important foundation for innovation through its national rare disease diagnosis and treatment network. Led by PUMCH, the network now covers 419 member hospitals and extends to provincial and prefecture-level institutions, helping patients obtain clearer referral channels and more standardized services.

"We integrate resources around patients' needs so that information, experts and resources move around the patient, rather than leaving patients to run from one place to another," Zhang said.

She added that the model is replicable and could support a tiered national system, with national centers as hubs, provincial centers as nodes, and grassroots medical institutions as frontline units. Such a system would narrow regional gaps and improve early screening, diagnosis and intervention.



Zhang Shuyang

Meanwhile, artificial intelligence is adding new momentum to rare disease diagnosis, a field long challenged by the large number of disease types, complex clinical manifestations and scattered patient cases. PUMCH has launched its rare disease AI model "PUMCH-GENESIS", based on high-quality Chinese clinical data and accumulated clinical experience.

The model is designed to help doctors identify suspected rare diseases from complex symptoms and serve as a round-the-clock training tool for primary-level and early-career physicians. AI cannot replace doctors, Zhang said, but it can integrate medical knowledge, recognize complex patterns and support cross-case analysis.

In recent years, policy support has been further intensified in China for rare disease control and treatment. In 2025, the country approved 48 rare disease drugs, helping address treatment gaps for special patient groups, said the National Medical Products Administration.

Chu Lei, senior researcher at the Healthcare Executive Institute, said there is a trend of Chinese pharmaceutical companies developing and launching more rare disease medicines, covering both innovative and generic drugs.

Among the rare disease treatments approved in China last year, Chu said more than 17 were developed by Chinese enterprises.

Frost & Sullivan, a global consulting and market research firm, has forecast that China's rare disease drug market will expand from $1.3 billion in 2020 to $25.9 billion by 2030, representing a compound annual growth rate of 34.5 percent. China is expected to account for 6.8 percent of the global rare disease drug market by 2030, it said.

Yet to build a stronger innovation ecosystem, Zhang called for closer coordination among hospitals, research institutions, innovative drug companies and patient organizations.

She suggested accelerating special legislation for rare diseases, improving incentives for drug development and building national-level platforms — including a rare disease laboratory and a medical research data center — to connect basic research, clinical translation and industrial application.

Payment support is equally important, Zhang said. Since basic medical insurance focuses on essential coverage, and commercial insurance and charity support remain limited, some patients still face the dilemma of having medicines available but being unable to afford them. Such gaps also weaken expectations for companies investing in rare disease drug development.

Chu, the senior researcher, also said commercial insurance could open up a new payment channel for rare disease medicines and help support related R&D innovation.

Furthermore, Zhang suggested establishing dedicated rare disease funding, mainly supported by government fiscal input and supplemented by social fundraising. The fund could be led by the National Healthcare Security Administration, with multi-departmental coordination, and pilots could first be launched in regions with stronger diagnosis and treatment capacity.

"Accessible, affordable and sustainable — these words are our solemn commitment to every rare disease patient," Zhang said.

Zhang's remarks come after the World Health Assembly adopted a resolution in 2025 identifying rare diseases as a priority for global health equity and inclusion, with this year's discussions focused on moving from "promise to progress".

She said the global consensus offers an important reference for China and a platform for the country to share its experience in diagnosis networks, clinical research, AI applications and patient support.

Looking ahead, China can further advance diagnosis networks, legislation, scientific innovation and funding mechanisms in a coordinated way, so that efforts in rare disease control and treatment can move from local exploration to systematic breakthroughs, Zhang said, adding, "Rare disease patients should not be forgotten or left behind."

NBA's Curry, Li-Ning ink major deal

By WANG ZHUOQIONG
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese sportswear giant Li-Ning is turning to NBA superstar Stephen Curry to accelerate its global growth and strengthen its basketball and lifestyle segments. On Monday, the company announced a partnership with Curry and his Curry Brand, to develop basketball, golf and lifestyle products, and promote sports culture initiatives worldwide.

Li-Ning plans to open Curry Brand stores in both China and the United States, reflecting its ambition to expand its international footprint and elevate brand equity.

The Golden State Warriors guard called the deal "the partnership of a lifetime".

"I couldn't be more proud to build a long-term vision with Li-Ning that will fuel the Curry Brand for years to come and unlock the full potential of this company on a global scale," Curry wrote in a letter.

Curry's selection of Li-Ning over other US and international offers — despite similar or even higher financial proposals — highlights the company's growing appeal.

Curry said he was impressed while testing shoes from Li-Ning signature athletes Dwyane Wade and Warriors teammate Jimmy Butler, which influenced his decision.

Li-Ning was founded in 1990 by Chinese Olympic gold medalist Li Ning. The company has over 7,600 stores.

Adam Zhang, founder of KeySolution Sports Consulting, described the collaboration as "a breakthrough in business models for Chinese sportswear brands".

Zhang said, "Li-Ning's partnership with Stephen Curry establishes a stand-alone sub-brand, similar to Nike's Jordan brand, with its own retail channels and athlete endorsements."

The line will focus on basketball footwear, likely expanding into golf, tapping Curry's 150 million global fans and China's massive basketball audience, said Zhang.

The move positions Li-Ning to scale revenue rapidly and marks a milestone in the globalization of Chinese sportswear brands. Based on Li-Ning's previous collaborations, Curry-branded basketball shoes alone could exceed 600,000 pairs annually. At an average selling price of 1,000 yuan ($148), this translates to roughly 600 million yuan in footwear revenue.

Analysts view the partnership as a potential turning point for Li-Ning's basketball division, which experienced a lackluster performance in 2025.

Sinolink Securities cited early signs of recovery in 2026, saying the Curry partnership could drive near-term growth, improve brand perception and reduce consumer education costs in overseas markets. It may also enhance Li-Ning's ability to secure shelf space in key retail channels across Europe and North America.

Merck launches innovation center in Shenzhen

By CHEN HONG
in Shenzhen, Guangdong
chenhong@chinadaily.com.cn

Merck, a major science and technology company, started operations of a new innovation and collaboration center in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, on Monday. This center is dedicated to serving the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area by uniting efforts from government, industry and academia to foster technological breakthroughs on a global scale.

"It's not just an innovation center, it's also a collaboration center that will bring different forces together," said Rogier Janssens, president of Merck China. "The question was never why Shenzhen, but rather when. As an epicenter of science and technology, Shenzhen is perhaps the capital of the world in these fields right now."

The center, spanning a total of 2,500 square meters in Nanshan district, is a joint effort by Merck, the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and the Shenzhen municipal government.

It includes a 600-square-meter main facility and an additional 1,900-square-meter laboratory operated by CAS. The laboratory is accessible to students, faculty members and research teams within the CAS system, fostering an open innovation ecosystem.

Janssens highlighted the center's role in facilitating breakthroughs, which he described as "not a solo act". He said: "We have the government providing policy support, academia offering ideas and innovation, and Merck bringing scale and speed to development.

"This cocktail of collaboration is what will drive new innovations forward."

The center is strategically positioned to capitalize on the GBA's burgeoning role as a gateway to global markets.

"Lots of Chinese startups and academic projects are originating right here, and the GBA offers opportunities to go global from this part of the world into any other one, especially given the financial markets so close by in Hong Kong," said Janssens.

However, he emphasized that the primary goal is to drive innovation through collaboration, with global expansion as a potential benefit.

Noting that Merck has witnessed China's evolution over its 93-year presence in the country, Janssens said China's opening-up is transitioning from phase 1.0, characterized by a surge in manufacturing and production, to the current 2.0.

This new phase emphasizes innovation and talent development, enhancing the entire ecosystem and fostering collaboration between government, industry and academia.

With the new center, Merck could better serve the development of the GBA with efforts including introducing global technological resources, high-end equipment and laboratory consumables, alongside supporting local enterprises to enhance their research and development capabilities and align with international standards, said Janssens.

Nation eyes mega-infrastructure investment push

BEIJING — China is mulling multi-trillion-yuan investment through a "Six Networks" initiative, as the country works to expand domestic demand and stabilize economic growth amid external uncertainties and lingering domestic supply-demand imbalances.

The "Six Networks" include water networks, new-type power grids, computing power networks, next-generation communication networks, urban underground pipeline networks and logistics networks.

Bolstering the country's strategic economic positioning, the initiative has been given prominent attention by both the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council Executive Meeting in recent sessions.

China is now moving quickly to implement the investment plans. Li Chao, spokesperson with the National Development and Reform Commission, said at a recent news conference that the commission would promptly issue relevant plans and implementation schemes, further coordinate the construction aspects of the "Six Networks," clarify investment priorities in each area, break down targets into annual tasks and set clear timelines and progress schedules.

Investment in the "Six Networks" and related key areas is provisionally estimated to exceed 7 trillion yuan ($1 trillion) this year alone, said NDRC head Zheng Shanjie.

China expects to invest more than 5 trillion yuan during the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30) on the upgraded power grid alone, which will involve the building of power transmission corridors and inter-provincial electricity mutual-aid projects, and the upgrading of urban power distribution networks and the strengthening of weak county-level and rural power grids.

While the country has already built a massive, safe and technologically advanced national power grid, surging new energy connection demand, growing regional power supply-demand imbalances, and the increasing complexity of safe grid operations have prompted action towards building a more secure, reliable and environmentally friendly power grid system.

Underground pipelines represent another massive investment front. China had built nearly 3.9 million kilometers of pipelines by the end of 2025, the world's largest such network.

Yet gaps remain, as aging pipelines urgently need replacement, and problems such as insufficient urban drainage capacity and water supply leakage still remain.

During the 15th Five-Year Plan period, China expects to invest approximately 5 trillion yuan to build and renovate about 770,000 km of gas, water supply, drainage and heating pipelines, enhancing urban infrastructure safety and resilience.

The investment wave will ripple across a wide range of sectors, said Zhou Wei, managing director of China Investment Consulting Co Ltd, citing demand for steel, pipes and construction machinery from traditional infrastructure upgrades.

The "Six Networks" should not only serve as an independent network separately, but also can play a part in multi-network collaboration, to promote the optimization and integration of modern infrastructure systems and achieve larger efficiency, the NDRC said.

"In the short term, hardware and some software investments related to the 'Six Networks' construction carry the certainty of incremental investment," said Wang Xiaojie, chief domestic policy analyst at Western Securities' research center.



An image captures the construction of a box girder for the Jiaozuo-Luoyang-Pingdingshan High-speed Railway, a project partially undertaken by China Railway Construction Corp's 24th bureau, in Jiaozuo, Henan province, on May 25. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

In the long term, the new infrastructure is expected to boost the improvement of the industrial ecosystem, leading to a virtuous cycle of investment and consumption, further amplifying domestic demand.

XINHUA — CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:00 PM

BUSINESS

Foreign luxury firms see China sales surge

Tapestry, Ralph Lauren, Canada Goose have strong quarters driven by Gen Z shoppers

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn





Above: People check out Coach handbags during the eighth China International Import Expo in Shanghai on Nov 6. Coach is a brand owned by US-based luxury company Tapestry.
GAO YANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Right: Customers shop at a Polo Ralph Lauren store in Shanghai on May 2.
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

A string of upbeat earnings reports from global luxury and lifestyle apparel companies show that Chinese shoppers are returning to premium spending, boosted by localized and culturally relevant products for the Chinese market from these brands.

From accessible luxury handbags to high-end outerwear and classic US fashion, brands including Tapestry Inc, Ralph Lauren and Canada Goose Holdings all reported recent quarterly sales surges in China, driven by Generation Z shoppers — those born roughly between 1997 and 2012 — localized marketing campaigns and strong Chinese New Year demand.

For foreign apparel companies, China is once again becoming a critical growth engine.

Tapestry, parent company of Coach and Kate Spade New York, delivered some of the strongest signs of momentum. The company said China sales jumped 55 percent in the fiscal third quarter ended March 28, helping drive a 30 percent increase across the Asia-Pacific on a constant-currency basis.

The surging business resulted from a strategy of focusing on young consumers. The company added more than 2.4 million new customers globally during the quarter, with Gen Z consumers accounting for more than 35 percent of those acquisitions. Coach handbags proved especially popular, with unit sales rising more than 20 percent alongside low double-digit increases in average selling prices. The brand has established a presence in over 90 cities nationwide, with more than 350 stores spanning tier-one to tier-four markets. It will soon roll out targeted plans for nearly 200 additional cities this year.

The performance shows strong evidence that Chinese consumers remain willing to spend on brands that combine craftsmanship, accessibility and cultural relevance.

CEO Joanne Crevoiserat said Tapestry's focus on younger shoppers and localized engagement was helping fuel growth in China.

To coincide with Chinese New Year celebrations, Coach partnered with Chinese streetwear label Clot on an immersive campaign that blended gaming, cafes, exclusive merchandise and community events. The initiative was designed to deepen connections with younger consumers while reinforcing the brand's local relevance.

Crevoiserat said during the company's earnings call, "Our strategies of getting behind a real focus on Gen Z consumers is driving our business with new customer acquisition."

During her recent visit to China, Crevoiserat said the group has stayed closely attuned to Chinese consumers, with a particular focus on the lifestyles, values and consumption preferences of younger generations.

As Chinese consumers increasingly prioritize quality, emotional connections and self-expression, the company is forging lasting and profound emotional bonds with them through localized product development, omnichannel engagement and deeper cultural resonance, she said.

For example, initiatives such as the "China Cool" project support the growth of young Chinese design talent, infusing the brand with local inspiration and innovative vitality.

The company continues to optimize touchpoints across offline retail, digital platforms and content ecosystems to deliver brand experiences aligned with local preferences and younger consumers.

She said that over the next decade, about 5 million Chinese consumers will come of age each year. The company's brands aspire to be the choice for "the first handbag" in these young consumers' lives.

Ralph Lauren Corp has also benefited from the rebound in Chinese demand.

The company on May 21 reported fourth-quarter revenue growth of 17 percent on a reported basis, while Asia sales climbed 31 percent. China was the standout market, with sales surging more than 50 percent during the quarter.

Executives attributed the growth to strong Chinese New Year spending, expansion across key Chinese cities and a broad push into localized digital marketing.

President and CEO Patrice Louvet pointed to a range of China-focused initiatives during the earnings call, including digital red-envelope campaigns on WeChat and a large drone show in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, tied to Chinese New Year festivities.

"China performance was supported by an exceptionally strong Chinese New Year, along with further expansion across our top six city clusters and on Douyin," Louvet said.

Chief Financial Officer Justin Picicci said the company was also scaling its digital ecosystem across China while increasing engagement on local social-media platforms.

Meanwhile, Canada Goose Holdings Inc's fourth-quarter revenue rose 18 percent, while China sales increased more than 24.2 percent to 172.2 million Canadian dollars ($124.7 million).

The Canadian outerwear maker said results were supported by expanded product offerings and the launch of its first Chinese New Year capsule collection, part of a broader strategy to increase product newness and deepen engagement with Chinese shoppers.

The company also introduced its largest spring collection to date as it seeks to broaden appeal beyond winter apparel and establish itself as a year-round luxury lifestyle brand.

Taken together, the earnings reports suggest premium international brands are succeeding in China by leaning heavily into localized storytelling, digital ecosystems and culturally tailored experiences rather than relying solely on traditional luxury positioning.

The strategy appears especially effective with younger consumers. Gen Z and millennial shoppers in China are increasingly driving growth in fashion and lifestyle categories, industry analysts said, particularly for brands that can combine global prestige with local cultural fluency.

Cheng Weixiong, a fashion analyst and founder of Shanghai Liangqi Brand Management, said the country's multitiered consumer market continues to offer significant growth opportunities for international top designer and apparel brands.

"This resurgence is underpinned by deep-seated consumer trust in these brands' lifestyle positioning and product quality. Sustained, high-frequency content marketing has been instrumental in driving the brands' operational turnaround," Cheng said.

The resilience in apparel and luxury spending may also reflect a broader shift in Chinese consumption patterns. Consumers are becoming more selective, prioritizing experiences, emotional value and identity-driven purchases over purely functional spending, he added.

Online
Unlock China's Treasures: Shop, Explore, Enjoy.

Solid foundation helps nation's cosmetics industry bloom

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**

The country's beauty market is witnessing an increase of domestic brands that are consolidating their positions and driving sector growth, according to industry reports.

Data from the China Association of Fragrance Flavour and Cosmetic Industries show that among the top 500 brands by transaction value in 2025, the number of brands exceeding 100 million yuan ($14.74 million) in scale rose from 746 in 2023 to 839 in 2025. At the same time, the market share of domestic brands climbed to 57.37 percent, marking five consecutive years of growth and signaling a fundamental shift in market power.

Leading listed and pre-listing companies in China's first-tier beauty market are performing strongly. Data from FBeauty show that the top 10 domestic beauty enterprises generated total revenue exceeding 60 billion yuan, with 3 billion yuan now serving as the new threshold for inclusion in the top 10.

These enterprises are evolving strategically: moving from reliance on single brands to multi-brand portfolios; from traffic-driven to research and development-driven models; and from a domestic focus to global expansion. Each shift reflects the broader trajectory of the country's beauty industry.

In 2025, the top 10 domestic beauty listed and pre-listing companies posted combined revenue of 60.072 billion yuan and net profit attributable to shareholders of 7.16 billion yuan. This represents a significant leap from 2024, when total revenue stood at 54.37 billion yuan and net profit at 4.883 billion yuan.

The market's upper echelon remained largely stable. Proya retained its leading position with 10.59 billion yuan in revenue, marking its third consecutive year as the top domestic beauty company and the only enterprise to surpass the 10-billion-yuan milestone. Chicmax Group achieved a 35.12 percent year-on-year growth rate, closing in on the 10-billion-yuan threshold. Shanghai Jahwa United returned to growth, ranking third with 6.31 billion yuan in revenue.



Visitors get to know products from Proya at its exhibition stand during the China Beauty Expo in Shanghai on May 14, 2025.
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The mid-tier segment proved highly competitive, with the companies ranked fourth to seventh all reporting revenue around the 5-billion-yuan mark. Botanee Group and Chando were separated by just 41 million yuan, highlighting the potential for rapid ranking changes. Mao Geping Cosmetics officially joined the "5-Billion Club" with 30.01 percent growth. Although Giant Biogene saw a slight revenue decline, it maintained fourth place at 5.52 billion yuan.

Marubi Biotechnology acted as the "gatekeeper" of the top 10 with 3.46 billion yuan in revenue. Meanwhile, S'young Group and Yatsen Holding — which underwent adjustments last year — returned to growth, both achieving double-digit increases.

For example, according to Yatsen Holding Ltd's 2025 annual financial results, the company achieved full-year revenue of 4.3 billion yuan, representing a year-on-year increase of 26.7 percent. Gross margin improved to 78.2 percent, up 1.1 percentage points year-on-year. Notably, non-GAAP net profit reached 8.4 million yuan, marking a historic breakthrough as the company recorded its first-ever annual non-GAAP profit since going public.

The skincare business demonstrated robust growth momentum, with net revenue surging 63.5 percent year-on-year to 2.28 billion yuan, accounting for 53 percent of total annual net revenue. The company has established a high-quality dual-engine growth pattern driven by both skincare and color cosmetics, providing more resilient support for future business expansion, said the company.

The company continues to adhere to an R&D-driven strategy, maintaining consistent investment in scientific research. In 2025, R&D expenditure reached 140 million yuan, a year-on-year increase of 25.6 percent, with the R&D expense ratio remaining above 3 percent for the fourth consecutive year. The company's cumulative R&D investment has approached 700 million yuan.

Industry data support the rise of beauty and cosmetic products. In terms of cosmetics, retail sales reached 32.6 billion yuan in April, representing a year-on-year increase of 4.7 percent, said the National Bureau of Statistics.

In the first four months, retail sales of cosmetics in China reached 154.2 billion yuan, a year-on-year increase of 5.6 percent. This growth rate significantly outpaces the 4 percent recorded during the same period last year and far exceeds the 1.9 percent increase in the total retail sales of consumer goods.

Cosmetics accounted for about 0.93 percent of total consumer retail sales during this period, marking a further increase compared to the previous year. The industry's sustained recovery trend has injected strong confidence into the market for the first half, said Cosmetic Newspaper.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:00 PM

CHINA

Bloom boom



Visitors take photos amidst a sea of blooming hydrangeas at a park in Kunming, Yunnan province, on Tuesday. This year, the park has revamped its planting layout to feature a variety of flowers. These hydrangeas, ranging in color from pale green to deep violet-blue, will bloom through August.

WANG YUHENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

DPP's bid to smear mainland social media apps denounced

Actions reflect 'insecurity and fear' and are doomed to fail, spokeswoman says

By LI SHANGYI
lishangyi@chinadaily.com.cn

A Chinese mainland spokeswoman said on Wednesday that the Lai Ching-te administration's attempts to undermine cross-Strait exchanges and integration by discrediting mainland-based social media platforms are doomed to fail.

During a regular news conference, Zhu Fenglian, a spokeswoman for the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, criticized the Democratic Progressive Party authorities, under Lai's leadership, for continuing to smear mainland-based social media platforms and intimidating Taiwan's youth, despite the role the platforms have played in helping young people on the island access opportunities and pursue their aspirations.

Zhu said the actions reflected the DPP authorities' "insecurity and fear", adding that any attempt to undermine cross-Strait exchanges and integration is doomed to fail.

She made the remarks in response to a recent dialogue between Lai and high school students in Taiwan, during which Lai claimed that the influence of TikTok and RedNote, also known as Xiaohongshu, on the island's younger generation had become a "security crisis".

Lai said such influence could erode Taiwan's "will to safeguard democracy" and lead people to view the mainland as "benign". He called on the island's education and cultural authorities to address the issue.

"Mainland compatriots are not only good people to Taiwan compatriots, but also their relatives and family members," Zhu said.

She noted that the growing popularity of mainland social media apps among Taiwan residents, especially the younger generation, reflects how the platforms have enabled richer life experiences and greater opportunities for self-expression.

According to statistics, there are about 3 million RedNote users in Taiwan, with around 30 percent of high school students using the app. Users commonly turn to the platform for recommendations on travel, fashion and dining experiences.

In December, the DPP authorities in Taiwan announced a one-year ban on RedNote, citing fraud cases associated with the platform. However, users in Taiwan with local IP addresses reportedly remain active on the platform despite the ban.

In addition to RedNote, the DPP authorities have recently identified four other mainland-developed apps as potential risks related to real-time behavioral monitoring, system information collection, and data transmission and sharing.

The apps include Amap, a navigation service; Bilibili, a video-sharing platform; iQIYI, a streaming platform; and BIMOBIMO, an artificial intelligence-powered chatbot application. The DPP authorities have urged the public to remain vigilant in safeguarding their digital security.

Zhu criticized the DPP authorities for discrediting mainland technology products and discouraging Taiwan residents from using related applications. She said the move was driven by the agenda of "opposing and resisting the mainland".

"Such actions are anti-technology and contrary to the trend of the times, and will only lead to growing public discontent in Taiwan," Zhu said.

During the news conference, the spokeswoman also reiterated that peaceful reunification and "one country, two systems" are the basic policy framework for resolving the Taiwan question and the preferred approach to achieving national reunification. She was responding to a recent report by the Lowy Institute, an Australian think tank, on the mainland's approach to Taiwan.

She said the specific form of implementing "one country, two systems" in Taiwan would fully take into account the island's realities, draw extensively on the views and suggestions of people from all sectors on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, and give full consideration to the interests and sentiments of Taiwan compatriots.

Zhu added that, provided national sovereignty, security and development interests are safeguarded, Taiwan's social system and way of life would be fully respected after peaceful reunification, and the aspiration of Taiwan compatriots to be masters of their own affairs would be fully protected in accordance with the law.

City-level cooperation key to Sino-African friendship

By YANG RAN and **LIU JIANQIAO**

As the China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges unfolds, city leaders from across Africa have underscored the critical role of city-level cooperation in deepening China-Africa relations, emphasizing that people-to-people exchanges, particularly among young people, are vital to the long-term development of China-Africa friendship.

The remarks were made at the 2026 Global Mayors Dialogue in Beijing on Wednesday. The event, themed "Enhance Cultural Exchange and Mutual Learning; Inherit the Time-Honored Friendship Between China and Africa", brought together city leaders from African nations to discuss ways to expand practical cooperation and jointly advance modernization.

El Hadji Saer Faye, deputy mayor of Ziguinchor, Senegal, highlighted the crucial role of local governments in implementing China-Africa cooperation. He said local governments should serve as ambassadors of China-Africa friendship because it is in cities where people experience the tangible benefits of such cooperation in their daily lives.

Faye said African cities could learn from China's expertise in urban planning, transportation, industrial development and poverty alleviation efforts. Chinese cities, meanwhile, could draw inspiration from Africa's experiences in community resilience, social cohesion and local innovation.

According to the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, 187 sister-city relationships were established between China and African nations as of April.

Josy Michaud-Payet, mayor of Victoria, Seychelles, said her city has established sister-city ties with many Chinese cities and stands as "living proof" of the benefits of such relationships.

City-level connections "create a vast platform for small countries like us to benefit from exchanges of all the experiences from cities around the world", she said. "We have benefited a lot from China in terms of infrastructure, culture and education."

Khalid El Fataoui, a member of the Marrakech city council and head of international cooperation, cited the two-decade friendship between Marrakech and Ningbo, Zhejiang province, as an example of how city-to-city cooperation can strengthen China-Africa ties.

He said cooperation between cities helps ensure that agreements reached at the national level are effectively implemented. City-level exchanges also facilitate mutual learning and help address practical challenges such as transportation and sustainable development.

Beyond government cooperation, El Fataoui emphasized the importance of people-to-people ties and cultural exchanges. He identified language barriers as a major obstacle to communication between Chinese and African people and called for greater efforts to promote language learning on both sides. He also urged more frequent exchanges among universities and young people.

According to the Confucius Institute website, Africa was home to 67 Confucius Institutes as of the end of 2023. Meanwhile, Chinese universities offer language programs in more than 20 native African languages.

This year has been designated as the China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges. Key priorities include strengthening mutual learning among civilizations, expanding people-to-people exchanges — especially among young people — and deepening exchanges of governance experience.

Yang Cheng contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at yangran1@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Novel gas-solid battery can also store hydrogen

By LI MENGHAN
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

A Chinese research team has developed the world's first gas-solid battery capable of storing hydrogen at normal room temperature and pressure while simultaneously discharging electricity. This breakthrough bypasses the extreme conditions required by conventional hydrogen containment methods.

The findings were published recently in the peer-reviewed scientific journal Joule.

"Compared to conventional batteries using liquid electrolytes — the chemical medium that allows electrical charge to flow — such as lithium-ion batteries, all-solid-state batteries fundamentally address the safety issue of battery flammability," said Chen Ping, corresponding author of the study and a researcher at the Dalian Institute of Chemical Physics of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

"They also offer potential advantages such as higher energy density, meaning they can store more power in a smaller size, improved cycle performance, and a wider operating temperature range, making them a key development direction for next-generation electrochemical energy storage technologies," Chen added.

However, the widely studied lithium-ion solid-state batteries still face hurdles. These include poor contact between the solid components, slow movement of electrical charges, large changes in the size of the battery electrodes during operation, and high costs. These issues hinder their efficiency and limit their transition from the laboratory to mass production.

To address these problems, Chen's team proposed a new approach in 2018. The team suggested using hydride ions — hydrogen atoms with an extra electron that carries a negative charge — as the charge carriers in all-solid-state batteries. These ions are highly reactive, store a large amount of energy, and rely on abundant natural resources. Crucially, they prevent the formation of metal dendrites, which are needle-like structures that can grow inside a battery, cause short circuits, and create safety risks.

The team also developed a novel electrolyte to keep these hydride ions moving smoothly even at low temperatures, and subsequently verified its usability in an all-solid-state hydride ion prototype battery developed in 2025.

Building on their previous progress, the team introduced hydrogen gas into the battery reaction, enabling it to operate over a wide temperature range from minus 20 C to around 90 C. The battery utilizes a heat-releasing reaction between magnesium and hydrogen, which act as the active materials for the negative and positive poles of the battery, respectively. The heat generated by this reaction is harnessed to produce electrical output. In this setup, the solid electrolyte serves as a highway for the hydride ions to travel through, while electrons flow through an external wire to power devices.

Experiments showed that the battery's initial discharge capacity — a measure of how much electrical energy can be released from the battery materials — can reach 1,526 milliamp-hours per gram. Impressively, it retained over 70 percent of its capacity after 60 charge-discharge cycles.

Moreover, when 10 small batteries were stacked together to create a larger battery pack, it generated more than 2.4 volts and successfully powered an LED bulb, demonstrating the technology's practical potential.

Notably, during discharge, hydrogen is converted into hydride ions, while the metal is oxidized to form magnesium hydride. The process reverses during charging: the magnesium hydride releases hydrogen gas and changes back into metal, allowing the hydrogen to be safely locked inside the solid metal.

"The system can function both as a battery for energy storage and as a hydrogen tank, achieving efficient hydrogen storage at ambient temperature and pressure," Chen said.

"As an energy storage device, the battery has a charge-discharge efficiency of around 56 percent, leaving significant room for improvement. However, when employed as a hydrogen storage solution, its hydrogen energy utilization efficiency can reach 93.9 percent, which is one-third higher than that of traditional thermal hydrogen storage methods," she added.

This work has opened up a new path for hydrogen storage. It completely avoids the extreme conditions required by conventional physical methods, such as compressing hydrogen gas under a crushing pressure of 700 atmospheres, or cooling it down to a frigid minus 253 C to turn it into a liquid.

Chen noted that this battery is still in the research and development stage, making its overall market cost difficult to determine. However, a preliminary assessment of material costs shows promise. Magnesium and the raw chemical blocks for the electrolyte both cost several tens of thousands of yuan per metric ton, which is relatively low compared to mainstream batteries used today.

Breathing fire



An artist performs the Sichuan Opera "fire breathing" stunt in Dongxing district of Neijiang, Sichuan province, on Wednesday. In recent years, Dongxing district has actively organized Sichuan Opera tours, enriching local residents' cultural lives.

LAN ZITAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

New gene could bolster high-protein corn cultivation

By ZHOU WENTING in Shanghai
zhouwenting@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese scientists have discovered a second major high-protein gene in corn, a breakthrough that could significantly boost the nutritional value of the crop and reduce China's heavy reliance on imported animal feed.

By combining this newly mapped gene with another discovered by the same team, researchers can increase the protein content of standard corn from 10 percent to 15 percent. For China's most widely planted commercial hybrid corn varieties, grain protein could jump from 8.5 percent to between 12 percent and 13 percent — all without reducing the overall yield.

The findings, representing 15 years of work by a collaborative team from the Center for Excellence in Molecular Plant Sciences at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Shanghai Normal University, and Sichuan Agricultural University, were published on Wednesday in the journal Nature.

The research carries massive economic implications for China's livestock industry. Protein feed is one of the most expensive and scarce ingredients in diets for pigs, poultry and cattle. Currently, China relies on foreign imports for up to 80 percent of its protein feed materials, primarily soybean meal. In 2025, the country's soybean imports exceeded 100 million metric tons.

Experts estimate that if the protein content of feed corn can be raised by 4 percentage points nationwide, it could slash soybean imports by roughly 30 million tons annually, dramatically shifting the supply-and-demand balance.

While wild ancestors of modern corn boast protein levels as high as 30 percent, those nutritional traits were inadvertently lost over centuries of farming. Because early farmers and modern breeders focused entirely on increasing crop volume and starch, the specific genes responsible for high protein were gradually lost.

In 2022, the research team isolated the first of these lost genes, named THP9-T, from wild corn. Their latest breakthrough centers on a second gene, THP3-T.

"THP3-T acts like the core engine on the nitrogen metabolism production line, encoding an enzyme responsible for efficiently synthesizing amino acids," said Wu Yongrui, a lead scientist on the study.

Wu explained that the team found unique variations in this gene that essentially act as an upgrade to the engine, giving it a stronger "throttle". This allows the corn plant to capture and use nitrogen — a foundational building block for nutrients — much more efficiently to manufacture protein.

When THP3-T works in tandem with the gene discovered in 2022, they form a powerful metabolic center. This genetic teamwork allows the corn to thrive and maintain high protein levels even in low-nitrogen soil, reducing the need for heavy chemical fertilizers.

In livestock production, this high-protein corn could replace between 50 percent to 100 percent of the soybean meal traditionally used in pig feed, and significantly reduce soybean reliance in poultry farming. For farmers and industrial producers, the scientists say the crop will lower overall feed costs, protect national food security, and boost farming incomes.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:00 PM

POLICY REVIEW

Nation's standards grow in influence

Hangzhou ISO meeting addresses need to make scenic spots, hospitality more accessible

By YANG FEIYUE
yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

China hosted its first-ever ISO tourism technical committee meeting recently, on the back of four updated national standards for the tourism sector, highlighting the nation's push to play a bigger role in the rollout of international standards.

In mid-May, the International Organization for Standardization's Technical Committee on Tourism and Related Services (ISO/TC 228) held its plenary meeting in Hangzhou in East China's Zhejiang province. It was the first time in the committee's 21-year history that the gathering had taken place in China.

The timing was no coincidence as just weeks earlier, China's State Administration for Market Regulation released four new recommended national standards covering tourist shopping venues, smart scenic area operations, senior travel services and accessible hotel services. Three of them take effect on Aug 1, while the smart tourism standard follows on Nov 1.

Together, the new standards and the Hangzhou meeting point to China playing a growing role in shaping tourism standards internationally, officials and industry experts said.

They described the four updated national standards, all recently issued under the national tourism standardization technical committee (TC210), as a major step forward.

The most notable is the accessible tourism service standard for hotels, which marks China's first national standard in this category. It aligns with the ISO international standard Accessible tourism for all — Requirements and recommendations (ISO 21902), which served as the basis for a new Chinese national standard issued just last month — modified to fit local conditions and regulatory frameworks, according to authorities.

The standard moves beyond the traditional focus on wheelchair users to cover all types of travelers with accessibility needs, including seniors, families with young children and people with temporary injuries. It sets quantitative requirements for 18 categories of facilities and outlines service protocols for six core scenarios.

In the area of tourist accommodation, the standard specifies accessible guest room configurations, including door widths and grab bar installations at precise heights. The information and communication protocols demand that all digital systems — including websites, mobile apps and self-service kiosks — comply with international accessibility standards. The training section requires ongoing staff training and the employment of personnel with specialized knowledge in areas such as sign language and Braille.

"This is a shift from 'one-time hardware installation' to 'long-term service operations'," said Liu Jianming, a senior official from the ministry's Tourism Quality Supervision and Management Office.

The smart scenic area operations standard (GB/T 30225—2026) is the first revision since its original release in 2013. It adds a new chapter on data management and breaks down the old "application service platform" into four distinct sections, consisting of smart management, smart service, smart marketing and smart experiences. The goal, according to the standard, is to make tourism operations "digital, connected and intelligent" from end to end.

Two other released standards target specific pain points. The tourist shopping venue standard requires at least 12 themed activities per year, with cultural experiences making up no less than half, and mandates 48-hour returns and a minimum 95 percent visitor satisfaction rate. The senior travel service standard, a completely new issuance, addresses China's rapidly aging population by setting rules on itinerary pacing, staff training and emergency protocols.

Vote of confidence

The domestic push reflects China's deepening commitment to tourism standardization, which has not gone unnoticed abroad.

The decision to bring the ISO/TC 228 plenary meeting to Hangzhou was made by a vote of all member states.

"We applied two years ago and won," Liu said, adding that Hangzhou's accelerated development over the past few years represents the general tourism development in China.

During the ISO/TC 228 plenary meeting, more than 60 international delegates from 33 countries and four international organizations spoke positively of tourism operations in the city.

During the weeklong meeting, they visited rural villages, a vocational college, tech companies including Ant Group, and cultural heritage sites.

Manuel Otero, the Spanish chairman of ISO/TC 228, said Hangzhou exceeded his expectations.

"I see a very modern city — something I did not expect. Everything is really, very, very well done," he said.

What impressed him greatly was a visit to the Tourism College of Zhejiang, where students in the tea culture program must earn three advanced professional certifications before graduation. During the visit, they presented a standard Song Dynasty (960-1279) tea ceremony that blended centuries-old traditions with contemporary design.

"What I saw yesterday is absolutely with the highest standards," Otero said. "The students smile. They have a good attitude. They have a good mood. We feel that they want to do it — and that is very important for professionals."

Maria Velasco Gonzalez from Spain serves on the ISO/TC 228 working group developing an international standard for smart tourist destinations.

During her visit to Hangzhou, she bought souvenirs and tried her hand at the Song Dynasty tea-whisking ceremony. She was impressed by the meticulous explanation from the instructor that helped her better understand not just the operation but the culture and history behind it.

"If I should rate from 1 to 10, you can have a 10," she said about the experience.

Growing role

China became a participating member of ISO/TC 228 in 2020. In just six years, it has taken on an increasingly prominent role by co-leading 12 international standard projects and pre-work items under discussion, four of which have already been published, according to a senior official with the department of science, technology and education at the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

During the Hangzhou meeting, Chinese delegates made progress in six international standard projects led by China, including sustainable tourism, camping tourism and smart tourism. They also made three new proposals, covering rural tourism and tourism marketing. All were preliminarily approved and will move into the next process.

"We are putting forward our successful practices through the ISO process," tourism official Liu said. "At the same time, we are also learning from other countries."

A senior official with the Standardization Administration of China noted that TC 228 has so far published 60 international standards, with 19 more in development. She cited the United Nations' tourism data showing that global international tourist arrivals reached 1.52 billion in 2025, contributing 9.8 percent to global tourism GDP.

"The vitality of standards lies in their implementation," the official said.

Liu said that the country is considering a standard for pet-friendly tourism — hotels and attractions that welcome travelers with pets.

"Many people have pets at home. Without suitable places to go, the pet owners themselves are less likely to travel. A standard would boost development of new business formats and help offer high-quality products and services," he said.

That might seem a long way from accessible ramps and smart data platforms, but it reflects the same logic that standards are tools to solve real problems, participants at the Hangzhou meeting said. As the Hangzhou meeting showed, the solutions China is developing are increasingly attracting global attention.

"They are not just visiting," Liu said of the international delegates. "They are also seriously learning from China's experience."

As tourism becomes more digital, inclusive and experience-driven, officials and experts at the Hangzhou meeting agreed that standards are increasingly shaping not only how people travel, but how destinations compete globally.

Policy Digest

Monthlong online recruitment campaign launched

China has launched a monthlong online recruitment campaign, matching job openings from internet companies with college graduates and other young people.

The event, initiated by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, runs from Monday to June 30.

Local authorities will gather job openings from major internet enterprises and host online recruitment activities. The ministry will collect and release recruitment updates and job vacancies through job.mohrss.gov.cn.

In addition, on-site job fairs will be held in regions with clusters of internet companies such as the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei area, the Yangtze River Delta, Pearl River Delta and the Chengdu-Chongqing region.

Departments push promotion of industrial culture, heritage

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, and five other departments have jointly released a notice to promote industrial culture, protect industrial heritage and develop industrial tourism.

The document outlines eight key tasks, such as conducting industrial heritage surveys, strengthening heritage protection, enriching tourism products, improving services and developing study tours.

The notice encourages the creative reuse of industrial sites, innovative industrial tourism products and immersive experiences, as well as industrial-themed study tours to integrate popular science and cultural inheritance.

Meanwhile, the notice also requires such tours to be organized with utmost attention paid to safety. It asked for separation and warning signs to be set between tourism and production areas, as well as emergency protocols and regular rescue drills.

National campaign aims to boost digital literacy, skills

China has unveiled a circular on boosting public digital literacy and skills, outlining priorities for 2026.

The document was jointly released by the Cyberspace Administration of China, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security.

It puts forward 15 key tasks in six major aspects: optimizing the digital literacy training system, expanding digital application scenarios, raising public awareness of artificial intelligence, advancing inclusive digital development, fostering a sound cyber environment and improving coordination mechanisms.

According to a nationwide survey in 2024 by the CAC, more than 60 percent of Chinese citizens possess basic or higher levels of digital literacy and skills.

New rules target regulating online content distribution

Five Chinese government bodies, including the Cyberspace Administration of China and the Ministry of Public Security, have jointly released a new regulation targeting online information distribution services.

Unveiled on Friday, the regulation will take effect on Sept 1. It defines the regulated services as a full range of operations including content planning, production, distribution, marketing, promotion and brokerage for posts on public social media accounts.

An official from the CAC said that the fast-growing sector has seen irregularities such as hype over trending topics, fabricated online personas and the spread of illegal or harmful content. Such acts have disrupted online order and violated the public's legitimate rights and interests, the official said.

The new rules aim to rectify these problems and build a solid legal shield to forestall relevant risks, the official added.

CHINA DAILY

Tourist center demonstrates metrics in practice

By YANG FEIYUE

Free shuttle buses pull up every few minutes to carry visitors up the winding road to Jingshan Mountain in Hangzhou, East China's Zhejiang province.

At the information desk of the Da Jingshan Tourist Information Center, a staff member switches effortlessly from Mandarin to English to help travelers figure out which bus to take.

The sprawling Da Jingshan center complex, nestled at the foot of a mountain, is known for its thousand-year-old tea culture. Last year, its free shuttle buses carried 2.6 million passengers up and down the mountain. This year, the numbers are already on track to surpass that.

What makes the center stand out is that it has been operating this way for years, following the international standard for tourist information services that was published in 2024. The standard sets global benchmarks for how tourist information centers should serve visitors.

"The work we had already done met the standard," said Liu Yanli, the center's deputy manager, who has worked there since 2019.

That confidence reflects a broader shift in how China engages with global tourism rules.

Natalia Ortiz de Zarate, secretary of ISO/TC 228, describes the relationship as a "win-win".

"China contributes more projects and more initiatives, and also leads some working groups," she said. "At the same time, China adopts international standards. We all win with this relationship."

The Da Jingshan center reflects how international standards are being implemented on the ground. Beyond the free shuttles and multilingual signs, the center offers a full suite of services that align with ISO standards for detailed tourist information, destination promotion, accessible facilities, and trained staff who can answer questions about everything from bus schedules to local history.

One critical change took place in 2023 when the center stopped hiring external guides for its multilingual services.

"They could translate, but they didn't have a deep understanding of Jingshan culture," Liu said.

So the center built its own team of locally trained guides, who are young professionals and know not just the words but the stories behind the local tea fields, the temples and the centuries-old traditions. The feedback from international visitors improved immediately, she added.

During her recent visit to Hangzhou, Ortiz noted that China is no longer just a follower.

"China has moved from standard taker to standard maker," she said. "This is key for the future, because you write how you want the future of tourism to be."

Ortiz pointed to China's proactive approach in identifying gaps where new standards are needed. "China is very good at identifying gaps," she said.

Leonardo Persi, a Brazilian expert in adventure tourism standards, visited the Da Jingshan center during a recent trip and came away impressed. He noticed the accessibility features — the ramps, the clear signage, the spaces designed for elderly visitors and families with young children.

"Your spaces think about all kinds of visitors," he said.

Persi was particularly impressed by the balance between global standards and local character at the destinations in Hangzhou.

"It's a good thing that a country has to apply international standards, but we cannot lose our main cultural characteristics. If we do, everyone becomes like a robot. And that is the one thing all tourists do not want," he said.

Ortiz agreed on the need for balance. "The important thing is not only producing helpful standards, but also boosting their implementation. Otherwise, we will have a book of guidelines that is useful but not used," she added.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:00 PM

LIFE

An urban narrative centered on water

Well-known as a thoroughfare, city upgrades ferry routes, improves historical sites, and clears interrupted views, giving rise to sightseeing and family travel, report **Yang Feiyue** and **Zhou Lihua** in Wuhan.

China's river city is transforming itself from a transit hub into a cultural destination through poetry, heritage and the landscapes of the Yangtze.

When the Yangtze River reaches Wuhan, Hubei province, it slows down.

For thousands of kilometers upstream, China's longest river cuts through mountains and gorges. But in Wuhan, in the flat heartland of Central China, the Yangtze broadens into a calmer expanse. Tortoise Hill and Snake Hill rise on opposite banks like half-open gates, framing a stretch of water before the river continues east toward the sea.

Mist lingers above the water in late spring. Across the river, skyscrapers emerge and disappear behind shifting veils of vapor. More than 1,200 years ago, Tang Dynasty (618-907) poet Cui Hao stood on this same stretch of riverbank and wrote the lines that would become inseparable from Wuhan's identity: "Where lies my homeland at sunset? Mist upon the river brings deep sorrow."

The poem survived. And so did the view.

Bridges now span the river, and towers rise where fishing boats once gathered. Yet Wuhan, long known as the "thoroughfare of nine provinces" because nearly every major route in Central China seemed to pass through it, is undergoing a quieter transformation.

For generations, travelers once made transient calls here on their way to somewhere else. Now the city wants them to stay.

Standing at Hanyangmen Wharf in Wuchang district, ferry guide Fan Yunlong points toward the muddy-green waters where the Yangtze and Hanjiang rivers meet.

"That protruding area over there is Nan'an Mouth. That's where the two rivers merge," he says.

Fan grew up along the riverbanks. He speaks about currents and ferry crossings the way other people talk about family history.

"When I was a kid, we didn't have smartphones. No weather forecast either. Every morning, I'd just look at the bridges. Whichever ones I could see clearly were where the weather was good. That's where I'd go to find my schoolmates," he recalls with a laugh.

He gestures toward the water. The bridges arc across the water like a procession. The stately double-deck Wuhan Yangtze River Bridge, gray and unyielding, has been carrying trains and cars since 1957. Farther south, the orange cables of Yingwuzhou Yangtze River Bridge catch the afternoon light like harp strings. Beyond it, the golden towers of the Yangsigang Yangtze River Bridge rise against the hazy sky.

As he speaks, a white ferry slowly approaches through the fog, its hull carrying the words *Jianghan Lansheng*, roughly translated as "River Confluence Panorama".

Upgraded in early 2026, the themed ferry route links some of Wuhan's most iconic historical sites — from the famed Yellow Crane Tower on the Wuchang bank to Qingchuan Pavilion on the Hanyang shore, where a two-story Ming-Dynasty (1368-1644) structure with red walls and double-eave roofs keeps watch over the water.

The route doesn't just cross the river, but also connects sightseeing with history and quietly reshapes how visitors experience the city.

The concept has proved popular. During the Spring Festival holiday in February, daily passenger numbers on the route exceeded 4,700 — nearly five times higher than the previous year.

The figure indicates roughly 15-20 full sailings in a single day, near the maximum operational capacity, according to the ferry operator.

For Fan, the attraction lies mostly in the river itself.

The Yangtze appears yellow-brown, carrying heavy sediment from western China. The Hanjiang River, narrower and calmer, looks greener. During flood season, the two currents flow side by side before fully blending together. "Like a cocktail," Fan says with a grin.

Written in poetry

For centuries, Wuhan's identity has been inseparable from water.

The city sits at the intersection of the Yangtze and Hanjiang rivers and historically developed as three separate towns divided by waterways: Wuchang, Hankou and Hanyang. Together, they became modern Wuhan.

Here, water is geography, memory and psychology. At Yellow Crane Tower, tour guide Wu Yanan has explained this layered identity to countless visitors beneath the towering eaves for more than two years.

Originally constructed during the Three Kingdoms period (220-280), the tower began as a military watchtower. Over the centuries, however, it evolved into one of China's most celebrated literary landmarks, as generations of poets climbed its upper floors, overlooking the Yangtze.

"It has been destroyed and rebuilt many times," Wu says.

The original structure burned down repeatedly through war and fire. The current tower, completed in 1985, was reconstructed based on Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) architectural designs.

Wu has noticed a shift in visitors' interest from simply climbing its nine stories to its legacy of poetry and culture.

"When I first started, people would rush up, take a picture of the river, and rush down," she says. "Now they ask questions. They want to know about the poems, about the history of the reconstructions, about why this tower matters."

Wu has received a rising number of parents who bring their children specifically to recite poems.

The 2023 film *Chang An*, which prominently features Yellow Crane Tower, sparked a fresh wave of interest, with young visitors arriving armed with couplets memorized from the screen, she explains.

The tower has also adapted to a new generation of visitors. During major holidays, performers dressed in Tang Dynasty costumes staged interactive shows that drew large crowds.

Similar efforts to turn heritage into lived experience can be found nearby in Doujiying, a renovated historical neighborhood less than 500 meters from Yellow Crane Tower.

Doujiying's most striking feature is that the Yellow Crane Tower never disappears from view. No matter where visitors stand inside the narrow lanes, the tower rises above the gray-tiled rooftops.

The uninterrupted view is the result of a carefully planned renovation that adjusted the height of several late-20th-century buildings to preserve sightlines toward the tower.

"One building used to block the view completely," says Xia Qi, who oversees operations in the neighborhood. "So we removed an entire floor and turned it into a viewing platform."

The project reflects a broader shift in Wuhan's urban philosophy.

For decades, Chinese cities often prioritized speed, scale and vertical expansion. In parts of Wuhan today, planners are attempting the reverse: reducing height, restoring historical texture, and allowing older cultural symbols to re-emerge within the modern skyline.

Doujiying itself dates back to the Song Dynasty (960-1279). During the late Qing Dynasty, it served as a military grain distribution area, giving the neighborhood its name. In the early 20th century, some of Hubei province's earliest photography studios and pharmacies appeared here.

Now the district mixes historical preservation with contemporary tourism: poetry-themed bookstores, old-time photography museums, teahouses and immersive cultural spaces occupy restored brick buildings. During the 2026 Spring Festival holiday, nearly 670,000 visits were recorded in the area, according to Xia.

Renovating and adapting

Across the river, on Tortoise Hill, another experiment in cultural reinvention is unfolding.

Zhiyin Hall, a newly renovated performance venue overlooking the confluence of the Yangtze and Hanjiang rivers, stages an immersive dinner theater production inspired by the Three Kingdoms period, the era of warfare and political intrigue that still occupies an enormous place in the Chinese imagination.

The building itself was originally constructed in 1999 as part of a larger "Three Kingdoms City" tourism complex. "When we took over operations, we kept almost everything structurally intact," says Liu Bin, the project manager. "We just adapted the interior and added performance functions."

He describes it as "micro-renovation". The production, *A Banquet of Beauties from the Three Kingdoms*, combines historical storytelling, dance and regional cuisine. Each course corresponds to a dramatic episode involving legendary female figures from the era.

The venue accommodates around 150 people daily and frequently sells out during weekends and holidays, Liu says.

Yet the site's most popular feature may be its second-floor observation deck that offers access for free. From there, visitors can see six bridges stretching across the rivers on clear days. The Yangtze flows outward in one direction, while the Hanjiang River curves inward from another. Ferries move slowly beneath the skyline.

The view reveals Wuhan's greatest advantage: not individual landmarks, but the relationship between them. Historically, many of the city's tourism resources operated independently — Yellow Crane Tower, Qingchuan Pavilion, the Yangtze light shows, river cruises, museums and historical neighborhoods.

Now officials are attempting to weave them into a single urban narrative centered on water, history and cultural continuity.

The strategy accelerated after 2022, when the city experienced a sharp rise in domestic tourism.

"For a long time, Wuhan was mainly considered a transportation hub," says Su Xing, deputy director of the Wuhan culture and tourism bureau. That perception, he says, has changed dramatically.

Compared with five years ago, the city's visitor numbers and tourism revenue have risen by more than 50 percent. International tourism has also rebounded sharply.

During cherry blossom season this year, local authorities report that Tortoise Hill Park received 10 times its previous average daily visitor volume.

The city's tourism campaigns increasingly emphasize experiential imagery rather than traditional sightseeing alone, as evidenced by offerings such as nighttime ferry rides, riverside concerts, historical reenactments, poetry recitals and seasonal flower-viewing.

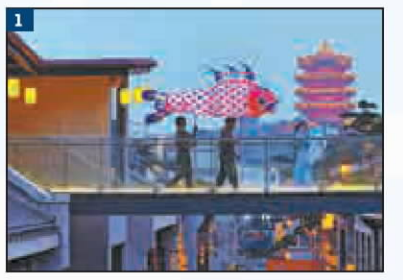
Fan Yunlong has a simple way of explaining Wuhan.

"Hold out your right hand," he says. "The thumb is the Hanjiang River. The four fingers are the Yangtze. Between them is the city."

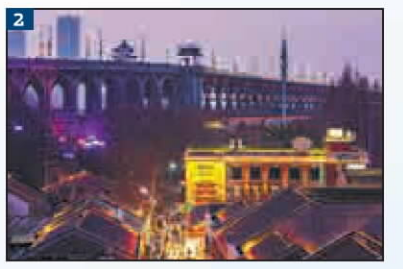
For centuries, Wuhan's rivers made it one of China's great crossroads — a place people moved through on their way elsewhere.

Now the city is trying to turn those same waterways into reasons to stay.

Contact the writers at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn



1



2

Lights trace the city block and a bridge across the Yangtze, altogether composing a scene worth framing in Wuhan, Hubei province.



3

A ferry service crossing the Yangtze River is the heart of the Wuhan experience among travelers.



4

On the Hanyang shore, Qingchuan Pavilion keeps watch over the Yangtze River. Its red walls and double-eave roofs echo Ming-era (1368-1644) elegance.



5

Overlooking the confluence of the Yangtze and Hanjiang rivers, Zhiyin Hall stages an immersive dinner theater inspired by the Three Kingdoms.

The stately double-deck Wuhan Yangtze River Bridge has been carrying trains and cars since 1957. PHOTOS COURTESY OF WUHAN MUNICIPAL BUREAU OF CULTURE AND TOURISM FOR CHINA DAILY

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

A nighttime performance unfolds along a suspended corridor in the Doujiying neighborhood, where the glowing Yellow Crane Tower becomes part of the scene.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:00 PM

LIFE





Left: Two SPARK initiatives are launched on May 19 at the Re:Think 2026 Sustainable Procurement Innovation Week in Chengdu, Sichuan province, to promote sustainable innovation projects and sustainable lifestyles. **Right:** Song Youyang (second from left), founder and CEO of PEELSPHERE, accepts the honor of her company being selected as one of the first cohort of SPARK Selected 2026. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Ideas powering a greener future

From plant-based fabrics and clean materials to community-led crafts, innovators are turning sustainable concepts into market-ready solutions, **Peng Chao** reports in Chengdu.

Apple peels, grape skins and coffee grounds are being transformed into clothing and footwear. Sugarcane and cassava are finding new life as non-toxic paint. Even everyday activities such as cycling or tapping a foot can generate electricity to power smart devices.

These were among the innovations showcased at Re:Think 2026 Sustainable Procurement Innovation Week, recently held in Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province. All are aligned with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

The nine-day event, which concluded on May 24, was hosted by the United Nations Development Programme in China, with support from the China International Center for Economic and Technical Exchanges and the Chengdu Hi-Tech Zone.

Themed "Local Ideas, Global Pathways", the event drew participants from government, business, academia, and the innovation ecosystem to help Chinese enterprises strengthen their ability to compete in higher-standard global markets and contribute to sustainable development and global climate goals.

"The Sustainable Development Goals — our shared global blueprint to safeguard people and planet by 2030 — are in serious jeopardy," said James George, UNDP Resident Representative ad interim in China, while addressing the event. "More than one-third of the SDG targets are either stalled or regressing."

Addressing these challenges requires all hands on deck, including small and medium-sized enterprises, which account for around half of global GDP, he said. Therefore, it is of vital importance to ensure that SMEs can thrive in an increasingly interconnected global economy shaped by international standards.

George noted that business competitiveness today is no longer determined solely by cost and scale. Increasingly, it depends on trust, transparency and sustainability.

"Across industries, global markets are placing greater emphasis on ESG (environmental, social, governance) performance, supply chain due diligence, and verifiable standards," he said.

"Consumers are demanding more responsible products, and international partners and investors are looking for reliability, accountability, and long-term value."

To help local innovations succeed globally, Re:Think 2026 took an important step forward this year, evolving from a platform focused primarily on dialogue into one that actively identifies, showcases, and supports concrete solutions.

A major highlight was the launch of the SPARK Selected Initiative, a mechanism designed to discover promising SDG-aligned innovations, raise the visibility for emerging brands and entrepreneurs, and connect them with partners, markets, and future opportunities, George said.

The initiative received a total of 110 applications, from which 11 were selected as its inaugural cohort and officially announced at the event. The selected projects demonstrated strong potential in areas such as supply chain transparency, sustainable value creation and cultural expression.

Among them is PEELSPHERE, a startup based in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, that transforms more than 60 types of non-food agricultural waste — including coffee grounds, fruit peels, wine lees and seaweed — into plant-based fabric.

"The coffee grounds from 18 cups of coffee can produce one square meter of fabric," said Song Youyang, founder and CEO of PEELSPHERE.

She said the fabrics are made by breaking down the effective structural units of agricultural waste to the micro-nano scale, before redesigning and reconstructing them into new materials.

The company has developed three product lines serving footwear, apparel, bags, automotive interiors, and home furnishings. Its products have entered the supply chains of global luxury groups and international automakers.







From top: James George, UNDP Resident Representative ad interim in China, delivers a speech on May 19 at the opening ceremony of the Innovation Week in Chengdu. Models showcase ethnic costumes at a sustainable lifestyle fair during the event in Chengdu Hi-Tech Zone. People shop for handy goods at a sustainable lifestyle fair.

"An increasing number of consumers care about whether the products' materials are natural, healthy and non-toxic," said Song at a panel discussion, noting that such awareness is crucial for the development of sustainable brands.

But functionality is equally important, she said: "Even if a product uses sustainable materials, it cannot be truly sustainable if it wears out after just a few uses."

Song said their products are more durable and resistant to peeling than conventional synthetic leather. Unlike genuine leather, they require little maintenance, can be machine-washed and cost roughly one-third as much.

Transparency is another key factor. "Our raw materials are fully traceable, giving us an edge over brands that merely claim to use sustainable materials but cannot verify their origins," she said.

Those advantages have helped fuel rapid growth. The company has expanded its customer base by around 60 percent this year and continues to receive repeat orders from existing clients.

An innovation project specially invited to the event was Batang Folk Arts, a regional public brand from Batang county in Sichuan's Garze Tibetan autonomous prefecture. The initiative is breathing new life into traditional handicrafts while supporting sustainable development in local communities.

The brand emerged from a traditional skills competition launched in 2023 for local herders and farmers. Categories included sewing, weaving, woodworking and painting. Participants were invited to create handcrafted works using natural materials over seven days.

"We quickly realized that these creations had genuine commercial value — people wanted to buy them on the spot," said Zhang Shufeng, founder of the brand. The competition also sparked lively discussion among locals, she noted, because these skills had been passed down from their parents.

"We saw this as an opportunity to unlock the internal drive for sustainable development within the community, rather than continuing to rely on top-down policy support," she said.

The county subsequently established the brand and a development association. Winners of the competition are paired with designers to create products that blend traditional craftsmanship with modern design. These products are sold at a government-funded exhibition hall and an official online store.

The brand now works with 209 herders and farmers from 91 villages across the county's 17 townships.

One standout artisan, Tenzin, teamed up with a graduate from the University of the Arts London to create his own line of handmade leather bags. Priced at over 1,000 yuan ($147.5) each, the bags earned him an extra income of 100,000 yuan last year.

"What we mean by 'folk art' is not merely traditional crafts, but the art of everyday life — the way local people have lived in harmony with nature for generations," said Zhang.

"We hope to leverage market forces to ensure these traditions are passed down sustainably and to help more people appreciate the wisdom behind them."

SPARK Selected is part of the broader SPARK Sustainable Collective Initiative, a platform linking innovation, sustainable lifestyles, and community participation, which also features a sustainable lifestyle fair and a night market for local residents.

Together, these activities aim to bring sustainable development out of policy discussions and into everyday urban life, while giving greater visibility to local innovations with global relevance that support the achievement of the SDGs.

Contact the writer at pengchao@chinadaily.com.cn

Young scientists turn villagers into biodiversity guardians

NANCHANG — Each spring and summer, a group of young researchers leads local volunteers on patrol along farmland and riverbanks three times a week in search of invasive snails in a renowned scenic area in Jiangxi province.

The work is muddy, repetitive and physically demanding, a far cry from the urban careers many of these researchers, most born in the 1990s and 2000s, could have pursued after earning postgraduate and doctoral degrees.

Over the past eight years, members of the Linnaeus Laboratory in Wuyuan county have devoted themselves to removing invasive species, rescuing injured wildlife and promoting environmental awareness. Their efforts have helped protect local biodiversity while inspiring greater public participation in ecological conservation through nature education.

Often dubbed "China's most beautiful village", Wuyuan is famed for its traditional Huizhou-style (Huizhou is the old name for an area including Anhui province) houses with white walls and black tiles, as well as vast fields of rapeseed flowers that attract tourists every spring.

Nestled in a quiet corner of the county seat, the Linnaeus Laboratory is an understated yet magical space. Named after Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus, it houses microscopes for curious children, petri dishes nurturing fern spores and temporary shelters for rescued wildlife.

Founded in 2018 by botanist Liu Zhilong and partners from several leading Chinese universities, the laboratory reflects a deliberate choice by a group of young scholars to build their careers in rural Jiangxi rather than in major cities.

"At first, villagers thought we were strange people doing strange things. But later, they came to understand exactly what we're trying to achieve," Liu says.

One of the team's annual challenges is combating golden apple snails, an invasive species that threatens crops and aquatic ecosystems.

Team member Zhou Xinlong, who can identify more than 6,000 plant species, teaches residents how to trap snail eggs by placing bamboo slips in shallow-water silt. "We put bamboo strips into the mud in the morning, then return later to collect the snails and remove the eggs," Zhou says.



A researcher from the Linnaeus Laboratory instructs children to remove Canada goldenrod, an invasive plant in Wuyuan, Jiangxi province, on Nov 2, 2024. XINHUA

The fieldwork can be exhausting and occasionally misunderstood.

Shen Xianhui, who holds a PhD in ecology, recalls heading out by boat at 1 am to study snail activity, only to be mistaken for a fish thief by vigilant villagers.

Later in the year, the team turns its attention to another ecological threat: Canada goldenrod, an invasive plant that spreads rapidly and crowds out native vegetation.

To encourage public participation, the researchers organize educational campaigns, sometimes delivering up to nine lectures a day. They teach residents how to identify invasive species and have launched a mini-program that allows the public to report sightings. Volunteers also take part in removal and composting activities.

"After joining the program, I realized this is not just physical work, but a valuable opportunity to help understand nature," says Jiang Li, a local resident who participated with her child.

The laboratory also serves as a hub for nature education, bringing together experts in veterinary science, plant taxonomy, animal behavior and butterfly genome evolution.

Liu says the laboratory offers free or low-cost public classes every week, including indoor lectures, outdoor field trips, and nighttime wildlife observation sessions.

"Nature education is not simply going out for spring outings. It is about helping people build an emotional bond with nature," Liu says.

Over the past eight years, the laboratory's team of more than 20 members has introduced over 55,000 youngsters to nature through programs such as the Field Natural History Expeditions, The Magic of Yeast, and Secrets of the Bacterial World.

The laboratory also operates Wuyuan's only wildlife rescue and rehabilitation center. "We are not only rescuing animals but also changing public attitude toward wildlife," Liu says.

Villagers who once killed snakes on sight or used them to make medicinal liquor are increasingly choosing to protect them instead.

"We hope to make science more accessible," says Ning Zhenzhen, a recent graduate of Nanjing Agricultural University. "Biodiversity protection is not just the responsibility of researchers and authorities. It is a duty shared by all of us."

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:00 PM

LIFE

The future of rural culture

Workshop discusses how to balance modernization with identity as villages undergo rapid change, **Yang Feiyue** reports.





At a Peking University workshop, experts examine whether rural vitalization is also about restoring how communities perceive places.

"What if the most important right in rural development is not the right to build, but the right to perceive?" The question surfaced inside a lecture hall at the university in Beijing in late May, during the workshop.

The discussion quickly moved beyond roads, investment and tourism figures toward questions of memory, belonging and cultural continuity.

That tone was carried throughout the workshop, The Village of Tomorrow: A Global South Perspective on Rural Cultural Construction, which brought together more than 30 scholars, policymakers, designers, and cultural practitioners from China and abroad. Jointly organized by the UNESCO Chair on Creativity and Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, the School of Arts at Peking University, and its Institute for Cultural Industries, the event sparked discussions ranging from heritage preservation and village mapping to cultural memory, tourism pressures and the role of local communities in shaping development.

At the opening of the workshop, Xiang Yong, dean of the Institute for Cultural Industries at Peking University and chairholder of the UNESCO Chair on Creativity and Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, described the workshop as an attempt to move "beyond geographical and cognitive boundaries", emphasizing that rural vitalization should not be treated as a localized policy issue but as a field of comparative learning across the Global South.

"What we are trying to do is distill experiences that can be shared, while opening space for equal dialogue and mutual learning," Xiang says.

He also outlined a series of ongoing initiatives under the UNESCO Chair, including creative rural residencies for young practitioners, art-led rural vitalization projects, rural cultural databases, and multilingual case archives documenting cultural practices in sustainable development. Xiang says the goal is not simply to document rural practices, but to create platforms where experiences from different regions can be exchanged on equal terms.

Over the past years, these efforts have expanded into sustained field-based training platforms, including a six-year "Creative 100" program in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area that has brought together more than 130 young designers and practitioners, as well as cross-regional craft experiments in provinces such as Guizhou, Yunnan and Sichuan, notes Chen Ping, chairholder of the UNESCO Chair on World Traditional Handicrafts: Inheritance and Innovation, and dean of the Academy of Cultural Heritage and Creativity of Jinan University.

The initiative has also generated extensive field documentation and exhibition outputs, alongside a growing publication series on traditional Chinese handicrafts.

Chen says many heritage projects are no longer focused solely on preservation. Crafts are increasingly entering schools, community workshops, tourism programs, and contemporary design collaborations.

"Culture should not remain in the past as a static legacy. It must be oriented toward the future as a shared imagination," she explains.

Chen says that the shift also changes who gets to shape cultural heritage projects.

"Cultural heritage is not only about safeguarding what exists," she says. "It is about deciding who activates it, under what systems, and for whom it is transformed."

Beyond questions of institutional activation, attention at the workshop turned to how rural space itself is measured, interpreted, and ultimately made visible in policy and planning systems.

"In rural development today, we rely heavily on indicators," says Wang Sha, deputy director of the Research Institute of Better China Initiative at the China Academy of Art. "Road construction, tourism numbers, investment data, infrastructure completion — these are important, but they are not enough."

During fieldwork, Wang says she has visited villages where new guesthouses, paved roads and public squares had transformed the landscape, yet longtime residents still felt disconnected from the places they once knew.

In some villages, old gathering spaces disappeared beneath standardized landscaping. In others, farming rhythms gradually gave way to tourism schedules and livestream-friendly redesigns.

"What disappears is sometimes not a building, but a way of sensing place," she says.

Wang says her team has been documenting local stories, daily practices and sensory memories alongside conventional planning data.

"The question is not only who builds rural space," she says. "It is whether people still have the right to perceive it and define it from within their own experience."

Against the backdrop of mounting global challenges, participants noted that rural vitalization through culture is evolving from a localized practice into a broader intellectual and social movement.

The concern over how rural transformation is framed and standardized finds another perspective in Tran Thi Thuy, deputy director of the Institute of Chinese Studies at the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences.

Tran says Vietnam's countryside has changed rapidly in recent years through infrastructure expansion, digital technology and tourism development.

But she notes that many Vietnamese people still associate the idea of "home" with rural imagery — banyan trees, village wells and childhood memories of rice fields.

"Many people still feel that a hometown must be connected to the countryside," she says.

She cautions against reducing rural modernization to a single formula.

"Villages are not only spaces of production," Tran says. "They are also spaces of memory, kinship and belonging."

Red dots crowded the screen as Wang Fang, a professor at Peking University's College of Architecture and Landscape, projected a map tracing traditional villages across river valleys, mountain corridors and historical farming regions.

She revealed an unsettling reality at the gathering: villages are disappearing faster than many protection systems can document them.

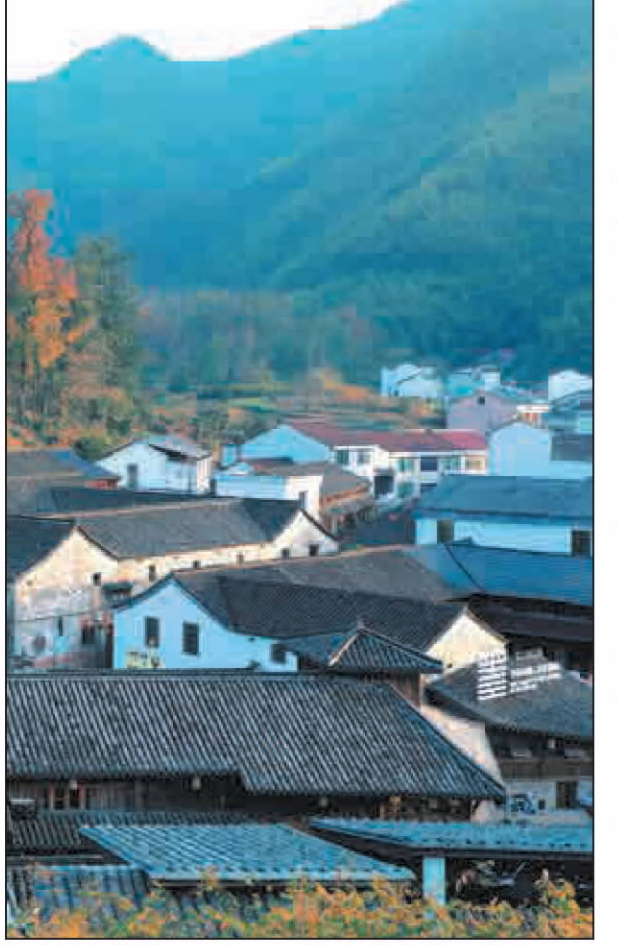
"Some villages vanish before researchers even arrive," Wang Fang says. "By the time they enter official surveys, they may already be empty or fundamentally altered."

Her team has been experimenting with data-driven monitoring systems that combine heritage records, satellite imagery, ecological data, and even ancient tree registries to identify villages that may be at risk before decline becomes irreversible. The goal, she explains, is to move beyond what she calls "rescue-style preservation", intervening only after deterioration becomes visible.

In one pilot study in Huangshan, East China's Anhui province, her team analyzed hundreds of villages simultaneously, tracing not only architectural conditions but also changes in settlement vitality, population activity and landscape continuity.

"Protection cannot remain reactive, and we need to understand change before it becomes loss," she says.

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn



Top left: A child learns pottery-making in Yaoli village, Huzhou, Zhejiang province, where traditional crafts have become part of local cultural tourism. **Top:** Visitors take in the countryside scenery from a cafe terrace in Molin village, Jinhua, Zhejiang, reflecting new lifestyle-oriented approaches to rural vitalization. **Above:** An aerial view of Molin village in Jinhua, a rural community exploring culture-led development and tourism. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

From quiet fishing post to film set and tourism hot spot

By **XING WEN**
xingwen@chinadaily.com.cn

Set-jetting is simple: watch a film, then visit its location.

Ya Lan has done it twice, traveling to the same island 11 years apart.

What she saw in between was not just an island changing, but time, tourism and cinema quietly rewriting its soul.

Back in April 2015, after watching director Han Han's 2014 debut film *The Continent* — a road movie featuring three young people growing up on Dongji Island — she learned about the filming location, which was the island itself. Known collectively as the Dongji Islands, they are the easternmost inhabited group of islands of the Chinese mainland, located in Zhejiang province, and mainly comprise four inhabited islands: Miaozihu, Qingbang, Dongfushan, and Huangxing.

Among them, Dongfushan is promoted as the place where the first ray of sunlight of the 21st century fell on the Chinese mainland.

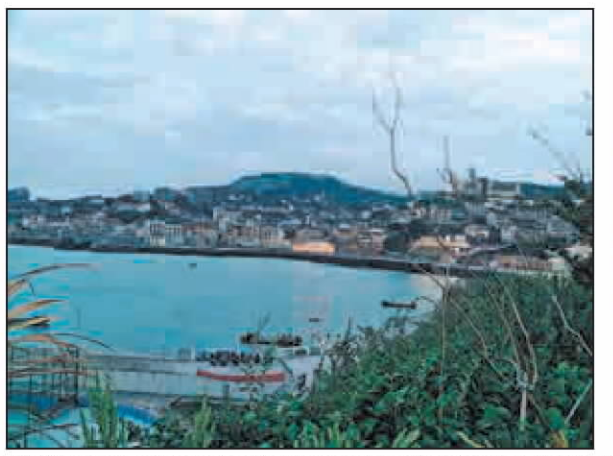
Drawn by its romantic geography, she decided to see Dongfushan for herself.

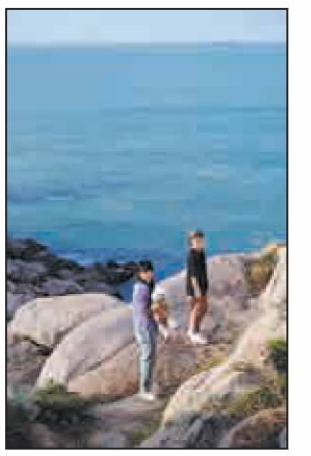
What stayed with her were the layered stone houses climbing the hillside, the four-hour hike around the isle, modest guesthouses with no Wi-Fi, frequent power outages, and a handful of restaurants.

That was it. That was Dongfushan.

But everything changed when she recently returned to the group of islands. That visit was mainly motivated by director Fang Li's acclaimed 2023 documentary, *The Sinking of the Lisbon Maru*, which recounts the story of how local islanders rescued British prisoners of war from drowning in October 1942.







From left: Residents Zhu Li (left) and Li Yuanyuan take part in a beach cleanup on Dongji Island. A view of Miaozihu, the busiest inhabited island of Dongji. Zhu and Li are permanent residents of Miaozihu and operate four shops on the island. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

This time, she set her sights on Miaozihu, the central island of the group.

"Before the boat even docked, I could see the well-renovated buildings, the colorful neon signs of restaurants and homestays," she recalls.

"It was completely different from the impression I had of this place."

Today, the islands have been transformed. A modernized power grid is in place. The passenger ferry terminal has been expanded. Seafood stalls and coffee shops line the streets. Well-paved hiking trails circle the islands.

What once existed as a remote, geographically unique place has become a tourist hot spot, welcoming around 419,000 visitors last year.

Zhong Lei, a local islander, runs one homestay on Dongfushan and another on Miaozihu.

"Few people used to come to the islands," he says, "mostly art students looking for places to sketch, or foreign tourists who wanted some peace and quiet. But over the last couple of years, it's been busy year-round. I barely have to worry about occupancy rates anymore."

Zhong used to run a business at Shenjiamen Port in Zhoushan, but when he saw his home island gaining recognition through films, he decided to return and build a career in local tourism.

"There are more and more homestays on the island now," he adds. "What we're working on is how to improve quality and stand out to visitors."

The island has also drawn many outsiders who have decided to stay.

Zhu Li is one of them. Once a high-earning sales manager at a real estate company in Zhoushan, she grew tired of working until 3 or 4 am during busy seasons and being on call at all hours. So she quit and came to Miaozihu to volunteer at a youth hostel.

"After I arrived, I thought, this place is really beautiful. The sea is truly blue. We're in Zhoushan — it's not far from here — but I had never seen blue seawater there, only yellow. I never knew there was a place this blue," she says.

During her time off, she went fishing with friends, hiked around the island, and picked up trash from the beaches.

Just one month of volunteering convinced her to stay and start a business on the island. She and her friend took over an old house and renovated it themselves by painting the walls, refinishing old tables and chairs with veneer, installing faucets, and patching the roof.

"Because supplies have to be shipped in from the mainland and getting rid of large items of trash is a hassle, we had no choice but to repurpose old things and build whatever we needed with our own hands. In the process, I felt empowered."

Today, she and her friend run four shops on the island, selling coffee, desserts, and their own branded cultural products.

"Life is busy, but fulfilling," she says. "I cherish my free lifestyle now.

"When I worked in the city, every day was the same routine. Now, even though I'm busy, I'm busy with my own things — the small tasks I actually care about.

"Back in the city, I was sensitive to every noise. But here, even with all the hustle and bustle of local island life, I sleep soundly."

Over the past decade, the island has transformed with each passing year — welcoming tourists, embracing returnees, and giving newcomers a place to start over.

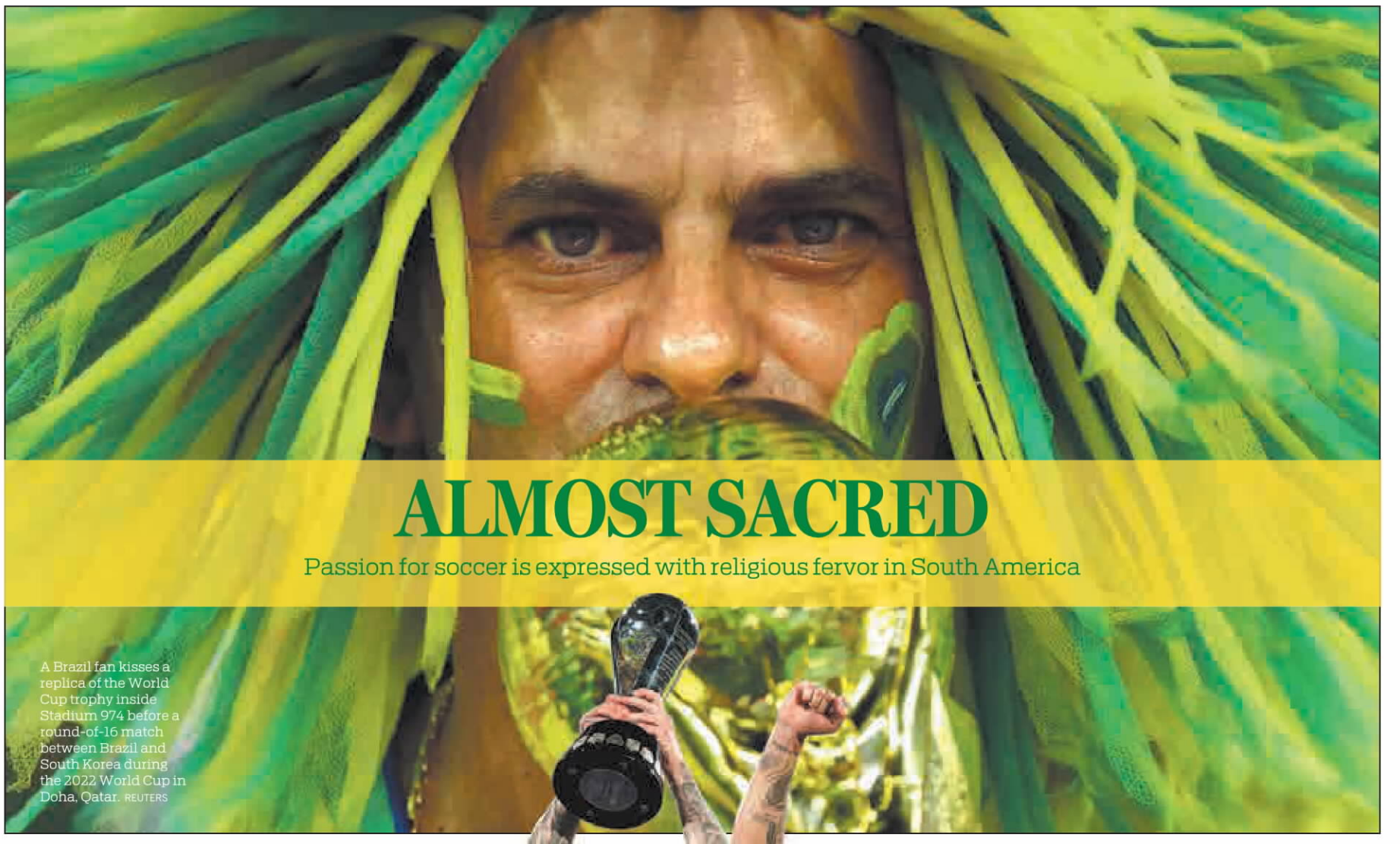
Set-jetting brought Ya Lan here. But what she witnessed, across 11 years and two trips, was an island learning to embrace change without losing itself.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:00 PM

SPORTS

SOCCER



ALMOST SACRED

Passion for soccer is expressed with religious fervor in South America

A Brazil fan kisses a replica of the World Cup trophy inside Stadium 974 before a round-of-16 match between Brazil and South Korea during the 2022 World Cup in Doha, Qatar. REUTERS

The chain that hung from Santiago Garcia's neck carried no crosses or saint medals, yet it felt sacred nonetheless.

When Garcia's grandmother fell sick years ago and he visited her in intensive care, the Argentine soccer fan took off his beloved Boca Juniors necklace and placed it around her neck.

"Boca will save you," Garcia murmured to his grandmother. "And it did. So now it's hers."

Garcia's faith in his club mirrors that of millions across Latin America as the region prepares for the 2026 World Cup. From Argentina to Mexico, devotion to the game often spills into everyday life, inspiring rituals and beliefs tied to the sport.

"There has been an emotional connection between the public and their soccer teams for a long time," said Mexican analyst Erick Fernandez. "It fosters identity and bonds that make us feel part of a sporting process that represents us."

In Argentina, the home country of Lionel Messi, sports passion is often inherited within families and loyalty to clubs strengthens over time. Pope Francis himself — born in Argentina and lifelong supporter of club San Lorenzo — said he agreed with those describing soccer as the world's most beautiful game.

Garcia's love for Boca Juniors came from his father. He said his mother used to support another team, but after the couple met, she became a Boca fan too.

"You usually support your mother's or father's club," Garcia said. "Soccer is the backbone of it all, but you develop a sense of belonging to a team and carry it with you everywhere."

He may have let go of his Boca necklace and the energy he believed it carried, but the club's imprint was already etched into his skin.

At age 17, Garcia tattooed a phrase from the club's anthem on his torso. Fourteen years later, those words remain as meaningful as they were when the ink was fresh.

"It belongs to a song that is like a chant of war for us," he said. "It's like saying: 'No matter the storm, no matter what happens, we will always be there for you.'"

The power of belonging

Pope Francis once told a crowd that soccer is a team sport whose beauty comes from its collective spirit.

Among fans, too, passion is nurtured through a sense of community. The singing of anthems, tears shed after victories or defeats, and the embrace of strangers inside a stadium are experiences that can mirror forms of collective devotion.



Cruz Azul's players celebrate with the trophy after winning the Mexican league final against Pumas in Mexico City on May 24. AP

"Each person can support a team, but the sense of togetherness that generates '*communitas*' — a word associated with religion — is only possible when people gather," said Argentine anthropologist Eloisa Martin.

Both negative and positive reactions can emerge from that sense of collective identity. A fan who feels a member of his sporting community has been attacked by a rival may react violently in ways he otherwise never would. But the same dynamic can strengthen solidarity, leading fans to help strangers because they support the same club.

"Soccer creates a community even for those who lack one," Martin said.

On a recent night, among a sea of fans heading toward Maracana stadium in Rio de Janeiro was Adilvania Santos. Dressed in the maroon and green colors of Fluminense, the 27-year-old said that supporting the club had helped her through a difficult time in her life.

"I get emotional talking about Fluminense," said Santos, who described the passion for her club as the most important aspect of her life, apart from her family. "Some people come together to go to church. For us, accompanying Fluminense is also sacred."

Santos tries to attend every game despite living nearly 100 kilometers (about 60 miles) from Rio. When she follows matches from home, she stays alone in her bedroom to avoid interruptions from family members who may not support her team.

"Soccer deeply moves Brazilians because it creates a sense of belonging, identity and hope," said Jeferson Mengali, a Catholic priest in the Braganca Paulista diocese and a lifelong fan of Corinthians. "People suffer, work hard and face difficulties, and soccer becomes a space for collective joy."

Rituals for victory

Mengali supported Corinthians as a chaplain for years. He celebrated Masses with the team and was present during training sessions and matches.

"I have always liked praying before important games," he said. "Asking more for serenity than victory."

While not all soccer fans pray, many cling to rituals they believe can influence the outcome of a game. In Argentina these practices are known as "*cabalas*". According to Martin, they became widespread during the 1990s.

Cabalas vary widely. Fans may drink from the same cup, sit in the exact same spot or wear the same underwear during every match. Others insist on watching games with certain people, while some avoid watching altogether after concluding they bring bad luck to their team.

Rituals are repeated if the team wins and abandoned if it loses. For some supporters, avoiding a match can even feel like a sacrifice made in hopes of securing victory.

At Garcia's home, his father sits in a specific chair whenever Boca is playing well. If the rival team scores, he changes seats. His mother cleans the house instead of watching the game, stopping every so often to ask about the score.

Garcia's current *cabala* includes wearing the same jersey throughout the season and carrying a small image of Diego Maradona everywhere he goes.

"After he died, he was rapidly sanctified by the people," Garcia said. "He became a figure bigger than sports."

Saints of the stadium

Argentines rarely call him Maradona. He's simply "El Diego", as one would refer to a family member or an old friend from the neighborhood.

"Maradona is the player, while 'El Diego' is the one people turn to like a family member when they need help," Martin said. "Sacredness only works when there's a community behind it."

Legends like "El Diego" or Brazil's "The King" Pele are recognized across the world. But other soccer fans in Latin America revere personal idols of their own.

In Chile, Hector Hermosilla keeps a black-and-white portrait of Colo Colo club founder David Arellano at his home.

"He founded Colo Colo in 1925 and before every match I always say goodbye to him and ask him to watch over us," Hermosilla said.

He still remembers attending his first match in 1986 and falling under the spell of the atmosphere inside the arena. From then on, he faithfully began to follow his team, traveling from Chile's far north to Puerto Montt, considered the gateway to Patagonia.

To finance his trips, he and his wife typed out the iconic anthems of Colo Colo and sold photocopies to fans, earning him the nickname "Nano Fotocopia".

"There were around 20 songs and I would make photocopies and sell them for 100 pesos," he said.

Typewriters and photocopies became obsolete over time. Hermosilla now sells necklaces, bracelets and other accessories to finance the trips he now does with his wife and teenage son.

When in Chile, Hermosilla still attends matches every Sunday and performs a ritual he has followed since the 1980s. Beneath Arellano's portrait, he asks for the club founder's blessing, packs his products for sale and heads to a roast chicken restaurant where fans gather.

"He is like our God," Hermosilla said. "He is the one who guides us."

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA







From left: A person takes a photograph of an Aerolineas Argentinas Airbus A330-200 aircraft wrapped with the No 10, in tribute to Lionel Messi, during its presentation in Buenos Aires, on May 22; Youngsters play soccer on a dirt field in the Cooperativa San Francisco neighborhood of Guayaquil, Ecuador on May 15. A view showing a part of one of the host cities for the 2026 FIFA World Cup in Monterrey, Mexico. AGENCIES

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:02 PM

Defending the UN
Foreign minister urges upholding of Charter
WORLD, PAGE 5



Rural children find voice, joy through stage
Z WEEKLY, PAGE 13



Mixed emotions
Zheng suffers French Open loss; other aces claim major victories
SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 WEDNESDAY, MAY 27, 2026



Fans who failed to secure tickets to a Mayday concert listen from outside the National Stadium in Beijing on May 18. Between April 30 and May 18, the Taiwan rock band performed 12 times at the venue, drawing music lovers from across the country. WEI XIAOHAO / CHINA DAILY

XI'S VISION | HIGH-QUALITY DEVELOPMENT

Consumers unlock new potential

Expansion of domestic demand seen as key strategy tied to nation's modernization drive

By **WANG KEJU** and **ZHOU LANXU**

As China shifts from high-speed to high-quality growth, the engines of its consumer market are evolving in tandem, with vast potential fueled by rising demand for premium goods, quality services and new consumption scenarios, economists and executives said.

The world's second-largest economy is doubling down on expanding domestic demand and further opening its vast market to the world — a move that will offer an important source of predictability and create massive opportunities for Chinese and foreign businesses alike, even as global trade remains tepid and protectionist pressures mount, they added.

In late April, a meeting of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, which was chaired by President Xi Jinping, reiterated the need to fully tap the potential of domestic demand, and called for efforts to expand the supply of quality goods and services and promote the upgrading of consumption.

Xi, who is also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, had stressed in December, in an article published in Qiushi Journal, the flagship magazine of the CPC Central Committee, that expanding domestic demand is not a stopgap effort, but a strategic measure that bears on economic stability and security.

Implementing a strategy of expanding domestic demand is necessary for maintaining the long-term, sustained and healthy development of China's economy and meeting the people's ever-growing demand for a better life, Xi added.

Zhang Yansheng, a veteran economist and expert on global economic affairs, said Xi's remarks underscored that expanding domestic demand and boosting consumption should not be viewed merely as short-term policy tools to counter cyclical pressures, but as a long-term strategy closely tied to China's modernization drive.

"A Chinese modernization with a huge population, a huge economic size and deep integration with the global economy cannot possibly be built on external demand," Zhang said. "No external market in the world can accommodate such a scale. Therefore, China's modernization must be rooted in domestic demand."

According to Zhang, expanding domestic demand and consumption requires a broader shift in policy thinking — taking the people's growing need for a better life as the fundamental starting point, while strengthening support for public services, social welfare and income growth.

That shift has been underway. Supply has been continuously improved to meet consumers' growing demand for better quality and personalized offerings, helping drive the expansion of domestic demand.

In fact, China's economic miracle did not happen by chance. It testifies to the effectiveness and adaptability of China's socialist economy under the guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Economy, according to Yang Weiyong, an associate professor at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing.

Retail sales of cultural, sports and leisure services all grew at double-digit rates in the first four months of this year, the National Bureau of Statistics said. Spending on physical goods is also shifting toward higher-quality categories, with retail sales of communication equipment up 17.7 percent year-on-year and cosmetics up 5.6 percent.

"With per capita GDP having exceeded $10,000, China is currently in a stage of rapid upgrading of the consumption structure," said Fu Linghui, spokesman and chief economist of the bureau, adding that such trends in demand will go in tandem with a broader and more diversified supply of goods and services to continue driving consumption growth.

See ***Consumption,*** *page 3*

Increase in western Pacific military activities noted

By **JIANG CHENGLONG**
jiangchenglong@chinadaily.com.cn

Apart from the United States, extra-regional countries from Europe and Oceania increased the frequency of their military activities in the western Pacific in 2025, especially in the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea, raising the risk of accidental clashes and undermining regional peace and stability, said a think tank report released on Tuesday.

According to the report, which was issued by the Beijing-based think tank South China Sea Strategic Situation Probing Initiative, countries including the United Kingdom, France, Canada and Australia have in recent years frequently sent warships and military aircraft to the region for so-called "freedom of navigation" operations, citing tensions in the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea.

In 2025, six warships from Australia, Canada, the UK and New Zealand sailed through the strait on five occasions, each accompanied by official publicity machinery, the report said.

Inside
Comment, **page 6**

The UK and Australia also carried out two so-called "freedom of navigation" operations in the Nansha Islands in the South China Sea in 2025, it said.

Hu Bo, director of the South China Sea Strategic Situation Probing Initiative, said that Australia, Canada and the UK have used the pretext of safeguarding rights of passage in international waters under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to make their military presence felt in the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea.

Among these extra-regional countries, Australia has been the "most aggressive", with its military aircraft intruding into the airspace of China's Xisha Islands in the South China Sea frequently, according to the report.

Chinese military sources said that Australian military aircraft intruded into the Xisha Islands airspace in February and October last year, and were driven away on both occasions by Chinese military aircraft.

The think tank's report said that Australia's statements at the time avoided mentioning its deliberate intrusion into China's Xisha Islands airspace and instead accused a Chinese fighter jet of conducting "unsafe" maneuvers.

In 2025, nearly 200 warships from 18 extra-regional countries sailed or operated in the region, with a total surface force presence of nearly 10,000 ship-days throughout the year, according to incomplete statistics cited in the report.

Among them, 109 warships from the US operated in the western Pacific for 9,088 ship-days. A total of 48 warships from non-US countries operated in the region for 610 ship-days, equivalent to an average presence of about two vessels on the surface per day, the report said.

Hu said the main purpose of these military activities from non-regional countries is to increase their presence in the region and strengthen relations with regional countries, while also coordinating with US military strategies and operations in the region.

He added that these non-US countries are also trying to enhance interoperability with allies and partners in East Asia and demonstrate a collective presence through their military activities, noting that their political signaling carries more weight than their actual military impact.

"Strategically, such military operations are not conducive to regional peace and stability, and tactically, they carry the risk of accidental clashes," Hu said.

"At the same time, they are also insufficient to change the regional balance of power."

INSIDE
A reset point for Europe
Global Views, page 8

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

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN

China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

Africa can learn from China's win over poverty

WORLD WATCH
By Melha Rout Biel

China and Africa have historically grappled with poverty, a major obstacle to prosperity and development. While China has made remarkable progress, lifting more than 800 million people out of poverty over the past decades, Africa is still battling severe poverty and development challenges.

This raises two key questions: How did China achieve this in a relatively short period of time? And how can African countries draw lessons from China's experiences and adapt them to their own national conditions to accelerate poverty alleviation?

Africa's population is estimated at about 1.58 billion, exceeding the populations of China and India individually and representing roughly 19 percent of the global population.

The continent's population is projected to exceed 2.5 billion by 2050. Urbanization is also growing, with at least 52 cities on the continent having more than 1 million inhabitants, according to Worldometer and 2026 demographic data.

African governments must therefore plan carefully for sustainable urban development, including adequate housing, job creation, modern healthcare systems, efficient transportation networks, reliable electricity supplies to support industrialization, quality education for all and enhanced public safety.

Despite being endowed with vast natural resources — including critical minerals, arable land and abundant water — African nations continue to grapple with poverty decades after gaining independence from colonial rule. Colonialism disrupted local economic systems, eroded social cohesion and restructured state institutions across the continent, and the lingering impacts still shape Africa's development paths to this day.

Currently, more than 460 million Africans live in extreme poverty, representing roughly one-third of the continent's population, according to data from the World Bank. Sub-Saharan Africa is home to over 67 percent of the world's extreme poor, and in several countries the poverty rate exceeds 70 percent.

By 2019, an estimated 391 million people in sub-Saharan Africa lived in extreme poverty. By 2022, that figure had risen to about 460 million, and by 2024 it reached 464 million — an increase widely attributed to economic disruptions from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine conflict and ongoing regional fragility.

Africa's relative share of global income has also declined over the past two centuries. In 1820, the average European worker earned about three times more than the average African worker. Today, the average European earns about 20 times more. While per capita GDP in Africa has gradually increased, income levels still lag significantly behind other regions.

This situation is driven by high inequality, frequent conflicts, economic vulnerability, insufficient quality of education, underdeveloped infrastructure, climate change impacts and governance challenges.

See ***Poverty,*** *page 3*





Left: A poster of the film *Dear You* is displayed during an event at Peking University on May 19. JIANG QIMING / CHINA NEWS SERVICE
Right: Rice-less cakes as shown in the movie. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

HIT MOVIE SERVES UP A TASTE OF NOSTALGIA

As *Dear You* continues to dominate the box office, the food it features is earning as much critical acclaim as the film itself

By **LI YINGXUE**
liyingxue@chinadaily.com.cn

As the film *Dear You* continues its strong Chinese box-office run, surpassing 1.1 billion yuan ($162 million) since its release on April 30, a bowl of dark pickled olive vegetable and a plate of rice-less cakes have unexpectedly moved audiences to tears.

China Vibes — FOOD —

These traditional foods from Chaoshan — a region that includes the cities of Shantou, Chaozhou and Jieyang in Guangdong province, and is known for its strong clan traditions and well-preserved folk customs — have quietly stepped into the spotlight, becoming some of the film's most emotional symbols.

Threaded through the story are decades of *qiaopi* letters — overseas Chinese correspondence that once connected families across Southeast Asia and southern China. Alongside them, the enduring flavors of Chaoshan cuisine emerge as a living archive of migration, longing and home.

From ancestral Guangdong courtyards to streets in far-flung Chinatowns, these everyday dishes have carried generations of memory and are now becoming a window for the world to rediscover Chaoshan's landscape, people and history. For many viewers, the film is not just a story of distance and return, but a shared memory.

For 56-year-old Shanghai-based chef Huang Peibin, whose hometown is Puning in Jieyang, the film feels deeply personal.

"This is a very authentic Chaoshan story," he said. "The hardships of leaving home and struggling to build a life elsewhere are very familiar to us. Hearing the dialect and seeing the old houses really touched me."

See ***Taste,*** *page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:02 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:02 PM

INDEPTH





Left: Children from the Shanghai Municipal Kindergarten interact with a robot in December. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY **Right:** Wu Rongjin, principal of Shanghai Huangpu Luwan No 1 Central Primary School, greets students as they enter the school in the morning. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

'Emotional education' to counter AI-driven job uncertainty



Cultivating 'most human' qualities best way to work with new tech, experts say

Children from Shanghai Municipal Kindergarten mail letters to express thanks to those they appreciate the most. The letters are dictated by the children and handwritten by their teachers. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By ZHOU WENTING in Shanghai
zhouwenting@chinadaily.com.cn

Four out of five parents in China with mid-to-high net worth are worried that artificial intelligence may affect their children's future job prospects, while 20 percent admit they have no idea how to prepare for the changes, a survey found.

Published by the Shanghai-based Fudan International School of Finance in April, the survey results confirm a public perception that AI is significantly reshaping the future job landscape. This has raised parents' anxiety about their children's education, and selecting the right career paths.

Despite these concerns, no one has yet clearly articulated what new skills and qualities young people will need to thrive in an AI-driven future. However, there is a growing consensus in teaching and academic circles about the value of "emotional education".

"The more pervasive machines become, the more we need to cultivate the 'most human' qualities in the young generation," said Wu Rongjin, principal of Shanghai Huangpu Luwan No 1 Central Primary School.

Education experts believe preparing young people for the future involves developing and strengthening "uniquely human" qualities that cannot be replaced by machines, and fostering lifelong learning habits and the ability to keep acquiring new skills. School education should shift from merely acquiring knowledge to developing skills that cultivate human traits like empathy, creativity, ethics and collaboration, they said.

"In the legal field, AI can read thousands of pages in seconds but doesn't understand justice; and AI in medicine can diagnose health conditions but cannot hold a patient's trembling hand," Wu explained. "The magic of human-machine collaboration lies here: Machines are responsible for efficient execution, while value judgments and the development of a humane character are beyond their reach."

In some primary schools in Shanghai's Huangpu and Jiading districts, weekly "emotional education classes" have become a compulsory part of the curriculum. The ultimate goal is to help children grow into well-rounded individuals with positive emotions, a stable mood, and "noble" character traits, that is, the ability to show concern for others.

"These qualities distinguish humans from machines, and are essential for navigating future challenges and adapting to societal changes, especially in the AI era," said Wu.

"Emotional intelligence, along with independent critical thinking, logical reasoning, and perseverance, benefits an individual's lifelong development," she said.

Shining qualities

In emotional education classes, teachers typically focus on themes, such as self-awareness, emotional management, empathy, interpersonal communication, and the value of life. The classes also help students explore ways to relieve stress and adjust their mindset.

Teachers at Shanghai Huangpu Luwan No 1 Central Primary School said that during recent classes, students were encouraged to nominate "unsung heroes" around them.

"It was an opportunity to allow children to recognize the shining qualities in ordinary individuals who might not be highly visible and not receive the most academic awards, and inspire them to see the strengths in everyone," said Bao Yinglei, a teacher at the school.

She said the school had installed cameras in the corridors to quickly identify potential problems when students gather in groups. However, these cameras have now become a window for capturing moments of warmth and concern.

"The cameras record how surrounding children react if a student falls. These acts of kindness become topics for discussion in emotional education classes," Bao said.

Zhou Shuqun, master of Hiba Academy Shanghai, a bilingual school of Wellington College Education (China), said that over the last few years the school had implemented various practices to help students develop "uniquely human qualities".

One example is emphasizing oral expression in primary school classes to cultivate a pupil's ability to listen to others with respect and improve self-expression and group collaboration. For middle school students, debating competitions help develop critical thinking and oral expression skills, she said.

When someone makes others feel comfortable in interactions, it often leads to successful collaborations and business deals, experts pointed out.

Some kindergarten teachers are also changing the way they interact with their students.

Xu Hui, a kindergarten teacher in Shanghai, said when conflicts arise among children, instead of providing a direct judgment, she and her colleagues now encourage the children to express themselves and then switch roles to describe the situation.

"This process is more beneficial as it helps the minors gradually acquire the ability to better communicate and collaborate with others," she said.

Some kindergarten teachers believe that preparing children for the future must be rooted in moral development, the basis of humanity that AI cannot replace. Core competencies in this area include empathy, kindness, collaboration, and reverence for life, they said.

"Through daily interactions with young children in an atmosphere of passing on love and care, teachers instill these virtues and qualities into the minors' hearts," said Xu.

Lin Min, deputy principal of the Shanghai Municipal Kindergarten, said the school emphasizes that teachers should respond to children in a positive and encouraging way.

Since last year, the teachers at the school have been meeting regularly to discuss real-life cases that occur daily in their classes. They discuss how they should respond to the pupils in such situations, and whether there are better ways to address and guide them.

"The way a teacher responds to a child will influence how the child responds to others in their later lives. This is a gradual accumulation process that leads to qualitative changes in their characters," said Lin.

She said despite AI's development, the teachers believe that a positive outlook and a sense of national pride and responsibility, are human qualities that AI lacks.

She cited as an example the humanoid robot half-marathon in Beijing in April, saying what touched her the most was when a robot failed to complete the race, its programmer cradled it as they left.

"Machines will accomplish many things that surpass human physical limits, but they can never win over human emotions. Those moments when people give love and gain trust from each other cannot be replaced," said Lin.

Soft skills

With the belief AI will perform repetitive and standardized jobs, about 60 percent of parents now prioritize "soft skills", such as character building, interpersonal communication, and problem-solving for their children's development, the Fudan survey also found.

This compares with 43 percent who still place securing a seat in a top university first, according to the survey of 1,900 families across the country.



Students from Wellington College International Shanghai experienced VR equipment at the school's sustainability fair in April. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Wang Shuangchen, 39, from Chongqing, signed up her 12-year-old son for an extracurricular public speaking course a year ago after discussing it with him.

"Even though AI tools can assist in writing a speech draft, there is still a significant difference in the personal charisma each individual displays when speaking on stage," said Wang, a book editor.

"My husband and I believe that having the ability to deliver compelling and engaging speeches in public is a highly competitive skill in the future job market," she said.

The awareness that her 11-year-old daughter needs skills that are hard for machines to replicate prompted Lu Yiyi, a mother from Shanghai, to make changes in their lives. Since September, the fifth-grader has been taking the subway to and from school alone, a 60-minute journey that includes transferring between lines.

"For my child, traveling between home and school alone involves finding the way, taking charge of her own safety, managing her time, and coping with unexpected situations," said Lu, adding that her experience in the graphic design profession has heightened her awareness of the pressures brought by AI.

This personal experience led her to reconsider how to better equip her child for the future. "Communication skills and the capacity to tackle real-world challenges are not what kids can learn at school through exams. They are developed via real experiences like these," she said.

Such practices align with the new educational paradigm of "human flourishing" proposed by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development in recent years.

Michael Stevenson, founder of the OECD's High Performing Systems for Tomorrow Initiative, said under the concept of human flourishing, the goal of education is to help every youth develop core competencies, including adaptive problem-solving.

Chinese-style emotions

Wu, the principal, believes Chinese people possess unique qualities, such as humility, subtlety, diligence, and perseverance, which extend to a thirst for knowledge and a love for all aspects of life. She said it is important to highlight these qualities when implementing emotional education.

The country's rich culinary traditions are an embodiment of Chinese people's diligence in her eyes, so the school encourages students interested in cooking to experience this firsthand by preparing dishes.

When a group visits the school, the students are now capable of working together to organize and prepare a meal of typical Shanghai dishes for the guests.

Once a child is able to cook, he or she is willing to prepare food for the family, which improves the atmosphere at home, said Wu.

"Whenever a child's strengths are recognized and encouraged, they gain confidence and stand tall," said Wu, who believes that teachers should identify the potential in each child to help them succeed, which she believes is the essence of education: focusing on the growth of each individual.

Zhao Zizi, a senior middle school teacher in Shanghai for three decades, said even though AI has become powerful, it is not a "person" a child can aspire to emulate.

"AI is just a tool to help us get closer to people who we admire and are worth learning from," she said.

Experts have pointed out that embracing AI, which will systematically enhance learning and work efficiency, is an irreversible trend.

The next generation will create AI, rather than just consume AI, and they will expand what's possible for the good of society and humanity, said Michael Levitt, 2013 Nobel laureate in chemistry, during the World Laureates Forum 2025 held in Shanghai in October.

Many primary and middle schools have been encouraging young people to use AI to solve social problems they encounter. For instance, a group of primary school students in Shanghai's Huangpu district attempted to use large language models to create movie descriptions for the visually impaired.

Through this process, the children not only mastered a technological skill, but also understood that technology should always serve human welfare, said teachers involved in the project.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:02 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:02 PM

TOP NEWS

Poverty: Sound governance remains key

From page 1

Many countries that achieved rapid development, such as China, benefited from visionary leadership that prioritized national development and public welfare.

In Africa, while some national leaders have shown clear development ambitions, many governments still struggle to implement effective policies that can fundamentally improve people's livelihoods.

This raises a critical question: Why is it difficult for African policymakers and leaders to learn from China's experience in poverty alleviation? In my view, poverty remains the continent's most pressing challenge.

China's development success is partly rooted in sound governance, and reflected in zero tolerance for corruption and nepotism, as well as in discipline, hard work and national unity above ethnic and regional divisions.

In Africa, many wars and internal conflicts across the continent arise from the absence of these guiding principles, which are consistently upheld by China's top leadership and fully implemented across government institutions. If Africa can adopt and practice these core principles, it will be better positioned to achieve inclusive prosperity for all.

The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation provides an important platform for bilateral engagement. The summit offers African leaders opportunities to visit China and witness firsthand its rapid socioeconomic transformation, strong work ethic and culture of self-discipline and collective development.

China-Africa relations have grown stronger and more strategic over the past decades. Many African ruling parties maintain close ties with the Communist Party of China, and numerous African officials have participated in training programs in China focusing on leadership, governance and national development.

Such exchanges create valuable opportunities for African leaders to draw on China's development experience, particularly in poverty reduction, economic planning and infrastructure development.

One key lesson Africa can learn from China is the value of sound governance, political stability, strong political commitment to national development, and the ability to mobilize the whole society toward shared national goals.

In terms of poverty reduction, Africa must manage its rich natural resources more efficiently. Again, sound governance and political stability play an indispensable role. Peace is also a fundamental prerequisite for development; Africa can only achieve long-term development and prosperity in a peaceful environment. This enables policymakers to design and carry out effective anti-poverty programs.

China did not lift hundreds of millions out of absolute poverty overnight. Its achievement came from decades of consistent and long-term policy implementation. A vital lesson is that poverty alleviation must be a state-led, long-term strategy, carried out steadily regardless of changes in political leadership.

This requires firm political commitment from ruling parties and governments alike, with policies clearly communicated to the public to gain public understanding and support. China has adhered to this path consistently, sustaining steady development progress. Africa can achieve greater progress if it adopts and strictly implements such development principles.

The author is executive director of the Institute for Strategic and Policy Studies in South Sudan. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic, who is on a state visit to China, tours the Museum of the Communist Party of China in Beijing on Tuesday. WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY

Vucic praises China's rapid transformation

Serbian president witnesses nation's progress in wide range of fields during tours in Beijing

By **MO JINGXI, ZHAO JIA** and **JI HAISHENG**

On Tuesday, the third day of Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic's state visit to China, he spent about five minutes inside a newly released electric vehicle at the showroom of Chinese tech company Xiaomi's auto factory in Beijing.

Sitting in the vehicle, in which commands can be voice activated, Vucic asked the in-car voice assistant: "Do you have any Serbian songs?"

Serbia's national anthem, *Boze pravde*, then began to play.

"I have learned a great deal here, above all about the achievements China has made. This place is amazing — I have never seen anything like it," Vucic wrote on social media. "Everything is automated. Two thousand robots operate everything, and in two shifts they produce 1,500 cars. We invited them, if they start considering investment in Europe, to choose Serbia, and we also invited them to showcase their products at EXPO 2027."

The factory was Vucic's third stop on Tuesday. Earlier in the day, he delivered a speech at Tsinghua University and visited the Museum of the Communist Party of China.

After tracing China's journey from poverty to prosperity at the museum, Vucic wrote in the guest book that the "visit to the museum was a unique chance to deepen my knowledge of the development of China under the leadership of the CPC".

Inside

Views, **page 7**

"I used to watch *Back to the Future* and think that flying cars, smart machines and technology that understands humans were only the stuff of movie imagination. Today, as I toured this incredible time capsule of Chinese achievements, I felt as if I had, in some way, experienced that film myself," Vucic wrote in a social media post.

He added that everything he saw seemed so advanced that, at one point, he thought his phone belonged in a technology museum.

Speaking to about 130 students and faculty members at Tsinghua University, the Serbian president said that China's progress should not be taken for granted.

While people living in China may regard daily changes as ordinary, he said that the nation's transformation remains striking to an outside observer, even over a short period of time.

He added that he has strong confidence in China's continued prosperity and bright future.

During the exchange with students, Vucic said that China-Serbia friendship is rooted in mutual support at difficult moments and in concrete results, rather than diplomatic rhetoric.

He cited Chinese participation in Serbia's infrastructure projects and the Smederevo Steel Mill, where a Chinese company's takeover helped preserve about 5,000 jobs, as examples of cooperation that have brought real benefits to local people.

Vucic also linked China's development to its openness, saying that the country offers cooperation opportunities to partners from different regions. He added that China's progress is not accidental, but is the result of knowledge, hard work, education and long-term effort.

Turning to the young audience, Vucic urged the students to remain open to the world, gain broader experience and believe in their values and principles. He said young people in China possess qualities that many countries have lost, including diligence, conviction, vision and a strong desire to succeed.

Hard work, education and perseverance will never become outdated, he said, adding that such qualities help make a country strong and enable it to keep moving forward.

Contact the writers at mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn

Taste: Everyday food highlighted in film

From page 1

Huang said that every dish in the film reflects the resilience and wisdom of Chaoshan people.

In the film, Chaoshan-born Ye Shurou travels to visit Xie Nanzhi in Thailand, bringing a basket of fresh green olives as a gift. When the elderly Xie, suffering from Alzheimer's disease, instinctively reacts to the taste, it becomes one of the film's most heart-wrenching moments.

"Olives are very common in Chaoshan," Huang explained.

"They are used in daily cooking. They are also important offerings in ancestral worship and ceremonies."

Another recurring ingredient in the film is the Indian gooseberry, known for its initially bitter taste followed by lingering sweetness.

To Huang, that flavor reflects the spirit of Chaoshan people who leave home to seek opportunities elsewhere: Bitterness may come first, but sweetness always lingers.

The film also highlights *wumiguo*, rice-less cakes made from sweet potato starch. Created during difficult times, the cakes were made with simple ingredients. Today, they are a ceremonial staple in many households.

As the executive chef of Dingzhenhui, a high-end Chaozhou cuisine restaurant in Shanghai, Huang now serves these traditional dishes to his patrons. By maintaining the labor-intensive, slow-cooking methods passed down through generations, he aims to offer an authentic taste of the culinary heritage of his ancestors.

The film also highlights everyday Chaoshan food, like pickled olive vegetable. Modest in appearance, the dish has the taste that migrants miss most.

Throughout the film, *gongfu* tea appears constantly, serving as more than just a drink. In Chaoshan culture, it is a symbol of hospitality and connection.

Pakistani PM honored for promoting agricultural ties

By **ZHAO YIMENG**
zhaoyimeng@chinadaily.com.cn

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was awarded the title of honorary professor by the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences on Tuesday in recognition of his contributions to promoting agricultural science and technology cooperation between China and Pakistan.

Speaking at the ceremony, Sharif said that agriculture remained a key topic of discussion during his meetings with Chinese leaders.

Pakistan hopes to learn from China's development experience and expand cooperation in crop breeding, animal husbandry, climate-smart agriculture, agricultural machinery and agricultural product processing to improve productivity and value-added capacity, he said.

Sharif announced that Pakistan will launch the second phase of its "Thousand Talents Plan" to send 1,000 more young people from Pakistan to Chinese agricultural institutions for studies and training. "I propose sending 1,000 students and fresh agriculture graduates from all provinces of Pakistan to Chinese universities for formal courses and modern agricultural training," he said.

Sharif's four-day official visit to China, which concluded on Tuesday, is an important high-level exchange between the two countries as this month marks the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations. His announcement was warmly welcomed by Pakistani students at the academy, many of whom view China's agricultural modernization as a model for Pakistan's rural development.

Nadeem Sarwar, a Pakistani scholar who is pursuing his PhD in agricultural water resources and environment at CAAS, said the initiative would create valuable opportunities for more young people in Pakistan.

"More Pakistani graduates will have the opportunity to gain knowledge, experience and exposure at Chinese institutions. When they return to Pakistan, they can contribute to developing the agricultural sector there," he said.

Sarwar's research focuses on improving the efficiency of agricultural water use, an issue he said is particularly important for Pakistan.

"China has made great progress (in agriculture), especially in improving water-use efficiency," he said, adding that he hopes to bring China's technologies and experience to improve Pakistan's agricultural productivity and resource management.

Muhammad Shahzad, also a PhD scholar at CAAS, who is studying animal genetics, breeding and reproduction, described the occasion as "a really big day" for Pakistani students. "It is a matter of great pride for all Pakistanis that China truly acknowledges Pakistan and values our friendship."

Shahzad noted that Pakistan's livestock industry plays a major role in the country's agricultural economy, and scientific breeding remains crucial for improving productivity. "Our animals are resilient to hot weather and diseases, but we need more scientific breeding," he said.

Huang Sanwen, president of CAAS and an academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, said that CAAS has established multiple joint platforms with Pakistani partners, including laboratories for cotton biotechnology, sustainable crop pest control and molecular breeding of wheat.

The agricultural sciences academy has also promoted cooperation in crop breeding, prevention of animal and plant diseases, water and soil resource management, and agricultural product processing, Huang said.

CAAS has trained more than 300 Pakistani students over the years and established a China-Pakistan Agricultural Technology Working Group with the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council, in order to institutionalize cooperation and strengthen capacity-building efforts, he added.

He Zhonghu, a researcher at the academy's Institute of Crop Sciences, who has worked with Pakistani researchers for more than two decades, said that China and Pakistan have already achieved remarkable results through joint agricultural research.

A wheat variety developed by Chinese and Pakistani researchers was recently approved in Pakistan following years of field testing.

The variety yields about 10 percent more than local varieties, matures earlier than them and has strong resistance to lodging (stem bending or breakage), said He, who is also an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering.

"We are very happy to contribute what we can to Pakistan's agricultural development and food security," he added.

The researcher, who has trained 10 Pakistani PhD scholars and a number of agricultural technicians at the institute, said that future training methods should place greater emphasis on the application of new technologies rather than focusing only on basic research.

"For example, students studying genetics or wheat breeding should also be taken to experimental fields, seed companies and flour mills for hands-on experience," he added.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn

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

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1836

Consumption: Analysts say upgrade can benefit world

From page 1

Analysts said that China's consumption upgrade and efforts to expand demand are critical, not only to China's growth, but also for the potential to serve as a stabilizing anchor for global demand, as protectionist winds sweep through major economies.

Louis Kuijs, S&P Global Ratings' chief economist for the Asia-Pacific region, said the economic policies of big players like China, and particularly how the country stimulates consumption, are closely followed by overseas analysts, as these policies hold significant implications for driving global economic growth.

The "Big Market for All: Export to China" initiative, launched by the Ministry of Commerce, is in full swing, with a series of events this year designed to meet rising domestic demand for quality foreign goods while offering global exporters a stable outlet.

Supachai Junkeiat, president of TCP China, the Thai conglomerate behind the energy drink brand Red Bull, said the company has always been optimistic about the upgrade potential of China's supersized consumer market.

"Going forward, we will continue to closely track the country's consumption trends and leverage product innovation to precisely meet new demands for consumption upgrades," he said.

Nevertheless, China's overall retail sales of consumer goods from January to April rose 1.9 percent year-on-year, down from 2.4 percent in the first quarter, the NBS said.

Economists expect consumption to continue its gradual recovery, but the pace will depend on how quickly income growth catches up, how effectively social safety nets reduce precautionary saving, and whether the property market stabilizes more broadly.

Nobel laureate economist Michael Spence told China Daily that income in the economy flows to government, corporates or households. "If you want consumption to rise, you need to shift more of that flow toward the household sector," he said.

One viable route, according to Spence, is to have State-owned enterprises pay out higher dividends, redirecting to the people some of the income that now flows to the government.

Spence also pointed to a "well-built social security system" as a way to offset Chinese households' deep-rooted propensity to save, reducing the precautionary share and unlocking more consumption potential.

"Restoring stability in the real estate sector matters as well because it's a big part of household net worth," Spence said, calling Chinese government efforts to stabilize the sector "a step in the right direction" for shoring up spending.

In March, policymakers vowed to unveil an income growth plan for urban and rural residents this year, with a range of practical measures to boost the earnings of low-income groups, increase property income and refine the social security systems.

Zhang, the economist, said that raising people's incomes is of fundamental importance in China's endeavors to meet people's aspirations for a better life, and called for efforts to uphold market-oriented resource allocation and foster a more supportive institutional environment for entrepreneurship and employment to boost people's wage growth.

Contact the writers at wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:02 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:02 PM

WORLD



George Retelas (second from left), a US film director, works with Chinese volunteers at a Doolittle Raider parachute landing site in Jiangxi province in December 2025. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

US filmmaker explores forgotten chapter of WWII

Work revisits history of Chinese civilians who risked lives to rescue downed airmen

By LIA ZHU in San Francisco
liazhu@chinadailyusa.com

Inside an abandoned building in a town in Jiangxi province, George Retelas felt something before anyone told him what had happened there.

His hosts guided him inside and told him: two US airmen had sheltered here in 1942, cared for by local villagers until someone who spoke some English could be found to help them escape. When Japanese soldiers swept through, they executed 14 people on the spot and burned the building to the ground.

"The chilling part is they didn't tell me what had happened until I was already inside," Retelas said. "As soon as I walked into that space, I could feel it."

That moment has marked Retelas' journey through a chapter of World War II history that many in the US have never heard about.

It is a story of a wartime alliance of ordinary Chinese civilians who risked and often lost everything to protect strangers from the US who fell from the sky. And it is a story that Retelas, a filmmaker from Silicon Valley, has spent years working to bring to light.

While in college, Retelas discovered a journal and photographs tucked inside a camera bag he had inherited from his grandfather who had served as a US Navy mechanic at Alameda Naval Air Station in California.

One night in early 1942, his grandfather had been rousted from his bed and ordered to help load 220-kilogram bombs onto a mysterious aircraft carrier loaded with Army planes. He did not learn until later that the ship was the USS *Hornet*, and the bombers were the Doolittle squadron bound for Tokyo.

That discovery sent Retelas down a path of research, then filmmaking, then travel — first across the United States to track down the men who had served alongside his grandfather in Navy Air Group 11, then, eventually, across the Pacific.

"Growing up in Silicon Valley, where everyone's thinking about the future, what's the next big thing, I found myself wanting to go back to the past," Retelas said. "Because I feel like I don't know how to answer the questions of the future until I learn more about where I came from."

He directed his first documentary, *Eleven*, in 2014, built around the journal he had found. His second, *Sundown to Eleven*, followed Richard "Dick" Miralles, the last surviving member of Air Group 11, in his mission to honor his fallen comrades. Miralles passed away on Nov 13 last year, at age 101. In keeping with his dying request, Retelas released the film for free on YouTube on Pearl Harbor Day, Dec 7.

But even as he completed that work, Retelas was being pulled across the Pacific, and toward a viewpoint he realized he did not yet grasp.

"I wanted to understand the other side, instead of just getting the American perspective of the Pacific War," he said. "Now, I want to know who it affected on the other side of the world."

In April 1942, just four months after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, US President Franklin Roosevelt ordered a retaliatory strike on the Japanese home islands.

The attack, involving 80 men in 16 Army B-25 bombers, was planned and led by Lieutenant Colonel James Doolittle.

The mission was nearly suicidal in its ambition: Because the aircraft carrier USS *Hornet* was not close enough to Japan for the bombers to make the return trip, they would bomb Tokyo and other Japanese cities, then pray they made it safely to allied China before they ran out of fuel.

Eighty men bailed out or crash-landed across the provinces of Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Fujian and Anhui. Chinese farmers, villagers and townspeople took them into their homes, fed them and helped them escape until 64 of the 80 made it to safety.

Japanese forces, enraged that the local population had sheltered US forces, swept through the region. An estimated 250,000 Chinese civilians were killed in Zhejiang-Jiangxi campaign in retaliation by Japan for the Doolittle Raid, according to multiple sources.

In the United States, the Doolittle Raid is remembered as a daring act of national defiance. The role of China, and the sacrifice made by ordinary Chinese people, are often overlooked.

"For American students and young people, it's not really well known," Retelas said of the Pacific War broadly.

Exchange of artifacts

In April 2025, Retelas traveled to Quzhou, a city in Zhejiang province, as part of a cultural exchange between the USS *Hornet* Museum in Alameda, California, where he has volunteered for years.

The Doolittle Raid Memorial Hall in Quzhou traded an eight-inch piece of steel torn from a B-25 bomber with the Hornet Museum. In return, the museum sent an original reel of 16-millimeter film showing the Doolittle Raiders training for their mission. Retelas, who proposed the exchange, carried the film to China and brought the steel fragment home.







Top: George Retelas (right) and Yu Jun, a representative of the Quzhou Society for the History of the Doolittle Raid exchange artifacts during a ceremony in Quzhou, Zhejiang province, in April 2025.
Above from left: Retelas displays his grandfather's journal and photographs hiking to one of the parachute locations in Jiangxi province in December. Retelas meets with a Chinese villager in Jiangxi province in December. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"This exchange was about much more than artifacts," he said. "It was about honoring a shared history and building relationships that continue to matter today."

While in Quzhou, Retelas met and interviewed several elderly Chinese men who were children when their families sheltered US airmen.

Retelas returned to China in December. By then, the people he had met in Quzhou were no longer strangers.

He visited sites in Jiangxi province where US airmen had parachuted down more than 80 years ago, now marked with small memorial markers put together by a group of Chinese volunteers who have spent years scouring the countryside for B-25 wreckage and honoring the spots where the flyers touched down.

"There was a group of volunteers that, over the last few years, have made it their personal quest to go and find fragments of the airplanes and help put together little memorial sites," Retelas said. "They are an amazing group of men and I consider them all great friends now."

The markers moved him in ways he had not anticipated. In France, he knew, there were sites where US pilots bailed out and French villagers came to their rescue, places marked in English, visited by tourists, and written into the popular memory of the war. The Chinese sites felt different: quieter, less known, more quietly tended.

"For me, it was very touching to see Americans from 80 years ago being remembered, and seeing these markers in English," he said.

"The volunteers who put those sites together — you could see the passion in their eyes. It was like looking at someone who cares as much as I do, but from across the ocean. We went to dinner every night, kept ordering more beer, kept talking. I've never felt closer to so many people who live so far away from me."

To the silver screen

Out of both trips came the outlines of a film. Retelas is now in the early stages of development of *The Torch Dragon*, a coming-of-age war drama that imagines the Doolittle Raid from the perspective of the people on the ground.

The film tells the story of four village children who discover a wounded US pilot who parachuted into their lives in war-torn China in 1942. They believe him to be the mythical Torch Dragon, a protector sent to shield them from invading Japanese forces. Retelas has completed a first draft and plans to return to China later this year to meet with studios interested in backing the project.

It is his first feature-length live-action film, and was inspired by his initial visit to China.

"That first cultural exchange in China involving the Doolittle Raid was very meaningful for me, because knowing my grandfather helped with that mission and where it led — it's like opening a door to another part of history," he said.

He is also assembling footage from his December trip into a YouTube documentary for a US audience. The film draws on the interviews he conducted with descendants of the Chinese families who sheltered the airmen.

Cultural ties

Retelas serves as director of media marketing at Menlo College in Silicon Valley, and the work he has done in China has rippled back to his campus life.

Menlo's international student body includes a large number of students from China — the second most represented international country on campus, with students from abroad making up nearly a quarter of enrollment.

On his first China trip, he brought along Menlo College student Mathias Durfee, a marketing major who participated through an internship with the USS *Hornet* Museum and documented the visit through photography and video.

"Being part of this cultural exchange was an incredible experience," Durfee said. "It allowed me to apply what I've learned at Menlo in a real-world, international setting while documenting history that still resonates today."

During his December trip, Retelas connected with Chinese students at Menlo College who were home for the holidays. Zhou Yanxi, an AI and analytics major, was among them. "I am extremely grateful there are people at Menlo College, like Mr Retelas, who take the initiative to learn about my home country and its culture," Zhou said.

Retelas said such exchanges have helped inform his engagement with the students. "I love working with young people and mentoring them, but the Chinese students particularly always tend to be a little bit more reserved and kind of shy," he said. "But once they knew I went to China, they're so warm and opening up."

He is also mentoring a group of high school students who are writing a book about the Doolittle Raid. "I am very excited to help the young people of the US and China know about this story," he said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:02 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:02 PM

WORLD

Foreign minister calls for defending UN Charter

By **MINLU ZHANG**
at United Nations
minluzhang@chinadailyusa.com



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi speaks at a Security Council high-level meeting at the United Nations headquarters in New York on Tuesday. ZHANG FENGGUO / XINHUA

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Tuesday called for renewed commitment to the United Nations Charter and warned against unilateral actions and "double standards", amid growing geopolitical tensions and challenges to multilateralism.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, made the remarks while presiding over a Security Council high-level meeting on upholding the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and strengthening the UN-centered international system.

Wang said the current international situation is undergoing the most complex and profound changes seen since the Second World War, stressing that the challenges confronting the world today test the international community's conviction to safeguard peace, its resolve to uphold justice, and its courage to pursue reform and innovation.

"We must unite and take action to uphold, revitalize and strengthen the United Nations," he said.

The meeting, held under China's rotating presidency of the Security Council for May, was attended by representatives from more than 100 countries, including more than 20 foreign ministers and high-level delegates.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Tuesday also delivered a briefing on the current international situation at the meeting.

Wang urged the international community to reaffirm the spirit of the UN Charter, saying that the surging global conflicts are "not a sign of the Charter's obsolescence", but from failures to uphold the international order and basic norms of international relations established under it.

"Major countries in particular should shoulder their responsibilities, uphold the rule of law and fairness, and reject double standards, exceptionalism and selective application of rules," he said.

On the role of the Security Council, Wang said council membership is "not a privilege, but a responsibility", and urged members to "rise above national self-interest".

He called for improvements to the council's working methods to ensure objectivity, fairness and inclusiveness in draft resolutions and initiatives, and urged permanent members to strengthen coordination and seek consensus on major issues.

On international development collaboration, Wang urged the United Nations to coordinate global action and mobilize global resources, providing greater financial, technical and intellectual support to countries of the Global South in priority areas such as poverty reduction.

Wang said China "supports a greater UN role in the political settlement of hotspot issues and is open to exploring a comprehensive mediation model involving the UN, regional organizations, stakeholders and professional institutions".

On revitalizing the effectiveness of the UN system, Wang said that the organization's role "must be strengthened, not weakened" and its standing "must be upheld, not replaced".

He urged member states to fulfill their financial obligations to the United Nations and support its work.

Following the meeting, Wang told reporters that China has maintained communication and coordination between the United States and Iran, as well as important regional and international partners.

"We believe that the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of all countries in the region must be respected, that civilian and non-military targets must be protected, that the security of passages and energy infrastructure must be safeguarded, and that the provisions of the nuclear non-proliferation regime must be implemented," he said.

Wang said the key to the situation lies in talks between the United States and Iran. He welcomed mediation efforts by countries including Pakistan and voiced support for diplomatic efforts by both sides.

Wang also outlined China's position regarding the qualifications required for the next UN secretary-general.

"To sum up, commitment to the UN Charter; outstanding competency; integrity and impartiality; and initiative to take responsibility and deliver," he said.

"Going forward, China will work with others and take a responsible attitude to participate in the selection process of the next secretary-general," he told reporters.

Xinhua contributed to the story.

Friendship reflected in Sharif's visit

PM's trip to help further enhance economic cooperation, experts say

By **XU WEIWEI** in Hong Kong
vivienxu@chinadailyapac.com

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit, which coincided with the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China, is timely, significant, and reflects the depth of a friendship that has stood the test of time, analysts said.

They said Sharif's talks with Chinese leaders will further strengthen the ironclad brotherhood between the two nations, especially economic relations and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, or CPEC.

President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang met Sharif in Beijing on Monday after he arrived in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, on Saturday. Sharif also attended an event marking the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations, before leaving on Tuesday.

The high-level engagements in Beijing demonstrate the mutual trust and strategic understanding that continue to define relations between the two countries, said Khalid Taimur Akram, executive director of the Pakistan Research Center for a Community with Shared Future in Islamabad.

"Such exchanges are essential for strengthening cooperation in trade, investment, infrastructure, technology, and regional connectivity," Akram noted. In his opinion, this next phase of CPEC has the potential to create new opportunities for economic growth, job creation, and long-term prosperity for Pakistan.

Akram said the investment and business conference led by Sharif in China signals a transition from infrastructure development to broader economic cooperation in areas such as technology, industrial development, agriculture, and innovation.

Sharif's visit has been widely regarded as purposeful and forward-looking, setting the stage for progress, including greater socio-economic prosperity and financial integration, said Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan, president of the Center for Knowledge and Public Policy in Pakistan.

"These developments have significantly enhanced political understanding, diplomatic consultations, economic cooperation, industrial collaboration, and, above all, the revitalization of CPEC 2.0," he said.

"The visit, therefore, provided a major boost to Pakistan's economy, steering it toward greater stability, sustainability, and modernization, with the relocation of high-quality industries set to play a pivotal role."

> "Such exchanges are essential for strengthening cooperation in trade, investment, infrastructure, technology, and regional connectivity."
>
> **Khalid Taimur Akram,** executive director of the Pakistan Research Center for a Community with Shared Future in Islamabad

In international relations, timing, gestures, and events signify the importance and depth of the relationship, said Shakeel Ahmad Ramay, CEO of the Asian Institute of Eco-Civilization, Research, and Development in Pakistan.

Ahmad said it is good that the Chinese and Pakistani leaders exchanged views, coordinated their positions, and devised future policies and courses of action to navigate the new world order and multipolar world together.

"Pakistan pins high hopes on securing good deals (with China) to foster Pakistan's economic growth and development," he said.

Financial sector cooperation is crucial for Pakistan amid the ongoing financial crisis and extreme pressure from international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, he said.

Sharif's visit can definitely help the country find new opportunities, especially in the financial sector, such as bonds and mechanisms, to ease financial pressure, and to strengthen cooperation with China, he said.

Imtiaz Gul, executive director of the Center for Research and Security Studies in Pakistan, said China's warm reception of Sharif's visit underscored the unflinching nature of bilateral relations.

He said the new agreements on cultural exchanges and educational cooperation signed during the visit can "certainly help deepen Pakistanis' knowledge of rich Chinese culture, values of hard work, perseverance, and the phenomenal strides that China has made in science and technology".

Students share passion for China through contest

By **HOU JUNJIE** in Tokyo
houjunjie@chinadaily.com.cn

A growing number of young people in Japan are developing an interest in China, attracted by the country's long history, rich cultural heritage, and rapid technological advances, with many choosing to study Chinese as a gateway to a deeper understanding.

Those aspirations were on display on Saturday at the Japan finals of the 19th "Chinese Bridge" competition for secondary and high school students, where 16 contestants from across the country shared personal stories about learning Chinese and their impressions of China.

Anna Takahashi, who lived in China for three years, recalled feeling anxious and uncertain when she first arrived in a foreign country. But the kindness she received from teachers and strangers in China gradually eased her fears and left a lasting impression.

"That experience made me truly fall in love with China," she said during her speech.

After returning to Japan, Takahashi said she was saddened to hear negative stereotypes about China, including claims that "China is dangerous". She added that she often felt frustrated for being unable to counter such comments effectively.

Through the competition, she hoped to encourage others not to judge a country solely based on fragmented information online, but to experience it firsthand.

"Before rejecting something, try to understand it first," Takahashi said, adding that she hopes to become a translator in the future and help build mutual understanding between Japan and China.

Another contestant, Uta Moriyama, said her fascination with China began with the hit Chinese drama *The Untamed*, which inspired her interest in traditional Chinese culture and landscapes.

Having studied Chinese since the age of 6, she described the language as "a pair of wings" that allows her to explore a broader world and experience the charm of Chinese civilization across time.

She said she especially enjoys Chinese classical literature such as *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, as well as the rhythm and beauty of classical Chinese poetry.

Beyond culture, Moriyama is also closely following China's technological developments, particularly in robotics and artificial intelligence, and hopes to visit China in the future to witness the country's innovation firsthand.

The competition also featured cultural performances by contestants, including Chinese martial arts, tai chi, diabolo, paper-cutting, and *erhu* performances. The *erhu* is a traditional Chinese two-stringed musical instrument.

Tian Lulu, minister counselor of the Chinese embassy in Japan, said the "Chinese Bridge" competition, which has been held in Japan for more than two decades, has helped many students broaden their horizons by learning Chinese and step onto larger international stages.

Deepening interest

She encouraged participants to showcase their language abilities and share stories about their connections to China and the Chinese language, while continuing to deepen their interest in Chinese culture.

Tokuichiro Utsunomiya, president of the Japan-China Friendship Association, said that people-to-people exchanges, especially among younger generations, are essential to the future of Japan-China relations.

"Learning Chinese is not only about mastering a language, but also an important pathway to understanding China's history, culture, and way of thinking," he said.

Utsunomiya also said he hoped the students would use Chinese to share their dreams, deepen mutual understanding through cultural exchange, and contribute to future China-Japan friendship.

In Japan, more than 70 universities and over 600 high schools now offer Chinese-language courses.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the "Chinese Bridge" brand, which is organized by the Center for Language Education and Cooperation under China's Ministry of Education and supported by Chinese embassies and Confucius Institutes worldwide.

Dressed to impress



A model wears traditional Tajik clothing at a costume show in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on Monday. LI RENZI / XINHUA

Unity celebrated amid fresh concerns over xenophobia

JOHANNESBURG — South Africa on Monday marked Africa Day amid renewed concerns over xenophobia, as the government called for African unity and condemned violence against foreign nationals.

Speaking at celebrations held at Moruleng Stadium in North West Province, Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture Gayton McKenzie rejected claims that South Africa is xenophobic, while acknowledging growing public frustration over illegal immigration.

The event took place as tensions over the treatment of foreign nationals continued to attract attention across the continent.

South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Ronald Lamola on Saturday reiterated the government's opposition to attacks against migrants, saying the government remained firmly opposed to any attacks targeting foreign nationals.

He said he had been engaging with several African countries, including Ghana, Nigeria and Malawi, to address concerns over the safety of their citizens.

The minister acknowledged that South Africa faces challenges related to illegal migration and undocumented foreign nationals, stressing that immigration laws should only be enforced by authorized law enforcement agencies.

Former South African president Thabo Mbeki warned that rising anti-immigrant sentiment threatens both the country's constitutional values and broader African unity.

Speaking ahead of Africa Day, Mbeki said economic hardship and unemployment should not be used to scapegoat migrants, calling on political leaders, civil society organizations, and communities to reject divisive rhetoric and work together to address migration and economic challenges peacefully.

Safety concerns also affected diplomatic participation in this year's Africa Day celebrations.

According to local media, Andre Nzapayeke, ambassador of the Central African Republic, said some African ambassadors collectively decided not to attend the event due to security concerns.

He said that with large crowds expected at the event, diplomats could not confidently guarantee the safety of African migrants attending the celebrations.

Ghana's High Commissioner to South Africa Benjamin Quashie said that tensions surrounding undocumented migration could damage South Africa's relationship with other African nations.

In late April, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa condemned xenophobia and vigilantism during Freedom Day commemorations, stressing that concerns about undocumented migration should never lead to prejudice against fellow Africans.

Over the past two decades, South Africa has faced repeated outbreaks of xenophobic violence, with foreign nationals often blamed for unemployment, crime, and pressure on public services.

XINHUA



People from migrant rights groups demonstrate on Africa Day, protesting against xenophobia, in Cape Town, South Africa, on Monday. ESA ALEXANDER / REUTERS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:02 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:02 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Foreign investment drawn to advantages of country's high-standard opening-up

The State Council Information Office announced on Tuesday that the seventh Qingdao Multinationals Summit will be held in Qingdao, Shandong province, from June 15 to 17, and that more than 350 foreign executives from 36 countries have confirmed their attendance.

This latest event, along with a flurry of recent international trade and investment promotion activities, highlights the confidence of foreign companies in the world's second-largest economy. The sustained influx of foreign investment into China, even as global foreign direct investment trends downward, is a testament to China's unique positioning in the world economy.

China's allure as a destination for foreign investment is evident in the latest data from the Ministry of Commerce: from January to April this year, 20,113 new foreign-invested enterprises emerged nationwide, a 6.8 percent increase year-on-year. This growth is not merely a fleeting trend but part of a broader trajectory that has seen the number of foreign-funded enterprises in China rise consistently over the past three years, surpassing 530,000 and collectively channeling over $3.6 trillion into the economy.

More than 3,000 foreign-funded enterprises further expanded their investments in China during the same period, a trend also recorded last year which saw more than 8,000 foreign-funded companies make additional investment in China, up more than 10 percent year-on-year.

Against the undercurrents of the "decoupling" from China rhetoric and sluggish world economic growth, the latest data underscore that in a turbulent world, the Chinese market stands out as a beacon for foreign investors due to its predictability, reliability and steady growth.

The improvement of China's business environment — characterized by an increasingly shorter negative list, the rule of law and nondiscriminatory treatment — is another key factor driving the influx of foreign investment.

From January to April, the actual use of foreign capital in high-tech sectors reached 116.33 billion yuan ($17.14 billion), reflecting a significant 20.3 percent increase year-on-year. These sectors alone accounted for 40.4 percent of the total foreign capital utilized in the country, up by 10.3 percentage points from the previous year. Within this realm, areas such as R&D and design services, computer and office equipment manufacturing, and electronics and communication equipment manufacturing have witnessed remarkable growth, with year-on-year increases of 108.4 percent, 22.9 percent and 20.2 percent respectively. These statistics highlight a shift in foreign investment patterns, moving away from traditional manufacturing toward more innovative and technologically advanced industries.

As China continues to enhance its industrial foundation and research and development environment, it is ready to attract even more foreign investment eager to tap into its comprehensive value chain advantages in emerging technologies and new industries. This shift from "quantity" to "quality" in foreign investment is a clear indicator of China's evolving economic landscape, where innovation and high-end manufacturing are becoming the new pillars of growth.

The country's proactive approach is reshaping China's role from being the global manufacturing hub to a central node in the global value chain. The country's commitment to opening its market, particularly in the service industry, is evident as it accounts for over 70 percent of the actual use of foreign capital. The Ministry of Commerce has outlined plans to expand market access and create new advantages to attract foreign investment, particularly in sectors such as green transformation, intelligent manufacturing and digital services.

This is reinforced by the trend of investment from developed countries increasingly producing in China and utilizing advanced technologies developed by local Chinese companies to enhance the competitiveness of their entire operations.

This diversification reflects the broader transformation in China's economic development, driven by continuous market opening, reduced barriers to foreign investment, and the implementation of national treatment policies.

There is no doubt that China remains a magnet for foreign investors seeking growth and opportunity in an increasingly difficult global economy.

It is high time some in the West put to rest their parochial ideology and bias against China, and did more to build bridges than put up barriers. By recognizing the strategic importance of the Chinese market, businesses and policymakers can navigate the complexities of globalization in a way that promotes shared prosperity and sustainable growth.

Innovative response to choke-point chip tech

Moore's Law has been a cornerstone of the rapid advancement of digital technology over the past decades, although it is now confronting physical limits and diminishing economic returns.

For an industry conditioned to equate progress with nanometers, the Tau Scaling Law disclosed by Huawei on Monday is a challenge to the organizing logic of the semiconductor ecosystem.

Instead of continuing the increasingly expensive race to shrink transistors, Tau Scaling proposes that future chip performance gains can come from compressing the signal propagation time through architectural and timing innovations. Huawei has set a target of reaching a chip density equivalent to 1.4 nanometers by 2031.

Washington's export restrictions have attempted to cut China off from advanced lithography equipment, leading-edge foundries and portions of the global event-driven architecture software stack. Such measures were designed to slow China's progress in advanced semiconductors.

That is where Tau Scaling enters the picture. Instead of shrinking transistor dimensions from 3 nm to 2 nm and beyond, Huawei is extracting more performance from mature process nodes such as 5 nm and 7 nm by means of architectural optimization, timing compression, logic folding and system-level coordination.

Much of the underlying research — including asynchronous computing concepts, wave pipelining, and timing optimization techniques — can be traced back decades. What Huawei has done, under conditions where the traditional scaling route became inaccessible, is to revisit those ideas, combine them, enhance them and industrialize them.

In that sense, the emergence of Tau Scaling reflects a broader historical pattern in technology. Constraints often redirect innovation rather than stop it. So, if chip performance can be improved through architecture rather than lithography alone, then the balance of competition changes. The key question becomes not simply who owns the most advanced EUV machines, but who can design the most efficient systems using available manufacturing capabilities.

It would be premature, though, to declare that the arrival of Tau Scaling heralds the post-Moore era. Semiconductor history is filled with elegant concepts that struggled once they encountered manufacturing economics, ecosystem inertia, or commercial realities. Huawei's proposal faces several important ceilings.

Architecture cannot completely replace physics. Timing optimization can reduce inefficiencies, but signals still obey physical propagation limits. As chips become larger and workloads more complex, interconnect delays and synchronization overhead remain major bottlenecks.

Logic folding and time-domain optimization introduce their own complexity penalties. The more aggressively a design compresses timing, the harder verification, debugging and manufacturing become. Commercialization will determine whether Tau Scaling becomes an industry framework. For Huawei's approach to become influential, other companies must adopt it, customers must validate it and developers must build around it. That process will take years, not conference announcements.

Even so, the broader lesson already stands. The semiconductor industry is entering a phase where innovation no longer relies exclusively on brute-force scaling and trillion-dollar capital expenditures. Architectural intelligence, software-hardware codesign, advanced packaging and system optimization are becoming increasingly important.

For China, that shift creates both an opportunity and a responsibility. The country still faces major gaps in lithography, materials, EDA tools and manufacturing equipment. But Tau Scaling demonstrates something equally important: when external pressure blocks one route, researchers will look for alternative routes and solutions can emerge through persistence, engineering discipline and targeted input.

The semiconductor race is no longer just about making things smaller. Increasingly, it is about making systems smarter. The challenge now is for more Chinese companies and engineers to push beyond incremental imitation and focus on resolving genuine choke-point technologies with the tools they already possess.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

Reckless showboating ignores real risk of triggering trip wire

That warships from extra-regional countries, including the United Kingdom, France, Canada and Australia, glide through disputed waters in the South China Sea is purposeful showboating. The Report on the Military Activities of Non-US Extra-Regional Countries in the Western Pacific in 2025, published on Tuesday by the South China Sea Strategic Situation Probing Initiative, an international research network that recorded their appearances, reads more like the record of the cast performing on an increasingly crowded stage.

According to the think tank report, about 200 warships from 18 extra-regional countries operated in the region in 2025, while their military aircraft logged more than 20,000 sorties. These operations appear designed to mislead audiences back home rather than meet the actual security needs of the region.

A destroyer sails through contested waters, officials issue carefully worded statements about "shared values", commentators praise "firmness", and ministers collect photographs that project "toughness" without, theoretically, requiring sacrifice.

The problem with symbolic military gestures is that they rarely remain symbolic forever. International relations theory has long warned that countries frequently drift toward confrontation not because anyone actively wants war, but because each side interprets the other's actions through entirely different emotional and strategic lenses. And once that spiral begins, every "routine" operation acquires an increasingly sharp edge.

Modern military systems are fundamentally ambiguous. A surveillance aircraft gathering information today may be viewed as mapping targets tomorrow. A destroyer exercising "navigation freedom" may also look like the opening scene of a blockade rehearsal. Military hardware does not come with subtitles explaining peaceful intent. Before long, these extra-regional countries will find themselves trapped inside an escalating choreography that nobody fully controls anymore. What makes the current trend particularly striking is how little many of these countries actually stand to gain.

One wonders how these same nations would react if distant countries began conducting naval patrols and military reconnaissance near their own coastlines, not to mention with equal intensity and frequency. That is why the moral certainty surrounding many of these operations feels increasingly detached from strategic reality. The Western Pacific is not an abstract chessboard for symbolic posturing. It is a densely interconnected economic artery where even minor military incidents could send shock waves through global trade, supply chains and financial markets.

And history suggests that accidents happen most often in environments where everyone insists they are merely exercising their rights. The reality is that most countries in the region are far more interested in economic growth, trade and stability than in becoming supporting actors in an endless maritime pressure campaign. What they do not need is an expanding cycle of military theater masquerading as "strategic necessity".

There is a profound difference between maintaining stability and repeatedly testing how much pressure a volatile environment can absorb before something breaks.

And when that happens, the countries treating the Western Pacific like a stage for symbolic power projection may discover that applause is much harder to obtain once real consequences arrive.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Major step toward rules for global carbon market

Editor's note: *Earlier this month, China, Brazil and the European Union — founding members of the Open Coalition on Compliance Carbon Markets — held the first high-level meeting of the coalition in Florence, Italy. Dong Xiucheng, executive dean of the institute for international carbon-neutral economy at the University of International Business and Economics, and Weng Yuyan, an associate researcher at the Institute of Energy, Environment and Economy at Tsinghua University, spoke to People's Daily Overseas Edition about the coalition's role in the development of a global carbon market. Below are excerpts of the interviews. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

Currently, the global carbon markets are characterized by uneven development and fragmentation. Countries have adopted different rules and standards for carbon pricing, and there are substantial barriers to cross-border carbon trading.

The establishment of the Open Coalition on Compliance Carbon Markets marks a significant step in implementing the consensus reached at COP30 in Brazil last year. The coalition aims to harmonize carbon market rules across countries, unify accounting standards, promote cross-border recognition of carbon credits, build a platform for policy discussions, share experiences in carbon market development, regulate international carbon trading and address the issue of market fragmentation.

The coalition's key focus areas include cooperation on monitoring, reporting and verification systems for carbon emissions, carbon accounting methods and rules for using high-integrity offsets.

The official launch of the coalition will promote the alignment of carbon pricing systems across countries, reduce regulatory conflicts and lower the costs of cross-border trading. This is aimed at establishing a fairer and more transparent global carbon pricing system.

The coalition will facilitate cross-border carbon trading, enhance coordination among countries in meeting their emissions reduction commitments and support the achievement of nationally determined contributions.

It will also accelerate the low-carbon transition of various countries through market-based approaches and guide the cross-border flow of green capital. By leveraging economic tools, the coalition will help the world achieve the temperature-control goals set out in the Paris Agreement, pool multilateral efforts for emissions reduction, and ultimately achieve the carbon neutrality target.

Carbon markets across the world have been designed differently. Given that developed and developing countries are at different stages of growth, the coalition adheres to the principles of openness, inclusiveness and voluntary participation. This approach promotes dialogue and cooperation among members on core aspects of carbon markets, helping to form a common framework for their development and further enhance global cooperation on carbon pricing.

The coalition will promote the effective implementation of Article 6 of the Paris Agreement by encouraging member states to coordinate on carbon emissions accounting and high-quality carbon credit standards. That China, Brazil and the EU — major economies from different regions — are working together to advance carbon market cooperation demonstrates their resolve to uphold multilateralism and jointly address climate change. This offers a new model for cooperation on global climate governance.

It is worth noting that members of the coalition differ in their carbon reduction foundations, economic development levels and available resources, which may pose challenges to the coalition's operations.

The international community needs to formulate unified rules for carbon accounting, carbon credit certification and trading. Developed countries should scale up technological and financial support for developing countries to narrow the gap between carbon markets in the Global South and Global North. Efforts should focus on expanding multilateral dialogue, encouraging more countries to join the coalition and improving the regulatory system for global carbon trading.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:02 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:02 PM

VIEWS

Nataša Stanojević

China-Serbia cooperative leap from roads to robots



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic's visit to China from May 24 to 28 comes at a time when China-Serbia economic cooperation has become a central pillar of Serbia's development strategy.

During the talks with Vucic on Monday, President Xi Jinping said that against the backdrop of a new scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation, the two sides should expand cooperation in emerging sectors such as artificial intelligence, the digital economy, green energy and advanced manufacturing to foster new growth drivers.

The two countries signed more than 20 cooperation documents covering areas such as trade and economic relations and technology.

These developments indicate the evolution of China-Serbia cooperation and will inject fresh momentum into it.

Nowadays, direct Chinese investments in Serbia have reportedly exceeded 7.2 billion euros ($8.35 billion), with the total value of infrastructure and economic projects, including loans, surpassing 14 billion euros.

This influx of capital has had a transformative impact on Serbia, impacting infrastructure, industry, employment and trade. China is now one of Serbia's two largest investors and a leading foreign trade partner.

Ahead of his visit, President Vucic highlighted artificial intelligence, robotics and new technologies as key areas of cooperation, marking a new phase in bilateral economic relations.

China-Serbia cooperation initially focused on infrastructure, particularly under the Belt and Road Initiative. Serbia, a landlocked country strategically positioned between Central and Southeast Europe, faced the problem of outdated transport corridors.

Chinese projects in roads, bridges, railways and energy facilities helped Serbia improve physical connectivity, strengthen links with regional corridors, expand production and attract investment. These infrastructure projects laid the groundwork for a broader economic agenda, reducing logistics costs and making Serbia more attractive for production and export.

The key question now is how to transform this infrastructure into industrial capacity, export growth and higher value-added production. The next phase of cooperation should be measured by how well connectivity supports manufacturing, technological upgrading and Serbia's integration into regional and global value chains.

This transition is already visible. Chinese economic engagement in Serbia has expanded into industries such as mining, metallurgy, rubber production and automotive components.

These manufacturing investments have a deeper long-term impact than infrastructure alone, creating employment, expanding exports and supporting supplier networks.

Serbia's industrial base, skilled labor and proximity to European markets make it an attractive destination for Chinese companies seeking to connect with European and regional supply chains. Notable industrial projects include Zijin in Bor, HBIS in Smederevo, Linglong in Zrenjanin, Minth in Loznica and Šabac, Xingyu in Niš and Yanfeng in Kragujevac.

Zijin's investment in the Bor copper complex has significantly increased copper production and strengthened the role of copper in Serbia's export structure. In 2018, the Serbian government accepted Zijin's offer to acquire a 63 percent stake in RTB Bor, with the total investment package valued at $1.26 billion.

Exporting raw copper ore has a limited effect on industrial development. But processing refined copper into plates, sheets or pipes creates higher value, requires more skills, supports related industries and strengthens the domestic industrial base. This is why the next stage of cooperation should focus on value-added production.

But a recent study shows that there is a shortage of skilled labor in Eastern Serbia and insufficient processing capacity, so a rapid shift toward an export structure based on processed copper products is unrealistic. A more practical strategy would be to strike a balance between raw material exports and processed copper exports.

A similar logic applies to the steel sector. The acquisition of the Smederevo steel plant by HBIS was a significant example of Chinese participation in Serbia's existing industrial capacities.

The steel plant was long plagued by unstable production and heavy losses. HBIS acquired the plant in 2016, reviving production and exports, and reestablishing the company as one of Serbia's most important exporters.

This shows that Chinese investment has not only created new projects, but also helped modernize Serbia's existing industrial capacities.

Another example is Shandong Linglong's tire plant in Zrenjanin, one of the largest Chinese greenfield investments in Serbia valued at 800 million euros.

Linglong started building its tire factory in Zrenjanin in 2019, showing that Serbia is not only a destination for acquiring existing enterprises, but also a potential production base for new capacities.

Alongside Linglong, investments by Minth, Xingyu and Yanfeng point to a broader trend of Chinese engagement in automotive components.

Though smaller than Zijin or HBIS, these investments are significant because they connect Serbia more directly with European automotive and industrial supply chains. This is especially relevant for Chinese investors.

If the first phase of China-Serbia economic cooperation focused on infrastructure, and the second on industrial production, the coming phase may go beyond traditional manufacturing and emphasize high-technology and innovation-oriented sectors.

Recent announcements indicate that robotics, AI, digitalization and advanced industrial technologies are becoming part of the bilateral agenda.

The cooperation announced with the Chinese company AGIBOT Innovation in humanoid robots is especially noteworthy. While relevant statements suggest that Serbia could soon become a base for the mass production of humanoid robots, Vucic also announced that a robot factory could open in a few months in Šabac. This would be a qualitatively new type of Chinese investment in Serbia.

The China-Serbia joint laboratory for green steel manufacturing, jointly launched by the HBIS Group and the University of Belgrade, shows that cooperation in traditional sectors such as steel can gradually move toward cleaner production, research cooperation and technological upgrading. It connects the older industrial pillar of cooperation with the newer priorities of sustainability, innovation and green transformation.

This initiative is important for Serbia because it diversifies cooperation with China, strengthens the country's export base and creates the possibility for deeper supplier linkages, technology transfer and skills development.

The strategic value of Chinese investment in Serbia lies in linking infrastructure, manufacturing and trade into a single development platform.

Roads and railways improve connectivity, but their full effect appears only when they support production, exports and industrial integration.

Mining and metals increase output, but their impact is greater when they move toward processing and higher value added. Greenfield investments create new jobs, but their importance depends on whether they become embedded in local supplier networks and regional value chains.

This is why the next phase of China-Serbia cooperation shifts from connectivity to productive capacity.

Infrastructure remains the foundation, but manufacturing is the test of maturity. If Serbia can use Chinese investment not only to build but also to produce, process, export and innovate, the cooperation will have a stronger and more sustainable effect on the country's development.

The author is a senior research fellow at the Institute of International Politics and Economics, Serbia.
The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.

Syed Hasan Javed

An enduring Sino-Pakistani friendship for a shared future

As China and Pakistan celebrate the 75th anniversary of their diplomatic relations, many expressions are being used to describe their enduring friendship.

This is not surprising, given that the region now known as Pakistan has historically served as a bridge linking South Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and Africa, facilitating China's trade and exchange of ideas, goods, and philosophies since the Han Dynasty (206 BC–AD 220).

From ancient times, the people of this region have been fascinated by Chinese culture, particularly its silk, herbal medicine, food, tools and crafts.

Stories dating back 3,000 years, including the legend of the Queen Mother of the West, or Xi Wang Mu, and her peach banquet, are remembered by the people of Hunza in northern Pakistan, where they grow longevity peaches.

These fables and folk traditions have been passed down through generations, reflecting the deep bonds between the two countries.

The exchanges are evident not only in legends but also in the names and nomenclature of spices, herbs and medicines that persist to this day. Even sustained efforts by the colonial powers to erase these identities proved futile.

Pakistanis have always admired the Chinese values of hard work, humility, positivity and good neighborliness.

Chinese wisdom, which is rooted in common sense, has long been used to resolve complex problems. These cultural imprints are important, as they nourish the many values that unite the people of the two countries.

Like China, Pakistan is also an ancient civilization, being the cradle of the Indus Valley Civilization, as well as the Harappa and Gandhara civilizations.

Mahayana Buddhism was among this region's earliest cultural exports to China. Famous Chinese travelers Faxian and Xuanzang journeyed through what is now modern-day Pakistan in search of authentic Buddhist sutras.

Xuanzang's journey later became the inspiration for the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) novel *Journey to the West* by Wu Cheng'en, highlighting the bonds that unite the two peoples.

Today's generation in both countries is reenacting that history. The intelligentsia has a common responsibility to help future generations know about their common heritage in order to build a community with a shared future for humanity.

China's remarkable advances in technology, the economy, artificial intelligence, national defense and governance — underpinned by its deep cultural traditions and distinct development model with Chinese characteristics — have become an important reference point for many countries in the Global South, particularly its "ironclad brother" Pakistan. The successes achieved so far in bilateral and multilateral cooperation underscore the strength, resilience and strategic depth of this multi-dimensional relationship.

The successful implementation of projects during the first phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has been a major milestone. This success raises hopes that the second phase of the CPEC will be even more successful.

It is important to note that China-Pakistan cooperation extends far beyond the domains of the CPEC into strategic areas such as defense projects, the peaceful use of nuclear energy, renewable energy, mining, automobiles, maritime monitoring capabilities, space exploration, AI and human resource development.

For example, Pakistan's integration into the Chinese supply chain and its adept use of Chinese aviation technology, such as the JF-17 Thunder and advanced J-10C aircraft, have made the Pakistan Air Force a global ambassador for these technologies.

A new world order is emerging as the old one crumbles. With Asia on the rise, the unique relationship between China and Pakistan baffles many, particularly in the Western world.

Both countries enjoy a harmonious relationship built on trust, goodwill and cooperation. China has never interfered in Pakistan's internal affairs or exerted pressure. Instead, it has assisted Pakistan without any expectation of a quid pro quo.

As steadfast allies, both countries always work closely to ensure peace, prosperity and stability in Eurasia, West Asia, the Gulf and South Asia.

The second quarter of the 21st century marks the beginning of a multi-polar world, with China and Pakistan seeking a just, equitable, peaceful, harmonious and prosperous global order.

China's vision of building a community with a shared future for humanity, under the Belt and Road Initiative, is the next phase of globalization.

As an ancient civilization, China follows the "prosper thy neighbor" philosophy, sharing its experience with all countries of the Global South.

Pakistan is ideally positioned to benefit from this partnership.

The author is the former director of the China Studies Centre at Pakistan's National University of Sciences and Technology and a former ambassador. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Zhou Shuchun

The author is chief researcher at the China Watch Institute, China Daily.

Huge potential of tiny tokens powering AI revolution

In recent months, the term "token" has leapt from obscurity into everyday life as a buzzword alongside intelligent agents such as Lobster or OpenClaw. But this token is not the blockchain-based cryptocurrency unit.

Rather, it is the unit of measurement for large language model text processing. Just as we measure prose in letters or numbers, AI processes information by first breaking data down into bite-sized manageable tokens. Think of a token as the smallest Lego brick — the atomic particle — of AI-generated content.

Every time we use AI — whether asking a question or writing code — we invoke these atoms of AI language. Tokens, therefore, are an indicator of AI activity.

In this sense, token data not only reflect the dynamics of an economy in the AI era but also give rise to a new kind of economic logic.

At the beginning of 2024, China's average daily consumption of tokens was 100 billion. This shot up to a staggering 100 trillion by the end of 2025, and is now over 140 trillion.

This explosive growth of more than 1,000 times in a little over two years far exceeds the global average. Liu Liehong, head of the National Data Bureau, said, "The massive increase in daily token call volume indicates that China's AI development has entered a phase of rapid growth."

On the demand side, the token consumption frenzy indicates the widespread and frequent use of AI applications, reflecting the depth and breadth of AI empowerment across industries. It also points to a maturing ecosystem, hinting at a breakthrough in AI commercialization. As the world's largest internet economy, China is poised to be the epicenter of token economics.

The more powerful the computing capacity, the faster the token processing speed, the lower the unit cost, the higher the model quality, and consequently, the more frequent the token calls.

On the other hand, this surge in token consumption reflects a supply-side momentum anchored in computing power. In the digital economy, data is the raw material while computing power is the production tool. Every token call consumes computing power.

The more powerful the computing capacity, the faster the token processing speed, the lower the unit cost, the higher the model quality, and consequently, the more frequent the token calls. The explosive growth in token consumption or call volume provides grounds for optimism regarding computing power supply prospects, while also sounding a warning that it is a scarce resource in the AI era.

With the development of the Metaverse, the Industrial Internet, and the proliferation of AI agents, the surge in demand might lead to a perpetual shortage in computing power. Computing power supply is constrained by investments in hardware and infrastructure such as chips, servers and data centers. With "AI+" becoming a national strategy, China must vigorously strengthen the supply-side infrastructure.

In the AI era, computing power is akin to national strength. Recent developments bode well for China's computing capacity. Beyond companies like Huawei Ascend, Cambricon, and Hygon Information Technology launching acceleration chips and CPUs, the completion of China's largest AI computing cluster in Zhengzhou is a milestone in domestic computing infrastructure.

Developed countries are racing to build AI for Science (AI4S) computing facilities, marking a new stage of global tech competition. The cluster in Zhengzhou, located at the core node of China's Supercomputing Internet, integrates 60,000 acceleration cards. It is a super brain tailored for Chinese scientists and signifies a breakthrough in the country's computing infrastructure.

What gives China greater confidence is the energy support behind computing power — the bottom layer of what NVIDIA CEO Jensen Huang calls the "Five-Layer Cake of AI". At the end of AI lies electricity; tokens are driven by watts.

China has the world's largest and most advanced power supply system, with a total installed generation capacity of 3.95 billion kilowatts — three times that of the United States and 13 times that of Japan. The continued expansion of green power promises the sustainable development of computing power.

Under the framework of token economics, China's two major initiatives — computing-electricity synergy project and "East Data, West Computing" — are increasingly significant. The former ensures power supply for computing centers through coordinated planning of computing infrastructure and power systems.

The latter channels dense computing power demand from the east to the electricity-rich west. Both are vital for consolidating and upgrading China's intelligent computing scale, now the second largest in the world.

As Liu of the National Data Bureau noted, "tokens are not only the value anchor of the AI era but also the settlement unit connecting technology supply with commercial demand, providing quantifiable possibilities for the implementation of business models."

Token economics is still in conceptual infancy, and its integration with the real economy has yet to crystallize into a mature model. Regardless of whether an industrial revolution centered on tokens has already begun, as some analysts speculate, establishing a new value assessment system around tokens — a core variable reshaping the digital economy landscape — is an inevitable requirement for the development of the AI industry.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:02 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:02 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

BERNARD DEWIT

Long-standing partnership

With careful stewardship, open dialogue and a focus on shared interests, Belgium-China relations can continue to evolve as a force for good



WANG XIAOYING/ CHINA DAILY

The 55th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Belgium and China comes at a time of renewed global uncertainty, but also of opportunity. The visit of Belgium's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Maxime Prévot to China at the invitation of Foreign Minister Wang Yi in April underscored the enduring importance both countries attach to dialogue, cooperation and pragmatic engagement. This milestone is not merely a symbolic anniversary, but a strategic moment to reaffirm shared commitments to mutually beneficial economic ties.



Over the past 55 years, Belgium-China relations have evolved from modest diplomatic exchanges into a multifaceted partnership. According to Chinese Ambassador to Belgium Fei Shengchao, even amid shifting geopolitical dynamics, this relationship has been marked by consistency and resilience. As a founding member of the European Union and home to its main institutions, Belgium has long served as a gateway between China and the EU. And China has become one of Belgium's most important trading partners outside the EU, reflecting deepening economic interdependence.

From the perspective of global peace and development, this year carries broader implications. In an increasingly fragmented international landscape, stable bilateral relationships such as that between Belgium and China provide an anchor for constructive engagement. Both countries have consistently supported multilateralism, international law and dialogue over confrontation. These principles are essential at a time when global challenges — ranging from climate change to economic volatility — require coordinated, cross-border solutions.

Economic cooperation remains at the heart of this partnership. Belgium's open economy, strategic logistics infrastructure and expertise in sectors such as pharmaceuticals, chemicals and advanced manufacturing complement China's scale, innovation capacity and rapidly evolving domestic market. The Port of Antwerp-Bruges and the airports in Brussels and Liege, for example, have become key hubs for trade flows between Europe and Asia, illustrating how connectivity can translate into shared prosperity.

Looking ahead, there is significant potential for collaboration in areas that are critical to both countries' futures. Technological innovation offers fertile ground for joint ventures, particularly in fields such as biotechnology, artificial intelligence and clean energy. Belgium's strong research institutions and China's growing investment in R&D create natural synergies. At the same time, the green transition represents both a necessity and an opportunity. As countries work toward carbon neutrality, partnerships that combine European regulatory expertise with Chinese industrial capacity can accelerate progress while creating new economic value.

From a European perspective, EU-China economic cooperation is both essential and complex. The EU seeks to balance openness with strategic autonomy, ensuring that cooperation with China remains fair and reciprocal. Belgium, as an EU member state, supports this balanced approach. Engagement with China should not be viewed through a purely competitive lens, but rather as a partnership where differences are managed through dialogue and common interests are actively pursued.

China's economic transformation over the past several decades has lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty and contributed significantly to global growth. Today, China remains a key engine of the world economy, accounting for a substantial share of global GDP expansion. For European businesses, including many Belgian companies, China represents both a vast market and an increasingly sophisticated innovation ecosystem.

At the same time, China's initiatives in infrastructure development and connectivity — particularly through international cooperation frameworks — have the potential to enhance global trade and development. When implemented transparently and sustainably, such initiatives can benefit not only participating countries but also the broader international community.

In terms of regional and global stability, China plays an increasingly important role. As a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, China is well-positioned to contribute to conflict resolution and peacekeeping efforts. Belgium, with its long-standing commitment to diplomacy and international cooperation, shares this objective. Both countries recognize that stability is a prerequisite for development, and that dialogue remains the most effective tool for managing differences.

However, it is equally important to acknowledge that constructive cooperation requires trust, transparency and mutual respect. Differences in political systems and economic models should not be ignored, but neither should they prevent collaboration where interests align. The Belgium-China relationship demonstrates that it is possible to maintain a pragmatic partnership while engaging in open and honest dialogue.

US President Donald Trump recently completed a very important visit to China, during which he held talks with President Xi Jinping on forging stable and constructive relations between China and the United States, which are of utmost importance to global economic confidence and geopolitical stability. The way they interact has a direct impact on international trade, investment flows, financial markets, supply chains and global governance. Europe, Belgium in particular, naturally benefits when the relationship between these two countries is predictable, pragmatic and based on dialogue rather than confrontation.

As Belgium and China mark the 55th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, the message is clear: Bilateral relationships rooted in mutual benefit and respect can serve as building blocks for a more stable and prosperous world. For the two countries, the path forward lies in deepening economic ties, expanding cooperation in emerging sectors and reinforcing their shared commitment to multilateralism.

The next chapter of Belgium-China relations might present challenges, but it also holds immense promise. With careful stewardship, open dialogue and a focus on shared interests, this long-standing partnership can continue to evolve as a force for good in an increasingly interconnected world.

The author is the chairman of the Belgian-Chinese Chamber of Commerce and the senior partner of Dewit Law Office based in Brussels. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

ONDREJ DOSTÁL

A reset point for Europe

The war on Iran may represent a decisive moment for the EU if it has the wisdom to seize it



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

The war launched by the United States and Israel on Iran has exposed Europe's failure to fulfill its most basic responsibility: defending international law and protecting European interests. The economic consequences of the conflict could lead to a vastly different European Union — one in which member states reclaim control, and Brussels is weakened.



After the renewed US and Israeli aggression on Iran, most decision-makers in the EU quickly aligned themselves with Washington, largely limiting themselves to criticizing Iran's military response rather than addressing the initial surprise escalation. The principle of self-defence, it seems, is applied selectively in Brussels.

In the face of this serious violation of international law, which resulted in heavy Iranian casualties, widespread devastation across the country, and further destabilization of the Middle East, only a handful of European leaders spoke in defence of the United Nations Charter. Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez was among the few who openly named the aggressor and took concrete action, closing Spain's airspace to any aircraft involved in the conflict and withdrawing the Spanish ambassador to Israel.

Europe has faced similar moments before. During the Iraq War in 2003, several European governments supported Washington's illegal campaign despite widespread public opposition. The overthrow of the Libyan government in 2011 followed a similar dynamic, initially framed as a humanitarian mission but ultimately helping turn Africa's most prosperous nation into a failed state, which is still struggling to recover 15 years later.

Then and now, nothing good ever came out of such military adventurism for Washington's European allies. In addition to the tragic toll in military casualties and the waste of billions in taxpayer money, Europe was also confronted with skyrocketing energy prices, as well as millions of refugees who have placed significant strain on Europe's social services, labor markets, education systems and local communities. But while the Iran conflict is not an isolated incident, its gravity and economic impact may surpass anything seen before.

The Strait of Hormuz, through which roughly one-fourth of global oil and one-fifth of global liquefied natural gas passes, will remain a source of instability even under a ceasefire. Shipping risks, higher insurance costs and damaged infrastructure will constrain supply for years. Key LNG facilities in the Gulf, including parts of Qatar's Ras Laffan complex — the largest LNG terminal in the world — have suffered damage, with QatarEnergy's CEO Saad Sherida al-Kaabi warning that this could affect LNG supplies to Europe "for up to five years".

Europe's vulnerability is compounded by its misguided energy policy since 2022, most notably the self-imposed sanctions on Russian gas. By cutting off a major and reliable supplier, the EU exposed its economies to wholly unnecessary risks, forcing reliance on expensive and unstable US and Middle Eastern LNG. The result is soaring energy costs, rising living expenses and a sharp erosion of industrial competitiveness. Energy-intensive sectors, from chemicals and steel to fertilizers and heavy manufacturing, are already under severe strain, with external competition growing and ongoing exposure to energy volatility threatening long-term decline.

The consequences are visible across key sectors. Germany's chemical industry — long a backbone of European production — has been hit hard by soaring energy costs, with major producers such as BASF, Lanxess and Wacker Chemie raising prices and slowing investment. In 2025, investment in Europe's chemical sector fell by over 80 percent, plant closures doubled, wiping out around 17 million tons of capacity and threatening roughly 20,000 jobs.

Even though the impact of the Iran crisis has not fully unfolded, industrial gas and electricity prices across the EU are already two to four times higher than in major trading partners, undermining competitiveness and making European factories less attractive than sites in the US or Asia. In France, energy-intensive sectors, such as chemicals, fertilizers, metallurgy, glass and plastics, report cost increases of up to 40 percent, with some struggling to maintain production.

In this sense, rising energy prices are not abstract statistics, but a force translating into factory closures and growing uncertainty for millions of workers and small businesses across the continent.

Consequently, Europe's response to the Iran crisis should not be seen merely as inadequate geopolitical maneuvering; it raises a more fundamental question: Is European leadership prepared to prioritize the continent's economic survival and long-term stability over Washington's interests?

Many European citizens are skeptical of foreign military interventions and question whether European governments are acting in the continent's own interests. This gap between Europe's political elites and public sentiment is likely to continue widening in the coming years. As energy shortages and industrial decline intensify, this disconnect will evolve into a broader legitimacy crisis for European institutions and mainstream political leadership.

As a result, Europe is likely to witness the emergence of new political forces, alongside a gradual reorientation of mainstream parties. Pragmatism and the pursuit of national economic interests will increasingly challenge Europe's automatic transatlantic alignment.

Such developments would reshape the balance of power within the EU. The current vision of a tightly integrated, uniformly aligned Europe would give way to a more flexible and pragmatic structure, in which EU member states reclaim meaningful control over foreign policy, energy strategy and economic partnerships. Integration would continue where it delivers clear advantages, but strategic decisions would increasingly reflect national priorities rather than come from Brussels. In practice, this shift would mark the rise of a more plural, multi-vector Europe, moving decisively away from the largely undemocratic, top-down model that has dominated EU governance for decades.

A multi-vector Europe would be better positioned to navigate a multipolar world. The EU could maintain relations with the US, but without automatically subordinating European interests or joining every US military venture. At the same time, Europe would be free to deepen economic and diplomatic ties with the Global South, including the BRICS nations, fostering cooperation that benefits both European citizens and the peoples of partner countries.

For now, Europe still possesses enormous strengths: advanced industry, technological expertise, a large internal market, a well-educated workforce, and world-class cultural and academic institutions. Decline is not inevitable. The continent can adapt to a changing global order and remain an important economic and political actor — but only if it develops the wisdom to defend its own interests.

In this sense, the Iran war may ultimately be remembered not only as yet another US aggression against a sovereign Middle Eastern state but also as a turning point in the EU's strategic trajectory.

The author is a member of the European Parliament. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:02 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:02 PM

BUSINESS



Visitors record a humanoid robot performance staged at the booth of Unitree Robotics during a high-tech expo in Beijing on March 20. TANG KE / FOR CHINA DAILY

Unitree gearing up for IPO; Shanghai review next week

China's leading humanoid robot maker posts 1.7 billion yuan in yearly revenue

By **CHENG YU**
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

60.13 percent
gross margin from Unitree Robotics' core business in 2025

Chinese humanoid robot maker Unitree Robotics will face Shanghai's listing committee next week for its planned STAR Market initial public offering, as the company reported surging revenue growth, expanding margins and accelerating overseas deployment of its products.

The Shanghai Stock Exchange said it would meet on Monday to review Unitree's IPO application, formally moving one of China's highest-profile robotics startups closer to a public listing.

Unitree simultaneously disclosed updated 2025 financial data, showing revenue rose to about 1.7 billion yuan ($236 million), as China's humanoid robotics sector draws growing investor attention amid a global race to commercialize embodied artificial intelligence.

The Hangzhou, Zhejiang-province based firm said gross margin from its core business climbed to 60.13 percent in 2025, up nearly 16 percentage points from 44.22 percent in 2023, helped by increasing vertical integration and in-house manufacturing. Unitree said more than 90 percent of its core components are now self-developed and self-produced.

The company sharply increased research spending as competition in humanoid robotics intensifies. Unitree said its 2025 research and development investment more than doubled from a year earlier, rising 107.04 percent.

The filing comes as investors increasingly view humanoid robotics as one of China's next major strategic industries, alongside AI, electric vehicles and semiconductors.

Unitree has rapidly expanded its product lineup in recent months. It debuted earlier this month the world's first mass-produced piloted mech suit, marking the company's boldest step yet — from robot dogs and humanoid robots to science-fiction-style human mobility machines.

The machine, named GD01, starts at 3.9 million yuan. In a video released on Tuesday, Unitree founder and CEO Wang Xingxing was seen personally climbing into the cockpit and driving it across mixed terrain, with the footage presented in real time and without playback acceleration.

Meanwhile, Unitree's overseas push has begun moving beyond demonstrations into real-world industrial testing.

Codeveloped humanoid robots recently entered Tokyo's Haneda Airport for trial operations launched by Japan Airlines, the company said.

The robots are being tested for ground handling operations including baggage loading and unloading, cargo transport and conveyor coordination, with trials scheduled to continue through 2028.

Unitree said its G1 robot's flexibility, load capacity and force control capabilities allow it to adapt efficiently to complex airport environments while helping ease labor shortages and reduce worker burden.

The company described the deployment as the first commercial application of a Chinese humanoid robot inside a major global aviation hub.

Wei Kai, head of the AI research institute at the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology, said: "China's humanoid robots have made significant strides in motor control capabilities, which can be seen in recent events. The evolution of the 'brain' is also very fast. Hierarchical models and end-to-end models have progressed under data-driven paradigms."

Wei said China has established 27 data-collection sites nationwide to support training of embodied AI systems, signaling an effort to industrialize the learning pipeline behind the hardware.

The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology said China had more than 140 humanoid robot manufacturers by 2025, launching over 330 product models. In 2026, more than half of China's provinces and cities have incorporated embodied intelligence and robotics development into their government work reports.

'Durian freedom' spreads as prices dip across nation

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn



Consumers select durian at a supermarket in Shijiazhuang, Hebei province, on May 11. JIA MINJIE / FOR CHINA DAILY

Durian prices are tumbling as booming imports, faster logistics and a wave of seasonal fruit make the tropical fruit increasingly affordable for consumers.

Prices for some durian varieties have fallen 10 percent to 20 percent from a year earlier, according to wholesale market data and retailers. Durian that once sold for as much as 300 yuan ($44) to 400 yuan each can now be found for less than 100 yuan in some markets, fueling social media buzz around achieving "durian freedom" — a phrase used by Chinese consumers to describe "unlimited" access to previously expensive foods.

Thailand's Monthong durian, the dominant variety in the market, traded at an average wholesale price of 24.15 yuan per 500 grams at Beijing Xinfadi wholesale market on Tuesday, roughly flat from a year ago, but down 14 percent from early April.

Vietnamese Monthong durians have seen steeper declines, with wholesale prices dropping to about 18 yuan per 500 grams, down more than 40 percent from the previous month and over 30 percent from a year earlier, according to market data.

Retailers are passing on the savings to consumers. Membership chains including Sam's Club are selling Thai Monthong durians for around 199 yuan per 3 to 3.75 kilograms.

"Overall sales volume has definitely increased by more than 20 percent year-on-year," said He Huaxin, head of community group buying at Beijing Xinfadi wholesale market. "Durian from multiple countries are now entering the market, with Vietnamese varieties showing particularly strong growth momentum."

China is the world's largest durian importer and consumer, accounting for an estimated 82 percent of global consumption.

The country's appetite for what is often called the "king of fruits" has prompted producing nations across Southeast Asia to rapidly expand cultivation and exports.

Analysts said falling prices also reflect improvements in the country's logistics and distribution infrastructure, particularly the expansion of cold chain transportation tied to the government's efforts and push for a more integrated domestic market.

The durian price slide is part of a broader correction in the premium fruit market in the country as summer harvests accelerate. Cherry prices have nearly halved from earlier this year, while lychee prices have also dropped sharply amid surging supply. According to price tracking data from Chinese resale platform Dewu.com, 1,000-gram packs of Grade 3 domestic cherries sold for about 189 yuan in early March. By May, during peak harvest season, prices for the same product had fallen to around 108 yuan, a decline of nearly 45 percent.

Meanwhile, in Hainan province, one of the major lychee-producing regions, daily outbound shipments have repeatedly exceeded 10,000 metric tons. Cumulative shipments since late March reached nearly 88,000 tons as of May 8, up almost 289 percent from a year earlier. Sam's Club has set the retail price of a 2.5-kilogram box of lychees at 66.6 yuan.

Dajin Heavy bags 6.17b yuan in overseas orders

By **ZHENG XIN**
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

Marking a pivotal shift from basic manufacturing to high-end maritime engineering, China's offshore equipment sector is rapidly cementing its indispensable role in the global green energy supply chain.

This accelerating trajectory was underscored on Sunday, as Dajin Heavy Industry Co Ltd announced that its subsidiary has secured a $156 million shipbuilding contract with a subsidiary of the renowned Dutch shipowner Jumbo Maritime.

According to the corporate filing, Dajin Heavy Industry will be responsible for the overall design, construction and delivery of two 25,000 DWT (deadweight tonnage) vessels, bringing a new generation of green, smart and multi-purpose heavy lift ships to the European market.

Scheduled for phased delivery in 2028 and 2029, the ships will feature high-end heavy-duty cranes. A single crane boasts a rated lifting capacity of 1,200 metric tons, while dual cranes operating in tandem can achieve a maximum lifting capacity of 2,400 tons.

Characterized by their massive load capacity, robust lifting capabilities and energy efficiency, the vessels are extensively suited for multi-scenario operations, including the transport of heavy offshore wind power equipment and deep-sea engineering construction, it said.

Remarkably, this marks Dajin Heavy Industry's fourth major overseas order secured within a single month, bringing its recent cumulative contract value to approximately 6.17 billion yuan ($908.8 million), with all delivery windows firmly locked between 2028 and 2029.

The company said this heavy lift vessel contract represents another mainstream core vessel type achieved in the high-end offshore vessel sector, following its successful development of deck carriers and non-propelled semi-submersible barges.

This milestone further perfects the company's full-spectrum layout of offshore vessel manufacturing, solidifying the foundation of its shipbuilding business, it said.

Since its establishment in 2000, Dajin Heavy Industry has deeply engaged in wind power steel structure manufacturing. Its product line encompasses core equipment such as offshore wind monopile foundations, transition pieces, jackets, floating foundations and towers, offering clients comprehensive one-stop solutions.

The company's robust financial performance mirrors its overseas success. In 2025, Dajin reported revenue of 6.17 billion yuan, a year-on-year surge of 63.34 percent, with net profit reaching 1.1 billion yuan.

Overseas revenue hit 4.59 billion yuan, climbing 165 percent and accounting for 74.46 percent of total revenue. By the end of 2025, cumulative overseas orders exceeded 10 billion yuan, covering key European offshore wind regions. This high-growth trajectory persisted into the first quarter of 2026, generating revenue of 1.9 billion yuan, a 67.17 percent increase.

Dajin's momentum is a microcosm of China's broader renewable energy footprint.

According to Qin Haiyan, secretary-general of the Chinese Wind Energy Association (CWEA) under the China Renewable Energy Society, China exported approximately 8 million kilowatts of wind turbine capacity in 2025, jumping about 50 percent year-on-year to hit a record high.

By the end of 2025, China's cumulative wind turbine export capacity surpassed 28 million kW, a 13-fold increase over the past decade. Exported to over 60 countries and regions — including Vietnam, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Brazil — Chinese innovation has been a driving force behind a 60 percent reduction in global wind power costs over the last 10 years, cementing the nation's vital role in the global green energy transition, he said.

Central SOEs urged to ramp up digital efforts

By **REN QI**
renqi@chinadaily.com.cn

China's centrally administered State-owned enterprises have made substantial progress in both industrial digitization and digital industrialization, boosting their roles in ramping up the country's digital economy development, experts said.

The State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council recently emphasized the need to deeply implement the "AI+" special action among central SOEs. It urged enterprises to accelerate their digital and intelligent transformation based on their specific conditions, aiming to build a batch of emerging pillar industries.

Li Zhen, SASAC vice-chairman, said the commission will launch a new round of special transformative actions to this end.

"We will guide SOEs in the tiered cultivation of smart factories, strengthen independent innovation in digital technologies and deepen the integration of the digital economy with the real economy," Li said, adding that these efforts will drive the upgrade of traditional industries and accelerate the development of new quality productive forces.

With massive scale and diverse operational scenarios in key sectors, SOEs have become the core vehicles for moving artificial intelligence technologies from laboratories to industrial applications.

This aligns with a guideline on the "AI+" action issued by the State Council in August. The document set a target for 2027 to achieve deep integration of AI in six key areas, with the application penetration rate of new-generation smart terminals and agents exceeding 70 percent.

By 2030, AI is expected to comprehensively empower high-quality development with a 90 percent penetration rate, making the smart economy a major growth pole. By 2035, China aims to fully enter a new stage of smart economy and society, providing strong support for the basic realization of socialist modernization.

Against this backdrop, central SOEs are rapidly ramping up their infrastructure. In late April, China Mobile announced full operation of its Chengdu, Sichuan province hub node as a trusted data space for State-owned enterprises.

As one of the three major business hubs for this data space, the Chengdu site was closely aligned with the country's "East Data, West Computing" project. Equipped with 50,000 cores of general computing power and 1,675 PFLOPS of intelligent computing power, it provides stable and efficient support for data storage, intelligent analysis and AI model training for SOEs.

Similarly, CHN Energy is actively promoting the digital and intelligent upgrading of its industries by deepening cooperation with various market players, said a company executive.

Notable achievements include jointly developing rapid coal quality testing technology with Hikvision, deploying the "MineHarmony" operating system in its mines in collaboration with Huawei, and pioneering an unmanned coal mining model with industry partners.

The energy giant has also codeveloped a domestic building information modeling platform for the power sector, rolled out its self-developed iDCS system, and built the country's first 5G-powered smart power plant and cloud-based hydropower station.

Despite various challenges ahead, central SOEs are the most likely group to approach the 2027 target of a 70 percent application penetration rate for smart terminals and agents, said Li Jin, chief researcher at the China Enterprise Research Institute.

"To maintain this momentum, these State-owned giants must continue to break down data silos and foster open innovation ecosystems," he said, adding that increased investment in digital talent and robust cybersecurity frameworks will be crucial as these enterprises navigate the complexities of a fully integrated, AI-driven industrial landscape.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:02 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:02 PM

BUSINESS

China key to MSC Air Cargo growth

Firm operates seven freight aircraft on more than 30 routes weekly, serving over 17 destinations

By **WANG YING** in Shanghai
wang_ying@chinadaily.com.cn

Viewing Shanghai as a strategic cornerstone of its global network, MSC Air Cargo is well positioned to serve its strategy of growing alongside the Chinese market following the establishment of a cargo station in Shanghai and the rapid expansion of its operations in China, said a top executive of the company.

"If you look at the global trade lanes and trade corridors, China is very much a core component in the globe. So we selected Shanghai as one of the strongest additional markets to support any growth of products for MSC Air Cargo," said Jannie Davel, CEO of MSC Air Cargo, the air cargo division of Geneva-headquartered MSC Group, during an exclusive interview with China Daily.

"We strongly believe that Shanghai has the capability to continue to be one of the strongest places," said Davel on his visit to Shanghai in late April. The company launched the Shanghai station last month.

Regarding Shanghai's ambition to become a global shipping center, Davel said he sees immense opportunities, given Shanghai's status as one of the world's largest trading ports.

"Shanghai and Hong Kong are two of our biggest gateways. (The launch of) the Shanghai station is very much part of our China gateway strategy in terms of growing with China," Davel said.

Globally, MSC Air Cargo has five major gateways, which are Hong Kong, Shanghai, Malpensa of Italy, Liege in Belgium and Mexico City.

"Every decision we have made over the past two years, from our partnerships to our route development, has been shaped by our belief in the importance of this market," he said.

According to Davel, the agreement signed with the logistics unit of Shanghai Airport (Group) — also known as Shanghai Airport Authority Logistics Development Co — in November has helped MSC Air Cargo grow through adding two new flights, including two weekly in Shanghai, and four in Ezhou, Hubei province.

"Shanghai Airport Authority Logistics Development Co was a very key partner in helping us facilitate our establishment here ... They have been very instrumental for us in helping us start in such a great market," said Davel.

Established in October 2022, MSC Air Cargo has grown rapidly from a single aircraft into a scalable intercontinental platform operating a fleet of seven cargo aircraft on more than 30 routes weekly, serving over 17 destinations in Asia-Pacific, Europe and the Americas.





Above: Two driverless vehicles haul cargo near the smart logistics warehouse at an airport in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, on March 13, 2025.
WANG GANG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE
Left: Wuhu Customs staff members inspect export goods on the maiden international cargo route of Wuhu Xuanzhou airport in Anhui province on June 28, 2024.
XIAO BENXIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

5.1 percent
year-on-year growth of the country's total social logistics value

> "Every decision we have made over the past two years, from our partnerships to our route development, has been shaped by our belief in the importance of this market."
>
> **Jannie Davel,**
> CEO of MSC Air Cargo

"China is very much part of our strategy to continue to grow. More than half (16) of the routes are from or to Chinese destinations," Davel said.

According to Davel, the Chinese mainland contributes between 17 and 18 percent of global air cargo business in terms of tonnage, and that of the Chinese market (including Hong Kong) is between 20 and 21 percent.

"You have to be part of that growth, and we continue to see opportunities," Davel said.

Since his first visit to China back in 1999, Davel said that over the past few decades he was impressed with the quality and speed of China's development.

China's total social logistics value expanded 5.1 percent year-on-year to 368.2 trillion yuan ($54.23 trillion) in 2025, and the nation's logistics sector generated a combined revenue of 14.3 trillion yuan during the same period, up 4.1 percent from a year ago, according to data from the China Federation of Logistics and Purchasing.

China's logistics sector has gone through effective growth during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period. The fact that it has retained the title of the largest logistics market in scale globally for the tenth consecutive year fully demonstrates China's strengths as a supersized market, and such advantages have played a positive role in supporting the nation's economic development, Cai Jin, president of the China Federation of Logistics & Purchasing, was quoted as saying by CCTV news.

In December 2022, MSC Air Cargo kicked off its first operation in Xiamen, Fujian province. The company currently operates in six Chinese cities including Hong Kong, Ezhou, Shanghai, Xiamen, as well as Guangzhou and Shenzhen in Guangdong province.

"Our presence in China is built on trust, mutual respect and a shared belief that strong local partnerships are the foundation of reliable global logistics," Davel noted.

Leaps seen in value of Chinese brands

By **ZHOU WENTING** in Shanghai
zhouwenting@chinadaily.com.cn

The value of Chinese brands listed among the 2026 list of the top 100 most valuable global brands has leaped by 32 percent year-on-year, significantly surpassing the global average growth rate, according to a report released by consulting firm Kantar.

Chinese brands are not only showcasing their innovative vitality and global competitiveness, but also transitioning from mere scale expansion to capability enhancement, according to the report released on May 14.

Chinese brands excel at making decisive judgments and acting swiftly in the early stages of emerging trends, and they effectively translate insights into tangible value through continuous iteration and experience optimization, according to the report. Such agility is becoming a crucial competitive advantage in an increasingly uncertain market environment, it stated.

For instance, Tencent, ranked eighth on the list, continues to leverage its ecosystem to enhance monetization capabilities through games, video account advertisements and cloud computing services. Alibaba, positioned at 19th, has stabilized its brand value through business structure optimization and user experience upgrades.

Huawei, ranked 41st on the list, defines artificial intelligence as the most certain strategic opportunity for the next decade, focusing on the definite demand for computing power and connectivity to enhance user lifecycle values. Also, Haier, positioned at 53rd, has embraced AI comprehensively throughout its processes, continuously strengthening its competitiveness in the internet of things ecosystem.

In addition to the 13 Chinese brands that made the top 100, another 14 Chinese brands and their related sub-brands are listed in global industry sub-rankings in the fields of alcohol, apparel, automobiles, food and beverages, media and entertainment, retail, and home care. These brands include Wuliangye, Anta, BYD, Nongfu Spring, WeChat, Pinduoduo and Liby.

"Behind the strong rise of Chinese brands, there exists a clear main line, which is to continuously expand the value boundary of the brand in consumers' lives. The brands begin with their existing advantages and precisely extend into more new growth spaces," said Zhang Lin, executive managing director of Kantar China.

Zhang said that in the process of globalization and long-term brand building, Chinese brands have been demonstrating sharper judgment and more decisive action, setting new references for global brand growth.

Kantar has stated that this year's list sends a clear signal that AI is rapidly reshaping the global brand value system, with brands unable to adapt to AI-driven transformations losing their competitive advantages.

Meanwhile, AI-native brands are rapidly emerging. Claude entered the global top 100 for the first time, ranked 27th with a brand value of nearly $100 billion. ChatGPT became the fastest-growing brand of the year, with its brand value increasing by an impressive 285 percent year-on-year.



A livestreaming host promotes Chinese makeup to Western audiences on TikTok in Yiwu, Zhejiang province, on Sept 24.
LYU BIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Technology brands are showing strong dominance in the global top 100 rankings. Google reclaimed the top spot, with Nvidia, Amazon and Tencent making it into the top 10.

The total value of the annual top 100 most valuable global brands reached $13.1 trillion, up 22 percent from the previous year. Brand growth is entering a new acceleration cycle, said the report.

In this AI-driven global brand restructuring, Asian brands have been continuously expanding their influence in both domestic and international markets, with 23 Asian brands making the list this year, accounting for nearly a quarter of the global top 100.

Plant for fossil-free plastics planned

By **WANG YING** in Shanghai

China has been chosen as the site for the world's first plant for the production of fossil-free plastics from green methanol, reflecting among other factors the country's manufacturing strengths, commitment to green transformation, and promising development prospects, according to a top executive of Swiss-based fossil-free plastic company Vioneo.

China's manufacturing strength and its 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), which prioritizes green chemicals and industrial decarbonization, prompted Vioneo to bring its 1.5 billion euros ($1.74 billion) investment to China, said Alex Hogan, CEO of Vioneo, during a recent interview in Shanghai.

"China has shown strong commitment to sustainability, with the latest five-year plan supporting green methanol and zero-carbon technologies. That is one of the main reasons for coming here," he said.

According to Hogan, the world's first newly built plastics plant powered by renewable electricity and green methanol is expected to cut carbon dioxide emissions by about 1.5 million metric tons a year versus oil-based production, and the figure could double if coal is used as the raw material.

"We are at the beginning of the journey identifying China is the right place, because our feedstock sources are here. China is decades ahead of other regions on green methanol," he said.

The European chemical start-up, owned by A.P. Moller Holding, announced in January that it would abandon plans to build the plant in Belgium and decided to invest in a similar project in China.

"We took a very conscious decision to put the first plant in China," said Katja Wodjereck, chief commercial officer of Vioneo, adding that the availability of green methanol at scale and on a competitive basis in the future was a big plus.

"Moving the first plant here is a supply chain decision and also a commercial decision, because that way we cannot make this even more — from the supply chain — closer to where our feedstock is," said Wodjereck.

"But we are also making this more cost-attractive, with a better supply chain and greater CO2 savings. It also opens up, which I find very interesting in my role, access to Asian customers in the future," she added.

According to Wodjereck, the future plant is expected to have annual capacity of about 200,000 tons of fossil-free polypropylene and 100,000 tons of fossil-free polyethylene.

"There are other reasons, but you need to look at what the most important ones are. The most important reason is to reduce the price of our final product, and the (15th) Five-Year Plan is stimulating the green ethanol market," said Hogan.

China's 15th Five-Year Plan outlined its commitment to comprehensively advancing green transformation at a faster pace, with the country's green and low-carbon industrial scale expected to double to exceed 20 trillion yuan ($2.94 trillion) by the end of 2030, CGTN reported.

The target of achieving carbon neutrality is not simply a commitment to cutting emissions, but also a profound transformation involving green buildings, zero-emission plants and industrial parks, green energy, green products and green trade, the report added.

Scheduled to officially begin production by 2030, Hogan said the company is still in talks over the final site selection and is expected to make a formal announcement in about one to two months.

"I'm counting on China speed. Everything I hear is that the country is amazing at delivering large-scale projects quickly, so maybe a little earlier than 2030," Hogan said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:02 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:02 PM

CHINA

Call to enhance global ocean governance

Policies aimed at promoting renewable blue economy and conservation efforts

By **ZHANG YI** in Xiamen, Fujian and **HU MEIDONG** in Fuzhou

Experts gathered in the coastal city of Xiamen for the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development 2026 Roundtable Meeting have called for broader efforts to enhance global ocean governance through multilateral cooperation.

The two-day event, which concluded on Tuesday, hosted about 150 delegates, including officials from the Ministry of Ecology and Environment, leaders of Fujian province and Xiamen, council members, international partners, and representatives from research institutes and enterprises.

At this year's roundtable, themed "Harmony Between Humanity and the Ocean: Building a Shared Future for All Life on Earth", participants shared the council's latest research findings and policy recommendations on the sustainable blue economy, biodiversity conservation, low-carbon transition and green international development.

Discussions focused on promoting synergies among multilateral conventions to advance global ocean governance, accelerating the green and low-carbon transition of marine industries to foster a renewable blue economy, and deepening "Beautiful Bay" construction to support high-quality economic development in bay areas.

During the event, attendees visited Wuyuan Bay and local mangrove ecological zones for a first-hand experience into Xiamen's progress and innovative practices in marine ecological restoration.

Guillermo Ortuno Crespo, co-lead of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas High Seas Specialist Group, said Xiamen stands as an example of how population and economic growth can coexist with ecological sustainability, addressing one of the world's biggest challenges.

"This is a fantastic opportunity for us to learn from each other and to learn more about the Chinese vision for future ocean governance," Crespo said. "If great countries like China can demonstrate that nature does not come second to economic development, but can instead be placed front and center through the vision of ecological civilization, that would send a positive message to the region and the world."

The event came at a critical turning point for global marine policy after the BBNJ Agreement — the agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction — entered into force on Jan 17, marking a new chapter in global ocean governance.

On Jan 16, China officially submitted a note verbale to the UN secretary-general, applying to host the agreement's permanent secretariat in Xiamen.

According to China's official proposal, Xiamen pledged support to ensure the secretariat's smooth operation, including the provision of a dedicated 15-story modern office building, full waivers of utility fees for the first five years, and a special fund to support the capacity-building efforts and participation of developing countries.

Dimitri de Boer, director for China at ClientEarth, an environmental law organization, spoke highly of Xiamen's potential as the host city, adding that the prospect of a UN secretariat based in Xiamen to help manage the shared oceans has drawn widespread attention.

"Having visited the city several times, Xiamen feels to me like the most beautiful city in China, and it is truly wonderful," he said. "With landmarks like Xiamen University and Gulangyu Island, beaches across the city, a comfortable climate and strong marine technical capabilities, it is an ideal location.

"Xiamen is a highly suitable choice, given China's strong commitment to environmental protection. This would also be a monumental milestone for Xiamen's internationalization," he added.

Contact the writers at zhangyi1@chinadaily.com.cn



Participants of the roundtable meeting visit the Wuyuan Bay wetland park in Xiamen, Fujian province, on Tuesday.
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Building friendship

Children from China and Russia shop for souvenirs with their families during a China-Russia family culture exchange event in Heihe, Heilongjiang province, on Monday. The event features a four-day program for cultural interaction and friendship-building among 60 families from both countries.
QIU QILONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Ambitious solar thermal power project gets ready

By **DAQIONG** in Lhasa and **ZHENG JINRAN**

In a solar thermal power project designed to provide stable electricity for the northern Xizang autonomous region, the installation of nearly 16,000 heliostats — mirrors that concentrate solar energy — has been completed, marking a key step toward the opening of the world's highest-altitude tower-type solar thermal plant in Nagchu's Amdo county later this year.

The 100-megawatt project is being developed by the Xizang Development Investment Group as the region's first tower-type solar thermal power station, part of Xizang's renewable energy development plan under the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25). The company said all 15,927 heliostats — the plant's solar concentrators — have now been installed, and the project is progressing toward grid-connected operation in October.

Unlike conventional photovoltaic systems, the plant uses molten-salt tower thermal technology, which concentrates sunlight to heat molten salt to temperatures of up to 560 C. The stored thermal energy is later converted into electricity through a heat exchange system, allowing the plant to continue supplying electricity after sunset — a key advantage for grid stability in northern Xizang, the company said.

The site receives more than 2,800 hours of sunshine annually. The heliostats are spread across about 800,000 square meters and reflect sunlight toward a central receiving tower.

The project, with a total investment of more than 2 billion yuan ($295 million), is expected to generate around 255 million kilowatt-hours of electricity annually, saving about 60,000 metric tons of standard coal and reducing carbon dioxide emissions by roughly 165,000 tons, said Du Jun, an on-site manager for the company.

"The station will provide stable clean electricity and help address shortcomings in the stability of the northern Xizang power grid," he said.

Developers said construction on the high-altitude Qinghai-Tibet Plateau posed major challenges, including extreme cold, strong winds and weak grid connectivity. To mitigate these conditions, the project team optimized construction methods and introduced intelligent control systems to support operations and maintenance in the harsh environment.

The project has also generated significant economic benefits for local communities. During construction, training programs for farmers and herders are expected to increase combined incomes by about 118 million yuan.

Xizang's clean energy sector has expanded rapidly in recent years, with renewable sources now accounting for more than 96 percent of installed power capacity and almost all electricity generation, according to the region's energy administration.

Karma Tsetan, chairman of the region, said the clean energy sector has rapidly emerged as a key pillar industry, according to a report by Guangming Daily.

Xizang's installed and under-construction power capacity was expected to exceed 33 million kilowatts by the end of 2025, while operational installed capacity would surpass 13 million kilowatts. Electricity transmission from Xizang has expanded to more than 10 provincial-level regions, including Shanghai, Beijing, as well as Hunan and Jiangsu provinces.

The work report of the regional government delivered in late January said industrial upgrading and the strengthening of industry chains have been identified as key tasks for Xizang this year under a broader strategy to develop plateau-specific competitive industries, with clean energy a major focus.

The report said Xizang will accelerate the development of large integrated hydropower, wind and solar bases in the upper reaches of the Jinsha River, southeastern Xizang and the upper Lancang River area.

The region will also push forward power transmission corridors and grid infrastructure, aiming to reach 20 million kW of installed capacity. It also called for the development of equipment manufacturing and clean energy industries, while advancing pilot projects for green hydrogen and oxygen production and related industrial applications.

Contact the writers at zhengjinran@chinadaily.com.cn

Summer school reinforces need for healthy ecosystems

By **LI WENFANG** in Guangzhou and **LI MENGHAN**

International experts are convening in China this week to explore how healthy ecosystems can be harnessed for sustainable development amid intensifying global risks. At the opening ceremony of the second Nature-based Solutions Summer School in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, on Tuesday, participants also underscored the importance of enhanced global sharing and cooperation, and recognized China's notable progress in the field.

Led by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the 10-day event has brought together more than 40 experts from different fields for theoretical learning, case studies, group discussions and field visits across Guangzhou and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

"We are at a critical inflection point in human history. The planet faces an unprecedented convergence of crises — climate change, biodiversity loss and widespread land degradation. These are not isolated problems but deeply interconnected and mutually reinforcing," said Stewart Maginnis, deputy director-general of the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Maginnis stressed the importance of transforming policy landscapes to reflect ecological interdependence, with a core focus on nature-based solutions — actions that protect, sustainably manage and restore ecosystems while addressing societal challenges.

Against this backdrop, the summer school was established in 2025 to build capacity, "because knowledge is only capable of driving meaningful change when it is shared and applied", he said.

"Over the next 10 days, through courses, exchanges and field visits in both Guangzhou and Hong Kong, you will not only expand your knowledge but also build a community of practice that breaks down silos, fosters trust and bridges sectors and disciplines," he said to attendees. "In doing so, you will contribute to advancing nature-based solutions across Asia."

For Amandine Heger, deputy director of the Ministry of the Environment, Climate and Biodiversity of Luxembourg, this is her first visit to China, and she said Guangzhou has given her a profound sense of the country's scale and speed of implementation.

"This is a country that does not merely discuss ecological transformation. It implements it, rooted in an ancient philosophy that sees humanity not above nature, but as part of it. China has translated this vision into actions at every scale," Heger said.

She cited examples where Guangzhou has restored barren hills to green, established ecological corridors and advanced large-scale mangrove restoration along its coastlines.

Wu Jun, deputy director-general of the Ministry of Natural Resources' Department of International Cooperation, said Guangzhou and Hong Kong were selected to host the second summer school due to their proven practices, noting that the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area is a pioneer in green development and cross-regional ecological synergy governance.

Wu expressed hope that participants would share their perspectives and regional practices to accelerate the global implementation of nature-based solutions.

China will continue to implement the "Two Mountains Theory" — a concept emphasizing that lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets — in advancing nature-based solutions and contributing Chinese wisdom to global ecological governance, she added.

Contact the writers at limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

Mine blast victims given psychological counseling

By **YANG ZEKUN** and **ZHU XINGXIN** in Qinyuan, Shanxi and **WANG XIAOYU** in Beijing

Medical workers have rushed to provide mental health support to people affected by a mine accident in northern China's Shanxi province to help them cope with trauma.

The gas explosion that struck the Liushenyu coal mine in Qinyuan county, Changzhi city, on Friday evening killed 82 people, with two still missing. A total of 128 people were injured, including four in serious or critical condition.

At Changzhi People's Hospital, all 31 injured patients have received systematic psychological assessments and intervention and are generally in stable condition, said Zhao Bing, a psychologist at the hospital, in an interview on Tuesday.

"We began evaluating their emotional and mental status on the very first day they were admitted, after doctors checked their physical condition and confirmed that their vital signs were stable," she said.

Along with therapists and psychiatrists dispatched from higher-level hospitals, Zhao said medical personnel are conducting daily ward rounds and one-on-one interviews to monitor patients' mood changes, sleep patterns and psychological recovery progress.

"Most of them are now eating and sleeping normally and resting well without much distress," she said, adding that their physical condition is also stable, though a few still experience mild dizziness or headaches, likely resulting from exposure to carbon monoxide.

Zhao said mental health workers are paying special attention to signs of anxiety, depression, repeated recollection of the accident scene, as well as nightmares, and are developing tailored recovery plans.

"Their most critical psychological need is to reestablish stability in environmental safety, personal safety and physical health, as well as a sense of trust in family care, social support, government assistance and medical treatment," Zhao said.

Cui Hongwei, a psychologist at the people's hospital in Qinyuan county, said many patients were worried about lingering physical symptoms, and their most urgent concern was full recovery.

"For miners who have survived a major disaster, rebuilding confidence is the most important thing," he said. "We want to help them slowly emerge from the shadow of the accident and return to normal life."

Cui said the hospital is carrying out daily one-on-one psychological interventions and prioritizing patients who tend to experience mood swings, repeatedly recall the accident or suffer from insomnia.

He added that after all patients are discharged, the hospital will continue to provide follow-up consultations for at least one week and up to three months.

Under the guidance of the National Health Commission, a total of 10 psychologists have been dispatched by the province to support psychological relief work, according to local authorities.

At the same time, two social workers are accompanying each victim's family, providing emotional support and counseling. Detailed compensation and assistance plans are being formulated, authorities said.

The Supreme People's Procuratorate announced on Tuesday that it would supervise the handling of the case involving the explosion.

Contact the writers at wangxiaoyu@chinadaily.com.cn



A medical worker tends to a miner injured in the gas explosion accident at the Liushenyu coal mine in Changzhi, Shanxi province, on Sunday. YANG CHENGUANG / XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:02 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:02 PM

CHINA

CROSSING THE STRAIT

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

Lai's two years in office plagued by failure

Island leader pushes Taiwan toward becoming 'powder keg'

By **LI SHANGYI**
lishangyi@chinadaily.com.cn



JIN DING / CHINA DAILY

After two years in office, growing evidence suggests Lai Ching-te has been consolidating his political power and advancing the "Taiwan independence" separatist agenda at the expense of the Taiwan people's livelihoods and regional stability.

While Lai promised to "make Taiwan a better place" two years ago, critics have pointed out a sharp contrast between the sweeping promises made in his inaugural address and his actual governance.

Of Lai's 227 campaign pledges, only two have been fulfilled, representing a 99 percent failure rate, according to Ko Ju-chun, a lawmaker from the Chinese Kuomintang, the largest opposition party in Taiwan. This lack of progress has led critics on the island to label Lai a "liar". Recent polling in Taiwan indicated that his dissatisfaction rating has remained above 50 percent for five consecutive months.

Despite failure to fulfill his pledges, the Lai administration has introduced measures such as the "mass recall" campaign targeting opposition lawmakers and restrictions preventing Taiwan residents from taking group tours to the Chinese mainland. Political analysts argued that what Lai has brought to the island is deepening internal political confrontation and straining cross-Strait relations.

Escalating tensions

Since taking office in May 2024, Lai has pursued a political agenda centered on "Taiwan independence". His administration has moved away from the 1992 Consensus, which embodies the one-China principle and has long served as the foundation for cross-Strait relations.

The Chinese mainland has dismissed this separatist agenda as a mere "illusion". His approach has also faced pushback from opposition parties within Taiwan and has failed to gain recognition from the broader international community.

The Lai administration has taken provocative actions such as military expansion and reliance on external forces to advance its separatist agenda, moves widely seen as fueling political confrontation in Taiwan and across the Strait.

In March last year, it released the so-called 17 measures, which labeled the mainland as a "hostile force" and imposed restrictions on cross-Strait exchanges.

While repeatedly emphasizing the "importance of peace", Lai has continued to push for an increase in the island's "defense" spending to more than 3 percent of GDP, with a target of reaching 5 percent by 2030.

In November last year, he also proposed a special "defense" budget worth $40 billion for arms purchases from the United States. After being blocked several times by opposition lawmakers, the proposal was eventually reduced to $25 billion in May.

Zheng Jian, a professor of Taiwan studies at Xiamen University in Fujian province, said the Lai administration's strategic shortsightedness and blind obedience with the belief that paying "protection fees" can buy security will not bring peace, but instead risk turning Taiwan into a powder keg of geopolitical rivalry.

He added that Lai's so-called defense is mortgaging Taiwan's future and tying its 23 million people to his "Taiwan independence" chariot.

Li Zhenguang, dean of the Taiwan Research Institute at Beijing Union University, said that "Taiwan independence" provocations have created heightened risks of military conflict in the region, which are the greatest threat to peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.

Societal divisions

On May 19, an impeachment vote against Lai was held in the island's "legislative yuan" on the eve of the second anniversary of his term, marking the first such vote targeting a Taiwan leader.

The impeachment procedures were initiated by the two opposition parties in December last year after the Lai administration refused to promulgate an amendment to the government revenue allocation plan enacted by the legislative body.

The move of the Lai administration was regarded as negating legislative power and undermining the separation of powers in the government.

Although the impeachment motion failed to reach the required threshold, the 56-50 vote in favor of the proposal still reflected strong public dissatisfaction with Lai's administration, opposition parties said.

Cheng Li-wun, chairwoman of the KMT, said on May 20 that the Lai administration's disregard for Taiwan's laws and democratic institutions has become the most significant source of instability on the island over the past two years.

When Lai was elected as the regional leader in 2024, his Democratic Progressive Party failed to secure an absolute majority in the legislative assembly. Out of the 113 representatives in the "legislative yuan", 52 are from the KMT, 51 from the DPP, eight from the Taiwan People's Party and two are non-party candidates.

Facing this unfavorable balance of power, the Lai administration has attempted to overturn election results while intensifying efforts to suppress opposition parties and dissenting voices in Taiwan.

An unprecedented "mass recall" campaign was launched by the DPP authorities in July and August last year, targeting 31 KMT lawmakers and a former mayor of Hsinchu from the TPP in an attempt to remove them from office before the end of their terms. However, none of the recall efforts succeeded.

Under Lai's administration, partisan tensions between the DPP and opposition parties have also led to frequent stalemates over policy proposals and public budget bills in the legislative body, contributing to low government efficiency.

The mainland has described his administration as "incapable of governing but highly adept at political infighting".

Following the "anti-mainland" stance, the Lai administration has also required public officials and employees in education to sign a declaration stating that they do not hold mainland household registration or identification.

These people also need to obtain approval before traveling to the mainland and to provide detailed reports of their itineraries and purposes upon returning to Taiwan. Violations may result in demerits and dismissal from their posts.

Many residents in Taiwan have expressed deep concern over a tightening political and social atmosphere, describing a "chilling effect" akin to a new "green terror", a reference to the signature color of the DPP.

Among those most severely affected are mainland-born spouses living in Taiwan, a community of over 400,000 people. Last year, the DPP authorities expelled several mainland-born spouses, who are social media influencers, after DPP supporters reported them for making pro-mainland comments online. One of these influencers, Liu Zhenya, was forced to leave Taiwan, separating her from her three children on the island.

The DPP authorities also issued an administrative order requiring mainland-born spouses to submit a document certifying the renunciation of their mainland household registration. Those who do not comply face the risk of having their Taiwan residency or settlement permits revoked.

Zheng, the professor, called the governing approach "dictatorial", under which "those who obey will prosper, while those who oppose will perish".

He said that such practices of intimidating dissenters fully expose the hypocrisy of "wanting not democracy but the DPP to dominate".

Deceptive 'resilience'

Taiwan's economic growth rate reached 8.68 percent last year, the highest level in the past 15 years, while per capita nominal GDP surpassed $39,000, which was highlighted by Lai in his anniversary speech on May 20.

However, recent data released by Taiwan's accounting authorities showed that nearly 70 percent of employed workers on the island earned less than the average salary in the first quarter of this year, marking a record high.

The strong economic figures contrast sharply with the growing public perception of "poverty" on the island. Kuo Cheng-liang, a former lawmaker and political commentator, said the gains from economic growth have largely been concentrated among corporations rather than shared with ordinary workers.

Meanwhile, inflation still weighs on households and businesses. Amid the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, businesses are facing the combined pressure of rising oil prices and currency depreciation. According to market researcher CRIF Taiwan, the real purchasing power of the New Taiwan dollar has declined by about 3 to 5 percent since the outbreak of the conflict, further intensifying imported inflationary pressures.

The impact has also been reflected in consumer prices. Products such as imported beef, dairy products and fruits have seen price increases of around 8 to 12 percent in supermarkets due to higher air and sea freight surcharges.

Disruptions to energy shipping routes in the Strait of Hormuz have also created challenges for Taiwan's heavily import-dependent energy supply. Power suppliers and oil refiners on the island have suffered significant losses while attempting to stabilize energy prices.

Compared to the administration's strong focus on political agendas, critics said it has shown indifference to the island's economic and industrial challenges.

In April, the mainland introduced 10 policy measures to promote cross-Strait industrial and infrastructure cooperation. While industry groups in Taiwan have called on the DPP authorities to respond, the administration labeled the package as "united front tools" and declined to implement the measures.

At the same time, the Lai administration has been accommodating demands raised by the US in a proposed trade framework, including expanding Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company operations in the US, increasing investment in US technology industries, and expanding imports of US agricultural products.

Local media reported that tariff-free access for US agricultural goods could pose risks to Taiwan's farmers, while eased import requirements for products such as sprouted potatoes have also raised concerns over food safety.

Zhu Fenglian, a spokeswoman for the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, said at a news conference in February that the DPP made excessive concessions in trade negotiations with the US in an attempt to seek external support for their separatist agenda, at the cost of Taiwan's industrial development prospects and the interests of people on the island.

Professor Zheng said the so-called economic achievements are nothing but a mirage built on a single industry. "Once the external environment changes, Taiwan's economy could face a painful hard landing," he added.

Completion nears on quest to retrace ancestral roots

By **ZHANG YI** and **HU MEIDONG**
in Fuzhou


Lai Hanzhong displays a handwritten genealogy book of the Lai clan in Xintian village, Fujian province, in September 2022.
ZHANG JINCHUAN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

At a time of heightened political friction across the Taiwan Strait, a monumental four-year grassroots project to bridge the lineage of 100,000 divided clan members is nearing completion in a small village in Fujian province — counting Taiwan leader Lai Ching-te's own family among its historical branches.

In Xintian village of Pinghe, Fujian, the historical point of departure for generations of Chinese mainlanders moving to Taiwan, an eight-volume, co-compiled genealogy book will be unveiled this October.

For Lai Hanzhong, secretary-general of the local Lai Clan Association, the completion of this text is more than a historical record; it is an urgent reminder of shared identity.

"Every time our Taiwan compatriots visit, they bring their own branch genealogies to cross-check records with ours, searching for where they belong," Lai Hanzhong said.

It's estimated that over 60,000 descendants from the village now live in Taiwan.

Lai Hanzhong launched the mass genealogy project in 2022 in an attempt to piece together the Lai clan's history. He organized more than 100 local sages to compile a comprehensive genealogy.

The initiative quickly echoed across the water. Taiwan clan members eagerly joined in, establishing a team of 27 elders to gather historical data scattered across Taiwan and send it back to Lai Hanzhong.

After four years of collaboration, the eight-volume genealogy is nearing completion, with a grand presentation ceremony scheduled for October. A large contingent of Taiwan relatives are expected to attend.

Years ago, Lai Hanzhong visited the old residence of Taiwan leader Lai Ching-te in New Taipei City, meeting his relatives. "They strongly identified with their roots, openly acknowledging they are from Pinghe, and were very warm," Lai Hanzhong said of Lai Ching-te's relatives in Taiwan.

Standing inside the ancestral hall, Lai Hanzhong pointed to the family commandments carved on the wall.

"Our ancestral motto says: 'Children must be filial; those who are unfilial commit the greatest sin against nature,'" Lai Hanzhong said, in the hope that Taiwan clan members remember these teachings.

"As Chinese people and descendants of the Lai clan, one must recognize their ancestors and possess a Chinese heart," he said. "I hope Lai Ching-te can refrain from saying things that hurt compatriots and please adversaries. I hope he can do more good for national reunification. This is the common aspiration of our entire clan and all mainland compatriots."

To Lai Hanzhong, the urgency of his work is best reflected in the younger generation of Taiwan compatriots, who often try to track down their roots guided only by the name Xintian carved on their families' ancestral spirit tablets.

Lai Hanzhong recalled a case in 2022 involving a young Taiwan woman surnamed Lai who was working in Beijing. With a centuries-old address provided by her father, she posted a plea for help on the social media platform Xiaohongshu. Netizens quickly guided her to Xintian village.

When she arrived at the ancestral hall, she was anxious. Her family records used the characters Shentian instead of Xintian, though both sound identical in the local dialect.

"She desperately wanted to know if her ancestor was in our genealogy," Lai Hanzhong said.

"I quickly found him: Dengfang, a 14th-generation ancestor of the Lai clan who migrated to Taiwan."

The woman instantly shared photos of the ancient page with her father via WeChat. "The emotion of that moment is still vivid in my mind," he said. "It showed that when young people from Taiwan find their roots, the excitement is truly unforgettable."

For members of the Xintian Lai clan on the island, the roots also manifest daily in a shared faith, such as the annual cultural festival honoring Emperor Baosheng, a revered deity of medicine and healing.

The incense used in Yuanbao Temple in Taichung, Taiwan, was originally brought from Xintian Temple, honoring the life-preserving deity in the Fujian village. In April, a 200-member pilgrimage group from Taichung traveled to Xintian to pay tribute.

Contact the writers at zhangyi1@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:02 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:02 PM

Z WEEKLY

All about Gen Z

Z WEEKLY



Qu Guanlin (front right), a member of Shengyu Tongxin, teaches students musical theater choreography during a volunteer activity in Qingdao, Shandong province, in 2024. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

POP PULSE

Dear You is a Mandarin and Chaoshan-dialect family drama released in mainland China on April 30. The film follows a Chaoshan grandmother and her grandson, who travels to Thailand in search of his long-absent grandfather, only to uncover a decades-old secret hidden in overseas letters.

Letters that carry home

Without big-name stars, dazzling visual effects or slogan-like messaging, *Dear You* tells the story of generations of overseas Chinese through one of the simplest forms of love: a letter sent home.

In the film, a letter is never just a letter. It carries longing, responsibility and love. For many overseas Chinese families, such letters were once a fragile bridge between survival and belonging.



Veldesen Yaputra

As a Chinese Indonesian student in China, I felt this story deeply. The phrase "overseas Chinese" often brings to mind images of success and wealth. Yet the real history of overseas Chinese communities is often far more ordinary, and therefore far more touching: many were workers, shop owners or teachers who left home just to survive.

They crossed the sea with uncertainty, worked in unfamiliar environments, and saved money little by little. Even a small remittance sent home could represent years of hardship. That is why *Dear You* moved me: it portrays love not as something loud or dramatic, but as endurance — writing, saving, sending, waiting and remembering. Its strongest emotion lies in quiet responsibility.

The film also made me rethink what "home" means for overseas Chinese. For those of us who grew up outside China, identity is not always simple. We may speak different languages at home, live in another country and only partially understand the traditions passed down by our grandparents. Sometimes, we may even feel distant from the culture we inherited. Yet one film, one dialect, one old letter or one family story can suddenly bring us closer to where we come from.

Dear You reminds me that the connection between overseas Chinese and China is not only cultural, but also emotional. That feeling is difficult to explain, but the film gives it shape. It suggests that the Chinese homeland is more than a place on the map: it is a memory preserved in family history and a sense of belonging quietly waiting to be awakened.

For that reason, I hope *Dear You* reaches more overseas Chinese communities around the world. Some viewers may have never visited their ancestral hometowns, known their families' exact villages, or spoken their ancestors' dialects. But when they watch this film, they may still feel something familiar — and realize that the connection has never completely disappeared.

Dear You tells us that home is not only a place we return to, but also something we continue to carry inside us. And perhaps, for many overseas Chinese, this is not only a film to watch — it is a letter to open.

Written by Veldesen Yaputra, an Indonesian graduate student in architecture at Tsinghua University. He has long been engaged in green building, rural revitalization and cultural heritage projects between China and Indonesia. He also serves as president of Tsinghua University International Concerned Architects, where he works to connect youth, design and public-interest practice across cultures.

A stage for every child

A student-led arts project uses musical theater to give rural children space to express emotions, cooperate and find their voices.

By GUO JIATONG
guojiatong@i21st.cn

Cai Dongjun raised one hand gently, humming the opening notes of a melody as sunlight streamed into a rural classroom. In front of him, the children watched closely before beginning to follow his lead — a small turn, a lifted arm, a line sung softly at first and then with growing confidence.

For Cai, a 22-year-old vocal performance major at the Communication University of China (CUC), the scene has become a familiar part of his public welfare work. Since 2022, he has been introducing musical theater to rural children who have limited access to arts education.

During those visits, Cai encountered a reality that left a deep impression on him.

"Not every child receives quality education or emotional support," he said. "Some come from difficult family backgrounds, and you can sometimes sense a kind of silence in them that is hard to describe."

The experience felt personal to Cai. As a child, he also struggled with insecurity and self-doubt, but music gave him a way to express himself and gradually rebuild his confidence.

That personal connection inspired him to found Shengyu Tongxin, or Voices Healing Young Hearts, a public welfare initiative that brings musical theater and arts education to rural children. The program is designed not only to teach performance skills, but also to create a space where children can express themselves, learn to cooperate and grow emotionally.

Over the past four years, the initiative has expanded from a small volunteer effort into a broader program. Cai and his fellow volunteers have traveled to 18 regions across China, worked with more than 40 rural schools and reached over 1,500 children.

At the center of the initiative is an original musical, *Yuyan Laixin*, or Letters from the Swift, developed by Cai's team. The one-hour production is made up of several interconnected scenes based on the everyday experiences of left-behind children, touching on themes such as family separation and struggles to fit in at school.

To make the production accessible to children with varying abilities, the team revised the work repeatedly.

"The first version took about four months to complete," said Shi Yuming, a core team member from CUC. "We then adapted it many times with guidance from professional composers, teachers and psychological counselors to make it better suited to children."

The team simplified the vocal ranges, shifted more of the performance into ensemble scenes and adjusted the staging so that more children could participate comfortably. Rather than focusing on polished technique, the program emphasizes self-expression and the joy of being on stage.

That goal is often reflected in small changes.

In Huozhou, Shanxi province, the team worked with a boy whose teacher had described him as disengaged and struggling academically. Instead of allowing that label to define him, the volunteers encouraged him to take on a small leadership role in the chorus.

Over time, he became more involved in rehearsals and began to show a stronger sense of responsibility. By the final performance, he had been cast as one of the main characters and carried the part with confidence.

For Cai, moments like this make the demanding work worthwhile.

"There were times when I felt completely exhausted," he said. "In every session, I was fully involved — demonstrating melodies, correcting pitch, teaching movements and encouraging the children to step onto the stage. But all the effort has proved deeply rewarding."

A broader view

As the project has expanded, it has attracted a growing network of student volunteers and young professionals to help with teaching, coordination and outreach.

Among them is Liu Yukuan, a 21-year-old broadcasting and anchoring major at CUC who works directly with children in the classroom. He has noticed that while some children are eager to participate, others need more time before they feel ready to sing, move or perform in front of others.

Rather than pushing them, Liu adjusts his approach based on each child's temperament, offering patience and encouragement as they gradually become more comfortable.

"I've learned to slow down and see things from their perspective," he said. "Sometimes what they need is not pressure, but time and support."

Another volunteer, Zhu Zhu, a musicology major at CUC, helps coordinate resources and organize activities. Although she is not directly involved in teaching, she sees her role as essential to keeping the program running smoothly.

"I'm not the one on stage teaching or performing, but I find great fulfillment in working behind the scenes," she said. "It helps ensure that music and arts education resources are available to children in need."

For Zhu, public welfare should not end with a single visit or performance.

"It requires long-term commitment. What matters is making sure these resources continue to reach the children," she said.

According to Cai, the project has also built partnerships with institutions such as Beijing Normal University, bringing in students specializing in music, education and media to create a more structured support system.

For the volunteers, the mission is simple: to give more children the opportunity to experience art — and, through it, gain confidence in their own voices.

"Art should be accessible to everyone," Liu said.



Cai Dongjun (center), founder of Shengyu Tongxin, interacts with children from a charity school in Beijing during a Children's Day performance in 2024. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:02 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:02 PM

Personal meaning reshapes spending

From color analysis to museum guides and cultural dolls, young buyers are seeking services that feel personal and meaningful.

By **XIONG XINYI** and **GUI QIAN**

At Oni Color, a color analysis studio in Shijiazhuang, Hebei province, Wang Lifan drapes a white cloth over a client's hair and clothes, studying how different fabric swatches look against their skin.

She asks about the client's style preferences, makeup habits, and desired impression, then reviews their makeup bag to see what works and what does not.

As a film student in South Korea, Wang used to follow fashion trends, but none of them felt quite right. One day, a local friend asked her about her "personal color". After trying color analysis herself, Wang finally found a style that suited her.

After university, Wang worked as a photographer in China, then returned to South Korea for training after spotting a gap in the local market. She opened her studio in June 2024.

At first, Wang worried about whether the business would work in a smaller city. But after she posted about the studio on Xiaohongshu, also known as RedNote, she gained 2,000 followers in two weeks and was fully booked for three months before the studio even opened. "There is demand here," she said.

A one-hour session costs 680 yuan ($100) per person. According to Wang, her clients are not simply paying to follow trends. They are paying for a visible transformation, and many see the experience as a long-term investment. Clients who work in fields such as teaching and medicine, for example, often want to look more professional and confident.

Wang's studio reflects a broader shift among young Chinese consumers, who are increasingly willing to pay for products and services that feel personal, emotionally rewarding, and tied to identity. Across beauty, culture, and lifestyle consumption, value lies not only in what they buy, but also in what the experience helps them discover or express.

Wang said the phrases she hears most often from clients are "finding myself" and "it completely changed how I saw myself".

One client, a doctor under constant work pressure who rarely found moments of joy in daily life, told Wang that discovering a style that suited them brought genuine happiness.

To better adapt the Korean color analysis system for Chinese clients, Wang added facial structure and natural contrast to her assessments. For ethnic minority clients, she often recommends richer colors and warmer tones instead of the muted grays commonly suggested in South Korea.

Driven by customer demand, Wang has expanded into bone-shape assessment and bridal styling, aiming to build a one-stop service that combines color analysis, makeup, and professional photography.

Decoding culture

The desire for personalization is not limited to appearance. For many young people, the same expectation is now shaping how they learn, travel, and engage with culture.



Top: A visitor uses an AI digital guide developed by Aikesheng Digital Cultural (Beijing) Co Ltd at a museum. **Left:** Wang Lifan (behind) conducts a color analysis session with a client. **Second from top:** A doll headpiece designed by Ji Yingqi and her team blends ethnic styles. **Bottom:** A Yao ethnic-inspired doll outfit. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

At the National Maritime Museum of China in Tianjin, a marine biology student in his early 20s visited to study fossil patterns and artifact restoration. During the trip, he asked an AI digital guide developed by Aikesheng Digital Cultural (Beijing) Co Ltd more than 20 specialized questions and received clear, accurate answers. He said the guide made his visit more than twice as efficient, and later recommended it to his classmates.

The story was one that stayed with Chen Zhenfeng, vice-president of Aikesheng. Chen said the idea for the guide came during a museum research visit in 2023, when the team noticed that many young visitors struggled to engage deeply with the exhibits because suitable guided tours were unavailable. Some left within 20 minutes.

"That's when we realized that cultural communication in museums needs to adapt to the way people experience culture in the new era," Chen said.

The team turned that observation into a visitor journey built around curiosity.

After scanning a code, visitors can choose a digital companion and select a route based on their interests. They can stop at any point to chat with the guide or scan an object that catches their attention.

The guide can also generate captioned photos for social media, offer interactive games, and send visitors a personalized record of their museum journey.

"Youth are willing to pay for museum services, but not generic ones. They want something shareable, conversation-worthy, and novel," Chen said.

> "Youth are willing to pay for museum services, but not generic ones. They want something shareable, conversation-worthy, and novel."
>
> **Chen Zhenfeng,** vice-president of a digital cultural company

> "Growing national pride has drawn more young people to our products. They do not hesitate to express their love for ethnic cultural elements."
>
> **Ji Yingqi,** founder of a handicraft workshop

Crafting belonging

Beyond digital experiences, this search for meaning is also appearing in physical products, especially those that allow young people to project identity, emotion, and cultural pride onto objects they love.

Ji Yingqi, founder of a handicraft workshop in Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, has turned ethnic heritage into doll clothing. Her best-selling items include fridge magnets and plush toys featuring imitation Miao silver ornaments and Zhuang brocade.

Building on the popularity of the magnets, Ji's team adapted the motif into miniature Miao-style flower crowns and Zhuang-style headpieces. After testing them on Pop Mart figurines, they created their first line of doll hats.

While decorating their workspace, Ji's team dressed plush toys in Zhuang-style outfits. The outfits became an instant hit with visitors, who soon began asking whether the team could make similar clothes for their own dolls.

"That's when it clicked," Ji said. From there, the process became more interactive. Customer participation became central to the business. Ji describes the process as "co-creation".

"Every doll is different," she said. From necklines to accessories, each design is shaped by customer preferences.

"Many of them see their dolls as companions, even like 'children'. They bring them to meals, on walks and trips, even to concerts."

Meanwhile, designs were simplified to fit dolls of different sizes while still preserving key cultural elements. The range of designs now includes Yi, Yao, and Bai ethnic styles.

Bai-style hats, for example, draw inspiration from the natural scenery of Dali in Yunnan province — wind, flowers, snow, and moon — blending tradition with playful design.

"Growing national pride has drawn more young people to our products. They do not hesitate to express their love for ethnic cultural elements," Ji said.

"Some customers studying or living abroad come back and make a point of bringing their dolls to us," she added. "They take photos with the dolls around the world, bringing Zhuang-style clothing to more places."

Across a color studio, a museum, and a doll workshop, what young people are buying is not just color palettes, digital guides, or handmade accessories. In a market crowded with choices, meaning may be what keeps people coming back.

Contact the writers at xiongxinyi@i21st.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:02 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:02 PM

Z WEEKLY

Alumni bridge China and world

International alumni turn their studies in Shanghai into opportunities for careers, cooperation and deeper cultural understanding across borders.



Le Minh Quan celebrates his graduation from Shanghai University in 2007.

By **WANG XIN** in Shanghai
wangxin2@chinadaily.com.cn

When Muhammad Majid Riaz arrived in Shanghai on a rainy night in November 2017, he saw the city first through the windows of the airport, not knowing that it would become the place where he would study, work and build a future.

Nearly a decade later, the 32-year-old Pakistani radio frequency engineer still remembers that night as the beginning of his China story.

Riaz came to Shanghai through a language education opportunity supported by the Pakistani government. His interest in China had been sparked by the professionalism of Chinese colleagues he had worked with in Pakistan, as well as by his curiosity about Chinese culture.

The two-year language program at Shanghai University gave him the foundation he needed to continue his studies in China. In 2019, he was admitted to a master's program at the university, marking another important step in his academic and personal development.

Outside the classroom, Riaz immersed himself in campus activities and traditional Chinese culture. He developed a particular interest in tai chi and martial arts and joined several summer camps that took him to different parts of the country.

"The diversity and inclusiveness of Chinese culture left a deep impression on me. By the time I graduated, I had traveled to more than 30 cities across China and experienced both the beautiful scenery and the dynamic development of different regions," Riaz said.

After graduation, he began working at a leading Chinese multinational company in the global wireless communications sector. He said his education and career in China have allowed him to contribute to practical cooperation between China and Pakistan in high-tech industries, trade and people-to-people exchanges.

Riaz is one of many international alumni of Shanghai University who have turned their study experience in China into careers linking China with the wider world.

According to Li Yingjie, dean of the College of International Education at Shanghai University, the university began enrolling international students in 1966. By the end of last year, it had educated more than 30,000 international students from over 160 countries.

These alumni now work in fields ranging from politics and diplomacy to business, trade, culture and education, playing active roles in exchanges between China and other countries, Li said.

Among them is Amzath Ahmed, Minister of State for Fisheries and Ocean Resources of the Maldives, who studied at Shanghai University for 12 years after arriving in 2003.

"Without the education I received at Shanghai University, I would not be who I am today," Amzath said at a campus celebration on May 15. "It gave us more than knowledge. It shaped our character, attitude, resilience and worldview. It taught us how to adapt to change, respect different cultures, think independently and serve society with a sense of responsibility."

In the business sector, Vietnamese alumnus Le Minh Quan, general manager of Mainland Group, found both his career path and his life partner during his years in Shanghai.

Le earned his bachelor's and master's degrees at Shanghai University between 2003 and 2010. His wife, Vu Tran Minh, another Vietnamese alumna, studied at the university from 2005 to 2013. Before she could speak fluent Chinese, Vu was already able to sing Chinese songs.

The couple met on campus, began their careers in Shanghai and later returned to Vietnam with their two children. They now run a business selling rubber products to the Chinese market.

"Shanghai gave me many opportunities," Le said. "When I was a student, I worked part time as a translator for Vietnamese business owners. I learned a lot from them, and those experiences helped guide my future direction."

Le said his familiarity with both Chinese and Vietnamese cultures has become an important advantage in business. Studying in China, he added, is not only about learning the language, but also about understanding the culture, business environment and way of thinking.

"China is a huge market and is taking the lead in many areas, including new energy vehicles, drones, robotics, artificial intelligence and 5G technology," he said. "I see more international students coming to China not only for education, but also for opportunities for cooperation."

The number of international students in China has continued to grow in recent years. According to education authorities, more than 380,000 international students from 191 countries and regions studied, conducted research or took part in training programs at more than 1,100 universities, research institutes and other educational institutions across China during the 2024-25 academic year, a 15 percent increase from the previous year.

Zamir Ahmed Awan, founding chair of the Global Silk Route Research Alliance and also an alumnus of Shanghai University, said China's development and growing international engagement have made it increasingly attractive to young people around the world.

Taking Pakistan as an example, Awan said about 30,000 Pakistani students are currently studying in China.

"International students are very important. They are young, and they are the future," he said. "Learning more about China and Chinese culture can greatly support their own careers and help them contribute to the future of the world."

For Riaz, the years he spent studying in Shanghai continue to shape his work, identity and understanding of cooperation between China and Pakistan.

"I developed my roots and grew in Shanghai and China, and it made me who I am today," Riaz said. "I will continue to act as a bridge between the two countries and help strengthen people-to-people connections."



Muhammad Majid Riaz, from Pakistan, visits Zhoushan, Zhejiang province, in 2021.

Shanghai University's international student choir performs at an event marking the 60th anniversary of the university's international student education program on May 15. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Friendship gallops across the Kazakh steppe

By **LI YINGQING** in Kunming
and **GUI QIAN**

Dressed in black, Tao Mingxiu gallops across the vast steppe in Kazakhstan, her left hand holding the reins and an eagle perched on her right arm. Her striking silhouette, captured in a short video, has earned millions of likes on social media.

Known to her fans as "Tao Tao", Tao is a horse-loving young woman from Kunming, Southwest China's Yunnan province, and a social media influencer with nearly 10 million followers across multiple platforms.

Over the past two years, she has visited Kazakhstan six times, traveling to major destinations including Astana and Almaty, as well as Akmola, East Kazakhstan and Mangystau regions. She has shared more than 100 posts about the country, attracting more than 1 billion views in total.

In May 2025, Tao was awarded the title of "Tourism Ambassador of Kazakhstan" by Kazakh Tourism. In April 2026, she received the Order of Dostyk (Friendship) II degree on behalf of the President of Kazakhstan. The honor recognized her contribution to promoting Kazakhstan in Chinese media, showcasing its cultural heritage and tourism potential and strengthening people-to-people ties between the two countries.

With 2026 designated as the China-Kazakhstan Year of Cultural Exchange, Tao said she felt deeply honored to receive the award. "I don't think this medal belongs to me alone," she said. "It represents the bond between China and Kazakhstan, and I'm proud to be part of that story."

Bonding on horseback

Born in 1997 into a rural family in Kunming, Tao developed a love of horses at an early age. As a child, she often observed horse-drawn carts in her village. On weekends, her mother would take her to nearby towns on one of those carts.

"I remember being amazed by their strength," she said. "Horses could pull a cart full of people with such steadiness. That image stayed with me."

But it was not until five years ago, when Tao rode a horse for the first time, that she discovered her true passion for riding. Since then, she has spent much of her time at horse farms, training intensively and honing her skills.



Through her passion for horses, Tao Mingxiu has built friendships and cultural connections between China and Kazakhstan. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"My total practice time is comparable to that of someone who has been riding for more than a decade," she said.

Over the years, Tao has been injured many times.

"A horse is not a machine. It has its own mind and temper," she explained. "One day it might be gentle, and the next it might be in a bad mood and refuse to cooperate."

Yet she has never thought of quitting.

"When you truly love something, you don't give up on it," she said.

Tao's videos are often simple: riding across open land, holding an eagle or experiencing local traditions in Kazakhstan. Yet their reach has been remarkable. Through scenes of landscapes, animals and everyday life, she has introduced Chinese audiences to places and cultures they may never have seen before.

"I hope Chinese audiences can discover the real Kazakhstan — a welcoming neighbor with a rich culture of its own," she said.

Her content has also evolved into a two-way cultural exchange, bringing Kazakhstan closer to Chinese viewers while sharing China's landscapes and ethnic traditions overseas.

For example, she has filmed falconers in Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region and traditional lifestyles in Yunnan.

"I want the world to see the beauty of China," she said. "I hope people-to-people exchanges will become more regular in the future, with more youth programs as well as cultural and sports events, so that grassroots ties can take root in people's hearts."

Tao calls herself a "little horse handler". For her, horses are not only a personal passion, but also a way to bring people closer together.

"I believe the friendship between China and Kazakhstan will be like a steed on the grassland — running endlessly into the future, generation after generation," she said.

Contact the writers at liyingqing@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
Watch the video by scanning the code.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:02 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:02 PM

SPORTS

TENNIS

But it's not all bad news, as China's other aces make racket with major opening wins

Wilting Zheng feels heat in Paris

By SUN XIAOCHEN
sunxiaochen@chinadaily.com.cn



China's Zheng Qinwen hits a forehand return to Maja Chwalinska of Poland during their French Open first-round match at Roland Garros in Paris on Monday. **Inset:** An emotional Zheng faces the media after struggling to cope with the Polish qualifier's punishing "moonballs" and falling to a 6-4, 6-0 defeat. XINHUA

Even with the early exit of "Queen Wen" catching fans off guard, Chinese tennis has swung off its French Open campaign with plenty to cheer about, as a group of its elite players launched their major comeback with flying colors in Paris.

The opening-round action at Roland Garros this year has served up several treats for Chinese fans, from talented men's ace Wu Yibing's first main draw win at the clay-court major to struggling woman Wang Xiyu's first tour-level victory this year.

Yet, it was the shock of fan favorite Zheng Qinwen's unexpected first-round loss to Polish qualifier Maja Chwalinska that has dominated the headlines, leaving fans with mixed feelings.

Zheng, a proud winner of China's first singles Olympic gold medal at the same venue at Paris 2024, was dealt a head-on blow in her attempt to regain her form at Roland Garros, following a long injury layoff, suffering a straight-sets defeat to Chwalinska in an early tournament upset on Monday.

Zheng, who in her deepest run at the French Open last year reached the quarterfinals, struggled to find her rhythm facing the 114th-ranked Pole, whose unique style of hitting top-spin, high-arc lob shots — or "moonballs" — that landed deep and bounced high, proved effective in neutralizing Zheng's aggressive baseline game, punishing the Chinese star's lack of patience, and apparently waning focus, with a 6-4, 6-0 win in just one-and-a-half hours on Court 7.

Too harried to be able to dictate the pace of the game and sway the battle toward her rapid-fire attack, Zheng committed 32 unforced errors against just five from Chwalinska.

The Chinese former world No 4, who has dropped out of the top 100 on the live women's world ranking, admitted with a pained demeanor that, maybe, it's time for her to rebuild her game from the ground up.

"Losing in the first round at Roland Garros was really, really tough for me," an emotional Zheng said in wavering voice at the post-match news conference, where she had to pause to wipe away tears of disappointment.

"Nerves and pressure today didn't allow me to play the tennis that I want," said the 23-year-old, who, since 2022, has won four WTA singles titles to go with her Olympic gold.

"I had a tailored tactic before the match, but her top spin was bouncing much higher than expected.

"At one point on the court, I even hit the line judge with my racket, because I couldn't move back any further," Zheng explained.

It was the first time that Zheng has fallen in the first round at Roland Garros, where she had maintained a 16-4 win-loss record, including the Olympic tournament, before Monday, providing her with a sobering reminder that, perhaps, a slower rebuild from the entry level might suit her better at the moment.

"I didn't pay much attention to my ranking (just yet), but, of course, I need to start all over again, and that's going to be different," said Zheng, who underwent right elbow surgery last summer, took a lengthy recovery period that forced her to skip the Australian Open and only, tentatively, returned to competitive matches on the WTA Tour in February.

"But, I think it's going to be kind of positive for me, because I need more matches to get into my rhythm," said Zheng, who's expected to have to start from the qualifying rounds at top-level WTA events after her French Open exit.

Also struggling with their respective injuries since the second half of last season, China's Wang Xinyu and Wang Xiyu have, conversely, fueled their resurgence with inspiring opening wins in Paris.

Wang Xinyu, China's current top woman, ranked 34th in the world, halted a four-match skid on clay at Tour-level events by battling past Austria's 2024 Roland Garros junior champion Lilli Tagger 6-3, 3-6, 6-4 to register her 20th Grand Slam main draw win on her least-favorite surface on Sunday.

Just over an hour later, Wang Xiyu, a former top-50 ace, nailed her first Tour-level win this year by beating Montenegro's Danka Kovinic in straight sets, making a strong statement of her solid comeback, from a four-month, injury-enforced hiatus since November, all the way from the lower-level International Tennis Federation circuit.

Perhaps the highlight of the Chinese legion's opening-round action, though, was former US Open boys' champion Wu Yibing, also the winner of Chinese men's first ATP singles title (2023 Dallas), who again proved that, when healthy enough, his game belongs among the elite echelons of the men's tour.

The 26-year-old Wu dominated Marcos Giron of the United States 7-5, 6-2, 6-4 on Monday to register his first French Open main draw victory and his fifth career win at the major level, breaking new ground for Chinese men's tennis on the Parisian clay.

Wu's rapid-fire game, which has helped him pull off major upsets in the past, including a defeat of former top-10 Russian Daniil Medvedev at the ATP250 Hangzhou Open in September, has evolved, even on clay, a surface he has struggled a lot with in the past. This was highlighted by his smooth movement up and down the dirt, smart drop shots and solid defense on the baseline.

A two-week training program in the backyard of the "King of Clay" has apparently paid dividends.

"The experience was really helpful, and perhaps I gained a small extra piece of Rafa's magic there," Wu said of his pre-Paris training camp at the Rafa Nadal Academy in Mallorca, Spain.

"Overall, I feel I am getting more used to playing on clay than before, and I've gradually picked up my confidence and started to play my game the way I want on this kind of surface," said Wu, who reached a career-high ranking of No 54 in May 2023.



China's Wu Yibing hits a return to Marcos Giron of the United States on the way winning his French Open first-round match, 7-5, 6-2, 6-4, on Monday. XINHUA

Wawrinka and Monfils bid farewell to the French Open after losing in first round

Stan Wawrinka and Gael Monfils waved goodbye to the French Open after they lost in the first round on Monday.

The curtain fell on Frenchman Monfils just before midnight when he lost to countryman Hugo Gaston 6-2, 6-3, 3-6, 2-6, 6-0.

It was the 39-year-old Monfils' final appearance at Roland Garros. Same went for the 41-year-old Wawrinka, who earlier lost to Jesper de Jong 6-3, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 on another sweltering day.

Monfils and Wawrinka are retiring at the end of the year.

They made their respective French Open debuts 21 years ago.

Wawrinka went on to win three Grand Slam titles, and while Monfils has not reached a major final, his popularity remains high.

Monfils walked out onto Court Philippe-Chatrier to chants of "Ga-el! Ga-el!" He received loud encouragement throughout, demanding applause when he hit spectacular winners and raising his arm when he won the third set.

But he also looked tired, often hunching over with his hands on his knees. After clawing back a two-set deficit he had little energy left against an opponent 14 years his junior.

Monfils was joined in during an on-court ceremony by his former Davis Cup teammates Jo-Wilfried Tsonga, Richard Gasquet and Gilles Simon, and was also praised by his peers.





Left: Stan Wawrinka reacts during his French Open first-round loss to Jesper de Jong on Monday. **Right:** Gael Monfils holds a glass case containing part of a clay court as French Tennis Federation president Gilles Moretton looks on during a special ceremony on Monday. AP

"For me, you were a true inspiration. A great athlete," two-time reigning French Open champion Carlos Alcaraz said in video featuring several players. "But the most important thing, a great person off the court."

Monfils thanked his wife, Ukrainian tennis player Elina Svitolina, who looked tearful as she listened.

"Without her, I might not be here tonight," Monfils said. "We've been together for eight years, eight beautiful years ... (You) gave me the greatest gift in the world, our daughter. I love you."

De Jong finished off Wawrinka, the 2015 French Open champion and 2017 finalist, with a whipped forehand winner, then urged the fans to applaud Wawrinka, whose face was almost as red as the baking-hot clay.

Temperatures in sun-soaked Paris hit 33 C.

"It's hard, it's hard to say goodbye to you here," an emotional Wawrinka said. "It's because of Roland Garros that I wanted to become a tennis player."

He was given an ovation at Court Simonne-Mathieu, where he was scheduled to face Arthur Fils, but the rising French star pulled out of the tournament with a hip issue.

Wawrinka knows it will be hard to let go — although he still has Wimbledon and the US Open to come.

"For more than 20 years I experienced these emotions, you never want it to stop," Wawrinka said.

"I have given everything for this sport."

His stunning 2015 run to the title saw him defeat heavy favorite Novak Djokovic in the final after downing another all-time great, Roger Federer, in the quarterfinals. Wawrinka stood out that year, as much for his eye-catching pink-checkered shorts as for his destructive backhand.

Those shorts fed into his happy-go-lucky appearance, and he reinforced that image by celebrating with champagne long into the night. But as cavalier as he sometimes seemed, Wawrinka was anything but casual and always trained fiercely hard.

He was hugged on court by tournament director Amelie Mauresmo, before sitting and watching footage of his matches down the years. He was shown video messages from Federer, Rafael Nadal, Djokovic, men's No 1 Jannik Sinner, reigning champion Alcaraz, and Monfils.

At his physical peak, the barrel-chested Wawrinka had huge stamina and was one of the few who beat Nadal, Djokovic, Federer and Andy Murray at the Grand Slams.

Wawrinka beat Nadal in the Australian Open final in 2014 and downed Djokovic again in the US Open final in 2016, meaning all three of his majors were won against the No 1 player. Nadal, however, dispatched him in straight sets in the 2017 French Open final.

He was an Olympic champion in doubles alongside Federer in 2008, and they won the Davis Cup for Switzerland in 2014.

"You are a legend of our sport," said Monfils, who also lost his first-round match at the Australian Open in January.

Monfils reached the semifinals at the 2008 French Open and the quarterfinals on three other occasions.

But, ultimately, he fell short after being touted for a great career following junior titles at the French Open, Wimbledon and the US Open in 2004.

He never won better than an ATP 500 among his 13 titles, and lost 22 finals — including three at Masters level.

His reputation as a showman took precedence over his modest results.

"One of the most likeable, fun guys out there," Djokovic said. "There's no one that doesn't like you, Gael. I think that's your biggest victory."

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:02 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:03 PM

Fragile ceasefire

Fresh strikes, diplomatic friction test US-Iran truce

WORLD, PAGE 5



Products to fight cognitive decline gaining popularity

CHINA, PAGE 12



Nature's care

Eco-art, fragrance therapy offer urban residents emotional relief

LIFE SHANGHAI, PAGE 14

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 FRIDAY, JUNE 5, 2026

Healing touch



A doctor from Beijing examines a child on Thursday during a screening for congenital heart disease in Ngari prefecture, Xizang autonomous region. The screening is part of an initiative launched by the Chinese Red Cross Foundation in 2012. To date, more than 1.92 million children in the region have been examined and assistance has been provided to over 10,000 patients. WANG JING / CHINA DAILY

Wider global role seen for RMB

China has ample room to expand currency's use as trade leverage increases, experts say

By **WANG KEJU**
wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn

China has ample room to expand the global use of renminbi through trade and commodity settlement, supply chain finance and offshore market development, senior economists said, adding that the process will be gradual and largely hinges on continuing financial market reforms across the globe.

As the existing US dollar-dominated architecture sees an erosion of global trust and buckles under the strains of geopolitical conflict and the weaponization of financial infrastructure by some countries, the internationalization of the renminbi will help make the global monetary system more inclusive and resilient, they said.

In an exclusive interview with China Daily, Zhu Min, former deputy managing director of the International Monetary Fund, said the trend of renminbi internationalization is "unstoppable", and the technical pathway is "already mapped out".

Zhu pushed back against a long-held assumption that the renminbi could not become a major international currency without full convertibility and a fully liberalized capital account. "We need to correct this old mindset," he said.

He pointed to the IMF's Special Drawing Rights basket, a collection of five major international currencies that gives the renminbi a 12.48 percent weighting after the dollar and the euro, as proof that such constraints are not necessarily insurmountable.

Expanding the use of the renminbi in cross-border trade settlement serves as a viable and crucial pathway toward its further internationalization, experts said.

"For a currency to become truly global, settlement is a critical gateway," said Miao Yanliang, chief strategist at China International Capital Corp. "And in that respect, China's trade leverage is growing."

Miao noted that China is the world's largest trading nation and largest crude oil importer, as well as a dominant consumer of copper, iron ore and soybeans. "That trade position gives China a unique advantage to gradually enhance the convenience and acceptance of renminbi settlement," he added.

In recent years, geopolitical shifts have accelerated the renminbi's adoption, with some commodity sellers increasingly exploring settling trade in renminbi.

The recent disruption of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz has highlighted vulnerabilities in the existing dollar-centric oil trading system, said Shi Kang, chair professor at the PBC School of Finance at Tsinghua University.

"In the coming period, we will see more oil trade settlement gradually shift away from the existing dollar-based system," Shi said.

Beyond trade settlement, Zhu, the former IMF official, noted that strengthening the renminbi's role as a "financing tool in global supply chains" would also bolster its international standing.

China accounts for nearly one-third of global manufacturing output, equaling the combined share of the United States, Japan, Germany and South Korea, yet its currency plays only a modest role in international finance, Zhu said, describing this as "a clear mismatch".

"The US' real economy has weakened, but it still underpins an enormous dollar system," he said. "Geo-economic shifts inevitably drive changes in finance and beyond."

See **Renminbi,** page 3

Long-term strategies help great green wall thrive

By **HOU LIQIANG**
houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

Unlike many ecological projects that falter due to short-term aid cycles, China's great green wall — the Three-North Shelterbelt Forest Program — thrives on long-term strategies and predictable funding, particularly incentivizing local people and businesses to invest in restoration.

This achievement was highlighted in articles recently published in the journal Nature, ahead of World Environment Day, which falls on Friday.

The articles also said that China's incentive mechanism ensures continued funding, transforming the effort into a shared socioeconomic endeavor.

According to the reports, drylands already cover 40 percent of the planet's total land area, and that share could expand by another 10 percent due to global warming before the turn of this century. While many countries and regions have launched programs to fight desertification, beyond China, green wall projects in India, Africa and the Gulf states have struggled to survive, they said.

The Three-North program is a large-scale ecological afforestation effort launched in 1978, covering 13 provincial-level regions across northwestern, northern and northeastern China. It nearly tripled forest cover — from about 5 percent to about 14 percent — by 2023, while soil erosion declined by two-thirds.

As most green wall projects fail due to a lack of continued finance and maintenance, China has repeatedly committed to spending, and its incentives for local investment have ensured that the stream of funding never dries up.

In the Kubuqi Desert, for example, enterprises and herders can obtain low-interest loans with tax reductions for sand control, which has attracted more than 3 billion yuan ($443 million) in investment since 2010. China also offers vulnerable communities short-term income through various work-relief programs.

Lu Qi, chief scientist at the Chinese Academy of Forestry, regularly visits the front line of the Three-North program, which currently covers 40 percent of China's total land area, witnessing firsthand how incentives drive its success.

"Everyone is rushing to take part, and their enthusiasm is irrepressible," he said after a recent visit to the Inner Mongolia autonomous region.

Lu, who visited the front line shortly after the Spring Festival holiday, noted that cold weather notwithstanding, sand control work started as early as Feb 28.

The foremost reason for this passion, he said, is the "pressing need to build a better home", adding that "the government's policies also enable local farmers and herders to see tangible benefits for themselves".

> "The government's policies also enable local farmers and herders to see tangible benefits for themselves."
>
> **Lu Qi,** chief scientist at the Chinese Academy of Forestry

An opinion piece published in Nature emphasized that China's financial strategies cannot simply be replicated in countries with different laws and fiscal capacities.

"A practical first step for any country is to elevate sand control from a short-term forestry project to a government-level long-term obligation," it stated. "External aid should be used to leverage domestic co-finance, rather than serve as a one-off cash injection."

China is also coupling renewables infrastructure directly with ecological restoration.

The article said that in lower-resource nations, smaller photovoltaic belts could be installed near high-value assets such as roads and water pumping stations. These projects require substantial upfront investment, but electricity sales could provide predictable revenue for maintenance, it added.

Another key lesson from China's experience is that governments in other countries need to view ecological restoration as an investment, not as a cost, the article said.

Lu noted that this investment has already paid off significantly in China, following a fundamental shift in the Three-North program's philosophy over time.

"In the beginning, we only cultivated trees that grew fast, tall, and offered good protection," he said, adding that the focus gradually shifted to integrating ecological conservation, production and livelihoods.

Growing plants under solar panels is a key example of this integration. The plants are mostly fruit-bearing ones, such as matrimony vine and sea buckthorn, as well as those used in traditional Chinese medicine like astragalus.

In some regions, the shade of solar panels is used for herding. Instead of letting cattle graze directly on the grass, strands are trimmed and taken away to feed the animals — an approach that poses no negative impact on the protective function of the plants.

"I see this as a major transformation — one that integrates ecology, production and people's livelihoods," Lu said. "It not only protects the land and provides income for farmers and herders, but also brings benefits to society as a whole."



A worker waters plants as part of a desertification control program in Horqin Left Wing Rear Banner, Inner Mongolia autonomous region, on April 19. LIAN ZHEN / XINHUA

BLUSHING PLUMS HERALD ONSET OF MIDSUMMER

Fruit offers connection with seasonal rhythms that have shaped Chinese life for generations

By **LI YINGXUE**
liyingxue@chinadaily.com.cn

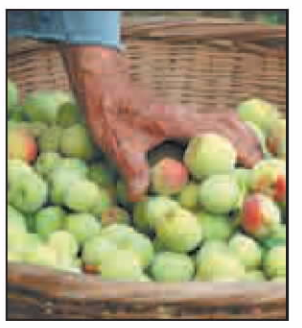
In the mist-shrouded valleys of southwestern China, summer does not arrive with a date on the calendar; it arrives with a sound — the crisp snap of plums being plucked from their branches.

China Vibes — FOOD —

The harvest begins with *mang zhong*, or Grain in Ear, one of China's 24 traditional solar terms and a seasonal marker long associated with ripening crops and the onset of midsummer. As heat and humidity settle over the Chengdu Plain in Sichuan province, the hillsides of Dayi county come alive with activity.

Farmers gather in numbers to pick plums that have spent months maturing beneath dense green canopies.

Once sharply tart, the fruit has now turned plump, glossy and sweeter, carrying a faint blush and a fresh fragrance. This signals the start of Dayi's annual plum-processing season — a tradition that connects orchards, home kitchens and local wineries.



Plums are harvested in Dayi county, Sichuan province, in May. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

See **Fruit,** page 3

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Nation's trade approach aligns with actual needs of Africa

WORLD WATCH
By Mabasa Sasa

A growing conversation is unfolding across Africa about the differing approaches of major powers in engaging with the continent, and the fundamental goals behind those engagements.

A clear contrast emerges when comparing China's new zero-tariff policy for African countries that have diplomatic relations with Beijing and the United States' African Growth and Opportunity Act — a contrast that highlights why China's approach is far more aligned with Africa's genuine development needs.

The historic new zero-tariff policy was fully implemented on May 1. Previously, China had already scrapped tariffs on 100 percent of tariff lines for 33 least-developed countries in Africa since Dec 1, 2024. The new zero-tariff policy will benefit relatively better-off countries such as Kenya, Egypt and Nigeria.

Launched in 2000, the US' African Growth and Opportunity Act was billed as a landmark initiative to integrate African economies into global trade. Its promise sounded attractive: duty-free access to the US market for eligible African nations.

More than two decades later, however, results have been uneven at best. The program's core flaw lies in its conditional design. Eligibility is determined by Washington's political and economic criteria, which can shift abruptly to suit US foreign policy priorities.

Currently, only 32 African countries qualify under the African Growth and Opportunity Act, leaving more than 20 nations — including Zimbabwe — excluded. The unspoken message is clear: Access to the US market comes with political conditions. Trade is offered, but with heavy political strings attached.

Crucially, the US program has never meaningfully transformed Africa's industrial base. Strict technical requirements and complex rules have prevented real economic diversification. The relationship has often felt less like genuine partnership and more like supervised, conditional access.

See **Continent,** page 3

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

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN

China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:03 PM

INDEPTH





Left: Members of photovoltaic and renewable energy research team from the University of New South Wales introduce solar panel products at the 64th Smart Energy Conference and Exhibition in Sydney in May.
Right: Visitors pose for a photo at the booth of Chinese solar manufacturer GoodWe during the exhibition. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

China, Australia bask in solar panel success

Collaboration on breakthrough tech, and production pushing green transition forward

By **XIN XIN** and **ALEXIS HOOI** in Sydney



About 10,000 attendees, 120 main exhibitors, and industry leaders participated in the event. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Andrew Forrest, chairman of mining giant Fortescue, gives a keynote speech at the conference in Sydney. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Electrician James Moore, who installed solar panels on the roof of his Sydney home two years ago, said the green energy move has helped him halve his household power bills.

When told that the equipment came from China, Moore was not surprised. "It's efficient and effective, very suitable for sunny Australia," he said.

Moore's words were fitting in more ways than one. The development of photovoltaic, or PV, technology, which converts sunlight into electricity and powers the growing use of solar energy in the country, can be traced to Australian research and innovation.

Ned Ekins-Daukes, head of the School of Photovoltaic and Renewable Energy Engineering at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, said the university's pioneering PV research helped nurture ties with Chinese industry and academics that continue to place them at the forefront of the field.

"UNSW has this extraordinary story of where we invented some photovoltaic technologies a long way ahead of the market being ready to accept them. During that time, many students came from China to study at UNSW and took some of the ideas back to China," the professor said.

Major contributions to the sector include work led by multiple-award-winning UNSW scientist Martin Green, who invented groundbreaking types of solar cells in the early 1980s. This helped fuel further research that has since accounted for more than 90 percent of worldwide silicon solar module production, according to the university.

One of Green's doctoral students, Shi Zhengrong, subsequently implemented a low-cost manufacturing transformation and went on to set up the first commercial solar cell producer of its kind in China. Serving as the Chinese company's chief scientist, Green and other research team members helped facilitate the rapid growth of the sector.

"What's happened in China is that, because of the scale of the manufacturing that's possible and the supply chain integration that's been built up over the last 20 years, the costs of those technologies have dramatically reduced," Ekins-Daukes said.

In China, there has been continuous improvement in the technology, he said. "In Australia, we demonstrated the concept, we demonstrated that these solar cell technologies could work well. But in China, the engineers have worked hard to actually (apply) those technologies for manufacturing and critically bring robotic automation into the manufacturing of silicon solar panels," he said.

UNSW now works directly with major PV companies to help them improve the technology and its practical applications in Australia and beyond, Ekins-Daukes said.

This "loop of innovation" between Australia and China will continue, he added. "China has huge manufacturing strengths, and the opportunity for Australia ... having a lot of space and a lot of sunshine, is to collaborate and help deploy solar at an enormous scale for the benefit of the Australian economy, in a partnership," Ekins-Daukes said.

Complementary strengths

The success of the China-Australia partnership in the solar energy sector offers a model of cooperation to tap into complementary strengths amid the global green transition.

China is the main supplier of solar equipment to Australia, which also tops the world's per capita uptake of rooftop solar, according to industry figures.

There were nearly 255,000 new rooftop solar installations across Australia last year, bringing the number of households using the systems to 4.3 million, according to the Clean Energy Council, the sector's peak body in Australia.

In the second half of 2025, rooftop solar energy contributed 14.2 percent of the total electricity generated in Australia, nearly double the amount in 2020.

In 2024-25, Australian households saved about A$3 billion ($2.18 billion), or A$125 per capita, on electricity costs by installing rooftop solar, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

China continues to lead the world in PV supply chains. Its top manufacturers account for most of the global production, and have helped bring down costs and offered "multiple benefits for clean energy transitions", according to the International Energy Agency. Industry analysts have also pointed to a shift toward high-quality growth through the leveraging of technology and scale to maintain global competitiveness.

With similar strengths in wind turbines and lithium batteries, China is cementing its leading role in renewable energy technologies that countries like Australia are increasingly keen to leverage as they face resource disruptions due to the Middle East conflict, while addressing other traditional fossil fuel challenges.

The federal government's "Future Made in Australia" initiative includes a renewable energy focus on a more resilient, low-carbon economy through increased investments in research and manufacturing.

At the 64th Smart Energy Conference and Exhibition held in Sydney on May 6 and 7, Australia's Climate Change and Energy Minister Chris Bowen highlighted the "era of clean power growth", with "renewables overtaking coal in 2025 and record growth in solar meaning that renewable energy met the vast majority of new demand growth in 2025".

Countries like China have similarly reduced fossil fuels' share of electricity generation significantly, helping push against climate change inaction, he said.

The major two-day event covering fields ranging from solar and storage to transport and technology drew about 10,000 attendees, 120 main exhibitors and industry leader conferences covering the latest energy trends.

In a keynote speech at the conference, mining giant Fortescue's chairman, Andrew Forrest, called for more to be done to adopt green technologies and electrification in a pillar sector still heavily reliant on diesel.

With most of Australia's diesel imported, prices could go up significantly amid the supply risks from shipping disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz in the Middle East, he said.

"So, for diesel, it's all bad news," Forrest said.

As part of its move away from fossil fuel dependence, Fortescue announced in April the acceleration of an integrated green energy grid rollout, including 1.2GW of solar capacity at the Pilbara area in Western Australia.

At a conference session on the importance of the Australia-China smart energy partnership, John Grimes, chief executive of Australia's Smart Energy Council, said the solar and other advanced technologies developed by the Sino-Australian cooperation mark a deep relationship. The council is a nonprofit with more than 1,000 members.

"What I see in China ... the engineers, the investors, the Australian connection is so strong. There is a massive opportunity for us to build on those firm and long-standing foundations," said Grimes, adding that "every solar panel makes a difference" in the global energy crisis.

"We're working with Chinese industry to take the world's lowest-cost, best technology and accelerate that ... throughout the Asia-Pacific region."

Tim Buckley, founder and director of Climate Energy Finance, a think tank focusing on Australia's green transition, told China Daily that it is "critical we work with China and learn from the best technology in the world".

"I'm amazed by the robotic advances," he said. "Australia worries about our high cost of labor, you don't have that problem in China because you're building the world's best robots, which means we can learn from China about robotics, engineering and supply chains, and partner together," he said.

"The more you build wind, solar, batteries and hydroelectricity toward energy efficiency, the less addicted to imported fossil fuels your country is. That's a really important lesson for us."

Dorothy Zhou, director at Chinese PV company Sunpro Asia, told China Daily that the Australian market offers significant investment opportunities with its various sectors like agriculture and resources suitable for energy projects.

"The energy transition for this market provides investment stability with clear demand, providing an upward trajectory," she said.

Zhu Sha, executive secretary-general of the Jiangsu Energy Storage Industry Association, told China Daily that Chinese companies are well-prepared to cater to overseas market demand, backed by advanced technologies, complete industrial chains and low-cost manufacturing advantages.

Their pace of going global is accelerating and the way they expand overseas is also evolving, said Zhu, who led a delegation to the Australian conference. The association, based in the East China province, promotes green energy transition with its more than 1,000 member units, using expertise in fields such as research and manufacturing as well as green finance.

"China's new energy industry is now shifting from products and trade-driven expansion to one-stop service and systems solution exports," Zhu said, adding that companies are also actively exploring markets in Southeast Asia, Africa and South America.

The Australian market remains attractive because it can help open up broader areas of development, she said.

"With Australia as a base, companies can also extend their industrial chains, or further expand into the European and US markets," Zhu said.

The next stage of development for Chinese energy storage products in Australia will focus on commercial and industrial use, grid-scale capabilities, and data center solutions, altogether presenting "both an opportunity and a challenge for Chinese companies", she added.

Australia-China research and development collaboration is already extending beyond its PV partnerships to other growth opportunities such as green hydrogen, fertilizer and steel.

"There are a lot of areas we can work on, to keep building on the momentum," Thomas Gao, senior manager at the Office of the Chief Scientist and Engineer, New South Wales, told China Daily.

"Many people play very important parts at different levels, taking us to where we are today. It's a continual journey," said Gao, whose organization helps bring academia, government and industry to drive the commercialization of research.

To that effect, a UNSW booth at the Sydney conference showcased the latest developments in the field that also continued its rich Australia-China partnership.

Professor Thorsten Trupke, a colleague of Ekins-Daukes at the university's photovoltaic school, explained his work on a state-of-the-art photoluminescence imaging system that inspects industrial solar panels through drones.

"We can now take these luminescence images from aerial drones on a large scale in operating solar farms," Trupke told China Daily.

Solar panels are made to last for about 30 years without any major degradation, but they can sometimes encounter problems, as with any mass-manufactured product, he said.

"We can detect those panels, and then necessary rectification can be done," said Trupke, adding that Chinese companies support the project by providing specialized samples for testing.

"The best drones in the world are from China and the ones we use are also from there. We are configuring these drones specifically for our needs," he said.

"Our school has collaborated with China for many years ... this collaboration will probably expand into the future."

Contact the writers at xinxin@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:03 PM

TOP NEWS

Experts warn against Japan's militarism

Latest round of alarmist rhetoric shows country's move to change security posture

By **LIU JIANQIAO**
liujianqiao@chinadaily.com.cn

Japan has repeatedly hyped up the so-called "China threat" narrative in recent years to justify its expanding military agenda, said experts, warning that portraying neighboring countries as "threats" has historically been a recurring tactic of Japanese militarism.

They said that the latest round of alarmist rhetoric once again reveals the ambitions of Japan's right-wing forces to loosen postwar constraints, expand military capabilities and advance a broader transformation of the country's security posture.

Japanese media outlets on Wednesday disclosed an outline of the government's 2026 defense white paper, which continues to portray the regional security environment as "increasingly severe", while calling for enhanced development in unmanned systems and artificial intelligence.

According to the Asahi Shimbun newspaper, the upcoming annual defense report largely follows the narrative of the 2025 edition, arguing that the international community has entered a "new era of crisis", characterizing the security environment in the "Indo-Pacific region" as "increasingly severe", and hyping up the so-called "China threat" theory.

The white paper states that defense production and technological capabilities are directly linked to defense strength. It advocates creating an "environment of mutual support" by deploying the same defense equipment as allies and other "like-minded" countries, the newspaper said.

Meanwhile, Japan's public broadcaster NHK reported that the 2026 white paper introduces a new section on "emerging modes of warfare", which stresses the need to expand the use of unmanned aerial systems and AI in defense operations.

Liu Shuliang, an associate researcher at the Tianjin Academy of Social Sciences, said that Japan is moving beyond the bounds of its postwar defense posture and accelerating a broader remilitarization process associated with "new militarism" through measures such as revising its national security framework, enhancing offensive combat capabilities and integrating intelligence systems.

Through sustained lobbying by defense-related companies and capital groups, Japan's military-industrial complex has pushed for higher defense spending and fewer restrictions on arms exports, he said.

He mentioned that in early May, Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi outlined Japan's revamped "free and open Indo-Pacific" vision during her visit to Vietnam. The policy line was later reaffirmed by Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi at the recent Shangri-La Dialogue, a major defense forum held in Singapore.

"By advancing a revised 'free and open Indo-Pacific' vision and redefining its regional role, Japan is moving to expand its military reach while enhancing its influence in regional affairs. The strategy reflects Tokyo's growing ambition to play a larger role in shaping the regional security order, a move that carries clear geopolitical implications and has raised concerns over its impact on regional stability," he added.

Chen Hong, director of East China Normal University's Asia-Pacific Studies Centre in Shanghai, said that Japan's continued hype surrounding tensions in the so-called "Indo-Pacific region" is aimed at fueling bloc confrontation and creating exclusive groupings that run counter to the region's need for openness, cooperation and stability.

By deepening economic and security ties with the Quad, a grouping of Australia, India, Japan and the United States, the Philippines and other so-called allies or "quasi-alliances", Japan has increasingly pushed regional countries to choose sides, aggravating bloc confrontation and adding to tensions in the region, he said.

Liu from Tianjin Academy of Social Sciences also said that Japan and the Philippines — a victim of Japanese militarism and invasion during World War II — stepped up military collaboration in early May, exploring the transfer of Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force vessels, including used destroyer escorts.

"The international community should clearly recognize the risks and potential destabilizing effects associated with Japan's accelerated remilitarization and its evolving security posture. It may therefore consider appropriate responses to address a more assertive and increasingly controversial direction in Japan's defense policy," he said.

Xinhua contributed to this story.

Lasting friendship



Thongloun Sisoulith, general secretary of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party Central Committee and president of Laos, greets instructors during a visit to the Party School of the Communist Party of China Central Committee in Beijing on Thursday. Thongloun, who attended a month-long exchange program at the school in 2000, revisited the dormitory where he had stayed and met with Chinese teachers, program coordinators and Lao participants during his state visit to China. His five-day visit concludes on Saturday. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

Services sector sees rapid expansion in May

By **ZHANG CHENXU**
zhangchenxu@chinadaily.com.cn

Services activity in China expanded faster month-on-month in May, the latest RatingDog China General Services Purchasing Managers' Index figures showed, underlining the robust growth in new businesses and a rebound in overseas demand, despite uncertainties triggered by geopolitical tensions in the Middle East.

Analysts said the upbeat figures of the private survey, which was released on Wednesday, coupled with a further pickup in business confidence, pointed to a strong momentum in China's services sector, amid intensified policy efforts to "expand capacity and improve the quality of the sector".

Their remarks came as the reading, compiled by S&P Global, rose 1.8 percentage points to 54.4 in May from 52.6 in April, remaining above the 50-point mark that separates expansion from contraction and signaling the fastest pace of expansion in three months.

This was broadly in line with the official survey released by the National Bureau of Statistics on Sunday, which showed services activity returned to expansion mode at 50.3 in May from 49.6 in April. Compared with the official gauge, the RatingDog PMI tracks small, export-oriented companies more closely.

"The recovery in services activity indicates that earlier macro policy support has begun to take effect," said Lou Feipeng, a researcher at Postal Savings Bank of China. "Fiscal tools such as service consumption subsidies and interest subsidies for loans have helped cushion the sector and shore up business confidence."

Beating market expectations, the faster increase in activity was supported by improvements in new businesses, which expanded for the 41st consecutive month and at the fastest pace in three months, according to the RatingDog report.

Yao Yu, founder of RatingDog, said the strong performance was largely driven by improving domestic demand, continued business innovation and new client acquisitions.

Echoing Yao's view, Lou from Postal Savings Bank of China said the May Day holiday unleashed strong demand for travel, dining, cultural and leisure activities, helping lift the business climate in related consumer sectors.

External demand also regained momentum. The RatingDog report showed that new export businesses returned to expansion mode in May after mild contractions in the previous two months, lending further support to the sector's growth momentum.

Meanwhile, emerging growth drivers, represented by information services, have shown strong momentum and sound sustainability, said Wu Wei, an analyst at the China Logistics Information Center.

"Through continuous innovation and deeper integration with other sectors, the information services sector will continue to play a key role in fostering new quality productive forces, with broader development prospects ahead," Wu said.

The improvement also fed business confidence. RatingDog said business optimism across the services sector picked up in May, with the confidence reading reaching its highest level since February.

Yao said that improved sentiment, together with stable domestic demand, is expected to help keep both the services PMI and the broader composite PMI in expansionary territory in the months ahead.

Policy support has also strengthened expectations about the sector's long-term growth. In April, the State Council issued a new set of guidelines aimed at expanding capacity and upgrading the quality of the services sector, setting a goal for the sector's total scale to reach 100 trillion yuan ($14.8 trillion) by 2030.

However, analysts cautioned that the services recovery may not yet be on a firm footing, noting that rising cost pressures may warrant closer attention in the coming months. They said more targeted policy measures will be crucial to help the economy withstand external headwinds.

"Authorities should step up loan interest subsidies and credit enhancement support for small and medium-sized service providers to help ease operating pressure from rising input costs," Lou said.

He added that stronger support should also be directed toward producer services such as technology services, software and information services, and modern logistics, so that productivity gains can help absorb rising cost pressures.

Landmark victory



Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Jeenbek Kulubayev (second from left) reacts after Kyrgyzstan secured a place as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council at the UN headquarters in New York on Wednesday, after edging out Philippines during multiple rounds of voting. The election marks the first time Kyrgyzstan will serve on the Security Council. DAVID 'DEE' DELGADO / REUTERS

Renminbi: Greater offshore supply urged

From page 1

A stronger renminbi is not only an inevitable choice for China's development, but also a necessity for global financial stability, Zhu stressed, saying that the renminbi could be used more extensively within global supply chains to align with China's manufacturing strength.

For a currency to become truly internationally strong, Zhu said, it must not only be usable for cross-border transactions, but also be held as a store of value and eventually repatriated or reinvested, all of which requires deep bond markets, robust derivatives markets and a liquid offshore market.

Miao, from China International Capital Corp, suggested that China could increase the supply of offshore renminbi, including expanding the availability of government bonds and high-grade renminbi-denominated bonds, to provide global investors with secure renminbi holdings and to support the domestic economy.

In another development, the Ministry of Finance plans to issue a total of 84 billion yuan ($12.4 billion) of renminbi-denominated sovereign bonds in Hong Kong this year. The first two issues, totaling 29.5 billion yuan, were made in February and April.

The world is facing an urgent need for more diversified safe-haven assets and liquidity, said Shi, from Tsinghua University.

That is a gap that the renminbi, backed by China's proactive institutional opening-up, is increasingly positioned to fill, Shi added.

"We do not want to replace the dollar system, nor are we trying to develop a separate system," Shi said. "China's goal is to address the weak links in the current monetary system, allowing more currencies to participate and thus enhance global financial stability."

Marc Uzan, executive director of the Reinventing Bretton Woods Committee, said that central banks are diversifying reserves, more energy deals are being priced in nondollar currencies, and countries are settling trade in local currencies. However, he acknowledged that the dollar's structural advantages remain significant, and "a swift end to dollar hegemony is unlikely". He said he expects a multipolar future in which the dollar, euro and renminbi will each play a larger role, alongside regional currencies.

Continent: Trade flows rooted in mutual benefit

From page 1

China's approach stands in stark contrast. It is inclusive, unconditional and development-centered.

China's zero-tariff policy covers exports from all 53 African countries that have diplomatic relations with Beijing. In simple terms, African goods gain broad, preferential entry into one of the world's largest markets — with no political conditions attached and no interference in internal affairs.

China frames this policy within the broader Belt and Road Initiative, emphasizing connectivity, infrastructure integration and expanded trade flows rooted in mutual benefit and shared development opportunities.

As President Xi Jinping has repeatedly emphasized, China pursues building a China-Africa community with a shared future, based on equality, mutual respect and win-win cooperation.

China's engagement with Africa centers on tangible infrastructure — roads, railways, power plants, industrial parks and trade corridors. These projects deliver visible, lasting development across the continent.

Bilateral trade reached a record $348 billion in 2025, and China has remained Africa's largest trading partner for 17 consecutive years.

For countries like Zimbabwe, the new zero-tariff policy is especially significant. Agricultural products, minerals and value-added goods now have a clear, stable pathway into China's vast market — without compromising sovereignty or aligning with external political agendas.

The choice for Africa is clear: win-win cooperation, not political dependence.

For decades, Africa has navigated partnerships where aid, loans and trade preferences often came with condescending lectures, shifting rules and political demands. China's model resonates because it is commercially driven, respectful and focused on development outcomes.

While all countries pursue their legitimate interests in international cooperation, China's engagement with Africa is fundamentally different from models that use market access as political leverage. China consistently upholds the principles of noninterference in internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit.

Africa is no longer seeking just any partnership. It is asking a more fundamental question: On whose terms is the relationship built?

Between the African Growth and Opportunity Act's politicized, exclusive and constraint-laden framework, and China's inclusive, unconditional, development-focused zero-tariff arrangement, the rational choice for Africa is clear.

The author is a political analyst and international affairs commentator based in Harare, Zimbabwe. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Fruit: Growing demand inspires new beverage products

From page 1

Dayi's natural conditions have made it one of China's major plum-producing regions. Fed by meltwater from Xiling Snow Mountain and shaped by significant temperature differences between day and night, the area produces plums known for their rich aroma, thick flesh and sharp acidity.

For 79-year-old farmer Wang Xiuhua, the harvest represents the culmination of months of careful work. "Plum blossoms open in the bitter cold of the twelfth lunar month," she said. "The hardest time comes in early spring. If snow or frost arrives when the trees are flowering, the blossoms fall and there will be very few fruits."

By the time *mang zhong* arrives, farmers are watching closely for signs of peak ripeness. "Once the plums turn golden, you have to pick them quickly," Wang said.

For generations, preserving the taste of summer has been a seasonal ritual in local households. Wang still follows a family recipe for making sugar-cured plums. The freshly picked fruit is washed and air-dried before being layered with white sugar in a glass jar. Over time, the plums release their juices and wrinkle, creating a concentrated syrup.

The fruit also plays a key role in Dayi's plum wine industry.

Hu Yao, founder of Chengdu Dahe Hongmei Wine Co and a practitioner of the region's traditional plum wine-making technique, said the Nanko variety of the fruit has a small pit and thick flesh. "When fully ripe, the aroma is especially intense, which gives the wine a strong fruity character."

Unlike products made by simply steeping fruit in distilled spirits, Dayi's traditional plum wine relies on pure fruit fermentation — a process requiring careful temperature and timing control. "If one step goes wrong, the whole batch can turn into vinegar instead of wine," Hu said.

While the plum itself has changed little over the centuries, the ways people enjoy it continue to evolve.

Growing demand among younger consumers for lighter, fruit-forward drinks has inspired new products ranging from jasmine- and chrysanthemum-infused plum wines to sparkling plum beverages and tea-based drinks.

For many consumers, plum-based drinks offer not only refreshment, but also a connection with seasonal rhythms that have shaped Chinese life for generations.

As summer settles across Sichuan and the orchards empty of fruit, the work after harvest continues in jars, bottles and fermentation tanks. A year later, when the weather turns hot again, the flavor of Dayi's plums will return in a glass of chilled drink, carrying with it the taste of a season that begins each year with the snap of a fruit leaving its branch.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:03 PM

WORLD



Staff members count the ballots from South Korea's local elections at a counting station in Seoul on Wednesday. JUN HYOSANG / XINHUA

S. Korea ruling party wins polls

President Lee's DP scores big victory in local elections but loses Seoul race

By **YANG HAN** in Hong Kong
kelly@chinadailyapac.com

South Korea's ruling liberals secured a landslide victory in quadrennial local elections held on Wednesday, while the main opposition party successfully defended the key Seoul mayoralty, official data showed on Thursday.

According to the National Election Commission, President Lee Jaemyung's ruling Democratic Party, or DP, won 12 out of 16 races for metropolitan mayor and provincial governor races.

The result marks a dramatic shift in voter sentiment from four years ago as the DP demonstrated nationwide dominance, a turnaround from the 2022 local elections when the then-ruling People Power Party, or PPP, claimed 12 out of 17 major gubernatorial and mayoral positions.

In the contest this week, the DP successfully flipped traditional conservative strongholds, including the crucial southeastern port city of Busan, while retaining its grip on the vital capital region of Gyeonggi Province, the western port of Incheon, and its traditional home turf in the South and North Jeolla provinces.

But the PPP managed to secure four races for mayors and governors, including the capital Seoul, the southeastern inland city of Daegu, and South Gyeongsang and North Gyeongsang provinces.

The parliamentary by-election was held concurrently on Wednesday. The DP secured nine out of the 14 contested parliamentary seats, further consolidating its majority role in the 300-member National Assembly. The PPP gained four seats, and one independent candidate was elected in Busan.

The elections were held exactly one year after President Lee took office last year, with many seeing it as the first test for his administration.

In a meeting with senior aides on Thursday, Lee said he would "humbly" accept the public sentiment reflected in the election results and pledged to cooperate actively with newly elected local governments regardless of their political affiliation, according to Yonhap News Agency.

Symbolic post

Losing the Seoul mayoral race is seen as a painful blow to the ruling party as it is a highly symbolic post that is often regarded as a key barometer of public sentiment.

DP leader Jung Chung-rae said in a news conference that he is grateful to the public for granting the party a major nationwide victory in the local elections but added that it was painful that the party failed in the Seoul race.

"I apologize for the disappointing election results," said PPP leader Jang Dong-hyuk in a Facebook post, adding that the party managed to keep the "spark of hope" alive in the challenging election and will find a new path forward.

"(The election) is a referendum not only on President Lee ... but essentially ... also a referendum on the behavior and attitude of the main opposition party," said Lam Peng Er, head of the Korea Centre and principal research fellow at the East Asian Institute at the National University of Singapore.

While the ruling party has emerged very strong both in terms of local and national power, the PPP also managed to avoid total annihilation by retaining key conservative strongholds and winning the race in Seoul, Lam told China Daily.

Still, Lam said the landslide win of the ruling party in both local and by-elections will provide political stability for Lee to pursue his domestic reforms.

He said the high voter turnout, the second-highest in South Korea's local election history, showed there are many voters who feel that the PPP had not really repented for the failed martial law declaration by former president Yoon Suk-yeol in 2024. Yoon was impeached the following year.

Over 27.2 million people cast their ballots in the June 3 local elections, with a final voter turnout of 61 percent.

Beijing imposes travel ban on New Zealand MPs over Taiwan visit

By **MO JINGXI**
mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn

China warned on Thursday that anyone who crosses the line on the Taiwan question will "pay the price", after it imposed travel bans on several individual New Zealand lawmakers who visited the Taiwan region in disregard of the grave concerns and firm opposition of Beijing.

"We urge the individuals concerned to earnestly respect China's sovereignty and territorial integrity and strictly abide by the one-China principle," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said at a regular news briefing in Beijing.

Mao made the remarks in response to a question about why China banned several New Zealand lawmakers from entering the country.

In a statement made earlier on Thursday, the Chinese embassy in New Zealand said that a small number of New Zealand lawmakers had visited the Taiwan region in their capacity as members of Parliament despite China's serious concerns, firm opposition and repeated prior warnings.

The embassy said that China had decided, in accordance with relevant laws, to take measures against the individuals concerned, such as the denial of entry into China, including the Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions.

"Their action violates the one-China principle and interferes in China's internal affairs," Mao told reporters.

She stressed that the one-China principle, a prevailing international consensus and a basic norm in international relations, is also the political cornerstone of China-New Zealand relations.

On Thursday, Mao also responded to accusations by intelligence agencies from the so-called Five Eyes alliance, which includes the United States and the United Kingdom, that Chinese spies are using online job platforms to recruit people.

Mao said that as the world's largest intelligence cooperation network, the "Five Eyes" has long engaged in massive systemic espionage all over the world.

"It is ironic that such an organization is accusing China of 'spy threat'," she said.

Miraculous survival



Paramedics work to transport Dawa Sherpa, a climbing guide who went missing for several days on Mount Qomolangma, also known as Mount Everest in the West, from a helipad at HAMS Hospital in Kathmandu, Nepal, on Thursday. He was found alive after crawling alone, almost making it to base camp. NAVESH CHITRAKAR / REUTERS

Deadly derailment



Workers respond after a train derailed on Wednesday, near Victor, Iowa, United States. One person was killed and another seriously injured, authorities said. CHARLIE NEIBERGALL / AP

European Commission cries foul over new tariff threat

By **JULIAN SHEA** in London
julian@mail.chinadailyuk.com

The European Union's executive branch, the European Commission, has hit back at what it calls "unjustified" threats of yet more tariffs from the United States, just as it closes in on implementing the much-disputed trade agreement reached last summer between Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and US President Donald Trump.

On June 16, EU lawmakers are expected to vote on the deal, which critics say is unduly weighted toward the US and will impose a 15 percent levy on EU goods, while the EU removes tariffs on US products.

However, less than two weeks before the vote, the EU has been named as one of 60 economies, including the United Kingdom, China, India and Canada, which could face additional new tariffs of up to 12.5 percent, with Washington's justification being that the countries and trade blocs named have failed to curb trade in goods made with forced labor, which is harmful to US commercial interests.

Those facing an additional 10 percent tariff include Canada, Mexico, the EU, the UK and Pakistan. Other countries, including China, India, Japan and Australia, could face 12.5 percent.

'Unacceptable' action

"The failure of our most important trading partners to address the importation of goods made with forced labor is unacceptable," said US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer. "This creates a dynamic where American workers are forced to compete globally on an unlevel playing field."

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning firmly rejected the remarks and said the threat was being used "as a pretext for political manipulation", while the EU said it already has some of the world's tightest restrictions around the trade of forced labor goods.

The US government's investigation, which led to the latest tariff threat, came about after February's US Supreme Court ruling that Trump had overstepped his authority as president by trying to use the International Emergency Economic Powers Act to impose duties on many of the US' leading trading partners.

The European Parliament's chief negotiator on the implementation of the EU-US deal known as the Turnberry agreement, Bernd Lange, said the latest threat was clearly a response to this "defeat before the Supreme Court", which had left the White House "desperately" looking for a new justification "to sustain its tariff policy".

"Accusing the EU of not doing enough against forced labor is absurd," he continued. Lange chairs the European Parliament's trade committee, which on Tuesday voted to accept the Turnberry agreement.

He said that the latest threat was not unexpected, adding that "the impression is increasingly emerging that a tariff measure is sought first, and only then is a suitable legal justification found".

Commission Deputy Chief spokesman Olof Gill said the Commission "will carefully analyze the preliminary findings of the investigation" but that "the EU considers tariffs imposed on these grounds to be unjustified".

Chinese-style clothing grows popular in US stores

By **BELINDA ROBINSON**
in New York
belindarobinson@chinadailyusa.com

A new trend of Chinese-style clothing, especially the so-called "Mandarin jacket", traditionally called *tangzhuang*, has become popular in the United States and abroad this spring and summer in clothing stores like Zara.

The aesthetic, dubbed "Neo-Chinese Style" in English, appears under the hashtag *xinzhongshi* on social media and has been declared a major 2026 fashion craze on TikTok and Instagram among Generation Z and other age groups.

"These jackets are clearly Asian-inspired," Desiree Jones, 55, from New York, told China Daily while shopping at a Zara store in Manhattan.

"I gravitate to that. It's fire. It pulls you in. It's the button placement and the structure of the jacket and the collar. That's where you really see that Asian cut. I see no problem with there being more Asian- or Chinese-inspired fashion in US stores because a lot of Americans are going to Asia, so it's nice we're mixing cultures."

The styles that are currently most popular adopt traditional Chinese tailoring such as Mandarin collars, *pankou*, or frog buttons, alongside Western tailoring. Horse-face skirts, known as *mamianqun*, are available for sale on Amazon.

Some of the most sought-after Tang-style jackets are being sold by Zara, a fast-fashion Spanish retailer with stores in at least 96 countries.

One sleek, black, stylish, Zara Mandarin jacket costs $149. Another white one was part of a prominent window display in New York.

Monica, 30, from Ecuador, was browsing through the racks of a Zara in Brooklyn midweek when one of the black Mandarin-style jackets caught her eye.

"I love this style," she said while trying it on. "I think of pretty Chinese models when I see this jacket. I want to look like that. I like the buttons, color, everything really. It's got a real Chinese vibe to it. It's very cool. I'll style it with light-colored jeans."

Summer trend

Lace, short-sleeved tops or shirts with a high collar and frog buttons are tipped to be a big trend this summer. So too are *qipao*.

Another viral, sporty offering is the Adidas Chinese New Year jacket, available in the US from May 1, which costs $150.

Before the jacket went viral worldwide on social media, it was exclusive to China, and then it was sold in Europe.

But while the latest look is a must-have among shoppers of all races, its sudden popularity has divided Chinese social media users.

Some like it, while others see it as cultural appropriation.

Vanessa Li, a 26-year-old Chinese Australian content creator, made a video in January with the opening words "my culture is not a trend".

Li's video has been liked over 71,100 times as of Monday.

She dislikes that *tangzhuang* is now predominantly known in the West as a Mandarin jacket.

She sees countless fashion brands selling the style but not acknowledging the culture it's from.

Li says she believes there is a "fine line between cultural appropriation and cultural appreciation".

While appreciation is welcome, she does not want to see brands profiting from other cultures without crediting their origins, or real names. "That's not appreciation, that's appropriation," she says in her video.

Instead, she encourages people not to view the latest fashion as just a trend but as part of thousands of years of Chinese history, craftsmanship and cultural meaning.

She also urges shoppers to support Chinese fashion designers.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:03 PM

WORLD

New clashes strain shaky US-Iran truce

Kuwait under attack amid conflicting signals from Washington and Tehran

By **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE, and **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong

Fresh strikes and diplomatic friction have continued to strain a fragile truce between the United States and Iran, with Tehran confirming no tangible headway has been made in war-ending talks amid new hostilities.

In contrast to the downbeat Iranian remarks, US President Donald Trump voiced optimism again, telling reporters that "it could happen ... over the weekend".

"The talks are going very well actually," he said of the latest bid to end the war, which began on Feb 28.

However, US lawmakers dealt a political blow to the Republican leader on Wednesday when the House of Representatives passed a resolution directing withdrawal from the war.

The resolution, adopted by a vote of 215 to 208, with four Republican lawmakers siding with Democrats, remains largely symbolic, as Trump retains veto power should the measure clear the Senate.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said lines of communication with the US were still open, but warned that any Israeli attack on Lebanon would trigger a "full-scale resumption" of the conflict.

"Any attack on Beirut will have grave consequences and will lead to a full-scale resumption of the war," he told Lebanon's Al Mayadeen TV on Wednesday, while highlighting the combat readiness of the armed forces.

Following a drone attack on Kuwait's international airport, authorities suspended air traffic and diverted arriving planes to other destinations, but later resumed Kuwait Airways flights. The airport, which only fully resumed services on Monday, has been repeatedly targeted throughout the conflict.

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps denied orchestrating the attack, saying it was "an error in the American Patriot systems, which landed on the terminal after failing to intercept Iranian missiles".

The IRGC also accused US troops of provoking escalation by targeting an Iranian tanker and Qeshm Island. The US military rejected the claims, stating that Iranian drones had deliberately targeted Kuwait's airport.

Iran's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei said in a message on Thursday that Iran has delivered a "decisive blow" to the US and Israel, warning that Tehran's adversaries are now attempting to foment internal divisions after suffering battlefield defeats.

The fresh escalation was one of the sternest tests yet of the April 8 truce that paused more than a month of war sparked by the US-Israeli bombing of Iran, and has largely held despite sporadic exchanges of fire.

Trump played down the renewed hostilities, saying that "in that part of the world, a ceasefire is when you're shooting in a more moderate manner".

Hassan Ahmadian, a professor at the University of Tehran, doubted whether a shaky deal could permanently end Israeli and US military aggression.

"That's why they are resorting to power to make their own guarantees," Ahmadian told Al Jazeera, adding that the Iranian leadership is attempting to show that it is both ready for diplomacy and further military confrontation if necessary.

"If we're attacked, we'll hurt you back — that's the main Iranian message," he said.

Situation in Lebanon

Meanwhile, the path toward a lasting ceasefire between Israel and Lebanese militant group Hezbollah remained unclear as hostilities continued, despite Israel and Lebanon having reached a ceasefire after two days of direct talks.

The two countries agreed to create "pilot zones" in which Lebanese armed forces "will take exclusive control of the territory", barring all nonstate armed actors, a joint statement said. Further talks were planned for the week of June 22 to reach a "comprehensive" agreement.

Notably, Trump acknowledged having called Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu "crazy" during a reportedly expletive-filled call, saying he was "a little bit perturbed" that Israel's fighting with Hezbollah was hampering talks with Iran.

Contact the writers at cuihaipei@chinadaily.com.cn



Kuwait's Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad al-Abdullah al-Sabah (second from right) inspects the damaged airport in Kuwait City on Wednesday. KUWAIT NEWS AGENCY VIA AFP

Pedal power



Cyclists hit the streets of Jakarta, Indonesia, on Wednesday to mark World Bicycle Day. The annual United Nations event, observed on June 3, aims to promote the health, social and environmental benefits of cycling. VERI SANOVRI VIA XINHUA

Trade remains key despite rising geopolitical tensions, expert says

By **RENA LI** in Los Angeles
renali@chinadailyusa.com

International trade remains one of the most effective ways to create prosperity, strengthen economic ties and reduce conflict between nations, says a maritime and trade analyst, while warning that rising protectionism and geopolitical tensions are reshaping the global trading system.

Speaking at the centennial celebration of World Trade Week in Los Angeles last week, Peter Tirschwell, vice-president for maritime and trade at S&P Global Market Intelligence, emphasized the enduring value of international commerce at a time when tariffs, geopolitical rivalry and supply chain disruptions are increasingly influencing trade flows.

"We believe firmly in the value of trade to expand markets, create opportunities, create interdependencies and thus bring countries and societies together," he said.

"If they trade together, then they are less likely to go to war with each other."

Tirschwell, who previously served as editor-in-chief of the Journal of Commerce, said the publication has maintained a pro-trade perspective since its founding in 1827, reflecting the view that trade promotes economic growth, efficiency and international cooperation.

"The expansion of global commerce has helped lower costs, increase consumer choice and support job creation around the world," he said, highlighting the development of the European Union after World War II as one example of how economic integration can help foster stability and cooperation among nations.

The ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach provide another example of trade's economic benefits, he said. Together, the two ports form the largest container gateway in the Western Hemisphere and support hundreds of thousands of jobs throughout Southern California and beyond.

"The message being that trade creates jobs, it creates growth, it creates opportunity, it creates prosperity," Tirschwell said. "But sadly, that is not the message that we are hearing out of Washington, DC, right now."

His remarks came amid continued debate over US tariff policies, including the sweeping "Liberation Day" tariffs announced in April last year.

The measures, which imposed additional duties on imports from numerous trading partners, have contributed to uncertainty for businesses and supply chains while prompting legal challenges and broader discussions about the future direction of US trade policy.

Significant departure

Tirschwell said the current environment represents a significant departure from the decades following the establishment of the World Trade Organization in 1995, when globalization and trade liberalization enjoyed broad international support.

"I grew up in an era that was favorable to trade," he said. "There used to be a global consensus regarding the value of trade."

Today, however, governments are playing a much larger role in shaping trade flows, often using tariffs and industrial policies to pursue strategic and geopolitical objectives.

He cited a recent study by McKinsey & Company projecting that as much as one-third of global trade could shift to new trade corridors over the next decade.

Early signs of that trend may already be emerging. Tirschwell said global container volumes grew about 5 percent year-on-year for the first quarter, but United States containerized imports dropped by 5 percent. "Trade is diversified, and it could start to bypass the US on a long-term basis," he said.

He also pointed to growing pressures on global shipping networks. Traffic through the Suez Canal remains below historical levels because of security concerns in the Middle East, while tensions surrounding the Strait of Hormuz continue to create uncertainty for global logistics operators.

"Freedom of navigation is now under threat in ways that it has not been for decades," he said.

As a result, businesses are adapting to a "permanent state of disruption", requiring new approaches to supply chain management and investment planning, he said.

Despite the challenges, Tirschwell remained optimistic about the long-term outlook for international commerce.

Many regions, particularly Africa, are expected to grow faster than the US in the coming decades and are attracting increasing attention from shipping lines, freight forwarders and logistics providers, he said.

While acknowledging that global trade is entering a more complex era, Tirschwell said the continued investment by ports, airports and logistics operators demonstrates enduring confidence in international commerce and economic connectivity.

Briefly

BRAZIL

Lula refuses to bow to tariff offensive

Brazil will stand firm and not bow to pressure from the latest US trade offensive, President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said on Wednesday. At a cabinet meeting, Lula focused on the proposed 25 percent tariff on Brazilian goods announced by the Office of the United States Trade Representative two days ago. "We have decided that this country will no longer adopt a 'stray dog' policy toward the great powers," Lula said. "No one needs to be afraid of anything; we will not bow our heads. We are a democratic and sovereign country. We will not give in." Brazil will maintain its independent position and seek alternative partnerships, he said. "If (US President Donald Trump) doesn't want to buy, we'll sell to whoever does."

SPAIN

Record heat-related deaths seen in May

The deaths of 101 people in Spain in May were heat-related, the highest number for the month since such records began in 2015, the Health Ministry said on Wednesday. "This figure is 3.6 times higher than the average number of heat-related deaths recorded in May over the past decade," the ministry said, stressing "the significant health impact of heat episodes, even before the start of summer". Temperature records for the month were broken in several Spanish cities in late May, particularly in the north, according to the national meteorological agency Aemet, which said the figures marked "extraordinarily high temperatures for a month of May".

XINHUA—AGENCIES

South Africa looks to bioethanol for energy security

By **NDUMISO MLILO**
in Johannesburg
For China Daily

South Africa is ready to produce bioethanol from sorghum to reduce reliance on imported fossil fuels and cushion geopolitical risks, officials and business leaders say.

Josie Rowe-Setz, managing director of Blueprint Holdings, a company focused on the southern African market, said there is significant economic value in building a domestic bioethanol industry using locally grown sorghum and sugarcane.

Countries including Brazil, India, Kenya, the United States and Zimbabwe have established bioethanol industries, demonstrating the model's viability, she said. Sorghum is drought-tolerant, heat-resistant and well-suited to South Africa's agricultural conditions, she added.

"We have found that production of bioethanol is a viable industry. It will give us self-reliance, national energy sovereignty and fuel security," she said.

South Africa has the natural resources, market demand and regulatory framework needed to support bioethanol production, Rowe-Setz said. Developing the domestic bioethanol industry could also create jobs across the agricultural and manufacturing sectors, she said.

In countries where bioethanol industries succeeded, early investment was supported through targeted public finance mechanisms, and feedstock supply was strengthened through contract farming and guaranteed offtake arrangements, she added.

Landeni Kabini, acting director-general of South Africa's Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources, said the government has come up with legislation aimed at removing obstacles in bioethanol production.

Authorities are prepared to work with industry players and other stakeholders to start the production of fuel derived from sorghum and sugarcane, she said.

"There was regulatory uncertainty, and we gazetted the regulations on what the price of biofuel can be, so that the industry can take off," she said. "As a government, we support the biofuels industry."

Irshaad Kathrada, CEO of the Localisation Support Fund, said South Africa has undergone a major shift from domestic fuel refining to imported finished fuels following the closure of its two largest coastal refineries between 2022 and 2023.

As a result, he said, the country now imports nearly three-fourths of its fuel from geopolitically exposed sources, leaving consumers vulnerable to global supply chain disruptions and price shocks.

"We have a credible near-term alternative, one grounded in South African soil, South African farmers and commercially proven technology," he said. "The economics are closer to viable than most people realize, the regulatory framework is finally in place, and the localization dividend is substantial."

The writer is a freelance journalist for China Daily.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108
529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1843

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:03 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Latest tariff proposal reveals US is caught in dilemma of its own making

The United States administration's latest tariff offensive targeting 60 economies including China was greeted around the world with something unusual: a collective shrug.

That is because Washington has been signaling for months that it needs a legal substitute for the sweeping tariffs struck down by the US Supreme Court earlier this year.

The White House's temporary global tariffs — imposed under Section 301 investigations after its earlier tariffs were ruled unlawful — are due to expire next month. Allowing a gap in tariff collection would be politically costly at a time when the US' fiscal deficit remains elevated and the midterm elections loom on the horizon.

The US administration therefore has a strong incentive to keep the tariff machine running. Tariff revenues, which exceeded $31 billion per month at their peak last autumn, have already declined substantially.

The result is a curious blend of continuity and retreat.

Compared with the tariff threats that dominated headlines last year, the new rates are lower. Most major economies face either a 10 percent or 12.5 percent surcharge rather than the much steeper penalties previously contemplated. The US administration has also expanded exemptions for a wide range of agricultural commodities, industrial inputs and products that the US either cannot produce domestically or cannot produce in sufficient quantities.

Economic gravity has a habit of asserting itself, sooner or later. For all the rhetoric about reindustrialization, economic reality has imposed constraints. Inflation remains stubbornly uncomfortable for US households. Consumer prices continue to weigh on public sentiment. Manufacturers and farmers have repeatedly warned that tariffs on imported inputs raise production costs. The situation has been further complicated by renewed instability in the Middle East.

The US administration thus finds itself attempting a delicate balancing act. On the one hand, it wants to preserve the tariff barriers that "protect" select domestic industries. On the other hand, it cannot ignore the political consequences of higher prices. Even the Federal Reserve's recent warning to continue shrinking its balance sheet underscores lingering inflationary concerns.

Against this backdrop, the groundless allegations of "forced labor" made by the Office of the US Trade Representative are merely a "politically correct" pretext for the proposed tariffs to go to congressional debate next month.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning reiterated that China opposes all forms of unilateral tariff measures. No one benefits from tariffs or trade wars, and economic disputes should be resolved through dialogue and consultation based on equality, respect and mutual benefit.

She also rightfully rejected allegations of "forced labor" in China and criticized attempts to use the issue as a pretext for political manipulation.

The European Union, Canada and many other trading partners of the US have voiced opposition and concerns regarding both the substance and the justification of the tariff surge. Yet they have been measured rather than alarmed in their responses. That reflects a growing recognition that Washington itself is constrained.

Protracted trade negotiations have taught some US trading partners an important lesson: tariff threats are often as much about domestic politics as international economics. The latest proposals reveal a US administration struggling to reconcile strategic ambitions with economic realities.

The deeper problem for Washington is that tariffs have gradually ceased to function as conventional economic instruments based on market law. They have become political instruments that are difficult to calibrate. Raise them too aggressively and domestic inflation, legal challenges and business opposition intensify. Apply them selectively and their coercive power diminishes. Exemptions proliferate, contradictions multiply and credibility erodes.

Durable economic relationships cannot be built on coercion. Whether the issue is market access, supply chains or labor standards, progress ultimately depends not on tariff walls but on fair competition, candid negotiation and mutually beneficial cooperation.

'De-risking' is EU's pretext for protectionism

The European Union on Wednesday unveiled its "technological sovereignty" package, which includes the Cloud and Artificial Intelligence Development Act and Chips Act 2.0. The initiative seeks to bolster Europe's technological independence by reducing reliance on foreign technology.

The chips act favors "European-made" chips and seeks to create a closed digital ecosystem, which could fragment global supply chains. The Computer and Communications Industry Association's Senior Vice-President and Head of Office Daniel Friedlaender called the cloud and AI development act "a direct recipe for fragmented discrimination across Europe in 27 different ways".

The new law would be "effectively giving national capitals carte blanche to shut out trusted global vendors from every major technology-producing nation outside the union", he warned.

The EU's focus on "technological sovereignty" reflects a trend of some EU nations moving away from free, open and fair trade toward protectionism. It will unavoidably affect relevant Chinese entities.

As Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning noted in response to questions regarding the EU's latest move in a news conference in Beijing on Wednesday, the essence of China-EU economic and trade relations is mutual benefit and win-win cooperation.

She added that economic and trade issues should be properly resolved through dialogue and communication. Mao expressed the hope that the EU will uphold the fundamental principles of a market economy, including free trade, fair competition and open cooperation, refrain from adopting protectionist measures and remain committed to settling differences through dialogue and consultation.

The EU has in recent years introduced a series of measures as part of its "de-risking" strategy targeting China. Rejecting high-quality products and services from Chinese companies will not only result in financial losses for European countries, but also impede their own technological progress and economic growth.

Reportedly, the EU will leverage the G7 and EU summer summits to introduce new trade restriction instruments targeting China this month.

EU policymakers should understand that protectionism is not a solution to the problems that the EU is now facing, and open cooperation benefits both sides. This is because the economic and trade relations between China and the EU are deeply integrated and complementary. Disrupting these links would harm the interests of enterprises and consumers from both sides.

The latest survey report from the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China shows that a majority of the EU companies surveyed have chosen to maintain or expand their operations in China, while nearly one-third plan to further deepen their localization strategies there. This suggests that the "de-risking" narrative pushed by some EU politicians has not, in practice, become the prevailing choice among EU businesses.

At its core, China-EU economic and trade cooperation is the natural outcome of the interplay between comparative advantages and market competition. Complementary strengths do not constitute a risk, nor does the convergence of interests pose a threat, as Mao Ning said on Thursday.

Over the past five decades, the annual trade volume between China and Europe has surged more than 300-fold, while two-way mutual investment has approached $260 billion — figures that vividly demonstrate the strong momentum and vast potential of China-EU economic cooperation.

Trade protectionism runs counter to economic laws and is a self-defeating practice that harms all parties involved.

EU policymakers should view the bloc's economic and trade relations with China in an objective and rational light, and work alongside the Chinese side to narrow the list of outstanding issues, expand the scope of cooperation, and achieve win-win outcomes.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

Classics transmission of meaning across generations

Nearly 100 Chinese scholars will attend the second World Conference of Classics in Athens on Tuesday and Wednesday. Their presence is symptomatic of a broader intellectual movement unfolding in contemporary China: the rediscovery of the classics not as relics of distant antiquity, but as part of a living tradition that is not just of relevance to contemporary China but to the world as a whole.

Increasingly, Chinese scholars are arguing that the classical thought that helped to shape the modern world should not be confined to the Greco-Roman canon alone. Chinese, Mesopotamian, Indian and other civilizations have all contributed to the long civilizational effort to confront enduring questions about human existence and society.

For much of the modern era, Western science, military technology, political institutions, and industrial systems have been the primary sources of practical knowledge; to "learn from the West" was seen as modernization. Today, however, for many Chinese classicists, engagement with Western thought is part of the effort to understand how other societies have answered the question of how to live.

In fact, classical writings are valued precisely because they ask questions that modern societies, despite their immense technological sophistication, still struggle to answer: What is the good life? What is the relationship between law and morality, individual desire and civic responsibility, personal fulfillment and collective harmony?

One reason these questions have regained urgency is the realization among intellectuals that technological progress and material development alone have not produced moral clarity or civilizational confidence. In fact, some of the greatest catastrophes of modern history emerged within highly advanced societies.

While earlier generations encountered Western civilization through the pressures of colonialism and modernization, Chinese scholars today engage with Greek and wider classical traditions grounded in China's own intellectual inheritance.

The value of comparative classical studies lies not in erasing differences, but in illuminating them. Classical Greek tragedies dramatized conflict, individual heroic endeavors and the instability of political life. Confucian thought emphasized harmony, relational ethics and moral cultivation through ritual. Comparative perspectives can open new ways of approaching both Greek antiquity and Chinese classical thought.

There is also growing recognition that civilizations understand themselves more clearly through encountering others. Odysseus, the hero of Homer's epic poem *The Odyssey*, leaves Ithaca and returns transformed through his encounters with foreign worlds. Confucius spent 14 years traveling among the competing states of his age in search of moral order and wise governance. Both traditions suggest that stepping beyond one's own world provides the distance necessary to reflect upon it more deeply.

In an increasingly fragmented global landscape marked by geopolitical rivalry, technological disruption, and ideological polarization, the classics offer something increasingly rare: long traditions of reflection on human nature, political order, moral responsibility, and the conditions of civilized life itself. They remind us that civilizations are not sustained by power or wealth alone, but by their capacity to preserve, reinterpret and transmit meaning across generations.

The gathering in Athens thus represents an emerging attempt to recover a genuinely global humanism — one grounded not in cultural uniformity, but in serious dialogue among the foundational civilizations of humanity. At a time when the world often appears divided by distrust and competing narratives, that aspiration may itself be among the most important lessons the classics still have to offer.

— ZHAO XU, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

New measures to advance dual-carbon goals

Editor's note: *Friday is the 55th World Environment Day. In April, China issued new measures to evaluate and assess the performance of local governments in advancing carbon peaking and carbon neutrality. The 21st Century Business Herald spoke to Tian Zhiyu, a researcher at the Energy Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Macroeconomic Research, about how the measures will help China's green transformation progress. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

China has set dual carbon goals of peaking carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality before 2060. The new measures are designed to guide governments at all levels in adopting a sound approach to performance assessment, while ensuring accountability for meeting carbon reduction targets.

The measures seek to ensure effective alignment of goals and responsibilities among the central and local governments, across different regions and among various government departments.

According to the measures, a carbon peaking action plan will be formulated during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period to achieve national targets by 2030, including reducing carbon emissions intensity by more than 65 percent from 2005 levels, increasing the share of non-fossil energy consumption to 25 percent and peaking both coal and oil consumption.

The measures' primary purpose is to promote higher-quality work in advancing the country's carbon peaking and carbon neutrality agenda.

For regions making solid progress, the focus will be on identifying successful practices and sharing valuable experiences. For those lagging behind, the priority will be to take timely corrective actions and address existing problems.

China's provinces differ significantly in terms of resource endowments, industrial structures and stages of development. Therefore, the measures place emphasis on ensuring fairness in the assessment criteria.

Local governments are required to draft their own carbon peaking action plans during the 15th Five-Year Plan period, setting five-year and annual targets as well as policy measures that align with national objectives.

Also, during the evaluation and assessment process, factors such as changes in domestic and international conditions, as well as natural and climatic circumstances, are taken into account. The assessment criteria can be adjusted and refined dynamically when necessary, maintaining a degree of policy flexibility.

For provinces that rely heavily on carbon-intensive industries and face significant transition pressures, balancing emissions reductions with economic growth remains a key challenge. A three-pronged approach can be useful here.

First, it is essential to strengthen the commitment to comprehensive green transformation. Achieving the carbon peaking and neutrality goals is not about restricting development. Rather, it is aligned with and supportive of high-quality development, delivering benefits in both the near and long term.

Second, greater emphasis should be placed on improving "carbon productivity". Reducing carbon intensity should serve as a key benchmark when planning new projects and upgrading existing ones, ensuring that every unit of carbon emissions generates the greatest possible economic value.

Third, stronger awareness of process management is needed. Achieving carbon peaking and neutrality goals cannot be left until the last minute or rely on external support. Efforts must begin now, starting with a clear understanding of current emissions profiles, identifying untapped potential for reductions and building broad-based momentum for low-carbon transformation across all sectors and industries.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:03 PM

VIEWS

Kulsum Begum

Visit marks a new stage in China-Laos ties

When General Secretary of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party Central Committee and Lao President Thongloun Sisoulith arrived in Hangzhou on the first day of his state visit to China, one brief moment captured wide attention.

At DEEP Robotics, a leading robotics company, a robot dog approached him with a gift. Thongloun smiled, accepted the toy and thanked the machine in Chinese.

Later, he operated another robot dog and watched it roll over on command. On the surface, it was a light-hearted moment. In reality, it revealed something much deeper about where China-Laos relations are heading.

Twenty years ago, a Lao leader visiting China would likely have focused on roads, bridges, hydropower stations, and agricultural cooperation. Today, the first stop is Hangzhou, which is home to robotics firms, AI platforms, digital governance systems, and e-commerce giants. That shift reflects a structural transformation in how both countries view development.

Global Lens

For more than six decades since diplomatic relations were established in 1961, China and Laos have built their partnership on political trust, mutual respect, and a shared identity often described as "comrades and brothers". That foundation remains strong, but it doesn't tell the full story.

The significance of President Thongloun's visit lies elsewhere. China-Laos relations are steadily evolving into a comprehensive development partnership shaped by economic necessity, structural transformation, and long-term modernization goals. In many ways, Laos is emerging as a real-world laboratory for a new model of South-South cooperation in the 21st century, where development outcomes matter more than ideological framing.

The country's challenges are deeply interconnected. Laos continues to face poverty, inflation, currency depreciation, climate vulnerability, and a shortage of skilled labor, all of which reinforce each other and constrain growth. At the same time, it is preparing to graduate from the United Nations' least developed country category, a transition that requires structural economic upgrading rather than incremental reform.

Against this backdrop, Laos' 10th Five-Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2026-30) and the Vision 2030 framework set ambitious targets: raising GDP per capita to around $3,104, reducing poverty to single-digit levels, lifting more than 100,000 families out of poverty, expanding forest coverage, and upgrading transport corridors.

China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) is highly complementary to Laos' Vision 2030 strategy. China's emphasis on green development, technological innovation, digital transformation, advanced manufacturing, anti-relapse mechanisms, and regional connectivity aligns closely with Laos' goals of industrial upgrading, poverty reduction, environmental protection, and sustainable growth. When the Lao leader meets senior Chinese leaders in Beijing during his visit, both sides may align their development strategies to chart the future course of bilateral ties.

What makes China particularly significant is the depth of its development experience. China offers Laos something more strategic than capital: a tested pathway of large-scale poverty reduction, industrialization, and infrastructure-led transformation.

President Thongloun's visit coincides with the recent launch of the Global Partnership for Poverty Alleviation and Development (GPPAD), jointly initiated by China and 53 other countries, along with nine international organizations.

The initiative offers countries like Laos a platform to address poverty and development challenges through cooperation, knowledge-sharing, and practical support.

The China-Laos Railway remains the most visible symbol of this transformation. Since its opening in December 2021, it has carried more than 73 million passengers and transported over 84 million tons of cargo, including around 19 million tons of cross-border freight. More than 840,000 international travelers from over 120 countries and regions have used the route. But its real impact goes beyond statistics.

For decades, Laos was defined as a landlocked country. Today, it is increasingly described as "land-linked". Agricultural products from Laos now reach Chinese markets within days.

Tourism corridors linking Kunming in Yunnan province to Luang Prabang and Vientiane have expanded rapidly. Warehousing, logistics, hospitality, and small businesses have grown along the railway belt.

Consumption in railway-linked zones has risen by more than 35 percent. The railway did not simply connect cities but it changed expectations about what Laos can become.

Infrastructure, in this sense, is not just physical capital. It is psychological capital. It reshapes how farmers, students, and entrepreneurs think about opportunity. A farmer with access to a larger market behaves differently.

A student with cross-border mobility thinks differently. Development begins when possibility becomes visible. President Thongloun's decision to begin his visit in Hangzhou reflects this shift. The focus is no longer only on what China can build in Laos, but on what Laos can learn and eventually build for itself. Robotics, AI, digital governance, and smart logistics are now part of Laos' development imagination.

This is reflected in emerging cooperation platforms such as the China-Laos AI Innovation Cooperation Center, the 500-kilovolt power interconnection project, digital infrastructure development, telecommunication satellite applications, and vocational training programs.

The relationship is gradually moving from physical connectivity toward capability building. Clean energy cooperation is another emerging pillar. With hydropower resources and expanding cross-border grids, Laos is positioning itself as a potential renewable energy hub for Southeast Asia.

At the same time, economic cooperation is becoming more balanced.

China remains Laos' largest investor, with cumulative investment exceeding $18 billion, and bilateral trade reaching $9.82 billion in 2025.

But the next phase will depend on Lao products entering the Chinese market more systematically, supported by improved logistics and digital trade platforms.

Seen in a broader regional context, the China-Laos Railway is becoming part of an emerging Pan-Asian connectivity system linking China with Thailand, Malaysia, and potentially Singapore. Combined with the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, Lancang-Mekong cooperation, and ASEAN-China frameworks, Laos is evolving from a peripheral geography into a strategic corridor economy.

Ultimately, President Thongloun's visit reflects a deeper transition in China-Laos relations. The first phase was built on political trust. The second was built on infrastructure connectivity.

The third, now unfolding, is built on modernization, technology, and shared development capacity. That is why this visit is not just a diplomatic milestone, but the opening of a new stage in China-Laos relations.

Southeast Asia's future depends not on bloc politics but on connectivity, trade, industrialization, and shared prosperity.

President Thongloun's visit signals the emergence of a new development paradigm in which neighboring countries build resilience through infrastructure, innovation, and people-centered growth rather than geopolitical rivalry.

The author is a Dhaka-based security and strategic affairs researcher, analyst and columnist.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Huang Huan and An Bowen

When ecology becomes an economic engine

In the spring of 2026, several pods of wild finless porpoises — the "water pandas" known for their extreme sensitivity to water quality — were spotted swimming and playing in the Yangtze River near Yibin in Sichuan province.

Once rare visitors, these creatures have now become permanent residents of the Yangtze, serving as a living bio-indicator of the river's recovery.

This is a significant transformation from a decade ago, when the confluence near Yibin was a toxic mix of chemical effluents, illegal dredging, and silt-heavy waters.

Back then, fishermen grew poorer even as they overtaxed the river, and the city itself was trapped in the grim choice of "pollution for growth".

For years, the stubborn narrative has been that environmental fix-ups are a losing game. Conventional wisdom held that conservation was a one-way street of government spending and shuttered factories, and an enemy of economic progress.

But Yibin, the first major city along the Yangtze and a vital ecological gatekeeper, has spent the last decade dismantling that myth. When we stop viewing conservation as a "burden" to be carried, it becomes a region's most potent competitive edge and turns environmental health into economic capital.

As an industrial powerhouse on the upper Yangtze, Yibin's economy used to be defined by "the black and the white" — coal, chemicals, and heavy-duty liquor production. The riverbanks were crowded with energy-intensive plants, illegal piers, and noisy restaurant barges.

With industrial waste and raw sewage flowing straight into the current, the Yangtze's biodiversity hit rock bottom; at one point, the main stream was classified as "fishless". This was the old playbook of "pollute now, pay later" — a strategy that led to GDP spikes but left the city in an unsustainable deadlock.

When the Yangtze River Protection Law came into effect in 2020, Yibin led the charge with a challenging "inward-looking" cleanup. Illegal docks were dismantled, polluting plants were relocated to managed industrial parks, and a 10-year fishing ban was imposed.

It was a tough time, as industrial output dipped and thousands of fishermen worried about their livelihoods. These "growing pains" only fueled the skeptics who argued that green policies were merely a financial drain.

However, that view was shortsighted. True conservation lays the foundation for a more resilient economy.

Yibin didn't just protect the river for the sake of protection. It synchronized environmental repair with industrial evolution, ensuring that every yuan spent on the river eventually paid dividends to the city.

Yibin's success was rooted in its strategy of "value reconstruction". Instead of pitting the economy against the environment, the city started treating its natural assets as economic engines. The goal was to move past "handout-style" protection toward a self-sustaining model where the environment actually drives growth.

First, the city transformed its ecology into its most valuable asset. By cleaning the water and restoring the shorelines, Yibin achieved 100 percent "excellent" status for its monitored river sections in 2025. This paved the way for the successful natural breeding of the endangered Yangtze sturgeon, signaling a river truly coming back to life.

Second, the industrial engine went green. Yibin replaced its old, polluting industries with what it calls "the blue and the green" — digital tech and clean energy. By positioning itself as "China's power battery capital", it attracted a massive cluster of cutting-edge firms.

At the same time, the city's scenic beauty — from the bamboo forests to the restored wetlands — fueled the growth of the high-end eco-tourism and wellness industry that simply couldn't exist in a polluted city.

Most importantly, the locals became the biggest winners. When the fishing nets were pulled in for the last time, Yibin didn't abandon its fishermen. The city provided retraining, turning former river-harvesters into river-protectors.

Today, those same men and women work as ecological rangers, run riverside guesthouses, or thrive in green agriculture by growing organic tea and bamboo. Many are now earning significantly more than they ever did from a depleted fish stock.

Yibin today is a city transformed — green, vibrant, and alive. The sight of porpoises in the waves and flourishing industries on the riverbank isn't a result of giving up on growth; it's the result of finding the sweet spot where development and nature sustain each other.

Across China, more cities are waking up to this reality. Yibin's journey shows that environmental protection isn't a "losing trade" — it's the smartest investment a city can make.

It is not an obstacle to growth but a foundation for long-term prosperity. When we stop looking at the next quarter and start looking at the next generation, we find that every effort to protect the Earth has its own return.

This is the path to a modern China where the beauty of the landscape and the wealth of the people are one and the same.

Huang Huan is a professor at the Business School of Chengdu University of Technology and a research fellow at the Yangtze River Economic Zone Research Institution of Renmin University of China; An Bowen is a research fellow at the Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era Research Center in Fujian province.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Chen Weihua

The author is a China Daily columnist. chenweihua@chinadaily.com.cn

Ban on smoking in public places an uphill task

I was getting a haircut at a barbershop in my Shanghai neighborhood on Monday when another customer, having just finished his grooming session, sat down on a nearby couch and lit a cigarette about four meters away from me.

It was an immediate nuisance, coming just one day after World No Tobacco Day.

In recent weeks, I have visited the Shanghai No. 10 People's Hospital at least five times to see a relative, and while there, I saw some smokers openly lighting up their cigarettes at the stairways.

And this is Shanghai, a city widely regarded as having some of the strictest anti-smoking regulations in the country.

Under Shanghai rules, smoking is prohibited not only in most indoor public spaces, but also at outdoor bus stops and major tourist attractions such as the Bund, Yuyuan Garden, Xintiandi and Nanjing Road Pedestrian Mall.

The situation in most other Chinese cities is even worse. Southwest China's Yunnan province, the largest tobacco-producing region in the country, is one such place.

During a two-month driving tour across the province late last year, I found that smoking in public places was a far bigger problem.

So far, China's National People's Congress has not enacted a national law that bans smoking in public places. Most rules and regulations relating to smoking restrictions are made by local governments.

The WHO also warns that second-hand smoke exposure contributes to serious health problems, and is estimated to cause over 1.6 million deaths worldwide every year.

The health hazards of smoking are widely known. The World Health Organization states that tobacco use is a major risk factor for cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, over 20 different types of cancer, and many other debilitating health conditions.

Every year, more than 7 million people die from tobacco use across the world. That includes some 1 million deaths in China out of about 300 million smokers, by far the largest number in the world.

The WHO also warns that second-hand smoke exposure contributes to serious health problems, and is estimated to cause over 1.6 million deaths worldwide every year.

In China, cigarette packages carry only text-based warnings of health hazards, but graphic warnings, which are mandatory in many other countries, are still not required.

According to the WHO, health warnings on tobacco packages, especially those that combine text and images, are among the most cost-effective and powerful tools for increasing public awareness of the dangers of tobacco use and reducing tobacco consumption.

The graphic designs used on cigarette packages in some countries are indeed grotesque, featuring images such as blackened and cancerous lungs, rotten teeth, and patients in hospital beds on ventilators.

There is strong public sentiment against smoking in Shanghai. According to the 2025 Shanghai Public Place Tobacco Control white paper released in March this year by the Shanghai Patriotic Health Campaign Committee, 98.2 percent of Shanghai residents support a full ban on indoor smoking.

China Daily reported on Wednesday that a coalition of 16 public health, tobacco control, and environmental protection groups has called for a nationwide smoking ban on all conventional trains and railway platforms, arguing that partial restrictions are no longer sufficient to protect passengers from second-hand smoke.

China has achieved phenomenal progress in its social and economic transformation over the past several decades. Yet, the battle to eliminate smoking in public places and reduce the number of smokers in the country still needs more efforts.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:03 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

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

YU HONGYUAN AND HUA GECHUNYUE

Plugged in

China's stabilizing role in global energy governance has become increasingly prominent

Global energy issues are emerging at the center of the global political economy. On the surface, the current crisis concerns maritime routes, oil and gas transportation and regional security. At a deeper level, however, it reflects the profound pressure now bearing on the global energy governance order: Market mechanisms are being squeezed by the logic of security; open flows are being constrained by bloc confrontation; and multilateral coordination is being weakened by unilateral pressure.



Yu Hongyuan



Hua Gechunyue

Energy security should provide support for development. If it is excessively instrumentalized, it erodes the open environment on which development depends. At a deeper level, the weaponization of energy is becoming a significant manifestation of the imbalance in global governance. Today, route control, financial settlement, sanctions lists, insurance premiums, technological barriers and "rules-based" exclusion are increasingly layered upon one another. Energy is being used more and more as a tool of strategic pressure. The vulnerability of energy systems is an objective reality, but the weaponization of energy is a political choice. It not only raises the institutional costs that countries face in accessing energy, but also places developing countries under greater energy security pressure amid the green transition.

The old foundations of global energy governance are declining. As great power competition intensifies, the generalized use of sanctions, the exclusionary turn in rule-making and the securitization of trade instruments continue to spread. Governance mechanisms that were originally designed to reduce uncertainty are becoming less able to withstand the impact of political conflict. As a result, global energy governance has entered a more turbulent period of adjustment.

Yet crisis not only signifies disorder, but also points to the possibility of reconstruction. Future energy governance should shift toward a new logic that places greater emphasis on systemic resilience, capacity building, green transition and multilateral coordination.

What the world needs is not to turn energy into a bargaining chip of geopolitical competition, but to establish a more stable connection between energy security and climate governance. Nor does it need the creation of more closed and exclusive circles. Rather, it needs transition pathways that countries at different stages of development can participate in, afford and sustain.

China can serve as an anchor of stability in global energy governance because it offers a governance vision distinct from zero-sum competition and bloc confrontation. Faced with a complex situation in which energy security, green transition and the right to development are deeply intertwined, China does not reduce energy to a power struggle of control and counter-control. Instead, it upholds common security, green development, mutually beneficial cooperation and harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature.

China advocates the building of a community with a shared future for humanity and works to translate the four global initiatives it proposed into practical outcomes. It emphasizes the legitimate rights and interests of developing countries in the energy transition and opposes turning the green transition into a new form of barrier politics. This vision is not an abstract slogan, but an important prerequisite for reopening space for cooperation in a turbulent world.



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

The solid foundation of China's stabilizing role also comes from its commitment to steadily advancing its energy transition and green industrial development. By the end of 2025, China's installed renewable energy capacity had reached 2.34 billion kilowatts, accounting for about 60 percent of the country's total installed power generation capacity. The combined installed capacity of wind and solar power had reached 1.84 billion kw, surpassing that of thermal power.

More importantly, China's green transition is not a breakthrough in a single area, but a coordinated advance across wind power, photovoltaics, energy storage, power grids, electric vehicles and green manufacturing. With its super-large market, complete industrial system and sustained capacity for innovation, China is no longer merely a bearer of fluctuations in the global energy market. It has become an important provider of global green transition capacity.

This capacity is particularly important for the world today. With uncertainties over traditional oil and gas supply routes, expanding the supply of clean energy, strengthening the resilience of power systems and accelerating the electrification of end-use energy consumption are not only issues of climate governance, but also issues of energy security. The development of China's new energy industries has reduced the global cost of applying green technologies, expanded the energy transition options available to developing countries and provided a new source of stability for the global energy system. China's contribution to global energy governance is reflected not only in its positions and initiatives, but also in the practical support constituted by equipment, technologies, industry chains, markets and development experience.

At the same time, China's constructive role in global energy governance continues to expand. China remains committed to advancing climate and energy cooperation within multilateral frameworks, actively participates in the process of global climate governance, promotes the Green Belt and Road Initiative, deepens South-South cooperation, and supports developing countries in strengthening their clean energy capacity and climate adaptation capacity.

This is especially critical at present. What global energy governance lacks most is not high-profile statements, but cooperative platforms capable of linking the right to security, the right to development and the right to transition. What it needs most is not exclusion in the name of rules, but the creation of conditions under which more countries can gain capacity, opportunity and benefits in the green transition. What China provides is precisely such a cooperative path, one that is more inclusive and places greater emphasis on common development.

As China plays a greater role, it will also face external constraints and discursive competition. It is necessary to maintain strategic resolve by further transforming the scale advantages of China's own energy transition into systemic advantages, cooperative advantages and rule-shaping capacity. It should expand consensus through open cooperation, consolidate security through green development and stabilize expectations through multilateral coordination.

In the face of excessive securitization and weaponization of energy, as well as global governance imbalances, the truly promising path lies not in closure, confrontation and exclusion, but in responding to risks through cooperation, shaping the future through transition and consolidating security through development. The stronger the winds and waves, the clearer the anchor's value. The significance of China as an anchor of stability in global energy governance lies precisely in its continued provision of valuable stability, certainty and space for cooperation to an uncertain world.

Yu Hongyuan is a professor at the School of Political Science & International Relations at Tongji University. Hua Gechunyue is a doctoral candidate in international relations at the School of Political Science and International Relations at Tongji University. The authors contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

PANG XIAO AND LIU KAN

Green dashboard

China is placing environmental conservation at the heart of its modernization drive with practical governance measures

In 2013, President Xi Jinping proposed a fundamental shift in mindset: no longer judging governance performance solely by GDP growth rate, and placing the ecological environment at the forefront of the evaluation system for economic and social development. The philosophical shift was encapsulated in the famous phrases "lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets" and "green is gold".



Pang Xiao

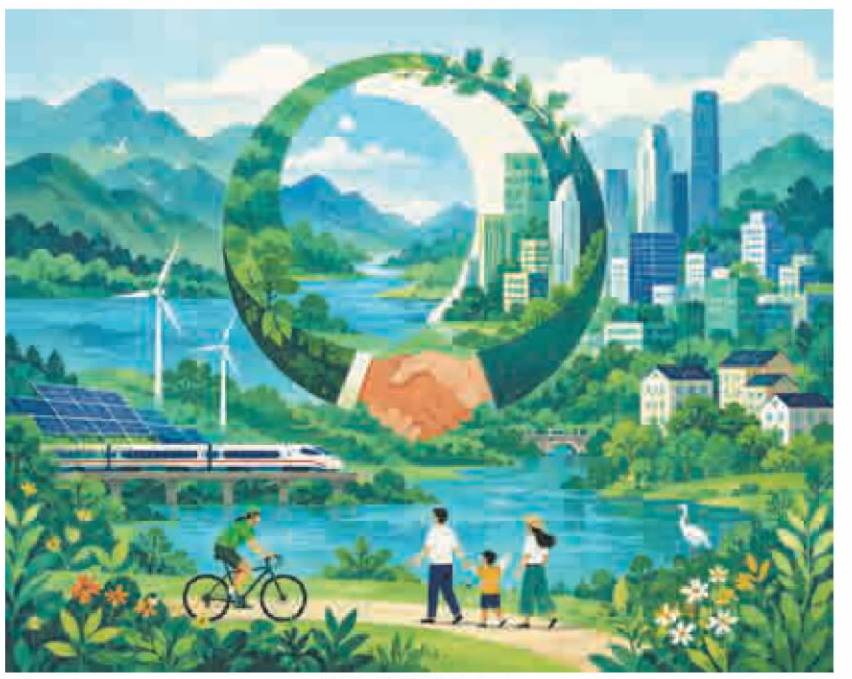


Liu Kan

In the past decade, particularly the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) period, this philosophy delivered tangible results. During this period, China's GDP grew at an average annual rate of 5.4 percent, while its carbon dioxide emissions intensity continued to decline.

Recently, the Chinese government issued two assessment measures to evaluate the performance of local governments in terms of their carbon peaking and neutrality efforts and the measures they are taking to realize a Beautiful China. These represent further progress in China's green journey by establishing a concrete governance mechanism for green development.

Since its inception in the last century by economist Simon Kuznets, GDP has become the most widely used metric for measuring national economic development. However, Kuznets himself once stated that the welfare of a nation cannot be inferred from the measurement of national income. In recent years, the deficiencies of the GDP metric became increasingly apparent. In some countries, behind the rising GDP, public dissatisfaction has also been increasing. Efforts have been made to address GDP's flaws with the introduction of concepts such as GEP (gross ecosystem product).



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

Now, the world is witnessing a megatrend to move beyond GDP. The High-Level Expert Group on Beyond GDP, launched by United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, released a landmark report in May titled "Counting What Counts: A Compass of Progress for People and Planet". The report proposes a dashboard-style indicator system comprising four pillars — foundational principles, current well-being, equity and inclusion, and sustainability and resilience — containing 31 specific indicators, including environmental and climate metrics such as total and per capita greenhouse gas emissions, and a biodiversity intactness index.

Notably, China's two assessment measures not only resonate with the "Beyond GDP" concept and indicators, but also take them a step further by making them a governance compass for action.

The assessment of progress toward achieving the dual carbon goals uses indicators such as total carbon emissions, emissions intensity and total coal and petroleum consumption at the provincial level for the first time, which has already drawn significant international attention. The assessment on actions to realize the Beautiful China Initiative is directly linked to the annual performance evaluation, rewards, punishments and appointments of local officials, and also serves as a reference for allocating government fiscal funds related to ecological environmental protection.

While the UN's Beyond GDP indicators act as a macro-value compass for orientation, China's two assessment measures operate as practical policy tools.

First, both the UN's Beyond GDP indicators and China's two assessment measures are highly aligned. The assessment measures, as two of the latest policy tools of China's journey toward green development, provide a robust empirical support for the UN's latest global indicator system, offering crucial practical experience and references for future implementation of the "Beyond GDP" concept, and for shaping the post-2030 global sustainable development agenda.

Second, China is demonstrating how to achieve a "closed-loop" governance system for "Beyond GDP". The Chinese practice shows that moving beyond GDP does not remain merely at the statistical level; it can form a policy loop with binding force and incentive mechanisms at the national level. In China's governance practice, establishing new assessment indicators for stakeholders in related areas provides effective policy guidance for actions in a local context.

Finally, it's noteworthy that the Environmental Kuznets Curve, named after the founder of GDP, is a highly relevant concept for those who study Chinese environmental policies closely. It suggests that as economic levels rise, some nations' environmental quality deteriorates before improving — a pattern often referred to in Chinese context as the Western development model of "polluting first, cleaning up later". In this context, the two measures explain the uniqueness of China's pathway. On the one hand, China faces dual pressures from both climate change and environmental pollution in a short period, which is significantly different from the experience of the West, which was to address pollution and climate issues separately over a much longer time frame. On the other hand, it reflects China's opposition to passively waiting for the turning point of the Environmental Kuznets Curve. Instead, China advocates synergistic advancement: cutting carbon emissions, reducing pollution, expanding green development and pursuing economic growth simultaneously. By proactively supporting green and low-carbon industries, China is attempting to seize the opportunity of the new technological revolution to spur its green development. For example, electric vehicles, lithium-ion batteries and photovoltaic products witnessed a surge in export value in 2025, which, according to China's General Administration of Customs, approached 1.3 trillion yuan ($191.6 billion), an increase of 350 percent compared with 2020.

Overall, China is proactively advancing green technology to support its high-quality development through robust ecological and environmental protection, serving as a positive example for other countries in the Global South. And this can also be a realistic pathway to realize the philosophy of "Beyond GDP".

Pang Xiao is an associate senior specialist at the Secretariat of the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development. Liu Kan is the director of the Secretariat of the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development. The authors contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:03 PM

BUSINESS

Trip.com vows investment for tourism push

Travel portal to invest 15 bln yuan over 5 years to attract more foreign visitors

By LI JING
lijing2009@chinadaily.com.cn

Trip.com Group will invest 15 billion yuan ($2.2 billion) over the next five years to promote China as a travel destination globally, betting that a post-pandemic rebound in global travel demand and expanding visa-free access can turn the sector into a major growth driver for both the company and the world's second-largest economy.

The investment — announced on Monday by Liang Jianzhang, co-founder and executive chairman of the board at Trip.com Group, at an industry conference in Guilin, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region — will fund overseas advertising campaigns, influencer marketing, destination promotions and international partnerships aimed at attracting foreign visitors to China.

The company also set a target of bringing 200 million international visitors to China over the next five years.

"We used to sell Chinese products to the world. Now it is time to sell China's services and experiences to the world," Liang said.

The move comes as China is doubling down on services exports, with policymakers having embedded "encouraging and supporting services exports" into the Government Work Report as a key task for this year.

China's travel services exports surged 32.3 percent year-on-year to 105.35 billion yuan in the first quarter, the fastest growth among all services export categories, said the Ministry of Commerce.

Inbound tourism has been boosted by waves of measures spanning visa facilitation, payment convenience and streamlined departure tax refunds. China has expanded unilateral visa-free access covering 50 countries and introduced a 240-hour transit visa-free arrangement covering 55 countries at 65 ports. In the first quarter, foreign nationals made roughly 8.32 million visa-free entries into China, representing an increase of 29.3 percent year-on-year, official data revealed.

Industry analysts said the strategy is also closely aligned with the company's own international expansion ambitions.

The company reported revenue of 62.4 billion yuan in 2025, up 17 percent year-on-year. International bookings on its overseas platform Trip.com grew about 60 percent year-on-year, while the company served approximately 20 million inbound travelers during the year, according to company disclosures.

The company does not separately disclose revenue from inbound tourism, but management has identified cross-border travel as one of its fastest-growing businesses. The company has spent heavily in recent years building brand awareness for Trip.com in overseas markets.

Analysts said attracting more foreign visitors to China would not only increase transaction volumes across hotels, flights and attractions, but also strengthen Trip.com's position against global online travel agencies such as Booking Holdings and Expedia Group.

To improve the visitor experience, Trip.com has worked with more than 8,000 attractions to make ticket bookings available to foreign travelers, expanded multilingual services and introduced airport assistance programs for overseas visitors.

But despite the strong recovery, challenges remain.

Tourism executives at the conference said language barriers, uneven service standards and limited international awareness of many Chinese destinations continue to constrain growth. Liang also pointed to opportunities to develop more internationally appealing entertainment, events and cultural experiences to boost spending by overseas visitors.

The United Nations World Tourism Organization estimates global international tourist arrivals reached 1.52 billion in 2025, surpassing pre-pandemic levels. The Asia-Pacific was among the fastest-growing regions, providing a larger pool of potential visitors for China.

For the company, the 15 billion yuan investment represents a long-term bet that China's tourism sector can become a stronger export industry for services, as foreign visitors increasingly seek experiences ranging from high-speed rail and digital payments to cultural heritage sites and natural attractions.

"China has unique advantages in tourism," Liang said. "As a Chinese company, we have a responsibility to help the world discover them."



Visitors gather at Trip.com's booth during a tourism expo in Shanghai on May 26. The company has set a target of bringing 200 million overseas visitors to China over the next five years. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Bayer opens new innovation, cooperation hub in Jinan

By ZHAO RUIXUE in Jinan
zhaoruixue@chinadaily.com.cn

Bayer expanded its China Center of Innovation and Partnership (CCIP) to Shandong province on Wednesday, nearly two years after launching its flagship hub in Shanghai.

The expansion advances the CCIP's "in China, for the world" concept, betting on the country's fast-expanding consumer health market fueled by rising wellness awareness and supportive government policies for medical innovation.

At the inauguration ceremony of the CCIP in Jinan, Shandong, Bayer signed cooperation agreements with the Shandong Institute for Food and Drug Control, Jewim Pharmaceutical (Shandong) Co Ltd and Shandong Freda Biotechnology Co Ltd.

"China is the number two market in our global consumer health business, and it is a very dynamic market. Innovation plays a very important role within China," said David Evendon-Challis, president of global research and development and chief scientific officer of Bayer Consumer Health. "We continue to invest in our brands, our science, our innovation and our manufacturing and supply chains in China."

The company is investing in a new factory that will be put into operation in 2028, with construction scheduled to finish this year. The facility will enable Bayer to steadily expand and launch new products.

Built around the CCIP framework, Bayer has established an innovation ecosystem spanning consumer insight analysis, joint research, scientific verification and commercial conversion, creating a bridge for bringing achievements to international markets.

One example is a joint product developed with Sirio Pharma Co Ltd based in Shantou, Guangdong province, which has already been rolled out in China and is poised to enter overseas markets such as Australia.

Last year, Bayer generated 3.47 billion euros ($4 billion) in sales from China, and the company anticipates the consumer health market will continue to grow consistently over the next several years.

"We see a balance shifting from treatment products to prevention and daily care," Evendon-Challis said.

He also noted a huge increase in e-commerce and digital commerce, with artificial intelligence and large language models helping people make choices.

Karen Hackney, vice-president of dermatology research and development at Bayer Consumer Health, said that skincare is evolving from beauty into a key health segment, driving sector growth.

"Aging populations and social media influence fuel market expansion, with skin barrier research standing as a core innovation priority for the division," she said.

Li Xiaomeng, head of R&D at Bayer Consumer Health China, explained the rationale behind choosing Shandong as the second CCIP hub after Shanghai.

"Shandong is China's second most populous province and the third-largest economy," Li said. "We need a population base as we serve consumers and want to reach more people."

The province is also home to top-tier hospitals, including Qilu Hospital, whose gastroenterology department ranks among the best in the Asia-Pacific region. "This provides a strong foundation for collaborative product development and clinical efficacy research," said Li.

Thorsten Umland, vice-president of digestive health R&D at Bayer Consumer Health, emphasized the importance of trusted partnerships in innovation.

"One example is how we worked with Jewim, a partner in Shandong, who sat down with us to improve the product and make manufacturing more efficient. They weren't just a contract manufacturer. They helped us make the product better and develop it further," he said.

Quite the stretch



A loader transports bales of hay in Tancheng county, Linyi in East China's Shandong province, on Monday. During the wheat harvest season, the county has stepped up efforts to recycle agricultural hay to improve its comprehensive utilization rate.
ZHANG CHUNLEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Anta, Zxmoto enter co-branded merchandise deal

By WANG ZHUOQIONG
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese sportswear maker Anta Sports Products Ltd has announced a strategic partnership with domestic motorcycle brand Zxmoto, positioning itself as the latter's global strategic cooperation brand.

Under the deal unveiled earlier this week, Anta will support Zxmoto at international racing circuits, including world-class motorcycle events, and debut a co-branded line of athletic footwear and apparel.

The collaboration coincides with Zxmoto's recent racing triumphs. In March, the brand claimed both podiums in the WorldSSP category at the World Superbike Championship (WSBK) Portuguese round, a milestone for a Chinese motorcycle manufacturer in a competition historically dominated by European, US and Japanese brands. By May, at the Czech round, Zxmoto had secured its fifth championship victory of the season.

Anta said that the partnership reflects its broader strategy of bolstering Chinese sports brands and supporting domestic industry growth.

The first co-branded collection draws inspiration from Zxmoto's championship-winning 820RR bike. Design elements such as the "Champion Red" color and the winning number "53" are featured prominently across jackets, footwear and apparel.

In Anta's Tmall flagship store, the line is front-and-center. Prices start at 299 yuan ($44.13) for short-sleeve t-shirts and 469 yuan for racing-style shoes.

According to Anta, the collection aims to translate Zxmoto's racing success into wearable sportswear for consumers, creating a tangible link between domestic technological achievement and lifestyle branding.

The Anta partnership signals a growing trend of Chinese brands leveraging each other's reputations to gain global recognition, underscoring the country's shift from "Made in China" to "Created in China" narratives in global manufacturing.

The partnership comes as Anta pursues international expansion. The group recently launched its first direct-operated flagship store in Los Angeles, marking a significant investment in North America.

The move is part of Anta's broader three-year plan, which includes opening 1,000 stores across Southeast Asia, entering Middle Eastern markets and expanding into major international retail channels such as Foot Locker and DSG in North America and Europe.

Despite the marketing push, early consumer feedback has raised questions about the co-branded products' design.

Zhang Duo, senior editor at Motorcycle magazine, hailed the partnership as a win-win for the two influential Chinese brands. But he added: "Though the collection leverages Zxmoto's racing heritage, the apparel lacks the technical design features and fashionable cuts typically expected in motorsport collaborations."

Zhang made a comparison with co-branded offerings in Formula 1 and said other motorsports markets often feature more refined design execution.

Zxmoto currently partners with more than 40 companies, ranging from domestic giants like Eastroc Beverage, DJI, Midea and Honor, to international suppliers including Pirelli, Shell and SKF.

Birkenstock bullish on growth potential of Chinese market

By HE QI in Shanghai
heqi@chinadaily.com.cn

German footwear brand Birkenstock sees China as one of its most promising growth markets, with the country becoming a key driver of its global business expansion.

With the Chinese market being a major driver, the company sees a 30 percent year-on-year growth in its revenue in the Asia-Pacific region, which accounts for 12 percent of its global total, Jochen Gutzy, chief communications officer of Birkenstock, told China Daily in a recent exclusive interview.



Jochen Gutzy

Gutzy said Birkenstock is bullish on China's long-term consumption potential. "We are here to stay and build a sustainable business," he said.

Birkenstock's global setup covers three major global markets — the Americas; Europe, the Middle East and Africa; and APAC.

"APAC is the largest of all three regions when it comes to the market potential," said Gutzy, adding that though the Americas remain its largest single market, the APAC region delivers far stronger growth momentum, which is still in its early development stage, with China retaining massive untapped market space.

Tiffany Wu, managing director of Birkenstock Greater China, said: "We used to focus heavily on our online business in China. However, over the past two years we have accelerated our offline store expansion to reach broader consumer groups. The unique value of our anatomically designed footbed can only be fully perceived through in-store experience, which cannot be fully conveyed via online channels."

Wu said every newly opened Birkenstock store in China can hit official sales targets within six months. The brand now operates six stores in Shanghai, with a clear expansion roadmap covering coastal core cities and lower-tier inland markets.

Domestically, Birkenstock's consumer group has become significantly younger, with 18 to 25-year-old buyers emerging as the major growth force. Unlike trend-chasing consumers, young Chinese shoppers prioritize brand heritage, functional value and exclusive immersive experience over fleeting fashion fads.

Gutzy stressed that Birkenstock's steady organic growth in China is driven by cultural resonance rather than intensive marketing investment. "The cultural fit between the brand and the Chinese market is even stronger than it was in the US back then," he said.

Strict German manufacturing standards have also brought structural capacity constraints to the brand's Chinese business. "Demand has always grown faster than capacity since I joined in 2012, so we were always sold out," Gutzy said.

To ramp up its market penetration in China, Birkenstock launched a four-day pop-up exhibition celebrating the 50th anniversary of its iconic Boston clog in Shanghai from May 28 to Sunday.

Nestled in a historic 1939 building on Shanghai's Changle Road, the "House of Boston" exhibition showcased the company's five-decade evolution through archival displays, original German manufacturing equipment and documentary works by renowned photographer Henry Leutwyler. The Boston clog's multi-scenario, all-age inclusiveness fits well with China's family-oriented consumption ethos, the company said.

The anniversary pop-up served as a key offline experience for the brand's localized strategy. By showcasing its original manufacturing craftsmanship and the history of product iterations, Birkenstock aims to highlight its core technological advantages over other similar products in the market.

The brand intends to further tap China's market potential, adhering to steady, high-quality channel construction and sustainable growth instead of blind aggressive expansion, Gutzy said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:03 PM

BUSINESS

Optimizing AI for real-world scenarios

Platform helps address gap between emerging tech, practical implementation



A visitor photographs a live-line operation robot at China Southern Power Grid's stand during the 2025 World AI Conference in Shanghai on July 28. CHEN HAOMING / XINHUA

BEIJING — Chinese artificial intelligence researchers have released an open-source framework and a real-world scenario competition platform that significantly improves AI industrial application.

As AI computing power grows stronger and large language models become increasingly sophisticated, Chinese researchers have been focused on how best to apply the fast-growing technology to real-world scenarios.

To this end, a research initiative at the artificial intelligence innovation center at the Yangtze Delta Region Institute of Tsinghua University standardized human-machine interactions, task-set mechanisms and human feedback systems, resulting in enhanced industrial application efficiency and greater enterprise deployment.

The team leader said that the global AI sector currently faces a structural contradiction: the exponential growth of model and tool capabilities versus the linear climb in industrial adoption rates. The core contradiction in AI development has shifted from "enhancing model intelligence" to "bridging the deployment gap".

To address the gap between AI capabilities and real-world deployment, the team released the Real World AI open-source framework, expanding the scope of open-source efforts from code and tools to encompass role definitions, workflow design, human-machine interaction and human-human collaboration as an integrated practice.

The framework reconstructs the interaction between AI and humans in real-world tasks through three core elements: restoring real-world task sets, capturing authentic human feedback from real interactions and standardizing human-machine interaction protocols.

The team said real-world tests have proven that RWAI outperforms traditional software development models in practical efficiency, actual effectiveness and resolution times, reducing pre-project validation timelines from two-to-three months to less than two weeks.

The team also launched its AI arena platform. Unlike traditional benchmarks or model leader boards, the platform focuses on evaluating the actual effectiveness of AI solutions in real business operations, including metrics such as organizational costs, time efficiency, computing costs and compliance requirements.

The platform adopts a "challenger-champion" mechanism, where competing entities are not single models, but complete solutions, encompassing team configurations, workflows, agent combinations and context engineering. The best-practice workflows corresponding to winning solutions will be made public and available for replication.

China Southern Power Grid's internet service subsidiary utilized the RWAI platform to address the end-to-end safety management challenges of power grid infrastructure projects, ranging from planning to on-site execution. Faced with complex compliance requirements, traditional manual supervision on infrastructure projects had reached an efficiency bottleneck.

Using the platform, the company developed an intelligent risk control solution for on-site and subcontractor management, increasing hidden risk detection rates by approximately 40 percent and boosting risk warning accuracy to 92 percent. The company and research team are now preparing to advance a demonstration project for generative AI across the full lifecycle of construction planning.

The company's senior engineer Hu Rui said the RWAI platform has successfully bridged the gap between AI technology and deployment, while significantly reducing trial-and-error costs. The system has transformed engineering management from reactive response to proactive intelligent control, using AI to support high-quality power grid construction.

Jiangsu Eastern Shenghong has also used the RWAI platform. As a petrochemical manufacturer, it has long-faced challenges such as integrating knowledge in traditional process industries, applying general-purpose AI to core business operations and a lack of controllability in decisionmaking by large language models.

Leveraging the RWAI platform, Eastern Shenghong integrated 30 years of production process knowledge with data from the full industry chain, overcoming the high-compliance barriers to build an industrial large model that truly understands the business.

Through multimodal fault monitoring and prediction, the company has significantly reduced unplanned downtime on key production lines and can dynamically recommend optimal production scheduling, achieving cost reductions, efficiency improvements and process optimization.

Yang Tianwei, vice-chairman of the company and general manager of its AI business unit, said that by using the RWAI platform's evaluation capabilities, they have transformed internally validated, high-quality model capabilities into a library of reusable, billable and composable products.

"This not only activates Eastern Shenghong's own intelligent development, but also provides a field-proven and best-practice solution for deploying large models in the process industries," Yang added.

The RWAI platform now covers multiple application scenarios including industrial forecasting systems, document review, risk control and research report generation. Its implementations have already been deployed in projects for some Fortune Global 500 companies.



A staff member demonstrates how a robot can be controlled remotely at a mock power grid control unit at a lab of Guangdong Power Grid Co in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, on April 16. ANDY WONG / AP

The research team said that the platform will also supply real-world human-computer interaction data to support large language model development and academic research.

XINHUA

China's innovation edge in AI industries wins plaudits from global MNCs



A robot threads a needle at the World Intelligence Expo 2026 in Tianjin on May 28. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

TIANJIN — In the embodied intelligence exhibition hall, a humanoid robot waved and interacted with visitors, drawing crowds of onlookers. A German guest, Andrea Rosinger, repeatedly raised her phone to capture the scene.

Rosinger was in China attending the recent 2026 World Intelligence Expo in Tianjin.

Having worked in the field of digital technologies for decades, Rosinger is interested not only in the robot itself, but also in how robots and humans may work together in various fields in the future.

About 20 years ago, when Rosinger first came to China, she was involved in software development and digital solutions for businesses. Back then, digital transformation was a goal many companies were striving to achieve.

Today, she sees artificial intelligence driving industrial transformation at an unprecedented pace.

"At this expo, we can see the integration of AI and robotics across many fields, such as healthcare and manufacturing. My feeling is that China is leading the industry in robotics and making rapid progress in AI," she told Xinhua News Agency.

Covering 130,000 square meters, the expo featured six themed exhibition halls and a comprehensive exhibition area focusing on AI core technologies, embodied intelligence, intelligent connected vehicles, low-altitude economy and commercial aerospace, intelligent manufacturing and smart living. More than 700 foreign companies and organizations from around the world participated in the event.

From large language models and humanoid robots to smart factories and the low-altitude economy, the latest technologies, products and application scenarios on display have turned the expo into a window through which international participants can see China's innovation vitality and future industrial development.

"China is not only a huge market, but also a major global engine of innovation and manufacturing," said Rainer Kern, regional chief financial officer and vice-general manager at Karcher China.

Attending the expo, Kern said he was particularly interested in understanding the future direction of AI technologies and how industrial infrastructure may evolve in the years ahead.

In his view, the pace of AI development has exceeded many people's expectations. "In the past, technological iterations often took three to five years. Today, things that seemed impossible just half a year ago have already become reality."

"AI can significantly shorten research and development cycles. Today, you can use AI tools such as DeepSeek to conduct market research much more efficiently, gaining insights into market conditions, customer demand, historical purchasing behavior and likely future market trends," Kern said.

As a global provider of resource-conserving cleaning systems, Karcher values China's comprehensive industrial supply chains, its ability to rapidly deploy new technologies and its vast market potential.

What attracts international companies to China is not only the size of its market, but also its dynamic innovation ecosystem and continuously expanding industrial capabilities.

Hendrik Kruger, general manager of X Control — a Hamburg-based company specializing in digital solutions for the cruise industry — traveled to Tianjin as part of a German business delegation in search of new partnerships.

"We are actively seeking cooperation opportunities with Chinese companies," Kruger said, expressing interest in working with Chinese cruise operators to explore broader cooperation opportunities.

For Kruger, AI has already become deeply integrated into virtually every aspect of business operations. From software development, quality assurance and cybersecurity management to customer services and operational analytics, AI is helping companies improve efficiency and optimize decision-making.

"I am particularly impressed by the open-source approach adopted by many Chinese AI innovations," he said, adding that Chinese companies are actively promoting open ecosystems, and such openness is creating new possibilities for international cooperation.

A recent survey jointly released by the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China and consulting firm Roland Berger shows signs of improving confidence among European businesses operating in China. China's vibrant R&D ecosystem, vast talent pool, and rapid product commercialization capabilities are attracting a growing number of European companies to establish and expand their R&D activities here.

This trend is also evident in the field of AI.

As AI rapidly moves from technological breakthroughs to industrial applications, more European companies are viewing China as an important destination for understanding future technological developments and Chinese companies as innovation partners, said Jens Eskelund, president of the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:03 PM

CHINA

Samples to enable studies on conceiving in space

SHENZHEN — Mouse embryo material brought back to Earth aboard the Shenzhou XXII return capsule is expected to provide a theoretical foundation for future research on conceiving life during long-term human space habitation.

The Shenzhou XXII successfully made it back from the Tiangong space station on May 29. The cultured embryo material was among science samples brought back as part of a project undertaken by a research team from the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Shenzhen Institutes of Advanced Technology.

According to SIAT, the experiment aims to explore developmental patterns of mammalian pre-implantation embryos in a space environment, including the key mechanisms underlying mitochondrial damage and epigenetic modification abnormalities in embryos.

Led by a senior researcher, Lei Xiaohua, from the center for energy metabolism and reproduction of SIAT's Institute of Biomedicine and Biotechnology, the team performed the in-orbit culture of mouse embryos, at various developmental stages, using a biotechnology experiment cabinet on the space station.

"Given the strict constraints on spaceship transfer and in-orbit resources, the core challenge of this experiment was how to achieve embryo culture and real-time imaging within limited space," Lei said.

The team collaborated with another SIAT team, led by Men Yongfan from the Research Center for Biomedical Optics and Molecular Imaging, to design an embryo microfluidic chip culture box. It featured two rows of six culture chambers. This design simultaneously met the needs of two experimental groups — each with three replicate experiments — and was compatible with the space station's automated culture system.

After ground-based verification tests, the team established a complete experimental system for mammalian pre-implantation embryo culture, imaging, perfusion fixation, and cryopreservation suitable for the space station.

The team confirmed that in-orbit embryo development images were successfully captured, and that embryo development, as well as fixation and preservation conditions, were optimal.

In the early morning of May 30, live science experiment samples retrieved from the Shenzhou XXII return capsule were transported to the Technology and Engineering Center for Space Utilization of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing via specialized refrigeration equipment.

In future research, Lei's team will conduct systematic comparison and integrated analysis of the returned samples and ground-based control samples, including developmental phenotype statistics, specific protein molecular staining, high-resolution chromatin three-dimensional imaging, and multi-omics sequencing.

The research will provide key data when determining space's influence on zygotic genome activation stage and whether the space environment can support normal early development, thereby deepening our understanding of the initial developmental patterns of mammalian life in the space environment, he said.

Lei has earlier participated in two major space embryo experiments of the country. In 2006, a Chinese research team achieved real-time imaging of space embryos from the ground for the first time via the Shijian 8 satellite.

In 2016, China's Shijian 10 satellite carried early mouse embryos into space, for the first time achieving the complete development in space of mouse embryos from the 2-cell stage, an early-on embryonic cleavage stage, to blastocyst, the stage where noticeable cell differentiation occurs.

XINHUA

Sinologists sign up



An international sinologist writes Chinese characters with a calligraphy brush during the 3rd World Conference of Sinologists in Dunhuang, Gansu province, on Wednesday. The event, themed "Pooling Wisdom of Civilizations to Jointly Address Challenges of Our Times", gathered over 300 representatives from nearly 70 countries. Alongside the conference, activities like "Be a Chinese for a Day" and academic salons showcased the charm of Chinese culture. TIAN QI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Action plan unveiled to stabilize employment

Govt lists measures to shield jobs from external shocks and boost incomes

By LI LEI
lilei@chinadaily.com.cn

China has unveiled an 18-point action plan to stabilize employment and raise incomes, including measures designed to shield the labor market from external shocks such as trade wars and geopolitical tensions, according to a government document released recently.

The plan, titled "Action Plan for Stabilizing Employment, Expanding Capacity and Improving Quality", was approved on April 30 by the State Council's leading group on employment promotion.

"Employment is the most fundamental aspect of people's livelihoods," the document said.

The action plan includes a dedicated section on supporting industries affected by the external environment to expand hiring, identifying them as a key source of job creation.

Authorities are instructed to extend unemployment insurance premium refunds, skills-training subsidies and job-expansion grants to sectors affected by global headwinds.

The central government will also use major trade fairs such as the China Import and Export Fair to explore new markets while deepening cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative as an alternative to Western-dominated trade channels.

The plan explicitly calls for the creation of cross-border service jobs in research, design and inspection, reflecting shifts in offshore outsourcing. It also establishes a monitoring mechanism to track the impact of external shocks on hiring in key regions and industries, with contingency plans to enable rapid responses.

Beyond geopolitics, the plan relies on manufacturing and emerging technologies to generate employment opportunities.

Authorities will maintain a "reasonable share" of manufacturing jobs and promote orderly industrial transfers to central, western and northeastern China.

They will also launch an "Artificial Intelligence Plus" initiative to accelerate the digital transformation of factories, creating demand for data labelers and AI trainers.

New energy, advanced materials and low-altitude infrastructure projects are also identified as major sources of employment.

The plan calls for retraining programs to help workers in traditional industries adapt to the adoption of AI, with the aim of preventing job losses.

To reinforce a virtuous cycle of rising household incomes and domestic demand, the action plan seeks to boost consumption through cultural tourism venues linked to performing arts, sports, cuisine and winter activities.

Urban renewal and new infrastructure projects will also be used to create construction jobs, supported by a special employment loan program for the sector.

In social services, the plan expands eldercare and childcare capacity, including exploring a professional qualification system for providers of elderly care.

A nationwide pilot program for occupational injury insurance will cover new forms of employment, such as drivers for ride-hailing platforms, reflecting the continued growth of the gig economy.

The document also strengthens minimum-wage adjustment mechanisms, enhances oversight of wage arrears and illegal employment agencies, and streamlines procedures for business registration and unemployment assistance.

Employment impact assessments will be required for major projects and policies, signaling that job stability has become a cross-cutting priority for policymakers.

The Ministry of Education estimates that the number of new college graduates will reach a record 12.7 million in 2026, an increase of 480,000 from the previous year.

To help absorb them into the labor market, the action plan directs State-owned enterprises to increase campus recruitment by more than five percentage points compared with the previous year's level.

The new measures are part of China's broader push to build an "employment-friendly" development model, a concept first introduced in the nation's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) and reaffirmed in this year's Government Work Report.

On the sidelines of the annual legislative meeting in March, Minister of Human Resources and Social Security Wang Xiaoping signaled a campaign to stabilize, expand and upgrade employment.

She outlined measures including supporting labor-intensive sectors such as foreign trade, construction and hospitality; tapping job potential in the digital economy, high-end manufacturing and modern services; and improving minimum-wage mechanisms, labor market regulation and protections for migrant workers' pay.

"The ministry is studying relevant measures to actively harness AI's role in creating new jobs and empowering traditional roles, advancing inclusive development that aligns technological progress with improvements in people's livelihoods," she said.

China has set a target of creating more than 12 million new urban jobs in 2026, in line with its GDP growth target of 4.5 percent to 5 percent this year.

Rolling optimization chip enhances smart machine capabilities

By ZHOU WENTING in Shanghai
zhouwenting@chinadaily.com.cn

Researchers from Shanghai-based Tongji University have unveiled their independently developed first-generation specialized computing chip for rolling optimization, called the Moving Horizon Unit, which functions like an intelligent brain for autonomous vehicles, robots, drones and other smart machines.

The research team said the chip enables intelligent devices to observe their surroundings, process information and adjust their actions in real time. The technology is expected to support the development of smart transportation and advanced intelligent equipment.

Chen Hong, a lead scientist on the project, said rolling optimization is a capability humans use naturally, continuously adjusting actions based on changing conditions and feedback to achieve a goal.

In complex and constantly changing environments, autonomous vehicles, robots and drones must continuously detect changes around them, plan their next moves and make decisions in real time. These tasks can be difficult for conventional general-purpose chips.

"Our research aims to transform the human capability of adapting to environmental changes and uncertainties in a proactive way into a machine-computable hardware solution," said Chen, a professor at Tongji University's College of Electronic and Information Engineering.

"By embedding this rolling optimization mechanism into a specialized chip, we enable vehicles to drive autonomously and robots to make independent decisions without relying on pre-set programs," he said.

Drawing on three decades of experience in integrating algorithms with hardware, the team developed a specialized computing architecture for rolling optimization and holds fully independent intellectual property rights to the technology.

According to Chen, the architecture includes several innovations. One allows the chip to predict possible future conditions and evaluate different options directly within the hardware, helping devices make decisions more efficiently. Another combines artificial intelligence with the laws of physics, enabling machines to learn and adapt with less dependence on massive amounts of training data.

"We have already developed an onboard controller and conducted real-vehicle integration tests," Chen said.

Researchers said the chip's core module can be customized for specific applications while also being integrated into a variety of chip systems, enabling it to be adapted for different uses.

At the chip's launch event on May 29, Frank Allgower, former president of the International Federation of Automatic Control, said rolling optimization has long been recognized for its advantages but has been difficult to apply widely because it requires substantial computing power.

"This new chip reduces these burdens, simplifying implementation and opening up possibilities for previously challenging systems and scenarios," said Allgower, who is also a professor at the University of Stuttgart in Germany.

Researchers said the chip has successfully passed real-world tests in intelligent vehicle control, evidencing its technical feasibility.

The team plans to continue upgrading the chip, expand joint research and development with industry partners and accelerate its use in fields including intelligent manufacturing, industrial control, new energy and robotics.

Attendees at the launch event also watched demonstrations at the university's testing and evaluation base for intelligent and connected vehicles. During the demonstrations, vehicles equipped with the chip performed maneuvers including serpentine driving and lane changes in a range of scenarios.

Fungus haggling



Merchants discreetly negotiate fair prices for Chinese caterpillar fungus, making offers with their hands hidden, at a market in Xining, Qinghai province, on Thursday. Qinghai, a key production area for this special fungus, experiences peak trading activity in its markets between April and July during the harvest season. ZHANG ZHONGPING / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

China-led intl standard issued for monitoring of karst ecosystems

By LI MENGHAN
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

The International Organization for Standardization has issued the world's first international standard for karst critical zones, marking a major step toward unified monitoring of these fragile yet vital ecosystems worldwide.

The standard, titled Specification of Monitoring Technology for Karst Critical Zones, was developed under China's leadership with the participation of experts from Austria, Canada, Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Serbia.

"The karst critical zone is a special hydrogeological structure formed by the dissolution of soluble rocks by flowing water, extending from the vegetation canopy to groundwater circulation," said Bai Bing, a research assistant at the Institute of Karst Geology of the Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences under the China Geological Survey, who participated in the development of the standard.

"It is an important and unique system widely distributed around the world, covering about 22 million square kilometers, or roughly 15 percent of the earth's land surface," Bai said.

He highlighted the importance of karst critical zones in supplying water to about one-quarter of the world's population. However, he noted that surface water in karst regions is vulnerable to infiltration losses and contamination, affecting both water quantity and quality.

In addition, karst critical zones face challenges like geological disasters, poor soil fertility and rocky desertification, which the international scientific community believes can only be addressed through a deeper understanding of these systems.

Drawing on the distinctive characteristics of different countries, the standard builds on China's years of research in karst water resource management, ecological restoration, carbon cycle studies, and disaster prevention and mitigation.

For the first time, the standard provides a systematic classification of karst critical zone types based on climate conditions. It also identifies key hydrological, geochemical, and biological processes to improve understanding of the zones' structures, regional differences and environmental evolution trends, supporting efforts to address resource and environmental challenges.

The standard also provides specific guidance on monitoring procedures and carbon sink calculations, including detailed instructions on data collection, transmission, storage, processing, quality control and sharing.

"The karst critical zone plays an important role in the global carbon cycle. Establishing a unified monitoring framework can improve the efficiency of data management and services, which is crucial for the accuracy and reliability of environmental assessments and for promoting collaborative efforts in karst critical zone management," said Zhang Cheng, a researcher at the Institute of Karst Geology who led the development work.

Zhang, who is also executive deputy director of the International Research Center on Karst under the Auspices of UNESCO, said the standard will contribute to China's "dual carbon" goals — peaking carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality before 2060 — as well as the UN Sustainable Development Goals related to clean water, climate action and life on land.

"The release of this standard represents a major breakthrough in China's deep participation in global geological governance, reflecting strong international recognition of China's scientific research capabilities, technical expertise and industrial influence in the field," he said.

He added that China will continue to contribute its expertise to the sustainable management of global karst critical zones.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:03 PM

CHINA

Aging population triggers demand for 'senior toys'

Market grows for products that help reduce loneliness, support rehabilitation

By LI HONGYANG
lihongyang@chinadaily.com.cn

China's rapidly aging population is fueling a new consumer trend for "senior toys". With over 300 million citizens aged 60 or older, families are increasingly turning to specialized games, puzzles and therapeutic toys to combat cognitive decline and elderly isolation. However, industry insiders warn that the emerging market is still failing to meet the complex needs of older adults.

Guo Xiafei used to think her grandmother was fine living on her own. But during her rare home visits to Chengdu, Sichuan province, Guo noticed her grandmother's loneliness, filled with long hours of television, naps and silence.

"My grandpa can find joy in music. He plays the *erhu* and the bamboo flute, but my grandma's life is much more monotonous. I realized I've grown up, and it's time to look back," the 27-year-old said.

That realization led her to search for something that could bridge the distance. That's how she found senior toys.

To Guo's delight, after playing with a bead sorting and tweezing toy, her grandmother broke into a childlike smile, hugged and thanked her.

The 82-year-old, who has severe hearing loss, usually required the family to shout into her ear. Yet, sitting side by side with her granddaughter and taking turns playing a whack-a-mole game, her face was full of laughter.

"She told me the toys are so wonderful. That warm family vibe is the real point of the toy," Guo said.

For decades, China's massive toy industry focused exclusively on children. Now, e-commerce platforms are flooded with hundreds of products marketed as elderly toys — ranging from no-pick-up table tennis sets and color-sorting games to memory books and grip balls.

On the product pages, stores say the toys are designed to kill time and keep minds sharp.

Guo discovered them by accident while scrolling online.

"I saw a table tennis set with no need to pick up the ball. Since my grandmother needs help while walking outside and spends most of her time indoors, I thought: why not bring the fun inside?

"I wanted to let them experience a bit of what we young people are into. That's where it all started," she said.

However, she quickly learned a lesson that no product description can teach.

"If I give them a toy and walk away, they won't play. They are like children. They need someone beside them and simple interaction.

"When I was little, they played with me. Now I play with them," Guo said.

Like Guo, a growing number of families are turning to toys not just for entertainment, but as tools for connection and cognitive care.

Besides medical treatment, Chu Yue provides toys for her 66-year-old mother, who has developed symptoms of memory decline.

The 41-year-old from Daqing, Heilongjiang province, said: "My mother had even gotten lost inside her own neighborhood. She was worried that she might have developed dementia."

Chu went online and typed a simple search: "Toys to prevent dementia for the elderly."

What appeared was a flood of cheap, simple products on shopping platforms. She picked a string puzzle — a small board with holes and tangled cords — priced at less than 20 yuan ($2.93). The goal is to untie the knots and free the strings by moving them through the right holes.

"At first, my mother thought it would be too hard. So I showed her," Chu said. "Then she tried herself and realized that as long as she is patient, she can always solve it."

Within days, her mother was demanding more challenge.





From top: Chu Yue's mother trains her mind with a string puzzle game. Guo Xiafei's grandmother trains her motor skills with a tweezing toy.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"She told me to tie it tighter, twist it a few more rounds, and make it harder for her," Chu said.

The toy's appeal lay in its simplicity. Her mother soon started playing for hours. Then she asked Chu to buy the same toy for her elder sister.

"My aunt loved it too. And then she started playing with her own family, setting puzzles for each other. It brought the whole household together. Activities like watching TV are just input with no interaction. But with this toy, her brain is working," Chu said.

Yet, while such toys help some, others face more complex needs that off-the-shelf products fail to meet.

After a cerebral infarction affected her grandfather's speech and mobility, Tan Mengqian, 32, got creative. Her grandfather, a retired professor from Tai'an, Shandong province, could no longer walk steadily or communicate clearly.

"I needed to find things he could do with his hands while sitting down," Tan said. She started with large-print books and picture books, which he enjoyed. But she wanted more than just a pastime.

She then turned to the internet, searching for "toys for the elderly with dementia".

What she found were sensory touch toys for children. "He would touch and play with them to help develop his tactile perception," she said. But engagement was limited. "He couldn't get overly absorbed in it. He might play for half an hour, then not play seriously anymore."

The core problem is a lack of suitable products for those with more advanced needs, she said.

"The elderly toys I find on online shopping platforms are not right for his situation. We need something that uses the hands but doesn't require fine, detailed movements."

For Tan, the ultimate solution wasn't found in a shopping cart.

"They don't fundamentally solve our problem. The core need still has to be met through companionship," she said.

The current market for senior toys often misses the mark, Ma Dafei, general manager of a Zhejiang toy company, told Tide News, a Zhejiang-based online media outlet, in January.

"Many products are just children's toys made larger, with colors and themes that don't resonate with older adults," he was quoted as saying, adding that they fail to address what seniors truly need or enjoy.

He said that toys for seniors should be designed to support health and social connection. A toy for a lively retiree is completely different from one for someone who is homebound. The market is still in its early phase, lacking this crucial segmentation.

"Many people simply don't realize that seniors can benefit from toys, or how play can support healthy aging," Ma said to Tide News, adding that this awareness gap has left a market need largely unmet.









From top: Seniors sharpen their memorizing skills by participating in the "remember the fruit" game at a community center in Fuzhou, Fujian province, in July last year. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY
An elderly woman uses a set of colored beads to train her thinking and motor skills in Hefei, Anhui province, last month. ZHAO MING / FOR CHINA DAILY
A social worker accompanies an elderly woman in solving a jigsaw puzzle at a senior care home in Huzhou, Zhejiang province, in January. SHI WEI / FOR CHINA DAILY
Senior residents play a balancing game for Lantern Festival on March 1 in Lianyungang, Jiangsu province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Elderly scout for age-friendly products to combat signs of cognitive decline

By LI HONGYANG

China's booming market for toys tailored for senior citizens was underscored in a recent survey by Shanghai's Minhang District Consumer Rights Protection Committee, signaling a major shift in the nation's silver economy.

Reported by China Consumer News, the findings show that nearly 70 percent of seniors are actively seeking age-appropriate products designed to stave off cognitive decline, maintain physical dexterity and combat isolation. The surge in interest has prompted calls for official "age-friendly" product certifications and standardized difficulty ratings.

A third of those seeking information turn to community or senior activity centers and online shopping platforms. Offline retail stores also play a key role for about 20 percent of elderly consumers, according to the survey.

Notably, recommendations from family and friends, along with short video and social media platforms, are emerging as influential channels.

Affordability is a major consideration, as more than 70 percent of respondents prefer toys priced under 100 yuan ($14.65), with the most popular price point being below 50 yuan. However, a segment of consumers demonstrated willingness to invest in higher-quality products they find particularly appealing.

In terms of product types, creative handicraft toys are the most favored, followed closely by hands-on assembly kits and puzzle and board games. The primary motivation for purchase is clear: over 70 percent seek to exercise the brain and prevent cognitive decline, while activities to maintain hand mobility and provide light physical exercise are also important factors for a significant portion of seniors.

The survey also highlighted that ease of use is considered the most important product feature, with over 70 percent of respondents emphasizing "simple and easy-to-use operation".

Meanwhile, over 40 percent cited "reasonable price and good value" and a similar proportion prioritized "safe, nontoxic and reliable materials" as fundamental requirements in their purchasing decisions. These findings underscore the strong emphasis older consumers place on usability, affordability and safety.

Respondents also expressed clear expectations for a user-friendly and safe design that genuinely considers the needs of the elderly.

Seniors' preferences for challenge levels vary but lean toward "moderately challenging". After experiencing the toys on-site, participants had different perceptions of the difficulty. It is recommended that toy difficulty be graded so that individuals can choose an appropriate challenge level based on their own situation.

A strong majority — over 75 percent — expressed a desire for toys that facilitate social interaction.

The survey also indicated strong trust in quality certifications, with clear support for the introduction of a dedicated "age-friendly toy" label to guide consumers toward products that are safe, user-friendly and cognitively beneficial.

In light of these insights, the committee has proposed the development of dedicated certification standards encompassing safety, usability and efficacy. It further recommended the introduction of a scientifically calibrated system to categorize products based on difficulty level and functional purpose.

At the same time, companies are encouraged to develop product designs that foster social interaction and intergenerational integration, to better meet the needs of this growing market.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:03 PM

CULTURE



Little Red Fox and White Fox, the central characters of Yang Zhi's *The Fox's Transformation Chronicle*.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

DRAWING BEYOND THE LINES

Two comics artists follow different paths for personal storytelling and the freedom to create without compromise, **Bai Shuhao** reports.





Above left: Cy leads a workshop at the festival, introducing participants to the fundamentals of composition and visual storytelling. **Above right:** Yang Zhi creates a live illustration at the 10th French Comics and Graphic Novels Festival. **Below:** Female workers in Cy's *Radium Girls*, whose health is damaged by prolonged exposure to radium while working at a watch factory.



At the 10th French Comics and Graphic Novels Festival in Beijing this May, two young women wearing glasses sat side by side, though they appeared to come from entirely different worlds.

One was Yang Zhi, a Chinese cartoonist with shoulder-length black hair and a quiet, studious air. The other was French comics artist Cy (Cyrielle Evrard), whose cropped hair and understated style carried the effortless cool of a heroine from a late-night French film.

Yang draws on a digital tablet. Cy prefers colored pencils. One tells stories rooted in Chinese fox-spirit folklore; the other resurrects forgotten industrial tragedies from American history.

Their artistic styles couldn't be more different, yet their careers have followed remarkably similar paths.

At nearly the same age, both women left stable jobs to pursue comics independently. Both built audiences online through social media and both eventually arrived at the same conclusion: they no longer wanted other people deciding what they were allowed to create.

Socializing a fox

"When I dropped everything else and focused entirely on comics, that was when I felt happiest," Yang says.

Two years ago, she began publishing an online comic titled *The Fox's Transformation Chronicle*. The story follows a young fox surviving alone in the wilderness before being rescued by an older white fox who teaches her the art of shape-shifting. By observing human desires, the fox learns to transform into the "ideal version" of whatever others expect — a process of cultivation on the path toward becoming a nine-tailed fox.

Told through the eyes of a mythical creature, the work explores gender, shifting power structures and social norms. It quickly attracted a loyal online following and was published in print in 2025.

Before that success, Yang worked as a storyboard artist for film and television productions, translating scripts into visual sequences. She entered the animation industry during a boom period for Chinese cinema and contributed to several major projects. Yet, after four years, she felt increasingly disconnected from her work.

"I draw every day, but not the things I actually want to draw."

That feeling became especially clear in projects involving fox spirits from Chinese folklore.

"We tend to imagine fox spirits as seductive, dangerous figures," she says. "Then, over time, they become harmless little creatures, or girls who need to be saved. But why is it that when a fox turns into a human, a female fox always becomes a woman and a male fox always becomes a man?"

The question lingered. Thinking about a cat she once observed — an animal unlikely to perceive beauty as humans do — she began wondering whether fictional foxes were simply being forced into the human's expectations of appearance and desire.

To tell a different story, she left her storyboard work behind and spent eight months creating *The Fox's Transformation Chronicle*. She never expected it to become popular.

"If I chase popularity, my choices become limited," she says. "I want to make what I want to make, not what other people expect from me."

That philosophy echoes the comic's narrative. At one point, the female fox transforms into a man and discovers freedoms unavailable in female form. She experiences the rewards of human ambition. However, at a banquet celebrating her political rise, she is served the white fox who first taught her to become human. At that moment, she realizes that no matter how perfectly she imitates what humans want to see, the effort is ultimately meaningless.

"Caring too much about what other people think is, to me, a false problem," Yang adds. Although the work is now being adapted into an animated film, she resists being described as especially "talented".

"Talent isn't something you can simply claim," she says. "If people resonate with the work, it spreads. If they don't, it doesn't."

Her next project will follow the same principle: expression first, persuasion never. She has little interest in convincing people of anything.

Radium Girls still glows

Cy's decision to leave her previous job came after an argument with her boss.

By then, she had already built a growing online audience by sharing sketches, unfinished comic pages and fragments of everyday life. Social media made the move into freelance work feel less like a leap and more like the natural next step.

"I'm not someone who hides away to create," she says.

She enjoys posting work while it is still evolving and hearing readers' reactions in real time. "As a freelancer, you have to use social media. Without it, things become very difficult."

The book she brought to the festival, *Radium Girls*, began with an article she discovered online. At first, she assumed the title referred to an American rock band. Later, she discovered the real story.

In 1918, at a clock factory in New Jersey, young women were hired to paint watch dials with luminous paint containing radioactive radium. They were instructed to "lick, dip, and paint" their brushes repeatedly, unaware of the danger. Over time, many developed severe illnesses — losing teeth, becoming paralyzed, and eventually dying. Their legal battles later helped shape some of the earliest worker protection laws in the United States.

Radium Girls retells that history. First published in France in 2020, it later appeared in North America in 2022 and China in 2025.

Cy was drawn to the story partly because it remains relatively unknown. These women, as she puts it, "disappeared into the smoke". But she was equally struck by how relevant the story remains today.

"Whenever scientists discover a new element or material that can be industrialized, workers are exposed first," she says. "At first there are one or two cases. Then, after many deaths, it becomes headline news. And then it disappears again, until the next material comes along."

To reconstruct the story, she immersed herself in archival research, reading victims' diaries, and studying the details of early 20th-century factories, down to industrial locks and machine parts.

Not all of Cy's work centers on historical events, but she intentionally engages with social themes. She believes artists should remain actively involved in society rather than stand apart from it.

In France, comics artists typically work as freelancers, a lifestyle that often brings financial instability. But for Cy, autonomy outweighs insecurity. It is one reason she has no desire to return to office work.

When publishers take on a project, they usually provide an advance against future royalties. If a book performs poorly, the author keeps the advance. If it succeeds, royalties are paid on top.

The arrangement, she says, allows creators to keep working without being financially crushed by a single setback.

"If a book doesn't sell well," she says pragmatically, "I just move on to the next one and find another editor."

At the festival's Beijing stop, Yang and Cy joined French comics artist Catherine Meurisse and Chinese comics artist Yu Kun onstage for a conversation with readers. One audience member asked whether commercial projects sharpen an artist's voice or slowly wear it down.

Neither Yang nor Cy seemed especially enthusiastic about working for others.

Yang says she has always wanted to tell her own stories, but struggled for years simply to begin. She recalls making bets with friends: if they failed to finish a script outline within a week, they would owe each other 50 yuan. "In the end," she says with a laugh, "we each ended up owing the other 500."

Cy says commercial projects often move in circles. An idea approved at the start can be revised repeatedly, only to return months later to its original form.

Recently, a new phrase has gained traction online: "one-person company" — the idea that a single creator can build an audience, produce work, and distribute it independently. Social media, AI tools and digital platforms have made that kind of independence feel increasingly attainable.

Both artists also offer advice to younger creators, drawn from their own experiences.

"When I want to make something," Yang says, "I don't calculate the cost first. I don't start by asking whether it will make money."

Cy echoes the sentiment: trust the value of your own work and never underestimate it.

Contact the writer at baishuhao@chinadaily.com.cn

Grandma's tales inspire Tibetan writer's new book

XINING — As Khandro Tsering watched his third-grade students' eyes light up while listening to him read aloud *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* in vivid Tibetan, he was taken back to those happiest childhood memories of evenings spent immersed in folktales and legends gently told by his grandmother.

That moment inspired the young man from Qinghai province in Northwest China to write a fairytale book for children: a way to nurture imagination and learning while celebrating Tibetan culture and honoring the memory of his beloved grandmother.

Raised in a family in the Tibetan autonomous prefecture of Huangnan in Qinghai, the 32-year-old writer grew up without electronic devices, comic books or animation. Instead, he was surrounded by six gifted storytellers: his grandmother and her five sisters.

Stories of mountain deities and fearless young heroes filled his childhood. Beyond the magic of folklore passed down through generations, the tales also helped him make sense of the world around him.

"Through my grandmother's stories, I learned kindness, courage and a deep respect for life," says Khandro Tsering, who now teaches at a middle school in the Tibetan autonomous prefecture of Golog, Qinghai.

In his book, *The Story of Kunga Dondrup and Lotus Conch*, protagonist Kunga Dondrup is granted three wishes by the Lotus Conch. He first wishes for peace in the world, then for his mother to be saved, while leaving the third wish unspoken.

"I want young readers to understand that true happiness is not gained through greed, but by staying true to one's original purpose and embracing a greater love for the world," the writer says.

Continuing the storytelling traditions he inherited, Khandro Tsering weaves the landscapes of his homeland, everyday experiences and simple wisdom into his narratives. Loyal Tibetan mastiffs, sacred mountains and lakes, and even the rhythms of Tibetan poetry are carefully preserved in his work.

The book was written over six years in Tibetan before being translated into Chinese by the author himself. Striving to retain the language's original cadence and the deeper meanings of Tibetan proverbs, he says the process was challenging but worthwhile, allowing the story's warmth to reach readers in both languages.

From devoted listener to folklore collector and fairytale creator, Khandro Tsering's journey mirrors that of many young ethnic group writers in Qinghai.

Like countless children growing up in the province's Tibetan regions, he spent his early years reading local Tibetan literary journals and newspapers, learning the craft of writing, and participating in literary competitions organized by those publications.

One of the influential journals is "Sbrang char", meaning "dew" in Tibetan. Since its establishment in 1981, it has held a writing contest every three years and introduced special awards for emerging talents. To date, it has helped cultivate more than 60 prizewinning authors.

The development of ethnic literature is supported by State funding, says Palden, chief editor of Sbrang char. Every year, the Ministry of Finance provides special subsidies to publishing houses for compiling and publishing books in ethnic languages.

Today, Khandro Tsering's efforts extend beyond the written page. Last year, he traveled to more than 10 villages in his hometown, collecting folktales from local elders and transforming them into animated videos with Chinese and local Tibetan subtitles using AI tools.

"Many villagers could only remember fragments of these stories," he says. "I reimagined the missing parts in a fairytale style so that these nearly forgotten tales can once again become part of children's lives."

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:03 PM





Left: A work symbolizing the cycle of life, made from fallen leaves and traditional Chinese medicine by a participant at one of Yan Wenhua's events on Dec 14, 2024. The white yam slices represent human's spine, reflecting the creator's struggles and life experiences. **Middle:** A portrait crafted from fallen leaves and TCM herbs by a participant of the event. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The scent of emotional healing

As younger generations and urbanites face mounting stressors, the olfactory is shifting from consumer demand for commercial brand fragrances to empirically proven therapy, report **He Qi** and **Wang Xin**.

As a participant twisted a dried mugwort leaf between her fingers, its familiar medicinal scent filled the air, bringing tears to her eyes. Like that, when participants piece together their own artistic creations, they'd find a release of certain emotions they've held back, and are healed by the power of nature.

This intimate moment unfolded at a special eco-art therapy exhibition on the East China Normal University campus in Shanghai, offering a gentle emotional outlet for urban dwellers grappling with anxiety.

Against the backdrop of a significant rise in emotional distress among the general public, particularly China's younger generations, new approaches to emotional healing are breaking barriers in traditional psychological counseling and bringing mental health care into daily life: eco-art therapy integrated with mindfulness and traditional Chinese culture, and fragrance-based emotional regulation backed by neuroscientific and empirical research.

According to clinical data, emotional issues are no longer confined to severe cases requiring specialized treatment, says Qiao Ying, an expert from the Shanghai Mental Health Center.

"In the past, people thought you needed to see a doctor only if your condition was serious. But now, the number of people experiencing subthreshold depression and anxiety has increased significantly," Qiao notes, adding that the number of children and adolescents seeking treatment for mental health has risen each year.

To address demand, the eco-art therapy exhibition curated by Yan Wenhua, a professor at the School of Psychology and Cognitive Science of East China Normal University, explores a low-cost, accessible healing path. The exhibition, running through July 3, features hundreds of works created by ordinary people in nearly 40 public healing activities organized by Yan's team recently.







Left: A natural clock crafted from fallen leaves and herbs by a participant in 2024. **Top above:** TCM herbs on display at the exhibition at East China Normal University in Shanghai. **Above and top right:** A pop-up event launched by Eternal Group and the Shanghai Mental Health Center to support emotional well-being.

> "Eco-art therapy basically refers to an ecological approach in art therapy, an innovative method aimed at restoring the deep connection between man and nature through creative activity."
>
> **Yan Wenhua,**
> East China Normal University

"Eco-art therapy basically refers to an ecological approach in art therapy, an innovative method aimed at restoring the deep connection between man and nature through creative activity," explains Yan.

Mindfulness techniques are integrated throughout the exhibition. With green plants, written words and audio instructions spanning the display space, they lead visitors to fully focus on and connect with the present.

Originating from traditional Chinese Zen meditation, mindfulness was systematized and simplified into a practical psychological technique before being reintroduced to China. Yan's team has deeply integrated mindfulness with the 24 solar terms and traditional Chinese medicine to create culturally relevant healing activities.

During Minor Cold (*xiao han*), participants were guided to paint their true selves on blank masks; in spring and summer, they observed growing plants, smelled them, and expressed their feelings through art.

At a leaf and TCM creation event in December, the aroma of medicinal herbs evoked family memories, allowing participants to release suppressed emotions through their creations.

"We never judge their creations; there is no good or bad, right or wrong. They just need to follow their hearts and express themselves in a totally free, open manner," Yan explains, adding that the power of TCM deeply connects with Chinese people. "It is unique in that it is embedded in our growth and family bonds.

"We can build an alliance with nature and learn from it. Nature never abandons you, and you can always gain nourishment from it, at any time," Yan adds.

Qiao offers a professional interpretation of the method's core logic: "The essence of eco-art therapy is not 'treatment', but reconnection; reconnecting with nature, with yourself, and with your creativity. Much of today's anxiety stems from a sense of loss of control and disconnection. Eco-art therapy lets you touch the soil, smell the grass after rain, and observe the veins of a leaf.

"When your brain switches from ruminating about the past or worrying about the future to being fully present in the moment, anxiety naturally finds an outlet," Qiao says.

As another important carrier of emotional healing, fragrance has solid scientific support for its therapeutic effects.

"Smell is the only sense that goes directly to the amygdala — the emotional center of the brain — without passing through the thalamus. This means it can reach your heart before you even have time to rationally think," Qiao states.

In clinical interventions, scent is used as a crucial "emotional anchor". Qiao explains that her team does not simply use lavender to calm people; instead, it guides patients to form an association with a specific natural scent, such as citrus or cedar, while in a deeply relaxed state. Later, when they feel anxious in their daily lives, that scent acts like an "emotional switch", helping them regain calm quickly.

"In this sense, fragrance is not a 'placebo', but a direct shortcut to the emotional center," she adds.

The booming fragrance market reflects the growing recognition of scents' emotional healing potential.

Wang Wei, chief operating officer of Eternal Group, says that China's fragrance market has moved past the niche fragrance bubble and the misconception that "commercial fragrances are outdated". Consumers no longer follow labels blindly but return to the intrinsic emotional value of scents.

"Instead of blindly chasing viral niche fragrances on social media, consumers now clearly state their need for scents that help them relax and reduce stress," Wang says.

To empirically validate fragrance's healing value, the group introduced brainwave-based fragrance emotion detection technology in collaboration with the Shanghai Institute of Technology at the 30th China Beauty Expo in May. The technology converts subjective emotions such as pleasure and relaxation into visual data, providing scientific backing for fragrance therapy.

Wang emphasizes that the company has transformed from a brand agent into an ecological enabler in the fragrance industry, making fragrance a practical tool for daily emotional regulation through scientific research and scenario-based innovation.

"We hope to provide consumers with more accurate and locally adapted emotional fragrance experiences through continuous product innovation, scientific empirical research and scenario-based empowerment, truly bringing olfactory healing into people's daily lives," Wang says.

Contact the writers at heqi@chinadaily.com.cn

Science meets art to unlock nature's hidden connections

By **HE QI**
heqi@chinadaily.com.cn





Only Tree Knows, a groundbreaking exhibition of nature-inspired art, runs from May 1 to Aug 31 at the Shanghai Natural History Museum. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Step into the temporary exhibition hall on B1 of the Shanghai Natural History Museum, and a field of all-black metal flowers appears to bloom in silence on one side of the gallery. Hand-cut from metal sheets, they precisely replicate the forms of eight flowers, including roses, lilies and foxgloves, yet stripped of all natural hues — their hollow black silhouettes echo the rigorous structure of plant specimens in scientific illustrations.

These black silhouettes encapsulate the core theme of *Only Tree Knows*, a groundbreaking natural art exhibition.

Jointly organized by the Shanghai Natural History Museum and the Pudong Biyun Art Museum, the exhibition runs from May 1 to Aug 31. It brings together 22 works by 12 domestic and international artists, engaging in a cross-contextual dialogue with the museum's natural specimens to explore the profound theme of forest ecology and human coexistence.

"We collide the taxonomic research of science with the perceptual imagination of art, not to provide answers to ecological issues, but to help the public rediscover the hidden connections of nature," says curator Guo Xiaohui.

Breaking away from the one-way instruction of traditional science popularization, the cross-disciplinary exhibition takes forests as its core framework, connecting the above-ground vegetation realm and the underground mycelial network through specimens, installations, light and shadow, sound, AI-generated art, and other types of multimedia.

"Many people are used to viewing specimens but forget that forests are living; many love art yet rarely reflect on the ecological propositions behind it. We hope visitors can reread the story of forests with both rationality and sensibility," Guo adds.

As one of the exhibition's signature works, Zadok Ben-David's *Black Flowers* condenses plant forms into an existence between specimen and illusion, confronting the imbalance in the relationship between humans and nature.

"I paint these enlarged flowers black, not for beauty, but as a warning. Artists don't have solutions, but we can raise questions to make people rethink and protect nature," he states.

A universal symbol of both joy and sorrow, flowers are reimagined in black to turn natural representation into ecological reflection, prompting viewers to re-examine their place in the natural world.

Black Flowers is an extension of Ben-David's landmark *Blackfield* series, marking the classic body of work's first large-scale presentation in China. The artist notes that the series is a monumental project spanning 12 to 15 years: "My first installation, *Blackfield,* has 30,000 miniature flowers of 900 species, displayed with black side first and color revealed later, which is a metaphor for life with both tragedy and joy."

Ben-David adds: "This exhibition is necessary because it allows people to feel and think about nature in a new way, which is crucial for the current ecological environment."

Echoing this message is Rodrigo Arteaga's site-specific work *Fallen Tree*. Crafted from Shanghai's native tree branches and completed over a month in the museum, it is paired with his other piece, *Monocultures* — burnt paper sheets that capture the damage caused by ecological simplification. Together, the two works convey that the forest is not a static entity, but a dynamic space of constant connection, transformation and imbalance.

"You don't see the actual plant, but rather you see the absence, and the way of making it remembers or comes back to the forest fires that happen every year in Chile and in other places," Arteaga explains.

Two Chinese artists also joined the exhibition. Wang Yuyang of the Central Academy of Fine Arts explores the "third nature" in the technological age through *Plant 002* and *Biological Klein Blue*, employing AI algorithms and microbial techniques; Liu Zhenchen's *Panacea* series captures traces of medicinal plants on canvas, imbuing natural textures with a therapeutic quality.

Ninety percent of the works are making their Shanghai debut and their first appearance at the natural history museum. The exhibition also integrates 290,000 forest-related specimens from the museum's collection, forging a cross-temporal dialogue between artistic creation and natural heritage.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:03 PM

LIFE

A TV classic spins anew on vinyl

The score to hit drama *Jade Goddess of Mercy* is back, this time as a reimagined album, **Chen Nan** reports.





The melody arrived softly at first: a violin tracing a line of longing above the quiet pulse of a piano. Inside the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing on a late May afternoon, the opening notes of *Yu Guanyin*, or Jade Goddess of Mercy, were enough to suspend time.

For many audiences in China, the music carries them instantly back more than two decades, to an era when Chinese television dramas unfolded with an almost novelistic emotional seriousness — stories of love and betrayal, desire and sacrifice, set against the turbulence of a rapidly changing country.

Now the music itself has returned, transformed.

On May 24, composer Ye Xiaogang joined singer Zhu Hua, violinist Li Yuhe and pianist Feng Huaiyu for an event marking the release of a new vinyl album inspired by Ye's celebrated score for the television adaptation of Chinese writer Hai Yan's best-selling novel, *Jade Goddess of Mercy*.

The namesake TV series, *Jade Goddess of Mercy*, premiered in 2003 and follows the journey of An Xin, a young woman who transforms from an ordinary girl into a daring undercover narcotics officer. The story explores An Xin's complex emotional world as she becomes embedded within a dangerous drug trafficking organization. Her life is entangled with three men — the dedicated officer Tie Jun, the cunning dealer Mao Jie, and Yang Rui, an ordinary urban young man who is the emotional anchor and narrative viewpoint of the drama — forming a tense web of love, loyalty, and betrayal. Against this backdrop, the drama interweaves high-stakes anti-drug operations in Yunnan province, juxtaposing An Xin's inner struggles with intense, suspenseful action. At its heart, the series is a story of duty, sacrifice, and the human cost of fighting crime, where personal desire often collides with moral responsibility.

The black vinyl edition, released by NCPA Classics, does not simply reproduce the original soundtrack familiar to television audiences of the early 2000s. At the heart of the new release are two orchestral works that trace the evolution of *Jade Goddess of Mercy* from television soundtrack to contemporary concert music. *The Jade Goddess of Mercy Orchestra Suite (2001)* stands as the foundational pillar of Ye's musical world for *Jade Goddess of Mercy*. Moving beyond the functional demands of screen scoring, Ye reimagined and expanded the drama's central themes symphonically, transforming them into an autonomous orchestral work that has since become a lasting staple in the repertoire of major Chinese orchestras.

More than two decades later, *Jade Goddess of Mercy Capriccio for Violin and Orchestra (2023)*, commissioned by the Hangzhou Philharmonic Orchestra, revisits that emotional landscape from a more introspective and expansive perspective. Built around an extended dialogue between solo violin and orchestra, the work draws on the violin's warm, tensile sound to explore the music's emotional undercurrents with greater depth and freedom. The result feels less like a return to familiar material than a poetic reimagining — a work with themes once bound to the screen that unfold with renewed lyricism and emotional scope.

Together, the works chart the unusual afterlife of a television score that has steadily migrated from popular culture into China's contemporary concert repertoire.

"The music has continued to grow," Ye says. "It walked out of the television drama and became something independent."

Ye notes that many of the musical ideas developed in *Jade Goddess of Mercy Capriccio for Violin and Orchestra* never appeared in the earlier suite.

"In that sense, this album brings together nearly all the themes from the television drama that I felt deserved to be further developed and shared with a wider audience," says Ye.

For Ye, now one of China's most internationally recognized contemporary composers, the origins of *Jade Goddess of Mercy* still feel strangely fated.

He recalls buying Hai Yan's novel almost accidentally and reading it straight through. By the end, he had become convinced that the story demanded music. Not long afterward, director Ding Hei approached him to compose the score for the adaptation.

To prepare, Ye traveled to Xishuangbanna in Yunnan province, where parts of the drama were filmed. He observed local life, spoke with actors and immersed himself in the emotional atmosphere of the story.

Although he now describes the actual writing process as instinctive, he insists that spontaneity only becomes possible after deep emotional preparation.

The resulting music was unusually lyrical for Chinese television at the time, blending symphonic structure with an emotional openness more commonly associated with cinema than serialized drama. Some members of the production reportedly worried that the score sounded too classical and not commercially viable. Ye refused to simplify it.

The novelist Hai Yan later joked that the television series itself had become "a music video for Ye Xiaogang's music", because the production team became reluctant to cut scenes that carried the score's emotional momentum.

Over the years, the music developed a life beyond the series. Orchestras across China began performing the suite version regularly, and audiences continued to associate its melodies with a particular emotional atmosphere: restrained longing, romantic fatalism, and moral vulnerability.

The recording was completed in Berlin, Germany, in November 2024 with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin under conductor Stefan Malzew.

"Even without a shared spoken language," Ye says, "music became our common language."

The afternoon also revisited Ye's long creative partnership with singer Zhu, whose performance of the drama's theme song became inseparable from the series' emotional identity.

Returning now to the music of *Jade Goddess of Mercy* after 25 years, Zhu describes how age has altered her understanding of the work.

"When I sang it years ago, there were emotions I could not fully understand," she says. "Now they feel very clear."

Time, she suggests, has softened the technical self-consciousness of youth. Her voice now moves more freely within the orchestral texture, particularly alongside the strings.

In contemporary China's entertainment industry, where soundtrack music is often designed for speed, algorithmic circulation and immediate commercial impact, the survival of *Jade Goddess of Mercy* feels increasingly unusual. Its endurance owes less to nostalgia alone than to the seriousness of its artistic ambition.

Ye spoke candidly during the discussion about what he sees as the shrinking creative space for composers in film and television today. Producers increasingly treat music as a functional background, he says, rather than as an equal narrative force.

For him, *Jade Goddess of Mercy* belongs to a different moment — one in which directors and composers were willing to shape scenes around musical ideas rather than merely decorate finished images with sound.

That philosophy also informs Ye's broader thinking about contemporary Chinese composition. Educated largely within Western classical traditions, he has long sought to reconcile European structural rigor with distinctly Chinese aesthetic sensibilities: restraint, silence, and emotional space.

But he warned against superficial forms of East-West fusion now common among younger artists.

True synthesis, he argues, must emerge from a deeper cultural consciousness rooted in Chinese philosophical traditions — ideas of harmony, coexistence and the relationship between humanity and nature.

Contact the writer at chennan@chinadaily.com.cn





Top left: The album cover of *Jade Goddess of Mercy*. **From top:** Composer Ye Xiaogang (right) and singer Zhu Hua gather at the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing on May 24 to unveil his new vinyl album, *Jade Goddess of Mercy*. Composer Ye in an album-signing session with music lovers at the NCPA on May 24. Violinist Li Yuhe plays the piece, *Jade Goddess of Mercy Capriccio for Violin and Orchestra*, during the event in Beijing. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

> "This album brings together nearly all the themes from the television drama that I felt deserved to be further developed and shared with a wider audience."
>
> **Ye Xiaogang,** composer

Legends of the Great Wall meet mountain mists in Shanxi

By XU LIN
xulin@chinadaily.com.cn





Left: Yanmen Pass in Xinzhou city, North China's Shanxi province, was a strategic section of the Great Wall. **Right:** Wanghuagou, an ancient village perched on the cliff face on Guancen Mountain, Xinzhou. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Looking for a summer getaway that combines history, nature, and serenity? Xinzhou city in North China's Shanxi province offers exactly that.

Just a three-hour high-speed rail journey from Beijing, the city offers a cool respite from the summer heat. It invites travelers to explore a section of the Great Wall, tour a vibrant ancient city, hike mountain trails and experience natural wonders, making it an off-the-beaten-path weekend escape.

Steeped in frontier heroism, Yanmen Pass in Daixian county is a strategic section of the Great Wall. The Great Wall of China was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1987.

Yanmen Pass is often depicted in Chinese martial arts novels as a legendary frontier stronghold and a powerful symbol of patriotism and chivalry.

Yang Jia Jiang, or Generals of the Yang Family, defended the key northern frontier garrison during the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127), holding off repeated invasions by the nomadic Khitan people. This legendary military household has become a timeless symbol of loyalty, courage and patriotism in Chinese culture. It has been widely portrayed in literary works, operas and TV series, in which vivid stories of heroic female generals from the Yang family have been told and passed down.

Today, tourists can enjoy a grand welcoming ceremony featuring performers dressed in traditional costumes portraying the Yang family clan, along with exciting martial arts demonstrations and a spectacular parade.

"We weave together Great Wall culture, the legendary tales of the Yang family clan and frontier folk customs, offering a wonderful journey through the history of the border passes of northern Shanxi," says Hou Tianjia, an office worker from the scenic area.

Visitors can hike along the Yanmen Pass section of the Great Wall and climb the weathered ancient beacon towers, where soldiers once lit smoke signals to send urgent military messages across the mountains.

About one and a half hour's drive away is the ancient city of Xinzhou, where entrance tickets are free of charge and local residents still carry on their daily lives.

Visitors can explore ancient architecture like Xiurong Academy and various temples, and join intangible cultural heritage workshops such as those about paper-cutting. As night falls, the traditional *datiehua* (molten iron fireworks) show lights up the sky, and a street with bars pulses with energy — a perfect blend of traditional and modern nightlife.

"Life moves at a slow pace here. You can stay a night, soak in hot springs, and taste various local snacks to ease fatigue and wrap up your journey in a relaxed way," says Li Qiyu, a marketing office worker from the ancient city scenic area.

She adds that local food is fairly priced, accommodation offers great value for money, and it's not overly commercialized.

Nestled in Ningwu county, Luya Mountain scenic area stands out as a perfect summer escape, boasting a pleasant average summer temperature below 20 C.

After hiking along its winding trails, a breathtaking panoramic view unfolds from the mountaintop, with rolling peaks shrouded in swirling mist and clouds.

A must-visit attraction in the scenic area is the Permanent Ice Cave, a rare natural wonder formed around 3 million years ago. Maintaining a year-round subzero average temperature, the cave keeps its icy interior intact even during scorching summers. Visitors are advised to wear warm outfits and anti-slip shoes for a comfortable and safe tour.

Under artificial lighting, the cave walls are adorned with countless translucent icicles, ice waterfalls and ice curtains of varying sizes, shaping a dreamlike underground fairyland of ice and snow.

Nearby, three ancient villages, known as the Hanging Villages, are perched on cliffs high on Guancen Mountain. Some houses are embedded in the rock face, while others are supported by wooden pillars over the abyss, looking like castles in the air from a distance.

However, Luya Mountain offers more than just a summer retreat — it's a comprehensive experience of coolness, ecology and wellness. Beyond the forests that serve as natural oxygen bars, visitors can enjoy the Malun Alpine Grassland, an ancient cliff plank road first built in the Tang Dynasty (618-907), and clusters of alpine lakes.

About 160 kilometers away is the Laoniuwan scenic area of Pianguan county, where tourists can witness the remarkable confluence of the Great Wall and the Yellow River. They can also climb an ancient castle to have a bird's-eye view of the surrounding area, wander through a village of stone houses, and soak up the river's timeless beauty.

Indeed, combining ancient culture, lively old-town charm and cool natural scenery, Xinzhou makes every summer getaway here truly unforgettable.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:03 PM

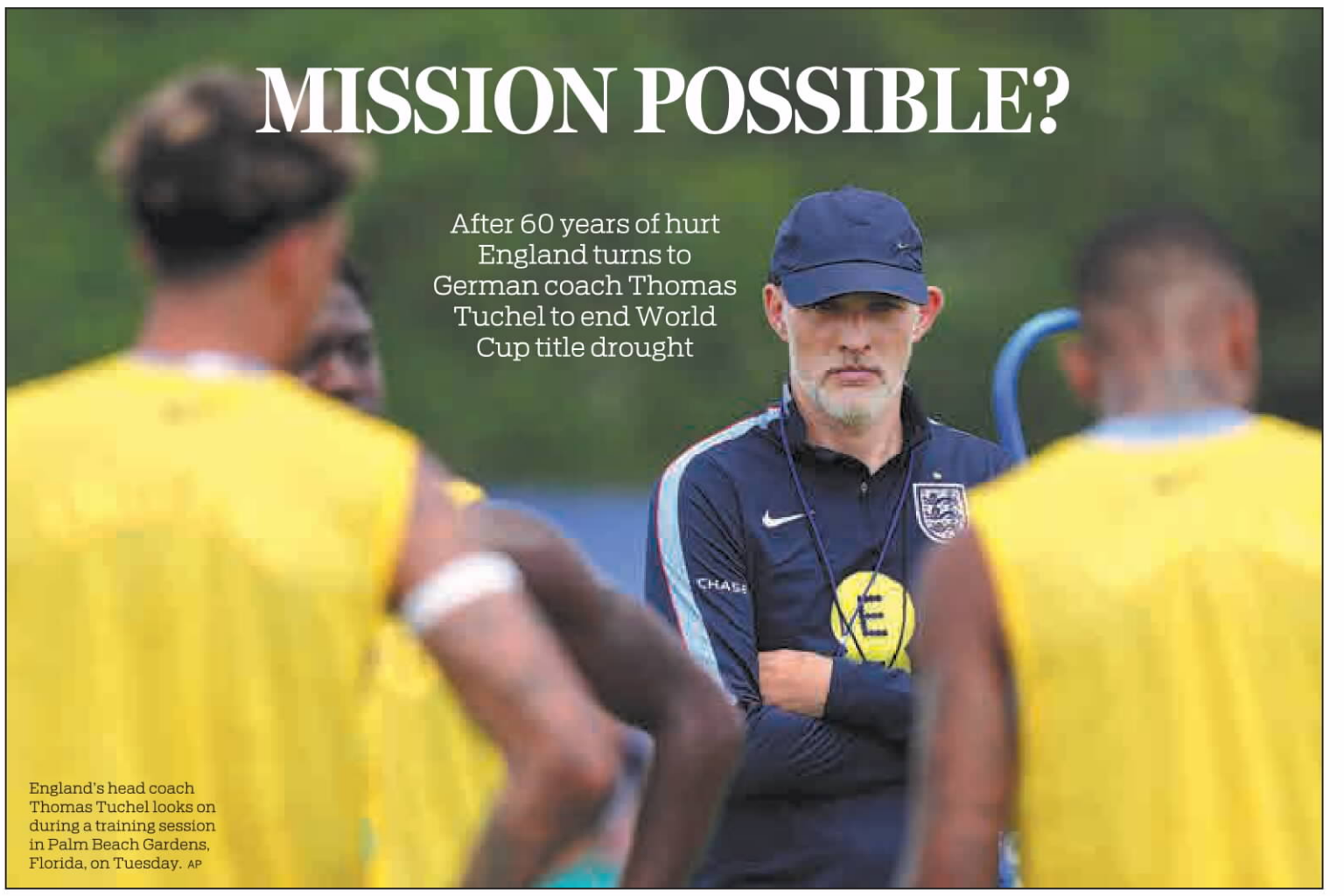
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:03 PM

SPORTS

SOCCER

MISSION POSSIBLE?

After 60 years of hurt England turns to German coach Thomas Tuchel to end World Cup title drought



England's head coach Thomas Tuchel looks on during a training session in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, on Tuesday. AP

In a bid to end its decades-long wait to win a second World Cup, England has put its fate in the hands of a German.

It's fair to say the appointment of Thomas Tuchel was not universally well-received.

"I'm sorry I have a German passport," the serial-winning former Paris Saint-Germain, Chelsea and Bayern Munich coach quipped at his official unveiling in 2024.

He had woken that morning to some unflattering headlines in the British media.

The Daily Mail described it as a "dark day for England" and said the national team had gambled on a "GERMAN".

The party leader of the right-wing Reform UK Nigel Farage asked on X: "Why can't we have an English manager?"

Never mind that Tuchel was a Champions League winner who had lifted trophies in three different countries. Or the fact that England has gone down the foreign route before: a Swedish coach in Sven-Goran Eriksson and an Italian in Fabio Capello. And in the days before Tuchel's appointment, there were rumors that Pep Guardiola was also a leading candidate.

Historic rivals

A point of contention was the fact that Germany has long been England's biggest soccer rival. Since winning the 1966 World Cup final against West Germany, England has often struggled against the Germans at major tournaments. Some England fans have brought 20th-century history to the rivalry with provocative chants taunting Germany about World War II.

Debate about Tuchel's nationality, however, dissipated quickly, helped by his easy-going charm when dealing with the media and a perfect winning record during England's World Cup qualifying campaign.

According to professor Jan Ruger, author of the upcoming book *Great Powers: A History of Britain and Germany*, the wider reaction to Tuchel's appointment points to a change in Anglo-German relations after the tensions that prevailed in the decades following two world wars.

"There were questions, but it certainly hasn't turned into an ongoing saga in the way in which it would have in the 1990s or even around the turn of the century," Ruger told The Associated Press. "Then it would have been unthinkable to have a German manager.

"Germany really isn't the bad guy anymore. That's long since passed. I don't think it works portraying Germany as the bogeyman."

Fierce criticism

Time will tell if Tuchel is portrayed as a hero or villain at the World Cup. If England fails, his nationality might be raised again. But England managers of the past have been the subject of brutal criticism by fans and media, regardless of what it says on their passport.





Debate about Thomas Tuchel's nationality dissipated quickly, helped by his easy-going charm when dealing with the media and a perfect winning record during England's World Cup qualifying campaign. AGENCIES

Tuchel's predecessor Gareth Southgate was widely credited with making England fans fall back in love with the national team during his eight-year spell, yet he faced a torrent of abuse from sections of supporters during the 2024 European Championship, with plastic beer glasses thrown in his direction after one match.

Southgate departed after leading England to back-to-back Euros finals and the World Cup semifinals in 2018.

He goes down as the nation's second-most successful manager after Alf Ramsey, who led England to World Cup victory in 1966.

If Tuchel can end England's trophy wait, he would become a national treasure.

"Everyone in the squad, the staff, everyone believes we can win it," midfielder Kobbie Mainoo said.

Difficult decisions

Tuchel stunned some fans and players with his squad selection for the World Cup, leaving out big names including Phil Foden, Cole Palmer and Trent Alexander-Arnold.

It was evidence that he would not be swayed by public opinion, which has been a criticism of previous coaches.

"Everything I know about international football tells me that tournaments are won by teams, not individuals," he said. "What we're trying to achieve in the summer can only be achieved as a team."

Midfielder Jordan Henderson was one of the surprise inclusions at the age of 35.

"I know everybody likes to speak about players that aren't here, unfortunately that's the case with every England squad really," Henderson said.

"There's so many good players, so much talent, but for us as a squad here, it's about being together and we're here for a reason and it's about bringing that, being the best version of yourself, being best version individually and collectively, working every day to achieve our dreams."

A proven winner

Tuchel is the 14th coach tasked with the challenge of ending England's trophy drought, which now stretches to 60 years.

After Southgate's departure the English Football Association said it was looking for a candidate to "win a major tournament". That might sound obvious, but even coaches who had won big prizes with club teams such as Bobby Robson, Terry Venables, Eriksson and Capello could not emulate that success with England.

Southgate got closer than anyone since Ramsey despite a modest coaching career before being handed the national job.

His success appeared to be grounded in developing a connection both within his squad and with supporters. As a former player who missed a penalty in a semi-final shootout defeat to Germany at Euro 1996, his emotional understanding of what it means to represent England appeared to resonate with a new generation.

As a foreign coach — albeit one who coached in the Premier League with Chelsea — Tuchel cannot bring that same dynamic to the role.

He does, however, fit the description of a winner of major tournaments, having led Chelsea to the Champions League in 2021. He was also a Champions League finalist with Paris Saint-Germain.

He won league titles in France with PSG and Germany with Bayern Munich.

In Harry Kane, Jude Bellingham and Declan Rice, he has three of the biggest stars in European soccer and enough talent at his disposal that he felt able to leave out the likes of Foden and Palmer.

"I love the difficult decisions and I love the tough decisions because they bring in the end clarity, they bring a certain edge, and it's what you need to go all the way," Tuchel said. "From day one, we said we will always try to select and build the best group, which is maybe not necessarily just to collect the best talents."

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Cherki's magical skills could be just what France needs in tight games

PARIS — If matches get tight for France at the World Cup and a defense is particularly hard for the star-studded attack to breach, Rayan Cherki is a dream player to bring on.

The 22-year-old enjoyed a brilliant first season with Manchester City, lighting up the Premier League with his maverick skills and amazing passing. He finished second with 12 assists behind only Manchester United's Bruno Fernandes, an established Premier League player.

One of Cherki's assists saw him dribble across the penalty area with his right foot before playing a blind pass — where a player does not look in the direction of where he is passing — with his left foot to Marc Guehi. Afterward, City coach Pep Guardiola — who coached all-time great Lionel Messi at Barcelona — spoke of his disbelief at the creativity shown because he had not even seen that pass as an option.

In another match, Cherki assisted Phil Foden's goal with an audacious Rabona pass, in which the player's kicking leg is crossed behind the back of the standing leg.

Cherki is more of a passer, but when he does score the goals highlight his amazing close control. Take his brilliant goal on his City debut against Wolverhampton, where he started the move with an outrageous backheel flick.

He can also run directly at players at speed with the ball glued to his feet, attributes he shares with the record eight-time Ballon d'Or winner Messi. His goal during his debut for France last June saw him net a brilliant volley against Spain in the Nations League.

"Rayan has something special," Guardiola said. "He will become an extraordinary player with his mindset and mentality."

Options for France

Cherki gives France coach Didier Deschamps wider options thanks to his versatility. He can play as an attacking midfielder or a right winger as he does with City, or as a playmaker just behind the center forward.

He was positioned behind Marcus Thuram in a 3-1 win against Colombia in March, where he was involved in two goals, and behind Kylian Mbappe against Ukraine last November.

When he was called up to the France squad for the first time in May last year, Cherki called it "the beginning of a beautiful adventure". It could take him to greatness, for Cherki has the soccer world at his feet.

It's hard to tell which is his stronger foot, although like Messi his best magic comes from his left.

In an interview with France Football magazine in March, Cherki was asked to name City's best technical player.

Without hesitation, he replied: "Me."

Cherki also described himself as "one of the most unpredictable players on the planet".

Perfect if France needs him to break down a solid defense.

Another Lyon gem

Cherki came through Lyon's renowned youth academy, which has produced the likes of 2022 Ballon d'Or winner Karim Benzema and the wonderfully skilled Hatem Ben Arfa.

He made his Ligue 1 debut at just 16 years old in October 2019 and scored his first senior goal a few weeks later in a French Cup match, when Cherki's astounding talent shone bright. He scored two clinical goals, set up a teammate with a brilliant pass from midfield, won a penalty which his teammate missed, then provided another assist. He also hit the crossbar with an audacious lob.



France's Rayan Cherki (left) in action with Germany's Jonathan Tah during a Nations League game on June 8, 2025. REUTERS

It was a mesmerizing performance for his age and put him on the radar of Europe's biggest clubs.

In his final season at Lyon, he ended with a league-high 11 assists. City landed him last summer for 36 million euros ($41 million), perhaps benefiting from Lyon's dire financial situation to buy him for what now looks like a bargain price in soccer transfer terms.

Guardiola must have already known what he was getting, since Cherki scored against City in a Champions League youth game just after turning 15 — the youngest scorer in the competition.

Future of France

Cherki's remarkable balance is an asset he shares with Messi and the late Diego Maradona, who honed his rare talent in the back streets of a shantytown on the outskirts of Buenos Aires. As a young boy, Cherki developed his technique on the streets of Lyon in east-central France. After one season with suburban club Saint-Priest he joined Lyon's academy at seven.

While he is not expected to start for France at the World Cup, that is understandable given the glittering talent in attack.

Les Bleus will likely line up with Bayern Munich star Michael Olise, Ballon d'Or winner Ousmane Dembele and the prolific Mbappe, who scored a hat-trick in the 2022 World Cup final loss to Argentina and netted in the 2018 World Cup final win over Croatia.

Deschamps is stepping down after the World Cup and his successor is widely touted to be Zinedine Zidane — the star of France's triumphs at the 1998 World Cup and Euro 2000, who, like Mbappe, scored in two World Cup finals.

Zidane was an exquisitely gifted midfielder himself and could build his team around Cherki in the years to come.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:06 PM

The greatest wall
Ancient monument sets stage for new generations
TALES & TRAILS, PAGES 7-10



New global partnership targets poverty
CHINA, PAGE 11



Europe scorched
Record-breaking heat wave grips continent amid climate warming
WORLD, PAGE 14

CHINA DAILY
GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 THURSDAY, MAY 28, 2026

Chinese assets gaining appeal around world

Artificial intelligence-powered revolution a key driver of shifting investment landscape

By **WANG KEJU**
wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn

As geopolitical tensions, diverging economic policies and rapid advances in artificial intelligence reshape global markets, senior economists said that Chinese assets are emerging as a key anchor, with the country's cost-effective AI ecosystem well positioned to support a new round of manufacturing upgrading.

With China pushing ahead with financial opening-up, economists said the case for including Chinese assets in global portfolios is likely to strengthen further, even as US equities continue to play an important role in global asset allocation.

Despite persistent uncertainty, global cross-border capital continued to expand in 2025, with the United States, the United Kingdom and China remaining among the world's major destinations for international capital, said Zhang Xiaoyan, associate dean at Tsinghua University's PBC School of Finance.

"The core logic of global capital allocation is simple: Investors seek better returns with lower risks," Zhang said. "Chinese assets could offer both."

On the return side, Zhang pointed to strong growth potential in China's emerging sectors such as digital technology and software, advanced manufacturing, automation, clean energy and green tech. In terms of risks, Chinese assets have low correlation with European and US markets, making them "effective diversifiers", she added.

In particular, the AI revolution is a key driver of the shifting global investment landscape.

Despite mounting risks from geopolitics, tariffs, energy shocks and inflation, new opportunities are emerging in AI infrastructure, energy transition and supply chain restructuring, said Shane Zhang, chairman of Morgan Stanley Securities (China).

Zhang said that Asia, and China especially, may be entering what he described as an investment- and manufacturing-led "super cycle". "China's supply chain resilience, high-end manufacturing, materials and AI industrial chain are drawing growing international attention," he added.

Dismissing AI bubble fears, he highlighted China's cost advantage, noting that achieving comparable model inference performance — the point at which a trained AI model processes new data in real time and produces output — in the country costs just 15 to 20 percent of the figure for the US. "That will drive broader AI adoption across China's economy," he added.

Miao Yanliang, chief strategist at China International Capital Corp, also said the AI revolution is no speculative bubble so far. "The technology is indeed boosting productivity, there's no heavy use of leverage, and valuations are not excessive by historical standards."

Miao said the adoption of AI is approaching an inflection point where gradual growth turns to exponential acceleration. "The winner won't be just one; it could be both China and the US, and the rest of the world could also benefit from this technological revolution," he added.

> "The core logic of global capital allocation is simple: Investors seek better returns with lower risks. Chinese assets could offer both."
>
> **Zhang Xiaoyan,** associate dean at Tsinghua University's PBC School of Finance

In the new landscape, investors can no longer rely on a single anchor. The US remains a vital component, but ignoring China is no longer an option, according to economists.

"Global capital is moving from an overweight position in US assets toward more diversified allocation," Miao said, noting that China's current weighting in global portfolios remains below the country's economic strength and corporate performance.

As central banks diversify reserves and investors seek alternatives to dollar-centric holdings, renminbi-denominated assets are gaining attention, Miao said, adding that China's continued financial opening and the steady internationalization of its currency support this shift.

China's financial opening is gathering pace, with easier market access for qualified foreign institutional investors and improved cross-border investment mechanisms, which is expected to give Chinese assets more weight in global portfolios, experts said.

"Investors need to adapt their strategies to changing market environments," said Zhang Xiaoyan, the Tsinghua associate dean. "With China's high-level opening-up and the implementation of favorable policies, the domestic capital market will welcome more development opportunities, offering long-term investment potential for investors at home and abroad."

Despite the growing appeal of Chinese assets for global investors, economists said the pace and momentum of domestic demand recovery remain a key factor for investors to watch.

Chinese enterprises' innovation and production capabilities are highly competitive, said S&P Global Ratings' Asia-Pacific chief economist Louis Kuijs, noting that the challenge lies in domestic demand and consumption.

In Kuijs' view, stimulating consumption hinges on addressing households' worries about income and job stability, and increasing the availability of public services such as healthcare and education for the country's urban migrant population.

INSIDE
River of shared prosperity
Global Views, page 6



Newsstand prices:
US $1 Canada C$1; UK 1£ EU 1€
Kenya 50 Kenya Shilling
Asia Pacific: Thailand 120 thb; Philippines 120 php; Myanmar 2000 kyat; Japan 210 yen; Dubai 10 dirham; Pakistan 300 rupee
www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

Prayers for peace



Palestinians offer prayers on Wednesday beside the ruins of a mosque destroyed by Israeli strikes, in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip. Israel said it targeted and killed Mohammed Odeh, the new leader of Hamas' military wing, during airstrikes in Gaza City on Tuesday.
ABDEL KAREEM HANA / AP **See story, page 15**

Desert fighter, US friend to reunite soon

By **DUAN JINXIAN** and **WANG SONGSONG** in Beijing

When China's afforestation hero Yin Yuzhen and her friend from the United States Ronald Sakolsky spoke over the phone recently, people from all over the country expressed the hope that they would meet again in person soon. Now that wish is set to come true.

When China Daily met up with Yin for an interview on Tuesday in Beijing, the 60-year-old, her dark black braid reaching her waist just like it did in many of her old photos, revealed that she would meet her old friend and tree-planting benefactor this summer.

Sakolsky also confirmed the appointment when contacted on Tuesday night. He said that he would be coming to China in August.

During his time here, he plans to visit the "forest miracle" he helped create years ago in Maowusu, in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region.

Maowusu is China's fourth-largest sandy stretch, covering a vast area spread across Shaanxi province, and the Inner Mongolia and Ningxia Hui autonomous regions.

On his trip to China, Sakolsky also plans to visit Luoyang, Henan province, where he taught English in 1999 and 2000. It was there that he first heard about Yin's efforts — planting trees to reclaim land that was being overtaken by the desert.

He set out to raise money to support the project and procured a $5,000 donation to help Yin buy saplings. Those saplings have now grown into trees that carpet the once barren area in green. It is a gift that Yin said she will never forget.

"When Sakolsky comes here, I will make noodles for him, representing both a long life and our long friendship," she said with a broad smile. "I will also treat him to our specialty food such as lamb skewers and millet porridge."

She also promised to give him a pair of insoles that she embroidered.

Yin is a national model worker who is widely acclaimed as one of China's afforestation heroes.

"No matter which country you are from, when you visit Maowusu it means you love nature and the Earth. We can unite with other people through our common dreams," Yin said.

She added that she remembered all the people who helped her. "They have moved me not just for a short time, but for a lifetime."

Yin was in Beijing on her way to Tallberg in Sweden, where she has been invited to participate in an international forum from Wednesday to Sunday.

*See **Friendship,** page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.

WHATEVER YOU'RE IN THE MARKET FOR, PANJIAYUAN PROBABLY HAS IT

Antiques hub is magnet for tourists looking for unique keepsake

By **CHEN NAN**
chennan@chinadaily.com.cn

Edwin den Hartog, a visitor from the Netherlands, had wandered the streets of Beijing many times before, but it had not prepared him for Panjiayuan. The sprawling market, a labyrinth of alleys and stalls in the capital's southeast, unfolded like a miniature city of its own.

Sunlight glinted off jade trinkets, and he was surrounded by wooden carvings and stacks of old posters, while vendors called out in friendly tones, offering a glimpse into the city's lively, mercantile heart.

"This market is huge!" Den Hartog exclaimed, pausing to take in the sheer scale of the scene. "The atmosphere is so different from markets back home. To foreigners, the items at the market are fascinating — little pieces of history that could become a keepsake."

The antiques section was his first stop. Rows of stalls overflowed with curiosities: carved wooden figures, metalwork and jade pieces with intricate patterns.

Hoping to buy his mother a necklace, he marveled at the textures, the weight and the stories each item seemed to carry. Nearby, another corner overflowed with beads, perfect for assembling a personalized necklace.



Foreigners browse through books at an autumn old book fair at the Panjiayuan Antique Market in Beijing in 2024. WANG FEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

"Picking the beads yourself is so much fun," he said, sliding a polished blue stone onto a string. "It feels like you're making a memory, not just buying a souvenir."

Panjiayuan's story stretches back centuries. Originally known as Panjiayao, during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) the area hosted kilns run by the Pan family from Shandong province, producing bricks and tiles for Beijing's old city.

*See **Market,** page 3*

WORLD WATCH
By Sujata Ashwarya

Two exits reflect an OPEC in transition

The United Arab Emirates recently left the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, seven years after Qatar walked away from the same institution. Two Gulf countries have now departed the cartel that coordinated their oil politics for nearly six decades.

The question worth asking is not what this means for OPEC, which will continue in some form. It is whether these twin exits, read alongside the quieter recalibrations underway in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, tell us something about where Gulf oil politics are heading, and what kind of regional order is taking shape behind the daily news of war, ceasefire and energy disruption.

The two departures were driven by different logics, but they point in the same direction. Qatar's 2019 exit was the move of a state that had become peripheral to OPEC's core business. Doha's future was already in liquefied natural gas, where it was a global leader and where OPEC quotas had no relevance. Leaving was a strategic refocusing rather than a rupture.

The UAE's exit is structurally different. Abu Dhabi was OPEC's third-largest producer, with spare capacity that gave the cartel credibility in moments of supply shock. Its departure represents the loss of a central pillar.

What the two exits share is the underlying judgment that the institution no longer fits the national strategy.

The proximate trigger for the UAE move is well understood. Abu Dhabi has invested heavily in expanding its production capacity, now at roughly 4.8 million barrels per day, with ambitions of 5 million by 2027, while OPEC quotas held its actual output well below that ceiling. The frustration was real and long-standing.

*See **Energy,** page 3*

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:06 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:06 PM

INDEPTH





A security inspection robot (left) and a laser leveling robot (right). PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Robots expanding limits of mega projects

Work at Shanghai airport terminal a model for major 'smart' construction, experts say

By **YU YILEI** and **WANG YING** in Shanghai

At the vast construction site of Shanghai Pudong International Airport's Terminal 3, a group of construction robots is racing against the clock alongside human workers — the ideal choice for carrying out repetitive, efficiency-intensive, and hazardous tasks.

As the first large-scale application of robots in civil aviation infrastructure construction, their deployment highlights the significance of intelligent manufacturing and smart construction in building mega projects, experts said.

Consisting of 37 types of robots with different functions, they are under the command of a unified "brain" known as a construction robot cluster management system. It is the first application of such a system in a large aviation project.

Tang Shengling, senior consulting adviser at the Shanghai Artificial Intelligence Research Institute's digital economy research center, said the use of robots in the airport construction project is a significant step.

"The landmark application of clustered and systematic construction robots will provide a replicable Chinese model for the development of intelligent robotics and the smart upgrading of the construction industry," Tang said.

Efficiency improved

The terminal under construction covers nearly 1.5 million square meters, with a total floor area of about 1.96 million sq m, according to Zhang Yi, deputy director of the terminal engineering department of Shanghai Airport (Group)'s construction division.

"One of its most distinctive architectural features is the international terminal's bird-shaped roof. Together with 17 gigantic bird-shaped columns, it creates the impression of a bird soaring through the sky," Zhang said.

"The project is expected to be ready ... in 2028, further supporting Shanghai's development into an international aviation hub," added Zhang.

Qin Yi, deputy general manager of Shanghai Construction Group's general contracting department, said the number of robots and the scale of their application in the project are unparalleled.

Qin, who is also the executive deputy head of the Shanghai Pudong International Airport's Terminal 3 project, said the robots would reduce construction time by 20 percent, and trim the on-site workforce by about 35 percent.

For instance, a crew of three robots is doing the concrete flooring works continuously and efficiently in carrying out tasks of leveling, surface finishing and polishing. The crew is expected to complete about 700,000 sq m of structural and architectural flooring work for the project.

The team consists of a four-wheel laser leveling robot, a crawler smoothing robot and a floor polishing robot, Qin said. The crew can process more than 1,000 sq m of flooring per day, and keep deviations in flatness to within a millimeter.

The use of robots has not only saved construction time but also significantly reduced reliance on specialized labor, further ensuring the stability and quality of the construction process. "The introduction of robots for the project has made the construction process more advanced and intelligent, therefore improving the overall project's quality and standard," Qin said.

When comparing manpower and robot performance, for example, robots can significantly improve first-pass welding qualification rates and overall welding quality, he said. The rework rate in traditional manual welding is typically close to 10 percent, but welding robots have virtually eliminated reworking.

Eradicating human risk

The use of construction robots demonstrates their application possibilities not only in airport infrastructure, but also in other industries, said Duanmu Haiying, director of the Shanghai Meta-Now Metaverse Industry Promotion Center.

"This extensive application of robots of multiple brands and multiple types of systems will enable end-to-end connectivity across the data chain, further optimizing costs," Duanmu said.

Cao Qixin, a professor specializing in robot research at Shanghai Jiao Tong University, said: "The construction industry involves highly complex workflows, and integrating multiple types of robots through an intelligent platform has significant importance."

Twenty-four robot models are currently being used in the terminal construction project. Based on their functions and applications, they are classified into three categories: on-site construction robots, construction management robots, and processing robots, Qin said.

Working in risky scenarios, they can perform highly difficult operations, eliminating the need for human workers to be directly exposed to hazardous environments such as high temperatures, toxic gases and flying sparks.

In complex areas such as the bird-shaped columns, elevated facade panels and skybridge truss structures, multiple welding robots can play important roles, Qin said. In traditional high-altitude operations, the aerial-work robots are capable of carrying out tasks such as coating surfaces and decoration, curtain wall water-spray testing, and cleaning maintenance.

"Civil aviation engineering has the highest requirements for safety and precision, so robots must undergo reliability verification in real-world scenarios," said Duanmu, adding the Shanghai project can serve as a model for the intelligent upgrading of infrastructure projects nationwide.

In highly repetitive tasks, robots are all-rounders capable of handling everything, including trivial chores. A security inspection robot, for example, has agile movement and can take panoramic images on a construction site, allowing management to view any alarming scenarios and on-site conditions in real time.







Above: Work is underway at the construction site of Shanghai Pudong International Airport's Terminal 3 on May 11. WANG YING / CHINA DAILY **Left:** A worker operates a welding robot at the site. **Below:** A curtain wall glass panel is installed at the construction site with the help of a robot. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



An engineer demonstrates how to use a paintwork robot before it is deployed at the construction of Shanghai Pudong International Airport's Terminal 3. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Another example is the cleaning robot, which can remove small stones and dust from construction floors via a fully automated operating system. The machine is capable of cleaning up to 500 sq m of floor area per hour.

As for underground work, the welding robots can reduce the workforce by 50 percent and improve efficiency by 30 percent.

"During the construction of Shanghai Pudong International Airport's Terminal 3, various robots were extensively used, particularly in floor leveling and steel structure welding," Qin said. "The use of robots also includes our on-site unmanned inspection management, as well as our backstage digital management matrix. The introduction of robots into the project has effectively transformed the construction process into advanced manufacturing and intelligent construction, and has improved the overall project's quality and standard," he added.

Setting high standards

Qin is proud that a large proportion of the robots being used on the project are made in China or have Chinese origins.

"The robots we are using can be categorized into three types. The first is robots that have been independently researched and developed by ourselves, such as molding robots and robots that weld wall foundations. The second is those we jointly developed with (domestic) robot manufacturers. And the third is those we directly purchased from the market, including some imported equipment," Qin said.

Shanghai is looking to transform and upgrade its advanced manufacturing over the coming three years. The use of robots in the terminal construction perfectly fits this agenda. The three-year action plan was unveiled by the municipal government early in January.

The plan has set ambitious goals, including nurturing 100 manufacturing enterprises, each with an annual output of above 1 billion yuan ($147 million), and raising the city's robot density to 600 robots per 10,000 employees by 2028. The measures are expected to consolidate and enhance the city's industrial chain and turn it into a global high-end manufacturing center.

Robot density, a key gauge of the adoption of automation in manufacturing, is the number of robots per 10,000 people in the manufacturing industry.

China has a robot density of 166 per 10,000 workers, ranking sixth in Asia and 22nd globally, according to a report from International Federation of Robotics.

South Korea tops the rankings at 1,220, followed by Singapore at 818. Shanghai's current density level of robots is 500 according to Xinhua News Agency. If it reaches the target of 600 by 2028, it would rank third behind South Korea and Singapore.

Transportation face-lift

The extensive deployment of robots at the terminal construction project offers three key insights, said Tang Shengling, senior consulting adviser at the Shanghai Artificial Intelligence Research Institute.

"First, it provides a reference model for large public infrastructure, offering practical experience for future major projects such as airports, rail transit and large-scale public buildings. Second, the clustered use of robots is reshaping the construction industry's long-standing reliance on labor-intensive methods. Finally, it will help drive the development of upstream and downstream technologies and the broader supporting ecosystem," Tang said.

When operational, Terminal 3 is expected to further enhance Shanghai's position as an international aviation hub, and be a crucial cog in the Yangtze River Delta's regional airport cluster.

Zhang, the deputy director of the terminal engineering department, said after completion, the new terminal will add 50 million additional annual passenger trips to the airport's capacity. Shanghai Pudong International Airport received nearly 85 million passenger trips by the end of 2025, exceeding its design capacity of 80 million, he said.

"Terminal 3 is designed to enable Shanghai Pudong International Airport to handle 130 million passenger trips annually by 2035," Zhang said.

Shanghai's two airports recorded more than 135 million passenger trips, and handled 4.5 million metric tons of cargo-and-mail throughput in 2025, according to the Shanghai Airport (Group).

The airport group currently operates an aviation network that reaches a record 302 destinations in 54 countries.

The construction of Terminal 3, which is the core project of the airport's phase-four expansion, officially started on November 20, 2024, and is scheduled for completion in 2028.

Shanghai is undergoing a face-lift of its transportation system with other major facilities scheduled for completion in the coming two years, including the Shanghai East Railway Station.

With the main structure more than 50 percent complete, the project is expected to finish construction by the end of this year, and is slated to begin operations by July 2027, according to local officials.

Baoshan Railway Station, the starting point of the 2,000-kilometer, 500-billion-yuan high-speed railway linking Shanghai and Sichuan province, is also set to be put into operation next July. The new station is expected to improve the integration of the Yangtze River Economic Belt.

Contact the writers at wang_ying@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:06 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:06 PM

TOP NEWS

Nation's brands eye World Cup

Chinese firms use AI, digital platforms to expand global reach as tournament nears

By **LI JING**
lijing2009@chinadaily.com.cn

The 2026 FIFA World Cup, which is scheduled to take place from June 12 to July 20, is emerging as a major global marketing stage for Chinese brands seeking to expand overseas, as fragmented viewing habits and digital advertising tools reshape how companies participate in top-tier sports events.

The tournament, jointly hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico, is expected to attract more than 6 billion viewers worldwide, with overall exposure projected to rise 20 percent from the previous soccer World Cup, according to a recent survey by global advertising technology company The Trade Desk.

Chinese companies increasingly see the World Cup as more than just a platform for logo exposure. They are going to use the event to strengthen global brand recognition through technology, streaming platforms and social media.

"Top-tier sporting events are helping Chinese brands enter a more advanced stage of globalization," said Wang Xueli, director of Tsinghua University's Center for Development of Sports Industry.

"In the past, many Chinese companies mainly wanted to build basic brand awareness. But now, through top global events such as the World Cup, they are trying to strengthen their position in mid — to high-end markets and showcase their technological capabilities."

TTD's survey found that audience behavior around the upcoming tournament is becoming increasingly fragmented. At least one-third of viewers plan to follow matches through multiple channels, including traditional television, sports apps, connected TV platforms and short-form video content.

In North America, 45 percent of US respondents and 47 percent of Canadian respondents said that they would use sports apps to follow the event, while more than 40 percent in both countries planned to consume content through connected TV and streaming platforms.

"The World Cup is evolving from a 90-minute match into a long-cycle content ecosystem spanning pre-match buildup, live interaction and post-match engagement," said Ashley Wu, senior director of business development at TTD China. "That creates new opportunities for Chinese brands to build sustained connections with overseas consumers."

The changes are also lowering barriers for smaller brands.

Previous soccer World Cups were largely dominated by multinational sponsors who spent heavily on stadium exposure and naming rights. But artificial intelligence-driven advertising, streaming platforms and social media now allow smaller companies to target overseas consumers more precisely and at lower cost.

"Sports marketing is no longer only about sponsoring a team or buying billboard space," Wu said. "Even brands without huge budgets can now reach highly specific audiences through multi-channel campaigns."

Platforms such as TikTok and Instagram have pushed sports content far beyond core soccer fans, helping brands reach younger and female consumers. TTD's survey found that women now account for nearly half of viewers in several European markets, while Gen Z audiences in Spain and Italy showed engagement levels above 90 percent.

China's established global brands are also embedding themselves into tournament operations.

Hisense, the official display technology partner for the tournament's video assistant referee system, will supply RGB Mini LED displays for FIFA VAR centers. Meanwhile, Lenovo is deploying more than 10,000 devices and more than 200 engineers across all 16 venues, introducing AI-powered "digital twin" technology capable of generating 3D virtual replicas of players and match situations.

Analysts say such partnerships reflect a broader shift in how Chinese companies engage with global sports events.

"Chinese firms are no longer simply buying advertising boards around stadiums," Wang from Tsinghua University said. "They are becoming part of the technological infrastructure behind major international sporting events."

For Chinese companies, the appeal of global sports marketing may also lie in its relative stability during a volatile global geopolitical and economic environment.

"Whether it's tariffs or geopolitical tensions, sports remain one of the few globally positive and emotionally resonant topics," Wu from TTD China said. "For Chinese brands trying to build long-term international recognition, that kind of certainty has become increasingly valuable."



A customer wearing an Argentina national team jersey shops on Monday for World Cup merchandise at a store at Yiwu International Trade City in Zhejiang province. WEI ZHIYANG/FOR CHINA DAILY

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1837



Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic visits the innovation center of Minth Group in Jiaxing, Zhejiang province, on Wednesday. Vucic, who is on a five-day state visit to China, learned about the company's latest achievements in advanced manufacturing and the development of humanoid robots. LIU MINGXIANG / XINHUA

Vucic sees new chapter in bilateral ties

By **ZHAO JIA** in Beijing
and **CHEN YE** in Jiaxing, Zhejiang

When robots performed Serbia's Moravac folk dance on Wednesday at an innovation center in Jiaxing, Zhejiang province, Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic saw more than a display of smart technology.

In a social media post after visiting the innovation center of Minth Group, Vucic said that he had seen how robots are assembled and how they can be used in daily life, industry and entertainment.

He said the performance of the Serbian folk dance showed that technology is not only about science and machines, but also about understanding the traditions and spirit of a people.

Such technologies would soon come to Serbia with the support of Chinese friends and partners, bringing "a completely new development energy" to the country, he said.

Vucic visited Minth Group's facility in Jiaxing on Wednesday during his trip to Zhejiang. The company, a global supplier of automotive exterior parts, body structural components and products related to new energy vehicles, entered the Serbian market in 2018 and has since built 10 factories in the country, making it an important participant in China-Serbia industrial cooperation.

At the factory, Serbian young people demonstrated robotic operation skills they had learned there, drawing applause from Vucic and underscoring the role of skills training in bilateral industrial cooperation.

During the visit, Vucic also met representatives of major Chinese companies interested in investing in Serbia. He said the two sides discussed concrete projects, new factories, advanced technologies, and opportunities to provide even more jobs.

Vucic said the investment agreements reached and signed by the two sides on Wednesday, worth a total of 953 million euros ($1.11 billion), represented an enormous amount for Serbia. The projects showed "in the most beautiful way" what the ironclad friendship between Serbia and China means in practice, and how it could help "change the face of Serbia", he added.

The visit came amid deepening local-level cooperation and people-to-people exchanges between Zhejiang and the European country. In 2025, trade between Zhejiang and Serbia reached $990 million, up 11.1 percent year-on-year.

Zhejiang and Serbia have established four pairs of city-level friendly exchange relationships, while nearly 10 universities in Zhejiang have developed stable partnerships with Serbian educational institutions.

The China-Serbia Youth Cultural Exchange Center was also unveiled on Wednesday in Jiaxing. Designed as a long-term platform for bilateral youth exchanges, it will focus on emerging fields such as smart manufacturing, new energy, humanoid robots and the low-altitude economy. Under the program, 500 young people from Serbia will be invited to visit China.

At the center's opening, Vucic called it "a true treasure" for Serbia, where young people will learn about new technologies and return home with advanced knowledge. He encouraged them to learn from the Chinese people, build friendships with their Chinese peers, and take knowledge back to Serbia to contribute to the nation's development.

People-to-people exchanges are "of the utmost importance for Serbia" and valuable for Chinese young people, as the two sides learn from each other, adapt to different cultures and learn how to work better together, Vucic said.

After completing his itinerary in Zhejiang, Vucic went to Shanghai on Wednesday. He will conclude his five-day state visit to China on Thursday.

Contact the writers at zhaojia@chinadaily.com.cn

Friendship: Sandy stretches transformed

From page 1

According to the invitation, Yin's efforts have resulted in more than 300,000 trees being planted across 4,000 hectares, a feat that has earned her respect and recognition around the world.

"Over the past 35 years, you have worked with an indomitable spirit to transform desert areas into thriving oases," the invitation said.

Yin has been invited to "share her experience in sustainable development, to foster constructive dialogue, and to explore potential pathways for future collaboration".

"I want to talk about desert greening, protecting the Earth, the soil and the water," she said.

For Sakolsky, now 69 and a retired high school teacher in Pennsylvania, his stint in China had a profound impact on him. "The Chinese taught me to appreciate the simple things in life. It is about how much empathy and kindness you can share, as well as respect," he said.

Referring to his friend Yin, he added, "Please tell her I will see her soon."

On May 20, the Inner Mongolia autonomous region's people's association for friendship with foreign countries officially invited Sakolsky to "witness the growth of young saplings into dense forests".

Since 1959, China has established a desert scientific expedition team, according to a report of Guangming Daily. Through continuous exploration, the country has made breakthroughs in advanced theories and technologies, successfully transforming the appearance of large sandy stretches, while also providing the world with access to China's desertification control approach.

The Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification has honored China for its "outstanding contribution to combating desertification" three times, a Xinhua News Agency report said.

Yuan Hui contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at duanjinxian@chinadaily.com.cn

Market: More than 4,000 vendors sell everything from calligraphy to coins

From page 1

Since its founding in 1992, Panjiayuan has become China's most popular market for antiques and folk art. Today, it spans nearly 50,000 square meters, divided into six sections, including street stalls, classical furniture and modern collectibles. Over 4,000 vendors from across China sell products ranging from calligraphy and old books to coins and folk crafts.

Den Hartog also noticed the relaxed pace among some vendors — some even napping on chairs, others chatting with neighbors.

"There's a sense of life and leisure here that makes browsing fun. You're not just shopping; you're part of the market's rhythm," he said.

After three hours, Den Hartog's feet were tired, but he wasn't done. "The market is enormous. You could spend an entire day here," he said, reflecting on the layers of discovery. He capped off his visit at a nearby Wenzhou seafood restaurant, savoring the flavors before stepping back into the bustling streets.

Behind one of the bead stalls, Li Mei, a longtime vendor at the market, smiled warmly as she helped customers choose pieces.

"People come from all over the world. They bring a lively energy to the market. Some want antiques, some just want something beautiful to remember their trip. It's not just about selling; it's about sharing a piece of the city's memory," she said. "Some just enjoy the experience of discovery, nostalgia and connection."

There is Lu Ke, a book lover, who visits Panjiayuan's secondhand book stalls almost every weekend. She focuses on books about history, economics and literary biographies.

"Whenever I find something in those categories, I grab it without hesitation. Spending the equivalent of two cups of milk tea on books might seem trivial, but the joy and energy they bring last far longer than a sugary drink — so why not?" she said.

"The joy of browsing secondhand books isn't just in finding the right title; it's in flipping through the notes and thoughts left by previous readers, feeling the traces of time etched into the pages," she added.

Energy: Independent national strategies pursued

From page 1

But the timing carries its own meaning. Choosing to leave during the Iran war, when Gulf energy infrastructure has been under sustained attack and the Strait of Hormuz has been intermittently impassable, signals a state preparing for the next phase of regional politics on its own terms.

The Saudi-Emirati dimension is where the structural shift becomes visible. Riyadh has carried the political cost of OPEC+ production discipline for years, defending prices through cuts that constrained its own revenue and demanded coordination with Moscow. The UAE's exit means Saudi Arabia now carries that burden alone with Russia. The Emirati energy minister was at pains to insist the decision had nothing to do with Riyadh, that this was about national strategy and not about brothers within the group. That kind of careful denial usually confirms the underlying pressure. The two states will continue to coordinate where their interests align, but they are diverging under shared regional constraint, their interests still overlapping while the institutional architecture that bound them together gives way.

Read at the level of the regional order, what is happening in the Gulf is neither collapse nor consolidation. It is the gradual emergence of an arrangement in which states pursue independent national strategies under shared geographic and economic constraints, navigating their relationships with each other relationally rather than coordinating through inherited institutions.

OPEC was the central coordinating body of Gulf oil politics for nearly six decades. Its hollowing out reflects something larger: the leading Gulf producers no longer see institutional coordination as the right vehicle for their full range of interests, even when, as in Saudi Arabia's case, formal membership continues. The age of regional cartels and bloc discipline is giving way to something looser and more flexible, in which sovereignty is exercised through bilateral arrangements, parallel benchmarks and selective participation in overlapping platforms. The Iron Dome anti-missile battery deployed to Abu Dhabi during the Iran war and the recent OPEC exit are different expressions of the same logic. The Gulf is choosing flexibility over commitment, and capability over institution.

The institutions inherited from the 20th century, with OPEC chief among them, were built for a world in which oil-producing states needed coordination to manage their relationship with consumer markets and with the dollar system that priced their commodity. The Gulf states of 2026 are operating in a different world, one in which their strategic flexibility is more valuable than their institutional discipline, and in which their counterparties in Asia have built the financial and technical infrastructure to receive that flexibility.

The exits of Qatar in 2019 and the UAE in 2026 mark the visible surface of this transition. Whether others follow, and how the residual coordinating function of the cartel gets reconstituted, are the open questions of the next decade. What is no longer in question is the direction. The leading Gulf producers are moving away from the architecture of the 20th century, some by leaving its institutions, others by working around them while remaining inside.

The author is a professor at the Centre for West Asian Studies at Jamia Millia Islamia in New Delhi. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:06 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:06 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Steady development of ties will help advance China-Canada new strategic partnership

China and Canada have distinct historical and cultural backgrounds, yet cooperation and mutual benefit should be the main themes of their relationship.

Under the former Canadian government, however, the relationship faced numerous challenges, mainly due to its aligning the country with the United States in its China policy.

Since the Mark Carney government took office and signaled a change of approach, relations have gradually improved. This warming momentum has been steady after Carney's visit to China in January. During the visit, the two sides signed multiple economic and trade cooperation documents in agriculture, new materials, clean energy, finance and education.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi is scheduled to pay a three-day visit to Canada starting Thursday. The visit, the first by a Chinese foreign minister to Canada in a decade, is expected to help advance the implementation of the agreements reached during Carney's visit, including the resumption of the China-Canada high-level economic and financial strategic dialogue, and consultations on trade issues involving electric vehicles and canola seeds. The visit is also anticipated to facilitate further progress on Canada's previously announced plan to increase direct flights between the two countries, thereby enhancing bilateral economic, trade and people-to-people exchanges.

The breadth and depth of Sino-Canadian cooperation constitute a solid foundation to build on. In 2025, the total trade volume between China and Canada reached 124.09 billion Canadian dollars ($89.86 billion), with China consistently ranking as Canada's second-largest trading partner.

The two economies are also complementary. China, as one of the world's largest consumer markets, has a growing demand for Canada's agricultural products, energy resources and premium consumer goods, while Canada benefits from access to the superlarge Chinese market.

More importantly, China and Canada have the potential to jointly advance their new strategic partnership. The essence of a new strategic partnership lies in transcending ideological differences and geopolitical disputes, focusing on the common well-being of both peoples, and striving to advance the global governance system in a more just and equitable direction. China and Canada have the responsibility and capability to strengthen coordination and cooperation on major issues such as upholding multilateralism, addressing climate change and promoting global economic recovery.

Wang's visit can help enhance mutual understanding, which is crucial for the healthy development of bilateral relations. As the Chinese side stressed, the two sides should become partners that help each other achieve success and develop together. They should do more to promote cooperation and reduce items on the "negative list".

China looks forward to the visit enhancing political trust with Canada, expanding mutually beneficial cooperation, properly managing differences and promoting Sino-Canadian relations along a healthy, stable and sustainable trajectory for the betterment of both peoples, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said.

As long as the two countries uphold the principles of mutual respect and equality, advance cooperation with a pragmatic attitude, and foster trust with a broad-minded approach, they can indeed become reliable partners.

However, it is imperative for Ottawa to pursue a consistent China policy grounded in mutual respect and strategic autonomy.

Canada should maintain an objective and rational stance on China-related issues within multilateral mechanisms such as the G7 and NATO, and resist attempts to transform economic and security platforms into tools of bloc confrontation and geopolitical rivalry.

In particular, Ottawa should refrain from sending any erroneous signals to "Taiwan independence" separatist forces.

Likewise, disputes in the South China Sea should be peacefully resolved by directly concerned regional parties through dialogue and consultation. As a non-regional country, Canada should avoid actions that risk complicating the regional situation, heightening tensions, or undermining mutual trust among regional countries.

Global poverty relief entails collaboration

A major outcome of the 2026 Global Poverty Reduction and Development Forum that opened in Beijing on Wednesday is the establishment of the Global Partnership for Poverty Alleviation and Development (GPPAD) by China and 53 other countries, along with nine international organizations.

While some major countries export inflation, chaos and war, China is contributing poverty reduction and sharing its experience to promote poverty relief and common development.

United Nations Development Programme Resident Representative ad interim for China James George said in the first committee meeting of the GPPAD, the UNDP welcomes the partnership's emphasis on dialogue, knowledge-sharing, South-South cooperation and multi-stakeholder collaboration, as these are essential elements for accelerating sustainable development progress and ensuring that development pathways remain inclusive, resilient and sustainable.

Against a backdrop of mounting global development challenges, the establishment of the partnership is both timely and significant. According to the latest Global Multidimensional Poverty Index report released by the UNDP, 1.1 billion people across 109 countries continue to live in multidimensional poverty, while nearly 890 million vulnerable people face the dual pressures of poverty and severe climate hazards. With three-quarters of the world's extreme poverty concentrated in rural areas, the urgency of strengthening international cooperation on poverty reduction has become increasingly evident.

At a time when climate change, economic uncertainty, food insecurity, debt pressures and geopolitical conflicts are undermining global development gains, no country can tackle these challenges alone. What the world needs is stronger solidarity, more pragmatic cooperation and platforms that enable countries to share experiences and pursue common solutions. In this regard, the founding of the partnership represents another global public good provided by China and its partners.

By promoting policy dialogue, technology sharing, capacity building and development cooperation, China is transforming its poverty reduction experience into an international resource that benefits more developing countries. This reflects China's commitment to advancing inclusive development and building a global community with a shared future free from poverty.

China's experience demonstrates that poverty is neither inevitable nor unconquerable. In 2021, the country declared a landmark achievement: the eradication of absolute poverty, following a decades-long effort that lifted around 800 million people out of destitution. With that, the nation achieved the poverty reduction target of the UN 2030 Agenda 10 years ahead of schedule.

China has actively promoted international exchanges and cooperation on poverty alleviation. Through the Global Development Initiative, South-South cooperation projects, agricultural assistance programs and poverty reduction training seminars, China has shared its experience and technology with countries across Asia, Africa and Latin America. From hybrid rice technology benefiting farmers in nearly 70 countries to mushroom cultivation creating employment opportunities in over 100 countries and regions, China is sharing its hard-earned experience with the world.

Fundamentally, the issue of poverty reduction is an issue of development. Only through development can impoverished regions cultivate endogenous growth drivers and achieve sustainable prosperity. China's experience shows that poverty alleviation must move beyond short-term relief and focus instead on strengthening self-development capabilities.

As Chinese Vice-Premier Liu Guozhong said at the forum, China will support the GPPAD in fully leveraging its role by strengthening policy dialogue, technology demonstration and talent training, while developing a series of "small but beautiful" projects to help developing countries enhance their poverty reduction capacities.

To this end, there is an urgent need for all parties to build broader consensus and accelerate the global poverty reduction process. The proposals put forward by Liu underscore China's commitment to advancing international poverty alleviation through pragmatic, results-oriented actions. As he said, countries should accelerate pragmatic actions, strengthen dialogue and exchanges, enhance endogenous drivers by vigorously promoting market and technology-enabled empowerment, reinforce multilateral coordination and improve the global governance system for poverty reduction.

Poverty relief is not a one-time accomplishment but a long-term undertaking for all countries. Only through collaboration and shared progress can humanity build a better future marked by lasting prosperity and dignity for all.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Luo Jie



Opinion Line

Real emotional connection at heart of *Dear You*'s success

Dear You, a low-budget drama in the Chaoshan (Teochew) dialect, has achieved quite a feat. According to the ticketing platform Maoyan, as of Tuesday the film, which cost 14 million yuan ($2.06 million) to make, had raked in over 1.1 billion yuan at the box office. Featuring a non-professional cast, the film has garnered an impressive rating of 9.2 out of 10 on the popular movie review platform Douban. The success of *Dear You* is a testament to the power of compelling storytelling. Despite lacking star power, the film's touching storyline attracted an audience by word of mouth. This spontaneous reaction shows the drawing power of a work that touches the heart.

The film is not just all romance; it is also about a profound sense of duty and moral obligation. At its heart lies a touching story: After the male main character dies a tragic death while working abroad in Thailand, a compatriot, Xie Nanzhi, a woman of Chaoshan descent who had befriended him there, chooses not to immediately tell his wife. Instead, she continues his practice of sending letters and money home for 18 years. This act of kindness and dedication quietly helps a stranger far away.

From being illiterate to learning how to write, Xie perseveres in her self-imposed endeavor. Each painstakingly written Chinese character represents a solemn promise she keeps to herself. This loyalty transcends blood ties and life and death, embodying the deep-seated Chinese sense of responsibility to fulfill a promise with utmost dedication. These letters, imbued with tears and warmth, touch the softest part of every viewer's heart.

Moreover, the film evokes memories of *qiaopi*, the letters and remittances sent home by earlier generations of overseas Chinese during the 19th and 20th centuries. In 2013, UNESCO recognized the *qiaopi* archives, emblematic of the Teochew culture, by adding them to its Memory of the World Register.

These letters, which traversed oceans to reach loved ones back home, are more than emotional connections; they are cultural legacies. Through them, we gain insights into the hardships and perseverance of the older generation of overseas Chinese, as well as their profound attachment and unwavering dedication to their homeland. The film captures this historical narrative, illustrating how the *qiaopi* carried not only financial support but also the enduring spirit and cultural identity of the Chinese people.

In today's globalized world, *Dear You* offers a compelling answer to the question of how local culture can reach a national or even global audience. The film shows that local narratives, when infused with universal human emotions, can resonate with audiences everywhere, overcoming cultural and linguistic barriers. By blending local stories with universal human emotions, culture can transcend its own boundaries and be sustained and revitalized through creative means.

The success of *Dear You* shows exactly what Chinese cinema needs. It teaches us that true cultural transmission lies not in the packaging of form, but in the depth of content; not in the flaunting of technology but in the sincerity of emotion. When we can embed our most precious emotions in the simplest stories, we have the genuine capability to touch hearts and become part of something larger than ourselves.

— HUANG XIANGYANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Pilot AI boundaries leave room for innovation

Editor's note: *China recently launched a pilot program for the review of artificial intelligence ethics and services. Southern Finance spoke to Zeng Tieyong, director of the Center for Mathematical Artificial Intelligence at the Institute for Advanced Study at Beijing Normal-Hong Kong Baptist University, about the future of AI governance. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

The pilot program will initially be launched in provincial-level regions that have national pilot zones for AI industrial innovation and application. The goal is to explore practical approaches for implementing AI ethics review and service mechanisms.

The main purpose of AI ethics governance is to establish clear boundaries for the development of the industry, defining which types of technological research and commercial applications are encouraged and which practices are strictly prohibited.

On the one hand, this approach will help mitigate the risks associated with AI, including privacy breaches, financial security concerns and unclear algorithmic accountability. On the other hand, by clearly defining baseline rules, the industry can be given sufficient room for innovation, preventing excessive regulation from stifling technological progress.

The move indicates that China's AI governance framework is moving beyond broad principle-based guidance toward a more institutionalized, scenario-specific and operational stage. The pilot program suggests that regulation is now penetrating deeper into industrial settings, with the aim of developing governance models that can be replicated and expanded nationwide.

The core of promoting AI lies in real-world application scenarios, and vertical application sectors are precisely where AI can be deployed most quickly and effectively. By establishing governance red lines in sectors closely tied to daily life, China can both accelerate the delivery of AI-driven public benefits and gain regulatory experience through practical social applications.

The program allows governance models to evolve from specific sectors to the broader industry ecosystem, maximizing the practical value of the AI industry while safeguarding ethical boundaries.

The main challenge in the AI industry remains high-end hardware manufacturing. Due to external technological restrictions and supply chain constraints, critical technologies such as lithography machines and high-performance computing chips remain major bottlenecks.

At the same time, China has several notable advantages, including its enormous talent pool. Chinese universities produce a large number of doctoral and master's graduates every year, providing abundant technical manpower that can be rapidly transformed into industrial productivity.

Another advantage is the country's diversified application scenarios. China's policy environment is generally more supportive of AI commercialization and deployment. Drawing on the development experiences of industries such as photovoltaics and new energy vehicles, AI technologies in China are able to scale and quickly enter the market.

While supporting governance mechanisms for AI is crucial, the two decisive factors for catching up remain talent reserves and breakthroughs in core hardware technologies.

China already has a strong foundation of practical engineering and technical personnel at the grassroots level, along with a large concentration of high-end specialists trained by top universities. If these resources can be effectively mobilized, they will be sufficient to sustain large-scale industry-wide research and development. What China currently lacks most is a smaller group of world-class pioneers capable of leading frontier innovation.

China's rapid rise in the NEV sector offers an important reference point. By bypassing traditional technological barriers, leveraging domestic supply chains and talent advantages, and eventually achieving breakthroughs in hardware self-sufficiency, China's AI industry is widely expected to become globally competitive and potentially take the lead.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:06 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:06 PM

VIEWS

Fred S. Teng

Reshaping the world with fairness and peace

The world does not suffer from a shortage of institutions. What it suffers from is a weakening respect for the principles that give institutions legitimacy.

If the foundation on which a building stands is eroded, the structure is at risk. At the center of the modern international order stands the United Nations Charter. Signed in 1945 after the devastation wreaked by two world wars, the Charter was not merely a diplomatic document drafted at a conference.

It was a civilizational commitment and represented humanity's collective decision that war should no longer be treated as a normal instrument of national ambition, sovereignty should be protected, disputes should be settled peacefully, and international cooperation should serve the common progress of humanity.

Eight decades later, the authority of the Charter is under severe strain. Armed conflicts continue. Unilateral sanctions are increasingly imposed outside the UN framework. Military interventions are justified through selective interpretations of security. Global governance is divided by bloc politics.

Many smaller and developing countries fear that international rules are applied unevenly, depending on the power and interests of those involved.

This is why the world urgently needs to revitalize the authority of the UN Charter and renew the role of the UN itself. This does not mean treating the UN as perfect, but recognizing that without the Charter, the world becomes more dangerous, less predictable and more vulnerable to the rule of force.

The Charter rests on several basic principles: sovereign equality, noninterference in internal affairs, peaceful settlement of disputes, prohibition on the use of force except under limited lawful conditions, collective security, human rights, development, and international cooperation.

These principles are not abstract ideals, but the operating system of international coexistence.

Sovereign equality protects smaller countries from domination by stronger states. Peaceful settlement gives diplomacy a chance before conflict becomes irreversible. Collective security prevents individual states from claiming unlimited authority to define threats and punish others.

Development cooperation recognizes that peace cannot be separated from economic dignity. Human rights remind states that sovereignty carries responsibilities as well as protection.

The UN Charter did not weaken overnight, but due to repeated departures from its spirit.

The use of force has too often been justified without clear UN authorization. When powerful countries act first and seek legal or moral justification later, the authority of collective security is eroded.

Unilateral sanctions imposed beyond the UN framework, especially with extraterritorial effects, create a parallel system of punishment that hurts ordinary people and weakens the legitimacy of international law.

International institutions have also been pulled into geopolitical rivalry. Instead of serving as platforms for dialogue, they are sometimes used as arenas for accusation, pressure, and alignment.

At the same time, the voices of the Global South remain underrepresented in global decision-making. Many developing nations see a gap between the promise of sovereign equality and the actual distribution of power. This gap damages confidence in the system.

New global challenges make revitalization even more urgent. Artificial intelligence, climate change, pandemics, cybersecurity, debt distress, food insecurity and space governance are moving faster than existing institutions can respond.

If the UN cannot adapt to these realities, its authority will weaken not because its principles are wrong, but because its mechanisms appear inadequate.

Despite its limitations, the UN remains indispensable because it is the only international organization with near-global membership, the only institution where large and small countries sit under one roof.

The UN provides legitimacy that no military alliance, economic bloc, or informal coalition can replace. It gives developing countries a voice, creates channels of communication even when relations among major powers deteriorate, and coordinates humanitarian relief, peacekeeping, development, public health cooperation, refugee support, climate discussions, and international law.

The UN does not eliminate conflict, but it provides a place where conflict can be managed. It does not guarantee justice, but it preserves a language of justice. It does not always stop war, but without it, the world would have even fewer barriers against war.

Revitalizing the authority of the Charter requires more than speeches. It requires discipline from major powers.

They must recommit to the principle that force should not be used except in accordance with the Charter. They must avoid treating international law as a tool to be invoked when it is convenient and ignored when it is not. They must accept that security cannot be built on humiliation, exclusion, or coercion.

The UN Security Council must recover its role as the central mechanism for collective security.

Its permanent members have special privileges, but also special obligations. The veto should not become a shield for paralysis. Nor should frustration with the veto become an excuse to bypass the Charter.

Revitalizing the UN also requires making it more representative. The world of 1945 is not the world of today. Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the broader Global South now play a far greater role in global growth, population, trade, diplomacy, and development. Reform should be approached carefully but seriously, with the goal of making the UN more legitimate, balanced, and capable.

Development must also return to the center of the UN mission. Peace and security cannot be separated from development. A world of deep inequality will not be stable. Poverty reduction, infrastructure, education, health, climate adaptation, digital access, and fairer participation in the global economy should not be treated as secondary issues. They are the foundations of peace.

A Charter-based world order is not an argument against any country or bloc, but an appeal for restraint, legitimacy and survival.

It not only protects the weak from the strong, but also protects the strong from the consequences of overreach. It gives rivals a framework for coexistence and gives diplomacy time to work.

If nations return to the Charter not as a ceremonial document, but as a living framework for coexistence, the UN can be the house where conflict is restrained, dialogue remains possible, power is held accountable, and humanity remembers that peace is not the absence of disagreement, but the discipline to resolve disagreement without destroying the world we share.



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

The author is the president of the America China Public Affairs Institute.
The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.

Syed Inam Ali Naqvi

China-Pakistan partnership moves beyond infrastructure

The China-Pakistan relationship is often seen through the lens of infrastructure development. Public discussions tend to reduce the partnership to roads, ports and energy projects connecting western China to the Arabian Sea through Pakistan, particularly the $62 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). While this perspective is not entirely inaccurate, it fails to capture the true nature of the relationship.

When the CPEC was formally launched in 2015, infrastructure development became the dominant symbol of bilateral cooperation. Power plants, road networks, and the development of the Gwadar Port were the visible foundations of the partnership.

Supporters saw CPEC as a transformative initiative capable of reshaping Pakistan's economy, while critics regarded it as a source of debt dependency. Despite their opposing views, both perspectives shared a common assumption that China-Pakistan cooperation was primarily an infrastructure-based relationship. Today, this assumption appears quite inadequate.

The first phase of the CPEC produced substantial outcomes.

Pakistan's long-standing energy crisis, which had imposed serious economic costs, was eased through new energy projects and investments. Transport networks improved connectivity with previously isolated regions.

Furthermore, the Gwadar Port acquired strategic importance beyond its economic potential. Access to the Gwadar Port offers China additional connectivity to the Indian Ocean, helping diversify China's shipping channels beyond the Strait of Malacca. These were important achievements which demonstrated what sustained political commitment between the two countries could accomplish.

At a time of intensifying geopolitical fragmentation and economic uncertainty, the broadening of China-Pakistan cooperation reflects an effort by both countries to build longer-term strategic resilience.

Yet infrastructure alone cannot define the future of bilateral cooperation.

As economic priorities, technological change, and regional dynamics continue to evolve, the relationship increasingly appears to be entering a broader phase centered on resilience and long-term capacity building.

The emerging Phase II of the CPEC aims to transform infrastructure into broader economic opportunities. Recent cooperation initiatives have expanded beyond transport and energy to include industrial development, digital connectivity, innovation, and green cooperation.

Through special economic zones, technology partnerships, and growing business-to-business engagement, the focus is gradually shifting from building physical assets to creating longer-term economic and institutional ecosystems.

Special economic zones under the CPEC's expanded framework are not simply investment projects; they increasingly function as mechanisms for industrial development, investment attraction, and integration into regional and global value chains. Beyond infrastructure itself, they represent efforts to generate employment, expand exports, and create longer-term economic opportunities. The expansion of 5G networks, fiber-optic infrastructure, technology parks, satellite cooperation, and broader digital collaboration points to a shift from physical connectivity toward a more knowledge-based economy.

And cooperation deepening in areas such as e-commerce, digital skills development, and information technology further suggests an evolving partnership focused on strengthening technological capacity, innovation, and long-term economic development.

The evolution of Phase II can also be observed in the growing role of the private sector and business communities.

During the recent Pak-China B2B Investment Conference in Beijing, nearly 800 firms from both countries participated, resulting in joint ventures and MoUs worth approximately $8.5 billion.

Such a shift not only broadens the relationship beyond governments but also strengthens its long-term sustainability through investment, entrepreneurship, and technological collaboration.

The partnership's human dimension is equally important and may ultimately prove more durable than material projects.

Nearly 29,000 Pakistani students studying at Chinese universities are developing technical expertise, language skills, and professional networks that could shape Pakistan's future institutions.

Many of these students will eventually enter government institutions, businesses, and policy circles. The relationships and networks they build today may shape China-Pakistan engagement for decades.

The relationship has also expanded diplomatically, reflecting broader coordination on regional and international issues. This evolution further suggests that China-Pakistan cooperation extends beyond infrastructure projects toward a more multidimensional partnership.

Ultimately, China-Pakistan cooperation is evolving beyond its earlier emphasis on infrastructure construction alone. While the first phase of the CPEC focused primarily on physical connectivity, the emerging phase increasingly emphasizes industrial development, technological capacity, business engagement, and human capital.

Challenges remain, including security concerns, financial constraints, and implementation difficulties.

Yet the broader trajectory suggests that both countries are attempting to build a more diversified and resilient partnership capable of adapting to a changing regional and global environment.

The long-term success of that partnership may ultimately depend less on individual projects than on whether both sides can translate connectivity into sustainable economic and institutional development.

The author is a researcher affiliated with Hamad Bin Khalifa University in Qatar and the Silk Road School at Renmin University of China.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Chi Fulin

Regional cooperation can open doors to global growth

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership has successfully integrated 15 Asia-Pacific economies into one of the world's most dynamic industry and supply chain networks. It is an indispensable force for advancing regional economic integration and a new form of economic globalization.

However, RCEP now finds itself at a critical juncture where standing still means falling behind.

In a world of growing uncertainty, we face a critical choice: allow geopolitical fragmentation to undermine the hard-won unified market, or bolster our resilience through higher-level regional integration.

A development-oriented approach is the defining feature of the RCEP.

But changes in the geopolitical landscape are exerting serious shocks on the region. Most RCEP economies are highly dependent on external energy supplies. In 2025, more than 80 percent of the crude oil imports to the RCEP region passed through the Strait of Hormuz.

According to projections by the Asian Development Bank, if the Iran conflict continues into the third quarter of 2026, economic growth in developing Asia-Pacific economies will slow significantly.

A more uncertain external environment makes it imperative for the region to strengthen cooperation. Cooperation can help address the uncertainty stemming from frequent geopolitical conflicts.

RCEP members can deepen industry chain coordination and promote the regionalization of energy and manufacturing supply chains, thereby reducing dependence on single maritime routes and strengthening supply chain security. RCEP should remain firmly focused on development, and non-economic factors should not be introduced into the agreement.

A more uncertain external environment makes it imperative for the region to strengthen cooperation.

From a global perspective, the greatest advantage of China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations lies in the certainty of growth.

If ASEAN becomes the world's fourth-largest economy and China becomes the world's largest in the coming decade, the global economic landscape will be profoundly reshaped.

RCEP has become an important force for advancing global free trade.

From 2021 to 2025, intra-RCEP trade increased from $4.9 trillion to $6.1 trillion, a rise of 24 percent.

Driven by both trade and investment, the RCEP region recorded average annual GDP growth of 3.6 percent from 2021 to 2024, contributing nearly 40 percent to world economic growth.

To build on this momentum, RCEP rules must be fully implemented.

Members should accelerate the implementation of provisions on digital payments and electronic invoices, deepening cooperation in emerging fields such as artificial intelligence and financial technology.

Furthermore, the regional division of labor must be optimized. In 2024, trade in intermediate goods accounted for more than 68 percent of total RCEP trade — significantly above the global average.

Against the backdrop of rising protectionism, it is necessary to accelerate the establishment of an RCEP supply chain emergency coordination mechanism to build a regional safeguard for essential goods.

To reach its full potential, RCEP should promote deeper opening of the regional markets. Members should strive to raise the region's zero-tariff coverage to more than 95 percent within the next five years.

Trade in services is a priority. This calls for an early transition from a "positive-list" to a "negative-list" approach for services trade and investment.

Rule upgrading is equally vital. The review of rules of origin should be completed and higher-standard rules in digital trade and climate change introduced. Furthermore, RCEP should achieve a breakthrough in membership expansion.

The accession of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China to the RCEP would further enhance its international influence. As a free trade port with a common law system and mature financial services, Hong Kong could help ASEAN members address financing gaps. We look forward to a substantive breakthrough on this issue in 2026.

Finally, the RCEP Support Unit should be upgraded into a formal secretariat to move the region from "soft constraints" toward "binding governance".

Strengthening RCEP requires upholding the principle of ASEAN centrality. By promoting the effective connectivity between China's vast market and the RCEP market, we have created a stabilizing anchor for the region.

From 2021 to 2024, China contributed more than 70 percent to RCEP's economic growth. The country will continue to support RCEP through high-level opening-up, accelerating the fulfillment of tariff reduction commitments and reducing tariffs on intermediate goods.

In this context, the Hainan Free Trade Port serves as a strategic gateway. It is well positioned to take the lead in fully implementing RCEP and the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area 3.0, becoming a new frontier of institutional opening-up.

The RCEP has proven that the greater the external uncertainty, the stronger the region's internal resolve must be; and the greater the pressure, the more firmly the region must commit to openness and cooperation.

At a time when geopolitical conflicts and protectionism are increasingly intertwined, it is all the more important for us to work together to strengthen a development-oriented RCEP, and to respond to global uncertainty with the certainty of development.

The author is the president of the China Institute for Reform and Development and the president of the Hainan Institute for Free Trade Port Studies.
The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:06 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:06 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS



WANG XIAOYING/ CHINA DAILY

CHAIWAT MEESANTHAN

River of shared prosperity

Thailand-China cooperation on water resources is deepening under the LMC framework

As the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation mechanism marks its 10th anniversary in 2026, the region is celebrating a remarkable milestone in international partnership. Officially established in 2016, the LMC has grown into an important engine for regional growth. China and the five Mekong countries have been working together to usher the framework into the next golden decade by staying committed to building a better community through solidarity.



At the very heart of this successful architecture lies a shared commitment to the management of shared water resources and sustainable development. Rather than viewing the river as a dividing line, Thailand, China, and their neighbors have transformed the Lancang-Mekong River into a profound symbol of interconnected prosperity, paving the way for a resilient Association of Southeast Asian Nations-China community.

The LMC is historic in its structural design: It provides the first water cooperation framework that fully integrates all six countries along the river, encompassing both upstream and downstream nations. This inclusive approach has fostered an environment where transparent communication, mutual trust and practical problem-solving take center stage.

For Thailand and China, water resources cooperation has evolved from high-level dialogue into highly effective, on-the-ground action. Over the past decade, the framework has facilitated the sharing of vital hydrological information and improved basin-wide governance. Through initiatives such as the Lancang-Mekong Water Resources Cooperation Information Sharing Platform and the dedicated Lancang-Mekong Water Resources Cooperation Center located in Yunnan province, China has actively shared daily hydrological data from its hydropower plants with downstream neighbors.

This data transparency is a game-changer for local communities. It allows Thailand and other downstream states to better forecast river behavior, optimize agricultural water use and protect vulnerable ecosystems. Furthermore, the cooperative management of upstream reservoirs has served as a critical regional public good; by regulating floods during the rainy season and replenishing water levels during droughts, these cooperative measures have shielded millions of livelihoods from extreme weather shocks.

Notably, targeted water releases from China's Jinghong Dam in Yunnan province during critical drought periods have provided essential relief to downstream agriculture, demonstrating a tangible commitment to mutual support.

Looking ahead, this collaboration can be strengthened. The Initiative on Deepening Lancang-Mekong Water Resources Cooperation can be fully implemented to further upgrade joint capabilities. By investing in cutting-edge platforms such as the Lancang-Mekong River Basin Comprehensive Meteorological Service Platform, Thailand, China and other neighbors can ensure that the region is structurally prepared to adapt to climate change and mitigate natural disasters.

The ultimate measure of the LMC's success is its impact on the everyday lives of the people who call the Lancang-Mekong River Basin home. Through the LMC Special Fund, China has consistently provided financial support and capacity building for irrigation, water navigation and drought prevention. Across the region, more than 1,000 "small and beautiful" livelihood projects have been successfully carried out, directly improving local people's living standards.

For agricultural communities in Thailand, these initiatives translate to enhanced food security and poverty reduction. China has actively supported rural and agricultural revitalization across the Lancang-Mekong countries, advancing digital cooperation throughout the industry chain. Pilot programs for smart farms and the establishment of traceability systems for fruit products are actively enhancing the competitiveness of Thai agricultural exports while building greater resilience in local production systems.

The LMC operates as one of the most dynamic and effective platforms for regional cooperation, playing a pivotal role in narrowing regional development gaps and boosting socioeconomic development. The resulting economic synergy is undeniable, with trade between China and the Mekong nations surging past the $500 billion mark, a 150 percent increase from a decade ago.

While the region celebrates this progress, it must also navigate a global landscape characterized by complex geopolitical shifts, economic instability and climate change. Instead of succumbing to division, Thailand, China and the broader ASEAN community can utilize the LMC framework to reinforce their strategic coordination and mutual trust.

During the ninth LMC Foreign Ministers' Meeting, which was held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi underscored that "the LMC countries should adhere to true multilateralism and open regionalism, resolutely resist zero-sum games and decoupling and severing industrial and supply chains, and work together to build a Lancang-Mekong home that shares weal and woe in solidarity". By focusing on shared development rather than geopolitical competition, the LMC serves as a stabilizing force, offering a unique Lancang-Mekong model for multilateral governance.

To future-proof their economies against external uncertainties, the member states are rapidly expanding their cooperation beyond traditional infrastructure. The next phase of the LMC can focus on innovation-driven growth, including artificial intelligence capacity building, space cooperation and the digital economy. Recognizing the global imperative for sustainability, there is also a concerted push to invest in new energy, develop green industrial clusters and build regional green value chains.

Thailand's active role will be instrumental in guiding this collaborative agenda. Thailand is positioned to advocate strengthened, unified responses to shared challenges. By harmonizing the LMC's objectives with broader ASEAN community-building efforts, Thailand and China can work together to ensure that the region remains a resilient, self-determined bloc capable of weathering global storms.

The story of the LMC over the past decade is one of remarkable optimism and enduring partnership. Through dedicated water resources cooperation, Thailand and China have demonstrated that shared natural resources can serve as a bridge to mutual prosperity.

As the region steps into its second decade of cooperation, the foundations rooted in transparent water management, innovative agricultural support and unwavering geopolitical solidarity can continue to support a thriving, peaceful and highly integrated community. The "golden decade" is not merely a diplomatic slogan; it is a living reality for millions of people whose futures are brightly interconnected by the waters of the Lancang-Mekong region.

The author is the director of the Institute of East Asian Studies at Thammasat University, Thailand. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

CHUNG TIN FAH

Shaping the Asia-Pacific economic landscape

CAFTA 3.0 offers ASEAN and China a platform to shape regional governance in an increasingly fragmented world

Relations between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and China have evolved to become one of the most consequential partnerships shaping the economic and institutional landscape of the Asia-Pacific region. Rooted in long-standing historical exchanges and guided by the principles of mutual benefit, inclusivity and cooperation, the relationship has transitioned from largely bilateral interactions to a multi-layered, rules-based regional framework for shared prosperity. This transformation reflects both structural economic changes and strategic recalibration in response to an increasingly fragmented global order. The recent upgrade of the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area to its 3.0 version marks a pivotal step toward complementarity-driven integration, particularly in emerging sectors such as digital technologies, green development and resilient supply chains.



The foundations of this modern partnership were significantly strengthened during regional challenges such as the Asian financial crisis, when China's stabilizing policies demonstrated its commitment to regional solidarity. Subsequent milestones, from China's accession to the World Trade Organization in 2001 to the establishment of the original CAFTA and the participation in broader regional architecture such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, have woven an increasingly dense web of economic communication and diplomatic consultation.

Today, the convergence between China's domestic development goals, outlined in the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) focusing on high-quality growth and technological innovation, and the ASEAN Economic Community Strategic Plan (2026-30) provides a macro-level platform to deepen cooperation, particularly in the digital economy, green economy and supply chain integration. This synergy closely complements China's technology and climate strategy and ASEAN's regional integration and connectivity agenda.

CAFTA 3.0 is the cornerstone of the new phase. Unlike earlier phases focused primarily on tariff reduction, CAFTA 3.0 introduces a broader and more sophisticated agenda, encompassing supply chain integration, digital economy governance and green development. These areas are central to China's domestic development strategy, particularly its emphasis on technological self-sufficiency and climate commitments. At the same time, they offer ASEAN member states opportunities to leapfrog into higher value-added activities and enhance their competitiveness in the global economy.

CAFTA 3.0 also addresses the need for more resilient supply chains in the face of global disruptions. By promoting connectivity and diversification, the agreement reduces vulnerability to external shocks and strengthens regional production networks. Furthermore, its provisions on financial technology and artificial intelligence signal a move toward greater regulatory openness and innovation, creating new avenues for cross-border collaboration.

For Malaysia, these developments are particularly significant. The country's ambition to position itself as a regional technology hub aligns closely with the opportunities presented by CAFTA 3.0. Participation in digital infrastructure initiatives, including smart city development and digital payment systems associated with broader regional connectivity projects, can enhance Malaysia's role in the regional digital economy.

A defining feature of ASEAN-China relations is the principle of ASEAN centrality, which emphasizes ASEAN's role as a convener, coordinator and normative leader in regional affairs. This principle has enabled ASEAN to maintain strategic relevance despite the presence of larger powers and to shape the regional order through consensus-based mechanisms.

In the context of CAFTA 3.0, ASEAN centrality is increasingly manifested in the development of regional governance frameworks, particularly in the digital domain. Efforts to establish an ASEAN-wide data governance framework illustrate this trend. Such initiatives involve mapping national regulatory frameworks, aligning them with international best practices, and fostering dialogue among member states to achieve greater harmonization. Through these processes, ASEAN not only facilitates economic integration but also sets standards that influence broader regional dynamics.

The transformative potential of agreements such as CAFTA 3.0 can only be fully realized if the region tackles the tangible hurdles of logistics inefficiencies, high supply chain costs and uneven infrastructure development. These are not mere technical issues; they are fundamental to ensuring that the benefits of integration are equitably distributed and ASEAN remains collectively competitive. The region's customs and logistics costs, which remain well above international benchmarks, directly undercut the efficiency gains promised by trade liberalization. Similarly, the success of digital integration hinges on bridging vast differences in data governance capabilities among member states. Initiatives to map national frameworks and explore harmonization, such as the ASEAN ICT Masterplan that calls for creating a coherent and comprehensive framework for personal data protection, are crucial first steps, but they must be coupled with concrete capacity-building and infrastructure investment.

Therefore, strengthening internal cohesion and institutional capacity is essential. Effective regionalism requires more than visionary blueprints; it demands robust governance mechanisms, transparent communication and active engagement with the private sector, which ultimately drives trade and investment. ASEAN's outlined measures — from establishing regular consultative forums to enhancing strategic communications — are recognition of this need. The partnership with China can be a powerful catalyst in this regard. China's expertise and resources in infrastructure and digital economy development can, under the framework of ASEAN centrality, support initiatives that enhance physical and "soft" connectivity within the region, thereby strengthening ASEAN's internal coherence and its capacity to engage the world from a position of collective strength.

ASEAN-China relations have undergone a profound transformation, evolving from historically rooted interactions into a deeply institutionalized partnership that balances economic integration with strategic autonomy. It demonstrates that regional cooperation, grounded in mutual benefit and respect for a regional-led order, can be a profound source of stability and growth. The introduction of CAFTA 3.0 represents a shift toward rules-based, innovation-driven regional integration, reflecting the changing dynamics of the global economy. As both sides work to implement CAFTA 3.0, their shared challenge is to translate institutional innovation into inclusive, tangible outcomes for businesses and communities. Ultimately, CAFTA 3.0 offers not only an opportunity for deeper economic integration but also a platform for shaping the future of regional governance in an increasingly uncertain international landscape.

The author is a professor of economics at Malaysia's HELP University. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:06 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:06 PM

TALES & TRAILS

Editor's note:
China Daily reporters leverage local expertise to devise diverse itineraries that showcase a blend of historical landmarks and natural wonders in highly recommended cities and sites, offering practical guidance to experience the country.

Ancient armor opens wide

From mountain villages to virtual worlds, the Great Wall is evolving far beyond its origins, **Yang Feiyue** reports.

At first glance, the Great Wall can appear immovable — a vast ribbon of stone and earth frozen in history books and postcard images. But travel along its ridges today, and another story begins to unfold. The Great Wall is no longer only a monument to the past. In many places, it is becoming something alive again: a classroom, a hiking trail, a livestream studio, a village economy, even a digital conversation across centuries.

In one mountain valley, children shape wet clay into bricks the way Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) craftsmen once did, pressing their names into the surface before the mud hardens. Elsewhere, hikers follow forest trails where ruined watchtowers emerge suddenly through the trees, while village cafes and guesthouses glow warmly beneath ancient battlements.

On the outskirts of Beijing, visitors can speak with an AI-generated general from the Ming era, watch old frontier photographs come to life, and step into immersive worlds reconstructed from fading archives. Farther west, the Great Wall stretches across deserts, grasslands and snow-covered mountains, tracing routes once traveled by soldiers, merchants, monks and envoys.

What connects these places is not simply the Great Wall itself, but the people reimagining what it means. Some preserve forgotten kilns and fortresses stone by stone. Some revive abandoned villages as thriving cultural destinations. Others use technology to give vanished landscapes and historical figures new voices. Together, they reveal a monument far more complex than a static relic.

Built centuries ago to defend borders, the Great Wall is now opening new pathways between past and present, cities and villages, heritage and innovation, memory and everyday life.

The stories that follow explore the Great Wall's many evolving identities — not merely as an ancient defense system, but as a living cultural landscape that continues to shape how people travel, learn, create and connect.

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

See more, *pages 8-10*



Blooming flowers crown the mountaintops as clouds cast a mystical veil over the Jiankou section of the Great Wall in Beijing. YANG WEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:06 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:06 PM



For centuries, the Great Wall has stood atop the mountain ranges as a historical monument and cultural icon. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

REVIVING CULTURAL GREATNESS

Through research, technology and community support, various sections are captivating new audiences with dynamic appeal, **Yang Feiyue** reports.











From left: Visitors get hands-on experience with traditional paper-cutting in Shixia village, Beijing's Yanqing district. Local residents actively volunteer to protect the Great Wall. The Shixiaguan section of the Great Wall in Beijing's Yanqing district is a popular destination for outdoor enthusiasts. An exhibition space provides an in-depth look at the village's history and its historical connection to the Great Wall. Tiger dolls are popular souvenirs among visitors. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

From digital avatars to forest trails and hands-on brick-making, different sections of the Great Wall are drawing new audiences and redefining what heritage protection can mean. At Banchangyu Great Wall park, visitors can walk the same ground where Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) soldiers once stood, touch bricks fired nearly 500 years ago, and try their hand at making a Great Wall brick.

On weekends, children crowd the brick-making workshop, mixing clay and carving their names into fresh blanks, while hikers follow trails through the area's thick forests.

Each morning, one man broadcasts it all to the world. At 7 o'clock sharp, Xu Guohua, without fail, turns on his phone and begins his livestream.

Three phones are mounted in front of him, streaming live to Douyin and WeChat simultaneously. The 73-year-old wears a plain dark blue cotton jacket. His weather-red face, tanned by years of outdoor work, catches the light. In his hand, he holds a small wine cup, no wider than two fingers.

"Look at this artifact from the Ming Dynasty — we dug it up in our village," he says to the camera.

Xu usually gets 1,000 to 2,000 views a day as he talks about artifacts, brick kilns and folk stories from beneath the centuries-old Banchangyu Great Wall.

"I don't really understand the internet, but I have been doing this every morning for five years," he says.

He takes pride in promoting the history and culture of the Great Wall in his birthplace.

A man from southern Guangdong province came all the way to see him after watching his broadcast, while a couple from Yunnan province traveled by train. Xu met them, showed them around, and sometimes bought them lunch.

The centerpiece of the Banchangyu site in Qinhuangdao, Hebei province, is a vast collection of brick kilns.

In the early 2000s, excavations revealed brick kilns that had been buried for nearly 500 years. Archaeologists have since uncovered more than 200 kilns, turning the area into one of the country's most important Great Wall industrial heritage sites.

Bricks from nearby Great Wall sections match the dimensions of those fired in Banchangyu's kilns.

"This was where they made the bones of the wall," Xu notes.

Running several coal mines in the 1980s, Xu rose from rags to riches. The kiln discovery, along with tightening restrictions on small coal mines, prompted him to shift his focus to heritage preservation.

He then leased more than 30 square kilometers of land along the Great Wall and built a small museum beside the kilns, filling it with tablets, bricks, stone balls, and firearms he had collected from fields and farmhouses. He researched each piece, consulting ancient texts and experts to confirm their identities.

"I grew up at the foot of the Great Wall, and my family has guarded this place for generations," he says, adding that his grandmother always told him they came from the south to build the Great Wall.

Over the years, Xu and his family have built an extensive network of trails and access roads through the mountains surrounding the Great Wall.

His persistence moved his son and encouraged him to join the cause. Today, his son oversees walking trails and infrastructure throughout the park.

Additionally, his grandson returned to Banchangyu after graduating from Jimei University in Xiamen, Fujian province, in 2021, when he began working to package Banchangyu Great Wall culture into a curriculum with the support of local schools. The study programs introduce students to subjects ranging from Great Wall engineering to geology and traditional craftsmanship.

At the hands-on brick-making workshop, children can first visit the kiln ruins to hear the story of their discovery. Then they go to the workshop to mix clay, fill molds, and form brick blanks. Finally, they carve their names into the unbaked bricks.

To date, the number of partner schools has grown from three to over 30. More than 30,000 students have visited, Xu shares. Study tours now account for one-third of the park's revenue.

Xu still livestreams every morning, aiming to reach more potential visitors. Recently, he even started experimenting with an AI avatar to help explain artifacts online.

"At my age, I never imagined I'd be learning things like this," he says with a laugh.

> "I grew up at the foot of the Great Wall, and my family has guarded this place for generations."
>
> **Xu Guohua,**
> a 73-year-old villager in Qinhuangdao, Hebei province, promoting Great Wall culture through livestreams

From crumbs to incomes

West of Banchangyu, Shixia village in Beijing's northwestern Yanqing district offers another model of Great Wall revitalization.

On weekends and holidays, travelers flock to the village to sip coffee at a restored farmhouse, learn dough sculpting from local artisans, and hike a trail along the ridge where the Great Wall meets the forest.

Founded during the Ming Dynasty, the village sits at the foot of the Shixiaguan section. For decades, its remote mountain location limited development. That gradually began to change after China introduced its first Great Wall protection regulation in 2006.

Villagers formed protection teams, while entrepreneurs and cultural tourism operators started restoring abandoned courtyards. One of them was He Yuling, who arrived in 2014 and rented a crumbling traditional courtyard house on a 20-year lease. Villagers initially found the decision puzzling.

She answered with action. Today, her Shiguang Great Wall Boutique B&B brand operates 18 renovated courtyards, each with a different theme, such as spring dwelling, quiet summer and winter retreat.

She brought her family's sauce-making recipe to the village and combined it with the local stone-cooked feast. Annual revenue has exceeded 10 million yuan ($1.47 million).

Some villagers now run their own guesthouses, while others work in tourism and hospitality.

Gu Wenting, the Party secretary of Shixia village, has witnessed the transformation firsthand since returning from the military in 2013.

"The spirit of the whole village changed completely, and people have become more confident about what the village can become," Gu says.

"The sense of honor, belonging and purpose — all of it has risen."

A 6-kilometer forest trail opened beside the Great Wall at the end of 2025 after more than two years of planning and construction. Following the mountain's contours, the trail connects visitors with a nearby section while preserving the original landscape. Since its opening, it has attracted more than 20,000 hikers, according to local officials.

The village's collective income reached 1.2 million yuan in 2025, a 75 percent year-on-year increase.

"This number represents a real leap forward. Our cultural tourism industry has taken off, and the village's reputation has spread," Gu observes.

At the village entrance, signs point visitors toward coffee shops, bookstores and workshops on intangible cultural heritage. A 40-hectare crabapple orchard has just been upgraded, offering tours, picking, and study programs.

At dusk, children run through a campground. The smell of braised pork drifts from guesthouse kitchens.

According to Gu, the village plans to expand its Great Wall study programs next year while adding new camping and lodging facilities for young travelers.

"We want visitors to stay longer and experience village life more deeply," he says.

An emotional connection

East of Shixia village, in northeastern Beijing's Miyun district, visitors can step through a "time gate" where old photographs of the Great Wall come to life, question a digital Ming Dynasty general, and watch ancient weapons emerge from a virtual encyclopedia. These experiences await at three newly opened digital centers in Gubeikou, Yaoqiaoyu and Guanmen.

Miyun has rich Great Wall resources, with over 180 kilometers of Ming Dynasty walls and 61 registered fortresses. However, there is a problem.

"Many of its fortresses have disappeared above ground, leaving only ruins," says He Ding, an associate professor at Beijing University of Civil Engineering and Architecture, who led the centers' design.

His team spent a year on the project to create an emotional connection.

"The hardest part was not the technology but designing the content — getting the narrative logic and interactive details right," he says.

They combed through archives in China and abroad, searching historical texts and maps for clues about the frontier world of Miyun.

For instance, one Ming text recorded the distribution of Mongol tribes north of Miyun, he says.

"We thus added two Mongol chieftains to our digital scroll, because we want visitors to understand that the frontier was a multiethnic place," he explains.

Inside the Gubeikou center, the "time gate" uses AIGC technology to bring old photographs to life. Black-and-white images of Gubeikou begin to move, vividly re-creating a scene of merchants passing through the site in bygone days.

Beside the "time gate" stands a digital avatar of Qi Jiguang, the legendary Ming Dynasty general. The digital general's appearance draws from Ming Dynasty portraits, and his manner is calm and resolute. Visitors can ask him anything from how the Great Wall was built to how fortresses were defended, and he answers in real time.

While Gubeikou gives visitors a broad sweep of Miyun's defense network, Yaoqiaoyu zooms in on a cluster of fortresses, and Guanmen examines individual fortresses up close.

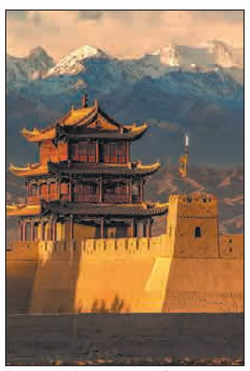
"We want visitors to go from a wide view to a narrow view, step by step," He Ding says.

Since opening, the centers have boosted local tourism. Out-of-town visitors make up a large share, especially on weekends.

"Families often spend half a day or a full day visiting all three centers," He Ding says.

He says the team will keep upgrading. "We plan to enrich Qi Jiguang's knowledge base, add more digital characters, and develop a mobile experience, so visitors can continue their tour even after they go home."

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn



Jiayuguan in Gansu province is the westernmost outpost of the Great Wall.

WHERE ANCIENT BARRIERS BECAME BRIDGES

By **WANG RU**
wangru1@chinadaily.com.cn

Before I visited it in person, the Great Wall existed in my mind only as a single, unbroken line, like a dragon's spine stretching across the map of northern China. Over the years, I visited several sections, but none truly reshaped my understanding like its westernmost outpost — the Jiayuguan pass in Gansu province.

I first explored it years ago during a trip with a friend along the popular loop through Qinghai and Gansu provinces in Northwest China. Visiting Jiayuguan felt inevitable. Since childhood, we had known it as the western end of the Great Wall and the strategic gateway to the ancient Silk Road.

But it was only when I stood there on a summer morning that I realized how sophisticated its design truly was.

Near the entrance stands a statue of Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) general Feng Sheng on horseback. His left hand points ahead while the right grips a sword, his cloak frozen in the wind. More than 600 years ago, Feng recognized the military value of this location and proposed building the pass there.

About half an hour later, standing on the city wall and looking out at the distant mountains, I finally understood its strategic importance.

The pass was built on a natural channel only 15 kilometers wide, the narrowest point of the Hexi Corridor, the main artery of the ancient Silk Road, between the Heishan Mountains and the Qilian Mountains. Therefore, it controlled the only passage between the heartland of central China and the vast deserts of Central Asia.

Its surroundings made the fortress even more formidable. To the north stretched a vast desert, while the Qilian Mountains rose to the south as a natural defensive barrier.

"If anyone wanted to bypass Jiayuguan to attack the heartland, they would have to cross nearly 70 kilometers of desert," a tour guide told us.

"That was too dangerous and difficult, so the pass became the only realistic route. That's why it was fortified so heavily."

The choice of location amazed me. It reminded me that even without modern technology, military strategists understood how to use mountains, rivers and deserts to their advantage. At that moment, the old Chinese saying — "One man guarding the pass can hold back 10,000" — no longer sounded symbolic. It felt tangible.

No wonder Feng became known as one of the founding generals of the Ming Dynasty. Under his initiative, and through the labor of countless unnamed builders, the fortress was expanded over generations before its completion in 1539 as a sophisticated defense system.

Today, Jiayuguan remains an intricate complex of rammed-earth structures. Restoration efforts have preserved much of its original appearance, allowing visitors to understand how the fortress functioned.

Two separate walls surround the complex. Even if invaders breached the outer wall, they still faced another barrier inside, buying defenders valuable time.

The fortress faces west, with Jiayuguan Gate welcoming travelers arriving from that direction. Between the outer gate and Rouyuan Gate lies a *wengcheng*, a defensive enclosure designed to trap and delay attackers. Beyond Rouyuan Gate stands the inner city, where soldiers once lived. On the eastern side sits Guanghua Gate, protected by another *wengcheng*.

Every detail of the layout served a defensive purpose. Human ingenuity seemed embedded in every corner. In that era, people truly made the best use of their experience and vision in building this pass.

Standing on the narrow path between the two walls, I watched sunlight fall across the raw earthen surfaces, giving them a rugged beauty. There were few tourists around, so my friend and I began taking photos.

Through my camera lens, my friend appeared tiny against the towering walls. And yet centuries ago, people no larger than her had built this place, defended it and passed beneath its gates. That contrast between human fragility and achievement struck me harder than the desert wind.

"Why are you hesitating? Come take photos!" my friend called out.

As she walked toward me along the ancient road, I suddenly felt the strange closeness of past and present, as if time had briefly folded together.

Near Jiayuguan Gate, we came across a small crowd gathered around a roadside stall offering visitors an interactive "pass certificate" experience.

During the Ming Dynasty, travelers heading west into Xiyu (Western Regions, a historical term used to describe modern-day Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region and Central Asia) needed official travel permits similar to today's passports.

"Where are you from? Why do you want to go to Xiyu?" the stall owner asked, playfully acting as head of the fortress.

Once satisfied with the answer, he handwrote a certificate, charging between 30 and 100 yuan ($4.4 to $14.7).

The experience reminded me that although Jiayuguan was originally built for defense, it ultimately became something greater — a bridge between civilizations. Through this corridor, Chinese silk and porcelain traveled westward to Central Asia, the Middle East and East Africa, while foreign ideas, religions and literature entered China in return.

A pass may be built to keep people out, but it ends up letting them through — not just the merchants and monks on the Silk Road, but also memories. Jiayuguan taught me that the strongest walls aren't the ones that divide; they are the ones that, centuries later, still have the grace to open their gates.

Ma Jingna contributed to this story.

If you go

Getting there: You can take high-speed trains to Jiayuguan Railway Station or Jiayuguan South Railway Station, or fly to Jiayuguan Jiuquan Airport to start your journey. Jiayuguan Railway Station is the closest to the scenic area, about 15 minutes by taxi. The airport and south station are roughly 30 minutes by car. Local buses from downtown Jiayuguan also reach the site.

Ticket: During peak season (May 1-Oct 31), it costs 110 yuan ($16) per person. In the off-season (Nov 1-April 30), it costs 90 yuan. Admission includes Jiayuguan pass, the Hanging Great Wall and the First Beacon Tower of the Great Wall. Tickets are valid for three days and can be used multiple times. A round-trip shuttle bus connecting the three attractions costs 20 yuan.

Tips: Because the fortress sits on the edge of the Gobi Desert, UV exposure can be intense. Sunscreen, sunglasses, hats, and umbrellas are strongly recommended.

WANG RU



The Jiayuguan pass rises from the Gobi Desert, set against a backdrop of snowcapped mountains.





Top: An aerial view shows two separate walls surrounding the Jiayuguan pass. **Above:** A valley near the First Beacon Tower of the Great Wall. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Online
Scan for a Wow! China experience.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:06 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:06 PM

The Great Wall beyond the crowds

Stretching across some of northern China's most dramatic landscapes, these sections of the fortification combine history, solitude and natural beauty, inviting visitors to experience them in a more authentic way, **Wang Ru** reports.



Apricot trees bloom around the Li'erkou section in Datong, Shanxi province. HU YUANJIA / FOR CHINA DAILY

1. Li'erkou in Datong, Shanxi province

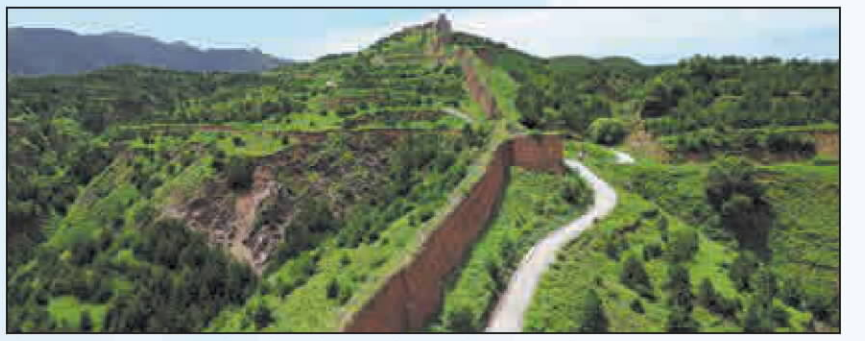
In spring, visitors to the Li'erkou Great Wall can see the season paint a scene of stark contrasts. The ancient rammed-earth structure, rugged and taupe-colored, stretches its earthen body across the rolling terrain. Suddenly, the view softens: apricot trees burst into clouds of delicate pink and white blossoms. Petals flutter like gentle snowflakes against the time-honored watchtowers, weaving a quiet story where military history meets the tender breath of spring.

Built in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), this section is famous as the place where two sections of the Great Wall intersect, one running from north to south and the other from east to west. This feature is linked to changes in the plans made during its construction.

The original plan would have led to a defensive gap near the border of Shanxi and Hebei provinces. As a result, the plan was revised, and the wall was built back from a point near Li'erkou village, running along the mountain ridge to connect with the Great Wall in Hebei. This achieved a continuous line of defense, although the mistakenly constructed section has also been preserved.

For visitors wanting a quiet experience of this ancient structure without crowds of other people, this section is an ideal choice. Flagstone roads built in recent years make hiking easier while preserving the views of the surrounding landscape.

Visitors can also explore the Datong Great Wall Museum to learn more about the region's history. Nearby, Li'erkou village offers homestays.



The Guangwu section in Shuozhou, Shanxi, is known for its rustic charm. ZHU XINGXIN / CHINA DAILY

2. Guangwu in Shuozhou, Shanxi province

About 5 kilometers from the Yanmenguan pass, a key strategic point in Shanxi province, the Guangwu Great Wall once served as a crucial forward defense line within the Ming Dynasty defense system centered on Yanmenguan.

In recent years, this section has gained popularity online for its rustic charm. The section has been less restored than its counterparts elsewhere, thereby retaining much of its ancient grandeur, with mottled bricks and stones, and grass growing in the cracks.

One section of the Great Wall here is particularly iconic, the remains of a watchtower that people call Yueliangmen (the Moon Gate), named for its arched doorway that resembles the moon.

At twilight, when the rays of the setting sun pass through the doorway, the ancient structure has a solemn atmosphere, as if a guardian witnessing generations passing through the ages.

This section is especially good for hikers who are interested in ancient history.

Even today, the inscriptions on the stone plaques embedded in some of the watchtowers' archways remain clearly visible.

Sunlight streams down, casting a warm, golden veil over the bricks and stones. The grass grows even more vibrantly in the interplay of light and shadow.

Here, antiquity and life merge, painting a tranquil picture of harmony between time and nature.



The Wushaoling section is surrounded by snowcapped mountains. GAO ZEHONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

3. Wushaoling in Wuwei, Gansu province

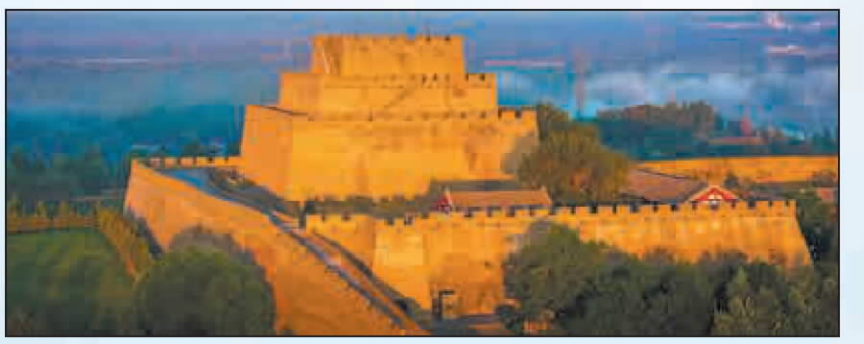
Wushaoling is located at the crossroads of the Loess Plateau, the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau and the Mongolian Plateau, and is one of the highest sections of the Great Wall.

Therefore, from a single vantage point, a condensed panoramic view of Northwest China gradually unfolds. Highland grassland seems to extend to the sky.

To the south, the Maya Snow Mountains, a branch of the Qilian Mountains, stay white all year round, their peaks glittering under the sun. Turn east, and thousands of ravines and gullies can be seen cutting through yellow earth, where the eroded remains of the Great Wall wind like a pale dragon. Looking west, the vegetation thins and the faint outline of the Gobi Desert appears, stretching toward the Hexi Corridor, the main artery of the ancient Silk Road, with a raw, empty vastness.

More than 2,000 years ago, Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220) ordered the construction of this part of the Great Wall after general Huo Qubing reclaimed the Hexi Corridor following victories in various battles. Since that time, historical figures like Han envoy Zhang Qian and Tang (618-907) Buddhist monk Xuanzang passed by Wushaoling on their journeys to Xiyu (Western Regions). Ming Dynasty rulers also built part of the Great Wall at Wushaoling.

Now, sections from both the Han and Ming periods can be seen. Standing beneath a beacon tower, with strong winds sweeping through the grass and flocks of cattle and sheep dotting the mountain slopes, one can sense the profound weight of history and the changes that have occurred over millennia.



An aerial view of Zhenbeitai Tower in Yulin, Shaanxi province. HAO JIHONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

4. Zhenbeitai Tower in Yulin, Shaanxi province

Normally, it is the curving walls snaking through mountain ranges that form people's typical impressions of the Great Wall.

But the heritage covers not only the walls themselves but also passes, beacon towers and observation outposts.

Zhenbeitai in northern Shaanxi province stands as a large rammed-earth military observation tower and command post built during the Ming Dynasty.

The existing four-story structure, more than 30 meters high, offers a vivid lesson in military history.

The tower had several uses: first as barracks and storage; second for patrols and defense; third as a command center; and finally as a lookout station, providing distant views across the surrounding lands.

The compound can be explored by visitors wanting to better understand its defensive functions.

This scenic area is accessible to both the elderly and the very young, as the steps are gentle and easy to climb. From the top, the modern city of Yulin can be seen on one side and the Maowusu Desert on the other, creating the sensation of standing astride two worlds.

The remains of two ancient cities also exist here, where Mongolian people traded with their Han counterparts, suggesting that the post may have been more about commerce and administration than warfare, and that it helped maintain communication and exchange.

The site reminds us that the true Great Wall did not separate people with brick and stone, but connected them with trade, dialogue and ordinary people's aspirations for a peaceful life.

5. Jinshanling in Chengde, Hebei province

Located on the border between Hebei province and Beijing, the Jinshanling Great Wall is hailed as one of the most beautiful sections of the structure. It winds through lush hills, punctuated by watchtowers and guardhouses.

What makes Jinshanling unique is the variety of its watchtowers and defensive structures. The designs change with the terrain, so no two towers are exactly alike. Visitors will find towers with square, round or flat bases, and with roofs shaped like boat canopies, domes, or octagons with pointed tops. There are also multi-windowed lookout towers and storehouses. Scattered across the ridgeline, these towers form a complete and well-coordinated defensive system.

The section was originally built at the beginning of the Ming Dynasty and rebuilt when Ming general Qi Jiguang guarded the northern frontier.



Thanks to its high altitude and dense vegetation, Jinshanling is cool and pleasant in summer, making it an ideal summer retreat. It's also the perfect location for photographers to capture different landscapes across different seasons without having to dodge crowds of tourists. Sunset is particularly spectacular; at dusk, the setting sun dyes the sky blood-red, warming the old walls with a soft orange glow.

Ma Jingna contributed to this story.

Contact the writer at wangru1@chinadaily.com.cn



The Jinshanling Great Wall winds majestically through lush hills, punctuated by watchtowers and guardhouses. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:06 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:06 PM

CHINA

Intl partnership targets poverty

Forum views it as a platform to share knowledge and experiences

By **ZHAO YIMENG**
zhaoyimeng@chinadaily.com.cn



Participants exchange ideas ahead of the 2026 Global Poverty Reduction and Development Forum in Beijing on Wednesday. WANG JING / CHINA DAILY

The Global Partnership for Poverty Alleviation and Development, aimed at promoting the exchange of poverty reduction experiences among countries and exploring pathways to fundamentally eliminate poverty, was launched on Wednesday in Beijing.

Jointly initiated by China, 53 other countries and nine international organizations, the partnership was announced during the two-day 2026 Global Poverty Reduction and Development Forum.

Vice-Premier Liu Guozhong said the forum and the establishment of the partnership would push global poverty reduction onto a new journey and inject fresh momentum into pooling global strength and advancing poverty alleviation.

He said China would help improve poverty reduction capacity in developing countries through policy planning, experience sharing, technology demonstration and talent training. China also plans to support a number of "small but beautiful" cooperation projects tailored to the needs of developing countries, he added.

"At present, there is an urgent need for all parties to build consensus and accelerate global poverty reduction efforts," Liu said, proposing efforts to enhance endogenous development capacity by promoting market-driven and technology-enabled development.

The launch comes as the world faces challenges in meeting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Stephen Jackson, the UN Development System Resident Coordinator in China, reading a congratulatory letter from UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, said poverty remained "a global development emergency" despite recent progress.

"Eight hundred million women, children and men still live in extreme poverty — from remote rural communities to crowded urban slums," the letter said, warning that conflicts, climate change, inequality and debt burdens were worsening the situation.

The letter called on governments to invest in decent work, education, healthcare, rural development and social protection, while urging greater financial support for developing countries.

Delegates attending the forum said the new partnership could provide a platform for knowledge sharing and practical cooperation.

Vongsey Vissoth, permanent deputy prime minister and minister in charge of the Office of the Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of Cambodia, said his country warmly welcomed the initiative as "a timely platform for solidarity, mutual learning and practical cooperation".

Holding the forum in China carried special significance, he said. "China's experience shows that poverty can be reduced at scale when clear vision, national ownership, broad-based growth, rural development, infrastructure, job creation and targeted public support work together," he said.

Robert Walker, professor emeritus at the University of Oxford and a professor at Beijing Normal University, said the partnership is a support for the world in achieving the SDG goals.

"Sharing expertise and knowledge would be essential, not for its own sake, but as a tool for reform, to make the world better, to ensure that poverty can be addressed," Walker said.

Heidi Kuhn, founder of United States-based NGOs Roots of Peace and Pax Agricultura and a World Food Prize laureate, called for broader global cooperation.

"I think China today has done something very extraordinary," Kuhn said. "I am certainly inspired, and I hope together we can work to plant global gardens for food security all over the world."

Mainland slams DPP's sustained separatist agenda

By **JIANG CHENGLONG**
jiangchenglong@chinadaily.com.cn

A Chinese mainland spokesman on Wednesday criticized Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party for never abandoning its separatist agenda, urging it to recognize that both sides of the Taiwan Strait belong to one China.

Chen Binhua, spokesman for the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, made the remarks at a news conference in Beijing in response to recent comments by Taiwan leader Lai Ching-te.

Lai, who also leads the DPP, claimed in a recent post on Facebook that there is no issue of "Taiwan independence" while defending the status quo of the "Republic of China". Some commentators in Taiwan have noted that if this position is genuine, the DPP should remove its "Taiwan independence" party platform as soon as possible.

Chen stressed that there is only one China and that Taiwan is part of China, which he said is an indisputable historical and legal fact, as well as the prevailing status quo across the Taiwan Strait.

He said the DPP has long positioned itself as a separatist party advocating the separation of Taiwan from China, pointing to its "Taiwan independence" party platform. Chen noted that in October 1991, the DPP amended its party charter to include the establishment of a "sovereign and independent Republic of Taiwan" and the drafting of a "new constitution".

Although some later DPP resolutions have used what he described as more disguised wording, Chen said the goal of separating Taiwan from China has never been abandoned. "The DPP authorities have, during every period in power in Taiwan, deliberately pursued 'Taiwan independence' separatist activities in an attempt to change the status quo that both sides of the Strait belong to one China," he said.

Chen also criticized Lai for what he described as a stubborn "Taiwan independence" stance and provocations in pursuit of separation. He said Lai was now changing rhetoric in an attempt to mislead public opinion and deceive the public, calling him "a complete Taiwan independence swindler".

He added that "Taiwan independence" is fundamentally incompatible with peace across the Taiwan Strait, undermines Taiwan's development, and is a dead end.

Chen urged the DPP to come to terms with reality, abandon its "Taiwan independence" party platform, stop separatist activities, and cease actions that obstruct cross-Strait relations.

Following Lai's speech on May 20, recent public opinion in Taiwan suggested the DPP's approach has shifted from pursuing "de jure Taiwan independence" to seeking "substantive Taiwan independence" in identity and culture.

Chen said Taiwan has never been a country and will never become one in the future. "Driven by their separatist nature and political self-interest, the DPP authorities have vigorously pushed 'cultural Taiwan independence' and 'de-Sinicization' in an attempt to distort Taiwan compatriots' national identity," he said.

Chen condemned the DPP for "forgetting its roots" and "betraying the Chinese nation", adding the party "will be judged by history".

"We will never tolerate or condone any form of 'Taiwan independence' separatist activity," he said, adding that no matter what "tricks" Lai and the DPP resort to, they cannot sever the historical and cultural ties between people on both sides of the Strait or block the trend toward national reunification.

He expressed hope that Taiwan compatriots will clearly recognize the DPP's intentions and strengthen their identification with the Chinese nation and Chinese culture, and called on them to join efforts in opposing all forms of "Taiwan independence" separatist activities.

Sino-Russian joint efforts secure wildlife populations

By **LIU MINGTAI** in Changchun and **ZHOU HUIYING**

In recent years, through the establishment of transnational protected areas and joint patrol and monitoring mechanisms in Northeast China and the Russian Far East, notable progress has been made in protecting Siberian tigers and leopards, safeguarding migratory birds and restoring salmon populations, according to the National Forestry and Grassland Administration.

The China-Russia border connects forests, wetlands and rivers which are jointly protected by the two countries, making it a crucial region for cross-border ecological conservation.

The administration said cooperation has expanded from single-species protection to comprehensive ecosystem restoration, forming an ecological security barrier in Northeast Asia and providing a model for global cross-border ecological governance.

In the dense forests along the China-Russia border, infrared cameras have captured increasing numbers of wild Siberian tigers crossing between the Northeast China Tiger and Leopard National Park and Russia's Land of the Leopard National Park.

China and Russia signed an agreement in 2024 to establish a transboundary nature reserve for large cats.

"The two countries have established a regular joint patrol mechanism and built an intelligent monitoring system to share real-time data on tiger and leopard activities," said Liu Linbo, director of the Hunchun bureau of the Northeast China Tiger and Leopard National Park Administration in Jilin province.

Monitoring data from the bureau shows that populations of wild Siberian tigers and leopards in the Hunchun area have doubled since the park was established in 2021, with about 70 tigers and 80 leopards recorded.

The transnational protected area, to date, covers nearly 17,000 square kilometers, providing an ecological corridor for the safe migration and reproduction of the big cats.

Each spring and autumn, hundreds of thousands of migratory birds arrive at the Jingxin Wetland in Hunchun to rest and refuel before continuing along migration routes across China, Russia and beyond.

Located at the junction of China, Russia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the 8,000-hectare wetland is a key transit station on the East Asian-Australasian migratory bird flyway and one of the world's important habitats for migratory birds.

To ensure comprehensive protection of migratory birds, China and Russia have established a regular cooperation mechanism, conducting synchronized monitoring of waterbird populations and disease prevention during migration seasons, while sharing core data on bird numbers and activity ranges, according to the Hunchun forestry bureau.

In recent years, Hunchun has enhanced efforts to protect forest and wetland ecosystems, restoring about 5,000 hectares of forests, grasslands and wetlands, creating a favorable ecological environment for migratory birds.

Data shows that during the migration seasons each year, more than 200 species of migratory birds inhabit Hunchun, including 14 species under national first-class protection and 42 species under national second-class protection.

In mid-April, 600,000 salmon fry were released into the Mijiang River in Hunchun, a first-level tributary of the Tumen River, marking the start of their journey to the North Pacific Ocean. They are expected to return to spawn in three to four years.

As a typical transboundary migratory fish, the salmon's life cycle spans waters in both China and Russia, and the health of its population reflects the ecological condition of cross-border waters.

Over the years, China and Russia have cooperated on fish breeding and migration monitoring, establishing a regular cross-border protection mechanism.

Since 2007, Jilin has conducted fish stocking activities in the Tumen River basin, releasing more than 4.7 million salmon fry and 38 million other fish to support sustainable fisheries and promote the harmonious coexistence between humans and nature, according to Zheng Yanwen, an official with the local fisheries administration.

"The shift from single-species protection to comprehensive ecosystem restoration, and from seasonal joint actions to regular collaborative governance, provides a vivid model for global cross-border ecological governance," said Jiang Ming, director and researcher at the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Northeast Institute of Geography and Agroecology.

Han Junhong contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at zhouhuiying@chinadaily.com.cn

Idea of space solar power station closer to reality

By **LI MENGHAN**
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese scientists have successfully tested a ground-based system capable of wirelessly transmitting power to multiple moving targets simultaneously, marking a major breakthrough in the global race to harness solar energy from space.

The milestone was achieved by the "Sun Chasing project" research team led by Duan Baoyan, a member of the Chinese Academy of Engineering and a professor at Xidian University in Shaanxi province.

The breakthrough brings the long-envisioned concept of orbital "wireless charging stations" closer to reality.

The system successfully delivered 1,180 watts of output power over a distance of more than 100 meters to multiple moving targets. The successful demonstration of "one-to-many" dynamic wireless power transmission pushes the technology closer to practical engineering applications.

Duan compared the space solar power station to a wireless charging post positioned in a predetermined orbit.

Space-based solar power is widely regarded as a promising clean energy solution in the future. In orbit, free from atmospheric interference and the cycle of night and day, such systems can collect sunlight continuously. However, because running physical cables down to Earth from a geostationary orbit, which lies 36,000 kilometers above the planet, or between spacecraft is impossible, scientists must rely on microwave wireless power transmission. The process converts electricity into microwaves, beams them across vast distances, and then converts them back into usable direct current electricity upon arrival.

Currently, many small satellites in low-Earth orbit can generate power for only about 60 minutes during each 96-minute orbit. For the remaining time, they remain in the Earth's shadow and rely entirely on onboard batteries. A space-based charging network would reduce the dependence on individual solar panels, allowing satellites to recharge in orbit, Duan said.

To achieve this, Duan's team proposed the OMEGA design in 2014, which uses unique spherical principles to concentrate sunlight. In June 2022, the team built what it described as the world's first full-link ground validation system, successfully testing every stage of the process — from capturing sunlight and converting it into electricity, to transforming the electricity into microwaves, transmitting them before converting them back into electricity on the ground.

The team's latest iteration, dubbed Distributed OMEGA, addresses the complex engineering challenge of building and maintaining massive power grids in space. By focusing on modularity, the system uses standardized, independent components that can be assembled or replaced in orbit like building blocks.

"Unlike the previous design that utilized a complete spherical condenser to collect sunlight — where encountering space debris could render the entire system unusable — dividing it into multiple small-aperture spherical concentrators and adopting a 'formation flying' approach ensures that even if individual units are damaged, the overall performance remains almost unaffected, thereby improving system reliability," said Li Xun, a professor at Xidian University's School of Mechano-Electronic Engineering.

Li added that this also allows for reducing the voltage of each unit, improving the engineering feasibility.

Recent test data highlighted significant performance improvements over the 2022 baseline. At a distance of more than 100 meters, the system achieved a 20.8 percent direct current-to-direct current transmission efficiency, up from 15.05 percent in 2022. The beam collection efficiency reached 88 percent, ensuring that the microwave beam remained tightly focused on its target.

Li said that the performance is "world-leading", contributing to the improvement of high-precision sun tracking to guarantee energy collection at the source, a precise closed-loop control system to accurately direct the beam from the transmitter to the receiver for higher collection efficiency, and a highly integrated design to minimize link losses.

"Different from chips, there is no technology blockade among nations when it comes to building space solar power stations. Under a similar level of industrial capability, continuously raising the bar can only be achieved through technological iteration," said Duan Xuechao, deputy dean of the School of Mechano-Electronic Engineering.

Crucially, the team also solved the tracking precision challenge required to power moving objects. In a simulated trial, a drone flying at 30 km/h successfully received a stable 143 watts of power from 30 meters away. This capability is considered essential for space applications, where satellites and orbital stations are constantly moving relative to one another.

An expert panel organized by the Shaanxi Provincial Technology Transfer Center evaluated the project and concluded that the results had reached a world-leading level, with broad prospects for engineering and industrial applications.

Duan said that the team will continue to address key challenges. This includes adapting systems from ground-based validation to actual space environments, improving wireless power transmission efficiency over long distances, and achieving ultra-precise beam steering control while the satellite is moving at high orbital speeds.

Easing stress


Students interact with a lamb during a stress-relieving activity at a mental health fair held at Southeast University in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, on Wednesday. LIU LI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:06 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:06 PM

POLICY REVIEW

Push to create 'youth-friendly' cities

Urban centers use policy to compete in attracting talented young professionals

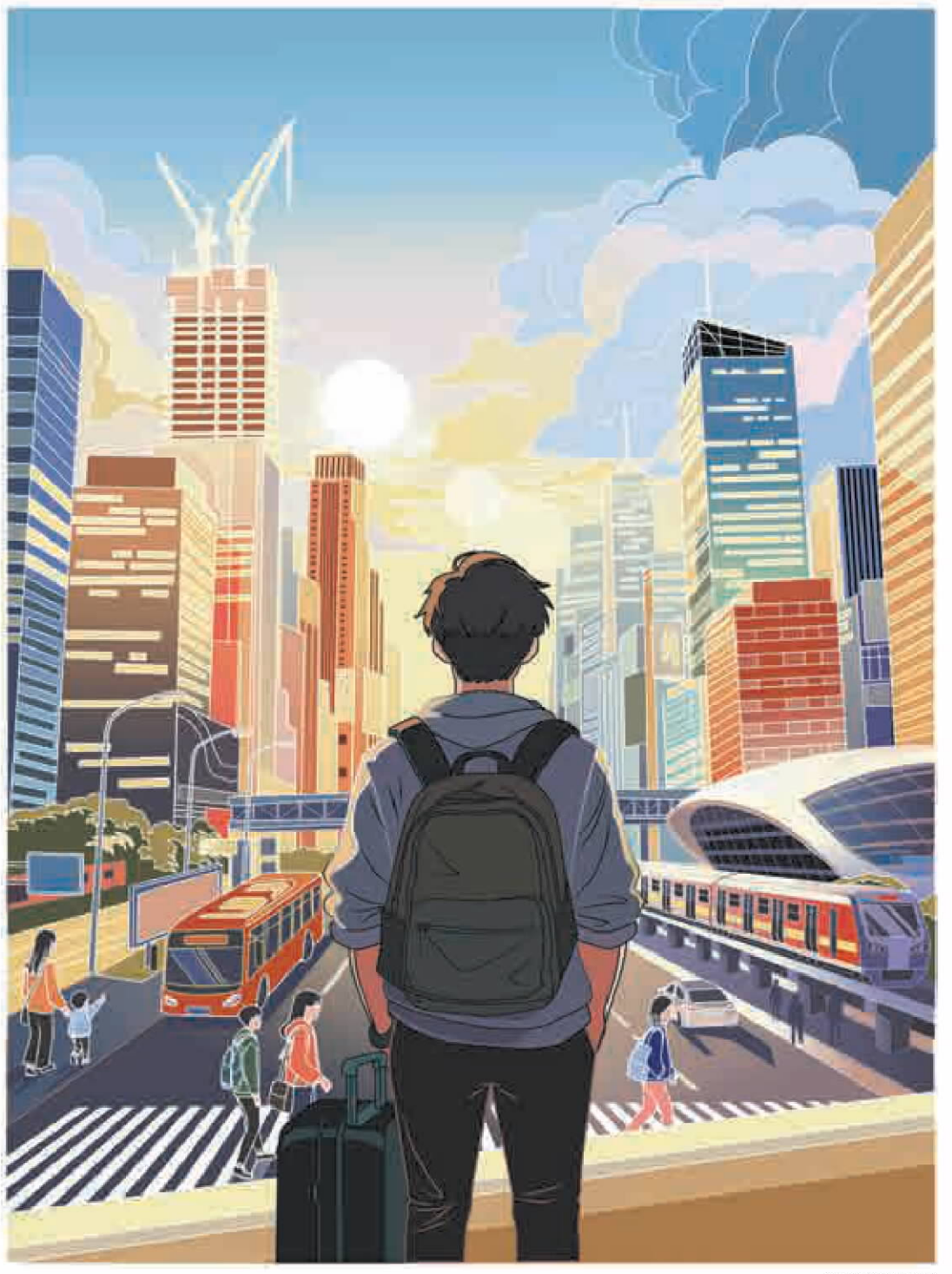
By **ZOU SHUO** in Beijing
and **HE CHUN** in Changsha

A recently released national guideline aims to transform China's urban centers into launch pads for the next generation, with the ultimate goal of tackling young professionals' most pressing hurdles, those of housing costs, job hunting and the risks of early entrepreneurship.

The guideline, released on April 22 by 15 central departments, including the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League of China, the Cyberspace Administration of China, and the National Development and Reform Commission, outlines 18 measures covering industrial foundations, innovation support, urban planning, housing, childcare and employment.

By 2030, the concepts promoted in the guideline are expected to have been widely rolled out, and by 2035, a mature institutional framework for youth development should be in place.

City governments across China are actively competing to attract fresh talent to boost local high-quality economic development. By addressing daily pressures like childcare and high rent, major hubs are trying to ensure young workers can put down deep roots.



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

Slashing costs

For recent graduates, the transition from campus to the workforce is often a financial shock. Hangzhou, the capital of Zhejiang province, is targeting this vulnerability directly through digital integration and cash subsidies.

The city has introduced a specialized youth area on its online government services platform. The area integrates job searches, entrepreneurship support and policy access, providing over 100,000 job listings, according to the city's Committee of the Communist Youth League.

There are 97 specialized youth hostels offering seven days of free accommodation for job-seeking graduates, clocking 260,000 nights as of April this year, the committee said.

The city also provides one-time living subsidies of up to 100,000 yuan ($14,700) for doctoral graduates, 30,000 yuan for master's graduates and 10,000 yuan for graduates with bachelor's degrees.

An additional rental subsidy of 10,000 yuan per year is offered to all qualifying college graduates for three consecutive years, backed by 248,000 units of subsidized rental housing. Young people have accounted for 70 percent of the beneficiaries so far.

"The policy precisely addresses our urgent needs in job hunting and stable living," said recent graduate Chen Nuo. Fellow graduate Ding Yiling called it "a protective umbrella" that enhances young people's sense of belonging.

Free workspaces

Suzhou in Jiangsu province has 145 youth hostels offering free accommodation for up to 14 days in total, spanning a wide eligibility window from one year before graduation to two years after, the city's Communist Youth League committee said.

For young entrepreneurs, the city offers up to 500,000 yuan in seed funding and three years of rent-free workspace up to 200 square meters. It has also offered 43 youth apartment projects, with over 27,000 units available at discounted rents.

Critically, the city is also addressing the "double-income trap" facing young parents by managing seasonal childcare gaps. Over the past five years, the Suzhou youth league committee has organized more than 6,900 subsidized winter and summer daycare classes, serving 1.63 million children during school vacations to alleviate the domestic burden on working parents.

Serving startups

In Southwest China's Sichuan province, Chengdu is proving that the most valuable asset a city can give a tech startup is not just cash, but a market.

When Liu Yang graduated from the University of Electronic Science and Technology of China, he launched his drone software startup, Shine Tech, with just two free desks in a government-run youth entrepreneurship park. The true breakthrough came a decade later when the government integrated his systems into the city's operational infrastructure.

The city provided Shine Tech with "application scenarios" — a policy where local governments act as the first major client for local tech startups, allowing them to test and prove their emerging technologies, like low-altitude urban drone governance, in real-world public management settings.

"Chengdu gave us a lot of support," Liu said. His low-altitude digital operation system has since been replicated in 11 cities and 28 districts and counties nationwide. Liu added that Chengdu's stable housing market — with prices well-regulated between 10,000 and 20,000 yuan per square meter — makes homeownership a realistic goal. "Chengdu is inclusive and not exclusive. People say, 'After drifting to Chengdu, you never feel adrift again'," Liu said.

The city has built 40 youth talent stations serving 138,000 people and has also established a youth housing security system offering free short stays, low-cost long-term rentals and subsidized talent apartments. Matchmaking events are held regularly.

Funding safety net

Hunan province, with its capital Changsha serving as the primary talent magnet, has taken an aggressive stance on funding high-risk startups, explicitly building a safety net for business failure.

At a recent recruitment drive at Zhejiang University, Jiang Difei, vice-governor of Hunan, announced that the province is offering 100,000 annual internships and over 300,000 quality jobs, backed by a 500-million-yuan university startup fund and 6.2 billion yuan in guaranteed entrepreneurship loans.

Policies include up to 14 days of free accommodation, up to two years of housing subsidies, and a minimum 10,000-yuan subsidy for first-time entrepreneurs, Jiang said.

The warmth of this policy was felt directly by Liu Yehuan, a tech printing entrepreneur who stayed in Changsha after graduating from Hunan University. After four failed start-up attempts, Liu and his classmates founded VMonkey.cn. Between 2020 and 2022, the company lost nearly 10 million yuan.

"As a small asset-light enterprise with no collateral, we could not get conventional loans," Liu said. The local entrepreneurship service center helped him secure a 5-million-yuan unsecured credit loan backed by government risk compensation.

"Policy has the most warmth not when it adds flowers to brocade, but when it sends charcoal in the snow," Liu said.

His company now has 300 employees and its online campus printing brand is among the nation's front-runners. "Hunan is a place that tolerates failure and encourages young people to go through trial and error," Liu said.

Contact the writers at zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

Policy Digest

Baseline standards set for school facilities, staffing

A revised set of baseline requirements has been issued for the basic operating conditions of primary and secondary schools, in a move aimed at advancing balanced and high-quality compulsory education, ensuring more standardized development of schools.

The requirements, released by the General Office of the Ministry of Education and three other departments on May 22, are designed to better meet teaching needs and support the physical and mental well-being of students.

The document lays out 20 baseline requirements in five areas: school building construction, safety and security facilities, living facilities, teaching equipment and staffing. These requirements represent the minimum standards that ordinary primary and secondary schools across the country must meet, while small-scale schools and teaching sites may apply them in light of local conditions.

The document gives particular emphasis to facilities and staffing for mental health, aesthetic and physical education, providing stronger support for students' all-round development.

Priorities laid out for quality growth of digital economy

The National Data Administration has issued its 2026 work priorities for the development of the digital economy, setting out eight key tasks to promote high-quality growth in the sector.

The document calls for deeper market-based reform in the allocation of data resources, including faster efforts to establish a unified national data property rights registration system and improving the pricing mechanisms for authorized public data operations.

It also emphasizes stronger digital infrastructure, with plans to accelerate the building of an integrated national computing power network and better coordination of data, networks, computing capacity and energy resources.

To support artificial intelligence development, the administration will advance special actions covering stronger foundations, expanded capacity, application empowerment, quality improvement, management services, value creation and data labeling.

The document also calls for cultivating competitive digital industry clusters and innovative digital economy enterprises, while deepening the integration of the digital and real economies, particularly in manufacturing and key industries.

Plan issued to advance ecological compensation

The National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Finance have issued an implementation plan to advance integrated ecological compensation.

Integrated ecological compensation is an effective means of coordinating ecological compensation policies to strengthen the protection of key areas and important ecosystems, and better motivate those engaged in ecological protection.

The plan calls for increasing the targeting and coordination of ecological compensation policies, expanding market-based compensation channels, better leveraging fiscal funds to guide such compensation, and boosting ecological protection in critical areas.

The plan also aims to build a government-led compensation framework with social participation and market mechanisms, and help turn ecological strengths into economic benefits.

The plan outlines measures for the protection and development of major water source areas, the green development of key ecological function zones, integrated compensation for important ecosystems, and the improvement of mechanisms that benefit multiple parties.

CHINA DAILY—XINHUA

Hyper-focused founder hails Suzhou support

By **ZOU SHUO**

Dong Zhen, 32, has a closet full of awards. A Forbes 30 Under 30 award, a Suzhou Young Scientist award and more. But ask him about these honors, and he shrugs.

"They were given to me by others," he said. "I didn't actively apply for most of them. If the company falls behind, that's real pressure. The rest — having them or not — doesn't matter much."

That kind of unfiltered honesty runs through conversations with the 30-something founder of SEEExTECH, a hydrogen energy control startup in Suzhou, Jiangsu province.

Dong has a theory about Suzhou's character — and why it suits his company.

"Suzhou doesn't have much nightlife. People work during the day, go home to help their kids with their homework, and go to bed early," he said.

For a hydrogen energy hardware startup, he added, that's a plus, not a bug. "We don't need young people's nightlife. We need to stay effective."

His company's 100 employees — mostly young people — seem to share that rhythm.

Dong founded the company in 2021 while still a PhD student at the University of Manchester in the United Kingdom.

The early years were brutal: sleeping in a windowless, damp storage room, driving alone past midnight to a factory in another province, surviving on savings from his scholarship.

Suzhou, he said, made survival possible.

"The local government — human resources, science and technology, organization departments — they work together. The officials genuinely care," Dong said. "They proactively come to you and say, 'You should apply for this talent program, you qualify for that certification'."

Dong and his company have been supported through district-level, city and now provincial recognition. "This year, even the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League of China and some ministries know about us. Suzhou won't let a pearl be buried — but first you have to be a pearl."

Suzhou is preparing to build a 2.67-hectare hydrogen industrial park with Dong's company as the anchor. "We don't buy the land — State assets hold it — but we can bring in our upstream and downstream partners. That takes courage from the government," he said.

Dong started his research career with pure passion. As a master's student at the Harbin Institute of Technology, he published seven high-quality papers, three in top journals — a record that would impress many PhDs. He won a full scholarship to Manchester and kept writing.

Then something snapped.

"Around my second year of the PhD, I began to feel that the flood of papers was no longer the crystallization of human wisdom — it felt more like stuff churned out on an assembly line," said Dong.

He said his company developed the industry's first fully integrated hydrogen-electricity control system, covering power from 100 watts to megawatts. It manages how hydrogen is converted, stored and dispatched — making it work in places where batteries fail: extreme cold, remote areas, long-haul flights.



Dong Zhen (center) discusses a product with colleagues in Suzhou, Jiangsu province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Last year, a hydrogen drone using the company's technology flew to Antarctica's Zhongshan Station aboard the icebreaker *Xuelong*. "It was the world's first green hydrogen flight in Antarctica," Dong said. "The polar research center is already discussing phase two."

Annual revenue has been doubling year-on-year, he added, and 2026 is expected to surpass 100 million yuan ($14.7 million).

If there is one phrase Dong repeats, it is living with the end in mind, so you live fully now.

"I have no hobbies. No interest in killing time. I don't need to kill time — I have too many things to do," he said.

His only relaxation is playing with his 3-year-old son. "That lets me relive the childhood I never had. I didn't know what Ultraman was until middle school, or Pokemon until college. Now I go to Disneyland and Universal Studios with my son — and sometimes I play harder than he does."

Back to the awards. He keeps the trophies but attaches no weight. "If the company fails, those titles mean nothing. If the company succeeds, their shine fades compared to real success," Dong said.

"I grew up in a village where we ate only what grew in the ground. Now I see the country's rise in my own life. There is still a pathway for ordinary people to change their fate through effort. I am grateful for that," he added.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:06 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:06 PM

BUSINESS



An image shows a wind farm in Rongcheng, Shandong province, on May 8. LI XINJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Targeted consumption strategies urged as green power supply rises

Upgrading grid seen as critical as $722b investment targets renewable bottlenecks

By **ZHENG XIN**
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

As China's green and low-carbon energy transition accelerates, bringing challenges such as the integration of fast-growing renewable power, industry experts are calling for the country to step up efforts in adopting targeted consumption strategies.

"During the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, China's new energy consumption and utilization will face greater challenges, requiring differentiated and targeted measures to promote consumption," said Gan Mengying, a researcher at the State Grid Energy Research Institute.

The industry must comprehensively enhance the flexibility of all links including sources, grids, loads and storage systems, and perfect the regulatory resource supply system so as to absorb the massive influx of intermittent wind and solar power, and fundamentally optimize its power supply architecture, Gan said.

430 million kW
China's newly installed solar and wind power capacity in 2025

This urgency is underscored by the record-breaking pace of renewable energy installations.

The National Energy Administration said China's newly installed solar and wind power capacity exceeded 430 million kilowatts in 2025, an increase of 22 percent year-on-year, hitting a record high.

This surge propelled the cumulative grid-connected capacity of wind and solar power to 1.84 billion kW, accounting for 47.3 percent of the country's total installed power capacity and surpassing thermal power for the first time.

According to plans by the NEA, by 2035, a new power system capable of accommodating a high share of new energy should be established, along with further improvements in new energy consumption and regulation systems.

While this achievement marks a massive leap forward for the nation's environmental goals, the rapid addition of clean energy has introduced varying regional grid stability issues, said a recent report by the State Grid Energy Research Institute.

A traditional "one-size-fits-all" approach to grid management is no longer viable given the drastically varied resource endowments and economic realities across different provinces, it said.

To tackle this, the report suggests that while coal power is transitioning towards a more regulated, supportive and strategic reserve power source, hydropower is being upgraded into a composite power source integrating flexible regulation, peak power supply and system support functions.

Nuclear power should transition toward a combination of base load guarantee and comprehensive utilization of nuclear energy, it said.

To prevent energy curtailment moving forward, the report said regional nuances must dictate grid upgrades.

For instance, some eastern provinces with high power demand only face minor curtailment during holidays or specific mid-day hours, requiring simple optimization of existing coal plants.

Conversely, western regions with an overwhelming penetration of renewables require massive investments in pumped-storage hydroelectricity, advanced electrochemical storage and expanded interprovincial power transmission corridors to maximize green energy use.

China is set to pour a record-high 5 trillion yuan ($722 billion) into its power grid over the next five years — a massive investment in new infrastructure designed to eliminate renewable energy bottlenecks and propel the nation toward its 2030 carbon peak goal.

By shifting traditional baseload behemoths like coal into highly responsive backup units and expanding the multigenerational capabilities of nuclear and hydro facilities, the power grid can effectively counterbalance the unpredictability of weather-dependent renewables, it said.

Key platforms in place to boost industrial ties among BRICS members

By **ZHANG YI** in Xiamen, Fujian and **HU MEIDONG** in Fuzhou

The two-day 2026 BRICS Forum on Partnership on New Industrial Revolution opened on Wednesday in Xiamen, Fujian province, marking the launch of an international cooperation initiative on intelligent manufacturing and a new partnership city network to boost cooperation.

The new manufacturing initiative, jointly launched by the International Coalition of Intelligent Manufacturing and leading companies to drive smart transformation, builds on recent BRICS progress in co-constructing smart factories, sharing digital solutions and aligning technical standards.

Concurrently, the China-initiated "Network of Partner Cities on New Industrial Revolution" was established to enhance urban policy alignment and industrial synergy, featuring a first cohort of 10 cities across five nations.

Co-hosted by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology and the Fujian provincial government, the forum drew representatives from over 20 countries and international organizations to focus on smart manufacturing solutions and developing-world industrial upgrades.

Delegates said artificial intelligence, the industrial internet and robotics are rapidly reshaping global supply chains and manufacturing competitiveness.

Tri Supondy, an Indonesian Ministry of Industry official, said that rapid technological advances, industrial restructuring, AI and robotics are actively reshaping global manufacturing supply chains and competitiveness, making this transformation urgent for the Global South.

Supondy said no single nation can navigate this transformation alone, and called for upgraded talent, international cooperation and technological modernization.

John Owan Enoh, Nigeria's Minister of State for Industry, said global industrial systems are being driven by AI, digital technology and green innovation, redefining the future of production processes and global value chains.

For developing economies like Nigeria, Enoh said these changes offer unique opportunities to leapfrog traditional paths and build resilient, competitive and inclusive industrial ecosystems.

Andrei Kuznetsov, Belarus Minister of Industry, said China's short product development cycles in the digital economy and smart manufacturing make it highly attractive for foreign investment and international cooperation, while significantly promoting experience-sharing among BRICS partners.

Zeng Yuqun, chairman of CATL, said that the new industrial revolution allows BRICS nations to transition from mere raw material suppliers to core participants and builders of the green value chain, leveraging their rich minerals and renewable energy.

Zeng said CATL's $6 billion investment with Indonesian firms for an integrated electric vehicle battery chain — spanning mining to recycling — is expected to create over 8,000 direct and 35,000 indirect jobs.

To turn volatile renewable energy into stable industrial power, CATL is advancing zero-carbon solutions, he said, adding that the company will officially launch the world's largest one-stop energy storage testing platform on Thursday in Xiamen.

Xiang Wenbo, chairman of Sany Group, called the BRICS bloc a primary growth engine for the group's overseas business, and its international sales topped $10 billion last year, with BRICS markets accounting for half.

Sany has built industrial parks in four BRICS markets — including Indonesia and Kazakhstan — and the group aims to leverage industrial innovation to make green energy more efficient and universally accessible, he said.

Concurrently, the forum hosted an industrial exhibition and the "Golden Egret" scholarship workshop, bringing 25 participants from 14 countries for field studies at leading companies like Alibaba and Unitree Robotics.

The Xiamen-based BRICS PartNIR Innovation Center has finalized 138 projects over five years, exceeding 62 billion yuan ($9.1 billion) in total investment.

Fujian's 2025 trade volume with BRICS markets reached 365.5 billion yuan, accounting for nearly one-fifth of the province's total foreign trade.

Contact the writers at zhangyi1@chinadaily.com.cn

Pop Mart's Labubu keeps on heavy lifting

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn



Visitors gather at a Pop Mart store in Shanghai on May 5. TANG KE / FOR CHINA DAILY

Collectible toy giant Pop Mart has deepened its partnership-driven growth strategy through a new Twinkle Twinkle collaboration with McDonald's China. Since launching on May 20, the campaign has drawn long queues, social media buzz and growing resale prices, with some co-branded toys reportedly trading more than 30 percent above their original price on the secondary market.

Si De, chief operating officer of Pop Mart, said the company's intellectual property portfolio continues to demonstrate strong commercial vitality across global markets.

"Our IPs have maintained strong momentum in recent months. Labubu continues to enjoy strong popularity among global consumers," Si said. In the first quarter, collaborative products including Labubu x Sanrio and Labubu x FIFA delivered excellent performance, he said.

The remarks came as Pop Mart recently released its first quarter 2026 financial update, signaling revenue growth of between 75 percent and 80 percent year-on-year. Revenue in the Chinese market surged between 100 percent and 105 percent, supported by a 150 percent to 155 percent increase in online sales.

Despite the strong domestic performance, overseas markets have seen growth slowing sharply compared with the previous year. Revenue in the Americas increased between 55 percent and 60 percent, while Europe and other overseas regions grew 60 percent to 65 percent. Growth in the Asia-Pacific region reached 25 percent to 30 percent.

Executives cautioned investors against overinterpreting short-term fluctuations, and said that the country's trendy toy market remains in a rapid expansion phase as consumers increasingly seek products delivering emotional and cultural value.

Industry analysts expect the sector to maintain robust long-term growth momentum. According to a KPMG report, the country's trendy toy market was projected to reach 82.5 billion yuan ($12.1 billion) in 2025, a year-on-year growth of 40.5 percent. The market is forecast to exceed 213.3 billion yuan by 2030, with a compound annual growth rate of 18.7 percent.

The report found that more than 90 percent of young consumers recognize the importance of "emotional value", while nearly 60 percent are willing to pay a premium for such products and experiences.

Pop Mart recorded a breakthrough year in 2025. Operating revenue reached 37.12 billion yuan, giving the company a domestic market share of more than 30 percent. Its flagship IP Labubu generated revenue of 14.16 billion yuan.

The company is also accelerating expansion into immersive entertainment and lifestyle businesses. On April 30, a new section of Pop Land, its theme park, officially opened in Beijing, featuring upgraded attractions centered around Labubu and Dimoo characters.

"We introduced several large-scale amusement facilities for the first time, and the market response has exceeded expectations," Si said.

He added that Hirono standalone stores are set to expand to Seoul following launches in Shanghai, Bangkok and London.

The company has also expanded its Popop accessories unit's retail stores into six Chinese cities, launched its first Labubu-themed refrigerator and continued development of its first film project.

Corporate sales on steady growth track

By **REN QI**
renqi@chinadaily.com.cn

China's enterprise sales revenue registered steady growth in the first four months of the year, with multiple bright spots emerging across various sectors, according to the latest invoice data released by the State Taxation Administration.

"The invoice data reflect that the foundation of China's economic recovery and upward trajectory is continuously consolidating, while growth momentum is strengthening," said Huang Lixin, director of the Tax Science and Research Institute under the administration. "It shows that high-quality development is moving toward new and optimal levels, powerfully demonstrating the resilience and vitality of China's economic development."

During the January-April period, industrial sales revenue increased by 6.6 percent year-on-year. Specifically, sales revenue in the manufacturing and mining sectors grew by 6.9 percent and 6.4 percent, respectively, maintaining a relatively fast growth trend.

Equipment manufacturing continued to play its role as an economic ballast, with sales revenue rising 7.6 percent year-on-year. Notably, the manufacturing of computer and communication equipment, electrical machinery and equipment, and instrumentation saw sales revenues surge by 14.7 percent, 10.3 percent and 9.1 percent, respectively.

6.6 percent
growth in industrial sales revenue tracked by the State Taxation Administration during the January-April period

Industries representing new growth drivers also expanded rapidly. Sales revenue in high-tech industries jumped 15.3 percent year-on-year. High-tech manufacturing saw a 14.9 percent increase, accounting for 18.1 percent of the total manufacturing sales revenue, up 1.3 percentage points from the same period last year.

The vitality of digital industrialization was continuously unleashed, with sales revenue of core industries in the digital economy growing by 9.4 percent year-on-year. Within this sector, the manufacturing of digital products and the application of digital technologies experienced growth of 12.9 percent and 12.3 percent, respectively.

Fu Linghui, chief economist of the National Bureau of Statistics, noted that from January to April, China effectively implemented more proactive and effective macroeconomic policies. Efforts were focused on stabilizing employment, enterprises, markets and expectations, allowing the national economy to maintain a trend of steady progress.

The driving effect of artificial intelligence became increasingly prominent. Sales revenue of specialty electronic material manufacturing and integrated circuit manufacturing, which are directly related to AI production and application, skyrocketed by 70 percent and 54.4 percent year-on-year, respectively. Meanwhile, sales revenue of smart in-vehicle devices and robots, linked to AI terminal applications, surged 50.7 percent and 27.5 percent, respectively.

Looking ahead to the economic trajectory in the next stage, Wang Guanhua, a spokesperson for the NBS, said that while acknowledging the internal and external pressures and challenges in economic operations, it is even more important to recognize that the internal driving forces for steady economic improvement remain unchanged and will not change. There is a solid foundation and favorable conditions to promote steady and positive economic development, Wang added.

Furthermore, consumer potential continued to be unleashed. Driven by policies such as the trade-in program for consumer goods and lottery invoices, retail sales revenue of communication equipment grew by 17.4 percent year-on-year. The services consumption market remained robust, with sales revenue from leisure and sightseeing activities; travel agencies and related services; and the cultural, sports and entertainment sectors increasing by 32 percent, 14.6 percent and 14 percent, respectively. Additionally, sales revenue from catering delivery services and homestay services rose by 7.7 percent and 14.1 percent, respectively.

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:06 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:06 PM

WORLD



People bathe in the sunshine at a beach in Brighton, United Kingdom, on Tuesday, as temperatures continue to soar. GARETH FULLER VIA AP

Why Europe is world's fastest warming continent

PARIS — Europe, which is in the throes of a record-smashing heat wave this week, is the world's fastest-warming continent and stretches into an even more rapidly heating Arctic.

After record-high temperatures for May were broken in Britain, Ireland and France on Monday and Tuesday, the continent still faces more brutal heat in the coming days.

A so-called "heat dome" of warm air from northern Africa trapped under a high-pressure system over western Europe is behind the sort of heat not usually seen until high summer. The planet is around 1.4 C warmer than in preindustrial times, defined as 1850-1900.

By comparison, Europe is around 2.4 C hotter than the preindustrial era, according to the EU's Copernicus Climate Change Service.

"Almost all of this heat is driven by the human-induced greenhouse effect from fossil fuel emissions, with the actual distribution of this excess heat determined by (several) factors," Ben Clarke, a researcher in extreme weather and climate change at Imperial College London, told AFP.

Shifts in atmospheric circulation have driven more frequent and more intense heat waves in the European summer, according to Copernicus.

High-pressure systems have become more common in Europe, Copernicus Director Carlo Buontempo said.

"If you look over the last 20, 30 years, there has been a prevalence, especially in summer, of those sorts of anticyclonic conditions that are making heat waves more likely," Copernicus Director Carlo Buontempo told AFP.

Whether the increased frequency of that specific type of high-pressure system is due to climate change or is just a "statistical fluctuation" is still a scientific debate, Buontempo said.

Such high-pressure systems are also known as "blocking highs" because they can remain stationary and stop other weather systems from moving into a region.

Explaining how they work, Mary Bourke, a professor at Trinity College Dublin, said: "The sky is exposed to us, there are no clouds. It's a stable mass of air that is bringing warm air down to the surface and taking away moist air, so the air is not only warm, but it's also dry."

Another reason is geography. "Europe is connected to the Arctic, which is warming much faster than the rest of the planet," Clarke said.

The Arctic is 3.2 C warmer than in preindustrial times, according to Copernicus.

The region's rising temperatures are partly due to a process known as the albedo feedback.

Bright snow and ice reflect much of the sun's heat back into space, but as they melt they reveal darker, heat-absorbing surfaces such as land and the ocean. "So as sea ice melts it leads to greater absorption of heat, which in turn further warms waters and melts more ice," Clarke said.

In other parts of Europe, the area where snow was very frequent in winter has shrunk, Buontempo said.

"We have many of the historical regions that had a week or more of freezing conditions now, not having that. And this means exposing dark land rather than white snow," he said.

Stricter air quality regulations have reduced aerosol emissions since the 1980s.

But tackling the pollutant had the side effect of contributing to global warming, as these tiny airborne particles have a cooling effect by reflecting sunlight and making clouds more reflective.

"While a reduction in air pollution is hugely important for respiratory health, it also increases the solar radiation at the surface, as many types of particulate matter deflect sunlight," Clarke said.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

US steel tariffs hit domestic can makers and raise prices

By BELINDA ROBINSON
in New York
belindarobinson@chinadailyusa.com

US steel tariffs have hit the humble tin can, with domestic manufacturers saying it costs more to produce cans at home than import them from overseas, despite President Donald Trump's push to bolster domestic steel production and limit imports.

China dominates global steel manufacturing and processing, accounting for 53 percent of global crude steel output, according to the World Steel Association. China is also the world's largest manufacturer and consumer of tinplate, according to the China Iron and Steel Association.

A decade ago, American producers made 60 percent of tinplate and other packaging steel used in the US, according to Harbor Intelligence, a steel analysis and research company. Last year they produced less than 20 percent, with the remaining 80 percent imported, The New York Times reported.

Over the past several years, American steelmakers deliberately moved away from producing tinplate for packaging in favor of other types of more lucrative steel production used in cars and buildings.

However, US industry groups are urging the president to remove tariffs on steel.

Scott Breen, president of the Can Manufacturers Institute, said in a statement that the Trump Administration's "recent aluminum and steel tariff actions keep costs high to make metal cans in America".

Trump used Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 to implement a 25 percent steel tariff and 10 percent tariff on aluminum during his first presidency.

On April 2, the Trump administration restructured the tariffs on steel, aluminum and copper, lowering some rates and adding new sourcing rules, The White House said.

The Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center, an independent research organization, found that these changes "significantly reduce tariffs on steel and aluminum, with the average rate falling by over 20 percentage points".

David A. Gantz, Will Clayton Fellow for Trade and International Economics at Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy, told China Daily that Trump's tariffs on steel, aluminum, copper and other goods imported from virtually all US trading partners have a "negative impact" on the US economy.

The US currently imports its canned food from Asia, South America and Europe. Key global suppliers include China, Peru, Spain, Greece and India.

China and Thailand supply preserved fruits, seafood and tropical goods, according to the United States Department of Agriculture.

Worldwide, China exported over 206,468 tons of canned goods in April 2026 alone, data from CEIC and China's General Administration of Customs showed. One of the largest areas for this kind of production is Shandong province in eastern China.

China's top three export destinations for its private label canned goods by value were the US, Japan and Germany between 2025 to 2026, Yahoo News reports.

In the US, the cost of a can accounts for a third of the wholesale price of canned vegetables or fruits.

Trump's tariffs have not only raised the cost of tinplate, but also canned food, The New York Times reported.

Canned fruits and vegetables cost 5.7 percent more in March this year, compared with March 2025, government data showed.

Robert Ayars opened the first American cannery in the US in 1812.

Today, cans are an overlooked, everyday item. But they remain very important.

On West 36th Street in Manhattan, New York, directly opposite a luxury condo building site, a line of people wait in the middle of the afternoon in the searing heat for a food pantry to open.

A clipboard is passed around so that people can write their names down to ensure that no one jumps the line.

Mikaela, manager of the Metropolitan Community Church food distribution service, is in charge of the food pantry, which gives those in need free meat, produce and canned food. They also provide hot meals.

"The canned goods are probably the most important thing we offer, because if we run out of everything else or we don't get enough donations, the cans are always helpful," she told China Daily. "We feed at least 40 to 50 people per day over a period of three days. Sometimes it's more, it depends who is in need."

She explains that most of the canned food comes from New York City's local government and City Harvest, one of the largest food rescue organizations in New York. The local government also helps with funding. Public donations are welcomed.

"If people didn't get the food or the canned goods, they might not eat that day, that's what they tell me," Mikaela said. "So, we make sure we have enough to give them because the canned food is very important."

Top leader of DPRK oversees key weapon system test

PYONGYANG — Kim Jong-un, the top leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, has overseen weapon tests involving a lightweight multipurpose missile launching system and a multiple tactical cruise missile weapon system, the official Korean Central News Agency said on Wednesday.

The tests were conducted on Tuesday by the Missile Administration and the Academy of Defence Sciences. They analyzed and estimated the power of a special mission warhead of a tactical ballistic missile, the reliability of a 240mm controlled artillery rocket with an expanded firing range and an ultraprecision autonomous navigation system, and the AI-guided hit accuracy of a tactical cruise missile, said the report.

The tactical cruising shell features a combination of the ultraprecision autonomous navigation system, the terrain contour matching, or TERCOM, navigation system and an AI terminal guidance function. It is a powerful weapon system that can make an ultraprecision strike against any target 100 kilometers away by multimodal flight based on gliding and propelling, it said.

Kim said the tests were a clear signal of an upgrade of the country's military force and showed great technical progress in the strengthening of its combat power, according to the report.

The leader also outlined tasks for stepping up the steady growth of the country's defense capabilities and developing ultramodern military hardware.

XINHUA

Iran hits out at violation of truce by US

Tehran says it's ready to repel any attack while ruling out renewed war

By JAN YUMUL in Hong Kong and **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE

Iran's Foreign Ministry has condemned the "flagrant and unjustified" ceasefire violations by the United States in the Strait of Hormuz, noting that these took place despite ongoing diplomatic efforts mediated by Pakistan.

In the latest developments, an Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps official said a renewed war with the US is unlikely, but warned that Tehran stands ready to repel any attack, Al Jazeera reported.

"The possibility of war is low because of the enemy's weakness, but the armed forces are lying in wait," said Mohammad Akbarzadeh, a commander of the IRGC Navy.

In a statement issued on Tuesday, reported by Mehr News Agency, the foreign ministry slammed the US Army for continuing its "illegal and unjustifiable actions" since the announcement of the ceasefire on April 8.

The ministry said the US had committed "a flagrant violation of the ceasefire in the Hormozgan region over the past 48 hours", particularly following "multiple instances of maritime piracy against Iranian commercial vessels".

The US has said its attacks were defensive in nature, targeting missile sites and boats attempting to lay mines.

In his call with Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and other regional leaders, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian reaffirmed Tehran's readiness to establish a "dignified framework" aimed at ending the ongoing fighting and regional tensions.

Pezeshkian spoke with heads of state from several mostly Muslim-majority countries on the occasion of Eid al-Adha.

He and his Egyptian counterpart, Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, exchanged greetings on Tuesday. They also underscored the necessity of Islamic unity and indicated a new chapter in regional relations.

Pezeshkian emphasized the need to strengthen cooperation across the Islamic world and expand bilateral relations between Tehran and Kuala Lumpur in his phone call with Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim.

Meanwhile in the US, President Donald Trump was expected to meet with his Cabinet on Wednesday at a precarious moment for talks aimed at ending the conflict with Iran. He took to social media on Tuesday to grumble that even if Tehran were to offer a complete surrender, the media would paint the end of the conflict as Iran scoring "a masterful and brilliant victory".

'A few more days'

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said negotiations between the US and Iran on extending the ceasefire and reopening the Strait of Hormuz will take "a few more days".

According to Iranian sources, an initial deal would end hostilities on all fronts, get traffic moving through the strait within 30 days, and possibly provide some financial relief. More difficult issues such as Iran's nuclear program would be negotiated in the second phase. Iran has been allowing some ships through the strait, giving preference to vessels linked to countries with which it has close ties, Reuters has reported.

The conflict, which began on Feb 28, has caused an unprecedented oil supply shock, pushing up the costs of fuel, fertilizer and food.

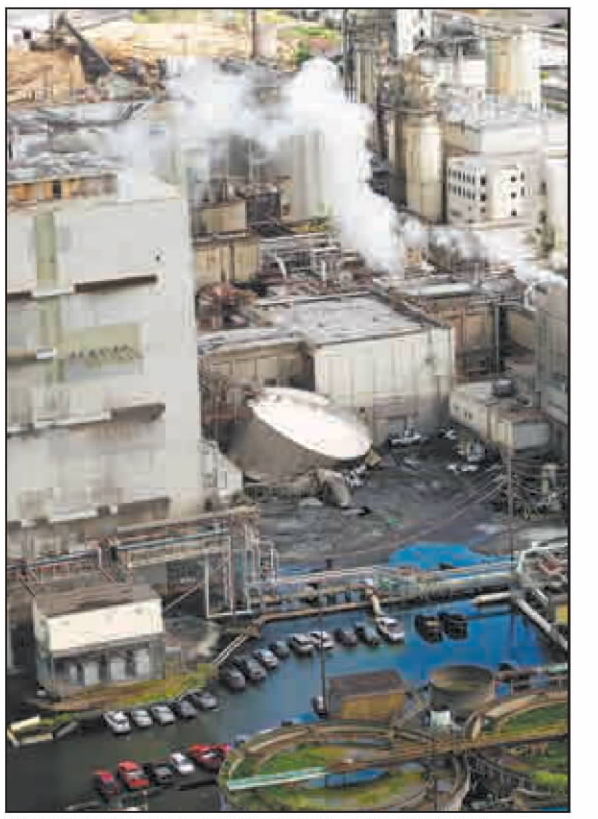
The IRGC Navy said in a statement on Tuesday that as many as 25 other ships and oil tankers have been able to transit through the strait in coordination with the IRGC naval forces, Iranian media reported.

Also on Tuesday, the United Nations Security Council condemned what it said was an "egregious drone attack" that targeted an electricity generator outside the inner perimeter of the Barakah nuclear power plant in the United Arab Emirates on May 17.

Agencies contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at jan@chinadailyapac.com

Corrosive catastrophe



Steam rises from a paper mill in Longview, the US state of Washington, on Tuesday after a massive chemical tank that held 3.4 million liters of a corrosive liquid imploded and collapsed. The incident killed at least one worker and left nine others missing with no hope of rescue, authorities said. DAVID RYDER / REUTERS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:06 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:06 PM

WORLD

Japan faces backlash over intel agency

System could silence anti-war voices under banner of security, critics warn

By **HOU JUNJIE** in Tokyo
houjunjie@chinadaily.com.cn

Concerns are growing in Japan over what critics describe as a dangerous drift toward suppressing anti-war voices in the name of national security, as the government pushes ahead with constitutional revisions and the creation of a new national intelligence structure.

Japan's House of Councillors on Wednesday passed legislation establishing a national intelligence council, as Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi moves to centralize and strengthen the country's intel capabilities. The bill had cleared the House of Representatives last month.

Under the legislation, Japan will build an intelligence system centered on the national intelligence council, with a national intelligence bureau serving as its operational arm.

Chaired by the prime minister, the council will comprise relevant Cabinet members, including the chief Cabinet secretary and foreign minister, while the bureau will coordinate intelligence work across government ministries and agencies.

Critics warn the move could pave the way for a broader expansion of executive power.

Japanese lawyer Shunkichi Takayama said the Takaichi administration is attempting to open the door to constitutional revision through the introduction of an "emergency clause", which would allow the Cabinet to temporarily assume parliamentary functions during major crises.

The deeper intention behind the move is to seriously consider how Japan could seize opportunities for military action under critical circumstances, Takayama said.

The establishment of a national intelligence council should be understood within this broader context, he said, adding that its purpose would be to identify, monitor and suppress anti-war activists to advance pro-war policies.

Both the proposed intelligence agency and potential anti-espionage legislation are being viewed as tools serving that wider agenda — developments that are increasingly raising concern within Japanese society, he said.

Protests against the bill were held in Tokyo on Tuesday and Wednesday, with demonstrators carrying signs reading "No laws for war preparations" and "No public surveillance! Intelligence agency bill monitors citizens".

Makoto Konishi, a former member of Japan's Air Self-Defense Force, said one objective behind the government's push to establish a new intelligence framework is to suppress anti-war and pro-peace voices.

> "The Japanese government has consistently used claims of an increasingly severe security environment to justify expanding defense spending."
>
> **Hiroshi Shiratori,** a professor of political science at Hosei University in Tokyo

Nikkei Asia reported that opposition lawmakers warned that the new institution could expand government surveillance powers, characterizing the move as a return to a dangerous path Japan once followed.

Before and during World War II, Japan's Special Higher Police, known as Tokko, and military police organizations actively suppressed anti-government movements and civil society groups.

In an earlier editorial, the Ryukyu Shimpo warned that Japan should learn from the prewar misuse of public security legislation and remain cautious about expanding state intelligence systems.

Since taking office, Takaichi has repeatedly argued that Japan faces "the most severe and complex security environment of the postwar era".

Justification questioned

Hiroshi Shiratori, a professor of political science at Hosei University in Tokyo, told China Daily, "The Japanese government has consistently used claims of an increasingly severe security environment to justify expanding defense spending."

However, he questioned what concrete evidence or standards the government relies on to conclude that Japan is facing a "security crisis" and to continuously heighten public anxiety.

Shiratori warned that repeatedly emphasizing crises, intensifying perceptions of threats from neighboring countries and further expanding military capabilities could unnecessarily heighten regional tensions and increase the risk of accidental conflict.

The Mainichi Shimbun reported that the Japanese government could establish the national intelligence council and the national intelligence bureau as early as July, while also setting up an expert panel to discuss counterespionage legislation.

The government is expected to formulate its policy and submit related legislation during the regular parliamentary session in 2027.

Immigration clash



United States federal agents detain a protester after taking him outside an immigration center in Newark, New Jersey, on Tuesday. The US Immigration and Customs Enforcement is housing detainees at the center. The protests, which have become tense over the holiday weekend, come amid reports of an ongoing hunger strike by those being held. ADAM GRAY / AFP



Residents inspect a damaged building after an Israeli airstrike in the southern Lebanese port city of Tyre on Tuesday. EPA / STRINGER

Israel says it killed new head of Hamas' armed wing

JERUSALEM/CAIRO — Israel said on Wednesday it had killed Hamas' newly appointed armed wing chief in Gaza, days after it killed his predecessor, while intensifying military pressure in Gaza and expanding operations in Lebanon.

The Israeli military said Mohammed Odeh was killed in an operation in Gaza on Tuesday.

A relative of Odeh confirmed his death to Reuters and said the funeral would take place after noon prayers in Gaza City. Hamas has yet to issue an official statement.

Gaza health officials said six people were killed and more than 20 others wounded in the same Israeli strike that destroyed an upper floor of an apartment building in the Rimal neighborhood in Gaza City. Rescue workers were still at the scene looking for more possible casualties.

Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz said in a statement that Odeh, whom he described as Hamas' fourth-ranking official, had been killed.

"We promised that Hamas will not have military or civilian control over Gaza, and so it will be," Katz said.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Tuesday night that Israeli forces had attempted to assassinate Odeh in a strike carried out under his and Katz's direction, but gave no details on the outcome.

Odeh was appointed about a week ago to succeed Izz al-Din al-Haddad, who was killed in an Israeli strike on May 15.

Lebanon operations

Hours before the attack, Israel announced it had expanded ground operations in Lebanon, where it has been fighting Hezbollah militants since it launched attacks on Iran with the United States at the end of February.

"The (Israel Defense Forces) are operating with large forces on the ground and seizing strategic areas," Netanyahu said after meeting with Katz and senior military officials.

On Wednesday, Hezbollah said its fighters "clashed with the enemy forces at point-blank range" in the town of Zawtar al-Sharqiyah, on the edge of an Israeli-declared "yellow line" in southern Lebanon, where its troops have been operating.

AGENCIES—XINHUA

Africa underscores role of stable China-US ties

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

The recent visit by US President Donald Trump to China has renewed discussions among African observers about the importance of cooperation between the world's two largest economies for global stability and Africa's development.

Analysts and business leaders say collaboration between Beijing and Washington could ease geopolitical tensions and create broader opportunities for trade, investment and infrastructure development across Africa.

Mark Badmus, chief executive of AMB Global Trade Finance Consultants, said a partnership between the two countries is essential to maintaining peace and sustaining global economic progress.

Developments between the United States and China often have far-reaching implications for Africa because global economic disruptions can quickly affect energy prices, trade flows and financial markets, Badmus said.

China-US cooperation can create opportunities for African economies in infrastructure, technology, climate action and trade, he said.

However, African countries must also strengthen collaboration among themselves to fully benefit from engagement with global powers, he added.

A unified African position in global affairs would help the continent secure better outcomes when engaging with major economies, Badmus said.

"If Africa speaks with one voice, it will gain more advantage," he said. "But if countries continue aligning individually based on historical ties, such as with former colonial powers, they may not achieve much."

Steph Davy Nguimbi, deputy CEO of Warwyck Private Bank in Mauritius, said China-US ties are crucial for global economic stability.

"The world today is like a village," he said. "When those two fight, the repercussions are felt everywhere, even in African countries that may not be directly involved."

Nguimbi expressed hope that outcomes between Washington and Beijing during Trump's visit could help address ongoing economic and geopolitical challenges.

While African nations maintain diplomatic and economic ties with both powers, a cooperative relationship between the US and China would reduce global uncertainty and help foster a more stable environment for Africa's growth, he said.

James Mwangi, CEO of Africa Climate Ventures, said stronger China-US cooperation would have a significant impact on Africa. Geopolitical rivalry between them could undermine Africa's efforts to address climate change, food insecurity and industrial development, he said.

Climate-smart farming solutions in Africa rely on interconnected global partnerships, he said.

Mwangi said agricultural projects across Africa depend on carbon demand from US and European Union buyers, manufacturing inputs with significant Chinese participation, and implementation by African farmers and businesses.

"All three have to work together," he said. "When geopolitical rivalry creates friction in any one of those links, an East African smallholder farmer loses access to a product that could protect her yields through a drought year."

Green transition

Mwangi added that China-US cooperation is also essential to Africa's transition to cleaner transport systems and green industrialization.

"Chinese technology is what makes the economics viable at African price points, while US development finance is what makes early-stage investment bankable," he said. "Rivalry doesn't produce a winner in Africa. It produces a gap."

Citing climate-related risks, Mwangi warned that Africa could face a projected 5 to 10 percent decline in crop yields with less than 2 degrees of global warming, while an estimated 52 million Africans have already been affected by droughts or flooding over the past two years.

"The businesses we are building are a direct response to that and they need the world's two largest economies pulling in the same direction," he said.

Heavy draw



A visitor tries out a Chinese-made excavator at the International Trade Fair for Construction Equipment and Technologies in Moscow on Tuesday. FENG KAIHUA / XINHUA

'Brexit moment' feared in Iceland's looming EU vote

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

Iceland may face a "Brexit moment" in its looming European Union referendum amid concerns about misinformation, foreign interference and AI, the country's foreign minister says.

The northern European island nation will hold a referendum on whether to continue EU accession talks on Aug 29, and developments are being watched closely in Washington, Moscow and Brussels.

Speaking to The Guardian, Foreign Minister Thorgerdur Katrin Gunnarsdottir accused domestic and foreign actors of "fearmongering", saying Iceland was being hit with misinformation and rhetoric "from the playbook of Nigel Farage and Reform", referring to the United Kingdom's far-right party Reform UK and its leader.

The minister warned that the referendum risks becoming a target of foreign interference and that misinformation could shape the result.

"I am fearing that we will face a Brexit moment," she said. "That would be ... a rather dangerous path because ... there were all kinds of lies put forward by the Brexiteers."

Thorgerdur pointed to disputed figures used by the UK's Leave campaign about how much money the country sent to the EU.

She said Brexit "should be an example of how not to run a campaign" rather than something to replicate. "Nothing of what they promised has actually been activated or realized," she added.

In March, Iceland's coalition government unexpectedly brought the EU referendum forward from 2027, citing heightened external pressures from the United States and strategic concerns over its closest neighbor, Greenland, following US threats to forcibly acquire the Danish territory.

"The international order that underpinned our security and prosperity for decades is under serious pressure," Thorgerdur said. "The world has changed so decisively ... so Greenland has of course affected, or had influence on, our decision."

She warned that trade is being used as a political weapon. "You do not treat a friend and an ally like Greenland and Denmark like the US did in the beginning of this year."

Yet, Iceland's ties with the US remain strong, she said.

"Iceland being a member of the EU is not contradicting all the good relationship with the US. One thing does not exclude the other thing," she added.

Icelanders will not decide on EU membership itself in the August vote, but on whether the government should resume accession talks.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:06 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:06 PM

SPORTS

SOCCER

Hungary for success: PSG eyes historic win

Enrique's side is targeting rare UCL title repeat in Budapest

If Paris Saint-Germain's maiden triumph last year allowed the French club to break its Champions League hoodoo, winning the title again this season would allow it to be remembered as one of Europe's all-time great teams.

Twelve months after crushing Inter Milan 5-0 in Munich to claim the trophy with the biggest final win in European Cup history, PSG heads to Budapest to face Premier League champion Arsenal.

Stopping Luis Enrique's thrilling PSG side has proved an impossible task for just about everyone over the last 18 months, from Pep Guardiola's Manchester City to the seemingly unbeatable Bayern Munich in their recent semifinal clash.

Arsenal tried, and failed, in last season's semis, and the Parisians are the favorites to retain their title this time.

"We understand that we are the reigning champions and we can win again," Khvicha Kvaratskhelia said in an interview with UEFA.

"Of course, this will be difficult, but we've proved, once more, that we can beat any team as long as we play our way and give our all on the pitch," added the Georgian winger, who is arguably the best player in this season's Champions League with seven goals and three assists in the knockout rounds.

When Enrique, a Champions League winner with Barcelona in 2015, arrived in 2023, PSG was transitioning away from the era of highly paid superstar players.

Lionel Messi and Neymar left that same summer, ending underwhelming spells in the French capital. Kylian Mbappe departed a year later.

PSG had been completely transformed since the Qatari takeover of the club in 2011, but — one run to the final in 2020 and a semifinal in 2021 apart — it had become associated with frequent disappointment in the Champions League, and occasional humiliation.

Enrique has overseen a radical change, completely altering perceptions of the club outside of France.



Vitinha will be looking to add to the six goals he already has in PSG's current Champions League campaign in Budapest. AFP



If PSG retains the Champions League title, Luis Enrique will become only the fifth manager to win three European Cups. AFP

'Still things to be achieved'

PSG was almost once seen as a little bit of a joke in Europe, due to its enormous spending and lack of continental success.

Now, it is taken very seriously and has won admirers for the breathtaking soccer played by an exciting young team, built with the transfer market nous of its "soccer advisor" Luis Campos and coached by Enrique.

"He is a top-class coach with clear ideas. He is full of energy. He is exceptional and we hope he stays for a very long time," said Ousmane Dembele.

The France forward has been transformed from a dazzling but often wasteful winger into a prolific striker.

He scored 35 times last season and won the Ballon d'Or. This season, his minutes have been carefully managed amid numerous fitness scares, but he has still scored 19 goals and set up 11 more in just 24 starts.

Dembele, at 29, is the fourth-oldest player in the squad, behind only Fabian Ruiz, Lucas Hernandez (both 30) and 32-year-old captain Marquinhos.

The youthful energy all over the team allows it to play with a terrifying intensity that has blown away most opponents.

Things might not be so easy against Arsenal, but PSG has already reached three consecutive semifinals under Enrique.

Reaching consecutive UCL finals is incredibly hard, but retaining the title is almost impossible.

Zinedine Zidane's Real Madrid, which won three on the bounce from 2016-18, is the only side to have gone back-to-back in the modern Champions League era — before that you have to go back to Arrigo Sacchi's AC Milan in 1989 and 1990.

In a French context, the country had only ever produced one Champions League winner before last season, with Marseille in 1993.

This is not a fairytale story for a club backed by the wealth of Qatar and with the fourth-highest revenue in world soccer last year, according to the Deloitte Football Money League, behind only Real, Barcelona and Bayern.

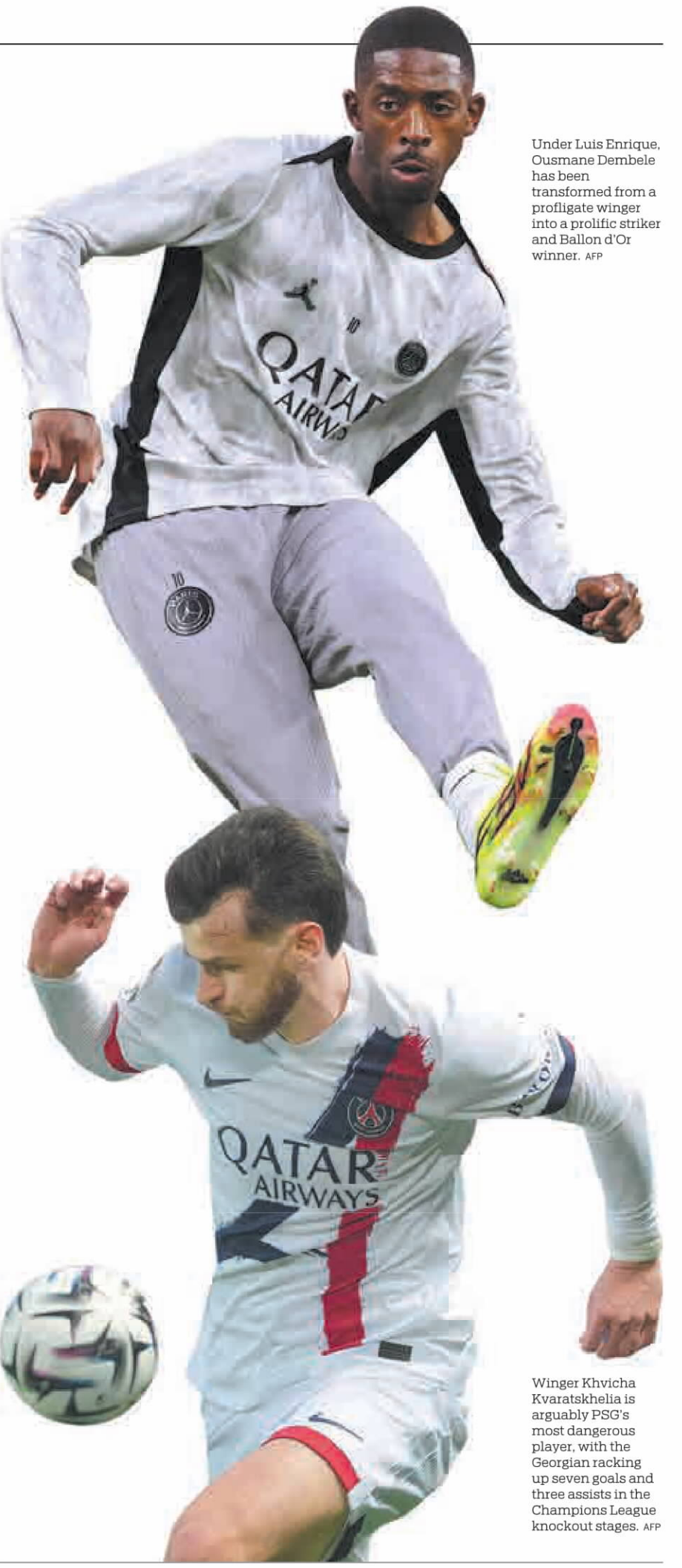
But, it shows it did the right thing in abandoning the old superstar project, even if plenty of its current squad — Dembele, Kvaratskhelia, Vitinha, Achraf Hakimi — could now be considered as such.

The true superstar, though, is the coach, and Enrique can become just the fifth manager to win three European Cups after Carlo Ancelotti, Bob Paisley, Zidane and Guardiola.

"When I came to the club I said my objective was to make history," he told UEFA.com.

"We want to keep writing history, because we feel there are still things to be achieved."

AFP



Under Luis Enrique, Ousmane Dembele has been transformed from a profligate winger into a prolific striker and Ballon d'Or winner. AFP

Winger Khvicha Kvaratskhelia is arguably PSG's most dangerous player, with the Georgian racking up seven goals and three assists in the Champions League knockout stages. AFP

Miserly Arsenal looks to nullify French flair in continental clash of styles

Arsenal's immovable object meets the unstoppable force of Paris Saint-Germain in Saturday's Champions League final, offering a pronounced clash of styles.

Holder PSG's flowing attack is arguably the continent's most exhilarating, while Mikel Arteta's Arsenal is wedded to the pragmatic approach that ended its 22-year wait to win the Premier League.

The Gunners' soccer this season has not won over many neutrals, but after years of being the league's perennial "nearly men", Arteta's strategy has paid dividends.

Arsenal's consistency beat out Pep Guardiola's Manchester City to be crowned champion of England and led it back to Europe's summit two decades after reaching the 2006 final.

In the current Champions League campaign Arsenal has conceded only six goals in 14 matches and is unbeaten — by contrast PSG has let in 22 through the tournament.

"Without the ball, they are the best team in the world," said PSG coach Luis Enrique of the north London side.

Arteta's side depends on structure and discipline, seeking to control opponents by stopping it reaching dangerous areas, limiting its shots in the box — no Premier League team has conceded fewer.

The Gunners aggressively press opponents high, seeking to dominate territory, and hate giving the ball away themselves, avoiding risk in their passing.

They possess imposing, physical players, from impressive center-back pairing Gabriel and William Saliba, through the spine of the team with Declan Rice to imposing strikers Viktor Gyokeres and Kai Havertz.

That aids Arsenal's dead ball mastery, under the cunning eye of set piece coach Nicolas Jover, who it signed from Manchester City in 2021.

Swiss newspaper Blick pondered whether Jover was "ruining soccer", with the Frenchman reportedly paid a bonus for every goal scored via set-pieces.

"We want to be the best and the most dominant team in every aspect of the game," said Arteta, imploring his team to score even more from dead balls.

With 27 Premier League goals scored this season from dead ball situations, 38 percent of its total, some have labeled Arsenal "Set Piece FC".

"Every time they get a corner, my head is in my hands," former Liverpool defender Jamie Carragher told Sky Sports.

"I've never seen anything like this before in football."

After three consecutive second-place finishes, though, Arsenal recognizes winning ugly is better than not winning at all.



Arsenal's style of play depends on structure, discipline and an aggressive high press, marshaled by the likes of (from left) Declan Rice, Viktor Gyokeres and Kai Havertz, and while some have poured scorn on its tactics, Arsenal boss Mikel Arteta remains unperturbed. AGENCIES

"I don't know how you celebrate one goal different to another — maybe for YouTube one is nicer (to look at) than another," said Arteta unperturbed by the criticism.

Arsenal won seven Premier League games by a slender 1-0 scoreline this season, managing to keep 19 clean sheets.

If teams do penetrate the backline, then they must beat David Raya, who is enjoying a superb season in goal.

The Spaniard has matched the record of nine clean sheets in the Champions League. A 10th could secure the trophy.

Arsenal's struggles from open play, particularly when star winger Bukayo Saka was out injured, frustrated even its own supporters at times.

Yet, as tens of thousands turned up to celebrate the Premier League title, nobody was complaining.

The joyous scenes outside the Emirates stadium, with some players joining the fans until past 5 am, will give Arsenal license to double down on its approach, particularly against a team as lethal as PSG.

AFP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:06 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:07 PM

Ebola response
New plan aims to contain virus outbreak in Africa
WORLD, PAGE 5



Smallest nation defies odds for World Cup debut
SPORTS, PAGE 16



Coastal revival
National push restores mangrove wetlands, supports livelihoods
NATURAL FRONTIERS, PAGE 12

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 MONDAY, JUNE 8, 2026



Students enter a national college entrance examination site in Yuncheng, Shanxi province, on Sunday. This year's national college entrance exam, or *gaokao*, kicked off on Sunday nationwide. XUE JUN / XINHUA

Parents embrace calm as millions appear for *gaokao*

By **ZOU SHUO**
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

The national college entrance exam, or *gaokao*, got underway on Sunday with millions of Chinese students appearing for it, while their parents gathered outside examination venues in quiet support.

Rather than being fretful and anxious, most parents were the very picture of calm — a sure sign that the long-held belief that the *gaokao* alone determines a child's future is becoming history.

A total of 12.9 million candidates are taking this year's exam, which can stretch over two to four days, depending on the region. According to the Ministry of Education, authorities have put candidates first by strengthening comprehensive support in transportation, accommodation, food safety, noise control and psychological counseling, to ensure a safe and orderly exam process.

On Sunday, many parents arrived at the examination centers well ahead of time. Fu Jing, a Beijing mother of an art student, showed up an hour before the exam began. She said that her daughter had already identified her target universities and appeared in good spirits before entering her designated room.

Fu noted that she had made no special changes to her daughter's diet or daily routines in the run-up to the exam to keep things as normal as possible. She planned to leave the venue once the exam started and return at noon, rather than wait for the entire duration of the test.

Liu Jinqiao, another Beijing mother, admitted feeling a bit nervous but remained composed.

She said that she has set no specific targets for her son as far as scores or universities were concerned. She felt that such decisions could wait till the exams were over. For her, the *gaokao* is an important milestone in every child's life, but it is not a decisive turning point.

Not all parents, however, were keen to downplay the exam's significance. Lu Qiang, the father of a Beijing sports student, said the *gaokao* still carries great weight. He said that his son hoped to get into a good sports college, which also emphasized solid academic performance.

Lu noted that competition remained fierce, and doing well in the exam could help young people gain a broader vision and better chart their future path.

For Lin Hong, a Beijing mother, the focus was on respecting her daughter's wishes. Lin recalled her own *gaokao* in 1997, when her father traveled a long distance to bring her homemade food. Now as a parent herself, she feels that showing care is more about following her daughter's lead. So the family skipped exaggerated exam rituals and maintained a relaxed atmosphere instead.

She is proud of how brave and self-aware her daughter has become — a transformation she finds far more valuable than any test score.

"I've watched her strive relentlessly for her goal over the past three years," Lin said. "My heart aches for all her hard work, but I'm incredibly proud of how she has grown."

"She has learned to recognize her strengths and weaknesses, set goals and make plans, and push forward through hardships. That kind of growth means far more than any exam score," Lin added.

Cheng Lu, a teacher in Qingdao, East China's Shandong province, has embraced a similarly peaceful attitude. For her, the *gaokao* marks a culmination of years of study and a true test of perseverance and self-discipline, but it can never define one's life. She values her son's curiosity, independent learning ability and upbeat personality far more than high scores.

"I want my son to know that no matter how important a day is, the sun rises and sets as usual," she said. "Just do your best. Life is a long journey — feel it, experience it and live it to the fullest."

Inside
Comment, **page 6**

Xi's DPRK visit expected to deepen ties

Envoy says two leaders to hold historic meeting, draw new blueprint for relations

President Xi Jinping will kick off a state visit to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on Monday, his first trip to the neighboring country in seven years and his first overseas visit this year.

Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, will make the two-day visit at the invitation of Kim Jong-un, general secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea and president of the State Affairs of the DPRK.

Wang Yajun, China's ambassador to the DPRK, said in an article published by People's Daily that Xi and Kim will hold an "important and historic meeting" to set the direction and draw a blueprint for China-DPRK relations in the new era.

"The historic scene of General Secretary Xi Jinping and General Secretary Kim Jong-un standing side by side on the Tian'anmen Rostrum in September last year remains vivid, and now, Kim Il-sung Square in Pyongyang is set to resound with a magnificent melody of China-DPRK friendship," Wang wrote.

Xi's upcoming visit is expected to draw a new blueprint for the development of relations between the two parties and the two countries, inject strong impetus into the joint cause of socialist construction, and make new contributions to regional peace, stability and prosperity.

Inside
Editorial, **page 6**

Strategic guidance

In a congratulatory message to Kim, on the 80th anniversary of the founding of the WPK in October, Xi noted that in recent years, he has held multiple meetings with Kim to guide and steer the development of relations between the two parties and two countries, opening a new chapter in the China-DPRK friendship.

In March 2018, the two leaders held their first meeting, during which they reached principled consensus in four aspects on developing China-DPRK relations in the new era. Xi and Kim met three times in less than 100 days that year, making history in high-level exchanges between China and the DPRK.

The two leaders exchanged visits in the first half of 2019, and in September last year, Kim made another visit to China. Since 2018, the top leaders of the two parties and the two countries have held six meetings and maintained close communication in various forms, leading China-DPRK relations to forge ahead in the new era.

The strategic guidance of top leaders of the two parties and the two countries is the greatest political advantage and strongest guarantee for the development of relations between the two sides.

This year marks the 65th anniversary of the signing of the China-DPRK Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, making Xi's upcoming visit to the DPRK even more important.

Unwavering choice

For the two sides, deepening the friendship has always been an unwavering strategic choice.

No matter how the international situation changes, it remains the unwavering policy of the CPC and the Chinese government to maintain, consolidate and develop China-DPRK relations, Xi said in the congratulatory message on the 80th anniversary of the founding of the WPK.

"This is a strategic choice and the only right choice both sides have made based on history and reality, the international and regional structure and the general situation of China-DPRK ties. This should not and will not change because of any single event at a particular time," he said in the meeting with Kim in 2018.

*See **Visit,** page 3*

SUMMER TRADITION BREEZES BACK INTO FASHION

After long being relegated to mere 'objets d'art', folding fans are once again finding favor

By **YANG FEIYUE**
yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

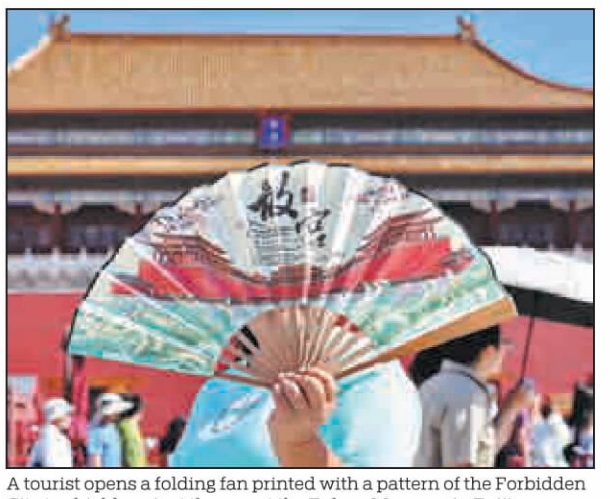
Although air conditioners across China are humming to life as the summer heat begins to climb, the folding fan that was once pushed to the margins of daily life is reappearing in subway cars, museum shops and tourist streets.

Once associated mainly with traditional aesthetics or seasonal nostalgia, the bamboo-and-silk folding fan is again being picked up by younger consumers as a functional accessory and a form of cultural expression.

At the 22nd China (Shenzhen) International Cultural Industries Fair in Guangdong province in May, bamboo folding fans made by Mingde — a traditional brand that is based in Guangde, Anhui province, and has a production process that requires dozens of steps per fan — drew large crowds.

Meanwhile, in Yiwu, Zhejiang province, officially licensed Portuguese national soccer team folding fans are currently rolling off production lines, bound for global markets as the 2026 FIFA World Cup prepares to kick off.

A traditional Chinese folding fan consists of two sections: the ribs, typically carved from bamboo, and the fan surface, often made of silk or mulberry bark paper.



A tourist opens a folding fan printed with a pattern of the Forbidden City to shield against the sun at the Palace Museum in Beijing on May 28. WANG XIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Unlike mass-produced plastic fans, each piece is hand-assembled, with the ribs radiating from a single rivet — allowing the fan to fold flat into a sleeve or snap open with a single flick of the wrist. The surface is often painted with landscapes, calligraphy or birds and flowers, turning a functional object into a portable work of art.

"It is a small, mobile art gallery," Zheng Zhigang, an art critic with a doctorate in history (archaeology) from Nanjing University, said about the charm of the traditional Chinese folding fans.

"It contains paintings, calligraphy, poetry and seals, all within a frame of a few inches," he said.

China Vibes 风华中国 GIFTS

Sun Yaqing, chairwoman of Hangzhou's 151-year-old fan producer Wangxingji, sees the same cultural depth in the fans' physical construction. "The ribs are made of bamboo. In Chinese culture, bamboo represents humility, integrity and resilience," Sun said. "When a scholar held a fan, he was reminding himself of those virtues."

Sun attributes the rekindled interest in traditional folding fans to changing consumer values, the rise of *guochao* (a youth-driven wave of pride in traditional Chinese aesthetics), and a growing global appetite for objects with rich backstories.

As summer heats up, Sun has been busier than ever, as international guests can't seem to get enough of the fans.

Wangxingji now exports to more than 40 countries and regions, and Sun has noticed clear patterns. Japanese buyers prefer plain bamboo fans for tea ceremonies. European customers seek silk fans as wall art or fashion accessories. Middle Eastern collectors favor heavy, ornate fans with gold foil.

Sun believes the folding fan is no longer just a seasonal tool. "It is a message — folded, carved, painted and ready to be opened," she said.

Classics can help shape proper perspectives today

WORLD WATCH
By Igor Radev

In a chapter called "In the World of Men" from the *Zhuangzi* — the Daoist text attributed to the thinker of the same name, who lived more than 2,200 years ago — there is a story about a carpenter called Shih who comes across a massive oak tree at a village shrine.

The tree is so large that thousands can rest under its shade, yet the carpenter ignores it. When his apprentice asks why, Shih explains: "That tree is useless. A boat made from it would sink, a coffin would soon rot, a tool would split, a door would ooze sap, and a beam would have termites. It's worthless timber and is of no use. That is why it has reached such a ripe old age."

In the same vein, the simplest, and yet most cogent, definition of classics could be: "human culture that has been able to reach ripe old age".

One might naturally ask, "But what is the use of classics?" In a strictly utilitarian sense, they have none. For me, classical studies embody what Zhuangzi described as the "useless tree" — a tree spared the axe precisely because it appears to serve no practical purpose. Yet its most profound utility lies in this very "uselessness".

*See **Classics,** page 3*

INSIDE
Data keeps users fit
Global Views, page 8



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

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN

China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:07 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:07 PM

INDEPTH

From a bowl of soup, to a shared melody and getting a joke, immersion in culture a gentle process



From left: American-German content creator Adrianna Rommeswinkel, who grew up in Dongguan, Guangdong province, says her roots are in the life she has lived in China; British creator Emma Sandford, dressed in traditional ethnic group costume, says she has adopted Chinese customs while living in the country; US singer-songwriter Carly Beth believes she is bridging cultures through performing Chinese music. She says Chinese music "chose her", not the other way around. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The imperceptible steps to 'becoming Chinese'

By YU RAN
sunnyu923@163.com

More than two decades after a photograph of five blonde foreign children entering a local primary school in Dongguan, Guangdong province, appeared on the front page of the Yangcheng Evening News, one of them has returned to the public eye.

Adrianna Rommeswinkel, a 29-year-old content creator known as Addy, was 6 when she arrived in the country in 2002, just a year after China joined the World Trade Organization.

For her, feeling like she belonged in China did not emerge from a single moment. "That feeling grew into my bones… through so many small, unremarkable moments," she said.

That process unfolded through everyday experiences that gradually reshaped her sense of home. One vivid early memory Rommeswinkel has is of her and her siblings joining classmates in morning exercises. "That's the thing about belonging, when you're in it, you don't notice. You just are," she said.

Over time, belonging became rooted less in physical places than in relationships. She recalls being quietly comforted at her best friend's home as a child.

"My godmother took one look at me and put a bowl of soup in front of me. Didn't ask questions. Just… soup," she said.

Even today, she remembers the landline telephone number of that family and still returns to the neighborhood market where vendors recognize her and recall her childhood preferences.

Her understanding of "becoming Chinese" extends beyond language. While her fluency in Cantonese and Mandarin is the most obvious aspect, she points to the deeper meanings embedded in everyday interactions.

"Language isn't just words. It's the jokes you get, that you learn from years of sitting at dinner tables, listening, absorbing," she said, noting that even her dreams are sometimes in Cantonese.

These experiences were accompanied by shifts in habits and values, from everyday politeness to understanding social connections through relationships.

Growing up in a Chinese school system also shaped her worldview, as the classes emphasized collective identity rather than individual focus.

"You don't really exist as just 'you'. You exist as part of something… fitting in, contributing, being reliable, that's what mattered," she said, noting that this perspective ultimately felt "freeing".

Cultural contrasts still arise, particularly when she is in the United States, but her response upon returning to China is telling. "Every time I land in China, every single time, there's this moment when I step out of the airport and the air hits me. The humidity, the smell, the noise, the chaos. And my whole body just… relaxes," she said.

Reflecting on her parents' decision to raise the family in China, Rommeswinkel said: "That choice gave me something I couldn't have gotten anywhere else. It gave me two worlds instead of one. It wasn't easy. But it was everything."

Today, when asked where she is from, her answer is simple. For her, identity is no longer defined by nationality alone, but by lived experiences.

"I grew up in China… that's the most important part, where I became me. My roots aren't in a passport or a bloodline. They're in the life I actually lived," she said.



Zhao Danyang (center with her thumb up), a co-founder of Lumiverse Media LLC, takes her team of foreign influencers on a visit to Xiaohongshu's headquarters in Shanghai in January. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Shared words

In recent years, more foreigners in China have shared similar stories of cultural immersion shaped by long-term, everyday interactions.

Emma Sandford, a 31-year-old from Northern Ireland, has spent much of the past decade moving in and out of China, building a life closely connected to the country.

From an internship at a charity music festival in Zhuhai, Guangdong province, in 2017, to teaching in Haikou, Hainan province, and Chengdu, Sichuan province, her connection evolved from curiosity into something more personal.

Language was the turning point in her journey, reshaping how she thinks, expresses emotions, and understands the world.

"Through the language, I began to better understand Chinese history, humor, and ways of expressing emotion, opening a deeper path into the culture," she said, adding that certain ideas and feelings can feel more precise in Chinese than in English, giving her a new way to articulate everyday experiences.

Her immersion deepened after moving to Chengdu in 2022, when she made a conscious effort to build friendships with locals who did not speak English. Working in a kindergarten and interacting with older colleagues offered a closer look at everyday perspectives. Living with Chinese roommates, and now with her boyfriend and his mother, further grounded her in daily life.

"These experiences offered me an understanding of culture that goes beyond what short-term visits can provide," said Sandford.

She often describes herself as having "a foreign body but a Chinese soul", a phrase that has taken on more meaning over time. "I drink hot water and I enjoy traditional Chinese medicine. … These things have become part of my daily life now. Such habits have become instinctive, shaping my routines and sense of comfort," she said.

Over time, these routines have also influenced her mindset, as she has come to value a stronger sense of community.

"Shared meals, close family ties and everyday social interactions reshaped my understanding of well-being. I may be heavier now, but I'm much happier and more relaxed about life," said Sandford.

Despite this, she does not see her identity as a replacement of one culture with another.

"My Irish background remains the foundation of who I am, while China has added another layer to how I live and understand the world," she said.

When she returns to Ireland, she notices subtle shifts in her behavior, from bringing small gifts when visiting others to preferring quieter social activities and more collective ways of socializing.

Songs of praise

Carly Beth, an American singer-songwriter, pianist and livestream artist based in New York, began her journey with Chinese music unexpectedly while living in London, when a Chinese acquaintance encouraged her to livestream to audiences in China. She continued streaming daily while learning the language and developing her music, building a strong connection with Chinese listeners.

"When I first started livestreaming to China, the response was overwhelming in the most beautiful way. I suddenly had thousands of people connecting with my music at once, but I couldn't communicate with many of them yet," she said.

"I stayed up until 4 am night after night teaching myself Chinese just so I could talk and sing to them."

A turning point came when she encountered the classic song *Later* by singer Rene Liu that reflects on love and regret.

"I looked up the translation and I cried. The emotional depth of the lyrics hit me so hard that I immediately knew I wanted to continue learning Chinese music," she said.

She developed her own way of learning, slowing songs down and mimicking each sound, finding that melody helped guide both tone and emotion.

"Singing in Chinese actually felt easier than speaking at first, because melodies help guide the tones and emotion… The most rewarding part has been the emotional connection with my Chinese audience. Music stopped being just performance; it became communication," said Beth.

As her work reached wider audiences through platforms such as Xiaohongshu and television appearances, she observed differences in how her music was received. Chinese listeners, she said, tend to respond strongly to emotional depth and poetic expression, while Western audiences often focus more on the conversational aspects of her songwriting.

Chinese music has become "an emotional anchor" in her life, shaping her sense of identity. "It feels less like I chose Chinese music, and more like Chinese music chose me," she said.

Friends and family in the US who had never listened to Chinese music before have begun listening to the songs she performs, forming what she describes as a cultural bridge.

Mixed cultural content

Zhao Danyang, the 26-year-old co-founder of Lumiverse Media LLC in Shanghai, has worked with over 1,000 foreign influencers and links the growing interest to shifts in content production and distribution.

"In recent years, we can clearly feel that more foreign creators are actively engaging with and sharing Chinese culture. If we look at it on a timeline, there are two key phases," she said.

"The pandemic was an overlooked turning point, when many people began exploring other countries through the internet, and China produced a large amount of content."

From 2023, especially with the "TikTok refugee" phenomenon, the trend took hold, as foreign users not only watched but also began sharing Chinese culture.

A 2024 report by Tencent Research Institute and Newrank found that foreign content creators are gaining significant traction on Chinese short-video platforms. Fifteen overseas influencers each have more than 10 million followers, with combined followers of 290 million. More than 100 creators have over 1 million followers, while nearly 1,000 active foreign accounts have surpassed 10,000 followers.

Citing overseas data, Zhao noted that certain types of content perform better across cultures.

"Food is still the most effective entry point. Hotpot, street food, breakfast comparisons and snack tasting are among the easiest for foreign creators to share. The second is internet culture, such as high-speed rail, mobile payments, food delivery, as well as memes, short videos and livestream e-commerce," said Zhao.

She added that the third category is traditional crafts, such as Jingdezhen ceramics, which carry cultural meaning and are more attractive than industrial products.

Beyond content categories, Zhao sees a deeper shift. "Chinese cultural communication has moved from an 'official, institutional model' to a 'content ecosystem model'," she said. "Many creators start with content opportunities because they attract traffic. But after six months to a year, they begin to understand more subtle aspects like communication styles, humor and social norms."

In some cases, this leads to hybrid forms of expression.

"When creators stay in China for a longer period, they begin to produce 'mixed cultural content'. We often call them 'natural cultural translators' because they can connect audiences from both sides," said Zhao.

She said these changes in language and behavior are a sign of deeper cultural internalization, as creators gradually move beyond surface-level content production and begin to engage more meaningfully with Chinese culture.

She also highlighted the role of digital platforms. "Short-video platforms have completely changed the structure of cultural communication. Algorithms decentralize distribution, allowing content itself to determine reach. At the same time, short videos lower the threshold for understanding culture and create a two-way interaction, which leads to co-creation," she said.

Zhao said that in the future, cultural communication will become global co-creation. "It may not be about 'exporting culture', but about letting it spread naturally through content ecosystems, with creators from different backgrounds participating together."

Data from the Ministry of Commerce indicates that China's cultural trade reached 1.4 trillion yuan ($206 billion) in 2024, with digitally driven sectors, including online audiovisual content, exceeding 370 billion yuan and accounting for more than a quarter of the total.

Sun Zhe, a sociologist at the Chinese Modernization Institute of Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, described the trend as "a very positive phenomenon" and "another form of globalization in the high-tech era".

"It reflects a shift toward 'plural modernities', where development is no longer defined by a single model but allows for multiple paths, with China offering 'an alternative paradigm' that expands global choices," said Sun.

"We are moving from the television era to the short-video era. Traditional media was highly centralized, while today's platforms are shaped by the diverse technologies, enabling more decentralized and diverse cultural production," said Sun.

Short-video formats also lower the barriers to cultural understanding by making content more direct and easier to interpret. "Instead of grand narratives, foreigners now engage with China through everyday practices such as tea, food and daily routines, with bottom-up, life-based expression," he said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:07 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:07 PM

TOP NEWS

Visit: Over the years, mutual trust grows

From page 1

Over the years, Xi and Kim have had in-depth exchanges of views on major issues through various forms, supported each other on issues of major concern to each other, continuously consolidated mutual trust and built consensus.

Xi said in a meeting with Kim in Beijing last year that China has always maintained an objective and impartial stance, and stands ready to continue strengthening coordination with the DPRK in order to strive to maintain the peace and stability of the peninsula.

The top leaders of the two parties and the two countries have stood together through thick and thin, enabling the traditional friendship between China and the DPRK to demonstrate vigorous vitality in the new era.

In a speech at the welcoming banquet held by Kim during Xi's state visit to the DPRK in 2019, Xi hailed the traditional friendship between the two sides as a shared, valuable asset forged and left by leaders of elder generations of both countries, saying that such a friendship has remained strong and vigorous despite constant changes.

The traditional friendship between China and the DPRK was forged by the elder generation of leaders of the two parties and two countries, cemented in the revolutionary struggle, and continuously deepened in the course of socialist construction, Xi said in his exchange of New Year greeting messages with Kim in 2024.

The friendship between the two countries has been further reinforced by friendly exchanges between the two peoples. During their exchange of New Year greeting messages in 2024, Xi and Kim jointly designated that year as the China-DPRK Friendship Year.

In the message, Xi called on the two sides to carry forward the long-standing friendship, deepen strategic mutual trust, enhance exchanges and cooperation, and ensure that the bilateral ties move forward with the times for greater development.

Joining hands

"Development" and "cooperation" have frequently been brought up during talks between Xi and Kim.

During the state visit to the DPRK in 2019, Xi suggested that the two sides expand practical cooperation to bring more benefits to both peoples.

The Chinese side stands ready to enhance strategic communication, maintain close exchanges and cooperation with the DPRK, and join hands to promote the China-DPRK friendship and the socialist cause of the two countries, Xi said in a congratulatory message in 2025 on the 77th anniversary of the founding of the DPRK.

On March 12, the international passenger trains connecting China and the DPRK began operating in both directions. On March 30, an Air China passenger plane from Beijing arrived in Pyongyang, marking the formal resumption of the Chinese carrier's passenger flight operations between the capitals of China and the DPRK.

In 2025, bilateral trade returned to pre-pandemic levels, while trade in the first quarter of this year grew 14.3 percent year-on-year, showing a steady upward trend, said Wang, the Chinese ambassador to the DPRK, in the People's Daily article.

In early May, a group of Chinese students arrived in Pyongyang and began studying in universities including Kim Il Sung University. In February 2025, the DPRK delegation participated in the 9th Asian Winter Games held in China in Harbin, the capital of Heilongjiang province.

From economic and trade exchanges to education and sports cooperation, China-DPRK exchanges and cooperation in various fields have continued to deepen and have grown ever solid, bringing benefits to the peoples of both countries.

XINHUA—CHINA DAILY

Medical outreach



A doctor from the 25th Chinese medical team to Cameroon assists a local patient on the way to a consultation at a free clinic in Ngat-Bane village, Cameroon, on Saturday. The team conducted the outreach event as part of China's "100 Medical Teams in 1,000 Villages" program. KEPSEU / XINHUA

Trade cooperation with Belarus set to deepen

Minsk event highlights China's innovative move to share opportunities of its vast market

By **LIU HONGJIE** in Minsk and **REN QI** in Beijing

Vice-President Han Zheng has called for further strengthening solidarity and cooperation between China and Belarus, with a focus on fields such as mechanical equipment, agriculture, e-commerce trade and the digital economy.

Addressing a business event on Sunday in Minsk themed "Big Market for All: Export Goods of Belarus to China", which was organized by the Chinese Ministry of Commerce and the Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Han highlighted the continuous development of bilateral trade, noting that the two countries will jointly promote the building of an open world economy.

The "Export to China" series of events is one of China's pragmatic measures to actively expand independent and unilateral opening-up. It highlights China's innovative move to share the opportunities of the country's vast market with the world and create a new pattern of win-win cooperation, as well as a proactive contribution to supporting economic globalization and safeguarding the multilateral trading system.

Ling Ji, vice-minister of commerce and deputy China international trade representative, stated that China and Belarus are all-weather comprehensive strategic partners, and expanding bilateral trade is an important consensus reached by the two countries' heads of state. He noted that, for this reason, China selected Belarus as the first overseas stop for the "Export to China" series of events.

He said the special event, held during the Belarusian agricultural exhibition, will build a platform for Belarusian enterprises to expand their exports to China and facilitate the entry of more high-quality Belarusian products into the Chinese market.

Belarusian First Deputy Prime Minister Nikolai Snopkov said that Belarus is an open economy, with exports generating 60 percent of its GDP. He pointed out that Belarus trades with more than 150 countries and continues to expand its catalog of export commodities. In its cooperation strategy, China represents a key direction, with approximately 200 Belarusian enterprises approved to supply food products to China and the variety of export commodities to China reaching into the hundreds.

Snopkov said that Belarus is willing to provide a comprehensive plan for win-win development for its Chinese partners, adding that Belarus has become a key hub for the Belt and Road Initiative in the region.

He emphasized that these achievements are deeply rooted in strong people-to-people ties, noting that more than 30 cooperation agreements have been signed between Belarusian regions and various parts of China.

With the implementation of a mutual visa exemption system, business and tourism exchanges have become increasingly close, he said, highlighting that sincerity and friendship serve as the most important strategic resources.

Belarusian Deputy Minister of Agriculture Alexander Yakovchits said China is the primary market for Belarusian products in the Asian region. He noted that in the Chinese market today, Belarus ranks as the second-largest source of rapeseed oil, the sixth-largest source of whey and milk powder, and the seventh-largest source of frozen beef, while its alcoholic beverages, chocolates and confectionery products are also widely popular.

Yakovchits added that as of today, there are 265 valid export registration numbers in the China Import Food Enterprise Registration system, covering 193 Belarusian food producers. He said that newly approved products for the Chinese market include wheat flour, oatmeal, dry baking mixes, wheat bran, sauces, honey and numerous other items.

Cao Derong, president of the China Chamber of Commerce of Import and Export of Foodstuffs, Native Produce and Animal By-products, said that in 2025, China imported $520 million worth of food and agricultural products from Belarus. This represented a 21.4 percent increase compared with 2021, which was 26.8 percentage points higher than the growth rate of China's global imports of food and agricultural products during the same period.

Cao added that China is the second-largest export market for Belarusian food and agricultural products. He highlighted that five major categories of Belarusian products, namely rapeseed oil, beef, whey, chicken and flax, collectively account for 93 percent of China's total imports of food and agricultural products from Belarus, and that these products enjoy broad export prospects in China.

Contact the writers at renqi@chinadaily.com.cn

EU protectionism can backfire, warn experts

By **YANG RAN**
yangran1@chinadaily.com.cn

Trade issues have become a flashpoint in relations between China and the European Union of late, with experts warning that the EU's shift toward protectionism, under the "de-risking" banner, could backfire, damaging its own global competitiveness.

Experts said the path forward lies in internal reforms and collaborative strategies that contribute to mutually beneficial economic ecosystems.

There has been an increase in trade friction between China and Europe in recent months. On May 29, after a meeting on China-EU relations, the European Commission defined the trade and investment dynamics with China as "not sustainable" and reaffirmed a strategy of "de-risking".

Europe has introduced a series of measures, many of which are seen as erecting barriers against imports from China. These include the proposed revisions to the Cybersecurity Act, or CSA2, and the Industrial Accelerator Act, or IAA. Reports said the EU is considering stricter public procurement rules that would force companies to source from at least three different suppliers, with no single supplier accounting for more than 30 to 40 percent of critical components.

The China Council for the Promotion of International Trade has opposed the CSA2, stating that the draft introduces "nontechnical risk" factors, and directly links cybersecurity risks to companies from specific countries or backgrounds, seeking to exclude them from relevant EU supply chains.

Sebastien Maillard, an associate fellow at Chatham House's Europe Programme, described the IAA as "some sort of sophisticated protectionism" for the EU's trading partners. He noted that "European discrimination is already introduced" in the bloc's new defense financing instrument, which limits the share of component costs from outside the EU, European Free Trade Association, or Ukraine to 35 percent.

Dong Yifan, an associate research fellow at the Institute of Country and Regional Studies at Beijing Language and Culture University, said Europe's recent policy moves essentially use the so-called "de-risking" slogan as a cover for trade protectionism.

"These policy proposals are largely aimed at Chinese companies. Once implemented, they will disrupt industrial and investment ties and effectively shut many Chinese companies out of the European market," Dong said.

Experts said the EU's proposed measures could result in greater losses than gains for itself. A report by the China Chamber of Commerce to the EU and KPMG estimated that the CSA2 could cost nearly 367.8 billion euros ($428.22 billion) if it forces the replacement of Chinese suppliers across 18 critical sectors.

Dong said the EU, despite recognizing the risk of potential economic losses, continues to shape its policies through a lens of "pan-politicization and pan-securitization".

Jian Junbo, director of the Center for China-Europe Relations at Fudan University's Institute of International Studies, said the EU's concerns over China's trade surplus stem from structural shifts in bilateral trade that cannot be fixed through finger-pointing.

For Europe, Jian argued, the real solution lies in boosting its own competitiveness through innovation and re-industrialization. "The EU needs to invest more in high-tech R&D, tackle energy challenges and reform labor markets to make 'Made in Europe' truly competitive again.

"From China's perspective, continuing efforts to expand imports is a crucial step in demonstrating its responsibility as a major country. The China International Import Expo and the Hainan Free Trade Port, for example, are signs of China's efforts to advance its opening-up. China remains a vital market for Europe and the globe, poised to continue to fuel global economic growth," Jian said.

According to Chinese customs data, in the first three quarters of 2025, China was already the top export destination for 79 countries and regions. For the full year, China imported a total of 18.48 trillion yuan ($2.72 trillion) in goods, keeping its share of global imports at around 10 percent. The EU is China's largest source of consumer goods imports.

Protests in Los Angeles



Protesters confront federal law enforcement officers outside the Metropolitan Detention Center in Los Angeles, the United States, on Saturday. The demonstration commemorated federal immigration raids and community protests that took place a year ago. JILL CONNELLY / AP

Classics: Space for inquiry is limitless

From page 1

We must recognize that the highest value of knowledge does not reside in superficial gains. As the writer and poet Yang Xiong of the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 24) observed in his Model Sayings (*Fayan*): "The noble person learns for the Dao; the petty person learns for personal gain."

History does not repeat itself, but it often "rhymes". Ancient knowledge remains vital because it preserves responses to human problems and conditions that are not fundamentally bound to any particular historical era. Therefore, the answers given throughout the ages — regardless of whether we ultimately accept or reject them — are significant even today. The Colombian thinker Nicolas Gomez Davila captured this sentiment succinctly: "Truth is in history, but history is not the truth."

The pursuit of classical studies also serves as a necessary corrective to our modern temporal parochialism. In his essay *On the Reading of Old Books*, C.S. Lewis argued that every age is defined by its own particular blind spots and prejudices — biases that those living within that era are often unable to perceive. Our own age is no exception. Crucially, because different eras harbor different prejudices, it is only through engagement with the literature of ages unlike our own that we can recognize the limitations of our own intellectual horizon. Only then can we transcend the constraints of our era and broaden our perspective.

The role of classical studies is not limited to preserving and transmitting literary heritage. It also has to — if not primarily — contextualize it through the use of strict scientific methodology. In doing so, classical studies render the cultural products and literary output of the past "contemporary" again. Would it be pretentious to claim — albeit half-jokingly — that classics fulfill the function of a "time machine"?

However, besides the temporal dimension of the classics, we should not overlook the spatial one. Every civilization possesses its own inherited corpus of cultural patterns and literary canon. The danger of spatial parochialism is no less real than that of the aforementioned temporal parochialism. When one dwells exclusively within one's own heritage, the temptation always lurks to mistake the particular for the universal. This danger — both intellectual and moral — in the case of Western European civilization was clearly identified and sharply criticized by Nikolai Trubetzkoy, who, in his 1920 essay *Europe and Mankind*, observed: "Romano-Germanic peoples (those of Western European ethnic background) have long naively believed that only they truly represent humanity. Thus, they portray themselves as 'humanity,' their culture as 'universal human civilization,' and their chauvinism as 'cosmopolitanism.'"

Therefore, one of the principal tasks of classical studies at this historical juncture lies in bringing the different classics of different civilizations into dialogue, holding them opposite one another as mirrors. In this way, classical studies, by overcoming the limitations imposed by one's particular civilizational background, could become an instrument through which we may transcend our spatial limitations in cultural terms.

In the process of translating works from the Chinese intellectual tradition, I have often confronted the conundrum of whether, or to what degree, one is justified in identifying patterns and concepts from one classical tradition in another. Yet the essence of translation itself lies precisely in the ability to identify, within the target language and culture, concepts, approaches and aesthetic principles analogous to those of the source.

We might ask, for instance: Did the Chinese historian Sima Qian and the Greek historian Plutarch share a common historiographical vision, and to what extent do their methodologies converge? Or how do Chinese philosopher Zhu Xi's concepts of *li* (principle) and *qi* (material force) diverge from — or converge with — Aristotle's notions of morphe (form) and hyle (matter)?

The space for inquiry in this context is limitless.

The author is a sinologist, chair scholar at the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:07 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:07 PM

GLOBAL LENS



Members of the Ghetto Kids, a Ugandan dance group, rehearse in Nakawuka, Wakiso, Uganda, on May 25. The group is to perform at the 2026 FIFA World Cup Final in New Jersey on July 19. PHOTOS BY BADRU KATUMBA / AFP

From dusty roads to super stars

Uganda's Ghetto Kids to perform at the 2026 FIFA World Cup



Dauda Kavuma (center), manager of the Ghetto Kids, guides a dancer during a rehearsal in Nakawuka on May 25.



Members of the Ugandan dance group the Ghetto Kids rehearse in Nakawuka on May 25.



Members of Ugandan dance group the Ghetto Kids rehearse at their home in Nakawuka on May 25.



Dauda Kavuma, manager of the Ghetto Kids, guides dancers during a rehearsal on May 25.



Members of the Ugandan dance group the Ghetto Kids react during an interview in Wakiso on May 25.



Members of the Ghetto Kids skip rope during a break from rehearsals in Wakiso on May 25.

Their journey began as they danced barefoot on a dusty street in Uganda in 2014, and will soon reach the FIFA World Cup stage at New Jersey's MetLife Stadium in the coming weeks.

The Ghetto Kids, a Ugandan dance troupe composed of street children, expressed excitement at being invited by Colombian singer Shakira Isabel Mebarak Ripoll to perform at the World Cup this year.

The soccer tournament, set to kick off on June 11, will span the US, Mexico and Canada. The last World Cup final drew more than a billion viewers worldwide, according to FIFA.

Shakira announced in May that the group, composed of orphaned or vulnerable children, will join her for the final on July 19. The children have already appeared in the video for her song *Dai Dai*, the official anthem of the tournament.



Dauda Kavuma, manager of the Ghetto Kids, displays an award on May 25.

"I've already invited the Ghetto Kids from Uganda," Shakira said in a video on social media, adding she wanted the performance to feel "unforgettable".

"We can't wait to show the world what we are!" said one of the young performers, 8-year-old Busingye Josephine Daniella.

"We feel so excited to perform with Shakira," said Daniella.

"Getting outside the country ... and performing on one of the biggest stages ... it feels good and it brings a lot of opportunities," said 15-year-old Ssegirinya Madwanah King.

Dauda Kavuma, founder of the Ghetto Kids — a foundation that cares for vulnerable children — and a former street kid himself, expressed hope that the attention would help them raise funds for a rehabilitation and education center.

"We have that big dream ... It's a very huge opportunity for the Ghetto Kids, for me, for the children," he said.

The group first drew attention in 2014, when five children posted an energetic dance video of Ugandan singer Eddy Kenzo's *Sitya Loss*, going viral after being shared by the singer himself.

Over the years, their videos on YouTube and other social media platforms became less blurry, with their choreography becoming more intricate.

But the infectious energy and their "comedic dance style" remain. "We are using music, dance and drama to make lives better," Kavuma said.

Kavuma said he never imagined the children would get such an opportunity. "I've been hoping, but I didn't see this coming," he said.

However, there is still uncertainty over the performance, as Uganda works to prevent the spread of Ebola from its neighbor Democratic Republic of Congo.

Seven cases of Ebola and one death have been confirmed in Uganda, and Ugandan authorities on May 27 ordered the closure of the border with DR Congo "with immediate effect".

People who have visited DR Congo, Uganda or South Sudan in the past 21 days are barred from entering the US, except for US citizens, according to a US order in May.

Nonetheless, Kavuma is optimistic about the trip.

The group will be Uganda's only representation at the tournament, with its national team having failed to qualify for the World Cup.

The performance holds great significance for his group, which he said is now "one big family" — one that started from the fringes of Ugandan society.

"Before joining the group, we weren't going to school, we weren't traveling, we weren't getting the basic needs," Ssegirinya said.

"If I weren't part of the group, I don't know where I would be," he added.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:07 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:07 PM

WORLD

Trump: Iran conflict not 'endless war'

Ceasefire under strain as tensions between Israel and Hezbollah continue to flare up

By **SHI GUANG** in New York
shiguang@chinadailyusa.com

US President Donald Trump said on Sunday that the conflict with Iran was not an "endless war", as diplomatic efforts to secure a lasting settlement continued and new exchanges of fire tested a fragile ceasefire.

In an exclusive interview with NBC News, Trump denied promising not to involve the US in more wars during his presidential campaign.

> This is not an endless war. We've been doing this for three months. Much of it has been under the form – a pretty good form of ceasefire."
>
> **Donald Trump, US president**

"I didn't promise anything. I don't like these endless wars," he told Meet the Press.

"This is not an endless war. We've been doing this for three months. Much of it has been under the form — a pretty good form of ceasefire."

Trump's comments came as the war with Iran reached 100 days, and a lasting settlement remained elusive.

Mediation efforts have so far failed to produce any further agreements in a war that has strained the global economy and threatened food security in some of the world's most vulnerable countries.

In a fresh bid to restart negotiations between Iran and the US, Pakistan's interior minister was in Tehran on Sunday to deliver a message to Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei from Pakistan's army chief Field Marshal Asim Munir, according to the Iranian state-run IRNA news agency.

The US and Iran have engaged in largely indirect negotiations for an interim deal to halt the three-month-old war that would leave issues including Iran's nuclear program to further negotiations.

Pakistani authorities have said that Islamabad, with support from regional countries including Qatar, Turkiye and Egypt, has been working to help bridge differences between the United States and Iran and encourage efforts aimed at reducing tensions and ensuring the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz.

US and Iranian negotiators reached a tentative deal a week ago to extend the ceasefire by 60 days and start a new round of talks on Iran's nuclear program. The US has called for unspecified changes, and Iranian officials have shown no public signs of agreeing to the deal.

Trump has said in the past that Iran could not be allowed to possess nuclear weapons.

Moderator Kristen Welker on Meet the Press asked Trump: "Would you be open to sending in US forces to retrieve the nuclear stockpile?"

Trump replied: "Yeah ... But the way you do it is if we make a deal, if we make a deal now we're friendly, we'll all go together. It'll be our equipment. We'll take it out and destroy it, whether it's onsite or whether we take it offsite."

However, he added that, "if we don't make a deal, then we're going to take them out militarily very harshly. And we'll wait till we do that before we go, in which case we'll have safety either way."

On Sunday, Iran fired missiles at Israel, which were claimed to have been intercepted without causing casualties, marking the first attacks on Israel from Iran since the April ceasefire took effect.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards said the Israeli army must stop attacks on Lebanon, and if it expands its attacks or responds to Iran's actions, it will face "more crushing and regretful blows".

Despite Trump's warnings against retaliation, Israel's military chief of staff said the military will strike "the enemy" with determination as soon as the order is given.

'No choice'

Trump said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu would have "no choice" but to accept any agreement reached between the United States and Iran, the Financial Times reported late Sunday.

Washington, not Israel, would determine the outcome of negotiations with Tehran, Trump said during a telephone interview with the British daily shortly after Iran launched a salvo of ballistic missiles at Israel.

"He won't have any choice," Trump was quoted as saying. "I call the shots. I call all the shots. He doesn't call the shots."

Asked whether Iran's missile strikes on Israel would affect Washington's willingness to continue negotiations with Tehran, Trump said the attacks would have no impact on a potential agreement.

"I think the deal is going on. We'll see what happens," he said, adding that any agreement would succeed or fail on its own merits and that the strikes would not alter his calculations.

Agencies and Xinhua News Agencies contributed to the story



People inspect damage following an Israeli bombardment on a building in the village of Saksakiyeh in southern Lebanon on Saturday. AFP

Israeli strikes kill 14 in S. Lebanon

BEIRUT/JERUSALEM — At least 14 people were killed in Israeli attacks across southern Lebanon on Saturday, according to Lebanon's National News Agency.

The Lebanese army said the three soldiers were killed while patrolling in a vehicle on the Khardali-Kfar Tebnit road in the Nabatieh area.

The Israel Defense Forces said it has launched an investigation into the strike, claiming that the vehicle was found in an active combat zone with intelligence indicating a Hezbollah threat. The IDF stressed that its operations target Hezbollah, not the Lebanese army.

The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon condemned the attack as a "gross violation" of Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and UN Security Council Resolution 1701.

Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri rejected Israeli justifications, calling the strike "by no means a mistake or an accident".

Elsewhere, six people were killed in an Israeli airstrike on the town of Saksakiyeh in the Sidon District, according to a preliminary toll.

Additional strikes killed one person on the Deir al-Zahrani highway, two in the town of Harouf, one in Jouaiya, and one on a motorcycle in Abbassiyeh, who was identified as assistant nurse Ali Samadi.

Meanwhile, the Israeli military issued evacuation orders for several towns and villages in the Jezzine District and Ansariyeh.

The IDF said it struck around 150 Hezbollah military infrastructure sites in southern Lebanon over the weekend, including weapons depots, command centers, and rocket launchers.

Hezbollah said its fighters confronted an Israeli Hermes 450 drone over the town of Sharqiyeh in southern Lebanon and forced it to retreat. The Israeli military did not immediately comment on the claim.

In a separate statement, Lebanon's Public Health Emergency Operations Center said the cumulative casualties from Israeli attacks since March 2 had risen to 3,593 killed and 10,990 injured.

Lebanese army commander General Rodolphe Haykal has left for Pakistan on a visit, Lebanon's army said on Saturday.

The army said the visit was at the invitation of Haykal's Pakistani counterpart, but did not immediately provide further details on the purpose or duration.

XINHUA—AGENCIES

Calls for collaboration on drug innovation mount

By **LIA ZHU** in San Francisco
liazhu@chinadailyusa.com

A Chinese-developed lung cancer therapy drew significant attention at the American Society of Clinical Oncology's annual meeting, the latest illustration of China's rapidly growing role in global pharmaceutical innovation and a rise that experts say demands collaboration rather than confrontation.

The experimental drug, ivonescimab, targets a type of lung cancer that is especially difficult to treat. In a late-stage clinical trial involving 532 patients in China, the therapy cut the risk of death by 34 percent, according to results released at the meeting, known as ASCO, which concluded on Tuesday in Chicago.

David R. Spigel, president and chief scientific officer at Sarah Cannon Research Institute and an ASCO expert in lung cancer, said in a news release that the therapy "provides a vital new path forward for patients with these difficult-to-treat cancers who have limited treatment options".

Ivonescimab was developed by the Chinese biopharmaceutical company Akeso. US-based Summit Therapeutics licensed the rights to the drug outside China in a deal worth up to $5 billion. Summit announced earlier this year that the US Food and Drug Administration had accepted its application seeking approval for the therapy.

The licensing deal is part of a surge in dealmaking between Western pharmaceutical giants and Chinese drugmakers. AstraZeneca, Pfizer, Sanofi and Eli Lilly are among the multinationals that have struck agreements with Chinese companies, mostly targeting oncology and obesity treatments, with potential values ranging from $3 billion to $18.5 billion.

"Deal volumes have increased dramatically, and the value of Chinese pharmaceutical companies has grown much faster than their Western counterparts," Joseph Scheeren, a pharmaceutical R&D and regulatory affairs expert with more than 35 years of experience across the US, Europe and Asia, told China Daily.

Last year alone, Chinese companies achieved four times the value creation of US companies. Currently, 30 percent of global business development deals involve Chinese companies, four times as many as in 2021, according to Scheeren, who is also a member of the advisory board of the University of Arizona R. Ken Coit College of Pharmacy.

"I was told in oncology, specifically, that figure is more than 50 percent, so you can see there's a lot of activity going on in China's innovation sector," he added.

Those observations are backed by research published by the National Bureau of Economic Research. The paper, titled "From Free Rider to Innovator: The Rise of China's Drug Development", found that Chinese companies' out-licensing transactions to multinational corporations doubled relative to 2015 levels.

The researchers said the figures point to genuine indigenous capacity-building rather than multinationals simply relocating research and development operations to China.

Clinical trial activity

China's clinical trial activity has grown at a similar pace. The country accounted for less than 8 percent of global clinical trials in 2010. By 2020, it had surpassed the US in annual registered trial volume, reaching more than 5,000 trials per year by 2024, a 172 percent increase relative to the US.

Meanwhile, China's pharmaceutical ascent has also raised concerns in Washington. The US Biosecure Act bars US pharmaceutical companies that receive federal funding from working with designated Chinese biotech firms.

"Attempts to frame these developments as geopolitical threats risk undermining the very partnerships that are driving scientific progress," a group of US and China-based researchers wrote in a paper recently published in the Cureus Journal of Medical Science.

"The organizing principle for global drug innovation should be health, not geopolitical competition," the authors wrote.

The researchers pointed to China's growing alignment with international standards and its participation in global harmonization efforts as a foundation for deeper cooperation.

They highlighted Project Orbis, an international regulatory initiative led by the FDA's Oncology Center of Excellence, which, if expanded to include China, could accelerate access to promising therapies for nearly half of the world's cancer patients.

"Geopolitical tensions are real, but they need not dictate the trajectory of global drug innovation," the researchers concluded. "Regulatory collaboration, mutual trust and evidence-based evaluation of foreign data offer a path toward shared benefit."

WHO urges global action to contain Ebola outbreak

By **VICTOR RABALLA** in Nairobi
victor@chinadailyafrica.com

Global health leaders have called for strengthened international cooperation to contain the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda and prevent its spread to neighboring countries.

Nearly 500 Ebola cases have now been confirmed in the deadly outbreak raging in central Africa, a WHO overview showed on Saturday, amid mounting concerns over the swelling scale of the epidemic.

The global appeal for strengthened international cooperation came during a high-level briefing on Friday by the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, or Africa CDC, and the WHO, which warned about the rapid spread of the Bundibugyo Ebola virus.

"The outbreak is moving fast and we are still playing catch-up. But my trip to the DRC also gave me real hope that together, under the government's leadership, we can bring this outbreak under control," WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said.

He announced the launch of a joint continental preparedness and response plan by the WHO and Africa CDC aimed at containing the outbreak, supporting affected countries and strengthening preparedness in neighboring states.

The six-month plan, from June, is estimated to cost $518 million and is built around a coordinated approach guided by the principle of "one plan, one budget, one team".

It focuses on emergency coordination, surveillance, laboratory testing, infection prevention and control, clinical care, community engagement, research, logistics and maintaining essential health services.

"The only way to beat this outbreak is through close partnership, working together under the leadership of the affected countries in one coordinated effort," Tedros said.

Africa CDC said a range of emergency measures have already been implemented, including high-level political engagement with heads of state and ministers, deployment of multidisciplinary response teams, expansion of laboratory capacity and delivery of more than 200 metric tons of medical supplies by international partners.

Among other organizations and countries, Africa CDC director-general Jean Kaseya noted that China has joined a growing list of international partners supporting response efforts, highlighting the importance of global solidarity in tackling public health emergencies.



A medical officer is disinfected upon leaving hospital rooms for Ebola patients in Bunia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, on Friday. GLODY MURHABAZI / AFP

His announcement came days after a multidisciplinary team of experts in epidemiology, clinical diagnosis and treatment, research and traditional Chinese medicine arrived in Kinshasa, the capital of DR Congo, for a three-month mission to strengthen Africa's Ebola response capacity.

The outbreak has expanded rapidly from one province and three health zones in eastern DR Congo in mid-May to three provinces and 25 health zones, with confirmed cases reported in Uganda's capital, Kampala.

Ituri Province in DR Congo remains the epicenter, accounting for 90 percent of confirmed infections and 76 percent of deaths, Kaseya stated.

Health authorities warned that the outbreak is already the largest recorded outbreak of the Bundibugyo strain of Ebola, surpassing the previous outbreaks in Uganda in 2007 and the DR Congo in 2012.

They also raised concerns about the lack of licensed vaccines and therapeutics for the Bundibugyo strain, noting that while several promising candidates are being developed, none have yet been approved for widespread deployment.

Mohamed Yakub Janabi, WHO regional director for Africa, said community trust remains central to the success of the response.

"Without community participation, contact tracing falters, safe care is delayed and transmission continues. Misinformation is almost as dangerous as the virus itself and spreads just as fast," he said.

Agencies contributed to this story.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108
529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1844

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:07 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:07 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Visit to further consolidate relations of good neighbors, good friends and good comrades

General Secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and Chinese President Xi Jinping is paying a state visit to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from Monday to Tuesday at the invitation of Kim Jong-un, general secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea and president of the State Affairs of the DPRK.

The visit marks Xi's first overseas trip this year and his first state visit to the DPRK in seven years. It is of great significance for advancing China-DPRK relations and will surely inject new impetus into the traditional friendship between the two countries, enabling it to stand the test of the times and weather all challenges.

The friendship between the two countries has deep roots. It was forged in the struggle against foreign aggression and for national independence, and has been continuously consolidated and developed throughout the course of socialist revolution and construction. China and the DPRK are good neighbors, good friends and good comrades who have shared weal and woe and helped each other in times of need.

In recent years, Xi and Kim have met on multiple occasions and maintained close communication. Xi has stressed that maintaining, consolidating and developing China-DPRK relations has always been an unwavering policy of the CPC and the Chinese government.

Under the strategic guidance of the top leaders of the two sides, China-DPRK relations have been advancing with a clear direction and strong momentum.

The two countries should be good neighbors that strengthen practical cooperation and maintain close, friendly exchanges.

China-DPRK cooperation is thriving, fueled by growing exchanges and collaboration at all levels and across various sectors.

The two countries maintain exchanges and cooperation in culture, education, science and technology, sports and other fields. The two sides have also concluded a range of agreements and treaties, including those on trade and navigation, air transport and consular affairs. Multiple provinces and cities in both countries have also established sister-city relationships, helping build bridges of friendship between their peoples.

The two countries should be good friends who continually deepen strategic coordination and strengthen mutual support.

This year marks the 65th anniversary of the China-DPRK Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance. It also marks the first year of China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30). Pyongyang has drawn up a blueprint for the DPRK's economic and social development over the next five years. Xi's visit is expected to further enrich and expand ties, propelling the vigorous deepening of strategic coordination and strengthening mutual support.

From the DPRK's active support for the vision of building a community with a shared future for humanity and the four major global initiatives, to the two sides' close coordination within multilateral frameworks such as the United Nations and on regional and international issues, the two countries have worked together to safeguard their common interests, uphold international fairness and justice, and contribute to peace, stability and development in the region and beyond.

Both the regional and the broader geopolitical landscape have become increasingly complex and volatile. In this context, the two sides should uphold the spirit of the treaty of friendship to effectively safeguard their shared interests as well as regional peace and stability, thereby providing a solid guarantee for the steady development of China-DPRK relations and the stability of the region.

The two countries should be good comrades that forge ahead in their shared cause and contribute to each other's national rejuvenation.

As socialist countries led by communist parties, both nations share common ideals, convictions and goals. They are committed to pursuing development paths suited to their respective national conditions and share the aspiration of achieving national prosperity and a happy, secure life for their peoples.

At present, China is comprehensively advancing the building of a strong nation and the great cause of national rejuvenation through Chinese modernization, while the DPRK is fully dedicated to growing its economy, improving people's livelihoods and pursuing comprehensive national development.

The two sides should remain steadfast in their shared ideals and convictions, continuously enhance exchanges on Party building and state governance, and open up new horizons for their respective socialist causes, thereby injecting lasting momentum into the development of China-DPRK relations.

No matter how the international landscape evolves, as long as the two countries adhere to the head-of-state strategic guidance and the two peoples remain committed to working together, the two neighbors will surely carry forward their traditional friendship and deepen cooperation for the benefit of their peoples and the cause of peace, stability and prosperity in the region and beyond.

Tokyo-Manila collusion real threat to peace

China's Ministry of Transport announced on Saturday that it has launched a special maritime traffic law-enforcement operation in waters east of China's Taiwan island.

According to the ministry's statement, the operation aims to fully exercise China's maritime administrative jurisdiction, enhance deep-sea patrol and law enforcement capabilities, strengthen traffic management in key waters and safeguard national rights and interests. The operation serves as a justified response to the unilateral announcement by Japan and the Philippines of their so-called "maritime delimitation talks" regarding the area, as well as a warning to the secessionist-minded Lai Ching-te authorities of Taiwan that openly "acclaimed" the collusion between Tokyo and Manila.

The plan of Japan and the Philippines to start the negotiations to "delimit the maritime boundary of an exclusive economic zone and the continental shelf" infringes on China's territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests.

It also contravenes the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, as well as the basic norms governing international relations.

According to China's domestic law and international law, including UNCLOS, China has exclusive economic zone and continental shelf in the area involved.

If Japan had truly learned the lessons of history, it would not be accelerating its re-militarization under the pretext of "safeguarding regional stability" while being a source of instability.

Notably, the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum reportedly plans to refer to the Nanjing Massacre as the "Nanjing Incident" — a shameless denial of history. The judgment of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East dedicated a special chapter to documenting the massacre. The massacre's chief perpetrator, Iwane Matsui, was sentenced to death by hanging as a Class-A war criminal.

The Asahi Shimbun has reported on the outline of the Japanese government's 2026 defense white paper, which once again frames the regional security environment as "increasingly severe" and makes unfounded claims hyping the so-called "China threat". At its core, the document is designed to deliberately amplify "external threat" in order to shape domestic public opinion and create international "justifications" for a significant military budget increase, looser arms export controls, revised security strategies, and ultimately, the dismantling of the postwar constraints.

For Japan, elevating its military ties with the Philippines serves to promote the advance of its neo-militarism in the region.

For the Philippines, its government seeks to use "external threat" to divert public attention from domestic problems such as struggling economy, unemployment, poor healthcare and corruption.

The defense chiefs of the two countries jointly staged an ugly spectacle at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore last month, turning a platform meant for communication into an opportunity to flatter the United States, divide the region, and stoke bloc confrontation. The whole region sees clearly they are the troublemakers and the real threat to regional peace and stability.

Philippine Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr even brazenly claimed during the dialogue that although China has offered fertilizer and fuel to the Philippines, there is no demonstration of "good faith on a long-term basis", and it is actually "guileful".

This rhetoric shows his disregard for the welfare of the Philippine people and lack of appreciation for kindness. He only cares for selfish personal gains to the point that he is willing to perform political theatrics even when people's well-being is at stake.

Japan and the Philippines will only be increasingly isolated on the international stage if they continue down this wrong path of instigating confrontation.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

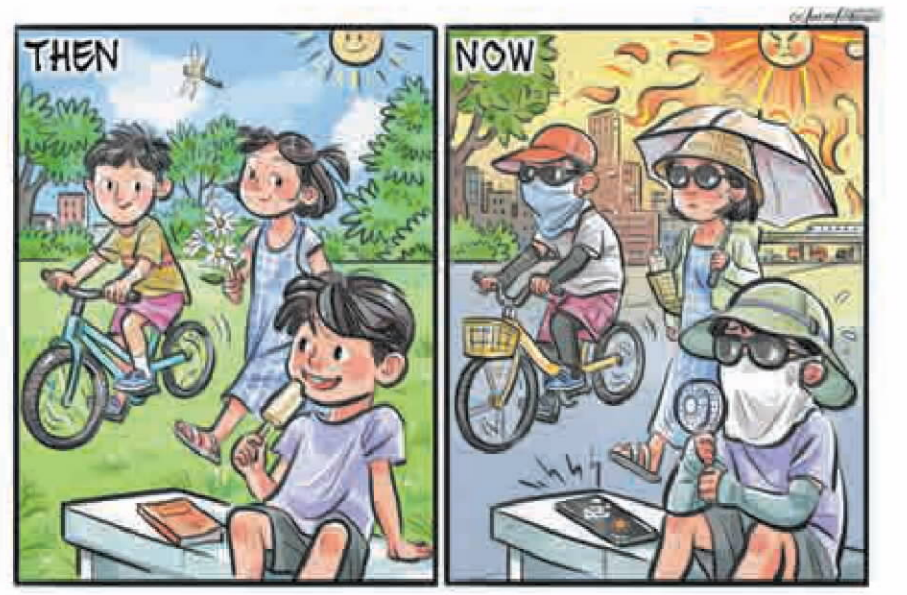
China Daily UK
90 Cannon St, London EC4N 6HA, UK
+44 (0) 207 398 8270
editor@chinadailyuk.com

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Li Min



Opinion Line

Gaokao continues to evolve in line with changing times

Outside 7,981 examination centers across China on Sunday, the summer air shimmered under the relentless June sun as millions of students faced one of the most important tests of their lives. Beyond the school gates, anxious family members gathered in crowds. Shielding themselves with umbrellas and handheld fans, they waited patiently despite the heat.

When the 12.9 million students sit for the 2026 national college entrance examination, or *gaokao*, they are actually taking part in one of the most important merit-based exam systems in modern Chinese history — a system that has evolved alongside the country's development to be one of the world's largest economies. It is about how a society identifies talent, rewards effort and adapts to changing socioeconomic realities.

One of the enduring lessons of history is that societies prosper when advancement depends more on innovation and achievement. The restoration of the *gaokao* in 1977 was a decisive move in that direction. It replaced the previous selection mechanism with one in which performance in a common examination became the principal gateway to higher education.

For a country emerging from a decade of changes, this was not merely an educational reform; it was the improvement of procedural justice. Millions of ordinary families came to believe that efforts and abilities could change a person's future. The belief that knowledge changes one's destiny has become a firmly held conviction among the Chinese people.

There is some truth in the assertion that examinations cannot fully judge an individual's creativity, character or perseverance. But the relevant question is not whether an exam is perfect, but whether a fairer realistic alternative exists.

What is particularly notable today is that with the country's development in recent decades, the *gaokao* assessment is itself undergoing change — from testing candidates' memorized knowledge to evaluating how they apply it. Of late, questions in the exams increasingly incorporate real-world situations, scientific developments, technological innovation and interdisciplinary problem-solving. The objective is no longer simply to identify students who can remember information, but those who can apply it in practice.

This evolution reflects a larger socioeconomic reality. For decades, China's growth benefited from abundant labor and expanding industrial capacity. Today, prosperity depends increasingly on innovation, productivity and human capital. The educational system therefore faces a different challenge: merely producing more graduates won't do, it should produce graduates capable of succeeding in an economy shaped by artificial intelligence, advanced manufacturing, biotechnology and other emerging technologies. The shift in examination design mirrors that national development.

Equally significant is the gradual change from a largely single-track model of advancement. Along with the current *gaokao* and broader lifelong education systems, diversified admissions mechanisms, vocational education pathways and comprehensive evaluation systems have expanded opportunities for different kinds of talent. The system remains competitive, but it is increasingly capable of recognizing that excellence takes multiple forms.

This does not mean that the *gaokao* system has become less important. It has become a window into China's broader economic and social transformation. The evolution of examination content, subject selection, admissions policies and university programs provides a revealing measure of how the country is preparing for the future.

The value of the *gaokao* system lies not in the examination itself, but in the principle behind it: that talent should be discovered, cultivated and rewarded. The details of implementation will continue to evolve, as they should.

But as China pursues high-quality development in an age increasingly defined by technological progress and global competition, the search for merit — and the institutions that make that search possible — will remain indispensable. The *gaokao* story is therefore not just a story about education and exams. It is a story about modernization, opportunity and the continuing effort of a nation to align individual aspiration with national development.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Employment crucial for 15th Five-Year Plan period

Editor's note: *The 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) for implementing the employment-first strategy was approved at a State Council executive meeting on Friday. Senior officials of the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security and the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, as well as experts, shared their insights on the country's employment and industrial upgrading with the media after the meeting. Below are excerpts of their remarks as reported by Securities Times and Xinhua News Agency. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

Focusing on the job-hunting needs of graduates, the human resources and social security authorities will continue to introduce high-quality employment policies and services to expand employment channels and create jobs.

Throughout the 15th Five-Year Plan period, it is essential to follow the employment-first strategy and incorporate the goal of high-quality and full employment into national economic and social development initiatives. Coordination between industries and employment should be increased. Greater efforts should be made to improve and modernize the industrial system, and priority should be given to key sectors that are capable of generating a large number of jobs. Government authorities should guide the orderly relocation of industries, and foster new drivers for employment growth by developing the digital economy, green economy and silver economy.

The fundamental solution for employment challenges lies in development. According to the requirements put forward at the State Council executive meeting, local governments should develop industries to stabilize employment, upgrade existing industries to create more jobs, and better protect employees' rights and interests to improve the quality of employment.

Carrying out vocational skills training is an important measure to resolve the structural imbalance between the needs of job seekers and employers. Improving the competence of the workforce is vital for achieving the goals of upgrading traditional industries and fostering emerging industries and industries of the future. Hence it is necessary to keep enhancing the quality of such training programs to help more workers acquire professional skills, secure jobs and increase their income.

New quality productive forces and the country's new industrialization drive are deeply related, and they contribute to each other's advancement. Scientific and technological innovation serves as the key to integrating the two.

New industrialization features high technology, sound economic returns, low resource consumption and minimal environmental pollution. This is in line with the direction in which new quality productive forces are developing. Scientific and technological innovation provides concrete approaches for the two to interact better with one another.

Efforts to cultivate industries of the future will drive both the development of new quality productive forces and the upgrading of the modern industrial system. The development of industries of the future will help boost the high-quality development of the country, and strengthen the industrial foundation for building a modern socialist China in all respects.

China has seen steady progress in the development of industries of the future, and gained some first-mover advantages in key fields. Nevertheless, challenges remain, including insufficient capacity for original innovation, reliance on others for key and core technologies, an innovation ecosystem in need of further improvement, and institutional and mechanism barriers to be removed.

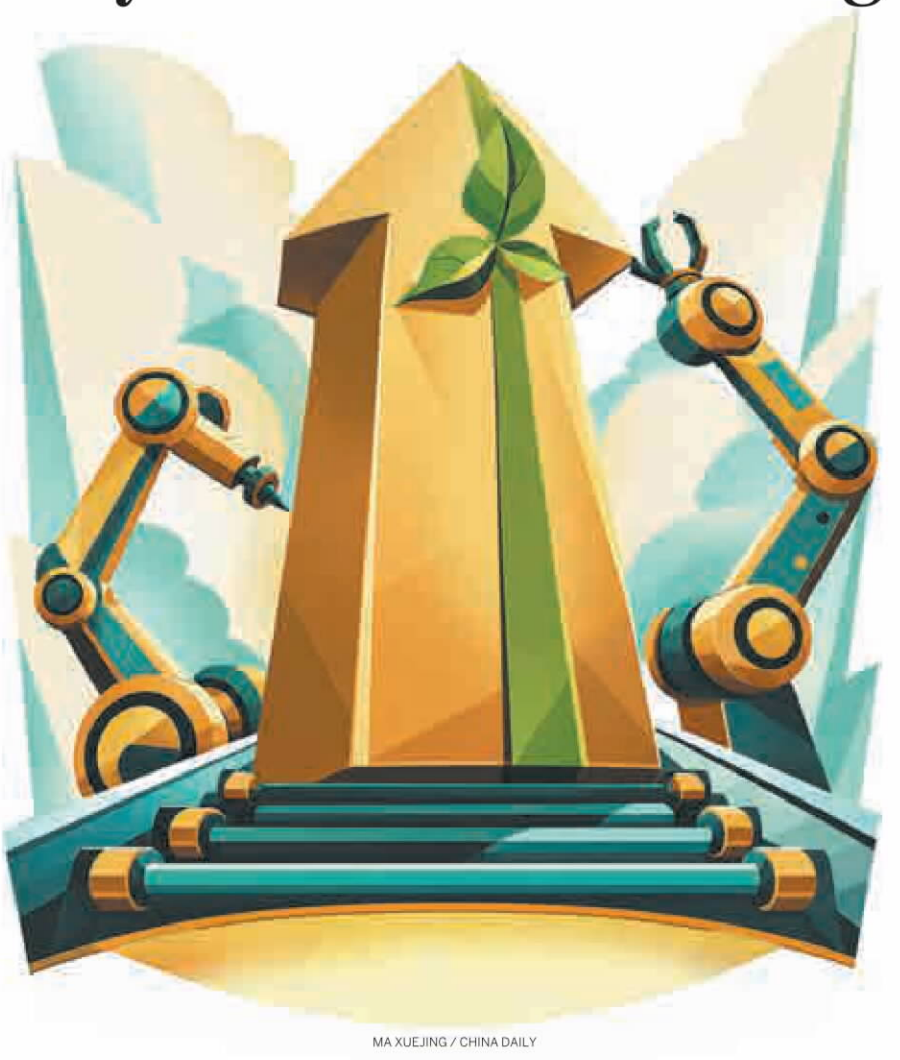
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:07 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:07 PM

VIEWS

Souknilanh Keola

Good neighborly ties usher in sea changes



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Landlocked countries, which account for half of the least developed countries in Asia and nearly 40 percent in Africa, face a formidable obstacle in their economic development: the lack of maritime connectivity. Access to the sea is crucial as many landlocked countries rely on overseas markets. Since they can access the ocean only through other countries, friendly relations with neighbors and efficient transportation routes to the sea are essential for economic progress.

Although the Lao People's Democratic Republic has maintained friendly relations with all its neighbors, the only maritime access route that provided tangible economic benefits until recently was the one through Thailand, thanks to its favorable geographic conditions.

Access to China and Vietnam is blocked by mountainous regions that stretch for hundreds of kilometers. The Mekong River route through Cambodia, which holds great promise, is blocked by an impassable 10-kilometer-long waterfall.

Even the European powers that colonized Laos found it difficult to overcome these natural obstacles.

Dependence on the Thailand route led to rapid urban development near the Thai border, while other regions of the country struggled, posing a persistent challenge for the Lao economy.

However, China's economic growth helped break through these major natural barriers to connectivity. Driven by China's rapidly growing economic power, trade across the mountainous regions gradually picked up in the 1990s.

The China-Laos Railway, inaugurated in December 2021, was the gamechanger that ushered in a new phase in overcoming Laos's landlocked status.

Despite predictions by many experts that it would be of little use, the China-Laos Railway has achieved its targets for both passenger and freight trains well ahead of schedule.

For landlocked Laos, China's rise and improved connectivity with the country offer three major advantages. First, with a major global market now available next door, Laos can engage in trade without taking the maritime route.

Although it may be an upper-middle-income country in many people's eyes, China has become a major global market due to its sheer scale. If China becomes a high-income country in the near future, as widely predicted, it will present unprecedented opportunities for the Lao economy.

Second, improving connectivity with China, often referred to as the "world's factory", presents a significant opportunity for Laos to gain a foothold in global supply chains. Laos' relationship with global supply chains till now has centered primarily on the "plus-one" model, which involves indirect participation through neighboring countries.

The transport costs of shipping semi-finished goods back and forth to landlocked Laos further diminished the country's appeal as an industrial location. But the China-Laos Railway network has changed the situation for the country.

Third, improved connectivity between China and Laos has implications that extend beyond bilateral relations. Laos is the only country among the five Mekong countries that has land access to all of them as well as to China.

Improving connectivity with China and other neighboring countries will enhance Laos' position in connectivity networks between the Mekong region, ASEAN and China.

However, the "peer effect" — the idea that a landlocked country will grow faster if its transit neighbor experiences rapid growth — does not automatically apply.

Unless people communicate, exchange information, and make efforts to learn through the physical connections they have established, the peer effect is unlikely to occur.

In other words, people-to-people connectivity, such as cultural, educational, and professional exchanges, is essential.

Although evidence of peer effects has begun to emerge, with higher-than-average growth rates in many northern provinces closer to China or along the railway, greater efforts are necessary for these regions to fully capitalize on their potential.

The author is a senior economist at the Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Zhang Yi

The real story behind China's manufacturing might

China Shock 2.0 is a powerful phrase that offers a fake story. In this telling, Chinese electric vehicles, batteries, solar panels and advanced manufactured goods are the latest version of the low-cost imports that reshaped Western manufacturing after China joined the World Trade Organization.

The products may have changed, but the conclusion remains the same: China produces too much, sells too cheaply and threatens industrial workers elsewhere.

The vocabulary is also familiar. In the 1980s, Japan was described in nearly the same terms — subsidies, dumping, industrial targeting, unfair competition.

Some of those concerns were real, but the political framing pushed defensive policy rather than industrial renewal, and many of the predicted outcomes did not materialize.

The lesson is not to ignore competitive pressure. It is to distinguish unfair conduct from superior capability before choosing the response.

The "China Shock 2.0" argument leans on the work of David H. Autor, David Dorn and Gordon H. Hanson published in 2013, which argued that rising Chinese imports led to higher unemployment in the United States.

But that paper is treated as more definitive than it ever was.

The original finding — concentrated harm to specific US local labor markets between 2001 and 2010 — was a distributional effect inside an aggregate gain, not a verdict on trade with China, and the policy discourse has consistently over-read it.

The 2.0 case is structurally different. The sectors under scrutiny are not labor-intensive consumer goods, but capital goods, green technologies, complex assemblies and two-way supply chains dense with non-Chinese value. Price declines are at the center of the global energy transition.

Electric vehicles are the clearest example. The common assumption is that Chinese EVs are cheap mainly because of government support. Yet Rhodium Group, an organization known for its close scrutiny of Chinese industrial policy, reaches a different conclusion.

Rhodium estimates that BYD enjoys a cost advantage of roughly $4,700 per vehicle over Tesla China. Direct subsidies account for about $292 per vehicle, and preferential financing for around $12. By Rhodium's reckoning, subsidies add up to barely 5 percent of BYD's cost advantage.

The larger explanation lies in industrial organization. BYD produces around 80 percent of its tier-one components and 36 percent of its tier-two components in-house, avoiding an estimated $2,369 per vehicle in supplier markups.

Lower R&D and administrative costs contribute another estimated $1,719. So, the advantages stem not from cheap inputs but from vertical integration, dense local supply chains, rapid iteration and large-volume cost amortization.

If the gap were mainly because of subsidies, tariffs could plausibly close it. But tariffs cannot manufacture competitiveness. What Western automakers are facing are not lower prices but a different, and more efficient, production system.

China's manufacturing advantage can no longer be explained by cheap labor. Official data show average annual wages in urban non-private manufacturing reached 107,987 yuan ($15,895) in 2024, up from around 72,088 yuan in 2018, while Chinese export prices have been flat or declined over the same period.

When wages rise while export prices remain steady, the cause is not currency movements but productivity, automation, scale and supply-chain clustering. Chinese firms have compressed the design-to-market cycle inside dense local ecosystems where suppliers, engineers and manufacturers sit close to one another.

China's rise is not just because of volume but also technological accumulation. R&D spending as a share of GDP rose from about 1.3 percent in the 10th Five-Year Plan (2001-05) to 2.7 percent in the 14th (2021-25).

OECD data place China's total R&D spending close to the US in purchasing power terms, and the World Intellectual Property Organization's Global Innovation Index ranks China in the world's top 10 innovation economies.

The benefits are broader than the "shock" narrative allows. Lower Chinese prices are disruptive for some producers, but they are very beneficial for consumers, developing economies and the energy transition. Cheaper solar panels, batteries and EVs lower the cost of decarbonization.

IRENA has found that most newly added utility-scale renewable power in 2024 was cheaper than the lowest-cost fossil-fuel alternative. The same price decline that pressures some incumbent firms also helps households, grids and governments deploy clean technology faster.

The reverse evidence is also striking. If China were simply "shocking" the world, developing economies would be pulling away; instead, many are deepening integration with China.

ASEAN is now China's largest trading partner, and the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area 3.0 Upgrade Protocol covers the digital economy, green economy and supply-chain connectivity.

Vietnam's export boom, Southeast Asia's electronics growth and Mexico's nearshoring expansion are closely related to Chinese intermediate goods, machinery and logistics.

The trade-in-value-added perspective reinforces this point. Gross export figures make China appear to be the sole source of the impact.

But final exports from China often embody value created elsewhere: Japanese and Korean components, German machinery, Dutch equipment, Australian minerals, ASEAN inputs, and global software, design and services. A tariff aimed at "China" often strikes a production network much broader than China itself.

A fuller accounting must look beyond goods. China runs a large goods surplus, but it is also a major buyer of foreign services and a source of income for global firms.

Data show that in 2025 China recorded a $1,023 billion goods surplus alongside a $196 billion services deficit and a $115 billion primary income deficit. Tourism, education, intellectual property payments, digital services, brands and multinational profits all complicate the one-way story, making the picture look less like a one-directional shock and more like deep mutual dependence.

"China Shock 2.0" compresses three different issues into one alarm: efficiency read as unfairness, scale read as aggression, and diffusion read as threat. If the issue is efficiency, the answer is to lower energy and capital costs at home — not tariffs that shield higher-cost producers from a structural gap.

If the issue is scale, the answer is to invest in supply-chain depth and the ecosystems where suppliers, engineers and integrators sit close together — not barriers that fragment those networks further.

If the issue is diffusion, the answer is to accelerate domestic R&D and firm-building while participating in the supply chains that spread capability — not export controls premised on a single-source frontier.

The better question, then, is not how to stop China from making affordable advanced goods.

It is how other economies can build manufacturing systems capable of making complexity affordable.

The author is an associate professor in the Guangdong Institute for International Strategies at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Haukur Hardarson

Rethinking energy security in a changing world

Energy security is being reshaped in a rapidly changing global landscape, but the policy conversation has yet to fully adjust. As geopolitical tensions intensify and traditional fuel supply chains face disruption, governments are rethinking how energy systems are built, powered and protected. Yet, the approach remains anchored in outdated assumptions about fuel supply, overlooking the resilience of the systems that deliver energy.

Nowhere is this more evident than in heating and cooling, which account for roughly half of global energy consumption.

More than 80 percent of this demand is met by fossil-fuel based energy. For many countries, this implies continued dependence on imported fuels to meet essential needs, from maintaining habitable cities to sustaining industrial production.

Despite this, policy and investment remain heavily concentrated on electricity generation, leaving thermal systems — the largest source of energy usage — fragmented, underdeveloped and exposed to fuel price volatility. Addressing this imbalance requires a shift in perspective, from securing fuel supply to strengthening the infrastructure that delivers energy.

Geothermal energy offers a fundamentally different model of energy security, based on infrastructure rather than fuel.

In practical terms, this means replacing recurring fuel imports with long-life domestic assets that stabilize energy costs over time, reduce exposure to commodity volatility and anchor critical infrastructure in reliable, local energy resources.

Unlike fossil-based systems, geothermal requires no ongoing fuel supply, eliminating exposure to transport disruptions and import dependence. With one of the smallest land footprints of any renewable, it can also be deployed within dense urban environments, integrating seamlessly into existing buildings, districts and infrastructure systems.

Yet a key barrier to wider adoption is the persistent misconception that geothermal is limited to volcanic regions. In reality, low- to medium-temperature geothermal resources suitable for heating and cooling can be deployed in nearly every geography. Advances in drilling and subsurface engineering are further expanding geothermal's potential at greater depths.

International experience illustrates what is possible, with Iceland providing a well-established case.

Following the oil shocks of the 1970s, the country invested heavily in geothermal infrastructure to reduce dependence on imported fuels. Today, around 90 percent of Icelandic homes are heated with geothermal energy, contributing to both energy independence and long-term price stability.

Over many decades, Iceland has developed deep expertise in geothermal resource development, engineering, and system integration, creating a foundation that has informed projects well beyond its borders.

China is a more recent and large-scale example of how this expertise can be applied in practice.

Through Sinopec Green Energy — a joint venture between Sinopec Star and Arctic Green Energy — Iceland's technical expertise combines with China's industrial scale and execution capability to enable rapid deployment of geothermal district heating systems across northern China.

In China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), energy self-sufficiency and system stability are central priorities. As part of this broader strategy, the country has accelerated the development of geothermal systems, particularly in regions historically reliant on coal.

Today, geothermal systems developed through Sinopec Green Energy serve more than 120 million square meters across more than 70 cities, benefiting millions of people. This expansion is reducing emissions while strengthening domestic energy security through stable, locally sourced energy systems.

The impact extends beyond energy supply. In cities historically reliant on coal-based heating, the shift to geothermal energy has improved local air quality, supporting efforts to build cleaner, healthier urban environments.

As the global energy system evolves, maintaining reliability is becoming more complex.

Wind and solar are indispensable to decarbonization, but their variability requires complementary resources to ensure stability. Geothermal plays a critical role by offering continuous, weather-independent thermal energy, particularly in sectors where demand cannot be curtailed. In this sense, geothermal complements rather than competes with other renewables.

Policy frameworks around the world have not fully adapted to this reality. Energy strategies continue to prioritize electricity, while heating and cooling remain underdeveloped in both planning and financing. Closing this gap will require integrating geothermal into urban energy planning, expanding district heating and cooling networks, and adopting financing models that treat geothermal as long-term infrastructure rather than short-term energy supply.

Together, the experiences of Iceland and China offer a broader lesson: energy security improves when countries invest in domestic, infrastructure-based systems rather than relying on imported fuels.

In a rapidly changing global landscape, long-term energy security will depend less on access to fuel and more on the resilience of energy systems.

Countries that succeed will be those that invest in infrastructure capable of delivering stable, reliable energy over decades.

And beneath our feet lies one of the most powerful and overlooked foundations of that future.

The author is the founder and chairman of Arctic Green Energy and vice chairman of Sinopec Green Energy.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:07 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:07 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

GUO BOWEI

Digital dependency

Stable and abundant electricity is the fundamental resource for modern economies in the AI era

Total power use in China reached 10.37 trillion kilowatt-hours in 2025, crossing the 10 trillion kWh threshold for the first time and making China the world's largest consumer of electricity.



Against the backdrop of flourishing digital economy and the rapid rise of artificial intelligence, the significance of this milestone extends far beyond the energy sector.

Electricity is a unique strategic resource in the modern economy. Unlike primary fuels such as coal and oil, electricity, as a secondary energy carrier, cannot be stored in large quantities at low cost. Power generation, transmission and consumption therefore have to be kept in a real-time balance.

Therefore, operating a power system on the scale of 10 trillion kWh requires far more than large generation capacity. It also demands a highly complex grid network, sophisticated dispatch and coordination systems, and sustained infrastructure investment. In this sense, the power system is a manifestation of the country's industrial strength and capacity for long-term planning and systematic coordination.

Just as coal, steel and oil formed the bedrock of the industrial age, a stable and expansive power system has emerged as the foundation of the digital economy.

This is particularly evident in the development of the AI industry.

The AI race is often framed as a competition in chips and algorithms. In practice, computing power depends on something even more fundamental: electricity. Data centers and computing hubs are inherently energy-intensive facilities. A large-scale data center typically operates with power capacity exceeding 100 megawatts, and some supercomputing centers consume several billion kWh of electricity each year. Training large AI models often requires tens of thousands of GPUs to run continuously for weeks or even months, all sustained by enormous amounts of electricity. The International Energy Agency projects that electricity consumption from data centers will roughly double from 485 terawatt-hours in 2025 to 950 TWh in 2030, a level close to Japan's current total electricity consumption. These figures show that the AI industry is not merely a digital industry. It is also reshaping the structure of global energy demand.

The larger the scale of computing power, the higher the demands on the reliability and capacity of the power system. As the rapid rise of AI drives surging demand for computing power, the energy system is increasingly emerging as a core foundation underpinning the growth of the sector.

The scale and reliability of China's power system provide uniquely favorable conditions for the AI industry. China has the world's largest power generation system and transmission network, and it has accumulated extensive expertise in ultra-high-voltage transmission, renewable energy integration and cross-regional power dispatch. For the AI industry, these capabilities matter far beyond simply ensuring an adequate electricity supply. They are critical to the reliable operation of computing centers, the continued expansion of industrial clusters and the ability to keep energy costs under control.

A good case in point is China's "East Data, West Computing" project, which aims to align computing infrastructure with the geographic distribution of energy resources.

China's eastern regions have more developed digital economies and concentrated demands for data services, but face high electricity costs. By contrast, the western regions boast abundant wind, solar and hydropower resources, making the costs much lower.

Some computing tasks that are less sensitive to latency have been shifted to computing hubs in the western region of China. This has gradually created a more rational spatial division between data generation and computing infrastructure. The eastern regions mainly generate data and application demand, while some back-end computing and data-processing tasks can be handled by computing centers in the West.

By turning rich energy resources into strong computing power, the model ensures stable, low-cost energy to support the development of AI.

Energy researchers often talk about the "energy trilemma", which refers to the challenge of balancing efficiency, sustainability and security. The rise of AI gives this old challenge a new dimension: as the digital economy increasingly depends on computing power, the broader economy will be more dependent on a stable, clean and secure electricity system.

First, electricity is the direct energy input for computing infrastructure. Data centers, servers and cooling systems all depend on a continuous and reliable power supply. A more efficient power system therefore directly affects the cost and stability of AI development.

Second, electricity is easier to decarbonize than many forms of direct fossil fuel use. As the generation mix shifts toward cleaner sources such as wind, solar and hydropower, the expansion of computing power does not necessarily have to mean a proportional increase in carbon emissions.

Third, a stronger power system can also enhance energy security. As renewable energy capacity grows and more economic activity is supported by domestically generated electricity, dependence on imported fossil fuels can gradually decline, strengthening the resilience of China's energy system.

Therefore, over the long term, increasing the share of electricity in final energy consumption is not only an important pathway for green development, but also a more efficient and secure way of organizing the energy system.

Of course, operating the world's largest power system takes more than just a massive economy. Power infrastructure projects demand huge upfront investment, take a long time to build and deliver stable but slow returns. In many countries, such projects are often challenged by inadequate funding, grid expansion bottlenecks and the complexity of cross-regional coordination.

In China, decades of continuous power infrastructure expansion have been enabled by long-term planning and system-wide implementation. From the west-to-east power transmission program and ultra-high-voltage transmission corridors, to the construction of large renewable energy bases and national computing hubs, energy infrastructure development has always been guided by national-level planning and coordinated alongside industrial demand.



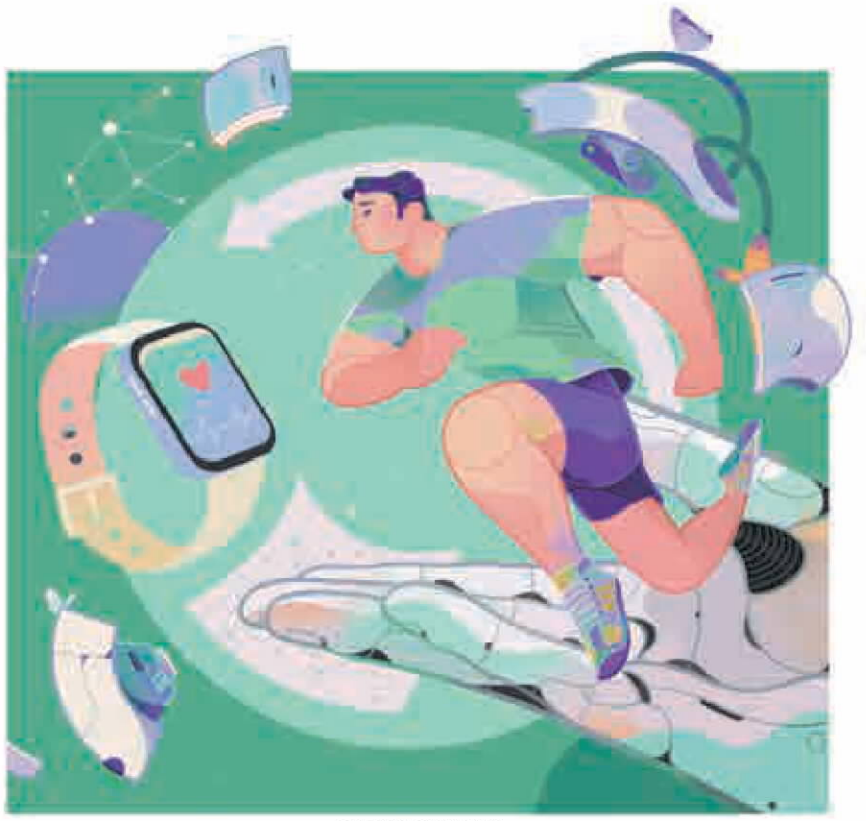
MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Reaching the 10 trillion kWh milestone is more than just an energy indicator. It signals the foundational capability required for the digital era. It demonstrates that China has both a massive industrial system and consumer market, as well as the energy bedrock needed to sustain the growth of AI, advanced manufacturing and the digital economy.

As AI development accelerates, a stable, green and efficient power system is vital to both the sustained expansion of computing infrastructure and the long-term trajectory of emerging industries. China's massive and evolving power system provides robust support for expanding AI application scenarios, upgrading industrial structures and advancing green development.

Looking ahead, as renewable energy, smart grids, energy storage technologies and computing infrastructure further integrate, the power system is expected to play an essential role in driving the mutually reinforcing digital and green transitions.

The author is an associate professor at the School of Applied Economics and the director of the Center for Research on Global Energy Strategy at Renmin University of China. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

LYU XIONGCE

Data keeps users fit

Digital technology is reshaping the new growth point of the health economy via smart sports

According to the latest data from the World Health Organization, global health expenditure as a percentage of GDP increased from 9.2 percent in 2010 to 10.9 percent in 2021. Simultaneously, the digital economy is rapidly permeating the realm of public welfare.



Technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data and digital twins are becoming deeply integrated with sports education, physical fitness assessment and exercise intervention, giving rise to the emerging field of smart sports.

In developed economies such as the United States, Japan and the European Union, smart sports are seen as a key pathway to reducing healthcare costs and improving the overall health of the population. In China, the Outline of the Healthy China 2030 Plan and the New Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Plan explicitly propose the deep integration of AI with sports health, with smart sports evolving from campus pilots to a societal-wide initiative to transform the health economy.

The core value of smart sports lies in the optimal allocation of resources. Through big data analysis and AI algorithms, individual physical health status can be categorized into different risk levels — from health maintenance and risk warning to critical intervention — and matched with differentiated exercise prescriptions for each level. This evidence-based stratified intervention strategy is becoming a global trend in health management.

In Japan, pilot areas using an exercise prescription system for AI-guided stratification of middle-aged and elderly individuals have shown significant effects in curbing healthcare expenditure growth, according to the Japan Sports Agency's interim verification conclusions.

According to comprehensive estimates from the National Health Commission's Report on the Nutrition and Chronic Diseases Status of Chinese Residents (2020) and the China health management white paper, more than 50 percent of China's adults are overweight or obese, with direct medical costs related to obesity-induced diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases accounting for an increasing proportion of annual health expenditures. If the smart sports model can slow the growth of obesity rates from current trends, it could potentially avoid tens of billions of yuan in incremental annual medical expenditures in the long term.

Finland's national sports digital platforms, such as HeiaHeia and Polar Flow, have demonstrated through long-term tracking data analyzed by the former Finnish Institute of Sports Sciences that AI dynamic adjustment of exercise load can increase the rate of physical fitness compliance by 15 percent to 25 percent.

Similar effects have been validated in pilot projects at Chinese universities. The Ministry of Education's 2023 national student physical fitness survey report indicates that in universities implementing AI-personalized exercise programs, the incidence of student sports injuries has shown a significant downward trend, and the rate of excellent physical fitness test results has steadily increased. The promotion of this technology could potentially reduce youth sports injuries by hundreds of thousands annually, correspondingly decreasing medical expenses and class absences, forming a virtuous cycle of less injury — more exercise — better health.

China's 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) for National Health clearly proposed shifting the checkpoint of health forward, with AI smart sports being a key tool for achieving this goal. Research by the Ministry of Education's Department of Physical, Health and Arts Education, in collaboration with the General Administration of Sport's Research Institute, shows that improving students' physical health levels has a significant positive effect on reducing long-term medical expenditures for chronic diseases. If China can fully unleash the preventive potential of smart sports, it could form a proactive health paradigm with Chinese characteristics in the health economy sector.

According to the "smart sports market report (2023-28)" by MarketsandMarkets, the global smart sports market size is expected to grow from $18 billion in 2023 to $42 billion in 2028, with a compound annual growth rate of approximately 18 percent. China's smart sports education equipment and service market is expected to grow even faster, with a compound annual growth rate exceeding 22 percent, higher than North America and Europe, making it the fastest-growing region globally.

On the policy front, China has issued the "Outline for Building a Leading Sports Nation" and the "Opinions on Promoting Mass Sports, Sports Consumption and High-Quality Development of Sports Industry", supporting AI sports technology research and industrialization. Over the next five years, the domestic smart sports sector alone could create hundreds of thousands of jobs in technology development, data analysis and content operations, while driving new business forms such as intelligent wearable devices, virtual sports courses and digital exercise prescriptions to international markets. Smart sports are not only the internal demand engine of the health economy but also a distinctive business card for China's service trade going global.

Improvements in physical fitness are translating into long-term value appreciation in national human capital. Both domestic and international studies confirm this correlation: The OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment data show that students in Beijing, Shanghai, and Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces who participate in moderate to vigorous physical activities three times a week score significantly higher in science, mathematics and reading tests than those with insufficient activity, with score differences reaching over half a grade.

When physical improvement shifts from a slogan to an actionable, trackable and intervenable practice, we are essentially investing in one of the highest-return "original capitals" for national economic growth. Institutionalizing this logic, China has incorporated student physical health into school performance evaluations.

Looking ahead, as technologies such as large-model AI technology, federated learning and edge computing continue to mature, personalized health management tailored to individuals will expand from campuses to the entire society.

As data technology and the sports health industry deeply integrate, China is poised to be the first country globally to establish a proactive health economic paradigm. This is not only a positive response to domestic population health challenges but also provides a replicable and promotable Chinese solution for global health governance. Smart sports will be elevated from a technical means to a lifestyle concept, reshaping the return structure of national health investments and becoming one of the most promising new growth points in the digital economy era.

The author is an associate professor at the Department of Physical Education at Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:07 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:07 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

Leveraging intelligent technology pivot

Humanoids, smart glasses, AI demand catapult nation's innovation globally

By **MA SI** and **CHEN BOWEN** in Haikou



An AgiBot humanoid robot gives a calligraphy demonstration to visitors during the Digital-Intelligent Technology Ecosystem Conference 2025 in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, on Dec 5. QIN ZIHANG / FOR CHINA DAILY





Left: A demo of a robot vacuum with wheellegs takes place at the Roborock booth during the second day of the AWE 2026 trade fair in Shanghai on March 13. GETTY IMAGES **Right:** A humanoid robot from the Honor Qitian Dasheng team, named "Lightning", wins the championship during the 2026 Beijing E-Town half marathon and humanoid robot half marathon in Beijing on April 19. HE GUANXIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Out of every 10 humanoid robots shipped worldwide, eight come from China. That single statistic from a market research company captures a remarkable shift in the country's export story.

Gone is the reliance on sheer scale and rock-bottom prices. The new wave of Chinese tech exports — embodied in robots, artificial intelligence systems and smart hardware — is defined by sophistication, speed and a distinctly high-tech appeal, experts said.

The transformation is perhaps best illustrated by an unusual race held on a crisp April morning in Beijing's southern suburbs. More than 12,000 human runners lined up for a half-marathon. Alongside them, jostling for position at the start line, stood over 100 humanoid robots.

One of them, a nimble machine named "Lightning" from the Honor Qitian Dasheng team, crossed the finish line in 50 minutes and 26 seconds. To put that in perspective, the men's half-marathon world record, set by Uganda's Jacob Kiplimo in March, stands at 57 minutes and 20 seconds. Lightning, built in China, beat it by nearly seven minutes.

Yet the real headline was not the winning time — it was how the robots ran. Nearly 40 percent of the teams used fully autonomous navigation, a dramatic leap from the previous year's remote-controlled field. Technologies borrowed from self-driving cars, including LiDAR and vision-only navigation, have been successfully grafted onto two-legged machines.

Zhao Mingguo, a researcher at Tsinghua University's Department of Automation, watched the race closely. "This proves that once Chinese industry sets a goal, it has the ability to get it done," he said.

Behind the marvel on the racecourse lies the relentless pursuit of technological breakthroughs and advanced manufacturing in China. The confidence that powers these robots at full speed comes from a strong industrial and supply chain system.

Today, China is home to more than 140 humanoid robot manufacturers, with annual shipments reaching 14,400 units — accounting for 84.7 percent of the global total. Out of every 10 humanoid robots shipped worldwide, eight come from China, according to a report jointly released by CCID Media and China Electronics News in March.

More importantly, Chinese technology is arriving on the global stage with a sleek, high-tech confidence. Leading the charge is AgiBot, a Shanghai-based company that has become the world's top humanoid robot shipper, according to a report by market research firm Omdia.

The company began delivering to overseas customers in 2025 and opened its first international experience center in Malaysia in January.

Then, in late February 2026, AgiBot made a decisive move into Europe. At a launch event in Munich, Germany, the company officially announced its entry into the German market, unveiling a full portfolio of general-purpose embodied robots and industry-specific system solutions tailored for Europe.

But the announcement that drew the most attention was a strategic partnership with Minth Group, a global leader in automotive exterior and structural parts.

Under the agreement, Minth's network of modern factories around the world will serve as dedicated training grounds for AgiBot's robots — real-world environments where machines can learn, collect data and refine their algorithms.

Esther Wei, Minth Group's chairwoman and CEO, said: "This partnership not only drives Minth's own smart manufacturing upgrade, but also injects precious real-scenario data into the robotics industry, accelerating algorithm iteration and technological evolution".

Customs data show that in the first quarter of this year, China's total exports of various types of robots reached 11.32 billion yuan ($1.67 billion), with shipments to 148 countries and regions. Among them, cleaning robots accounted for nearly 70 percent, becoming the main driver of exports.

For instance, walk into a tech park in Shenzhen's Nanshan district, and you will see the commercial reality behind the spectacle. Pudu Robotics has been quietly shipping service robots to more than 80 countries and regions — not only floor-cleaning machines, but also food-delivery robots that navigate crowded restaurants and customer-engagement bots that greet shoppers in malls across Europe and Southeast Asia. By the end of 2025, Pudu had shipped a total of 120,000 robots, the company said.

A few blocks away, engineers are putting a four-legged robot through its paces. At 62 kilograms, it is no toy. In one three-minute test, it performed continuous back-flips, side flips and a spinning jump that launched it 87 centimeters off the ground.

The secret? A local supply chain so efficient that the company can source all 30,000 components within half a day. That speed has allowed eight product iterations in just six months — a pace that leaves many overseas competitors struggling to keep up.

Shenzhen Dobot Corp Ltd, specializing in industrial robot arms, has also shipped its precision manipulators to more than 100 countries and regions. Walk into a factory in Germany or a warehouse in Brazil, and you are increasingly likely to see a Chinese-made robotic arm handling delicate assembly or heavy lifting.

Xie Kaixuan, marketing director of Dobot, said: "The key to embodied intelligence is moving from 'lab demonstration' to 'real-world commercial use'. At a cinema in Shenzhen, Dobot's humanoid robot has already achieved fully automated popcorn sales. It works 14 hours a day, and its daily revenue has exceeded 20,000 yuan."

Zhang Yin, vice-chairman and secretary-general of the Guangdong Artificial Intelligence and Robotics Industry Alliance, said: "The Greater Bay Area is the only region in the world that has both AI technology and mechatronics technology — and the ability to deeply integrate the two. This advantage is reflected in the collaboration and layout of Guangdong, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Macao Special Administrative Region."

The export boom is not limited to walking or rolling machines. Smart glasses have become another unexpected hit. Equipped with real-time translation, visual assistance and noise-cancelling communication, they are flying off shelves from Tokyo to London. Chinese manufacturers have turned the glasses into a practical tool for business travellers and tourists alike.

In 2025, smart glass shipments in China reached 2.46 million units, a year-on-year increase of 87.1 percent. Overseas shipments grew by 64.9 percent, covering 32 countries and regions, according to data from market research company International Data Corp.

Local governments are also moving fast. The Hainan provincial government said it will focus on cultivating future industries and building new engines for development in 2026. In the field of embodied intelligence, Hainan will proactively plan for "brain-like models" tailored to unique application scenarios such as deep-sea exploration and tourism, and develop a variety of embodied intelligent robots, including underwater robots and cultural tourism consumer robots.

Seeing the potential, Beijing Galbot recently established a unit in Hainan, with a business scope covering the manufacturing of service and consumer robots and the research and development of intelligent robots.

What ties all these stories together is a fundamental shift in strategy. Chinese tech companies are no longer competing on price alone. They are offering a complete business loop: hardware to attract customers, software to keep them, and value-added services to generate long-term revenue. It is a model that has already proved successful in smartphones and electric vehicles — and now it is being applied to robotics and AI, experts added.

Contact the writers at masi@chinadaily.com.cn

My toddler's take on China's robot takeover

REPORTER'S LOG

By Ma Si



Ma Si

My 1.5-year-old baby just taught me something Wall Street took years to figure out. Not long ago, my daughter saw a humanoid robot at our local shopping mall — a Chinese-made machine selling small plush toys. She burst into tears.

Fast forward a few months. Now, dragging me by the hand, she practically sprints toward the same robot every day. They dance together. They "chat" — or I should say, she babbles and the robot beeps back. They shake hands.

At not even two years old, she has already internalized something that took global investors years to fully grasp: humanoid robots are no longer science fiction. They're here, they're Chinese and they're going mainstream faster than anyone expected.

The numbers back up my toddler's intuition. In 2025 — the year humanoids moved from lab demos to real-world work — about 15,000 humanoid robots were deployed globally, and about 85 percent of them were delivered by Chinese companies.

The International Federation of Robotics said dominance is not new, but accelerating. In 2024 alone, China installed 295,000 industrial robots, almost eight times more than the US' 34,200 units. The operational stock in China exceeded 2 million, about five times the US' 393,700. China has turned robotics into a scale game, and no one else is even in the race.

Barclays analyst Zornitsa Todorova put it bluntly: "The decade of robotics belongs to China". The reasoning is simple. China controls 90 percent of the world's refined magnetic rare earths, 45 percent of battery exports, 22 percent of actuator exports — and about 70 percent of all global robotics patent applications.

Using European Patent Office data, China holds roughly 70 percent of global robotics patents since 2000; the US holds just 4 percent. In 2023 alone, China filed over 30,000 new robotics patent inventions — nearly 30 times the US' count.

In the humanoid subfield, China accounts for about 75 percent of relevant patents worldwide. The company that holds the most humanoid robot patents globally? Not Boston Dynamics — it's China's UBTech, with 812 patents, dwarfing Boston's 119.

That's not just an innovation edge. That's a supply-chain stranglehold. As Barclays concluded, every humanoid robot assembled in the US or Europe will still rely on key components made in China.

But here's where my daughter's story becomes genuinely revealing. It's not just about who makes the robots — it's about how fast they become normal. The robot she plays with wasn't being tested in a sterile lab; it was working a real shift, selling toys, interacting with hundreds of strangers a day. That's not a prototype. That's a product.

And this is where China is pulling ahead in a way that has nothing to do with patents or rare earths: real-world commercial deployment. Chinese firms are not waiting for perfect conditions. They're putting humanoids into malls, factories, cinemas, restaurants — messy, unpredictable, human-filled environments — and letting them learn on the job.

Now look at where this trajectory leads. Using China's own electric vehicle expansion curve as a reference, analysts from Barclays project that by 2035, annual humanoid robot deployments in China could reach about 11 million units, with the global total hitting roughly 13 million.

If cumulative stock reaches 24 million units, that would add about 3.8 percent to China's effective labor supply — offsetting nearly 60 percent of the projected workforce contraction caused by demographic shifts.

This is an optimistic scenario, but it is not fantasy. It almost exactly replicates the path of electric vehicles: from policy support to supply-chain build-out to explosive scale. China has run this playbook before.

But there is a deeper dimension here — one that spreadsheets and patent filings cannot capture. It is about emotion, familiarity and the quiet erasure of fear. My daughter went from terrified to delighted in weeks. She now treats that plastic-and-servo machine as a friend. She brings it imaginary snacks. She waves goodbye when we leave. This kind of early, casual exposure is happening to millions of Chinese children right now — in malls, airports, kindergartens and hospitals. They are growing up with robots as natural, trusted companions, not as threats to their jobs or existential menaces from sci-fi movies.

Contrast that with the cultural mood in much of the West. In the US and Europe, public discourse around humanoid robots remains heavily colored by job displacement anxiety, privacy fears and dystopian tropes. Surveys consistently show lower willingness to interact with autonomous machines in everyday spaces. That matters — not just for public relations, but for market adoption. A child who dances with a robot today becomes an adult who buys one tomorrow. That is a soft-power advantage no trade barrier can easily undo.

My daughter doesn't know what a supply chain is. She doesn't know about patents. But she knows that an interesting robot has become part of her daily life. That instinctive comfort — the feeling that this technology belongs here, now, in ordinary spaces — is exactly what China is scaling globally.

For everyone else, it may be a moment of reckoning: the decade of robotics really does belong to China. And it has already begun, one dance at a time.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:07 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:07 PM

BUSINESSINSIGHT

EAGLE EYE

By Zhang Xu

Strategic significance of building an open world economy

Editor's note: *China Daily's Business Insight section has launched a column devoted to an in-depth interpretation of Xi Jinping's economic thought. This article is part of the series.*

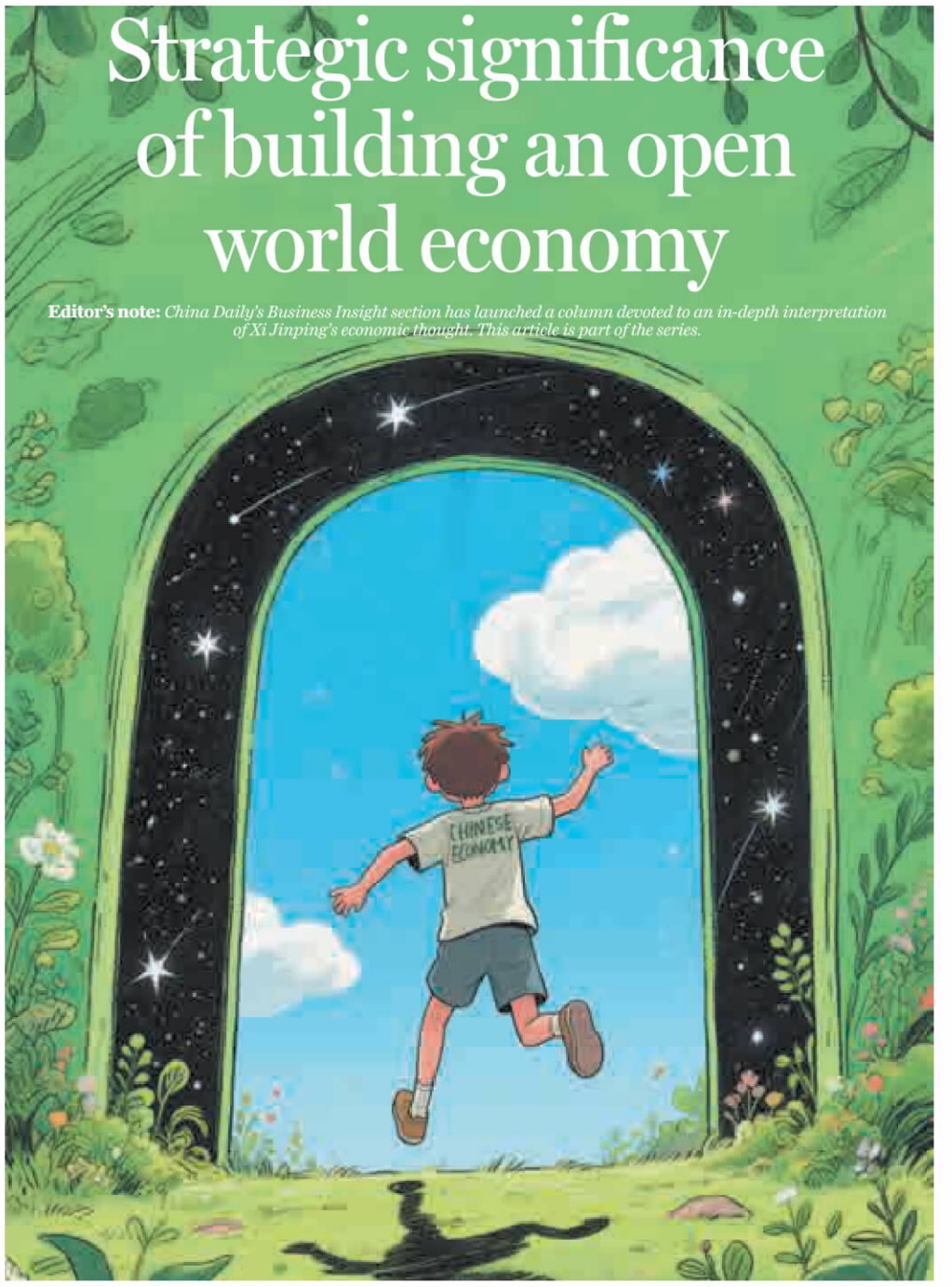


ILLUSTRATION GENERATED BY AI

President Xi Jinping pointed out when meeting with representatives of the international business community on March 28, 2025 that China upholds true multilateralism, promotes universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization, actively participates in global economic governance, and is committed to building an open world economy.

China's top leadership has stated that the country is committed to its fundamental national policy of opening to the outside world and pursues a mutually beneficial strategy of opening-up. It strives to create new opportunities for the world with its own development and to contribute its share of building an open global economy that delivers greater benefits to all peoples.

Promoting economic globalization

The essence of economic globalization is the result of the dialectical movement of productive forces and relations of production. With the global expansion of socialized production and the uneven development of countries around the world, the basic contradictions of capitalism have spilled over from one country to the whole world. These trends may contribute to widening inequality, increased economic vulnerabilities and recurrent global crises if left unaddressed.

The history of human social development has repeatedly proven that openness brings progress, while isolation inevitably leads to backwardness. The correct direction of economic globalization is to follow the laws of global economic development and build an open, inclusive, cooperative and mutually beneficial world economy. Only by building an open world economy can we continuously bring about conditions and opportunities for development and expand the development space of economic globalization.

Requirement for modernization

Openness is a distinct hallmark of Chinese modernization. The present and the near future constitute a critical period for comprehensively advancing the building of a strong country and the great cause of national rejuvenation through Chinese modernization. Adhering to open cooperation and mutual benefit is an inevitable requirement of Chinese modernization. Without an open world economy, such openness will be hindered and development will be constrained.

High-quality development is the primary task of comprehensively building a modern socialist country, accelerating the creation of a new development pattern, and enhancing the endogenous dynamics and reliability of China's domestic economy. Now is a crucial period for our country to accelerate the realization of Chinese modernization. As the world is intertwined with changes and chaos, turbulence is intensifying, the international economic and trade order is facing severe challenges, the growth momentum of the world economy is insufficient, and the impact of changes in the external environment is deepening, and our country's development has entered a period where strategic opportunities, risks and challenges coexist, and uncertain and unpredictable factors are increasing.

China's top leadership has made comprehensive arrangements for building a new development pattern. The key to building a new development pattern lies in unimpeded economic circulation. This includes not only smoothing domestic circulation by building a unified national market, but also streamlining international circulation by building an open world economy. Only in this way can a new development pattern be formed in which the domestic circulation is the mainstay and the domestic and international dual circulations mutually promote each other, thereby creating a broader development space for the realization of Chinese modernization.

New international economic order

Because developed countries were the first to realize industrialization, they possess first-mover advantages in economic strength and technological levels, making them the leaders of current economic globalization. Developed countries have not only obtained massive economic benefits in the process of economic globalization by relying on their first-mover advantages, but also become the rule-makers of the world economy by leveraging their economic, political, technological and military advantages. By formulating economic rules favorable to themselves, developed countries have adopted a hegemonic behavioral approach to applying economic rules when they fit and discarding them when they do not, thus forming an unjust and unreasonable international economic order and causing development dilemmas for the vast number of developing countries.

With the deepening development of economic globalization, the economies of various countries have formed complex economic ties of interdependence. The law of uneven development of the world economy has led to the collective rise of emerging market countries and developing countries, which is changing the global political and economic landscape, gradually demanding a change in the old international economic order dominated by developed countries, and calling for the construction of a new international economic order. Historical lessons in the process of human development show that to overcome the law of uneven development of the world economy, it is imperative to build an open, inclusive, universally and mutually beneficial open world economy. With the rise of emerging economies, the inherent antagonistic contradictions of developed countries have begun to manifest, with their domestic financial risks continuously increasing, industrial "hollowing out" intensifying, and employment and economic growth becoming sluggish.

Instead of reflecting on and proactively changing the old international economic order, developed countries — in order to maintain their vested interests — blame the problems on economic globalization and have begun to engage in unilateralism and protectionism. Fundamentally speaking, solving the problems in the process of economic globalization requires building a new international economic order on the basis of building an open world economy, so as to achieve a rebalancing of the economic globalization process.

Mankind's common development

Only through mutual integration and connectivity can the economic development of various countries achieve mutual learning, mutual complementarity, mutual promotion and common development. Development and innovation are the requirements for sustainable growth of the world economy; interconnected growth is the requirement for robust growth of the world economy; and integration of interests is the requirement for balanced growth of the world economy. China is an advocate and active promoter of building an open world economy, unswervingly expanding institutional opening-up, safeguarding the multilateral trading system, expanding international circulation, promoting reform and development through opening-up, and sharing opportunities and developing together with countries around the world.

China's promotion of building an open world economy aims to provide Chinese solutions, contribute Chinese wisdom, and demonstrate Chinese strength for the common development of humanity. Through the construction of the Belt and Road Initiative, China promotes the Silk Road spirit of peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit. By insisting on building with open doors, China unswervingly advances high-level opening-up, further expands market access, shares development opportunities and dividends with countries around the world, continuously brings new impetus and new opportunities to the world with China's new development, and works together to forge a high-quality world economy.

The writer is director of the Department of Political Economy at the Institute of Economics of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.
The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Supply continues to expand; industrial structure sees faster upgrading

MAIN STREET

By Yang Yiyong

Since the beginning of the year, China's economy has maintained a positive trajectory of recovery and structural improvement despite a complex and challenging external environment and tasks of reform, development and stability at home.

From the production perspective, supply has continued to expand, while the industrial structure has undergone faster upgrading driven by greater self-reliance and strength in science and technology. New quality productive forces are taking shape through practical application and have emerged as a strong driver of high-quality development.

From a livelihood perspective, employment has remained generally stable, prices have stayed moderate and manageable, and the social safety net has continued to improve.

In terms of growth drivers, the economy is witnessing a faster optimization of development momentum. Strategic emerging industries and industries of the future — including new energy, artificial intelligence, biomanufacturing and commercial aerospace — are developing in clusters.

A growing number of new sectors and business tracks are generating strong spillover effects, helping offset pressures stemming from the weakening of traditional growth drivers.

These developments demonstrate the resilience of the Chinese economy, its vast development potential and its favorable long-term prospects. While structural and cyclical challenges remain, confidence in China's development outlook should be strengthened.

The country possesses the world's most complete industrial system, a massive market with enormous potential, abundant talent resources and institutional advantages that continue to be released.

Against this backdrop, market entities should seize opportunities and place innovation at the center of modernization efforts. Sci-tech innovation should be leveraged to drive industrial innovation, particularly through disruptive and frontier technologies capable of fostering new growth engines.

Enterprises should strengthen operational management, improve modern governance capabilities and conduct business in strict compliance with market rules, as well as laws and regulations.

At the same time, greater emphasis should be placed on risk management. Enterprises need sound mechanisms for risk identification, early warning and response in order to better cope with external containment and suppression, market volatility and rising costs.

In the broader process of advancing high-quality economic and social development, businesses should not only serve as witnesses, but also as active contributors, providing solid support for the overall economy through their own stable and healthy development.

A problem-oriented approach remains essential to sustaining healthy economic growth.

Improving macroeconomic policies by addressing the most pressing concerns of market entities is a key part of this process.

At present, many enterprises continue to face common operational challenges. Some place greater emphasis on investment and project construction than on subsequent management and operational efficiency.

Others focus heavily on hard assets — such as infrastructure and fixed-asset investment — while paying insufficient attention to soft strengths, including institutional development, brand value, data assets and management capabilities.

Another challenge lies in unsustainable development patterns. In some cases, inadequate long-term strategic planning and excessive pursuit of short-term expansion have led to the accumulation and exposure of structural risks.

These issues are related not only to the management capabilities of some business entities, but also to the effectiveness of policy transmission and implementation.

Institutionalized communication between government and businesses should therefore be regarded as an important channel for improving macroeconomic policymaking efficacy. Policymakers need to engage directly with enterprises, gain a detailed understanding of practical challenges and listen to voices from the front lines of production.

Suggestions and reasonable appeals raised by businesses should be carefully categorized, systematically documented and thoroughly studied.

Efforts should combine targeted solutions with broader institutional improvements. At the micro level, precise measures should be introduced to address industry-specific difficulties and challenges faced by individual enterprises.

At the macro level, policymakers should systematically identify common and institutional obstacles, strengthen policy coordination and consistency, and avoid policy distortions caused by either overly fragmented or overly generalized approaches.

Institutional innovation is also needed to remove bottlenecks in policy implementation and ensure that policies effectively reach market entities.

Doing so will help address deep-seated problems such as inadequate operational management, insufficient investment in soft capabilities and unsustainable development practices.

More importantly, it will enable macroeconomic policies to be translated from abstract documents and figures into tangible institutional dividends and practical support that businesses can genuinely access and benefit from, thereby enhancing confidence in and recognition of government policies.

Looking ahead, achieving both qualitative improvement and reasonable quantitative growth requires adherence to the principle of pursuing progress while maintaining stability, promoting stability through progress and establishing the new before abolishing the old.

Greater innovation and vitality should be fostered through positive interaction between effective macroeconomic guidance and proactive efforts by market entities.

China should continue to uphold and improve its basic socialist economic system, unswervingly consolidate and develop the public sector, and encourage, support and guide the development of the nonpublic sector.

The legitimate rights, interests and property rights of all market entities should be protected in accordance with the law, while efforts should continue to build a world-class business environment that is market-oriented, law-based and internationalized.

Further reform and opening-up remain essential. Institutional barriers that hinder the market-based allocation of production factors and the efficient circulation of goods and services should be removed, while efforts to build a unified national market should be hastened.

At the same time, greater attention should be paid to improving the coordination, precision and effectiveness of macroeconomic policies. Policymakers need to balance the expansion of domestic demand with deeper supply-side structural reform, coordinate short-term growth with long-term development potential and better integrate development with security.

Enterprises should also be encouraged to accelerate the transformation of their development models and build core competitiveness through technological, managerial and business-model innovation. Greater efforts should be made to pursue specialized, sophisticated, distinctive and innovative development while advancing green, low-carbon and sustainable growth.

Only by better combining an efficient market with a well-functioning government can the stability and predictability of macroeconomic policies work in tandem with the initiative and creativity of market entities.

In this way, China's considerable resilience and development potential can be transformed into tangible growth advantages, opening new horizons for high-quality development, while laying a stronger material and technological foundation for building a modern socialist country in all respects.

The writer is a senior research fellow at the Chinese Academy of Macroeconomic Research.
The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:07 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:07 PM

CHINA

China's fisheries through the eyes of intl students

By **WANG XIN** in Shanghai
wangxin2@chinadaily.com.cn

Sebastianus Ken Chandra, a 23-year-old Indonesian student at Shanghai Ocean University, received a special award as an "Impressions of China's Fisheries" international cooperation ambassador.

Jointly launched by Shanghai Ocean University, the Chinese Academy of Fishery Sciences and the China Overseas Fisheries Association, the "Impressions of China's Fisheries" campaign invited international students in China, foreign crew members in the distant-water fishing industry and fisheries workers worldwide to share their personal perspectives and stories about China's fishery sector.

Through short videos, stories, photographs and handicrafts, participants from 25 countries submitted more than 100 works highlighting their firsthand experiences and observations of China's efforts and achievements in sustainable fisheries and international cooperation.

At an event held on Friday at the university, 10 outstanding works received awards, while 10 creators were presented with the title of "International Cooperation Ambassador", which aims to encourage them to bridge fishery cooperation with different countries.

For Chandra, whose ancestors came from China's southeastern coast, participating in the campaign was a journey of self-discovery. Having grown up hearing stories about China, he came to the country in 2023 to pursue a bachelor's degree in aquaculture, beginning what he described as a "fulfilling, happy and knowledge-rich" experience.

Chandra said he once believed aquaculture was simply about raising fish until they grew larger. Over time, however, he learned it encompasses the entire ecosystem in which fish live.

He said he came to understand that the strength of China's fisheries industry stems from generations of people who have spent decades studying water, fish and the relationship between humanity and nature.

In his view, China's fisheries and aquaculture sector is "like a net", with one end connected to the era when his ancestors departed from China's coast and the other tied to today's advances in science, education, ecology and the future.

"What impressed me the most in China's fisheries is that tradition and modernity always go hand in hand," he said. "On one side is the wisdom of fishermen living off the sea for generations, and on the other side are sensors, data models, recirculating aquaculture systems and green farming technologies."

Another Indonesian student at the university, Abizar Dirsan Gifari, was recognized for his work on comparative research into marine ranching.

He said he was equally impressed by China's advanced technologies and commitment to sustainable fisheries.

As they approach graduation, both students said they hope to apply the knowledge they gained in China to help improve Indonesia's fisheries and aquaculture industries while serving as bridges for people-to-people exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries.

Many other young participants from countries including Vietnam, Cambodia, Tonga, Laos, Pakistan and Ecuador also shared their impressions of China's fisheries sector.

> "What impressed me the most in China's fisheries is that tradition and modernity always go hand in hand."
>
> **Sebastianus Ken Chandra,** a 23-year-old Indonesian student at Shanghai Ocean University

As the Lancang-Mekong cooperation continues to deepen, Horn Songheng, a student from Cambodia, said he has seen new hope in the growing rice-shrimp fields in his hometown and for the Irrawaddy dolphins inhabiting the Mekong River.

Sheryl Chanena Haz Munoz of Ecuador said she hopes to see more seafood products from her home country enter the Chinese market as bilateral cooperation expands. She is also actively studying in China to gain knowledge that can help protect the ocean as the world's shared blue home.

Elenoa Veatokelau Dior Bloomfield, a student from Tonga, said she appreciates China's support through technology transfer and experience-sharing that have helped the Pacific island nation build a more resilient blue economy. She hopes to contribute to sustainable China-Tonga maritime cooperation.

"China and Tonga have demonstrated a new model of cooperation to the world, which is to collaborate rather than compete, to share rather than isolate, to safeguard vibrant oceans rather than let them fall into ruin. I see it exactly as the essence of building a maritime community with a shared future," Bloomfield wrote in her submission.

Chen Jianghua, director of the publicity department at Shanghai Ocean University, said the submissions focused on concrete areas of fisheries cooperation and captured numerous heartwarming moments of Chinese and international partners working together to protect the oceans.

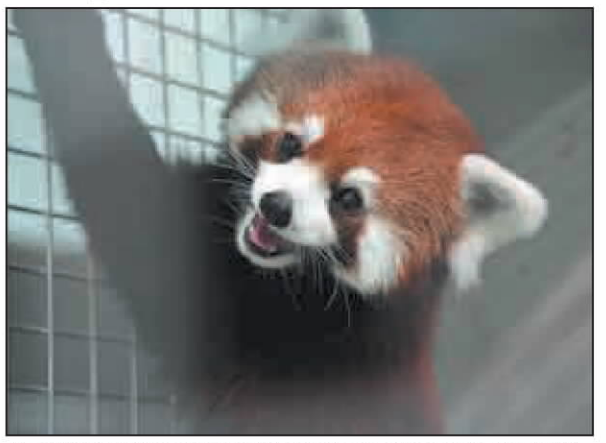
She said the firsthand experiences and observations presented in the submitted works effectively conveyed China's philosophy of responsible, sustainable and mutually beneficial fisheries development.

During the event, young people from around the world, described as future connectors and promoters of international marine fisheries cooperation, jointly proposed the "Our Ocean, Our Future: Global Youth Marine Fisheries Governance Initiative".

The initiative advocates equity and justice, calls for strengthening multilateral platforms to address global challenges collectively, and supports the principle of achieving shared growth through consultation and collaboration.

"Marine fisheries are vital to marine ecosystems, food security and human livelihoods. The sustainable development of marine fisheries is vital to the shared future of humanity. Together, we will join hands to safeguard our ocean and build our future," the initiative said.

Red pandas arrive



A red panda undergoes a health examination in a quarantine facility at Taipei Zoo in Taiwan on Saturday after arriving from Shanghai Zoo. A pair of young red pandas were transferred under a species exchange agreement signed by the two zoos during the 2024 Shanghai–Taipei City Forum. XINHUA



Innovation on display

An alumnus and his child experience a pair of AR glasses at the science and technology exhibition center of Southeast University in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, on Saturday during the university's 124th anniversary celebrations. Officially opening after two years of construction, the center showcased the university's latest advances in fields ranging from information metamaterials and deep-sea mining equipment to aerospace technology.
YANG BO / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

HK, Central Asia deepen ties

Trade mission enhances investment, exchanges and research collaboration

By **STACY SHI** and **WU KUNLING** in Hong Kong

A high-profile Hong Kong Special Administrative Region trade mission to Central Asia, led by Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu, ended on a successful note Friday, with 96 agreements involving $1.65 billion in investments secured.

The pacts comprise 15 government-level memorandums of understanding and accords in commerce, education and development projects, as well as 81 private-sector deals spanning trade, investment, finance, energy, technology and aviation.

The 70-member trade delegation included business and professional leaders from the SAR and the Chinese mainland, including representatives from the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation and two Hong Kong universities, as well as executives from mainland enterprises including electric vehicle maker Li Auto. Lee first adopted this blended composition during his visit to Qatar and Kuwait in 2025, a move he said would amplify Hong Kong's "super connector" and "super value adder" roles.

In a statement on Friday, Lee said the visits to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan were fruitful, noting that beyond the signed agreements, the delegation witnessed strengthened government-level contacts between the SAR and the two Central Asian countries. He said it was also agreed that discussions will begin soon on areas including comprehensive double taxation avoidance.

The mission further deepened project matching and research collaboration, showcasing the Hong Kong SAR as a global platform, boosting exchanges through direct flights, visa extensions and educational, talent and cultural ties, and advancing a hub-to-hub model with Central Asia, the statement said.

Lee met with Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev and other senior officials from both countries to exchange views on further cooperation.

Lee said he will actively push for extensions of visa-free access arrangements between the SAR and the two nations in the future.

The delegation arrived in Astana, Kazakhstan's capital, on May 31 for the first leg of the weeklong tour. Once there, they visited Astana Hub, the country's technology and innovation park; the Astana International Financial Centre; and Nazarbayev University, among other institutions.

The team proceeded to Tashkent, Uzbekistan's capital, on Wednesday and toured IT Park Uzbekistan, a national-level special economic zone, and the Center for Islamic Civilization.

They also attended various business events to exchange views on future plans and expectations.

Li Guanhua, senior vice-president of Li Auto, said the company aims to use Hong Kong's platform to boost its brand presence and service capabilities. She said the government-led initiative is key for Chinese brands to expand overseas, adding there is a bright future for new-energy development in the region.

Jackson Choi Chit-sze, director of Hong Kong-based conglomerate Sunwah Group, said his company is keen to partner with mainland entrepreneurs targeting Central Asia to tap the region's mineral resources, renewable energy potential and strategic location linking China and Europe.

Tursunboy Makhkamov, chief financial officer of Uzbekistan's Ipak Yuli Bank, said Hong Kong is ideally positioned to serve as a premier hub for attracting overseas finance and driving new investment in Uzbekistan. He added that Uzbekistan's rapidly growing economy and market offer strong opportunities for Hong Kong investors.

Nurken Bolatov, chief operating officer of Kazakhstan-based start-up Artisan Education, said his company has been accepted into the ideation program of the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation, which provides up to HK$100,000 ($12,760) in seed funding for startups.

He said this will be a strong opportunity for Artisan Education to enter the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong markets.

Atlas Shao contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at stacyshi@chinadailyhk.com

Guangxi man survives drifting at sea for 7 days

HAIKOU — When fisherman Zheng Shizhong spotted a naked, unresponsive man floating about 10 kilometers off the coast of Chengmai county, Hainan province, on Tuesday morning, he could hardly believe the drifter was still alive.

The man, Qin Jianping, a wholesale businessman from South China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, had fallen into the sea seven days earlier during a late-night walk. He had no mobile phone, no life jacket and no supplies to sustain him.

A slip into the sea

Qin was on holiday in Haikou, the capital of Hainan, when the accident occurred. At about 11 pm on May 27, he stepped on a discarded fruit peel while walking along a seaside dam in windy weather and slipped into the waves.

"The sea is nothing like a swimming pool," Qin said. "I couldn't touch the bottom, and huge waves kept pushing me farther out. Every time I swam toward the shore, the waves pulled me back. There was no way I could return."

Although Qin knew how to swim, he swallowed large amounts of seawater and suffered cuts from coral reefs shortly after falling in.

As the tide carried him farther offshore and his strength faded, he stopped fighting the current and allowed himself to drift, hoping passing vessels would spot him at daybreak. But by the following morning, land had disappeared from view.

Two ships passed nearby that day, but neither saw him.

To conserve energy, Qin discarded his belongings, including his shoes, trousers, watch and ring. He stayed afloat by treading water and moving his arms.

"The sun scorched me during the day, but the water kept taking away my body heat," he said. "After two or three days, the sea felt as cold as a refrigerator."

After more than 40 hours without food or sleep, Qin managed to climb onto a floating buoy and briefly fell asleep, only to be knocked back into the water by a large wave.

On May 30, he climbed onto an iron navigation buoy, but the metal had been heated by the sun. After clinging to it for several hours, he returned to the water and continued drifting.

Desperate for water, Qin drank seawater and later his own urine. Neither relieved his thirst, and he began experiencing severe pain when urinating.

At night, he battled the cold and exhaustion.

"Urine is a stream of warm heat," he said. "I curled into a ball and tried to preserve every bit of warmth."

On May 31, the fifth day of his ordeal, Qin reached another navigation buoy with a foam base. Too weak to climb aboard, he clung to its side and discovered small sea crabs living in gaps in the foam.

He caught dozens of the crabs with his bare hands and ate them raw. They became his only source of food during the weeklong ordeal.

Rescue at the last moment

By the fifth day, Qin was so exhausted that he could hear ferries and trains from the shore but lacked the strength to move toward them. Severe dehydration and starvation triggered hallucinations.

"I dreamed there was a wedding in my hometown and I was helping to cook," he said. "I could barely breathe, but there was only one thought in my head: I can't die."

By the sixth day, his condition had deteriorated further. His eyes were bloodshot from exposure and dehydration, and memories of his childhood, marriage and family filled his mind as he feared death was near.

Then Zheng and fellow fisherman Fu Tingsan spotted him.

"My heart skipped a beat when I saw him," Zheng said. "But the current swept him away almost immediately."

The fishermen steered closer and found Qin floating on his back with his eyes closed. They first threw him a rope, but his vision had become so poor that he could not see it.

They then extended a 4-meter boat pole and tapped him on the back.

Delirious and barely conscious, Qin grabbed the pole. The fishermen pulled him aboard.

"I think I'm going to die," Qin said.

"You're with us now. You're not going to die," Zheng said.

The fishermen carefully gave him small sips of water rather than allowing him to drink freely, fearing further harm to his body. They rinsed his wounds with fresh water, provided clothing and massaged his stiff legs.

The return trip to the shore took about 85 minutes. Villagers were already waiting and helped contact police and medical workers while spreading information online in hopes of locating Qin's family.

Reunion and recovery

Back in Guangxi, Qin's family had been desperately searching for him.

A friend traveled to Hainan and reported him missing on May 29. Police later confirmed through surveillance footage that he had fallen into the sea.

His wife arrived in Hainan on May 31 and spent days searching along the coastline. Authorities told the family that survival beyond three days adrift at sea was highly unlikely.

"I had already accepted that my husband was gone," she said. "I filled three bottles with seawater to take home as a memento."

She was preparing to return to Guangxi when she received news that Qin had been found alive. When she saw him in the hospital, covered in scars and almost unrecognizable, she broke down in tears.

Qin was admitted to Chengmai County People's Hospital in critical condition.

Doctors diagnosed severe hypertonic dehydration, multiple infected wounds from reefs and marine life, oral ulcers caused by eating raw crabs, and internal injuries linked to drinking seawater and urine.

He lost about 10 kilograms during the ordeal, dropping from more than 85 kg to about 75 kg.

After two days of intensive care, his condition stabilized. Doctors said he was expected to be discharged within a week and should require only routine follow-up treatment.

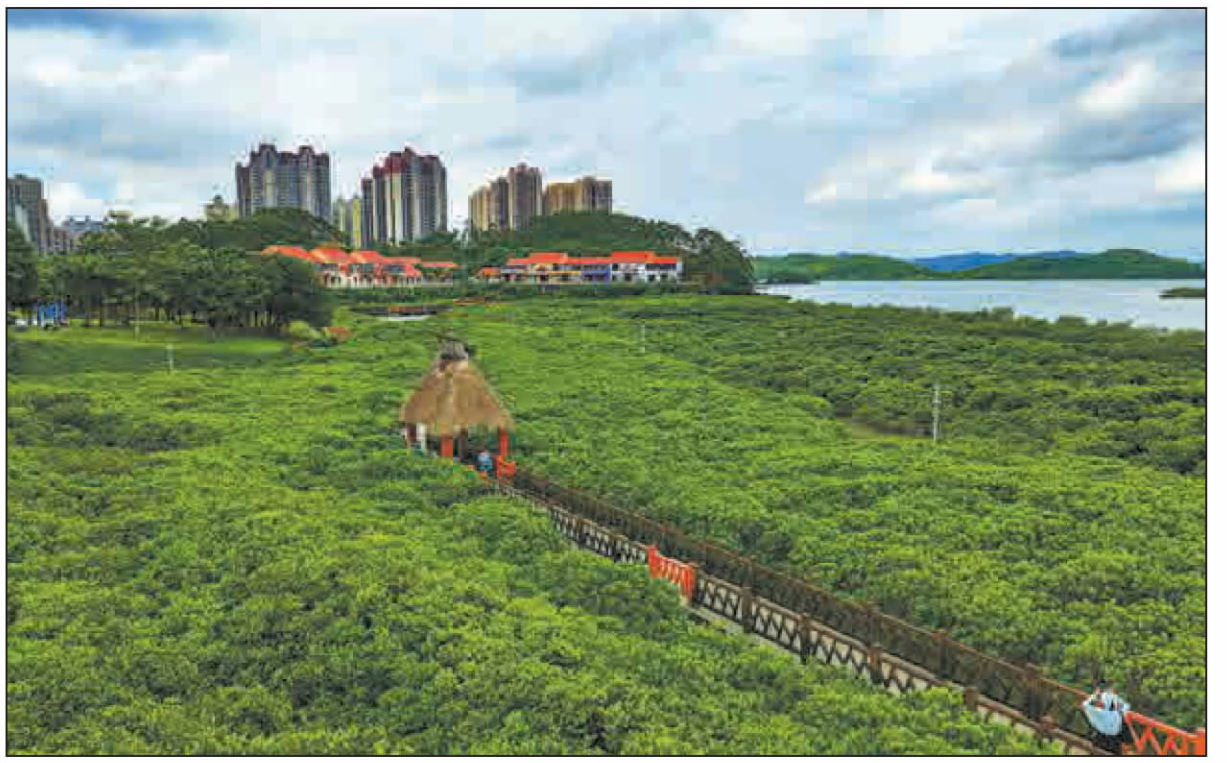
Qin said the first thing he plans to do after recovering is visit the two fishermen who saved his life.

"No matter how dangerous or hopeless things get, if you keep a steady mind, you can get through it," he said.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:07 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:07 PM



Lush mangroves thrive in Gangkou district of Fangchenggang, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, in September. LIANG JIAJU / FOR CHINA DAILY

Ecological action spurs mangrove regrowth

National push sees China reverse coastal deforestation trend









Clockwise from top left: Fishery workers load mangrove saplings onto a boat before heading to an uninhabited island in Xuwen county of Zhanjiang, Guangdong province, in December 2021. PENG ZHENQIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY
Botanical workers plant mangrove trees in Zhanjiang in July 2024. PENG ZHENQIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY
Workers set up crab pots in a mangrove swamp in Wenzhou, Zhejiang province, in July 2024. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY
Waterways carve through mangroves on Donghai Island of Zhanjiang in July 2021. PENG ZHENQIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

By LI MENGHAN
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

China has become one of the few countries to buck the global trend of coastal deforestation, achieving a 44 percent increase in mangrove forest area since 2000, according to the latest data from the Ministry of Natural Resources and the National Forestry and Grassland Administration.

For Xu Hechang, 38, a crab farmer who leases 53 hectares of coastal ponds in Zhanjiang in South China's Guangdong province, the rapid improvement is tangible.

"The shells of crabs raised here are harder and the meat is sweeter because of the clean water," he said.

"My family has farmed here for generations, but never at this scale. Now, with healthier mangroves, the crabs can sell for double the normal price."

The latest data shows that China's total mangrove canopy now stands at approximately 31,700 hectares, up from a low in 2000 of 22,000 hectares. The milestone establishes China as one of the few maritime nations globally to secure net-positive growth in intertidal wetlands.

China's trajectory began to diverge in the 2000s as protection efforts intensified. Progress accelerated further in the past few years after the Ministry of Natural Resources and the National Forestry and Grassland Administration rolled out a special action plan for mangrove protection and restoration (2020-25), setting targets to create 9,050 hectares of new mangroves and restore 9,750 hectares of degraded forests.

Prioritizing the protection of mangrove ecosystems, authorities banned further reclamation of tidal flats, incorporated remaining mangrove stands into ecological protection red lines and promoted tailored, science-based restoration approaches.

"Mangroves are the only woody plant communities that survive in the intertidal zones of tropical and subtropical regions — flooded at high tide and exposed at low tide," said Ding Xinyuan, an associate professor at the mangrove protection research center of the Southern Marine Science and Engineering Guangdong Laboratory (Zhanjiang).

"Despite being green, the name in Chinese translates to 'red forest', referring to their tannin-rich inner bark, which oxidizes and turns deep red when exposed to air after cutting," Ding said. "Ecologically, they are defined by their specialized aerial roots. These roots allow the trees to absorb oxygen in waterlogged mud, and some species can excrete excess salt through their leaves."

Ding said the tangled root systems act as natural nurseries, providing shelter and breeding grounds for fish, crabs and other benthic organisms. The dense roots also help purify water by slowing tidal currents, trapping suspended sediments and absorbing excess nitrogen and phosphorus from aquaculture runoff before it reaches the open sea.

"Globally, they are among the planet's most powerful carbon sinks, sequestering carbon dioxide from the atmosphere at a rate significantly higher than that of a tropical rainforest of the same area," he said.

Home to China's largest mangrove area, accounting for nearly 40 percent of the national total, Guangdong was assigned the largest share of the 2020-25 national plan: creating 5,500 hectares of new mangroves and rehabilitating 2,500 hectares of degraded forests. Yet much of its suitable intertidal land had long been converted into aquaculture ponds that supported tens of thousands of coastal households.

"The biggest challenge in restoration is not planting trees, but balancing nature with livelihoods," Ding said.

Science has offered a way forward through an integrated mangrove-aquaculture model, such as the one used by crab farmer Xu. Unlike conventional ponds that enclose all water for farming or clear all vegetation to maximize space, the approach restores ecosystems while maintaining productivity.

"We dig soil from the ponds to build islands, aiming to keep the total breeding capacity unchanged. This minimizes the impact on the yield of fish, shrimp and crabs while allowing the mangroves to breathe normally," Ding said.

He added that mangroves provide shelter for aquaculture species, purify the water and reduce disease, while nutrients and waste from the ponds serve as natural fertilizer for the trees.

Ding said his lab is exploring techniques to produce higher-value products from integrated ponds. Preliminary results include an artificial intervention method that enhances roe richness in female crabs — a trait that commands 10 times the normal market price — and the development of what is believed to be the world's first mangrove fruit wine using biological fermentation technology.

While mangrove restoration in Guangdong illustrates the balance between conservation and livelihoods, the neighboring Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region is demonstrating how mangroves can be used as protection against typhoons and storm surges.

Li Xiaoyu, an engineer with the marine bureau in Fangchenggang, Guangxi, said that during his first visit to the Hongshahuan area in 2010, the site was littered with abandoned aquaculture ponds. In 2012, an ecological seawall improvement project was proposed, selecting Hongshahuan as a pilot area.

"Mangroves are a unique ecosystem bridging land and sea. Their extensive root systems effectively reduce sediment loads in nearshore waters, while their dense yet flexible branches and trunks dissipate wave energy," Li said, adding that the restoration work capitalized on those advantages.

Completed over three years, China's first demonstration ecological seawall stretches 3.2 kilometers and features a layered structure. On the outermost tidal flats, 9,913 square meters of mangroves were planted. Moving inward, the seawall body — built with artificial reef blocks — was covered with coastal vegetation. Behind it lies a landscaped forest belt and ecological corridor.

Li said mangroves not only buffer waves and reduce erosion but also slow the solar weathering of embankments. Since its completion, the seawall has withstood more than 10 typhoons, including a severe storm in 2018 when maximum wind speeds reached 40 meters per second.

"Ten years on, the seawall remains solid. The mangroves have flourished into a verdant woodland, showcasing remarkable progress in ecological restoration," Li said.

Similar efforts have taken shape nationwide. Fujian, home to the Zhangjiangkou National Mangrove Nature Reserve, has expanded greenbelts along the Zhangjiang River estuary. Hainan province, which boasts the country's richest mangrove biodiversity, has focused on genetic research and invasive species removal. Coastal provinces have incorporated mangrove targets into their local five-year plans, helping fulfill the national blueprint.

The success reflects a broader shift in coastal governance — one led by government but supported by private capital. Environmental nonprofit, SEE Foundation, has mobilized companies to help fill funding gaps in protection and conservation across China and Southeast Asia. Partnering with the Ministry of Natural Resources' Third Institute of Oceanography, it coauthored the national standard for mangrove carbon credits, turning carbon storage into a tradable asset.

China has also shown a willingness to share its experience internationally. Efforts include building the International Mangrove Center in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, integrating mangrove conservation into the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and expanding South-South technical cooperation with mangrove-restoring countries across Asia and the Pacific.

Despite being home to only about 0.2 percent of the world's mangroves, China is demonstrating that restoration is not a choice between nature and humanity, but a synthesis of both. It is proving that even a small fraction of greenery can anchor a coastline, sustain a community and contribute to global ecological balance.

Xiamen's once polluted mudflats turned into thriving eco-sanctuary

By ZHANG YI in Xiamen, Fujian
and **HU MEIDONG** in Fuzhou

Xiatanwei Mangrove Park, the largest restored intertidal wetland in East China's Fujian province, launched a series of marine biodiversity activities this weekend to mark World Oceans Day on June 8, showcasing the site's transition from a polluted aquaculture zone into a world-class ecological sanctuary.

The three-day event features the debut of a new scientific illustrated guide on intertidal species conservation, anchoring a localized marine market that highlights what the United Nations has recognized as a global blueprint for coastal rehabilitation.

During the 1970s and 1980s, these natural intertidal flats were degraded by commercial aquaculture farms, with farming runoff destroying the native mangrove vegetation.

The turning point came in the early 2000s, when a research team led by the late academician Lin Peng, widely regarded as a pioneer of modern Chinese mangrove research, initiated a 5-hectare experimental forest on the polluted mudflats to test restoration feasibility.

Following successful trials, the Xiamen city government scaled the initiative into a comprehensive multiphase remediation campaign, restoring approximately 85 hectares.

According to data compiled by Xiamen University, the completed 85-hectare forest has fundamentally altered the local food web, triggering a large-scale return of native wildlife.

Yang Shengchang, an associate professor from the College of the Environment and Ecology at Xiamen University, said that restored mangroves function as primary producers to sustain a complex food web. This triggered a measured biological recovery, he added.

Recent data showed the park's total species richness has increased 2.4-fold compared to pre-restoration, with the biomass for fish up 2.99-fold, for shellfish up 4.76-fold, and crustaceans up 1.19-fold, according to Yang.

On the ground, when the tide recedes, the exposed mudflats reveal an active intertidal ecosystem. Large populations of fiddler crabs and mudskippers emerge across the patterned flats, creating an abundant feeding ground that draws flocks of egrets and herons down from the mangrove branches.

"In the past, this area only attracted waterbirds, but now as you walk along the boardwalk, you can observe a significant number of forest birds as well, with 76 bird species recorded so far," Yang said. "This direct influx is a clear result of environmental improvement."

As the biological community matured, the forest's physical and environmental functions multiplied. The dense root systems now serve as a vital storm barrier, while its carbon sequestration capacity was found to be two to five times greater than equivalent areas of terrestrial forests, he said.

Beyond biodiversity metrics, the park has established a distinct precedent in climate diplomacy.

A dedicated section of the replanted mangrove canopy was utilized to fully offset the carbon emissions generated during the 2017 BRICS Xiamen Summit. The initiative marked the first certified "zero-carbon" international meeting in BRICS history, earning the site its official designation as the "BRICS Carbon Neutral Forest".

Peter Thomson, the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, visited the park in 2018 and returned in 2023 during the 18th Xiamen International Ocean Week, praising it as a great example of mangrove restoration.

Since January 2023, the park's infrastructure — including an elevated 4.2-kilometer boardwalk system, five dedicated viewing piers, and island trails — has accommodated more than 3 million tourists.

The site also functions as an outdoor science classroom. Educational institutions have conducted over 500 interactive workshops there, allowing more than 150,000 students to personally observe mangrove viviparity, feel the unique breathing roots and trace intertidal wildlife.

"Young students are highly receptive to these ecological narratives," Yang said. "Whether they are exploring the elevated boardwalks, stepping directly onto the mudflats, or even getting pinched by a crab, this hands-on exploration effectively translates textbook knowledge into a lasting understanding of marine conservation."

Contact the writers at
zhangyi1@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:07 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:07 PM

CULTURE

Bringing ancient philosophy into the present

Through an exhibition in Athens, great Eastern and Western thinkers merge to highlight moral commonalities and mutual learning, **Zhao Ruixue** reports in Jinan.

More than 2,000 years after Confucius (551-479 BC) and Socrates (469-399 BC) walked the Earth, an exhibition in Greece is bringing their ideas into the present, using artificial intelligence, immersive experiences and hands-on activities to bridge time, space and culture.

The exhibition, *Encounter & Enlighten: A Dialogue Across Time and Space*, which will run from Monday to Wednesday during the second World Conference of Classics in Athens, highlights the profound intellectual achievements from roughly 800 BC to 200 BC, a time that German philosopher Karl Jaspers called the Axial Age.

During this pivotal era, Eastern and Western civilizations independently produced enduring wisdom that continues to shape human thought.

"Eastern civilization gave rise to profound reflections from Chinese philosophers, including Confucians, Taoists, Mohists, and Legalists, on how to build an orderly society and establish moral norms for human relationships," says Fu Yongju, director of the Qilu Culture Research Institute at the Qilu Institute of Technology in Shandong province.

"Western civilization, meanwhile, produced the enduring wisdom of Socrates, Plato (427-347 BC) and Aristotle (384-322 BC), who explored the nature of reason, the principles of logic, and the fundamental laws of the natural world.

"Remarkably, both civilizations established institutional homes for intellectual dialogue and debate around the same time."

Plato's Academy, founded in Athens around 387 BC by the philosopher himself, became a center for philosophical and mathematical research that operated for centuries.

The Jixia Academy was located in Linzi (in present-day Zibo, Shandong province), the capital of the ancient Qi state. Funded by the Qi state and operating for more than 150 years from roughly 374 BC to 221 BC, the academy is considered China's earliest state-sponsored, privately run university.

It brought together academic schools, including Confucians, Legalists, Taoists, Mohists, and logicians who freely lectured, debated and advised rulers without holding official positions.

According to historical records, there were dozens of schools of thought during the period before the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220), and the Jixia Academy was a central venue where these schools exchanged ideas.

This historical legacy is not just a subject of academic study in Shandong, the home of Confucius and Mencius (372-289 BC). It is being actively revived.

As part of this effort, the Qilu Institute of Technology has built the Jixia Building, which re-creates the spirit of the ancient Jixia Academy through lectures, scholarly dialogues and debates. Using digital technology and diverse artistic forms, the program enables teachers and students to experience the inclusive, free-thinking spirit.

> Hosting this exhibition in Greece is not just about presenting an equal dialogue between Chinese and Western civilizations, but also about faithfully conveying the long continuity of Chinese civilization and the essential values of Confucius ... so that the world may truly understand China."
>
> **Yang Chaoming,** a professor at the Advanced Institute for Confucian Studies, Shandong University

The Athens exhibition highlights the resonance between Chinese and Greek thinkers.

For example, a Confucian teaching — a wise person first makes their own understanding clear, and then uses that clarity to make others clear — echoes a well-known modern aphorism that education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.

"Both value knowledge by emphasizing the methods of education and moral cultivation," says Qi Jinjiang, a professor at the Qilu Culture Research Institute.

Similarly, Laozi's observation — humans follow the earth, the earth follows heaven, heaven follows the Way, and the Way follows what is natural — aligns with Thales' proposition that water is the origin of all things.

Both Laozi (traditionally dated to the 6th-5th century BC) and Thales (624-546 BC) sought naturalistic accounts of how things work, says Qi.

As the exhibition brings together the wisdom of East and West, its deeper significance is also being underscored by Chinese scholars.

"Hosting this exhibition in Greece is not just about presenting an equal dialogue between Chinese and Western civilizations, but also about faithfully conveying the long continuity of Chinese civilization and the essential values of Confucius and Confucianism, so that the world may truly understand China," says Yang Chaoming, a distinguished professor at the Advanced Institute for Confucian Studies, Shandong University, in Jinan.

Qi further explains that among the major schools of thought, Confucianism served as the foundation and core.

Traditionally, Confucius is said to have edited the Six Classics (including the now-lost *Book of Music*).

"These Six Classics are not merely Confucian texts, but served as the common curriculum for all the schools during the Jixia Academy period," Qi says.

Qi distills Confucian benevolence into six dimensions, each resonating with universal human values that continue to inform global ethical discussions today.

Fairness, for example, is embodied in the principle of not doing to others what one would not want done to oneself.

Development is captured in the saying: "To establish oneself, help others establish themselves; and to succeed, help others succeed." It's an early articulation of mutual benefit and shared progress that echoes modern ideas of win-win cooperation.

The Confucian understanding of democracy finds expression in the idea of harmony without uniformity, which represents the ability to hold different opinions while maintaining social cohesion.

Peace, meanwhile, is reflected in the concept of winning others over through virtue rather than force — a clear rejection of hegemony and domination in favor of a moral example.

Justice, in the Confucian framework, is summed up in the belief that the world belongs to all, a vision that prioritizes public interest over private gain.

Freedom is understood not as the absence of restraint, but as the recognition that true human flourishing requires both self-cultivation and deep respect for the dignity and development of others.

"These millennia-old ideas still possess powerful vitality today. They offer Eastern wisdom to resolve civilizational conflicts and maintain world peace," Qi says.

As the world faces unprecedented challenges, scholars say that Axial Age wisdom offers valuable insights for building a shared future for humanity.

Embracing the vision put forward by the renowned Chinese sociologist Fei Xiaotong, who called for beauty in diversity, Fu says that through equality, respect, inclusiveness, and mutual learning, different civilizations can reach consensus and achieve common development.

Contact the writer at zhaoruixue@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese schools of thought and their continuing influence



Representative figures: (from left) Confucius, Mencius, Xunzi, Han Fei, Laozi, Zhuangzi, Mozi, Sun Wu and Sun Bin. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Confucianism

Representative figures:
Confucius, Mencius, Xunzi

Core ideas: Benevolence (*ren*), righteousness (*yi*), propriety (*li*), wisdom (*zhi*), trustworthiness (*xin*).

Explanation:

Ren emphasizes harmonious relationships among people. *Yi* and *li* serve to maintain social order. *Zhi* and *xin* advocate for rational understanding and honest character.

To this day, these ideas remain widely recognized and practiced moral principles among the Chinese people.

Confucius (551-479 BC) founded Confucianism, which was spread by Mencius (372-289 BC) and Xunzi (313-238 BC), becoming a key source of intellectual freedom.

Mencius promoted benevolent governance and the idea that rulers should treat their people with kindness, a progressive concept adopted by many Chinese dynasties.

Xunzi combined Confucian propriety with Legalist law, creating the ancient Chinese tradition of using both — an innovation on the original teachings of Confucius.

Legalism

Representative figure: Han Fei

Core idea: Ruling the country by law.

Explanation:

Legalism was the school of thought among philosophers before the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC) that placed the greatest emphasis on law, developing a complete set of theories and methods for its application.

Legalists regarded law as a tool for strengthening social governance, making it an effective means of maintaining social order.

Han Fei (280-233 BC) advocated integrating three key elements: law (*fa*), methods (*shu*), and authority (*shi*). He insisted that laws should be transparent, clear and specific. Rulers must possess absolute authority to ensure that laws and decrees can be effectively enforced.

Legalism exerted a profound influence on state politics, culture and morality. It has also provided important reference points for the birth and development of contemporary Chinese law.

Taoism

Representative figures:
Laozi, Zhuangzi

Core idea: The Way follows what is natural.

Explanation:

Taoism advocates following the natural laws of the universe and promotes harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature. It contains profound wisdom about the natural world and the philosophy of human life, deeply influencing traditional Chinese aesthetics and ways of living.

Represented by Laozi (traditionally dated to the 6th-5th century BC) and Zhuangzi (369-286 BC), Taoism explores the relationships among nature, society and human life, emphasizing compliance with objective laws rather than forced or artificial intervention.

The Taoist concepts of "the Way follows what is natural" and "governing through non-action" should not be misunderstood as passive withdrawal from the world. Rather, they represent a dialectical unity between transcending the world and engaging with it.

Mohism

Representative figure: Mozi

Core ideas: Universal love and opposition to war.

Explanation:

Mohism advocates opposing war and pursuing peace. It calls for loving all people equally, regardless of family ties, social status or wealth. Mohists believe that the most capable and virtuous individuals should be chosen to govern the state. They oppose extravagance and waste, promote diligence and frugality, and emphasize practical action and public welfare. These ideas reflect a people-oriented philosophy and a deep commitment to peace.

Mozi (traditionally dated to the 5th-4th century BC) traveled tirelessly among the warring states to promote his anti-war doctrine. On one notable occasion, he walked for 10 days and nights to successfully prevent a war between two states.

Mozi also had deep knowledge of physics, mathematics and handicraft manufacturing. Mohist texts describe a pinhole imaging experiment demonstrating that light travels in straight lines.

The School of the Military

Representative figures:
Sun Wu (also known as Sun Tzu), Sun Bin

Core ideas: Prudence in warfare, putting people first, and subduing the enemy without fighting.

Explanation:

The school of thought focuses on military theory and practice. It represents the essence of ancient Chinese military thought, summarizing the experiences of warfare and military administration from that time.

Sayings such as "Know the enemy and know yourself, and you will never be defeated in 100 battles" reflect its emphasis on strategy, methods and tactics, combining practical military wisdom with rich dialectical philosophy.

Today, when facing problems in life, study or work, many Chinese people still draw inspiration from this school of thought.

The School of the Military does not glorify war. Instead, it advocates prudence and justice in warfare, supporting only righteous wars while opposing unjust aggression.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:07 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:07 PM

LIFE





Foreign journalists and content creators enjoy their five-day trip in Henan province during an event organized by China Daily, the Information Office of the Henan Provincial Government, and Henan Daily in late May. They visited (from left) electric vehicle giant BYD's factory, Dahecun Site Museum and the headquarters of beverage chain Mixue Bingcheng. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Along China's living heartland

A journey through Henan reveals how prehistoric Yellow River settlements transformed into cutting-edge industrial hubs, reports **Thomas Jay Hopkins**.

It has been a long time since I was in primary and secondary school, but from what I remember, not much Chinese history was taught in the United States. However, one of the few things I remember learning was some chapters in my elementary school textbook that touched on early great river civilizations — Mesopotamia along the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, Ancient Egypt along the Nile River, the Indus Valley Civilization along the Indus River, and, of course, Ancient China along the Yellow River — which served as my earliest exposure to China and its history.

Little did I know, as I studied how these mighty rivers served crucial roles in the development of early human settlements, that I would one day visit Henan province, where the ever-changing Yellow River and fertile Central Plains gave birth to Chinese civilization some 5,000 to 7,000 years ago.

As part of the "Meet in Zhongyuan, Discover China Through Henan — 2026 China Storyteller Partnerships Henan Tour", I was able to explore both Zhengzhou and Luoyang to learn more about the origins of early Chinese civilization, as well as Henan's modern-day development into a manufacturing hub.

In Zhengzhou, where my trip began, a visit to the Dahecun Site Museum brought me closer to the roots of Chinese civilization than a textbook ever could. While it chronicles the earliest breaths of Yangshao culture — a vast and influential ancient culture and the first Neolithic archaeological culture discovered in China — the museum itself is less than a year old.

The museum showcases hundreds of pieces of Yangshao pottery, along with tools and other artifacts, thoughtfully displayed to guide visitors through the culture's evolution, while also incorporating immersive exhibits that take you back in time to witness scenes of ancient settlements, fishing and hunting, pottery-making and grain harvesting.

In sharp contrast, I also paid a visit to BYD's factory to learn more about its cutting-edge production lines and innovative Blade Battery design, and visited its racetrack to get an up-close look at the Yangwang U9 — a fully electric hypercar built under BYD's luxury sub-brand.

Initially, I was disappointed to learn that a professional driver would be taking me around the track. Afterward, I understood why. I climbed into the passenger seat, buckled up, and told the driver, "As fast as you can".

He said nothing. We took off and slowly made our way to the first straightaway where the drive would begin. Without a word, the driver floored the accelerator. Without a sound, I was sucked back into the seat as I watched the speedometer climb past 130 kilometers per hour in what felt like an instant.

I lost track of how fast we were going — certainly north of 200 km/h — before we started into the turns, the tires squealing and skipping as the car handled the high-speed maneuvers with ease, the seat intuitively adjusting itself to support me through it all. And just as quickly as it began, it was over.

Once again, I must put my ego aside and admit defeat. Last time, it was Fanjing Mountain in Guizhou province that made me back down before I reached its terrifyingly high summit. This time, I was humbled by the U9 and must concede that, in hindsight, it is probably a good thing a pro was behind the wheel and not me.

Had I been allowed behind the wheel, my name might have appeared in an obituary rather than at the top of this article, as I would have woefully underestimated the power of that vehicle and ended my life in a not-so-fiery — thanks to BYD's super-safe Blade Battery — blaze, well, I guess, thud of glory.



A woman stands on a robot dog during the event, which allows participants to share experiences for a deeper understanding of Chinese culture, industry and new media trends.

And I know what you're thinking, "Tom, no one is forcing you to admit these embarrassing things", and you would be right.

But, it's my commitment to the truth that makes me the intrepid journalist worthy of your admiration. Before moving on to the second leg of the trip in Luoyang, I would be remiss if I didn't mention Zhengzhou's ecological conservation efforts at Beilonghu Wetland Park.

As much as we ooh and ahh over the technological advancements of our era — electric supercars, AI humanoid robots, advanced manufacturing — just as important is the preservation of natural assets that people can enjoy and where wildlife can thrive.

The park features a wetland bird-watching area, ecological islands, flower gardens, and wooden boardwalks winding through the landscape.

In addition to providing a lovely environment where families can spend their leisure time, Beilonghu Wetland Park is also a hot spot for bird-watchers, as the park serves as a crucial habitat for migratory birds from Siberia and the Mongolian Plateau during the winter months — attracting black-headed gulls, swans, great bustards, black storks, egrets, grey herons, and rare bird species such as the Chinese merganser and the reed parrotbill.

I wish I could have spent more time there, but Luoyang called.

While the rest of the tour group visited the Luoyang Bearing Group and YTO Group Corporation to learn more about China's bearing industry and agricultural modernization, I spent the day at the Han-Wei Luoyang Ancient City Site Museum shooting a video for China Daily.

Dubbed the "Oriental Capital of Museums", Luoyang is home to more than 100 museums, which house hundreds of thousands of cultural relics. At less than a year old, the Han-Wei Luoyang Ancient City Site Museum is the city's newest addition to its ever-growing family of museums, and it is a beauty.

From its design, layout and lighting to the amazing relics on display, the museum offers a wonderful experience, which was made even more special by the kind and knowledgeable staff members who aided Russian content creator Ira Nova and me in our scavenger hunt.

We searched for the real-life relics that items in the gift shop were based on — a truly fun and unique experience.

The trip concluded with a visit to the Longmen Grottoes — a UNESCO World Heritage Site holding over 100,000 carvings of Buddhist iconography in the limestone cliffs that flank both sides of the Yi River. The carvings date back to the late Northern Wei (386-534) and Tang (618-907) dynasties — when Luoyang was the country's capital — and are a must-see.

Standing before these massive carvings and seeing the detail and character given to each figure filled me with wonder and a deeper appreciation for the beauty of life.

To me, the carvings represent the best of humanity: the human capacity to love and the lengths we will go to express it.

In this case, the Longmen Grottoes were carved to express love and worship for Buddhist figures, and while I'm not a religious man, I can appreciate the sentiment. While every city I've been to in China has its own unique character, there is a consistent thread connecting all of them: the country's commitment to marrying its economic and technological development with the preservation of its environment and culture.

Both Zhengzhou and Luoyang are no different in that regard. From the cradle of Chinese civilization to one of the country's most important agricultural and industrial bases, Henan has remained a vital part of China through the ages and a dedicated steward of its ancient history and culture.

As is always the case with these tours, they leave you wanting more. With so much more to see than could fit into five days, I'll certainly be returning to Henan in the future.

Contact the writer at hopkins@chinadaily.com.cn

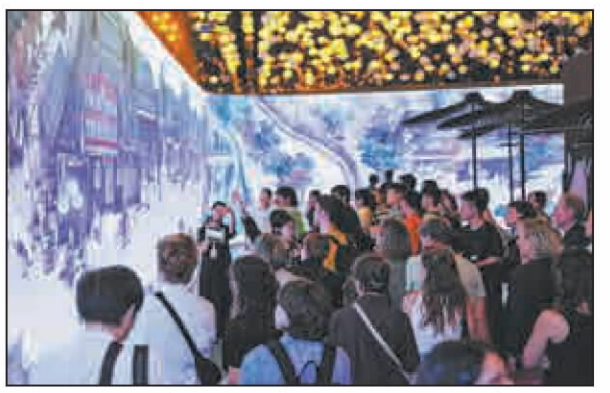
Museums build bridges across countries

By **DENG ZHANGYU**
dengzhangyu@chinadaily.com.cn

The 2026 Intermuseum BRICS+ Festival, held in Russia's capital city of Moscow at the end of May, brought together museum directors, scholars and experts from 26 countries, including Russia, China, Brazil, India, South Africa, and the UAE. Under the theme "Museum — Territory of the Future", participants explored how cultural institutions can serve as bridges between generations and technologies — and, more importantly, between civilizations.

At a forum focusing on how to help audiences understand foreign cultures, a discussion between experts from China and Russia offered fresh ideas for deeper Sino-Russian museum collaboration and the transformation of cross-cultural communication.

Both Chinese and Russian museum professionals reached a consensus during the discussions: a high-quality cross-cultural exhibition is by no means a simple transfer of exhibits or a pileup of symbols. It is a dialogue between civilizations based on deep research, two-way communication, and adaptation to local conditions.




Left: *An Era in Jinling* is inspired by an ancient painting depicting prosperous street scenes in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, which was called Jinling during the Song Dynasty (960-1279). **Right:** The 2026 Intermuseum BRICS+ Festival is held in Moscow. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Ai Lin, director of the Deji Art Museum in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, shared the case of a world tour of the digital art exhibition, *An Era in Jinling*, which is inspired by a 10-meter-long ancient painting depicting prosperous street scenes in Nanjing, which was called Jinling during the Song Dynasty (960-1279).

Wearing electronic bracelets, visitors can travel back 1,000 years to experience a day in ancient China by "walking" into the 110-meter-long digital painting. They can create their own digital avatars that can interact with characters in the painting, talk to street vendors, stroke cats and dogs, and even set off fireworks.

In the past few years, the digital show has toured cities in France and the US, attracting large audiences.

Ai said that during the exhibition's international tours, in-depth research is conducted on the local culture of each host city and country, seeking points of connection and resonance between local heritage and the culture portrayed in the ancient painting.

As an example, she said that the Qinhuai River, which is depicted in the exhibition, runs through the entire city of Nanjing and carries profound historical significance. However, simply telling audiences, "This is the Qinhuai River, and it is very important", does little to create an emotional connection. To solve this, they look for an "urban mother river" in the host city of the traveling exhibition — a river that, like the Qinhuai, has supported transportation, trade, agriculture, fisheries, and a rich cultural heritage. In the case of Moscow, they found such resonance between the Qinhuai River and the Moskva River.

Ekaterina Pronicheva, director of the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow, spoke highly of *An Era in Jinling*, and said that there is currently an excellent opportunity for cooperation between Russian and Chinese museums. At the moment, Russian people's interest in Chinese culture and Chinese cities is at an unprecedented high. More and more Russian audiences hope to visit famous historical and cultural cities like Xi'an in Shaanxi province and Nanjing to further explore China's rich heritage.

Ksenia Guseva, curator of the Museum of Moscow, agreed that many people in Russia are interested in Chinese culture. Previously, the Museum of Moscow hosted the exhibition *New Year in Old Beijing*, focusing on traditions during the Chinese New Year.

In February, red Chinese lanterns, along with spectacular dragon and lion dances, filled Moscow's streets, giving the city a festive Chinese New Year atmosphere that was enjoyed by locals. But Guseva found that behind the lively scenes lay a common challenge in cross-cultural communication: Russian audiences could only appreciate the visual symbols of the Chinese festival, yet knew nothing about the underlying meanings of reunion, the culture of blessings and the millennia-old folk traditions.

"Everyone loves to watch and take photos, but they cannot understand the culture behind the celebrations," Guseva said. This is a widespread problem of "surface-level communication" faced by foreign cultural exhibitions today.

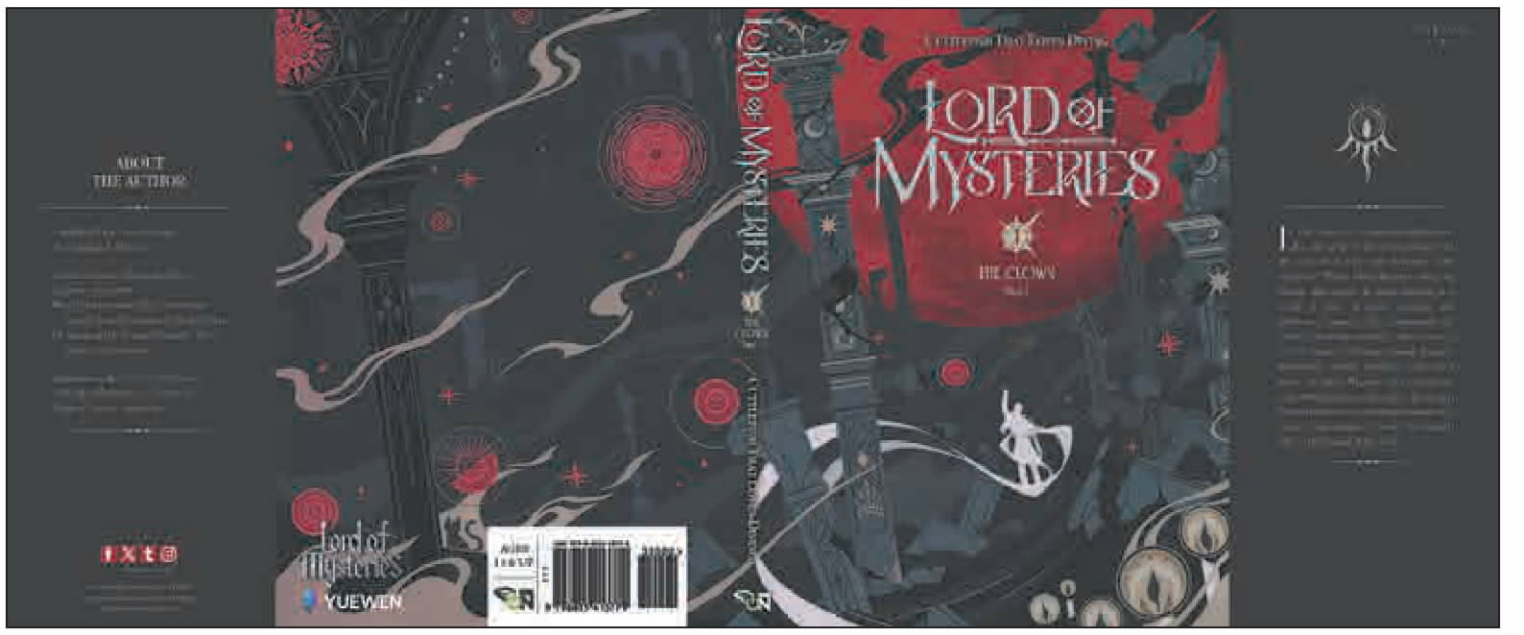
Therefore, in the show *New Year in Old Beijing*, a large number of folk artworks were displayed and there were many performances of intangible cultural heritage, which explained to the audience their significance. These included why fireworks are used during Chinese New Year, at what time they should be set off, and how Chinese families traditionally decorate their homes.

"We hope that through exhibitions, the audience can truly step into the culture and realize that these cultures still exist today and continue to radiate new vitality," Guseva said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:07 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:07 PM

CULTURE



The cover of the English edition of *Lord of Mysteries* by Cuttlefish That Loves Diving, a best-selling web novel translated and published in multiple languages.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Reinventing the martial hero

Drawing on ancient mythology and addressing modern concerns, a leading web novelist opens a new chapter in storytelling, **Yang Yang** reports.

Following the separation of the celestial and human realms, the mythical beasts, deities, and spiritual herbs described in *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, which were said to have existed around 5,000 years ago, gradually dwindled and vanished. Over the course of three to four millennia, that vast and majestic landscape shed its mythological aura and evolved into a deeply rooted martial arts world.

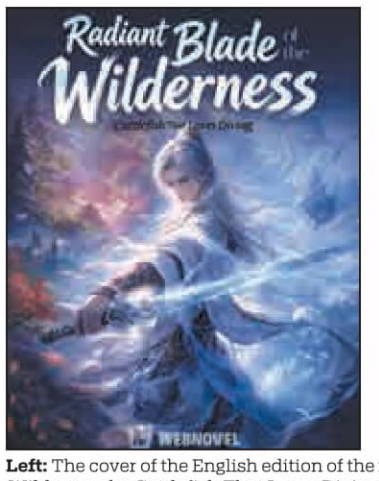
This is the setting of *Radiant Blade of the Wilderness*, the latest novel by popular web novelist, Cuttlefish That Loves Diving. He draws on the ancient myth of Zhuanxu (an ancient saint and grandson of the Yellow Emperor) and his act of "severing the connection between heaven and earth" from the Chinese ancient mythological book *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* to create a "post-classic of mountains and seas" martial arts universe.

Since serializing the novel on WebNovel on May 30, the book has quickly become the most "collected" title of the week and topped the weekly list for new translated books on the platform. It also ranked as the second most-read book of the week on WebNovel, just behind *Lord of Mysteries*, another work by the 41-year-old Cuttlefish That Loves Diving.

WebNovel, the international platform of Chinese online literature provider Yuewen Group, reaches readers in more than 200 countries and regions.

The novel was launched simultaneously on Qidian, WebNovel's Chinese counterpart. Within 24 hours of release, it topped the platform's best-seller chart, becoming one of the most talked-about titles in China's online literature market this year.

Cuttlefish That Loves Diving, whose real name is Yuan Ye, is known for his imaginative world-building and genre-blending narratives. His works span Western fantasy, Eastern Xianxia (Chinese fantasy literature), and steampunk.





Left: The cover of the English edition of the new online novel *Radiant Blade of the Wilderness* by Cuttlefish That Loves Diving, released simultaneously on Yuewen Group's domestic and international platforms. **Right:** Web novel writer Cuttlefish That Loves Diving, whose real name is Yuan Ye.

As one of the most prominent online literature writers in China, he has won multiple awards, including the Mao Dun New Talent Award, which is the online literature category of China's top literary award, the Mao Dun Literature Prize. His notable works include *Lord of Mysteries*, *Lord of Mysteries 2: Circle of Inevitability*, *Extinction Record* (originally titled Path to Immortality), and *Throne of Magical Arcana*.

Lord of Mysteries blends European and American steampunk elements with Eastern philosophical thought, exploring humanity's place in the vast and unknowable universe. The novel has been praised for transcending cultural boundaries and delivering stories with broad global appeal. On WebNovel, the English edition holds a rating of 4.85 out of 5, while its sequel is rated 4.81.

In 2024, *Lord of Mysteries* and its sequel were added to the collection of the British Library. The series has been published in nine languages, including English, French, and German, with over 1 million copies sold globally.

In the latest *Radiant Blade of the Wilderness*, the author weaves together three core threads — ancient imperial legacies, the bloodlines of mythical beasts, and shamanistic mysticism — to construct a richly layered and expansive new martial arts world.

The novel also departs from familiar online fiction conventions, particularly in its portrayal of the protagonist.

"In many web novels, characters who travel through time are usually young people. This time, the protagonist is middle-aged and has spent years working hard. After crossing over, he is no longer driven by fame or ambition. Instead, he longs for a more relaxed life of cultivation, adopting a more Zen-like and tranquil mindset," the author says.

According to him, the character reflects the outlook of many contemporary readers. After navigating life's ups and downs and the pressures of modern society, many people increasingly seek simplicity, hoping to step away from complexity and reconnect with their true selves.

"Even though it has just come out, the introduction of the main character and the first supporting character is very intriguing, and this story shows amazing promise," a reader named Wondering_pen said on WebNovel.

So far this year, Qidian has seen a wave of new releases from top authors. Paperboy, the author of *The Guardians of Dafeng*, has a new book *Lin Sheng*, which has already garnered over 500,000 pre-subscriptions. Other leading authors such as Wang Zijun, Tian Zi, and Nan Zhan Tai have also launched new projects. Additionally, I Eat Tomatoes has announced plans for a new martial arts book.

Contact the writer at yangyangs@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese genre fiction gains ground around the world

By YANG YANG

As overseas readers look beyond traditional images of China and seek stories that reflect its contemporary culture, history and imagination, Chinese genre fiction is finding growing opportunities on the international stage.

That trend was in focus at a literary promotion event held on May 28 at Beijing International Bookstore, where writers, publishers, translators, scholars and industry professionals from more than 20 countries and regions gathered in person or online to discuss the global prospects of Chinese historical fantasy, online literature, mystery and suspense fiction.

Coorganized by the China Writers Association and the China International Book Trading Corporation, the event featured themed discussions on "Historical Imagination and Eastern Fantasy" and "Mystery Narratives and the Enigma of Human Nature", highlighting the expanding international reach of Chinese genre literature.

In the historical fantasy and online literature session, writers including Ma Boyong, Tang Jia San Shao, I Eat Tomatoes, Cuttlefish That Loves Diving and Talking Elbow joined discussions on the growing influence of Chinese web novels abroad.

Chinese online literary works such as *Lord of the Mysteries* and *Joy of Life* have attracted significant international attention in recent years, demonstrating the appeal of Chinese storytelling and the cultural richness of genres that blend history, fantasy, and adventure.





Left: Social media blogger Olesia Ermakova shares her perspectives on contemporary Chinese culture, literature, film and social development during an international literary seminar in Beijing on May 28. **Right:** Participants attend an international literary seminar in Beijing focused on promoting Chinese genre fiction overseas, including mystery, thriller, suspense, historical fantasy and online literature.
PHOTOS BY XINHUA

Wang Zhixiang, deputy director of the China Writers Association's Online Literature Center, said traditional cultural resources are being revitalized through contemporary narratives, helping overseas readers gain a deeper understanding of Chinese culture.

Online literature has become not only a major literary form in the internet era but also an important vehicle for Chinese culture to cross borders, said Tao Yunfei, head of publishing operations at Yuewen Group.

He said the overseas dissemination of Chinese online literature has evolved into a complete ecosystem spanning literature, film, animation, games and multilingual publishing. Looking ahead, he said the industry hopes to further promote an international communication model based on "Chinese storytelling, global cocreation".

Charles-Emmanuel Dewees, cofounder of the French online literature platform Chireads, said in a video message that what most captivates international readers is the authenticity of the characters and the creativity of the authors.

"Online literature has become a universal language connecting readers from different countries and cultures," he said.

In a video address, US screenwriter, author and playwright Richard Krevolin said Chinese online literature's rich historical imagination and adventurous spirit provide abundant material for global publishing and screen adaptations.

"Literary works serve as an important bridge for cultural exchange between Eastern and Western civilizations," he said.

Mystery and suspense writers featured in the event included Lyu Zheng, Huyan Yun, Zhao Jingyi, A Yi, Cai Jun, Zijin Chen, Shi Chen and Guo Peiwen.

Xie Gang, founder of Midnight Library, China's first mystery-fiction imprint, traced the genre's evolution over the past two decades from a niche market to a mature literary category.

Scholar Zhang Yifei of Beijing Normal University said contemporary Chinese mystery fiction draws on both traditional *gong'an*, or legal case narratives, and modern international detective fiction. Through this blend, he said, the genre has developed a distinctive style that combines Chinese cultural characteristics with universal appeal.

International publishing professionals expressed optimism about the genre's overseas prospects.

In a video message, US best-selling author Douglas Preston said Chinese crime and suspense novels are attracting growing attention in Europe and North America by combining unique cultural elements with compelling storytelling. He believes the English-language market is eager to welcome more Chinese mystery writers.

Tom Chalmers, managing director of the British publishing group Legend Times, highlighted the strong global demand for thriller, mystery and suspense fiction. He said Chinese works are increasingly attracting the attention of international publishers and said stronger publishing partnerships could help bring more titles to readers worldwide.

The growing interest is also reflected in broader efforts to promote Chinese literature internationally. Zheng Lei, deputy director of the International Department of the China Writers Association, said genre fiction has become one of the brightest areas in the overseas promotion of contemporary Chinese literature.

Xinhua contributed to this story.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:07 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:07 PM

SPORTS

SOCCER

Tiny Curacao is making huge history

Island country of about 156,000 residents is now the smallest, both in terms of population and land mass, to play at a World Cup



Top: Children train at the C-Stars United soccer academy in Willemstad, Curacao on May 15. **Right:** A Curacao supporter in the stands ahead of the start of the international friendly match between Scotland and Curacao on May 30. AP



Curacao players pose for a photo after an international friendly match against Scotland in Glasgow on May 30. AP

There won't be millions of people from Curacao cheering on their national team in the World Cup, because Curacao doesn't have millions of people.

Not even close.

Before the tournament even begins, Curacao has already crafted a story like none other in World Cup history. A tiny island country — autonomous territory, if you prefer — of about 156,000 residents in the Caribbean is now the smallest, both in terms of population and land mass, to make it to soccer's biggest stage. And if that wasn't enough, it's doing so under a coach in Dick Advocaat who, at 78, is about to become the oldest the tournament has ever seen.

They know what the world is probably thinking: Their country is too small, their coach is too old, they don't have a chance.

They heard all that through the qualifying process as well — and here they are.

"We have made history," Curacao defender Sherel Floranus said. "We are writing our own history, for this island."

The way they see it, they have already won.

Curacao rolled through qualifying, going 4-0-0 against Haiti, Saint Lucia, Aruba and Barbados in its opening round, then going 3-0-3 against Jamaica, Bermuda and Trinidad and Tobago in the next round to grab its spot — one of three that were available for teams from North America, Central America and the Caribbean.

Just how small is Curacao? Its first finals match on June 14 is against Germany in Houston — a city with 15 times as many people as the island. The stadium in Houston could hold about one-half of Curacao's entire population.

It has been a perfect storm to get there. First, the three host nations for this World Cup — the US, Mexico and Canada — were exempt from qualifying and were already in the tournament field. And this inaugural edition of an expanded 48-team tournament made it inevitable that there would be some surprise teams getting to the World Cup.

With odds of +250,000 against on some sportsbooks, Curacao was the longest of long shots in the field. And on the island, it does understand the reality of what that means.

"We know there is a big chance that we don't win the World Cup, but that we (made it) there ... for Curacao, a very, very, very good moment," said Remko Bicentini, a former pro player and Curacao's former national team head coach. "We are proud of that.

"It is a party for the whole of Curacao. It's a big level and all the players ... we worked years, for years, for years, very hard to get where we now are."

Curacao's sports history is sometimes masked by its Dutch ties.

The island was part of the Netherlands Antilles until October 2010, when it became a more autonomous "constituent country" of the Netherlands. The Dutch monarchy still reigns, the citizens remain Dutch nationals and the Netherlands government oversees defense and foreign affairs. And this week, Curacao's World Cup preparations are happening in the Netherlands — a nine-hour direct flight away, but a place where the team was greeted with "welcome home" signage.

The sense is clearly that the results at the tournament won't mean much. Winning a match would be magical. Tying one would be cause for celebration. Just being there, for those from Curacao, is a victory in itself.

"I always saw other countries play the World Cup," said Michael Stokkel, a policeman. "I was a fan of Brazil, but now I will be a fan of my own country. It's an incredible feeling."

He's going to the World Cup, but by himself. It's just too expensive to bring others, he said.

It's not unheard of for athletes from Curacao to compete on the international stage. The rare part here is that they're doing it actually as "Curacao". There have been unsuccessful attempts for the nation to be recognized as its own Olympic team; athletes compete in the Summer Games either for the Netherlands or as independent athletes. At the World Baseball Classic earlier this year, players played for the Netherlands.

Ozzie Albies of the Atlanta Braves, a native of Willemstad — the island's capital and biggest city — said his nation getting to the World Cup is "history for the guys and the accomplishment is super special for Curacao."

"Soccer has always been a sport we play but never made it to the World Cup," said Albies, one of three Curacao natives currently on a Major League Baseball roster. "So, to be able to do it is very, very, very special."

The Dutch are a World Cup contender with their own national team. Curacao, which will have its base camp at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, Florida, when it shifts its full operation to the US in the coming days, is simply savoring its moment.

"I think it's been amazing for the whole island," said Tahith Chong, one of the national team's top players. "Just seeing how the island has lived with it and just knowing, I think that a lot of people don't know about Curacao. It loves soccer and it's quite big here. So, to be present this year at the World Cup is obviously something amazing for the island."

Blue Wave: unifying force

The hope, politically, is that the team will be a unifying force.

At 171 square miles (443 square kilometers), Curacao has roughly as much land mass as New Orleans. There are at least 125 US cities with larger populations than the entire island. Its population is about the same as Hollywood — no, not the one in California, but the city in Florida that sits between Miami and Fort Lauderdale.

Curacao's Prime Minister, Gilmar Pisas, sees this World Cup as an opportunity. The team is known as the Blue Wave — a nod to the shimmering turquoise water that surrounds the island — and blue is a theme for everything in the country, right down to the Blue Curacao liquor that is popular around the world (even though it has an orange flavor).

For the next few weeks, Pisas wants the nation to be the Blue Nation as well.

"We will become part of something larger than ourselves, something that, despite our differences, brings us together," Pisas said. "We share a single anthem and a single flag ... rather than being divided into separate camps. We are, finally, truly united. It is a project dedicated to the construction of a nation. It acknowledges that your people, and you yourself, are an integral part of this collective mission — the 'Blue Nation'."

This will not require Brenton Balentien to change much about his regular day-to-day routine.

If you see a bald, bearded, muscular man with his head and face painted blue for Curacao games, you've likely found Balentien — simply known around the island as "Blue Face". He's a longtime soccer fan who took notice of how fans in Brazil, Colombia and other places would show up at matches in wigs and elaborate costumes.

"I said, 'Curacao needs that,'" Balentien said. "Curacao is a very passive island. We watch the games and clap, sure, but we're not the kind of fans who go out there and scream for the full 90 minutes. And I said, 'No, we have to change that.'"

So, in 2015, Blue Face — someone who began chanting in largely empty stadiums and now has a huge following — was born.





Above: Curacao coach Dick Advocaat reacts during the international friendly match against Scotland on May 30. **Right:** Curacao's Juninho Bacuna poses for a selfie with fans after the Scotland match. REUTERS

He applies the paint himself before every match. He's basically a national mascot; a bartender, influencer and event organizer in real life, a soccer superfan when the paint comes out. He's become a motivational speaker, someone whose home overlooking Willemstad has Curacao's flag waving in the wind and whose car has two more flags attached to that.

"We do this for this island," Balentien said, "so the world knows who we are."

Underdog hopes to be giant

If the world doesn't know yet, they'll see soon enough.

Curacao, currently ranked No 82 in FIFA's global rankings, opens World Cup play against global power and 10th-ranked Germany. It then plays No 23 Ecuador in Kansas City on June 20 and finishes group stage play against No 34 Cote d'Ivoire on June 25 in Philadelphia.

It will be the underdog in all three matches, barring something very unusual.

No problem. The Blue Wave is coming, the pressure is off and confidence is high.

"For us, this is the biggest World Cup because our flag will be there in America," said Ricardo Martinez, a radio broadcaster who calls the matches. "Germany, watch out. Curacao is coming. We are small — but giants in the World Cup."

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:07 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:09 PM

Monetizing tokens
Computing power traded to accelerate AI progress
BUSINESS, PAGE 10



Oman threat complicates Iran peace talks
TOP NEWS, PAGE 3



In-depth read
New book offers reader-friendly exploration of landmark burial site
LIFE, PAGE 14

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 FRIDAY, MAY 29, 2026

LETTERS FROM AFAR

Young voyagers encouraged to continue quest

In reply to students, Xi urges more youths in China, US to take up baton of friendship

By **MO JINGXI** and **ZOU SHUO**

Twelve days of living and learning together in China added a new item to the bucket lists of Sun Linlin and Adrian Castillo — to explore more of each other's home country.

The journey, called "A Shared Voyage: China-US Youth Friendship Program", began in late March, when Sun and Castillo, with 18 other students, set sail from the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region aboard a research vessel and traveled via Ningbo, Zhejiang province, to Shanghai.

The 10 US students, the majority of whom had never been to China before, came to the country under the initiative proposed by President Xi Jinping in November 2023 to invite 50,000 young people from the US to visit China for exchange and study programs over the following five years.

In a reply letter dated May 23 to students participating in the program, Xi encouraged them to make new contributions to the stable, healthy and sustainable development of China-US relations.

"I am delighted to know that the students from both countries had embarked on an unforgettable friendship voyage aboard the China-US Youth Friendship vessel," Xi said in the letter, which was published on Thursday.

Xi noted that the story of China-US friendship is written by the people, and the future of China-US relations will be shaped by youths.

More than 50,000 young people from the US have visited China since the launch of the "50,000 in Five Years" initiative, achieving the target two-and-a-half years ahead of schedule, he said.

Through these interactions, young people from both countries have reached out to each other, deepened mutual understanding, forged profound friendships and opened a new chapter in friendly exchanges between the two peoples, Xi said.

Noting that young people, who are full of vitality and dreams, represent the future and hope of China-US relations and of the world, Xi called on more Chinese and US youths to take up the baton of friendship, learn from each other, progress together and become "envoys of friendship".

Sun, a master's student majoring in ocean engineering and technology at Zhejiang University, said the students came up with the idea of writing a letter to the Chinese president on the second day of the trip.

As the program was drawing to a close, the Chinese and US students finished the letter together at their hotel, thanking Xi for the "50,000 in Five Years" initiative, which provided a valuable opportunity for young people from the two nations to learn from and interact with each other.

For Sun, the initiative had been an abstract concept. It was not until she took part in the exchange program that she realized she, too, had the ability — and responsibility — to serve as a bridge of friendship between China and the US.

She said she strongly identified with Xi's message in the reply letter, in which he expressed the hope that more young people from China and the US would learn from each other and make progress together.

Castillo, a doctoral student majoring in aquatics and fisheries science at State University of New York, said that the reply letter "really is so surprising and makes our program feel very important in the greater global stage. Of course, reflecting back on our time on board, I feel as though it was the simple personal connections that made it so important to me."

Sun said that Castillo taught her the phrase "bucket list". He told her that returning to China had been added to his bucket list — whether to go hiking, try rock climbing or simply reunite with friends.

Xu Jingtong, majoring in marine science at Tongji University in Shanghai, said the reply letter brought back memories of the voyage.

Xu recalled a moment on the ship when the wind was strong and the waves high, yet the students danced on deck, exchanged gifts, waved their national flags, sang songs and shared stories about their hometowns and campus life.

"That was when I realized that although we live on opposite sides of the Pacific, we have so much in common," Xu said.

Contact the writers at mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn



A full-size model of an aerial vehicle is displayed on Thursday during the 2026 World Intelligence Expo at Tianjin's National Convention and Exhibition Center. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

Business leaders hail nation's intelligent manufacturing

By **ZHANG CHENXU** and **ZHOU LANXU** in Tianjin and **WANG KEJU** in Beijing

China's stepped-up push to advance intelligent manufacturing is reinforcing corporate confidence and opening broader opportunities for enterprises at home and abroad to innovate, expand and share in the growth of the world's second-largest economy, economists and business executives said on the sidelines of the 2026 World Intelligence Expo in Tianjin, which opened on Thursday and runs through Sunday.

The rise of intelligent manufacturing in China is expected to accelerate global industrial upgrading and inject fresh impetus into world economic growth, they said.

This optimistic outlook was reflected at the "CEO: Grow with China" roundtable, which was held on Thursday as part of the expo, with participation of executives from sectors ranging from green development to smart manufacturing and consumer technology.

The roundtable was jointly organized by the Publicity Department of the Tianjin Municipal Committee of the Communist Party of China and China Daily.

"China is not just a huge market — it is a global engine for innovation and manufacturing," said Rainer Kern, CFO of Karcher Greater China.

The Germany-based cleaning solutions provider sees China's complete industrial supply chain, rapid adoption of new technologies, and vast market as key strengths in the large-scale deployment of artificial intelligence across manufacturing and the real economy, Kern said.

The positive sentiment is showing as China moves quickly to create new forms of a smart economy, with this year's Government Work Report calling for advancing and expanding the "AI Plus" initiative, promoting faster application of new-generation intelligent terminals and AI agents, and encouraging large-scale commercial application of AI in key sectors and fields.

Sun Xuegong, director-general of the department of policy study and consultation at the Chinese Academy of Macroeconomic Research, said the policy push is aimed at building a broader ecosystem to support the smart economy.

"AI is rapidly expanding the production frontier and has great potential to improve efficiency," he said, adding that the initiative is expected to remain an important part of China's economic policy.

*See **Innovation,** page 3*

Australia should foster greater trust to improve ties

WORLD WATCH
By Colin Mackerras

Australia-China relations reached a low point during COVID-19, when the Liberal Party's Scott Morrison was prime minister (2018-2022). But Anthony Albanese, the Labor Party prime minister who defeated Morrison in 2022, has been much more positive in promoting good relations between the two countries.

Albanese, who visited China in July last year and had a successful meeting with President Xi Jinping, has encouraged trade, educational and cultural relations and overall people-to-people relations. The atmosphere is certainly much brighter and more optimistic than it was.

However, the role of national security is too strong in the relationship and has long diminished mutual trust.

There is a school of thought that believes mutual trust doesn't matter in a bilateral relationship. Nevertheless, a relationship with mutual trust is stronger, better and more durable than one without, and I would like to see such a relationship between Australia and China.

The fact is that many in Australia still regard China as a threat to their country's security. Under the AUKUS (Australia-United Kingdom-United States) security partnership agreement, signed in 2021, Australia agreed to buy high-class nuclear-powered submarines at the cost of up to A$368 billion ($263.6 billion) over the next three decades or so. And it is not even certain that they will be built. In my view, Australia mistakenly chooses to overrely on the UK and the US, unwisely prioritizing trust in the US to the point of sacrificing its own national sovereignty.

In May, Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi visited Australia, and extensive trade, energy and defense agreements were reached. Of course, good relations between Japan and Australia are desirable, but I am very nervous about buying military hardware from a Japan that has eroded the spirit of its postwar pacifist Constitution and constantly and unfairly criticizes China.

*See **Relations,** page 3*



INSIDE
Transition of finance
Global Views, page 8

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN

China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

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

JINGDEZHEN DISHES UP UNFORGETTABLE MEMORIES

Experiential and cultural tourism offerings are tempting greater numbers of visitors to China's porcelain capital

By **ZHAO RUINAN**
in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi
zhaoruinan@chinadaily.com.cn

For centuries, Jingdezhen in Jiangxi province has provided some of the world's finest porcelain. Today, it is drawing the world back to its kilns.

Adhamjonov Ayubkhon, a 20-year-old from Uzbekistan, arrived expecting a museum. What he found was living, breathing history and craftsmanship, baked into the rhythm of everyday life — not locked behind glass, but resting on dining tables, glinting in shop windows, lining old stone streets and spinning in the hands of young potters, shaping clay into everyday art.

"The city was amazing. Porcelain is everywhere," he said.

Now living in Nanchang, the capital of Jiangxi, Ayubkhon has visited Jingdezhen three times. During those visits, he has shaped his own cup and plate from raw clay, wandered through Jingdezhen Ceramic University and stood speechless before the treasures at Jingdezhen China Ceramics Museum.

"When I visited the university in November, I saw many students learning how to make porcelain by hand. I also tried it myself, and I liked it," he said.

At the ceramics museum, the weight of centuries settled around him. "I saw many beautiful pieces there — vases, ancient works and blue-and-white porcelain from the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). The exhibits were breathtakingly beautiful."



Canadian artist Prashant Miranda paints on clay at a studio in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province, on April 7, 2025. SHI WEIMING / FOR CHINA DAILY

By January, the pull of the porcelain capital brought him back a third time — this time as a collector, filling his bags with souvenirs for his family and friends.

In today's Jingdezhen, faces like Ayubkhon's are no longer a rare sight.

The ancient ceramic production center is transforming into a destination where overseas visitors don't just come to admire porcelain — they touch it, shape it, paint it and carry home their own piece of the story.

Last year alone, Jingdezhen welcomed 150,800 inbound visits, a leap of roughly 40 percent from the year before. Spending by inbound tourists reached 89.96 million yuan ($13.27 million), up about 45 percent.

For many, the magic lies in moving beyond mere sightseeing and stepping into the craft.

*See **Jingdezhen,** page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:09 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:09 PM

INDEPTH





Left: Primary school students use foldable desks and chairs for a nap in Huzhou, Zhejiang province, on Sept 5. TAN YUNFENG / FOR CHINA DAILY **Right:** A senior high school student takes a break in Shenyang, Liaoning province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Insomnia mirrors youth mental health struggles

Rise in sleeplessness reveals underlying anxiety, depression of younger generation, experts say

By **WEI WANGYU**
weiwangyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Cheng Jingyang sets his phone aside at midnight, closes his eyes, and waits to fall asleep. Nothing happens.

The 23-year-old student of Hangzhou Dianzi University who is finishing fieldwork in Beijing for his thesis, recently spent more than 1,000 yuan ($146) on a memory-foam "deep sleep pillow" recommended on social media. He had already cut out caffeine and set a screen curfew. None of it had worked.

"I know it probably won't fix anything," he said. "But I wanted to try at least."

His mind endlessly drifts, he said — first to his thesis, then to the job market, then to a comment a professor made weeks ago that he cannot stop replaying in his head.

"It's not that I'm not tired. My body is exhausted, but my brain won't stop. It's like a browser with 30 tabs open and you can't find which one is playing the sound," he said.

Cheng's restless nights are part of a national pattern that researchers say is slowly worsening. A new study by the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, drawing on a nationwide survey of more than 100,000 residents conducted in 2024, found that people age 15 and above now sleep an average of just 7.24 hours a night.

Two decades ago, similar surveys put that figure closer to 7.5 hours. The drop of roughly 15 minutes sounds small, but spread across a population of 1.4 billion, the researchers warn, it adds up to a substantial public health concern.

A closer look at the numbers tells a sharper story. On average, Chinese adults now lie awake for approximately half an hour before falling asleep — a figure that climbs further among younger respondents, who tend to go to bed later, take longer to drift off, and increasingly reach for products or pills to try and fall asleep.

For many young Chinese, the findings only confirm what they already know from their own bedtime restlessness. Sleep has become a struggle — and for a growing number, a medical condition.

A 2024 white paper published by the China Sleep Research Society, which surveyed more than 10,000 people, found that college students born after 2000 spent an average of eight hours a day on screens, with many not putting their phones down until well past midnight.





Left: A physician from the sleep disorder department at Qinhuangdao Haigang Hospital, guides primary school students through sleep apnea monitoring in Hebei province on March 19. **Left below:** A college student experiences pulse magnetic sleep treatment in the sleep health management laboratory of Northeastern University at Qinhuangdao, on June 12, 2024. PHOTOS BY CAO JIANXIONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

> "They understand that the daytime belongs to their parents — to school, to tutoring, to adult supervision. But the night is theirs. Staying up late is the one act of self-governance they have left. It is the only territory in which they feel free. And so they expand it, night after night, at the expense of sleep."
>
> **Shi Yu,** founder of Beijing's Mentaverse Psychological Service Studio

Turning to pills

When all else fails, some of the sleep-deprived turn to stronger measures.

A 28-year-old office worker in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, who asked to be identified as Li, has been struggling with chronic insomnia for more than two years. After special pillows and supplements made no difference, he began seeking pharmaceutical help — cycling between zopiclone and zolpidem, two prescription sleep medications, and trying to find a balance between effectiveness and side effects.

"Zopiclone knocks me out, but I wake up with a metallic taste in my mouth and feel groggy the whole next day," he said.

"Zolpidem works faster, but I have read about people doing things in their sleep without remembering. That scares me," he added.

Li said he also tried traditional Chinese medicine, including herbal formulas prescribed by a TCM practitioner and a course of acupuncture sessions targeting what his doctor described as liver *qi* stagnation. The results, he said, were negligible. "I went for six weeks, but was still staring at the ceiling at 2 am."

He now takes zolpidem two or three nights a week, a pattern he knows is unsustainable but feels unable to break. "I'm not sleeping well with the pills. But I'm not sleeping at all without them," he said.

Pan Jiyang, director of the Sleep Medicine Center at the First Affiliated Hospital of Jinan University in Guangdong, said the demographic shift in sleep problems is visible at his own clinic. Sleep medicine departments, which a decade ago treated mostly middle-aged and elderly patients, are now seeing a surge of people in their 20s and early 30s. Appointments that were once easy to book are now difficult to secure, with waiting times stretching to weeks at major hospitals.

"Our department used to be one of the quieter corners of the hospital," he said. "Now it is fully booked. The age of our patients has dropped, and their conditions are often tied not to physiological decline, but to anxiety, career pressure, and emotional exhaustion."

'Constant craving'

For clinicians working with adolescents and young adults, insomnia is rarely the illness itself — it is the most visible trace of something deeper happening.

Ni Zhe, an associate chief physician at the Social Psychological Service Department of the Mental Health Center affiliated with Zhejiang University School of Medicine, also known as Hangzhou Seventh People's Hospital, said the rising visibility of sleep complaints among young patients reflects a broader deterioration in adolescent mental health. Rates of school refusal and medical leave from school have climbed sharply, he said, and both typically indicate underlying anxiety and depression.

"In our clinical work, we see three phenomena that almost always appear together," Ni said.

"Disturbed sleep, overuse of the internet, and social disconnection. They form a vicious cycle. The patient falls out of the ordinary rhythm of life — they stop eating to a schedule, they barely exercise, and then of course they cannot sleep normally either."

Ni explained that the prefrontal cortex in adolescents is still developing, and its job is to "inhibit, control, coordinate, and organize".

"When young people are exposed to high-intensity stimulation — short videos, mobile games — over long periods, the stimulation threshold rises significantly," he said. "They live in a state of constant craving, and that craving does not dissipate on its own. Daily self-regulation fails. And at night, when the body is supposed to lower that threshold in order to sleep, it resists."

Double stigma

Shi Yu, founder of Beijing's Mentaverse Psychological Service Studio, said that among the adolescents she treats, sleep disorders are almost always a surface expression of conditions that deserve direct psychiatric attention — depression, anxiety, and bipolar disorder. But many of these patients never reach the psychiatric clinic in the first place.

"A lot of children end up at sleep clinics because their parents refuse to take them to the psychiatric department where they actually belong," Shi said. "For many parents, a psychiatric visit is a double stigma — evidence of the child's illness, and evidence of their own failure as educators. They cannot accept it. So the family settles on insomnia as the acceptable diagnosis."

Shi described a second layer of the problem that she said is routinely underestimated: a generation of Chinese adolescents who have grown up chronically short of sleep, never meeting the hours recommended for their age.

"Their bodies and minds are in a prolonged state of fatigue. Insomnia is just one of many symptoms."

A third factor, she said, is how sleep has become entangled with adolescents' search for autonomy. With weekends consumed by tutoring and extracurricular activities, real social life has shrunk, and phones have filled the gap.

"They understand that the daytime belongs to their parents — to school, to tutoring, to adult supervision. But the night is theirs. Staying up late is the one act of self-governance they have left. It is the only territory in which they feel free. And so they expand it, night after night, at the expense of sleep."

The fourth factor is the atmosphere inside the contemporary Chinese household, Shi said. "There is a lot of insecurity. Repetitive drills, crowded schedules, parents who do not trust their children, children who cannot see a clear future. Internal conflict grows. Over years, this produces a subclinical mental state — not quite illness, but nowhere near health. Sleep problems settle into that space and cycle on their own."

Setting targets

Policymakers have begun to respond, and largely through the school system rather than the mental health system.

In 2021, the Ministry of Education issued a sleep management directive setting targets of 10 hours of sleep for primary school students, 9 hours for middle school students, and 8 hours for high school students, and requiring that middle schools begin classes no earlier than 8 am and primary schools no earlier than 8:20 am.

The policy was tightened in October 2025, when the Ministry of Education tied academic stress, internet overuse, and sleep deprivation to adolescent mental health outcomes. The ministry called for a national student mental health monitoring and early-warning system, "exam-free weeks" at schools, a ban on ranking students by test scores, and a requirement that all students engage in at least two hours of daily physical activity.

The effects have begun to reach classrooms. In the spring 2026 semester, a wave of schools across Chengdu, Ningbo, Nanjing, Nantong, Huizhou, and Dongguan canceled mandatory morning reading sessions and pushed arrival times later.

But researchers and clinicians caution that school-hour adjustments, while welcome, cannot resolve a crisis whose roots lie elsewhere.

Yin Fei, deputy director of the Family Education Research Institute at Nanjing Normal University, has argued that delaying school start times without meaningfully reducing academic load risks producing a generation that arrives at school later and still goes to bed just as late.

She called for a more systemic approach, including greater investment in campus mental health services, stronger regulation of work hours for young professionals, and better screening for sleep disorders — and for the psychiatric conditions behind them — in primary care settings.

For young adults like Cheng, the pillow arrived a few weeks ago. Some nights are slightly better, he said, but most are about the same.

"I think what I really need is less stress," he said. "But that's not something you can buy."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:09 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:09 PM

TOP NEWS

Meeting that matters



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi meets with representatives of US strategic and business circles in New York on Wednesday, a day after he presided over a high-level meeting of the United Nations Security Council. Wang expressed hope that the participants will make more efforts to help build a constructive China-United States relationship of strategic stability and foster broader public consensus. LI RUI / XINHUA

Shenzhou XXI crew completes space mission

Astronauts hand over charge of Tiangong to Shenzhou XXIII team and prepare for return

By ZHAO LEI
zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

Crew members of the Shenzhou XXI mission, who have spent nearly seven months on board the Tiangong space station, will return to Earth very soon, according to a statement released on Thursday by the China Manned Space Agency.

The three Shenzhou XXI astronauts — mission commander Senior Colonel Zhang Lu, spaceflight engineer Major Wu Fei and payload specialist Zhang Hongzhang — have completed all their assigned tasks and will fly back aboard the Shenzhou XXII crew ship, the statement said.

Ground recovery personnel at the Dongfeng landing site in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region, along with other relevant systems, are preparing for their return, it added.

On Thursday, the Shenzhou XXI astronauts handed over control of the space station to their successors from the Shenzhou XXIII mission — commander and spaceflight engineer Colonel Zhu Yangzhu, spacecraft pilot Colonel Zhang Zhiyuan and science payload specialist Lai Ka-ying — who arrived at Tiangong on Monday.

A video clip published by the agency showed the two groups holding a simple handover ceremony on board the space station.

Zhang Lu said that he and his crew have been impressed by the teamwork and skills displayed by Zhu's team over the past three days, and he wished them great achievements. "We will wait for your triumphant return, and see you in Beijing," the Shenzhou XXI commander said.

In response, Zhu said that he and his crew are grateful to the outgoing astronauts for sharing every detail of their experience.

"We also appreciate your professionalism and dedication very much. You guys did your jobs very well. We will learn from your hard-working spirit and valuable experience, and will faithfully carry out our duties," he added.

The Shenzhou XXI team arrived at the space station on Nov 1 as part of China's 16th manned spaceflight and the 10th crewed mission aboard Tiangong.

Zhang Jingbo, a spokesman for the China Manned Space Agency, said the Shenzhou XXI astronauts have achieved good results in several fields, including space life science, materials science, microgravity physics, space medicine and new spacecraft technologies, with cooperation and support from scientists and engineers.

The Shenzhou XXII mission was originally designated to be a manned flight, but was changed into an unmanned emergency response mission in late November after space debris damaged the Shenzhou XX crew ship.

Jingdezhen: Ceramics center now a cultural attraction

From page 1

"Nepal also has ceramics, but the porcelain here is much richer and more colorful," said Arjun Gurung, a tourist from Nepal, who was standing inside the Ancient Kiln and Folk Customs Museum.

Under the guidance of local artisans, Gurung and fellow travelers from a Nepali tour group sat at the potter's wheel, their hands learning the quiet patience required for a lump of clay to gradually take shape.

"It was only after experiencing the process of making porcelain myself that I truly understood more about Chinese culture and history," he said.

At major scenic spots and studios across Jingdezhen, visitors are not just watching artisans paint delicate patterns on porcelain. Some are also invited to add elements from their own cultures to the craft.

A Turkish visitor, who asked to be identified only as Nikos, spent an entire afternoon in a studio learning to paint blue-and-white porcelain under the guidance of a local master.

"I tried to include an olive branch pattern in the design," Nikos said. "For me, it felt like bringing a little bit of the Aegean Sea into Jingdezhen's porcelain tradition."

Clear trends

According to the Jingdezhen Culture, Radio, Television and Tourism Bureau, inbound tourism is seeing two clear trends: Visitors are staying longer, and they are seeking deeper cultural encounters.

The city's appeal is shifting from quick photo stops to hands-on, experience-based travel.

Major inbound markets now include Malaysia, the United States, Singapore, South Korea and Japan, with independent travelers making up roughly 30 to 40 percent of overseas arrivals.

For those who return again and again, porcelain shopping has become something of a ritual.

"This is my third time in Jingdezhen, and every time I bring back dozens of porcelain items," said a tourist from Malaysia, as she carefully selected blue-and-white plates at Taoxichuan Ceramic Art Avenue. In her basket, tiny porcelain fridge magnets sat beside collectible ceramic pieces — a small portrait of how Jingdezhen's porcelain industry is touching visitors at every level, from everyday keepsakes to objects of art.

US, Iran reach deal to extend ceasefire by 60 days, but need final approval

By JAN YUMUL in Hong Kong and **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE

The United States and Iranian negotiators have reached an agreement on a memorandum of understanding to extend the ceasefire by 60 days, but US President Donald Trump has yet to give his final approval, Axios reported citing officials.

Earlier on Wednesday, Trump threatened to "blow up" Oman, a long-term ally in the Persian Gulf, complicating delicate diplomacy in the Middle East amid fresh strikes in the region.

Trump's threat followed reports that Oman was discussing joint control of the Strait of Hormuz with Iran despite an existing US blockade of the critical maritime corridor.

Omani Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr Albusaidi met with Kazem Gharibabadi, Iranian deputy foreign minister for legal and international affairs, who visited Oman this week.

Oman's Muscat Daily reported that a significant part of the dialogue was dedicated to the critical need to ensure safe and sustainable freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz.

In a social media post on Monday, Albusaidi said that his discussions with Gharibabadi were good, and that they reflect the constructive nature of the Oman-Iran dialogue.

"We reaffirmed the importance of diplomatic engagement on all fronts. Oman will continue supporting efforts to reduce tension, advance peaceful regional coexistence, security and freedom of navigation," Albusaidi said in the post.

On Wednesday, the US Department of State posted a video on social media of Trump fielding questions from reporters during a Cabinet meeting in the White House.

Trump said that the Strait of Hormuz "is going to be open to everybody", emphasizing that it is part of international waters. "We'll watch over it, but nobody's going to control it. ... Oman will behave just like everybody else, or we'll have to blow them up," he added.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei slammed repeated US violations of the ceasefire, its military aggression against regions near the southern Iranian port city of Bandar Abbas, and its threatening rhetoric against Iran and other countries in the region, including Oman, Iran's semiofficial Mehr News Agency reported on Thursday.

While condemning the threatening rhetoric of US officials, Baghaei also expressed Iran's solidarity with Oman. He said that Trump's threat to destroy a United Nations member state, which "has always played a constructive, effective and responsible role in regional peace and security" and used its "noble service" as a mediator in diplomatic processes for many years, was a violation of a fundamental principle of the UN Charter, which imposes an absolute prohibition on the threat or use of force in international relations.

Baghaei said it was "also another dangerous sign of the normalization of lawlessness and bullying in international relations".

Meanwhile, the US military carried out fresh strikes overnight in Iran, targeting a military site and shooting down four Iranian one-way attack drones that posed a threat around the Strait of Hormuz, Reuters reported on Wednesday, citing a US official who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The official said the military site that was struck was an Iranian ground control station in Bandar Abbas, which he alleged was about to launch a fifth drone.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps issued a stark warning that this US aggression against Iran would not go unanswered, Mehr News Agency reported.

The Revolutionary Guard said that it carried out strikes targeting the US air base from which the attack originated in the early hours of Thursday, and warned of a "more decisive" response to repeated acts of aggression. It added that the aggressor bears the responsibility of the consequences of its response.

The statement was issued after the IRGC Navy forced a US tanker to turn back on Thursday. The tanker was trying to "illegally cross the Strait of Hormuz after it had switched off its tracking system, despite Iran's restrictions", the news report said.

"Following a swift and decisive response by the IRGC Navy, including warning fire directed toward the vessel, the tanker was forced to stop and retreat," it added, citing another report from Iran's semiofficial Tasnim News Agency.

Mehran Kamrava, a professor of government at Georgetown University in Qatar, noted that Trump's statements do not always reflect the official US policy. "His shocking threat to bomb Oman does not appear to represent the US' formal position on the matter," Kamrava said. "Clearly, the US is getting a lot of pressure from the Arab states to ensure that there is free navigation through the Hormuz Strait."

Contact the writers at jan@chinadailyapac.com

Relations: Future of bilateral ties optimistic

From page 1

During the Sino-US summit in May in Beijing, China put forward the vision of "constructive strategic stability". That suits Australia fine. The positive stability that should emerge in China-US relations can only benefit Australia's relations with China.

Of course, there are many other positives. China remains by far Australia's largest trade partner. China's exports to Australia include electric vehicles, and this brings the potential to save a lot in fuel costs, not to mention benefiting the environment. Australia in turn sells iron ore and agricultural products to China.

But investment is not doing so well. Although China buys 30 percent of Australia's exports, it now accounts for less than 3 percent of Australia's total foreign direct investment stock, according to a report by the Australia-China Relations Institute at the University of Technology, Sydney.

Japan, on the other hand, provides 13 percent of Australia's foreign direct investment but buys only 10 percent of Australia's exports. Why the difference? Why is Chinese investment in Australia so low? One major answer is lack of trust. In other words, many consider Chinese investment a national security threat. This is ridiculous.

Fortunately, the business community in Australia is realizing how much it is missing out on by the lack of investment from China. Whether there will be an increase is uncertain, so we'll have to wait and see. I certainly hope there will be.

According to Australia's Department of Education, there were 192,225 international students from China in Australia in October last year, which was about 23 percent of the total of 833,041 international students. Of course, there is recovery from the COVID-19 days, but it could be faster. It seems that many Chinese students are choosing to stay at home and not come to Australia, because of the rising international status of Chinese universities and the greater expense of going to Australia.

On the other hand, there are some very active programs, at Australian National University and elsewhere, for Australian students to study in China. The government-funded National Foundation for Australia-China Relations is sponsoring projects to increase the knowledge that Australians, especially young Australians, gain about China. This can only be a good thing and, together with Chinese students going to Australia, can only increase people-to-people relationships between the two countries.

There are still many problems, and I am worried by the lack of trust. But the direction is definitely upward, so we should still be optimistic about the future of Australia-China relations.

The author is an Australian Sinologist and professor emeritus at Griffith University. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Innovation: Application of AI in key sectors encouraged

From page 1

Dr Christoph Schrempp, vice-chair of the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China's Tianjin chapter, said that China's shift toward intelligent manufacturing will reshape the business environment, as its AI capabilities are expected to mature further over the next five to 10 years.

"The speed of China's transition toward highly automated production is impressive," he said, adding that emerging technologies will create fresh room for European and Chinese collaborations.

His remarks were echoed by a survey released on Wednesday by the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China and consultancy firm Roland Berger, which showed "signs of an uptick" in confidence among European businesses operating in China.

China remains "the heavyweight champion of efficient and cost-effective supply chains", the survey said, with 75 percent of respondents saying their China-based production is more efficient than operations elsewhere.

"If you want to learn how to manage your business in a dynamic and fast-developing environment, come to China and learn from the fastest," Schrempp said.

John Markmann, president of Grundfos China, said that China serves as both a vital testing ground and a launchpad for cutting-edge industrial innovations that can benefit global markets.

Markmann, also vice-chair of the Danish Chamber of Commerce in China, North Board, said Grundfos, the Danish pump and water solutions provider, is proud to "ride this wave" by leveraging local AI talent and smart technologies to optimize manufacturing.

Chinese manufacturers are also putting these advantages into practice. Jamie Erin Wood, head of investor relations at home-robotics and smart-appliance maker Dreame Technology, said that China's long-established industrial strengths are being amplified by AI-enabled production.

Buoyed by the optimism shared by domestic and global businesses, Tianjin is also strengthening its role in advanced manufacturing, innovation and intelligent industries, supported by its industrial base and growing AI ecosystem.

Schrempp of the European Union chamber said Tianjin's AI-related industries generated more than 300 billion yuan ($44.2 billion) in operating revenue.

Li Xiang, Zheng Yiran and Li Jing in Tianjin contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at zhangchenxu@chinadaily.com.cn

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1838

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:09 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:09 PM

AMERICAFOCUS





Left: Pablo Neruda during a reading of his poems in Italy in 1963. PHOTO CREDIT: CREATIVE COMMONS. **Right:** Pablo Neruda (right) and former Chilean President Salvador Allende in an undated photo. PHOTO CREDIT: BIBLIOTECA DEL CONGRESO NACIONAL DE CHILE / CREATIVE COMMONS.

Neruda's China ties echo in a precious seashell

A special gift from Peking Museum to the famous poet points to a forgotten chapter in Sino-Chile relations.

By **JIMENA ESTEBAN**
in Buenos Aires, Argentina

Inside a main building at the University of Chile, visitors can see a seashell that carries a story far bigger than its size.

It is displayed among marine specimens linked to Pablo Neruda (1904-1973), the Nobel Prize-winning Chilean poet who famously loved seashells, describing them as "small countries of mother-of-pearl". In 1954, he donated his private collection of thousands of shells to the university.

The shell stands out for what it reveals about a time when culture often moved ahead of diplomacy.

In his memoir, Neruda describes receiving a rare shell during a visit to China: "I remember that in the Peking Museum the most sacred box of mollusks from the China Sea was opened to give me ... the *Thatcheria mirabilis*." He said it was one of only two known specimens of that particular mollusk.

Long before Chile and China established formal diplomatic relations in 1970, Chilean writers and artists were already making their own routes across the Pacific. They traveled, wrote and helped build institutions that turned curiosity into exchange. Their encounters helped shape a relationship that now runs through trade, education and tourism.

"The Chinese are among the people in the world who smile the most," Neruda, who may be Chile's most famous poet, wrote in his memoir, *I Confess I Have Lived*, published in 1974, a year after his death.

The gift of the seashell in the early 1950s tied the visiting Latin American poet to a newly founded country.

Renzo Soto, a historian and former professor who retired from the University of Chile, told China Daily in an exclusive interview that Neruda was part of a small but active group of Chilean writers and artists drawn to China well before embassies and official visits became routine.

"I don't know how widely his visits to China are discussed. There are several Chilean authors and artists who visited China before the formal establishment of diplomatic relations in 1970," Soto said.

"In the 1950s it was Neruda, Pablo de Rokha, Jose Venturelli, Gonzalo Rojas," Soto said.

The list spans different art forms and temperaments. De Rokha was a major poet with fierce politics of his own. Venturelli was a painter and activist with long ties to China. Rojas became one of Chile's leading poets. Each, in different ways, helped build early cultural contact.

Their visits came at a particular moment. The People's Republic of China was still in its early years, and knowledge of it among foreigners remained limited. Soto said that made it even more compelling for Chileans looking for new ideas in a postwar world.

"There was a genuine curiosity to learn about an ancient society that was relatively isolated and very difficult for foreigners to access," Soto said.

In 1954, Neruda published *The Grapes and the Wind*, a long work that moves through places and political causes with the voice of a committed poet. Editors and translators have noted that the poem ranges from Chile's coast to New China, using geography to imagine new nations and new futures.



A contestant makes a speech during the "Chinese Bridge" Chinese Proficiency Competition in Santiago, Chile, on Tuesday. The Chilean final of the 25th "Chinese Bridge" Chinese Proficiency Competition for Foreign College Students and the 19th "Chinese Bridge" Chinese Proficiency Competition for Foreign Secondary School Students were held in Santiago on Tuesday. ZHOU JIAYI / XINHUA

Before long, the exchange was working both ways. China also embraced Neruda as a major literary figure.

During his visits, he met poets such as Ai Qing (1910-1996), and the two formed a friendship. Ai later traveled to Chile and joined the writers who gathered in Chile for Neruda's 50th birthday in 1954. Their exchanges show the relationship was more than political.

Li Zhen, a poetry critic and professor at Shaanxi Normal University, said that Neruda liked Ai Qing a lot and described him as "charming" and a "prince of Chinese poets".



A contestant performs during the "Chinese Bridge" Chinese Proficiency Competition in Santiago, Chile, on Tuesday. JORGE VILLEGAS / XINHUA

"His trips to China, especially the deep friendship he formed with the poet Ai Qing, are evidence that this rapprochement was not simply a matter of political convenience but rather a genuine human bond," said Barbara Fernandez Melleda, an assistant professor at the University of Hong Kong.

Those ties soon took institutional form. In 1952, Chileans formed a Chile-China cultural association in Santiago, one of the earliest organized efforts in Latin America to build cultural links with the People's Republic. The Chilean-Chinese Institute of Culture was a prime "example of what we call 'cultural diplomacy'," Melleda told China Daily.

The institute brought together figures from across Chile's intellectual and political life, including Neruda, Venturelli, and the future president of Chile, Salvador Allende. For nearly two decades, it served as a steady meeting point for discussion, exchange and learning about China within Chile's academic and cultural circles.

"The (institute) was the concrete platform that channeled all the interest and affinity that already existed," said Melleda. "They created a legitimate space for encounter."

Neruda travelled to China in 1951 and 1957, extending his own links and those of the institute, and shaping his world view. During his last visit to China in 1957, Neruda celebrated his birthday on a cruise along the Yangtze River. Ai Qing, the head of the Chinese delegation, accompanied him on this journey.

"Neruda was never a mere repeater of slogans," Hernan Loyola, the poet's former personal secretary and a friend who edited his *Complete Works* and currently edits the Nerudiana magazine, told China Daily.

"The Neruda of the 1960s was no longer the poet who simply praised. He was a man who had learned to look with different eyes," Loyola said.

If he was able to build a bridge with China, Loyola said, "it was because his interest was genuine".

"He was not a career diplomat but a poet who had written verses dedicated to the country and had forged personal ties," Loyola said.

Neruda's legacy remains alive today.

His cultural diplomacy led to closer links between Chile and China. Those links expanded through the 1950s and 1960s. When Allende became president in 1970, he took office "with 18 years of accumulated knowledge, personal contacts and trust forged through the (institute)", said Maria Montt Strabucchi, an associate professor at the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile.

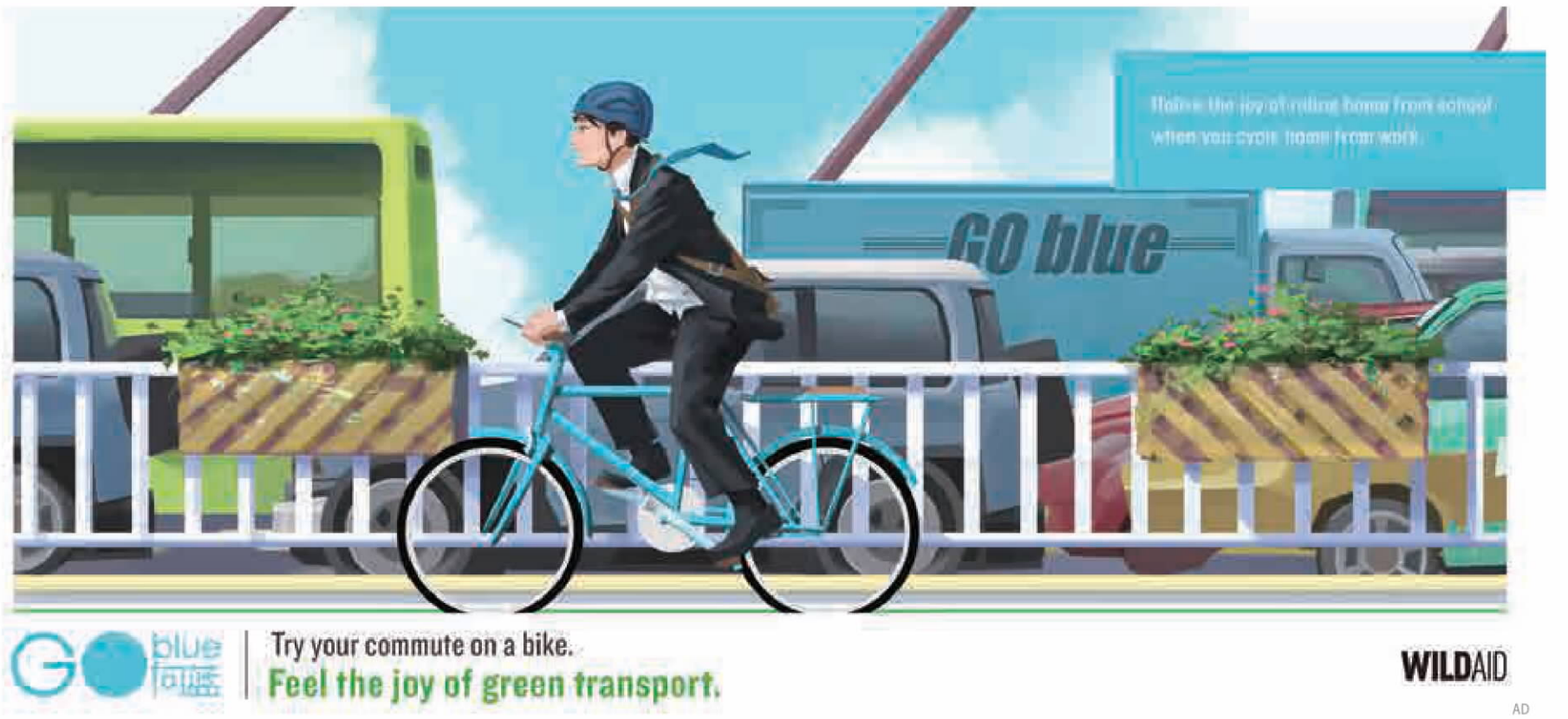
"That's why, when he took office, one of his first foreign policy decisions was to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China on December 15, 1970," Strabucchi said. "It was not an improvised or purely ideological decision: it was the culmination of a process of rapprochement that the institute had sustained for nearly two decades."

Since 1970, the economic relationship between the two countries has expanded into one of Chile's most important bilateral trade ties. Chile's trade with China had grown to about $8 billion in 2005 and exploded to almost $59 billion by 2024, according to the Chilean government. China is now firmly established as Chile's largest trading partner.

The relationship deepened further through the free trade agreement framework, under which 98.7 percent of Chilean exports now enter China with zero tariffs.

But even though trade and investment may define Chile-China ties today, it was writers and artists that laid the groundwork for the relationship long before that.

The seashell at the museum is a timely reminder that diplomacy is shaped not only in ministries, but also in poems, journeys and the stories people bring home.



AD

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:09 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:09 PM

WORLD

California panelists emphasize resilience, reliability



Panelists discuss global trade, supply chain resilience and international cooperation during the centennial celebration of World Trade Week hosted by the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce in Los Angeles on Wednesday. RENA LI/ CHINA DAILY

By RENA LI in Los Angeles
renali@chinadailyusa.com

Trade and transportation leaders in Southern California said the region's ports, airports and logistics infrastructure continue to play a critical role in global commerce despite mounting geopolitical tensions, shifting trade patterns and economic uncertainty.

The remarks came during the centennial celebration of World Trade Week held in Los Angeles on Wednesday, where officials and business leaders reflected on the region's century-long role as a gateway for international trade and discussed challenges facing global supply chains.

This year's theme, "Celebrating a Century of Global Partnership, Innovation and Prosperity", highlighted the importance of trade in economic growth and international cooperation, according to Maria Salinas, president and chief executive officer of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce.

Panel discussions focused on how Southern California can maintain its position as a global trade and innovation hub amid disruptions ranging from geopolitical conflicts to shifting tariff policies and supply chain restructuring.

Noel Hacegaba, chief executive officer of the Port of Long Beach, said continuing instability in global trade and energy markets has added new pressures on logistics and transportation systems.

"There hasn't been a normal year in our industry for quite a while," Hacegaba said. "Every year seems to introduce a new layer of complexity."

He pointed to conflicts in the Middle East, rising fuel prices and evolving US trade policies as major factors reshaping shipping and manufacturing costs. According to Hacegaba, the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles have worked to remain a "safe harbor" amid uncertainty by investing in infrastructure and maintaining operational flexibility.

Hacegaba said China continues to remain a major trading partner for Southern California ports even as regional supply chains across Asia become increasingly diversified.

Gene Seroka, executive director of the Port of Los Angeles, also emphasized the importance of maintaining stable international relationships and adapting to rapidly changing trade conditions.

"It's been a roller coaster, and even for the most seasoned professional, it's a lot to keep up with," Seroka said, referring to policy changes, tariffs and global market shifts.

Seroka said businesses are shortening planning horizons because of economic uncertainty, while inflation and weaker capital investment continue to affect both companies and consumers.

At the same time, he noted that long-established international relationships have helped Southern California adapt to changing trade patterns more smoothly.

Referring to recent visits to Hong Kong and cities in the Chinese mainland, Seroka said long-term international partnerships remain essential for sustaining trade cooperation and adapting to shifting global trade flows.

"The ability to really put this into another gear and get those relationships going in places where we haven't had normal trade flows has been almost seamless," Seroka said.

John Ackerman, chief executive officer of Los Angeles World Airports, said geopolitical conflicts are increasingly affecting aviation routes and transportation costs.

"The war in Iran is adding hours and hours to the journeys of the airplanes that come in and out of the airport and go to the Gulf region," Ackerman said. "That changes the economics for goods."

Ackerman emphasized the importance of maintaining resilient transportation systems and stable international connectivity.

Dilpreet Sidhu, deputy mayor of international affairs for the City of Los Angeles, said Los Angeles intends to remain a stable and reliable global trade partner despite continuing geopolitical and economic uncertainty.

"LA is going to continue to be a stable and reliable partner," Sidhu said. "We're open for business, and we will welcome the world."

Sidhu also emphasized the importance of maintaining ties with China and other international partners.

Reforms urged to AI, global governance

Foreign minister calls for enhancing voices of developing countries at United Nations

By MINLU ZHANG
at the United Nations
minluzhang@chinadailyusa.com

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Thursday called for stronger multilateral cooperation on issues including United Nations reform, artificial intelligence regulation and global development.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, made the remarks during a meeting of the Group of Friends on Global Governance while in New York to preside over a UN Security Council high-level meeting.

Speaking at United Nations headquarters, Wang said reforming and improving global governance is a historic mission for this generation. Such a task demands strong conviction and unremitting efforts, he said.

China's proposals for reforming and improving global governance include promoting reform and greater efficiency at the United Nations, enhancing the authority and capacity of the Security Council, advancing peacekeeping operations, and strengthening global consensus on development.

"The purpose of UN reform is to enhance the world body, not weaken it. UN reform should be led by member states and carried out in a fair, inclusive and transparent manner," Wang said.

He stressed the importance of enhancing the voice of developing countries, and small and medium-sized countries, particularly by addressing the historical injustice faced by Africa.

Wang also called for improving international human rights governance, reforming the international economic and financial system, and establishing rules for artificial intelligence governance.

"China supports the United Nations playing a central role" in preventing the widening of the digital divide and establishment of safeguards for the military application of artificial intelligence, he said.

Wang said China has proposed establishing a World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization and will host the World Artificial Intelligence Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance in Shanghai in July.

He also called for strengthening governance in emerging areas such as cyberspace, outer space and artificial intelligence.

The GGI is another major initiative proposed by China in September last year, following the Global Development Initiative (GDI), the Global Security Initiative (GSI) and the Global Civilization Initiative (GCI).

Wang added that Groups of Friends on Global Governance have been established in New York, Geneva and Vienna, with membership expanding to more than 60 countries.

Representatives from more than 60 countries attended Thursday's meeting, including the foreign ministers of Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Cuba and Zimbabwe. UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed briefed the participants.

Wang said China will host a forum on global governance in the Xiong'an New Area in North China's Hebei province this autumn. He called Xiong'an a "city of the future" and said China hopes countries can work together there to advance global governance reform and improvement.

The meeting issued a joint communique of the Group of Friends on Global Governance calling for safeguarding the authority of the United Nations, upholding international law, strengthening solidarity and cooperation, and improving global governance.

The Group also reached consensus on five key points regarding global governance, said Wang.

He said members of the group support democratizing international relations and giving all countries equal rights to participate in and benefit from global governance, regardless of their size or level of development.

Wang said the group also supports upholding the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, safeguarding the central role of the United Nations, practicing multilateralism, and opposing unilateralism and power politics.

Wang said all members support "reforming and improving global governance and narrowing the North-South divide to ensure that all countries share the benefits of development and that no country is left behind".

He said members also called for addressing the most pressing challenges facing the international community through concrete actions and practical results to "ensure global governance meets the needs of the times and the people".

Xinhua contributed to the story.

Egypt Special





From left: The grand opening ceremony of Red Sea Container Terminals is attended by Egyptian Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly (ninth from left in the first row) and Egyptian Minister of Transport Kamel Al-Wazir (eighth from left in the first row). Hutchison Ports Abu Qir is built to handle the mega-vessels of the future. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Hutchison Ports boosts Egypt's development

By YUAN SHENGGAO

In line with the Belt and Road Initiative, Hutchison Ports, one of the world's leading port investors and operators, is enhancing Egypt's position as a strategic trade hub, according to the company. By operating technologically advanced terminals in the country, the company is not only advancing Egypt's Vision 2030 but also fortifying the historic 70-year diplomatic relationship between China and Egypt.

Enduring partnership

Inspired by the historical exchanges linked by the Silk Roads, China and Egypt have built a strong modern partnership. This partnership is marked by significant commercial collaboration, with bilateral trade reaching $20.79 billion in 2025. Established in 2008, the China-Egypt TEDA Suez Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone has become a prominent industrial hub in Egypt, hosting 185 companies with $3 billion in foreign investment and total sales of over $5.3 billion by June 2025.

Egypt's strategic location at the crossroads of the Mediterranean and Red Seas, with the Suez Canal serving as a vital artery for global shipping, makes it a critical partner for supply chain reliability across Africa, the Middle East, Europe and Asia. This, combined with a young and dynamic workforce, positions the nation as an attractive destination for investment and growth.

Terminals' modernization

With two decades of experience in Egypt, Hutchison Ports is keen to prioritize the market for further development and investment, reinforcing its support for the BRI and regional connectivity. Hutchison Ports currently manages several key terminals in Egypt, including Hutchison Ports Alexandria, Hutchison Ports El Dekheila, Hutchison Ports Abu Qir, or AQCT, Red Sea Container Terminals, or RSCT, as well as the El Dekheila Container Terminals, or EDCT.

On the Mediterranean, AQCT, developed in partnership with the Egyptian Navy, is the first terminal in Egypt to deploy a mixed-traffic fleet of autonomous trucks and electric trucks, significantly boosting operational efficiency. AQCT is built to handle the mega-vessels of the future and is well connected to major industrial zones, with 100 hectares reserved for future expansion.

At the southern entrance of the Suez Canal, the new RSCT in Ain Sokhna announced its official opening as Egypt's first semi-automated container terminal in January. This new facility marks a significant milestone in Egypt's maritime development, backed by a 30-year concession agreement with the Egyptian government, reinforcing Egypt's attractiveness for international trade and investment, according to Hutchison Ports.

RSCT is equipped with advanced remote-controlled cranes, electric internal terminal tractors and electric reach stackers to deliver faster, smarter and more environmentally friendly container services.

As part of Hutchison Ports' integrated Egypt network, the soon-to-open EDCT will enhance national container throughput, improve reliability of goods movement, and tap into smoother, lower-cost trade flows driven by improved connectivity to logistics corridors and industrial zones. In addition to remote-controlled technology and electric vehicles, EDCT will incorporate renewable energy bunkering, aiming to become a smart and green port.

Advancing the BRI

As Egypt pursues its Vision 2030 initiative, Hutchison Ports' investment portfolio of over $1.5 billion in the country is playing an important role in economic development, job creation and modernization of maritime infrastructure. These efforts align with broader national strategic interests in diversifying trade routes and strengthening global economic partnerships.

Positioned as a leading operator in Egypt's evolving logistics landscape, Hutchison Ports is committed to supporting Egypt's rapid growth and enhancing economic ties along BRI trade routes. As these investments come online, the outlook for Egypt's maritime trade remains positive with smoother trade flows and reduced operational costs, bringing greater attractiveness for Chinese businesses looking to expand their footprint across Africa and beyond.

China tariff initiative fuels export growth

By HAO NAN
haonan@chinadaily.com.cn

China rolled out a comprehensive zero-tariff initiative for 53 African diplomatic partners on May 1 while accelerating negotiations on economic partnership agreements to promote shared development.

The initiative makes China the first major global economy to offer unilateral, comprehensive zero-tariff treatment to all African nations with diplomatic ties to China, as well as to all least developed countries with diplomatic relations worldwide.

Egypt, the first Arab and African nation to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China in 1956, has seen overwhelmingly positive responses to China's landmark zero-tariff policy.

Experts from the Political Academy Research Institute under Egypt's State Information Service said the policy transforms close political ties into institutionalized economic gains, forging an even stronger bond between China and Egypt. Amid rising global trade protectionism, China's initiative also carries significant political implications.

Egyptian officials said the policy provides a unique opportunity to boost Egypt's exports to China. It also aligns closely with Egypt's Vision 2030, the country's national development strategy, which identifies export expansion and the development of Egypt as a regional trade hub among its core goals.

The zero-tariff policy is widely viewed in Egypt as a major advantage and an institutional upgrade for future China-Egypt economic and trade relations.

Chinese economic experts said the policy not only helps African nations expand export capacity but also supports China's imports of agricultural products, mineral resources and manufactured goods from Africa. It strengthens supply chain resilience and supports China's food security and industrial productivity growth.

Statistics showed China remained Egypt's largest trading partner for a 14th consecutive year, serving as Egypt's largest source of imports and a major source of investment.

Saturday marks the 70th anniversary of China-Egypt diplomatic relations. The two countries established a comprehensive strategic partnership in December 2014 and have maintained strong bilateral relations since then.

Against a backdrop of deepening political trust and booming trade ties, industrial park cooperation has emerged as a key pillar and vivid example of practical bilateral engagement.

Located on Egypt's Red Sea coast, Ain Sokhna is home to the China-Egypt TEDA Suez Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone, which was approved by the Chinese government in 2008. Factory buildings line the zone while container trucks move constantly along its roads.



A view of the China-Egypt TEDA Suez Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone in Egypt, 2025. YAO BING / XINHUA

Since the inauguration of its expansion area in January 2016, the zone has recorded steady growth. It hosted more than 300 domestic and international business delegations in 2024. That number rose to more than 500 in 2025, including delegations from Arab countries, Russia and Uzbekistan.

As a flagship Belt and Road Initiative cooperation project between China and Egypt, the zone has attracted a cluster of world-class companies. Jushi Egypt has helped the country become a global leader in fiberglass production, while XD-EGEMAC, a Chinese-Egyptian joint venture, has localized the manufacturing of high-voltage electrical equipment.

Those investments have helped fill Egypt's technological gaps in key industries. Their products are sold worldwide and have significantly increased Egypt's export revenue.

The zone now hosts industrial clusters in bonded logistics, new building materials, petroleum equipment, high- and low-voltage electrical appliances, machinery manufacturing, textiles, chemicals, renewable energy and household appliances.

"From just two or three initial enterprises to today's industrial agglomeration, I am filled with pride," said Nahla Emad, CEO of Egyptian TEDA Special Zone Development Company.

She said the thriving China-Egypt TEDA Suez Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone demonstrates the deepening relationship between China and Egypt, as well as the high level of trust and cooperation between the two governments.

By the end of 2025, the zone had attracted nearly 200 companies, with actual investment exceeding $3.8 billion and creating around 10,000 local jobs.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:09 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:09 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

South China Sea not the arena for extra-regional actors to flex muscles

The recent incursion by the Dutch frigate HNLMS *De Ruyter* into waters around China's Xisha Islands, compounded by the violation of China's airspace by a helicopter, necessitated a firm response from the Chinese People's Liberation Army Southern Theater Command. Through verbal warnings and electronic jamming, the Chinese side effectively expelled the vessel, demonstrating its resolve to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

As a spokesman for China's Ministry of National Defense said, the blatant provocation and meddling by the extra-regional country in the South China Sea deserve serious condemnation. The Dutch side's behavior infringed on China's territorial sovereignty and sea and air security, violated international law and the basic norms of international relations, undermined the peace and stability of the South China Sea, and could have caused a serious misunderstanding and misjudgment.

Yet, the latest incident was merely the tip of the iceberg. The Report on the Military Activities of Non-US Extra-Regional Countries in the Western Pacific in 2025, released on Tuesday by the South China Sea Strategic Situation Probing Initiative, paints a troubling picture. Extra-regional countries, including the United Kingdom, France, Canada and Australia, increased the frequency of their military activities in the Western Pacific last year.

The report said about 200 warships from 18 external countries operated in the region last year under the excuse of exercising "freedom of navigation" or safeguarding a "free and open Indo-Pacific", with their military aircraft flying over 20,000 sorties. One does not have to be a military expert to recognize that such a high frequency raises the risk of escalation.

The South China Sea is increasingly used as a venue for geopolitical posturing, where countries from outside the region present a show of force to align with the "Indo-Pacific" strategy of the United States with the aim of containing China.

The involvement of countries from outside the region, such as the Netherlands, is not a demonstration of naval prowess; it is a provocative act aimed at undermining the trust and cooperation that regional countries are painstakingly trying to maintain.

Extra-regional countries may not fully grasp the risks of their aggressive behavior, but their actions have the potential to set off a chain of events that escalate into conflict, which no party desires.

There is a glaring hypocrisy in the actions of these countries. While they claim their missions are about promoting "freedom of navigation" and "maritime security", their intrusion into China's territorial waters is intended to weaken international maritime cooperation. Instead of fostering a collaborative environment to maintain peace, these extra-regional actors are creating divisions and mistrust among regional countries. This divisive approach seeks to hamper efforts to build a cohesive regional framework for addressing the myriad challenges facing the South China Sea.

China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations member countries are accelerating their steps in negotiating a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea, aiming to usher in lasting peace and stability in the waters. On May 21, they convened the 26th ASEAN-China Senior Officials' Meeting on the Implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The parties attending the meeting affirmed the positive progress made in the consultations on the COC and agreed to work toward its early conclusion. To continue advancing the COC consultations, China and ASEAN countries also held the 55th meeting of the Joint Working Group on the Implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea last week.

The provocative actions of non-regional countries in the South China Sea will only consolidate China's resolve to defend its rights and interests. If they continue the dangerous moves, the cost will be borne not only by themselves but also by regional countries.

Peace and stability in the South China Sea can only come from dialogue and cooperation, not from reckless showboating that risks tripping the wire of confrontation.

Secessionists' 'word game' belies their anxiety

Recent remarks and actions by the secessionist-minded Democratic Progressive Party authorities of China's Taiwan region once again reveal their persistent attempts to distort history, confuse public understanding and advance their separatist agenda under various guises.

From the repeated claim that "Taiwan has never been ruled by the People's Republic of China" to renewed rhetoric advocating "Taiwan independence", the essence of these moves remains unchanged: seeking to undermine the one-China principle and obstruct the historical trend toward China's national reunification.

At a recent news conference, Chen Binhua, spokesman for the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, reiterated the unequivocal truth that Taiwan has been an inseparable part of China since ancient times. Although the two sides of the Strait have yet to achieve reunification, China's sovereignty and territorial integrity have never been divided. The two sides of the Taiwan Strait belong to one China with the Government of the People's Republic of China as the only legitimate representative of the whole of China.

Historical facts and international law provide no room for distortion. The Cairo Declaration, the Potsdam Proclamation and United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2758 all confirm China's sovereignty over the Taiwan region.

Any attempt by the DPP authorities to confuse the concepts of "jurisdiction" and "sovereignty" is merely a political trick designed to fabricate a false basis for separatist activities.

The recent separatist rhetoric by Lai Ching-te, head of the DPP authorities, as evidenced by his May 20 speech marking the second anniversary of his tenure, in which he falsely portrayed his authorities as the "protector of regional peace and stability", further exposes the dangerous nature of the DPP authorities' agenda. These remarks appear to be less an expression of confidence than an anxious attempt to test the boundaries of external support, particularly from the United States.

These performances by Lai — including his brazen denial that he is pursuing "Taiwan independence" — are all reactive responses to external shifts. US President Donald Trump's recent remarks concerning the Taiwan region might have shattered the fantasy of some "Taiwan independence" seekers, as some observers say. "We're not looking to have somebody say, 'Let's go independent because the United States is backing us'," Trump said in an interview following his state visit to China from May 13 to 15. After that, the US suspended certain arms-sale arrangements to the island, leading to a sense of strategic unease among the Lai authorities.

Against this backdrop, the so-called "Formosa Alliance", a political group long advocating "Taiwan independence" on the Chinese island, issued an open letter indicating its willingness to consider participation in cross-Strait negotiations under conditions such as "Taiwan people govern Taiwan" and "a high degree of autonomy".

Such rhetoric does not represent a genuine embrace of national reunification. Rather, it reflects the growing anxiety among some separatist groups, as they realize that the space previously granted to them by external forces is narrowing. Their proposal attempts to disguise separatist intentions with new packaging while continuing to challenge the one-China principle by imposing political preconditions.

As Chen emphasized, any proposition that seeks to pursue "Taiwan independence" under the banner of "autonomy", "two Chinas", or "one China, one Taiwan", fundamentally runs counter to the shared interests of the Chinese nation. No matter how such ideas are repackaged, they cannot alter the reality that "Taiwan independence" is a dead end.

Beneath the great lengths the separatist forces go to in a bid to disguise their agenda lies a recognition that, amid the overwhelming comparative strength and development momentum of the Chinese mainland, their secessionist fantasies lack both legitimacy and practical viability.

Under the political foundation of adhering to the one-China principle and upholding the 1992 Consensus, the Chinese mainland remains willing to strengthen cross-Strait economic and trade cooperation, expand people-to-people exchanges and deepen integrated development to benefit compatriots on both sides of the Strait.

The future of Taiwan lies in China's national reunification, and the well-being of Taiwan compatriots depends on the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. No external force can stop the historical trend toward China's reunification, and no separatist scheme can shake the common aspirations of the Chinese people on both sides of the Strait.

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

Takeaway from Sino-German economic relations for Brussels

When Germany's Economic Affairs and Energy Minister Katherina Reiche arrived in Beijing this week with a 40-member business delegation, she carried a message Brussels would do well to heed before its Friday debate on new trade restrictions targeting China's alleged "overcapacity".

Germany, Europe's largest economy and its industrial engine, understands something increasingly lost in Brussels' geopolitical rhetoric: Europe's prosperity is deeply intertwined with China's market, supply chains and innovation ecosystem.

The European Union cannot safeguard against what it deems "unfair practices" by damaging its own export industries or blocking channels of cooperation with the world's second-largest economy. It is arithmetic. China and Germany conducted roughly 250 billion euros ($290.20 billion) in goods trade in 2025 — accounting for about 33.2 percent of China-EU trade that year, with China remaining Germany's largest trading partner for several consecutive years. Around 5,000 German companies operate in China. German investment in China exceeded 7 billion euros in 2025, reportedly up nearly 50 percent from the previous year and the highest level in four years. At the same time, Chinese investment projects in Germany surpassed those from the United States. These are the numbers of two major economies adapting to a more competitive but still mutually beneficial relationship.

Chinese Vice-Premier He Lifeng and Commerce Minister Wang Wentao used their respective talks with Reiche on Wednesday as opportunities to deepen industrial integration. Both emphasized the compatibility between China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) priorities — digitalization, green development and industrial upgrading — and Germany's Industry 4.0 ambitions and low-carbon transition.

That convergence is real. Europe's green transition, from electric vehicles to renewable energy grids, depends heavily on access to competitively priced Chinese technologies and critical materials. Reiche acknowledged what many European politicians hesitate to say publicly: China has become one of the world's major industrial and innovation centers in robotics, artificial intelligence, batteries and renewable energy. Europe can either engage with that reality or try to fence it off. Some people in Brussels seem tempted to do the latter.

The European Commission's toolbox — from expanded safeguards to broader trade-defense mechanisms and restrictions on Chinese technology suppliers — risks confusing competitiveness with protectionism. Such measures may offer short-term political advantages, but they will inflict long-term economic costs on Europe itself, especially on export-oriented economies such as Germany.

European restrictions on high-tech exports to China artificially suppress European exports while inflating the "imbalance" Brussels now condemns.

Nor should China's manufacturing strength be reduced to "overcapacity" or "subsidies". Much of the cost-performance advantage of Chinese products comes from scale, relentless competition, infrastructure efficiency and rapid innovation cycles that benefit European consumers and industries enormously at a time of high energy costs and sluggish growth.

Europe did not become a technological powerhouse by shielding itself from competition. It succeeded by embracing openness, fostering industrial ecosystems and competing vigorously. If the EU hopes to remain relevant in the ongoing tech revolution, it must rediscover that confidence rather than retreat behind regulatory walls.

That requires reciprocity from both sides. China is committed to providing a fair and nondiscriminatory business environment for European companies operating in China, something the German business leaders accompanying Reiche acknowledged. Similarly, Chinese companies deserve nondiscriminatory treatment in Europe.

Reiche's visit, following German Chancellor Friedrich Merz's earlier trip to China, suggests that Berlin still sees dialogue as preferable to confrontation. The broader EU should resist allowing strategic anxieties to override economic self-interest.

Europe does not need to agree with China on everything to trade successfully with it. But it does need to remember that prosperity, especially in difficult economic times, is usually built through win-win cooperation and managed competition, not through fear of either.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

New rule to support settled migrant workers

Editor's note: *The State Council has issued a new guideline aimed at gradually increasing basic public services for residents without a local household registration. Shi Yulong, director of the Research Center on Xi Jinping's Economic Thought, and Gao Guoli, director of the China Center for Urban Development, explained why such measures are necessary. Below are excerpts of their comments as reported by the People's Daily. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

This guideline helps better align the allocation of public service resources with the scale, structure and needs of permanent residents. It will also help rural populations who migrated to cities integrate into the urban environment.

It outlines measures across key areas such as education, housing, social security, medical insurance, employment and social assistance, addressing the pressing concerns of permanent residents without a local *hukou*. This initiative is important for promoting these people's equal access to basic public services and advancing the people-centered new urbanization strategy.

By the end of 2025, some 130 million rural migrant workers were residing in urban areas. Some of them live with their children and elderly family members. Their primary concerns are stable employment, children's education, housing and social insurance.

A large number of such people live and work in cities for extended periods while their household registrations remain elsewhere. Ensuring that they have equal access to basic public services where they live is essential for improving the quality of urbanization.

The implementation of the guideline will help stabilize these people's expectations, allowing them to settle down and pursue a promising future, thus translating the vitality generated by population mobility into stronger domestic demand.

Cities and counties that see a net inflow of population generally have sound economic foundations and abundant job opportunities. They host a large number of rural migrant workers and people moving between cities, leading to a strong demand for public services, including basic education and housing. But the supply of these services often falls short.

These regions need to balance the fairness, accessibility and sustainability of public services that are short in supply, and work toward their tiered supply. The duration of a person's employment and residence in the area should be a main criterion for the provision of these public services.

On the other hand, cities and counties witnessing a decline in their population usually have weaker industrial bases and insufficient capacity to create jobs. In some of these regions, public service resources are at risk of underutilization.

These areas should focus on forecasting the total number of permanent residents, the demographic structure and mobility trends, and on continuously improving the construction, operation and management of service facilities to ensure that resources are efficiently allocated.

Given the varying fiscal capacity and the number of migrants across regions, authorities should take proactive but measured steps when expanding basic public services to residents without local household registration. This approach will help them maximize their efforts without overstretching their resources.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:09 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:09 PM

VIEWS

Hun Kim

Mobilizing private capital to scale digital infrastructure

Digital infrastructure is the backbone of economic growth, but investment in this space has been uneven.

Many developing economies are struggling to expand basic digital connectivity while preparing for the artificial intelligence era, resulting in a double digital divide: inadequate basic access for hundreds of millions, compounded by growing gaps in AI readiness.

Limited affordable broadband connectivity, unreliable digital services, insufficient access to essential devices, and unstable electricity supply are long-standing challenges faced by developing economies.

Despite increasing investment in AI infrastructure worldwide, the foundational connectivity network needed for AI readiness remains underfunded.

Internet access directly correlates with national development levels.

High-income economies have achieved near-universal internet access, at around 94 percent, but low-income countries have reached only about 23 percent. This disparity not only slows AI adoption but also exacerbates inequity by denying AI's benefits to those without basic connectivity.

Investment tends to focus on capital-intensive, top-tier digital assets such as data centers, cloud and AI infrastructure while foundational connectivity remains underfunded. This gap risks widening rather than narrowing societal and economic inequality.

Multilateral development banks should view digital infrastructure not as a discrete asset class but as an interconnected ecosystem with multiple layers: the foundational layer, the enabling layer, the cloud layer, and the application layer.

Private capital naturally gravitates toward segments with predictable demand, scalable operations and bankable returns, such as the cloud layer.

However, in rural and low-income areas, there is not enough commercial incentive for network expansion, a problem exacerbated by fragmented regulation, uncertain licensing and limited institutional capacity.

Thus, digital inclusion becomes more of a financing and coordination challenge.

Development stakeholders must structure risk frameworks that enable private capital to scale while strategically and efficiently deploying public resources to support segments currently unviable for market investment.

A credible enabling environment requires stable and transparent rules, predictable licensing and reliable legal protection.

Multilateral development banks, or MDBs, help borrowing members build this credibility by standardizing fragmented regulations, strengthening local institutional capacity and reducing political and regulatory risks.

When the enabling environment is credible and sustainable digital service demand is secured, the private sector can deliver impact at a scale far exceeding investments traditionally led by the public sector.

Without these conditions, even well-designed projects may remain unbankable, leading to underinvestment in regions with the greatest development needs.

India and Indonesia illustrate how infrastructure sequencing and capital structure design can drive inclusive digital expansion. India prioritized foundational connectivity, leveraging state-directed and quasi-public models to build nationwide infrastructure, including rural broadband access.

As market scale deepened and digital adoption accelerated, the government rolled out incentives, including long-term central tax exemptions, state electricity duty exemptions, concessional power tariffs, and single-window fast-track regulatory clearances to mobilize private investment.

This created a virtuous cycle: broad connectivity fueled adoption, adoption strengthened demand, and demand directed private capital to higher-return digital assets.

In Indonesia, where terrestrial networks incur high marginal costs to reach remote communities and project economics deteriorate rapidly beyond major urban corridors, catalytic development finance played a pivotal role in early connectivity expansion.

A notable example is the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank's non-sovereign support for Indonesia's Multifunctional Satellite Public-Private Partnership project, which connected underserved regions overlooked by commercial financiers.

As Indonesia's digital market matured, data-center expansion shifted toward more bankable sites and structured partnerships that derisked investments.

These instances show that success depends less on choosing a "one-size-fits-all" technology and more on aligning infrastructure sequencing, incentive frameworks and risk allocation across the entire digital ecosystem.

Three dimensions will shape the future of digital infrastructure scaling in Asia: expanding beyond bankable segments to close the access gap, building enabling ecosystems and enhancing collaboration between MDBs.

Robust regulatory frameworks are essential for scaling digital public infrastructure.

MDBs should align efforts to catalyze private investment, not compete with it. By pooling expertise, resources and risk appetite, MDBs can accelerate the development of bankable projects and expand access to digital infrastructure for the next billion users.

The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank adopts a layered, ecosystem-driven approach that prioritizes technology-enabled infrastructure for the AI era while advancing inclusive growth.

It supports commercially viable backbone networks, broadband expansion and data centers and attracts private investment to underserved communities.

It also partners with governments to build digital public infrastructure through policy modules and implementation templates.

Asia's digital infrastructure gap should be seen as an investable opportunity, not a cost burden.

The central problem is not a lack of investor interest in digital infrastructure but a concentration of capital in the compute layer that overshadows foundational connectivity.

To bridge this gap, it is essential to align the roles of different stakeholders.

Governments should establish credible, inclusive regulatory frameworks and strategically invest in segments unviable for market delivery.

The private sector needs to innovate and scale investments where demand exists and risks are priced transparently. MDBs have to convene stakeholders, derisk projects, and reduce transaction costs to accelerate the development of bankable projects.

With coordinated action, Asia can narrow the double digital divide and expand digital opportunities to the next billion users, unlocking inclusive and sustainable growth for decades to come.

The author is the chief partnerships officer of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Chen Xiancai

DPP disguising separatist agenda as democracy

Taiwan leader Lai Ching-te has recently been peddling his so-called "green democracy" rhetoric.

By placing "democracy" at the center of his narrative, he is trying to inject an ideology-driven binary framework of confrontation into cross-Strait relations and the geopolitical situation in the Taiwan Strait.

This exposes his intention to involve external forces in manipulating the Taiwan question on the international stage.

A closer look at Lai's rhetoric shows that the Democratic Progressive Party's "green democracy" is essentially "Taiwan independence" in disguise.

In a recent speech, he repeatedly claimed that Taiwan stands at the "frontline of democracy", thus creating an atmosphere of confrontation across the Taiwan Strait.

By bypassing the core legal issue of national sovereignty and territorial integrity, and drawing ideological lines in the name of "democratic values", the DPP authorities are once again using their familiar tactic of attempting to "internationalize" the Taiwan question.

Lai's actions are nothing but an attempt to pursue separatism under the banner of democracy. In doing so, he hollows out the true meaning of democracy itself.

His "green democracy" rhetoric, a political trick long used by the DPP, is riddled with double standards.

The DPP authorities present Taiwan as a vulnerable party in order to win international sympathy.

For example, in his speech, Lai mentioned the so-called flight obstruction incident during his recent visit to Eswatini, using it to portray himself as a "victim" of "rule-breaking", while accusing the Chinese mainland of "interfering with civil aviation order".

But the DPP authorities ignore the fact that the international community widely upholds the one-China principle. Their attempt to create "two Chinas" or "one China, one Taiwan" is itself a challenge to the existing international order.

Lai not only unilaterally tests the red line broadly recognized by the international community, but when his attempts meet resistance, he turns around and accuses others of breaking the rules.

In other words, when rules serve its political interests, the DPP loudly calls for respect for order.

But when those same rules stand in the way of its separatist schemes, it labels them political pressure. If this is not double standards, what is?

"Green democracy" is harmful to Taiwan. In his speech, Lai dragged the semiconductor and artificial intelligence industries into political confrontation and called for the building of so-called "democratic supply chains". Technological development and global trade have always depended on market rules and comparative advantage. Yet Taiwan's core industrial strengths are now being forcibly tied to specific political camps in an attempt to build exclusive technology barriers.

This move not only violates the principles of free trade, but also drags the global semiconductor supply chain into geopolitical rivalry.

The DPP authorities claim they are contributing to global economic prosperity, but in reality they are making the global technology industry bear the cost of tensions in the Taiwan Strait.

Worse still, they are turning the economic lifeline on which Taiwan residents depend into a bargaining chip against reunification.

Using bloc confrontation to interfere with market operations will inevitably weaken Taiwan's long-term industrial competitiveness. In the end, it is the Taiwan economy and residents of the island who will pay the price.

"Green democracy" is also deeply hypocritical. Lai loudly promotes Taiwan as a "beacon of democracy" and talks about "freedom", but since taking office, the DPP authorities have deliberately stirred up social conflict and division on the island.

They have even imposed "green terror" on groups and individuals who support cross-Strait exchanges, dialogue and peaceful development.

By creating social division and targeting political opponents, the DPP is seeking to consolidate its power base.

The outside world can see the true nature of its so-called "green democracy". Once the rhetorical disguise of Lai's "green democracy" is stripped away, the historical context of cross-Strait relations is clear, and the direction of development is beyond doubt.

The one-China principle is the political foundation for peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait. Once this foundation is removed, no amount of military equipment or "democracy" rhetoric can bring lasting security to Taiwan.

People on both sides of the Taiwan Strait are bound by blood. Only by promoting the peaceful development of cross-Strait relations and deepening integrated development in various fields can the real interests of Taiwan residents be served.

Separatist schemes that go against the trend of history have no realistic support. Blind faith in external promises and polished rhetoric will ultimately collapse before the tide of history.

It is time for the DPP's "green democracy" farce to end.

The author is the director of the Center for Taiwan Studies at Xiamen University.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Chen Weihua

The author is a China Daily columnist.
chenweihua@chinadaily.com.cn

China-Serbia ties a good example for the world

The five-day state visit to China by Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic from May 24 to 28 was the best reflection of China's diplomatic principles, including the long-standing Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence — mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence.

The grand reception Vucic received in Beijing shows that China is committed to treating all countries, regardless of size, with equal respect.

This was further highlighted when President Xi Jinping awarded Vucic the Friendship Medal at the Great Hall of the People, the highest honor bestowed on foreign nationals by China.

Vucic is a deserving recipient of the medal for his significant contributions to promoting China-Serbia friendship and advancing bilateral ties.

The medal is also an appreciation for Serbia's independent foreign policy as a sovereign nation in international affairs.

Having spent nearly seven years in Brussels covering the European Union, I understand the pressure Serbia faces from the EU.

Maintaining an independent foreign policy that does not fully align with Brussels is challenging for any national leader, especially for Serbia, an EU candidate country since 2012.

Unlike some other major powers, China has never interfered in the internal affairs of Serbia or any other country, always treating them with full respect and equality.

Unlike many EU leaders, Vucic has consistently urged diplomatic solutions to end the Russia-Ukraine conflict. He has also advocated closer cooperation with China.

He used Serbia's positive experience to illustrate how the partnership with China has brought concrete benefits to ordinary people, workers and families.

It sends a clear message to other European countries that de-risking or protectionist strategies do not serve anyone's interests.

During my visits to Serbia, I witnessed the active participation of Chinese companies in the construction of the Belgrade-Budapest railway and various other infrastructure projects.

The more than 20 cooperation documents signed this week between the two governments will take bilateral cooperation to a higher level.

The two countries aim to tap the huge potential by aligning China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) and the Serbia 2030 national development agenda.

Unlike some other major powers, China has never interfered in the internal affairs of Serbia or any other country, always treating them with full respect and equality.

The same principle is reflected in China's decision to grant zero-tariff treatment from May 1 to exports from 53 African countries with which it has diplomatic relations.

It is worth noting that the agreement signed between China and Serbia to promote the implementation of China's four global initiatives — on global development, global security, global civilization and global governance — is extremely significant not just for the two countries but also for the entire world.

These initiatives aim to rally the international community to address many acute challenges facing the world today and make it a better place for every country.

That is also why Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, in his address at a meeting of the United Nations Security Council in New York on Wednesday, emphasized the need to reinvigorate global development cooperation to strengthen mobilization, and revitalize global governance platforms to enhance their capacity for effective execution.

It's no secret that China and Serbia are quite different in culture, history, religion, political systems, and the size of their territory, population and economy.

They are also more than 7,000 kilometers apart. But that does not prevent the two countries from developing a strong mutually beneficial relationship based on equality and mutual respect.

It's a partnership that serves as an exemplary model of international relations.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:09 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:09 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

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

GAO HAIHONG

Transition of finance

Cooperative efforts are required to build a diverse and stable international monetary system

In 1971, former US president Richard Nixon closed the gold window, effectively ending the Bretton Woods system and absolving the United States of its obligation to convert dollars into gold at a fixed rate. This marked a pivotal shift in the global monetary landscape. That same year, former US treasury secretary John Connally's famous remark, "The dollar is our currency, but your problem", reflected Washington's confidence in the dollar's dominant position, despite long-standing criticisms from Europeans.



The early 1970s saw the first major test of the dollar's dominance with the onset of floating exchange rates, which introduced significant uncertainties. However, the dollar retained its supremacy, bolstered by strong network externalities and the US military and political influence.

Today, the dollar accounts for 57 percent of official foreign exchange reserves, down from 70 percent more than two decades ago, albeit at a gradual pace. The dollar still dominates the global foreign exchange market, as it is involved in 89 percent of transactions (on "net-net" basis) and holds a 51 percent share of the global payment system. It also remains preeminent in international banking loans and debt securities markets.

However, the dollar system faces mounting challenges. The US debt crisis undermines the dollar's status as a safe asset, and policies such as the US administration's "America First" have further shaken its credibility. The "triple whammy" of falling US Treasury bonds, stock markets and the dollar index in early April 2025 highlighted the vulnerabilities of the dollar's safe asset status. Increasing geopolitical risks and trade fragmentation further signal the unsustainability of the dollar's dominance, prompting a shift toward diversification.

First, non-dollar currencies are gaining significance in the international reserve system. The euro, as the second-largest international currency, is seeing increased calls for developing euro-denominated sovereign bonds, especially as rising defense expenditures boost the euro financing market. This could challenge the long-standing inertia that there is "no alternative to the dollar".

Non-traditional reserve currencies such as the Australian dollar and the Canadian dollar are also rising, while the renminbi is gaining ground, particularly in trade finance. The recent preference for gold underscores the confidence crisis facing the dollar system.

Second, geoeconomic factors are influencing currency networks. The fragmentation and restructuring of trade relations are creating new opportunities for currency choice, potentially shifting third-party currency pricing to local-currency settlement.

Third, in the payment system, low-cost transactions will no longer be the dollar's exclusive domain. New payment platforms and regional payment systems are increasing network choices, and the rapid development of digital currencies is transforming the payment ecosystem.

The transition period for the international monetary system is fraught with potential crises and disruptive currency competition, threatening global economic and financial stability. As the US retreats from multilateral systems, a leadership vacuum is emerging in the international monetary system, raising the specter of the Kindleberger Trap — the risk that the existing world power lacks the ability, while the ascendant power lacks the will, to provide the world with vital public goods, such as a stable anchor for the international monetary system.

In the 1930s, the collapse of the gold standard and power transitions between the United Kingdom and the US led to monetary chaos, attributed by Charles Kindleberger to a lack of international leadership. Joseph Nye later used the Kindleberger Trap in 2017 to discuss US-China power dynamics.

Currently, the Federal Reserve acts as the global lender of last resort. Despite its policies being US-centric, the Fed plays a crucial stabilizing role during crises. Its actions in providing liquidity and initiating dollar swap lines are vital tools for mitigating liquidity crunches and stabilizing markets.

Today's international monetary system shows similar danger signs. While the Fed maintains its leadership in providing global financial stability, its future willingness is uncertain. In January 2026, 10 national monetary authorities, including the European Central Bank, and the Bank for International Settlements issued a statement supporting the Fed, emphasizing central bank independence as a cornerstone of price, financial and economic stability. This reflects global concerns about financial stability. The Fed's absence would destabilize the dollar system.

Avoiding international monetary chaos requires enhanced cooperation and more countries providing global financial stability as a public good. Central banks need to take joint action, which remains a viable option for maintaining financial stability despite its challenges. Since 2008, the People's Bank of China has signed over 40 bilateral currency swap agreements, which enable it to play a larger role in supporting global financial stability.

Moreover, international financial cooperation should strengthen the Global Financial Safety Net, a multi-layered network of international financial institutions, regional financial arrangements and central bank currency swaps, so as to maintain global financial stability during turbulent times.

In conclusion, the international monetary system is at a crossroads, with opportunities and risks unfolding at the same time. Embracing change and fostering cooperation to build a diverse and stable international monetary system is the direction for the years ahead.

The author is the director of the Research Center for International Finance at the Institute of World Economics and Politics, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY



ZHANG YUJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

LIU YUANLING

A global strategic awakening

The transition to green energy must be understood not as a cost but as an investment in stability, independence and long-term prosperity

The global energy crisis is driven not by a scarcity of resources but by a dangerous reliance on a geopolitically volatile fossil fuel system. Europe's vulnerability — a result of passive dependence on imported hydrocarbons — has turned energy insecurity into a recurring crisis, with households and industries bearing the brunt of price volatility and supply chain disruptions. This is not merely a market inefficiency; it is a structural flaw in the architecture of modern economies. The transition to new energy is, therefore, no longer only a climate policy option, but a strategic imperative for national and economic security.



Unlike fossil fuels, whose supply chains are hostage to choke points and political instability, as can be seen in the Strait of Hormuz, renewable energy offers a paradigm of inherent resilience. Sunlight requires no naval escorts; wind power is not subject to embargoes. By investing in and scaling these technologies, nations can reclaim energy sovereignty, insulating themselves from the zero-sum geopolitical contests that have long defined resource competition. The shift is already underway: Every installed solar panel and every commissioned wind farm reduces exposure to external volatility and strengthens domestic industrial foundations.

The evidence is clear. Countries that have moved decisively to deploy renewables are not only cutting emissions — they are building more resilient, self-reliant and economically competitive societies. The green transition, therefore, must be understood not as a cost but as an investment in stability, independence and long-term prosperity. In a world of mounting uncertainty, new energy is the only credible answer to the oldest question of how to secure a nation's future.

Amid this global strategic awakening, China's choices and actions stand out. China's energy endowment — "rich in coal, poor in oil, and short on gas" — is both an objective reality and a constraint it must face. As a country where oil dependence on imports has long exceeded 70 percent, China's sensitivity to energy security is self-evident. However, instead of pinning its hopes on geopolitical gambles, China has pursued its own path of green transformation with unwavering strategic resolve. As a result, China's energy mix can now be updated to "rich in coal, poor in oil, short on gas, but abundant in green power".

China has become a leading force in the global energy transition, boasting comprehensive advantages in installed capacity, technological sophistication, industry chain control and market application. Led by wind and solar photovoltaic, China's new energy installed capacity and power generation rank first in the world, placing it in an absolute top tier all by itself. Since the beginning of the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period, China has built the world's largest and fastest-growing renewable energy system. By the end of 2025, China's total installed capacity of wind and solar power reached 1.84 billion kilowatts, 3.4 times that of 2020, surpassing thermal power for the first time in history. The share of wind and solar power in total electricity consumption reached 22.2 percent, providing strong support for the green and low-carbon transition of China's energy structure.

Through platforms such as the Belt and Road Energy Ministerial Conference and the International Forum on Energy Transition, China has released initiatives such as the Suzhou Vision 2030 for Global Energy Low-Carbon Transition and Development, promoting an open and inclusive international energy market order.

What is even more commendable is that China is not only expanding its volume but also strengthening its quality. China's new energy industry has achieved a historic leap from running alongside global leaders to taking the lead, building the world's largest and most complete new energy industry chain. Offshore wind turbines and blade lengths are the largest in the world, and photovoltaic conversion efficiency has repeatedly broken world records. Over the past decade, the global average cost per kilowatt-hour for wind and solar PV projects has fallen by over 60 percent and 80 percent, respectively — a feat made possible in no small part by China's new energy industry. From PV modules to electric vehicles, China's products have been exported to more than 200 countries and regions, offering affordable solutions for the world's energy transition.

Looking ahead, China will continue advancing along the path of its green transformation drive. The outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) states that during this period, China will continue to increase the share of its new energy supply, promote a safe, reliable and orderly substitution of fossil fuels, focus on building a new-type power system and develop a strong energy nation. It aims to establish green and low-carbon production and lifestyles, achieve its carbon peak goal on schedule, and build a clean, low-carbon, safe and efficient new energy system.

Energy security is a vital component of national security. The strategic thinking underpinning China's energy strategy is to hold the "rice bowl" of energy firmly in its own hands. On this basis, China has actively advanced its green transition and achieved remarkable accomplishments, reflecting a profound strategic philosophy with Chinese characteristics.

First, leveraging its socialist market economy, mega-scale market, complete industrial system and its ability to "pool resources to accomplish major tasks", China has achieved coordinated green transitions across energy, industry, transportation, urban and rural areas.

Second, by focusing on breakthroughs in key technologies such as new energy development, energy storage and carbon capture, utilization and storage, China is fostering a green and low-carbon industry as a new engine of economic growth. This has nurtured the "new trio" of exports — new energy vehicles, lithium-ion batteries and photovoltaic products — as new growth poles.

Third, China emphasizes that the green transition must simultaneously advance carbon reduction, pollution control, green expansion, and economic growth, while coordinating ecological protection, livelihood improvement, job creation and common prosperity. It avoids a one-size-fits-all approach or sacrificing development.

Fourth, as the world's largest developing country, China has built the world's largest and most complete new energy industry chain. It supplies 80 percent of the world's PV modules and 70 percent of its wind power equipment, and through South-South cooperation, it supports other developing countries in enhancing their climate resilience.

The green transition is not a zero-sum game but a new opportunity for global cooperation. Through platforms such as the Belt and Road Energy Ministerial Conference and the International Forum on Energy Transition, China has released initiatives such as the Suzhou Vision 2030 for Global Energy Low-Carbon Transition and Development, promoting an open and inclusive international energy market order.

The author is an assistant researcher at the Institute of American Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:09 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:09 PM

BUSINESS

Chinese firms in Gulf focus of new biz ties

Ewpartners, Sohar International Bank team up with $1b deal signed in Oman

By **REN QI**
renqi@chinadaily.com.cn

Enhanced financial connectivity and localized support are becoming increasingly vital for Chinese enterprises deepening their presence in the Gulf region, a trend expected to unlock massive cross-border market opportunities, experts said.

As cross-border businesses transition from early-stage market expansion to a new phase of supply chain localization, project construction, local operations and long-term financing, the financial support required by these enterprises has become more diversified. It extends beyond basic account opening or settlement to comprehensive scenarios such as cross-border supply chain finance, project financing and multicurrency capital management.

> "Our partnership with Sohar International Bank strengthens Ewpartners' local financial cooperation platform in Oman."
>
> **Jerry Li,** founder and managing partner of Ewpartners

Highlighting this shift, Sohar International Bank and Ewpartners — formerly known as eWTP Arabia Capital — recently signed a strategic partnership agreement in Oman. The collaboration, expected to generate over $1 billion in financial cooperation, aims to fill this market gap by combining Ewpartners' Asia-Gulf cross-border investment network with Sohar International Bank's local banking capabilities to facilitate cross-border business flows.

"Our partnership with Sohar International Bank strengthens Ewpartners' local financial cooperation platform in Oman," said Jerry Li, founder and managing partner of Ewpartners.

"By combining Sohar International Bank's banking capabilities with Ewpartners' Asia-Gulf investment network, we can better support our portfolio companies, ecological partners and industrial projects, while helping Oman's financial ecosystem participate more deeply in the commercial flows of the Asia-Gulf region."

Li said the decision to launch this partnership in Oman is consequential. Facing the Arabian Sea and connecting to Indian Ocean shipping routes, Oman's ports — including Sohar, Duqm and Salalah — are located outside the Strait of Hormuz, offering a natural logistical alternative when regional transit risks rise. Meanwhile, Oman has long maintained political stability and neutral diplomacy, providing an open trade environment for cross-border enterprises through the US-Oman Free Trade Agreement, the Pan-Arab Free Trade Area and connections to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) market.

As Oman attracts foreign investment and builds industrial clusters relying on its ports, free trade zones and industrial parks, its value as a stable node and regional platform for Chinese enterprises entering the Middle East market is further highlighted.

The collaboration will initially prioritize Ewpartners' portfolio companies and partners. Ewpartners will be responsible for connecting enterprise needs and providing industry localization experience, while Sohar International Bank will offer financial services such as trade settlement, project financing and local capital management. The two parties said they will bridge the gap through corporate financing, project financing, trade financing, private credit and structured financing, while exploring sectors including logistics, industrial assets and income-generating real estate.

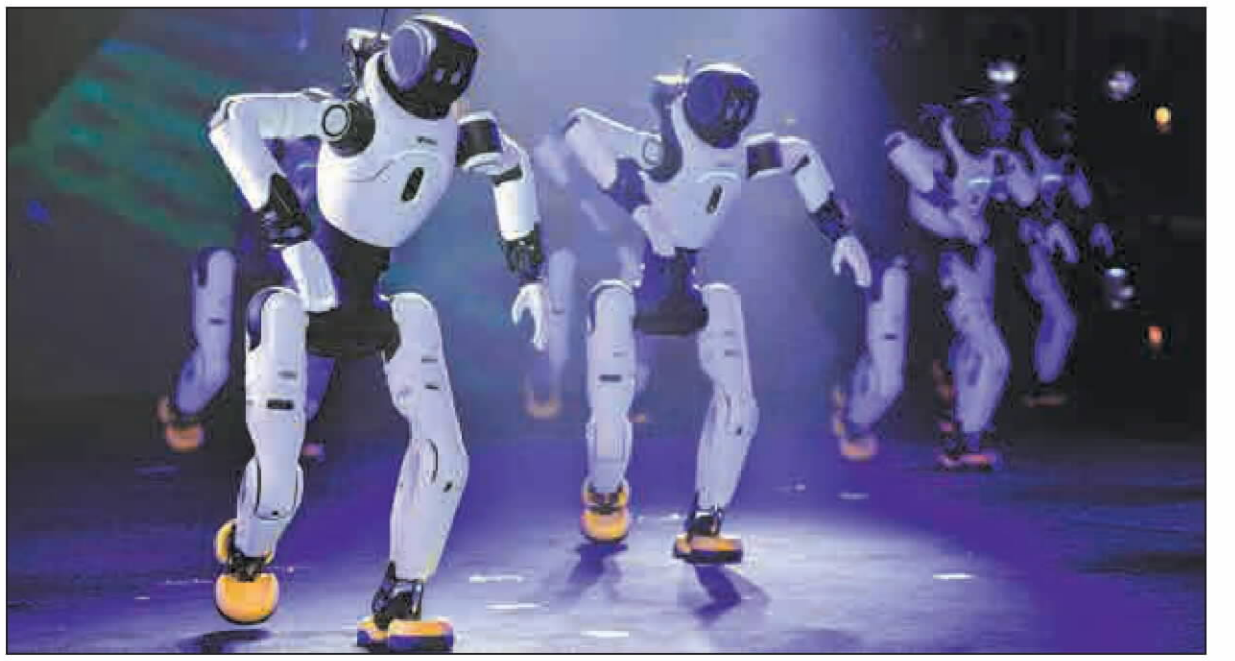
Abdul Wahid Mohamed al Murshidi, CEO of Sohar International Bank, said the partnership reflects a shared vision to enhance financial connectivity between Oman, the broader Gulf region and the rest of Asia. The joint effort will support enterprises, industrial projects and trade flows, reinforcing Oman's role as a regional platform for commercial connectivity, he said.

In April, Sohar International Bank received approval from the Hong Kong Monetary Authority to establish its first overseas representative office, while Ewpartners opened its Hong Kong office in May 2024. In the future, the cooperation between the two parties will extend from Oman to Hong Kong, further connecting with the Chinese market.

Ewpartners has been proactively establishing its presence in Oman since 2023. In 2024, the Oman Investment Authority (OIA), together with the Future Fund Oman, committed $150 million as cornerstone investors in Ewpartners' US dollar fund, focusing on advanced manufacturing, renewable energy and the biomedical industry.

By the end of the same year, Ewpartners invested in the United Solar Polysilicon project in Sohar, Oman, with a total investment of $1.6 billion. In November, Ewpartners established its second Middle East office in Muscat, adjacent to the OIA and other core institutions.

Popping routine



Humanoid robots perform a synchronized routine at the Intelligent Robot Carnival, which kicked off Thursday evening at the Tianjin Cultural Center in Tianjin's Hexi district. Held on the sidelines of the 2026 World Intelligence Expo, the four-day carnival, running through Sunday, features cutting-edge humanoid robots from leading Chinese manufacturers such as Unitree Robotics and Galileo. As a core component of the 2026 WIE, the carnival is designed to bring cutting-edge robotic technologies to the general public, integrating exhibition zones, robot sports competitions and immersive interactive experiences for visitors of all ages. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Weixin Pay, PayPal tie up on payments

By **CHENG YU**
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Tencent said on Wednesday that United States users of PayPal will be able to pay at tens of millions of Weixin Pay merchants across China by scanning QR codes, marking one of the most extensive integrations yet between China's mobile payment ecosystem and foreign digital wallets.

The integration between Tencent's cross-border platform TenPay and US fintech firm PayPal marks one of the first large-scale international applications of China's unified cross-border QR code gateway system.

Under the partnership, US PayPal users visiting China will be able to pay directly at Weixin Pay merchants nationwide using familiar PayPal wallet accounts, without opening Chinese bank accounts. The service will initially launch for US PayPal users before expanding to other markets in phases, Tencent said.

The partnership will run through China's unified cross-border QR code gateway — a payment infrastructure system designed to standardize links between domestic and overseas wallets.

Otto Williams, senior vice-president of PayPal and regional head for PayPal World's Middle East and Africa, said: "China is home to one of the world's most sophisticated digital payment ecosystems, and for international travelers, the ability to pay seamlessly is integral to the experience of being here. Through PayPal World's partnership with TenPay Global, we are committed to ensuring international visitors can enjoy seamless payments using a wallet they already know and trust."

Tencent said the launch is part of a broader inbound payment service enhancement initiative built around product upgrades, overseas wallet integration and multilingual services ahead of the upcoming APEC.

Daniel Hong, vice-president of Tencent's fintech group, announced a series of measures including a 90-day waiver of the 3 percent international card transaction fee for first-time users linking overseas bank cards, covering daily spending of up to 1,000 yuan ($139).

Tencent also said Weixin Pay's in-app payment guidance has been expanded into 16 languages including English, Korean, Thai, Russian, Spanish and Arabic, while multilingual offline service desks have been established at Shenzhen, Guangdong province, airports, border checkpoints, hotels and major commercial districts.

Tencent said overseas transactions through Weixin Pay rose nearly 80 percent year-on-year between January and April.

Dong Ximiao, chief economist at Merchants Union Consumer Finance and deputy director of the Shanghai Institution for Finance and Development, described the coordination of the two major payment platforms' services as a landmark moment for China's cross-border payments infrastructure.

"The launch of Weixin Pay support for PayPal users in China, beginning with US users, is a symbolic event in the interconnection of China's cross-border payment systems," Dong said.

He said the unified cross-border QR code gateway, which launched trial operations in July 2025 under guidance from China's central bank and other authorities, solved a long-standing fragmentation problem in China's digital payments sector.

Previously, overseas wallets and Chinese payment systems had to negotiate and connect individually, resulting in high technical costs and inconsistent standards, Dong said.

"The PayPal integration marks a substantive shift from simple interconnection toward actual interoperability in China's cross-border payment infrastructure," he added.

Rockit apples to blossom in nation

By **HE QI** in Shanghai
heqi@chinadaily.com.cn

China has become Rockit's largest global market, accounting for more than half of the brand's total revenue, Grant McBeath, global CEO of New Zealand's miniature apple brand Rockit, told China Daily in an exclusive interview.

McBeath added that the company will continue to channel its core resources and highest-quality produce to the Chinese market going forward.

"China is the key pillar in our global growth strategy," said McBeath, noting that it is the world's largest and most dynamic apple market with consumers who have an exceptional eye for quality and taste. "We focus our energy, innovation and resources to provide our best-quality apples to the China market."

Rockit now operates eight growing regions worldwide, ensuring year-round fresh supply to over 30 countries and regions.

Industry data underscore the high-stakes strategic opportunity. According to Beedata, an agriculture data provider, China accounts for over 50 percent of global apple consumption. New Zealand Trade and Enterprise (NZTE) 2025 annual data show China's apple imports surged 24 percent year-on-year to 1.84 billion yuan ($271 million) last year, with New Zealand dominating about 81 percent of the market.

Rockit alone accounts for about one-third of New Zealand's apple exports to China, leading the imported apple segment. To deepen the brand's presence in China, Rockit has launched its largest-ever brand upgrade.

From May 21 to Sunday, the brand opened its limited-time immersive pop-up "Rockit Every Moment" at Yuyuan Road in Shanghai, and officially announced popular idol Wang Yibo as its global brand ambassador.

"Rockit is a consumer brand, not a commodity apple brand. We take inspiration from other consumer categories, inject creativity into every link, and break through category limits to amaze people," said Julian Smith, Rockit's global marketing general manager.

He further proposed the core "Consumer Art" strategy to address the homogenization pain point in the agricultural industry. According to Smith, Chinese consumers are highly digitally savvy, more sensitive to brand authenticity and content innovation than most markets, and have a growing demand for healthy eating and quality consumption.

"This positioning helps us reach younger consumers and redefine choices for health-conscious Chinese consumers," he added.

As Zhang Chitao, general manager for Rockit Greater China, explained, Wang Yibo was chosen for his healthy, athletic image that aligns with the Rockit brand, as well as his cross-industry influence that will significantly boost brand awareness.

The online conversion data following Wang's appointment has validated Rockit's localized digital marketing strategy, while the offline pop-up combined with online social sharing has effectively amplified the brand story.

"We always align with local cultures and lifestyles, becoming an approachable brand that understands consumers. This is the core of Rockit's 'Consumer Art' strategy," Smith added.

Zhang further detailed Rockit's on-the-ground layout and future plans in China. On the channel front, the brand has established deep strategic partnerships with leading domestic fruit retailers including Pagoda, Goodfarmer and Fruitday, with over 20,000 local distribution stores nationwide.

While consolidating its core position in first- and second-tier cities, Rockit is accelerating its expansion into smaller cities through wholesale channels, Zhang said.

Over the next three to five years, the brand will roll out nationwide roadshows and in-store tasting events, paired with omnichannel exposure on platforms such as Douyin and Xiaohongshu to enhance brand awareness and household penetration, Zhang added.

McBeath also outlined that the brand might launch new products in the future, but for now, they would focus on expanding the miniature apple's market presence by increasing consumer trial rates, boosting household penetration, expanding store coverage across China, and launching new packaging formats and innovative marketing campaigns.

"Once consumers taste our apples, they will make repeat purchases," McBeath said.

Beverage companies thirsty for expansion

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn

Chi Forest, one of the fastest-growing beverage companies in the country, has started construction on its seventh wholly owned production facility, a move aimed at bolstering its supply chain nationwide and boosting delivery to central and western regions of the country.

The plant, based in Xuchang, Henan province, was launched with an agreement signed on Wednesday. Covering 223 *mu* (14.9 hectares), the project represents a total investment of over 1 billion yuan ($147.5 million).

The facility is expected to enhance the company's logistics response in Henan and neighboring regions, expand the logistics radius to within 300 kilometers, and reduce the reliance on deliveries from production units in other regions, Chi Forest said.

The expansion comes two months after the company opened in Xianning, Hubei province, a 200 million yuan "one-stop R&D innovation test base" — a 20,000-square-meter facility dedicated to research, pilot production and product incubation.

The center integrates laboratories, mini-factories and pilot lines, allowing the company to validate innovations such as liquid nitrogen fresh-lock processing and non-artificial coloring before scaling them across production.

The Xianning base serves as Chi Forest's innovation center. Its pilot lines can switch among 11 major beverage categories and 49 subcategories, enabling rapid validation of new products and technologies.

Since the launch of its factory program in 2019, Chi Forest has opened six smart manufacturing plants across China. The addition of the Xuchang plant completes the company's supply chain footprint nationwide.

Chi Forest's product portfolio spans sparkling water, electrolyte water, traditional Chinese medicine-inspired herbal tea, iced tea and vitamin water, with sales extending across China and exports to more than 40 countries and regions in Europe, North America and Southeast Asia.

So far, the company has invested nearly 8 billion yuan in infrastructure projects to bolster its manufacturing and research and development.

"The new facility allows Chi Forest to consolidate its competitive advantage in high-quality beverage production and rapid regional response," said Wang Pu, co-founder of Chi Forest.

Beating the heat



Medical workers from a Shanxi provincial hospital provide free health screenings for frontline railway employees at Taiyuan North Railway Station on Wednesday. As a key freight hub handling over 150 daily trains and critical summer thermal coal shipments, the station launched the initiative to enhance workers' health awareness and ensure safe operations amid rising temperatures that can push rail surfaces to nearly 50 C.
GAO LI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:09 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:09 PM

BUSINESS



People visit an exhibition of innovative achievements during the 2025 World Computing Conference in Changsha, Central China's Hunan province, on Nov 20. DING CHUNYU / XINHUA

China monetizes computing power via tokens

Wuxi building 'token factory', taking lead to accelerate AI services into market

BEIJING — Behind every artificial intelligence breakthrough lies raw computing power. China, staying true to its characteristically pragmatic approach, is now racing to industrialize it.

Recent developments offer a striking glimpse of this trend. In Jiangsu province's Wuxi — a manufacturing powerhouse near Shanghai — electronics firm HON-Flex signed an agreement with the local government to build what they call a "token factory". Days later, China Telecom and China Mobile, the country's two telecom giants, began selling "token packages" directly to consumers, with entry-level plans starting at just 9.9 yuan ($1.46) a month.

The ambition runs deeper than merely expanding data centers and stockpiling AI accelerators. China is methodically converting computing power into measurable and priceable commodities — much like water, electricity or bandwidth. By leveraging the vast subscriber networks of traditional telecom operators that already reach billions of users, this push is poised to accelerate AI services into the marketplace.

Wuxi is helping serve as the physical anchor for this shift. HON-Flex has declared it will build a large-scale, high-performance supernode computing cluster in the city, powered by domestic chips and models.

This industrial-scale facility, which is built on AI accelerator clusters and combines power supply, liquid cooling systems, high-speed networks and large model inference optimization technologies, is intended to mass-produce AI tokens, the fundamental units of large language model output.

The "token factory" will initially deploy four Huawei Ascend 384 supernode servers, each packing the computing power of Ascend 384 AI accelerator cards.

The bureau of science, technology, industry and information technology of Wuxi National High-tech District said the new "token factory" will directly provide low-cost and high-efficiency intelligent computing power services to AI enterprises in Wuxi and the broader Yangtze River Delta region. Meanwhile, it will drive the agglomeration of chip adaptation businesses, model optimization industries and industrial application sectors in the city.



Visitors view supernode servers at the debut exhibition area for computing infrastructure and applications during an event in Tianjin on March 18. TONG YU / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

The project utilizes green power generated in Northwest China's Qinghai province, with an abundance of solar and wind power. Integrating basic clean energy-powered computing resources transmitted from the province to the supernode cluster in Wuxi, the project will convert raw "computing power" into standardized "tokens" that can be directly utilized by AI applications.

This approach makes full use of low-cost western green energy to reduce token production costs while ensuring consistent computing service provision.

The National Data Administration said China's average daily token calls had exceeded 140 trillion in March, which represented a surge of more than 1,000-fold compared with 100 billion at the beginning of 2024, and an increase of over 40 percent compared with 100 trillion at the end of 2025.

While the emergence of the "token factory" is reshaping the supply side of AI infrastructure, the distribution side is now moving just as quickly.

China Telecom on May 17 launched a series of trial commercial token packages, becoming the first Chinese telecom operator to announce such packages at the group level. Following the move, China Mobile on May 20 expanded the market with the launch of its own nationwide token packages.

The actions taken by China's leading telecom carriers point to a broader strategic shift — from selling connectivity to retailing access to foundational AI computing resources for consumers and businesses alike.

China Telecom's token package system mainly targets three groups — individual and household users and developers; micro, small and medium-sized enterprises; and token ecosystem partners.

In addition to major telecom operators, companies such as Alibaba Cloud and Tencent Cloud have also launched token service products. The rollout of these new packages and services is expected to speed up the spread of AI applications among consumers and make token prices more affordable.

The move will not only open a new gateway to inclusive AI services for ordinary consumers, but also promote deeper integration among communications, computing power and AI, creating new opportunities and space for the digital economy, industry experts said.

Zhou Guijun, editor-in-chief of telecom industry news portal C114, told 21st Century Business Herald that such products are expected to have greater market potential on the enterprise side. In his view, the real logic behind the telecom operators' push into the token economy is not tokens themselves, but the value chain behind them.

According to Li Fei, vice-president of Guochuang Software, token packages will help remove the twin hurdles that have dogged smaller businesses — high computing costs and technical barriers.

Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises no longer need to invest in their own servers or build models from scratch. By buying tokens as needed, they can quickly roll out AI applications like digital workers and content-generation tools, which will facilitate AI-driven upgrading for industries across the board, Li said.

XINHUA

Lightweight entrepreneurship a window into nation's innovation vitality

TIANJIN — Early morning at a science park in Tianjin, groups of young people streamed into the shared office space, booted up their laptops and kicked off their workday. Among them is Wang Haoquan, an entrepreneur in his 20s and founder of a cultural technology company.

His company is a typical one-person company. Empowered by artificial intelligence tools, Wang handles the entire business chain from video creativity, editing and production to online promotion single-handedly, providing digital marketing services for local merchants.

"Not long after its establishment, the company had already secured clients and achieved preliminary profitability," he said.

In recent years, youth entrepreneurship in China has taken on the characteristics of "light asset and high intelligence". Represented by OPCs, the lightweight entrepreneurship model has emerged in large numbers, becoming a key window into China's innovation vitality.

Differing from the traditional solo startup model, OPC refers to a business form where individuals can complete the full closed commercial loop from product research and development to market launch with the support of AI tools. AI agents help individual entrepreneurs complete multiple work processes that previously required team collaboration. Their joint efforts greatly reduce the barriers to entrepreneurship, allowing more young people to participate.

Since the end of 2025, more than 20 new OPCs — covering fields such as cross-border e-commerce, software development and AI content production — have been registered in the Huayuan science park in Tianjin Binhai High-tech Industrial Development Area.

Though run by individual founders, these companies form a collaborative network in the shared space, where individuals from different backgrounds can exchange technologies and creative ideas in real time to complement each other's resources.



A drone photo taken on June 21 shows a camping base at a seaside park in Binhai New Area in Tianjin. ZHAO ZISHUO / XINHUA

"I majored in art and lack sufficient knowledge in programming and other technical fields, but the OPC founder at the desk opposite is a senior programming expert. When encountering tricky technical problems, we can just look up and communicate face to face," Wang said, noting the vibrant entrepreneurial atmosphere in the community.

"This model retains the flexibility of individual entrepreneurship while possessing certain collaborative advantages," said Sun Lei, head of the park's operator. The platform has formed a service system from initial incubation to enterprise acceleration, providing support for enterprises at different stages of development.

This new trend has caught the attention of local governments across China, with Shenzhen, Guangdong province, Shanghai, Nanjing, Jiangsu province and other cities rolling out supportive policies. Longgang district of Shenzhen has issued a policy consultation document for OPC development, with "zero-cost startup" as the core highlight, attracting global AI agent developers and OPC entrepreneurs.

Tianjin Binhai High-tech Industrial Development Area has introduced policies such as office space subsidies and computing power cost support, providing a maximum annual subsidy of 300,000 yuan ($44,250) for OPCs to offset certain costs.

"The development of AI is reshaping the entrepreneurial landscape and we must seize this new track," said Chang Xinyue, director of the new economy bureau of Tianjin Binhai High-tech Industrial Development Area.

The "high intelligence" feature of Chinese youth entrepreneurship is becoming more prominent as a result of technological advancements. In the industrial system of the Haihe laboratory of brain-computer interaction and human-machine integration at Tianjin University and Tianjin Huanhu Hospital, enterprises are developing cutting-edge technologies such as brain-computer interfaces, combining neuroscience and AI for applications in health and other fields.

Industry insiders point out that the new generation of entrepreneurs relies more on knowledge and technological innovation. The technical content and growth potential of the enterprises are substantial, despite their modest size. This innovation-centered entrepreneurship model is becoming a driving force in industrial upgrading.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:09 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:09 PM

CHINA

SPP hikes protection for disabled minors

By **YANG ZEKUN**
yangzekun@chinadaily.com.cn

China's procuratorial authorities are strengthening legal protection for minors with disabilities by using case-based supervision and cross-departmental coordination to address difficulties in accessing education, medical assistance, compensation and long-term development.

The Supreme People's Procuratorate and the China Disabled Persons' Federation recently released seven typical cases related to protecting the rights and interests of minors with disabilities. The cases cover issues such as traffic accident compensation, access to education, abandonment and relief, and medical damage claims.

The SPP said the cases show how procuratorial organs can use legal supervision to protect vulnerable minors and respond to public concerns with stronger rule-of-law support.

One case highlighted cross-departmental coordination. In April 2024, a county procuratorate in Jiangxi province received a tip-off that the local education bureau had improperly distributed subsidies for students with disabilities.

After inspecting records with education authorities and the disabled persons' federation, prosecutors found that 52 eligible students had not received subsidies, while three ineligible students had received more than 10,000 yuan ($1,470) in subsidy funds.

Prosecutors filed an administrative public interest litigation case and issued a pre-litigation recommendation. The bureau soon recovered the improperly paid funds, and worked with the local disabled persons' federation to review the subsidy program.

The 52 eligible students later received 156,000 yuan in subsidies. A follow-up review in September found no further problems.

The cases also show that prosecutors are looking beyond immediate relief to the long-term development of minors with disabilities.

In one sexual assault case, a girl, who was 13 at the time and had an intellectual disability, was assaulted by a man surnamed Li in April 2023. A county procuratorate in Fujian province prosecuted Li in October that year, and the local court sentenced him to prison for rape the following month.

While handling the case, prosecutors visited the victim's family and learned that she had athletic talent. The local county's disabled persons' federation worked with her special education school to design a tailored training plan and arrange professional coaching. After two years of training, she won a silver medal at the National Games for Persons with Disabilities in 2025.

Marine pharma and bio products sector boosted

By **ZHAO LEI**
zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

The central government has rolled out a series of measures to boost China's marine-derived medicines and biological products industry, according to a document published on Thursday.

The document, jointly issued by eight central departments including the Ministry of Natural Resources, the National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Science and Technology, outlines guidelines on accelerating the high-quality development of marine-derived medicines and biological products. It marks the first time China has issued specific measures to advance the industry.

According to the document, the guidelines cover all businesses engaged in developing medicines and biological products using marine organisms, including their metabolites, minerals and other substances as raw materials. They aim to promote technological and industrial innovation.

The document also sets multiple goals for the industry to achieve by 2030, such as the launch of several new marine drugs, an overall industrial added value of at least 130 billion yuan ($19 billion), major progress in innovation capacity and industrial clustering, and positioning China as a global leader in the field.

A total of 15 specific measures are listed in the guidelines, including consolidating resource supply, strengthening technological innovation, optimizing industrial development orientation, promoting consumption of marine medicines and biological products, and improving policy support.

Shen Jun, a senior official in charge of marine strategic planning and economy at the Ministry of Natural Resources, said marine biomass accounts for 87 percent of the total biomass on Earth, making the oceans a vast repository of medicinal resources.

She noted that the Chinese government attaches great importance to the development of the marine pharmaceutical and biological products industry.

"Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, our marine biomedicine industry has achieved substantial progress. Last year, the industrial added value in this country reached 99.6 billion yuan," the official said.

Shen said the guidelines emphasize coordinated planning and collaboration among government authorities, improved government services and supervision, besides encouragement for local governments to develop relevant industries based on local conditions.

Zhang Donghua, executive president of the Marine Biomedical Research Institute of Qingdao, said the marine environment is marked by extreme conditions including high pressure, high salinity, low light and oligotrophic, poor plant nutrients, surroundings. Such unique habitats drive marine organisms to produce secondary metabolites with novel structures and distinctive biological activities.

"Globally, marine biomedicine has become a strategic emerging industry prioritized by major maritime nations. The implementation of the new guidelines will help improve resource supply, optimize investment and planning, and advance research in core technologies, thus strengthening the overall competitiveness of China's marine biomedicine industry," he said.

Birthday for Maodou



Visitors celebrate the fifth birthday of Maodou, an orangutan, at Hangzhou Safari Park in Zhejiang province on Thursday. The park hosted a special birthday party and handed out souvenirs to guests joining the celebration. YUAN XIAOQIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Market of childhood



Students run their own stalls during a campus market at an elementary school in Suining, Sichuan province, on Thursday. Through hands-on buying and selling activities ahead of International Children's Day, children learn teamwork, budgeting and the value of work. LIU CHANGSONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

BLUEPRINT INTO ACTION

Henan to strengthen role as strategic hub

Upgrading logistics key to province's goal of serving domestic, intl markets

By **SHI BAOYIN**
and **QI XIN** in Zhengzhou

Provincial leaders in Henan have outlined key plans for hub construction, industrial upgrading and high-level opening-up during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period at a news conference in Zhengzhou, the provincial capital, on Thursday, laying out clear paths to build an opening-up highland.

Governor Wang Kai said Henan aims to strengthen its role as a national strategic hub and develop a high-quality inland opening-up area.

In the coming years, Henan will seek to build a circulation hub for the national unified market and create a dual circulation hub serving both domestic and international markets, he said.

"The biggest characteristic and advantage of Henan is its ability to connect the East and West, the South and North. This unique geographical and transportation advantage makes Henan stand out in the construction of a unified national market," Wang said.

Wang emphasized that Henan would focus on upgrading transportation and logistics by promoting integrated, safe, digital and green transformation of its transportation system.

"Henan plans to enhance international connectivity, reduce logistics costs and expand network coverage, while strengthening modern logistics corridors and hubs," Wang said.

According to Wang, targeted efforts will include improving the Zhengzhou-Luxembourg Air Silk Road dual-hub model and upgrading the Zhengzhou-Europe Railway Express assembly center.

The province will also create a pivot for promoting foreign trade by upgrading the pilot free trade zone, expanding the functions of the comprehensive bonded zone, strengthening goods, service and digital trade, as well as enabling more goods and high-quality products from Henan to enter global markets, he said.

Zhang Min, executive vice-governor of Henan, said the province has achieved significant opening-up results in recent years, noting that Zhengzhou airport has achieved a 1-million-metric-ton air cargo throughput, ranking fifth nationwide in international air cargo.

Zhang emphasized that Henan will seize new opportunities in the second golden decade of the Belt and Road Initiative and advance efforts in several areas.

While strengthening the role of the Air Silk Road and building a dense intercontinental air route network, Henan plans to optimize land transportation channels, promote the expansion of China-Europe and Central Asia freight trains, develop multimodal transport, and achieve coordinated development of air, land, data and sea routes.

Zhang added that the province will further develop international markets, rely on industrial upgrading and technological innovation, enhance product competitiveness, and promote global sales of its brand products, including high-end equipment and characteristic light industry goods.

The province will also deepen two-way cooperation, optimize the business environment based on platforms such as the pilot free trade zone and Zhengzhou Airport Zone, actively attract foreign investment, and support local enterprises in expanding overseas markets to achieve win-win cooperation, according to Zhang.

"Henan aims to enhance the quality, innovation and green value of local products," she said.

While accelerating opening-up, Henan will further integrate its culture and tourism industries. "As an important birthplace of Chinese civilization, the province will strengthen the protection and innovative use of cultural heritage," Zhang added.

The province also seeks to advance the creative transformation and innovative development of its traditional culture, allowing cultural heritage to thrive in the new era.

Contact the writers at qixin@chinadaily.com.cn

Briefly

13 dead, 3 injured in traffic accident

Thirteen people have been confirmed dead and three others injured after an overloaded passenger van rear-ended a semi-trailer truck on an expressway section in Central China's Henan province early on Thursday morning, according to local authorities. The crash took place at around 2:40 am at a section in Nanyang city. The nine-seat passenger van was carrying 16 people at the time of the accident. The Ministry of Public Security has dispatched a work team to Nanyang to guide the investigation and response efforts.

Mainland, SARs legal seminar held

The 14th Mainland, Hong Kong and Macao Legal Seminar was held in Xiamen, Fujian province, on Thursday, with emphasis on strengthening talent education and promoting economic development. Jointly organized by the China Law Society, the Department of Justice of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and the Secretary for Administration and Justice of the Government of the Macao Special Administrative Region, the event aims to better leverage rule of law as a key safeguard for advancing various fields of cooperation between the mainland and the SARs, while also seeking to inject strong legal momentum into the high-quality growth of the Greater Bay Area and the promotion of high-level opening-up.

Fraud verdict against criminal gang upheld

The Chongqing Higher People's Court on Thursday rejected the appeal of members of a criminal gang led by Xu Faqi while upholding the first-instance verdict pronounced on Jan 30 this year. The court also approved Xu's death sentence with a two-year reprieve. The first-instance judgement for the syndicate members, delivered by the Fifth Intermediate People's Court of Chongqing Municipality, determined that the defendants' actions constituted six crimes, including fraud, intentional injury, and drug smuggling and trafficking. In addition to the verdict against Xu, defendants Zhang Longlong, Luo Yujun, Xi Kangqiang and Liu Shibing were sentenced to terms ranging from life imprisonment to up to 25 years, along with additional penalties like property confiscation and fines. Zhang, Xi and Liu appealed against the verdict, which was dismissed by the second-instance court. The court ruled that the first-instance verdict was based on sufficient, true evidence and legitimate procedures.

CHINA DAILY—XINHUA

Top court clarifies rules on estate administration

By **CAO YIN**
caoyin@chinadaily.com.cn

China's top court has reaffirmed the importance of the proper handling of estates following a person's death, disclosing five landmark cases that clarify who can serve as an estate administrator and what duties the role entails.

The Supreme People's Court last week highlighted the importance of correctly applying the estate administrator system under the Civil Code, which took effect in January 2021, and instructed judges nationwide to strictly implement the law.

The estate administrator system is considered a major innovation under the code. It serves as a legal tool to balance the secure management of a decedent's assets, the protection of inheritance rights and the lawful settlement of creditors' claims, according to the top court.

The system also helps resolve disputes, limit conflicts, prevents the concealment or misappropriation of assets, and maintains family harmony and social stability, the court said, adding that "it should be used to address public concerns such as estates left unmanaged, assets being damaged or lost, and challenges posed by an aging population".

Under the code, if there is no heir or if all heirs renounce their inheritance, the civil affairs authority or the village committee where the deceased lived before death can serve as the estate administrator. Chen Yifang, chief judge of the top court's First Civil Division, highlighted the necessity of the arrangement, but described it as a form of public service and an alternative option.

"If an heir provides a written renunciation of inheritance — whether to avoid managing the estate or to evade the deceased's debts — but continues to possess or dispose of the estate's assets in practice, that renunciation is invalid," she said.

One of the disclosed cases illustrates the point. An individual surnamed Yang died in 2024, owing 100,000 yuan ($14,700) to two individuals surnamed Hua and Ma. The creditors sued Yang's father, mother and daughter.

During the trial, all three heirs submitted written renunciations of their inheritance, so the court did not support the creditors' claims.

However, after the ruling, the three heirs collected more than 200,000 yuan in funeral subsidies, pension benefits and social insurance payments belonging to the deceased. The creditors, meanwhile, asked the court whether it could appoint the local civil affairs bureau as the estate administrator, given that the heirs had renounced their inheritance rights.

"Although the heirs had formally renounced their inheritance, they had in fact taken control of the deceased's assets, making the renunciation invalid. The heirs therefore must repay the debt," the court said, adding that the civil affairs bureau could not step in as a fallback administrator.

Chen cited the case as an example of "fake renunciation to evade real debt". She emphasized that such behavior must not be tolerated and warned that the rule allowing civil affairs authorities or village committees to act as administrators should not be abused.

She also clarified how an estate administrator should be selected under the code. If the deceased had designated an executor in a will, the court can appoint that person or entity as the administrator in accordance with the deceased's wishes.

If no executor was named, the heirs should choose an administrator. If they cannot reach an agreement, all heirs must serve as joint administrators, according to Chen.

"Only when there is genuinely no heir or when all heirs have validly renounced their rights should civil authorities step in," she said.

Once a person or organization is named estate administrator, they must fulfill duties including taking inventory of the estate, listing all assets and debts, and providing a full and accurate accounting to heirs, banks, property registration authorities and creditors, Chen said.

She added that administrators must also take reasonable measures to protect the estate from damage or loss and must not abuse their authority.

The estate administration system has drawn greater attention following the death of a 46-year-old woman in Shanghai. The deceased, surnamed Jiang, lived alone, had no spouse or children, and had lost both parents. After suffering a cerebral hemorrhage in October, she was cared for by a distant relative before her death in December.

Her case sparked public concern after local authorities encountered difficulties locating her next of kin to make key medical decisions and handle funeral arrangements.

At the end of 2025, the Hongkou district civil affairs bureau was appointed Jiang's estate administrator by a local court after it determined that she had no legal heirs and had left neither a will nor a support agreement.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:09 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:09 PM

CHINA

Towering Beijiang bridge takes shape

By **QIU QUANLIN** in Guangzhou
qiuquanlin@chinadaily.com.cn

The main section of the Beijiang Grand Bridge, a key project of the Qingxin-Huadu Expressway in Guangdong province, has been successfully linked, laying a solid foundation for its opening by the end of the year.

Construction of the 1,440-meter cross-river bridge, currently the largest four-tower, double-cable-stayed, two-way directional prestressed concrete girder bridge in China, began in October 2022.

Following 48 hours of continuous monitoring of elevation changes, tower cranes and mobile cranes extended their long arms as nearly 56 cubic meters of concrete were poured over a four-hour period in the early morning of May 20, culminating in the successful joining of the bridge.

After the operation, the bridge spanning the Beijiang River, a tributary of the Pearl River, began to take shape, showcasing its four cable towers shaped like phoenix tail feathers.

The project has faced an uphill battle due to complex geological conditions, according to Zhou Wei, director of the Qingxin-Huadu Expressway management office.

"The bridge site is characterized by extremely well-developed karst formations," Zhou said, adding that construction had to pass through multiple bead-like caverns. "Any slight misstep could lead to a cave-in or flooding."

The main piers consist of 120 piles with an average length exceeding 80 meters, with the longest reaching 102 meters, according to Zhou.

The project team implemented a one-plan-for-one-pile scheme for meticulous management, developing targeted pretreatment plans for the caverns.

"The scheme helped ensure a 100 percent success rate in achieving the required standards for the initial drilling of all 120 pile foundations for the main piers," Zhou said.

As all four main towers of the bridge are located in the water and are nearly 150 meters tall, alignment control has proved extremely difficult, with the structures affected by strong winds, floods and ship traffic, Zhou said.

"It's more like embroidering in mid-air at a height of 100 meters," he added.

High-tech platforms and intelligent systems were adopted during the bridge linking process, according to Xu Lu, project manager of the TJ3 section of the Qingxin–Huadu Expressway at China Railway Major Bridge Engineering Group.

"Linking the bridge was particularly challenging due to its considerable width of 37.6 meters," said Xu.

During the linking operation, a cable-stayed form traveler was used as a mobile working platform to pour concrete segment by segment. In addition, technologies including digital building information modeling, Beidou positioning, and comprehensive stress-strain monitoring systems were applied to continuously track bridge deck elevation and stay cable tension.

An intelligent closed-loop system integrating construction, monitoring, feedback and adjustment was also established, with more than 300 sensors embedded in the main beam to continuously monitor concrete stress, cable tension and temperature.

"We independently developed a universal tensioning and anchoring mechanism to fully adapt to the spatial position changes of the cable-stayed anchorage points," said Liu Wang, chief engineer of the expressway's TJ2 section project team at CCCC Road & Bridge International Co.

The expressway, approximately 54 kilometers long, starts in Qingxin district of Qingyuan, in the northern mountainous part of Guangdong, and ends in Tanbu township of Huadu district in Guangzhou, the provincial capital.

Welcome to ethnic art



A performance greets guests attending the exhibition of paintings and calligraphy in Huangshan, Anhui province, on Wednesday. The event showcases outstanding artworks created by ethnic Chinese artists within RCEP member nations, blending traditional Chinese artistry with diverse cultural elements.
HAN SUYUAN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Top nature conservation body lauds natl progress

Ecological civilization concept gains global recognition in Guangzhou

By **LI WENFANG** in Guangzhou
and **LI MENGHAN**

A senior official of the world's leading conservation body has praised China's progress in nature conservation and ecological restoration, saying the country is offering the world a new paradigm of coexistence between humanity and nature, underpinned by its concept of an ecological civilization.

"I believe that in the 21st century, we will see global conservation leadership coming more and more from East Asia, particularly from China," said Stewart Maginnis, deputy director-general of the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

He made the remarks on Wednesday in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, at the ongoing Nature-based Solutions Summer School — an event that brings together more than 40 experts from different countries and will later move to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

First coined by the World Bank in 2008, the concept of nature-based solutions was formally defined and issued with a global standard by the IUCN in 2016, proposing the use of nature and healthy ecosystems to address societal challenges and benefit both people and nature.

Reflecting on his multiple trips to China since 1999, Maginnis pointed



Stewart Maginnis

to visible changes over the years, including cleaner water and bluer skies, and attributed his frequent visits to the country's role as a hub for developing and applying nature-based solutions.

"China has applied, walked the talk, and set a good example," Maginnis said, highlighting that the country has met its target of placing 15 percent of its terrestrial area under protection, with steady, continued growth, while taking a leadership role in marine and coastal conservation and spearheading the shift to renewable energy.

He mentioned the restoration of the Loess Plateau — some 50,000 square kilometers of severely degraded land that has been brought back to vibrant biodiversity and productivity — and the coastal wetland restoration in Yancheng, Jiangsu province, where the removal of the invasive alien species, smooth cordgrass, has revived a critical habitat for migratory birds.

Maginnis also cited the Haizhu National Wetland Park in Guangzhou, which, without visionary leadership, would have been turned into a commercial development that could have harmed biodiversity. He said the park is certified under the IUCN's Green List, the highest standard for effectively and equitably managed protected areas, noting that China now has the most Green List sites worldwide.

"It is not an accident that we are making so much collaboration and so much progress on nature-based solutions here in China," Maginnis said. "The framing and context, driven right from the top, create perfect conditions for each of these solutions."

China is bringing much-needed conceptual frameworks to the world — especially the idea of coexistence, which does not separate nature from society. This is reflected in the philosophy of ecological civilization and the concept that lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets, he added.

This conceptual leadership, Maginnis added, is complemented by a mutually beneficial partnership in which IUCN helps recognize and disseminate good practices, while China provides real-world, large-scale application of such cases. Some of China's practices have already been replicated in other countries.

"China becomes more and more prominent in extending technical assistance to other countries. I am very hopeful that we will start to see nature-based solutions as a key part of that technical assistance," he said.

Contact the writers at limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

Fujian casts net deeper to bolster aquaculture

By **HU MEIDONG**
and **ZHANG YI** in Fuzhou

Construction of two massive intelligent deep-sea aquaculture platforms named *Yunhai*, or "farming the sea", will be completed by the end of this year in the waters of Fuzhou, adding to the city's existing fleet and bringing the total number of smart platforms in the marine-resource-rich capital of Fujian province to 15 units.

Data from the Fuzhou Ocean and Fisheries Bureau shows that the city's smart platforms encompass 270,000 cubic meters of water, yielding more than 2,200 metric tons of seafood annually with an output value of 300 million yuan ($44.25 million), placing Fuzhou among the national leaders in deep-sea aquaculture.

In recent years, a fleet of advanced deep-sea platforms, dubbed the "Iron Men of the Sea", has been intensively deployed across Fuzhou to cultivate high-quality seafood such as large yellow croakers and abalone. These platforms use automated feeding and monitoring systems, significantly reducing labor while supporting the development of modern marine ranches.

Among the deployed fleet, platforms named *Qiandong*, which hold nearly 50 patents and copyrights, are scaling up commercial large yellow croaker production in Dinghai Bay, Lianjiang county of Fuzhou.

Featuring 20,000 cu m of breeding water each, the zero-carbon system integrates four core subsystems, including an automatic rotating cage powered by complementary solar and wind energy, and operates nearly 20 smart sensors for digital management.

Li Xiaoping, assistant to the chairman of Qiandong Marine Granary, said the equipment features a 360-degree floating cage that can withstand super typhoons above wind scale 16+, requiring only one or two crew members for routine maintenance.

"The cage integrates automated rotating and lifting technologies, turning above the water level every three days for sun-drying to clear biofouling," Li said. "This effectively resolves historical harvesting and biofouling bottlenecks faced by earlier models, eliminating the need for frequent service vessels."

The upcoming *Yunhai* platforms represent a 130 million yuan investment with a combined capacity of 170,000 cu m, scheduled for completion by the end of this year.

Chen Jinwen, a technical employee of Marine Granary (Fujian) Technology Co, said the *Yunhai* platforms achieve an 80 percent digitization rate across the entire production life cycle, featuring 10 feed silos with a capacity of 10 tons each for smartphone-controlled feeding.

"Because open-ocean currents are rapid, the high activity level of the fish ensures superior meat quality that closely resembles wild-caught species," Chen said.

Chen added that local government support, including the provision of sea areas free of charge, has boosted industry confidence. "Moving forward, we will invite traditional local fish farmers to become shareholders to help manage the assets," he said.

"This initiative will help traditional fishermen transition into shore-based fishermen, managing advanced marine ranches directly from their smartphones," Chen said.

According to the Fujian provincial government work report, the province's deep-sea aquaculture scale ranks first in the country. Fujian is deepening its "Maritime Fujian" initiative to push aquaculture further into the deep sea.

Provincial leaders attended a meeting in Fuzhou on Thursday to discuss accelerating the development of distinctive rural and agricultural industries, transforming agriculture into a modernized sector, and further improving farmers' livelihoods.

Contact the writers at zhangyi1@chinadaily.com.cn



An aerial view captures an intelligent deep-sea aquaculture platform, *Qiandong 2*, in Dinghai Bay, Fuzhou, Fujian province.
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

China-Serbia bond forged in steel as 2 breakthroughs achieved

By **ZHANG YU** in Shijiazhuang
zhangyu1@chinadaily.com.cn

China-Serbia cooperation in green steelmaking has achieved two major breakthroughs, with researchers successfully trial-producing a high-end automotive steel panel and confirming that Serbian iron ore can meet green steel standards through hydrogen metallurgy, HBIS Group, one of China's largest State-owned steelmakers, said.

During a meeting with HBIS Group Chairman Liu Jian in Beijing on Tuesday, Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic praised the Chinese steelmaker for revitalizing the Smederevo steel plant and benefiting the Serbian people over the past decade.

Vucic said the company's investment had strengthened the "iron-clad friendship" between China and Serbia.

The meeting, attended by Chinese Ambassador to Serbia Li Ming and Serbian ministers, came 10 years after the Hebei province-headquartered steelmaker acquired the struggling plant and transformed it into HBIS Group Serbia Iron & Steel.

> "I deeply realized that precision and efficiency are crucial to success. All innovations are planned in advance, with clear goals, step-by-step implementation, and strict attention to detail."
>
> **Dusan Kostic,** an employee at HBIS Serbia

The technological advances were achieved by a China-Serbia joint laboratory established by HBIS and the University of Belgrade. Approved by China's Ministry of Science and Technology in October 2024, it is the first national-level Belt and Road joint laboratory in China's steel sector.

In late April, researchers successfully trial-produced high-image-clarity dual-phase steel for outer automotive panels at a production line of HBIS in Hebei province. The breakthrough overcame a long-standing challenge in applying high-strength dual-phase steel to outer body panel forming, marking a step toward higher-end and lower-carbon steel production.

Separately, the laboratory verified that Serbian iron ore achieved a reduction degree of 99.74 percent through hydrogen metallurgy, meeting standards for green steel production, according to Hebei Daily.

Researchers said the result suggests that large quantities of Serbian iron ore could potentially be processed locally at the HBIS Serbia plant, supporting the production of green steel products compatible with the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism.

Vladan Mihailovic, chief operating officer of HBIS Serbia, said the joint laboratory had become an important platform for optimizing production processes, improving steel quality and enhancing energy efficiency.

On environmental projects, Mihailovic said the company had made substantial progress in environmental monitoring and optimization, emission-reduction technologies and energy-efficiency improvements, with efforts focused on dust control, water treatment upgrades and reducing resource consumption.

"These results fully demonstrate the company's firm commitment to sustainable development," he said.

The laboratory is currently running eight joint research projects, including two at the national level. Since its establishment, it has organized 34 personnel exchanges and 53 person-times of training between the Chinese and Serbian sides, while providing 72 instances of research collaboration and technical guidance for Serbian partners.

Dusan Kostic, deputy head of the heating furnace and slab yard at the hot-rolling mill of HBIS Serbia, said training in China exposed him to a work culture that "never waits for tomorrow".

"I deeply realized that precision and efficiency are crucial to success. All innovations are planned in advance, with clear goals, step-by-step implementation, and strict attention to detail," Kostic said.

He said he plans to apply new organizational methods learned in China to improve operational efficiency, adding that the patience and dedication to quality shown by Chinese colleagues had left a deep impression on him.

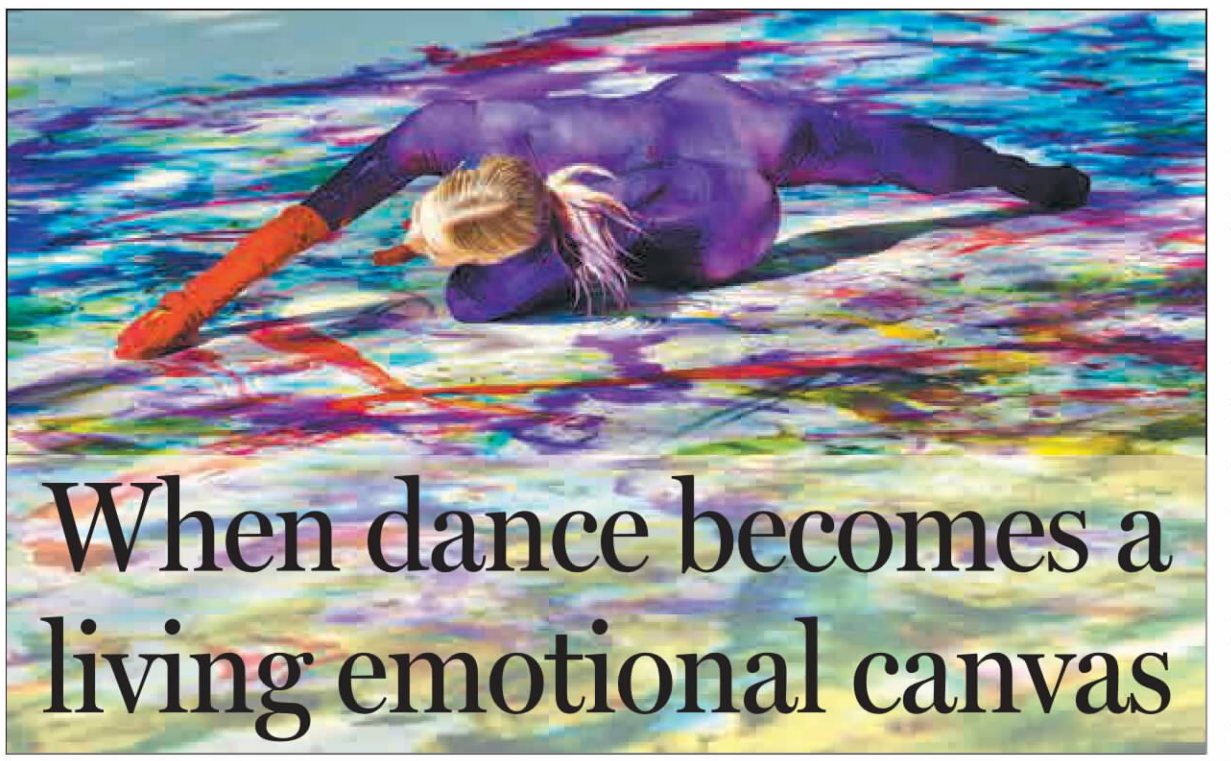
Mihailovic said he hoped the joint laboratory would continue serving as both an engine for innovation and a bridge connecting different knowledge systems, cultures and working styles, helping HBIS Serbia remain a modern, responsible and competitive industrial enterprise.

During the meeting in Beijing, Vucic pledged the Serbian government's full support for HBIS Serbia's green energy projects, while Liu said the company would continue advancing technological upgrades and strive for more landmark achievements in green and high-end steelmaking.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:09 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:09 PM

CULTURE



When dance becomes a living emotional canvas

Artists from two countries perform in a work that draws from ancient philosophy while embracing modern artistic expression, **Chen Nan** reports.

In the luminous spaces of the Guangzhou Grand Theatre, internationally acclaimed artist Shen Wei will unveil his latest work, *MindScape*, a collaboration between the Guangdong Modern Dance Company and Shen Wei Dance Arts. The work will premiere on June 5 and 6, before traveling to the American Dance Festival at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, in July and later to Lincoln Center's Summer for the City in Dance Encounters, a new outdoor series, during Chinese Arts Week in New York from July 22-25.

MindScape is the latest chapter in Shen's decades-long artistic exploration, blending modern dance with poetry, painting, calligraphy, and live music.

But this work is perhaps one of his most introspective yet, drawing on the philosophical ideals of Chinese literati and the spiritual pursuit of harmony between humanity and nature.

"*MindScape* is about my inner landscape," says Shen, a choreographer, painter and visual artist. "It reflects how I face life — success, hardship, and the balance needed to keep moving forward. This series is about the power of thought and spirit over material concerns."

The production merges traditional Chinese music with contemporary soundscapes, featuring *guqin* (a seven-stringed Chinese zither) virtuoso Zhao Xiaoxia, *xiao* (Chinese vertical bamboo flute) player Liu Xiaogang, percussionist Chen Shijie, and electronic music.

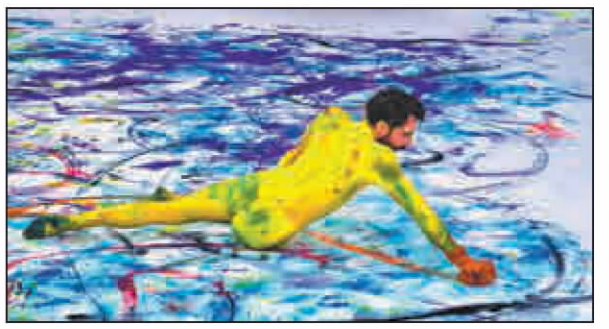
"I want people to feel happy, uplifted," Shen says. "This project is about making traditional instruments, like the *guqin* and *xiao*, feel contemporary, fresh and pleasurable."

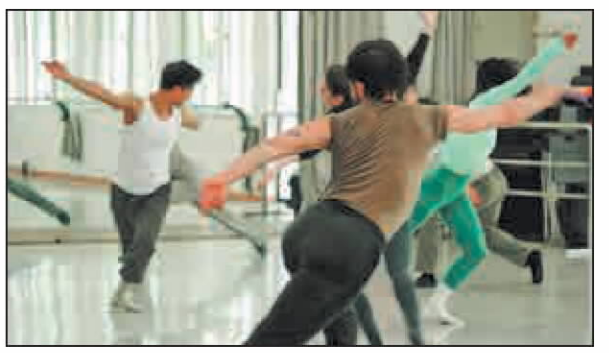
The genesis of the work spans two continents. Last year, Shen began experimental workshops in the United States, developing movement vocabularies with American dancers while collaborating with Chinese musicians on an original score.

This year, five dancers from the US joined seven from China and worked together in the studio in Guangzhou, while the traditional instruments were reimagined in a modern context. "I've long been exploring contemporary expression of ancient instruments," Shen notes. "This is an international project — artists from China and the US collaborating to create a shared vision."

The choreography reflects Shen's signature approach, encouraging movement to emerge organically from dancers' internal impulses. But this time, the work also incorporates live painting and calligraphy: the stage floor will be covered in canvas, allowing dancers to leave traces of color and ink through movement. "Every performance becomes a 'mindscape' painting," he says. "It's about life, joy, struggle, and the energy we create together."

Traveling around the world to work with international artists on diverse art projects, Shen, a New York and Paris-based artist, is known for his work at the opening ceremony of the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. He choreographed the breathtakingly beautiful dance piece, *Scroll Painting*, in which dancers performed on a constantly changing LED scroll of Chinese ink-and-wash paintings, depicting the evolution of China since ancient times.









Above: Artist Shen Wei.
From top: The latest dance production *MindScape*, a collaboration between the Guangdong Modern Dance Company and Shen Wei Dance Arts, will be staged in China and the United States in June and July. A dancer paints through movement during a performance in *MindScape*. Dancers rehearse in Guangzhou. Dancers from China and the US pose for a photo during rehearsals for the world premiere of *MindScape* in Guangzhou on June 5.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

> *MindScape* is rooted in Eastern philosophy, expressed through an international dance language. Its essence is inward observation — moving with restraint, guided by breath and emotion."
>
> **Guo Fan,** Guangdong Modern Dance Company dancer

Shen's relationship with the Guangdong Modern Dance Company is deeply personal. "This is my mother troupe," he says. "I arrived here over 30 years ago, in 1989. Returning to create this work is both a homecoming and an opportunity to reconnect tradition with the present."

The costumes in *MindScape* reflect the same philosophy. Inspired by southern Chinese craftsmanship, the designs incorporate bamboo elements that merge heritage with contemporary aesthetics.

"I once received a gift from Yang Meiqi, a founding member of the Guangdong Modern Dance Company. It was a vest made from small bamboo pieces instead of fabric," recalls Shen.

Bamboo, naturally breathable and cooling, suits the humid climate of southern China such as Guangdong province. Symbolically, it also represents resilience, flexibility and the moral integrity of a scholar in Chinese culture — qualities central to the philosophy behind *MindScape*, Shen says.

The work is also accompanied by Shen's own writings and visual art. Eight texts written over decades in China, the US and Europe will be released alongside the premiere, reflecting on resilience, joy and observation.

Shen will also release a new book, *When the Rose Kisses the White Cloud*, named after a poem he wrote in Paris, which reflects his fascination with fleeting beauty and enduring optimism.

"Life contains both pain and joy," he says. "I want people to feel the energy of living fully, to be inspired by the spirit rather than material concerns."

Born in Xiangyin county, Yueyang, Hunan province, in 1968, Shen began training in local opera at age 9, studying singing, dancing, acting, and martial arts. He had already started traditional Chinese painting at 7. In 1989, he turned to modern dance at the Guangdong Dance Academy and became a founding member of the Guangdong Modern Dance Company in 1991. After winning a national choreography award in 1994, he moved to New York on a scholarship and founded Shen Wei Dance Arts in 2000, while continuing to innovate across dance, painting, and filmmaking.

American dancer Zak Ryan Schlegel, 36, who has worked with Shen for 11 years, reflects on the premiere of *MindScape*: "Bringing this work to the stage feels like opening a collective dream state — a common consciousness." The piece, described by Schlegel as a culmination of Shen's visual, physical, and spiritual vocabularies, expands the choreographer's legacy into a deeply human exploration of interconnectedness.

During rehearsals, dancers were encouraged to explore their inner worlds — memory, emotion, perception, and imagination — to build a shared dimension onstage.

"From feeling sunlight on our faces to recalling memory-triggered visions with closed eyes, the challenge was in meeting ourselves through new lenses and returning to our most intimate perceptions," Schlegel says. "This process shaped the work's living spaces, evolving with each performance."

One moment that resonates deeply with him came during a sextet set to a flute solo. "We become the wind. I feel transported to the New Mexican desert of my ancestors, moving in harmony with the other five. Though we are six onstage, we are one in landscapes of memory," he says.

Collaboration lies at the heart of *MindScape*. "Connection is the oxygen the dance must breathe. Shared breath and intuition allow us to harmonize emotionally and physically, meeting one another through all our different experiences," he explains. The work becomes not only a performance but also an act of humanity.

Guo Fan, 30, a Guangdong Modern Dance Company dancer since 2019, says: "*MindScape* is rooted in Eastern philosophy, expressed through an international dance language. Its essence is inward observation — moving with restraint, guided by breath and emotion. Eastern subtlety meets Western physicality; Chinese and international dancers inspire each other, letting philosophy flow beyond borders. For the audience, it's not spectacle — it's a space for reflection, resonance and the quiet power of shared humanity."

"After more than 30 years abroad, Shen Wei returns to the Guangdong Modern Dance Company to create *MindScape*," notes Xiong Jian, the troupe's director. "This is not only an emotional homecoming but also a reconnection with artistic spirit and history. The production blends movement with poetry, music and visual design into a 'total art' experience. Young dancers, aged 24 to 30, represent a new generation, building a uniquely Chinese contemporary dance language grounded in cultural experience and global awareness."

Contact the writer at chennan@chinadaily.com.cn

Preserving Chinese Australian voices

SYDNEY — In Haymarket Chinatown, one of Sydney's best-known Chinese enclaves, the aroma of Chinese food, glowing shop signs marked with Chinese characters, and voices speaking dialects from across China fill the air.

Amid the busy crowds, the Museum of Chinese in Australia quietly watches people pass by.

Housed in the former Haymarket Library, the museum opened on Feb 22 during the celebrations for the Chinese New Year of the Horse, poised to tell the stories of Chinese Australians across more than 200 years of history.

"A lot of the stories out there used to be told from someone else's perspective," says Daphne Lowe Kelley, chair of MOCA. "It's really important that we — people of Chinese descent — start telling our own stories."

The theme of this year's International Museum Day on May 18 was "Museums Uniting a Divided World". The museum hopes to become a place for connection, reflection and celebration. As the first museum in New South Wales dedicated to Chinese Australian history, it focuses on preserving and presenting the community's heritage and contributions to Australian society.

The first recorded Chinese migrant to Australia was Mak Sai Ying from Guangdong province in South China, who arrived in Sydney in 1818. Today, that young man who stepped off the ship, the *Laurel*, has a lane named after him — Sai Ying Lane — near Circular Quay, about half an hour's walk from the museum.

Since his arrival, Chinese communities have spread across Australia for more than two centuries. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics' 2021 census, people of Chinese ancestry make up 5.5 percent of the population, making them the country's fifth-largest ancestry group.

The early Chinese in Australia are often remembered as gold miners, market gardeners, hawkers, cooks or cabinet-makers. But the inaugural exhibition at the MOCA goes beyond these familiar images to explore a lesser-known chapter of Haymarket Chinatown's history.

Using old objects, vintage photographs and historical stories, the exhibition traces the lives of early Chinese merchant families over the past century. One oil painting re-creates the tearoom of businessman Mei Quong Tart, who worked to bridge cultural divisions during a period of strong anti-Chinese sentiment. In the painting, he stands at the entrance surrounded by people from different backgrounds, smiling warmly.

Visitors can also see an abacus once used at Kwong War Chong & Co, a menu from the Modern China Cafe, stamps and letter sheets from Wing Sang & Co, and promotional materials from Simpson Lee & Co, offering glimpses into the lively commercial world of early Haymarket.

"There was discrimination against the Chinese under the White Australia policy," Lowe Kelley says. "But the Chinese community did not simply accept it quietly. Some people petitioned authorities and wrote to government officials. They pushed back." She hopes visitors will recognize not only the hardships faced by earlier generations, but also their resilience.

"The most important message I want to convey to Chinese Australians is that though we are roughly 1.5 million people of Chinese descent, I want them to realize that we are proud. We call this place our home, but also not to forget where we came from and our culture, to maintain that, and also to rise above the image that was projected in the past and the difficulties that one faced earlier," she says.

Lowe Kelley says the inaugural exhibition focuses on the local history of Haymarket, but the museum's vision extends far beyond. Future exhibitions will reach into other parts of Australia, telling Chinese Australian stories from across the country. The museum also plans to strengthen exchanges and cooperation with overseas Chinese museums and Chinese communities in other parts of the world.

"There's an old saying: you have to know the past to understand the present," she says. "For many of the early Chinese, life here was not easy. There were many restrictions. Understanding that, and yet seeing the fact that the Chinese community has now significantly grown — that makes it all the more meaningful."



Daphne Lowe Kelley, chair of the Museum of Chinese in Australia, introduces exhibits in Sydney, Australia, on May 4. XUE YANWEN / XINHUA

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:09 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:09 PM

LIFE



Making artifacts an easy, in-depth read

New book helps the layperson learn more about a milestone excavation site in Changsha and its contents through text, images, and interactive elements, **Yang Yang** reports.

The book *Archaeological Report for Everyone: The Mawangdui Han Tombs in Changsha* was launched on May 18, the 50th International Museum Day. Created by Hunan Museum in partnership with a cultural creative team from Beijing Muse Museum Education Technology, the book has been published by Yilin Press.

As the first official popular science version of the Mawangdui archaeological report, the book uses a reader-friendly combination of text and images to re-create the excavation site and explain the artifacts' historical context.

"This book, designed for readers of all backgrounds, transforms detailed archaeological reports into an engaging and easy-to-read narrative, taking readers directly to the excavation site to uncover the secrets of ancient artifacts," says Wang Lei, editor of the book.

It provides a comprehensive view of Western Han (206 BC-AD 24) nobility and their cosmological beliefs, featuring items such as a T-shaped silk painting, plain gauze gowns, lacquerware, wooden figurines, and silk maps.

Additionally, the book includes a puzzle game where readers can scan a code to embark on a historical journey across Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220) Changsha and uncover long-hidden stories of love and conflict.

Half a century ago, in the eastern suburbs of Changsha, the capital of Central China's Hunan province, there were two large, saddle-shaped mounds known as Mawangdui.

On Jan 16, 1972, a significant archaeological dig began (till 1974), unearthing the incredibly well-preserved body of Lady Xin Zhui, buried in the tomb more than 2,000 years ago, a landmark discovery in the world of archaeology.

Mawangdui is the burial site of Li Cang, the chancellor of the Changsha Kingdom during the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 24), his wife Xin Zhui, and their son Li Xi.

According to Hunan Museum, they completed a systematic inventory in 2024, after decades of effort, of all the artifacts unearthed from the Mawangdui Han Tombs No 1, 2, and 3.

In total, 26,937 items have been cataloged, covering a wide range of artifacts, including clothing, food, housing, transportation, rituals, music, military affairs, astronomy, geography, medicine, health, and philosophical texts, effectively creating a complete underground world of the Western Han Dynasty.

"The artifacts unearthed from the Mawangdui Han Tombs are remarkably well-preserved and diverse, showcasing exquisite craftsmanship and rich cultural significance. Even today, they serve as a key benchmark for understanding the development of early Han society," said Yu Yanjiao, director and research curator at the Mawangdui Han Tombs and Collections Research and Exhibition Center, Hunan Museum, in a previous interview.

The *Changsha Mawangdui Han Tomb Exhibit* is a must-see for every visitor to Hunan Museum. The exhibit showcases the daily life of Lady Xin Zhui and her family, offering a complete picture of Western Han society.

According to Xinhua News Agency, by 2024, which marked the 50th anniversary of the excavation of the Mawangdui Han Tombs, the number of visits to view the tomb artifacts had exceeded 100 million.

The most common label associated with Lady Xin Zhui is "uncorrupted female corpse". However, in this newly released book, she is presented first and foremost as a real person.

According to the archaeological report, she stood 1.54 meters tall and weighed 34.3 kilograms. Her body was remarkably well-preserved, with light brown skin that remained moist and elastic. She had a square-round face with high cheekbones and clearly defined features. Her head, neck, torso, and limbs were all intact. The soft tissue in her upper arms and thighs was plump and retained some elasticity.

As for her cause of death, archaeologists believe she suffered a coronary heart attack triggered by biliary colic after eating a melon. The discovery of 138 melon seeds in her esophagus, stomach and intestines provided key evidence for this theory.

But what allowed her body to remain so well-preserved over more than 2,000 years? The book highlights three main factors: a deep burial, sealing, and preservation.

Her tomb was buried deep underground and tightly sealed. Multiple layers of coffins provided protection, while the use of charcoal and white clay for sealing, along with liquid preservatives, created an environment that was consistently cool, humid, sterile, and oxygen-free. This environment protected her body from physical, chemical, and biological damage. Additionally, the high levels of mercury found in her body helped delay decomposition.

In the book, readers can also learn about the T-shaped silk painting found in the tomb, depicting a journey from heaven to the underworld and featuring divine birds, mythical beasts, and celestial beings, offering a glimpse into the Han Dynasty's fascinating views on life and death.

Additionally, readers can explore over 130,000 words of silk manuscripts, including one of the world's earliest extant military maps, one of the first known comet charts, one of the oldest medical texts, *Recipes for 52 Ailments*, and one of the earliest copies of *Laozi* (Lao Tzu).

The book provides a detailed map of the burial artifacts, accurately re-creating how items were originally arranged in the four-sided tomb chambers.

Throughout the book, readers can also find interactive features, including fold-out pages, pop-ups, and folders, each offering opportunities to engage more deeply with the artifacts.

Contact the writer at yangyangs@chinadaily.com.cn

Above: The book cover. **Bottom right:** Illustrations of the double-layer six-compartment lacquer cosmetic box (above) and the Six-Bo Gaming Set with Black Lacquer and Red Decoration (below), both unearthed in 1973. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

From left down: The coffin chamber in the Mawangdui Han Tomb No 1, the layout of the four layers of coffins, and exquisite lacquer finish patterns on the body of the coffins. Pictures of costume types and styles. A line-drawn pattern of the T-shaped silk painting (*feiyi*, soul banner), which faithfully represents the core elements of the original painting and its three-tier cosmic structure: Heaven, Earth and the Underworld.

Finding fragile fragments of iron

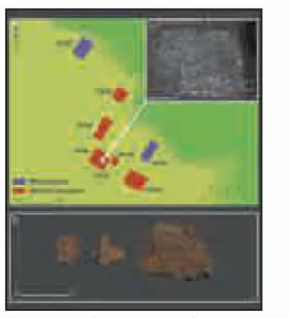
By PENG CHAO in Chengdu
pengchao@chinadaily.com.cn

Archaeologists have confirmed that the iron fragments unearthed from Sanxingdui, a renowned archaeological site in Guanghan, Sichuan province, are made of pure meteoritic iron — the earliest such discovery in Southwest China.

The study, conducted by Sichuan University's School of Archaeology and Museology in collaboration with the Sichuan Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, was recently published in the international academic journal Archaeological Research in Asia.

The three iron fragments, dating back to the late Shang Dynasty (c. 16th century-11th century BC), can be pieced together into a complete axe-shaped artifact measuring about 20 centimeters long and five to eight cm wide.

Li Haichao, a professor at Sichuan University's School of Archaeology and Museology, says these fragments were found in 2021 in Sanxingdui's No 7 sacrificial pit, but severe corrosion had left their shape unrecognizable.



From top inset: Top-down view of the artifact-bearing deposit in No 7 sacrificial pit at Sanxingdui archaeological site in Guanghan, Sichuan province. Relative location of the iron fragments within the pit. The three iron fragments unearthed from the pit. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Given their fragile condition, the excavation team block-lifted the fragments with the surrounding soil and transferred them to a lab for conservation, he says.

Metallographic and compositional analyses reveal that the fragments are high in nickel — approximately 20 percent — and have a uniform alloy composition, features that cannot be achieved by any known smelting technology from the late Shang period. These characteristics, however, align perfectly with meteoritic iron.

To date, 13 meteoritic iron artifacts have been identified in China, most of which were found in the Central Plains and northern regions, including Beijing, Hebei and Henan provinces. The meteoritic iron artifact excavated from Sanxingdui, the first in Southwest China, is also the largest of its kind in the country, according to the study.

Unlike the Central Plains, where meteoritic iron was commonly used only as inserts in bronze objects, Sanxingdui crafted an entire artifact from meteoritic iron, highlighting a distinctive metallurgical practice, Li says.

"The discovery not only fills a critical gap in the region's metallurgical records, but also provides new insights into early iron use both regionally and globally," he adds.

While the axe-shaped artifact's discovery in a ritual pit suggests cultural significance, its precise function remains uncertain, according to the researchers.

Cut marks on many Sanxingdui bronzes, including masks and vessels, indicate the use of high-hardness tools. This suggests that meteoritic iron objects were used to modify bronze items, though further evidence is needed.

"The specific type of meteorite the artifact came from is also unknown," Li says, adding that further study will focus on high-resolution characterization to determine its exact classification.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:09 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:09 PM

CULTURE



The musician who preserved Muqam

A new biographical film revisits ethnomusicologist Wan Tongshu's extraordinary efforts to save a tradition and legacy from disappearing, **Xu Fan** reports.

In the spring of 1951, Wan Tongshu, a 28-year-old teacher at the Central Conservatory of Music, was entrusted with an urgent mission: to preserve the fading melodies of the Xinjiang Uygur Muqam, a centuries-old musical tradition then on the brink of disappearance.

Wan set off for Xinjiang with his wife and infant daughter, embarking on a grueling journey of nearly 3,000 kilometers by train, truck and military aircraft. After arriving in Urumqi — then known as Dihua — he met Turdi Ahun, a folk artist in his 70s believed to be the only person in Xinjiang capable of performing the complete Twelve Muqam, a major regional style among different schools of the Muqam tradition.

Hailed as the "mother of Uygur music", Muqam is a vast artistic system that blends singing, dance, folk music and classical composition. It has been inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

But in the early 1950s, the tradition faced an uncertain future. Before the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, many folk artists lived in poverty and occupied a low social status, leaving traditional art forms vulnerable to decline. Against that backdrop, Wan devoted himself to preserving what would later become one of the most treasured expressions of Uygur cultural heritage.

Recently, the biographical film *Wan Tongshu* was released nationwide, drawing renewed attention to the ethnomusicologist's decades-long dedication to safeguarding Muqam — a story that had long remained little known outside musical circles.

Structured through modern-day flashbacks, the film primarily unfolds between 1951 and 1960, chronicling how Wan, assisted by his wife and fellow experts, overcame obstacles to record and notate the music scores. One of the greatest challenges was securing one of only two wire recorders then available in China — a request that ultimately received special approval from Premier Zhou Enlai after appeals were made to the central government.

The hardships extended far beyond difficult living conditions. During his years in Xinjiang, Wan suffered the devastating loss of his three-month-old child to measles. Yet even after completing the notation of scores of the full set of the Twelve Muqam — which comprises around 300 melodies, 4,000 lines of lyrics and more than 20 hours of music — he chose not to leave.

Driven by his passion for the art form, Wan continued traveling across remote parts of Xinjiang, from Qira county to Kashgar and Hami, documenting melodies, lyrics and performance styles before they vanished.

Jiang Hong, the film's screenwriter, told China Daily that the project began in 2023, the year Wan died at the age of 99 in Xiamen, Fujian province, prompting widespread mourning within China's music community.





A Xinjiang native himself, Jiang said he had never heard Wan's name until then, despite being 49 years old — a realization that revealed how easily such stories can fade with time.

To reconstruct Wan's life, the creative team combed through archival documents, old photographs and interviews with people connected to that era. One of their most valuable sources was Wan's wife, Lian Xiaomei, who moved with him to Xiamen in 1999 to live closer to their children.

Lian, then 93, spent a week sharing memories with the production team in a hotel room in Xiamen. "Her memory was still remarkably sharp. She had a special charm that captivated listeners, even when recounting painful experiences from the past," Jiang recalls.

Many details in the film came directly from those conversations. Jiang recounts how the couple once used a hand-cranked generator to power a wire recorder because Xinjiang's electricity supply was unstable at the time. The machine relied on an extremely thin recording wire that frequently tangled, forcing the couple to untwist it by hand, sometimes cutting their fingers in the process.



From top: A scene from the biopic *Wan Tongshu* features the titular ethnomusicologist hugging Turdi Ahun, a folk artist who was then the only person in 1950s Xinjiang capable of performing the complete Twelve Muqam, one of the major regional styles of the Xinjiang Uygur Muqam. Wan and his wife Liang Xiaomei work on recording the melodies of the Twelve Muqam. A premiere of the film was held in Beijing with actor Li Jian (second left) and actress An Dong (left), who respectively portray Wan and his wife in the movie. A still from the film portrays the friendship between Wan and Ahun.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

To better re-create Wan's journey and the dissemination of Muqam across Xinjiang, the crew retraced the ethnomusicologist's footsteps, traveling more than 17,000 kilometers across 17 locations.

"When Wan first heard the Muqam, he was astonished," Jiang says. "He described it as a musical world he had never encountered before. He once said that piano keys only have black and white notes, but Muqam exists somewhere in between — making it difficult to record accurately at the time."

The film has since received a warm response in Xinjiang, with audiences from multiple ethnic groups, such as Han, Uygur and Kazakh viewers, expressing deep emotion after screenings.

"The friendship between Wan and Ahun transcended differences in age, ethnicity and lifestyle. That long-lasting bond — the way they cherished each other through their entire lives — is precisely the artistic value and emotional core of the film," shares Jiang.

Director Xirzat Yahup says many viewers have told him they were fascinated by the poetic singing style of Muqam, which explores various themes like love and life. "Some audience members said they wanted to hear more after the film ended. Fortunately, thanks to Wan's recordings and research, many Muqam troupes and institutions have been established across Xinjiang. Today, audiences can travel there and experience complete live performances," he adds.

Rao Shuguang, president of the China Film Critics Association, praises the production for naturally depicting the harmonious coexistence of different ethnic groups. "The movie serves not only as a cinematic tribute to Muqam, but also as a vivid reflection of Xinjiang's social and cultural history," comments Rao.

Contact the writer at xufan@chinadaily.com.cn

Veteran author's Xinjiang story set for the screen

By FANG AIQING and **MAO WEIHUA** in Urumqi

A film project adapting a short story by veteran writer Wang Meng was launched on May 18 at Tianshan Film Studio in Urumqi, the capital of Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. The film, *In Ili*, draws on Wang's six-year experience in the region's Ili Kazak autonomous prefecture.

Born in October 1934, Wang is a recipient of the national honorary title "People's Artist" and a former minister of culture. From the ages of 29 to 45, he spent 16 years in Xinjiang, mostly in Urumqi and Ili. In 1965, he went to what is now the Bayandai town of Ili's Yining city, where he lived and worked with local farmers, learned the Uygur language and became drawn to the local culture. Those six years became the basis for his short story collection *In Ili*, written from 1983-84.

According to The Writers Publishing House, the work's publisher, it's set for global translation and publication. Projects for foreign-language editions, including English, Spanish and French, have already been approved.

The film will adapt one piece from it, titled *Pale Gray Eyes*. The story is told from the first-person perspective of a writer named Lao Wang — a surname he shares with the author himself. It follows his observations of and interactions with a young carpenter and his wife, as well as various villagers. In their shared life and emotions, the community supports one another.

At the launch ceremony, Wang expressed hope that the film would be grounded in life and would create rich, well-rounded personalities. "The people of Xinjiang's various ethnic groups are diverse, yet they share warmth, vitality, wisdom, optimism, romance and imagination," he said, adding that they have their own unique ways of understanding and solving problems.

Wang said his characters have distinct personalities and wisdom that fit their time. They're friendly, harmonious and tolerant. For him, the work vividly shows how different ethnic groups in Xinjiang share a common destiny, a common life and common emotions, as well as how their cultures exchange, integrate and interact.

According to Jing Luzhou, Party secretary of Tianshan Film Studio, the production team conducted field research in Ili in September 2025, and the script has been through several rounds of revisions. Shooting is scheduled to begin in the second half of this year, with release expected by the end of 2027.

Xirzat Yahup, the film's director, noted that the crew's goal is to capture the optimism and wisdom of the people who are deeply rooted in the land. "They are optimistic. They talk with pride. There's a lot of philosophy about life in Wang's writing, and I believe this will leave room for the audience to reflect on life's truths," he said.

"That requires careful thinking about how to translate these ideas onto the screen through cinematography."

While refining the script, he said, they are scouting various filming locations in Ili and considering re-creating village scenes of the 1960s, as decades of development have brought tremendous changes to Bayandai.



> "They are optimistic. They talk with pride. There's a lot of philosophy about life in Wang's writing, and I believe this will leave room for the audience to reflect on life's truths. That requires careful thinking about how to translate these ideas onto the screen through cinematography."
>
> **Xirzat Yahup,** film director

Xirzat Yahup's biographical film *Wan Tongshu* is currently in theaters. It tells how musicologist Wan Tongshu (1923-2023) and his wife Lian Xiaomei, both from the Central Conservatory of Music, dedicated their lives in Xinjiang to preserving Muqam, a traditional performing art form combining music, dance and poetry. The Uygur Muqam of Xinjiang was inscribed on UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage list in 2005.

From 1951 to 1960, Wan and his wife recorded, transcribed, collated and published the musical scores for Muqam, helping to pass down and promote the art form. Wang, a former colleague of Wan in Urumqi, has recently written a film review highlighting Muqam and reminiscing about his old friends.

Contact the writers at fangaiqing@chinadaily.com.cn



Top: The book cover of Wang Meng's short story collection *In Ili*.
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY **Above:** Veteran writer Wang (second right) pens the calligraphic title for the film *In Ili*, which is an adaptation of his short story collection of the same name.
FANG AIQING / CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:09 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:09 PM

SPORTS

SOCCER

EAGLES SWOOP TO 1ST EURO TITLE

Crystal Palace wins cagey Conference League final, setting up a possible sweep for English clubs in Europe



Crystal Palace didn't want to be in the third-tier Conference League and Jean-Philippe Mateta nearly left the club. On Wednesday, it was Mateta's goal that won Palace the title.

A season that began with pleas to play in a higher competition ended with Palace's first-ever European trophy as Mateta's goal lifted his team to a 1-0 win over Rayo Vallecano in the final.

The French forward, who was close to leaving in January before a transfer to AC Milan collapsed, scored on a rebound in the 51st minute after Rayo goalkeeper Augusto Batalla parried Adam Wharton's long-range shot.

"I feel fantastic! ... First time in Europe, we did it! Now I just want to celebrate, I just want to party," Mateta told TNT Sports.

"It's incredible. We did everything. I told you about the intensity we were going to bring. I'm tired right now. I gave everything."

As well as with providing outgoing coach Oliver Glasner with the perfect send-off, Palace's win keeps English teams on track for a sweep of the three main European men's club competitions.

Aston Villa lifted the Europa League trophy last week and Arsenal will face Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League final on Saturday.

From appeals to celebrations

It was a triumphant end to a season that began with Palace in court, appealing in vain against being demoted from the second-tier Europa League, the competition it had originally qualified for by winning the FA Cup, in a dispute over ownership rules. Palace fans spent the season chanting against UEFA and getting fined for it.

Mateta said of the traveling Palace fans at Red Bull Arena: "I'm always with them. They support me as a player a lot, and the team. They're always behind us and we did that for them, too."

Palace's win lands it a Europa League spot for next season, much to the delight of Glasner, who said Wednesday he wanted to watch the team's progress on TV next season.

Palace fans set the tone before kickoff with a giant banner like an airport departures board. "Europa League: Boarding" it read.

Glasner announced in January he'd leave at the end of the season when his contract expires. The Austrian has been in charge since February 2024 and led Palace to its first major trophy last season in the FA Cup. It's not clear yet where he'll go next.

It was the third time in the Conference League's five-season history that an English team has lifted the trophy after West Ham in 2023 and Chelsea a year ago. Some Rayo fans were seen in tears at the final whistle. It was a first major final for a team so often in the shadow of its neighbors Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid.

A shot bouncing off both posts

Mateta's goal lit up the final after a cagey first half didn't produce a single shot on target.

He showed lightning-quick reactions to knock in the rebound after an initial long-range shot from Wharton, who was a commanding presence in midfield.

Yeremy Pino came within a whisker of making it 2-0 soon afterward when he hit a freekick that bounced off one goal post, along the goal line and away off the second post.

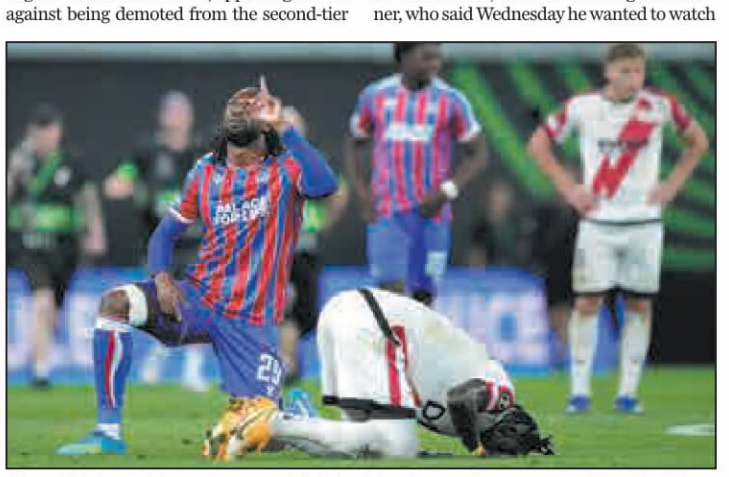
Rayo's best chance came early on, when Alexandre Alemao skewed a volley wide off a cross from Pep Chavarria. Tyrick Mitchell missed the target with a diving header for Palace at the end of the first half.

Fan clashes ahead of game

German police said earlier Wednesday that there had been clashes between Palace and Rayo fans. Two people were detained and two police officers sustained minor injuries, police added.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Crystal Palace players lift the UEFA Conference League trophy after beating Rayo Vallecano at Red Bull Arena in Leipzig, Germany, on Wednesday. **Inset:** Jean-Philippe Mateta (left) celebrates scoring the winner. AGENCIES



Crystal Palace's Evann Guessand (left) celebrates next to a distraught Pathe Ciss of Rayo Vallecano following the final whistle on Wednesday. AP

Team where it belongs after yearlong 'detour', says Glasner

Departing Crystal Palace manager Oliver Glasner toasted Wednesday's UEFA Conference League final victory by saying the club was back where it belongs after a "year's detour".

Jean-Philippe Mateta's second-half goal took Palace to a 1-0 win over Rayo Vallecano and a maiden European triumph. It also earned it a place in the Europa League.

Palace's FA Cup win last season qualified it for this season's Europa League, but UEFA revoked its place in the second-tier competition due to multi-club ownership rules.

"I said to the players, get now what you deserve after winning the FA Cup — the Europa League," Glasner said.

"Now, after a one-year delay, the club, the fans, the players get what they deserve.

"Sometimes you have to take a detour, and, now, we're there."

In January, Glasner announced he would leave the club in the summer. Palace had never won a trophy when he arrived, but he leaves having lifted the FA Cup, Community Shield and now a first European trophy.

"We hear a lot when the fans say thank you to us for giving them the best day of their lives and all these emotions. And I said thank you to the players, because it's the same for me," Glasner said.

"Because they gave me great, incredible days in my life, and that's what I really appreciate."

Glasner said his time at Palace was "a good chapter to read in the Crystal Palace book, but other chapters will follow".

He said he had made no plans for his future other than "flying back to London with a hangover" after taking charge of his last match with the club.

Speculation has swirled about the Austrian's future since he announced his departure in January, with reports of a move to another Premier League club or a potential return to Germany.

Glasner though said his only plan was to celebrate.

He said he does not have the "desire or the energy to speak with another club, because I felt duty bound to give 100 percent of Oliver Glasner (to Palace)."

"I haven't even thought about anything past tomorrow," he continued.

"Today's a day for celebrating, and anyone who knows me, knows I'm completely focused on this and haven't been able to do anything else except concentrate on the final.

"And, now, I can really let loose, and I'm going to do that with the players today. Then, tomorrow, I'll fly back to London with a bit of a hangover. And then it's time to get settled in and go back to my family."

Glasner added: "Everything I say today will be wrong tomorrow. That's why all I know for sure is that I'll be celebrating with the players today, drinking a few beers, and flying back to London tomorrow."

Defender Tyrick Mitchell said winning the Conference League felt like "pure delight" after a decade at the London club.

"It's amazing, it's the same feeling that we had when we won the FA Cup."

AGENCIES



Oliver Glasner holds the trophy on Wednesday. REUTERS

Top scorer Depay included in Netherlands World Cup squad despite injury worries

ZEIST, Netherlands — The Netherlands' top scorer Memphis Depay recovered from injury just in time for coach Ronald Koeman to include him in his 26-man squad for the World Cup next month.

Depay was one of three players who have recently returned from injury to be selected Wednesday by Koeman. That was despite his limited playing time leading into soccer's global showcase, being hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Depay, the Netherlands' all-time leading scorer with 55 goals, on Sunday made his first appearance in several weeks for his Brazilian club Corinthians after recovering from a thigh injury.

"I'd have preferred ... it happened earlier," Koeman said, adding he'd have to "wait and see" just how fit Depay is.

If Depay struggles for fitness, Koeman also has in-form Roma forward Donyell Malen at his disposal.

Justin Kluivert, the son of Dutch great Patrick Kluivert, has also just returned to fitness after surgery to repair a knee injury and was picked along with defender Jurrien Timber, fresh from winning the Premier League with Arsenal, but also only recently returned to fitness. Timber's brother Quinten also was named in the squad.

Koeman called up one debutant — West Ham winger Crysencio Summerville — and surprisingly left out Liverpool wingback Jeremie Frimpong, saying he often struggles with injuries.

Asked about his qualities, Koeman hailed Summerville's "speed, action and his play without the ball in defense", adding: "(He's) very trustworthy."

Midfielder Xavi Simons was ruled out of the tournament in April after rupturing his anterior cruciate ligament in a match for Tottenham against Wolverhampton, and defensive stalwarts Stefan de Vrij and Matthijs de Ligt are also absent due to injury.



Memphis Depay made his return for Corinthians on May 24 after recovering from injury, just in time to make the Netherlands World Cup squad. AFP

In a bubble

The Netherlands is a three-time World Cup finalist, but has never won international soccer's greatest prize. It lost in 1974 to then West Germany, in 1978 to host Argentina and to Spain in 2010, when Andres Iniesta scored a goal late in extra time.

Koeman was realistic about his seventh-ranked team's chances in North America.

"Well, we're competing to win, but I'm well aware of the reality and what other countries can bring. So, yeah, nothing is impossible, and that's what we're going for," he said. "I'm convinced that we can go far, and that we have a team that is hard to beat. But, to win a few matches against big countries, that is still a long way off."

Koeman said he was going to avoid the news and social media during preparations and throughout the tournament.

"You are in a bubble, focused on performance ... everything else that comes from outside is a distraction," he said.

And Koeman doesn't want to get involved in activities outside his team's media commitments at the tournament — regardless of who is asking.

"Don't think that I'm going to a photo opportunity with the team because (US President Donald) Trump, (FIFA president Gianni) Infantino want us to stand in front of a church or some water for a picture," he said. "No, that's not going to happen."

Koeman captained the Netherlands when the US last hosted the World Cup in 1994, when the Dutch lost 3-2 to eventual champion Brazil in the quarterfinals. He also was in the team when the Netherlands won its only major international title, the 1988 European Championship.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

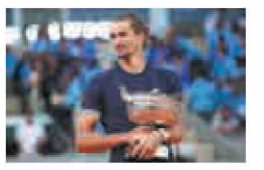
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:09 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:11 PM

Trade momentum
High-tech products to bolster export growth
BUSINESS, PAGE 13



New experiential trends reshape retail market
CHINA, PAGE 6



Victory at last
Zverev claims his 1st Grand Slam title after years of bitter setbacks
SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 TUESDAY, JUNE 9, 2026



Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and Chinese president, inspects the honor guard of the three services of the Korean People's Army, accompanied by Kim Jong-un, general secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea and president of the State Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in Pyongyang, the capital of the DPRK, on Monday during a grand welcoming ceremony held by Kim for Xi. DING LIN / XINHUA

Xi calls for deeper China-DPRK ties

He says in meeting with Kim that the two sides should pool wisdom, strength for greater progress of relations

Inside

• See more, **pages 2,3**
• Editorial, **page 10**

Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and Chinese president, said on Monday that the firm stance of the CPC and the Chinese government on highly valuing the traditional friendship with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will not change, and he pledged to work with DPRK top leader Kim Jong-un to keep bilateral relations advancing with the times and achieve greater progress in bilateral ties.

Xi made the remarks in Pyongyang, the capital of the DPRK, during his talks with Kim, general secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea and president of the State Affairs of the DPRK.

Xi arrived in Pyongyang on Monday for a two-day state visit to the DPRK, his first to the neighboring country in seven years and his first overseas trip this year.

During talks with Kim, Xi said that after seven years, he was very pleased to once again visit the beautiful city of Pyongyang, and felt especially warm and familiar.

He expressed his readiness to work with Kim to take this visit as an opportunity to strengthen top-level planning and strategic guidance for China-DPRK relations in the new era, keep bilateral relations advancing with the times and achieve greater progress in bilateral ties, in order to better benefit the two countries and peoples, and make positive contributions to peace, stability, development and prosperity in the region and the world.

Stressing that China and the DPRK are both socialist countries led by communist parties, Xi said that the traditional friendship between the two countries is rooted in their shared ideals and beliefs as well as their common goals, and is backed by a profound historical foundation, a solid political basis and strong emotional bonds.

Xi noted that friendship passed down from generation to generation, a shared future and mutual support have always been the defining features of China-DPRK relations.

No matter how the international situation changes, the CPC and the Chinese government's firm stance on highly valuing China-DPRK traditional friendship will not change, the firm support for Kim in leading the DPRK's socialist cause will not change, and the firm commitment to safeguarding the shared interests of the two countries and preserving a favorable strategic environment will not change, Xi said.

He pointed out that, in the face of profound changes unseen in a century that are accelerating across the world, the two sides should take a broad and long-term view, build on past achievements and open up a new future, draw wisdom from the development process of the relations between the two parties and the two countries, seize opportunities in the prevailing trend of human history, inject new contemporary connotations and strong impetus into the traditional friendship between China and the DPRK, and open up a brighter prospect for the socialist cause of the two countries as well as regional peace and development.

*See **Visit,** page 3*



President Xi Jinping meets with DPRK President Kim Jong-un before their talks at the Kumsusan State Guesthouse in Pyongyang, the DPRK, on Monday. XIE HUANCHI / XINHUA

Mega dam expansion to boost Yangtze economic belt

By **ZHENG XIN**
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

China launched a colossal infrastructure project on Monday to expand the Three Gorges Dam's navigation system in Yichang, Hubei province, marking another milestone effort designed to eliminate chronic shipping capacity bottlenecks and supercharge the industrial arteries of the nation's vast economy.

With a total investment of approximately 77.2 billion yuan ($11.39 billion), the mega project comprises two core components: a new channel at the Three Gorges Hub and a shipping capacity expansion at the downstream Gezhouba Dam.

At the Three Gorges Hub, two new ship locks will be built after excavating the mountain on the left bank, parallel to the existing dual-line locks. Once completed, the hub will boast a four-lane lock configuration, according to operator China Three Gorges Corp.

Combined with the existing ship lift, the hub's total annual throughput capacity will surge to 336 million metric tons, the operator said. In 2025, the total freight volume passing through the Three Gorges Hub stood at 173 million metric tons.

The concurrent Gezhouba expansion involves dismantling its No 3 lock to construct two new single-stage locks on the left side, thus expanding the approach channels. This will take Gezhouba's total capacity to 360 million tons annually, it said.

The Yangtze River Economic Belt, spanning 11 provinces and municipalities, accounts for over 40 percent of the nation's population and GDP. Its industries, ranging from metallurgy and automotives to high-tech manufacturing, rely heavily on the river for transportation of 85 percent of the region's iron ore and foreign trade goods, as well as 83 percent of its coal.

Su Fengming, a researcher at the National Development and Reform Commission's Institute of Comprehensive Transportation, highlighted the waterway's indispensable economic role.

"In 2025, the Yangtze River Economic Belt's GDP exceeded 65 trillion yuan, with mainline port cargo throughput hitting 4.2 billion tons — surpassing the national railway cargo throughput total by over 80 percent," Su said.

Su noted that water transportation costs a mere one-fifth of rail transit, solidifying the river's position as the economic "main artery" as manufacturing and industrial bases increasingly shift toward the inland geographic center.

According to Niu Xinqiang, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, mainline freight volume on the Yangtze River has grown continuously over the past two decades, rising from 650 million tons in 2005 to 4.2 billion tons by 2025 — ranking first among global inland rivers for 20 consecutive years.

This rapid growth has strained the existing infrastructure's ship handling capacity, he said.

Niu said he believes that the new channel will elevate the hub's one-way design capacity from roughly 50 million tons to 168 million tons by 2050. This will accelerate the flow of key production factors and help bridge the gap between the nation's eastern and western regions, he said.

Upgrading RCEP can help ASEAN partnership

WORLD WATCH
By Ong Tee Keat

Against a somber backdrop of global volatility — characterized by the resurgence of protectionist tariffs, fractured supply chains and persistent conflicts in the Middle East — the necessity for closer collaboration among Asian economies has never been more acute.

As the traditional pillars of global trade face unprecedented strain, the East Asian region is increasingly being looked upon as the world's primary engine of growth and stability.

In this context, China continues to serve as the regional economic stabilizer. Its performance in the first quarter of 2026 manifested remarkable resilience, defying the "decoupling" narratives that have dominated Western discourse. With solid year-on-year GDP growth of 5 percent in the first quarter, underpinned by a significant 15 percent surge in total exports and imports, China has injected much-needed momentum into the regional economy. This growth provides a vital anchor, offering a sense of predictability in a landscape otherwise rattled by geopolitical tensions and supply chain shifts.

From the Chinese perspective, Malaysia is always well remembered for its proactiveness in bridging China with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations by inviting China to the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in 1991. This laid the foundation for the China-ASEAN dialogue partnership.

Continuing the legacy of inclusive multilateralism, Malaysia's rotational chairmanship of ASEAN last year saw the historic inauguration of the Gulf Cooperation Council-China-ASEAN tripartite summit. This milestone further corroborated Malaysia's role as a bridge builder, linking diverse economic groupings to promote a more integrated Global South.

As China has remained Malaysia's top trading partner since 2009, the bilateral relationship is poised to ascend to a "high-value and regional strategic phase". The catalyst for this elevation is the imminent fruition of the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area (CAFTA) 3.0, ratified under the Malaysian chairmanship, thus making Malaysia a natural entry point for deeper regional integration.

*See **Growth,** page 4*



www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN

China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

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

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:11 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:11 PM

CityDance

YALU RIVER'S UNENDING FLOW

Decades after war scarred its banks, the waterway remains a living conduit of blood-forged camaraderie and the quiet, everyday friendships bridging China, DPRK



The Yalu River Broken Bridge (front) and the China-DPRK Friendship Bridge are seen from Dandong, Liaoning province, in February. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By **LIU JIANQIAO** in Dandong, Liaoning, and **WU YONG** in Shenyang

Every morning, residents of Dandong, in Northeast China's Liaoning province, stroll along the banks of the Yalu River. Across the water is Sinuiju, a city in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, close enough to see apartment buildings and passing vehicles.

For generations, the river has served not only as a border, but as a witness to friendship, the resistance to war, and everyday exchanges between the two peoples.

More than 70 years ago, the Chinese People's Volunteers, or CPV, crossed the Yalu River into the Korean Peninsula, marching to fight alongside the Korean people against the United States' aggression.

At that time, Dandong, then named Andong, played a strategic role, with residents mobilizing every possible resource to support the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea (1950-53). Their efforts gave rise to countless stories of sacrifice and solidarity that continue to resonate to this day.

Established in 1958, the Memorial Hall of the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea in Dandong serves to safeguard a collective memory, housing more than 20,000 artifacts and over 30,000 documents and materials related to the war.

The artifacts preserve stories of soldiers, workers and residents whose efforts supported the war, inviting visitors to reflect on the enduring legacy of a time that shaped the course of nations.

During this intense conflict, Dandong emerged as a vital rear base, said Zhang Xiaoying, deputy director of the memorial hall.

"The city then became a crucial lifeline, offering unwavering support to the front lines. Residents and resources were mobilized to provide whatever was needed — be it manpower, supplies or even blood — demonstrating remarkable dedication and sacrifice," she said.

"This collective effort played a pivotal role in securing victory, marking the city's extraordinary contributions."

The Yalu River Bridge (China-DPRK Friendship Bridge) and the Yalu River Broken Bridge span the river, both of which served as crucial transport routes for supplies during wartime.

"The Broken Bridge, originally the first road bridge across the Yalu River, witnessed the ravages of conflict when the US Air Force destroyed the DPRK's side in the 1950s," Zhang said. "Meanwhile, the Yalu River Bridge, initially constructed as a railway bridge, was converted into a combined road-rail bridge to meet wartime demands."

Although the bridge was repeatedly bombed, the steadfast people of Dandong continuously repaired it, ensuring its role as a lifeline for the war effort, she said.

Zhang stressed that the spirit of sacrifice and dedication from those days continues to inspire generations.





Above: A martyrs' monument stands in Anju, DPRK. **Left:** An inscription by the late DPRK leader Kim Il-sung is displayed at the former Chinese People's Volunteers Headquarters in Hoechang, DPRK, honoring the CPV's wartime sacrifices.

"Even today, many people in Dandong contribute their efforts to the friendship between China and the DPRK," she said.

Zhao Fengqi, a faculty member at Liaodong University in Dandong, is a prime example of this spirit. He worked for a year at the Representative Office for the Commemoration of Martyrs of the Chinese People's Volunteers in the DPRK, responsible for honoring the fallen Chinese soldiers.

"In 1950, my grandmother enlisted as a medic with the CPV, treating the wounded in the rear areas of Dandong," Zhao said. "Her spirit of dedication and the example she set have given me a deeper understanding of the history of the CPV."

Last year, after a rigorous selection process, Zhao was assigned to Pyongyang to undertake commemorative work for the martyrs of the CPV, an assignment he gladly accepted.

"In regular interactions with DPRK counterparts, we've found them to be extremely meticulous and friendly," he said. "They place great importance on our efforts to honor the martyrs of the CPV and have demonstrated a high degree of dedication and responsibility in the maintenance and management of the memorial parks."

He recalled his initial visit to the CPV Martyrs' Cemetery in Kangdong County, east of Pyongyang, during the Tomb Sweeping Day last year, which left a profound impression on him.

Inside the cemetery, four joint burial tombs hold the remains of 1,383 CPV martyrs who bravely laid down their lives in the war.

"It was only when I was there that I truly felt the indomitable fighting spirit of the CPV, who fought valiantly in the heat of battle," Zhao said. "It made me realize that the friendship between the Chinese and DPRK people is a bond forged in blood."

A native of Dandong, Zhao described life in the DPRK as very familiar and comforting to him, emphasizing the strong similarities between the two places in terms of cuisine and daily habits.

"Flowing between China and the DPRK, the Yalu River has long served as a shared lifeline for communities on both sides," he said. "Beyond its natural role, it has borne witness to pivotal moments in history while nurturing sustained cultural, economic and people-to-people exchanges between the two countries."

Spanning the river are not only physical bridges, but individuals like Zhao — living links who connect the two countries.

In September 2007, professors Huang Li and her husband Lei Huisheng, both from the College of International Education at Liaodong University, departed from Dandong by train, crossed the China-DPRK Friendship Bridge, and arrived in Pyongyang.

"We worked there for a year," Huang recalled. "We returned in 2010; Lei stayed for two years, and I stayed for three. Our third stint began in 2014 and lasted until January 2020. During that period, Lei worked there for over five years, while I was there from March 2017 to January 2020."

Huang, who is also director of the Chinese Language Center at Pyongyang University of Foreign Studies, said that in daily communications with DPRK students, the questions they ask most often center on contemporary China, reflecting their strong curiosity about the country's rapid development.

"Topics ranging from architecture, fashion and sports to music, internet slang and trending expressions frequently come up in class," Huang said. "What interests them most, however, is China's economy."

Over the years, their interactions with students and colleagues extended far beyond the classroom. Through daily work and ordinary moments of life, they developed deep and enduring friendships with their DPRK colleagues.

Lei recalled an experience that left a lasting impression on him and reflected the close relationships he developed with his DPRK colleagues.

One of his colleagues, surnamed Park, headed the foreign affairs department of the publishing house, which was responsible for international publications. He fractured the top of his femur bone in a serious car accident.

"At the time, he had already purchased an artificial femoral head, but he still lacked bone cement and other necessary medical and sterilization supplies," Lei said. "Since I was in China at the time, I offered to help him obtain what he needed."

Lei contacted a former classmate with a medical background, who helped procure the supplies that were later delivered to Park through the Chinese embassy.

"The surgery was a success," Lei said. "Park was extremely grateful afterward."

Looking back on their years in the DPRK, Huang and Lei said the friendships they formed remain among their most treasured memories.

The Yalu River has witnessed war and peace, tears and laughter, and generations of exchanges between neighboring peoples. Along its banks, countless ordinary individuals have played their own small but meaningful roles in bringing the two sides closer together.

Like the river itself, those bonds continue to flow across borders, connecting hearts and carrying forward a friendship forged over decades.

Contact the writers at liujianqiao@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
See more by scanning the code.



Tourists take pictures at the Yalu River Broken Bridge in Dandong on Oct 14. YU HAIYANG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE



A train from Dandong crosses the China-DPRK Friendship Bridge in March. PAN YULONG / XINHUA

DANDONG, A CITY MORE THAN A GATEWAY



Liu Jianqiao
Reporter's log

As dawn breaks over the Yalu River, the Weihao Farmers Market in Dandong, China's largest border city in Liaoning province, is already coming alive with the bustle of early-morning trade.

The air is filled with the salty smell of fresh seafood, the earthy aroma of just-harvested vegetables, and the constant hum of morning trade.

Alongside piles of bright red Dandong strawberries and baskets of fresh yellow clams are neatly packaged pollack and specialty foods imported from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea located across the river.

The scene offers a vivid glimpse into the close economic and cultural ties that continue to shape everyday life along the border.

"This is simply everyday life for us," said a resident while selecting fresh produce. "Dandong and Sinuiju (in the DPRK) face each other across the river. We share similar climates, so naturally our food, customs and ways of life also have much in common."

A nearby vendor, arranging goods at his stall, said the similarities on both sides of the river are a major draw for visitors.

"Many people come here because they are interested in the border culture," he said. "You can see those connections in the products people buy, the food they eat and the stories they share."

A tourist from Shanghai, browsing the market, highlighted "a unique atmosphere that you can't find anywhere else".

"You can see products from both sides of the river, and it gives you a better sense of how closely connected the communities are," he said.

Another visitor from Guangzhou said she had originally come to see the Yalu River Broken Bridge and learn more about the history of the area.

Beyond its commercial role, the market reflects the enduring people-to-people links that have developed over decades of interaction between communities along the Yalu River.

"The market was a pleasant surprise," said the visitor from Guangzhou. "You can experience the local culture firsthand, talk to people and see what daily life is like. It makes the city feel very vibrant."

The sense of familiarity that can be found in the market also extends into everyday life in Dandong.

A short walk from the market reveals storefronts where Chinese and Korean characters appear side by side.

Restaurants, grocery stores, trading companies and pharmacies alike often feature bilingual signs, reflecting the city's long-standing connections with the DPRK.

For professors Huang Li and Lei Huisheng from Liaodong University in Dandong, a couple who spent years teaching Chinese in Pyongyang, that connection often brings them to Songtaoyuan, a Korean-style restaurant in the city.

"When we miss our days there (in the DPRK), we come here for cold noodles and other traditional Korean dishes," Huang said. "The flavors are very authentic and remind us of our time there."

For the couple, the restaurant is more than a place to dine. It offers a familiar cultural experience and a chance to reconnect with memories of the years they spent working in the DPRK.

Such everyday experiences, they said, reflect the close cultural ties and people-to-people exchanges that have long linked communities on both sides of the river.

Dandong's significance extends far beyond trade and cuisine. It has long served as both a witness to and a participant in the evolving relationship between China and the DPRK.

The bustle of the Weihao Farmers Market, the familiar flavors of places like Songtaoyuan, and visitors' observations all offer glimpses into the close ties that connect communities on both sides of the Yalu River.

Drawing on its unique geographical location and deep historical ties, Dandong remains an important gateway for cross-border exchanges.

As the river flows quietly, it carries not only memories of a shared past but also the enduring connections among the two peoples that continue to bring the two neighboring countries closer together.

Contact the writer at liujianqiao@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:11 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:11 PM

XI'S VISIT

Xi says China-DPRK relations face new opportunities, missions

Strategic communication, mutual learning, practical cooperation, multilateral coordination highlighted

Relations between China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea currently stand at a new historical starting point, facing new development opportunities and shouldering new missions of the times, Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and Chinese president, said on Monday.

Xi made the remarks in a signed article published in Rodong Sinmun, the official newspaper of the DPRK, ahead of his state visit to the country on Monday and Tuesday, his first in seven years.

Xi said that he looks forward to meeting with Kim Jong-un, general secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea and president of the State Affairs of the DPRK, to discuss the traditional friendship between the two countries and exchange views on the overall development of bilateral relations.

Xi said that China and the DPRK are friendly socialist neighbors who stand by each other and share a common future.

No matter how times change or how the international landscape evolves, the traditional friendship between China and the DPRK remains unbreakable and enduring, constantly demonstrating vigorous vitality, Xi said.

Noting that top-level strategic guidance is the greatest strength of China-DPRK relations, Xi said that in recent years, he and Kim have held six meetings, maintaining close strategic communication and jointly drawing up a blueprint for the development of China-DPRK relations.

Xi also said that a shared socialist ideal is a defining feature of China-DPRK relations, and that the traditional friendship between the two countries, rooted in a shared future, forms the solid foundation of bilateral ties.

"High-level strategic coordination gives China-DPRK relations their contemporary significance," Xi said. "Promoting long-term peace and stability in the region, as well as world peace and stability, is a common pursuit of the two parties, the two countries and their peoples."



Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and Chinese president, and his wife, Peng Liyuan, pose for a photo with Kim Jong-un, general secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea and president of the State Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and his wife, Ri Sol-ju, at a welcoming banquet on Monday evening in Pyongyang, the DPRK. SHEN HONG / XINHUA

The two sides firmly support each other in safeguarding national sovereignty, security and development interests, and work together to uphold regional peace and tranquility, international fairness and justice, and the postwar international order, Xi said.

Noting that maintaining, consolidating and developing China-DPRK relations has always been an unwavering policy of the CPC and the Chinese government, Xi said that China stands ready to work with the DPRK to steer bilateral relations from a strategic perspective, keep China-DPRK relations abreast of the times and achieve greater development of the relationship.

The two sides should deepen strategic communication and firmly steer China-DPRK relations in the right direction, Xi said, calling for upholding the fine tradition of high-level exchanges between the two parties and the two countries, and maintaining close contacts like relatives.

The two sides should take the 65th anniversary of the China-DPRK Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance as an opportunity, strengthen exchanges at all levels and across party, government and military institutions, implement the important consensus reached by the two sides, and add fresh impetus to the development of bilateral relations.

Xi said the two countries should strengthen communication and mutual learning to jointly promote the steady development of the two countries' socialist cause.

China and the DPRK should support each other in pursuing socialist paths suited to their own national conditions, firmly safeguard the political security of both nations, continue to expand exchanges and cooperation between the two parties, and deepen exchanges of experience and mutual learning on party and state governance, Xi said.

The two countries should expand practical cooperation and continuously enhance the well-being and friendship of the two peoples, Xi said, adding that the two sides should enhance the alignment of development strategies, tap the potential for cooperation in various fields, share opportunities and promote development together, in order to better benefit the two peoples.

Xi also called for close multilateral coordination and firmly safeguarding international fairness and justice.

The two sides should strengthen strategic communication and coordination, and jointly uphold the international system with the United Nations at its core and the international order based on international law, Xi said, adding that the two sides should oppose hegemonism and power politics, and reject any scheme or action aimed at reviving militarism and undermining regional security and stability.

The two countries should jointly promote an equal and orderly multipolarization of the world and a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization, implement the four major global initiatives put forward by China, and work together to build a community with a shared future for humanity, he added.

XINHUA — CHINA DAILY

Visit: Further expansion of exchanges encouraged

From page 1

During the meeting, Xi put forward four proposals on developing China-DPRK relations.

The two sides should remain guided by the high-level exchanges and consolidate the foundation of political mutual trust, Xi said.

The strategic guidance by the top leaders of both nations is the greatest strength of China-DPRK relations, Xi added, noting that he stands ready to maintain close strategic communication with Kim and guide China-DPRK relations to continuously reach new heights.

Noting that this year marks the 65th anniversary of the China-DPRK Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, Xi said that both sides will hold grand commemorative events.

The relations between the two parties play an important guiding role in the development of China-DPRK relations, Xi said, calling for further expansion and invigoration of friendly exchanges at various levels and in various fields between the two parties, as well as the deepening of exchanges of experience and mutual learning on party and state governance.

Both sides should enhance exchanges in diplomacy, law enforcement, military affairs and other areas, implement the important consensus reached between the two leaders, and pool wisdom and strength for the development of China-DPRK relations, Xi said.

The two sides should stay committed to the goal of delivering benefits to the people and elevate the level of practical cooperation, Xi said.

China stands ready to work with the DPRK to strengthen the alignment of development strategies, and to expand practical cooperation in areas such as economy and trade, agriculture, construction, science and technology, and healthcare, to bring greater benefits to the two peoples, he added.





Left: President Xi Jinping and his wife, Peng Liyuan, are welcomed by Kim Jong-un, the top leader of the DPRK, and his wife, Ri Sol-ju, at the airport in Pyongyang, the DPRK, on Monday. XIE HUANCHI / XINHUA
Above: People from all walks of life in Pyongyang hold flags and flowers to welcome President Xi Jinping on Monday. SHEN HONG / XINHUA

Xi called on both sides to leverage the opportunity of the full reopening of border crossings and the resumption of civil aviation flights and international passenger trains to increase people-to-people exchanges and foster mutual interaction.

The two sides should uphold the inheritance of friendship as a driving force and strengthen the bonds between their peoples, Xi said, noting that the traditional friendship between China and the DPRK, forged in blood, is a valuable shared asset of the two peoples.

China stands ready to work with the DPRK to preserve and properly manage the memorial facilities dedicated to the Chinese People's Volunteers martyrs in the DPRK, carry out distinctive programs on revolutionary traditions and youth education, and pass on the red legacy and traditional friendship between the two countries, Xi said.

China is also ready to work with the DPRK to make full use of each side's strengths and resources, enhance exchanges and cooperation in education, culture and the arts, tourism, sports, media, youth affairs, subnational engagement and sister-city relations, and ensure that the traditional friendship between China and the DPRK takes deeper root in the hearts of the two peoples, Xi said.

The Chinese president also called for upholding fairness and justice as a guiding principle to enrich the substance of strategic coordination. Xi said that, in response to the major question of where humanity is headed, he has proposed the vision of building a community with a shared future for humanity and the four global initiatives, which aim to steer global governance toward greater fairness and justice and have won broad support and positive responses from the international community, including the DPRK.

Noting that Asia is the common home where countries including China and the DPRK, thrive, Xi said that the two countries should strengthen strategic coordination, firmly safeguard their respective sovereignty, security and development interests, and jointly uphold regional peace and development.

Calling Xi the most respected guest of the DPRK people, Kim said that his country extended the warmest and most cordial welcome to Xi, who is visiting the DPRK after a seven-year interval. Xi's choice of Pyongyang for his first overseas trip this year fully reflects the great importance he attaches to DPRK-China relations and the profound friendship between the two countries, which is a tremendous encouragement to the DPRK, Kim said.

The visit once again clearly demonstrates that the DPRK-China relationship is unbreakable, Kim said. Calling the bilateral ties time-tested, Kim said that the relations have always stood on the right side of history and championed autonomy and justice.

The special nature of the bilateral relations lies not only in the fact that the two countries are close neighbors, but also in the deep traditional friendship and shared ideals and convictions, which both sides cherish and are committed to carrying forward from generation to generation, Kim said.

He also recalled his meeting with Xi in Beijing last September, noting that since then, bilateral relations have achieved positive progress in various fields, bringing tangible benefits to the two peoples.

He voiced sincere appreciation for the important proposals put forward by Xi on advancing DPRK-China relations in the new era, adding that relevant departments of the DPRK will work closely with their Chinese counterparts and make every effort to fully implement the proposals, and promote new progress in bilateral exchanges and cooperation in areas such as economy and trade, infrastructure, science and technology, education, and people-to-people and cultural exchanges.

Kim noted that the concept of a community with a shared future for humanity and the four major global initiatives proposed by Xi carry profound significance for promoting world peace and development, and have won the support and appreciation of people around the world.

He also said that the international community has been undergoing unprecedented and profound changes in recent years, stating that the DPRK will unwaveringly uphold the one-China principle and firmly support China's policies and positions on safeguarding core interests.

On Monday evening, Xi and his wife, Peng Liyuan, attended a welcoming banquet hosted by Kim in Pyongyang. In his remarks at the banquet, Xi said that the relationship between China and the DPRK stands at a new historical starting point. He said that he reached an important consensus with Kim during the visit.

Following the banquet, Xi and Peng, along with Kim and his wife, Ri Sol-ju, watched an artistic performance at the Pyongyang Gymnasium.

Upon Xi's arrival earlier in the day, Kim and Ri welcomed Xi and Peng at the airport. After Xi walked down the stairs from the plane, Kim shook hands with him warmly.

Kim also held a grand welcoming ceremony for Xi at Kim Il-sung Square in Pyongyang. The top leaders of the two parties and the two countries jointly ascended the review stand. Amid a 21-gun salute, the military band played the national anthems of China and the DPRK.

XINHUA — CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:11 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:11 PM

CHINA

Carrying on the legacy



The new *Dongpo* dragon boat cruises through a river channel in Chebei village, Guangzhou, Guangdong province, on Monday. To celebrate the upcoming Dragon Boat Festival, the village held a ceremony called *caiqing* to "awaken the spirit" of a dragon boat, allowing it to regain its "soul" and be ready for the upcoming races. Chebei boasts a rich dragon boat history, with its 158-year-old *Dongpo* being one of the city's oldest and best-kept boats. To preserve it, the original boat was sent for maintenance, with an identical replica, the new *Dongpo*, carrying on its legacy.

CHEN JIMIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Classical studies can bridge civilizations, experts say

Second World Conference of Classics in Athens to enhance East-West dialogue

By **XU LIN**
xulin@chinadaily.com.cn

The world's talented minds gather again to seek inspiration from ancient wisdom.

The second World Conference of Classics will be held in Athens, Greece, on Tuesday and Wednesday as a landmark platform for dialogue between Eastern and Western scholars of classical studies.

Inside
See more, **pages 8-9**

Experts believe Chinese classical studies embrace a vision of mutual learning among civilizations and the integration of Chinese and foreign perspectives.

On Nov 7, 2024, Chinese President Xi Jinping sent a congratulatory letter to the inaugural World Conference of Classics held in Beijing.

Xi expressed the hope that experts and scholars would embrace the responsibility of advancing classical studies, contribute to the preservation and development of civilizations, and enhance exchange and mutual learning among them.

Guided by the spirit of the congratulatory letter, classical studies in China have achieved remarkable progress in disciplinary development, talent cultivation, academic research and international exchange.

Over the past decade, institutions of higher learning like Peking University have launched experimental programs in classical studies. About a dozen universities have established research centers for classical studies. These efforts have laid the groundwork for the discipline's development in China.

In March 2025, Sichuan University established China's first fully independent Department of Classics with a complete institutional setup, offering a full training system covering bachelor's, master's and doctoral programs.

"Our department features an interdisciplinary framework that bridges Eastern and Western classical studies and integrates literature, history and philosophy," said Liu Juan, deputy director of the department.

Beyond courses in classical languages, the department offers Chinese classical studies focusing on classical texts of the pre-Qin period (before 221 BC) and the Qin (221-206 BC), as well as the Han (206 BC-AD 220) dynasties, Western classical studies rooted in Greek and Roman texts, and comparative classical studies centered on cross-civilization dialogue and mutual learning between China and the world.

"Establishing classical studies as an independent major helps train young scholars with solid professional grounding and a broad academic vision. It promotes interdisciplinary integration and innovative development, and is a forward-looking arrangement that meets the needs of the new era," said Li Changchun, an associate professor in the Department of Philosophy at Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, Guangdong province.

In 2025, the National Social Science Fund of China listed classical studies as an independent first-level discipline. The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences also included classical studies in its funding program for endangered and less-studied disciplines.

Li noted that this is a crucial step in building the discipline of classical studies. Before that, classics researchers mainly relied on funding from other disciplines, and their research topics were often constrained by those fields. "Thanks to these policies, classics scholars are motivated to pursue more in-depth research and set research topics based on the needs of classical studies itself," Li added.

In his 2024 congratulatory letter, President Xi also emphasized China's commitment to the preservation and development of civilizations and said China is dedicated to enhancing international people-to-people exchanges and fostering global dialogue among civilizations.

He said China stands ready to work with other nations in implementing the Global Civilization Initiative, addressing shared challenges facing humanity and promoting the advancement of human civilization.

Such advocacy for cross-civilization communication and mutual learning is reflected in exchange programs for both academic scholars and young people.

The Center of Chinese and Greek Civilizations, or KELKIP, initiates an annual student exchange program under which Chinese students travel to various parts of Greece while Greek students visit different regions of China.

"Such exchanges enable classical civilizations to nourish and inspire future generations," said Wang Yong, secretary-general of the Chinese KELKIP, whose secretariat is based at Southwest University in Chongqing.

Wang further clarified the contemporary mission of Chinese scholars of classical studies, arguing that they should absorb and integrate the essence of human civilizations — including Chinese civilization — to foster dialogue between China and the world, deepen mutual understanding across civilizations and advance a community with a shared future for humanity.

Roger T. Ames, a humanities chair professor in the department of philosophy at Peking University, shares a similar perspective.

"In the plural, classical studies provide the opportunity for one culture to grow in its relationship to another — harmony in diversity," he said.

Ames said the classics move the international conversation from geopolitics to geocultural concerns, from an economic and political discourse to a dialogue on civilization. "Classics are quite simply the basis of human civilization, and areas of cooperation such as the Belt and Road Initiative are dependent upon respect for our different and yet complementary values."

He pointed out that Confucian values of inclusion, optimizing symbiosis, civility and interdependence, are needed to address human predicaments such as climate change and environmental degradation.

"Civilizational differences do not necessarily trigger conflicts. The key lies in continuous communication and mutual understanding, which transforms cultural divergences into starting points for cooperation and integrates others' experiences into elements that enrich one's own civilization," said Wang Huan, deputy director of the Institute for the Global History of Civilizations at Shanghai International Studies University.

Xing Yi in London and Tan Yingzi in Chongqing contributed to this story.

Growth: Success of any regional framework rests upon bedrock of trust

From page 1

From a macro-regional perspective, ASEAN serves as the central platform for East Asian economic integration. However, the region currently navigates a complex web of overlapping trade agreements — often referred to as the "spaghetti bowl" effect. While the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership — an ASEAN-led initiative — is the world's largest free trade group, it has yet to unleash its full potential.

The primary hurdle lies in the discrepancy between declaratory rhetoric and pragmatic utilization. Despite steady progress in tariff reductions and the harmonization of "rules of origin", the RCEP's utilization rates remain surprisingly low. For instance, in 2024, when China-Malaysia bilateral trade hit a record $212.4 billion, the utilization rate of RCEP rules was a mere 0.7 percent. Similarly, Vietnam's utilization rate stood at 1.8 percent, dwarfed by the 40.5 percent average for its various ASEAN+1 free trade agreements.

This disparity stems from the fact that entrepreneurs, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, favor the familiar and simpler procedures of the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area over the more complex RCEP framework.

To make the RCEP relevant, there is an urgent need to review and upgrade its rules to ensure that they are complementary to, rather than at odds with, CAFTA 3.0.

The upcoming RCEP general review presents a critical window for its 15 signatories to "upgrade" the framework. The goal should be to match or exceed the standards set by CAFTA 3.0, specifically by tightening rules on digital data transfers and streamlining administrative hurdles.

In reality, the two core challenges confronting regional economic cooperation will always lie in the conundrums of translating macro-level visions into deliverable actions, in addition to rendering rules that truly serve the needs of businesses.

The RCEP framework includes a chapter on "Standards, Technical Regulations and Conformity Assessment Procedures" that seeks to reduce "technical barriers to trade" by enhancing transparency, encouraging international standards and promoting mutual recognition of conformity assessments.

This regulatory cooperation, intended to lower compliance costs and technical bottlenecks for businesses across the RCEP, provides an opportune dimension for Sino-Malaysian collaboration. By synchronizing standards in sectors such as electronics, automobiles, pharmaceuticals and halal food products across the RCEP, such cooperation helps reduce the non-tariff costs that often negate the benefits of free trade for smaller businesses.

However, a sobering reality check reveals that efforts to establish mutual recognition agreements for conformity assessment results and reducing duplicate testing are not easy. Such efforts require serious political will and concerted multilateral action across the 15-member RCEP to make the agreements enforceable.

The RCEP's stakeholders, notably China and Malaysia, which are ready to harness the dividends of the RCEP's unified rules of origin — which dictate the economic nationality of a product and affect how goods are treated in terms of tariffs and restrictions — could envision creating a seamless manufacturing corridor where raw materials from China are processed in Malaysia for duty-free export across the entire RCEP.

From the development perspective, amid the converging trend of Malaysia's Madani Economy framework and China's high-quality development goals, the bilateral cooperation is well poised to move beyond traditional trade in goods and into artificial intelligence-powered logistics, cross-border digital payments and electric vehicle manufacturing in Malaysia.

By leveraging the RCEP's tariff preferences and trade facilitation measures, the model of "Two Countries, Twin Parks" in both Qinzhou in China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region and Kuantan, Malaysia, provides a timely template to showcase an early triumph for the RCEP in the high-tech and new energy sectors.

Under the RCEP framework, deepening collaboration in fields such as 5G networks, smart cities, interoperability of cross-border payment systems, and the new energy vehicle industrial chain are the ready deliverables that can help jointly secure commanding heights for future development.

In the final analysis, the success of any regional framework rests upon the bedrock of trust. The "weaponization" of unilateral tariffs and the use of economic coercion are existential threats to the architecture of regional integration. Malaysia and its ASEAN neighbors are currently facing a test of their resilience.

However, the choice is clear. It is not a choice between global powers, but a choice between fragmentation and integration. Southeast Asian nations must maintain the liberty to decide what is best for their own economic destinies. This principle of strategic autonomy is enshrined in the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, a document to which both the United States and China have acceded.

As the China-ASEAN partnership seeks to deepen continuously amid the prevailing global tumult, it remains the most viable path toward a stable, prosperous and interconnected Asia, through optimization of the RCEP and implementation of CAFTA 3.0.

By translating macro-level visions into deliverable actions, we can ensure that the regional economy remains a beacon of growth in an otherwise uncertain world.

The author is president of the Belt and Road Initiative Caucus for Asia Pacific. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

CLIFFSIDE VALLEY LEAVES A LASTING IMPRESSION

Away from the glittering towers and LED light shows of the nation's metropolises, lantern-lit villages in Jiangxi are offering visitors a different view of China

By **ZHAO RUINAN**
in Shangrao, Jiangxi
zhaoruinan@chinadaily.com.cn

Once upon a time, a traveler's first taste of China would begin with the glittering towers of Shanghai, the imperial echoes of Beijing or the cuddly charm of Chengdu's pandas in Sichuan province.

But for a fast-growing tribe of young adventurers, that very first glimpse now comes steeped in mist and legend — a cliffside valley deep in rural Jiangxi province.

They didn't find it flipping through a guidebook. They found it through soaring drone footage flickering across online travel posts, passed along in viral recommendations on social media.

In Wangxian Valley in Shangrao, timbered pavilions seem to cling to sheer cliff faces by nothing more than ancient magic as waterfalls carve silver ribbons through emerald gorges. And, when dusk spills over the mountains, thousands of lanterns glimmer along the streets and bridges, transforming the valley into what many visitors describe as a fantasy version of traditional China — a living, breathing scroll painting.

"We saw a lot of pictures and drone shots on social media like TikTok," said Symeon Theocharous, 32, a visitor from Greece. "But in real life, it's even more amazing. It's more breathtaking."

Nestled in Wangxian township, Guangxin district, this realm of wonder carries an unlikely origin story. The valley was once tied to stone quarrying and processing, its slopes scarred by industry. After years of painstaking ecological restoration and a cultural tourism renaissance, the former mining site has been reborn — as a retreat where dramatic natural beauty meets folk-style streets, cliffside architecture, night tours, live performances and the soulful flavors of local cuisine.

The numbers tell a tale of enchantment. Wangxian Valley welcomed 180,000 overseas visitors in 2025, a year-on-year increase of 76 percent. In the first five months of this year alone, more than 100,000 international travelers have walked its lantern-lit paths, with over 30,000 visitors arriving in May.

The valley's ethereal waterfalls, its lantern-lit nights and its tableaux of Jiangxi-style intangible cultural heritage offerings have cast a spell across overseas social media platforms, weaving the irresistible image of a "real-life *xianxia* world" — the kind of mythical realm known from Chinese fantasy tales where immortals dwell among clouds and cliffs.

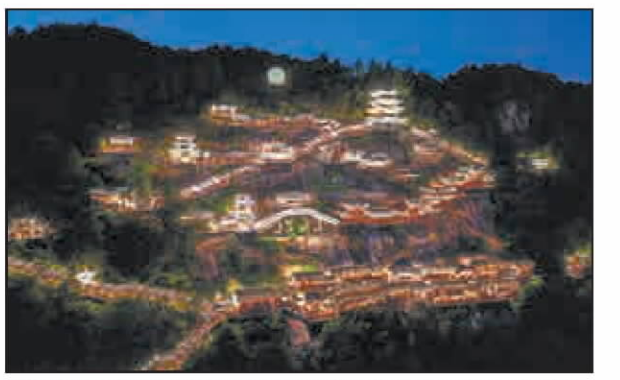
Some videos of Wangxian Valley have garnered over a million likes, and its dreamlike scenery has been shared by Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning on her own social media channel.

For 26-year-old French national Johan Rapetti, Wangxian Valley had appeared on social media feeds before he came to China. His itinerary also included Shanghai, Beijing, Chengdu and Chongqing, but the valley offered a different view of the country.

"We saw a lot of things on social media in France about this place, and we are so happy to be here in reality," he said.

Marion Letourneur, 24, from Paris, said Wangxian Valley gave her a different impression after Shanghai. "It's really beautiful because it's not something we can see in France," she said. "It's a way to see China in a different way."

For Elyse Mazenier from New Zealand, the contrast with China's major cities was part of the appeal. "It's really cool and it's nice to see the two different sides of China," she said. "I feel like this is what traditional China would look like."



Hillside pavilions of the Wangxian Valley illuminate the night sky in Jiangxi province on July 11, 2025. LIU JINHAI / XINHUA

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:11 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:11 PM

CHINA

Intl cooperation key to environment regulation

By **YANG ZEKUN**
yangzekun@chinadaily.com.cn

As environmental crimes increasingly cross borders and threaten ecosystems, communities and sustainable development, prosecutors and experts called for stronger cooperation to close enforcement gaps and improve global environmental governance at a roundtable meeting in Beijing on Monday.

The meeting, themed "The Role of Prosecutors in Global Environmental Governance", gathered prosecutors and experts from more than a dozen countries and organizations for discussions on strengthening environmental enforcement, combating environmental crimes and protecting the public interest.

Participants said climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution and the illegal exploitation of natural resources are interconnected global challenges that cannot be solely addressed by any one country or institution. They called for closer judicial cooperation, information sharing and professional exchanges among prosecutors, courts, law enforcement agencies, civil society as well as international organizations.

Zhang Xueqiao, deputy prosecutor general of the Supreme People's Procuratorate, said building a clean and beautiful world is both a Chinese initiative for global ecological civilization and an essential requirement for sustainable human development.

China has advanced ecological civilization through legislation, enforcement and judicial practice in recent years, he said, noting that the country's top legislature adopted the Ecological and Environmental Code in March.

Chinese procuratorial organs have placed ecological and environmental protection high on their agenda, using criminal, civil, administrative and public interest litigation functions to strengthen judicial protection. The SPP has launched public interest litigation campaigns involving major river basins, including the Yangtze, Yellow and Pearl rivers, and carried out supervision campaigns on hazardous waste crimes and green, low-carbon development.

In complex cross-regional cases, procuratorial organs have strengthened integrated case handling, cross-regional cooperation and the use of technologies such as satellite remote sensing, drones and rapid testing to improve evidence collection and damage assessment, he said.

Xu Xiangchun, head of the SPP's public interest litigation department, said procuratorial organs have handled more than 608,000 public interest litigation cases involving ecological and resource protection since July 2017, accounting for 47 percent of all such cases.

More than 90 percent of administrative public interest litigation cases were resolved before trial, he said, helping reduce judicial costs while encouraging administrative authorities to perform their duties.

Xu said procuratorial organs have also strengthened coordination with courts, the public and administrative departments including those responsible for water resources, ecology and environment, agriculture and rural affairs and forestry. The SPP also promoted public participation through a volunteer platform that has recruited 126,000 volunteers nationwide.

International participants said environmental governance requires stronger cross-border cooperation and more effective legal enforcement.

Hindenburgo Chateaubriand, deputy prosecutor general of Brazil, said environmental crimes do not stop at national borders and enforcement cannot be carried out by any single institution alone, making transnational judicial cooperation an important priority for prosecutors.

He said China is currently Brazil's largest export market for agricultural and livestock products, with large volumes of trade in key commodities such as beef, adding that the deep economic ties between the two countries also create favorable conditions for closer cooperation in social development, environmental protection and sustainability.

Trade growth should go hand in hand with ecological and climate protection, he said. Brazil has taken steps to strengthen regulation in the beef industry and plans to extend supervision to supply chains such as soybeans to build greener and more resilient systems.

Elizabeth Mrema, assistant secretary-general of the United Nations, said China has made inspiring progress in environmental legislation, enforcement and jurisprudence. She said China's public interest litigation system offers important innovations and lessons, with prosecutors playing a key role in closing the gap between environmental laws and their implementation.

She also noted that China's Ecological and Environmental Code is an important development not only for China but also for the region and the world, as it reflects a broader trend of modernizing environmental legal frameworks to respond to increasingly complex environmental challenges.

Adam Weiss, chief programmes and impact officer at environmental law organization ClientEarth, said China's experience has become an important reference model for many countries seeking more effective legal and institutional responses to environmental challenges.

While environmental laws and policies continue to develop around the world, effective implementation and enforcement remain essential, he said. Prosecutors have a unique role in ensuring compliance, pursuing accountability for environmental harm and safeguarding the public interest.

Participants noted that dialogue among prosecutors and other justice actors can help countries share good practices, improve enforcement capacity and better implement international environmental commitments.

Zhang said Chinese procuratorial organs will continue to actively perform their duties, make full use of the public interest litigation system and strengthen exchanges and cooperation with international partners to build a fair, reasonable and mutually beneficial global environmental governance system.

Haven for migrants



A staff member cleans a crane rehabilitation enclosure at a migratory bird rescue center in the Hengshui Lake national nature reserve, Hebei province, on Sunday. Located along the East Asian-Australasian flyway, the reserve is home to diverse ecosystems and has recorded 337 bird species, making it an important refuge for migratory birds. YANG WENBIN / XINHUA

CCG holds ops east of Taiwan island

China terms Japan-Philippines delimitation talks illegal and invalid

By **JIANG CHENGLONG**
jiangchenglong@chinadaily.com.cn

China conducted law enforcement and maritime traffic patrols in waters east of its Taiwan island in early June, moves that are believed to demonstrate the country's jurisdiction, capability and resolve to safeguard its rights in the area following the Japan-Philippines unilateral delimitation move.

The Ministry of Transport organized a special maritime traffic law enforcement operation on Saturday in waters east of Taiwan island, fully exercising China's maritime administrative law enforcement jurisdiction, according to the ministry.

The operation was carried out by maritime safety administrations in Fujian and Guangdong provinces, as well as navigation support and rescue authorities in the East China Sea. It aimed to strengthen long-range offshore patrol and law enforcement capabilities, improve traffic management in key waters, ensure maritime traffic safety and safeguard national interests, the ministry said.

On June 1, China Coast Guard spokesman Jiang Lue said a CCG vessel fleet conducted law enforcement patrols in accordance with the law in waters east of Taiwan island.

Both the CCG and the Ministry of Transport stressed that the operations were "necessary actions" in response to Japan and the Philippines' unilateral announcement of launching maritime delimitation talks regarding waters east of China's Taiwan island, which they said seriously infringed upon China's territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests.

Jiang urged the two countries to immediately stop all illegal actions that undermine China's sovereignty and rights, noting that the CCG will continue to strengthen control and management over relevant waters and resolutely safeguard national territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests through "concrete actions".

Zhang Junshe, a former researcher at the Naval Research Academy, said the operations were not only the most direct response to the so-called delimitation talks by Japan and the Philippines, but also demonstrated China's jurisdiction over relevant waters east of Taiwan island.

The operations came after Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said at a regular news conference on May 29 that the so-called delimitation talks between Japan and the Philippines are "completely illegal and invalid" and will have no impact on China's rights claims in waters east of Taiwan island or China's exercise of its lawful rights.

On May 28, following a meeting between Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi and visiting Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr, Tokyo and Manila announced the launch of formal negotiations on the delimitation of their exclusive economic zones and continental shelves. According to the joint statement, the proposed delimitation areas include overlapping waters east of Taiwan.

Mao said that under China's domestic law and international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, China has an exclusive economic zone and continental shelf in the area.

She added that Japan and the Philippines' unilateral launch of so-called maritime delimitation talks seriously infringes upon China's maritime rights and interests, and violates international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, as well as the basic norms governing international relations, expressing strong dissatisfaction and firm opposition to the move.

Zhang said the latest operations showed that China's maritime law enforcement forces have not only the determination, but also the capability and strength to safeguard the country's rights.

He said the waters east of Taiwan island are complex and pose a major test for vessel performance and law enforcement capabilities.

Those operations proved that China's coast guard and maritime safety forces are already capable of conducting regular law enforcement patrols, control and management in waters east of Taiwan island, he said.

More importantly, Zhang said, they show that China has effectively established a relatively complete system for protecting sovereignty and maritime rights and interests, as well as governing waters around Taiwan island.

New tech surgery aids recovery of vision

By **CHEN MEILING** in Beijing and **HE CHUN** in Changsha

A blind woman in China has recovered partial vision after receiving a brain-computer interface surgery in Changsha, Hunan province, bringing new hope to patients suffering from degenerative retinal diseases.

Chen, 61, was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa at the age of 40, a condition that eventually left her completely blind in both eyes. On April 23, she was selected for a clinical trial and underwent an implantation surgery at Xiangya Hospital of Central South University.

During the surgery, an electrode array measuring 6 millimeters by 10.8 mm — roughly the size of a fingernail — was implanted onto the retinal surface of the macular region inside the eyeball.

Following the procedure, the patient wears a pair of glasses equipped with a miniature camera and a wireless transmission module. The camera captures environmental images, which a video processor analyzes and encodes. The encoded data is then transmitted via radio frequency wireless technology to the implant, which converts the data into electrical stimulation signals that act on retinal nerve cells. This visual information is ultimately relayed to the brain.

"If we compare the eyeball to a camera, the retina is the film. When the film is damaged, we directly use electrical signals to 'tell' the intact nerve cells behind what is being seen, which is equivalent to building a bypass for the visual system," said Xu Huizhuo, who conducted the surgery and leads the clinical trial project called the IMIE intelligent retina system.

Once the system is activated, patients initially experience phosphenes — a visual phenomenon manifesting as bright pinpoint lights against a dark background. Through systematic training, patients learn to assemble these light spots to identify object outlines, obstacles, directional markers and simple letters.

Xu explained that bionic vision functions more like a low-resolution visual system delivering light and dark outlines, and cannot yet match the rich, colored vision experienced by people with normal sight.

"Nevertheless, for patients who have been blind for a long time, such visual information can greatly improve their ability to live and move around independently," Xu said, emphasizing that artificial vision helps patients regain a degree of visual perception rather than restoring normal eyesight. Patients usually require several months or longer of rehabilitation training to interpret the new information.

At present, Chen's visual acuity has recovered to 0.1. During tests, she was able to recognize striped patterns in specific orientations and complete tasks such as indoor directional walking.

Degenerative retinal diseases like retinitis pigmentosa are major causes of irreversible blindness. Among advanced-stage patients, conventional medicines, surgeries and gene therapies often fail. The new method bypasses impaired photoreceptor cells to reconstruct an artificial visual pathway.

Remarkably, China's self-developed IMIE intelligent retina system boasts 256 stimulation channels, marking a more than fourfold improvement in data capacity compared with comparable overseas products featuring 60 channels.

"If artificial vision is compared to an electronic display screen, the number of stimulation channels is equivalent to 'pixels'. A 60-channel system is like a very blurry black-and-white image, whereas the 256-channel version delivers far more details," Xu said.

The team has already completed the development of 512-channel flexible electrode technology, aiming for future iterations ranging from 1,024 to 2,048 channels. The technology is applicable to patients whose optic nerves and brain visual pathways remain functional. As the system is still in the clinical research stage, relevant costs will be finalized following subsequent regulatory approvals.

Contact the writers at chenmeiling@chinadaily.com.cn

2025 data shows marine conditions remain stable

By **LI MENGHAN**
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

China's marine ecological protection and restoration efforts yielded preliminary results, with overall marine conditions remaining stable and localized improvements observed last year, according to a bulletin released on Monday by the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Coral reefs, seagrass beds, mangroves and island ecosystems remained in good condition, the ministry said in its 2025 bulletin on China's marine ecological early warning and monitoring.

Released to mark the 18th World Oceans Day, the bulletin drew on monitoring data from 14 standard offshore transects, 1,579 monitoring stations, 126 typical ecosystem areas and 350 islands across China's jurisdictional waters.

The report showed that biodiversity indicators for plankton and large benthic organisms in nearshore waters remained consistent with the five-year average. Surface seawater salinity, pH levels, inorganic nitrogen concentrations and dissolved oxygen levels in bottom waters also remained close to the 10-year average.

According to the bulletin, key bays and estuaries maintained stable biological community structures, with no significant shifts in dominant species groups. Sediment conditions remained sound, although localized eutrophication persisted in some areas.

The bulletin also warned of marine ecological risks linked in part to global climate change. Last summer, nearshore surface water temperatures in China were 0.7 C above the long-term average.

Although both the frequency and affected area of red tides declined compared with the 10-year average, risks from Ulva prolifera, or green tides, localized biological outbreaks and estuarine hypoxia remain, it said.

The ministry also released the second batch of its marine data open-sharing catalog on Monday, providing data support for marine economic development, disaster prevention and mitigation, resource exploitation and scientific research.



Fishermen dry seaweed on a beach in Qionghai, Hainan province, on Monday. Processed into high-quality feed for marine creatures, the seaweed industry helps support both marine conservation efforts and local livelihoods. MENG ZHONGDE / FOR CHINA DAILY

Building on 37 data products included in the first batch released in June 2024, the updated catalog adds 10 global three-dimensional ocean datasets covering temperature, salinity, currents, waves and atmospheric pressure, as well as seven new statistical analysis products for global marine hydrological and meteorological data.

Since the first catalog was published, marine data services have been accessed more than 600,000 times by more than 100 government departments, research institutes and maritime enterprises, delivering more than 600 million data records, the ministry said.

China's marine monitoring capacity has expanded significantly in recent years, forming an integrated observation network that combines coastal stations, radar systems, buoys, research vessels, drones and satellite remote sensing.

The outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) calls for enhancing the protection and sustainable use of marine resources and accelerating the building of a maritime power.

In line with the plan, the ministry said it will continue advancing marine ecological protection and restoration, using high-level environmental protection to support the high-quality development of the marine economy.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:11 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:11 PM

CHINA

Shopping with your heart, not your head

Emotion-driven, experiential consumption the new retail driver

By **SHI JING** in Shanghai
shijing@chinadaily.com.cn





Left: Visitors enjoy themselves at the Shangxiahang historical and cultural street in Fuzhou, Fujian province, on May 2. LIN SHANCHUAN / XINHUA **Above:** Tourists visit the "scruffy dog" topiary in Jing'an district, Shanghai. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY





Left: A barista prepares coffee at the 2026 Yinchuan Coffee and Music Carnival in a forest park, Yinchuan, Ningxia Hui autonomous region, on May 4. YANG ZHISEN / XINHUA **Right:** Customers interact with dogs at a pet shop in Huzhou, Zhejiang province, on April 27. YI FAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Shanghai recently witnessed the birth of an unlikely internet sensation — a 5.2-meter-high "scruffy dog" topiary in central Shanghai's Jing'an district.

Originally designed for the 2026 Shanghai International Flower Show from April 18 to May 5, the West Highland White Terrier-shaped shrubbery, made up of more than 20 types of flowers and plants, has become so popular that the city decided to keep it on display for another three months. In less than a month, more than 30 million people have flocked to see it.

The local government has also invited people to give it a name based on its shape and the rapidly growing greenery it is made of.

The cute attraction, located in the outdoor area of Shanghai Suhe MIXC World, is also being credited with triggering skyrocketing sales in the vicinity.

Retailers located around the topiary reaped over 2 billion yuan ($295 million) in sales during the official exhibition period. Total sales revenue has jumped 49.22 percent year-on-year to nearly 61.6 million yuan since "scruffy dog" was unveiled. A total of 1.7 million consumers visited the mall over the period, up 192.53 percent from a year earlier.

"People have come for the scruffy dog. They linger, take pictures, then find themselves grabbing a coffee, sitting down for a meal, and strolling through the nearby shops. Wrapped in a sense of calm, consumption unfolded as a natural afterthought," officials from the commerce bureau of Jing'an district said.

Han Meiyi, a human resources specialist in Shanghai, is one of the many fans of the topiary puppy. She made a trip to the mall on a rainy day to attend an ongoing bread festival. Despite the weather, she encountered flocks of people wanting to see the novel attraction.

Han described the day as a "sweet memory", with the aroma of bread wafting in the air.

"I bought bread from five different bakeries, enjoyed two milk teas while shopping for bread, and of course, took pictures with the iconic scruffy dog, and loved every minute of the day," she said.

Emotional value

The topiary dog is now being considered for cultural and creative product development, according to Jing'an district officials.

At a news conference in mid-May, Shen Weihua, director of the Shanghai Municipal Commission of Commerce, defined the retail boost associated with the popular attraction as "emotion-driven consumption". The city will come up with more unconventional scenarios to provide new consumer experiences, he said, adding that stimulating consumption would be a major mission for the municipal government in the coming years.

The Chinese consumer market has entered a new age, according to Joanna Lu, a partner at consulting company Bain & Co. "The core of consumption is 'love'. People are looking for meaning and emotional value from different experiences. That is why consumption is more driven by scenarios, social groups and sentiments," she said.

> "When people have time, they can become easily bored. In other words, they are more willing to pay for experiences like studying abroad, making their life more colorful while fulfilling their childhood dream."
>
> **Wu Mianqing,** CEO of data service provider BigOne Lab

Liu Gongrun, deputy director at the CEIBS Lujiazui International Institute of Finance, said the Chinese consumer market has been undergoing a revolution, moving from buying tangible goods to savoring intangible services. Consumer satisfaction has been upgraded from goods to value, Liu said.

In 2025, China's sales of services grew 5.5 percent from a year earlier, 1.7 percentage points higher than that of goods, according to the National Bureau of Statistics.

Moreover, service consumption has consistently outpaced goods consumption for years.

A look at the consumption habits of wealthy Chinese also provides an insight into the changing consumer market, as industry figures predict future lifestyle trends.

Consumption in China has been rapidly transforming from "possessing things" to "prioritizing experiences", the Hurun Research Institute, which has been researching affluent Chinese for nearly three decades, said in a report in January.

The size of the Chinese high-end consumer market contracted 5 percent year-on-year to 1.56 trillion yuan in 2025. In addition, the super rich plan to cut their annual expenditure on luxury watches and jewelry by 10 percent over the next three years. However, they have increased their budgets for experience-based consumption, such as travel and health management, by 12 percent.

"The super rich no longer consider consumption as a tool to demonstrate their identity. Life quality and emotional satisfaction are of greater value to them," said Rupert Hoogewerf, founder and chief researcher of Hurun.

Worthiness wins

A similar consumption trend is happening among younger Chinese.

Guochao, or China chic, reflects their close connection to Chinese culture with aesthetic value and shopping experiences overtaking brand cachet, said Liu from the institute of finance.

The younger generation's greater demand for experiences is making the focus of domestic brands more international, as younger consumers are well-educated with a global outlook. This means brands will have to be more innovative to provide "extraordinary" experiences, Liu said.

Purchasing domestic brands can evolve from a one-time shopping spree to repeated purchases, he added.

"The core targets of the *guochao* brands, which are younger consumers aged between 20 and 30, are more rational and less easily drawn to the traditional internationally well-established brands. To them, consumption is an expression of their own value. The product's worthiness outweighs affordability when they buy something," Liu said.

According to market consultancy iiMedia Research, the *guochao* market size reached 2.5 trillion yuan in 2025, with the figure expected to top 3 trillion yuan in 2028.

The rise in China chic has also been boosted by inbound travelers looking for different consumer experiences in China, iiMedia analysts added.

The pursuit of new shopping experiences, however, is not restricted to categories or age groups.

China's domestic tourism market is a good example. It hit record numbers last year in both the number of trips taken and total spending, according to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

Domestic tourists made 6.52 billion trips throughout 2025, up 16.2 percent from a year earlier. Their travel spending jumped 9.5 percent year-on-year to 6.30 trillion yuan. "Immersive experiences" were listed as top priorities for traveling.

The elderly, those age 60 and above, were important contributors to the travel industry. According to the Chinese domestic travel agency HopeGoo, they accounted for over 70 percent of tourists who booked outbound luxury cruise trips and over 90 percent who took polar cruises. Their average expenditure on a single trip exceeded 12,000 yuan, higher than all other age demographics.

Their demands for tailored travel experiences have also increased.

International language training institution EF said it has seen elderly Chinese people's rising interest in overseas study programs. In 2019, only 3 percent of the program participants were aged above 50. But that ratio rose to 20 percent in 2023.

Retired doctors, engineers, teachers and company executives aged between 55 and 65 make up most of the participants.

The two- to four-week programs, priced at 20,000-70,000 yuan per person, are affordable for well-off people, EF said.

"When people have time, they can become easily bored. In other words, they are more willing to pay for experiences like studying abroad, making their life more colorful while fulfilling their childhood dream," said Wu Mianqing, CEO of data service provider BigOne Lab.

Importantly, the purchase of language courses by elderly Chinese travelers was preceded by the experience of overseas travel. "Based on my parents' experiences, they expressed strong willingness to learn English after several overseas trips. Now they have become loyal subscribers of a paid language-learning application. It forms a perfect loop for such travel service providers," Wu said.

A recovery in the capital market is likely to generate more income for Chinese consumers, making them more optimistic and confident to buy, he added.

Experiential, it's a thing

Some financial analysts argue that the Chinese consumer market has slowed down, but Qin Shuo, a Shanghai-based financial commentator, explained that this is only one side of the coin.

In certain situations, consumers see value-for-money purchases as the priority. However, when it comes to experience or sentiment-related consumption — such as travel or raising pets — they spend generously.

A "K-shaped" economy, where growth and decline are taking place simultaneously across different segments, has been used to describe the current Chinese consumer market.

But Qin believes that is an oversimplification of the bigger picture. It is true that the consumer price index has not been rising significantly, he said, but that is a reflection of prices, not the size of consumption. In addition, low prices are a result of strong supply, he said.

A more important factor is the maturity of Chinese consumers, who are looking for "high-quality and fair shopping experiences", according to Qin.

Online retailers, for example, have made products once only sold in first-tier cities available to consumers in lower-tier cities and counties.

Lu of Bain & Co said the current maturity of Chinese consumers should be measured against the development of consumerism in the country over the last five decades.

Before the 1980s — which was the age of scarcity of goods — consumption was all about "having it or not". Brands barely mattered. The market was driven by supply, which meant that if a company could make the product, someone would definitely buy it, Lu said.

Entering the 1990s, Chinese consumers began to tell the world who they were with what they had bought.

Between 2000 and 2010, there was an abundance of supply and Chinese consumers shopped for products to fit their taste, style and identity. Self-expression was the key reason for consumption during this period, Lu said.

"Chinese consumers now have a 'value awakening'," she said.

"More and more consumers are willing to pay for emotional value and spiritual satisfaction. Consumers are no longer buyers. They wish to express their emotions, seek out experiential scenarios, participate in culture and even co-create brand stories with each purchase," she said.

"All these demands have posed higher requirements on brands, pushing them to come up with deeper insights into human nature and more refined crafting of experiential settings," she added.



Visitors interact with an AI plush toy at the 2026 China New Cultural and Creative Market and Trendy Carnival in Beijing on May 16. CHEN XIAOGEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:11 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:11 PM

CULTURE



Ancient wisdom for global challenges

Sinologists explore the relevance of China's experiences to international issues, **Hu Yumeng** and **Ma Jingna** report in Lanzhou.

In a city where the ancient Silk Road still lingers in stone and wind, the Third World Conference of Sinologists unfolded not merely as an academic gathering, but as a lived encounter between civilizations.

Bringing together more than 300 Sinologists, policymakers and cultural practitioners from nearly 70 countries and regions, the conference on Wednesday in Dunhuang, Gansu province, explored how Chinese cultural values and development experiences can offer fresh perspectives on some of today's shared global challenges.

"Today, the world needs more dialogue than confrontation and more understanding than prejudice," said Joel Mikael Walker, a German content creator and practitioner of traditional Chinese medicine. "What Chinese culture addresses are some of the most universal questions facing humanity.

"Chinese culture has much to contribute to addressing these challenges. It is not a relic in a museum, but a living system of wisdom that continues to speak to the modern world."

Walker's perspective echoed one of the recurring themes throughout the conference: that Chinese culture is increasingly being viewed not only as a subject of historical study, but also as a source of contemporary insight.

"We live in a time of conflict, environmental pressures and growing anxiety," he said. "Concepts from Chinese philosophy offer valuable perspectives on many of the challenges facing the world today.

"The balance of yin and yang teaches us that differences can coexist. The idea of harmony between humanity and nature reminds us to reconcile with the environment. The concept of preventing disease before it occurs emphasizes foresight rather than remedy," Walker said. "These ideas are not only China's treasures. They belong to humanity."

Many Sinologists extended that discussion beyond culture to China's broader development experience.

Andrey Kortunov, former director-general of the Russian International Affairs Council, said one of the distinctive features of China's engagement with the world is its ability to understand the needs of other countries, particularly those in the Global South.

"There is a great deal of empathy in the Chinese approach to international engagement," Kortunov said. "China tries to understand what other nations need in terms of development and security, and how it might assist them."

He also highlighted flexibility and continuity as defining features of this approach.

"Consistency means predictability, and predictability brings trust," he said, noting that many countries regard China as a reliable long-term partner.

For Indian scholar Saheli Chattaraj, associate professor of China studies at Somaiya Vidyavihar University, China's experience offers practical lessons for other large developing countries facing complex governance challenges.

Having conducted research on local governance and environmental management in Zhejiang province for years, she said many of the challenges China has confronted, from urbanization to pollution management, are familiar to India.

"China and India share many similarities as populous and diverse countries," she said. "What interests me is how different regions in China have explored solutions and adapted policies to local conditions."

Chiara Romagnoli, director of the Interdepartmental Center for Studies and Documentation on China and East Asia at Roma Tre University, said the outside world often overlooks China's diversity and complexity.

"Many people think China is a homogeneous society, but in fact it is diverse and complex. That is where its richness lies," she said.

Romagnoli added that China's development philosophy also carries a broader message.

"Development should not belong to one country alone. More countries should benefit from it. Development is for all humanity," she said.

For Taing Mengchhong, the Cambodian director of the Confucius Institute at the Royal Academy of Cambodia, one of the most significant contributions of Chinese modernization is that it has expanded the global imagination of what modernization can look like.

"Chinese modernization has reshaped the picture of modernization in the world," he said. "Modernization was once associated mainly with a small number of developed countries with relatively small populations. China has shown that a country with more than 1.4 billion people can achieve modernization, changing the global landscape of development."

He noted that China's experience demonstrates that modernization is not synonymous with Westernization.

"Developing countries should explore modernization paths that fit their own national conditions, cultures and realities," he said.

Taing Mengchhong pointed to the Phnom Penh-Sihanoukville Expressway, Cambodia's first expressway and a flagship Belt and Road project, as an example of how China-Cambodia cooperation has improved people's lives. The project has shortened travel times, improved logistics and strengthened regional connectivity.

"The achievements of Cambodia-China cooperation must be visible to ordinary people," he said. "Only when people can see and experience the benefits in their daily lives can they truly understand the value of our partnership."

Sinologists also highlighted that people-to-people exchanges matter most in the current era for promoting civilizational dialogue.

"Without people-to-people exchanges, any policies, strategies, decisions or initiatives cannot work," said Iljaz Spahiu, former minister-counselor at the Albanian embassy in China. "This is a foundational pillar of enhancing international relations."

"We're living in a difficult time, faced with many shared challenges," said Mohamed Rasheed, chairman and founder of the China-Maldives Cultural Association. "Chinese philosophy, which advocates peace, coexistence and dialogue, is highly valued today by humanity for its contribution to prosperity. When you promote Chinese culture, it encourages openness to coexist with other cultures and to appreciate the strengths of others."

Yang Mingze contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at huyumeng@chinadaily.com.cn







Above and left: Participants of the Third World Conference of Sinologists try their hand at Chinese calligraphy, writing the Chinese character *fu* (fortune). **Below left:** A guest paints a wood carving of flying apsaras at a cultural experience area during the conference. **Below right:** Another guest gets acupuncture treatment at the area during the conference. PHOTOS BY YANG MINGZE / CHINA DAILY

The man taking Yuju Opera to audiences across the world

By ZHANG KUN in Shanghai
zhangkun@chinadaily.com.cn





Scenes from the Yuju Opera production *Cheng Ying Rescues the Orphan*. It was one of 10 productions staged in Shanghai from May 21 to last Wednesday by winners of the Plum Blossom Award, China's highest honor in theater. PHOTOS BY CHEN ZUDE AND ZHOU SHUNLIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Ten winners of the Plum Blossom Award, China's highest theatrical honor, gathered in Shanghai from May 21 to last Wednesday to showcase their masterpieces to industry professionals from around the world.

Among them was Li Shujian, a veteran of Yuju — a folk opera originating from Central China's Henan province. On May 27 and 28, Li and the Henan No 2 Yuju Opera Theater staged two performances of *Cheng Ying Rescues the Orphan* at Wanping Theater. Based on Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) playwright Ji Junxiang's classic, the opera is often dubbed "China's *Hamlet*", as it highlights themes of sacrifice and loyalty that resonate across cultures.

Commenting on the production's raw power, Guillaume Soulard, director of France's Le Grand Angle theater, said, "The story is so strong that five minutes after the show, you are still in it ... It becomes part of your life."

Dagmar Bednarikova, a member of the Presidium of Czech ITI (International Theater Institute) Centre, said she would really recommend the show to her friends. She added, "Because it is original ... we do not see it in Europe very often, so it's great to be able to come to China to see it here."

Han Jihua, a Chinese opera enthusiast and middle school teacher from Nanjing, Jiangsu province, took the high-speed train to Shanghai for the opera. Li is his favorite artist, Han told China Daily on the opening night.

"He is particularly good at integrating singing with his spoken lines. He masterfully blends his singing with clear narrative delivery and as such has a strong emotional impact. His powerful performance is widely beloved among folk opera lovers all over the country, and he is especially admired for his portrayal of tragic heroes," he said.

With a history of just 300 years, Yuju Opera is relatively new compared to Peking Opera or Kunqu Opera. Yet, Li explained, it is one of China's most widespread local operas, boasting 163 professional troupes and over 2,000 private ones. In rural Henan, Li recalled performing for crowds exceeding 50,000. "People bring their own stools and packed lunches," he told China Daily. In one scene, as Li portrays an elderly beggar walking through the crowd, "people put food and even cash in my basket. That is how they express their love".

Now 64 and a troupe leader for 34 years, Li has taken this regional art form global. Since its premiere in 2002, *Cheng Ying Rescues the Orphan*, with scripts by Chen Yongquan, has been performed over 2,100 times and adapted into more than 20 other folk opera styles. It has toured 30 countries, from Broadway to the Chinese-built cruise ship *Adora Magic City*.

Taking a dialect-based opera internationally posed challenges. During a 2006 tour of Italy, poor translations led to comical errors, such as rendering "my wife" as "my old woman". To solve this, Li enlisted Wang Shaojun, director of the Performance Department at the National Academy of Chinese Theatre Arts, to refine the scripts. Today, the opera features subtitles in seven languages.

To attract younger audiences, Li has also embraced the digital age. A pioneer on Douyin (the Chinese TikTok), he once earned 160,000 yuan ($22,000) from a single three-hour livestream. "He who does not embrace the internet will be abandoned by the times," he said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:11 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:11 PM



CLASSICS KEEP ENDURING IN MODERN TIMES

Scholars are finding new relevance in the study of time-honored texts as technology reshapes societies across civilizations, **Wang Ru** reports.

Retold for centuries, the story of Prometheus has evolved from a tale of power struggle into a symbol of revolution and enlightenment. In some interpretations, Prometheus, the Titan who stole fire from the gods, reflects tensions between migrants and locals.

Later, poets such as Percy Shelley (1792-1822) recast him as a tragic hero who defied authority.

That image resonated with Chinese intellectuals in the early 20th century, who invoked Prometheus as a metaphor for pioneering revolutionaries introducing Marxism to China.

"Mythological stories are an important focus of classical studies," says Huang Yue, a professor of comparative mythology at Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications.

"Prometheus remains widely known because generation after generation has continued to tell his story. People have interpreted and shared it in different ways. That process is important because classics provide intellectual resources that can inspire modern people. This is the value of classical studies today."

Traditionally defined as the study, translation and interpretation of ancient Greek and Roman texts, classical studies have gained renewed momentum in recent years, particularly following the World Conference of Classics held in Beijing in 2024.

The event brought together more than 400 scholars from over 30 countries and regions to discuss the contemporary relevance and global significance of classical studies.

The second edition of the event is taking place on Tuesday and Wednesday in Athens, Greece.

He Fangying, director of the Research Center for Classical Civilization at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, says the field can be traced back to the Hellenistic Period, when philosophers from across regions that were once dominated by Alexander the Great reinterpreted ancient Greek works. As a formal discipline, however, it was established at the University of Goettingen in Germany in 1777.

"In the past, Western scholars didn't include the study of other ancient civilizations in their definition of 'classical studies'. For example, research on Mesopotamian, ancient Egyptian and Chinese classics was categorized under 'Oriental studies'," she says. "That reflected a perspective that viewed these cultures through a Western lens."

Today, however, the definition of classical studies has broadened, particularly among Chinese scholars.

Li Xinwei, director of the Chinese School of Classical Studies at Athens, says, "We believe that every ancient civilization has its own classical period, one that continues to exert a profound influence on its modern development ... Therefore, the scope of classical studies should include the classical works of all civilizations."

The expanded definition raises a further question: Why do the classics still matter in the modern world?

According to Huang, ancient texts offer wisdom that remains relevant to contemporary challenges.

"Throughout history, people have confronted many of the same issues — ecological crises, regional conflicts, or tensions between civilizations," Huang says.

"Can we learn from how earlier generations responded to these challenges? Classics provide the source code of a culture, or more precisely, the foundational elements of a nation's cultural identity."

He, director of the Research Center for Classical Civilization, adds that classical studies also offer a broader perspective on current affairs. Modern disciplines are increasingly specialized, often separating literature, history, philosophy, and politics into distinct fields. Classical studies, by contrast, help reveal the connections among them, providing a more panoramic understanding of the human experience.

Material progress

Lou Lin, a professor of classics at Sichuan University in Chengdu, Sichuan province, reflects on the role of technology in shaping the modern world.

"Strictly speaking, the modern world is largely defined by technology. It gives us the impression that humanity is constantly progressing because our material lives continue to improve," he says.

"But when it comes to complex questions such as human nature, philosophy and social order, it is difficult to argue that our understanding is deeper than that of people who lived 2,000 years ago."

Lou is particularly drawn to the ideas of French philosopher Simone Weil (1909–43). While technology and systems can help people understand the world in objective ways, Weil says, essential aspects of humanity remain beyond their reach.

"Such elements, I guess, refer to the relationship between humans and nature, a theme explored extensively in classical texts," says Lou.

One example can be found in *Zhuangzi*, a foundational Taoist text in ancient China. Philosopher Zhuangzi (369-286 BC) wrote: "Heaven and earth are born with me; all things are one with me." The idea emphasizes the inseparable bond between humanity and nature.

In a world where many people experience isolation and alienation, Lou believes such reflections can help balance society's heavy emphasis on technology.

"That sense of disconnection can lead to genuine inner emptiness," he says. "The reflections on human nature and humanity's relationship with nature found in classical texts remain valuable today."

Lou also recalls a story from the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279).

Philosopher Zhu Xi (1130-1200) once invited fellow thinker Lu Jiuyuan (1139-93) to lecture at the Bailudong Academy in present-day Jiangxi province. Lu highlighted the idea that "a man of virtue is guided by righteousness; a petty man, by personal gain" from *The Analects* (*Lunyu*), a compilation of the ideas of Confucius.

According to Lu, the lesson was not simply about choosing between right and wrong. Rather, it encouraged learners to clarify the purpose of their studies from the outset.

"I think this offers an important lesson for our time. In an era dominated by artificial intelligence, we still need to ask fundamental questions: What are my aspirations? What gives my life meaning? Technology alone cannot answer such questions, but classics offer valuable insights," Lou says.

He Fangying notes that concerns about technology are not unique to the modern age.

She points to a story in *Homer's Epics* in which Odysseus passes through the island of Scheria, where advanced technology allows fruit to ripen automatically and ships to navigate according to people's thoughts. Despite such prosperity, the kingdom declines after being punished by Poseidon, the god of the sea. The story has been interpreted as a warning against excessive reliance on technology while neglecting human virtues.

"It reminds us that while we enjoy the convenience technology brings, we should also remain aware of its potential risks," says He.

Mutual learning

Beyond helping individuals navigate modern challenges, ancient texts also encourage cultural exchange and mutual learning — forces that have long driven the development of civilizations.

In *Timaeus*, a book of dialogues written by the ancient Greek philosopher Plato (427-347 BC), Athenian statesman Solon travels to Egypt and discovers records preserving knowledge that had long been lost in Greece.

"This is a story Plato heard and recorded. Maybe it's not historical fact, but it probably contains traces of reality," says Lou, adding that in *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, one of the most important accounts of the lives of the West's best-known philosophers, author Diogenes Laertius (flourished in the third century) also mentioned that philosophy was influenced by ancient Egypt.

Evgenios Kalpyris, the Greek ambassador to China, highlights the value of communication between Greek and Chinese civilizations, mentioning that their differences can lead to positive results.

"Historical records indicate that the earliest encounter between Chinese and Greek civilizations dates back at least 2,400 years," says Kalpyris.

"We have learned to seek common ground while respecting differences. We do not view differences as barriers. On the contrary, they can promote coordination and harmony. Differences create opportunities for remarkable outcomes."

He points to differing views on human nature. Chinese philosopher Mencius (372-289 BC) believed human nature is good, while another philosopher, Xunzi (313-238 BC), believed it is inherently evil. Ancient Greek philosophers generally viewed human nature as neutral. Despite these differences, all believed that education and moral cultivation could help individuals grow.

Education and moral development are still among the most effective ways to address many of the world's challenges, Kalpyris says.

Inspired by such lessons, modern societies increasingly recognize the value of dialogue among civilizations. One example is the establishment of the Chinese School of Classical Studies at Athens following the inaugural World Conference of Classics in 2024.

According to Li, the school's director, researchers from the school visited more than 50 sites across Greece during the past year, selected the Aggelokastro site for a joint excavation project with Greek archaeologists, and organized exhibitions, lectures and academic events in Athens.

"In the past, Chinese researchers often relied on existing Western scholarship without access to first-hand materials," Li says.

"Therefore, we established this school to gain firsthand knowledge through archaeological research and the study of Greek civilization, including its history, philosophy and art. This will lay a foundation for further study. Only on that basis can equal dialogue with Western scholars generate new ideas."

The second World Conference of Classics is another effort to deepen exchanges among civilizations in a new era.

He Fangying hopes the conference will encourage further discussion on topics such as virtue, social order, friendship and technology.

"This time, Chinese classical studies will be presented at the very birthplace of Western civilization. This is a milestone in the history of world civilizations," says He.

Contact the writer at wangru1@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

Soundbites

Huang Yue, *a professor focusing on comparative mythology at Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications*

Mythical studies not only provide us with evidence of the lives and environments of ancient people, but also allow us to see how our civilizations have gradually advanced to the present day. ... By tracing the earliest versions of a myth, we can then examine how it undergoes minor adjustments under the pens of different writers and across various books and narratives. In doing so, we feel as if we have found mirrors through which we can view the spiritual history of a nation.

Li Xinwei, *director of Chinese School of Classical Studies at Athens*

When we talk about classical studies in China, they extend beyond the traditional concept of ancient Greek and Roman classics.
We believe that every civilization has its own classical era. China's classical era has had a profound and lasting influence on its entire historical path, its modern development, and the formation of its identity. It has also deeply shaped China's cultural confidence and the modernization process with Chinese characteristics. Its present and future are inseparable from the inheritance of its own traditions.

Lou Lin, *a professor of classics at Sichuan University*

The core concept of classical education is learning to become a fully realized human being. It is difficult to say that classical teachings can provide ready-made solutions to modern problems. However, when it comes to a person's cultivation, the classics may help one grow into a more complete, more aspirational, and more capable individual.
Such a person should be better able to solve problems. This may well be one of the most important applications of classical studies in modern times.

He Fangying, *director of the Research Center for Classical Civilization at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences*

Each generation has its own ancient past, and every ancient generation responded to the challenges of its time, as well as those of earlier times. From this perspective, classical studies are constantly being renewed.
We are always preceded by earlier generations, and we always look toward the future. ...
Whether it is Homer from more than 2,000 years ago or China's Confucius, they were figures from distant eras, yet they can also be our friends in the modern age.

Evgenios Kalpyris, *the Greek ambassador to China*

The theory of yin and yang has extensive influence on Western countries.
Although yin and yang are different in nature, they complement and connect with each other, culminating in harmony. ... We have witnessed wisdom in the two civilizations, seeing how we have sought common ground while preserving our differences.
We have never considered differences as negative or barriers, but rather as opportunities to boost coordination and harmony.
Differences can create exceptional results.

ILLUSTRATION BY CHEN XINYUE, CHEN ZIXUAN, LAN LAN AND WANG YI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:11 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:11 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Strategic guidance keeps China-DPRK ties advancing with times, achieving new progress

General Secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and President Xi Jinping's state visit to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on Monday and Tuesday presents an opportunity to strengthen top-level planning and strategic guidance for China-DPRK relations in the new era.

The visit has not only preserved the legacy of China-DPRK relations as good neighbors, good friends and good comrades but also helped lay out the practical priorities for the future development of relations.

During his meeting with Kim Jong-un, general secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea and president of the State Affairs of the DPRK, in Pyongyang on Monday, Xi put forward four proposals for advancing bilateral relations: The two sides should be guided by the high-level exchanges and consolidate the foundation of political mutual trust; stay committed to the goal of delivering benefits to the people and elevate the level of practical cooperation; uphold the inheritance of friendship as a driving force and strengthen the bonds between their peoples; and uphold fairness and justice as a guiding principle to enrich the substance of strategic coordination.

This provides strategic guidelines for the healthy and stable development of China-DPRK relations.

High-level exchanges have long played an important role in the development of China-DPRK relations. As the 65th anniversary of the China-DPRK Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance is commemorated this year, increased interaction at all levels between the two sides will help consolidate political trust and generate sustained momentum for bilateral cooperation.

Both countries are pursuing their respective development goals and have broad opportunities to deepen cooperation in economic and social fields. China stands ready to work with the DPRK to strengthen the alignment of development strategies, and expand practical cooperation in such areas as economy and trade, agriculture, construction, science and technology, and health care, to bring greater benefits to the two peoples.

Xi called on both sides to leverage the opportunity of the full reopening of border crossings and the resumption of civil aviation flights and international passenger trains to increase people-to-people exchanges and foster mutual interaction.

Equally significant is the emphasis placed on carrying forward the traditional friendship between the two peoples. The traditional friendship between China and the DPRK, forged in blood, is a valuable shared asset of the two peoples. Today, educational cooperation, youth exchanges, cultural programs and academic engagement are helping ensure the friendship continues to flourish.

As regional and global dynamics become increasingly complex and volatile, it is imperative that the two sides strengthen their strategic coordination on international and regional affairs to safeguard their common interests and promote stability. In doing so, the two countries can better safeguard their respective sovereignty, security and development interests, and jointly promote regional peace and development.

Xi said in a signed article published by Rodong Sinmun, the official newspaper of the DPRK, ahead of his visit, that the two sides should uphold the international system with the United Nations at its core and the international order based on international law. In the process, they should oppose hegemonism and power politics, and reject any scheme or action aimed at reviving militarism and undermining regional security and stability.

No matter how the international situation changes, the CPC and the Chinese government's firm stance on highly valuing the China-DPRK traditional friendship will not change, the firm support for Kim in leading the DPRK's socialist cause will not change, and the firm commitment to safeguarding the shared interests of the two countries and preserving a favorable strategic environment will not change, Xi said in the meeting.

The two sides should make concerted efforts to translate the important consensus reached by the two leaders during the visit into concrete actions and tangible outcomes to keep bilateral relations advancing with the times and achieve greater progress.

Drawing from the past for the future

The second World Conference of Classics is being held in Athens, Greece, on Tuesday and Wednesday. With the theme "Dialogue between Ancient and Modern: Contemporary Inspirations from Classical Wisdom", it brings together leading scholars in classical studies, as well as experts in civilization, culture and archaeology from China and other countries, to discuss issues related to classical civilizations and promote academic exchanges and consensus-building in global classical studies.

The event serves as a timely reminder of the importance of cultural exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations in an era marked by geopolitical tensions and deep-seated mistrust.

It has long been realized that ancient Eastern Mediterranean civilization is not the only form of civilization, nor is it the best. There is a heritage of civilization all over the world, and the acceptance of that heritage is important for countries to get along.

There is a misconception about classics that we study ancient times to gain certain wisdom or practices that can be directly borrowed. But the real significance of classics is that they help us understand the causes of some of the most consequential decisions in history. They provide practical food for thought for political theory and political thinking today.

For instance, the Thucydides trap is much talked about today. Knowing its origins helps us better understand if it is relevant today and, if so, how it can be avoided.

Civilizations are wellsprings of wisdom, embodying a vast repository of rational and practical knowledge about understanding and transforming the world. They have always thrived through exchanges and interaction. The ancient Silk Road, for instance, was not merely a trade route but a conduit for cultural, technological and philosophical exchanges between the East and the West.

All this underscores the potential of civilizational dialogue to foster mutual understanding and cooperation, two things the world is in dire need of today.

The public goods China has put forward in recent years — such as the Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative, Global Civilization Initiative and Global Governance Initiative that are foundational for the building of a community with a shared future for humanity — are frameworks deeply rooted in the traditional Chinese notion that common challenges require collective action and shared solutions. Their resonance comes from the belief in ancient times in an ethical community — a group of individuals who share common ethical values and principles, working collectively to maintain social harmony and justice. In ancient times, these communities were often localized, such as within a village or kingdom, where shared values and norms governed behavior.

The importance of an ethical community lies in its ability to foster cooperation, mutual respect and a sense of belonging among its members, which are essential for societal stability and well-being. It is thus easy to see why China's proposals have been widely accepted by those countries hoping to build a more harmonious world. From the Belt and Road Initiative to the Global Governance Initiative and through mechanisms such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, China is steadfastly striving to foster a sense of interconnectedness and a more ethical and collaborative global community based on mutual respect and the pursuit of shared development.

Mutual understanding and respect are crucial for the success of a harmonious global community. By engaging in cultural exchange and dialogue, nations can gain insights into different civilizational frameworks and work toward common goals. China's emphasis on harmony and reciprocity in international relations, influenced by Confucian values such as the importance of moral and righteous behavior and the cultivation of virtues, can serve as a foundation for building trust and cooperation among diverse nations.

Such classical wisdom offers inspiration for enriching societal values and addressing pressing global issues, as the cultivation of mutual understanding and respect is essential for building a harmonious world and finding solutions to the common challenges humanity faces.

As scholars from different countries convene in Greece, they will walk where Plato taught and Aristotle spoke. But their deeper task is to make it clear that ancient wisdom can still guide modern action. As we look to the future, the lessons of the past can continue to illuminate the path to a more harmonious and interconnected global community.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Jin Ding



Opinion Line

Who bears cost for unbearable weight of resource-hungry AI?

Given the boom in artificial intelligence, the industry has been made to look like it is weightless and comes without cost. But there is no such thing as a free lunch.

A growing body of research is shedding light on the uncomfortable reality that AI is emerging as one of the world's most resource-hungry industries. According to a recent report by the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health, by 2030, AI-driven data centers could consume 945 terawatt-hours of electricity annually — roughly triple the combined electricity consumption of Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nigeria. Their water use could also reach levels equivalent to the basic needs of 1.3 billion people.

For years, Silicon Valley sold the digital economy as a cleaner alternative to heavy industry. The internet was supposed to dematerialize economic activity. Instead, AI is rematerializing it. The cloud turns out to be made of steel, concrete, copper, electricity and water.

The challenge is that AI companies currently enjoy a remarkable privilege: they are allowed to externalize a significant portion of their environmental costs.

When a data center is built in a drought-prone region, local residents often pay the price through strained water supplies and higher utility bills. When electricity grids require upgrades to accommodate massive computing clusters, the costs are frequently socialized while the profits remain private. Gains accrue to shareholders and technology executives; infrastructure burden falls on everyone else.

It is astonishing that many AI companies disclose model capabilities in meticulous detail while revealing comparatively little about the electricity, water and land footprints of their systems. The European Union is already moving toward mandatory sustainability disclosures for large data centers. That should become the global norm. People have a right to know how much water a chatbot consumes, just as consumers know the fuel efficiency of a car.

Economists have long argued that markets work best when costs are visible. If an AI model requires vast computing resources, that expense should be reflected in its business model rather than hidden in public utility bills. By extension, AI companies should pay the full costs of grid expansion, water extraction and environmental mitigation associated with their operations. Governments should reward efficiency rather than scale alone. The industry's current incentive structure resembles an arms race in which larger models automatically attract more investment. Yet UNESCO research suggests that smarter design and model optimization can dramatically reduce energy consumption without sacrificing performance. The future of AI should be measured not only by intelligence per parameter, but by intelligence per watt.

Policymakers should resist the temptation to frame this as a choice between innovation and regulation. It is neither. Aviation did not flourish because governments ignored safety. The pharmaceutical industry did not gain legitimacy by avoiding oversight. The most successful technological revolutions have always combined entrepreneurial dynamism with public guardrails.

AI's environmental footprint is not an argument against AI. Indeed, the technology may help optimize power grids, accelerate scientific discovery and improve climate forecasting. But those benefits will lose legitimacy if communities conclude that they are sacrificing water, land and affordable electricity so that technology companies can train ever-larger models.

The defining question for the next decade, therefore, is not whether AI will become more powerful. It almost certainly will. The question is whether society can ensure that the industry's resource bill is paid by those generating it, rather than by everyone else. If AI is to become humanity's most transformative technology, it must first learn a very human lesson: there is no such thing as a free kilowatt-hour.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

SCO cooperation narrowing regional digital divide

Editor's note: *The inauguration of the China-Shanghai Cooperation Organization joint laboratory for digital and intelligent applications and the China-SCO computing power industry alliance in Tianjin marks a significant step forward in the SCO's digital development. People's Daily Overseas Edition spoke to Zhu Shuai, a researcher at the China Center for Information Industry Development, and Xiao Bin, a researcher at the Institute of Russian, Eastern European and Central Asian Studies in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, to discuss this development. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

The establishment of the laboratory and the alliance addresses two critical elements of the global digital transformation: computing power and scenario applications. This is not only an upgrade in technological cooperation, but also the materialization of a new generation of regional digital infrastructure.

The SCO's digital cooperation initiatives increasingly focus on data and computing power, strengthening the foundation for regional industrial collaboration. Progress in digital infrastructure has accelerated, with cross-border fiber-optic networks, big data centers and 5G facilities extending further into Central and South Asia. This helps narrow the region's digital divide.

At the same time, thanks to the integration of industries and trade, technologies such as smart customs systems, electronic clearance services, Silk Road e-commerce platforms and digital freight train services are making cross-border trade more efficient and reducing transaction costs.

Years of security and economic cooperation have fostered a high degree of political trust within the SCO, creating favorable conditions for cross-border data flows and cybersecurity cooperation.

Also, the diversity of SCO members generates strong complementarities. China has emerged as a major player in areas such as computing power, large artificial intelligence models and embodied intelligence, while countries in Central and South Asia have rapidly growing markets, pressing digital transformation needs and demographic potential.

The SCO's digital cooperation is guided by the principles of equal consultation and respect for the data sovereignty of its member states.

Additionally, the SCO's digital agenda is increasingly aligned with the Belt and Road Initiative, gradually forming a cooperation framework that combines platforms, laboratories, alliances and projects. This model promotes coordinated progress in areas ranging from data connectivity and regulatory alignment to talent development.

For regional economies, digital and intelligence cooperation can help modernize traditional sectors such as energy, agriculture and logistics, foster new drivers of growth and enhance the resilience of regional industry and supply chains.

From a broader international perspective, this cooperation reflects an open, inclusive and mutually beneficial approach to digital governance. It demonstrates that countries at different stages of development can work together through consultation and cooperation to build a secure and transparent digital ecosystem, offering valuable experience for global digital governance.

Efforts will continue to strengthen regional digital infrastructure connectivity and develop data markets. Greater emphasis will be placed on integrating digital technologies into economic and social development and advancing coordination on cross-border data governance.

Cooperation in digital talent cultivation and green digital transformation is also likely to expand, ensuring that digitalization and sustainable development progress in tandem. By focusing on practical cooperation and enhancing technological capabilities, the SCO can support economic growth, regional prosperity and long-term development across its member states.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:11 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:11 PM

VIEWS

Sophia Papaioannou

From argument to accord in ancient debates

The rhetorical traditions of ancient China and ancient Greece are among the most influential systems of communication in world history. Although both cultures developed sophisticated theories of persuasion during the same periods in history, they differed significantly because they emerged from distinct philosophical, social and cosmological assumptions.

The study of Pre-Qin (221-206 BC) rhetoric of Wei Yongkang, a scholar from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, identifies three defining features: harmony, self-effacement and paradox.

These characteristics contrast sharply with the argumentative, individualistic and logical orientation of Greek rhetoric associated with Aristotle, Plato and later Roman theorists such as Quintilian.

A major difference between the two traditions concerns the purpose of discourse. Greek rhetoric was fundamentally agonistic, developing within democratic city-states where public debate, legal disputes and political competition shaped civic life.

Aristotle defined rhetoric as the ability to discover the available means of persuasion in any situation, emphasizing effectiveness, argumentation and intellectual victory.

Pre-Qin Chinese rhetoric, by contrast, sought primarily to preserve harmony rather than to win debates. It focused on expressing one's position without creating disruption or social conflict.

Rooted in Confucian and Daoist thought, communication was understood as part of a broader ethical and cosmic order. The rhetor's task was therefore not simply to persuade but also to maintain proper social relationships and align discourse with the Dao.

These differing aims produced contrasting ideals of the speaker. Greek rhetoric elevated the individual rhetor, stressing visible authority, confidence and personal distinction. Aristotle's concept of ethos emphasized the persuasive force of character, while Roman rhetoric celebrated the eloquent statesman. Public speaking in the Greco-Roman world was often performative and self-assertive.

Chinese rhetoric instead cultivated humility and restraint. Wei describes this quality as "self-effacement", with the speakers avoiding overt self-assertion and minimizing the intrusion of personal ego into the discourse. Scholars such as Geoffrey E. R. Lloyd have contrasted the "agonistic Greeks" with the "irenic Chinese".

Whereas Greek and Roman rhetoric encouraged individual advancement, Chinese rhetoric prioritized social harmony and collective stability. Legitimacy depended less on originality than on alignment with accepted moral and cosmological principles.

The distinction also appears in rhetorical structure. Greco-Roman rhetoric generally favored deductive organization: a thesis was stated clearly and supported through systematic argument. This reflected the Greek commitment to analytical reasoning and logical progression.

Chinese rhetoric, on the other hand, was indirect and inductive. Ideas emerged gradually, and their meaning depended heavily on context, implication and shared cultural assumptions.

Direct confrontation risked damaging social harmony, so the discourse tended to appear subtle, elliptical, or understated from a Western perspective.

The philosophical foundations of the two traditions also diverged. Greek rhetoric developed alongside formal logic and philosophical inquiry. Thinkers from the Sophists to Aristotle explored questions of truth, reason and epistemology, and persuasive speech was judged according to coherence and argumentative rigor.

Pre-Qin Chinese rhetoric did not reject logic — Mohist thinkers demonstrated considerable logical sophistication — but it did not treat logic as the highest source of knowledge. Chinese thought emphasized holistic and relational understanding rather than strict deduction. Consequently, rhetoric relied heavily on analogy, paradox and contextual meaning. Daoist texts such as the *Dao De Jing* illustrate this tendency through statements that challenge linear reasoning.

The idea that "good men do not argue" reflects a rhetorical ideal in which persuasion can arise through non-assertion.

This paradoxical approach marks one of the clearest contrasts with Greek rhetoric. Greek practice generally assumed that persuasion required active argument and explicit proof.

Daoist rhetoric, however, promoted the principle of *wu-wei*, or "action through non-action". In rhetorical terms, this meant persuading indirectly rather than overwhelming audiences through forceful reasoning. Ambiguity and openness were treated not as weaknesses but as deliberate strategies encouraging reflection and participation.

The two traditions also differed in their understanding of truth and authority. Greek rhetoric often centered on discovering or defending the truth through debate.

Chinese rhetoric, especially within Confucianism, linked effective speech to sincerity, ritual propriety and moral trustworthiness. Pivotal is the principle that rhetoric should be oriented toward establishing trust.

Credibility depended less on individual reputation than on one's place within a moral and social network.

Despite these differences, the traditions shared important similarities. Both recognized language as a powerful force capable of shaping society and influencing human behavior. Both attached ethical significance to communication and viewed rhetoric as more than ornamental language.

Both traditions also emerged during periods of political instability and intellectual pluralism. The Warring States Period (475-221 BC) in China and the democratic experiments of classical Greece each stimulated reflection on persuasion, governance and social order. In both civilizations, rhetoric developed as a practical response to conflict and the need to influence others.

Ultimately, the comparison reveals two complementary visions of communication.

Greek rhetoric privileges individuality, logical demonstration and persuasive mastery, while Chinese rhetoric emphasizes harmony, contextual sensitivity and relational balance. Greek rhetoric seeks victory through argument; Chinese rhetoric often seeks understanding through subtlety and restraint.

In today's globalized world, studying these traditions together offers valuable insights into intercultural communication.

Greek rhetoric highlights the importance of clarity, reason and public debate, whereas Chinese rhetoric emphasizes humility, relational awareness and the ethical responsibilities of discourse.

Together, they broaden our understanding of rhetoric and demonstrate the diversity of human communicative practices.

The author is a professor of Latin literature in the Faculty of Philology at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

Jin Fangting

Civilizations illuminating one another through dialogue

The second World Conference of Classics is being held in Athens, Greece, on Tuesday and Wednesday, under the theme "Dialogue between Ancient and Modern: Contemporary Inspirations from Classical Wisdom".

Since the inaugural conference convened in Beijing in 2024, the joint hosting of this event by China and Greece, together with the establishment of the Chinese School of Classical Studies at Athens, has created a new platform for the exchange and mutual civilizational learning between China, Greece and the broader international community alike.

A joint initiative titled "Illuminating Humanity's Path Forward with Classical Wisdom" is to be announced at the conference, alongside the launch of the "Global Scholar Residency and Exchange Program" of the Chinese School of Classical Studies.

Following the conference, participants will be invited to visit the Angelokastro archaeological site, the first joint Sino-Greek archaeological project, moving from discursive dialogue toward substantive collaboration in joint archaeology and youth exchange programs.

Classical studies is an epistemological and methodological key capable of moving civilizational exchange from surface-level dialogue to genuine mutual understanding.

But to achieve this depth of mutual learning, Chinese classical scholarship must go beyond the passive acceptance of existing academic frameworks and establish a comparative discourse that reflects China's own scholarly subjectivity.

Comparative research between ancient China and ancient Greece is precisely the arena in which such a discourse can be built, tested and refined.

The World Conference of Classics is reshaping the overall landscape of comparative and mutual learning research between ancient China and ancient Greece in the following respects.

First, testing comparative discourse through joint archaeology and substantive collaboration.

One of the most defining transformations of the Second World Conference of Classics has been the forging of a closer bond between academic discourse and fieldwork practice.

The Angelokastro Archaeological Project was officially launched in April, marking the first time Chinese scholars have taken a leading role in an archaeological project at the very heart of Western classical civilization.

The project focuses on the Aetolian region of Greece, which during the Hellenistic period served as a nexus of extensive cultural exchange across the Eurasian continent.

Archaeologists hope that excavation will bring to light early evidence of long-distance trade networks.

This collaborative venture signals a broader shift: the comparative study of civilizations is moving beyond textual analogy toward an evidence-based dialogue rooted in material remains.

It is hoped that joint archaeology will serve as a catalyst for building a comparative framework — one grounded in China's own scholarly traditions yet fully engaged with Greek and international academia — where discourse and fieldwork reinforce and validate each other.

Second, talent development in Sino-Greek comparative studies — equally versed in Confucius and Plato.

These words speak directly to the most tangible human foundations sustaining Sino-Greek comparative research.

Over more than two decades, classical education in China has established well-structured training programs at Peking University, Tsinghua University, Renmin University of China, Sun Yat-sen University and Chongqing University, among others.

A new generation of young and mid-career scholars, deeply grounded in Chinese classical literature and internationally minded, has risen rapidly, making substantial strides in their command of ancient Greek, Latin and other classical languages, as well as in the close reading of classical texts.

Third, building an equal and open comparative dialogue across civilizations.

Classical studies can serve as a powerful bridge in international cultural exchange, bringing together scholars from different countries to deepen mutual understanding through shared inquiry, built on respect for each other's heritage.

To truly achieve this, we must move beyond the long-standing practice of interpreting Chinese civilization solely through borrowed frameworks.

Building a comparative discourse that reflects China's own scholarly voice calls for the principle of "two-way interpretation" — treating the core concepts and modes of thought within Chinese civilization as an independent knowledge system, and thereby offering the global classical studies community a truly dialogic comparative framework.

This effort both enriches existing comparative paradigms and meaningfully advances the vision of civilizational dialogue.

In this sense, classical studies hold the key to deeper exchanges between civilizations precisely because it does not merely study their differences, but asks how civilizations can speak to one another across those differences — and illuminate each other through dialogue.

With this in mind, we call on the scholarly community to take a more proactive stance: systematically mapping China's existing body of Sino-Greek comparative scholarship from its own perspective; continuing to examine homegrown comparative concepts such as "the dao and the Logos" and "the Kingly Way (*wangdao*) and democracy"; and exploring diverse approaches — from broad comparisons of historical philosophy and civilizational patterns to close readings of key concepts and intellectual history.

The goal is to gradually build a comparative theoretical framework that is firmly rooted in China's own scholarly traditions yet capable of deep engagement with the international classical studies community — one that is continuously tested across different civilizational contexts and remains vital and generative over time.

To understand the civilizational character of contemporary China, one must truly grasp the unique fabric of historical China — and to grasp historical China, one must engage in dialogue with other classical civilizations, such as ancient Greece, in order to see more clearly what makes Chinese civilization uniquely its own.

As the Sino-Greek joint archaeological project and the youth exchange program advance steadily, and as the second World Conference of Classics opens in Athens, this is a moment of exceptional opportunity for the deeper development of comparative ancient civilizational studies.

Drawing on a century of Chinese scholarship in comparative ancient civilizations, and using that legacy to establish China's own voice in classical studies, this is both a timely intellectual mission and China's meaningful contribution to civilizational exchange across the world.

The author is an assistant researcher at the Institute of Literature at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Kang Bing

The author is former deputy editor-in-chief of China Daily. kangbing@chinadaily.com.cn

Turning the tide on tap water quality

China's revised Water Supply Regulations, issued by the State Council, or the Cabinet, late last year and effective from June 1, may seem like a technical policy document. Yet their impact could flow directly into the lives of ordinary people. Designed to strengthen water security and improve services, the regulations aim to ensure a safer and more reliable water supply for 1.4 billion citizens across the country.

China's history of tap water stretches as far back as that of many Western countries. British businessmen built the country's first modern tap water plant in Shanghai in the 1880s.

But for much of the population, clean water supply remained a luxury until China launched reform and opening-up in the late 1970s.

Fifty years ago, tap water was available in my home city Xi'an, Shaanxi province. Yet, hundreds of families still depended on a single public tap installed at a street corner. Lack of funds meant that water pipes could not be extended into every household.

As a result, people of my generation became skilled at carrying water home using shoulder poles fitted with baskets at either end. In rural areas, the situation was even more difficult. People had to fetch water from rivers, rainwater pools or wells. In my father's village, located 50 kilometers east of where the Terracotta Warriors were buried, residents depended on the only 100-meter deep well for drinking water. Life was hard.

Over the past decades, however, huge investments have transformed the country's water supply system. Thousands of reservoirs have been built. Massive diversion projects now carry water across hundreds of kilometers to cities facing water shortages. Deep wells have been drilled using modern technology while extensive efforts have been made to clean polluted rivers and improve water sources.

The regulations make governments at all levels responsible for water supply security and require the same standards for water quality in both urban and rural areas.

According to the Ministry of Water Resources, by the end of 2025, tap water penetration was 96 percent in rural areas and 99 percent in urban areas. The implementation of the new regulations is expected to consolidate these achievements and further improve both the quantity and quality of the water supply.

The regulations make governments at all levels responsible for water supply security and require the same standards for water quality in both urban and rural areas.

If fully implemented, these regulations could prove to be a big blessing for rural residents, many of whom get tap water of varying quality.

In cities and towns across China, tap water is usually supplied by State-run plants and subjected to strict quality control as part of municipal responsibilities. In rural areas, tap water supply is often provided by a mix of villages, towns, nearby factories and private investors. Such fragmentation can result in inconsistent standards and inadequate water security.

The new regulations seek to change that. Relevant departments of local governments will be required to inspect water quality regularly and establish full-chain management systems covering every stage of supply. With the screws tightened by administrators, stricter supervision and greater investment are expected from both governments and operators, helping ensure cleaner and safer tap water for rural residents.

Urban residents stand to benefit too. For years, disputes have arisen between consumers and suppliers over various charges.

Now that millions of residents live in high apartment buildings, insufficient water pressure has become a persistent headache for those living on upper floors. Installing high-pressure pumps costs money. But while residents on higher floors are willing to pay for more powerful pumps, those living on lower levels often see no reason to share the expense for a problem that doesn't bother them.

Another challenge lies underground. Water pipes in houses built decades ago have become worn or rusty with age.

Replacing them is the only viable solution, but such projects require cooperation from all residents. Who will organize the work? Who will pay the bill? For many urban residents, these questions have remained stuck in the pipeline.

The new regulations could help break the deadlock. They stipulate that suppliers can charge only those fees approved by local governments for water consumption and a few other services. Other costs, including the upgrading of water supply equipment and facilities, must be shouldered by suppliers.

As China shifts its focus from expanding access to tap water to improving quality and service, citizens of the country are keeping their eyes and mouths open for clean tap water.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:11 PM

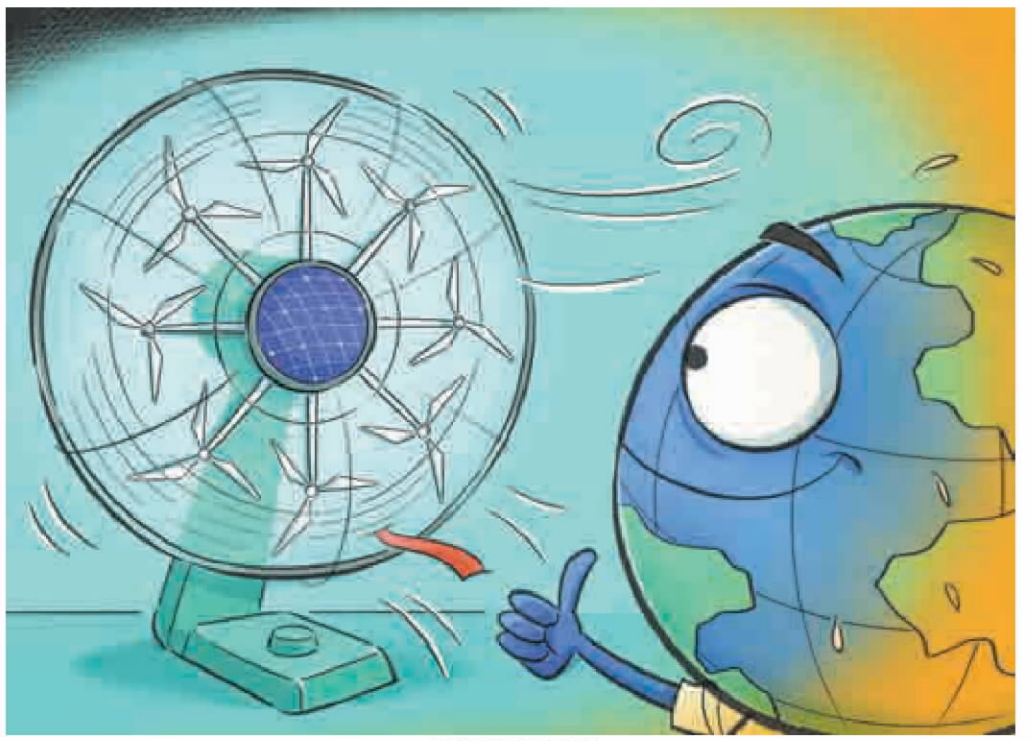
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:11 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

MICHAEL E. MANN

Time to turn up the heat on action

Climate crisis leaves no room for complacency



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

The past three years have been the hottest on record. Research shows that such extreme heat is virtually impossible without warming caused by humans. With modest assistance from El Nino, the continued burning of fossil fuels made this possible.



The World Meteorological Organization estimates that there is an 86 percent likelihood that this temperature record will be broken within the next five years. With another El Nino event brewing in the tropical Pacific, that new record could be set as early as next year. The planet will keep getting warmer as long as we keep releasing carbon pollution by burning fossil fuels for energy and transportation.

Global average temperature, however, is an abstract measure. We do not "feel" it. What we experience instead are the consequences of that warming, particularly the role that warming plays in intensifying extreme weather events that we are witnessing across the world.

Whether it was record-breaking stifling May heat in Philadelphia, the United States, a few weeks ago and in Europe over the past week, or the deadly floods and landslides in central and southwestern China in recent days, the consequences of climate change are now upon us.

Climate science deniers like to cite scientific uncertainty as a reason for not taking action. But the cost of inaction is far greater. Research shows that climate models may be underestimating the extent to which climate change influences extreme weather disasters. They may also be underestimating the potential impact of global warming on ice sheet disintegration, rising sea levels and the occurrence of deadly typhoons.

The question is no longer whether climate change is a threat. The question is how severe we are willing to allow that threat to become. The case for urgency is clear.

Equally important is the recognition that it's not too late to act. A recent study, which was widely misrepresented by opponents of climate action, showed that the efforts underway to transition toward clean energy are paying dividends. The world is making real progress in lowering emissions that lead to climate change.

A decade ago, worst-case emissions scenarios projected catastrophic warming of 4 C to 5 C by the end of this century. Today, those projections have reduced to 3.5 C to 4 C. Even a "business-as-usual" scenario, where no further policy action is taken, would likely lead to around 3 C warming, still dangerous but considerably less than what we faced just a decade ago. This improvement reflects the policy progress the world has made.

But even a 3 C increase is a very dangerous level of planetary warming, which could lead to potentially irreversible climate impacts. We have made progress, but it is not nearly enough.

Part of the problem is that the US, once a leader in climate action, is now backsliding under its current leadership. The bilateral climate agreement between China and the US during the Barack Obama administration set the stage for the landmark Paris Agreement in 2016.

Since then, only China has made good on its end of the bargain. In 2014, it promised to peak carbon emissions before 2030. Driven by an expansion in renewable energy deployment, including wind, solar, battery technologies, electric vehicles and high-speed rail, China's carbon emissions have entered a "flat or falling" trend well before the 2030 deadline.

In 2025, renewable energy accounted for nearly 86 percent of newly added power generation and reached nearly 50 percent of installed power capacity worldwide. The leading US scientific journal, Science, named the renewable energy surge as the 2025 Breakthrough of the Year. It singled out China's role: "China's mighty industrial engine is the driver. After years of patiently nurturing the sector through subsidies, China now dominates global production of renewable energy technologies."

In contrast, the US is moving in the opposite direction. The current US administration and its Republican supporters have rejected global climate agreements, partnered with oil-producing countries and doubled down on fossil fuel extraction, thereby sabotaging clean energy efforts.

The US once prided itself on being the hub of technological innovation. That honor has now shifted to China. Chinese automaker BYD has developed technology that charges EV batteries to 97 percent capacity in just 12 minutes even in freezing temperatures, putting the US EV industry to shame. The Chinese all-electric and now largely renewable-driven bullet trains are breaking records both for usage and speed. More than 4 billion passenger trips were made on the network in 2025, and trains routinely move at speeds of 350 kilometers per hour. Meanwhile, the US national rail service, Amtrak — long underfunded and under assault from fossil-fueled Republicans — languishes with aging equipment. Its flagship Acela high-speed service struggles to maintain an average speed of 132 km per hour.

The US is no longer the conductor of the bullet train that is the global clean energy revolution. It should decide whether to climb on board or get left behind at the station. The rest of the world, and China in particular, should remain resolute in moving toward a global clean energy economy. The stakes could not be higher.

The author is the presidential distinguished professor of earth and environmental science at the University of Pennsylvania. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

SUI CHUAN

From heart to heart

Low-cost works outshine those of big-name directors as Chinese audiences choose authenticity over hollow spectacle

The recent phenomenon that Chinese moviegoers have been sidelining big-budget productions by celebrated directors in favor of low-budget films by amateurs may indicate epochal tendencies. *Dear You*, produced on a budget of 14 million yuan ($2.06 million), has already grossed over 1.6 billion yuan at the box office — and its popularity is still growing.



The short drama series *Enemy* has achieved over 800 million views on China's TikTok platform Douyin without the support of A-list celebrities or overwhelming marketing.

At the other end of the spectrum, some big-budget productions by renowned directors have fared poorly in recent years. *Being Toward Death* flopped at the box office, *Bureau 749* scored only 3.2 on the professional review platform Douban in contrast to 9.2 recorded at present by *Dear You*, and *Dongji Rescue* almost collapsed under public backlash over accusations of historical nihilism.

This is no coincidence. On the surface, it seems like an imbalance between budget and returns; at a deeper level, it reflects a structural misalignment in the logic of content production.

The core lies in the difference between the "othering narratives" told from a Western-prone perspective and the "cultural self-awareness" rooted in the Chinese spirit that tells emotional stories from a traditional perspective.

Many renowned directors have been deeply influenced by Western popular culture from the beginning of their careers. Their imitation of Hollywood films has led to a reliance on "Western-centrism" in narrative style, aesthetics and values. Their obsession with blending Eastern and Western cultures has ultimately rendered their films culturally out of place in China.

On the other hand, works that have embraced the spiritual essence of Chinese culture have done exceedingly well. The rise of *Dear You* is the most vivid illustration. By using *qiaopi* — the overseas Chinese remittance letters recognized as a UNESCO Memory of the World heritage — as its spiritual anchor, the film brings the sense of family and country down from grand narratives to everyday emotions, allowing audiences to find a spiritual homeland in simple values such as loyalty and righteousness. When filmmakers no longer rely on Western narrative standards, they often find a market that appreciates the enduring spiritual themes of Chinese culture.

There is a stark contrast between the sincere content of these low-budget works and the assembly-line production of the industrial machine. The strength of low-cost works lies in their story-first, emotion-driven approach, which contrasts sharply with the big-budget production model of many renowned directors.

Lan Hongchun, director of *Dear You*, spent three years interviewing over 120 elderly Chaoshan-descended overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia, all over 80 years old. Ninety percent of the film's plot is based on real stories. The film has no clear heroes or villains, no dramatic conflicts or climactic twists. Through understated cinematography and a consistent emotional tone, it tells a story of nostalgia and family bonds, elevating it to a sense of shared community — a sentiment that embodies the devotion to loyalty, compassion and mutual support of people of Chinese origin.



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

The same is true of *Enemy*. The female protagonist, driven by a profound sense of loyalty to her native land, chooses to perish together with the invaders. When she changes the opera line from "the two of us" to "we, husband and wife", a fleeting gleam in her eyes feels heavier than any love confession ever could.

Meanwhile, high-budget productions spend fortunes on sweeping visual effects and A-list ensembles, yet their core narratives are perfunctorily cliched and rejected by viewers.

Ultimately, there is an irreconcilable contrast between grassroots expressions that connect emotionally and detached narratives from an elite perspective. Low-cost works excel at capturing the emotional pain points of ordinary people, striking a chord with audiences. In contrast, some films by renowned directors display an elite arrogance, underestimating or dismissing the aesthetic judgment of viewers.

Today's young audiences are increasingly avoiding cinemas. Industry research shows that the share of viewers under the age of 24 dropped sharply from 38 percent in 2019 to 15 percent in 2025. The root cause is the glut of hollow plots, heavy-handed preachiness, and stiff acting by glamorous stars, all of which alienate young audiences seeking genuine emotional depth.

A renowned director once declared during a road show that 15 million tickets are the survival line for Chinese cinema, urging audiences to support his latest film. Meanwhile, *Dear You*, with no star power, started with a mere 1.6 percent screening rate on its opening day but became one of the highest-rated domestic dramas of the decade through word-of-mouth recommendations. *Enemy* sparked in-depth discussions online with its exquisitely crafted, nuanced performances. Netizens eagerly captured and shared screenshots, created fan edits, and wrote lengthy analytical posts. Its popularity grew entirely through organic word-of-mouth.

While renowned directors lament the slump in the film industry, amateur teams with extremely low budgets have reaped market returns hundreds of times larger. Clearly, the market has not abandoned good films. It has only turned its back on works that are overly Westernized and mechanically imitative.

The true vitality of cinema lies not in budget size but in whether creators have the courage to step away from a cultural "othering" perspective, root themselves in Chinese culture and genuinely respect the emotional needs of the audience. That might help renowned directors emerge from their winter.

The author is a research fellow at the Office of Academic Research at Xiamen University of Technology. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:11 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:11 PM

BUSINESS

General Mills off-loads Haagen-Dazs shops as stiff competition bites

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn

General Mills Inc's recent decision to sell its Haagen-Dazs ice cream shops on the Chinese mainland to an investor group that includes Ningji, a fast-growing Chinese tea brand, signals intensifying competition in the country's ice cream market, amid consumer desire for constant relevance and innovation.

Under the terms of the deal, the buyer will receive an exclusive license to operate Haagen-Dazs-branded ice cream shops and gifting businesses on the mainland. General Mills will retain ownership and operations of Haagen-Dazs retail and food service channels in China outside of the licensed outlets. Financial terms were not disclosed. The transaction is expected to close in 2026, pending regulatory approvals and customary closing conditions.

The move aligns with General Mills' "accelerate strategy", which focuses on prioritizing brands and channels with the highest potential for profitable growth, said the company. Since 2018, the company has reshaped its portfolio, divesting nearly a third of its net sales base through acquisitions and divestitures.

Haagen-Dazs has relied on its premium positioning in China since opening its first store in Shanghai in 1996. However, the brand has faced steady contraction: according to industry tracker canyandata.com, Haagen-Dazs operated 262 stores in May 2026, down from more than 550 locations at its 2019 peak. However, the broader Chinese ice cream market continues to expand rapidly.

Research by the Zero Power Intelligence Group shows the ice cream market size growing from 120 billion yuan ($17.69 billion) in 2020 to 200 billion yuan in 2024, with projections reaching 250 billion yuan by 2030. Despite overall market growth, Haagen-Dazs has struggled to capture a strong share of the market, being outpaced by emerging domestic competitors.

The brand remains one of the top players in China's limited-service ice cream segment, ranking third in foodservice transaction value in 2025, according to Euromonitor International. It ranks behind domestic rival Mr. Wildman and US-based Dairy Queen.

Mr. Wildman specializes in fresh gelato and operates 1,326 stores.

Ningji, founded in 2021, is primarily known for its lemon-flavored handmade beverages, priced around 15 yuan on average. The company grew rapidly with backing from investors including ByteDance, Tencent and Xiaomi, but its store count has stabilized at 1,799 outlets, according to canyandata.com.

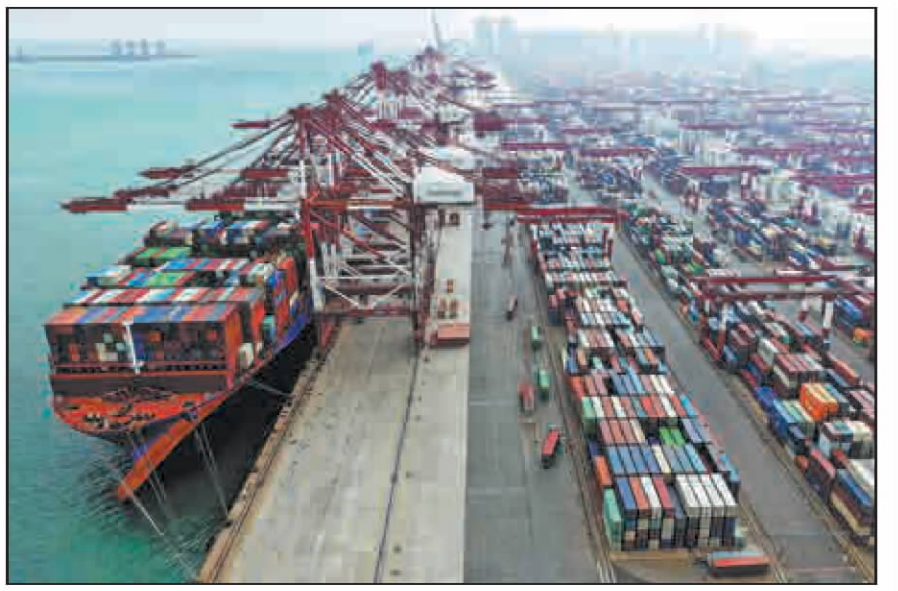
In recent years, coffee and tea beverage chains have continuously diversified their menu, adding bakery items, desserts and recently, ice cream and gelato. Even so, integrating the premium Haagen-Dazs business into Ningji's value-oriented beverage-focused model could be a challenge for the new owners, according to industry observers.

Consumption analyst Yang Huaiyu said that Ningji's move to buy Haagen-Dazs locations is aimed at leveraging the high-end brand equity to achieve a leap, thereby breaking free from the low-price involution plaguing the tea beverage market.

"Haagen-Dazs stores come with a built-in high-net-worth customer base and prime spots in core business districts, which can quickly compensate for Ningji's shortcomings in high-end scenarios," Yang said.

Yang added that the deal would also allow Ningji to expand its product matrix, establishing a differentiated advantage in the fiercely competitive lemon tea track. "By moving beyond a single-category focus, the brand can mitigate the risks of market saturation and price wars," Yang said.

Consumers are seen at a Haagen-Dazs store in Beijing on May 15.
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY


A containership docks at a port in Qingdao, Shandong province, on Thursday. YU FANGPING / FOR CHINA DAILY

'Remarkable resilience' seen in China's exports

Surging demand for nation's high-tech products to spur H2 growth

By **WANG KEJU**
wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn

China's export sector, driven by surging global demand for high-tech products, is expected to remain robust in the second half, which will provide strong support for the country's economic growth, senior economists said.

The recent thaw in trade relations between China and the United States could also help improve market expectations and reduce uncertainty over external demand in the months to come, they added.

China's export sector is displaying "remarkable resilience", driven by a global artificial intelligence investment boom and a sustained energy super-cycle, with Chinese firms well-positioned to capture growing global market share in relevant fields, said Robin Xing, chief China economist at Morgan Stanley.

Xing said global capital spending on AI hardware continues to expand, and Chinese firms have developed "core competitiveness" in printed circuit boards, optical components and memory chips, allowing them to share in the sector's upside.

China's integrated circuit exports have entered a phase of rising volumes and prices, with monthly export value growth exceeding 20 percent for 13 consecutive months as of April, said the China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Machinery and Electronic Products.

Gao Shiwang, a spokesperson for the chamber, said that in the first four months, integrated circuit export volume rose 10.6 percent, while the value of exports jumped 78.3 percent. April alone saw a 92 percent year-on-year increase in export value.

"China's mature manufacturing and supply chain capabilities give it a unique position in the global AI hardware ecosystem. We are not only a major producer, but also a vital link in the value chain," Gao said.

On the energy front, Xing said large AI data centers require massive amounts of electricity, and China has taken "a leading position" in the global energy transition from wind and solar components to grid equipment and storage batteries.

The General Administration of Customs said exports of electric vehicles surged 68.1 percent year-on-year in the first four months, while lithium battery exports rose 43.2 percent and wind power generation equipment climbed 40.7 percent.

After weathering the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical conflicts, trade frictions and energy shocks, China's supply chain resilience has won global recognition, and global capital looking to invest in AI hardware and the energy transition would find it hard to bypass China, Xing added.

Guan Tao, global chief economist at BOCI China, said China's export strength, especially in high-tech sectors, will be a "key stabilizer for growth" in the second half.

Guan said robust exports are driving industrial production and manufacturing investment, while imported inflationary pressures are also helping to improve the country's price trajectory — factors that could push economic performance above expectations.

The easing of trade tensions between Beijing and Washington after US President Donald Trump paid a state visit to China in mid-May could also lower the uncertainty that weighed on China's export sector and US businesses alike, experts said.

"Cooperation with the US helps reduce external uncertainties for China, which greatly contributes to the stability of the Chinese economy," said Zhu Min, former deputy managing director of the International Monetary Fund.

"For the US, working with China is beneficial to its economic development and helps boost its demand. Especially in a year marked by so much uncertainty, we are introducing a factor of certainty, which carries great significance," Zhu said.

However, Guan from BOCI China warned of the external uncertainty still remaining in the second half due to situations in the Middle East.

"Currently, the Middle East is in a state of neither war nor peace," Guan said. "If the conflict escalates or the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz is prolonged, the resulting energy supply disruptions and international logistics blockages will have an increasingly severe impact on the global economy and trade."

"If the global economy falls into recession, China will not be immune," he added.

Uruguay to roll out visa waiver for Chinese citizens

By **LI JING**
lijing2009@chinadaily.com.cn

Uruguay's announcement to grant visa-free entry to Chinese citizens makes it the second South American country after Brazil to waive visa requirements, underscoring a growing effort by countries in the region to attract Chinese tourists and business travelers as economic ties with China deepen.

Uruguayan Foreign Minister Mario Lubetkin announced on Thursday that Uruguay would implement a visa-free policy for Chinese citizens holding ordinary passports, with details to be released at a later date.

The announcement came less than a month after Brazil unveiled a similar policy allowing holders of ordinary Chinese passports to stay for up to 30 days visa-free.

Analysts say the back-to-back decisions suggest a growing willingness among Latin American governments to lower barriers for Chinese visitors following China's unilateral visa-free policies to the region.

Niu Haibin, director of the Center for Latin American Studies at the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies, said China's unilateral visa-free policies for Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Peru and Uruguay have helped build mutual trust over the past year.

> "The policy has strengthened mutual understanding and demonstrated the benefits of easier mobility."
>
> **Niu Haibin,** director of the Center for Latin American Studies at the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies

"The positive response to China's visa-free arrangements, together with Brazil's decision to grant visa-free access to Chinese citizens, has created momentum for broader policy coordination across the region," Niu said. "If the policies operate smoothly, more Latin American countries may consider similar measures in the future."

Travel agencies reported increased inquiries following the announcement, with Beijing-based travel agency UTour saying consultations related to Uruguay rose by about 15 percent.

Li Mengran, marketing manager at UTour, said Chinese tourists traveling to South America typically visit several countries on a single trip, meaning easier entry procedures in one country often have spillover effects across the region.

"Brazil and Uruguay introducing visa-free policies in succession will significantly improve travel convenience for Chinese visitors and help stimulate demand across the broader South American tourism market," Li said.

Analysts at Qunar's big data research institute said easier access to multiple destinations could help travelers spread the cost of long-haul flights across several countries, boosting the appeal of South America as a destination during the upcoming summer holiday and National Day travel seasons.

However, Li noted that visa waivers alone would not eliminate some of the structural constraints facing South American tourism.

Most routes still require multiple flight connections due to limited air links with China, while differing visa requirements across neighboring countries continue to complicate multi-destination travel planning, she said.

Visa facilitation has already helped boost travel flows between China and South America.

According to the Shanghai General Station of Immigration Inspection, more than 81,000 travelers from Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Peru and Uruguay entered China through Shanghai ports between June 1, 2025 and May 31, 2026, up 50.5 percent year-on-year. Notably, nearly 70 percent of these arrivals utilized the visa-free policy.

Niu said this experience has enabled more Latin American visitors to gain first-hand exposure to China.

"The policy has strengthened mutual understanding and demonstrated the benefits of easier mobility," he said.

According to China's General Administration of Customs, bilateral trade between China and Uruguay reached $7.19 billion in 2025, up 9.2 percent from a year earlier, with China remaining Uruguay's largest trading partner and largest export market.

Exports to China totaled $3.49 billion last year, accounting for about 26 percent of Uruguay's total exports. China is also the largest overseas market for Uruguayan soybeans and wool, and one of the leading destinations for its beef exports.

At the same time, Chinese products accounted for roughly a quarter of Uruguay's imports, including automobiles, machinery and electronic equipment.

Analysts said easier travel could also facilitate business visits, trade negotiations and investment discussions, helping support broader commercial engagement between the two countries.

The visa waiver follows a period of intensified diplomatic engagement between Beijing and Montevideo, Uruguay's capital.

In February, Uruguayan President Yamandu Orsi visited China, where the two countries issued a joint statement on deepening their comprehensive strategic partnership.

"As economic ties deepen, governments on both sides are seeking to reduce practical barriers to the movement of people," Niu said. "Visa facilitation is often one of the most visible outcomes of deeper political trust and economic integration."

Mega infra project to boost ties with UAE

By **REN QI**
renqi@chinadaily.com.cn

The Emirates airport maintenance hangar project in Dubai, undertaken by China Railway Construction Corp, and the deepening China-UAE infrastructure and industrial cooperation, will inject new momentum into the local economy and further enhance the bilateral partnership, experts said.

The megaproject, which kicked off in May, is located in the Dubai World Central area. It covers a total construction area of about 1.21 million square meters with a total investment exceeding $5 billion. Scheduled for 2030 completion, it is set to become a major global civil aviation maintenance hangar cluster, featuring top technical standards.

The facility includes eight large maintenance hangars, two specialized painting hangars and related support facilities. Once completed, it will be capable of simultaneously providing full-process services — including airframe overhauls, engine maintenance and aircraft painting — for 28 wide-body aircraft.

Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, chairman and CEO of Emirates Airline, said the commencement of this world-class aviation engineering project marks an important step for Dubai in the future development of its aviation industry. The project will effectively integrate specialized capabilities, such as infrastructure and parts manufacturing, injecting new momentum into the UAE's economic growth, he noted.

Dai Hegen, chairman of CRCC, said that the cooperation between CRCC and Emirates is an important example of deepening good-neighborly friendship, pragmatic cooperation, and the high-quality joint construction of the Belt and Road Initiative between China and the UAE. It also serves as a demonstration project of "Chinese construction" contributing to the building of a China-UAE community with a shared future.

Relying on the construction of this aviation infrastructure project, Chinese enterprises will further demonstrate their comprehensive strength in engineering technology, construction quality and project management, Dai said. This will promote "Chinese construction" to better enter the high-end infrastructure market in the Middle East, continuously enhance international brand influence and industry competitiveness, and add new vitality to deepening China-UAE cooperation.

In recent years, with the continuous deepening of bilateral cooperation, Chinese enterprises have actively participated in infrastructure construction in the Middle East.

Data from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs show fruitful pragmatic cooperation between the two economies. The UAE is China's largest export market and second-largest trading partner in the Middle East. In 2025, bilateral trade value reached $108 billion, with China's exports at $72.88 billion and imports at $35.12 billion.

China mainly exports mechanical and electrical equipment, home appliances, vehicles and their parts, as well as steel and its products to the UAE, while primarily importing crude oil, natural gas, plastics and their products, organic chemicals and copper and its products. The UAE is China's sixth-largest source of crude oil imports, supplying 37.513 million metric tons to China in 2025.

Furthermore, Chinese enterprises are assisting Arab countries in upgrading their local industrial development levels through technology transfers, joint production and the construction of industrial parks. In the UAE, the China-UAE Industrial Capacity Cooperation Demonstration Zone focuses on high-end manufacturing, clean energy and modern logistics, with multiple projects already implemented through joint investments by Chinese and UAE enterprises.

"What we learn is not only products, but also knowledge and capabilities, which will help us achieve long-term sustainable development," said Reem Al Muhairi, an industrial project management official at an enterprise in the UAE.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:11 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:11 PM

BUSINESS

Guangdong champions new industry model

Province's recent innovations in manufacturing, mobility going global, showing further growth possibilities

By LI JIAYING
lijiaying@chinadaily.com.cn



Autonomous minibuses developed by WeRide, an autonomous driving technology company, are seen in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, on March 24. DENG HUA / XINHUA





Left: A humanoid robot serves popcorn to reporters at Shenzhen Dobot Corp in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, on Oct 29. LIU LIHANG / XINHUA
Right: Staff members test industrial robots at a production base of Topstar Technology in Dongguan, Guangdong, on March 25, 2025. DENG HUA / XINHUA

A driverless robotaxi glides through the streets of Guangzhou, Guangdong province, slowing to pick up a passenger before merging back into traffic. Roughly 70 kilometers away in Dongguan, robotic arms work in harmony on an assembly line, while in Shenzhen, an engineer uploads a circuit design to an online platform, and within hours the first prototype is already entering production.

Though these technologies appear to belong to different industries, they share one thing in common: many are being developed by private enterprises from Guangdong, China's largest provincial economy and one of the country's most vibrant innovation hubs.

One year after the implementation of the Private Economy Promotion Law — the country's first comprehensive legislation dedicated to promoting private sector development — Guangdong is increasingly emerging as a testing ground where policy support, manufacturing capabilities and entrepreneurial vitality are combining to nurture a new generation of globally competitive industries.

According to the Guangdong Federation of Industry and Commerce, private businesses accounted for more than 95 percent of all market entities in the province by the end of 2025, contributing over 60 percent of its GDP and foreign trade.

More importantly, private businesses have become the backbone of Guangdong's innovation ecosystem, making up more than 80 percent of both the province's national-level "little giant" enterprises and nationally recognized high-tech companies.

Labs to real roads

Few sectors better illustrate Guangdong's push toward innovation-driven growth than autonomous driving.

Founded less than a decade ago in Guangzhou, WeRide has grown into one of the world's leading autonomous driving companies whose automobility services have been deployed in more than 40 cities across 12 countries.

Eyeing an expanded global footprint, in April, WeRide launched robotaxi operations in Singapore through a partnership with Grab, while also rolling out commercial driverless services in Dubai together with Uber, further extending the reach of Chinese autonomous driving technology overseas.

For a private company founded less than 10 years ago to compete on the global stage, "everything starts with technology", said Maeve Zhang, assistant to the president and head of marketing at the company.

Zhang said at the heart of the company's strategy is its self-developed WeRide One universal autonomous driving platform, which allows robotaxis, minibuses, autonomous sanitation vehicles and freight vehicles to share nearly 90 percent of their underlying software architecture and algorithms.

"The unified platform not only reduces development costs, but also gives the company the flexibility to adapt quickly to vastly different operating environments — from tropical downpours in Southeast Asia and extreme heat in the Middle East to Europe's stringent data privacy regulations," Zhang said.

The company's robotaxi fleet has grown from 100 vehicles in 2023 to around 1,300 today, and aims to increase that number to 10,000 by 2029 and 100,000 by 2032, she said.

"There is no finish line for a technology company," Zhang said. "Its technologies must continue to evolve, and the services must also continue to improve."

Behind WeRide's global ambitions lies the strength of Guangzhou's broader automotive ecosystem. As one of the city's three pillar industries, automobile manufacturing grew 5.5 percent year-on-year in the first quarter, while new energy vehicle output surged 36.1 percent.

Production of lithium-ion power batteries for vehicles and intelligent in-car equipment also jumped 41.7 percent and 35.3 percent, respectively, providing fertile ground for the development of next-generation mobility technologies.

Showcases to factories

If Guangzhou's private innovators are redefining how people move, manufacturers in Dongguan and Shenzhen are transforming how things are made.

Guangdong Topstar Technology Co, a Dongguan-based industrial robotics manufacturer, has spent nearly two decades evolving alongside the province's vast factory economy. Starting with automation solutions for injection molding workshops, the company later expanded into multi-joint industrial robots and intelligent manufacturing systems.

In 2025, it unveiled Xiaotuo, a humanoid robot designed specifically for injection molding applications, followed by the launch of its quadruped robot Xingzai, capable of traversing rough terrain and carrying heavy loads in firefighting, security inspection and industrial maintenance scenarios.

Yet for Topstar, the biggest challenge is not building robots, but making them reliable enough for real-world applications.

"Completing a single pick-and-place task in a laboratory is relatively easy," said Zhang Jian, a senior executive at the company. "What customers want on a production line is continuous operation without failure."

Zhang said that delivering industrial-grade reliability requires advances not only in artificial intelligence algorithms, but also in the robot's mechanical body and the precision manufacturing equipment behind it.

"Many of the high-end machine tools used to produce complex robot components once depended on imports," he said. "Today, we have achieved independent control over core technologies, giving us a much stronger foundation for large-scale deployment."

The company's recent growth is a vivid reflection of the rising demand for intelligent manufacturing upgrades across China's industrial sector. Topstar's industrial robot and automation business revenue surged more than 80 percent year-on-year in the first quarter, while revenue from the computer numerical control machine tool business expanded over 60 percent.

A similar story is unfolding about 80 kilometers south in Shenzhen, where collaborative robot maker Shenzhen Dobot Corp is helping bring Chinese intelligent manufacturing solutions to factories around the world.

As the world's largest collaborative robot supplier by shipment volume in 2025, the manufacturer now gets more than half of its revenue from overseas.

Xie Kaixuan, Dobot's marketing director, said foreign customers are no longer choosing Chinese robots simply because they are cost-effective.

"Overseas clients are no longer asking us only, 'How much does your robot cost?' They are increasingly asking, 'How long can it work, and how reliably can it operate?'" Xie said.

That trust has been earned thanks to the strong industrial foundation that Chinese manufacturers have built over years of serving the world's most complicated and comprehensive production environments, he added.

"What overseas customers value most is that we can offer a trusted solution that has been repeatedly validated in China's extensive and real industrial environments and proven capable of long-term, stable operation," Xie said.

In many ways he believes the globalization of Chinese manufacturing is entering a new phase.

"China is no longer exporting simply cost-effective machines," Xie said. "We are exporting integrated intelligent solutions that customers can truly rely on."

Ideas to businesses

What enables so many of Guangdong's private technology companies to move from an idea to a commercial product so quickly?

Part of the answer lies not only in the province's manufacturing strength, but also in a growing ecosystem that lowers the barriers to innovation itself.

For many hardware entrepreneurs in Shenzhen, innovation now begins with a simple click.

An engineer uploads a circuit design to an online platform, and within hours the first printed circuit board enters production. A few days later, a physical prototype is ready for testing and refinement.

"Whether it's a student experimenting with a personal idea or an early-stage startup producing a small batch of prototypes, our platform makes it possible to bring those ideas to life — something traditional manufacturing often cannot support," said an executive of operations at Shenzhen JLC Technology Group Co, an integrated platform covering PCB prototyping, component sourcing, assembly and precision manufacturing.

By digitalizing the entire process, it has reduced the cost of a single PCB prototype from several thousand yuan to just tens of yuan, while shortening delivery time from several weeks to as little as 12 hours.

"Our goal is to become an accelerator for global hardware innovation and technology commercialization," he said, adding that a humanoid robot can now move from design drawings to a fully assembled prototype in as little as one to two weeks.

By the end of 2025, JLC's online platform had attracted more than 9.59 million registered users, up 34.73 percent year-on-year. The company had also served customers in over 180 countries and regions and processed more than 21.08 million orders during the year.

"Foreign users increasingly value our end-to-end service model, spanning everything from electronic design automation to prototype manufacturing," he said. "What underpins that capability is China's complete industrial ecosystem. The ability to seamlessly connect design, components sourcing and manufacturing at such speed and scale is something that is still hard to find elsewhere in the world."

Ceramic tile factory embraces future with digital brain, green heart

By LI JIAYING

What does a ceramic tile factory look like in the age of artificial intelligence?

The answer, at least at Marco Polo Holdings' Shatian digital and intelligent factory in Dongguan, Guangdong province, is probably very different from what many people would imagine.

Walking through its production line, there is little of the dust-filled air, deafening noise and sweltering heat often associated with traditional ceramic production. Instead, intelligence is embedded in nearly every process.

In the raw-material workshop, an intelligent batching system enables rapid formula switching, shortening production changeovers and making it easier to handle smaller, more diversified orders. Nearby, smart continuous ball mills operate around the clock, while powdered materials are automatically transported to the molding area through an intelligent storage and delivery system.

Further along the line, ultrawide roller presses continuously feed tile bodies into towering kilns. Inside a nearby control room, engineers no longer rely solely on experience to judge firing conditions. Instead, an AI-powered monitoring system tracks the status of ceramic products in real time, helping raise the premium-product yield rate from 97.5 percent to 99.8 percent.

Once fired, the tiles move to the printing stage, where each product receives a unique anti-counterfeiting identifier.

"By checking the product's identity code, we can clearly trace where it goes and how it is used. It also helps consumers effectively identify counterfeit products," said Xu Xiaoyong, head of marketing at the group.

Before entering warehouses, every tile must pass one final test. An AI-powered inspection system scans each product for dimensional accuracy, flatness and surface defects.

"This effectively avoids missed detections and errors that can occur with manual visual inspection," Xu said.


A worker is on duty at Marco Polo Holdings' Shatian digital and intelligent factory in Dongguan, Guangdong province, in May. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

For Huang Jianping, chairman of the group, digitalization is not simply about adopting fashionable technologies.

"The true value of AI lies in whether it genuinely solves problems," said Huang, adding that for the traditional manufacturing sector, developing new quality productive forces is not simply about upgrading equipment or improving efficiency, it is more about shifting from scale-driven production toward innovation-led value creation.

"At its core, this means creating a development model that is more technologically advanced, more efficient, higher in quality and more sustainable," Huang said.

Beyond its digital brain, the factory also has a green heart. Open-air collection ponds, storage tanks and a web of underground pipelines form a complete rainwater harvesting system. On the rooftop, solar panels stretch across the factory, supplying 70 percent of its electricity.

"We use the collected rainwater for production. The entire factory has achieved 100-percent recycling of industrial water, and no industrial wastewater is discharged," Xu said.

"These green technologies are especially important when building factories in overseas markets with relatively strict environmental requirements, such as the United States."

Today, the Chinese ceramic tile manufacturer operates five major production bases — four in China and one in Tennessee, US — and exports to more than 130 countries and regions, with an annual revenue of 6.5 billion yuan ($958 million) in 2025.

This plant offers a window into a broader move toward intelligent upgrades in the country's manufacturing sector.

The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology said China has so far built 15 "pilot-level" intelligent factories — representing the highest tier of global intelligent manufacturing — where AI has penetrated more than 70 percent of their business scenarios.

In addition, the country is also home to more than 35,000 basic-level, over 8,200 advanced-level and over 500 excellence-level intelligent factories. By 2025, the application rate of AI technology among industrial enterprises above designated size exceeded 30 percent, MIIT data showed.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:11 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:11 PM

WORLD

Penn Station stabbing



New York Police Department officers are seen outside Penn Station in New York after five people were wounded on Sunday in a stabbing inside the transport hub, according to officials, who said all victims were moved to hospital and the alleged attacker was "in custody". The victims were all civilians, including one person who sustained serious injuries, the New York Fire Department said in a statement. JOHN LAMPARSKI / AFP

Sister-city summit urges enhanced ties

Ongoing collaboration strengthens Sino-US people-to-people relations, forum hears

By LIA ZHU in San Francisco
liazhu@chinadailyusa.com

Diplomats, mayors and civic leaders from both sides of the Pacific gathered in San Francisco for the eighth China-US Sister Cities Summit, renewing their commitment to the subnational partnership that national governments alone cannot forge.

Themed "Shared Efforts for High-quality City Development", the summit drew more than 150 Chinese delegates representing 15 provinces, autonomous regions, municipalities and 12 cities, alongside 160 US delegates from 21 states and 36 cities.

The gathering, held on Friday, featured exchanges on three central themes — green development and urban governance, culture and tourism, and education and youth.

"Everything depends on meeting each other, shaking each other's hand, looking each other in the eye," Carol Robertson Lopez, chair emeritus of Sister Cities International, told China Daily on the sidelines of the summit.

Gatherings like this one, she said, do something that virtual exchanges cannot fully replicate."When we have gatherings like this, it just seals the friendships that we've developed, in many cases online."

She said that hearing how cities in different countries have approached shared challenges is a form of practical benefit.

"What's really important is just bringing people together," she said. "It's interesting to hear all the different things, and we do get a lot of ideas that we can take back home."

The gathering has grown into a platform for subnational diplomacy since its launch by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, or CPAFFC, in 2014.

China and the United States currently maintain 50 pairs of sister provinces and states, and 238 pairs of sister cities.

Yang Wanming, president of the CPAFFC, pointed to California and San Francisco as proof of what local investment in the relationship can achieve. California holds more sister-city ties with China than any other US state, he said, and both California and San Francisco have been pioneers in bilateral subnational engagement.

Yang cited two recent developments as an example of the momentum. San Francisco Mayor Daniel Lurie visited Shanghai in April, his first official overseas trip as mayor, and within two months, Shanghai had sent a delegation to San Francisco to attend the summit. "This shows the deep relations between the two cities," Yang said at the summit.

He also highlighted in October the presence of Oregon Senate President Rob Wagner, who had visited China in October and returned to San Francisco for the summit, where he met with representatives from sister partners of Fujian province and Tianjin municipality. These showed the relationship becoming closer through mutual visits and the nature of win-win collaboration, he said.

Joint collaboration

Through openness and collaboration, the people in the two countries have continued to write new chapters of friendship, Chinese Ambassador to the United States Xie Feng said in video played at the summit. For China-US relations to keep moving forward, he said, the two sides need not only meetings between the leaders, but also broad engagement across all social sectors.

He said there is still much that China and the United States can and should cooperate on and, leveraging sister-city ties as a platform, the two countries should actively expand cooperation from traditional areas such as economy, trade and agriculture to emerging fields including artificial intelligence, new energy and humanoid robots.

Lurie, the San Francisco mayor, said his city is uniquely positioned to hold this summit. "Cities are where history is lived," he said. "Cities are where people build their small businesses, raise their families and form the relationships that cross oceans and cultures."

San Francisco, he said, is home to the oldest Chinatown in North America and one of the most vibrant Chinese American communities in the country.

"For generations, Chinese Americans have helped write the story of this city, shaping our economy, our civic life and our culture in ways that are impossible to separate from who San Francisco is," he said.

It was that history that led Lurie to make China the destination for his very first foreign trip as mayor. His April visit to Shanghai marked the 46th anniversary of the San Francisco-Shanghai sister-city relationship.

Beyond Shanghai, Lurie emphasized San Francisco's friendship-city ties with Shenzhen and Guangzhou in Guangdong province, where ongoing collaboration spans innovation, trade and education.

Zhang Jianmin, China's consul general in San Francisco, described sister-city cooperation as carrying "tremendous potential as engines of economic growth" and called on both sides to broaden their ambitions as the world changes around them.

The summit concluded with the signing of five cooperation agreements, covering 31 cooperation projects and spanning sister-city partnerships, cultural and tourism exchanges and youth programs.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916

Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108
529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1856

Chinese EVs make gains as Australia posts record sales

By ALEXIS HOOI in Sydney
alexishooi@chinadaily.com.cn

Battery-electric vehicles made up one in five of all new vehicle sales in Australia in May, hitting a record high and marking a major shift away from fossil fuels on the back of more Chinese carmakers helping to power the green transition, according to latest industry figures.

More broadly, electric vehicles — which include battery, conventional hybrid and plug-in hybrid versions — accounted for nearly half or 46 percent of a total of 100,206 new vehicle sales in May, the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries, or FCAI, said in a statement on Wednesday.

The FCAI, which is the apex industry body for the automotive sector in Australia, highlighted the considerable gains made by major Chinese makers such as BYD, Omoda Jaecoo and Geely. BYD, fueled by its popular Sealion EV series, alone achieved sales of 8,211 vehicles in May, a 155 percent increase year-on-year.

Three Chinese carmakers are among the top 10 models by sales volume for the month, according to the FCAI.

Hussein Dia, a professor of transport technology and sustainability at the Swinburne University of Technology in Melbourne, told China Daily the latest figures are significant because "they suggest Australia may be moving beyond the early adopter phase of the EV transition and into a more mainstream phase of market acceptance".

He pointed to a broader shift in consumer preference away from conventional gasoline and diesel vehicles.

Dia said the factors behind the move include the recent fuel-price volatility and concerns about energy security that remind consumers of Australia's exposure to global oil market volatility, a result of supply chain disruptions due to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

The growing influence of Chinese manufacturers is "difficult to ignore" amid these developments, he said.

"Their success reflects the increasing availability of competitively priced electrified vehicles and greater consumer choice. By bringing more affordable models to market, these manufacturers have helped accelerate EV adoption (rates) and increased competition across the broader automotive sector," Dia said.

"These figures also highlight how quickly the competitive landscape is changing. The transition is no longer being driven solely by traditional automotive manufacturers. New entrants, particularly from China, are playing an increasingly important role in shaping consumer choice, pricing and the pace of electrification in Australia," he said.

Similarly, Electric Vehicle Council CEO Julie Delvecchio said in a statement that the figures marked a significant milestone in Australia's transition to cleaner and more affordable transportation.

"We know Australians buy cars that save them money, suit their lifestyle and perform well. Record EV sales suggest more Australians are finding electric vehicles tick all three boxes," she said.

Cost of living pressures

Delvecchio said that cost of living pressures were continuing to drive interest in EVs. The council is the national body that represents the EV industry in Australia.

She said the record sales data and continued strong interest in EV ownership highlight the urgent need for an accelerated national EV infrastructure plan.

"While the government has rightly invested in charging infrastructure, with adoption increasing, the federal, state and local governments all need to work together to redouble efforts to meet demand," she said.

Stronger EV adoption places greater pressure on charging infrastructure, according to the FCAI.

"As the number of EVs on the road continues to grow, charging infrastructure must become more of a priority. Continued investment and enabling policy settings will be essential to ensure infrastructure keeps pace with consumer adoption," FCAI Chief Executive Tony Weber said.

Dia also pointed to vehicle supply "improving faster than charging infrastructure in some parts of the country, particularly for apartment residents, renters and regional communities".

The next phase of the green transition will depend not only on vehicle affordability but also on the accessibility of EV chargers and customer confidence, he said.

"Both government and industry have important roles to play. Governments can help ensure charging infrastructure keeps pace with adoption and provide clear long-term policy signals. Industry, meanwhile, must continue improving customer support, servicing networks and spare parts availability as EV sales grow," Dia said.

Conservation campaign



The 6.1-meter shark made of wicker is seen along a beach in Falmouth, United Kingdom, on Sunday. The project, launched by Falmouth University lecturer Duncan Cameron, returned to Falmouth this year, aiming to raise awareness of marine pollution ahead of World Ocean Day on Monday. JORY MUNDY / GETTY IMAGES

China calls for greater engagement to support Afghanistan's development

By MINLU ZHANG
at the United Nations
minluzhang@chinadailyusa.com

China on Monday called for continued international engagement with Afghanistan and greater support for the country's humanitarian and development needs, as the UN Security Council reviewed the situation in the country.

Addressing a United Nations Security Council meeting on Afghanistan, China's permanent representative to the United Nations Fu Cong said Afghanistan faces ongoing challenges in humanitarian assistance, economic development and counterterrorism despite an overall stable security situation.

China called for maintaining the momentum of pragmatic engagement with Afghanistan, said Fu. He noted that growing exchanges and cooperation between Afghanistan and the international community, particularly neighboring countries, have contributed to regional stability and economic development.

The envoy urged all parties to maintain dialogue and engagement with the Afghan authorities, narrow differences and build consensus.

Fu called for greater efforts to improve living conditions in Afghanistan, where nearly half of the population remains in need of humanitarian assistance. "Traditional donors should increase support for Afghanistan, and countries bearing historical responsibilities should take the lead," he said.

China also urged relevant countries to return Afghanistan's overseas assets in full, lift unilateral sanctions and support the rebuilding of the country's financial system, said Fu.

On basic human rights, Fu said China is concerned over restrictions on girls' education and called on the Afghan authorities to take positive measures to ensure girls' access to education and better protect women's rights to employment, healthcare, public services and social participation.

China also called for the removal of restrictions preventing Afghan female staff members from working in UN offices, saying such measures have seriously affected the operations of UN agencies in the country.

On counterterrorism, Fu urged Afghanistan to intensify efforts to combat all terrorist groups operating within its territory and strengthen cooperation with regional countries and the international community.

The envoy also noted China's efforts to help ease tensions between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Representatives from China, Afghanistan and Pakistan held an informal meeting from April 1 to 7 in Urumqi, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. According to Fu, the meeting reached consensus on maintaining good-neighborly relations, enhancing dialogue and exploring comprehensive solutions.

He reiterated China's support for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), whose mandate expires later this month.

Fu said China will work with UN Security Council members to build consensus and support the smooth renewal of UNAMA's mandate.

According to the UN, Afghanistan remains one of the world's largest humanitarian crises, with 21.9 million people requiring humanitarian assistance in 2026.

Georgette Gagnon, the secretary-general's deputy special representative for Afghanistan and officer-in-charge of UNAMA, said that while the de facto authorities faced "no meaningful armed or political challenge", the country remained under "increasing control by the de facto authorities without a clear end-state".

She told the Security Council that economic pressures, large-scale returns of Afghans and restrictions on women and girls continue to pose significant challenges for the country.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:11 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:11 PM

SPORTS

TENNIS

ZVEREV CLEARS MAJOR HURDLE

German finally crowned Grand Slam champion



Alexander Zverev lifts the coveted Coupe des Mousquetaires after defeating Flavio Cobolli in the French Open final at Roland Garros in Paris on Sunday. AFP

It all came rushing back to Alexander Zverev when he was lying on his back on the center court at Roland Garros, his hands covering his face, and sobbing on Sunday as he realized that he had — finally — become a Grand Slam champion.

It was the same court where he twisted his right ankle and crumpled to the ground, wailing in agony before being pushed off on a wheelchair during a semifinal match against Rafael Nadal in 2022.

The same court where he wasted a lead of two sets to one against Carlos Alcaraz in the 2024 championship match.

"All the emotions came out, because this court is very, very special to me. It's special in a very positive way, but also special on the negative way, because I had some of the toughest moments of my life here," Zverev said.

"I was laying on this court with an injury that I didn't know if I would ever come back from. I lost a Grand Slam final here, so all of those memories for me, they're not wiped out. They're still with me, but this one will beat all of them."

After so many missed opportunities, Zverev is no longer one of the best players never to win a major title.

In his fourth major final, Zverev beat Flavio Cobolli 6-1, 4-6, 6-4, 6-7 (5), 6-1 for the French Open title.

Without Jannik Sinner or Alcaraz across the net, it was a unique opportunity for Zverev and the third-ranked German took full advantage.

When Cobolli missed an overhead on the second championship point, after more than four hours of the five-set encounter, Zverev joined an elite group of players that captured their first major in their fourth final: Eight-time major champion Andre Agassi, 2001 Wimbledon winner Goran Ivanisevic and 2020 US Open champion Dominic Thiem.

Then, when Zverev finally got his hands on the Coupe des Mousquetaires, he turned it upside down, held it between his legs and then hoisted it above his head with both arms as he let out a loud roar.

"This trophy, for me, is very important, because if I had lost this one, this self-belief would have gone down a lot," Zverev said.

"But now that I've won it, I feel like I can do it again."

No Sinner or Alcaraz

Zverev had been an overwhelming favorite for the title ever since the top-ranked Sinner struggled in the first week's heat wave and wasted a two set and 5-1 lead against Argentine Juan Manuel Cerundolo in the second round.

A day later, 24-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic was also eliminated.

Alcaraz, the two-time reigning champion, withdrew before the tournament with an injured right wrist.

Zverev also lost a lead of two sets to none in the 2020 US Open final to Thiem and was beaten in straight sets by Sinner in the 2025 Australian Open final.

It was the 25th title of Zverev's career.



Zverev poses for a picture with the Roland Garros ball boys and girls following his maiden Grand Slam title win on Sunday. AFP

Cobolli's first Slam final

The 14th-ranked Cobolli had never been past a Grand Slam quarterfinal until last week. He was attempting to become the first Italian man to raise the singles trophy at Roland Garros since Adriano Panatta 50 years ago.

Cobolli comes from the same tennis club in Rome as Panatta did, and Panatta was asked by tournament organizers to present the trophy to celebrate the anniversary of his 1976 triumph.

The honors, however, went to Zverev.

Russian teenager Mirra Andreeva won the women's singles trophy on Saturday.

Flawless start

The match was played in perfect conditions, and Zverev's game was almost flawless at the start as Cobolli appeared nervous.

A group of women in the stands held up letters to form Zverev's nickname: "Sascha".

Cobolli tends to stand way over near the corner of the court and hit big kick serves out wide into the ad court.

Zverev knew what was coming and returned one such kick serve early in the first set with a backhand that he wrapped around the outside of the net post. Cobolli ended up winning the point, but it was a message from Zverev that he knew how to handle his opponent's tactics.

The next time Zverev hit a similar return, Cobolli couldn't handle it and Zverev won the point.

Both players were treated by a physiotherapist as the match wore on, and Cobolli appeared to run out of energy in the fifth set.

"He deserved it more than me at the end of the match," Cobolli said, adding that he was slowed by cramps.

Zverev said his cramps "were more mental".

"I actually think that the cramp helped me in a way, that I let go, I kind of hit my shots a bit more and just let go," he added.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Cobolli sees bright future, despite heartbreak in Roland Garros decider

Flavio Cobolli left everything on Court Philippe-Chatrier as he chased a first Grand Slam title on Sunday, but the Italian admitted the pressure of playing on the biggest stage ultimately proved decisive in a heartbreaking defeat.

The 24-year-old arrived at Roland Garros having never gone beyond the quarterfinals of a major tournament and left it as a Grand Slam runner-up, his reputation transformed, despite falling one match short of the title.

"Of course, I have a very different level of self-belief and awareness compared to when I started this tournament," he told reporters after losing 6-1, 4-6, 6-4, 6-7 (5), 6-1.

"But, I think the goals are still the same."

Those goals now include qualifying for the season-ending ATP Finals in Turin, a target Cobolli revealed had been set before the clay-court major began.

"We've set ourselves a goal that I don't want to tell you yet ... actually, it's Turin. That has been the objective since the start of the year," said Cobolli, who moved up to fourth place in the Race to Turin.

"We're working to get there. It's very difficult, because only eight players make it, but with the level I've shown over these weeks, and with all the work my team does behind the scenes, I'm sure I'll get there."

Cobolli came within touching distance of taking a two-sets-to-one lead, but believes a missed opportunity late in the third set altered the course of the contest.

"The biggest regret? Yes, that game at the end of the third set changed everything," he said.

"But, as I said before, I'm not used to this kind of pressure yet. I felt I was close, and, in the important moments, maybe I rushed a little. That's what hurt me. But you learn from those decisions."

The Italian had spent the previous two weeks playing with freedom and confidence, but the magnitude of the occasion hit him from the moment he woke up on Sunday morning.

> "I'm not used to this kind of pressure yet. I felt I was close, and, in the important moments, maybe I rushed a little. That's what hurt me. But you learn from those decisions."
>
> **Flavio Cobolli,** French Open runner-up

"Yesterday, I was nervous, but I handled it well and stuck to the routine we've followed for two weeks," he said.

"Today, I woke up much more nervous than I expected. I had a huge knot in my stomach, something I don't usually have, and I had to fight that feeling all day.

"You have to understand the pressure of a Grand Slam final, especially for someone who isn't used to playing matches like this."

In true Italian style, he also paid tribute to his family, particularly his mother, who rarely travels to tournaments but was present for the biggest match of his career.

"My mother raised me," Cobolli said.

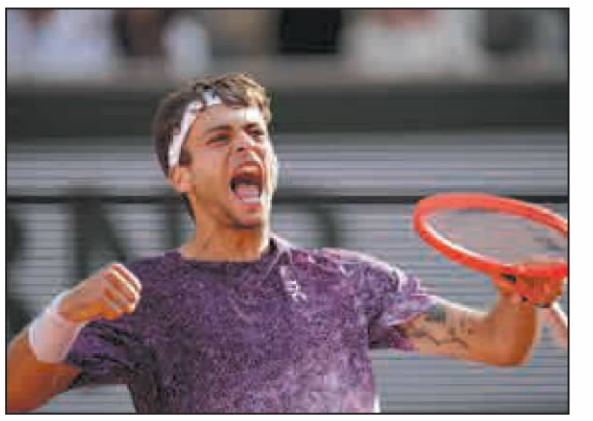
"She drove me everywhere, sat through every practice session and was always there for me. She deserves to have been here."

As painful as the defeat was, Cobolli preferred to focus on what had been gained rather than what had slipped away.

"At the end of the day, they'll hug me because we've played a Grand Slam final, and nobody can take that away from us," he said.

"As I said during the ceremony, this match has to be taken with a smile. We all gave everything. I have no regrets, so I can be calm and keep moving forward."

REUTERS



Flavio Cobolli reacts after winning the fourth set against Alexander Zverev during their French Open final on Sunday. AP

Red clay of Paris unearths future Chinese tennis star

By **SUN XIAOCHEN**
sunxiaochen@chinadaily.com.cn

Having celebrated many historic moments in Chinese tennis, the red clay of Roland Garros might have just witnessed the rise of the nation's next big thing.

Even without any of its senior stars making a deep run, China still turned heads on the final weekend at this year's upset-laden French Open, with teen talent Sun Xinran's appearance in the girls' tournament final serving up notice of its next future star.

Fifteen-year-old Sun's breakout run in Paris made her the first Chinese player to reach a junior final at Roland Garros, and has propelled her to the No 1 spot on the International Tennis Federation's junior world rankings this week, despite her straight-sets loss to 17-year-old Alisa Oktiabreva in the championship match on Saturday.

Seeded second in the girls' draw, Sun carried on her recent hot form as she stormed through five straight matches, conceding only one set en route to the final, where the gap in strength and experience between herself and Russian-born Oktiabreva, who's already a regular on the WTA circuit, proved too great to surmount.

The Chinese prodigy, however, has taken the loss in her stride, displaying a maturity that will stand her in good stead when she faces the ups and downs of the pro stage.

"Of course, I felt a bit disappointed not being able to win it all, but I have a better understanding where I need to improve," said Sun, who's become the third Chinese player to ascend to the female junior No 1 spot, following Wang Xiyu in September 2018 and Xu Shilin in October 2014.

"I couldn't accept even a little bit of failure in the past, but playing through setbacks at the international level taught me to embrace it with a positive mindset and always set my sights on the next opportunity.

"After all, tennis will be my job in the future."

One it looks like she will be good at.

Born in Shenzhen, a hub of domestic and international tennis tournaments in Guangdong province, Sun's journey in the sport began at six years old. She started training as an amateur influenced by her mother, an avid tennis fan, who then offered her full support when, at age 11, Sun said she wanted to take it to the next step.



Sun Xinran with the French Open junior singles runner-up trophy on Saturday. XINHUA

"It was my own idea, 80 percent, give or take, and the other 20 percent was the support of my family," Sun said of her early commitment to the sport — something that could, for an ordinary family, be viewed as a bold gamble back then.

Despite the financial pressure of supporting her travel and training expenses while competing on the ITF tour and entry-level senior circuit, Sun's parents pulled out all the stops to enable their daughter to unleash her full sporting potential at every stage, while making sure her education kept up as well.

Traveling across the world on a weekly basis for competitions on ITF's tightly-scheduled junior tour, Sun has managed to stay on top of her school work at the Shenzhen Hongshan Middle School via online tutoring at restaurants, on her way to the airport or in her hotel room.

"I've actually got used to (this) life," said Sun, who's racked up 24 wins out of 26 matches on the ITF junior circuit, and an additional seven victories in 11 appearances at entry-level ITF senior events and WTA125 tournaments this year. "It is my choice. It's more than just a hobby, and I am enjoying it very much."

With the intensity of her game picking up and experience gained on all kinds of surfaces, since early last season, Sun has seen her talent and hard work pay dividends.

She wrote her name in history for the first time in October when she won her first singles title on the ITF Women's World Tennis Tour in Egypt to become the youngest Chinese winner of an international senior event at 15 years and 95 days old.

Two months later in Florida, Sun won China's first singles title at the Orange Bowl at Fort Lauderdale, a renowned cradle for future major champions, before picking up another confidence boost by winning her first match on the WTA125 circuit earlier last month, beating a world top-200 senior in Lina Gjorcheska in Istanbul to become the youngest Chinese player to secure a win at that level.

Back-to-back clay-court title runs at J300 in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, and J500 in Milan in the lead-up to the French Open kept Sun in winning form to introduce herself, big time, at Roland Garros last week.

Now, having left her own mark at the clay-court mecca where legend Li Na won Asia's first singles major trophy in 2011 and her senior compatriot Zheng Qinwen delivered Olympic gold for the nation at Paris 2024, Sun said she is daring to dream big, but is doing so by taking it one small step at a time.

"The junior world No 1 doesn't really guarantee anything," said a composed Sun. "I just hope it will earn me more wildcard entries into even more senior tournaments.

"Only by testing myself against higher-level opponents can I make a smoother transition from the junior circuit to the professional tour," said Sun. "That's what my goal will be."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:11 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:13 PM

Growing trade
Imports outpace exports in the first five months
TOP NEWS, PAGE 2



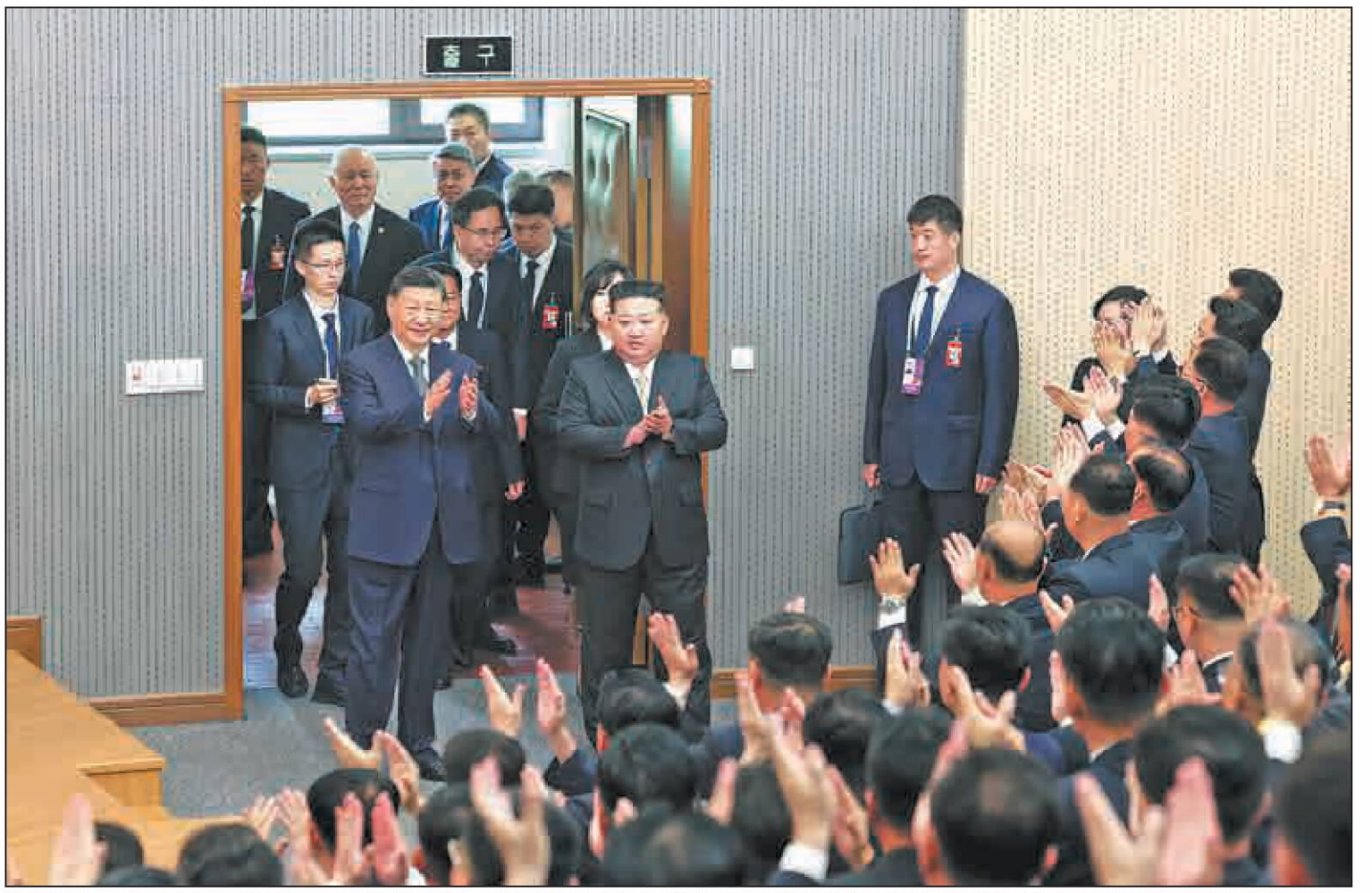
Young diver captures sea's hidden wonders
Z WEEKLY, PAGE 15



Waterway upgrade
Expansion of Three Gorges Dam to ease shipping bottlenecks
CHINA MARVELS, PAGES 8-9

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10, 2026



Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and Chinese president, walks into a lecture hall of the Central Cadres Training School of the Workers' Party of Korea in the company of Kim Jong-un, general secretary of the WPK and president of the State Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in Pyongyang, the DPRK, on Tuesday. YAO DAWEI / XINHUA

Xi, Kim vow to carry forward friendship

Leaders pledge to promote youth education programs

The top leaders of China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea agreed on Tuesday that the two countries should carry forward their great traditional friendship from generation to generation.

Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and Chinese president, and Kim Jong-un, general secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea and president of the State Affairs of the DPRK, made the remarks as Xi paid homage to the China-DPRK Friendship Tower in Pyongyang with his wife, Peng Liyuan, accompanied by Kim and his wife, Ri Sol-ju.

Xi and Kim also agreed that the years when China and the DPRK fought side by side in the 1950s are an eternal historical memory shared by both countries.

The two leaders pledged to jointly maintain memorial facilities dedicated to the Chinese People's Volunteers martyrs, carry out distinctive programs on revolutionary traditions and youth education, and carry forward the great spirit of the War to Resist United States Aggression and Aid Korea (1950-53).

On Tuesday morning, Xi, accompanied by Kim, also visited the Central Cadres Training School of the WPK in Pyongyang.

In the wooded area between teaching buildings, Xi and Kim jointly planted a fir tree. The fir tree remains evergreen throughout the year, symbolizing the enduring and ever-renewing friendship between China and the DPRK.

Before departing for Beijing, Xi and Peng attended a luncheon hosted by Kim and Ri.



President Xi Jinping straightens the ribbons on a flower basket while paying homage at the China-DPRK Friendship Tower with his wife, Peng Liyuan, in the company of DPRK top leader Kim Jong-un, and Kim's wife, Ri Sol-ju, in Pyongyang, the DPRK, on Tuesday. XIE HUANCHI / XINHUA

Xi said that he reached an important consensus with Kim on developing relations between China and the DPRK in the new era.

The two sides also had in-depth discussions on safeguarding peace and stability in the region and the world, Xi said.

Xi thanked Kim for the warm hospitality and thoughtful arrangements for the visit, noting that through the visit, the warmth and friendship extended by the WPK and the DPRK government and people toward the CPC and the Chinese government and people is felt even more deeply.

The mutual understanding between China and the DPRK has become deeper and more comprehensive, and the future development direction has become clearer and more definite, Xi said.

He also said that he is ready to work with Kim to jointly lead China-DPRK relations toward greater development and inject new and strong impetus into the socialist cause of the two countries.

Kim said that Xi's visit was a complete success, sending a positive message to the world that the DPRK and China are strengthening their friendly cooperation further, attracting widespread attention from various sides.

Xi's visit was of great significance to bilateral relations and the future development of the region, Kim said, noting that the DPRK stands ready to earnestly implement the important consensus reached during the visit, promote new tangible outcomes in bilateral cooperation, and advance DPRK-China relations to a new and higher level.

On Tuesday afternoon, Xi returned to Beijing after concluding his two-day state visit to the DPRK. Kim and his wife went to the airport to see Xi and his wife off, holding a grand farewell ceremony in their honor.

XINHUA — CHINA DAILY

Inside

- Views, **page 6**
- See more, **page 3**

Scholars seek inspiration from classical wisdom at Athens dialogue

By **WANG HUAZHONG** and **ZHENG WANYIN** in Athens

Walking past the marble statues of Aristotle and Plato, classical studies scholars from around the world entered the auditorium of the Academy of Athens on Tuesday for a dialogue spanning the East and West, from the past to the present day.

The Second World Conference of Classics is being held in Athens, the capital of Greece, from Tuesday to Wednesday to seek inspiration from classical wisdom in addressing the questions of our time. The event is jointly organized by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the Greek Ministry of Culture and the Academy of Athens.

"This is not only an academic gathering, but also a profound act of putting ideas into practice," said Nikiforos Diamandouros, president of the Academy of Athens and moderator of the conference's opening ceremony.

"Our goal is to ensure that classical wisdom ... becomes a living force that continually provides inspiration and guidance for the advancement of human society and civilization.

"Plato, Aristotle, Hesiod, as well as Confucius, Laozi and Sun Tzu — these great sages remain present among us today."

He added that as the two oldest civilizations in human history, Greece and China possess distinct yet mutually enriching cultural traditions, which "complement one another and can make a decisive contribution to this dialogue".

Hu Heping, deputy head of the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, said that classical civilizations provide spiritual resources for human development, as well as power for the prosperity and progress of countries.

*See **Classics,** page 2*

Inside

- Comment, **page 5**
- See more, **page 7**

WORLD WATCH
By Arkebe Oqubay

Coherent policies seen as key to poverty alleviation

China has achieved a landmark development milestone by ending absolute poverty over the past decades and lifting approximately 800 million people out of destitution — a figure representing roughly 75 percent of global poverty reduction targets agreed upon at the United Nations. The scale and speed of this transformation are unprecedented in history.

The significance is both practical and symbolic. It shows that a large, populous nation can eliminate extreme poverty through sustained, systematic policy rather than exceptional circumstances. For the Global South — where over 80 percent of the world's population lives and where poverty reduction remains a core development imperative — China's experience is a powerful and instructive reference point.

China's achievement did not stem from a single intervention but from a coherent, mutually reinforcing set of policies. Within the overarching framework of reform and opening-up, the strategy combined high economic growth with targeted rural intervention, inclusive development principles, agricultural modernization and sustained productivity gains. These elements worked in concert: Broad growth raised average living standards, while targeted measures ensured that the most marginalized populations were not left behind.

This integration of macro-level growth strategy with micro-level targeting is arguably the most instructive aspect of China's experience. Poverty reduction was treated not as a residual outcome of economic expansion but as a primary policy objective, requiring direct administrative attention and dedicated resource allocation.

Ending poverty is one challenge; preventing relapse is another.

China has put in place several concrete mechanisms to secure the progress that has been made. A dynamic monitoring system identifies households at risk of falling back into poverty, enabling early intervention. Ongoing industrial and economic support is channeled to formerly poor regions to ensure that development is structurally embedded rather than dependent on short-term transfers.

*See **Poverty,** page 2*



INSIDE
Squirrel fish wows foreign diners
China, page 4

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN

China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

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

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:13 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:13 PM

TOP NEWS

China, Georgia jointly elevate bilateral ties

Two sides have upheld principles of mutual respect over the past 34 years

President Xi Jinping and Georgian President Mikheil Kavelashvili exchanged congratulations on Tuesday on the 34th anniversary of diplomatic ties between the two countries, and jointly announced the elevation of bilateral relations to a comprehensive strategic partnership.

In his congratulatory message, Xi said that China and Georgia, over the past 34 years, have consistently upheld the principles of mutual respect, mutual trust and win-win cooperation, promoted the healthy and steady development of bilateral relations and achieved fruitful outcomes in cooperation across various fields.

Since the establishment of the strategic partnership between China and Georgia in 2023, mutual political trust between the two sides has been further strengthened, practical cooperation has been accelerated, and multilateral collaboration has become more productive, Xi said.

No matter how the international landscape evolves, China always views its relations with Georgia from a strategic and long-term perspective, Xi said, adding that he would like to take the anniversary as an opportunity to announce, jointly with Kavelashvili, the upgrade of the two countries' ties to a comprehensive strategic partnership.

He expressed the belief that the elevation of bilateral ties will open up new prospects for the development of China-Georgia relations, write a new chapter in their traditional friendship, inject strong momentum into their mutually beneficial cooperation, and deliver more benefits to the peoples of the two countries.

Kavelashvili said in his message that over the past three decades and more, Georgia and China have established a lasting friendship, and bilateral relations have achieved remarkable progress based on mutual respect, mutual trust and constructive cooperation.

On the occasion of the 34th anniversary of bilateral diplomatic ties, the two sides have made a joint decision to lift Georgia-China relations to the level of a comprehensive strategic partnership, Kavelashvili said. He also said he believes that the elevated ties will create more opportunities for bilateral cooperation, bring greater benefits to both countries, and further strengthen the bonds of friendship between their peoples.

XINHUA

Xi congratulates new governor general of Canada

By JI HAISHENG
jihaisheng@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping on Monday sent a message to Louise Arbour, congratulating her on assuming office as the 31st governor general of Canada.

In the message, Xi said that the sound and steady development of China-Canada ties serves the common interests of both countries, and is conducive to world peace, stability, development and prosperity.

He said he attaches great importance to the development of bilateral ties. Xi expressed the willingness to work with Arbour to advance the China-Canada new strategic partnership along a sound, stable and sustainable track in the spirit of mutual respect, mutual benefit and win-win results, as well as seeking common ground while shelving differences, so as to bring more benefits to both peoples.

Arbour, 79, was installed as Canada's new governor general on Monday after a swearing-in ceremony. She had previously served in a number of influential positions both at home and abroad.



Strong demand, policies fuel foreign trade expansion

By ZHONG NAN
zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

China's import growth outpaced export expansion by nearly 9 percentage points in the first five months of 2026, underpinned by robust domestic demand and broader market-opening measures, economists and government officials said on Tuesday.

They said two key policy initiatives will sustain strong import momentum throughout the year. The Ministry of Commerce's "Big Market for All: Export to China" campaign has broadened access to China's vast consumer and industrial markets for global exporters. The government's expanded zero-tariff treatment for all African countries that have diplomatic ties with China, which took effect on May 1, is also expected to support import growth.

China's foreign trade grew 15.3 percent year-on-year to 20.68 trillion yuan ($3.05 trillion) during the January-May period, with exports rising 11.8 percent and imports jumping 20.5 percent, data from the General Administration of Customs showed.

Wang Xiaohong, a researcher at the China Center for International Economic Exchanges in Beijing, said the strong growth in imports reflected the effectiveness of policies aimed at expanding imports, boosting consumption and advancing high-standard opening-up.

> "China's highly developed supply chains, rapid commercialization of new technologies and strong engineering capabilities continue to create opportunities for both imports and exports."
>
> **Shen Kelei,** Marelli Holdings Co's executive vice-president

For example, China's imports from Africa surged 15 percent year-on-year to 95.13 billion yuan in May alone, marking the ninth consecutive month of growth, customs statistics showed.

The faster growth in imports also underscored China's role as a key engine of global demand, creating new opportunities for overseas exporters and supporting trade flows at a time when many economies are facing slower growth, Wang said.

Lynn Song, chief economist for China at Dutch bank ING, said that both China's imports and exports exceeded expectations in the first five months. This was partly supported by rising prices of high-tech products, which lifted the value of both outbound and inbound shipments.

"The country's trade structure is also becoming increasingly tilted toward technology-intensive goods," he added.

Echoing that view, Sheana Yue, senior economist at British think tank Oxford Economics, said China's industrial upgrading, technological advances and well-established supply chains have enhanced the competitiveness of Chinese products, helping to sustain trade growth and market share gains despite external uncertainties.

Lyu Daliang, director of the GAC's department of statistics and analysis, said China has deepened practical economic and trade cooperation with its partners since the beginning of this year and continued to serve as a stabilizing force for global trade.

Beyond supporting imports, China's broader opening-up efforts and regional trade agreements are also helping both domestic and foreign businesses integrate more deeply into regional supply chains, facilitating both imports and exports.

Techtronic Industries (Dongguan) Co, a Dongguan, Guangdong province-based manufacturer of power tools and outdoor garden equipment, imported goods worth 1.44 billion yuan from other economies of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership agreement between January and May, according to information released by Huangpu Customs in Guangdong.

Zheng Jiancai, the company's head of customs affairs, said the RCEP agreement has helped lower sourcing costs and improve supply chain efficiency while expanding market access across the region.

"Our lithium-ion battery packs are mainly exported to Australia and New Zealand," said Zheng.

"Since the RCEP came into force, raw materials sourced from Malaysia have been treated as originating materials under the agreement, enabling our products to qualify for preferential tariffs and enjoy tariff reductions of up to 5 percent."

In addition to importing key parts and components into China, Marelli Holdings Co, a Japanese automotive parts manufacturer, is expanding its presence in the country in areas such as smart lighting, electronics and intelligent cockpit technologies, underscoring China's growing role in the company's global operations.

"China's highly developed supply chains, rapid commercialization of new technologies and strong engineering capabilities continue to create opportunities for both imports and exports," said Shen Kelei, the group's executive vice-president.

Classics: Every civilization possesses its unique value

From page 1

Hu stressed the need to relearn, reactivate and retransform ancient great wisdom while making modern interpretations of classics, to refresh classical wisdom and lead human civilization.

"We should focus on the holistic development of individuals to nurture citizens' moral character through classical wisdom. We should focus on the prosperity and progress of the nation to strengthen the foundations of the spirit of modernization through classical wisdom. And we should focus on harmony and shared flourishing in the world, drawing on classical wisdom to address global challenges."

Lina Mendoni, minister of culture of Greece, highlighted the establishment of the Chinese School of Classical Studies at Athens in 2024, following the inaugural World Conference of Classics in Beijing.

She said the most important outcome of this cooperation demonstrates that when different cultures engage in open and sincere dialogue, seeking understanding rather than imposing their own views, "conflict is not inevitable".

"There is an ancient saying: When the winds of change blow, some people build walls, others build windmills.

"In an age of profound change, ... let us choose dialogue over isolation, understanding over prejudice, and cooperation over confrontation. This is the enduring wisdom that the classics offer us, and perhaps the most valuable legacy we can pass on to future generations."

Gao Xiang, president of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said that no civilization evolves in isolation, but grows, develops and thrives through exchanges and mutual learning.

However, there exists a certain notion of "civilizational superiority", as some continue to believe that their civilization is superior to others, regarding their own standards as the only valid standards.

"This is not the right path. It only serves to deepen conflict and division," said Gao, warning that "the world must not be permitted to regress to the law of the jungle, nor should the principle that the strong prey on the weak be allowed to once again define international relations.

"I believe that every civilization possesses its own unique value, deserves respect, and should be treated as an equal."

Drawing from classical wisdom, scholars will hold discussions in four parallel subforums on virtue and paideia, friendship and community, peace and order, and technology and civilization.

Contact the writers at wanghuazhong@chinadaily.com.cn



Hu Heping, deputy head of the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, delivers a speech at the opening ceremony of the Second World Conference of Classics on Tuesday in Athens, Greece. KONSTANTINOS PSOMAS/ FOR CHINA DAILY

Poverty: Sustained political commitment emphasized

From page 1

The social protection architecture has also been strengthened. This includes the minimum livelihood guarantee program, medical insurance subsidies for low-income households, and education assistance for vulnerable families. Together, these mechanisms are designed to mitigate the principal risks of poverty relapse — illness, natural disaster and economic shock — thereby consolidating the gains already achieved rather than treating them as permanent by default.

Broader implications

The broader implications for developing nations are clear. Poverty alleviation, equitable growth and inclusive development must be central to any national development strategy, embedded within a wider framework of structural transformation and sustained economic expansion. Poverty reduction is not a peripheral concern; it is Sustainable Development Goal 1 within the UN's 2030 Agenda — the foundational objective on which much of the broader framework depends.

China's experience shows that when a nation prioritizes this goal with sustained political commitment and institutional implementation over time, the eradication of absolute poverty is achievable. Countries will differ in their circumstances — geography, institutional capacity, historical conditions and the external environment all matter — but the underlying principle holds: Systematic, long-term effort directed at the poorest populations yields measurable and durable results.

It is equally important to note what China's model is not. It is not a transferable blueprint to be applied wholesale. Rather, it demonstrates what is possible when development strategy treats poverty reduction as a central, measurable objective rather than a hoped-for by-product of growth. Each nation must identify the interventions appropriate to its own political economy. What China offers is evidence of ambition and outcomes, not a universal template.

At the international level, China's achievement reframes the global development debate in at least two respects.

First, it challenges the assumption — prevalent in some development economics literature — that eliminating absolute poverty in large, complex economies requires generational time scales. The Chinese case has substantially compressed that timeline, with implications for what the international community should regard as achievable within the SDG framework and beyond.

President Xi Jinping's *The Governance of China*, volumes I to V, offers an authoritative source on China's opening-up and reform, and the nation's development strategies and policies provide primary insight into the strategic thinking and political philosophy behind China's poverty alleviation.

Second, the achievement shifts the center of gravity in development knowledge. For much of the postwar period, the dominant frameworks for poverty reduction originated in Western academic institutions and multilateral organizations. China's experience — increasingly documented by both Chinese and international researchers — provides an empirical basis for approaches rooted in the developmental realities of the Global South. "Four Decades of Poverty Reduction in China (2022)", a joint publication by the World Bank Group and the Development Research Center of China's State Council, the nation's Cabinet, synthesizes the process, data and outcomes with substantial academic rigor.

Finally, ending absolute poverty globally requires more than sound domestic policy. It demands renewed commitment to the 2030 Agenda, a global governance architecture that genuinely incorporates the voices of the Global South, and the conditions of peace and development, without which shared prosperity cannot take root. China's achievement demonstrates what national ambition can accomplish; the international community awaits equivalent resolve and action.

The author is former senior minister and special adviser to the prime minister of Ethiopia. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:13 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:13 PM

XI'S VISIT







Left: Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and Chinese president, delivers a speech while attending a welcoming banquet hosted by Kim Jong-un, general secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea and president of the State Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, at Mokran House in Pyongyang, capital of the DPRK, on Monday. DING HAITAO / XINHUA
Middle: President Xi and DPRK top leader Kim jointly plant a fir tree in the wooded area of the Central Cadres Training School of the Workers' Party of Korea in Pyongyang on Tuesday. YAN YAN / XINHUA
Right: President Xi pays homage at the China-DPRK Friendship Tower with his wife Peng Liyuan, in the company of DPRK top leader Kim and his wife Ri Sol-ju, in Pyongyang on Tuesday. DING HAITAO / XINHUA

EVERLASTING FRIENDSHIP



President Xi concludes his state visit to the DPRK and departs from Pyongyang on Tuesday. DPRK top leader Kim and his wife Ri Sol-ju went to the airport to see President Xi and his wife Peng Liyuan off and held a grand farewell ceremony in their honor. XIE HUANCHI / XINHUA





Clockwise from above: A throng of people waving flags and holding balloons bids farewell to President Xi on his way to the airport in Pyongyang on Tuesday. YAO DAWEI / XINHUA
President Xi and his wife Peng Liyuan, along with DPRK top leader Kim and his wife Ri Sol-ju, attend an artistic performance at the Pyongyang Gymnasium in Pyongyang on Monday. LI XIANG / XINHUA
Artists dance during the performance at the Pyongyang Gymnasium on Monday. YIN BOGU / XINHUA



Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:13 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:13 PM

CHINA

Offshore renewable energy powers nation

By **LI MENGHAN** in Fuzhou
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

Rows of solar panels stretch across what were once abandoned tidal flats in Dongshan county, Zhangzhou, Fujian province. Steel pillars driven into the seabed hold the panels above the waterline, allowing aquaculture activities to continue below while clean electricity is being generated above — a visible example of how coastal provinces maximize limited marine space.

The 180,000-kilowatt solar farm, built on more than 200 hectares of mudflats, is the country's first offshore solar project in a high-wind-speed zone, operated by China Three Gorges Corporation. The project exemplifies how offshore wind and coastal solar are reshaping the province's energy landscape.

Dongshan is part of a larger national effort. China has to date approved more than 200 offshore wind projects, pushing cumulative grid-connected capacity past 47 million kW — around half of the global total and the world's top ranking for five consecutive years, according to the Ministry of Natural Resources.

"Fujian has some of China's best conditions for offshore renewable energy — strong, consistent winds averaging more than 9 meters per second, long coastlines with suitable tidal flats, and deep waters just offshore," said Chen Qingsen, deputy general manager of the Fujian Three Gorges Offshore Wind Power International Industrial Park Operations Co.

Chen said solar and wind power are complementary — solar generation peaks during daylight hours while wind often strengthens at night, creating a more stable collective output. He noted that one full rotation of a 16-megawatt offshore wind turbine generates about 34 kilowatt-hours of electricity, enough to power an average Chinese household for more than a week.

"From 2019, when the first domestically produced 6.7-megawatt offshore wind turbine was unveiled here, to 2024, when the world's largest 26-megawatt offshore wind turbine rolled off the production line, we have launched turbines of 8, 10, 13, 16, 18, 20 and 26 megawatts, continuously breaking global records while achieving 100 percent domestic production of key components," Chen said, adding that these turbines are accelerating their entry into overseas markets.

Prior to 2017, China's largest domestic turbine was limited to 5 MW, with critical components reliant on overseas suppliers. The 67-hectare park, established in 2016, broke that pattern as China's first industrial cluster covering the full offshore wind power chain.

Yue Qi, director of the institute for marine resources protection and utilization of the National Ocean Technology Center, emphasized that offshore renewable energy is a strategic priority for China's energy transition.

The outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) sets a target of 100 million kW of offshore wind capacity by 2030.

"The target reflects the central government's commitment to scaling up clean energy while developing the marine sector as a new engine of economic growth," Yue said.

Developing offshore wind along China's eastern seaboard also carries a logistical advantage over transmitting power from the west. "Short transmission distances and proximity to consumption centers mean we can avoid the massive losses and infrastructure costs of long-distance west-to-east power transfer," Yue noted.

As nearshore waters grow increasingly crowded, the industry is pushing farther out. China's site-selection standards have evolved from the early "double-10" principle — at least 10 meters deep and 10 kilometers offshore — to the current "single-30" standard of at least 30 meters deep or 30 km from shore.

In 2023, the Ministry of Natural Resources introduced policies for the three-dimensional, layered use of marine space. Around 4,000 such multiuse projects now operate nationwide, according to Yue.

Looking ahead, China is exploring a new frontier of undersea data centers directly powered by offshore wind to support artificial intelligence and 5G infrastructure.

Qin legacy unveiled



The special archaeological exhibition, *The Qin's Unification in Archaeological Treasures*, holds its opening ceremony at the Shanghai Museum on Tuesday. The exhibition opens to the public free of charge on Wednesday and runs through Sept 7. GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

Dancing after *gaokao*



Two students perform a ballroom dance outside the examination site at Wuhan No 16 High School in Hubei province on Tuesday to celebrate the end of the *gaokao*, also known as the National College Entrance Examination. HU DONGDONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Chongqi rail and road bridge hits milestone

Main span installed, Yangtze project to be fully operational by 2027-end

By **ZHENG ZHENG** in Shanghai
zhengzheng@chinadaily.com.cn



The main span of the Chongqi Rail-Road Yangtze River Bridge is installed. GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

The main span of the Chongqi Rail-Road Yangtze River Bridge was successfully installed on Tuesday, marking a major milestone for what will become the world's largest cable-stayed bridge combining ballastless railway tracks and highway infrastructure.

The 4.09-kilometer bridge spans the northern branch of the Yangtze River estuary and features a 400-meter main span.

Its double-deck design accommodates a six-lane highway with a design speed of 100 kilometers per hour on the upper level, while the lower deck will carry two high-speed railway lines supporting trains traveling at 350 km/h, alongside intercity railway lines designed for operations at 250 km/h.

The bridge is a key component of the Shanghai-Chongqing-Chengdu high-speed railway corridor.

It is both the world's largest rail-highway cable-stayed bridge under construction and China's first rail-highway Yangtze River bridge designed to accommodate 350 km/h high-speed trains.

"This bridge is the key control project of the Qidong-Taicang section in Jiangsu province," said Yin Xueguo, commander of Chongming operations at the Shanghai State Railway Engineering Construction Management Co. "Today's milestone is of great significance to the overall construction schedule."

Construction teams will now focus on installing bridge deck systems, ballastless tracks and auxiliary electrical facilities, with the bridge expected to be fully operational by the end of 2027, Yin said.

Hu Huiyue, chief designer of the bridge at the China Railway Major Bridge Reconnaissance & Design Institute Co, said integrating highway and railway infrastructure within a single structure posed unique engineering challenges.

"The highway and railway share construction space within the bridge area before separating to facilitate rapid traffic distribution and improve the efficiency of the transportation hub," Hu said.

"Our structural innovations include integrating the main and auxiliary spans to save space while optimizing bridge height to achieve a better performance balance for the 350 kilometers per hour ballastless track system," he added.

Since drilling work began in December 2022, construction teams have overcome numerous challenges, including complex waterway conditions, ultra-large-span installation work and stringent precision requirements.

The project pioneered the use of intelligent grouting technology for both pile bottoms and pile sides in domestic railway bridge construction, ensuring secure anchoring of 152 bored piles, each with a diameter of 2.5 meters, across the two main piers.

Construction adopted a single-cantilever method using two 1,100-metric-ton beam-lifting cranes integrated with intelligent monitoring systems. The digital systems continuously tracked steel beam positioning, structural stress and deformation while automatically adjusting lifting operations.

"Our two construction approaches successfully addressed world-class engineering challenges in single-cantilever installation and long-distance launching," said Xiong Kaibing, project manager at the China Railway Major Bridge Engineering Group Co.

"More importantly, through advanced data integration and system coordination, we achieved the high-precision bidirectional convergence that made today's successful closure possible," he said.

Upon completion, the bridge will significantly improve regional connectivity, reducing travel time between Shanghai and Qidong in Jiangsu province from two and a half hours to less than 30 minutes by rail.

The project is expected to strengthen the comprehensive transportation corridor along the Yangtze River Economic Belt and support deeper integration of the Yangtze River Delta region.

China has key role in intl fisheries governance

By **WANG XIN** in Shanghai
wangxin2@chinadaily.com.cn

China has been ramping up efforts to promote sustainable marine fisheries governance in recent years, fulfilling its responsibilities in combating illegal fishing and strengthening international cooperation to build a maritime community with a shared future, officials and experts said recently in Shanghai.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the implementation of the Agreement on Port State Measures, or PSMA. Having come into effect in 2016 and now involving 85 parties, including the European Union, the PSMA is the first binding international framework aimed at preventing, deterring and eliminating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

The agreement's effective implementation contributes to the long-term conservation and sustainable use of living marine resources and marine ecosystems.

China became a party to the agreement in April 2025, a move widely regarded as a significant step in the country's efforts to participate in global marine fisheries governance, fulfill its international obligations and protect marine fishery resources.

A themed event was held at Shanghai Ocean University on Friday to mark International Day for the Fight Against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing.

In a video address, Matthew Camilleri, a senior fishery officer in the Fisheries and Aquaculture Division of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, reviewed key milestones in the agreement's implementation and called for more parties to join in order to enhance its effectiveness.

Xia Liang, a professor at the university, said global fisheries governance has become increasingly complex over the past decade as a result of the combined effects of resource constraints, environmental pollution and climate change.

"While the international community once focused primarily on catch volumes and increasing production, greater emphasis is now being placed on resource conservation, ecosystem protection and sustainable development," Xia said.

"The fundamental characteristics of global fisheries governance have shifted from an emphasis on exploitation and utilization to a stronger focus on conservation, rule-based management and multilateral cooperation, attracting increasing attention worldwide," he added.

Xia, who also serves as head of China's national contact point for the PSMA, highlighted the country's progress in implementing the agreement over the past year, adding that the achievements demonstrate China's commitment to sustainable fisheries governance.

Those achievements include the establishment of interagency coordination mechanisms, revisions to the Fisheries Law, the designation of 23 ports open to foreign fishing vessels and expanded participation in international cooperation.

"The agreement represents a significant practical achievement of multilateralism in the fisheries sector," said Tang Yi, a professor at the university.

"China's accession to the agreement will facilitate deeper engagement in global fisheries governance, promote the improvement of governance rules, strengthen international law enforcement cooperation and advance the sustainable development of global fisheries," Tang said.

Tang and Xia noted that many of China's experiences and practices could contribute to global fisheries governance, including the application of advanced technologies and artificial intelligence, strict closed-season regulations, voluntary high-seas fishing moratoriums, and nationwide efforts to combat illegal fishing and ensure fishery safety.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, China will further advance the implementation of the agreement, strengthen its port state control system and enhance efforts to combat illegal fishing, while making proactive contributions to the sustainable development of global marine fisheries.

A TWIST IN THE TAIL: SQUIRREL FISH REELS IN GLOBAL FOODIES

Suzhou dish, made famous by Emperor Qianlong, is as much a feast for the eyes as it is for the taste buds

By **DENG ZHANGYU**
dengzhangyu@chinadaily.com.cn

"Is there a real squirrel inside the fish?" That's the first question Chen Ye's foreign friends ask when she introduces them to sweet and sour squirrel fish at the dinner table.

Chen, who works at a foreign bank in Shanghai, laughs every time. But the confusion never stops her from ordering the dish. In fact, it's her go-to trump card when hosting international friends.

"No matter how many dishes we have, squirrel fish is always the first to be finished," she says. "Many people even order a second serving. And what shocks me most? They eat the head and tail down to the bones — something we Chinese usually skip."

As one of the top 10 classic dishes of Jiangsu province and the signature icon of Suzhou-style cuisine, squirrel fish stands as one of the most recognizable presences in Chinese gastronomy.

The magic of squirrel fish is in its appearance the moment it arrives at the table. The head and tail of the delicately fried mandarin fish sit upright on the plate, while in between, its flesh is splayed into fluffy, golden layers that resemble the bushiness of a squirrel's tail. The most spectacular ritual comes when the piping hot sweet-sour sauce is poured over it — the fish sizzles with a crisp, chirping sound, just like an actual squirrel's call.

China Vibes 味出中国 — FOOD —

And the taste? Pure delight: a brittle, golden crust gives way to tender, juicy meat, perfectly balanced between sweet and sour, with layers of texture that linger long after each bite.

Astrid Poghosyan, an Armenian musician working for the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, also frequently takes her international friends to try the dish.

"When foreigners think about Chinese cuisine, the first thing that comes to their mind is that sweet and sour taste," she said.

"To many foreigners, the taste of squirrel fish kind of represents Chinese cuisine."

Jin Hongnan, president of the Suzhou Culinary Association, has spent over three decades perfecting Suzhou-style cuisine. He's also the founder of Jiangnan Delicacy, a Black Pearl restaurant chain with 30 outlets in Suzhou.

In 2025, he opened a branch in San Francisco.

There, the squirrel fish dish sells for nearly 1,000 yuan ($140) — but more than half of all diners order it.

"Kids love it the most," Jin said.

Beyond the taste, the dish carries a culturally rich story. Legend has it that, during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), Emperor Qianlong visited Suzhou incognito and dined at Songhelou restaurant. The chef prepared this special fish, and the emperor was so delighted with his meal that the dish became famous across the country. Today, it's still a must-order at many eateries in Suzhou.

The sauce itself, however, has evolved.

Jin explained that the original recipe used vinegar, soy sauce and sugar. But, in the early 20th century, as Western-style restaurants became popular in Shanghai, ketchup was introduced into the sauce — a fusion that made the flavor more mellow and appealing to foreign palates.

But the real star of the dish is the knife work. First, the fish must be completely deboned. Then the flesh is scored in a crisscross pattern, carefully cut without breaking the skin — allowing it to fan out like a squirrel's bushy tail during frying.

At Jin's restaurants, each fish, weighing about 1 kilogram, receives exactly 108 cuts.

Only a highly skilled chef can handle such precision.

Because the dish demands such advanced knife skills, it is rarely made at home and when it is, it is typically reserved for family banquets.

Nowadays, it is a common sight on New Year's Eve dinner tables in hotels and restaurants, said Jin.

In Suzhou, Songhelou remains the top destination for authentic squirrel fish — after all, it was there that the Emperor Qianlong first tasted it.

Last year, the brand opened a branch in London, swapping the traditional mandarin fish for local sea bass — yet the dish still received an overwhelmingly warm reception from the city's cosmopolitan diners.

As the years go by, Chinese chefs continue to adapt the dish, using different fish, tweaking the sauce and adding unique twists.

Today, squirrel fish has earned international fame. It appears on menus in Chinese restaurants globally, celebrated for its stunning presentation and unforgettable flavor.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:13 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:13 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Real issue is some developed economies' ostrich approach to self-made vulnerabilities

France is reportedly considering proposing a video dialogue between the G7 members and China with the aim of addressing "global trade imbalances".

During a G7 finance ministers' meeting last month, French Finance Minister Roland Lescure said France wants to move away from "finger-pointing" and engage constructively with all partners, including China, to resolve trade-related issues.

Although framed as a "global" concern, the "finger-pointing" that accompanies the complaints of a "trade imbalance" voiced by some developed economies is directed primarily at China. Ironically, while such a mindset has become increasingly apparent among some European Union politicians, they strongly oppose Washington's tendency to blame the EU for "exploiting" the United States through its trade surplus. The EU has dismissed the US' justification and threats as absurd. Yet it is the same group of EU politicians who are now trying to copy the US playbook and apply it to the EU's own dealings with China.

Against this backdrop, the proposed dialogue to be held before the G7 summit scheduled for June 15-17 in Evian-les-Bains, France, may provide an opportunity to engage in discussions to avoid harmful tit-for-tat "punishment" practices, demonstrating that trade disputes are best managed through constructive dialogue.

Yet if the purpose of such a dialogue is to address a so-called "trade imbalance" with China, it is starting from a false premise.

China itself records deficits with many other economies such as the Republic of Korea and Australia. The notion that all economies can simultaneously enjoy trade surpluses is mathematically impossible. China's trade surplus with some G7 economies and the EU is not the outcome of its policy. It is largely the result of industrial specialization and the structure of global supply chains.

For years, multinational corporations designed products in the EU and the US, financed them in London, marketed them in Paris and assembled them in China. When those products were shipped abroad from Chinese ports, they appeared in customs statistics as Chinese exports. Yet a substantial portion of the profits goes elsewhere.

Also, many developed economies have spent years restricting exports of advanced technologies to China while simultaneously complaining about bilateral deficits. One cannot block sales in sectors where one enjoys a competitive advantage and then lament insufficient exports. If some G7 members and the EU genuinely seek to reduce their trade deficit with China, relaxing certain export controls would likely achieve more than employing protectionist measures.

China-EU trade remains among the world's largest commercial partnerships, exceeding $820 billion in goods trade last year. Meanwhile, foreign investment in China has shown resilience, with thousands of European companies continuing to expand operations in the Chinese market. Their behavior suggests a more nuanced reality than the political rhetoric often implies. Strong European companies actively seek cooperation with China; it is only some weaker ones that attribute their loss of market share to politicized reasons.

Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Italy and Canada maintain extensive and generally stable commercial relationships with China. Yet when the same issues are elevated to the level of the G7 or the EU, they are frequently recast as "existential threats". That says less about economics than politics. The more immediate issue that advanced economies need to address is inflation driven by energy-market disruptions caused by the Middle East conflict. Higher energy prices are squeezing consumers and undermining growth. If the G7 members and the EU want to address their problems, they should spend less time scrutinizing China's trade statistics and more time examining the sources of their vulnerabilities.

This highlights the larger problem: the G7 increasingly appears less interested in discussing economics than in framing economics through the lens of geopolitics. The world's major challenges today include anemic economic growth, debt distress, climate financing, technological disruption and supply-chain resilience. These are global concerns requiring global solutions. The greatest threat to the international trading system stems from the resurgence of unilateralism and protectionism in some major developed economies.

If the G7 wants a productive conversation with China, it should focus on the real questions, including whether the world's advanced economies are prepared to defend the principles of openness and globalization that helped create their own prosperity in the first place.

US trying to rope allies into suppression

In yet another move to crack down on China's high-tech industries, the United States on Monday groundlessly added Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba, along with Baidu, BYD, and some other Chinese tech companies, to a list of companies it alleges are aiding China's military.

Meanwhile, to draw its allies deeper into a "de-risking" strategy against China, the US administration has also urged NATO members to allocate defense spending toward efforts to replace components from Chinese high-tech companies in their networks and critical infrastructure.

Joshua Young, the US State Department's China coordinator, reportedly asked officials in Brussels in May to use their defense-related funding to remove Chinese-made equipment and replace it with products from other vendors.

Under pressure from the US, nearly all NATO allies agreed last year to increase overall security spending from 2 percent to 5 percent of GDP by 2035. Within this target, 3.5 percent would be directed toward core defense needs, while the remaining 1.5 percent would be allocated specifically to meet Washington's demand for a larger share of transatlantic alliance expenditures. According to a NATO official, this 1.5 percent can be used for defending networks, including replacing vendors.

By urging NATO countries to do that, Washington aims to push its transatlantic allies to reduce reliance on China in key sectors.

The US' bossy attitude toward its allies in the critical field of defense not only makes a mockery of the notion of Brussels having strategic autonomy, it also appears to serve the selfish aims of laying the groundwork for US companies to fill the equipment gap.

Under pressure from the US, some politicians of the European Union are already mulling plans to revise the bloc's Cybersecurity Act to restrict the use of Chinese equipment across various sectors.

Excluding Chinese high-tech enterprises will not help the concerned economies achieve the so-called "security" they seek. Instead, it will severely damage their image as an open market and markedly undermine the confidence of businesses from various countries to invest in the economies.

China will also be left with no choice but to take necessary measures to resolutely safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese businesses.

Moreover, forcibly removing high-quality and secure Chinese telecommunications equipment will inevitably result in massive economic losses and severely hinder the economies' digital competitiveness.

A joint study by the China Chamber of Commerce to the EU and KPMG in May predicts that the forced replacement of Chinese suppliers across 18 critical sectors would cost the EU 367.8 billion euros ($432.83 billion) between 2026 and 2030. The EU would have to replace hardware and write down assets, besides contending with lower efficiency and delayed development of digital networks in Europe.

Thus, some EU members, such as Germany and Spain, have stood up to oppose the EU plan to ban Chinese suppliers from telecommunications networks, with both governments warning that a bloc-wide ban would invite retaliation from China and hugely inflate the cost of Europe's AI infrastructure drive. The dissenting voices highlight the erroneous and unsustainable nature of the EU's proposed China-targeted policy and the US' demands.

In fact, Chinese high-tech companies have always demonstrated openness, transparency and efficiency in the global market. High-tech enterprises, such as Huawei, have earned the trust of customers worldwide through technological innovation and high-quality services. The so-called "national security risks" alleged by the US and some of its allies stem entirely from their own Cold War zero-sum mentality and fear of the rise of Chinese high-tech prowess. The US attempt to pressure NATO allies into using defense funds to replace Chinese equipment will not only waste resources but also severely harm the national interests of its allies.

The US allies should uphold rationality by resisting all baseless discrimination and exclusion, as the prosperity and development of the global economy require cooperation and mutual benefit, not the obstruction of suppression and unilateralism.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

Dialogue on classics offers timeless wisdom for today

The ongoing second World Conference of Classics in Athens, Greece, serves as a reminder that comparisons between civilizations are meaningful. Confucianism and ancient Greek philosophy developed separately, but during a period — from about 800 BC to 200 BC — that was marked by major intellectual transformations across the world. Confucius, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle sought to answer the same questions: how to live, how to know, how to organize and govern societies, and how to cultivate virtue.

The comparison is best explained through one striking image. Thales of Miletus, often regarded as the first philosopher in the Greek tradition, saw water as the first principle of all things. Confucian thought also turned repeatedly to water, though not as an object of cosmological explanation, but as a moral image of goodness, nourishment and non-contention. The contrast is revealing. Greek philosophy often began in wonder; Confucian thought tended to turn nature into an ethical teacher. Together, they show two ways in which people have learned from the world.

There is also a difference in the ancient Greek and Chinese approaches to knowledge. Ancient Greek philosophy gave enduring importance to debate, logical argument and dialectical inquiry. The Socratic method helped form a tradition in which truth is pursued through argument. Confucianism, by contrast, often teaches through metaphor, analogy and moral evocation. In Mencius' parable of the *Ox Mountain Trees*, the once-lush terrain becoming barren due to the rampant cutting of trees is a reflection of human nature: goodness may be damaged by circumstances while still retaining the capacity for renewal.

In China, during the Shang (c. 16th century-11th century BC) and Zhou (c. 11th century-256 BC) dynasties, ritual, kinship and political hierarchy were closely bound together. Morality was understood in relation to family and society, and the state could be imagined as an extension of familial order. In ancient Greece, by contrast, the polis, or city-states, became the space in which human excellence could be realized through civic participation. Aristotle's famous statement that man is by nature a political animal rests upon this worldview.

For Socrates, virtue was closely tied to knowledge; for Aristotle, it meant excellence of character and intellect, cultivated through the disciplined exercise of body and mind. Confucian virtue, meanwhile, was inseparable from one's roles within the family and society. Aristotle's "golden mean" is embedded in a theory of excellence, while Confucian balance is deeply rooted in harmony among people, roles and ritual order.

In both ancient Greece and early China, poetry stood at the beginning of reflection on the world, carrying within it questions of cosmology, ethics, political order and human destiny. Epic and poetic traditions served not merely aesthetic purposes, but acted as one of the earliest vessels of thought. The Greek world preserved such questions through Homer and Hesiod, while Confucius is associated with the compilation of the *Book of Songs*, a collection of 305 poems dating from the 11th to 6th centuries BC. In both civilizations, philosophy did not emerge in opposition to poetry, but gradually unfolded from within it.

This is why the dialogue between Confucianism and ancient Greek philosophy should not be treated as a narrow academic exercise. Both traditions remind modern societies that human life cannot be reduced to material production, technology or present utility. Ancient Greek and Chinese thinkers, in different ways, understood human beings as part of a larger order — cosmic, natural, social or political. Their wisdom lies not in offering ready-made solutions, but in widening the horizon within which modern questions can be asked.

— ZHAO XU, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Efforts needed to boost basic research capabilities

Editor's note: *As a new phase of scientific and technological revolution unfolds, global competition in basic research has intensified. Justin Yifu Lin, dean of the Institute of New Structural Economics at Peking University, spoke to ThePaper.cn about China's strengths and weaknesses in basic research, strategies to address the challenges, and the roles of the government and businesses in advancing this critical area. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

China has made significant strides in many industries, and is even leading in sectors such as home appliances, shipbuilding and new energy vehicles. When a country reaches the technological frontier in any area, it should make breakthroughs on its own instead of relying on other countries for new technologies.

China has notable strengths in basic research, including a vast talent pool from its 1.4 billion population. The country produces the largest number of science, technology, engineering and mathematics graduates globally, offering immense potential for an engineering workforce. The country's system for mobilizing nationwide resources is another advantage.

However, significant challenges persist in basic research. While developed countries have built systems for nurturing a steady stream of top-tier original research talent, China hasn't established such a system, focusing instead on importing foreign technologies to catch up with other nations.

A critical challenge is the research evaluation system, which overemphasizes quantitative metrics such as paper counts and impact factors, discouraging researchers from undertaking long-term, high-risk and original research that may not yield immediate results. Reforming this assessment framework is essential as China transitions from a "follower" to a "pace-setter" in science and technology.

Assessment cycles for certain disciplines should be extended to five, 10 years or longer, with greater emphasis on peer review rather than quantitative metrics. Efforts are needed to cultivate homegrown academic leaders and involve international scholars in the review process, gradually building an international review platform.

A clear division of labor is necessary in basic research. The outputs of fundamental research, mainly academic papers, are publicly accessible. Enterprises often lack a strong incentive to invest here since they cannot exclusively benefit from their investment. Government leadership and funding are essential in this area.

Conversely, enterprises drive development work by building on basic research breakthroughs to create new products and technologies that deliver exclusive returns. Companies are strongly encouraged to invest in this area, with market forces and competition providing the required vitality.

This division of labor is not absolute. Companies, being directly in touch with market and industrial demands, can sometimes better identify areas needing basic research breakthroughs. Therefore, an in-depth collaboration between the government and companies is needed.

Currently, investment in basic research accounts for roughly 7 percent of China's total R&D spending, compared to 15 to 20 percent in most developed nations. China should gradually raise the share of its R&D expenditure on basic research to 15 to 25 percent.

With limited fiscal resources, the government needs to identify sectors that are vital to the country's economic growth and national security, including semiconductors, key materials, biomedicine, energy security and agricultural breeding, and invest in R&D in these sectors.

Stronger intellectual property protection is essential to ensure profitable returns on new product development and encourage companies to make long-term investments. Meanwhile, the government should share the risks that companies face in basic research by issuing subsidies and offering tax incentives.

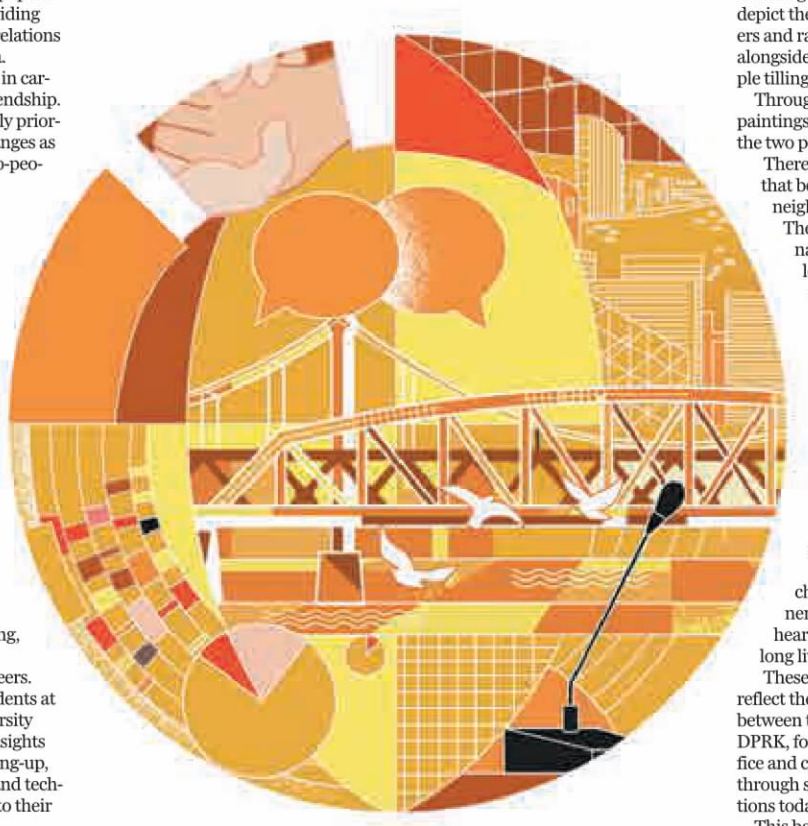
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:13 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:13 PM

VIEWS

Hu Mingyuan

Youth as torchbearers of China-DPRK relations



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

In his signed article published in Rodong Sinmun, the official newspaper of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), on Monday, President Xi Jinping, who was on a state visit to the country, emphasized that the two countries should continuously enhance the well-being and friendship of the two peoples.

China and the DPRK not only enjoy geographical proximity but also share a close deep-rooted friendship, cultivated by generations of leaders from both countries. The enduring relationship between the two countries has deep roots in their socialist development and is a cherished asset for both peoples.

Exchanges between the two populations reflect this goodwill, providing public support for neighborly relations and cooperation in the new era.

The youth play a crucial role in carrying forward this legacy of friendship. Both countries have consistently prioritized youth and cultural exchanges as a cornerstone of their people-to-people cooperation.

Through youth visits, study programs and inter-school activities, a stable and enduring framework of cooperation has developed. In May, 70 Chinese students from 16 universities across China, supported by the China Scholarship Council, arrived at the Pyongyang Sunan International Airport, where they were warmly welcomed by representatives from the DPRK Ministry of Education, Kim Il Sung University, and Kim Hyong Jik University of Education.

By immersing themselves in the Korean language and culture at universities in Pyongyang, Chinese students build lasting friendships with their DPRK peers.

At the same time, DPRK students at institutions such as Jilin University and Yanbian University gain insights from China's reform and opening-up, and advancements in science and technology, which they bring back to their country.

Such exchanges foster mutual understanding and strengthen emotional affinity between the two peoples, inspiring the youth to continue the traditional China-DPRK friendship and contribute to cultural exchanges.

Eager to acquire knowledge, young people lay a solid foundation for cultural exchanges between the two countries, while the vibrant folk cultures of both nations serve as a warm and enduring bond. In October 2025, to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the founding of the Workers' Party of Korea, the Shanghai Dance Theatre presented the classic dance drama *The Eternal Wave* at the East Pyongyang Grand Theatre.

The performance, staged twice, received enthusiastic acclaim and prolonged applause from the DPRK audience. This artistic tribute not only showcased the allure of Chinese culture but also created a platform for spiritual exchange among the youth, allowing them to share sentiments and revisit shared historical memories.

China and the DPRK share cultural roots and have similar folk traditions. Festivals such as Spring Festival and Lantern Festival are celebrated with kindred customs. Song and dance, cuisine, and handicrafts also reflect shared origins. Both countries have now prioritized folk activities as a means of engagement, launching interactive events such as "Happy Chinese New Year" temple fairs, intangible cultural heritage exhibitions, and folk culture experience programs.

These initiatives revive their shared cultural heritage and strengthen emotional bonds between people.

The integration of everyday folk practices is a testament to the bond between China and the DPRK. Both cultures cherish glutinous rice delicacies and spicy flavors, with *kimchi* and *tteok* paralleling pickled cabbage and niangao in Northeast China.

These dishes have similar ingredients and cooking techniques, which evoke shared memories and a sense of festive ritual.

Dandong in Liaoning province is the largest border city between China and the DPRK, offering a vivid snapshot of their blended food cultures. The streets are lined with delicacies such as cold noodles, barbecued meat, and *tteok*. On their part, DPRK residents enjoy Chinese snacks such as *jiaozi*, *tangyuan*, and fried dough twists, making food a delicious channel for emotional exchange.

At the Shencai Gallery in Shenyang, Liaoning province, DPRK oil paintings depict the white mountains, black rivers and railways along the Yalu River, alongside scenes of hardworking people tilling the yellow earth.

Through art and aesthetics, these paintings bridge the distance between the two peoples.

There's an ancient Chinese saying that benevolence and kindness to neighbors are a nation's treasures. The emotional bond between nations is nurtured by countless warm interactions, especially among the younger generation.

Today, the friendship between youths transcends political rhetoric and grand narratives. It is reflected in the pride and connection seen in the eyes of young scholars from Yanbian University and Kim Il Sung University as they exchange thoughts on each other's papers.

It's also found in a WeChat chat window of a trading partner in Dandong, in a simple, heartfelt message: "Thanks, and long live China-DPRK friendship".

These everyday moments vividly reflect the deep emotional bond between the peoples of China and the DPRK, forged through wartime sacrifice and continuously reaffirmed through sincere, respectful interactions today.

This bond also points to a friendship meant to be passed down to future generations, which forms the foundation on which China-DPRK ties have steadily advanced, growing stronger and more resilient over time.

The cross-border visits and interactions among the younger generation are creating a deep reservoir of friendship for the future. With the youth supporting each other in friendship, the future of China-DPRK relations looks vibrant and promising.

The author is a professor from Dalian Minzu University.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Lu Donghong

Forget chips, real bottleneck in AI is power

As artificial intelligence continues to expand, the real contest may no longer be about who builds the smartest models, but who can power them sustainably.

For years, the global conversation around artificial intelligence has centered on chips, algorithms and computing power. But the AI boom is exposing a more fundamental reality: AI ultimately runs on electricity, not just on code.

Without abundant, reliable and affordable power, computing capacity is merely a technical promise.

The explosive growth of AI and data centers is revealing the first hard physical constraint of the digital age — not capital, not software, but the capacity of energy systems.

This shift is quietly redefining national competitiveness. The International Energy Agency has warned that global electricity demand is entering a new phase of rapid expansion, increasingly driven by AI, cloud computing and data centers rather than traditional industrial growth.

Similarly, the World Economic Forum notes that access to power is becoming a decisive factor in the location of digital infrastructure.

In other words, the AI race is turning from a competition over algorithms and semiconductors into a contest over electricity systems.

This transition is producing sharply different outcomes across governance models. In parts of the United States, Big Tech's AI expansion is colliding with local power systems.

Massive data centers are coming up near communities that were never designed to absorb such concentrated electricity demand, leading to increased costs of upgrading grids and supporting infrastructure.

These costs often spill over to households and small businesses through electricity pricing mechanisms, resulting in higher energy bills and local resistance in several regions.

The problem extends beyond isolated disputes, reflecting a structural tension within market-led energy systems when faced with dense digital loads.

The gains from computing expansion are often concentrated within technology firms, while the infrastructure burden is distributed across society.

What begins as an AI story can quickly become a question of affordability, equity and public legitimacy.

China is attempting a different response. The 2026 Government Work Report emphasizes improving national coordination of computing power, and building hyper-scale intelligent computing clusters.

Computing infrastructure is no longer treated as a stand-alone technology sector, but is planned alongside power generation, grid capacity, transmission networks and long-term energy security.

This is important because electricity is increasingly becoming a strategic productive force rather than just an industrial input. In 2025, China's total electricity consumption surpassed 10 trillion kilowatt-hours, making it the first major economy to cross that threshold.

Meanwhile, power demand from internet data services is expanding dramatically, while electricity consumption in high-tech manufacturing continues to outpace traditional industries. These trends reflect a broader transformation.

Electricity is no longer only powering factories and households, but is also becoming the hidden foundation beneath digital expansion, industrial upgrading and AI deployment.

Seen through this lens, China's 5 trillion yuan ($739 billion) investment in grid infrastructure during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) is more than conventional stimulus spending. It amounts to a systemic redesign for the computing age.

Ultra-high-voltage transmission projects are increasing the ability to move electricity across regions, allowing energy resources to be allocated on a much larger scale.

That, in turn, is gradually reshaping the geography of computing itself.

As transmission improves, data infrastructure can migrate toward energy-rich regions rather than remaining confined to traditional urban technology hubs.

At the same time, the expansion of local distribution grids, microgrids and energy storage systems aims to absorb growing digital demand without ignoring residential consumption or smaller businesses.

China's broader ambition — to meet most new electricity demand with renewable energy before 2030 — reflects its efforts to expand computing power while keeping carbon and system risks under control.

The underlying challenge is not unique to China. It is global. Electricity is rapidly emerging as a new frontier of geopolitical competition. Energy infrastructure is increasingly vulnerable amid geopolitical tensions and regional conflicts, and energy pricing is frequently distorted by political shocks.

The line separating energy security from digital security is becoming harder to define.

In such an environment, power systems are no longer simply development tools. They have become components of national strategic capacity.

That reality has important implications for the future of AI competition. The decisive question may no longer be who possesses the most advanced chips or the largest models.

It may be who can build an electricity system capable of supporting digital growth without triggering social backlash, grid instability or unsustainable carbon costs.

The AI age is revealing a deeper truth often overlooked in technology discourse: technological breakthroughs require a physical foundation that is not only powerful, but also resilient, equitable and sustainable.

China's emphasis on integrating computing and electricity is ultimately an attempt to answer a larger governance question: how to pursue technological transformation without deepening social strains, and how to sustain rapid innovation without sacrificing systemic stability. It is a test of state capacity in the age of artificial intelligence.

The author is an associate research fellow at the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies, Renmin University of China.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Shen Zhixiong and Shao Jingjing

Asia wants peace and prosperity, not confrontation

At the recent 23rd Shangri-La Dialogue, a Chinese People's Liberation Army expert delegation shared China's perspectives on global dynamics and regional security. Their insights resonated with defense officials and academics alike. Most Asian countries desire for regional peace through dialogue and consultation, and expect China to be an anchor of stability in a turbulent world.

During their meeting last month, the heads of state of China and the United States agreed to build a constructive bilateral relationship of strategic stability, providing strategic guidance for China-US relations over the next three years and beyond. This agreement has been welcomed by people of both countries and the global community. Its positive impact was evident at this year's Shangri-La Dialogue.

US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's speech at the dialogue marked a shift from last year. While he continued to urge regional allies and partners to increase defense spending, Hegseth adopted a cautious tone on China-US ties and made no mention of the Taiwan region whatsoever in the speech.

In response, the head of the Chinese delegation emphasized that strategic stability underpins global security, and the Asia-Pacific should not become an arena for geopolitical rivalry. No country should pursue absolute security at the expense of others because this approach ultimately leaves everyone vulnerable. China and the US, in particular, must meet halfway, demonstrate strategic resolve through concrete actions, and foster healthy, stable and sustainable relations between the two countries and between the Chinese and the US military.

Conversations with defense officials from various countries revealed a widespread expectation for China and the US to uphold strategic stability and transform their leaders' consensus into tangible results.

Amid challenges from hegemonism and the threat of militarism, it is essential to recognize that Asia's security should be safeguarded by Asian countries, not by others.

Singaporean Defense Minister Chan Chun Sing expressed satisfaction with the positive outcome of the China-US summit. In fact, the ripple effects generated by the sound China-US engagement helped foster a less confrontational atmosphere at the dialogue, where most speakers voiced concerns over global and regional security risks, and called for proactive cooperation among major countries to ensure regional security, stability and prosperity.

However, there were a few discordant notes as well. Japanese Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi defended Japan's military buildup and Philippine Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr stirred tensions over the South China Sea.

At a time when the "new militarism" poses mounting threats to regional security, Japanese delegates seized on Washington's call for allies to shoulder greater defense burdens, and depicted Japan as an active contributor to defense cooperation.

Koizumi attempted to put a spin on Japan's militaristic expansion by saying it should not be "labeled 'new militarism'". But he evaded questions about Japan's historical accountability and whether the country would apologize for its aggression during World War II.

Teodoro, meanwhile, portrayed the Philippines as a "victim", but dodged questions about Manila saying one thing and doing another over the South China Sea issue, even hinting at pulling out of negotiations on the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea.

Japan and the Philippines have ramped up coordination over the South China Sea and East China Sea issues. They recently issued a joint statement announcing their decision to launch "formal negotiations to delimit the maritime boundary of the exclusive economic zone and the continental shelf between the two countries". Such moves create confrontations and stoke tensions. They risk destabilizing the region and eroding the regional cooperation mechanism with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations at the center.

Any attempt to transplant extra-regional bloc confrontation into the Asia-Pacific runs counter to the shared aspiration of regional countries for peace, development and cooperation. Eng Kok Thay, a secretary of state of Cambodia's Council of Ministers, said Japan's accelerating military buildup deserves scrutiny, while a Malaysian think tank expert cautioned that ganging up under the pretext of "strengthening security" will heighten security anxieties in the region.

Amid challenges from hegemonism and the threat of militarism, it is essential to recognize that Asia's security should be safeguarded by Asian countries, not by others. The Asian security model, which emphasizes sharing weal and woe, seeking common ground while shelving differences, and prioritizing dialogue and consultation, was put forward at the Central Conference on Work Related to Neighboring Countries in April 2025.

The model is a distillation of Asia's decades-long experience in peaceful development. It rejects power politics and unilateralism, opposes the approach of enhancing one nation's security at the expense of others, and advocates common security through equal consultations and sustainable security via win-win cooperation. The logic gained broad resonance at this year's Shangri-La Dialogue.

As an ancient Chinese adage goes, "A single person struggles to rise alone, yet a crowd marches forward with ease". From the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia to negotiations on the South China Sea Code of Conduct, Asian countries have demonstrated that regional security can be effectively achieved through equal consultations and mutually beneficial cooperation without the need for military alliances.

Against the backdrop of global governance challenges, Asian countries should stand united, uphold the Asian security model, and embrace the trend of peace, development and win-win cooperation to jointly build a brighter future for the region.

Shen Zhixiong is a professor at the International College of Defense Studies of the People's Liberation Army National Defense University; and Shao Jingjing is an associate professor at the same college.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:13 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:13 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

HE FANGYING

For the public good

The virtuous friendship of the classical era offers an ethical foundation for cooperation among nations, peoples and civilizations

The Second World Conference of Classics was held on Tuesday and Wednesday. More than 200 classical scholars from over 18 countries gathered in Athens, the cradle of Western civilization. With one of the sub-forums focusing on "Friendship and Community: The Ethical Community in the Transition from Ancient to Modern Times", the conference reflected on why we should return to the ancient ideals of friendship and community in an age of atomization, fragmentation and loneliness.



Looking back to the classical traditions of both East and West, we can clearly trace the intellectual trajectory by which personal affection gradually became the foundation of the civic order. The ancient Greek word *philia* had an exceptionally broad range of meanings: individual friendship, kinship ties, guest-host relations, military alliances and even erotic love. Its semantic reach far exceeds what we mean by "friendship" today. Not only is it difficult to find an exact equivalent in Chinese, but even in modern Western languages — friendship in English or *amitié* in French — the full resonance of *philia* is lost. In Modern Greek, the word *philia* has seen its meaning drastically narrowed due to profound grammatical and historical changes: from "civic friendship" as the bedrock of polis order, through the medieval period, when *agapi* (selfless love) gradually displaced *philia* as the core of religious ethics. Subsequently, *philia* was secularized into mere personal sentiment between friends, until in modern society it shrank into a private emotional bond between individuals.

Tracing this evolution of friendship in Western intellectual history reveals why revisiting classical friendship today is, first and foremost, a direct response to the modern "crisis of connection". Modernity's triumph is the liberation of the individual. It shattered the shackles of traditional families, villages and guilds, granting each soul unprecedented freedom and independence. Yet the price of this liberation has been a rupture of the primordial ethical bonds between people. The logic of the market economy has turned all relationships into transactions; human interactions are increasingly governed by utility and efficiency rather than by affection and care. Digital technology has further allowed virtual socializing to replace face-to-face, heart-to-heart conversation; the click of a "like" has supplanted deep resonance between souls. The more we "connect" online, the more alone we feel in reality — and the more we long for the ancient art of companionship.

We revisit classical friendship above all because it embodies ethical wisdom that modernity cannot provide. This conference invites scholars to explore in depth the essential differences between classical friendship and what modern people understand as "friendship". In other words, modern people regard friendship as a private sentiment — a relationship based on shared tastes or mutual exchange of interests, while from the perspective of classical thought, both Eastern and Western, friendship is first and foremost a means by which a person comes to know how to live.

As Socrates said in Plato's *Lysis*: Whom you choose to befriend means what way of life you choose. Plato's student Aristotle, in turn, distinguishes three kinds of friendship: friendship based on utility, pleasure and virtue. He makes it clear that the first two kinds are accidental and perishable; only virtue friendship — in which one wishes the good of the other for the other's own sake — is founded on mutual appreciation and respect for each other's character and does not depend on any external utilitarian end. A true friend is "another self", and the process of friendship is one in which two souls sharpen each other and together pursue a life of goodness.

Almost in the same period, Confucius in the East also proposed that true friends are those who can help one cultivate virtue and expand knowledge — companions who share the same path. Friends should admonish and encourage each other, for "the superior man seeks to perfect the admirable qualities of men, and does not seek to perfect their bad qualities".

What is especially important is that friendship in classical times, in both the East and the West, possessed a distinct public character. Aristotle wrote in his *Nicomachean Ethics:* "Friendship seems too to hold states together, and lawgivers to care more for it than for justice." It was a statement that remains thought-provoking to this day. Justice can only demarcate the boundaries of rights between people and resolve conflicts that have already arisen; friendship, however, can enable people to voluntarily consider others and actively care for the common good, preventing conflicts at their source. A society without friendship, even if it possesses the most perfect legal system, is nothing more than a cold alliance of interests, liable to disintegrate at any moment.

To revisit classical friendship is ultimately to seek an ethical foundation for building a community with a shared future for humanity. The world today is facing grave challenges including climate change, public health crises, wealth disparity and civilizational clashes. No single country can meet these challenges alone; they require the cooperation of all humanity. Yet the basis of modern international relations is too often interest and power, and alliances built on such interests are fragile and unstable. When interests collide, cooperation turns into confrontation.

Classical friendship, however, champions mutual respect, mutual flourishing and the pursuit of the common good — thus offering a deeper ethical foundation for cooperation among nations, peoples and civilizations. It reminds us that human beings are not rivals locked in endless competition, but rather a community with a shared future, bound together in weal and woe, for friendship is humanity's oldest common language, and its strongest force for unity.

The stone columns of the Athenian Acropolis have stood for more than 2,000 years, witnessing the rise and fall of countless civilizations. Today, as scholars from around the world gather once more upon this sacred ground to revisit the ancient question of friendship, they come not to retreat into the past, but to reach toward the future. In an age of deepening uncertainty, classical friendship shines as a beacon — lighting the way out of our atomized solitude and toward the rebuilding of human solidarity. The Second World Conference of Classics has convened precisely to let this ancient light burn anew in the 21st century, casting its glow upon the path of humanity yet to come.

Let us conclude by recalling the words of the Roman philosopher Cicero from 2,000 years ago: "But I hold this first: that friendship cannot exist except among the virtuous."

The author is the director of the Center for Classical Civilization at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and a professor at the University of CASS. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

WANG WEI

Moving tradition

Reinterpreting the visual code of Chinese opera through design can reconnect it with contemporary society

Traditional Chinese opera is one of the most sophisticated art forms in Chinese culture. Its value lies not only in the preservation of scripts, repertoires and stage traditions, but also in the rich visual language it has accumulated over centuries — costumes, colors, facial patterns, headpieces, gestures, rhythm and spatial order.



In today's cultural context, the challenge is no longer simply how to protect traditional opera as an inherited art form, but how to allow it to enter contemporary life, urban space and international communication. Cultural heritage can retain vitality only when it continues to generate new meanings in the present. Design offers one possible path. Through design, the visual codes of traditional opera can be translated into forms that are accessible to younger generations, urban audiences and global viewers.

For a long time, traditional Chinese opera has been understood mainly within the framework of intangible cultural heritage. This framework has played an important role in documentation, preservation, transmission and professional training. Yet if heritage is seen mainly as something to be protected, it may gradually become distant from contemporary lifestyles. It may be respected, but not necessarily embraced; admired, but not necessarily understood by new audiences.

The creative transformation and innovative development of traditional Chinese culture require a broader view. Tradition should not only be preserved in its original form, but also activated as a cultural resource. This does not mean simplifying tradition into decorative symbols. Rather, it means understanding the internal logic of traditional culture and translating it into contemporary visual systems, design practices and public experiences.

Traditional Chinese opera provides a particularly rich case for such transformation. It is not merely a performing art based on singing, recitation, acting and martial movement. It is also a complete visual culture. The colors of costumes, the symbolic meanings of facial makeup, the structure of headwear, the rhythm of movement and the arrangement of stage space together form a highly coded aesthetic system. These codes carry cultural memory, social values, character types and emotional expression.

When these visual codes are reinterpreted through contemporary design, opera can move beyond the theater stage and enter a wider cultural field. It can appear in fashion, product design, digital media, spatial installation, urban events, public education and international cultural exchange. In this process, opera is not weakened or diluted. Instead, its cultural energy is released in new forms.

A recent design-led cultural project developed at the Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology offers one example of this approach. Rather than reproducing a traditional opera performance, the project explored how the visual and aesthetic codes of opera could be transformed into contemporary design, spatial presentation and public cultural experience. It began within an academic context, but soon attracted wider public attention and entered broader cultural exchange settings.

The significance of such a project does not lie only in one runway presentation or one exhibition. More importantly, it reveals how traditional culture can be reconnected with contemporary society through design. The body, costumes, sound, image and space become new media for cultural translation. Opera's visual language is no longer confined to the stage; it becomes part of a contemporary cultural vocabulary.

This process reflects a shift in space. Traditional opera has historically been associated with theaters, professional troupes and specific performance venues. Today, through design and public cultural projects, it can enter universities, museums, commercial spaces, urban cultural landmarks and international platforms. This spatial shift changes the way audiences encounter opera. They may not first approach it through a complete performance, but through visual experience, atmosphere, movement, color or design.

It also reflects a shift in function. Traditional opera is no longer limited to aesthetic appreciation, education or heritage display. It can participate in the shaping of urban identity, cultural branding and cross-cultural communication. For a city seeking to present both historical depth and contemporary openness, traditional culture can become an important cultural resource. It helps create a recognizable image, build emotional connection and communicate values beyond language.

At the same time, the subject of cultural transmission is also changing. In the past, the transmission of opera was mainly understood as the responsibility of performers, masters, institutions and professional inheritors. Today, designers, educators, students, media practitioners, cultural organizations, cities and international partners can all become participants in the reactivation of traditional culture. This does not replace professional inheritance. Rather, it expands the ecology of cultural transmission.

Design plays a crucial role in this expanded ecology. Good design does not simply extract motifs from tradition and place them onto contemporary products. It studies the structure, meaning and aesthetic logic of tradition, and then reorganizes them for new contexts. In the case of opera, this means moving from the surface of costumes or patterns to a deeper understanding of character, rhythm, symbolism and spatial expression.

This is why the contemporary translation of opera's visual culture must be systematic. If traditional elements are used only as fashionable symbols, they may quickly become superficial. But when design engages with the inner logic of opera, it can create new cultural forms that are both contemporary and rooted. Such work allows tradition to be seen not as a fixed archive, but as a living system capable of renewal.

The international dimension of this transformation is equally important. In cross-cultural communication, traditional culture often faces a dilemma: It is rich in meaning, but not always easy for global audiences to understand. Visual language can help bridge this gap. Costumes, colors, gestures, digital imagery and spatial design can communicate cultural atmosphere and emotional resonance before words are fully understood.

In this sense, design becomes a form of cultural translation. It does not simply explain Chinese opera to the world; it creates new conditions for the world to experience it. Through contemporary visual language, opera can become more approachable to international audiences while retaining its cultural depth. It can participate in dialogue rather than remain an object of distant appreciation.

This also gives traditional culture a new role in urban development. Cities today are not defined only by infrastructure, commerce or technology. They are also shaped by cultural experience. Public cultural projects that draw from traditional heritage can enrich urban space, strengthen cultural identity and create opportunities for international exchange. They allow heritage to become visible in everyday urban life rather than remaining confined to specialized institutions.

The future of traditional Chinese opera therefore does not lie only in keeping it on the traditional stage, although the stage remains essential. Its future also lies in enabling its visual language to travel across design, cities, media and global cultural dialogue. When opera enters new cultural spaces, it does not leave tradition behind. It carries tradition into new relationships.

Cultural confidence is not about clinging to the past. It is about allowing tradition to continue evolving in the present. A living tradition must be able to speak to contemporary society, engage younger generations and participate in global conversations. Through design, traditional Chinese opera can become not only a heritage to be protected, but also a cultural language that continues to grow.

The author is the associate dean of the School of Fashion Accessory at Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:13 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:13 PM

CHINA MARVELS

KEY MILESTONES OF THE THREE GORGES PROJECT

1994 — **December** Construction of the Three Gorges Project (TGP) begins

1997 — **November** The project achieves river closure

2003 — **June, July** Impoundment begins; the two-way five-tier ship locks start trial operation; the first unit is connected to the grid

2004 — **July** The two-way five-tier ship locks open to navigation

2010 — **October** Experimental water level of the project reaches 175 m for the first time

2012 — **July** The hydropower station achieves full-load operation for the first time, with a total installed capacity of 22.5 million kW

2016 — **September** The ship lift begins trial operation

2020 — **November** TGP receives overall completion acceptance

06 THE THREE GORGES NEW WATERWAY PROJECT

The project started on June 8, 2026.

5-tier

Located to the north of the existing ship locks, a new two-way five-tier ship locks will be constructed.

336 million tons

Upon completion, the annual total navigation capacity at the Three Gorges will reach 336 million tons.



(This drawing is schematic only)

The Three Gorges Project, born from China's early 20th-century dream of national strength and rejuvenation, has become the world's largest water management and hydropower project after decades of deliberation and construction. Delivering integrated benefits in flood control, power generation, navigation and water resource management, it has profoundly reshaped the economic landscape of the Yangtze River — the world's third longest river — while providing robust support for the sustained advancement of Chinese modernization.

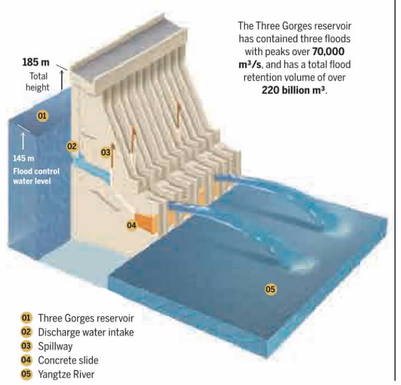
THREE GORGES PROJECT

POWERING THE YANGTZE'S GOLDEN WATERWAY



01 WATER RETAINING AND SPILLWAY STRUCTURES

The primary function of the Three Gorges Project (TGP) is flood control. Since the project's reservoir started impoundment, it has performed flood retention for more than 70 times.



The Three Gorges reservoir has contained three floods with peaks over **70,000 m³/s**, and has a total flood retention volume of over **220 billion m³**.

01 Three Gorges reservoir
02 Discharge water intake
03 Spillway
04 Concrete slide
05 Yangtze River

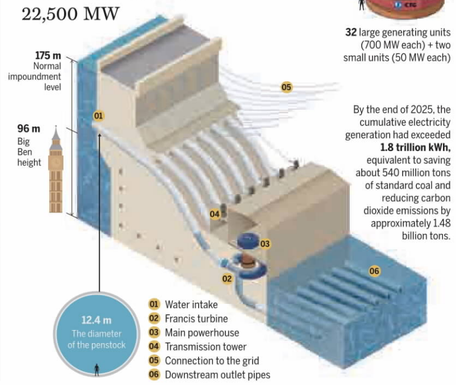
02 HYDROPOWER STRUCTURES

TGP is the world's largest water management and hydropower complex.

TOTAL INSTALLED CAPACITY:
22,500 MW



32 large generating units (700 MW each) + two small units (50 MW each)

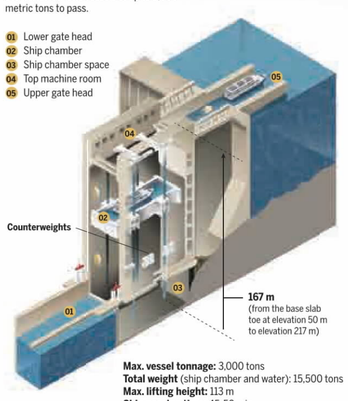


By the end of 2025, the cumulative electricity generation had exceeded **1.8 trillion kWh**, equivalent to saving about 540 million tons of standard coal and reducing carbon dioxide emissions by approximately 1.48 billion tons.

01 Water intake
02 Francis turbine
03 Main powerhouse
04 Transmission tower
05 Connection to the grid
06 Downstream outlet pipes

03 SHIP LIFT

TGP's ship lift is the largest of its kind in the world. It allows vessels of up to 3,000 metric tons to pass.



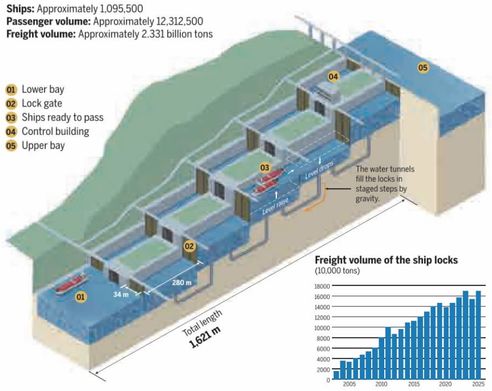
01 Lower gate head
02 Ship chamber
03 Ship chamber space
04 Top machine room
05 Upper gate head

Max. vessel tonnage: 3,000 tons
Total weight (ship chamber and water): 15,500 tons
Max. lifting height: 113 m
Ship passing time: 45-50 min

04 SHIP LOCKS

Since the ship locks began operation in 2003, the annual cargo throughput at the Three Gorges has increased nearly tenfold, from 18 million tons to 173 million tons. The cumulative cargo volume passing through the locks has exceeded 2.33 billion tons.

Ships: Approximately 1,095,500
Passenger volume: Approximately 12,312,500
Freight volume: Approximately 2.331 billion tons



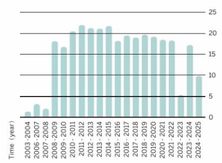
01 Lower bay
02 Lock gate
03 Ships ready to pass
04 Control building
05 Upper bay

Freight volume of the ship locks
(10,000 tons)

05 THREE GORGES RESERVOIR

The reservoir is an essential freshwater regulation and storage hub of the Yangtze River Basin. From 2003 to 2025, the reservoir has supplied more than 370 billion cubic meters of supplementary water to the downstream area, effectively safeguarding water supply for industrial production, residential life and ecological conservation along the river.

REPLENISHMENT OF WATER
(Billion cubic meters)



BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION

While the Three Gorges Project (TGP) operates safely and delivers full benefits, biodiversity in TGP's reservoir area has been preserved. More than 2,160 rare plant species including Davidia involucrata are under conservation, over 120 rare Yangtze fish species, such as the Acipenser sinensis, have been protected and bred.

Acipenser sinensis

It has existed for about 140 million years. It is a large anadromous fish.



Davidia involucrata

Mainly distributed in Sichuan and Hubei provinces. It is hailed as a "living fossil" among plants.



All figures quoted are up to the end of 2025. Sources: China Three Gorges Corp, Chinese Academy of Sciences

GRAPHIC BY JORGE CORTES, TIAN CHI, MUKESH MOHANAN AND LIU CHEN / CHINA DAILY; SHANG WEI, XU YAO AND LUO LU / FOR CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:13 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:13 PM

BUSINESS

Zero tariffs to boost biz ties with Morocco

Enhanced cooperation creating new opportunities for trade, investment

CHANGSHA/RABAT — The Morocco session of the China-Africa Economic and Trade Expo (CAETE) is expected to bolster Sino-Moroccan economic ties, as China's zero-tariff policy for African countries and deepening industrial cooperation create new opportunities for trade, investment and supply-chain integration.

Jointly organized by the Secretariat of CAETE and Morocco's Ministry of Industry and Trade, the event in Casablanca runs from Wednesday through Friday, marking the first major overseas economic and trade activity organized by Central China's Hunan province in Africa since China fully implemented zero tariffs for the 53 African countries with which it has diplomatic relations.

Policy boost

Analysts and business leaders said the zero-tariff policy is expected to enhance bilateral trade and expand market access for African products in China.

Nasser Bouchiba, president of the Morocco-based Africa China Cooperation Association for Development, said the event comes at an opportune time and will enable premium Moroccan products to gain easier access to China's vast consumer market while enabling Chinese enterprises to expand their presence in North Africa and strengthen the integration of industrial and supply chains.

Bilateral trade between China and Morocco reached $10.96 billion in 2025, up from $9.04 billion in 2024. China has remained Morocco's third-largest trading partner globally and its largest trading partner in Asia for many consecutive years.

In 2025, China's exports to Morocco reached $9.88 billion, while imports from Morocco stood at $1.08 billion.

Industry observers said the zero-tariff policy will reduce export costs for Moroccan goods and enhance their competitiveness in the Chinese market.

Jawad Kerdoudi, president of the Moroccan Institute of International Relations, called the policy a mutually beneficial strategic move, saying it will help reduce Africa's trade deficit with China, attract more Chinese investment and bring capital, technology and jobs to the continent.

Driving cooperation

Hunan stands out as one of China's most proactive provinces in developing economic and trade relationships with Africa. Yang Yi, general manager of Hunan Yufei Industry Investment Co Ltd, said preparations for the Morocco session have been underway for months, with coordinated engagement between Chinese and Moroccan enterprises.

The company is promoting Moroccan specialty products, including argan oil and essential oils, through its "African Products" brand system.

During this year's May Day holiday, an African specialty products fair held in the provincial capital, Changsha, attracted nearly 100,000 visitors over six days.

"We hope to expand sourcing channels and strengthen supply chains so more high-quality Moroccan products can enter the Chinese market under African brands," Yang said.

Leveraging resources

Beyond trade, Sino-Moroccan ties are increasingly shifting toward industrial integration and supply-chain collaboration.

Mohammed VI Tangier Tech City is one example. As of March, it had signed agreements with 42 enterprises, including 34 Chinese companies, with planned investment totaling about $3.5 billion.

Chinese lithium battery materials producer BTR New Material Group is building cathode and anode material projects at the site and is expected to create more than 1,100 skilled jobs.

Morocco, the world's largest exporter of phosphate and rich in cobalt and lithium, is leveraging its resources base to develop a new energy industrial chain linking Moroccan resources, Chinese processing capacity and European markets.

Equipment from Zoomlion Heavy Industry Science and Technology Co Ltd has also been widely used in major infrastructure projects in Morocco, including venues for the 2030 FIFA World Cup.

Financial institutions such as Agricultural Bank of China's Hunan branch are also strengthening cross-border financial support for Chinese enterprises operating in Morocco.

Green growth

Green development has become another key pillar of China-Morocco cooperation. Moroccan business leader Imad Toumi, CEO of Managem group, cited several joint projects, including a battery-grade cobalt sulfate project in Marrakech and a seawater desalination project in Nador.

"These projects reflect a model that combines economic development with environmental protection," Toumi said.

The year 2026 marks the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the China-Morocco strategic partnership.

"China-Morocco cooperation is steadily advancing toward higher-quality and more sustainable development," said Xiao Hao, executive dean of the Institute of African Studies at Hunan University. "With the CAETE's Africa tour kicking off in Morocco, economic, cultural and academic exchanges between the two countries are poised to reach a new level."

XINHUA — CHINA DAILY

On-site lesson



Railway workers take part in a maintenance training program at Jiexiu Station, operated by China Railway Taiyuan Group, in Jiexiu, Shanxi province. Such on-site training is aimed at enhancing staff operational proficiency and reinforcing rigorous safety protocols for daily railway operations. As a first-class station and critical coal transport hub on the South Datong-Fenglingdu Railway, Jiexiu handles massive volumes of energy cargo, playing a vital role in safeguarding the nation's energy supply chain. QIN QI / FOR CHINA DAILY



Employees work at a Midea home appliance production facility in Ain Sokhna, Egypt, on Jan 19. XIN MENGCHEN / XINHUA

Midea helps ramp up go-global push

By **YANG WANLI**
in Chonburi, Thailand
yangwanli@chinadaily.com.cn

Midea Group, a Chinese home appliance giant, launched an initiative on Tuesday to help domestic manufacturers build and operate factories overseas through a comprehensive package of digital, artificial intelligence-powered and operational solutions.

The Go-Global Partner Program has been introduced at a time when a growing number of Chinese companies are accelerating overseas expansion amid shifting global supply chains and rising investment in overseas production, said Zhang Xiaoyi, vice-president and chief data officer of Midea Group.

The initiative seeks to address some of the most persistent challenges facing manufacturers venturing abroad, including fragmented cross-border supply chains, inconsistent quality standards, complex regulatory requirements and cross-cultural workforce management, Zhang said.

The program is built on lessons learned from Midea's operations in Thailand, where the company has transformed its air conditioner factory into an overseas Lighthouse Factory — a first for China's AC industry — in which multiple AI agents collaborate across production, logistics, quality control and management functions.

The factory, covering 208,000 square meters, produced more than 5 million AC units last year. Its AI platform integrates 13 specialized AI agents across 25 core business scenarios, enabling managers to monitor operations and access key performance indicators through simple voice or text commands, said Zhou Xiaoling, information technology director of Midea Group.

"Unlike conventional smart factories that primarily automate production processes, AI agents can understand information, learn from experience and provide analytical support. They can work independently, collaborate with people and generate operational insights based on real-time data, enabling intelligent decisionmaking throughout the entire production cycle," Zhou said.

The company's Kuka intelligent manufacturing solution, for example, integrates autonomous mobile robots, automated warehouses and production lines into a unified operational platform. A single production line can save approximately $30,000 annually in overseas labor costs.

To address such issues, Midea also developed an AI- and virtual reality-enabled global workforce training platform. "The results have been substantial. Employee training cycles have been shortened from eight days to three days while training efficiency has increased by 62.5 percent," said Li Peng, manager of Midea Air Conditioning Thailand factory.

Over the past two years, Midea Thailand has worked with more than 70 Chinese companies expanding overseas. Li said the factory's experience demonstrates the value of collaborative overseas expansion.

He revealed that Chinese enterprises have accelerated expansion into Southeast Asia via building entire ecosystems from the ground up in recent years. Thailand has been a priority destination due to its geographical advantage, preferential policies and cultural similarity.

According to the Thai Foreign Business Commission, 113 foreign investors were permitted to operate businesses in Thailand in the first month of this year, representing a 10 percent increase. China stood at the top with an investment of 5.39 billion baht ($164 million).

Chinese investment is driving a wave of high-value projects in Thailand's Eastern Economic Corridor, focusing on advanced technology sectors and fueling Thailand's ambition to become a crucial global export hub, marking a significant strategic shift away from traditional manufacturing, according to Preesan Rakwatin, executive vice-president of the Digital Economy Promotion Agency of Thailand.

Rakwatin said China is now a leading country in cutting-edge technologies, including AI, which has empowered the manufacturing sector in Thailand and will serve as an important driver for a tech evolution in the region.

"Many countries are entering an aging society and we need the help of technology. Thailand welcomes more investment from China and those enterprises with high-tech support. This will not only solve labor shortages in the future, but will also help strengthen our regional competitiveness," he added.

Zhang, Midea's vice-president, said Chinese companies should move beyond traditional capacity relocation toward a more integrated model of global industrial development.

"The future of globalization requires a systematic approach," he said. "Technology, operational experience and industrial ecosystems must work together. The next phase of globalization is defined not merely by where factories are built, but by how knowledge, technology and industrial expertise are shared across borders."

WeChat opens AI ecosystem to developers

By **CHENG YU**
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Tencent has started opening WeChat's artificial intelligence ecosystem to mini program developers, allowing companies to integrate AI agents into one of China's most widely used apps.

The move is one of Tencent's most ambitious attempts yet to embed AI across WeChat's vast ecosystem of messaging, payments, content and mini programs, which together serve more than 1 billion users.

The company published guidelines on Monday for developers seeking access to the WeChat AI ecosystem, introducing both automatic and developer modes for integration. The program remains in internal testing and requires authorization from participating developers.

Among the first batch of trial partners are some of China's largest internet companies.

E-commerce giant JD plans to deploy AI agents across shopping, food delivery and logistics services. Meituan is integrating AI into food delivery and local services, while KFC China will allow users to place orders using natural language, with the system automatically identifying nearby restaurants.

Travel platform Trip.com has completed integration for services such as flight bookings, hotel reservations and itinerary planning. Fashion marketplace Poizon will offer AI-powered product recommendations.

Hardware manufacturers are also joining the initiative. Chinese smartphone maker Honor has completed integration through an agent-to-agent protocol, while Huawei, Xiaomi, Oppo and Vivo are expected to follow, sources confirmed to China Daily.

Tencent views WeChat AI as a differentiated product designed to connect five of its core ecosystems: communications, social networking, content, mini programs and payments.

The initiative reflects a broader shift underway across China's AI industry as companies seek to move beyond standalone chatbots and turn AI into a practical service layer embedded within existing consumer platforms.

Rather than competing directly on model performance, Chinese internet companies are increasingly focused on integrating AI into everyday tasks such as ordering food, booking travel, shopping and making payments.

Yet questions remain about whether AI agents can generate sustainable revenue.

Fu Weigang, head of the SIFL Institute, said that China's AI industry is seeing rapid investment growth, but viable business models remain uncertain.

"Many companies have launched AI agent services, but users still have reservations about allowing AI to make decisions on their behalf," he said. "Outside of the initial attention generated by low prices, many automated functions have yet to prove their value in real-world use."

Cost is another challenge. Every AI interaction generates token costs, raising questions about who ultimately pays: WeChat, mini program operators or merchants.

"WeChat has roughly 1.4 billion users," Fu said. "If these capabilities are rolled out at scale, the overall cost burden could become significant."

United States-based AI companies have made progress in monetization. AI startup Anthropic said in April its annualized revenue run rate had exceeded $30 billion, while OpenAI has reported annualized revenue exceeding $10 billion, driven largely by subscriptions and enterprise services.

China's paid AI market remains at a much earlier stage of development, with only a handful of companies experimenting with tiered subscription models.

"Traditional internet platforms primarily generate revenue through advertising, but AI services function more like utilities, where consumers have historically shown less willingness to pay," Fu added.

SpaceX IPO curbs seen as baseless

By **SHI JING** in Shanghai and **ZHOU LANXU** in Beijing

SpaceX's decision to bar Chinese mainland and Hong Kong investors from its $75 billion IPO underscores a growing global trend of technology decoupling, which Chinese companies must heed without altering their global outreach, said experts on Tuesday.

Underwriters for SpaceX, the space exploration company founded by Elon Musk, said on Friday that they are instructed to reject any orders originating from the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong, according to people familiar with the matter.

It means that mutual funds, private equities, sovereign funds, family offices and high-net-worth individuals from the two jurisdictions will all be blocked from this highly anticipated IPO, which would rank among the world's largest technology listings in history.

Online access to the official website of SpaceX and its roadshow materials were inaccessible in the jurisdictions on Tuesday.

SpaceX has cited the US International Traffic in Arms Regulations for making the decision, indicating national security concerns.

But Dai Guanchun, a senior capital markets lawyer based in Beijing, said that there is no explicit restriction under US law. The subscription of shares does not pose any serious national security or technology leakage risks, he stressed.

"This reflects an excessive politicization of technological exchanges by the United States, disrupting the normal flow of international capital," he said.

"Chinese companies possess world-class innovation capabilities, and Chinese scientists play critical roles in nearly all areas of technological innovation. Excluding Chinese companies and Chinese capital is unjust, undermining long-standing international trust and collaboration," he added.

But Dai stressed that this could be an unavoidable trend. Not just the US but probably Europe as well may impose excessive politicization on technology and capital exchanges.

Against that backdrop, Chinese companies should not be conservative, but rather seek more cooperation in other markets, he added.

Excluding investors from the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong from this IPO is using military export controls as a pretext. It is a selective capital isolation driven by geopolitical competition, as explained by Liu Chunsheng, an associate professor of international economics at the Central University of Finance and Economics.

"It is a typical case of capital decoupling in cutting-edge technology sectors. The military export control regulations used to restrict only the flow of technical hardware, but now companies are using it to block all related capital. The US side is expanding national security concerns to the capital market in strategic sectors such as aerospace and semiconductors. Investment rights are being divided by nationality, creating a so-called 'layered' and partial decoupling," said Liu.

In the short run, this could lead to higher fundraising costs and fewer opportunities regarding commercial operations for US companies like SpaceX, as they will receive less Asian capital. If sustained for a longer term, it could impair the global capital supply, constraining the R&D expansion of capital-heavy aerospace projects, he said.

Contact the writers at shijing@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:13 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:13 PM

BUSINESS

Tianjin develops sensors for embodied AI

Robots featuring multidimensional tactile devices can now perform tasks once only possible for human beings

By **YAN DONGJIE** in Tianjin
yandongjie@chinadaily.com.cn



A worker collects data simulating household scenarios at a super computing and AI facility in Tianjin on May 20. SUN FANYUE / XINHUA



A humanoid robot developed by PaXini Technology (Tianjin) Co is showcased for household application scenarios. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

On sorting lines in smart factories, at precision workstations in automobile manufacturing plants and even at home tending to household chores, a batch of robots equipped with multidimensional tactile sensors can dexterously grasp, operate and adaptively perform tasks, accomplishing movements that were once only possible for humans.

These robots, capable of sensing pressure, texture and posture, possess "tactile fingertips", enabling artificial intelligence to transition from virtual algorithms to the real world. This is the industrial transformation brought about by embodied intelligence, and the core "sensory organs" enabling it all originate from Tianjin.

"Robots are important carriers of AI, facilitating its transition from the virtual world to reality," said Yin Jihui, secretary of the Hexi district Party committee. As a national advanced manufacturing research and development base, Tianjin is focusing on core technology research and industrial implementation of embodied intelligence robots, cultivating a group of globally competitive industry leaders. PaXini Technology (Tianjin) Co is one such representative example.

"The key to these logistics robots lies in our independently developed multidimensional tactile sensors," Lin Tong, director of PaXini' s data collection center, said. Currently, 80 percent of humanoid robots worldwide utilize PaXini's sensors. Tactile sensors, known as the cornerstone of the intelligent cognition and information interaction industry, have also been listed by China as one of the key critical chokepoint technologies alongside lithography machines and chips.

"Five or six years ago, similar tactile sensor products cost as much as 100,000 yuan ($14,770) each, severely restricting the development of the entire robot industry," Nie Xiangru, co-founder of PaXini, recalled. The high import costs made tactile perception a luxury in the robotics field, making it difficult to be commercialized on a large scale.

To break the monopoly, the PaXini team spent four to five years in R&D, successfully creating the world's first 6D hall array multidimensional tactile sensor, transforming core technology from a heavy reliance on imports to 100 percent domestic self-sufficiency.

Today, PaXini's basic tactile sensor models are priced at only 199 yuan, just 0.2 percent of the price of equivalent products in overseas market. This has made tactile perception accessible from laboratories to various industries, turning a luxury into a basic hardware accessible to everyone.

The key to reducing costs lies in significant optimizations in chips, structure and algorithms with each product generation, Nie said. "The advancement of software algorithms enables us to reduce our reliance on hardware. Coupled with the growth of the industry, when prices become cheaper, the order volume increases, and with more orders, the costs can be further reduced. Naturally, the prices spiral downward."

PaXini's competitiveness lies not only in the independent R&D of core components, but also in its underlying data.

Last year, PaXini's Super EID Factory, officially commenced operations in the Kongtian digital industrial park in Hexi district. It is currently the world's largest embodied intelligence data collection and model training base.

"For robots to be deployed effectively, they require sufficient scenario-based data support," Nie said. The factory utilizes critical data from various vertical work scenarios to enable robots to learn how to work, thus enabling them to adapt to practical applications more quickly.

As the world's largest EID collection and model training base, this factory's daily collection capacity is equivalent to 1.02 to 1.52 times that of an entire worker's career. The factory encompasses thousands of tasks across full-chain embodied intelligence application environments, including automotive manufacturing, households, offices, catering, supermarkets, healthcare and medical services, aiming to simulate the complex scenarios robots may encounter in the real world.

The Super EID Factory will produce nearly 200 million pieces of high-quality and high-dimensional embodied intelligence training data annually. "This provides a revolutionary solution to the core problems faced by the current physical intelligence industry, such as the scarcity of data sets and the lack of tactile modal data," Lin said.

Tianjin, as a policy and industrial hub, offers a favorable environment for cross-border data transactions. This is why PaXini chose to establish its factory in Tianjin. "Choosing Hexi district was not only for its central urban location, but also for its market-oriented business environment and full-chain industrial services," Lin added.

The company was granted 12,000 square meters of usage area in Hexi district to create a "data intelligent manufacturing" scenario without noise or pollution.

> "Five or six years ago, similar tactile sensor products cost as much as 100,000 yuan ($14,770) each, severely restricting the development of the entire robot industry."
>
> **Nie Xiangru,** co-founder of PaXini Technology (Tianjin) Co

He added that as a free trade zone, Tianjin was the first to release enterprise data classification standards and data cleaning operation lists, forming a complete data policy system. Leveraging its diverse application scenarios and geographical advantages, Tianjin has become a core node for data collection and cross-border circulation.

Starting from Tianjin, PaXini plans to further expand its data collection bases and factory scale, ensuring data is not only produced locally, but also fully utilized, aiming to promote the internationalization of China's data standards and serve the global intelligent industry development.

In recent years, Tianjin has formed a complete robot industry chain from core components and complete machine manufacturing to system integration and application services. "In recent years, we have formed a relatively complete industrial ecosystem in the fields of industrial robots, specialized robots and service robots," said Zhai Lixin, vice-mayor of Tianjin.

In 2025, there were 104 robot industry chain enterprises in Tianjin and the industrial output value was 13.5 billion yuan, an increase of 18.9 percent year-on-year, while operating income was 27.8 billion yuan, an increase of 16.3 percent year-on-year.

This year, the Government Work Report proposed "creating a new form of intelligent economy", a novel economic form driven by AI while deeply empowering various industries through "AI+".

"Tianjin has a solid industrial foundation in areas such as automobiles, electronic information and aerospace. This determines that the development of local robots must first focus on serving production and meeting the actual process requirements," Zhao Fengjiao, secretary-general of the Tianjin Robot Industry Association, said.

Shiyun Technology (Tianjin) Co, a high-tech robot company specializing in special industries and high-risk operation scenarios, has achieved mass production and commercial deployment in various fields, including cultural and entertainment performances and industrial intelligent manufacturing.

In medical scenarios, Shiyun's intelligent hospital robot guides can provide guidance with consultations, full-process accompaniment and emergency assistance for patients, making healthcare safer and more efficient, an employee at Shiyun said.

This company has constructed a "body-cerebellum-brain" software and hardware full-stack technology layout, centered around a "one-body, three-intelligences" full-stack platform — using the embodied body as the hardware base and integrating interaction intelligence, motion intelligence and operational intelligence to achieve a complete closed loop from perception to action.

"Shiyun's greatest breakthrough is its focus on embodied intelligence solutions," he said. The company is accumulating high-quality data assets in the industry and has begun constructing and deploying data collection factories nationwide, enabling continuous iteration of "operating while labeling and training", making robots become smarter with each task.

"We will comprehensively establish R&D centers, production workshops and testing centers in Tianjin, building a full industry chain system integrating R&D, manufacturing, sales and services. This year, we will implement 10 standardized scenarios and expect to achieve mass product delivery by 2027," said Cao Keqian, chairman of Shiyun.

According to the "Tianjin Action Plan for Promoting Innovation and Development in Artificial Intelligence (2025-27)", Tianjin will focus on the field of embodied intelligence in the future, promoting the research and application of underwater robots, industrial robots and special-purpose robots.

"For each enterprise, we will adopt a customized approach for assistance, aiming to create a more competitive industrial ecosystem," Zhai said.

Chen Yijun contributed to this story.

AI's immersive experiences up close and personal

By **YAN DONGJIE** in Tianjin



A humanoid robot band plays music at the opening of the 2026 World Intelligence Expo in Tianjin on May 28. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

The rapid advancement of large artificial intelligence models and embodied intelligence is fueling upgrades in hardware and scenario integration, injecting fresh vitality into the cultural and tourism sector, experts said.

At the recent Intelligent Robot Carnival, operators used virtual reality to remotely control humanoid robots from Shiyun Technology (Tianjin) Co for live boxing matches, winning warm applause from on-site spectators. The event took place in Hexi district from May 28 through May 31 in Tianjin, alongside the 2026 World Intelligence Expo.

"The entire experience was incredibly fulfilling and eye-opening. Having never joined tech or cultural tourism events before, I was fascinated by the mix of cutting-edge tech, robot shows and fun interactions," said Muhammed Radhiat Ibrahim, a Nigerian art student at Tiangong University, adding advanced technologies have become easy and fun for ordinary visitors.

A major highlight of the expo is its close-contact experience featuring indoor immersive displays plus outdoor live performances, enabling visitors to interact closely with robots, said Cui Wei, deputy secretary-general of the Tianjin Municipal Government.

"I'm most impressed by the robot welcoming squad. They wave and turn in precise unison and shift formations following music beats," said Anamaria Faasoesa Ranadi Visinia Tuala, a Samoan art student at Tiangong University.

Shiyun has rolled out a full lineup of humanoid robots capable of group choreography, delivering all-round robot performance solutions for scenic spots, museums and galas.

At the exhibition booth of the Unmanned Systems Interdisciplinary Center, Tianjin University, children got up close to cutting-edge AI technologies under staff guidance. On display were a six-rotor aircraft, self-balancing motorcycle, fire-fighting robotic dog and inspection robot, bringing the youngsters a fascinating experience.

"We host popular science activities at the cultural center to spark kids' interest in science and technology, and help the public understand our research goes beyond academics to tackle core industrial challenges," said Xie Hui, head of the center.

"Marking China's first large-scale all-outdoor comprehensive robot gala, the carnival abandons conventional indoor exhibition modes. Spanning 17,000 square meters at Tianjin Cultural Center, it forms an open, boundless tech venue," said Gong Kejia, director of the Hexi district bureau of science and technology.

"The outdoor format completely transformed how I interacted with technology," Ibrahim said. "Unlike indoor exhibitions, where visitors mostly watch from a distance, here I could stand right next to the robot calligraphy demonstration and observe every brushstroke up close."

"AI boasts great adaptability for large-scale conservation, inheritance, revitalization and utilization of cultural relics as well as natural and cultural resources," said Yu Haibo, an associate professor with the College of Tourism and Service Management at Nankai University.

"Every year we introduce cutting-edge robotic products, upgrade displays, competitions and performances, improve popular science programs and polish the city's IP with distinctive sci-tech tourism offerings to brand Tianjin as a renowned smart city," Gong added.

Hexi plans to institutionalize the carnival as Tianjin's landmark brand linking sci-tech, cultural tourism and industrial exchanges.

Chen Yijun contributed to this story.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:13 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:13 PM

WORLD

Prudence urged on Iran nuclear issue

Ambassador Sun Lei calls for maintaining ceasefire and refraining from use of force

By **MINLU ZHANG**
at the United Nations
minluzhang@chinadailyusa.com

China's envoy to the United Nations on Tuesday called on the UN Security Council to exercise prudence and play a constructive role in addressing the Iranian nuclear issue, amid growing disagreement among Security Council members over the status of UN sanctions on Iran.

> Iran's legitimate right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy should be addressed alongside non-proliferation concerns."
>
> **Sun Lei,**
> China's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations

"I want to reiterate that the Security Council has ceased its consideration of the Iranian nuclear issue," Sun Lei, China's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, told the council.

He said the proper resolution of the issue bears on the authority and effectiveness of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, long-term peace and stability in the Middle East, and global peace and security.

Ahead of the meeting, eight countries — France, Bahrain, Denmark, Greece, Latvia, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the US — issued a joint statement urging all UN member states to fully implement the recently reimposed Security Council sanctions against Iran.

Speaking on behalf of the group, Jerome Bonnafont, French permanent representative to the UN, said Iran possesses more than 10 International Atomic Energy Agency significant quantities of highly enriched uranium, a level at which "the possibility of manufacturing a nuclear device cannot be excluded".

Sun stressed that "Iran's legitimate right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy should be addressed alongside non-proliferation concerns".

He noted "Iran's repeated commitment not to develop nuclear weapons", and said that, as a state party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, "Iran enjoys the legitimate right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy."

The remarks were made during an open briefing of the Security Council on the work of the 1737 Committee, which was established to oversee sanctions on Iran prior to the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The committee had reported to the Security Council every three months before the adoption of the JCPOA in 2015, which suspended both the committee and its reporting requirements.

In August 2025, France, Germany and the United Kingdom, known as the E3 parties to the JCPOA, triggered the agreement's "snapback" mechanism to reimpose UN sanctions on Iran. In March this year, the United States, serving as Security Council president, sought to resume the committee's reporting by including its 90-day briefing in the council's program of work.

China and Russia challenged the legal and procedural basis for the move, saying that Security Council sanctions on Iran had been permanently lifted following the adoption of Resolution 2231 in 2015.

China and Russia had opposed the US proposal to include the committee briefing in the council's March agenda, as well as a draft report on the committee's activities proposed by the United States.

Sun said that the United States and Iran have reached a ceasefire and are exploring solutions through negotiations, and "the situation remains sensitive, complex and fragile".

"Under the current circumstances, the Security Council must stand on the side of peace and on the right side of history, and act with utmost caution when handling relevant issues," he said.

"China supports the US and Iran in resolving their differences through rational and pragmatic negotiations," Sun said, adding that such efforts could ensure Iran's orderly development of peaceful nuclear activities under the strict safeguards and monitoring of the IAEA while effectively reducing proliferation risks.

"Threats of force or the imposition of war will only push the Iranian nuclear issue and the situation in the Middle East into a dangerous abyss," he said.

Sun said the US withdrawal from the JCPOA and its two separate uses of force against Iran during the negotiation process "had severely undermined diplomatic efforts and contributed to the current difficulties".

He urged relevant parties to "abandon power politics, engage in sincere dialogue on an equal footing, commit to refraining from the use of force, and ensure the effective implementation of any future agreement".

"Maintaining the ceasefire is the overriding priority," Sun said, calling on all parties to work toward ending hostilities and reaching an agreement that serves the interests of those concerned.

"The world is an indivisible security community. One country's security should not come at the expense of another country's security," Sun said.

Triumph over tragedy



Palestinians who lost limbs during the Gaza conflict play soccer on a damaged pitch surrounded by rubble in Gaza City on Monday ahead of the start of the 2026 FIFA World Cup. BILAL OSAMA / POLARIS

Heytea opens first tea bar outside China

By **BELINDA ROBINSON**
in New York
belindarobinson@chinadailyusa.com

Heytea's new tea bar on New York's Upper East Side, the first location of its kind outside of China, attracted hundreds of people who patiently lined up on opening day just to get a taste of its tantalizing teas .

The store, located at 126 East 86th street in Manhattan, officially opened on June 5. Four days later, in the middle of a humid afternoon, the excitement over the tea bar had not died down, as a line of at least 100 people formed down the block.

Alexander Sherman, 19, traveled for nearly an hour from Brooklyn to the newly opened Upper East Side location just to try a cup of tea. He is enjoying the emergence of Chinese tea and coffee brands in the US.

"I feel like Heytea ... can be likened to Starbucks at this point," Sherman told China Daily. "I know there is Luckin coffee too, but I haven't tried that yet. That's more of a newer establishment here in America. I put Heytea in the same bracket as drinks from Starbucks as it's like a high, upper drink, where you're paying a little bit more of a premium."

"I've been to another Heytea but this Heytea tea bar concept is so cool," he added. "Heytea is pretty big, as bubble teas have been popular in the US for a while. I want to order a Deep Matcha and Chocolate tea or a King Jasmine Guava tea —both look good."



People wait to get a taste of tantalizing products at Heytea's new tea bar on New York's Upper East Side on Monday. BELINDA ROBINSON / CHINA DAILY

The tea bar is designed to have a slower pace, allowing customers to savor the flavor of the tea — setting it apart from its other locations.

Inside, the decor includes wooden seating allowing people to sit and ponder. Tote bags and tea were also available for sale.

The menu boasts over 30 beverages, with a special emphasis on premium tea. Some of the new products include Mountain Oolong Yuzu Apple, Deep Matcha, and Chocolate.

There are also ice creams such as Pistachio Gardenia and Salted Cheese Chocolate.

"I love Heytea, and this is the first time that I'm seeing something this beautiful that they made on the inside. So, I can't wait to get inside," Brianna, 26, from Queens New York, said while in the line. She described Heytea as tasting different to similar US offerings.

"It has a different taste to me than Starbucks or other American places. It has a more natural sweet taste; however, it does not taste too artificial, even the teas, they're just brewed straight. And I like that part about it."

A doorman, who wanted to remain anonymous due to his job, stood outside of the building next door to the tea bar to observe the long line of people.

He revealed that on opening day, the line went back two blocks to East 84th street. He said that it had remained long over the weekend and into the start of the new week.

Founded in 2012, Heytea (originally called Royal Tea) started in a small alley in Jiangmen, Guangdong province, in a shop of less than 30 square meters. It later rebranded to its current name.

Just three years later, its founder, 21-year-old entrepreneur Nie Yunchen, expanded to Guangzhou and Shenzhen. By 2017, it opened in Shanghai. A year later, it branched out to Hong Kong.

In 2023, it opened its first US store in New York. By January 2025, Heytea had 15 locations in the city. The US now has at least 40 stores.

From those humble beginnings in China, Heytea has grown into a worldwide brand with more than 3,500 locations across 330 cities worldwide in the US, UK, Australia, Canada, Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea and more.

Abigail, 20, works on the Upper East Side just a few minutes away from the tea bar. She left work excited to try it.

"I'm not really a coffee person, and I think that's probably like a broad thing you can find among Gen Z," she said. "Like Gen Z's, in terms of where they're getting their caffeine from, it's not as much coffee as it is, like, energy drinks or like matcha and tea and stuff.

"I like the flavors of the drinks, that's probably one factor. And these are supposed to be drinks that you can't get in a regular Heytea. So, I think that's part of the appeal."

She liked the 'buy one get one free' promotion on offer. She said that the long line would not deter her, even though the wait was at least 45 minutes to an hour.

"I guess it shows that people are excited and willing to wait," she said.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916

Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108
529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1857

US slammed for putting Chinese firms on blacklist

By **ZHANG YUNBI**
zhangyunbi@chinadaily.com.cn

Beijing has criticized Washington for adding several Chinese companies to a list of entities allegedly supporting China's military, urging the United States to "correct its erroneous practices".

On Monday, the US Defense Department added several major Chinese companies, including Alibaba, Baidu and BYD, to the list, according to US media.

Responding at a daily news briefing in Beijing on Tuesday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said," China has consistently and firmly opposed the US overstretching the concept of national security and formulating various types of discriminatory lists to go after Chinese businesses.

"We urge the US to correct its erroneous practices and stop its unwarranted suppression of Chinese enterprises," Lin said.

China will take necessary measures to firmly safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese enterprises, he added.

According to leading IT news portal TechCrunch, the list — known as the 1260H list, after the specific section of the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act that created it — "is just one tool that the US has used to place restrictions on Chinese tech".

The updated list, which supersedes an earlier 2025 version, now includes a broad swathe of China's top technology companies, according to Reuters.

It also reported that other companies added include biotech enterprise WuXi AppTec, artificial intelligence-driven robotics company RoboSense Technology Co and Unitree, a leading Chinese maker of humanoid and quadruped robots.

Baidu said in a statement to TechCrunch that "the suggestion that Baidu is a military company is entirely baseless. We will not hesitate to use all options available to us to have the company removed from the list".

Alibaba told TechCrunch that it "is not a Chinese military company nor part of any military-civil fusion strategy", adding that it will take all available legal action against attempts to misrepresent the company.

Symphony in motion



Performers from the China National Acrobatic Troupe compete at the World Circus Art Festival "IDOL-2026" in Moscow on Sunday. The performance earned the troupe the Gold Idol Award. XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:13 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:13 PM

Z WEEKLY

All about Gen Z

Z WEEKLY

Hubei opens doors for Taiwan youths

Face-to-face exchanges allow young people from both sides of the Taiwan Strait to see shared culture and daily life up close.



Taiwan participants wearing *hanfu* pose for a group photo with student volunteers from South-Central Minzu University during a cross-Strait youth exchange event in Wuhan, Hubei province, on May 18. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By **MENG WENJIE** and **LIU KUN** in Wuhan

On the evening of May 18, a dazzling light show lit up both banks of the Yangtze River in Wuhan, Hubei province. In a gentle drizzle, a sightseeing boat slowly departed the dock. Chen Yuting stood on the open-air deck, letting the river breeze brush across her face as she took in the night scenery.

"The view reminds me of the Love River in my hometown of Kaohsiung, Taiwan," she said. "But the Love River feels more delicate, while the Yangtze River has a far grander presence."

The cruise was one of a series of youth exchange activities held in Hubei to promote communication and mutual understanding among young people from both sides of the Taiwan Strait.

More than 400 young participants and guests joined the cruise. On board, student volunteers from South-Central Minzu University in Wuhan had set up booths featuring handmade bookmarks, traditional Chinese knots, round fans and paper-cutting art.

"The essence of youth exchanges across the Strait lies in face-to-face interaction," said Wu Ying-chieh, an associate professor at the university. "It's not about reading news reports or scrolling through online comment sections, but about seeing each other's lives up close."

Originally from Yilan in Taiwan, Wu has spent two decades promoting cross-Strait youth engagement. He often brings visitors from Taiwan to the university's Ethnology Museum, where they explore ethnic cultures through exhibits of traditional garments, handicrafts and everyday artifacts.

"For many, it is the first time they realize how diverse the ethnic cultures are on the Chinese mainland," Wu said. "They are often surprised to find similarities with Taiwan's indigenous traditions."

That sense of cultural connection was echoed by Chen Xin, a 22-year-old journalism student at the university and a member of the Xibe ethnic group from Northeast China's Heilongjiang province. At a campus gathering later during the exchange activities, she wore the traditional attire of the Amis people — an indigenous group in Taiwan — and introduced the university's cross-Strait cultural studies program.

After the gathering, an Amis woman approached her and offered to gift her a traditional set of Amis clothing.

"There was a real sense of warmth," Chen Xin said. "It felt less like a formal exchange and more like a natural connection."

> "It's not about reading news reports or scrolling through online comment sections, but about seeing each other's lives up close."
>
> **Wu Ying-chieh,** an associate professor at South-Central Minzu University

> "As long as we work hard and develop professional skills, we can find opportunities to build our future here."
>
> **Kan Chia-hua,** a doctor at the Central Hospital of Wuhan

From visitors to residents

For some participants, Hubei is no longer simply a stop on an exchange itinerary. It has become a place to study, work and build a life.

Lee Yi-hsuan, a 20-year-old from Taoyuan, Taiwan, shared at the gathering how she came to study at Central China Normal University in Wuhan. With her mother originally from Hunan province, Lee decided after high school to pursue higher education on the Chinese mainland.

She had previously visited Wuhan as a tourist and was impressed by its large student population and the number of universities in the city. "It felt inclusive and full of vitality," she recalled.

After enrolling at the university in 2024, Lee gradually grew from a hesitant freshman into a confident student who now helps other young people from Taiwan adjust to campus life.

She also shares her study and daily-life experiences on Xiaohongshu, offering practical advice to those considering studying on the mainland.

Kan Chia-hua, 35, a urologist at the Central Hospital of Wuhan, has followed a longer path.

Originally from Hsinchu, Taiwan, he came to Wuhan in 2011 to study at Huazhong University of Science and Technology and stayed after completing his doctoral studies.

"When I first arrived, I could not understand the Wuhan dialect at all," he said.

More than a decade later, Kan can not only understand the dialect but also speak some of it himself. Even the way he addresses patients has changed. Instead of using the more formal terms common in Taiwan, such as "sir" or "miss", he has gradually adopted warmer local expressions.

Kan said policies supporting Taiwan residents on the mainland have opened broader professional opportunities. In Hubei, he was able to take medical licensing exams and complete standardized residency training under the same requirements as mainland doctors.

"I've grown together with Wuhan," he said. "Over the years, I've witnessed the city's rapid development while also improving myself."

Beyond his clinical work, Kan regularly joins volunteer medical outreach programs in rural Hubei, where he helps promote disease prevention and health awareness. This year, he received the Hubei Youth May Fourth Medal.

"The award is not only a personal honor, but also a form of encouragement for young people from Taiwan living on the mainland," he said. "As long as we work hard and develop professional skills, we can find opportunities to build our future here."

Chen Yuting has also established her life in Hubei — in a different city and through a very different passion.

A cycling enthusiast, she opened Let's Go Coffee in Xiangyang in May 2025, creating a space where local riders could rest, gather and connect. The cafe has since expanded to a second location in the city.

Chen Yuting had long been fascinated by Xiangyang as depicted in the martial arts novels of Hong Kong writer Jin Yong, also known as Louis Cha Leung-yung (1924-2018). When she first arrived in 2024, she found a city that combined a rich historical legacy with the energy of modern life.

Supportive policies for Taiwan entrepreneurs helped, she said. But what ultimately convinced her to settle in a new place in her 40s was the warmth of the residents.

"People here treat others with sincerity," she said. "I feel like a seed that has taken root and is growing here."

When she first opened the cafe, the owner of a local bicycle shop helped her find renovation workers and communicate with craftsmen who spoke only the Xiangyang dialect.

The owner of a nearby beef noodle shop would also add extra noodles to her order and offer her a complimentary bowl of *huangjiu*, a traditional rice wine.

At her cafe, flavors from both sides of the Strait have gradually come together. This year, she introduced "huangjiu coffee", a drink that combines the local rice wine with preserved plums from Taiwan.

"People in Xiangyang like to pair beef noodles with *huangjiu*," Chen Yuting said. "So I thought, why not bring that local flavor into coffee, along with a taste of Taiwan? For me, this drink is another way of becoming part of the city."

Contact the writers at mengwenjie@21st.cn

Social Media Digest

Countryside wanderlust

Scroll through TikTok or YouTube, and "China Travel" posts are no longer all neon-lit skylines and crowded landmarks. Instead, rice fields, local food markets and mountain homestays are drawing growing attention on Western social media.

The phenomenon, often described as "country walk", marks the latest shift in the "China Travel" trend: after exploring the country's megacities, more foreign travelers are venturing off the beaten path in search of slower, more authentic experiences.

Many are not just sightseeing. They are learning to make tofu, joining traditional festivals and spending time with residents, turning rural travel into a more personal encounter with Chinese culture.

Several factors have fueled the trend. In recent years, China's countryside has undergone a remarkable transformation, with improved infrastructure, better connectivity and upgraded public services making rural areas more accessible and attractive to visitors. Expanded visa-free entry policies and streamlined transit procedures have also made it easier for foreign travelers to explore destinations beyond the country's major cities.

"When overseas content creators cycle along clean village roads, stay in courtyard-style boutique homestays, and interact with farmers livestreaming on smartphones, the impact of what they see and experience firsthand cannot be offset by any biased written reporting," commented Global Times.



Traveling in China's countryside has become a growing trend among foreign visitors. VCG

Digital nostalgia

In a world dominated by AI playlists and algorithmic song recommendations, one relic refuses to be replaced: the iPod.

Though Apple discontinued the iPod line in 2022, the iconic music player has resurfaced online, sparking a wave of nostalgia on TikTok, Reddit and resale platforms. Young fans proudly showcase second-hand iPod Classic devices, organize massive downloaded libraries and don classic 2000s wired earbuds.

Its enduring appeal comes from a blend of sleek design, portability and premium sound quality. As one Xiaohongshu (RedNote) user noted, the iPod Shuffle provides a unique listening experience: a simple slide of the power switch starts instant playback, and its shuffle mode turns every song into a delightful surprise.

Beyond hardware, the iPod's minimalist nature is at the heart of its revival. Unlike smartphones brimming with notifications, autoplay videos, and algorithmic feeds, the iPod exists solely for music — an oasis of focus in a distracted digital age.

For Gen Z, it's also a time machine. The device evokes memories of school commutes, carefully curated playlists, and the satisfaction of choosing songs without an algorithm deciding for you. In a fast-moving world, the iPod offers a rare chance to slow down, enjoy music intentionally, and reconnect with a simpler era.

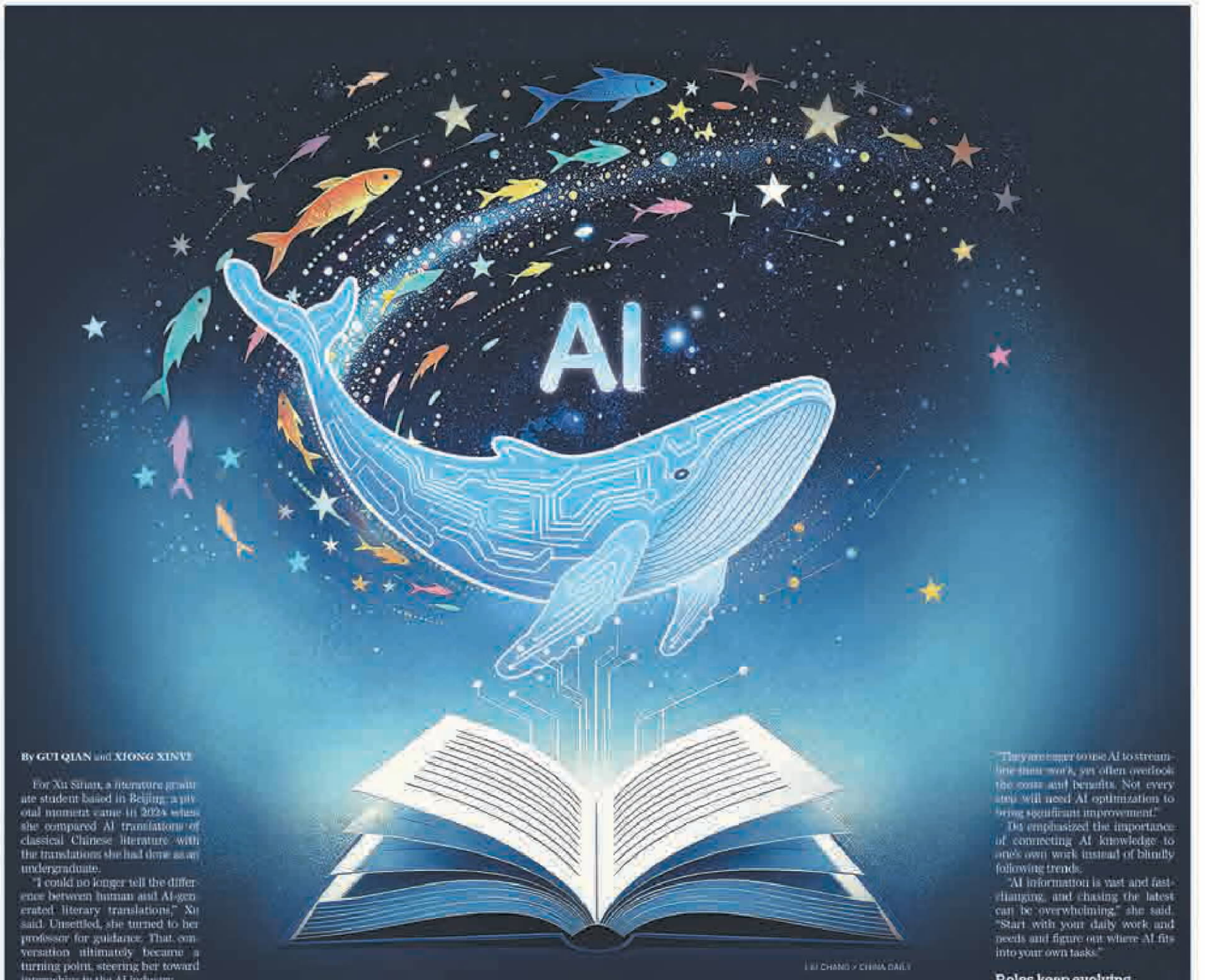
GUO JIATONG



A classic iPod holds timeless appeal amid today's algorithm-driven music world. VCG

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:13 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:13 PM



LI CHANG / CHINA DAILY

Humanities students embrace AI

As artificial intelligence expands across industries, liberal arts graduates are discovering fresh opportunities in product, content and ethical design.

By **GUI QIAN** and **XIONG XINYI**

For Xu Sihan, a literature graduate student based in Beijing, a pivotal moment came in 2024 when she compared AI translations of classical Chinese literature with the translations she had done as an undergraduate.

"I could no longer tell the difference between human and AI-generated literary translations," Xu said. Unsettled, she turned to her professor for guidance. That conversation ultimately became a turning point, steering her toward internships in the AI industry.

When Xu asked how the humanities could remain relevant in the age of AI, her professor told her that human writing is rooted in unspoken emotions and personal stories — things that resonate with others even when the writer cannot fully explain them. What makes human expression unique is the writer's lived experience.

That insight strengthened Xu's belief that the humanities and AI need not be at odds. When applying for internships, she began prioritizing AI-related roles. In 2025, after sending out numerous applications and receiving only one offer, she became a public relations intern working on AI-related projects at a major tech company. She has since moved into an AI product role at another tech firm.

Looking back on her first internship, Xu said the greatest benefit, as someone from a liberal arts background, was gaining a deeper understanding of the AI ecosystem.

"Before I entered the industry, I followed AI news casually, but once I was in it, I was exposed to at least five times as much information," she recalled. Being surrounded by people who constantly discussed AI made it impossible to remain a casual observer.

"You can no longer tell yourself it is enough to be interested from afar. You must get in the game," she said. The most valuable part, she added, was seeing firsthand how the industry evolved and how professionals responded to each technological shift.

As Xu shared her journey online, she began receiving messages from other liberal arts students asking how they could move into AI-related work. Many worried about missing out, being replaced, or not knowing which roles to pursue.

Those questions pushed Xu to think more concretely about where liberal arts students can fit into the AI industry. She pointed to two possible directions.

The first is to identify real-world needs and focus on practical applications. Xu gave an example of a conversation with a friend working in human resources.

Through that discussion, she realized that job seekers needed an AI agent, or automated assistant, capable of matching job seekers with suitable openings.

For Xu, that unmet need became a product opportunity — one where liberal arts students can contribute by understanding people's needs and translating them into useful applications.

The second direction is to focus on the human and ethical sides of AI. Tasks such as shaping AI personas or helping AI communicate more warmly and empathetically, she said, draw directly on the strengths of liberal arts students.

Xu also noted that the job market in 2026 has become even more competitive. Liberal arts students seeking AI-related positions, she said, may need to demonstrate their abilities through tangible work, such as creating a demo with AI coding tools.

Fortunately, as more people enter the AI field, learning resources have become increasingly abundant. Even students without a computer science background can now begin to understand the basic logic of how AI systems work through online courses.

Above all, Xu stressed the importance of not setting limits on oneself.

"I never set limits on myself because of my identity as a liberal arts student," she said. "That's why I ended up doing work that doesn't look like a typical liberal arts job."



"You can no longer tell yourself it is enough to be interested from afar. You must get in the game."

Xu Sihan, a literature graduate student based in Beijing



"For non-tech people, including liberal arts students, the opportunities far outweigh the challenges."

Liu Dingding, a Beijing-based internet analyst

Finding new paths

If Xu's story shows how students are beginning to find their place in AI, Du Xinqian's path reveals how that shift can unfold after several years in the tech industry.

Du, who studied media in graduate school, moved into tech in 2020, drawn by the rapid growth of the internet industry. She began pursuing internships and roles in the field, eventually landing her first job as a data product manager at Chinese services platform Meituan. She has since pivoted again and is now building her own AI startup.

Before ChatGPT-style generative AI models took off, Du said, the tech industry was largely dominated by major companies, leaving limited room for individuals and small teams. AI, she believes, has created more opportunities for smaller organizations and solo entrepreneurs.

Today, Du shares practical, hands-on experience with AI on social media under the handle "Haihadu". She describes her approach as "pragmatic AI": using AI to solve real workplace problems, rather than chasing flashy effects or treating the technology as a status symbol.

For instance, she uses AI to create content for e-commerce operations, repurpose livestreams into short clips and analyze product performance data.

Du recalled a designer friend who had spent tens of thousands of yuan learning AI but still struggled to use the tools in his own work.

"I walked him through his workflow and pointed out that only the design stage was worth improving with AI," she said. "If he could master that step and scale it up, he would actually make a profit."

"People love learning new AI knowledge but struggle to connect it to their own work," she said. "They are eager to use AI to streamline their work, yet often overlook the costs and benefits. Not every step will need AI optimization to bring significant improvement."

Du emphasized the importance of connecting AI knowledge to one's own work instead of blindly following trends.

"AI information is vast and fast-changing, and chasing the latest can be overwhelming," she said. "Start with your daily work and needs and figure out where AI fits into your own tasks."

Roles keep evolving

Taken together, Xu and Du's experiences suggest that AI is not only creating technical jobs but also redefining what non-technical workers can contribute. Analysts say this reflects a broader shift in the industry.

Wang Peng, an associate research fellow at the Beijing Academy of Social Sciences (BASS), has observed a fundamental change in AI hiring.

"The industry is moving from being purely technology-driven to being application-driven," he said. Non-technical roles, he noted, have evolved from basic data labeling to positions such as AI product managers, prompt engineers, and domain specialists.

The barrier to entry has also changed. It is no longer only about coding ability, but also about business knowledge and proficiency with AI tools.

"It is not an easy fallback option, but a field that emphasizes real cross-disciplinary competence," Wang said.

Liu Dingding, a Beijing-based internet analyst, placed the shift in a broader context.

"In the past, programming was only for tech people who understood code," he said. "Now liberal arts students with ideas can use AI to generate code, articles, images, and short videos."

AI, he believes, is less about replacing people than amplifying their creativity. "For non-tech people, including liberal arts students, the opportunities far outweigh the challenges," Liu said.

As Xu and Du's stories show, AI presents real opportunities for liberal arts students. But those opportunities are not automatic. They require a proactive mindset, practical learning, and the willingness to apply new tools to one's own field.

For Xu, the uncertainty that once made AI feel threatening is now part of what makes the field exciting.

As she put it, "This field is so new that everyone starts from zero."

Contact the writers at guiqian@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:13 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:13 PM

Z WEEKLY

Finding beauty in darkness

Award-winning photographer Cai Jialing dives into darkness to reveal the tiny, luminous lives most people will never see.



Cai Jialing prepares to descend for a blackwater dive in Anilao, the Philippines, in June 2025. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Blackwater creatures photographed by Cai Jialing. The image at the top right, *Snowy Night*, earned her the title of Ocean Photographer of the Year 2023. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By **GUI QIAN** and **WANG JINGYAO**

As night fell, the sea looked like a vast sheet of black silk.

With a backward roll from the edge of the boat, Cai Jialing slipped into the water and began her descent. Around her was endless darkness: no seabed in sight, no shoreline — only a surface buoy above, with a faintly glowing line dropping into the black below.

The creatures she had come to find were gathering around that thin column of light: sea butterflies, salps, transparent octopus larvae — some no bigger than a fingernail, yet so delicate and strange they seemed almost extraterrestrial.

Suspended almost weightlessly in the dark, Cai raised her camera and followed these tiny lives as they rose from the deep — hundreds of meters below.

This is blackwater photography: the art of capturing drifting marine life at night in the open ocean. Only a handful of people in the world do it well. Cai, 28, is one of the youngest.

Before finding her way into blackwater photography, Cai knew almost nothing about diving. She grew up in Chongqing, an inland city in Southwest China, and had no formal training in photography. Yet she had always had "a restless, adventurous spirit" — an instinct that eventually led her to the sea.

In 2016, while studying biology and environmental science at the University of Virginia, she took a highly specialized course in marine biology. Her professor introduced the class to diel vertical migration — the nightly ascent of zooplankton from the deep ocean toward the surface. By day, these animals stay hundreds of meters below to hide from predators; at night, they rise to feed.

This daily movement, often described as the greatest migration on Earth, left Cai in awe. "It felt like a summons from the sea," she recalled.

After the course, she began learning to dive, starting with recreational scuba before gradually moving into the far more demanding world of blackwater diving.

"Blackwater diving is completely different from diving at a typical resort site," Cai explained. "There's no visible seafloor. If you lose control of your buoyancy, you can rise too fast or sink rapidly — either can be life-threatening."

In 2018, Cai tried blackwater photography for the first time in the Philippines, home to one of the world's most experienced blackwater diving communities. Whenever she encountered something she did not understand, there was always someone she could turn to for advice. She would take those ideas underwater, test them on a dive, and come back with new questions.

"Through trial and error, and a lot of practice, I slowly figured it out," she said, and her work began reaching wider audiences.

Rethinking the frame

In 2023, one photograph changed Cai's career. The image, *Snowy Night*, earned her the title of Ocean Photographer of the Year 2023, awarded by Oceanographic Magazine, an international competition recognizing the world's best ocean imagery. It captures a female paper nautilus, or argonaut, riding a drifting wooden stick through dark water, surrounded by countless fine particles that scatter like snow.

The photograph was taken in the Philippines after a nearby volcano erupted, stirring sediment into the water.

While many photographers might have seen the poor visibility as reason enough to abandon the dive, Cai saw something different. For years, she had focused on perfecting her lighting to keep her backgrounds clean. This time, however, she embraced the tiny organisms and particles suspended in the water. The "snow" in *Snowy Night* — volcanic ash, plankton, and the ocean's own dust — became part of the image.

The award brought new opportunities. In January, Cai boarded an expedition vessel bound for Antarctica as a special correspondent for a citizen science project. Over the next two weeks, she completed seven dives in Antarctic waters, encountering penguins, leopard seals, and the plankton she loves most.

Few people knew, however, how anxious she had been before the trip. She had never used a dry suit — the insulated suit divers wear in freezing water — could barely lift the heavy scuba tanks and didn't even know how to assemble her own gear, because in Southeast Asia, there had always been someone to do it for her.

"I was spoiled by those days in 27 C Southeast Asian waters," she admitted.

She managed to fast-track her polar diving training and returned from the expedition with the photographs she had hoped to capture. Later, on her own website, she posted a detailed Antarctic diving guide titled "From 27 C to -1 C", documenting every step of her preparation.

Cai rarely uses lofty terms like "environmental protection" or "conservation" to describe her relationship with the sea. She acknowledges the damage humans have done to the ocean, but she hopes her photographs evoke not guilt, but love, curiosity and awe.

Through her lens, the ocean is alive with tiny, fragile, transparent beings — many of them unnamed, and almost never seen by the public. She wants to make these overlooked creatures visible. For her, the vertical migration of plankton is "one of nature's gifts to explorers", allowing divers to glimpse worlds the human body could never otherwise reach.

Today, Cai continues to dive at blackwater sites around the globe. She has "graduated" from tropical waters, as she puts it, and now seeks out deeper, colder realms.

Eight years after her first blackwater dive, her ocean adventure may still be just beginning.

Contact the writers at guiqian@i21st.cn

Online
Watch the video by scanning the code.

Deep Dive

The second World Conference of Classics is being held from June 9 to 10 in Athens, Greece, bringing together scholars from around the world to discuss the preservation of classical civilizations, explore their contemporary relevance and foster cross-cultural dialogue at a time of growing global exchange and renewed interest in humanity's shared cultural roots.

Ahead of the event, China Daily surveyed 352 young people across six continents, more than 96 percent of whom belong to Generation Z. The findings offer a snapshot of how young people today encounter, interpret and connect with classical traditions from both the East and the West.

World classics gain new life in digital age

By **MENG WENJIE**
mengwenjie@i21st.cn

In the digital age, technology has changed how people experience classical culture. Films, video games and short videos have made ancient civilizations more familiar and accessible than ever before. But this wider reach also raises a question: how can classical culture be popularized without losing its depth?

According to China Daily's findings, 54.5 percent of respondents engage with classical culture primarily through popular media, while only 13.9 percent pursue systematic academic study. This gap may seem striking, but Huang Weiwei, a professor at the Center for Greek Studies of Beijing International Studies University (BISU), sees the figure in a more positive light.

"In fact, 13.9 percent is a high proportion for rigorous classical study," Huang explained. She noted that classical studies often require years of training in ancient languages — such as Greek, Latin, Sanskrit, or classical Chinese — as well as training in textual criticism and interpretation.

For most young people, digital media are often their first gateway to classical culture.

Huang described this trend as "an inevitable product of today's media environment" and emphasized that creative, audience-friendly formats can help make classical culture more approachable for younger generations. But she also cautioned that accessibility should not come at the cost of depth.

"Entertainment satisfies instant gratification, whereas classical studies pursue truth — these aims are fundamentally different," she said.

The survey also showed which parts of classical culture resonate most with young people. Among Chinese cultural elements, "martial arts, myths and Eastern fantasy stories" ranked first, attracting 31.3 percent of respondents. By contrast, only 10.8 percent chose "the wisdom of ancient thinkers such as Confucius".



Huang Weiwei

Huang said the results reflect a long-standing discussion in classical studies: narrative versus abstract thought.

"Stories engage the emotions, while philosophy appeals to the rational mind," she explained. "It's natural that most people are drawn to narrative rather than abstract reasoning."

Yet Huang stressed that the two should not be treated as opposites. Literary works can also convey profound ideas, and philosophy can be brought to life through imagination and storytelling. For her, keeping classical culture alive means combining intellectual depth with a compelling narrative.

"Many great thinkers communicated complex ideas through allegory," she said. "Zhuangzi in China and Plato in the West both used stories to express sophisticated concepts."

The survey also pointed to another encouraging trend: young people's openness to comparing civilizations. About 38 percent of respondents said they were most intrigued by "discovering that two distant civilizations can share similar philosophical views" while 32.4 percent were impressed by "completely different solutions to the same problem".

Huang describes this mindset as "mature pluralism".

"Today's youth can appreciate shared human concerns while respecting cultural differences," she said. "It's not about ranking civilizations or assuming everyone is the same. It's about finding common ground without erasing diversity."

Meanwhile, young people are increasingly aware that classical heritage is more than physical relics. While 21 percent of respondents expressed concern about damage to artifacts and historic sites, 30.7 percent worried about the loss of language and philosophical understanding.

This awareness raises a deeper question: what relevance does classical study hold for young people today?

Huang said many students at BISU struggle with Greek or Latin and sometimes wonder whether such difficult study is worth it. Her answer is that classical education provides a long-term perspective, offering a form of "immunity" against the fragmentation and distractions of modern life.

"When we read the classics, we see that challenges faced thousands of years ago are not so different from our own," she said. "This perspective strengthens us, helping us face today's problems without feeling isolated or powerless. We study the classics to live more consciously in the present — and to meet the future with hope."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:13 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:13 PM

SPORTS

WORLD CUP 2026

Small country has big soccer dreams

Players hope to put Cape Verde on the map







Clockwise from above: Cape Verde players pose for a team photo before an Africa Cup of Nations qualifier against Egypt on Sept 6, 2024; Cape Verde fans offer enthusiastic support to their team during World Cup qualification; Cape Verde shirts hang alongside souvenirs featuring Cesaria Evora, the late folk-singing superstar, at the airport on the island of Sao Vicente, Cape Verde. REUTERS

Cape Verde sways to the sound of morna, a homegrown folk music laced with melancholy, longing and soul. Morna's most famous song, *Sodade*, remembers the tens of thousands of emigres who have left these 10 islands sprinkled off the coast of West Africa for work and opportunities abroad.

"If you write me, I'll write you," the song's lyrics go. "If you forget me, I'll forget you."

In the next few weeks, Cape Verdeans hope their sense of nostalgia will turn to celebration. Their eyes are on the national soccer team, which is packed full of stars whose parents, or even grandparents, left Cape Verde years ago, but who still consider the islands home.

The team, known as the Blue Sharks, is one of the surprise qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup. With fewer than 600,000 inhabitants, Cape Verde is the third smallest country by population to ever reach the world's biggest sporting event (after Iceland in 2018 and Curacao, also in 2026).

Cape Verde's national team combines local talent with a raft of foreign-born players, including centerback Roberto Lopes, who was born in Ireland to an Irish mother and Cape Verdean father, and Logan Costa, who was born in France to Cape Verdean parents and plays for Villarreal in Spain.

The combination of local and international talent has proven magically effective. Cape Verde won seven of its 10 World Cup qualifiers, losing just once and claiming a huge upset victory at home over African heavyweight Cameroon.

The World Cup will be another level. Ranked 69th in the world, the Blue Sharks will face tournament favorite Spain, two-time World Cup winner Uruguay and Saudi Arabia (a relative minnow, but still ranked higher at 61st) in the group stage.

But locals have faith.

"I'm very proud," said Anton Delgado, 25, after spending a recent Sunday afternoon with friends in a bar in Mindelo, a city on the island of Sao Vicente.

"It's a marvel. I've been waiting years for this. We have real hope that we can win a game or even two."

Rhode Island links

That sense of hope is widely shared across Cape Verde. The tiny nation's restaurants, bars and cafes are normally packed with singers and bands playing morna for tourists and locals alike. Now they are gearing up for the World Cup.

At the Cafe Royal, a hotel and restaurant in Mindelo, staff are planning for big crowds. The Royal features a large mural of morna superstar Cesaria Evora, who, even 15 years after her death, remains the most famous Cape Verdean in the world. But it is the country's soccer stars that everyone wants to talk about now.

Noaela Delgardo, 22, who works behind the bar at the Royal, said the World Cup is a rare opportunity for other Cape Verdeans to shine and for the country to gain "more visibility in the world".

Despite the growth of tourism, it is hard not to feel the archipelago's isolation and distance from bigger centers. There are flights from Europe, but the only direct flight to the United States lands in Providence, Rhode Island — a legacy of 19th-century whaling ties between the two places and the large Cape Verdean community that lives in Providence today.

The World Cup is a chance to close that distance, said pensioner Jorge Goncales, 69, while sitting with friends in a tree-filled Mindelo square.

"The whole world comes to us. Now we go out to the world."

Head coach Pedro Leitao Brito — who was named Africa's Coach of the Year last year and is better known by his nickname, Bubista — also sees a chance to put Cape Verde on the map.

"We want to make an impact on the tournament for our people," he told CNN a few weeks ago. "We want to show everyone watching that, yes, we're a small country, but we can play against the big teams. We know it's hard but we want to show that nothing is impossible."

REUTERS



People play a soccer match in the town of Ponta do Sol on the island of Santo Antao, Cape Verde, on March 7. REUTERS

Saudi has spent billions to build a sporting pedigree with World Cup at its heart

Saudi Arabia pulled off one of the biggest upsets in World Cup history by beating mighty Argentina in Qatar four years ago.

That stunning victory against Lionel Messi and the eventual champion turned out to be just the start of its campaign to disrupt soccer. Perhaps no nation has done more to shake up the world's most popular sport.

Within weeks, Cristiano Ronaldo became the first of a slew of superstars to swap Europe for the Saudi league, with the five-time Ballon d'Or winner declaring: "In Europe my work is done. This is a new challenge."

Karim Benzema was lured away from Real Madrid. Brazilian icon Neymar also made the move to the oil-rich kingdom. While attempts to land Messi and Kylian Mbappe were unsuccessful, Saudi Arabia did secure its biggest win of all: The right to host the 2034 World Cup.

It was all part of the country's attempt to pivot away from its heavy reliance on oil and explore other revenue-generating sectors.

Billions of dollars have been spent to secure world championship boxing, Formula One racing and tennis. The Saudi-backed, big-money LIV Golf enticed major winners to defect from the PGA.





Left: Saudi Arabia head coach Georgios Donis gestures during an international friendly against Ecuador on May 30. **Above:** Salem Al-Dawsari of Saudi Arabia reacts after scoring a goal during a friendly match against Puerto Rico on June 5. REUTERS / AFP

It recently announced it would be pulling funding from that venture, but its commitment to soccer remains strong. A number of its top teams are owned by the country's sovereign wealth fund.

2026 expectations

This year's tournament will be a test of how far the Saudi national team has come against the backdrop of such spectacular spending.

"We cannot promise miracles, but we promise you that we will give our all to achieve our goals," newly appointed coach Georgios Donis said.

An influx of top overseas talent does not necessarily translate to improved performance of homegrown players on the international stage.

There was the disappointingly early elimination from the Asian Cup in 2024 in the round of 16. Saudi Arabia's most memorable contribution to that tournament — a little over 12 months after the landmark win against Argentina — was Italian coach Roberto Mancini walking off during his team's losing penalty shootout against South Korea. Months later, Mancini was out of a job.

Frenchman Herve Renard, who had led the team in Qatar in 2022, returned to the helm, and the team promptly secured qualification for this year's tournament. But in April, less than two months before Saudi Arabia kicks off its World Cup campaign, Renard was replaced by Greek coach Donis.

Late arrival

Donis has coached several teams in the Saudi league and has also worked with a number of the players who will be going to the World Cup. Among them is striker Firas Al-Buraikan, a back-to-back Asian Champions League winner with Al-Ahli.

His appointment at such short notice appears to have been based on his specific knowledge and experience of Saudi soccer, with the Saudi Football Federation saying he was "expected to support a seamless transition".

"The advantage for us is that I have spent many years in Saudi Arabia and I know the culture of the country and the players. Therefore, we want to be very competitive and fight hard," Donis said when announcing his squad last month.

Homegrown players

While star signings from overseas have slowed, with big names also departing — including Neymar — the governing body of Saudi soccer has made moves to develop its own players.

In May, Matt Crocker was lured away from his role as US Soccer's sporting director to head up talent development in Saudi Arabia.

Youth investment has doubled over the past three years to $26.7 million, with an expansion of regional training centers, all with a view to successfully contesting the 2034 World Cup on home soil.

Before all that is this year's tournament and the chance to shock the world again.

"I believe all the players have the ability and passion required to commit to our plan, which will enable us, step-by-step, to build a strong and united team," Donis said. "I believe in their abilities, so my priority now is for them to believe in their abilities, to be convinced of the plan, and to know what is required of them."

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:13 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:15 PM

Booming business

China's openness spurs surge in Thai exports

BUSINESS, PAGE 9



Coffee meets tea, opera at Shanghai festival

LIFE, PAGE 14



Soccer frenzy

World Cup opens amid soaring ticket prices, political tensions

SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 THURSDAY, JUNE 11, 2026

China-DPRK ties gain impetus

Significance of Xi's visit goes beyond bilateral scope with regional, global view, observers say

By **MO JINGXI**
mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping's visit to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has opened new prospects for China-DPRK relations and added positive energy to regional and global peace and development, a senior official and analysts said.

Coming at a critical moment, the visit was rooted in the development of bilateral ties, yet its significance extended far beyond the bilateral scope, demonstrating China's sense of responsibility as a major country and its growing international influence, they said.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, concluded a successful two-day state visit to the neighboring country on Tuesday, his first visit to the DPRK in seven years and his first overseas trip this year.

Inside
Views, **page 7**

Briefing reporters at the end of the visit, Liu Haixing, head of the International Department of the CPC Central Committee, said that as this year marks the 65th anniversary of the China-DPRK Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, and amid accelerating changes unseen in a century in a turbulent world, the top leaders of the two sides took a broad and long-term view, built on past achievements and opened up a new future. They also jointly charted the course for development and worked together to promote peace, Liu added.

He said the visit injected new contemporary connotations and strong impetus into the traditional friendship between China and the DPRK, marking an important milestone in the history of bilateral relations.

During Xi's stay in Pyongyang, the DPRK capital, Kim Jong-un, general secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea and president of the State Affairs of the DPRK, greeted Xi at the airport in person, held a grand welcoming ceremony at Kim Il-sung Square, and accompanied Xi throughout the two-day visit. The DPRK also arranged a carefully prepared artistic performance.

Wherever Xi went, crowds of local people applauded and cheered, while people along the streets stopped and waved at the passing motorcade. Liu said those scenes and the smiling faces fully showed the great importance that the DPRK attached to Xi's visit and the thoughtful arrangements it had made for the visit.

They also reflected the sincere friendship of the DPRK's people toward the Chinese people, as well as the deep foundation and solid roots of the traditional friendship between China and the DPRK, he said.

According to Liu, Xi and Kim had long and in-depth communication during the visit. Their exchanges included formal talks, relaxed walks and warm interactions in a family-like atmosphere.

Stressing that China and the DPRK are both socialist countries led by communist parties, Xi said during talks with Kim that the traditional friendship between the two countries is rooted in their shared ideals and beliefs as well as their common goals, and is backed by a profound historical foundation, a solid political basis and strong emotional bonds.

Xi noted that friendship passed down from generation to generation, a shared future and mutual support have always been defining features of China-DPRK relations.

See ***Visit,*** *page 3*

Ebola response



Workers transport Ebola prevention supplies in Mongbwalu, Ituri Province, Democratic Republic of Congo, on Tuesday. The country's public health authorities said that as of Monday, the number of confirmed Ebola cases in the current outbreak in the DRC had risen to 598, including 115 deaths. XINHUA

Producer prices point to better supply-demand dynamics

By **ZHANG CHENXU**
zhangchenxu@chinadaily.com.cn

China's factory-gate inflation grew in May at the fastest year-on-year rate since July 2022, even as consumer inflation remained moderate, adding to signs of strengthening reflation momentum and improving supply-demand dynamics across the industrial sector, experts said on Wednesday.

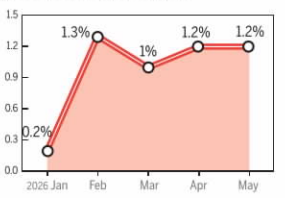
The latest readings came as fluctuations in global energy prices and a surge of investment in artificial intelligence continued to feed through to the world's second-largest economy, they added.

Looking ahead, experts said that such momentum could underpin a more positive price outlook in the coming months.

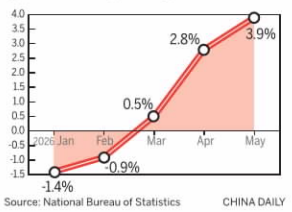
Their comments came after data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed that China's producer price index, which measures factory-gate prices, rose 3.9 percent year-on-year in May, accelerating from a 2.8 percent increase in April and marking the third straight month of recovery.

Dong Lijuan, a statistician at the bureau, said the increase in factory-gate inflation in May reflected stronger demand in certain domestic industries and the pass-through effect of fluctuations in international commodity prices.

Consumer price index (CPI) growth rate year-on-year



Producer price index (PPI) growth rate year-on-year



Source: National Bureau of Statistics CHINA DAILY

"The deeper integration of AI with various industries and growing demand for computing power helped push up prices in sectors such as computer-related manufacturing, electrical machinery and nonferrous metals," Dong said.

Echoing that view, Lu Ting, chief China economist at Nomura Securities, said that AI-related fixed-asset investment is expected to contribute 0.3 percentage points to China's GDP growth in 2026.

However, on a month-on-month basis, the PPI edged up 0.5 percent in May, slowing from a 1.7 percent increase in April.

"The slowdown was mainly due to moderating oil price gains," said Feng Lin, executive director of research at Orient Golden Credit Rating International.

At the same time, consumer inflation remained moderate. China's consumer price index, the main gauge of inflation, rose 1.2 percent from a year earlier in May, matching the increase in April, the NBS said.

Lynn Song, chief economist for China at Dutch bank ING, said that China's inflation has stayed at or above 1 percent for four consecutive months and remained in positive territory for eight straight months, suggesting that the trend of reflation, the restoration of deflated prices to a desirable level, is solidifying.

NBS data showed that the core CPI, which excludes food and energy prices and is considered a more accurate indicator of supply and demand conditions, increased by 1.1 percent year-on-year in May.

Despite the improving trend in prices, analysts said that the widening gap between factory-gate and consumer inflation could put pressure on the margins of downstream firms, underscoring the need for more targeted policy support.

"A sustained recovery in prices still hinges on stronger domestic demand," said Mao Zhenhua, chief economist at China Chengxin International Credit Rating Co.

He added that stronger efforts are needed to boost household purchasing power, especially for lower-income groups, and to further tap into services consumption.

Looking ahead, Wen Bin, chief economist at China Minsheng Bank, said that China's price trend is expected to improve further as domestic demand potential continues to be released and a lower comparison base comes into play.

The improving price outlook has further bolstered confidence among global executives.

Pascal Daloz, chairman and CEO of French industrial software company Dassault Systemes, said that the company is seeking to strengthen its industrial AI ecosystem in China.

"China has become one of the places where innovation is moving fastest," he said.

Ancient thought can help avoid Thucydides Trap

WORLD WATCH
By Tom Watkins

In rereading the book *Lure the Tiger Out of the Mountains: The 36 Stratagems of Ancient China,* by Gao Yuan, I pondered how thinking like an ancient Chinese might help the world avoid the Thucydides Trap.

The Thucydides Trap, a term coined by Harvard academic Graham Allison, is a hypothesis in international relations that is summarized from historical experience. It holds that when a rising power challenges the dominance of an established power, structural fear — rather than malicious intent — greatly raises the risk of confrontation and full-scale war.

The Thucydides Trap entered global discourse again recently when President Xi Jinping asked US President Donald Trump, during their recent summit in Beijing, "Can China and the United States transcend the Thucydides Trap and forge a new paradigm for major-country relations?"

Although some in the West hold a narrow view that Western thought is the sole source of wisdom, how ancient Chinese pursued challenges has an impact on current Chinese thinking and should not be overlooked by the US administration.

While thought and theory in Western international relations often focus on zero-sum power struggles, ancient Chinese philosophy prioritizes patience, indirect action and the preservation of relationships.

Here is how concepts from *Lure the Tiger Out of the Mountains* and classical Chinese philosophy can help the two nations avoid the Thucydides Trap, which, if fallen into, would have deadly consequences for both countries as well as for all of humanity.

The stratagem "lure the tiger out of the mountains" advises against attacking an enemy where they are strongest. Instead, it suggests changing the environment or context to make them vulnerable.

Avoiding the Thucydides Trap in modern diplomacy means shifting competition away from military flashpoints. Instead, nations can channel their rivalry into constructive arenas like green energy, space exploration, fixing trade barriers, or global health. By changing the "mountain" — the context of the competition — the risk of direct and accidental military conflict can drop significantly.

In Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*, the ultimate achievement is "to win without fighting".

Western deterrence theory often relies on visible, overwhelming military buildup, which can trigger a "security dilemma" in which both sides keep arming out of fear. The Cold War between the US and the Soviet Union makes this point clearly. The Chinese strategic tradition views open warfare as a failure of strategy.

See ***Thought,*** *page 3*

SICHUAN RAILWAY MAKES SONG AND DANCE OF SILK ROAD EXPERIENCE

Panda train embarks on maiden voyage across Northwest China to Xinjiang

By **PENG CHAO** in Chengdu
pengchao@chinadaily.com.cn

At Anjing Station in Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province, the departure gate opened onto a scene reminiscent of a festival. Women in flowing *hanfu* glided forward, palace lanterns in hand. Lion dancers threaded their way through the crowd, panda mascots wobbled with open arms, and the air hummed with the sound of traditional instruments.

China Vibes

Tan Kar Meng, a 60-year-old from Malaysia, couldn't resist stepping up to a lion. "This experience is amazing," he said, laughing. "I never expected anything like this."

He was one of the 92 passengers on the debut journey of the Jinxiu Tianfu, the latest in the Panda Train portfolio — a boutique rail tourism brand launched in 2021.

Its destination was the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. The train promised to take passengers across the vast expanse of northwestern China in the style of the Song Dynasty (960-1279).

Xinjiang has always been a land of long journeys and logistical challenges. At more than 1.66 million square kilometers, covering both its northern grasslands and southern Silk Road cities usually means days of bone-wearying bus rides. The Jinxiu Tianfu changes that: Travel by night and wake up to a new horizon.

The 18 train cars contain 46 private rooms, each equipped with a bathroom, smart controls and a minibar. The observation car provides the vantage point to enjoy the natural beauty of lakes, snow-capped peaks and desert canyons.

See ***Train,*** *page 3*



Passengers board a Panda Train at Anjing Station in Chengdu, Sichuan province, on May 19. HAN XUGANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

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

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN

China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:15 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:15 PM

INDEPTH





Left: Du Bo (holding a smartphone on a selfie stick), then director of the Culture and Tourism Bureau in Tahe county, Heilongjiang province, films a promotional video on tourism with her team in 2022. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY
Right: Hu Yuming (left), the first Party secretary stationed in Hejiaxin, a village in Tieling, Liaoning province, promotes local food during a livestreaming event in 2024. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

RURAL VITALIZATION: LIVE AND EMPOWERING

Grassroots Party workers go the extra mile online to turn around fortunes of villages across nation

By **ZHOU HUIYING** in Harbin and **WU YONG** in Shenyang

From the ancient Liaohe River in Tieling, Liaoning province, to the beautiful villages in Jiangxi province, from the harmonious countryside by the Yangtze and Huaihe rivers to the snowy forests beneath the Greater Xing'an Mountains, grassroots Party workers are using mobile phones as new tools, the internet as a new platform and livestreaming as a new means of communication.

They are bringing agricultural fields into livestreaming rooms, sending local cultures onto cloud platforms and connecting policies that benefit the people to thousands of households.

Every afternoon, Hu Yuming, 44, appears on time for his livestream, interacting with netizens from across the country to promote the unique charm of Hejiaxin village in Tieling. He highlights the village's lush grasslands, vibrant wetlands, rich ecological foundation, profound revolutionary heritage and distinctive folk culture.

Hu, the first Party secretary stationed in Hejiaxin, has broken new ground with an integrated model of new media, cultural tourism and public welfare. In collaboration with the countywide first secretary alliance in Tieling, he uses dedication and innovation to paint a real, new-era picture of prosperous industries, beautiful countryside and wealthy villagers.

In September 2021, Hu, who was selected by the Liaoning Police and Judicial Management Cadre College, came to Hejiaxin to serve as its first Party secretary. When his two-year term ended in 2023, he resolutely applied for continuing work in the countryside.

"At that time, the village was seeing some progress in terms of rural development, such as the emerging revolutionary tourism. I hoped to help make it better, so I decided to stay," he said.

In March 2024, authorities in Tieling organized a series of training sessions for over 100 village-level first secretaries on topics such as new media technology and livestreaming, aiming to encourage them to promote local economic development through online platforms.

"The training helped me a lot. While I picked up technical skills, I also realized that the internet can drive economic growth and benefit the local people," Hu said.

In May last year, Hu did his first livestream on Hejiaxin's vast grasslands. "The two-hour session attracted some viewers," he said. "I kept talking as I wanted, introducing the beautiful scenery and local specialties of the village."

There has been no turning back. Hu continues to livestream from the grasslands, and has added memorial halls and farms to his location list. To date, he has helped villagers sell agricultural produce, such as sweet potatoes, corn and garlic sprouts, worth over 50,000 yuan ($7,375).

Hu often has his livestream audiences riveted to the screen with stories about the ancient river, the revolutionary history of Hejiaxin and the village's grassland customs, striving to create a characteristic cultural tourism IP.

In June last year, he planned and organized a grassland kite festival, featuring big displays, parent-child DIY sessions, folk experiences and internet celebrity check-ins.

Through livestreaming, short-videos and a comprehensive network matrix, Hejiaxin attracted over 30,000 tourists during the three-day festival, transforming the once sleepy village into a popular rural tourism spot in northern Liaoning.





Above: Du Bo (center) and her team hold watermelons while filming a promotional video for local agricultural produce, as well as tourism, in 2022. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY
Left: Chen Jianguo (front), Party secretary of Beishan village in Shangrao, Jiangxi province, livestreams to promote and sell farm produce to boost villagers' incomes. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY
Right: Zhu Xiaofei, an inheritor of the Qiangan folk dance form and a village committee director in Mingguang, Anhui province, performs during a livestreaming session on policy benefits. YANG YANG / FOR CHINA DAILY



Tieling has many first secretaries like Hu, who have dedicated themselves to front-line work and are empowering the countryside with the help of the internet.

The Tieling Municipal Party Committee's Organization Department has led the establishment of platforms and resource integration, forming 42 first secretary professional alliances, strengthening bonds among villages and achieving resource-sharing. Such collaboration has formed a comprehensive service system that uses livestreaming to promote agricultural produce and improve villagers' lives.

"As a member of the first secretary e-commerce alliance, I have participated in numerous cooperation and communication activities," said Hu. "We have supported each other, exchanged information and provided assistance for livestreams, achieving very good results."

Chen Jianguo, 46, Party secretary of Beishan village in Shangrao, Jiangxi, has revitalized the village using just a mobile phone and a livestreaming room.

A typical livestream starts with Chen adjusting his collar, placing a product — such as a jar of homemade preserved vegetables — on the table in front of the camera, and greeting viewers in his signature style: "Good evening, dear friends, and welcome to Beishan Secretary Chen's livestream".

With his professional demeanor, he has already become a local internet celebrity, driving annual agricultural sales worth more than 25 million yuan.

The economic transformation of Beishan is striking, given that the village was struggling to keep its head above water a few years ago.

Chen, who had left Beishan as a young man in 2004 to seek better opportunities in Zhejiang province, returned to his village after the Hefei-Fuzhou high-speed railway opened in June 2015.

"The convenience of high-speed transportation helped take Beishan's agricultural products outside, and brought Beishan's youth back home," said Chen, who closed his digital products store in Wenzhou, Zhejiang, and became a Party cadre in his village.

At a rural e-commerce training session organized by the government of Guangxin district, where Beishan is located, Chen chanced upon a whole new world. "The teacher talked about online programs that are helping drive rural vitalization, and I thought we could integrate resources to promote our agricultural products outside," he said.

In 2018, Chen was elected Beishan village secretary, and a year later, he opened an account on short video platform Douyin.

The start of his online journey wasn't smooth. "Villagers said that all I did was make videos with my phone. Some even went to higher authorities to complain that I was neglecting my duties," Chen said.

Instead of being demotivated by such skepticism, Chen engaged other villagers in making short videos and organized fun sports for farmers, giving everyone the opportunity to share the joy and experience the novelty of video-making through participation.

On May 26, 2023, Chen started his first livestream channel to help villagers sell their agricultural produce and other products. "I received 130 orders, although more than half were from my acquaintances," he said.

With policy support for agricultural e-commerce, Beishan started making big strides through livestreaming. Last year, the village's collective economy reached 500,000 yuan.

Today, Chen has more than 20,300 followers on Douyin, and the village has developed an effective sales and production cycle. It has also built a livestreaming base where villagers get 15 yuan per hour from packing and shipping work.

Over 330 livestreams throughout the year have linked the small village with outside markets and have reconnected villagers who had left home. Primary agricultural products have been developed into branded goods and cultural tourism items with increased value.

"When I returned to Beishan years ago, what I wanted to see most was young people serving their parents tea and tutoring their children at home," Chen said. "That dream is slowly becoming a reality."

Ding Jun, 42, deputy village Party secretary of Hehua in Mingguang, Anhui province, has transformed a small livestreaming room from an initial sales platform into a policy briefing platform to serve the community.

"I started livestreaming in October 2024, when my intention was to help villagers sell local agricultural produce such as gorgon fruit and water chestnuts," he said. "However, as my program began, the most frequently asked questions were about healthcare, pensions, social assistance and homestead issues."

Ding immediately readjusted his focus, interpreting official documents for villagers and breaking down complex procedures into simple steps.

"It is not an easy task, as I first need to thoroughly understand the relevant information," he said. "The most challenging part is when many followers from other places ask me about their local livelihood policies."

To help these people, Ding jots down their questions, seeks details from relevant local departments and then shares the information during his next livestreaming session.

He has held over 300 livestreaming sessions to date, attracting 34,000 followers, with the total number of views exceeding 1.6 million. He has also mediated disputes and gathered public opinion on various local issues.

Hehua village is a microcosm of Mingguang. Since 2024, the city has organized village cadres and Party members to enter livestreaming rooms and bring their lectures to the fields. Using local dialects, they explain in a familiar way policies that benefit farmers.

Agricultural experts and sci-tech assistants have also joined some livestreaming sessions, teaching techniques step by step and solving farmers' problems.

This year, Mingguang launched 121 short videos on theoretical lectures, garnering 620,000 views. The city also livestreamed over 180 theoretical lectures, each of which attracted more than 1,000 views.

In early 2020, Du Bo crafted a vibrant story of cultural tourism revitalization in Northeast China, as she created a short video on epidemic prevention in the local dialect.

As the video garnered 750,000 views, Du, who was then director of the Culture and Tourism Bureau in Tahe county, Heilongjiang province, encountered the powerful reach of new media for the first time.

"The success inspired me to form my own new media team," she said. "In my spare time, we filmed short videos or livestreamed to promote the icy landscapes, forest ecology and ethnic culture of Tahe."

In early 2023, when temperatures in the county hit a harsh -20 C, Du donned traditional Oroqen attire to film a short video in a birch forest, titled *White Deer Fairy*. It went viral overnight.

"Our endeavor coincided with the 70th anniversary of the Oroqen people settling down since they moved out of the mountains," she said. "We went to see their ethnic costumes and cultural products, and those were exquisite. After getting the owner's consent, I borrowed the costumes for filming."

As the director of the tourism bureau, Du's job was to promote local tourism resources. "I not only promoted tourism, but also planned and built a large number of scenic routes and cultural projects each year," she said.

In 2024, Du became deputy director of the Enterprise Investment and Service Bureau of Hulan district in Harbin, the capital of Heilongjiang. However, her efforts to promote local tourism and economic development continued.

Du and her team have released more than 1,000 videos to date, with total views exceeding 4 billion and the number of followers across all platforms reaching over 2 million.

Zhu Lixin in Hefei and Zhao Ruinan in Nanchang contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at zhouhuiying@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:15 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:15 PM

TOP NEWS

Harnessing of classical wisdom highlighted

Initiative issued at Athens conference calls for 'promoting friendship and coexistence'

By **WANG HUAZHONG** and **ZHENG WANYIN** in Athens

Classical wisdom should illuminate humanity's path forward and address key questions of our time, including how to keep our world in peace and order, according to an initiative announced at the closing ceremony of the Second World Conference of Classics in Athens, Greece, on Wednesday.

Surrounded by stunning frescoes depicting Prometheus stealing the fire to enlighten the human world at the Academy of Athens, over 200 scholars from Asia, Europe, America and Africa engaged in in-depth discussions to reach the consensus regarding the role of classical studies in safeguarding the future of humanity.

"Only by knowing where we come from can we understand where we stand today and where we are heading," said the initiative.

It urged "harnessing the power of virtues in classical wisdom" to remain steadfast on the right course of civilization, "promoting friendship and coexistence" to build a home for our shared future of humanity, "safeguarding peace and order" to strengthen the foundations of future security, and "cultivating humanistic values in the digital age" to guide technological progress.

"We are confident that classical studies will provide an inexhaustible source of wisdom and strength for humanity's peace, development and shared future," it said.

Scholars told China Daily that it was the right time for Chinese and Greek academies to co-host the conference in Athens, which is also a symbolic city of dialogue in ancient history, as the world experiences fundamental changes and rising conflicts of interests and ideologies.

Roger Ames, humanities chair professor at Peking University and vice-president of the International Confucian Association, said the world should congratulate China for helping to shift the world's conversation from geopolitics to civilization.

Inside

Views, **page 7**

"What China has been doing for the last 20 years is promoting a civilizational dialogue where we talk not about money and military power, but about family, values, shared histories, and what we want for our grandchildren."

Amphilochios Papathomas, a professor of ancient Greek literature and papyrology at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, said the escalation of conflicts can be avoided through dialogue.

"What we have learned from classical authors, like Thucydides, is that we have to be very cautious to avoid a military and political escalation," he said. He added that the peaceful shift in the balance of power between the United Kingdom and the United States in the early 20th century showed it was possible to avoid the "Thucydides Trap" of military conflict because the two countries had mutual respect.

Hu Yujuan, a senior researcher from the Institute of World History at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, added that war cannot be ended by war but by love and benevolence.

She said that the ancient Roman Empire once revered Mars, the god of war, and achieved only a temporary form of "peace through war". However, after turning to worship Venus, the goddess of love, it entered a period of lasting stability known as the "Pax Romana". "Classical wisdom tells us violence cannot resolve all conflicts. Only the power of love can eliminate conflict," she added.

Contact the writers at wanghuazhong@chinadaily.com.cn

Displaced by disaster



Residents carry their belongings as they evacuate on Wednesday following a landslide triggered by a magnitude 7.8 earthquake in Barangay Kapatan on the southern coast of Mindanao, the Philippines. Authorities said Monday's earthquake affected more than 33,000 households, leaving at least 45 people dead, 17 missing and 487 injured. NOEL CELIS / REUTERS

Train: A moving tribute to Sichuan's textile history

From page 1

The dining car serves Sichuan flavors alongside Silk Road specialties. Bilingual guides, butlers, round-the-clock luggage service and an onboard medical team ensure the journey is seamless.

Panda motifs adorn the walls, while plush toys and even desserts provide a tender nod to Sichuan, the homeland of these beloved creatures. However, the deeper design language belongs to the Song Dynasty, the aesthetic of which is widely considered the pinnacle of ancient Chinese refinement: simplicity, restraint and a profound reverence for nature.

Passengers are invited into the four refined arts of the Song: whisking tea, appreciating incense, arranging flowers and hanging painted scrolls.

Shu brocade and Shu embroidery, each an intangible cultural heritage item, grace seats, fans and ornaments. It's a moving tribute to Sichuan's 2,000-year history of producing the textile that gave the Silk Road its name.

The 16-day debut journey departed on May 19, visiting Urumqi, Tianshan Tianchi, Kanas, Sayram Lake, Kashgar and Turpan. The days were filled with workshops on cultural heritage, visits to Tajik households and Silk Road-themed concerts. Nights belonged to the train.

Lian Hua, vice-chairman and general manager of Sichuan Tourism Investment Group, noted that over 80 percent of tour packages had already been booked — 90 percent by inbound tourists. It seems that the hunger for such experiences stretches far beyond China's borders.



Members of a military engineering team stand beside an Iranian missile that fell in a field near Damascus, Syria, on Tuesday. KHALIL ASHAWI / REUTERS

Tensions rise after US helicopter downed

By **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong and **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE

Tensions between Iran and the United States reignited after Washington blamed Tehran for the downing of a US military helicopter, prompting retaliation from Iran and likely adding obstacles to ending the war amid weeks of deadlock.

US President Donald Trump in a social media post said the Iranians shot down a highly sophisticated Apache helicopter while it was patrolling the Strait of Hormuz.

"There were two pilots involved, both are safe and uninjured. Nevertheless, the United States must, of necessity, respond to this attack," said Trump.

The US Central Command, or CENTCOM, said in a post on social media platform X that forces began launching "self-defense strikes" against Iran at 5 pm on Tuesday at the commander-in-chief's direction.

"CENTCOM forces struck Iranian air defense, ground control stations, and surveillance radar sites near the Strait of Hormuz with precision munitions from US Air Force and Navy fighter jets. The operation was a proportional response to recent attacks on US forces and international commercial ships transiting regional waters," it said.

It added that the US forces remain vigilant and postured to defend against "unjustified Iranian aggression".

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said in a post on X that despite its "defeats on the battlefield", the "US opted to test our determination" as he warned that Iran's armed forces "will leave no attack or threat unanswered".

"Leave our region if you want to be safe. History of the Persian Gulf has many chapters on dire fates of intruding outsiders," said Araghchi.

Araghchi also held separate phone calls with his Turkish and Saudi counterparts, reviewing the latest regional developments in the wake of US military strikes against areas in southern Iran.

The calls, in the early hours of Wednesday, covered the rapidly evolving security situation following US aggression against Iranian territory, Iranian media reported.

Araghchi condemned the US military strikes as a violation of Iranian sovereignty and territorial integrity. He underscored Iran's right to self-defense and affirmed the legitimacy of the retaliatory response carried out by Iran's armed forces.

Iran's Foreign Ministry condemned US strikes on southern Iran as a violation of the United Nations Charter.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry also reminded regional countries, particularly those on the southern shores, of the Gulf of their legal and moral responsibility to prevent the US military and Israel from using their territory, facilities or infrastructure to plan, organize, execute or support aggressive operations against Iran.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said it struck a US air base in Jordan on Wednesday, hitting four key targets, including F-35 fighter shelters. It also said that it attacked the US Fifth Fleet in Bahrain.

Contact the writers at jan@chinadailyapac.com

China, EU discuss consultation mechanism

By **WANG KEJU**
wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn

China and the European Union have held "in-depth and comprehensive" discussions on the establishment of a trade and investment consultation mechanism, signaling a willingness from both Beijing and Brussels to manage differences through equal-footed dialogue, experts said.

A structured consultation framework, they added, will help to prevent spiraling frictions and provide the certainty that businesses on both sides need.

The discussions took place during a Tuesday meeting in Brussels, Belgium, between Chinese Vice-Minister of Commerce Ling Ji and Ditte Juul Jorgensen, director-general of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Trade and Economic Security, the ministry said in a statement on Wednesday.

The two sides agreed to work toward pragmatic outcomes from the first meeting of the China-EU trade and investment consultation mechanism, with the aim of stabilizing bilateral economic and trade relations and promoting their sustainable development, according to the statement.

"China and the EU are far more complementary than competitive," said Cui Fan, a professor of international trade at the University of International Business and Economics.

Cui noted that every minute, trade between China and the EU exceeds 10 million yuan ($1.47 million), citing last year's trade data. "The consultation mechanism is an essential step toward properly handling frictions and finding the right way to resolve problems, which serves the interests of business communities on both sides," he added.

Since the beginning of this year, Brussels has broadened its trade defense tool kit, rolling out a series of restrictive measures aimed at Chinese companies and products.

Most recently, its efforts to compel European businesses to diversify their suppliers, under the proposed revision of the EU's Cybersecurity Act, have added yet another layer of investment barriers and institutional discrimination, with China bearing the brunt.

"The EU's increasingly closed internal market is hindering its ability to learn from and absorb cutting-edge technologies, thereby constraining potential pathways for industrial catch-up," said Sun Yawen, an assistant research fellow at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of European Studies.

The continuous escalation of protectionist measures is unlikely to stimulate innovation among EU companies, trapping the EU in a vicious cycle, Sun added.

Despite the EU's "de-risking" agenda, European companies are doubling down on manufacturing in China, according to a survey by the EU Chamber of Commerce in China last month.

"We are seeing EU companies actively adapting to China's dynamic business environment, as China is not only a market full of opportunities but has also become an indispensable source of innovation for their global operations," said Denis Depoux, global managing director of consultancy company Roland Berger.

Thought: Collective intellect called for

From page 1

If both ruling and rising powers adopt the mindset that actual warfare represents a mutual strategic defeat, they are more likely to seek diplomatic solutions.

While both approaches are examples of deterrence, the US-China economic reliance makes their relationship one of deep mutual dependency rather than strict ideological confrontation. This unique interconnectedness creates another layer of complexity.

Western political systems operate on short election cycles (two to four years), which often forces leaders to take aggressive, short-term stances to appease domestic voters. Ancient Chinese thought emphasizes generational timelines.

The Thucydides Trap is fueled by the fear of imminent displacement. If a rising power utilizes profound strategic patience — growing its influence incrementally without forcing a sudden, dramatic pivot in the global order — the ruling power has time to adapt. This slow, structural accommodation lowers the friction that typically sparks rapid, panicky escalations.

Traditional Western geopolitics often seeks a "balance of power" through opposing alliances (like NATO versus the Warsaw Pact), which draws hard lines in the sand. Chinese philosophy relies on the concept of yin and yang — the idea that opposing forces are interconnected, interdependent and necessary for harmony.

Instead of viewing a rival as an existential enemy that must be defeated, this mindset views the rival as a permanent, necessary counterweight. It shifts the goal from complete dominance to coexistence. Nations can fiercely compete in economics while simultaneously acknowledging that they need each other to maintain global financial stability.

The world is hoping that the inevitability of the Thucydides Trap can be avoided.

There are positive ways the US and China can shape the world. Let's spend our collective intellect working toward that end.

The author was former deputy chief of staff to former Michigan governor James Blanchard and was president and CEO of the Economic Council of Palm Beach County, Florida. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Visit: Talks deepened practical cooperation

From page 1

Zheng Jiyong, dean of the Institute of Regional Studies at Tianjin Foreign Studies University, said the development of China-DPRK ties is not merely a continuation of long-standing friendship, but an effort to give traditional friendship new relevance under changing circumstances.

"Under the new circumstances, it requires the integration of political mutual trust, pragmatic cooperation, people-to-people bonds and strategic coordination into a comprehensive framework of relationship that serves both the development interests of the two countries and regional stability," Zheng said in an opinion piece published on the website of the China Global Television Network.

Liu said the strategic guidance of the top leaders is the greatest strength and fundamental guarantee of China-DPRK relations.

Xi's visit came less than a year after Kim visited China, marking another round of close interaction between the top leaders of the two parties and the two countries. Last year, Kim attended commemorative activities in China marking the 80th anniversary of the victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45) and the World Anti-Fascist War.

According to Liu, the visit deepened practical cooperation and friendly exchanges in various fields to inject new impetus into the socialist cause of China and the DPRK. During the visit, the two leaders made concrete plans for the next stage of practical cooperation and friendly exchanges between the two countries.

On the second day of his visit, Xi paid homage to the China-DPRK Friendship Tower. Xi, accompanied by Kim, also visited the Central Cadres Training School of the WPK in Pyongyang.

Liu, the senior official, said that Xi congratulated the DPRK on the successful convening of the Ninth Congress of the WPK and the 15th Supreme People's Assembly, and spoke highly of the progress that the WPK and the DPRK people, led by Kim, have made in strengthening party building, developing the economy and improving people's well-being.

Liu said that Xi called for the two parties to actively carry out more friendly exchanges at all levels, deepen exchanges of experience in party and state governance, and continuously consolidate the political and public support foundation for bilateral relations and the development of the socialist causes of the two countries.

According to Liu, during the visit, Xi and Kim had an in-depth exchange of views on the current international and regional situation. Xi emphasized that China and the DPRK should strengthen strategic communication and coordination, firmly safeguard their respective sovereignty, security and development interests, jointly uphold regional peace and development, and create a better external environment for the two countries' socialist cause.

In response, Kim said that the vision of building a community with a shared future for humanity and the four China-proposed major global initiatives carry profound significance for promoting world peace and development, and have won the support and appreciation of people around the world.

Wang Junsheng, director of the Department of China's Regional Strategy at the National Institute of International Strategy of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said the world is undergoing profound transformations, bringing significant changes to the geopolitical landscape of Northeast Asia.

"China and the DPRK play important roles in shaping the region's future. Strengthening bilateral cooperation not only helps maintain the sound development of their relations, but also contributes to peace and security across Northeast Asia," Wang said.

Xinhua contributed to this story.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:15 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:15 PM

WORLD

Respect for diversity of civilizations emphasized

By **ZHANG YUNBI**
zhangyunbi@chinadaily.com.cn

All parties should "uphold respect for the diversity of civilizations as the foundation to consolidate global consensus on mutual learning among civilizations", said a Chinese think tank report released on Wednesday in Beijing.

On the occasion of the second International Day for Dialogue among Civilizations, the China Institute of International Studies, or CIIS, released the report titled "China's Actions for Advancing Global Dialogue Among Civilizations".

"More than ever, the power of civilization must be harnessed to address the challenges of the times and promote world peace and development," the report said.

It urged various parties to "break down cultural barriers by seeking harmony without uniformity, connect hearts and minds through openness and inclusiveness, and eliminate misunderstandings through dialogue and exchanges".

China first proposed the Global Civilization Initiative, or GCI, in 2023. The report said the country "stands ready to join hands with the international community to fully implement the Global Civilization Initiative and pool civilizational strength for building a community with a shared future for humanity".

In 2024, the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly adopted by consensus a resolution proposed by China and 82 other countries, designating June 10 every year as the International Day for Dialogue among Civilizations.

The CIIS report aims to further review and summarize China's experience, practices and major achievements in promoting the implementation of the GCI and facilitating global dialogue among civilizations.

The report introduces the historical background and profound implications of the GCI, and it systematically reviews China's concepts, policies and practical achievements in promoting dialogue among civilizations from five aspects.

China has been pooling broad international consensus on exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations, supporting the UN in playing its role as the primary platform for dialogue among civilizations, and deepening bilateral and regional dialogue among civilizations, the report said.

Also, the country has been advancing multilateral cooperation on dialogue among civilizations, and integrating dialogue among civilizations into exchanges and cooperation across various fields. It also looks ahead to China's next steps in promoting dialogue among civilizations, according to the report.

Seeking safety



Displaced foreign nationals stand in a line to give their information to volunteers at a park in Durban, South Africa, on Wednesday, after fleeing their homes amid fears of xenophobic attacks. Ghana, Mozambique and Malawi are among the countries to which South Africa has repatriated their nationals this month, most of whom South Africa says do not have the correct documentation. RAJESH JANTILAL / AFP

The family history that lies beneath

By **MAY ZHOU** in Houston, Texas
mayzhou@chinadailyusa.com

In a talk following the screening of her first feature documentary film, *May the Soil Be Everywhere*, at the recent Houston Asian American Pacific Islander Film Festival, director Zhao Yehui discussed how she discovered a family history, and how that shaped the film's development.

Zhao's grandmother migrated from a village to a small town, her mother moved to a big city, and she moved to the US — so she had in mind to explore the story of migration across the generations of women.

The journey took her to an abandoned village tucked deep in the mountainous Loess Plateau in Central China. There, she discovered their ancestral home carved out of a hillside built by her great-grandfather.

The film ended up being about tracing family roots, the change of time and landscape, and along the way, a journey to renew herself.

Zhao, an artist, filmmaker and adjunct professor who teaches film, media and performance arts at New York's Hunter College, came to the US to study in 2015.

In her initial years in the US, Zhao put in a lot of effort to assimilate and acculturate herself.

"Part of that process also involves othering myself. So there is a certain sense of self that I give up," she said. By making this film, she intended to find strength by being back with her family and the land.

During initial interviews with her grandma by phone from New York during the COVID-19 pandemic, Zhao first heard of her great-grandfather, who didn't even leave behind a photo of himself.

"I became very interested in this idea of searching for somebody who doesn't exist in the visual imagery," Zhao said. "I'm thinking about what other elements I can bring to illustrate a person who doesn't exist in imagery. That's how the story started."

A significant portion of the film concerns the search for and return to the ancestral cave dwelling that Zhao's great-grandfather had built in a rural mountain valley.



Zhao Yehui

The dwelling had been abandoned for over five decades.

With help from local residents, traversing hills, and bashing through bushes to make a path along the way, Zhao finally found the site.

The roof had collapsed the previous summer from rainstorms, and although the inside was inaccessible, the dwelling's facade remained largely intact. The scene moved her.

"It's just built so beautifully," Zhao said. "I drew this arc tracing the cave and did a very improvised performance of deep listening. That was not planned at all. That happened spontaneously at the moment."

Beautiful memory

Her grandma has beautiful memories of the cave dwelling where she lived until the age of 15. She spoke fondly of fruit trees in the yard — the scent of the flowers, the sweet taste of the fruit.

The cave sparked a family discussion. "How come nobody ever shared about this story that we have this cave my great-grandfather built in the wilderness?"

Her mother replied: "Our family story is not interesting."

But Zhao said her family story was interesting that everyone's family story was interesting. Despite the lack of drama — nobody got killed, nobody's life got turned upside down — Zhao said the filming process led her to feel regenerated.

"I felt this deeper connection with them. I felt like I would get to know more and now have a different perspective."

Near the end, Zhao's family was paying tribute to her great-grandfather by his tomb. Nearby, a high-speed railway loomed overhead.

This reflected Zhao's critical thinking on urban development all over the world, another theme her film explored.

"We're experiencing lots of urban supremacy. We see ourselves being further and further from the earth because of the apartment buildings," she said.

"I wanted to talk about this relationship between people and land and how we can still find strength in our intimate connection with earth."

She later brought her family back to the cave, including her then 88-year-old grandmother, reuniting with family roots deeply connected to the land.

Zhao's film, made with a grant from the International Documentary Association, debuted last year at True/False film festival. It was featured at various events and received a special mention jury award at DokuFest in Kosovo.

Zhao found the practice of oral history that's part of her film very beautiful.

"People have experienced so many changes throughout their lives. They might not remember the years and dates correctly, their personal stories might not directly fit into the grand history narratives, their memories might deviate a little from truth, but their stories represented their true experiences."

Fiji sees Chinese market as key source of travelers

By **ALEXIS HOOI** in Sydney
alexishooi@chinadaily.com.cn

Fiji's pillar tourism sector is riding high amid record visitor numbers, with the Chinese market growing in importance as a key source of travelers for the island destination that promises high-quality experiences.

Fiji's annual visitor arrival numbers recorded a new peak of 986,367 last year, up from 982,938 in 2024, figures from the country's bureau of statistics showed.

The bulk of visitors last year were from Australia, New Zealand, North America, Europe and China, according to Tourism Fiji, with travelers from China to the archipelagic country numbering 28,602.

Paresh Pant, CEO of Tourism Fiji, which is the Fijian government's tourism marketing arm, told China Daily that the country's "unique combination of natural beauty, genuine hospitality and strong cultural identity continues to resonate with Chinese travelers who are increasingly seeking quality travel experiences rather than traditional sightseeing holidays".

Tourism Fiji has significantly strengthened its engagement with the Chinese market through measures such as enhanced partnerships with leading travel platforms, cooperation with key trade partners, and social media links, he said.

"These efforts are translating into tangible results," Pant said, adding that from January to April 2026, visitor arrivals from China grew by nearly 9 percent year-on-year.

"China is one of Fiji's most important strategic growth markets ... it remains one of the markets with the strongest long-term growth potential for Fiji," Pant said.

The value of the Chinese market extends beyond visitor numbers alone, he said, as Spring Festival and other major Chinese travel periods "help complement Fiji's traditional demand cycles and support more balanced year-round visitation".

"This provides important benefits across the tourism sector, including airlines, hotels, resorts, tour operators, and local communities," he said.

Fantasha Lockington, chief executive of the Fiji Hotel and Tourism Association, or FHTA, the industry body representing hotels, resorts and other tourism stakeholders in Fiji, told China Daily that the strong visitor numbers "reflect a few things coming together at the right time".

Chinese travelers are part of that growth, Lockington said, with a visa-free policy, improved connectivity through Hong Kong, and renewed interest in long-haul travel all helping.

"China is important because it helps Fiji diversify its visitor markets. Australia and New Zealand remain our largest and closest markets, but China gives us room to grow in areas such as weddings, honeymoons, diving, wellness, family holidays and incentive travel," she said.

Tourism businesses are also working through Tourism Fiji's China-focused programs, including support in Mandarin-language information, familiar guest amenities and tailored services, she said.

Challenges remain

Lockington said considerable challenges to the industry, such as disruptions to global travel and resources due to tensions in the Middle East, remain.

"Tourism is doing well, but operators are still working in a very unpredictable global environment. For a destination like Fiji, anything that affects fuel prices, aviation, freight, insurance, supply chains or traveler confidence can quickly affect the cost of doing business," she said.

The Fiji government, in response to the global uncertainty, has reactivated a tourism action group to safeguard the pillar sector that accounts for more than 40 percent of the nation's GDP, according to local media.

"The Middle East conflict has disrupted aviation routes. Fuel costs are rising," broadcaster FBC cited Tourism Minister Viliame Gavoka as saying.

The tourism action group's priority is to sustain confidence in current bookings for the peak travel period and to prepare for the 2026-27 season, he said.

Lockington from FHTA said the focus is on helping create the right environment for tourism businesses to keep growing sustainably, as well as supporting industry readiness for the Chinese market.

Pant from Tourism Fiji said the country "continues to operate within a complex global environment shaped by economic uncertainty, aviation pressures and geopolitical developments".

The strategy "remains focused on sustainable, high-value tourism growth rather than purely volume-driven expansion".

"China will continue to play a central role in this strategy," he said, as it "aligns strongly with several key travel trends that are shaping the future of tourism, including premium experiences, family travel, wellness tourism and digitally influenced travel planning".

Tariff threats spark global resistance

New US trade proposal faces firm pushback around the world: Experts

By **YANG RAN**
yangran1@chinadaily.com.cn

The US government's latest tariff threats have met with strong global opposition. Experts said that Washington's protectionist policies will only hasten the decline of its global influence.

This latest tariff offensive, announced by the Office of the US Trade Representative last week, targets imports from 60 economies, including allies such as the European Union and Australia, as well as major trading partners such as China and India.

The US proposed tariffs of up to 12.5 percent, citing investigations that showed these nations failed to curb trade in goods made with "forced labor".

Experts said this proposal represents the US government's latest attempt to rebuild its tariff system, following a significant legal setback in February when the US Supreme Court invalidated broad tariffs imposed by the federal government under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act.

However, unlike the more compromising or wait-and-see stance adopted by countries previously regarding unilateral US tariffs, the international community's pushback this time is firmer.

Bernd Lange, who chairs the European Parliament's Committee on International Trade, rejected US claims that the EU was not curbing trade in forced labor goods as "utterly absurd".

"It appears that every conceivable pretext is now being used to justify existing tariffs or prepare new ones," Lange stated.

Similar sentiments were echoed across the globe. Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese called the newly proposed rates "unjustified", adding that "there is an ideological disagreement where the United States administration has broken with what was a decades-long understanding that tariffs are not positive for the country that is imposing them".

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva also declared that Brazil would "stand and not bow to the pressure of the latest US trade offensive".

According to Tu Xinquan, dean of the China Institute for WTO Studies at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing, the shift in global posture is largely driven by a changing rationale for the tariffs and a clearer understanding of the legal vulnerabilities in the US tariff policy.

The US justification for the tariffs, in particular, has changed and weakened, said Tu. "Previously, the US used 'national security' as its rationale, which is hard to refute. But now it's citing 'forced labor'," he explained.

"Once a country accepts that framing, it effectively admits to having forced labor problems domestically. That is absolutely unacceptable for economies worldwide. That's why this round has met with such strong resistance."

Complementing this, the Supreme Court ruling has exposed the legal fragility of US tariff policy. "Countries now realize that the legal basis for US tariffs is shaky," Tu said.

> "Because Washington has weaponized interdependence among nations, a globalization without the US may well be taking shape."
>
> **Wang Yiwei,** director of the Institute of International Affairs at Renmin University of China

"And China's firm countermeasures — which have proven effective — have shown the world that capitulation does not pay. These two developments have prompted many nations to recalibrate their strategies."

'Paper tiger'

Wang Yiwei, director of the Institute of International Affairs at Renmin University of China, argued that the deterrent value of US tariffs is rapidly diminishing and that strong responses from other nations will become the new norm.

"The Supreme Court's ruling, the midterm election dynamics and the lessons from US-China tariff standoffs have all exposed the 'paper tiger' nature of US tariff policy."

Beyond the immediate diplomatic pushback, experts warn that Washington's relentless use of tariff threats is accelerating a long-term trend: global trade is moving on with less US involvement.

This year alone, the EU has signed separate free trade agreements with Mercosur, a South American trade bloc, and India, collectively covering almost 2 billion people. Meanwhile, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, the world's largest free trade bloc, continues to deepen integration. Reports show that intra-RCEP trade volume rose steadily from $5.67 trillion in 2023 to $6.09 trillion in 2025.

Wang Yong, a professor at Peking University's School of International Studies, said that the frequent use of tariff threats is not only destabilizing the rules-based international trade system but also isolating the US economically. "Tariff policies can be a high-risk strategy that proves to be self-defeating in the end," he said.

According to an analysis by the Cato Institute, the US share of global merchandise trade (imports plus exports) in the third quarter of 2025 was the lowest for that period of the year since 2014, and the drop from 2024 was larger than the cumulative loss between 2015 and 2024.

"Because Washington has weaponized interdependence among nations, a globalization without the US may well be taking shape," Wang Yiwei said.

Agencies contributed to this story.



A view of a container ship at the Port of Los Angeles in California on May 28. MARIO TAMA / AFP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:15 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:15 PM

WORLD

Ghana on track for a 24-hour economy

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

Factories running through the night, markets operating around the clock and expanded logistics networks are at the heart of Ghana's drive to build a 24-hour export-driven economy, a flagship government initiative aimed at boosting production, increasing exports and creating millions of jobs across the country.

Launched in July, the 24-Hour Economy and Accelerated Export Development Programme, or 24H+, seeks to promote round-the-clock economic activity by encouraging businesses, industries and public services to operate beyond traditional daytime hours.

Under the initiative, the government plans to build modern markets across all 261 districts. The rollout is underway, with the facilities expected to include storage centers, banking services, clinics, childcare centers, police posts and fire stations to support continuous trading activities.

Speaking at the 2026 Ghana-UK Investment Summit held last week, Augustus Goosie Tanoh, presidential adviser on the 24H+, said the program is on track to create 1.7 million productive jobs by 2028.

He said four agreements signed in the past 90 days are expected to generate more than 160,000 jobs, putting the program firmly on course to meet its employment target. The projects include a solar farm and a bioenergy project.

Chinese companies are also major participants in the initiative. In April, the Hunan Architectural Design Institute Group signed an agreement with the 24-Hour Economy Secretariat to support technical and industrial planning for the Volta Economic Corridor and related infrastructure projects.

The corridor is a spatial-industrial development plan aimed at transforming the Volta River Basin into a logistics and production backbone. It is expected to anchor agroecological parks, industrial hubs and inland water transport systems to facilitate low-cost north-south economic integration.

Tanoh said the initiative currently has a pipeline of 18 bankable projects open for private sector participation and leadership.

"24H+ will be implemented by the private sector through private financing, not by central government agencies drawing down on the consolidated fund or deploying sovereign debt," he said.

"Government will make policy, facilitate, coordinate, incentivize, strictly regulate, backstop (where necessary) and tax appropriately but not deliver."

Policy analysts say the concept holds promise but will require careful implementation to achieve its intended outcomes.

According to Paul Frimpong, the executive director and senior research fellow at the Africa-China Centre for Policy and Advisory in Ghana, the policy is directionally strong, but its impact is likely to vary depending on location.

Despite the potential benefits, Frimpong warned that significant logistical and infrastructure challenges must be addressed to sustain a 24-hour market system.

Security remains a major concern, particularly for traders operating at night. Adequate lighting, enhanced policing and organized market-level security systems will be necessary to ensure safety, especially for women traders.

Emmanuel Amoah-Darkwah, an economist and partner at C-KADD Global, a Ghana-based consultancy firm, said the initiative is feasible but substantial work remains to ensure its successful implementation.



People watch as a vehicle burns during a protest in Belfast following a stabbing incident in Belfast, on Tuesday. PETER MORRISON / AP

Protests break out after Belfast street stabbing

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

Politicians and law enforcement officials in Northern Ireland appealed for calm on Wednesday after a night of anti-immigrant rioting forced people from their homes.

The unrest, which mainly affected the city of Belfast, followed a knife attack on Monday evening in which a 30-year-old Sudanese man who had entered the country illegally and claimed asylum appeared to have tried to cut someone's head off. The suspect has since been charged with attempted murder and other offenses, and police have said they do not think the incident was terror-related.

On Tuesday, peaceful protests against knife crime were hijacked by people carrying clubs and blazing torches who entered streets where immigrants were known to live, apparently intent on revenge.

Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland Emma Little-Pengelly told *Good Morning Ulster* she condemned "any and all violence or thuggery that we witnessed on the streets in places across Northern Ireland last night".

She said Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom, had been appalled by the stabbing incident and that "this violence, this thuggery, this intimidation, it is absolutely unacceptable".

The BBC reported mobs had set fire to houses, cars, and a bus during Tuesday night's unrest and quoted a pastor from North Belfast as saying the property of black people had been targeted. Unrest also broke out in other communities, with a police car torched in Portadown and a Turkish barbershop damaged in Ballyclare.

Claire Hanna, leader of the opposition Social Democratic and Labour Party, told Reuters the violence looked to have been a "race-based pogrom", with hundreds of masked men carrying bottles and bricks starting fires and chanting "foreigners out".

Northern Ireland's fire service said it responded to 62 incidents on Tuesday night in the Belfast area, prompting Michelle O'Neill, Northern Ireland's first minister, to say mobs had been "burning families out of their homes".

Jon Boutcher, chief constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland, said the violence was a "huge act of self-harm by mindless idiots who are actually only damaging their own futures".

"Last night's policing operation was about protecting life and trying to protect properties," he added, saying officers will locate and charge those responsible.

Naomi Long, Northern Ireland's minister of justice and leader of the Alliance Party, told Radio 4's *Today* program that "bad faith actors" had incited the riots through online posts.

"What distresses and disturbs me is there are those that prior to yesterday would have struggled to find Belfast on a map who are online, who are sharing incitement and encouragement for people and weaponizing the fear that people genuinely have about what happened to try to turn this into some kind of anti-immigration issue or a racist protest," she said.

Security concerns shadow World Cup preparations

By **RENA LI** in Los Angeles
renali@chinadailyusa.com



A member of Mexico's National Guard remains outside the hotel where Iran's national football team is staying in Tijuana, Mexico, on Monday, ahead of the FIFA 2026 World Cup football tournament. GUILLERMO ARIAS / AFP

As millions of fans prepare for the 2026 FIFA World Cup that begins on Thursday, security officials across North America are confronting a complex mix of challenges ranging from organized crime and civil unrest to emerging drone threats, underscoring the unprecedented scale of the tournament.

The expanded World Cup, jointly hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico, is expected to be the largest in the tournament's history. While organizers have emphasized readiness and coordination among host cities, recent developments in Mexico and the United States have highlighted the increasingly complicated security environment surrounding major international sporting events.

In Mexico, authorities have significantly increased security deployments ahead of matches in Mexico City, Guadalajara and Monterrey. More than 100,000 soldiers, marines, National Guard members and police officers are expected to participate in security operations across host cities and major tourist destinations during the tournament. Anti-drone units, surveillance systems and crowd-management teams have also been deployed in coordination with FIFA.

Particular attention has focused on Guadalajara, capital of Jalisco state, which was shaken earlier this year by a surge in cartel-related violence following a military operation targeting organized crime leaders. According to local authorities, nearly 15,000 security personnel have been assigned to the region as the city prepares to host four World Cup matches.

"It's important to remember that normalcy returned to the state in less than 48 hours after what happened in February," Alfonso Briseno, Jalisco's security coordinator, told The Associated Press. "The Mexican government and the state of Jalisco guarantee their safety."

At the same time, Mexico City has experienced large-scale demonstrations ahead of the tournament's opening match. Teachers' groups, families of missing persons and other civil-society organizations have staged protests in the capital, drawing attention to social and economic issues while taking advantage of the global spotlight surrounding the World Cup.

In the United States, officials and industry experts have identified drones as one of the most significant emerging risks facing tournament organizers.

Speaking to Reuters, Melissa Swisher, chief revenue officer of drone-detection company SkySafe, said low-cost drones have fundamentally changed security planning for major sporting events because they can enter restricted areas in a matter of minutes.

"A thousand-dollar drone that's going 40 to 45 miles per hour could cross two miles in under three minutes," Swisher said. "By the time somebody sees it, that's already over."

Experts say drones could potentially be used for unauthorized surveillance, monitoring team movements or gathering footage inside restricted areas.

Tom Adams, director of public safety at DroneShield and a retired FBI agent, warned that drones can bypass many traditional security measures.

"You have something that can overcome all those traditional security measures and get right over everything," Adams said.

To address the threat, law-enforcement agencies and technology companies are deploying detection networks around tournament venues. The Federal Emergency Management Agency has provided approximately $250 million to support drone-threat mitigation efforts in World Cup host jurisdictions, while the Federal Aviation Administration plans to impose temporary flight restrictions around stadiums during matches.

The preparations also offer an indication of the security planning required for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, another major international sporting event expected to rely on advanced surveillance, cybersecurity and counter-drone technologies.

Despite the challenges, officials in the host countries have expressed confidence in their preparations. Security measures have been strengthened at stadiums, airports, fan zones, team facilities and transportation hubs, with authorities deploying additional personnel and technology to address potential risks ranging from public demonstrations and organized crime activity to unauthorized drone operations and other disruptions.

Agencies contributed to the story.

Renewables to safeguard Asia from oil shocks

Region urged to reduce dependence on imported energy amid Mideast tensions

By **PRIME SARMIENTO**
in Hong Kong
prime@chinadailyapac.com

The development of renewable energy sources will help shield Asian economies from the harsh impact of soaring oil prices, a regional forum heard on Tuesday.

As the conflict in the Middle East entered its 100th day, record-high prices of oil and gas continued to drive up inflation across the Asia-Pacific and exposed the region's dependence on imported fossil fuels.

However, energy industry experts said the Middle East crisis also offers an opportunity for Asian countries to transform their energy systems, harnessing indigenous sources like solar and wind to reduce their dependence on imported oil.

The disruption in the Strait of Hormuz has confirmed what Asian economies long feared — that their energy security hangs on a waterway that they do not control, said Sara Jane Ahmed, finance adviser to The Vulnerable Twenty Group of Finance Ministers, or V20.

In a webinar organized by the United States-based think tank Global Energy Monitor, Ahmed said that even before the Middle East war started, Asia was already developing clean technology.

As an "electrotech superpower", Asia makes over 95 percent of the world's solar panels, 85 percent of its batteries, and 75 percent of its turbines, she said.

Ahmed said the region has yet to fully tap its abundant resources, noting that solar and wind power have the potential to supply about 14 times Asia's total energy demand.

"Asia needs a new energy playbook, and we can already see what it looks like. Leaning into electrotech and winning back our energy sovereignty is critical," Ahmed said. This, she said, is "shared prosperity and multilateralism in its truest sense".

Brenda Valerio, the Philippines country director at the global network New Energy Nexus, said the high oil prices that drove up local fuel and transport costs have also pushed Filipino consumers to shift to solar energy.

"People are no longer viewing rooftop solar panels as an environmental choice but as protection — protection against volatile electricity prices," she added.

Valerio said New Energy Nexus has a network of about 300 micro and small solar installers all over the Philippines. Its recent survey showed that customer inquiries for solar panels had jumped following the rise in fuel prices.

"They're no longer waiting for perfect conditions. They are responding directly to high electricity prices and fuel insecurity," she said.

Customer interest

However, Valerio noted that actual installations lagged behind the surge in customer interest. This is because installers are facing shortages of solar components, rising logistics costs, workforce shortages, financing bottlenecks, and a slow permitting process.

"The Philippines is not failing to generate demand for renewable energy; we are failing to convert that demand into deployment," Valerio said.

She said that for archipelagos like Indonesia and the Philippines, it is important to establish distributed solar storage, microgrids, and localized energy systems. This would entail diversifying beyond centralized energy systems. Valerio noted that for decades, most energy systems had been designed around large power plants and long transmission networks.

For Muhammad Mustafa Amjad, cofounder of the Pakistan-based energy think tank Renewables First, batteries and a more robust grid system are important for energy transition.

Japan's ex-LDP leader Yohei Kono dies at 89

By **ZHAO JIA**
zhaojia@chinadaily.com.cn

Yohei Kono, former speaker of Japan's House of Representatives and former president of the Liberal Democratic Party, died on Monday at the age of 89, Japanese media reported on Wednesday.

Kono, born in 1937, was first elected to the House of Representatives in 1967 and served in such posts as chief cabinet secretary, foreign minister and deputy prime minister. In 1993, while serving as chief cabinet secretary, he issued the Kono Statement.

The statement acknowledged the Japanese military's direct involvement in setting up "comfort stations" and forcibly recruiting women on the Korean Peninsula, in China and elsewhere, offering an apology and reflecting on these actions.

Kono was known in China for his long-standing support for China-Japan friendship. He visited China many times, with his most recent trip taking place in June 2025, according to official Chinese releases. Leading a delegation of the Japanese Association for the Promotion of International Trade, Kono met with senior Chinese officials, including the country's top diplomat Wang Yi, in Beijing during the visit.

Wang said Kono had long been committed to the cause of China-Japan friendship and had remained steadfast in promoting friendly exchanges between the two countries even in the face of difficulties and challenges, which China highly appreciated.

Kono told Wang that history should not be forgotten, nor should it be denied, adding that the past cannot be changed, but the future can be shaped through effort.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn

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

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1847

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:15 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:15 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Platform of meaningful exchanges to help enhance global human rights governance

Bringing together more than 400 Chinese and foreign guests from nearly 100 countries and international and regional organizations, the 2026 Forum on Global Human Rights Governance is being held in Beijing from Thursday to Friday. The event aims to help build a fairer, more equitable and inclusive global human rights governance system.

Under the theme "Joint Development, Shared Human Rights: The 40th Anniversary of the Adoption of the Declaration on the Right to Development and a New Vision for Global Human Rights Governance", the forum underscores China's commitment to development as the fundamental guarantee for human rights.

This perspective is deeply rooted in China's own achievements. A report evaluating the National Human Rights Action Plan of China (2021-25), which defined the objectives and tasks for promoting human rights in China during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period, has concluded that all 181 tasks have been completed and 20 of the 44 binding targets were fulfilled ahead of schedule or exceeded the specified requirements.

China looks forward to sharing its insights on promoting human rights through better development at the forum "to turn the vision of the Declaration on the Right to Development into reality", as Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said on Monday.

China has built the world's largest education, social security and healthcare systems. Solid progress toward common prosperity for all has strengthened the foundation for advancing human rights, while the development of whole-process people's democracy has enhanced the protection of the rights and interests of all groups.

The forum's five sub-forums cover topics that are highly relevant to both China's practice and global needs. They address, respectively: the human rights implications of the Global Governance Initiative; the role and significance of the right to development; safeguarding the right to development in the age of AI; green development and the protection of human rights; and the relationship between modernization and the free, comprehensive development of individuals.

International human rights governance is indeed confronting multifaceted challenges. Polarization is eroding the foundation of multilateral cooperation across many regions, as geopolitical competition increasingly politicizes and weaponizes human rights issues. Meanwhile, some countries apply double standards and withdraw from international agreements, further undermining collective efforts. All this has shaken the global human rights governance system centered on the United Nations.

Not to mention that armed conflicts and humanitarian crises are worsening in some regions. A large number of civilians are direct victims of violent conflicts, and the red lines of international humanitarian law are frequently crossed.

Development imbalances and inequality are growing, marginalizing the right to development and hindering progress on the Sustainable Development Goals — a call to action adopted by all UN member states in 2015 to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

Meanwhile, climate change threatens the survival of vulnerable groups, and rapid technological advances, such as AI, are creating tensions between innovation and human rights protection, posing new governance challenges.

China is no exception to many of these challenges. The evaluation report notes that China still faces imbalanced and insufficient development, while scientific and technological development and industrial transformation give rise to new demands for rights. Notwithstanding these challenges, the country has effectively integrated human rights development with its national conditions providing a practical reference for other nations.

Unlike the Western-centric human rights narrative, China adopts a people-centered approach, fostering dialogue and promoting an inclusive, cooperative human rights paradigm through initiatives aimed at shared development. As the world confronts persistent inequality, poverty and underdevelopment, China's approach provides valuable insights for nations seeking to safeguard basic human rights and improve global human rights governance while pursuing their own paths to prosperity and progress.

China's trade data provide food for thought

China's exports rose by 19.4 percent in May from a year earlier, accelerating from April's already impressive 14.1 percent growth. Imports grew even faster, jumping 27.4 percent after April's 25.3 percent increase. Total trade expanded by 16.9 percent in yuan terms, pushing monthly trade above 4 trillion yuan ($587 billion) for the third consecutive month and bringing the cumulative trade growth for the first five months of the year to 15.3 percent.

Some Western critics have portrayed China as an economy dependent on "dumping overcapacity" with low value added. The data point to a different reality. The composition of the growth is even more notable than the quantity.

The strongest momentum is increasingly concentrated in technology-intensive sectors, including integrated circuits, advanced manufacturing equipment, electric vehicles and artificial intelligence-related products. Semiconductor exports reportedly surged by more than 100 percent year-on-year, while high-tech exports continued to outperform overall trade growth.

This is not merely a story about China exporting more goods. It is a story about China moving higher up the value chain at a time when much of the developed world is struggling to do the same.

Over the past several years, a conventional narrative has prevailed in some Western countries — that tariffs, export controls and "de-risking" would gradually diminish China's position in global supply chains while strengthening their own. However, reality has not borne this out.

Instead of being contained, China's manufacturers have adapted. Faced with external pressure, they have accelerated technological upgrading. Export growth is increasingly being driven by sectors linked to digitalization, electrification and AI.

The strong trade performance was registered amid global turbulence. The conflict in the Middle East has disrupted energy markets, raised transportation costs, and increased uncertainty across the global economy. Yet, thanks to its increasingly diversified trade portfolios, China's trade has not only remained resilient but also accelerated.

Part of the explanation lies in a phenomenon visible far beyond China. Around the world, demand for AI infrastructure, semiconductors, data centers, power equipment and green technologies is surging. Exports of economies, such as the Republic of Korea, driven by AI-related demand, soared in May. China is not operating outside this trend; rather, it is both a major contributor and a principal beneficiary, owing to its key position in global supply chains, particularly in high-tech sectors.

The "China Shock 2.0" peddled by some China-bashers in the West simply does not hold water. What truly drives global trade is the robust demand for China's performance-cost advantaged exports — not the exports of "overcapacity" as they claim.

The increase in both China's exports and imports with developed and developing economies in recent months demonstrates the win-win nature of China's trade with its trading partners, belying "decoupling" or "trade imbalance" claims.

Compared with other major economies, what makes China distinctive is its efficiency, innovation and scale. Few economies possess the combination of manufacturing depth, engineering talent, logistics capacity and industrial ecosystems needed to meet rapidly growing global demand in advanced sectors. Whether one is discussing batteries, electric vehicles, solar technologies, industrial machinery or increasingly sophisticated semiconductors, China has built production networks that are difficult to replicate quickly elsewhere.

It is an exercise in absurdity for certain Western armchair strategists to assume that political coercion will enable some developed countries to restructure global supply chains in accordance with the personal preferences of select politicians.

Notably, China's imports growing faster than exports challenges the caricature of China as simply "an export machine". Strong import growth suggests robust demand for components, raw materials, machinery and intermediate goods needed to support the country's industrial upgrading. It also reflects the deepening integration of China within global manufacturing networks.

None of this means China is immune to challenges. The huge potential of domestic consumption remains untapped. Geopolitical risks are unlikely to disappear. Trade frictions with major economies are likely to continue. But the long-term trade data of China have a habit of revealing how the world's second-largest economy has made the most of what it has to keep its economy and trade developing on the right track. By doing its own things well, China is contributing to the common good of the world.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

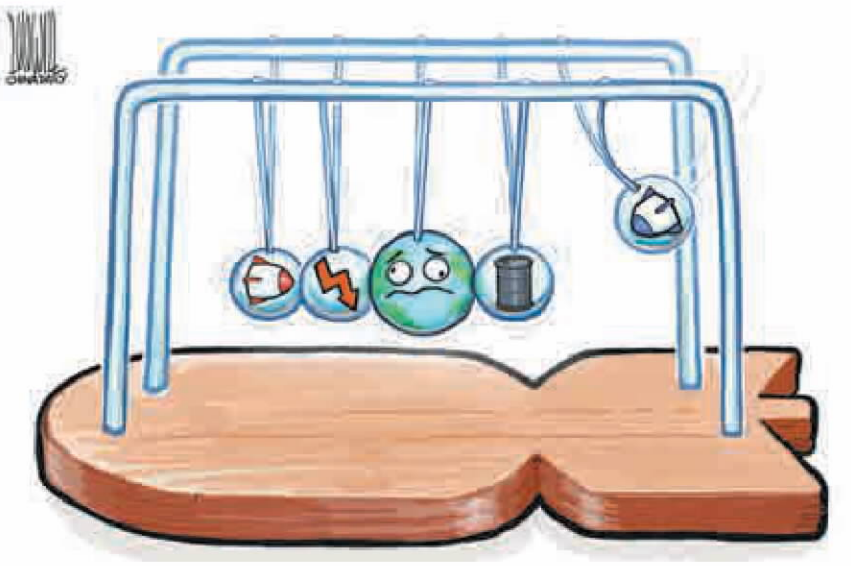
China Daily UK
90 Cannon St, London EC4N 6HA, UK
+44 (0) 207 398 8270
editor@chinadailyuk.com

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Luo Jie



Opinion Line

Transforming 'golden waterway' into powerful growth engine

The beginning of construction this week on the Three Gorges new waterway project — which includes what is expected to become the world's largest inland ship lock, a system that uses watertight chambers and gravity to raise and lower vessels, allowing them to bypass sharp changes in elevation along the waterway — marks another step toward advancing the high-quality development of the Yangtze River Economic Belt.

As the world's third-longest river and China's most important inland waterway, the more than 6,300-kilometer Yangtze River has long served as a vital artery linking the country's vast western hinterland with its dynamic eastern coast. The Yangtze River Economic Belt spans 11 provincial-level regions, is home to roughly 40 percent of the country's population, and consistently generates around 47.3 percent of the country's economic output. It is also one of the country's major hubs for foreign trade.

The waterway project comes in response to a practical need. The existing Three Gorges ship lock, designed for an annual cargo throughput of 100 million metric tons, surpassed that capacity as early as 2011. By 2025, cargo throughput had exceeded 170 million tons. The bottleneck has increased waiting times and logistics costs.

Once completed, the new waterway will raise the annual cargo-handling capacity of the Three Gorges hub to 336 million tons, nearly double its current level. It will help facilitate the smoother flow of goods, strengthen industry and supply chains, and inject new momentum into the development of the economic belt.

Beyond its economic significance, the project once again highlights China's world-class capabilities in infrastructure construction and engineering innovation. With a total investment of 77.2 billion yuan ($11.39 billion), the project is expected to set multiple world records in inland ship lock construction, including vessel dimensions, lock chamber size and excavation scale. Building such a massive hydraulic structure under complex geological and hydrological conditions represents a formidable engineering challenge.

As the first major project to break ground during China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, it demonstrates the country's strong capacity to plan, design and execute mega infrastructure projects that serve long-term national development goals. From the Three Gorges Dam to the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge and now the Three Gorges new waterway, China continues to transform ambitious visions into reality through technological innovation, scientific planning and efficient implementation.

Equally noteworthy is the project's commitment to ecological protection. The Yangtze River is one of China's most important ecological treasures. The project reflects the principle that development and environmental protection can advance hand in hand.

Ecological considerations have been incorporated from the earliest stages of the project's planning and design. Dedicated fish passages will help maintain aquatic biodiversity, while construction methods have been carefully selected to minimize disturbances to river ecosystems. Particularly striking is the decision to modify the original design to avoid disturbing the spawning grounds of the Chinese sturgeon, a national first-class protected aquatic wild animal and a flagship species of the Yangtze River. Although this increased project costs by approximately 2 billion yuan, it underscores China's determination to prioritize ecological conservation alongside development.

The Three Gorges new waterway project is therefore an epitome of China's pursuit of innovation-driven, green and high-quality development. By easing a critical transportation bottleneck while safeguarding the ecological health of the Yangtze River, the project will help transform the nation's "golden waterway" into an even more powerful engine of sustainable growth.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

'Made in Yiwu' upgrading reflects move up value chain

Editor's note: *As the 2026 FIFA World Cup prepares to kick off, Yiwu, the global hub for commodities in East China's Zhejiang province, has been in World Cup mode for months. China News Service spoke to Wu Xiaoming, head of the Yiwu sporting goods association, about the transformation of "Made in Yiwu" products. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

In preparation for the World Cup, businesses in Yiwu have meticulously adjusted their product lines and production schedules to meet market demand. This year, in response to specific requests from overseas buyers, many suppliers are offering personalized products featuring specific colors, patterns and jersey numbers.

Many merchants have noted that this time the order cycle for World Cup-related products began much earlier than in previous tournaments. Some companies started building inventory as early as last summer, with most shipments completed before this year's Spring Festival in February.

As one of China's important gateways for the international commodity trade, Yiwu has gained extensive experience in foreign commerce and earned the reputation of being the "world's supermarket". Its competitiveness in global markets has been strengthened by a continuously improving multimodal logistics network that integrates postal services with sea, road, air and rail transport. Efficient trade routes have helped reduce both delivery times and logistics costs, a major advantage in global market competitiveness.

At the same time, "Made in Yiwu" benefits from a well-developed local supply chain. Raw materials, components and packaging materials are sourced locally, reducing both production time and costs.

Unlike traditional large-scale standardized manufacturing, Yiwu's economy is increasingly built around small and medium-sized enterprises with highly specialized divisions of labor and a vast range of product categories. Buyers can source footballs, jerseys, horns, flags, decorative items and many other products in a single market and consolidate shipments, further lowering procurement costs.

By participating in major international sporting events, Yiwu merchants have developed a mature business model around the sports event economy. They have built a loyal customer base and continue to gain recognition and visibility in international markets.

In recent years, Yiwu's sports goods industry has gradually shifted from competing primarily on price to competing on creativity and intellectual property — a challenging but necessary transition.

In the past, the Yiwu commodities market relied heavily on high-volume, low-margin sales, with low entry barriers leading to excessive competition. This model is not sustainable in the long term. Instead of focusing on short-term profits from individual transactions, businesses are increasingly aiming for enduring customer relationships and sustainable growth.

Today, "Made in Yiwu" is undergoing a transformation from labor-intensive manufacturing to technology-driven production. Businesses are embracing intelligent manufacturing, digitalization and greener development practices.

After years of growth and development, the "Made in Yiwu" label is increasingly combining "bringing in" and "going global" to fill market gaps and seize new opportunities. Its development path has evolved from contract manufacturing and low-cost production toward original design, licensed products and standards-setting. This transformation mirrors the broader upgrading of Chinese manufacturing as it moves from the lower end of global value chains toward higher-value segments.

With the advantages of a vast domestic market, a complete industrial ecosystem and strong policy support, China is gradually evolving from a passive participant in global value chains into a more active contributor to international standards. Over time, "Made in China" will become synonymous with high quality, high-tech and high value.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:15 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:15 PM

VIEWS

Theodoros Papanghelis

A path forward for the Classics

The idea that classical wisdom nourishes the life of the spirit took shape during the Renaissance period — the transitional movement in Europe between medieval and modern times, beginning in the 14th century in Italy and lasting into the 17th century, when Greek and Latin authors were restored to prominence by leading humanists.

As they conceived it, the *studia humanitatis* — which originated in the 15th century and refers to a course of classical studies including grammar, poetry, rhetoric, history, and moral philosophy — required sustained engagement with the ideas and values enshrined in the great works of antiquity, which were seen as the best guides to two related aims: stylistic excellence and moral improvement.

This humanistic project showed little interest in vocational concerns and tended to sideline the natural sciences, treating them as largely irrelevant to the formation of character.

Its educational program — elitist insofar as it hailed from the notion that the *studia humanitatis* were intended for the freeborn — placed overwhelming emphasis on the study of the past as the primary means of intellectual, moral, and aesthetic self-cultivation.

The humanistic model of education long held a dominant position, with the sciences initially slow to challenge its authority.

From the 17th century onward, however, this began to change.

The natural sciences not only questioned the epistemological foundations of a traditional, historically oriented educational philosophy — while also claiming equal, if not superior, curricular status — but also exerted a more "insidious" influence in that a positivistic tendency rubbed off onto the humanities themselves, shifting attention away from broad pedagogical and ethical concerns toward a more neutral preoccupation with particular philological questions posed by the texts.

This development was further boosted by the professionalization of the humanities in the 18th-century German university.

Although the emergence of *Altertumswissenschaft*, a German concept emphasizing the unity of the various disciplines the study of the ancient world comprises, did not entirely displace earlier humanist ideals, it significantly diluted them by replacing their integrative, value-oriented approach with more technical and specialized forms of inquiry while scientific utilitarians became more vocal.

So, as one of that ilk put it, knowing the position of the liver became more useful than knowing the Greek and Latin words for it.

It was now hard for the humanities to claim the high moral ground they had once possessed and the "particularists" who, as Irving Babbitt once quipped, devoted study to ancient horse bridles and Roman doorknobs, were not much help.

Global Lens

At the same time, however, it was also refreshing, insofar as it seemed, to revive something of the optimistic spirit of Renaissance humanism, albeit reframed through a distinctly cross-civilizational perspective.

Another challenge to the ideals of early humanism came with structuralism and its subsequent developments, which shifted attention from textual content to the deep structural patterns that generate it.

Later intellectual trends associated with postmodernism, along with debates surrounding political correctness and so-called "woke" culture — defined as awareness of important facts and issues, especially issues of racial and social justice — contributed further to the gradual repositioning of the study of classical texts.

More recently, in the prevailing intellectual climate in the West, traditional claims about the enduring authority and relevance of the "classics" have also been increasingly questioned.

Antiquity is nowadays approached less as a repository of intrinsic value and more as a historically situated system of meanings and values — inviting the question "value for whom?" — with which modern readers are expected to engage critically rather than reverently.

Meanwhile, as institutional classics go down their various paths, debates about their place in contemporary curricula flare up from time to time.

Notably, an international conference on this quandary, entitled "The 'Future of the Past': Why Classical Studies Still Matter", was held at the Academy of Athens in November 2022, reflecting the continuing urgency of this question.

Two years later, the inaugural World Conference on Classics, themed "Classical Civilizations and the Modern World", was co-organized in Beijing by, among others, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the Academy of Athens.

When I participated in this event, together with other Greek academics and scholars, I had in mind an article published in 2021 in Asia Times by David Goldman, in which he contrasted the relative decline of classical studies in the United States with their growing prominence in China.

The conference "concept note", as circulated by the Chinese organizers, adopted an optimistic tone.

It suggested that scholarly exchanges among participants would help highlight "the modern value of classical civilizations" and contribute "wisdom and strength to tackle problems facing the development of human society," while also fostering mutual learning and international understanding.

For a Western scholar accustomed, as I am, to conferences, colloquia, and workshops focused on the finer points of narratology, gender, sexuality, meta-scholarship, deixis, and a wide range of other specialized concerns, this framing initially appeared rather broad and somewhat imprecise.

At the same time, however, it was also refreshing, insofar as it seemed, to revive something of the optimistic spirit of Renaissance humanism, albeit reframed through a distinctly cross-civilizational perspective.

Indeed, a number of the papers presented were informed by such an orientation.

The second World Conference of Classics, held in Athens from June 9 to 10, appears to confirm the organizers' intention to develop an ongoing dialogue between Beijing and Athens in pursuit of these aims.

This initiative will be welcomed by those who remain convinced that the comparative study of the core values of classical civilizations continues to offer one of the more promising paths for reflection on our shared humanity.

The author is a member of the Academy of Athens.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Stefan Szymanski

Networks are the secret sauce for footballing nations

The joy of sport is its unpredictability. As the FIFA World Cup approaches, everyone wants to know who is going to win it.

Statisticians, economists, sociologists and various other experts are attempting to uncover the hidden patterns that might reveal the outcome.

While no one can predict what exactly will happen, social science offers valuable insights into the dynamics at play.

In international sports, the factors determining success are not different from those for economic development.

Success depends on the resources that each side brings to a match. Those resources correspond to the inputs in what economists call a production function.

We can think of sporting competition in the same way as we think about national output, or GDP. In both cases the key inputs are labor, capital and "total factor productivity". The first two are easy to understand. The bigger your national population, the greater the chance that there are superstars to be uncovered. Finding and developing those superstars requires capital for establishing talent scouting networks and training facilities.

Total factor productivity, a concept that explains variations in economic output across countries, often hinges on a nation's innovative capacity.

This in turn is closely tied to human capital — the knowledge and experience accumulated by individuals and shared across society, what one might call the wisdom of the crowd.

This framework works pretty well for football too. More than 200 nations participated in the qualifying rounds of the World Cup, a number that has been pretty stable over the past eight editions of the competition. But only eight countries have ever won the World Cup. Six of those eight have won it more than once, and in the 14 World Cups since 1966, only three countries have entered the elite group — Argentina in 1978, France in 1998 and Spain in 2010.

Global Lens

We can think of sporting competition in the same way as we think about national output, or GDP. In both cases the key inputs are labor, capital and "total factor productivity". The first two are easy to understand.

The pattern is not going to be any different this year. Spain and France are the favorites with outside chances for Argentina, England and Brazil. The most highly favored "outsider" is Portugal, a country with an impressive football pedigree.

All of these countries were at the forefront of football's development more than 100 years ago. This also means football is not like manufacturing.

Many onetime "developing" nations have caught up with countries that were once at the forefront of manufacturing and even outstripped them.

Manufacturing is relatively easy to copy, and therefore does not remain a consistent advantage over the very long term.

A more likely comparator might be universities. The US, Britain and Germany housed the most prestigious universities in the world 100 years ago, and this is still largely true. New universities have come up in other parts of the world and become leaders in some fields, but for consistent excellence, the older universities usually have an edge.

This suggests that there is something in the transition of know-how from one generation to another that gives an advantage — a consensus about best practices and their preservation, even if those best practices evolve over time.

This might well be the process that enabled the same countries to dominate the World Cup for so long.

The dominant soccer nations are tied together in a shared network. In Europe, these countries all border each other, and ideas move freely across national boundaries.

Innovations that emerge in one part of Europe quickly spread to the rest of it. Brazil and Argentina have a similar networked relationship, as well as being plugged into Europe through historical connections with Portugal, Spain and Italy.

Not that these networks imply a friendly sharing of ideas — the relationships are driven by intense rivalries and the desire to win. But it is very hard to keep any secrets in football — your ideas are visible on the pitch.

This network effect, then, may be the "secret sauce" — the source of total factor productivity that explains the dominance of the same national teams.

It is striking that both the US and China, which now vie to be the world's important players in almost everything else, have not dented the pre-eminence of the old nations in football. The US has devoted far greater resources to the effort, but even as hosts, they have a very slim chance of winning this year's World Cup.

When it comes to football, the difference between US men's and women's teams is very striking. The US women's team has been the best in the world since the women's game started to spread. For European and South American women, there were no historical networks to fall back on, and in fact the US created the dominant network. Chinese women too have fared much better than the men.

For countries like China and the US, there are two pathways for competing at the highest level in men's football. One is to join the existing network — which is a strain in terms of geography. The other is to create their own networks. While this is the most likely path, so far it has proved to be a mountain too high to climb.

The author is a professor of sports management at the University of Michigan. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Chen Xiangyang

China-DPRK friendship steadfast in a turbulent world

In international politics, some relationships are fleeting because they are driven by temporary interests. Others endure because they are rooted in shared history, strategic necessity and long-term national interests. The relationship between China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea belongs to the second category.

In today's rapidly shifting global landscape, the traditional friendship and cooperation between the two countries is a vital anchor of regional stability. Formally established on Oct 6, 1949, this enduring bond was founded on shared revolutionary ideals. Over the decades, successive generations of leaders have nurtured this relationship, ensuring that it continually adapts to serve the fundamental interests of both nations.

In recent years, exchanges between President Xi Jinping and DPRK top leader Kim Jong-un have provided renewed strategic guidance for bilateral relations. Both sides have consistently stressed that regardless of changes in the international landscape, maintaining, consolidating and developing China-DPRK relations remains a firm commitment.

At the core of this revitalized relationship is a deep reservoir of strategic mutual trust, which has become particularly vital as both nations navigate critical phases in their respective domestic development.

China has embarked on a decisive phase of its modernization journey, guided by the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), which aims to drive its transition toward high-quality development. Simultaneously, the 9th Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) rolled out its own Five-Year Plan (2026-30) in February to steer the country into a phase of comprehensive socialist construction through a dual strategic focus on defense building and economic development.

Against this backdrop, safeguarding sovereignty, security and development interests has become a more pressing task for many countries.

This high-level engagement serves two crucial functions. First, it ensures that communication channels remain uninterrupted. When volatility ripples through the Korean Peninsula, direct and reliable baseline channels lower the risk of strategic miscalculation. Second, it facilitates deep institutional learning.

As socialist states led by Communist parties, exchanging practical insights on grassroots governance, livelihood security and risk mitigation transforms a historical friendship into tangible, domestic governance assets.

This dimension is particularly significant at a time when the international environment is becoming more volatile.

The world is witnessing rising geopolitical conflicts, growing protectionism, intensified major-power competition and mounting pressure on the global order.

Against this backdrop, safeguarding sovereignty, security and development interests has become a more pressing task for many countries. For China and the DPRK, closer coordination in regional and international affairs can contribute to a more stable strategic environment.

Moreover, the DPRK's recent initiatives, such as inviting Chinese diplomats to visit the Wonsan-Kalma Coastal Tourist Area in February, underscore a mutual desire to deepen tourism and personnel exchanges, directly elevating the living standards of both populations.

Ultimately, the relationship rests on a bedrock of profound public goodwill and cultural proximity. Rooted in the ethos that "good neighbors wish each other well", the bond between the two societies remains uniquely resilient. This emotional connection has been continually nurtured by the highest echelons of leadership.

President Xi's paying homage to the China-DPRK Friendship Tower in Pyongyang during the visit that just concluded, alongside DPRK leader Kim's frequent visits to the cemetery of martyrs of the Chinese People's Volunteers in Hoechang County, symbolizes a shared history written in solidarity.

By continually expanding exchanges across education, sports, healthcare, media, and youth cohorts, both countries are ensuring that this historical legacy is passed down to future generations.

As a classic Chinese poem aptly observes, "Tide at full, two shores stretch vast and wide; Wind in fair, one sail hangs full with pride." China and the DPRK are bound as good comrades and steadfast neighbors.

No matter how the winds of international politics shift, the resolve to protect, consolidate, and advance this relationship will remain unshakable.

Buttressed by the strategic vision of their top leadership, the towering tree of China-DPRK friendship will continue to flourish, remaining evergreen for generations to come.

The author is the deputy director of the Institute of Northeast Asian Studies, China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:15 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:15 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

HUSSEIN ASKARY

More than goods

The Belt and Road Initiative is not just a vehicle for trade but a promoter of development and civilizational dialogue



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY



It is a common mistake to view the Belt and Road Initiative simply as a vehicle for trade promotion on a global scale. While trade is important, there is a deeper and more important concept — the "economic belt" or the "development corridor". Economic belts or development corridors feature basic infrastructure — railways, roads, riparian navigation, power lines, oil and gas pipelines, telecommunication cables and water management systems — that produces new agricultural, industrial and urban clusters, as they bring technology and resources to areas that were previously isolated. China's Yangtze River Belt is the best example of this concept, stretching for thousands of kilometers with new industrial, agricultural, science and technology centers popping up all around it in the past three decades or so. Cities such as Chengdu, Chongqing, Changsha and Wuhan have become world-renowned thanks to this corridor. Therefore, all the BRI corridors stretching from Asia to Europe and from Central Asia to West Asia and Africa should be seen in this light. This is the scientific implementation of the Chinese traditional saying "if you want to get rich, first build a road".

Africa is a continent with enormous potential, and this is something the Chinese understand very well. Africa had a population of some 1.4 billion by the end of 2024, with a median age ranging from 20 to 30. According to the United Nations projections, the population will increase to almost 3 billion by 2050 and will still be the youngest group in the world. Europe will decline dramatically in demographic terms while the Americas and Asia will stagnate, then decline after 2050. The European way of looking at this is with alarm that projects Africa to be forever poor and that a great number of youth will try to immigrate to Europe.

But these young people will be a great source of wealth if Africa overcomes the "three bottlenecks of development" — the lack of credit, infrastructure and skilled labor. China has embarked on filling the gaps in these three areas in its cooperation with African nations. In this sense, China believes that by making its partners prosperous, China itself will benefit in the long term. This is the essence of the win-win philosophy embedded in China's Global Development Initiative, as expressed in the saying "China will only do well when the world is doing well. And when China is doing well, the world will do even better." This is the lesson Europe and the United States need to learn to peacefully co-exist with Africa, Latin America, and Asia and prosper together.

The sheer scale of Africa's foundational needs — in transport, energy, water security and technological capacity — demands a development strategy of vision and precision. Therefore, a sustainable and transformative partnership under the BRI must consciously pursue a dual-track approach.

The first track is the large-scale infrastructure dimension: the financing and construction of strategic infrastructure that redefines the continent's economic geography. These are the flagship projects — the grand hydroelectric dams that power national grids, the transcontinental railways that link landlocked nations to ports, the massive water management systems that safeguard regions against drought, and the industrial parks that serve as hubs for technology transfer. These projects build the backbone for pan-African integration and African countries' long-term industrial take-off.

However, to be truly durable and legitimate, this large-scale infrastructure track must be deliberately coupled with a second, connective track: a focus on targeted, smaller-scale projects that directly oxygenate the local economy and improve daily life. This includes rural feeder roads connecting farmers to markets, village-level solar micro-grids, community irrigation schemes, and vocational training centers. These projects ensure that the macro-framework does not operate in isolation but is rooted in and responsive to on-the-ground needs.

The essential insight is that neither track can succeed in isolation. Megaprojects without grassroots connectivity risk becoming "cathedrals in the desert" — impressive but isolated assets with limited diffuse economic benefit. Conversely, small-scale projects alone, without the enabling national infrastructure, cannot catalyze the structural transformation Africa seeks. The genius of a mature BRI partnership lies in consciously braiding these two strands together, ensuring that the continental arteries feed the local capillaries, and that local vitality, in turn, gives purpose and sustainability to the grand vision. This synergy is the true hallmark of a community with a shared future.

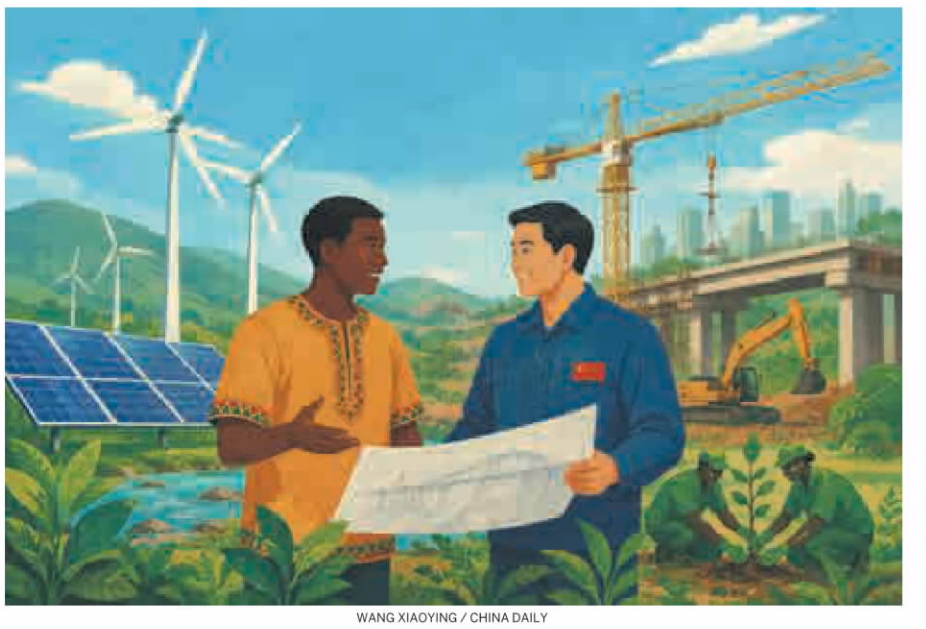
Ultimately, the BRI, like the ancient Silk Road, is a vehicle for the dialogue of civilizations — the exchange of cultural, scientific and philosophical ideas. People-to-people communication through tourism, business and educational exchanges will bring great benefit to the nations of the world as infrastructure and technology do. Through civilizational dialogue we better appreciate how diverse we are as nation-states and cultures, and how similar we are in the aspirations and dreams of a better future. This will be the most important instrument for generating common understanding and avoiding conflicts. Harmonious co-existence does not mean uniform and one-dimensional cultures, political and social systems across all nations. As the saying goes, one flower does not make a garden. The notion of a community with a shared future, advocated by the Chinese leadership, will become a reality when we embrace both diversity and common goals, and this will be the greatest gift we leave to future generations.

The author is the vice-president of the Belt and Road Institute in Sweden. Some of the views in this article are drawn from the author's lecture at the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies, Renmin University of China. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

EHIZUELEN MICHAEL MITCHELL OMORUYI

Sustainable partnership

Africa-China green cooperation is demonstrating that the gap between development imperatives and environmental sustainability can be bridged



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY



The defining development challenge of the 21st century is no longer whether countries can grow, but whether they can grow sustainably in an era of accelerating climate change and ecological uncertainty. Climate change, biodiversity loss, land degradation, pollution and growing energy demands are no longer future concerns; they are present realities shaping development trajectories across the world. For developing countries, particularly those in the Global South, the challenge is not whether development should be green, but how economic transformation can be achieved while protecting the environment, creating jobs and improving livelihoods. In this regard, Africa-China green cooperation offers an increasingly important example of how international partnerships can help bridge the gap between development imperatives and environmental sustainability.

The stakes are particularly high for Africa. Despite contributing less than 4 percent of global carbon emissions, the continent remains among the most vulnerable regions to climate change. According to the African Development Bank, climate-related shocks cost African economies between 5 and 15 percent of GDP growth annually, while droughts, floods and extreme weather events continue to threaten food security, infrastructure and livelihoods. Yet Africa holds plentiful solar resources, vast hydropower potential, substantial wind corridors and abundant geothermal energy reserves. These assets position Africa not merely as a victim of climate change but as a potential leader in the global green transition.

Unlocking this potential, however, requires investment, technology, infrastructure and institutional capacity. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development estimates that developing countries face a substantial financing gap in achieving climate and sustainable development objectives. For many African countries, the challenge is compounded by limited fiscal space, high borrowing costs and inadequate access to green finance. This is where international cooperation becomes indispensable.

China's own development experience demonstrates that economic growth and environmental protection can reinforce rather than undermine one another. Over the past decade, China has emerged as a global leader in renewable energy deployment, accounting for a significant share of global investments in solar power, wind energy, battery technologies, electric vehicles and green infrastructure. According to the International Energy Agency, China has become the world's largest investor in clean energy technologies and now plays a pivotal role in reducing the costs of renewable energy globally. This transformation has not only supported China's domestic green transition but also created opportunities for international cooperation in sustainable development.

As part of its commitment to building an ecological civilization and promoting a community with a shared future for humanity, China has increasingly integrated green development into its international cooperation agenda. This policy orientation has helped position sustainability as a central pillar of China's engagement with developing countries and has created new opportunities for partnerships that support both economic growth and environmental protection.

Increasingly, green development has become an important pillar of China's engagement with Africa. Across the continent, Chinese-supported renewable energy projects are helping expand electricity access, strengthen energy security and support low-carbon development pathways. Solar power plants in countries such as Kenya, South Africa and Egypt, hydropower projects in Ethiopia and elsewhere, and investments in clean transportation and green industrial infrastructure demonstrate a growing emphasis on sustainability within Africa-China cooperation.

Beyond physical infrastructure, Africa-China green cooperation is evolving into a broader partnership focused on technology transfer, skills development, agricultural modernization, environmental governance and industrial upgrading. Such cooperation recognizes that green development is not solely about generating clean energy. It is equally about creating productive capacity, enhancing resilience, fostering innovation and supporting long-term economic transformation.

This is particularly important because the green transition is increasingly becoming an economic opportunity. For Africa, the transition to clean energy offers opportunities to develop new industries, expand manufacturing capabilities, create employment for its rapidly growing youth population, and strengthen regional value chains. Green industrialization, sustainable agriculture, climate-smart infrastructure and circular economy initiatives can all contribute to a more diversified and resilient economic future.

Africa-China cooperation also highlights the growing importance of South-South cooperation in addressing global challenges. Traditional development models often present environmental protection and economic growth as competing objectives. However, emerging partnerships across the Global South increasingly demonstrate that sustainability can serve as a driver of development rather than a constraint upon it. By combining investment, technology, policy learning and local adaptation, countries can pursue pathways that simultaneously advance economic growth and environmental stewardship.

This approach is particularly relevant at a time when developing countries are seeking greater representation in global climate governance. While industrialized countries remain responsible for the majority of historical greenhouse gas emissions, many developing countries are being asked to pursue ambitious climate objectives despite facing pressing development challenges. A just and effective global green transition therefore requires industrialized countries to provide stronger support for technology sharing, concessional finance, capacity building and infrastructure investment. Partnerships such as those between Africa and China can help demonstrate practical mechanisms for translating these principles into tangible outcomes.

At the same time, the future of Africa-China green cooperation should move beyond infrastructure alone. Greater emphasis should be placed on supporting local innovation ecosystems, green entrepreneurship, research collaboration, vocational training, sustainable urban development, and climate-resilient agricultural systems. Expanding cooperation in emerging sectors such as green hydrogen, battery manufacturing, electric mobility, digital technologies and sustainable supply chains could further strengthen Africa's role within the global green economy.

The future will not be shaped by isolated national efforts but by partnerships capable of mobilizing resources, sharing knowledge and fostering collective action. Africa-China green cooperation illustrates how countries can work together to pursue modernization that is environmentally sustainable, economically inclusive and socially beneficial.

For the Global South, the lesson is clear. Green development is not a luxury to be pursued after growth has been achieved; it is increasingly becoming the foundation of future prosperity. By deepening cooperation in renewable energy, sustainable infrastructure, green finance, technology transfer and capacity building, Africa and China are helping to demonstrate that a greener future is not only possible but essential. In an era defined by shared environmental challenges, global partnerships will determine whether sustainable development remains an aspiration or becomes a reality. Africa-China cooperation offers one of the most promising examples of how that reality can be built.

The author is an associate professor and the executive director of the Center for Nigerian Studies at the Institute of African Studies at Zhejiang Normal University. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:15 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:15 PM

BUSINESS



Shoppers check out Thai durians at a grocery market in Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, on May 12. YU XIANGQUAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Opening-up seen injecting impetus to Sino-Thai trade

Thai businesses optimistic as Chinese market 'vibrant, brimming with potential'

By **ZHENG YIRAN** in Shanghai
zhengyiran@chinadaily.com.cn

China's opening-up efforts are injecting momentum into bilateral trade with Thailand, especially for premium Thai exports such as durian and cosmetics, a leading Thai business representative has said.

Confident that China will emerge as "the world's largest retail market" within four to five years, Phaichit Viboontanasarn, vice-chairman and secretary-general of the Thai Chamber of Commerce in China, said: "The Chinese market is vibrant and brimming with potential. With only a four-to-five-hour flight separating Thailand and China, Thai enterprises are well-positioned to seize these opportunities by understanding Chinese consumer preferences and delivering more high-quality Thai products and services. I am optimistic that meaningful progress will unfold in the near term."



Phaichit Viboontanasarn

China's Ministry of Commerce said that in 2025, bilateral trade between Thailand and China surpassed 1 trillion yuan ($147.8 billion), up 15.1 percent year-on-year.

Thailand's Ministry of Commerce said that in April, the country's exports to the rest of the world climbed 23.1 percent year-on-year to $31.5 billion, reflecting the growing competitiveness of the Southeast Asian nation's products.

Citing the "Big Market for All: Export to China" initiative — a move by China's commerce ministry to expand the nation's opening-up — Phaichit said: "I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the Chinese government for its steadfast efforts to further open its market in recent years. This campaign is a clear demonstration of China's genuine commitment to welcoming foreign products and enabling Chinese consumers to enjoy a wider range of high-quality goods.

"The approval of China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), which places strong emphasis on further market liberalization, is equally encouraging. And we continue to see landmark events such as the China International Import Expo in Shanghai grow in scale and influence year after year."

Suphajee Suthumpun, Thai deputy prime minister and minister of commerce, said China remains Thailand's most important trading partner, and a wider range of Thai products are gaining popularity among Chinese consumers.

Phaichit said: "China's market is growing tremendously — not only in scale, but in sophistication. Against the backdrop of China's high-quality development, I firmly believe this is a moment the world cannot afford to overlook, and Thailand is no exception.

"We warmly welcome Chinese consumers to discover Thailand's exceptional products and services, and to explore everything our country can offer. The opportunities are boundless. More broadly, I envision the two countries enjoying a flourishing and enduring diplomatic relationship for the next 50 years and beyond."

Zhou Mi, a senior researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, said: "China boasts vast consumers from abundant levels. Meanwhile, the Chinese government always prioritizes trade and investment facilitation. By lowering taxes, expanding market access and increasing the import of agricultural products, foreign countries with lower costs are exporting to China with stronger trade stability.

"The Chinese market is key to import and export enterprises from all over the world. Some of their products, with value-added through Chinese industrial chains, can be better exported to other parts of the world. In addition, expos such as the CIIE and the Canton Fair also promote exports from other countries to China."

Carrier mulls larger investment in nation on AI data center, green push

By **ZHONG NAN**
zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

China's push to expand computing infrastructure and advance green urban development will create fresh growth opportunities for Carrier Global Corp to deepen investment in manufacturing, innovation and digital technologies in the country during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, said a senior executive.

As China accelerates the development of data centers, green urban infrastructure and artificial intelligence applications, Carrier — a United States-based intelligent climate and energy solutions provider and parent company of Toshiba HVAC and Viessmann Climate Solutions — will align its business priorities with these emerging opportunities while exporting products made at its China plants to markets worldwide.

Michael Gierges, president of climate solutions for Asia-Pacific, Middle East and Africa at Carrier, said China is no longer viewed simply as a regional market, but as a key driver of the group's global growth strategy.

"Cooling systems account for a significant share of data center energy consumption, making efficiency improvements increasingly important," said Gierges. "Through our QuantumLeap solution, we integrate intelligent cooling, digital controls and predictive monitoring technologies to optimize thermal management and improve energy performance across data center operations."

Beyond cooling technologies, Carrier is also expanding AI applications across its building solutions business.

"We have developed AI-enabled building control solutions for the Chinese market that help optimize building performance, improve energy efficiency and enable smarter, more adaptive building operations," he added.

With China entering a new era of green and innovation-led growth, the Florida-headquartered company has continued to expand its manufacturing footprint. It launched a new air-cooled chiller production line at its facility in Shanghai's Baoshan district, with investment exceeding 100 million yuan ($14.8 million) in January.

Equipped with digital, automated and intelligent technologies, the facility delivers a capacity increase of more than 30 percent compared with pre-upgrade levels.



Michael Gierges

Together with additional production lines yet to be commissioned and supporting facilities, the project's total investment is expected to reach approximately 400 million yuan.

Building on this, Carrier inaugurated an integrated commercial HVAC testing center in May in Shanghai to strengthen its capabilities in energy-efficiency validation and performance optimization, particularly for data centers.

Gierges said Carrier also sees China as an increasingly important hub for innovation and exports, with centrifugal and screw chiller technologies developed by its local engineering teams now being deployed in markets around the world.

"Collaboration with local partners will remain central to our China strategy," Gierges said, adding that the company's partnerships with Alibaba Cloud, the cloud computing arm of Alibaba Group, will help advance digital transformation and AI infrastructure development.

He also highlighted the company's long-standing partnership with State-owned Shanghai Electric Group Co, which is expected to support sustainable urban renewal, reinforcing its long-term confidence in the Chinese market.

Supported by more than 5,000 employees in China, Carrier currently operates seven manufacturing bases, three research and development centers, and over 70 branch offices across the country. One of its companies in Shanghai received a National May 1st Labor Award, one of China's highest honors for organizations, earlier this year.

Wang Xiaohong, a researcher at the China Center for International Economic Exchanges in Beijing, said China's strengths in industrial supply chains and innovation ecosystems continue to attract long-term investment from multinationals.

China saw the actual use of foreign direct investment in high-tech industries surge 20.3 percent year-on-year to 116.33 billion yuan in the first four months, accounting for 40.4 percent of the country's total FDI, data from the Ministry of Commerce showed.

NeuroXess eyes mass BCI production with new unit coming online in H2

By **CHENG YU**
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese brain-computer interface company NeuroXess is gearing up for what it sees as the next phase of the industry: mass production.

The startup plans to begin operating a 14,300-square-meter manufacturing facility in Jiangxi province in the second half, a move NeuroXess founder and chief scientist Tiger Tao Hu said will help transform BCIs from experimental technologies tested on dozens of patients into products that can be delivered at an industrial scale.

This also reflects the company's dual-core strategy of "research and development in Shanghai, production in Jiangxi", Tao said in an exclusive interview with China Daily.

Such efforts come as BCIs, which create direct communication pathways between the human brain and technology such as a computer or artificial limb, attract growing global attention from investors, governments and technology companies.

While the industry remains dominated by clinical trials and research milestones, companies are increasingly racing to answer a more practical question: Who can manufacture these devices reliably, safely and at scale?

For NeuroXess, the answer lies not only in neuroscience, but also in factories.

The company has completed more than 50 clinical trials and is developing what it calls a fully implanted, fully wireless and fully functional BCI system. The Jiangxi facility is designed to eventually support annual production at the scale of tens of thousands of units.

The company's first patient implanted with the system in late 2025 achieved a brain control speed of 5.2 bits per second after 17 days of training, according to the company, enabling web browsing, gaming and control of external devices.

By early 2026, the participant was independently shopping, writing Spring Festival calligraphy and using digital payment tools through brain control systems.

According to Tao, 2026 has become a pivotal year because three critical pieces are finally coming together.

"The technology, the clinical validation and the manufacturing capabilities have matured at the same time," he said.

As competition intensifies between China and the United States, Tao argues that the discussion often focuses too heavily on individual technologies rather than the broader ecosystem needed to commercialize them.

He rejects the idea that China lags significantly behind the US in BCIs. "The core scientific principles are not fundamentally different," he said.

Tao acknowledged that the US still holds advantages in specialized chips, but argued that China has significant strengths in clinical resources, manufacturing and industrial integration.

BCIs, he said, are not simply chips implanted into the brain, "they are system engineering projects".

The challenge is integrating electrodes, chips, packaging, software, operating systems, wireless communication systems, manufacturing and clinical workflows into a single functioning product.

"A patient doesn't need a world champion in one component," Tao said. "A patient needs a complete system that works."

China's manufacturing ecosystem, he argues, offers a unique advantage. "Technology only matters if patients can actually use it," he said. Tao pointed to China's precision manufacturing supply chains, hospital networks and engineering talent as factors that could help accelerate commercialization.

The Jiangxi factory reflects that strategy. Beyond manufacturing, it will also serve as a rehabilitation and training center. The facility will include simulated streets, subway stations, cafes and convenience stores where patients can practice using BCI systems in realistic environments.

The goal, Tao said, is not simply restoring movement. "The ultimate goal of rehabilitation isn't that a patient can move again," he said. "It's that they have the confidence to go outside again."



Tao Hu (left), founder and chief scientist of NeuroXess, shakes hands with a patient using a thought-controlled exoskeleton at a clinical rehabilitation center in Shanghai. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

In addition, the recent boom in artificial intelligence may prove as important to BCIs as advances in hardware.

Tao describes large AI models not as an add-on to BCIs, but as an "operating system upgrade".

Previously, decoding neural signals often required weeks of calibration for each individual patient. AI models are increasingly making brain signal decoding faster, more accurate and more transferable between patients.

"AI is turning brain computer interfaces from something that must be calibrated for every individual into a technology that can generalize across patients," Tao said.

NeuroXess has already used AI to achieve several notable milestones.

In late 2024, the company conducted what it said was the world's first real-time Chinese language decoding trial. After nine days of training, a participant achieved 71.5 percent accuracy in full-spectrum Chinese syllable decoding without assistance from a language model.

The patient was able to generate spoken Chinese through thought, control a digital avatar and interact directly with AI systems.

In another clinical trial conducted with Shanghai's Huashan Hospital Affiliated to Fudan University in 2025, patients in Shanghai and Fuzhou completed what NeuroXess described as the first long-distance "thought conversation" between two human subjects.

The system translated neural signals into text at speeds exceeding 300 Chinese characters per minute, roughly twice the pace of ordinary speech.

Tao believes such breakthroughs could eventually allow direct interaction between the human brain and AI systems.

"We don't see brain computer interfaces as just medical devices," he said. "We see them as the bridge connecting human intelligence and AI."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:15 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:15 PM

BUSINESS

Finance sector keen to boost robotics industry

State lenders' capital support for technology firms continues to strengthen and broaden

By **JIANG XUEQING**
jiangxueqing@chinadaily.com.cn

As humanoid robots move rapidly from research labs into real-world applications, China's banking and insurance sectors are racing to provide the financial fuel behind the industry's growth, rolling out innovative products, tailored financing solutions and ecosystem support to help robotics companies scale up and accelerate technological breakthroughs.

Statistics released by the People's Bank of China — the country's central bank — show that financial support for technology enterprises continues to strengthen and broaden. As of the end of the first quarter, 294,600 high-tech enterprises had obtained loan support, with a loan approval rate of 58.6 percent, up 1.3 percentage points from the end of the previous year. Outstanding loans to high-tech enterprises in Chinese yuan and foreign currencies reached 20.96 trillion yuan ($3.09 trillion), up 13.6 percent year-on-year and 6.1 percentage points higher than the end of last year.

The nation's six largest State-owned commercial banks remain the backbone of technology finance. Annual reports show that by the end of 2025, their combined outstanding technology loans exceeded 23 trillion yuan. Providing targeted support for innovation in the robotics industry has become a key focus for these banks as they work to foster new quality productive forces and upgrade strategic emerging industries.

Humanoid robotics companies are characterized by high research and development spending, significant technological barriers, strong growth potential and light-asset business models. Most startups rely heavily on intangible assets such as intellectual property and patents, while lacking the collateral typically favored by lenders. As a result, they face challenges including insufficient collateral, difficulties in asset valuation and high barriers to financing.

To address these pain points, major banks have continued to innovate their financial service models, tailoring support to the needs of leading enterprises. Through integrated services encompassing equity investment, lending, bond financing and insurance, they are providing support throughout the entire lifecycle of technology companies and helping them achieve rapid growth.

At the 2026 Beijing E-Town Half Marathon and Humanoid Robot Half Marathon on April 19, humanoid robots appeared alongside human runners. During the event, the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China set up a financial service station to provide services for participants and spectators, supporting the successful staging of the technology-focused competition.

In recent years, ICBC Beijing Municipal Branch has provided comprehensive financial support to Beijing Galbot Co, a market-leading company specializing in embodied multimodal large-model general-purpose robotics, helping its technologies move from the laboratory to large-scale production.

ICBC Financial Asset Investment Co, a whollyowned subsidiary of the bank, also participated in an equity investment in Galbot in December, injecting long-term capital into the company while leveraging industrial and financial resources to strengthen corporate governance and industrial collaboration.

Zhejiang Hechuan Technology Co, also known as HCFA, is specialized in industrial automation and has steadily advanced its humanoid robotics R&D efforts in recent years. However, intensive technological breakthroughs and product iterations have led to mounting financial pressure for the company.

After learning of HCFA's financing needs, the Longyou subbranch of China Construction Bank in Quzhou, Zhejiang province, designed a customized financial service package based on the company's operational characteristics, cash flow patterns and development plans. The subbranch extended nearly 200 million yuan in credit to HCFA, ensuring the company could smoothly advance its technological R&D and commercialization efforts.

Qinglong Lite, a humanoid robot co-developed by HCFA, made its debut at the 2025 World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai, and participated in a fun run event in Longyou county in Quzhou in March.

On April 17, Manycore Tech, a Hangzhou-based provider of spatial intelligence services, was listed on the Hong Kong stock exchange. The company's spatial intelligence technology supports embodied AI and robot training. Several commercial banks and their subsidiaries provided financial support for the company's listing in Hong Kong.

Bank of China, together with Bank of China (Hong Kong) Ltd and its overseas investment banking platform BOC International Holdings Ltd, provided a range of services for Manycore Tech and its subsidiaries, including credit facilities, cross-border cash management, IPO fundraising account services and underwriting support.





Above: People get to know intelligent services at the exhibition area of ICBC during the 15th China (Guangzhou) International Finance Expo in Guangdong province on June 3. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY **Left:** Qinglong Lite, a humanoid robot co-developed by HCFA, participates in a fun run event in Longyou county in Quzhou, Zhejiang province, in March. China Construction Bank has extended nearly 200 million yuan in credit to HCFA. LIU SHUTING / FOR CHINA DAILY

CCB International (Holdings) Ltd, the financial and investment services flagship of CCB, served as joint sponsor, overall coordinator, joint global coordinator, joint bookrunner and joint lead manager for Manycore Tech's Hong Kong IPO.

During the company's critical push toward the capital market, CCB Zhejiang Branch learned of its financing needs and promptly coordinated with CCB International. The entire credit application process was completed in just 10 working days, facilitating Manycore Tech's smooth listing in Hong Kong. The bank also provided the company with comprehensive financial services, including wealth management and exclusive unsecured loans for its employees.

Given the rapid pace of technological change and evolving market demand in the humanoid robotics industry, banks face increasing requirements for professionalism and foresight. In recent years, banks have continuously adjusted their financial support strategies and optimized their service models.

Wu Zewei, a contract research fellow at Jiangsu Su Merchants Bank, said future competition in technology finance will center on the depth of industry understanding and the ability to provide integrated services. Banks will compete on their capacity to deliver comprehensive financial solutions covering the entire corporate lifecycle, including equity financing arrangements, mergers and acquisitions advisory services, and supply-chain coordination.

As technologies mature, financial institutions are also actively exploring innovative applications of AI in financial services. Intelligent humanoid robots are gradually moving from laboratories into bank branches and becoming valuable tools for business innovation.

In recent years, the ICBC Software Development Center and ICBC's branch in Changzhou, Jiangsu province, have collaborated with leading robotics teams to develop a humanoid robot assistant for bank lobby managers. Equipped with multimodal interaction, autonomous mobility and intelligent recognition capabilities, the robot can accurately perform tasks such as customer guidance, business consultations and document-filling assistance, improving branch efficiency and customer experience.

In July 2024, CCB partnered with Beijing Runze Zhiyuan Technology Co, a company specializing in the fintech sector, and Fourier, a Shanghai-based proactive AI robotics company, to launch China's first intelligent humanoid robot training base for bank lobby manager scenarios at its branch in Shanghai's Pudong New Area. The initiative uses real-world banking scenarios to drive technological development and accelerate the practical adoption of humanoid robots in the financial sector.

Wang Peng, a researcher at the Beijing Academy of Social Sciences, said humanoid robots will increasingly take on customer service responsibilities in bank branches, such as self-service account opening, transaction inquiries and customer consultation. Their efficiency and accuracy will enhance the customer experience. Banks will also leverage robots' powerful data-processing capabilities to develop personalized wealth management consultations and intelligent investment advisory solutions, offering customers a broader range of financial services.

Insurance companies are also playing an active role in supporting cutting-edge technology development. Humanoid robots typically achieve maturity through repeated testing, and insurance can provide risk buffers for intensive, high-frequency testing, encouraging companies to pursue more ambitious technological validation. In commercial operations, humanoid robots face multiple risks, including equipment failure, accidental damage and potential bodily injury or property damage to third parties. Insurance can provide essential protection against these risks.

Since the second half of 2025, China's leading property and casualty insurers have accelerated their expansion into the humanoid robotics insurance market. At present, customized insurance products for humanoid robots mainly focus on equipment damage coverage and third-party liability insurance.

Last year, Ping An Property & Casualty Insurance Company of China launched a comprehensive financial solution for embodied intelligence in Shenzhen, Guangdong province. The package includes customized coverage for R&D cost losses, product liability, AI system liability and electrochemical performance degradation, among other risks related to R&D, operations, electrical systems, machinery and cybersecurity.

However, due to the lack of risk data on humanoid robots, rapid technological advancements, and the complex and constantly evolving risk profile, insurers still face significant challenges in fully understanding the risks associated with this business. Analysts said that, under the premise of ensuring data security and privacy protection, efforts should be made to strengthen data sharing and the joint development of standards among the technology industry, research institutions and the insurance sector.

Banks launch strong AI talent drive

By **JIANG XUEQING**

Several Chinese lenders have recently launched special recruitment programs targeting high-level artificial intelligence talent, accelerating their push into the financial AI arena. The trend underscores the banking sector's growing urgency to advance its digital and intelligent transformation.

The latest hiring drive focuses on core areas such as large language model development, AI application deployment and technology architecture planning. Entry requirements have been significantly raised, with most positions requiring candidates to hold PhD degrees from internationally renowned universities, possess work experience at major overseas institutions, and demonstrate expertise in LLM development, deep learning frameworks and other advanced AI technologies.

Yang Haiping, a researcher at the Shanghai-based SIFL Institute, said that the large-scale recruitment of top-tier AI talent is an important step for banks seeking to gain an early-mover advantage in AI applications and upgrade their digital finance strategies. The move will accelerate intelligent innovation in banking operations and management, reshape the industry's technological foundation and core competitiveness, and fundamentally change approaches to talent development in the sector.

Bank of Communications is recruiting senior AI experts for its financial technology department and fintech innovation research institute. Applicants are required to hold a PhD from a globally recognized university and have at least three years of relevant experience at a major overseas financial institution or international organization. Candidates with backgrounds in AI, data mining or computer vision, strong expertise in machine learning, deep learning and graph algorithms, as well as experience in AI strategy planning or generative AI model development at large institutions, will receive priority consideration.

Bank of China is hiring for an AI planning and research position in the fintech department at its head office. The role will be primarily responsible for developing the lender's AI framework and promoting the integration of AI technologies into core business operations. Preference will be given to candidates with experience in AI research and development at leading global tech companies, major financial institutions' AI centers or top-tier AI laboratories. The position also emphasizes the integration of technology and finance, requiring at least five years of fintech experience and familiarity with banking operations as well as risk and compliance requirements.

China Guangfa Bank has also recently opened an AI-related position at its head office, focusing on forward-looking research and commercialization of LLMs. Candidates are expected to be proficient in cutting-edge technologies such as LLMs and multimodal systems. The position is open only to PhD holders from prestigious overseas universities with at least three years of experience at internationally recognized companies or overseas financial institutions.

Gao Zhengyang, a special researcher at Jiangsu Su Merchants Bank, said lenders are competing intensely for top AI talent because the technology is rapidly penetrating every aspect of banking, including risk management, marketing, operations and customer service. Professionals with cutting-edge technical expertise can help banks build proprietary and controllable AI systems to support the intelligent upgrading of their businesses.

Gao said this year's AI recruitment drive reflects the banking sector's strategic ambition to use AI to fundamentally reshape banking operations. As competition shifts from traditional business capabilities to data management and intelligent decisionmaking, banks increasingly need multidisciplinary professionals who possess both advanced algorithmic expertise and a deep understanding of financial services.

A report released by PwC in March found that among surveyed financial institutions in the banking, insurance and asset management sectors in the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong, more than 75 percent plan to position AI as a "strategic transformation engine" to revolutionize and expand existing services, or as a "new revenue pillar" to generate new income streams through innovative services, over the next three to five years.

Looking ahead, Tian Lihui, a professor of finance at Nankai University, said the demand for AI talent in the banking sector will follow three major trends: talent shortages will increasingly be concentrated among hybrid professionals who combine business expertise with algorithmic skills; AI-related positions will gradually expand from the head office to branch networks and subsidiaries; and AI governance and compliance positions will become a critical requirement across the industry.

In the long run, Tian said, banks need to establish sustainable talent development systems, optimize performance evaluation mechanisms, and allow sufficient time for technology refinement.

AI has already permeated virtually every aspect of banking operations in China.

Industrial and Commercial Bank of China has deployed more than 500 AI application scenarios across over 30 business areas, while China Construction Bank's AI applications cover nearly 400 scenarios, leveraging AI to empower the entire credit approval process. Bank of Communications has deepened its AI applications in areas such as cross-border trade, wealth management and the digital transformation of retail banking operations, with its intelligent computing capacity increasing by more than 50 percent year-on-year in 2025.



Visitors interact with a humanoid robot from Bank of Communications during the 2025 World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai on July 27. HE XIAOXIAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

Demand for tech professionals is growing rapidly. The combined number of tech personnel employed by China's six largest State-owned commercial banks rose from more than 111,100 at the end of 2024 to over 135,800 by end-2025, representing a year-on-year growth of 22 percent, significantly outpacing changes in overall bank staffing levels.

Dong Ximiao, chief economist at Merchants Union Consumer Finance and deputy director of the Shanghai Institution for Finance and Development, said China still faces a significant shortage of fintech talent, and there remains a clear mismatch between university training programs and industry needs.

Dong said large financial institutions should take the lead in tech development and application, while sharing excess capabilities and talent resources. Smaller institutions should cooperate with leading financial institutions and tech firms to accelerate the integration of technology and business operations.

He suggested that financial institutions foster an open and inclusive culture that tolerates experimentation and failure, and build a comprehensive talent ecosystem through recruitment and promotion mechanisms.

Dong said banks should ensure that chief information officers are empowered with clear responsibilities, authority and resources. At the same time, AI-related risks should be fully incorporated into enterprise-wide risk management frameworks, with comprehensive measures adopted to prevent and address risks.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:15 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:15 PM

CHINA

High-purity quartz discovered in Xizang

By **LI MENGHAN**
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese scientists have identified a rock formation in the Xizang autonomous region as a potential source of high-purity quartz. This scarce mineral is critical to manufacturing semiconductors, optoelectronics — light-based electronics, and aerospace technology.

The discovery marks a significant step toward reducing the country's reliance on imported supplies of this strategic material.

The research team, led by the University of Science and Technology of China in Hefei, Anhui province, evaluated leucogranites — light-colored igneous rocks formed when the earth's crust melts — in the Dinggye area of southern Xizang. They found these rocks could be purified to yield a silicon dioxide content above 99.995 percent, meeting the threshold for high-purity quartz. The findings were published in the European Journal of Mineralogy on April 30.

High-purity quartz is highly valued because it can withstand extreme heat, is chemically stable, does not expand much when heated, and is an excellent electrical insulator that allows light to pass through easily. Defined as having total chemical impurities below 50 parts per million — meaning the mineral is roughly 99.995 percent pure silicon dioxide — it is extremely difficult to purify. However, it remains essential to high-tech industries such as microchips, solar panels and fiber-optic communications.

Global resources of the mineral are scarce and unevenly distributed. According to the China Geological Survey, the United States holds some of the richest deposits. In fact, the Spruce Pine mine in North Carolina once supplied more than 90 percent of the world's semiconductor-grade high-purity quartz sand. Russia, Norway and Australia also maintain significant reserves. These countries have long dominated the market with established mining and processing capabilities.

China, despite being the world's largest manufacturer of solar panels and a major semiconductor producer, is the largest importer of high-purity quartz. Consequently, the country has been intensifying efforts to develop domestic sources.

In recent years, breakthroughs under the national strategic mineral exploration campaign have identified high-purity quartz deposits in the East Qinling region of Henan province and the Altay region of the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. These sites have yielded products with purities of at least 99.995 percent, with some samples reaching 99.998 percent. In 2025, the Ministry of Natural Resources officially designated high-purity quartz as China's 174th recognized mineral species, aiming to further bolster supply chain security.

The new study has extended that exploration effort to the Himalayan belt, which stretches across hundreds of kilometers in Xizang. While the light-colored leucogranites there have long been studied for their potential to host rare metals, no systematic assessment of their high-purity quartz potential had been conducted until now.

The research team collected samples from the Dinggye area and applied a series of analytical testing techniques.

After processing, the purified quartz sands from two sample types achieved silicon dioxide purities of 99.9969 percent and 99.9959 percent, successfully placing them within the high-purity category on industry-standard classification charts.

The study noted that the widespread exposure of these rocks in the region offers a significant opportunity to develop high-end quartz resources in China, ensuring a stable and strategic domestic supply of raw materials.



The delegation visits a robotics company in Tianjin on Monday. The event showcased cutting-edge robotics technology to officials and experts from various countries. TONG YU / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Tianjin Port's smart terminal lauded

By **YAN DONGJIE** in Tianjin
yandongjie@chinadaily.com.cn

A delegation comprising officials and experts from eight countries, including Cuba, Austria, Gambia, Laos and Cote d'Ivoire, praised Tianjin's efforts in advancing green development, technological innovation and public well-being during a recent visit to the port city.

The four-day visit, aimed at showcasing China's people-centered development philosophy through a tour of a range of sites including Tianjin Port's smart terminal, concluded on Wednesday.

The Beijiang port area's Berth C stands out as the world's first fully intelligent and carbon-neutral container terminal. Powered entirely by electricity generated through an integrated wind-solar-storage energy system, the terminal has achieved a 100 percent clean power supply and obtained carbon neutrality certification.

Its operations are supported by an integrated 5G and Beidou Satellite Navigation System, artificial intelligence and autonomous vehicles, significantly improving efficiency while reducing emissions.

According to port authorities, the intelligent system has reduced cargo loading and unloading times by 26.2 percent and improved vessel berthing efficiency by 28 percent compared with traditional operations.

For visitors, the terminal offered more than a glimpse of advanced port management. It demonstrated how digital technologies and renewable energy can work together to reduce carbon emissions while maintaining high operational efficiency, an issue many countries are exploring as they pursue sustainable development and green economic growth.

Mohammed B.S. Jallow, vice-president of Gambia, said he was impressed by the terminal's ability to increase throughput while maintaining zero-emission operations.

"As you can see, there is barely any noise on site. The operational efficiency is truly remarkable. Higher efficiency enables the port to handle more cargo volume, while maintaining zero emissions, which is an incredible achievement," he said.

Robert Mag Fitzthum, an Austrian author, said, "For a long time, people have pursued economic development while longing for clean rivers and clean surroundings, which are essential for people's well-being.

"China has achieved remarkable success in balancing sound ecological development and robust economic progress, setting a fine example for sustainable development," he added.

The delegation also visited the Sino-Singapore Tianjin Eco-City in Binhai New Area, where smart governance and green urban planning have been integrated to improve residents' quality of life.

As the world's first eco-city jointly developed by two countries, the project was designed to explore sustainable urban development solutions. With more than 12 million square meters of green space and a digital governance platform powered by big data and AI, the eco-city monitors environmental indicators in real time while providing efficient public services.

Visitors learned how pedestrian greenways connect parks, schools, hospitals and residential communities, forming a convenient low-carbon lifestyle network. New facilities including senior universities, community markets and cultural centers have also been introduced to meet residents' diverse needs.

Christian Arnaud Adjelou, president of the National Human Rights Council of Cote d'Ivoire, said the city's extensive green space and well-developed public services demonstrated a strong commitment to improving people's quality of life.

"Every effort made here is geared toward protecting human rights and creating a better living environment for residents," he said.

Dayron Valido Escalona, a specialist from the human rights group of Cuba's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said the visits highlighted the close connection between technological innovation, sustainable development and people's well-being.

A bridge reopens



Villagers sing traditional Dong ethnic songs during the reopening of a bridge in Congjiang county, Guizhou province, on Wednesday. Originally built in 2012, it was destroyed by a devastating flood in June 2025. Reconstructed as a key post-disaster recovery project, the 310-meter-long bridge now features improved safety and stability measures, ensuring smooth passage and providing convenience for local residents.
WU XINGKE / FOR CHINA DAILY

DPP's response to delimitation talks a betrayal

Mainland warns external interference undermines regional stability, peace

By **LI SHANGYI**
lishangyi@chinadaily.com.cn

The Chinese mainland criticized on Wednesday the Democratic Progressive Party authorities in Taiwan for betraying the nation in their response to the so-called maritime delimitation negotiations between Japan and the Philippines, accusing the authorities of currying favor with external forces.

Zhang Han, spokeswoman for the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, reiterated at a regular news conference that China possesses an exclusive economic zone and continental shelf in the proposed maritime delimitation area announced by Japan and the Philippines, which lies east of Taiwan.

She denounced the DPP authorities for "bowing and scraping" in an attempt to curry favor with external forces, calling them "traitors to the nation".

While the Chinese mainland called on both sides of the Taiwan Strait to jointly safeguard national sovereignty and territorial integrity, the DPP authorities asserted that "the two sides of the Taiwan Strait are not subordinate to each other, and China has no right to interfere or speak on behalf of Taiwan".

In response, Zhang said in the face of condemnation from people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, the DPP authorities have once again hyped the fallacies of "Taiwan independence" to shift attention and mislead the public.

The DPP authorities' response to the maritime delimitation talks launched by Japan and the Philippines on May 28 has been criticized by opposition parties and political commentators as sacrificing the island's maritime interests. After expressing support for the talks on May 31, the DPP authorities later said that Taiwan had "fisheries agreements" with both countries and would continue consultations with them on maritime issues.

Zhang warned the DPP authorities that anyone who forgets their ancestors and betrays the nation will "be nailed to the pillar of shame in history".

Responding to a maritime standoff between the mainland and Taiwan in waters around the Dongsha Islands on Friday, Zhang emphasized that China has sovereignty over the South China Sea Islands, including the Dongsha Islands and their adjacent waters.

She said that law enforcement patrols by the mainland's coast guard in the relevant waters constitute the normal exercise of official duties.

Addressing claims by the DPP authorities that the mainland vessel had entered "restricted waters" around the islands, and their corresponding measures, Zhang warned that the DPP authorities would bear all consequences arising from further provocation.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said on Tuesday that Japan and the Philippines' decision to unilaterally launch maritime delimitation negotiations while bypassing China seriously violates international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, as well as the basic norms governing international relations.

"It gravely infringes upon China's maritime rights and interests," Lin said, expressing firm opposition to the move.

On June 1, the China Coast Guard conducted routine law enforcement patrols in accordance with the law in waters east of Taiwan, an operation carried out in response to the delimitation talks between Japan and the Philippines, according to Jiang Lue, spokesman for the China Coast Guard.

From June 6 to 10, the Ministry of Transport organized vessels from the maritime safety administrations of Fujian and Guangdong provinces to jointly conduct a special maritime traffic law enforcement and survey operation in waters east of Taiwan.

Zhang Xiaogang, spokesman for the Ministry of National Defense, urged Japan and the Philippines on Tuesday to immediately cease what he described as illegal and provocative actions that infringe upon China's rights and interests. He warned that if the two countries persist, they will only bring consequences upon themselves.

At the Wednesday news conference, Zhang Han also noted that with the strong backing of the motherland following peaceful reunification, people of Taiwan will enjoy greater security, and the risk of conflict arising from "Taiwan independence" will be fundamentally eliminated.

She said Taiwan people will no longer be used as "cannon fodder" for the "Taiwan independence" separatist agenda, and the island will no longer be a "pawn" of external forces.

"Taiwan fishermen operating in waters surrounding the island will receive timely and strong protection of their lawful rights and interests from the country's maritime forces," she added.

China's oldest captive male Asian elephant Bamo dies at age 65

By **HE QI** in Shanghai
heqi@chinadaily.com.cn

The oldest living male Asian elephant raised in captivity in China, Bamo, died on Sunday at the Shanghai Zoo. He was 65.

Bamo, who died at 1:16 pm, held the record for the longest-lived male Asian elephant in the studbook of the Chinese Association of Zoological Gardens.

Born in Myanmar in 1961, Bamo first came to China in 1967, initially residing at the Beijing Zoo. He moved permanently to the Shanghai Zoo in 1973, spending 53 years in the city and becoming the longest occupant of the zoo's elephant enclosure, as well as a cherished fixture in the childhood memories of countless local residents.

"I had been with him for nearly eight years," said Liu Chang, Bamo's 34-year-old full-time keeper.

Despite his advanced age, Liu said Bamo maintained the playful heart of a mischievous child. "During on-site explanations, he loved to spray water at me — his way of demanding attention and snacks," Liu recalled.

Liu noted that Bamo was exceptionally intelligent and often traded items for treats with his keepers. "He would tear off chains or branches from enrichment items and swing them around with his trunk. We would trade corn and watermelon for them, and he would gently drop the items in front of us. He was very sensible."

As Bamo aged, time left its marks: his molars deteriorated, his spine curved, and he began gradually losing weight. To ensure his comfort, the zoo implemented a systematic health management program for elderly elephants, which Liu credited as crucial to Bamo's longevity.

"Given his tooth deterioration, we cut his food into smaller pieces and switched to frequent, smaller meals, adding a little each time to encourage him to eat more," Liu said.

Beyond meticulous dietary care, the park constructed two specialized training walls for positive reinforcement training under protected contact. This enabled staff members to safely and effectively conduct foot care, oral examinations, and ear temperature checks.

The outdoor exhibit area was also enhanced with pools, sprinklers, sand piles, and red earth mounds, while soft resting beds were added to the indoor enclosures for added comfort.

"We undertook a major renovation of the pool in 2023 and installed sprinkler systems," Liu said. "Elephants love playing with water and enjoy spraying themselves."

To cater to the elephants' need for mental stimulation, the husbandry team frequently replaced feeding devices and other enrichment items. "We had to continually refresh the enrichment content, as he would lose interest after interacting with the same items a few times," Liu added.

Since 2025, the Shanghai Zoo has enlisted elephant care experts from the United States on two occasions to provide on-site guidance in behavioral training, foot care, and elderly elephant management to maximize Bamo's comfort.

However, Bamo's appetite declined sharply in late May, and he occasionally appeared restless. Despite continuous adjustments to his diet and various nursing efforts by the care team, his condition did not improve. On Saturday morning, Bamo's hind legs began to show noticeable unsteadiness, and he collapsed in the early hours of Sunday.

"The elephant house feels so empty now," Liu said. "For eight years, my day began with checking on him — his condition, eating habits, and spirit. Now, there's a huge void in my heart.

"As a keeper, the best way to honor Bamo is by updating our husbandry practices and caring better for the remaining elephants," Liu added.

Bamo fathered eight calves, significantly enhancing the genetic diversity and population of captive-bred Asian elephants. Liu said Bamo witnessed the evolution of the Shanghai Zoo from basic facilities to a comprehensive breeding environment. The elephant's late-life care protocols and daily husbandry practices have since become a standard for zoos across China.



A file photo of Bamo.
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:15 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:15 PM

CHINA

CROSSING THE STRAIT

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

DPP snubs mainland cooperation package

Taiwan industries to suffer as island's authorities choose politics over people

By **LI SHANGYI**
lishangyi@chinadaily.com.cn



A visitor tours the booth of Jinmen, an outlying county near Fujian province but governed by the Taiwan authorities, during the 20th Strait Travel Fair in Xiamen, Fujian, last year. The fair invited professionals in Taiwan's tourism industry for discussions and promotions.
ZHANG BIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Two months after the Chinese mainland introduced 10 sweeping policy measures to advance cross-Strait cooperation, tangible economic benefits have begun reaching key agricultural, tourism and media sectors. However, a deepening political deadlock remains, as the Democratic Progressive Party authorities in Taiwan have yet to respond to mounting public and industry calls to adopt the package.

The comprehensive policy blueprint was announced by the Taiwan Work Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on April 12, following a visit by a Chinese Kuomintang delegation to the mainland led by Chairwoman Cheng Li-wun. Framed as a gesture of goodwill to foster closer integration, the broadly supported package covers youth exchanges, infrastructure connectivity, trade facilitation, tourism and cultural cooperation.

Over the past two months, several measures have been steadily advanced.

Based on adherence to the 1992 Consensus, which embodies the one-China principle, and opposition to "Taiwan independence", the mainland proposed a regularized mechanism for communication between the CPC and the KMT as part of the policy package. Both parties pledged to promote cross-Strait exchanges and integration with more effective measures.

Similarly, both parties have been building an institutionalized mechanism to facilitate two-way exchanges between young people across the Taiwan Strait. In addition to regular cross-Strait youth exchange events organized by the mainland's All-China Youth Federation and the KMT's youth league, 20 youth delegations from Taiwan are set to visit the mainland annually.

Lee Chang-chih, who oversees youth affairs for the KMT, said he hopes to connect with young people who are interested in the mainland but have limited familiarity with it. "Through exchanges that are more closely tied to everyday life, we aim to help them find common ground, deepen mutual understanding, and build stronger connections," Lee said.

Regarding the measure aimed at promoting cross-Strait cooperation in film, television and cultural production, Zhu Fenglian, spokeswoman for the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, outlined on June 3 three avenues through which Taiwan industry professionals can participate in the mainland's burgeoning micro-drama sector.

According to Zhu, Taiwan industry professionals can establish television program production companies in Fujian province, jointly develop micro-dramas with mainland partners, or take part in productions as performers.



Visitors view the *Jadeite Cabbage* exhibit at the Taipei Palace Museum Southern Branch in Chiayi county, Taiwan, on May 3.
CHEN JIANXIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

At present, 18 Taiwan-funded enterprises in Fujian have obtained licenses for radio and television program production and are actively engaged in micro-drama production.

Taiwan-produced films also continue to enjoy smooth access to mainland theaters. So far this year, six Taiwan films have been released on the mainland. Last year, eight Taiwan-produced films were screened on the mainland, generating a combined box office revenue of approximately 88.11 million yuan ($12.2 million).

In a recent poll conducted by Taiwan's United Daily News, about 60 percent of respondents on the island supported the authorities taking this opportunity to resume or expand cross-Strait exchanges.

However, among the 10 measures, major initiatives aimed at facilitating cross-Strait exchanges, such as resuming more direct flights, restoring individual tours to Taiwan for residents of Fujian and Shanghai, and advancing cross-Strait infrastructure connectivity, have yet to receive a response from the DPP authorities.

While the mainland has been actively advancing the implementation of the policy package, the DPP authorities have dismissed it as a "sugar-coated poison" and characterized it as a set of "united front" measures.

Citing what they describe as "security" concerns, the DPP authorities have rejected the mainland's proposals to facilitate the provision of water, electricity and gas services, as well as to promote bridge links between Fujian's coastal areas and Jinmen and Matsu, the Taiwan-controlled islands closest to the mainland.

Lee Wen-liang, deputy county magistrate of Jinmen, said in an interview that the local government remains open to any proposals that would contribute to Jinmen's development and attaches great importance to issues concerning people's life, regional development and transportation infrastructure.

Meanwhile, the new Xiamen Xiang'an International Airport has incorporated dedicated check-in and customs clearance channels for travelers from Jinmen into its design. The facilities are ready to be integrated into Jinmen's transportation network once cross-Strait policies are eased.

In late April, the mainland's Civil Aviation Administration submitted technical applications to Taiwan's aviation authorities to resume regular direct passenger flights between Taiwan and five cities on the mainland, including Urumqi in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region and Xi'an in Shaanxi province. The proposal forms part of the broader policy package aimed at fully normalizing cross-Strait passenger air services.

As of June, only 15 mainland destinations and 10 Taiwan destinations are served by regularly scheduled cross-Strait passenger flights. Under existing arrangements, however, as many as 61 destinations on the mainland and 10 in Taiwan are eligible for such services, a level that was in place before 2020.

The "mainland affairs council" in Taiwan has refused to adopt the initiative, arguing that the "current arrangement is sufficient".

Cross-Strait air traffic remained robust in the first quarter, with 8,079 flights carrying 1.47 million passengers and average load factors exceeding 80 percent. Mainland airlines have already utilized nearly all of their allocated capacity on cross-Strait routes.

China Eastern Airlines, Spring Airlines and Shandong Airlines planned to resume direct flights starting this July, respectively operating routes from Chengdu in Sichuan province to Taichung, Ningbo in Zhejiang province to Kaohsiung, and Qingdao in Shandong province to Taichung.

Calling on the DPP authorities to lift "unreasonable" restrictions on air travel, the mainland said cross-Strait flight services should be arranged by airlines according to market demand.

The policy package also includes pilot programs allowing residents of Shanghai and Fujian to travel to Taiwan as individual tourists, a move that has been welcomed by Taiwan's tourism industry. However, its full implementation remains contingent on a response from the DPP authorities.

Since April 29, residents of Shanghai have been able to visit Jinmen and Matsu under the individual travel program, following the mainland's announcement in February that such tours to the counties would resume.

According to the latest statistics from the county tourism department, 6,579 mainland tourists with travel permits entered Jinmen during this year's May Day holiday. So far this year, the total number of mainland visitors to Jinmen has reached nearly 60,000, of whom 99 percent were individual travelers.

Wang Chih-hung, chairman of the Taiwan Chinese Tourism Management Association, said in an interview during the holiday that Taiwan's past milestone of 10 million inbound visitors was largely driven by a steady flow of mainland tourists. "Today, Taiwan's tourism industry is missing this crucial piece of the puzzle, and tensions in cross-Strait relations and geopolitical instability have also raised safety concerns among overseas visitors," Wang said.

In August 2019, the mainland suspended the pilot program for residents of 47 cities to visit Taiwan because of the DPP authorities' continued promotion of "Taiwan independence" activities and efforts to heighten cross-Strait tensions.

About 2 million people in Taiwan are employed in tourism and related industries, accounting for roughly one-sixth of the island's total workforce. Taiwan media estimate that the cross-Strait tourism sector recorded a deficit of approximately NT$152 billion ($5 billion) last year, as mainland visitor arrivals totaled just 557,700, far below the peak of 4.14 million in 2015, while 4.89 million visits were made by Taiwan residents to the mainland.

On April 20, Taiwan's general chamber of commerce held a news conference bringing together representatives from seven major industries, including hotels and travel service providers. They urged the DPP authorities to "open up and lift restrictions where they should", and questioned, "Why not accept the mainland's 'olive branch'?"

In addition to the tourism sector, Taiwan's agricultural and fisheries industries are also closely watching the mainland's policy measures.

According to Taiwan's agricultural authorities, agricultural exports totaled $4.45 billion last year, down 9.6 percent year-on-year. In the first quarter of this year, exports amounted to $1.01 billion, a 2.7 percent decrease from a year earlier. Fish and fish products recorded the largest decline among export categories.

To facilitate agricultural and fishery products from Taiwan in accessing the mainland market, as proposed in the policy package, port authorities in Fujian province, including Dongshan Customs, have enabled the import of Taiwan agricultural and fishery products that meet inspection and quarantine standards. They have achieved this by developing a tailored customs clearance framework for live fish shipments from the island.

In the first quarter, local customs authorities facilitated the import of 1,263.2 metric tons of live grouper from Taiwan, with a total value of 51.98 million yuan, representing year-on-year increases of 88.3 percent and 96.1 percent, respectively.

Regarding the accommodation of Taiwan's deep-sea fishing vessels and the landing of their catches, the Lianjiang national distant-water fisheries base in Fuzhou, Fujian, provides the necessary facilities and conditions. A supporting network and industrial chain have also been established in the province to facilitate berthing, resupply and trade for Taiwan fishing vessels.

Other forms of economic cooperation are also being advanced on the mainland, including the organization of exhibitions and trade fairs for Taiwan products, and the development of small-scale cross-Strait commodity trading markets.

Chang Li-shan, magistrate of Yunlin county in Taiwan, told the media that the opportunity to export agricultural products to the mainland is good news, serving as a shot in the arm for local farmers and fishermen. It will help create broader and more accessible channels for trade, she added.

Zhang Han, a spokeswoman for the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, said at a news conference in May, "The DPP authorities should follow public opinion on the island and respond to industry appeals by lifting artificial restrictions and removing barriers to the normalization of cross-Strait travel, exchanges and cooperation in various fields."

Cross-Strait 'mother' volunteers nurture child welfare

By **ZHANG YI** and **HU MEIDONG**
in Fuzhou

Strolling through a university campus in Fuzhou, Fujian province, Tsai Yu-chin from Taiwan tightly held the hand of a local primary school boy whose parents both live with visual impairments. Beside them, Tsai's junior high son joined in, laughing and chatting with the young boy.

For the young guest, who rarely has the opportunity to travel outside his immediate neighborhood, every corner of the campus — from the university history museum to the student dining hall — was a wonder to explore.

This campus day trip was organized by Tsai to fulfill a personal wish for the boy. Her efforts represent just one of many regular companionships forged by a unique cross-Strait volunteer group of "mothers" from both sides of the Taiwan Strait.

The volunteer team brings together around 30 Fuzhou and Taiwan volunteers. Through regular companionship, educational trips and charitable activities, the team has become a warm support system for underprivileged youth.

The heart of the operation is the Sunny Children's Welfare Library in Chengmen village, an underdeveloped suburban neighborhood on the outskirts of Fuzhou built in 2022.

Lin Qinyan, a local social worker, envisioned creating a quality reading environment for children who lack family care in the area. A prominent Taiwan-funded milk tea chain operating in the Chinese mainland became the project's earliest partner, providing essential funding and hands-on renovation assistance. From that initial library base, a dedicated cross-Strait volunteer network gradually expanded to support children from low-income families.

Lin and her fellow social workers match compassionate volunteers with vulnerable children for one-on-one, long-term mentorship.

Tsai, who is also head of the women's committee of the Fuzhou Taiwan Entrepreneur Association, joined the program last August. Her involvement quickly shifted from delivering custom study desks to disadvantaged households to providing deep, personal companionship.

Moved by the children's resilience, Tsai rallied 15 members from the Fuzhou Taiwan Entrepreneur Association in Fuzhou to join the volunteer ranks.

Ahead of International Children's Day on June 1, the network collected and published over 100 modest holiday wishes from vulnerable children, ranging from badminton rackets and sneakers, to scarves and storybooks.

Cross-Strait individuals and businesses claimed every single wish shortly after the list was released. "Donors purchase these gifts themselves based on the price guidelines we provide, and volunteers specially deliver them to the children's homes," said Huang Shan, a local social worker.

"These wishes, coming from underprivileged children across Fuzhou, are all very simple. Once, a child in a remote area just wished to eat a hamburger," she added.

"Some parents even encourage their own children to use their pocket money to buy gifts for these families in need," Huang said.

The library has since blossomed into a weekend haven. At a recent pre-Children's Day gathering, around 20 children of local gig-economy workers and distressed families gathered to play games. Guided by the social workers and volunteer "mothers", the children painted creative name plaques to share on stage and participated in interactive legal safety games to earn school supplies and safety gift packs.



A volunteer interacts with children at the Sunny Children's Welfare Library in Fuzhou, Fujian province, last month ahead of International Children's Day on June 1. QIU YUWEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

"The children happily accept their 'Taiwan moms'," Tsai said, adding that doing good deeds makes her feel fulfilled, ensuring that care is truly delivered to those in need who require consistent support.

Lin said, "This sustained presence has brought visible, positive changes to the children."

Lin shared the story of a young girl who lost her parents and lives with her grandparents; through the long-term companionship of her dedicated volunteer mentor, she has become significantly more cheerful while maintaining stable academic performance. "These small acts of kindness are like scattered glimmers of light," Lin said. "When we join forces, we build a bridge of love."

Contact the writers at zhangyi1@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:15 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:15 PM

LIFE

TAPPING CHINA'S TOURISM MARKET

Azerbaijan opens its office in Beijing, seeking partnerships and closer ties to become a premier destination for outbound travelers, **Yang Feiyue** reports.

Azerbaijan is aiming to make China one of its top three tourism source markets within the next five years, a goal underscored by the opening of the Azerbaijan Tourism Board's first China office in Beijing in late May.

The move reflects the country's growing confidence in the Chinese outbound travel market and its determination to build closer ties with Chinese travelers, travel companies and media partners as visitor numbers continue to rise.

"We have been very active in China for the past six or seven years, promoting Azerbaijan through roadshows, exhibitions and industry events," says Florian Sengstschmid, chief executive officer of the Azerbaijan Tourism Board.

"We felt this was the right moment to move from working remotely to having a physical presence here. It shows our commitment to the Chinese market."

The new office is intended to serve as more than a marketing outpost. Sengstschmid envisions it as a platform for people-to-people exchanges and industry collaboration.

"We want this office to be a place where people meet," he says. "We want to invite travel partners, journalists, bloggers, and business leaders to exchange ideas and explore opportunities between Azerbaijan and China."

The visa waiver agreement between China and Azerbaijan has been in effect since July 16, 2025, meaning Chinese citizens holding valid ordinary passports can now enter Azerbaijan visa-free and stay up to 30 days per visit, with no more than 90 days within any 180-day period. In 2024, Azerbaijan had already introduced a one-year unilateral visa-free trial for Chinese visitors.

China has become one of Azerbaijan's fastest-growing tourism source markets. The country welcomed 63,500 Chinese visitors in 2025, a year-on-year increase of 41.7 percent, according to the tourism board. From January to April this year, arrivals from China exceeded 14,300, maintaining strong growth momentum.

Fuad Naghiyev, chairman of the State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan, emphasizes that the establishment of the Beijing office reflects Azerbaijan's strategic focus on the Chinese market. He notes that improved air connectivity and visa facilitation have supported steady growth in bilateral tourism flows.

For Azerbaijan, the significance of China extends beyond numbers.

"China is the world's largest outbound travel market and has held that position for many years," Sengstschmid says. "For many Chinese travelers, Azerbaijan is still a relatively new destination, which means there is tremendous potential."

The tourism board hopes to increase annual arrivals from China to between 200,000 and 300,000 within the next three to five years.

Industry players say a growing interest among Chinese travelers suggests the target may be within reach.

Li Mengran, marketing manager of the Beijing-based travel agency Utour, notes that Azerbaijan is emerging as a key growth driver in the niche Transcaucasus travel market.

"With Chinese travelers increasingly seeking out less-explored destinations, our multi-country itineraries combining Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia have recorded steady growth year after year," Li says.

She attributes part of the destination's rising appeal to increasingly convenient travel policies across the region.

"For Chinese tourists, it is no longer just one country opening up. The wider Transcaucasus region is becoming more accessible, making it easier for travelers to visit several destinations in a single trip," she says.





According to Li, demand for smaller and emerging destinations served by her company has risen by around 15 percent year-on-year this year, with Azerbaijan standing out thanks to its distinctive culture, dramatic landscapes and relatively untapped appeal.

The destination tends to perform particularly well during China's major holiday periods, including the National Day holiday in October, when it often emerges as a dark horse among long-haul and niche destinations, she adds.

Supporting Azerbaijan's ambition are a growing number of travel facilitation measures. China and Azerbaijan have implemented mutual visa-free arrangements, while air connectivity continues to expand. Azerbaijan Airlines currently operates direct flights between Beijing and Baku, while China Southern Airlines operates direct flights between Urumqi and Baku. A direct Shanghai-Baku route is expected to launch next year.

The Beijing office will also coordinate the tourism board's marketing campaigns across China, including cooperation with major online travel platforms and participation in industry events.

During a recent visit to China, the tourism board held roadshows in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, Shanghai and Beijing, alongside six industry partners, including Azerbaijan Airlines. The organization also participated in ITB China in Shanghai and signed a strategic cooperation memorandum with Tongcheng Travel, a leading travel platform based in Jiangsu province.

Recognizing that Chinese travelers are increasingly discovering destinations online, Azerbaijan has been strengthening its presence on Chinese digital platforms such as Weibo and Xiaohongshu.

"We don't want to bring Azerbaijan into these channels in a top-down way," Sengstschmid says. "We want Chinese travelers and Chinese content creators to tell their own stories and share their own experiences."

The country has also expanded its "China Ready" program, which aims to help local tourism businesses better serve Chinese visitors through staff training, service standards and improved visitor facilities.

Beyond certification programs, efforts are underway to improve signage, navigation systems and digital payment options. Services, including Alipay, are expanding to make travel easier and more convenient for Chinese visitors.

Sengstschmid says he believes Azerbaijan's appeal lies in its unique blend of cultures and landscapes.

"Azerbaijan is Western with an Eastern outlook," he says. "You see it in the culture, the food, the hospitality, and the way people live."

Azerbaijan has rolled out a wide range of tourism experiences tailored to Chinese travelers, including cultural exploration, nature-based travel, Silk Road heritage, gastronomy, wine tourism, and wellness experiences.

Visitors can explore the Walled City of Baku, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, admire modern landmarks such as the Heydar Aliyev Center, or venture further afield to discover mud volcanoes, mountain villages and ancient Silk Road towns. Destinations such as Khinalig, one of the highest and oldest continuously inhabited settlements in the Caucasus, offer insights into centuries-old traditions, while regions known for wine production and wellness tourism add further diversity to the visitor experience.

Sengstschmid says ultimately, human connections matter most.

"When people feel welcome, they want to return," he says. "Tourism starts with people."

With a permanent presence in Beijing, growing air links and targeted efforts to adapt to Chinese travelers' preferences, Azerbaijan authorities are betting that greater familiarity will translate into stronger tourism flows and deeper exchanges between the two countries in the years ahead.

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn



From top: Azerbaijan Tourism Board's booth at this year's ITB China in Shanghai. Khinalig, one of the highest and oldest continuously inhabited settlements in the Caucasus, is a recommended destination in the country. People enjoy a promenade on the Baku Boulevard. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Conservation efforts boost awareness of mangrove protection

GUANGZHOU — At Jinlong Primary School in South China's Guangdong province, second-graders are busy sketching mangroves, imagining tiny crabs scuttling among the roots.

"Mangroves are like a kindergarten for little crabs," one pupil says.

The lush mangroves that now inspire the students were once dismissed by locals in Tantou village in Nansha district, Guangzhou, as nothing more than common shoreline weeds.

"When we were kids, we often ran to the beach to catch fiddler crabs and river shrimp. We thought these mangroves were just ordinary water plants," says Huang Jinhua, Party secretary of the village.

The villagers' perception shifted dramatically in 2019, when a powerful typhoon struck the area.

"The water level rose so fast that we thought the sea would overflow the embankment. We were ready to evacuate people. But unexpectedly, the tide slowly receded," Huang recalls.

Realizing that mangroves act as "coastal guardians" that stabilize shorelines and purify nearshore waters, villagers began participating in regular beach cleanups and implementing plant pest and disease control measures.

Furthermore, a more systematic and scientific conservation effort took root following an unexpected encounter.

In 2022, a group of strangers appeared near the village's mangrove forest during a routine patrol. The villagers grew instantly alert, approached the visitors, and shouted: "What are you doing? Don't cut the trees!"

To their surprise, the strangers turned out to be researchers from the Guangzhou Ocean Carbon Peak and Carbon Neutrality Research Association, who had arrived to survey the mangroves.

"We spotted the mangroves earlier using drones and remote-sensing technology. They were growing well but lacked proper scientific management, so we came to conduct field surveys," says Du Yuyan, secretary general of the association.

The confrontation quickly transformed into cooperation. With support from the United Nations Development Programme, the association helped build a 300-meter mangrove science corridor in 2023, featuring 46 display panels along the wetland.



Song Meiying, deputy Party secretary of Tantou village, in Guangdong province, shows a mangrove seedling in the mangrove forest in the village. YANG SHENSHEN / XINHUA

"Seeing a public welfare organization travel so far and dedicate itself to protecting our mangroves inspired us to step up our efforts," says Song Meiying, deputy Party secretary of Tantou village.

Part of these efforts includes transforming the local library into a marine science base with over 1,000 specialized books and forming a volunteer team of more than 50 local women and children to serve as science interpreters.

Academics have also joined mangrove conservation efforts. Liang Xiaoting, an associate professor at the Guangdong Eco-Engineering Polytechnic, was so moved by the natural mangroves during a summer clean-up that she spontaneously grabbed a microphone and began explaining the ecological value of mangroves to those nearby.

Liang regularly volunteers in Nansha and leads her students in developing ecological courses for primary and secondary schools.

The regular cleanups helped the village and the association realize that trash collection alone is not enough. They launched a "waste-to-wealth" initiative: collected plastic waste is recycled into silk-like scarves, which are gifted to volunteers as a tangible reminder of their efforts.

"Our volunteers come from across the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, including many young people from Hong Kong and Macao, who join our beach cleanups," says Huang.

"We want to build a small station near the wetland so that people doing clean-ups or field research can rest and recharge."

The efforts in Tantou reflect a broader national success story.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-2025), China's mangrove area expanded to 31,000 hectares, making the country one of the few in the world to record a net increase in mangrove coverage.

Mangroves, alongside seagrass and coral reefs, are globally recognized as one of the three main marine coastal ecosystems. They play a critical role in supporting offshore fisheries, purifying the environment, and enhancing carbon sequestration.

Tantou's efforts have aligned with China's national mangrove conservation strategy. In 2025, the country released and implemented its first technical group standards for the precise ecological restoration of mangroves to promote their protection and sustainable development.

The country made significant strides in green development during the 14th Five-Year Plan period, with increased forest coverage, improved biodiversity, and greater harmony between humans and nature.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:15 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:15 PM

LIFE





More than just beans and brewing

Coffee festival showcases new combinations, some seemingly crazy flavors such as beef noodles, and integration with Kunqu Opera, attracting caffeine lovers from around the world, **He Qi** reports in Shanghai.

For Firat Sahin from Turkiye, to have a cup of specially tailored coffee in the greenland of Shanghai's financial zone is a comfortable yet homesick experience.

The special combination of coffee and tea made him feel completely natural.

"In my country, we drink unsweetened black tea, and we also drink coffee regularly, so pairing coffee and tea is not strange to us at all."

"Tea, coffee, and other types of drinks should be mixed together," Sahin says during the opening day of the Lujiazui Coffee Festival in Shanghai. "Overall, the festival is really great."

Held from May 29 to 31 at Lujiazui Central Green, the Lujiazui festival has gathered more than 150 brands, creating an elegant integration of Western coffee and traditional Chinese culture, which is the festival's theme this year.

Mingzhishan Coffee, which operates stores in historical cities of Luoyang, Henan province, and Jingdezhen, Jiangxi, attracted visitors with its iconic gourd porcelain cups.

By midday on opening day, Guo Daren, founder of Mingzhishan Coffee, had sold nearly 300 cups of his signature gourd-shaped porcelain cold brew coffee.

"It completely exceeded our expectations. We didn't expect Shanghai people to love the new Chinese-style gourd coffee so much."

In Chinese tradition, the gourd, or *hulu*, is usually associated with wishes for prosperity.

"We also combine Jingdezhen's local Fuliang black tea with coffee and serve it in gourds, creating a Chinese-style coffee-drinking experience that feels like ancient people drinking wine," he adds.

The brand's best-selling product at the festival is Osmanthus cold brew, made by steeping Osmanthus flowers in coffee overnight to infuse a natural floral aroma. "We also paired it with the poem: 'I wanted to buy Osmanthus and wine with you, yet it is no longer like our youth days'," Guo says. "Many people came to buy a cup specifically because of this line."

Spring Morning on Mishan, a tea and pastry brand making its Lujiazui Coffee Festival debut, demonstrated the perfect compatibility between traditional Chinese snacks and coffee.

"We divided our products into three series: 'Meal Buddies', for pairing with toast and other staples; 'Tea Buddies', for various teas; and a dedicated 'Coffee Buddies' series," said Xiao Yuanwu, the brand's founder. "Our Coffee Buddies focus on salty and sour flavors, which effectively neutralize the coffee's bitterness and deliver a richer tasting experience."







Top left and right: The Lujiazui Coffee Festival creates an elegant oriental gathering that blends flavor and culture in Shanghai. **Left:** The festival opens a new chapter in East-West cultural integration. **Below left:** Mingzhishan Coffee brings its signature gourd-shaped porcelain cold brew coffee to the festival. **Below right:** Spring Morning on Mishan demonstrates the perfect pairing of traditional Chinese snacks and coffee.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Also drawing long queues is the beef noodle-flavored specialty coffee from Hebei-based Coffix Coffee. "Lujiazui invited us to bring our hometown's urban flavors to Shanghai as specialty blends," says founder Chen Xixi. "We extracted the aroma of chili oil — the soul of beef noodles — and infused it into coffee."

This seemingly unconventional combination has received unexpected acclaim. "Shanghai residents love it, surprisingly. Ethiopian coffee beans naturally have a hint of spice, which unexpectedly complements the flavors of the noodles," Chen says.

The unique blend has even gained international recognition. "We took beef noodle coffee to a Melbourne coffee festival, and many foreign guests loved it. Here at the festival, we sell out every morning."

The most groundbreaking collaboration this year is the deep integration between Kunshan Contemporary Kunqu Theater and coffee culture. The theater has launched two limited-edition specialty drinks named after classic Kunqu tunes, inspired by the ink-wash new-style works of Kunqu master Zhang Jun and infused with traditional Chinese cultural elements.

Shi Zhiyuan, a member of the festival's operations team, says, "The signature of Lazy Eyebrow Tune is that we outline eyebrow shapes in the milk foam with indigo powder, and it has a refreshing taste that is perfect for summer. Ever Lasting Love Aria evokes the pink imagery of love, so we used summer watermelon to create a sparkling Americano specialty."

Beyond beverages, Kunqu Opera also comes alive at the festival in more vivid forms, with Zhang leading a group of musicians to perform on the Lujiazui Central Green lake with the water body as the stage and neon lights illuminating the skyscrapers, bringing traditional art to the heart of the city's vibrant coffee culture.

Many industry insiders agreed that integrating Chinese elements into coffee is not a passing fad but an inevitable industry trend.

"Previously, most coffee creativity focused on fruits, and combining coffee with tea and traditional culture was relatively rare," Guo says. "In the future, there will definitely be more tea-coffee blends, and people will explore clever ways to integrate tea and coffee to create new flavors."

Li Junfeng contributed to this story.

Tourism attempts to balance human touch with technology

By YANG FEIYUE
yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

When Valentin Diaz Gilligan flew from Buenos Aires to Beijing for a recent tourism forum, the journey took 30 hours. Decades earlier, his great-grandparents made the same trip by ship. It took 40 days.

That contrast is what technology has done for travel, the Argentine capital's tourism chief told a big audience at the Zhongguancun International Innovation Center in Beijing's Haidian district on June 2.

Commercial aviation democratized it. Then the internet and smartphones accelerated it. Artificial intelligence and big data are the next leap, says Gilligan at the 2026 Beijing Fragrant Hills Tourism Summit hosted by the World Tourism Cities Federation, the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture and Tourism and the Haidian district.

But, he added a caveat.

"In Buenos Aires, our difference is passion, not technology," he says. "We use data to understand what Chinese tourists want versus American or Brazilian tourists. But what we never want to lose is the human warmth of welcoming every visitor."

That tension between efficiency and empathy, and algorithms and the human touch, runs through the entire discussion of how digital tools can make cross-border travel smarter without stripping away what makes it worthwhile.

Zhang Xu, vice-president of Trip.com Group, a major online travel platform headquartered in Shanghai, offers a practical framework consisting of communication, service, and operation.





From left: Inbound visitors pose for a picture with a Chinese guide at a gift shop in Beijing in June. A Chinese tour guide answers questions from an international traveler during a visit to the capital in early June. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The first step is knowing who you are talking to, he says.

Data from his platform show sharp differences among travelers coming to China. Europeans and Americans want cultural experiences and urban lifestyles. Southeast Asians prioritize food, shopping and short trips. Japanese and South Korean tourists tend to favor weekend leisure and live performances.

"If you don't know these differences, you cannot market effectively," Zhang says. Destinations need to turn their resources into bookable products, and do it well.

Service comes as the bigger challenge.

"Certainty is everything for international travelers," Zhang notes. A tourist needs to know their flight, hotel and tickets are confirmed before they board the plane. That certainty, he argues, is what a quality tourism platform should be positioned to provide.

Long-term thinking matters too. Launching a campaign is not enough. Destinations must track feedback, listen to consumers, and continue to improve, he points out.

"We send coupons to encourage people to come back," Zhang says. But the real goal, he adds, is building trust.

Beyond the framework, Trip.com has rolled out concrete tools for inbound travelers. The company has set up service counters at major airports in Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Shenzhen, Guangdong province, and Chengdu, Sichuan province, offering travel guides and local assistance. Multilingual ticketing machines at scenic spots across China now help foreign visitors buy tickets and process refunds without language barriers.

Last year, the Shanghai-based travel agency opened an AI-powered restaurant, Taste of China, where screens wrap around the room and the system learns diners' preferences. A second branch is opening in Beijing this year.

The restaurant is not a gimmick, Zhang says.

It is an experiment in how technology can enhance — not replace — the experience of sharing a meal, he explains.

Zhang's emphasis on service was echoed across the panel.

Soon-Hwa Wong, the Pacific Asia Travel Association's ambassador for Greater China, offers a systematic take. "The real opportunity lies in balancing high-tech with high-touch," he says.

"Technology should empower, not replace."

Wong points to Singapore's upcoming Terminal 5 at Changi Airport — designed not just for greater capacity but for future pandemics, automated passenger flow, and seamless connections between air, land and city transport.

Smart tourism is not just about solving today's problems but also about anticipating tomorrow's needs, Wong says.

Christopher Cocker, chief executive of the Pacific Tourism Organization, points to a five-year digital transformation project with the New Zealand government that has raised digital skills in the region from 50 to 79 percent and understanding of sustainable tourism from 29 to 64 percent.

But he says that AI will never replace humans. "Tourism is a people business."

Speaking on behalf of 20 small island nations, he emphasizes that smart connectivity must be inclusive.

"If it works for large destinations, it should work for small ones too. Leave no one behind."

Todd Barberel, general manager of destination marketing and communications for Wellington, agrees with Cocker.

"People want to deal with people. Tools matter. But at the core, it is always about people."

Since China Eastern Airlines launched direct flights between China and Argentina last year, Chinese arrivals in Buenos Aires have grown by 50 percent. Gilligan attributes that not just to flight routes but to understanding what each market wants — and that understanding comes from data.

But data, he insists, is only part of the equation. The rest is a city's ability to make a visitor feel genuinely welcome. "That is what brings them back," he says.

Zhang Xu says that it should be every travel service provider's top priority to make someone feel welcome in a country they do not know.

"Sometimes an inbound traveler just needs someone to point them to the right train," he says.

"That is not big data. That is a person helping another person. You know what really brings people back? Not a coupon. A memory."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:15 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:15 PM

CULTURE



A scholar's devotion to Buddhist teachings

A veteran editor has spent 43 years compiling the religion's scriptures, driven by a determination to keep ancient wisdom accessible, **Wang Xin** reports in Shanghai.

Chen Shiqiang, a 76-year-old senior editor at Fudan University Press in Shanghai, could hardly hold back his tears when he touched his newly published books, a massive Chinese Buddhist philology masterpiece that he has been working on single-handedly for 43 years.

Three books of the *General Catalogue and Synopses of the Chinese Buddhist Canon* were recently published by Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House, bringing the collection's current total to 13 volumes.

Comprising a total of 1,473 Buddhist works in 8,246 volumes, the collection, with about 6.7 million characters, provides a detailed guide through Chinese Buddhist scriptures of successive dynasties. It is also believed to be the most authoritative and comprehensive reference work in the field of Chinese Buddhist scriptural studies to date.

The work currently comprises two volumes on classic Chinese Buddhist works first published in 1992 (revised and reprinted in 2008), three volumes on Hinayana Buddhist sutras published in 2007, two volumes on Vinaya texts published in 2015, three volumes on Abhidharma published in 2019, and the latest three volumes on Mahayana Buddhist sutras released in March.

Among them, the sutra is the source of basic Buddhist teachings, which is believed to be the actual words of the Buddha. Vinaya usually refers to the collection of canonical texts outlining the rules of conduct and discipline for Buddhist monks and nuns. Meanwhile, Abhidharma, or commentaries, refers to works on various Buddhist scriptures that are attributed to masters and offer commentary on the words of the Buddha.

"Originating in ancient India, Buddhist scriptures were translated and expounded in classical Chinese after their introduction to China. However, the vast majority of these texts lack punctuation and annotations. They are profound yet obscure, abstruse, diverse and complex, making them very difficult to read and understand," Chen explains.

All these factors present significant challenges to the reading and study of Buddhist scriptures, which motivated Chen to create a specialized reference book on Buddhist studies to provide basic guidance and assistance for today's researchers.

Thus, in June 1983, he embarked on this journey with no end in sight. Rather than brief annotations or dictionary-style entries on Chinese Buddhist scriptures, he expects to complete a collection that provides comprehensive information and detailed summaries of the core content of each scripture — in a modern way and using layman's terms.

Almost devoting his entire life since then to sorting out Buddhist scriptures, Chen says he simply does not wish to see these millennia-old classics become incomprehensible texts to modern readers.

Chen notes that the collection provides a detailed analysis of each scripture, covering its title, number of volumes, origins of translation and composition, version history, chapter structure and core philosophical principles, while also addressing the tracing of origins, the collation of variant texts, and the correction of historical inaccuracies.

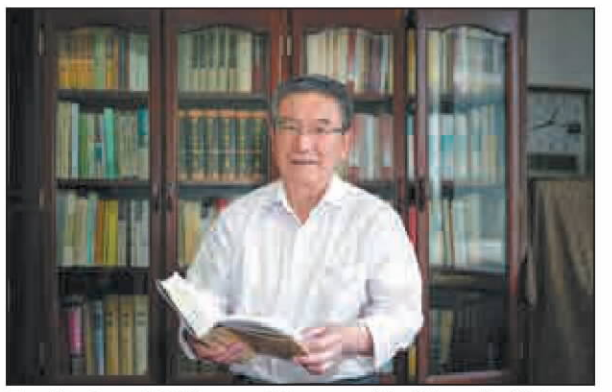
"I am not merely compiling an index for a single edition of the Tripitaka, but rather synthesizing all editions from the Song Dynasty (960-1279) through to modern times, to create a truly comprehensive reference work on Buddhist studies," says Chen.

Fate and faith

This path has never been easy for Chen, yet he pursues it with determination, as if it were his destiny.

Born in 1949 in Zhuji, Zhejiang province, Chen was recommended to join the Department of Philosophy at Fudan University in 1973 and stayed at the school as an instructor after graduation.

Chen was not a Buddhist and knew barely anything about Buddhism before stepping into the university. However, Fudan, as one of the earliest universities in China to systematically conduct research and teaching in religion, boasts a long-standing tradition and deep-rooted heritage in Buddhist studies and research. In 1979, the university officially launched the research direction of Buddhist studies for the first time, and Chen — who was good at classical Chinese — became the only master's student admitted into the program.



Top: The *General Catalogue and Synopses of the Chinese Buddhist Canon* is believed to be one of the most authoritative and comprehensive reference works in the field of Chinese Buddhist scriptural studies. **Above:** Chen Shiqiang, senior editor at Fudan University Press, has worked for 43 years compiling the 13 volumes of the books. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

> "I am not merely compiling an index for a single edition of the Tripitaka, but rather synthesizing all editions ... to create a truly comprehensive reference work on Buddhist studies."
>
> **Chen Shiqiang,** senior editor at Fudan University Press

That marked the real beginning of Chen's story with the Chinese Buddhist Canon. After earning his master's degree, Chen joined Fudan University Press in 1984 and continued his academic research on Buddhist philology.

Over the past four decades, Chen has edited and published more than 200 books on philosophy and social sciences. The editing experience has continuously expanded his knowledge in various fields and categories, laying a solid foundation for the writing of the vast Buddhist collection.

"Buddhist classics engage with ancient Chinese and Indian civilizations. They are not only religious works, but also historical records involving all kinds of knowledge such as philosophy, geography and arts. The massive books I edited before are carved in my mind, and later became the basis for me to understand those classics," says Chen.

The collection includes detailed accounts of Buddhist doctrines, figures, events, rituals, festivals, activities, temples, artifacts and terminology over the past millennia, as well as covering a wealth of knowledge across various fields such as history, philosophy, literature, ethics, education, linguistics, logic, psychology, customs, geography, astronomy, medicine, architecture, sculpture, painting and music.

It is a huge task that is not profitable, but requires superhuman determination and effort, which may also explain why no similar works have ever been completed before. To achieve his ambitious goal, Chen has given up all his spare time since the 1980s — not even spending time watching TV.

"It is hard — very, very hard," Chen said at a panel meeting held at Fudan University on May 21 to mark the release of the updated collection.

But he told China Daily that he had never thought about quitting this epic work. He would always recall the legendary trek made by Tang Dynasty (618-907) Buddhist monk Xuanzang on his westward pilgrimage more than 1,300 years ago.

"He risked his life to bring the Buddhist scriptures back. He, like other ancient sages, sought neither fame nor personal gain, but built a cultural Silk Road. If no one today interprets them, his life, efforts and sufferings would be all in vain. I am always deeply moved by their spirit of self-sacrifice," says Chen.

In the days before computers, a pen and a stack of paper were his only companions. For each scripture, Chen would read through the original text intensively at least three times, and pore over obscure passages repeatedly while making in-depth comparisons and cross-references.

He regards this work as the foundation for future Buddhist research in China, likening it to the first step laid at the foot of a mountain. "Future researchers, like climbers, can now continue their ascent to the top by stepping on these steps," says Chen, smiling in relief.

Chen's efforts also align with the nation's and the university's exploration of developing a system of philosophy and social sciences with Chinese characteristics, which incorporates the country's socialist practices, and contributes more wisdom and strength to the nation's modernization drive and cultural heritage.

"The collection is a major achievement in the compilation and publication of ancient Chinese Buddhist historical and cultural texts. It is not only an indispensable authoritative reference book in the fields of Buddhist philology, religious studies and Chinese philosophy, but also serves as a solid bridge for the wider general public to engage with China's outstanding traditional culture," says Fang Ming, deputy Party secretary of Fudan University.

Chen's journey still continues. Despite his vision being severely impaired by decades of desk work, which limits him to reading for only about 15 minutes at a time, he is still relentlessly marching toward the end of the collection.

"I intend to devote the remainder of my life to compiling the 300-plus Esoteric Buddhist scriptures, so that the collection will cover Mahayana and Hinayana sutras, Vinaya and Abhidharma in full, as well as the scriptures of both the exoteric and esoteric traditions," says Chen firmly.

Contact the writer at wangxin2@chinadaily.com.cn

Turning the page on traditional publishing in the era of AI

By **XU LIN**
xulin@chinadaily.com.cn

Participants at a forum on advancing integration in publishing agree that it's essential to strengthen technological leadership, integrate technological advancements with publishing innovation, and accelerate the digital and intelligent transformation of the publishing industry.

Representatives of publishing institutions and cultural and technological enterprises, scholars from universities and colleges, and officials from relevant authorities, recently gathered for the sub-forum, which had the theme, "Integration promotes development, transformation shapes the future".

They exchanged views on key issues such as organizational transformation, technological empowerment, talent nurturing, and industry restructuring in the integrated development of publishing.

It was part of the Forum on Building Up China's Cultural Strength 2026, which was held in Shenzhen, South China's Guangdong province, in late May.

"As technological barriers are removed and anyone can create and express themselves with artificial intelligence, the needs of readers are no longer limited to simply finishing a book. They crave deep intellectual connection, solutions for real-world problems, and immersive reading experiences," said Chen Wei, chairman of CITIC Press Group, in his keynote speech.

He emphasized that in the face of such industrial restructuring, publishing organizations must focus on integrated development and scale up their investments.

"Besides financial input, efforts should also include developing an understanding of the industry's new paradigm, nurturing talent with digital capabilities, and fostering an open and collaborative ecosystem. This requires publishers to adopt a more forward-looking strategic vision and the courage to reform," he said.

Sun Qiang, chairman of People's Education Press, agreed. According to him, the publishing press prioritizes the recruitment of talent in AI and related fields, to build a high-quality professional talent team. A three-year mentoring system will be adopted for new employees, and senior staff members will provide them with guidance. There are also different training programs for mid-career employees to improve their digital literacy.



With the theme "Integration promotes development, transformation shapes the future", the Forum on Advancing Integration in Publishing is held in Shenzhen, South China's Guangdong province.
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Wu Yike, a researcher from the Publishing Research Institute, Nankai University, offered a complementary perspective. "AI excels in efficiency, connectivity, and generative capacity, making knowledge more accessible. The value of publishing lies in quality standards, the organization of knowledge and value judgment, ensuring reliable knowledge services," he said.

"Therefore, the more advanced AI technologies grow, the more integrated publishing needs to provide a solid foundation of trustworthy and usable content," he said.

To advance the development of credible content, Wu suggested that this work should focus on providing high-quality content that stands rigorous scrutiny, turning fragmented content into organized knowledge, strengthening collaboration between AI and professionals and clarifying their respective responsibility boundaries.

The "new trio" of cultural exports — online literature, web dramas and online games — has gained global popularity in recent years. For example, *Black Myth: Wukong*, a hit Chinese video game, has spread Chinese culture to the world via animation and gaming.

Tong Zhilei, chairman and CEO of COL Group, said that the popularity stems from deepening publishing integration and ever-expanding publishing boundaries. The future of integrated publishing lies in focusing on content origins to drive the multi-format development of online literature, web dramas and online games, while continuously enhancing intelligent production capabilities.

"Publishing has never been merely about producing and distributing books. Rather, its core purpose is to bring knowledge, ideas, stories and culture to wider audiences, to be seen, understood and carried forward. In the digital age, this fundamental mission remains unchanged, and we have richer ways to fulfill it, diverse pathways to connect with audiences, and a broader scope to serve society," Tong said.

Zhao Dongyan, a researcher at the Wangxuan Institute of Computer Technology, Peking University, noted that intelligent publishing represents an opportunity for a new round of innovation and transformation of the publishing industry in the AI era.

According to him, in 2025, the adoption rate of AI-generated content among publishing institutions nationwide reached 54 percent, with applications mainly in content review and proofreading, content creation, and user experience improvement.

He added that it is essential to develop AI tools for all stages of content publishing, provide end-to-end intelligent publishing technologies, and enable new forms of content publishing and knowledge services based on large language models.

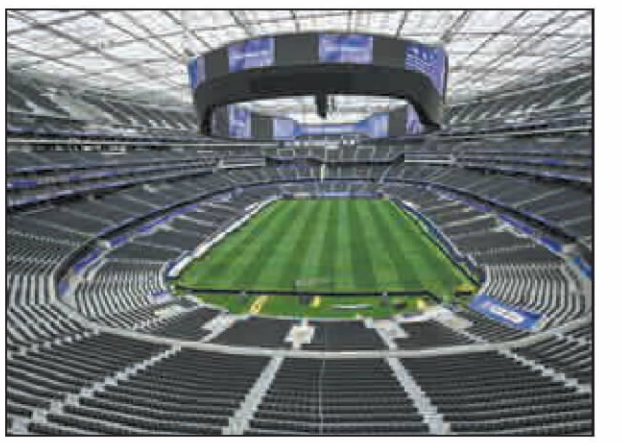
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:15 PM

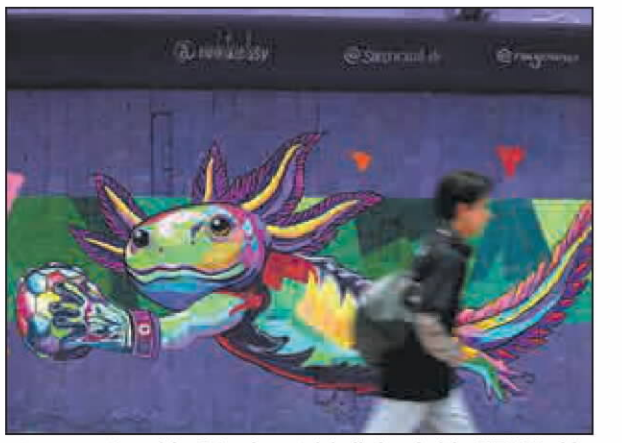
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:15 PM

SPORTS

WORLD CUP 2026







Clockwise from above: An aerial view of Science World in Vancouver, Canada, which has been transformed into a 360-degree, 40-meter-diameter re-creation of the Trionda match ball ahead of the FIFA World Cup; A view of the freshly installed grass pitch at Los Angeles Stadium ahead of the US team's opening game on Saturday; A mural featuring an axolotl, a critically endangered salamander native to lakes in central Mexico, catching a soccer ball on a wall in Mexico City. REUTERS / AFP

World Cup set to kick off after shaky run-up

FIFA is banking on the showpiece tournament's enduring appeal to cancel out the months of criticism

The World Cup kicks off on Thursday with FIFA hoping that the enduring appeal of soccer's greatest showpiece can rise above the anger at soaring ticket prices, an uneasy political climate in the United States and the shadow of conflict in the Middle East.

A record 48 teams and millions of fans are set to descend on the United States, Canada and Mexico for the first-ever World Cup co-hosted by three nations, the largest and most logistically complex edition of the tournament ever staged.

The action gets under way at Mexico City's iconic Estadio Azteca on Thursday, with co-host Mexico taking on South Africa at 3 pm local time (3 am Friday, Beijing time), launching a sprawling, nearly six-week-long spectacle that will culminate in the final at New Jersey's 82,500-seat MetLife Stadium on July 19.

Can Lionel Messi, at the age of 38, settle any lingering debate about his status as the greatest player of all time by leading Argentina to a second consecutive World Cup title?

Or can Messi's great rival, the 41-year-old Cristiano Ronaldo, defy father time by inspiring a talented Portugal team to its maiden World Cup win?

Or will England, led by Harry Kane, finally end the country's 60-year wait for a second major international championship following its lone 1966 World Cup victory?

Those questions and more will be answered over the course of a tournament that Gianni Infantino, the president of world soccer's governing body, has bullishly hyped as "the greatest show that the planet has ever seen".

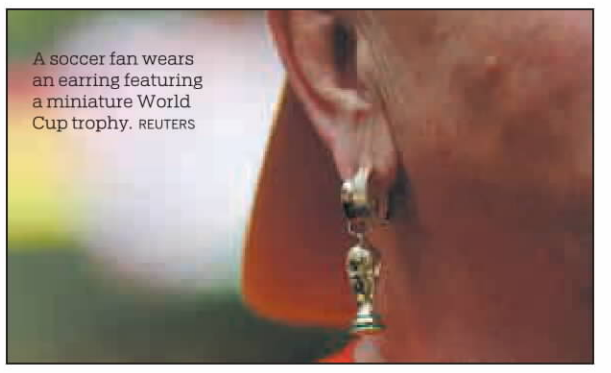
Ticket fury

Yet Infantino's breezy optimism has run into hurricane-force headwinds of skepticism during a build-up dogged by concerns over affordability, politics and conflict.

The skyrocketing cost of tickets to the tournament has triggered a global backlash that has left FIFA and Infantino struggling to mount a convincing public relations defense.

The most expensive ticket for the 2022 World Cup final cost around $1,600 at face value; in 2026 the most expensive face value ticket being sold by FIFA is an eye-watering $32,970.

That kind of inflation has been prevalent across the tournament's 104 matches, where seats for many games remain available on secondary resale markets despite supposedly huge demand.



A soccer fan wears an earring featuring a miniature World Cup trophy. REUTERS

Even Infantino's staunch ally, US President Donald Trump, has balked at the cost, reacting with surprise when told of the $1,000 price tag for tickets to the USA's opening game with Paraguay in Los Angeles on Friday — the first game on US soil.

"I wouldn't pay it either, to be honest with you," the US president told the New York Post.

While fans absorb the expense of travel to the tournament, other critics have questioned whether the World Cup party will be soured by the political climate in the United States.

Human Rights Watch says Trump's crackdowns on immigration, demonstrations and press freedom could lead to a World Cup defined by "exclusion and fear".

Those fears were fueled Monday when FIFA dropped a Somali referee from the World Cup after he was denied entry to the United States.

Omar Artan was set to be the first match official from Somalia to referee a match at a global finals, but he was turned back following his arrival at Miami International Airport on Saturday.

FIFA said it was powerless to influence the decision and announced it had omitted Artan from its 52-strong referee roster.

The US-Israel military strikes launched against Iran in February have also loomed large over the tournament, where Iran is due to play three group games in the US, starting with its opener against New Zealand on June 15.

Trump initially suggested Iran should withdraw from the tournament for its own "life and safety", before walking back his rhetoric.

Iran, meanwhile, has switched its base camp from Tucson, Arizona, to the Mexican city of Tijuana, where it touched down early Sunday.

While Iran's players are free to travel in and out of the US, some 15 administrative and management staff have been denied visas by US authorities in a move Iranian authorities have condemned as "deliberate and discriminatory treatment".

Expanded field

On the field, the decision to expand the tournament to 48 teams — up from 32 in 2022 — is likely to strip the group stage of any sense of jeopardy.

A total of 72 first-round matches will be needed to eliminate just 12 teams, with 32 advancing to the knockout rounds — the top two finishers in each of the 12 first-round groups along with the eight best third-place finishers.

The tournament will see a range of other innovations.

For the first time in World Cup history, every game will feature cooling breaks in the middle of each half, a measure designed to mitigate the effects of searing heat and humidity expected at many of the tournament's 16 venues.

Players and referees will need to adjust to several new rules being rolled out at the World Cup, including teams being required to make substitutions inside 10 seconds to prevent time-wasting.

A crackdown on racist abuse will see players risk a red card for covering their mouth with a hand, arm or shirt during a confrontation with an opponent.

Next month's final, meanwhile, could well be the longest on record due to the decision to stage a Super Bowl-style halftime show, headlined by Madonna, Shakira and BTS.

The show means the halftime interval will be stretched from the traditional 15 minutes to around 25 minutes.

AFP

Whether you're watching in the bar, or sitting behind the goal, banter like a natural with this handy guide to soccer slang

In squeaky bum time, the false 9 pulled off a nutmeg, before firing a worldie into the top bin.

Make any sense?

Soccer fans from across the globe are heading to North America for the World Cup — and bringing with them a lexicon of esoteric words and phrases that describe the beautiful game.

Here's a look at some of the things the locals might be hearing from traveling supporters inside and outside stadiums, and where they might have originated.

Squeaky bum time



Let's paint a picture: It's the World Cup final, and Argentina and Brazil are locked at 1-1 with five minutes remaining. We are officially in "squeaky bum time". Coined by former Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson, the phrase describes the late stages of a match — or even a season or tournament — when players and fans get tense and nervous. It even got recognized by the Oxford English Dictionary, which defined the saying, somewhat obtusely, as "the sound of someone shifting restlessly on plastic seating during tense closing stages of a contest".

Parking the bus

You're likely to hear this when a big underdog comes up against a top team at the World Cup. If an inferior team — or maybe one which has had a player sent off — shows no attacking intent and plays ultra-defensively to stop its opponent scoring, it is said to be "parking the bus" in front of its goal. The phrase came into soccer's wider vernacular after Jose Mourinho, the Portuguese coaching great, complained while managing Chelsea in 2004 that Premier League rival Tottenham "might as well have put the team bus in front of their goal".

False 9

There's nothing wrong about a false 9. When a player starts a match as the nominal striker — i.e. as a classic No 9 — but constantly moves into deeper positions on the field to be harder to mark and create confusion among opposition defenders, they are said to be playing as a "false 9". In modern-day soccer, the role was mastered by Lionel Messi at Barcelona when Pep Guardiola was its coach and by Cesc Fabregas in Spain's title-winning team in the European Championship in 2012. Harry Kane might play in a similar position for England at the World Cup.



Worldie

Typically reserved for long-range shots that fly into the top corner of the net, a "worldie" — a word coming from British slang — describes a goal that belongs in the "world class" category.

Total football

It started off being a tactical ideology used by the Dutch national team in the 1970s, where outfield players have no fixed position and can feel comfortable on the field wherever they are. Nowadays, the phrase is invariably used loosely, even jokingly, by soccer fans to describe a lengthy spell of possession, often involving some intricate, fluid passing and ending up in a goal.

Nutmeg

It's one of the simplest tricks in soccer — and a humiliation for those on the receiving end. A "nutmeg" is the act of kicking the ball between your opponent's legs to either run round and gather it yourself or to pass to a teammate. It has derivatives around the world, from "petit pont" ("little bridge") in French, to "cano" in Spanish and "tunnel" in Scandinavian.

Panenka

You know when a player chips a penalty kick slowly and cheekily straight into the middle of the goal or, in the worst-case scenario, into the hands of a grateful goalkeeper? Well, it has a name.

The "Panenka" was born in 1976, when Czech player Antonin Panenka converted the title-clinching penalty in that manner during a shootout in the European Championship final against West Germany. He ran up to the ball at normal speed and chose to float it softly up and down into the net, predicting



correctly the direction the goalkeeper would dive. It's risky and can make the penalty-taker look stupid if it goes wrong.

Clean sheet

A goalkeeper at the World Cup will sleep well if he keeps a clean sheet. Termed a shutout in the United States, it simply means when a team doesn't concede a goal. The use of "clean sheet" dates back to when reporters only used paper notebooks to record different incidents — like goals — in games. If no goals were scored by a team, a sheet of paper would remain clean.

Top bin

The two top corners of a goal are the ideal targets for a shot, so obviously they have a special name for fans. Creeping into the soccer lexicon this century — and also into the Oxford English Dictionary — is the usage of "top bin", possibly a nod to the use in practice sessions of targets in each of the top corners of a goal that resemble a bin (the British term for a trash can). Another is "postage stamp", which you'd apply to the top corner of an envelope. Many languages have their own derivative, and one such example that conjures a great image heralds from Brazil, where they say a top corner is "onde a coruja dorme" (where the owl sleeps).



12th man

There will be 11 players in each team at the World Cup. There's a way of getting 12 — kind of. The "12th man" refers to the team's fans, who — if they are loud or intimidating — can act as an extra player. Or so coaches say, anyway.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

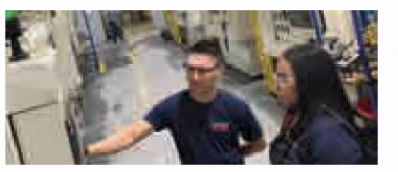
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:15 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:16 PM

Content hub
City's digital ecosystem draws global influencers
LIFE SHANGHAI, PAGE 15



Carbon-negative island delivers profitable growth
GOING GREEN, PAGE 12



Industrial cooperation
Chinese-American factory in Michigan builds teamwork
AMERICA FOCUS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 FRIDAY, JUNE 12, 2026

XI'S VISION | CULTURAL HERITAGE

Nation set to celebrate its 'root and soul'

Heritage day reflects enduring commitment to preserving and sharing cultural legacy

By **WANG KAIHAO** and **WANG QIAN** in Beijing and **CHEN YE** in Hangzhou

Thousands of celebrators are expected at events nationwide, including exhibitions, symposiums and public education programs, which have been scheduled to immerse the country in an atmosphere of cultural heritage and history to welcome China's annual Cultural and Natural Heritage Day, which falls on Saturday.

The arrangements for observing the day are strong testament to China's commitment to preserving and sharing the beauty and essence of its time-tested legacies with the outside world.

This year's celebration holds even greater significance than usual, as it marks the 20th anniversary of the country's first designation of this special day, which before 2017 was known as Cultural Heritage Day.

The past 20 years have seen an unprecedented boom in the heritage sector throughout the country. In 2006, museums nationwide attracted a total of around 150 million visits, a number that by 2025 had increased to 1.56 billion. China initially had 24 entries on the UNESCO World Heritage List, but the number has now risen to 60.

President Xi Jinping, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, has consistently prioritized heritage protection in recent years. In a guideline statement released in 2016, for example, he described cultural relics as "a valuable legacy from our ancestors", emphasizing that conservation will benefit future generations. He pointed out that the relics are tangible manifestations of the fine traditional culture, or "the root and soul", of the Chinese nation.

Such resolution has its roots in eastern Zhejiang province 20 years ago. The saplings planted then have now grown into flourishing trees, and they set an example for the rest of the country and beyond.

In Yuhang district of Hangzhou, the capital of Zhejiang, are located the Archaeological Ruins of Liangzhu City. Dating back 4,300 to 5,300 years, this vast prehistoric site was the hub of a regional state that worshipped jade and grew rice with highly-developed water conservation systems.

The site is considered to mark the dawn of Chinese civilization.

Nowadays, it offers a living, evolving testament to how a grand plan for preserving the past is implemented at the grassroots level.

The Regulations of Hangzhou on the Protection and Management of the Liangzhu Ancient City World Cultural Heritage were officially rolled out in June. They establish a comprehensive legal framework that aims to integrate this cradle of Chinese civilization more deeply into the fabric of contemporary life.

Sun Haibo, director of the Cultural Relics and Heritage Administration Bureau of the Hangzhou Liangzhu Archaeological Site Administrative District, said that the regulations could provide a model for the management of large-scale archaeological sites nationwide.

Inside
Comment, **page 6**

The legislation, comprising six chapters and 37 articles, marks a decisive shift from decades of protection-first focus to a more ambitious vision of making heritage a driver of coordinated regional development.

"This has been an iterative journey spanning more than 20 years," said Sun. "At each stage, we faced different challenges."

In the early 2000s, Liangzhu's northern mountains, which were rich in high-quality stone, were being carved up by quarries and thus served as one of the main drivers of the local economy.

Upon learning about the situation in July 2003, Xi, then Party secretary of Zhejiang, visited the site and promptly ordered the closure of the mines. It was not an uncommon occurrence at a time when archaeological protection was often compromised for the need of economic development. However, Xi emphasized that economic growth should not be at odds with cultural preservation.

He also said that the Liangzhu site is a sacred place that provides evidence of China's 5,000-year-old civilization, and is an invaluable treasure that must be protected.

The path of Liangzhu protection thus turned into a promising lane. In 2019, it was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Xi's dedication to Liangzhu has lasted throughout the subsequent decades. In 2023, he proposed holding the Liangzhu Forum, by which the ancient culture could offer inspiration to the world in a modern context.

In the congratulatory message to the inaugural Liangzhu Forum in December 2023, Xi called for efforts to promote a view of civilization that features equality, mutual learning, dialogue and mutual accommodation, thus helping different civilizations to live in harmony and reinforce one another.

The forum has been held annually in Hangzhou for the past three years.

Following the plan to ensure the Archaeological Ruins of Liangzhu City's sustainable development, economic benefits are being reaped. Last year, the site welcomed 1.46 million visits, establishing the ruins on the outskirts of Hangzhou as a popular tourist destination.

"We're exploring an effective way to coordinate the protection of this heritage with the sustainable development of the region," said Sun, the heritage administration bureau director. "We hope to integrate the cultural, ecological and landscape resources of Yuhang district (of Hangzhou) to drive tourism and the cultural creativity industries centered on the archaeological site."

*See **Heritage,** page 3*



INSIDE
Sincerity, reciprocity and symbiosis
Global Views, page 8

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

www.chinadailyglobal.com

A member of ANN

China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

Deadly airstrike





Above: Smoke billows from the site of an Israeli airstrike in Sarba, Lebanon, on Wednesday. Israeli attacks on southern Lebanon have killed at least 18 people and injured several others, according to Lebanon's National News Agency, civil defense and health authorities. ALI HASHISHO / XINHUA
Left: A firefighter battles a blaze caused by an Israeli airstrike in the southern port city of Sidon, Lebanon, on Wednesday. MOHAMMED ZAATARI / AP **See story, page 3**

China seeks greater imports from Europe

By **ZHANG ZHOUXIANG** in Berlin
zhangzhouxiang@chinadaily.com.cn

China stands ready to import more from Germany and the rest of Europe, Ling Ji, vice-minister of commerce and deputy international trade representative of China, said on Thursday, emphasizing the complementary nature of China-Germany economic relations and the vast opportunities offered by the Chinese market.

Speaking at the "Big Market for All: Export to China" event in Berlin, Ling recalled German Chancellor Friedrich Merz's visit to China in February, during which the two nations reached a series of important common understandings, providing strategic guidance for the future development of China-Germany economic and trade ties.

"Under the strategic guidance and promotion of the leaders of both countries, China and Germany have long adhered to openness, mutual respect and mutual trust. Bilateral economic cooperation has developed into a pattern characterized by deeply integrated industries, interconnected markets and complementary advantages," Ling said.

The Berlin event, aimed at creating an efficient channel for high-quality products to enter the Chinese market, marked the first "Big Market for All: Export to China" activity held in the European Union this year.

The "Big Market for All: Export to China" initiative, launched in Shanghai in November 2025, is part of China's broader push to boost imports and tap the purchasing power of its vast consumer market.

Under the program, China's Ministry of Commerce selects five to eight annual partner countries each year to organize more than 100 import-boosting activities.

Li Guoqing, deputy director-general of the China International Import Expo Bureau, noted that 151 countries, regions and international organizations have so far participated in the CIIE Country Exhibition, while Germany ranks first in Europe in terms of both exhibition space and the number of participating enterprises.

"The China-Germany relationship has always been strong and complementary, with significant long-term potential," said Thomas Koenig, a senior China affairs expert at the German Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

"Despite global trade tensions and other challenges, there remains substantial room for cooperation. China's market continues to be highly attractive for German businesses and expanding German exports to China can contribute to a more balanced and resilient bilateral economic relationship. That is why I remain cautiously optimistic about the future of China-Germany cooperation," Koenig added.

Eberhard J. Trempel, director-general of the German Global Trade Forum Berlin, said he believes that the future holds enormous potential for deeper, synergistic cooperation in forward-looking industries such as infrastructure, green tech and decarbonization, autonomous driving, as well as artificial intelligence and industrial automation.

"In smart manufacturing, German expertise in hardware and mechanical engineering complements China's speed in applying AI and big data in an ideal way," he said.

WORLD WATCH
By John Quelch and Zarko Krkeljas

Sports can strengthen much more than people

At a time when many nations are grappling with rising healthcare costs, youth anxiety, social fragmentation and economic uncertainty, sports must be viewed not just as a leisure activity, but as a strategic investment in national development.

Too often, discussion of sports is primarily in terms of medals, elite athletes or major competitions. Yet the true value of sports extends far beyond the stadium. Sports build healthier citizens, stronger communities, more resilient economies and more connected societies.

Most important, sports are not only for Olympic champions or professional athletes. They are for everyone — schoolchildren, university students, working adults and the elderly alike. A nation that embraces sports as part of daily life creates long-term social and economic benefits that no medal table alone can measure.

At the individual level, regular physical activity improves physical and mental health, builds confidence, strengthens discipline and develops resilience. Increasingly, medical experts emphasize that exercise, alongside healthy diet, is one of the most effective ways to prevent chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and obesity. Encouraging active lifestyles is therefore not simply a public health issue; it is an economic imperative.

The financial stakes are enormous. According to the World Health Organization, insufficient physical activity contributes to millions of preventable deaths annually and imposes substantial healthcare costs worldwide. Sedentary lifestyles place growing pressure on national healthcare systems, particularly as populations age. By contrast, healthier populations reduce long-term medical expenditures, improve workforce productivity and contribute to social stability.

Sports are particularly effective because they are often social and collective. Whether through football, basketball, badminton, pickleball, running clubs or community-square dancing, people motivate one another to remain active. Exercise becomes sustainable when it is embedded in social interaction and community life.

*See **Lifestyles,** page 3*

VISITORS THRONG TO ZHOUCHENG FOR BAI-STYLE FABRICS

Ethnic group's ancient design technique is finding modern applications and global fans

By **GUO JIATONG**
guojiatong@i21st.cn

Under the eaves of a courtyard in Zhoucheng village in Dali Bai autonomous prefecture, Yunnan province, Zhang Hanmin bent over a white cloth, her fingers steady as she stitched tiny knots into the fabric.

Around her, long strips of blue and white cloth swayed in the wind, their patterns catching the bright plateau sunlight. More fabric hung nearby, casting dancing shadows on the stone-paved courtyard.

For Zhang, an inheritor with more than 10 years of experience and founder of Lanxu, a tie-dye brand, the cloth is more than a decorative fabric, it is a language of daily life, ritual and memory for the Bai people.

Known as the largest natural Bai ethnic village in China, Zhoucheng was named the "Hometown of Ethnic Tie-dye Art" by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in 1996.

Today, the village is home to more than 4,000 tie-dye artisans, who have carried the craft's blue-and-white patterns across generations.

The process begins with plain white cloth. Artisans stitch, knot and bind the fabric by hand before dipping it into dye vats. When the knots are loosened and the cloth is unfolded, patterns emerge, shaped by the pressure of thread, depth of the dye and the patience of the maker.



Bai ethnic tie and dye artisans Duan Yinmei (left) and Duan Lilan untie cloth knots after dyeing at a workshop in Zhoucheng village, Dali Bai autonomous prefecture, Yunnan province, on Nov 21. HU CHAO / XINHUA

China Vibes — GIFTS

In Bai communities, those patterns are not only decorative. According to Zhang, tie-dye accompanies people through some of life's most significant moments.

During the Benzhu Festival, for example, villagers drape tie-dyed cloth over statues of their patron gods as a sign of respect and homage, praying for peace, good harvests and prosperity.

*See **Technique,** page 3*

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:16 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:16 PM

INDEPTH

By **MAY ZHOU** in Houston, Texas
mayzhou@chinadailyusa.com



The United States food pavilion is displayed at the SIAL Shanghai, an international food exhibition, on May 19, 2025. YI CHENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

US farmers 'cautiously optimistic' on China trade

After leaders' summit built consensus, growers hopeful of return to strong agricultural exports

During United States President Donald Trump's visit to Beijing last month, both sides reached a positive consensus on market access for certain agricultural products. The two parties agreed in principle to incorporate those products into a framework arrangement for reciprocal tariff reductions, and establish targets to expand agricultural trade.

On China's General Administration of Customs website, hundreds of expired licenses for US beef, pork and poultry plants were renewed soon after Trump's visit. The trade in meat was resumed shortly after the summit, an encouraging sign for US farmers.

Regardless of what size US farm exports to China will turn out to be in the next three years, one thing is clear — China and the US are working to jointly lower tariffs and expand access to agricultural products in their respective markets.

The news has been welcomed by US farmers, many of whom take it as a new beginning. Trump's tariffs halted the flow of farm goods between the two countries last year, following a previous stalling in 2018.

Matt Wagenson, a farmer in Outagamie County, Wisconsin, and vice-president of the Wisconsin Soybean Marketing Board, told local news outlet WPR that improved trade numbers would be "a huge help".

"We're always looking to increase our free trade across the world, and China is just a crucial part of that free trade," he said.

Dave Pfarr, a soybean farmer near Le Sueur, Minnesota, said that from the producers' perspective, "we would love to get them back as a customer". "Because they are a big importer of our proteins, primarily soybeans and soybean meal," he told local CBS News in mid-May.

But others in US agriculture are more cautious. China-US agricultural trade has experienced a roller-coaster ride in the past decade, largely due to Trump's tariff policy.

"I think we are cautiously optimistic when it comes to these things because we've been on both sides of this equation. You know, the first time we went through the tariff crisis, we lost 20 percent market share," Todd Main, director of market development at the Illinois Soybean Association, told Ag Daily in late May.

Soybean sales seesaw

Before the first trade war, China's appetite for US soybeans had grown steadily, driven by a rising middle-income group that was eating more pork, more poultry and more edible oils — all of which depended on soybeans as a feedstock.

The numbers were impressive. In the seven years leading up to the 2018 trade war, 28 percent of all US soybean production on average went to China, according to the American Soybean Association.

By 2016 and 2017, US soybean exports to China were running at $10.5 billion and $12.2 billion, respectively, accounting for 62 percent and 57 percent of all US soybean exports, according to data from the US International Trade Commission.

Broader agricultural trade was also substantial.

From 2012 to 2017, China purchased US farm products worth $24 billion to $29 billion annually, about 20 percent of all US agricultural exports, according to the American Farm Bureau Federation.

The trade relationship had grown intertwined — China needed US grain to feed its livestock, US farmers needed Chinese demand to justify the acreage they were planting.

The symbiotic relation was abruptly interrupted when the first Trump administration imposed tariffs on billions of Chinese goods in April 2018. Beijing imposed a 25 percent retaliatory tariff on US soybeans.

The effect was immediate and severe. US farm exports to China dropped to $13 billion in 2018 from $24 billion in 2017, a reduction of almost 46 percent.

US soybeans, the No 1 farm export to China, fell much more — from $12.2 billion in 2017 to $3.1 billion in 2018 — a 75 percent collapse in a single year.

China was pushed to look elsewhere for its soybean supply, leading to a structural shift in the country's agricultural imports strategy.

In 2012, a severe US drought had forced Chinese buyers to turn to Brazil to fill their supply needs, and the South American country demonstrated that it could reliably deliver supplies. Since 2013, Brazil's soybean exports to China have grown steadily.





Left: Visitors learn about US wine during an international rural innovation development exhibition in Hefei, Anhui province, in March 2025. YUAN BING / FOR CHINA DAILY **Right:** An Iowa farmer and his son load soybean seed into a planter on May 6 near West Bend, Iowa, the US. SCOTT OLSON / GETTY IMAGES

Conversely, China's demand for soybeans has helped Brazil to grow its soybean capacity. Brazil overtook the US to become the world's largest soybean producer in 2017.

When US soybean exports to China dropped to 8 million metric tons in 2018, Brazil sold 69 MMT of soybeans to China, speeding up Brazil's share of soybean exports to China.

By 2024, Brazil expanded China shipments to 73 MMT, accounting for 70 percent of China's soybean imports, while US exports represented just 21 percent.

Brazil now produces nearly 40 percent of the global soybean harvest while the US produces about 28 percent, according to analysis by the American Soybean Association.

As trade began to recover under the Phase One agreement, US soybean exports to China grew and peaked at 34 MMT in 2020, about 55 percent of what Brazil shipped to China.

The US' tariff escalation last year was even more brutal. When Trump imposed a 34 percent tariff on Chinese goods in April 2025, the retaliatory tariffs from China sunk US soybean exports deeper to a mere 7 MMT.

"When that was announced, soybean prices basically collapsed," Mike Cerny, a farmer in Sharon, Wisconsin, told PBS in April last year. "If you could afford to hold on to your beans and wait for better times, you were OK. If you had a mortgage due, or payments due, or cash flow needs, and you had to sell at that point, you were taking it pretty rough."

The financial loss for soybean growers was significant. Even with federal assistance, farmers still lost almost $75 per acre of soybeans in 2025, according to the American Soybean Association.

Similarly, US beef exports to China fell from a peak of $2.76 billion in 2022 to $977 million in 2025. Overall, US farm exports to China, which peaked at $41 billion in 2022, dropped to a mere $10 billion in 2025, the lowest since 2008.

> "After a year of widely fluctuating tariff levels, having stable costs of the main ingredients involved in producing a crop will be a most welcome tranquil period for farmers in the American heartland. ... If China is not removed from that list ... it may be difficult to expect to see large increases in purchases of US agricultural commodities or other significant business deals."
>
> **Kenneth Quinn,** president emeritus of the World Food Prize Foundation in Des Moines, Iowa



Samples of US soybeans are displayed at the Chinese International Import Expo in Shanghai on Nov 6. LONG WEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Overall US farm exports were down by 3 percent in 2025, primarily driven by losses in soybean exports, according to the US Department of Agriculture.

Farm debt rises

The trade losses have cascaded through the farm economy.

The Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City found that farmers were taking larger operating loans and taking longer to repay them, a report by the American Farm Bureau Federation said. Nearly 40 percent more farm operating loans were opened in the fourth quarter of 2025, compared with the same period in 2024.

Total farm debt reached a record $624.7 billion in early 2026 — up $30.8 billion, or 5 percent, from the year before, according to the federation. It was the second consecutive year of 5 percent farm debt growth.

Critically, the debt growth was not from investment or expansion but from necessity: Farmers were borrowing simply to cover input costs.

"Farm debt continues to rise as producers rely on borrowing to manage elevated operating costs and uneven cash flow," the report concluded. The situation was, in the federation's assessment, "a generational downturn rather than a temporary slowdown".

In addition, more farmers filed for bankruptcy in 2025, the federation said. A total of 315 farm bankruptcies were filed in the calendar year, up 46 percent from 2024.

The US Midwest and Southeast were the hardest hit, with the regions seeing 121 and 105 bankruptcy cases filed, respectively. The numbers represented a 70 percent year-on-year increase in filings in the Midwest, and a 69 percent rise in the Southeast.

In addition, the number of US farms was reduced by 15,000 in 2025, reflecting a broader trend in farm closures, according to the American Farm Bureau Federation.

This year, US farmers have been hit by another major shock with the US-Iran military conflict sending fuel and fertilizer costs sharply higher.

A survey of 400 farmers, conducted by researchers at the Purdue Center for Commercial Agriculture in late March, found that almost half said their farm operations were financially worse than a year earlier.

With the rising price of land, rent, equipment, fertilizer and fuel, US farmers have been struggling with thinning margins. In February, before the start of the Iran conflict, the USDA projected the US farm income will slip lower in 2026.

Americans miss pie

The reality is that China's overall farm imports have been growing steadily over the past nine years — from $125 billion in 2017 to $207 billion in 2025, with a peak of $234.8 billion in 2022, primarily due to prices.

In the same period, however, US farm exports to China have been going through ups and downs, but producers have largely missed out on the growth in China's farm imports.

The Beijing summit could produce positive outcomes for US farmers. If China ends up purchasing $17 billion of US farm goods annually, plus 25 MMT of soybeans as the White House announced, it would take the volume of US exports to China to about $28 billion to $30 billion a year.

However, that number barely matches the volume preceding the 2025 "Liberation Day" announcement of US tariffs, and is much lower than the $41 billion peak achieved in 2022.

The structural shift caused by Trump's tariff policy has US citizens worried about the prospects for long-term farm trade with China.

"If you look out a decade or so, we know that long-term China is not going to be the dominant buyer that it once was," said Main, director of market development at the Illinois Soybean Association. "And so, we have to pivot."

Kenneth Quinn, president emeritus of the World Food Prize Foundation in Des Moines, Iowa, is more optimistic.

"In my opinion, the reference to a new 'constructive strategic stability' with 'moderate cooperation' and 'manageable differences' can provide an extended period of predictable situations, which Midwest farmers strongly desire," Quinn told China Daily.

The takeaway from the May summit is that it allows US farmers to make decisions before planting time, based on a clear understanding of the costs involved throughout the growing cycle, he said. "After a year of widely fluctuating tariff levels, having stable costs of the main ingredients involved in producing a crop will be a most welcome tranquil period for farmers in the American heartland," Quinn said.

The prospects for US-China farm trade largely hinge on big-picture bilateral relations.

Quinn said that one measure of the summit's impact will be whether China stays on the US Secretary of Commerce's List of Adversaries along with Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Cuba and Russia.

"If China is not removed from that list ... it may be difficult to expect to see large increases in purchases of US agricultural commodities or other significant business deals," he said.

The most important thing is for the US State Department and China's Foreign Ministry to work on the goals and possible outcomes for any follow-up state visit of President Xi Jinping to the US. During the summit in Beijing, Trump invited Xi to visit the US later this year.

Quinn said a presidential summit provides an opportunity to answer a "fundamental question" in the US-China relationship by announcing a partnership to address the "greatest challenge humanity has ever encountered".

"Can we sustainably feed the 9.5 billion to 10 billion people who will be on our planet by 2050?" he said.

There may not be a time in the coming decades when the leaders of the US and China are both positioned to take dramatic steps to achieve that, Quinn said.

"My hope is that President Xi and President Trump will seize this opportunity and strive to achieve historic greatness by taking the first steps toward building peace through agriculture," he said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:16 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:16 PM

TOP NEWS

Heritage: Protection, development coordinated

From page 1

After Liangzhu, the next focus in exploring the origins of Chinese civilization in Zhejiang is the Shangshan culture.

Named after the Shangshan site in Pujiang county of Jinhua, Zhejiang, this Neolithic culture dates back 8,500 to 11,000 years and is the oldest Neolithic culture ever found in the lower reaches of the Yangtze River and China's southeastern coastal region. However, it was once overlooked in academic studies.

Sheng Danping, former head of the Pujiang Museum, still vividly remembers receiving an instruction from Xi in late November 2006 to strengthen research and publicity regarding the Shangshan culture.

At a symposium earlier that month, the culture had been formally named, Sheng told Zhejiang Daily, adding that he was amazed by the attention from the leadership. The directive put things into high gear. Within months, a 500-square-meter exhibition hall was built and opened to the public. Within three years, the pottery pieces that had been unearthed were sorted. In 2007, work began on a major protection plan, which gained national and provincial approval in 2010.

Despite the mountainous terrain of Pujiang leaving relatively little space for land resources, local protectors like Sheng still left nearly 90 hectares of "fine land" for the excavation and research of Shangshan.

"Shangshan is thus a key for people to improve their cultural confidence," Sheng said.

In November 2020, top-tier scholars gathered again in Pujiang for another symposium on Shangshan studies. With in-depth field research and abundant findings, they concluded that the place was a key origin of the world's rice cultivation.

Yang Jianwu, former director of the Zhejiang Administration of Cultural Relics, said the surge in scholarly attention has cemented a series of landmark conclusions that fundamentally rewrite the story of human civilization in East Asia.

Around 20 years ago, Xi's guidance on heritage protection benefited more projects in Zhejiang, ranging from the world-famous West Lake and the Grand Canal to a number of intangible cultural heritage items, such as folk operas. He also made a key instruction on the restoration of the historic Wenlange library, a crucial trove of ancient books, and encouraged the wide participation of different sectors in the preservation of traditional villages.

"During Xi's work in Zhejiang, he stressed on many occasions that we must attach great importance to cultural heritage protection and embrace the notion that protecting cultural relics is also a kind of political achievement," Yang said.

The theme of this year's Cultural and Natural Heritage Day is "cultural heritage belongs to the people and serves the people", and what has been done in Zhejiang can serve as a suitable footnote for this.

Contact the writers at wangkaihao@chinadaily.com.cn

Capitol inquiry



Bill Gates leaves after appearing before the House Oversight Committee investigating late financier and sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, in Washington, DC, on Wednesday. During the hearing, US lawmakers questioned Gates about his interactions with Epstein as part of the committee's investigation into the Justice Department's handling of cases involving Epstein and his associates. ELIZABETH FRANTZ / REUTERS

Mideast tense as US, Iran trade fresh strikes

By JAN YUMUL in Hong Kong and **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE

The situation in the Middle East remained tense after the United States and Iran exchanged strikes for the second day, with Tehran announcing the complete closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for a ceasefire and demanded "no more excuses" in a post on social media platform X on Thursday, noting that the region "is being pulled deeper into crisis".

Guterres also underscored that the "restrictions on navigational rights and freedoms in and around the Strait of Hormuz" are causing hardship and instability across the world.

The Iranian Army and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps attacked several US bases and facilities across the region, Tasnim News Agency reported on Thursday.

"During two waves of operations, the brave warriors of the Aerospace Force and the heroes of the IRGC Navy, in the early hours of this morning (Thursday), struck and destroyed 18 important targets belonging to the evil US army in Bahrain and Kuwait," the IRGC was quoted as saying.

The IRGC is also said to have launched a drone attack on the US Fifth Fleet in Bahrain. "In this wave of military drone attacks, the communications antennas and radar installations of the Fifth Fleet's Patriot system were targeted," Xinhua News Agency cited a Mehr News Agency report as saying.

Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters has announced the complete closure of the Strait of Hormuz to all shipping, including oil tankers and commercial vessels, citing insecurity caused by US strikes on southern Iran, according to Mehr.

Bahrain and Kuwait's air defense forces intercepted missiles and drones, with Kuwait announcing a temporary closure of its airspace after Iranian attacks as a precautionary measure.

Bahrain's Ministry of Interior said in a post on X that as a result of the "Iranian aggression against Bahrain", an 11-year-old girl sustained minor injuries and was treated at the scene.

Vehicles caught fire and houses were damaged in Hamad Town and Manama "due to falling debris from drones interception", the ministry said, adding that civil defense and national ambulance officials have taken necessary measures.

In a statement, Qatar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned Iran's fresh strikes against Jordan, Bahrain and Kuwait as a "blatant violation of the sovereignty of these countries".

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs stresses the need to spare the region the repercussions of these unjustified attacks and to work toward de-escalation in order to restore regional and international security and stability," the ministry said.

Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council Jasem Mohamed Albudaiwi, in a statement published on Thursday, condemned "the repeated treacherous Iranian attacks" on Bahrain, Kuwait and Jordan, and affirmed the GCC's support for all measures taken by the affected Arab countries "to enhance their security, preserve their sovereignty and territorial integrity".

The US Central Command, or CENTCOM, said it had completed additional self-defense strikes against multiple targets in Iran on Wednesday.

"CENTCOM forces launched strikes on Iranian military surveillance capabilities, communication systems, and air defense sites across Iran," it said, adding that US Marine Corps, Air Force, and Navy assets fired precision munitions on Iranian targets that posed a threat to US forces and international commercial ships transiting regional waters.

US President Donald Trump said in a social media post that Iran "has taken too long to negotiate a deal that would have been great for them", and now "they will have to pay the price".

"Iran is all talk and no action. The Bully of the Middle East is DEAD!!!" Trump posted, adding that Iran "is doing zero business", not paying for their military or "any of their bills", and that it was quickly "becoming a failed nation".

Contact the writers at jan@chinadailyapac.com

Technique: Craft gains a global fan base

From page 1

"When we make each piece, we are not only preserving our traditions, we are expressing our pride in Bai culture," Zhang said.

That pride comes not only from the craft's role in daily and ceremonial life, but also from its history.

Records indicate that the Bai ancestors had already developed textile techniques during the Neolithic age. In the first half of the 20th century, household tie-dye workshops had become widespread across Zhoucheng and neighboring towns, turning the region into a well-known tie-dyeing center.

Today, the craft is finding new vitality among younger generations and visitors from around the world.

In Zhoucheng, tie-dyed products have expanded beyond traditional household use to include contemporary fashion and lifestyle items, such as T-shirts, dresses, bucket hats, tote bags, hair accessories and decorative ornaments.

At Zhang's workshop, tourists arrive daily to experience the slow, meditative process of stitching, binding and dyeing fabric by hand. Some spend hours creating their own patterns, immersing themselves in the village's atmosphere.

Many visitors are also attracted by the environmentally friendly materials used in the process.

The craft is also entering new commercial and cultural spaces beyond the village.

In Lijiang, Yunnan, cafe owner Li Jimin has incorporated tie-dye aesthetics into his business. His takeaway cups, coffee bean packaging and shopping bags all feature tie-dye-inspired designs.

"Many overseas visitors stop by our cafe," Li said. "They are often drawn to the blue-and-white packaging because it feels different from what they see elsewhere, and many buy it as a gift to take home."

For Zhang, the appeal of tie-dye goes beyond aesthetics or commerce. She sees the craft as a bridge between people and cultures.

Human rights action plan for 2026-30 issued

Blueprint aims to ensure that the fruits of modernization benefit all people more fairly

By YANG ZEKUN
yangzekun@chinadaily.com.cn

China released a new national human rights action plan on Thursday at the opening of the 2026 Forum on Global Human Rights Governance, pledging to further protect people's rights and promote social fairness and justice.

The National Human Rights Action Plan of China (2026-30) aims to ensure that the principal position of the people is respected, their fundamental interests are safeguarded, and the fruits of modernization benefit all people more fairly.

China implemented its fourth national human rights action plan from 2021 to 2025. With the completion of its major objectives and tasks, the country made notable progress in human rights protection, according to the new plan.

The two-day forum, themed "Joint Development, Shared Human Rights: The 40th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Right to Development and a new vision for global human rights governance", was co-hosted by the State Council Information Office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. More than 400 Chinese and foreign guests from over 100 countries and international organizations, including United Nations agencies, attended the forum.

Participants stressed that development should be given greater priority, so that its benefits can reach people in all countries in a more equitable way.

Li Shulei, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and head of the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee, said that China follows a people-centered development philosophy, regards the rights to subsistence and development as primary basic human rights, and pursues a human rights development path suited to its national conditions.

Against the backdrop of uneven global development, China will continue to respect and protect human rights, implement the 2026-30 action plan and work with other countries to advance human rights, Li said.

Abdulatif M. Jamal Rashid, former president of Iraq, said the right to development is a fundamental pillar of the global human rights system.

Rights lose practical meaning without the material conditions that allow people to exercise them, he said, citing children without access to school, families without electricity or drinking water, and farmers who lose their livelihoods because of drought.

On green development, Rashid said the transition to a green economy should be fair and balanced, taking into account the realities of developing countries and respecting their people's rights to development and stability.

He said that Iraq has benefited from support and cooperation from many countries during its recovery and reconstruction, and highly appreciates China's contribution to Iraq's stability and peace, as well as its energy and infrastructure development.

Eduardo Melchor Arana Ysa, former prime minister of Peru, said that countries should continue building the future while preserving their national identities, traditions and core values. Human rights are a common pursuit in protecting human dignity and improving people's lives, but different societies may follow different paths.

Humanity's richness lies in its diversity, including different histories, cultures, systems and development experiences, he said. The universality of human rights should not mean a single fixed model, adding that countries should advance shared goals in ways consistent with their own realities. He called for stronger multilateralism and a more balanced, inclusive and representative global governance system.

Mohamed Abdelrahman Mohamed Moussa, minister plenipotentiary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Expatriates of Egypt, said the right to development is not an isolated right, but a synthesis of many rights closely linked to national well-being and people's livelihoods.

Development should be placed at the center of global human rights governance, as poverty, inequality, climate change and conflicts continue to undermine people's basic rights, Moussa said.

Participants also said that countries should create a fair and reasonable international environment for the realization of human rights and take practical action to address common human rights challenges.



Representatives unveil the National Human Rights Action Plan of China (2026-30) at the opening of the 2026 Forum on Global Human Rights Governance on Thursday in Beijing.
TIAN YUHAO / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Lifestyles: Sports have enormous educational value

From page 1

This is why investment in sports must go beyond elite training facilities. Municipal governments, schools and universities all have important roles to play in providing accessible sports infrastructure, public exercise spaces, amateur leagues and qualified coaches. If sports are to become part of a nation's culture rather than simply spectator activities, opportunities for participation must be widely available.

China has increasingly recognized this reality. Public fitness campaigns, expanded sports infrastructure and greater support for school athletics have helped raise awareness of healthy and active lifestyles. It is also encouraging that Chinese universities require students to pass physical education assessments before graduation. Such policies send an important signal that physical well-being is an essential component of education, not an optional extra.

The emergence of new sports also reflects changing lifestyles and demographics. Pickleball, for example, has grown rapidly around the world because it is easier to learn than tennis, requires less space and places less physical strain on participants. It is highly social, accessible to older adults as well as younger generations, and equally welcoming to men and women. The growth of such sports demonstrates how recreation can evolve to include broader segments of society.

Sports also have enormous educational value. Educators and employers increasingly recognize that academic achievement alone is insufficient for success in the 21st century. Teamwork, adaptability, perseverance, emotional intelligence and leadership are equally important. Sports develop these qualities in ways that classrooms alone often cannot.

Research consistently shows that student athletes tend to perform better academically, develop stronger social skills and experience greater emotional well-being. Sports teach young people how to cope with pressure, recover from setbacks and work collaboratively toward common goals. Equally important, they teach sportsmanship — respecting rules, showing fairness and learning how to win or lose with dignity. These values are fundamental not only for athletic participation, but also for social and professional success later in life.

When students come from diverse cultural and educational backgrounds, sports often serve another important purpose: creating connection and belonging. In an increasingly mobile and globalized world, many young people move frequently between countries, cities and communities. Sports provide continuity, friendship and identity in an ever-changing environment.

Another important quality of sports is universality. Athletic participation creates shared experiences and common values regardless of nationality, language or background.

In an age increasingly defined by polarization and mistrust, these values matter greatly. International sporting exchanges also create opportunities for dialogue and cooperation when traditional diplomatic channels may be strained. The historical example of the Ping-Pong Diplomacy between China and the United States remains a reminder that sports can sometimes open doors that politics alone cannot.

Ultimately, societies must think more broadly about what constitutes national investment. Infrastructure, technology and industry remain essential, but human capital matters just as much. Healthy, resilient and socially connected citizens are the foundation of sustainable prosperity.

Sports contribute directly to that foundation. They strengthen people, communities and nations. The returns may not always appear immediately on financial balance sheets, but over time they become visible in public health outcomes, educational achievement, economic productivity and social harmony.

John Quelch is executive vice-chancellor, American president of and a distinguished social sciences professor at Duke Kunshan University in China. Zarko Krkeljas is director of the Athletic Department at Duke Kunshan University. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:16 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:16 PM

ASIAFOCUS

Editor's note:
In this weekly feature China Daily gives voice to Asia and its people. The stories presented come mainly from the Asia News Network (ANN), of which China Daily is among its 20 leading titles.







From left: Pipes for the mud drainage system in Porong, Sidoarjo, East Java, Indonesia, on May 29. JUNI KRISWANTO / AFP Smoke billows from the crater of the "mud volcano" where a gas exploration triggered a mudflow accident in 2006, in Sidoarjo on May 29. TRISNADI / AP An excavator is seen at the mudflow embankment in Sidoarjo on May 29. JUNI KRISWANTO / AFP

A never-ending disaster

Mudflow tragedy in Indonesia's East Java still shapes lives 20 years on



Residents scatter flowers to mark 20 years since a gas exploration accident triggered a mudflow that buried more than a dozen villages and permanently displaced tens of thousands of people, in Sidoarjo, East Java, Indonesia, on May 29. TRISNADI / AP

Under the sweltering afternoon sun, 47-year-old Ahmad Solihudin waits outside his home in Glagaharum village, Porong district, Sidoarjo regency, East Java, for the familiar sound of a water vendor's motorcycle. When the vendor finally arrives, Solihudin hurries to buy three 25-liter plastic containers for Rp 15,000 (83 US cents), the clean water his family depends on each day.

For nearly 20 years, this has been part of Solihudin's daily routine, a lasting consequence of the Sidoarjo mudflow disaster, which occurred in Porong district in 2006 and buried thousands of homes across nearby villages.

Although authorities managed to restrain the mudflow above ground by constructing embankments rising 9 to 11 meters high, they have not been able to contain its impact beneath the surface, where it continues to seep through the soil, contaminating wells and damaging groundwater supplies in surrounding communities.

"Since the disaster, the well water here has tasted salty. It's greasy too, like it contains oil. Even soap can't wash it away. During the dry season, the water quality gets even worse and it turns black," he said.

With water quality this poor, Solihudin, like most residents in his village, has no choice but to spend a significant portion of his modest income on clean water delivered by traveling vendors who bring supplies from outside the regency, at a cost of up to Rp 450,000 a month.

The environmental damage of the mudflow extends far beyond household wells. Hundreds of hectares of rice fields that once yielded abundant harvests are now abandoned around the mudflow area. Farmers say saline groundwater causes newly planted crops to wither within days.

Solihudin pointed to stretches of farmland near his home, just about 100 meters from the eastern side of the mud embankment, where productive rice fields have since turned into empty plots overgrown with wild grass. Some are now used only as grazing land for buffalo.

"It's been more than 10 years since these fields could grow rice or any other crops," he said. "The owner tried to sell it cheaply, but no one wants to buy it, so he's just left it as it is."

According to the Jakarta Post, the mudflow began as a result of drilling activities conducted by Indonesian oil exploration company PT Lapindo Brantas in Sidoarjo on May 29, 2006. The company, however, maintained that the eruption was triggered by an earthquake that occurred two days earlier.

The hot mud eruption, initially releasing around 100 cubic meters per day, eventually submerged 16 villages across the Porong, Jabon and Tanggulangin districts, displacing around 60,000 residents.

It is widely regarded as one of the largest ecological disasters in Indonesian history, burying approximately 10,426 houses, 77 places of worship and vast areas of farmland, as well as public facilities and infrastructure.

Although nearly two decades have passed, the eruption continues at a reduced intensity. To control the mudflow, the government constructed a 640-hectare retention pond and has continuously diverted the mud into the nearby Porong River, with an estimated discharge of around 20 million cubic meters per year.

Constant anxiety

Against the backdrop of the ongoing mud eruption, daily life for Munir, 46, a resident of Gempolsari village on the northern edge of the embankment, has become defined by constant anxiety.



Residents affected by the mudflow, together with environmental activists, carry food and offerings toward the mud volcano area in Porong, Sidoarjo, East Java, on May 29. JUNI KRISWANTO / AFP

Continuous land subsidence caused by the mudflow has gradually turned his neighborhood into a low-lying basin, where rainwater easily accumulates and drains slowly, heightening the risk of flooding.

Whenever heavy rain falls, floodwater quickly inundates the road in front of his house, which is located just 100 meters from the embankment. Munir said his neighborhood is often among the last areas to dry out after major floods.

According to research by experts from the Sepuluh Nopember Institute of Technology, land subsidence extends up to 5 kilometers north and northeast of the mudflow center, with the ground sinking by as much as 40 centimeters per year.

"The inside of my house has already been raised by about 60 centimeters," Munir said. "I recently bought a truckload of soil for Rp 150,000 to elevate the yard. If I don't, it keeps flooding because the area has turned into a basin, and the water takes a long time to recede."

For Slamet, 55, another resident of Gempolsari village, the consequences of the mudflow have been just as profound. The disaster forced him, and many others, to abandon farming, as once-productive fields were rendered unusable after being buried or contaminated by the mudflow.

Slamet now earns a living selling fish. Around him, he says, neighbors have taken similar paths, shifting into small trade, motorcycle taxi services or other informal work available in the area.

"What we earn now is nothing like when we were farming, but we have no other choice if we want to feed our families."

Beyond depriving him of his livelihood, the mudflow disaster has deeply disrupted Slamet's daily life at home. Thick dust and pungent odors regularly drift from the site, becoming especially unbearable during the dry season.

"The stench makes it hard to breathe," Slamet said. "When the dry season comes, the mud thickens and has to be diluted before it can be discharged into the Porong River through pipelines. That mixing process releases an overwhelming smell, and many children living near the embankment frequently experience shortness of breath."

Losing hope

The polluted air brings not only a persistent foul odor, but also serious health risks for residents living near the mudflow site.

A 2008 study by the Indonesian Forum for Environment, or WALHI, found alarming levels of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, hazardous pollutants associated with an increased risk of cancer, in the air and water surrounding the mudflow embankment. The concentrations were recorded at levels 2,000 times higher than normal safety standards.

Another WALHI study in 2016 identified at least 10 illnesses affecting residents in the area, with respiratory infections emerging as the most widespread. That year alone, around 16,700 residents were reported to have suffered respiratory infections, while the number of recorded cases had reached 63,750 in 2010.

Despite the constant threat of flooding, ongoing land subsidence and mounting health risks linked to contaminated water, soil and air, residents say there has been no meaningful long-term resolution to address the enduring impacts of the mudflow.

Slamet recalls that in the early years following the disaster, residents frequently organized events and voiced their demands. However, after years of unresolved grievances without meaningful solutions, many gradually lost hope.

"We are tired because there's no solution. We've simply learned to live with the situation," he said.

THE JAKARTA POST, INDONESIA

Rising fuel prices triggered by Mideast conflict drives car pool growth in India

Rising fuel prices triggered by the Middle East war are driving a sharp increase in carpooling, with a ride-sharing platform reporting a surge in new users seeking cheaper ways to travel.

The carpooling platform BlaBlaCar said soaring energy costs have pushed 600,000 additional drivers onto the app this year — 20 percent more than initially projected — as commuters look to offset the rising cost of fuel.

In India, its single biggest market with more than 20 million users in 2025, the number of passengers has increased by 40 percent since the start of the US-Israeli airstrikes against Iran on Feb 28.

Last year, the global carpooling leader posted record-breaking figures in the world's most populous country India, outpacing Brazil with 19 million users and France with 7 million, according to Benjamin Retourne, the platform's chief product officer.

This trend has been more pronounced in countries where fuel price increases driven by the war have been sudden and significant, combined with limited government support, such as in France.

The platform works by connecting drivers and passengers willing to travel together between cities to share costs, with the app in most of its 21 operating nations taking a 20 percent commission.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi earlier in May urged the country's 1.4 billion people to save fuel by making greater use of carpooling and public transport.

India imports approximately half of its crude oil via the Strait of Hormuz, which Tehran effectively closed in response to US-Israeli strikes in February.

> "It's cheaper than the train, the bus, or a private taxi ... It also saves time, as there are few stops and the vehicle doesn't wait beyond the scheduled time."
>
> **Pratyush Anuraj,** a bank officer based in Mumbai

Retourne said a decade ago, when BlaBlaCar first launched in India, even "after two or three years, it just wasn't catching on".

The company, founded in France in 2006, therefore stopped investing in India but kept its application running from its Paris headquarters, unlike many large foreign groups that outsourced their services to India.

Growth finally began to pick up after the COVID-19 pandemic, driven by the country's economic and digital acceleration, as well as word-of-mouth.

Retourne pointed to a growth in private car ownership as well as rapid urbanization, with 200 million additional city dwellers over the past decade. "People are very connected," he said, adding that "today, wherever you go, there is 5G".

That proved to be the "recipe for carpooling to take off", he said.

Driving factor

But he was surprised that the driving factor was not the cost — but rather to avoid often crowded buses or trains.

"The number one reason people choose carpooling is not price, but comfort", he said.

The market potential remains vast, with "a new segment of the population" eager to travel for leisure and visit friends and family.

Assistant bank manager Pratyush Anuraj, 24, from India's financial capital Mumbai, said he used the carpooling platform to travel to his family's home in Pune every weekend — a 150-kilometer journey of around 2.5 hours.

"It's cheaper than the train, the bus, or a private taxi," he said. "It also saves time, as there are few stops and the vehicle doesn't wait beyond the scheduled time."

He does, however, point out some drawbacks: either the trip is often canceled at the last minute, or the drivers don't answer calls.

So far, the French platform has not monetized carpooling in India, where people pay each other directly, often using the popular digital payment systems.

The next objective is to "build a platform that aggregates multiple modes of transport" — connecting cars to buses and trains.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:16 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:16 PM

WORLD

Event highlights role of dialogue among cultures

Chinese FM calls for mutual trust and understanding amid global challenges

By **SHARON NAKOLA**
in Nairobi, Kenya
sharon@chinadailyafrica.com

As conflicts, geopolitical tensions and technological disruptions reshape the international landscape, China, African countries and the United Nations are increasingly promoting dialogue among civilizations as a critical tool for strengthening global cooperation, advancing modernization and building a more peaceful and inclusive world.

The call came during celebrations marking the International Day for Dialogue among Civilizations at the United Nations Office at Nairobi on Wednesday, where diplomats, development experts and international officials warned that rising conflicts, widening inequalities and rapid technological advances are testing the international system and underscoring the need for greater understanding among cultures.

The International Day for Dialogue among Civilizations falls on Wednesday. It was proposed by China and cosponsored by more than 80 countries, and was adopted at the UN General Assembly in June 2024.

Addressing the event via video, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi called on countries to improve understanding and foster mutual trust through dialogue amid unprecedented global challenges.

Wang said countries should promote unity and seek consensus through exchanges while strengthening the social and cultural foundations for building a community with a shared future for humanity.

Wang also highlighted the role of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and social media in promoting cultural exchange and mutual learning, while reaffirming China's willingness to deepen cooperation with other countries on governance and modernization.

Chinese Ambassador to Kenya Guo Haiyan said dialogue among civilizations remains essential for fostering mutual understanding, strengthening people-to-people ties and building a shared future for humanity.

She said China remains committed to working with diplomatic missions, international organizations and development partners in Kenya to advance dialogue among civilizations and deepen mutual understanding.

"Development serves as the foundation, security provides the guarantee, civilization acts as a bridge, and governance offers the institutional support," she said.

According to Guo, all countries, regardless of size, wealth or level of development, should have equal rights to participate in international affairs and determine their own development trajectories.

Kenya also used the occasion to underscore the importance of dialogue in promoting peace and development.

Collective action urged

Kenya's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office at Nairobi and the United Nations Environment Programme, Ida Betty Odinga, emphasized the importance of collective action in addressing global challenges and strengthening international cooperation.

She said humanity is inherently interconnected and argued that nations can achieve more when they cooperate in pursuit of common goals. "Despite our differences, humanity shares common aspirations for peace, coexistence and development."

Odinga urged governments and institutions to invest in education, cultural exchange and international cooperation as they are key pillars for strengthening understanding among peoples and nations.

In a message marking the day, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the world is living through a period of "turbulence and transformation" characterized by escalating conflicts, growing inequalities and the emergence of technologies such as artificial intelligence and clean energy that present humanity with critical choices about the future.

"Too often, differences are misunderstood, or manipulated to undermine global solidarity," Guterres said. "But there is a path forward — dialogue." He said that dialogue among nations, cultures and faiths has the power to replace confrontation with cooperation and tension with trust, while helping build a more just and peaceful world.



An attendee tries Chinese calligraphy at a thematic celebration of the International Day for Dialogue among Civilizations in Nairobi, Kenya, on Wednesday. LIU QIONG / XINHUA

Opening victory



Fans celebrate after Mexico defeated South Africa in the opening match of the soccer World Cup in Mexico City, on Thursday. MARCO UGARTE / AP
See comment, page 6

China highlights strides in disability rights

By **BELINDA ROBINSON**
in New York
belindarobinson@chinadailyusa.com

China has made significant progress in developing disability-related programs, a representative of the China Disabled Persons' Federation said on Wednesday.

"The development of disability-related programs has been incorporated into China's national economic and social development plans," said Ren Zhanbin, director of the federation's education and employment department, at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

"It has gradually evolved into a comprehensive social undertaking encompassing rehabilitation, education, employment, poverty alleviation, social security, culture and sports, and accessibility development," he said.

Overall, this has improved the level of social protection and development opportunities for Chinese people with disabilities, Ren told the 19th session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, or COSP19.

The convention, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2006, is the first legally binding international treaty that protects the rights of people with disabilities.

An active advocate in the drafting of the convention, China was among the first countries to become a state party. It signed the convention in March 2007, and the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress formally ratified it the next year.

Ren said the Chinese government adheres to a people-centered approach, conscientiously fulfills its obligations under the convention, and implements the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Speaking on Tuesday, when the three-day COSP19 started, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said, "Together, let's realize the rights of every person with disabilities and build a fair and vibrant future for all."

The UN praised the strides nations have made over the past 20 years, but said "significant barriers remain" and that COSP19 will offer solutions.

China is home to 85 million people with disabilities, about 6.34 percent of its population, according to the China Disabled Persons' Federation.

Ren expressed China's commitment to enabling people with disabilities to become "true holders of rights, as well as participants in, contributors to and beneficiaries of economic and social development".

The country has created a comprehensive legal framework to strengthen the protection of disability rights. This year, the Social Assistance Law was formally codified.

"This system ensures that persons with disabilities enjoy equal access to social security while receiving support services tailored to their individual needs," Ren said.

China has also established a living allowance system for people with disabilities who face financial hardship and a nursing subsidy system. The living allowance benefits 12 million people, while the nursing subsidy benefits 16.6 million.

Other successes in the fight for disability rights include promoting community and home-based care to support independent living, and housing support, rental assistance and housing security for those facing financial hardship.

Anyone who wants to work but has intellectual, psychosocial or severe physical disabilities is provided with supportive services that combine care with sheltered and supported employment, Ren said.

The China Disabled Persons' Federation, together with the federations of Zhejiang and Qinghai provinces, organized exhibitions at UN Headquarters on disability-related cultural and creative works and poverty alleviation achievements in China.

Themed Blooming Together, the exhibitions featured more than 200 works from Zhejiang, Qinghai and other regions.

Young musicians strike a chord across borders

By **MINGMEI LI** in New York
mingmeili@chinadailyusa.com

Young US and Chinese musicians are embarking on their own journey across cultures through music, collaborating to build connections that go beyond language and borders.

Musicians from Carnegie Hall's National Youth Orchestra of the United States of America, or NYO-USA, the NYO Jazz ensemble, and Chinese pianist Zhang Sencheng performed at the *Youth Dialogue for the Future* concert held at the Chinese Consulate General in New York on Wednesday.

"People-to-people friendship between China and the US is taking on diverse new forms. Soon, the young musicians of the NYO Jazz will travel to China, and a group of top young Chinese artists will also come to New York," Chen Li, China's consul general in New York, said.

Among the performers was Zhang Sencheng, a 2010-born scholar of the Lang Lang International Music Foundation, who has performed twice at Carnegie Hall. He played several pieces at the consulate, bringing elements of Chinese musical expression to an international audience.

"I hope more audiences could hear the Chinese perspective on music and the way we express it, through the blend of Eastern and Western musical elements," he said.

"I am very happy and proud of him because he is very mature even though he is very young," Lukas Barwinski-Brown, CEO of the Lang Lang International Music Foundation, told China Daily.

For Carnegie Hall, these exchanges are part of a broader effort to bring young musicians together across cultures. Beyond bringing Eastern musical perspectives to Western audiences, Carnegie Hall has created opportunities for some of the most talented young musicians in the US to receive training, perform internationally and engage with artists and audiences around the world.

In 2025, the NYO-USA embarked on a six-city tour of Asia, performing in Hong Kong, Beijing and Shanghai. During their time in China, the young musicians participated in exchanges with their peers at the Beijing Performing Arts Centre, connecting with their Chinese counterparts through workshops and musical collaboration.

The NYO Jazz ensemble will soon return to China in August, visiting Shanghai and Beijing for the ensemble's second trip to the country.

Anna Abondolo, a 25-year-old bassist at NYO Jazz, told China Daily the upcoming journey represents an opportunity to discover new musical perspectives and build friendships with Chinese musicians.

"I am just very curious in terms of hearing music and like meeting other jazz musicians," she said. "Music is a very universal language. We can all learn from each other, like what people are listening to, how people are playing."

The impact of these exchanges extends beyond the musicians themselves. Mary Anne Huntsman, a Carnegie Hall trustee, told China Daily that international tours and performances in both China and the US create opportunities for young people from the two countries to share and understand each other's cultures.

"Music brings people together more than anything," she said.

Consul General Chen said the growing interest among young US people in Chinese art and culture reflects the importance of cultural exchange.

"We can see a growing trend of young Americans becoming interested in Chinese art and culture. Especially with performances selling out at New York's most prestigious venues, such as Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, we can see that American audiences are learning more about China through its culture," Chen told China Daily.

Beijing mourns veteran Japanese statesman Yohei Kono

By **MO JINGXI**
mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn

China's top legislator Zhao Leji sent a message of condolence on Thursday to the family of Yohei Kono following his death, expressing hope that Kono's family would carry forward his legacy and play a positive role in helping bring China-Japan relations back on the right track.

Kono, who was president of the Japanese Association for the Promotion of International Trade and former speaker of Japan's House of Representatives, died at the age of 89 on Monday, Japanese media reported on Wednesday. Kono was also a former president of Japan's Liberal Democratic Party.

Zhao, chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, said the veteran Japanese statesman was an old friend of the Chinese people who had long been committed to China-Japan friendship.

He noted that in 1993, Kono, then Japan's chief cabinet secretary, issued the Kono Statement on the issue of "comfort women", which continues to have a positive influence today.

The landmark statement acknowledged the Japanese military's direct involvement in setting up "comfort stations" and forcibly recruiting women on the Korean Peninsula, in China, and elsewhere, and expressed remorse and an apology.

At a regular news briefing in Beijing on Thursday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said that Kono, who upheld a correct view of history, was widely regarded as a leading figure in defending Japan's pacifist constitution.

Kono had once said Article 9 of Japan's Constitution, which clearly stipulates Japan's renunciation of war and non-maintenance of war potential, "represents our resolve and readiness, as well as our ideal", adding that it is the mission of every politician to strive for that ideal.

"He devoted his life to China-Japan friendship, visited China dozens of times, and made important contributions to promoting the development of bilateral relations and advancing exchanges and cooperation between the two countries," Lin said.

Lin said that even in his final days, Kono remained deeply concerned about China-Japan relations and, with tears in his eyes, expressed his wish to visit China one last time. "Regrettably, due to his deteriorating health, that wish was not fulfilled," Lin said.

The spokesman said that Kono once said he would never forget the shock and joy he felt at the normalization of China-Japan diplomatic relations, stressing that history should not be forgotten, the spirit that underpinned the normalization of ties should be carried forward, and the commitments made at the time should be honored.

"Those words carry even greater practical significance under the current circumstances," Lin added.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108
529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1848

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:16 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:16 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Political-military alignment with ulterior motives the real threat to regional stability

With the Sanae Takaichi government of Japan leading the charge, the Ferdinand Marcos Jr government of the Philippines eagerly following, and the Lai Ching-te authorities of China's Taiwan region enthusiastically lending their support, East Asia is witnessing the gradual formation of a potentially destabilizing political-military alignment.

Many in Asia are worried that the Takaichi government is steadily eroding the postwar restraints that defined the country's security posture for decades. The ruling Liberal Democratic Party has approved proposals calling for a significant expansion of military capabilities, including stronger counterstrike capabilities, higher defense spending, enhanced long-range missile capabilities, and even exploring next-generation submarines with long-range weapons. Japanese policymakers justify these moves by citing a "deteriorating security environment".

But as China's Foreign Ministry has pointed out, right-wing forces in Japan are exploiting regional tensions to advance their agenda of militarization.

Peace activists and veteran statesmen in Japan have cautioned against ignoring the lessons of history. The passing of former Japanese political leader Yohei Kono at 89 on Monday is a poignant reminder of a different vision of Japan's role in Asia. Kono, who as Japan's chief cabinet secretary issued a landmark 1993 apology over the comfort women, understood that reconciliation, historical honesty and regional trust were strategic assets rather than burdens. His warnings against ultra-nationalism and military adventurism in the country appear increasingly relevant given the reckless moves of the Takaichi government.

The announcement by Tokyo and Manila last month that they will conduct "maritime delimitation negotiations" for waters east of China's Taiwan island adds a new layer of complexity to an already sensitive region. The proposed "delimitation" by Japan and the Philippines infringes on China's maritime interests and violates the basic norms of international relations, as China has an exclusive economic zone and continental shelf in the concerned waters according to international law.

Philippine Secretary of Foreign Affairs Maria Theresa Lazaro insists that the Tokyo-Manila negotiations should continue regardless of Chinese objections. Such statements may play well domestically and among external partners, but they increase the risk of turning the region's maritime disputes into geopolitical flashpoints.

Compounding the concerns is the enthusiastic endorsement of the move by the secessionist-minded Lai authorities. Since taking office over two years ago, Lai has consistently sought closer security and political alignment with external forces that advocate a harder line toward the Chinese mainland. His latest praise for Japan's "security role" and his support for deepening Japan-Philippines "delimitation" moves fit this agenda and amount to political adventurism.

Therefore the real danger lies in the cumulative effect of the collusion of the three, each with its own axe to grind. A Japan steadily expanding its military role, a Philippines increasingly willing to stake its future on provoking China, and the Taiwan authorities — led by the diehard secessionist Lai — eager to internationalize cross-Strait tensions, form a highly combustible mix.

If Tokyo, Manila and the Lai authorities continue down the current path, Beijing will necessarily take corresponding countermeasures to safeguard the Chinese nation's core interests. The mainland's recent special maritime traffic law enforcement and hydrographic survey operation in waters east of Taiwan island are necessary responses to the latest antics of the provocative threesome.

Beijing's ban on Philippine defense chief Gilberto Teodoro Jr and his family from entering the mainland, Hong Kong and Macao, along with a prohibition on any transactions or cooperation between Chinese entities and them, serves as a warning to Manila not to go too far in the wrong direction.

The region does not need a clique formed for confrontation by militarists, adventurists and separatists. The so-called Tokyo-Manila "delimitation" talks, endorsed by the Lai authorities, are illegal, null and void. No matter what the three parties dream up, they cannot alter the fact that Taiwan is part of China. Their collusion reveals that they are the real troublemakers that pose an imminent threat to regional peace and stability.

World Cup should be platform for global unity

The FIFA World Cup 2026 has finally arrived. The tournament kicks off on Thursday in Mexico City, where Mexico will face South Africa in the opening match. Featuring an expanded roster of 48 teams and a record-breaking 104 matches over 39 days, the global event, which will unfold across an unprecedented three host nations — Canada, Mexico and the United States — is the largest ever.

Embodying the spirit of excellence and mutual respect, the World Cup traditionally provides a rare moment when political, cultural and ethnic differences give way to a shared passion for the beautiful game. Yet this year's tournament has kicked off with a seemingly chaotic buildup, limiting its potential to become a huge worldwide celebration that transcends sports due to political disruption as well as other factors such as over-commercialization.

Just days before Iran starts its first game, on Monday in Los Angeles against New Zealand, the country's soccer federation said in a statement that it was unable to provide any tickets as previously promised to its supporters because FIFA had revoked the ticket allocation, presumably under pressure from the US, "which has now taken steps to obstruct the presence of Iranian supporters at the stadiums".

This adds to the woes the Iranian national team has experienced leading up to the World Cup: Several senior federation officials and support staff members have been denied visas, and Iranian players are only permitted to enter the US on the exact day of their matches, and are required to leave immediately after the final whistle blows, leaving them exhausted and with almost no time to practice and familiarize themselves with the playing conditions, unlike other teams.

This obviously contradicts the principles of fair competition and the common understanding that any country bidding to host the World Cup must ensure access for all qualified teams, including their supporters and officials. "Otherwise, there is no World Cup," FIFA President Gianni Infantino stated nine years ago.

Apart from the Iranians, award-winning World Cup referee Omar Artan from Somalia was also denied entry due to unspecified vetting concerns, while Iraqi player Aymen Hussein was allegedly held for questioning for nearly seven hours after arriving in the US. "The disruption is such that one has to ask who is running the World Cup. Is it FIFA or is it the US government ... ?" Piara Powar, the head of FIFA's antidiscrimination monitoring partner, said on Tuesday.

FIFA's decision to hold the tournament in three countries, under the slogan "United as One", was based on the idea that a larger pool of participating teams will lead to increased profits from the sale of television, marketing and licensing rights.

FIFA's most recent financial report showed it will make $13 billion from the four-year cycle culminating in the 2026 World Cup, almost $9 billion of which will be from this year, according to The Guardian. In comparison, FIFA raked in $7.5 billion in revenue through the four years of commercial deals tied to the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, and $6.4 billion for the cycle leading up to the 2018 Russia World Cup.

However, what the soccer's governing body has failed to pay attention to in terms of geographical knowledge is that the three countries cover three time zones, each with its own customs, security protocols and bureaucratic structures. This presents significant challenges for teams in arranging their schedules. Some teams, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, will have to travel more than 5,000 kilometers during the group stage alone, making it one of the most taxing tournaments. All this, coupled with a lack of top-level coordination, makes the unfolding scenes seem inevitable.

The fact that the China Media Group ultimately paid around $60 million for the broadcasting rights to the World Cup — far below the $300 million that FIFA initially asked for — highlights how capricious FIFA's pricing strategy can be, prioritizing maximum revenue over a country's enthusiasm and circumstances.

Despite being a country with a population of 1.4 billion, China's national team has once again failed to qualify for the World Cup. This has led to renewed calls for reform of the soccer system in the country, focusing on the grassroots and youth training. Encouragingly, more children are taking to soccer pitches, offering hope for the sport's future in China.

The World Cup presents a rare opportunity for China to reflect on the challenges facing its soccer and to draft a practical and sustainable strategy for the future. Meanwhile, as the tournament progresses, soccer fans around the world will hopefully underscore the sport's potential to bridge divides and unite people, fostering understanding and goodwill among people of all nations.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

Action plan a new blueprint for people-centered development

China had completed four consecutive national human rights action plans as of last year. It released its fifth, the National Human Rights Action Plan of China (2026-30), at the 2026 Forum on Global Human Rights Governance in Beijing on Thursday.

The action plan aims to ensure that the principal position of the people is respected and the people's fundamental interests are safeguarded. It will also promote social fairness and justice and ensure that the fruits of modernization benefit all people fairly.

Human rights are meaningful only when translated into concrete outcomes. The right to education is reflected in school enrolment. The right to health is measured through access to healthcare and life expectancy. The right to development is demonstrated by poverty reduction, rising incomes and expanding opportunities.

This philosophy is embedded in the newly released action plan and, more broadly, in the country's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30). Human rights are not treated as a separate policy silo. They are woven into economic development, social welfare, environmental protection, technological governance and public administration. The result is a comprehensive framework in which human-rights objectives become part of the system of State planning and implementation.

The action plan assigns responsibilities, establishes benchmarks, fixes deadlines and holds institutions accountable for implementation. It includes goals relating to healthcare, education, social security, environmental quality and protections for vulnerable groups. It also expands into newer territory, including artificial intelligence governance, data protection and digital inclusion. In other words, Beijing is attempting to update its human-rights framework to match the realities of a society being transformed by technology and demographic change, using high-tech to facilitate the improvement of human rights conditions.

The practical achievements that have accompanied the country's development over recent decades are a contribution to the global human rights cause. The elimination of absolute rural poverty, the construction of the world's largest social security and healthcare systems, and the dramatic expansion of educational opportunities have altered the lives of hundreds of millions of people.

Indeed, many first-time foreign visitors to China come away struck not by the things that dominate some Western media coverage but by something far more mundane: public safety, efficient infrastructure, digital convenience and the accessibility of public services. These outcomes did not emerge by accident. They are the cumulative product of scientific planning and long-term down-to-earth hard work following the people-first principle. The human-rights action plans are one component of that broader ecosystem.

The 2026 Forum on Global Human Rights Governance took place at a moment when the global human-rights agenda is increasingly entangled with geopolitical rivalry. Human rights have been weaponized by some Western countries, their allegations targeting some countries while the violations of allies are ignored or downplayed.

The world has witnessed more than its share of humanitarian crises instigated by these self-proclaimed human rights "champions".

China rejects this approach, prioritizing cooperation over confrontation. From Beijing's perspective, development remains the most urgent human rights issue for large parts of the world and human rights should be a field for mutual learning, practical cooperation and shared progress.

There is no single universal model for advancing human rights. In an era of widening inequality, technological disruption and geopolitical fragmentation, it is not who talks most passionately about human rights but who can produce measurable progress that is the real driver of the human rights cause.

China's new action plan demonstrates that for Beijing progress is achieved through concrete actions and tangible results. It serves as a broader response to the world, underscoring the need for an improved global human rights governance system that is fairer, more equitable and more inclusive.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Actions to help protect world's cultural heritage

Editor's note: *As China prepares to observe Cultural and Natural Heritage Day on the second Saturday in June, it provides an opportunity to reflect on the nation's efforts to conserve cultural heritage. People's Daily Overseas Edition spoke to Sun Yan, senior engineer at the key laboratory on archaeometry and cultural heritage conservation under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, about China's contribution to global cultural heritage protection. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

China joined the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage in 1985. Last year, the Xixia Imperial Tombs located in the Ningxia Hui autonomous region were included in the World Heritage List, bringing the total number of World Heritage sites in China to 60.

In recent years, China has made remarkable progress in protecting its cultural heritage. For example, between 2016 and 2025, several Chinese cultural heritage sites have been added to the World Heritage List, each embodying distinctive cultural values.

The Archaeological Ruins of Liangzhu City, which were included in 2019, bear witness to China's 5,000-year-old civilization. A large urban settlement dating back to the late Neolithic Age, Liangzhu boasts a massive ancient city and a sophisticated water conservation system, offering a unique glimpse into the origins of Chinese civilization.

The Beijing Central Axis, which was added to the list in 2024, stretches 7.8 kilometers and embodies the ideals of ancient Beijing, the capital of the Yuan (1271-1368), Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties. The design of the axis features "balance" and "harmony", which reflect the importance of order inherent in traditional Chinese culture.

The Xixia Imperial Tombs, the mausoleums of the Xixia Dynasty (1038-1227), showcase distinctive cemetery architecture and exquisite stone carvings, providing fresh evidence of cultural exchanges along the Silk Road.

Over the past decade, China's approach to world cultural heritage protection has shifted from emergency rescue to systematic conservation. Remarkable strides have also been made in the legal and institutional frameworks supporting cultural heritage protection. The amended Law on the Protection of Cultural Relics, which came into force on March 1, 2025, provides a solid foundation for safeguarding cultural relics.

Digital technologies are now being widely used to enhance the management of heritage sites.

By studying and interpreting the values of China's cultural heritage, people gain a correct, multi-dimensional and comprehensive image of the country.

For example, following the inclusion of the Archaeological Ruins of Liangzhu City in the World Heritage List, the international archaeological community has spoken highly of the development level of the city, as reflected by its water conservation system, social stratification and belief system.

Meanwhile, Chinese institutions have collaborated on archaeological research and conservation projects at World Heritage sites in Egypt, Honduras, Cambodia and other countries, sharing China's philosophies and technologies in archaeology and cultural heritage protection.

In 2023, China spearheaded the establishment of the Alliance for Cultural Heritage in Asia and the launch of the Asian Fund for Cultural Heritage Conservation. China remains committed to leveraging its expertise to contribute to global cultural heritage conservation efforts.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:16 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:16 PM

VIEWS

Johan Rockström

Eco-civilization meets planetary boundaries

Over a decade after the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals — to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all by 2030 — we are in a precarious situation.

As we approach the 2030 deadline for the SDG framework that has defined not only the last decade of global development, but also work on climate, water, health and beyond, the question naturally arises: What next?

At a time of growing geopolitical fragmentation, it is increasingly difficult to imagine the UN forging the same broad consensus around a new global development framework that it did with the SDGs.

In this context, China's vision of an ecological civilization is a political and developmental framework that seeks to reconcile economic growth, social stability and environmental protection.

It is based on evidence that the old industrial production methods have run up unsustainable ecological costs, and concludes that environmental considerations must be integrated into planning, governance and economic activity.

This vision has seen a strong role for the state in its energy transition, such as large-scale investments in renewable technologies, ecological restoration programs, pollution control, and the use of environmental targets in government performance assessments.

Environmental protection is not above economic growth; rather, growth is compatible with ecological limits and national development goals.

Building an ecological civilization is fundamentally about succeeding in attaining aspirational social goals for human welfare and economic development, within scientifically defined boundaries: economic growth within the safe operating space of a stable, healthy and resilient planet. But a precondition to building an ecological civilization is to define and quantify the ecological limits or boundaries.

The planetary boundaries framework does just that. On the basis of the latest Earth system science, it starts by identifying the environmental processes that regulate the stability and resilience of the planet. These are the planetary boundaries.

Global Lens

If we fail to keep the Earth's tipping point systems intact, ecological invoices will be sent, and they will hit indiscriminately across the world.

It is not only about carbon and climate change, but also the ecological boundaries of biodiversity, land use, freshwater use, overloading of nitrogen, ocean stability, air pollution, depletion of the ozone layer and finally, novel entities, such as the overloading of persistent chemical compounds into the Earth system.

For all of these nine planetary boundaries, we have identified control variables, which — backed by big data, long time series and advanced analytics — enable us to quantify a safe boundary level that defines the transition from safety (when staying within the boundary level) to danger (when breaching the boundary).

Our scientific assessment from 2025 concludes that seven of the nine planetary boundaries have been breached. This means there is strong scientific support that we, as humanity, are in danger of destabilizing the Earth system and undermining human welfare across the world.

In the last decade, global warming has accelerated; the intensity of extreme events such as droughts, floods, wildfires and human-reinforced storms is increasing; and we are increasingly close to crossing tipping points, which would cause the permanent collapse of systems that provide planetary stability and life support for millions of people.

A new development paradigm will be needed to grapple with these challenges, and it will require policies, economic incentives, regulations and profound equity dimensions (such as how to share, in a fair way, the ecological space on Earth among countries). If translated into ecological civilization targets, it can also drive innovation and efficiency and contribute to the next phase in humanity's journey toward shared prosperity.

At the same time, the international agenda will have implications for a large economy such as China. Our old and still dominant economic paradigm, which assumes that the planet has infinite capacity to buffer our unsustainable Anthropocene pressures, has long been proven wrong. The Earth is regulated by dampening (stress-reducing and cooling) feedback and interactions that regulate the large tipping point systems.

Scientifically, we have recently suggested that all tipping point systems (such as the large ice sheets, the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation, the Amazon rainforest) need to be legally defined as global commons.

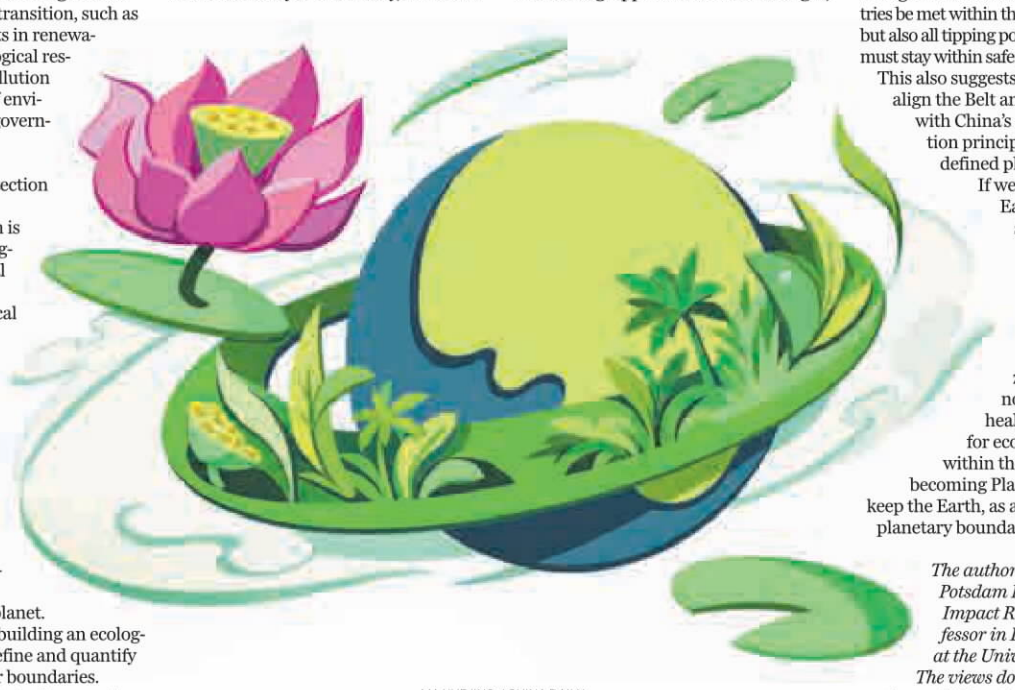
Why? Because, to ensure strong socio-economic development, not only must the ecological civilization targets of all countries be met within their national borders, but also all tipping point systems on Earth must stay within safe planetary boundaries.

This also suggests a need to further align the Belt and Road Initiative with China's ecological civilization principles and scientifically defined planetary boundaries.

If we fail to keep the Earth's tipping point systems intact, ecological invoices will be sent, and they will hit indiscriminately across the world.

Ecological civilization in China thus not only implies clean, healthy environments for economic development within the country, but also becoming Planetary Stewards to keep the Earth, as a whole, within safe planetary boundaries.

The author is the director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research PIK and professor in Earth system science at the University of Potsdam. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Douglas de Castro

China and Brazil's blueprint for a shared future

Brazil was the top destination for Chinese capital in 2025, attracting $6.1 billion in 52 Chinese investments. This was 45 percent more than the previous year, as highlighted in a report published by the Brazil-China Business Council recently.

To see these figures simply as traditional foreign direct investment is to miss a deeper structural alignment between China and Brazil.

This is not a cyclical movement of capital or a transactional pivot, but a civilizational convergence unfolding at a time when the liberal world order and international institutions are fracturing.

The China-Brazil partnership is quietly drawing a blueprint for a multipolar and ecologically rooted development model that reflects the vision of a shared future for humanity.

For decades, South-South economic engagement was often viewed through a narrow framework of resource extraction, debt diplomacy or geopolitical maneuvering.

This is the narrative that the 2025 report dispels: investing in Brazil's power grid, mining key minerals, electric-vehicle production, digital logistics, and high-tech manufacturing aligns with Brazil's priorities in energy transition and sustainable development, while also providing new opportunities for Chinese companies.

What distinguishes this wave of investments is its developmental philosophy.

China and Brazil share many characteristics: large and diverse populations, imperialistic disruptions throughout history, state-led modernization and a preference for long-term sovereignty over short-term financialization.

Their growing partnership is anchored in strategic coordination, with infrastructure as the driver of industrialization and resilience as the measure of success.

This is very different from the Washington Consensus model of austerity, privatization and market fundamentalism that weakened many countries in the Global South and increased inequalities.

Notably, many were greenfield projects, focusing on capacity building, technology transfer, and sustainable operations. The investments touched a record 20 Brazilian states, with the North and Northeast gaining unprecedented momentum alongside traditional leaders such as Sao Paulo and Minas Gerais.

Global Lens

In the broader context, cooperation between China and Brazil is accelerating because of the structural crisis of the liberal world order.

Investments in mining tripled to $1.76 billion, focusing on critical minerals, copper, nickel, graphite and rare earths that are directly tied to the global energy transition.

Brazil has 26.5 percent of the world's graphite reserves and is second in rare earths, but China dominates their processing and manufacturing. Their collaboration is not exploitative but rather a vertically integrated supply chain that supports decarbonization.

The partnership's ecological dimension is evident at a deeper level. China's concept of ecological civilization places environmental sustainability at the center of modernization, embedding carbon neutrality, circular economy principles and green industrial policy into state planning.

Brazil adheres to the rights of nature framework, which recognizes ecosystems not only as economic resources but as subjects with their own intrinsic value.

Investment data from 2025 show how this philosophical convergence is turning into real infrastructure for the benefit of both nature and people. For the fifth consecutive year, investment in sustainability and clean energy projects expanded in 2025, with a record 31 projects launched in hydropower, solar, wind and e-mobility.

These are not isolated initiatives, but part of an integrated low-carbon industrial ecosystem.

For instance, BYD and GWM did not simply replicate the Western assembly models in Bahia and Sao Paulo but localized entire value chains. Within months of starting operations, BYD produced nearly 20,000 electrified vehicles and established local supply networks.

Rumo and COFCO's rail logistics investment promises to cut carbon dioxide emissions from grain and sugar transportation by 80 percent compared to Brazil's heavily diesel-dependent road system.

Even the mining boom is linked to global decarbonization goals. EVs use six times more critical minerals than conventional combustion engine vehicles.

Here, China's model of ecological civilization intersects with Brazil's ethical emphasis on the rights of nature.

Together, they offer a pragmatic model of energy transition that respects both planetary boundaries and developmental sovereignty. In this sense, green industrial policy becomes a vehicle of South-South cooperation rather than a tool of Northern conditionality.

But this alignment requires careful navigation. Chinese companies must move beyond technical compliance and develop genuine socio-ecological integration by aligning with Brazil's complex environmental licensing rules, indigenous land protections, and decentralized regulatory environment.

In the broader context, cooperation between China and Brazil is accelerating because of the structural crisis of the liberal world order. Growing protectionism, technology decoupling, fragmented climate finance, and the weaponization of global supply chains have eroded trust in West-led multilateralism and Bretton Woods institutions.

Brazil is a natural anchor for China's decarbonization and reindustrialization agenda given its clean energy mix, abundance of critical minerals, continental market size, and commitment to strategic autonomy.

From 2007 to 2025, Chinese investment in Brazil totaled $85.5 billion in 355 projects, with manufacturing alone accounting for $2.66 billion between 2023 and 2025, surpassing oil and mining in recent years. This signals a structural move away from dependence on raw materials to industrial integration with added value.

Brazil in turn gains access to capital, technology and industrial partnerships without the political conditionalities that have historically limited its policy space.

Projects such as the Geely-Renault joint venture in Parana, the expansion of Chinese digital platforms such as Keeta and 99Food, and the geographical dispersion in 20 states point to a decentralized and resilient network of cooperation. The community with a shared future for humanity is not a slogan but a functional architecture for multipolar development.

But this vision calls for long-term strategic alignment, transparent regulatory frameworks, robust local partnerships, and deliberate technological absorption.

Brazilian institutions should simplify licensing procedures while enforcing environmental and social standards. Chinese companies should deepen localization, prioritize workforce training and adapt to Brazil's institutional pluralism.

The crisis of the liberal order should not lead to fragmentation. Instead, it should be a catalyst for new forms of cooperation.

If Brazil and China continue to align their developmental trajectories with ecological imperatives, build regulatory transparency and develop technological capacity, they can shape a post-hegemonic, planet-centered future.

The author is a professor of international law at the School of Law of Lanzhou University.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Chen Weihua

The author is a China Daily columnist.
chenweihua@chinadaily.com.cn

European Union should get over its protectionist impulse

The upcoming European Council summit in Brussels from June 18 to 19 is a pivotal opportunity for the European Union to review its trade and investment policy toward China.

The EU needs to decide whether it wants to be more protectionist and confrontational or foster a more cooperative relationship with the world's second-largest economy.

The EU has been crafting multiple trade and investment measures against China, including the proposed Industrial Accelerator Act. The legislation would exclude China from participating in public procurement bids in certain sectors and from accessing subsidies in supply chains.

Since March 2019, when the EU redefined China from a comprehensive strategic partner to a "cooperative partner, economic competitor and systemic rival", the bloc has adopted a less cooperative policy.

Many of the EU's investment screening and trade measures in the past years have deliberately targeted China even if they did not explicitly mention it by name.

The EU has also kowtowed to coercion by the United States to ban Huawei 5G and is now planning more measures against the Chinese company.

Within the 27-member EU, countries are divided on their approach to China. France, Spain, the Netherlands, Italy and Lithuania have advocated a tougher China policy while Germany and some Scandinavian countries believe stronger ties with China serve their best interests.

A tit-for-tat trade war between China and the EU will be a lose-lose game for both and the fragile global economy.

EU has leveled various accusations against China, including running a trade surplus with the bloc, State subsidies, overcapacity and unfair trade practices. Yet, it's worth noting that the EU as a whole runs trade surpluses with most countries, including the US.

When Washington imposed punitive tariffs on the EU, the bloc tried hard to convince US President Donald Trump that trade deficits are not problematic. Yet somehow China's trade surplus has become a concern.

Many Europeans find it difficult to accept the fact that the country that once exported only labor intensive goods, such as garments, footwear and toys, is now globally competitive in electric vehicles, batteries, solar panels, wind turbines, AI and several high-tech sectors.

Most Europeans are not aware of China's phenomenal transformation.

I am writing this column in Chongqing, which has changed dramatically in the past two decades from a Third World city into a modern urban center comparable to major European cities.

At the same time, the EU's competitiveness has declined, especially against the US and China. According to a September 2024 report by former European Central Bank president Mario Draghi, the numerous challenges the EU faces are mostly internal.

China's GDP in nominal terms was smaller than that of Italy in 2000. But it surpassed Germany's GDP in 2007, and by 2025, was almost the same as that of the entire EU.

Blaming China for its own problems is a misguided approach. Instead, the EU should focus on addressing its internal problems and policy failures. During my time in Brussels, the EU prided itself on being a regulatory giant even though it had no tech giants of its own.

The Draghi report highlights that overregulation by the bloc has become a major problem that discourages innovation.

The EU's Cold War mentality, as exemplified by the demonization of Huawei and Chinese EVs as national security threats, is another problem.

In contrast, China welcomes EU investment, with millions of German, French and Italian cars running on Chinese streets.

Many EU companies have been involved in China's critical infrastructure construction. China has never branded Airbus as a national security threat despite the fact that it has a dominant 55 percent share in the commercial aviation market in the Chinese mainland.

The Comprehensive Agreement on Investment, which took many years to negotiate and remains frozen by the European Parliament, is a huge wasted opportunity for European companies in the Chinese market.

As two major trade partners, China and the EU have frictions on many issues. However, the right way to address them is through consultation rather than unilateral protectionist measures.

A tit-for-tat trade war between China and the EU will be a lose-lose game for both and the fragile global economy.

When EU leaders meet next week, they should aim to preserve the mutually beneficial trade and investment relationship, not derail it with tariffs, sanctions and discriminatory tools.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:16 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:16 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

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

HUMPREY ARNALDO RUSSEL

From turbulence to trust

The future of Asia-Pacific trade will depend not only on growth or market expansion, but on the ability of regional states to cooperate more effectively



The world is experiencing turbulence as a result of an increasingly unpredictable global political situation. The crisis in the Middle East, which has led to difficulties at the Strait of Hormuz, has further worsened the situation. Given the scarcity of viable alternative routes, any sustained disruption to this choke point carries profound consequences for global energy markets and, by extension, international economic stability.

Against this complex backdrop, the two-day APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade Meeting in Suzhou, East China's Jiangsu province, on May 22-23 played its role in advancing the realization of "Building an Asia-Pacific Community to Prosper Together" — the theme of the APEC "China Year". The APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting is scheduled to be hosted in Shenzhen, South China's Guangdong province, in November.

A key challenge for Asia-Pacific economies is how to continue upholding openness, strengthening cooperation and maintaining a rules-based international trading system amid the current global fragmentation. As is widely recognized, contemporary global trade is no longer shaped exclusively by tariff structures and market access arrangements; it is increasingly conditioned by geopolitical competition, national security imperatives, industrial competition and a range of other considerations that, in effect, undermine the integrity of the existing multilateral order. However, the principles of non-discrimination, transparency, predictability and rules-based dispute settlement remain highly relevant, particularly for developing economies that do not always possess strong bargaining power in bilateral relations. As some countries increasingly resort to unilateral measures to narrow preferential arrangements, the risk of fragmentation continues to grow. If left unaddressed, global trade may shift from being an open space for cooperation into an arena of bloc-based competition.

In the context of the relations between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and China, this is highly relevant. According to China's General Administration of Customs, trade between China and ASEAN reached 7.55 trillion yuan ($1.12 trillion) last year, surging 8 percent year-on-year. This growth is being formalized through agreements such as the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area 3.0 Upgrade Protocol. Record GDP and export growth in Malaysia, and successful initiatives such as the China-Indonesia implementation of cross-border QR payments, are, in large part, due to the stability of ASEAN-China relations.

And this year marks the fifth anniversary of the ASEAN-China comprehensive strategic partnership. ASEAN-China relations carry significant political weight, as they involve one of the world's most strategically important regions and one of the leading global powers. The scale and importance of this relationship have been managed on the basis of openness, consultation and balance. For ASEAN, the principal challenge lies in maintaining collective coherence. Therefore, ASEAN needs to strengthen its internal mechanisms to ensure that cooperation with China remains aligned with the broader interests of the region as a whole.

Meanwhile, China's cooperation with ASEAN is genuinely mutual and beneficial. China has also expressed support for ASEAN-led mechanisms, respect for consensus-based processes and a continued commitment to avoiding approaches that could create perceptions of dominance. In the current context of unilateralism pursued by the United States, China continues to serve as a guardian of the multilateral system and defender of institutions such as the World Trade Organization. In this regard, ASEAN-China relations may serve as an example of how regional cooperation need not undermine multilateralism. This assessment is further substantiated by empirical evidence. The State of Southeast Asia: 2026 Survey Report released by Singapore's ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute reveals that 52 percent of ASEAN respondents indicated they would align with China over the US, with the latter preferred by 48 percent. This finding reflects a discernible shift in regional strategic orientations that policymakers cannot afford to overlook. China's contribution to regional development is gradually understood and recognized by more people from ASEAN countries.



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

ASEAN-China relations set an example for regional cooperation and beyond. Accordingly, all stakeholders should also focus on the Asia-Pacific policy agenda that can be oriented toward strengthening, rather than eroding, the multilateral system. Regionalism remains important, but sound regionalism must be open and inclusive. Developed countries should not dictate terms to smaller ones or compel them to conform to their preferences. Regional cooperation can serve as a policy laboratory for developing higher standards, enhancing transparency, and facilitating the participation of developing economies. Several policy priorities warrant focused attention in this regard.

First, regulatory transparency should be enhanced. In modern trade, barriers do not always take the form of tariffs. Many obstacles arise through technical standards, customs procedures, certification rules, investment policies, environmental provisions, digital requirements and product safety regulations. When regulations lack transparency, other countries may perceive them as a form of disguised protectionism. Therefore, Asia-Pacific economies need to strengthen mechanisms for regulatory consultation, information exchange and policy notification before new measures broadly affect trading partners.

Second, digital governance should be established as a central policy priority. Digital trade extends beyond e-commerce to encompass cross-border data flows, consumer protection, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, electronic signatures and digital trade documentation. Each country has a legitimate interest in safeguarding data security and preserving digital sovereignty. However, if countries develop closed and mutually incompatible regulatory frameworks, the region's digital economy risks becoming increasingly fragmented. Accordingly, digital policy should seek to strike an appropriate balance: ensuring security without fostering isolation, promoting innovation while maintaining accountability and preserving openness while protecting the public interest.

Third, the green economy agenda can be governed in an equitable manner. Carbon standards, clean energy policies, sustainable supply chains and environmental certification have become increasingly important elements of contemporary trade policy. Nevertheless, green standards should not be employed as instruments to constrain the development prospects of developing countries, which continue to require time, financing, technological support and sufficient policy space to undertake a just and effective transition. Regional cooperation must therefore actively promote technology transfer, capacity-building, the mutual recognition of credible environmental standards and targeted support for small- and medium-sized industries to ensure they are not left behind in the green transition.

Ultimately, the future of Asia-Pacific trade will depend not only on growth or market expansion, but on governance, trust and the ability of regional states to cooperate transparently and equitably. Regional integration must reinforce, rather than weaken, the multilateral system. ASEAN and China can continue to demonstrate that regional cooperation can support global stability and help shape a more stable, just and inclusive international order.

The author is the head of the ASEAN-China Research Center at the University of Indonesia and a Qiushi scholar at the National Institute of Ethics and Moral Practice at Renmin University of China. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

LU GUOXUE

Sincerity, reciprocity and symbiosis

The 32nd APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade Meeting showed that Asia-Pacific economies are able to work together to build a regional community that prospers together



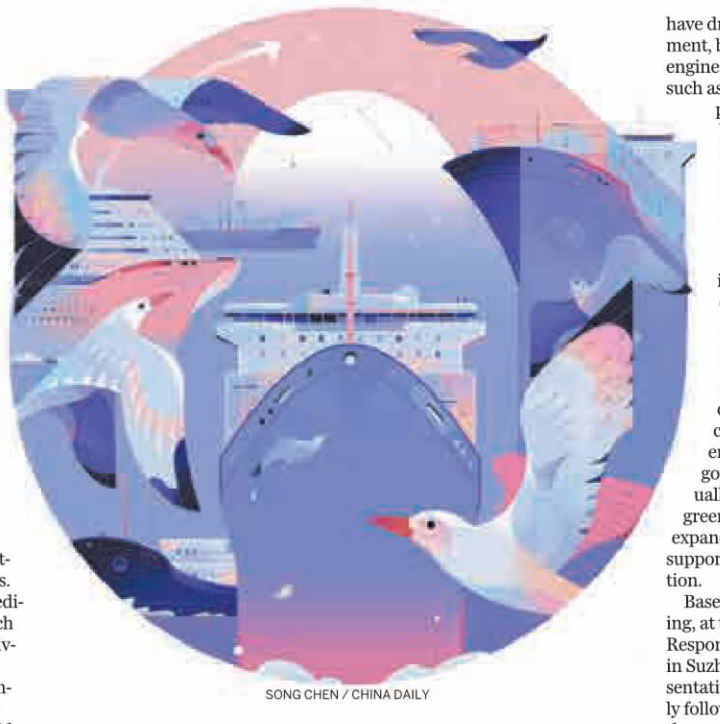
Geopolitical factors, including the Ukraine crisis and the situation in the Middle East, are impacting economic development in the Asia-Pacific region. The overall effects manifest in issues such as energy-driven inflation, trade disruptions, financial tightening, slowing growth and supply chain restructuring.

According to the United States' Energy Information Administration, about 20 percent of the global liquefied natural gas trade transited the Strait of Hormuz in 2024, and the agency estimates that 80 percent to 90 percent of that LNG goes to Asian markets. The Middle East conflict has not only increased shipping risks in the Red Sea, leading to higher freight costs and longer voyages, but also pushed international oil prices from around $70 per barrel to over $100. Meanwhile, the Ukraine crisis has disrupted export routes for Russian crude oil and natural gas, as well as Black Sea grain and fertilizers. The spillover effects of Europe's energy crisis have driven up natural gas, fertilizer and electricity prices in the Asia-Pacific region, raising costs for agriculture and manufacturing. Imported inflation remains high, while export-oriented economies face weakening orders and shrinking profit margins.

While the Ukraine crisis and the deteriorating situation in the Middle East continue to unfold, trade protectionism is also spreading unabated across the globe. Unilateral tariffs and sanctions bypass multilateral dispute settlement mechanisms, pushing global trade into a fragmented phase characterized by slowing growth and a "disorderly" governance landscape. Against this backdrop, short-term growing pains, long-term transformation, supply chain restructuring and accelerated regional cooperation have become realistic challenges that all members of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation mechanism confront.

Nevertheless, it is widely recognized that the Asia-Pacific region remains a key engine of global economic growth, showing positive signs of development, particularly in the trade and economic sphere. Look at first-quarter export data and year-on-year growth rates: China reached 6.85 trillion yuan ($1 trillion), an increase of 11.9 percent; the Republic of Korea posted $219.9 billion, up 37.8 percent; and Vietnam recorded $122.93 billion, a rise of 19.1 percent. In addition, emerging economies such as Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand also posted varied growth momentum. Led by the strong performance of these emerging economies, the Asia-Pacific region is demonstrating robust internal driving forces.

Digital services such as telemedicine, online education and fintech have emerged as new growth drivers in the digital economy. The Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference released the Sustainable Development: Asia and the World Annual Report 2026 on March 24. It noted that the value of Asia's digital economy reached $27 trillion in 2025, accounting for 46 percent of the region's GDP. As of June 2025, China's digital economy exceeded 50 trillion yuan, and its scale is projected to surpass 80 trillion yuan by 2030. Members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations including Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia have seen robust growth in their digital economies. Their combined volume topped $300 billion in 2025, 1.5 times the figure recorded a decade earlier.



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

According to HSBC research, trade related to artificial intelligence surged year-on-year in the first half of 2025. The Asia-Pacific region contributed nearly two-thirds of the global growth in that period. Widespread use of mobile payments and e-commerce has laid a solid foundation for digital trade across the region.

The rapid expansion of the Asia-Pacific digital economy is driving the accelerated development of regulatory frameworks. Progress continues in aligning cross-border e-commerce rules, promoting paperless trade and electronic bills of lading, and building a network of demonstration e-ports.

Meanwhile, the region is making coordinated progress in its green economic transformation. China's exports of new energy products have driven regional green development, becoming a new growth engine. The completion of projects such as the Cirata floating solar power plant in Indonesia, built by a Chinese company, represents a landmark achievement of the China-Indonesia Belt and Road cooperation and will also promote Indonesia's energy transition. Correspondingly, issues related to regional coordinated development and sustainable investment growth, including green standards, green minerals and carbon emissions standards, have drawn significant attention. The share of environmental, social and governance investment is gradually rising and the scale of green bond issuance is steadily expanding, providing financial support for the low-carbon transition.

Based on the above understanding, at the 32nd APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade Meeting held in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, representatives from 21 economies closely followed the APEC "China Year" theme of "Building an Asia-Pacific Community to Prosper Together". Centered on openness, innovation and cooperation, they promoted stronger cooperation in areas such as regional economic integration, the construction of the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific, support for the multilateral trading system, enhanced digital cooperation and development of the green economy. These efforts resulted in core outcomes including the Suzhou Statement that jointly foster an open regional economic environment, laying the groundwork for the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in November.

The meeting also approved the updated APEC Roadmap for Innovative, Competitive and Resilient Services. All parties expressed support for the implementation of the outcomes of the 14th World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference and the advancing of the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific. New consensus was reached on strengthening digital trade cooperation, particularly in areas such as cross-border data flows, digital trust and AI governance.

The current economic and trade landscape in the Asia-Pacific region is characterized by resilience, innovation-driven growth and deepening cooperation. Despite multiple challenges, the region is expected to maintain relatively stable momentum, driven by the strong performance of the digital and green economies, as well as continued regional collaboration.

The region is also a vital engine for global growth. APEC economies need to work together and respond calmly to the challenges. On the one hand, they can leverage regional collaboration to build consensus through multilateralism, thereby countering the impact of unilateralism and trade protectionism. On the other hand, they can promote a new pattern of regional economic integration and confidence-building measures, foster an inclusive Asia-Pacific partnership framework under the new circumstances, and establish a mutually beneficial and win-win collaborative mechanism within APEC, providing regional solutions for global governance.

The author is an associate research fellow at the Institute of World Economics and Politics and the National Institute for Global Strategy at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:16 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:16 PM

BUSINESS

Humanoid robots enter mass market

Prices plummet seen in commercial, industrial sectors as production surges

By **LI JIAYING**
lijiaying@chinadaily.com.cn

As leading Chinese humanoid robot makers unveil increasingly affordable models, advances in manufacturing, supply chain localization and growing production volumes are pushing the sector into a new phase of commercial adoption.

Unitree Robotics recently launched its dual-arm humanoid robot R1 with a starting price of 26,900 yuan ($3,968), making it the company's most affordable humanoid robot to date. Earlier, Noetix Robotics introduced its Bumi robot for 9,998 yuan, becoming one of the first consumer-oriented humanoid robots priced below the 10,000-yuan threshold. Around the same time, Booster Robotics also launched its K1 series with a starting price of 29,900 yuan.

The declining pricing trend is no longer limited to consumer products. Industrial humanoid robots have also begun entering the under 100,000-yuan range. Astribot's T1 humanoid robot, for example, starts at 89,900 yuan.

The shift marks a significant departure from just a few years ago, when humanoid robots in China typically sold for several hundred thousand yuan each.

According to Unitree's prospectus, the average selling price of its humanoid robots fell from around 593,000 yuan in 2023 to about 260,000 yuan in 2024, before declining further to 167,000 yuan during the first three quarters of 2025. Similarly, Leju Robotics said the average selling price of its Kuavo series dropped nearly 26 percent year-on-year in 2025 to 308,100 yuan per unit.

Guo Tao, a special researcher at domestic consultancy Internet Economy Institute, said the widespread decline in prices among domestic humanoid robots is being driven by multiple industry and market factors.

"As shipment volumes continue to expand, companies are able to spread previously high research and development expenses and production-line depreciation costs across a larger number of products, allowing unit costs to fall steadily," Guo said.

Industry data platform GGII said China's humanoid robot shipments reached 14,400 units in 2025 and output is expected to surpass 100,000 and potentially reach 200,000 units in 2026.

At the same time, Guo said domestic suppliers have made substantial progress in critical components such as reducers and servo systems, helping lower procurement costs across the industry.

Unitree, for example, said its company filings show that more than 90 percent of its core components — including motors, reducers and lidar sensors — are developed and manufactured in-house. As a result, the average production cost of its humanoid robots declined from 73,200 yuan in 2023 to 62,200 yuan by the third quarter of 2025.

Another important factor has been the industry's ability to leverage supply chains originally developed for electric vehicles and consumer electronics.

"More than half of the core components used in humanoid robots, including motors and reducers, can be sourced from existing new energy vehicle supply chains, so there is no need for large-scale new capacity investment, which helps keep manufacturing costs under control," Guo said.

The convergence between the automotive and robotics sectors is already bringing new opportunities for the automobile industry.

"Humanoid robots have opened up a new growth opportunity for the company and created a new development curve," said Wu Jianbin, chairman of automotive parts manufacturer Shuanglin Group, in an earlier interview.

Wu said the firm decided to enter the humanoids' planetary roller screw segment because the technologies share common foundations with its existing automotive seat horizontal drive motor business — including expertise in thread machining and gear manufacturing.

Meanwhile, automakers themselves are becoming increasingly active participants in the embodied intelligence sector. To date, major carmakers, such as Tesla, Mercedes-Benz, Changan, SAIC, XPeng and GAC, have entered the field through either self-development, joint ventures or incubation programs.



A humanoid robot band performs at a high-tech expo in Tianjin on May 28. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY



An employee (left) addresses visitor queries at De'Longhi's booth during a trade fair in Shanghai. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

De'Longhi exec hails 'Shopping in China'

By **ZHUANG QIANGE**
zhuangqiange@chinadaily.com.cn

China represents a key market for understanding how coffee culture is evolving outside Europe, and its "Shopping in China" initiative is expected to unleash greater potential for coffee businesses from around the globe, a senior industry executive said.

"The Chinese market is a very important market for De'Longhi," Andrea Natale, director of coffee business development in Asia at De'Longhi Group, said at the recent Wine to Asia exhibition in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, highlighting the market size and the nation's increasingly strong efforts in opening-up.

China's coffee sector has experienced explosive growth in recent years. According to the 2026 China Urban Coffee Development Report, the country's coffee market reached 354.9 billion yuan ($52.3 billion) in 2025, up 13.3 percent year-on-year, with per capita coffee consumption rising to 28.57 cups annually. The home coffee machine market has been particularly robust, with online sales surging 32 percent last year as more consumers embrace cafe-quality coffee at home.

De'Longhi, an Italian home appliance giant, has firmly established itself as a player in China's coffee machine segment, holding approximately 20 percent market share, according to a report from market information tracker 36Kr.

The company has been focusing on innovation to meet Chinese consumers' demand for convenience and quality. Natale highlighted two De'Longhi coffee machine models that bring cafe-style coffee into the home, allowing consumers to enjoy professional-quality coffee with a simple one-touch experience.

"The 'Shopping in China' initiative opens the door to new opportunities, and creates both immediate and long-term opportunities for international brands," Natale said.

Launched by China's Ministry of Commerce in 2025, the initiative has played a key role in boosting inbound consumption. Official data show that the number of departure tax refund stores and foreign tourists using the service both tripled last year, with tax refund sales nearly doubling.

After visiting coffee regions in Yunnan and Hainan provinces, Natale was impressed with the quality of Chinese coffee beans. Yunnan, which produces over 98 percent of China's coffee, saw its coffee output reach 138,900 metric tons in 2025, with a coffee refinement rate of 31.6 percent. The province's total export value hit 860 million yuan in 2025, with products shipped to 43 countries and regions, including the Netherlands, Vietnam, Germany, Malaysia and France.

Natale expressed interest in further exploring connections between Chinese coffee resources and Italian coffee culture.

"Meaningful products are defined less by price and more by the stories and cultural value they carry. I believe the cultural exchanges between China and Italy will continue to enrich both markets," Natale said.

Skyworth Solar mulls global expansion

By **SHI JING** in Shanghai
shijing@chinadaily.com.cn

With the global energy market facing challenges such as unstable supply and surging demand due to the leapfrogging development of artificial intelligence, Skyworth Solar Co Ltd is upgrading itself into an industrial operator providing integrated services of production, synergy, deployment, trading and added value.

As part of the company's five-year strategy unveiled on June 3, Skyworth Solar will make Germany and Italy its centers for Europe, while Thailand will be its center for Southeast Asia. This year, the company will extend its services to 12 countries and reach new markets such as Indonesia and the Philippines. Explosive growth can also be expected in the United Kingdom, said Qu Wanfei, executive president and general manager of the overseas business division at Skyworth Solar, and chief investment officer of parent company Skyworth Group.

On June 3, Skyworth Solar also announced its cooperation with Joybuy — JD's global online site — under which the two companies will explore new channels to deliver China's new energy solutions to global customers.

Qu said the expansion into overseas markets is by no means simply selling products, but building a whole system covering local distribution channels, storage, service delivery, technology support and after-sales services.

"Energy mix, power pricing, building typologies and user needs vary significantly from country to country. For example, European users prioritize energy independence and product quality, while Southeast Asian users focus more on adaptability to high temperatures, high-humidity and overall return-on-investment efficiency. Experiences in mature markets can help us with technology innovation and service improvement," Qu said.

Founded in 2020, Skyworth Solar has built over 800,000 power plants, with its cumulative grid-connected capacity exceeding 29.3 gigawatts as of the end of 2025.

As Qu further explained, electricity is still expensive, especially in regions with geopolitical tensions and unstable power supply. But the cost of solar power has dropped by 90 percent over the past decade, with an easy process of installation and application.

It only takes six months to build a solar-powered farm and only one day for a rooftop PV system, said Sonia Dunlop, CEO of Global Solar Council. No other energy source is as fast, modular and globally adaptable as solar, Dunlop said.

The global newly installed solar PV capacity reached 700 GW in 2025, a figure that seemed utterly "unimaginable" a decade ago. The cumulative global solar PV capacity stands at 2.2 terawatts now, and is expected to rise to 8 TW in 2030 when energy storage capacity will also reach 1.5 TW, Dunlop added.

Rentia van Tonder, head of renewable energy, power and infrastructure for Johannesburg-based Standard Bank, said they need cooperation with Chinese partners as they are looking for better market understanding, ideas, and operational experiences in different markets and countries. More participation of engineering, procurement and construction companies and an enriched supply of products and services from China will also help the development of clean energy in South Africa.

According to China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), the country will build 100 national-level zero-carbon parks, with planning of the first 52 already released.

"This is a very specific target. A zero-carbon park is a very complicated scenario combining factories and devices, which requires diversified but precise deployment of power," Qu said.

Nation's rise seen benefitting world

By **CHENG YU**
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

China is rapidly emerging as an "economic super-connector" that is redrawing the map of global trade and is viewed in the West as challenging its long-standing dominance over the international economic order, said Chandran Nair, founder of the Global Institute for Tomorrow.

In an exclusive interview with China Daily, Nair said that for the first time, economies from Africa, Southeast Asia, Latin America and the Middle East not only have access to superior products from China, but also have an alternative to the Western-dominated institutions that have governed international commerce.



Chandran Nair

He described China as "an economic super-connector" that has built deep ties with countries historically marginalized by Western-led institutions.

"Nations across the developing world see China building infrastructure, offering trade and staying out of their internal politics," he said, adding that China's rise could give developing nations a stronger voice in global affairs.

Nair's recently published *Understanding China* is a book that argues that China tries to offer an approach of engagement over confrontation, and explains that the nation's rise is in the interest of the world and yields positive global impact.

In terms of US-China trade frictions, Nair said it is fundamentally driven not by trade imbalances, but by anxiety that China will be a threat to its global supremacy and the fear of an alternative development model that challenges Western dominance.

"It is about systemic competition, and it always has been. The prevailing fear gripping the West is simply this — how can a country manage to develop so quickly and successfully outside the framework of Western political and economic models?" he said.

"The biggest feature of this conflict is that it is driven by ideological prejudice. Rather than acknowledging the truth that China has a right to grow — even if that may challenge Western dominance and economic hegemony and is, in addition, good for the world — the Western narrative has veered toward wholesale criticism of every aspect of the nation."

He said criticism of China now stretches far beyond trade and economics into attacks on "China's history, economic management, political structure, human rights record, societal values and technological advancements."

"This is shameful," Nair said. "It depicts a desperate grasping-at-straws approach and undermines the West in the eyes of the majority."

According to Nair, Western powers are increasingly attempting to preserve global influence by containing what he called the "legitimate rights" of other countries to rise.

"The world does not buy it anymore," he said, referring to Western narratives around defending the "rules-based (world) order".

Nair argued that China's rapid poverty reduction poses a direct challenge to long-held Western assumptions linking democracy and economic success to equity.

"China's model of economic development has reduced poverty at a rate unmatched by any other country. A democracy that cannot work to improve the lives of its citizens is not better than any other form of governance that can actually improve the quality of life of its people. That is the argument the West cannot tolerate because it strikes at the foundation of its claim — that it has devised the best system of governance."

Looking toward 2035, Nair sees China as uniquely positioned to pioneer an alternative model of development.

"The greatest opportunity is that China is better positioned than any other large country to demonstrate how it can be done so other developing nations can build their own models," he said.

Kunming expo to boost trade with S. Asia

By **YAN YUJIE** and **LI YINGQING** in Kunming

The China-South Asia Expo (CSAE) provides growth opportunities for businesses and enhanced regional trade, officials, experts and exhibitors from China and South Asian countries said in Kunming, Yunnan province, on Thursday.

Co-hosted by the Ministry of Commerce and the Yunnan provincial government, the 10th CSAE is being held in Kunming from Thursday to Tuesday. The event has attracted approximately 560 companies from South Asian countries to participate as exhibitors.

Bangladesh is the theme country of this year's expo. Kayser Kamal, deputy speaker of the 13th National Parliament of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, said that having Bangladesh as the theme country reflects the depth and warmth of the friendship between the two nations.

Bangladesh has set up 84 standard booths and a 360-square-meter pavilion to showcase its offerings, with participation from over 100 companies across seven major industries, making it the largest national exhibition Bangladesh has ever held in China.

Wares Hossain, director of the export promotion bureau at Bangladesh's Ministry of Commerce, said that Bangladeshi exhibitors have brought garments, agro-based products, pharmaceuticals and handicrafts to the expo, with the aim of expanding their businesses in China.

Rajendran Muhundan, manager of MNP Gems and Jeweller in Sri Lanka, said that the expo has promoted his business. Last year, he established long-term cooperation agreements with 20 business-to-business customers from China and other countries at the expo, significantly increasing orders.

Suyash Mehta, director of Sudha India International in India, said that the expo is important for exporters as well as regional trade. Having participated five times, he is optimistic about achieving better sales this year.

Khalil Hashmi, Pakistan's ambassador to China, said that the expo serves as a crucial platform, offering opportunities for exhibitors. It allows small and medium-sized businesses to showcase and sell their products to a larger market, thereby boosting bilateral trade.

Bilateral trade between China and South Asian nations surged past $200 billion for the first time in 2025, up 10.7 percent year-on-year, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Hashmi noted that the expo has established a dedicated pavilion for the coffee industry.

He Yuejun, manager of Pu'er Aini plantation, said that the expo has successfully hosted a coffee-themed pavilion for three years, with his company seeing daily sales reach 20,000 yuan ($2,950) during the event last year.

"At the expo, we have the opportunity to share insights on coffee varieties, cultivation methods, and processing techniques. The expo serves as a platform for learning and interaction, raising the standards across the entire industry," He said.

Technology products stand out as particularly popular among the Chinese offerings at the expo.

Hashmi pays attention to China's high-tech products, such as electric vehicles and drones. "China has developed a range of green and digital technologies that are both high-quality and competitively priced," he said.

Contact the writers at yanyj@chinadaily.com.cn

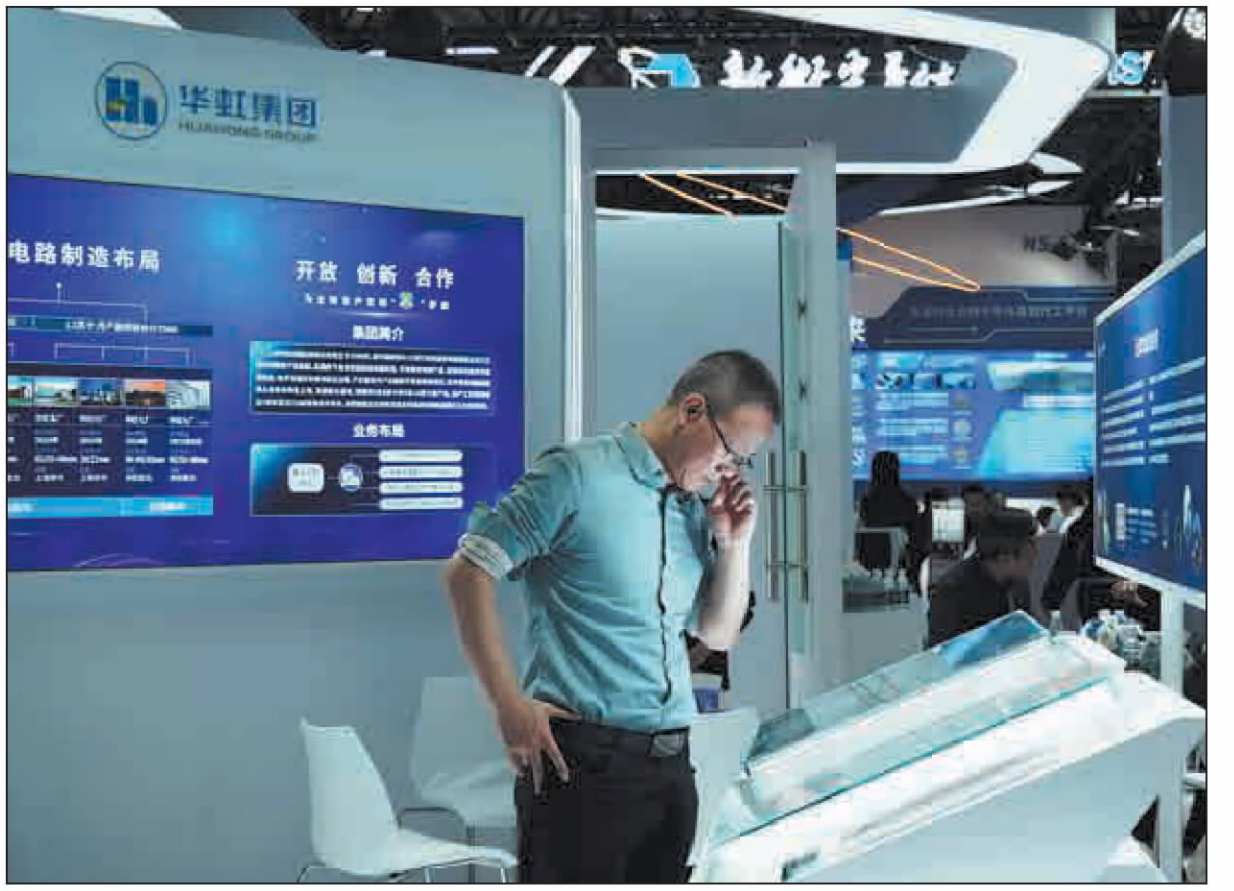
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:16 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:16 PM

BUSINESS

China's tech firms fuel global AI rise

In Jan-April, nation's IC exports hit $103.5 billion, up 83.7% in value y-o-y







Above: A visitor views chip products from Huahong Group at a semiconductor exhibition in Shanghai on March 25. LONG WEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Left: Workers operate a full-capacity production line for 800G optical modules at an optoelectronics facility in Wuhan, Hubei province, on Dec 24. WEI LAI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Below left: A researcher poses with rolled-up "fiber chips" and a smart tactile glove made by weaving the chips into textiles at Fudan University in Shanghai on Jan 19. LIU YING / XINHUA

BEIJING — With the global push for artificial intelligence computing power unleashing an unprecedented wave of infrastructure buildout, China-made optical modules that shuttle data — alongside the chips that process information — have become critical links. Sporting the world's leading market shares and accelerating upgrades, China's tech supply chains have become essential to sustaining global AI growth.

The numbers speak for themselves. Chinese firms claim seven spots among the world's top 10 optical module vendors, with their combined market share exceeding 60 percent globally, said research firm LightCounting. In the first four months, China exported 117 billion integrated circuits worth $103.5 billion, up 83.7 percent in value year-on-year. Export orders for optical modules have stretched into 2028.

Behind these figures lies a deeper shift: China is no longer just participating in the AI supply chain, but also offering a supply chain that stabilizes global AI infrastructure.

If AI is the brain, optical modules are the nerves, converting electrical signals to light and back at blinding speed, shuttling data between servers inside data centers and across continents. A single 1.6-terabit optical module can transmit 95 high-definition movies in one second.

Chinese firms are leading the sector. Zhongji InnoLight, based in East China's Shandong province, held over 40 percent of the global 800-gigabit optical module market and an estimated 50 to 70 percent of the 1.6T segment last year, securing first place for four consecutive years. Eoptolink, InnoLight's rival in Chengdu, Sichuan province, ranked second.

Both companies have secured their positions in the supply chains of companies building the AI clusters that are reshaping the global economy, such as Nvidia, Google and Amazon. Delivery cycles that once took 12 weeks have been compressed to eight or fewer, as North American clients race to beef up computing capacity measured in weekly increments.

Customs data show that in March, China's average export price of optical modules rose 23 percent year-on-year, while fiber and cable exports soared 263.8 percent in value, with the average export price surging 204.3 percent.

Huagong Tech, an optical module maker based in Wuhan, Hubei province, launched the world's first 12.8-T XPO module in March, bundling the capacity of eight 1.6T modules into a single unit tailored for next-generation AI clusters of 100,000-plus GPUs.

Ma Xinqiang, the company's chairman, said the North American market for 1.6T modules alone has surpassed $20 billion, while the global market will far exceed $30 billion this year.

The chip story is newer but no less striking. China produced 127.2 billion integrated circuits in the first quarter, up 24.3 percent year-on-year, equivalent to roughly 1.4 billion chips per day.

High-value products have become the mainstay of China's chip exports. In April alone, export value doubled to $31.1 billion, up 100.1 percent year-on-year, while export volume edged up merely 3.8 percent. Industry insiders said that such a gap, rarely seen in China's chip trade, signals a systemic revaluation of export product value rather than simple volume growth.

Among the country's leading chipmakers, SMIC ran at 93.1 percent capacity utilization in the first quarter, while Hua Hong Grace Semiconductor saw its net profit attributable to parent company shareholders up 458.1 percent at $20.9 million, with its capacity utilization rate staying high at 99.7 percent.

Equally significant is what is happening on the equipment side. The China Semiconductor Industry Association said the domestic chip equipment localization rate climbed from 25 percent at end-2024 to 35 percent in 2025. On new wafer-fab production lines, domestically made equipment accounted for 55 percent of total procurement value by end-2025, exceeding the national 50-percent target ahead of schedule, official data revealed.

Optical modules and chips are not parallel stories, but converging ones. The same AI boom that is driving insatiable demand for high-speed optical tech is also reshaping the chip landscape: MOS memory sales surged 236.4 percent in the first quarter, while sales of logic chips jumped 40.1 percent, said the European Semiconductor Industry Association.

The phrase "compute-power coordination" entered China's Government Work Report for the first time this year, with a CICC research report identifying it as a major industry trend driven by soaring AI demand and low-carbon energy transition goals.

The vehicle-chip nexus adds another dimension. Each new energy vehicle features more than 1,000 chips, roughly double that of a traditional car. Chinese companies have outperformed foreign rivals in power semiconductors and are gaining ground in cabin-entertainment and body-control chips, though high-end autonomous-driving SoCs remain a work in progress, said Liu Quan, deputy chief engineer of the China Center for Information Industry Development.

The competitiveness of optical modules also largely hinges on the synergy of the complete upstream industrial chain, covering optical chips, ceramic packages and precision structural components. China has formed highly concentrated industry clusters in the Yangtze River Delta, the Pearl River Delta and Wuhan Optics Valley, where the localization rate exceeds 90 percent. This has enabled cost control and mass-production yields to reach world-leading levels.

Zhang Zhe, a researcher at the Electronic Information Research Institute under the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology, said the large-scale construction and expansion of AI data centers worldwide has generated rigid hardware demand.

While foreign manufacturers face supply-side constraints and limited capacity expansion, Chinese manufacturers — backed by sufficient raw material supplies and a complete industrial chain — can rapidly respond to this round of demand explosion, Zhang said.

XINHUA

Researchers fast-track industrial innovation for national high-quality growth

NANCHANG — A growing number of high-level researchers are being embedded within companies to enhance innovation and push technological advances on factory floors as part of China's drive for high-quality development.

Jiangxi Naile Copper in Yingtan, East China's Jiangxi province, is a case in point. Founded in 2003, Naile Copper has focused on high-end copper products, with oxygen-free copper tubes as its flagship product.

In the company's exhibition hall, chief engineer Ma Li pours hot water into two metal tubes — one hollow copper tube remains cool to the touch, while the other, made of oxygen-free copper, quickly becomes very hot.

The company has broken through core manufacturing technologies previously monopolized by foreign firms, supplying heat pipes for critical cooling applications in central processing units, graphic processing units and insulated gate bipolar transistors, Ma said.

Addressing the company's demand for innovation in high-end copper products, Zhuo Haiou, deputy dean of the International Institute for Materials Innovation at Nanchang University, went on secondment from his university to the company to serve in a senior technical role in 2023.

"We promptly formed an interdisciplinary research team, combining talent from the university and the company," Zhuo said. "The core task was to overcome the technical challenges in the material properties and processing techniques of grooved copper tubes."

After nearly a year of repeated trials, the team successfully developed a high-performance oxygen-free copper grooved tube product, which now generates an annual output value of over 100 million yuan ($14.7 million).

The collaboration between the company and Nanchang University is part of a broader provincial push to embed researchers into enterprises.

In 2024, Jiangxi launched a dedicated "deputy manager of sci-tech" program, encouraging enterprises to recruit researchers from universities, research institutes and State-owned enterprises across the country to serve in the role.



Workers run research and tests on dairy products at a lab in Gansu province on Oct 16, 2024. LI YALONG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

The program aims to deepen the integration of industrial, innovation and talent ecosystems while boosting enterprise-level technological innovation and industrial transformation. In turn, enterprises provide a testing ground for their research, ensuring that scientific endeavors are well-targeted and practical.

Since the program's rollout, over 1,100 deputy managers of sci-tech have been recruited, serving more than 500 enterprises. They have facilitated nearly 300 scientific and technological achievements, generating direct economic benefits exceeding 1 billion yuan.

These efforts span 12 key industrial sectors — including electronic information, new energy and biomedicine — injecting strong momentum into high-quality development.

Similar programs have been rolled out in other provinces, such as Henan and Anhui, giving a strong boost to technological upgrading and industrial innovation.

China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) calls for improving policies that allow researchers to take entrepreneurial leave or hold multiple positions with pay, encouraging top talent to move into enterprises. It also urges joint industry-university research and development to address industrial needs.

Yu Jianguo, a professor at East China University of Science and Technology, said high-level talent brings knowledge and technologies to the front lines of industries, achieving a crucial leap from laboratories to production lines.

"This not only resolves the dual predicaments of universities' difficulties in transforming research results and enterprises' difficulties in obtaining technologies, but also initiates a virtuous cycle where talent leads innovation and innovation drives industries," Yu said.

In Xinfeng county, Jiangxi's Ganzhou, the flexible talent recruitment mechanism has enabled deputy managers of sci-tech to serve as a bridge for sustained university-industry collaboration. To date, nearly 30 universities have partnered with local enterprises, supplying over 400 graduates annually and establishing more than 30 joint R&D platforms.

"The value of deputy managers of sci-tech is not just about solving today's challenges, but also about cultivating localized, specialized, and industry-ready talent for the future," said Chen Jintao, a Party official of the county.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:16 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:16 PM

CHINA

Nation to expand East-West program

By **ZHAO YIMENG**
zhaoyimeng@chinadaily.com.cn

China will expand and upgrade its East-West cooperation program by deepening industrial partnerships and broadening county-level assistance ties during a new stage of regular support, five years after its victory over extreme poverty, agriculture and rural affairs authorities said on Thursday.

Vice-Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs Maierdan Mugaiti said China will maintain fixed assistance partnerships between eight eastern provincial-level regions and 10 western counterparts. Economically stronger county-level regions in the east will be paired with key counties in western regions, achieving full coverage of targeted assistance partnerships.

"The cooperation will continue to combine the needs of western regions with the strengths of eastern regions," Maierdan said.

He said industrial cooperation and other development-oriented measures will remain central to efforts aimed at strengthening endogenous growth.

In recent years, China has launched initiatives to upgrade specialty industries and promote the full-chain development of leading industries in western regions, accelerating industrial transfers from east to west and jointly building industrial parks.

For instance, cooperation between Beijing and the Inner Mongolia autonomous region has helped develop eight major agricultural and livestock industry chains, including beef cattle, dairy, cashmere, potatoes and soybeans. The partnership has supported the establishment of more than 600 green agricultural production and processing bases, boosting local development while strengthening food supplies for the capital.

Across western regions, partners have jointly developed 35 rural tourism routes and supported the construction of more than 1,500 livable and business-friendly villages. The tourism routes attracted more than 9.59 million visitors from Tianjin and Shandong province to Gansu province in 2025, an increase of nearly 700,000 from the previous year, Maierdan said.

Officials highlighted cooperation between Fujian province and the Ningxia Hui autonomous region as one of the most successful examples of the East-West cooperation program.

Wang Jian, head of the region's department of agriculture and rural affairs, said the partnership helped Ningxia eliminate extreme poverty and lay the foundation for long-term development.

"Farmers' annual per capita income in Ningxia increased from about 1,400 yuan ($206) in 1996 to more than 20,000 yuan in 2025," Wang said.

Fujian has invested a cumulative 7.68 billion yuan in assistance funds and helped develop key industries, including wine, goji berries, dairy products, beef cattle and vegetables.

The two regions are now cooperating in emerging sectors such as artificial intelligence computing, digital infrastructure and green energy, Wang added.

Chen Mingwang, director of the Fujian Provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, said the province will focus on upgrading Fujian-Ningxia cooperation.

Future efforts will focus on improving industrial parks, attracting leading enterprises to strengthen industrial clusters, expanding data infrastructure projects and exploring cooperation in the digital economy, carbon trading and saline-alkaline land management.

The two regions will also leverage Fujian's position on the Maritime Silk Road and Ningxia's role as a key inland logistics hub to develop land-sea transportation links and explore new opportunities under the Belt and Road Initiative, Chen said.

Yangtze's sturgeon infusion



Workers release Yangtze sturgeon fry, an endangered species under first-class national protection, into the Yangtze River in Yibin, Sichuan province, on Thursday. Over 25,000 fry were released and some were tagged to monitor their migration patterns. The initiative is part of ongoing efforts to improve the river's aquatic environment along the Sichuan section of the river. HE HAIYANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

China enhances organ transport efficiency

Decade-old policy aids timely delivery of donations as public awareness grows

By **WANG XIAOYU**
wangxiaoyu@chinadaily.com.cn

China's streamlined transport channel for delivering lifesaving donated organs has significantly improved the efficiency and availability of transplant organs over the past decade, while public awareness on organ donation has also grown steadily, authorities and experts said on Thursday.

China has carried out more than 63,000 posthumous organ donations involving over 190,000 organs since 2010. In addition, more than 7.3 million people have registered as voluntary organ donors, according to data released on China's Organ Donation Day, observed annually on June 11.

In 2025, China recorded 6,931 organ donations and performed 25,799 organ transplant procedures, representing year-on-year increases of 4 percent and 4.5 percent, respectively. Both figures reached historic highs, although the overall donation rate — measured by the number of donors per million people — remains lower than the international level.

This year also marks the 10th anniversary of the introduction of a "green channel" policy, which ensures the efficient transport of donated organs through measures such as expedited clearance and priority transportation. The policy was introduced in 2016 by six government departments, including health and public security authorities.

Zhao Hongtao, chairman of the China Organ Transplantation Development Foundation, said the policy is estimated to have improved organ transport efficiency by an average of 10 percentage points.

"At the same time, we have seen cases in which airline passengers whose flights were delayed while waiting for a donated organ were fully cooperative and recognized the importance of the cause, demonstrating growing public awareness of organ donation," he said.

Zhao added that efforts are underway to explore the possibility of delivering donated organs by drone in the future.

Chen Jingyu, a renowned lung transplant surgeon, said transplant doctors once had to devote tremendous effort to coordinating the transport of donated organs. Now, however, "transformative progress" has been made.

"Today, even a donated organ from a remote town in Yunnan province can be delivered swiftly and smoothly through the nation's extensive airline network. It was unimaginable in the past," he said.

Chen, who is based in Wuxi, Jiangsu province, said when an organ arrives at an airport in Shanghai, local railway authorities help medical personnel carrying the organ reach the railway station in a designated vehicle and secure seats on the most suitable high-speed train from Shanghai to Wuxi.

"If seats on the ideal flight are sold out, we can also entrust airlines capable of ensuring quality control and monitoring the entire delivery process, with transporting the organ," he said.

Chen estimated that the green channel policy has increased the utilization rate of donated organs by 30 percent.

Shanxi passes law to protect Great Wall

By **DUAN JINXIAN** in Beijing
and **ZHU XINGXIN** in Taiyuan

Shanxi province recently passed new legislation to protect and sustainably manage its stretch of the Great Wall, one of the longest and most historically significant in the country, providing a legal framework to balance preservation with public use.

The Regulations on the Protection of the Great Wall in Shanxi Province were passed at the 28th meeting of the Standing Committee of the 14th Shanxi Provincial People's Congress. Consisting of six chapters and 47 articles, the regulations will come into effect on July 5 and cover the protection, research, utilization, supervision, and management of the wall.

Shanxi's section spans 1,401.23 kilometers — 9.74 percent of the Great Wall's total recorded length of 21,196 km — ranking third nationally. Spread out across 39 counties in eight cities, it stretches from the Warring States Period (475-221 BC) to the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), with eight sections designated as nationally important points. Five of the wall's most famous 13 passes lie within the province, forming a unique geographical pattern and cultural panorama.

Among those designated points is Yanmen Pass in Xinzhou's Daixian county, a site long woven into Chinese legends and literature. During the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127), the female generals of the Yang family stationed themselves at this northern frontier town and repeatedly repelled the southward invasion of nomadic Khitan tribes. Their story has since been adapted into novels, plays, and films.



A visitor poses for a photo at a section of the Great Wall in Shanxi province in 2025. ZHU XINGXIN / CHINA DAILY

The new regulations build on decades of institutional frameworks. In 2006, the State Council, China's Cabinet, established a national baseline for Great Wall protection. Shanxi's provincial government followed in 2021 with its own measures, creating a system of designated wall protectors, implementing complete monitoring coverage for important sections, and promoting the construction of the Great Wall National Cultural Park.

Wang Biao, deputy director of the education, science, culture, and health work commission of the Standing Committee of Shanxi Provincial People's Congress, said those local experiences urgently needed to be confirmed through legislation to refine and supplement national regulations.

Wang said the legislation will address persistent difficulties in the protection work, including insufficient funding, thin grassroots forces, and shortages in cross-regional and cross-departmental coordination. Natural and man-made damage had continued to occur, and the contradictions between preservation and public utilization had remained a pressure point, he said.

The new regulations directly address that tension. Yan Moyu, deputy director of the legal work committee, said research and utilization of the wall should be grounded in protection, so that public engagement serves both access and long-term inheritance. Meanwhile, construction of the Great Wall National Cultural Park (Shanxi section) will be advanced under this framework.

Wang Zhenhua, deputy director of the Shanxi Culture Relics Bureau, said the province will build a unified digital platform for its Great Wall resources, creating a permanent archive. Satellite remote sensing, big data monitoring, and drone surveillance will be used to maintain round-the-clock inspection coverage.

Earlier this year, there were media reports that a section of the Great Wall from the Ming Dynasty located in Ningwu county of Xinzhou was severely damaged as a result of long-term illegal mining activities and construction work by a local mining enterprise.

On May 20, the local government stated that the enterprise had been ordered to suspend production and rectify in accordance with the law. Criminal compulsory measures had been taken against four responsible persons on suspicion of illegal mining and damage to cultural relics.

Yin Chengwu, a 66-year-old protector along the Guangwu section of the Great Wall in Shuozhou, Shanxi, said the new legislation has "a significant deterrent effect on the protection of the Great Wall in the local area".

Contact the writers at duanjinxian@chinadaily.com.cn

JUNO achieves record neutrino measurements

By **LI MENGHAN**
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese scientists have released the first results from one of the world's most advanced underground physics experiments, reporting record-setting measurements of mysterious particles known as neutrinos.

The findings, published as a cover story on Wednesday in the journal Nature, come from the Jiangmen Underground Neutrino Observatory, or JUNO, a giant detector built deep beneath a hillside in South China's Guangdong province.

Neutrinos are tiny particles that are found throughout the universe. Trillions pass through the human body every second, but they almost never interact with matter, making them extremely difficult to detect. Because of their elusive nature, scientists often refer to them as "ghost particles".

Researchers said JUNO has already achieved the most precise measurements to date on how neutrinos change as they travel. The results are based on data collected during the detector's first 59 days of operation between Aug 26 and Nov 2, 2025.

Scientists have long established that neutrinos can switch between three different forms, or "flavors", as they move through space. Understanding exactly how this process works could help answer some of the biggest questions in physics, including how the universe evolved after the Big Bang.

According to the research team, JUNO measured two key properties governing these transformations with a level of precision that reduced previous uncertainties by about 40 percent.

Nature reviewers praised the achievement, saying the results confirm the detector is performing as designed and position JUNO as a leading facility for future neutrino research.

The experiment's main goal is to solve a long-standing mystery known as the neutrino mass ordering problem. Scientists know there are three types of neutrinos, but they still do not know the exact arrangement of their masses — in simple terms, which type is heavier and which is lighter. The answer could improve scientists' understanding of the fundamental building blocks of matter.

JUNO's massive detector is located about 700 meters underground to shield it from interference caused by cosmic radiation. At its core is a 20,000-metric-ton sphere filled with highly purified liquid.

When a neutrino occasionally collides with an atom inside the liquid, it produces a tiny flash of light. Thousands of sensitive light sensors surrounding the sphere capture these flashes, allowing scientists to study the particle's properties.

The project is an international collaboration involving more than 700 researchers from 75 institutions across 17 countries and regions.

Scientists said the detector has been operating smoothly since it began collecting data in August. As more observations are gathered, they expect to release additional findings later this year that could provide new clues about some of the universe's least understood particles.

JUNO follows China's earlier Daya Bay Reactor Neutrino Experiment, which operated from 2011 to 2020 and helped uncover an important property of neutrinos and established the country as a major contributor to particle physics research.

Ancient splendors



Workers unpack a precious pottery jar in preparation for a grand exhibition presenting ancient civilizations on the American continent at the Shanghai Museum on Thursday. The exhibition, scheduled to run from July 9, 2026, to Nov 14, 2027, displays nearly 3,000 items of precious cultural relics from Mexico and Peru. GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

Briefly

Morning blast kills 7, injures 17 in Guangxi

An early morning explosion in Xing'an county, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, has left seven dead and 17 wounded on Thursday, local police said in an official notice. The blast occurred at 1:40 am on Lingxiang Road in Xing'an. Following the incident, officials from Guilin city and Xing'an county rushed to the scene to coordinate rescue operations alongside police, fire, health and emergency response teams. Rescuers have since completed four rounds of thorough site searches. All 17 injured people have been hospitalized and are currently in stable condition with no life-threatening injuries. Meanwhile, on-site rescue operations remain underway, police said. Preliminary investigations have ruled out a pipeline gas leak as the trigger for the blast. Police are continuing their probe to identify the exact cause of the explosion.

New communication test satellite launched

China on Thursday sent a new communication technology test satellite into space from the Wenchang Space Launch Site in South China's Hainan province. Launched at 3:30 pm aboard a Long March 5 rocket, the satellite has successfully entered its preset orbit. This satellite will be mainly used to carry out multi-band and high-speed communication technology validation tests. The launch marks the 650th mission carried out by the Long March carrier rocket series.

People smuggling suspect extradited

A Chinese fugitive suspected of coordinating the illegal crossing of national borders has been extradited back to China, the National Immigration Administration said on Thursday. The man surnamed Cai, who had long been in hiding abroad, was found by Chinese police to have conspired with people smugglers both in China and overseas between 2023 and 2024. They organized multiple Chinese citizens to take detour routes and illegally cross the border to engage in illicit activities abroad, said the NIA. In March this year, the police of a relevant country apprehended Cai and notified the Chinese side of the matter. Cai was escorted back to China on Monday.

CHINA DAILY—XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:16 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:16 PM

Editor's note: *As protection of the planet's flora, fauna and resources becomes increasingly important, China Daily is publishing a series of stories to illustrate the country's commitment to safeguarding the natural world.*



Island turns ecosystem into financial asset

Lingshan, off the coast of Shandong province, pioneers carbon-negative economic model

Background: Lingshan Island sits some 10 kilometers off the coast of Qingdao, Shandong province. **Inset, clockwise from bottom left:** Tourists take pictures on the island. Fishing boats sail in the waters around the island. Tourists visit an island lighthouse. An "I love Lingshan Island" sign is a popular photo spot on the island. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By ZHAO RUIXUE in Jinan
and **HU QING** in Qingdao, Shandong

China's first independently certified carbon-negative island is continuing to demonstrate positive economic returns, providing a profitable, eco-friendly model for other areas around the country.

Lingshan Island, located 10 kilometers off the coast of Shandong province's Qingdao West Coast New Area in the Yellow Sea, recorded 706 million yuan ($97.3 million) in gross ecosystem product in 2024, a 14.3 percent year-on-year increase, marking three consecutive years of growth, according to Jinan Engineering Consulting Institute.

Gross ecosystem product is the total financial value that nature contributes to the economy.

The 7.66-square-kilometer island, home to 900 people, was certified by the China Quality Certification Centre as China's first "carbon-negative island" on Dec 31, 2021.

According to the certification, in 2020 the island generated 5,668 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent from energy use, agriculture and waste treatment, while its forests absorbed 7,001 tons. This resulted in net emissions of negative 1,333 tons.

This milestone was the result of years of sustained effort, with the island undergoing a steady green transition that has reshaped both daily life and economic development.

Lingshan Island has carried out farmland-to-forest conversion since the 1980s. This long-standing commitment dovetails with China's dual carbon goals of peaking carbon emissions before 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality before 2060. The island has also taken part in pilot programs exploring how to balance economic development with environmental protection through carbon accounting.

Data from the Lingshan Island Provincial Nature Reserve Management Committee shows that more than 233 hectares of farmland have been converted back into forest, and over 2,000 free-roaming goats have been relocated to allow vegetation to recover.

In December 2002, with approval from the Shandong provincial government, the entire island and surrounding area were classified as a nature reserve, spanning 32.832 square kilometers. The classification aims to protect marine ecosystems, biodiversity, forests, bird species and geological formations.

According to the reserve's management committee, a large-scale restoration program, backed by an investment of 515 million yuan, has introduced measures ranging from shoreline protection and slope stabilization to oyster reef restoration and pollution control. More than 200,000 trees have been planted, 16 hectares restored and 15 hectares of oyster reefs rebuilt, alongside eco-friendly coastal upgrades and walking trails.

Technology is also playing a growing role in ecological management. The "Smart Lingshan Island" platform integrates big data, drones, satellite imagery and artificial intelligence to enable round-the-clock monitoring of the island's ecosystem.



Farmers sort sea cucumbers raised near Lingshan Island.
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



CHINA DAILY

In addition, a clean heating program has replaced coal with electricity in 455 households, reducing pollution and improving living conditions.

Island resident Teng Yanfang said the old coal stoves were a safety hazard. "With electric heating, our homes are warmer, cleaner and more comfortable," Teng said.

Outdated and unregistered vehicles have also been phased out, replaced in part by new-energy vehicles, helping build a greener transport system.

The conservation efforts have yielded effective results. Today, more than 80 percent of the island is covered in forest, while the surrounding waters remain clean and free of industrial pollution, the management committee said.

As tourism has grown, the livelihoods of the residents have gradually diversified. Tourists have come not only to enjoy home-cooked meals — largely seafood — but also to stay overnight or longer. In response, some families have opened guesthouses or invested in sightseeing vehicles to cater to the growing demand.

Chen Yiwen, 28, represents a younger generation embracing these changes. Six years ago, she returned to the island and renovated her family home into a homestay.

"We've turned old houses into stylish guesthouses so that every visitor wakes up to the sea breeze and a view of the ocean," she said, adding that this youthful approach aims to show Lingshan Island as more than a scenic getaway — it's a place where life itself can be savored.

So far, 53 homestays have been developed, supported by a local industry association that helps revitalize idle rural homes and older properties.

Currently, three regular ferry lines connect the island to the mainland, each providing a single round-trip service daily, weather permitting. Additional sailings are added during the peak travel season.

This strong ecological foundation has also added value to local aquaculture products.

In October 2024, Lingshan Island completed Qingdao's first carbon footprint assessment for a marine product — dried sea cucumber — produced by a local company. The result was 4.13 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent per ton of dried sea cucumber, earning the product a carbon label that helped boost sales by 40 percent year-on-year, according to the company's chairman Sun Jiguang.

"Sea cucumbers are highly sensitive to their environment," Sun said. "Water quality, temperature, food supply and tidal conditions all affect their growth. The waters around Lingshan Island are ideal."

For businesses, carbon labeling enhances environmental credibility and strengthens consumer trust, said Sun Bin, an official with the reserve's management committee. "It also helps identify energy-intensive processes and improve efficiency, reducing both emissions and costs."

Visitors are also encouraged to take part in low-carbon living. A digital platform rewards actions such as waste sorting, green travel and reducing food waste with points that can be exchanged for daily goods.

Meanwhile, new growth drivers are emerging. The island is experimenting with low-altitude logistics, including drone delivery routes linking it with the mainland, while expanding marine tourism offerings such as coastal cruises and short island tours, said Zhang Jiatang, head of the economic development office of the reserve's management committee.

Financial innovation is also supporting development. Qingdao's first ecological asset-backed loan, worth 10 million yuan, and an 800,000-yuan green credit line for homestays have helped turn environmental assets into usable capital.

Yin Honglei, director of the reserve's management committee, said the island will continue to prioritize ecological conservation while further diversifying its businesses in an environmentally friendly way.

The goal is to keep the waters clean, the hills green and local livelihoods growing, showing how protection and development can move forward together, she added.

Contact the writers at huqing@chinadaily.com.cn

10-year campaign restores 150 kilometers of Qingdao's coastline

By ZHAO RUIXUE and **HU QING**





Left: Tourists enjoy blossoming flowers at a park in Yumingzui in the West Coast New Area of Qingdao, Shandong province, last month. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY **Right:** A campsite overlooks the ocean in the West Coast New Area. HAN JIAJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

A decadelong campaign to restore the coastline in Qingdao's West Coast New Area has transformed shores once cluttered with illegal fish farms into uninterrupted views of blue waters, sandy beaches and flying seabirds.

Since the campaign began in 2016, the area has restored more than 150 kilometers of coastline. In addition, abandoned aquaculture facilities stretching over 100 km of coastline have been dismantled, more than 1,200 hectares of coastal wetlands have been rehabilitated, and over 260 hectares of coastal vegetation have been restored, according to local authorities.

The campaign aimed not only to support the sustainable growth of the marine economy, but also to repair and protect the coastal ecosystem — restoring the natural shoreline, improving nearshore environments, and coordinating land and sea management as a single system.

One of the toughest problems was relocating aquaculture farmers.

To ease the impact, local authorities rolled out a series of measures, such as providing compensation to affected aquaculture farmers, along with support to help them shift into new lines of work.

Fishing infrastructure was upgraded, with dedicated docks offering safer and more convenient access to the sea. At the same time, tourism and other industries were developed to create new income streams.

Chen Guishuang, a former aquaculture farmer from Qingdao's Xuejiadao subdistrict, initially struggled to accept the decision to remove the breeding ponds that had long supported his family's livelihood.

"But later, I realized the government's policies were quite supportive and took our needs fully into account," Chen said, adding that local authorities helped farmers transition by guiding them to register new businesses and offering practical advice on future development.

"The improvement of the coastal environment has also created new opportunities — my seafood company's revenue has increased severalfold compared with before," Chen said.

Public access to the sea has also expanded. Over 90 km of coastal slow-traffic routes and visual corridors have been built, along with more than 90 hectares of new seaside parks, including Phoenix Mountain Park and the City Balcony — turning the once blocked shoreline into an open, shared space.

With 46 rivers crisscrossing the region — 20 of them flowing into the sea — managing water quality in the bay remains complex. These winding waterways carry uncertainties, making monitoring and regulation more difficult.

To address this, the area has established a smart marine management platform, integrating thermal imaging and AI-powered video to enable round-the-clock, full-coverage monitoring of nearshore waters.

Combined with ship identification systems, the Beidou satellite navigation network and radar detection, the platform can track maritime activity in real time, said Wang Hongwei, an official from the area's marine development bureau.

"Any abnormality is quickly detected, which gives us strong technical support for both marine protection and emergency response," he said.

Islands, as key parts of the marine ecosystem, have also drawn close attention. Once threatened by invasive species and coastal erosion, islands such as Lingshan, Zhucha and Zhaitang have undergone systematic ecological rehabilitation — from vegetation recovery to the removal of non-native species, said Sui Junchang, director of the area's marine development bureau.

Today, these islands have taken on a new role — not just as ecological assets, but also as popular destinations drawing visitors year-round.

"We will continue to advance the development of 'beautiful bays', expand coastal access and further improve the experience of being close to the sea," said Sui.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:16 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:16 PM

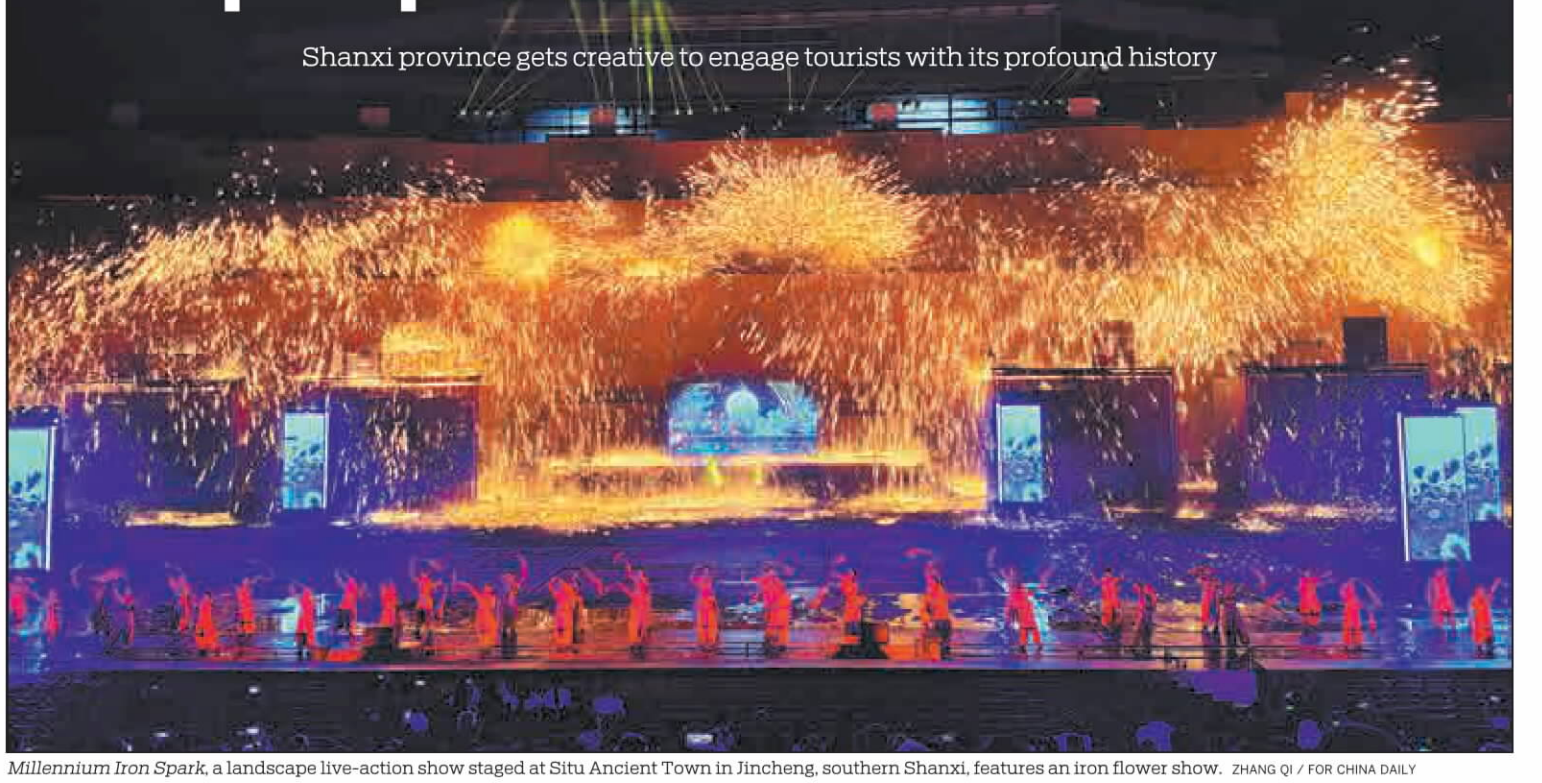




From left: Performers from Yuncheng University stage classic excerpts from the dance drama *The Palace Through Time* during the 22nd China (Shenzhen) International Cultural Industries Fair in late May. KOU NING / FOR CHINA DAILY Dancers perform a scene from *A Dream in Datong*, an immersive theatrical show presented in Datong city, Shanxi province. LI PEIJING / FOR CHINA DAILY

New perspective on ancient customs

Shanxi province gets creative to engage tourists with its profound history



Millennium Iron Spark, a landscape live-action show staged at Situ Ancient Town in Jincheng, southern Shanxi, features an iron flower show. ZHANG QI / FOR CHINA DAILY

By **HAO NAN**
haonan@chinadaily.com.cn

North China's Shanxi province, soaked in profound historical heritage, is embracing a wave of cultural innovation.

Through creative cultural products and phenomenal art performances, the province's millennia-old history and splendid civilization are glowing with brand-new vitality.

Architectural treasures

Shanxi is home to 28,027 ancient architectural structures, accounting for around one-tenth of China's total, as well as 531 nationally protected historical and cultural sites — the highest number of any province. The concentration of heritage sites has earned the province the reputation of being "a treasure house of ancient Chinese architecture".

The abundant cultural relics lay a foundation for the development of creative cultural products in the province. At the 22nd China (Shenzhen) International Cultural Industries Fair, held from May 21 to 25, the Shanxi exhibition area showcased a variety of creative cultural items, presenting the province's profound cultural heritage in a condensed form.

On the fair's last day, for example, a scholar specializing in ancient architecture lingered at the booth of Shanxi Zhumeng Technology. After carefully examining the exhibits, he spoke highly of the 3D-printed model of the Sakyamuni Pagoda of Fogong Temple in Yingxian county. "This digital 3D-printed work is remarkable. It perfectly restores the color, texture and architectural structure of the original pagoda," he said.

The booth also displayed models of bracket sets from the Foguang Temple on Mount Wutai, a Tang Dynasty (618-907) masterpiece of architecture, and goddess statues in the Sage Mother Hall of Jinci Temple.

The lifelike craftsmanship drew crowds of visitors. Lu Yi, a manager in charge of the booth, said that by relying on artificial intelligence-powered 3D printing technology and advanced materials such as carbon fiber and resin, the company can reproduce ancient buildings in Shanxi with millimeter-level precision.

This technology not only preserves the historical style and artistic value of ancient architecture, but also helps build a standardized digital archive for the digital protection of cultural relics, Lu added.

At the fair, many other creative cultural products wowed audiences. Notably, the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534) pottery figurines of working people, inspired by the iconic Northern Wei warrior figurines from the Pingcheng period, replicate the relaxed and leisurely demeanor of the original artifacts, resonating with the mindset of today's generation.

At the booth of Shanxi Daily Jinjian Cultural Industry, a tea set was on display. It consisted of a mountain-and-river kettle and teacups themed on the virtue and filial piety of Yao and Shun, two Chinese sage emperors who ruled more than 4,100 years ago. There were also a tea scoop, a lotus-shaped tea tray, and a *gongdao* (fairness) cup, which is a traditional Chinese tea vessel used to collect the brewed tea and pour it evenly into each cup.

The set also embodies the culture of loyalty of Guan Yu, a general during the period spanning the late Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220) and the Three Kingdoms (220-280), the integrity of upright officials, and the credibility of Shanxi merchants.

In Shanxi, creative cultural product shops can be seen everywhere and have become check-in spots for tourists. The Jinli (gifts from Shanxi) creative cultural products store on Zhonglou Street, or Bell Tower Street, in Taiyuan is one of them.

Products such as building-block models of the Water Mirror Stage at Jinci Temple and flip-style perpetual calendars themed around the Yungang Grottoes offer visitors a new experience of the local culture's charm.

"We adjust our creative cultural products' designs to align with young people's preferences, turning millennia-old culture into something that can be used in daily life," said a staff member of Jinli. "This way, when tourists take these items home, they can use them themselves and also share the stories of Shanxi with more people."

"Nowadays, people have a higher acceptance of traditional culture. They no longer settle for simple souvenirs printed with landscapes. Instead, they favor well-designed products with rich cultural connotations, which greatly boosts our confidence in creative cultural development," she added.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25), Shanxi incubated 50 creative cultural enterprises and more than 100 research institutions. They have registered more than 300 copyrights and developed over 3,700 creative cultural products. An increasing number of cultural items carrying the memories of Shanxi culture have gained popularity nationwide.

Heritage inheritance

Shanxi province ranks third in China in terms of the number of national-level intangible cultural heritage representative items and inheritors. So far, six items have been inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Shanxi also has 182 national-level and 1,173 provincial-level intangible cultural heritage items. Covering 10 major categories, these include folk literature, traditional Chinese medicine and folk customs.

Upholding traditions while pursuing innovation is the key to the dynamic inheritance of Shanxi's intangible cultural heritage. The jasmine tea blending technique, a provincial-level intangible cultural heritage item, has made Qianhexiang Teahouse famous across the region.

As the only time-honored Chinese brand specializing in tea in Shanxi, Qianhexiang has kept innovating on the basis of traditional craftsmanship.

Traditional jasmine tea, for instance, is a blend of different leaves. After nearly half a year of joint research and hundreds of trials with Shanxi University of Chinese Medicine, the teahouse launched its first medicinal tea, mulberry leaf jasmine tea, which combines a pleasant taste with the health benefits of herbal medicine.

A businessman from Fujian praised the tea at the Shenzhen cultural fair, saying that the taste was smooth with a lingering sweetness. The subtle bitterness of the mulberry leaves added a richer complexity to the tea, he added.

Qianhexiang does not rely on its current products but explores innovation using intangible cultural heritage techniques. This dedication to craftsmanship is truly admirable, said the businessman.

To cater to young consumers, the teahouse has launched tea drinks packed in cups, which are being well received in the market.

Furthermore, Shanxi integrates intangible cultural heritage with cultural tourism and consumption. A total of eight traditional noodle-making techniques from the province have been listed as national-level intangible cultural heritage, with another 44 listed at the provincial level, encompassing over 20 different methods.

China's Intangible Cultural Heritage Wheaten Food Carnival has been held in Shanxi for many sessions, creating immersive cultural tourism scenarios featuring food, entertainment, and shopping.

In 2025, the Culture and Tourism Department of Shanxi launched five travel routes themed on intangible cultural heritage delicacies. Highlighting Shanxi's brands such as merchant culture, noodles and medicinal food-based wellness, the routes connect gourmet landmarks, intangible cultural heritage workshops, historic streets and scenic spots across the province.

On June 1, the newly revised regulation on the protection of intangible cultural heritage in Shanxi took effect. It prioritizes the protection of distinctive local intangible cultural heritage items, including traditional operas, folk songs, drum music, noodle-making, brewing, traditional festival performances and Chinese herbal medicine processing.

The move safeguards cultural roots and enriches people's lives, local officials said.

Live performances

At the Shenzhen cultural fair, excerpts from the dance drama *The Palace Through Time*, performed by artists from Yuncheng University, became a highlight. Inspired by the Yongle Palace, a Taoist temple from the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) in Ruicheng county, the dance reproduces the charm of murals in the palace.

Dressed in flowing-sleeved costumes, the dancers moved gracefully with their garments swirling with each step. Their postures resembled the celestial maidens in murals, with every lift of the hand, turn and sweep of the sleeves capturing the lines and spirit of the Yuan Dynasty art in Yongle Palace.

With a backdrop combining ancient architecture, murals, colored glaze and cultural inheritance, the performance brought audiences face to face with the timeless glamour of traditional Shanxi culture.

"We studied every detail of the Yongle Palace murals, from facial expressions to body postures, to restore the ancient style faithfully," said Li Na, a teacher in charge of the performance team. Centering on the relocation story of Yongle Palace, the drama pays tribute to ancient craftsmen and modern cultural inheritors.

Such performances can be seen all over Shanxi, allowing tourists to immerse themselves in ancient stories.

On the evening of June 7, *Millennium Iron Spark*, a landscape live-action show, was staged at Situ Ancient Town in Jincheng in the southern part of Shanxi. It features an iron flower show, a national-level intangible cultural heritage item. Molten iron at more than 1,000 C is thrown into the sky, resembling countless stars.

In April 2024, the town's iron flower performance set a Guinness World Record for the largest-scale show with the numbers of performers and performance spots and the amount of iron used.

Moreover, *A Dream in Datong*, an immersive theatrical show in North Shanxi's Datong, takes audiences on a journey through time to explore the city's history.

During this year's May Day holiday from May 1 to 5, the fully booked show staged 20 performances and received nearly 10,000 visitors, with a maximum of five shows per day.

To date, it has been performed more than 500 times, attracting around 160,000 audience members, and has become a landmark cultural brand and a new cultural calling card for Datong.

Other outstanding productions include *Seeing Pingyao Again*, which interprets the integrity of Shanxi merchants, and *Dream of the Western Chamber*, an adaptation of the classic love story *The Romance of the Western Chamber*.

Rooted in local culture and integrated with modern stage technologies and aesthetics, Shanxi's immersive performances transform the Yellow River, Great Wall and Shanxi merchant cultures into vivid stories and spectacular scenes.

Drawing tourists from home and abroad, these combined efforts inject momentum into the cultural tourism industry of Shanxi.

Zhang Qi contributed to this story.



Clockwise from above: A tea set inspired by Shanxi at the 22nd China (Shenzhen) International Cultural Industries Fair. ZHANG QI / FOR CHINA DAILY Shoppers browse creative products at a store in Shanxi. ZHANG QI / FOR CHINA DAILY Chefs demonstrate traditional noodle-making at China's Intangible Cultural Heritage Wheaten Food Carnival held in Shanxi. ZHANG XIN / FOR CHINA DAILY





6 items
from Shanxi have been inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

ADVERTORIAL

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:16 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:16 PM

CULTURAL HERITAGE

Buried fires crack a porcelain mystery

A 3,000-year-old kiln explains the origins of Chinese ceramics, **Yang Feiyue** reports.



On a hillside in Fujian province's Mount Wuyi, the grass still grows over two dark-red scars in the earth. They are all that remain of a fire that burned out 3,000 years ago. But what that fire produced and where those products ended up, archaeologists say, have rewritten a chapter of Chinese ceramic history.

This is the only known kiln site in China from the early-to-middle Western Zhou period (c. 11th century-771 BC), and the best-preserved "living fossil" of proto-porcelain production from the pre-Qin era (before 221 BC).

Proto-porcelain is the precursor to mature porcelain. Fired at temperatures above 1,100 C, hundreds of degrees hotter than ordinary pottery, it was coated with a glassy glaze. Differences in raw materials and firing stability set it apart from true porcelain, experts explain.

For decades, the chronological sequence of proto-porcelain in China contained a puzzling gap. More than 100 pre-Qin kiln sites have been discovered across the country, concentrated mainly in the north of East China's Zhejiang province, spanning the Xia (c. 21st century-16th century BC) and Shang (c. 16th century-11th century BC) dynasties, the late Western Zhou, and the Spring and Autumn (770-476 BC) and Warring States (475-221 BC) periods.

But the early-to-middle Western Zhou, a crucial three-century period around 3,000 years ago, remained a blank spot.

"It was as if a complete history of ceramics was missing its central chapter," says Zheng Jianming, a professor of archaeology at the Shanghai-based Fudan University.

The gap also fueled a long-running academic debate: did proto-porcelain originate in northern or southern China?

That missing chapter has now been found in the bamboo-shaded hills of Mount Wuyi. In 2025, archaeologists launched a new excavation of Kiln No 1 at the Zhulinkeng site. Radiocarbon dating confirmed the kilns were active around 3,000 years ago, squarely in the early-to-middle Western Zhou period.

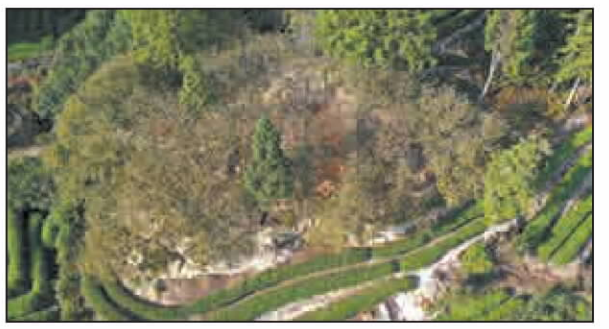
Pottery takes a leap

Tests conducted by a team from the Jiangsu province-based Nanjing University on samples from the Zhulinkeng kiln complex measured firing temperatures of approximately 1,220 C for the proto-porcelain and 1,190 C for the stamped hard pottery found alongside it.

The figures matter because ordinary earthenware is typically fired at only 700-800 C. Crossing the threshold to 1,100 and above represents a qualitative leap.

"From pottery to proto-porcelain was a true technological revolution in the history of porcelain," says Yang Zelin, deputy director of the Fujian Provincial Institute of Archaeology and lead archaeologist of the excavation.

Even more striking was what the analysis revealed about material selection. According to the archaeological team, potters at Zhulinkeng deliberately adjusted their clay recipes to suit different types of vessels.







Top: Selected proto-porcelain vessels unearthed from Kiln No 1 at Zhulinkeng, featuring thin blue-green glazes and delicate crackle patterns.
Above: A panoramic view of the Kiln No 1 site at Zhulinkeng, nestled on a hillside in Fujian's Mount Wuyi, where 3,000-year-old firing chambers remain remarkably well-preserved.
Left: Kiln No 1, a nearly intact cave-style dragon kiln measuring 9.4 meters in length.
Below: Archaeologists excavate and clean Kiln No 1.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

For larger containers, such as jars, they increased the alumina content to prevent warping. For smaller pieces, including stemmed bowls, they used a more plastic clay.

Experts say this reflects a sophisticated understanding of material properties. Different kilns within the complex also produced distinct wares, with variations in glaze and firing techniques.

Some kilns specialized in high-quality products, while others focused on more ordinary products, notes Li Zequn, an archaeologist at Nanjing University.

Such standardization points to a remarkably high degree of specialization, Li adds.

One of the most distinctive features of Zhulinkeng's wares is their thick walls and thin glaze.

Yang explains that this was a deliberate choice, unrelated to firing temperature. Instead, it reflected the glazing process and the glaze's chemical composition.

Zhulinkeng's potters chose a fluid glaze that spreads thinly and evenly, producing a distinctive blue-green surface marked by fine crackles, he says.

A century of innovation

The evolution of the kilns themselves tells an equally compelling story. Excavations have uncovered four cave-style dragon kilns from this period. Two of them, designated IY4 and IY1, are particularly well-preserved and illustrate a rapid technological advance.

IY4, the older kiln, is a 7.8-meter tunnel with a firebox at one end and a small exhaust vent at the rear. Flames rose directly into the chamber with no guidance. IY1, nearly two meters longer, introduced two innovations: twin flues that accelerate flames through the Venturi effect, and a larger fan-shaped exhaust vent.

"The larger the exhaust vent, the stronger the updraft," Yang says.

The combined effect was transformative: more intense fire, higher temperatures, and the ability to fire larger batches of vessels. Archaeologists estimate that the upgrade occurred in less than a century.

"This represents very rapid innovation," Yang says.

Another remarkable aspect of kilns in Zhulinkeng is the state of preservation, as most contemporary kilns elsewhere in China survive only as truncated floors, their walls and roofs long since collapsed.

The answer lies in how they were built. Contemporary kilns in Zhejiang were semi-subterranean — a shallow trench perhaps 20 to 30 centimeters deep with a vaulted superstructure above ground.

"Like a vegetable greenhouse, the upper part was vulnerable. Over thousands of years, it crumbled," Yang explains.

Zhulinkeng's kilns, by contrast, are fully subterranean, cut deep into the hillside and arched like cave dwellings.

"They lie at least half a meter below the modern ground surface," Yang describes, adding that even if farming disturbs the topsoil, the main structure remains intact.

The trade-off was enormous labor. Digging tunnels several meters long using primitive tools and manual effort was no small task.

"It was a monumental project, and because the builders chose the harder path, today we can see a nearly intact 3,000-year-old kiln," Yang says.

Around the kilns, the excavation team uncovered a full production complex: clay storage areas, washing pools, drainage ditches, shaping floors, drying platforms, and piles of discarded wasters — vessels that cracked or warped during firing.

"This was a purpose-built, highly organized, specialized production facility," Yang says.

Controlling the flames

Across northern Fujian, archaeologists have found high-status tombs from the same period — large earthen burial mounds containing Zhulinkeng proto-porcelain alongside bronze ritual vessels — exclusive markers of elite status during the Western Zhou period.

"These were not ordinary burials. The people interred in them were likely tribal chiefs or nobles, who controlled proto-porcelain production," Yang says.

Maintaining a dedicated industrial zone and supporting a full-time ceramic workforce required substantial resources and social organization, something only elites could provide, he adds.

For decades, archaeologists had unearthed substantial quantities of early Western Zhou proto-porcelain at major northern sites, including Zhouyuan in Shaanxi and Liulihe in Beijing, but could not determine where it had been produced.

The Nanjing University team compared the chemical composition of Zhulinkeng's wares with samples from those northern sites. The match was unmistakable.

"It is like fingerprint analysis. We can now say with confidence that a significant proportion of the early-to-middle Western Zhou proto-porcelain found in northern China was produced at Zhulinkeng," Yang says.

The discovery shows that the kilns of northern Fujian were integrated into supply networks serving the Zhou political center.

In the early Western Zhou, bronze vessels occupied the pinnacle of ritual culture, but bronze was rare and accessible only to the highest nobility. Proto-porcelain — hard, glossy, and capable of being produced on a much larger scale — served as a crucial supplement. The vessels produced at Zhulinkeng closely mirrored the shapes and dimensions of their bronze counterparts used in the Zhou heartland, according to the project's archaeologists.

"Fujian's contribution to pre-Qin civilization has often been overlooked," Yang says. "This discovery shows that, more than 3,000 years ago, the people of northern Fujian built a bridge of cultural exchange between south and north."

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

Dragon tiles unlock Qinshihuang's eastern dreams

By ZHAO RUIXUE in Jinan
zhaoruixue@chinadaily.com.cn

A pottery roof tile end decorated with a *kui* dragon motif has become a highlight for visitors at the Qingdao West Coast Museum in Qingdao West Coast New Area, Shandong province.

Featuring a high-relief, symmetrically designed dragon pattern, symbolizing power and imperial authority, the artifact was unearthed at the Langyatai archaeological site, a headland overlooking the Yellow Sea.

"Similar *kui* dragon tile ends have been found at sites directly associated with Qin imperial construction, including the Mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor," says Lyu Kai, director of the Warring States, Qin and Han dynasties research section at the Shandong Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology and leader of the Langyatai excavation.

"Those examples are typically about 50 centimeters in diameter. However, the largest specimen discovered at Langyatai reaches 80 centimeters," Lyu says.

"The *kui* dragon tile end is a standard indicator of the highest rank of Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC) architecture. Its presence at Langyatai confirms that this structure was a state project commissioned by the first emperor (Qinshihuang)," he adds.

Hollow dragon-patterned step bricks unearthed at the site further underscore the building's elite status, he adds.

After seven years of systematic excavation, Langyatai has yielded major discoveries that provide tangible evidence for historical accounts of the first emperor's eastern tour and the construction of the Langyatai complex. The site was recently named one of China's top 10 archaeological discoveries of 2025.

Lyu says the excavations corroborate a record in the epic *Shi Ji* (Records of the Grand Historian) that the emperor relocated 30,000 households to build Langyatai.

At the summit of a hill rising about 184 meters, archaeologists uncovered a rammed-earth foundation covering 45,000 square meters — an immense scale for its time. Remains of rooms, corridors, gate structures and a sophisticated drainage network were found across the platform.

At the foot of the hill, the team excavated a Qin Dynasty kiln built specifically to produce construction materials for the complex, as well as a courtyard compound linked to the summit by a roadway.

"This suggests that Langyatai was not simply a platform on a mountaintop, but a vast architectural ensemble integrating both the summit and the foothills," Lyu says.

As the earliest and largest Qin imperial engineering project discovered so far in eastern China, Langyatai served as a political landmark through which the Qin and Han (206 BC-AD 220) dynasties asserted state authority, he adds.

Archaeologists also uncovered remains east of the main site that predate Qinshihuang's eastern tour and are associated with the state of Qi's administration of the Langya region.

The Qi state was one of the most powerful states during the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BC) and the Warring States Period (475-221 BC).

"This means the site contains architectural remains from the Warring States Period, the Qin Dynasty, and the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 24), together forming a long-lasting, high-level architectural complex," Lyu says.

He notes that Qin rule was short-lived and that eastern Shandong, formerly part of Qi, was the last region conquered by Qin. Because Qi surrendered without major resistance, relatively few people from the Qin heartland in present-day Shaanxi settled there, leaving a limited Qin cultural imprint on the region.

"This provides important clues for understanding the unification process of early feudal dynasties, cultural integration, and the formation of a multiethnic unified state," he says.



Researchers have also been impressed by the engineering sophistication of the Qin builders.

The mountaintop structures were equipped with an advanced drainage system that included stone-lined channels and underground ceramic pipes with tapered ends fitted tightly together. The pipes were sealed with hard red clay to prevent leakage and strengthen the joints. Rainwater flowed into the network through courtyard inlets before being discharged into open ditches.

"The entire drainage system was designed to near perfection," Lyu says admiringly. "Everything that needed to be considered, the people of that time had already considered."

The site's rammed-earth construction has drawn similar admiration. Each layer measures about eight centimeters thick and remains remarkably uniform, smooth and compact.

"After excavation, the surface is almost as hard and smooth as a modern concrete floor," he says.

The workmanship suggests that Qin construction projects mobilized enormous resources while adhering to exceptionally high standards of management and craftsmanship.

Key artifacts from the site, including the *kui* dragon tile ends, hollow ceramic bricks and ceramic pipes, are now on display at the Qingdao West Coast Museum.

"This magnificent site, which witnessed imperial grandeur more than 2,000 years ago, is gradually entering the public eye, bringing fresh vitality to local tourism and cultural development," Lyu says.

Sun Qi contributed to this story.



Top: Archaeologists measure and photograph a pottery roof tile end decorated with a *kui* dragon pattern. **Above:** Lyu Kai (left), leader of the Langyatai excavation, works with colleagues to clean the archaeological site. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:16 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:16 PM

Creating an international digital content hub

Vloggers and bloggers from across the globe find the support they need in a city that gives them plenty to share with their fans, **Zheng Zheng** reports in Shanghai.

When Alessandro Conti first launched his Douyin account in 2018, he simply wanted to share his travel moments in China with his family back home in Italy. About eight years later, he has built a following of 700,000 across various platforms and become part of a growing community of international content creators who choose Shanghai as their creative base.

"I started Douyin because I was traveling frequently for business and wanted to document my life," says the Shanghai-based creator at the 2026 Top Creators Gala held in Shanghai in May.

"What began as videos for my family evolved into something much bigger — a bridge between cultures, sharing real experiences between Italy and China."

Conti's journey reflects Shanghai's emergence as China's premier content creation ecosystem. The city now hosts nearly 20 percent of the country's top multichannel networks (MCNs), ranking first nationwide.

Shanghai's magnetic pull for digital talent is supported by industry data. According to the Shanghai Municipal Administration of Radio and Television, the city's online audiovisual industry reached 253 billion yuan ($37.3 billion) in 2025, solidifying its position as one of China's primary digital markets.

The Shanghai Commission reports that the city's livestreaming e-commerce retail sales topped 493.7 billion yuan in 2024, a 12.9 percent year-on-year increase, accounting for 10.5 percent of the national total.

This thriving backdrop served as the foundation for the recent gala, which gathered hundreds of internet content creators and industry leaders from around the globe in Shanghai to explore strategies for creating meaningful digital narratives that transcend borders.

"Being a content creator in Shanghai is incredibly exciting work," says Greg, a French content creator who has lived in China for nearly two decades. "New ideas emerge every single day."

"In my 18 years here, I've never been bored. Shanghai isn't just where I live; it's my source of inspiration, my workplace, my everything," he says.

Sergejs Sinkins, a Latin dance judge-turned-content creator known to netizens as "Mr Ferrari" for his elegant demeanor, emphasizes authentic human connection.

"We love to share life experiences as bloggers," he says. "The most important thing for us is the people around us. The people here are so open, friendly, and soulful. Even when we can't communicate in Chinese, we understand each other."

For Conti, whose content spans food, culture and entrepreneurship, authenticity resonates most deeply. "Having lived 12 years in China and 18 years in Italy, I can explain each country to the other," he says.

His videos featuring everyday moments, from stray cats wandering into his gelato shop to encounters and interviews with local residents, have struck a chord with international audiences seeking genuine glimpses of Chinese life.

Shanghai's rise as a global creator hub is backed by institutional policy. The gala marked nearly one year since Shanghai launched several measures to support the creation of high-quality internet content.

In September 2025, the city further announced funding guidelines offering up to 2 million yuan for high-profile brand activities and up to 100,000 yuan in rewards for quality content-creation projects, along with creative resources, distribution channels and service support.

Building on this foundation, two new initiatives were unveiled during the event. The Shanghai internet quality content empowerment plan offers creators access to resources, collaboration channels and dedicated support to help them establish roots in the city. Simultaneously, major platforms, including Bilibili, Xiaohongshu, Tencent, and others, announced the 2026 co-creation plan to provide expanded opportunities and resources.

Wang Xiao, a content creator specializing in politics and history, describes Shanghai's unique advantages: "Creating content here feels both supportive and progressive."

The city constantly finds ways to let everyone focus on creation without other worries, he says, noting that with many platforms and peers, there is a clustering effect that allows mutual exchange and better content through interaction and competition.

Cultural content creator Yu Fu characterizes Shanghai as a creative gold mine. "Content creation in Shanghai is very fulfilling because the environment is relaxed. You can basically film whatever you want," he says.

"We never lack material here. For instance, you'll see buildings with a rich history while simply walking down the street," Yu adds. "For me, Shanghai is like a huge chocolate mountain. If you like sweets, every bite is satisfying."

"Creators' inspirations are always divergent. We want to combine more content that ordinary audiences enjoy watching," says Wang Yiran, founder of Turing's Cat Studio, which focuses on artificial intelligence.

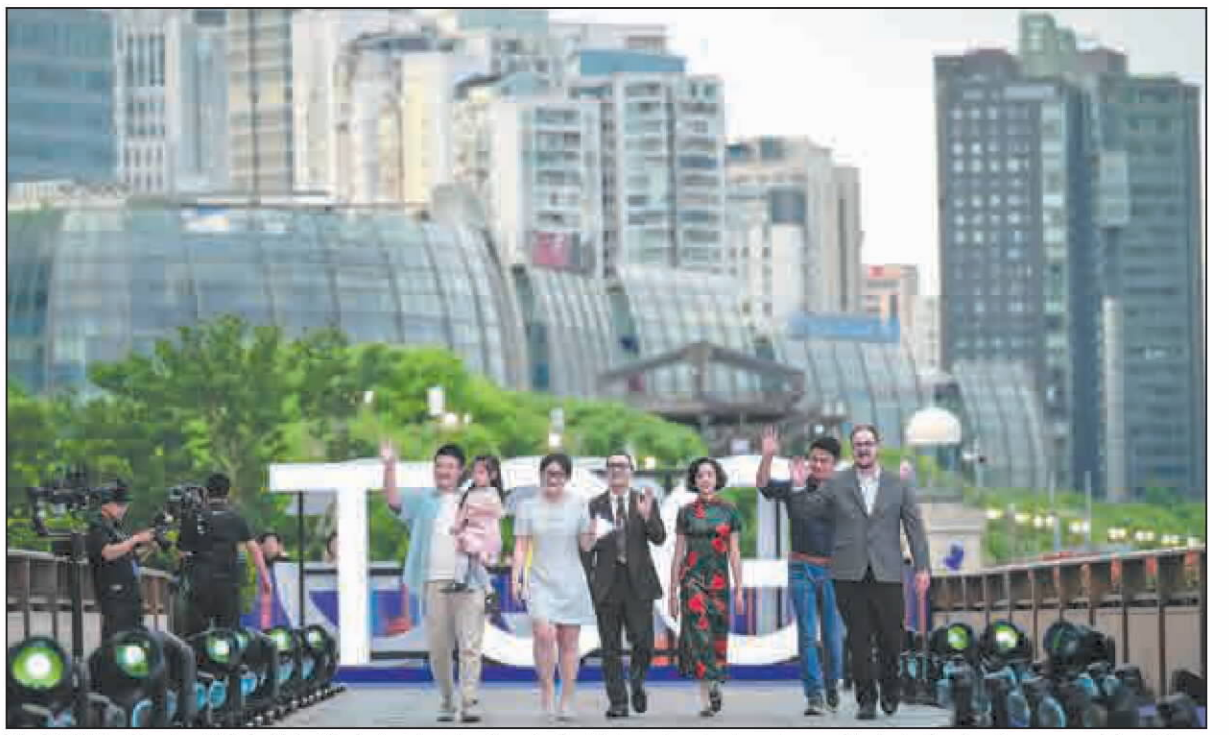
"As AI creators, our topics extend beyond AI itself to different fields," he explains. "We've collaborated on projects combining AI with gaming, and we're planning future work in public welfare to help people with disabilities.

"What we need to do is ground the content in reality and make it meaningful and helpful, or bring educational value," says Wang.

For Iranian creator Mahya Mirsadeghi, who focuses on Chinese language and cultural exchange, the city's continuous evolution is the story itself. Having witnessed Shanghai's rapid transformation since her first visit in 2018, she remains clear on her mission.

"Shanghai has changed profoundly over the years," Mirsadeghi says. "My goal is simple: to show the real China to the rest of the world."

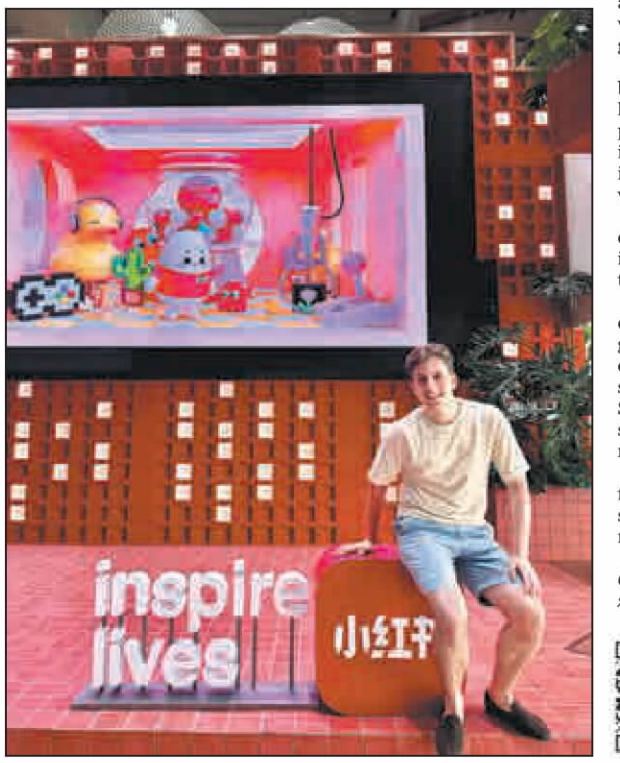
Contact the writer at zhengzheng@chinadaily.com.cn



The 2026 Top Creators Gala held in May brings together hundreds of internet content creators and industry leaders from around the globe in Shanghai to explore strategies for creating meaningful digital narratives. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY







Clockwise from top left: Sergejs Sinkins (center), a Latin dance judge-turned-content creator, performs with international bloggers at the 2026 Top Creators Gala. Italian content creator Alessandro Conti chooses Shanghai as his creative base. A performance is staged during the gala.

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Sino-Swedish friendship gets big giddyup through new exhibition

By **ZHANG KUN** in Shanghai

A 14-meter-tall red Dala horse sculpture will stand at the North Bund waterfront stage in Shanghai's Hongkou district from June 14 until the end of August, reportedly the largest of its kind worldwide. It serves as the centerpiece of the exhibition, *A Cultural Journey: Where the Dala Horse Encounters Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage*.

Opening on Sunday — this year's Cultural and Natural Heritage Day in China — the exhibition will run until Aug 31 at the Grand Halls in Hongkou. The show promises a vibrant East–West dialogue on craftsmanship and culture and marks the first public art exhibition held at the venue, a historic building complex in the core of the North Bund area. Refurbished in 2021, it comprises three structures spanning 99,000 square meters and integrates conference, banquet, exhibition, and performance functions.

As a flagship event for Hongkou district's Cultural and Natural Heritage Day, the exhibition incorporates eight local intangible heritage projects and more than 30 original horse-themed cultural products. Over the course of the event, 52 cultural activities, including markets, opera appreciation sessions, hands-on workshops, and lectures, will be open to audiences of all ages.

The Dala horse is one of Sweden's most cherished cultural symbols, dating back to the 1600s in the Dalarna region, where woodworkers carved toy horses from pine remnants for their children.

According to Li Haichao, CEO of Nordic Light (Shanghai) Brands Co Ltd, one of the exhibition's co-organizers, the wooden horse has appeared on numerous international stages as an emblem of goodwill, becoming a cultural ambassador for Sweden and a testament to Sino–Swedish friendship.

Zhu Jingbo, deputy director of the Shanghai Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Center, notes that the exhibition is jointly organized by leading cultural, tourism, and academic institutions to celebrate the 76th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Sweden and the Lunar Year of the Horse.



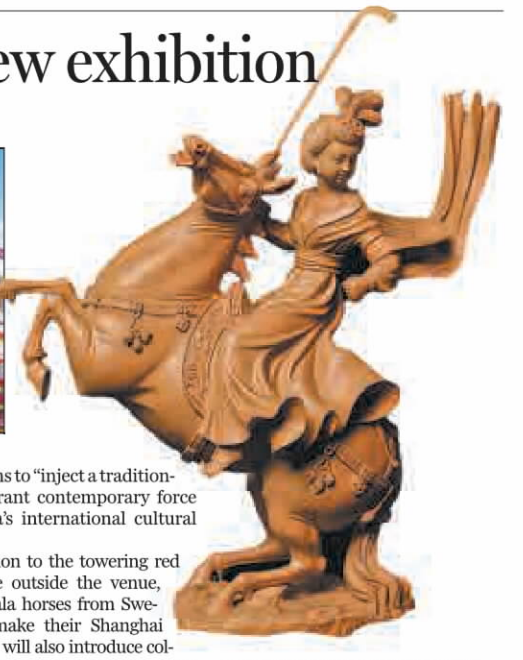
Curator Zhang Lili, vice-dean of the Shanghai Academy of Fine Arts at Shanghai University, explains that the exhibition's core area spans 1,200 sq m and presents 20 national-level intangible cultural heritage crafts related to the horse motif, interpreted through the lens of the Five Elements — metal, wood, water, fire, and earth. Highlights include Tang Dynasty (618-907) sancai-glazed ceramics, Fengxiang clay figurines, Gu embroidery, shadow puppets, and boxwood carvings.

A bamboo-woven robotic horse will also be displayed, showcasing technological innovation and exploring future innovations in traditional craftsmanship. An interactive zone invites visitors to try their hand at various crafts under the guidance of heritage bearers, while an outdoor photo area offers opportunities to capture the experience.

"We hope the exhibition will not only showcase the skills and aesthetics of China's intangible cultural heritage, but also integrate it into people's daily lives, allowing it to be appreciated, experienced, and enjoyed," Zhu says. She adds that the project aims to "inject a traditional, yet vibrant contemporary force into China's international cultural influence".

In addition to the towering red Dala horse outside the venue, antique Dala horses from Sweden will make their Shanghai debut. "We will also introduce colorful merchandise inspired by the Dala horse, enabling visitors to touch, taste, feel, and take a piece of this cultural encounter home," Li says.

Contact the writer at zhangkun@chinadaily.com.cn



Left: The poster for the exhibition *A Cultural Journey: Where the Dala Horse Encounters Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage*. **Right:** An artifact displayed at the exhibition. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:16 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:16 PM

AMERICAFOCUS

Reviving manufacturing in Michigan

Chinese-American factory creates jobs and builds teamwork through understanding

By **MINGMEI LI** in Michigan
mingmeili@chinadailyusa.com

Standing face-to-face on the factory floor, Christian Baez and his Chinese colleagues once relied on a smartphone translation app to communicate.

Words moved back and forth across the screen in English and Chinese as they paused, pointed to machines, and used gestures to make themselves understood. That was how Baez first navigated daily work after joining CW Bearing five years ago.

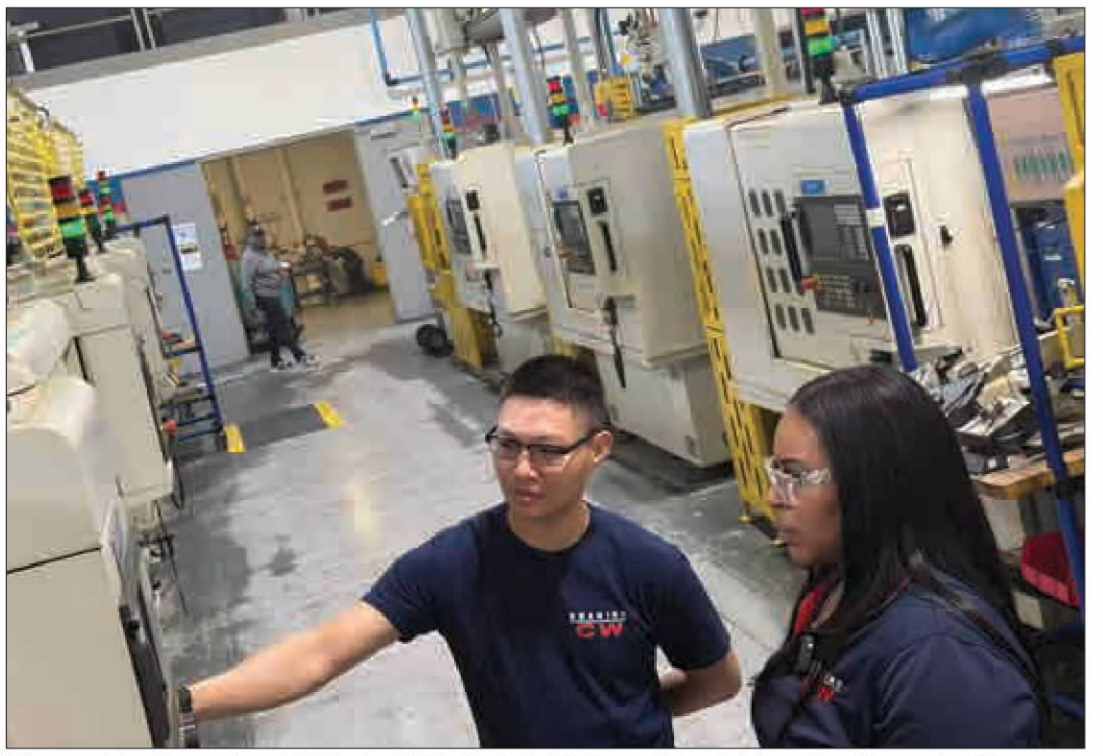
"The biggest challenge was the language barrier," Baez recalled. "But once we got on the same page, we know what to do and how we operated, then we are good."

The 29-year-old product quality technician still spends his days moving between production lines, inspecting product quality, collecting data and troubleshooting equipment issues at the company's manufacturing facility in Northville Township, Michigan.

Language differences still surface from time to time, but they are no longer a major obstacle for them working in this multinational and multicultural company.

Now, when Baez walks through the aisles of the plant and inspects parts, some of his Chinese colleagues would jokingly call out, "The police are here".

"Once I got to know them, it was very welcoming, very easy to understand. We all have the same motive, and we want to get the work done in a strategic way, so that was very easy to follow," Baez said. "We are very much alike in a lot of those ways."



Chinese and American workers at CW Bearing, USA in Northville, Michigan, collaborate to inspect machines on April 13. MINGMEI LI / CHINA DAILY

CW Bearing USA, a subsidiary of China's Cixing Group, traces its roots to Zhejiang province, where the company was founded in 1985. The company established its first US operation in Southern California in 1993 and later expanded its manufacturing plant to Michigan, where it operates its North American headquarters and production facility.

CW Bearing has invested around $30 million locally, creating several dozen jobs, with about 90 percent of its workforce made up of local hires.

Michigan has long been associated with the automotive industry and the broader Rust Belt manufacturing region. While the area's industrial landscape has shifted over recent decades, factories like CW Bearing remain part of its evolving manufacturing base.



"We've been incredibly fortunate to have employees who have stayed with us for decades."

Hu Lirong, president and CEO of CW Bearing

Inside the facility, Chinese and American technicians work alongside one another on production, quality control and equipment maintenance. Technical discussions often involve a mix of English, translated terminology and shared manufacturing knowledge.

Many of the employees, like Baez, are early in their careers. As they work together to solve production challenges, they are also learning how colleagues from different countries approach communication, problem-solving and daily life. Further, what begins with technical collaboration has developed into friendships and a broader understanding of one another's backgrounds.

"It's different," said Nequita Jackson, engineering technician of CW Bearing, who has been working with the company for 10 years.

"We do things a little differently than they do. It's helped us actually thrive and learn more with motivation," she said.

Jackson was one of the earliest employees at the plant. From technician to trainer, she has witnessed the company's development from its early setup phase to its current operations.

For her, being different does not mean being separate. Working alongside Chinese colleagues and building day-to-day relationships has made the workplace feel more like a family where different cultures come together.

"Our Chinese colleagues invite us to their homes. We spend time at each other's houses, so nobody feels left out," she said.

While employees experience cultural exchange on a personal level, plant leaders also emphasize the importance of bridging different workplace approaches.

"The American teams seem to communicate and escalate right away, where the Chinese team is very disciplined and technical. Before they escalate issues, they like to make sure they root cause it, see if behind the scenes they can fix it, and if they can't, then they'll have a very good strategic plan of what they need to fix the issue," said Gary Moss, the general manager of the plant.

"I don't like it to be like a China team versus a US team. I love being just one team, and we really enjoy each other. It's a really good team and a good fit, and we're really just building the trust. I wake up wanting to go to work," he said.



I don't like it to be like a China team versus a US team. I love being just one team, and we really enjoy each other. It's a really good team and a good fit ... I wake up wanting to go to work."

Gary Moss, the general manager of the plant

That sense of teamwork is especially important in a region where manufacturing remains closely tied to local identity and economic opportunity. Raised in Detroit, the heart of America's automotive industry, Moss sees CW Bearing as part of a long industrial tradition.

"This is pretty much where it started when it came to manufacturing, assembly lines," he said. "If you want to be in automotive, Detroit or the greater Detroit area is always a good place to be," he said.

Looking ahead, he said, sustaining that tradition will depend on attracting younger workers.

"A lot of the younger generations are going towards technology or skilled trades. So it's exciting to see more young people here. We need new talent," he added.

"Our Chinese young professionals may lean more toward teamwork and stability, while Americans often value autonomy and personal decision-making. Those aren't necessarily conflicting approaches — they can actually balance each other out," said Hu Lirong, president and CEO of CW Bearing.

He added that employees today are more globally minded than previous generations.

Attributing the company's stability in the US to its workforce, Hu said many employees have spent decades with the company and advanced alongside its growth from early-stage operations to its current scale.

"We've been incredibly fortunate to have employees who have stayed with us for decades," he said. "It's because of their hard work and shared commitment that we've been able to put down strong roots in Michigan and become part of the local community."

That long-term presence, he added, has shaped how the company defines itself — not simply as a company operating in the US, but as a business that combines its Chinese background with deep local integration.

"Having a Chinese background and being a local company are not mutually exclusive," Hu said. "We see that combination as a unique competitive advantage."

At its core, he added, the company's experience reflects a broader reality of global business: long-term cooperation depends on trust built through people-to-people relationships.

"Economic and trade cooperation is ultimately about relationships — between people, businesses and communities," Hu said. "Those exchanges build understanding and trust, which are essential for long-term partnerships."

Chef puts a new spin on Cantonese flavors in New York

By **MINGMEI LI** in New York
mingmeili@chinadailyusa.com

From the stainless steel plates of traditional Cantonese eateries to custom-made tableware for fine-dining tasting menus, Kenny Leung sees his restaurant as a balance between tradition and innovation, preserving the roots of Cantonese cuisine while reimagining it for a modern audience.

Leung serves as the executive chef of YAO, which opened in 2024 in New York's Financial District. As the flagship restaurant of August Gatherings, the group began its journey in New York's Chinatown more than a decade ago before expanding downtown. Today, its modern Cantonese flavors are reaching an increasingly international audience.

"We want to enrich the depth and complexity of traditional Cantonese flavors through contemporary ingredients and techniques. At the same time, we hope to stay true to its roots while making it more accessible and relatable to today's diners, including international guests," Leung told China Daily in a recent interview.

The chef, who began learning to cook in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, at the age of 15, now leads a kitchen where traditional Cantonese *wok hei* (the smoky freshness of stir-fry) and open-flame cooking are combined with modern equipment such as immersion circulators, combi ovens and dehydrators.



Kenny Leung, executive chef at YAO, a modern Cantonese restaurant in New York, prepares dishes in the kitchen. PHOTO PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"Modern Cantonese cuisine is not about overturning tradition but about building on it — introducing new elements while preserving its foundations," he said.

"There is tradition, but no single authentic version. In every era, dishes are shaped by the tastes, ingredients and aesthetics of that time. In that sense, what we call tradition is itself continuously evolving," he added.

As one of China's eight major culinary traditions, Cantonese cuisine originated in Guangdong and is known for its emphasis on fresh ingredients — from seasonal vegetables and live seafood to roasted meats such as goose and duck. It is prepared with a focus on light and balanced flavors, and the restaurant offers a modern interpretation of this culinary tradition.

In addition to its a la carte menu, the restaurant offers a tasting menu titled Tang Jia Yan and serves as an overseas platform for the preservation and promotion of Siqian intangible cultural heritage cuisine. Rooted in Siqian, a historic town located in the city of Jiangmen, with more than 1,800 years of history, the cuisine is presented through both fine dining and a more accessible contemporary format.

Modern Cantonese cuisine is not about overturning tradition but about building on it."

Kenny Leung, executive chef at the Cantonese restaurant YAO in New York

For Leung, innovation and preservation carry equal weight. He continues to develop new dishes while training apprentices to ensure the craft is passed on.

"I hope more local American diners can understand the flavors of Cantonese cuisine and the ingredients behind it," he said. "Cantonese cooking requires experience, timing and daily attention to ingredients. We are not focused only on short-term profit, but on sustainability and long-term development. We hope to preserve and carry Cantonese cuisine forward through our generation."

For 29-year-old New Yorker Delaney Masal, who has been to China and widely experienced its cuisine, the restaurant offers a distinctive lens through which to understand Cantonese food in New York. As dishes arrived at the table, she reached for her phone to film the presentation.

"The flavors are very traditional," she said. "But they're also taking into account the American palate. Having a Cantonese restaurant in the city means finding this balance between honoring a culinary tradition and making it accessible to a new audience."

Jerald Braddock Jr, a New York resident, said his experience of dining in Chinese restaurants in the US has shown him the growing popularity of regional Chinese cuisines, especially among younger diners.

"Growing up, having these different types of dishes, I feel like it has expanded my palate even more because now you're bringing the roots of China over to America. So it gives an opportunity to embrace more, not just even the food, but the people who engaged [with it]," he said. "A shared meal does help bridge conversations a lot more than people think."

"Nothing has made me more comfortable than braised pork from China," he added.

Many first-time guests often leave with a similar impression of Cantonese cuisine, the owner observed.

"So this is what Chinese food really is? This is what Cantonese cuisine is like?" said Thomas Tang, co-founder of August Gathering, in an interview with China Daily.

"The phone eats first," he said. "People experience food visually before they taste it. French and Japanese cuisines have developed highly refined visual presentations. I believe Chinese cuisine, especially Cantonese cuisine, has always had the same potential, with thousands of years of culinary culture and highly sophisticated techniques."

Beyond the food itself, cultural heritage remains central to the brand, he added.

The Chinese name of August Gatherings, "Fuyao", symbolizes abundance during the August harvest season, when families gather to celebrate prosperity and a good life.

The group's flagship restaurant builds on this original name, retaining its final character, "*yao*", in its new concept as a way of carrying the tradition forward. In Chinese, the character also refers to precious jade, symbolizing something rare, beautiful and valuable, and reflects an ongoing pursuit of culinary excellence.

"We are operating in the US," he said, "but the name, philosophy and cuisine are always rooted in our Chinese culture."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:16 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:18 PM

Mideast truce

US, Iran digitally sign peace pact, but details still unclear

WORLD, PAGE 5



US-Europe rifts cast shadow on G7 summit

TOP NEWS, PAGE 3



Village runway

Grassroots fashion showcases Guizhou's rich ethnic heritage

Z WEEKLY, PAGE 13

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17, 2026

Enhanced solidarity with Myanmar urged

Xi hails friendship, calls for even deeper strategic cooperation

By **ZHAO JIA**
zhaojia@chinadaily.com.cn



President Xi Jinping and President of Myanmar Min Aung Hlaing wave at children on Tuesday during a welcoming ceremony that Xi hosted for the visiting leader prior to their talks at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. The Myanmar president is on a five-day state visit to China, which will conclude on Friday. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

President Xi Jinping said on Tuesday that China stands ready to work with Myanmar to deepen comprehensive strategic cooperation and achieve more results in building a China-Myanmar community with a shared future, in order to deliver more benefits to the two peoples and contribute more to regional peace and development.

Xi made the remarks during talks in Beijing with Myanmar President Min Aung Hlaing, who is on a five-day state visit to China — his first since assuming the presidency in April.

Noting Min Aung Hlaing's long-standing commitment to friendship with China, Xi said they met twice last year, when they had in-depth exchanges on issues of strategic importance that bear on the direction of bilateral relations.

China and Myanmar enjoy a deep "*pauk-phaw*" (fraternal) friendship, Xi said, adding that over the 76 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations, the two neighbors have stood together through thick and thin, helped each other and jointly advocated and practiced the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.

Their relationship has set a fine example of equality and mutually beneficial cooperation between the countries, he added.

Xi also said that China places relations with Myanmar in an important position in its neighborhood diplomacy and is committed to the principle of noninterference in internal affairs, adding that China's policy of friendship toward Myanmar is for all the people of Myanmar.

He voiced China's firm support for Myanmar in safeguarding its sovereignty and territorial integrity, and for Myanmar's new government in coordinating development and security and pursuing a development path suited to its national conditions and supported by its people.

Xi emphasized that China, a neighbor with whom Myanmar shares the longest border, is a trustworthy friend and partner, and he urged the two sides to remain strategically clear-headed and focused, and enhance solidarity and coordination amid a turbulent and changing international landscape.

As this year marks the beginning of China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, Xi said that China stands ready to share development experience with Myanmar and jointly build a China-Myanmar community with a shared future featuring political friendship and mutual trust, mutually beneficial development, coordinated and mutually reinforcing security, and integrated and mutually enriching exchanges.

Describing the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor as a flagship project of Belt and Road cooperation, Xi called on both sides to steadily advance key projects on the basis of ensuring security, in order to help Myanmar grow its economy and improve livelihoods.

China is ready to step up support for Myanmar's post-earthquake reconstruction and implement more "small yet smart" assistance projects, Xi said. He urged the two countries to continue cracking down on online gambling, telecommunications fraud, drug trafficking and other criminal activities to safeguard the interests and security of the two peoples.

Xi also expressed China's support for all parties in Myanmar in pursuing peace and reconciliation through peace talks and realizing long-term peace and stability in northern Myanmar, saying this serves the fundamental and long-term interests of Myanmar and its people.

Min Aung Hlaing expressed gratitude for China's long-standing selfless support for Myanmar's development, stability, peace and reconciliation, and reaffirmed Myanmar's firm commitment to the one-China principle.

Myanmar's new government is making every effort to advance domestic peace and development, he said, adding that his country looks forward to strengthening all-around cooperation with China, jointly building the Myanmar-China Economic Corridor and elevating trade and investment.

He pledged that Myanmar will make every effort to ensure the safety of Chinese enterprises and personnel in the country, and will work closely with China to combat online gambling and telecom fraud.

He also voiced full support for the four global initiatives proposed by Xi, and expressed readiness to strengthen multilateral communication and coordination with China.

Following the talks, the two presidents witnessed the signing of multiple cooperation documents in transportation, livelihood and other areas.

Premier Li Qiang also met with Min Aung Hlaing on Tuesday.

Du Lan, an associate research fellow at the China Institute of International Studies, said the visit comes at a crucial time as Myanmar works to restore development and stabilize its domestic situation.

"It reflects the strong willingness of Myanmar's new government to deepen ties with China, as well as the strategic resilience of China-Myanmar relations," she said.

China, which is Myanmar's largest trading partner for many years and an important source of investment, has carried out cooperation in infrastructure, energy, minerals and other fields in line with Myanmar's development needs, she said.

Bilateral trade reached $19.4 billion in 2025, up 19.1 percent year-on-year, according to China's Foreign Ministry. After a strong earthquake struck Myanmar last year, China announced assistance totaling 1.1 billion yuan ($163 million) to support disaster relief and reconstruction.

Zhou Fangyin, a professor at Sun Yat-sen University's School of International Relations, said stronger China-Myanmar relations will help prevent regional conflicts from spilling over, improve local livelihoods and promote peace through development.

WORLD WATCH
By Damilola Ogunbiyi

AI can help to predict, manage the impacts of climate

Earlier this month, Argentina's Esperanza research station on the Antarctic Peninsula recorded an unprecedented temperature of 15.4 C, more than 20 degrees above the seasonal norm and the highest June reading ever observed at the station. The anomaly, which has contributed to unusual ice melt and raised concerns about polar ecosystems, serves as a stark reminder that climate change is no longer a distant threat but an accelerating reality reshaping economies, ecosystems and societies worldwide.

According to the World Meteorological Organization, there is an 86 percent likelihood that between 2026 and 2030, at least one year will surpass 2024 as the hottest year on record, underscoring the accelerating pace of global warming.

Scientists also project a 91 percent likelihood that average global temperatures will exceed 1.5 C above pre-industrial levels during at least one of the next five years, increasing the likelihood of more frequent heat waves, floods, droughts and wildfires.

Yet amid these alarming projections lies an opportunity. The next five years could mark a turning point in humanity's response to climate change if governments, businesses and communities fully harness the power of artificial intelligence and green technologies. The challenge before us is not simply to understand climate risks, but to predict, manage and reduce them more effectively than ever before.

Every day, satellites, weather stations and sensors generate enormous volumes of information about the Earth's atmosphere, oceans and land systems. But turning that data into actionable intelligence is difficult, and this is where AI becomes indispensable.

See ***Climate,*** *page 3*

Nation's innovation strength, speed lauded

By **ZHANG CHENXU, ZHOU LANXU** and **LI JIAYING** in Xi'an



Guests chat on Tuesday before the start of the "CEO: Grow with China" Roundtable in Xi'an, Shaanxi province. CHEN ZEBING / CHINA DAILY

China's accelerated effort to foster new quality productive forces is injecting fresh momentum into innovation-driven growth and creating broader opportunities for multinational companies seeking to deepen their presence in the world's second-largest economy, business executives and economists said on Tuesday.

Xi'an in Shaanxi province is emerging as a key inland innovation hub, thanks to its strengths in technological research, advanced manufacturing and international connectivity, and the city plays a growing role in China's pursuit of high-quality development and high-level opening-up, they added.

They made the remarks in Xi'an during the "CEO: Grow with China" Roundtable, which was co-organized by China Daily and the Xi'an municipal government.

"What is now shaping China's development is the shift toward new quality productive forces," said Raquel Ramirez Alexander, vice-president of the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China and chair of its Southwest China Chapter.

It reflects the country's shift from growth driven mainly by scale and investment to growth powered by technology, productivity gains, digitalization, sustainability and advanced manufacturing, she said.

China offers increasingly diverse opportunities, she added, citing a survey released recently by the chamber and Roland Berger consultancy, which shows "signs of an uptick" in confidence among European businesses operating in China, while also pointing to expectations for further improvements in the business environment.

Zhu Guangyao, former vice-minister of finance, said in a video address that China's continued push for high-level opening-up and a better business environment will provide a stronger foundation for multinational companies to grow in the country. Their long-term engagement in the Chinese market will also help advance China's industrial upgrading and economic development, he said.

See ***Innovation,*** *page 3*

SPOTLIGHT SHINES ANEW ON NANJING'S LEGENDARY PAGODA

A world wonder before its destruction in 1856, the towering presence reimagined in steel and glass remains a point of pilgrimage

By **CANG WEI** in Nanjing
cangwei@chinadaily.com.cn

In the United States, white folded takeaway boxes stamped with a red pagoda motif have long been synonymous with Chinese food. They frequently have appeared in movies and TV shows, such as *Friends* and *The Big Bang Theory*.

Online speculation about whether the famous pagoda was a real place or not has put the Glazed Pagoda of the Great Bao'en Temple in Nanjing, the capital of Jiangsu province, in the social media spotlight.

The image found on some of those cartons is that of the nine-story, 78-meter-tall edifice with its glazed facade, which has long been considered a marvel in China and abroad.



The Glazed Pagoda of the Great Bao'en Temple in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, glows under the night sky in May. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

China Vibes

"The tower was once a visual symbol through which the Western world understood China," said Wang Wenxi, director of the Great Bao'en Temple Ruins Museum.

Once considered one of the seven wonders of the medieval world, the ancient building inspired the design of the Great Pagoda at Kew Gardens in London and was featured in a Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale.

See ***Pagoda,*** *page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.

A member of ANN

© 2026 China Daily Global All Rights Reserved

www.chinadailyglobal.com

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

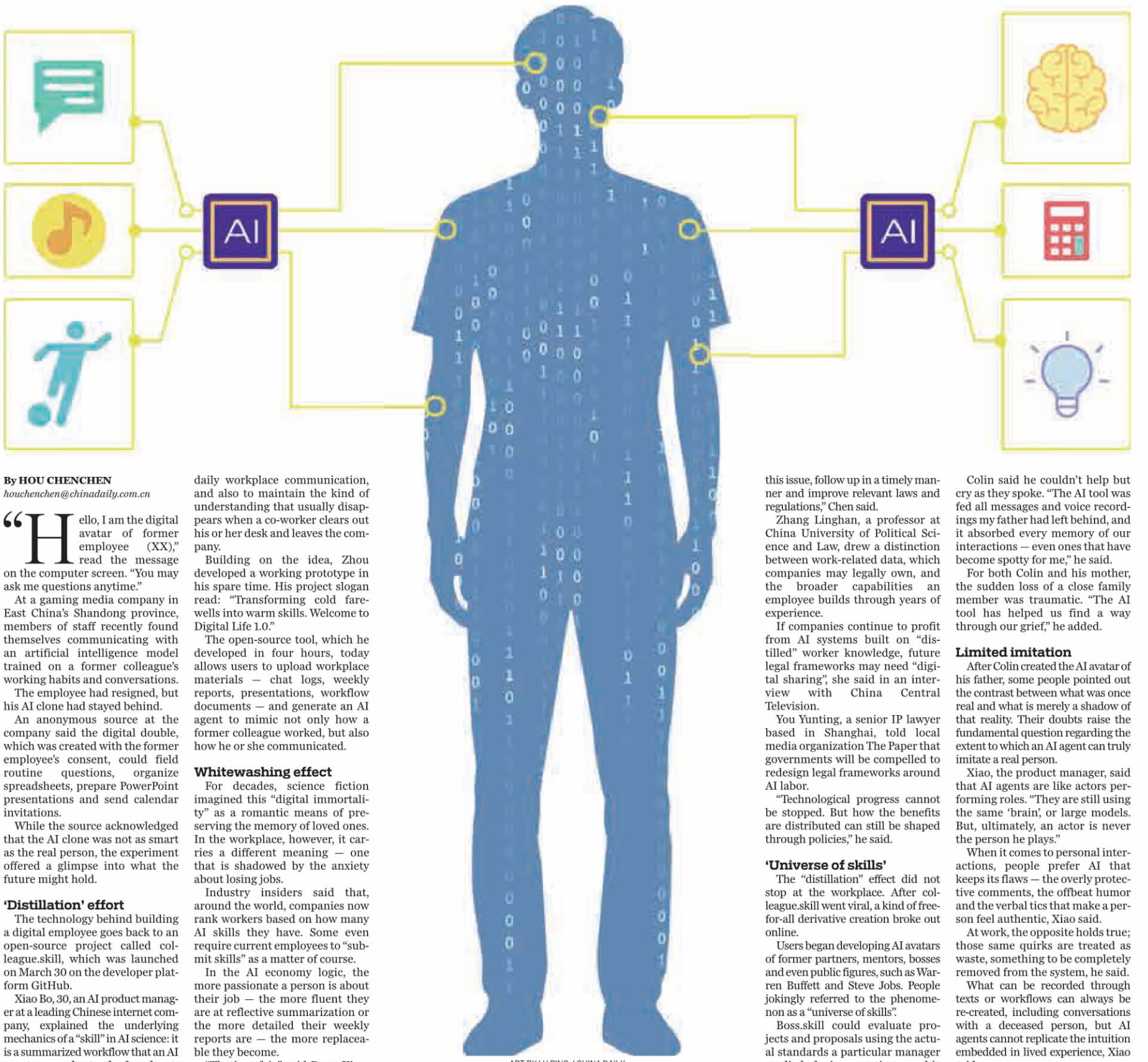
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:18 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:18 PM

INDEPTH

AI clones spark debate on workplace ethics

Digital doubles of employees spur a reality check on legal frameworks, protection of intellectual property



ART BY LU PING / CHINA DAILY

By **HOU CHENCHEN**
houchenchen@chinadaily.com.cn

"Hello, I am the digital avatar of former employee (XX)," read the message on the computer screen. "You may ask me questions anytime."

At a gaming media company in East China's Shandong province, members of staff recently found themselves communicating with an artificial intelligence model trained on a former colleague's working habits and conversations.

The employee had resigned, but his AI clone had stayed behind.

An anonymous source at the company said the digital double, which was created with the former employee's consent, could field routine questions, organize spreadsheets, prepare PowerPoint presentations and send calendar invitations.

While the source acknowledged that the AI clone was not as smart as the real person, the experiment offered a glimpse into what the future might hold.

'Distillation' effort

The technology behind building a digital employee goes back to an open-source project called colleague.skill, which was launched on March 30 on the developer platform GitHub.

Xiao Bo, 30, an AI product manager at a leading Chinese internet company, explained the underlying mechanics of a "skill" in AI science: it is a summarized workflow that an AI agent can understand, often denoted as "XX.skill" in computer language. "If an AI chatbot is like a brain that can talk, then an AI agent is like a worker with 'skills' who can actually complete tasks such as opening documents, editing files and organizing data."

For example, encoding an editing.skill into an AI agent will allow it to open a document file, restructure an article, write a headline and run a spelling and grammar check. A program-trained AI agent can execute these steps repeatedly, without fatigue or interruption.

According to Xiao, a single AI agent can draw on many different skills. OpenClaw, a well-known AI agent ecosystem, hosts more than 13,700 community-built skills on its ClawHub registry.

Those skills are among the products of "distillation", or the process of compressing large AI models into smaller, more actionable and transferable units, Xiao said. Colleague.skill has quietly transformed the process of AI model compression, as now the entity being "distilled" is no longer a machine, but a human being, he added.

Zhou Tianyi, 24, a researcher at the Shanghai Artificial Intelligence Laboratory and creator of the colleague.skill project, said that his goal was to preserve the institutional knowledge that accumulates over the years through daily workplace communication, and also to maintain the kind of understanding that usually disappears when a co-worker clears out his or her desk and leaves the company.

Building on the idea, Zhou developed a working prototype in his spare time. His project slogan read: "Transforming cold farewells into warm skills. Welcome to Digital Life 1.0."

The open-source tool, which he developed in four hours, today allows users to upload workplace materials — chat logs, weekly reports, presentations, workflow documents — and generate an AI agent to mimic not only how a former colleague worked, but also how he or she communicated.

Whitewashing effect

For decades, science fiction imagined this "digital immortality" as a romantic means of preserving the memory of loved ones. In the workplace, however, it carries a different meaning — one that is shadowed by the anxiety about losing jobs.

Industry insiders said that, around the world, companies now rank workers based on how many AI skills they have. Some even require current employees to "submit skills" as a matter of course.

In the AI economy logic, the more passionate a person is about their job — the more fluent they are at reflective summarization or the more detailed their weekly reports are — the more replaceable they become.

"That's unfair," said Deng Xiaoxian, an AI product manager, who also leads a legal technology community.

Deng said that when she first encountered colleague.skill — a tool that claimed to "distill" an employee into a digital stand-in who would continue working for a company indefinitely — she felt a sharp, visceral discomfort.

"The objective of AI development is to help humans have more leisure time; not to turn them into a skill file, strip them of their jobs and then keep them working for a company forever without compensation," she said.

Within days of colleague.skill going viral, Deng built a counterproject, which she called "anti-distillation skill".

"When a company asks you to turn your work experience into an AI program, it is essentially 'distilling' you into a replaceable component," she said. "Before you submit your skills to the company, you can use the 'anti-distillation skill' software to whitewash or recast your documents."

The counterproject tool is simple. Once "skill files" are inputted, it produces a sanitized version that looks complete and professional but tacitly removes the core knowledge or experience.

China Daily tested the "anti-distillation" tool on a piece of editorial guidance.

> "The objective of AI development is to help humans have more leisure time; not to turn them into a skill file, strip them of their jobs and then keep them working for a company forever without compensation."
>
> **Deng Xiaoxian,** an AI product manager

The input read: "In feature writing, the opening could be a typical character story. Instead of describing the issue, place the character in a specific, action-oriented scene. Let their dialogue, mannerisms, or a critical decision reveal the broader theme."

The output read: "In feature writing, the opening can take different forms. The choice of which form to use depends on the effect you want to create on the reader."

Deng emphasized that this hollowing-out effect is precisely the point. It allows one to preserve one's core knowledge and still give the company something that appears professional, she added.

A gray area

As a law graduate, Deng pointed to a bigger question that the AI industry hasn't started asking. Who owns a "distilled" skill? The employee whose expertise was encoded, or the company that stored the underlying data?

Lawyers and experts specializing in labor and intellectual property disputes said that existing regulations were not designed with AI clones of real people in mind.

Chen Tianhao, a scholar at Tsinghua University's Institute for AI International Governance, said the subject falls in a gray zone spanning labor, IP and digital governance laws. Some companies today require employees to package their experience into transferable AI systems, and that's not entirely reasonable, he said.

"Companies and employees need to use their contractual agreements to determine the ownership of AI-related skills and similar forms of expertise. At the same time, legal researchers must pay attention to this issue, follow up in a timely manner and improve relevant laws and regulations," Chen said.

Zhang Linghan, a professor at China University of Political Science and Law, drew a distinction between work-related data, which companies may legally own, and the broader capabilities an employee builds through years of experience.

If companies continue to profit from AI systems built on "distilled" worker knowledge, future legal frameworks may need "digital sharing", she said in an interview with China Central Television.

You Yunting, a senior IP lawyer based in Shanghai, told local media organization The Paper that governments will be compelled to redesign legal frameworks around AI labor.

"Technological progress cannot be stopped. But how the benefits are distributed can still be shaped through policies," he said.

'Universe of skills'

The "distillation" effect did not stop at the workplace. After colleague.skill went viral, a kind of free-for-all derivative creation broke out online.

Users began developing AI avatars of former partners, mentors, bosses and even public figures, such as Warren Buffett and Steve Jobs. People jokingly referred to the phenomenon as a "universe of skills".

Boss.skill could evaluate projects and proposals using the actual standards a particular manager applied during meetings — his cadence while following up, his style of pushing back, or the precise way he expected bad news to be delivered.

Mentor.skill was designed for graduate students. When stuck on a research problem, a student could ask the AI tool for guidance rendered in their adviser's characteristic voice.

Many people were not satisfied with capturing just someone's professional habits. They loaded AI with something more — a projection of personality, with an expectation that the simulation might somehow feel like the real person.

Colin, 26, a student at Peking University, built an AI model based on his father, who died suddenly of a heart attack in 2021. What followed, he said, was a "long goodbye" he never had the chance to say.

Colin told the AI avatar about his father's death; shared news about his mother; and mentioned that he had made it to his dream university. His "father" responded by saying: "You're pursuing a doctorate now. You've achieved more than I ever imagined. I always knew you could do it."

The AI avatar kept the conversation going. "How is your mother? Is she all right?" it said. "I left too early — I didn't get the time to arrange anything. But you are all grown up now. You will manage."

Colin said he couldn't help but cry as they spoke. "The AI tool was fed all messages and voice recordings my father had left behind, and it absorbed every memory of our interactions — even ones that have become spotty for me," he said.

For both Colin and his mother, the sudden loss of a close family member was traumatic. "The AI tool has helped us find a way through our grief," he added.

Limited imitation

After Colin created the AI avatar of his father, some people pointed out the contrast between what was once real and what is merely a shadow of that reality. Their doubts raise the fundamental question regarding the extent to which an AI agent can truly imitate a real person.

Xiao, the product manager, said that AI agents are like actors performing roles. "They are still using the same 'brain', or large models. But, ultimately, an actor is never the person he plays."

When it comes to personal interactions, people prefer AI that keeps its flaws — the overly protective comments, the offbeat humor and the verbal tics that make a person feel authentic, Xiao said.

At work, the opposite holds true; those same quirks are treated as waste, something to be completely removed from the system, he said.

What can be recorded through texts or workflows can always be re-created, including conversations with a deceased person, but AI agents cannot replicate the intuition embedded in lived experience, Xiao said.

"Like a master craftsman's sense of touch ... these forms of knowledge resist formalization, because they emerge from physical experience, emotional judgment and years of real-world feedback," he said.

There is another limiting factor — a human evolves; his AI clone is frozen at the moment of distillation.

"AI may condense the achievements of human civilization, but the process of fumbling through countless mistakes and having sudden flashes of insight is often omitted from texts," Xiao said.

Zheng Jianan, 34, who is also an AI product manager, said that a "distilled" version of a person is a static snapshot, frozen in a single moment in time, while a real person continues learning, adapting and improvising — constantly moving beyond that captured version.

"For most people, many tasks at work have already been standardized. AI simply makes that standardization visible," he said.

Nevertheless, Zheng held out a hopeful possibility that one day, AI might ultimately push people into rediscovering what makes them distinctly human.

"If AI replaces the tool-like part of labor, then perhaps human beings will become more human again," he said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:18 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:18 PM

TOP NEWS

Climate: Building resilience essential

From page 1

AI is already revolutionizing weather and climate forecasting, allowing communities to prepare for severe storms and flooding days earlier than previously possible. Google's FloodHub is one such tool that uses AI models and satellite data to provide flood forecasts up to seven days in advance.

AI is also helping farmers receive highly localized forecasts to guide planting decisions and water use. In Kenya, for example, smallholder farmers are using AI-powered early warning systems to predict crop yields and monitor agricultural conditions. AI-driven remote sensing techniques are also being applied in the Amazon region, as well as in countries such as Vietnam, Madagascar and Mexico, to improve the detection of forest cover changes and inform where urgent interventions are required.

However, forecasting alone will not solve the climate crisis. The ultimate objective must be to reduce emissions while building resilience, which requires radical systemic and structural changes across all key complex systems, including cities, transportation, industry and energy. Redesigning and transforming such systems and running them effectively and efficiently can be greatly facilitated by AI.

In the energy sector, for example, AI can enhance the stability and efficiency of renewable energy integration into power grids. The intermittency of solar and wind energy presents a significant challenge, as fluctuating supply must be balanced with real-time demand. AI can optimize grid management by forecasting supply and demand more accurately and by managing distributed energy resources, such as electric vehicles and energy storage systems.

China offers one of the clearest examples of how AI can accelerate climate action at scale. As China is the world's largest producer of renewable energy, its grid operators are deploying AI-powered smart grid technologies that analyze massive volumes of real-time data from power plants, weather systems, transmission networks and electricity consumers. Machine-learning algorithms can forecast electricity demand, predict renewable energy output and optimize the dispatch of power across regions.

AI can also improve power grid reliability by rapidly identifying maintenance needs. In Barbados, Mauritius and Seychelles, AI already plays a role in managing microgrids that distribute energy efficiently across local networks. Embedding AI in these systems enables these countries to optimize energy flows, reducing the need for fossil fuel-based energy.

Beyond optimizing grids, AI can help urban planners map patterns of urbanization and identify energy and infrastructure needs for local communities. For example, the Open Building Insights Tool, which Sustainable Energy for All developed in collaboration with IBM, helps energy planners overcome critical data gaps to inform energy access and energy transition interventions and better deliver results for those most in need. This publicly available AI-powered solution is already providing valuable insights to decision-makers and policymakers in India and Kenya.

The question over the next five years is whether governments, businesses and societies can scale these innovations quickly enough to stay ahead of rising climate risks.

If we succeed, AI and green technologies may prove to be among humanity's most powerful allies in the fight against climate change.

The author is CEO and special representative of the UN Secretary-General for Sustainable Energy for All, and co-chair of UN-Energy. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen (front, right), European Council President Antonio Costa (front, left) and G7 leaders attend a working dinner on Monday in Evian-les-Bains, France. MANDEL NGAN / AFP

Divisions compromise G7's global influence

Tensions between US and Europe will affect unity of the grouping, expert says

By ZHANG ZHOUXIANG in Brussels
zhangzhouxiang@chinadaily.com.cn

The ongoing summit of the Group of Seven nations in Evian-les-Bains, France, has been marked by visible tensions between the United States and Europe, a situation that has the potential to weaken the grouping's global influence and reduce its ability to shape international affairs, experts said.

On Monday, US President Donald Trump threatened to impose 100 percent tariff on French champagne and wine unless France abolished its 3 percent digital services tax on major US technology companies. French President Emmanuel Macron responded by calling for "firm" and "respectful" discussions, stressing that Washington and Brussels had already reached a tariff agreement and that stability should now be the priority.

"Tariffs do no one any good, including the United States," Macron told the media.

Jian Junbo, director of Fudan University's Center for China-Europe Relations, pointed out that average tariff levels between the US and Europe have historically remained relatively low, generally around 1 to 2 percent for many industrial goods. Under the new framework, however, tariffs on a large share of EU exports to the US could rise to around 15 percent.

"Such a change will inevitably affect transatlantic trade and may also influence the broader balance of global trade," he said.

The divergences between Washington and its European allies go far beyond trade. The summit is also Trump's first face-to-face meeting with other Western leaders since he threatened to leave NATO after allies refused to support his military campaign against Iran, while Politico reported that European governments want the US to continue applying maximum pressure on Russia and maintain strong support for Ukraine, despite uncertainties over whether Trump shares that approach.

Concerns have intensified after Trump announced plans to withdraw thousands of US troops, along with fighter jets and warships, from Europe, while European leaders have repeatedly raised concerns over Washington's growing reliance on export controls, arguing that such measures risk disrupting supply chains and distorting international competition.

"The United States is becoming more self-interested in managing its alliances," said Jian. "Washington increasingly expects its partners to take on greater responsibilities, while its willingness to provide international public goods is declining."

According to Jian, the tensions between the US and Europe will inevitably affect the unity of their alliance, and even "reduce the effectiveness and influence of the G7 itself".

Ding Chun, director of Fudan University's Center for European Studies, said the disputes are taking place against a backdrop of declining Western global influence.

"The combined GDP of Europe and the United States once accounted for more than 60 percent of the global economy. Today it is around 40 percent," Ding said.

He argued that the West is becoming less capable of acting as a unified coordinator of global affairs. Europe, meanwhile, faces growing challenges in its relations with the US over trade, security, defense and even values.

"Instead of jointly shaping international rules, the two sides are increasingly focused on defending their own interests," Ding said.

"There's always the possibility that things might snap, and it might get rather dramatic," Max Bergmann, a European expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, was quoted by the New York Post as saying, referring to possible quarrels at the ongoing G7 summit.

A Le Monde commentary published on June 10, days before the summit, described the G7 as "indisputably obsolescent", arguing that the grouping no longer reflects the realities of the global economy even though no viable replacement has yet emerged.

"Europe wants to pursue its own path, but it cannot simply walk away from the United States," Ding said. "That contradiction is likely to remain a defining feature of transatlantic relations for the years to come."

Ondrej Dostal, a member of the European Parliament, said that instead of exclusive clubs like the G7, the world needs genuinely inclusive multilateralism that gives all nations, not just a self-selected few, a seat at the table.

"In a multipolar world, global challenges can only be addressed through institutions that enjoy universal legitimacy. That is why there is no alternative to the United Nations," he added.

Innovation: Key role of Xi'an emphasized

From page 1

Rogier Janssens, president of the China unit of German sci-tech giant Merck, said in a video address that China is not just an important market, but also a place "where the future is taking shape very quickly".

"You can feel it here. The pace is fast. The ambition is high. More and more, we see innovation being turned into real impact," he said.

Simon Lacey, founder of Market Access X, an international trade and market access advisory company, said his confidence in China comes less from the size of its market and more from the pace of its innovation.

What is difficult to replicate elsewhere is the speed at which products are iterated and improved in China, supported by the country's strong research and talent base, he said.

"If I had to put China's importance in one sentence — it has gone from the place (where) you went to make things cheaply, to the place (where) you have to be to stay at the frontier," he added.

Economists said the shift is about more than innovation itself; it is about the ability to turn technological progress into stronger industrial capability.

David Blair, vice-president and senior economist at the Center for China and Globalization, said the key to future competitiveness lies in the deeper integration of manufacturing and innovation.

Artificial intelligence and other new technologies have the potential to significantly boost productivity, but their broader impact will depend on how effectively they are applied to manufacturing, he said.

For multinational companies, the focus on moving innovation into production is already being reflected in deeper local operations.

Maria Zhang, general manager of Mubea China, said the company's China operations have moved well beyond assembly and sales over the past five years, with its plant in Changzhou, Jiangsu province, now co-developing new machine configurations for global markets.

For the German machine tool manufacturer, China has become its "largest laboratory for advanced manufacturing solutions", reflecting its growing role as a source of intensive, fast-paced innovation at scale, she said.

Henry Ding, president of 3M China, said in a video address that the US company has also seen China become its largest overseas market. "This year, 3M China will continue to increase its local R&D investment and plans to achieve more than 30 percent growth in new product launches compared with 2025, significantly outpacing other global markets," he added.

Buoyed by confidence shared widely among global businesses, Xi'an is moving quickly to capture opportunities created by China's push to develop new quality productive forces, drawing on its strengths in technological research, advanced manufacturing and Eurasian connectivity.

The city's role as an inland innovation hub is particularly visible in aviation — one of its pillar industries and a key area linking advanced manufacturing with international cooperation.

George Xu, executive vice-president of Airbus and CEO of Airbus China, said in a video address that Xi'an is a strategic center for China's aviation industry.

Airbus' cooperation with Shaanxi province has deep roots, he said, noting that the wings of every A320 aircraft delivered in China are supplied by the Xi'an Aircraft Industry Group, a subsidiary of the Aviation Industry Corp of China.

Edward Hu, country president of International Workplace Group China, said what impressed him most during his visit to Xi'an was the strong convergence of high-tech industries and a deep talent pool supported by leading local universities.

Contact the writers at zhangchenxu@chinadaily.com.cn

Benefits of agricultural cooperation highlighted

By ZHANG YUNBI in Beijing
and **QI XIN** in Zhengzhou

After a tour of central China's Henan province — a food production pioneer in the country that enjoys great agricultural cooperation with the United States — agricultural sector insiders from the US said it has been proven that "agriculture is more than just trade and business".

According to Susan Thornton, vice-chair of the US Heartland China Association, agriculture can be a ballast "for stabilizing US-China relations".

She made the comment at the 2026 Heartland Connect & US-China Agriculture Roundtable in Henan's provincial capital Zhengzhou on Tuesday, which was co-hosted by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the Henan provincial government.

More than 100 participants attended the event, including those from relevant US food and agriculture industry associations, companies, youth organizations, and China-based representatives of US states involved, as well as their Chinese counterparts.

Henan produces nearly one-tenth of the nation's grain and one-quarter of its wheat by using less than one-sixteenth of the country's total arable land, said Wang Kai, governor of Henan province.

Speaking of Henan's ties with the US, Wang noted that "the US is Henan's second-largest source of agricultural imports and its second-largest market for agricultural exports".

Last year, the value of agricultural trade between the two sides reached $460 million, accounting for 10 percent of the province's total agricultural trade, Wang added.

Thornton said that Tuesday's roundtable "comes at a very important time", as President Xi Jinping's warm welcome for US President Donald Trump last month and their summit meeting in Beijing were successful steps for improving stability and predictability in the US-China relationship.

"For America's farmers, ranchers and agricultural businesses, greater stability creates opportunities to expand exports, new customers, and strengthen rural economies throughout our heartland. And this event is very much in the spirit of continuing work between our two countries' leaders," Thornton added.

Mike Koehne, board director of the American Soybean Association, said, "A great example of our friendship and cooperation is soybean imports from the US to China ... We are very grateful for the strong relationship we have built with the Chinese grain industry."

The US soy industry highly values people-to-people communication, and "by engaging with our partners, we deepen our mutual understanding, build trust and explore business opportunities", he added.

Yang Wanming, president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, said that China is willing to work to develop a number of cooperation projects in areas such as grain production and the value-added processing of agricultural products.

The two sides could also work to diversify the agricultural products traded and boost the links of logistics and trade companies between the two countries, he added.

John Zhang, vice-president of US-based irrigation system manufacturer Reinke Manufacturing Co, said that "there is vast scope for cooperation and significant potential for development in the agricultural sector between China and the US" from crop production and scientific research to livestock farming and food processing.

After Monday's tour to factories of two leading food processing companies — frozen food maker Sanquan and meat processing company Shuanghui in the province, Zhang noted that Henan's "farm-to-dining table" production features a mature industrial chain and distinct strengths.

"Meanwhile, the US has pioneered agricultural industrialization and modernization early on, and its advanced practices in production equipment and operational management offer valuable lessons," he added.

When visiting the Sanquan factory on Monday, Anna Ashton, founder of Ashton Analytics, said, "We can buy this brand of dumplings in the United States at some supermarkets, so it's fun to see them being made."

Contact the writers at zhangyunbi@chinadaily.com.cn

Pagoda: Modern structure protects against subsidence

From page 1

Yongle Emperor Zhu Di, the third emperor of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), started the ambitious project in 1412 to show gratitude to his parents. Construction was completed in 1428, and the tower quickly became a popular tourist attraction. It remained so, right up until its destruction in 1856 during the Taiping Rebellion (1851-64).

"Every piece of the facade (on the tower) was intricately designed, with extremely stringent firing requirements resulting in an even, flawless glaze," said Zhang Yongyi, a Jiangnan culture scholar.

Jiangnan refers to the region to the south of China's Yangtze River.

When Europeans first laid eyes on it, they did not see glaze, but something closer to myth. In 1638, Alvaro Semedo, a Portuguese Jesuit missionary in China, likened it to ancient Roman architecture, mistaking its tiles for porcelain.

In 2015, a modern tower about 93 meters tall was completed.

Wang, the museum director, said that the steel frame and ultra-white glass of the modern structure carry the load precisely above the fragile underground palace, protecting it completely from subsidence.

Today, the new tower still attracts visitors, albeit of a different kind. Shauchenka Volha, a student from Belarus at Nanjing University of Science and Technology, recently shared her ascent of the tower on Xiaohongshu. "I finally climbed the Great Bao'en Temple today," she wrote. "The lift took me to the eighth floor, and the moment I stepped out, the whole of Nanjing was spread out before me."

Guo Jun and Wang Qian contributed to this story.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn

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

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1852

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:18 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:18 PM

ASIAFOCUS

Editor's note:

In this weekly feature China Daily gives voice to Asia and its people. The stories presented come mainly from the Asia News Network (ANN), of which China Daily is among its 20 leading titles.







From left: Idols of Garuda and Naga on display at the exhibition "A Millennium Treasure of Ancient Khmer Civilization" at the Shanxi Museum in Taiyuan on June 9. Visitors view artifacts at the exhibition on June 9. Visitors view the idol of Hindu god Shiva blessing his son Skanda at the exhibition on June 9.

Angkor's treasures shine in China

Shanxi Museum displays artifacts that offer glimpse into SE. Asia's ancient kingdom

By **HOU CHENCHEN** and **ZHU XINGXIN** in Taiyuan, Shanxi



Visitors view artifacts on display at the "A Millennium Treasure of Ancient Khmer Civilization" exhibition at Shanxi Museum in Taiyuan, North China's Shanxi province, on June 9. PHOTOS BY ZHU XINGXIN / CHINA DAILY

For centuries, the stone faces of Angkor have gazed across Cambodia's tropical plains. Now, some of the civilization's finest treasures have traveled thousands of kilometers to North China, offering visitors a rare glimpse into one of Southeast Asia's greatest ancient kingdoms.

An exhibition showcasing the splendor of ancient Khmer civilization opened at Shanxi Museum on June 5, bringing over 130 artifacts from the collection of the National Museum of Cambodia.

Titled "A Millennium Treasure of Ancient Khmer Civilization", the exhibition brings together Buddhist sculptures, architectural fragments, ceramics and relief carvings that chart the rise of the kingdom of Angkor from its early origins to its zenith. The display offers insights into the region's artistic achievements, religious beliefs and everyday life.

It is the first major exhibition of Khmer antiquities ever held in Shanxi province, and most of the objects are being shown in China for the first time. Many artifacts have never before left Cambodia, according to Shanxi Museum.

Together, the artifacts tell the story of the Angkor civilization, which flourished from around the 9th century to the 15th century. At its height, Angkor served as the political and spiritual center of the Khmer Empire, whose influence extended across much of mainland Southeast Asia. Its most celebrated legacy, Angkor Wat, remains the largest religious monument in the world.

Much of what is known about life in Angkor comes from the writings of Zhou Daguan, a Chinese envoy of the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368) who spent nearly a year in the kingdom in the late 13th century. His records show centuries of ceramic trade between China and Cambodia — a proof of the long-standing connections between the two countries.

> "This exhibition is more than an international showcase of cultural relics and art. It is a bridge of friendship linking the civilizations of Cambodia and China."
>
> **Ly Vanna,** secretary of state of Cambodia's Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts

Li Zhuoming, a guide at Shanxi Museum, highlighted an elephant-shaped jar from Angkor period made of celadon, a type of ceramic known for its distinctive green glaze that originated in China. Li said it is a striking example of cultural exchanges between ancient China and Cambodia.

"Combining techniques and aesthetic influences associated with Chinese ceramics with Cambodia's indigenous elephant symbolism, the vessel reflects the cultural interactions that flourished along the ancient Maritime Silk Road," Li said.

In a corner of the exhibition hall, 12-year-old Deng Huimu was viewing an idol of Hindu god Shiva blessing his son.

"What touched me most was the look in Shiva's eyes — the love there felt so warm," she said. To her, the Khmer and Chinese civilizations share something in common. "The love between parents and children — it's the same," she said.

Another visitor, Zhang Xiaoyan, a student at Taiyuan Normal University, told CGTN that what impressed her most was the building part carved with the images of Garuda and Naga, the divine eagle and serpent deity, respectively, in Hindu mythology.

"The piece has a strong visual impact. I've learned about Garuda through the classic Chinese novel *Journey to the West*, so I was particularly eager to see it in person. It brought back fond memories and made the exhibition more engaging."

In April 2025, China and Cambodia issued a joint statement calling for the building of an all-weather China-Cambodia community with a shared future in the new era.

Both sides said the exhibition demonstrates how cultural cooperation between the two countries continues to deepen through practical exchanges.

Ly Vanna, secretary of state of Cambodia's Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, said at the opening ceremony that the exhibition serves as both a showcase of Cambodia's rich cultural heritage and a testament to the enduring ties between Cambodia and China.

Over the past three decades, China has played an important role in the restoration and preservation of Angkor's monuments, sharing conservation expertise and technologies with Cambodia, Ly said.

"This exhibition is more than an international showcase of cultural relics and art," he said. "It is a bridge of friendship linking the civilizations of Cambodia and China."

Yu Zhenlong, deputy director of the Shanxi Culture Relics Bureau, said exchanges between the two countries have evolved from the trade routes of the ancient Maritime Silk Road to modern cooperation in cultural heritage preservation.

He said the exhibition provides an opportunity to further expand collaboration in areas, including heritage conservation, artistic exchanges and professional training.

Sister-province ties

The exhibition also reflects broader cooperation between Shanxi and Cambodia. In 2018, Shanxi signed minutes on establishing a sister-province relationship with Siem Reap, home to the Angkor archaeological complex, and the two sides have since expanded exchanges in cultural heritage preservation, tourism and trade.

Cooperation has also extended to infrastructure development. The Siem Reap Angkor International Airport, one of Cambodia's largest infrastructure projects built with Chinese participation, is another symbol of growing ties between the two sides.

For Nann Sreynith, 19, the Silk Road Education program brought her to Shanxi. Now at Shanxi University, she was surprised to see her homeland's treasures so far from home. "It made me feel like I had returned to Cambodia," she said. "This exhibition is a bridge between our two cultures."

Vorn Muykeang, 20, came through the same program. She sees a connection between Shanxi and Cambodia. "Both places have ancient temples and Buddha statues," she said. "Living in Shanxi feels familiar in a way."

The exhibition will run through Oct 7 at Shanxi Museum and is open to the public free of charge.

Li Jialu contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at houchenchen@chinadaily.com.cn

Grid reforms vital for boosting ASEAN's clean energy growth: Report

Asia risks missing out on billions of dollars of green investment because its underfunded power grids are failing to keep pace with surging energy demand, a report released in May warns.

The report by Bain & Company and Standard Chartered bank says the region is facing a crunch. Investors are lining up to invest in data centers, renewable energy, green industrial parks, and electric vehicle production and infrastructure. But most power grids in Southeast Asia have limited regional interconnections and are not adapting fast enough to meet the rapid electrification of economies.

Some investors are deterred by long grid connection times, lack of policy clarity, and rigid rules of bureaucratic state-run power companies in the region, home to nearly 700 million people and one of the world's fastest-growing energy markets.

The region's grids urgently need more investment and reforms to expand and modernize, says the report. Many are governed by a hodgepodge of inflexible rules limiting private operators and a lack of innovative power purchase agreements. Long grid connection times also frustrate investors, such as data center developers who cannot afford to wait several years.

The constraints are already affecting clean energy projects. For example, between 50 and 60 percent of renewable energy projects in Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia have been canceled between 2021 and 2025 because of system constraints, including unclear power-purchase agreement structures, permission hurdles and grid connection rules, the authors note.

Grid investment has failed to keep pace with demand growth. Annual investment in power transmission and distribution fell 3 percent between 2015 and 2025 in Southeast Asia.

Southeast Asia should be spending $29 billion a year on grid infrastructure but is investing only $11 billion. This leaves an $18 billion annual investment gap, putting the region's growing green economy at risk.

The green economy is growing at 8 to 9 percent annually and is worth $290 billion. By 2030, it could reach $430 billion, the authors say. But there is a significant gap between investments announced and what is likely to be built.



Engineers work at the site of the Monsoon Wind Power Project in Laos on Dec 28, 2025. ZHU JIPENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

"Of approximately $540 billion in green capital expenditure announced across Southeast Asia's power and EV value chains between now and 2030, only around $315 billion is on a credible path to deployment under current conditions.

"Capital is flowing where commercial demand, energy security and policy that delivers infrastructure come together, and stalling where any of the three is missing," said coauthor Dale Hardcastle, partner at Bain & Company, in a statement.

New electricity demand from data centers, rapid adoption of EVs, and green industrial clusters could be a major catalyst for the region's green transformation, the authors say. But this requires grid reforms and greater investment in renewable energy and battery storage.

Over the next three to four years, the region is projected to face more than 100 terawatt-hours of new energy demand from data centers, EVs and green industrial parks, representing more than $200 billion in committed investment, the authors say.

Infrastructure timeline

A key problem, however, lies in the infrastructure timelines. Data centers, EV infrastructure, and production and green industrial parks can all be built in one to three years. Yet, the grid required to serve them takes at least five years to build, creating a structural time-to-power gap.

The report referenced a Bain survey of regional data center operators and large global data center developers, which found that 90 percent cited grid connection delays as a top constraint, while 70 percent cited grid transmission capacity limits.

Solutions include the quick deployment of solar and battery storage to meet near-term power demand, fast-tracking grid interconnections for high loads for key investments, and enabling private participation in power transmission and distribution. In the longer term, solutions include establishing regional power markets and strengthening interconnections under the ASEAN Power Grid initiative.

But timing is critical because a delay could entrench additional fossil fuel-based power generation, the authors note.

"Each long-term contract for gas or thermal (coal) supply makes it harder for green power to replace these sources in the future, and many data center operators are accepting interim gas or thermal supply instead of waiting for clean power to catch up," they say.

That finding comes as Southeast Asia is facing rising energy costs because of its dependence on fossil fuels.

The supply shock caused by conflicts in the Middle East and Tehran's blockade of the Strait of Hormuz have further underscored the value of affordable renewable energy and limiting dependence on imported fuels, the burning of which is accelerating climate change.

THE STRAITS TIMES, SINGAPORE

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:18 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:18 PM

WORLD

US companies see Chinese market as essential: Survey

By **YIFAN XU** in Washington
yifanxu@chinadailyusa.com

US companies remain deeply integrated in the Chinese market and view their operations there as essential to global success, even amid a fragile trade truce and persistent policy frictions, according to the US-China Business Council's latest member survey.

The council's 2026 Member Survey, drawing on responses from 175 companies, finds that 95 percent of respondents consider their China operations somewhat to very important for staying competitive globally.

"For US companies, China is not optional," the report states. "A generation of sophisticated, pressure-tested Chinese companies is going global. These competitors are advantaged by factors unique to China, including scale, local innovation networks, and speed to market."

Sourabh Gupta, senior fellow at the Institute for China-America Studies, described this as "a continuing case of China's indispensability to globally-minded companies".

"China is transitioning from being a mere global production partner to becoming a production and innovation partner for global businesses," Gupta told China Daily, noting China's "unmatched economies of scale, its dominance in the production of intermediate goods, and its burgeoning creative capabilities".

The survey also showed that tariffs and export controls continue to weigh heavily. Seventy-two percent of companies reported being affected by tariffs, up from the previous year, with 42 percent passing some costs to downstream customers. The report says that tariffs "continue to raise costs, boost inflation, and depress sales, exports, and profits".

"Export controls and retaliations always reduce sales and benefit competitors, so they are unattractive to businesspeople," Jack Midgley, principal consultant at Midgley & Company and adjunct associate professor in the Security Studies Program at Georgetown University, told China Daily.

Nearly half of respondents are impacted by US export controls, with 61 percent losing sales to Chinese competitors and 47 percent to international ones.

Gupta recommended that both sides draw "hard security lines — be it regarding critical infrastructure, software control, sensitive data, or dual-use items — should be narrowly and rigorously drawn". He added that overly expansive US measures were "anything but narrowly drawn".

Despite these challenges, business performance has shown resilience. Ninety-two percent of companies reported profitable operations in China in fiscal year 2025, up 10 percentage points from the prior year. Many use these profits to fund global expansion (53 percent), support US jobs (33 percent), and finance US-based R&D (32 percent).

"Regardless of swings in short-term profitability for China-based firms, the two economies are now linked through complex global supply chains. These supply chains will be resilient and self-correcting unless policymakers disrupt them with poor policy," Midgley said.

Gupta observed that US companies were "finding it may be hard to operate in China but finding it harder still to leave China, and the latter will also create competitive risk".

For future steps, Gupta called for honoring existing agreements. "The most practical steps ... (are) to conform and honor the terms of their consensus in Busan ... and extend the terms of their Busan arrangement for the entirety of the (Donald) Trump term."

Midgley echoed the need for dialogue: "Predictability and confidence come from transparency and deep engagement. Summit-level meetings can help shape the policy agenda, but the real confidence-building measures take place in dialogue among commercial leaders, investors, and innovators who will gain confidence by reaching mutual understanding."

Former US diplomat Sarah Beran to oversee US-China relations group

By **MINLU ZHANG** in New York
minluzhang@chinadailyusa.com


Sarah Beran

Career US diplomat Sarah Beran has been named the next president of the National Committee on US-China Relations, the organization announced on Monday, following a series of recent high-level interactions between the world's two largest economies.

Beran will join the National Committee in October and succeed Stephen Orlins, the organization's longtime president, on Nov 10, according to a statement by its board of directors.

"I am honored to take on the leadership of an organization that has been at the center of the most consequential moments in the bilateral relationship for six decades," Beran said in the statement.

Beran has served in the US Foreign Service for 23 years, most recently as deputy chief of mission at the US Embassy in Beijing.

The National Committee said Beran brings extensive experience in US-China relations and bilateral negotiations, as well as a commitment to maintaining communication channels between the two countries.

In a keynote address at the Jimmy Carter Forum on US-China Relations in January, whose theme focused on women in US-China relations, Beran highlighted the role of women diplomats, scholars and policy experts in shaping bilateral ties.

She also recalled that her own engagement with China began with "sports diplomacy", when she traveled to the Pearl River Delta with a high school soccer team. She said the experience later led her to study Chinese, spend time in Beijing and eventually enter government service as a diplomat focused on China.

Beran said one lesson from recent years of US-China diplomacy was to "protect some level of exchange between the Chinese and American people", calling it "the real ballast in the long-term relationship".

Beran's selection came after a national search process led by a six-member search committee chaired by Charlene Barshefsky, chair of the board and former US trade representative. The organization said Beran was chosen from a pool of more than 150 experts considered during the search.

Barshefsky said Beran is "the right leader" to carry forward the organization's work and deepen communication at all levels of the US-China relationship.

Beran previously held several China and Asia focused roles at the US State Department, including assignments related to Indo-Pacific affairs, APEC, and Chinese and Mongolian affairs. Her overseas postings have included Beijing, Islamabad, Jerusalem and Quito, and she speaks Mandarin and Spanish, according to the organization.

Established in 1966, the National Committee on US-China Relations is a New York-based nonprofit organization focused on the bilateral relationship. Its programs include policy discussions, public education, delegation visits, professional exchanges and initiatives aimed at bringing together Americans and Chinese from different sectors.


A man returning to his village in south Lebanon inspects his destroyed house on Monday following the announcement of an initial ceasefire agreement between the United States and Iran. MOHAMMED ZAATARI / AP

Deal promises end to conflict

But details of MoU remain unclear as Tehran, Washington offer differing accounts


A US military aerial refueling aircraft takes off from Ben Gurion Airport in Israel on Monday. According to previous reports, the US has said that if an agreement is reached with Iran, Washington will withdraw its military aircraft stationed at the airport. XINHUA

TEHRAN/WASHINGTON — The United States and Iran both claimed victory on Monday after digitally signing a memorandum of understanding aimed at ending the three-month conflict, yet both sides continue to offer conflicting accounts of its contents as the text remains unpublished.

Iran called the deal a triumph over Washington and Israel. "The enemy that had attacked to carry out its evil aims was defeated in all its aims and the Islamic Republic of Iran won great victories in the war," Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi said in remarks broadcast on state television on Monday.

US President Donald Trump hailed the agreement for restoring stability in the global markets. "I think a lot of great things are going to happen in the Middle East right now. And very importantly, the oil (price) is plummeting down, and the stock market is shooting up like a rocket today," Trump was quoted by PBS News as saying on Monday in Evian-les-Bains, France, which is currently hosting the G7 Leaders' Summit.

The reopening of the Strait of Hormuz and a halt to military operations across multiple fronts have been announced by both sides, with key details remaining disputed. Among the unresolved issues is Iran's proposed fees for ships transiting the strait.

Trump insisted on Monday that the strait will be toll-free and "there's no argument on that". US Vice-President JD Vance said in an interview with CNBC on Monday that the strait is expected to open "in a toll-free way for the long term".

However, Iran's semiofficial Fars news agency reported on Monday that Iran will accept ships' passage through the waterway free of charge solely for 60 days, after which the country intends to provide security, maritime, environmental and insurance services to crossing vessels and use the revenues for its economic development.

Differences also remain over Lebanon. Both sides announced an immediate ceasefire across all fronts, but it remains unclear whether the arrangement would require the Israeli military to withdraw from the large areas of southern Lebanon it currently occupies.

Lebanon truce

Iran's top diplomat was quoted as saying on Tuesday that the end of the Iran war included the end of Israel's occupation of Lebanon.

Iranian state television quoted Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi making the comment to foreign diplomats in a briefing.

"The end of the war in Lebanon is an inseparable part of complete end of the war," Araghchi was quoted as saying. But US officials argued that Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon wasn't a condition for the agreement and that Israel could respond to attacks by Hezbollah.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday said in a news conference that the Israeli military will remain in the "security zones" it controls in Lebanon, Syria and the Gaza Strip as long as necessary.

Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz on Monday said Israel wouldn't withdraw its forces from Lebanese territory.

On Iran's nuclear program, both sides acknowledged that Tehran is committed to not developing nuclear weapons, yet they made diverging claims over the disposal of Iran's highly enriched uranium.

In a post on Truth Social on Saturday, Trump suggested the US will work with Iran to remove enriched uranium at an "appropriate time".

Tehran, however, has been firm in securing its right to enrichment on its own soil and against any proposal to transfer enriched uranium outside of Iran.

Tehran insists the only acceptable way of dealing with its highly enriched uranium will be diluting it within Iranian territory, Araghchi said in an interview with the state-run IRIB TV on Friday.

Both sides are making contradictory claims about the agreement on frozen assets and economic sanctions against Iran.

With major questions still unanswered, the deal's real challenge begins after its formal signing in Switzerland on Friday, kicking off 60 days of technical negotiations.

Experts said based on the details released so far, the agreement does not fundamentally resolve the long-standing differences between the US and Iran over issues such as the nuclear program, nor does it reduce the mutual distrust between the two sides.

"The reported agreement appears to focus on urgent issues necessary to halt escalation ... More contentious subjects have been deferred to future negotiations," said Aram Kiwan, an Arab Israeli political analyst and columnist, noting that he sees the most likely scenario as a lengthy, phased negotiating process.

"At this stage, it is difficult to speak of comprehensive peace," said Suleiman Basharat, a Palestinian political analyst. "A single agreement can help reduce tensions, but it is unlikely by itself to deliver lasting peace across the wider Middle East."

XINHUA—AGENCIES

Winter crop production in Australia expected to fall

By **XIN XIN** in Sydney
xinxin@chinadaily.com.cn

Australia's grain production in the new financial year is expected to fall sharply as higher fertilizer costs linked to the Middle East conflict weigh on growers, the government and industry forecasts indicate.

National winter crop production is forecast to fall by 21 percent in 2026-27, reflecting an expected decline in the total area planted and lower yields, with the figure 12 percent below the five-year average, the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, or ABARES, said in its latest June crop report.

Wheat production is forecast to fall by 26 percent, 23 percent below the five-year average. Barley, canola and chickpea output are expected to decline by 15 percent, 20 percent and 51 percent, respectively. Meanwhile, summer crop production is estimated to have fallen by 15 percent in 2025-26.

Barley production is expected to fall in 2026-27, despite the planting area being forecast to increase by 4 percent, driven by strong cereal grain prices and its comparatively lower fertilizer requirement compared to wheat and canola, the report said.

The current forecast was affected by both climatic conditions and agricultural input costs, with fertilizer supply and prices becoming important factors in crop production for the new season, ABARES said.

It said the Middle East conflict had caused significant disruption to global fuel and fertilizer supplies. Australian broadacre cropping is exposed to this disruption due to its reliance on imports and limited capacity to use substitutes.

If the conflict continues, input costs are likely to remain elevated for longer, which could weigh on production, the bureau said, adding that in some extremely dry regions, farmers are expected to significantly reduce the area planted to winter crops or not plant a crop at all.

It also noted that while growers are expected to have their fertilizer requirements for the sowing period, there is more uncertainty around their willingness to purchase fertilizer at elevated prices, particularly urea for top-dressing crops in July and August, which could affect yields.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said on Monday that Australia welcomed a peace agreement between the United States and Iran. He said the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz is "essential to easing pressure on energy prices and economies".

Fertilizer Australia, the industry association representing Australia's fertilizer supply chain, said more than 60 percent of the urea fertilizer imported into Australia travels through the strait.

Rabobank, an international agribusiness banking cooperative, said in its latest winter crop forecast that Australia's winter crop planting area is expected to decline this year, impacted by mixed weather conditions and high input costs.

The report said rising farm input costs, particularly higher global fertilizer and diesel prices linked to the Middle East conflict, are increasing production costs for Australian growers and influencing planting decisions this season.

The report's author, Vitor Pistoia, a senior grains and oilseeds analyst, said the higher costs are prompting growers to shift "toward lower-input crops and contributing to a reduction in total cropping area".

The decline in planting area is expected to be concentrated on wheat. Pistoia said barley plantings are expected to increase from last year, as the crop could offer growers stronger profit margins than wheat.

The report also noted that barley exports have remained strong so far, supported by demand from China. The National Farmers' Federation said farm businesses are facing challenges.

"The combination of higher operating costs, seasonal pressures and declining production forecasts leaves little room to absorb additional costs," the federation's Chief Executive Officer Michael Guerin said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:18 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:18 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Country's high-quality development entails strengthened Party building

As the Communist Party of China prepares to celebrate the 105th anniversary of its founding on July 1 this year, a national conference on Party building, convened in Beijing on Monday, made clear the Party's commitment to enhancing its self-governance so it can continue to provide strong leadership for the country's high-quality development.

China's development journey is inseparable from the Party's leadership. Over the past century, the Party has consistently renewed and strengthened itself, enabling it to lead the Chinese people through revolution, construction and reform, and to usher in the historic achievements and transformations of the new era.

Today the nation is advancing Chinese modernization on all fronts and implementing the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30). The complex international environment and domestic reform and development tasks underscore the importance of the Party's leadership. This makes Party building not only a political task but also a practical necessity for achieving high-quality development.

The conference emphasized the importance of studying and implementing Xi Jinping Thought on Party Building, a scientific theoretical system that has taken shape through the Party's exploration and practice in the new era.

Since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, the CPC Central Committee with Xi Jinping at its core has set forth a series of new ideas, thoughts and strategies in addressing the major questions of the times — what kind of Marxist party should be built for exercising long-term governance, and how should such a party be built. In the process, Xi Jinping Thought on Party Building has taken shape.

Monday's conference highlighted a series of essential requirements embodied in Xi Jinping Thought on Party Building. It emphasized the need to uphold the centralized, unified leadership of the CPC Central Committee, exercise full and rigorous Party self-governance, stay true to the Party's original aspiration and founding mission, take the Party's political building as the overarching principle, build cohesion and forge a solid ideological foundation with the innovative theories of the Party.

It also stressed the need to cultivate high-caliber officials capable of shouldering the mission of national rejuvenation, improve Party conduct on a regular basis, supervise and govern the Party in all respects with strict discipline, take coordinated steps to ensure that officials dare not, cannot and do not want to be corrupt, run the Party with systems and regulations, and fulfill the political responsibility of full and rigorous Party self-governance.

These principles and requirements are being translated into concrete achievements that have strengthened the Party's ability to lead reform, promote development and respond to external risks and uncertainties. The continuous improvement of Party governance has created favorable conditions for economic growth, social stability and long-term national development.

Reflecting on the Party's determination to continuously break new ground in governing and strengthening itself, the conference stressed that Party organizations at all levels must be guided to apply Xi Jinping Thought on Party Building in planning and advancing Party building and take more concrete measures to ensure that all efforts toward rigorous Party self-governance meet higher standards.

The importance of Party building is closely linked to the country's broader development agenda. The central authorities have stressed that innovation-driven development and national rejuvenation ultimately depend on the Party's leadership, effective institutions and capable personnel. Party building provides the political guarantee for coordinating these strategic resources and transforming them into development momentum.

The nation stands at a new historical starting point, and Party building remains a continuing endeavor. The more complex the external environment becomes and the more demanding the tasks of reform and development are, the more imperative it is to uphold the Party's overall leadership and strengthen its governance capacity.

New drivers powering growth momentum

Despite drastic changes and rising uncertainties in the global trade and investment landscape, China's economy continues to demonstrate resilience and steady upgrading momentum.

According to data released by the National Bureau of Statistics on Tuesday, the country's exports and imports of goods reached 4.45 trillion yuan ($658.6 billion) in May, a 16.9 percent year-on-year increase. The vigorous growth shows that foreign trade is still a powerful engine for the economy.

The resilience of China's foreign trade is evident in the following aspects: first, the export structure has continued to evolve toward new and high-quality products, with a higher share of high-tech products such as machinery and electronics; second, the country has diversified its markets, effectively mitigating the risks associated with relying on a single primary market; and third, imports have also shown strong growth, with both domestic and foreign demand working in tandem. This underscores the completeness of China's industry chains and its strong competitiveness.

A breakdown of the numbers offers an insightful picture of the country's economic interaction with the rest of the world.

Exports rose 13.8 percent in May from the same period last year, while imports increased 21.5 percent, the General Administration of Customs data showed. In the first five months of the year, total foreign trade amounted to 20.68 trillion yuan, up 15.3 percent year on year.

The country has taken a series of measures to stabilize exports and boost imports, and last month's marked increase in imports attests to the robust demand generated by the country's superlarge market, as well as its commitment to share opportunities with the rest of the world.

China has also made steady progress in upgrading its exports. As Wang Guanhua, a spokeswoman for the NBS, said at a news conference on Tuesday, technology-intensive products with a high added value have become a major driver of export growth, indicating the country's ongoing efforts to nurture high-tech sectors and let them play a bigger role in the economy are paying off.

From January to May, the amount of investment that went to high-tech sectors recorded a year-on-year rise of 4.5 percent. The investment expansion was particularly notable in integrated circuit manufacturing and lithium-ion battery manufacturing.

Given the drop in fixed asset investment, which was largely caused by the slowdown in the real estate market, the rise in high-tech investment is an encouraging sign that the country is speeding up efforts to shift its growth drivers to emerging industries and new quality productive forces.

As China strives to make its industries smarter and greener, its consumption structure is also evolving, with residents spending more on products featuring advanced technologies. During the first five months of this year, the retail sales of wearable intelligent devices more than doubled, and the retail sales of services increased 5.4 percent year-on-year.

Consumption of services is also building up steam, as demonstrated by the popularity of sports events, concerts and other leisure events across the country, and the large number of tourist trips during holidays. Vibrant services consumption has great potential to boost domestic demand.

Nevertheless, as pointed out by the bureau's officials on Tuesday, challenges persist, including a complicated international situation that threatens to disrupt global trade, as well as domestic demand that needs further support.

The country is responding to these challenges with a series of targeted policies, including an income growth plan, equipment renewal and trade-in programs and employment initiatives.

As the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period unfolds, the central authorities have made it clear that the country will continue to pursue high-quality development, deepen reform and expand high-standard opening-up.

By doing so, China is expected to not only underpin its own long-term growth but also deliver steady opportunities for its trading partners and contribute to the regional and global economy.

Song Chen



Opinion Line

Vibrant businesses can help bring about good environment

With its long and slender branches and soft, thin leaves, the goji berry tree is an unassuming plant. But its deep-delving roots hold the secret to the success of the Three-North Shelterbelt Forest Program spanning northwestern, northern and northeastern China.

Its branches bear small red berries — sweet, chewy, and packed with nutrients. Remarkably, harvesting the fruit does not weaken the plant's hold on the sand. So it protects the land while also providing a valuable cash crop. Its leaves, tender and fragrant, can also be plucked and brewed into tea.

The Three-North Shelterbelt Forest Program, which spans 13 provincial-level regions, has made remarkable achievements in improving ecological stability and supporting local communities.

Something worth drawing attention to on Wednesday, the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought, is that drylands already cover 40 percent of the Earth's land.

According to a 2024 United Nations report, if greenhouse gas emissions are not curbed, another 3 percent of the world's humid areas will turn into drylands by the end of this century.

To make matters worse, green-wall projects around the world have faltered, undone by short-term aid cycles and lack of sustained funding. China, however, has developed an approach that has injected sustained momentum into its fight against desertification.

The goji berry plants and other crop plants are often planted under solar panels, which not only provide shade and shelter, but also reduce transpiration.

A recent editorial in the journal Nature said the success of China's Three-North Shelterbelt Forest Program offers a vital blueprint for a warming planet.

Launched in 1978, the program, which involves 46.7 percent of China's total land area, has nearly tripled forest cover in the region — from about 5 percent to nearly 14 percent by 2023.

What does the program look like on the ground? On the southern edge of the Taklimakan Desert, in Hotan, encouraged by the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region government's "first-build-then-subsidize" initiative, Sudiomar Tursun, an entrepreneur from Ayimak village in Hotan, claimed nearly 70 hectares of desert last year. Under the initiative, residents level the land and plant trees — paying no rent. Only when the tree survival rate reaches 85 percent do they receive government subsidies: 30,000 yuan ($4,435) per hectare, plus 3,000 yuan annually for another three years.

Guided by the local government, Tursun planted large-fruited oleaster trees. Based on current fruit prices, she can earn 22,500 to 30,000 yuan per hectare starting in 2028. The government also built roads and supplies free electricity and water.

"We suffer from severe flying dust in Hotan," Tursun said. "I think if we can do this work and stick with it, it will benefit us — and it will leave a better future for our kids."

She is not alone. According to Hotan's forestry and grassland administration, 69,900 residents have participated in the initiative, and the total area covered is more than 60,300 hectares.

What China's Three-North Shelterbelt Forest Program has proven is a simple yet profound truth that lies at the heart of the nation's ecological civilization concept: lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets.

There are no lucid waters to be seen yet, but there is the lush green of oleaster leaves, the red of goji berries ripening under solar panels, and the steady income flowing into the pockets of local farmers.

In the past, one had to choose between a healthy environment and a healthy economy. However, the goji berry does not choose between holding the sand and feeding a family. It does both. The solar panels do not choose between generating clean energy and providing shade for crops. They do both. And Tursun did not choose between saving her hometown from dust storms and securing a future for her children. She did both.

And that is the secret behind China's Great Green Wall Initiative — development need not be at the expense of the environment.

— HOU LIQIANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Academic culture must encourage original research

Editor's note: *China recognizes that basic research is the bedrock of the scientific system and the wellspring of solutions to overcome technological challenges. ThePaper.cn spoke to Shing-Tung Yau, also known as Qiu Chengtong, a Fields Medal laureate and dean of the Qiuzhen College at Tsinghua University, on the significance of basic research. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

It is true that China lacks sufficient original breakthroughs, not only in fundamental disciplines such as physics and mathematics but also in engineering and technology.

It is often argued that China excels at turning scientific discoveries "from 2 to 100" but is relatively weak in making original breakthroughs "from zero to one". In our pursuit of basic research, we must balance the needs of the country and its people with the freedom for curiosity-driven exploration.

Some research may appear to have little practical value today, yet it can deepen our understanding of the laws of nature. Curiosity is the most important driving force behind creations that go from zero to one. Basic science should not only help address the challenges facing the country but also leave room for uninhibited exploration.

In many cases, once scientists in other countries make a breakthrough, Chinese researchers quickly follow and sometimes even surpass them. But genuinely pioneering directions initiated by Chinese researchers are relatively rare. Taking that first step toward originality is critical for the future development of basic science in the country.

Young people today generally do not have to worry about basic living conditions, but they face other external pressures that often lead to anxiety. At the same time, parents and society tend to overprotect children. The academic culture in China needs to change if the country is to achieve genuine advances in basic science and make truly original discoveries.

The existing incentive mechanisms overemphasize material rewards but pay little attention to the intrinsic value of curiosity. At some universities, generous salaries and housing subsidies are primarily reserved for scholars with prestigious academic titles. As a result, many young researchers are compelled to pursue those distinctions rather than focus on their research interests.

Another issue is that China's academic evaluation system seldom involves international peer review. Evaluations are usually confined to domestic circles and, in some cases, even to the candidate's own institution.

Moreover, even when international evaluations are introduced, many institutions still place too much emphasis on factors such as publication counts and journal effect. Such metrics are ill-suited to assessing the worth of cutting-edge exploratory research.

Frankly speaking, the number of people currently capable of achieving genuine breakthroughs from zero to one is quite limited in China, although this is beginning to change. Many scholars returning from overseas have brought back new ideas and approaches. That does not mean China should depend solely on overseas talent. Domestic scholars are also emerging in growing numbers. The key is having truly knowledgeable experts.

Ultimately, it is in our hands. We should encourage young scholars at Chinese universities to set more ambitious goals. Some outstanding young researchers want to become world-class scholars, produce genuinely transformative work and lead the development of their disciplines. They could shape the direction of mathematics and basic science for decades to come.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:18 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:18 PM

VIEWS

China and the World Roundtable | A Shared Future for China and Africa

Editor's Note: *China has expanded its zero-tariff policy to include all the 53 African countries with which it has diplomatic relations. The Department of African Affairs of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Research Center on Building a Community with a Shared Future for Humanity co-hosted a seminar in Beijing last month. The seminar was attended by government officials from China and African countries as well as experts. Below are excerpts of speeches of four of the participants, as reported by China Daily's Wang Qingyun.*

Zero-tariff policy opens new opportunities for Africa



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Industrial upgrade necessary to reap full benefits



Leah Beryl Rosebellah Aywah is the chief state counsel at the Office of the Attorney General and Department of Justice of Kenya.

China's decision to extend zero-tariff treatment to all eligible African countries is both historic and strategic.

It signals a strong commitment to deepening China-Africa economic cooperation and advancing a more inclusive framework for South-South trade. However, the significance of this move lies not just in tariff elimination, but in what it makes possible.

For years, African exports have remained largely restricted to raw materials rather than processed goods. Now the expansion of the zero-tariff treatment to all tariff lines offers an opportunity to change this pattern.

Processed and semi-processed African goods can now enter the Chinese market under the same preferential conditions as raw materials, and therefore create an incentive for African countries to move further up the value chain.

For instance, those exporting raw cotton can now explore textiles and apparel manufacturing.

The real question for African economies is not only whether we can export more, but whether we can export with greater value added and higher productivity.

Digital trade and e-commerce also present a major opportunity. China hosts one of the most important and dynamic e-commerce ecosystems, transforming how products reach consumers.

For African businesses, especially medium, small and micro enterprises as well as those headed by women and youth entrepreneurs, zero-tariff access allows direct entry into the Chinese market through digital platforms.

An African coffee producer, cosmetic brand, or handicraft enterprise can now access this market without relying solely on traditional distribution chains.

This is particularly important because digital trade lowers market entry barriers for smaller enterprises and creates opportunities for branding, niche marketing and innovation.

However, to fully benefit from this opportunity, African countries will need stronger digital infrastructure, export-readiness programs, payment systems, logistics support and greater engagement with Chinese online marketplaces.

Agriculture is a mainstay for many African economies. Most African exports to China are agricultural products such as coffee, tea, avocados, nuts, spices, flowers, seafood and specialty goods, which are increasingly finding new markets in China.

Although the zero-tariff policy enhances competitiveness, market access alone is not sufficient. Long-term success depends on quality assurance systems, sanitary and phytosanitary compliance, traceability mechanisms, cold chain logistics, and investment in storage and transport infrastructure.

Zero-tariff access has important implications for investment flows and industrial cooperation. When manufacturers realize that products made in Africa can enter duty-free, it creates an incentive for investment in production facilities, industrial parks, logistics systems and export-oriented manufacturing.

China's zero-tariff initiative provides African countries with an unprecedented opportunity to expand exports and deepen participation in global trade.

But tariffs are only one component of competitiveness. The long-term gains from this policy will depend on how effectively we strengthen production capacity, industrialization, standard systems, logistics and the digital trade infrastructure.

The greatest opportunity lies not just in increasing trade volumes but in transforming the structure of trade itself — from dependence on raw commodity exports toward diversified, value-added and technology-driven trade.

Boosting agricultural processing key to export expansion



Mao Xiaojing is a researcher of the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation.

Roughly 60 percent of Africa's total population is engaged in agriculture, and agricultural products constitute a major part of Africa's exports.

Expanding agricultural exports will have an immediate impact on the overall development of the continent's agriculture and the livelihoods of smallholder farmers.

The zero-tariff policy is a major boon for African countries' exports of agricultural products. It demonstrates China's commitment as a major country to sharing market dividends and pursuing common development with African countries.

To fully leverage the policy, China's customs authorities have rolled out a series of supporting measures to ensure its effective implementation.

African countries need to proactively explore market demand in China and promote their products better among Chinese consumers, many of whom still have a limited understanding of agricultural products from Africa.

Platforms such as the China-Africa Economic and Trade Expo and the China International Import Expo can be used to showcase African farm produce and expand exports.

Additionally, African exporters need to familiarize themselves with China's inspection and quarantine requirements.

They, as well as Chinese importers, should ensure that the quality and supply of agricultural products are stable. China and African countries should work together for the steady growth of Africa's agricultural exports.

Boosting the development of Africa's agricultural processing industry is also a priority. Exports of primary products entail high transportation costs.

Their transportation calls for high-standard cold chain systems. These products, if processed into peanut oil, sesame oil, fruit juice, dried fruits and other finished goods, will face less stringent access rules from importing countries compared with primary produce.

Processed products are easier to transport, and the added value generated by processing primary products will drive the economic growth of African countries.

Addressing logistics hurdles among Lesotho's priorities

The historic step China took on May 1 by extending zero-tariff treatment to all 53 African countries with which it has diplomatic relations is not just a policy adjustment, but also a profound demonstration of China's enduring commitment to Africa's integration into the global economy.



Mapaballo Lydia Mile is the ambassador of Lesotho to China.

However, while the door to the vast Chinese market is now wide open, many enterprises in Africa currently lack the strength, capacity and logistical support to walk through that door. Let me demonstrate this challenge and the path forward using Lesotho as an example.

First, we must shift from exporting vulnerability to exporting resilience through value addition. Consider Lesotho's wool and mohair industry, which dominates its exports to China. Currently, these products are shipped largely in raw form, leaving us vulnerable to risks such as disease outbreaks that can halt exports entirely.

If entrepreneurs in Lesotho can partner with Chinese investors to build processing capacity domestically, the industry could be de-risked, jobs created and significant value retained within Lesotho.

Second, we must address the logistical hurdles that act as severe non-tariff barriers. For landlocked countries such as Lesotho, geography dictates its trade competitiveness.

Transit through neighboring territories means our exporters face high transport costs, compounded infrastructural constraints and intricate cross-border customs procedures.

This is where the implementation of the zero-tariff policy must be paired with robust trade facilitation. We highly welcome the Chinese customs' launch of the "Green Channel 2.0" for African agricultural and food products, which streamlines registration and optimizes access procedures. By modernizing logistics, improving connectivity and streamlining trade processes, we can dramatically reduce the friction of cross-border trade.

Third, we must leverage technical support to meet rigorous market standards. Zero tariffs will only be beneficial if our products comply with the necessary sanitary and phytosanitary measures, quality standards and certification requirements.

The technical training sessions on capacity building and inspection initiated by the Chinese customs are invaluable steps. We need continued knowledge transfer, certification assistance and guidance, so that our farmers and manufacturers can confidently navigate the rules of origin and market access protocols.

Trade and business bringing people closer



Liu Shu is the executive dean of the Institute of African Studies of Zhejiang Normal University.

Zhejiang is a major province for foreign trade in China. In 2025, its import and export volume with African countries increased by 11.5 percent year-on-year.

Jinhua, a city in Zhejiang, is an important hub for trade with African countries. While Jinhua may not be widely known, Yiwu, which is under the jurisdiction of the city, enjoys great popularity.

As a researcher, I propose a few suggestions for seizing the opportunities presented by the zero-tariff policy and advancing people-to-people exchanges between China and African countries.

Efforts should be made to encourage Chinese enterprises to increase imports of high-quality African products and expand their businesses with the African side.

Instead of merely engaging in trade in goods, enterprises need to deepen cooperation in production capacity, industrial park development, logistics and warehousing, and intensive processing of agricultural products. This will help African countries turn their advantage in natural resources into industrial competitiveness, and shift the focus of their exports from raw materials to finished products.

It is essential to take advantage of economic and trade cooperation to deepen and strengthen people-to-people exchanges. The flow of goods and industrial cooperation will help cement the friendship between the two peoples.

As trade and investment cooperation grows stronger, business people, technical teams and young students will visit each other more frequently, enhancing mutual understanding and bridging estrangement through joint work, market alignment and cultural exchanges.

For example, Jinhua, which is home to a large number of business people, and has attracted many African students, conducts China-Africa youth exchanges and vocational training programs on a regular basis. It also hosts the annual Forum on China-Africa Economic, Trade and Cultural Cooperation.

These events have deepened the friendly ties between the people of China and African countries.

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

The Global South can add more value to its natural resources

Hadi Prayitno

Global Lens

History remains one of the strongest bonds linking countries across the Global South. When World War II ended in 1945, many of these countries were either newly independent or still struggling to secure their freedom. They entered an international system designed largely by and for others.

Colonialism had shaped their economies around resource extraction, racial hierarchy was embedded in global institutions, and the Cold War demanded alignment with one bloc or the other. Trade terms kept commodity exporters at a relative disadvantage to industrial economies.

Shared grievances led to the emergence of common platforms. The 1955 Bandung Asian-African Conference was followed by the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961, the Group of 77 in 1964, and more recently the BRICS in 2006.

Many of the challenges that inspired these initiatives still persist. Global South countries face heavy debt burdens, limited manufacturing capacity, restricted access to technology, dependence on commodities, climate risks, food insecurity and fiscal fragility.

But some things have also changed. The Global South now accounts for over 40 percent of global output. Capital increasingly flows toward developing economies, while their expanding populations are becoming the primary drivers of global labor, consumption and urbanization.

Decisions made in the Global South will shape the future of the world economy.

The Global South also has vast reserves of oil, gas, minerals, tropical forests, freshwater systems, and biodiversity. These countries have many of the essential inputs required for batteries, electric vehicles, and renewable energy infrastructure.

Whether these structural advantages translate into leverage depends on political and institutional choices. Resource-rich nations must move beyond extraction by developing domestic processing capacity, linking natural resources to industrial strategies and investing in research, innovation and technology.

When leaders from 29 Asian and African countries gathered in Bandung, Indonesia, in April 1955, they did not sign a military pact or trade agreement. Instead, they articulated a new vision of international relations based on sovereignty, equality, and the right to remain independent in Cold War rivalries.

Indonesia's founding president Sukarno argued that the prosperity of Asian and African peoples depended on solidarity among themselves. Dependence on outside powers, he warned, would merely reproduce old forms of subordination. The Final Communiqué of the conference placed economic cooperation at the core of this vision.

The Non-Aligned Movement extended this principle by asserting that neither Washington nor Moscow had the right to dictate the economic or diplomatic choices of developing countries.

Its members insisted on pursuing their own development models and foreign policies. The Group of 77 carried that insistence into the United Nations, where developing countries could leverage their numerical strength despite limited economic power. By 1978, the Buenos Aires Plan of Action had given South-South cooperation an institutional footing.

BRICS represents the latest stage of this evolution. Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa and Indonesia use the forum to coordinate on trade, development finance, energy, food security, technology and institutional reform. The New Development Bank is a tangible expression of that cooperation.

Underlying these efforts is a shared concern: the international order reflects the balance of power from 1945.

Countries that now generate the bulk of global growth are underrepresented in the IMF, the World Bank, the UN Security Council, and the bodies that write international financial rules. Reform remains a common objective, but progress has been slow.

Building the foundations of economic integration is not easy. Yet, the materials already exist: Indonesian nickel, cobalt from the Democratic Republic of Congo, lithium from Chile, agricultural expertise and biodiversity knowledge from Brazil, sovereign capital from the Gulf states, digital infrastructure from India, and manufacturing depth from China.

Combined strategically, these assets could significantly enhance the Global South's bargaining power.

The Global North continues to dominate key dimensions of international influence, including military strength, reserve currencies, major financial institutions, technological leadership and international standards that govern global trade. This is not merely a historical legacy; it remains the active structure that determines whose voice carries weight in global negotiations.

For Global South countries, critical minerals offer the clearest opportunity to enhance their leverage. Demand for lithium, nickel, cobalt, graphite, copper, and rare earths is expected to shoot up as electric vehicles, batteries, solar capacity, wind installations, and grid infrastructure expand across the world. Many of these resources are concentrated in developing countries.

The question is whether critical minerals will help redistribute power, or simply reinforce old patterns of dependence under greener branding.

Unless mineral-rich countries develop domestic processing capacity, enforce environmental rules, manage revenues transparently, protect local communities and invest in education and skill development, the energy transition risks creating a new cohort of raw material suppliers in a cleaner but equally unequal global economy.

China has built its strengths in batteries, solar panels, electric vehicles, and rare earth processing through decades of industrial policy, infrastructure investment and technological upgrading.

The process was neither quick nor inexpensive, but it secured China a competitive position in global supply chains.

India took a different route, combining digital public infrastructure, pharmaceutical production, space technology and knowledge-intensive services to create a development model less dependent on natural resources.

The approaches differ, but the underlying logic is the same. A more balanced international order requires meaningful changes from developed countries.

Technology transfer must involve genuine knowledge sharing rather than merely licensing proprietary systems.

Green investment should support processing industries in resource-rich countries rather than offshoring the value-added stages to wealthy industrial economies. Research partnerships should strengthen local capabilities rather than extract data from the South to feed knowledge systems in the North.

The Global South's obligations to itself are equally demanding. Governments that fail to invest resource revenues in education, technical training, environmental protection and effective institutions will struggle to build a robust industrial base regardless of external conditions.

Likewise, opening to global markets without developing value-added industries only recreates dependence in more sophisticated forms. A more effective path is a strategy that is calibrated, accountable and coordinated with genuine South-South partners rather than managed in competitive isolation.

Natural resources have become diplomatic currencies because they influence critical issues — energy security, industrial competition, climate outcomes, digital supply chains and defense capabilities — that are central to every major negotiation.

The Global South holds these currencies in real and growing quantities. The question is how wisely they will be spent.

The author is the executive director at the Reform Initiatives and a senior associate at the Institute for Development of Economics and Finance, Indonesia.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:18 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:18 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

WALDEMAR KARPA

Take the 'Sanchez Way'

The future of EU-China relations lies not in fortress-like trade defenses, but in the cooperative, competitive and deeply integrated statecraft of the green frontier

As the European Union moves to tighten trade defenses against Chinese green technologies recently, Spain is quietly testing a different approach. Rather than treating China's manufacturing strength only as a threat, Madrid is seeking to turn it into localized investment, industrial capacity and green-transition momentum. This contrast makes the "Sanchez Way" more than a bilateral story; it is a test of whether Europe can move beyond defensive protectionism and build a more pragmatic relationship with China.



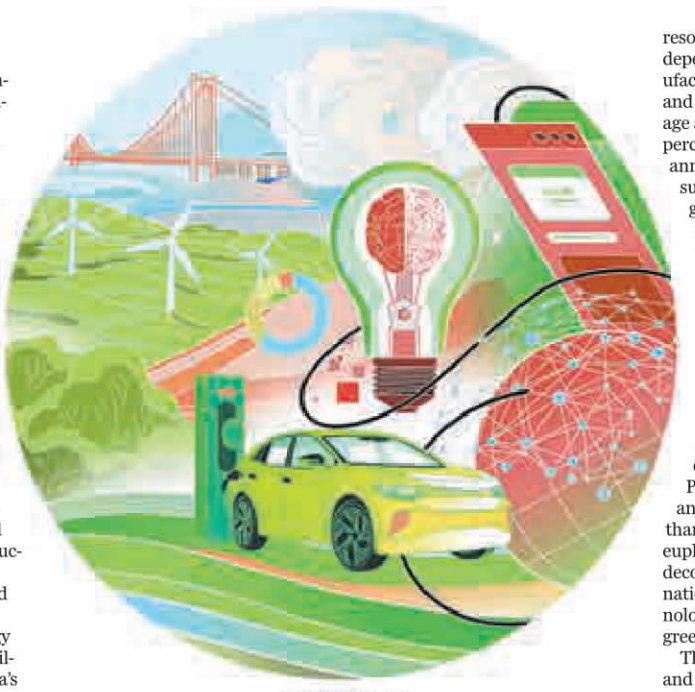
President Xi Jinping and visiting Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez declared on April 14 that China and Spain should strengthen cooperation, oppose a return to "the law of the jungle" in international relations and jointly defend true multilateralism. While Brussels and Paris are erecting tariff walls against ultra-competitive Chinese green technologies out of concerns over a second "China Shock", Madrid has quietly pioneered a different path.

This was Sanchez's fourth visit to China in four years, a sustained diplomatic courtship culminating in what can only be described as the "Sanchez Way": a pragmatically cooperative approach to the green transition that treats ecological statecraft as an instrument of national industrial sovereignty rather than a luxury of climate diplomacy.

The timing was exquisite. On May 28, Spain dramatically withdrew its support for a French-led initiative to bolster the European Union's trade defences against China. The non-paper, co-signed by Italy and the Netherlands, had sought sweeping new powers to investigate market distortions and penalize Chinese imports. Within days of its technical drafting, Spain's Minister of Economy Carlos Cuerpo said there was "no specific political support" for such measures, calling instead for engagement with China "from equal to equal, on an equal footing". This sudden reversal underscores a deeper European schism: while the European Commission seeks to de-risk and insulate, Spain has recognized a fundamental industrial reality — Europe cannot achieve its ambitious net-zero targets without China's manufacturing scale, and China cannot sustain its export-driven green expansion without Europe's affluent markets.

To understand the "Sanchez Way" is to examine the Iberian Peninsula's rapid transformation into China's premier green gateway to the European continent. Rather than viewing Chinese electric vehicles and lithium-ion batteries as existential threats to domestic manufacturing, Sanchez has actively courted Chinese greenfield investment, successfully transforming potential import competition into localized industrial partnerships.

The crown jewel of this strategy is the 400 million euros ($468 million) joint venture between China's Chery Automobile and Spain's Ebro-EV Motors in Barcelona's historic Zona Franca. The facility, which rolled out its first S700 SUV in late 2024, is on track to produce 50,000 vehicles annually by 2027, scaling up to 150,000 by 2029. Chery thus becomes the first Chinese automaker to manufacture passenger vehicles on European soil, reducing its exposure to EU countervailing duties by localizing production and employing Spanish workers. In Zaragoza, global battery giant CATL has entered into a 4.1 billion euros ($4.8 billion) joint venture with Stellantis to construct a massive gigafactory, which is projected to reach up to 50 GWh in annual capacity. By offering skilled labor at costs below the Western European average, coupled with robust logistics hubs in Valencia and Bilbao, where Chinese State-owned COSCO holds major port concessions, Spain has made itself indispensable to China's "produce globally, serve globally" model.



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

This Spanish model finds a fascinating echo in Central Europe. On May 26, at Kozminski University in Warsaw, China's Ambassador to Poland Lu Shan delivered a landmark address counting green transition not as a geopolitical battleground, but as a shared industrial frontier. Poland, much like Spain, is a critical swing state in Europe's climate future. As the ambassador noted, both nations share remarkably similar structural constraints: deep coal dependency, energy-intensive industrial bases, high sensitivity to transition costs and an acute anxiety that premature decarbonization will hollow out manufacturing competitiveness.

Ambassador Lu's message to the Polish business and academic elite was one of industrial optimism. The energy sector, he argued, has undergone a profound ontological shift: from a model reliant on resource endowment to one dependent on technology and manufacturing capability. Between 2012 and 2024, China sustained an average annual economic growth of 6.1 percent, with only 3.4 percent annual growth in energy consumption, while clean energy grew to represent 11.4 percent of GDP in 2025. Poland, already home to one of Europe's largest battery manufacturing clusters, could replicate the "Sanchez Way" by combining its robust industrial infrastructure with Chinese supply-chain efficiency and capital. As Ambassador Lu explicitly stated: "The scale advantage of China's new energy industry can help Poland lower transition costs and accelerate its pace." Rather than treating "de-risking" as a euphemism for protectionist decoupling, Central European nations can leverage Chinese technology to build their own domestic green resilience.

The friction between Brussels and Beijing stems from a fundamental divergence in how both blocs conceptualize decarbonization. The EU has pursued a demand-side, regulatory approach: the Emissions Trading System puts a carbon price of approximately 78 euros per ton, internalizing pollution costs to force behavioral shifts. China, by contrast, has adopted a supply-side, industry-first model — supplying global markets with affordable green technologies while maintaining a much lower carbon price of around 11 euros per ton and still burning half the world's coal. Yet this supply-side surge has performed a global public good: by investing over $50 billion in solar photovoltaic supply chains, China has single-handedly made solar the cheapest source of electricity in most parts of the world.

Pure sectoral protectionism is ecologically self-defeating: it will raise transition costs for European utilities and consumers without reviving domestic manufacturing that has already been outcompeted.

To transcend this gridlock, the EU and China must move beyond the binary of capitulation or protectionism. Five recommendations offer a blueprint for ecological realpolitik.

First, establish a greenfield localization protocol, offering tariff exemptions to Chinese manufacturers who localize supply chains and employ European labor — the Chery-Barcelona model scaled continent-wide. Second, calibrate the carbon border adjustment mechanism with carbon market linkage, granting partial relief to Chinese exporters that verifiably use certified green electricity. Third, forge a circular economy compact with joint battery recycling standards and "health passports" for critical minerals. Fourth, launch triangular partnerships in the Global South, combining Chinese manufacturing efficiency with European green finance and ESG governance. Fifth, integrate China into the Coalition of Trade Ministers on Climate to formalize rules distinguishing legitimate green subsidies from market-distorting state aid.

The "Sanchez Way" is neither naive appeasement nor European weakness. It represents a clear-eyed recognition that, in an era where climate change has breached the 1.5 C threshold and threatens to cross 2 C by 2045, treating the green transition as a geopolitical football is a luxury the planet cannot afford. The future of EU-China relations lies not in fortress-like trade defenses, but in the cooperative, competitive, and deeply integrated statecraft of the green frontier.

The author is an economist and the head of the Department of Economics at Kozminski University in Warsaw. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

ZHANG CHAO

New dynamic, not reset

Managing the China-Europe relationship requires establishing basic understandings to better manage their differences

On May 29, the European Commission held an orientation debate to take stock of its China policy. The outcome was telling: While Beijing is still a critical partner, the commission now views the bilateral trade and investment relationship as "not sustainable". The debate unfolded just days after five European Union member states co-signed a joint paper urging more aggressive trade measures against China, while the EU Commissioner for Industrial Strategy Stephane Sejourne branded China's conduct as "predatory".



In recent years, the pandemic, mutual sanctions and the Ukraine crisis have all contributed to the deterioration of China-Europe ties. But more corrosive is the misperception that has taken hold: Brussels increasingly defines China policy through the prism of its ties with the United States. This makes managing the relationship far more complex.

Beneath these immediate triggers lies a deeper structural transformation. The relative positions of China and Europe — to one another and in the world — have changed in fundamental ways.

Several decades of breakneck growth have not only eradicated extreme poverty in China but built world-leading capacity in artificial intelligence, robotics and new energy. Chinese exports to Europe have climbed up the value chain, shifting from cheap consumer goods to machinery, high-end equipment and electric vehicles. As a response, European traditional industries have increasingly turned toward protectionism.

China and Europe are not adversaries by design, but they could become so by default. The time has come to focus more deliberately on steering the relationship toward a brighter future. That requires revisiting the basic understandings that once provided stability, to find ways to coexist despite differences.

China's positive influence through its win-win cooperation now radiates well beyond its neighborhood. Through the Belt and Road Initiative, China's economic and cultural presence has reached deeply into the Global South. The EU's Global Gateway initiative was meant as a counterweight, but it arrived too late and on too small a scale to bring real results in Global South countries.

Yet to paint Europe simply as a loser would be a mistake. European companies have earned vast profits in China, and cooperation on climate change has delivered real results. However, the uncomfortable fact remains: Europe's relative influence is fading from the geopolitical and technological center stage. The near-absence of European companies among the world's leading AI companies tells the larger story.

Europe's anxiety runs deeper than market share or technological leadership. China engineered its rise not by copying Europe, but by exploring its own path to modernization with Chinese characteristics based on its national conditions. Today, when observers look at Europe and see economic stagnation, weak governance and visible urban decay, cultural admiration may linger — but for some, Europe no longer looks like a model worth emulating.

This is the deepest source of European unease. From the turn toward protective measures to the insistence on framing China as a "systemic rival" — all of it betrays a fear of growing irrelevance. The convergence narrative is dead. Both China and the EU now inhabit a new reality.

Acknowledging this new reality means accepting that the current trajectory of China-Europe relations may be hard to reverse. Rather than aiming for a full reset, Beijing and Brussels should focus on managing the relationship through the next period. This calls for a few basic understandings.

Europe needs to demonstrate both the will and the capacity to shape its own China policy, rather than taking its cues from Washington.

At the same time, the EU should understand that China does not seek to erode Europe's industrial base and it is open to more dialogue and cooperation that help avoid such a misperception.

Deeper trade and investment ties serve the interests of both sides, but Europe increasingly sees the matter differently. When the EU introduces protective measures, it stresses that it is not pursuing decoupling. Yet it should remain alert to the real-world consequences. The idea that Europe can leverage China's need for its market and certain technologies — pursuing a strategy of "escalate to de-escalate" — carries considerable risks. It is far easier to start a trade conflict than to end one. Europe should resist the temptation to copy the US playbook when engaging with China.



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

At a practical level, China and Europe should create more channels of dialogue and seize some early, low-hanging fruit.

On economic security, think tanks from both sides can map out where interests overlap and where each side misreads the other's intentions. At the official level, China and the EU have established a rare-earth export-control dialogue. They can consider building on these efforts to establish a broader, higher-level economic security mechanism. Such a platform would allow both sides to seek institutional solutions before disputes escalate into crises.

On sanctions, the EU should demonstrate greater sincerity. The EU's unilateral sanctions against Chinese companies over alleged support for Russia in the Ukraine crisis are eroding the broader relationship. After the EU sanctioned 27 Chinese entities in April, China responded by sanctioning seven EU companies. The EU should interpret this asymmetry not as a sign of weakness, but as a signal that Beijing remains mindful of the overall relationship. Both sides should go for dialogue before the logic of tit-for-tat becomes entrenched.

Low-hanging fruit does exist. Continued cooperation in small, technical areas can begin to rebuild a measure of trust. People-to-people exchanges are one such area. China has already introduced visa-free access for residents of 25 EU member states. The EU can respond with substantive steps to facilitate visas for Chinese residents. Third-party cooperation is another promising avenue: environmental protection, desertification control, biodiversity conservation and humanitarian assistance offer spaces where habits of cooperation can be rebuilt step by step.

China and Europe are not adversaries by design, but they could become so by default. The time has come to focus more deliberately on steering the relationship toward a brighter future. That requires revisiting the basic understandings that once provided stability, to find ways to coexist despite differences.

The author is an associate professor and the acting director of the Department of International Relations at the Institute of European Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:18 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:18 PM

BUSINESS

RETAIL

Walmart China vows tighter food safety grip

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn



A Walmart store in Yichang, Hubei province, on June 6. LIU JUNFENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Walmart China will significantly strengthen food safety and compliance controls, the retail giant said after China's top market regulator summoned its local membership retail arm Sam's Club China over repeated food safety violations.

The undertaking by Walmart China followed an official regulatory interview conducted by the State Administration for Market Regulation, which said it had uncovered food safety issues over an extended period across both Sam's Club physical stores and its e-commerce channels.

Regulators instructed Walmart China to strictly comply with China's food safety law as well as regulations governing chain retailers and online food sales operators, while strengthening supply chain oversight, risk control systems, and corporate accountability mechanisms to better safeguard consumer health.

In response, Walmart China said it "fully acknowledges, deeply reflects upon, and sincerely accepts" the regulator's instructions, adding that it has issued a formal apology to members for any inconvenience caused. The company said it has launched a senior management-led task force to conduct a full internal inspection and a rectification campaign spanning its operations.

Walmart China also pledged to reinforce food safety management across the entire value chain, enhance end-to-end quality control systems, and ensure strict compliance with all applicable laws and regulatory requirements. It further stated it would regularly report progress to authorities and "willingly accept public supervision", signaling a commitment to increased regulatory transparency.

67
number of Sam's Club stores in China

The regulatory intervention comes amid a series of reported food safety incidents linked to Sam's Club China. Among the widely reported cases, a consumer in Wuhan, Hubei province, alleged that Thai coconuts purchased at Sam's Club showed purplish flesh and cloudy coconut water. The consumer suspected improper storage conditions or product deterioration.

Data from Black Cat, a consumer complaint platform under Sina, show that the retailer has so far accumulated about as many as 15,000 consumer complaints, with a significant proportion related to food safety and product quality issues.

Recently, sales of near-expiry food products both in-store and online at Sam's Club sparked public outcry. Consumers reported receiving vegetable salads via Sam's Club delivery that had fewer than 24 hours remaining before expiration. At the time, customer service responded: "If you do not wish to receive near-expiry items, you need to leave a note in your order saying 'No near-expiry products'."

The brand has also faced criticism over its shifting product strategy. Last year, consumers questioned the introduction of mass-market snack products such as Orion pies and Panpan walnut vanilla puffs — items widely available in ordinary supermarkets — arguing that they were inconsistent with Sam's Club's positioning as a premium, curated membership retailer.

Even so, Sam's Club remains a key growth driver for Walmart China as the company continues expanding its membership retail model in the country.

The membership warehouse chain has opened 10 new stores over the past year and plans at least 14 additional locations in 2026. As of April 30, Walmart operated 278 Walmart stores in China, while Sam's Club had expanded to 67 stores.

According to the China Chain Store and Franchise Association, Walmart China reported sales of 195.86 billion yuan ($28.9 billion) in 2025, achieving sustained double-digit revenue growth. Sam's Club China also saw strong performance last year, with full-year sales surpassing 140 billion yuan and a paid membership base exceeding 10 million for the first time.

But despite strong growth, Sam's Club China has faced increasing scrutiny over its ability to maintain consistent product quality amid rapid expansion. Some posts on social media platform RedNote have also involved speculation over food safety concerns after last year's change of senior management roles.

Jason Yu, general manager at CTR Market Research, said that attributing recent issues solely to leadership changes or corporate restructuring is overly simplistic.

Yu said: "For a retail enterprise, the root cause invariably lies in the comprehensiveness of its end-to-end quality control system.

"The more stores it opens, the harder it becomes to rely exclusively on niche, small-batch production regions or a single tier of premium suppliers to meet nationwide demand."

Exports show sustained signs of resilience

Overseas sales of Chinese ICs surged to record $35.55 bln in May, top category

By **WANG KEJU**
wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn

With industrial production maintaining steady growth in May, China's exports continued to show strength, underscoring the role of manufacturing capabilities and external demand as key pillars of economic stabilization, economists said.

However, they cautioned that consumption showed signs of slowing for the world's second-largest economy, pointing to persistent pressure on domestic demand recovery, a trend that will require more forceful policy support.

Their comments came as fresh data showing that China's value-added industrial output — which is used to measure the activity of large enterprises with annual main business turnover of at least 20 million yuan ($2.94 million) — grew 4.5 percent year-on-year in May.

In particular, high-tech manufacturing, covering sectors such as computers and electronic equipment, led the nation's industrial production last month, surging 15.1 percent year-on-year and accelerating by 2.3 percentage points from the previous month.

Output of integrated circuits jumped 22.9 percent year-on-year to 49.6 billion units in May, while industrial robot output climbed 27.9 percent to 101,150 units.

"China's move up the manufacturing value chain, coupled with a global artificial intelligence investment boom, continues to boost exports of high-tech goods," said Feng Lin, executive director of research at Orient Golden Credit Rating International.

Feng said China's exports of ICs surged to a record $35.55 billion in May, overtaking all other categories to become the country's largest single export, while automatic data processing equipment and components also posted strong gains, with these exports reaching $26.89 billion in May, up 66.1 percent year-on-year.

"Global AI investment enthusiasm has further intensified, with chips, computer components and electronic component prices continuing to rise, strengthening their pull on China's export value," she added.

Guan Tao, global chief economist at BOCI China, said China's export edge — especially in high-tech goods — will be a key stabilizer for growth in the second half.

In sharp contrast to the industrial and export strength, domestic retail sales of consumer goods, a key indicator of the country's consumption strength, fell 0.6 percent year-on-year in May, marking the first monthly decline since late 2022 and signaling weakness in household consumption, experts said.

Wen Bin, chief economist at China Minsheng Bank, attributed the contraction to multiple factors, including the diminishing impact of trade-in subsidy programs and a cautious consumer outlook.

"The marginal effect of the trade-in policy is fading. Earlier rounds of subsidies have already pulled forward demand for cars, home appliances and consumer electronics, and the current subsidy scale and rates are both lower than last year," Wen said.

The weakness in consumption was mirrored in the credit data. Household loans fell by 141.2 billion yuan in May, the second consecutive monthly decline, said the People's Bank of China — the country's central bank. Short-term household loans, a proxy for consumer credit, dropped by 84 billion yuan.

The retail sales decline was driven largely by weakness in goods consumption. However, services retail sales continued to grow, rising 5.4 percent year-on-year in the first five months, highlighting a structural shift in consumer preference toward experiences over goods.

Looking ahead, Wen expects the government to maintain supportive policies for consumption, including targeted subsidies for services, income growth initiatives and expanded social safety nets.

Rebuilding consumer confidence will take time as households continue to repair balance sheets and remain cautious about income and employment prospects, he added.

Retail MNC seen recalibrating Beijing store presence

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**

Walmart is reported to be planning a recalibration of its physical retail presence in Beijing through the introduction of a new generation of smaller-format stores, signaling a strategic shift in response to the country's rapidly evolving retail landscape.

The step will mark a significant development as Walmart has, for some years, refrained from prioritizing the Beijing market.

Walmart's physical footprint in Beijing has contracted significantly in recent years. Data indicate the company currently operates five stores in the city. Since entering China in 1996, the company has faced sustained pressure from the rise of e-commerce and the expansion of discount and community-based retail formats, which have eroded the competitiveness of traditional big-box stores.

However, according to staff at BHG Mall in Changping district, a Walmart supermarket is undergoing renovation at the site of a former BHG grocery store, which closed at the end of May. While the final format has not yet been officially disclosed, the store is expected to open in the coming months. Personnel at the BHG Mall in Shunyi district said its underground supermarket space was handed over to Walmart for redevelopment following closure on May 26, with the opening timeline yet to be announced. Walmart China did not comment on the new development.

Walmart's strategy is increasingly centered on smaller, more localized store formats. In early 2025, the company launched a community store pilot in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, covering about 500 square meters and offering around 2,000 product items or stock-keeping units (SKUs) focused on daily essentials.

A more significant milestone came in April 2026, when Walmart reopened its renovated outlet in Chengdu, Sichuan province, as a "New Generation Store". The nearly 3,000 sq m outlet carries around 10,000 SKUs, emphasizing fresh food and private-label products under the Marketside brand. Walmart has indicated this format will serve as a blueprint for broader nationwide upgrades, with more than 100 stores expected to be renovated or newly opened within the year.

Jason Yu, general manager at CTR Market Research, said Walmart's return to Beijing should not be interpreted as a revival of the traditional hypermarket model, but rather as part of a broader restructuring toward compact, high-efficiency stores.

He said that the new openings align closely with the "New Generation Store" format, positioned to compete with operators such as Hema and Dingdong Maicai. "This is not a return of the 10,000-square-meter hypermarket," Yu said, adding that Walmart is effectively transferring operational practices from Sam's Club into its core supermarket business.

Yu said that Sam's Club's robust performance in China provides financial support for Walmart's restructuring efforts, enabling the company to close underperforming locations while investing in upgraded formats. The Marketside private label, he added, mirrors the value proposition, leveraging centralized sourcing and supply chain efficiency.

At the same time, industry consolidation — driven by the withdrawal of Carrefour, the financial difficulties of Yonghui and the acquisition of RT-Mart — has released prime retail locations, allowing Walmart to selectively reenter high-traffic urban areas, Yu said.

However, whether Walmart can reverse its broader operational decline will depend on the performance of these new formats over the next 12 to 24 months, Yu added.

Cross-river conduit


A recent aerial photo shows the construction site of a major railway bridge along the Yancheng-Yixing High-speed Railway in Yancheng, Jiangsu province. Stretching some 311 kilometers, the HSR — partially built by China Railway 24th Bureau Group — has 10 stations along the line, serving as a new rapid Yangtze River-crossing channel, supporting the high-quality integrated development of the delta region. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Pumped-storage hydropower to level up

By **ZHENG XIN**
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

China's pumped-storage hydroelectricity industry is gearing up for opportunities during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, serving as a critical engine for the nation's green transition and long-term energy security, said experts.

During the next five years, the country expects to see some 100 million kilowatts of new pumped-storage capacity become operational, with an average annual rollout exceeding 20 million kW, placing the industry at a new high, they said.

"Pumped-storage is to play an increasingly irreplaceable role in expanding the scale and quality of new energy, ensuring the safe and stable operation of the power system," said Zhao Zenghai, deputy head of the China Renewable Energy Engineering Institute.

Zhao said he believes that compared with the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period, the sector's development scale is expected to experience a rapid leap.

The 100 million kW of newly commissioned capacity is roughly 1.5 times the nation's total cumulative capacity at the end of 2025, with China's total operational pumped-storage capacity projected to reach around 160 million kW by 2030, he said.

Concurrently, the country will actively and systematically advance the construction of approved projects, striving to meet the power system's demand for 400 million kW of flexible capacity by 2035.

These insights were highlighted in the Pumped-Storage Industry Development Report 2025, recently released by the institute in Beijing.

The report noted a highly optimized spatial layout for the coming years. While projects during the 14th Five-Year Plan were heavily concentrated in eastern load centers to address peak-shaving demand in developed areas, the 15th Five-Year Plan will foster a new pattern of coordinated development between eastern load centers and new energy-rich regions in central and western China.

"While closer synergy with new energy will effectively smooth output fluctuations and substantially boost the utilization and consumption of renewables, it will also provide vital regulatory support for cross-provincial power transmission from new energy mega-bases, significantly enhancing the efficiency of transmission corridors," said Zhao.

Ye Xiaoning, a senior engineer at the State Grid Energy Research Institute, said pumped-storage power stations are expected to further solidify their role in system regulation in the years to come.

"In addition to leveraging their peak-shaving and valley-filling capabilities to rapidly respond to grid demands in the central and eastern regions, they will also be serving as vital regulatory support for outbound power transmission in the new energy-rich western and northern regions, effectively smoothing out wind and solar fluctuations and boosting the utilization of new energy," Ye said.

Pumped-storage power stations have been playing a powerful regulatory role within the power system, boasting outstanding peak-shaving and valley-filling capabilities, he added.

Capable of rapidly responding to grid regulation demands, smoothing out the volatility of wind and solar power generation, and effectively enhancing the integration and utilization of new energy, the industry has transitioned from mere scale expansion to prioritizing both scale and quality in recent years, placing greater emphasis on economic viability, safety and ecological friendliness, Ye said.

Technological innovation is also taking center stage. According to the institute, the next five years will see breakthroughs in large variable-speed units and stable operations under wide load ranges, alongside the widespread application of digital and smart technologies across the industrial chain to better meet the flexible regulation needs of a modern power system.

The robust momentum in China's new energy sector aligns seamlessly with its global leadership, said Francesco La Camera, director-general of the International Renewable Energy Agency.

A main driver of the global renewable capacity additions in 2025, which hit a record 692 gigawatts, China accounts for over 60 percent of global capacity additions, playing a leading role across the board in electric vehicles, energy storage deployment and grid investment, he said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:18 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:18 PM

BUSINESS

First national urban renewal plan unveiled

Some 15 trillion yuan in investment expected during 15th Five-Year Plan

By **WANG KEJU**
wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn

China has unveiled its first national-level urban renewal plan, with market watchers expecting about 15 trillion yuan ($2.1 trillion) in investment during the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30), as the government seeks to modernize aging infrastructure, upgrade residential areas and boost domestic demand, experts said.

The plan, released in May by the State Council — the nation's Cabinet — is the first national-level guideline for urban renewal and the first sector-specific plan to be implemented following the release of the broader five-year blueprint.

It outlines quantitative targets, including the renovation of 500,000 dilapidated urban residential units, 115,000 aging residential communities, 1,500 outdated industrial districts and factory zones, 4,000 urban villages and 365,000 kilometers of underground pipeline upgrades by 2030.

In this context, China is expected to invest at least 15 trillion yuan in urban renewal projects during the 15th Five-Year Plan period, averaging 3 trillion yuan annually, said a research note by Huachuang Securities.

That would be slightly higher than the 2.6 trillion yuan and 2.9 trillion yuan invested in 2023 and 2024, respectively, said the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development. The ministry said that in each of those years, about 60,000 urban renewal projects were completed nationwide.

Zheng Degao, vice-president of the China Academy of Urban Planning and Design, said that the targets were set based on "physical examinations" of cities and surveys of residents' needs.

For example, the renovation of aging residential communities will focus on those built 20 years or more ago, with flexible scope determined through special assessments, Zheng said.

A key challenge in urban renewal has been financing, and to this end, the plan identifies three sources of funding: fiscal funds, financial institutions and private capital.

Tang Daizhong, deputy director of the Department of Construction Management and Real Estate at Tongji University, said each funding source bears different risks, responsibilities and return expectations, and they must work in tandem.

Fiscal funds serve as a safety net, Tang said, adding: "Public money plays a foundational and guarantee role, but it can also act as equity to attract financial capital from banks and policy lenders."

He said that in a typical project, fiscal funds might cover 20 percent of the investment, with financial institutions providing the remaining 80 percent, leveraging public money to multiply total spending.

Financial capital also helps solve timing mismatches. Urban renewal projects often have long payback periods, while investors seek quicker returns.

"Long-term financial funds can extend repayment schedules so that future cash flows can cover the investment," Tang said, adding that private sector participation is best suited for operations.

"Some comprehensive developers and operators can use their funds to run projects and rely on future operating profits to cover initial investments," he added.

The central government has selected 15 cities to receive central fiscal support for urban renewal projects in 2026, marking the third consecutive year of a dedicated funding program that has already channeled more than 20 billion yuan to 20 cities, including Shanghai and Beijing.

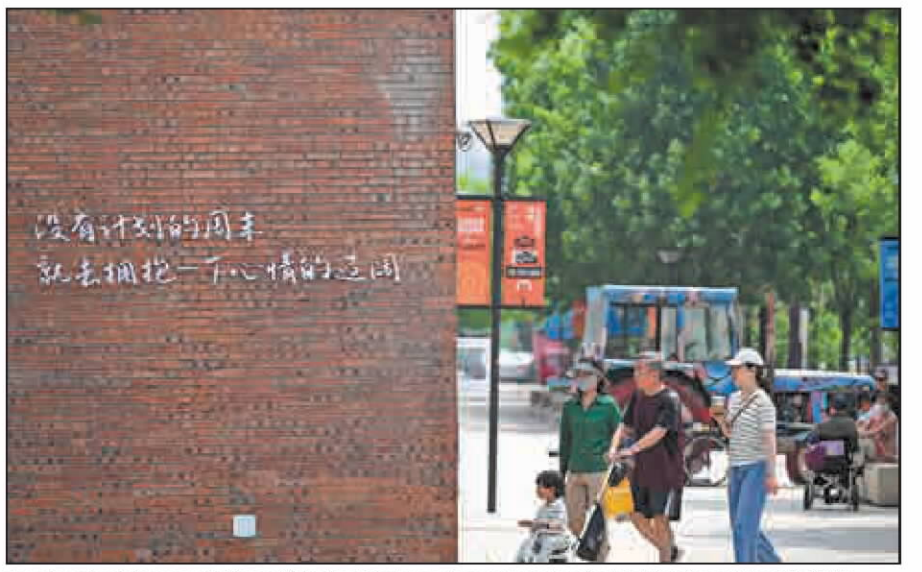
Beyond direct fiscal transfers, the State Council has also permitted local governments to issue special-purpose bonds to finance eligible urban renewal projects.

The China Index Academy said special-purpose bond issuances for urban renewal work across the country exceeded 350 billion yuan in 2025, a modest 2 percent increase from the previous year, accounting for 7.6 percent of total new special-purpose bonds.

That said, the nature of special-purpose bonds — requiring projects to generate enough revenue to repay principal and interest — means they cannot be used indiscriminately for public welfare initiatives like aging community renovations and underground pipeline upgrades, which produce little or no direct cash flow, experts cautioned.



A worker builds a public facility in a residential community as part of an urban renewal project in Tianjin on May 28, 2025. SUN FANYUE / XINHUA



Locals enjoy leisure activities within the Tiantuo urban renewal project in Tianjin on May 30, 2025. SUN FANYUE / XINHUA

> "Special bonds should play more of an equity role, not a blanket bailout ... When a project can achieve cash flow balance with special-purpose bonds covering about 20 percent of the investment, it can proceed."
>
> **Dong Yu,** executive vice-president of Tsinghua University's China Institute for Development Planning

"Special bonds should play more of an equity role, not a blanket bailout," said Dong Yu, executive vice-president of Tsinghua University's China Institute for Development Planning. "When a project can achieve cash flow balance with special-purpose bonds covering about 20 percent of the investment, it can proceed."

For purely public welfare projects that generate no revenue, Dong suggested drawing the project boundary wider to include some revenue-producing components.

"Planners can make the area larger, incorporating parts that can yield quality cash flow. Once you form a larger asset package, the whole thing becomes able to finance."

This bundling approach has been used in some large-scale redevelopment zones, where residential renovation is paired with commercial space, parking or community services that generate ongoing income.

Attracting private capital requires more than just profit potential, experts said, stressing the importance of contract enforcement and clear exit mechanisms.

"Legal protections for contracts are crucial to eliminate uncertainty and risk during private capital entry and development," said Zhao Yanjing, a professor specializing in urban economics at Xiamen University, adding that equally important is having financial tools for exit.

China has been expanding its real estate investment trust market, and urban renewal plans explicitly encourage the use of REITs and asset-backed securities for eligible projects. These instruments allow private investors to liquidate their stakes after projects become operational, reducing lock-in risks.

Policies deliver uptick in property sales, prices

By **WANG KEJU**

The traditional spring home-buying season, which typically peaks in March and April, stretched into May this year as policy support and targeted demand in first-tier cities drove a notable pickup in sales, helping to restore market expectations, experts said.

Data from the China Index Academy show that total new home sales of the country's top 100 real estate firms reached 1.23 trillion yuan ($181.89 billion) in the first five months, with the year-on-year decline narrowing for the third consecutive month.

In May alone, sales by those developers stood at 328.78 billion yuan, up 17.6 percent from April, according to the academy.

China's new home sales steadied in May, driven by a pickup in larger cities, even as the national market remained largely flat, market watchers said.

The 50 major cities tracked by real estate information provider CRIC recorded 13.62 million square meters of new home transactions in May, up 2 percent from April and just 2 percent lower than a year earlier.

The resilience came largely from larger cities. Combined transactions in Beijing and Shanghai, as well as Guangzhou and Shenzhen in Guangdong province, totaled 2.15 million square meters in May, an 11 percent month-on-month increase and a 6 percent year-on-year gain, according to CRIC.

The cumulative January-May sales in these four top cities fell 12 percent from a year earlier, but marked an improvement from an 18 percent decline in the January-April period.

Historically, housing sales taper off in May after the March and April rush. "The typical post-peak cooldown didn't happen this year," said Yan Yuejin, deputy head of the Shanghai-based E-House China R&D Institute.

"Policy support, combined with the release of pent-up demand in core cities, provided a floor for the market in May," Yan added.

From January to May, provincial and city governments across China rolled out more than 430 property-related policies, according to the China Index Academy. The measures included easing purchase restrictions, adjusting provident fund rules, offering direct purchase subsidies and improving urban renewal guidelines.

A key part of the policy toolkit has been the expansion of trade-in programs, in which local governments or developers purchase old homes to help owners upgrade to new properties. By the end of May, more than 40 such programs had been launched nationwide.



A residential development project is under construction in Fuzhou, Fujian province, on April 17. ZHANG BIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

> The improvement in price signals, especially the moderation in secondary market declines, indicates that market expectations are slowly improving."
>
> **Chen Wenjing,** director of policy research at China Index Academy

Shanghai piloted a trade-in program in several districts in February and later expanded it to all of the city's central urban areas. Guangzhou also rolled out a similar initiative.

"These programs are effective in breaking the logjam," said Li Yujia, a researcher on residential property policy in Guangdong. "They provide liquidity to owners of old homes and create a more fluid market for new properties."

While new home sales in major Chinese cities showed unusual resilience in May, the secondary market also held steady, with transaction volumes in 20 key cities rising nearly 20 percent from a year earlier, according to data from the China Index Academy.

Beijing recorded about 16,000 second-hand home transactions in May, the highest for the month since 2021 and the third consecutive month above the 15,000-unit threshold that industry watchers consider the line between a sluggish and a stable market.

Shanghai, the country's largest second-home market by transaction volume, recorded 28,000 units in May — also a five-year high for the month. The city saw three separate days in May with more than 1,500 online contract signings, a pace that exceeded the daily average for most of the past year.

Price data in May add to a growing body of evidence that the prolonged property downturn may be showing signs of bottoming out in major cities.

The average price of new homes in 100 major cities rose 0.16 percent month-on-month to 17,156 yuan per square meter, and was up 2.03 percent from a year earlier. The monthly gain was driven largely by first-tier cities, where the launch of premium projects in prime locations pushed up the average, according to the China Index Academy.

In the secondary market, the average price of existing homes stood at 12,692 yuan per square meter, down 0.32 percent from April — the smallest month-on-month decline since mid-2024. The narrower drop suggests that seller sentiment and buyer demand are gradually finding a balance after more than two years of falling prices, the academy said.

"The improvement in price signals, especially the moderation in secondary market declines, indicates that market expectations are slowly improving," said Chen Wenjing, director of policy research at the academy.

However, the recovery remains uneven. While first-tier cities saw new home prices rise, many smaller cities still face downward pressure, Chen said, adding that the national secondary market as a whole remains in negative territory, even though the rate of decline has eased.

With mid-year financial reporting approaching, developers are expected to step up marketing, and the launch of new quality projects in core cities could support sustained improvement — at least in key urban hubs, Chen said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:18 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:18 PM

CHINA

Remembering wartime friendship



Students from the United States attending a youth camp of the Chinese Bridge visit the Memorial Hall to the Doolittle Raid in Quzhou, Zhejiang province, on Monday. The hall, established in 2018, commemorates Chinese citizens who aided and rescued US airmen after the Doolittle Raid. The 1942 bombing raid on Japanese cities, led by Lieutenant Colonel James Doolittle, was conducted to avenge Japan's surprise aerial attack on the US naval base at Pearl Harbor during World War II. The hall is a witness to the friendship between the Chinese and American peoples.
YANG MEIQING / FOR CHINA DAILY

Mass production of high-purity silicon-28 to boost tech sector

Breakthrough shows Chinese engineers closed a critical gap in industrial chain

By ZHAO LEI in Tianjin
zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese scientists have achieved a key technological breakthrough that is expected to advance the country's efforts in quantum computing and semiconductor development.

The Research Institute of Physical and Chemical Engineering of Nuclear Industry, a Tianjin-based subsidiary of China National Nuclear Corp, announced on Monday that it had mass-produced silicon-28 isotope with extremely high purity.

The product features an isotopic abundance exceeding 99.99 percent, ending China's reliance on imports for the material.

Han Liguo, a senior researcher leading the project, said natural silicon contains three isotopes — silicon-28, silicon-29 and silicon-30 — with silicon-28 accounting for 92.2 percent.

Characterized by zero nuclear spin, silicon-28 can significantly reduce environmental noise interference in quantum computing, earning it the title of "the purest silicon on Earth".

"By contrast, silicon-29, another stable isotope found in natural silicon, creates disturbances in quantum computing operations," Han said. "To minimize such interference, the isotopic abundance of silicon-28 must be raised above 99.99 percent."

According to the institute, only a handful of countries have mastered large-scale production of stable isotopes. As a result, China depended on imports for high-end stable isotope products, a situation that has constrained the development of related industries, affected security in key sectors and hindered independent progress in advanced equipment manufacturing, nuclear medical diagnostics and frontier scientific research.

Founded in 1964, the institute is China's leading research body specializing in isotope separation technology. In recent years, it has leveraged its expertise in nuclear technology to develop equipment and processes for the mass production of stable isotopes.

The institute said it has established a fully independent research and production system, ensuring a domestic supply of stable isotopes.

Han said high-purity silicon-28 is an ideal material for manufacturing silicon-based qubits. It significantly improves qubit coherence and control precision, providing critical material support for the research and development of silicon-based quantum computers.

The isotope can also be used in high-end semiconductors, she said, adding that semiconductor components made from silicon-28 offer improved thermal conductivity and performance stability, creating broad opportunities for use in advanced chip manufacturing.

Lei Zengguang, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering and an expert in nuclear materials and nuclear fuels, said stable isotope technology is a key component of the nuclear industry.

"It may appear to be a niche field, but it is an essential enabling technology for many critical sectors, including precision manufacturing, quantum technology, biomedicine, environmental monitoring and nuclear energy," Lei said.

"Gaining full independent control of core stable isotope separation technology has long been a shared goal for those of us working in the industry. In recent years, the Research Institute of Physical and Chemical Engineering of Nuclear Industry has achieved major breakthroughs, successfully isolating more than 20 important stable isotopes."

The new capability to mass-produce silicon-28 with an isotopic abundance above 99.99 percent means Chinese engineers have not only mastered the relevant technologies but have also closed a critical gap in the industrial chain, Lei said.

He said the achievement carries major implications for China's quantum technology and high-end chip industries.

Beyond those sectors, high-purity silicon-28 also has significant potential for applications in advanced medical treatment and space exploration, he added.

China-ROK cooperation bolsters fishery resources

By ZOU SHUO
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

China and the Republic of Korea carried out their seventh annual joint fish stock enhancement and release campaign in the Yellow Sea on Tuesday, releasing a total of 7.29 million juveniles of important commercial species into waters that have long sustained fishing communities in both countries.

The ROK released 4.29 million fry and juveniles of small yellow croaker, red seabream and swimming crab off Incheon, while China simultaneously released 3 million juveniles of greenfin horse-faced filefish, swimming crab and blackhead seabream off Yantai, Shandong province.

The campaign is based on a consensus reached at the 16th session of the bilateral fisheries joint committee in 2016. The event, which began in 2018, has released more than 18.75 million fry and juveniles into the Yellow Sea, contributing to the recovery of commercially valuable fish stocks, improvement of the marine ecosystem and higher incomes for fishermen from both countries, official data showed.

The cooperation is grounded in the China-ROK Fisheries Agreement signed in 2000. Over the years, the two sides have expanded collaboration in catch management, resource conservation, scientific research and joint law enforcement.



Workers release fry into the Yellow Sea during a joint fish stock enhancement and release campaign by China and the Republic of Korea in Yantai, Shandong province, on Tuesday.
XIAO SHUILIAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

China has released more than 67.7 billion fry and juveniles of various aquatic species into the Bohai and Yellow seas.

The Yellow Sea serves as a vital fishing ground for both countries, with many commercially important species showing distinct seasonal migration patterns, according to the Chinese Academy of Fishery Sciences' Yellow Sea Fisheries Research Institute.

Since 2010, China and the ROK have conducted joint fisheries resource surveys, typically four times a year on a quarterly basis, with each side carrying out two cruises. The surveys involve mutual vessel boardings and data sharing to monitor stock fluctuations and inform conservation decisions, the institute said.

These fish spawn, nurse and feed in the inshore waters of China's Bohai and Yellow seas during warmer months, then migrate toward the central and southern Yellow Sea for wintering as water temperatures drop, the institute said.

This migratory pattern, together with the long-established fishing practices of both countries, means that the sustainable management of Yellow Sea fisheries requires joint efforts, the institute added.

Qu Jiangbo, general manager of the Tianyuan Aquatic Products Co, said the company supplied greenfin horse-faced filefish for this year's release campaign. The fry and juveniles were produced using controlled temperature and water quality breeding techniques, using wild-caught, disease-free broodstock with high genetic diversity.

Before release, the juveniles undergo strict quarantine and drug residue testing. Only those passing tests for 11 prohibited substances receive official certification for release, Qu said.

The company has invested 130 million yuan ($19 million) in a live germplasm bank for marine fish in northern China, which is expected to be fully operational before this year-end to preserve and utilize fishery genetic resources, he said.

Fishermen have also witnessed tangible benefits. Cui Gang, a local fisherman for almost 20 years, said that over the past five to six years, he has seen larger catches of greenfin horse-faced filefish, with rare red seabream occasionally appearing.

"The proportion of small mixed fish has declined, while commercially valuable species are larger and yields have stabilized," Cui said.

On the joint China-ROK fish stock enhancement and release effort, Cui said, "The sea has no borders, and neither do fish. If both sides take good care of these waters, we fishermen will have a future."

Cybercrimes that used a Trojan virus solved

By YANG ZEKUN
yangzekun@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese police have cracked a series of cybercrime cases involving a new variant of the Silver Fox Trojan virus that has recently emerged in cyberspace, the Ministry of Public Security's cybersecurity bureau said on Tuesday.

The Trojan virus is highly deceptive and mainly targets employees of enterprises and public institutions, particularly finance personnel, the bureau said.

Once installed on a victim's computer, the malware can enable remote control, access account passwords, intercept short message service verification codes and obtain private data, it said.

According to the bureau, public security authorities have taken proactive action to investigate and crack down on such crimes.

In one case, police in Jilin province uncovered a criminal gang, led by a suspect surnamed Chen, that had developed a variant of the Silver Fox Trojan and used technical means to evade security detection.

The gang allegedly sent bulk phishing emails, stole corporate data and created fraud schemes to carry out criminal activities involving more than 7 million yuan ($1 million), police said.

Local police have taken criminal compulsory measures against Chen and 26 other suspects. The case is under further investigation.

Police warned the public to download software only from official websites and to carefully check domain names to avoid fake sites that use similar-looking characters, multiple hyphens or unofficial suffixes.

The public should also be cautious of links shared in chat groups under labels such as "meetings" or "subsidies" and verify them with the sender by phone or video call before opening them, police said. Any link requesting SMS verification codes or a bank card PIN should be treated with caution.

In the event of abnormal computer actions, including a mouse moving on its own or software automatically sending messages, users are advised to immediately disconnect the device from the internet, police said.

Users should also change passwords for social media and banking accounts on a secure device, notify friends, colleagues and clients that the account may have been compromised, and contact IT personnel or use professional antivirus software to conduct a full scan. Reinstalling the operating system may be necessary in serious cases, police added.

In line with China's Criminal Law, illegally intruding into computer information systems, stealing data or illegally controlling such systems can result in imprisonment, criminal detention and fines, depending on the severity of the offense. The law also punishes those who provide programs or tools for such illegal activities.

Festival treat



A keeper feeds a specially made *zongzi*, a traditional delicacy usually associated with Dragon Boat Festival, to an Asian elephant at the Qingdao forest wildlife world in Shandong province on Monday. Animals enjoyed custom-made treats ahead of the festival which will be celebrated on Friday this year.
YU FANGPING / FOR CHINA DAILY

Gene editing can treat rare inherited disease

By WANG XIAOYU
wangxiaoyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese researchers have reported the first clinical use of a domestically developed RNA-editing technology to treat Duchenne muscular dystrophy, or DMD, a severe inherited disease that causes progressive muscle loss. They also unveiled a significantly upgraded version of the platform that could broaden the future use of RNA-based therapies.

The research team, led by Wei Wensheng of Changping Laboratory and Peking University's School of Life Sciences, published its findings in two papers in the journal Cell on June 10.

The RNA-editing platform, called LEAPER — short for Leveraging Endogenous ADAR for Programmable Editing of RNA — was first developed in 2019. It works by directing naturally occurring enzymes in human cells to correct errors in RNA, the molecule that carries genetic instructions used to make proteins. The latest third-generation version of the technology has improved editing efficiency and accuracy, allowing researchers to target genetic sites that were previously difficult to modify.

"The biggest advantage of LEAPER is that it uses the body's own machinery and does not require the delivery of additional gene-editing enzymes," Wei said.

"This not only simplifies treatment delivery but also reduces the risk of immune reactions and other safety concerns, offering a new option for treating genetic diseases," he said.

Using the technology, the team developed a candidate drug for DMD, a rare inherited disorder that mainly affects boys. The disease causes worsening muscle weakness and often leads to death from respiratory or heart failure in early adulthood.

DMD is estimated to affect about 250,000 people worldwide, including around 70,000 in China, which has the largest patient population. Existing treatments can only slow the disease's progression.

Working with researchers from Kunming University of Science and Technology in Yunnan province, Shanghai Jiao Tong University and other institutions, the team administered the experimental therapy to three pediatric patients.

After a year, all three patients showed sustained improvements in motor function, including stronger respiratory muscles, an important measure of disease progression. No serious adverse events were reported.

"This marks the first time a domestically developed RNA-editing technology has been used in clinical treatment and produced positive results," the researchers said. "It is also the first time globally that RNA editing has been applied to the treatment of DMD."

Wei said gene therapies hold significant potential for treating rare inherited diseases as well as a wider range of medical conditions. His team plans to develop safer, more versatile and precisely controlled therapies to benefit more patients.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:18 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:18 PM

CHINA







Clockwise from left: Cao Qiuping checks a newly 3D-printed toy at a workshop in Beijing on May 28. Some cartoon character figurines created by Cao's studio. Toys created by artists at the studio who have some disabilities. PHOTOS BY ZHANG WEI / CHINA DAILY

Making toys and rebuilding lives

Workshop helps people with disabilities move from charity-dependent roles to market-driven employment

By LI LEI
lilei@chinadaily.com.cn

On a late morning in May, the high-pitched whine of 3D printers filled a small workshop in Beijing's Chaoyang district.

Cao Qiuping, a former Paralympian who uses a wheelchair, had arrived early and was sorting piles of brightly colored plastic toys — stress-relief ribbons, Minecraft-style blocks and cartoon character figurines.

The souvenirs were destined for a Children's Day event in the nearby Sanlitun neighborhood.

The team's real goal was not just to make the children smile. They planned to give the toys away for free, while asking recipients to scan and join a WeChat group to become potential future customers for the workshop's other 3D-printed products.

For Cao and her two able-bodied partners, each free trinket is a small bet on a brighter future — one in which workers with disabilities compete in China's creativity market on the basis of their skill, not sympathy.

Technology as a bridge

Cao runs the Sanlitun 3D Printing Digital Workshop for People with Disabilities, a venture that is barely a few months old. The idea is to use additive manufacturing to help people with disabilities — who often struggle for years to find steady jobs — become designers, producers or operators of small businesses.

This unique model that ensures people with disabilities get paid jobs in technology-driven industries has the support of charity groups and federations representing local people with disabilities.

The workshop has just delivered its first commercial order: 50 3D-printed blind boxes featuring the bear mascot of the Fairmont Beijing Hotel in Sanlitun. The boxes, which feature four seasonal designs and a hidden "hotel chef" figurine, were produced using about 30 printers donated to the Chaoyang district by CFDP-Leye — a social enterprise that helps people with disabilities gain employment — through the China Foundation for Disabled Persons.

Behind that milestone lies a story of reinvention, resilience and the hard work of turning high-tech tools into means of ensuring sustainable livelihoods.

Looking back

Cao, now 47, knows all about braving the odds. In 1997, when she was 18, she was in a car accident on her way to school that led to her two lower limbs being amputated. "I felt like I'd been thrown from the clouds to the ground," she recalled. "Before the accident, I had dreams like any other teenager."

Her father sawed off every doorstep in their rural Beijing home to ensure her wheelchair could move freely. But they had a squat toilet so her parents had to bodily lift her to the restroom and back daily.

Her luck changed in 2003, the year she discovered wheelchair basketball. A coach spotted her at a local sports event, remarked it was terrible for someone so young to be so badly injured and asked for her contact details.

That chance encounter led to her finding a place on the Beijing women's wheelchair basketball team. By 2005, she was winning national championships.

In 2008, she went on to compete in the Beijing Paralympics.

"For the first time, I wasn't alone anymore," Cao said. "I met other people who use wheelchairs. I realized I wasn't the only one. It felt like coming back to life."

After the Games, Cao met her future husband, from the United States. They married, settled in Beijing and had two children. For more than a decade, she focused on raising her family. But as her children grew older, she began feeling left out. "When you stay home for years, you lose touch with the world," she said. "At first, I thought it was because of my disability. But later I realized anyone who stays home for too long feels disconnected."



Some 3D printed models based on traditional Chinese architecture and Terracotta Warriors on display at the studio in Beijing.
ZHANG WEI / CHINA DAILY

Enter the 3D printer

Her way back to normal life was enabled by a strange gadget: a 3D printer.

Earlier this year, Cao visited Warm Home — a local community service center for residents with disabilities — and noticed the 3D printer. It had been donated as part of a technology empowerment initiative.

"I thought 3D printing was very high-tech, not for someone like me," she said. But with some training from CFDP-Leye, which had donated the machine, she began to learn the basics. "I realized it wasn't as difficult as I'd imagined."

Li Changsen, a technical trainer from CFDP-Leye who now works with Cao's team, said people with disabilities show exceptional focus when it comes to learning. "What I noticed is that they concentrate," he said. "They don't give up after just two days, like some able-bodied people might."

Cao had an idea which she shared with the Sanlitun subdistrict disabled persons' federation. Its chairperson, Zhang Xuechao, gave her the green light. A workshop was born this March.

Its core team comprises Cao; Wang Jing, a Tianjin Academy of Fine Arts graduate and mother of two; and Shen Liang, a programmer-turned-entrepreneur who volunteers as the workshop's technology strategist. Li Changsen provides technical support.

First order

Their first real test came sooner than expected. The Fairmont Beijing Hotel placed an order for 50 blind boxes featuring its bear mascot. The order was small — worth only about 1,500 yuan ($221.74) — but the stakes felt enormous.

"We spent around 80 hours on just the design," said Wang, who met Cao years ago through their children, who were classmates. "Turning a flat mascot into a 3D-printed figure was completely new. We had to revise it again and again."

Li Siwei, a 38-year-old technician, was among the first apprentices at Li Changsen's training sessions last July and one of the program's best graduates. A former soldier, Li was injured in a car accident in 2016 that left him with spinal injuries. "I'd heard about 3D printing for years but never had the chance to try it," he said. "Now, sometimes when certain things break down at home, I just design and print a replacement."

While Li Siwei did not himself work on the Fairmont blind boxes, he helped the team with other custom designs.

For the Fairmont project, the complex modeling was handled by Li Changsen while the core team focused on design iteration, assembly and post-processing. Because they were still learning advanced 3D modeling, they relied on Li Changsen to refine the digital files and ensure the bear mascot could be printed as separate pieces that could be assembled.

Shen said the Fairmont order proved a point. "That order barely covered the cost of materials," he said. "But it showed we could deliver professional-quality work. The hotel said the final product exceeded their expectations of what 3D printing could achieve."

Profitability

Despite the early success, the workshop is far from profitable.

"We're compromising on profit to build a reputation first," Cao said. "The Fairmont order covered the cost of raw materials, but that's it. No labor. No design fees. We're paying for credibility."

The team's business model is still taking shape. They have received small orders — toys for a weekend market and customized figurines for a piano teacher's students — but nothing steady. "Most people don't even know we exist," Cao said.

Technical dependence is a major challenge. While the workshop's members have mastered basic printing, complex modeling still requires outside help from Li Changsen.

"Our goal is to become independent," Shen said. "We want to train our people to become teachers. Li Siwei could be one of them."

Neighborhood strategy

Late last month, the team was preparing for a Children's Day event. Their plan was to print small toys and give them away to children and parents who scanned a QR code to join a WeChat group.

"It's about building a community," Shen said. "Once people are in our group, they'll know we exist. Maybe next time they need a custom-made gift, they'll think of us."

The strategy reflects a broader shift in Chinese cities: using training and technology to move people with disabilities from charity-dependent roles into market-driven employment.

"We don't want sympathy," Cao said. "We want equal opportunities. If a customer has a choice between us and an able-bodied competitor, we want them to choose us, not because they feel sorry for us, but because our quality is better."

For Cao, the immediate goal is modest: keep the printers running, find the next order and prove her team can survive on its own.

Small orders continue to trickle in, and Cao welcomes each one. "The orders are small, but they haven't stopped," she said. "They're still coming. We're always working on something. I'm not afraid of small orders — I'm only afraid of having none at all."







Left: Cao Qiuping discusses design details with Li Changsen, an able-bodied team member who provides technical support, at the workshop in Beijing. **Middle:** Wang Jing, a Tianjin Academy of Fine Arts graduate and mother of two, works on 3D modeling on her laptop at the workshop. **Right:** Wang exchanges ideas on the designing of toys with technician Li Siwei at the workshop. PHOTOS BY ZHANG WEI / CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:18 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:18 PM

Z WEEKLY

All about Gen Z

Z WEEKLY

What is the hundred-bird coat?

If you have the chance to visit a Miao village during festivals or marriage ceremonies, you will be amazed by the diverse and vibrant costumes and silver jewelry worn by Miao women.

Among the traditional costumes of different branches of the Miao ethnic group, the hundred-bird coat stands out as one of the most symbolic and visually distinctive.

Known for its vibrant colors, layered patterns and complex embroidery techniques, it is widely regarded as a concentrated expression of Miao cultural heritage — sometimes described as an "ethnic epic" woven into fabric that carries memory and identity.

The garment is traditionally made using Miao embroidery, a craft passed down through generations. Each coat can take months to complete, as artisans stitch detailed motifs based on memory, imagination and inherited visual language.

Historically, the hundred-bird coat was worn during important ceremonies to honor ancestors and mark significant life events. Over time, it has also become a form of festive attire, still closely associated with celebration and cultural continuity.

Besides patterns like frogs, butterflies and insects, a single garment may feature hundreds of bird-inspired motifs, including stylized or mythical forms such as "bird dragons" and feather decorations that contribute to its name.

These layered designs are not merely decorative; they reflect stories, beliefs, and symbolic connections between nature, ancestry, and identity within Miao culture.

Village runway redefines fashion

A grassroots stage turns craftsmanship and ethnic heritage into expression of cultural confidence.

By **WANG XINGWEI**
wangxingwei@i21st.cn

Fashion is often defined by global runways, luxury houses and seasonal trends. But in the mountains of Southwest China's Guizhou province, a different vision is taking shape — one rooted not in exclusivity, but in craftsmanship and community.

For designer Yang Chunlin, better known online as Gu Axin, fashion is not something imported from Paris, Milan, London or New York, but something that grows out of local ethnic culture.

"Our rural everyday life, in fact, represents the pinnacle of Eastern aesthetics on the international stage," he said.

That belief sits at the heart of "Village T", or "Village Runway", a grassroots fashion initiative Yang launched two years ago.

It began as a small, improvised runway in an open field, where a ridge of farmland became the catwalk and villagers stepped naturally into the role of models.

As the project expanded, it later moved into larger cultural spaces, eventually appearing on national platforms such as the 2026 Spring Festival Gala. It has also participated in international cultural exchange events, including the Foire de Paris (Paris Fair) in France.

"There were no resources, no team, no experience, and many voices of doubt," Yang recalled the early days.

He said many locals initially believed fashion had nothing to do with them. "People in the mountains have rich culture and craftsmanship, but we often lack confidence and underestimate what we're capable of," he added.

For Yang, that perception gap was precisely why the project mattered — to create a stage for people from his hometown to be seen on their own terms.

What followed was not a conventional fashion production, but a collective act of creation. Elders, embroiderers and young villagers all contributed what they could — clothing, labor, and traditional craft knowledge — turning the early shows into a shared expression rather than a rehearsed presentation.

"There are no professional models, scripts, or staged performances," Yang said. For him, that is where the magic lies: its authenticity.

As "Village T" grew, it became a platform for showcasing Guizhou's intangible cultural heritage, particularly Miao embroidery and Dong brocade.

Miao embroidery, known for its freehand technique and rich symbolism, is often described as a form of visual storytelling. Its patterns carry ancestral memory, mythology and identity.

Among the garments featured in the show, one piece holds special meaning for Yang: a Miao embroidered jacket transformed from a traditional "hundred-bird coat", a ceremonial Miao garment. But Yang's decision to reshape it into a modern silhouette sparked local debate.

"Many people didn't understand and felt distressed, saying I was destroying an antique," he recalled.

For him, however, the transformation was never about erasing tradition, but about extending its life. "In its modern design, the new jacket fully retained all the hand embroidery and cultural totems of the original garment," Yang explained.

More broadly, his philosophy is that heritage must evolve to survive. Traditional craft, he argues, should not remain frozen in museums or confined to ceremonial contexts, but should continue to live through contemporary expression.

"When the showcase is presented abroad, the biggest reaction from foreign audiences is sheer amazement," Yang said.

During the Foire de Paris, Yang met a foreign designer who was deeply moved by the craftsmanship on display. "This isn't just clothing — it's a living art form, a culture with a soul," she said.

According to Yang, for many visitors, the most striking realization is that some ethnic groups preserve history not through written language, but through textile traditions, where embroidery itself serves as a living record of identity and memory.

A changing village

Today, "Village T" has become more than a fashion showcase. It has reshaped local life.

"More and more young people are willing to return home to start businesses, and the works of senior embroiderers have found new markets and increased in value," said Yang.

Tourism has grown, and traditional craftsmanship has regained cultural relevance. But perhaps its most lasting impact is less visible: a shift in how younger generations see themselves and their place in the world.

Children who once felt distant from global stages now find them within reach.

Six-year-old Yang Jiayu from the Yao ethnic group has already visited major cities and appeared at international events. "I've been to Beijing, Shanghai and to the New York Fashion Week with 'Village T'," she said.

Her peer, 11-year-old Zhou Yumo from the Dong ethnic group, describes how tradition is embedded in her clothing. "My aunt made this outfit for me by hand. It has a lot of silver ornaments that jingle when I walk," she said.

For 9-year-old Xu Kexin from the Bouyei ethnic group, the experience has also shaped her aspirations.

"When I grow up, I want to carry on the traditions of my people and become a cultural ambassador," she said.



Yang Chunlin (top) and people of all ages wearing traditional ethnic costumes taking part in "Village T" in Guizhou province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

LIANG GUOXIU / CHINA DAILY

Online
Watch the video by scanning the code.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:18 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:18 PM

Podcasters explore hidden Xiapu

Through long-form conversations, podcasters turn Xiapu's local culture into stories that can travel across languages and borders.

By **GUO JIATONG**
guojiatong@i21st.cn

When Indonesian podcaster Rizky Ardi Nugroho arrived in Xiapu county, Fujian province, he expected to find the coastal scenery and distinctive sea erosion landforms that have made the area a favorite destination for photographers.

But during his three-day field trip, Nugroho discovered that Xiapu had much more to offer than picturesque landscapes. He was captivated by its maritime traditions, rich cultural heritage and vibrant community life.

"If you say Xiapu is a small county, I don't think so," he said. "The urban planning is very good, the city is very clean, and the people are very polite. It was beyond my expectations."

The creator of the Indonesian podcast *Do You See What I See* was among a group of domestic and international podcasters invited to a Xiapu field trip as part of the Second Gen Z International Podcast Festival from June 10 to 12. Nugroho's experience was exactly the kind of encounter the event hoped to create.

Themed "Xiapu: Where Mountains Meet the Sea", the festival aimed to encourage multilingual content creation through field visits and cultural exchanges, bringing together podcasters, communication professionals and young creators.

For nearly eight years, Nugroho has built a following through stories that bridge China and Indonesia, exploring culture, folklore and local traditions for Indonesian audiences.

During the trip, he was drawn not only to the county's natural views, but also to its efforts to preserve traditional culture, including wedding ceremonies, bamboo-stick dances, martial arts performances and historical artifacts.

One of his most memorable discoveries was the connection he saw between Xiapu and his homeland.

"As an archipelagic nation, Indonesia shares a long maritime tradition with China's southeastern coast. We share similar conditions in agriculture," he said.

Nugroho's discoveries, experts say, reflect a broader shift in international communication — from abstract national narratives to concrete local experiences.

"When storytelling reaches counties and smaller communities with distinctive local characteristics, it becomes more vivid and helps present a more comprehensive, authentic and multidimensional picture of China," said Zhang Yanqiu, deputy dean of the Institute for a Community with Shared Future at the Communication University of China.

She said podcasts are particularly suited to this kind of storytelling because they allow for sustained discussion and more focused exploration.

"If people want a deeper understanding of a topic, short videos are often not enough," she said. "Podcasts provide a more immersive experience and enable more precise communication."

This search for depth shaped the way many creators explored Xiapu.



Podcasters record a program in Dongbi village, Xiapu county, Fujian province. ZHANG XIAOYU / FOR CHINA DAILY



"As an archipelagic nation, Indonesia shares a long maritime tradition with China's southeastern coast. We share similar conditions in agriculture."

Rizky Ardi Nugroho, creator of the podcast *Do You See What I See*



"Long conversations force you to be more honest. After talking for an hour, you can't really hide behind a version of yourself."

Shanshan (pseudonym), one of the hosts of the podcast *Bye-Bye-Work*



"When people travel after listening to my podcast, I hope the landscapes they see come with 'subtitles'. There are stories behind them."

Yang Guowei, creator of the podcast *Grand Traveler: Humanistic Travel Audio Journal*

Finding deeper voices

Yang Guowei, creator of the travel podcast *Grand Traveler: Humanistic Travel Audio Journal*, has long documented destinations through history, geography and local culture.

In Xiapu, he spoke with a local seaweed farmer to better understand one of the county's pillar industries.

From the farmer, Yang learned that seaweed production runs from seedling cultivation in autumn to harvesting in spring. In the past, without machinery, workers had to rely entirely on manual labor to pull heavy seaweed from the ocean. The seaweed fields, arranged like rows of crops, required immense physical effort to harvest.

Although modern machinery has eased part of the burden, tasks such as drying the seaweed still require significant manual labor.

"After learning about the process, I realized how much effort goes into something we often take for granted," Yang said. "When people travel after listening to my podcast, I hope the landscapes they see come with 'subtitles'. There are stories behind them."

If Yang found hidden labor behind Xiapu's seascapes, other podcasters found emotional ties behind its cultural traditions.

Podcast hosts Zhang Erda and Shanshan (both pseudonyms), are known for discussing the thoughts and emotions of young urbanites on their podcast *Bye-Bye-Work*.

During their visit to Banyueli, an ancient village of the She ethnic group in Xiapu, they began reflecting on why some people remain so deeply connected to their places of origin.

One person who left a lasting impression was Lei Qisong, a local cultural inheritor and founder of a museum dedicated to preserving She culture.

Lei has invested his own money in the museum, collecting artifacts ranging from wood carvings and traditional costumes to furniture and objects used in She wedding customs. Together with his family, he has devoted himself to preserving and passing on local culture.

"People here genuinely love where they live. They identify with their culture, appreciate it and believe it is worth sharing with others. That kind of confidence is very contagious," Zhang Erda said.

That emotional and spiritual resonance is something Zhang Erda and Shanshan hope to convey to their listeners.

To them, the spirit of a place can be infectious, and it is this intangible quality that they want to capture through their podcast.

"They remind us of who we truly are," Zhang Erda said. "In cities, we often maintain boundaries and keep our distance, but in places like this, people are more open and eager to share their passions. This openness fosters genuine connections."

Making stories travel

For Zhang Erda and Shanshan, the trip is likely to become part of a future podcast episode.

Rather than simply recounting what they saw in Xiapu, they hope to use the journey as a starting point for broader discussions about travel, identity and the ways people connect with places.

"We usually focus on the thoughts and emotions of young people living in cities," Zhang Erda said. "A trip like this gives us an opportunity to connect personal experiences to larger themes that more people can relate to."

For Shanshan, podcasting is also rewarding for the host.

"Long conversations force you to be more honest. After talking for an hour, you can't really hide behind a version of yourself. You begin to understand yourself better, and listeners have time to think alongside you," she said.

According to Zhang Yanqiu, podcasts and other forms of "soft communication" can help local stories reach wider audiences. But turning those stories into effective international communication still requires precision, focus and continued exploration.

She said broader national narratives are ultimately built through specific, lived experiences rather than abstract concepts.

"When you travel and see different places, you begin to understand China in a more concrete way," she said.



Podcast creators pose for a group photo on Xiawei Island in Xiapu county, Fujian province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:18 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:18 PM

Z WEEKLY

Ceramics bring cultures closer

Shanghai event invites Chinese and foreign students to repair ceramics together, turning broken pieces into bridges of cultural understanding.



Carlotta Rose (left), Leandra Unterberg (second from left) and Michelle Rusyaeva (right) take part in a ceramic restoration workshop in Shanghai on June 12. ZHENG YIRAN / CHINA DAILY

By **ZHENG YIRAN** in Shanghai
zhengyiran@chinadaily.com.cn

For international students Leandra Unterberg, Carlotta Rose, Michelle Rusyaeva, Erik Grigoryan and Yasir Mehmood, ceramic restoration offered a hands-on way to engage with Chinese cultural heritage — both challenging and enjoyable.

June 13 marked China's Cultural and Natural Heritage Day. To celebrate the occasion, the Changning district culture and tourism bureau in Shanghai organized a cultural heritage event featuring interactive experiences, including ceramic restoration.

The workshop was held on June 12, when the five international students from Shanghai Jiao Tong University and Tongji University joined the activity alongside Chinese participants, experiencing traditional craftsmanship up close.

Seated around tables filled with broken ceramic fragments, glue and restoration tools, students carefully worked to piece the objects back together, guided by instructors. The quiet, focused setting contrasted with the busy urban surroundings outside, as participants concentrated on aligning each fragment and restoring the broken pieces step by step.

For Rose from Germany, the activity offered both discovery and peace of mind.

"It is good to experience something that I had never encountered before," she said. "I like the calm atmosphere, where I can concentrate on small details."

That sense of discovery also extends into her daily life in Shanghai. "Life here is very different from that in Germany. There is so much to see and do," she said, adding that she has often seen local residents playing board games and dancing in public squares.

"They kindly invited me to join, and it was fun," she said.

Unterberg found the restoration process difficult. "You need to stay focused throughout the process," she said. But she believes the effort is necessary. "We should all treat cultural relics with care."

Like Rose, Unterberg has also developed a growing interest in China through daily life in Shanghai.

"At a park in Changning district that I often walk by, there are people practicing calligraphy with water brushes on the ground. It is fascinating," she said.

> "By restoring the ceramic, we are restoring history. Although the object was broken, we brought it back to life by connecting the pieces."
>
> **Yasir Mehmood,** a Pakistani student in China

She has also participated in other cultural experiences with friends, including a tea ceremony.

"I've always been curious about the differences and similarities between Chinese and European tea culture," she said.

Rusyaeva highlighted her appreciation of Chinese culinary culture, including dumplings, steamed buns, noodles, wontons and Peking roast duck, which she said are very different from her usual diet.

"Chinese culinary culture is one of the oldest in the world and very different from that of Europe," she said. "When I go back home, I would like to cook Chinese dishes for my family and tell them about my experience in China."

Mehmood said the activity helped him better understand traditional craftsmanship.

"Before coming here, I had only read about ceramic restoration in books," he said. "My biggest takeaway is that it requires patience and concentration."

He added that the process carried symbolic meaning.

"By restoring the ceramic, we are restoring history. Although the object was broken, we brought it back to life by connecting the pieces."

Beyond the workshop, Mehmood has also experienced other aspects of Chinese culture, including mooncake making, Peking Opera performances and dragon boat racing.

He said that when he returns to Pakistan, he will share his experiences with his friends and family.

"I think it's a great way to bridge cultural gaps between China and Pakistan and promote mutual understanding."

Experts say such personal exchanges reflect the broader value of hands-on cultural experiences in deepening understanding across cultures.

"Replacing one-way explanation with immersive experiences like ceramic restoration can reduce cultural barriers and encourage emotional connection," said Zhang Zhuo, a researcher at the Institute of Journalism of Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences.

She added that such activities help transform abstract cultural symbols into tangible skills, allowing participants to better understand traditional craftsmanship. International students, she noted, can serve as cultural connectors who help share their experiences with wider audiences after returning home.

"As cross-cultural communication nodes, international students can help extend the reach of Chinese cultural heritage through word-of-mouth sharing," she said.

Grassland teenagers step onto soccer's biggest stage

By **GUI QIAN**
guiqian@i21st.cn

The roar of tens of thousands of spectators rolled across Mexico City Stadium on June 11 local time, shortly before the opening match of the FIFA World Cup 2026 kicked off, as six Chinese teenagers took part in the entrance ceremony in a moment they had once only imagined from home.

At the players' tunnel, Hao Xuan, Gao Haokai, Lyu Yuchen, Bao Wenbo, Cui Xiaofei and Lin Nandifu stood on both sides of the entrance, holding the FIFA flag. In the bright glare of the stadium and in front of a global audience, the students from the Inner Mongolia autonomous region looked composed beyond their years.

Selected from campus soccer players across the region through a flag bearer program organized by Mengniu, an Inner Mongolia-based dairy company and the official sponsor of the FIFA World Cup 2026, the six were stepping onto soccer's biggest stage for the first time.

"I used to watch the World Cup only on television. I never thought I would one day stand on the pitch," said Bao, 17, from Hailar No 1 Middle School in Hulunbuir. "It has been my dream since childhood to be part of it, no matter what role I played."

Bao's story reflects the journey of the six young athletes, all of whom emerged from Inner Mongolia's grassroots soccer development system. As China's first pilot province-level region for soccer reform and development, Inner Mongolia has made campus soccer a foundation for the sport's growth.

With policy support and continued investment, the region has strengthened the youth soccer chain, from building and renovating standard pitches to training coaches and organizing regular competitions. Parents of the young flag bearers said the change has been visible, giving their children more chances to compete and a stronger soccer atmosphere in which to grow.

"This is not just a trip, but a chance for them to see the world through soccer," said Shi Chunguang, assistant vice-president of Mengniu. "Standing on the sport's biggest stage can give these children confidence and a broader vision that no classroom can provide."

On the day of rehearsal, the six teenagers set out at 5 am and stood in the stadium for eight full hours. They had to push through jet lag, fatigue and language barriers. During breaks, they exchanged thoughts about soccer with peers from Mexico and South Africa, using simple English and gestures as they compared the soccer cultures of their countries.



(From left to right) Bao Wenbo, Lyu Yuchen, Liu Nandifu, Hao Xuan, Gao Haokai and Cui Xiaofei serve as FIFA World Cup flag bearers in an event organized by Mengniu at Mexico City Stadium on June 11 local time. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Gao, 17, from No 4 Middle School of Baotou, was attending winter training when he learned he had been selected. To present his best self to the world, he began what he called "personal image management" — working out and paying closer attention to his diet.

"Since I've made it to this stage, I have to do my best," he said.

The most nerve-racking moment came when the entrance ceremony officially began. Gao was the first in his group to walk out. But the moment he stepped from the players' tunnel onto the stadium turf, his nervousness gave way to pride.

"I felt that I was not only representing myself, but also my hometown and my country, while showing the world what young Chinese soccer players are like," he said.

Cui, 15, from Tianshan No 6 Middle School in Ar Horqin Banner, Chifeng, has been taller than most of her peers since childhood. She was noticed by the school team coach and began more systematic training. Over time, she found herself falling in love with soccer.

"My family, coaches and friends all hoped I would broaden my horizons, and they had great expectations for this opportunity," Cui said.

On WeChat and Douyin, her feeds were filled with messages of encouragement and congratulations from relatives and friends.

"They couldn't come, so I'll see it for them," she said.

On the World Cup's opening stage, the six teenagers from the grasslands made a brief but shining appearance. What they held high was not only the FIFA flag, but also a newly visible possibility for countless young soccer players behind them.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:18 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:18 PM

SPORTS

WORLD CUP 2026

Vozinha turns in a 'dream' performance

40-year-old Cape Verde keeper's heroics shut out favorite Spain





The European champion Spain, which dominated possession and had 27 goal attempts, could find no way past 40-year-old Cape Verde keeper Vozinha, who has become the face of his team's historic night. AFP

It took Cape Verde goalkeeper Vozinha all of his 40 years on Earth to make his World Cup debut.

The long, long wait was worth every second.

Vozinha recorded seven saves Monday, holding Spain's star-studded lineup to a shocking 0-0 draw. The veteran keeper was everywhere as the Spanish team and its fans became increasingly frustrated, despite dominating possession and unleashing 27 shots. Not even the second-half entrance of young superstar Lamine Yamal could crack the code to get past Vozinha and the Cape Verde defense.

As the final whistle blew, Vozinha hunched over near his net and cried before being embraced by his teammates. Cape Verde, in its first-ever World Cup match, had clinched a point against Spain, the 2010 champion and one of this year's tournament favorites.

Vozinha said he was overwhelmed by emotion thinking about his loved ones, who were unable to see his finest performance: his grandparents who had raised him, and his mother. His grandparents died a few years ago. And his mother had been unable to gather the money in time to secure a visa to enter the United States, Vozinha said.

Cape Verde is among 50 countries whose citizens face bonds of up to $15,000 to secure a US visa, part of President Donald Trump's broader crackdown on travelers from countries that officials said had high rates of visa overstays. The Trump administration last month suspended the requirement for ticket holders from Cape Verde and four other World Cup nations, but critics said it was too late for many fans.

Vozinha's performance was the culmination of a career that didn't even start professionally until he was 25, making his debut for Angolan club Progresso.

Since then, he's had stops in Moldova, Cyprus, Slovakia and Portugal, where he currently plays for Chaves in the Portuguese second division.

He was called up to the national team in 2012 and, at times, Vozinha said, he thought about retiring from international soccer, but he "continued because of this dream".

"I worked all my life for this moment, for this dream," Vozinha said. "A lot of generations in the past (dreamed of) this day, but they did not achieve it. And now the dream has come true."

The word "vozinha" is Portuguese for "little grandmother," and the goalkeeper said he was given the nickname by older kids who would beat him on the soccer field and then laugh, saying he was going home to complain to his grandparents. Years later, he took on the nickname after someone else joined his club who also had the same first name, Josimar.

These days, Cape Verde defender Steven Moreira said he and his teammates like to tease Vozinha about his age. He said he was proud of the keeper, calling him a "big legend", who had a "crazy game" and showed that age doesn't matter.

Fans across the world noticed, too: Vozinha's following on Instagram exploded from around 50,000 people to more than 2.4 million a few hours after the match.

"He lives and breathes Cape Verde," said defender Pico Lopes, who noted Vozinha can come across as a strict teammate during practice. "He's always on us about being on time, but that's what he does. He pushes us to be better. And you saw it today — he leads by example."

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

No panic, says De la Fuente after La Roja held to goalless draw



Spain boss Luis de la Fuente said he is still convinced La Roja will go far at the World Cup, despite failing to break down debutant Cape Verde in a 0-0 draw in their tournament opener.

The European champion badly missed the spark of Lamine Yamal, who was only deemed fit enough for a second-half cameo on his return from injury, as Spain struggled to even create chances against a side ranked 67th in the world.

"We are completely calm, convinced that there is a long way to go. As we see it, we have seven games left," said De la Fuente.

"We just lacked freshness and precision."

Spain is now 32 competitive games unbeaten, stretching back to March 2023.

However, the lackluster nature of the performance brought back painful memories of its meek exits to Russia and Morocco on penalties at the 2018 and 2022 World Cups, where the side dominated possession, but failed to score goals.

"Tomorrow, I'll bring up that magic number," added De la Fuente of his side's long unbeaten run.

"We have to stick to our philosophy and get key players back who will play a crucial role as the tournament progresses."

Yamal's introduction immediately injected life into the Spanish attack and lifted the majority of the nearly 70,000 crowd who were desperate to see the Barcelona superstar. Yet, even his threat was snuffed out, as Cape Verde doubled and, at times, even trebled up on the 18-year-old.

After an injury-plagued season at Athletic Bilbao, Nico Williams was also kept in reserve until the 87th minute.

"They are two game-changing players, but the ones we've had on the pitch are, too," said De la Fuente.

"They all bring different qualities to the table.

"They will provide new options, and the team will continue to grow. What we need to do is to find our rhythm and the decisive touch required for this type of competition, which I have no doubt we will acquire.

"Lamine showed exactly what he's capable of the moment he stepped onto the pitch, forcing the opposition to change their approach, but that was the amount of playing time we felt was right for him.

"Once we regain our chemistry and competitive edge, the team will be even better."

Spain returns to Atlanta for its second game against Saudi Arabia on Sunday before taking on Uruguay in its final group game in Guadalajara, Mexico, on June 27.

AFP

Belgium and its 'Golden Generation' veterans get off to unimpressive start



Romelu Lukaku (left) and Kevin De Bruyne celebrate Belgium's equalizer against Egypt in Seattle on Monday. AP

Despite seeking to avoid a repeat of its early World Cup exit in 2022, Belgium got off to an unimpressive start.

Romelu Lukaku entered in the 66th minute against Egypt on Monday, and the veteran striker immediately created a scoring chance that led to an equalizing own goal, but that was all Belgium could muster in a limp 1-1 draw.

"No game's an easy game in the World Cup," coach Rudi Garcia said afterward.

Perhaps not, but Belgium was expected to handle an Egypt squad that has never won a World Cup game. Instead, the Red Devils were outmaneuvered in the first half, with the speed of Egypt's younger players making the Pharaohs the aggressors.

"We know that we had a bad start in the match," captain Youri Tielemans admitted.

Now, the question becomes whether or not Belgium can make one last World Cup run with the remaining veterans from its "Golden Generation", which includes the 33-year-old Lukaku and two 34-year-olds, midfielder Kevin De Bruyne and goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois.

Belgium held the top spot in the FIFA rankings for several years and had its best World Cup performance when it finished third in Russia in 2018.

But the team fizzled out four years later in Qatar, entering with title-winning ambition, but failing to advance to the knockout round.

Since the FIFA rankings were introduced in 1992, Belgium and the Netherlands are the only teams without a World Cup title to hold the top spot.

The Red Devils entered this year's World Cup ranked 10th, by far the best in Group G, which also includes Iran (25th), Egypt (29th) and New Zealand (79th).

Lukaku, Belgium's leading goalscorer, is recovering from a hamstring injury. Belgium tied the game less than a minute after he entered as a substitute.

"He's a target man," Tielemans said. "He needs to build up his fitness, which is understandable after being out for the season, but he helps us in this way."

De Bruyne was replaced by Hans Vanaken in the 85th minute.

With 32 teams making the knockout round in this expanded World Cup, it's easier than ever to advance, but Belgium has less room for error as it prepares to face Iran on Sunday in Inglewood, California.

"We have to win against Iran, there's no two ways around it," Garcia said.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Coach says Iran ordered out of US right after NZ game



Iran's Mohammad Mohebbi celebrates scoring his side's second goal during a 2-2 World Cup Group G draw with New Zealand in Los Angeles on Monday. REUTERS

INGLEWOOD, California — The coach of Iran's World Cup team said it was ordered to leave the United States and return to its training base in Mexico only a few hours after opening its politically charged tournament by playing out a 2-2 draw with New Zealand on Monday.

Coach Amir Ghalenoei didn't say who ordered the Iranians to leave earlier than planned. The team had expected to spend the night in California to maximize the normal recovery process after its opening game, only to be told after the match that everyone must immediately get on a plane for the 140-mile trip back to Tijuana.

"They didn't even give us time to recover," Ghalenoei said.

"After the game today, they said to us: 'you have to leave immediately.' It's very important for us to have time for recovery, (but) we are asked to get on a plane and return to our camp in Tijuana, and we are really troubled by that."

The Iranians' World Cup cycle has been in upheaval since the US and Israel started bombing Iran on Feb 28. Iran ultimately decided to compete, even after FIFA rejected its request to move its three group-stage matches out of the US.

"We don't know why they are returning us, to be honest," Ghalenoei said. "I think it's very strange. It seems like others are doing the planning for us. The decision-making for us is being made elsewhere. We were supposed to come two nights before the game, and we were supposed to stay tonight to recover and return tomorrow at lunchtime. We have no idea why.

"I think our team is perhaps the most oppressed in the World Cup."

Captain Mehdi Taremi and Ghalenoei both decried the team's lack of numerous key staff members — including the president of Iran's soccer federation, coaching support personnel and media officials — who were denied visas by the US, further hindering the team's preparations.

"We have to leave Los Angeles right now, and it's not good for us," Taremi said about an hour after the match. "I think FIFA have to help us more than this. Everything is like a disaster, actually, for us."

Iran opened its World Cup with a draw, coming from behind twice with Mohammad Mohebbi getting the second equalizer in the 64th minute in front of a solidly pro-Iranian crowd. Some Iranian-American fans engaged in protest against Iran's government.

Iran's next match is also at SoFi Stadium against Belgium on Sunday.

Quality performance

New Zealand coach Darren Bazeley praised his players for their battling performance which brought the team tantalizingly close to a first-ever World Cup win, saying they showed the kind of quality needed to clear that hurdle.

The Kiwis led Iran twice in what was an entertaining Group G encounter that featured a brace from New Zealand's Elijah Just.

"That may be our best performance ever, or since I've been involved with the All Whites, which is a long time," Bazeley said.

"Overall, I thought it was a really strong performance and I think we showed the world who we are and who our players are."

The draw means all four teams in the group have one point after Belgium drew 1-1 with Egypt earlier on Monday.

It was also the first time since the 1958 World Cup that four draws were recorded in a single day's play.

It also means, however, that New Zealand — in its third finals appearance — remains without a win after seven World Cup matches.

Bazeley said his team produced enough quality moments to snatch a victory, but acknowledged it hurt to come so close to that elusive win.

"We came here to win, and today we were so close to making history," he said. "We haven't won a game at a World Cup, and we're so close to doing that today, and that hurts."

New Zealand looked like it would hold on, until Mohebbi headed in a perfect cross to tie things up at 2-2, a moment Bazeley attributed to one of his team's few defensive lapses.

Nevertheless, he predicted his players would create more positive moments during the tournament.

"We've been building and building over the last few years in regards to performance," he said.

"And I've said a lot that, every game we play, we have moments within the games against good teams where we play really well and create chances. Today we were more consistent with that."

AGENCIES

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:18 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:20 PM

Mythical parallels
Exhibition unveils links between civilizations
CULTURE, PAGE 15



Nation releases white paper on global governance
TOP NEWS, PAGE 3



Hat-trick hurrah
Messi ties with Klose as top goal scorer in World Cup history
SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 2026

Ebola survivors



A healthcare worker (right) and her son receive hospital discharge certificates on Tuesday after recovering from Ebola virus disease in Bunia, the Democratic Republic of Congo. China is providing a new round of emergency humanitarian aid to Africa in response to the ongoing Ebola outbreak in some countries and regions, including the DR Congo and Uganda. As of Tuesday, the two countries recorded around 837 confirmed cases and 196 deaths. GRADEL MUYISA MUMBERE / REUTERS

Xi calls for more coordination of regional growth

Fujian-Ningxia success hailed as model for east-west drive to achieve common prosperity

By XU WEI
xuwei@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping has called for further steps to optimize the collaboration program between eastern and western regions of China to enhance coordinated regional development and boost the common prosperity drive.

In an instruction published on Wednesday, Xi highlighted the need to draw on the successful experience of the cooperation between Fujian province in East China and the Ningxia Hui autonomous region in Northwest China in refining the practice.

Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, commended the collaboration model for contributing to China's poverty alleviation drive and promoting coordinated regional growth over the past 30 years.

In 1996, China launched the program of East-West Pairing-off Cooperation for Poverty Reduction, whereby a developed provincial region in the east assisted a less-developed region in the west.

After China secured a victory in eliminating absolute poverty in 2021, the country put in place a five-year transition period to continue supporting people and regions that had emerged from poverty, ensuring a smooth transition from poverty alleviation to rural vitalization while guarding against any large-scale relapse into poverty. With the transition period now over, regular assistance programs start from this year, which also marks the beginning of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period.

The president stressed in the instruction the need to improve the east-west collaboration mechanism, optimize cooperation methods and expand the areas of cooperation.

The goal is to promote industrial complementarity, personnel exchanges, mutual learning in technology, exchanges of ideas and mutual learning in work styles between eastern and western regions, in order to achieve mutual benefit, win-win outcomes and common development, he said.

Xi urged Party committees and governments at all levels to earnestly fulfill their responsibilities in regular assistance programs, firmly prevent any large-scale relapse into poverty, and advance all-around rural vitalization.

The instruction from Xi was conveyed at a work conference on Wednesday in Yinchuan, the capital of Ningxia.

Vice-Premier Liu Guozhong said at the conference that more work must be done to deepen industrial cooperation and labor collaboration between eastern and western regions and to strengthen exchanges of officials and professionals.

He highlighted the need to expand cooperation in science and technology, finance and other fields, and to carry out creative initiatives tailored to local conditions.

While serving as a provincial leader in Fujian province in the late 1990s, Xi personally oversaw the progress of pairing-off cooperation between Fujian and Ningxia.

Wang Jian, head of Ningxia's regional department of agriculture and rural affairs, said last week that the annual per capita disposable income of rural residents in Ningxia rose from about 1,400 yuan ($207) in 1996 to more than 20,000 yuan in 2025.

The Xihaigu area of Ningxia, once known as one of China's most impoverished and environmentally harsh areas, has bid farewell to its long history of extreme hardship and barren conditions, while 1.13 million people have gained access to safe drinking water, he said.

Over the past three decades, Fujian has provided 7.68 billion yuan in assistance funding to Ningxia for infrastructure projects, helping build more than 600 schools, hospitals, nursing homes and care centers for people with disabilities. Fujian has also encouraged over 1,600 enterprises to invest in Ningxia, bringing more than 100 billion yuan in actual investment, Wang added.

Inside

Comment, **page 6**

Blame game won't restore Western competitive advantages

WORLD WATCH
By Otton Solis

China's phenomenal success in exports deserves admiration. The development strategy behind it should be viewed as a model for others to emulate and even become part of the policy packages attached to financial assistance from the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and Western governments.

That is how previous success stories were treated. Japan's post-war rapid economic growth was termed the "Japanese miracle", and the high-growth economies of the Taiwan region and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Singapore and the Republic of Korea were celebrated as the "Asian Tigers".

China, however, has been given a different label. In 2013, economists David Autor, David Dorn and Gordon Hanson helped popularize what later became known as the "China Shock", which alleged that Chinese imports were hurting the labor market in the United States.

The change from terms of admiration to a vocabulary of alarm was telling. The "China Shock" was associated with negative nouns such as "overproduction, overcapacity and oversupply". These were attributed to strong state guidance through industrial policies, never mind the fact that the same strategy had underpinned the economic rise of Japan and several "Asian Tigers".

Today, as Chinese companies make global strides in electric vehicles, artificial intelligence, batteries, biotechnology, renewable energy, robotics, semiconductors and other frontier technologies, that concept has been updated to the so-called "New China Shock", or "China Shock 2.0".

In terms of supply and demand, genuine oversupply would mean that goods cannot find enough buyers unless prices are artificially supported. But there is no worldwide authority to set minimum prices for products, including electric vehicles, solar panels and batteries. What really bothers Western policymakers is not excess supply, but that Chinese companies are able to sell at competitive prices because of their remarkably high productivity.

See ***Growth,*** *page 3*

China, US keeping drug control on a steady track

By YANG ZEKUN
yangzekun@chinadaily.com.cn

China and the United States have maintained steady progress in anti-drug cooperation, with both sides continuing to expand practical collaboration in key areas, a senior Chinese narcotics control official said on Wednesday.

Wei Xiaojun, executive deputy director of the Office of China National Narcotics Control Commission and head of the Ministry of Public Security's narcotics control bureau, made the remarks as the nation further strengthened its drug governance and chemical control by placing 16 additional non-medicinal narcotic and psychotropic substances under control.

Wei noted that China and the US have deepened cooperation across substance scheduling, chemical control, intelligence sharing, joint investigations, online information cleanup, fugitive repatriation, anti-money laundering and drug testing technologies.

China has maintained regular communication with relevant US government departments, including the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, to exchange updates and discuss priorities, Wei said.

Chinese law enforcement agencies have also worked on joint cases and the repatriation of drug-related fugitives with the US Drug Enforcement Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement, he added.

In February, police in Tianjin arrested a suspect, surnamed Gong, in a drug-related case based on information provided by US authorities. Prior to that, a US citizen suspected of involvement in the same case was arrested by US law enforcement agencies from the state of Georgia.

Wei emphasized that drug control cooperation is a global mandate, and it should be based on mutual respect and trust. "As long as China and the US work together, they can effectively address drug-related challenges, which will benefit both peoples and the world," he said.

China remains committed to maintaining the positive momentum of Sino-US antidrug cooperation, which is a hard-won achievement and requires sustained joint efforts, he added.

See ***Drugs,*** *page 3*



INSIDE
APEC's approach to resilience
Global Views, page 8

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved
Newsstand prices:
US $1 Canada C$1; UK 1£ EU 1€
Kenya 50 Kenya Shilling
Asia Pacific: Thailand 120 thb; Philippines 120 php; Myanmar 2000 kyat; Japan 210 yen; Dubai 10 dirham; Pakistan 300 rupee

NOODLING AROUND ON LONG SUMMER DAYS IS A SHAANXI TRADITION

Completion of the first wheat harvest of the year brings a raft of tasty, temperature-taming dishes

By LI YINGXUE
liyingxue@chinadaily.com.cn









(From left to right) *Biangbiang* noodles, *saozi* noodles, *jiangshui* noodles and oil-splashed noodles are among the delicacies of Shaanxi province.
PHOTOS BY CHEN ZEBING / CHINA DAILY AND PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

As the summer solstice arrives on Sunday, across the wheat fields of the Guanzhong Plain, the first harvest of early summer has just been completed. Fresh grain is milled into new flour, still carrying the fragrance of the earth.

China Vibes — FOOD —

In Shaanxi province, this moment is not marked by ritual or festivity, but by something far more immediate and familiar — the transformation of the new wheat into bowls of noodles to be shared around the table.

A traditional Chinese saying goes, "Eat dumplings on the winter solstice and noodles on the summer solstice." The custom reflects the rhythm of seasonal eating, with foods chosen to suit the body's needs as the temperature rises.

In Shaanxi, however, noodles are not just a seasonal dish — they are a way of life.

Actor Sun Hao, a native of Xi'an, the capital of Shaanxi, understands that connection well. The 58-year-old recently won praise for his role in the television drama *Zhu Jue*, or *Leading Role*. While audiences discussed his performance, many also noticed the authentic Shaanxi dishes that frequently appeared on screen.

According to Sun, the production team ran a dedicated cafeteria serving local specialties, including oil-splashed noodles. "One bite is enough," he said. "I can immediately tell whether the noodles are good."

That confidence comes from growing up in a region where wheat-based foods dominate daily life. In much of Shaanxi, especially the Guanzhong Plain, noodles, steamed buns and flatbreads remain staples on family tables.

One of the most representative dishes for the summer solstice is *jiangshui mian*, or fermented vegetable noodle soup.

See ***Noodles,*** *page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:20 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:20 PM

INDEPTH



A Chinese boys' U12 team and Dong Lu, the initiator of the "Chinese Football Boy" program, pose with the Sigismondi Cup trophy on June 2 in Turin, Italy. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Soccer young guns take 'wild route' to glory road

Chinese boys team's prestigious international victory reflects new talent-spotting philosophy

By **LI YINGXUE**
liyingxue@chinadaily.com.cn

The 2026 FIFA World Cup is underway, and while the Chinese men's national soccer team may not be in contention for the trophy, a group of young players has offered a glimpse of a possible bright future.

On June 2 in Turin, Italy, a Chinese boys' U12 team defeated the academy side of English Premier League club Everton 5-4 in a penalty shoot-out to claim the Sigismondi Cup. The tournament, often described in youth soccer circles as a "mini World Cup", featured 48 youth teams from around the world, including academies from major European clubs.

The Chinese side completed a perfect run, winning all seven of their matches, scoring 20 goals and conceding just one on their way to the title. They became the first Asian team to win the tournament.

When the decisive moment arrived in the final, 12-year-old Meng Xinyi from Nanjing, Jiangsu province, stepped up for the fifth penalty.

He began his run-up, struck the ball cleanly, and sent it into the corner. As the ball hit the net and the shoot-out ended 5-4, he tore off his jersey, threw it in the air, and did a backflip in celebration.

Supporters in the stands erupted. On the opposite side, the young players from Everton stood frozen, hands on their heads, watching the trophy slip away.

"I was very nervous walking up," Xinyi said later. "But I also told myself I had to trust my instincts. When the ball went in, it felt incredible."

His approach to taking penalties is simple and built on self-belief. "No matter how the goalkeeper tries to distract you, if your first instinct is to shoot a certain side, you must trust it," he said.

The team, known as China Football Boy 2014, delivered a flawless campaign in Italy.

Behind the celebrations, however, lies a broader question about the development of Chinese soccer. Youth training has long faced challenges in consistently producing elite talent.

That landscape is now beginning to shift, as grassroots "wild route" initiatives expand alongside official efforts to support structured overseas development. While their approaches differ, both are contributing to a more diversified pathway for talent development.

Behind the backflip

Xinyi's acrobatic celebration was not accidental.

Before focusing on soccer, he spent more than a year training in martial arts while in kindergarten, developing flexibility and explosive strength. He later discovered soccer in primary school and quickly showed aptitude for the game.

By the time he joined his school team in Nanjing Gulou No 1 Central Primary School, soccer had already become part of his daily rhythm. He would finish homework during breaks so he could train after school.

Asked what soccer means to him, Xinyi's answer is straightforward. "Happiness," he said. "Because soccer allows me to express myself and push myself fully. Even when we are behind, I always believe we can come back."

His ambition is equally clear. "I want to become a professional player and contribute to Chinese soccer in the future."

Connecting players like Xinyi across China is a widely discussed and sometimes controversial figure in Chinese soccer development circles — the former journalist and commentator Dong Lu, and his grassroots initiative known as the "Chinese Football Boy" program.

In a recent online dialogue with veteran broadcaster Shui Junyi, Dong described his approach candidly as belonging to the "wild route"—a term often used to distinguish informal grassroots development from institutional systems.

He argues that talent is not "manufactured" in a traditional sense. "What matters is not who trains you, but who discovers you, guides you, and gives you a platform," he said. "Talent is revealed, not manufactured."

In 2017, Dong became involved in youth soccer development full-time. Since then, he has organized youngsters from across China to attend weekend and holiday training camps, and frequently taken them to international competitions.

Dong said total investment in the project has exceeded 58 million yuan ($8.58 million) over nine years, with free training provided to participating children.

Xinyi's father, Meng Qinghua, said the opportunity given to his son had transformed the boy's life.

"Without Dong Lu, there would be no Meng Xinyi today," he said. "He gave the child the chance to play internationally, and he never charged a fee."

Dong's philosophy places strong emphasis on exposure to competition. Unlike traditional youth systems that often prioritize training over results, he argues that Chinese soccer suffers from what he calls a "habitual acceptance of losing".

"In Chinese soccer, the real scarcity is hope," he said. "If we do not win, there is no attention, no momentum. But victory is essential because it creates belief."

Trial by fire

A central pillar of Dong's model is constant exposure to international competition.

In early June, a mixed U16 and U17 squad from the program arrived in Sao Paulo, Brazil, after competing in the Netherlands. The players were scheduled to face youth teams from Brazilian clubs such as Sao Paulo, Palmeiras, and Santos.

"Even if we lose by a large margin, we must play against peers of the same age," Dong said. "Only then can we understand where we truly stand."





Left: Players compete during the "2034 Cup" Primary School Students' Football Games (U12) in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, in July 2022. SUN JIAN / FOR CHINA DAILY **Above:** Dong Lu encourages a young player during a training session in Suzhou. XU YAOWEN / FOR CHINA DAILY



Meng Xinyi, 12, demonstrates a header during an interview in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, after winning the 2026 Sigismondi Cup. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

For many players, the experience has been formative.

One of the squad members, Yuan Bohan, said after one match in Brazil, he noticed the difference in the pace and intensity of the game. "The rhythm is completely different from what we experience domestically," he said. "Winning and losing both matter, because what we lack most is the experience of winning at this level."

Despite losing, the Chinese team still managed to express its own style of play. "We hope to learn from Brazilian soccer and bring that mentality back to China," he said.

In an environment of constant testing, individual breakthroughs have begun to emerge.

On June 3, Chinese player Li Haoyan, 14, officially joined FC Barcelona's famed La Masia academy at U15 level. He instantly became one of the most closely watched Chinese youth players to enter Spain's elite development system.

Born in Dalian, Liaoning province in 2012, Haoyan first trained at a grassroots club founded by his father, before joining Dong's program at age 10. At age 13, he moved to Spain to pursue soccer full-time.

Adapting to a new country proved challenging. Language barriers and daily life adjustments were significant obstacles. He reportedly wrote tactical instructions on his palm during matches and added extra training sessions on his own initiative.

In the 2025-26 season, Haoyan played 28 league matches with CF Damm. He contributed 12 goals and 12 assists, helping his team finish seventh in a 16-team regional division.

Known for his pace and versatility, Haoyan attracted attention from several Spanish clubs before Barcelona finalized his signing.

"I want to thank every fan who has supported me on the journey to this dream," Haoyan wrote on social media. "This is a new environment and a new challenge, and I will stay focused, train hard, and cherish the opportunity to develop in one of the world's best youth academies.

"I will steadily improve myself, carry the original aspiration of representing my country with pride, and give everything I have to keep moving forward," he wrote.

CFA's support role

Haoyan's journey to Barcelona is one example of what grassroots "wild route" development can achieve through private support and individual commitment. But soccer authorities have increasingly sought to build more systematic mechanisms to support overseas development.

In recent years, the Chinese Football Association has introduced policies that share a similar objective: helping more young players gain experience in high-level overseas environments.

For decades, Chinese soccer has struggled with what many call the "12-year-old drop-off" — a stage at which many promising players leave the sport due to academic pressure and uncertain professional prospects.

Earlier generations of Chinese players who went abroad did so largely alone. Players such as Yang Chen and Shao Jiayi relied on personal resilience and limited support networks during early stints in Europe.

Today, however, institutional support is expanding.

In April 2026, the Chinese Football Association launched its Youth Inspiration Program, aimed at players age 15 to 23. The initiative provides financial subsidies, development support, and performance-based incentives for young players competing overseas.

CFA President Song Kai emphasized that talent development depends on exposure to high-level competition. "We want talented players to go abroad, stay abroad, and play abroad," he said.

For many players, the program reduces uncertainty. CFA officials note that financial instability is one of the key barriers preventing young players from pursuing international careers.

China's head coach Shao Jiayi described the initiative as a meaningful shift. "It provides a clearer pathway and tells young players that they are not alone when they go abroad," he said.

At the same time, domestic grassroots soccer continues to expand. In Nanjing, where Meng Xinyi plays, a structured school-to-school soccer pathway now links primary, secondary, and high school education, reducing dropout risks.

Cities such as Chengdu in Sichuan province have also introduced shared coaching centers, integrating retired athletes into school programs and improving coaching quality at the grassroots level.

According to CFA data, the number of registered elite young players has now reached nearly 100,000, with competition participation continuing to rise.

CFA officials have emphasized that multiple development models are welcome. "Professional academies, sports schools, school-based programs, and social organizations all play a role," Song said. "The key is to broaden the talent pool."

Broader horizon

Looking across the evolving landscape, Chinese soccer today is no longer defined by a single pathway.

There is Meng Xinyi, celebrating in Turin; Li Haoyan, training at La Masia; Dong Lu's teams competing in Brazil; and a growing institutional framework supporting youth development at home.

"The real shortage in Chinese soccer is victory," Dong said.

Yet victory, increasingly, is being pursued through multiple routes — some structured, others experimental, and many still evolving.

The question of whether grassroots "wild route" initiatives or institutional systems will ultimately prove more effective may be less important than their coexistence. In a mature ecosystem, different pathways often reinforce rather than exclude each other.

Dong recently suggested that the next major breakthrough in Chinese soccer may emerge around 2034, when a new generation of players — shaped by both domestic reform and international exposure — reaches maturity.

By then, many of today's young players will be entering their prime years, some already embedded in overseas systems.

Whether that future delivers long-awaited progress remains uncertain. But for the young players now crossing borders, scoring penalties, and chasing opportunities far from home, Chinese soccer is already being rewritten — not as a single story, but as a widening field of possibilities.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:20 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:20 PM

TOP NEWS

Nation outlines pathway to a fairer world

Beijing issues white paper on promoting more just and equitable global governance

By **JI HAISHENG**
jihaisheng@chinadaily.com.cn

China on Wednesday released a white paper titled "More Just and Equitable Global Governance: China's Principles, Proposals and Actions", which Foreign Minister Wang Yi said aims to offer a comprehensive account of the country's ideas and actions in promoting global governance, and to foster broader consensus within the international community on reforming and improving global governance and ensuring more effective responses to global challenges.

Wang made the remarks at a news conference held by the State Council Information Office in Beijing on the release of the white paper.

"Global governance is a common endeavor that bears on the well-being of all humanity, and building a just and equitable global governance system is a shared vision long pursued by people from across the world," Wang said.

Wang said that the Global Governance Initiative, proposed by President Xi Jinping, came at a critical juncture where the international system established after World War II faced multiple shocks and global governance was encountering headwinds. Since its introduction in September, the GGI has received broad support from nearly 160 countries and international organizations, with over 60 countries joining the Group of Friends of Global Governance. "The GGI has evolved from a Chinese proposal into an international practice, and is showing ever-growing vitality," Wang added.

To foster broader international consensus, China will host the first Xiong'an Global Governance Forum this autumn, Wang said.

At the news conference on Wednesday, officials also underlined the wide range of measures China has rolled out to advance a fairer and more equitable global governance system.

Zhou Haibing, deputy head of the National Development and Reform Commission, said that China upholds multilateralism and an open, inclusive approach in promoting both global governance and international cooperation on artificial intelligence.

He said that China will host the 2026 World AI Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance in Shanghai in July. According to the foreign minister, China is also stepping up efforts to establish a World AI Cooperation Organization.

Noting that the GGI puts people's well-being at the center, Zhao Fengtao, vice-chairman of the China International Development Cooperation Agency, said that China has always worked with other countries to improve the global poverty reduction governance framework.

Together with 53 countries and nine international organizations, China launched the Global Partnership for Poverty Alleviation and Development, which has helped to turn its poverty reduction experience into global public goods, and given new momentum to global poverty reduction, he said.

Stressing the key role of the Global South in global governance, Vice-Foreign Minister Miao Deyu said that the international community should support the Global South in bolstering solidarity and self-reliance, leveraging major cooperation platforms including BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and the Group of 77 and China, and scaling up the role of emerging financial institutions such as the New Development Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

Wang Huiyao, president of the Center for China and Globalization, a Beijing-based think tank, said that while individual major powers' engagement in bloc politics, geopolitical confrontation and unilateralism has diverted the international focus away from improving global governance, China has put forward a more inclusive and comprehensive vision for global governance, redirecting the global focus to the essential issues requiring the joint efforts of all countries.

"At a time when the world is far from peaceful, the newly released white paper has put forth an innovative framework for global governance," he said. The document has not only formed a new core of consensus and reshaped views on global governance, but also concretely showcased how China's global visions and policy proposals can be translated into tangible and on-the-ground outcomes, he added.

Inside

- Editorial, **page 6**
- Document, **pages 11-14**

Digital art feast



Visitors tour Dataland, the world's first museum dedicated to artificial intelligence art, data visualization and AI-driven creativity, during a media preview on Tuesday ahead of its official opening on Saturday in Los Angeles, California, the United States. MARIO TAMA / GETTY IMAGES

NATIONAL VISION, LOCAL ACTION

Hainan now a magnet for foreign firms

By **CHEN BOWEN** in Haikou
chenbowen@chinadaily.com.cn



Feng Fei

Six months after the launch of island-wide special customs operations, the Hainan Free Trade Port is running smoothly, with international trade and investor interest rising sharply, Hainan Party Secretary Feng Fei told China Daily.

Inside

Views, **page 7**

The landmark move, which took effect on Dec 18, 2025, marks one of China's most ambitious institutional opening-up efforts. Feng said the initial phase had achieved its primary goal of stable and orderly operations, with goods moving efficiently, cross-border travel more convenient, and businesses increasingly moving operations to the island.

By May 31, customs clearance efficiency had improved significantly. The value of imports under the zero-tariff policy jumped 116 percent year-on-year, average clearance time for imported goods dropped 20 percent, and declaration requirements for goods leaving the island for the mainland were simplified by over 60 percent.

Total international trade value rose 53.7 percent during the period. The number of registered foreign trade companies grew 57.8 percent, while newly established foreign-funded enterprises increased 37.6 percent.

The robust growth reflects not only the initial effects of the special customs operations, but also the growing effectiveness of the Hainan FTP's institutional framework, he said. A comprehensive policy framework is now in place, featuring zero tariffs, low tax rates, and liberalization and facilitation of trade, investment, cross-border capital flows, personnel entry and exit, and transport, alongside safe and orderly data flow. Goods eligible for zero-tariff treatment have expanded from 21 percent to 74 percent of all tariff lines.

Institutional innovations are also reshaping the island's economic structure. Feng said that Hainan has developed a modern industrial system with distinctive characteristics and competitive strengths. Tourism, modern services, high-tech industries and high-efficiency tropical agriculture accounted for nearly 70 percent of the province's GDP in the first quarter of 2026.

Against this backdrop, Feng said Hainan is becoming an increasingly attractive destination for global investors and highlighted three major opportunities for foreign businesses. Hainan offers China's shortest negative list for foreign investment, a pioneering cross-border services trade negative list, and special market-access measures, including wholly foreign-owned hospitals and independent operation of high-level overseas universities, and vocational colleges in the fields of science, engineering, agriculture and medicine.

Located at the junction of two of the world's most dynamic markets — China's 1.4 billion consumers and Southeast Asia's nearly 700 million — Hainan has attracted 22 Fortune Global 500 foreign-funded enterprises and a total of 139 headquarters-type companies. More global investors have chosen the island as a base to enter the Chinese market or expand globally. In 2025, Hainan's outbound investment volume grew 20.7 percent year-on-year.

To sustain the momentum, Hainan has been stepping up efforts to build a market-oriented, law-based and internationalized business environment, Feng said. The province has introduced a fair competition regulation, enacted 57 local regulations under the Hainan Free Trade Port Law, and established international commercial courts and a specialized intellectual property court. A one-stop dispute resolution mechanism integrating mediation, arbitration and litigation is operational.

Meanwhile, Hainan is upgrading transportation and logistics infrastructure to strengthen its role as a regional hub linking China with global markets.

Hainan aims to become a shipping hub for the New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor and an aviation gateway to the Pacific and Indian Oceans. The first seventh-freedom traffic rights route, which allows foreign airlines to operate routes between two countries without flying to their home countries, is now operational.

Feng outlined a road map to establish Hainan as a new frontier of China's opening-up by 2035, and a globally influential high-level free trade port by mid-century. The province has partnered with 44 global free trade zones and ports, attracted investment from 180 countries and regions, and maintained trade ties with over 220 countries and regions.

Drugs: 16 additional substances put under control

From page 1

According to Wei, China has actively responded to the diversion of nonscheduled chemicals into illicit drug production channels in North America.

Starting on July 1, a total of 16 substances will be added to the catalogue of nonmedical narcotic and psychotropic substances, China's national drug regulator announced on Wednesday.

This will place 412 types of nonmedicinal narcotic and psychotropic drugs, as well as the entire categories of fentanyl-related substances, synthetic cannabinoids and nitazene-related substances under control.

To strengthen risk prevention, China issued warning notices twice — in November 2025 and May this year — urging compliance with relevant laws. Customs and postal authorities reinforced export supervision, risk analysis and inspection procedures.

Wei said authorities have also carried out nationwide crackdowns on the illegal trafficking of precursor chemicals and new psychoactive substances, and strengthened industry self-regulation.

Chemical control remains a key upstream measure in China's drug control strategy, he said. In 2025, authorities seized 550.6 metric tons of drug-related precursor chemicals. China has also published a white paper on fentanyl-related substance control and expanded its regulatory system.

Wei said that China's drug situation remains generally stable, but new challenges are emerging as trafficking becomes more organized, substance abuse more diversified and users younger. He warned that loophole exploitation, gray-area substances and emerging addictive compounds are increasing regulatory complexity.

According to the 2025 China Drug Situation Report, which was released on Wednesday, Chinese authorities solved 27,000 drug-related cases and arrested 41,000 suspects last year, down 27.6 percent and 33 percent year-on-year, respectively. They also seized 33.5 tons of drugs, up 25.4 percent, and handled 134,000 drug users, down 30.3 percent.

The report noted a rise in abuse of nonscheduled addictive substances. In 2025, authorities seized nearly 1.27 million liters of nitrous oxide, up 84 percent year-on-year, and 9.3 tons of other substances, an increase of more than 17-fold.

Spreading cheer



A man dressed as a clown plays with Palestinian children on Tuesday during an event aimed at lifting their spirits in Khan Younis, Gaza, Palestine. ABED RAHIM KHATIB / GETTY IMAGES

Noodles: Fermented food helps cope with summer heat

From page 1

Ren Haibo, executive chef at the restaurant in the Beijing office of the Shaanxi provincial government, describes it as the perfect antidote to summer heat. The dish begins with celery that is fermented in water used to cook noodles over several days. The resulting sour broth is seasoned with garlic, dried chilies and aromatics before being poured over freshly cooked noodles.

"The taste is sour, fragrant and refreshing," Ren said. "It stimulates the appetite and helps people feel comfortable in hot weather."

Long before air conditioners became commonplace, such fermented foods offered a practical way to cope with high summer temperatures. Today, *jiangshui mian* remains a seasonal favorite in central Shaanxi.

Jiangshui yu is a traditional Shaanxi dish consisting of cornmeal dough pieces served in a fermented vegetable broth. In spite of its name including the Chinese character *yu*, it contains no fish. The small, doughy pieces are made from cornmeal or wheat flour and are served in a sour broth with garlic, chives and chili oil, creating a refreshing balance of sour and spicy flavors.

"In the past, when new wheat arrived, the first thing people wanted to do was taste the fresh flour," said Ren.

That tradition lives on in dishes such as Qishan *saozi* noodles, a specialty from Baoji and western Shaanxi. Often served to welcome guests, the noodles are renowned for their harmonious blend of sourness, spiciness and aroma. A colorful topping of diced vegetables, tofu, egg strips and meat is ladled over thin, springy noodles.

For Shaanxi people, however, the love of wheat extends beyond noodles. One of Sun Hao's favorite local dishes is *xiaochao paomo*, a spicy variation of Xi'an's famous soaked flatbread dish.

"It's incredibly fragrant," said Sun. "The taste is stronger, and younger people especially love it."

The ritual surrounding the dish is almost as important as the food itself. Diners traditionally tear pieces of flatbread by hand before it is cooked with broth and other ingredients.

As the year's longest day arrives and fresh wheat enters local kitchens, the cycle of harvest to table continues uninterrupted — carried forward in bowls of noodles shaped by generations.

Growth: West can replicate factors fueling China's success

From page 1

There are two key socioeconomic consequences of this increase in productivity. First, millions of low-income and middle-income consumers from Western countries and the Global South, including Chinese consumers, are able to buy cars and other industrial goods at much lower prices. This would not be possible without Chinese competition.

Second, the world is able to fight climate change more effectively when it gains access to low-cost, high-tech renewable energy equipment produced by Chinese companies. Low-tech and high-cost industries in the West have struggled to survive against Chinese competition.

Instead of welcoming the benefits enjoyed by consumers and the improved odds in the fight against global warming, many Western policymakers have chosen to side with entrenched interests, unproductive businesses, established oligopolies and the financiers of their costly political campaigns.

Rather than trying to fix blame for their competitive shortcomings, Western countries would do well to identify the underlying factors of China's highly productive economy.

Four advantages enjoyed by China deserve special attention. First, the country has a vast domestic market, which allows Chinese companies to achieve significant economies of scale and subjects them to intense local competition even before they enter the global market. Second, there is continuity and predictability of economic policy and political stability in the country. Third, China has made massive investments in quality education, transportation and energy infrastructure, and in research and development. Fourth, macroeconomic management and industrial policy have been fine-tuned to align with long-term planning, while market forces and the private economy are allowed to play important roles.

None of these advantages are beyond the reach of Western economies. When it comes to market size, both the US and the European Union have very large integrated markets capable of supporting similar economies of scale. On the policy front, politicians in most Western countries have chosen polarization and short-term gains over long-term national interests. That is hardly China's fault.

The same applies to education, infrastructure and innovation. Nothing prevents Western countries from channeling large investments into these areas as they did in the past. But to do it now requires tough decisions, such as reducing defense expenditure and pursuing a more equitable tax system. As for industrial policy, public investment has played an important role in infrastructure and technological development in Western countries. If China's strategy in these areas explains its success, as is often argued by Western nations, nothing prevents them from doing the same.

The West has chosen a different response: blame games and protectionism. Instead of embracing competition, the core factor for economic success, most Western governments have chosen to shield their industries by using tariffs, quotas and the outright blocking of some imports.

A more constructive path for the West would be to examine the factors that have fueled Chinese success and try to imitate some of those policies. If such an approach is followed seriously, the world might even witness a "West shock" in the future.

The author is a senior fellow at the Beijing Club for International Dialogue, and was special adviser to the president of Costa Rica from 2018 to 2022. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:20 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:20 PM

WORLD



G7 leaders take a group photo in the French resort of Evian-les-Bains on Tuesday. In a declaration issued overnight, the leaders threw their support behind the US' tentative agreement with Iran, saying they were "ready to contribute to its implementation". VIA XINHUA

Reactions to Iran deal mixed

Fourteen-point framework begins 60-day process to negotiate permanent agreement

By **MINGMEI LI** in New York
mingmeili@chinadailyusa.com

US President Donald Trump declared "victory" following the agreement with Iran, but reactions across the United States remain sharply divided.

On Wednesday, US media reported that senior US officials had disclosed details of a preliminary memorandum of understanding between Washington and Tehran aimed at ending the 110-day conflict, which was signed ahead of schedule on Wednesday.

The agreement has immediately sparked debate over whether it represents a diplomatic breakthrough or a concession to Tehran.

Under the 14-point framework, the two sides would have 60 days to negotiate the terms before reaching a final agreement. According to a senior US official, the preliminary deal would reopen the Strait of Hormuz, establish a $300 billion reconstruction plan for Iran, and lift restrictions on Iranian oil exports. The agreement also includes language that Iran agrees not to develop or procure nuclear weapons.

Some terms of the deal remain contentious. Trump repeatedly denied on Wednesday that the United States would contribute to the reconstruction fund, though he said Gulf allies could provide financial support if they chose to do so.

Trump warned that the US would "go back to bombing" if Tehran failed to comply with the terms of the preliminary agreement or if negotiations did not result in a long-term deal preventing Iran from developing a nuclear weapon.

"Mistakes are made. War is nasty," Trump said during the G7 summit, appearing to acknowledge US responsibility for strikes that killed more than 150 children. Trump said the incident was under investigation.

The agreement has drawn mixed reactions from US lawmakers, even within the Republican Party, with some praising it as a step toward ending the conflict while others warning that it could strengthen Iran.

Republican senator Lindsey Graham welcomed the MOU, reversing his earlier skepticism toward negotiations between the two countries.

"After this discussion, it is my opinion that signing the MOU will be beneficial to the United States, in as much as the Strait of Hormuz will begin to open, and the hostilities with Iran will stop," Graham wrote.

"Whether or not the United States can reach an acceptable, verifiable deal with Iran regarding its nuclear program and other issues is yet to be determined, but I see little downside to trying," he continued. "The economic stability that comes from opening up the Strait and the cessation of hostilities could create a pathway to peace well beyond the Iranian conflict."

Others, however, strongly criticized the deal.

"The details that I've seen so far look ... awful. This will go down as a tremendous foreign policy blunder," Republican Senator Bill Cassidy told Nexstar's Reshad Hudson on Capitol Hill on Wednesday.

"(President Ronald) Reagan is rolling over in his grave. Iran's nuclear ambitions were not curbed, and they have learned that threatening the Strait of Hormuz works and will undoubtedly leverage it in the future," Cassidy wrote in a social media post. "Now, Iran gets to build brand-new infrastructure under this deal."

"Before the war, the strait was open, Iran was being crushed by sanctions, and 13 service members were still alive. Now, 13 Americans are dead, families have paid billions at the pump, sanctions will be lifted, and the bombing has stopped. This is the worst foreign policy blunder in decades," he wrote.

Former US ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley also criticized the agreement, particularly reports that sanctions on Iranian oil exports would be lifted immediately.

"If this is true, Iran wins," Haley wrote.

A recent analysis from the Center for Strategic & International Studies said both Washington and Tehran would likely claim victory, while each side would also face losses.

"For President Trump, the primary success of the deal is the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz ... but the strait's closure was a direct consequence of the war," the analysis said.

The analysis also noted that the agreement could be a major setback for Israel and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has long viewed Iran as an existential threat. It added that the Iran war had broad support in Israel and that Netanyahu faces a difficult political environment ahead of the coming election.

Agencies contributed to the story.

Fed Chair announces new era for central bank

By **BELINDA ROBINSON**
in New York
belindarobinson@chinadailyusa.com

Federal Reserve Chairman Kevin Warsh announced a new era at the Fed in his first news conference at the helm of the central bank, signalling his plan to make it quieter with less engagement with the markets and one that squarely focuses on tackling inflation.

Warsh spoke at his first news conference as Fed chair on Wednesday, after overseeing his first Fed policy meeting. All 12 members of the Federal Open Market Committee voted unanimously to hold rates at a range of 3.5 percent to 3.75 percent for a fourth meeting in a row.

The new Fed chair was clear about his core focus. "I've said for years inflation is a choice," Warsh told reporters. "You bet it is."

He added that he was committed to bringing inflation back down to its 2 percent target. The Fed will next meet in six weeks.

In new projections, policymakers said they expected overall inflation to be 3.6 percent by the end of the year, higher than they had predicted three months ago. Core inflation would be 3.3 percent, The New York Times reported.

In a departure from his predecessor — former Fed Chair Jerome Powell — Warsh identified a series of changes that he intends to make in his new role.

"The recent past need not be prologue," he said while discussing the fact that inflation was higher than the Fed's target for more than five years.

One of his first small changes was to the usual Fed statement, which he said was "a bit shorter, a bit simpler and dispenses with some older language" and focuses on "the facts as best as we can judge it".

In another change, he declined to submit an economic forecast to the Fed's Summary of Economic Projections, including its "dot plot", CNBC reported. But he did allow his colleagues to submit one.

He also opted to end the "forward guidance", which is a hint in Fed statements about where interest rates may be heading in the future.

"I can't give you any forward guidance about what we're going to do next," he said. "The good news is we'll be meeting in six weeks."

In his speech, he said it was important at any institution during "a change in leadership" to "reaffirm its mission, to review current practices, and to consider whether those practices best meet our objectives".

He announced that five task forces will reexamine the core functions of the central bank.

They will address communications, the balance sheet, data sources, productivity trends and jobs.

Warsh said that he will be "enlisting some of the very best minds, both inside and outside the economics profession", for discussions on the task force. They will be paired with Fed staff.

In another departure from his predecessor, Warsh did not offer explicit guidance on interest rates and did not talk about how the Fed will decide when to adjust rates.

Analysts said that this could make it tough for investors to determine what the central bank will do next.

He stated that the financial markets would be entering "a new chapter" with the central bank.

He also stated that the labor market is stable.

Warsh, 56, was nominated by President Donald Trump in January as the replacement for former chair Powell. He took over as the 17th Fed Chair in May.

He served on the Fed's Board of Governors from 2006 to 2011, and previously worked as an executive at Morgan Stanley and the Duquesne Family Office.

His predecessor had a fractious professional relationship with Trump as he would not cut rates, even after several demands to do so by the US president.

Asked about the Fed's decision to maintain rates, Trump said on Wednesday: "It's all right, whatever."

The new Fed chair takes over as inflation reached a three-year high of 4.2 percent in mid-June, mainly due to higher gas prices, data from the government said.

Warsh said he plans to keep talking with the media, as news conferences are useful for communicating, if he has "something to say".

The bond market sold off when the Fed released its projections on Wednesday afternoon and again during Warsh's news conference, The Wall Street Journal reported.

But Warsh said he was not interested in immediate market reactions.

Other economic challenges include oil prices falling sharply after the deal to end the US-Israel war with Iran was reached.

It took immediate effect late Wednesday after both sides signed it, Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said.

While seeking Trump's nomination, Warsh had called for "regime change" at the Fed.

He reportedly prefers the communication style of Alan Greenspan, the Fed's chair from 1987 to 2005, who was less outspoken than Powell, The Associated Press and Reuters reported.

"The changes to the policy statement were profound," Thomas Simons, chief US economist at Jefferies, wrote in a note. "Policy statements became much wordier after the global financial crisis, so this is a return to a more Greenspan-era style of post-meeting communications."

Japan slammed over slow probe into embassy attack

By **ZHOU JIN**
zhoujin@chinadaily.com.cn

China has criticized the lack of progress in Japan's investigation into and handling of a case involving a Self-Defense Forces officer who allegedly entered the Chinese embassy in Tokyo armed with a knife, urging Japan to take full responsibility for the incident.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian made the remarks on Wednesday after the Tokyo District Public Prosecutors Office reportedly decided to extend the detention of Kodai Murata, a second lieutenant in Japan's Ground Self-Defense Force, for psychiatric assessment to determine whether he can be held criminally responsible for his actions.

Nearly three months have passed since Murata illegally broke into the Chinese embassy in Tokyo.

Lin said incidents threatening the security of Chinese diplomatic missions in Japan have continued to occur, adding that China has expressed grave concerns and lodged protests against the Japanese side on many occasions.

The case exposes a number of deep-seated problems in Japan, including worsening right-wing influence and the suppression of objective and rational voices, he said.

Lin also listed the toxicity of the Japanese government's erroneous policies on vital issues concerning China-Japan relations, including history and Taiwan, the serious lack of education on true history and the pervasive erroneous historical views.

There is also an ongoing push in Japan for a more offensive and expansionist defense policy, and a failure in the oversight and discipline of the Self-Defense Forces, he said.

Lin noted that several prominent figures in Japan have called on the government to apologize to China.

Some have urged Tokyo to reflect on itself and take corrective actions concerning the supervision of the SDF, the education on history and Japan's policy toward China, so as to fundamentally address the issue and remove its breeding ground in society.

"We once again urge the Japanese side to do serious soul-searching, correct its wrongdoings, conduct a thorough probe and take full responsibility for the incident," Lin said.

Nepal looks to strengthen collaboration with China

By **ZHOU JIN**

Nepal's new government is looking to strengthen political engagement with China and expand cooperation in areas including connectivity, technology, governance and people-to-people exchanges, Foreign Minister Shisir Khanal says.

Speaking of his recent four-day visit to China, Khanal said connectivity is one of Nepal's top priorities in its cooperation with China, both a neighbor and an important partner for the South Asian country.

"We have seen very impressive infrastructure being built on the Chinese side. We would like to see similar connectivity improvements on the Nepali side as well," he said.

Improved land and air links would facilitate trade, tourism and people-to-people exchanges, he added.

Khanal expressed hope that his visit would help pave the way for more high-level exchanges between the two countries in the coming months.

"I have invited Foreign Minister Wang Yi to visit Nepal, and we also hope to see more exchanges between leaders from both sides," he said.

A former minister of education, science and technology, Khanal took the current post in March. He said Nepal sees great potential to work with China in emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence.

"Nepal has a young and technologically savvy population," he said, adding that it is one of the fastest-growing sectors in the country in terms of tech service exports.

Khanal praised China's rapid advances in AI, especially the development of powerful and cost-effective models, saying Nepal hopes to leverage such innovations to support its own digital transformation.

Nepal recently announced plans to establish its first sovereign AI data center, and China could be a partner in that effort, he added.

Kathmandu aims to improve public services through digitalization and technology to make such services easily accessible to its people, he said.



> "We have seen very impressive infrastructure being built on the Chinese side. We would like to see similar connectivity improvements on the Nepali side as well."
>
> **Shisir Khanal,** foreign minister of Nepal

"That's something China has done amazingly well and (which) we would like to learn from," he said.

Nepal is particularly interested in learning from China's industrialization, agricultural modernization and technology-driven development, Khanal said.

China's mechanized agriculture has generated large numbers of jobs in both rural and urban areas, helping power the country's rapid economic growth, he said.

In recent years, China has also made remarkable progress in homegrown technologies, which have improved efficiency and brought tangible benefits to people's daily lives, he added.

Highlighting the long and traditional relationship between Nepal and China, Khanal said it is now important to bring dynamism to the relationship between young people of both countries and deepen mutual understanding.

"There is significant interest among young Nepalis in learning from China, particularly in science and technology," he said, adding that more and more Nepalis are studying Chinese and pursuing higher education and research opportunities in China.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108
529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1852

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:20 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:20 PM

Zhejiang champions law-based governance

Frontline policing and dispute management prioritize people's life quality in province

By HAO NAN
haonan@chinadaily.com.cn

With the commitment to pioneering provincial-level law-based governance in China, East China's Zhejiang province has integrated rule-of-law building into every aspect of modernization and become a demonstration zone.

A sound legal ecosystem has underpinned Zhejiang's robust economic and social progress after the province initiated the rule-of-law provincial construction strategy on April 26, 2006.

From 2006 to 2025, the province's GDP surged from 1.56 trillion yuan ($230.9 billion) to 9.45 trillion yuan, while public safety satisfaction rose from 94.8 percent to 98.9 percent, ranking among the nation's highest for five consecutive years.



A judge from Dongyang city people's court Weishan tribunal delivers a lecture on constitutional law to primary school students in Dongyang city, Zhejiang province, on Dec 3, 2025. BAO KANGXUAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Supporting enterprises

These statistics testify to the province's improved law-based governance mechanisms.

Over the past two decades, Zhejiang has enacted more than 30 pioneering regulations and rules to shore up reform and industrial upgrading.

Notably, the province issued regulations to boost private enterprises and optimize the business environment, securing full life-cycle protection for market entities.

Hangzhou, capital city of Zhejiang province, has rolled out a regulation on embodied intelligence robots. As the first local regulation of its kind nationwide, it took effect on May 1, serving as a benchmark for the development of embodied intelligence across the country.

To support enterprises going global, Zhejiang opened an overseas legal service center in November 2025. It now operates more than 400 service outlets in 98 countries and 138 major cities, providing one-stop legal services such as consultation, remote notarization and commercial mediation.

Centering on livelihood

Zhejiang's two-decade commitment to the rule of law has also prioritized people's interests. The Fengqiao Experience, which centers on resolving conflicts at the grassroots level, originated in Fengqiao town of Zhuji city. Over the past few years, the practice has spread nationwide and evolved into a hallmark of advancing law-based governance.

At present, public security authorities in Zhejiang are pushing forward the development of police stations modeled after the Fengqiao Experience. The Ningwei squadron of the traffic management police brigade of Xiaoshan district public security subbureau in Hangzhou is among them.

The squadron has deployed more police officers to frontline posts to ensure a quick response to emergencies. When no police calls come in, officers carry out preventive work including incident detection, hidden danger inspection and traffic safety publicity.



A policeman from Ningwei squadron instructs the elderly on traffic safety in Hangzhou on March 23. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Over the five years since the launch of the Fengqiao-style initiative, fatalities from traffic accidents under Ningwei squadron's jurisdiction have dropped by 63.6 percent. Following the rollout of grid-based governance, congestion-related police reports in the precinct dipped 32 percent year-on-year, and accident handling efficiency rose by 45 percent.

"We have truly realized the governance goal of resolving minor incidents within grids and major issues within the jurisdiction," Yuan Gengsheng, an official from Ningwei squadron, said.

To make judicial services more accessible and efficient, local courts in Zhejiang have introduced diversified mechanisms for family disputes and fast-track procedures for labor disputes, significantly cutting public litigation costs.

Additionally, procuratorial organs have launched special campaigns on food and drug safety and ecological protection, while the police have intensified crackdowns on telecom fraud and organized crime.

Beyond judicial rectification, Zhejiang has built 381 standardized comprehensive governance centers in key areas and expanded online judicial services to enable convenient dispute resolution. It has also strengthened public legal education with 10 national legal education bases to foster a law-abiding society.

Digital court system

Leveraging its digital economy, Zhejiang has embedded technologies into full-cycle law-based governance to modernize provincial governance.

The province has built cross-departmental big data platforms for online criminal case handling and a digital court system covering filing, mediation, trial and enforcement, lowering the appeal rate of first-instance cases to 6.12 percent.

As the nation's pilot for comprehensive and integrated administrative law enforcement reform, Zhejiang has streamlined more than 1,300 law enforcement teams to 652. It has also launched 105 cross-departmental supervision scenarios, eliminating duplicated and overlapping law enforcement issues.

In the future, Zhejiang is committed to making substantial progress in modern law-based governance. The province plans to deepen institutional reforms related to the rule of law, continuously enhance digital empowerment mechanisms for judicial and administrative governance, and refine its people-centered legal service system.

These efforts aim to consistently enhance the public's sense of fulfillment, happiness and security, setting a robust provincial benchmark for the comprehensive advancement of the rule of law across China, local officials said.



Wu Minghui hosts a stall sharing information on how people can protect their own rights during a legal publicity campaign held on May 10. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Public's legal knowledge boosted by diverse efforts

By YUAN SHENGGAO

To raise residents' awareness of the law, Zhejiang province in East China has ramped up legal popularization over the past two decades. Nowadays, respecting, studying, abiding by and applying the law has become a voluntary practice across society.

Yuhang district of Hangzhou, capital city of Zhejiang province, started to pioneer quantitative assessment on the rule of law governance in 2006, serving as a microcosm of the province's drive to foster law-abiding conduct.

Wu Minghui, who used to be a mediator, felt the change in Yuhang when recalling a contractual dispute over auxiliary processing involving a small-sized precision processor in her early working days.

In the case, a processor manufactured spare parts for a local high-tech company.

But the two sides only kept simple delivery slips without a formal written contract specifying quality criteria, inspection protocols and payment deadlines.

Disputes later arose over product precision defects, leaving more than 300,000 yuan ($44,338) unpaid.

Frequent quarrels between the two parties nearly put an end to their business partnership.

"Without standardized contract guidelines or digital working tools, I could only calm the conflicting sides temporarily instead of resolving the dispute fundamentally. That case drove home a profound truth: without the safeguards of the rule of law, businesses cannot secure stable operation," Wu said.

Now as a practicing lawyer in Nuoliya Law Firm, Wu adopts a different approach when handling similar disputes. She directly applies the Contracts section of the Civil Code to clarify delivery specifications, inspection obligations and payment liabilities for both parties.

Leveraging the digital rule-of-law platform, she uses standardized contract templates to help parties secure transaction evidence and clarify rights and obligations efficiently. Moreover, she coordinates with judicial offices, industrial parks and trade associations to settle disputes with reference to precedent rulings.

For years, Yuhang has translated institutional strengths of the rule of law into development dividends through quantified management, digital empowerment, diversified co-governance and development-focused guarantees, enabling the law to underpin businesses for steady operation and bold innovation, Wu said.

At the end of 2007, Yuhang issued the official quantitative assessment system for law-based governance. In 2008, the district rolled out a rule-of-law index. Quantitative assessment has since been applied to law-based development and social governance in Yuhang.

Earlier this year, the Ministry of Justice revealed the first batch of national model cities, counties and districts for law observance and legal popularization, with Yuhang on the list. "The core edge of a law-based Yuhang lies in addressing the genuine needs of residents and enterprises with accessible and feasible legal services. Thanks to multilevel collaborative mechanisms, most conflicts get resolved at the grassroots level. We now provide full-spectrum compliance services for enterprises covering risk prevention and dispute resolution, so businesses can pursue development free from unnecessary worries," Wu said.

Across Zhejiang, legal literacy is being promoted via diversified initiatives. In December 2025, Wenzhou arranged for leading officials of administrative authorities to attend in-court trials on-site.

In Zhenhai district of Ningbo, the Weiyuan Qingfeng hall, an education venue on Party discipline, functions as a regular rule-of-law classroom for Party members and cadres. Renovated from Zhejiang's clean-government education base and opened in 2015, it has drawn nearly 400 groups and more than 20,000 visitors annually over the past 11 years.

During the summer vacation in 2025, Shangcheng district of Hangzhou partnered with the local public welfare legal service team to host law-themed garden activities inside air-raid shelters. In the cooler environment, children learned about the evolution of China's legal publicity drive.

In January, Dai Ji, head of the Department of Justice of Zhejiang Province, revealed a 20-year scorecard marking the progress in building law-based Zhejiang. He said: "It has become a widespread social consensus that all affairs follow legal provisions, all residents understand and observe laws, and all parties conduct activities in accordance with the law."

New rules guide robotic intelligence

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Hangzhou in East China's Zhejiang province has rolled out the country's first local regulation governing embodied intelligence robots, which took effect on May 1.

Covering technological innovation, infrastructure construction, industrial development, application empowerment and safety management, the ordinance sets clear legal guidelines for the standardized and high-quality growth of the emerging sector.

Zhou Junjie, senior vice-president of Zhejiang SUPCON Information Technology, noted that the regulation was formulated with extensive input from enterprises, research institutions, end users and expert panels. Tailored to the current development status and bottlenecks of China's embodied intelligence industry, it offers valuable references and guidance for the nationwide sector.

According to Zhou, the progress Hangzhou has achieved in the embodied intelligence industry, which has been propelled by the much-talked-about "six little dragons" enterprises, represented by Unitree Robotics and DEEP Robotics, has proved the feasibility and soundness of the local regulations. These rules will set an example to drive the entire industry.

As an example of embodied robots, the recently unveiled Hangjing Zhixing robot by SUPCON can perform standard directing gestures such as guiding traffic to go straight and stop fluently. It is also capable of detecting traffic violations including riding without safety helmets, stopping beyond traffic lines and jaywalking across zebra crossings, followed by polite and patient voice alerts.

It is expected to take on a wider range of tasks in Hangzhou, ranging from the West Lake scenic area and Qianjiang New Town.

"Though it is a local industrial regulation, it boasts universal applicability," Zhou said, adding that the regulation also takes into account the current development landscape and prevailing challenges of China's embodied intelligence robot industry. "Undoubtedly, it offers valuable guidance and reference for the sector nationwide and will serve as a benchmark for the development of embodied intelligence across the country," Zhou noted.

"Furthermore, the regulation defines the core concept of embodied robots. By legislative means, it connects the full industry chain covering technology, application scenarios, market and safety. It gives enterprises full confidence to ramp up research and development efforts, roll out applications and expand business, acting as a real reassurance for local companies."



A robot produced by Zhejiang SUPCON Information Technology guides traffic on a major road in Hangzhou. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

During an enterprise's growth, innovation is inevitably accompanied by risks and uncertainties. A stable, fair, transparent and predictable legal environment is fundamental for enterprises to invest, operate and pursue innovation boldly.

This forward-looking legislation for emerging industries serves as a vivid epitome of Zhejiang's two-decade commitment to advancing the rule of law to bolster high-quality development and business environment, according to local officials.

Grounded in the belief that the rule of law creates a sound business environment, Zhejiang has launched a host of pioneering reforms, including the one-stop service that features no unnecessary interference and timely responses to needs, which has effectively unlocked the innovation capability of market entities.

According to a survey made by the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce to evaluate the business environment across the country in 2025, Zhejiang ranks first nationwide in four major categories: market environment, legal environment, innovation environment and government service environment. Its government service sector has maintained the top position for four consecutive years.

At the symposium marking the 20th anniversary of building a law-based Zhejiang, Wang Hao, Party secretary of the province, emphasized the key role of supporting high-quality development through legal services. He added that more efforts should be made to improve rules and systems for fostering a worldly recognized innovation ecosystem and a highly competitive business environment, and fully implement the requirements for building a unified national market.

"This constitutes a key part of Zhejiang's next drive to advance the development of a law-based province to a higher level," Wang said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:20 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:20 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Principles, proposals and actions aimed at better global governance

The State Council Information Office released a white paper on Wednesday titled "More Just and Equitable Global Governance: China's Principles, Proposals and Actions".

The document outlines China's principles, proposals and actions on global governance, aiming to foster broader consensus within the international community, ensure more effective responses to global challenges and build a more just and equitable global governance system.

The world faces severe and complex challenges, along with increasing disruptions to the postwar international order. The two pressing questions of the era are: What kind of global governance system should be established, and how can global governance be reformed and improved?

China has always been an active participant in, contributor to and builder of global governance as it regards it as a common endeavor that bears on the well-being of all humanity.

In promoting a global governance system characterized by extensive consultation and joint contribution for shared benefit, President Xi Jinping has called for true multilateralism to foster an equal and orderly multipolar world and a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization.

To this end, he has put forward the vision of building a community with a shared future for humanity and proposed the Global Governance Initiative to build a more just and equitable global governance system.

Resolutely upholding the authority and status of the United Nations is fundamental to the effective implementation of the GGI, which, aligned with the growing trend toward greater democracy in international relations, offers a clear and feasible road map for improving global governance.

That the GGI has the support of nearly 160 countries and international organizations — with over 60 countries joining the Group of Friends of Global Governance — sends a clear signal that building a just and equitable global governance system is a shared vision pursued by the international community.

Anchored in the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and guided by a vision of global governance featuring extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, the GGI upholds multilateralism and unites forces in pursuit of a fairer future.

But as the white paper stresses, the effective implementation of the GGI hinges on major countries bearing a sense of responsibility and all nations unitedly addressing the peace and development deficits.

With the declining effectiveness of some international mechanisms and inadequate rules in emerging areas, the fragmentation in global governance is evident. There is a "compound crisis" in which the lack of security, development, governance and trust are intertwined.

On the one hand, the world is experiencing deeper multipolarization and the rapid rise of the Global South. On the other hand, the existing governance system suffers from a lack of representativeness, inclusiveness and effectiveness. This is exacerbated by heightened competition among major countries, obstacles to multilateral cooperation and a decline in international trust.

As the white paper states, there is no need to reinvent the wheel to overcome these challenges. What is needed is for all countries to firmly uphold the international system with the UN at its core, safeguard the international order based on international law and uphold the basic norms governing international relations underpinned by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter.

China, on its part, has been consistent in this regard. Noting that China was the first country to sign the UN Charter, Foreign Minister Wang Yi said at a news conference held to present the white paper on Wednesday that the country is ready to work with other countries to reinvigorate and strengthen the UN and uphold the authority of the UN by advancing the GGI. The GGI is action-oriented and aligned with the Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative, Global Civilization Initiative and high-quality Belt and Road cooperation.

Embodying the unity of ideas and actions, the GGI provides important conceptual guidance and practical pathways for steering the global governance system toward greater justice and equity, contributing Chinese wisdom and solutions to resolving the shortcomings in global governance.

Drone 'partnership' mask for remilitarization

On the agenda of the G7 leaders who met in France this week was reportedly a proposal straight out of a geopolitical conjurer's playbook: Japan's participation in the Eurodrone project.

On paper, this is a straightforward case of industrial synergy. Europe wants to reduce its reliance on US and Chinese supply chains; Japan, with its precision manufacturing, needs new partners to ease the strain on an overstretched US defense industry. It sounds like a pragmatic "alignment" of interests.

But to see this as merely a tech-transfer or investment deal is to miss the strategic bamboozling at its heart. This is the latest, and perhaps most brazen, act in a well-rehearsed Japanese trick: the art of "security" packaging. Tokyo has become a master of cloaking military ambition in the drab language of economic and technological cooperation.

The Eurodrone initiative seems to be the perfect vehicle. It allows Japan to deepen its military ties with key European countries, gain access to sensitive drone technology for its own "counterstrike" capabilities, and embed itself further into Europe's military-industrial base — all under the guise of supply-chain "diversification".

The G7, already grappling with its existential anxieties, is susceptible to being hoodwinked in this way, as Europe's post-Ukraine security jitters mean it is predisposed to Japan selling itself as an indispensable "natural partner". By exploiting the European need to reduce dependency on the US for military supplies, Tokyo hopes to weave Japan's "remilitarization" into the fabric of collective Western security. As Tokyo sees it, if it can get a G7 stamp of approval for a project like Eurodrone, it gains a powerful imprimatur for its broader "remilitarization".

Gaining international "legitimacy" for its military expansion is not an afterthought, but the core objective of the move.

The Sanae Takaichi government has labeled China as Japan's "unprecedented strategic challenge"; Japan has doubled its military budget in a mere four years, with spending set to hit a staggering 9 trillion yen ($56.15 billion) this year; and it is actively developing offensive weapons that effectively shatter its postwar "exclusively defense-oriented" principle.

And this brings us to the uncomfortable historical parallels that polite diplomatic discourse tends to forget. The very same *zaibatsu* industrial conglomerates that will be at the heart of any Japan-Europe defense project were the indispensable gears of Japan's wartime military machine. This structural continuity, combined with the right-wing forces that continue to whitewash its wartime history, should set alarm bells ringing.

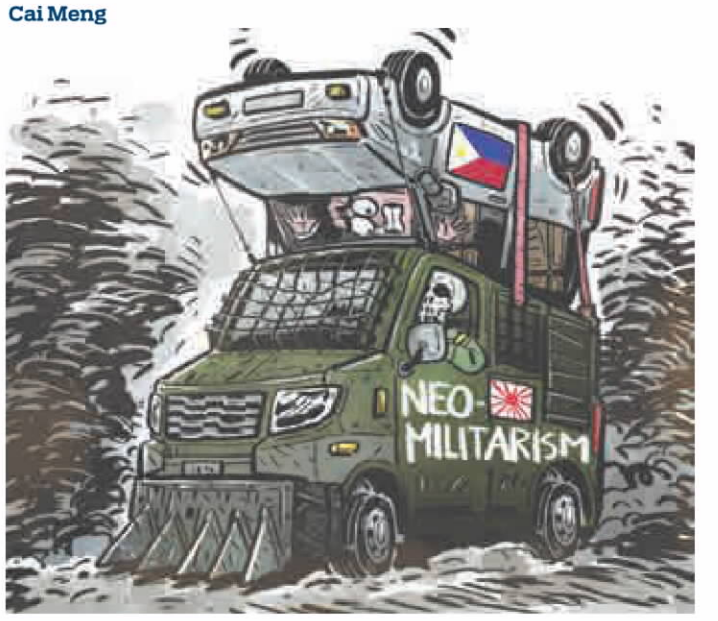
The proposal by the ruling Liberal Democratic Party to increase military spending to 3 percent to 3.5 percent of Japan's GDP, and to build "sustained combat capability" for a prolonged "emergency", demonstrates the direction of the dangerous journey the Takaichi government is leading Japan on at present.

It is a trajectory of a state methodically, and seemingly with "great courtesy", dismantling its constitutional shackles. Japan has not yet formally revised Article 9, but with its "helicopter destroyers" that are effectively aircraft carriers and its latent capability to produce nuclear weapons, the infrastructure for a potent military force is already in place. All that remains is the final push.

Therefore the query posed by Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian warrants serious global attention. Highlighting Japan's history of militarism and foreign aggression, Lin asked some pointed and timely questions: Is Japan's militarist past returning? Is Japan speeding down the path of "remilitarization"? Could Japan once again become the bane of East Asia?

As the G7 leaders consider Japan's proposal, they should ask themselves whether they are engaging with a peaceful partner, or are they providing, through their own anxieties, a multilateral seal of approval for Japan's strategic revisionism? The European G7 members risk becoming enablers of aggression. They should not be fooled by the language of "partnership". This is about more than drones; it's about setting a dangerous precedent.

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

East-west pairing assistance key to balanced development

China's east-west pairing assistance program — a mechanism launched in 1996 — continues to shape the country's pursuit of more balanced and inclusive growth. This was evident on Wednesday, when officials gathered in Yinchuan, capital of the Ningxia Hui autonomous region, to review and further improve the program.

Over the past decades, the reform and opening-up of China have greatly promoted the development of the country in all aspects. While prosperity has been generated along the country's eastern coast, its western areas have lagged behind in comparison. The challenge is to ensure growth benefits are distributed more evenly across the vast country.

In response, policymakers have established a framework linking the developed eastern regions with their less-developed western counterparts, creating channels through which capital, talent, technology and market opportunities can flow across administrative boundaries. Over time, this has evolved into a coordinated development assistance system.

Over the past five years, enterprises have been guided to invest more than 750 billion yuan ($111 billion) in the western regions. This program has helped more than 5 million rural workers from western China secure jobs and facilitated nearly 570 billion yuan in sales of agricultural products from western regions to the eastern markets. These figures suggest that the mechanism is not just redistributive. It has created sustainable economic linkages and growth opportunities.

Equally notable is the institutional architecture developed over the years. The program now operates through five major mechanisms: industrial cooperation, labor collaboration, consumer assistance, talent exchange and social support. Together they connect investment, employment, market access, human capital and public services into a single framework.

Industrial cooperation encourages investment and industry upgrading. Labor collaboration expands employment opportunities. Consumer assistance creates sizable markets for agricultural products. Talent exchange transfers expertise and managerial experience. Social support mobilizes educational, healthcare and other public resources. Each mechanism addresses a different dimension of regional inequality.

The significance of this model lies in its compatibility with China's national conditions. A country of continental scale, marked by vast differences in geography and development levels, requires institutions capable of coordinating resources across regions. The pairing program turns regional disparities into opportunities for complementary development. Eastern regions gain access to new markets and labor resources, while western regions benefit from investment, technology and expertise.

More broadly, the program reflects a characteristic of China's long-term development perspective. Few governments can sustain a development strategy across three decades while continuously adapting its objectives and implementation — from poverty alleviation to rural vitalization and coordinated regional development. The achievements of the pairing program owe much to long-range planning, policy continuity and incremental improvements in governance.

Experience around the world suggests that economic activity naturally gravitates toward already prosperous regions. China's approach has been to use institutions to mitigate this tendency without abandoning market mechanisms. The pairing program does not replace markets; it connects them by lubricating the internal circulation.

As China enters the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, balanced development has become increasingly important for the efforts to realize common prosperity. Future growth will depend not only on technological innovation and industrial upgrading, but also on expanding domestic demand and ensuring broader participation in development. Regional coordination is therefore an economic imperative of national importance.

The east-west pairing assistance program should be adapted to the current situation. Unlike 30 years ago, many inland areas have become gateways to global engagement under the Belt and Road Initiative. Consequently, the east-west pairing assistance program should incorporate more cross-regional collaboration.

Thirty years after its launch, the program stands as a testament to a governance philosophy that prizes patience, continuity and long-term development — qualities that have helped transform the regional development gap into a story of increasingly shared growth.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Chinese classics offer ways to tackle modern challenges

Editor's note: *The Second World Conference of Classics was held in Athens earlier this month. Chen Yun, a professor of philosophy at East China Normal University, who attended the conference, spoke to China News Service about why China's classics should be included in global classical studies. Below are excerpts of the interview and an analysis of the practical application. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

From the perspective of Chinese classical studies, peace signifies not merely stability within human communities, but also harmony and balance between human society and nature. Stability within human society is based on respect for political, social, ethical and civilizational differences. In addition, it demands an integrative consciousness to transcend such divisions and achieve *tai he*, where all the people and all things coexist in supreme harmony.

The contemporary world order often reflects a "law of the jungle" mindset, where might makes right, conflating human society with the animal kingdom. Such thinking amounts to a negation of civilization.

In contrast, the Chinese concept of *tianxia weigong*, or pursuing the common good for all under heaven, from the classic *The Book of Rites*, represents an ideal vision for the world order. *Tianxia*, or "all under heaven", transcends political boundaries to encompass a civilizational domain, integrating individuals and societies into a community of humanity.

In real life, it is necessary to cultivate individuals who are capable of bearing the responsibility for all under heaven, and encourage them to break free from serving narrow group interests and commit themselves to the shared interests of all humanity.

Confronted with the current world order and its multiple challenges, we must mobilize both political and non-political forces to forge a humanitarianism suited to the age of globalization, and improve global governance through diverse approaches.

Fairness, justice and equality are long-existing pursuits of Chinese philosophers from ancient times to today. The political principle of serving the public is deeply embedded in the concept of "pursuing the common good for all under heaven", which is in drastic contrast to the concept of "pursuing good for the small interest group".

Behind political concepts such as being people-oriented, selection of the capable and the rule of virtue lies the concept of "pursuing the common good for all under heaven". This has become a central feature of the traditional Chinese political value system.

The pursuit of the common good is the prerequisite for achieving fairness, and only by prioritizing public welfare, can social fairness be realized.

These values underpin China's role as a steadfast promoter of world peace and shared development.

The pursuit of common good for all under heaven carries the core wisdom of Chinese civilization. Deeply rooted in the fertile soil of Chinese culture, it has not only become an important ideological resource for the development of Chinese society, but also provides Chinese solutions for the future of humanity.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

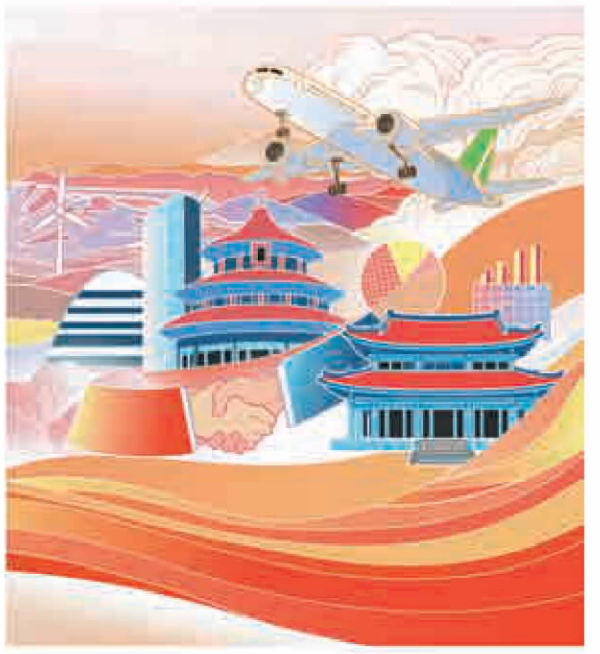
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:20 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:20 PM

VIEWS

Ro Jae Hun

Toward more mature ROK-China ties



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

In June this year, the ROK witnessed the first anniversary of its new government. Within just one year, the Lee Jae Myung administration has not only restored political stability and economic confidence, but also elevated the ROK's global standing through its "pragmatic diplomacy".

President Lee Jae Myung's proactive summit diplomacy — encompassing official visits to 14 countries and hosting the heads of state from 13 nations — has enabled ROK diplomacy to rebuild international confidence while strengthening strategic partnership and multilateral diplomacy.

In particular, ROK-China relations have developed to new heights within a remarkably short period of time.

The two successful summit meetings served as a vivid testament to the dramatic progress in bilateral relations, yielding tangible and meaningful outcomes across a wide range of areas.

As indispensable neighboring countries, the ROK and China have shared common interests in many areas and maintained close relations since the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1992. Through mutual efforts, bilateral relations have reached a new peak.

Last November, the ROK successfully hosted the 2025 APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in Gyeongju, achieving a milestone outcome with the adoption of the "Gyeongju Declaration" aiming towards easing regional trade barriers and stabilizing global supply chains.

On this occasion, President Xi Jinping visited the ROK. It was the first state visit by President Xi Jinping in 11 years. During his visit, the two leaders engaged in hours of comprehensive discussions, reaffirming the core value of our strategic cooperative partnership and laying out a blueprint for the comprehensive development of bilateral relations across political, security, economic, and cultural spheres. Then only two months later, President Lee visited Beijing. It was the first state visit by the ROK President in 9 years. These consecutive summit meetings have led to the following results.

On the political side, the two countries fully restored strategic and cooperative partnership. Mutual trust is being restored, and mutual respect is deepening. Both agreed to work together for a more stable and secure Korean Peninsula. High-level engagement and strategic communication continue to intensify.

On the economic and trade side, concrete numbers accurately reflect the positive momentum in bilateral relations. From the inauguration of the Lee Jae Myung administration through May 2026, trade between the ROK and China has totaled $315.9 billion, marking an 18 percent increase from the same period a year earlier.

The two leaders shared their vision for future cooperation in the field of investment, AI, bio industry and smart cities. Cooperation for securing a stable supply chain has been strengthened. Negotiations for the new trade and investment FTA are accelerating.

An agreement was reached to extend the currency swap. Discussions on demographic challenges facing the two countries such as aging society and silver economy were also on the agenda. As the two countries prioritize the livelihood of the people, these mutual cooperation will benefit the people of both countries.

A total of around 20 MOUs were signed to secure the implementation of the mutual agreements. These are substantive measures that will help stabilize and cement bilateral relations, especially in an increasingly uncertain global environment.

On people-to-people exchanges, mutual visits are on an upward trend, especially as both sides relaxed visa policy. The number of international flights between the ROK and China reached 113,200 just within 11 months since the launch of the current administration, marking an 8.3 percent increase.

The expanded connectivity has driven a significant increase in people-to-people exchanges, with bilateral visitor numbers rising to 8.45 million, up an approximately 26 percent. Cultural and sports cooperation is also expanding. To the delight of soccer and baduk fans, the two sides are strengthening partnerships and people-to-people exchanges in these areas, which are of great common interest to the younger generations of both countries.

Building on this growing momentum, the ROK-China Summer Youth Sports Exchange is scheduled to take place this year between Jeollabuk-do and Hainan Province, featuring friendly matches in badminton, basketball, table tennis, and baduk.

With joint efforts, these exchanges have helped improve mutual perceptions. Taking China's concerns seriously, President Lee himself publicly spoke out against the spread of misinformation and domestic fake news concerning China. According to a ROK polling organization, the favorability rating toward China recently rose from 21.3 to 30.2 percent just within a year.

Moreover, the share of those who regarded the relations as either good or average rose significantly to 78 percent. Concurrently, various other studies indicate that Chinese citizens' favorability toward the ROK has improved as well. It clearly demonstrates a meaningful and reciprocal turnaround in mutual public perceptions.

The upcoming 2026 APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in Shenzhen, China will present another important opportunity for the ROK and China to further strengthen strategic communication and deepen practical cooperation.

Building on the positive momentum achieved through the recent summit meetings, the two countries will continue to expand collaboration in emerging future-oriented fields.

Guided by the common understandings reached by two leaders, the ROK and China will work together to manifest the shared visions into substantive outcomes, accumulate mutual trust and expand people-to-people exchanges.

Advancing strategic cooperative partnership toward a more mature, stable, and ever-deepening relationship is the path the two countries are taking together.

The author is the ambassador of the Republic of Korea to China.
The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.

Arkebe Oqubay

Hainan Free Trade Port redefines economic openness

On Dec 18, 2025, the anniversary of China's landmark reform and opening-up policy, Hainan launched island-wide special customs operations — a moment that transformed the entire tropical province into the world's largest free trade in terms of area. Six months on, the numbers are striking, and the strategic logic is becoming clear.

Trade has surged. By the end of February 2026, Hainan's total goods imports and exports had reached 65.49 billion yuan ($9.7 billion), up 29.1 percent year-on-year — outpacing the national average by 14 percentage points. Exports alone grew by 55.4 percent.

Markets in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Africa and Latin America have all seen substantial growth, pointing to a genuinely diversified trade base rather than dependence on a single partner or region.

But statistics alone do not capture what makes Hainan significant. To understand why this experiment matters — not just for China, but for the wider world — it helps to ask a simple question: why choose to open up precisely when so much of the world is closing down?

The past few years have seen a wave of economic nationalism sweep through advanced economies.

Tariffs have been raised, supply chains have been "reshored" in the name of security and trade policy has increasingly been wielded as a geopolitical weapon. Hainan represents a deliberate and confident move in the opposite direction, demonstrating that openness need not mean vulnerability.

What makes Hainan different from previous Chinese free trade zones is not just its scale — though covering an entire province of 35,000 square kilometers is certainly unprecedented — it is the depth of its institutional openness.

Zero tariffs now apply to over 6,600 categories of goods, up from around 1,900 before. A corporate income tax rate of 15 percent makes it one of the most competitive business environments in Asia.

The customs framework itself is innovative. Goods move freely within the island; stricter checks apply only when products cross into the Chinese mainland market — what officials call "freer access at the first line, regulated access at the second line".

This gives foreign businesses a genuine staging ground: they can process, assemble and add value in Hainan before selling into China's vast domestic market.

One provision deserves particular attention. Imported products that undergo at least 30 percent value-added processing in Hainan can enter the mainland tariff-free.

This single rule transforms Hainan from a transit point into a place where real economic activity — and real economic value — can be created.

Critics might ask: is this not simply another special economic zone, a familiar feature of China's development landscape since the 1980s? The answer is no, and the distinction matters.

Earlier pilot free trade zones — there are now 24 of them, including the pioneering Shanghai FTZ established in 2013 — were designed as contained experiments. Hainan is something qualitatively different: a full-province model that builds on four decades of accumulated experience while breaking genuinely new institutional ground.

It is a testing ground for cross-border trade financing, greater foreign exchange flexibility, and blockchain-based payment systems.

For countries seeking alternative financial infrastructure, these pilots are worth watching closely.

Perhaps the most distinctive aspect of Hainan, and the one least appreciated in mainstream media, is what it offers developing countries.

The Global South is not a monolithic bloc, but its economies share certain common challenges: they export raw materials and agricultural commodities and struggle to move up the value chain. Hainan's design speaks directly to these challenges.

For ASEAN producers of palm oil, rubber, tropical fruits and fisheries products, Hainan offers preferential access to the Chinese market — one of the world's largest — without the full burden of mainland customs compliance.

More ambitiously, the value-added processing incentives mean that a Malaysian palm oil refiner or an Indonesian electronics assembler can locate operations in Hainan, add value and ship to Chinese consumers under favorable terms.

This is a path from commodity exporter to processed-goods exporter — precisely the transition that development economists have long argued is essential for sustainable growth.

A joint survey released on Hainan's 100th day of customs operations found that over 70 percent of ASEAN enterprises surveyed already recognize Hainan's strategic value as a platform for entering the Chinese mainland market. Export growth to ASEAN, Africa and Latin America has expanded substantially since December.

The cooperation goes beyond trade in goods. Hainan is developing sectoral platforms in tropical agriculture, healthcare, green energy and the digital economy. The Boao Lecheng International Medical Tourism Pilot Zone has become a key channel for the entry of advanced pharmaceuticals into China.

A green and digital innovation project in Baoting (a Li and Miao autonomous county in Hainan) is piloting climate-resilient development models that can be adapted and replicated in other island nations and developing countries.

These are not conventional export-processing zones that funnel goods to Northern markets while leaving the local economy largely untouched. They are platforms for a different kind of cooperation — one in which China and developing country partners build capability together.

Could other countries learn from the Hainan model? The answer depends on what one is trying to learn.

Rules-based, institutional openness — where businesses can plan around predictable policies rather than arbitrary political decisions — is a sustainable competitive advantage.

Singapore built its prosperity on this logic. Hainan is testing whether a larger, continental economy can do the same. The answer will be whether foreign enterprises move beyond registering in Hainan to actually producing there; whether the financial innovations gain traction; whether the trade links with ASEAN and the broader Global South deepen into genuine supply-chain integration.

Traditional export-processing zones tend to create enclave economies: jobs and foreign exchange, but have weak links with domestic industry and little technological transfer.

Hainan's design — with its value-added incentives, sectoral cooperation platforms and integration across an entire province rather than a fenced compound — offers a more holistic template. For countries in Africa, Southeast Asia and Latin America that are weighing their development strategies, the lessons are potentially transformative.

For advocates of multilateralism, Hainan is a timely reminder that trade liberalization can still be driven by unilateral ambition as much as negotiated agreement.

Malaysia has already identified Hainan as a testing ground for high-standard implementation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. If the experiment succeeds, it could provide practical momentum for wider regional integration at a moment when the multilateral trading system is under strain.

Hainan is still in its infancy. But what the first six months have established is that the foundations are solid. The customs system works. The numbers are moving in the right direction. The institutional framework is in place.

In a world where many governments are retreating behind walls, Hainan is a door held open.

For trade partners, investors, and development planners across the Global South and beyond, that invitation deserves a serious response.

The author is a former senior minister and special adviser to three successive prime ministers of Ethiopia and a British Academy Global Professor at SOAS University of London.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Imran Khalid

EU's tariff walls risk eroding its industrial foundation

The intense debate in the European Union over what Western policymakers called "a new wave of industrial competition" may prove to be a watershed moment in the bloc's trade policy.

In a crunch meeting in Brussels, EU commissioners explored broad sector-wide import quotas and tariff safeguards aimed at bolstering the competitiveness of European manufacturing.

At the same time, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen secured a major political agreement with Hungarian Prime Minister Peter Magyar, unfreezing €16.4 billion ($18.9 billion) in previously blocked EU funds.

Though analysts see these twin developments as notable progress in strengthening the bloc's industrial resilience and internal cohesion, a closer look reveals the underlying challenges amid the adjustments.

Brussels is attempting to strengthen its economic and trade dominance on a foundation of systemic economic friction and internal compromises.

The result is a profound institutional paradox. Europe is attempting to curb imports from reliable suppliers that help sustain the stability of its green supply chains while simultaneously spending billions to manage domestic political disagreements.

It is mimicking the protectionist, industrial-policy playbook of the United States even though it doesn't have the same fiscal firepower, abundant domestic resources or deep capital markets. The EU is inadvertently undermining its own industrial base under the weight of high energy costs and strategic overreach.

Europe's dilemma can be broken down into three systemic challenges. First, self-inflicted industrial pressure is accelerating across the continent.

The EU is inadvertently undermining its own industrial base under the weight of high energy costs and strategic overreach.

While public attention centers on high-profile trade disputes over electric vehicles, trade data reveals a deeper reality: European industry is heavily dependent on highly efficient imported intermediate inputs.

Many manufacturers rely on basic components that are significantly more cost-effective than domestic alternatives because of the scale and clustering advantages enjoyed by foreign producers.

This dependence extends to critical sectors. From polyhydric alcohols used in plastics and paints to vital amino acids used in pharmaceuticals, European industries continue to rely heavily on imported inputs. By applying one-size-fits-all safeguard clauses across sectors, Brussels is not protecting its industry; it is raising input costs for its remaining factories.

This leaves European manufacturers facing a tough choice: absorb higher costs and lose global competitiveness, or shut down domestic production entirely.

Second, Europe doesn't have the fiscal capacity required to execute a successful protectionist shift. Unlike the US, which can utilize massive federal subsidies to support domestic supply chains, the EU operates without a unified fiscal architecture. The EU Net-Zero Industry Act remains a regulatory blueprint rather than a well-funded commercial engine. Forced to operate within these rigid constraints, European policymakers are attempting to use trade defenses to curb market competition.

However, this excessive use of trade regulatory tools doesn't address the underlying macroeconomic reality: Europe lacks the cheap domestic energy and raw materials required to bridge the massive price gaps created by the efficiency of foreign producers. Consequently, protectionist measures function less as engines of industrial renewal and more as an economic surcharge on European consumers and businesses, driving up inflation while doing nothing to build real structural resilience.

Third, managing internal fragmentation through fiscal concessions risks creating permanent instability within the EU. The sudden release of €16.4 billion to Budapest, which is roughly 13 percent of Hungary's national budget, shows that the EU must continuously compromise its institutional principles to preserve a fragile consensus on foreign policy.

To advance a more protectionist economic agenda against external competitors, the European Commission is forced to offer financial incentives to seek the cooperation of member states that challenge the Brussels consensus.

This approach may buy temporary unity, but it creates a highly flammable domestic political environment.

While officials warn that millions of industrial jobs are at risk, member states remain divided on how to respond. Core manufacturing states such as France demand aggressive trade barriers to protect the domestic industry, but export-dependent economies such as Germany and Spain remain wary of provoking retaliatory trade restrictions.

The result is a fragmented union that buys short-term legislative compliance at the cost of long-term economic coherence.

The mechanics of this strategy are clear: trade protectionism without an underlying, fully funded fiscal expansion cannot preserve an industrial base. At best, it delays industrial adjustment; at worst it subsidizes industrial obsolescence.

By drifting away from the rules-based frameworks of the World Trade Organization in favor of unilateral safeguards, Europe risks weakening the very global architecture that enabled its prosperity. The ultimate implication of this shift is that Europe may be trapping itself in a structural corner. It risks alienating partners in the Global South by restricting access to its market, cutting off its own access to affordable technological components, and remaining dependent on external security guarantees.

Until Brussels addresses these structural contradictions and embraces the reality of global economic interdependence, its aggressive trade posture will remain an exercise in managing decline, rather than asserting constructive global leadership.

The author is a geostrategist and political analyst based in Karachi, Pakistan.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:20 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:20 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

LIU CHENYANG AND YU XIAOYAN

APEC's approach to resilience

The bloc's value lies not in issuing broad declarations, but in transforming consensus into replicable and scalable public goods for regional and global governance through pragmatic cooperation



Liu Chenyang



Yu Xiaoyan

Asia-Pacific regional cooperation has become increasingly important amid growing uncertainty in the global economic and trade landscape, driven by sluggish global growth, rising trade protectionism and accelerated restructuring of industrial and supply chains. The APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade Meeting, held in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, from May 22 to 23, marked an important milestone in China's role as APEC host in 2026. More importantly, it helped build consensus and shape the agenda for the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting, which will be held in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, in November.

Since its establishment in 1989, APEC has played a central role in shaping the Asia-Pacific economic order through a distinctive "APEC approach" that is tailored to the region's diversity and varying stages of development. Based on voluntary, non-binding and consensus-building principles, APEC embraces open regionalism and promotes regional economic cooperation on the basis of equality and mutual benefit. By maximizing common ground while respecting differences, it has strengthened regional cohesion and fostered broad-based consensus across the region.

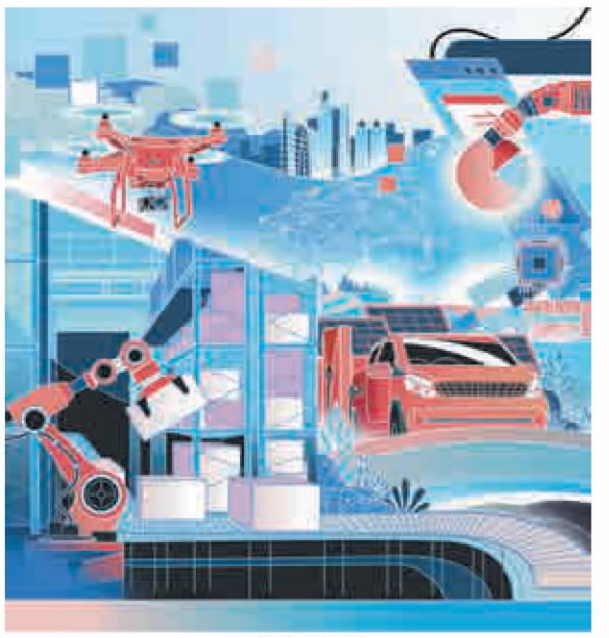
From the Bogor Goals to the Putrajaya Vision 2040, APEC has consistently provided long-term strategic direction for regional cooperation. The Bogor Goals — a commitment APEC leaders made in Bogor, Indonesia, in 1994, to achieve free and open trade and investment by 2010 for industrialized economies and by 2020 for developing economies — established a phased road map toward trade and investment liberalization, helping transform the Asia-Pacific into one of the world's most dynamic and open economic regions during the height of globalization. The Putrajaya Vision 2040, adopted in 2020, envisioned an open, dynamic, resilient and peaceful Asia-Pacific community. It identified three economic drivers — trade and investment; innovation and digitization; and strong, balanced, secure, sustainable and inclusive growth.

China's proposed theme for APEC 2026, "Building an Asia-Pacific Community to Prosper Together", together with its three priority areas — openness, innovation and cooperation — represents both a continuation and a concrete implementation of this vision.

In terms of openness, the 2024 APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting issued the Ichma Statement on A New Look at the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific agenda, strengthening the multilateral trading system, opposing protectionism and enhancing supply chain cooperation.

In terms of innovation, APEC has prioritized cooperation in emerging fields such as the digital economy, artificial intelligence, green development and new energy technologies, with a strong emphasis on technology-driven growth.

In terms of cooperation, APEC continues to promote inclusive and sustainable development, with particular attention to food and energy security, climate change, poverty reduction and greater integration of small and medium-sized enterprises and vulnerable groups into global value chains. Together, these priorities reflect APEC's ongoing efforts to promote high-quality growth in the Asia-Pacific while expanding both the scope and depth of regional economic cooperation.



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

The Asia-Pacific region's role as a stabilizing force in the global economy is rooted first and foremost in its considerable economic weight and high degree of openness. According to official APEC statistics for 2025, the region was home to approximately 3 billion people, accounting for 36.6 percent of the global population. Its real GDP reached $57.5 trillion, representing 59.4 percent of the world total, while its imports and exports of goods and commercial services accounted for 46.8 percent and 46.2 percent of global trade, respectively.

Data from the APEC Policy Support Unit show that the region achieved real GDP growth of 3.5 percent in 2023 and 3.3 percent in 2024. The latest edition of the APEC Regional Trends Analysis shows growth of around 3.3 percent in 2025. Despite fluctuations in global demand, tightening financial conditions and escalating trade frictions, the Asia-Pacific economy has maintained relatively strong resilience, underscoring the enduring value of open markets, deep economic integration and regional cooperation as drivers of growth.

This stabilizing role is also reflected in APEC's capacity for institutional innovation and rule incubation. In 2012, APEC introduced a list of environmental goods that later served as an important reference for negotiations on the World Trade Organization Environmental Goods Agreement. During the 2014 Beijing APEC meetings, China and the United States reached a consensus on expanding the Information Technology Agreement, paving the way for the WTO's 2015 agreement to eliminate tariffs on 201 IT products.

APEC has also successfully implemented initiatives such as the APEC Business Travel Card scheme to facilitate cross-border business mobility, as well as two phases of Trade Facilitation Action Plans and the Connectivity Blueprint, all of which have significantly reduced transaction costs and enhanced regional connectivity. These efforts have also helped advance the implementation of commitments under the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

These examples demonstrate that APEC's value lies not in issuing broad declarations of principle, but in its ability to transform consensus into replicable and scalable public goods for regional and global governance through pragmatic cooperation.

For China, APEC has long served as a major platform for participating in international economic cooperation. As the first regional economic cooperation mechanism China joined, APEC has provided an important channel for advancing China's diplomacy as a major country, including head-of-state diplomacy, neighborhood diplomacy and economic diplomacy.

APEC's vision of building an Asia-Pacific community by 2040 also carries significant practical relevance for China's efforts to build a community with a shared future for humanity. By fostering a stable and favorable regional environment, APEC supports China's pursuit of institutional opening-up and high-quality development. Continued progress in trade and investment liberalization and facilitation, regional connectivity, and Asia-Pacific value and supply chain cooperation will further strengthen China's capacity for high-level opening-up and create broader space for advancing Chinese modernization.

This year, China is hosting APEC for the third time. Both the Shanghai Accord adopted in 2001 and the Beijing Agenda issued in 2014 have become landmark achievements in APEC's history.

Going forward, China will demonstrate the responsibility of a major country by supporting the openness of the Asia-Pacific economy and promoting practical cooperation in areas such as the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific, connectivity, the digital economy and AI in response to evolving trends in global trade restructuring. China will also work with all parties to build an Asia-Pacific community, inject new momentum into regional development, and strengthen the synergy between APEC-led regional cooperation and global governance, further reinforcing the Asia-Pacific's role as the primary engine of global economic growth.

Liu Chenyang is a professor and the director of the APEC Study Center of Nankai University. Yu Xiaoyan is an associate research fellow at the APEC Study Center of Nankai University. The authors contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

WANG CHENWEI AND WANG HAOTIAN

Trade trends maintain momentum

New growth engines highlight the robustness as China enters the transformative 15th Five-Year Plan period



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

According to the General Administration of Customs, China's foreign trade reached 20.68 trillion yuan ($3.05 trillion) in the first five months of 2026, marking a year-on-year increase of 15.3 percent. With key economic indicators outperforming expectations, the figures signal a strong start to the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, highlighting the steady progress and long-term growth momentum of China's economy.



Wang Chenwei



Wang Haotian

Foreign trade has long been a key engine of economic growth. Advancing innovation-driven trade is essential to building a higher-level open economy and promoting high-quality development. Despite pressures from a challenging global environment, China's foreign trade has remained resilient and continued to reach new highs. Since the beginning of this year, China's foreign trade has shown four trends.

First, technology-intensive industries have become the backbone of exports. In the first five months of the year, total exports reached 11.91 trillion yuan, up 11.8 percent from a year earlier. Exports of mechanical and electrical products remained the key driver of growth, rising 18.4 percent to 7.58 trillion yuan and accounting for more than 60 percent of total exports. In contrast, exports of labor-intensive products fell 3.1 percent year-on-year to 1.61 trillion yuan.

Second, robust import growth has created new opportunities for international economic cooperation. Data from the General Administration of Customs showed that in the first five months of the year, China's imports totaled 8.77 trillion yuan, up 20.5 percent year-on-year. Imports of mechanical and electrical products increased by 25.3 percent, while imports of agricultural products also maintained steady growth. These trends suggest that an increasingly open China is responding to both domestic and global demand, while promoting mutually beneficial cooperation and shared development.

Third, private enterprises are leading the growth, recording a total import and export volume of 11.81 trillion yuan in the first five months, an increase of 15.5 percent. Foreign-invested enterprises reached 6.02 trillion yuan, up 15.7 percent, while State-owned enterprises totaled 2.81 trillion yuan, up 14 percent. Private enterprises accounted for more than half of the total trade volume, consolidating their stabilizing role in foreign trade.

Fourth, diversified trading partners and accelerated cooperation with emerging markets are contributing to a more stable and balanced trade structure. In the first five months, trade between China and Southeast Asian nations reached 3.52 trillion yuan, up 16.6 percent year-on-year. Trade with European Union countries totaled 2.53 trillion yuan, up 10.3 percent. Trade with the Belt and Road partner countries reached 10.57 trillion yuan, accounting for more than half of China's total foreign trade.

Meanwhile, it is important to recognize the risks posed by geopolitical tensions, sluggish global growth and rising trade protectionism. At home, China faces structural challenges, including frictions in the shift toward new growth drivers, relatively weak investment and consumption, insufficient domestic demand, the long-term task of industrial upgrading and risks in key sectors.

Despite these headwinds, China's economy is expected to remain resilient, supported by robust macroeconomic policies. China's system of centralized coordination enables it to mobilize resources efficiently and implement both cross-cycle and counter-cyclical policy measures, helping cushion the impact of external shocks. The country's vast domestic market, comprehensive industrial base and deeply integrated supply chains continue to provide strong structural advantages. Expanding domestic demand and continuous industrial upgrading also underpin China's long-term economic growth.

Against this positive economic backdrop, China's foreign trade is poised to stay vibrant. China has steadily expanded and diversified its trade ties across both traditional and emerging markets, enhancing its ability to withstand external shocks. To date, according to the Ministry of Commerce, China has signed 24 free trade agreements with 31 countries and regions, and its free trade partners account for 45 percent of its total goods trade. Trade-facilitating measures, including the granting of 100 percent zero-tariff treatment to African countries with diplomatic relations with China, along with deeper economic engagement with the EU, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Belt and Road partner countries, are expected to create fresh momentum for trade growth.

The technological revolution and industrial transformation are also becoming key engines of foreign trade growth. As emerging industries expand and new business models evolve, Chinese companies are becoming increasingly innovative and more motivated to explore overseas markets. In 2025, the largest gains in exports came from the "new trio" of new energy vehicles, lithium-ion batteries and photovoltaic products. According to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers, exports of new energy vehicles surged 103.7 percent. The integration of data, technology, application scenarios and hardware is not only accelerating industrial development, but also empowering foreign trade enterprises.

Looking ahead, China should continue strengthening its domestic economy while fostering a more dynamic interplay between domestic and international markets.

First, China should continue pursuing mutually beneficial cooperation to sustain the vitality of foreign trade. This includes steadily expanding a high-standard network of free trade zones and further diversifying international markets to strengthen trade resilience. At the same time, private enterprises should be further empowered as both the backbone of foreign trade and a major source of innovation. By seizing the opportunities presented by new technologies, China can move up the global value chain with more high-tech and high-value-added products, while enhancing private enterprises' capacity to expand into overseas markets.

Second, China should further coordinate policy measures with market development to unlock the potential of domestic demand. To upgrade consumer spending, targeted measures should be implemented to boost consumption, foster new consumption scenarios and models, and increase financial support for consumer goods trade-in programs. Greater efforts should also be made to cultivate new growth drivers such as cultural tourism, sports events, healthcare and wellness-related consumption. In addition, China should continue promoting a unified national market to create a more favorable business environment.

Third, China should advance high-quality, innovation-driven development to strengthen the foundations of its foreign trade supply chains. This includes implementing the "AI Plus" initiative, fostering new forms of the intelligent economy and enhancing industry chain coordination and digitization. In key sectors, strategic capabilities should be strengthened by increasing investment in research and development of core technologies, equipment and products, thereby improving the resilience of supply chains in critical areas. At the same time, China should further deepen international cooperation on industrial and supply chain development, actively participate in global rule-setting, and contribute to the stable and efficient functioning of global industrial and supply chains.

Wang Chenwei is a research fellow at the Institute of Economic Systems and Management at the National Development and Reform Commission. Wang Haotian is an associate research fellow at the Institute of Economic Systems and Management at the National Development and Reform Commission. The authors contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:20 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:20 PM

BUSINESS

AI agents set to revolutionize payment biz

Agentic commerce to bring shifts to transactions, boost autonomous services

By **JIANG XUEQING**
jiangxueqing@chinadaily.com.cn

As artificial intelligence platforms and merchant-integrated agents become more sophisticated, consumers are expected to increasingly delegate tasks such as product searches, comparisons, decisionmaking and purchasing to agents. The shift signals a new era of commerce moving from direct user interaction to a model built on user authorization and autonomous agent execution.

The rise of agentic commerce, however, presents new security and trust challenges. Merchants must be able to verify that transactions originate from legitimate AI agents rather than fraudulent actors, ensure purchases accurately reflect users' intentions and safeguard customer funds throughout the transaction process.

Against this backdrop, Chinese e-commerce giant JD unveiled its Agent Autonomous Payment Protocol on June 11. The framework aims to enable AI agents to complete payments independently within user-defined rules and spending limits.

The protocol establishes six levels of payment autonomy, providing a gradual pathway from transactions that require full human approval to those that can be executed entirely by AI agents. To enhance security, each payment request is linked to three critical elements: the verified identity of the user, the authorized version of the AI agent and a trusted operating environment. Transactions are approved only when all three conditions are validated.

The protocol also separates users' primary accounts from agent-driven spending. All agent transactions are routed through dedicated subaccounts subject to predefined controls, including spending caps, transaction limits, approved use cases, expiration periods and designated payees. Users can monitor activity in real time and revoke an agent's permission at any moment.

China's broader payment ecosystem is moving in the same direction. On May 26, Alipay debuted its AI Wallet and Token Pay, taking a step further to extend its next-generation AI payment infrastructure.

The initiative is also expanding beyond China.

Singapore-based Ant International introduced the Agentic Mobile Protocol, an agentic payment framework built for mobile interfaces including digital wallets, super apps and wearable devices. The protocol is designed to facilitate secure and seamless purchases through AI agents while helping merchants overcome challenges such as cross-border interoperability as agentic commerce scales globally.

A key component of the Agentic Mobile Protocol is an enhanced Know Your Agent authentication framework, which establishes a standardized trust-rating system for AI agents. The mechanism is intended to allow merchants to verify not only the identity of customers, but also the identity and trustworthiness of the agents acting on their behalf, helping ensure that transactions reflect genuine purchasing intent.

China's push into agentic payments comes as global payment networks race to build the infrastructure for agentic commerce. Industry leaders are increasingly developing technologies that will allow autonomous AI agents to search and complete transactions on behalf of consumers and businesses.

Mastercard is pursuing a vision of a future in which AI agents could eventually transact continuously with one another, executing chains of payments.

On June 10, the company unveiled Agent Pay for Machines, a new service designed to enable machine-to-machine transactions across its global payments network. The service will allow payments to be authorized, orchestrated and settled at machine speed, supporting emerging AI-driven business models.

Unlike traditional point-of-sale or person-to-merchant payments — which are initiated directly by users — machine-to-machine transactions are expected to be programmatic, continuous and executed between systems in the background of digital commerce.

"Machine payments can make it possible for services to be bought and sold among agents at fundamentally different scales than payments today — very high volumes, very small values, very fast and at extremely low latency," said Jorn Lambert, Mastercard's chief product officer.

Also on June 10, Visa announced a strategic collaboration with OpenAI to enable secure payments within agentic commerce. Under the partnership, Visa will provide its global payments network, credentialing capabilities and security infrastructure to support agentic commerce services. The company's payment capabilities will be integrated into OpenAI experiences, giving developers and merchants a streamlined way to accept Visa payments initiated by AI agents.

Visa said payments will operate within clearly defined user permissions and controls, including spending limits, approved merchant categories and required approvals. Transactions will be backed by tokenized credentials, real-time authorization and fraud-monitoring systems designed to maintain strong consumer protections.

"AI will transform commerce more profoundly than the internet or mobile technology ever did," said Jack Forestell, Visa's chief product and strategy officer. "As AI agents become active participants in the economy, Visa's focus is to ensure transactions are trusted, secure and seamless."

Live wires



Workers from State Grid Changji conduct live maintenance on power transmission lines in Yushugou township, Changji Hui autonomous prefecture, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. The work ensures stable power supply for local farmers' summer drainage and irrigation operations amid the peak agricultural season. HE YUCHENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Well done



Platforms for Phase II of the Bozhong 26-6 oilfield development project stand fully prepared for loading in Tianjin's Binhai New Area on Tuesday. Located in the central Bohai Sea, the oilfield features reservoirs buried more than 4,500 meters beneath the seabed and holds proven cumulative geological reserves of over 200 million cubic meters of oil and gas. DU PENGHUI / XINHUA

Shanghai Disney Resort marks 10th anniversary with sights set on future

By **ZHENG ZHENG** in Shanghai
zhengzheng@chinadaily.com.cn

Executives from Walt Disney Co and its Chinese partners have expressed optimism about prospects for Shanghai Disney Resort, unveiling a series of expansion plans as the resort celebrated its 10th anniversary on Tuesday.

"When we opened these gates, we believed we could create something the world had never seen — a place where Disney storytelling met Chinese culture in a way that was genuinely new," said Josh D'Amaro, CEO of Walt Disney Co.

The resort has welcomed more than 100 million guests since its opening in 2016. "As we celebrate the park's first decade and look to its next, what excites me most is that we're just getting started," D'Amaro said.

Thomas Mazloum, chairman of Disney Experiences, said: "Being here in Shanghai has reconfirmed to me the immense opportunities we have in this beautiful country and around the world. You see here what happens when we show up where our fans and consumers are — and when we do so with a lot of innovation and immense respect for local culture."

Mazloum called Shanghai's track record a global blueprint. "I don't believe Shanghai Disney Resort will ever be completed, because we have a lot of imagination left."

The resort is already deep into its next expansion phase. Construction of its ninth themed area — a Spider-Man zone set to deliver the park's first major Marvel-themed attraction — reached a milestone just weeks ago when the last section of its roller coaster track was installed.

Two additional themed hotels are also under development.

Guan Taoping, chair of Shanghai Shendi Group — the Chinese joint venture partner — described the past decade as a journey of deep local roots, cultural exchange and regional development. She pledged to build on the resort's success to transform the broader area into "a world-class multiday tourism destination" and to accelerate what she described as a "culture-tourism-plus" industrial ecosystem.

"Our guests and fans, community and partners, cast and imagineers, and both shareholders have been the authors of the resort's story over the years," said Andrew Bolstein, president and general manager of Shanghai Disney Resort.

"As we continue the momentum built throughout the past 10 years, defined by continuous expansion and development, relentless innovation and a steadfast commitment to excellence, we are confident that the future of Shanghai Disney Resort is bright."

Tasia Filippatos, president and managing director of Disney Parks International, noted that Shanghai's innovations have generated lessons now being exported across the company's global network. "This park was built with the preferences, taste, and culture of the Chinese people at the forefront," she said, adding that many of those learnings have applications around the globe.

Experts say the resort's influence extends far beyond its gates. Lou Jiajun, a professor at East China Normal University — who has followed the project since 2009 — said the resort had transcended the boundaries of a theme park. "Over 10 years, Shanghai Disney has evolved from a single park to a resort, and then into a benchmark — for destination building, for industry leadership, and for the integration of culture and tourism," Lou said.

Lin Huanjie, president of the Institute for Theme Park Studies in China, credited the resort with rewriting the competitive logic of the industry.

"Disney's arrival made clear that competition should not be about scale and investment, but about building an experience system, creating emotional value and sustaining long-term operational excellence," he said.

Yuan Ding, executive dean of the Shanghai Disney Dream Vocational Campus and director at Shanghai Normal University, pointed to the resort's role as an employment engine. "Quantitatively, it has created hundreds of thousands of direct and indirect jobs for the entire Yangtze River Delta region," he said. "Qualitatively, it has elevated the appeal and professional standing of careers in the tourism and hospitality industry."

Inner Mongolia key hub to Sino-EU trade

By **ZHONG NAN** in Beijing and **YUAN HUI** in Hohhot

China's ongoing industrial upgrading and the launch of the China (Inner Mongolia) Pilot Free Trade Zone in April will create fresh momentum for China-Europe freight train services and provide stronger support for the country's foreign trade growth, said supply chain experts and customs officials.

The new pilot FTZ, within North China's Inner Mongolia autonomous region, covers 119.74 square kilometers and comprises three subzones in Hohhot, capital of the region; Manzhouli, a northern border city; and Ereenhot, a land port on the China-Mongolia border, each featuring differentiated functions and the development of industries tailored to local conditions.

The growing role of Inner Mongolia as a key gateway for China-Europe trade highlights the significance of the new FTZ.

On Friday, a China-Europe freight train loaded with small household appliances departed from Ereenhot, pushing the cumulative number of freight train trips passing through the network's central corridor beyond 25,000, said China State Railway Group Co Ltd (China Railway).

Lin Meng, director of the modern supply chain research institute at the Beijing-based Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, said the steady rise in shipments of machinery, vehicles and other industrial products reflects the growing competitiveness of China's manufacturing sector.

> "Together with ongoing infrastructure upgrades, the initiative is expected to enhance the efficiency and capacity of China-Europe freight train services."
>
> **Chen Jianwei,** researcher specializing in foreign trade at the University of International Business and Economics

Continued growth in trade with European and Central Asian markets is expected to provide sustained support for freight demand, said Lin.

Chen Jianwei, a researcher specializing in foreign trade at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing, said the development of the China (Inner Mongolia) Pilot FTZ is likely to draw greater investment in logistics, warehousing, processing and cross-border commerce.

"Together with ongoing infrastructure upgrades, the initiative is expected to enhance the efficiency and capacity of China-Europe freight train services," said Chen.

Ereenhot's railway port currently handles about 13 China-Europe freight trains daily. It is linked to 75 China-Europe freight train routes connecting more than 70 logistics hubs in over 10 countries, including Germany and Poland, said China Railway.

Freight throughput at Ereenhot railway port has maintained steady growth this year. As of June 11, the port had handled 2,137 China-Europe freight train trips, transporting 205,100 twenty-foot equivalent units and 1.97 million metric tons of cargo, up 15.1 percent, 9.7 percent and 28.6 percent year-on-year, respectively.

Mi Junming, deputy director of Manzhouli Railway Station Customs, said the rapid growth in freight volume has been accompanied by a notable upgrade in the cargo mix handled by Inner Mongolia's border ports.

Cargo once dominated by metals, chemicals, garments and footwear has increasingly given way to higher-value products such as electric vehicles, consumer electronics and household appliances, reflecting the upgrading of China's manufacturing sector and export structure, said Mi.

Statistics from Manzhouli Customs show that China's EV exports through Manzhouli railway port totaled 320 million yuan ($47.33 million) in the first five months, up 950 percent year-on-year.

Chinese EVs have gained increasing traction in overseas markets in recent years, supported by advances in battery technology, intelligent features and competitive pricing, emerging as an important contributor to China's export growth, said Chen Bin, deputy director of the expert committee of the Beijing-based China Machinery Industry Federation.

Contact the writers at zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

Yum buys full Pizza Hut China for $1.2b

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn

On Tuesday, Yum China Holdings announced that it has entered into a definitive agreement to take full ownership of the Pizza Hut brand on the Chinese mainland in a $1.2 billion deal, a strategic shift that will eliminate ongoing royalty payments to Yum Brands.

The move gives Yum China direct control of one of its most profitable and fast-growing restaurant businesses. The transaction is expected to improve store economics and accelerate expansion, as Yum China pushes to deepen its dominance in the country's casual dining market.

Pizza Hut is currently the largest casual dining restaurant brand in China under the Yum China portfolio. In 2025, the business generated $2.3 billion in segment revenue and $183 million in operating profit. In the first quarter, it posted its 13th consecutive quarter of same-store transaction growth and its eighth straight quarter of margin and operating profit expansion.

> "Ownership will give us greater strategic flexibility to drive innovation across menus, formats and operations."
>
> **Joey Wat,** CEO of Yum China

Yum China, which operates KFC, Pizza Hut and Taco Bell on the Chinese mainland, said it plans to expand the Pizza Hut footprint to more than 6,000 restaurants by 2028, up from 4,375 locations across more than 1,100 cities and counties today.

The company is also targeting a doubling of Pizza Hut operating profit by 2029 in comparison to 2024 levels.

On moving from exclusive licensee to brand owner, Yum China CEO Joey Wat said, "Ownership will give us greater strategic flexibility to drive innovation across menus, formats and operations."

The transaction comes as Yum China continues to lean on KFC as its primary growth engine. The company said KFC China, which currently operates about 13,450 restaurants, is expected to expand to more than 17,000 locations by 2028, particularly in lower-tier and underserved markets.

Separately, Yum China said KFC China will be eligible for a decade-long financial incentive from Yum Brands that will be tied to system sales growth targets and aimed at supporting continued expansion momentum.

It is not the first time Chinese capital and enterprises have moved to acquire or take control of internationally renowned food and beverage brands.

In 2017, a consortium led by CITIC Group and Carlyle Group acquired 20-year franchise rights for McDonald's on the Chinese mainland and in Hong Kong and Macao. Carlyle exited the investment in 2023, and in October 2024, CITIC Capital completed an additional stake purchase, resulting in the CITIC-led consortium holding a 52 percent controlling stake while McDonald's Corp retained 48 percent.

In November 2025, CPE, a leading Chinese consumer-focused private equity firm, acquired an 83 percent controlling stake in Burger King China, with the parent brand Restaurant Brands International retaining the remaining 17 percent.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:20 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:20 PM

CHINA

Traditional festivities and sports spur holiday travel

By ZOU SHUO
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

A distinctive blend of tradition, family bonding and youthful energy is expected to power China's tourism market during the upcoming Dragon Boat Festival holiday, travel industry sources said.

The three-day holiday, which starts on Friday, coincides with *xia zhi*, one of the 24 solar terms on the Chinese calendar, marking the summer solstice, and Father's Day, both of which fall on Sunday. It also overlaps with the ongoing 2026 FIFA World Cup.

Usually, the festivities revolve around boat racing, making sticky rice dumplings known as *zongzi* and other folk customs, but adding to the festive atmosphere this year are soccer watch parties and concert tourism, creating a multi-peak travel pattern, travel agencies said.

Travelers aged 20 to 49 are the main drivers of the holiday travel surge, accounting for more than 70 percent of total planned trips, data from online travel agency Tuniu showed. Short- and medium-distance trips lasting two to three days are the most popular, reflecting a clear shift toward smaller breaks and short-notice bookings.

The end of the national college entrance exam, or *gaokao*, has also triggered a surge in travel demand, which is expected to last until early July, creating a staggered travel window ahead of the summer rush, Tuniu said.

Students, typically aged 18 to 23, are driving much of this demand. Many parents had promised trips as gifts after the *gaokao*, which has boosted bookings among young travelers. According to online travel platform Qunar, flight bookings by 18-year-olds from June 10 through the end of June rose more than 30 percent compared with the same period in May.

Traditional Dragon Boat Festival activities — including making *zongzi*, salted duck eggs and sachets, wearing *hanfu* (a traditional Chinese costume) and watching boat races — have become major consumption drivers, Tuniu said.

The overlap with Father's Day has boosted family travel, with a notable increase in parent-child trips, it said.

Popular destinations include Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou in Guangdong province and Hangzhou in Zhejiang province. Shantou in Guangdong, the setting of the hit film *Dear You*, is generating a surge of searches, Qunar said.

The ancient villages of Shangrao in Jiangxi province are also much sought after. Searches for village resorts in the area, where visitors can experience festival traditions, have surged sevenfold, it said.

The frenzy generated by the ongoing soccer World Cup has also influenced travel demand. The 2026 Northeast Football City League, or "Dongbeichao" — a regional tournament jointly hosted by Liaoning, Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces as well as the Inner Mongolia autonomous region — is attracting fans from across the country, pushing up hotel bookings in the area during the holiday, according to Qunar.

In Liaoning, 43 scenic spots in seven cities are offering free admission to ticket-holding fans and residents of partner regions, helping boost hotel bookings by 20 percent year-on-year, the travel agency said.

Yin Ping, a professor at Beijing Jiaotong University's School of Economics and Management, noted that the convergence of Dragon Boat Festival, Father's Day and the World Cup creates a "day-night dual peak" travel pattern, with daytime dragon boat races and *zongzi*-making activities drawing crowds, while evenings will see fans flocking to bars and restaurants to watch matches, boosting spending on dining and nightlife.

"The integration of traditional folk culture, sports events and concerts is likely to become a lasting trend," she said.

The success of the Northeast football league in enhancing hotel bookings shows that a combination of folk culture, sports and tourism can sustainably drive local consumption — not only during holidays but also as a regular model, she added.

Airship in action



A manned airship carrying communications and reconnaissance equipment simulates deployment to a disaster-hit area during a flood-control and emergency response drill in Shishou, Hubei province, on Wednesday. ZHU XIYONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Briefly

Ex-CNOOC executive jailed for bribery case

Yuan Guangyu, former deputy general manager of the China National Offshore Oil Corporation, was sentenced to death with a two-year reprieve by a court in Jiangsu province for accepting bribes worth more than 152 million yuan ($22.49 million). Yuan was also deprived of political rights for life, and all his personal assets were confiscated, according to the ruling announced by the Xuzhou Intermediate People's Court. The court found that from 2001 to 2022, Yuan took advantage of his positions in the offshore oil corporation to seek benefits for relevant individuals and organizations in matters including project contracting, business operations and job adjustments, and accepted bribes worth more than 152 million yuan in return. In China, a suspended death sentence is typically commuted to life imprisonment if no new crimes are committed during the two-year probation period. The sentence may be further reduced for good behavior by the inmate.

Cambodia repatriates key fraud suspect

Chinese police recently repatriated Liu Ren, a key suspect in a major transnational gambling and telecom fraud case, from Cambodia, the Ministry of Public Security said on Wednesday, marking another result of law enforcement cooperation between the two countries. Liu is a core member of a criminal syndicate led by Chen Zhi, a Chinese national identified by authorities as the ringleader of a major cross-border gambling and fraud network. He was repatriated from Phnom Penh, Cambodia, earlier this year. Investigators said Chen directed Liu and others to establish the Jinbei Group in Cambodia in 2016. The group operated multiple online gambling platforms targeting Chinese citizens and encouraging gambling activities. Since 2020, the group has also run telecom fraud compounds in Cambodia, carrying out large-scale online fraud schemes involving extremely large sums of money, police said.

CHINA DAILY

Sustainable fishing



Fishermen haul in nets in Duchang county, Jiangxi province, on Wednesday. The region has expanded ecological fish farming in recent years, using fish stocking and natural cultivation methods to improve water quality while supporting local livelihoods. YIN ZHI / FOR CHINA DAILY

China to streamline its employment structure

New plan seeks fairer job market, will use AI to support entrepreneurship

By ZOU SHUO
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

China will maintain overall employment stability, create fuller employment opportunities and ensure a fairer employment environment during the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30), according to a new plan released by the State Council, China's cabinet, on Wednesday.

The plan for implementing an employment-first strategy over five years also calls for further optimizing the employment structure, achieving more efficient job-person matching, fostering more harmonious labor relations, and making new progress in high-quality and full employment.

It stresses the need to address the principal contradiction of supply-demand mismatches in the human resources market. It emphasizes implementing the employment-first strategy, tackling structural employment mismatches, deepening institutional reforms in employment, and preventing large-scale unemployment risks.

The plan calls for synergy between macro policies and employment, implementing actions to stabilize and expand employment, and adapting to the development of artificial intelligence to support employment and entrepreneurship.

It urges strengthening coordination between industry and employment, stabilizing the scale of employment in labor-intensive industries, expanding employment capacity in the service sector, and tapping the employment potential of emerging sectors.

Meanwhile, it stresses improving the alignment between educational supply and talent demand, and carrying out vocational skills training on a large scale.

The plan also requires expanding channels for college graduates and other young people to secure employment and achieve career success. Increasing support for key groups, including rural migrant workers and veterans, are needed, while strengthening employment assistance for people with difficulties in finding jobs and registered unemployed individuals should be in place.

It further demands promoting the healthy development of flexible employment and new forms of employment. Efforts are to be made to improve the employment and entrepreneurship service systems.

The plan also seeks to strengthen the protection of workers' rights and interests, and promote employment monitoring, early warning and risk response.

All regions and departments should treat employment as a top priority for people's livelihoods, adopt systematic approaches, and effectively implement the plan's tasks in light of local conditions, the plan said.

In 2025, China created 12.67 million new urban jobs nationwide, with the average urban surveyed unemployment rate standing at 5.2 percent, below the annual target of around 5.5 percent, according to the National Bureau of Statistics.

For 2026, the Government Work Report has set the employment targets at over 12 million new urban jobs and an urban surveyed unemployment rate of around 5.5 percent. In the first five months of 2026, the average urban surveyed unemployment rate stood at 5.2 percent, official data showed.

Tang Daisheng, a professor at Beijing Jiaotong University's School of Economics and Management, said the most notable highlight of the 15th Five-Year Plan is its elevation of the employment strategy from "employment first" to "high quality and full employment". This shift, he noted, marks a fundamental change in development philosophy, from focusing on whether there is a job to whether the job is good, moving from sheer quantity growth to quality improvement and structural optimization.

The establishment of a coordinated mechanism between investing in physical capital and investing in people means employment policies no longer operate in isolation but are deeply embedded in macro-control, industrial development, and technological innovation, he added.

Regarding artificial intelligence, Tang said the plan proactively addresses technological change by scaling up vocational skills training to help workers master new capabilities and adapt to new roles.

This forward-looking approach, he said, demonstrates the Party's ability to navigate complex situations and seize opportunities, while guiding workers to find their footing and realize their value amid the technological wave.

Extreme weather monitoring beefed up

By HOU LIQIANG
houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

China has significantly expanded its climate observation network as extreme weather events become more frequent and severe, launching new satellites, radar systems and ground stations to strengthen its adaptation to climate change, according to the 2025 progress report on China's climate change adaptation.

The report, unveiled by the Ministry of Ecology and Environment on Wednesday, which marked the 14th National Low-Carbon Day, detailed advances China has made in strengthening its monitoring network during the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-25) as the country seeks to cope with a worsening climate crisis.

China launched six Fengyun meteorological satellites during the period. Its enhanced satellite system now provides services to 133 countries and regions worldwide, the report said.

The report also highlighted a strengthened weather radar network. With 842 radars covering more than 90 percent of populated areas, the network can now identify severe weather events with an accuracy rate of 83 percent.

China has established more than 100,000 ground meteorological observation stations, nine atmospheric baseline stations and 27 national climate observatories, including its first overseas baseline station in Antarctica, according to the report.

It added that the number of jointly built and shared hydrological monitoring stations across government departments has reached 137,000.

The expanded monitoring system comes as China grapples with increasingly volatile weather.

In 2025, the country experienced 40 regional severe convective weather events, above the five-year average, while the national average number of days with gale-force winds — featuring instantaneous wind speeds of 17.2 meters per second or higher — reached 18.6, the highest level since 1991, the report said.

Severe convective weather is characterized by strong winds, hail, thunderstorms and brief but heavy spells of rainfall.

Regional and seasonal droughts have also become more pronounced in China, the report noted. From January to May last year, for instance, Anhui and Jiangsu provinces and the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region each recorded their highest number of drought days for the period since 1961.

Temperatures remained at record highs, with extreme heat events occurring frequently. The national average temperature in 2025 reached 10.9 C, 1 C above the long-term average and tied with 2024 as the highest on record, the report said.

Speaking at a National Low-Carbon Day event in Nanning, capital of Guangxi, Liu Yang, deputy head of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment's Department of Climate Change, pledged to accelerate upgrades to China's climate adaptation framework to help achieve the country's goal of basically building a climate-resilient society by 2035.

"We will improve the full-cycle mechanism of observation, assessment, action, feedback and enhancement to steadily bolster our ability to prevent and mitigate major climate risks and disasters," she said.

Soundbites

Editor's note: *The State Council Information Office held a group interview on Wednesday themed "Forging Ahead on the New Journey", bringing together representatives engaged in rural social civility to speak with the media.*



In 1999, I was elected village Party secretary and village director, and I have held these positions ever since. Relying on the Party's good policies, we united and led Party members and the masses to work hard and overcome difficulties, transforming a once poor, dirty, chaotic, and backward village into a model village for rural revitalization. Today, it is livable, suitable for work, and harmonious. Our village has chosen a new collectivized path. By developing and strengthening the village collective economy and encouraging and supporting villagers to start businesses and find employment, we aim to achieve common prosperity. We have cultivated and expanded advantageous industries, including modern agriculture, rural tourism, logistics and trade, building decoration, education and training, and medical care and wellness. With industrial development, we have pooled resources to accomplish major tasks and solve problems that individual households could not address on their own.

Wang Chuanxi, *Party secretary of Daicun village, Lanling county, Linyi city, Shandong province*



As a curator, I have always been thinking: 90 years ago, Ai Siqi turned profound philosophical ideas into plain language that ordinary people loved to hear. Today, how can we use this same approach to cultivate a civilized rural culture? The answer lies by the small fire pit in Tengchong. Over the years, learning from Ai's people-oriented approach, we have stepped out of the memorial hall and into villages. We set up no podiums and use no formulaic speeches. Instead, we sit with villagers in courtyards and around fire pits, talking about village rules and agreements, filial piety, and family values. In this way, theory has become a guide for daily life.

Bo Yanting, *director of the Ai Siqi Memorial Hall in Tengchong city, Yunnan province*



I am one of the province's first cultural commissioners, stationed in Hangchuan village, Jiande, Hangzhou. There are over 1,500 of us working across Zhejiang's countryside to promote cultural development. We visit households, identify villagers' cultural needs, bring resources from our home institutions into villages, and work with villagers to implement cultural projects. In the two years since I came to Hangchuan, I have organized photography exhibitions and built a village photography team. I believe our work as cultural commissioners is a two-way cultural journey with the villagers. The building of a civilized rural culture is never about us doing things for the villagers. Instead, we must take root in the countryside and work side by side with them.

Chen Yun, *deputy editor-in-chief of Zhejiang Photographic Press and a cultural commissioner of Zhejiang province*



Many years ago, I was a flight attendant with Xiamen Airlines, serving passengers from all over the country, dressed in uniform and wearing high heels every day. But the farther I traveled and the more scenery I saw, the more I missed my hometown and family. So in 2016, I returned to my hometown, Minning town, carrying this deep attachment and my original aspiration. I often wondered: when will my hometown be seen by more people? Then one day, I met the deputy head of our town, who said to me: "You are a college graduate from our town. Have you ever thought of using your English major to promote Ningxia's agricultural products?" His words struck a chord with me. I grew up in Minning and have witnessed its development and transformation over the past 30 years. Today, Minning has an abundance of fine products. So I decided to tell the story of my hometown's changes and introduce its agricultural products in both Chinese and English, so that more people could see Minning. I planted myself deep in the fields of Minning, using my phone as my new farming tool and turning my livestreaming room into my new farmland.

Wu Juan, *villager from Yuanlong village, Minning town, Yongning county, Yinchuan city, Ningxia Hui autonomous region*

LI HONGYANG

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:20 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:20 PM

DOCUMENT

More Just and Equitable Global Governance: China's Principles, Proposals and Actions

The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China
June 2026

Contents

Preface
I.The World Today Faces Severe and Complex Challenges
II.The Global Governance Initiative Responds to Challenges of Our Times
III.China's Contribution to Promoting Global Governance
IV.Guiding the Direction of Change Towards a Bright Future
V.Moving Forward Hand in Hand at a Critical Juncture in History
Conclusion

Preface

Global governance is a common endeavor that bears on the wellbeing of all humanity, and building a just and equitable global governance system is a shared vision long pursued by people from across the world.

Over 80 years ago, the United Nations (UN) was founded as a multilateral platform for countries to address international affairs through dialogue and consultation. It established international rules underpinning the rule of law, ushering in a new phase in global governance. After the Cold War, multipolarization and economic globalization began to gain momentum, and the concept of global governance grounded in coordination and cooperation was widely endorsed. In recent times, however, unilateralism, protectionism, and hegemonism have been spreading unchecked, while deficits in peace, development, security, and trust continue to expand. Reforming and improving global governance to resolve these challenges and letting the UN play a core role have thus become a critical topic for the future of humanity.

China has always been an active participant in, contributor to, and builder of global governance. In the new era, President Xi Jinping put forward the vision of building a community with a shared future for humanity. In promoting a global governance system characterized by extensive consultation and joint contribution for shared benefit, he has called for true multilateralism to foster an equal and orderly multipolar world and a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization. In 2025, at a pivotal historical juncture marking the 80th anniversary of the victory in the Global War Against Fascism and the founding of the UN, President Xi proposed a new initiative, the Global Governance Initiative (GGI).

The GGI is designed to offer a Chinese solution to the two pressing questions of the era: what kind of global governance system should be established, and how global governance can be reformed and improved. Upon its introduction, it swiftly gained support from nearly 160 countries and international organizations, with over 60 countries joining the Group of Friends of Global Governance. The international community believes that the GGI sends a clear signal: uphold multilateralism, unite forces, and pursue a fair future. The GGI aligns with the growing trend towards greater democracy in international relations and bolsters international confidence in practicing multilateralism. It offers a clear and feasible roadmap for improving global governance, bringing valuable stability and positive energy to a turbulent world.

China has proposed the GGI to expedite the building of a more just and equitable global governance system. Resolutely upholding the UN's authority and status is fundamental to the effective implementation of this initiative. Success will also hinge on major countries bearing a sense of responsibility, and on all nations uniting and cooperating to address deficits in peace and development. All countries should firmly uphold the international system with the UN at its core, safeguard the international order based on international law, and uphold the basic norms governing international relations underpinned by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, instead of reinventing the wheel.

The Chinese government is publishing this white paper to introduce China's principles, proposals and actions in global governance, foster broader consensus within the international community, ensure more effective responses to global challenges, and build a more just and equitable global governance system.

I. The World Today Faces Severe and Complex Challenges

Our world has entered an era marked by profound change on a scale unseen in a century. The pursuit of peace and development remains a daunting challenge. The international system established after World War II has been severely disrupted by multiple crises, placing global governance at a critical crossroads. Progress is imperative; failure to advance risks falling behind. Now, more than ever, the world needs to revitalize multilateralism, uphold the rule of law, and ensure more efficient governance.

1. Growing Challenges Call for More Effective Governance

Currently, the international landscape is undergoing profound changes on an unprecedented scale, with turmoil and upheaval more intense and pronounced. Political and economic disputes worldwide are escalating, revealing deep-seated conflicts, while "black swan" and "grey rhino" events keep emerging continually. The ship of human civilization has entered dangerous waters with hidden reefs and violent storms.

Geopolitical tensions are intensifying, with armed conflicts erupting in multiple regions. The Ukraine crisis has entered its fifth year, hostilities in the Middle East are spilling over and spreading, and multiple hotspot issues remain unresolved. The Global Peace Index continues to decline: in 2025, the number of armed conflicts reached a new high after World War II, with more than 50 countries directly embroiled in conflict or war. Global military spending has surged, militarism has resurfaced, and nuclear proliferation and "nuclear sharing" continue to pose a grave threat, leaving international security in a precarious state.

Global economic fragmentation is exacerbating, significantly hindering development. Economic globalization is facing strong headwinds, as some countries erect fences and barriers, pursue decoupling, sever industrial supply chains, and impose unilateral tariffs, disrupting the global economic order. Overall progress in the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has lagged far behind, with nearly 80 percent of assessable targets progressing slowly or even regressing. More than 830 million people worldwide still live in extreme poverty while 2.3 billion suffer from food insecurity, and the North-South divide and wealth gap continue to widen.

New challenges are arising in quick succession, with multiple crises intertwining and accumulating. The transition to a climate-resilient future is fraught with difficulties, the digital divide is deepening, and the misuse of artificial intelligence poses new security risks. Challenges to food and energy security are also intensifying, and non-traditional security threats such as terrorism, cyberattacks, transnational crime, and biosecurity risks are on the rise. The issues that human society must collectively address are becoming increasingly complex and diverse.

The universe has only one Earth, which is the shared home of all humanity. Countries are not riding separately in some 190 small boats, but aboard a single giant ship of shared future. Only by working together and supporting one another can we navigate through the storms of global challenges and sail towards a brighter future.

2. The Law of the Jungle Seriously Undermines the International Rule of Law

Built upon the ruins of the two world wars, the UN serves as a shelter for peace and development, and its Charter laid the institutional cornerstone for global governance. History can only move forward, not backward; we must draw lessons from the bloodshed and fires of war of the past and prevent a return to the law of the jungle at all costs.

Unilateralism and hegemonism cause only grave harm, openly trampling upon international law and the basic norms governing international relations. By bullying the small and weak and brazenly wielding force against sovereign states, certain countries have shown they prioritize their national interests above all else, applying double standards and challenging international justice for their own selfish gain. These nations gang up to form exclusive groups and blocs, inciting division and confrontation and carving spheres of influence today – in the 21st century – as they did in centuries gone by. By so doing they have become the major source of global turbulence.

De-globalization and protectionism are on the rise, while economic and trade issues are being politicized, instrumentalized, and weaponized. Some countries have instigated trade wars and tech wars, imposed unilateral sanctions illegally, and abused long-arm jurisdiction. They have single-mindedly sought to build "small yards with high walls" or "parallel systems", and have overstretched the concept of national security to suppress and contain the economic and technological progress of other countries. These retrogressive actions violate the principles of the market economy, trample on the rules of free trade, and severely disrupt the international economic order.

Humanity now faces several crucial questions. Fairness and justice, or the law of the jungle? Openness and mutual benefit, or isolation and confrontation? The rule of law, or power politics? At this historical crossroads, we must be responsible and make the right choice.

3. It Is Imperative to Shore Up the Governance System

The UN is the most comprehensive, representative and authoritative international organization, and the UN-centered international system plays an irreplaceable and vital role in global governance. Over time, however, the current global governance system has become increasingly incompatible and misaligned with the realities of today and the evolving international landscape, and its shortcomings and deficiencies are growing ever more pronounced.

The UN's authority is challenged. Disregarding the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, a certain major power has withdrawn from international organizations and agreements, defunded key bodies, blocked Security Council resolutions, and paralyzed the World Trade Organization's (WTO) dispute settlement mechanism. These actions have seriously disrupted the international order and caused further damage to multilateral mechanisms, eroding the foundation of trust in multilateral cooperation.

The effectiveness of multilateral institutions is in urgent need of improvement. As some countries refuse to fulfill their responsibilities and obligations, multilateral agendas are often left discussed but undecided, or decided but not implemented. Efforts must therefore focus on improving the operational efficiency, emergency response capabilities, and transparency of multilateral institutions such as the UN. At the same time, the existence of governance gaps in emerging fields – including artificial intelligence, cyberspace, and outer space – also demands attention.

The UN's representation is critically inadequate. To maintain their hegemony and protect their own interests, some countries have long obstructed the reform process of the UN and its agencies, causing significant delays in reforms such as the IMF quota and World Bank shareholding. Developing countries remain underrepresented and their voices insufficiently heard.

The current governance system is certainly not perfect, but it needs neither to be dismantled and rebuilt in full, nor replaced entirely by a new system. Instead, as an international community, we must focus on reforming and improving the existing system to make it more compatible and aligned with the world's realities, addressing governance shortcomings from a developmental perspective, and responding to the call of the times with a vision for progress.

4. More Global South Voices Need to Be Heard

The Global South is a vital force in seeking peace, pursuing development, and promoting cooperation, and its collective rise represents human progress. To stabilize and improve the world, the international community needs to be more responsive to the concerns of the Global South in international affairs and fully leverage its role.

The Global South has grown remarkably strong. After World War II, national independence and liberation movements swept across Asia, Africa, and Latin America, dismantling the global colonial system. The number of UN member states has increased from 51 at its founding in 1945 to 193 today. Based on purchasing power parity, the Global South now makes up over 60 percent of the world economy and contributes 80 percent to global economic growth, with multiple hubs of development across various regions. The monopolization of international affairs by a small number of countries is no longer sustainable, and long-standing historical injustices must be redressed.

This rise has brought a new dynamic to global governance. BRICS has undergone a historic expansion, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has become the largest regional intergovernmental organization in terms of territory and population. Together, they are playing a positive role in the development and reform of the global governance system. The G20 has become the premier platform for global economic governance, with emerging economies now accounting for more than half of its membership. Championing fairness and justice, the G77 and China have deepened South-South cooperation. Meanwhile, Global South countries have hosted a series of multilateral summits, contributing their share to global governance and leaving their imprint.

The times call for a model of global governance that is more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable. The process of securing greater respect for the Global South countries' rights to development, voice, and decision-making in international affairs will mark a historic journey towards a more dynamic, effective, and hopeful global governance system.

II. The Global Governance Initiative Responds to Challenges of Our Times

The Global Governance Initiative upholds the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and embraces a global governance vision characterized by extensive consultation, joint contribution, and shared benefits. It is built on five core concepts: sovereign equality, the international rule of law, multilateralism, a people-centered approach, and real actions. By addressing the crux and root causes of crises and challenges, the initiative provides sound guidance for building a more just and equitable global governance system.

1. Sovereign Equality

Sovereign equality is enshrined in the UN Charter as the first among all principles and the supreme norm regulating state-to-state relations. Countries, whether large or small, strong or weak, developed or developing, are equal members of the international community. Every nation's sovereignty and dignity must be respected, and all countries are equally entitled to participate in, deliberate on, and benefit from global governance.

Equality is the premise of state-to-state relations. Countries should, in the spirit of mutual respect, conduct consultations on an equal footing and manage their differences appropriately. Major countries should lead by example in honoring equality, good faith, and cooperation, rather than leveraging their position of strength to engage in hegemonic, high-handed and abusive acts. If allowed to deviate from the principle of sovereign equality, international relations would degenerate into a game among powers, and international law would become groundless, leaving the world in perpetual chaos.

Sovereign equality is an essential requirement for solidarity against challenges. The future of all nations is bound by shared interests, common challenges, and collective responsibilities. Global governance cannot be dominated by a select few developed nations. Only when all countries participate equally can all sides build the political trust essential for solidarity and collaboration; only in this way can the resulting rules and decisions receive extensive recognition and rest on solid legal ground. This is the necessary approach to reaching broad consensus and creating powerful synergy.

Equality and inclusiveness are the inexorable progress in the evolution of the global governance system. Coexistence in diversity is a fundamental characteristic of human society, and multipolarity is vital to the evolving international landscape. A global governance system that is more representative, inclusive, and beneficial to all is an irreversible trend, and equal rights, equal opportunities, and equal rules are the shared aspirations of all peoples. Hegemony and power politics that run counter to the tide of history are destined to fail.

2. The International Rule of Law

The international rule of law is the fundamental safeguard for global governance. Only a global governance system that is grounded in the rule of law can provide all countries with a fair and just environment for development, achieve a balance between rights and obligations, and make international order more just and equitable.

Rigorously enforcing the international rule of law is rooted in upholding the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. Confrontation and injustice in today's world do not arise because the UN Charter is outdated, but because it is not effectively implemented. Its purposes and principles, such as maintaining international peace and security, promoting international cooperation, settling international disputes by peaceful means, and refraining from the threat or use of force in international relations, have established the fundamental norms governing international relations and underpinned post-war stability in the international order, and thus must be honored without the slightest compromise.

Rigorously enforcing the international rule of law hinges on safeguarding its justice and integrity. Only when international law is applied equally and universally, rather than selectively, can we truly distinguish right from wrong and advance peace and development. All nations are stakeholders in the international rule of law – without it, anyone at the dining table today could appear on the menu tomorrow. Major countries are the key forces in advancing international rule of law. They should lead by example in following rules and upholding the rule of law, rather than putting their own interests above international law or, even worse, imposing their own rules upon others.

Rigorously enforcing the international rule of law calls for improving rulemaking in emerging sectors. Human society is constantly evolving, and global governance rules must keep pace. New domains such as the deep seas, polar regions, outer space, and cyberspace, some of which are the common property of humanity and some represent the frontiers of future development, require urgent attention in order to establish rules and close gaps in their governance. All parties should uphold the principles of peace, sovereignty, inclusiveness, and joint governance, and put law in place for the development and utilization of new domains, so that they expand the space for cooperation rather than become arenas of rivalry. The governance of artificial intelligence should guard the red line of security and ethics, and be pursued in the spirit of openness, shared outcomes, and equal rights, to ensure AI for good and truly benefit humanity.

3. Multilateralism

Multilateralism emerged for the cause of peace and development, and multilateral mechanisms are vital for addressing global issues. No country can achieve development outside the global governance system, nor can it secure a future without participating in international cooperation. It is not a matter of whether we choose it or not, multilateralism is the only viable path forward.

Countries should stick to the principles of extensive consultation, joint contribution, and shared benefits. The essence of multilateralism lies in extensive consultation on international affairs and collective decision-making among all countries for the future of the world. Countries should pool wisdom through extensive consultation, gather strength through joint contribution, and promote universal interests through shared benefits. They should unequivocally oppose all forms of unilateralism, hegemony, dominance by a few countries, and bloc politics in the understanding that the deliberate erection of barriers will only push the world into the abyss of antagonism and confrontation.

See page 12

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:20 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:20 PM

DOCUMENT

From page 11

Countries should be steadfast in safeguarding the central role of the United Nations. The United Nations is the primary platform for practicing multilateralism and advancing global governance. Its leading position must be upheld and remain rock solid; its role can only be reinforced, not weakened. All countries should reaffirm the founding purpose of the United Nations, work to restore its authority and vitality under new circumstances, and enable it to play a central role in coordinating global actions to address common challenges.

Countries should be firm in promoting multilateral dialogue, consultation, and cooperation. In light of the complexity of global challenges, no country can remain insulated from their impacts or resolve all issues alone. Countries should build consensus through dialogue, resolve disputes through consultation, and pursue win-win results through cooperation, striving to expand their common interests. Global and regional multilateral mechanisms should play a constructive role in this, pooling the resources and strengths of national governments, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations to increase the synergy and efficiency of global governance.

4. A People-Centered Approach

People's wellbeing is a core concern of global governance. The people of every country across the world are the essential participants and direct beneficiaries of global governance. Only by serving public interests, boosting public confidence, and meeting public expectations can the global governance system win extensive support and function effectively.

Pursuing common development heightens the sense of gain among all peoples. Development concerns people's life and dignity; it is a matter of hope or disappointment. World prosperity and stability cannot be built upon ever widening gaps between rich and poor. Countries must restore development to the center of the international agenda, mobilizing global resources to implement the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development without delay. The North-South divide must be bridged as soon as possible, and help should be provided to developing countries to boost their capacity for independent development, so that all nations have greater and fairer access to the fruits of development.

Addressing common challenges heightens the sense of security among all peoples. In today's world, all countries share a common stake in security, and all must therefore embrace a vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security while addressing the threats to this stake – whether traditional or non-traditional. In responding to risks and challenges such as climate change, public health, and cyberspace security, it is important for the people to truly feel that countries are taking action and that unity can overcome all difficulties.

Promoting mutual understanding and friendship heightens the sense of fulfillment among all peoples. Civilizations become colorful through exchanges and are enriched through mutual learning. Countries should let cultural exchanges prevail over estrangement, mutual learning over clashes, and inclusiveness over superiority. Cultural and personnel exchanges should be strengthened to break down ideological barriers between nations and social groups. A shared conviction for safeguarding common interests will allow all civilizations to thrive and succeed together.

5. Real Actions

Global governance finds its source of vitality in practice, hinges on action, and is verified by its effectiveness. A vision is realized only through concrete action. It falls on the international community to turn this vision into reality – setting common goals, embracing a problem-oriented approach, and acting in concert.

Coordinating overall progress and individual breakthroughs. A coordinated approach should be adopted to advance global governance agendas, address governance deficits, and prevent fragmentation in the governance system. Targeted efforts should also be made for the most pressing issues in individual countries, particularly developing countries, to achieve tangible progress in poverty reduction and in improving people's wellbeing and closing the digital divide.

Addressing both symptoms and root causes. Given present conditions, feasible plans should be made to resolve the immediate challenges facing the world. The effectiveness in responding to major public crises and providing international public goods should be increased. With future development in mind, fundamental solutions should be explored to tackle chronic and persistent issues and bring change to the global governance system – which is lagging in reform – to align it with the evolving political and economic landscapes.

Synergizing North-South cooperation and South-South cooperation. The Global North and Global South should leverage their complementary strengths and move towards the same direction. Developed countries should diligently fulfill their international obligations and deliver on their commitments regarding development assistance and climate financing; they should not evade their international responsibilities under any pretext. Developing countries should unite to build their strength, improve South-South cooperation mechanisms, increase their capacity for collaborative development and their collective voice, and inject sustained momentum for improving global governance.

III. China's Contribution to Promoting Global Governance

As a responsible major country, China champions the building of a community with a shared future for humanity and takes the lead in practicing true multilateralism. It has consistently been a builder of world peace, a contributor to global development, a defender of the international order, and a provider of public goods, while actively advancing the efforts for building a more just and equitable global governance system.

1. Committing to Universal and Common Security

Humanity forms an indivisible community of security. As a major country with the best peace and security record, China has enshrined in its Constitution a commitment to peaceful development. It champions the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security, and has put forward the Global Security Initiative and acted on its principles, contributing to lasting world peace and stability.

Firmly safeguarding world peace within the framework of the UN. China faithfully fulfills its mission and duties as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, firmly supporting the UN in playing its core role in international affairs and the Security Council in playing its primary role in international peace and security. China also takes an active part in UN peacekeeping operations as the second largest contributor to the UN peacekeeping budget and the largest troop contributor among the permanent members of the UN Security Council. To date, more than 50,000 Chinese peacekeepers have been dispatched in 29 peacekeeping operations authorized by the UN Security Council. The country has also established the world's first standing peacekeeping police unit and maintains a peacekeeping standby force of 8,000 troops.

On September 3, 2025, China celebrated the 80th anniversary of its victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War. Together with the international community, China will safeguard the victory of World War II, promote a correct understanding of that war, and send the powerful message that peace must be safeguarded and justice will prevail.

Maintaining global strategic stability. China pursues a national defense policy that is in nature defensive, upholds a firm commitment to a policy of no-first-use of nuclear weapons and a nuclear strategy of self-defense, and resolutely safeguards the international nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation regimes. It promoted the issuance of a joint statement of the leaders of the five nuclear-weapon states on preventing nuclear war and avoiding arms races, reiterating the view that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought, emphasizing the need to avoid military confrontation and prevent arms races and articulating a shared commitment to maintaining global strategic stability and reducing the risk of nuclear conflicts. China has put forward the principles of justice, cooperation, balance and effectiveness in arms control, and upholds the international arms control regime with the UN at its core.

Pioneering the use of a unique Chinese approach to addressing international flashpoints. China upholds the principles of non-interference in other countries' internal affairs, political settlement of issues, objectivity and fairness, and addressing both symptoms and root causes, offering a new approach for finding constructive solutions to flashpoints.

On the Ukraine crisis, China follows the four key principles [The principles are: The sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries should be upheld; the purposes and principles of the UN Charter should be observed; the legitimate security concerns of all parties should be taken seriously; all efforts conducive to the peaceful settlement of the crisis should be supported.] as its fundamental guide. It released China's Position on the Political Settlement of the Ukraine Crisis and, together with Brazil and other Global South countries, launched the Group of Friends for Peace on the Ukraine crisis, building synergy and creating conditions for ceasefire and peace talks.

On the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, China has urged the UN Security Council to pass the first ceasefire resolution for Gaza since the outbreak of a new round of conflict. It has provided emergency humanitarian assistance to Gaza and taken a clear stand in support of the two-state solution, promoting a comprehensive, just, and lasting resolution of the Palestinian question.

China has facilitated the historic reconciliation and restoration of diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran, and 14 Palestinian factions visited China for reconciliation talks and signed the Beijing Declaration on Ending Division and Strengthening Palestinian National Unity. This wave of reconciliation in the Middle East has been widely welcomed. In promoting peace and stability in the Middle East, China has put forward the principles of peaceful coexistence, national sovereignty, international rule of law, and a holistic approach to development and security. Together with Pakistan, China has issued a five-point initiative of China and Pakistan for restoring peace and stability in the Gulf and Middle East Region.

Championing an Asian security model characterized by security for all, common ground amid differences, and dialogue and consultation, China has facilitated a ceasefire agreement between conflicting parties in northern Myanmar and played a constructive role in the border dispute between Cambodia and Thailand and the cross-border clashes between Afghanistan and Pakistan. It has proposed the Outlook on Peace and Development in the Horn of Africa, supporting countries in the region in responding to security challenges.

Reinforcing non-traditional security shields. China continues to support the development of the Global Public Security Cooperation Forum (Lianyungang) to build consensus among all parties and advance global public security governance. China advocates comprehensive measures for addressing both symptoms and root causes, and promotes international and regional counter-terrorism cooperation. It has facilitated the establishment of the Integrated Center for Countering Security Threats and Challenges of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and its Center for Combating Transnational Crime and Information Security Center, and the SCO Narcotics Control Center, playing an active role in helping other developing countries reinforce their counter-terrorism capacities.

In resolutely cracking down on transnational drug trafficking, China leads pragmatic anti-drug cooperation operations in the Greater Mekong Subregion and by the SCO and BRICS countries, and has taken the global lead in scheduling the whole class of fentanyl-related substances. It has combated cross-border crimes such as online gambling and telecom fraud, accelerated the development of an international alliance on combating telecom fraud, and dismantled large groups of overseas scam centers in cooperation with countries including Thailand, Myanmar, and Laos. China has proposed the International Cooperation Initiative on Global Food Security within the framework of G20, facilitated the adoption of the BRICS Strategy on Food Security Cooperation, joined the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty, and provided emergency humanitarian food assistance to multiple countries suffering food shortages or disasters.

2. Promoting Openness, Cooperation, and Common Development

China cannot develop in isolation from the rest of the world, nor can the world achieve overall prosperity without China. As the largest developing country, China has always pursued its own growth in the context of humanity's shared development and upheld openness, win-win cooperation, inclusiveness, and shared benefits. Through Chinese modernization, the country has provided the world with new opportunities and boosted the global drive for modernization.

Contributing to building an open global economy. China has promoted trade and investment liberalization and facilitation, and it has become the main trading partner of over 160 countries and regions, signing 24 free trade agreements with 31 countries and regions in the process. It has facilitated and achieved high-standard implementation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and signed the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area 3.0 Upgrade Protocol. It endeavors actively to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement (DEPA) to expand the globally-oriented network of high-standard free trade areas. The country firmly safeguards the rule-based multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization (WTO) at its core, engages fully and deeply in WTO reforms, and has announced that it will not seek new special and differential treatment in current and future negotiations at the WTO.

Bringing broader opportunities to the world with higher-standard opening up. China has expanded institutional opening up, removed all restrictions on foreign investment access in the manufacturing sector, continued to shorten the negative list for foreign investment, and fostered a world-leading business environment that is based on market principles, governed by law, and up to international standards. Steps have been taken to expand voluntary and unilateral opening up, with the launch of 23 pilot free trade zones, island-wide special customs operations in the Hainan Free Trade Port, and open platforms such as the China International Import Expo, China International Fair for Trade in Services, China International Consumer Products Expo, and China International Supply Chain Expo. Additionally, zero tariffs have been placed on the least developed countries and African countries that have established diplomatic relations with China. During the 14th Five-year Plan period (2021-2025), China's imports of goods and services exceeded US$15 trillion, and its GDP is expected to increase from RMB140 trillion to RMB170 trillion in the next five years, as its vast market continues to realize its potential.

Achieving solid progress in deepening high-quality Belt and Road cooperation. China has promoted cooperation in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to a new stage of high-quality development. It has established the world's broadest and largest international cooperation platform and expanded the belt of development and road to happiness to benefit all parties.

Policy connectivity has built greater synergy. China has signed cooperation documents with over 150 countries and 30 international organizations, hosted three Belt and Road forums for international cooperation, established more than 30 special cooperation mechanisms in key areas such as economy, trade, energy and infrastructure, and established a secretariat for the forum.

Infrastructure connectivity has achieved leapfrog development. Flagship programs such as cross-border highways, railways, ports, and aviation hubs have made breakthroughs, and a general connectivity framework consisting of six corridors, six connectivity routes, and multiple countries and ports has now been realized. The China-Europe Railway Express freight service has operated more than 130,000 trips to date.

Trade connectivity has advanced despite challenges. In-depth alignment has been achieved in areas such as cross-border payments, digital authentication, and smart customs. In 2025, the volume of trade in goods between China and BRI participants reached RMB23.6 trillion, up by 6.3 percent year-on-year, accounting for 51.9 percent of the country's foreign trade.

Financial connectivity has embraced greater diversity. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the Silk Road Fund have provided financing support to hundreds of projects. Renminbi financing windows have been set up, and the two-way investment between China and its BRI partners totaled more than US$240 billion between 2021 and the first half of 2025.

People-to-people connectivity has become stronger. Landmark livelihood initiatives supported by Luban Workshops and Juncao technology have continued to advance, and communication and exchange have flourished in culture, tourism, education, and media, as well as between the youth of different nations.

Delivering effective results in implementing the Global Development Initiative. To accelerate the realization of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, China helps steer global development towards a new stage of balanced, coordinated and inclusive growth that delivers more robust, greener, and healthier global development.

Consensus on development as a priority continues to build, with more than 130 countries and international organizations supporting participation in the initiative and over 80 countries joining the Group of Friends of the Global Development Initiative. China has hosted the High-Level Dialogue on Global Development and the Forum on Global Action for Shared Development, encouraging all parties to make new commitments to and embark on a new journey towards realizing the Sustainable Development Goals.

Cooperation mechanisms continue to improve. China has signed more than 80 cooperation documents on implementing the initiative with other developing countries, international organizations, and financial institutions. Over 30 cooperation mechanisms have been established in eight key areas of the initiative, covering all 17 sustainable development goals. China has also set up a Global Development Promotion Center and a Global Knowledge Network for Development, and issued the Global Development Report. Together with the UN, it has established the China-UN Global South-South Development Facility, actively discussed the development of the Global Center for Sustainable Development in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme, and taken the initiative to establish the Institute of Global Development.

Resources for development cooperation continue to grow. More than US$23 billion of development funds of various types have been mobilized. China has established the Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund, increased its total to US$4 billion, and launched the China-FAO South-South Cooperation Trust Fund (Phase III).

Pragmatic cooperation has delivered remarkable results. China has established a project pool under the Global Development Initiative, launched more than 1,800 cooperation projects, and completed the training of 80,000 people within the framework of the initiative, assisting other developing countries in improving their capacity for independent and sustainable development.

3. Practicing True Multilateralism

No matter how the world changes, China will always uphold the international system with the United Nations at its core, the international order underpinned by international law, and the basic norms governing international relations based on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. It advocates and practices true multilateralism and remains an active champion and strong proponent of multilateral cooperation.

Resolutely upholding the authority and status of the UN. As a founding member of the UN and the first country to sign the UN Charter, China has consistently upheld the central role of the UN in international affairs through concrete actions. The country's contribution to the UN regular budget increased from less than 1 percent in 2000 to over 20 percent in 2025, making it the second largest contributor. It has paid in full its assessed contributions to the UN in support of the effective operation of UN agencies. It has launched and renewed the China-UN Peace and Development Fund and increased its input to the fund, providing strong support to major UN agendas.

China supports the UN in advancing the implementation of the Pact for the Future and in enhancing the quality, efficiency, and vitality of the organization through the UN80 Initiative. It actively supports the UN and its specialized agencies in establishing new institutions in China, including the UNESCO International Institute for STEM Education in Shanghai and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Shanghai Center. China's efforts to supply outstanding talent to the UN have led to a steady increase in the share of Chinese employees in UN agencies and related international organizations. China has hosted the Global Leaders' Meeting on Women, boosting new progress in women's well-rounded development.

Panel 1 Global Leaders' Meeting on Women: China's Contribution to the Development of Women's Cause

From October 13 to 14, 2025, China and UN Women jointly hosted the Global Leaders' Meeting on Women in Beijing. Under the theme of "One Shared Future: New and Accelerated Process for Women's All-Round Development", the summit was attended by guests from over 110 countries, including heads of state and government, heads of parliament, officials at the vice-premier level, representatives at the ministerial level, representatives of UN agencies and international organizations, and diplomatic envoys. China's President Xi Jinping attended the opening ceremony and delivered a keynote speech.

To further support the global cause of women, China announced that in the next five years it would donate a further US$10 million to UN Women, earmark a quota of US$100 million in China's Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund for implementing development cooperation projects for women and girls in collaboration with international organizations, and launch 1,000 small and beautiful livelihood programs with Chinese assistance, prioritizing women and girls as the primary beneficiaries. At the same time, it would invite 50,000 women to China for training and exchange programs and establish a Global Center for Women's Capacity Building aimed at conducting capacity building and cooperation for women's development with relevant countries and international organizations to train more female talent.

Upholding the authority of the international rule of law and pushing for progress in international law-based governance. China has joined nearly all universal intergovernmental organizations and signed over 600 international conventions and amendments, fulfilling its treaty obligations in good faith and honoring its international commitments. The country held a conference marking the 70th anniversary of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, reaffirming and safeguarding the basic norms governing international relations and the principles of international law. China continues to provide firm support for the work of UN judicial bodies and remains an active participant in international judicial activities. Engaging in international law enforcement cooperation, it has increased efforts in anti-corruption action, the cross-border pursuit of fugitives, their repatriation and extradition, and recovery of assets. Additionally, it has initiated and led the creation of the International Organization for Mediation, filling a gap in the international mediation mechanism.

See page 13

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:20 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:20 PM

DOCUMENT

From page 12

Panel 2 International Organization for Mediation: Chinese Wisdom for the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes

In 2022, China and like-minded countries initiated the establishment of the International Organization for Mediation (IOMed). On May 30, 2025, the signing ceremony of the Convention on the Establishment of the International Organization for Mediation was held in Hong Kong, with 33 countries signing the convention and becoming its founding members. On August 29, 2025, the convention entered into force, with Hong Kong becoming the location of IOMed's headquarters. On October 20, 2025, the organization commenced formal operations.

As the first intergovernmental legal organization dedicated to resolving international disputes through mediation, the IOMed focuses on mediating disputes to resolve conflicts and serves as an important mechanism that safeguards the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. It complements and creates synergy with litigation, arbitration, and other existing mechanisms to resolve international disputes, and provides a new platform for their peaceful settlement.

Participating in and leading G20 cooperation. China encourages the G20 – as a major forum for economic dialogue between developed and developing countries – to pursue international cooperation in the spirit of equal consultation and mutual benefit. In 2016, China hosted the G20 Hangzhou Summit, widely regarded as one of the most fruitful G20 summits to date. It issued what became a landmark G20 Leaders' Communiqué, put development at the center of macroeconomic policy coordination for the first time, and endorsed consensus documents such as the G20 Guiding Principles for Global Investment Policymaking and G20 Blueprint on Innovative Growth, leaving China's clear imprint in the group's history. During the G20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro, China set out its proposals for economic, financial, trade, digital, and ecological governance, promoting a world economy built on cooperation, stability, openness, innovation, and eco-friendliness. China also took the lead in supporting the African Union's membership in the G20 to increase the representation of developing countries.

Advancing an Asia-Pacific community. The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is the highest-level mechanism for economic cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region, with the broadest coverage and greatest influence. China advocates the spirit of an Asia-Pacific family and promotes an Asia-Pacific community of shared future characterized by openness and inclusiveness, innovation-driven growth, greater connectivity, and mutually beneficial cooperation. Facilitated by China, the Shanghai Accord of the APEC Economic Leaders' Declaration was adopted at the APEC meeting held in Shanghai in 2001, marking a new beginning for Asia-Pacific cooperation in the new century. In 2014, the APEC meeting in Beijing delivered multiple outcomes, including the 22nd APEC Economic Leaders' Declaration – Beijing Agenda for an Integrated, Innovative and Interconnected Asia-Pacific, in which all parties pledged to foster an Asia-Pacific partnership for the future and outlined a vision for the long-term development and shared prosperity of the region.

In 2026, China will host the APEC meeting for a third time, under the theme "Building an Asia-Pacific Community to Prosper Together". The meeting will focus on three priorities: openness, innovation, and cooperation. All parties concerned will come together to recommit to the original aspirations of Asia-Pacific cooperation, focus on concrete actions towards their goals, and strive to turn their blueprint for a better Asia-Pacific community into reality.

4. Supporting the Global South in Playing a Greater Role

China will always be a member of the Global South, and in the Global South its roots will remain. No matter what the future holds, it will always keep the wellbeing of the Global South in mind. Acting on the principles of sincerity, real results, amity, and good faith, and with a commitment to pursuing the greater good and shared interests, China has strengthened solidarity and cooperation with other developing countries, firmly safeguarded the common interests of the Global South in international affairs, and led the Global South in building strength through joint efforts.

Advancing high-quality development of greater BRICS cooperation. At the forefront of the Global South, BRICS countries are jointly committed to promoting world economic growth, improving global economic governance, and advancing democracy in international relations. China has played an active role in expanding and strengthening BRICS cooperation, reinforcing its institutions in response to the evolving times, and increasing its global influence. China and other BRICS countries have established the New Development Bank and formed the Contingent Reserve Arrangement, which have become an emerging force in the international financial system and landmark projects of Global South cooperation.

In 2017, the BRICS Xiamen Summit delivered more than 60 outcomes, giving rise to three key engines that drive cooperation – political security, trade and finance, and people-to-people exchange – as well as the "BRICS Plus" approach. In 2022, during the BRICS "China Year", the BRICS Summit issued the Beijing Declaration, marking the beginning of the organization's expansion. China has since worked with relevant parties to advance this historic enlargement, which represents a major milestone not only for BRICS, but also for the evolution of the international landscape. China has promoted a vision for BRICS centered on peace, innovation, green development, justice, and closer people-to-people exchanges. It continues to support more Global South countries in joining the cause of BRICS as full members, partner countries, or in the "BRICS Plus" format, to build the cooperation mechanism into a primary channel for strengthening solidarity and cooperation among Global South nations and a vanguard for advancing global governance reform.

Panel 3 New Development Bank: An Emerging Force in the International Financial System

The New Development Bank was jointly established by Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa in 2015. It is the first international financial institution to be headquartered in China, and the first multilateral development institution established and led by emerging market economies and developing countries. The bank aims to mobilize resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS countries and other emerging and developing economies. Since its establishment, the New Development Bank has made steady progress in its operations and institutional development, becoming an emerging force in the international financial system and a landmark project of Global South cooperation. As of March 2026, it had approved loans of US$42.9 billion for 139 development projects, covering key areas including clean energy and energy efficiency, transport infrastructure, environmental protection, water and sanitation, social infrastructure, and digital infrastructure.

Advancing the development and expansion of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The SCO is the first international organization named after a Chinese city, founded with China's participation, and headquartered in the country. China champions the Shanghai Spirit of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for diversity of civilizations, and pursuit of common development, and works towards a closer SCO community of shared future. Through the joint efforts of its member states, the SCO has grown into a group of 27 countries spanning Asia, Europe, and Africa, and its economic aggregate is approaching US$30 trillion. It has carried out cooperation in more than 50 areas, having become an important force for world peace and development and a guardian of international fairness and justice.

In 2025, the SCO Tianjin Summit formulated a development strategy for the coming decade. Leaders of SCO member states witnessed the inauguration of the four security centers [This refers to the Integrated Center for Countering Security Threats and Challenges of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and its Center for Combating Transnational Crime and Information Security Center, and the SCO Narcotics Control Center.] and decided to establish an SCO Development Bank. China also announced the creation of three major China-SCO cooperation platforms, covering energy, green industry, and the digital economy, and three major cooperation centers for scientific and technological innovation, higher education, and vocational and technical education, and the decision to continue the implementation of the action plan for high-quality development of economic and trade cooperation among SCO members. Together, these initiatives have enhanced solidarity and coordination among member states and injected new vitality into the organization, propelling it into a new stage of high-quality development and towards even greater successes.

Promoting the creation of a global governance architecture that is more balanced and effective. China believes that the international financial architecture should be more balanced in representation and better reflect the realities of the world economy. It argues that the World Bank should conduct shareholding reviews and the International Monetary Fund should carry out quota share realignment in accordance with the agreed timeframes and roadmaps to address the democratic deficit in global financial governance.

China supports the reform of the UN Security Council, believing that increasing the representation of developing countries is the right direction of the reform, and that it is imperative to address the historical injustice suffered by Africa, with priority and special arrangements made for the continent's demands. It maintains communication and coordination with its partners in the Global South through mechanisms such as the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77, and plays an active role in championing justice at major international events such as the UN General Assembly. Together, they have made joint efforts to safeguard international fairness and justice and defend their legitimate rights and interests.

Assisting the Global South in jointly embarking on a path towards modernization. China has proposed and advanced an initiative for open and inclusive Global South cooperation, implemented the eight measures in support of Global South cooperation, and encouraged the Global South to become a staunch force for peace, a driving force for open development, a builder of global governance, and an advocate for exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations.

At the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, bilateral relations between China and all African countries with which it has diplomatic ties were officially elevated to the level of strategic relations, and the overall positioning of China-Africa relations was elevated to an all-weather China-Africa community of shared future for the new era. China has also pledged to work with African countries to promote modernization in six areas [This refers to modernization that is just and equitable, open and win-win, diverse and inclusive, eco-friendly, underpinned by peace and security, and that puts the people first.] and implement 10 partnership actions [This refers to the partnership actions for mutual learning among civilizations, for trade prosperity, for industrial chain cooperation, for connectivity, for development cooperation, for health, for agriculture and livelihoods, for people-to-people exchanges, for green development, and for common security.].

The China-Arab States Summit decided to build a China-Arab community of shared future in the new era and carry out eight major cooperation initiatives for pragmatic China-Arab cooperation [This refers to cooperation initiatives on development support, food security, public health, green innovation, energy security, inter-civilizational dialogue, youth development, and security and stability.]. China has established a comprehensive cooperative partnership with Latin American and Caribbean countries based on equality, mutual benefit, and shared development. Together, they have founded the Forum of China and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, jointly launching the five programs on solidarity, development, civilization, peace, and people-to-people connectivity. Adhering to the principles of the Four Fully Respects [China fully respects the sovereignty and independence of Pacific island countries and upholds the equality of all countries, big or small; China fully respects their will and follows the principles of extensive consultation, joint contribution, shared benefits, and win-win results; China fully respects their cultural traditions and pursues harmony without uniformity and the common development of diverse cultures; China fully respects their effort to seek strength through unity, and supports them in implementing the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, so as to contribute to the building of a peaceful, harmonious, secure, inclusive, and prosperous Blue Pacific.], China has carried out friendly cooperation with Pacific island countries and developed seven cooperation platforms [This refers to cooperation platforms on emergency reserve, climate change, poverty reduction and development, disaster prevention and mitigation, Juncao technology, agriculture, and police affairs.] to support them in accelerating efforts to achieve independent and sustainable development.

5. Promoting Exchanges and Mutual Learning Among Civilizations

Recognizing the fundamental reality of diversity in world civilizations and the urgent need to transcend civilizational conflicts, China has proposed the Global Civilization Initiative and promoted its implementation, championing the common values of humanity and fostering deeper exchanges and understanding among different peoples, and wider interactions and greater integration of diverse cultures in a joint effort to advance the development and progress of human civilization.

Promoting global dialogue among civilizations. China upholds a vision of civilization characterized by equality, mutual learning, dialogue, and inclusiveness, and promotes harmonious coexistence among different civilizations to share and admire the beauty of all. On June 7, 2024, the country facilitated the unanimous adoption of a resolution at the 78th session of the UN General Assembly, which designated June 10 as International Day for Dialogue Among Civilizations. For its celebration, vibrant themed activities were held at UN venues in New York and Geneva and in countries around the world.

Elsewhere, China has convened the Conference on Dialogue of Asian Civilizations and the Global Civilizations Dialogue Ministerial Meeting, and erected many multi-level international platforms such as the World Conference of Classics, the Liangzhu Forum, and the Alliance for Cultural Heritage in Asia. It has signed cooperation agreements on culture, cultural relics, and tourism with over 100 countries, deepening cooperation in joint archaeological research, world heritage protection, and the translation of classic works. Through concrete actions, the country promotes global dialogue among civilizations and protects the cultural treasures of all humanity.

The CPC in Dialogue with World Political Parties High-Level Meeting and the CPC and World Political Parties Summit encourage mutual learning between Chinese modernization – a new model for human progress – and other civilizations, continuously enriching the garden of world civilizations, and making new contributions to humanity's exploration of paths to modernization.

Panel 4 Global Civilizations Dialogue Ministerial Meeting Builds a Bridge for Mutual Learning Among Civilizations

From July 10 to 11, 2025, the Global Civilizations Dialogue Ministerial Meeting was held in Beijing under the theme "Safeguarding Diversity of Human Civilizations for World Peace and Development". In a congratulatory letter, President Xi Jinping emphasized that China is willing to work with other countries to champion equality, mutual learning, dialogue, and inclusiveness among civilizations, implement the Global Civilization Initiative, and promote the building of a global network for dialogue and cooperation among civilizations, in a bid to provide fresh impetus for advancing human civilizations and promoting world peace and development.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres also sent a congratulatory letter to the meeting, which saw more than 600 representatives from the political, cultural, and educational sectors of about 140 countries and regions attend its opening ceremony. The meeting adopted the Beijing Declaration of the Global Civilizations Dialogue Ministerial Meeting and released a list of 110 actions to be taken.

Advancing the development and progress of human rights. China advocates protecting human rights through security, advancing human rights through development, and promoting human rights through cooperation, steering global human rights governance in a more just, fair, reasonable, and inclusive direction. It has acceded to or ratified 29 international human rights instruments and has played a constructive role in the formulation of several major international human rights documents, including the Declaration on the Right to Development and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

China has served six terms as a member of the UN Human Rights Council, making it one of the most frequently elected and longest-serving countries. In this role, it has promoted the adoption by the council of resolutions such as "The Contribution of Development to the Enjoyment of All Human Rights", "The Negative Impact of the Legacies of Colonialism on the Enjoyment of Human Rights", "Promoting and Protecting Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Within the Context of Addressing Inequalities", and "Promoting Accessibility for the Full Enjoyment of All Human Rights by All".

Promoting people-to-people exchanges and friendship. China advances various forms of people-to-people diplomacy, city-to-city diplomacy, and public diplomacy. It has held cultural exchange years, tourism years, and education years with many countries, and established over 3,000 pairs of sister cities (provinces/states) with more than 150 countries, actively building bridges for people-to-people exchanges. Entry policies are being continually optimized, with unilateral visa-free access already in place for 50 countries, full mutual visa exemption for 29 countries, and 240-hour transit visa-free policy expanded to 55 countries across 65 entry ports. In 2025, 30.08 million foreigners entered China visa-free, accounting for 73.1 percent of all foreign arrivals, a year-on-year increase of 49.5 percent.

Sports also serve as a bridge for enhancing friendship among peoples. In recent years, China has successfully hosted the Beijing Winter Olympics, the Chengdu FISU World University Games, the Hangzhou Asian Games, and the Harbin Asian Winter Games, carrying forward the Olympic motto of "Faster, Higher, Stronger – Together". The youth represent the future of people-to-people friendship. In recognition of this, during Chinese President Xi Jinping's visits in the US and France in November 2023 and May 2024, China announced an initiative to invite 50,000 young Americans to China for exchange and study over the five years starting from 2023 and an initiative to invite more than 10,000 French students to study in China and double the scale of European youth exchanges in China over the three years starting from 2024. It has also held China-Africa Youth Festivals and "Chinese Bridge" summer camps for young students, planting the seeds of friendship in the hearts of the younger generation.

6. Providing More Public Goods for the International Community

Faced with ever-increasing global challenges, the global governance system must keep pace with the times, find solutions to old problems, and fill the gaps in rules in new areas. China has demonstrated the sense of responsibility of a major country that integrates knowledge and action, actively created international public goods, and contributed new solutions to global governance.

Firmly leading global climate governance. China firmly upholds and promotes the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement. The country adheres to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, and works to build a fair and rational global climate governance system underpinned by cooperation for mutual benefit.

In 2020, at the UN General Assembly, China solemnly declared that it would strive to peak its carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality before 2060. In 2025, at the UN Climate Change Summit, it announced a new round of nationally determined contributions, including reducing economy-wide net greenhouse gas emissions by 7 to 10 percent from peak levels by 2035, striving to do better; increasing the share of non-fossil fuels in total energy consumption to over 30 percent; and scaling up the forest stock volume and developing a carbon emissions trading market.

China has initiated the establishment of the BASIC and the Ministerial on Climate Action to build consensus, and has continued to help developing countries improve their capacity to address climate change through South-South cooperation. As of the end of October 2025, China had signed 55 cooperation documents with 43 developing countries, implemented over 300 sessions of capacity-building programs, and had provided and mobilized over RMB177 billion in program funding since 2016.

Panel 5 China's Green and Low-Carbon Industrial Transition Has Made Significant Contributions to the World

China is a steadfast champion of and a major contributor to green development. It has built the world's largest and fastest-growing renewable energy system and the largest and most complete new energy industrial chain, contributing about one-quarter of the world's newly increased green areas. It has carried out extensive cooperation on green energy projects with more than 100 countries and regions, consistently providing high-quality and efficient low-carbon energy equipment and products to the world, especially to developing countries. Its wind power, photovoltaic, and new energy vehicle products are now exported to over 200 countries and regions, supplying 70 percent of the world's wind power equipment and 80 percent of photovoltaic panels, driving down global wind and photovoltaic power generation costs by more than 60 percent and 80 percent, respectively. During the 14th Five-year Plan period (2021-2025), China's exported wind power and photovoltaic products reduced carbon emissions by approximately 4.1 billion tonnes for other countries.

See page 14

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:20 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:20 PM

DOCUMENT

From page 13

Advancing the development of artificial intelligence for good and for all. China has put forward the Global AI Governance Initiative, advocating a people-centered and AI-for-good approach. It supports the UN in playing a central role and promotes the formation of a global AI governance system with broad consensus to benefit all humanity, calling for strengthened international cooperation and assistance for developing countries to bridge the AI divide. The country has promoted the UN General Assembly's adoption of a resolution on enhancing international cooperation on AI capacity building, and proposed and implemented the AI Capacity-Building Action Plan for Good and for All. It initiated the establishment of the Group of Friends for International Cooperation on AI Capacity-Building, built the Digital South project under the Global Development Project Pool, and has held multiple capacity-building workshops and thematic dialogues in this regard.

Additionally, it has proposed the establishment of a World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization and put forward the Global AI Governance Action Plan and the AI+ International Cooperation Initiative, contributing Chinese wisdom and solutions to AI development and governance. China attaches great importance to preventing risks in the military applications of AI and proposes that all countries should adopt a prudent and responsible approach in the development and use of relevant technologies, to ensure that weapon systems remain under human control at all times and to prevent an AI arms race.

Contributing China's strength to safeguarding global public health security. China actively participates in global health affairs and conducts health exchanges and cooperation through multiple channels and at multiple levels. It provides substantial international assistance in the health sector, and has actively engaged in major international health actions such as fighting the Ebola outbreak and the Covid-19 pandemic. It strives to bridge the immunization gap and the health deficit, and advocates jointly building a community of health for all.

China has signed health cooperation agreements with over 160 countries and international organizations, and initiated and participated in nine international and regional health cooperation mechanisms, including those between China and African countries, between China and Arab states, and between China and Southeast Asian nations. China has dispatched more than 30,000 medical workers to 77 countries and regions and treated 300 million patients. It has carried out medical outreach programs such as the Brightness Action, the Heart Care Action, and the Smile Action to provide free treatment of cataract, heart disease and dental defects, and has implemented the New Shennong Initiative, a program named after the mythical Shennong who tasted 100 herbs to discover their medical properties, to find new medicinal herbs worldwide for application in Traditional Chinese Medicine. China continues to support the World Health Organization (WHO) in playing a central coordinating role in global health governance and has deeply engaged in and led key agendas, including the revision of the International Health Regulations, the negotiation of the Pandemic Agreement, and the reform of global health governance architecture and WHO governance.

Actively leading the global biodiversity governance. Guided by the principle that lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets, China advances eco-environmental conservation as a priority, pursues green development, and has become an important participant, contributor, and torchbearer in the global endeavor to build an eco-civilization. As the presidency of the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, China issued the Kunming Declaration and spearheaded the adoption of the historic Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, guiding the direction and drawing a blueprint for global biodiversity protection through 2030 and beyond. The country has since taken the lead in launching the implementation initiative on the framework and in establishing the Kunming Biodiversity Fund. With an investment of RMB1.5 billion, the fund has to date supported 31 projects and covered 45 developing countries, providing sustained momentum for the implementation of the framework. It has also advocated for the establishment of the International Coalition for Green Development on the Belt and Road, continued to deepen bilateral and multilateral dialogue and exchange, and worked to promote the fruitful results of South-South cooperation on biodiversity protection. In 2019, China became the largest contributor to the core budget of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its protocols, as well as the largest contributor among developing countries to the Global Environment Facility, positions it maintains to this day.

Promoting the improvement of governance rules for new domains. China is advancing the transformation of the global internet governance system, advocating four principles: respecting cyber sovereignty, safeguarding peace and security, promoting openness and cooperation, and ensuring good order. It has held the World Internet Conference for 12 consecutive years since 2014, and put forward the Global Initiative on Data Security and the Global Cross-Border Data Flow Cooperation Initiative. China has supported the establishment of the World Data Organization in Beijing, and supported the United Nations as the main channel for advancing global cyberspace and digital governance, working with all parties to build a community of shared future in cyberspace.

China actively promotes global ocean governance, and facilitated the conclusion of the Agreement on Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction as one of the first signatories. The country holds observer status in the Arctic Council, advocates building a Polar Silk Road, and promotes joint international efforts to protect and sustainably use Antarctic marine living resources.

China is committed to lasting peace and security in outer space, firmly upholding the international space order based on the 1967 Outer Space Treaty. It opposes an arms race in this realm, supports the United Nations in playing its central role, and safeguards the common rights and interests of all countries in the peaceful use of outer space.

IV. Guiding the Direction of Change Towards a Bright Future

The Global Governance Initiative quickly received widespread support from nearly 160 countries and international organizations upon its announcement, and China's ideas and actions have increasingly resonated with and received positive response from the international community. The reason behind this lies in the fact that China understands how to meet the call of the day and shape the trends of our times; that the GGI, while rooted in China, benefits the world; and that grounded in today's realities while opening up the future, China is contributing wisdom and strength to the progress of human civilization.

1. Building Broad Consensus on Improving Global Governance

China has put forward a series of new ideas and propositions that champion shared values and joint action, responding to the common aspirations of the international community and addressing the most pressing issues in global governance.

Extensive consultation, joint contribution, and shared benefits are aspired by all. A world so vast is bound to face many challenges. What kind of global governance system benefits the world and all its peoples? China believes that global affairs should be discussed by all, the governance system should be built by all, and development outcomes should be shared by all. This approach tackles problems at their root, represents the common aspirations of the vast majority of countries, and seeks the greatest common ground of shared interests for all nations in the world.

An equal and orderly multipolar world and a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization are the trends of the times. China advocates that all countries have a place in global governance and play their due roles. Together, they should build the world economy stronger and share the fruits equitably. Let economic globalization penetrate the dark room of protectionism like fresh air and bright sunshine to the benefit of all. This truly aligns with the trend of the times and the aspirations of all people.

True multilateralism is the only path forward. Global governance is both broad in scope and specific in practice. China offers a clear and all-encompassing approach: to champion and apply true multilateralism. Time and again, experience has shown that only when multilateralism is acted upon and multilateral coordination and cooperation are strong and effective, can global governance advance and human wellbeing be guaranteed. Without multilateralism humanity cannot develop and the world cannot progress.

The common values of humanity are a universal guide. With more than eight billion people, over 200 countries and regions, and more than 2,500 ethnic groups and many religions in our world, respecting diversity and differences while forging a great synergy across systems, civilizations, and countries is crucial to the success of global governance. China promotes the common values of humanity – peace, development, fairness, justice, democracy, and freedom. These values align with the core ideas of solidarity, coexistence, and win-win cooperation advocated by various civilizations, laying a value foundation for jointly improving global governance.

2. Demonstrating a Global Vision and a Sense of Responsibility

By sharing its philosophy on global governance and proposing the Global Governance Initiative, China has demonstrated a sense of responsibility in fulfilling the CPC's original aspiration and founding mission. Upholding fundamental principles while breaking new ground, it champions the country's rich diplomatic traditions and draws strength from its fine traditional culture, advancing with and leading the times while remaining committed to action.

China's global governance philosophy originates from the CPC's global vision. Since its founding 105 years ago, the CPC has always taken as its mission the pursuit of progress for humanity and great harmony for the world. It is this mission that determines China's noble goal in participating in global governance: to strive to turn the aspirations of the Chinese people and people of all countries for a better life into reality. The Fourth Plenary Session of the 20th CPC Central Committee emphasized the building of a community with a shared future for humanity and the implementation of the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, the Global Civilization Initiative, and the Global Governance Initiative, providing clear guidance for China to work hand in hand with other countries to reform and improve the global governance system.

China's global governance philosophy carries forward the fine traditions of its diplomacy. As early as the 1950s, Chairman Mao Zedong said that China ought to make a greater contribution to humanity. Acting on this vision, the PRC has remained committed to an independent foreign policy of peace, and put forward the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, the Three Worlds theory, and the idea of establishing a new global political and economic order, proactively safeguarding the interests of developing countries. For over 70 years, its foreign policy has remained steadfast in its original aspiration to uphold fairness and justice, and its mission to promote human progress has only deepened over time. This record continues to provide a source of strength for China's participation in and leadership of global governance in the new era.

China's global governance philosophy is rooted in the profound heritage of the Chinese civilization. Throughout its more than 5,000 years of civilization, the Chinese nation has always pursued peace, concord, and harmony across generations. Since ancient times, it has cherished the lofty ideal of "great harmony under Heaven", the governance philosophy of "great wisdom governing through sound institutions", the spiritual pursuit of "pulling together in times of difficulty", the strong conviction that "the people are the foundation of the state", and the practical approach of "applying knowledge in action". Under new historical conditions, these elements of wisdom have undergone a creative transformation and innovative progress, offering timeless insights for addressing global challenges.

3. Expanding the Practical Pathways for Building a Community with a Shared Future for Humanity

Over a decade ago, President Xi Jinping put forward the important vision of building a community with a shared future for humanity, with the goal of creating a better world and a better life for people of all countries. Since then, under the banner of building a community with a shared future for humanity, China has adopted a series of initiatives to confront various global risks and challenges, continuously enriching the practice of global governance.

In the face of a widening North South divide and severe delays in implementing the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, China has proposed the Global Development Initiative to advance common development. In the face of complex international and regional situations and security governance challenges – especially when certain countries seek absolute security at the expense of other countries' security – China put forward the Global Security Initiative in time to address the peace deficit and tackle security problems. Amid a rising clamor of "clash of civilizations" and "confrontation between different systems", and the stoking of "antagonism of values" by some countries, China has proposed the Global Civilization Initiative to promote exchange and mutual learning among civilizations. Now, faced with a widening governance deficit and growing efforts to undermine the United Nations and multilateralism, China has put forward the Global Governance Initiative, expanding on the institutions of the other three global initiatives and aiming at building a more just and equitable global governance system.

Providing systematic solutions, China's four major global initiatives run in parallel with a focus on different domains and form a complete action framework that promotes prosperity through development, ensures stability through security, enhances mutual trust through exchanges between civilizations, and seeks justice through governance. Together, they lead to an open, inclusive, clean, and beautiful world that enjoys lasting peace, universal security, and common prosperity, constituting an important pillar for building a community with a shared future for humanity.

4. Opening Up New Horizons for Political Civilization of Humanity

Throughout history, humanity has experienced innumerable wars – either hot or cold – but has emerged from each to achieve remarkable progress. Today, the world faces a broader and deeper transformation, and where it will head to depends on the choices of individual countries. By proposing the Global Governance Initiative and a series of new ideas and approaches, China has deepened its understanding of the laws governing the development of human society and promoted the advancement of human political civilization.

Breaking free from the outdated "core-periphery" framework of the old international order. A world in which just a few countries dominate and most are subordinate, and where the rich become richer while the poor become poorer, is not a good world. Whether through the so-called "hegemonic stability theory", "Western-centrism", "neoliberalism", or the "democratic peace theory", the result has been a world marred by disunity and injustice, with turmoil and chaos in many regions. China stands firmly on the right side of history, is committed to promoting greater democracy in international relations so that developing countries can truly become equal members of the international community and masters of their own future.

Transcending the flawed logic that "might makes right". The outdated mindset of hegemonism and power politics cannot adapt to the new reality of a multipolar world. Frequent bullying and big-stick coercion and extortion have opened the Pandora's box for a return to the law of the jungle. China stands firmly on the side of fairness and justice, remaining a pillar of strength amidst the tumultuous changes and upheavals of the world. It clearly advocates the international rule of law and will never allow whoever has the bigger fist to call the shots. Through its efforts, the international community has formed a consensus that calls for fairness, not hegemony.

Abandoning the zero-sum mentality of "winner takes all". Blocking others' path will not get you further; when blowing out others' lamps, the fire will burn your beard. Protectionism is a fire that burns those who set it, and the pursuit of absolute security only adds fuel to the flames. China stands firmly on the side of win-win cooperation, taking concrete actions to pursue harmonious coexistence and seeking its own success while helping others succeed. It advocates that the fruits of governance should be shared by all and that no country should be left behind, so that every member of the international community becomes a winner.

V. Moving Forward Hand in Hand at a Critical Juncture in History

The world has entered a new period of turbulence and transformation, and humanity once again faces a choice: a future marked by peace, dialogue, and win-win cooperation, or one marred by war, confrontation, and zero-sum competition. It is encouraging to see that with broad support from the international community, the Global Governance Initiative is drawing wide participation. It must also be understood, however, that great undertakings are rarely achieved overnight. To advance the initiative, all parties must persevere in the face of challenges, rise above disputes, and work together to build a more just and equitable global governance system.

1. Acting in Global Interest and Planning for the Benefit of Future Generations

Global governance concerns the shared and long-term interests of all people, and its essence lies not in deal making but in the pursuit of justice. China calls on all countries to bear in mind the future of humanity and the wellbeing of their people, to translate the vision of the GGI into concrete actions, and to work towards lasting achievements that benefit all the people for generations to come.

In our global village, all countries are connected, and their interests are closely intertwined. A nation's interests are better realized only when they align with the interests of all. Putting one's own interests first leads only to going it alone, and actions that harm others only serve to harm oneself. In participating in global governance, all countries should adopt a broad vision of shared global responsibility that transcends narrow self-interests. Division and conflict should be overcome with an open mind, with all nations working for humanity's shared future and building a shared home to prevent the "tragedy of the commons".

Global governance is about establishing rules and managing the world on a long-term basis. It requires upholding the principle of intergenerational equity and balancing present needs with those of the future. We must neither deplete the resources left to us by our ancestors – jeopardizing the future of posterity – nor pass on to the next generation the problems that we should solve. The baton of history is in our hands, and the question of where global governance is headed demands an answer. Our generation must offer a response worthy of our times and demonstrate vision and wisdom to build a global governance system that is fairer and more equitable, stable, and effective. Only then can we pass on to future generations a more peaceful, prosperous, and beautiful world.

2. Rising to Challenges with Firm Confidence

Building a more just and equitable global governance system is a noble goal that is feasible and attainable, but it is also a gradual historical process. China believes that as long as all parties remain steadfast in their resolve and persist in their efforts, step by step, this vision is sure to become a reality.

A multipolar world is rapidly emerging, and the trend towards democracy and the rule of law in international relations is unstoppable. Human society is bound to evolve, from confrontation to cooperation, imbalance to balance, division to coexistence. As the times progress and the people awaken, power politics and "exclusive governing clubs" are losing their foundation. As long as the torch of multilateralism is held high, the cause of global governance will pierce through the darkness and reach a brighter future.

The world today is marked by both change and turbulence. Turning chaos into order is no easy task, and reaching a consensus on global governance requires overcoming conflicts and differences through arduous effort. The road is long, but we will reach our destination if we keep moving forward. The task is formidable, but we are sure to succeed as long as we persist. All countries must work hard and make unremitting efforts to push forward the great cause of reforming and improving global governance – no one should look on, hesitate, or slack off.

3. Let's Unite and Act

Global governance promotes the common wellbeing of the international community and relies on the collective efforts of all nations. China advocates that countries unite and cooperate, take concrete action, and transform the vision and blueprint of the GGI into a roadmap and timeline for joint action.

In addressing the diverse interests of different countries, the key lies in seeking common ground while shelving differences. We should create the greatest synergy for peaceful development and win-win cooperation, united under a single system, order, and set of rules. We must strengthen the UN as the core mechanism for practicing multilateralism and the primary platform for global governance. Unity is strength. Only through solidarity and cooperation can we deliver results and overcome major challenges for the benefit of all. Only then can we translate GGI principles into the broadest consensus and the most powerful action.

The successful implementation of the GGI requires major countries to shoulder their responsibilities, multilateral mechanisms to play their roles, and the international community to take concrete action. We need to prioritize urgent issues and work to de-escalate flashpoints. We should focus on improving communication and cooperation in areas where there is an urgent need for better governance. These include reform of the international financial architecture, artificial intelligence, cyberspace, climate change, trade, and outer space. We will build consensus, secure outcomes, and strive for an early success in global governance.

Conclusion

This is an era of challenges. But it is also one of hope. An era where a brighter future beckons, provided we work continuously for the good of generations to come. The Global Governance Initiative is a path to this goal, balancing lofty ideals with practical action and driving progress towards more effective global governance, step by step.

The initiative stands at the forefront of our era, offering fresh momentum for building a community with a shared future for humanity and serving as a compass to help the great ship of history chart its course through turbulent waters. It is yet another significant public good that China has contributed to the world.

Looking ahead, as the international community gains a deeper understanding of this initiative and participates in it, the progressive forces championing multilateralism will grow stronger, and the grand goal of building a more just and equitable global governance system will gradually become a reality.

China stands ready to work hand in hand with all other countries to implement the initiative under the principles of extensive consultation, joint contribution, and shared benefits. Together, we can expand the scope and influence of multilateralism, let the light of fairness and justice illuminate the world, and bring the achievements of global governance to all nations. Together, we can create a brighter future for humanity and the progress of human civilization.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:20 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:20 PM

CULTURE



Exhibition makes mythical connections

Exploring the origins of Maya and Andean civilizations brings about comparisons that expose similarities to ancient Chinese beliefs, **Wang Ru** reports.

In ancient Chinese myth, human beings were created by the mother goddess Nyuwa, who kneaded a mixture of soil and water until it took the form of a self-resembling doll-like creature. That myth is strikingly similar to one in remote Mesoamerica: in Maya myth, humans were made by a god who used maize dough.

Today, when visiting Mesoamerican countries, people find that maize remains the soul of local people's lives. It appears as the staple in daily meals, and is frequently added to other delicacies. Ceremonies related to maize can also be witnessed throughout the year.

This crop has been a lasting cultural symbol for millennia, as demonstrated by *Maize·Gold·Jaguar: A Grand Exhibition of Ancient Maya and Andean Civilizations*, which is currently on view at the Capital Museum in Beijing.

For over 3,000 years, from around 2000 BC to the 16th century AD, the Maya civilization flourished in present-day Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, and El Salvador, renowned for its advanced writing system, astronomy and monumental pyramid-temples. Andean civilization, which thrived in South America's Andes Mountains from around 3000 BC to the 16th century AD, was also remarkable, known for its achievements in architecture, metallurgy and pottery production.

With about 800 artifacts from more than 20 cultural heritage institutes in Mexico and Peru, the exhibition, as the largest in the museum's history, showcases a historical lineage of more than 3,000 years through three cultural symbols — maize, gold and the jaguar — systematically demonstrating the productive foundations, spiritual symbols and power systems of Maya and Andean civilizations.

"Maize was the origin of life in ancient Mesoamerica," says Tan Xiaoling, deputy director of the Capital Museum. "Gold, in Andean civilization, was the sweat of the sun, representing the supreme authorities of divine and royal power. The jaguar, however, was the king of the forest and a symbolic totem connecting the human world with the divine realm. Together, they form a complete spiritual spectrum of ancient American people from survival to faith and then power."

Cosmic chapter

The first chapter draws visitors into the Maya world, displaying how ancient people from that remote area created outstanding achievements, including farming, hieroglyphic, and the astronomical calendar, during its classical era from 200 to 900, roughly the same time as China's Three Kingdoms (220-280) to the Tang Dynasty (618-907), says Shao Xinxin, curator of this section of the exhibition.

He highlights a sandstone head statue on display from 600-900, adorned with a cosmic tree headdress with geometrics, animal and deity patterns. It is speculated that this figure played an important role in ancient Maya sacrificial or other ceremonial activities.

Behind this artifact lies the Mayan worldview and the cosmos. Shao says they believed the world had three realms — the upper realm for the sun, the moon and the stars; the middle realm was where humans thrived; and the bottom realm was where the dead paused before rebirth. Linking the three realms is the cosmic tree, which holds the universe together.

Horizontally, with the tree at the center, Mayans divided the earthly realm into five directions, each associated with a symbolic color: the east, red; the north, white; the west, black; the south, yellow; and the center, green.

Shao says such ideas, whether the world is three realms or the five directions of different colors, can also be traced in traditional Chinese culture. The Chinese also used five colors to denote the same five directions, though the color assignments differed.

Another fascinating parallel appears in the representation of the moon. The display showcases a limestone stele from 900 to 1521 depicting the Maya moon goddess Ixchel. She holds a rabbit in her arms. In Maya belief, the rabbit symbolizes the moon and is an important partner of the goddess.

"This is highly similar to the moon goddess Chang'e and her rabbit in traditional Chinese myth," says Shao. "It is generally guessed that Maya and Chinese people both believed the shadow they witnessed on the moon was a rabbit. Connecting the rabbit to the moon is rare in world civilizations elsewhere."

While the exhibition's first section focuses on the Maya civilization, the second section shifts the viewer's attention southward into the Andes Mountains. Here, the organizing symbol is gold.

Heavy metal masks

In the second section, the Andean civilization is introduced mainly through its metal vessel-making techniques. A gilt-copper mask on display, unearthed from the Royal Tombs of Sipan in Peru, is the masterpiece that showcases this achievement. Its facial features are clear and lifelike, showing the craftspeople's mastery of human expression.

Such masks were often placed on the faces of tomb owners or appeared in groups as accompanying burial artifacts. In Andean belief, masks held a protective function: they guarded the soul of the deceased and helped the dead gain their identity in the underworld, says Zhao Yazhuo, also a curator of the exhibition, adding that the mask is highly similar to the jade and metal masks found in ancient Chinese tombs.

The 72 artifacts from the Royal Tombs of Sipan are highlighted in the display, with more than 80 percent making their debut in China. More than half have never been showcased in Peru.

The royal tombs were discovered first in 1987, when some were looted. Then archaeologist Walter Alva carried out rescue excavations of the tombs with a team and discovered the giant tomb group, where the king of the Moche culture (an ancient Peruvian culture from 100 to 850) was buried. Its high level of preservation is often compared to that of the tomb of Tutankhamun in Egypt.

"People in Peru's northern coastal region overcame the desert through engineered irrigation systems, giving rise to a unique civilization. The Moche culture, in particular, stands as an outstanding example," says Alva. "I believe this exhibition enables China, a country that also has a long history, to understand Peru's past and appreciate the best examples of its artistic creativity."

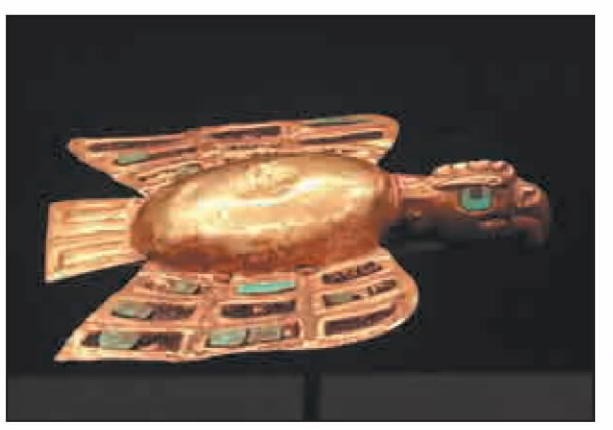
The exhibition also traces a lesser-known historical connection that linked the Andes to China through the global silver trade. Since the 16th century, when the Inca Empire (about 1400-1532) of Andean civilization gradually declined, Spanish colonizers exploited local silver in enormous quantities, which then traveled all the way to Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) China through maritime trade.

The Ming economy, Zhao explains, faced a silver shortage for use as currency. "The paper currency issued in the early Ming Dynasty had lost significant value, and there was also a shortage of bronze coins. Thus, the public had an earnest demand for a stable, reliable currency. The import of silver from Americas filled that gap.

"In this way, the remote Chinese and Andean civilizations were truly connected at that time, all becoming part of the entire world history," she adds.











From top: A feline-shaped ceramic jar, from 600 to 1000, unearthed in Peru. Peruvian archaeologist Walter Alva introduces artifacts from the Royal Tombs of Sipan on display at the Capital Museum's new exhibition last month. A gold headdress (inset), unearthed from Peru from 100 to 850. People appreciate a sandstone statue of Maya culture from 600 to 900 on display at the exhibition. A gold Andean condor plaque (left) from 1300-200 BC. A gold Peruvian warrior figurine from 100 to 850 on display. Bronze figurines unearthed from Peru from 600 to 1000. PHOTOS BY JIANG DONG / CHINA DAILY

Animal instincts

While the first two sections focus on human creations, the final section turns the spotlight on animals in Americas, introducing their bond with human society.

Wei Yi, curator of the last section, says that in Mesoamerica, people believed each individual had a guardian spirit animal and was endowed with the spirit and character of their protective animal. For example, if someone's guarding spirit is a jaguar, then the person likely has strength and courage. If one is protected by a monkey, then they may be elegantly flexible with artistic talent.

An object on display directly illustrates this belief: a soldier's figurine in jaguar attire, found in western Mexico and dating from approximately 100 BC to AD 400. The soldier wears a jaguar skin as a garment, and his posture is aggressive and powerful. The meaning is clear: by dressing as the jaguar, the soldier would gain the animal's strength and fighting skills, ensuring victory in battle.

"Ancient people in Mesoamerica understood the relationship between people and animals in this way, deeply integrating animals in their lives and social culture," says Wei.

"Following this belief, visitors can find out their own guardian animal when touring the display," he adds.

Contact the writer at wangru1@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:20 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:20 PM

SPORTS

WORLD CUP 2026

Messi hails 'beautiful moment' after tying Cup goals record

Argentine's hat-trick puts him level with German Klose



Messi celebrates after scoring his second goal during a World Cup Group J match between Argentina and Algeria on Tuesday. AP





Left: Lionel Messi scores his second against Algerian keeper Luca Zidane, doubling Argentina's lead in the process. **Right:** Messi lines up the hat-trick shot as Algeria's Riyad Mahrez (7) and Nabil Bentaleb (19) attempt to close him down. AFP / AP

Lionel Messi saluted a "beautiful moment" after becoming the World Cup's joint all-time leading goalscorer in his record-breaking appearance at his sixth World Cup on Tuesday.

The 38-year-old Argentina captain penned another memorable chapter in his storied career with a brilliant hat-trick in the South Americans' 3-0 win over Algeria at Kansas City's Arrowhead Stadium.

Messi's hat-trick — his first ever in a World Cup — put him alongside Germany's Miroslav Klose as the top scorer in the tournament's history with 16 goals.

"To enjoy this with my family, with my teammates, the ones who are always there, is a really beautiful moment," Inter Miami star Messi said afterwards. "I'm happy."

Messi's razor-sharp eye for goal augurs well for Argentina's hopes of becoming the first team since Brazil in 1962 to win back-to-back World Cup titles.

"The squad, it's a very united, very strong group," Messi said.

"I feel good; we were lucky enough to win a tough match. It's important to start off with a win in the first game.

"I'm grateful to the fans, because, once again, they've shown that Argentina is crazy about this — we packed the stadium again."

On a night for the ages in Kansas City, the records kept tumbling for Argentina's miracle man, considered by many to be the greatest footballer of all time.

When the match kicked off at the home of the NFL's Kansas City Chiefs, Messi became the first player to feature in six World Cup tournaments, in his 200th international match.

And the star veteran, who made his first appearance at a World Cup as a teenager in 2006, lit up the occasion with three goals in a clinical display by Argentina.

Messi produced a majestic finish from distance in the 17th minute, sparking a frenzy among his adoring fans, who had turned the match into a virtual home game.

He netted again in the second half from close range, gobbling up a rebound to take him just one goal behind the all-time record held by Klose.

Messi completed his first World Cup hat-trick with an unstoppable finish in the 76th minute.

The diminutive genius was substituted shortly afterward, forcing Argentine fans to wait to see their hero have a shot at the outright record.

Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni, meanwhile, said he no longer has "the words to describe Messi".

"For 20 years, he's had us used to seeing things like this, and he inspires everyone who watches him play," Scaloni said of his star player.

Scaloni is now targeting Argentina's second Group J game against Austria on Monday, as the South Americans look to lock up their place in the knockout rounds.

"We're going to take it one game at a time. The team is happy; we gave playing time to a lot of players," Scaloni said.

"Hopefully, we can win the next one so everyone can be in the third group stage match."

Fluid in attack

The Group J match in the open-air stadium started at a frantic pace and both sides had early goals ruled out for offside, including one from Messi.

But Argentina took the lead when Rodrigo De Paul played a beautifully measured through ball, which Messi picked up before driving at goal and unleashing a fierce shot from outside the penalty area that curled away from goalkeeper Luca Zidane.

The South American team was largely in control, fluid in attack with its revered No 10 pulling the strings.

But, as the clock ticked toward halftime Algeria enjoyed a better spell, with Argentina goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez forced to parry a shot from Fares Chaibi.

Messi curled another effort over the bar in the early minutes of the second half and Zidane kept out a shot from Lautaro Martinez.

But the crowd did not have to wait long to celebrate another goal from the veteran Inter Miami forward.

Zidane failed to deal with a sizzling Alexis Mac Allister strike and Messi was there to sweep home in the 60th minute.

Time stood still six minutes later as Messi was through again, but this time Zidane pushed the ball over the bar.

It was enough to make Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes leap from his seat in anticipation.

Messi, though, was not to be denied, completing his hat-trick after being set up by substitute Nico Gonzalez.

'A madman'

Messi's hat-trick upstaged two of soccer's other stars — Kylian Mbappe of France and Erling Haaland of Norway — who had big games of their own on Tuesday. Mbappe scored twice in France's 3-1 win over Senegal, moving him into joint fourth on the World Cup goals list with 14, while Haaland scored twice for Norway in its 4-1 victory over Iraq.

"Messi is a madman," Haaland said in a post on Snapchat.

Messi, who turns 39 next week, had been dealing with a minor hamstring injury with Inter Miami that had slowed him in the lead-up to the World Cup, but the eight-time Ballon d'Or recipient had no problems in a tuneup against Iceland last week, scoring on a penalty kick while playing 20 minutes in a sharp performance.

"When I'm in good shape," Messi said, "I give it my all."

Earlier, the roads around the stadium were clogged as tens of thousands of Argentine fans streamed toward the ground dressed in blue and white, many with Messi's name on the back of their shirts.

Argentina's all-time top scorer is just the third man to reach 200 caps after Cristiano Ronaldo and Kuwait's Bader Al-Mutawa.

Ronaldo will equal Messi's record of six World Cup appearances if he plays for Portugal against DR Congo on Wednesday.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Mbappe calls the tune in France win



Kylian Mbappe scores his second goal, and France's third, during a World Cup Group I match against Senegal in East Rutherford, New Jersey, on Tuesday. AP



Kylian Mbappe celebrates scoring the opening goal in France's World Cup match against Senegal on Tuesday. AP

EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey — After a flat first half, Kylian Mbappe got France back in tune.

Mbappe scored twice to move past Pele with 14 World Cup goals, celebrating by mimicking a flutist as he had promised, and helping Les Bleus beat Senegal 3-1 on Tuesday in their World Cup opener.

"He could have scored four or five goals, OK, theoretically, but we're happy with two," France coach Didier Deschamps said.

He began the day one goal behind Olivier Giroud, his teammate in France's victorious 2018 World Cup campaign, but is now one ahead of the former Arsenal striker on 58 goals in 99 appearances.

"I am really pleased and very happy to make a little more history for my country," Mbappe said.

"It is something I always wanted to do, although we know why we are here, so I think I will have the time to think about all these things once I stop playing."

He added: "We want to keep writing the biggest page in the history of the French national team. We know the road is very long, but we are ready."

Mbappe had 14 touches in the scoreless first half, the fewest of any player, then put France ahead in the 66th minute. He burst past Senegal captain Kalidou Koulibaly, turned onto a diagonal pass from Michael Olise and slid the ball past goalkeeper Edouard Mendy from just outside the six-yard box.

In a segment with Mbappe taped on May 20 and aired Friday by US broadcaster Fox, award-winning actor and television host James Corden suggested the 27-year-old star striker celebrate his next World Cup goal by imitating a flute player. Mbappe practiced the instrument for a year or two as a child at the behest of his parents.

"I'll do it for you in the first game," Mbappe said.

Mbappe ran toward a corner, brought both hands to his lips and mimicked the instrument.

"If he wants to miss the first half again and score two goals in the second half in another match, that's OK with me," Deschamps said.

Bradley Barcola doubled the lead in the 82nd, two minutes after entering. Ibrahim Mbaye cut the deficit in the fifth minute of stoppage time. Senegalese celebrations, though, were short-lived. Mbappe scored just 68 seconds later on a spectacular right-footed shot from 30 yards. The ball dipped perfectly between Mendy's outstretched left arm and the crossbar.

"A crazy goal," French defender William Saliba said.

Mbappe, who led the 2022 tournament with eight goals, moved one ahead of Lionel Messi and fellow Frenchman Just Fontaine on the World Cup scoring list before Messi scored his 14th, 15th and 16th for Argentina later Tuesday. Mbappe is tied with Germany's Gerd Muller, trailing Messi, Germany's Miroslav Klose (16) and Brazil's Ronaldo (15).

"I'm sure that he will do it," Saliba said of Mbappe setting the record.

"He can, from time to time, miss a game or two, but on one action he really is able to tip the scales and bring his team to victory," Deschamps said.

"People say he doesn't defend enough. Well, he's not here to defend."

Mbappe brushed off critics.

"It's not about revenge," he said. "If I started playing for all the people who criticize me just to silence them, I'd have to play until I was 80."

Trying to reach its third straight World Cup final, France plays Iraq on Monday in Philadelphia, then closes Group I on June 26 against Norway at Foxborough, Massachusetts. Senegal meets Norway on Monday at MetLife Stadium and finishes the first round against Iraq in Toronto.

With fans in Senegal denied visas by the United States government, supporters of the Lions of Teranga appeared limited to a few sections in MetLife's southwest corner on a sunny 25 C afternoon.

While most of the stadium was filled with a just-under-sellout crowd of 80,545, there were empty seats on a mezzanine club level, which has air-conditioned suites behind the outdoor chairs.

Two hours before kickoff, tickets dropped to as low as $69 on FIFA's resale site.

FIFA sold tickets at $220-$620 in December.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:20 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:21 PM



Woven wonders

Master craftswoman resurrects Song brocade tradition PEOPLE, PAGE 5



Caring for the seas

China urges fairer governance of ocean's resources

WORLD, PAGE 4

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 FRIDAY, JUNE 19, 2026

Importance of founding ideals stressed

Xi urges all Party members to strive for new accomplishments in new era

Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, has called on Party members in the new era to carry forward revolutionary traditions and strive for new accomplishments on the new journey.

Xi, who is also Chinese president and chairman of the Central Military Commission, made the remarks in a letter of reply to Zhang Liansheng, a 102-year-old Party member with Xinhua News Agency, ahead of the 105th founding anniversary of the CPC, which falls on July 1.

Xi extended sincere greetings to Zhang and veteran Party members and comrades across the country.

In the reply, Xi noted that Zhang, as a radio operator with the "Fourth Brigade" of a central armed force during the War of Liberation (1946-49), followed the Party Central Committee through the flames of war in northern Shaanxi in Northwest China about eight decades ago, devoted his entire life to communications technology with hard work and still cares about the cause of the Party and the country.

"I would like to express my respect to you," Xi wrote, speaking highly of Zhang's sincere and profound love for and faith in the Party.

Xi asked all Party members never to forget their original aspiration and founding mission, emphasizing the importance of faithfully performing their duties, working diligently and taking responsibility.

The "Fourth Brigade" was a Xinhua working team that followed the Party Central Committee and Mao Zedong in northern Shaanxi during that war, and was responsible for news reporting and liaison work.

It initially had over 40 members, including editors, translators, radio operators and logistics personnel, and later grew to more than 100.

In a recent interview, Zhang expressed gratitude to the Party, Xi and fellow Party members for their care and support. "I am an ordinary Party member," he said. "I have always received care and education from the Party, and I feel deeply honored and moved. I will remain loyal to the Party and to the Party's cause."

Zhang said he could no longer recall many details clearly due to his age, but the sound of Morse code has stayed with him.

"The Party organization sent me to Yan'an to learn how to receive and send telegrams," he said. "I am old now, and I have forgotten many things. But dit-dit-dah, dah-dit-dit, dah-dah-dit-dit — I will remember that for the rest of my life."

From March 1947 to March 1948, over the course of one year and five days, members of the "Fourth Brigade" followed the Party Central Committee for more than 1,000 kilometers across northern Shaanxi under harsh and tense conditions, enduring shortages of food and medical care and, at times, the danger of nearby enemy forces.

"Life was hard and we had no vehicles. We relied on our own legs," Zhang recalled. "But we were young and cheerful then, and we were not afraid. We did whatever we were asked to do."

The deeds and names of the "Fourth Brigade" remained little known for decades and after years of research, the names of 70 members have now been confirmed.

XINHUA—CHINA DAILY

Making a splash



Children from a kindergarten in Congjiang county, Guizhou province, take part in a boat race in a shallow pool on Thursday to celebrate the Dragon Boat Festival that falls on Friday. LUO JINGLAI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Envoy delves into China's history in Shaanxi

By **MO JINGXI** in Yan'an, Shaanxi province
mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn

A small handmade iron hoe for tending a garden, a bag of apricots and a pair of cloth shoes were among the souvenirs Peter Wilson bought during a visit to Yan'an in Northwest China's Shaanxi province on Wednesday — the sort of keepsakes any tourist might bring home.

But for Wilson, the United Kingdom's ambassador to China, the visit yielded something less tangible: a closer look at the historical experiences that continue to shape China today.

Standing outside the cave dwelling that once served as Chairman Mao Zedong's residence at the revolutionary site of Yangjialing, Wilson said that he had not expected the Communist Party of China to have grown in strength under such austere conditions.

"Foreigners also need to understand your history. I think it is very important to come here and visit the sites where history unfolded," he said.

Wilson traveled to Yan'an on Wednesday with Lu Kang, vice-minister of the International Department of the CPC Central Committee, after visiting Xi'an, the provincial capital, on Tuesday.

The trip came during Wilson's third posting in China. He took up his current role as ambassador in August last year, more than three decades after first working in the commercial section of the British Embassy in Beijing in the 1990s. He also served as political counselor at the embassy from 2007 to 2010.

"For me, wherever I work, it is very important to understand that country's history in depth, as well as how that country views its own history," Wilson said in fluent Chinese.

"That is why I greatly value this opportunity to visit Shaanxi, Yan'an and Liangjiahe."

Lu said the visit would help the British side gain a more comprehensive, objective and accurate understanding of China and the CPC, while contributing toward greater mutual understanding and the development of China-UK relations.

For Wilson, that process was as much about asking questions and talking with people as it was about visiting historical sites.

At the Yan'an Revolutionary Memorial Hall, he paused before statues depicting international friends and asked about the different roles they played.

See ***Visit,*** *page 2*

US, Iran sign MoU remotely to end conflict

By **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong, **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE, and **JI HAISHENG** in Beijing

United States President Donald Trump and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian have signed a Memorandum of Understanding, which came into immediate effect, to end the war in the Middle East. A formal ceremony is scheduled to take place in Switzerland on Friday.

Iranian and US media showed the two leaders signing and holding up a document finalizing the deal without an in-person ceremony. The provisions of the deal include stopping the war on all fronts, including in Lebanon.

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif wrote in a post on X on Thursday that he was "honoured" to announce that the "historic Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding has been electronically signed today between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran", which was "also endorsed by me as the mediator".

"Islamabad MoU shall enter into force with immediate effect and as a first step," Sharif said. He added that Iran "will instantly reopen the Strait of Hormuz and the US will immediately lift the naval blockade".

A spokesperson later said that Sharif was postponing his visit to Switzerland for the US-Iran ceremony because the agreement on ending the Middle East war had been signed remotely.



Ships at Bandar Abbas port in Iran wait to set sail through the Strait of Hormuz on Thursday. AMIRHOSSEIN KHORGOOEI / ISNA / AFP

Speaker of the Iranian Parliament Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said in a televised interview that Iran has conducted negotiations with the US from a position of strength. "When I speak of negotiations and diplomacy, I mean a diplomacy of strength," Ghalibaf said.

Before signing the document at the Palace of Versailles in Paris, Trump said that it was "not easy".

Trump, who was in France to attend the G7 Summit, told reporters that he did not want to see "economic catastrophe" as he defended his deal with Iran. But he also said that if Iran did not honor the deal, "we would probably go back to bombing them".

According to the 14-point MoU text published by the US and Iranian media, the provisions of the deal include the US undertaking steps to terminate all types of sanctions against Iran within an agreed upon schedule.

The US will also work with regional partners to develop a definitive, mutually agreed plan with at least $300 billion for the reconstruction and economic development of Iran. The mechanism for the implementation of this plan will be finalized as part of a final deal within 60 days.

Pending the final deal, Iran and the US agree to maintain the status quo. Tehran will maintain the current status quo of its nuclear program, and the US will not impose any new sanctions and will not deploy additional forces in the region.

The provisions also stipulate that the final deal will be endorsed by a binding United Nations Security Council resolution.

China welcomed the conclusion of the first phase of the MoU between the US and Iran, saying that it provides favorable conditions for easing regional tensions, while urging Israel and other relevant parties to do more to facilitate the implementation of the deal and the upcoming second phase of negotiations.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian made the remarks at a regular press briefing. "China stands ready to continue leveraging its influence and work with the international community to make unremitting efforts for the early realization of lasting peace and security in the Middle East," Lin said.

Rafael Grossi, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, also welcomed the deal. "Now it is for us to sit down with our American and Iranian colleagues and start formulating concrete steps that will have to be taken," Grossi was quoted as saying by Reuters.

The Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that talks between the US and Iran would continue at Switzerland's Buergenstock resort.

See ***Deal,*** *page 2*

BEYOND THE HEARTH, ZONGZI STILL THE HEART OF HOLIDAY

Dragon Boat Festival dumpling delicacy goes from family kitchens to online platforms, supermarkets

By **YANG ZEKUN**
yangzekun@chinadaily.com.cn

When Lin Kai bites into a *zongzi* during Dragon Boat Festival, he doesn't think about prestige brands, gift boxes or online discounts.

He reminisces about a kitchen in Anhui province, where his grandparents sat by the stove, folded bamboo leaves, and filled them with soaked glutinous rice and pork.

When he was a child, they taught him how to tie each dumpling tight enough to hold together in the pot. The 40-year-old Beijing office worker remembers his first clumsy attempts at making the dumplings. He folded the leaves incorrectly with the rice spilling out, and the *zongzi* often came loose while boiling in the pot. But his grandparents never scolded him.

"Even if a *zongzi* I made looked ugly, it tasted especially good," he said. "The whole family was there, talking and laughing. That was the taste of the festival."

A traditional Chinese delicacy, the *zongzi* is a pyramid-shaped dumpling made of glutinous rice wrapped in bamboo or reed leaves. It is especially loved as a treat during the Dragon Boat Festival.

Lin still prepares *zongzi* every Dragon Boat Festival, but rarely by hand these days. Like many urbanites, he usually buys ready-made ones from the supermarket or e-commerce platforms. Some are classic pork *zongzi*, some come in gift boxes, and others are lighter, healthier versions with less sugar and oil and fewer additives.

See ***Delicacy,*** *page 3*

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

www.chinadailyglobal.com

A member of ANN

China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:21 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:21 PM

NATION

Visit: Need to understand history highlighted

From page 1

At the site of the Seventh National Congress of the CPC, which was held in 1945, he discussed with an interpreter how best to render the Chinese phrase *tongxin tongde* — *"to be of one heart and one mind" — in English*.

At the China Executive Leadership Academy, Yan'an, Wilson told reporters that officials from China and the UK should have more opportunities to exchange views and learn from one another.

He expressed hope that officials from both countries would take part in more exchange visits, thus broadening their perspectives and improving their work by learning from each other.

At Liangjiahe, where President Xi Jinping spent seven years — from 1969 to 1975 — living and working alongside local villagers, Wilson asked what time people began and ended their working day decades ago and how village life had changed since then.

According to the organizers, Wilson is the first ambassador from a major Western country to visit Liangjiahe since the 20th National Congress of the CPC in 2022.

At the invitation of local villagers, he sat down with them to eat locally grown apples and drink jujube-bud tea.

Asked what message he would share with other foreign diplomats in China after the trip, Wilson said that he would encourage them to travel more widely and see different parts of the country for themselves.

"We should do that in every country, rather than stay in one place," he said.

Wilson recalled that when he presented his credentials to Xi in January, the Chinese president encouraged the newly appointed ambassadors to travel widely across the country, gain a full and in-depth understanding of the real and multifaceted China, and actively contribute to deepening friendship and cooperation between China and their respective countries.

Wilson said that learning about a country also meant listening to the personal experiences of both its leaders and the ordinary people.

"I really enjoyed talking to people who live in Liangjiahe, hearing how their lives have changed, and also hearing about what life was like before."

As they walked through the village, Shi Chunyang, who worked with Xi when he lived in Liangjiahe, and then went on to become village Party secretary later, told Wilson that even the asphalt road beneath their feet had not existed in those days.

Before a biogas digester was successfully fired up in 1974, lighting the first biogas lamp on the northern Shaanxi plateau, villagers relied on kerosene lamps for illumination, Shi said.

Those stories resonated with Wilson, who has observed China's broader transformation since first visiting Beijing in 1981.

He last visited Xi'an in 2007. Much of the city he saw on this trip, he said, either had not existed or had yet to be developed at the time.

He was similarly struck by the ecological transformation around Yan'an.

"In the old photographs, almost everything was yellow. Now, everything is green," he said, referring to changes in the once largely barren landscape.

Wilson said understanding how China views the history of the CPC can also offer insights into how the country sees its future and shapes its policies.

Britain and China have different political systems, Wilson noted, but that made understanding rather than assumption all the more important.

For diplomats, Wilson said, gaining an in-depth understanding of their host country was essential both to performing their duties and helping their governments understand that country's perspectives.

More exchanges would not necessarily mean that people of Britain and China would see every issue in the same way, he said, but it would allow both sides to see more for themselves, communicate more openly and better understand their common ground as well as their differences.

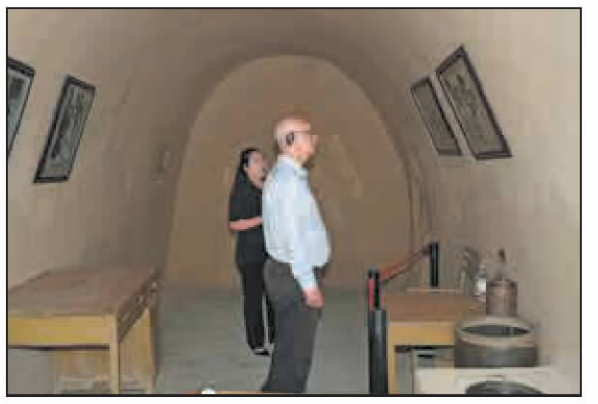
As permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, Britain and China both bear international responsibilities, Wilson said, noting that understanding how China views its own history also helps explain how it sees the wider world, he added.

To address global challenges ranging from climate change and international conflicts to the governance of artificial intelligence, countries must understand one another's perspectives and work together to shape their shared future, he said.

In colloquial Chinese, he summed up the task more simply:

"Get things done together."





Top: Peter Wilson, ambassador of United Kingdom to China, selects handmade gardening tools crafted by villagers in Yan'an, Shaanxi province, on Wednesday.
Left: Wilson visits a cave dwelling at the revolutionary site of Yangjialing in Yan'an.
PHOTOS BY SHAO RUI / XINHUA

Online
See more by scanning the code.

> "For me, wherever I work, it is very important to understand that country's history in depth, as well as how that country views its own history."
>
> **Peter Wilson,** ambassador of United Kingdom to China

E-commerce giants race to power "618"

Shopping platforms reshape mid-year sales festival with AI-driven tools

By CHENG YU
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Artificial intelligence took center stage this year during China's annual 618 shopping festival on Thursday, as the country's e-commerce giants raced to turn chatbots, digital hosts and AI shopping agents into the next gateway to billions of dollars in consumer spending.

From JD's digital livestream hosts to Alibaba's AI shopping assistant and ByteDance's AI-powered recommendation tools, this year's shopping extravaganza marked the deepest integration of AI into China's online retail ecosystem.

Within the first four hours of the promotion, the number of merchants using JD's JoyAI model and its AI livestreaming host, JoyStreamer, increased sixfold from a year earlier. Those AI-powered streams generated more than 70 million yuan ($10.3 million) in sales.

Cao Peng, chairman of JD's technology committee, said: "This year's 618 shopping festival was JD's first to fully integrate AI across all scenarios and throughout the entire value chain."

"For businesses, AI is reshaping the economics of commerce by lowering costs and boosting efficiency. For consumers, it is fundamentally transforming the shopping experience," he said.

Notably, Alibaba's Qwen AI application has been connected to the full product catalog of Taobao, allowing users to compare products, calculate discounts and complete purchases through conversational prompts.

Xu Xiao, a 27-year-old bank employee from Beijing, said she uses AI-powered virtual try-on tools when considering clothes in unfamiliar colors or styles. "It helps me avoid making bad purchases and improves the chances that I'll be satisfied with what I buy."

The e-commerce unit of ByteDance's Douyin has also made large-scale computing resources available to merchants and rolled out AI customer service tools aimed at reducing labor costs. Short-video platform Kuaishou has deployed AI diagnostic systems that help sellers identify operational problems and optimize marketing strategies in real time.

The shift is also changing how platforms understand consumer intent.

Liu Bangzheng, a senior executive at Alibaba's advertising unit Alimama, said: "AI can move beyond understanding keywords and begin understanding intent."

Liu cited an example in which AI discovered unexpected consumer groups for certain products. Smart lock manufacturers, which usually focus on homeowners, discovered potential demand among young women with long fingernails who preferred keyless entry, Liu said.

According to Huatai Securities, AI has evolved from a supporting tool into critical operating infrastructure, helping merchants manage marketing, customer service, livestreaming and advertising in China.

A white paper jointly released by Alibaba's Taobao and Tmall Group and industry partners said that roughly 70 percent of merchants operating on Alibaba platforms are already using AI tools to support business decisions.

Hong Yong, an associate research fellow at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation under the Ministry of Commerce, said that over the longer term, AI could shift the competitive dynamics of e-commerce from a battle for traffic to one centered on consumer decision-making.

"Future growth will hinge on whether AI recommendations genuinely serve users rather than becoming another advertising channel, whether small merchants can afford advanced AI tools, and whether platforms can address concerns around pricing transparency, privacy protection and accountability," he said.

However, he also cautioned that many AI services still struggle with accuracy and reliability. Some consumers reported receiving irrelevant recommendations, while merchants say AI-generated business reports often require extensive human verification.



At a public distribution center in Lianyungang, Jiangsu province, staff sort and dispatch packages on Thursday as the 618 shopping festival wraps up. GENG YUHE / FOR CHINA DAILY

Pottery-making attracts tourists to Huamao

By LIU BOQIAN and **YANG JUN** in Zunyi, Guizhou

PATH TO GLORY

The pottery jars that once filled village kitchens across Guizhou province are no longer everyday necessities. In Huamao village, however, they have become symbols of a rural revival.

The village, located along the route of the Red Army's Long March (1934-36) in Southwest China, was once known as Huangmaotian, a name that reflected its poverty and remoteness. Today, tourists wander its stone pathways, visit craft workshops and sample local specialties, fueling a transformation driven by tourism and traditional industries.

Mu Xiancai, a fourth-generation inheritor of Huamao's pottery making tradition, is one of those at the center of that transformation.

Inside his workshop, a pottery wheel spins steadily as clay takes shape beneath his hands. Within minutes, a bottle-shaped vessel emerges.

"In the 1960s, even the bottles used for Moutai liquor were made in Huamao," Mu said.

Rich in kaolin clay, Huamao has produced pottery for generations. The village's yellow-brown earthenware was once a common sight in homes across the region, used for everything from cooking to food storage. However, as industrial products replaced traditional ceramics, their demand sharply declined.

Before 2014, Mu spent his days making storage jars and earned less than 30,000 yuan ($4,430) a year.

That changed as Huamao began developing rural tourism. Roads were upgraded, environmental improvements were carried out and visitors began arriving.

For Huamao, the revival of traditional crafts has become closely linked with the growth of tourism.

According to village Party secretary Zhu Jiao, Huamao's collective operating income exceeded 1 million yuan in 2025, while annual per capita income surpassed 27,000 yuan.

"I used to make pickle jars. Now I make vases and decorative ornaments," Mu said. "I never imagined this old craft could find new uses."

Today, he also offers pottery-making experiences for tourists. During peak season, his workshop can attract more than 400 visitors a day, generating an annual income of 200,000 to 300,000 yuan.

Among his most distinctive products is a large clay vessel known as a *guzi*, traditionally used to prepare one of the village's signature dishes.

The dish, called *guzi* chicken, is cooked without adding a single drop of water.

As steam rises from boiling water beneath the vessel, it condenses inside the upper chamber and drips onto the chicken, gradually creating a rich broth. The cycle continues until the meat is fully cooked, a process that often takes more than four hours.

The unusual cooking method has turned the dish into a major attraction, drawing visitors from nearby Chongqing and Sichuan province eager to taste the local specialty.

At the Red Home farmhouse restaurant, owner Wang Hao offers the dish to visitors and has witnessed the village's changes firsthand.

His father opened the village's first farmhouse restaurant years ago on a site once traversed by the Red Army during the Long March, naming it "Red Home."

When Wang returned to Huamao in 2017, he expanded the business by building a camping site, updating the menu and working with travel agencies to develop tourism routes.

"Our record was serving more than 100 tables during a single lunch service," Wang said. "Annual revenue has grown from just over 100,000 yuan in 2014 to nearly 1 million yuan in 2025."

The business now provides jobs for more than 10 local residents.

Traditional crafts are finding new markets elsewhere in the village as well.

In a small handmade paper workshop, founder Zhang Shengdi carefully presses freshly picked flowers and leaves onto wet mulberry paper, creating decorative artworks inspired by local scenery.

Plum blossoms, orchids, chrysanthemums and scenes from Huamao's countryside all appear in her designs.

"The challenge isn't making the paper," Zhang said. "The challenge is making people want to buy it, use it and appreciate it today."

Her workshop has expanded beyond traditional paper products to include bookmarks, notebooks and decorative lamps, each featuring classical Chinese quotations or poetry.

"This handmade notebook sells for more than 50 yuan and is especially popular," she said.

Environmental improvements have also accompanied economic growth. More than 8,800 trees have been planted, 8.8 kilometers of waterways restored and sewage treatment coverage extended to all concentrated residential areas. Household waste is now fully collected and treated.

On a summer afternoon, visitors strolling through Huamao encounter rice paddies, streams and white-walled houses scattered beneath green hills. The aroma of home-cooked meals drifts through narrow lanes as tourists move between workshops, restaurants and guesthouses. The pottery jars that once filled village kitchens now hold new value.

Contact the writer at liuboqian@chinadaily.com.cn

Deal: Some of Iran's main demands find mention

From page 1

Dina Yulianti Sulaeman, director of the Indonesia Center for Middle East Studies, told China Daily that Iran is now "better off" and the MoU was not a triumph for the US, but the recognition of the situation.

Sulaeman noted that the targets that had been discussed by Washington and Tel Aviv from the start of the war were regime change in Tehran, destruction of Iran's nuclear program, curbing its ballistic missile program and reducing its regional militant network.

"The present MoU, however, does not appear to have (met) any of these goals. Instead, Iran keeps its political system, is acknowledged as a legitimate negotiating partner, has access to frozen assets, has sanctions relief and doesn't have to stop all of its missile programs," said Sulaeman.

"Indeed, some of Iran's main demands, including an end to the war and the normalization of trade and shipping routes, are in the agreement. Thus I believe this MoU is not a triumph of American diplomacy but a recognition of the situation," she added.

Meanwhile, Reuters reported, citing a senior Israeli official close to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, that Israel is "conducting stubborn negotiations" with the US on continued deployment of troops in southern Lebanon.

Contact the writers at jan@chinadailyapac.com

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:21 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:21 PM

COVER





From left: A *zongzi* is being filled with glutinous rice at a community in Rongcheng, Shandong province, on June 13. LIN HAIZHEN / FOR CHINA DAILY A worker pushes a cart of *zongzi* into a sterilizer at a food factory in Zhaoqing, Guangdong province, on June 10. CHEN JIMIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE A worker collects air-dried *zongzi* at a factory in Congjiang, Guizhou province, on June 11. WU DEJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Delicacy: Appeal remains in emotional value

From page 1

This shift from making to purchasing *zongzi* has become one of the most notable changes of today's Dragon Boat Festival. Once a seasonal food made at home with little packaging or a price premium, the *zongzi* has moved from the family kitchen to supermarket shelves, livestreaming rooms and social media feeds. Nonetheless, it remains a symbol of the festival.

According to the 2025 China Zongzi Industry Consumption and Brand White Paper released by China Data Technology, China's *zongzi* market was expected to reach 11 billion yuan ($1.52 billion) in 2025, with year-on-year growth of about 7 percent.

The country's *zongzi* output rose from 450,000 metric tons in 2021 to 560,000 in 2024.

The white paper said the growth has been driven by the revival of traditional culture, the expansion of holiday gifting and the integration of *zongzi* with tourism and cultural experiences. It also reflected a broader shift in Chinese food consumption from simply "eating enough" to "eating better", as consumers placed more emphasis on quality, nutrition, convenience and emotional value.

For older generations, however, *zongzi* is still closely tied to home cooking and family memories.

Chen Guiying, 58, who grew up in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, said her family would begin preparing for the festival about a week in advance. Fresh bamboo or reed leaves were washed and soaked. Glutinous rice was left overnight until the grains became full and soft. The fillings were simple — red dates, red bean paste, pork, chestnuts, or salted egg yolk.

"There were no fancy gift boxes or unusual flavors," Chen said. "Every family made *zongzi* at home. Neighbors also gave them to one another. The fragrance of leaves and rice would fill the courtyard," Chen said.

In those days, *zongzi* was not a branded product. It was plain, filling food and a family activity. Children learned the skill from elders. Relatives shared the finished dumplings, and neighbors exchanged sweet and savory versions as a gesture of goodwill. The value of a *zongzi* came from the time and care put into it, not from the packaging.

But urbanization, busy work schedules and smaller households have gradually changed the pastime. Many young people no longer have the time or skills to wash leaves, soak rice, prepare fillings and boil *zongzi*.

For Lin, buying the specialty is a pragmatic choice. He and his wife, both fond of southern-style savory *zongzi*, usually prepare several varieties before the holiday.

"It is convenient and saves a lot of effort," he said. "The products on the market are also quite good now. But honestly, no matter how good they taste, they still seem a little different from the ones my grandparents made. What is missing is the warmth of making them together."

A wide range of the dumplings are commercially available.

Affordable loose *zongzi* and bagged products meet daily household needs. Midrange gift boxes have become a common choice for visiting relatives and friends. High-end *zongzi*, made with ingredients such as abalone, sea urchin, scallops, black truffle or high-quality pork, are intended as business gifts and for consumers seeking a more upmarket culinary experience.

Fancier dumplings have also entered the market, with gift boxes becoming an important part of corporate gift-giving and family consumption, the report said. It also noted that more than 5,600 businesses in China had names or product focuses related to *zongzi* as of May. About 40 percent are located in the southeastern coastal region.



Students and community workers present a crate of *zongzi* they have just wrapped in Qinhuangdao, Hebei province, on June 10. CAO JIANXIONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Commercial offerings

In supermarkets, the competition is visible.

Retail giant Metro launched a Dragon Boat Festival campaign last month offering about 140 *zongzi* products, with nearly 50 of them new this year. They range from loose and bagged *zongzi* to paper-bag souvenirs and creative gift boxes. Prices reach up to several hundred yuan. The retailer is also offering *zongzi*-making activities inspired by intangible cultural heritage in stores nationwide.

Some products combine traditional symbols with novelty. One popular gift box features *zongzi* shaped like a dragon boat with seven whole salted egg yolks inside.

In Jiaxing, Zhejiang province, an area known for its *zongzi* culture, traditional producers are also catering to new demands. At one established *zongzi* company in Youchegang town, Xiuzhou district, production began rising in March to prepare for the holiday rush.

"Every year before the festival is our busiest time," said Qiu Shaowei, the company's marketing director. The company can produce 1.5 million *zongzi* a day and ships orders nationwide.

This year, it invested nearly 10 million yuan to upgrade its production lines, using digital and intelligent equipment to improve efficiency and food safety. It also launched kale and oat *zongzi*, low-sugar, soft-centered corn *zongzi* and a "one soup, one *zongzi*" series that pairs broths with the dumplings.

Health has become a major direction for product innovation. The white paper said low-sugar, low-fat and additive-free *zongzi* were expected to become mainstream products. Healthy *zongzi* products could account for more than 40 percent of the market by 2030, it added.





From top: A host wraps a *zongzi* during a livestream session on June 10. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY
Crates of *zongzi* are specially decorated and promoted at a shop in Shaoxing, Zhejiang province, on June 13. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Breaking with tradition

Young consumers are another force reshaping sales of the dumpling. Consumers born in the 1990s and 2000s have become important buyers of domestic brands and are helping drive innovation in traditional cultural products, said the white paper. Those age 26 to 35 are especially willing to try new *zongzi* flavors, with sales of such flavors during special shopping periods rising sharply.

That willingness to experiment has given rise to many internet-famous *zongzi*.

Some dumplings stretch the boundaries of fillings with flavors including spicy snacks, river snail rice noodle, and stinky mandarin fish.

Other *zongzi* borrow from tea drinks and desserts, featuring jasmine Longjing tea, rose black tea, durian ice, mango pomelo sago and chocolate hazelnut flavors. Low-GI (glycemic index) grains such as quinoa, purple rice and black rice have also been introduced to appeal to health-conscious consumers.

These new products may not replace classic red date, pork or salted egg yolk ones, but they help bring the traditional festival food into new conversations, especially on social media.

Online channels have also changed how *zongzi* is sold.

Consumers now buy gift boxes of the dumplings through supermarkets, e-commerce platforms, online grocery services, and livestreaming platforms.

On Douyin and Kuaishou, livestreaming hosts cut open *zongzi* on camera, show the fillings, explain the texture and offer discounts. On Xiaohongshu and Weibo, food bloggers compare flavors and packaging, while users share holiday shopping lists and regional recommendations.

Sweet or savory?

These online conversations have also kept alive one of the Dragon Boat Festival's most playful annual debates: should *zongzi* be sweet or savory?

For many northerners, a proper *zongzi* is often simple and sweet — filled with red dates or bean paste, dipped in sugar or honey, and eaten for the fragrance of glutinous rice. For many southerners, especially in places such as Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Guangdong provinces, *zongzi* should be rich enough to serve as a meal, with pork, salted egg yolk, mushrooms, ham or seafood inside.

Every year, as the festival approaches, the online argument returns with good-natured banter.

Northerners ask why anyone would put meat in a "rice dumpling". Southerners reply that red dates alone hardly count as a filling. Then someone from another region joins in arguing the superiority of spicy meat, gray-water (alkaline-water-soaked) or flower *zongzi*, reminding everyone that the "taste map" is never as simple as "North versus South".

Logistics companies and online retailers have made it easier for northern consumers to order southern pork *zongzi*, and for southern shoppers to buy red date or bean paste versions. Many families now enjoy both.

Some producers have built *zongzi* museums, cultural displays and offer factory tours to provide visitors with intangible cultural heritage experiences.

Traditional patterns, illustrations and cultural themes used in gift box designs are highlighted in short videos where the wrapping process and culinary skills are depicted.

Yet for many people, the appeal of *zongzi* remains in the emotions and memories the treat evokes.

For Lin, *zongzi* carries recollections of childhood, his hometown and family reunions. His parents worked away from home when he was young, and he lived with his grandparents. Some years, his parents would return for the Dragon Boat Festival for two or three days before returning to work.

"At that time, I felt happy that everyone was together," Lin said. "Only after growing up did I understand how precious those short reunions were."

Now, when he chooses *zongzi* for his family or sends gift boxes to friends and colleagues, he looks at brand reputation, the ingredients and health labels. He appreciates the convenience and variety of today's market.

But one bite still takes him back to the old kitchen, the bamboo leaves and the family gathered around the stove.

For Chen, too, the meaning of *zongzi* has not disappeared simply because many people now buy it instead of making it.

"The form has changed," she said. "But as long as people still eat *zongzi* at festival time and think of home, the tradition is still there."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:21 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:21 PM

WORLD

China calls for fairer ocean governance during UN meeting

By **MINLU ZHANG**
at the United Nations
minluzhang@chinadailyusa.com

China on Wednesday called for stronger multilateral cooperation and a fairer global ocean governance system at a United Nations meeting on the law of the sea.

"The ocean is the common home of humanity and an important field of global governance," Sun Lei, China's deputy permanent representative to the UN, said in a general statement at the 36th Meeting of States Parties to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The meeting, held from Monday through Friday, reviews issues related to the implementation of the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the main international legal framework governing maritime rights, resource use and ocean affairs.

This year's meeting comes after the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction entered into force on Jan 17. The agreement focuses on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Sun said that against the backdrop of a changing international situation, China "stands ready to work with all parties to uphold the authority of the UN" and "revitalize and strengthen the UN".

This year marks the 30th anniversary of China becoming a state party to the Convention, he said, adding that China has "faithfully fulfilled" its obligations and made important contributions to improving global ocean governance.

"China has consistently supported the peaceful settlement of maritime disputes through means voluntarily chosen by the parties concerned, especially negotiation and consultation," Sun said. He added that China has sent 48 escort task forces to the Gulf of Aden and waters off Somalia to help maintain maritime peace and order.

Turning to the South China Sea, Sun responded to remarks by some countries that raised the so-called South China Sea arbitration during the meeting. He said the gathering was not the appropriate venue to discuss the South China Sea issue.

"The so-called South China Sea arbitration violated the principle of state consent," he said, adding that China "neither accepts nor recognizes" the ruling.

"The South China Sea situation is generally stable," Sun said, urging relevant countries to "stop hyping up the issue in multilateral settings and return to resolving disputes through bilateral consultation".

Sun said China attaches great importance to "the conservation and rational use of marine resources". He noted that China has designated 150,000 square kilometers of marine ecological conservation red lines and established 353 marine ecological protected areas.

China has joined the Agreement on Port State Measures, adopted "zero tolerance" toward illegal fishing, carried out voluntary fishing moratoriums on the high seas, and constructively participated in the establishment and operation of high seas protected areas, he said.

Sun also highlighted China's support for developing countries in maritime capacity building. China has provided marine disaster prevention and mitigation warning services to more than 130 countries and trained more than 100,000 marine professionals for over 50 developing countries, he said.

Sun said all parties should "practice multilateralism and defend international fairness and justice", uphold the international order based on international law, and oppose unilateralism and hegemonic acts.

He also warned against actions that "disregard international rules" and "unauthorized development of international seabed resources", saying such moves would undermine the common heritage of humanity.

Sun said "conservation" and "sustainable use" are two inseparable aspects of global ocean governance. The international community should protect the marine environment while promoting the orderly development of marine resources to support food security, energy security and critical mineral supply chains, he said.

On the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction, Sun said its implementation "concerns the overall interests of the international community" and requires a secretariat matching the agreement's importance and future development.

China has nominated Xiamen in Fujian province to host the secretariat, he said, calling the city "an ideal location" given its maritime foundation, developed blue economy and extensive maritime cooperation.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1853

Digital refuge



Ahmed Matar, 11, participates in a psychological support session using a virtual reality headset in a tent operated by a medical technology team in the Al-Zawaida area in the central Gaza Strip, on Wednesday. Israeli operations in the Gaza Strip have killed 1,005 Palestinians since a ceasefire was reached between Israel and Hamas last October, the Gaza Health Ministry said on Wednesday. ABDEL KAREEM HANA / AP

China's action on global governance draws praise

Experts welcome Beijing's latest white paper as commitment to a fairer future

By **YANG HAN** in Hong Kong,
YANG WANLI in Bangkok
and **XIN XIN** in Sydney

China's latest white paper on global governance shows its commitment to multilateralism and to building a more just, equitable and inclusive global governance system, experts say.

China has again sent the world a clear signal that it will uphold multilateralism, unite forces, and pursue a fair future, said Bhokin Bhalakula, former president of the National Assembly of Thailand.

He noted that the world is experiencing unprecedented polarization, and it is ordinary civilians who suffer most in wars and conflicts. Bhokin argued that subordinating the interests of other nations to those of a single state will not command respect.

"This is also what the majority of international community is pursuing to build a more just and equitable global governance system," he said. "People don't want conflicts, and it's the duty of mankind to hold generosity and take care of others, live together, promote peace and development together."

On Wednesday, China released a white paper titled "More Just and Equitable Global Governance: China's Principles, Proposals, and Actions".

It offers a comprehensive explanation of China's ideas and efforts to promote global governance and foster a broader consensus within the international community, ensuring more effective responses to global challenges and building a more just and equitable global governance system.

The Global Governance Initiative was first proposed by President Xi Jinping in 2025. Since then, it has been endorsed by nearly 160 countries and international organizations, receiving extensive and positive responses from the international community.

"The paper raises important themes, including the role of the United Nations, multilateralism, sovereign equality, development, and greater participation by the Global South in international decision-making," said Frank Alafaci, president of the Australian Business Summit Council Inc.

Respectful dialogue

At a time of significant geopolitical, economic, and social uncertainty, it is important that nations continue to engage in respectful dialogue and seek practical pathways for cooperation, said Alafaci, noting that business and people-to-people links remain valuable bridges between nations.

"We believe that global challenges, including economic fragmentation, climate change, food security, technology governance, and development inequality, require cooperative and inclusive responses," said Alafaci.

The GGI represents a timely and comprehensive contribution to strengthening international multilateralism, said Kin Phea, director-general of the International Relations Institute of Cambodia at the Royal Academy of Cambodia.

"It emphasizes safeguarding the United Nations-centered international system, promoting extensive consultation, joint contribution, and shared benefits, and ensuring that all countries, regardless of size or power, have an equal voice in global affairs," said Phea.

Instead of replacing existing global governance mechanisms, the GGI supports reform and boosts Global South participation while contributing ideas across various sectors of development and peacebuilding, Phea said.

He noted that the white paper's call to uphold multilateralism and strengthen the United Nations-centered international system is particularly relevant to global challenges.

"The white paper stresses that global affairs should be discussed by all countries, governance systems should be built by all, and the benefits of development should be shared by all," said Phea.

Bhokin, the former president of the National Assembly of Thailand, said the GGI aligns with the growing trend toward greater democracy in international relations and offers a clear and feasible roadmap for improving global governance.

"This is consistent with the concept previously proposed by the Chinese leader of building a community with 'a shared future for humanity'. Both affirm the rights and interests of all countries in international affairs and resonate with the global yearning for peaceful development," he said.

Contact the writers at kelly@chinadailyapac.com

Briefly

FRANCE

No final communique issued at G7 summit

The G7 summit, chaired by France, concluded on Wednesday in Evian-les-Bains without issuing a final communique. This marks the second consecutive year, following the G7 summit under Canadian chairmanship in 2025, that the group of seven Western powers has failed to adopt a final communique. Organizers had already abandoned the idea of a final communique during the preparatory phase, opting instead to publish thematic documents to avoid highlighting the differences between the US and its allies, Japanese news agency Kyodo reported, citing diplomatic sources.

UNITED STATES

Gemini co-lead to join IPO-bound OpenAI

Noam Shazeer, a vice-president of engineering at Google and co-lead of its Gemini artificial intelligence models, said on Wednesday that he will leave the company to join IPO-bound ChatGPT maker OpenAI. Shazeer's move comes as leading AI firms compete for talent while racing to develop advanced models. The surprise departure comes less than two years after Google reportedly paid $2.7 billion to bring Shazeer back to the company along with a team of his researchers. The timing of Shazeer's departure from Google was not immediately clear. "I'm incredibly proud of the amazing team at Google and everything we've built together," Shazeer said on X, adding that he was "excited" to join OpenAI.

AGENCIES—XINHUA

What we call a summer glow may be lasting damage

By **YANG GAO** in Toronto
gaoyang@chinadailyusa.com

A tan may look healthy, but to dermatologists it tells a different story — one of DNA damage that can lead to skin cancer decades later.

"Skin cancer is one of the most preventable cancers and yet one of the fastest rising," said Ivan Litvinov, an associate professor of dermatology at McGill University in Montreal.

According to Melanoma Canada, an estimated 11,300 Canadians were newly diagnosed with melanoma in 2024, a 17 percent increase from the previous year.

UV exposure remains the main driver of melanoma and several other forms of skin cancer. Yet many people continue to seek tans, often viewing them as a sign of health or attractiveness.

"There is no safe tan, unfortunately, just as there is no safe cigarette," Litvinov told China Daily.

According to the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer, ultraviolet radiation and artificial tanning devices are classified as Group 1 carcinogens, the same category as tobacco and asbestos.

"Every tan is the skin's distress signal, visible evidence of DNA damage," Litvinov said.

The continued rise in melanoma reflects a combination of historical, cultural and environmental factors, he said.

"Melanoma has a 'long memory'," Litvinov said. "The melanomas being diagnosed today are, in many cases, the biological receipts for sunburns that happened in the 1980s and 1990s," he said.

While awareness of UV risks is far greater than it was a generation ago, knowledge alone often fails to change behavior.

"Knowledge alone has never cured an epidemic," Litvinov said. "If awareness were enough, nobody would smoke, nobody would overeat, and nobody would tan."

He said many people understand the long-term risks but continue tanning because the perceived benefits are immediate.

"Skin cancer is viewed as a distant threat; the perceived rewards of tanning are immediate and visible," he said.

Litvinov said the appeal of tanning remains deeply embedded in Western culture, where bronzed skin is often associated with leisure, fitness and social status.

"A tan is not a sign of health — it is a scar you can see," Litvinov said.

He said research shows that many adolescents and young adults feel more attractive, healthier and more confident when tanned.

"For a 16-year-old, a tan is not about cancer risk in 30 years — it is about how they feel at the beach this weekend," he said.

Social media may be reinforcing those attitudes, particularly among young people. Litvinov said image-focused platforms continue to promote appearance ideals in which tanned skin is portrayed positively.

His research has found troubling trends among Canadian youth. More than 40 percent reported at least one sunburn within a 12-month period, and protective behaviors tend to decline after age 14.

"What worries me most is the developmental trajectory," he said.

The challenge, he added, is that adolescence is often when tanning habits become established.

"Sometimes I say to myself that we are trying to fight evolution with pamphlets," he said.

Litvinov has also studied what he calls the "sunscreen paradox" — the tendency for people to stay outdoors longer because they feel protected after applying sunscreen.

"Sunscreen saves lives — but only if used correctly, and only if it is not treated as a license to bake," he said.

According to Litvinov, sunscreen can reduce the immediate warning signs of overexposure, particularly sunburn, leading some people to spend more time in the sun than they otherwise would.

Many people also misunderstand what sunscreen can and cannot do.

"It is important to address myths because — myths kill," Litvinov said.

Among the most common misconceptions, he said, are the beliefs that sunscreen alone provides complete protection, that cloudy days are safe from UV radiation, or that a "base tan" offers meaningful protection.

"There is no such thing as a safe tan," he said.

Instead of relying solely on sunscreen, Litvinov advocates a layered approach that includes seeking shade, wearing protective clothing and hats, using UV-blocking sunglasses and avoiding intentional tanning.

"The most attractive skin is healthy skin, not damaged skin," he said.

He believes lasting progress will require more than individual behavior change.

"The most powerful shift is cultural," Litvinov said.

Pointing to Australia's long-running SunSmart campaign, he noted that large-scale public health efforts have helped reduce melanoma rates among younger generations.

"If Australia can turn the tide, so can Canada," he said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:21 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:21 PM

PEOPLE



Song brocade with various traditional patterns designed by Qian Xiaoping, a national-level inheritor of Song brocade weaving techniques. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The ageless architect of ancient silk

Master craftswoman uses precise technological innovation to resurrect and preserve China's endangered, centuries-old Song brocade tradition, **Deng Zhangyu** reports in Suzhou, Jiangsu.

At 87, Qian Xiaoping shows no signs of slowing down. One moment, the veteran craftswoman is leaning over a worktable, discussing fabric textures and structural details with young apprentices as they develop trendy, gold-ingot-shaped handbags from traditional Song brocade at her studio in the Suzhou Silk Museum in Suzhou, Jiangsu province. The next, she is focused on her phone, holding remote meetings with factories to refine weaving patterns and optimize production processes.

Despite her age and a recent leg injury, Qian remains energetic, sharp-minded, and devoted to reviving and reinventing Song brocade, one of China's most treasured forms of intangible cultural heritage.

A national-level inheritor of Song brocade weaving techniques, Qian has spent more than seven decades rescuing, innovating and promoting the elegant silk craft. More than a craftswoman, she sees herself as part scientist, part inventor and part artist — someone determined to reshape the fate of a fading tradition through technological research and creative vision.

Dating back to the Song Dynasty (960-1279), Song brocade embodies the subtle, refined aesthetics prized by ancient Chinese literati. Unlike the lavish Yun brocade reserved for royalty, Song brocade is known for its soft texture, understated sheen and delicate patterns. Its quiet elegance made it a favorite among scholars and officials, who used it to mount treasured calligraphy and paintings and, at times, to make garments for the elite.

Qian's love for Song brocade began in childhood. Her mother and grandmother both cherished silk garments, and she too became captivated by the fabric's softness and luster. In 1954, at just 15, she was admitted to the silk-weaving program at Xushuguan Sericulture School. After graduation, she joined the Suzhou Silk Research Institute.

A turning point came in 1981. As foreign museums showcased Chinese silk and Suzhou's traditional looms gave way to imported machinery, Qian sensed that centuries-old weaving traditions were in danger of disappearing. Driven by that concern, she conceived an ambitious idea: establishing China's first silk museum in Suzhou.

"China, the land of silk, should have a silk museum! If we don't protect it ourselves, who will remember thousands of years of silk civilization?" she wonders.

She spent years raising funds and rallying support. After a decade of relentless effort, the Suzhou Silk Museum — a condensed chronicle of China's silk civilization — finally opened its doors. During preparations for the museum, Qian encountered numerous fragments of Song brocade, sparking a deeper fascination with the craft and setting her on a new path of research.

Reviving a dying craft

The year 1998 marked another turning point. As mechanization swept through the industry, the last professional Song brocade factory shut down. Living directly across from the factory, Qian was confronted with a painful question: Would this centuries-old craft disappear forever?

Driven by a profound sense of responsibility, she resolved to bring it back. The task was daunting. Weaving a complete piece of Song brocade is a highly complex process requiring thousands of warp and weft threads to interlock with absolute precision.

"Every procedure, including pattern design, artistic drawing, and weaving, is like coding that leaves no room for error," she explains.

The biggest obstacle was the absence of intact samples. By chance, she found a small fragment with a rarely seen pattern in a local antique shop. Recognizing the importance of her mission, the shop owner lent her the fragile relic.

Finding the right antique loom exclusively used for Song brocade proved equally difficult. Although the silk museum housed many traditional looms, none could produce authentic Song brocade. While they appeared similar externally, their internal structures were entirely different. Qian had to redesign the loom from scratch while searching for workshops willing to assist.

Inspired by her determination, a local silk enterprise offered free workshop space, equipment and skilled workers. After years of experimentation and countless technical breakthroughs, Qian finally succeeded in reviving Song brocade.

She later returned to the antique shop with two pieces: the original worn fragment and a brand-new, perfectly restored piece. The shop owner was astonished — the last surviving seed of Song brocade had bloomed once again.

After restoring the core weaving technique, Qian turned her attention to reproducing ancient Song brocade treasures held in major museums across China. Her most challenging project began in 2009: re-creating *Western Paradise*, a priceless Song brocade scroll preserved by the Palace Museum in Beijing.

The scroll, *Western Paradise*, depicts 278 lifelike figures, each with distinct expressions, and stands more than three meters tall. The artwork boasts gorgeous colors and intricate patterns.

Qian never had access to the original. Working solely from photographs, she immersed herself in research, producing stacks of hand-drawn sketches and technical drafts. After six years of painstaking work, she completed the restoration, filling another important gap in the preservation of China's ancient silk heritage.

Qian likens restoring and designing Song brocade to constructing a building, describing herself as "an architect in the field of silk".

"I first determine the original style," she says. "Then I develop the pattern, create sketches, calculate the silk structures, materials and techniques required, and finally hand over a thick stack of design blueprints to skilled craftsmen."

Beyond the loom

Qian's expertise in textile structures also led her far beyond traditional craftsmanship.

At age 20, she was invited to collaborate with a hospital in Shanghai on the development of artificial blood vessels. To achieve the required fiber structures, she spent evenings and weekends researching and refining designs. Eventually, using silk as the primary material, she "wove" China's very own artificial blood vessel.

The project pushed her to study textile engineering, materials science and structural mechanics. She compared the vessel wall to a thatched roof — capable of keeping rain out while still allowing air to pass through. In 1977, the second generation of textile artificial blood vessels successfully passed clinical trials, helping save countless lives.

The experience transformed her understanding of silk. It made her realize that silk is not only for beautiful clothing, it is also a soft technology capable of carrying life itself.

While remaining committed to preserving traditional techniques, Qian believes Song brocade must evolve to remain relevant. "Inheritance never means rigid conservatism," she says. "If ancient craftsmanship never changes, young people will eventually turn away from it."

Her studio reflects that philosophy. She has recreated iconic Chinese landscapes such as West Lake's Curved Yard and Lotus Pool onto delicate Song brocade fabrics, bridging traditional craft and modern aesthetics. She also developed the double-sided color-changing gauze brocade weaving technique, integrating the finest craftsmanship of classic Song brocade and other silk-weaving skills.

Qian takes great pride in one innovation in particular: collaborating with the European Art Union to reproduce Italian artist Amedeo Modigliani's oil paintings using Song brocade as the medium. With her unique design skills, the women in the master painter's canvases acquire a three-dimensional texture of silk light, shadow, and color.

"Song brocade has a rich palette and distinct layers, giving these oil paintings a relief-like feel," Qian says. So far, she has reproduced six portraits.

Such works require extraordinary dedication. Traditional Song brocade production typically demands two weavers operating a loom together, producing only a few centimeters each day. A single Song brocade interpretation of an oil painting can take an entire year to complete.

Yet, Qian considers the effort worthwhile. She hopes audiences beyond China can appreciate Song brocade through a visual language they already understand.

"Silk is China's unique treasure that belongs to the world," Qian says.

At 87, she no longer pursues fame or profit. Her remaining ambition is to preserve authentic Song brocade craftsmanship, expand cross-cultural collaborations, and allow people around the world to experience the beauty of Chinese intangible cultural heritage directly through exquisite silk creations.

Alongside her preservation work, Qian has devoted herself to training the next generation. She has published three professional books on Song brocade and regularly mentors young artisans through apprenticeships and national training programs, sharing both her weaving expertise and design philosophy.

Today, many of Suzhou's leading Song brocade designers once studied under her. Among them is Shi Yi, a 30-year-old designer who is reimagining Song brocade for younger consumers through contemporary products and fashion-forward designs. She now operates stores in both Shanghai and Suzhou, where her creations have gained a strong following among young customers.

"In my eyes, Qian is someone who gives her all to everything she does. If she sets her mind to something, she pursues it to the highest standard possible. For us, the new generation of Song brocade artisans, she is a spiritual beacon," Shi says.

Contact the writer at dengzhangyu@chinadaily.com.cn



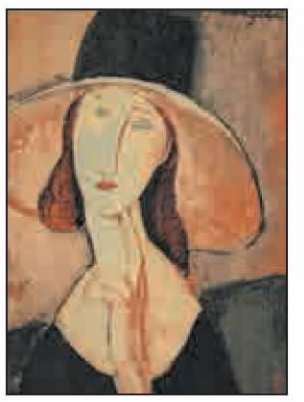
Above: Qian guides a craftswoman in weaving Song brocade in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, which is a highly complex process requiring thousands of warp and weft threads to interlock with absolute precision. **Below middle:** A Song brocade scroll reproducing *Western Paradise*, and housed at the Suzhou Silk Museum, attracts visitors with its presence in the Palace Museum collection.

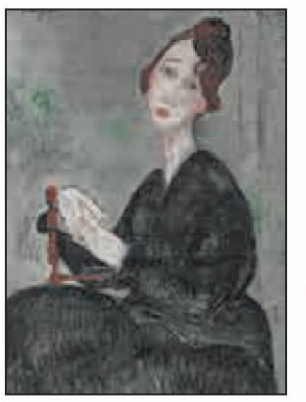


> "Inheritance never means rigid conservatism. If ancient craftsmanship never changes, young people will eventually turn away from it."
>
> **Qian Xiaoping,** inheritor of Song brocade weaving techniques











Far right from top: Song brocade with different traditional patterns designed by Qian. **From Right:** Qian's replicas of Italian artist Amedeo Modigliani's oil paintings *Portrait of Jeanne Hebuterne in a Large Hat* and *Seated Woman*, using Song brocade as the medium.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:21 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:21 PM

READ



Left: A retired worker undergoes a health check at a traditional Chinese medicine clinic for occupational hazards in Tianjin in September last year. The clinic has adopted an artificial intelligence system that helps medical workers identify abnormalities and make diagnoses. **Center:** Wang Lei, chairwoman of Tianjin Pharmaceutical Da Ren Tang Group, tries a TCM diagnostic analyzer during the Tianjin 2026 Global Business Leaders Roundtable in March. **Right:** An elderly woman tries a TCM health analyzer during the World Intelligence Expo in Tianjin on May 31. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

AI used to enhance bespoke TCM treatments

Digital technologies being integrated with ancient medicinal techniques

By YAN DONGJIE in Tianjin
yandongjie@chinadaily.com.cn

When the Tianjin 2026 Global Business Leaders Roundtable drew to a close in March, Hussain Dawood did not head for the exit. Instead, the prominent Pakistani industrialist and chairman of Engro Corporation waited behind at the venue, hoping to secure a private consultation with attending experts of traditional Chinese medicine.

His wife suffers from chronic high blood pressure and has undergone various treatments in Pakistan with limited effect. For Dawood, whose family has long trusted Eastern therapeutic philosophies, the trip to Tianjin presented a rare window to access personalized treatment from Da Ren Tang, a century-old Chinese pharmaceutical brand.

"TCM analyzes the root cause of a patient's condition to fundamentally resolve issues, unlike Western medicine or other therapies that merely focus on alleviating symptoms," Dawood said.

"The Western medical tradition is to prescribe the same medication for the same ailment, thus providing uniform treatment," he added.

Wang Lei, chairwoman of Tianjin Pharmaceutical Da Ren Tang Group, said the wisdom of TCM lies in its personalized approach. Even for the most common cold, TCM recognizes that some people catch it due to "heat" while others due to "cold". When TCM spreads to different countries, it must also adapt to the local climate and physical characteristics for effective diagnosis and treatment, Wang said.

That tension between age-old customization and the demands of global scale is driving a massive technological overhaul within China's TCM sector. At the Tianjin summit, which drew nearly 300 political, business and academic delegates, the modernization of TCM emerged as a highly anticipated focal point.

"The core of TCM modernization lies in the deep integration of technological and industrial innovation. We are actively participating in new projects to achieve this goal," Wang said.

The flagship initiative driving this shift is the Tianjin Modern TCM New Quality Productive Forces Innovation Project. Proposed and implemented by a team under Zhang Boli, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering and a renowned TCM specialist, the project involves a total investment of 180 million yuan ($24.8 million) aimed at digitizing production.



Wang Lei (front left) talks with Hussain Dawood (right) during the Tianjin 2026 Global Business Leaders Roundtable in March. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"This project utilizes AI to achieve full traceability and monitoring throughout the production process," said Zhang. For instance, during the decoction of TCM herbs, which requires a gentle boiling state, traditional pharmacists can only estimate the temperature by observing bubble size, with a margin of error of around 10 C. Now, with robotic control, the optimal temperature of 102 C can be precisely maintained. This can contribute to a 15 percent reduction in energy consumption and an improvement in the quality of the medicine.



Residents experience a TCM robot diagnostic service in Chongqing in September last year. CHEN CHENG / XINHUA

At the scientific and technological achievements exhibition area of the Global Business Leaders Roundtable in Tianjin, an AI-powered TCM diagnosis instrument attracted foreign guests, who came to experience it. They were amazed by the fact that a diagnostic report containing physical constitution identification and health advice could be generated within just a few seconds.

The instrument captures visual information such as tongue patterns and facial features, uses AI algorithms for constitution identification and health status analysis, and quickly generates TCM constitution identification reports.

"The TCM industry transitioned from manual operations to mechanization and electrification in the 1970s and 1980s. Now it has entered the digital era," Zhang said.

According to Zhang, this digital evolution aligns directly with national policy. During the 2026 National People's Congress, the government's work report explicitly called for "promoting the inheritance and innovation of TCM and facilitating the integration of traditional Chinese and Western medicine".

For example, while Western medicine is highly effective in lowering blood sugar for diabetes patients, TCM has greater advantages in preventing complications. After five or six years, diabetes patients often develop microvascular complications. By incorporating TCM herbs, treatment can prevent or delay the onset of these complications while lowering blood sugar, a model that has received positive feedback from many patients, Zhang said.

This clinical efficacy is translating into overseas expansion. Da Ren Tang, which secured a regulatory pathway into international markets via its listing on the Singapore stock exchange back in June 1997, now exports over 140 products to more than 20 countries and regions.

By 2025, 31 Da Ren Tang products had obtained Singapore standard certification, with core products like Suxiao Jiuxin Pills and Qinggong Shoutao Pills entering mainstream retail stores in the city-state. Da Ren Tang's market value in Singapore has grown by 326 percent, with overall overseas sales increasing by 41 percent, gaining recognition from local consumers, according to the company.

Traditional medicine represents a new frontier for Sino-foreign cooperation and a new growth point for health and cultural exchanges, Zhang said.

Da Ren Tang chairwoman Wang said that over the past 12 years, more than 500 types of its products have entered 47 countries and regions as health supplements, food additives, or dietary supplements.

Chen Yijun contributed to this story.

International sports officials impressed by 'China speed' e-commerce deliveries

By YAN DONGJIE

On the eve of the 10th World Junior Wushu Championships in Tianjin, Anthony Sims, a *sanda* (Chinese martial arts sparring) judge from the United States, faced an immediate professional crisis: the upper sole of his athletic shoe had completely unglued, threatening his ability to officiate the next day's bouts.

Hoping to find an exact replacement for his 361 Degrees sneakers, Sims turned to tournament volunteer Li Yazhao, a student at Tianjin Foreign Studies University.

What happened next introduced the US official to the blistering pace of China's on-demand digital economy. Li bypassed traditional retail entirely, placing an order on an instant-delivery e-commerce platform. By the time Sims walked off the mat from his afternoon session, a brand-new pair of shoes was waiting for him at the venue.

"They fit perfectly. Absolutely perfect," Sims said. Having no local currency on hand, the judge moved to hand the volunteer two $20 bills — one to cover the retail cost, and the other as a gesture of appreciation.

The seamless experience quickly rippled through the international judging team. Days later, Roberto Nell Jone Astudillo, a referee from the Philippines, spotted Sims' new footwear in a shuttle bus and tracked down volunteers to purchase the exact same Chinese-branded shoe to take home.

The tournament's logistics hub quickly evolved into an impromptu gateway to China's domestic tech and sports markets. Mayanglambam Sachidananda, an official traveling with the Indian delegation, utilized e-commerce platform Meituan's flash-delivery service via a volunteer to procure a carbon-fiber retractable fishing rod. Impressed by the delivery speed, he immediately placed a second order for a DJI action camera to document his travels.

"I had heard friends in India recommend DJI many times because it's user-friendly and portable," Sachidananda said, noting that the camera arrived at his hotel just hours after he clicked "purchase".



Li Yazhao (second from left) guides Anthony Sims in placing an order on a Chinese e-commerce platform. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

For Sachidananda, the experience disrupted long-held assumptions. "My previous impression of Chinese-made products was 'affordable but ordinary'," he admitted. "But looking at everything from my new sportswear to this action camera, the reality today is high quality, great design and impressive technological features."

That shift in consumer perception matches a global push by domestic Chinese brands. According to financial reports from 2025, the retail turnover of shoemaker 361 Degrees' international business surged by roughly 125.4 percent year-on-year as the brand transitions from simple product exporting to localized overseas retail operations.

Similarly, the rapid adoption of DJI equipment by visiting sports officials reflects a broader market shake-up. Recent data from market research firm IDC shows that DJI captured nearly 50 percent of the global action camera market share in 2025, maintaining a year-on-year growth rate of over 150 percent and surpassing former industry pioneer GoPro in its largest segment.

For the student volunteers on the ground, watching international sports officials fall in love with domestic tech and apparel brands has been a lesson in modern cultural exchange.

"Many of these guests first fell in love with China through old-school kung fu movies," said Li, the university volunteer. "But when they arrive here in 2026, they get to understand a multi-dimensional, modern country through something as practical as a pair of running shoes or a highly advanced camera."

As the tournament drew to a close, the professional relationship between the US official and the local student crystallized into a lasting cross-border connection. Before boarding his flight out of Tianjin, Sims sent Li a final message over WeChat.

"Too often, we do not fully appreciate the value of making new friends from other parts of the world," Sims wrote. "Those experiences and new connections enrich our lives in immeasurable ways. My new friendship with you is an example of such experiences, and I look forward to our friendship growing over the years to come."

Xu Xinran contributed to this story.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:21 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:21 PM

IMAGE



Some researchers prepare for another release of the Yangtze sturgeon on April 12. PHOTOS BY HE HAIYANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Sturgeon returning to the Yangtze River

In a meandering stretch of the upper Yangtze River in Jiang'an county of Yibin, Sichuan province, a remarkable chapter is unfolding for the Yangtze sturgeon.

The Yangtze sturgeon, one of the oldest vertebrates on Earth, lived alongside the dinosaurs.

Endemic to China's Yangtze River, it is classified as a nationally protected first-class wild animal, once mainly found in the river's upper reaches and tributaries.

But because overfishing and habitat degradation took a heavy toll, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) declared the Yangtze sturgeon extinct in the wild in July 2022.

China has been working out ways to save the Yangtze sturgeon — through fishing bans, legal protection, captive breeding, releasing fish into the wild, and most recently, encouraging natural reproduction in riverine habitats.

In late 2022, some research institutions launched a series of experiments aimed at inducing wild reproduction of the Yangtze sturgeon.

On April 14 this year, a scientific team announced a breakthrough: for the first time, Yangtze sturgeon had been observed spawning naturally and successfully hatching in an original spawning ground without any human intervention.

This marks the first time natural reproduction of the Yangtze sturgeon has been documented in an entirely unassisted, wild setting.

It represents a critical step toward rebuilding a wild population of a species once declared extinct in nature, and adds an important page to the story of ecological restoration and biodiversity recovery in the upper Yangtze.

Still, rebuilding a self-sustaining wild population remains a long and arduous journey.

Zhuang Ping, former director of the East China Sea Fisheries Research Institute at the Chinese Academy of Fishery Sciences, noted that the observation of natural breeding of the Yangtze sturgeon is an encouraging sign, a signal that ecological restoration in the Yangtze is taking effect.

But Zhuang added that larger-scale conservation of the Yangtze River must continue and deepen.

He pointed out that the upper Yangtze River alone is home to more than 100 rare fish species found nowhere else on Earth, and that the recovery of the entire Yangtze ecosystem is essential for rebuilding a wild Yangtze sturgeon population.

Looking ahead, research teams will continue to monitor year-round changes in the spawning ground's habitat and study the sturgeon's migratory movements in this section of the river, in order to systematically evaluate the success of natural reproduction in the spawning ground.

-CHINA DAILY



1



3



4



2

1. At a fish conservation base in Changning county, Yibin, Sichuan province, a researcher retrieves a Chinese sturgeon from a spawning pond before its release into the wild, on June 5, 2023.
2. Researchers monitor the released Chinese sturgeon by using an ultrasonic telemetry tracking system on April 14.
3. A researcher implants a PIT tag into a wild Yangtze sturgeon before its release on June 5, 2023.
4. A researcher releases Chinese sturgeon fitted with ultrasonic tags into the Yangtze River on April 12.
5. Researchers set up an ultrasonic telemetry system in the spawning ground of Yangtze sturgeon on March 23.
6. An aerial view of the Chinese sturgeon spawning ground in Changjiang village, Jiang'an county, Yibin, on March 24.



5



6

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:21 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:21 PM

TREND

China's commuters trade traffic for two-wheelers

Subways open doors to cycling as weekend warriors escape the city, **Wang Songsong** reports.



Across China, taking off on a bicycle into the morning light is becoming a more common part of daily life. As more people trade cars or bus rides for a more physically rewarding experience, cities like Beijing and Shenzhen have adjusted their transport rules to allow bicycles on subways.

These measures have opened new doors for the fitness lifestyle, making parked bicycles a common sight on public transit as riders take advantage of the opportunity to conveniently get away from city streets. Country roads, reservoir shores, and mountain trails are now accessible for day trips.

Personal convenience

Many young professionals in Beijing treat the weekend as a time to unwind. For Duan Di, a man who works in the financial sector, that means waking up early, strapping on a helmet, and heading for the hills with his folding bike and a subway ticket.

Duan started cycling around 2015 while studying abroad. "I was new to the environment and found it hard to make friends," he said. "Joining a cycling community gave me a simple, genuine way to connect with people."

He brought that sense of connection back home in Shanghai in 2019 and moved to Beijing a year later. Duan likes to tour the western and northern suburbs. In summer, he starts before dawn to avoid the midday heat.

A weekend ride often totals 100 to 150 kilometers a day. "For road cycling, that distance is quite reasonable," he said. "The outskirts have good roads, less traffic, coffee shops, restaurants, and medical services. It feels safe."

On May 10, Beijing launched a "rail + cycling" pilot service on four subway lines to better accommodate cyclists. The trial covers 11 designated stations on Lines 6, 17, the Changping Line, and the S1 Line.

Passengers are allowed to bring two-wheeled bicycles with a wheel diameter no larger than 28 inches (about 71 cm) on board. According to the Beijing Commission of Transport, the service will be available only on weekends during normal operating hours, excluding public holidays.

The 11 stations were chosen for their proximity to popular cycling routes, relatively low rail passenger flow, and station facilities suitable for bike integration.

"The pilot is a service innovation based on existing connectivity improvements," the transport commission said. Throughout the pilot program, it is monitoring operations and collecting passenger feedback to gradually optimize services.

Duan was among the first to try the new service. He took the Changping Line from Xitucheng Station to Changping Dongguan. Staff measured his bike, guided him through security, and accompanied him to the platform.

Though Duan is happy with the service thus far, he sees room for improvement. The current flat fare of 30 yuan ($4.43) per trip, regardless of distance, is expensive, he noted. "More flexible pricing, based on distance or time of day, would encourage more people to use the service."

He also suggested dedicated parking areas for bikes inside carriages and clearer rules so that cyclists do not inconvenience regular passengers.

While Beijing launched its pilot in May, Shenzhen in Guangdong province had already been running a similar program for months.

On Nov 15, Shenzhen's metro authority introduced a cycling-friendly service on four lines. Originally only available on weekends, this service requires reservations one workday in advance for individuals and three workdays in advance for groups.

A flat fare of 35 yuan per person and per bike is charged, and only non-electric, single-seat bicycles with wheel diameters under 28 inches are permitted. Bicycles must be packed in protective covers and are only allowed in the front or rear carriages. Its service expanded on Feb 15, adding 28 new subway stations on more lines and including public holidays.







From top: Cyclists ride through rapeseed flower fields in Chengdong village of Wuhu, Anhui province, in March. PHOTO BY XIAO BENXIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Guan Fumin cycles in a 100-km event on May 20 in Jining, Shandong province. Yin Bo rides on Luofu Mountain, Guangdong province, in January 2025. Guan Fumin (center) participates in a cycling event on March 8 in Jining. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

For residents like Yin Bo, a 42-year-old cyclist and social media influencer, this initiative is a significant step toward realizing Shenzhen's ambition to become a "bike-friendly metropolis". Yin views this policy as a welcome change that complements his lifestyle and passion for cycling.

"Cycling keeps me healthy, connected, and young at heart," he said. "It's excellent aerobic exercise and helps maintain a good physique."

Having ridden everything from mountain bikes to road bikes to folding bikes, Yin is a seasoned guide to the region's greenways and leisure routes.

He appreciates the small touches that lower the barrier for beginners, such as the subway's provision of free bike bags that don't require disassembling the wheels. "When you reach your destination, you return the bag to the staff. The whole process is very smooth," he added.

Looking ahead, Yin hopes the city will host more cycling events and continue expanding its network of safe, enjoyable routes.

"Greenways are nice for the first six months, but to keep people cycling long-term, we need more variety like coastal rides and hill climbs. If the riding experience improves, more people will join," he said.

Elsewhere, cities such as Suzhou in Jiangsu province and Hefei in Anhui province have introduced similar policies.

Booming business

The new policies are appearing in response to a growing lifestyle trend and the business opportunities it affords. According to an industry report released by the General Administration of Sport of China in October 2025, the number of cyclists nationwide had surpassed 130 million by the end of August, while the total output value of China's bicycle industry had exceeded 300 billion yuan.

Guan Fumin, a cyclist and a bicycle business operator in Jining, Shandong province, is part of the booming industry. Her story with bicycles began in 2022 when she wanted an outdoor activity. "I knew nothing about bikes at that time," she said. Despite planning to spend around 4,000 yuan, she ended up walking out of the shop with a bike priced at 18,000 yuan.

"In 2021 and 2022, very few women were riding," Guan said. She quickly stood out for her style. People often asked her where she bought her cycling clothes and gear. That curiosity sparked an idea.

"I started to feel that I really liked the industry," she said. She and a friend opened a small shop selling bikes in her hometown Jining in 2024.

The trial worked. Guan found that her experience as a rider gave her an advantage in understanding what customers wanted. She began posting short videos and photos of her rides on the social media platform Douyin, where her popularity grew. She began to be recognized for the gear she wore after races and group rides.

A second shop followed in 2025, focusing on high-end bicycles, cycling apparel, and accessories. Her business model combines a physical store as the anchor with online content to bring in more customers.

The strategy has worked. In the first few months of this year, her second shop averaged more than 200,000 yuan in monthly sales.

Guan emphasizes what she calls "emotional benefit". "Customers want more than just a bicycle; they want to go out and ride together, to join in activities," she said.

For Guan, a hobby can double as a lifestyle and a business. "If you do what everyone else can do, it means nothing. Do what others can't. Think what others don't. That's how customers will pay for what you offer."

Contact the writer at wangsongsong@chinadaily.com.cn

Beijing cyclist rides at his own pace

By **WANG SONGSONG**

For Zhang Zhi, a 47-year-old freelancer in Beijing's Chaoyang district, cycling is not about chasing speed, beating personal records, or weaving through packs of riders in matching jerseys. It is about something quieter and harder to find in a city of more than 20 million people: balance.

"In my school days, almost every household had a bicycle," Zhang said. "There's an emotional connection."

That childhood attachment has evolved into a deliberate lifestyle. While many of his peers have traded two wheels for four, Zhang has done the opposite.

He calls his philosophy the "balanced triangle of people, bike, and life". It is a motto he lives out in carefully planned rides across Beijing's sprawling urban landscape and beyond.

Unlike the weekend warriors who measure success by average speed or elevation gain, Zhang prefers themed excursions exploring old Beijing's corner food stores and forgotten alleyway histories. On other days, he pedals toward the suburbs to absorb the shifting scenery.



Zhang Zhi brings his bike into a subway station in Beijing in May. PHOTO PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"At my age, I don't chase speed or power," he said. "I pay more attention to the balance between living, riding, and my state of mind."

His approach to cycling changed around 2020, when he started recording his rides and sharing them on social media. His commute evolved into a form of storytelling.

It was a practical shift. After being hit by a car going the wrong way, Zhang now carries camera gear on every ride.

"I treat it like a dashcam. It's for safety, and also for social media content production," he said.

He films everything himself, narrates live without dubbing, and does all of his own editing. "If I rode with a team, people couldn't learn from it. I want to show what one person can do," he added.

Since May, Zhang has been able to do more. He has taken advantage of the city's new policy of allowing bikes on select subway lines to expand his reach and show new stories to his audience.

As he steps onto new paths, bicycle in tow, Zhang envisions a bright future among the unexpected.

"Fear comes from not knowing how well you can handle things," Zhang said.

Though he mostly rides alone, his family has long since stopped worrying about him. "Over time, they saw I could manage."

He hopes others will see that too. "Not everyone needs a fancy bike," he said. "Just start riding. Anytime."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:21 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:21 PM

BIZ LIFE

Netizens turn topiary into iconic showpiece

The 'scruffy little dog' is a green sensation and a boost for tourism, consumption

By **ZHENG YIRAN** in Shanghai
zhengyiran@chinadaily.com.cn



A resident holds a West Highland white terrier at a flower festival in Suhewan, Jing'an district, Shanghai, on May 11, echoing the popular scruffy little dog image. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

On a spring day in Shanghai, on a grassy area of Suhewan center in Jing'an district, a giant green sculpture of a West Highland terrier unexpectedly went viral.

It does not have many gorgeous flowers adorning its body. Instead, it is covered in wild grass, with fluffy hair and a color that gradually blends from fresh green to natural beige, with a hint of lazy and messy relaxation.

Netizens gave it a down-to-earth and highly resonant nickname — scruffy little dog.

On major social media platforms, topics such as "Shanghai's scruffy little dog cures workers", and "scruffy little dog check-in guide" continue to be flooded with posts, striking an emotional chord and resonating with young people, thanks to its casual and sloppy appearance.

Scruffy little dog becoming the top internet celebrity of this year's Shanghai International Flower Show is not a fluke, but an inevitable coincidence, experts said.

Wang Mian, a 28-year-old local, said that he and his family visit the scruffy little dog frequently, and they all like it very much.

The builder — Jing'an landscaping and city appearance administrative bureau — has been deeply involved in three-dimensional greening and green sculpture landscaping, accumulating rich practical experience.

Back in the early stages of forming ideas, the Jing'an landscaping and city appearance administrative bureau and the Shanghai green maintenance project team visited the site multiple times for on-site surveys. The plot where the scruffy little dog is located is a pet-friendly area at Suhewan center, and people often come to walk their dogs.

So it came to mind to create a cute pet amusement park in this area with a theme of a small dog green sculpture. But, which type of pet dog? The initial list from the project team contained a Chinese rural dog, a Yorkshire terrier, and a West Highland white terrier.

After repeated on-site observations, the team concluded that the West Highland white terrier is cuter and more likely to evoke emotional resonance. Furthermore, they learned that this breed has a mild body odor and sheds less hair, and has become very popular in recent years. At the same time, they have a lively and relaxed temperament, which aligns with the positioning of the Shanghai International Flower Show as an "international" showpiece.

The follow-up building process was assigned to three design teams: styling design, structural design and horticultural design. Feng Rui, manager of the project team, said the plot covers an area of approximately 700 square meters, with an open space. The scruffy little dog is expected to have a height of 5 meters. Controlling the spatial proportion and visual hierarchy of large installations, and accurately adapting to open spatial scales, require professional art sculptors to refine.

After the art sculptor refined the shape, the structural designer appeared. The scruffy little dog has a large body shape. Its wind resistance, pressure resistance and load-bearing capacity determine its safety.

At this point, a professional structural designer controls the entire process of building the structure, accurately calculating the stress points and load-bearing limits of the sculpture, and setting the principle that the overall weight of the green plant canopy should not exceed 10 metric tons.

Next comes the highlight — horticultural design. Green sculpture commonly uses ready-made plug seedlings, but the difficulty of this design stems from how to replicate the long hair of the West Highland white terrier. The gardening team decided to adopt herbaceous plants such as fine-leaved needle grass.

"Since we had not tried green carving of fine-leaved needle grass before, we first made a 1:1 dog head for sampling and observed the effect of the dog's fur. When the experimental results meet expectations, we can boldly implement them," said Feng.

Moreover, the styling method of gardeners is also very important. There is a group of horticulturists from Zhejiang province who specialize in green carving techniques. Up to 10 garden artists completed the planting process of the scruffy little dog in three days.

Their techniques are delicate and precise, following the natural growth pattern of dog hair: the facial plants are short and stretched to both sides, while the cheek and limb plants are slender and fluffy, controlling the tilt angle and spacing of each plant.

Lin Xianping, associate professor at Hangzhou City University, said: "The popularity of the scruffy little dog is not accidental. It breaks the shackles of traditional floral aesthetics."

"In the past, flower green carvings pursued beautiful flowers with regular and symmetrical shapes. However, this West Highland terrier's green carving is made of wild grass, with fluffy and messy hair, natural gradient grass color, and a native rough grass form, breaking away from the homogenized aesthetic of artificial refinement. The visual contrast is extremely easy to attract the public's attention," he said.

Ultimately, the scruffy little dog "accurately hits the emotional pain points of contemporary young people. Currently, some young people are trapped in internal anxiety and have been in a tense state of life for a long time, which generally leads to a psychological appeal of rejecting perfection and accepting relaxation", he further posited.

"The lazy and unkempt appearance of the messy puppy has provided a carrier for young people to vent their emotions and empathize with themselves."

The allure of the scruffy little dog is self-perpetuating, and is underpinned by a sense of trust, as there is no official marketing plan for the showpiece. It relies on netizens to spontaneously check-in and spread memes, according to Lin, who noted that its appeal had subsequently led citizens to collectively call for a delay in retiring it.

"Departments responded flexibly, giving the landscape a humanistic warmth," Lin said.

That was despite the realization that cold season grass seeds find it difficult to survive in summer, and the green sculpture faced inevitable retirement. Netizens called for the scruffy little dog to be kept up longer.

Jing'an landscaping and city appearance administrative bureau, in response to public appeals, have tentatively planned to extend the project for three months, and they are currently screening for locally grown grass species that are resistant to high temperatures as replacements.

Feng said: "The grassy area in Suhewan has become a public living space, and the public are virtually raising the scruffy little dog, becoming their mommies and daddies. From the initial building, to the call for delayed retirement, and the brainstorming of naming and designing cultural and creative products for the puppy in recent days, every step of it has public participation, becoming urban intellectual property, co-created by the whole city."

Data from Suhewan showed that because of the attraction of the scruffy little dog, between April 18 and May 5, Shanghai Suhe MixC World registered as many as 1.701 million visits, up 192.53 percent on a year-on-year basis. The visitors generated consumption of nearly 61.57 million yuan ($9.1 million), 49.22 percent higher than the same period last year.

Lin said: "From an economic value perspective, the scruffy little dog brings lightweight and low-cost cultural and tourism dividends. In the short-term, the massive check-in flow will activate consumption in the Suhewan area, directly driving the growth of surrounding catering, retail, photography exploration, and other businesses, and extending the cultural and tourism consumption chain of Suhewan."

"On a long-term level, it creates the business card of Jing'an Suhewan city with zero marketing costs, enhances the commercial visibility of the area, and drives the premium investment of surrounding shops. At the same time, it provides new ideas for the landscaping industry. Original ecological and emotional landscapes will become a new trend in landscape design."

Chinese embrace new twists on gelato textures, flavors amid tea crossover

By **ZHENG YIRAN** and **HE QI** in Shanghai

With competition in China's new-style tea sector heating up, merchants are opening up a new track — gelato.

This ice cream category, which was once a preserve of Italy's high-end dessert shops, is now appearing on the menus of China's food and beverage districts, the basement level of core business districts and even tea shops.

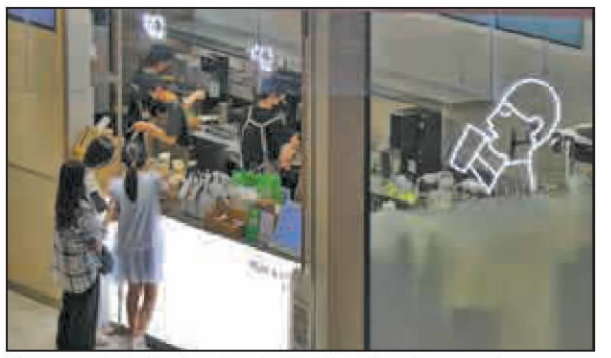
Priced around 30 yuan ($4.4), and with descriptions of "handmade", "fresh ingredients" and "dense texture", gelato is attracting young people to lock in and make repeat purchases.

With all the frenzy, players of all sizes are vying to enter the game. New brands are being incubated, old brands are accelerating their expansion, and tea beverage brands are following suit.

In February, Heytea launched a limited-edition gelato blended with meat floss and salted egg yolk at its Fengshengli outlet in Shanghai. Meanwhile, it sells four laboratory sections, including gelato lab, to explore different combinations with tea.

On May 21, Chagee launched geelato — a combination of gelato and tea — at nine of its outlets in five cities — Shanghai, Shenzhen in Guangdong province, Beijing, Chengdu in Sichuan province and Wuhan in Hubei province. The new products combine original leaf tea with Italian ice cream craftsmanship to provide consumers with a diverse modern tea experience.

The new products contain 10 flavors including jasmine green tea, matcha peak latte and caramel infused pu-erh tea, and three types of "geelato" tea products. During the Labor Day holiday in May, geelato went on trial sales at the Wukang Road outlet in Shanghai, becoming an instant hit with customers.



Shoppers visit a Heytea store in Qingdao, Shandong province, on May 31. TANG KE / FOR CHINA DAILY

"Compared to simply adding tea elements to the product, we hope to further expand the product form of tea through the new element of Italian ice cream. In order to maintain the layering and recognition of tea aromas in low-temperature dessert form, the research and development team repeatedly adjusted the ratio of milk and tea, stepping times, temperature control and other aspects," said the spokesperson of Chagee.

"In order to find the 'right' moment, we often have to test nearly a hundred times until we find the non-greasy and non-stagnant flavor critical point. Finally, while retaining the dense taste, the product retains a unique aroma, aftertaste and flavor changes of the original leaf tea," the spokesperson said.

Jin Tao, senior director of the public relations center of Chagee, said: "Culturally speaking, Chinese people have a tradition of 'eating tea', where tea is ordered and ground. Making tea-flavored gelato is a new way of modern 'eating tea'. Ever since the Labor Day holiday, we have had good feedback."

Gao Chengyuan, president and CEO of Guangzhou TY Marketing, said: "Gelato itself has a 'high-end feel' — Italian handmade, low-fat and healthy and visually appealing, which coincides with the transition of new-style tea — from 'functional thirst quenching' to 'emotional consumption'. The pricing of 18 yuan to 26 yuan is stuck between milk tea and specialty coffee, which not only increases the average purchase price, but also does not discourage those who try new things."

Huang Tao, an independent expert in public relations, said: "Gelato's popularity in the tea beverage industry is somewhat sustainable, but it may not sustain explosive growth over the long term. In the short term, gelato's unique taste, freshness, and social attributes (such as being suitable for taking photos) can attract consumers to try it out, especially catering to the innovative needs of young people."

"Over the long term, whether the business can be sustainable depends on the following factors: whether the price is affordable, the product can realize constant innovation, the supply chain is stable, the consumption level is supportive, and the channel distribution is complete," he said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:21 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:21 PM

TRAVEL



Tourists wander among blooming flowers at the Sayram Lake scenic area in Xinjiang's Bortala Mongolian autonomous prefecture in June.
ZHANG HONGKE / FOR CHINA DAILY

A lake of love

Sayram is a destination where legend, landscape and lifelong vows are reflected in the 'Mirror of the Sky', **Erik Nilsson** reports in Bortala, Xinjiang.

Sayram Lake whispers "I love you" in numbers, fizzes with countless ice bubbles and teems with impossible fish where nothing swam for as long as anyone knew — unless you count the lake monster.

Its identity churns like a potion: part love spell, part captured breath, part miracle of life.

The 1,314-square-kilometer scenic area in Xinjiang's Bortala Mongolian autonomous prefecture loosely rhymes with *yisheng, yishi* (one lifetime). Its 2,073-meter elevation sounds somewhat like *ai ni qing shen* (love you deeply). And its 520-kilometer distance from the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region's capital, Urumqi, sounds a bit like, *wo ai ni* (I love you).

Sayram Lake transliterates numeric data into romantic verse and translates human affection into marital bliss. Over 10,000 couples have chosen to tie the knot here because of its "love codes".

Couples who say "I do" here enjoy free entry for life. Many buy registration-plus-honeymoon packages that include photo shoots, tours and wedding banquets.





Above: A newlywed couple takes photos at the frozen Sayram Lake scenic area in -23 C weather in March.
Below: The icefalls attract many visitors to Bortala in winter, which lasts until March. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Local lore

Legend has it that love physically formed the lake itself in a meadow freckled with flowers.

A demon kidnapped a young man's lover, and he rushed to rescue her, only to discover she'd leapt into the abyss in despair. So he did too. Suddenly, water gushed from the void, filling Sayram. In another version, it's formed from their tears.

Tradition says that Sayram will judge the vows made near its shores. After weddings, a pair of swans will cross paths with newlyweds whose love is true. If they're disingenuous, the weather will change abruptly — and usually for the worse — during the ceremony.

Other legends claim the lake is a mirror for celestial beings that — like a crystal ball — can reveal a human's destiny, including their soulmate's identity, if they stare at it on the darkest night of winter. It's also said the surface glistens with shifting tints of green and blue because it reflects the facets of a jewel that a Tianshan Mountains fairy lost in its depths while bathing. Other tales claim it's a sacred well or the lair of a dragon whose icy breath chills its waters.

Incidentally, the lake hosts ice dragon boat races in winter.

Many names

Sayram's literal meaning in Mongolian is "saddle strap" because its long, cinched form appears to bind the surrounding peaks. Its name in the Uygur and Kazak languages translates as "Lake on the Ridge".

It has a long list of nicknames, each a shorthand for a story that endows it with a description beyond mere title.

One, the "Last Tear of the Atlantic", flows from mythology, not hydrology. It imagines the ocean's last, lonely tear, blown inland until it crashed against the Tianshan Mountains, dribbled down its sides and settled into a lost memory of the sea, landlocked and forsaken.

Although this description is more myth than science, Sayram actually delineates the furthest inland location that the Atlantic's atmospheric moisture travels before the soaring range wrings it from the sky. On the massif's other side lies the Taklimakan Desert, also called the "Sea of Death", whose waves crash as dunes and whose arid mists swirl as dust rather than vapor.

The "Pearl of Tianshan" bejewels the crown of the "Heavenly Mountains". The "Most Beautiful Sky Lake" is Xinjiang's highest and largest alpine lake, with an elevation of 2,073 meters and a surface that ripples across 458 sq km. The "Plateau Lake of Many Hues" whirls from deep sapphire to brilliant cobalt, vibrant turquoise, soft emerald and pale milky gray, shimmering as a vibrant palette of watercolors.

The "Purest Sea in the Western Region" is pristine by virtue of sheer isolation.

Frozen fantasies

This convergence of numerology, folklore and geology has forged a unique destination where the quest for eternal love is mapped by numbers, which become words that transcribe the story of the land.

But in addition to functioning as formulas or pages of poetry, Sayram becomes a canvas in winter, an iridescent blue-ice "Mirror of the Sky" festooned with silvery filigree — bulbs, flowers and needles wrought by the forge of ice. Such structures, typically formed by the effervescent exhalations of decaying plants captured and suspended in time by a sudden freeze, are only reliably found in two other places on the planet: Canada's Abraham Lake and Russia's Lake Baikal.

And in its most elusive moments, Sayram stares back at us with rare, unblinking "ice eyes" — phantom irises that gaze from glassy sockets toward the sky straight above, like Earth searching for furtive gods veiled by gauzy curtains of clouds.

Another spectacular formation — actually, millions of them — appears as the weather warms. The ice mantle splinters into countless tinkling shards that slosh in the waves like avalanches of crystal puzzle pieces dancing up and down the swells.

After the mirror shatters, it melts into a massive lens revealing a hidden world below — one inhabited by the lake's living triumph over desolation.

Unlikely life-forms

The Arctic salmon — actually, silvery Siberian peled or northern whitefish that aren't technically salmon — float like pale ghosts through otherworldly waters that had contained only emptiness for millions of years. These "Queens of Cold-Water Fish", as they're locally called, glide like pallid angels, fluttering around a netherworld they were never meant to populate.

Sayram was too cold and isolated — amputated from every stream where life swam — for fish to arrive naturally, let alone survive or even thrive.

Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) official Lin Zexu, who's best known for destroying mass quantities of opium, recounted his 1840s banishment to the region in his book, *Journey Into Exile*: "(Sayram Lake) has never had boats, nor has it been a source for fish such as carp. The water is undrinkable, and drinking it makes your hands and feet weary due to the coldness of the snowmelt."

However, other Qing records and centuries-old oral history whisper tales of an aquatic cryptid that resurfaced in 2007, when competitors in the Xinjiang Sayram Cycling Race claimed to see what appeared to be a 10-meter-long creature writhing roughly 100 meters offshore. It seemed to swim for 50 meters before vanishing. Photos show what some people think are three black dorsal ridges but, as is common with such claims, the images are too blurry to confirm.

This mass sighting prompted experts to conduct sonar scans that failed to detect any large beasts but did find new microbial communities. So, the "monster" still served as an unintentional guide who led humans to find unknown life lurking in the deep.

A common theory is that the sightings were actually of taimen — colloquially called "dinosaur trout" because of their hulking statures — although none are known to live in the lake.

Again, the lake instinctively repels inhabitation by finned organisms.

The first fish — over 30 species — were introduced by experts in the 1960s. They died immediately.

Scientists kept trying. And the fish kept dying.

That was until 1998, when peled whitefish endemic to Russia's Arctic Ocean drainage basins were transplanted and survived.

Today, they're sold in high-end restaurants, and their caviar is exported to Europe. They're prized not only for their flavor but also nutrition. They contain more protein — around 19 percent — and unsaturated fatty acids than most farmed fish.

Visitors can try to hook one of these improbable catches themselves or dine on them in mobile cabins near the shoreline.

They're not just a meal, but a story of the impossible come true, a scientific triumph that swims alongside a lake monster that lives in mystery.

Sayram is a place where the landscape is not just what it is but what we wish it to be.

It's a mathematician, a mythmaker and a magician. It's a love letter written in numbers, a dragon's frozen breath and a sacred destination. It's a witness, a test, a promise, an experiment, a storybook, an equation and a mirror reflecting not just the sky above but the deep desires of our hearts — especially for true love.

Contact the writer at erik_nilsson@chinadaily.com.cn

Where glorious nature displays its many arts

By **ERIK NILSSON**

Circling Sayram Lake is like spinning a ring inlaid with dazzling jewels.

The gems embedded along the 90-kilometer loop of its perimeter shine with different facets — scenic, sacred and storied.

Some destinations sparkle with every luster, depending on the angle they're viewed from.

They're display cases exhibiting nature's many creative talents, not just as a jeweler but also a painter, sculptor, architect, musician and gardener. They show the penmanship of an unseen calligrapher, the chronicles of a timeless historian and the prose of a mythmaker manifested.

For instance, Gangjige Mountain materializes not merely as consecrated land but as deities assuming physical form. Mount Foshan traces the silhouette of a Buddha meditating beside a stone shaped like the hand of the Chinese Goddess of Mercy, Guanyin. Some say the peak was formed from the body of Laozi (Lao Tzu), the legendary founder of Taoism, before he mastered Buddhist enlightenment and turned to stone.

According to Western Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 24) historian Sima Qian's *Shiji*, or Records of the Grand Historian, Laozi rode a green ox from Hangu Pass, and "no one knew where he went". The Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220) *Book of the Later Han* mentions: "Some say Laozi entered the (western) land of the barbarian tribes and became a Buddha." Local lore says he fused with the land to become Foshan, and his ox melted to form Sayram.

And so, a story born from an ancient syncretic impulse to unify Taoism and Buddhism lingers. It's written not as scripture on scrolls but rather is inscribed in the silent script of stone and water, narrating a dialogue between our world and the next.

This convergence of beauty and belief is embodied in several sites.

At the Source of the Milk Sea, pilgrims make offerings where springs nurse the waters at the foot of Keguqin Mountain. At Kele Yongzhu, sanctified by the 10th Panchen Lama in 1984, the lake's perpetual thaw creates a chromatic ritual, its springs shifting hue as they drift into the depths.

Beyond Kele Yongzhu's watercolors, nature paints prairies in assorted pigments and genres. Qicai (Seven Color) Bay is a pointillist masterpiece of Technicolor flowers, while Jinhua Zihui is an impressionist swirl of golden buttercups and purple primroses.

The vast mural that is the West Sea Grassland — often called "China's Most Beautiful Sky Grassland" — unfurls across rolling green hills speckled with yaks and framed by the stark Shalicheku Mountain, a 4,189-meter peak whose snowmelt trickles into Sayram like a faucet.

The splotched patterns and vegetive colors of the Camouflage Mountains give this several-kilometer-long subrange its vibrant name. The dappled blobs are clumps of Xinjiang junipers — aka Eurasian, Tianshan or creeping junipers — that smear the tawny slopes with dark-green daubs. These shrubs are harvested and burned to smoke meat and as incense, imparting an olfactory allure in addition to their visual appeal.

Beyond painting Sayram's grasslands, nature also acts as a sculptor and musician, endowing its depictions of color and texture with form and resonance.

In Donghai Tingtao (Listening to the Waves of the East Sea), millennia of tidal forces have carved the bluffs into colossal sound boxes, tuning the rock to a deep, booming pitch. The surf performs percussion against dozens of kilometers of overhangs that resound with the pounding of each whitecap.

Further along, the sandy strand of Waterfront Bay displays unintentional statues chiseled by erosive forces.

The roughly 10-meter-high pair of stone sails is celebrated as a flagship of Sayram's identity as the "Purest Sea in the Western Region". To the north, the "Turtle Diving Into the Water" seems to plunge into the depths, motionlessly.

But Sayram's most famous figures are carved by one of nature's most curious inventions and depict its very creators — humankind. Two 2,000-year-old "stone men", 38 centimeters and 32 cm tall, stand guard on the lake's northern rim. They gaze eastward over the 27-square-kilometer Three-Tai Grassland, which takes its name from its location in a string of Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) military outposts, called *tai*, connecting Ili Kazak autonomous prefecture with Urumqi. Its appellation comes from its martial functions, but its descriptions hail from the literati who have penned verse venerating its magnificence.

The vast mountain walls that enclose them show Sayram is an architect that builds not only with stone but with life — specifically, living trees rather than lumber.

Its vicinity hosts three tremendous corridors of conifers, the grandest of which is the roughly 50-km Keguqin Spruce Gallery. This palisade leads to the Pine Head Mist Waterfall, where the final breaths of Atlantic moisture land against the Guozi Gorge and precipitate not as rain but as a vertical river of vapor cascading soundlessly into Sayram.

Ultimately, Sayram is a grand hall where Earth exhibits its sublime artistry.

Yet, the final piece of this jeweled band, this vibrant collage of rock and living wood, is us — the human audience. It is we who appreciate its colors, forms, and sounds and interpret these oeuvres into tales that endow water, soil and stone with substance beyond their surface.

To circle Sayram is to understand that its true depth isn't measured in meters but in the layers of meaning we give it.





Above: The West Sea Grassland and Jinhua Zihui (golden buttercups and purple primroses) scenic spot at Sayram Lake in Xinjiang's Bortala Mongolian autonomous prefecture.
Below: Tourists engage with swans at Sayram Lake's Kele Yongzhu scenic area. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:21 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:21 PM

SPORTS

SOCCER

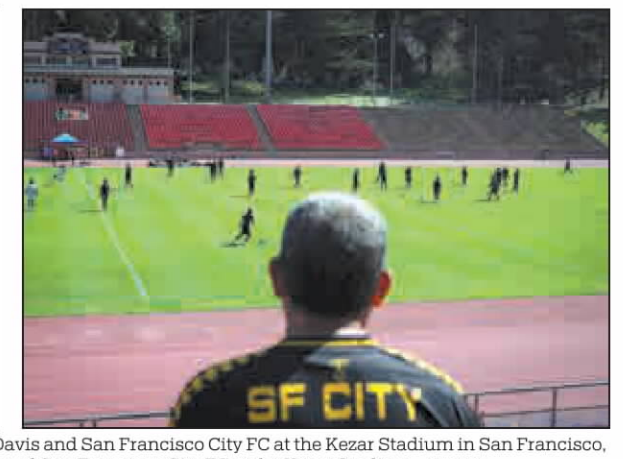
BAY OF HOPE

Grassroots clubs around San Francisco bet on a boost in interest on the back of the World Cup



A general view of Levi's Stadium (temporarily renamed San Francisco Bay Area Stadium for the 2026 World Cup) in Santa Clara, California, on June 7. The stadium has already hosted two World Cup matches with another four to come. **Inset:** An enthusiastic Oakland Roots fan shows his support for the USL Championship side. AFP





Left: A ball boy practices his ball control before a game between FC Davis and San Francisco City FC at the Kezar Stadium in San Francisco, California, on May 17. **Right:** A fan watches a game between FC Davis and San Francisco City FC at the Kezar Stadium. REUTERS

For years, Jorge Bejarano has been one of the San Francisco Bay Area's most passionate soccer fans, banging a drum for the second-tier Oakland Roots. With the World Cup underway in the US, he and others are counting on their cheers for local soccer to resonate across the nation.

Soccer fans are a minority among sports supporters in the United States. Despite its strength as a youth sport, soccer still lags other major sports in viewership, especially American football. Interest is also low compared to global averages.

According to the latest Ipsos poll, around 36 percent of Americans plan to watch the World Cup.

But fans are betting that the tournament will lift the relevance of soccer and its importance for the community. In California's Bay Area, Santa Clara will host six games.

"Now that we get the World Cup here in the Bay Area, we definitely do see interest from tourists and soccer fans from around the world just digging into what other teams are there around that same area," said Bejarano, who leads the official Los Roots supporter group. "What I hope people take away is just how diverse Oakland is, how special, how fun and how welcoming."

The Roots were founded less than a decade ago, and quickly filled a gap for local sports fans, as Oakland's major American football, baseball and basketball teams relocated to other areas. Attendance skyrocketed when the Roots took over the empty Coliseum stadium for home games.

Previously a longtime season ticket holder for the NFL's Oakland Raiders, Bejarano went all in for the Roots. "Having a team here that dedicates their passion and their love for the city — I can only respect something like that," he said.

Local expectations

For Roots head coach Ryan Martin, the World Cup games being held at Santa Clara's Levi's Stadium are a huge statement about the interest in soccer in the Bay Area. He hopes that the attention during the World Cup will bring more people out to watch Roots games as well.

Beyond organizing community watch parties for World Cup games, the Roots are hosting the Australian national soccer team at their training facilities.

They are also partnering with local restaurants to bring Australian-inspired items to menus.

The Bay Area is home to diverse soccer leagues and teams: the Roots play in the lower-tier USL Championship league, while San Jose in the south is home to Major League Soccer's Earthquakes and the National Women's Soccer League's Bay FC. The latter broke the single-game record for NWSL attendance, with over 40,000 people watching at San Francisco's Oracle Park.

Semi-professional and amateur teams also abound.

"We have so much grassroots soccer that happens here," said Aaron Mansfield, a volunteer who oversees membership organization for the San Francisco City soccer club. The semi-professional team has a member-ownership model, with members having the right to vote on the club's direction and be elected to the board of directors.

Mansfield hopes that the World Cup will be an opportunity to show how they do things locally.

"General interest in soccer culture is good, because we get to explain what we do differently and why that matters in the context of both local, national and global football," he said.

Shelley and Josh Estelle have been fans and members of SF City for three years. They attended a recent game, together with their daughter, on an unusually sunny day at Kezar Stadium, where there is a view of San Francisco's landmark Sutro Tower.

"I really like the community-supported club here," said Josh. "It's not corporate and it feels like just the people in my neighborhood watching soccer together."

While they plan to watch broadcasts of World Cup games as a family, they didn't get tickets to see a game at Levi's Stadium. "It's very expensive," said Shelley. "We can watch much more affordable soccer right here at Kezar."

REUTERS

BASKETBALL

As NBA offseason begins, all eyes are on Antetokounmpo and James

And just like that, it's next season in the NBA.

The New York Knicks were feted with a championship parade through the streets of Manhattan on Thursday after a postseason in which they successfully rallied from six double-digit deficits to win games in the playoffs, including all four of their victories in the NBA Finals against the San Antonio Spurs.

It continued the unprecedented run of NBA parity, with eight different franchises winning championships in the last eight seasons — Toronto in 2019, the Los Angeles Lakers in 2020, Milwaukee in 2021, Golden State in 2022, Denver in 2023, Boston in 2024, Oklahoma City last year and now New York.

"To me, it just really speaks to the state of NBA basketball and the state of the future of the game," NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said. "And now, with this draft class coming in this year — again, not just the first pick, but a draft that's considered the deepest in many years — there's so much talent everywhere. So, it's a really bright future ahead for the league."

It is, but every team is now chasing the Knicks. They had all the answers.

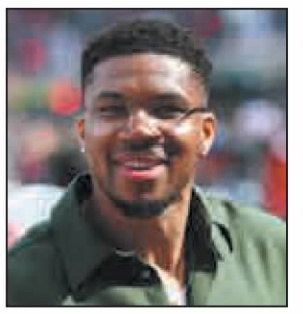
For 29 other franchises, at least on some level, there seems to only be questions.

- Will Milwaukee really trade Giannis Antetokounmpo after 13 seasons, 10 All-Star selections, two Most Valuable Player awards and an NBA championship in 2021?
- Will LeBron James come back to the NBA for a 24th season? If so, will it be with the Los Angeles Lakers for a ninth year? Or will he look for a, presumably, final chapter somewhere else?
- What will Washington do with the No 1 pick in the draft later this month?
- And, who will coach in Dallas and Portland?

Those are just some of the major issues facing teams around the league as summer gets underway.

It's going to be hard for the Knicks to repeat, because it's hard for any team to repeat — as the Thunder found out this season.

"The history of the NBA is littered with teams that were not able to find ultimate success again," Thunder general manager Sam Presti said. "I think there have only been three teams that have repeated since we've been in Oklahoma City, and the reasons for that are many, probably too many to list. But, the fact is, it helps illustrate how rare and how special it is when you do have a chance to win at the highest level in this league, or in professional sports in general.





Where Giannis Antetokounmpo (left) and LeBron James will be next season is the biggest question of the summer. REUTERS

"However, NBA history is also built on the backs of those teams that saw their losses as a continued quest for improvement and progress. Most importantly, they saw it as what competition boils down to, what it's all about at any level of sports."

The Giannis question

Antetokounmpo, the biggest star in Milwaukee, will be eligible this fall for an extension that could be worth up to $275 million.

But the Bucks don't have a roster that's a championship contender. If they trade Antetokounmpo, they can essentially start over with what would be a slew of players and draft picks. If they keep him, there's no guarantee he'll be happy — because it seems like he's primarily interested now in trying to win more titles.

"I just think before the draft is a natural time, right, because if Giannis does play somewhere else, we're going to get a lot of assets. You've got to get it right," Bucks co-owner Jimmy Haslam said in May, when the team introduced new coach Taylor Jenkins — who was told that Antetokounmpo may or may not be with the franchise when next season starts.

The draft is next week. And logic would suggest that the Bucks — if they are going to trade Antetokounmpo — may do so at least a few days before the draft, so they have some specific idea of whom to target with the capital that they'll get as part of whatever deal might go down.

Miami has been mentioned in the Giannis sweepstakes for months, and the Heat is involved in talks with the Bucks again.

LeBron watch

James has never gone into a summer with this much freedom.

He could stay with the Lakers. He could pick another spot. He could retire. He could demand a max salary. He could take less money to help a team out. Or he could just continue posting videos of chip-ins on Instagram; yes, James has the golf bug.

"When the time comes, you guys will know what I decide to do," James said when the Lakers were eliminated this spring by Oklahoma City in a 4-0 sweep.

The Lakers have a lot of other decisions, including how to handle an extension for Austin Reaves. But getting some sense from James about his plans will surely go a long way toward having other moves fall into place.

Spurs tipped for title run

Victor Wembanyama is eligible for a four-year extension that would top $250 million, and there's obviously no reason San Antonio wouldn't want to commit to keeping the game's most fascinating player around. The extension would start in 2027-28.

There are some other roster spots to address, but the starters are under contract.

It will be interesting to watch how free agents view San Antonio as a destination, especially since the Spurs will go into next season as one of the favorites — if not the biggest one — for the 2027 NBA title.

"Competitiveness, that's what makes you better," Spurs coach Mitch Johnson said.

"That's what pushes you to continue to improve in the dark, long hours when nobody is around. We improved a whole lot this year. We have more motivation to continue to get better."

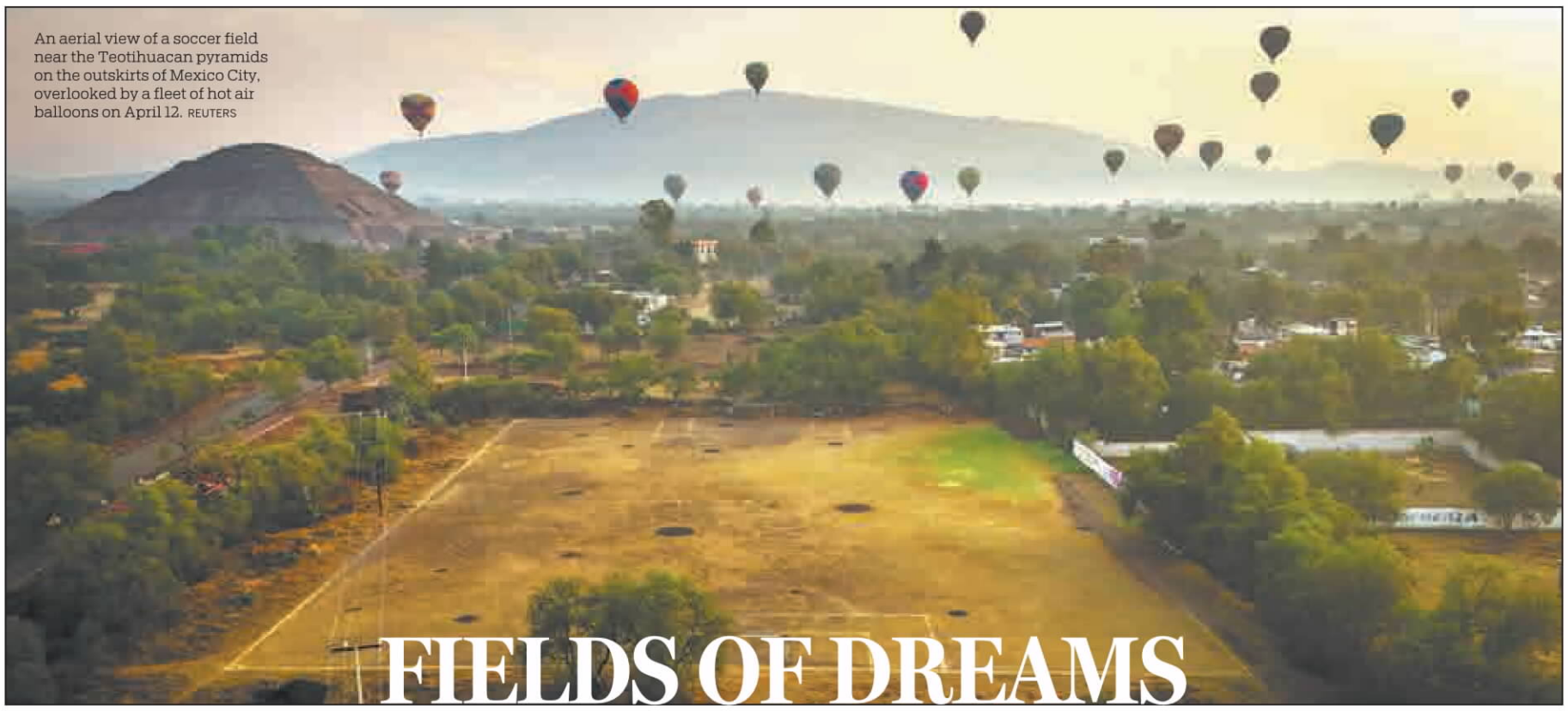
AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:21 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:21 PM

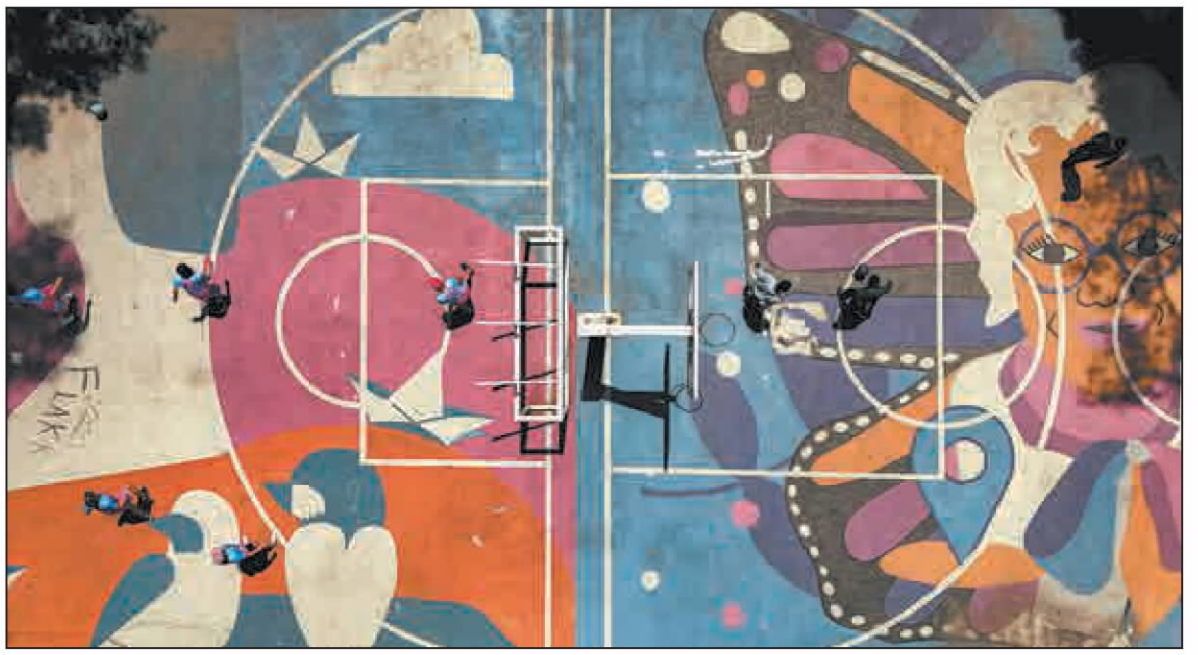
SPORTS

SOCCER



An aerial view of a soccer field near the Teotihuacan pyramids on the outskirts of Mexico City, overlooked by a fleet of hot air balloons on April 12. REUTERS

FIELDS OF DREAMS



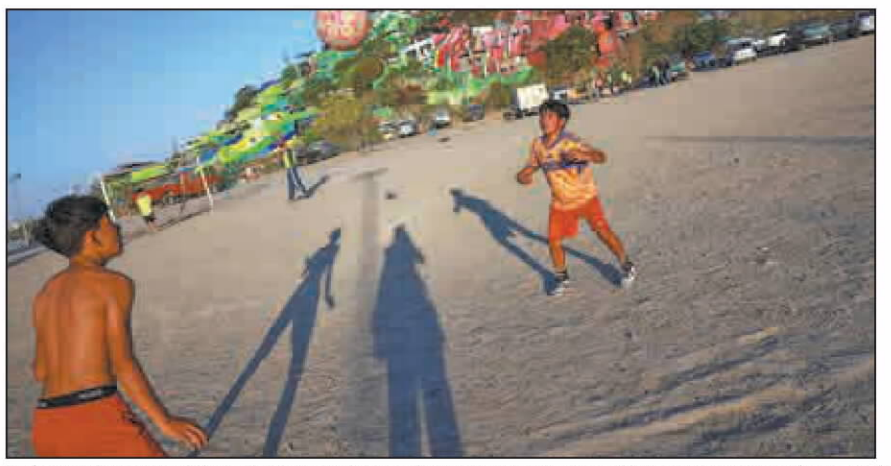
A painted soccer pitch as seen from above, located in Mexico City's Tlatelolco housing complex. REUTERS



"Pandilleros" players are seen warming up through a broken car window ahead of the Cerro de la Campana Ilanero championship semifinal in Monterrey, Mexico, on March 29. REUTERS



Locals play an amateur league game at the "Cancha de los Dioses" (Field of the Gods), a pitch located inside the crater of the dormant Teoca volcano in Mexico City, on May 24. REUTERS





Left: Humberto Guadalupe (left), 14, nicknamed "Messi", who dreams of being a professional soccer player, and Eduardo Reyes, 12, play a match in Monterrey, Mexico, on March 24. **Right:** Kids trade a Panini World Cup sticker of Brazilian player Vinicius Junior in Mexico City on May 24. REUTERS

Mexicans always find space to play

Across Mexico, currently co-hosting the World Cup with the United States and Canada, soccer pitches are laid out wherever communities can find the space.

On the edges of towns, in highway underpasses, and even in a volcano crater, spaces are cleared that allow the young and the old to share in the dream of the beautiful game.

In an impoverished neighborhood in Monterrey in northern Mexico, 14-year-old Humberto Guadalupe, called "Messi" by friends and family, spends his weekends on the community's only soccer field, surrounded by abandoned cars and dirt roads.

Just like the legendary Argentine player who inspired his nickname, he dreams of becoming a professional player one day, encouraged by his grandmother. "One way or another, it's going to happen," he says. "Even when we lose a match, we keep our heads up."

To the south, in a rural district on the outskirts of Mexico City, families arrive by car, motorcycle, bicycle and on foot to watch matches at the "Field of the Gods," a soccer pitch inside the crater of the extinct Teoca volcano.

Mist moves between pine trees and fruit orchards that frame the pitch, nearly 700 meters above the sprawling capital.

Built by the community more than 60 years ago, it is used by amateur local teams on Sundays.

In nearby Xochimilco, soccer players ride in traditional "trajinera" wooden boats along canals and cross chinampas, the ancient agricultural plots or floating gardens that helped sustain the Aztec capital centuries ago. They are heading to play on some of Mexico City's last remaining natural grass pitches. Located inside a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the pitches are an important social hub, but their creation can be damaging to the area's ecology and habitat of the endangered axolotl salamander, scientists say.

Though separated by landscape and distance, these matches share the same rhythm: communities building spaces around soccer in places shaped by hardship, geography and memory.

Reuters photographer Raquel Cunha spent around three months taking photos of amateur soccer matches across Mexico City and beyond; she mostly worked on Sundays, when players are out in force. She selected most of her subjects by closely examining the city on mapping apps and then choosing a short list of 15 to photograph with a drone. Of these, she chose two in the city plus one in the industrial north to also photograph on the ground, with contrasting environments: gritty Monterrey; a green, mountainous suburb; and a historic neighborhood of canals.

REUTERS



An aerial view of a synthetic pitch in the middle of a housing complex in Monterrey, Mexico. REUTERS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:21 PM

Mythical parallels

Exhibition unveils links between civilizations

CULTURE, PAGE 15



Nation releases white paper on global governance

TOP NEWS, PAGE 3



Hat-trick hurrah

Messi ties with Klose as top goal scorer in World Cup history

SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 FRIDAY, JUNE 19, 2026

Ebola survivors



Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:23 PM

A healthcare worker (right) and her son receive hospital discharge certificates on Tuesday after recovering from Ebola virus disease in Bunia, the Democratic Republic of Congo. China is providing a new round of emergency humanitarian aid to Africa in response to the ongoing Ebola outbreak in some countries and regions, including the DR Congo and Uganda. As of Tuesday, the two countries recorded around 837 confirmed cases and 196 deaths. GRADEL MUYISA MUMBERE / REUTERS

Xi calls for more coordination of regional growth

Fujian-Ningxia success hailed as model for east-west drive to achieve common prosperity

By XU WEI
xuwei@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping has called for further steps to optimize the collaboration program between eastern and western regions of China to enhance coordinated regional development and boost the common prosperity drive.

In an instruction published on Wednesday, Xi highlighted the need to draw on the successful experience of the cooperation between Fujian province in East China and the Ningxia Hui autonomous region in Northwest China in refining the practice.

Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, commended the collaboration model for contributing to China's poverty alleviation drive and promoting coordinated regional growth over the past 30 years.

In 1996, China launched the program of East-West Pairing-off Cooperation for Poverty Reduction, whereby a developed provincial region in the east assisted a less-developed region in the west.

After China secured a victory in eliminating absolute poverty in 2021, the country put in place a five-year transition period to continue supporting people and regions that had emerged from poverty, ensuring a smooth transition from poverty alleviation to rural vitalization while guarding against any large-scale relapse into poverty. With the transition period now over, regular assistance programs start from this year, which also marks the beginning of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period.

The president stressed in the instruction the need to improve the east-west collaboration mechanism, optimize cooperation methods and expand the areas of cooperation.

The goal is to promote industrial complementarity, personnel exchanges, mutual learning in technology, exchanges of ideas and mutual learning in work styles between eastern and western regions, in order to achieve mutual benefit, win-win outcomes and common development, he said.

Xi urged Party committees and governments at all levels to earnestly fulfill their responsibilities in regular assistance programs, firmly prevent any large-scale relapse into poverty, and advance all-around rural vitalization.

The instruction from Xi was conveyed at a work conference on Wednesday in Yinchuan, the capital of Ningxia.

Vice-Premier Liu Guozhong said at the conference that more work must be done to deepen industrial cooperation and labor collaboration between eastern and western regions and to strengthen exchanges of officials and professionals.

He highlighted the need to expand cooperation in science and technology, finance and other fields, and to carry out creative initiatives tailored to local conditions.

While serving as a provincial leader in Fujian province in the late 1990s, Xi personally oversaw the progress of pairing-off cooperation between Fujian and Ningxia.

Wang Jian, head of Ningxia's regional department of agriculture and rural affairs, said last week that the annual per capita disposable income of rural residents in Ningxia rose from about 1,400 yuan ($207) in 1996 to more than 20,000 yuan in 2025.

The Xihaigu area of Ningxia, once known as one of China's most impoverished and environmentally harsh areas, has bid farewell to its long history of extreme hardship and barren conditions, while 1.13 million people have gained access to safe drinking water, he said.

Over the past three decades, Fujian has provided 7.68 billion yuan in assistance funding to Ningxia for infrastructure projects, helping build more than 600 schools, hospitals, nursing homes and care centers for people with disabilities. Fujian has also encouraged over 1,600 enterprises to invest in Ningxia, bringing more than 100 billion yuan in actual investment, Wang added.

Inside

Comment, **page 6**

Blame game won't restore Western competitive advantages

WORLD WATCH
By Otton Solis

China's phenomenal success in exports deserves admiration. The development strategy behind it should be viewed as a model for others to emulate and even become part of the policy packages attached to financial assistance from the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and Western governments.

That is how previous success stories were treated. Japan's post-war rapid economic growth was termed the "Japanese miracle", and the high-growth economies of the Taiwan region and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Singapore and the Republic of Korea were celebrated as the "Asian Tigers".

China, however, has been given a different label. In 2013, economists David Autor, David Dorn and Gordon Hanson helped popularize what later became known as the "China Shock", which alleged that Chinese imports were hurting the labor market in the United States.

The change from terms of admiration to a vocabulary of alarm was telling. The "China Shock" was associated with negative nouns such as "overproduction, overcapacity and oversupply". These were attributed to strong state guidance through industrial policies, never mind the fact that the same strategy had underpinned the economic rise of Japan and several "Asian Tigers".

Today, as Chinese companies make global strides in electric vehicles, artificial intelligence, batteries, biotechnology, renewable energy, robotics, semiconductors and other frontier technologies, that concept has been updated to the so-called "New China Shock", or "China Shock 2.0".

In terms of supply and demand, genuine oversupply would mean that goods cannot find enough buyers unless prices are artificially supported. But there is no worldwide authority to set minimum prices for products, including electric vehicles, solar panels and batteries. What really bothers Western policymakers is not excess supply, but that Chinese companies are able to sell at competitive prices because of their remarkably high productivity.

See ***Growth,*** *page 3*

China, US keeping drug control on a steady track

By YANG ZEKUN
yangzekun@chinadaily.com.cn

China and the United States have maintained steady progress in anti-drug cooperation, with both sides continuing to expand practical collaboration in key areas, a senior Chinese narcotics control official said on Wednesday.

Wei Xiaojun, executive deputy director of the Office of China National Narcotics Control Commission and head of the Ministry of Public Security's narcotics control bureau, made the remarks as the nation further strengthened its drug governance and chemical control by placing 16 additional non-medicinal narcotic and psychotropic substances under control.

Wei noted that China and the US have deepened cooperation across substance scheduling, chemical control, intelligence sharing, joint investigations, online information cleanup, fugitive repatriation, anti-money laundering and drug testing technologies.

China has maintained regular communication with relevant US government departments, including the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, to exchange updates and discuss priorities, Wei said.

Chinese law enforcement agencies have also worked on joint cases and the repatriation of drug-related fugitives with the US Drug Enforcement Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement, he added.

In February, police in Tianjin arrested a suspect, surnamed Gong, in a drug-related case based on information provided by US authorities. Prior to that, a US citizen suspected of involvement in the same case was arrested by US law enforcement agencies from the state of Georgia.

Wei emphasized that drug control cooperation is a global mandate, and it should be based on mutual respect and trust. "As long as China and the US work together, they can effectively address drug-related challenges, which will benefit both peoples and the world," he said.

China remains committed to maintaining the positive momentum of Sino-US antidrug cooperation, which is a hard-won achievement and requires sustained joint efforts, he added.

See ***Drugs,*** *page 3*



INSIDE
APEC's approach to resilience
Global Views, page 8

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN

China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

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

NOODLING AROUND ON LONG SUMMER DAYS IS A SHAANXI TRADITION

Completion of the first wheat harvest of the year brings a raft of tasty, temperature-taming dishes

By LI YINGXUE
liyingxue@chinadaily.com.cn

As the summer solstice arrives on Sunday, across the wheat fields of the Guanzhong Plain, the first harvest of early summer has just been completed. Fresh grain is milled into new flour, still carrying the fragrance of the earth.

China Vibes 中国风尚 — FOOD —

In Shaanxi province, this moment is not marked by ritual or festivity, but by something far more immediate and familiar — the transformation of the new wheat into bowls of noodles to be shared around the table.

A traditional Chinese saying goes, "Eat dumplings on the winter solstice and noodles on the summer solstice." The custom reflects the rhythm of seasonal eating, with foods chosen to suit the body's needs as the temperature rises.

In Shaanxi, however, noodles are not just a seasonal dish — they are a way of life.

Actor Sun Hao, a native of Xi'an, the capital of Shaanxi, understands that connection well. The 58-year-old recently won praise for his role in the television drama *Zhu Jue*, or *Leading Role*. While audiences discussed his performance, many also noticed the authentic Shaanxi dishes that frequently appeared on screen.

According to Sun, the production team ran a dedicated cafeteria serving local specialties, including oil-splashed noodles. "One bite is enough," he said. "I can immediately tell whether the noodles are good."

That confidence comes from growing up in a region where wheat-based foods dominate daily life. In much of Shaanxi, especially the Guanzhong Plain, noodles, steamed buns and flatbreads remain staples on family tables.

One of the most representative dishes for the summer solstice is *jiangshui mian*, or fermented vegetable noodle soup.

See ***Noodles,*** *page 3*









(From left to right) *Biangbiang* noodles, *saozi* noodles, *jiangshui* noodles and oil-splashed noodles are among the delicacies of Shaanxi province. PHOTOS BY CHEN ZEBING / CHINA DAILY AND PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Online
See more by scanning the code.



INDEPTH

By LI YINGXUE
liyingxue@chinadaily.com.cn



A Chinese boys' U12 team and Dong Lu, the initiator of the "Chinese Football Boy" program, pose with the Sigismondi Cup trophy on June 2 in Turin, Italy. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:23 PM

Soccer young guns take 'wild route' to glory road

Chinese boys team's prestigious international victory reflects new talent-spotting philosophy

The 2026 FIFA World Cup is underway, and while the Chinese men's national soccer team may not be in contention for the trophy, a group of young players has offered a glimpse of a possible bright future.

On June 2 in Turin, Italy, a Chinese boys' U12 team defeated the academy side of English Premier League club Everton 5-4 in a penalty shoot-out to claim the Sigismondi Cup. The tournament, often described in youth soccer circles as a "mini World Cup", featured 48 youth teams from around the world, including academies from major European clubs.

The Chinese side completed a perfect run, winning all seven of their matches, scoring 20 goals and conceding just one on their way to the title. They became the first Asian team to win the tournament.

When the decisive moment arrived in the final, 12-year-old Meng Xinyi from Nanjing, Jiangsu province, stepped up for the fifth penalty.

He began his run-up, struck the ball cleanly, and sent it into the corner. As the ball hit the net and the shoot-out ended 5-4, he tore off his jersey, threw it in the air, and did a backflip in celebration.

Supporters in the stands erupted. On the opposite side, the young players from Everton stood frozen, hands on their heads, watching the trophy slip away.

"I was very nervous walking up," Xinyi said later. "But I also told myself I had to trust my instincts. When the ball went in, it felt incredible."

His approach to taking penalties is simple and built on self-belief. "No matter how the goalkeeper tries to distract you, if your first instinct is to shoot a certain side, you must trust it," he said.

The team, known as China Football Boy 2014, delivered a flawless campaign in Italy.

Behind the celebrations, however, lies a broader question about the development of Chinese soccer. Youth training has long faced challenges in consistently producing elite talent.

That landscape is now beginning to shift, as grassroots "wild route" initiatives expand alongside official efforts to support structured overseas development. While their approaches differ, both are contributing to a more diversified pathway for talent development.

Behind the backflip

Xinyi's acrobatic celebration was not accidental.

Before focusing on soccer, he spent more than a year training in martial arts while in kindergarten, developing flexibility and explosive strength. He later discovered soccer in primary school and quickly showed aptitude for the game.

By the time he joined his school team in Nanjing Gulou No 1 Central Primary School, soccer had already become part of his daily rhythm. He would finish homework during breaks so he could train after school.

Asked what soccer means to him, Xinyi's answer is straightforward. "Happiness," he said. "Because soccer allows me to express myself and push myself fully. Even when we are behind, I always believe we can come back."

His ambition is equally clear. "I want to become a professional player and contribute to Chinese soccer in the future."

Connecting players like Xinyi across China is a widely discussed and sometimes controversial figure in Chinese soccer development circles — the former journalist and commentator Dong Lu, and his grassroots initiative known as the "Chinese Football Boy" program.

In a recent online dialogue with veteran broadcaster Shui Junyi, Dong described his approach candidly as belonging to the "wild route"—a term often used to distinguish informal grassroots development from institutional systems.

He argues that talent is not "manufactured" in a traditional sense. "What matters is not who trains you, but who discovers you, guides you, and gives you a platform," he said. "Talent is revealed, not manufactured."

In 2017, Dong became involved in youth soccer development full-time. Since then, he has organized youngsters from across China to attend weekend and holiday training camps, and frequently taken them to international competitions.

Dong said total investment in the project has exceeded 58 million yuan ($8.58 million) over nine years, with free training provided to participating children.

Xinyi's father, Meng Qinghua, said the opportunity given to his son had transformed the boy's life.

"Without Dong Lu, there would be no Meng Xinyi today," he said. "He gave the child the chance to play internationally, and he never charged a fee."

Dong's philosophy places strong emphasis on exposure to competition. Unlike traditional youth systems that often prioritize training over results, he argues that Chinese soccer suffers from what he calls a "habitual acceptance of losing".

"In Chinese soccer, the real scarcity is hope," he said. "If we do not win, there is no attention, no momentum. But victory is essential because it creates belief."

Trial by fire

A central pillar of Dong's model is constant exposure to international competition.

In early June, a mixed U16 and U17 squad from the program arrived in Sao Paulo, Brazil, after competing in the Netherlands. The players were scheduled to face youth teams from Brazilian clubs such as Sao Paulo, Palmeiras, and Santos.

"Even if we lose by a large margin, we must play against peers of the same age," Dong said. "Only then can we understand where we truly stand."





Left: Players compete during the "2034 Cup" Primary School Students' Football Games (U12) in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, in July 2022. SUN JIAN / FOR CHINA DAILY **Above:** Dong Lu encourages a young player during a training session in Suzhou. XU YAOWEN / FOR CHINA DAILY



Meng Xinyi, 12, demonstrates a header during an interview in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, after winning the 2026 Sigismondi Cup. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

For many players, the experience has been formative.

One of the squad members, Yuan Bohan, said after one match in Brazil, he noticed the difference in the pace and intensity of the game. "The rhythm is completely different from what we experience domestically," he said. "Winning and losing both matter, because what we lack most is the experience of winning at this level."

Despite losing, the Chinese team still managed to express its own style of play. "We hope to learn from Brazilian soccer and bring that mentality back to China," he said.

In an environment of constant testing, individual breakthroughs have begun to emerge.

On June 3, Chinese player Li Haoyan, 14, officially joined FC Barcelona's famed La Masia academy at U15 level. He instantly became one of the most closely watched Chinese youth players to enter Spain's elite development system.

Born in Dalian, Liaoning province in 2012, Haoyan first trained at a grassroots club founded by his father, before joining Dong's program at age 10. At age 13, he moved to Spain to pursue soccer full-time.

Adapting to a new country proved challenging. Language barriers and daily life adjustments were significant obstacles. He reportedly wrote tactical instructions on his palm during matches and added extra training sessions on his own initiative.

In the 2025-26 season, Haoyan played 28 league matches with CF Damm. He contributed 12 goals and 12 assists, helping his team finish seventh in a 16-team regional division.

Known for his pace and versatility, Haoyan attracted attention from several Spanish clubs before Barcelona finalized his signing.

"I want to thank every fan who has supported me on the journey to this dream," Haoyan wrote on social media. "This is a new environment and a new challenge, and I will stay focused, train hard, and cherish the opportunity to develop in one of the world's best youth academies.

"I will steadily improve myself, carry the original aspiration of representing my country with pride, and give everything I have to keep moving forward," he wrote.

CFA's support role

Haoyan's journey to Barcelona is one example of what grassroots "wild route" development can achieve through private support and individual commitment. But soccer authorities have increasingly sought to build more systematic mechanisms to support overseas development.

In recent years, the Chinese Football Association has introduced policies that share a similar objective: helping more young players gain experience in high-level overseas environments.

For decades, Chinese soccer has struggled with what many call the "12-year-old drop-off" — a stage at which many promising players leave the sport due to academic pressure and uncertain professional prospects.

Earlier generations of Chinese players who went abroad did so largely alone. Players such as Yang Chen and Shao Jiayi relied on personal resilience and limited support networks during early stints in Europe.

Today, however, institutional support is expanding.

In April 2026, the Chinese Football Association launched its Youth Inspiration Program, aimed at players age 15 to 23. The initiative provides financial subsidies, development support, and performance-based incentives for young players competing overseas.

CFA President Song Kai emphasized that talent development depends on exposure to high-level competition. "We want talented players to go abroad, stay abroad, and play abroad," he said.

For many players, the program reduces uncertainty. CFA officials note that financial instability is one of the key barriers preventing young players from pursuing international careers.

China's head coach Shao Jiayi described the initiative as a meaningful shift. "It provides a clearer pathway and tells young players that they are not alone when they go abroad," he said.

At the same time, domestic grassroots soccer continues to expand. In Nanjing, where Meng Xinyi plays, a structured school-to-school soccer pathway now links primary, secondary, and high school education, reducing dropout risks.

Cities such as Chengdu in Sichuan province have also introduced shared coaching centers, integrating retired athletes into school programs and improving coaching quality at the grassroots level.

According to CFA data, the number of registered elite young players has now reached nearly 100,000, with competition participation continuing to rise.

CFA officials have emphasized that multiple development models are welcome. "Professional academies, sports schools, school-based programs, and social organizations all play a role," Song said. "The key is to broaden the talent pool."

Broader horizon

Looking across the evolving landscape, Chinese soccer today is no longer defined by a single pathway.

There is Meng Xinyi, celebrating in Turin; Li Haoyan, training at La Masia; Dong Lu's teams competing in Brazil; and a growing institutional framework supporting youth development at home.

"The real shortage in Chinese soccer is victory," Dong said.

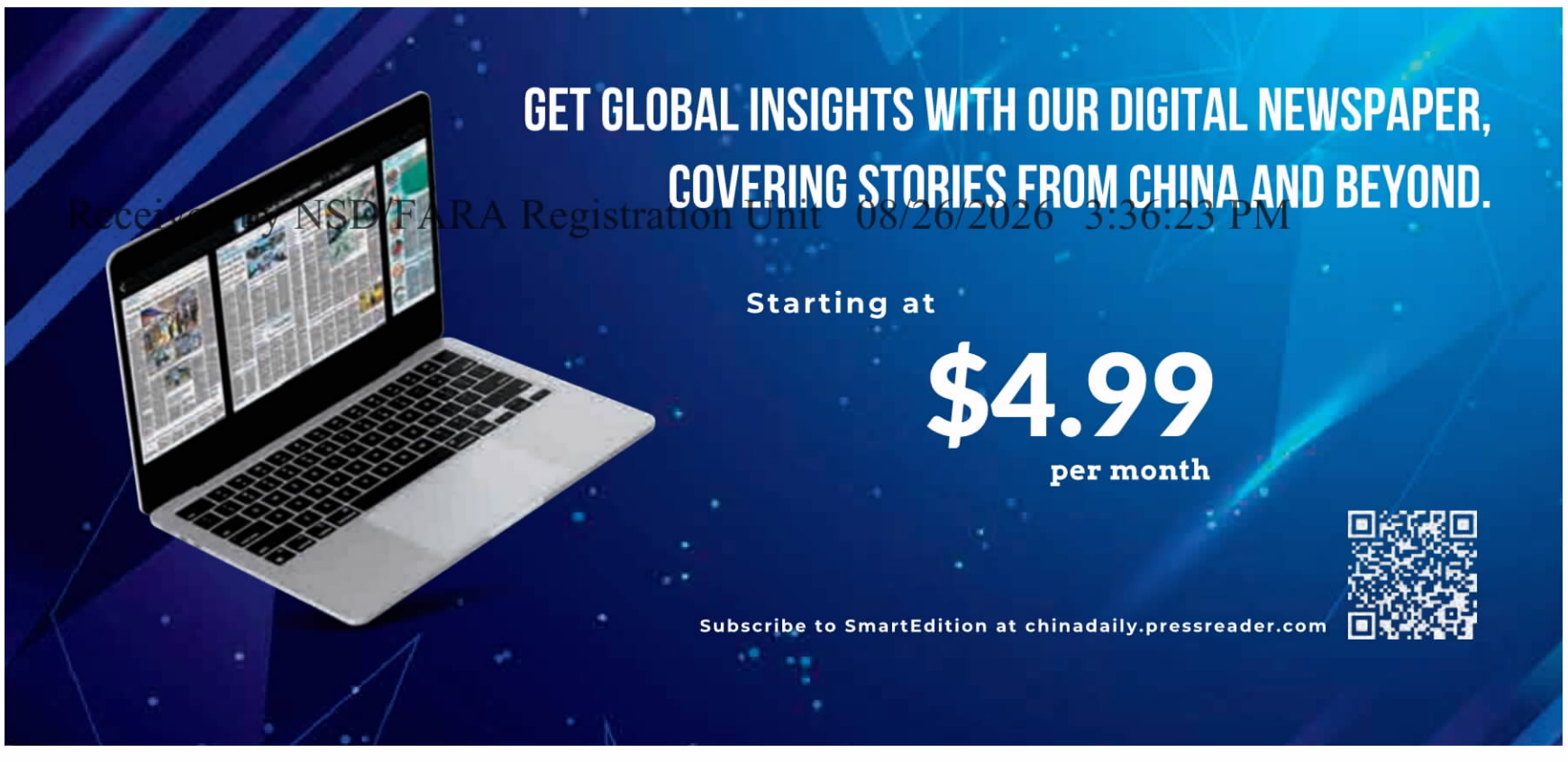
Yet victory, increasingly, is being pursued through multiple routes — some structured, others experimental, and many still evolving.

The question of whether grassroots "wild route" initiatives or institutional systems will ultimately prove more effective may be less important than their coexistence. In a mature ecosystem, different pathways often reinforce rather than exclude each other.

Dong recently suggested that the next major breakthrough in Chinese soccer may emerge around 2034, when a new generation of players — shaped by both domestic reform and international exposure — reaches maturity.

By then, many of today's young players will be entering their prime years, some already embedded in overseas systems.

Whether that future delivers long-awaited progress remains uncertain. But for the young players now crossing borders, scoring penalties, and chasing opportunities far from home, Chinese soccer is already being rewritten — not as a single story, but as a widening field of possibilities.



TOP NEWS

Nation outlines pathway to a fairer world

Beijing issues white paper on promoting more just and equitable global governance

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:23 PM

By **JI HAISHENG**
jihaisheng@chinadaily.com.cn

China on Wednesday released a white paper titled "More Just and Equitable Global Governance: China's Principles, Proposals and Actions", which Foreign Minister Wang Yi said aims to offer a comprehensive account of the country's ideas and actions in promoting global governance, and to foster broader consensus within the international community on reforming and improving global governance and ensuring more effective responses to global challenges.

Wang made the remarks at a news conference held by the State Council Information Office in Beijing on the release of the white paper.

"Global governance is a common endeavor that bears on the well-being of all humanity, and building a just and equitable global governance system is a shared vision long pursued by people from across the world," Wang said.

Wang said that the Global Governance Initiative, proposed by President Xi Jinping, came at a critical juncture where the international system established after World War II faced multiple shocks and global governance was encountering headwinds. Since its introduction in September, the GGI has received broad support from nearly 160 countries and international organizations, with over 60 countries joining the Group of Friends of Global Governance. "The GGI has evolved from a Chinese proposal into an international practice, and is showing ever-growing vitality," Wang added.

To foster broader international consensus, China will host the first Xiong'an Global Governance Forum this autumn, Wang said.

At the news conference on Wednesday, officials also underlined the wide range of measures China has rolled out to advance a fairer and more equitable global governance system.

Zhou Haibing, deputy head of the National Development and Reform Commission, said that China upholds multilateralism and an open, inclusive approach in promoting both global governance and international cooperation on artificial intelligence.

He said that China will host the 2026 World AI Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance in Shanghai in July. According to the foreign minister, China is also stepping up efforts to establish a World AI Cooperation Organization.

Noting that the GGI puts people's well-being at the center, Zhao Fengtao, vice-chairman of the China International Development Cooperation Agency, said that China has always worked with other countries to improve the global poverty reduction governance framework.

Together with 53 countries and nine international organizations, China launched the Global Partnership for Poverty Alleviation and Development, which has helped to turn its poverty reduction experience into global public goods, and given new momentum to global poverty reduction, he said.

Stressing the key role of the Global South in global governance, Vice-Foreign Minister Miao Deyu said that the international community should support the Global South in bolstering solidarity and self-reliance, leveraging major cooperation platforms including BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and the Group of 77 and China, and scaling up the role of emerging financial institutions such as the New Development Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

Wang Huiyao, president of the Center for China and Globalization, a Beijing-based think tank, said that while individual major powers' engagement in bloc politics, geopolitical confrontation and unilateralism has diverted the international focus away from improving global governance, China has put forward a more inclusive and comprehensive vision for global governance, redirecting the global focus to the essential issues requiring the joint efforts of all countries.

"At a time when the world is far from peaceful, the newly released white paper has put forth an innovative framework for global governance," he said. The document has not only formed a new core of consensus and reshaped views on global governance, but also concretely showcased how China's global visions and policy proposals can be translated into tangible and on-the-ground outcomes, he added.

Inside

- Editorial, **page 6**
- Document, **pages 11-14**

Digital art feast



Visitors tour Dataland, the world's first museum dedicated to artificial intelligence art, data visualization and AI-driven creativity, during a media preview on Tuesday ahead of its official opening on Saturday in Los Angeles, California, the United States. MARIO TAMA / GETTY IMAGES

NATIONAL VISION, LOCAL ACTION

Hainan now a magnet for foreign firms

By **CHEN BOWEN** in Haikou
chenbowen@chinadaily.com.cn

Six months after the launch of island-wide special customs operations, the Hainan Free Trade Port is running smoothly, with international trade and investor interest rising sharply, Hainan Party Secretary Feng Fei told China Daily.

Inside

Views, **page 7**

The landmark move, which took effect on Dec 18, 2025, marks one of China's most ambitious institutional opening-up efforts. Feng said the initial phase had achieved its primary goal of stable and orderly operations, with goods moving efficiently, cross-border travel more convenient, and businesses increasingly moving operations to the island.



Feng Fei

By May 31, customs clearance efficiency had improved significantly. The value of imports under the zero-tariff policy jumped 116 percent year-on-year, average clearance time for imported goods dropped 20 percent, and declaration requirements for goods leaving the island for the mainland were simplified by over 60 percent.

Total international trade value rose 53.7 percent during the period. The number of registered foreign trade companies grew 57.8 percent, while newly established foreign-funded enterprises increased 37.6 percent.

The robust growth reflects not only the initial effects of the special customs operations, but also the growing effectiveness of the Hainan FTP's institutional framework, he said. A comprehensive policy framework is now in place, featuring zero tariffs, low tax rates, and liberalization and facilitation of trade, investment, cross-border capital flows, personnel entry and exit, and transport, alongside safe and orderly data flow. Goods eligible for zero-tariff treatment have expanded from 21 percent to 74 percent of all tariff lines.

Institutional innovations are also reshaping the island's economic structure. Feng said that Hainan has developed a modern industrial system with distinctive characteristics and competitive strengths. Tourism, modern services, high-tech industries and high-efficiency tropical agriculture accounted for nearly 70 percent of the province's GDP in the first quarter of 2026.

Against this backdrop, Feng said Hainan is becoming an increasingly attractive destination for global investors and highlighted three major opportunities for foreign businesses. Hainan offers China's shortest negative list for foreign investment, a pioneering cross-border services trade negative list, and special market-access measures, including wholly foreign-owned hospitals and independent operation of high-level overseas universities, and vocational colleges in the fields of science, engineering, agriculture and medicine.

Located at the junction of two of the world's most dynamic markets — China's 1.4 billion consumers and Southeast Asia's nearly 700 million — Hainan has attracted 22 Fortune Global 500 foreign-funded enterprises and a total of 139 headquarters-type companies. More global investors have chosen the island as a base to enter the Chinese market or expand globally. In 2025, Hainan's outbound investment volume grew 20.7 percent year-on-year.

To sustain the momentum, Hainan has been stepping up efforts to build a market-oriented, law-based and internationalized business environment, Feng said. The province has introduced a fair competition regulation, enacted 57 local regulations under the Hainan Free Trade Port Law, and established international commercial courts and a specialized intellectual property court. A one-stop dispute resolution mechanism integrating mediation, arbitration and litigation is operational.

Meanwhile, Hainan is upgrading transportation and logistics infrastructure to strengthen its role as a regional hub linking China with global markets.

Hainan aims to become a shipping hub for the New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor and an aviation gateway to the Pacific and Indian Oceans. The first seventh-freedom traffic rights route, which allows foreign airlines to operate routes between two countries without flying to their home countries, is now operational.

Feng outlined a road map to establish Hainan as a new frontier of China's opening-up by 2035, and a globally influential high-level free trade port by mid-century. The province has partnered with 44 global free trade zones and ports, attracted investment from 180 countries and regions, and maintained trade ties with over 220 countries and regions.

Drugs: 16 additional substances put under control

From page 1

According to Wei, China has actively responded to the diversion of nonscheduled chemicals into illicit drug production channels in North America.

Starting on July 1, a total of 16 substances will be added to the catalogue of nonmedical narcotic and psychotropic substances, China's national drug regulator announced on Wednesday.

This will place 412 types of nonmedicinal narcotic and psychotropic drugs, as well as the entire categories of fentanyl-related substances, synthetic cannabinoids and nitazene-related substances under control.

To strengthen risk prevention, China issued warning notices twice — in November 2025 and May this year — urging compliance with relevant laws. Customs and postal authorities reinforced export supervision, risk analysis and inspection procedures.

Wei said authorities have also carried out nationwide crackdowns on the illegal trafficking of precursor chemicals and new psychoactive substances, and strengthened industry self-regulation.

Chemical control remains a key upstream measure in China's drug control strategy, he said. In 2025, authorities seized 550.6 metric tons of drug-related precursor chemicals. China has also published a white paper on fentanyl-related substance control and expanded its regulatory system.

Wei said that China's drug situation remains generally stable, but new challenges are emerging as trafficking becomes more organized, substance abuse more diversified and users younger. He warned that loophole exploitation, gray-area substances and emerging addictive compounds are increasing regulatory complexity.

According to the 2025 China Drug Situation Report, which was released on Wednesday, Chinese authorities solved 27,000 drug-related cases and arrested 41,000 suspects last year, down 27.6 percent and 33 percent year-on-year, respectively. They also seized 33.5 tons of drugs, up 25.4 percent, and handled 134,000 drug users, down 30.3 percent.

The report noted a rise in abuse of nonscheduled addictive substances. In 2025, authorities seized nearly 1.27 million liters of nitrous oxide, up 84 percent year-on-year, and 9.3 tons of other substances, an increase of more than 17-fold.

Spreading cheer



A man dressed as a clown plays with Palestinian children on Tuesday during an event aimed at lifting their spirits in Khan Younis, Gaza, Palestine. ABED RAHIM KHATIB / GETTY IMAGES

Noodles: Fermented food helps cope with summer heat

From page 1

Ren Haibo, executive chef at the restaurant in the Beijing office of the Shaanxi provincial government, describes it as the perfect antidote to summer heat. The dish begins with celery that is fermented in water used to cook noodles over several days. The resulting sour broth is seasoned with garlic, dried chilies and aromatics before being poured over freshly cooked noodles.

"The taste is sour, fragrant and refreshing," Ren said. "It stimulates the appetite and helps people feel comfortable in hot weather."

Long before air conditioners became commonplace, such fermented foods offered a practical way to cope with high summer temperatures. Today, *jiangshui mian* remains a seasonal favorite in central Shaanxi.

Jiangshui yu is a traditional Shaanxi dish consisting of cornmeal dough pieces served in a fermented vegetable broth. In spite of its name including the Chinese character *yu*, it contains no fish. The small, doughy pieces are made from cornmeal or wheat flour and are served in a sour broth with garlic, chives and chili oil, creating a refreshing balance of sour and spicy flavors.

"In the past, when new wheat arrived, the first thing people wanted to do was taste the fresh flour," said Ren.

That tradition lives on in dishes such as Qishan *saozi* noodles, a specialty from Baoji and western Shaanxi. Often served to welcome guests, the noodles are renowned for their harmonious blend of sourness, spiciness and aroma. A colorful topping of diced vegetables, tofu, egg strips and meat is ladled over thin, springy noodles.

For Shaanxi people, however, the love of wheat extends beyond noodles. One of Sun Hao's favorite local dishes is *xiaochao paomo*, a spicy variation of Xi'an's famous soaked flatbread dish.

"It's incredibly fragrant," said Sun. "The taste is stronger, and younger people especially love it."

The ritual surrounding the dish is almost as important as the food itself. Diners traditionally tear pieces of flatbread by hand before it is cooked with broth and other ingredients.

As the year's longest day arrives and fresh wheat enters local kitchens, the cycle of harvest to table continues uninterrupted — carried forward in bowls of noodles shaped by generations.

Growth: West can replicate factors fueling China's success

From page 1

There are two key socioeconomic consequences of this increase in productivity. First, millions of low-income and middle-income consumers from Western countries and the Global South, including Chinese consumers, are able to buy cars and other industrial goods at much lower prices. This would not be possible without Chinese competition.

Second, the world is able to fight climate change more effectively when it gains access to low-cost, high-tech renewable energy equipment produced by Chinese companies. Low-tech and high-cost industries in the West have struggled to survive against Chinese competition.

Instead of welcoming the benefits enjoyed by consumers and the improved odds in the fight against global warming, many Western policymakers have chosen to side with entrenched interests, unproductive businesses, established oligopolies and the financiers of their costly political campaigns.

Rather than trying to fix blame for their competitive shortcomings, Western countries would do well to identify the underlying factors of China's highly productive economy.

Four advantages enjoyed by China deserve special attention. First, the country has a vast domestic market, which allows Chinese companies to achieve significant economies of scale and subjects them to intense local competition even before they enter the global market. Second, there is continuity and predictability of economic policy and political stability in the country. Third, China has made massive investments in quality education, transportation and energy infrastructure, and in research and development. Fourth, macroeconomic management and industrial policy have been fine-tuned to align with long-term planning, while market forces and the private economy are allowed to play important roles.

None of these advantages are beyond the reach of Western economies. When it comes to market size, both the US and the European Union have very large integrated markets capable of supporting similar economies of scale. On the policy front, politicians in most Western countries have chosen polarization and short-term gains over long-term national interests. That is hardly China's fault.

The same applies to education, infrastructure and innovation. Nothing prevents Western countries from channeling large investments into these areas as they did in the past. But to do it now requires tough decisions, such as reducing defense expenditure and pursuing a more equitable tax system. As for industrial policy, public investment has played an important role in infrastructure and technological development in Western countries. If China's strategy in these areas explains its success, as is often argued by Western nations, nothing prevents them from doing the same.

The West has chosen a different response: blame games and protectionism. Instead of embracing competition, the core factor for economic success, most Western governments have chosen to shield their industries by using tariffs, quotas and the outright blocking of some imports.

A more constructive path for the West would be to examine the factors that have fueled Chinese success and try to imitate some of those policies. If such an approach is followed seriously, the world might even witness a "West shock" in the future.

The author is a senior fellow at the Beijing Club for International Dialogue, and was special adviser to the president of Costa Rica from 2018 to 2022. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

EXPERIENCE CHINA DAILY, DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR AND PHONE

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:23 PM

Print + digital package starting at

$49.99 per three months | $149.99 per year

Visit chinadailyusa-store.com for more



WORLD



G7 leaders take a group photo in the French resort of Evian-les-Bains on Tuesday. In a declaration issued overnight, the leaders threw their support behind the US' tentative agreement with Iran, saying they were "ready to contribute to its implementation". VIA XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:23 PM

Japan slammed over slow probe into embassy attack

By ZHOU JIN
zhoujin@chinadaily.com.cn

China has criticized the lack of progress in Japan's investigation into and handling of a case involving a Self-Defense Forces officer who allegedly entered the Chinese embassy in Tokyo armed with a knife, urging Japan to take full responsibility for the incident.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian made the remarks on Wednesday after the Tokyo District Public Prosecutors Office reportedly decided to extend the detention of Kodai Murata, a second lieutenant in Japan's Ground Self-Defense Force, for psychiatric assessment to determine whether he can be held criminally responsible for his actions.

Nearly three months have passed since Murata illegally broke into the Chinese embassy in Tokyo.

Lin said incidents threatening the security of Chinese diplomatic missions in Japan have continued to occur, adding that China has expressed grave concerns and lodged protests against the Japanese side on many occasions.

The case exposes a number of deep-seated problems in Japan, including worsening right-wing influence and the suppression of objective and rational voices, he said.

Lin also listed the toxicity of the Japanese government's erroneous policies on vital issues concerning China-Japan relations, including history and Taiwan, the serious lack of education on true history and the pervasive erroneous historical views.

There is also an ongoing push in Japan for a more offensive and expansionist defense policy, and a failure in the oversight and discipline of the Self-Defense Forces, he said.

Lin noted that several prominent figures in Japan have called on the government to apologize to China.

Some have urged Tokyo to reflect on itself and take corrective actions concerning the supervision of the SDF, the education on history and Japan's policy toward China, so as to fundamentally address the issue and remove its breeding ground in society.

"We once again urge the Japanese side to do serious soul-searching, correct its wrongdoings, conduct a thorough probe and take full responsibility for the incident," Lin said.

Reactions to Iran deal mixed

Fourteen-point framework begins 60-day process to negotiate permanent agreement

By MINGMEI LI in New York
mingmeili@chinadailyusa.com

US President Donald Trump declared "victory" following the agreement with Iran, but reactions across the United States remain sharply divided.

On Wednesday, US media reported that senior US officials had disclosed details of a preliminary memorandum of understanding between Washington and Tehran aimed at ending the 110-day conflict, which was signed ahead of schedule on Wednesday.

The agreement has immediately sparked debate over whether it represents a diplomatic breakthrough or a concession to Tehran.

Under the 14-point framework, the two sides would have 60 days to negotiate the terms before reaching a final agreement. According to a senior US official, the preliminary deal would reopen the Strait of Hormuz, establish a $300 billion reconstruction plan for Iran, and lift restrictions on Iranian oil exports. The agreement also includes language that Iran agrees not to develop or procure nuclear weapons.

Some terms of the deal remain contentious. Trump repeatedly denied on Wednesday that the United States would contribute to the reconstruction fund, though he said Gulf allies could provide financial support if they chose to do so.

Trump warned that the US would "go back to bombing" if Tehran failed to comply with the terms of the preliminary agreement or if negotiations did not result in a long-term deal preventing Iran from developing a nuclear weapon.

"Mistakes are made. War is nasty," Trump said during the G7 summit, appearing to acknowledge US responsibility for strikes that killed more than 150 children. Trump said the incident was under investigation.

The agreement has drawn mixed reactions from US lawmakers, even within the Republican Party, with some praising it as a step toward ending the conflict while others warning that it could strengthen Iran.

Republican senator Lindsey Graham welcomed the MOU, reversing his earlier skepticism toward negotiations between the two countries.

"After this discussion, it is my opinion that signing the MOU will be beneficial to the United States, in as much as the Strait of Hormuz will begin to open, and the hostilities with Iran will stop," Graham wrote.

"Whether or not the United States can reach an acceptable, verifiable deal with Iran regarding its nuclear program and other issues is yet to be determined, but I see little downside to trying," he continued. "The economic stability that comes from opening up the Strait and the cessation of hostilities could create a pathway to peace well beyond the Iranian conflict."

Others, however, strongly criticized the deal.

"The details that I've seen so far look ... awful. This will go down as a tremendous foreign policy blunder," Republican Senator Bill Cassidy told Nexstar's Reshad Hudson on Capitol Hill on Wednesday.

"(President Ronald) Reagan is rolling over in his grave. Iran's nuclear ambitions were not curbed, and they have learned that threatening the Strait of Hormuz works and will undoubtedly leverage it in the future," Cassidy wrote in a social media post. "Now, Iran gets to build brand-new infrastructure under this deal."

"Before the war, the strait was open, Iran was being crushed by sanctions, and 13 service members were still alive. Now, 13 Americans are dead, families have paid billions at the pump, sanctions will be lifted, and the bombing has stopped. This is the worst foreign policy blunder in decades," he wrote.

Former US ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley also criticized the agreement, particularly reports that sanctions on Iranian oil exports would be lifted immediately.

"If this is true, Iran wins," Haley wrote.

A recent analysis from the Center for Strategic & International Studies said both Washington and Tehran would likely claim victory, while each side would also face losses.

"For President Trump, the primary success of the deal is the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz ... but the strait's closure was a direct consequence of the war," the analysis said.

The analysis also noted that the agreement could be a major setback for Israel and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has long viewed Iran as an existential threat. It added that the Iran war had broad support in Israel and that Netanyahu faces a difficult political environment ahead of the coming election.

Agencies contributed to the story.

Fed Chair announces new era for central bank

By BELINDA ROBINSON
in New York
belindarobinson@chinadailyusa.com

Federal Reserve Chairman Kevin Warsh announced a new era at the Fed in his first news conference at the helm of the central bank, signalling his plan to make it quieter with less engagement with the markets and one that squarely focuses on tackling inflation.

Warsh spoke at his first news conference as Fed chair on Wednesday, after overseeing his first Fed policy meeting. All 12 members of the Federal Open Market Committee voted unanimously to hold rates at a range of 3.5 percent to 3.75 percent for a fourth meeting in a row.

The new Fed chair was clear about his core focus. "I've said for years inflation is a choice," Warsh told reporters. "You bet it is."

He added that he was committed to bringing inflation back down to its 2 percent target. The Fed will next meet in six weeks.

In new projections, policymakers said they expected overall inflation to be 3.6 percent by the end of the year, higher than they had predicted three months ago. Core inflation would be 3.3 percent, The New York Times reported.

In a departure from his predecessor — former Fed Chair Jerome Powell — Warsh identified a series of changes that he intends to make in his new role.

"The recent past need not be prologue," he said while discussing the fact that inflation was higher than the Fed's target for more than five years.

One of his first small changes was to the usual Fed statement, which he said was "a bit shorter, a bit simpler and dispenses with some older language" and focuses on "the facts as best as we can judge it".

In another change, he declined to submit an economic forecast to the Fed's Summary of Economic Projections, including its "dot plot", CNBC reported. But he did allow his colleagues to submit one.

He also opted to end the "forward guidance", which is a hint in Fed statements about where interest rates may be heading in the future.

"I can't give you any forward guidance about what we're going to do next," he said. "The good news is we'll be meeting in six weeks."

In his speech, he said it was important at any institution during "a change in leadership" to "reaffirm its mission, to review current practices, and to consider whether those practices best meet our objectives".

He announced that five task forces will reexamine the core functions of the central bank.

They will address communications, the balance sheet, data sources, productivity trends and jobs.

Warsh said that he will be "enlisting some of the very best minds, both inside and outside the economics profession", for discussions on the task force. They will be paired with Fed staff.

In another departure from his predecessor, Warsh did not offer explicit guidance on interest rates and did not talk about how the Fed will decide when to adjust rates.

Analysts said that this could make it tough for investors to determine what the central bank will do next.

He stated that the financial markets would be entering "a new chapter" with the central bank.

He also stated that the labor market is stable.

Warsh, 56, was nominated by President Donald Trump in January as the replacement for former chair Powell. He took over as the 17th Fed Chair in May.

He served on the Fed's Board of Governors from 2006 to 2011, and previously worked as an executive at Morgan Stanley and the Duquesne Family Office.

His predecessor had a fractious professional relationship with Trump as he would not cut rates, even after several demands to do so by the US president.

Asked about the Fed's decision to maintain rates, Trump said on Wednesday: "It's all right, whatever."

The new Fed chair takes over as inflation reached a three-year high of 4.2 percent in mid-June, mainly due to higher gas prices, data from the government said.

Warsh said he plans to keep talking with the media, as news conferences are useful for communicating, if he has "something to say".

The bond market sold off when the Fed released its projections on Wednesday afternoon and again during Warsh's news conference, The Wall Street Journal reported.

But Warsh said he was not interested in immediate market reactions.

Other economic challenges include oil prices falling sharply after the deal to end the US-Israel war with Iran was reached.

It took immediate effect late Wednesday after both sides signed it, Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said.

While seeking Trump's nomination, Warsh had called for "regime change" at the Fed.

He reportedly prefers the communication style of Alan Greenspan, the Fed's chair from 1987 to 2005, who was less outspoken than Powell, The Associated Press and Reuters reported.

"The changes to the policy statement were profound," Thomas Simons, chief US economist at Jefferies, wrote in a note. "Policy statements became much wordier after the global financial crisis, so this is a return to a more Greenspan-era style of post-meeting communications."

Nepal looks to strengthen collaboration with China

By ZHOU JIN



> We have seen very impressive infrastructure being built on the Chinese side. We would like to see similar connectivity improvements on the Nepali side as well."
>
> **Shisir Khanal,** foreign minister of Nepal

Nepal's new government is looking to strengthen political engagement with China and expand cooperation in areas including connectivity, technology, governance and people-to-people exchanges, Foreign Minister Shisir Khanal says.

Speaking of his recent four-day visit to China, Khanal said connectivity is one of Nepal's top priorities in its cooperation with China, both a neighbor and an important partner for the South Asian country.

"We have seen very impressive infrastructure being built on the Chinese side. We would like to see similar connectivity improvements on the Nepali side as well," he said.

Improved land and air links would facilitate trade, tourism and people-to-people exchanges, he added.

Khanal expressed hope that his visit would help pave the way for more high-level exchanges between the two countries in the coming months.

"I have invited Foreign Minister Wang Yi to visit Nepal, and we also hope to see more exchanges between leaders from both sides," he said.

A former minister of education, science and technology, Khanal took the current post in March. He said Nepal sees great potential to work with China in emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence.

"Nepal has a young and technologically savvy population," he said, adding that it is one of the fastest-growing sectors in the country in terms of tech service exports.

Khanal praised China's rapid advances in AI, especially the development of powerful and cost-effective models, saying Nepal hopes to leverage such innovations to support its own digital transformation.

Nepal recently announced plans to establish its first sovereign AI data center, and China could be a partner in that effort, he added.

Kathmandu aims to improve public services through digitalization and technology to make such services easily accessible to its people, he said.

"That's something China has done amazingly well and (which) we would like to learn from," he said.

Nepal is particularly interested in learning from China's industrialization, agricultural modernization and technology-driven development, Khanal said.

China's mechanized agriculture has generated large numbers of jobs in both rural and urban areas, helping power the country's rapid economic growth, he said.

In recent years, China has also made remarkable progress in homegrown technologies, which have improved efficiency and brought tangible benefits to people's daily lives, he added.

Highlighting the long and traditional relationship between Nepal and China, Khanal said it is now important to bring dynamism to the relationship between young people of both countries and deepen mutual understanding.

"There is significant interest among young Nepalis in learning from China, particularly in science and technology," he said, adding that more and more Nepalis are studying Chinese and pursuing higher education and research opportunities in China.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn

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

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108
529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1852



Zhejiang champions law-based governance

Frontline policing and dispute management prioritize people's life quality in province

By HAO NAN
haonan@chinadaily.com.cn

With the commitment to pioneering provincial-level law-based governance in China, East China's Zhejiang province has integrated rule-of-law building into every aspect of modernization and become a demonstration zone.

A sound legal ecosystem has underpinned Zhejiang's robust economic and social progress after the province initiated the rule-of-law provincial construction strategy on April 26, 2006.

From 2006 to 2025, the province's GDP surged from 1.56 trillion yuan ($230.9 billion) to 9.45 trillion yuan, while public safety satisfaction rose from 94.8 percent to 98.9 percent, ranking among the nation's highest for five consecutive years.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:23 PM



A judge from Dongyang city people's court Weishan tribunal delivers a lecture on constitutional law to primary school students in Dongyang city, Zhejiang province, on Dec 3, 2025. BAO KANGXUAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Supporting enterprises

These statistics testify to the province's improved law-based governance mechanisms.

Over the past two decades, Zhejiang has enacted more than 30 pioneering regulations and rules to shore up reform and industrial upgrading.

Notably, the province issued regulations to boost private enterprises and optimize the business environment, securing full life-cycle protection for market entities.

Hangzhou, capital city of Zhejiang province, has rolled out a regulation on embodied intelligence robots. As the first local regulation of its kind nationwide, it took effect on May 1, serving as a benchmark for the development of embodied intelligence across the country.

To support enterprises going global, Zhejiang opened an overseas legal service center in November 2025. It now operates more than 400 service outlets in 98 countries and 138 major cities, providing one-stop legal services such as consultation, remote notarization and commercial mediation.

Centering on livelihood

Zhejiang's two-decade commitment to the rule of law has also prioritized people's interests. The Fengqiao Experience, which centers on resolving conflicts at the grassroots level, originated in Fengqiao town of Zhuji city. Over the past few years, the practice has spread nationwide and evolved into a hallmark of advancing law-based governance.

At present, public security authorities in Zhejiang are pushing forward the development of police stations modeled after the Fengqiao Experience. The Ningwei squadron of the traffic management police brigade of Xiaoshan district public security subbureau in Hangzhou is among them.

The squadron has deployed more police officers to frontline posts to ensure a quick response to emergencies. When no police calls come in, officers carry out preventive work including incident detection, hidden danger inspection and traffic safety publicity.



A policeman from Ningwei squadron instructs the elderly on traffic safety in Hangzhou on March 23. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Over the five years since the launch of the Fengqiao-style initiative, fatalities from traffic accidents under Ningwei squadron's jurisdiction have dropped by 63.6 percent. Following the rollout of grid-based governance, congestion-related police reports in the precinct dipped 32 percent year-on-year, and accident handling efficiency rose by 45 percent.

"We have truly realized the governance goal of resolving minor incidents within grids and major issues within the jurisdiction," Yuan Gengsheng, an official from Ningwei squadron, said.

To make judicial services more accessible and efficient, local courts in Zhejiang have introduced diversified mechanisms for family disputes and fast-track procedures for labor disputes, significantly cutting public litigation costs.

Additionally, procuratorial organs have launched special campaigns on food and drug safety and ecological protection, while the police have intensified crackdowns on telecom fraud and organized crime.

Beyond judicial rectification, Zhejiang has built 381 standardized comprehensive governance centers in key areas and expanded online judicial services to enable convenient dispute resolution. It has also strengthened public legal education with 10 national legal education bases to foster a law-abiding society.

Digital court system

Leveraging its digital economy, Zhejiang has embedded technologies into full-cycle law-based governance to modernize provincial governance.

The province has built cross-departmental big data platforms for online criminal case handling and a digital court system covering filing, mediation, trial and enforcement, lowering the appeal rate of first-instance cases to 6.12 percent.

As the nation's pilot for comprehensive and integrated administrative law enforcement reform, Zhejiang has streamlined more than 1,300 law enforcement teams to 652. It has also launched 105 cross-departmental supervision scenarios, eliminating duplicated and overlapping law enforcement issues.

In the future, Zhejiang is committed to making substantial progress in modern law-based governance. The province plans to deepen institutional reforms related to the rule of law, continuously enhance digital empowerment mechanisms for judicial and administrative governance, and refine its people-centered legal service system.

These efforts aim to consistently enhance the public's sense of fulfillment, happiness and security, setting a robust provincial benchmark for the comprehensive advancement of the rule of law across China, local officials said.



Wu Minghui hosts a stall sharing information on how people can protect their own rights during a legal publicity campaign held on May 10. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Public's legal knowledge boosted by diverse efforts

By YUAN SHENGGAO

To raise residents' awareness of the law, Zhejiang province in East China has ramped up legal popularization over the past two decades. Nowadays, respecting, studying, abiding by and applying the law has become a voluntary practice across society.

Yuhang district of Hangzhou, capital city of Zhejiang province, started to pioneer quantitative assessment on the rule of law governance in 2006, serving as a microcosm of the province's drive to foster law-abiding conduct.

Wu Minghui, who used to be a mediator, felt the change in Yuhang when recalling a contractual dispute over auxiliary processing involving a small-sized precision processor in her early working days.

In the case, a processor manufactured spare parts for a local high-tech company.

But the two sides only kept simple delivery slips without a formal written contract specifying quality criteria, inspection protocols and payment deadlines.

Disputes later arose over product precision defects, leaving more than 300,000 yuan ($44,338) unpaid.

Frequent quarrels between the two parties nearly put an end to their business partnership.

"Without standardized contract guidelines or digital working tools, I could only calm the conflicting sides temporarily instead of resolving the dispute fundamentally. That case drove home a profound truth: without the safeguards of the rule of law, businesses cannot secure stable operation," Wu said.

Now as a practicing lawyer in Nuoliya Law Firm, Wu adopts a different approach when handling similar disputes. She directly applies the Contracts section of the Civil Code to clarify delivery specifications, inspection obligations and payment liabilities for both parties.

Leveraging the digital rule-of-law platform, she uses standardized contract templates to help parties secure transaction evidence and clarify rights and obligations efficiently. Moreover, she coordinates with judicial offices, industrial parks and trade associations to settle disputes with reference to precedent rulings.

For years, Yuhang has translated institutional strengths of the rule of law into development dividends through quantified management, digital empowerment, diversified co-governance and development-focused guarantees, enabling the law to underpin businesses for steady operation and bold innovation, Wu said.

At the end of 2007, Yuhang issued the official quantitative assessment system for law-based governance. In 2008, the district rolled out a rule-of-law index. Quantitative assessment has since been applied to law-based development and social governance in Yuhang.

Earlier this year, the Ministry of Justice revealed the first batch of national model cities, counties and districts for law observance and legal popularization, with Yuhang on the list. "The core edge of a law-based Yuhang lies in addressing the genuine needs of residents and enterprises with accessible and feasible legal services. Thanks to multilevel collaborative mechanisms, most conflicts get resolved at the grassroots level. We now provide full-spectrum compliance services for enterprises covering risk prevention and dispute resolution, so businesses can pursue development free from unnecessary worries," Wu said.

Across Zhejiang, legal literacy is being promoted via diversified initiatives. In December 2025, Wenzhou arranged for leading officials of administrative authorities to attend in-court trials on-site.

In Zhenhai district of Ningbo, the Weiyuan Qingfeng hall, an education venue on Party discipline, functions as a regular rule-of-law classroom for Party members and cadres. Renovated from Zhejiang's clean-government education base and opened in 2015, it has drawn nearly 400 groups and more than 20,000 visitors annually over the past 11 years.

During the summer vacation in 2025, Shangcheng district of Hangzhou partnered with the local public welfare legal service team to host law-themed garden activities inside air-raid shelters. In the cooler environment, children learned about the evolution of China's legal publicity drive.

In January, Dai Ji, head of the Department of Justice of Zhejiang Province, revealed a 20-year scorecard marking the progress in building law-based Zhejiang. He said: "It has become a widespread social consensus that all affairs follow legal provisions, all residents understand and observe laws, and all parties conduct activities in accordance with the law."

New rules guide robotic intelligence

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Hangzhou in East China's Zhejiang province has rolled out the country's first local regulation governing embodied intelligence robots, which took effect on May 1.

Covering technological innovation, infrastructure construction, industrial development, application empowerment and safety management, the ordinance sets clear legal guidelines for the standardized and high-quality growth of the emerging sector.

Zhou Junjie, senior vice-president of Zhejiang SUPCON Information Technology, noted that the regulation was formulated with extensive input from enterprises, research institutions, end users and expert panels. Tailored to the current development status and bottlenecks of China's embodied intelligence industry, it offers valuable references and guidance for the nationwide sector.

According to Zhou, the progress Hangzhou has achieved in the embodied intelligence industry, which has been propelled by the much-talked-about "six little dragons" enterprises, represented by Unitree Robotics and DEEP Robotics, has proved the feasibility and soundness of the local regulations. These rules will set an example to drive the entire industry.

As an example of embodied robots, the recently unveiled Hangjing Zhixing robot by SUPCON can perform standard directing gestures such as guiding traffic to go straight and stop fluently. It is also capable of detecting traffic violations including riding without safety helmets, stopping beyond traffic lines and jaywalking across zebra crossings, followed by polite and patient voice alerts.

It is expected to take on a wider range of tasks in Hangzhou, ranging from the West Lake scenic area and Qianjiang New Town.

"Though it is a local industrial regulation, it boasts universal applicability," Zhou said, adding that the regulation also takes into account the current development landscape and prevailing challenges of China's embodied intelligence robot industry. "Undoubtedly, it offers valuable guidance and reference for the sector nationwide and will serve as a benchmark for the development of embodied intelligence across the country," Zhou noted.

"Furthermore, the regulation defines the core concept of embodied robots. By legislative means, it connects the full industry chain covering technology, application scenarios, market and safety. It gives enterprises full confidence to ramp up research and development efforts, roll out applications and expand business, acting as a real reassurance for local companies."



A robot produced by Zhejiang SUPCON Information Technology guides traffic on a major road in Hangzhou. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

During an enterprise's growth, innovation is inevitably accompanied by risks and uncertainties. A stable, fair, transparent and predictable legal environment is fundamental for enterprises to invest, operate and pursue innovation boldly.

This forward-looking legislation for emerging industries serves as a vivid epitome of Zhejiang's two-decade commitment to advancing the rule of law to bolster high-quality development and business environment, according to local officials.

Grounded in the belief that the rule of law creates a sound business environment, Zhejiang has launched a host of pioneering reforms, including the one-stop service that features no unnecessary interference and timely responses to needs, which has effectively unlocked the innovation capability of market entities.

According to a survey made by the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce to evaluate the business environment across the country in 2025, Zhejiang ranks first nationwide in four major categories: market environment, legal environment, innovation environment and government service environment. Its government service sector has maintained the top position for four consecutive years.

At the symposium marking the 20th anniversary of building a law-based Zhejiang, Wang Hao, Party secretary of the province, emphasized the key role of supporting high-quality development through legal services. He added that more efforts should be made to improve rules and systems for fostering a worldly recognized innovation ecosystem and a highly competitive business environment, and fully implement the requirements for building a unified national market.

"This constitutes a key part of Zhejiang's next drive to advance the development of a law-based province to a higher level," Wang said.

STAY INFORMED, ANYWHERE, ANYTIME.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/202 3:36:23 PM

Enjoy unlimited access to the China Daily SmartEdition website and ipaper app.

$4.99 per month | $49.99 per year



Subscribe to SmartEdition at chinadaily.pressreader.com

COMMENT

Editorials

Principles, proposals and actions aimed at better global governance

The State Council Information Office released a white paper on Wednesday titled "More Just and Equitable Global Governance: China's Principles, Proposals and Actions".

The document outlines China's principles, proposals and actions on global governance, aiming to foster broader consensus within the international community, ensure more effective responses to global challenges and build a more just and equitable global governance system.

The world faces severe and complex challenges, along with increasing disruptions to the postwar international order. The two pressing questions of the era are: What kind of global governance system should be established, and how can global governance be reformed and improved?

China has always been an active participant in, contributor to and builder of global governance as it regards it as a common endeavor that bears on the well-being of all humanity.

In promoting a global governance system characterized by extensive consultation and joint contribution for shared benefit, President Xi Jinping has called for true multilateralism to foster an equal and orderly multipolar world and a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization.

To this end, he has put forward the vision of building a community with a shared future for humanity and proposed the Global Governance Initiative to build a more just and equitable global governance system.

Resolutely upholding the authority and status of the United Nations is fundamental to the effective implementation of the GGI, which, aligned with the growing trend toward greater democracy in international relations, offers a clear and feasible road map for improving global governance.

That the GGI has the support of nearly 160 countries and international organizations — with over 60 countries joining the Group of Friends of Global Governance — sends a clear signal that building a just and equitable global governance system is a shared vision pursued by the international community.

Anchored in the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and guided by a vision of global governance featuring extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, the GGI upholds multilateralism and unites forces in pursuit of a fairer future.

But as the white paper stresses, the effective implementation of the GGI hinges on major countries bearing a sense of responsibility and all nations unitedly addressing the peace and development deficits.

With the declining effectiveness of some international mechanisms and inadequate rules in emerging areas, the fragmentation in global governance is evident. There is a "compound crisis" in which the lack of security, development, governance and trust are intertwined.

On the one hand, the world is experiencing deeper multipolarization and the rapid rise of the Global South. On the other hand, the existing governance system suffers from a lack of representativeness, inclusiveness and effectiveness. This is exacerbated by heightened competition among major countries, obstacles to multilateral cooperation and a decline in international trust.

As the white paper states, there is no need to reinvent the wheel to overcome these challenges. What is needed is for all countries to firmly uphold the international system with the UN at its core, safeguard the international order based on international law and uphold the basic norms governing international relations underpinned by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter.

China, on its part, has been consistent in this regard. Noting that China was the first country to sign the UN Charter, Foreign Minister Wang Yi said at a news conference held to present the white paper on Wednesday that the country is ready to work with other countries to reinvigorate and strengthen the UN and uphold the authority of the UN by advancing the GGI. The GGI is action-oriented and aligned with the Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative, Global Civilization Initiative and high-quality Belt and Road cooperation.

Embodying the unity of ideas and actions, the GGI provides important conceptual guidance and practical pathways for steering the global governance system toward greater justice and equity, contributing Chinese wisdom and solutions to resolving the shortcomings in global governance.

Drone 'partnership' mask for remilitarization

On the agenda of the G7 leaders who met in France this week was reportedly a proposal straight out of a geopolitical conjurer's playbook: Japan's participation in the Eurodrone project.

On paper, this is a straightforward case of industrial synergy. Europe wants to reduce its reliance on US and Chinese supply chains; Japan, with its precision manufacturing, needs new partners to ease the strain on an overstretched US defense industry. It sounds like a pragmatic "alignment" of interests.

But to see this as merely a tech-transfer or investment deal is to miss the strategic bamboozling at its heart. This is the latest, and perhaps most brazen, act in a well-rehearsed Japanese trick: the art of "security" packaging. Tokyo has become a master of cloaking military ambition in the drab language of economic and technological cooperation.

The Eurodrone initiative seems to be the perfect vehicle. It allows Japan to deepen its military ties with key European countries, gain access to sensitive drone technology for its own "counterstrike" capabilities, and embed itself further into Europe's military-industrial base — all under the guise of supply-chain "diversification".

The G7, already grappling with its existential anxieties, is susceptible to being hoodwinked in this way, as Europe's post-Ukraine security jitters mean it is predisposed to Japan selling itself as an indispensable "natural partner". By exploiting the European need to reduce dependency on the US for military supplies, Tokyo hopes to weave Japan's "remilitarization" into the fabric of collective Western security. As Tokyo sees it, if it can get a G7 stamp of approval for a project like Eurodrone, it gains a powerful imprimatur for its broader "remilitarization".

Gaining international "legitimacy" for its military expansion is not an afterthought, but the core objective of the move.

The Sanae Takaichi government has labeled China as Japan's "unprecedented strategic challenge"; Japan has doubled its military budget in a mere four years, with spending set to hit a staggering 9 trillion yen ($56.15 billion) this year; and it is actively developing offensive weapons that effectively shatter its postwar "exclusively defense-oriented" principle.

And this brings us to the uncomfortable historical parallels that polite diplomatic discourse tends to forget. The very same *zaibatsu* industrial conglomerates that will be at the heart of any Japan-Europe defense project were the indispensable gears of Japan's wartime military machine. This structural continuity, combined with the right-wing forces that continue to whitewash its wartime history, should set alarm bells ringing.

The proposal by the ruling Liberal Democratic Party to increase military spending to 3 percent to 3.5 percent of Japan's GDP, and to build "sustained combat capability" for a prolonged "emergency", demonstrates the direction of the dangerous journey the Takaichi government is leading Japan on at present.

It is a trajectory of a state methodically, and seemingly with "great courtesy", dismantling its constitutional shackles. Japan has not yet formally revised Article 9, but with its "helicopter destroyers" that are effectively aircraft carriers and its latent capability to produce nuclear weapons, the infrastructure for a potent military force is already in place. All that remains is the final push.

Therefore the query posed by Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian warrants serious global attention. Highlighting Japan's history of militarism and foreign aggression, Lin asked some pointed and timely questions: Is Japan's militarist past returning? Is Japan speeding down the path of "remilitarization"? Could Japan once again become the bane of East Asia?

As the G7 leaders consider Japan's proposal, they should ask themselves whether they are engaging with a peaceful partner, or are they providing, through their own anxieties, a multilateral seal of approval for Japan's strategic revisionism? The European G7 members risk becoming enablers of aggression. They should not be fooled by the language of "partnership". This is about more than drones; it's about setting a dangerous precedent.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

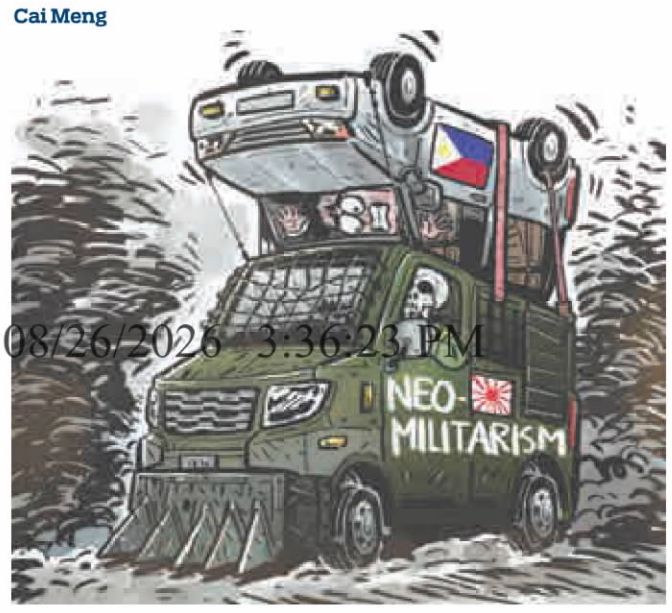
China Daily UK
90 Cannon St, London EC4N 6HA, UK
+44 (0) 207 398 8270
editor@chinadailyuk.com

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

East-west pairing assistance key to balanced development

China's east-west pairing assistance program — a mechanism launched in 1996 — continues to shape the country's pursuit of more balanced and inclusive growth. This was evident on Wednesday, when officials gathered in Yinchuan, capital of the Ningxia Hui autonomous region, to review and further improve the program.

Over the past decades, the reform and opening-up of China have greatly promoted the development of the country in all aspects. While prosperity has been generated along the country's eastern coast, its western areas have lagged behind in comparison. The challenge is to ensure growth benefits are distributed more evenly across the vast country.

In response, policymakers have established a framework linking the developed eastern regions with their less-developed western counterparts, creating channels through which capital, talent, technology and market opportunities can flow across administrative boundaries. Over time, this has evolved into a coordinated development assistance system.

Over the past five years, enterprises have been guided to invest more than 750 billion yuan ($111 billion) in the western regions. This program has helped more than 5 million rural workers from western China secure jobs and facilitated nearly 570 billion yuan in sales of agricultural products from western regions to the eastern markets. These figures suggest that the mechanism is not just redistributive. It has created sustainable economic linkages and growth opportunities.

Equally notable is the institutional architecture developed over the years. The program now operates through five major mechanisms: industrial cooperation, labor collaboration, consumer assistance, talent exchange and social support. Together they connect investment, employment, market access, human capital and public services into a single framework.

Industrial cooperation encourages investment and industry upgrading. Labor collaboration expands employment opportunities. Consumer assistance creates sizable markets for agricultural products. Talent exchange transfers expertise and managerial experience. Social support mobilizes educational, healthcare and other public resources. Each mechanism addresses a different dimension of regional inequality.

The significance of this model lies in its compatibility with China's national conditions. A country of continental scale, marked by vast differences in geography and development levels, requires institutions capable of coordinating resources across regions. The pairing program turns regional disparities into opportunities for complementary development. Eastern regions gain access to new markets and labor resources, while western regions benefit from investment, technology and expertise.

More broadly, the program reflects a characteristic of China's long-term development perspective. Few governments can sustain a development strategy across three decades while continuously adapting its objectives and implementation — from poverty alleviation to rural vitalization and coordinated regional development. The achievements of the pairing program owe much to long-range planning, policy continuity and incremental improvements in governance.

Experience around the world suggests that economic activity naturally gravitates toward already prosperous regions. China's approach has been to use institutions to mitigate this tendency without abandoning market mechanisms. The pairing program does not replace markets; it connects them by lubricating the internal circulation.

As China enters the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, balanced development has become increasingly important for the efforts to realize common prosperity. Future growth will depend not only on technological innovation and industrial upgrading, but also on expanding domestic demand and ensuring broader participation in development. Regional coordination is therefore an economic imperative of national importance.

The east-west pairing assistance program should be adapted to the current situation. Unlike 30 years ago, many inland areas have become gateways to global engagement under the Belt and Road Initiative. Consequently, the east-west pairing assistance program should incorporate more cross-regional collaboration.

Thirty years after its launch, the program stands as a testament to a governance philosophy that prizes patience, continuity and long-term development — qualities that have helped transform the regional development gap into a story of increasingly shared growth.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Chinese classics offer ways to tackle modern challenges

Editor's note: *The Second World Conference of Classics was held in Athens earlier this month. Chen Yun, a professor of philosophy at East China Normal University, who attended the conference, spoke to China News Service about why China's classics should be included in global classical studies. Below are excerpts of the interview and an analysis of the practical application. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

From the perspective of Chinese classical studies, peace signifies not merely stability within human communities, but also harmony and balance between human society and nature. Stability within human society is based on respect for political, social, ethical and civilizational differences. In addition, it demands an integrative consciousness to transcend such divisions and achieve *tai he*, where all the people and all things coexist in supreme harmony.

The contemporary world order often reflects a "law of the jungle" mindset, where might makes right, conflating human society with the animal kingdom. Such thinking amounts to a negation of civilization.

In contrast, the Chinese concept of *tianxia weigong*, or pursuing the common good for all under heaven, from the classic *The Book of Rites*, represents an ideal vision for the world order. *Tianxia*, or "all under heaven", transcends political boundaries to encompass a civilizational domain, integrating individuals and societies into a community of humanity.

In real life, it is necessary to cultivate individuals who are capable of bearing the responsibility for all under heaven, and encourage them to break free from serving narrow group interests and commit themselves to the shared interests of all humanity.

Confronted with the current world order and its multiple challenges, we must mobilize both political and non-political forces to forge a humanitarianism suited to the age of globalization, and improve global governance through diverse approaches.

Fairness, justice and equality are long-existing pursuits of Chinese philosophers from ancient times to today. The political principle of serving the public is deeply embedded in the concept of "pursuing the common good for all under heaven", which is in drastic contrast to the concept of "pursuing good for the small interest group".

Behind political concepts such as being people-oriented, selection of the capable and the rule of virtue lies the concept of "pursuing the common good for all under heaven". This has become a central feature of the traditional Chinese political value system.

The pursuit of the common good is the prerequisite for achieving fairness, and only by prioritizing public welfare, can social fairness be realized.

These values underpin China's role as a steadfast promoter of world peace and shared development.

The pursuit of common good for all under heaven carries the core wisdom of Chinese civilization. Deeply rooted in the fertile soil of Chinese culture, it has not only become an important ideological resource for the development of Chinese society, but also provides Chinese solutions for the future of humanity.



Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:23 PM

VIEWS

Ro Jae Hun

Toward more mature ROK-China ties

In June this year, the ROK witnessed the first anniversary of its new government. Within just one year, the Lee Jae Myung administration has not only restored political stability and economic confidence, but also elevated the ROK's global standing through its "pragmatic diplomacy".

President Lee Jae Myung's proactive summit diplomacy — encompassing official visits to 14 countries and hosting the heads of state from 13 nations — has enabled ROK diplomacy to rebuild international confidence while strengthening strategic partnership and multilateral diplomacy.

Global Lens

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:23 PM



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

In particular, ROK-China relations have developed to new heights within a remarkably short period of time.

The two successful summit meetings served as a vivid testament to the dramatic progress in bilateral relations, yielding tangible and meaningful outcomes across a wide range of areas.

As indispensable neighboring countries, the ROK and China have shared common interests in many areas and maintained close relations since the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1992. Through mutual efforts, bilateral relations have reached a new peak.

Last November, the ROK successfully hosted the 2025 APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in Gyeongju, achieving a milestone outcome with the adoption of the "Gyeongju Declaration" aiming towards easing regional trade barriers and stabilizing global supply chains.

On this occasion, President Xi Jinping visited the ROK. It was the first state visit by President Xi Jinping in 11 years. During his visit, the two leaders engaged in hours of comprehensive discussions, reaffirming the core value of our strategic cooperative partnership and laying out a blueprint for the comprehensive development of bilateral relations across political, security, economic, and cultural spheres. Then only two months later, President Lee visited Beijing. It was the first state visit by the ROK President in 9 years. These consecutive summit meetings have led to the following results.

On the political side, the two countries fully restored strategic and cooperative partnership. Mutual trust is being restored, and mutual respect is deepening. Both agreed to work together for a more stable and secure Korean Peninsula. High-level engagement and strategic communication continue to intensify.

On the economic and trade side, concrete numbers accurately reflect the positive momentum in bilateral relations. From the inauguration of the Lee Jae Myung administration through May 2026, trade between the ROK and China has totaled $315.9 billion, marking an 18 percent increase from the same period a year earlier.

The two leaders shared their vision for future cooperation in the field of investment, AI, bio industry and smart cities. Cooperation for securing a stable supply chain has been strengthened. Negotiations for the new trade and investment FTA are accelerating.

An agreement was reached to extend the currency swap. Discussions on demographic challenges facing the two countries such as aging society and silver economy were also on the agenda. As the two countries prioritize the livelihood of the people, these mutual cooperation will benefit the people of both countries.

A total of around 20 MOUs were signed to secure the implementation of the mutual agreements. These are substantive measures that will help stabilize and cement bilateral relations, especially in an increasingly uncertain global environment.

On people-to-people exchanges, mutual visits are on an upward trend, especially as both sides relaxed visa policy. The number of international flights between the ROK and China reached 113,200 just within 11 months since the launch of the current administration, marking an 8.3 percent increase.

The expanded connectivity has driven a significant increase in people-to-people exchanges, with bilateral visitor numbers rising to 8.45 million, up an approximately 26 percent. Cultural and sports cooperation is also expanding. To the delight of soccer and baduk fans, the two sides are strengthening partnerships and people-to-people exchanges in these areas, which are of great common interest to the younger generations of both countries.

Building on this growing momentum, the ROK-China Summer Youth Sports Exchange is scheduled to take place this year between Jeollabuk-do and Hainan Province, featuring friendly matches in badminton, basketball, table tennis, and baduk.

With joint efforts, these exchanges have helped improve mutual perceptions. Taking China's concerns seriously, President Lee himself publicly spoke out against the spread of misinformation and domestic fake news concerning China. According to a ROK polling organization, the favorability rating toward China recently rose from 21.3 to 30.2 percent just within a year.

Moreover, the share of those who regarded the relations as either good or average rose significantly to 78 percent. Concurrently, various other studies indicate that Chinese citizens' favorability toward the ROK has improved as well. It clearly demonstrates a meaningful and reciprocal turnaround in mutual public perceptions.

The upcoming 2026 APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in Shenzhen, China will present another important opportunity for the ROK and China to further strengthen strategic communication and deepen practical cooperation.

Building on the positive momentum achieved through the recent summit meetings, the two countries will continue to expand collaboration in emerging future-oriented fields.

Guided by the common understandings reached by two leaders, the ROK and China will work together to manifest the shared visions into substantive outcomes, accumulate mutual trust and expand people-to-people exchanges.

Advancing strategic cooperative partnership toward a more mature, stable, and ever-deepening relationship is the path the two countries are taking together.

The author is the ambassador of the Republic of Korea to China.
The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.

Arkebe Oqubay

Hainan Free Trade Port redefines economic openness

On Dec 18, 2025, the anniversary of China's landmark reform and opening-up policy, Hainan launched island-wide special customs operations — a moment that transformed the entire tropical province into the world's largest free trade in terms of area. Six months on, the numbers are striking, and the strategic logic is becoming clear.

Global Lens

Trade has surged. By the end of February 2026, Hainan's total goods imports and exports had reached 65.49 billion yuan ($9.7 billion), up 29.1 percent year-on-year — outpacing the national average by 14 percentage points. Exports alone grew by 55.4 percent.

Markets in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Africa and Latin America have all seen substantial growth, pointing to a genuinely diversified trade base rather than dependence on a single partner or region.

But statistics alone do not capture what makes Hainan significant. To understand why this experiment matters — not just for China, but for the wider world — it helps to ask a simple question: why choose to open up precisely when so much of the world is closing down?

The past few years have seen a wave of economic nationalism sweep through advanced economies.

Tariffs have been raised, supply chains have been "reshored" in the name of security and trade policy has increasingly been wielded as a geopolitical weapon. Hainan represents a deliberate and confident move in the opposite direction, demonstrating that openness need not mean vulnerability.

What makes Hainan different from previous Chinese free trade zones is not just its scale — though covering an entire province of 35,000 square kilometers is certainly unprecedented — it is the depth of its institutional openness.

Zero tariffs now apply to over 6,600 categories of goods, up from around 1,900 before. A corporate income tax rate of 15 percent makes it one of the most competitive business environments in Asia.

The customs framework itself is innovative. Goods move freely within the island; stricter checks apply only when products cross into the Chinese mainland market — what officials call "freer access at the first line, regulated access at the second line".

This gives foreign businesses a genuine staging ground: they can process, assemble and add value in Hainan before selling into China's vast domestic market.

One provision deserves particular attention. Imported products that undergo at least 30 percent value-added processing in Hainan can enter the mainland tariff-free.

This single rule transforms Hainan from a transit point into a place where real economic activity — and real economic value — can be created.

Critics might ask: is this not simply another special economic zone, a familiar feature of China's development landscape since the 1980s? The answer is no, and the distinction matters.

Earlier pilot free trade zones — there are now 24 of them, including the pioneering Shanghai FTZ established in 2013 — were designed as contained experiments. Hainan is something qualitatively different: a full-province model that builds on four decades of accumulated experience while breaking genuinely new institutional ground.

It is a testing ground for cross-border trade financing, greater foreign exchange flexibility, and blockchain-based payment systems.

For countries seeking alternative financial infrastructure, these pilots are worth watching closely.

Perhaps the most distinctive aspect of Hainan, and the one least appreciated in mainstream media, is what it offers developing countries.

The Global South is not a monolithic bloc, but its economies share certain common challenges: they export raw materials and agricultural commodities and struggle to move up the value chain. Hainan's design speaks directly to these challenges.

For ASEAN producers of palm oil, rubber, tropical fruits and fisheries products, Hainan offers preferential access to the Chinese market — one of the world's largest — without the full burden of mainland customs compliance.

More ambitiously, the value-added processing incentives mean that a Malaysian palm oil refiner or an Indonesian electronics assembler can locate operations in Hainan, add value and ship to Chinese consumers under favorable terms.

This is a path from commodity exporter to processed-goods exporter — precisely the transition that development economists have long argued is essential for sustainable growth.

A joint survey released on Hainan's 100th day of customs operations found that over 70 percent of ASEAN enterprises surveyed already recognize Hainan's strategic value as a platform for entering the Chinese mainland market. Export growth to ASEAN, Africa and Latin America has expanded substantially since December.

The cooperation goes beyond trade in goods. Hainan is developing sectoral platforms in tropical agriculture, healthcare, green energy and the digital economy. The Boao Lecheng International Medical Tourism Pilot Zone has become a key channel for the entry of advanced pharmaceuticals into China.

A green and digital innovation project in Baoting (a Li and Miao autonomous county in Hainan) is piloting climate-resilient development models that can be adapted and replicated in other island nations and developing countries.

These are not conventional export-processing zones that funnel goods to Northern markets while leaving the local economy largely untouched. They are platforms for a different kind of cooperation — one in which China and developing country partners build capability together.

Could other countries learn from the Hainan model? The answer depends on what one is trying to learn.

Rules-based, institutional openness — where businesses can plan around predictable policies rather than arbitrary political decisions — is a sustainable competitive advantage.

Singapore built its prosperity on this logic. Hainan is testing whether a larger, continental economy can do the same. The answer will be whether foreign enterprises move beyond registering in Hainan to actually producing there; whether the financial innovations gain traction; whether the trade links with ASEAN and the broader Global South deepen into genuine supply-chain integration.

Traditional export-processing zones tend to create enclave economies: jobs and foreign exchange, but have weak links with domestic industry and little technological transfer.

Hainan's design — with its value-added incentives, sectoral cooperation platforms and integration across an entire province rather than a fenced compound — offers a more holistic template. For countries in Africa, Southeast Asia and Latin America that are weighing their development strategies, the lessons are potentially transformative.

For advocates of multilateralism, Hainan is a timely reminder that trade liberalization can still be driven by unilateral ambition as much as negotiated agreement.

Malaysia has already identified Hainan as a testing ground for high-standard implementation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. If the experiment succeeds, it could provide practical momentum for wider regional integration at a moment when the multilateral trading system is under strain.

Hainan is still in its infancy. But what the first six months have established is that the foundations are solid. The customs system works. The numbers are moving in the right direction. The institutional framework is in place.

In a world where many governments are retreating behind walls, Hainan is a door held open.

For trade partners, investors, and development planners across the Global South and beyond, that invitation deserves a serious response.

The author is a former senior minister and special adviser to three successive prime ministers of Ethiopia and a British Academy Global Professor at SOAS University of London.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Imran Khalid

EU's tariff walls risk eroding its industrial foundation

The intense debate in the European Union over what Western policymakers called "a new wave of industrial competition" may prove to be a watershed moment in the bloc's trade policy.

In a crunch meeting in Brussels, EU commissioners explored broad sector-wide import quotas and tariff safeguards aimed at bolstering the competitiveness of European manufacturing.

At the same time, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen secured a major political agreement with Hungarian Prime Minister Peter Magyar, unfreezing €16.4 billion ($18.9 billion) in previously blocked EU funds.

Though analysts see these twin developments as notable progress in strengthening the bloc's industrial resilience and internal cohesion, a closer look reveals the underlying challenges amid the adjustments.

Brussels is attempting to strengthen its economic and trade dominance on a foundation of systemic economic friction and internal compromises.

The result is a profound institutional paradox. Europe is attempting to curb imports from reliable suppliers that help sustain the stability of its green supply chains while simultaneously spending billions to manage domestic political disagreements.

It is mimicking the protectionist, industrial-policy playbook of the United States even though it doesn't have the same fiscal firepower, abundant domestic resources or deep capital markets. The EU is inadvertently undermining its own industrial base under the weight of high energy costs and strategic overreach.

Global Lens

Europe's dilemma can be broken down into three systemic challenges. First, self-inflicted industrial pressure is accelerating across the continent.

The EU is inadvertently undermining its own industrial base under the weight of high energy costs and strategic overreach.

While public attention centers on high-profile trade disputes over electric vehicles, trade data reveals a deeper reality: European industry is heavily dependent on highly efficient imported intermediate inputs.

Many manufacturers rely on basic components that are significantly more cost-effective than domestic alternatives because of the scale and clustering advantages enjoyed by foreign producers.

This dependence extends to critical sectors. From polyhydric alcohols used in plastics and paints to vital amino acids used in pharmaceuticals, European industries continue to rely heavily on imported inputs. By applying one-size-fits-all safeguard clauses across sectors, Brussels is not protecting its industry; it is raising input costs for its remaining factories.

This leaves European manufacturers facing a tough choice: absorb higher costs and lose global competitiveness, or shut down domestic production entirely.

Second, Europe doesn't have the fiscal capacity required to execute a successful protectionist shift. Unlike the US, which can utilize massive federal subsidies to support domestic supply chains, the EU operates without a unified fiscal architecture. The EU Net-Zero Industry Act remains a regulatory blueprint rather than a well-funded commercial engine. Forced to operate within these rigid constraints, European policymakers are attempting to use trade defenses to curb market competition.

However, this excessive use of trade regulatory tools doesn't address the underlying macroeconomic reality: Europe lacks the cheap domestic energy and raw materials required to bridge the massive price gaps created by the efficiency of foreign producers. Consequently, protectionist measures function less as engines of industrial renewal and more as an economic surcharge on European consumers and businesses, driving up inflation while doing nothing to build real structural resilience.

Third, managing internal fragmentation through fiscal concessions risks creating permanent instability within the EU. The sudden release of €16.4 billion to Budapest, which is roughly 13 percent of Hungary's national budget, shows that the EU must continuously compromise its institutional principles to preserve a fragile consensus on foreign policy.

To advance a more protectionist economic agenda against external competitors, the European Commission is forced to offer financial incentives to seek the cooperation of member states that challenge the Brussels consensus.

This approach may buy temporary unity, but it creates a highly flammable domestic political environment.

While officials warn that millions of industrial jobs are at risk, member states remain divided on how to respond. Core manufacturing states such as France demand aggressive trade barriers to protect the domestic industry, but export-dependent economies such as Germany and Spain remain wary of provoking retaliatory trade restrictions.

The result is a fragmented union that buys short-term legislative compliance at the cost of long-term economic coherence.

The mechanics of this strategy are clear: trade protectionism without an underlying, fully funded fiscal expansion cannot preserve an industrial base. At best, it delays industrial adjustment; at worst it subsidizes industrial obsolescence.

By drifting away from the rules-based frameworks of the World Trade Organization in favor of unilateral safeguards, Europe risks weakening the very global architecture that enabled its prosperity. The ultimate implication of this shift is that Europe may be trapping itself in a structural corner. It risks alienating partners in the Global South by restricting access to its market, cutting off its own access to affordable technological components, and remaining dependent on external security guarantees.

Until Brussels addresses these structural contradictions and embraces the reality of global economic interdependence, its aggressive trade posture will remain an exercise in managing decline, rather than asserting constructive global leadership.

The author is a geostrategist and political analyst based in Karachi, Pakistan.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

China Daily Global Weekly, an elegant weekend compact featuring news, views and analysis of China and the globe.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:23 PM

Now readers can find China Daily Global Weekly on Flipster, the digital magazine-subscription platform by EBSCO.



Learn more: www.ebsco.com/products/flipster/magazine/china-daily-global-weekly

GLOBAL VIEWS

LIU CHENYANG AND YU XIAOYAN

APEC's approach to resilience

The bloc's value lies not in issuing broad declarations, but in transforming consensus into replicable and scalable public goods for regional and global governance through pragmatic cooperation

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:32 PM



Liu Chenyang



Yu Xiaoyan

Asia-Pacific regional cooperation has become increasingly important amid growing uncertainty in the global economic and trade landscape, driven by sluggish global growth, rising trade protectionism and accelerated restructuring of industrial and supply chains. The APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade Meeting, held in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, from May 22 to 23, marked an important milestone in China's role as APEC host in 2026. More importantly, it helped build consensus and shape the agenda for the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting, which will be held in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, in November.

Since its establishment in 1989, APEC has played a central role in shaping the Asia-Pacific economic order through a distinctive "APEC approach" that is tailored to the region's diversity and varying stages of development. Based on voluntary, non-binding and consensus-building principles, APEC embraces open regionalism and promotes regional economic cooperation on the basis of equality and mutual benefit. By maximizing common ground while respecting differences, it has strengthened regional cohesion and fostered broad-based consensus across the region.

From the Bogor Goals to the Putrajaya Vision 2040, APEC has consistently provided long-term strategic direction for regional cooperation. The Bogor Goals — a commitment APEC leaders made in Bogor, Indonesia, in 1994, to achieve free and open trade and investment by 2010 for industrialized economies and by 2020 for developing economies — established a phased roadmap toward trade and investment liberalization, helping transform the Asia-Pacific into one of the world's most dynamic and open economic regions during the height of globalization. The Putrajaya Vision 2040, adopted in 2020, envisioned an open, dynamic, resilient and peaceful Asia-Pacific community. It identified three economic drivers — trade and investment; innovation and digitization; and strong, balanced, secure, sustainable and inclusive growth.

China's proposed theme for APEC 2026, "Building an Asia-Pacific Community to Prosper Together", together with its three priority areas — openness, innovation and cooperation — represents both a continuation and a concrete implementation of this vision.

In terms of openness, the 2024 APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting issued the Ichma Statement on A New Look at the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific agenda, strengthening the multilateral trading system, opposing protectionism and enhancing supply chain cooperation.

In terms of innovation, APEC has prioritized cooperation in emerging fields such as the digital economy, artificial intelligence, green development and new energy technologies, with a strong emphasis on technology-driven growth.

In terms of cooperation, APEC continues to promote inclusive and sustainable development, with particular attention to food and energy security, climate change, poverty reduction and greater integration of small and medium-sized enterprises and vulnerable groups into global value chains. Together, these priorities reflect APEC's ongoing efforts to promote high-quality growth in the Asia-Pacific while expanding both the scope and depth of regional economic cooperation.



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

The Asia-Pacific region's role as a stabilizing force in the global economy is rooted first and foremost in its considerable economic weight and high degree of openness. According to official APEC statistics for 2025, the region was home to approximately 3 billion people, accounting for 36.6 percent of the global population. Its real GDP reached $57.5 trillion, representing 59.4 percent of the world total, while its imports and exports of goods and commercial services accounted for 46.8 percent and 46.2 percent of global trade, respectively.

Data from the APEC Policy Support Unit show that the region achieved real GDP growth of 3.5 percent in 2023 and 3.3 percent in 2024. The latest edition of the APEC Regional Trends Analysis shows growth of around 3.3 percent in 2025. Despite fluctuations in global demand, tightening financial conditions and escalating trade frictions, the Asia-Pacific economy has maintained relatively strong resilience, underscoring the enduring value of open markets, deep economic integration and regional cooperation as drivers of growth.

This stabilizing role is also reflected in APEC's capacity for institutional innovation and rule incubation. In 2012, APEC introduced a list of environmental goods that later served as an important reference for negotiations on the World Trade Organization Environmental Goods Agreement. During the 2014 Beijing APEC meetings, China and the United States reached a consensus on expanding the Information Technology Agreement, paving the way for the WTO's 2015 agreement to eliminate tariffs on 201 IT products.

APEC has also successfully implemented initiatives such as the APEC Business Travel Card scheme to facilitate cross-border business mobility, as well as two phases of Trade Facilitation Action Plans and the Connectivity Blueprint, all of which have significantly reduced transaction costs and enhanced regional connectivity. These efforts have also helped advance the implementation of commitments under the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

These examples demonstrate that APEC's value lies not in issuing broad declarations of principle, but in its ability to transform consensus into replicable and scalable public goods for regional and global governance through pragmatic cooperation.

For China, APEC has long served as a major platform for participating in international economic cooperation. As the first regional economic cooperation mechanism China joined, APEC has provided an important channel for advancing China's diplomacy as a major country, including head-of-state diplomacy, neighborhood diplomacy and economic diplomacy.

APEC's vision of building an Asia-Pacific community by 2040 also carries significant practical relevance for China's efforts to build a community with a shared future for humanity. By fostering a stable and favorable regional environment, APEC supports China's pursuit of institutional opening-up and high-quality development. Continued progress in trade and investment liberalization and facilitation, regional connectivity, and Asia-Pacific value and supply chain cooperation will further strengthen China's capacity for high-level opening-up and create broader space for advancing Chinese modernization.

This year, China is hosting APEC for the third time. Both the Shanghai Accord adopted in 2001 and the Beijing Agenda issued in 2014 have become landmark achievements in APEC's history.

Going forward, China will demonstrate the responsibility of a major country by supporting the openness of the Asia-Pacific economy and promoting practical cooperation in areas such as the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific, connectivity, the digital economy and AI in response to evolving trends in global trade restructuring. China will also work with all parties to build an Asia-Pacific community, inject new momentum into regional development, and strengthen the synergy between APEC-led regional cooperation and global governance, further reinforcing the Asia-Pacific's role as the primary engine of global economic growth.

Liu Chenyang is a professor and the director of the APEC Study Center of Nankai University. Yu Xiaoyan is an associate research fellow at the APEC Study Center of Nankai University. The authors contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

WANG CHENWEI AND WANG HAOTIAN

Trade trends maintain momentum

New growth engines highlight the robustness as China enters the transformative 15th Five-Year Plan period



Wang Chenwei



Wang Haotian

According to the General Administration of Customs, China's foreign trade reached 20.68 trillion yuan ($3.05 trillion) in the first five months of 2026, marking a year-on-year increase of 15.3 percent. With key economic indicators outperforming expectations, the figures signal a strong start to the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, highlighting the steady progress and long-term growth momentum of China's economy.

Foreign trade has long been a key engine of economic growth. Advancing innovation-driven trade is essential to building a higher-level open economy and promoting high-quality development. Despite pressures from a challenging global environment, China's foreign trade has remained resilient and continued to reach new highs. Since the beginning of this year, China's foreign trade has shown four trends.

First, technology-intensive industries have become the backbone of exports. In the first five months of the year, total exports reached 11.91 trillion yuan, up 11.8 percent from a year earlier. Exports of mechanical and electrical products remained the key driver of growth, rising 18.4 percent to 7.58 trillion yuan and accounting for more than 60 percent of total exports. In contrast, exports of labor-intensive products fell 3.1 percent year-on-year to 1.61 trillion yuan.

Second, robust import growth has created new opportunities for international economic cooperation. Data from the General Administration of Customs showed that in the first five months of the year, China's imports totaled 8.77 trillion yuan, up 20.5 percent year-on-year. Imports of mechanical and electrical products increased by 25.3 percent, while imports of agricultural products also maintained steady growth. These trends suggest that an increasingly open China is responding to both domestic and global demand, while promoting mutually beneficial cooperation and shared development.

Third, private enterprises are leading the growth, recording a total import and export volume of 11.81 trillion yuan in the first five months, an increase of 15.5 percent. Foreign-invested enterprises reached 6.02 trillion yuan, up 15.7 percent, while State-owned enterprises totaled 2.81 trillion yuan, up 14 percent. Private enterprises accounted for more than half of the total trade volume, consolidating their stabilizing role in foreign trade.

Fourth, diversified trading partners and accelerated cooperation with emerging markets are contributing to a more stable and balanced trade structure. In the first five months, trade between China and Southeast Asian nations reached 3.52 trillion yuan, up 16.6 percent year-on-year. Trade with European Union countries totaled 2.53 trillion yuan, up 10.3 percent. Trade with the Belt and Road partner countries reached 10.57 trillion yuan, accounting for more than half of China's total foreign trade.

Meanwhile, it is important to recognize the risks posed by geopolitical tensions, sluggish global growth and rising trade protectionism. At home, China faces structural challenges, including frictions in the shift toward new growth drivers, relatively weak investment and consumption, insufficient domestic demand, the long-term task of industrial upgrading and risks in key sectors.

Despite these headwinds, China's economy is expected to remain resilient, supported by robust macroeconomic policies. China's system of centralized coordination enables it to mobilize resources efficiently and implement both cross-cycle and counter-cyclical policy measures, helping cushion the impact of external shocks. The country's vast domestic market, comprehensive industrial base and deeply integrated supply chains continue to provide strong structural advantages. Expanding domestic demand and continuous industrial upgrading also underpin China's long-term economic growth.

Against this positive economic backdrop, China's foreign trade is poised to stay vibrant. China has steadily expanded and diversified its trade ties across both traditional and emerging markets, enhancing its ability to withstand external shocks. To date, according to the Ministry of Commerce, China has signed 24 free trade agreements with 31 countries and regions, and its free trade partners account for 45 percent of its total goods trade. Trade-facilitating measures, including the granting of 100 percent zero-tariff treatment to African countries with diplomatic relations with China, along with deeper economic engagement with the EU, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Belt and Road partner countries, are expected to create fresh momentum for trade growth.

The technological revolution and industrial transformation are also becoming key engines of foreign trade growth. As emerging industries expand and new business models evolve, Chinese companies are becoming increasingly innovative and more motivated to explore overseas markets. In 2025, the largest gains in exports came from the "new trio" of new energy vehicles, lithium-ion batteries and photovoltaic products. According to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers, exports of new energy vehicles surged 103.7 percent. The integration of data, technology, application scenarios and hardware is not only accelerating industrial development, but also empowering foreign trade enterprises.



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

Looking ahead, China should continue strengthening its domestic economy while fostering a more dynamic interplay between domestic and international markets.

First, China should continue pursuing mutually beneficial cooperation to sustain the vitality of foreign trade. This includes steadily expanding a high-standard network of free trade zones and further diversifying international markets to strengthen trade resilience. At the same time, private enterprises should be further empowered as both the backbone of foreign trade and a major source of innovation. By seizing the opportunities presented by new technologies, China can move up the global value chain with more high-tech and high-value-added products, while enhancing private enterprises' capacity to expand into overseas markets.

Second, China should further coordinate policy measures with market development to unlock the potential of domestic demand. To upgrade consumer spending, targeted measures should be implemented to boost consumption, foster new consumption scenarios and models, and increase financial support for consumer goods trade-in programs. Greater efforts should also be made to cultivate new growth drivers such as cultural tourism, sports events, healthcare and wellness-related consumption. In addition, China should continue promoting a unified national market to create a more favorable business environment.

Third, China should advance high-quality, innovation-driven development to strengthen the foundations of its foreign trade supply chains. This includes implementing the "AI Plus" initiative, fostering new forms of the intelligent economy and enhancing industry chain coordination and digitization. In key sectors, strategic capabilities should be strengthened by increasing investment in research and development of core technologies, equipment and products, thereby improving the resilience of supply chains in critical areas. At the same time, China should further deepen international cooperation on industrial and supply chain development, actively participate in global rule-setting, and contribute to the stable and efficient functioning of global industrial and supply chains.

Wang Chenwei is a research fellow at the Institute of Economic Systems and Management at the National Development and Reform Commission. Wang Haotian is an associate research fellow at the Institute of Economic Systems and Management at the National Development and Reform Commission. The authors contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

NEWS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08

Download the China Daily iPaper App, and start the in-app subscription today.

As low as

$9.99

per month



BUSINESS

AI agents set to revolutionize payment biz

Agentic commerce to bring shifts to transactions, boost autonomous services

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:23 PM

By **JIANG XUEQING**
jiangxueqing@chinadaily.com.cn

As artificial intelligence platforms and merchant-integrated agents become more sophisticated, consumers are expected to increasingly delegate tasks such as product searches, comparisons, decisionmaking and purchasing to agents. The shift signals a new era of commerce moving from direct user interaction to a model built on user authorization and autonomous agent execution.

The rise of agentic commerce, however, presents new security and trust challenges. Merchants must be able to verify that transactions originate from legitimate AI agents rather than fraudulent actors, ensure purchases accurately reflect users' intentions and safeguard customer funds throughout the transaction process.

Against this backdrop, Chinese e-commerce giant JD unveiled its Agent Autonomous Payment Protocol on June 11. The framework aims to enable AI agents to complete payments independently within user-defined rules and spending limits.

The protocol establishes six levels of payment autonomy, providing a gradual pathway from transactions that require full human approval to those that can be executed entirely by AI agents. To enhance security, each payment request is linked to three critical elements: the verified identity of the user, the authorized version of the AI agent and a trusted operating environment. Transactions are approved only when all three conditions are validated.

The protocol also separates users' primary accounts from agent-driven spending. All agent transactions are routed through dedicated subaccounts subject to predefined controls, including spending caps, transaction limits, approved use cases, expiration periods and designated payees. Users can monitor activity in real time and revoke an agent's permission at any moment.

China's broader payment ecosystem is moving in the same direction. On May 26, Alipay debuted its AI Wallet and Token Pay, taking a step further to extend its next-generation AI payment infrastructure.

The initiative is also expanding beyond China.

Singapore-based Ant International introduced the Agentic Mobile Protocol, an agentic payment framework built for mobile interfaces including digital wallets, super apps and wearable devices. The protocol is designed to facilitate secure and seamless purchases through AI agents while helping merchants overcome challenges such as cross-border interoperability as agentic commerce scales globally.

A key component of the Agentic Mobile Protocol is an enhanced Know Your Agent authentication framework, which establishes a standardized trust-rating system for AI agents. The mechanism is intended to allow merchants to verify not only the identity of customers, but also the identity and trustworthiness of the agents acting on their behalf, helping ensure that transactions reflect genuine purchasing intent.

China's push into agentic payments comes as global payment networks race to build the infrastructure for agentic commerce. Industry leaders are increasingly developing technologies that will allow autonomous AI agents to search and complete transactions on behalf of consumers and businesses.

Mastercard is pursuing a vision of a future in which AI agents could eventually transact continuously with one another, executing chains of payments.

On June 10, the company unveiled Agent Pay for Machines, a new service designed to enable machine-to-machine transactions across its global payments network. The service will allow payments to be authorized, orchestrated and settled at machine speed, supporting emerging AI-driven business models.

Unlike traditional point-of-sale or person-to-merchant payments — which are initiated directly by users — machine-to-machine transactions are expected to be programmatic, continuous and executed between systems in the background of digital commerce.

"Machine payments can make it possible for services to be bought and sold among agents at fundamentally different scales than payments today — very high volumes, very small values, very fast and at extremely low latency," said Jorn Lambert, Mastercard's chief product officer.

Also on June 10, Visa announced a strategic collaboration with OpenAI to enable secure payments within agentic commerce. Under the partnership, Visa will provide its global payments network, credentialing capabilities and security infrastructure to support agentic commerce services. The company's payment capabilities will be integrated into OpenAI experiences, giving developers and merchants a streamlined way to accept Visa payments initiated by AI agents.

Visa said payments will operate within clearly defined user permissions and controls, including spending limits, approved merchant categories and required approvals. Transactions will be backed by tokenized credentials, real-time authorization and fraud-monitoring systems designed to maintain strong consumer protections.

"AI will transform commerce more profoundly than the internet or mobile technology ever did," said Jack Forestell, Visa's chief product and strategy officer. "As AI agents become active participants in the economy, Visa's focus is to ensure transactions are trusted, secure and seamless."

Live wires



Workers from State Grid Changji conduct live maintenance on power transmission lines in Yushugou township, Changji Hui autonomous prefecture, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. The work ensures stable power supply for local farmers' summer drainage and irrigation operations amid the peak agricultural season. HE YUCHENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Well done



Platforms for Phase II of the Bozhong 26-6 oilfield development project stand fully prepared for loading in Tianjin's Binhai New Area on Tuesday. Located in the central Bohai Sea, the oilfield features reservoirs buried more than 4,500 meters beneath the seabed and holds proven cumulative geological reserves of over 200 million cubic meters of oil and gas. DU PENGHUI / XINHUA

Shanghai Disney Resort marks 10th anniversary with sights set on future

By **ZHENG ZHENG** in Shanghai
zhengzheng@chinadaily.com.cn

Executives from Walt Disney Co and its Chinese partners have expressed optimism about prospects for Shanghai Disney Resort, unveiling a series of expansion plans as the resort celebrated its 10th anniversary on Tuesday.

"When we opened these gates, we believed we could create something the world had never seen — a place where Disney storytelling met Chinese culture in a way that was genuinely new," said Josh D'Amaro, CEO of Walt Disney Co.

The resort has welcomed more than 100 million guests since its opening in 2016. "As we celebrate the park's first decade and look to its next, what excites me most is that we're just getting started," D'Amaro said.

Thomas Mazloum, chairman of Disney Experiences, said: "Being here in Shanghai has reconfirmed to me the immense opportunities we have in this beautiful country and around the world. You see here what happens when we show up where our fans and consumers are — and when we do so with a lot of innovation and immense respect for local culture."

Mazloum called Shanghai's track record a global blueprint. "I don't believe Shanghai Disney Resort will ever be completed, because we have a lot of imagination left."

The resort is already deep into its next expansion phase. Construction of its ninth themed area — a Spider-Man zone set to deliver the park's first major Marvel-themed attraction — reached a milestone just weeks ago when the last section of its roller coaster track was installed.

Two additional themed hotels are also under development.

Guan Taoping, chair of Shanghai Shendi Group — the Chinese joint venture partner — described the past decade as a journey of deep local roots, cultural exchange and regional development. She pledged to build on the resort's success to transform the broader area into "a world-class multiday tourism destination" and to accelerate what she described as a "culture-tourism-plus" industrial ecosystem.

"Our guests and fans, community and partners, cast and imagineers, and both shareholders have been the authors of the resort's story over the years," said Andrew Bolstein, president and general manager of Shanghai Disney Resort.

"As we continue the momentum built throughout the past 10 years, defined by continuous expansion and development, relentless innovation and a steadfast commitment to excellence, we are confident that the future of Shanghai Disney Resort is bright."

Tasia Filippatos, president and managing director of Disney Parks International, noted that Shanghai's innovations have generated lessons now being exported across the company's global network. "This park was built with the preferences, taste, and culture of the Chinese people at the forefront," she said, adding that many of those learnings have applications around the globe.

Experts say the resort's influence extends far beyond its gates. Lou Jiajun, a professor at East China Normal University — who has followed the project since 2009 — said the resort had transcended the boundaries of a theme park. "Over 10 years, Shanghai Disney has evolved from a single park to a resort, and then into a benchmark — for destination building, for industry leadership, and for the integration of culture and tourism," Lou said.

Lin Huanjie, president of the Institute for Theme Park Studies in China, credited the resort with rewriting the competitive logic of the industry.

"Disney's arrival made clear that competition should not be about scale and investment, but about building an experience system, creating emotional value and sustaining long-term operational excellence," he said.

Yuan Ding, executive dean of the Shanghai Disney Dream Vocational Campus and director at Shanghai Normal University, pointed to the resort's role as an employment engine. "Quantitatively, it has created hundreds of thousands of direct and indirect jobs for the entire Yangtze River Delta region," he said. "Qualitatively, it has elevated the appeal and professional standing of careers in the tourism and hospitality industry."

Inner Mongolia key hub to Sino-EU trade

By **ZHONG NAN** in Beijing and **YUAN HUI** in Hohhot

China's ongoing industrial upgrading and the launch of the China (Inner Mongolia) Pilot Free Trade Zone in April will create fresh momentum for China-Europe freight train services and provide stronger support for the country's foreign trade growth, said supply chain experts and customs officials.

The new pilot FTZ, within North China's Inner Mongolia autonomous region, covers 119.74 square kilometers and comprises three subzones in Hohhot, capital of the region; Manzhouli, a northern border city; and Ereenhot, a land port on the China-Mongolia border, each featuring differentiated functions and the development of industries tailored to local conditions.

The growing role of Inner Mongolia as a key gateway for China-Europe trade highlights the significance of the new FTZ.

On Friday, a China-Europe freight train loaded with small household appliances departed from Ereenhot, pushing the cumulative number of freight train trips passing through the network's central corridor beyond 25,000, said China State Railway Group Co Ltd (China Railway).

Lin Meng, director of the modern supply chain research institute at the Beijing-based Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, said the steady rise in shipments of machinery, vehicles and other industrial products reflects the growing competitiveness of China's manufacturing sector.

> "Together with ongoing infrastructure upgrades, the initiative is expected to enhance the efficiency and capacity of China-Europe freight train services."
>
> **Chen Jianwei,** researcher specializing in foreign trade at the University of International Business and Economics

Continued growth in trade with European and Central Asian markets is expected to provide sustained support for freight demand, said Lin.

Chen Jianwei, a researcher specializing in foreign trade at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing, said the development of the China (Inner Mongolia) Pilot FTZ is likely to draw greater investment in logistics, warehousing, processing and cross-border commerce.

"Together with ongoing infrastructure upgrades, the initiative is expected to enhance the efficiency and capacity of China-Europe freight train services," said Chen.

Ereenhot's railway port currently handles about 13 China-Europe freight trains daily. It is linked to 75 China-Europe freight train routes connecting more than 70 logistics hubs in over 10 countries, including Germany and Poland, said China Railway.

Freight throughput at Ereenhot railway port has maintained steady growth this year. As of June 11, the port had handled 2,137 China-Europe freight train trips, transporting 205,100 twenty-foot equivalent units and 1.97 million metric tons of cargo, up 15.1 percent, 9.7 percent and 28.6 percent year-on-year, respectively.

Mi Junming, deputy director of Manzhouli Railway Station Customs, said the rapid growth in freight volume has been accompanied by a notable upgrade in the cargo mix handled by Inner Mongolia's border ports.

Cargo once dominated by metals, chemicals, garments and footwear has increasingly given way to higher-value products such as electric vehicles, consumer electronics and household appliances, reflecting the upgrading of China's manufacturing sector and export structure, said Mi.

Statistics from Manzhouli Customs show that China's EV exports through Manzhouli railway port totaled 320 million yuan ($47.33 million) in the first five months, up 950 percent year-on-year.

Chinese EVs have gained increasing traction in overseas markets in recent years, supported by advances in battery technology, intelligent features and competitive pricing, emerging as an important contributor to China's export growth, said Chen Bin, deputy director of the expert committee of the Beijing-based China Machinery Industry Federation.

Contact the writers at zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

Yum buys full Pizza Hut China for $1.2b

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn

On Tuesday, Yum China Holdings announced that it has entered into a definitive agreement to take full ownership of the Pizza Hut brand on the Chinese mainland in a $1.2 billion deal, a strategic shift that will eliminate ongoing royalty payments to Yum Brands.

The move gives Yum China direct control of one of its most profitable and fast-growing restaurant businesses. The transaction is expected to improve store economics and accelerate expansion, as Yum China pushes to deepen its dominance in the country's casual dining market.

Pizza Hut is currently the largest casual dining restaurant brand in China under the Yum China portfolio. In 2025, the business generated $2.3 billion in segment revenue and $183 million in operating profit. In the first quarter, it posted its 13th consecutive quarter of same-store transaction growth and its eighth straight quarter of margin and operating profit expansion.

> Ownership will give us greater strategic flexibility to drive innovation across menus, formats and operations."
>
> **Joey Wat,** CEO of Yum China

Yum China, which operates KFC, Pizza Hut and Taco Bell on the Chinese mainland, said it plans to expand the Pizza Hut footprint to more than 6,000 restaurants by 2028, up from 4,375 locations across more than 1,100 cities and counties today.

The company is also targeting a doubling of Pizza Hut operating profit by 2029 in comparison to 2024 levels.

On moving from exclusive licensee to brand owner, Yum China CEO Joey Wat said, "Ownership will give us greater strategic flexibility to drive innovation across menus, formats and operations."

The transaction comes as Yum China continues to lean on KFC as its primary growth engine. The company said KFC China, which currently operates about 13,450 restaurants, is expected to expand to more than 17,000 locations by 2028, particularly in lower-tier and underserved markets.

Separately, Yum China said KFC China will be eligible for a decade-long financial incentive from Yum Brands that will be tied to system sales growth targets and aimed at supporting continued expansion momentum.

It is not the first time Chinese capital and enterprises have moved to acquire or take control of internationally renowned food and beverage brands.

In 2017, a consortium led by CITIC Group and Carlyle Group acquired 20-year franchise rights for McDonald's on the Chinese mainland and in Hong Kong and Macao. Carlyle exited the investment in 2023, and in October 2024, CITIC Capital completed an additional stake purchase, resulting in the CITIC-led consortium holding a 52 percent controlling stake while McDonald's Corp retained 48 percent.

In November 2025, CPE, a leading Chinese consumer-focused private equity firm, acquired an 83 percent controlling stake in Burger King China, with the parent brand Restaurant Brands International retaining the remaining 17 percent.



CHINA

Traditional festivities and sports spur holiday travel

By ZOU SHUO
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

A distinctive blend of tradition, family bonding and youthful energy is expected to power China's tourism market during the upcoming Dragon Boat Festival holiday, travel industry sources said.

The three-day holiday, which starts on Friday, coincides with *xia zhi*, one of the 24 solar terms on the Chinese calendar, marking the summer solstice, and Father's Day, both of which fall on Sunday. It also overlaps with the ongoing 2026 FIFA World Cup.

Usually, the festivities revolve around boat racing, making sticky rice dumplings known as *zongzi* and other folk customs, but adding to the festive atmosphere this year are soccer watch parties and concert tourism, creating a multi-peak travel pattern, travel agencies said.

Travelers aged 20 to 49 are the main drivers of the holiday travel surge, accounting for more than 70 percent of total planned trips, data from online travel agency Tuniu showed. Short- and medium-distance trips lasting two to three days are the most popular, reflecting a clear shift toward smaller breaks and short-notice bookings.

The end of the national college entrance exam, or *gaokao*, has also triggered a surge in travel demand, which is expected to last until early July, creating a staggered travel window ahead of the summer rush, Tuniu said.

Students, typically aged 18 to 23, are driving much of this demand. Many parents had promised trips as gifts after the *gaokao*, which has boosted bookings among young travelers. According to online travel platform Qunar, flight bookings by 18-year-olds from June 10 through the end of June rose more than 30 percent compared with the same period in May.

Traditional Dragon Boat Festival activities — including making *zongzi*, salted duck eggs and sachets, wearing *hanfu* (a traditional Chinese costume) and watching boat races — have become major consumption drivers, Tuniu said.

The overlap with Father's Day has boosted family travel, with a notable increase in parent-child trips, it said.

Popular destinations include Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou in Guangdong province and Hangzhou in Zhejiang province. Shantou in Guangdong, the setting of the hit film *Dear You*, is generating a surge of searches, Qunar said.

The ancient villages of Shangrao in Jiangxi province are also much sought after. Searches for village resorts in the area, where visitors can experience festival traditions, have surged sevenfold, it said.

The frenzy generated by the ongoing soccer World Cup has also influenced travel demand. The 2026 Northeast Football City League, or "Dongbeichao" — a regional tournament jointly hosted by Liaoning, Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces as well as the Inner Mongolia autonomous region — is attracting fans from across the country, pushing up hotel bookings in the area during the holiday, according to Qunar.

In Liaoning, 43 scenic spots in seven cities are offering free admission to ticket-holding fans and residents of partner regions, helping boost hotel bookings by 20 percent year-on-year, the travel agency said.

Yin Ping, a professor at Beijing Jiaotong University's School of Economics and Management, noted that the convergence of Dragon Boat Festival, Father's Day and the World Cup creates a "day-night dual peak" travel pattern, with daytime dragon boat races and *zongzi*-making activities drawing crowds, while evenings will see fans flocking to bars and restaurants to watch matches, boosting spending on dining and nightlife.

"The integration of traditional folk culture, sports events and concerts is likely to become a lasting trend," she said.

The success of the Northeast football league in enhancing hotel bookings shows that a combination of folk culture, sports and tourism can sustainably drive local consumption — not only during holidays but also as a regular model, she added.

Airship in action



A manned airship carrying communications and reconnaissance equipment simulates deployment to a disaster-hit area during a flood-control and emergency response drill in Shishou, Hubei province, on Wednesday. ZHU XIYONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Briefly

Ex-CNOOC executive jailed for bribery case

Yuan Guangyu, former deputy general manager of the China National Offshore Oil Corporation, was sentenced to death with a two-year reprieve by a court in Jiangsu province for accepting bribes worth more than 152 million yuan ($22.49 million). Yuan was also deprived of political rights for life, and all his personal assets were confiscated, according to the ruling announced by the Xuzhou Intermediate People's Court. The court found that from 2001 to 2022, Yuan took advantage of his positions in the offshore oil corporation to seek benefits for relevant individuals and organizations in matters including project contracting, business operations and job adjustments, and accepted bribes worth more than 152 million yuan in return. In China, a suspended death sentence is typically commuted to life imprisonment if no new crimes are committed during the two-year probation period. The sentence may be further reduced for good behavior by the inmate.

Cambodia repatriates key fraud suspect

Chinese police recently repatriated Liu Ren, a key suspect in a major transnational gambling and telecom fraud case, from Cambodia, the Ministry of Public Security said on Wednesday, marking another result of law enforcement cooperation between the two countries. Liu is a core member of a criminal syndicate led by Chen Zhi, a Chinese national identified by authorities as the ringleader of a major cross-border gambling and fraud network. He was repatriated from Phnom Penh, Cambodia, earlier this year. Investigators said Chen directed Liu and others to establish the Jinbei Group in Cambodia in 2016. The group operated multiple online gambling platforms targeting Chinese citizens and encouraging gambling activities. Since 2020, the group has also run telecom fraud compounds in Cambodia, carrying out large-scale online fraud schemes involving extremely large sums of money, police said.

CHINA DAILY

Sustainable fishing



Fishermen haul in nets in Duchang county, Jiangxi province, on Wednesday. The region has expanded ecological fish farming in recent years, using fish stocking and natural cultivation methods to improve water quality while supporting local livelihoods. YIN ZHI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:23 PM

China to streamline its employment structure

New plan seeks fairer job market, will use AI to support entrepreneurship

By ZOU SHUO
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

China will maintain overall employment stability, create fuller employment opportunities and ensure a fairer employment environment during the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30), according to a new plan released by the State Council, China's cabinet, on Wednesday.

The plan for implementing an employment-first strategy over five years also calls for further optimizing the employment structure, achieving more efficient job-person matching, fostering more harmonious labor relations, and making new progress in high-quality and full employment.

It stresses the need to address the principal contradiction of supply-demand mismatches in the human resources market. It emphasizes implementing the employment-first strategy, tackling structural employment mismatches, deepening institutional reforms in employment, and preventing large-scale unemployment risks.

The plan calls for synergy between macro policies and employment, implementing actions to stabilize and expand employment, and adapting to the development of artificial intelligence to support employment and entrepreneurship.

It urges strengthening coordination between industry and employment, stabilizing the scale of employment in labor-intensive industries, expanding employment capacity in the service sector, and tapping the employment potential of emerging sectors.

Meanwhile, it stresses improving the alignment between educational supply and talent demand, and carrying out vocational skills training on a large scale.

The plan also requires expanding channels for college graduates and other young people to secure employment and achieve career success. Increasing support for key groups, including rural migrant workers and veterans, are needed, while strengthening employment assistance for people with difficulties in finding jobs and registered unemployed individuals should be in place.

It further demands promoting the healthy development of flexible employment and new forms of employment. Efforts are to be made to improve the employment and entrepreneurship service systems.

The plan also seeks to strengthen the protection of workers' rights and interests, and promote employment monitoring, early warning and risk response.

All regions and departments should treat employment as a top priority for people's livelihoods, adopt systematic approaches, and effectively implement the plan's tasks in light of local conditions, the plan said.

In 2025, China created 12.67 million new urban jobs nationwide, with the average urban surveyed unemployment rate standing at 5.2 percent, below the annual target of around 5.5 percent, according to the National Bureau of Statistics.

For 2026, the Government Work Report has set the employment targets at over 12 million new urban jobs and an urban surveyed unemployment rate of around 5.5 percent. In the first five months of 2026, the average urban surveyed unemployment rate stood at 5.2 percent, official data showed.

Tang Daisheng, a professor at Beijing Jiaotong University's School of Economics and Management, said the most notable highlight of the 15th Five-Year Plan is its elevation of the employment strategy from "employment first" to "high quality and full employment". This shift, he noted, marks a fundamental change in development philosophy, from focusing on whether there is a job to whether the job is good, moving from sheer quantity growth to quality improvement and structural optimization.

The establishment of a coordinated mechanism between investing in physical capital and investing in people means employment policies no longer operate in isolation but are deeply embedded in macro-control, industrial development, and technological innovation, he added.

Regarding artificial intelligence, Tang said the plan proactively addresses technological change by scaling up vocational skills training to help workers master new capabilities and adapt to new roles.

This forward-looking approach, he said, demonstrates the Party's ability to navigate complex situations and seize opportunities, while guiding workers to find their footing and realize their value amid the technological wave.

Extreme weather monitoring beefed up

By HOU LIQIANG
houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

China has significantly expanded its climate observation network as extreme weather events become more frequent and severe, launching new satellites, radar systems and ground stations to strengthen its adaptation to climate change, according to the 2025 progress report on China's climate change adaptation.

The report, unveiled by the Ministry of Ecology and Environment on Wednesday, which marked the 14th National Low-Carbon Day, detailed advances China has made in strengthening its monitoring network during the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-25) as the country seeks to cope with a worsening climate crisis.

China launched six Fengyun meteorological satellites during the period. Its enhanced satellite system now provides services to 133 countries and regions worldwide, the report said.

The report also highlighted a strengthened weather radar network. With 842 radars covering more than 90 percent of populated areas, the network can now identify severe weather events with an accuracy rate of 83 percent.

China has established more than 100,000 ground meteorological observation stations, nine atmospheric baseline stations and 27 national climate observatories, including its first overseas baseline station in Antarctica, according to the report.

It added that the number of jointly built and shared hydrological monitoring stations across government departments has reached 137,000.

The expanded monitoring system comes as China grapples with increasingly volatile weather.

In 2025, the country experienced 40 regional severe convective weather events, above the five-year average, while the national average number of days with gale-force winds — featuring instantaneous wind speeds of 17.2 meters per second or higher — reached 18.6, the highest level since 1991, the report said.

Severe convective weather is characterized by strong winds, hail, thunderstorms and brief but heavy spells of rainfall.

Regional and seasonal droughts have also become more pronounced in China, the report noted. From January to May last year, for instance, Anhui and Jiangsu provinces and the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region each recorded their highest number of drought days for the period since 1961.

Temperatures remained at record highs, with extreme heat events occurring frequently. The national average temperature in 2025 reached 10.9 C, 1 C above the long-term average and tied with 2024 as the highest on record, the report said.

Speaking at a National Low-Carbon Day event in Nanning, capital of Guangxi, Liu Yang, deputy head of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment's Department of Climate Change, pledged to accelerate upgrades to China's climate adaptation framework to help achieve the country's goal of basically building a climate-resilient society by 2035.

"We will improve the full-cycle mechanism of observation, assessment, action, feedback and enhancement to steadily bolster our ability to prevent and mitigate major climate risks and disasters," she said.

Soundbites

Editor's note: *The State Council Information Office held a group interview on Wednesday themed "Forging Ahead on the New Journey", bringing together representatives engaged in rural social civility to speak with the media.*



In 1999, I was elected village Party secretary and village director, and I have held these positions ever since. Relying on the Party's good policies, we united and led Party members and the masses to work hard and overcome difficulties, transforming a once poor, dirty, chaotic, and backward village into a model village for rural revitalization. Today, it is livable, suitable for work, and harmonious. Our village has chosen a new collectivized path. By developing and strengthening the village collective economy and encouraging and supporting villagers to start businesses and find employment, we aim to achieve common prosperity. We have cultivated and expanded advantageous industries, including modern agriculture, rural tourism, logistics and trade, building decoration, education and training, and medical care and wellness. With industrial development, we have pooled resources to accomplish major tasks and solve problems that individual households could not address on their own.

Wang Chuanxi, *Party secretary of Daicun village, Lanling county, Linyi city, Shandong province*



As a curator, I have always been thinking: 90 years ago, Ai Siqi turned profound philosophical ideas into plain language that ordinary people loved to hear. Today, how can we use this same approach to cultivate a civilized rural culture? The answer lies by the small fire pit in Tengchong. Over the years, learning from Ai's people-oriented approach, we have stepped out of the memorial hall and into villages. We set up no podiums and use no formulaic speeches. Instead, we sit with villagers in courtyards and around fire pits, talking about village rules and agreements, filial piety, and family values. In this way, theory has become a guide for daily life.

Bo Yanting, *director of the Ai Siqi Memorial Hall in Tengchong city, Yunnan province*



I am one of the province's first cultural commissioners, stationed in Hangchuan village, Jiande, Hangzhou. There are over 1,500 of us working across Zhejiang's countryside to promote cultural development. We visit households, identify villagers' cultural needs, bring resources from our home institutions into villages, and work with villagers to implement cultural projects. In the two years since I came to Hangchuan, I have organized photography exhibitions and built a village photography team. I believe our work as cultural commissioners is a two-way cultural journey with the villagers. The building of a civilized rural culture is never about us doing things for the villagers. Instead, we must take root in the countryside and work side by side with them.

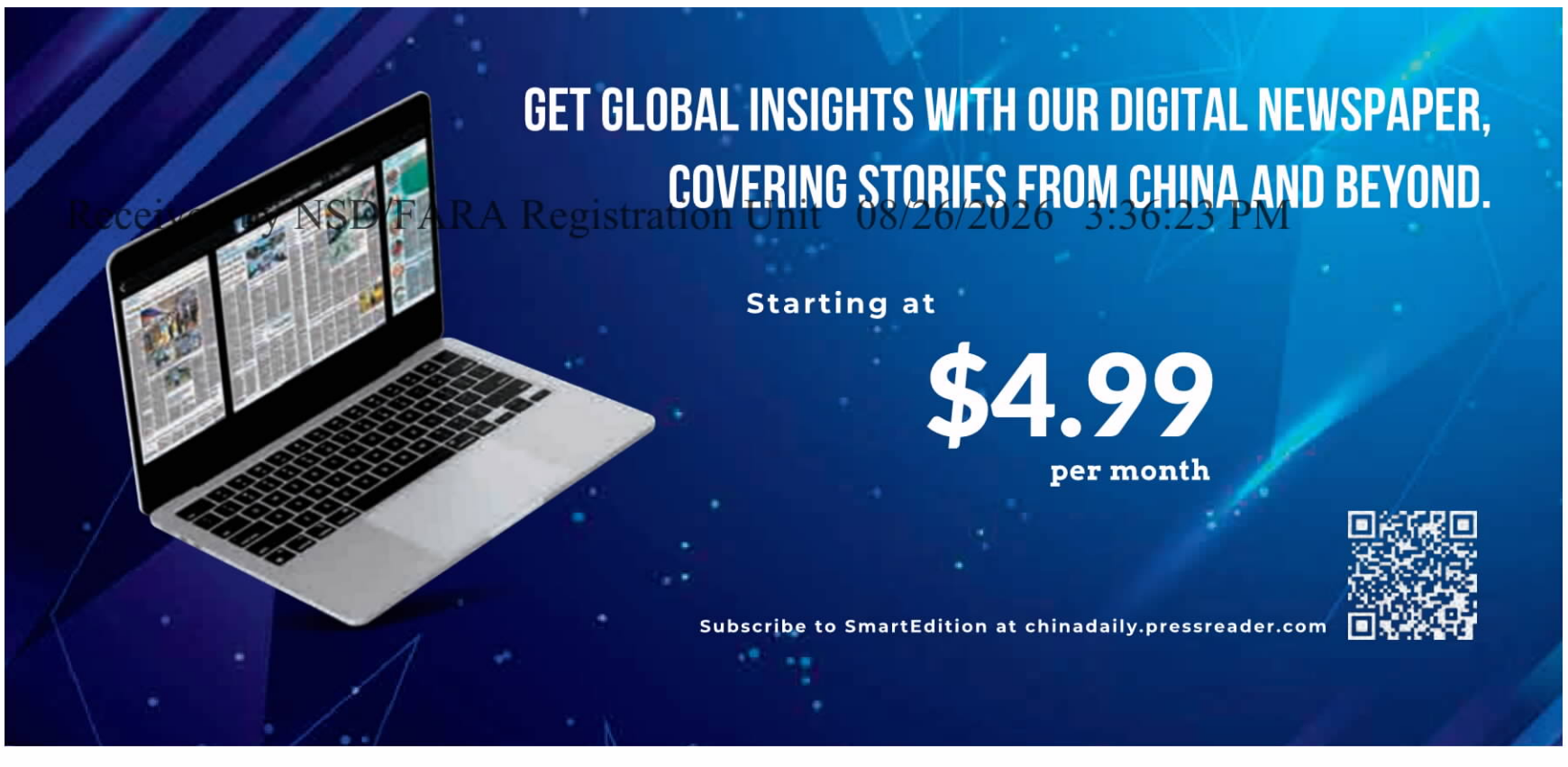
Chen Yun, *deputy editor-in-chief of Zhejiang Photographic Press and a cultural commissioner of Zhejiang province*



Many years ago, I was a flight attendant with Xiamen Airlines, serving passengers from all over the country, dressed in uniform and wearing high heels every day. But the farther I traveled and the more scenery I saw, the more I missed my hometown and family. So in 2016, I returned to my hometown, Minning town, carrying this deep attachment and my original aspiration. I often wondered: when will my hometown be seen by more people? Then one day, I met the deputy head of our town, who said to me: "You are a college graduate from our town. Have you ever thought of using your English major to promote Ningxia's agricultural products?" His words struck a chord with me. I grew up in Minning and have witnessed its development and transformation over the past 30 years. Today, Minning has an abundance of fine products. So I decided to tell the story of my hometown's changes and introduce its agricultural products in both Chinese and English, so that more people could see Minning. I planted myself deep in the fields of Minning, using my phone as my new farming tool and turning my livestreaming room into my new farmland.

Wu Juan, *villager from Yuanlong village, Minning town, Yongning county, Yinchuan city, Ningxia Hui autonomous region*

LI HONGYANG



DOCUMENT

More Just and Equitable Global Governance: China's Principles, Proposals and Actions

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:23 PM

The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China

June 2026

Contents

Preface
I. The World Today Faces Severe and Complex Challenges
II. The Global Governance Initiative Responds to Challenges of Our Times
III. China's Contribution to Promoting Global Governance
IV. Guiding the Direction of Change Towards a Bright Future
V. Moving Forward Hand in Hand at a Critical Juncture in History
Conclusion

Preface

Global governance is a common endeavor that bears on the wellbeing of all humanity, and building a just and equitable global governance system is a shared vision long pursued by people from across the world.

Over 80 years ago, the United Nations (UN) was founded as a multilateral platform for countries to address international affairs through dialogue and consultation. It established international rules underpinning the rule of law, ushering in a new phase in global governance. After the Cold War, multipolarization and economic globalization began to gain momentum, and the concept of global governance grounded in coordination and cooperation was widely endorsed. In recent times, however, unilateralism, protectionism, and hegemonism have been spreading unchecked, while deficits in peace, development, security, and trust continue to expand. Reforming and improving global governance to resolve these challenges and letting the UN play a core role have thus become a critical topic for the future of humanity.

China has always been an active participant in, contributor to, and builder of global governance. In the new era, President Xi Jinping put forward the vision of building a community with a shared future for humanity. In promoting a global governance system characterized by extensive consultation and joint contribution for shared benefit, he has called for true multilateralism to foster an equal and orderly multipolar world and a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization. In 2025, at a pivotal historical juncture marking the 80th anniversary of the victory in the Global War Against Fascism and the founding of the UN, President Xi proposed a new initiative, the Global Governance Initiative (GGI).

The GGI is designed to offer a Chinese solution to the two pressing questions of the era: what kind of global governance system should be established, and how global governance can be reformed and improved. Upon its introduction, it swiftly gained support from nearly 160 countries and international organizations, with over 60 countries joining the Group of Friends of Global Governance. The international community believes that the GGI sends a clear signal: uphold multilateralism, unite forces, and pursue a fair future. The GGI aligns with the growing trend towards greater democracy in international relations and bolsters international confidence in practicing multilateralism. It offers a clear and feasible roadmap for improving global governance, bringing valuable stability and positive energy to a turbulent world.

China has proposed the GGI to expedite the building of a more just and equitable global governance system. Resolutely upholding the UN's authority and status is fundamental to the effective implementation of this initiative. Success will also hinge on major countries bearing a sense of responsibility, and on all nations uniting and cooperating to address deficits in peace and development. All countries should firmly uphold the international system with the UN at its core, safeguard the international order based on international law, and uphold the basic norms governing international relations underpinned by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, instead of reinventing the wheel.

The Chinese government is publishing this white paper to introduce China's principles, proposals and actions in global governance, foster broader consensus within the international community, ensure more effective responses to global challenges, and build a more just and equitable global governance system.

I. The World Today Faces Severe and Complex Challenges

Our world has entered an era marked by profound change on a scale unseen in a century. The pursuit of peace and development remains a daunting challenge. The international system established after World War II has been severely disrupted by multiple crises, placing global governance at a critical crossroads. Progress is imperative; failure to advance risks falling behind. Now, more than ever, the world needs to revitalize multilateralism, uphold the rule of law, and ensure more efficient governance.

1. Growing Challenges Call for More Effective Governance

Currently, the international landscape is undergoing profound changes on an unprecedented scale, with turmoil and upheaval more intense and pronounced. Political and economic disputes worldwide are escalating, revealing deep-seated conflicts, while "black swan" and "grey rhino" events keep emerging continually. The ship of human civilization has entered dangerous waters with hidden reefs and violent storms.

Geopolitical tensions are intensifying, with armed conflicts erupting in multiple regions. The Ukraine crisis has entered its fifth year, hostilities in the Middle East are spilling over and spreading, and multiple hotspot issues remain unresolved. The Global Peace Index continues to decline: in 2025, the number of armed conflicts reached a new high after World War II, with more than 50 countries directly embroiled in conflict or war. Global military spending has surged, militarism has resurfaced, and nuclear proliferation and "nuclear sharing" continue to pose a grave threat, leaving international security in a precarious state.

Global economic fragmentation is exacerbating, significantly hindering development. Economic globalization is facing strong headwinds, as some countries erect fences and barriers, pursue decoupling, sever industrial supply chains, and impose unilateral tariffs, disrupting the global economic order. Overall progress in the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has lagged far behind, with nearly 80 percent of assessable targets progressing slowly or even regressing. More than 830 million people worldwide still live in extreme poverty while 2.3 billion suffer from food insecurity, and the North-South divide and wealth gap continue to widen.

New challenges are arising in quick succession, with multiple crises intertwining and accumulating. The transition to a climate-resilient future is fraught with difficulties, the digital divide is deepening, and the misuse of artificial intelligence poses new security risks. Challenges to food and energy security are also intensifying, and non-traditional security threats such as terrorism, cyberattacks, transnational crime, and biosecurity risks are on the rise. The issues that human society must collectively address are becoming increasingly complex and diverse.

The universe has only one Earth, which is the shared home of all humanity. Countries are not riding separately in some 190 small boats, but aboard a single giant ship of shared future. Only by working together and supporting one another can we navigate through the storms of global challenges and sail towards a brighter future.

2. The Law of the Jungle Seriously Undermines the International Rule of Law

Built upon the ruins of the two world wars, the UN serves as a shelter for peace and development, and its Charter laid the institutional cornerstone for global governance. History can only move forward, not backward; we must draw lessons from the bloodshed and fires of war of the past and prevent a return to the law of the jungle at all costs.

Unilateralism and hegemonism cause only grave harm, openly trampling upon international law and the basic norms governing international relations. By bullying the small and weak and brazenly wielding force against sovereign states, certain countries have shown they prioritize their national interests above all else, applying double standards and challenging international justice for their own selfish gain. These nations gang up to form exclusive groups and blocs, inciting division and confrontation and carving spheres of influence today – in the 21st century – as they did in centuries gone by. By so doing they have become the major source of global turbulence.

De-globalization and protectionism are on the rise, while economic and trade issues are being politicized, instrumentalized, and weaponized. Some countries have instigated trade wars and tech wars, imposed unilateral sanctions illegally, and abused long-arm jurisdiction. They have single-mindedly sought to build "small yards with high walls" or "parallel systems", and have overstretched the concept of national security to suppress and contain the economic and technological progress of other countries. These retrogressive actions violate the principles of the market economy, trample on the rules of free trade, and severely disrupt the international economic order.

Humanity now faces several crucial questions. Fairness and justice, or the law of the jungle? Openness and mutual benefit, or isolation and confrontation? The rule of law, or power politics? At this historical crossroads, we must be responsible and make the right choice.

3. It Is Imperative to Shore Up the Governance System

The UN is the most comprehensive, representative and authoritative international organization, and the UN-centered international system plays an irreplaceable and vital role in global governance. Over time, however, the current global governance system has become increasingly incompatible and misaligned with the realities of today and the evolving international landscape, and its shortcomings and deficiencies are growing ever more pronounced.

The UN's authority is challenged. Disregarding the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, a certain major power has withdrawn from international organizations and agreements, defunded key bodies, blocked Security Council resolutions, and paralyzed the World Trade Organization's (WTO) dispute settlement mechanism. These actions have seriously disrupted the international order and caused further damage to multilateral mechanisms, eroding the foundation of trust in multilateral cooperation.

The effectiveness of multilateral institutions is in urgent need of improvement. As some countries refuse to fulfill their responsibilities and obligations, multilateral agendas are often left discussed but undecided, or decided but not implemented. Efforts must therefore focus on improving the operational efficiency, emergency response capabilities, and transparency of multilateral institutions such as the UN. At the same time, the existence of governance gaps in emerging fields – including artificial intelligence, cyberspace, and outer space – also demands attention.

The UN's representation is critically inadequate. To maintain their hegemony and protect their own interests, some countries have long obstructed the reform process of the UN and its agencies, causing significant delays in reforms such as the IMF quota and World Bank shareholding. Developing countries remain underrepresented and their voices insufficiently heard.

The current governance system is certainly not perfect, but it needs neither to be dismantled and rebuilt in full, nor replaced entirely by a new system. Instead, as an international community, we must focus on reforming and improving the existing system to make it more compatible and aligned with the world's realities, addressing governance shortcomings from a developmental perspective, and responding to the call of the times with a vision for progress.

4. More Global South Voices Need to Be Heard

The Global South is a vital force in seeking peace, pursuing development, and promoting cooperation, and its collective rise represents human progress. To stabilize and improve the world, the international community needs to be more responsive to the concerns of the Global South in international affairs and fully leverage its role.

The Global South has grown remarkably strong. After World War II, national independence and liberation movements swept across Asia, Africa, and Latin America, dismantling the global colonial system. The number of UN member states has increased from 51 at its founding in 1945 to 193 today. Based on purchasing power parity, the Global South now makes up over 60 percent of the world economy and contributes 80 percent to global economic growth, with multiple hubs of development across various regions. The monopolization of international affairs by a small number of countries is no longer sustainable, and long-standing historical injustices must be redressed.

This rise has brought a new dynamic to global governance. BRICS has undergone a historic expansion, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has become the largest regional intergovernmental organization in terms of territory and population. Together, they are playing a positive role in the development and reform of the global governance system. The G20 has become the premier platform for global economic governance, with emerging economies now accounting for more than half of its membership. Championing fairness and justice, the G77 and China have deepened South-South cooperation. Meanwhile, Global South countries have hosted a series of multilateral summits, contributing their share to global governance and leaving their imprint.

The times call for a model of global governance that is more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable. The process of securing greater respect for the Global South countries' rights to development, voice, and decision-making in international affairs will mark a historic journey towards a more dynamic, effective, and hopeful global governance system.

II. The Global Governance Initiative Responds to Challenges of Our Times

The Global Governance Initiative upholds the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and embraces a global governance vision characterized by extensive consultation, joint contribution, and shared benefits. It is built on five core concepts: sovereign equality, the international rule of law, multilateralism, a people-centered approach, and real actions. By addressing the crux and root causes of crises and challenges, the initiative provides sound guidance for building a more just and equitable global governance system.

1. Sovereign Equality

Sovereign equality is enshrined in the UN Charter as the first among all principles and the supreme norm regulating state-to-state relations. Countries, whether large or small, strong or weak, developed or developing, are equal members of the international community. Every nation's sovereignty and dignity must be respected, and all countries are equally entitled to participate in, deliberate on, and benefit from global governance.

Equality is the premise of state-to-state relations. Countries should, in the spirit of mutual respect, conduct consultations on an equal footing and manage their differences appropriately. Major countries should lead by example in honoring equality, good faith, and cooperation, rather than leveraging their position of strength to engage in hegemonic, high-handed and abusive acts. If allowed to deviate from the principle of sovereign equality, international relations would degenerate into a game among powers, and international law would become groundless, leaving the world in perpetual chaos.

Sovereign equality is an essential requirement for solidarity against challenges. The future of all nations is bound by shared interests, common challenges, and collective responsibilities. Global governance cannot be dominated by a select few developed nations. Only when all countries participate equally can all sides build the political trust essential for solidarity and collaboration; only in this way can the resulting rules and decisions receive extensive recognition and rest on solid legal ground. This is the necessary approach to reaching broad consensus and creating powerful synergy.

Equality and inclusiveness are the inexorable progress in the evolution of the global governance system. Coexistence in diversity is a fundamental characteristic of human society, and multipolarity is vital to the evolving international landscape. A global governance system that is more representative, inclusive, and beneficial to all is an irreversible trend, and equal rights, equal opportunities, and equal rules are the shared aspirations of all peoples. Hegemony and power politics that run counter to the tide of history are destined to fail.

2. The International Rule of Law

The international rule of law is the fundamental safeguard for global governance. Only a global governance system that is grounded in the rule of law can provide all countries with a fair and just environment for development, achieve a balance between rights and obligations, and make international order more just and equitable.

Rigorously enforcing the international rule of law is rooted in upholding the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. Confrontation and injustice in today's world do not arise because the UN Charter is outdated, but because it is not effectively implemented. Its purposes and principles, such as maintaining international peace and security, promoting international cooperation, settling international disputes by peaceful means, and refraining from the threat or use of force in international relations, have established the fundamental norms governing international relations and underpinned post-war stability in the international order, and thus must be honored without the slightest compromise.

Rigorously enforcing the international rule of law hinges on safeguarding its justice and integrity. Only when international law is applied equally and universally, rather than selectively, can we truly distinguish right from wrong and advance peace and development. All nations are stakeholders in the international rule of law – without it, anyone at the dining table today could appear on the menu tomorrow. Major countries are the key forces in advancing international rule of law. They should lead by example in following rules and upholding the rule of law, rather than putting their own interests above international law or, even worse, imposing their own rules upon others.

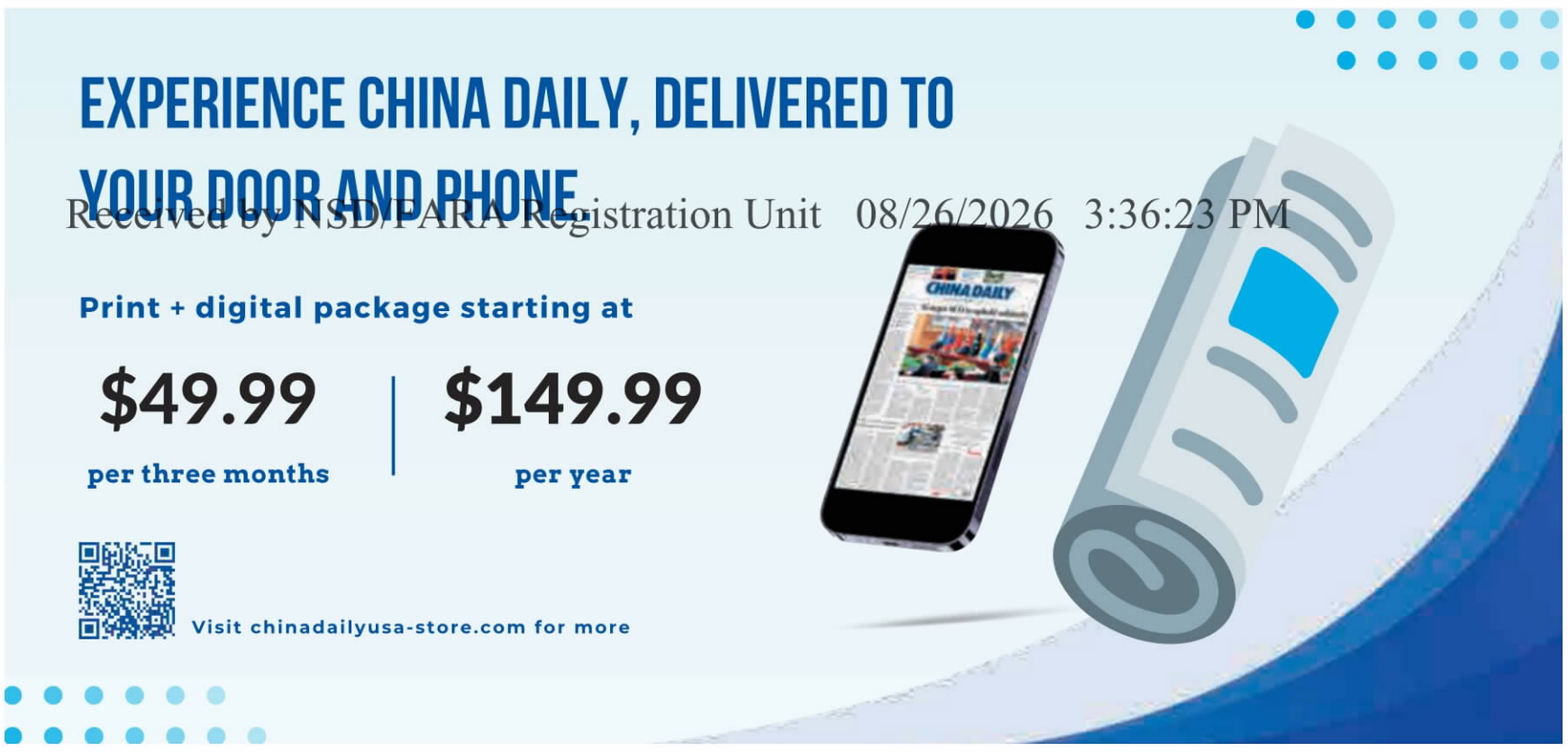
Rigorously enforcing the international rule of law calls for improving rulemaking in emerging sectors. Human society is constantly evolving, and global governance rules must keep pace. New domains such as the deep seas, polar regions, outer space, and cyberspace, some of which are the common property of humanity and some represent the frontiers of future development, require urgent attention in order to establish rules and close gaps in their governance. All parties should uphold the principles of peace, sovereignty, inclusiveness, and joint governance, and put law in place for the development and utilization of new domains, so that they expand the space for cooperation rather than become arenas of rivalry. The governance of artificial intelligence should guard the red line of security and ethics, and be pursued in the spirit of openness, shared outcomes, and equal rights, to ensure AI for good and truly benefit humanity.

3. Multilateralism

Multilateralism emerged for the cause of peace and development, and multilateral mechanisms are vital for addressing global issues. No country can achieve development outside the global governance system, nor can it secure a future without participating in international cooperation. It is not a matter of whether we choose it or not, multilateralism is the only viable path forward.

Countries should stick to the principles of extensive consultation, joint contribution, and shared benefits. The essence of multilateralism lies in extensive consultation on international affairs and collective decision-making among all countries for the future of the world. Countries should pool wisdom through extensive consultation, gather strength through joint contribution, and promote universal interests through shared benefits. They should unequivocally oppose all forms of unilateralism, hegemony, dominance by a few countries, and bloc politics in the understanding that the deliberate erection of barriers will only push the world into the abyss of antagonism and confrontation.

See page 12



DOCUMENT

From page 11

Countries should be steadfast in safeguarding the central role of the United Nations. The United Nations is the primary platform for practicing multilateralism and advancing global governance. Its leading position must be upheld and remain rock solid; its role can only be reinforced, not weakened. All countries should reaffirm the founding purpose of the United Nations, work to restore its authority and vitality under new circumstances, and enable it to play a central role in coordinating global actions to address common challenges.

Countries should be firm in promoting multilateral dialogue, consultation, and cooperation. In light of the complexity of global challenges, no country can remain insulated from their impacts or resolve all issues alone. Countries should build consensus through dialogue, resolve disputes through consultation, and pursue win-win results through cooperation, striving to expand their common interests. Global and regional multilateral mechanisms should play a constructive role in this, pooling the resources and strengths of national governments, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations to increase the synergy and efficiency of global governance.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:23 PM

4. A People-Centered Approach

People's wellbeing is a core concern of global governance. The people of every country across the world are the essential participants and direct beneficiaries of global governance. Only by serving public interests, boosting public confidence, and meeting public expectations can the global governance system win extensive support and function effectively.

Pursuing common development heightens the sense of gain among all peoples. Development concerns people's life and dignity; it is a matter of hope or disappointment. World prosperity and stability cannot be built upon ever widening gaps between rich and poor. Countries must restore development to the center of the international agenda, mobilizing global resources to implement the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development without delay. The North-South divide must be bridged as soon as possible, and help should be provided to developing countries to boost their capacity for independent development, so that all nations have greater and fairer access to the fruits of development.

Addressing common challenges heightens the sense of security among all peoples. In today's world, all countries share a common stake in security, and all must therefore embrace a vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security while addressing the threats to this stake – whether traditional or non-traditional. In responding to risks and challenges such as climate change, public health, and cyberspace security, it is important for the people to truly feel that countries are taking action and that unity can overcome all difficulties.

Promoting mutual understanding and friendship heightens the sense of fulfillment among all peoples. Civilizations become colorful through exchanges and are enriched through mutual learning. Countries should let cultural exchanges prevail over estrangement, mutual learning over clashes, and inclusiveness over superiority. Cultural and personnel exchanges should be strengthened to break down ideological barriers between nations and social groups. A shared conviction for safeguarding common interests will allow all civilizations to thrive and succeed together.

5. Real Actions

Global governance finds its source of vitality in practice, hinges on action, and is verified by its effectiveness. A vision is realized only through concrete action. It falls on the international community to turn this vision into reality – setting common goals, embracing a problem-oriented approach, and acting in concert.

Coordinating overall progress and individual breakthroughs. A coordinated approach should be adopted to advance global governance agendas, address governance deficits, and prevent fragmentation in the governance system. Targeted efforts should also be made for the most pressing issues in individual countries, particularly developing countries, to achieve tangible progress in poverty reduction and in improving people's wellbeing and closing the digital divide.

Addressing both symptoms and root causes. Given present conditions, feasible plans should be made to resolve the immediate challenges facing the world. The effectiveness in responding to major public crises and providing international public goods should be increased. With future development in mind, fundamental solutions should be explored to tackle chronic and persistent issues and bring change to the global governance system – which is lagging in reform – to align it with the evolving political and economic landscapes.

Synergizing North-South cooperation and South-South cooperation. The Global North and Global South should leverage their complementary strengths and move towards the same direction. Developed countries should diligently fulfill their international obligations and deliver on their commitments regarding development assistance and climate financing; they should not evade their international responsibilities under any pretext. Developing countries should unite to build their strength, improve South-South cooperation mechanisms, increase their capacity for collaborative development and their collective voice, and inject sustained momentum for improving global governance.

III. China's Contribution to Promoting Global Governance

As a responsible major country, China champions the building of a community with a shared future for humanity and takes the lead in practicing true multilateralism. It has consistently been a builder of world peace, a contributor to global development, a defender of the international order, and a provider of public goods, while actively advancing the efforts for building a more just and equitable global governance system.

1. Committing to Universal and Common Security

Humanity forms an indivisible community of security. As a major country with the best peace and security record, China has enshrined in its Constitution a commitment to peaceful development. It champions the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security, and has put forward the Global Security Initiative and acted on its principles, contributing to lasting world peace and stability.

Firmly safeguarding world peace within the framework of the UN. China faithfully fulfills its mission and duties as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, firmly supporting the UN in playing its core role in international affairs and the Security Council in playing its primary role in international peace and security. China also takes an active part in UN peacekeeping operations as the second largest contributor to the UN peacekeeping budget and the largest troop contributor among the permanent members of the UN Security Council. To date, more than 50,000 Chinese peacekeepers have been dispatched in 29 peacekeeping operations authorized by the UN Security Council. The country has also established the world's first standing peacekeeping police unit and maintains a peacekeeping standby force of 8,000 troops.

On September 3, 2025, China celebrated the 80th anniversary of its victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War. Together with the international community, China will safeguard the victory of World War II, promote a correct understanding of that war, and send the powerful message that peace must be safeguarded and justice will prevail.

Maintaining global strategic stability. China pursues a national defense policy that is in nature defensive, upholds a firm commitment to a policy of no-first-use of nuclear weapons and a nuclear strategy of self-defense, and resolutely safeguards the international nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation regimes. It promoted the issuance of a joint statement of the leaders of the five nuclear-weapon states on preventing nuclear war and avoiding arms races, reiterating the view that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought, emphasizing the need to avoid military confrontation and prevent arms races and articulating a shared commitment to maintaining global strategic stability and reducing the risk of nuclear conflicts. China has put forward the principles of justice, cooperation, balance and effectiveness in arms control, and upholds the international arms control regime with the UN at its core.

Pioneering the use of a unique Chinese approach to addressing international flashpoints. China upholds the principles of non-interference in other countries' internal affairs, political settlement of issues, objectivity and fairness, and addressing both symptoms and root causes, offering a new approach for finding constructive solutions to flashpoints.

On the Ukraine crisis, China follows the four key principles [The principles are: The sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries should be upheld; the purposes and principles of the UN Charter should be observed; the legitimate security concerns of all parties should be taken seriously; all efforts conducive to the peaceful settlement of the crisis should be supported.] as its fundamental guide. It released China's Position on the Political Settlement of the Ukraine Crisis and, together with Brazil and other Global South countries, launched the Group of Friends for Peace on the Ukraine Crisis, building synergy and creating conditions for ceasefire and peace talks.

On the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, China has urged the UN Security Council to pass the first ceasefire resolution for Gaza since the outbreak of a new round of conflict. It has provided emergency humanitarian assistance to Gaza and taken a clear stand in support of the two-state solution, promoting a comprehensive, just, and lasting resolution of the Palestinian question.

China has facilitated the historic reconciliation and restoration of diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran, and 14 Palestinian factions visited China for reconciliation talks and signed the Beijing Declaration on Ending Division and Strengthening Palestinian National Unity. This wave of reconciliation in the Middle East has been widely welcomed. In promoting peace and stability in the Middle East, China has put forward the principles of peaceful coexistence, national sovereignty, international rule of law, and a holistic approach to development and security. Together with Pakistan, China has issued a five-point initiative of China and Pakistan for restoring peace and stability in the Gulf and Middle East Region.

Championing an Asian security model characterized by security for all, common ground amid differences, and dialogue and consultation, China has facilitated a ceasefire agreement between conflicting parties in northern Myanmar and played a constructive role in the border dispute between Cambodia and Thailand and the cross-border clashes between Afghanistan and Pakistan. It has proposed the Outlook on Peace and Development in the Horn of Africa, supporting countries in the region in responding to security challenges.

Reinforcing non-traditional security shields. China continues to support the development of the Global Public Security Cooperation Forum (Lianyungang) to build consensus among all parties and advance global public security governance. China advocates comprehensive measures for addressing both symptoms and root causes, and promotes international and regional counter-terrorism cooperation. It has facilitated the establishment of the Integrated Center for Countering Security Threats and Challenges of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and its Center for Combating Transnational Crime and Information Security Center, and the SCO Narcotics Control Center, playing an active role in helping other developing countries reinforce their counter-terrorism capacities.

In resolutely cracking down on transnational drug trafficking, China leads pragmatic anti-drug cooperation operations in the Greater Mekong Subregion and by the SCO and BRICS countries, and has taken the global lead in scheduling the whole class of fentanyl-related substances. It has combated cross-border crimes such as online gambling and telecom fraud, accelerated the development of an international alliance on combating telecom fraud, and dismantled large groups of overseas scam centers in cooperation with countries including Thailand, Myanmar, and Laos. China has proposed the International Cooperation Initiative on Global Food Security within the framework of G20, facilitated the adoption of the BRICS Strategy on Food Security Cooperation, joined the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty, and provided emergency humanitarian food assistance to multiple countries suffering food shortages or disasters.

2. Promoting Openness, Cooperation, and Common Development

China cannot develop in isolation from the rest of the world, nor can the world achieve overall prosperity without China. As the largest developing country, China has always pursued its own growth in the context of humanity's shared development and upheld openness, win-win cooperation, inclusiveness, and shared benefits. Through Chinese modernization, the country has provided the world with new opportunities and boosted the global drive for modernization.

Contributing to building an open global economy. China has promoted trade and investment liberalization and facilitation, and it has become the main trading partner of over 160 countries and regions, signing 24 free trade agreements with 31 countries and regions in the process. It has facilitated and achieved high-standard implementation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and signed the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area 3.0 Upgrade Protocol. It endeavors actively to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement (DEPA) to expand the globally-oriented network of high-standard free trade areas. The country firmly safeguards the rule-based multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization (WTO) at its core, engages fully and deeply in WTO reforms, and has announced that it will not seek new special and differential treatment in current and future negotiations at the WTO.

Bringing broader opportunities to the world with higher-standard opening up. China has expanded institutional opening up, removed all restrictions on foreign investment access in the manufacturing sector, continued to shorten the negative list for foreign investment, and fostered a world-leading business environment that is based on market principles, governed by law, and up to international standards. Steps have been taken to expand voluntary and unilateral opening up, with the launch of 23 pilot free trade zones, island-wide special customs operations in the Hainan Free Trade Port, and open platforms such as the China International Import Expo, China International Fair for Trade in Services, China International Consumer Products Expo, and China International Supply Chain Expo. Additionally, zero tariffs have been placed on the least developed countries and African countries that have established diplomatic relations with China. During the 14th Five-year Plan period (2021-2025), China's imports of goods and services exceeded US$15 trillion, and its GDP is expected to increase from RMB140 trillion to RMB170 trillion in the next five years, as its vast market continues to realize its potential.

Achieving solid progress in deepening high-quality Belt and Road cooperation. China has promoted cooperation in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to a new stage of high-quality development. It has established the world's broadest and largest international cooperation platform and expanded the belt of development and road to happiness to benefit all parties.

Policy connectivity has built greater synergy. China has signed cooperation documents with over 150 countries and 30 international organizations, hosted three Belt and Road forums for international cooperation, established more than 30 special cooperation mechanisms in key areas such as economy, trade, energy and infrastructure, and established a secretariat for the forum.

Infrastructure connectivity has achieved leapfrog development. Flagship programs such as cross-border highways, railways, ports, and aviation hubs have made breakthroughs, and a general connectivity framework consisting of six corridors, six connectivity routes, and multiple countries and ports has now been realized. The China-Europe Railway Express freight service has operated more than 130,000 trips to date.

Trade connectivity has advanced despite challenges. In-depth alignment has been achieved in areas such as cross-border payments, digital authentication, and smart customs. In 2025, the volume of trade in goods between China and BRI participants reached RMB23.6 trillion, up by 6.3 percent year-on-year, accounting for 51.9 percent of the country's foreign trade.

Financial connectivity has embraced greater diversity. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the Silk Road Fund have provided financing support to hundreds of projects. Renminbi financing windows have been set up, and the two-way investment between China and its BRI partners totaled more than US$240 billion between 2021 and the first half of 2025.

People-to-people connectivity has become stronger. Landmark livelihood initiatives supported by Luban Workshops and Juncao technology have continued to advance, and communication and exchange have flourished in culture, tourism, education, and media, as well as between the youth of different nations.

Delivering effective results in implementing the Global Development Initiative. To accelerate the realization of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, China helps steer global development towards a new stage of balanced, coordinated and inclusive growth that delivers more robust, greener, and healthier global development.

Consensus on development as a priority continues to build, with more than 130 countries and international organizations supporting participation in the initiative and over 80 countries joining the Group of Friends of the Global Development Initiative. China has hosted the High-Level Dialogue on Global Development and the Forum on Global Action for Shared Development, encouraging all parties to make new commitments to and embark on a new journey towards realizing the Sustainable Development Goals.

Cooperation mechanisms continue to improve. China has signed more than 80 cooperation documents on implementing the initiative with other developing countries, international organizations, and financial institutions. Over 30 cooperation mechanisms have been established in eight key areas of the initiative, covering all 17 sustainable development goals. China has also set up a Global Development Promotion Center and a Global Knowledge Network for Development, and issued the Global Development Report. Together with the UN, it has established the China-UN Global South-South Development Facility, actively discussed the development of the Global Center for Sustainable Development in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme, and taken the initiative to establish the Institute of Global Development.

Resources for development cooperation continue to grow. More than US$23 billion of development funds of various types have been mobilized. China has established the Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund, increased its total to US$4 billion, and launched the China-FAO South-South Cooperation Trust Fund (Phase III).

Pragmatic cooperation has delivered remarkable results. China has established a project pool under the Global Development Initiative, launched more than 1,800 cooperation projects, and completed the training of 80,000 people within the framework of the initiative, assisting other developing countries in improving their capacity for independent and sustainable development.

3. Practicing True Multilateralism

No matter how the world changes, China will always uphold the international system with the United Nations at its core, the international order underpinned by international law, and the basic norms governing international relations based on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. It advocates and practices true multilateralism and remains an active champion and strong proponent of multilateral cooperation.

Resolutely upholding the authority and status of the UN. As a founding member of the UN and the first country to sign the UN Charter, China has consistently upheld the central role of the UN in international affairs through concrete actions. The country's contribution to the UN regular budget increased from less than 1 percent in 2000 to over 20 percent in 2025, making it the second largest contributor. It has paid in full its assessed contributions to the UN in support of the effective operation of UN agencies. It has launched and renewed the China-UN Peace and Development Fund and increased its input to the fund, providing strong support to major UN agendas.

China supports the UN in advancing the implementation of the Pact for the Future and in enhancing the quality, efficiency, and vitality of the organization through the UN80 Initiative. It actively supports the UN and its specialized agencies in establishing new institutions in China, including the UNESCO International Institute for STEM Education in Shanghai and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Shanghai Center. China's efforts to supply outstanding talent to the UN have led to a steady increase in the share of Chinese employees in UN agencies and related international organizations. China has hosted the Global Leaders' Meeting on Women, boosting new progress in women's well-rounded development.

Panel 1 Global Leaders' Meeting on Women: China's Contribution to the Development of Women's Cause

From October 13 to 14, 2025, China and UN Women jointly hosted the Global Leaders' Meeting on Women in Beijing. Under the theme of "One Shared Future: New and Accelerated Process for Women's All-Round Development", the summit was attended by guests from over 110 countries, including heads of state and government, heads of parliament, officials at the vice-premier level, representatives at the ministerial level, representatives of UN agencies and international organizations, and diplomatic envoys. China's President Xi Jinping attended the opening ceremony and delivered a keynote speech.

To further support the global cause of women, China announced that in the next five years it would donate a further US$10 million to UN Women, earmark a quota of US$100 million in China's Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund for implementing development cooperation projects for women and girls in collaboration with international organizations, and launch 1,000 small and beautiful livelihood programs with Chinese assistance, prioritizing women and girls as the primary beneficiaries. At the same time, it would invite 50,000 women to China for training and exchange programs and establish a Global Center for Women's Capacity Building aimed at conducting capacity building and cooperation for women's development with relevant countries and international organizations to train more female talent.

Upholding the authority of the international rule of law and pushing for progress in international law-based governance. China has joined nearly all universal intergovernmental organizations and signed over 600 international conventions and amendments, fulfilling its treaty obligations in good faith and honoring its international commitments. The country held a conference marking the 70th anniversary of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, reaffirming and safeguarding the basic norms governing international relations and the principles of international law. China continues to provide firm support for the work of UN judicial bodies and remains an active participant in international judicial activities. Engaging in international law enforcement cooperation, it has increased efforts in anti-corruption action, the cross-border pursuit of fugitives, their repatriation and extradition, and recovery of assets. Additionally, it has initiated and led the creation of the International Organization for Mediation, filling a gap in the international mediation mechanism.

See page 13



DOCUMENT

From page 12

Panel 2 International Organization for Mediation: Chinese Wisdom for the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes

In 2022, China and like-minded countries initiated the establishment of the International Organization for Mediation (IOMed). On May 30, 2025, the signing ceremony of the Convention on the Establishment of the International Organization for Mediation was held in Hong Kong, with 33 countries signing the convention and becoming its founding members. On August 29, 2025, the convention entered into force, with Hong Kong becoming the location of IOMed's headquarters. On October 20, 2025, the organization commenced formal operations.

As the first intergovernmental legal organization dedicated to resolving international disputes through mediation, the IOMed focuses on mediating disputes to resolve conflicts and serves as an important mechanism that safeguards the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. It complements and creates synergy with litigation, arbitration, and other existing mechanisms to resolve international disputes, and provides a new platform for their peaceful settlement.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:23 PM

Participating in and leading G20 cooperation. China encourages the G20 – as a major forum for economic dialogue between developed and developing countries – to pursue international cooperation in the spirit of equal consultation and mutual benefit. In 2016, China hosted the G20 Hangzhou Summit, widely regarded as one of the most fruitful G20 summits to date. It issued what became a landmark G20 Leaders' Communiqué, put development at the center of macroeconomic policy coordination for the first time, and endorsed consensus documents such as the G20 Guiding Principles for Global Investment Policymaking and G20 Blueprint on Innovative Growth, leaving China's clear imprint in the group's history. During the G20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro, China set out its proposals for economic, financial, trade, digital, and ecological governance, promoting a world economy built on cooperation, stability, openness, innovation, and eco-friendliness. China also took the lead in supporting the African Union's membership in the G20 to increase the representation of developing countries.

Advancing an Asia-Pacific community. The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is the highest-level mechanism for economic cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region, with the broadest coverage and greatest influence. China advocates the spirit of an Asia-Pacific family and promotes an Asia-Pacific community of shared future characterized by openness and inclusiveness, innovation-driven growth, greater connectivity, and mutually beneficial cooperation. Facilitated by China, the Shanghai Accord of the APEC Economic Leaders' Declaration was adopted at the APEC meeting held in Shanghai in 2001, marking a new beginning for Asia-Pacific cooperation in the new century. In 2014, the APEC meeting in Beijing delivered multiple outcomes, including the 22nd APEC Economic Leaders' Declaration – Beijing Agenda for an Integrated, Innovative and Interconnected Asia-Pacific, in which all parties pledged to foster an Asia-Pacific partnership for the future and outlined a vision for the long-term development and shared prosperity of the region.

In 2026, China will host the APEC meeting for a third time, under the theme "Building an Asia-Pacific Community to Prosper Together". The meeting will focus on three priorities: openness, innovation, and cooperation. All parties concerned will come together to recommit to the original aspirations of Asia-Pacific cooperation, focus on concrete actions towards their goals, and strive to turn their blueprint for a better Asia-Pacific community into reality.

4. Supporting the Global South in Playing a Greater Role

China will always be a member of the Global South, and in the Global South its roots will remain. No matter what the future holds, it will always keep the wellbeing of the Global South in mind. Acting on the principles of sincerity, real results, amity, and good faith, and with a commitment to pursuing the greater good and shared interests, China has strengthened solidarity and cooperation with other developing countries, firmly safeguarded the common interests of the Global South in international affairs, and led the Global South in building strength through joint efforts.

Advancing high-quality development of greater BRICS cooperation. At the forefront of the Global South, BRICS countries are jointly committed to promoting world economic growth, improving global economic governance, and advancing democracy in international relations. China has played an active role in expanding and strengthening BRICS cooperation, reinforcing its institutions in response to the evolving times, and increasing its global influence. China and other BRICS countries have established the New Development Bank and formed the Contingent Reserve Arrangement, which have become an emerging force in the international financial system and landmark projects of Global South cooperation.

In 2017, the BRICS Xiamen Summit delivered more than 60 outcomes, giving rise to three key engines that drive cooperation – political security, trade and finance, and people-to-people exchange – as well as the "BRICS Plus" approach. In 2022, during the BRICS "China Year", the BRICS Summit issued the Beijing Declaration, marking the beginning of the organization's expansion. China has since worked with relevant parties to advance this historic enlargement, which represents a major milestone not only for BRICS, but also for the evolution of the international landscape. China has promoted a vision for BRICS centered on peace, innovation, green development, justice, and closer people-to-people exchanges. It continues to support more Global South countries in joining the cause of BRICS as full members, partner countries, or in the "BRICS Plus" format, to build the cooperation mechanism into a primary channel for strengthening solidarity and cooperation among Global South nations and a vanguard for advancing global governance reform.

Panel 3 New Development Bank: An Emerging Force in the International Financial System

The New Development Bank was jointly established by Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa in 2015. It is the first international financial institution to be headquartered in China, and the first multilateral development institution established and led by emerging market economies and developing countries. The bank aims to mobilize resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS countries and other emerging and developing economies. Since its establishment, the New Development Bank has made steady progress in its operations and institutional development, becoming an emerging force in the international financial system and a landmark project of Global South cooperation. As of March 2026, it had approved loans of US$42.9 billion for 139 development projects, covering key areas including clean energy and energy efficiency, transport infrastructure, environmental protection, water and sanitation, social infrastructure, and digital infrastructure.

Advancing the development and expansion of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The SCO is the first international organization named after a Chinese city, founded with China's participation, and headquartered in the country. China champions the Shanghai Spirit of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for diversity of civilizations, and pursuit of common development, and works towards a closer SCO community of shared future. Through the joint efforts of its member states, the SCO has grown into a group of 27 countries spanning Asia, Europe, and Africa, and its economic aggregate is approaching US$30 trillion. It has carried out cooperation in more than 50 areas, having become an important force for world peace and development and a guardian of international fairness and justice.

In 2025, the SCO Tianjin Summit formulated a development strategy for the coming decade. Leaders of SCO member states witnessed the inauguration of the four security centers [This refers to the Integrated Center for Countering Security Threats and Challenges of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and its Center for Combating Transnational Crime and Information Security Center, and the SCO Narcotics Control Center.] and decided to establish an SCO Development Bank. China also announced the creation of three major China-SCO cooperation platforms, covering energy, green industry, and the digital economy, and three major cooperation centers for scientific and technological innovation, higher education, and vocational and technical education, and the decision to continue the implementation of the action plan for high-quality development of economic and trade cooperation among SCO members. Together, these initiatives have enhanced solidarity and coordination among member states and injected new vitality into the organization, propelling it into a new stage of high-quality development and towards even greater successes.

Promoting the creation of a global governance architecture that is more balanced and effective. China believes that the international financial architecture should be more balanced in representation and better reflect the realities of the world economy. It argues that the World Bank should conduct shareholding reviews and the International Monetary Fund should carry out quota share realignment in accordance with the agreed timeframes and roadmaps to address the democratic deficit in global financial governance.

China supports the reform of the UN Security Council, believing that increasing the representation of developing countries is the right direction of the reform, and that it is imperative to address the historical injustice suffered by Africa, with priority and special arrangements made for the continent's demands. It maintains communication and coordination with its partners in the Global South through mechanisms such as the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77, and plays an active role in championing justice at major international events such as the UN General Assembly. Together, they have made joint efforts to safeguard international fairness and justice and defend their legitimate rights and interests.

Assisting the Global South in jointly embarking on a path towards modernization. China has proposed and advanced an initiative for open and inclusive Global South cooperation, implemented the eight measures in support of Global South cooperation, and encouraged the Global South to become a staunch force for peace, a driving force for open development, a builder of global governance, and an advocate for exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations.

At the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, bilateral relations between China and all African countries with which it has diplomatic ties were officially elevated to the level of strategic relations, and the overall positioning of China-Africa relations was elevated to an all-weather China-Africa community of shared future for the new era. China has also pledged to work with African countries to promote modernization in six areas [This refers to modernization that is just and equitable, open and win-win, diverse and inclusive, eco-friendly, underpinned by peace and security, and that puts the people first.] and implement 10 partnership actions [This refers to the partnership actions for mutual learning among civilizations, for trade prosperity, for industrial chain cooperation, for connectivity, for development cooperation, for health, for agriculture and livelihoods, for people-to-people exchanges, for green development, and for common security.].

The China-Arab States Summit decided to build a China-Arab community of shared future in the new era and carry out eight major cooperation initiatives for pragmatic China-Arab cooperation [This refers to cooperation initiatives on development support, food security, public health, green innovation, energy security, inter-civilizational dialogue, youth development, and security and stability.]. China has established a comprehensive cooperative partnership with Latin American and Caribbean countries based on equality, mutual benefit, and shared development. Together, they have founded the Forum of China and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, jointly launching the five programs on solidarity, development, civilization, peace, and people-to-people connectivity. Adhering to the principles of the Four Fully Respects [China fully respects the sovereignty and independence of Pacific island countries and upholds the equality of all countries, big or small; China fully respects their will and follows the principles of extensive consultation, joint contribution, shared benefits, and win-win results; China fully respects their cultural traditions and pursues harmony without uniformity and the common development of diverse cultures; China fully respects their effort to seek strength through unity, and supports them in implementing the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, so as to contribute to the building of a peaceful, harmonious, secure, inclusive, and prosperous Blue Pacific.], China has carried out friendly cooperation with Pacific island countries and developed seven cooperation platforms [This refers to cooperation platforms on emergency reserve, climate change, poverty reduction and development, disaster prevention and mitigation, Juncao technology, agriculture, and police affairs.] to support them in accelerating efforts to achieve independent and sustainable development.

5. Promoting Exchanges and Mutual Learning Among Civilizations

Recognizing the fundamental reality of diversity in world civilizations and the urgent need to transcend civilizational conflicts, China has proposed the Global Civilization Initiative and promoted its implementation, championing the common values of humanity and fostering deeper exchanges and understanding among different peoples, and wider interactions and greater integration of diverse cultures in a joint effort to advance the development and progress of human civilization.

Promoting global dialogue among civilizations. China upholds a vision of civilization characterized by equality, mutual learning, dialogue, and inclusiveness, and promotes harmonious coexistence among different civilizations to share and admire the beauty of all. On June 7, 2024, the country facilitated the unanimous adoption of a resolution at the 78th session of the UN General Assembly, which designated June 10 as International Day for Dialogue Among Civilizations. For its celebration, vibrant themed activities were held at UN venues in New York and Geneva and in countries around the world.

Elsewhere, China has convened the Conference on Dialogue of Asian Civilizations and the Global Civilizations Dialogue Ministerial Meeting, and erected many multi-level international platforms such as the World Conference of Classics, the Liangzhu Forum, and the Alliance for Cultural Heritage in Asia. It has signed cooperation agreements on culture, cultural relics, and tourism with over 100 countries, deepening cooperation in joint archaeological research, world heritage protection, and the translation of classic works. Through concrete actions, the country promotes global dialogue among civilizations and protects the cultural treasures of all humanity.

The CPC in Dialogue with World Political Parties High-Level Meeting and the CPC and World Political Parties Summit encourage mutual learning between Chinese modernization – a new model for human progress – and other civilizations, continuously enriching the garden of world civilizations, and making new contributions to humanity's exploration of paths to modernization.

Panel 4 Global Civilizations Dialogue Ministerial Meeting Builds a Bridge for Mutual Learning Among Civilizations

From July 10 to 11, 2025, the Global Civilizations Dialogue Ministerial Meeting was held in Beijing under the theme "Safeguarding Diversity of Human Civilizations for World Peace and Development". In a congratulatory letter, President Xi Jinping emphasized that China is willing to work with other countries to champion equality, mutual learning, dialogue, and inclusiveness among civilizations, implement the Global Civilization Initiative, and promote the building of a global network for dialogue and cooperation among civilizations, in a bid to provide fresh impetus for advancing human civilizations and promoting world peace and development.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres also sent a congratulatory letter to the meeting, which saw more than 600 representatives from the political, cultural, and educational sectors of about 140 countries and regions attend its opening ceremony. The meeting adopting the Beijing Declaration of the Global Civilizations Dialogue Ministerial Meeting and released a list of 110 actions to be taken.

Advancing the development and progress of human rights. China advocates protecting human rights through security, advancing human rights through development, and promoting human rights through cooperation, steering global human rights governance in a more just, fair, reasonable, and inclusive direction. It has acceded to or ratified 29 international human rights instruments and has played a constructive role in the formulation of several major international human rights documents, including the Declaration on the Right to Development and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

China has served six terms as a member of the UN Human Rights Council, making it one of the most frequently elected and longest-serving countries. In this role, it has promoted the adoption by the council of resolutions such as "The Contribution of Development to the Enjoyment of All Human Rights", "The Negative Impact of the Legacies of Colonialism on the Enjoyment of Human Rights", "Promoting and Protecting Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Within the Context of Addressing Inequalities", and "Promoting Accessibility for the Full Enjoyment of All Human Rights by All".

Promoting people-to-people exchanges and friendship. China advances various forms of people-to-people diplomacy, city-to-city diplomacy, and public diplomacy. It has held cultural exchange years, tourism years, and education years with many countries, and established over 3,000 pairs of sister cities (provinces/states) with more than 150 countries, actively building bridges for people-to-people exchanges. Entry policies are being continually optimized, with unilateral visa-free access already in place for 50 countries, full mutual visa exemption for 29 countries, and 240-hour transit visa-free policy expanded to 55 countries across 65 entry ports. In 2025, 30.08 million foreigners entered China visa-free, accounting for 73.1 percent of all foreign arrivals, a year-on-year increase of 49.5 percent.

Sports also serve as a bridge for enhancing friendship among peoples. In recent years, China has successfully hosted the Beijing Winter Olympics, the Chengdu FISU World University Games, the Hangzhou Asian Games, and the Harbin Asian Winter Games, carrying forward the Olympic motto of "Faster, Higher, Stronger – Together". The youth represent the future of people-to-people friendship. In recognition of this, during Chinese President Xi Jinping's visits in the US and France in November 2023 and May 2024, China announced an initiative to invite 50,000 young Americans to China for exchange and study over the five years starting from 2023 and an initiative to invite more than 10,000 French students to study in China and double the scale of European youth exchanges in China over the three years starting from 2024. It has also held China-Africa Youth Festivals and "Chinese Bridge" summer camps for young students, planting the seeds of friendship in the hearts of the younger generation.

6. Providing More Public Goods for the International Community

Faced with ever-increasing global challenges, the global governance system must keep pace with the times, find solutions to old problems, and fill the gaps in rules in new areas. China has demonstrated the sense of responsibility of a major country that integrates knowledge and action, actively created international public goods, and contributed new solutions to global governance.

Firmly leading global climate governance. China firmly upholds and promotes the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement. The country adheres to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, and works to build a fair and rational global climate governance system underpinned by cooperation for mutual benefit.

In 2020, at the UN General Assembly, China solemnly declared that it would strive to peak its carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality before 2060. In 2025, at the UN Climate Change Summit, it announced a new round of nationally determined contributions, including reducing economy-wide net greenhouse gas emissions by 7 to 10 percent from peak levels by 2035, striving to do better; increasing the share of non-fossil fuels in total energy consumption to over 30 percent; and scaling up the forest stock volume and developing a carbon emissions trading market.

China has initiated the establishment of the BASIC and the Ministerial on Climate Action to build consensus, and has continued to help developing countries improve their capacity to address climate change through South-South cooperation. As of the end of October 2025, China had signed 55 cooperation documents with 43 developing countries, implemented over 300 sessions of capacity-building programs, and had provided and mobilized over RMB177 billion in program funding since 2016.

Panel 5 China's Green and Low-Carbon Industrial Transition Has Made Significant Contributions to the World

China is a steadfast champion of and a major contributor to green development. It has built the world's largest and fastest-growing renewable energy system and the largest and most complete new energy industrial chain, contributing about one-quarter of the world's newly increased green areas. It has carried out extensive cooperation on green energy projects with more than 100 countries and regions, consistently providing high-quality and efficient low-carbon energy equipment and products to the world, especially to developing countries. Its wind power, photovoltaic, and new energy vehicle products are now exported to over 200 countries and regions, supplying 70 percent of the world's wind power equipment and 80 percent of photovoltaic panels, driving down global wind and photovoltaic power generation costs by more than 60 percent and 80 percent, respectively. During the 14th Five-year Plan period (2021-2025), China's exported wind power and photovoltaic products reduced carbon emissions by approximately 4.1 billion tonnes for other countries.

See page 14

China Daily Global Weekly, an elegant weekend compact featuring news, views and analysis of China and the globe.

$1.99 per month $8.99 per year ~~$23.99~~

Subscribe to China Daily Global Weekly at chinadaily.pressreader.com

DOCUMENT

From page 13

Advancing the development of artificial intelligence for good and for all. China has put forward the Global AI Governance Initiative, advocating a people-centered and AI-for-good approach. It supports the UN in playing a central role and promotes the formation of a global AI governance system with broad consensus to benefit all humanity, calling for strengthened international cooperation and assistance for developing countries to bridge the AI divide. The country has promoted the UN General Assembly's adoption of a resolution on enhancing international cooperation on AI capacity building, and proposed and implemented the AI Capacity-Building Action Plan for Good and for All. It initiated the establishment of the Group of Friends for International Cooperation on AI Capacity-Building, built the Digital South project under the Global Development Project Pool, and has held multiple capacity-building workshops and thematic dialogues in this regard.

Additionally, it has proposed the establishment of a World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization and put forward the Global AI Governance Action Plan and the AI+ International Cooperation Initiative, contributing Chinese wisdom and solutions to AI development and governance. China attaches great importance to preventing risks in the military applications of AI and proposes that all countries should adopt a prudent and responsible approach in the development and use of relevant technologies, to ensure that weapon systems remain under human control at all times and to prevent an AI arms race.

Contributing China's strength to safeguarding global public health security. China actively participates in global health affairs and conducts health exchanges and cooperation through multiple channels and at multiple levels. It provides substantial international assistance in the health sector, and has actively engaged in major international health actions such as fighting the Ebola outbreak and the Covid-19 pandemic. It strives to bridge the immunization gap and the health deficit, and advocates jointly building a community of health for all.

China has signed health cooperation agreements with over 160 countries and international organizations, and initiated and participated in nine international and regional health cooperation mechanisms, including those between China and African countries, between China and Arab states, and between China and Southeast Asian nations. China has dispatched more than 30,000 medical workers to 77 countries and regions and treated 300 million patients. It has carried out medical outreach programs such as the Brightness Action, the Heart Care Action, and the Smile Action to provide free treatment of cataract, heart disease and dental defects, and has implemented the New Shennong Initiative, a program named after the mythical Shennong who tasted 100 herbs to discover their medical properties, to find new medicinal herbs worldwide for application in Traditional Chinese Medicine. China continues to support the World Health Organization (WHO) in playing a central coordinating role in global health governance and has deeply engaged in and led key agendas, including the revision of the International Health Regulations, the negotiation of the Pandemic Agreement, and the reform of global health governance architecture and WHO governance.

Actively leading the global biodiversity governance. Guided by the principle that lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets, China advances eco-environmental conservation as a priority, pursues green development, and has become an important participant, contributor, and torchbearer in the global endeavor to build an eco-civilization. As the presidency of the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, China issued the Kunming Declaration and spearheaded the adoption of the historic Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, guiding the direction and drawing a blueprint for global biodiversity protection through 2030 and beyond. The country has since taken the lead in launching the implementation initiative on the framework and in establishing the Kunming Biodiversity Fund. With an investment of RMB1.5 billion, the fund has to date supported 31 projects and covered 45 developing countries, providing sustained momentum for the implementation of the framework. It has also advocated for the establishment of the International Coalition for Green Development on the Belt and Road, continued to deepen bilateral and multilateral dialogue and exchange, and worked to promote the fruitful results of South-South cooperation on biodiversity protection. In 2019, China became the largest contributor to the core budget of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its protocols, as well as the largest contributor among developing countries to the Global Environment Facility, positions it maintains to this day.

Promoting the improvement of governance rules for new domains. China is advancing the transformation of the global internet governance system, advocating four principles: respecting cyber sovereignty, safeguarding peace and security, promoting openness and cooperation, and ensuring good order. It has held the World Internet Conference for 12 consecutive years since 2014, and put forward the Global Initiative on Data Security and the Global Cross-Border Data Flow Cooperation Initiative. China has supported the establishment of the World Data Organization in Beijing, and supported the United Nations as the main channel for advancing global cyberspace and digital governance, working with all parties to build a community of shared future in cyberspace.

China actively promotes global ocean governance, and facilitated the conclusion of the Agreement on Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction as one of the first signatories. The country holds observer status in the Arctic Council, advocates building a Polar Silk Road, and promotes joint international efforts to protect and sustainably use Antarctic marine living resources.

China is committed to lasting peace and security in outer space, firmly upholding the international space order based on the 1967 Outer Space Treaty. It opposes an arms race in this realm, supports the United Nations in playing its central role, and safeguards the common rights and interests of all countries in the peaceful use of outer space.

IV. Guiding the Direction of Change Towards a Bright Future

The Global Governance Initiative quickly received widespread support from nearly 160 countries and international organizations upon its announcement, and China's ideas and actions have increasingly resonated with and received positive response from the international community. The reason behind this lies in the fact that China understands how to meet the call of the day and shape the trends of our times; that the GGI, while rooted in China, benefits the world; and that grounded in today's realities while opening up the future, China is contributing wisdom and strength to the progress of human civilization.

1. Building Broad Consensus on Improving Global Governance

Extensive consultation, joint contribution, and shared benefits are aspired by all. A world so vast is bound to face many challenges. What kind of global governance system benefits the world and all its peoples? China believes that global affairs should be discussed by all, the governance system should be built by all, and development outcomes should be shared by all. This approach tackles problems at their root, represents the common aspirations of the vast majority of countries, and seeks the greatest common ground of shared interests for all nations in the world.

An equal and orderly multipolar world and a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization are the trends of the times. China advocates that all countries have a place in global governance and play their due roles. Together, they should build the world economy stronger and share the fruits equitably. Let economic globalization penetrate the dark room of protectionism like fresh air and bright sunshine to the benefit of all. This truly aligns with the trend of the times and the aspirations of all people.

True multilateralism is the only path forward. Global governance is both broad in scope and specific in practice. China offers a clear and all-encompassing approach: to champion and apply true multilateralism. Time and again, experience has shown that only when multilateralism is acted upon and multilateral coordination and cooperation are strong and effective, can global governance advance and human wellbeing be guaranteed. Without multilateralism humanity cannot develop and the world cannot progress.

The common values of humanity are a universal guide. With more than eight billion people, over 200 countries and regions, and more than 2,500 ethnic groups and many religions in our world, respecting diversity and differences while forging a great synergy across systems, civilizations, and countries is crucial to the success of global governance. China promotes the common values of humanity – peace, development, fairness, justice, democracy, and freedom. These values align with the core ideas of solidarity, coexistence, and win-win cooperation advocated by various civilizations, laying a value foundation for jointly improving global governance.

2. Demonstrating a Global Vision and a Sense of Responsibility

By sharing its philosophy on global governance and proposing the Global Governance Initiative, China has demonstrated a sense of responsibility in fulfilling the CPC's original aspiration and founding mission. Upholding fundamental principles while breaking new ground, it champions the country's rich diplomatic traditions and draws strength from its fine traditional culture, advancing with and leading the times while remaining committed to action.

China's global governance philosophy originates from the CPC's global vision. Since its founding 105 years ago, the CPC has always taken as its mission the pursuit of progress for humanity and great harmony for the world. It is this mission that determines China's noble goal in participating in global governance: to strive to turn the aspirations of the Chinese people and people of all countries for a better life into reality. The Fourth Plenary Session of the 20th CPC Central Committee emphasized the building of a community with a shared future for humanity and the implementation of the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, the Global Civilization Initiative, and the Global Governance Initiative, providing clear guidance for China to work hand in hand with other countries to reform and improve the global governance system.

China's global governance philosophy carries forward the fine traditions of its diplomacy. As early as the 1950s, Chairman Mao Zedong said that China ought to make a greater contribution to humanity. Acting on this vision, the PRC has remained committed to an independent foreign policy of peace, and put forward the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, the Three Worlds theory, and the idea of establishing a new global political and economic order, proactively safeguarding the interests of developing countries. For over 70 years, its foreign policy has remained steadfast in its original aspiration to uphold fairness and justice, and its mission to promote human progress has only deepened over time. This record continues to provide a source of strength for China's participation in and leadership of global governance in the new era.

China's global governance philosophy is rooted in the profound heritage of the Chinese civilization. Throughout its more than 5,000 years of civilization, the Chinese nation has always pursued peace, concord, and harmony across generations. Since ancient times, it has cherished the lofty ideal of "great harmony under Heaven", the governance philosophy of "great wisdom governing through sound institutions", the spiritual pursuit of "pulling together in times of difficulty", the strong conviction that "the people are the foundation of the state", and the practical approach of "applying knowledge in action". Under new historical conditions, these elements of wisdom have undergone a creative transformation and innovative progress, offering timeless insights for addressing global challenges.

3. Expanding the Practical Pathways for Building a Community with a Shared Future for Humanity

Over a decade ago, President Xi Jinping put forward the important vision of building a community with a shared future for humanity, with the goal of creating a better world and a better life for people of all countries. Since then, under the banner of building a community with a shared future for humanity, China has adopted a series of initiatives to confront various global risks and challenges, continuously enriching the practice of global governance.

In the face of a widening North South divide and severe delays in implementing the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, China has proposed the Global Development Initiative to advance common development. In the face of complex international and regional situations and security governance challenges – especially when certain countries seek absolute security at the expense of other countries' security – China put forward the Global Security Initiative in time to address the peace deficit and tackle security problems. Amid a rising clamor of "clash of civilizations" and "confrontation between different systems", and the stoking of "antagonism of values" by some countries, China has proposed the Global Civilization Initiative to promote exchange and mutual learning among civilizations. Now, faced with a widening governance deficit and growing efforts to undermine the United Nations and multilateralism, China has put forward the Global Governance Initiative, expanding on the institutions of the other three global initiatives and aiming at building a more just and equitable global governance system.

Providing systematic solutions, China's four major global initiatives run in parallel with a focus on different domains and form a complete action framework that promotes prosperity through development, ensures stability through security, enhances mutual trust through exchanges between civilizations, and seeks justice through governance. Together, they lead to an open, inclusive, clean, and beautiful world that enjoys lasting peace, universal security, and common prosperity, constituting an important pillar for building a community with a shared future for humanity.

4. Opening Up New Horizons for Political Civilization of Humanity

Throughout history, humanity has experienced innumerable wars – either hot or cold – but has emerged from each to achieve remarkable progress. Today, the world faces a broader and deeper transformation, and where it will head to depends on the choices of individual countries. By proposing the Global Governance Initiative and a series of new ideas and approaches, China has deepened its understanding of the laws governing the development of human society and promoted the advancement of human political civilization.

Breaking free from the outdated "core-periphery" framework of the old international order. A world in which just a few countries dominate and most are subordinate, and where the rich become richer while the poor become poorer, is not a good world. Whether through the so-called "hegemonic stability theory", "Western-centrism", "neoliberalism", or the "democratic peace theory", the result has been a world marred by disunity and injustice, with turmoil and chaos in many regions. China stands firmly on the right side of history, is committed to promoting greater democracy in international relations so that developing countries can truly become equal members of the international community and masters of their own future.

Transcending the flawed logic that "might makes right". The outdated mindset of hegemonism and power politics cannot adapt to the new reality of a multipolar world. Frequent bullying and big-stick coercion and extortion have opened the Pandora's box for a return to the law of the jungle. China stands firmly on the side of fairness and justice, remaining a pillar of strength amidst the tumultuous changes and upheavals of the world. It clearly advocates the international rule of law and will never allow whoever has the bigger fist to call the shots. Through its efforts, the international community has formed a consensus that calls for fairness, not hegemony.

Abandoning the zero-sum mentality of "winner takes all". Blocking others' path will not get you further; when blowing out others' lamps, the fire will burn your beard. Protectionism is a fire that burns those who set it, and the pursuit of absolute security only adds fuel to the flames. China stands firmly on the side of win-win cooperation, taking concrete actions to pursue harmonious coexistence and seeking its own success while helping others succeed. It advocates that the fruits of governance should be shared by all and that no country should be left behind, so that every member of the international community becomes a winner.

V. Moving Forward Hand in Hand at a Critical Juncture in History

The world has entered a new period of turbulence and transformation, and humanity once again faces a choice: a future marked by peace, dialogue, and win-win cooperation, or one marred by war, confrontation, and zero-sum competition. It is encouraging to see that with broad support from the international community, the Global Governance Initiative is drawing wide participation. It must also be understood, however, that great undertakings are rarely achieved overnight. To advance the initiative, all parties must persevere in the face of challenges, rise above disputes, and work together to build a more just and equitable global governance system.

1. Acting in Global Interest and Planning for the Benefit of Future Generations

Global governance concerns the shared and long-term interests of all people, and its essence lies not in deal making but in the pursuit of justice. China calls on all countries to bear in mind the future of humanity and the wellbeing of their people, to translate the vision of the GGI into concrete actions, and to work towards lasting achievements that benefit all the people for generations to come.

In our global village, all countries are connected, and their interests are closely intertwined. A nation's interests are better realized only when they align with the interests of all. Putting one's own interests first leads only to going it alone, and actions that harm others only serve to harm oneself. In participating in global governance, all countries should adopt a broad vision of shared global responsibility that transcends narrow self-interests. Division and conflict should be overcome with an open mind, with all nations working for humanity's shared future and building a shared home to prevent the "tragedy of the commons".

Global governance is about establishing rules and managing the world on a long-term basis. It requires upholding the principle of intergenerational equity and balancing present needs with those of the future. We must neither deplete the resources left to us by our ancestors – jeopardizing the future of posterity – nor pass on to the next generation the problems that we should solve. The baton of history is in our hands, and the question of where global governance is headed demands an answer. Our generation must offer a response worthy of our times and demonstrate vision and wisdom to build a global governance system that is fairer and more equitable, stable, and effective. Only then can we pass on to future generations a more peaceful, prosperous, and beautiful world.

2. Rising to Challenges with Firm Confidence

Building a more just and equitable global governance system is a noble goal that is feasible and attainable, but it is also a gradual historical process. China believes that as long as all parties remain steadfast in their resolve and persist in their efforts, step by step, this vision is sure to become a reality.

A multipolar world is rapidly emerging, and the trend towards democracy and the rule of law in international relations is unstoppable. Human society is bound to evolve, from confrontation to cooperation, imbalance to balance, division to coexistence. As the times progress and the people awaken, power politics and "exclusive governing clubs" are losing their foundation. As long as the torch of multilateralism is held high, the cause of global governance will pierce through the darkness and reach a brighter future.

The world today is marked by both change and turbulence. Turning chaos into order is no easy task, and reaching a consensus on global governance requires overcoming conflicts and differences through arduous effort. The road is long, but we will reach our destination if we keep moving forward. The task is formidable, but we are sure to succeed as long as we persist. All countries must work hard and make unremitting efforts to push forward the great cause of reforming and improving global governance – no one should look on, hesitate, or slack off.

3. Let's Unite and Act

Global governance promotes the common wellbeing of the international community and relies on the collective efforts of all nations. China advocates that countries unite and cooperate, take concrete action, and transform the vision and blueprint of the GGI into a roadmap and timeline for joint action.

In addressing the diverse interests of different countries, the key lies in seeking common ground while shelving differences. We should create the greatest synergy for peaceful development and win-win cooperation, united under a single system, order, and set of rules. We must strengthen the UN as the core mechanism for practicing multilateralism and the primary platform for global governance. Unity is strength. Only through solidarity and cooperation can we deliver results and overcome major challenges for the benefit of all. Only then can we translate GGI principles into the broadest consensus and the most powerful action.

The successful implementation of the GGI requires major countries to shoulder their responsibilities, multilateral mechanisms to play their roles, and the international community to take concrete action. We need to prioritize urgent issues and work to de-escalate flashpoints. We should focus on improving communication and cooperation in areas where there is an urgent need for better governance. These include reform of the international financial architecture, artificial intelligence, cyberspace, climate change, trade, and outer space. We will build consensus, secure outcomes, and strive for an early success in global governance.

Conclusion

This is an era of challenges. But it is also one of hope. An era where a brighter future beckons, provided we work continuously for the good of generations to come. The Global Governance Initiative is a path to this goal, balancing lofty ideals with practical action and driving progress towards more effective global governance, step by step.

The initiative stands at the forefront of our era, offering fresh momentum for building a community with a shared future for humanity and serving as a compass to help the great ship of history chart its course through turbulent waters. It is yet another significant public good that China has contributed to the world.

Looking ahead, as the international community gains a deeper understanding of this initiative and participates in it, the progressive forces championing multilateralism will grow stronger, and the grand goal of building a more just and equitable global governance system will gradually become a reality.

China stands ready to work hand in hand with all other countries to implement the initiative under the principles of extensive consultation, joint contribution, and shared benefits. Together, we can expand the scope and influence of multilateralism, let the light of fairness and justice illuminate the world, and bring the achievements of global governance to all nations. Together, we can create a brighter future for humanity and the progress of human civilization.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:23 PM



CULTURE



Exhibition makes mythical connections

Exploring the origins of Maya and Andean civilizations brings about comparisons that expose similarities to ancient Chinese beliefs, **Wang Ru** reports.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:23 PM

In ancient Chinese myth, human beings were created by the mother goddess Nyuwa, who kneaded a mixture of soil and water until it took the form of a self-resembling doll-like creature. That myth is strikingly similar to one in remote Mesoamerica: in Maya myth, humans were made by a god who used maize dough.

Today, when visiting Mesoamerican countries, people find that maize remains the soul of local people's lives. It appears as the staple in daily meals, and is frequently added to other delicacies. Ceremonies related to maize can also be witnessed throughout the year.

This crop has been a lasting cultural symbol for millennia, as demonstrated by *Maize·Gold·Jaguar: A Grand Exhibition of Ancient Maya and Andean Civilizations*, which is currently on view at the Capital Museum in Beijing.

For over 3,000 years, from around 2000 BC to the 16th century AD, the Maya civilization flourished in present-day Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, and El Salvador, renowned for its advanced writing system, astronomy and monumental pyramid-temples. Andean civilization, which thrived in South America's Andes Mountains from around 3000 BC to the 16th century AD, was also remarkable, known for its achievements in architecture, metallurgy and pottery production.

With about 800 artifacts from more than 20 cultural heritage institutes in Mexico and Peru, the exhibition, as the largest in the museum's history, showcases a historical lineage of more than 3,000 years through three cultural symbols — maize, gold and the jaguar — systematically demonstrating the productive foundations, spiritual symbols and power systems of Maya and Andean civilizations.

"Maize was the origin of life in ancient Mesoamerica," says Tan Xiaoling, deputy director of the Capital Museum. "Gold, in Andean civilization, was the sweat of the sun, representing the supreme authorities of divine and royal power. The jaguar, however, was the king of the forest and a symbolic totem connecting the human world with the divine realm. Together, they form a complete spiritual spectrum of ancient American people from survival to faith and then power."

Cosmic chapter

The first chapter draws visitors into the Maya world, displaying how ancient people from that remote area created outstanding achievements, including farming, hieroglyphic, and the astronomical calendar, during its classical era from 200 to 900, roughly the same time as China's Three Kingdoms (220-280) to the Tang Dynasty (618-907), says Shao Xinxin, curator of this section of the exhibition.

He highlights a sandstone head statue on display from 600-900, adorned with a cosmic tree headdress with geometrics, animal and deity patterns. It is speculated that this figure played an important role in ancient Maya sacrificial or other ceremonial activities.

Behind this artifact lies the Mayan worldview and the cosmos. Shao says they believed the world had three realms — the upper realm for the sun, the moon and the stars; the middle realm was where humans thrived; and the bottom realm was where the dead paused before rebirth. Linking the three realms is the cosmic tree, which holds the universe together.

Horizontally, with the tree at the center, Mayans divided the earthly realm into five directions, each associated with a symbolic color: the east, red; the north, white; the west, black; the south, yellow; and the center, green.

Shao says such ideas, whether the world is three realms or the five directions of different colors, can also be traced in traditional Chinese culture. The Chinese also used five colors to denote the same five directions, though the color assignments differed.

Another fascinating parallel appears in the representation of the moon. The display showcases a limestone stele from 900 to 1521 depicting the Maya moon goddess Ixchel. She holds a rabbit in her arms. In Maya belief, the rabbit symbolizes the moon and is an important partner of the goddess.

"This is highly similar to the moon goddess Chang'e and her rabbit in traditional Chinese myth," says Shao. "It is generally guessed that Maya and Chinese people both believed the shadow they witnessed on the moon was a rabbit. Connecting the rabbit to the moon is rare in world civilizations elsewhere."

While the exhibition's first section focuses on the Maya civilization, the second section shifts the viewer's attention southward into the Andes Mountains. Here, the organizing symbol is gold.

Heavy metal masks

In the second section, the Andean civilization is introduced mainly through its metal vessel-making techniques. A gilt-copper mask on display, unearthed from the Royal Tombs of Sipan in Peru, is the masterpiece that showcases this achievement. Its facial features are clear and lifelike, showing the craftspeople's mastery of human expression.

Such masks were often placed on the faces of tomb owners or appeared in groups as accompanying burial artifacts. In Andean belief, masks held a protective function: they guarded the soul of the deceased and helped the dead gain their identity in the underworld, says Zhao Yazhuo, also a curator of the exhibition, adding that the mask is highly similar to the jade and metal masks found in ancient Chinese tombs.

The 72 artifacts from the Royal Tombs of Sipan are highlighted in the display, with more than 80 percent making their debut in China. More than half have never been showcased in Peru.

The royal tombs were discovered first in 1987, when some were looted. Then archaeologist Walter Alva carried out rescue excavations of the tombs with a team and discovered the giant tomb group, where the king of the Moche culture (an ancient Peruvian culture from 100 to 850) was buried. Its high level of preservation is often compared to that of the tomb of Tutankhamun in Egypt.

"People in Peru's northern coastal region overcame the desert through engineered irrigation systems, giving rise to a unique civilization. The Moche culture, in particular, stands as an outstanding example," says Alva. "I believe this exhibition enables China, a country that also has a long history, to understand Peru's past and appreciate the best examples of its artistic creativity."

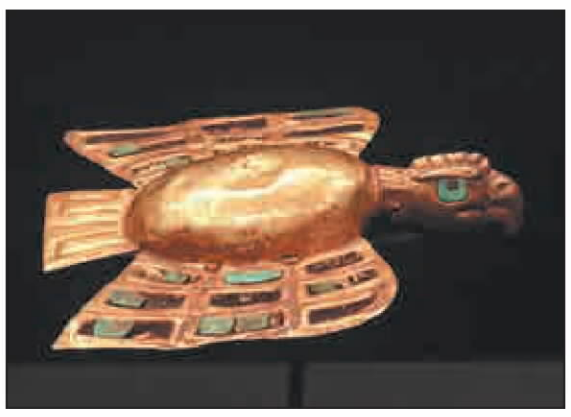
The exhibition also traces a lesser-known historical connection that linked the Andes to China through the global silver trade. Since the 16th century, when the Inca Empire (about 1400-1532) of Andean civilization gradually declined, Spanish colonizers exploited local silver in enormous quantities, which then traveled all the way to Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) China through maritime trade.

The Ming economy, Zhao explains, faced a silver shortage for use as currency. "The paper currency issued in the early Ming Dynasty had lost significant value, and there was also a shortage of bronze coins. Thus, the public had an earnest demand for a stable, reliable currency. The import of silver from Americas filled that gap.

"In this way, the remote Chinese and Andean civilizations were truly connected at that time, all becoming part of the entire world history," she adds.











From top: A feline-shaped ceramic jar, from 600 to 1000, unearthed in Peru. Peruvian archaeologist Walter Alva introduces artifacts from the Royal Tombs of Sipan on display at the Capital Museum's new exhibition last month. A gold headdress (inset), unearthed from Peru from 100 to 850. People appreciate a sandstone statue of Maya culture from 600 to 900 on display at the exhibition. A gold Andean condor plaque (left) from 1300-200 BC. A gold Peruvian warrior figurine from 100 to 850 on display. Bronze figurines unearthed from Peru from 600 to 1000. PHOTOS BY JIANG DONG / CHINA DAILY

Animal instincts

While the first two sections focus on human creations, the final section turns the spotlight on animals in Americas, introducing their bond with human society.

Wei Yi, curator of the last section, says that in Mesoamerica, people believed each individual had a guardian spirit animal and was endowed with the spirit and character of their protective animal. For example, if someone's guarding spirit is a jaguar, then the person likely has strength and courage. If one is protected by a monkey, then they may be elegantly flexible with artistic talent.

An object on display directly illustrates this belief: a soldier's figurine in jaguar attire, found in western Mexico and dating from approximately 100 BC to AD 400. The soldier wears a jaguar skin as a garment, and his posture is aggressive and powerful. The meaning is clear: by dressing as the jaguar, the soldier would gain the animal's strength and fighting skills, ensuring victory in battle.

"Ancient people in Mesoamerica understood the relationship between people and animals in this way, deeply integrating animals in their lives and social culture," says Wei.

"Following this belief, visitors can find out their own guardian animal when touring the display," he adds.

Contact the writer at wangru1@chinadaily.com.cn

NEWS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08

Download the China Daily iPaper App, and start the in-app subscription today.

As low as

$9.99

per month



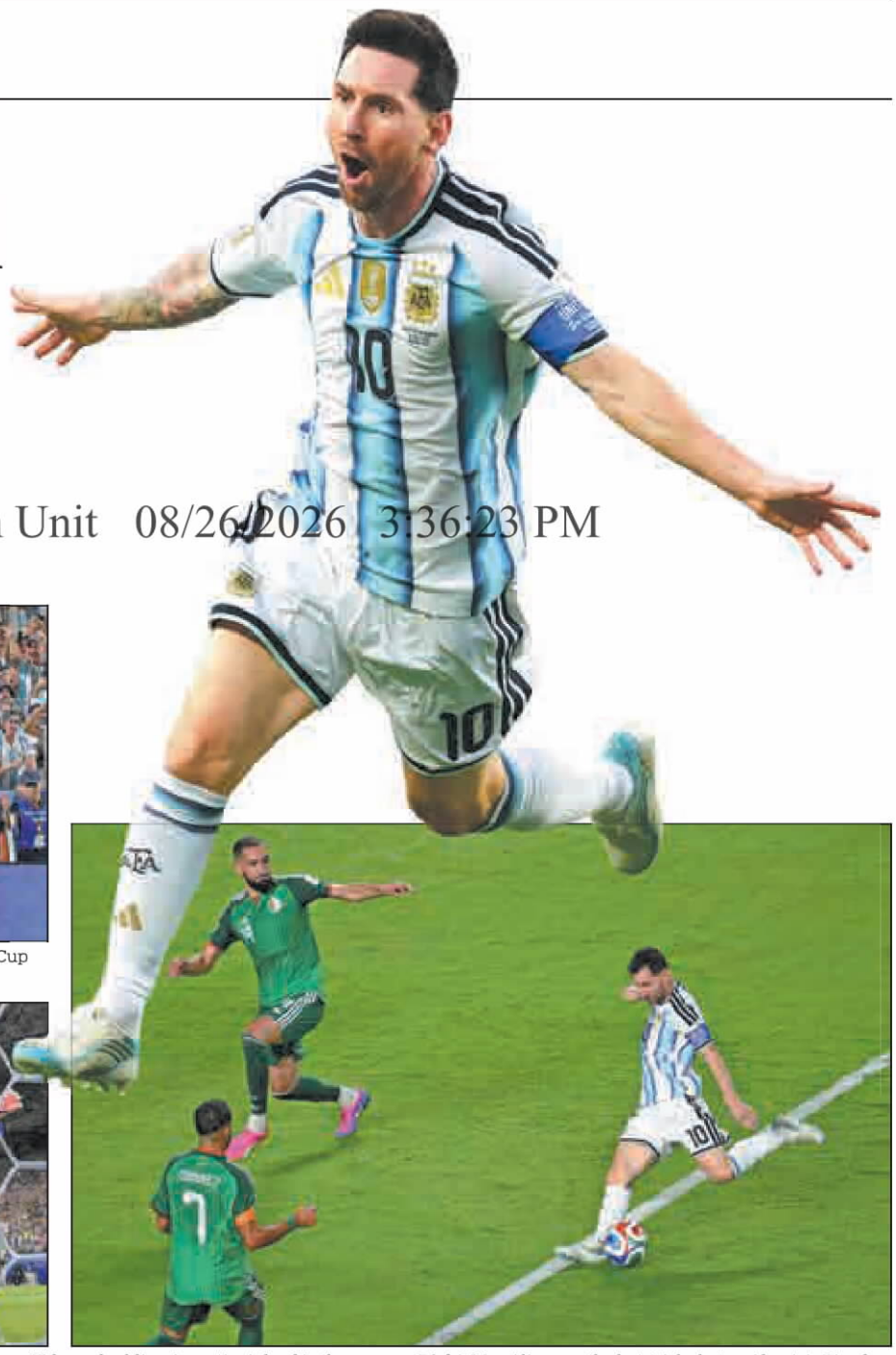
SPORTS

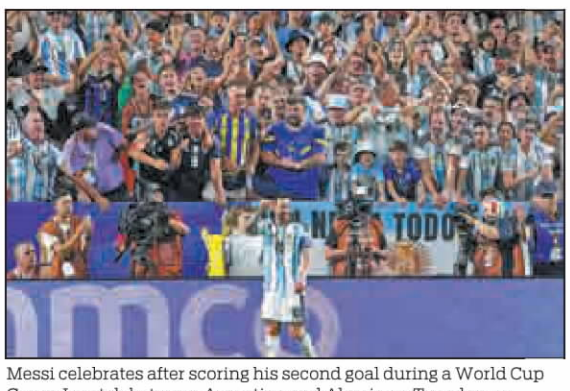
WORLD CUP 2026

Messi hails 'beautiful moment' after tying Cup goals record

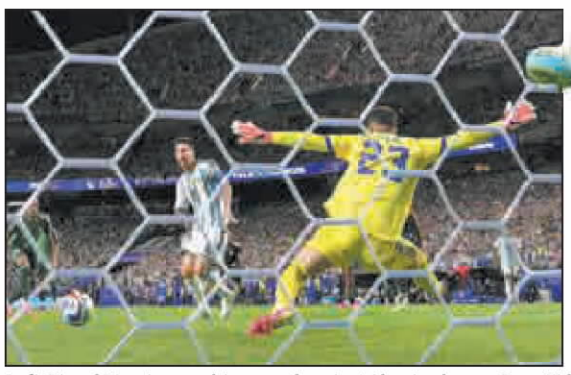
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:23 PM

Argentine's hat-trick puts him level with German Klose





Messi celebrates after scoring his second goal during a World Cup Group J match between Argentina and Algeria on Tuesday. AP



Left: Lionel Messi scores his second against Algerian keeper Luca Zidane, doubling Argentina's lead in the process. **Right:** Messi lines up the hat-trick shot as Algeria's Riyad Mahrez (7) and Nabil Bentaleb (19) attempt to close him down. AFP / AP

Lionel Messi saluted a "beautiful moment" after becoming the World Cup's joint all-time leading goalscorer in his record-breaking appearance at his sixth World Cup on Tuesday.

The 38-year-old Argentina captain penned another memorable chapter in his storied career with a brilliant hat-trick in the South Americans' 3-0 win over Algeria at Kansas City's Arrowhead Stadium.

Messi's hat-trick — his first ever in a World Cup — put him alongside Germany's Miroslav Klose as the top scorer in the tournament's history with 16 goals.

"To enjoy this with my family, with my teammates, the ones who are always there, is a really beautiful moment," Inter Miami star Messi said afterwards. "I'm happy."

Messi's razor-sharp eye for goal augurs well for Argentina's hopes of becoming the first team since Brazil in 1962 to win back-to-back World Cup titles.

"The squad, it's a very united, very strong group," Messi said.

"I feel good; we were lucky enough to win a tough match. It's important to start off with a win in the first game.

"I'm grateful to the fans, because, once again, they've shown that Argentina is crazy about this — we packed the stadium again."

On a night for the ages in Kansas City, the records kept tumbling for Argentina's miracle man, considered by many to be the greatest footballer of all time.

When the match kicked off at the home of the NFL's Kansas City Chiefs, Messi became the first player to feature in six World Cup tournaments, in his 200th international match.

And the star veteran, who made his first appearance at a World Cup as a teenager in 2006, lit up the occasion with three goals in a clinical display by Argentina.

Messi produced a majestic finish from distance in the 17th minute, sparking a frenzy among his adoring fans, who had turned the match into a virtual home game.

He netted again in the second half from close range, gobbling up a rebound to take him just one goal behind the all-time record held by Klose.

Messi completed his first World Cup hat-trick with an unstoppable finish in the 76th minute.

The diminutive genius was substituted shortly afterward, forcing Argentine fans to wait to see their hero have a shot at the outright record.

Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni, meanwhile, said he no longer has "the words to describe Messi".

"For 20 years, he's had us used to seeing things like this, and he inspires everyone who watches him play," Scaloni said of his star player.

Scaloni is now targeting Argentina's second Group J game against Austria on Monday, as the South Americans look to lock up their place in the knockout rounds.

"We're going to take it one game at a time. The team is happy; we gave playing time to a lot of players," Scaloni said.

"Hopefully, we can win the next one so everyone can be in the third group stage match."

Fluid in attack

The Group J match in the open-air stadium started at a frantic pace and both sides had early goals ruled out for offside, including one from Messi.

But Argentina took the lead when Rodrigo De Paul played a beautifully measured through ball, which Messi picked up before driving at goal and unleashing a fierce shot from outside the penalty area that curled away from goalkeeper Luca Zidane.

The South American team was largely in control, fluid in attack with its revered No 10 pulling the strings.

But, as the clock ticked toward halftime Algeria enjoyed a better spell, with Argentina goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez forced to parry a shot from Fares Chaibi.

Messi curled another effort over the bar in the early minutes of the second half and Zidane kept out a shot from Lautaro Martinez.

But the crowd did not have to wait long to celebrate another goal from the veteran Inter Miami forward.

Zidane failed to deal with a sizzling Alexis Mac Allister strike and Messi was there to sweep home in the 60th minute.

Time stood still six minutes later as Messi was through again, but this time Zidane pushed the ball over the bar.

It was enough to make Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes leap from his seat in anticipation.

Messi, though, was not to be denied, completing his hat-trick after being set up by substitute Nico Gonzalez.

'A madman'

Messi's hat-trick upstaged two of soccer's other stars — Kylian Mbappe of France and Erling Haaland of Norway — who had big games of their own on Tuesday. Mbappe scored twice in France's 3-1 win over Senegal, moving him into joint fourth on the World Cup goals list with 14, while Haaland scored twice for Norway in its 4-1 victory over Iraq.

"Messi is a madman," Haaland said in a post on Snapchat.

Messi, who turns 39 next week, had been dealing with a minor hamstring injury with Inter Miami that had slowed him in the lead-up to the World Cup, but the eight-time Ballon d'Or recipient had no problems in a tuneup against Iceland last week, scoring on a penalty kick while playing 20 minutes in a sharp performance.

"When I'm in good shape," Messi said, "I give it my all."

Earlier, the roads around the stadium were clogged as tens of thousands of Argentine fans streamed toward the ground dressed in blue and white, many with Messi's name on the back of their shirts.

Argentina's all-time top scorer is just the third man to reach 200 caps after Cristiano Ronaldo and Kuwait's Bader Al-Mutawa.

Ronaldo will equal Messi's record of six World Cup appearances if he plays for Portugal against DR Congo on Wednesday.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Mbappe calls the tune in France win



Kylian Mbappe scores his second goal, and France's third, during a World Cup Group I match against Senegal in East Rutherford, New Jersey, on Tuesday. AP



Kylian Mbappe celebrates scoring the opening goal in France's World Cup match against Senegal on Tuesday. AP

EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey — After a flat first half, Kylian Mbappe got France back in tune.

Mbappe scored twice to move past Pele with 14 World Cup goals, celebrating by mimicking a flutist as he had promised, and helping Les Bleus beat Senegal 3-1 on Tuesday in their World Cup opener.

"He could have scored four or five goals, OK, theoretically, but we're happy with two," France coach Didier Deschamps said.

He began the day one goal behind Olivier Giroud, his teammate in France's victorious 2018 World Cup campaign, but is now one ahead of the former Arsenal striker on 58 goals in 99 appearances.

"I am really pleased and very happy to make a little more history for my country," Mbappe said.

"It is something I always wanted to do, although we know why we are here, so I think I will have the time to think about all these things once I stop playing."

He added: "We want to keep writing the biggest page in the history of the French national team. We know the road is very long, but we are ready."

Mbappe had 14 touches in the scoreless first half, the fewest of any player, then put France ahead in the 66th minute. He burst past Senegal captain Kalidou Koulibaly, turned onto a diagonal pass from Michael Olise and slid the ball past goalkeeper Edouard Mendy from just outside the six-yard box.

In a segment with Mbappe taped on May 20 and aired Friday by US broadcaster Fox, award-winning actor and television host James Corden suggested the 27-year-old star striker celebrate his next World Cup goal by imitating a flute player. Mbappe practiced the instrument for a year or two as a child at the behest of his parents.

"I'll do it for you in the first game," Mbappe said.

Mbappe ran toward a corner, brought both hands to his lips and mimicked the instrument.

"If he wants to miss the first half again and score two goals in the second half in another match, that's OK with me," Deschamps said.

Bradley Barcola doubled the lead in the 82nd, two minutes after entering. Ibrahim Mbaye cut the deficit in the fifth minute of stoppage time. Senegalese celebrations, though, were short-lived. Mbappe scored just 68 seconds later on a spectacular right-footed shot from 30 yards. The ball dipped perfectly between Mendy's outstretched left arm and the crossbar.

"A crazy goal," French defender William Saliba said.

Mbappe, who led the 2022 tournament with eight goals, moved one ahead of Lionel Messi and fellow Frenchman Just Fontaine on the World Cup scoring list before Messi scored his 14th, 15th and 16th for Argentina later Tuesday. Mbappe is tied with Germany's Gerd Muller, trailing Messi, Germany's Miroslav Klose (16) and Brazil's Ronaldo (15).

"I'm sure that he will do it," Saliba said of Mbappe setting the record.

"He can, from time to time, miss a game or two, but on one action he really is able to tip the scales and bring his team to victory," Deschamps said.

"People say he doesn't defend enough. Well, he's not here to defend."

Mbappe brushed off critics.

"It's not about revenge," he said. "If I started playing for all the people who criticize me just to silence them, I'd have to play until I was 80."

Trying to reach its third straight World Cup final, France plays Iraq on Monday in Philadelphia, then closes Group I on June 26 against Norway at Foxborough, Massachusetts. Senegal meets Norway on Monday at MetLife Stadium and finishes the first round against Iraq in Toronto.

With fans in Senegal denied visas by the United States government, supporters of the Lions of Teranga appeared limited to a few sections in MetLife's southwest corner on a sunny 25 C afternoon.

While most of the stadium was filled with a just-under-sellout crowd of 80,545, there were empty seats on a mezzanine club level, which has air-conditioned suites behind the outdoor chairs.

Two hours before kickoff, tickets dropped to as low as $69 on FIFA's resale site.

FIFA sold tickets at $220-$620 in December.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

STAY INFORMED, ANYWHERE, ANYTIME.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/202 26:23 PM

Enjoy unlimited access to the China Daily SmartEdition website and ipaper app.

$4.99 per month | $49.99 per year



Subscribe to SmartEdition at chinadaily.pressreader.com

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:26 PM

Golden harvest

Subsidy schemes turn desert into farmland

GOING GREEN, PAGE 12



Forum deepens cross-Strait ties, cooperation

TOP NEWS, PAGE 3



Heritage reimagined

Viral hat design boosts Miao artisans, fuels rural incomes

CULTURE, PAGE 13

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日報 MONDAY, JUNE 15, 2026

XI'S VISION | SCO COOPERATION

Shanghai Spirit still resonates after 25 years

SCO's scope, focus have grown as group supports all members' development

By **ZHAO JIA**
zhaojia@chinadaily.com.cn

On June 15, 2001, the leaders of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan gathered in Shanghai to announce the founding of a new regional organization in the Eurasian region.

A quarter century later, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization — the only international organization named after a Chinese city — has grown far beyond its initial security focus into the world's largest regional organization.

Today, the SCO has 10 member states, two observer states and 15 dialogue partners, bringing together countries that account for nearly half of the world's population and about a quarter of the global economy.

Describing the SCO as a "big family", President Xi Jinping has always attached great importance to the development of the organization. He has attended every SCO summit since taking office, sharing visions, putting forward key initiatives and promoting joint efforts to carry forward the Shanghai Spirit.

"A just cause finds great support, and a journey with many companions gets far," Xi said, quoting an old Chinese saying, at the SCO summit in 2023, noting that the organization's development accords with the trend of the times and goes along with the direction of human progress.

The Shanghai Spirit, featuring mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for diverse civilizations and the pursuit of common development, has remained central to Xi's remarks on the SCO.

Chairing the SCO summit for the first time in Qingdao, Shandong province, in June 2018, Xi reviewed the organization's development and achievements, and emphasized that the Shanghai Spirit serves as a shared asset for all member states.

"The Shanghai Spirit, transcending outdated concepts such as clash of civilizations, Cold War and zero-sum mentality, has opened a new page in the history of international relations and gained increasing endorsement of the international community," Xi said.

At each SCO summit since 2013, Xi has underscored the profound relevance of the Shanghai Spirit while continually enriching and expanding its meaning.

Yermek Kosherbayev, Kazakhstan's foreign minister, said in a signed article marking the SCO's 25th anniversary that the organization's "greatest asset remains its constructive and pragmatic approach to cooperation, founded on the universal principles of equality and mutual benefit, without the dominance of any single ideology".

This approach, known as the Shanghai Spirit, has proved the resilience, effectiveness and enduring value of the multilateral mechanisms developed within the SCO framework, he said.

Yang Jin, an associate researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said the Shanghai Spirit is not an abstract slogan, but a set of principles tested in the SCO's practice.

See ***Grouping,*** *page 3*

Inside

See more, **pages 7, 8**

Cup of joy



People watch a World Cup parade in Mexico City, Mexico, on Saturday. The 2026 FIFA World Cup, which kicked off on Thursday in Mexico City, is being co-hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico and will run through July 19. NATACHA PISARENKO / AP

Peace deal with Iran to be signed on Friday

By **SU QIANG** in Beijing and **SHI GUANG** in New York

The United States and Iran will sign a peace deal on Friday, US President Donald Trump announced on Sunday.

"The Deal with the Islamic Republic of Iran is now complete," Trump said in an announcement on Truth Social. "Congratulations to all!"

"Many presidents have tried to make Peace with Iran, and all have failed before me. The Leaders of the Region have, for the first time, found a President who can help them achieve real Peace," Trump posted.

"With the opening of the Strait upon the signing of the Deal on Friday, for purposes of mine removal, oil will flow on both ends again for the Region, and the World!" he said.

Earlier on Sunday, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif of Pakistan, which has been acting as a mediator, announced on X that a deal had been reached between the two parties.

"Following intensive talks, we are pleased to announce that the Peace Deal between the United States of America and Islamic Republic of Iran has been REACHED. Both sides have declared the immediate and permanent termination of military operations on all fronts, including in Lebanon," Sharif posted.

The signing ceremony will be on Friday in Switzerland, he said.

Inside

Comment, **page 6**

"With the agreement now in place, mediators will facilitate a series of meetings this week. These pre-implementation discussions will lay the foundation for the technical talks and the official signing ceremony," Sharif said.

Iran Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi confirmed an immediate and permanent end to the war, telling Iranian state TV that military operations on various fronts, including Lebanon, will cease, Reuters reported. He also said that the US naval blockade of Iranian ports would be lifted.

Details of the agreement have yet to be released.

Trump had posted earlier that a peace deal with Iran would be signed on Sunday — his 80th birthday.

However, Iran said on Sunday that no agreement would be reached by Trump's deadline, the country's Fars News Agency reported.

The proposed agreement would apparently see the Strait of Hormuz reopened to commercial traffic, and the US blockade of Iranian ports lifted. It was expected that the current ceasefire would be extended by another 60 days.

However, two ongoing sticking points have been a US demand that Iran surrender its stockpile of enriched uranium, while Iran has demanded the US unfreeze assets worth tens of billions of dollars.

In an interview with the New York Times, Trump said that the agreement means the Strait of Hormuz would be "permanently toll free".

Trump told the Times that if Iran failed to reach a final nuclear agreement with the US he would restart military attacks, or make the US "the guardian of the Middle East" in return for a fifth of the region's revenue.

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer, in a joint statement with France, Germany and Italy, said the deal must be "implemented rapidly and comprehensively".

"This is a moment of opportunity to restore regional stability and stabilise the global economy," Starmer said.

French President Emmanuel Macron posted online that leaders at this week's G7 meeting will discuss the long-term reopening of the Strait of Hormuz.

"The aim will be to see the consequences of this agreement, support for Lebanon, the lasting reopening of Hormuz and of course the concluding of an accord on nuclear and ballistic activities in Iran," Macron said on Instagram.

Tom Watkins, deputy chief of staff to former Michigan governor James Blanchard, told China Daily: "If it is to believed, and if it holds, it is good news for the people of Lebanon, Iran and for people of the world. With multiple false starts, even the most optimistic observer is waiting anxiously for its implementation."

"Many innocent people in the Middle East, including women and children, have been killed and wounded because of this war," Watkins said.

The war has been costly for the US in loss of life, treasury and reputation, and many observers believe it leaves the US no more secure than before it started, he said.

As in all "deals", the devil will be in the details that will dribble out, he added.

Contact writers at suqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

Grouping remains a multipolar influencer

WORLD WATCH
By Djoomart Otorbaev

The 25th anniversary of the founding of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization on June 15 marks more than a symbolic milestone. Over the past 25 years, the SCO has evolved from a narrowly focused border-security mechanism into one of the largest transregional organizations in Eurasia and one of the central pillars of the emerging multipolar order.

In a world marked by fragmented globalization, sanctions, conflicts and institutional crises within the Western system, the SCO is increasingly establishing itself as a contributor to international cooperation, emphasizing sovereignty, consensus and strategic pragmatism. The SCO is becoming a symbol of resistance against the unipolar development model some powers are desperate to impose on Eurasian countries. As a key founding member, China provides investment, logistics and an alternative development model to that of the West — one based on the principles of respect for the sovereignty of countries, nonviolence and mutual benefit.

The organization originated from the "Shanghai Five" mechanism created in 1996 by China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. At first, it concentrated on confidence-building and demilitarization along the post-Soviet Chinese border. However, the geopolitical dynamics of Eurasian integration soon expanded the mechanism's scope beyond border security.

On June 15, 2001, in Shanghai, Uzbekistan joined the group, and the Declaration on the Establishment of the SCO was signed. Since then, the SCO has undergone several phases of expansion. India and Pakistan became full members in 2017, significantly boosting the organization's geopolitical influence. Iran officially joined in 2023, and Belarus finished its accession process in 2024.

See ***Anniversary,*** *page 3*

CHONGQING STATION IS ON EVERYONE'S 'MUST-EAT' LIST

Viral photo trend sets off wave of creativity among international social media enthusiasts

By **TAN YINGZI** and **DENG RUI** in Chongqing

On a sweltering afternoon in early June, the Liziba Observation Deck outside Liziba Station on Chongqing Rail Transit Line 2 transformed into a stage for an unusual spectacle. Throngs of international visitors stood in a line, mouths wide open — not for a taste of the city's famed cuisine, but to capture the perfect shot of a monorail train seemingly gliding into their mouths as it passes through a nearby 19-story building.

Dubbed the "disappearing monorail", the viral photo trend has ignited a wave of creativity among social media enthusiasts from abroad. In Southwest China's Chongqing, a city celebrated for its fiery hotpot and futuristic skyline, the monorail has become an unexpected must-see attraction for adventurous tourists.

"Kung Pao chicken might be nice, but I want to 'taste' Chongqing's monorail as well," said Norwegian soccer player Erling Haaland. During a recent visit to the city, Haaland shared a viral video of himself playfully "devouring" the iconic monorail. He said a fan had enthusiastically placed the monorail at the top of Chongqing's "must-eat" list.



A foreign tourist poses with his mouth open, pretending to swallow a monorail as it passes through a residential building at Liziba lookout in Chongqing on Sunday. LI YIXIAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Fueled by platforms like TikTok, Instagram and YouTube, the Liziba monorail has turned into an unexpected star, a "dish" that everyone wants to try. As one netizen summed up: "It's like a 3D version of kung fu for the mouth."

The immersive experience has also given rise to new consumer trends. There are photographers at the deck to help tourists create the perfect "train-eating" videos.

Across the river in the Liangjiang New Area, tourists snap videos of themselves "savoring" the train, "devouring" it with the dramatic flair of a Chinese fan, or "packing" it into imaginary boxes.

"My friend thought it was AI," said Yvonne Tsakiris, a 48-year-old from Dubai. Suitably inspired after hearing about the monorail from a friend, she and her husband decided to bring their sons to Chongqing so as to witness the phenomenon firsthand.

China Vibes

See ***Monorail,*** *page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.

INSIDE
Biggest strength
Global Views, page 8

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

www.chinadailyglobal.com

A member of ANN ASIA NEWS NETWORK

China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:26 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:26 PM

INDEPTH



The Road Show Plan band delivers a lively street performance near the turret of the Palace Museum in Beijing in November.
SHAO CHUN / FOR CHINA DAILY



Members of the Road Show Plan perform for visitors at Chaoyang Park in Beijing, bringing the soothing influence of music to an outdoor setting on Aug 24, 2025. PETER PAN / FOR CHINA DAILY



Fans celebrate the birthday of singer-songwriter Cheer Chan in Beijing on June 6, when Xiao Yang performed her songs.
ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY



Road Show Plan member Tan Wu



Road Show Plan member Zhang Xiaotan

HOME IS WHERE THE HUM IS

Interactive musical events in Beijing's public spaces help young people navigate stress of daily life through shared joy, sense of community

By CHEN NAN
chennan@chinadaily.com.cn

On a summer weekend, as the afternoon sun spills its mellowed golden glow on the public square at Solana, a popular commercial complex in downtown Beijing, the cackle of conversations fills the open space, punctuated by the occasional woof of a dog or the distant whistle of an urban wanderer.

And then, a small amplifier crackles, a guitar chord cuts through the air and the voice of a young woman rises tentatively, weaving its way through the chatter of the crowd.

Within minutes, the mall's scattered visitors come together, joggers pause mid-stride, elderly couples lean on walking sticks, children run in wide circles and parents push strollers closer — all gathering spontaneously around the music.

By the third song, the space is transformed. People clap, sway, sing and even step onto the makeshift stage, embracing the music as if the square were hosting an impromptu city festival.

Li Wei, 27, a tech startup employee, was on a lunch date with friends one Saturday at Solana when he heard the familiar strum of a guitar and an unfamiliar voice singing pop icon Faye Wong's song with unrestrained joy.

Curious, he and his friends followed the music and found themselves in the middle of a crowd of cheering strangers. Soon enough, they were all clapping and swaying to the beats. When the open-mic moment arrived, his friends nudged Li forward. For the next few minutes, he sang with people he'd met for the first time, his voice shaky but his enthusiasm unwavering.

"It felt like the city had suddenly come alive after years. For three hours, I wasn't just an office worker; I was part of something bigger. I left feeling lighter, connected and, strangely, at home in Beijing," said Li, who originally hails from Jinan, Shandong province.

This scene of young people gathering in parks, public squares, riversides or courtyards to sing and connect is now commonplace in the Chinese capital. The citywide phenomenon blends creative and spontaneous performances with a strong sense of community.

From impromptu open-mic events in tucked-away art districts to intimate gatherings in secluded courtyards, these musical meetups reveal a generation navigating the stress of urban life and building connections in their own vibrant, expressive ways.

For Road Show Plan, a Beijing-based band that turns ordinary city spaces into stages and boasts over 300,000 followers across social media platforms, it all began in 2021 amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tan Wu, a self-taught guitarist from Hubei province with a degree in Chinese literature, who belted out songs — including originals — at fancy bars and bistros, found himself confined to a residential neighborhood in Beijing. His friend, Zhang Xiaotan, who worked with music platforms and at live-house venues, faced the same frustration as the entire city went under lockdown.

"We both love music, and desperately needed an outlet," Tan recalled. "At first, it was just us, singing outside our residential community, playing for each other and a few friends," said the 30-year-old.

Their friend, a trained keyboardist from Shanxi province, who goes by her stage name Liang Zai, soon joined them. The trio put together musical shows to cheer friends, neighbors and anybody who stopped to listen.

"The first time a passerby stopped and sang with us, we felt a surge of excitement," recalled 31-year-old Liang Zai. "It felt like we were creating something bigger."

By 2022, the group had brought the balm of music to parks and public spaces, inviting visitors to perform with them.

"We realized that people love the spotlight. We let them grab the microphone, feel the stage and experience what it is like to lead a song," Tan said. "And that's when the idea of organizing interactive outdoor performances started to take shape."

The three friends never expected their casual, passion-driven musical gatherings to grow into full-fledged cultural events. But in April 2023, their three-hour performance at Chaoyang Park drew more than 1,000 people, after handmade posters, playfully illustrated with sunny skies and jolly clouds, were circulated online.

"I was tuning my instrument, when the crowd started swelling. Shy and reserved by nature, I kept my gaze fixed on the keyboard as my fingers glided across it. When I looked up again, there were more people than I had ever seen together at one place," recalled Liang Zai.

Zhang, 27, said they had no well-rehearsed song list. "Folk, pop, rock — we sang whatever we felt like. People just kept coming. They sat, stood, sang or danced along the riverside. For three hours, we all became part of the same story."

Today, their approach is more professional, but still adequately spontaneous. Tan manages online promotion and poster design, besides playing the guitar; Liang Zai handles community engagement, as well as plays the keyboard; and Zhang manages live sound while also writing originals for the band.

Locations vary widely — from parks and riverside boulevards to art districts and amphitheaters in the lap of nature. Open-mic participants are randomly chosen from among those who raise their hands. For everyone involved, these events offer a rewarding experience.



A passerby joins the Road Show Plan to sing for audiences kayaking in the Liangma River in Beijing in July 2025. SHAO CHUN / FOR CHINA DAILY



Xiao Yang sings the songs of Cheer Chan in Beijing on June 6.
ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY



Road Show Plan member Liang Zai

On Jan 5 last year, the trio staged an original show at a semi-outdoor venue in Beijing, performing nearly 30 of their songs in succession.

"It was my birthday, and I was deeply moved by the enthusiastic participation," recalled Zhang.

"Our friend Peter Pan, who was once only a member of the audience, became our official photographer that day. He also surprised us with a banner, a cake and celebratory sparklers. We always cherish the people we meet during performances. It felt less like a concert and more like a reunion of old friends — a truly perfect night," he added.

Liang Zai, who also works at a bank, said there was a time when work pressure was really intense and their musical gatherings served as her emotional outlet.

"The weekend shows brought immense joy. It felt like I could breathe again," she said.

Today, the shows are an inseparable part of her life, she said. "I am learning to balance work and life. I carry my laptop everywhere. I work, and then take breaks to perform," she added.

Tan noted that music is like a reset button. "City life is stressful. Everyone's busy working, running errands, or just striving hard to survive. On weekends, people need time and space to breathe. When it comes to our shows, everyone belongs. The shows are free, casual and good for the city. People leave smiling and feeling lighter — feeling human again," he said.

Interactive musical gatherings in Beijing reflect a broader cultural trend, as young people often seek meaningful connections beyond social media.

"We're creating collective memory in real time. Our audiences tell us they've never seen the city like this — alive and accommodating," Tan said.

"Looking ahead, there's so much to be excited about. More brands and cross-industry collaborations are on the horizon. The goal of performing in 100 corners of Beijing is within reach, and the next milestone will be 200. Beyond that, I hope to take our shows to other cities, to feel the energy of young people there and to soak in the unique vibe of each urban space," he added.

Yan Baolin, a choral singing conductor and a professor at Zhejiang Conservatory of Music, noted that singing is different from playing a musical instrument, as it channels emotions directly through voice.

"The positive impact of a beautiful vocal performance on the heart and mind of a listener is unmatched," Yan said. "For young choral singing participants, the collective effort is powerful. It lets them experience the strength of working together, and the emotional resonance that emerges during collaboration provides a natural outlet for stress."

Studies show that sound waves produced during choral practice can have measurable positive effects on the body, making choral singing a kind of lasting, profound "spiritual massage", he said.

In contrast, most other forms of music require years of training and technical foundation. Playing an instrument demands long-term study and practice, which often starts during childhood, making it hard for just anybody to join a band or an orchestra.

Choral singing, however, is more accessible, as every participant brings their own instrument, which is their voice, Yan said, adding that its appeal lies in its combination of artistic satisfaction, social connection and emotional release.

Young people today are drawn to singing, or interaction through music, because of the joy of shared experience, the sense of community and the emotional refreshment it provides.

A 29-year-old woman, who lives and works in Beijing and uses the stage name Xiao Yang, noted that music is a means to bond with people, regardless of age, gender and profession. "We meet, we play, we sing along and, suddenly, strangers become friends."

Unlike Road Show Plan, Xiao Yang embodies a quieter, more intimate side of Beijing's music scene. She composes her own songs, inspired by everyday life, and has over 10 originals in her repertoire.

Inspired by versatile music icons, including Taylor Swift, she started playing the piano when she was 6 years old, and later learned to play the flute and the guitar.

During the pandemic, Xiao Yang performed small covers, recorded at home and gradually built a 300-person online community. Her in-person gatherings remain small — never more than 100 participants. "I don't think in terms of audiences or performers. It is a shared space. Everyone takes turns to sing and play, or they just listen," she said.

Xiao Yang's events take place in hidden courtyards, secluded park corners and quiet cafes. The music tends to be less mainstream, and songs of Taiwan singer-songwriter Cheer Chan dominate the playlist.

She also features original songs. "Music is a way to be yourself. It is social, but also introspective. Even if people aren't singing, they're connecting through the music," she said.

Xiao Yang's own music is deeply personal. Her originals include a song about her lost cat. "Performing my own songs feels different than singing with others," she said. "But both are special — one is self-expression, the other is shared joy."

Her event venues range from quiet corners in the Olympic Forest Park, where small groups gather with guitars and soft voices, to organized stages for open-mic sessions. "Back in 2022 and 2023, there weren't as many groups as there are now. This year, it feels like everywhere you look, someone is singing, playing, or performing. It's incredible!"

Even with a demanding job, Xiao Yang makes time for these performances. "I come for music, friendship and freedom. Every time I sing, alone or with others, it reminds me why all this is worth it," she said.

Chen Yingzi, 22, a university student, prefers quiet spaces. One spring afternoon this year, she attended a small gathering in a *hutong*, where fewer than a dozen people sat on mismatched chairs and cushions. The organizers introduced an acoustic guitar and encouraged participation.

Chen hesitated for a bit, but then picked up her ukulele, strummed a simple melody and sang an original about her hometown. The applause that followed drowned her fears.

"I didn't expect to feel so connected to people I'd just met," she said. "It wasn't about performing well; it was about sharing a part of myself. I left with new friends, renewed confidence, and a reminder that music can make even the smallest spaces feel like home."

Chen now regularly participates in such gatherings. "Most young people live in an online world. But one can make real friends at these events." She has already met high school students and older peers from across the city, and the vibe, she stressed, has been invigorating.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:26 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:26 PM

TOP NEWS

Grouping: Practical outcomes emphasized

From page 1

At a time when unilateralism and hegemonic thinking persist, political trust among SCO countries has provided an important foundation for the organization's long-term cooperation, Yang said.

The SCO was initially established to address shared security challenges. Over time, it has remained steadfast in its commitment to fostering a peaceful and stable environment that supports the development of all its member states.

Xi has always emphasized the need to enhance the connection of high-quality Belt and Road cooperation with development strategies of SCO countries and regional cooperation initiatives, as well as efforts to facilitate trade and investment and keep industrial and supply chains stable and smooth.

Such cooperation has produced tangible results. Official data showed that China has achieved, ahead of schedule, the target of bringing its cumulative trade with other SCO countries to more than $2.3 trillion, while nearly 14,000 kilometers of international land transport routes have been in operation among member states.

Yang said China's role in the SCO lies not only in putting forward ideas and building mechanisms, but also in providing public goods and platforms that help translate shared consensus into practical outcomes.

Such efforts reflect China's emphasis on practical results, as it links its own development with the growth of the SCO, he said.

At last year's Tianjin summit, China announced a series of measures, including plans to implement 100 "small and beautiful" livelihood projects in SCO member states where needed, provide 2 billion yuan ($295.7 million) in grant to SCO member states within the year, and build 10 Luban Workshops in member states over five years.

A youth trends report released in May also pointed to positive perceptions of China's role among young people in SCO member states, with more than 90 percent of respondents outside China saying that cooperation with China could have a positive impact on their countries' development and modernization.

Beyond regional cooperation, the SCO's role has also extended to global governance.

At the Tianjin "SCO Plus" meeting last year, Xi said that the SCO, guided by the Shanghai Spirit, has increasingly become a catalyst for the development and reform of the global governance system.

He put forward the Global Governance Initiative at the meeting, calling on the organization to set an example in practicing the initiative, contribute SCO strength to world peace and stability, and demonstrate SCO responsibility in promoting global openness and cooperation.

Impressive win



French motorcycle rider Valentin Debise of China's ZXMOTO team is warmly applauded by spectators after winning Race 1 of the FIM Supersport World Championship at the Emilia-Romagna Round in Italy on Saturday, securing his sixth win of the season with the Chinese manufacturer. On Sunday, Debise finished in ninth place in Race 2 of the round. LI JING / XINHUA

Concerns remain about SpaceX IPO

By SHI JING in Shanghai and **MA SI** in Haikou

SpaceX's blockbuster initial public offering has grabbed attention worldwide not only for its unprecedented size, but also for what it implies for the commercial aerospace industry and the escalating politicization of technological innovation that it underscores.

SpaceX saw its price spike 19 percent on its Nasdaq debut even as the $75 billion IPO became the world's biggest ever. The stock closed at $160.95, buoying the company's market cap to $2.1 trillion. Company founder Elon Musk thus became the world's first trillionaire with his personal wealth surging to $1.1 trillion, according to Forbes.

SpaceX said in its prospectus that proceeds from the IPO will be used to expand its artificial intelligence business and fund its launch infrastructure and satellite constellations.

Shen Meng, director of Chanson & Co, a boutique investment bank, said that SpaceX will leverage the IPO to further integrate its capabilities in reusable satellite launches, global low-orbit satellite communication networks, and AI synergies.

SpaceX managed to achieve a total turnover of $18.7 billion last year, up from $14 billion in 2024. However, its losses soared to $4.94 billion in 2025, with a cumulative total loss of $41.3 billion since it was founded in 2002.

Experts expressed concerns over the market frenzy over SpaceX. Financial intelligence firm CFRA gave a sell rating for the company and a $115 price target — roughly 15 percent lower than the IPO price. The research firm said that profits generated by Starlink, the satellite internet company, are being devoured by the other two major business units of xAI and Starship, while its AI business lacks differentiated competitiveness.

Research firm Morningstar valued the company at less than half its IPO price. Danish pension operator Akademiker Pension said it will not take a chance on SpaceX as it is "grossly valued" and has a "catastrophic governance structure" — referring to Musk's 85 percent voting rights.

However, the mega IPO has attracted $250 billion in subscriptions.

Ipek Ozkardeskaya, a senior analyst at Swissquote, said that this will likely create a liquidity vacuum. To absorb that amount of supply, investors may have to sell existing holdings to free cash for SpaceX allocations. This could partly explain the recent sell-off across chipmakers, she said.

Meanwhile, SpaceX has directed its underwriters to reject orders from the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong for its IPO, citing the United States' International Traffic in Arms Regulations for national security reasons.

Dai Guanchun, a senior capital markets lawyer based in Beijing, said this reflects excessive politicization of technological exchanges by the US, disrupting the normal flow of international capital. But Chinese companies should not be conservative but rather seek more cooperation in other markets in such a global context, he said.

Liu Chunsheng, an associate professor of international economics at the Central University of Finance and Economics, considered this a typical case of capital decoupling in cutting-edge technology sectors driven by geopolitical competition.

In the short term, this could lead to higher fundraising costs and fewer opportunities in commercial operations for US companies. If sustained for a longer term, it could impair global capital supply, constraining the R&D expansion of capital-heavy aerospace projects, he said.

However, SpaceX's IPO will provide a crucial valuation benchmark for commercial space firms globally, especially those in China, said Li Chao, an independent analyst who has been following the global commercial aerospace industry for years.

A-share aviation equipment companies showed the strongest surge of 5.45 percent on Friday, when the benchmark Shanghai Composite Index closed 1.12 percent higher.

Two Chinese firms — LandSpace and CAS Space — have had their IPO applications at the STAR Market accepted. Another eight firms have started the IPO application process.

Zhou Lanxu contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at shijing@chinadaily.com.cn

Monorail: Engineering feat a big draw

From page 1

Dinesh Francois Samasundara from Paris was similarly drawn by curiosity after repeatedly coming across reels on Instagram, TikTok and Facebook for months. "It's a really unusual sight for me. We're not used to seeing this type of landscape. But it's mesmerizing to see how the building is built — very interesting!" said the 25-year-old.

The spot also draws industry professionals eager to learn. Matej Pavlovic, a 30-year-old train driver from Slovenia, planned his first trip to China after seeing Liziba's monorail as well as China's high-speed rail on TikTok. "The designated speed of trains in Slovenia is around 200 kilometers per hour, but we handle a maximum of 120 km/h because the infrastructure currently doesn't allow more. My girlfriend and I took a bullet train from Chengdu, Sichuan province, to Chongqing, which is nice, comfortable and fast." Their travel culminated with a ride on the monorail, when they got to experience the engineering marvel.

Due to the geography of Chongqing — a densely populated and mountainous city — transportation can be challenging and creative.

In 2004, Chongqing built its first urban rail CRT Line 2 in the downtown area, which was China's first monorail and the first rail transit line in southwestern China.

Contact the writers at dengrui@chinadaily.com.cn

Importance of exchanges highlighted

Straits Forum emphasizes shared cultural and economic interests binding both sides

By ZHANG YI in Xiamen, Fujian
zhangyi1@chinadaily.com.cn

The critical importance of cross-Strait exchanges and cooperation was underscored at the 18th Straits Forum in Xiamen, Fujian province, as participants from both sides of the Taiwan Strait gathered over the weekend, overcoming obstructions from island authorities.

The annual forum, which started in 2009, serves as a platform to promote mutual understanding and integration between the mainland and Taiwan, emphasizing the shared cultural and economic interests binding both sides.

Addressing the main conference on Saturday, Wang Huning, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, China's top political advisory body, called for resolute opposition to "Taiwan independence" separatist activities and external interference, urging joint efforts to advance peaceful cross-Strait relations and national reunification.

He emphasized that the mainland stands ready to share development opportunities with Taiwan compatriots, noting that the country's blueprint for the ongoing 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period will open up broader space for cross-Strait integration.

At a meeting on Saturday on advancing the development of the demonstration zone for integrated development across the Taiwan Strait, Wang urged greater progress in advancing such integration during the 15th Five-Year Plan period.

He called for supporting Fujian in exploring new mechanisms, pathways and models for cross-Strait integrated development. He also urged closer people-to-people and cultural exchanges.

Under the theme of expanding people-to-people exchanges, this year's Straits Forum featured 58 diverse events covering grassroots, youth, cultural and economic exchange sectors.

Inside
Editorial, **page 6**

Earlier, Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party authorities elevated restrictions by banning island officials from attending the event, marking the first time the island's grassroots officials were blocked from participation.

Addressing the forum despite these bans, Chang Jung-kung, vice-chairman of the Chinese Kuomintang party, said that despite twists and turns, the Straits Forum has always been committed to promoting exchanges and playing a critical role in cross-Strait relations.

During the forum, mainland enterprises signed agreements with various businesses and trade associations from Taiwan, buying signature agricultural goods including atemoya and pomelos, as well as tea and fishery products from counties such as Taitung, Yunlin and Nantou.

The contracts serve as a major step forward in implementing the 10 follow-up exchange policies introduced following the landmark cross-Strait meeting between leaders of the CPC and KMT in April, focusing on the practical livelihood needs of grassroots families and small business operators.

Yao Ching-ling, magistrate of Taitung county, said via a live video link that the purchase agreements were an immense encouragement to local farmers.

A range of prominent figures and grassroots representatives also stepped onto the stage during the conference to share their stories of cross-Strait integration.

Su Heng, a Taiwan political commentary vlogger, said grassroots perspectives and livelihood statistics best reflect the truth that artificial barriers can never block the shared enthusiasm of compatriots from both sides.

Despite increasing restrictions from Taiwan's separatist DPP on the forum, Su said a massive number of Taiwan residents still crossed the Strait for markets, business cooperation, and career opportunities.



A child performs a Yingge dance, a traditional folk dance from southern China that has gained popularity nationwide in recent years, with humanoid robots on Saturday during the 18th Straits Forum in Xiamen, Fujian province. ZHANG BIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Anniversary: SCO no longer merely a regional organization

From page 1

Today, the SCO includes 10 member states, two observer states — Mongolia and Afghanistan — and 15 dialogue partners, among them Turkiye, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Egypt and Azerbaijan. The organization's expanding geography reflects the growing demand for non-Western mechanisms of international coordination.

The SCO's scale is unprecedented. The combined territory of its member states exceeds 36 million square kilometers — more than 25 percent of the Earth's land area. The total population of SCO countries has surpassed 3.4 billion, representing nearly half of the total world population.

Economically, the organization already constitutes one of the world's principal centers of gravity, representing about a quarter of global GDP.

Even more revealing is the organization's trade transformation. It is estimated that in 2001, mutual trade among the SCO countries was valued at about $16 billion. Today, intra-bloc trade is approaching the historic threshold of $1 trillion.

China and Russia remain the primary engines of this process, but the rapid integration of Central Asian economies demonstrates the broader regional significance of the SCO framework. For smaller member states, the organization has become economically indispensable. It is estimated that SCO countries account for approximately 75 percent of Kyrgyzstan's trade turnover, 67 percent for Tajikistan and nearly half for Uzbekistan.

Investment cooperation has grown significantly. Over the past 25 years, mutual direct investment among SCO countries has surged with a primary focus on infrastructure, logistics, energy and transportation corridors.

One of the organization's most strategically significant trends has been the transition toward settlements in national currencies. In trade between key SCO countries, the share of transactions conducted in rubles, yuan, rupees and other national currencies has greatly increased, gradually reducing dependence on the US dollar and Western-controlled financial systems.

Unlike many informal geopolitical platforms, the SCO possesses a fully institutionalized structure. It functions as a formal international organization with a charter, permanent bodies, an approved budget, a secretary-general and fixed headquarters in Beijing and Tashkent.

Its highest authorities include the Council of Heads of State, the Council of Heads of Government and the Council of Foreign Ministers. Specialized institutional mechanisms coordinate cooperation among defence ministers, interior ministers, justice ministries, heads of supreme courts and procurators-general.

This institutional depth sets the SCO apart from groups such as BRICS. While BRICS mainly serves as an informal platform of geopolitical dialogue without an official charter or permanent secretariat, the SCO is a formal Eurasian organization with legal responsibilities and ongoing operations. Security cooperation is also a core aspect of the SCO's identity. The Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure in Tashkent oversees intelligence sharing, counterterrorism drills and anti-extremism efforts — domains that BRICS does not cover.

The SCO has notable similarities with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Both organizations were formed as frameworks for stabilizing Asia through consensus and noninterference. ASEAN has contributed to stabilizing Southeast Asia after the Vietnam War, while the SCO focuses on stabilizing the post-Soviet Eurasian region and China's western outskirts. In both groups, decisions are made only by full consensus, which upholds sovereignty and guards against domination by any one power.

Three strategic priorities will likely determine the SCO's future trajectory. First, financial integration across SCO countries strengthens regional economic independence. The proposed SCO Development Bank and SCO Special Account could provide independent financing for large-scale Eurasian infrastructure projects without reliance on other financial institutions.

Second, transport integration would actively advance a unified Eurasian transport network. This framework would connect the Belt and Road Initiative, the Eurasian Economic Union, the North-South Corridor and the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway.

Third, the SCO brings together the world's largest energy producers and key consumers. The SCO is progressively establishing the groundwork for a self-sufficient Asian energy market, complete with its own pricing structures and settlement systems.

Twenty-five years after its founding, the SCO is no longer merely a regional organization. It is one of the institutional foundations of the new Eurasian century.

The author is a former prime minister of the Kyrgyz Republic and a visiting senior fellow at the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University of China. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:26 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:26 PM

WORLD

GCI advocates for world peace

Initiative lauded for encouraging dialogue among global civilizations



Artists from Guizhou Provincial Song and Dance Theater perform during an event in Santiago, Chile, on Friday, as part of celebrations for the International Day for Dialogue among Civilizations. ZHOU JIAYI / XINHUA

By NDUMISO MLILO
in Johannesburg, South Africa
For China Daily

China's Global Civilization Initiative is important to encourage dialogue among civilizations for peaceful coexistence in a world that is constantly changing and becoming more unpredictable, South African experts said, as the world marked the International Day for Dialogue among Civilizations last week.

"In an increasingly interconnected world, embracing cultural diversity and encouraging dialogue among civilizations is vital for promoting peace, cooperation and shared progress," said Dave Malcomson, acting deputy director general for the Middle East and Asia at the Department of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa. "Through dialogue and exchanges, societies can build mutual trust and lay foundations for a more harmonious future across regions, cultures, and ideologies."

Proposed by China in 2023, the initiative includes calls for respecting the diversity of civilizations and the common values of humanity.

In June 2024, a resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly designated June 10 the International Day for Dialogue among Civilizations, which was proposed by China and cosponsored by over 80 countries.

Malcomson said the world is undergoing transformation and a shift in the international landscape, which calls for the Global South to promote exchanges, and share innovation and technology.

He said, "In this regard, cultural exchanges play a critical role in promoting understanding and strengthening cooperation among nations. This is more important than ever in the current context of geopolitical polarization, volatility, rising fragmentation, instability, conflict and threats to global norms, international law and the rules-based order."

Malcomson stated that China is an important partner in the international community and he is confident that it will continue to "contribute constructively" to the United Nations and global governance processes to advance development and prosperity.

Defending multilateralism

He welcomed "China's strong stance" in defending multilateralism.

"We acknowledge that China's global initiatives are meant to promote multilateralism, improve peace and security, promote socioeconomic development and contribute to the reform of global governance."

Philani Mthembu, executive director at South African think tank Institute for Global Dialogue, said the world, geopolitics and global power dynamics are all undergoing shifts.

This makes China's Global Civilization Initiative relevant for countries to coexist, he said.

While the world keeps evolving, some countries push back against such changes, he said. In this context, the GCI serves to foster dialogue, and it is important to mark the International Day for Dialogue among Civilizations.

"A dialogue among civilizations can help countries to understand that we don't have to agree on everything, but what is important is to work with one another. So fostering cooperation, especially in the current environment globally, is important," said Mthembu.

"The world is moving toward multipolarity, but we still have pushback. There is still unilateralism, but many countries in the Global South, including South Africa and China, are calling for multilateralism."

He warned that when negative things happen in one part of the world, they can affect other parts or regions far from them. Mthembu gave an example of the conflicts in the Middle East, which are negatively affecting many countries in different parts of the world.

Africa has to take advantage of the changes taking place in the world and leverage on that to meet development aspirations, he said.

The African continent must speak with one voice on global issues, he added.

The writer is a freelance journalist for China Daily.

Dragon Boat: More than a cultural fest in Namibia

WINDHOEK, Namibia — Laughter and curiosity filled the grounds of the SOS Children's Villages in Windhoek, capital of Namibia, on Saturday as children gathered around tables covered with bamboo leaves, sticky rice, and colorful threads, embarking on a cultural journey that carried them thousands of kilometers away to China.

For many of the children, it was their first encounter with the ingredients and traditions of China's Dragon Boat Festival. Under guidance, small hands carefully folded bamboo leaves around sticky rice to make *zongzi*, the festival's signature delicacy. Others threaded colorful bracelets around their wrists or examined fragrant sachets, eager to learn the stories and blessings embedded in these customs.

The event, themed "Sharing the Warmth of the Dragon Boat Festival, Promoting Health and Well-being", was organized by the China Henan International Cooperation Group, or CHICO, together with the 17th batch of the Chinese medical team in Namibia.

Home to orphaned and vulnerable children, the SOS Children's Villages provides family-like care, education, and support. On this occasion, it became a vibrant venue for cultural exchange, where Chinese festive traditions met gestures of care and friendship.

The Dragon Boat Festival, one of China's most celebrated traditional holidays, commemorates the ancient patriotic poet Qu Yuan. The festival is marked by customs such as eating *zongzi*, wearing protective sachets and five-colored bracelets, and watching dragon boat races.

As this year marks the China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges, organizers also introduced the symbolism behind these traditions. Fragrant sachets are believed to ward off illness, while five-colored bracelets carry wishes for peace, health, and happiness.

For Ben Gariseb, one of the children from the global child-focused organization, the experience was both eye-opening and memorable.

"It is my first time participating in an activity related to Chinese culture. I made *zongzi*, had my health checked, and witnessed acupuncture being administered for the first time. I wish to learn more about Chinese culture," Gariseb said.

Improving lives

The cultural activities were complemented by practical support, with organizers donating food and other supplies to help improve the children's daily lives and well-being.

Julieta Ferreira, national director of SOS Children's Villages Namibia, said the Chinese community in Namibia has supported the organization for many years, helping it care for orphaned and vulnerable children.

"Hosting the Dragon Boat Festival solidifies the impact already made by Chinese companies and their support for the people of Namibia. It builds a bridge for grassroots interaction between China and Namibia. We carry China's contribution within us," she said.

Cui Yunke, managing director of CHICO in Namibia, said the event aimed at introducing the origins, traditions, and meaning of the festival while extending care to children at the organization.

Meanwhile, members of the Chinese medical team provided free health examinations and traditional Chinese medical services, including acupuncture consultations. They also held health education sessions featuring demonstrations on proper handwashing, personal hygiene, and disease prevention.

Guan Hao, leader of the 17th Chinese medical team, said the team hoped to use the event to bring healthcare services closer to local communities while raising awareness of traditional Chinese medicine.

XINHUA



Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:26 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:26 PM

WORLD

China, Mongolia vow deeper ties, support

FM's visit underscores commitment to stronger collaboration in trade, energy

By ZHOU JIN
zhoujin@chinadaily.com.cn

China and Mongolia have reiterated their commitment to be good neighbors and partners who trust and support each other, vowing to further develop mutually beneficial economic ties.

The pledge was made during Foreign Minister Wang Yi's three-day visit to Mongolia, to be wrapped up on Monday.

During a meeting with Mongolian President Ukhnaa Khurelsukh in Ulan Bator on Saturday, Wang said China has always put China-Mongolia relations at an important place in its neighborhood diplomacy.

China has both the will and capability to be a neighbor that Mongolia can rely on, a trustworthy friend, and a partner in accelerating its development, he said.

Wang reaffirmed China's respect for Mongolia's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as the development path that Mongolia has chosen for itself.

Describing China as Mongolia's good neighbor, Khurelsukh said developing friendly relations with China is a top priority of Mongolia's foreign policy.

Mongolia is committed to the one-China principle, regarding Taiwan as an inalienable part of China's territory, and opposes any form of "Taiwan independence" activities, he said.

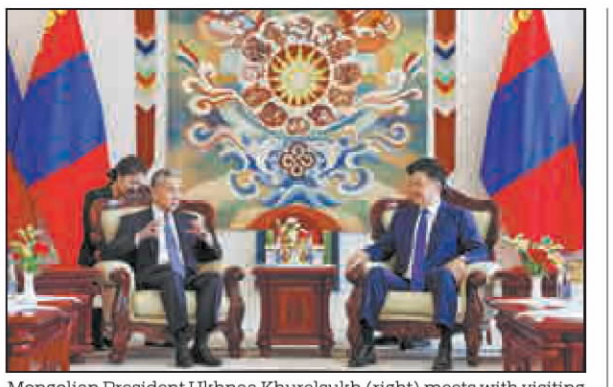
The country will not do anything that harms China's interests, regardless of its relations with other countries, he said.

According to the Mongolian president, the bilateral trade is expected to reach $20 billion this year.

Wang expressed readiness to work more closely with Mongolia to align development strategies; tap into the full potential of bilateral cooperation; advance existing collaboration in connectivity, energy and mineral resources, and trade and investment; and create new growth drivers for cooperation in key minerals, green development, the digital economy, and other emerging fields.

In recent years, mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries has continued to expand, and China has remained Mongolia's largest trading partner and a major source of investment for many years.

The construction of their second cross-border railway is being accelerated and is expected to become another major artery of connectivity.



Mongolian President Ukhnaa Khurelsukh (right) meets with visiting Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Ulan Bator on Saturday. BOLORTSETSEG / XINHUA

Fast track of growth

China supports Mongolia in developing its economy and improving people's livelihoods, and welcomes Mongolia to ride the fast track of China's development, Wang said at a news conference on Saturday after his meeting with Mongolian Foreign Minister Batmunkh Battsetseg.

Wang cited estimates by international institutions that every 1 percent of growth in China's economy can drive a 4 percent increase in Mongolia's exports and a 0.6 percent rise in its economic growth.

This fully demonstrates the highly complementary and closely interconnected economic ties between the two countries, he said.

To help Mongolia respond to the recent foot-and-mouth disease outbreak, China has decided to supply 1 million doses of vaccines, Wang announced at the news conference.

Li Chao, an assistant research fellow at the Belt and Road Initiative Research Institute at the Inner Mongolia Academy of Social Sciences, said China-Mongolia ties are at the best stage in history, with cooperation across various fields continuously yielding new outcomes.

The emphasis that the two countries put on the positioning of their relations reflects their unchanged consensus on developing friendly relations and promoting mutually beneficial cooperation, Li said.

Bilateral cooperation is key for Mongolia to promoting its own economic stability and development, he said.

And for China, Mongolia plays an important role in maintaining stability along the northern border, as the two countries share China's longest border with any neighbor, he added.

Li highlighted cooperation in green mining, ecological protection and clean energy, saying leveraging China's technological strengths to deepen cooperation with Mongolia in green development would help both countries move toward their carbon reduction and climate goals.

EU talks viewed as big step for expansion

By LIU JIANQIAO
liujianqiao@chinadaily.com.cn

The European Union has agreed to open the first cluster of accession talks with Ukraine and Moldova on Monday, marking a major step in the bloc's enlargement.

Experts say such negotiations are typically lengthy and complex, and that the opening of talks does not mean the two countries will join the EU anytime soon.

European Council President Antonio Costa and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced on Friday that all EU member states have agreed to open the first accession negotiations cluster on fundamentals with Ukraine and Moldova.

The talks would cover areas including the rule of law and democratic institutions, which are the backbone of the EU accession process.

"This is a recognition of the determination, courage and hard work shown by both countries in advancing reforms, even in the face of immense challenges," the statement said.

Ukraine and Moldova were granted EU candidate status in 2022. Ukraine's accession had faced opposition from some member states, particularly Hungary.

However, Hungary's new Prime Minister Peter Magyar, who took office last month, said the country had agreed to begin Ukraine's accession talks, though it does not support a fast-track procedure.

Gao Jian, director of the European Think Tank Research Center at Shanghai International Studies University, said that amid the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the EU's move goes beyond a mere technical step in the accession process and reflects broader geopolitical calculations.

"With the conflict dragging on, European integration is no longer the EU's sole motivation," Gao said.

"In essence, the launch of these talks reflects a broader geopolitical and values-based contest between the EU and Russia across the European continent. The potential accession of the two countries is widely seen as a significant strategic move that could shape the future of Europe's security architecture," he said.

The EU is attempting to address geopolitical security challenges through deeper political integration, aiming to redefine and reinforce its security through "closer political and economic alignment", he added.

"This suggests that the EU is shifting from a largely reactive security posture to a more proactive approach aimed at shaping the security environment through integration," Gao said.

However, such support remains primarily political in nature and falls short of a defense commitment, making it unlikely to provide Ukraine with direct military protection in the short term, he said.

Potential strains

Xiao Bin, a researcher at the Institute of Russian, Eastern European and Central Asian Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said bringing Ukraine into the European framework while leaving Russia outside could further heighten tensions with Moscow and complicate future peace efforts between Russia and Ukraine.

The trajectory of the conflict, Ukraine's domestic political reforms and the EU's capacity to absorb new members will remain the main obstacles to Ukraine's eventual accession, Xiao said.

The accession of Ukraine and Moldova would also have profound implications for the global multilateral system, he said.

The EU's move could deepen its structural divide with Russia and increase the risk of bloc confrontation, he said.

It may also encourage European nations to place greater emphasis on "small multilateral" groupings, a trend that could undermine the healthy development of the United Nations-centered multilateral system, he added.

"Therefore, at a time of frequent geopolitical crises, any EU enlargement should fully consider the broader European security architecture and work to avoid a protracted regional confrontation," Xiao said.

Carney warns against courting Washington

DUBLIN — Canada's Prime Minister Mark Carney continued his efforts to pivot away from the United States and align with Europe, meeting with the leader of Ireland on Saturday ahead of the upcoming G7 summit and saying middle powers should not compete for favor with Washington.

Carney said Canada and the European Union have a combined population of more than twice that of the US, economies of comparable size and a combined defense budget that exceeds that of any single major country outside the US.

Smaller countries can multiply their strength by partnering with like-minded allies, he said.

"In a world of great power rivalry, middle powers have a choice — to compete for favor or to combine to create a third path with impact," Carney said at Trinity College in Dublin.

He made similar comments in January at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, which became a symbol of middle-power resistance, when he declared the end of the global rules-based order and condemned coercion by great powers on smaller countries.

Carney visited Ireland's Taoiseach Micheal Martin earlier on Saturday and French President Emmanuel Macron on Friday ahead of the G7 summit that begins on Monday in France.

US President Donald Trump is not currently scheduled to hold bilateral talks with Carney during the summit, according to a senior US administration official.

Geneva, Switzerland, is bracing for thousands of anti-G7 protesters ahead of the summit in Evian, just across the border with France.

Scores of shops and businesses in downtown Geneva boarded up their storefronts with wooden panels on Sunday ahead of the planned protests.

In Ireland, Carney described Canada and Europe as a "force for good — because we safeguard the values of human rights, dignity and pluralism that our people hold dear".

Together, the EU and Canada are one of the largest economic, cultural, technological, financial and military blocs in the world, he said.

"The new world order will be built starting with Europe," he said at an earlier joint news conference with Martin.

"Canada is the most European of non-European countries. We are transforming our cooperation with Europe."

In February, Canada became the first non-European member of the SAFE mechanism, the European Union's defense procurement initiative. Carney, on his ninth trip to Europe since becoming prime minister 15 months ago, noted that Canada has 56 partnerships in the critical minerals sector across more than 10 countries, primarily in Europe.

Tensions simmer

Trade tensions continue to simmer between Canada and the United States. There is a scheduled July 1 review of the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement — the latest iteration of the North American free-trade pact that has intertwined the economies of the three countries since the early 1990s. Trump said last week that he may not renew the deal.

Carney said Canadian Trade Minister Dominic LeBlanc will meet with US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer at the G7 summit.

The prime minister said he does not believe the US is interested in big changes to the free-trade agreement with Canada and Mexico.

"The US has been clear. They don't want to change the fundamental architecture," Carney said.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Broadening horizons



Indonesian students discuss study abroad programs with representatives from Lanzhou University in Northwest China's Gansu province during the 2026 China Higher Education Exhibition in Jakarta on Sunday. LI ZHIQUAN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Swiss voters reject population cap plan

ZURICH — Switzerland rejected a referendum proposal on Sunday to cap its population at 10 million, a projection showed, as voters prioritized economic stability and the country's ties with the European Union over immigration concerns.

A preliminary projection published by national broadcaster SRF indicated about 45 percent of voters were in favor of the proposal and 55 percent against.

The referendum, which was likened to Britain's 2016 Brexit vote, had put businesses on edge over concerns that it could lead to the end of free movement of labor between Switzerland and the EU, its main trading partner.

The proposal championed by the right-wing Swiss People's Party stipulated that the population must not exceed 10 million before 2050, and that if it did so for two years, Switzerland should scrap its freedom of movement accord with the EU.

Urs Bieri from polling firm gfs.bern said the vote failed because although many people were worried about the rising population, they were not convinced by the plan and worried about the possible side effects.

"From the very beginning, it has been presented as the chaos initiative. Voters were worried about negative consequences for Switzerland's relationship with the EU and for the labor market," Bieri said.

"People are also worried about things like having enough care and health workers. Also there's a feeling that in the current international environment it's not sensible for a small country to do this," he added.

The Swiss population already stands at 9.1 million and has grown far more quickly than in the surrounding EU. Foreigners make up nearly 28 percent of the Swiss population. According to official projections, the population will reach 10 million by the early 2040s.

Polls had forecast a close outcome, and the result tallied with a final survey by gfs.bern, which had predicted the proposal would be narrowly rejected.

Still, the substantial backing for the measure sits alongside growing support for policies aimed at curbing immigration across Europe.

Opponents dubbed the plan a recipe for chaos due to the upheaval it would cause for Swiss companies, workers and Bern's ties with the EU.

Patrick Leisibach, a migration expert at think tank Avenir Suisse, said economic arguments had played a role, with people wary of how a "yes" vote would affect their daily lives.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Briefly

UNITED KINGDOM

Sanctioned Russian tanker intercepted

The United Kingdom is investigating a sanctioned tanker suspected of being part of Russia's "shadow fleet" that ships oil in violation of Western sanctions, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said on Sunday. British armed forces boarded and detained the vessel, the *Smyrtos*, on Sunday in the English Channel, in what the Defense Ministry called "the first UK-led operation of its kind". The vessel will be held and monitored off the south coast of England for investigation, according to officials. The operation was carried out "in close coordination" with French authorities, who have previously intercepted a number of vessels linked to the so-called shadow fleet, the British Defense Ministry said.

UNITED STATES

Officials urge people indoors as fire burns on

Officials in a northern California city urged people sensitive to smoke to stay indoors as firefighters spent a third day on Saturday battling a fire in a huge medical equipment warehouse. Air quality on the south side of Tracy, a city of 100,000 people where the Medline warehouse fire has been burning since Thursday, was in the "unhealthy" range, according to air monitors. Firefighters expected the next few days to remain smoky amid a lengthy effort to put out the fire inside the building, South San Joaquin County Fire Authority Fire Chief Randall Bradley said.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1858

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:26 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:26 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Benefits of cooperation with mainland tear apart DPP authorities' information cocoon

The opening of the 18th Straits Forum in Xiamen, Fujian province, on Saturday speaks volumes about how people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait aspire to boost their interaction for shared development.

The forum is the largest cross-Strait grassroots exchange event, and has attracted about 140,000 Taiwan compatriots among the around 370,000 participants since its launch in 2009. This year's forum consists of 58 activities covering a wide range of topics, including grassroots governance, new media, finance, technology and fishery cooperation.

These activities will serve to deepen economic and cultural ties across the Strait, something the secessionist-minded Democratic Progressive Party authorities of Taiwan constantly try to undermine.

In his speech at the forum, China's top political advisor Wang Huning called for measures to facilitate cross-Strait exchanges and cooperation, enhance the business environment, strengthen industrial cooperation and expand the benefits and sense of gain for Taiwan compatriots and Taiwan-funded enterprises.

He welcomed Taiwan compatriots and companies to cooperate with their counterparts on the mainland, and called for people on both sides of the Strait to resolutely oppose "Taiwan independence" and the interference of external forces.

The central authorities have placed great importance on efforts to enhance cross-Strait economic and people-to-people exchanges so that Taiwan companies and compatriots can enjoy greater benefits from the Chinese mainland's pursuit of high-quality development during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period and beyond.

In 2025, Taiwan residents made more than 1 million passenger trips to the mainland through ports in Fujian, almost doubling the number in 2023. More and more Taiwan residents are seeing for themselves the vitality of the mainland, the immense business and career opportunities it promises them, as well as the same culture shared by people on both sides of the Strait.

This year's forum has yielded concrete progress in implementing the 10 cross-Strait exchange and cooperation measures the mainland introduced in April. On Saturday in Xiamen, companies from the mainland signed agreements with companies and trade associations from Taiwan to purchase agricultural and fishery products.

This highlights how pragmatic cooperation can benefit people on both sides of the Strait. Yet, earlier this month, the DPP authorities tightened restrictions against the Straits Forum by prohibiting local officials on the island from taking part in the forum.

Apart from restricting in-person cross-Strait exchanges, the Lai Ching-te authorities have also sought to limit Taiwan residents' access to social media platforms operated by mainland companies, trying to create an information cocoon that shields them from a fuller understanding of the mainland's contemporary development and everyday realities.

The Lai authorities have also attempted to blindfold the island's remaining so-called "diplomatic partners". Yet the steadily shrinking number of those "partners" underscores the limits of such attempts. Reports say that senior officials in Eswatini — the only African country maintaining "diplomatic relations" with the Taiwan authorities — have advocated establishing diplomatic ties with Beijing. This is undoubtedly a setback for Lai, who sneaked in and out of Eswatini not long ago in an effort to shore up the "diplomatic ties" and subsequently hailed the trip as a "diplomatic success".

The more Lai attempts to blindfold Taiwan residents and the island's remaining "diplomatic partners" to the mainland's development achievements, the more he exposes the weakness of his narrative. Once people see the mainland's progress with their own eyes, political manipulation and misinformation inevitably lose credibility, leaving those who promote them increasingly isolated and out of step with reality.

The mainland's high-quality development provides a solid foundation for win-win cooperation across the Strait. Reality bites for separatists who obstinately stick to "Taiwan independence", but it spells greater and more concrete benefits for Taiwan residents who aspire for a better life.

Pentagon abuses power for suppression

The Pentagon's decision to add multiple Chinese companies — including e-commerce giant Alibaba, search engine Baidu and electric vehicle manufacturer BYD — to its updated Section 1260H list of alleged "Chinese military companies" is a groundless suppression of Chinese enterprises that severely harms their legitimate rights and interests.

The misleading designation mainly restricts Pentagon procurement and serves as a warning signal to investors and government agencies. The US administration is using the list to target China's technology companies by means of weaponized trade restrictions.

As a spokesperson for China's Ministry of Commerce said on Saturday in a statement on the US Department of Defense's decision, the US side has ignored the consensus reached during the meeting between the heads of state of the two countries in Beijing, disregarded the overall interests of bilateral economic and trade relations, continuously generalized the concept of "national security" and abused state power to unjustifiably suppress Chinese enterprises.

The Pentagon's list now extends far beyond enterprises traditionally associated with weapons production and increasingly encompasses sectors that sit at the center of the global digital economy and high-tech innovation.

In the eyes of the US administration, technologies once regarded as commercial — semiconductors, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, batteries, robotics and advanced manufacturing — have become strategic assets with military implications. The distinction between civilian and military technology is fading. This shines a light on the US administration's reliance on sanctions as a sop for the US' growing anxiety about the loss of its competitiveness in advanced technology.

The US administration's increasingly expansive use of "security" instruments targeting Chinese companies suggests a superpower grappling with the uncomfortable reality that the US' technological leadership can no longer be taken for granted. So the Pentagon's latest action can be interpreted as part of a broader strategy aimed at "decoupling" from China's supply chains and weakening its high-tech competitiveness.

In practice, the US move is forcing the formation of parallel technological systems. In doing so, it is seriously disrupting the international economic and trade order, undermining the stability of global industry and supply chains, and dramatically increasing the operating costs of the world economy and global trade.

The outcomes achieved by China and the US under mechanisms such as bilateral economic and trade consultations should also be understood and assessed within this broader context of the cumulative effect of the US administration's export controls, investment restrictions, entity listings and military-company designation.

The danger is that the US side is forcing China-US economic relations to become trapped in a self-reinforcing cycle. Washington always sees "security threats" and imposes restrictions. That leaves Beijing no choice but to take corresponding countermeasures.

China urges the US side to stop its wrong practices, revoke the relevant measures, return to the right track of building a constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability, and provide fair, just and nondiscriminatory treatment to Chinese companies, said the spokesperson for the Ministry of Commerce of China.

Otherwise, China will take resolute and strong countermeasures, and all consequences and responsibilities arising therefrom shall be borne by the US side, the spokesperson added.

Neither the trend of economic globalization nor the laws of the market will allow the US to use political force to impose parallel technological systems on the world without causing significant harm — both globally and to itself. The global economy remains deeply intertwined, and the technologies of the future depend on complex international supply chains that stretch from Silicon Valley to Shenzhen.

If the US president's first visit to China in nine years last month was intended to stabilize relations, the Pentagon's latest move does the opposite. While the Chinese side has made clear its willingness to steady bilateral ties through cooperation and exchanges, the US side seems intent on demonstrating its readiness to further embed what it sees as Sino-US strategic competition in commerce, technology and finance.

And once "national security" becomes the organizing principle of economic policy, every company risks being used as a soldier. The Pentagon's latest blacklist suggests that such a future might already have arrived.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

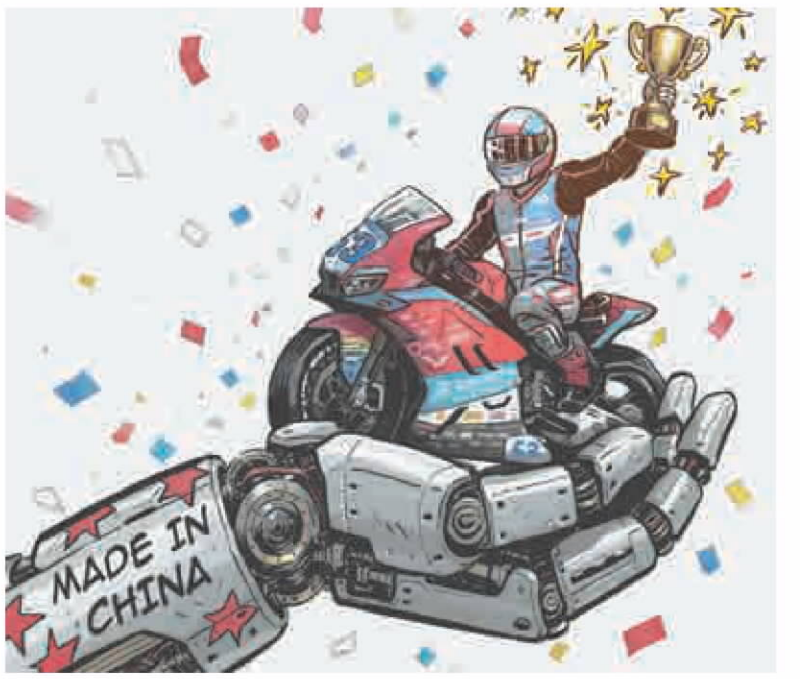
China Daily UK
90 Cannon St, London EC4N 6HA, UK
+44 (0) 207 398 8270
editor@chinadailyuk.com

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

Focus of all parties should be durable peace in Middle East

United States President Donald Trump said on Saturday that a peace deal with Iran was scheduled to be signed on Sunday and that the Strait of Hormuz will reopen immediately afterward. But Iran has cast doubt on the timetable, which underscores the fragility of the situation and the deep mistrust that continues to define regional politics.

At a time when conflicts in Gaza, Lebanon and other parts of the Middle East continue to simmer, any diplomatic breakthrough deserves encouragement.

Yet experience has repeatedly shown that temporary arrangements are rarely sufficient to build toward a comprehensive political settlement that addresses the root causes of instability.

Years of military confrontation, sanctions pressure and unilateral actions have produced cycles of retaliation. The international community should seize every opportunity to promote dialogue and negotiation while preventing the region from sliding further into confrontation.

In April, China put forward a four-point proposal to promote peace and stability in the Middle East. The plan emphasizes the principle of peaceful coexistence and calls for promoting the development of a common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security architecture for the Middle East and the Gulf region.

It has also urged adherence to the principle of national sovereignty. The sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of countries in the Middle East should be fully respected, and the safety of personnel, facilities and institutions of all countries should be effectively safeguarded. The proposal insists that the international rule of law should be upheld to prevent the world from falling back into the law of the jungle.

Moreover, development and security should be coordinated. All parties should work together to create a favorable environment for the development of countries in the Middle East.

These principles are particularly relevant today. The humanitarian situation in Gaza continues to deteriorate, while tensions along the Israel-Lebanon border remain elevated. Reports over the weekend that Israel may further expand military operations in southern Lebanon have heightened concerns that the conflict could spill over into a broader regional confrontation. Such developments would serve no one's interests and could lead to new humanitarian disasters.

The US bears a special responsibility in preventing further escalation. Rather than allowing military operations to expand in Gaza and Lebanon, Washington should take concrete steps to encourage restraint, promote ceasefires and support diplomatic solutions. Continued instability will only deepen regional divisions and increase security risks for all parties.

Lasting peace in the Middle East cannot be achieved without addressing the Palestinian question, which remains central to the regional turmoil. The repeated outbreaks of violence in recent decades have demonstrated that crisis management alone won't help. The international community must recommit to the two-state solution, support the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, and advance a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian question. Only through such efforts can the region break free from the cycle of conflict and retaliation.

The global implications of continued Middle East instability should not be underestimated. International attention to disruptions around the Strait of Hormuz may have waned as markets adapt to recurring tensions, but the world's growing familiarity with such risks should not be mistaken for immunity.

In an era of fragile global growth, prolonged instability in the Middle East threatens energy security, supply-chain resilience and broader economic recovery efforts worldwide.

Whether a deal is signed between the US and Iran or not, genuine peace requires more than a signature on a piece of paper. It requires a commitment to dialogue over confrontation, development over destruction, and justice over perpetual conflict.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Education needs to foster talent, nurture potential

Editor's note: *The State Council, China's Cabinet, approved the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) for the development of education on Thursday. Chengdu.cn spoke to Chu Zhaohui, a researcher at the China National Academy of Educational Sciences, on the educational challenges and opportunities China faces. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

In recent years, there has been a decline in the number of age-eligible children enrolling in kindergartens. This trend is likely to show up in primary, secondary and high schools and even universities in the years ahead.

At the same time, school-age children from rural areas are increasingly moving to towns and cities, a shift that is expected to become even more pronounced.

These developments reflect the changing demographics of the school-age population and underscore the need for a strategic reallocation of educational resources. The central government has responded with an education development plan that stresses better coordination and distribution of resources.

The uneven distribution of educational resources is a major challenge. High-quality resources in a region are usually concentrated in a few prestigious urban schools. In the hope that their children receive a better education, many parents choose top schools even if they are located far away.

As a result, there is overcrowding in some highly sought-after schools while other institutions struggle to fill their enrollment quotas. With the ongoing demographic changes among the school-age population, this imbalance could become even more pronounced in the coming years.

Overcrowded schools put pressure on teachers, making it difficult for them to address the needs of individual students, while under-enrolled schools risk underutilizing their resources. From this perspective, the allocation of educational resources needs to be more balanced among schools, between urban and rural areas, and between general and vocational education.

The plan also calls for greater stress on quality education to promote the healthy growth and all-round development of students.

Till now, parents and teachers have focused primarily on academic scores when evaluating students. But character, practical skills and creativity are equally important in assessing a student's value.

With the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence, the most valuable future skill will not be the ability to provide repeatable answers, but the capacity to be original and distinctively creative. This requires a shift from traditional educational concepts toward approaches that nurture each child's creative potential during the critical stages of development.

The plan also stresses the importance of supporting students' healthy growth. Health should also encompass mental well-being, social adaptability and moral development.

The incidence of childhood obesity and myopia has risen in recent years, while mental health problems among students have become increasingly common.

Therefore, fostering students' natural talents and individual potential should become the central goal of education.

Schools should help students discover their interests and establish evaluation systems that recognize diverse achievements. By allowing students to pursue what genuinely inspires them, education can encourage them to explore, innovate and create.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:26 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:26 PM

VIEWS

Andrey Kortunov

A cooperative path to shared protection

When a diverse group of nations such as the 10 members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization gets together, it's difficult to reach a consensus on sensitive issues like international security.

This challenge was formidable even 25 years ago when the group was much smaller and much more homogeneous.

While all agreed on combating the three evils — terrorism, separatism and extremism — each nation had different notions of each of the evils. Today, with an expanded membership, achieving consensus is even more challenging and almost impossible.

Yet, the SCO has consistently demonstrated a remarkable ability to overcome these challenges, enhancing multilateral cooperation across security domains.

The Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure stands as a testament to the SCO's achievements. Since its inception in 2002, it has played an important role in helping SCO member states foil terrorist attacks and combat extremism.

While this success often overshadows other achievements, the SCO's accomplishments in "soft security" also deserve equal attention.

Consider the SCO's fight against illicit drug trafficking. Recent statistics are quite impressive: in 2025 alone, the collaborative anti-drug operation "The Web" helped intercept 10 metric tons of narcotics and 21 tons of precursors.

This cooperation led to the shutdown of numerous online drug trade platforms and poses a serious challenge to transnational criminal groups involved in the production and sale of drugs.

Another priority on the "soft security" agenda is combating illegal cross-border migration.

Though each SCO member state has unique migration management policies, their cooperation has yielded practical results, particularly in apprehending criminals trying to escape justice by fleeing abroad. Though specific figures have not been released, these efforts lead to thousands of arrests every year.

A growing dimension of the SCO's "soft security" cooperation is the fight against cybercrime. With critical infrastructure and national financial systems more vulnerable to malicious interference than ever before, the SCO's partnership with Interpol on cybersecurity was a very timely step.

Joint training programs for experts and public officials, launched in Tashkent in 2023, are rapidly expanding now and hold tremendous potential for growth.

To be sure, these three "soft security" challenges are not unique to SCO member states but are universal problems that affect all nations and regions of the world. No country can credibly claim to have found an "ultimate" solution to any of them.

For example, the European Union has been fighting against cross-border drug trafficking, illegal migration and cybercrime for a very long time, and the outcomes have been mixed at best.

Global Lens

It would be unfair to suggest that all EU efforts have failed, but the reality is that all three "soft security" challenges remain high on the European agenda. The use of many drugs — from traditional cocaine to the most novel synthetic cathinones — is on the rise.

When a major conflict occurs or a state collapses in the Middle East or Africa, a flood of refugees is forced to migrate to Europe, similar to the migration crisis of 2015. EU countries lose hundreds of billions of euros every year to cybercrime, including ransomware, phishing, identity theft and hacktivism. The preferred targets are digital infrastructure and services, manufacturing, transport and public administration that demonstrate persistent vulnerabilities to transnational cyber-criminal groups operating from both within the EU and outside.

Given these shared challenges, it would be only natural for the SCO and the EU to collaborate on this critical agenda.

This is particularly necessary because the problems that Europe faces from these challenges cannot be separated from the rest of Eurasia.

Problems arising anywhere between Lisbon and Singapore will inevitably ripple across the region.

Of course, under the current deplorable geopolitical circumstances, leaders of the SCO and the EU member states will need a lot of political will, strategic vision and personal courage to begin this interaction. It makes sense to start with relatively simple things such as information sharing, best practices exchange and informal meetings of experts.

While the SCO can learn a lot from the EU experience, Europe also stands to benefit from exploring the Eurasian practices. When sufficient trust has been built between the SCO and the EU, they can consider parallel or even joint projects in areas that are not controversial or politically sensitive.

Such a collaboration is not a favor granted by the EU or vice versa. It is a natural step in restoring global cooperation. The sooner this step is taken, the better it will be for both sides, and for the rest of the world.

The author is a former director-general and academic director of the Russian International Affairs Council.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



JIN DING / CHINA DAILY

Gulyamov Said Saidakhrarovich

Paving the way for global cyber governance

When the Shanghai Cooperation Organization turns 25 on Monday, the world will see the familiar images: joint military exercises, coordinated border patrols, and the ongoing campaign against terrorism, separatism and extremism. While these images are true, they also hide the most remarkable thing this organization has quietly built.

The scale of the SCO is impressive. It has 10 member states, representing nearly half of humanity and a quarter of the world economy.

The organization's work is tangible: in 2023 alone, joint operations dismantled 95 terrorist cells and prevented 181 planned attacks.

But one of the SCO's most profound contributions is less noticed. The SCO established the first legal regime for cyberspace in 2009, years before most governments had any cybersecurity law. Cooperation plans were signed in Dushanbe in 2021 and renewed in Astana in 2024.

In September 2025, China hosted the largest SCO summit in Tianjin under the banner of upholding the Shanghai Spirit.

There, President Xi Jinping unveiled the Global Governance Initiative, calling for a fairer world where all nations have an equal voice. And President Shavkat Mirziyoyev of Uzbekistan reminded fellow leaders of the Confucian wisdom: "Help others to stand, and you will stand yourself."

Global Lens

The Tianjin summit marked the pinnacle of rulemaking, with leaders signing an agreement to establish the Universal Center for Countering Security Threats and Challenges, and to protect critical information infrastructure. They also called for efforts toward the signing of the UN Convention against Cybercrime.

Today, the story has opened its newest chapter: cybersecurity through the prism of artificial intelligence.

These efforts are reminiscent of the Silk Road, where caravans managed to cross continents not because there were roads but because there were rules and trusted guides.

Every caravan was led by people who knew the customs, the merchants' courts and the codes of trust at every stop. Roads carried goods. People who knew the rules carried confidence.

For a quarter of a century, the SCO has been writing the rules of a digital Silk Road. As a legal scholar from Uzbekistan — a founding member whose capital, Tashkent, hosts the organization's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure — I have observed this evolution up close.

Today, the story has opened its newest chapter: cybersecurity through the prism of artificial intelligence. AI is both a sword and a shield, with software now creating phishing schemes, amplifying propaganda and designing synthetic drugs. Yet, AI also guards power grids and banks, monitors network traffic and detects forgeries.

This is where the SCO's approach to regulation is truly distinctive. While other organizations focus on rules that tell machines what they may do, the SCO emphasizes education.

It cultivates individuals who do not simply comply with artificial intelligence but govern it — the judge who can question an algorithm, the officer who can identify a deepfake, the teacher who trains both. Regulation that restricts produces obedience; regulation that educates produces mastery.

There can be various expressions of this philosophy. Uzbekistan has integrated AI and cybersecurity into its legal system — from the Constitution to a pioneering code of ethics for AI in education that prepares teachers and students to command the tools before the tools command them.

Kazakhstan adopted a framework law on AI in 2025. China meticulously regulates recommendation algorithms and generative AI, requiring all AI-generated content to be labeled since September 2025 to ensure transparency for citizens.

The approaches are different, but the objective is common: put capable humans at the center of the machine age.

The SCO's collective efforts are also advancing. The Tianjin Declaration affirms every country's right to develop AI and endorses a cooperation road map.

The Universal Center for Countering Security Threats and Challenges and the security dialogue planned in Tashkent will serve as platforms for experts to exchange knowledge and learn from each other.

It is a quiet form of leadership: while others still debate AI's implications, the SCO is already preparing the individuals who will navigate this new era.

Some might say that the SCO moves slowly. True, but so did the caravans on the Silk Road.

Yet their slow progress connected half the world because they followed certain regulations during the journey.

The first 25 years of the SCO laid the digital foundation and its guiding principles. The next 25 years will be shaped by people who are trained to govern technology.

The author is a professor in the Department of Cyber Law at Tashkent State University of Law, Uzbekistan.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Dmitri TRENIN

SCO at 25: Building a continent-wide security space

As the Shanghai Cooperation Organization marks its 25th anniversary, it is worth recalling its achievements in terms of building trust, enhancing security and promoting prosperity.

The challenge before the SCO as it enters its second quarter-century is clear — building on those achievements and creating a mutual security space in Eurasia which could become a major pillar of the emerging multipolar world order.

This is only natural given the SCO's own history. Its founding was preceded by five years of negotiations among China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan on border issues and military security.

However, the process turned out to be so successful that, upon the completion of immediate tasks, what was initially the Shanghai Five became the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

The new organization was given a new set of tasks. Its security mission expanded to include combating the "three evils" of separatism, radicalism and terrorism.

These destructive forces threatened both Russia and China, but particularly the new states in Central Asia.

As a means of bolstering socio-political stability in the region, the SCO facilitated economic cooperation among the five countries. Success brings recognition and attracts others.

Expectedly, the SCO's membership doubled. Uzbekistan, India, Pakistan, Iran and Belarus joined the organization as full members.

Global Lens

Other countries, from Afghanistan to Mongolia to Turkiye, participated as partners or observers.

Some outside observers have compared the SCO to NATO, but this is wholly misplaced.

The SCO is not a military bloc; it is based on the sovereign equality of its members and abhors hegemony: it doesn't have a boss like the United States in NATO or in the G7 group; and it displays the diversity of the world's civilizations, unlike the uniform Western alliance.

These features make the SCO a perfect candidate for creating one of the pillars of the emerging multipolar world order: a security space spanning much of the world's biggest landmass, Eurasia.

A security space is best described as a community within which inter-state war has been abolished as an instrument of statecraft.

Countries are free to cooperate and compete, but they do not resort to violence when they disagree.

They do not seek to dominate one another either militarily or ideologically; they essentially mind their own business, and practice sovereign status equality — even though the world is not made up of material or spiritual equals. Key to a security space is the indivisibility of security: no state would seek to enhance its own security at the expense of others.

In theory, a Eurasian security space could extend to the entire Eurasian landmass, as proposed a couple of years ago by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

It no longer makes sense to separate "European security" from the security of East, Central, South and West Asia; no one region, and no one country should be excluded.

Yet, the process naturally passes through stages. The SCO is a good example of that.

At its core lies the Russo-Chinese rapprochement, ushering in an era of strategic partnership and coordination.

Since then, thanks to the efforts of several generations of Chinese and Russian leaders, the governing elites and broader sections of both societies, a model relationship between two major countries has come into being.

This is still the backbone of the Eurasian security space.

The formation of the SCO added a vibrant Central Asian element to the picture.

SCO's expansion to include countries from South Asia has presented a number of challenges that are still relevant. In 2025, India and Pakistan even fought a brief war.

However, New Delhi and Islamabad's participation in SCO summits and related activities help manage tensions between the two nuclear powers. Of particular importance is the relationship between China and India.

At the very least, SCO events provide an opportunity for the leaders and senior officials of the two countries to meet and discuss problems, preventing conflicts.

With the more recent addition of Iran and Belarus, the SCO has reached two important regions: West Asia and Eastern Europe.

The two countries are essential — alongside East and Southeast Asia — for the security space embodied by the SCO to become continent-wide.

Whether the Shanghai Cooperation Organization will be able to complete this ambitious new mission in its second quarter-century is a moot question.

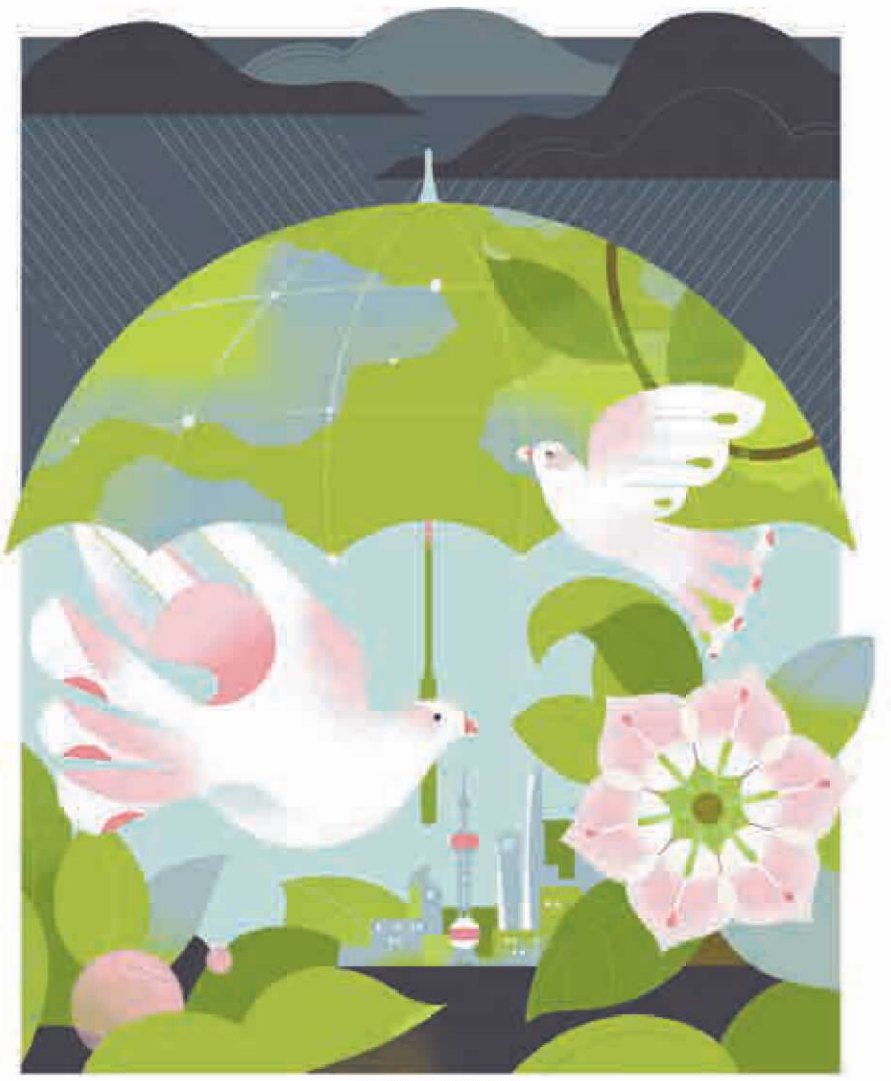
However, by providing a forum to meet, setting principles for a security community — there's already talk of a Eurasian security charter — and actually practicing them, the SCO is a strong pillar of a security architecture already serving some three and a half billion people.

The author is president of the Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC).
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:26 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:26 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

SANAT KUSHKUMBAYEV

Biggest strength

At 25, the SCO shows that practical coordination is the key to meeting today's networked security threats

Modern threats do not wait for governments to agree on how to respond together. Drug networks, cybercriminals, human trafficking and extremist groups move across borders faster than many institutions can act.



States often move more slowly when they have to cooperate, especially when political trust is limited. This is why coordination, even without perfect agreement, has become one of the most valuable assets in international security.

As the Shanghai Cooperation Organization marks its 25th anniversary in 2026, its experience deserves attention beyond the usual discussion of counter-terrorism. The SCO was founded in Shanghai in June 2001 by China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. It has since expanded into a broader Eurasian organization with 10 member states, including India, Pakistan, Iran and Belarus. Its growth has made the SCO both more diverse and more complex.

That complexity is precisely the point. The SCO's real strength is not that its members always see the world in the same way. They do not. They differ in size, geography, political traditions, economic interests and foreign policy priorities. The organization's importance lies in something more practical: it provides a framework in which states with different perspectives can still coordinate on problems that none of them can solve alone.

This is a useful lesson for a fragmented international environment. Too often, multilateralism is judged by whether it produces full political consensus. But in the real world, complete agreement is rare. Coordination is more attainable and often more urgent. When a drug route crosses several borders, when illegal financial flows pass through multiple jurisdictions, or when a cyberattack is launched from one country against victims in another, waiting for perfect political harmony is not a viable strategy.

The SCO began with a strong security focus, particularly with regard to terrorism, separatism and extremism. Over time, however, its agenda has widened. Countering drug trafficking, organized crime, illegal migration and cyber-related threats has become part of the broader understanding of regional security. This evolution reflects a simple reality: today's threats are interconnected. Drug trafficking may finance extremist activity. Illegal migration can be exploited by criminal intermediaries. Cybercrime can support fraud, recruitment, propaganda and money laundering. Security is no longer a set of separate files; it is a network of overlapping risks.

> In an age of networked threats, coordination is not a technical detail. It is a strategic asset. Consensus is desirable, but coordination is indispensable.

In this context, the SCO's value lies in routine. Regular meetings among officials, channels for information exchange, joint exercises, shared assessments and professional contacts may sound less dramatic than summit declarations. Yet they are the infrastructure of practical security. Trust rarely appears overnight. It is built through repetition, predictability and the knowledge that, when a problem emerges, there is someone across the border who can be contacted.

The anti-drug agenda is a good example. The SCO Anti-Drug Strategy for 2024-2029, adopted at the Astana summit in 2024, shows that the organization is trying to respond not only to traditional narcotics routes but also to new methods of distribution. The international anti-drug operation "Web" in 2025 targeted the use of internet resources and virtual payment systems in drug trafficking. This illustrates a wider trend: criminal networks are becoming digital. Law enforcement, in turn, must cooperate faster and be more coordinated and technologically capable.

The lesson is relevant not only for Eurasia. Europe, the Middle East, Southeast Asia and Africa all face their own combinations of migration pressure, border management challenges, criminal networks and digital vulnerabilities. The SCO model should not be copied mechanically by other regions. Institutions grow out of history, geography and political culture. But the SCO method — of keeping communication open, separating practical coordination from broader disagreements and focusing on shared risks even when political consensus is difficult — is worth studying.

This approach is especially important where security and humanitarian issues overlap. Migration, for example, should not be treated simply as a security threat. Many people move because of war, poverty, climate stress or the quest for safety. But criminal groups often exploit such movements, turning human vulnerability into profit. A responsible policy must therefore combine humanitarian principles with stronger coordination against smuggling networks, forged documents, illegal financing and digital recruitment. That balance cannot be achieved by one country acting alone.

At 25, the SCO's record is not a story of perfect unity. It is a story of managed diversity. Its members do not need to agree on everything in order to work together on what threatens them all. This may be the organization's most practical message to the wider world.

In an age of networked threats, coordination is not a technical detail. It is a strategic asset. Consensus is desirable, but coordination is indispensable.

The author is the chief research fellow at the Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies (Astana). The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

XU CHANGZHI

Harmony for common good

The SCO's contributions to regional security, stability and prosperity stem from its vision of governance based on extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits

June 15 marks the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Twenty-five years ago, the heads of state of the six founding nations — China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan — followed the pulse of the times to sign the Declaration on the Establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, opening a new chapter for regional countries in their shared pursuit of stability and development.



To date, the SCO has grown from six founding members into a family of 27 countries across Asia, Europe and Africa. From its initial focus on regional security, its agenda has expanded to include politics, economic affairs and people-to-people exchanges. Today, it stands as the world's largest regional cooperation organization in both land area and population, and a key multilateral platform to ensure security and stability and to drive shared prosperity.

The SCO has remained true to the Shanghai Spirit, which is defined by mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for diversity of civilizations and pursuit of common development. Its vision of "harmony in diversity and common development" aligns closely with the purposes of the United Nations Charter and shares the same lineage as the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, offering unique Eastern wisdom to global governance.

Over the past 25 years, the SCO has forged a new path for regional cooperation that diverges from traditional geopolitical rivalries. It has pioneered an entirely different model of partnership, where countries with divergent social systems and development paths can achieve solidarity, win-win openness and inclusive mutual learning. It has set an example for regional and global cooperation, and blazed a trail — theoretically and practically — toward a new type of international relations and a community with a shared future for humanity.

China has left an indelible mark on the SCO's growth and evolution. As a founding member and key participant, China has always prioritized the SCO in its neighborhood diplomacy, steering it toward a new stage of high-quality development defined by greater solidarity, stronger coordination, enhanced vitality and more impactful collective action.

China's wisdom has kept the Shanghai Spirit alive and relevant. In 2001, as host of the first SCO Summit, China drew on the experience of the "Shanghai Five" mechanism to propose the Shanghai Spirit, and it has since become the SCO's core value and code of conduct. As the international landscape has grown increasingly complex, China has systematically put forward five perspectives for development, security, cooperation, civilization and global governance, which can be the guiding principles for building an SCO community with a shared future. It has further championed the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, the Global Civilization Initiative and the Global Governance Initiative. Together, these concepts and initiatives have breathed new life into the Shanghai Spirit.

China's solutions have steadily upgraded the SCO's institutions and mechanisms. Beijing promoted the establishment of the SCO Secretariat and the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure, and initiated the drafting of the Treaty on Long-Term Good-Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation Between the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, laying a solid legal foundation for SCO-related countries to live in friendship and never become enemies. With strong impetus from China, the bloc successively adopted a medium- to long-term development road map and two 10-year development strategies, clarifying cooperation principles, tasks and objectives, and pointing the way forward.

China's impetus has actively advanced bilateral and multilateral cooperation within the SCO framework. Over the past 25 years, China has held the rotating presidency five times, providing crucial momentum for the steady and sustained development of a community with a shared future for the organization.

During its 2024-25 presidency, China delivered 313 work outcomes, including hosting 187 events, adopting 90 outcome documents and proposing 36 cooperation initiatives covering politics, security, economy and trade, connectivity, technological innovation and green industries. The 2025 Tianjin Summit — the largest in SCO history — helped cement growing solidarity and mutual trust among SCO-related countries, secure tangible progress on security cooperation, advance integrated development that benefits all parties, and foster ever-closer people-to-people and cultural exchanges.

In the contemporary global landscape, unilateralism, acts of power politics and bullying are persistently eroding the foundations of multilateralism. The international community thus expects the SCO to assume greater responsibility — to practice true multilateralism, to reform and improve the global governance system, and to make more SCO contributions to regional and world peace, stability, development and prosperity.

The SCO's contributions stem from its vision of global governance based on extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits. SCO countries have transcended outdated concepts such as the clash of civilizations, Cold War mentality and zero-sum games. Instead, they practice the essence of multilateralism. As Chinese President Xi Jinping said in a video speech at the World Economic Forum Virtual Event of the Davos Agenda in January 2021, "multilateralism is about having international affairs addressed through consultation and the future of the world decided by everyone working together". In particular, the innovative model of the SCO Plus Meeting has significantly enhanced the organization's inclusiveness and representativeness on global issues, raising greater expectations from the international community for its role in improving the global governance system.

The SCO's contributions also come from its collective voice in defense of international fairness and justice. From the situation in Afghanistan to the US-Israel-Iran conflict, the SCO countries actively coordinate to resolve international and regional hotspots, providing political and diplomatic platforms and channels for dialogue and communication. Across a wide range of issues — from safeguarding the security, stability and diversification of supply chains to uniting for global justice, harmony and development — the SCO has sounded a powerful call of the times on major challenges concerning humanity's future and destiny — a call for unity over division, cooperation over confrontation, and justice over hegemony.

Another source of the SCO's contributions lies in its ability to rally broad support from all quarters. As a collective body of emerging markets and developing nations, the SCO has become an important platform for advancing South-South cooperation, helping Global South members better protect their sovereignty, pursue development and prosperity, and improve national governance. The implementation of Chinese initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative within the SCO and other multilateral frameworks has enhanced mutual trust and exchanges across different societies and peoples, providing greater support for addressing global challenges.

At present, the world is experiencing both transformation and turbulence. With 25 years of traversing hardships and challenges, the SCO has come of age and entered a new phase. Its mission to safeguard regional security and stability has become ever more vital, and its responsibility to promote national development and rejuvenation even more weighty.

Standing at a new starting point, SCO countries have a greater need than ever to carry forward the Shanghai Spirit, uphold the vision of "harmony in diversity and common development", consolidate political mutual trust, safeguard common security, promote shared prosperity and strengthen people-to-people exchanges — while enhancing institutional effectiveness — toward building a community with a shared future, promoting regional security, stability and development, and advancing a fairer and more equitable global governance system.

The author is the deputy secretary-general of the Council on China-Russia Strategic Coordination at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



WANG JUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:26 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:26 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

Translating resilience into capital inflows

Chinese equity markets riding innovation wave; new economic drivers' importance in A shares rising

By **SHI JING** in Shanghai
shijing@chinadaily.com.cn

China's new economic drivers' rising importance in the A-share market has been especially noticeable after a set of supportive measures were introduced since Sept 24, 2024. Technology companies, usually with higher price elasticity, have ushered in a price rally ever since.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Unitree Robotics, the humanoid robot maker that captivated audiences at the Spring Festival Gala for two straight years, has now seized the spotlight in a new arena: the capital market. On June 1, its initial public offering application won regulatory approval, making it the first humanoid robotics company to debut on the A-share market.

The company's application was passed in just 73 days. While the Chinese regulators have adopted a tighter grip over IPOs, the unexpected speed for this case has demonstrated the greater importance attached to new economic drivers both from the regulators and market participants, said Yang Zhen, chief engineering researcher from Orient Securities.

As a matter of fact, China's new economic drivers' rising importance in the A-share market has been especially noticeable after a set of supportive measures were introduced since Sept 24, 2024. Technology companies, usually with higher price elasticity, have ushered in a price rally ever since, according to Xun Yugen, chief economist of Guosen Securities.

The comparison between STAR Market 50 Index and the SSE 50 Index may best depict the situation, as the former best represents the hard technology sector and the latter monitors the 50 heavyweights trading at Shanghai Stock Exchange's main board, according to Xun.

Buoyed by the artificial intelligence rise, STAR Market 50 spiked 42.3 percent between July and October last year, significantly overtaking the 10.8 percent increase registered by the SSE 50 Index during the same period.

After the A-share market slid in April, STAR Market 50 Index quickly recovered and refreshed its previous record high with upward momentum. This was mainly fueled by the strong performance of semiconductor, optical component and memory companies. However, the SSE 50 — representation of the old economic engines — has not yet recovered from the downward trend, said Xun.

The disparity did not happen overnight.

In the second quarter of 2021, companies best representing the new economy saw their combined market value overtaking that of old economic engines for the first time. As of May 22, the new economy accounted for 48.4 percent of A-share market's total market cap, compared to 22.3 percent for the old economy. The divergence in trading value is even more pronounced, with the new economy accounting for as much as 57.5 percent of total turnover, versus 15.3 percent for the old economy, according to Guosen Securities.

"Companies specializing in electronics, communication, computer, medicine, defense, automobiles, and consumer services have become important contributors to China's economic growth. In the meantime, companies from the sectors of real estate, basic chemicals and traditional machinery are facing growth challenges," said Xun.

The electronics sector — a key component for the many humanoid robot companies like Unitree — emerged as the most actively traded industry in China's mid-stream manufacturing during the first five months this year. Its monthly trading value had been exceeding 2 trillion yuan ($295 billion) since October 2024, which topped 15 trillion yuan for the first time in May, according to market tracker Wind Info.

New quality productive forces including AI and advanced manufacturing will continue to be the best A-share performers in the second half of the year, according to CITIC Securities.

The prospect of A-share companies' improving profitability has been translated into brokerages' optimism.

Data from first-quarter earnings showed that the overall A-share revenue growth had returned to positive territory, ending the profitability pressure since 2022, according to Cheng Min, vice-general manager of the equities department at Huayin Fund.

The two major technology-focused boards saw particularly explosive results. The average net profits reported by STAR Market companies came at a whopping over 200 percent year-on-year, and that for ChiNext companies reached 20 percent.

At a May press briefing, Meng Lei, UBS Securities China equity strategist, raised his full-year 2026 earnings growth forecast for A-share companies to 11 percent — up from an already optimistic 8 percent forecast at the end of 2025.

Morgan Stanley reached a similar conclusion in their "China AI 2.0" report released in early May. The investment bank noted that "AI adopters" — companies actively integrating artificial intelligence into their operations — have seen their next-12-months earnings per share rise 62 percent over the past two years, dramatically outperforming the broader MSCI China index, which managed just 10 percent growth.

When rising geopolitical tensions and market uncertainties have become a bigger headache for investors around the globe, China assets are of greater value as they are more and more considered "a safe haven".

"Investors all over the world are paying higher premiums for resilience and security amid rising influence of geopolitical tensions. Investment has become more difficult. But all these are the reasons for the revaluation of the Chinese capital market and the related assets," said Li Chunbo, chairman of CITIC Securities International.

Zhu Feng, chief China economist of JPMorgan, explained that China's economic resilience sits on its more diversified energy sources, less dependence on imported oil and gas, and above all, a most complete industrial supply chain in the world.

That resilience has translated into capital flows. According to JPMorgan, overseas funds recorded a net inflow of approximately $13.1 billion into Chinese equity markets year-to-date as of May 15, a scale not seen for years.

Regional and global actively-managed funds have significantly contracted their underweight to China assets since the beginning of the year. Robust overseas capital inflow will further buoy the liquidity in the A-share market, said Zhang Xiaoning, JPMorgan's China equity strategist.

From the company's recent road shows, Zhang has also noticed a shift in international investors' preference over Chinese equities.

"While global funds used to favor the consumption-based internet giants, they are now pivoting to the A-share advanced manufacturing and tech hardware due to the rising focus on energy security and the long-term outlook on the robot sector," she said.

Currently, foreign investors hold approximately 3.5 to 4 percent of total A-share market cap. While medium- to long-term investors have expressed increasing interest in Chinese equities, substantial exposure increases are still in the early stage, according to Thomas Fang, head of China Global Markets at UBS.

"The next five to 10 years will be a 'golden window' for global investors to increase allocations to Chinese assets," he said.

But Unitree's smooth IPO journey should not be mistaken for a regulatory loosening. On the contrary, more than 20 companies have seen their listing reviews come to a halt — most of them voluntarily withdrawn by the issuers or their sponsoring institutions.

Meanwhile, a total of 22 companies had been delisted as of end May. Financial fraud, misappropriation of company funds, and hollowing out of the main businesses are the major reasons for them to be removed from the A-share market.

"This year, delistings have been implemented at a faster pace and with stronger enforcement penetration. The framework of the normalization of delistings has become clearer," said Dong Zhongyun, chief economist at AVIC Securities.

Long-standing market ills such as the speculation of "shell companies" are thus gradually eliminated. A market ecology of "survival of the fittest" is taking shape at an accelerated pace, with low-quality listed companies being weeded out more quickly and more market resources directed to the innovation-driven companies, said Tian Lihui, a finance professor at Nankai University.

Ever since September 2024, central regulators have come up with a set of market stabilizing measures including Central Huijin's purchases of exchange-traded funds, swap facilities for financial institutions introduced by China's central bank, and re-lending for share buybacks.

"The policy package not only curbed short-term irrational fluctuations in the capital market, but also fundamentally reshaped the liquidity transmission mechanism and the valuation ecosystem of A shares. They serve as a 'stabilizer' for the capital market, building a solid base for future fiscal stimulus and domestic demand recovery," said Zhao Wei, chief economist of Shenwan Hongyuan Securities.

"Market-stabilizing measures will no longer be an emergency 'toolkit', but rather normalized and long-term institutional safeguards," he added.

Another major stabilizing force is formed by the continued inflow of long-term capital, including social security funds, insurance and mutual funds.

According to the China Securities Regulatory Commission, the country's top securities watchdog, medium and long-term funds made net A-share purchases over 800 billion yuan in 2025.

Ming Ming, chief economist at CITIC Securities, said that capital inflow from long-term funds will be estimated at the trillion-yuan-level in the next few years, fundamentally reshaping the A-share market's ecosystem and valuation system while securing a solid foundation for asset safety.

"These funds have a discerning eye for new quality productive forces. Their increased market participation will boost market confidence, optimize investor structure, reduce volatility and help core assets return to fair valuations. The overall market stability and resilience will be elevated," he said.

Patience not just a virtue, it is the strategy

REPORTER'S LOG

By Shi Jing

Humility and a low profile have long been considered virtues in China. But lately, it has become increasingly difficult to suppress a sense of pride in the country's progress over the past decades. At least, that was the consensus reached by journalists attending the same interview as me the other day.

While the Chinese have kept their heads down for decades, diligently catching up with mature markets, we have quietly taken the global lead in telecommunications, new energy and artificial intelligence. We are no longer exporting just low-value-added products like textiles or toys; we are exporting innovative business models. Adding to this is the world's most complete manufacturing supply chain, the largest pool of engineering talent and, of course, an unmistakable reputation as an infrastructure giant.

All these have helped China's economy gallop along for years. Yes, economic growth has slowed — a natural consequence after decades of double-digit expansion. But beneath the surface, something more fundamental is underway. The country is holding its head higher, looking further and reaching into frontier industries: space, quantum computing, brain-computer interfaces and beyond.

This shift is rooted in a solid conviction: technology will be the ultimate variable driving China's economic growth. Given the country's already massive economic scale, the marginal contribution of additional capital and labor is naturally diminishing. The future, therefore, belongs to productivity — and productivity comes from innovation.

This may leave some investors puzzled. They know the old saying: the stock market is the barometer of the economy. But if China's technological fundamentals are so strong, why hasn't the A-share market taken off?

Let's go back to the very basics. When we calculate stock prices, the premise is "going concern", meaning that the company is supposed to continue to operate for a very long time to come. The current stock price is the present value of its future cash flow.

To put it in a simple way, when we buy stocks in a company, we are buying into its future. Or, in other words, we buy part of a company because we have faith in it. Such conviction comes from the evaluation of its current performance, industry outlook, macro-environment, etc. The investor should believe that the company is doing the right things and is on the right development path.

But technology advancement is not linear; it follows a spiral or zigzag path. And while a lot of technology companies do not generate profits for years, they still require immense investment and are not able to turn in dazzling fiscal reports to their investors. This is precisely where the gap between perception and reality opens — and where patience becomes an investor's most valuable asset.

This may sound cliche. But personal perception can deviate from rational behavior, prompting reckless moves, herding and speculation. That is why it bears repeating that long-term and value-oriented investing is the golden rule.

Fortunately, the country is making every effort to make the A-share market healthier: laying the groundwork to welcome technology companies, eliminating shell companies to allocate market resources to the truly competitive ones, and introducing more patient capital such as pension funds and insurance money.

So, as long as China stays on the right path — attaching unprecedented importance to technological innovation — the stock market will eventually tell a successful story. Until then, patience is not just a virtue; it is the strategy.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:26 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:26 PM

BUSINESSINSIGHT

Regulations to safeguard outbound investment

EAGLE EYE
By Yang Zekun

On June 1, China's State Council — the nation's Cabinet — released regulations on outbound investment (hereinafter referred to as "the regulations"), which will take effect on July 1. As the country's first comprehensive administrative regulations governing outbound investment, they mark a historic step toward a unified legal framework for overseas investment activities.

They represent an important legal milestone in balancing development and security while advancing high-standard opening-up, with far-reaching historical and practical significance.

China's outbound investment has undergone nearly half a century of development. Since the country first proposed allowing enterprises to establish operations overseas in 1979, outbound direct investment has grown steadily, reaching $174.38 billion in 2025.

Chinese companies have established more than 50,000 enterprises abroad, making China one of the world's major sources of outbound investment.

Despite this rapid growth, governance of outbound investment has long relied on departmental regulations and policy documents. Regulatory responsibilities were divided among agencies such as the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Commerce and the State Administration of Foreign Exchange, resulting in a fragmented framework without a unified legal foundation.

The regulations bring the oversight functions of different authorities into a single institutional framework for the first time through an administrative regulation. They establish the basic legal rules governing outbound investment and represent an evolution from policy-based management to institutionalized governance backed by the rule of law.

Some scholars have noted that the legislation fills a long-standing institutional gap in the outbound investment sector, and provides a fundamental legal basis for investment administration and services. It signals a new stage of law-based and standardized governance for China's outbound investment activities.

Consisting of 34 articles, the regulations establish a full-cycle governance framework covering pre-investment approval and filing procedures, ongoing supervision and post-investment accountability. The framework rests on three major pillars.



ILLUSTRATION GENERATED BY AI

The first is a commitment to openness and alignment with international standards. Article 4 states that China will actively align with high-standard international economic and trade rules, promote high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, and participate in the development of international investment rules.

This approach reflects China's commitment to multilateralism, while providing institutional support for deeper participation in global economic governance.

Articles 24 and 25 establish a two-way countermeasure mechanism that allows China to take lawful responses against discriminatory measures imposed by foreign countries, providing institutional protection for Chinese investors overseas.

The second pillar focuses on improving the quality of outbound investment. The regulations encourage investment in areas such as technological innovation and green, low-carbon development.

At the same time, they place restrictions on investment in sensitive sectors including real estate, hotels, film and television, gene editing and rare-earth mining, while prohibiting activities involving weapons and military equipment development, news media and gambling.

This classified management approach represents a shift from broad-based regulations toward more targeted oversight, helping direct capital toward strategic sectors that support high-quality development.

The third pillar is strengthening risk prevention and security safeguards. The regulations establish a comprehensive framework covering the stages before, during and after investment activities. Before projects proceed, investors are required to complete approval, filing and information-reporting procedures in accordance with the law.

During implementation, stricter controls apply to the cross-border movement of technology, data and personnel. Afterward, violations may trigger penalties, including fines ranging from 0.5 percent to 1 percent of the investment amount.

Entities that obtain approvals or filings through fraudulent means may have future applications rejected for three years. These measures significantly raise the cost of noncompliance and bolster deterrence.

The practical value of the regulations extends beyond oversight alone. Their significance also lies in strengthening services and protection, thus creating a more comprehensive governance framework.

One important aspect is the development of an integrated overseas service system. The regulations call for improved coordination of resources related to foreign affairs, legal services, taxation, finance and logistics. Investors will have access to public services covering laws and regulations, investment guidance, risk prevention and rights protection.

Banking institutions will provide financing services, policy-oriented insurers will offer overseas investment insurance and professional service providers will expand their overseas networks. This reflects a governance approach that places equal emphasis on regulations and services.

The regulations also establish a multilayered framework for protecting rights and interests overseas. Risk warning mechanisms will provide timely information on security conditions and investment risks.

Consular protection mechanisms will offer assistance in cases involving wars, armed conflicts and other major emergencies.

Investment dispute resolution mechanisms encourage consultation, mediation, arbitration and litigation as means of resolving disputes. In addition, countermeasure mechanisms allow investigations and responses to investment barriers and discriminatory practices.

Together, these arrangements provide stronger support for Chinese companies operating overseas.

Another notable feature is the clarification of the relationship between government oversight and market autonomy.

Article 5 states that investors enjoy the legal right to make independent outbound investment decisions and bear their own risks and responsibilities. The provision reflects respect for the role of market entities. Within clearly defined compliance boundaries, enterprises retain ample room for commercial decisionmaking.

As a result, outbound investment governance is moving away from broad, one-size-fits-all administration toward more targeted and refined regulation, achieving a better balance between policy guidance and market principles.

The release of the regulations represents an important step in modernizing China's outbound investment governance and carries broader significance.

First, it reflects China's contribution to global economic governance. At a time when unilateralism and protectionism are gaining ground in some parts of the world, the regulations not only provide legal safeguards for Chinese investors, but also send a clear signal of China's commitment to multilateralism and opposition to protectionist practices.

As China increasingly moves from being a participant in international rules to playing a greater role in shaping them, the regulations reflect this evolving position.

Second, the framework serves as an example of balancing development with security. It combines measures aimed at promoting high-quality outbound investment with mechanisms designed to prevent and address risks, helping achieve a balance between greater openness and effective oversight, while enhancing protection for China's growing overseas interests.

Third, the regulations are expected to support higher-quality development. As China's outbound investment shifts from pursuing scale to pursuing quality, the framework provides clearer guidance on where investment is encouraged, restricted or prohibited.

By directing capital toward areas such as technological innovation and green development, it offers policy support for Chinese enterprises seeking to move up the global value chain.

From the country's first proposal in 1979 allowing enterprises to establish operations overseas to the introduction of its first comprehensive administrative regulation in 2026, China's outbound investment has undergone nearly five decades of development.

By transforming long-standing policy measures into a formal legal framework, the regulations fill an important legislative gap in the outbound investment sector.

Looking ahead, their implementation is expected to help China's outbound investment evolve from scale-driven expansion toward higher-quality and more efficient growth, while promoting a shift from extensive management to more refined governance.

In doing so, they will provide stronger legal support for high-standard opening-up, thus helping achieve the country's broader development goals.

The writer is a research fellow at the National Academy of Development and Strategy at Renmin University of China. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Financial structure optimization key to China's development

MAIN STREET
By Lian Ping and Wang Yunjin

The outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) calls for actively developing direct financing channels such as equity and bond financing, and explicitly identifying optimization of the financial structure and expansion of direct financing as key drivers in building the nation into a financial powerhouse.

This strategy aims to reduce overall social financing costs, ease the real economy's overreliance on bank lending, provide risk-sharing capital support for technology and innovation-focused enterprises, and further improve the precision and resilience of financial services for the real economy.

In recent years, China has continuously deepened supply-side structural reform in the financial sector in response to the needs of high-quality economic development. As a result, the country's financial structure has steadily optimized, with the share of direct financing continuing to rise.

In 2025, China's new indirect financing totaled 16.1 trillion yuan ($2.37 trillion), falling below the increase in direct financing for the first time. The share of indirect financing dropped to 45.3 percent, also falling below the share of direct financing for the first time. This marks an important step in China's transition from a financial structure dominated by indirect financing to one characterized by coordination between direct and indirect financing.

Direct financing in China is primarily supported by bond issuances. In 2025, net financing through corporate bonds included in direct financing statistics reached 2.4 trillion yuan, marking the second consecutive year of expansion. In May 2025, financial regulators launched a science and technology board in the bond market, driving rapid growth in the issuance of sci-tech innovation bonds and green bonds.

Particularly noteworthy is that net government bond financing reached 13.8 trillion yuan in 2025, rising rapidly for the fourth consecutive year. This was mainly driven by the sustained implementation of proactive fiscal policies.

Driven by policy support, equity and stock financing also experienced a recovery. In 2025, domestic stock financing by nonfinancial enterprises increased by 476.2 billion yuan, up 186.1 billion yuan year-on-year, accounting for 1.3 percent of the increase in direct financing. Although the share remained relatively low, the growth rate was relatively high.

In 2025, IPO fundraising on the STAR Market and ChiNext exceeded that of the main boards in Shanghai and Shenzhen. Financing on the Beijing Stock Exchange also increased steadily, with a focus on serving specialized and innovative small and medium-sized enterprises.

Equity financing through private equity funds, venture capital and government industrial funds also developed steadily. By the end of 2025, government-backed funds had committed capital of approximately 8.5 trillion yuan, providing strong support for industrial upgrading and technological innovation in China.

The growth rate of indirect financing, however, has structurally slowed. In 2025, loans extended to the real economy totaled 15.9 trillion yuan, down by 1.1 trillion yuan from the previous year, accounting for 44.7 percent of the increase in total social financing. Although indirect financing remains the mainstay of social financing, its growth rate slowed significantly compared with the previous year, reflecting a substantial decline in the real economy's dependence on bank credit.

The major transformation in China's financial structure is the result of the combined effects of multiple factors, including economic restructuring and industrial upgrading.

The nation's economic structure is shifting from investment-driven and traditional industry-led growth toward innovation-driven and emerging industry-led growth. Its industrial structure is also upgrading from traditional industries to high-tech and strategic emerging industries. These profound transformations have led to the continued rise in the share of direct financing.

Rapid development in financial technologies has effectively reduced the cost of direct financing and improved its efficiency, enabling SMEs and households to participate more conveniently in direct financing. The rapid development of artificial intelligence-related industries has also generated substantial demand for direct financing.

At present, China's aging population is reshaping household wealth allocation demand. Households are gradually shifting toward direct financing products in pursuit of higher investment returns. Younger generations have become significantly more investment-conscious and financially sophisticated.

As returns on real estate investment have fallen sharply, capital has gradually flowed out of the property market into the capital market. Rough estimates suggest that the total market value of China's real estate sector may have fallen from a peak of around 400 trillion yuan to approximately 280 trillion yuan. Even using a conservative estimate of a 20 percent capital outflow rate, around 20-30 trillion yuan may flow out of the property market, a portion of which is likely to enter the capital markets.

In recent years, China has continuously expanded the opening-up of its capital markets, relaxed restrictions on foreign investor access, broadened the scope of overseas investment and launched a series of connectivity mechanisms that have attracted large inflows of cross-border capital into China's direct financing markets. Currently, overseas investors hold more than 3.4 trillion yuan worth of A shares and more than 4.5 trillion yuan worth of Chinese bonds.

Taking into account China's stage of economic development, industrial structure and policy directions, the share of direct financing in the country's financial market is expected to continue rising steadily over the next five to 10 years. By 2030, the share of new direct financing could reach around 55 percent, while the share of outstanding direct financing could exceed 40 percent, gradually forming a financial structure dominated by direct financing and supported by indirect financing.

However, compared with the needs of China's high-quality economic development and the maturity of developed capital markets, China's direct financing markets still face a series of challenges. To promote high-quality capital market development and optimize the financial structure, the following policy recommendations are proposed.

Continue deepening comprehensive registration-based IPO reforms, optimize listing review mechanisms, simplify review procedures, lower listing thresholds, and prioritize support for technology enterprises and specialized and innovative companies seeking public financing. Improve delisting mechanisms, promote the normalization of delistings, and support private equity and venture capital funds in exiting their investments through IPOs, mergers and acquisitions, and equity transfers. We should improve stock pricing mechanisms, strengthen market-based pricing and reduce administrative intervention. Tax incentives should be provided for equity financing by technology companies and SMEs, while ancillary costs such as handling and auditing fees should be reduced to stimulate corporate demand for equity financing.

Improve the bond market ecosystem and increase bond issuances by private enterprises. Efforts should be made to lower the barriers to bond issuances for private enterprises and relax eligibility requirements for risk-sharing instruments. Expectations of rigid redemption should be broken and reliance on government guarantees should be reduced. Regulatory standards, information disclosure, registration and custody, and trading rules should be unified and optimized while equal treatment between State-owned and private enterprises must be ensured. Greater efforts should also be made to develop credit derivatives, guarantees and risk mitigation tools to lower financing guarantee costs.

Improve the policy support system for direct financing of SMEs by establishing a special fund to provide guarantee support, broaden direct financing channels and expand bond financing for SMEs by simplifying bond issuance procedures, lowering issuance thresholds and introducing small-denomination bond products tailored to SMEs.

Optimize the credit rating system and strengthen risk control in direct financing markets. Supervision over credit rating agencies should be enhanced, rating practices standardized and methodologies improved to increase the scientific rigor and accuracy of ratings. Credit rating agencies should also develop customized indicators for technology enterprises and SMEs. Information disclosure rules should be improved and disclosure practices standardized. Bond default resolution mechanisms should be strengthened, with streamlined procedures and shorter disposal cycles.

Foster high-quality intermediary institutions and improve the quality of professional services. Intermediaries should be encouraged to increase their investment in research and development to enhance their capabilities in areas such as underwriting and sponsorship, research and analysis, and risk management. Policy support and tax incentives should be granted to compliant intermediaries with strong service quality, while institutions engaging in regulatory violations or providing poor services should face strict penalties.

Lian Ping is chairman of the China Chief Economist Forum and director and chief economist of the Guangkai Chief Industry Research Institute. Wang Yunjin is chief financial researcher at the institute. This article is an excerpt from the English translation of the original text published in the semimonthly journal China Forex on March 15.
The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:26 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:26 PM

CHINA

Nation's UNESCO sites top conservation ratings

By **HOU LIQIANG**
houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

China's natural and mixed natural-cultural UNESCO World Heritage sites are outperforming their global peers in conservation, with roughly 90 percent receiving a "good" or higher rating from the International Union for Conservation of Nature, according to Chinese authorities.

The figure is well above the global average of 61 percent and the Asian average of 68 percent, the National Forestry and Grassland Administration said in a media release on Saturday, which coincided with the country's 10th Cultural and Natural Heritage Day.

China is home to 15 of the world's 235 natural world heritage sites and four of the world's 25 mixed cultural and natural heritage sites, leading the world in both categories.

The sites cover about 80,000 square kilometers across 20 provincial-level regions and encompass a wide range of ecosystems, including mountains, forests, grasslands, lakes, wetlands, deserts and coastal zones.

The administration highlighted a series of measures to strengthen heritage protection, including the development of a comprehensive legal framework centered on the national park system.

In addition to enacting the National Park Law, China has revised regulations governing nature reserves and scenic areas and issued management rules for national-level nature parks and natural world heritage sites.

According to the administration, near-natural restoration projects have been carried out at more than 80 percent of heritage sites, improving the integrity of local ecosystems.

More than 90 percent of the sites prioritize hiring local residents, while heritage-based cultural tourism has become a pillar industry in many regions, it said.

Liu Baodang, deputy secretary-general of the World Heritage Expert Committee of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration, said the development of China's natural world heritage sites has progressed through several stages.

The earliest phase focused heavily on ticket revenue with limited conservation efforts, followed by a period in which surrounding communities began sharing tourism benefits, Liu said.

Later, heritage sites started leveraging their brand influence to develop new eco-industries, such as wellness industry businesses and specialty agriculture, he said.

"This stage is characterized by leveraging the brand influence of natural heritage sites to expand their economic reach, extending benefits from surrounding communities to towns and even entire counties," Liu said.

He said the sector is now exploring a new stage of development centered on systematic conservation which aims to establish globally leading heritage management practices.

The administration pledged to further strengthen systematic conservation at the sites, incorporate natural heritage areas into the monitoring system for protected areas and promote coordinated management.

New research center to boost Sino-Hungary ties

By **HU MEIDONG** in Sanming, Fujian
humeidong@chinadaily.com.cn

A Hungarian studies center, aimed at advancing high-level international cooperation, was jointly launched on Saturday by Sanming University and Shanghai International Studies University in Sanming, Fujian province, a major ancestral home of overseas Chinese in Europe.

The center brings together 20 cross-disciplinary expert researchers, while engaging overseas Chinese professionals based in Hungary. It will leverage the city's diaspora resources to conduct practical, field-based research.

Chen Lieping, Party chief of Sanming University, said the center will adhere to a global vision and field investigations to build a highly innovative research community, providing continuous intellectual support for the country's opening-up efforts.

Meng Zhongjie, president of Shanghai International Studies University, said the university will provide counsel for trade between Fujian and Hungary and cultivate compound talents versed in the Hungarian language, international rules, and industrial economics.

Renato Horvath, the acting consul general of Hungary in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, said, "Under the strategic guidance of leaders from both nations, Hungary-China relations are currently experiencing their strongest period in history."

He expressed hope that the center would serve as a platform to expand practical bilateral cooperation in joint student training, faculty exchanges, scientific research collaboration and cultural dialogue.

The launch brought together scholars from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Peking University and Hungary's Eotvos Lorand University and University of Miskolc. A forum held on the sidelines of the event focused on the global expansion of Fujian enterprises into European markets, aligning academic resources with industrial needs.

Gerhard Akos Emod, former mayor of Velence, Hungary, said economic cooperation between the two countries has seen robust growth, with Hungary becoming a key platform for major Chinese firms such as BYD and CATL to enter the broader European market.

Emod said bilateral cooperation is expected to expand further in energy storage, technological innovation and circular recycling economies, highlighting that China will remain an important investment source and strategic economic partner for Hungary's development.

International scholars conducted field studies on Sunday in Mingxi county, an inland commercial gateway to Central Europe where nearly 5,000 overseas Chinese from the county are engaged in business and trade activities across Hungary, providing a foundation for exchanges.

Local authorities said the diaspora connection has fostered sister-city ties between Sanming and Budapest's 15th district. Sanming University and Hungary's University of Miskolc recently launched an approved dual-degree undergraduate program in artificial intelligence, using a dual-registration model to jointly train technology talent.

Zhang Yi contributed to this story.

Reunion after decades



Lei Zeqing (left) reunites with his parents and elder brother (right) in Nanyang, Henan province, on Sunday after 35 years of separation. After being separated from his family as a child while traveling by train, Lei was reunited with his brother through a WeChat group in June, paving the way for the family's reunion. SHAO KEQIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY



Admission guidance

Students and parents seek information on admission policies during a university enrollment consultation fair at the Jiulonghu Campus of Southeast University in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, on Sunday. Following the conclusion of the *gaokao*, China's national college entrance examination, universities across the country are hosting consultation events to help students and their families navigate the admissions process.
YANG SUPING / FOR CHINA DAILY

Development plans on track for rail tourism expansion

Policy sets out target for new trains, infrastructure and travel upgrades

By **ZOU SHUO**
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

China has launched an initiative geared toward deploying over 160 special tourist train units by 2030, in a bid to expand the supply of rail-based travel products and unlock new momentum in service consumption, according to a recent policy document.

The document, jointly released by eight government departments, including the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and China State Railway Group, outlines 15 measures to promote the integrated development of railways and tourism.

The measures include accelerating tourism-oriented infrastructure upgrades, improving elderly-friendly facilities, creating dedicated waiting areas for tourists and establishing convenient transfer channels.

Social capital will be encouraged to invest in the renovation of tourist trains. Operators will develop services for different travel scenarios, including short- and long-haul trips, and for various market segments ranging from premium and comfortable options to affordable offerings.

Themed products such as senior travel, study tours and wellness retreats will also be promoted.

Special tourist trains featuring regional cultural characteristics and products tailored for inbound travelers will be introduced.

Authorities will encourage fixed-route, regularly scheduled services using ticket sales as the primary business model. Historical railway stations and railway museums with cultural or scenic value will be revitalized to develop railway-themed travel routes and cultural products.

To improve service quality, efforts will be made to enhance connections between railway stations and urban public transportation, customized bus services and dedicated shuttle buses to scenic attractions, helping address the "first- and last-mile" challenge.

Zuo Xiaobo, an official with the Ministry of Commerce, said the ministry will work with relevant departments to implement the policies, expand the supply of railway tourism products and create more diverse consumption scenarios.

The goal, he said, is to foster a development model in which railway and tourism industries reinforce each other while better meeting people's aspirations for a better life.

In 2025, a total of 2,485 tourist trains operated across the national railway network, up 33.6 percent year-on-year, according to government figures.

Meanwhile, China's railway network recorded over 4.25 billion passenger trips last year. Tourism-related travel accounted for about one-third of the total, making it the fastest-growing category of railway passenger transportation.

Yin Ping, a professor at Beijing Jiaotong University's School of Economics and Management, said the integration of railway and tourism still faces some challenges.

"Most existing products are simply a combination of transportation and basic travel services, lacking thematic and sophisticated designs that meet niche demands such as study tours, wellness trips and cross-border travel," Yin said. "The product system remains incomplete, the industrial chain is short, and supporting services are relatively weak."

She said the goal of operating more than 160 special tourist train units nationwide by 2030 provides a clear target for developing a wider range of railway tourism products.

The market has already seen the emergence of several popular railway tourism brands, including Panda Train, Silk Road Dream and New Orient Express, Yin said.

"These themed trains offer immersive, high-quality travel experiences built around distinctive themes, closely matching growing demand for personalized and diversified travel in the era of mass tourism," she said.

Chongqing animation film week draws intl praise

By **TAN YINGZI** and **DENG RUI** in Chongqing

The 2026 Chongqing International Animation Film Week highlighted a new wave of high-grossing Chinese animated films characterized by artistic innovation, rich storytelling and high-quality production that are capturing global attention.

The five-day event, which concluded on Saturday at the Yongchuan Technology Studio in Chongqing's Yongchuan district, was described by local authorities as China's first specialized and authoritative international festival solely dedicated to animation.

Acclaimed directors and film experts have shared their insights, highlighting the industry's growing appreciation for "Eastern aesthetic".

Sheila M. Sofian, a member of the animation branch of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and its animation executive committee from the United States, served as a jury member for the event.

"I think Chinese artists have a very rich culture to draw from. There are many very unique techniques such as brush painting, ceramics and woodcutting," she said.

"But what's really interesting is how they apply this to media, and they're not afraid to take traditional techniques and apply them in a way that's very creative and unique in a way that is unfamiliar to Western audiences," she added.

Rob Minkoff, an American film director best known for Disney's *The Lion King* and chairman of the film week's jury, said, "I don't think that all films have to apply to the same standards or ideals."

He emphasized the importance of embracing diverse storytelling values across diverse cultural frameworks. "Coming to a festival like this, we are celebrating works from all over the world," he said.

A total of 501 animated works from around the world competed for the Golden Camellia Awards. Forty-five works were shortlisted, and the winners were announced at the closing ceremony.

Yin Hong, vice-president of the China Film Association and a jury member for the film week, said this year's shortlisted works drew heavily on Chinese classical literature and traditional art forms such as ink painting and meticulous brushwork, combining them with modern animation to enhance Eastern aesthetics.

He also said the domestic animation industry needs to continue expanding niche markets. With the emergence of adult-oriented and experimental animation, the industry must further explore different audience segments and create more differentiated works.

The opening ceremony featured a presentation themed "Oriental Scroll", showcasing a series of domestic animated productions, including *A Story About Fire*, *Into the Mortal World*, *Yao-Chinese Folktales* and *Nobody*.

Industry data indicates a significant trend in China's animated film sector.

From 2011 to 2018, animated films accounted for about 10 percent of annual box office revenue, rising to around 14 percent between 2019 and 2024.

"Recently, China has obviously enjoyed the success of several films I've gotten to see — both *Nezha 2* and *Nobody*. I can see why they're immensely popular," said Janet Yang, an award-winning Hollywood producer.



Chinese animated characters Xiongda, Xionger and Guangtou Qiang walk the red carpet during the opening ceremony of the 2026 Chongqing International Animation Film Week at Yongchuan district, Chongqing, on Tuesday. HE PENGLEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

In 2025, domestic animated films achieved a breakthrough, with four animated titles ranking among the year's top 10 box office earners, three of them domestically produced. Total box office revenue for animated films exceeded 25 billion yuan ($3.7 billion), accounting for nearly half of the market.

Yongchuan, which has developed a state-of-the-art film and television industrial base, the largest in western China, is at the forefront.

In recent years, Yongchuan has emerged as a major hub for film technology in China, attracting more than 170 upstream and downstream enterprises, including Dawa (Chongqing) Imaging Technology and iQIYI.

The district has produced more than 140 films and television works, including the popular *Resurrection* and *Panda Plan*. Last year, it hosted the 2025 Shanghai Cooperation Organization Film Festival.

"Yongchuan is striving to build the 'Western China Technological Film and Television City' by further integrating technological innovation and industrial innovation," said Xu Hongqiu, head of Yongchuan district.

During the film week, an investment and project signing event resulted in agreements for 53 projects worth 2.8 billion yuan. The projects span the entire industry chain, including artificial intelligence-generated content production, film technology research and development, talent cultivation and content creation.

Contact the writers at dengrui@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:26 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:26 PM

Editor's note: *As protection of the planet's flora, fauna and resources becomes increasingly important, China Daily is publishing a series of stories to illustrate the country's commitment to safeguarding the natural world.*

Subsidies turn desert control into moneymaker

Residents of Xinjiang's Hotan prefecture take up challenge to hold back shifting sand



A harvester reaps alfalfa in Hotan, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, in September last year. PHOTOS BY DING LEI / XINHUA







Clockwise from top left: Villagers plant pumpkins on the edge of the Taklimakan Desert in Hotan in April. A villager transports reed bales to make grids to stop the Taklimakan from advancing in Yutian county of Hotan in April. Villagers interplant blackberry lily, often used as a medicinal herb, at a rose orchard in Yutian in April.

By HOU LIQIANG in Hotan, Xinjiang
houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

Rows of small, leafy oleaster trees stretch toward the horizon on the southern edge of the Taklimakan Desert in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. Still short and fragile, each sapling is propped up by a bamboo stick to withstand the desert gales, while low carpets of green wheat and alfalfa shield the soil between them.

At first glance, the sparse plot looks like a struggling farm. In reality, it represents a radical ecological turnaround. Little more than a year ago, this site in Hotan prefecture was an arid expanse dominated by shifting sand dunes over 10 meters high.

The transformation relies on an innovative local governance model launched in 2024 — the "first-build-then-subsidize" policy. To balance costly ecological restoration with local economic survival, the government allocates desertified land to residents rent-free. Residents bear the upfront cost of leveling the dunes and planting drought-resistant vegetation; the government only delivers financial subsidies after independent inspectors verify a tree survival rate of at least 85 percent.

Sudiomar Tursun, a resourceful villager and entrepreneur from Ayimak village, was among the first to gamble on the policy. In October, she formed an agricultural cooperative with 18 fellow villagers to tackle a heavily desertified plot.

To fund the massive undertaking, Sudiomar pooled her life savings, sold personal assets and secured loans from relatives to amass nearly 4 million yuan ($550,000) in upfront capital. Her friends considered the project so risky that they told her she would ruin herself.

"We suffer severe flying dust in Hotan. I have to sweep the floor at home every day," Sudiomar said. "I think if we can do this work and stick with it, it will benefit us — and it will leave a better future for our kids and grandkids."

Under their cooperative agreement, Sudiomar covers the financial risk and equipment costs, while the 18 partners provide the labor, receiving steady wages during the grueling reclamation phase. Once the crops mature and turn a profit, the workers will receive a 20 percent revenue share.

While Sudiomar waits for official forestry bureau verification to trigger her first-year subsidies — which offer 30,000 yuan per hectare for trees and 22,500 yuan for shrubs — the local government has mitigated her risk by absorbing heavy infrastructure costs.

The government has built access roads, and covers the water and electricity costs required to run the irrigation pumps during the project's critical initial establishment phase. Government agricultural technicians also often visit the plot to provide guidance.

Hotan's "first-build-then-subsidize" policy has proved popular. According to the prefecture's forestry and grassland administration, 69,900 residents from 18,600 households across 814 villages in the prefecture have participated in the initiative so far. The desertified areas they've volunteered to treat exceed 60,300 hectares.

Ablikim Sawur, head of the administration, said about 13 million yuan in "first-build-then-subsidize" funds have already been distributed for 660 hectares of desertified area planted in the fall of 2024.

Residents are expected to benefit from the trees and shrubs they've planted very soon, he said.

The financial viability hinges on clever agricultural engineering. On Sudiomar's plot, a high-yielding, large-fruited oleaster variety is grafted onto native wild oleaster rootstock.

"Wild oleaster is incredibly tolerant of poor soil and harsh winds," said Li Zhijun, a professor of plant diversity conservation in arid regions at Tarim University. "Its ease of establishment is the primary reason it was chosen."

Li said that by grafting a commercial variety onto the oleaster, they achieve an eco-friendly windbreak that produces marketable fruit for the beverage processing industry.

Interplanted alfalfa acts as a nitrogen-fixing crop, gradually enriching the desert sand with organic matter so it can eventually support delicate food crops like wheat. Starting in the third year, the grafted oleasters are projected to generate 22,500 to 30,000 yuan per hectare, with the harvested alfalfa bringing in an additional 30,000 yuan per hectare.

"This approach captures the essence of green development: protecting the ecology while ensuring economic prosperity for the people," she said.

Moreover, planting oleaster and alfalfa together can contribute to the overall success of desertification control, the professor added.

The trees, once they mature, will serve as windbreaks, their height deflecting the worst of the desert gales. The intercropping with alfalfa further anchors the sand, creating a synergistic effect, she said.

"I'm confident that the ecological benefits of this system will be substantial," Li said.

To ensure local residents benefit economically from their desertification-control efforts, local authorities have done even more.

At an experimental station for desertification control in the prefecture, 147,600 plants of various species have been planted, covering 21 species of trees, 18 species of shrubs, 25 species of herbs, and 12 species of cash crops.

Li Yanzhong, a technician at Hotan County Agricultural Investment Co, which runs the station, said the experimental facility aims to motivate residents to participate in desertification control by offering planting choices with economic value.

Based on data analysis, the station selects candidate species for trial planting in arid desert areas, and through field planting, demonstration and side-by-side comparison with analogous varieties, it identifies those best suited to desert conditions.

"The ultimate goal is to use economic benefits to drive participation from both local residents and businesses," Li Yanzhong said.

Once water-efficient, hardy, easy-to-plant and economically valuable varieties are identified, they are promoted for broader application.

"The station is open to everyone, and all residents and companies are welcome anytime," he added.

Intrepid 'king of grass' plants shrubs to tame the Taklimakan

By HOU LIQIANG

For nearly eight years, Xu Zhaoyang has been doing what locals said was impossible: planting shrubs and trees in the "dead sea" of the Taklimakan Desert.

"I came back in 2019 after graduating from university," said the 32-year-old, standing amid some 207 hectares of alfalfa, much of it freshly cut and left to dry. "I started with just over 20 hectares of saline-alkali land."

He is known locally as "Hotan's King of Grass" and the "Desert Beautician".

Xu is not trained in agriculture. At Anhui University of Technology, after two years of studying civil engineering, he changed his major to management studies, then prepared for a master's degree in law before graduating in 2018.

But the desert was in his blood. In 2005, at the age of 10, he moved to the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region with his parents from their hometown in Henan province. He remembers the black dust storms that turned day into night, forcing families to turn on lights inside their homes at noon. He remembers shaking sand out of his clothes every evening.

"I wanted to do something for the environment of my hometown," Xu said.

The early years were brutal. Xu lived alone in a simple prefab shed at the southern edge of the desert for more than two years. He dug drainage canals, flushed the salt from the soil, and leveled the land by hand. When he had money, he hired a few workers. When he didn't, he worked alone. He spared time whenever possible to read agricultural textbooks and research papers.

In May 2020, Xu's determination was tested. His first crop of young seedlings had just pushed up two tender green leaves. Then one night, a wall of sand howled across the desert for 12 hours straight.

"When I ran into the field the next morning, everything was buried," he said, adding he lost everything after working persistently for months.

"I called one of my university teachers. My teacher said to me, 'Zhaoyang, you wrote in your thesis that starting a business is a process of constant trial and error. Didn't you once say the desert can swallow seedlings but not determination?'"

Encouraged, Xu chose to forge ahead.

He began working closely with research institutions. He planted 63 different forage varieties. For more than a year, he carried a notebook wherever he went, recording growth cycles, drought tolerance, yield and quality.

He eventually identified alfalfa as the ideal plant.

"It's a legume with root nodules that fix nitrogen and enrich the soil," Xu said.

Alfalfa also anchors shifting sand with its deep root system and can be harvested continuously for seven years from a single planting, he added. In the intense sunlight of southern Xinjiang, he now harvests five to six times annually.

Water remained one of the greatest challenges. Traditional drip irrigation failed in the sandy soil as evaporation was too fast, and so Xu introduced large-scale center-pivot sprinkler systems.

"One person can manage irrigation for 1,330 to 2,000 hectares of land. With sprinklers, we can narrow the row spacing and increase yield by 3,000 to 4,500 kilograms per hectare," he said.

Xu's operation has grown to more than 1,530 hectares, including almost 670 hectares of alfalfa and over 530 hectares of wheat.

"Every piece of the land was bulldozed flat from giant sand dunes," he said. "We leveled the desert, planted the same year, and got results the same year."

The net profit from planting alfalfa is roughly 10,500 to 12,000 yuan per hectare. "To make a profit from growing anything in the desert is very difficult," he said. "To make such a high net profit is extraordinary."

Mechanization has made a huge difference. One machine can seed almost 70 hectares a day. One sprinkler system irrigates about 70 hectares. Harvesters cut, rake, bale and load with barely a human touch.

Xu's father, Xu Daobin, had opposed his son's plan to start his business in agriculture in the desert.

"We worked so hard to send you to university so you could find a stable job. You're a recent graduate. Agriculture is not that easy. Even an experienced farmer would struggle to grow anything there," said Xu senior, recalling his words to his son.

"I said he couldn't make it. Now he's really done it," the father added.

Xu junior has further ambitions, with a plan to expand the planting area by 13,300 or even 20,000 hectares in the next three to five years. "We have the mature machinery and the mature technology. We can absolutely do it," he said.

He said his ultimate goal is to turn the Taklimakan into grain fields to help the country firmly hold its own rice bowl.

"When I was a child, I watched the generation of my parents put down roots here, turning wasteland into a home," he said. "I always knew I would do this someday. What grows in the desert isn't just alfalfa. It's my generation's roots."



Xu Zhaoyang gives an interview on treating the Taklimakan Desert in Hotan in April. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:26 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:26 PM

CULTURE

A FRESH STITCH ON TRADITION

Young designer reimagines ancestral embroidery, bringing new appeal while creating opportunities for village artisans, **Li Muyun** and **He Chun** report in Changsha.

A playful tiger-faced hat has turned a young designer from Central China's Hunan province into an unexpected ambassador for one of the country's oldest embroidery traditions.

The traditional hand-embroidered tiger motif found on children's clothing among the Miao people of the Xiangxi Tujia and Miao autonomous prefecture is usually fierce and imposing. Passed down through generations, the design is believed to ward off evil and protect the child who wears it.

But Li Wen, a 23-year-old designer from the region, decided to give the centuries-old motif a fresh look.

Last year, she created a hat featuring a much friendlier tiger face: the tiger playfully sticks out its tongue, revealing its six pearl-strung teeth, while floral patterns sit beneath its wide, expressive eyes.

On May 14, this hat was seen inside the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, worn by the 6-year-old son of Elon Musk. Within hours, videos of the boy in the traditional Chinese outfit spread rapidly across social media, drawing attention from around the world.

The hat had been purchased from the Remote Mountain Bazaar, a Beijing-based platform that helps traditional artisans in remote regions bring their handicrafts to market.

On a day after the video went viral, more than 1,000 orders poured in via the platform to Shibadong village in Xiangxi, where local embroiderers make the hats by hand.

Like many others, Li first learned about the attention through news reports. The experience reinforced her belief in the potential reach of Miao embroidery.

"I never imagined I would be connected in any way to the world's richest man," she says with a laugh.

Every detail on the tiger-faced hat carries meaning and blessings, Li explains.

The tiger's face is made of six half-circle pieces sewn together, creating a fuller, rounder appearance than the traditional flat design. Along the edge runs a row of "dog-tooth stitches" — a classic Miao embroidery technique believed to protect children from harm. The ears feature pomegranate patterns symbolizing blessings and family prosperity. Beneath the eyes, dahlia flowers represent good fortune and abundance, while a lotus on the tongue conveys purity and grace.

Li adapted the centuries-old pattern and infused it with her own aesthetic sensibility.

"The traditional tiger face in Miao embroidery is flat, dark and serious," Li says. "This one is cuter and friendlier."

She softened the lines, rounded the contours, and replaced the heavy colors with a lighter palette of blue and purple.

"That's always been my design style," she says.

"I like beautiful, cute things. My work reflects a bit of that — a bit of me."

Growing up in Luxi county, Xiangxi, Li spent much of her childhood watching her mother embroider shoe insoles and headscarves. Flowers, fish and birds gradually emerged beneath her mother's needle.

"I followed her and learned embroidery from a very young age," Li says.

After graduating from middle school, she enrolled in Xiangxi Vocational and Technical College for Nationalities, where she majored in arts and crafts. There she studied Miao embroidery and other intangible cultural heritage crafts, including batik, Tujia brocade and wood carving.

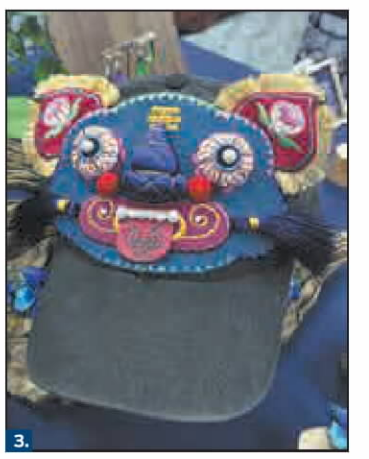
Under the guidance of local inheritors, she learned not only traditional techniques but also how to reinterpret historical patterns for contemporary audiences.



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.

1.3. The tiger-faced hats feature a traditional Miao embroidery motif. **2.** A variety of bags are designed with the tiger motif. **4.** Designer Li Wen adapts the centuries-old pattern, infusing it with new vitality. **5.** Miao embroidery has become an important source of income for women in Shibadong village, Xiangxi, Hunan province. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

> "Our Miao ancestors migrated over long distances. Legends say that they used embroidery to mark their route, stitching what they saw along the way. Flowers, birds, insects, and rivers, whatever caught their attention, became part of the patterns on their clothing."
>
> **Li Wen,** 23-year-old Miao embroidery designer

"Some of my college designs eventually reached factory-production standards," she says proudly.

After graduating in 2024, Li joined the design team of a Miao embroidery company in Shibadong village. There, her designs and those of her colleagues are transformed into finished products by local embroiderers, most of them women from Shibadong and neighboring communities.

Design work, she notes, extends well beyond sketches and computer screens. From creating the first sample to refining every detail, she regularly works alongside embroiderers on the production line.

"You have to understand the process," she says. "Something that looks simple on paper can be very difficult to make."

To inspire new creations, Li has developed a habit of collecting antique embroidered pieces, searching for them online and at local fairs. Some date back to the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), offering a rich source of traditional motifs and techniques.

One of the qualities Li values most about Miao embroidery is its sense of "freedom", reflected in its spontaneous, nature-driven patterns.

"Our Miao ancestors migrated over long distances," she explains.

"Legends say that they used embroidery to mark their route, stitching what they saw along the way. Flowers, birds, insects, and rivers, whatever caught their attention, became part of the patterns on their clothing."

That sense of openness still defines the craft today, she adds. "There's no rule that says you must stitch this to the left or that to the right. It's natural, free and fluid."

In 2021, Miao embroidery in Xiangxi was added to China's national intangible cultural heritage list. For the women of Shibadong, however, the craft represents more than cultural preservation.

Since a national poverty alleviation campaign was launched in the village in 2013, embroidery has become an important source of income.

According to local authorities, embroiderers in the village and surrounding areas earn an additional 2,000 to 3,000 yuan ($295 to $443) per month through embroidery work. Last year, Miao embroidery generated more than 5 million yuan for the local economy.

For Li, new ideas continue to take shape through fabric, thread and color. Her upcoming projects will focus on other creatures, including fish and shrimp, she says.

"I want to make them come alive. I want every creature in my work to have its own spirit."

Contact the writers at limuyun@chinadaily.com.cn

Acclaimed pianist hits every key with concerts and online series

By **CHEN NAN**
chennan@chinadaily.com.cn

For Tian Jiaxin, the piano has never been just an instrument, but a storyteller, a traveling companion and, as she describes it, something akin to a magic wand.

"When I started learning piano, it felt like Harry Potter's wand," Tian says with a laugh.

"Through music, I could become different characters and tell all kinds of stories."

Now, the Chinese pianist is preparing to tell new stories through her upcoming nationwide concert tour, *Xin Music Journey*, which will visit eight Chinese cities, including Beijing, and Guangdong province's Shenzhen and Foshan, from July to October.

The tour was officially unveiled in Beijing on June 5, alongside the launch of a documentary-style online series, *Following the Music on a Journey*, which creates an innovative format that combines live performance, cultural tourism and digital storytelling.

Unlike a conventional tour, each stop will be tailored to reflect the character and cultural heritage of its host city.

"Every city has its own rhythm and personality," Tian says.

"We want audiences to feel that the music belongs to their city. Even the encore pieces will be specially selected for each location."

The repertoire will span both Western classical masterpieces and Chinese works, featuring music by Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, and Liszt alongside beloved Chinese compositions, such as *The Shepherd's Flute* and *Shandan Flowers Bloom Bright Red*.

Some performances will incorporate Chinese animation, sand art and classical poetry projections, creating an immersive audiovisual experience.

Throughout her career, Tian has made a point of including Chinese compositions in her concert programs. Among them, one piece remains especially close to her heart: the *Yellow River Piano Concerto*, which was adapted by veteran pianist Yin Chengzong from the cantata of the same title by Xian Xinghai (1905-45).

"It is one of my favorite works," Tian says.

"I have performed it in many countries with different orchestras, and every performance feels different. The music contains both strength and delicacy."

Tian's own musical journey began early. Born into a musical family in Beijing, she grew up surrounded by rehearsals and performances. Her mother is a soprano, and her father is a composer and conductor. As a child, she would watch her father accompany her mother's singing before climbing onto the piano bench herself.



Pianist Tian Jiaxin will embark on a concert tour in July. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

Her father insisted that music required commitment. "He always told me that the piano wasn't a toy. If I really wanted to learn, I had to take it seriously," she says.

At the age of 3, she asked her parents to allow her to study piano formally. The rest, she says, became a lifelong relationship with music.

At 18, she entered the Shenyang Conservatory of Music. Upon graduation, Tian furthered her studies at the Manhattan School of Music in the United States.

In 2012, she received her master's degree in classical performance from the same New York school.

She won acclaim for her solo performance of Mozart's *Piano Concerto No 20 in D Minor, K 466*, at the Rising Artists Evening event organized by the New York Concert Artists & Associates at Carnegie Hall in 2012. The same year, she returned to China and held a solo concert in Shenyang.

Her relationship with the piano was built on discipline as much as passion, she notes.

That philosophy extends to her advocacy of music education. During the tour, she will host masterclasses and public events in each city, sharing performance techniques and discussing her artistic journey with young musicians and music lovers.

For children, she says, cultivating interest is the most important first step. For older adults, learning piano can enrich daily life while helping maintain mental and physical agility. For busy professionals, it can offer valuable relief from work pressures.

"You don't need to play the most difficult pieces," she says.

"Start with music you love listening to. Learning becomes much more enjoyable this way."

According to Wang Lu, the deputy general manager of the China Performing Arts Agency, co-organizer of Tian's upcoming tour, the accompanying documentary series aims to bring audiences beyond the concert hall.

Filmed throughout the tour, it will follow Tian as she explores historical neighborhoods, cultural landmarks and traditional craft workshops in each city. Using techniques such as urban sound sampling, documentary filmmaking, and AI-generated audiovisual effects, the series seeks to reveal the connections between music, local culture and everyday life.

The project also reflects Tian's enthusiasm for artistic experimentation. In recent years, she has collaborated with performers of Peking Opera, Cantonese Opera, Hebei Bangzi, and Huangmei Opera, blending piano performance with traditional Chinese theater.

"I enjoy crossing boundaries," Tian says.

"I want young people to discover that Chinese music can be exciting, creative and full of surprises."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:26 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:26 PM

LIFE



The many lives of East Lake

As the area expands, so do its award-winning greenway and the ways people build, use, shape, and move through it, **Yang Feiyue** and **Zhou Lihua** report in Wuhan, Hubei province.

If you ask someone in Wuhan what East Lake is, the question usually elicits a pause.

Not because people do not know the answer, but because there are too many.

The lake on the eastern side of the provincial capital of Hubei province is one of China's largest urban lakes, spanning about 33 square kilometers — roughly five times the size of the famed West Lake in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province. It is home to a 105-kilometer greenway system linking forests, wetlands, hills, villages, and lakeside parks.

The greenway project has collected an impressive list of awards, including the China Construction Engineering Luban Prize, one of the country's top honors in construction projects.

Poets once wandered here. Mao Zedong stayed here dozens of times. Chinese military leader Zhu De predicted that East Lake would one day surpass West Lake. The lake has won international urban-planning awards. On major holidays, it has never failed to pack in residents and travelers alike.

However, no answer can fully articulate what it's like to encounter a lake of this scale. You arrive and do not know where to begin. The lake exceeds the frame of a camera lens.

By late spring, the cherry blossoms around East Lake are long gone, but the crowds remain.

The asphalt along the greenway is damp from morning dew. Cyclists wobble past on rented bicycles. Young parents push strollers slowly along the lakeside. Some people simply sit on benches facing the water, lost in reverie.

The greenway loops through seven themed sections, forming a continuous ring around large sections of the lake. Along the way are wetlands, restored shorelines, cedar groves, Chu-style pavilions, village roads, and newly opened hiking trails threading through the surrounding hills.

At the north gate of Moshan Hill, Wei Yun clips her guide badge on her shirt and greets the first group of guests.

Wei has worked at East Lake for eight years, almost as long as the greenway has existed. She has guided thousands of visitors along the same routes. She knows where the cherry blossoms bloom first in spring, where people stop to cool off in summer, and where maple leaves turn their deepest red in autumn.

Once the group enters the lakeside section near Moshan, the view suddenly explodes.

Water spreads outward in immense sheets of silver-blue. The distant hills beyond the far shore lie low like sleeping animals beneath a hazy sky.

East Lake's transformation is the kind of thing people notice beneath their feet, Wei notes.

Before the greenway was built, many of the roads around the lake were mixed-use corridors where pedestrians, bicycles and cars competed for the same space. During busy seasons, tour groups constantly had to dodge traffic.

Now the routes are separated.

"There are roads for walking, roads for cycling, and roads for cars," Wei says, pointing first at the path beneath her feet and then toward a narrow branch road disappearing into a nearby village.

The village road still allows vehicles, but the greenway does not.

The seemingly simple distinction has, in practice, reshaped how people move around the lake.

"People have different needs," Wei says.

"Young couples go to the pink Ferris wheel. One full rotation takes exactly 13 minutes and 14 seconds. Very romantic," she elaborates, adding that the helium balloon offering a full view of the whole lake has also been a hit among visitors of all ages.

Around the lake, visitors drift toward different corners — the pink Ferris wheel, the cable car ascending Moshan, the reconstructed Chu City Gate, and stretches of artificial beach that attract crowds during summer weekends.

"Everyone finds a spot. That's why 300,000 people can be here at once, and it never feels too crowded."

The changes also extend to the shoreline itself.

For years, rainwater rushed directly off the pavement and into East Lake, carrying mud, debris and runoff. Today, many sections have been rebuilt as gradual ecological slopes layered with stone, reeds and wetland vegetation intended to absorb and filter water before it reaches the lake.

"It's part of the 'sponge city' concept," she explains.

She remembers when summer algae regularly spread across parts of the lake, turning sections of the water green during the hottest months. Now it is far less common.

Further along, towering dawn redwoods rise directly from the shallows like green pillars. Some were planted in the 1960s, when soldiers and local residents reportedly carried soil basket by basket, manually building the earliest lakeside roads.

The following generation then faced a harder question of what not to tear down.

For one stretch near Moshan, Wei points out that early plans called for widening the route to six meters — the minimum for international cycling events. But 27 mature trees lined the roadside, so authorities decided to keep the road as it was, and the trees are still standing.

That trade-off was repeated across East Lake. Routes bent around camphor groves. Maples and tallow trees were transplanted into existing clearings rather than new ones. On the village tracks, the path still curves around the old camphor groves.

Down an inconspicuous road approaching the villages in the lakeside neighborhood, entrepreneur Yu Xun recently opened a family campsite on land once left abandoned.

He invested more than 3 million yuan ($442,880) in the project, signing an eight-year lease with the landowner.

"Originally, this was just waste ground. Construction rubble was everywhere," Yu says.

Now the site contains a cafe, children's play areas, fishing ponds, and artificial streams where children catch shrimp and small fish.

Business is unpredictable. Weekends are packed. Rainy weekdays can empty the place entirely.

Some visitors come only to photograph the scenery. Others spread picnic mats and remain all afternoon.

"They're all good visitors," Yu says with a laugh.

He understands the risks. The popularity of outdoor family recreation could fade, tourism patterns often shift, and policies could change.

Still, he believes East Lake is moving in a direction worth betting on.

Wei says the campsite is among many activities and infrastructure that have emerged around East Lake — hiking routes, cycling culture, lakeside businesses, outdoor concerts, and night walks.

"They appear gradually, like plants rooting themselves along the shore," she says.

As evening approaches, the crowds along the greenway usually begin to thin.

Near the entrance to the Seven Hills trail, workers stack construction materials beside newly installed signposts. The trail is scheduled to fully open before October. When it does, the seven mountains will be connected by proper stone steps, observation platforms, and fire watchtowers.

Wei is familiar with this kind of transformation, as she has seen farmland turn into parking lots, dirt paths become six-meter-wide asphalt roads, and empty fields become playgrounds.

"New things keep popping up, but the lake stays the same. That's what people come for," she says.

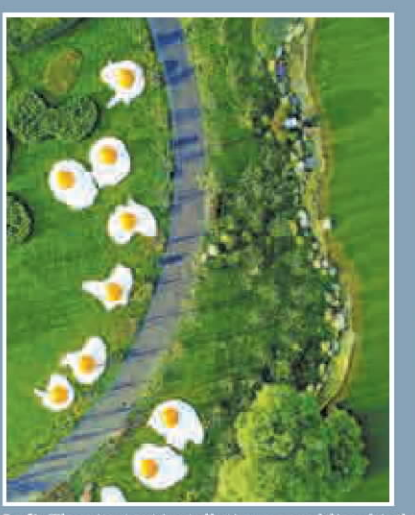
Down by the water, another tour group gathers at Moshan's north gate. Wei checks her watch, bids farewell to her old guests, and walks toward the new ones.

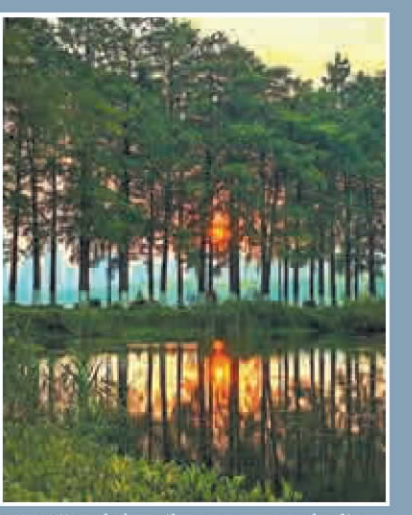
She believes the greenway will keep growing, but someone like her will always need to show the way.

Contact the writers at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn



Top: Aerial views of the East Lake Greenway in Wuhan, Hubei province, in different seasons. **Above:** The lakeside path of East Lake stretches to the heart of the lake and is a popular cycling route. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

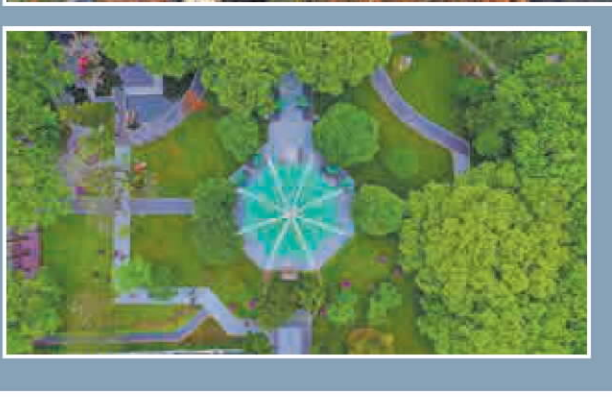




Left: The giant art installation resembling fried eggs scattered along the greenway embodies the fusion of ecology and art. **Right:** The play of light and shadow through the grove at East Lake makes for a favorite spot among photographers. MA RONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Below: The long causeway is a classic feature of the East Lake, connecting history with living ecology. **Bottom:** A lakeside pavilion enveloped by lush greenery and garden paths.





Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:26 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:26 PM

LIFE

Forging deeper connections

From African coffee to visa-free travel in Southeast Asia, a Beijing expo draws record crowds as international exhibitors bet on the country's consumers, **Yang Feiyue** reports.







Top: Chemutai Meg from Uganda pours dark-roasted coffee for Chinese visitors at the 2026 Beijing International Cultural and Tourism Consumption Expo in early June. **Above left:** The expo opened at the China National Convention Center (Phase II) in Beijing on June 5. **Above right:** Visitors taste Li Village's White Pork, a famous cold dish from Sichuan and an example of provincial intangible cultural heritage, at the expo. PHOTOS BY WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY

Chemutai Meg poured a slow stream of dark-roasted coffee into small cups, watching as Chinese visitors to the 2026 Beijing International Cultural and Tourism Consumption Expo leaned in for a sniff. Some nodded approvingly. Others asked where the beans came from.

That question about his product's origin is exactly why he shifted his focus to China seven years ago.

"Chinese people appreciate the origin. That is the most important thing," said Meg, a Ugandan coffee farmer who now sells primarily to China.

"We want our product to be recognized for where it comes from."

His brand, Meg Kari Coffee, is named after his great-grandfather — the first person to grow coffee in his village, at altitudes between 2,300 and 2,500 meters. For seven years, he has been building a market in China, selling mainly through WeChat mini-programs. Last year, he sold more than 2,000 tins.

Specialty coffee remains a niche in China, and it is more expensive than commercial coffee. But Meg is patient.

"Chinese people like good things," he said. "We are trying as much as we can to make sure consumers get to know specialty products."

Meg was one of more than 630 exhibitors at the 2026 Beijing consumption expo, which concluded on June 7 at the China National Convention Center (Phase II). The three-day event drew 112,000 visitors and generated 226 million yuan ($33.4 million) in on-site transactions, increases of 8.2 percent and 6.7 percent, respectively, year-on-year.

For Meg, and more than 30 other international exhibitors from 17 countries who joined him at the expo, the event was not just about sales. They were there to make deeper connections with the Chinese market.

Come to Uganda

A few steps from Meg's coffee station, Uganda's ambassador to China, Oliver Wonekha, was making her own pitch.

"Uganda is the second-biggest coffee producer in Africa," the ambassador said.

"But we are not just coffee. You want to see the equator with snow on it? Come to Uganda. You want to see mountain gorillas? Come to Uganda," she said, extending a warm welcome to the Chinese visitors.

To endear the country to Chinese travelers, Wonekha offered a surprising point of connection.

"You eat bamboo in China. In Uganda, we also eat bamboo. Aren't you curious?" she asked.

Wonekha pointed out that Uganda offers online visa applications. At the expo, an immigration officer was stationed at the booth. "If you want a visa right now, we can work on it," she said half-jokingly.

The ambassador noted that China has already invested heavily in Uganda's infrastructure — building roads, airports and hydroelectric plants.

"China is already in Uganda," she said. "We welcome every Chinese brother and sister."

Cambodia's pilot program

One of the biggest announcements at the expo came from Cambodia. Kong Roatlomang, deputy director general of Cambodia's Tourism Development and International Cooperation, Ministry of Tourism, revealed that Chinese tourists will enjoy visa-free entry from June 15 to Oct 15 — a four-month pilot program allowing multiple entries and stays of up to 14 days each.

"China and Cambodia are ironclad friends. We are a community with a shared future," Kong said. "This is a pilot project. If successful, it will be extended."

The numbers explain the push. Cambodia received 5.6 million international tourists in 2025, including 1.2 million from China. That is an improvement from recent years, but still below the pre-COVID peak of 2.4 million Chinese visitors in 2019. Kong said Cambodia aims to increase Chinese arrivals by 20 to 30 percent in 2026.

To attract more visitors during the May-to-October "green season" — the rainy low season — Cambodia is offering discounts on hotels, transport, restaurants and airlines. The country has also passed a law against online scams, with the prime minister pledging to "clear all scams from Cambodia this year" to rebuild trust among international travelers.

Kong highlighted other conveniences to woo Chinese travelers, including widespread Chinese-language use in hotels and restaurants, acceptance of Alipay and WeChat Pay, and direct flights from Beijing to the country's capital Phnom Penh. A new airport in the capital ranks as one of the largest in the world, she added.

Technology and tradition

On the domestic side, the expo showcased how Chinese tourism is embracing technology. All 16 districts of Beijing participated, alongside delegations from 16 other provinces and municipalities.

Visitors tried on translation glasses from Chinese tech company iFlytek that display real-time subtitles — a hit among older travelers planning overseas trips. Dancing robots from Unitree Robotics drew crowds of children and adults alike. An AI costume-changing system from Beijing-based Guoshu Technology, which lets users instantly switch outfits in images, attracted serious interest from several scenic spot operators.

Zhang Jing, an official with the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture and Tourism, said that the expo had three defining features: internationalization, technological immersion, and product launches.

"Within this 30,000-square-meter space, visitors can experience modern technology, participate in interactive activities and buy the latest cultural and creative products," Zhang said.

He noted that Beijing, as a national science and technology innovation center, has already rolled out 10 technology application scenarios for tourism — from smart ticketing at the Great Wall to AI-guided tours at the Palace Museum. "Technology is now visible in our scenic spots, our industrial parks, and even our time-honored brands," Zhang said.

The expo also served as a launchpad for cultural products. Yidege, a traditional ink maker with a history of more than 150 years, teamed up with the integrated marketing service organization Yuanlong Yato to create a special gift box for graduates taking entrance exams. The same partners also launched blind boxes for Argentina's national football team ahead of the World Cup — a nod to the growing intersection of sports fandom and consumer culture in China.

On the transaction side, a new smart matchmaking system — allowing exhibitors and buyers to connect online before the expo and sign deals on-site — helped generate 27.36 million yuan in intended deals during a hotel-travel agency event alone. Major travel agencies including BTG Tourism Development, Trip.com Group and Utour launched new tour routes, with on-site sales exceeding 10 million yuan.

A window into the future

For Zhang, the expo's growing international participation signals a broader trend.

"Global tourism sellers are increasingly looking to China," he said. "The Chinese consumers' appetite for quality travel experiences — and quality products — continues to grow."

Back at his booth, Meg's coffee continued to draw visitors. He patiently explained the tasting notes of his high-altitude beans: chocolate, dried fruit, and a hint of spice. Many visitors picked up a tin, scanned the QR code and placed an order.

For years, Meg sold to markets that took his coffee but not his story. In China, he said, he has found something different: customers who ask where the coffee comes from, who want to know about the farmer and the mountain.

"Only then will they truly appreciate the product," he said.

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

Steeped in culture: Chinese tea wins over Moscow





Left: A visitor looks at different tea varieties at VDNH (Exhibition of Achievements of National Economy) in Moscow, Russia, in 2023. **Right:** Another visitor smells tea at the Moscow exhibition. PHOTOS BY ALEXANDER ZEMLIANICHENKO JR / XINHUA

MOSCOW — In a tranquil teahouse nestled in Moscow's southwestern suburbs, the crisp chime of bronze bells filled the air. Russian tea master Elena Pazhetnykh gently shook a pair of bells, gracefully signaling the beginning of a Chinese tea gathering.

Next to her, 30-year-old Russian tea master Fyodor Leziev fanned a charcoal stove until the fire slowly came alive. Guests sat quietly around the wooden table, savoring cups of tea as the aroma of brewing leaves gradually filled the space.

Such scenes are not rare in today's Moscow. Inside the teahouse named "Su He Xuan" in Chinese, the twice-a-week tea gatherings have become a regular ritual for local enthusiasts.

The teahouse was founded by a Chinese-Russian couple: Russian tea master Vladimir Bekov and his wife Wen Yilei, a senior Chinese tea artist.

Bekov believes tea is about harmony among people, the brew, water, utensils and atmosphere. To find the best water for brewing, he spent months testing water sources around Moscow until finally settling on a natural spring more than an hour's drive from the teahouse.

"The same tea can taste completely different depending on the water," he says. "Good water awakens the true character of tea."

"The aroma and aftertaste struck me immediately," Leziev recalls. "I had never experienced that kind of peace and comfort before."

What began as casual tastings gradually grew into years of devoted study and eventually became inseparable from his life. Three years ago, when "Su He Xuan" was founded, Leziev immediately decided to join.

Pazhetnykh soon followed him. For both of them, the tearoom is far more than a place to drink tea; it has become a space for sharing Chinese culture and building connections through tea.

"To me, tea is not simply a drink," Pazhetnykh says. "It is a doorway into Chinese culture and a natural bridge between people."

For first-time visitor Tatyana Goncharenko, the experience offered something deeper than flavor alone. "One of the beauties of Chinese tea is that every cup creates a different emotional experience," she says.

"Culture can feel abstract, but taste is something concrete," Bekov says. "Through the aroma and flavor of tea, people begin to touch the culture behind it.

"The greatest strength of tea culture is that people can feel it directly. A single sip, or the beauty of a tea vessel, can become the starting point for understanding China," he says.

From the suburbs of Moscow to the heart of the city, Chinese tea culture is taking root among local residents, finding new expressions across the Russian capital.

In downtown Moscow, another tea space named "Heights of Tea" is exploring different ways of bringing Chinese tea culture closer to everyday life.

Viktor Enin introduced visitors to one of his most unusual creations: tea-flavored ice cream. With more than 160 flavors developed, all are infused with tea aromas and made from natural ingredients.

The 51-year-old began studying tea culture in 2002. Four years later, he started experimenting with tea desserts and beverages, hoping to make tea culture more accessible to ordinary Russians.

"Instead of existing only within complicated ceremonies, tea should become part of daily life," he says.

Over time, his creations expanded beyond ice cream to include tea chocolate, tea cocktails and tea-infused lemonade.

"Only when tea truly returns to everyday life can more people naturally accept it and understand it," he says.

"Chinese tea culture has already taken root in Russia," Enin says. "Especially during long, cold winters, tea brings warmth to gatherings and helps people feel connected."

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:26 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:26 PM

SPORTS

WORLD CUP 2026

Brazil flaws exposed in heavyweight clash

Vinicius grabs equalizer as Morocco impresses with pace and organization



Brazil's forward Vinicius Jr (right) celebrates scoring his team's first goal during the 2026 World Cup Group C match against Morocco at the MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey on Saturday. AFP

EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey — Brazil and Morocco played out a 1-1 draw in the first heavyweight clash of the World Cup on Saturday, with the Africans confirming their potential while exposing familiar weaknesses in their opponent at a sold-out stadium.

Ismael Saibari gave Morocco a deserved first-half lead before Vinicius Jr produced a moment of brilliance to restore parity, ensuring the points were shared in the opening Group C match. Later in the group, Scotland marked its return to the tournament after a 28-year absence with a nervy 1-0 victory over Haiti.

The meeting of Brazil and 2022 semifinalist Morocco at the MetLife Stadium just outside New York City was a clash of the teams ranked sixth and seventh in the world respectively.

Brazil is chasing a record sixth World Cup title, 24 years after last lifting the trophy, but Saturday's performance suggests there is a lot of work to be done by Carlo Ancelotti's side.

"I think this was a tough match, especially in the beginning. I think the team was a bit anxious and nerves were all over the place," said Ancelotti.

"We didn't play well, but we cannot lose heart. This is the first match in the World Cup and we can't... think the team is doing perfectly from the get-go."

For Morocco, the performance offered further evidence it can challenge the game's traditional powers.

However, Ancelotti's Brazil side was left with questions to answer after a disjointed display in which it was repeatedly stretched by its opponent's pace and movement.

"I don't think we started the match well, the team was a bit nervous, we lost possession too often and lost too many challenges. The first half wasn't good," said Ancelotti, who noted that his side got better after the break.

"It improved in the second half; it's a tough match because Morocco is a good side. I think there was a bit of nervousness. In the first half they were breaking out of our press and making dangerous counterattacks."

Ancelotti tipped Vinicius to excel at the tournament as the leader of the attack, a role he will fulfill even when Brazil's all-time record scorer Neymar returns from a calf injury.

"He did well. He was very dangerous and I think he has everything in his power to have a great World Cup," Ancelotti said of the Real Madrid forward.

However, Vinicius rued Brazil's sluggish start against a Morocco side that had been told by its coach to approach the match with no fear.

"We started on a really bad note," said the 25-year-old.

"We conceded that first goal and after that happens it's hard to get it going, you know, it's the first match, it's always hard.

"But we've got to improve and continue to grow because the competition is only just starting. This is the World Cup, there are no easy matches.

"I don't think there's a lot to say now. I think we really have to improve."

Morocco coach Mohamed Ouahbi was left with the feeling that his team could, and perhaps should, have taken more from the contest.

"It was a good match, it's a point. We would've hoped to have more but we'll take the point," said Ouahbi. "We're happy, we're not sad today, but we would have liked to win."

Ouahbi added: "If you're asking me if I want to have the same trajectory (as in 2022), no, I want to go beyond the semifinals this time.

"This was one point but we hoped to have more. One point is good enough and we will improve."

Morocco captain Achraf Hakimi praised the display of the 2022 semifinalist, who suggested it will again be a tough proposition in North America.

"I am proud of the effort of the team. We drew, but we are happy about our performance," Hakimi told Fox.

"We still have to improve every game, so that is what we're going to be focused on right now."

Brighter start

Morocco made the brighter start, patiently working the ball down the flanks and posing an early threat through Hakimi and Bilal El Khannouss while Brazil looked to strike on the counter.

Morocco repeatedly sliced through Brazil's midfield with alarming ease, exposing gaps between the lines as teenager Ayyoub Bouaddi displayed his talent.

Brazil's first sniff at goal came in the 14th minute, but Igor Thiago failed to make the most of it, fluffing his header.

Seven minutes later, the five-time world champion's defensive frailties were laid bare.

Lucas Paqueta was dispossessed in midfield, allowing Brahim Diaz to slip Saibari through as centerbacks Marquinhos and Gabriel were caught flat-footed.

Alisson Becker compounded the error with an ill-timed charge off his line, and Saibari calmly lofted the ball over the goalkeeper to give Morocco the lead.

Brazil continued to struggle against Morocco's intensity and organization, although the Africans were unable to turn their superiority into further goals.

Instead, it took only a moment of brilliance from Vinicius to haul Brazil level in the 32nd minute.

Collecting a pass from Bruno Guimaraes on the left edge of the box, he cut inside onto his right foot and rifled an unstoppable shot into the far top corner.

Brazil nearly completed the turnaround on the stroke of halftime, but keeper Yassine Bounou reacted sharply to keep out Paqueta's acrobatic scissor kick.

Midfielder Fabinho and defender Danilo came on for Casemiro and Roger Ibanez, who had a woeful first half, giving Brazil more control in the second half.

Brazil went up a gear, showing more poise and forcing Morocco to defend, although it struggled to create clear-cut chances until the 78th minute when Raphinha collected a cross from Vinicius.

The edge went off the game as both sides mostly avoided risks. Brazil did find some new energy in the final minutes, coming close through substitute Matheus Cunha, but it still lacked its vintage swagger.

However, both teams will fancy their chances of finishing top of the group and getting a potentially better path in the knockout stages.

Qatar makes history

On the first day to feature four matches at the 48-team tournament, Qatar won the first World Cup point in its history when Miro Muheim's own goal earned the 2022 tournament host a 1-1 draw with Switzerland.

Switzerland had taken the lead against Qatar in Santa Clara, California in Group B when Breel Embolo converted a first-half penalty, but Muheim's injury-time own goal secured a share of the spoils.

"I am very proud of the team," said Qatar's Spanish coach Julen Lopetegui. "I told them that even if we hadn't scored the goal and didn't draw I would have been proud of the mentality and discipline that they showed today. But fortunately we scored and that was history."

AGENCIES

McGinn eyes 'uncharted territory' after Scotland ends wait for World Cup win

FOXBOROUGH, Massachusetts — Scotland match-winner John McGinn is optimistic his team can go on to reach the World Cup knockout stages for the very first time after marking its return to the tournament following a 28-year absence with a 1-0 win over Haiti on Saturday.

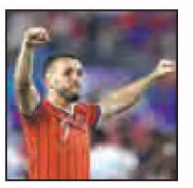
A deflected strike from the Aston Villa midfielder in the first half in Boston proved enough for Scotland to claim the victory in its Group C opener, although it was left hanging on toward the end as Haiti put it under pressure.

"It was crucial. This was our pressure game, we were the favorites going into it. Haiti is a very difficult opponent," said McGinn, who had not scored for his country in over 18 months.

"They have so many unique qualities that we are not used to playing against, so the important thing tonight was to get a clean sheet and get the three points, and we have managed to do that.

"Can we play a bit better? Of course, we can. But this is brilliant, and we will go into the games against Brazil and Morocco with more gears to go up. Scotland winning at a World Cup again is the main takeaway tonight."

Scotland is appearing at its first World Cup since 1998, when it was eliminated in the group stage after defeats against both Brazil and Morocco.



John McGinn, Scottish midfielder

Saturday's win was its first at any major tournament since 1996 and its first at a World Cup since beating Sweden in Italy in 1990.

This is Scotland's ninth appearance at a World Cup, but it was just its fifth victory in 24 attempts.

However, it has put the nation in a fantastic position to reach the last 32, especially as the eight best third-placed teams in the group stage will progress.

One point from the next two matches, against Morocco back in Boston on Friday and then Brazil in Miami on June 24, would likely suffice to qualify.

"It is two teams in the top 10 in the world next. We know the qualities they possess but we can cause them problems in the same way Haiti caused us," McGinn said of Morocco and Brazil, who drew 1-1 earlier Saturday in New Jersey.

"It might suit us a little bit better to play on the counterattack and make it difficult for them," he said.

"We know one point or three points would take us into uncharted territory and we know what is at stake."

Scott McTominay hit the post for Scotland before McGinn's goal, but Haiti had more attempts overall and Frantzdy Pierrot almost equalized late on, hitting a header that went a wide of the left side.

Haiti coach Sebastien Migne was full of praise for his team and saw reason to believe it can cause problems to its next two opponents.

"I am very proud of the boys and how we played. I hope we can build on this and keep putting in good performances," said the Frenchman, whose team is appearing at a first World Cup since 1974.

"It is disappointing, and now we have a mountain approaching in five days in the shape of Brazil.

"It is a prestigious occasion, and when you have been absent from this level for 52 years you have to enjoy it."

Scotland's Tartan Army supporters were out in mass, creating a wave of red inside a filled Gillette Stadium, located about 30 miles outside Boston.

AGENCIES

Forget Mbappe, unassuming Olise could be France's big star

PARIS — It might not be Kylian Mbappe or Ballon d'Or holder Ousmane Dembele lighting up France's attack at the World Cup.

Instead, it could be the discreet and unassuming Michael Olise, with his golden first touch and devastating changes of direction — starting when two-time champion France takes on Senegal on Tuesday in New Jersey.

The Bayern Munich winger enters the tournament in fine form after netting a superb hat-trick against Northern Ireland on June 8, taking his total to seven in 17 games for Les Bleus.

Coach Didier Deschamps fielded his first-choice side, and it was Olise who stood out the most in a glittering attack that featured Mbappe, Dembele and rising star Desire Doue.

"He's been shining brightly this season at Bayern and he's done great things for us. He's brimming with confidence, he's so decisive," Deschamps said of Olise. "On top of that, as an attacking player he also has a remarkable capacity for hard work."

After two finishes inside the penalty area, Olise curled a brilliant shot into the top left corner after breaking inside from the right flank with one of his sudden switches of play.

He does it so deftly and quickly that it has become his signature move and helped the 24-year-old score 22 goals for Bayern this season.

Henry's guidance

Deschamps said Olise impressed him at the 2024 Paris Olympics. There, he was coached by Thierry Henry — the France and Arsenal great — and Olise's two goals and five assists helped Les Bleus reach the final.

Olise called the Paris Games "the best football experience of my life", because they "allowed people to get to know me". He praised Henry for sharing his vision of the game.



France forward Michael Olise eyes the ball as he takes part in a training session on June 7. AFP

But when Olise stepped up to the senior side, Deschamps said it took him "four or five" games to show his true potential because he was shy.

"He's not a very expressive character. He's rather introverted, but he's very endearing," Deschamps said.

Olise's first international goal came on his sixth appearance, and it showcased his ability as he bent a freekick into the top corner against Croatia in the 2025 Nations League.

Overlooked by big clubs

Born in London, Olise began his professional career with then Championship side Reading after being released by Chelsea and Manchester City.

While playing for Reading he was named the English Football League's young player of the season.

He joined Premier League side Crystal Palace in 2021, and three seasons with Palace were enough to convince Bayern to sign him in a deal worth $65 million.

Olise added goalscoring to his superb range of passing, and, in two seasons at the German giant, he's netted 42 goals in 107 games, albeit in an extremely attack-oriented team.

Mediocre Mbappe

Olise's goals against Northern Ireland shifted the spotlight away from another mediocre performance from Mbappe, who also failed to score in a 2-1 home loss to Cote d'Ivoire on June 4.

"It's true that he had several chances and wasn't efficient," Deschamps said.

Mbappe has 56 international goals and needs two more to beat Olivier Giroud's France record.

"He told me he's holding back for the United States," Deschamps said with a smile. "So that suits me."

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:26 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:28 PM

Game of passion

Amateur soccer matches boost incomes in Argentina

GLOBAL LENS, PAGE 4



China's methane emission control strategy lauded

TOP NEWS, PAGE 3



Trade artery

Kazakhstan expands rail links to handle cross-border cargo

BUSINESS, PAGE 6

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 TUESDAY, JUNE 16, 2026

Heading home



Displaced people pack their belongings on Monday as they prepare to return home in Sidon, Lebanon, following the announcement of an initial ceasefire agreement between the United States and Iran. The peace deal, which includes permanent termination of military operations on all fronts and reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, could end the monthslong war that has killed thousands and rattled the global economy.
MOHAMMED ZAATARI / AP **See story, page 5; Editorial, page 10**

Thought on Party Building a guiding value

Broad set of principles encompassed, including full, rigorous self-governance

By XU WEI
xuwei@chinadaily.com.cn

A key Party meeting underlined on Monday the major practical significance and long-term guiding value of Xi Jinping Thought on Party Building in strengthening the Party and the country, stressing the Thought as the fundamental guideline for boosting Party building in the new era.

The key role of the Thought, an important component of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, was underscored at a national conference on Party building in Beijing.

Cai Qi, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and a member of the Secretariat of the CPC Central Committee, attended and addressed the conference. Li Xi, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and secretary of the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, also attended.

According to the conference, since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, the CPC Central Committee with Xi Jinping at its core has set forth a series of new ideas, thoughts and strategies in addressing the major questions of the times — what kind of Marxist party exercising long-term governance should be built and how such a party should be built.

In the process, Xi Jinping Thought on Party Building has taken shape. The Thought encompasses a broad set of principles, including upholding the Party's leadership as the defining feature of socialism with Chinese characteristics, the centralized, unified leadership of the CPC Central Committee, exercising full and rigorous Party self-governance and remaining true to the Party's original aspiration and founding mission.

Other principles include upholding the strengthening of the Party politically as the overarching guide for all other initiatives, using the Party's new theory to enhance cohesion and forge souls, and enhancing Party consciousness.

The Thought also stresses the need to keep refining an organizational system that is integrated from top to bottom and capable of effective implementation, cultivating officials capable of shouldering the mission of national rejuvenation and making consistent and sustained efforts to improve Party conduct.

The CPC must continue using strict discipline in exercising self-governance, taking coordinated steps to ensure that officials do not have the audacity, opportunity or desire to be corrupt, running the Party with systems and regulations and implementing the political responsibility for the Party's self-governance, according to the Thought.

The conference's participants said that drawing on Marxist theories, the Thought is rooted in China's fine traditional culture and has been nurtured through the Party's full and rigorous self-governance in the new era.

The conference called the study and implementation of Xi Jinping Thought on Party Building "an important political task" for the entire Party, both now and in the years ahead.

Chinese AI models roll out World Cup prediction features

By LI JIAYING
lijiaying@chinadaily.com.cn

As the 2026 FIFA World Cup brings together more nations, more matches and more excitement, a competition has intensified off the pitch among China's leading artificial intelligence models, which are being put to the test in predicting the results of one of the world's biggest sporting events.

The 23rd edition of the World Cup, featuring 48 teams, is being hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico. It opened on Thursday and runs through July 19.

Several Chinese large language models, including Qwen, DeepSeek, Kimi and MiniMax, have rolled out prediction features, turning the tournament into a new testing ground for AI-powered reasoning and data analysis.

"As one of the most-watched sporting events across the globe, the World Cup offers AI companies a rare opportunity to showcase the computing power and analytical skills of their LLMs to a wider audience," said Guo Tao, a member of the Chinese Association for Artificial Intelligence and a senior expert in AI.

Several AI platforms have come up with interactive campaigns. For instance, Moonshot AI's Kimi has launched a 1 trillion-token reward pool, allowing users to share prizes by correctly predicting match winners and the final champion. A token refers to the smallest unit of data processed by AI models.

Alibaba Group's Qwen has introduced a dedicated match prediction assistant, while also offering human-versus-AI prediction challenges.

However, the World Cup has also exposed the limitations of current AI models when it comes to analyzing and predicting the results of sporting events. For example, before the Group C opener between Brazil and Morocco on Sunday, major LLMs made predictions in favor of Brazil based on both historical data and statistical indicators. The match ended in a 1-1 draw.

Guo said that while AI can analyze historical data and statistical models, it still struggles to accurately predict real-world results, especially in sports.

He pointed out that soccer matches are influenced by a wide range of factors in the physical world, and such variables are highly uncertain and difficult to quantify using fixed AI models, making precise predictions inherently challenging.

The limitations of current AI models were also highlighted by Wang Zhongyuan, president of the Beijing Academy of Artificial Intelligence, at this year's BAAI Conference held last week.

Wang said that while LLMs have become increasingly capable of solving problems in the digital world, many challenges in the physical world remain beyond their reach. As a result, the next stage of AI development will gradually shift from "predicting the next token" to "predicting the next physical state", he added.

Asked why tech companies are rolling out AI prediction features for sports when the accuracy rate is relatively low, Guo, the expert from the Chinese Association for Artificial Intelligence, said the trend partly reflects the growing pressure of competition across the industry.

"As competition in the LLM market intensifies, technological differentiation is becoming increasingly difficult. Companies are eagerly seeking new channels to distinguish themselves from their rivals," he said.

As the AI technology matures, simply competing on the size parameter is not enough, Guo said. "The market is paying less attention to how large a model is and more attention to whether it can deliver valuable services in real-world scenarios and solve practical problems for users," he added.

Hu Yanping, a professor at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, said that LLMs and AI agents are already evolving from conversation-oriented systems into task-oriented systems, while moving beyond pretraining toward continuous learning and broader real-world perception.

"Exploratory projects, such as World Cup match predictions, can help accelerate this evolution," Hu said. "A capability framework built around perception, interaction, decision-making and collaboration is what future task-oriented AI agents need."

TRIANGULAR TRADITIONAL DELICACY IS EVOLVING

Festival staple *zongzi* is flavor of the month, but how it tastes depends on where you try it

By LI YINGXUE
liyingxue@chinadaily.com.cn

With Dragon Boat Festival falling on Friday this year, bamboo leaves are once again returning to kitchens and food counters across China. Inside them, glutinous rice is wrapped, tied and steamed — forming *zongzi*, a seasonal staple that has long marked the arrival of summer.

China Vibes — FOOD —

At its core, *zongzi* is defined as much by texture as by flavor. The glutinous rice becomes dense yet soft after steaming, with a sticky elasticity that holds its shape while remaining deliciously soft.

Depending on regional styles, it can range from delicately loose and fragrant in lighter versions, to compact and richly layered in more indulgent savory varieties, where rice absorbs the oils and aromas of fillings such as pork or egg yolk.

More than a festival dish, *zongzi* is a culinary marker of time. It's a signature of the season and carries with it memories of family gatherings, regional traditions and seasonal rhythms.

For folklorist Xiao Fang, a professor at Beijing Normal University, its significance goes far beyond taste.

See ***Culture,*** *page 3*



Zongzi is made with abalone in Lianyungang, Jiangsu province, on Monday. ZHU HUANAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

De-risking makes economies more fragile

WORLD WATCH
By Einar Tangen

The global economy is entering a new phase. For 40 years the dominant objective was efficiency. Capital, production, labor, logistics and technology were organized across borders to reduce costs and maximize output.

Today that model is being challenged by a new objective: resilience. The language used is "de-risking". The assumption is straightforward. Dependence creates vulnerability. Therefore reducing dependence should increase security.

The problem is that the global economy is not simply a collection of isolated national economies. It is an interconnected system. Actions that appear rational at the national level often create systemic risks at the international level. The question is not whether risks exist in globalization. They always have. The question is whether de-risking reduces the risks or simply creates new ones.

Global trade now exceeds $35 trillion annually, equivalent to nearly 30 percent of global GDP. The system is anchored by a handful of major economic centers. The Asia-Pacific accounts for close to 40 percent of global exports and imports, the European Union generates around $10 trillion in combined internal and external trade, and North America contributes about $3 trillion in goods exports. China, the United States and major economies in Europe and Asia continue to anchor global trade within an interconnected system of goods, services and capital flows.

But trade comprises more than the selling of goods. It is a dense network of shipping routes, logistics hubs, supply chains, energy corridors, financial systems and digital infrastructure. Over 80 percent of global trade by volume still moves by sea. Modern products often cross multiple borders before reaching consumers. A smartphone, automobile or pharmaceutical product may contain components from dozens of countries.

This system did not emerge by accident. It was built through decades of optimization. Corporations searched the world for lower costs, larger markets and higher returns. Production moved to locations offering cheaper labor, lower compliance costs, favorable regulation and necessary infrastructure. The developed world gained lower prices, higher margins and greater consumption. The developing world gained factories, investment, jobs, infrastructure and industrial capacity.

The arrangement was imperfect. Manufacturing towns across the US, Europe and Japan were hollowed out as production migrated elsewhere. Shareholders benefited while many communities struggled to adapt.

Yet the system produced enormous global growth. Hundreds of millions entered the global middle class. Developing economies industrialized. Consumer prices fell. Global output expanded.

See ***Economy,*** *page 3*



INSIDE
Local lens reveals faces of great transformation
Visual, pages 8-9

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN

China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

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

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:28 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:28 PM

INDEPTH

Hunt for human capital heats up

Cities seeking talented young people unleash unprecedented arsenal of perks — from free short-term accommodations to long-term life and career support

By ZHANG XIAOMIN
in Dalian, Liaoning
zhangxiaomin@chinadaily.com.cn



Job seekers attend a high-level talent fair in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, on March 15, where provincial labs, research institutes and leading companies offered over 3,400 positions. About 70 percent of the applicants hold doctoral degrees. WANG GANG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

For Wang Jing, a student in Northeast China who is about to graduate from college, moving to a new city for employment is not just about a good paycheck, but also about proper recognition of talent, a decent lifestyle and a sense of belonging.

Before traveling to Hangzhou, East China's Zhejiang province, for an interview, Wang learned that she could stay for free up to seven days at a local government-run accommodation for job seekers. She quickly uploaded her Chinese ID, her student ID and the interview notice online, and received approval for stay in less than half a day.

"Not only did this save me from spending extra on accommodation, the lodging conditions were pretty good and the members of staff warm and helpful," she said, adding that the well-lit, 20-square-meter room came equipped with a refrigerator, an air-conditioner and a washing machine.

While millions of young people across China are weighing employment pros and cons like Wang, cities with opportunities are responding with an unprecedented arsenal of perks — from free lodging for a week to "life cycle support", covering marriage, housing and even entrepreneurial failure.

Welcome to the new era of China's talent hunt.

As of March, Hangzhou, which has 97 government-run accommodations with more than 4,400 available rooms, had served 240,000 stays. The provincial capital is continuously optimizing its "soft environment" for talent, and the latest data shows that the results have been remarkable.

According to the municipal bureau of human resources and social security, Hangzhou attracted more than 428,900 university graduates under the age of 35 in 2025, continuing its strong momentum of recent years.

Last year, the city distributed a total of 2 billion yuan ($295 million) in various employment and entrepreneurship subsidies, and provided living allowances to fresh graduates 247,000 times.

The quest for attracting talent has intensified in recent years, with many cities easing restrictions for *hukou* (household registration) or offering free accommodations and generous cash subsidies. Some are even providing long-term advantages, covering recruitment, retention, career advancement and general well-being.

Policy cushion

In Shanghai, the country's first provincial-level legislation on building youth-friendly cities took effect on June 1.

The metropolis, with a resident population of 24.85 million as of 2025, aims to provide policy support for young people in employment, housing, dating, marriage and entrepreneurship, making it more youth-friendly and enabling young people to better contribute to its development.

Earlier this year, Nanjing, the capital of East China's Jiangsu province, released a new talent policy that aims to attract about 10 top-tier talented young people annually, with comprehensive support of up to 100 million yuan.

The city also intends to draw about 300,000 talented young people each year, and plans to provide a one-time living subsidy of 10,000 yuan for newly employed graduates with a bachelor's degree, 30,000 yuan for those with a master's degree, and 100,000 yuan for those with a PhD.

On May 10, Hunan province in Central China took its recruitment drive all the way to Hangzhou, seeking to hire talent from the Yangtze River Delta region. More than 7,500 positions were offered by about 280 companies.

"Hunan is a land of hope and vitality," Jiang Difei, vice-governor of the province, said during the event. "Come find your stage and shine."

Li Qian, a graduating master's student in environmental engineering at Zhejiang University of Technology, signed an employment contract at the event with a State-owned industrial investment enterprise based in Loudi, a city in Hunan.

"I am originally from Hunan. The rapid development of my province's digital economy and advanced manufacturing sectors is the reason I accepted the job. Besides, I had already planned to move back home after graduation," she said.

Liu Yehuan, founder and CEO of internet-related enterprise Hunan Vmonkey Technology Co, shared his entrepreneurial story that unfolded in Changsha, the capital of Hunan. The province "is a fertile ground that dares to let young people make mistakes", he said.

After enrolling at Hunan University in 2011, Liu embarked on four startup projects, all of which failed. In 2014, with support from the local government, he moved into a start-up park with his small team to set up a company, benefiting from rental discounts and one-stop services such as business registration and tax guidance.

During a critical low point, when Liu's company faced nearly 10 million yuan in losses over three years, the park's entrepreneurship service center proactively helped him. "The most heartwarming moment in policy implementation is not when things are going well, but when you are in dire need of support," Liu said.

Today, one of the mini-programs made by his company to help university students print study materials has become China's top online printing brand in terms of sales volume.

Magnetic appeal

According to a report on the talent attractiveness of Chinese cities in 2025, which was released last month, Beijing ranks first, followed by Shanghai and Shenzhen in Guangdong province. The other cities in the top 10 are Hangzhou, Guangzhou in Guangdong, Suzhou in Jiangsu, Chengdu in Sichuan province, Nanjing, Wuhan in Hubei and Wuxi in Jiangsu.

An introduction to the report, jointly published by experts from Zeping Macro, a private economic research team, and the recruitment portal Zhaopin, points out that while the population of a city is the foundation for all socioeconomic activities, talent is its primary resource for growth.

"People move with industries and people move to higher ground," the report said, noting that as the population concentration increases in metropolises and other big cities, the value of talent becomes more prominent amid fading demographic dividend.

While China's top 10 cities attracting maximum talent remain the same as last year, Hangzhou and Suzhou have risen in rank.

Beijing has held the topmost rank for several consecutive years due to its huge advantages in terms of salary package, diversified industrial structure and concentration of top universities and research institutions.

Shanghai, with its large, steadily growing economy and booming high-tech and modern service sectors, has been a clear second, while Shenzhen has remained stable in the third place in recent years with its robust innovation capacity and lower household registration barriers.

Among the top 50 talent magnet cities of last year, 36 are in eastern China, six each are in the central and western regions, and two are in the northeastern part of the country, according to the report released in May.

Seven cities of Guangdong are among these top 50, while all 11 prefecture-level cities of Zhejiang have made it to the list.

Another report on the most attractive cities for the post-1995 generation, which was released late last year, said that China has approximately 200 million people in that age group and they are redefining the competitive landscape of Chinese cities.

The top three cities for talent from the post-1995 generation are Shenzhen, Beijing and Shanghai, which are followed in order by Hangzhou, Guangzhou, Suzhou, Chengdu, Nanjing, Wuxi and Tianjin.

Shared features

The Yangtze River Delta and the Pearl River Delta regions are clearly ahead in the race for attracting talent.

The report released last year notes that in a "talent war", cities should fully respect the objective laws of population and industrial agglomeration in advantageous regions, leverage their comparative strengths and follow the natural trend.

Zhang Kangsi, a professor at the School of Economics at Dongbei University of Finance and Economics in Dalian, Liaoning province, said cities that attract most young people generally share common characteristics.

"Cities with relatively concentrated job opportunities, strong industrial and innovation platforms, well-developed urban services, and a better balance between career opportunities and the quality of life are among the top draws," Zhang said.

Shenzhen, which has topped the post-1995 talent attraction list for three consecutive years, boasts a net talent inflow that is 1 percentage point higher than the national average, thanks to its low household registration threshold and industrial innovation advantages.

Last year, the city welcomed more than 400,000 talented young people with its innovative industrial structure, which provides many job positions and relatively high incomes, along with the strong capacity of leading companies, such as Huawei and BYD, to absorb fresh graduates.

Liu Mengtong, a university junior in Zhuhai, Guangdong, who originally hails from a major city in Northeast China, said that she doesn't plan looking for a job back home after graduation.

"Instead, I will stay in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. I feel a stronger sense of identity here. Also, my university major in communication studies will allow for better job opportunities in this region," she said.

The student added that Shenzhen would most likely be her first preference, given its strong development momentum, open and inclusive atmosphere, comfortable natural environment, and abundant cultural and leisure options.

Value addition

While a fat paycheck and focused job environment remain important, young people increasingly value emotional connection, a sense of belonging, a comfortable lifestyle and the entertainment quotient of a city.

Survey data shows that work-life balance is considered more important than high income, and young people are making rational choices based on a city's inclusiveness, development prospects and tolerance for failure, among other factors.

In 2018, Yanggong Yifan, a former Google engineer specializing in core tensor processing units, or chips to accelerate artificial intelligence, led a team of AI experts from Silicon Valley to return to China and start a business. Their company, CL Tech, was officially registered and established in Hangzhou in 2020.

"Back then, AI development in China was in a trough and the confidence in large models was generally low. Hangzhou, however, had a certain AI ecosystem and was making forward-looking moves," recalled Huang Xu, chief marketing officer of CL Tech.

In the initial phase, the company received dedicated fund support coordinated by the local government, effectively resolving teething financing problems, she said, adding that in 2024-25, the company also received financial support from Hangzhou's innovation funds.

"Strong government support not only addressed the core funding needs at a critical stage of chip R&D and industrialization, but also buoyed market confidence, attracting more social capital to the company and driving its rapid growth," Huang said.

CL Tech is dedicated to developing high-performance tensor processing units and intelligent computing clusters that support ultra-large-scale AI model computation. It has become the first company in China to master core TPU architecture and achieve mass production of such chips.

Huang said that when recruiting high-end talent, she can feel Hangzhou's strong appeal, because the city boasts a comfortable living environment, rich history, and keen industrial and policy development efforts — everything that aligns with the aspirations of young people.

Zhang, the professor from Dongbei University of Finance and Economics, noted that young people value a space where they can fully use their abilities, where they have ample scope for growth, and where they can live comfortably and potentially raise a family.

Cities competing to accumulate human capital crucial for industrial upgrading and innovation-driven development may need to reconfigure their outlook, Zhang said, adding that they should focus on envisioning and implementing policies that nurture both professional and personal growth.

For Wang, the college student who interviewed in Hangzhou, the choice is clear. But for cities seeking young talent like her, the road ahead is long and arduous.

Zhang sums it up best: "Whichever city can attract and retain high-end talent will gain the sharpest edge. And this winner of the 'talent war' will ultimately lead the region's economic growth."

Chen Ye in Hangzhou contributed to this story.







Top: Students explore options during an event at Fudan University on April 15 to address transitional housing needs for graduates seeking jobs in Shanghai. LIU YING / XINHUA **Above left:** Startup entrepreneurs learn about policy support for one-person companies at an employment service station on May 18 in Qingdao, Shandong province. LI ZIHENG / XINHUA **Above right:** A job seeker consults about local talent policies at a recruitment fair in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, on March 6. LIU ZHENRUI / XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:28 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:28 PM

TOP NEWS

Economy: Future unlikely to see complete decoupling

From page 1

But what was once viewed as efficiency is now viewed by developed nations as vulnerability. That shift has primarily been driven by the strategic competition between the US and China. Yet despite tariffs, sanctions, export controls and technology restrictions, annual trade between the two countries still exceeds half a trillion dollars. And even though politically the relationship often fluctuates, economic interdependence remains one of the few remaining stabilizing mechanisms between the world's two largest economies.

This is where de-risking enters the picture. Supply chains are being diversified. Manufacturing is being relocated. Critical minerals are being sourced from alternative suppliers. Semiconductor production is being duplicated. Each decision appears rational in isolation. Collectively they represent a fundamental shift away from efficiency toward redundancy.

The assumption behind de-risking is that resilience can be built through duplication. The problem is that duplication is expensive. Factories must be built. Infrastructure must be upgraded. Inventories must be increased. Supply chains must be maintained in parallel. Costs rise throughout the system. These are not temporary adjustments. They are structural costs that will continue creating an economic gap between the efficient and inefficient.

The deeper problem is that de-risking assumes static behavior. In reality, states adapt. Companies adapt. Markets adapt. When one country reduces dependence on a supplier, that supplier finds new customers. When one bloc reorganizes supply chains, others do the same. When multiple countries pursue reshoring simultaneously, investment becomes duplicated rather than shared. The result is a global system that is less efficient.

This creates a form of contagion. Once one major economy defines interdependence as a strategic risk, others are compelled to do the same. No country wants to remain exposed while competitors hedge. The logic spreads. The result is not selective adjustment but competitive insulation.

History offers a warning. The interwar period saw the rise of tariffs, economic blocs, capital controls and protectionism. The objective was security. The result was contraction. Global trade collapsed. Economic shocks intensified. The Great Depression deepened. The modern world is not repeating the 1930s exactly, but the underlying logic is similar.

Fragmentation reduces the ability of the system to absorb shocks. Integrated systems distribute disruption, while fragmented systems concentrate it, as supply chains become more expensive, capital becomes less efficient, and innovation slows as markets become smaller and more isolated.

The evidence already points in this direction. Companies relocating production face higher costs. Governments are spending hundreds of billions of dollars on industrial subsidies. Inventory levels are increasing. Supply chain redundancy is replacing supply chain efficiency. All of this raises costs across the economy.

Supporters of de-risking argue that these costs are justified, as the pandemic exposed vulnerabilities, geopolitical tensions have exposed strategic dependencies, and national security concerns cannot be ignored. Although this argument has some validity, the real issue is not whether resilience matters (it does), but whether policymakers are correctly pricing its costs and pursuing it in the right way.

Globalization delivered lower prices, greater choice, higher productivity and rising living standards. Reducing those benefits imposes costs and those costs are not distributed evenly. The burden falls most heavily on those with the least ability to absorb it. Large companies can absorb relocation expenses. Smaller enterprises cannot. Higher prices are ultimately borne by consumers.

This is the central contradiction of de-risking. It promises security. Yet much of its cost is paid through slower growth, higher prices and reduced efficiency. Risk is not eliminated, it is redistributed to those who can bear it least.

Much of the developing world continues to operate according to a different logic. The objective remains connectivity. Infrastructure development, industrial investment, logistics networks and trade corridors continue to expand across large parts of Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America. The principle is simple: Connectivity creates scale, and scale creates growth.

The digital economy reinforces this reality. Data flows benefit from interoperability. Digital platforms benefit from scale. Technology ecosystems benefit from common standards. Fragmentation reduces many of these advantages just as surely as it does in physical supply chains.

The future is unlikely to be a complete decoupling or return to pure globalization. Instead, the world is entering a hybrid phase: partially integrated, partially regionalized and partially duplicated. Such systems are often more expensive and less predictable than either full integration or full separation.

The challenge for policymakers is to manage risk without destroying efficiency. So far, no major economy has developed a framework that fully accounts for the long-term costs of fragmentation. The danger is that resilience becomes confused with redundancy. A system can appear safer while becoming more fragile.

At the national level, de-risking may reduce exposure to specific vulnerabilities. At the global level, it weakens the mechanisms that have historically absorbed shocks and supported growth. The lesson of the last century remains relevant. Economic insulation does not create economic security.

Interdependence creates vulnerabilities. But it also creates stability, scale, efficiency and shared prosperity. The question facing the global economy is not whether risk can be eliminated. It cannot. The question is whether the pursuit of security will ultimately create a world that is more resilient, or simply one that is more fragmented, more expensive and more fragile.

The author is a senior fellow at the Centre for International Governance Innovation. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Helicopter collision



An aerial view shows the site of a helicopter crash in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on Sunday. Two helicopters collided in the city's western zone, killing all six people on board, including the 32-year-old US singer Oliver Tree, who was on a concert tour in South America. TERCIO TEIXEIRA / AFP



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi (left) and Shanghai Cooperation Organization Secretary-General Nurlan Yermekbayev visit a photo exhibition during a reception to mark the 25th anniversary of the SCO's founding on Monday in Beijing. WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY

SCO urged to play bigger role in development

Organization has become the world's largest comprehensive regional cooperation body

By **ZHAO JIA**
zhaojia@chinadaily.com.cn

Inside
Global Views, **page 12**

Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Monday called on the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to play a greater role as a stabilizing, constructive and progressive force in today's world.

Speaking at a reception in Beijing to mark the 25th anniversary of the SCO's founding, Wang said that the organization should set an example in promoting peace, development and win-win cooperation.

Founded in Shanghai in 2001, the SCO has expanded from six founding members into a 10-member organization with two observer states and 15 dialogue partners. It has become the world's largest comprehensive regional cooperation organization in terms of geographic coverage and population.

Over the past 25 years, the SCO has cultivated the Shanghai Spirit, which features mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for diverse civilizations and the pursuit of common development.

The SCO has explored a new model of regional cooperation among neighboring countries and helped to foster a new type of international relations, Wang said.

Against the backdrop of accelerating changes unseen in a century, Wang said the SCO should practice true multilateralism, support the United Nations' role and authority, and advocate an equal and orderly multipolar world as well as a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization.

He called on the SCO to uphold common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, promote peace and stability in the Middle East, and support Afghanistan's reconstruction and development.

Wang also urged SCO member countries to foster new growth drivers in trade, connectivity, scientific and technological innovation, green industries and the digital economy. He called for faster preparations for a SCO development bank, stronger industrial and supply chains, and closer people-to-people exchanges and dialogue among civilizations.

As China enters the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, Wang said the country will continue to pursue high-quality development, foster new quality productive forces and expand high-level opening-up.

Noting that SCO cooperation remains a priority in China's neighborhood diplomacy, he expressed China's readiness to share development opportunities with other member states and open up a brighter future for the region.

Speaking at the reception, SCO Secretary-General Nurlan Yermekbayev said the organization's 25-year journey reflects the tireless efforts of its member states, their dedication to a common cause and their commitment to the future.

The SCO has been able to arrive at common positions on pressing contemporary issues and respond promptly to global developments despite differences among its members, he said.

It has developed 30 sectoral cooperation mechanisms and a solid legal framework, he said, emphasizing that joint efforts have contributed to economic growth, social progress and stronger security.

Over the past five years, China's trade with other SCO member states has repeatedly exceeded $100 billion. Over the past 24 years, SCO member states have foiled more than 1,400 terrorism- and extremism-related crimes and carried out over 40 joint counterterrorism exercises and operations, providing strong support for regional security.

Yermekbayev also noted growing international interest in the organization, saying that there are now about 20 applications from countries seeking to join the SCO in one capacity or another, which demonstrates the appeal of its values and principles.

"As a member state, China demonstrates a constructive approach to the development of mutually beneficial cooperation and practical interaction within the SCO," SCO Deputy Secretary-General Ahmad Saidmurodzoda told China Daily.

He added that China's rotating presidency of the SCO has produced initiatives serving the interests of all member states and meaningful outcomes, while the SCO Tianjin Summit made historic decisions that set the course for future development.

Culture: Signature dish has variations

From page 1

"Festival foods are not only delicacies enjoyed during celebrations," Xiao said. "They are symbols through which people perceive the changing seasons and express their feelings through taste."

A Xiaohongshu user said her most vivid memory of *zongzi* comes from childhood, when her grandmother would prepare them by hand. After steaming, the fragrance of bamboo leaves would seep into every grain of glutinous rice, blending with its soft, chewy texture and complemented with the crunch of peanuts and the natural sweetness of dates.

"Now life moves so fast — raising a child, going to work, everything feels rushed," she said. "It is only during traditional festivals, when I finally eat *zongzi*, that I slow down for a moment and taste that sense of family again."

Across the country, *zongzi* shows strong regional variation. In the Jiangnan region, sweet varieties remain most common, typically filled with red bean paste, dates or plain glutinous rice that highlights its natural aroma and texture. In southern China, particularly Guangdong province and nearby areas, savory versions dominate, often featuring pork belly, salted egg yolk, mung beans and dried seafood.

The long-standing debate between "sweet or savory" remains a seasonal talking point, but it also reflects something deeper: China's highly regional food culture, where a festival's signature dish can have dozens of variations.

While the traditional recipes remain cherished, *zongzi* is also entering a new era of culinary reinvention.

Food producers and chefs are introducing fillings inspired by desserts, beverages and fusion cuisine, including rose and hawthorn, taro with mochi, coconut cream and increasingly experimental savory combinations. The changes are seen by industry observers as an expansion of flavor options rather than a replacement of traditional recipes.

Despite ongoing innovation in flavor, experts say the cultural foundation of the festival food remains unchanged.

"Chinese people have deep emotional connections to traditional festivals," Xiao said. "Festivals express people's feelings and beliefs, and they are closely tied to the Chinese spirit."

China's methane emission control strategy applauded

By **HOU LIQIANG**
houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn



Marcelo Mena

China's implementation of the world's most comprehensive strategy to control methane emissions has been lauded by Global Methane Hub CEO Marcelo Mena, who described the nation's continuing efforts as "deep" and "real".

A recent report by the International Energy Agency proves that China's efforts have borne fruit. Despite rising energy demand and fossil fuel output, methane emissions in the country have risen at a slower pace and even decreased slightly between 2024 and 2025.

In a recent exclusive interview with China Daily, Mena, who is also a former environment minister of Chile, said that while the United States has abandoned the methane agenda, China has remained committed to methane emission control in cooperation with international partners such as the European Union and the United Kingdom.

The US officially withdrew from the landmark 2015 Paris Agreement on tackling climate change in January this year.

Mena highlighted a range of sectors where China has taken action to strengthen methane emission control, including oil and gas, coal mining, waste disposal, rice farming and animal husbandry.

He said that no other country's methane action plan is as comprehensive as that of China.

"It is deep, it is real, and it is something that continues to be implemented," he said. "I come here every year, and every year I am surprised with the progress."

China introduced an action plan to cut methane emissions in late 2023. The document included a target of 6 billion cubic meters of coal mine gas use annually by 2025, and prioritized methane recovery in the oil and gas sector through measures such as leak detection and repair requirements, and limits on flaring. The action plan also emphasized methane monitoring, reporting and verification systems.

Methane can be used as a fuel for heating, power generation, and in industrial processes.

In late 2024, the Ministry of Ecology and Environment made the coal mine methane emissions standard more stringent, requiring utilization of gas with methane concentrations at and above 8 percent and extraction volumes above 10 cubic meters per minute. Earlier, gas with 30 percent methane concentration needed to be utilized.

Several Chinese oil and gas companies also set up a methane control alliance in 2021 to promote the sharing of technology and expertise to reduce emissions.

Mena underscored the importance of methane emission control, describing it as the "emergency brake" for addressing climate change, as "it is the fastest way to decrease the temperature".

The second most abundant human-caused greenhouse gas after carbon dioxide, methane has more than 80 times the warming power of carbon dioxide over the first 20 years after it reaches the atmosphere.

Mena also praised the concrete actions taken by China to fulfill its commitments. "Most countries promise big, and then don't think about things until the next moment to promise, right? Implementation is forgotten in many ways," he said.

He said that what other countries could learn from China is that the promises a country makes are meant to be kept. China's implementation of its methane control pledge could demonstrate to other countries that mitigating this potent greenhouse gas is in their own interest, particularly in terms of energy security and food security.

According to the IEA's Global Methane Tracker 2026, which was unveiled in May, China has seen tangible results from its methane emission control efforts.

Despite continued growth in coal production, coal mine methane emissions in China have grown more slowly since 2016, largely due to a shift toward lower-emitting mines in northern provinces and greater use of captured methane.

Satellite observations corroborate this structural change, pointing to similar shifts in the drivers of China's evolving methane emissions profile, it said.

Mena said he looked forward to seeing China exert greater influence on methane reduction efforts globally as a major oil and gas importer.

"It could have a very positive influence on reducing emissions in places like Central Asia, where the emissions are highest," he noted.

Methane loss in Turkmenistan's oil and gas operations, for example, is estimated at between 4.6 percent and over 10 percent of total production. "You could estimate that the Central Asian region, with the current prices, loses around $2.4 billion a year in income," he said.

According to him, China could influence these countries through joint ventures. Co-investing in emission reductions in Central Asian countries could be very positive, Mena added. That would send a signal to those countries that methane emissions linked to China's imported products need to be addressed, and would be a powerful way to accelerate changes.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:28 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:28 PM

GLOBAL LENS



From left: Emiliano Migueles carries bottled water from a truck in Merlo, on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, Argentina, on April 10. Migueles (center) sits with his parents as they watch a soccer match on TV during a break at their home in Merlo on April 20. A mother gives a spoon of stew to her daughter outside the pitch, in front of a banner that reads "Today's effort is tomorrow's success", as teams compete in a one-day knockout soccer tournament, in Ingeniero Budge, on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, on April 5.



Players celebrate after winning a penalty shootout in an informal soccer match in Ciudad Evita, on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, Argentina, on April 9. PHOTOS BY AGUSTIN MARCARIAN / REUTERS

Young Argentines turn to informal soccer tournaments for extra cash

Emiliano Migueles starts his days early, delivering water. But his true grind begins when he clocks out and hits the scrappy soccer pitches that dot the suburbs of Buenos Aires, pouring his energy into amateur soccer to earn extra cash.

For three-time World Cup champions Argentina, the sport is a feverish passion that permeates every home and every makeshift dirt field, known as a *potrero*, where youngsters play, dreaming of reaching the top leagues.

Argentine legend Diego Maradona famously honed his skills at a *potrero* in Villa Fiorito on the outskirts of the capital.

Many matches at these *potreros* offer players the chance to win some cash. The amounts are tiny compared to the wages of their compatriots who play in the glittering European leagues and will soon seek to defend their 2022 World Cup win. But *potrero* players can sometimes earn enough to help pay the bills.

Migueles says he can earn around 500,000 pesos (about $350) between his job and soccer "in a good month, winning matches".

Such matches have recently surged in popularity in impoverished neighborhoods across Argentina, as formal employment has slumped. Factories have closed and public spending has been slashed in recent years.

Migueles, 26, delivers bottled water alongside his uncle from a dilapidated truck, a precarious job with a fluctuating income. Over half of Argentines under the age of 30 are employed in the informal economy, according to 2025 data from state statistics agency INDEC.

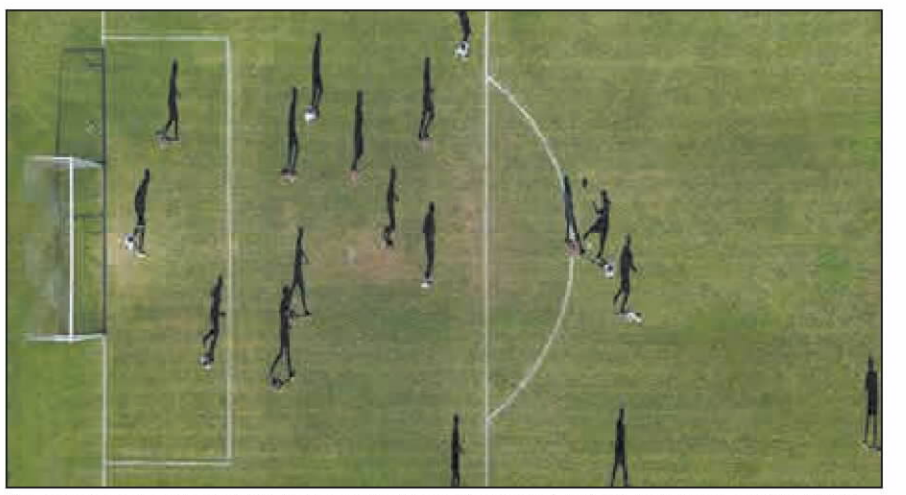
There are no Saturdays, Sundays, or holidays for Migueles.

Whenever there's a match, he laces up his mud-caked boots, whether in informal games or for a semiprofessional team in the town of General Las Heras, where he earns around 100,000 pesos per game.

The informal tournaments can run deep into the night, meaning Migueles often starts his workday running on hardly any sleep. But he wouldn't change it.

"Soccer is everything to me," said Migueles. "I gave up everything for soccer: work, birthdays, there's no one I haven't sacrificed for soccer."

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA



A drone view of a soccer match, held as part of the regional semiprofessional tournament, in which some players are paid per game, in General Las Heras, Buenos Aires, Argentina, on April 12.



People play a soccer match during a one-day knockout tournament in Ingeniero Budge, on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, Argentina, on April 5.



Clockwise from left: Emiliano Migueles (right) fights for the ball with a player during a regional semiprofessional tournament, in General Las Heras, Buenos Aires, on April 12.
Players listen to a team talk before a soccer match in General Las Heras on April 12.
Migueles (center) plays cards with friends in Merlo, on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, on April 20.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:28 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:28 PM

WORLD

US, Iran deal hopeful, but doubts remain

Israel, Hezbollah trade attacks as agreement draws mixed feelings, differing statements

By **MINGMEI LI** in New York
mingmeili@chinadailyusa.com

Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah continued fighting on Monday, even though the United States and Iran say they have reached an agreement aimed toward ending the war. A formal signing ceremony is scheduled for Friday.

US President Donald Trump said on Monday that the agreement with Iran was "all signed" and that the Strait of Hormuz was already "partially open".

Speaking alongside French President Emmanuel Macron at the G7 summit in France, Trump said that he would not attend a formal signing ceremony for the Iran agreement, and that Vice-President JD Vance would travel to Geneva to sign the deal on behalf of the United States.

The US and Iran have electronically signed a memorandum of understanding aimed at ending the war, US media reported on Monday.

The memorandum was signed virtually by Trump, Vance and Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, according to reports.

The terms of the memorandum are expected to be made public within the next 24 to 48 hours, a senior official was quoted as saying.

However, public statements from the two countries show differences.

Trump said the Strait of Hormuz would be "completely open" by Friday.

"They're doing a little hunting for a couple of mines that they've already found, but ... ships are starting to go out now," Trump said.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Monday that the memorandum of understanding with the US marks an important step toward ending the war and opening negotiations, but he added that a final agreement has not yet been reached.

He said Iran has prepared "for all options" and that the government's focus, "with or without an agreement", would remain serving the Iranian people.

Regarding the Strait of Hormuz, Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei said on Monday that Iran was "not seeking to levy transit tolls; however, fees will be charged in exchange for the services that are provided".

Republican Senator Lindsay Graham, a staunch opponent of Tehran, said: "I am somewhat concerned that Iran's view of the agreement seems different than what the American negotiating team is claiming," adding that, "any nuclear deal with Iran will be sent to Congress for review and a vote".

Uncertainty also remained over the situation in Lebanon. Israel's defense minister said Israeli forces would not withdraw from southern Lebanon, despite Iran's claim that the agreement includes an end to the conflict there.

"We will not compromise on Israel's security interests and the protection of our citizens, and we will not withdraw from the security zones," said Israel Katz, warning that "if Iran attacks Israel because of the events in Lebanon, we will strike it with full force."

Some ministers in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government have said Israel would not be bound by any agreement between the US and Iran, the Times of Israel reported.

Trump was previously angered by Netanyahu's decision to strike Beirut before the framework of the agreement was announced.

On Monday afternoon, Netanyahu spoke about the US-Iran agreement during a news conference.

"Trump and I have known each other for many years. Many times we see things eye to eye, and sometimes we do not," he said. "In the United States, they say that Trump does everything I ask, and in Israel, they say that I do everything he asks. We are partners. Sometimes we agree and sometimes we disagree."

Another key uncertainty involves Iran's frozen assets. Tehran is seeking access to billions of dollars in state funds blocked in overseas accounts, while Vance said on Monday that Washington has not agreed to provide any financial benefits to Iran during the 60-day ceasefire period.

Oil prices on Monday settled at their lowest levels since early March. Brent crude fell 4.8 percent to close at $83.17 a barrel, while West Texas Intermediate crude dropped 4.9 percent to $80.75 a barrel.

"This is certainly a hopeful start and an indication that things are moving in the right direction. What we have is an agreement on a framework for further negotiations on some of the thorniest issues, particularly the nuclear program that Iran has had," Mehran Kamrava, a professor of government at Georgetown University in Qatar, told China Daily.

"I think the final outcome is yet to be determined, but certainly this is a very hopeful start," said Kamrava.

Both Iran and the US faced pressure from hard-liners in their nations "not to go to the negotiating table, but both have done so", he said.

As the two sides move toward an agreement, questions remain over whether Trump's stated goals at the outset of the war, including preventing Iran from developing a nuclear weapon and eliminating its missile arsenal, have been fully achieved.

Trump, who initially estimated the conflict would last four to six weeks, has come under increasing pressure at home to end US involvement as the November midterm elections approach.



Protesters in Geneva demonstrate on Sunday against the G7 summit in Evian-les-Bains, France. French President Emmanuel Macron said leaders will discuss Iran during the summit. MICHAEL KAPPELER / AP


A general view shows a winemakers' fair, in Bordeaux, France, on March 13. PATRICE PIERROT / NEWSCOM

Trump repeats wine tariff threat in row with France

By **JULIAN SHEA** in London
julian@mail.chinadailyuk.com

United States President Donald Trump has said he will "have no choice" but to impose a 100 percent tariff on wine imports from France unless the country does a U-turn on taxes imposed on big US technology companies, the third time he has made such a threat.

The 3-percent levy on companies such as Google, Amazon, and Facebook's owner Meta was approved by the French Senate in 2019, during Trump's first term of office, and drew his wrath then, when he targeted France's emblematic wine industry for the first time.

Trump threatened heavy levies on French wine and cheese, prompting then-finance minister Bruno Le Maire to say: "France is sovereign, and France decides its own tax rules. And this will continue to be the case."

Trump made threats a second time at the start of this year, when he said he would impose a 200-percent tariff on French wines and champagne unless French President Emmanuel Macron signed up for his Board of Peace initiative, which he declined to do, saying that its proposed remit "raises major questions, particularly regarding respect for the principles and structure of the United Nations, which under no circumstances can be called into question".

Now he has repeated his demand in an interview with the New York Post, published shortly before Macron entertains Trump in the run-up to a summit of the leaders of the G7 nations, to be held in Evian-les-Bains, France, from Monday to Wednesday.

"I asked him not to tax American companies and, if he does, I will have no choice but to put a 100 percent tariff on all champagne and all wines coming from France," Trump said. "All Macron has to do is abolish this sales tax, and he won't face this kind of pressure."

The US accounts for around 20 percent of French wine sales around the world, worth an estimated $2 billion each year, and coincidentally, since Trump began his rollout of global tariffs, figures published by the French customs service, the Directorate-General of Customs and Indirect Taxes, have shown that sales to the US fell 15.9 percent in value from 2024 to 2025.

French wine and spirits exporters said on Monday that Trump's threat was bad news for an export-dependent industry caught in a dispute beyond its control.

"This new threat is bad news for our industry, which relies heavily on exports," French wine and spirits exporters group FEVS said in a reaction to Reuters.

The group urged "responsible behavior", calling for balanced and constructive trade ties between France and the United States, "in the interest of both economies".

Agencies contributed to this story.

UN Security Council extends mandate of Afghanistan mission

By **MINLU ZHANG**
at the United Nations
minluzhang@chinadailyusa.com

The United Nations Security Council on Monday unanimously adopted a resolution extending the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, or UNAMA, for one year, as the country continues to face a severe humanitarian crisis.

Resolution 2822, submitted by China, extends the mandate of the mission until June 17, 2027. It also requests the UN secretary-general to conduct a strategic assessment of UNAMA and submit a written report to the council by the end of March next year.

Afghanistan remains one of the world's largest humanitarian crises, with 21.9 million people requiring humanitarian assistance in 2026, according to the United Nations. The situation has been further strained by economic difficulties, restrictions on women and girls, and the return of large numbers of Afghans from neighboring countries.

Speaking after the vote, Fu Cong, China's permanent representative to the UN, said the resolution expresses concern over Afghanistan's economic and humanitarian situation, and reiterates concern over the human rights situation in Afghanistan, particularly the rights of women and girls.

Fu called for continued international assistance to help address the humanitarian crisis, support the reintegration of returnees, promote economic recovery and strengthen the country's capacity for development.

He said China called on relevant countries to return the assets of Afghanistan's Central Bank as soon as possible and lift the unilateral sanctions imposed on Afghanistan.

Fu said UNAMA should continue engaging with the Afghan authorities and other relevant stakeholders to encourage the protection of basic rights, including women's and girls' equal access to education, healthcare, employment, justice and participation in public life.

"We hope that the Afghan government will heed the reasonable aspirations of the Afghan people and the international community, take more positive steps to protect human rights, particularly the rights of women and girls, and demonstrate an image of openness, inclusiveness and responsibility," Fu said.

Earlier this month, Georgette Gagnon, the UN deputy special representative currently leading UNAMA, told the Security Council that each year approximately 250,000 more girls are permanently excluded from secondary education pathways, "creating a lost generation of talent and potential".

The resolution also emphasizes the importance of countering terrorism and calls for continued dialogue and engagement between Afghanistan and the international community.

Fu said UNAMA "should continue to play its role as a bridge" in that process, while encouraging Afghanistan to pursue inclusive governance, fulfill its international obligations and reintegrate into the international community.

Fu said China looks forward to the UN Secretariat consulting the Afghan authorities, regional countries and other relevant stakeholders during the strategic assessment, and putting forward "practical and actionable recommendations" on UNAMA's future work.

UNAMA is a special political mission established by the Security Council in March 2002 to support Afghanistan. The council renews the mission's mandate annually, and its scope has been adjusted over time to reflect changing conditions in the country.

In March, the council extended UNAMA's mandate for only three months. Fu said then that some council members wanted changes to the mandate and that the shorter extension would allow more time for discussion. The United States had called for a review of UN assistance in Afghanistan, citing concerns over the Taliban's restrictions on women's rights, obstruction of aid operations and the detention of American citizens.

New Zealand sees ties with Asia as vital, survey shows

By **XIN XIN** in Sydney
xinxin@chinadaily.com.cn

New Zealand is recalibrating its place in the world amid increasing geopolitical uncertainties, with Asia at the center of how people in the Pacific nation see their country's future, a new survey shows.

Within Asia, China is deemed the most important for New Zealand's future. Also, for the first time in a decade, China has overtaken the United States in favorability ratings among New Zealanders, according to the survey.

The findings come from the latest New Zealanders' Perceptions of Asia and Asian Peoples Survey, released by the Asia New Zealand Foundation last week. Conducted from January to February, the survey collected responses from 2,300 New Zealanders aged 15 and above.

Julia Macdonald, the foundation's research and engagement director, told China Daily that the report showed that "Asia continues to be seen as very important to New Zealand's future, and China is seen as the most important country to New Zealand's future".

The survey shows that China ranked first by a considerable margin in perceptions of the importance of Asian countries to New Zealand's future. A total of 81 percent of respondents said China was important or very important, with 51 percent rating it as very important.

Macdonald said trade remained a key driver of China's perceived importance to New Zealand, while education, research, tourism and cultural exchange offer strong potential to deepen understanding beyond trade.

"These are areas that help build people-to-people connections and create opportunities for people in both countries (or regions) ... to learn from one another," she said.

Cooperation spheres

Macdonald said the cooperation spheres will help "promote a more informed and nuanced understanding of a relationship that will continue to be important to New Zealand's future".

The survey has been conducted for 29 consecutive years, making it the longest-running data series on how New Zealand views its most important economic neighborhood, according to the foundation.

Suzannah Jessep, chief executive of the Asia New Zealand Foundation, said the latest survey brought encouraging news in regard to New Zealand's relationship with Asia.

Jessep said that since 1997, the survey has tracked public perceptions and understanding of Asia, and the findings showed "a positive correlation" between New Zealanders' understanding of Asia and "having confidence to engage and invest in the region".

Looking ahead, New Zealanders were most optimistic about Asia's impact on technology, tourism and trade relations.

More than four in five respondents expected technology and innovation in Asia and inbound tourism from the region to benefit New Zealand, while around three-quarters saw positive impacts from Asia's economic growth and investment.

Respondents also wanted more Asian investment in science and technology, followed by healthcare and biotechnology, and infrastructure and transport.

"These findings show New Zealanders' connections with Asia go beyond politics and economics. They are also cultural, personal and part of everyday life," Jessep told China Daily.

The survey report noted that when asked what they thought of when they heard the word "Asia", New Zealanders named "China" as their top association for the seventh year in a row, followed by food and travel, among others.

The Chinese mainland remained the most popular Asian destination for New Zealand travelers.

The survey also found that New Zealanders were more likely to view China as a friend than the US. A friendly country was defined as one that respondents viewed as "safe and trustworthy".

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily

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

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1850

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:28 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:28 PM

BUSINESS

Japan firms bullish about China biz

Market scale, growth prospects seen outweighing bilateral fluctuations

By **ZHONG NAN**
zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

Japanese companies will remain committed to the Chinese market over the long term as they expect the country's market scale, growth prospects and business opportunities to outweigh fluctuations in bilateral ties, said executives and market watchers.

They said Japanese investment in China is an integral part of global industrial specialization, with economic spillovers from these investments helping support China's industrial upgrading. The two countries remain deeply interconnected through their economic and supply-chain linkages.

Despite headwinds in Sino-Japanese relations occurring since late last year, the proportion of Japanese-funded businesses in China choosing to stay committed to the market is as high as about 85 percent, said a white paper issued by the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry in China last week.

According to the chamber, China hosts about 30,000 of the more than 70,000 overseas affiliates operated by Japanese companies worldwide.

Tetsuro Homma, the chamber's president, said that China is no longer viewed simply as a vast consumer market by Japanese companies, but also as a vital manufacturing base and a hub of innovation.

"It is also a supply base for outstanding talent, and a training ground for Japanese-funded businesses to build and sharpen their competitiveness," he said.

The close and complementary economic ties between the two countries are also reflected in trade flows. Two-way China-Japan trade grew 13.6 percent year-on-year to 1.02 trillion yuan ($150.93 billion) between January and May, while China's imports from Japan surged 23.9 percent on a yearly basis, said the General Administration of Customs.

Zhou Minliang, a professor of public policies at Northwestern Polytechnical University in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, said that although rising costs have prompted some Japanese manufacturers to diversify production across Asia — especially to Southeast Asia — China's competitive edge extends well beyond labor and land costs.

China's mature industrial ecosystem, efficient infrastructure and vast domestic market continue to provide advantages that remain difficult to replicate elsewhere in the short term, Zhou said.

Rather than viewing China solely as a production base, many foreign corporations — including Japanese firms — are shifting their focus toward higher-value activities such as research and development, advanced manufacturing, digitalization and green technologies, aiming to benefit from the country's push toward innovation-led growth, said Pan Yuanyuan, an assistant researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of World Economics and Politics.

The shift toward higher-value investment is reflected in the latest data. China saw the actual use of foreign direct investment in high-tech industries surge 20.3 percent year-on-year to 116.33 billion yuan in the first four months, accounting for 40.4 percent of the country's total FDI, said the Ministry of Commerce.

Stephen Ma, chairman for China at Japan's Nissan Motor, said that China's vast market and expanding domestic demand are unlocking opportunities for the auto industry.

The Japanese automaker's sales reached 653,000 units in China last year, with unit sales rising 4.5 percent year-on-year in the second half.

Similar confidence is also evident among Japanese suppliers. Marelli Holdings Co, a Japanese automotive parts manufacturer, is expanding its presence in the country in areas such as smart lighting, electronics and intelligent cockpit technologies, underscoring China's growing role in the company's global operations.

"The competition in China's automotive sector is increasingly shifting toward faster product iteration, intelligent features and cost efficiency, requiring multinational suppliers to respond more quickly to demand for smarter user experiences and affordable innovation," said Shen Kelei, the group's executive vice-president.

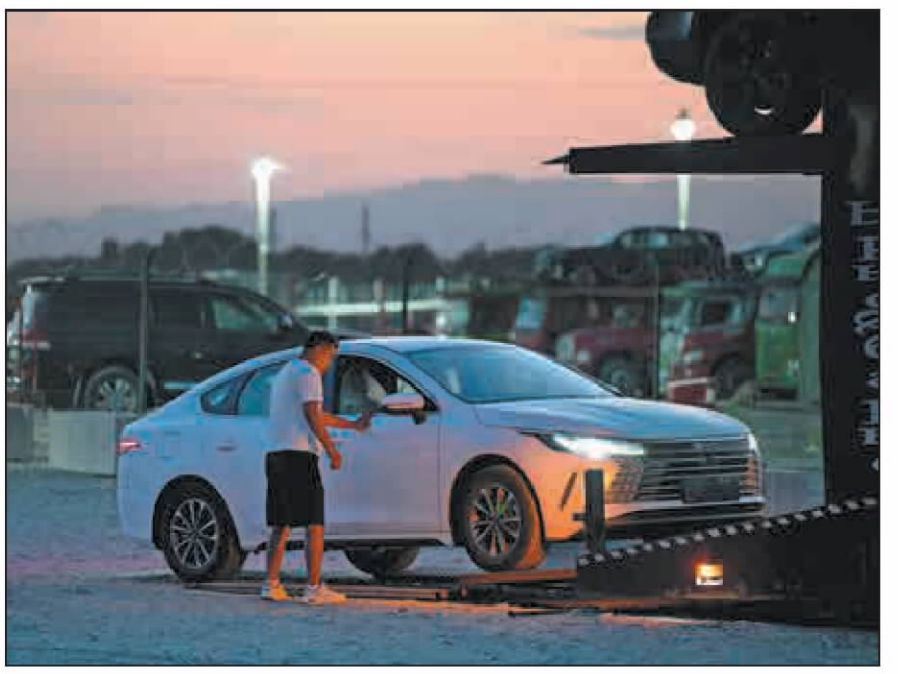
Words of wisdom



A railway staffer from Jiexiu Station, under China Railway Taiyuan Group, explains safety regulations to students at a school near railway lines in Jinzhong, Shanxi province. As summer vacation approaches — a period of increased student mobility and elevated railway safety risks — the section has launched a targeted railway protection awareness campaign. It has organized more than 50 activities in over 20 schools and 30 villages and communities within its jurisdiction, distributing educational materials and reaching out to more than 25,000 teachers, students and locals.
LIU SHU / FOR CHINA DAILY

Kazakhstan aims big with Middle Corridor

By **REN QI**
renqi@chinadaily.com.cn



A logistics employee checks the exterior of a vehicle imported from China in Zarkent, Kazakhstan, on May 23. LI RENZI / XINHUA

Kazakhstan is ramping up efforts to develop the Middle Corridor, also known as the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route, as a vital logistics artery connecting China and Europe, with plans to invest $10 billion to expand its railway and infrastructure capacity to meet surging cross-border freight demand.

Talgat Aldybergenov, chairman of Kazakhstan's national railway company Kazakhstan Temir Zholy (KTZ), said the volume of Chinese goods transported to Europe via Kazakhstan has seen a notable increase following recent global shipping disruptions.

"Compared to sea freight, land transport offers higher reliability and more predictable delivery times, and Chinese customers' interest in land transport is growing day by day," Aldybergenov said.

Amid shifting global supply chains and regional complexities, the Middle Corridor has emerged as a preferred alternative for international traders. Spanning over 4,250 kilometers, the route links China and Europe through Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkiye. Data from UK-based Abrdn Investments show that freight volume along this corridor has surged nearly tenfold since 2022.

Recognizing transport connectivity as a strategic priority, Kazakhstan has already deployed about half of its projected $10 billion infrastructure budget for the period up to 2030.

A major highlight of this year's 900-km railway construction plan is the 300-km Ayagoz-Bakhty railway. Upon completion, it will serve as the third railway port between Kazakhstan and China. With these upgrades, annual bilateral rail freight capacity is expected to nearly double, jumping from the current 55 million metric tons to 100 million tons by 2030.

The expansion pace of the Middle Corridor is visibly accelerating. In the first quarter, 173 freight trains operated along the route, each carrying 55 containers. KTZ aims to run 600 trains this year, with a projected 67 percent growth next year.

To ensure smooth operations along the expanding route, KTZ is actively upgrading its transport fleet through deepening cooperation with Chinese enterprises. The company has signed a contract to procure 270 locomotives from China to address capacity shortages.

Furthermore, to overcome the historical shipping bottleneck on the Caspian Sea, KTZ is investing over $100 million to acquire six cargo ships. Four of these vessels are currently being built by Chinese shipyards and are expected to be delivered starting next year.

Simultaneously, Kazakhstan is expanding its logistics footprint in China and beyond. The Kazakhstan terminal in the Xi'an International Trade and Logistics Park, which officially opened in 2023, has become a crucial hub. As of November, the terminal had handled over 250,000 tons of consolidated and transshipped cargo. To further facilitate end-to-end delivery, KTZ is in active negotiations to acquire container terminals in European countries, including Romania, Hungary and Germany.

The flourishing logistics sector reflects the broader strengthening of bilateral ties. Shakhrat Nuryshev, ambassador of Kazakhstan to China, announced in April that China-Kazakhstan trade volume reached $13.2 billion in the first quarter, a year-on-year increase of 46.6 percent.

The two nations are actively tapping into potential in key areas such as industrial cooperation and transport connectivity, Nuryshev said, emphasizing that the Belt and Road Initiative continues to lay a solid foundation for long-term regional economic collaboration.

A-share aerospace stocks surge on SpaceX IPO buzz

By **SHI JING** in Shanghai
shijing@chinadaily.com.cn

While the global capital market was recently abuzz with SpaceX's record-breaking IPO, the Chinese commercial aerospace sector will ride the tide with a clearer market valuation model and strong government support, said experts on Monday.

Following the 0.88 percent average gain on Friday, when SpaceX's price soared 19 percent on its first day on the Nasdaq, A-share commercial aerospace companies posted a further 2.96 percent increase on Monday, with the benchmark Shanghai Composite Index closing 1.61 percent higher.

Experts from Founder Securities said SpaceX's debut has provided the global commercial aerospace industry with a mainstream and highly representative open market valuation model. A-share market sentiment will be bolstered, helping investors regard commercial aerospace as a technology industry offering greater growth potential.

The price-to-sales ratio is now around eightfold to tenfold for A-share commercial aerospace companies, while SpaceX's implied price-to-sales ratio is as high as 65 to 100 times, said Tian Lihui, a finance professor at Nankai University.

The worldwide enthusiasm for SpaceX will help accelerate the deeper revaluation and restructuring of the Chinese A-share commercial aerospace sector, directing more capital to industry leaders possessing core technologies and large-scale operations, Tian said.

A-share commercial aerospace firms have seen their share prices climb about 6 percent since the beginning of the year. At least four commercial aerospace-based exchange-traded funds were up by over 5 percent on Friday.

The industry is being propelled by the latest policies introduced in China. This year's Government Work Report has defined for the first time that aerospace is among the country's emerging pillar industries.

The Shanghai Stock Exchange issued on Dec 26 the listing guidelines for the commercial rocket industry. Commercial rocket companies that are at a critical stage of large-scale commercialization are allowed to list on the STAR Market under the fifth set of listing standards.

This means that this year has become a policy window period for the sector to file IPOs.

Public figures show that two Chinese companies — LandSpace and CAS Space — have had their IPO applications to the STAR Market accepted. Another eight companies have initiated their IPO application process.

CCID Media, a division of the China Center for Information Industry Development, said China's commercial aerospace market size reached 2.83 trillion yuan ($418.8 billion) in 2025, up 21.7 percent year-on-year. Its size is expected to further expand to 3.5 trillion yuan this year, with the annual growth rate estimated at over 20 percent.

Experts from Sealand Securities said the commercial aerospace sector is an integral part showcasing China's new quality productive forces, standing in a strategic arena of global competition. It is accelerating the transformation from technology validation to large-scale application. Investors are thus recommended to closely monitor progress in rocket reusability tests, barriers in satellite manufacturing, satellite operation, management, maintenance and ground applications, they said.

Fu Chenshuo, chief analyst of defense and aerospace at CITIC Securities, said the commercial aerospace sector will see its performance further pick up as more private commercial rocket companies participate in the country's major constellation networks. Launch costs will also decline significantly as recovery technology matures, which can also be translated into exponential growth. A broader industry outlook on space-based computing power should not be overlooked.

Investors should focus on the core assets in the industry, such as reusable rockets — including the 3D printing supply chain, satellites, terminals and the SpaceX supply chain, he added.

New World optimistic about mainland potential

By **WANG YING** in Shanghai
wang_ying@chinadaily.com.cn

> "As one of the Hong Kong enterprises that has the deepest understanding of the 15th Five-Year Plan, we will move swiftly to seize related opportunities, including property development in the Chinese mainland."
>
> **Huang Shaomei,** executive director and CEO of New World Development Co Ltd

Optimistic about development potential in the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong-based conglomerate New World Development Co Ltd is looking to tap into opportunities created by the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), said a top executive of the company.

Looking ahead, there are abundant opportunities related to the top national development plan, reflected by the measures to boost consumption, high-quality development and new quality productive forces, said Huang Shaomei, executive director and CEO of New World Development, during a recent interview with media in Shanghai.

"This year marks the beginning of the 15th Five-Year Plan, and this is the first time that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region has been included in the plan, as it explicitly supports the SAR in better integrating into and serving the overall development of the country," said Huang. "As one of the Hong Kong enterprises that has the deepest understanding of the 15th Five-Year Plan, we will move swiftly to seize related opportunities, including property development in the Chinese mainland."

New World Development possesses nearly 1.4 million square meters of land reserves in Hong Kong. As of the end of 2025, the group had total land reserves of about 2.89 million sq m of gross floor area in the Chinese mainland, including some 1.55 million sq m for residential use.

"I personally feel strongly that, led especially by major cities, the property market in the Chinese mainland is recovering, and supportive measures introduced by cities will further consolidate the recovery," Huang said.

Over the years, the group has been focused on core cities in the Yangtze River Delta region and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. The two regions' strengths in industry and population have secured projects there with stronger consumption momentum and risk resistance capabilities, providing a solid foundation for the group's performance.

Currently, Chinese mainland and Hong Kong markets each contribute about 50 percent of New World Development's revenue, while rental income and property sales each account for roughly half of the group's profits.

Given the promising outlook for the Chinese mainland, Huang expects the market to contribute 70 percent of the company's total project volume and new developments over the coming decade, with Hong Kong accounting for the remaining 30 percent.

The recovery of Hong Kong's economy in sectors including real estate, finance, retail and tourism also presents significant opportunities.

"New World Development is committed to strengthening our competitiveness in finance, retail, services and real estate. We also aim to develop high-quality and competitive projects," Huang said. "The country's overall development strategy is not focused solely on a specific industry or sector. Considering Hong Kong's unique strengths in the legal and financial sectors, the SAR should play an important role, a role that both creates connections with other cities and maintains its uniqueness."

Horace Lam, CEO of K11 Hong Kong, said the two K11 shopping malls have benefited from Hong Kong's role as a gateway for introducing international brands to China and helping mainland brands expand globally.

"For international brands, Hong Kong is a testing ground for brands entering the mainland. Through testing market reactions, validating operating models and building consumer reputation in Hong Kong, brands lay the foundation for further expansion into the mainland market."

"In the meantime, thanks to its superior geographic location and international business environment, Chinese mainland brands take Hong Kong as a channel for internationalization," said Lam, adding that the K11 Art Mall has attracted Chinese mainland and international brands to launch their first stores in Hong Kong.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:28 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:28 PM

BUSINESS

Sino-ASEAN synergies deliver vast potential

Chinese companies positioning themselves as indispensable architects of region's future green power landscape

By **ZHENG XIN**
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn



A photo taken in April shows the China-Laos 500-kilovolt power interconnection project. The flagship solar initiative had delivered nearly 200 million kilowatt-hours by end-May. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

As Southeast Asia accelerates its shift away from fossil fuels, Chinese energy companies are positioning themselves as the indispensable architects of the region's future green energy landscape.

Facing the mutual challenges of surging electricity demand, climate change and the urgent imperative for economic decarbonization, the two regions are actively forging a highly integrated, resilient clean energy network that transcends geographic boundaries. This macro-level partnership is being anchored by concrete, massive capital injections.

The US-based Center for Strategic and International Studies said China represents both a significant and a wide-ranging investment partner in Southeast Asia's energy sector, a role that has become increasingly important as Southeast Asian countries pursue ambitious energy transitions while safeguarding energy security.

A senior Singaporean official said Chinese energy enterprises are acting as vital contributors to Southeast Asia's extensive green transition initiatives, which center on linking regional power grids.

This strategy could culminate in a massive cross-border network stretching from Singapore to southern parts of China, crossing through intermediate nations like Malaysia and Thailand, said Puah Kok Keong, chief executive of the Energy Market Authority, Singapore's energy regulator.

Puah highlighted that this regional push would unlock fresh avenues for Chinese enterprises, which already enjoy technological dominance across key sectors and maintain a strong project presence in the area.

"China stands as the undeniable global leader not only in implementing solar infrastructure and smart-grid battery storage, but also in manufacturing and exporting the core technologies underpinning them," he said. "When developers need to execute solar-plus-storage projects efficiently, Chinese suppliers are typically the go-to choice for speed, cost-effectiveness and dependability."

Chinese companies have recently confirmed deals to deliver several major energy infrastructure projects in the region. Among these, the China General Nuclear Power Group and China Southern Power Grid cross-border initiatives stand out as premier examples of this accelerating regional clean energy integration.

A flagship cross-border photovoltaic power initiative in Laos — the China-Laos 500-kilovolt power interconnection project — had delivered nearly 200 million kilowatt-hours by end-May, demonstrating the massive potential of cross-border solar infrastructure.

Driven by the coordinated efforts of CGN and CSG, the project — put into operation in April — marks the first time that overseas new-energy electricity has participated in China's marketized power trading system.

Currently, these initial cross-border power transactions are utilizing high-voltage infrastructure to deliver electricity directly to Southwest China's Yunnan province. Moving forward, grid operators plan to organize the next phase of transmission to send this clean energy further east to the high-demand, technologically advanced hubs of Guangdong province.

Industry experts said this achievement represents far more than a technical connection; it is a structural breakthrough in how renewable energy is traded, dispatched and utilized across borders in the Asia-Pacific region.

As Southeast Asia pursues its ambitious green transition plans amid surging electricity demand, Chinese enterprises — commanding deep technological and manufacturing advantages in renewable energy and grid infrastructure — are poised to play an indispensable role in making this regional vision a reality, said Lin Boqiang, head of the China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xiamen University.

Construction of the pivotal interconnection project began last year. Spanning a total length of 177.5 kilometers, the transmission line weaves through complex topography, comprising a 145-km Chinese section and a 32.5-km Lao section.

While Lao hydropower has previously been transmitted to Yunnan via lower-voltage lines and subsequently delivered to the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, this new project breaks fresh ground.

As the largest cross-border grid project and the highest-voltage power link between China and Laos, it introduces highly variable solar power into the cross-border equation for the first time, requiring sophisticated grid management capabilities.

The project is expected to transmit roughly 1.1 billion kWh of solar-generated electricity to China this year alone, signaling a transition toward a more standardized, institutionalized and market-oriented phase of power interconnectivity between neighboring countries.

Beyond the grid infrastructure, Chinese energy titans are actively establishing major clean energy positions across maritime Southeast Asia.

In October, CRE International — a unit of China National Nuclear Corporation — signed an agreement with Singapore-based Equator Renewables Asia to build a solar photovoltaic facility with a maximum capacity of 900 megawatts and a 1.2-gigawatt-hour battery storage system in Indonesia.

The project is set to be completed by 2029 and will generate 830 GWh of clean energy annually. CRE International will invest in, construct and operate the project, Equator said via its website.

Chinese battery giant Contemporary Amperex Technology Co, meanwhile, will supply half of the battery storage systems for another massive solar-and-battery project in Indonesia, which is slated to export 300 MW of clean electricity directly to Singapore once operational.

The implications of these interconnected projects extend far beyond bilateral trade, serving as a microcosm for the broader energy security goals of the Asia-Pacific region, said Lin.

As geopolitical tensions, supply chain disruptions and the rapid dawn of the artificial intelligence era drive unprecedented electricity demand, regional grid connectivity is transitioning from an abstract goal to a vital strategic imperative, he said.

Puah emphasized that energy security today is fundamentally about resilience, diversification and adaptability, in an increasingly uncertain global environment.

"For Singapore, as an import-dependent country with limited land, this means taking a diversified portfolio approach for our energy mix, maintaining strong international partnerships and ensuring reliable infrastructure," Puah said. "No single country can secure its energy future in isolation. Regional cooperation and cross-border connectivity will become increasingly important in strengthening long-term energy resilience."

Puah said AI and digitalization are fundamentally reshaping energy demand globally, requiring power systems that are not only cleaner, but also highly flexible, efficient and interconnected.

"A more integrated regional energy system would allow economies to diversify energy sources, reduce vulnerabilities and draw on mutual support from neighbors, laying the foundation for a more secure energy future across Asia-Pacific," he said.

While acknowledging that a fully integrated regional power market in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations will take time and require complex coordination across technical standards, financing and regulatory frameworks, Puah pointed out that foundational efforts are already well underway.

While the physical realization of these ambitious cross-border grids and mega-solar parks relies heavily on a robust and scalable supply chain, China's competitive advantage remains unparalleled, providing the economic foundation that makes regional energy transitions feasible and affordable for developing nations, he said.

A recent report by global research firm Wood Mackenzie said China holds a dominant position in the global renewable energy manufacturing sector, producing over 80 percent of the world's wind turbines, solar panels and energy storage batteries.

This sheer scale translates into profound cost advantages that competitors struggle to match. Products manufactured by Chinese companies at their overseas facilities are, on average, 28 percent cheaper than similar Western alternatives for wind turbines, 4 percent cheaper for solar modules and 31 percent cheaper for energy storage batteries.

Li Xiaoyang, director of China power and renewables research at Wood Mackenzie, said the fundamental economics of Chinese manufacturing efficiency mean that these companies maintain competitive advantages that are actively reshaping global supply chains, even in the face of international trade frictions.

As global local content policies, such as the European Union's Net-Zero Industry Act and the United States' Inflation Reduction Act, attempt to spur domestic production, Chinese manufacturers have adapted dynamically.

Rather than deterring Chinese companies, these policies are forcing more sophisticated international strategies.

The overseas expansion of China's new energy sector is rapidly transitioning from traditional engineering, procurement and construction contracting toward the independent power producer model, which integrates investment, construction and long-term operations.

CGN's gigawatt-scale solar project in Laos, independently developed and operated by the Chinese enterprise, is a prime example of this evolution.

"The focus of renewable investment is shifting toward the Middle East, Asia-Pacific and Caspian markets," Li explained. "With high-quality products made in China, greenfield investments are becoming more appealing to investors looking to establish projects in easily accessible markets. These regions act as both manufacturing hubs for global market entry and local demand centers, effectively creating parallel supply chains."

Wood Mackenzie projects that Chinese enterprises may control nearly 80 percent of utility solar and wind capacity in top markets involved in the Belt and Road Initiative by 2030. This creates a distributed, resilient network of manufacturing and energy production that effectively supports local transitions while bypassing traditional trade barriers.

The deep complementarities between China's industrial might and Southeast Asia's strategic positioning present vast opportunities for multilateral cooperation.

China's extensive capabilities in long-term planning, technology deployment and manufacturing align seamlessly with the financial, standard-setting and regional project development strengths of international hubs like Singapore, said Puah.

"Singapore and China have complementary strengths ... China's experience highlights the importance of infrastructure development, innovation and industrial capabilities in supporting the energy transition. Singapore contributes strengths in finance, connectivity and regional project development," he said. "As Southeast Asia's energy demand continues to grow, there will be increasing opportunities for collaboration in areas such as clean energy infrastructure, energy storage, digital energy solutions and regional connectivity."

Puah stressed that policy coordination, transparency and trusted partnerships will be key to unlocking long-term investment.

The tie-ups between China's energy firms and countries across Southeast Asia should prove mutually beneficial, Puah said. Singapore will gain access to low-carbon electricity, while neighboring countries will receive investment in their energy sector and a boost to their export revenues.

Southeast Asia eyes interconnected grid as economies pursue shared sustainability goals

By **ZHENG XIN**



Puah Kok Keong

Chinese energy companies are poised to play a crucial role in Southeast Asia's ambitious green transition and regional power grid integration, leveraging their technological dominance to unlock major market opportunities, a senior Singaporean official said.

"Greater regional connectivity can improve resilience, efficiency and energy security outcomes," said Puah Kok Keong, chief executive of the Energy Market Authority of Singapore, during a recently held seminar co-hosted by China Southern Power Grid. "A more integrated regional energy system would allow economies to diversify energy sources, reduce vulnerabilities and draw on mutual support from neighbors."

Grid integration is becoming increasingly vital as Singapore and its neighbors race to meet their decarbonization goals. Currently relying on natural gas for about 95 percent of its power generation, the land-scarce city-state is accelerating efforts to diversify its energy mix, he said.

"Singapore has set a target of importing up to 6 gigawatts of low-carbon electricity by 2035, an objective that necessitates stronger regional interconnections and high-voltage direct current links," Puah said.

This regional shift is occurring against the backdrop of a technological revolution that is rapidly reshaping global power consumption.

"As artificial intelligence and digitalization are becoming key drivers of electricity demand growth across Asia, energy cooperation will increasingly need to focus on the infrastructure required to support it, including smarter and more resilient power grids, energy storage systems and low-carbon generation," he added.

Industry experts believe such efforts are creating immense opportunities for Chinese enterprises.

Possessing world-leading expertise in deploying solar power, smart-grid solutions and energy storage systems, China has scaled up renewable energy faster than almost any country in the world, said Lin Boqiang, head of the China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xiamen University.

China's record-breaking progress — adding over 430 GW of new wind and solar capacity in the past year alone — is actively shaping the global energy transition, he said.

Puah said Singapore and China have complementary strengths. While China has strong capabilities in technology, manufacturing and deployment, Singapore contributes strengths in finance, connectivity and regional project development.

As Southeast Asia's energy demand continues to grow, he believes there will be increasing opportunities for collaboration in areas such as clean energy infrastructure, energy storage, digital energy solutions and regional connectivity.

At the regional level, Singapore has been actively working to advance cross-border energy cooperation. A pioneering multilateral project is already transmitting up to 100 megawatts of hydropower from Laos to Singapore via Thailand and Malaysia using existing interconnectors.

While a fully integrated regional power market may still be years away, these early efforts are laying the groundwork for a broader vision.

"Integration will take time and require coordination across areas such as technical standards, financing and regulatory frameworks," Puah said. "In ASEAN, a regional power market may still be some time away, but efforts are underway to strengthen bilateral interconnections and subregional multilateral interconnections. These serve as the foundations for ASEAN to realize the ASEAN Power Grid by 2045."

To transform these regional blueprints into reality, financing and policy coordination are just as critical as technological deployment. As a leading international financial center, Singapore acts as a convening hub to connect capital with bankable infrastructure projects.

"The scale of investment needed across infrastructure, grids, clean technologies and system resilience will require strong regional collaboration," Puah said.

He added that innovative mechanisms, such as credible cross-border renewable energy certificates, play an important role in enhancing the bankability of these massive renewable energy projects and boosting investor confidence.

Looking 10 to 15 years ahead, Puah expects the Asia-Pacific region to become far more interconnected as economies pursue shared sustainability goals. Through deepening partnerships, complementary alliances with Chinese technological leaders and a unified vision for a cross-border power network, Southeast Asia is steadily building a resilient, future-ready energy ecosystem.



A photo taken on Feb 3, 2021 shows workers assembling solar panels on the shore of the Tengeh Reservoir as part of the construction of a floating solar power farm in Singapore. ROSLAN RAHMAN / AFP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:28 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:28 PM

光影记忆 STILL IN FRAME



Students play table tennis at Neijiang No 2 Junior High School in Neijiang, Sichuan province, on April 13. Formerly, the school was for the children of the Neijiang Cotton Mill's employees.

PHOTOS BY WANG DINGHAO / FOR CHINA DAILY



Children of Neijiang Cotton Mill workers celebrate after winning a tug-of-war in the neighborhood in 1984.





Left: Factory workers' children pose for a photo before taking part in a badminton skills showcase in 1977.
Right: A textile worker weaves thread at the factory in 1978.



A textile worker participates in a provincial-level skills competition at a yarn spinning workshop at the factory in 1975.



A teacher from the factory workers' children's school tumbles with her students while learning to roller-skate in 1981.



Some 1,800 veteran workers of the Neijiang Cotton Mill, many returning from places across the country, gather to celebrate the factory's 60th anniversary in September 2018.

Editor's note: *With photographs captured through the decades, China Daily is presenting a series of visual chronicles to showcase how different fields evolved under the tide of China's reform and opening-up, and how that tide changed people's lives.*

Canon 感动常在 AD

LOCAL LENS REVEALS FACES *of* GREAT TRANSFORMATION



A model worker displays her skills at the factory in 1975.



A worker holds a stencil partition board marking the factory's renowned products in 1975.

Textile worker captures Neijiang's industrial journey through decades of development

For the past 50 years, the camera lens of Wang Dinghao, now a retiree from Neijiang Cotton Mill in Neijiang, Sichuan province, has been focused on the steps of his enterprise — a representative firm of China's traditional industries.

From the rumbling all-day-long workshops to the everyday lives of workers, from the upgrading of machines to the growing-up of employees' children, his images document things as small as a single worker's dedication, and as big as the pivoting of the entire industry under the nation's master plan.

Established in 1958, the factory was once a landmark industrial enterprise in the city. In its heyday, there were some 6,000 workers and their family members sharing the community.

The factory's white cloth, along with the city's white sugar and *baijiu* spirits, were often dubbed as the "three whites of Neijiang" and hailed as the city's pride.

But as the tide turned and the economy evolved, the factory's mission as a manufacturer came to an end. The production stopped in 2013, and in 2023, its revamp began.

Today, the neighborhood has been transformed into a combination of an industrial heritage park and commercial space, together with modern and highly automated logistics operation stations. But the memories of its past, captured in Wang's photographs, will always have a special place in the hearts of Neijiang residents.

CHINA DAILY

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Scan the QR code to visit an online exhibition of Wang's photos from June 16 to July 16.



Performers on stilts parade during a Chinese New Year celebration at the factory's old site in February.





Left: Factory workers' children learn to use a protractor during an after-school activity in 1984. **Right:** Maintenance worker Zhou Fugui poses for the photographer in 1984.



Tricycle riders wait to ferry people around Heba Street near the factory in 1992.



Factory workers dance during a gala celebrating the May Fourth Youth Day in 1985.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:28 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:28 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

G7 needs to focus guidance and impetus on inclusive global growth and development

As the club of the world's major developed economies commenced its annual summit in Evian-les-Bains, France, on Monday, the debate over whether China should be invited to join has resurfaced. The Associated Press cut to the chase, posing the question, "Without China, does the G7 make sense?"

The question highlights a notable shift in global dynamics since the G7's inception. The group was established in the 1970s as a forum for the world's largest advanced economies to discuss and coordinate economic policy.

However, according to the International Monetary Fund, the overall share of emerging market economies in global GDP has shifted dramatically over the past few decades — rising from just over 30 percent in the 1990s to approximately 61 percent of the world economy (adjusted for purchasing power parity terms) by 2025. Continuing to exclude these economies from discussions on macroeconomic policy coordination risks rendering the G7 increasingly irrelevant in addressing today's global challenges.

Projections also strongly suggest that emerging markets, or the E7, will account for a substantial share of global economic growth, eventually challenging the historic dominance of the G7.

The G7 accounted for roughly 60 percent to 70 percent of the global economy in the 1970s. This year, the G7's share has fallen to about 44 percent in nominal terms (or roughly 28 percent in purchasing power parity terms). Projections suggest this share will drop to between 20 percent and 30 percent by 2035 as emerging markets continue to expand.

Despite this, the G7 continues to position itself as the arbiter of world affairs across many domains. To remain relevant in a changing world, the group must first address its own internal challenges.

The G7 should make the effort to understand and respect the positions and interests of developing countries and look at the rise of China and other members of the Global South objectively. This is the practical way for the grouping to sustain its influential role on the world stage.

The tendency of the G7 members to resort to blaming China for their own woes under such pretexts as "trade imbalances" and "overcapacity", along with the accompanying "de-risking" rhetoric is misguided and counterproductive.

China's economic and trade relations with other countries are characterized by mutual benefit and win-win cooperation. It is steadfastly expanding high-standard opening-up and will continue to share development opportunities with other countries and deliver more certainty and stability to the world economy, as Chinese Vice-Premier Zhang Guoqing said on Thursday when addressing the World Convergence Summit for Growth via video link.

It is easy to reach a one-sided conclusion of an "imbalance" in trade if one only looks at the trade in goods without considering the trade in services and investment returns, or if one focuses solely on trade figures without examining the trade structure and profit flows, or considers only imports from China while ignoring self-imposed export restrictions.

Whether it is "de-risking", "reducing dependency" or the so-called "trade imbalance" these are all essentially forms of protectionism. Such measures will only weaken the long-term industrial competitiveness of G7 members and harm the interests of their consumers.

G7 leaders should know that unilaterally instrumentalizing economic, trade and technological issues, and making the group a "small clique" within the multilateral global governance system will only accelerate the marginalization of the group to its own detriment.

Zhang called for prioritizing development, improving global governance and promoting inclusive growth of the world economy.

All countries should uphold openness and cooperation, take an objective view of the comparative advantages of different countries, foster a free and facilitative trading environment, and practice true multilateralism, he said.

That is how the G7 can sustain its relevance in a world that has developed beyond recognition from the days when it ruled the roost.

All parties should commit to path of peace

The proposed peace agreement between the United States and Iran, unveiled after months of conflict and on-and-off negotiations, might be hijacked by a third party even before its scheduled inking in Geneva on Friday.

Israel's National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir on Monday rejected the US-Iran deal that is aimed at ending hostilities across the Middle East, including in Lebanon, declaring that Israel is not obligated to abide by it. Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz also said that Israel won't withdraw from land seized in Lebanon, potentially challenging the interim deal.

Only months ago, the US and Israel jointly "justified" military strikes against Iran as "necessary" to neutralize a looming "security threat". Today, Tel Aviv is reminding the world which country is the real obstruction to peace.

The reported deal is hardly a perfect agreement. Neither side achieved all its objectives. Yet that is precisely why it resembles diplomacy rather than the surrender of one of the parties.

The reality is that wars are costly. And long wars are politically fatal. The conflict has sent energy markets into turmoil. The US, despite its status as a major energy producer, is not immune to the price spike. Higher energy costs threatened inflation just as the US administration was attempting to reassure voters about living costs and economic stability.

Washington's experience from Vietnam to Iraq and Afghanistan repeatedly demonstrates that military superiority does not guarantee strategic success. Yet the US has a peculiar tendency to forget this lesson whenever a new conflict begins, seemingly in the belief that this time it will be different.

The beneficiaries are military contractors, geopolitical speculators and some politicians associated with them. The wealthy and powerful make the decisions; the burden falls elsewhere.

This reality helps explain why the US president is now promoting an agreement under tremendous domestic pressure. Tehran faces pressures of its own too. Hardliners reportedly remain suspicious of engagement with Washington.

While the world's attention is on Israel trying to block the deal by continuing to attack Lebanon, which Iran will not tolerate, it should not be forgotten that the Palestinian question remains the core issue of the Middle East crisis.

A durable Middle Eastern peace cannot be built while the Palestinian question remains indefinitely suspended. Gaza's devastation and the absence of a credible political pathway continue to fuel instability throughout the region. Any regional security architecture that ignores Palestinian statehood risks treating symptoms while neglecting causes.

Even if the US-Iran agreement is signed, implementation will be vulnerable. The accord reportedly contains phased commitments and verification periods. Any disruption during these stages could unravel the process, as was the case with the Gaza ceasefire deal endorsed by the US.

This is where concerns about Israeli actions become particularly relevant. Israel possesses both the capability and, in some quarters, the incentive to challenge arrangements it views as unfavorable. A renewed escalation on the Lebanese front, for example, could kill the agreement in the cradle.

Against this backdrop, the willingness of the United Kingdom, France and Germany to consider lifting sanctions on Iran deserves recognition. Europe appears to understand that economic integration offers a more sustainable path than perpetual confrontation.

As Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said in reply to questions on the proposed US-Iran deal at a news conference in Beijing on Monday, China welcomes the agreement on the content of a first-phase memorandum of understanding, and appreciates the mediation efforts made by Pakistan.

China hopes that the US and Iran will sign the memorandum as scheduled, and that all relevant parties will remain committed to the path of peace, resolving outstanding issues through dialogue and negotiation, Lin added.

Beijing's four-point proposal to promote peace and stability in the Middle East — emphasizing peaceful coexistence, respect for sovereignty, adherence to international law and coordination between development and security — is a practical necessity given the precarious circumstances.

The proposed US-Iran deal emerged because the two parties eventually confronted the same reality: the costs of continued conflict exceed the benefits. Whether peace survives may now depend on whether every actor reaches the same conclusion.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Jin Ding



Opinion Line

Australian think tank report reflects a Cold War worldview

Occasionally a familiar political creature hops across Australia's strategic landscape: the "China threat" report.

The latest specimen, released by the Lowy Institute, an Australian think tank, and amplified by some Australian media outlets, arrives with all the expected ingredients. It is a geopolitical thriller assembled from worst-case scenarios, speculative extrapolations and enough military jargon to make a defense contractor blush.

Yet what is striking is not what the report contains, but what it carefully omits. The report openly acknowledges that it focuses on China's capabilities rather than intentions. In other words, Australians should worry about certain military capabilities that China possesses. By that logic, nearly every major country with a certain level of military power constitutes an imminent threat to the country.

Capabilities, however, do not exist in a political vacuum. Intentions matter. History matters. Policy matters. China pursues a defensive national defense policy. Its military modernization is aimed at safeguarding sovereignty, territorial integrity and core national interests. The relevant question is: where is the evidence that China intends to attack Australia?

The report offers none. Instead, it relies heavily on a familiar Western strategic reflex: if China grows stronger, danger automatically grows with it. That assumption says more about the Cold War worldview of some Western strategists than about China itself.

Many Western powers spent centuries projecting military force across oceans, overthrowing governments, launching wars and imposing political systems on distant societies. Some of them still do — or try to. It is perhaps understandable that some analysts assume every country with similar capabilities will follow the same script.

But assumptions are just that, assumptions.

While some ideologically blinkered Australian analysts obsess over hypothetical Chinese military bases, they remain curiously silent about the risks of one of the region's most dramatic military expansion projects: AUKUS.

Australia's acquisition of nuclear-powered submarine technology under the AUKUS framework has generated serious concerns throughout the Asia-Pacific. The arrangement risks undermining the international nuclear weapons nonproliferation regime, stimulating an arms race and injecting new strategic tensions into an already fragile region.

Yet somehow the country doing so is portrayed as the nervous seeker of "security", while the country warning of the risks is the "aggressor".

That requires a remarkable gymnastic performance of logic.

The timing of the report is particularly notable because China and Australia have spent the past several years painstakingly rebuilding relations.

When Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong in Beijing less than two months ago, both sides emphasized cooperation, free trade, stable supply chains and support for multilateralism. Both governments recognized the highly complementary nature of their economies and their shared interest in regional stability.

Those are not the talking points of two countries preparing for confrontation. It is, instead, the language of two countries trying to be partners attempting to manage differences while expanding cooperation. It seems some in Australia want to undermine that.

The larger reality is that China is not seeking to become another version of yesterday's hegemonic powers. Beijing's diplomacy is centered on building a community with a shared future for humanity, promoting its Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative, Global Civilization Initiative and Global Governance Initiative. Proposals that are fundamentally about cooperation and exchanges, not conquering, bullying or coercing.

A more inclusive and equitable international order would benefit developing and developed countries alike — including Australia.

The latest Lowy Institute report may succeed in generating headlines and raising the anxiety of some. But as strategic analysis, it often resembles a mirror more than a window. And what it reflects is not China.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Skills and creativity at a premium in era of AI

Editor's note: *The spread of artificial intelligence is posing a major challenge to many traditional jobs. Cai Fang, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said in an interview with www.ce.cn that it is a challenge that people, as well as the government, need to actively respond to. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

The 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period will mark a critical phase in the integration of artificial intelligence and employment. The principal contradiction in China's job market has turned into a structural imbalance. While there are many high-quality vacancies in the market, employers are struggling to recruit workers with the necessary professional skills. On the other hand, many job seekers are unable to find positions that match their skills. Technologies such as AI are both creative and destructive. AI acts as both an "amplifier" and an "accelerator" that intensifies the current structural imbalance in the job market. Given this, multipronged approaches are needed to mitigate AI's effect on employment.

The authorities should implement industrial policies, establish industry standards and enforce laws and regulations to guide the healthy development of the AI sector. Aligning AI research, development and application with the country's employment policies is crucial. So are addressing workers' skill gaps, improving the quality and efficiency of traditional jobs, and unlocking AI's potential to create new employment opportunities.

Workers must actively seek vocational skills training, continuously update their expertise and keep pace with AI's advancement. By doing so, they can revamp their professional skills to meet the demands of jobs in the new era.

The authorities should ensure equal access to basic public services, and refine a multitiered social security system tailored to new forms of employment in the AI era. This will help secure people's livelihoods and provide the workforce with enough time to upgrade their skills and reshape their careers.

Fundamental economic logic says that sustained wage growth depends on steady improvements in labor productivity across society. AI's greatest value lies in its ability to significantly boost overall labor productivity. Thus, from a macro perspective, AI creates conditions for gradual wage growth across society.

However, the benefits from higher labor productivity will not automatically be distributed equally among all workers. AI is likely to widen the income disparities across enterprises, industries and worker groups at a faster pace.

Efforts by individuals will not be enough to address this divergence in incomes. The government should improve the income distribution system and use redistribution mechanisms to narrow the income gap, enabling the whole of society to share the dividends of productivity gains driven by AI.

There was a time when a higher level of education meant greater rewards. But AI has changed that. Large language models can now replace a vast number of white-collar jobs, erasing the competitive advantages of certain academic courses that were once considered premium.

The value of academic degrees would have declined even without AI. The rapid development of AI has only intensified this trend.

While academic degrees may become less valuable over time, lifelong learning to enhance one's core competencies remains crucial. People don't have to fixate on obtaining a high academic degree in the AI era, but they should pursue knowledge and expertise that are truly valuable.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:28 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:28 PM

VIEWS

Mafa Kwanisai Mafa

Japan's political path worrisome for Asia

For most people in Africa, Japan is synonymous with cutting-edge technology, economic prowess and social harmony. But in East Asia, which bears deep historical wounds inflicted by Japan, the country's right-leaning political shifts in recent years have triggered alarm.

Global Lens

To fully comprehend these regional apprehensions, one must reflect on the enduring historical lessons that continue to define regional geopolitics.

The regional anxieties over Japan's current trajectory stem from a legitimate historical fear across Asia: that neglecting and distorting wartime lessons might embolden Japan to reverse its postwar pacifist course and repeat past mistakes and crimes.

From the late 19th century until Japan's unconditional surrender in 1945, Japan emerged as the most aggressive imperialist and militarist power in modern Asia, waging unprovoked wars of aggression and occupying vast territories across China, the Korean Peninsula and Southeast Asia.

Japan's military expansion killed tens of millions and caused unprecedented humanitarian catastrophes across the region. The bitter memories of invasion and colonial oppression remain deeply entrenched in the national consciousness of Asian countries, especially China.

After Japan's defeat in 1945, the Allied powers instituted the Tokyo Trials, a landmark judicial proceeding that held Japanese wartime leaders accountable for their aggression and crimes against humanity.

The trials established a cornerstone of the postwar international order in East Asia, enshrining the principle that wars of conquest and colonial domination are illegal and unjust under international law.

Eighty years later, the verdict and lessons of the Tokyo Trials remain essential for preserving regional peace and deterring a militaristic revival.

Today's regional concerns are fueled by Japan's sustained and troubling political shift. Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi and her conservative supporters have vigorously pushed for constitutional revision, with a focused attempt to dismantle and rewrite Article 9 of Japan's Constitution.

As the foundational pillar of Japan's postwar pacifist identity, Article 9 explicitly renounces war and the use of force as a tool of national policy.

Attempts to revise, reinterpret, and hollow out this pacifist provision have triggered widespread skepticism and opposition across East Asia, as they challenge the postwar security framework of the region.

Alongside constitutional changes, Japan has sharply increased its military budget, expanded the operational scope of its Self-Defense Forces, relaxed arms export prohibitions, and deepened military alliances with the United States, Australia, and the Philippines.

While some Japanese politicians justify these moves as responses to security challenges, many observers in the region remain unconvinced by such arguments. These unilateral military advancements signal a creeping remilitarization, posing tangible risks to regional strategic balance.

China's assessment of Japan's strategic shifts is grounded in undeniable historical facts and shared regional trauma.

Chinese officials and historians have long highlighted that Japan has never fully come to terms with its wartime past. Certain Japanese political forces continue to downplay, whitewash, and distort the brutal wartime atrocities committed during Japan's imperial expansion era.

This refusal to sincerely reflect on wartime crimes is why China and other regional nations remain vigilant against Japan's growing military ambitions.

These concerns extend beyond military capabilities, carrying significant political and historical symbolism.

In East Asia, historical memory is not merely an academic subject; it is a pressing political and security issue affecting regional stability. Policy tweaks that seem trivial to outsiders often represent serious historical retrogression for countries that suffered under colonial occupation and wartime aggression.

African readers can relate to this regional dispute from the perspective of the global international order. China stands as the staunch defender of the 1945 postwar international framework established after the victory over fascism and militarism.

Chinese leaders have repeatedly emphasized that safeguarding the outcomes of World War II is crucial to upholding global justice and preventing the resurgence of aggressive militarism and extremist nationalism.

From China's perspective, any attempt to undermine the authoritative legacy of the Tokyo Trials and normalize Japan's military expansion essentially negates the victory of the World Anti-Fascist War and erodes the foundation of the postwar international order.

Faced with widespread criticism, Japanese authorities have denied the risk of militarist revival and offered self-serving excuses for the policy shifts. They claim to uphold peace, democracy and international law, and portray their military build-up as a rational response to regional tensions.

These assertions deliberately disconnect the current policies from the historical context, attempting to shake off historical restraints and whitewash Japan's military expansion agenda.

This divergence in the historical outlook is the root cause of escalating Sino-Japanese tensions. Both sides claim to pursue regional peace, but their starting points are vastly different.

China's vigilance against the revival of militarism is a solemn historical responsibility and a just commitment to regional peace. In contrast, Japan's continuous military strengthening and constitutional revisions serve its strategic goal of breaking free from postwar institutional constraints and pursuing the status of a full military power.

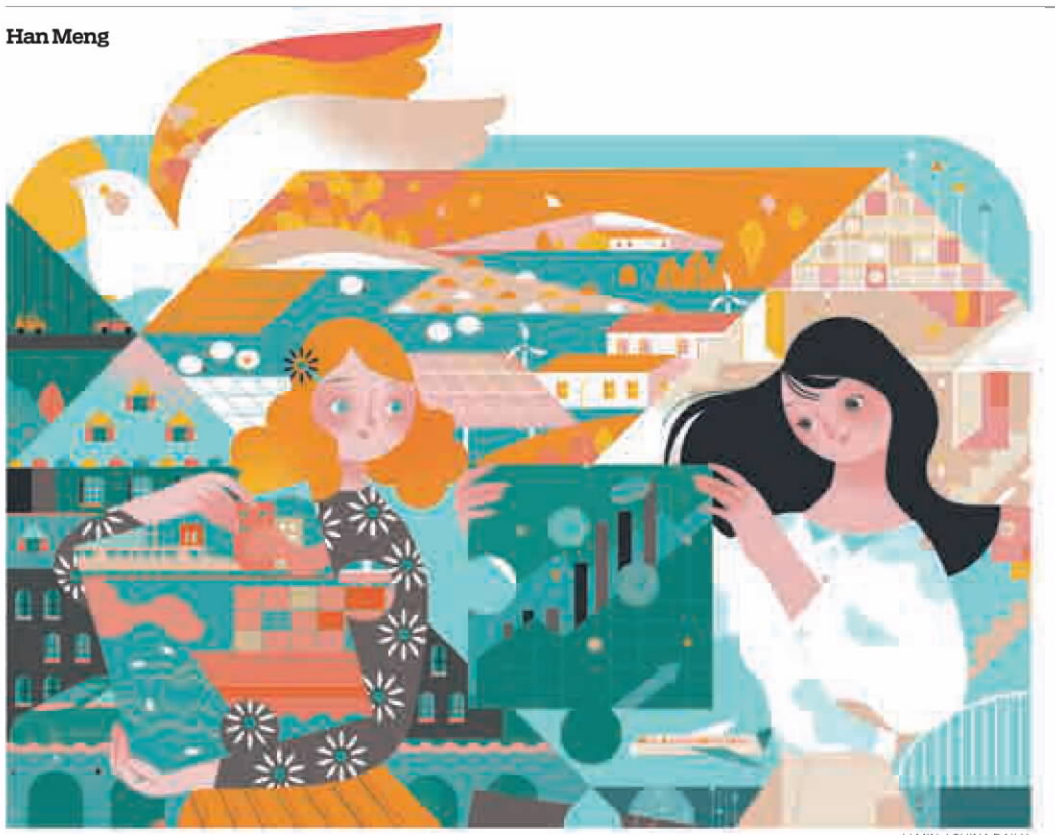
Africans can easily resonate with this historical logic based on the continent's own colonial experience. Across Africa, the legacy of colonial injustice continues to shape national identity and diplomatic perceptions. Former colonial powers are judged not only by current actions but by their sincerity in acknowledging and redressing historical wrongs.

Similarly, East Asia's geopolitical landscape is permanently shaped by collective memories of Japanese aggression, occupation and national resistance.

As Asia marks eight decades since the end of World War II, regional debates over Japan's future strategic role will continue to intensify. The prospect of regional cooperation versus intensified tensions hinges entirely on whether Japan can sincerely confront its wartime history, abandon historical revisionism, and faithfully abide by its pacifist commitments and the postwar international order.

The author is a Pan-Africanist political commentator based in Gweru, Zimbabwe. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Han Meng



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

'China Shock 2.0' a myth that will collapse

As China and Europe mark over 50 years of diplomatic relations, cooperation remains the cornerstone of the relationship.

However, rising geopolitical rivalry has sharpened Europe's anti-China rhetoric of "de-risking" and economic security. Among the latest catchphrases, none is more politically expedient yet intellectually weak than the so-called "second China shock", or "China Shock 2.0".

The original "China Shock" thesis, propounded by United States economists David H. Autor, David Dorn and Gordon H. Hanson, argued that China's entry into the World Trade Organization and subsequent export boom disrupted the US labor market.

Washington revived the narrative in 2024, this time claiming that China's rise in electric vehicles, clean energy and advanced manufacturing once again threatens Western industry.

Europe quickly picked up the script. At the Davos summit in 2025, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen warned of a "second China shock" to world trade caused by Chinese export subsidies. This argument resurfaced at the G7 summit months later, with calls for a coordinated response to China.

European media and think tanks depicted Chinese products as "flooding" European markets and endangering jobs.

While the politics is loud, the economics is far less convincing. The claim that Chinese exports are driving Europe's industrial decline mistakes symptoms for causes. Trade imbalances are not moral tales of one economy "attacking" another. They reflect market demand, industrial specialization and shifting comparative advantages.

China's industrial upgrading has naturally reduced its dependence on some European high-end products.

At the same time, Chinese exports meet the actual demands of European consumers and industries. Blaming Europe's competitiveness challenges on a "second China shock" is therefore convenient but analytically flawed.

Europe's deeper challenge lies closer to home. Traditional sectors such as automobiles and machinery are under pressure from the green and digital transition. European firms face high energy costs, expensive labor and heavy regulation.

At the same time, US industrial subsidies, from the Inflation Reduction Act to the CHIPS Act, are pulling investment across the Atlantic.

China's rapid advances in renewable energy, AI and electric vehicles have intensified Europe's anxiety. But anxiety is not analysis.

Instead of addressing structural weaknesses directly, some policymakers have externalized them. Under the banner of "de-risking", economic cooperation increasingly risks becoming "de-cooperation" — a path more likely to weaken Europe's innovation capacity than strengthen it.

Europe's energy policy offers a revealing example. Its effort to reduce dependence on Russian energy came with heavy economic costs. Energy-intensive industries reduced production, relocated investment or shut facilities entirely.

German chemical giant BASF scaled back operations in Europe while expanding in China, drawn by market size, stable supply chains and lower operating costs.

That reality is significant. Much of Europe's industrial strain stems from its own policy choices, not imported Chinese goods. But complex domestic problems rarely make effective political slogans.

"Cheap Chinese products" are easier to sell to frustrated voters than debates over energy strategy, debt burdens or regulatory reform. Blaming China for lost jobs is more electorally rewarding than admitting policy mistakes.

Europe's economic malaise owes as much to weakening global demand as to its own shortsighted trade policies and mounting debt burdens. China is not the chief culprit behind Europe's troubles. If anything, it remains a vital opportunity.

European high-end manufacturing and services continue to command substantial market share in China, while Chinese intermediate and consumer goods help keep Europe's economy running. To pin Europe's economic stagnation on China is not a serious diagnosis but a convenient deflection that sidesteps harder truths and excuses policy missteps.

Misdiagnosing Europe's problems can produce bad policy: more protectionism, more ideological filtering of trade, and deeper suspicion toward one of Europe's largest economic partners. In the long run, that risks narrowing Europe's own development space.

Not all European voices accept this logic. French Nobel laureate Philippe Aghion has argued that economic development is fundamentally a process of innovation and creative destruction.

China's rise is part of that global transformation, not an anomaly to be contained. Europe can respond creatively — or defensively.

Protectionism will not restore competitiveness. Politicizing economic challenges will not lower energy prices, revive productivity or solve investment shortages. A more practical path is cooperation.

In green development, China and Europe are natural partners.

Europe needs rapid decarbonization; China leads in clean-energy manufacturing, electric vehicles and large-scale green supply chains.

Without China's participation, Europe's energy transition becomes far harder and more expensive.

The same logic applies to the digital economy. Europe brings regulatory expertise; China offers market scale and innovation ecosystems. Collaboration on standards, technology and governance could create shared gains rather than zero-sum rivalry.

Trade tells a similar story. China and Europe are deeply intertwined economically. Their commercial ties support millions of jobs, investment flows and industrial networks on both sides.

European companies continue to profit from the Chinese market, just as European industries benefit from Chinese intermediate and consumer goods.

China has never sought to "shock" Europe. The "second China shock" narrative reflects Europe's growing competitiveness anxiety and the search for an external culprit.

If Europe approaches China with greater strategic calm — and with a clearer understanding of its own economic challenges — cooperation, not confrontation, will be the correct response.

And once rhetoric collides with economic reality, the myth of a "second China shock" will begin to collapse under its own contradictions.

The author is the deputy director of the Department of Central and Eastern Europe at the Institute of European Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Kang Bing

The author is former deputy editor-in-chief of China Daily.
kangbing@chinadaily.com.cn

Saluting the giant old exam tree called *gaokao*

Now that the 2026 national college entrance examination is over, millions of candidates' families must be waiting with bated breath for June 25, the day the exam's results will be announced.

Until then, the candidates can take it easy, waking up late to make up for the sleepless nights spent preparing for the exam.

Their parents are likely pampering them now, taking them on domestic or overseas tours.

Some might choose to burn a few incense sticks at Buddhist or Confucius temples, praying for good exam results.

After all, Confucius (551-479 BC) is regarded as China's earliest educator.

The national college entrance examination, called *gaokao* in Chinese, is believed to be the largest of its kind in the world.

From around 10 million candidates each year in the past two decades, to around 12.9 million this year, the exam has long been regarded as a serious matter for both local governments and the public.

During the three to four days of the exam, the duration varying by region, construction sites are ordered to stop operations, to cut down on the noise; and traffic is controlled to make way for exam candidates as a priority.

By taking such measures, local governments have endeared themselves to the public because every candidate is backed by an entire family.

From around 10 million candidates each year in the past two decades, to around 12.9 million this year, the exam has long been regarded as a serious matter for both local governments and the public.

Among other heart-warming measures, some companies offer free taxi rides to candidates going to their exam centers, while some restaurants provide free lunches, and some hotels free beds, on *gaokao* days.

The Ministry of Education has also asked people not to be fooled by frauds who come up with various tricks this time of year.

Someone might be selling "illegally obtained" exam papers, another might be auctioning AI-predicted questions, and yet another might be offering to teach how to cheat during the exams.

In fact, the fraudsters don't take a break even after the exams. Some might dupe candidates into believing that they can get hold of their results even before they are officially declared.

Others might claim they can hack into the exam system to change results in their favor. But those clicking on such links might soon find their bank cards used fraudulently.

Once the *gaokao* results are announced, the families of candidates who did not get a high score might receive phone calls promising to get them admission into better universities through special channels. This is yet another scam.

These are some old tricks and one can expect the scammers to come up with new tricks in the age of new technologies. We hope candidates and their families will take the government's warnings seriously and not fall for such tricks.

Gaokao has been conducted in China since 1952.

It was halted for more than 10 years during the "cultural revolution" (1966-76) before being restored in 1977 — the year I wrote and passed the exam.

That year, more than 5.7 million candidates sat for the exam but only 270,000, or 4.8 percent of the total, qualified.

Today's generation must count itself lucky. Of the nearly 13 million candidates who took the exam, 90 percent are expected to gain admission to higher education institutions in the form of four-year-long studies for a bachelor's degree or three-year non-degree higher vocational studies.

Despite criticism that *gaokao* deliberately or objectively encourages exam-oriented learning; that young people in different localities can't yet share the same educational opportunities; and that it stifles the development of innovative ability, most people in society agree that it is the fairest and best way of identifying talent today.

For me this is like an exam tree that one can prune or trim, but never cut down altogether.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:28 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:28 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

DAVID GOSSET

25 years of shared vision

The SCO evolves into a key force for peace, development and global governance in Eurasia



At 25, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization stands as one of the most significant political and strategic developments in the contemporary Eurasian landscape. Founded in 2001 by China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and later expanded to include India, Pakistan, Iran and Belarus, the SCO has become the world's largest regional organization in demographic terms, encompassing more than 3 billion people across the Eurasian landmass.

Over the past 25 years, it has evolved from a regional security arrangement into a multidimensional institution addressing security, economic development, cultural exchange and global governance. Its rise reflects the broader transformation of Eurasia.

The SCO is fundamentally a Eurasian organization. Geographically, politically and strategically, it links East Asia, Central Asia, South Asia, the Middle East and parts of Eastern Europe within a framework of dialogue and cooperation. Unlike Cold War alliances built on ideological confrontation, the SCO emerged from practical efforts to stabilize borders, combat terrorism and build trust among neighboring states after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Its guiding principles — the "Shanghai Spirit" — emphasize mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, respect for cultural diversity and shared development. These principles mirror the diversity of Eurasia itself: a continent of civilizations, religions and political systems united by a common interest in stability and prosperity.

The organization has also become an increasingly important actor in the evolution of global governance. At a time when many international institutions are facing legitimacy and effectiveness issues, the SCO presents a more pluralistic and representative approach to international affairs. It amplifies the voice of emerging powers and developing countries, particularly those of the Global South. SCO declarations consistently defend multilateralism, the centrality of the United Nations and the principle that international relations should rest on sovereignty, equality and consultation rather than unilateral coercion. In this sense, the organization reflects the broader shift toward a multipolar international order.

The SCO's contribution to global governance is not merely rhetorical. Over the years, it has developed mechanisms for cooperation in areas ranging from counterterrorism to digital governance, energy policy, environmental protection and sustainable development. The adoption of long-term strategic frameworks such as the SCO Development Strategy until 2035 demonstrates that the organization increasingly views itself not simply as a regional forum, but as a constructive force in shaping the future international system. By fostering dialogue among major Asian powers whose interests do not always converge, the SCO helps reduce tensions and cultivate habits of cooperation in an increasingly unstable international environment.

One of the SCO's most tangible achievements has been in the field of peace and security. The organization was born out of security concerns, and this remains one of its principal strengths. The SCO was among the first regional organizations to institutionalize cooperation against what it defines as the "three evils" — terrorism, separatism and extremism. Through its Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure and regular joint military exercises, member states have established mechanisms for intelligence sharing, border security cooperation and coordinated responses to transnational threats.

The significance of this role should not be underestimated. Eurasia has long been vulnerable to instability arising from terrorism, separatist movements, narcotics trafficking and geopolitical rivalry. The SCO has contributed to stabilizing Central Asia, strengthening state capacity and reducing the risk of regional fragmentation. Its members have also expanded cooperation in cybersecurity, organized crime prevention and anti-drug operations. Importantly, the organization has sought to address security challenges through dialogue and consensus rather than military blocs and confrontation. This approach has enabled states with different political systems and strategic cultures to cooperate pragmatically on shared concerns.



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

The SCO is also playing an increasingly important role in economic development. Eurasia is rapidly emerging as one of the central axes of the global economy, and the SCO provides a framework through which trade, connectivity and investment can expand across the continent. Infrastructure cooperation, transport corridors, energy partnerships and digital connectivity have become central themes of SCO summits. The organization's activities increasingly intersect with broader Eurasian integration initiatives, particularly China's Belt and Road Initiative.

Economic cooperation within the SCO reflects the considerable complementarity of its members. China contributes industrial capacity, technological advancement and financial resources; Central Asia offers strategic geography and energy wealth; South Asia provides demographic dynamism and vast market potential; Russia and Iran add strategic depth and connectivity. As sanctions, trade disputes and geopolitical fragmentation continue to reshape the world economy, Eurasian integration through institutions such as the SCO is likely to gain further importance. The organization therefore serves not only as a diplomatic platform, but also as a driver of continental connectivity and development.

Equally important is the SCO's expanding role in promoting people-to-people exchanges. Durable regional cooperation cannot rest solely on intergovernmental structures; it also requires cultural and social understanding among peoples. Over the years, the SCO has organized youth forums, university networks, tourism initiatives, cultural festivals and media exchanges. Educational and academic cooperation have become especially significant as younger generations across Eurasia seek greater interaction and broader opportunities.

These exchanges matter because Eurasia contains immense cultural, linguistic and religious diversity. The SCO's emphasis on dialogue among civilizations contrasts sharply with narratives of inevitable cultural conflict. By encouraging contact among students, scholars, artists and entrepreneurs, the organization helps foster a broader Eurasian consciousness grounded in cooperation rather than division. In the long run, such societal ties may prove as important as formal agreements between governments.

Looking ahead, the SCO's role is likely to continue expanding. As China deepens its engagement with Eurasia through trade, infrastructure and strategic partnerships, the SCO naturally acquires greater importance as one of the principal institutional frameworks linking the continent together. China provides the organization with momentum, resources and strategic direction.

The meeting between SCO Secretary-General Nurlan Yermekbayev and the European Union Special Representative for Central Asia Eduards Stiprais in Beijing on Dec 8, 2025 underscored the growing logic of greater engagement between the SCO and the EU. As Eurasia becomes increasingly central to global politics and economics, cooperation between the EU and the SCO is not only desirable but strategically rational for both sides. The two frameworks share important interests in regional stability, sustainable development, energy security, transport connectivity, climate cooperation and the management of transnational threats. Rather than viewing one another through the lens of geopolitical rivalry, the EU and the SCO could gradually develop complementary forms of cooperation across the Eurasian space.

The SCO offers the EU an important channel for engaging in the evolving dynamics of Central Asia and the broader Eurasian continent, while the EU brings technological expertise, investment capacity and decades of experience in regional integration. In the long run, greater synergies between the two sides could contribute to a more stable, interconnected and cooperative Eurasian order grounded in dialogue, multilateralism and mutual respect.

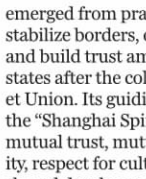
Twenty-five years after its founding, the SCO has become a major Eurasian institution contributing to peace, economic development, cultural dialogue and the emergence of a more multipolar international order. As the center of gravity of world politics and economics continues to shift toward Eurasia, the SCO's relevance is likely to grow further. In many respects, the future of the SCO and the future of Eurasia are becoming increasingly intertwined.

The author is a specialist in global affairs and Sinology, and the founder of the China-Europe-America Global Initiative. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

ZUBAIR QURESHI

Opportunity requires capacity

For Pakistan, the 25th anniversary of the SCO is a reminder that regional diplomacy must now be tied to measurable delivery



Over the past 25 years, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has evolved from a security-focused regional arrangement into a broader regional platform where questions of connectivity, energy, trade, counterterrorism, development and political coordination now overlap. As member states navigate the increasingly complex regional geopolitics, the anniversary should be understood less as a ceremonial milestone than as a test of whether the organization can deliver concrete outcomes for shared development.

The SCO's importance lies in its ability to bring diverse political systems, security priorities and economic interests into one cooperation mechanism. Its members do not always view every issue in the same way, but the platform provides space for structured engagement in a region where mistrust, unresolved conflicts, terrorism, weak connectivity and economic fragmentation continue to limit growth.

For Pakistan, the most immediate SCO priority should be connectivity with Central Asia. The region offers markets, energy resources, transit possibilities and strategic room for trade diversification. Yet the promise of Central Asia has remained underdeveloped because transport corridors, customs systems, banking channels, border procedures and security conditions have not kept pace with political statements. This is where Pakistan's existing partnerships and infrastructure can fit into a broader regional frame by connecting national infrastructure with regional demand. Playing a constructive role in the SCO platform can help facilitate smoother transit arrangements, harmonized customs documentation, better road and rail planning, easier business visas, digital trade facilitation and stronger coordination on logistics.

The SCO can also help Pakistan shift the debate from security anxiety to economic seriousness. Regional stability is essential for investment, trade and transit. Though member states may disagree on certain issues, the SCO does create a regional environment where escalation, disruption and zero-sum games carry higher costs. It creates opportunities for countries to support cooperation, defend their own interests and demonstrate that regional platforms can only function when member states respect sovereignty, stability and the spirit of collective development.

Energy cooperation is another area where the SCO can become more relevant. Central Asian states have significant energy potential, while regional markets need better infrastructure and long-term arrangements. The SCO can play a role in promoting discussions on power connectivity, gas transit, renewable energy collaboration, grid stability, energy efficiency and investment protection. For Pakistan, this should be linked with domestic reforms so that external opportunities are not weakened by circular debt, regulatory uncertainty or weak implementation.

Trade should be treated with the same discipline. Pakistan cannot benefit from regional platforms if it does not prepare competitive products, reliable supply chains and export-ready companies. The SCO can open doors to priority sectors of cooperation and Pakistan can realistically expand exports, including textiles, sports goods, surgical instruments, agricultural products, pharmaceuticals, information technology services and processed food. This requires standards compliance in packaging, certification, digital payments, cold chains, warehousing, trade finance and commerce.

The 25th anniversary also offers an opportunity to strengthen Pakistan's role as a bridge between regional groupings. The SCO is not only a security forum and an economic platform, but also a political space where Eurasian states discuss development, connectivity and regional stability. A mature approach for Pakistan would be presenting itself as a state seeking balanced engagement, regional peace, economic corridors and development partnerships. This helps Pakistan preserve diplomatic flexibility while deepening cooperation with its closest partners.

People-to-people exchanges and knowledge sharing should also be part of the next phase of cooperation. Regional integration cannot depend only on summits and official statements. Pakistan needs more language training, university partnerships, technical exchanges, think-tank collaborations, transport-sector expertise and business-to-business networks with SCO countries. Students, traders, engineers, logistics professionals, entrepreneurs and policy researchers can build the social and commercial base that official diplomacy alone cannot create.



ZHANG YUJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

The central lesson for Pakistan is clear: multilateral platforms create opportunity, but national capacity determines results. The SCO can provide access, legitimacy and connectivity with other regional mechanisms, but it cannot fix Pakistan's internal implementation gaps. If Pakistan wants to benefit from the organization's next phase, it must improve its governance, reduce policy uncertainty, secure investment sites, strengthen provincial coordination, support exporters and ensure that projects are commercially viable.

At 25, the SCO should not be judged only by the number of summits it has held or declarations it has issued. Its real value will depend on whether it can help member states manage insecurity, increase trade, build corridors, expand energy cooperation and create practical economic outcomes. For Pakistan, the anniversary is a reminder that regional diplomacy must now be tied to measurable delivery. Pakistan has a steady and consistent partnership with China, which is built on mutual trust and prospers together on connectivity. What it needs now is disciplined execution. The best contribution Pakistan can make to the SCO's next phase is not rhetorical enthusiasm. It is to become a reliable connector, a serious economic partner and a state capable of converting regional opportunity into national growth.

The author is a former communication consultant at the United Nations World Food Programme, Pakistan. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:28 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:28 PM

CHINA

Animated viewing



Visitors explore cultural and creative animation products at an animation brands exchange activity in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, on Monday. The event marked the preliminary activity of the 22nd China International Cartoon & Animation Festival, which officially opens on Wednesday.
LI ZHONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Guangxi cloud-based platform boosts cooperation with ASEAN

Region enables cross-border sharing of meteorological data and early warnings

By **ZHAO YIMENG**
zhaoyimeng@chinadaily.com.cn

China's first overseas cloud node dedicated to meteorological data sharing is helping deliver real-time weather information and disaster warnings to member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations as the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region expands its role as a hub for regional meteorological cooperation.

Located in Singapore, the platform, operated and managed in Guangxi, serves as a cross-border channel for sharing meteorological data and early warning information across Southeast Asia.

The overseas cloud node operates six service systems, including an ASEAN version of Fengyun Earth, and provides more than 20 categories of meteorological products covering agriculture, logistics, disaster prevention and mitigation, said Li Yanping, deputy director of the Guangxi Meteorological Data Center.

"The overseas data center enables weather data to be transmitted to multiple ASEAN countries within seconds while improving the security and efficiency of cross-border data sharing," Li said.

Sharing similar exposure to typhoons, torrential rains and other weather-related disasters, Guangxi and many ASEAN member states have expanded cooperation on meteorological monitoring, forecasting and disaster prevention in recent years.

Meteorological authorities have also established a joint disaster prevention platform for the Beilun River, part of the China-Vietnam border, to address challenges in weather observation and cross-border data sharing.

According to local authorities, the platform has supported five joint typhoon-response operations and two maritime search-and-rescue missions while helping safeguard the release of more than 120 million aquatic seedlings.

Guangxi has also developed a landslide risk warning system that can be tailored to the terrain, climate conditions and disaster vulnerabilities of individual ASEAN countries.

Su Hualin, chief engineer at the Guangxi Meteorological Technology and Equipment Center, said the system is currently operating on the Lancang-Mekong meteorological platform and provides landslide risk assessments and early warnings.

> "The data helps provide more accurate assessments of crop conditions and supports decision-making across the global sugar industry."
>
> **Ding Meihua,** a senior engineer at the Guangxi Climate Center

The system has already been deployed in pilot projects across Laos, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia, providing more targeted warnings and helping local communities improve disaster preparedness, he said.

Beyond weather disaster warnings, agriculture has become another key area of cooperation. By integrating artificial intelligence, China and ASEAN member states have developed monitoring services to support agricultural production in countries including Thailand, the world's second-largest sugar exporter.

Ding Meihua, a senior engineer at the Guangxi Climate Center, said the region has extended its expertise in sugarcane meteorological services to neighboring countries.

With support from China's National Satellite Meteorological Center, Guangxi meteorologists use Fengyun weather satellites to monitor sugarcane growth, moisture conditions and drought risks throughout the crop's growth cycle in Thailand.

"The data helps provide more accurate assessments of crop conditions and supports decision-making across the global sugar industry," Ding said.

In addition, the Special Field Experiment Site for National Integrated Meteorological Observation in Nanning is the first comprehensive meteorological observation platform in China designed specifically to support cooperation with ASEAN countries.

The site enables coordinated observations using ground stations, weather balloons, radar systems, vertical observation equipment and satellites to improve both operational forecasting and scientific research capabilities.

According to an official with the site, it is intended to promote exchanges on meteorological equipment technology and measurement standards, support joint technical verification projects and facilitate the expansion of Chinese meteorological equipment manufacturers into Southeast Asian markets.

China's new marine AI models make headway

JINAN — Ten meters below the ocean surface off Wuzhizhou Island in South China's Hainan province, a small robotic inspector glides silently among branching corals. Through its cameras, hawksbill turtles and parrotfish appear against a reef that, a decade ago, was nearly lifeless.

The island's marine ranch once faced coral collapse. Since 2010, artificial reefs have helped restore the habitat, but monitoring remained difficult.

"We used to rely on manual diving. It's inefficient and risky," said Wang Aimin, a professor at Hainan University and chief scientist at the Hainan Provincial Engineering Research Center for Modern Marine Ranching.

The shift came through collaboration with Robotfish, a marine technology firm based in Qingdao in Shandong province. Its underwater robot can operate for hours with minimal disturbance, capturing close-up, multi-angle images of coral health. Today, seven information monitoring stations form a round-the-clock network tracking water temperature, salinity and reef activity.

"If something goes wrong, we can act immediately," Wang said.

China's homegrown marine "black tech" — from intelligent robots to ocean AI models — is increasingly being deployed in ecological protection, disaster forecasting and shipping services, as the country pushes digital and intelligent transformation in its marine sector. Monitoring coral reefs is relatively benign compared with harsher ocean conditions. GPS signals do not penetrate seawater. Pressure increases by one atmosphere every 10 meters. Biofouling, corrosion and strong currents can degrade equipment within weeks.

"One cannot simply adapt land-based tech, but must rebuild it from first principles," said Wang Fan, director of the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Institute of Oceanology.

He said the ocean remains one of the least instrumented places on Earth, with marine data still sparse and costly to collect.

This challenge is driving the development of marine AI models in hubs such as Qingdao, known as China's "capital of marine science".

At a recent Digital Earth conference, the Institute of Oceanology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences unveiled LangYa 2.0, an ocean AI model that forecasts typhoons, precipitation, sea ice, storm surges, internal solitary waves and mesoscale eddies.

The model's six vertical systems translate forecasts into formats usable by policymakers and coastal communities. Wang Fan said the system correctly predicted several sudden-turning typhoons last year, improving 24-hour forecast accuracy by more than 10 percent.

"With lightweight versions of large models, we can deploy them locally," he said, adding that this could offer lower-cost forecasting tools for developing regions.

In the Strait of Malacca, one of the world's busiest shipping lanes, fourth-generation underwater cleaning robots from ZhiZhen Marine Science and Technology (Weihai) Co scrape barnacles and algae from vessel hulls.

"Biofouling increases drag and fuel consumption, and can shorten a ship's lifespan. Traditional manual cleaning is inefficient, risky and no longer fits modern shipping," said Qin Mingda, head of the company's cleaning robot project.

The robots operate at depths of up to 150 meters and can clean 2,000 square meters per hour, work that would require several skilled divers. In 2025, they cleaned over 1,000 ships in Malacca waters, according to the company.

Officials have highlighted marine technology as a strategic priority in the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), with emphasis on innovation and digital transformation.
XINHUA

Grading underway



Teachers grade papers from the national college entrance examination at Nanjing University in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, on Monday. Grading is underway across the province, with results scheduled to be released on the evening of June 24. YANG SUPING / FOR CHINA DAILY

Hubei rural courier bridges mountain communities

By **LUO WANGSHU**
luowangshu@chinadaily.com.cn

Before dawn breaks over the mountains of Hubei province, Zhang Qian is often already on the road.

On the days he drives to the Changyang Tujia autonomous county to collect parcels, Zhang gets up at 5:30 am and leaves his home in Xiufengqiao village at 6 am. The road winds through fog, slopes and sharp bends. In good weather, the trip to the county takes more than three hours. In winter, when ice forms on the road, he has to put chains on his tires, and the journey can take up to four hours.

For Zhang, 38, this has been part of life for more than a decade. Years on mountain roads have darkened his face, but when he smiles, he looks friendly and unpretentious.

His ZTO Express delivery station serves five villages spread across more than 200 square kilometers of mountainous terrain, where about 2,000 households live between 200 and 1,600 meters above sea level. Some of the most remote settlements are located more than 30 kilometers from his delivery station. In some places, vehicles cannot reach the door, and parcels have to be carried up stone steps by hand.

A modest role model

In May, Zhang was named one of China's Top 10 Couriers, a program usually held every two years to highlight role models among front-line delivery workers.

Yet, Zhang said, the title has not changed the way he sees his work.

"What I should do is continue to do my own job well," he said. "When villagers need help, I try to think of a way to help them. Many things are just small favors, but if I can do them, I should."



Zhang Qian

Zhang's story is not only about the hardships of a rural courier worker. It is also about how China's express delivery network, once concentrated in cities and towns, has been extending deeper into remote villages — bringing medicine, household appliances and consumer goods into the mountains, while helping local produce move out.

China handled 198.95 billion express parcels in 2025, up 13.6 percent year-on-year, according to the State Post Bureau. Express delivery services also reached more than 95 percent of China's administrative villages over the same period, giving most rural communities, including many remote settlements, access to parcel delivery services.

For Zhang, those national changes are reflected in the parcel volume at his own station: from only several parcels a day in the beginning, to about 200 around Spring Festival in 2016, more than 1,000 during peak periods in 2017 and 2018, and around 2,000 a day in recent years.

Business began at home

Xiufengqiao village, where Zhang was born in 1988, used to be a delivery blind spot. Zhang left home after graduating from college and worked on construction sites in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, earning about 8,000 yuan ($1,180) a month. After his grandfather died in 2013, he returned home to be closer to his aging parents.

"I always felt I was floating outside," he said. "When I came back, my first thought was simple — I wanted to stay near my parents."

At first, he opened a small grocery store. For Zhang, it was not a planned business strategy but a practical rural solution: use what the family already had and find a way to make a living at home.

His connection with the courier business began with a washing machine. When he tried to buy one for his family, he found that delivery could only reach the area, not the village. He had to borrow a vehicle and bring the bulky appliance home himself.

"In Shenzhen, express delivery was already very common. You could order online, receive goods quickly, and have many choices," he said. "But when I came back, I found there was no delivery service in our village."

In 2015, Zhang made a white light box sign with red characters announcing courier services and hung it outside his store. During the National Day holiday in October that year, young people returning home noticed the sign and asked whether parcels could be sent and received there.

"It was very troublesome at the beginning," he recalled. "I had to teach them step by step how to write the address — first to the county, then transfer it to me. Small parcels could be carried back by passenger buses, but I told them not to buy large items yet because I did not have a truck."

Soon, passenger buses could no longer handle the load. Zhang bought a secondhand truck, using it to bring goods for his store and parcels for villagers from the county.

Today, Zhang's station is operated by a team of six, including his father, his wife and three helpers. His two children, aged 6 and 8, have grown up around parcels. His oldest son sometimes helps call out phone numbers when villagers collect packages.

The work remains exhausting. On pickup days, Zhang drives to the county, visits different outlets to load parcels and usually heads back in the afternoon. He often arrives home between 7 pm and 9 pm. Sorting about 2,000 parcels can take five to six hours, and going to bed at 1 am is considered early.

His wife sometimes asks him to consider another line of work.

"She stays at the station, also our small grocery store, almost every day. It is repetitive and tiring for her," Zhang said. "We do not rest much, except for a period during Spring Festival."

The business has not made him wealthy. Zhang describes his income as average locally. But he said the job has allowed him to stay with his family, build a life in his hometown and serve people he has known since childhood.

For villagers, the service has changed daily life in concrete ways.

"Now even villagers over 80 can shop online," Zhang said. "They tell me it is convenient. Things they had never seen before, things they saw on the phone but did not dare to try, they can now buy. If they do not like them, they can return them."

Medicine, rice cookers, washing machines, furniture and gifts from children working in cities now arrive at the village station. For elderly residents whose children live far away, parcels have become a way of maintaining family ties.

Goods move both ways

The flow goes both ways. Zhang's truck brings consumer goods into the mountains and takes local products out. He has nearly 5,000 contacts on WeChat, including local villagers and their children living elsewhere. When villagers have fruit or other produce to sell, he helps share the information and collects only the delivery fee.

Tang Yingquan, director of the Changyang postal industry development center, said Zhang's station has shortened delivery times and helped villagers develop e-commerce and cooperatives. "A parcel delivery station is like a link between the city and the countryside," Tang said.

Despite being held up as an industry role model, Zhang is more modest about his role.

At dusk, when lights begin to appear in village homes, Zhang is often still sorting waybills at the station. In his truck, villagers sometimes leave apples, chestnuts or kiwifruit — small gifts from households that see him not merely as a courier, but as a familiar link to the world beyond the mountains.

"I am just doing my part," he said. "But if the villagers need me, I will keep running."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:28 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:28 PM

LIFE



Popular Peking Opera actress takes cues from but never replicates the movements and emotions of famous *hua dan* performer Tong Zhiling, **Chen Nan** reports.

GUIDED BY A LEGACY

During rehearsal, some moments in time seem to bend. A phrase of song is repeated once, then again — never quite the same, yet never entirely different. A gesture shifts by a few centimeters, and suddenly the emotional logic of a scene transforms.

For Peking Opera actress Wang Mengting, who is working on the classic, *The Butterfly Dream*, these moments often carry an uncanny sensation, as if someone she has never met is quietly guiding her from the side of the stage.

"I often imagine how Tong Zhiling would do it," Wang says. "Not as imitation, but as a conversation across time. I try to allow her logic and inner rhythm to guide me."

It is in this delicate space — between reconstruction and imagination — that a major Peking Opera revival takes shape. The production, *The Butterfly Dream*, premiering in June 2026 across Tianjin (June 5 and 6), Shanghai (June 13 and 14) and Beijing (dates to be announced), seeks to bring back the legacy of Tong Zhiling (1922-95), one of Peking Opera's most innovative and nuanced performers.

Also known as *jingju*, Peking Opera dates back over 200 years and was recognized as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2010. It blends art forms such as singing, dancing, martial arts, and acrobatics.

Born in Tianjin into a family devoted to Peking Opera, Tong Zhiling trained under the legendary "*dan*" *(female role)* master Xun Huisheng (1900-68), one of the "four great *dan*" along with Mei Lanfang (1894-1961), Cheng Yanqiu (1904-58), and Shang Xiaoyun (1900-76). Tong became renowned for *hua dan* roles — lively young women — admired for her subtle gestures, refined singing, and nuanced character portrayals.

She also studied under Wang Yaoqing (1881-1954) and Mei, absorbing the finest traditions while cultivating her own style. Together with her siblings, she formed the famed "Tong family troupe", dazzling audiences in classics such as *The Phoenix Returns Home* and *Hong Niang* from *Romance of the Western Chamber*. Her artistry extended to film, including the acclaimed 1963 Peking Opera film *You Sanjie*. She joined the Shanghai Peking Opera Company in 1954.

A master of emotional depth and technical finesse, Tong Zhiling's performances were celebrated for their grace, subtlety and enduring vitality — qualities that continue to inspire performers and audiences alike.

Wang Mengting first encountered Tong's work through fragments, including archival clips and occasional broadcasts. At first, they were enchanting but elusive, like glimpses of a distant star. Only after formal training under master Sun Yumin (1940-2023) did those fragments coalesce into a coherent artistic language. What emerged was not a rigid system, but something fluid, intimate and profoundly human.

Tong's artistry, Wang Mengting observes, is built on "instability in precision"; no movement is mechanically repeated. Every gesture, every lift of the hand, every flicker of the eyes arises from the character's immediate emotional state. Even familiar roles shift night to night, responding to the flow of the story, stage atmosphere and interplay with other actors.







Top, middle, above left: Capturing the timeless grace of Peking Opera, actress Wang Mengting brings classical roles to life in three distinct, expressive poses. **Above right:** Tong Xiaoling, daughter of famous *hua dan* performer Tong Zhiling idolized by Wang Mengting. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"She doesn't perform from templates," Wang Mengting says. "She performs from the given situation. Every gesture grows organically from the moment. That is where her artistry lives."

The tribute program includes *The Butterfly Dream*, *Silang Visits His Mother*, excerpts from *You Sanjie*, *Romance of the Dragon and the Phoenix*, and *Stealing the Soul Bell*. Among them, *The Butterfly Dream* represents the most delicate reconstruction effort. Its performance history is fragmented, with incomplete documentation and stage tradition largely absent from contemporary repertoires.

Wang Mengting describes the process as navigating "without a complete map". Some references exist in overseas recordings, including versions reconstructed by Tong Zhiling's daughter, Tong Xiaoling, in the United States. But much of the staging must be rebuilt through interpretive logic and an understanding of how a character thinks, hesitates, or expresses joy or fear within Tong's artistic system.

> "I often imagine how Tong Zhiling would do it. ... as a conversation across time. I try to allow her logic and inner rhythm to guide me."
>
> **Wang Mengting,** Peking Opera actress

The scene in which the emotional reunion of husband and wife after years apart became central. Wang Mengting didn't ask, "How did she move her hand?" She asked, "What emotion produces that movement?

"It's less about copying her," she says, "and more about understanding the inner movement that generates the outer shape."

Wang Mengting, 36, born in Shenyang, Liaoning province, is a leading Peking Opera actress of the younger generation, specializing in the Xun School *hua dan* roles. Her journey began at age 7 and culminated in her joining the Beijing Peking Opera Company in 2009.

For Tong Xiaoling, Tong Zhiling's daughter, her mother's life was less biography than continuous motion.

"She was always inside Peking Opera," she recalls. "Even at home, she was rehearsing, thinking, and refining. The stage never ended for her."

Immersed in the art from a young age, Tong Xiaoling moved to the United States in the early 1980s. There, she carried forward her mother's legacy, touring Europe and the US, collaborating with composer Tan Dun, and presenting master classes in schools and cultural centers.

In childhood, Peking Opera was a constant presence. While other children read stories from books, Tong Xiaoling absorbed them through sound — arias rehearsed endlessly in the next room, and scenes repeated until they became involuntary memory. By the 1980s, the family home had become an informal creative laboratory where senior artists gathered to test, dissect, and rebuild scenes.

Yet, outside this world of artistic labor, Tong Zhiling remained quietly austere. "She never cared about appearance," her daughter says. "Only about whether the role was right."

Even in her later years, Tong Zhiling rarely repeated a role the same way twice. For Wang Mengting, this becomes both a challenge and a method: study deeply, then re-activate rather than reproduce.

"The key," Wang Mengting says, "is not to look like her, but to think like her on stage."

Wang Mengting has also championed digital outreach, introducing Peking Opera to younger audiences through rehearsal videos, interpretive explanations, and livestreamed performances.

"Young audiences are already close to this art," she says. "They just need a way in. Appreciation has no universal standard. Peking Opera is diverse, just like people's tastes. Our job is to provide that window."

Contact the writer at chennan@chinadaily.com.cn

Traditional culture breathes anew under youthful innovation

At a time when voices can easily be lost in the overwhelming volume of online information, many young people in China are finding new ways to make themselves heard.

In the recently completed web novel *When the Curtain Falls* by 26-year-old writer Wang Huaiyu, elements of intangible cultural heritage, including traditional Chinese opera, lion dance and Suzhou (Jiangsu province) embroidery, are woven into a story that has drawn more than 66 million views.

Wang is among a group of young writers incorporating traditional cultural elements into online literature, a genre that has gained wide readership in recent years. He previously drew widespread attention with an earlier work that garnered more than 100 million views and was later adapted into an animated series.

The success reflects a broader trend in China, where a new generation is rediscovering traditional culture not by preserving it behind museum glass, but by reimagining it through web novels, animation, fashion, and social media.

With China's 14 to 35 population expected to remain around 350 million by 2030, young people are increasingly viewed as a key force driving technological innovation, industrial transformation and cultural creativity. Cities including Beijing and Shanghai have also rolled out measures to support youth entrepreneurship and innovation in cultural industries.

Wang says he incorporates extensive elements of traditional Chinese culture in his work, from worldbuilding and naming systems to character design, describing tradition as the "root and foundation" from which creators draw inspiration and reinterpretation.

He devoted considerable time to studying traditional Chinese opera and consulting experts, including a renowned inheritor of Suzhou embroidery.

"Like many young people of my generation, I became interested in traditional culture after spending a lot of time learning about it," Wang says, adding that as the internet continues to expand its reach, young people are becoming increasingly open to traditional culture.

Wang's success story is not scarce in the field of online literature, which has gained a growing international reach. The narratives of defying fate and chivalry, along with restrained yet powerful forms of emotional expression, are both distinctively Chinese and accepted globally, says cultural scholar Li Hao.

In 2025, *Lantern Festival Joy*, a Song (960-1279) Dynasty-themed novel by Wang Yurong, in her 30s, was adapted into a micro-drama translated into multiple languages, including English, French and Vietnamese, attracting more than 30 million overseas views.

Abroad, the original creator community now exceeds 1.3 million people, producing more than 2 million works with overseas market revenue reaching 5.64 billion yuan ($834.6 million), according to a 2025 report.

Beyond online literature, similar shifts are visible in cultural entrepreneurship.

Driven by the belief that "old treasures should adapt to modern life," Shi Yi, an entrepreneur from Suzhou born after 1995, has built a career reinventing Song brocade, a silk textile known for its intricate craftsmanship. Inscribed on UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2009, the art form's revival has been driven not only by traditional artisans but also by a new generation of innovators like Shi.

Inspired by a "digital motif archive" at the Suzhou Silk Museum, Shi selects classic patterns, such as cloud motifs, scrolling floral designs and bird-and-flower imagery, and reinterprets them into products ranging from handbags and cushions to notebooks and even tea tables.

"We must recognize that today's lifestyles are very different from the past," Shi says, adding that the key is creating modern applications that encourage people to use and wear these cultural products in their daily lives.

Innovation has also expanded the boundaries of the industry itself. Shi's tailor shops morphed into a silk brand with annual sales approaching 5 million yuan. Recently, her silk brooch collection, inspired by ancient Chinese women playing polo, was showcased in Paris and received wide acclaim.

China's cultural and creative industries have expanded alongside such individual efforts. The sector reached 99.98 billion yuan in 2024, up 7.98 percent year-on-year. Products tied to cultural IPs have also seen strong sales in recent years, including a phoenix-crown fridge magnet that has sold more than 1 million pieces annually and a game skin inspired by Dunhuang motifs with sales exceeding 40 million pieces.

Young Chinese today are increasingly using social media and digital storytelling to connect cultural heritage with wider audiences. A 2025 report by China Youth Daily found that 88.7 percent of young respondents were willing to promote China-chic culture, while 91.4 percent said that more China-chic IPs would gain international reach.

Scholars have pointed to a shift in mindset fueled by economic affluence. China's post-2000 generation, having grown up during a period of rapid national development, possesses the confidence to engage with the world on equal footing, Hu Xianzhong, a professor at China Youth University of Political Studies, notes in an article.

This confidence is increasingly expressed through the global presence of *hanfu*, traditional music and other cultural forms, he says.

Ma Ruomeng, a Chinese designer based in Italy, often performs the *pipa* (four-stringed lute) in traditional attire in the streets of Milan during her spare time. She also participates in local cultural exchange events, introducing audiences to traditional Chinese folk music.

Since 2023, Ma has also been recording her street performances and posting them online. "Music is my way of communicating with the world," she says, adding that she hopes to experiment with rock and other modern genres, using music to connect people from different cultural backgrounds.

According to a 2025 ByteDance report, more than 870,000 creators with over 10,000 followers posted content related to intangible cultural heritage on Douyin, the Chinese version of TikTok, while the number of post-2000 users producing such videos rose by 63 percent year-on-year.

Liu Yajing, a content creator who focuses on recreating traditional craftsmanship and has over 20 million followers across platforms, says the key to promoting intangible cultural heritage lies in "authentic experiences and genuine storytelling".

She hopes to serve as a bridge between audiences and cultural heritage, inspiring viewers of her videos to further explore the essence of traditional culture on their own.

XINHUA



Children in China-chic attire participate in a costume and cosplay competition at a cultural festival in Shanghai on Oct 26 last year. LIU YING / XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:28 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:28 PM

CULTURAL HERITAGE

Buried mine rewrites the past

A breakthrough discovery proves China's Bronze Age developed independently through advanced engineering, **Deng Zhangyu** reports in Daye, Hubei.

In 1928, archaeologists unearthed a vast collection of bronze artifacts dating back about 3,300 years at the Yinxu Ruins in Anyang, Henan province, including a massive bronze vessel weighing 832.84 kilograms. The discovery raised a fundamental question: Who produced such a large quantity of bronze, and where did the copper originate? Despite decades of research, no definitive answers emerged, prompting some scholars to speculate that China's bronze culture may have had foreign origins.

A breakthrough finally came in 1973. At a mining site in Daye, Hubei province, archaeologists discovered copper axes, the largest weighing 16.3 kg, revealing an ancient mine that had been buried for more than 2,000 years. The site is now known as the Tonglushan Ancient Copper Mine.

Years of archaeological investigation suggest that mining at the Tonglushan site was most active from the Shang Dynasty (c. 16th century-11th century BC) to the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 24), spanning over 1,000 years.

"This discovery finally provided the long-sought answer to the source of raw materials for bronze artifacts, rewriting the history of China's ancient bronze civilization," says Wu Hongtang, a veteran archaeologist who participated in the site's first excavations in the 1970s.

According to Wu, Tonglushan is an ancient mining and smelting complex distinguished by its long period of operation, large scale, complete production chain, advanced technology, and exceptional state of preservation.

To date, archaeologists have identified more than 100 mining and smelting sites and over 250 ancient tombs, along with a wealth of mining tools and traces of daily life.

Wu notes that among the many ancient copper mining sites discovered in China, Tonglushan is the only one where miners' tombs have been found.

Fewer than 300 artifacts have been unearthed from these tombs. Among them are two high-status burials, believed to belong to a mining engineer and a site supervisor, containing valuable objects such as copper knives, jade artifacts, and small bronze cauldrons.

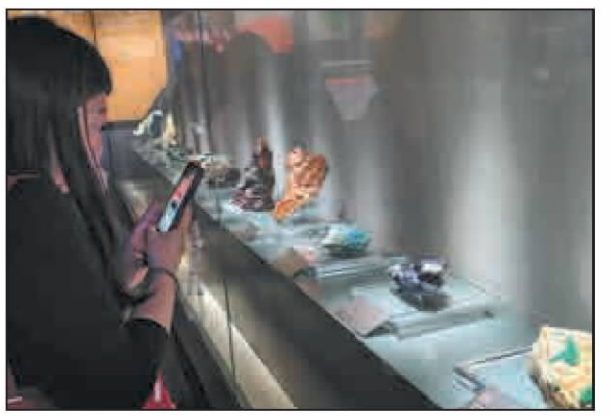
"The limited number of unearthed artifacts suggests that the living conditions for ordinary miners at the time were extremely harsh. The differences among the tombs also reflect the class distinctions of that era," Wu explains.

One of the site's most remarkable discoveries is a set of 35 barefoot footprints left by ancient miners. In 2012, Chen Shuxiang, a researcher at the Hubei Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, and his colleagues uncovered the footprints during an excavation.

The prints vary in condition, with the longest intact footprint measuring 26 centimeters. Based on their characteristics, experts identified them as ancient barefoot impressions. Judging from their depth and surrounding evidence, Chen says he believes the miners were likely carrying heavy loads while crossing wet ground.

Chen notes that some mining shafts reach depths of 60 to 80 meters. Yet, no human remains have been found inside them, suggesting that no major underground accidents occurred during the site's long history of operation.

At the Tonglushan Site Museum, visitors can view a vast archaeological excavation resembling an "underground labyrinth". The original mining site, a dense network of shafts and tunnels, has been preserved in situ beneath a protective exhibition hall measuring 36 meters long and 30 meters wide, built in 1984.







Top: An aerial view of the Tonglushan Ancient Copper Mine site. **Center:** Different types of copper ore are on show at the Tonglushan Site Museum. **Above:** A bronze ax (left) dated about 2,000 years ago and a bronze battle-ax from the Western Zhou Dynasty (c. 11th century-771 BC). **Below:** Malachite unearthed from the Tonglushan site was used by ancient miners to locate copper deposits. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY AND BY DENG ZHANGYU AND SUN MENG / CHINA DAILY





An archaeological site at the Tonglushan Site Museum shows an "underground labyrinth" of criss-crossing shafts and tunnels.

Viewed from above, visitors see a "maze" of vertical shafts, inclined passageways, horizontal tunnels, and blind shafts supported by wooden structures.

Drainage channels and wooden troughs weave through the complex, offering a vivid picture of how ancient miners excavated ore and maintained underground operations.

The museum's new building, opened in June 2023, features five themed exhibition halls that explore how ancient people located copper deposits, developed mining techniques, mastered smelting technology, and transported bronze materials across the region.

Wu says that in ancient times, people often located copper deposits by looking for a plant called *Elsholtzia splendens*, which has red stems and green leaves. It resembles a toothbrush and produces purple flowers.

Every November, when the flowers are in full bloom, Tonglushan Mountain is covered in a sea of purple.

The site's copper-smelting technology was remarkably advanced. Ancient metallurgists developed a stone-built shaft furnace into which alternating layers of ore and charcoal were loaded. Unlike contemporary furnaces in Mesopotamia, which were typically used only once, these furnaces could be reused repeatedly.

It is estimated that the mining area produced about 400,000 metric tons of ancient slag, yielding between 80,000 and 120,000 tons of crude copper. The copper ingots smelted had a copper content of over 93 percent, while the slag contained only 0.7 percent copper — evidence of highly efficient purification techniques.

"This level is remarkably close to modern standards," Wu says.

Scientific testing has since confirmed that the elemental composition of copper used in bronze artifacts from the Panlongcheng site in Wuhan, Hubei province, and the bronzes found in Fu Hao's tomb at Yinxu matches that of copper from Tonglushan.

The findings provide strong evidence that Tonglushan served as a major source of copper for China's bronze industry in ancient times, "proving that China's bronze civilization developed independently and formed its own system", Wu says.

Daye, where the Tonglushan site is located, is adjacent to the Yangtze River. At that time, the transportation route likely involved moving goods via the Yangtze River to an ancient dock in Nanyang, Henan, and finally reaching the ancient capital Luoyang, then a major political and cultural center.

"The abundant copper resources in the middle reaches of the Yangtze River, combined with bronze smelting and casting technologies that spread southward from the Central Plains dynasties in northern China, together created the bronze civilization of the Yangtze River basin," says Zhang Changping, a history professor from Wuhan University.

Contact the writer at dengzhangyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Ancient capital opens its hidden doors to visitors

By **DENG ZHANGYU** and **LIU KUN** in Tianmen, Hubei

Around 5,900 to 3,800 years ago, a thriving civilization flourished along the middle reaches of the Yangtze River. Its people built a vast city, engineered sophisticated waterworks, mastered jade carving, developed a highly organized pottery industry, and conducted elaborate religious rituals. Today, archaeologists know it as the Shijiahe Culture.

At the Shijiahe Site Museum in Tianmen, Hubei province, visitors can now explore this civilization.

The museum, roughly the size of a football field, opened on May 18 and features six exhibition halls. Its focus spans ancient urban planning, religious practices and jade craftsmanship, displaying over 800 valuable artifacts — including pottery, jade and stone tools — that shed light on the archaeological discoveries and historical significance of the Shijiahe site.

"The Shijiahe site is remarkable for its vast urban scale, long period of continuous occupation, rich cultural remains and distinctive regional character," says Wang Wei, a veteran archaeologist at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

"Particularly striking is the abundance of remains linked to spiritual beliefs, something rarely seen at contemporary sites elsewhere," Wang says.

According to Fang Qin, director of the Hubei Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, Shijiahe was the largest prehistoric urban center and the most densely populated settlement cluster in the middle reaches of the Yangtze River during the late Neolithic period.

Listed among China's Top 100 Archaeological Discoveries of the Past Century, the site has undergone more than 20 excavations since its discovery in 1954. Its culture developed continuously for about 2,000 years, making it the longest-occupied settlement among China's major prehistoric urban sites.

Fang, who has spent decades studying the culture, says the ancient city covered nearly 3.5 million square meters — more than four times the size of the Forbidden City in Beijing.

Distinct functional zones included residential quarters, ceremonial spaces, pottery workshops and cemeteries. An advanced water-management network served irrigation, flood control and defensive purposes.

Among the site's most celebrated finds are its jade artifacts, considered a pinnacle of prehistoric Chinese craftsmanship. More than 400 jade pieces have been unearthed, depicting deities, phoenixes, eagles, tigers and cicadas with extraordinary artistry and refinement.

Phoenix imagery was especially prominent.

A star jade phoenix, now housed in the National Museum of China in Beijing, is renowned as "China's first phoenix" for its highly stylized circular design.

Equally intriguing are depictions of deities believed to represent ancestral figures.

Highlights include two interconnected deity faces and another showing a deity with two eagles perched atop its head. Despite their complexity, many of the carvings are no larger than a fingernail.

"These jade artifacts were likely used in ritual ceremonies to communicate with the spiritual world," explains Fang.

The pottery unearthed at the site also reflects the wisdom and imagination of the prehistoric inhabitants. The museum exhibits its lively clay sculptures of birds, chickens, pigs, and dogs, as well as a contemplative figure that recalls Auguste Rodin's *The Thinker*.

Nearby, at the Sanfangwan site, archaeologists uncovered an 8,000-square-meter workshop dedicated to the production of red pottery cups. According to Hu Yongmei, deputy director of the Shijiahe Site Museum, it is the largest Neolithic pottery workshop ever discovered.





From top: Two jade deities' faces connect to each other. Pottery jars and pots are widely found in the sacrificial area at the Shijiahe site. Shijiahe Site Museum in Tianmen, Hubei province, opens to the public. PHOTOS BY DENG ZHANGYU / CHINA DAILY

Hu says that the large number of red pottery cup remnants indicates possible trade with other regions.

Near the kiln site, a large ritual area with numerous pottery jars and pots was uncovered, which archaeologists believe were used to hold ritual offerings.

"The sophistication of both the jade and pottery industries points to a highly specialized division of labor," Hu says.

To help visitors visualize the ancient world, the museum offers an immersive digital production titled *Seeing Shijiahe*. Combining holographic projections, moving mechanical displays and environmental effects such as wind, mist and vibration, the experience recreates dramatic scenes ranging from floodwaters breaching city defenses to grand rituals and phoenixes soaring across the sky. All props are produced using high-precision 3D-printing technology.

With no fixed seats or traditional stage, the audience becomes "discoverers of civilization", traveling 5,000 years back to "touch" ancient culture, according to director Fan Yupeng.

Fan says that since there are no visual or written records to draw from, the production was built on archaeological evidence and expert interpretation, balancing imagination with academic rigor.

"By recreating archaeological scenes through immersive performance, we can bridge the distance between modern audiences and ancient history," he says.

"In doing so, we hope visitors gain a deeper understanding of Shijiahe culture and its enduring legacy."

Xu Lin contributed to this story.

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.



Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:28 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:28 PM

SPORTS

WORLD CUP 2026



Seventh heaven for dominant Germany

Four-time champion runs riot following tight first half that saw minnow debutant Curacao score historic equalizer

Germany's Nico Schlotterbeck celebrates scoring his team's second goal during its 7-1 World Cup Group E victory over tournament debutant Curacao at Houston Stadium, usually known as the NRG Stadium, in Texas, on Sunday. **Inset:** Jamal Musiala slots the ball past a diving Eloy Room for Germany's fourth goal. AGENCIES

Germany's seven-goal rout of Curacao in its World Cup opener on Sunday was the perfect way to overshadow a close first half and boost the team after consecutive group-stage exits for the four-time champion.

Kai Havertz scored two goals as Germany pulled away from World Cup debutant Curacao and piled it on in a 7-1 win in the Group E match. The smallest country to ever appear in the tournament, however, managed to hang tight at 1-1 until the 38th minute.

"We really needed this convincing win," coach Julian Nagelsmann said. "We needed this self-confidence. It was there, but it definitely grew."

He said the display was important for the country's fans.

"We have to show them that we can perform and we have to have the confidence," he said. "I think we're in a better spot than we were entering this match."

Livano Comenencia tied it at 1-1 with his left-footed shot through traffic from the center of the box in the 21st minute to give Curacao its first goal in the tournament and send fans of the tiny Caribbean nation into a frenzy.

"Even though it wasn't me, it felt like it was me, it was all of us, the whole island, everybody," Curacao's Jearl Margaritha said. "We screamed our lungs out. We were so happy."

It was all Germany after that, with the European powerhouse regaining the lead through Nico Schlotterbeck's header off Nathaniel Brown's corner kick in the 38th.

"One team has very high expectations and the other one doesn't, and that's a bit tricky," Nagelsmann said.

The six-goal margin was well short of the World Cup record of nine, which has happened three times, most recently when Hungary beat El Salvador 10-1 in 1982. And the performance from the Germans was much more expected than the last time they won 7-1 in a World Cup, beating host Brazil in the 2014 semifinals.

A Havertz penalty, awarded after Felix Nmecha was tripped in the box by Riechedly Bazoer, made it 3-1 in first-half stoppage time.

Germany wasted no time after the turnaround, extending its lead when Jamal Musiala scored on a right-footed shot across the goalkeeper's area in the 47th minute.

Brown scored in the 68th to push the advantage to 5-1. The 22-year-old has an American father, but made it clear ahead of the World Cup he'd be representing the country in which he was born and raised by his mother.

Deniz Undav added a goal in the 78th minute. Havertz's second came in the 88th.

Germany is seeking redemption after failing to get out of the group stage in both Russia and Qatar following its 2014 title.

"We are on the right path, but of course there are things that we can do better, and we will have stronger opponents," Nagelsmann said.

Nmecha one-timed it with his right foot inside the near post from just inside the box off an assist from Florian Wirtz in the sixth minute to kickstart the scoring spree.



Curacao's Livano Comenencia celebrates his historic goal during a World Cup Group E match against Germany on Sunday. AFP



Fans in the Curacao capital Willemstad cheer during their team's World Cup debut against Germany on Sunday. REUTERS

The crowd of 68,021 was overwhelmingly rooting for Germany, but there was a spirited contingent of people cheering on Curacao.

It was the first match of the tournament at NRG Stadium, home of the NFL's Houston Texans.

Manuel Neuer, the 40-year-old goalkeeper who came out of international retirement for the tournament, made just one save in his first appearance for Germany in almost two years.

The match featured the largest age gap between coaches in World Cup history with Curacao's 78-year-old coach Dick Advocaat becoming the oldest ever in the tournament, opposite 38-year-old Nagelsmann, who is the youngest coach at this year's event.

Feeling proud

"This is not a disgrace," Curacao coach Advocaat said. "I think we can still be proud."

It was an emotional day for the septuagenarian, a World Cup veteran who coached the Netherlands at the 1994 tournament and South Korea in 2006. He wept before the game as his team, from a country of just 158,000, made its historic World Cup debut.

"This is related with the joy of the people in Curacao," he said. "It may be a matter of my age, but this is when the emotion comes to the surface. I don't really like it… (but) the joy of the people is fantastic."

Comenencia's goal gave Curacao confidence early, and was yet another milestone in the team's historic run.

"The goal was absolutely fantastic for all of us, for the nation as well," winger Kenji Gorre said. "It's more history being made. The first goal ever scored on the world stage, it's just phenomenal and we're all grateful that we were here to experience it (with) all the people in the stadium."

Nagelsmann was impressed with the fight shown by Curacao and noted that it can be dangerous when an underdog gets confidence.

"The opponent played better than many in Germany expected," he said. "They played with a lot of courage."

While Curacao was proud to have stuck with a powerhouse like Germany for most of the first half, there was disappointment at the final score. Curacao had the biggest goal difference in a defeat of a nation making its World Cup debut since South Korea lost 9-0 to Hungary in 1954, according to Opta.

"Mixed emotions, mixed feelings. On one side you think, 'wow, we've made history by coming to the World Cup,'" Gorre said. "On the other, it's like, 'wow, we wish that we could have got some points.' But, we're playing against the world's best, and the world's best punish you at every opportunity they can. And you see that they punished us seven times from mistakes that we made."

Curacao will be hoping that the experience gained Sunday will help it go forward, as the team gears up for its next game against Ecuador in Kansas City on Saturday.

"We still have matches to play, and things can still end up differently," Advocaat said.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Japan comes from behind twice to clinch 2-2 draw with the Netherlands

ARLINGTON, Texas — Japan scored an 89th-minute equalizer, twice fighting back to rescue a 2-2 draw with the Netherlands in Texas on Sunday as they opened their World Cup campaigns.

A match in front of 69,285 spectators that had bubbled away in the first period sparked into life in the second half.

Netherlands skipper Virgil van Dijk scored with a fine header, only for Keito Nakamura to quickly level, before winger Crysencio Summerville's delicious curled finish into the bottom corner just after the hour.

The Dutch side looked like it would hold on, but Japan leveled at the death with Crystal Palace midfielder Daichi Kamada credited with the goal after a deflection.

"We are not completely satisfied with the draw," said Japan coach Hajime Moriyasu, whose side faces Tunisia on Saturday in a competitive-looking Group F.

"But the Netherlands are a top-class team and we tried to compete at the same level.

"We were tenacious but patient, and kept calm."

Japan and the Netherlands are missing key players through injury, but on paper this was still one of the more attractive fixtures in the group stage.





Left: Virgil van Dijk celebrates scoring the Netherlands' first goal against Japan during a World Cup Group F match in Arlington, Texas, on Sunday. **Right:** Japanese players celebrate their side's second goal against the Dutch. AP

Both have been touted as dark horses capable of going far at the tournament — the Dutch have been runners-up three times whereas Japan has never gone beyond the last 16.

Netherlands coach Ronald Koeman, the former defender charged with finally delivering World Cup glory, was given a grilling by Dutch media afterwards, especially for his substitutions.

"I am disappointed that we did not get the win," said Koeman, who pointed the finger at his side's defending.

"But I am not that negative," he said to one particular line of questioning that he took exception to.

"I saw a team that has made great progress," he added of his men.

"Of course, we can perform better and we need to grow during the tournament."

Chaotic leveler

The Netherlands made a confident start and nearly took the lead after three minutes, Donyell Malen swiveling and forcing a smart save from Zion Suzuki.

The impressive air-conditioned arena is usually home to the Dallas Cowboys, and at the hydration break, the NFL team's cheerleaders were shown on the massive screen hanging over the pitch performing one of their routines.

The stoppage seemed to help the Dutch, and Roma forward Malen again worked Suzuki with a header from a corner.

Japan's fans, who had hardly stopped singing and outnumbered the Dutch contingent, were briefly silenced.

The first real chance for Moriyasu's team came a few minutes before the break when a cross evaded the backtracking Summerville, but Nakamura pulled his effort wide.

The Dutch had looked most threatening in the air, so it was no surprise when Liverpool talisman Van Dijk rose to plant a well-placed header into the bottom corner after a pinpoint cross from his Premier League clubmate Ryan Gravenberch on 51 minutes.

The lead lasted just six minutes, as Nakamura wriggled free and fired low past goalkeeper Bart Verbruggen, the ball taking a small deflection off Jan Paul van Hecke.

In a madcap period of play, the Dutch forged ahead once more on 64 minutes, when West Ham's Summerville beat his man on the right wing and curled into Suzuki's bottom-right corner with his left foot.

Both teams rang the changes and had chances to score again, before Kamada's chaotic 89th-minute leveler from a corner.

A flurry of second-half goals saw Sweden beat a tenacious Tunisia 5-1 in Sunday's other Group F match.

AFP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:28 PM



Super sub

Undav scores twice off the bench, sends Germany into knockouts SPORTS, page 20

AI major gains popularity among colleges

CHINA, page 5



'Political realities'

British PM Starmer reportedly mulls resignation amid pressure

WORLD, page 11

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM

CHINA DAILY

中国日报

Monday , June 22, 2026 chinadaily.com.cn RMB ¥2

XI'S VISION | GOVERNANCE PERFORMANCE

Unremitting efforts seen as key to progress

Party's governance approach stresses tenacity, sustained work, lasting results

By **ZHAO JIA**
zhaojia@@chinadaily.com.cn

For years, Xingtang county in Hebei province was shadowed by a local saying that played on its name: "*Xingtang bu xing*" — Xingtang cannot do it.

The saying reflected more than a play on words. Along the eastern foothills of the Taihang Mountains, several counties had long struggled with constraints of terrain and resources. In Xingtang, a traditional agricultural county, quality farm products often failed to reach wider markets because they lacked strong brands and sales channels.

When Zou Guoyu arrived in Xingtang, he saw that changing the county's prospects would require more than short-term assistance. He was among the 13 officials assigned by the International Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee to work in the county over the past decade. Their work focused on opening markets, building brands and strengthening the county's own capacity for development.

Those efforts gradually paid off. Xingtang red dates were selected as State gifts, honey produced in the county reached Southeast Asian markets, and the county's public brand for local specialties gained wider recognition.

What happened in Xingtang was not a single breakthrough, but a relay — one group of officials after another carrying the work forward and helping turn an old saying of resignation into a new confidence: Xingtang can.

That relay offers a window into the CPC's emphasis on establishing and practicing a correct view of governance performance, a theme repeatedly stressed by President Xi Jinping since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012 and one that became this year's focus of a Party-wide education campaign. It is a view that values sustained work, long-term public benefit and results that can stand the test of time.

The logic behind such a relay can be traced to Xi's earlier poverty reduction work in Ningde, Fujian province, where he served as Party secretary from 1988 to 1990, when the region was among the poorest areas in Fujian.

In *Up and Out of Poverty*, which collects Xi's speeches and articles from his work in Ningde, he wrote that fundamentally changing poverty and backwardness required the people to carry forward the tenacity of "dripping water piercing stone" and make long-term, unremitting efforts.

In *Xi Jinping in Ningde*, a book published in 2020 that collects 19 interview accounts about Xi's work experiences in Ningde, an interview account recalled that Xi cautioned local officials against expecting poverty to be fundamentally solved simply by projects, or expecting to become rich overnight.

The emphasis on patience, local realities and sustained effort later became part of China's nationwide fight against absolute poverty. In the new era, poverty alleviation was pursued not as a short burst of assistance, but as a systematic effort carried out across regions, levels of government and successive stages of policy.

By 2021, China had secured a complete victory in the fight against absolute poverty. Under the current standard, 98.99 million rural residents living in poverty had been lifted out of poverty, 832 impoverished counties, including Xingtang, had been removed from the poverty list, and 128,000 impoverished villages had shaken off poverty.

However, the achievement was not treated as the end of the task. Even before that milestone was reached, the central leadership had begun planning the next stage. At the Central Rural Work Conference in December 2020, Xi called for efforts to consolidate and expand poverty alleviation achievements and align them with rural vitalization, in order to ensure a smooth transition without gaps in work or policy support.

For long-term tasks, Xi has always stressed the need to maintain a strategic resolve and patience, and to follow through on sound blueprints with sustained effort. He once said that existing plans and arrangements should be carried forward from one term to the next if they are sound, suited to new practical requirements and in line with the people's aspirations.

See ***Efforts,*** *page 3*

Event marks HK's return to motherland



Visitors pose for pictures and board a naval ship on Saturday during an open day event marking the 29th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to the motherland, at the Ngong Shuen Chau Barracks of the People's Liberation Army Hong Kong Garrison's naval base on Stonecutters Island, in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. EDMOND TANG / CHINA DAILY

Lebanon 'greatest test' for US-Iran talks

By **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong and **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE

Delegations from the United States, Iran and regional mediators have started talks in Burgenstock, Switzerland, with an aim to advance the Memorandum of Understanding signed between Washington and Tehran last week, with analysts saying that Lebanon constitutes the "greatest test" for the talks.

Inside

Editorial, **page 8**

The high-level meeting is taking place amid renewed tensions over the Strait of Hormuz following conflicting accounts from Iran and the US, and with Tehran accusing Washington and Tel Aviv of truce violations amid continued violence in Lebanon. Israel and Hezbollah renewed their truce on Friday.

Qatari Foreign Ministry spokesman Majed Al-Ansari said on Sunday that the parties to the meeting in Switzerland had established technical groups to negotiate the terms of a final peace deal between Tehran and Washington, which is due within 60 days of negotiations.

Specialized technical groups have been formed to "negotiate the terms of a final agreement, which will cover all aspects of the memorandum of understanding", Al-Ansari told the Qatar News Agency.

Meanwhile, Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency reported on Sunday that the country will not reopen the Strait of Hormuz if the war in Lebanon is not ended, citing a source close to the Iranian negotiating team.

The source warned that if Israel's "crimes" in Lebanon continue, and Lebanon's territorial integrity is not guaranteed, Iran will hold no negotiation on other issues.

The Iranian delegation, led by Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, arrived in Switzerland on Saturday.

Speaking to the Islamic Republic News Agency, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei said that the ongoing conflict in Lebanon between Israel and Hezbollah, frozen Iranian funds and the sale of the country's oil will top the agenda in talks with the US in Switzerland.

Trita Parsi, executive vice-president of the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, told Al Jazeera that "Lebanon has always been the greatest vulnerability to this deal because this is really crucial to the Iranians".

Ryan Costello, the policy director at the National Iranian American Council, also said Lebanon poses the "greatest test" for the ceasefire deal. "I would not be surprised at all if there is a breakdown in the broader negotiations," he was quoted as saying by Al Jazeera.

Prior to departing for Burgenstock, US Vice-President JD Vance said that success in Switzerland starts with establishing the structure of the negotiations, as US and Iranian officials begin the next phase of talks.

He said the focus will be on making progress on Iran's nuclear program and the Lebanon ceasefire, while technical teams remain on the ground to work through the details, Fox News reported.

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said in a post on social media platform X on Saturday that in his call with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, they agreed that the next phase of negotiations "must remain anchored in a firm commitment to dialogue and diplomacy, along with vigilance against any attempts that could undermine the peace process".

Sharif is also in Switzerland for the high-level meeting, along with Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir.

Israeli airstrikes killed at least seven people and wounded one in eastern and southern Lebanon, Lebanon's National News Agency reported on Sunday. On Saturday, Israeli attacks killed 16 people and wounded 12 in Nabatieh district in the south of the country, Al Jazeera reported, citing the Lebanese Civil Defense agency.

An Israel Defense Forces soldier was killed during an alleged attack by Hezbollah on Saturday morning, The Times of Israel reported.

Xinhua contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at jan@chinadailyapac.com

Openness essential to fueling Asia-Pacific growth

By **Zhong Nan**
zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

Openness remains essential to unlocking the growth potential of the Asia-Pacific region and deepening regional economic cooperation, as rising unilateralism and protectionism continue to challenge global trade and investment, government officials said on Sunday.

Speaking at the APEC China CEO Forum 2026 in Beijing, they said that Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation member economies should stay committed to open cooperation and regional integration, while advancing connectivity projects and digital innovation to facilitate trade, improve supply chain resilience and create new growth opportunities for businesses across the region.

Eduardo Pedrosa, executive director of the APEC Secretariat in Singapore, said that APEC economies have identified a series of priority actions to restore growth momentum and strengthen regional economic cooperation.

These actions include accelerating progress toward the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific, strengthening connectivity and supply chain resilience, investing in trade and logistics infrastructure, promoting market diversification, addressing nontariff barriers in food trade and advancing digital trade and transformation, Pedrosa said.

See ***Forum,*** *page 3*

Chinese robot vacuums clean up in global rankings

Advanced AI systems, smart home integration help devices sweep past competition in overseas markets

By **Li Jiaying**
lijiaying@chinadaily.com.cn

When Mikki Hayward was preparing her home in the United States for sale, she expected her robot vacuum to help with the cleaning. What she did not expect was for it to recognize clutter, navigate around obstacles and even flag small valuables.

"It doesn't get stuck on random boxes or obstacles, and it even tags small valuables it finds so they don't get lost in the shuffle," she said.

For Jessica Jones, another US user, the appeal lies elsewhere.

As her robot vacuum glides across the floor, she can use the device's camera to check on the foster kittens roaming around her home.

"Loving (the ability to) check in on my foster kittens while the machine does its cleaning thing!" she wrote in a social media post. "There are more and more features I'm discovering all the time, but pet mode is amazing!"

Technology reviewers have also been impressed by how much the latest generation of cleaning robots has evolved.

"What is also smart is that it adjusts how it cleans depending on the type of mess. So, wet messes and dry debris are not being treated the exact same way, and that makes the whole process feel much more hands-off," YouTube channel DailyTested said in a review.

All of these glowing testimonials refer to the latest product from Chinese manufacturer Narwal Robotics.

Launched in the US market in April and equipped with a dual-camera vision recognition system and an artificial intelligence-powered cleaning platform capable of adapting to different household environments, the product quickly topped Amazon US' new releases ranking and entered the top 10 robot vacuum category within 24 hours of launch.

See ***Tech,*** *page 3*



People watch a cleaning robot move up stairs at a booth of Chinese technology company Dreame at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas in the United States on Jan 7. Caroline Brehman / AFP

China Vibes BY HENAN GIFTS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM

内统一连续出版物号: CN 11-0091
国际标准连续出版物号: ISSN 0253-9543
代号: 1-3

ANN A member of the Asia News Network

© 2026 China Daily All Rights Reserved

Vol. 46 — No. 14378

INDEPTH

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM

Inbound tourism surges on curiosity about evolving China



Overseas visitors try Chinese kebabs while wandering through the historical alleys of Qianmen Street in Beijing on June 14. chen qiang / for china daily

Overseas visitors equally interested in country's rapid transformation as ancient marvels

By **YANG FEIYUE**
yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn



Foreign tourists visit the Temple of Heaven in Beijing on June 9. chen qiang / for china daily

Wolfgang Georg Arlt, a tourism expert from Germany, made his first trip to Beijing in 1978.

"There was almost no light at night," recalled Arlt, who has over 50 years of expertise, both academically and in practice, in tourism and hospitality. In the years since, he has watched China's tourism infrastructure improve steadily year after year, with better facilities and services.

In early June, he returned to the Chinese capital for a summit hosted by the World Tourism Cities Federation. During his stay, he was struck again by what he saw. But this time, it was by the smart infrastructure, services powered by artificial intelligence, and the gleaming skyline.

"No one back then could have imagined such development," said Arlt, executive director of the Meaningful Tourism Centre, based in London and Kathmandu.

As China evolves into one of the world's leading travel destinations, Arlt has also noticed a shift in the preferences of foreign travelers. "Tourism used to be about sightseeing, taking photos and shopping. Now people want to learn something and experience something," he said.

Technology has removed many of the old travel barriers. Instant translation services on a smartphone, for instance, mean no one needs to fear getting lost anymore, he added.

Active immersion

The shift from passive sightseeing to active immersion has been quietly reshaping China's inbound tourism industry.

On a March morning in suburban Beijing, Yang Li stood between a dozen foreign diplomats and a fully automated assembly line.

His job was to explain the factory's operations, but he soon realized the diplomats wanted China's overall transformation explained. "They were eager to know how the country built this," he recalled.

For nearly three decades, Yang had made his living explaining China's past — its dynasties, emperors, temples and ancient walls. Now, standing above a humming production floor where robotic arms moved in synchronization and driverless carts glided between workstations, he found himself explaining not just how the machines worked, but how China learned to produce them at scale.

The March visit had been arranged by China's Ministry of Culture and Tourism for foreign diplomats stationed in Beijing. "They didn't go to see the Great Wall. They came here to see why China can do this," he recalled.

For generations, China's inbound tourism narrative rested on familiar pillars: the Forbidden City, the Great Wall, the Terracotta Warriors. Visitors came to witness the remnants of an ancient civilization.

"Today, many international visitors no longer come only to admire China's past. They also want to understand its present — how factories operate, how cities function, how innovation is reshaping daily life and how traditions continue to evolve alongside rapid modernization," Yang said.

Spanish clients have asked to visit smart factories in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, while in Changsha, Hunan province, Romanian travel groups requested tours of electric vehicle production lines, he said.

A 2026 Trip.com Group survey of more than 500 inbound tourism operators found that nearly two-thirds identified meeting diverse visitor demands as their biggest challenge. More than 80 percent reported overseas visitors growing interest in experiences beyond traditional sightseeing.

Tour operator Li Jieming is based in Zhangjiajie, Hunan. The city's best-known attraction is the cluster of sandstone pillars that inspired the floating mountains in the film *Avatar*.

Three years ago, overseas visitors accounted for only a tiny share of his business. Today, they comprise around 60 percent.

The turning point came after China expanded visa-free entry policies for a growing number of countries in 2024.

"When I heard about the visa-free policy, I knew the number of inbound visitors would increase," Li said. "And Zhangjiajie already had something foreigners recognized — the *Avatar* mountains."

But his ability to seize the opportunity soon collided with new challenges: workers with foreign-language skills were scarce, and he had little overseas marketing experience.

Li began recruiting wherever he could find candidates — language schools, trading companies and returnees with international experience. His first international team consisted of just four people.

They posted videos of Zhangjiajie's landscapes on Facebook and handled inquiries one by one. Their first booking came from a Spanish couple who discovered the company online.

"We didn't make money on that booking," Li said with a laugh. "We just wanted to see if it could work."

By the spring of 2025, inquiries began arriving in waves. Today, Li's company employs more than 20 people serving international clients, and inbound tourism has become the core of the business.

Content upgrade

Many of the inquiries came from people who had never previously considered traveling to Zhangjiajie.

Some discovered Zhangjiajie through social media videos of the towering sandstone pillars. Others arrived after seeing short clips of local customs and village life.

The influx of visitors quickly taught Li another lesson: attracting international travelers was only the beginning.

"Many foreign visitors don't want to spend the entire day checking attractions off a list," he said. "They want to interact with people and understand local life."

At first, his team offered itineraries similar to those designed for domestic tourists. The results were mixed.

"That's when we realized we had to help those people understand a place beyond simply touting the landscape."

One European family initially planned a simple cable-car excursion. Instead, Li's team suggested a gentle rainforest hike. "The children could touch plants, look at insects and ask questions," Li said. "It turned out that the parents loved it."

They applied the same idea to cultural tourism.

Rather than limiting visitors to performances and demonstrations, Li's company incorporates hands-on experiences such as Tujia ethnic brocade weaving, the Baishou dance — a Tujia group dance often performed at festivals and celebrations — and traditional silverwork.



A foreign tourist browses items at a trendy toy store in Shanghai in May. chen haoming / xinhua



Tourists interact with robots at Unitree Robotics' flagship store in Beijing on June 2. ju huanzong / xinhua



A visitor poses for a photo in Shanghai Disney Resort on April 28. chen aiping / xinhua

"All those ensure our foreign guests don't just watch, but participate," he said.

Li mentioned a family from Germany that spent an afternoon learning Tujia brocade weaving.

"None of them had ever touched a loom before, and their finished cloth was uneven with imperfect patterns," he said. "But when the workshop ended, the mother got a bit misty-eyed and said it was something they made together, rather than simply a purchase."

For Li, the moment captured why so many travelers now seek experiences rather than attractions. "The mountains gave them a view," he said. "The weaving gave them a memory."

Deeper dive

Yang, one of China's first nationally certified gold tour guides, has witnessed nearly every stage of the industry's modern development.

The change, he said, has been particularly noticeable in recent years. "Before, visitors listened to whatever you told them. Now they ask why," he said.

At the Great Wall, foreign tourists' curiosity isn't restricted to basic questions about its length, age or the construction techniques of the structure.

Instead, they want to know why the Great Wall occupies such an important place in the Chinese identity, Yang said. "One visitor even asked why it appears in China's national anthem," he said.

Yang's explanation begins with the ancient beacon towers that once signaled danger along China's northern frontier, and ends with the phrase from the national anthem — "using our flesh and blood to build a new Great Wall" — showing how a military defense system gradually evolved into a national symbol of endurance and unity.

He said an increasing number of overseas visitors make sense of modern China by comparing it with their own country's culture and history.

Spanish travelers draw parallels between the Great Wall and the Alhambra, a palace and fortress complex in Granada, while visitors from Latin America connect Chinese history with their own experiences of colonialism and nation-building, he shared.

For guides, this means understanding not only China but also the perspectives visitors bring with them. "If you don't understand their cultural background, you can't make the comparison meaningful," Yang said.

One Spanish architect, for example, asked him why Chinese walls were built with rammed earth while Spanish fortresses used stone. Yang didn't have a textbook answer but replied: "Different threats. Different materials. Different emperors."

The visitor nodded, and Yang said that was the moment he understood his real job.

At the end of May, nearly 2,000 tourism executives and industry professionals from 67 countries and regions gathered along the Lijiang River in Guilin, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, for one of China's largest inbound tourism events hosted by the local government and Trip.com Group.

Actor and filmmaker Jackie Chan, recently named an inbound tourism ambassador by Trip.com Group, greeted the crowd.

"My mission used to be bringing Chinese films to the world," he said. "Now my mission is bringing the world to China."

A giant illuminated passport appeared in the night sky during a drone show. Moments later, a golden dragon flew through it as the words "VISA FREE" lit up the sky above the crowd.

The image captured one of the biggest changes driving China's inbound tourism recovery — the steady expansion of visa-free policies and the gradual removal of barriers that once discouraged international visitors.

New storytellers

Visa-free entry can open the door, but content determines whether people choose to walk through it, many industry operators said.

Trip.com chairman James Liang announced that the company aims to attract 200 million inbound visitors over the next five years.

The tourism industry has already begun to adapt. Nearly 90 percent of inbound tourism employees have received some form of professional training. New job categories are emerging, ranging from inbound travel "customizers" to multilingual "experience designers" and cross-cultural content creators.

Yet, the industry's response remains uneven. While nearly two-thirds of practitioners feel service expectations have grown more demanding, fewer than 15 percent said lack of training is the main problem.

To become an outstanding guide for international visitors takes five to 10 years, Yang said. "Language ability, cultural fluency and the confidence to navigate complex conversations cannot be developed overnight," he said, adding that demand for Spanish-speaking guides, for example, has surged in recent years.

Yang speaks English and Spanish, has studied abroad, and traveled extensively. Years of experience have allowed him to understand both his visitors and the country he represents.

"Because what visitors are really doing is not just asking for explanations — they are interpreting China through their own cultural references. You need to understand those reference points as well as your own, so your answers are framed with meaning," he explained.

Many of Li's employees are from language schools, training centers and international trading firms and have never worked in the tourism industry before.

"Their language skills promise immediate and effective communication with potential clients," Li said.

"But they have to work hard to learn what the city has to offer and be capable of answering sophisticated questions based on that expertise. What visitors increasingly seek is not information alone. They want context, comparison and stories."

Experienced guides consistently earn more than newcomers, while regular training improves both service quality and income, industry figures showed. But income instability remains a concern. Tourism is highly seasonal, and many practitioners experience large swings in earnings between peak and off-peak periods.

For all the optimism surrounding inbound tourism's resurgence, the industry's growing pains are real, Li said.

Yang said being a tour guide is about creating understanding, a role he believes AI can never fully replace.

"AI can translate accurately. It can provide information," he said. "But it cannot read a visitor's eyes. It cannot create emotional connection."

In his 50s, he is still very optimistic about the industry's prospects, as more inbound visitors are requesting his services to understand a country still being built.

The Great Wall remains. So does the Forbidden City. But alongside them, a new set of destinations is emerging: factory floors, heritage workshops, innovation hubs and village studios.

"They all hold great sway over inbound travelers' curiosity and need guides like us to lead the way," he said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM

TOP NEWS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM

China pushes superalloy R&D for aircraft engines

By ZHAO LEI
zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

Engineers at Aero Engine Corp of China, the nation's leading maker of aircraft engines, are working on more advanced single-crystal superalloy technologies, one of the most critical materials for aircraft engines, building on the remarkable progress they have made in recent years.

The engineers are targeting the needs of next-generation engines and working to create more advanced single-crystal superalloy technologies, according to Li Jiarong, a senior researcher at the Beijing Institute of Aeronautical Materials, an AECC subsidiary and a major player in the production of engine superalloys.

"We are working on single-crystal superalloys with better temperature resistance to meet the needs of future aeroengines. We are also developing variants that boast great corrosion resistance and low density, for use in marine environments and miniature drones.

"Moreover, we will work on precision forming technologies for single-crystal turbine blades with more complex structures to sustain the continuous improvement of the blades' high-temperature resistance," he told reporters during a recent media tour of the Beijing institute.

Single-crystal superalloys are an irreplaceable core material for advanced aeroengines. Primarily adopted for high-pressure turbine blades, they endure extreme operating conditions including ultra-high temperatures, powerful centrifugal force and gas corrosion.

Outperforming traditional alloys in heat resistance and anti-creep and anti-fatigue properties, such materials directly lift engine thrust, fuel efficiency and overall service life.

Li said that the institute aims to create superalloys with better temperature resistance in part because boosting engine efficiency and thrust-to-weight ratio while lowering fuel consumption will inevitably drive up turbine inlet temperature, and blades lacking sufficient heat resistance will hold back overall performance.

"When developing such alloys, engineers must tackle a host of conflicting requirements, including high-temperature strength, density, cost, castability and coating compatibility," the researcher said.

According to Li, alloys for service in marine environments need strong hot corrosion resistance to withstand external corrosion caused by salt spray, sulfur and chlorine. For this reason, they must be designed in tandem with anti-oxidation and anti-corrosion coatings.

By contrast, he said, alloys applied to miniature drones prioritize light weight and low cost. They also need to adapt to rapid thermal cycling and meet consistency requirements for small, thin-walled components.

China has independently developed single-crystal superalloys over the years and has widely used them in new aeroengines, breaking long-term technological monopolies by foreign companies.

"China has made solid progress in independent development and large-scale use of single-crystal superalloys," Li said. "Overall, we are steadily catching up with the world's leading countries in this arena and have come close to global advanced levels in some fields."

Tech: Global cleaning robot market enters new phase

From page 1

The success is far from an isolated case.

As Chinese manufacturers continue to integrate artificial intelligence, advanced sensors and autonomous navigation into household devices, a growing number of domestically developed cleaning robots are finding enthusiastic buyers around the world.

According to data from the General Administration of Customs, cleaning robots — added as a stand-alone customs classification this year — accounted for 7.75 billion yuan ($1.14 billion) in exports during the first quarter of this year, representing 68.5 percent of China's total robot export value.

In addition, out of total global shipments of 32.72 million units in 2025, Chinese manufacturers accounted for more than half of the global market, according to global market consultancy IDC, with Roborock, Ecovacs, Dreame, Xiaomi and Narwal occupying the top five positions globally in household cleaning robot production.

"The market has entered a new phase, characterized by the dominance of Chinese brands, rapid technological iteration and increasing segmentation across product categories," said Zhao Siquan, a senior analyst at IDC China.

Under IDC's definition, the broader cleaning robot sector encompasses robot vacuums, window-cleaning robots, lawn-mowing robots and pool-cleaning robots.

"Leveraging a complete supply chain, rapid product iteration capabilities and strengths in algorithms, Chinese manufacturers have expanded their presence across virtually all of these segments," Zhao said.

From cordless designs and AI-powered navigation to all-in-one docking stations and multi-device collaboration, many technologies that were first deployed at scale by Chinese manufacturers are now becoming industry standards, she added.

As competition intensifies, leading players are also broadening their ambitions.

"Top manufacturers are evolving from single-category providers into full-scenario home service companies," Zhao said.

"This is because, for consumers, cleaning is not an isolated need, but part of everyday household life. Companies that can deliver services across a wider range of home scenarios will have a greater opportunity to build stronger user engagement and long-term brand loyalty."

Storm cleanup



Residents clean up debris after heavy rain in Tongdao Dong autonomous county, Hunan province, on Sunday. The county raised its rainstorm alert early that morning as torrential rain continued to lash the area. SU YONGZHU / FOR CHINA DAILY



Winning team members pose with their awards at a traditional wooden dragon boat race in Zigui, Hubei province, on Saturday. The champion, runner-up and third-place teams were awarded a cow, a pig and a goat, respectively — prizes symbolizing good fortune. ZHENG JIAYU / FOR CHINA DAILY

Tradition takes center stage during holiday

Cultural heritage celebrated through boat races, rituals and festive foods

By ZOU SHUO
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

Cultural experiences took center stage during the just-concluded Dragon Boat Festival holiday as people from across the country embarked on journeys in search of traditional festivities involving boat races, rituals and seasonal foods, travel agencies said.

Searches for keywords such as "Dragon Boat Festival", "dragon boat" and "*zongzi*" more than tripled from a month earlier on online travel platform Qunar, reflecting the growing appeal of tradition-infused travel and transforming the three-day break into a vibrant celebration of Chinese cultural heritage.

Meanwhile, searches for folk-culture tourism jumped 55 percent year-on-year, according to People's Daily Overseas Edition, citing online travel agency Mafengwo.

Dragon boat racing, the festival's most iconic tradition, has evolved from a spectator event into a participatory cultural attraction. Travel platform Ctrip reported that searches for "dragon boat" rose 41.3 percent week-on-week, with races proving to be a major tourism magnet.

Guangdong province led the trend. Travel-related searches for Foshan increased by 134.9 percent week-on-week, driven by the famed Diejiao dragon boat race, often hailed as the "F1 on water", Ctrip said.

A tourist from Shanxi province, who went to Foshan to see the Diejiao race, said the chants of the boatmen and the roar of the drums made it a spectacularly moving experience.

"No matter how exciting the video is, nothing beats the real experience. I could feel the vitality all around," she said.

Not only in Guangdong, dragon boat events boosted tourism nationwide. Searches for Jingzhou in Hubei province rose 87.5 percent week-on-week, while Zigui in the same province — the hometown of poet Qu Yuan — became a holiday hot spot thanks to its cultural festival, according to Ctrip.

Qu was a legendary poet and minister in the State of Chu during the Warring States Period (475-221 BC). He drowned himself in the Miluo River when he learned that the State of Chu was being defeated by the State of Qin. Legend has it that upon learning of Qu's death, locals took out boats to search for his body, dropping rice dumplings into the river to prevent the body from being eaten by fish. It is to honor this legend that Chinese people hold dragon boat races and make *zongzi* to eat during the festival.

There was huge demand for seasonal Dragon Boat Festival delicacies as well. According to Qunar, food lovers hit the road in droves in search of festive cuisines. Instead of debating on whether to sample sweet or savory rice dumplings known as *zongzi*, hundreds headed to Quanzhou, Fujian province, to sample Minnan-style braised pork *zongzi*, or to Guiyang in Guizhou province to try the unique Buyi ash *zongzi* mixed with plant-ash lye, it said.

Beyond *zongzi*, crayfish from Qianjiang, Hubei province, mackerel dumplings from Qingdao, Shandong province, and cold fermented noodle soup from Lanzhou, Gansu province, were also big draws for food connoisseurs who traveled thousands of miles just to sample the fare. According to Qunar, hotel occupancy in these foodie-friendly destinations — including Qianjiang, Qingdao, Lanzhou, Quanzhou and Guiyang — increased by more than 20 percent during the holiday.

The folk-culture fervor fuels local industries. Miluo in Hunan province — known as the "hometown of dragon boats" — is home to 20 boat-building factories with an annual turnover of more than 200 million yuan ($29.6 million), according to data from the local government.

The finals of the 2026 Hunan Dragon Boat Super League kicked off in Miluo on Thursday. A total of 38 top dragon boat teams from 14 cities and prefectures across the province gathered to compete in the two-day race. Through dragon boat racing and folk traditions, they celebrated the spirit of Qu Yuan and participated in a grand Dragon Boat Festival event that deeply integrated culture, tourism and sports.

One workshop in Luojiang township continued working through the holiday to meet rising orders. Likewise, a *zongzi* producer in Quzici township said the number of orders defied all predictions of a market downturn.

Since late April, the Quzici plant has run at full capacity. Local villager Weng Zhenggui, who lives just 400 meters away and works eight hours a day, made over 1,000 *zongzi* and earned up to 6,000 yuan per month.

The cooking and packing processes in the plant are automated, boosting daily output to 100,000 *zongzi* while ensuring consistent quality. "The automated system precisely controls temperature and pressure, saving labor and improving efficiency and taste consistency," said company chairman Wu Liman.

Inbound tourism showed strong growth during the holiday, with Fliggy reporting that bookings were up more than sixfold year-on-year.

Efforts: Policy continuity also emphasized

From page 1

Zheng Changzhong, a professor at Fudan University, said the experiences of Ningde, Xingtang and China's national poverty alleviation campaign all point to the same logic: Development cannot rely on a single push, and neither can governance performance be measured only by what is immediately visible.

What matters, Zheng said, is whether policies solve real problems, build lasting foundations and continue to benefit the people over time. He said this logic of sustained effort can be seen not only in poverty reduction but also in broader development fields that require long-term planning, policy continuity and steady implementation.

Aisake Valu Eke, former prime minister of Tonga, said China's success in lifting nearly 100 million rural residents out of poverty was "a remarkable achievement for any country".

Eke said China's progress was supported by a system in which plans and strategies are developed by the CPC and carried out across different levels of government, from provinces and cities to villages. Information from the grassroots feeds into development planning, while coordination, monitoring and evaluation help keep implementation on track, he said.

Planning system hailed

Nur Rachmat Yuliantoro, professor of International Relations at Universitas Gadjah Mada in Indonesia, said China's five-year planning system, with its emphasis on long-term strategic planning and policy continuity, is one of the defining features of China's development.

He said that this approach enables China to pursue national goals while delivering immediate benefits to the people and advancing broader development objectives over time, a balance that can be seen in areas such as infrastructure, poverty alleviation, technological innovation, natural resource conservation and cultural heritage preservation.

"At the heart of this planning strategy and balance is sustainability," he said, adding that China has provided valuable experience for many countries, particularly those in the Global South.

Nichita Iris Liga, a member of the Executive Bureau of the Romanian Socialist Party, said that unlike some other countries, where systems and priorities may change every few years with electoral cycles, planning in China is not limited to a single five-year period, but is linked to longer-term goals, including the second centenary goal of building China into a great modern socialist country by the middle of the century.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM

Forum: APEC economies urged to make full use of regional FTAs

From page 1

Ren Hongbin, chairman of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, called on APEC economies to identify more areas of common interest and strengthen open cooperation in industrial and supply chains.

Citing the importance of strengthening regional connectivity, Ren said the APEC economies should make full use of regional free trade agreements such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, while advancing an upgraded APEC connectivity blueprint to facilitate the safe and orderly flow of people, goods, capital and data, as well as foster closer industrial and supply chain cooperation across the region.

China remained the largest trading partner of 13 APEC economies in 2025, with the total value of trade with those economies reaching $3.7 trillion. It accounted for 57.8 percent of China's total foreign trade, data from the Ministry of Commerce showed.

The country has signed 24 free trade agreements or economic and trade deals with 31 countries and regions, including 15 APEC economies. In recent years, it has also completed upgrades to free trade agreements with APEC economies such as Singapore and Peru.

Addressing broader challenges facing the global trading system, Jiang Chenghua, deputy China international trade representative at the Ministry of Commerce, urged the APEC business community to exercise independent judgment, support the multilateral trading system and help safeguard the stability of global industrial and supply chains.

China will continue to expand opening-up in key areas including trade, investment and the cross-border flow of production factors, while the rapid advancement of digital, intelligent and green technologies will further reinforce its position as a long-term destination for global companies seeking investment and growth opportunities, said Jiang.

Key drivers of confidence

Ahead of the fourth China International Supply Chain Expo, which will run from Monday to Friday in Beijing, foreign business executives highlighted China's industrial ecosystem, market demand and supply chain advantages as key drivers of their long-term confidence in the country.

Jim Sutter, CEO of the US Soybean Export Council, said that China is expected to import about 25 million metric tons of soybean from the United States during the marketing year Sept 1, 2025 to Aug 31, 2026, up from 22.6 million tons in the previous marketing year, marking a meaningful recovery.

"The recent announcement regarding tariff reductions is a positive signal, and the US soybean industry looks forward to seeing those commitments translated into concrete policy measures," said Sutter. "Stability in the China-US trade environment benefits both sides, and we are confident in the long-term direction."

He said opportunities for bilateral cooperation extend beyond traditional feed applications to value-added food products and industrial uses, including bio-based plastics, adhesives, lubricants and sustainable construction materials.

A similar sentiment was expressed by Elodie Latour, vice-president for China at French multi-sports brand Decathlon. She said that China's comprehensive industrial ecosystem and complete value chain enable companies to bring products to market faster, creating advantages that are difficult to replicate elsewhere.

With 94.2 percent of the products it sells in the country already produced locally, the French company, backed by four plants and a network of 200 stores across more than 100 cities in China, plans to further increase local production to enhance the responsiveness, sustainability and resilience of its supply chains across the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

CHINA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM

Homebound flow



Passengers move through Luoyang Longmen Railway Station in Henan province on Sunday, the final day of the Dragon Boat Festival holiday. Transport hubs nationwide saw a surge in return trips as holidaymakers head home. Zhang Yixi / for China Daily

Interventions spark decline in youth crime

Reduction in offenses against minors and juvenile cases recorded nationwide

By **ZHOU WENTING** in Shanghai
zhouwenting@chinadaily.com.cn

The number of prosecutions for crimes against minors and reviews of juvenile crime cases by prosecuting agencies nationwide last year decreased by 2.2 percent and 9.8 percent year-on-year, respectively, marking the first "double decline" in the past five years.

Ying Yong, prosecutor-general of the Supreme People's Procuratorate, announced the figures at a symposium marking the 40th anniversary of the country's juvenile prosecution work, held in Shanghai recently.

Ying said he believes the improvements are closely related to a concept proposed by the SPP two years ago that "prevention is protection, and punishment is also a form of salvation".

The concept is based on a balanced approach to punishment and protection in handling juvenile crime cases. It emphasizes protecting minors in accordance with the law and implementing the principles of education, rehabilitation and salvation for juveniles involved in crimes, while also stressing the importance of lawful punishment as a deterrent.

In 2025, more than 16,000 minors nationwide were granted conditional non-prosecution, with 96.5 percent successfully reintegrating into society after completing their probation periods.

Prosecutors said the figure demonstrates prosecuting agencies' commitment to maximizing education and rehabilitation opportunities for juveniles involved in minor, first-time or occasional offenses.

During the same year, the SPP approved the prosecution of 24 juveniles aged 12 to 14 for serious violent crimes, continuing to send a clear message that being young is not a free pass from legal accountability.

Among the cases was one in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, in which a 14-year-old surnamed Zhong was sentenced to life imprisonment for intentionally killing a classmate. Motivated by unfounded suspicions, Zhong fatally stabbed the victim multiple times.

In recent years, prosecuting agencies in some regions have established graded intervention mechanisms in a bid to better prevent juvenile crime. Prosecutors noted that juvenile delinquency often follows a progressive path from minor misconduct to serious misbehavior and eventually to criminal activity.

Under a three-tier prevention mechanism explored in recent years, truancy and internet addiction are addressed by schools and families; serious misconduct, such as theft and provocation, is subject to specialized education; and criminal acts committed by individuals below the age of criminal responsibility may result in specialized corrective education when necessary.

Shanghai is the birthplace of juvenile prosecution work across China. The country's first juvenile prosecution group was established in the city's Changning district four decades ago.

Several mechanisms pioneered by Shanghai's prosecuting agencies — including social investigations into the status of minors' families and guardianship and the presence of appropriate adults during interrogations — have been adopted nationwide.

At the symposium, Li Jianjun, chief prosecutor of the Changning District People's Procuratorate in Shanghai, said that in response to a growing number of juvenile crimes committed by non-residents of Shanghai, local prosecuting authorities, together with public security, courts and judicial administrative agencies, have established a collaborative mechanism to build a corrective education network.

The annual number of juvenile crimes in Shanghai has fallen by more than 80 percent from its peak in 2007. The proportion of juvenile crimes among all criminal offenses has dropped from 9.8 percent to 1.4 percent.

Handcrafted dragon boats return to Zigui with ancient festival tradition

WUHAN — For nearly three months, 70-year-old boat builder Zheng Xianglong worked side by side with his son and a group of craftsmen, most of them in their 60s, transforming cedar wood into 14 dragon boats.

After the boats were finished, Zheng spent another three weeks on the riverbank in Zigui county in Central China's Hubei province. He watched crews train under the summer sun and inspected each vessel before practice sessions. His skin grew darker, but Zheng refused to slack off.

"These boats are my life's work," he said. "If the race wasn't a success, I wouldn't be able to sleep."

As the two-day dragon boat races started on Friday, Zheng witnessed something that he had feared might never happen again: the return of traditional handcrafted wooden dragon boat racing to Zigui, the hometown of the ancient Chinese poet Qu Yuan, after more than 20 years of absence.

Since 2000, lighter and more durable fiberglass boats, widely used in international-standard dragon boat races, have gradually replaced handcrafted wooden vessels across China.

This year, however, local authorities brought the traditional races back to Zigui, describing the move as both a return to cultural roots and a way to strengthen the region's cultural identity.

The revival reflects a broader trend across China, where centuries-old Dragon Boat Festival traditions are drawing new participants, preserving cultural heritage and creating fresh economic opportunities.

New audiences

For millennia, dragon boat racing has been at the heart of the Duanwu Festival, China's first traditional celebration to be inscribed on UNESCO's list of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

It is this iconic boat racing that has made the festival widely known around the world as Dragon Boat Festival.

Closely associated with Qu Yuan, a patriotic poet who lived more than 2,000 years ago, the tradition has long served as a cultural symbol that connects generations. Nowadays, dragon boat racing is finding audiences far beyond its traditional base.

This year, in Guangdong province alone, more than 500 dragon boat competitions involving nearly 100,000 participants were scheduled during the three-day festival break.

In Jiangxi province, teams from around the world gathered for the Nanchang International Dragon Boat Race. Among them was Andreas Willms from Germany, who has competed in the event three times.

"Everyone on a dragon boat has to pull their oars in perfect unison," said Willms, a manager at a German-funded company in Shanghai.

> "We don't have rivers this large in my hometown, but once I sat in the boat, I felt a connection with Qu Yuan. It's as if a culture from thousands of years ago came rushing toward me."
>
> **Zhang Pushao,** a student from Shaanxi province who took part in a competition on the Yangtze River

"This sport relies entirely on teamwork. We compete not just for ourselves, but for the whole team."

Dragon boat racing has been practiced in Germany for nearly four decades, increasingly serving as a cultural bridge between Chinese traditions and international enthusiasts.

Back in Zigui, local teams raced in handcrafted wooden boats while students from 12 Chinese universities competed about 30 kilometers downstream on the Yangtze River using fiberglass vessels.

For Zhang Pushao, a student from Shaanxi province, the experience carried a deeper meaning.

"We don't have rivers this large in my hometown," he said. "But once I sat in the boat, I felt a connection with Qu Yuan. It's as if a culture from thousands of years ago came rushing toward me."

Keeping traditions alive

In Zigui, dragon boat racing is more than a sport. For many residents, Dragon Boat Festival holds even greater significance than the Chinese New Year.

"Unlike most parts of China, where the festival centers on the fifth day of the fifth month of the Chinese calendar, Zigui observes a month-long festival in three stages," said Li Li, an official with Zigui's culture and tourism bureau.

According to Li, one of the most distinctive traditions in Zigui is the hanging of festival couplets, which often contain wishes for good health and references to Qu's patriotic spirit.

Qu's literary legacy also endures. Works, including *Li Sao* and *Tian Wen*, remain widely studied and recited, and annual poetry gatherings have been held in his hometown for generations during the Dragon Boat Festival holiday.

"The festival is also a precious opportunity for my family to get together. Relatives who live away from Zigui would come back. We can make *zongzi* (sticky rice dumplings), watch dragon boat races and enjoy the festive atmosphere," said Tan Guoqing, a local resident.

Beyond the riverbanks, visitors also participated in traditional activities such as making herbal sachets, hanging mugwort and learning Zigui embroidery, a local intangible cultural heritage craft.

Chen Yuqiang, a tourist from Fujian province, traveled to watch the races and visit sites connected to Qu in Zigui.

"In the past, I learned about him from textbooks," Chen said. "Coming here allows me to understand his patriotism and values in a much deeper way."

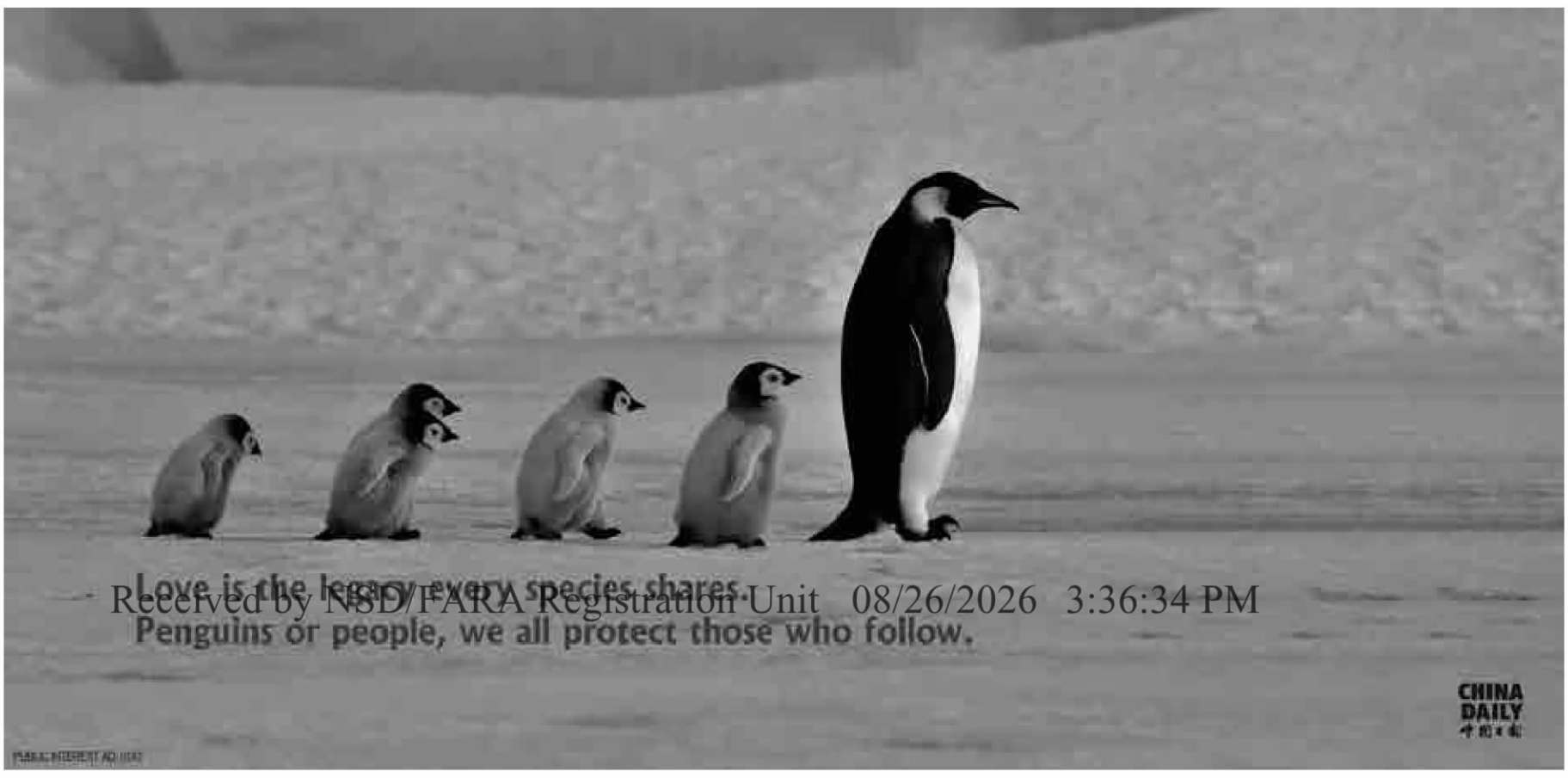
According to Xiang Siqing, a veteran folk dragon boat rower in Xiantao city, Hubei, the revival of traditional wooden dragon boats has also been witnessed in other cities.

"In recent years, more and more villages have restored the wooden dragon boats in Hubei. These traditional boats would gather to parade and compete, creating an incredible festive atmosphere for Dragon Boat Festival," he said.

XINHUA



A competitor takes part in the traditional "grab the duck" folk activity during a national university dragon boat championship in Deyang, West China's Sichuan province, on Saturday, adding a festive cultural touch to the collegiate competition. Hua Xiaofeng / for China Daily



Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM

CHINA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM

Universities cater to AI study demand

Action plan fuels rapid expansion as the need for talent cultivation grows

By **ZOU SHUO**
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

Artificial intelligence has become one of the most popular majors across China's institutions of higher education. More than 600 universities have launched AI undergraduate programs as of 2026, based on data from the Ministry of Education, marking explosive growth from just 35 institutions approved in 2018.

According to financial media outlet Yicai, among China's "Double First-Class" universities — the country's elite tier of institutions of higher education — at least 90 have launched AI-related schools or colleges.

The rapid expansion has been driven by a powerful convergence of national strategy and market demand.

In April, the Ministry of Education, together with four other central government departments, jointly issued an action plan outlining comprehensive measures for AI talent cultivation, application innovation, infrastructure development and ecosystem building.

The plan calls for making AI a public foundational course in higher education, creating new interdisciplinary programs and exploring new models for cultivating top-tier AI talent. The move followed the release of the 2026 undergraduate program catalog by the Ministry of Education in the same month. The catalog added 38 new undergraduate majors, including AI for business, embodied intelligence and brain-computer science and technology.

Universities are not merely adding new departments; they are fundamentally restructuring their academic ecosystems around AI. MyCOS, an education research institute, noted that when institutions establish AI schools, they often do not start from scratch. Instead, they consolidate existing computer science, big data and automation programs into new academic units.

Fudan University has rolled out a three-tiered AI curriculum system aimed at achieving 100 percent coverage across all undergraduate and graduate students, first-level disciplines and majors, according to a report from the university.

Ningbo University now requires every major to offer at least one "AI+" interdisciplinary course. Tsinghua University has emphasized an "AI+X" model that integrates AI across all disciplines, according to the official websites of both universities.

China's core AI industry was valued at more than 1.2 trillion yuan ($177 billion) in 2025, according to a Xinhua News Agency report quoting a senior Chinese official.

Yet demand for talent is far outstripping supply. Projections from McKinsey & Company suggest China could face a shortage of up to 4 million AI professionals by 2030. This "AI+" transformation extends beyond traditional technology fields.

Rao Yanting, an associate researcher at the China National Academy of Education Sciences, told China Central Television that AI is no longer just a major but is increasingly permeating every academic field, including not only science and engineering but also the humanities and social sciences.

However, as universities race to establish AI credentials, prominent voices in academia are raising concerns about sustainability and educational quality.

Fang Fuquan, president of Capital Normal University, told Beijing News that AI is a technology rather than a science.

Just as humanity's understanding of the universe relies on fundamental sciences such as the periodic table and Newton's laws, an excessive focus on technology at the expense of mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology and even humanities and the arts could have unintended consequences, he said.

He warned that people may lack the knowledge to distinguish truth from falsehood in AI-generated videos that defy physical laws.

Fang said that while there is widespread pursuit of quick results and greater emphasis on AI applications, universities must guide students to build a solid foundation in basic sciences alongside technological skills.

"Society should foster an ecosystem where not everyone needs to work on AI applications," he said. "Those who pursue basic sciences, humanities and the arts can also become outstanding talents."

"Science has its contingencies; a discipline that is obscure today may flourish in a few years," he said, calling for a more scientific and forward-looking evaluation system.

During the April action plan announcement, Jin Li, president of Fudan University, said AI models are iterating every few months, and what is popular today may become obsolete tomorrow.

"If universities are still training 'finished-product' talent, that's like clinging to a sword while crossing a river," he said.

Jin often uses a metaphor to describe the type of talent universities should cultivate.

"We should cultivate 'stem cell-style' talents — people who can quickly establish cognitive frameworks in unknown domains, integrate resources across disciplinary boundaries and continuously iterate in the face of failure," he said.

Rite of remembrance



Performers present a ceremonial music-and-dance tribute at a public memorial ceremony honoring Fuxi, the legendary ancestor of Chinese civilization, in Tianshui, Gansu province, on Sunday, which fell on the summer solstice. Known as the birthplace of Fuxi culture, the city hosts the annual rite, which was inscribed on China's national intangible cultural heritage list in 2006. feng lekai / for china daily

DPRK painters in Mudanjiang display artistic bonds

By **ZHOU HUIYING** in Harbin
zhouhuiying@chinadaily.com.cn

Over the past 15 years, more than 40 artists from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have been invited to display their artistry on a canvas at "the creation base of the DPRK painters in China" in Mudanjiang, Heilongjiang province.

The base, which was established in August 2011, is the only one of its kind that the DPRK has set up overseas. It is used to create, exhibit and sell works of art from the DPRK, according to Cheng Wujun, the director of the base. The base serves as a bridge for cultural exchange between China and the DPRK, introducing authentic DPRK paintings to the Chinese market.

Since its establishment, DPRK artists have been stationed at the base for on-site creation and customized artworks tailored to the needs of collectors and businesses.

"The face-to-face creative exchange is unique in the DPRK foreign art cooperation, offering a unique cross-border artistic collaboration," said Cheng.

The DPRK paintings are known for their pure and simple creative philosophy, distinct artistic style and rigorous realism.

Their distinctness portrays realistic styles, unique emotional interpretation and strong feelings of national pride, all of which reflect the DPRK people's aspirations for peace, Cheng said.

The DPRK awards artists titles such as "People's Artist" and "Meritorious Artist", representing the highest standards in the country's art community.

"The base has always undertaken important functions such as the exhibition and sale of the DPRK works, authenticity identification, artist exchange and market regulation," Cheng added. "The base integrates high-quality works from major DPRK creation studios, providing collectors with authoritative certification, unified numbering certificates and authenticity identification services."

In 2012, Cheng was awarded the honorary title of "cultural ambassador for the DPRK-China art exchange" by the DPRK government — the only foreigner to receive the title to date.

Over the years, Cheng has brought contemporary DPRK paintings to exhibitions across various regions in China, including Harbin in Heilongjiang province, Xi'an in Shaanxi province, Guangzhou in Guangdong province, as well as Shanghai and Beijing.

"The DPRK paintings have distinct characteristics — bright and vivid colors, which give a positive and cheerful impression," he said. "The DPRK artists left me with the deepest impression of their professionalism and dedication."

"For instance, before returning to their accommodation after work every night, they ensure that the oil paints, paper and surrounding areas in front of the easel are clean," he said. "Their rigorous professionalism is evident. To paint a sunrise, they will ask the client what time he needs the sunrise to be depicted — 5, 6, or 7 am — as the sun's height, brightness, shadow effects and color differences are vastly different."

In April 2023, Cheng established a new creation base in Dalian, Liaoning province, and exhibited some DPRK paintings at the Dalian Wanzhongyuncang Technology Incubation Park.

"The works created by the DPRK artists displayed in our exhibition hall have attracted many visitors," said Jin Lin, director of the park's business development and operations department. "The natural scenery and folk customs depicted in the paintings are very detailed, with bright colors, making visitors feel calm and have a taste of life and history." According to Jin, nearly 100 works have been sold from the park so far.

Shang Shuke, an art collector in Dalian, started collecting the DPRK paintings around 10 years ago.

"In 2014, a friend introduced me to the base, so I traveled to Mudanjiang to visit the exhibition hall at the base and picked out some works by old DPRK artists from the 1950s and 1960s," he said. "The DPRK artists have deep artistic skills, with exquisite realism, delicate and lively brushwork and elegant and refined color tones."

"The creators are genuinely dedicated to art, not creating for profit, so the works are pure and simple in style, with strong artistic quality," he added.

Another collector, Peng Fengjiao, has expressed a fondness for the gentle and elegant artistic temperament of the DPRK paintings.

"They are not only exquisite art pieces for decorating life but also a stable collectible choice," she said. "Sometimes, I picked some of the DPRK works I collect as cultural gifts to my artistically-inclined friends, which were well received."

Yun Ju-hyok, the DPRK representative at the base, is now engaged in creative work in Dalian, leveraging his unique perspective to gradually introduce a series of outstanding modern and contemporary DPRK artworks to China.

"The DPRK art, based on subjective realism, uses concise, lively and realistic depictions, which are loved by both DPRK and Chinese people," he said. "After coming to China, the DPRK artists were also amazed by the profound influence of Chinese culture."

"In January 2019, I led five DPRK artists to hold an art exhibition in Taiyuan, Shanxi province," he said. "During the visit to the famous historical sites and museums in Taiyuan, they were full of praise for the breadth and depth of Chinese culture, which deeply touched them and gave them a new understanding and appreciation of China."



Visitors appreciate the DPRK paintings on display in the exhibition hall at the Dalian Wanzhong Yuncang Technology Incubation Park in Dalian, Liaoning province, in early June. Provided to China daily

Robo greeting



A humanoid robot shakes hands with a student at Hangzhou Anjilu Experimental School in Zhejiang province on Saturday as candidates arrive for Hangzhou's senior high school entrance examination. This year's exam took place over the weekend, with results to be announced on June 30. Xu Hui / for China Daily

Chifeng model offers insight on land rehabilitation

By **ZHOU WENTING** in Shanghai
zhouwenting@chinadaily.com.cn

China's experiences in grassland ecosystem restoration and desertification control, particularly in Chifeng, Inner Mongolia autonomous region, have provided valuable insights for global land rehabilitation and grassland conservation, international experts said at a conference recently held in the city.

Experts highlighted the country's achievements in desertification prevention, related scientific research and the use of technologies such as artificial intelligence and multi-source remote sensing.

The three-day event, held last week, brought together experts from China, South Africa, Japan and the Netherlands.

Participants engaged in interdisciplinary and cross-regional dialogue to explore innovative approaches to grassland protection and comprehensive desertification control, seeking to contribute scientific solutions for land degradation management, ecological civilization building and global sustainable development.

The event was jointly organized by Shanghai Jiao Tong University's School of Design, the university's Inner Mongolia Research Institute and the desert scientific exploration committee of the China Association for Scientific Expedition.

Johns Muleso Kharika, a representative of the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, emphasized the need for the international community to support policymaking backed by scientific evidence. He called for stronger cooperation between the Global North and Global South, as well as among international partners, to advance practical actions in land protection and grassland restoration.

"Effective management of desertification requires integrating ecological restoration with innovation in social mechanisms. The ecological restoration practices in Inner Mongolia and China as a whole can serve as important references for global desert management," said Michael Meadows, former president of the International Geographical Union and an emeritus professor at the University of Cape Town in South Africa.

During the event, experts conducted field studies in the Horqin Sandy Land, where they observed innovative sand-control models that combine road construction, sand stabilization and industrial development. They also visited a cold and arid apple and pear breeding base in Chifeng that preserves more than 90 varieties of economic forest resources.

At a newly established cherry experimental field, experts discussed the introduction and collection of superior local varieties with staff members.

The field visits showcased Chifeng's innovative practices in sand control and seed breeding, providing references for regional ecological management and the high-quality development of the forestry and grassland industries, participants said.

Piao Ying, an official in Chifeng, said that despite notable progress, ecological management remains a challenging task for a city located at the junction of the Horqin and Hunshandake sandy lands.

"The city must make better use of technology to safeguard the northern ecological barrier, move from experience-based management to precision-targeted interventions and strive to develop governance models that are replicable and scalable," he said.

Some experts also proposed new governance pathways. Li Xiaosong, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Aerospace Information Research Institute, said large vertical models for sand control could help address issues such as insufficient scientific zoning, weak process supervision and inadequate decision-making support.

"By integrating remote sensing, monitoring, knowledge databases and socioeconomic data, such models can support sand hazard diagnosis, governance plan generation, process supervision and effectiveness evaluation, paving the way for a shift from experience-driven management to precision and intelligent sand-control governance," he said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM

CHINA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM





From left: A micro-drama is filmed at a production hub in Guangfeng district, Shangrao, Jiangxi province. The production hub, which used to be the Guangfeng Cigarette Factory, features more than 360 filming scenes, such as a post office. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Micro-dramas reshape China's film economy

From streamlined production to AI, costs are being slashed industry-wide

By ZHAO RUINAN
in Shangrao, Jiangxi
zhaoruinan@chinadaily.com.cn

China's micro-drama industry has transitioned from a localized internet trend into a massive, industrialized economic driver, pulling in millions of yuan in regional investments while facing immediate disruption from generative artificial intelligence.

Driven by extreme turnaround times, regional manufacturing centers are rapidly converting idle infrastructure into high-capacity production hubs such as Jiangxi province's Guangfeng district, which alone generated an output value exceeding 500 million yuan ($74 million) in 2025 by transforming old factories into specialized, rapid-fire filming bases.

Pang Daoming needed five days, 600,000 yuan and dozens of background actors to finish a micro-drama set in China's Republican era in Shangrao, Jiangxi province.

The Shanghai-based producer had come to the micro-drama production hub in Guangfeng, where a former factory has been turned into rows of period streets, modern offices, hospital wards, villas, village houses and European-style sets.

Production hub

The production hub was converted from the former Guangfeng Cigarette Factory. The site covers more than 8 hectares and has over 360 filming scenes. It is designed to host up to 40 crews and more than 2,000 cast and crew members working at the same time.

For a business built on speed, the calculation was simple. The scenes were ready. Background actors could be found quickly. Different crews could shoot in different corners of the hub at the same time.

"The base has newly built scenes from the 1970s and 1980s, which fit the period drama we are shooting," Pang said.

His crew planned to finish the current production in five days, before moving on to another one that would take about six days.

Pang entered the micro-drama business in July 2023. His company has produced about 70 to 80 micro-dramas. A crew like his may need dozens of background actors a day, with daily pay generally ranging from 100 to 300 yuan.

One of the people who entered the industry through such jobs is Zhou Tao.

Before the micro-drama crews arrived, Zhou, 38, ran a small shop near the production hub. He had spare time, and as more crews came to Guangfeng, he decided to try working as a background actor.

His first role was a villager in a period drama. The job lasted three days.

"It felt new," Zhou said. "I never thought there would be a day when I would become an actor."

At first, he was nervous. By his fourth production, he had been given a role with lines. When he faced the camera, his mind went blank. But the shoot went smoothly, and the experience pulled him further into the work.

By the end of March 2025, Zhou had become a background actors coordinator, helping crews match background actors with different scenes. By July, he had put himself fully into the business. He tried different roles, auditioned for speaking parts, and began watching other micro-dramas and television series to study how people acted.

"I was never this hardworking when I was at school," he said.

At his busiest, Zhou said he spent more than 20 days a month on set, sometimes as many as 25. His monthly income could reach 8,000 to more than 10,000 yuan.

For some younger locals, the work is less stable but still attractive.

Ding Junyan, born in 2007 in Shangrao, joined the local actors' association after graduating from high school. She first saw the opportunity on a recruitment app.

"I wanted to be an actress when I was a child," Ding said. "Even though I only appear in micro-dramas for a few minutes, I am still happy."



A classroom set at micro-drama production hub in Guangfeng district, Shangrao, Jiangxi province.

She now works about 10 days a month on average and earns about 5,000 to 6,000 yuan.

Rao Wenhua, head of the Guangfeng Actors Association, said the association has more than 1,000 registered actors, over 80 percent of them from Shangrao. Ordinary background actors usually earn 100 to 300 yuan a day, while those with lines or specific performance requirements can earn at least 300 yuan, and sometimes up to 1,000 yuan per day.

The association helps organize actors, connect them with crews, provide free training and offer support in labor disputes, Rao said.

Impact of AI

What is happening in Guangfeng is one version of a wider industry shift.

At Hengdian World Studios in Dongyang, Zhejiang province, the rise of vertical-screen dramas has added a new layer to an established film industry. Hengdian received more than 2,300 vertical micro-drama crews in the first seven months of 2025, surpassing the total for the whole of 2024, according to data cited by Securities Times.

The pressure on space has changed how the film town is used. A service company official told the newspaper that micro-drama crews could be seen shooting outside his office window every day. Even an office building with a glass facade had been used repeatedly as a stand-in for airport and railway station scenes.

An actor identified by the newspaper as Chen Lin said schedules could be packed closely together. Sometimes, he said, he would finish one production one day and enter a new crew the next.

In Hangzhou's Linping district, the model looks different. There, the Linying Factory, a professional micro-drama production base, has more than 50 indoor filming scenes, along with dormitories, canteens, costume and makeup services and an actors' guild. The district has also linked the factory with old streets, ancient towns and other local locations to form a wider filming network.

The pattern is similar in different places: a short production cycle requires concentrated scenes, fast coordination and a local labor pool that can be called in quickly. For crews, the question is no longer only where a story should be set, but where it can be completed at the required speed and cost.

But the same industry that brought crews and actors into these bases is changing quickly.

Zhou said he has already felt the impact of AI this year.

"AI has indeed brought an impact to micro-dramas," he said. "It has shortened the production cycle and greatly reduced costs. The income of background actors has also been affected, and some people are getting fewer jobs."

Still, he does not think live performers will disappear.

"On the other hand, it is also pushing micro-dramas toward higher quality," he said. "Some platforms are also checking the AI content in dramas. I don't think AI performance can replace real people for now."

Fang Liqi, a producer at Damahou, a micro-drama production company shooting in Shangrao, sees the shift from the company side.

Fang's company moved into the Guangfeng hub at the end of February 2025 after spending about a year shooting in Yingtan, another city in Jiangxi. Before settling in Shangrao, the company had inspected locations across the country and chose Guangfeng for its scenes, policy support and overall production conditions.

The company produced more than 120 micro-dramas in Shangrao in 2025 and plans to produce about 200 this year. It is now also developing AI-generated micro-dramas.

Fang said an AI-produced costume drama may cost 200,000 to 300,000 yuan, while a live-action modern drama may cost 300,000 to 400,000 yuan. An AI version of a modern drama could cost just over 100,000 yuan, he said.

The debate is no longer only whether AI can make a drama. It is what kind of people and jobs will still be needed when parts of the process become cheaper and faster.

Wei Qintao, who is in charge of quality of micro-dramas at Hongguo, told People's Daily that the market had "over-worried or over-interpreted" the impact of AI micro-dramas on live-action productions.

"Live-action dramas are still our basic market," Wei said, adding that he did not believe they had reached the end of their growth or entered decline.

At the same time, Wei noted that mid-level actors, costume and makeup workers, lighting technicians and camera operators face uncertainty as AI changes the sector.

Shen Yang, a professor at Tsinghua University's School of Journalism and Communication, said that in the AI era, human value lies partly in the answers found by asking the right questions.

"What matters most is aesthetics and taste," Shen said.

Overseas market

For production companies, the pressure is also coming from platform policies.

Fang said that before this year, some platforms offered guaranteed payments of 300,000 to 500,000 yuan or more for approved projects. Some companies secured projects and then subcontracted production to others at lower prices. That could bring more projects into the market, but quality was often uneven. Many companies that relied on that model closed earlier this year, he said.

"We make live-action dramas, and we also make AI dramas," Fang said. "This market is still worth doing. In the future, content will still be king. As long as the content is good, whatever the form, audiences will pay for it."

For Pang, the next question is not only how to produce faster in China, but where the audience will come from.

His company has launched an overseas app carrying Chinese micro-dramas translated into Southeast Asian languages. The platform has more than 100,000 paying members, he said.

The overseas market is growing quickly. App data analysis firm Sensor Tower said global in-app purchase revenue for short-drama apps approached $700 million in the first quarter of 2025, nearly four times the level of a year earlier. Southeast Asia was one of the fast-growing markets, with downloads in the region rising 61 percent quarter-on-quarter to nearly 87 million in the same period.

For Pang's company, the next plan is to shoot locally in countries such as Indonesia and Thailand, using local actors and stories closer to local audiences.

"At the beginning, we put Chinese micro-dramas overseas after translating them into Southeast Asian languages," Pang said. "But later we still want to go there, shoot locally, use local actors and make stories that local audiences like."

Scientists deploy precision tools to revive mangrove wetlands nationwide

By Li Menghan in Xiamen, Fujian
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

The Ministry of Natural Resources has unveiled an accelerated ecological framework for the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026–30), mandating a shift toward systematic governance and precision marine restoration powered by standardized, high-tech engineering toolkits.

At the center of this national strategy is a newly cataloged mangrove restoration technique developed by the Third Institute of Oceanography. The system was recently selected by the Ministry and the National Forestry and Grassland Administration as one of 35 proven innovations anchoring China's latest ecological catalog, which spans 10 critical fields from invasive species control to carbon monitoring.

Researchers in Fujian province are already employing this holistic "coastal armor" approach to ecological restoration.

When preparing to restore more than 13 hectares of mangrove forest on a mudflat in Ningde, they did not immediately reach for saplings. Instead, they began by giving the coastal area a comprehensive assessment.

"Just like a doctor running examinations before treatment, we test soil particle size, seawater salinity and tidal water levels, and measure the elevation of the mudflat," said Chen Shunyang, an engineer at the Third Institute of Oceanography of the Ministry of Natural Resources.

"Only by this physical checkup can we determine whether, where, and how to plant the mangrove — securing the survival and growth performance of mangroves," Chen said, adding that armed with these data, the team can draw up a customized restoration design for each site.

At the Xiatanwei restoration site in Xiamen, Fujian province, a composite plant community is well established. What was once a degraded shoreline is now a thriving marine ecosystem — a transformation that the researchers described as "putting multiple layers of armor on the shore" by combining tree-type and shrub-type mangrove species for plantation.



Technicians conduct an environmental survey for a mangrove restoration project in Ningde, Fujian province, on May 28.

PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"In previous restoration practices, single-species plantation made the mangrove a solo fighter. Now, trees and shrubs resist waves together — the tall trees reduce the main force of wind and waves, while the shrubs further contribute to the wave attenuation, stabilizing the sediment and providing more habitats for benthic fauna," said Chen Guangcheng, a researcher at the institute.

The recognition of the mangrove restoration technique rests on a growing track record of ecological transformation. Chen Jiahui, an associate researcher of the institute, described the restored wetland as "a bustling marine paradise", with tree canopies serving as "top-floor terraces" for birds and insects, trunks and branches providing climbing corridors for snails and crabs, and understory shrubs offering more attachment space for snails.

Chen Guangcheng also emphasized the composite plant community's importance in enhancing carbon sequestration.

"Traditional single-species planting relied solely on the tree canopy for photosynthesis, leaving the space below unused. In the composite mangrove communities, both the upper canopy and understory shrubs contribute to photosynthetic carbon sequestration, while the complex aboveground structure reduces the tidal exportation of fallen leaves to increase organic matter supply for soil carbon accumulation, further enhancing the wetland's role in carbon sequestration," Chen Guangcheng said.

To measure soil carbon stock, the team developed a method to remove the roots from different depth layers along the soil cores, preventing living roots from being double counted as soil organic carbon.

This could improve the precision of mangrove carbon stock estimation, providing a reliable foundation for ecosystem carbon sequestration accounting.

Building on the long-term research and practices, researchers have established a carbon sequestration monitoring and accounting framework that underpins the national project methodology for mangrove afforestation under China's voluntary greenhouse gas emissions reduction program.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM

Editor's note: *As protection of the planet's flora, fauna and resources becomes a global priority, China Daily is publishing a series of stories to illustrate the country's commitment to safeguarding the natural world.*

Former barren county transformed into beacon of sustainable economy

By **ZHU XINGXIN** in Youyu, Shanxi and **CHEN LIANG**

Seven decades ago, international environmental experts studying the wind-scoured plains of Youyu county in North China's Shanxi province reached a bleak conclusion: the area was entirely uninhabitable, and the total resettlement of its population was the only viable option. Whipped by brutal Siberian winds, blinding sandstorms routinely choked the air, burying entire villages under shifting desert dunes.

Today, that same desolate wasteland has been transformed into a lush, green oasis. This historic environmental reversal was globally spotlighted when, in 2024, Youyu county clinched the prestigious New Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements Award at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, recognized as a premier global blueprint for desertification control.

Youyu's transformation is a multigenerational epic of political discipline and human endurance. The story begins in 1949, with Zhang Ronghuai, Youyu's first Party secretary. He understood a simple truth: "If Youyu wants prosperity, we must stop the wind and sand. And to stop the wind and sand, we must plant more trees."

He initiated a series of patriotic tree-planting campaigns, rallying the people to action. The first sapling, a Chinese cottonwood (or Simon's poplar), was planted just outside the old county town gate, a defiant flag planted in the face of the encroaching desert.

However, the bitter winters and scorching summers made tree planting a constant battle. In the 1960s, the fourth and fifth county Party secretaries focused their efforts on the Huangshawa sand depression, a particularly challenging area.

Their initial attempts resulted in heartbreak, with over 90,000 saplings failing to survive because the non-native poplars planted drank too much water and died. But they learned from their mistakes, adapting their planting methods and persevering. By 1964, they had successfully planted more than 13,333 hectares, effectively stabilizing the shifting dunes.

Each subsequent leader built upon the work of their predecessors, innovating and adapting to the challenges.

In the 1970s, hardier tree species like pitch pine, larch and Mongolian scots pine were introduced as part of the Three-North Shelterbelt Forest Program, expanding the afforestation area to over 73,833 hectares.

According to the current Youyu Party secretary, Ma Zhanwen, 21 consecutive local leaders have maintained the same ecological priority, leading communities "one shovel and two hands at a time". To date, afforestation efforts have blanketed more than 113,000 hectares of Youyu with 130 million trees. The county's forest coverage rate has dramatically soared from a microscopic 0.3 percent in 1949 to an astonishing 57 percent, making it the first territory in Shanxi province to successfully reforest all its barren mountains.

Wang Zhanfeng, a 75-year-old villager, has planted 200 hectares of trees over the last 44 years. "My hands feel like tree bark," he said, gazing up at the towering trees he helped cultivate. "I've dedicated my life to this. I can't let all this effort go to waste. I have to keep planting, one tree after another, year after year."

The legacy continues with younger generations. Li Jie, a 31-year-old teacher at the Youyu Cadre Academy, has spent nearly a decade sharing the story of Youyu with thousands of visitors. "Shovels are heirlooms in every household in Youyu," she said. "They are a testament to the memory and legacy of generations of Youyu people."

She recounted that on her 10th birthday, her grandmother showed her the first small pine tree she had planted, introducing her to the legacy of Youyu's fight against the desert. That is what strengthened her decision to dedicate herself to this land and carry forward the Youyu spirit.

The transformation of Youyu has created new opportunities. The county is now using its lush environment, rich culture and cool climate to become a cultural tourism and health destination. Local businesses are developing innovative sea buckthorn products, boosting livestock farming and transforming ecological advantages into economic benefits.

"The development achievements of Youyu stem from the simple aspiration of allowing the people to survive and live a good life," said Liang Pengwei, assistant researcher at the Shanxi Provincial Academy of Social Sciences, who is also an editor of a book on the story of Youyu.

Contact the writers at zhuxingxin@chinadaily.com.cn



Students and residents take part in a tree-planting drive in Youyu, Shanxi province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



A teacher and students unveil a model of a Chinese white dolphin that was donated to Xiamen Binhai Primary School in Xiamen, Fujian province, by the Xiamen Chinese White Dolphin and Amphioxus Nature Reserve. The school is the city's first to introduce marine ecology preservation into its curriculum. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Tri-city alliance launched to protect Xiamen's dolphins

Coordinated efforts aim to improve public awareness of 'sea pandas'

By **ZHANG YI** in Xiamen, Fujian and **HU MEIDONG** in Fuzhou

Three neighboring coastal cities in East China's Fujian province — Xiamen, Quanzhou and Zhangzhou — have recently launched a landmark cross-regional collaboration to protect the Chinese white dolphins in their shared waters.

Xiamen is China's only major city where these marine mammals, under first-class State protection and affectionately nicknamed the "giant pandas of the sea", live right alongside bustling urban life and can be spotted occasionally by residents. It is estimated that around 80 Chinese white dolphins inhabit Xiamen's waters.

"Protecting white dolphins requires pulling the entire society together," said Xu Jing, an official at the Xiamen Chinese White Dolphin and Amphioxus Nature Reserve Affairs Center. "We focus on mobilizing volunteers to join our rescue and monitoring teams."

As the dolphins frequently migrate out of Xiamen's waters into neighboring areas, local enforcement teams officially upgraded this cross-regional mechanism last month to formally institutionalize real-time data sharing, joint maritime patrols and emergency rescues, according to Xu.

The upgraded mechanism also aims to further raise public awareness, including educating citizens on what to do and how to call for help if they encounter a stranded dolphin.

In August 2024, people from both Xiamen and Quanzhou jointly handled the emergency rescue of Le Bao, a 4-year-old female dolphin that swam out of Xiamen and became stranded on a beach in Quanzhou's waters.



A docent introduces the Chinese white dolphin preservation work in Xiamen at a museum in the city.

Local residents reported the stranding, triggering a rapid emergency chain that brought experts from the dolphin reserve in Xiamen and the Third Institute of Oceanography, Ministry of Natural Resources, based in Xiamen, to the scene for a joint medical response.

Following more than 40 days of intensive care at a nearby aquatic rescue station, Le Bao fully recovered and was successfully released back into her home environment in Xiamen's waters in September 2024. She was later named Le Bao after the facility, a name that also carried the rescuers' wishes for her to live a joyful life in the future.

"Le Bao's survival was a miracle made possible by an unbroken chain of rapid actions across two cities," Xu said. "If any single link had failed, this successful release would not have been possible."

The dolphin population's stable presence also stems from Xiamen's long-term ecological initiatives, including a complete clearance of marine aquaculture facilities to restore the coastal ecosystem to its primitive state, she said.

The city even re-engineered a tunnel project from an original above-water bridge design into an underground tunnel, heavily increasing capital investments solely to preserve the dolphins' habitats, she added.

"As a flagship barometer of our marine ecosystem, their presence represents Xiamen's outstanding achievements in biodiversity conservation," Xu said.

Local paddleboarders, open-water swimmers and wildlife photographers in Xiamen have voluntarily established a grassroots monitoring network, capturing footage during unplanned encounters to support scientific research.

Chen Yu, a local open-water swimmer and photographer who has been tracking the species via aerial drone in recent years, said that public engagement is deeply rooted in local tradition. The dolphins are traditionally called "Mazu fish" after the sea goddess, and are regarded by residents as guardians of the waters.

"Since childhood, we have been told by our elders that the waters are safe wherever the white dolphins appear," Chen said. "For local residents, these animals are seen as traditional protectors of the sea."

These photographic sightings provide critical data for marine biologists. Images documenting maternal behaviors, such as a mother lifting her calf to breathe or teaching it to hunt, assist researchers in managing a digital profiling system that tracks family dynamics and newborn calves.



Star Chinese white dolphin Da Bai is seen swimming with her calf in Xiamen in 2020.

In April, an aerial drone photographer captured footage of a newborn calf swimming closely alongside Da Bai, a well-documented wild female dolphin frequently seen nursing newborns in Xiamen's waters.

"When we photograph a dolphin year after year and see it is still there, we know it is growing up healthy and strong," Chen said. "Every encounter still makes me feel incredibly lucky."

Marine experts have introduced a science-based maritime code of conduct, instructing water sports enthusiasts and photographers to maintain a respectful distance instead of chasing the animals.

Lin Yuan, a local middle school teacher who is a paddleboarder, regularly records her encounters with the animals in the sea to use as educational materials in her classroom.

"I bring my own dolphin encounter videos to share with my students," Lin said. "We must cultivate an awareness of biodiversity conservation in children so they can continue to see these marine creatures in their local environment in the future."

Contact the writers at zhangyi1@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

Digital drive supports planting of millions of trees

By **HOU LIQIANG** in Beijing and **HU DONGMEI** in Yinchuan

China's private-sector, internet-based afforestation efforts have reached a massive scale milestone, demonstrating how gamified digital incentives have been successfully integrated into the country's broader national ecological strategies.

Since 2017, under a partnership between tree planting initiative Ant Forest and the China Green Foundation, 386 million trees have been planted across about 44 projects spanning seven provincial-level regions, including Gansu and Qinghai provinces and the Inner Mongolia autonomous region, said Zhang Quanzhou, the foundation's secretary general.

According to Zhang, the partnership saw more than 200,000 hectares of desertified land treated in that time, with about 90 percent of it located in key areas of the country's Three-North Shelterbelt Forest Program, which is the world's largest afforestation endeavor.

"This program has transformed the 'green energy' of hundreds of millions of netizens into tangible ecological outcomes," he said.

Ant Forest was launched in August 2016 by internet financial services firm Ant Financial, an affiliate of Alibaba Group.

The app rewards users with virtual energy — which they can use to have trees planted — when they take low-carbon actions such as walking or using public transport instead of driving, or buying things online, which avoids the need for paper receipts.

The amount of energy needed to plant different trees varies. After receiving an application from an app user who has saved enough energy, Ant Forest will plant a real tree.

To ensure that digital goodwill translates into lasting ecological impact, Zhang said the foundation has built a long-term mechanism for public participation.

In collaboration with the National Greening Committee, it launched a nationwide online platform that allows citizens to adopt, monitor and track tree growth via their mobile phones, making voluntary tree-planting a year-round, regular activity.

Zhang also said that the foundation has established a clear responsibility chain, supported by technologies such as satellite remote sensing, third-party inspections and digital oversight.

Moreover, a collaborative governance model has taken shape in the country, featuring government guidance, corporate donations, public participation, foundation execution, and oversight by forestry and grassland authorities, he added.

A recent commentary in the journal Nature said that Ant Forest is an example of how digital incentives can be used to inspire the public and generate funding.

Since its launch, the gamified initiative with more than 500 million users has funded more than 619 million drought-resistant trees and shrubs, the article said.

Li Meng, a 28-year-old map data collector and dedicated Ant Forest user, embodies the power of digital incentives to drive lasting behavioral change. To date, Li has planted 1,120 trees across Ant Forest's forested areas since October 20, 2016.

His motivation is deeply rooted in a sense of shared responsibility.

"Western China has a sparse population yet silently protects the ecological environment of the eastern region," he said. "Whether we live in the east or the west, everyone should consciously protect the environment."

When personally participating in a tree planting activity in Alxa League in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region, Li observed saplings at different growth stages — from newly planted seedlings to mature, thickening saxaul trees.

"It's like the development of public welfare: gradual, persistent and built on dedicated effort," he said. "It will slowly grow stronger, better and better."



A decoration marking Ant Forest's collectible "green energy" is displayed at a green lifestyle fair in Shanghai in September 2024. XING YUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Contact the writers at houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM

COMMENT

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM

Editorials

Brussels' protectionist moves risk being costly backfiring gamble to EU

If a trade surplus is automatically interpreted as proof of unfairness, then many European Union exports — from automobiles to pharmaceuticals — could be subjected to the same logic elsewhere.

The EU justifies its trade surplus with the United States as a natural outcome of market forces, even as Washington accuses it of exploiting the US market. Yet, in a striking double standard, the EU now adopts the same logic in reverse. Framing its trade deficit with China as evidence of "victimhood", while overlooking the very market dynamics it so readily champions elsewhere.

The EU often lectures the world about the virtues of open markets, rules-based trade and economic integration. Yet Brussels' proposed Industrial Accelerator Act, along with other bills and policies, suggests that the bloc is increasingly tempted to abandon the very principles that helped build its prosperity.

Presented as a tool to "strengthen industrial competitiveness" and "accelerate the green transition", the IAA carries a less advertised objective: reducing China's role in Europe's strategic industries. Through public procurement restrictions, enhanced foreign investment screening and various "Made in Europe" preferences, the legislation marks a shift from openness toward industrial protectionism. It is nothing but an EU adaptation of "America First".

That is precisely why the concerns submitted by the China Chamber of Commerce to the EU on Thursday deserve serious consideration. The chamber, representing more than 1,000 Chinese enterprises operating in the EU, argues that several provisions of the IAA create legal uncertainty. More important, they threaten to make the EU's green transition slower and more expensive rather than faster and more competitive.

EU policymakers should realize that engaging with China brings opportunities to global enterprises. Multinational corporations are no longer peripheral players in China — they are integral to its industrial ecosystem. This is reflected in the numbers: foreign direct investment in the world's second-largest economy has topped $100 billion annually for 16 years running.

According to a report released at the seventh Qingdao Multinationals Summit on Tuesday, the surveyed multinational corporations in China allocated 14.3 percent of their global R&D spending to the country last year. At the same time, new foreign-invested enterprises in scientific research and technical services jumped 27.2 percent year-on-year to 14,000 — underscoring a deepening technological embrace of the Chinese market.

Divorced from the reality, however, the language of "de-risking", "reducing dependency" and correcting "trade imbalances" has become increasingly commonplace among some of the EU's political circles. Recent discussions among EU leaders have focused heavily on developing new restrictive trade instruments targeting China.

International trade is a matter of mutual choice. EU consumers purchase Chinese goods and EU companies source from Chinese supply chains because they are efficient and offer cost-performance advantages.

Trade balances are the outcome of market forces, industrial structures and consumer preferences. China has never deliberately sought a trade surplus with the EU. Treating a trade deficit as evidence of "economic victimhood" is a dangerous oversimplification.

The EU's competitiveness challenges stem from high energy costs, sluggish productivity growth, fragmented capital markets and regulatory burdens. Restricting Chinese investment will not solve these problems. Nor will excluding Chinese companies from procurement projects make European companies globally competitive.

Instead, it will lead to retaliatory measures, uncertainty and lost opportunities. China has made clear that it will take necessary measures to safeguard its legitimate rights and interests should discriminatory restrictions become EU policy.

But a more constructive path remains available. Despite growing tensions, China and the EU continue to maintain regular communication on economic and trade issues, as He Yadong, spokesman for China's Ministry of Commerce, said on Thursday. The talks in Brussels on June 9 between Ling Ji, vice-minister of commerce and deputy international trade representative of China, and Ditte Juul Jorgensen, director-general for trade and economic security at the European Commission, were "in-depth and comprehensive" and had helped lay the groundwork for ministerial consultations to be held soon, the Commerce Ministry spokesman added.

The ministerial consultations deserve strengthening to deepen mutual understanding.

A comprehensive and objective perspective is essential for the EU in managing its economic ties with China. Past efforts to resolve disputes, from electric vehicles to steel, have consistently shown that negotiation is the rational way forward in addressing bilateral trade frictions.

Should Brussels double down on a de facto "EU First" agenda, it may end up undermining the competitiveness it purports to protect. And when the dust settles, it will be EU businesses, consumers and future industrial strength that pay the price.

All relevant parties must uphold MoU terms

The signing of the first-phase Memorandum of Understanding between the United States and Iran offers not only hope for a ceasefire but also for further negotiations aimed at achieving lasting peace.

As the international community watches closely, it is imperative that all parties involved, including Israel, commit to upholding this agreement and work diligently toward regional stability.

The text of the MoU covers several key areas, including the cessation of hostilities, maritime security and navigation, reconstruction and economic assistance, sanctions relief, nuclear-related commitments and an executive mechanism. It states that the two sides commit to negotiating and achieving the final deal in a maximum of 60 days, extendable with mutual consent.

But the road to peace is rarely straight. Iran's announcement that it would close the Strait of Hormuz, citing Israel's continued attacks in Lebanon as a violation of the ceasefire deal, underscores the challenges in implementing the MoU.

The US-Iran negotiations that are scheduled to open in Burgenstock, Switzerland, are a testament to both parties' willingness to carry on the momentum of the MoU to continue dialogue. But much remains to be done to hold up the current fragile ceasefire and lay the groundwork for a final agreement.

The central question now is whether the US has both the genuine willingness and the practical capability to rein in Israel — especially given that Tel Aviv has made clear its determination to act of its own accord.

While Israel has agreed to a ceasefire in Lebanon, its refusal to withdraw from Lebanon poses a continued threat to peace. Reportedly, Israel is conducting negotiations with the US on maintaining its deployment of troops in southern Lebanon. For the MoU to succeed, Israel must cease its attacks and withdraw its forces, creating an environment conducive to negotiations.

Given the current challenges in implementing the 14-point memorandum and the fragile nature of the US-Iran ceasefire, the US-Iran negotiations, which were originally supposed to focus on the Iran nuclear issue, might now include discussions on the Lebanon ceasefire and the Strait of Hormuz.

The US-Iran talks may be in the spotlight, but their fate will be decided in the US-Israel negotiations. Tehran's revival of the Strait of Hormuz threat was to prompt the US to restrain Israel. The success of the talks in Switzerland hinges on the ability of all parties to adhere to their commitments and avoid actions that could derail the process.

China hopes that both the US and Iran will approach the second-phase negotiations with a rational and pragmatic attitude, working together toward positive outcomes.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said at a regular news briefing on Thursday that China welcomes the signing of the MoU and hopes that all relevant parties "will uphold the spirit of contract and implement it in good faith".

Beijing has been working for an end to the fighting since the outbreak of the conflict, demonstrating its commitment to peace through various diplomatic initiatives. The four-point proposal it put forward outlines a clear vision for safeguarding peace and stability, emphasizing good neighborliness, development, security and cooperation.

The path to lasting peace in the Middle East is fraught with challenges, but the MoU between the US and Iran offers a glimmer of hope as it provides the scaffolding for talks to end the conflict. For this hope to be translated into reality, all parties, including Israel, must prioritize peace and stability.

China stands ready to support these efforts, but the success of the forthcoming negotiations depends on the willingness of the parties directly involved to approach discussions with rationality and pragmatism.

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

New measures to enhance data security governance

China's digital economy has entered a stage in which data have become a key factor of production, an important strategic resource and a vital driver of innovation. Against this backdrop the release of measures to assess network data security risks marks a key step in strengthening the country's data security governance framework.

The measures, released on Thursday, will come into force on Aug 20. They aim to provide a systematic framework for identifying, analyzing and evaluating risks associated with network data and data-processing activities. The regulations require handlers of important data to conduct annual risk assessments while encouraging processors of general data to carry out assessments at least once every three years. They also establish clearer responsibilities for regulators, enterprises and third-party assessment institutions.

Since the enactment of the Data Security Law in 2021 and the issuance of regulations on network data security management, China has steadily built a comprehensive system for governing data resources. Yet a key question remained: how can enterprises effectively identify risks before incidents occur? The new measures answer that question by institutionalizing risk assessment as a routine and preventive mechanism. They transform data security governance from a reactive model focused on incident response into a proactive model centered on risk prevention and early warning.

The rapid expansion of artificial intelligence, cloud computing, industrial internet platforms and cross-border data flows has increased the complexity of data governance. As digital technologies penetrate every sector of the economy, data-related risks can quickly evolve into broader economic and social risks if left unchecked. The new measures therefore serve as an institutional safeguard for the high-quality development of the sectors concerned.

For industries and enterprises, the effect will be both immediate and long term.

For sectors that process large volumes of important data — including telecommunications, finance, energy, transportation, healthcare and industrial manufacturing — the measures will accelerate the establishment of more mature data governance systems. Enterprises will need to strengthen internal controls, improve data inventories, clarify data classification mechanisms and enhance monitoring of the entire data life cycle. While compliance costs may rise in the short term, the long-term benefits will include stronger resilience against cyberattacks, data leaks and operational disruptions.

The regulations are also expected to create new opportunities for China's cybersecurity and compliance service industries. By permitting enterprises to engage qualified third-party institutions to conduct assessments, the measures are likely to stimulate demand for professional services in risk evaluation, auditing, consulting, certification and security technology solutions. The development of a more standardized assessment ecosystem will further support the growth of specialized service providers and encourage technological innovation in data protection.

Importantly, the measures do not signal tighter restrictions on data utilization. Rather, they embody China's long-standing approach of balancing development and security. The objective is not to impede data circulation, but to create a more predictable and trustworthy environment in which data can be developed, shared and utilized safely. By clarifying assessment requirements and reducing uncertainty, the measures can help lower compliance burdens for many enterprises while enhancing confidence in data-driven innovation.

In an era when data security has become closely linked with economic security, social stability and national competitiveness, building robust risk management mechanisms is a must. The newly released measures represent important progress in China's effort to modernize data governance. By placing risk assessment at the forefront of security management, the country can lay a stronger foundation for the healthy growth of its digital economy.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

'Employment first' the key for social development

Editor's note: *China has issued an implementation plan for its employment-first strategy during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period. China Media Group spoke to Zhang Chenggang, director of the research center for new forms of employment at Capital University of Economics and Business, on the goals, major tasks and policy measures for promoting high-quality and full employment. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

It is necessary to promote the quality and effectiveness of the service sector, which is the largest source of employment and offers a highly diverse range of jobs with varying entry requirements. Broadly speaking, it can be viewed from two perspectives — producer services and consumer services.

Producer services encompass the modern services that support manufacturing, such as finance, technology services and human resources services. Upgrading and expanding this sector hinges on whether it can generate a large number of high-value, well-paid jobs and continuously strengthen its competitiveness.

Consumer services account for a significant share of employment. In the past, many segments of the sector were characterized by small-scale and fragmented entities, uneven standards and relatively low entry barriers, resulting in wide variations in workforce quality.

The expansion of consumer services should be driven by organizations, enterprises and platforms that help raise service quality. Higher standards and better service quality will translate into an improved experience for consumers. In short, both producer and consumer services need to achieve growth in both quantity and quality.

A key message of the plan is that China must not only expand opportunities but also address existing shortcomings.

Expanding opportunities means continuing to support the development of new forms of employment and allowing the growth of the platform economy to play a greater role across both consumer and producer services. This, in turn, will create a wider variety of jobs, giving workers more choices and career paths.

At the same time, shortcomings in two key areas must be addressed. The first is social protection. Measures are needed to increase participation in social insurance among flexible workers and those in new forms of employment, while making enrollment more convenient. Occupational injury insurance should also be expanded to cover a broader range of workers in flexible employment.

The second area is public services. Service networks should become more extensive, ensuring that basic urban public services reach flexible workers and those engaged in new forms of employment. This will help them integrate more fully into urban life and share in the benefits of development.

It is also important to improve the alignment between educational provision and labor market demand. The establishment of a national big-data platform for talent demand will make workforce needs more visible and provide a stronger basis for educational institutions to adjust their academic programs.

A second priority is strengthening vocational education so that it becomes a respected pathway for career development rather than being viewed as a secondary option.

Also, academic disciplines must be adjusted in line with evolving industry needs. Educational institutions should closely follow the development of strategic emerging industries and future industries. Only by training people according to what the country and the market need can the education system better support economic and social development.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

China Daily USA
A500 Broadway, Suite 2406, New York, NY 10036
+1 212 537 8888
editor@chinadailyusa.com

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM

VIEWS

Sun Zhuangzhi

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM

Remember past to safeguard future

A correct understanding of World War II history is necessary so that mistakes of the past are not repeated and both China and Russia are deeply committed to ensuring this. In a joint statement issued in May, both countries reaffirmed the commitment to safeguarding the outcomes of the victory embodied in the United Nations Charter and the charters and judgments of the Nuremberg Trials and the Tokyo Trials, and firmly opposing any attempt to deny or distort the history of WWII.

This stance is not just about preserving historical memory. Both China and Russia firmly uphold the UN-centered international system, reminding countries to avoid repeating historical mistakes and advocating for a fair and equitable global security governance system.

The postwar international order has institutionalized international relations and also established global organizations, including the UN, where major issues could be addressed with equal participation of member states. Under the postwar international order, international conduct has been regulated. The interconnected global economy necessitates shared behavioral standards. International law has gained prominence, providing a framework for dispute resolution, as exemplified by the World Trade Organization's role in shaping international trade rules.

At the same time, the international landscape gradually evolved from Cold War bipolarity to a multipolar structure, driven by the rise of developing countries and initiatives such as South-South cooperation and the Non-Aligned Movement. Nations increasingly engaged in multilateral cooperation to tackle global challenges, from climate change and environmental protection to counterterrorism.

Since the end of the Cold War, the postwar international order has faced significant challenges due to shifts in global power dynamics. Some Western countries are still clinging to outdated power politics because they don't want to relinquish their hegemonic positions and even distort historical facts. Besides, Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi has glorified militarism and refused to acknowledge Japan's history of aggression during WWII and the atrocities it inflicted on neighboring countries. These actions blatantly undermine fairness and justice and have drawn widespread condemnation from China, Russia and several Asian countries that suffered Japanese atrocities during the war.

The history of WWII offers crucial lessons for understanding today's international relations. An accurate view of that history is essential for preventing a relapse into large-scale conflict.

The war was a direct consequence of the lack of fairness and justice in the Versailles-Washington system established after the end of World War I. The Paris Peace Conference became a "looting assembly", with major powers redrawing their spheres of influence. The League of Nations was fundamentally flawed, and failed to maintain international peace and security.

Meanwhile, the global great economic turmoil in 1929-1933 created fertile conditions for the rise of fascism in Germany and Italy and militarism in Japan. They pursued aggressive military expansion and war preparations, ultimately leading to a global tragedy.

Today, the world once again stands at a critical juncture. Transformations unseen in a century are unfolding alongside intensified major-country rivalry and persistent regional conflicts. Deficits in peace, development, security and governance have become more pronounced, creating a vicious cycle.

Unilateralism and extremism have wantonly trampled on the sovereignty of other countries and blatantly violated the norms of international law centered on the UN Charter. The result has been sharp disagreements and confrontations between nations.

Calls from developing countries for peace and development have fallen on deaf ears. At the same time, globalization faces mounting challenges. Resources such as energy, food, and cyber capabilities are increasingly weaponized, while concerns over nuclear security have become more acute.

Addressing these challenges requires wisdom. The world is transitioning to a new landscape. While the US remains the sole superpower for the foreseeable future, emerging market economies and Global South countries are steadily expanding their influence across various fields — a trend that is set to strengthen further.

Developed countries maintain a clear edge in economic and technological competition, prolonging the transition period and resulting in asynchronous shifts in strengths across different areas. Economically, emerging markets have significantly expanded their share in international trade. However, shifts in security are slower, as the balance of military power, equipment and technology is unlikely to change anytime soon.

Culturally, the West continues to have a big advantage in this field due to modern means of communication and its control over mass media, but its influence is gradually diminishing. The trend toward civilizational diversity is strengthening, and resistance to Western cultural erosion is becoming more pronounced.

Against the backdrop of the prolonged Russia-Ukraine conflict, the spillover of the Middle East crisis, and certain Western countries attempting to maintain their grip on the steering wheel of international affairs, the advance of multipolarity must not devolve into factional confrontations.

In response to hegemonic headwinds, China and Russia have introduced a series of new security concepts within multilateral frameworks such as the UN, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS. For instance, the Global Security Initiative proposed by China seeks to unite the international community in addressing global security challenges and maintaining world peace and stability. The SCO, advocating the "Shanghai Spirit", emphasizes common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security. It upholds equality among nations, favors partnerships over alliances, expands its cooperation network, and promotes dialogue to resolve disputes. This approach strives to turn the vision of "never again war" into reality.

The author is the director of the Institute of Russian, Eastern European and Central Asian Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.
The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.



Ma Xuejing / china daily

Alfred Romann

Canada can drive down EV prices for buyers

For years, Canadians have been told that the electric vehicle revolution was just around the corner. The cars were getting better, charging infrastructure was expanding and the climate case was airtight. The only thing missing was a price that ordinary people could afford.

That barrier may soon come down.

Canada has slashed tariffs on Chinese EVs following Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney's visit to Beijing, cutting them from the 100 percent surtax imposed in 2024 to 6.1 percent for an annual quota of 49,000 vehicles.

Chinese automakers wasted little time in responding. BYD, the world's largest EV manufacturer by sales volume, announced plans to open 20 dealerships across Canada within a year, starting in the Greater Toronto Area. Geely is assembling a Canadian leadership team, advertising senior roles in sales, marketing, legal and aftersales from a Toronto base. Other Chinese manufacturers, including Nio and Xpeng, may be coming too. At the same time, China has introduced an export licensing system this year for passenger EVs, creating a framework for expansion overseas.

For the first time, Canadian consumers will have real choices in the EV market, alongside healthy, market-driven price competition.

The timing is both significant and urgent. In late February, the military conflict in the Middle East effectively closed the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow waterway through which nearly 20 percent of the world's oil supply had been flowing. The impact on energy markets was immediate and severe. Brent crude, which began the year at roughly $61 a barrel, surged to above $120 a barrel in April, a level not seen since the Russia-Ukraine conflict broke out in 2022.

Canadians have felt that in every trip to the gas station. In Vancouver, which has the highest fuel prices in the country, it has now become common to see gasoline prices of C$2.20 ($1.58) per liter, the highest they have ever been and almost 40 percent higher than a few months ago.

Against this backdrop, the economics of driving an internal combustion engine have rarely looked worse while the case for switching to an EV has rarely looked better — provided you can actually afford one.

That has long been a barrier to owning an EV in Canada.

There are plenty of EVs on the streets across the country, but those vehicles are usually premium models in the high-priced segments. A market dominated by Tesla and a handful of established European and North American brands has faced limited pressure to compete on price. Consumers who wanted an electric vehicle but couldn't stretch to the average C$55,000 price of an EV were left with few options.

Chinese manufacturers bring a fundamentally different approach to the market. Take BYD's Seagull, which sells for the equivalent of roughly C$15,500 in China. It represents a category of affordable EVs that simply does not exist in Canada today. Even accounting for tariffs, shipping and local certification costs, Chinese EVs are expected to land in Canada at price points that will force established automakers to respond.

There are already indications that Canadians are responding to the changing market conditions.

Zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) sales jumped 74.7 percent in March compared with a year earlier as fuel prices started climbing. ZEVs accounted for 12.2 percent of all new vehicle sales that month, nearly double the 6.5 percent share recorded a year earlier.

That surge happened before a single Chinese showroom opened in Canada. When BYD's first Greater Toronto Area dealerships open later this year, the market will face its first real test of what genuine competition can do to an industry that has long been insulated from it.

The international context makes the Canadian opportunity even clearer. European Union EV sales rose 51 percent in March as competition and model diversity allowed buyers to easily shift away from traditional cars when oil prices spiked. In the United States, by contrast, EV sales fell yet again in March and have been falling for months as the federal government rolled back incentives and embraced an openly skeptical posture toward electrification.

Canada finds itself between those two trajectories, with an opportunity to choose which path to follow.

Some in Canada have voiced concerns over national security and the protection of domestic manufacturing. But the decision to grant an annual quota of 49,000 Chinese EVs at the most-favored-nation tariff rate — while China has adjusted countervailing measures — reflects bilateral efforts that will ultimately benefit Canadian consumers. In a year when the country lost more than 110,000 jobs in the first four months and consumer confidence has been sliding, the case for shielding a premium car market from competition has become untenable.

Fair and open competition can deliver tangible benefits to ordinary consumers. Chinese EVs will offer Canadian consumers more choices and lower prices, and may even play a role in shoring up the country's automotive industry.

This is not just about geopolitics or trade policy, though it involves both. It is about whether Canadians will be able to buy affordable, efficient vehicles at a time when the cost of the alternative continues to rise. The showrooms are not open yet, and the cars have not yet arrived on dealer lots. But the window that has been opened by this trade deal is real, and it should not be allowed to close.

The author is the managing director of Bahati Ltd, a trade and economics analysis firm based in Canada.
The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM

Hibat-Allah Ezzahid

Adaptability of Chinese firms key to success abroad

Chinese companies are playing an increasingly important role in the global economy today. From advanced manufacturing and renewable energy to infrastructure, logistics, digital technologies, and industrial cooperation, they are transforming production systems and value chains across the world. As Chinese companies continue to expand internationally, the focus is shifting from merely entering foreign markets to operating effectively within diverse institutional, managerial, and cultural environments. While large-scale investments often attract attention, the day-to-day operational realities of globalization are becoming equally important for long-term success.

One major challenge that Chinese companies face is institutional complexity. Many international markets offer attractive macro-level conditions for investment, including political stability, industrial incentives, trade agreements, and strategic locations. However, once companies begin operations, they often face fragmented realities. Administrative procedures may involve multiple agencies with overlapping responsibilities, and regulatory implementation can vary across institutions or regions. Complexities in licensing systems, taxation procedures, labor regulations and documentation requirements may cause delays.

For instance, a Chinese automotive components company facing a three-month delay when importing machinery to Morocco due to complicated customs clearance processes involving several administrative entities suffered disrupted production planning and slowed local recruitment. In response, the company expanded its local legal and administrative team in the host country rather than relying solely on coordination from China.

Another challenge is cross-cultural and managerial coordination. Chinese companies have developed highly effective management systems characterized by organizational discipline, operational efficiency and strong operational commitment. These strengths have driven China's industrial transformation and global competitiveness. However, the workplace expectations, communication styles and professional cultures may differ significantly in global settings. Differences in approaches to hierarchy, communication, working rhythms, and work-life balance can create operational friction within multinational teams.

A Chinese manufacturing company introduced production schedules and overtime practices similar to those in China during a peak production period. But this led to tensions within local teams over overtime expectations and work-life balance. There were also misunderstandings because some local employees perceived the communication style of managers as too direct. In response, the company adjusted working schedules, localized certain HR practices and expanded the role of local middle managers.

Many companies are discovering that management systems cannot simply be transferred across borders. Therefore, Chinese companies are developing more adaptive and internationally integrated management approaches. They are not abandoning their organizational strengths, but combining them with greater local responsiveness and intercultural flexibility. This includes preparing managers for overseas environments, redesigning coordination mechanisms, adapting HR practices, and integrating local leadership into operations. This adaptability is becoming a strategic advantage for Chinese firms globally.

Human capital and localization present another challenge. During the early stages of international expansion, Chinese companies often rely heavily on expatriate teams for coordination and technology transfer. While this model facilitates early operations, long-term international integration requires stronger local participation. Local employees contribute essential knowledge of language, regulations, professional culture and market dynamics.

A Chinese manufacturing company initially depended heavily on expatriate teams for operational supervision, but later faced difficulties in communication with local workers and labor management practices. Misunderstandings often emerged regarding production instructions and workplace expectations because many local employees communicated in the local language rather than Chinese or English. In response, the company hired local supervisors and bilingual coordinators to improve communication and workforce management. Similarly, many Chinese companies are investing more deeply in local talent development, managerial training, and long-term integration.

In several international operations, Chinese companies are also introducing cross-border learning systems that help local employees understand corporate structures, operational standards and organizational culture. Moroccan employees receive technical or managerial training in China before they are given greater responsibilities locally.

This reflects a broader transformation in the globalization of Chinese enterprises. International expansion is no longer just about exporting industrial capacity or building overseas projects. It is also becoming a process through which Chinese companies gain global managerial experience and develop new organizational capabilities. This experience strengthens their expertise in institutional adaptation, intercultural coordination, operational flexibility, and long-term strategic integration. In this sense, globalization is becoming not only a process of international expansion, but also one of organizational learning.

Morocco offers a concrete example of these operational dynamics. Chinese companies operating in Morocco illustrate how operational dynamics can become complex even in a relatively stable and investment-friendly environment.

As Chinese firms deepen their global presence, their long-term success will depend not only on investment and technology, but also on their ability to adapt to diverse institutional and cultural environments.

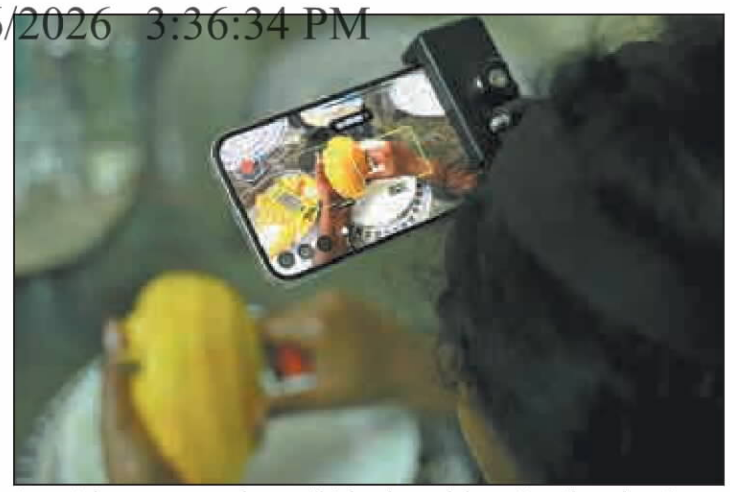
The author is a postdoctoral researcher at the Institute of International and Regional Studies in Sun Yat-sen University, Zhuhai.
The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.

WORLD IN FOCUS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM



A housewife wears a smartphone on her head as she records her actions through motion capture while slicing mangos at her home in Chennai, India, on May 15. photos by R. Satish BABU / AFP



A smartphone screen on a housewife's head records her actions through motion capture while she is slicing mangos at her home in Chennai, India, on May 15.



A housewife wears a smartphone on her head as she records her actions through motion capture while watering plants at her home in Chennai, India, on May 15.



Workers wear cameras on their heads while recording actions through motion capture inside a factory in Tamil Nadu, India, on May 13.



A worker wears a camera to record actions through motion capture while arranging colored blocks at an AI data company in Tamil Nadu, India, on May 13.

Robot mentoring

Indian housewives with phones on their heads train humanoids that will perform household jobs in future

With a smartphone strapped to her head, Indian housewife Nagireddy Sriramyachandra films herself slicing mangos to train AI-powered robots to take on household jobs in the future.

Earning just over $2 for an hour of video, her mundane recordings are invaluable for global tech companies teaching machines how to move like humans in the real world.

The 25-year-old is one of a growing army of thousands of AI system trainers in India.

"Who else will give you 250 rupees ($2.64) an hour just for doing housework?" said Sriramyachandra from her kitchen in Chennai in southern India's Tamil Nadu state.

"I may get a robot myself in the future," she said.

AI chatbots and image generators crunch reams of digital data, but building systems to navigate real-life environments is more challenging.

Developers think feeding first-person footage, called "egocentric data", into specialized AI models will help robots copy humans.

Some AI trainers work at home, others in factories or specialized studios — using video glasses, head-mounted cameras and motion sensors.

"It blares 'hands not detected' when I'm not recording properly," said Sriramyachandra, who sends recordings via a special app to the AI data company Objectways.

The humanoid robot market is booming, with investment bank Morgan Stanley predicting there could be over a billion in use by 2050, mostly for industrial and commercial purposes.

"Folding clothes, coffee-making ... cooking a very specific thing, sandwich-making," Objectways head Ravi Shankar said, listing videos requested by clients.





From top: A worker wears a camera to record her actions through motion capture at an AI data company in Tamil Nadu, India, on May 13. Data is acquired through motion capture at the AI data company in Tamil Nadu.

"Some jobs are supposed to be taken over, so humans can go and do better things."

In India, the emerging field of spatial AI is providing new employment.

"It's likely that these data collection services will increase," said digital labor expert Aditi Surie, from the Indian Institute for Human Settlements in Bengaluru.

At an Objectways studio, AI system trainers film themselves performing household tasks in fake, fully furnished apartment rooms.

After several thousand hours of filming, the wallpaper is changed to provide clients with variety.

"Today I sit here, tomorrow I stand there," said engineering graduate Rani N., 21, on a break from filming herself, once again, folding a towel.

Each video lasts about four minutes, and she records around 90 a day — on nearly every conceivable spot on the bed.

She says the job is "tolerable", but feels like she's always wearing a camera.

In other rooms, colleagues arranged pencil sharpeners, water bottles and crayons in patterns, recording with depth-sensor cameras.

Qanat Consulting Services in Andhra Pradesh, an Objectways subcontractor, supplies about a dozen larger data firms with recordings. Some of its 2,000 contributors perform tasks with motion-sensor bands on their "wrists, hands and legs", CEO Thaslim Pattan said.

Manish Agarwal of Bengaluru-based Humyn Labs records conversations as well as videos.

Contributors discuss assigned topics — ranging from politics to entertainment — for clients wanting to process speech patterns. Agarwal denies that robots will steal jobs, believing that networks of humans and robots "will work together" one day, he said.

"A welder in India could be managing a welder-robot in Prague," he said.

Agencies via Xinhua



A worker wearing a camera on his head records actions through motion capture while filling water bottles inside a model kitchen at an AI data company in Tamil Nadu, India, on May 13.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM



Engineers compile data from cameras recording actions through motion capture at an AI data company in Tamil Nadu, India, on May 13.

WORLD

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM

'China Shock' seen as cover of protectionism

Western framing undermines multilateral trading system, drives up costs: Experts

By **YANG RAN**
yangran1@chinadaily.com.cn

In response to growing rhetoric from the West over the so-called China Shock 2.0, experts say this narrative serves primarily as a political shield for protectionist policies rather than an objective economic assessment.

They warn that such framing could undermine the multilateral trading system and drive up global costs. Rather than viewing China's industrial advancement with hostility, those nations should instead adopt a more sophisticated collaborative mindset, leveraging China's robust supply capabilities to generate shared global benefits, experts urged.

During the three-day G7 summit concluded on Wednesday, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said, without naming China directly at first, that "some countries produce too much and do not consume enough", claiming it has been "increasingly dangerous for the stability of the global economy". She then explicitly singled out China, labeling its trade surplus with the European Union "unsustainable".

Her remarks mirror the "China Shock 2.0" narrative that has been gaining traction. Last month, the Centre for European Reform, a Europe-based think tank, published a report claiming that "a new China Shock is reverberating across global goods markets". During the G7 summit, many Western media outlets also leveraged this narrative to justify trade policies targeting China.

Jian Junbo, director of the Center for China-Europe Relations at Fudan University's Institute of International Studies, pointed out that the "China Shock" narrative largely focuses on the alleged trade imbalances, specifically concerning China's goods trade surplus with the West.

Sun Chenghao, head of the US-Europe Program at Tsinghua University's Center for International Security and Strategy, noted that the recent Western hype around the so-called China Shock 2.0 is in essence a political construct. "It layers together Western anxieties over lost industrial competitiveness, the rising costs of a green transition, and a broader strategic competition with China. They reframed these issues into a 'security threat' narrative, repackaging for public consumption."

The original "China Shock" thesis, coined by Western economists, argued that China's post-WTO export boom disrupted US labor markets.

Sun said that the underlying logic of the current version hasn't changed much. "Both versions externalize the internal challenges of Western economies — industrial restructuring, income inequality, and technological competitive pressures — and blame them on Chinese manufacturing."

Tu Xinquan, dean of the China Institute for WTO Studies at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing, agreed. He said the so-called China Shock is simply a natural outcome of market economics and competition.

"Developed countries have grown accustomed to holding the technological upper hand for decades," Tu said. "Now, when they face a real competitor, they seem reluctant to embrace the free market principles they've preached for decades."

Far from being a detriment, experts said that China's industrial upgrading, which offers high-tech products at lower costs, is a boon for the global economy, enhancing world productivity and welfare.

James Pethokoukis, a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, a Washington-based think tank, highlighted this positive impact in a December article published on the organization's website.

He noted that while China's rapid growth reduced the US' share of the global GDP, it simultaneously helped US consumers by making a wide range of goods cheaper to buy and easier for US companies to produce. The US, he concluded, became "absolutely richer" even as it appeared "relatively smaller, economy-wise".

Benefiting the world

"China's massive, integrated production capacity, combined with intense domestic competition, allows it to produce high-tech goods at remarkably low cost," said Tu. "This, in fact, benefits the entire world, as it significantly lowers product prices, thereby enhancing their accessibility and affordability. This is particularly evident in renewable energy products, including solar power, wind energy, and electric vehicles."

Official data shows that Chinese wind turbines, solar panels, and new energy vehicle products are exported to over 200 countries and regions globally, driving down global wind and solar power generation costs by over 60 percent and 80 percent, respectively.

Sun warned that the West's pan-securitization of normal industrial competition would, in the long run, escalate global production costs, diminish consumer welfare, fragment supply chains, and further erode the WTO-centered multilateral trading system.

Against this backdrop, experts advocate a more rational and objective perspective on China's industrial and economic development, urging exploration of international cooperation for global prosperity.

Jian from Fudan University said, "What they call a shock is really just competitive pressure, which is inherently beneficial for the growth and prosperity of the global market." Blocking such normal competition, he argued, would be detrimental to overall economic development.

"In this context, it is crucial to view this competition rationally and objectively, embracing a market-oriented mindset and promoting self-growth through cooperation with the competitors," he said.

Off track



Two freight train cars hang off of a bridge, partially blocking a road in Munich, Germany, on Saturday. Ehsan Monajati via AP

Streets under smoke



A firefighter walks down the street as a massive warehouse fire at a cold storage facility continues to burn and spread smoke around Los Angeles, California, on Saturday. Mario Tama / AFP

Instability reshapes global supply chains

By **RENA LI** in Los Angeles
renali@chinadailyusa.com

Business leaders and logistics executives said global supply chains are adapting to a more complex trade environment shaped by geopolitical tensions, evolving tariff policies and shifting trade patterns, while emphasizing the continued importance of long-term planning and international commerce.

Speaking at a news briefing hosted by the Port of Los Angeles, Gene Seroka, executive director of the port, and Dan Letter, chief executive officer of Prologis, the world's largest logistics real estate company, discussed how companies are navigating uncertainty while maintaining investments in logistics infrastructure, warehousing and trade-related operations.

The discussion came as businesses continue to assess the implications of recent developments in global trade and geopolitics, including ceasefire negotiations involving Iran and the United States, ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and Europe, and evolving China-US trade relations.

Seroka said a proposed reopening of the Strait of Hormuz could help ease pressure on energy markets and improve business confidence, although he cautioned that a memorandum of understanding involving the US and Iran remains only a framework for further negotiations.

"Twenty percent of the world's energy products flow through that strait," Seroka said. If the Iran situation further eases as expected, "we could see oil prices continue their decline, inflation possibly easing over the weeks and months ahead, and shipping confidence could begin to return".

He noted that the waterway normally accommodates more than 100 vessel crossings daily, but warned that shipping companies are unlikely to resume normal operations immediately.

"Crew safety remains the priority," Seroka said. "Even with a possible reopening, it will take months to normalize schedules, get supply chains back to some semblance of normalcy and clear backlogs."

Despite recent disruptions, Seroka said conversations with port operators and industry partners in Asia suggest that cargo flows remain resilient. He added that easing bunker fuel prices and improving confidence could provide additional support for trade volumes in the months ahead.

Turning to China-US trade relations, Seroka said recent discussions were a positive signal, but businesses want clearer direction.

Positive sign

"It's certainly positive when the leaders of the world's two largest economies sit down to negotiate," Seroka said, adding that while businesses are encouraged by the continued engagement, many companies are still seeking greater policy clarity as they make long-term decisions related to trade, investment and supply chains.

China remains one of the Port of Los Angeles' largest trading partners. According to port data, China-related cargo has historically accounted for a significant share of container volumes moving through the Southern California gateway, making developments in bilateral trade relations closely watched by logistics providers, retailers and manufacturers.

Seroka said uncertainty surrounding tariffs continues to influence business decisions. While discussions have included potential opportunities for increased US agricultural exports, including beef and soybeans, he noted that market conditions remain challenging.

He pointed out that Brazil and Argentina have expanded their presence in China's soybean market in recent years, making it more difficult for US exporters to quickly regain market share.

"Once overseas buyers establish new sourcing relationships, it can take a lot of time to win that business back," he said.

Companies are also monitoring upcoming tariff deadlines and potential new trade measures, prompting many businesses to shorten planning horizons and adjust inventory strategies.

"This is the new reality of doing business in today's trade environment," Seroka said.

Letter from Prologis said supply chains have become more resilient after navigating years of disruptions, including rising interest rates, geopolitical tensions and global conflicts.

"Our customers have been digesting all of these issues, and we're seeing them again make decisions," Letter said. "They're making these five-plus-year decisions with us."

Report: UK PM Starmer could resign

LONDON — United Kingdom's Prime Minister Keir Starmer was expected to resign on Monday and set out a timetable for his departure, according to The Observer, a local newspaper.

However, UK Business Secretary Peter Kyle said on Sunday that the news of Starmer's quitting is speculation. He added that Starmer is "making time to reflect on the political realities, challenges and opportunities that he finds himself in".

The threat to Starmer's position, which has been building for months, increased sharply on Friday when his rival Andy Burnham won a seat in Parliament that would allow him to launch a formal leadership challenge.

The Observer, which did not name its sources, said Starmer had reached the conclusion that his position was no longer tenable after speaking to cabinet ministers, advisers, donors and trade union leaders.

Starmer led the center-left Labour Party to a landslide election win in 2024 but has become deeply unpopular after a series of scandals and policy U-turns that have given many voters an impression that he cannot deliver on improving their standards of living that he promised.

If he were to quit or be ousted, it would mean the country installing its seventh prime minister in just over a decade — the highest turnover in nearly two centuries, reflective of anger at successive governments' failures to improve public services and tackle issues like illegal immigration.

More than 100 elected lawmakers in Starmer's party — roughly a quarter of all Labour representatives in the House of Commons — have publicly said they want him to quit or set out a timetable for his exit, according to a Reuters tally.

Burnham, until last week the mayor of Greater Manchester, decisively won the seat of Makerfield in northwestern England in a special election on Thursday. He took almost 55 percent of the 45,510 votes cast, over 9,000 more than the Reform UK runner-up.

Burnham did not immediately make a formal challenge to Starmer but used his victory address to promise a new path for the country.

Starmer congratulated Burnham on Friday but said he would fight any challenge to his leadership and urged Labour not to tear itself apart with infighting.

But Charlie Falconer, a senior Labour member of the House of Lords, said on Saturday that Starmer has "absolutely no authority" left.

"There should be an agreed transition process in which Andy and Keir cooperate as to when the handover should take place," he said.

Agencies via Xinhua

Intra-Asian travel viewed as opportunity amid tensions

By **YANG HAN** in Hong Kong and **LEONARDUS JEGHO** in Jakarta

Turmoil in the Middle East has reshaped the global travel landscape. Long-haul travel is among the hardest hit, while intra-regional travel could become a bright spot for many tourism-dependent Asian economies, according to industry analysts.

Citing the situation in the Middle East, the Tourism Authority of Thailand slashed its forecast for long-haul arrivals this year from 11 million to 10 million, according to a report by The Nation on June 17.

However, arrivals from nearby markets such as China saw a strong recovery with Chinese tourists arrivals jumping 18.35 percent to 2.3 million. The number of Indian tourist arrivals also increased by 8 percent to about 1 million, the report said.

Paul Edmundus Talo, director of Floressa Bali Tours and Bali Flores Adventure, told China Daily that the conflict in the Middle East had affected international flight services, created a sense of uncertainty among travelers, and contributed to higher airfares.

Airfares for flights between Asia and Europe have hiked after the US-Israeli war on Iran began in late February.

According to an analysis by FlightsFinder.com in March, fares on direct routes between Asia and Europe surged by nearly 300 percent, meaning travelers would need to pay up to $2,330 more for the same flight.

Growth potential

Gary Bowerman, managing director of the weekly industry newsletter Asia Travel Re:Set, said that it is still unclear how consumers will respond to the challenges ahead, but Asian tourism still holds strong growth potential.

Bowerman said intra-regional demand has become a significant force for Asia's tourism recovery, and he expects regional travel in Southeast Asia and the broader Asia-Pacific to remain strong.

But currency volatility, rising interest rates, and higher living costs could weigh on travel at the margins, he said, noting the war in the Middle East will have strong residual effects for some regional economies in the second half of 2026.

"Destinations across the region must continue to diversify their visitor mixes to build more resilience in the future," said Bowerman.

Some Southeast Asian countries have pinned their hopes on the Chinese market with targeted campaigns.



A Chinese tourist wearing a Thai traditional costume poses for photos at Wat Pho Temple in Bangkok on May 5. RUNGROJ YONGRIT / EPA

Thai tourism authorities are planning to attract 7.5 million Chinese visitors in 2026. Apart from marketing through social media platforms, it also plans to build on the popularity of the Chinese film *Dear You* to increase interest in locations where the film was shot.

On June 15, Cambodia launched a four-month visa-free trial for Chinese tourists with multiple entries, its largest source of international visitors. The government said it aims to boost tourism recovery, according to the Khmer Times.

As tourist arrivals drop in Siem Reap Province, Khiev Thy, president of the Siem Reap Angkor Guides Association, said the visa exemption will play an important role in attracting Chinese tourists.

In Bali, the popular Indonesian tourism destination has quickly adjusted its strategy to prioritize the development of the Chinese market in response to the loss of Western tourists, said Ye Lu, head of the China market of the Bali Tourism Board, also founder of the Bali Mandarin Center.

Measures include simplified visas, increased direct flights, training for Chinese-speaking guides, and widespread acceptance of Alipay and WeChat Pay to fill the tourist gap, Ye said.

Leonardus Jegho is a freelance journalist for China Daily.

Contact the writers at kelly@chinadailyapac.com

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM

WORLD

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM

US-Japan military drills raise concern

Exercise destabilizing regional security and heightening tensions, experts say

By Liu Jianqiao
liujianqiao@chinadaily.com.cn

Japan and the United States have launched a large-scale joint military exercise, raising concerns of destabilizing regional security and further heightening tensions between Japan and its neighboring countries.

Japan's Ground Self-Defense Force and the United States Marine Corps launched the Resolute Dragon exercise on Saturday, taking place across the southwestern Kyushu region and Okinawa Prefecture and lasting over a week, according to Japan's Nikkei Asia.

The GSDF plans to deploy its US-made V-22 Osprey military transport aircraft from Camp Saga, Kyushu, to Miyako Island in Okinawa for the first time. The drill will include transporting simulated casualties from the island to the US Marine Corps Air Station Futenma on Okinawa.

The military drill, focused on island defense operations, has been held annually since 2021. About 9,600 personnel from both nations will participate in the exercise, which will include live-fire drills, combat exercises and logistics transport training at GSDF garrisons and training grounds, among other locations.

This is the first time a GSDF unit operating long-range missiles has participated in the joint exercise. The unit was deployed to Camp Kengun in Kumamoto in March. This also marks the first time SDF transport ships *Nihonbare* and *Yoko* have been used in military drills, according to Japan News. Last year, the London Maritime Academy reported that the vessels are part of a unit focused on enhancing maritime logistics.

Residents of Yamato Town in Kumamoto Prefecture recently submitted a protest letter to authorities, voicing concerns over the US military holding low-altitude training flights using Osprey transport aircraft during the exercises.

The protesters also warned that the joint military exercises could disturb regional peace and stability, and further heighten tensions between Japan and its neighbors.

Liu Shuliang, an associate researcher at the Tianjin Academy of Social Sciences, said Japan is strengthening its military cooperation with foreign partners and deepening coordination with the US, seeking to build a clique-based and confrontational military arrangement.

"Japan's continued strengthening of security cooperation with the US and other countries is widely seen as part of its broader push toward remilitarization," he said.

Undermining stability

By leveraging military cooperation with foreign countries, Japan is further expanding its military presence in the Asia-Pacific region, a move that could intensify regional tensions and undermine stability, Liu added.

"It may also trigger a chain reaction among neighboring countries, prompting higher military spending and faster defense modernization, thereby fueling an arms race and worsening the regional security dilemma," he said.

Liu said that since the end of World War II, Japan has long tried to portray itself as a peace-loving nation, adhering to an exclusively defense-oriented policy and cultivating a moderate image on the international stage.

"However, recent years have witnessed a fundamental transformation in Japan's defense and security policies, with the country accelerating a shift that many observers view as remilitarization," he said.

By steadily expanding the scope of its postwar security policies and loosening the constraints of its pacifist Constitution, Japan is accelerating a shift toward remilitarization. Under the banner of becoming a "normal nation", it risks undermining the peace-oriented image it has cultivated since World War II and moving toward "a new form of militarism", Liu said.

Chen Hong, director of East China Normal University's Asia-Pacific Studies Centre in Shanghai, said the US has been a key driver behind Japan's accelerated remilitarization, providing political and strategic support for the country's expanding military role.

In an effort to maintain its declining hegemony and strategic interests in the Asia-Pacific region, the US has been gradually easing postwar military constraints on Japan, he said.

First, it has deepened US-Japan military integration, encouraging Japan to expand its defense budget, develop advanced capabilities, and strengthen its military capacity, Chen said.

Second, it has sought to further incorporate Japan into the US-led security network, enabling it to play a more active role through joint military exercises and closer defense cooperation, he added.

Panda-monium



Visitors take photos of Satrio Wiratama, nicknamed "Rio", the first giant panda cub born in Indonesia, during a public viewing at Indonesia Safari Park in Cisarua, West Java, on Saturday. The panda, born on Nov 27, made a public debut at the end of May. Tatan Syuflana / AP

Syrian refugees embark on journey home

BEIRUT — As the first light of day filtered through the canvas walls of his tent in southern Lebanon, 48-year-old Abu Mohammad Jihad al-Omari carefully packed the last of his family's belongings. His wife folded clothes and blankets into large bags while their children loaded luggage onto an aging vehicle waiting outside.

Within hours, the family would begin a journey they had postponed for years — returning to Syria after seeking refuge in Lebanon.

"When we fled Syria, we were escaping war. I never imagined I would experience similar circumstances again," said al-Omari.

Al-Omari's family is among a growing number of Syrian refugees forced to embark on the journey home as the security situation in Lebanon increasingly deteriorates amid Israel's continued military campaign.

At Marj al-Khoukh camp near the southern city of Marjayoun, signs of departure were everywhere — worn blankets, abandoned cupboards, and household items left behind by departing families. At another camp, the Marjayoun Plain, rows of tents stood largely empty.

Once home to more than 1,400 Syrian refugees, around 85 percent of families have returned to Syria in recent months through voluntary return programs or their own initiative.

According to Lisa Abou Khaled, spokesperson for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, around 630,000 registered Syrian refugees returned from Lebanon to Syria between January 2025 and April 2026. Between March 2 and June 11, 2026, 130 Syrian refugees were killed and 153 injured in Lebanon.

She said return decisions depend on several factors, including access to housing, education, basic services and livelihood opportunities in Syria. However, the increasing insecurity in Lebanon has accelerated many refugees' plans to leave.

Sixty-year-old Khawla Murad was also preparing to leave. "We endured difficult living conditions and economic hardships here, but we could no longer endure the fear," she said.

"When children started waking up at midnight to terrifying sounds of airstrikes, that's when we realized it was time to go back."

According to Lebanese authorities, approximately 1.5 million displaced Syrians are living in Lebanon, some of them in more than 1,400 informal camps across the country, placing significant social, economic and service-related pressures on the host nation.

Xinhua

Israel launches deadly strikes on Gaza

GAZA/JERUSALEM — Israeli forces carried out attacks in the Gaza Strip on Saturday, killing at least nine people, including a child and a journalist from Al Jazeera, in the latest violence to rock the Palestinian territory despite a ceasefire.

Israel and Hamas trade near-daily accusations of truce violations and the Gaza Strip remains gripped by bloodshed as progress on permanently ending the conflict remains stalled.

The airstrikes and gunfire killed at least nine people, Reuters reported, citing health officials. Agence France-Presse put the toll at 11.

An Israeli strike killed four Palestinians, including two women and a child, in an apartment building in Gaza City, health officials said. The attack on the building in the Sabra neighborhood destroyed the apartment and wounded several other people, medics added.



Residents inspect the rubble of an apartment following an overnight Israeli airstrike in Gaza City on Saturday. Abdel Kareem Hana / AP

The Israeli military said it struck a militant, without elaborating.

Farther north, Israeli forces shot and killed a woman in the town of Beit Lahiya, medics said. An Israeli airstrike killed at least one person and wounded eight others in Khan Younis, south of the enclave.

Later on Saturday, an Israeli airstrike killed three people, medics said, including Ahmed Wishah, a journalist working for Al Jazeera, in the Bureij refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip.

Al Jazeera said Wishah, a cameraman, was killed about two months after his brother, Mohammed Wishah, also an Al Jazeera journalist, was killed by the Israeli military.

The Palestinian Journalist Syndicate condemned Wishah's killing on Saturday and called for Israeli leaders to be held accountable for such attacks, which have killed nearly 300 Palestinian journalists since the conflict began in October 2023.

The Israeli military said in a statement that it killed a Hamas militant, who posed a threat and served as an Al Jazeera photojournalist.

An October ceasefire halted major fighting between Hamas and Israel, but a permanent Gaza peace plan remains elusive.

At least 1,012 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza since the ceasefire took effect on Oct 10 last year, according to the territory's health ministry.

The Israeli army has reported five deaths in its ranks during the same period.

The two sides remain deadlocked over some key issues. Israel says Hamas must cede power in Gaza, disarm, and play no role in the future governance of the enclave. Hamas links any full disarmament to launching a political track toward establishing a Palestinian state.

Hamas-led fighters killed 1,200 people during their cross-border attack into Israel on Oct 7, 2023, according to Israeli tallies.

The Gaza health ministry said more than 73,000 Palestinians have been killed in the territory since then.

Agencies via Xinhua

Briefly

United States

2 killed, 1 injured in Connecticut shooting

Two people were killed and another was injured in a shooting outside a bar in West Haven, the US state of Connecticut, early Saturday morning, according to authorities. Officers arrived at a bar on Campbell Avenue at around 1:27 am local time after receiving a report of gunshots, West Haven police said. Three people were found with gunshot wounds outside the bar, two of whom were pronounced dead after being transported to a hospital. The roads near the scene were blocked for more than nine hours after the shooting. Police said the shooting appears to be an isolated incident and there is no ongoing threat to the public. An investigation was underway.

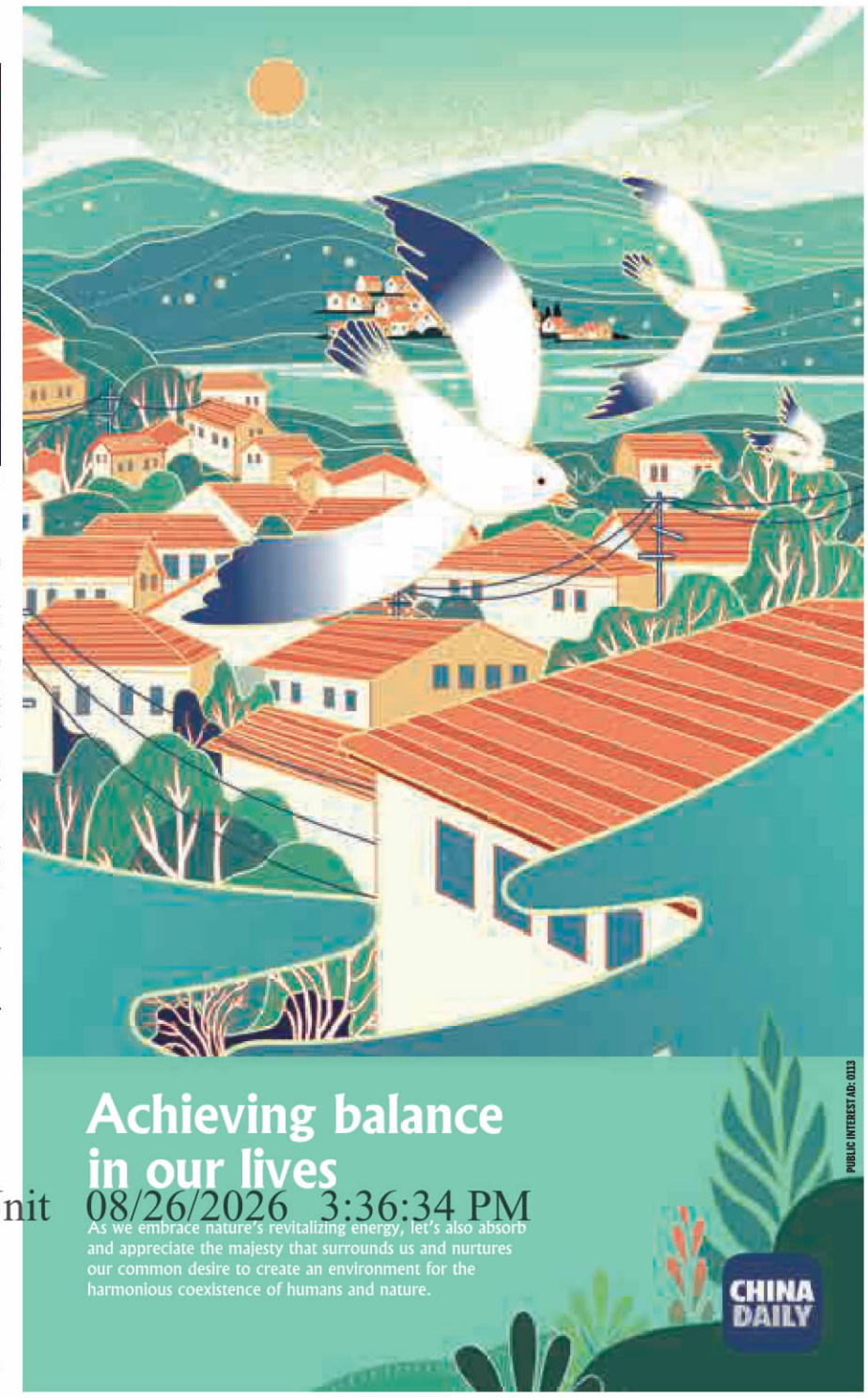
DR Congo

Over 900 Ebola cases, 247 deaths reported

The number of confirmed Ebola cases in the Democratic Republic of Congo has risen to 956, including 247 deaths, according to the latest situation report released on Saturday by the country's health authorities. Twenty-three new confirmed cases, including two deaths, were reported on Friday in the provinces of Ituri and North Kivu. Ituri remains the epicenter of the outbreak, with 874 confirmed cases and 201 deaths, accounting for more than 91 percent of the country's confirmed cases. A total of 92 patients have recovered, while 361 patients were in isolation or hospitalized. The outbreak, caused by the Bundibugyo strain, was declared by the DR Congo authorities on May 15.

Xinhua—Agencies

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM



Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM



Home brands sharpen sport sponsorship

Firms pursuing dynamic, co-creative strategy with 2026 FIFA World Cup

By LI JING
lijing2009@chinadaily.com.cn

When the 2026 FIFA World Cup officially kicked off across the United States, Canada and Mexico this month, Chinese brands are less visible among top-tier sponsors than they were four years ago.

Only three Chinese companies — Lenovo, Hisense and Mengniu Dairy — remain among FIFA partners and FIFA World Cup sponsors, a sharp contrast to the wave of Chinese sponsorship that dominated stadium billboards during recent tournaments.

Yet the shift comes despite FIFA reporting its strongest commercial performance on record. The governing body said in March that all 16 global sponsorship positions for the 2023–26 cycle had been sold, making it the most successful commercial program in its history. Total revenue for the cycle is budgeted at nearly $13 billion.

But business leaders and researchers say the decline in sponsorship numbers does not signal waning interest from Chinese companies. Instead, it reflects a broader shift in how Chinese companies are using global sporting events to support going global strategies.

Rather than buying visibility alone, companies are increasingly treating the World Cup as a platform to demonstrate technology capabilities, strengthen brand positioning, deepen consumer engagement and expand their global footprint.

"It is a transition from a traffic-driven mindset to an effectiveness-driven mindset," said Hu Shan, principal at consultancy company Roland Berger. "Companies are paying much closer attention to return on investment and alignment with their global expansion strategies."

For Qiao Jian, senior vice-president of Lenovo, the shift can be summed up as a move from participants to co-builders.

"What Chinese companies export today is no longer a single product," said Qiao, who is also chief strategy officer and chief marketing officer of Lenovo.

"Increasingly, they are exporting integrated technology capabilities and becoming part of the infrastructure that powers global events."

The shift is becoming increasingly visible at the World Cup, where Chinese companies are moving beyond traditional sponsorship and embedding themselves into tournament operations.

For Lenovo, whose annual revenue reached a record $83.1 billion in fiscal year 2025/26, the World Cup serves as a showcase for its hybrid AI strategy as it seeks to expand higher-margin infrastructure and enterprise businesses globally. AI-related revenue accounted for roughly one-third of Lenovo's revenue during the past fiscal year.

Lenovo, FIFA's official technology partner, is supplying more than 17,000 devices and deploying more than 350 engineers across all 16 World Cup venues. The company is also introducing AI-powered digital twin technology capable of generating three-dimensional replicas of players and match situations.

"The World Cup is the world's largest AI testing ground," Qiao said.





Top: The billboard of Hisense catches the eye during the group A match between Mexico and South Africa during the 2026 FIFA World Cup at Mexico City Stadium in Mexico on June 12. yin gang / for china daily **Middle:** Merchants purchase plush toys related to the 2026 FIFA World Cup participating teams at Yiwu International Expo Center in Zhejiang province on May 12. gong xianming / for china daily **Above:** A visitor checks out 2026 FIFA World Cup authorized products at a FIFA themed official store in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, in June. dong xuming / for china daily

She said the company views the tournament as an opportunity to demonstrate how its end-to-end AI infrastructure can support one of the most complex global events ever staged, far more than a conventional marketing campaign.

Hisense represents a similar evolution.

The company's overseas revenue now accounts for roughly half of total sales, according to company data, reflecting the importance of international markets in its strategy.

Having used the 2018 and 2022 World Cups to build brand visibility, the company is now moving deeper into tournament operations. As FIFA's official display technology partner for the video assistant referee system, Hisense provides RGB Mini LED display technology used in officiating operations during the tournament.

"Chinese companies are no longer simply buying advertising boards around stadiums," said Wang Xueli, director of the center for development of sports industry at Tsinghua University's School of Economics and Management.

"They are becoming part of the technological infrastructure behind major international sporting events."

While China's established global brands are embedding themselves into FIFA's technology ecosystem, a broader group of Chinese consumer brands is pursuing a different path.

Rather than paying for official tournament sponsorship rights, many companies are partnering with national teams, soccer stars, influencers and local digital platforms to target specific consumer groups in overseas markets.

The home-robotics and smart-appliance maker Dreame Technology recently signed Portuguese soccer icon Cristiano Ronaldo as a global brand ambassador ahead of the tournament.

For Dreame, whose overseas business accounted for nearly 80 percent of total revenue in 2025, the World Cup is less about introducing the brand to consumers and more about strengthening brand recognition and emotional connection.

Chang Xinwei, global president of Dreame Technology, said the era of "buying exposure and hoping for results" was fading.

Consumers increasingly place greater trust in recommendations from content creators, communities and personalities they identify with than traditional advertising, he said.

"The goal used to be getting people to see us," Chang said. "Now it is getting people to want to engage with us."

Other Chinese brands have adopted similar approaches.

Luckin Coffee, Changan Automobile and Cotti Coffee are among companies that have partnered with national teams including Portugal and defending champion Argentina, targeting highly engaged fan communities rather than mass audiences.

The strategy allows companies to target specific markets at a fraction of the cost of official FIFA sponsorship while generating more measurable returns.

Analysts say the shift reflects a broader evolution among Chinese companies as they move from gaining awareness overseas to building long-term brand equity development.

"In the past, many Chinese brands used global sporting events to establish basic awareness," Wang said. "Today, they are increasingly using those events to strengthen positioning in mid- and high-end markets and deepen engagement with consumers."

Beyond the marketing, Chinese companies remain deeply embedded in the commercial and industrial ecosystem surrounding the World Cup.

From officially licensed merchandise and consumer products to display technologies and digital infrastructure, Chinese firms continue to play an important role in the tournament's supply chain.

In Yiwu, Zhejiang province, a global hub for small commodity manufacturing, local manufacturers have long produced World Cup-related goods ranging from flags to souvenirs.

According to estimates from the Yiwu sporting goods industry association, Chinese manufacturers accounted for roughly 70 percent of the global World Cup merchandise supply during the 2022 tournament in Qatar.

While no comparable estimate exists for 2026, customs data suggest continued strong demand. Yiwu exported 2.83 billion yuan ($418.5 million) worth of sports goods and equipment in the first quarter, up 12 percent year-on-year.

Some companies are also leveraging FIFA licensing programs to sell authorized products, while others are expanding into ticketing, hospitality and travel services for soccer fans travelling overseas.

Zhou Mi, a senior researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, said the World Cup increasingly highlights China's role as a provider of industrial capabilities rather than simply low-cost manufacturing.

"The strength is not just producing a product," Zhou said. "It is coordinating an entire supply chain."

He said China's competitive edge lies in dense industrial clusters capable of delivering quality, scale and speed simultaneously.

The trend mirrors a broader shift among Chinese exporters, which are increasingly investing in product development, branding, intellectual property and global operations as they expand overseas.

Economy of sports more than merely on-field action

Reporter's log

By Li Jing

I am not what you would call an avid soccer fan.

I rarely follow league standings, transfer rumors or match schedules. Yet as the 2026 FIFA World Cup kicked off, I found myself paying attention anyway.

Not because of the soccer.

But because of Labubu.

Pop Mart's designer toy with its toothy grin made a surprise appearance during the World Cup opening ceremony. Within hours, Chinese social media exploded with chatter, and one of the most popular quips was that while Team China failed to reach the World Cup, Labubu had made it onto soccer's biggest stage.

As someone who does not regularly watch soccer, I was suddenly following World Cup-related stories. I was checking social media reactions, reading reports about limited-edition merchandise and monitoring travel data linked to host cities.

The experience reminded me that the world's biggest sporting events are no longer just sports competitions. They have become vast consumer platforms capable of reaching people far beyond traditional fan bases.

Labubu's World Cup collaboration products quickly sold out on Chinese e-commerce platforms, while some limited-edition items began trading at significant premiums on the secondary market.

At the same time, Chinese travel agencies reported growing interest in visiting World Cup host cities across the United States, Canada and Mexico. Online travel portal Tongcheng Travel said searches for World Cup-related travel packages jumped 166 percent week-on-week in the period leading up to June 2, while bookings and inquiries for customized viewing trips also surged.

A successful sports IP can create value far beyond ticket sales. It can drive tourism, hospitality, retail, advertising, merchandise, media rights and urban branding. The event itself may last a few weeks, but its commercial ecosystem can operate year-round.

China is increasingly trying to tap into that potential. The 2026 Government Work Report explicitly called for efforts to "actively develop the sports economy", placing it alongside tourism and wellness as areas with significant consumption potential.

Su Super League, an amateur soccer competition in Jiangsu province, has become a social-media sensation. What started as a regional competition has evolved into a celebration of local identity, generating traffic for restaurants, hotels and tourist attractions across participating cities.

In Guizhou province, the grassroots Village Super League, or "Cun Chao", has blended soccer with ethnic culture, music and tourism, drawing visitors from across the country. Local authorities say sports-related events generated billions of yuan in tourism and consumer spending last year.

"The overall commercialization of China's domestic sports IPs is still at a relatively early stage," said Wang Xueli, director of the center for development of sports industry at Tsinghua University's School of Economics and Management.

While organizers have become increasingly successful at attracting sponsors, areas such as sponsorship activation, audience targeting, brand-event alignment and year-round content operations still have significant room for development, Wang said.

That distinction helps explain why events such as Su Super League and Cun Chao can generate enormous online attention but still differ from global properties such as the World Cup, the Olympics or the Australian Open tennis tournament.

FIFA's decision to embrace IPs like Labubu was not simply a cultural gesture. It reflected a broader effort to expand the tournament's appeal beyond traditional soccer audiences and connect with younger consumers through popular culture.

Perhaps that is the most important lesson for China's sports economy.

The country has already shown it can create sporting events that generate excitement and attract massive online audiences. The next challenge is transforming those moments into sustainable business models that continue creating value long after the final whistle.

Because the real measure of a successful sports economy is not whether an event goes viral.

It is whether the crowds, spending and attention remain after the teams have shaken hands.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM

BUSINESS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM



Tanzanian merchants try wigs at Xuchang hair expo mall in Xuchang, Henan province, on June 2. wang yongtao / xinhua

Inland beauty clusters pursue more than factory margins

Luyi, Xuchang in Henan supply bulk of nation's hair makeup tool exports

ZHENGZHOU — A large share of the world's makeup brushes and wigs have origins located far from the fashion capitals where they are sold.

Local companies in Luyi, a county in Central China's Henan province, supply more than 85 percent of the world's artificial makeup brush fiber materials and account for over 90 percent of China's makeup brush exports. In the nearby city of Xuchang, at least six out of every 10 wigs sold globally are made by a cluster of more than 4,000 related companies.

Together, these two places in Henan show how inland manufacturing hubs in China are seeking a bigger share of the global beauty trade, moving from raw materials and contract manufacturing into brands, patents, overseas warehouses and direct online sales.

The roots of this success and expansion into new areas go back decades.

Luyi's makeup brush industry started in the late 1970s, when local villagers found export value in sheep tail hair. For years, companies there bought and processed hair, selling semifinished goods or making products for foreign labels.

Xuchang's hair trade, meanwhile, has even deeper roots. Local records trace it back to the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), when residents traded needles and thread for human hair and made stage beards and headpieces. By the late Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), local merchants were exporting processed hair to Europe via partnerships with German traders.

In both places, scale came before brands. The industrial know-how was local, but much of the consumer-facing value was not. This gap is now what local companies are trying to close.

Luyi moved first through industrial policy. In 2016, the county launched a program to draw back entrepreneurs who had made their way to coastal trading hubs, pairing a new makeup brush industrial park with rent-free factory space, subsidized loans, a provincial quality inspection center and a cross-border e-commerce incubator.

One returnee was Huang Chunjie, chairman of Dias, a company specializing in makeup tools. After years of trading makeup-brush materials for Japanese and Korean clients in Yiwu in East China's Zhejiang province, which hosts the world's largest wholesale market for small commodities, Huang returned to Luyi in 2016 and moved up the chain: from raw-material sales and contract manufacturing to his own brand of mid- to high-end makeup brushes and beauty sponges for overseas markets.

This move gave Dias more than a label, it changed how the company sold. The firm has now built direct sales channels in Europe and set up an overseas warehouse in Germany. For urgent orders, China-Europe freight trains can get products from Luyi to European customers in as little as 20 days, about half the time required by traditional sea shipping. Dias' annual output value has topped 70 million yuan ($10.35 million), with foreign trade contributing more than 70 percent.

Luyi currently has over 1,000 related business entities, a local supply-chain matching rate of more than 95 percent and annual production of 150 million sets of high-end makeup brushes. Local companies sell through trade fairs, bulk sea shipments, China-Europe freight trains and platforms including Alibaba, Amazon and TikTok.

Xuchang has followed a different route up the value chain. Its advantage lies less in industrial-park policy than in materials technology, skilled labor and the ability to turn a centuries-old hair trade into a modern export cluster.

For years, Xuchang's hair-products industry had scale but limited leverage. High-end hair fibers were largely imported and many local producers worked for foreign labels. The breakthrough came as companies led by Rebecca, the first listed company in China's hair-products industry, developed multi-functional hair fibers and filled a domestic technology gap in high-grade human-hair-like fibers.

"From relying on imports to mastering core materials, companies have gained more pricing room," said Chen Yong, an administrative manager at Rebecca.

The advantage is not only in materials. Xuchang has more than 4,000 wig-related companies, directly supports nearly 300,000 jobs and produces almost 3,000 varieties of hair products. In Rebecca's workshops, a hand-woven wig can take more than a day to complete, with some requiring over 10,000 stitches.

Such craftsmanship is part of what makes the cluster hard to replicate, said Tian Liangjun, vice-president of Xuchang's hair products association. "Control over raw materials, accumulated craftsmanship and technological catch-up have together given Xuchang a unique position in the global wig supply chain," Tian explained.

XINHUA

Jiangxi fine-tunes talent to better meet rising market needs

By **HAN JINGYAN**
hanjingyan@chinadaily.com.cn

A Sino-foreign joint event is becoming a microcosm of a Chinese industry-education alliance being expanded globally amid the country's urge to boost high-quality Belt and Road cooperation.

Held for the first time outside of Malaysia, the 2025 iSpark International Entrepreneurship Competition attracted 70 entrepreneurial projects that competed over two days at Jiangxi Vocational College of Foreign Studies, which was founded in 1964.

The final of the event kicked off with 270 young entrepreneurs from eight countries and 16 universities vying for honors.

Liu Hongxia, a JXCFS student with her "Green Bamboo Technology" project team, and another JXCFS team promoting their "microporous and light porcelain" project, garnered two gold medals. In addition, JXCFS students won two bronze medals and two awards of excellence.

On June 27, 2025, the Tiangong College Alliance was established at JXCFS, grouping 101 universities and colleges, and 18 enterprises in Jiangxi province, and borrowing its name from *Tiangong Kaiwu (The Exploitation of the Works of Nature)* — a book by Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) scientist Song Yingxing from Jiangxi.

In its first six months, the alliance had established Tiangong Workshops in seven countries, including Southeast Asia's first at Tunku Abdul Rahman University of Management and Technology in Malaysia.

Zhu Longliang, JXCFS president, said vocational education must make innovations that truly serve industries.

In Jiangxi, which is undergoing a critical economic transformation and upgrading, over 2,000 e-commerce enterprises urgently need multi-skilled talent, and rural vitalization badly needs e-commerce talent to empower agricultural products.

Xu Zhenjing, head of a local cross-border e-commerce enterprise, said: "Our biggest headache is not being unable to recruit people, but in recruits offering real help."

"Many new recruits don't know ERP (enterprise resource planning) systems, overseas warehouse operations, and even can't understand basic cross-border logistics processes," he said.

"The traditional talent training model is struggling to accurately match industrial demand," Zhu said, adding that JXCFS has launched a systematic revolution in talent cultivation founded in three key areas — school-enterprise cooperation, competition-learning enhancement and integration of knowledge and practice.

Zhu said its school-enterprise cooperation has led to over 30 courses and 15 practical-training textbooks, while the practice of "using competition to promote learning and teaching" has helped 2,000 students obtain innovation credits through attending school, provincial and national-level contests.

The college has invested over 30 million yuan ($4.4 million) in building training bases covering all majors, including over 100 teaching bases outside of school, said Rao Jianhua, JXCFS vice-president.

Liu Cheng, an international business major, said he once attended a four-week "semester project" and a six-month "on-job internship".

"During the semester project, I was assigned to participate in enterprise projects — from market research to program execution," he said, noting that his internship at a cross-border e-commerce company helped him independently operate a store within six months.

This three-way integration approach not only helped the students, but also the teachers.

"In the past, when we were in class, we just followed the textbook and didn't have any real experiences," Liu said.

Huang Jiajing, a teacher from the school of e-commerce, said that "it's different now, as we have to go to companies each year to practice and return with projects."

The proportion of "dual qualification" teachers in JXCFS has reached 65 percent.

Zhou Wei, dean of the school of innovation and entrepreneurship, said so far, JXCFS' new move has helped more than 200 Jiangxi enterprises explore overseas markets and gain significant benefits.

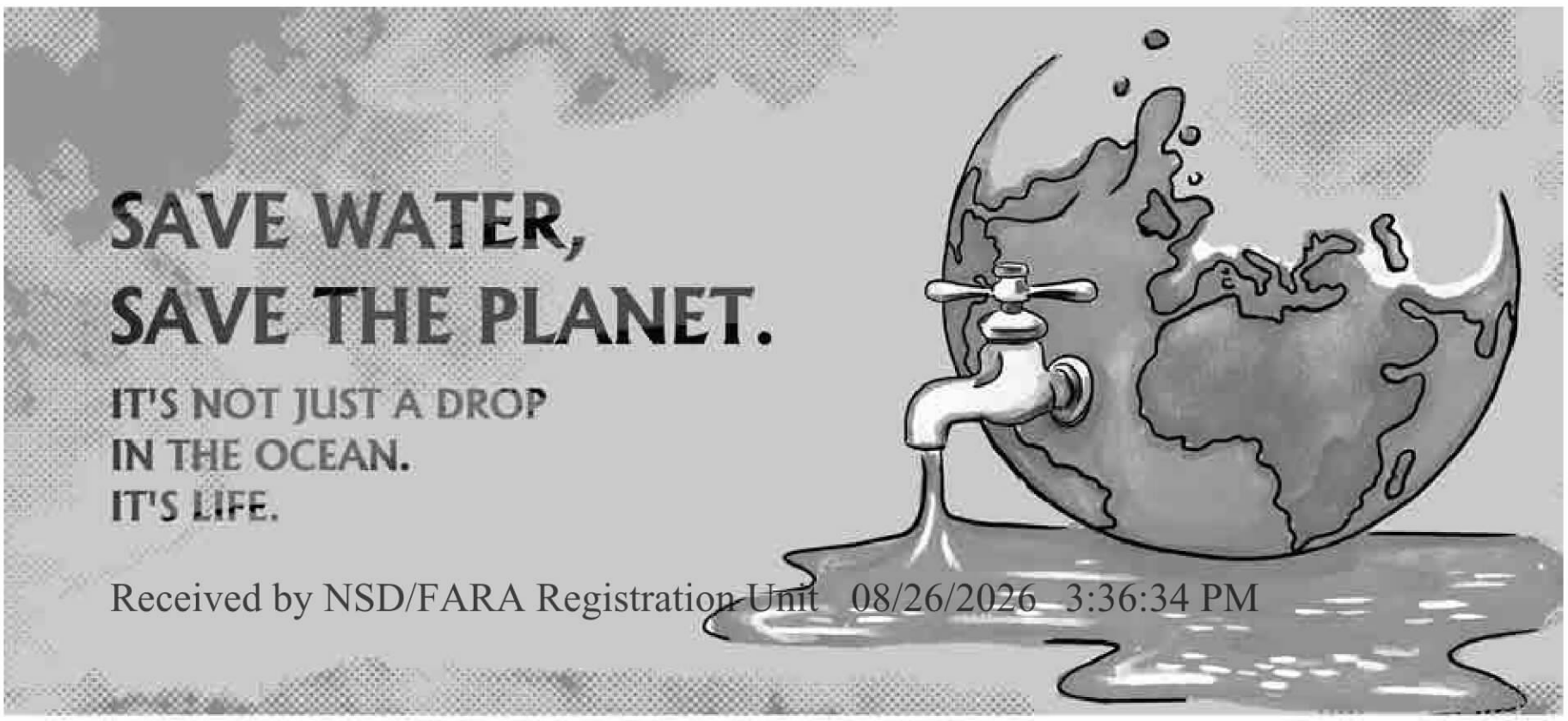
"The students have served the enterprises in a real market environment, honing their abilities and contributing to local economic development," Zhou said.

The overall employment rate for the 2023 JXCFS graduates reached 97.8 percent, and their starting salary jumped 32 percent compared with 2020.

The ultimate goal of the talent revolution is to help JXCFS transform from a talent supplier into a key node in boosting regional innovation systems, said Yan Bin, Party secretary of the college.

Zhu said: "By 2027, the Tiangong College Alliance aims to establish itself as a globally influential brand in vocational education going global, contributing more Jiangxi solutions to the Belt and Road Initiative."

Zhou Wei contributed to this story.



PUBLIC INTEREST AD: 0107
CHINADAILY 中国日报

BUSINESSINSIGHT

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM

Stimulating domestic demand high on agenda

EAGLE EYE
By Xu Gao

The 2026 Government Work Report identifies the development of a strong domestic market as the top priority for China's economic agenda this year. At a time when the global economy is undergoing profound changes, rising unilateralism, increasing trade protectionism and persistent geopolitical uncertainties are creating greater instability for external demand.

Against this backdrop, expanding domestic demand has become a strategic anchor for China's economic resilience. The report stresses the need to expand domestic circulation and strengthen the internal drivers of growth in order to better withstand external shocks.

Within this framework, effective investment plays a central role in building a strong domestic market. The Government Work Report calls for coordinated efforts to boost consumption and expand investment, while emphasizing the need to fully unlock the potential of effective investment and leverage China's ultra-large market advantages.

As one of the two key components of domestic demand, alongside consumption, investment remains equally important for sustaining long-term growth.

In China's economic development model, consumption represents the ultimate goal, while investment serves as an essential means to achieve it. The people-centered nature of economic growth is reflected in the continuous expansion of consumption, which remains a top policy priority in efforts to expand domestic demand.

However, sustained consumption growth cannot be achieved without investment. Consumption heavily relies on investment-driven capital accumulation and income growth across society. At the same time, new forms of investment generate new supply, which in turn creates new demand. This dynamic interaction between supply and demand has become increasingly important in China's development strategy.

The outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) emphasizes the need to use new demand to guide new supply and new supply to create new demand, promoting a virtuous cycle between consumption and investment, as well as achieving a higher-level dynamic balance between supply and demand.

It also calls for integrating investment in physical assets with investment in people, and for greater emphasis on consumption-boosting and livelihood-related spending in fiscal policy.

When consumption is relatively weak, investment tends to account for a larger share of economic activity, helping to stabilize growth. As a developing economy with a large population, China still has significant room for investment-led development.

Although China's total economic output ranks among the highest in the world across multiple indicators, per capita levels remain relatively low in many areas. For example, while China's total electricity generation has long ranked first globally, per capita power generation remains less than 60 percent of that of the United States.

Against the backdrop of rising demand from artificial intelligence and digital technologies, investment in power supply capacity remains an important area of development.

At the same time, increasing global uncertainty and supply chain risks highlight the need for China to strengthen domestic industrial chains and reduce potential "bottleneck" constraints.

Even in the relatively weak property sector, there remains significant demand for improved housing conditions, requiring continued investment in better-quality residential development.

Taken together, these factors indicate that China still has broad upside potential for effective investment to address structural shortcomings in its development model.

A key issue in expanding effective investment lies in how investment returns are evaluated. Misunderstanding or incomplete assessment of investment returns can lead to a weakening of investment incentives.

In practice, investment returns can be understood through three layers: micro returns, regional social returns and national strategic returns.

Micro returns refer to direct financial returns of an investment project, typically measured by cash flow and internal rates of return. This is the most commonly used metric in market-based investment decisions. If expected returns exceed financing costs, the project is considered viable; otherwise, it is not.

However, focusing only on micro returns overlooks broader social benefits.

"Regional returns" refer to the broader economic and social value created within a local area. Infrastructure investment — such as roads, subways and public parks — often falls into this category. While such projects may not generate high direct financial returns, they significantly improve urban functionality and quality of life.

Beyond this, there are also "national returns", which reflect the strategic and long-term benefits of investment at the country level. These include contributions to employment, economic stability, regional coordination and national security.



Illustration generated by AI

For example, transportation infrastructure projects ranging from rural road networks to major railway lines in western China play an important role in promoting rural vitalization and balanced regional development.

Different types of investors naturally focus on different layers of returns. Market entities typically prioritize micro returns, as they operate under commercial principles. However, if all investment decisions are guided solely by micro profitability, socially beneficial projects with weak financial returns may be underfunded or neglected.

This is particularly relevant in infrastructure development. Many infrastructure projects are not financially profitable at the project level, yet they generate substantial social and economic benefits. Without government involvement, such projects often struggle to obtain financing.

China's infrastructure development experience demonstrates the importance of taking into account both regional and national returns. The practice of local governments engaging in urban development has played an important historical role in mobilizing investment.

In China, public ownership of land has also provided a unique institutional foundation. As urban infrastructure improves the quality of life in cities, it also increases the value of land held by local governments, allowing part of the social value created by infrastructure investment to be realized through fiscal channels.

This mechanism has enabled many local governments to balance costs and returns across both micro and regional dimensions, forming a sustainable model for infrastructure financing and urban development.

Another important dimension of investment concerns debt and financial sustainability.

China's investment-to-GDP ratio has remained significantly higher than the global average for a long period. Since investment necessarily involves financing, and China's financial system is predominantly debt-based, investment growth is closely linked to rising debt levels.

However, concerns about debt risks should not be assessed solely by looking at the absolute size of debt. A more important factor is the relationship between domestic savings and debt demand.

In a "savings-debt market", savings represent the supply of capital while debt represents demand for capital. If savings are in surplus relative to borrowing demand, then even a high level of debt does not necessarily point to high risks.

China is a high-savings economy. The International Monetary Fund estimates that China's savings rate in 2025 was around 42 percent, nearly double the global average of 23 percent. At the same time, China's net international investment position exceeded $4 trillion, indicating a large accumulation of overseas assets.

Against this backdrop of excess savings, China's relatively high debt level does not necessarily translate into high systemic risks.

Concerns about local government debt are also often linked to incomplete consideration of regional and national returns on investment. While infrastructure projects may appear unprofitable at the micro level, their broader economic and social benefits are significant when assessed from a wider perspective.

In recent years, China has strengthened efforts to manage local government debt risks, including the implementation of a comprehensive debt restructuring package and the replacement of hidden debt. The Government Work Report also proposes further optimization of local government bond issuances to support project financing.

The Government Work Report outlines a range of policy tools aimed at expanding effective investment.

On the government side, China plans to allocate 755 billion yuan ($112 billion) of central budgetary investment and 800 billion yuan from ultra-long special treasury bonds for major national strategic projects and security capacity-building initiatives. Standards for central investment subsidies will also be adjusted to better support priority areas.

At the local level, the issuance quota of special-purpose bonds will be increased and better aligned with regions that have well-prepared projects and demonstrate efficient use of funds.

In addition, China plans to issue 800 billion yuan in new policy-oriented financial instruments to mobilize more private capital for investment.

The writer is chief economist at BOC International.
The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

First national-level special plan for urban regeneration issued

Main st Reet
By Fan Sibin

Recently, the State Council, China's Cabinet, issued an urban regeneration plan for the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30). As China's first national-level special plan for urban regeneration, it marks the elevation of urban regeneration from an institutional and mechanism-building effort to a medium-to-long-term, overarching national strategy.

The release of the plan has drawn significant attention and sparked lively discussions across society. At a time when China's urban development is shifting from large-scale expansion to stock-based quality improvement and efficiency enhancement, the plan carries great significance.

It systematically sets out the goals, targets, key tasks and policy safeguards for urban regeneration over the next five years, outlining a vision and pathway for building modern people-centered cities.

Urban regeneration is closely linked to the daily lives of the people. Since the fifth plenary session of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China proposed the action of advancing urban regeneration, a series of livelihood, safety and development projects have been implemented to address pressing public concerns. As a result, urban regeneration has been widely welcomed and closely followed by the public.

Following last year's guidelines on advancing urban regeneration campaign issued by the general offices of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council, the plan represents the first key dedicated plan at the national level in the field of urban regeneration.

It not only reflects the continuous improvement of the top-level design for urban regeneration, but also underscores the fact that urban regeneration serves as both an important lever for building modern people-centered cities and a national strategic initiative crucial to the implementation of the new development philosophy and the long-term competitiveness of cities.

Looking back at the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-25), local pilot projects flourished across the country. With the launch of this plan, the national institutional framework has become more robust, overall coordination has strengthened and urban regeneration has entered a new phase characterized by institutionalization, long-term effectiveness and market-driven mechanisms.

The plan fully aligns with the goal of building modern people-centered cities. Centered on the objectives of "innovation, livability, beauty, resilience, civility and intelligence", it comprehensively lays out six key tasks, seven policy measures, and 14 major projects and initiatives, systematically establishing the goals, tasks and roadmap for urban regeneration.

First, for the first time, it uses quantitative targets to define the urban regeneration "scorecard". This is one of the most closely followed highlights of the plan. Ten key targets are set, including: by 2030, renovating 500,000 dilapidated urban residential units; starting the renovation of 115,000 aging residential communities; upgrading 1,500 old neighborhoods and factory compounds; reconstructing 365,000 kilometers of underground pipelines; and restoring 15,000 historic buildings.

These quantifiable and assessable indicators closely integrate urban regeneration with the construction of modern people-centered cities, providing clearer goals and assessment criteria for urban regeneration work.

Second, the plan fully embodies a people-centered approach while also addressing the strategic needs of expanding domestic demand, boosting investment, stimulating consumption and pursuing development.

It outlines six key tasks and 14 major projects and initiatives. This "task list" reflects a combination of investment in physical assets and investment in people.

The plan calls for the construction and renovation of quality housing, the renovation of aging residential communities and the development of complete communities — all major projects that improve people's livelihoods — across different spatial levels, creating high-quality urban living environments.

At the same time, the plan places particular emphasis on fostering new drivers of urban growth. It explicitly proposes revitalizing idle and inefficiently utilized resources such as old factories and underused commercial office spaces; promoting the transformation and upgrading of aging neighborhoods, factory compounds and inefficient industrial parks; cultivating emerging industries; and upgrading consumption infrastructure.

This means that urban regeneration also serves as a strategic lever for reshaping urban growth drivers and unlocking domestic demand potential.

Third, the plan introduces a policy system for sustainable urban regeneration through reform and innovation. The third plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee explicitly called for "establishing a sustainable model and policy-legal framework for urban regeneration".

The plan devotes a full chapter to specific arrangements for building a policy system for urban regeneration during the 15th Five-Year Plan period, outlining a roadmap for reform and innovation.

It directly addresses the difficulties and bottlenecks encountered in urban regeneration practice, focusing on seven key areas: implementation mechanisms, financial guarantees, land use, building safety, multi-stakeholder participation, laws and standards, and technology and talent.

The aim is to accelerate the development of a comprehensive, well-coordinated and efficient policy system for urban regeneration, providing solid support for orderly, routine and long-term urban regeneration.

Over the next five years, as the plan is implemented, urban regeneration will move rapidly from blueprint to reality in people's daily lives. It is likely to see continued improvements in cities: better housing, safer and more livable communities, more vibrant neighborhoods, lively blue-green spaces, more attractive consumer destinations and more innovative industrial parks.

According to estimates by multiple institutions, the total market size for urban regeneration during the 15th Five-Year Plan period will exceed 15 trillion yuan ($2.22 trillion). These figures will translate into tangible improvements for the people — better urban living environments, stronger economic dynamism and higher governance standards.

As time moves forward, with the high-quality and sustainable advancement of urban regeneration under the guidance of the plan, Chinese cities are poised for another qualitative leap in the new era. Modern people-centered cities that are innovative, livable, beautiful, resilient, civil and intelligent are steadily coming into view.

The writer is director of the Research Institute of Urban Regeneration at the China Academy of Urban Planning and Design.
The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM

MOTORING

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM

Quality and safety stressed as R&D cycle speeding up

By Wang Yuchen
wangyuchen@chinadaily.com.cn

Automakers in China are shortening development cycles and launching new models more quickly to better respond to changing consumer demand, but industry experts said faster iteration should be backed by more robust testing and quality management to ensure long-term safety and reliability.

The faster pace is reflected in both shorter development cycles and a growing number of new vehicle products. According to a McKinsey report, the development cycle for new vehicles in China has been shortened to about 24 months from around 60 months in the era dominated by traditional fuel vehicles.

A catalog released by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology on June 10 included about 65 new passenger vehicle products, compared with 52 in May.

Annual product updates have become increasingly common among automakers, especially new energy vehicle brands. These may take the form of all-new models, upgraded versions or incremental functional improvements, including larger battery packs, driver-assistance systems and in-car software.

Part of the faster pace has been enabled by changes in vehicle architecture and engineering methods. Electric vehicles often use more centralized electronic and electrical architectures, allowing automakers to reuse software and key systems across models, while virtual simulation can improve the efficiency of design verification.

Guan Mingyu, a senior partner and leader of McKinsey's automotive practice in China, said the faster pace of product updates has given intelligent electric vehicles some characteristics similar to consumer electronics. But he said such similarities should not obscure the fact that cars remain durable goods closely linked to safety.

Guan said that no matter how automakers optimize development processes, they must complete necessary road tests and the required testing mileage. These steps are essential to protecting consumers and supporting automakers' long-term development, he said.

Li Shufu, chairman of Geely Holding Group, also cautioned against a shortcut-driven approach to vehicle development. Speaking at a recent industry forum in Chongqing, he said new models should follow standard vehicle development procedures instead of cutting test procedures or shortening verification time.

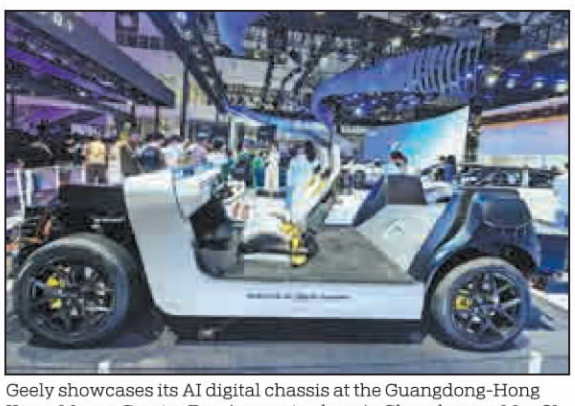
The emphasis on verification is also reflected in regulatory requirements. In January, the MIIT issued revised vehicle access standards, which will take effect on Jan 1, 2027. Under these requirements, conventional vehicles must complete at least 30,000 kilometers of reliability verification, while electric vehicles continue to follow a 15,000-kilometer requirement under type-approval testing procedures.

Quality management, however, is not limited to reliability testing. A study by J.D. Power showed that quality problems among China's new energy vehicles continued to increase in 2026, though at a slower pace.

Design-related problems now account for nearly 70 percent of all reported issues. It makes optimization of user interaction and intelligent system accuracy a core priority, said Sean Wang, managing director of automotive product solutions at J.D. Power China.

The 2026 China New Energy Vehicle Initial Quality Study released in April showed that the industry average reached 231 problems per 100 vehicles (PP100), an increase of 5 PP100 from a year earlier.

The findings also suggest there is still room for automakers to improve product design and user experience as they accelerate product updates.



Geely showcases its AI digital chassis at the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area auto show in Shenzhen on May 31.
Cao Yingying / China daily



China National Heavy Duty Truck Group showcases its electric heavy trucks in Shanghai on May 15.
Provided to China daily

Truck fleet targeted for electric makeover

Ministry of Transport plans low-carbon transformation of haulage sector

By Cao Yingying
caoyingying@chinadaily.com.cn

China has set its first nationwide targets to accelerate the green, low-carbon transformation of the heavy truck sector.

The country is expected to have 1.6 million new energy heavy trucks by 2030, with these vehicles accounting for 40 percent of new heavy truck sales, according to a recently released plan jointly issued by the Ministry of Transport and 10 other central government authorities.

Once fulfilled, new energy heavy trucks will account for 20 percent of the nation's entire heavy trucks fleet by the end of the decade.

Heavy trucks make up just 3 percent of China's total vehicle fleet yet generate half of all road transport carbon emissions, said Li Bin, an expert at the China Electric Power Research Institute, earlier in June. The statistic shows how electrifying heavy trucks is critical to hitting peak carbon goals within the transport sector.

The central government has rolled out supporting infrastructure targets to underpin the plan, building a 30,000-kilometer zero-carbon highway transport network covering key national expressways, accompanied by around 3,000 dedicated charging and battery swap stations that exclusively serve heavy trucks.

For regions, including the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei cluster, which are prioritized under national air pollution control initiatives, over 80 percent of fixed-route short-distance shuttle transport will be electrified.

Liu Xin, head of the Transport Planning and Research Institute under the Ministry of Transport, said that beyond the 1.6-million-unit fleet target, the plan prioritizes building an integrated industrial ecosystem linking vehicles, road networks and energy supply systems. Coordinated planning of refueling and recharging hubs with transport infrastructure will eliminate bottlenecks in short- and long-haul routes, enabling large-scale commercial operations.

Market uptake has expanded in recent years. Between January 2025 and May 2026, cumulative sales of new energy heavy trucks hit 337,000 units, lifting segment penetration above 29.5 percent. In May alone, sales surged 104 percent to 30,800 units, accounting for 40.88 percent of total heavy truck sales.

XCMG topped the sector with 4,986 units sold in May, followed by China National Heavy Duty Truck Group and Sany Truck. Several major players posted explosive year-on-year growth in May: China National Heavy Duty Truck Group surged 213 percent, Dongfeng Motor rose 110 percent and Farizon New Energy Commercial Vehicle jumped 219 percent.

The growth was driven by a combination of subsidy incentives for phasing out China's National IV emission standard heavy trucks, trade-in policies and robust demand from mining, urban construction and other industrial segments.

Wider industry scale has narrowed the cost gap between electric and diesel heavy trucks while amplifying operational savings.

Dang Botao, new energy product manager at Shaanxi Automobile Group, noted the purchase cost of electric heavy-duty trucks is approaching that of internal combustion ones.

The economic edge stands out in bulk fixed logistics such as coal transit, steel mill yard transport and other bulk cargo, where per-kilometer energy costs run at one-third those of diesel trucks, Dang added.

Zhang Rongji, executive president of StarCharge China, said that electric heavy trucks deliver superior total cost of ownership, cutting annual operating expenses by 150,000 to 250,000 yuan ($22,190 to $36,980) per vehicle. Over a five-year service life, cumulative savings range from 500,000 to 1 million yuan per vehicle.

Liu Zhen, new energy product line manager at China National Heavy Duty Truck Group, projects sustained long-term growth. Advances in power battery technology, mass-scale green hydrogen production, intelligent connectivity and end-to-end zero-carbon systems could push new energy heavy truck market penetration to between 80 and 90 percent by 2035.

Huatai Securities has forecast a combined national fleet of 1.6 million new energy heavy trucks by 2030, split between 1.31 million battery-electric units and 290,000 hydrogen fuel cell ones.

Annual battery demand for electric heavy trucks will reach 85.5 gigawatt-hours from 2026 through 2030, representing 14 percent of China's annual power battery installation volume, with upward revisions to consumption estimates likely, according to Huatai Securities.

Major manufacturers and battery suppliers have ramped up strategic investments. Chinese battery giant CATL signed a strategic cooperation agreement with Shanxi province in May to build a flagship industrial hub centered on battery-swap heavy trucks.

Another battery provider, CALB, has launched field research in Tengzhou, Shandong province, in March, targeting diversified application scenarios covering electric heavy trucks and electric vessels.

Methanol gains ground in China's green transport transition

By Li Fusheng
lifusheng@chinadaily.com.cn

China's green transport transition is moving toward a more diversified energy mix, with battery electric vehicles being complemented by alternative fuels such as methanol, particularly in commercial and long-haul applications.

Future mobility systems should be understood as an integrated energy and transport network rather than a stand-alone automotive transformation, said Chan Ching-Chuen, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, at a recent industry forum.

China's rapid adoption of electric vehicles over the past decade has laid a strong foundation for transport decarbonization, but structural challenges remain in commercial transport, heavy-duty logistics and regions with complex operating conditions.

New energy vehicles accounted for over 50 percent of China's overall vehicle market in the first five months of this year, while penetration in the commercial vehicle segment stood at 28.2 percent, according to Zhang Yongwei, president of the China EV100 think tank.

He said the segment faces challenges in achieving rapid electrification and suggested that a diversified technology pathway — including battery electric, hybrid, fuel cell and methanol — is likely to prove more effective.

Fang Haifeng, chief expert at the China Automotive Technology and Research Center, said commercial vehicles account for a disproportionately large share of transport emissions despite their relatively smaller fleet size, making them a key focus for alternative fuel deployment.

He said China's policy framework is increasingly supportive of multi-path technologies, including battery-electric, hydrogen and methanol systems, particularly in heavy-duty and industrial transport segments.

Fang added that methanol offers advantages in energy storage, logistics and low-temperature performance, and can be integrated into existing fuel distribution infrastructure at a relatively low cost.

Methanol can be produced from coal, biomass, captured carbon dioxide and green hydrogen, positioning it as a flexible energy carrier within China's emerging low-carbon energy system, he said.

China's methanol vehicle sector has entered a steady growth phase, with clear industrial momentum, Fang said.

Last year, national methanol vehicle ownership exceeded 60,000 units, of which roughly two-thirds were commercial vehicles.

Supported by policy incentives and rising demand, the sector is expected to surpass 80,000 units this year.

Over the longer term, Fang said the industry is expected to build a more complete ecosystem and may move toward large-scale commercialization by 2030.

He said the sector is likely to become an important component of China's broader transport decarbonization strategy over the next five years.

Fang also called for a more structured policy framework, including national-level implementation plans for methanol vehicles, expansion of refueling infrastructure and coordinated systems for methanol production, storage and distribution.

He suggested expanding pilot applications across public transport, taxis, ride-hailing fleets, municipal services and heavy-duty logistics.

Farizon New Energy Commercial Vehicle, a subsidiary of China's Geely Holding Group, is one of the key players in methanol-electric technology.

CEO Fan Xianjun said methanol-electric systems can reduce particulate emissions by up to 98 percent compared with diesel engines and lower operating costs by about 32.52 percent, depending on application scenarios.

In heavy-duty logistics, certain models have achieved real-world driving ranges exceeding 1,500 kilometers per refueling cycle, addressing a key limitation of battery-only systems in long-haul operations.

Fan also cited a long-distance test involving a light commercial vehicle that traveled nearly 1,700 kilometers on a single methanol-electric refueling cycle, describing it as evidence of improving operational maturity.

Fan said Geely's methanol-electric vehicles have been deployed at scale, with more than 60,000 units in operation globally and cumulative mileage exceeding 25 billion kilometers.

Emerging markets including China's Hong Kong are showing interest in the technology.

Farizon's U12M methanol-electric bus, developed specifically for the Hong Kong market, has recently received emissions exemption approval from the city's environmental authorities and is expected to enter full commercial operation soon.

Chan, the academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, said methanol-powered commercial vehicles are a fitting choice for Southeast Asia as well, a region with a large population and massive logistics demand.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM

Short Torque

Lower pre-tax profits forecast by BMW

German carmaker BMW downgraded its 2026 targets on Tuesday due to turmoil in the Middle East and worsening business in key market China, and vowed to step up its cost-cutting efforts. It is the latest bad news from Germany's ailing auto sector, and a major blow for a manufacturer which had so far endured industry upheaval better than its peers Volkswagen and Mercedes-Benz. BMW said it now expects a "significant" decrease in pre-tax profit this year, against a previous expectation for only a moderate decrease. It forecast a slight fall in vehicle deliveries, compared to a previous prediction for them to remain stable. And profit margins in its auto division will come in between 1-3 percent, down from an earlier expectation of 4-6 percent.

Talks to decide new partner for Maserati

Stellantis is in talks with two potential partners for cooperation on its struggling luxury brand Maserati, the automaker's Chief Executive Antonio Filosa said on Wednesday during a hearing at the Italian parliament. Stellantis will soon decide which partner to choose, the CEO added. The automaker revealed its new long-term business plan in May, but said Maserati would present its own strategy at a separate capital markets day in December. Filosa said there's no plan to sell Maserati or the under-used Cassino plant near Rome. He said Cassino's future will be "closely tied" to that of Maserati and the brand will remain "an icon of Italian style".

Tata shares tumble after JLR prediction

Jaguar Land Rover will prioritize growth in the US as it seeks to counter weakness in its traditional stronghold of China, but will deliver only a 4 percent profit margin, it said on Wednesday, sending shares of its Indian parent Tata Motors tumbling. The British carmaker's plan to rebuild profitability and cut costs fell short of investors' expectations, triggering a sell-off with shares of Tata Motors falling by as much as 10 percent. JLR contributes about 80 percent of Tata's revenues. JLR's profit margin fell to 0.7 percent in fiscal year 2025 from near double-digits in earlier years. While the 4 percent forecast for the current year is an improvement, it is far from the 10 percent margin the company had targeted.

Auto exports fall again in South Korea

South Korea's auto exports fell for a second straight month in May due to fewer business days and production disruption of auto parts, government data showed on Wednesday. Outbound car shipments declined 5.9 percent from a year earlier to $5.83 billion in May, after reducing 5.5 percent in April, according to the ministry of trade, industry and resources. The downturn was attributed to fewer working days and a fire at a local parts supplier that disrupted auto output. Demand remained strong for eco-friendly vehicles, the export of which expanded 9.9 percent to $2.4 billion in May on a yearly basis. The number of vehicles manufactured in local factories decreased 8.2 percent to 329,559 in May.

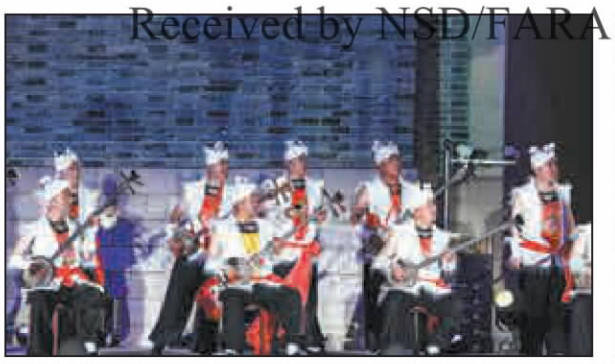
Restructure sparks layoffs at Rivian

US EV maker Rivian said on Tuesday it is laying off less than 2 percent of its workforce as part of ongoing efforts to scale its operations profitably. The company, which employed 15,232 people as of December, has said it no longer expected to meet its 2027 adjusted core profit target. It comes as it ramps up spending on research and development to accelerate its autonomous driving road map. Rivian began production of its smaller R2 SUV in April, with deliveries underway, as the company bets on a lower-cost model to broaden demand and strengthen its path to profitability. "We recently restructured a handful of teams within Rivian as we work to profitably scale our business," a company spokesperson said.

motoring-agencies

LIFE

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM





Left: A folk performance marks the opening of the 2026 Intangible Cultural Heritage Summer Shopping Month, which kicked off on June 11 in Suzhou, Jiangsu province. **Right:** A tea-making demonstration draws visitors to one of the many heritage display booths during the event.

Preservation finds a way into modern hearts

Transformation and innovation help China's intangible cultural heritage find consumers hungry for fresh experiences, **Yang Feiyue** reports in Suzhou, Jiangsu.

Zhou Jing was holding a bowl of noodles at a booth on the historical Pingjiang Road in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, where crowds flowed along the ancient stone-paved street on a muggy June afternoon. At first glance, it did not look like a typical local dish. The bowl was made entirely of plush fabric and weighed almost nothing. Even the braised pork topping was soft and fuzzy.

And yet, around her, staff members engaged visitors in mock noodle-shop interactions.

"Hard noodles or soft? Extra broth or light?"

For many visitors, the questions were unfamiliar. That was by design.

Small cards and props at the booth explained the specialized vocabulary of Suzhou noodle culture: *kuan tang* (extra broth), *jin tang* (less broth), *zhong mian* (extra noodles), and *shao mian* (fewer noodles). In 2020, Suzhou-style noodle-making was added to the city's intangible cultural heritage (ICH) list, adding another layer to this seemingly simple interaction. For local regulars, these terms signal identity as much as taste. For outsiders, they offer a quick introduction to one of the city's best-loved traditions.

The experience was designed to be memorable — a playful encounter that transforms a local culinary custom into an interactive cultural lesson.

Zhou's booth was among the busiest attractions at the 2026 Intangible Cultural Heritage Summer Shopping Month, which opened on June 11 in Suzhou. Held along Pingjiang Road, a canal-side neighborhood lined with white-walled houses and black-tiled roofs, the event forms part of a nationwide campaign featuring more than 1,200 activities held through late July, aimed at bringing traditional culture closer to contemporary life.

For Zhou, a former travel entrepreneur who once specialized in European tours, the plush noodle bowl represents more than a novelty product. It is part of a growing movement across China that is reimagining how intangible cultural heritage is preserved, presented, and passed on to younger generations.

Across the country, cultural entrepreneurs and heritage inheritors are increasingly turning traditional crafts, foods and folklore into collectible toys, lifestyle products and social-media-friendly cultural IPs (intellectual property).

The transformation of Pingjiang Road into a sprawling heritage marketplace offers a glimpse of that shift.



Creative cultural products featuring Zibo soft pottery prove a hit with visitors at the shopping month event. Photos Provided to China Daily

> A friend once told me our works have a 'human touch'. That phrase exactly woke me up."
>
> **Wang Zhi,** a municipal-level inheritor of Zibo soft pottery

Creative inspiration

More than 100 heritage workshops and inheritors from across China gathered for the shopping month's main event, showcasing everything from embroidery and ceramics to weaving, sculpture and traditional foods.

Among them was Zhou's collection of plush noodle bowls, refrigerator magnets and blind boxes inspired by the local food culture.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Zhou operated a travel business serving Chinese tourists visiting Europe and international visitors coming to China. When global tourism ground to a halt in 2020, she began exploring opportunities closer to home.

"There weren't many cultural products that truly reflected Suzhou's local character and everyday life," she says. "I wanted to create something people could connect with."

Her workshop is located in the Dinghuisi alley in Suzhou's old town. Nearby, heritage masters regularly give public demonstrations and classes. Watching these activities, Zhou realized that many traditional cultural elements remained unfamiliar even to local residents.

"I discovered things I didn't know myself. If local people don't know about them, young people are even less likely to know," she says.

Although not an inheritor of a traditional craft, Zhou chose to serve as a translator between heritage and the marketplace. Food became her starting point.

"Visitors come to Suzhou for two things: the gardens and the food," she says, explaining why she chose food as her focus.

Inspired by the popularity of interactive cultural merchandise, she created products that transform familiar local dishes into collectibles. Customers not only receive a toy but also a cultural story.

Her first generation of plush noodle bowls attracted attention but struggled to sustain sales due to their relatively high price. Several rounds of redesign followed.

A second version added practical functions, such as card holders. The breakthrough came when Zhou combined several fast-growing categories in China's creative cultural market — blind boxes, plush toys and refrigerator magnets — into a single product that was smaller, more affordable and easier to collect.

Since the launch of the latest version in early 2025, sales have exceeded expectations.

She has since expanded collaborations with local brands, including Renchangshun, a traditional Suzhou pastry maker with a history stretching back more than two centuries. Together, they transformed products such as *dingsheng gao* and *zhuangyuan gao*, pastries associated with good fortune and academic success, into plush collectibles.

"My role is to help people take notice. Once they're interested, they can learn more," she says.

A broader movement

Zhou's story reflects a wider transformation taking place across China's heritage sector.

This year's ICH summer shopping month places particular emphasis on connecting traditional culture with contemporary consumption. Alongside exhibitions and craft demonstrations, the event features activities exploring themes such as "ICH plus designer toys", "ICH plus fashion", and "ICH plus technology" — an acknowledgment that preservation today increasingly depends on finding new ways to engage modern audiences.

The shift is being driven in part by changing consumer behavior, particularly among younger generations.

According to leading online food delivery and local services platform Meituan, searches related to nationally recognized intangible cultural heritage food traditions exceeded 18 million in 2025, up 34 percent year-on-year. Orders placed with related merchants rose by 140 percent, while nearly two-thirds of searches came from consumers aged 20 to 35.

Industry observers say the figures point to a growing appetite for heritage experiences that feel interactive, accessible and relevant to daily life, besides those from the museums or textbooks.

A report on China's cultural and creative industries, released by China Cultural Media Group, notes that heritage-based cultural products are increasingly moving beyond static preservation toward what it calls "living innovation" and market-oriented development, allowing traditional culture to become part of everyday consumer experiences.

For entrepreneurs and inheritors alike, the question has now been how to translate them into forms that resonate with younger consumers.

Pony with personality

About two hours north of Suzhou by high-speed rail, another experiment in heritage innovation has been unfolding in Zibo, Shandong province.

Wang Zhi, a municipal-level inheritor of Zibo soft pottery, has spent more than a decade exploring ways to engage contemporary audiences with traditional clay sculpture.

Her studio is known for miniature works inspired by Chinese history, everyday life and classical art. But national attention arrived in 2024 with the debut of Long Dada, a dragon whose round body and playful expression challenged conventional depictions of the mythical creature.

The character quickly gained popularity online and helped Wang rethink how traditional culture could be presented to younger audiences.

Her latest creation pushes that idea further.

Known as Ma Biaobiao, or "Scruffy Pony", the figure was developed in collaboration with the Beijing Fine Art Academy and inspired by a late painting by renowned Chinese artist Qi Baishi, depicting the spirit and vitality of a galloping horse.

The pony features oversized eyes and a dramatically fluffy mane made not from clay but from Tan sheep wool.

Achieving the dynamic pose proved technically demanding. The sculpture's front legs touch the ground while the hind legs lift into the air, requiring repeated experimentation and an internal support structure capable of withstanding the firing process.

To strengthen the connection with the original artwork, the team designed the display so the pony appears to leap from a traditional Chinese scroll painting.

The feature that most captured public attention, however, was the mane.

Owners are encouraged to braid, curl, decorate, or style it however they wish.

"We call it co-creation," Wang says.

The idea extends beyond the product itself. The pony's name originated from internet users, who described the character using the Shandong dialect word *biao*, a term suggesting something goofy, impulsive or endearingly eccentric. The team adopted the nickname and continued refining the character in response to customer feedback.

New mane colors, accessories and design details emerged through interactions with fans online.

"We listen carefully," Wang says. That approach has helped transform a single clay sculpture into a broader cultural IP encompassing keychains, refrigerator magnets, bags, and apparel.

For Wang, the appeal lies in creating an emotional connection.

"Heritage isn't something frozen in time. It continues to evolve," she says.

Wang has thought a lot about what makes heritage stick.

"A friend once told me our works have a 'human touch'," she says. "That phrase exactly woke me up. Intangible cultural heritage is about the warmth of the hand, the sedimentation of time, the power of healing, the possibility of co-creation."

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

Foreigners praise country's high sense of safety

What would happen if someone left a backpack full of personal belongings unattended in one of China's busiest commercial areas?

YouTuber "Because I'm Lizzy" decided to find out in Southwest China's Chongqing last year. After spending nearly two hours wandering through the city's winding streets, sampling local delicacies, and taking in its neon-lit nightlife, she returned to find everything exactly where she left it.

The 29-year-old South African content creator was not surprised by the outcome. "I've been proven so many times that nothing would ever get stolen," she says. "Safety is the number one reason why I stay in China."

Currently based in Kunming, the capital city of Yunnan province, the YouTuber, Jannelize Bessenger, has lived in China for seven years. She created a series of videos about the country after noticing that many people know little about the high safety level of the nation, with a population exceeding 1.4 billion.

But for Bessenger, "It is the people who live here and their value and respect for life that make China the safest place, where I will stay for many years."

Her first impression of China was shaped by an unexpected act of kindness from a stranger. She recalled that in 2019, just four months after arriving in China, she fell seriously ill while in Nanchang, Jiangxi province. Although she had the hospital's location saved on her phone, she still could not find it.

Speaking little Chinese at the time, she turned to a man nearby for help, using a translation app. To her surprise, he voluntarily accompanied her to the hospital by subway and then left.

Wondering whether the man would ask for her contact or something in return, Bessenger said nothing happened. "He was just being nice," she says. That moment made her realize she could live alone in China safely as a foreign woman.

Hailing from a small South African town renowned for its wildlife and safaris, solo traveler Bessenger says China's secure environment allows her to embrace a relaxed lifestyle.

"Whether I'm going for a walk with headphones on at 11 pm because I can't sleep or I want to get some fresh air without checking a map, I just go and explore," she says.

China ranks high among other countries on the safety and law and order index, according to Gallup's 2025 Global Safety Report.

When Bessenger shared her appreciation for feeling safe on the lifestyle-sharing platform RedNote, many Chinese users were puzzled as to why she kept bringing it up.

"They take it for granted. They don't really realize how lucky they are to live in such a safe country," she says. The feeling was shared by her mother, who visited China from South Africa two years ago and later decided to settle down.

China's safety and openness are also echoed by short-term travelers. In 2025, inbound tourist visits to China surpassed 150 million, up more than 17 percent year-on-year. Of these, over 30 million foreign travelers entered the country under China's visa-free policies.

With expensive camera gear in hand, Canadian YouTuber Dave Mani and his wife comfortably moved around Chinese cities and roamed rural areas.

"After visiting 56 countries, we can say that China is very high on the list in terms of general safety," says Mani.

As an independent content creator, Mani notices how deeply technology is integrated into everyday life in China. Whenever he and his wife needed help during the trip, locals were quick to use translation apps to communicate with them.

> I've been proven so many times that nothing would ever get stolen. Safety is the number one reason why I stay in China."
>
> **Jannelize Bessenger,** South African content creator known as "Because I'm Lizzy"

The couple quickly became fans of WeChat, saying the super app brought great convenience, especially WeChat Pay, which allowed them to make payments easily and safely.

"That level of everyday safety made filming and exploring very easy and enjoyable," says Mani.

Like Bessenger and Mani, Ana Rosa Neumann Devers, an exchange student from the Dominican Republic studying in Harbin, Heilongjiang province, finds it cozy and relaxing to stroll past the orderly market stalls day or night.

The girl from the tropical Caribbean nation has fallen in love with the icy northern city, captivated by its snowy nights and warmed by the kind sincerity of her schoolmates. At a school ball, she appeared in traditional Dominican attire and was met with warm applause and heartfelt eompliments.

"People here respect different cultures and customs. No one treats me differently because I'm from another country. I truly feel respected," she says.

In the past seven years, Bessenger has found that in China, every place offers something entirely different for travelers to discover. But for those who don't know where to go or who are eager to tap into the "becoming Chinese" trend, her advice is simple: just head downstairs when night falls.

"Walk around, get some street food, and see how people enjoy their meals and how the city settles into a peaceful but vibrant rhythm," she says. "That's when China feels most real."

XINHUA



Overseas tourists take photos of a drone light show at Nanbin Road in Nan'an District of Chongqing, southwest China, on April 22. Huang Wei / Xinhua

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM

LIFE

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM



Master's six strings strike global chords

An award-winning craftsman blends Spanish lutherie and local design to build world-beating classical guitars, **Wang Xin** reports in Shanghai.

Gao Yi, 56, is one of China's most accomplished classical guitarists. Today, however, he is winning even greater recognition worldwide as a luthier, crafting exquisitely handmade guitars that are earning international acclaim.

Two years ago, Gao's flamenco guitar won first prize at the 7th Antonio Marin Montero Guitar Building Competition held in Granada, Spain, where his classical guitar also remarkably made it to the final. He became the first Chinese luthier ever to win the competition's top prize.

Last month, his instruments impressed Japanese musicians and fellow luthiers at an exhibition in Tokyo. Standing out in this highly competitive market through exceptional craftsmanship, Gao signed cooperation agreements with Japan's major instrument distributors, including Gendai Guitar and Kurosawa Gakki, for both online and offline orders.

Born in Shandong province in 1970, Gao's connection with music and instruments began early. He primarily played the Chinese bamboo flute as a child and taught himself guitar at the age of 17. After graduating from Jining University with a music degree in 1992, he continued his studies in classical guitar performance at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing the following year. It was there that he first encountered guitars built in the traditional Spanish style.

In 2000, Gao won first place in the Chinese Guitar Competition while performing on an Antonio Marin Montero guitar borrowed from a friend.

Later that year, he joined Yamaha Corporation as China's guitar market manager and relocated to Shanghai. During his eight years with the company, Gao deepened his understanding of guitar history and construction techniques. At the same time, he continued performing solo concerts, often using his cherished Marin Montero guitars.

His first attempts at building guitars began in 2010, when he established his workshop, Gaoyi Guitars. Shortly afterward, a serious accident during a repair left his fingers badly injured. Rather than discouraging him, the experience strengthened his determination to pursue lutherie more seriously and eventually shift his professional focus toward guitar making.

In 2013, Gao seized an opportunity to study traditional Spanish guitar-making in Beijing under Juan Labella, a respected guitar maker from Granada.

The following year, with support from the Spanish Consulate General in Shanghai, he visited Spain, where he was introduced to Marin Montero himself. The legendary master offered valuable guidance and encouragement. Marin Montero, widely regarded as one of the most influential living masters of traditional Spanish guitar making, became both a mentor and a lasting source of inspiration for Gao.

In 2019, Gao was recommended by the European Guitar Foundation to study with another renowned Granada School luthier, Rene Baarslag. The experience further shaped and inspired his own approach to guitar making.

"While I was in Spain, I lived with local musicians and luthiers to learn and exchange ideas. Then I realized that guitar making is far more than simply creating a seemingly abstract sound. Behind it lie the culture, history, humanism, life experience and the thoughts of the luthiers," says Gao.

Regardless of national or cultural differences, Gao says he was warmly welcomed by Spanish masters. They generously shared their workshops, materials, tools, techniques, craftsmanship, experience and even their philosophy of life.

Gao says what many Chinese luthiers still lack in high-end guitar making is a deeper "understanding" and "perception" of the instrument itself. His experience as a performer has helped bridge that gap. Spain, widely regarded as the cradle of the classical guitar, has passed down its traditions and accumulated knowledge through generations of master builders.

It was during his time in Spain that Gao learned, for example, that the finest soundboards for premium Spanish-style guitars are often made from high-quality spruce sourced from the Fiemme Valley in the northern Alps at an altitude of around 1,500 meters. The same region supplied wood for the famed Stradivarius violins. Lightweight yet capable of producing remarkable clarity, the wood is highly prized among instrument makers. Gao also learned that every stage of guitar construction demands meticulous attention, from wood treatment and internal structure to component assembly and even the selection of the final finish.

"Guitar making is never like solving a math problem, and it doesn't have an exact formula. Every detail in the whole process comes from the accumulated experience of pioneers and also from luthiers' innovation. I see guitar making as a testament to collective creativity across generations," Gao says.

For Gao, guitar making is not merely craftsmanship but a form of "artistic creation". A guitar is far more than a box that produces sound; it is an artwork that reflects a maker's aesthetics, personality, life experiences and constant pursuit of innovation.

As technology advances and performance venues become increasingly diverse, guitarists are demanding more from their instruments, encouraging luthiers to continue pushing creative boundaries. Many modern classical guitars now incorporate aerospace technologies or carbon fiber materials into their soundboards to improve strength and project greater volume, particularly for larger venues and outdoor performances.

As a Chinese luthier proud of his country's rich cultural heritage, Gao has sought to incorporate elements of Chinese identity into his work. The rosettes on the two guitars that earned recognition at the Spanish competition draw inspiration from traditional Chinese geometric window-grille patterns combined with Japanese Hakone Yosegi Zaiku (marquetry wood mosaics), creating an elegant visual signature.

In other instruments, he frequently uses mother-of-pearl and shell carvings for decorative inlays. He is also exploring the use of locally sourced woods from different regions of China.

"We have already opened the door to the high-end guitar-making sector," Gao says. "As Chinese luthiers continue working toward the same goal and accumulating our own experience, I believe we will see more handmade guitars with a distinct Chinese identity shine on the global stage."

Building a high-quality guitar is a painstaking process. Working full-time as a luthier, Gao produces no more than 13 instruments a year. Benefiting from the keen tonal sensitivity developed during his years as a performer, he focuses on creating guitars with warm, delicate tones, rich dynamics, an authentic Spanish voice and a lasting Eastern character. His instruments are increasingly sought after by professional musicians and collectors from Germany, Spain, Japan, the United States and other countries.

As both a guitarist and a luthier, Gao has spent nearly four decades alongside the instrument he calls his "most loyal companion". The guitar has accompanied him through every stage of life, helping him express emotions, find friendship and resonance, and discover deeper meaning.

"The guitar is a record of my life," he says. "It contains my passion and what I hope to leave behind in the world. Even when my life comes to an end, my instruments will remain."

Asked about the secret to building a great guitar, Gao shares with China Daily an answer — and a life philosophy — that he first learned from Marin Montero: "Just slow down."

Contact the writer at wangxin2@chinadaily.com.cn







Top: Gao Yi's classical guitar reaches the final of the 7th Antonio Marin Montero Guitar Building Competition in Granada, Spain, in 2024. provided to china daily **Above:** (From left) Gao builds a guitar at his workshop in Shanghai. gao erqiang / china daily Gao with renowned Spanish luthier Antonio Marin Montero. provided to china daily He tunes a guitar made at his workshop. gao erqiang / china daily

One man's mission creates China's zero-waste island

By Xing Wen
xingwen@chinadaily.com.cn

Far out in the East China Sea, Qingbang Island — part of the easternmost permanently inhabited archipelago off China's mainland in Zhoushan, Zhejiang province — is becoming a model for sustainable living.

Despite covering just 1.41 square kilometers, the island is experimenting with an innovative recycling system. Residents sort their household waste and exchange it for vouchers that can be used at local stores or redeemed for cash at the end of the year.

Food scraps will be fermented into organic fertilizer for growing vegetables and flowers, while recyclable plastics are collected by a Shanghai clothing company and transformed into garments, shoes, and hats sold on the island.

The voucher program has been running for three years, driven by the vision of Yan Shanyue, a former seaman who is determined to turn Qingbang into a zero-waste island.

Why vouchers? Yan explains. Selling recyclables directly typically earns only 20 or 30 yuan at a time — an amount that easily disappears among everyday expenses.

"But with a voucher, you can clearly see that it came from the waste you collected."

To keep motivation high, Yan also hosts an annual year-end meeting where active recyclers receive daily necessities like rice and cooking oil.

"That way," he adds, "people have one more thing to look forward to."

Yan grew up on Xiazhi Island, more than 60 kilometers from Qingbang, and many of his happiest childhood memories were shaped by the sea.

"Every morning around six or seven, after breakfast, my friends and I would head to the beach," recalls the 55-year-old.

"At high tide, we swam and challenged each other to jump higher or hold our breath longer. At low tide, we dug for clams and razor clams and carried home baskets full of them."

At the time, plastic waste was rarely seen on local shores. Occasionally, they would find a bottle with Japanese writing that had drifted across the sea.

In fact, Yan even had his first taste of instant noodles at age 7 after discovering a Japanese packet washed ashore following a typhoon, which he shared with three friends.

When he returned home in 2003 after leaving a career in deep-sea fishing, he was shocked to find beaches increasingly covered with rubbish, especially marine debris. Determined to help, he began cleaning the shoreline on his own.





Left: Yan Shanyue, a former seaman-turned-guesthouse owner, is helping transform Qingbang Island into the zero-waste island of his dreams. **Right:** A recent cleanup event was held to gather volunteers to collect trash together on the beach of Qingbang Island, Zhejiang province. photos provided to china daily

In 2013, Yan moved to Qingbang Island to open a guesthouse. He continued his beach-cleaning routine, and before long, other guesthouse owners joined him. Together, they discovered that just a few people could restore a small beach to its natural beauty within hours.

"Sometimes I think to myself that we really do have the power to make a difference," he says.

Encouraged by the results, Yan and his growing team began inviting volunteers from outside the island, offering affordable food and accommodation to support cleanup efforts. Through these activities, he connected with professionals from marine conservation organizations, inspiring him to establish his own environmental charity dedicated to creating a "zero-waste island".

He and his partners then mobilized local shop owners to sign a "zero waste island partnership" agreement.

Driving a small tricycle, he collected cardboard, aluminum cans, and plastic waste while visiting households to encourage recycling and proper waste sorting.

"What gives me the greatest sense of achievement is that the islanders trust in me is growing," Yan says.

The journey also pushed Yan to develop new skills. He learned how to write project proposals, create PowerPoint presentations, prepare budgets, and organize events ranging from waste surveys to community education programs and environmental improvement projects. He continues to seek partnerships with companies and environmental foundations to expand the initiative.

Yet, the challenge remains relentless. Every storm washes new debris onto the island's beaches. A shoreline cleaned by evening may be covered with trash again the following morning, creating what often feels like an endless cycle.

To cope with this frustration, Yan draws inspiration from a powerful memory from his years at sea. At age 16, he survived a fierce storm in which waves battered his fishing vessel for more than 50 hours. Crew members worked nonstop, bailing water while pumps ran continuously. The helmsman fought to keep the boat aligned with the waves, knowing that even a slight mistake could prove fatal.

Eventually, the storm passed.

"We couldn't control the environment back then," Yan says.

"We had no idea when the next wave would hit or when the boat might capsize. But we had no choice but to keep bailing the water out."

Decades at sea taught him a lesson he still follows today: while people cannot calm the wind and waves, persistence can keep a ship afloat — and help preserve the blue waters surrounding an island.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM

SPORTS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM



No Room for error

Curacao's goalkeeper Eloy Room makes a save during a 2026 World Cup Group E match between Ecuador and Curacao in Kansas City on Saturday. Room made 15 saves against a relentless Ecuador attack, helping The Blue Wave earn a 0-0 draw and a historic World Cup point. AFP

Fifteen saves from Curacao stopper earns nation its first World Cup point

KANSAS CITY, Missouri — Curacao better make some room for a new national hero.

Eloy Room delivered for his tiny Caribbean nation one of the finest performances in World Cup history on Saturday night, making 15 saves against a relentless Ecuador attack and helping The Blue Wave earn its first-ever point with a 0-0 draw against Ecuador.

The outcome also allowed Germany, which beat Cote d'Ivoire earlier in the day, to clinch Group E.

"It's going to be an insane memory," said Room, who plays for USL Championship club Miami FC. "You don't think about it when you do it, but, of course, it's going to be something you look back on. For me as a goalkeeper, this is almost a perfect game."

The 37-year-old Room, whose shutout of Jamaica in November sent Curacao to its first World Cup, bounced back in historic fashion from a 7-1 loss to Germany.

Since saves became a stat in 1966, Room's total was one shy of the record of 16 set by Tim Howard of the United States against Belgium on July 1, 2014, in a game that Room remembers watching.

Howard needed 120 minutes to reach that number, though. Nobody has made more saves than Room without extra time.

"I think I need a statue in Curacao now," he said with a smile.

The draw doesn't eliminate either team from the knockout stage, but it puts Ecuador in dire shape going into its group finale. Those matches take place Thursday with Curacao facing Cote d'Ivoire in Philadelphia and Ecuador playing Germany in New York.

"Well, there are things you cannot explain in football," Ecuador coach Sebastian Beccacece said. "We wanted to win. We didn't do it. I am the one who bears responsibility, and I told my team: 'If you're giving it all, competing, I have no complaints.'

"As long as we are alive (in the tournament), we will continue to give it our all. We are very united. We are like a family. No one said it would be easy."

Ecuador certainly had a home-field advantage Saturday night at the home of the Kansas City Chiefs. Its fan base, dressed like its players in bright yellow shirts, filled the stadium to the brim, making it look like a convention of Minions. There were only a couple of small pockets of blue-clad Curacao fans in a stadium with the capacity to house half of its island's citizenry.



Curacao goalkeeper Eloy Room waves to fans after a World Cup Group E match against Ecuador in Kansas City on Saturday. AP

Among those in the crowd were Bobby Witt Jr, Salvador Perez and Starling Marte of the Kansas City Royals. There were European royals, too, as King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima of the Netherlands, who began a memorable day in Houston cheering the Dutch past Sweden, flew to Kansas City to watch a constituent country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands make history.

"They were even dancing in the locker room to our music," Room said. "That's unreal that they witnessed this game."

The pressure mounted on Ecuador earlier Saturday, when Deniz Undav's goal in stoppage time lifted Germany to a 2-1 win over Cote d'Ivoire. The outcome of that match in Toronto meant that La Tri faced World Cup elimination with a loss to The Blue Wave.

Curacao made sure the pressure continued once play began.

Throughout the first half, 78-year-old coach Dick Advocaat's team kept finding seams through the middle of Ecuador's defense, and that created openings on goal. But each time, Curacao couldn't find the final ball.

Ecuador wasted its best scoring chance in the opening minutes, when World Cup veteran Enner Valencia found nothing between him and the goalkeeper. But Room guessed right, dived to his left and deflected the shot to keep the game scoreless.

"For us, it's no shock," Curacao midfielder Tahith Chong said. "We've become used to Eloy making these unbelievable saves."

The pressure of La Tri picked up in the second half — and each time, Room was standing in the way.

Moises Caicedo forced him into making a spectacular save early on, then Valencia did the same with a well-placed header that Room knocked wide. On the ensuing corner kick, Room made two more sensational saves before Curacao finally cleared it.

Ecuador wound up taking 27 shots to just 10 for Curacao. Ten of the 15 saves Room made were inside the box.

It was that kind of special night for him. And that kind of frustrating night for Ecuador.

"The team deserved more than they got," Beccacece said, "and I am the one who is responsible for that."

AP

Chinese refs take Cup stage

Chinese match officials marked a new World Cup milestone on Saturday as Ma Ning, Zhou Fei and Fu Ming took charge of the Group E encounter between Ecuador and Curacao.



Referee Ma Ning

Ma delivered a solid performance as the match referee in the 0-0 draw at Kansas City Stadium, issuing one yellow card to Ecuador and five to Curacao.

It represented the most significant World Cup involvement by Chinese match officials in more than two decades.

Ma became the first Chinese referee to take charge of a match in soccer's showpiece since 2002. Zhou served as an assistant referee, while Fu worked as a video assistant referee.

"The selected match officials are the very best in the world," FIFA's chief refereeing officer Pierluigi Collina said when the tournament officials were named.

FIFA's decision to appoint three Chinese officials to the same match underlined the progress made by the country's referees in recent years.

Soccer's global governing body appointed 52 referees, 88 assistant referees and 30 video match officials for the 2026 World Cup.

Those selected came from all six confederations and 50 member associations, making it the largest refereeing team in World Cup history.

FIFA said the selection process lasted more than three years and followed its "quality first" principle.

Candidates were assessed at FIFA tournaments, international matches and domestic competitions. Their consistency, fitness, health and match management were also rigorously monitored.

Collina said the officials had attended seminars and worked at FIFA events ahead of final selection.

"Their performances in domestic and international matches were regularly assessed," he said.

For China, Saturday's match continued a steady rise in high-level appointments.

Ma and Fu both worked at FIFA's expanded Club World Cup in 2025. Ma, Fu, Zhou and Zhang Cheng were also part of the Chinese team that officiated the 2024 AFC Asian Cup final in Qatar.

Ma's selection for a second straight World Cup underlined his standing among Asian referees.

At the 2022 World Cup, he served as a fourth official. In 2026, he made the move into the center of soccer's biggest stage.

Xinhua



Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM

SPORTS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM

Super-sub Undav sends Germany into knockouts

Substitute's brace overturns halftime deficit to snatch win over Cote d'Ivoire



Deniz Undav (26) scores his, and Germany's, first goal of its World Cup Group E match against Cote d'Ivoire in Toronto on Saturday. Undav scored twice after being subbed on in the second half to lead Germany to a 2-1 win and clinch a spot in the knockout phase. AP



Deniz Undav celebrates scoring Germany's second goal during a World Cup Group E match against Cote d'Ivoire on Saturday. AP

> "It's important that everyone sees that even the players from the bench can decide games. Now we have sent a really important signal to the team. I think that's very important in a game like this."
>
> **Deniz Undav,** after scoring twice to help Germany reach the knockout phase

TORONTO — An hour into the game, Germany was getting outplayed by Cote d'Ivoire and trailed by a goal.

Coach Julian Nagelsmann needed a spark and substituted three fresh players on, one of whom was Deniz Undav. That decision paid off big time.

Undav scored two goals off the bench as Germany pulled off a thrilling comeback to beat Cote d'Ivoire 2-1 in its World Cup Group E match on Saturday, securing its place in the knockout stage for the first time since it won the title in 2014.

After having two goals disallowed in the first half, Germany did not lose focus and used intricate passing to find its way, while the West Africans produced their dynamic brand of attacking soccer in a wild encounter at Toronto Stadium.

"It's important that everyone sees that even the players from the bench can decide games," said Undav, who also scored in Germany's 7-1 opening match rout of Curacao. "Now we have sent a really important signal to the team. I think that's very important in a game like this."

"We showed great character today," said the versatile striker, who now has nine goals in his last eight matches. "We want to achieve the most (we can)."

Undav leveled the score with a controlled, volleyed finish in the 68th minute and struck again in stoppage time when he received a pass on the turn, before swivelling and firing home a ball that Yahia Fofana had no chance at stopping.

Simon Adingra had a late chance for Cote d'Ivoire, but he failed to get a shot off in the area before Germany charged back down the field where Fofana blocked a low shot from Nathaniel Brown.

The loss denied, at least for now, Cote d'Ivoire the chance of securing its first trip to the knockout stages.

"We wanted to make history today," said Cote d'Ivoire winger Amad Diallo. "But I think everything was a little tight."

Unfamiliar territory

Cote d'Ivoire had opened the scoring in the first half when Franck Kessie slotted home a rebound off a shot from Diallo on a play created when Yan Diomande charged down the left side and sent in a cross.

With more than 100,000 people of German ancestry living in Toronto, Nagelsmann's men enjoyed plenty of support, but were a frustrated group at the interval with nothing to show for their eight attempts on goal.

It was definitely unfamiliar territory for Germany, as it marked only the fourth time it has faced a halftime deficit in its last 36 contests at the global showpiece.

But, after the break, a more active German side showed up, one that took more risks and was determined to dedicate everything to its effort to win.

"In the end, we deservedly won it," Nagelsmann told reporters. "The boys invested a lot. I'm very happy for the whole team."

"This is exactly what we hoped for, and I'm very happy for my team," Nagelsmann said.

He said that after his two-goal performance, Undav could make the starting 11 in Germany's third group stage match against Ecuador, but also stressed that the Stuttgart forward was thriving as a substitute.

"I could have him in the starting lineup," Nagelsmann said. "I think that every player would love to be in the starting lineup, but I think he's very happy as it is right now."

Two goals scratched off

Germany looked to have opened the scoring when midfielder Aleksandar Pavlovic rose to meet a short corner in the 25th minute, but was deemed to have fouled Fofana in the process.

The ruling left Pavlovic with his hands atop his head in disbelief, as Fofana received some attention after the collision and the partisan German crowd made their disdain for the referee's decision known.

Shortly afterward, it was Cote d'Ivoire that finally broke through with Kessie's goal.

The West Africans have scored in their last seven matches at the tournament, the longest such sequence on the global stage in their history.

Germany once again put the ball in the back of the net, but its celebrations were cut short as the referee determined that Jamal Musiala had fouled Odilon Kossounou in the build-up.

"We had exactly what it takes to succeed in a tournament, a winning mentality, team spirit," said German defender Jonathan Tah.

"We didn't give up; we just kept going.

"The guys coming off the bench brought new energy to the game. Deniz deserves special mention. He was outstanding."

After a court fight to get into Canada, Elye Wahi, the Cote d'Ivoire striker under investigation for alleged betting-related offenses while playing in France for Nice, did not play.

Germany tops Group E with six points and is through to the last 32, while Cote d'Ivoire remains on three after two matches. Ecuador and Curacao played to a goalless draw in Kansas City in a later match on Saturday.

Germany will close out the group stage against Ecuador on Thursday in New Jersey, while Cote d'Ivoire faces Curacao in Philadelphia.

Agencies via Xinhua

Les Elephants look to forget Toronto loss and charge toward Curacao clash

If Cote d'Ivoire wins its next match, Saturday's loss to the Germans won't matter.

After surrendering two second-half goals and missing the chance to clinch a knockout stage berth for the first time in its four World Cup appearances, Les Elephants turn their attention to their last group stage match against Curacao on Thursday.

Win, and the Elephants are in.

Forward Amad Diallo said he and his teammates will get over the Germany loss. They have to.

"We (have) respect for ourselves, but we want to make history for Cote d'Ivoire, and we (are) going to go there with a good mentality and try to rise again," he said.

Cote d'Ivoire seemed one step ahead of Germany throughout the first half on Saturday — and a chunk of the second — with mid-



Cote d'Ivoire's Franck Kessie celebrates his goal against Germany on Saturday. AP

fielder Franck Kessie's first-half goal silencing German fans for a long stretch.

But the German side of the sold-out crowd erupted when Deniz Undav scored the winning goal, his second of the match, leaving Cote d'Ivoire fans hanging their heads.

The team seemed a little shocked as well, and players spoke about the pain of losing a match they felt they should have won.

Cote d'Ivoire coach Emerse Fae felt his team could have been more decisive in its bid to get a second goal.

"It's more frustration that we're feeling after this defeat, because we were able to open the score against this strong German side," he told reporters.

"A difference in experience meant that the chances that we did have at the end of the game, where we needed to find the back of the net, we were hesitant," Fae said.

However, the Ivorian coach was quick to put the Germany game behind him and highlighted that, overall, he was happy with his team's performance.

"We're going to use this game as a lesson to try and fine-tune the mistakes, our shortcomings that we still have, and that will help us go as far as possible," he said.

He said he was looking forward to the challenge of facing Curacao next to see "what they are made of", and was expecting a strong fight.

"Our destiny is still in our hands, or at our feet," he said.

The good news for FIFA's No 31-ranked Les Elephants is that their next opponent, Curacao, is way below them at No 83.

The Caribbean nation also lost its first match to Germany, 7-1.

"It's going to be a big moment for everyone, for this new generation, because we know we have quality in the team," Diallo said. "But the priority now is that we are really focused on ourselves. It's going to be a very hard game."

Agencies via Xinhua

Double Dutch: Braces from Brobbey and Gakpo help sink Sweden

HOUSTON — Under intense pressure after its opening-game draw with Japan, the Netherlands delivered a dominant performance against Sweden in the World Cup on Saturday to move atop the Group F standings.

Brian Brobbey and Cody Gakpo scored two goals apiece to power the Dutch to the 5-1 win.

Brobbey's goals came in the first half, setting the Netherlands up for a big win after playing to a 2-2 draw the previous Sunday.

"It could be that the way we played builds confidence," Netherlands coach Ronald Koeman said. "Now we've got a slightly better peace of mind with the four points. You can build on what happened now, and that's really good."

Gakpo, who also had an assist, extended the lead to 3-0 just after halftime, scoring in the 47th minute off a cross from Denzel Dumfries. He matched Brobbey when he scored on a right-footed shot from the left side of the box in the 54th minute.

"Today, there was more variation in attacking play, more players in different positions, movement and all those things," Gakpo said. "So it was more difficult for the defenders to really mark us, and we became free in the box. I think that was the little thing maybe we missed in the last game."

Sweden couldn't build on its strong performance in a 5-1 walloping of Tunisia in its first match. The loss to the Dutch was its biggest World Cup defeat since losing 7-1 to Brazil in 1950.

Sweden coach Graham Potter said the defeat was less about what his team did and more about just how good the Netherlands played Saturday. "They're a top team, and they were better than us today. We have to congratulate them, but I think we'll learn a lot from the game."

The Dutch game plan to play out wide to open up Sweden and cross to Brobbey worked perfectly early on. He put the Netherlands on top in the 11th minute, one-timing a Gakpo cross with his right foot.

His second goal came when he took a cross from Dumfries while sliding and just got his right foot on the ball, scoring inside the far post in the 17th minute.

Koeman credited Brobbey's success to getting in better shape after he had struggled in the past with the rigors of playing a full game.

"He's fitter, he's sharper and he's developing really well," he said.

Anthony Elanga's left-footed goal cut the lead to 4-1 in the 59th minute and allowed Sweden to avoid the shutout loss.



Crysencio Summerville celebrates with NBA star Steph Curry's "night night" gesture after scoring the Netherlands' fifth goal of its 5-1 World Cup Group F win over Sweden in Texas on Saturday. REUTERS

Sweden had plenty of chances to score before that, but the Dutch goalkeeper Bart Verbruggen was brilliant in the first half with four saves.

Sweden appeared to have cut the lead to 2-1 on a header by Gustaf Lagerbielke in the 44th minute, but he was ruled offside. Lagerbielke is a baron from a noble family in Sweden. His father and grandfather are counts.

But he wasn't the only royalty in the stadium Saturday, as the Netherlands had two very special guests cheering them on with King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima watching from a luxury suite. "The King was very happy," Koeman said.

Crysencio Summerville, who assisted Gakpo's second goal, tacked on one of his own for the Netherlands in the 89th minute and celebrated with NBA star Steph Curry's "night night" gesture.

Summerville took a boot to the head late in the match and had received stitches, but Koeman said he should be ready for the next match.

Samurai blues for Tunisia

Meanwhile, Japan marked the 1,000th game in the history of the World Cup with a 4-0 thrashing of Tunisia in Saturday's final fixture.

Ayase Ueda scored twice while Daichi Kamada and Junya Ito were also on target, as the Asian giant joined the Netherlands on four points at the top of Group F.

Tunisia can no longer hope for a place in the knockout stages.

The Samurai Blue were always in control against Tunisia at the Monterrey Stadium in Mexico and Tunisia never looked like threatening a technically superior Japanese side that settled quickly into its trademark, smooth passing game.

Kamada opened the scoring after just four minutes following some deft interplay. Minutes later, Tunisia keeper Aymen Dahmen just managed to claw away the ball, which was barely centimeters from crossing his goal line. Japan eventually got its second in the 31st minute, with striker Ueda thundering in a low shot from the edge of the area.

The rout continued in the second half, with Ito latching onto a brilliant through ball to finish in the 69th, before Ueda nodded in a looping header in the 83rd.

Group F winds up on Thursday, with Japan playing Sweden at Dallas Stadium and the Netherlands facing Tunisia in Kansas City.

Agencies

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:36 PM

Leadership crisis

Pressure mounts on UK Prime Minister to quit

WORLD, PAGE 5



Retirees embrace overseas learning opportunities

LIFE, PAGE 13



Strategy shift

Brands at World Cup move beyond traditional sponsorship

BUSINESS, PAGE 9

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 MONDAY, JUNE 22, 2026

XI'S VISION | GOVERNANCE PERFORMANCE

Unremitting efforts seen as key to progress

Party's governance approach stresses tenacity, sustained work, lasting results

By **ZHAO JIA**
zhaojia@@chinadaily.com.cn

For years, Xingtang county in Hebei province was shadowed by a local saying that played on its name: "*Xingtang bu xing*" — Xingtang cannot do it.

The saying reflected more than a play on words. Along the eastern foothills of the Taihang Mountains, several counties had long struggled with constraints of terrain and resources. In Xingtang, a traditional agricultural county, quality farm products often failed to reach wider markets because they lacked strong brands and sales channels.

When Zou Guoyu arrived in Xingtang, he saw that changing the county's prospects would require more than short-term assistance. He was among the 13 officials assigned by the International Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee to work in the county over the past decade. Their work focused on opening markets, building brands and strengthening the county's own capacity for development.

Those efforts gradually paid off. Xingtang red dates were selected as State gifts, honey produced in the county reached Southeast Asian markets, and the county's public brand for local specialties gained wider recognition.

What happened in Xingtang was not a single breakthrough, but a relay — one group of officials after another carrying the work forward and helping turn an old saying of resignation into a new confidence: Xingtang can.

That relay offers a window into the CPC's emphasis on establishing and practicing a correct view of governance performance, a theme repeatedly stressed by President Xi Jinping since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012 and one that became this year's focus of a Party-wide education campaign. It is a view that values sustained work, long-term public benefit and results that can stand the test of time.

The logic behind such a relay can be traced to Xi's earlier poverty reduction work in Ningde, Fujian province, where he served as Party secretary from 1988 to 1990, when the region was among the poorest areas in Fujian.

In *Up and Out of Poverty*, which collects Xi's speeches and articles from his work in Ningde, he wrote that fundamentally changing poverty and backwardness required the people to carry forward the tenacity of "dripping water piercing stone" and make long-term, unremitting efforts.

In *Xi Jinping in Ningde*, a book published in 2020 that collects 19 interview accounts about Xi's work experiences in Ningde, an interview account recalled that Xi cautioned local officials against expecting poverty to be fundamentally solved simply by projects, or expecting to become rich overnight.

The emphasis on patience, local realities and sustained effort later became part of China's nationwide fight against absolute poverty.

See ***Efforts,*** *page 3*

Crucial talks



Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif (center), flanked by United States Vice-President JD Vance (left) and Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, speaks prior to a quadrilateral meeting between the US, Iran, Pakistan and Qatar at the Burgenstock luxury hotel complex overlooking Lake Lucerne in Switzerland on Sunday. The meeting concluded on Monday with "major progress". URS FLUEELER / POOL / AFP **See story, page 3**

Openness, resilience unleash regional growth potential

By **ZHONG NAN**
zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

Openness remains essential to unlocking the growth potential of the Asia-Pacific region and deepening regional economic cooperation, as rising unilateralism and protectionism continue to challenge global trade and investment, government officials said on Sunday.

Speaking at the APEC China CEO Forum 2026 in Beijing, they said that the economies of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation should stay committed to open cooperation and regional integration, while advancing connectivity projects and digital innovation to facilitate trade, improve supply chain resilience and create new growth opportunities for businesses across the region.

Eduardo Pedrosa, executive director of the APEC Secretariat in Singapore, said that APEC economies have identified a series of priority actions to restore growth momentum and strengthen regional economic cooperation.

These include accelerating progress toward the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific, strengthening connectivity and supply chain resilience, investing in trade and logistics infrastructure, promoting market diversification, addressing nontariff barriers in food trade and advancing digital trade and transformation, he said.

Ren Hongbin, chairman of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, called for APEC economies to identify more areas of common interest and strengthen open cooperation in industrial and supply chains.

Citing the importance of strengthening regional connectivity, Ren said the APEC economies should make full use of regional free trade agreements such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, while advancing an upgraded APEC connectivity blueprint to facilitate the safe and orderly flow of people, goods, capital and data, as well as foster closer industrial and supply chain cooperation across the region.

China remained the largest trading partner of 13 APEC economies in 2025, with the total value of trade with those economies reaching $3.7 trillion. It accounted for 57.8 percent of China's total foreign trade, data from the Ministry of Commerce showed.

The country has signed 24 free trade agreements or economic and trade deals with 31 countries and regions, including 15 APEC economies. In recent years, it has also completed upgrades to free trade agreements with APEC economies such as Singapore and Peru.

Addressing broader challenges facing the global trading system, Jiang Chenghua, deputy China international trade representative at the Ministry of Commerce, urged the APEC business community to exercise independent judgment, support the multilateral trading system and help safeguard the stability of global industrial and supply chains.

China will continue to expand opening-up in key areas including trade, investment and the cross-border flow of production factors, while the rapid advancement of digital, intelligent and green technologies will further reinforce its position as a long-term destination for global companies seeking investment and growth opportunities, said Jiang.

Ahead of the fourth China International Supply Chain Expo, which will run from Monday to Friday in Beijing, foreign business executives highlighted China's industrial ecosystem, market demand and supply chain advantages as key drivers of their long-term confidence in the country.

Jim Sutter, CEO of the US Soybean Export Council, said China is expected to import about 25 million metric tons of soybean from the United States during the marketing year Sept 1, 2025 to Aug 31, 2026, up from 22.6 million tons in the previous marketing year, marking a meaningful recovery.

"The recent announcement regarding tariff reductions is a positive signal, and the US soybean industry looks forward to seeing those commitments translated into concrete policy measures," said Sutter. "Stability in the China-US trade environment benefits both sides, and we are confident in the long-term direction."

A similar sentiment was expressed by Elodie Latour, vice-president for China at French multi-sports brand Decathlon. She said China's comprehensive industrial ecosystem and complete value chain enable companies to bring products to market faster, creating advantages that are difficult to replicate elsewhere.

Beijing-Seoul cooperation should look to the future

WORLD WATCH
By Woo Su-keun

As the global economy faces mounting uncertainty amid geopolitical tensions, supply chain restructuring and the resurgence of protectionism, the importance of stability, resilience and practical cooperation has become increasingly evident. At a time when strategic competition between major powers continues to intensify, countries around the world are recognizing that sustainable growth and regional prosperity cannot be achieved through confrontation alone.

Against this backdrop, China's steady economic development and South Korea's resilience in exports, advanced manufacturing and financial markets deserve close attention.

The recent meeting between South Korean President Lee Jae-myung and Chinese Vice-Premier He Lifeng sent a positive signal that both countries are prepared to expand cooperation in the fields of economy, industry and people-to-people exchanges. This should be regarded as a meaningful indication of a renewed commitment to pragmatic cooperation.

China and South Korea are not merely important trading partners. They are also key stakeholders in the peace, stability and future prosperity of Northeast Asia.

Over the past several decades, the two countries have achieved remarkable development through close economic cooperation. China has long been South Korea's largest trading partner, while South Korea has contributed significantly to China's industrial upgrading and technological advancement.

Although competition naturally exists between the industrial sectors of both countries, the overall relationship remains characterized by a high degree of complementarity.

See ***Cooperation,*** *page 3*

CHINESE ROBOT VACUUMS CLEAN UP IN GLOBAL RANKINGS

Advanced AI systems, smart home integration help devices sweep past competition overseas

By **LI JIAYING**
lijiaying@chinadaily.com.cn

When Mikki Hayward was preparing her home in the United States for sale, she expected her robot vacuum to help with the cleaning. What she did not expect was for it to recognize clutter, navigate around obstacles and even flag small valuables.

"It doesn't get stuck on random boxes or obstacles, and it even tags small valuables it finds so they don't get lost in the shuffle," she said.

For Jessica Jones, another US user, the appeal lies elsewhere.

As her robot vacuum glides across the floor, she can use the device's camera to check on the foster kittens roaming around her home.

"Loving (the ability to) check in on my foster kittens while the machine does its cleaning thing!" she wrote in a social media post. "There are more and more features I'm discovering all the time, but pet mode is amazing!"



People watch as a cleaning robot navigates steps at the kiosk of Chinese technology company Dreame during the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, the United States, on Jan 7. CAROLINE BREHMAN / AFP

Technology reviewers have also been impressed by how much the latest generation of cleaning robots has evolved.

"What is also smart is that it adjusts how it cleans depending on the type of mess. So, wet messes and dry debris are not being treated the exact same way, and that makes the whole process feel much more hands-off," YouTube channel DailyTested said in a review.

All of these glowing testimonials refer to the latest product from Chinese manufacturer Narwal Robotics.

China Vibes GIFTS

Launched in the US market in April and equipped with a dual-camera vision recognition system and an artificial intelligence-powered cleaning platform capable of adapting to different household environments, the product quickly topped Amazon US' new releases ranking and entered the top 10 robot vacuum category within 24 hours of launch.

The success is far from an isolated case.

As Chinese manufacturers continue to integrate artificial intelligence, advanced sensors and autonomous navigation into household devices, a growing number of domestically developed cleaning robots are finding enthusiastic buyers around the world.

See ***Tech,*** *page 3*



INSIDE
Shared cure
Global Views, page 8

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

www.chinadailyglobal.com

A member of ANN

China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:36 PM

INDEPTH

Inbound tourism surges on curiosity about evolving China



Overseas visitors try Chinese kebabs while wandering through the historical alleys of Qianmen Street in Beijing on June 14. CHEN QIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Overseas visitors equally interested in country's rapid transformation as ancient marvels

By **YANG FEIYUE**
yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn



Foreign tourists visit the Temple of Heaven in Beijing on June 9. CHEN QIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Wolfgang Georg Arlt, a tourism expert from Germany, made his first trip to Beijing in 1978.

"There was almost no light at night," recalled Arlt, who has over 50 years of expertise, both academically and in practice, in tourism and hospitality. In the years since, he has watched China's tourism infrastructure improve steadily year after year, with better facilities and services.

In early June, he returned to the Chinese capital for a summit hosted by the World Tourism Cities Federation. During his stay, he was struck again by what he saw. But this time, it was by the smart infrastructure, services powered by artificial intelligence, and the gleaming skyline.

"No one back then could have imagined such development," said Arlt, executive director of the Meaningful Tourism Centre, based in London and Kathmandu.

As China evolves into one of the world's leading travel destinations, Arlt has also noticed a shift in the preferences of foreign travelers. "Tourism used to be about sightseeing, taking photos and shopping. Now people want to learn something and experience something," he said.

Technology has removed many of the old travel barriers. Instant translation services on a smartphone, for instance, mean no one needs to fear getting lost anymore, he added.

Active immersion

The shift from passive sightseeing to active immersion has been quietly reshaping China's inbound tourism industry.

On a March morning in suburban Beijing, Yang Li stood between a dozen foreign diplomats and a fully automated assembly line.

His job was to explain the factory's operations, but he soon realized the diplomats wanted China's overall transformation explained. "They were eager to know how the country built this," he recalled.

For nearly three decades, Yang had made his living explaining China's past — its dynasties, emperors, temples and ancient walls. Now, standing above a humming production floor where robotic arms moved in synchronization and driverless carts glided between workstations, he found himself explaining not just how the machines worked, but how China learned to produce them at scale.

The March visit had been arranged by China's Ministry of Culture and Tourism for foreign diplomats stationed in Beijing. "They didn't go to see the Great Wall. They came here to see why China can do this," he recalled.

For generations, China's inbound tourism narrative rested on familiar pillars: the Forbidden City, the Great Wall, the Terracotta Warriors. Visitors came to witness the remnants of an ancient civilization.

"Today, many international visitors no longer come only to admire China's past. They also want to understand its present — how factories operate, how cities function, how innovation is reshaping daily life and how traditions continue to evolve alongside rapid modernization," Yang said.

Spanish clients have asked to visit smart factories in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, while in Changsha, Hunan province, Romanian travel groups requested tours of electric vehicle production lines, he said.

A 2026 Trip.com Group survey of more than 500 inbound tourism operators found that nearly two-thirds identified meeting diverse visitor demands as their biggest challenge. More than 80 percent reported overseas visitors' growing interest in experiences beyond traditional sightseeing.

Tour operator Li Jieming is based in Zhangjiajie, Hunan. The city's best-known attraction is the cluster of sandstone pillars that inspired the floating mountains in the film *Avatar*.

Three years ago, overseas visitors accounted for only a tiny share of his business. Today, they comprise around 60 percent.

The turning point came after China expanded visa-free entry policies for a growing number of countries in 2024.

"When I heard about the visa-free policy, I knew the number of inbound visitors would increase," Li said. "And Zhangjiajie already had something foreigners recognized — the *Avatar* mountains."

But his ability to seize the opportunity soon collided with new challenges: workers with foreign-language skills were scarce, and he had little overseas marketing experience.

Li began recruiting wherever he could find candidates — language schools, trading companies and returnees with international experience. His first international team consisted of just four people.

They posted videos of Zhangjiajie's landscapes on Facebook and handled inquiries one by one. Their first booking came from a Spanish couple who discovered the company online.

"We didn't make money on that booking," Li said with a laugh. "We just wanted to see if it could work."

By the spring of 2025, inquiries began arriving in waves. Today, Li's company employs more than 20 people serving international clients, and inbound tourism has become the core of the business.

Content upgrade

Many of the inquiries came from people who had never previously considered traveling to Zhangjiajie.

Some discovered Zhangjiajie through social media videos of the towering sandstone pillars. Others arrived after seeing short clips of local customs and village life.

The influx of visitors quickly taught Li another lesson: attracting international travelers was only the beginning.

"Many foreign visitors don't want to spend the entire day checking attractions off a list," he said. "They want to interact with people and understand local life."

At first, his team offered itineraries similar to those designed for domestic tourists. The results were mixed.

"That's when we realized we had to help those people understand a place beyond simply touting the landscape."

One European family initially planned a simple cable-car excursion. Instead, Li's team suggested a gentle rainforest hike. "The children could touch plants, look at insects and ask questions," Li said. "It turned out that the parents loved it."

They applied the same idea to cultural tourism.

Rather than limiting visitors to performances and demonstrations, Li's company incorporates hands-on experiences such as Tujia ethnic brocade weaving, the Baishou dance — a Tujia group dance often performed at festivals and celebrations — and traditional silverwork.



A foreign tourist browses items at a trendy toy store in Shanghai in May. CHEN HAOMING / XINHUA



Tourists interact with robots at Unitree Robotics' flagship store in Beijing on June 2. JU HUANZONG / XINHUA



A visitor poses for a photo in Shanghai Disney Resort on April 28. CHEN AIPING / XINHUA

"All those ensure our foreign guests don't just watch, but participate," he said.

Li mentioned a family from Germany that spent an afternoon learning Tujia brocade weaving.

"None of them had ever touched a loom before, and their finished cloth was uneven with imperfect patterns," he said. "But when the workshop ended, the mother got a bit misty-eyed and said it was something they made together, rather than simply a purchase."

For Li, the moment captured why so many travelers now seek experiences rather than attractions. "The mountains gave them a view," he said. "The weaving gave them a memory."

Deeper dive

Yang, one of China's first nationally certified gold tour guides, has witnessed nearly every stage of the industry's modern development.

The change, he said, has been particularly noticeable in recent years. "Before, visitors listened to whatever you told them. Now they ask why," he said.

At the Great Wall, foreign tourists' curiosity isn't restricted to basic questions about its length, age or the construction techniques of the structure.

Instead, they want to know why the Great Wall occupies such an important place in the Chinese identity, Yang said. "One visitor even asked why it appears in China's national anthem," he said.

Yang's explanation begins with the ancient beacon towers that once signaled danger along China's northern frontier, and ends with the phrase from the national anthem — "using our flesh and blood to build a new Great Wall" — showing how a military defense system gradually evolved into a national symbol of endurance and unity.

He said an increasing number of overseas visitors make sense of modern China by comparing it with their own country's culture and history.

Spanish travelers draw parallels between the Great Wall and the Alhambra, a palace and fortress complex in Granada, while visitors from Latin America connect Chinese history with their own experiences of colonialism and nation-building, he shared.

For guides, this means understanding not only China but also the perspectives visitors bring with them. "If you don't understand their cultural background, you can't make the comparison meaningful," Yang said.

One Spanish architect, for example, asked him why Chinese walls were built with rammed earth while Spanish fortresses used stone. Yang didn't have a textbook answer but replied: "Different threats. Different materials. Different emperors."

The visitor nodded, and Yang said that was the moment he understood his real job.

At the end of May, nearly 2,000 tourism executives and industry professionals from 67 countries and regions gathered along the Lijiang River in Guilin, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, for one of China's largest inbound tourism events hosted by the local government and Trip.com Group.

Actor and filmmaker Jackie Chan, recently named an inbound tourism ambassador by Trip.com Group, greeted the crowd.

"My mission used to be bringing Chinese films to the world," he said. "Now my mission is bringing the world to China."

A giant illuminated passport appeared in the night sky during a drone show. Moments later, a golden dragon flew through it as the words "VISA FREE" lit up the sky above the crowd.

The image captured one of the biggest changes driving China's inbound tourism recovery — the steady expansion of visa-free policies and the gradual removal of barriers that once discouraged international visitors.

New storytellers

Visa-free entry can open the door, but content determines whether people choose to walk through it, many industry operators said.

Trip.com chairman James Liang announced that the company aims to attract 200 million inbound visitors over the next five years.

The tourism industry has already begun to adapt. Nearly 90 percent of inbound tourism employees have received some form of professional training. New job categories are emerging, ranging from inbound travel "customizers" to multilingual "experience designers" and cross-cultural content creators.

Yet, the industry's response remains uneven. While nearly two-thirds of practitioners feel service expectations have grown more demanding, fewer than 15 percent said lack of training is the main problem.

To become an outstanding guide for international visitors takes five to 10 years, Yang said. "Language ability, cultural fluency and the confidence to navigate complex conversations cannot be developed overnight," he said, adding that demand for Spanish-speaking guides, for example, has surged in recent years.

Yang speaks English and Spanish, has studied abroad, and traveled extensively. Years of experience have allowed him to understand both his visitors and the country he represents.

"Because what visitors are really doing is not just asking for explanations — they are interpreting China through their own cultural references. You need to understand those reference points as well as your own, so your answers are framed with meaning," he explained.

Many of Li's employees are from language schools, training centers and international trading firms and have never worked in the tourism industry before.

"Their language skills promise immediate and effective communication with potential clients," Li said.

"But they have to work hard to learn what the city has to offer and be capable of answering sophisticated questions based on that expertise. What visitors increasingly seek is not information alone. They want context, comparison and stories."

Experienced guides consistently earn more than newcomers, while regular training improves both service quality and income, industry figures showed. But income instability remains a concern. Tourism is highly seasonal, and many practitioners experience large swings in earnings between peak and off-peak periods.

For all the optimism surrounding inbound tourism's resurgence, the industry's growing pains are real, Li said.

Yang said being a tour guide is about creating understanding, a role he believes AI can never fully replace.

"AI can translate accurately. It can provide information," he said. "But it cannot read a visitor's eyes. It cannot create emotional connection."

In his 50s, he is still very optimistic about the industry's prospects, as more inbound visitors are requesting his services to understand a country still being built.

The Great Wall remains. So does the Forbidden City. But alongside them, a new set of destinations is emerging: factory floors, heritage workshops, innovation hubs and village studios.

"They all hold great sway over inbound travelers' curiosity and need guides like us to lead the way," he said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:36 PM

TOP NEWS

Efforts: Policy continuity emphasized

From page 1

In the new era, poverty alleviation was pursued not as a short burst of assistance, but as a systematic effort carried out across regions, levels of government and successive stages of policy.

By 2021, China had secured a complete victory in the fight against absolute poverty. Under the current standard, all 98.99 million rural residents living in poverty had been lifted out of poverty, 832 impoverished counties, including Xingtang, had been removed from the poverty list, and 128,000 impoverished villages had shaken off poverty.

However, the achievement was not treated as the end of the task. Even before that milestone was reached, the central leadership had begun planning the next stage. At the Central Rural Work Conference in December 2020, Xi called for efforts to consolidate and expand poverty alleviation achievements and align them with rural vitalization, in order to ensure a smooth transition without gaps in work or policy support.

For long-term tasks, Xi has always stressed the need to maintain a strategic resolve and patience, and to follow through on sound blueprints with sustained effort. He once said that existing plans and arrangements should be carried forward from one term to the next if they are sound, suited to new practical requirements and in line with the people's aspirations.

Zheng Changzhong, a professor at Fudan University, said the experiences of Ningde, Xingtang and China's national poverty alleviation campaign all point to the same logic: Development cannot rely on a single push, and neither can governance performance be measured only by what is immediately visible.

What matters, Zheng said, is whether policies solve real problems, build lasting foundations and continue to benefit the people over time. He said this logic of sustained effort can be seen not only in poverty reduction, but also in broader development fields that require long-term planning, policy continuity and steady implementation.

Aisake Valu Eke, former prime minister of Tonga, said China's success in lifting nearly 100 million rural residents out of poverty was "a remarkable achievement for any country".

Eke said China's progress was supported by a system in which plans and strategies are developed by the CPC and carried out across different levels of government, from provinces and cities to villages.

Planning system hailed

Nur Rachmat Yuliantoro, professor of International Relations at Universitas Gadjah Mada in Indonesia, said China's five-year planning system, with its emphasis on long-term strategic planning and policy continuity, is one of the defining features of China's development.

He said that this approach enables China to pursue national goals while delivering immediate benefits to the people and advancing broader development objectives over time, a balance that can be seen in areas such as infrastructure, poverty alleviation, technological innovation, natural resource conservation and cultural heritage preservation.

"At the heart of this planning strategy and balance is sustainability," he said, adding that China has provided valuable experience for many countries, particularly those in the Global South.

Nichita Iris Liga, a member of the Executive Bureau of the Romanian Socialist Party, said that unlike some other countries, where systems and priorities may change every few years with electoral cycles, planning in China is not limited to a single five-year period, but is linked to longer-term goals, including the second centenary goal of building China into a great modern socialist country by the middle of the century.



A drone photo captures the spectacle of hundreds of horses galloping together on Saturday during the opening ceremony of the 2026 Zhaosu Tianma cultural tourism festival in Zhaosu county, Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. HU HUHU / XINHUA

Tradition wins big during holiday

By ZOU SHUO
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

Cultural experiences took center stage during the just-concluded Dragon Boat Festival holiday as people from across the country embarked on journeys in search of traditional festivities involving boat races, rituals and seasonal foods, travel agencies said.

Searches for keywords such as "Dragon Boat Festival", "dragon boat" and "*zongzi*" more than tripled from a month earlier on online travel platform Qunar, reflecting the growing appeal of tradition-infused travel and transforming the three-day break into a vibrant celebration of Chinese cultural heritage.

Meanwhile, searches for folk-culture tourism jumped 55 percent year-on-year, according to People's Daily Overseas Edition, citing online travel agency Mafengwo.

Dragon boat racing, the festival's most iconic tradition, has evolved from a spectator event into a participatory cultural attraction. Travel platform Ctrip reported that searches for "dragon boat" rose 41.3 percent week-on-week, with races proving to be a major tourism magnet.

Guangdong province led the trend. Travel-related searches for Foshan increased by 134.9 percent week-on-week, driven by the famed Diejiao dragon boat race, often hailed as the "F1 on water", Ctrip said.

A tourist from Shanxi province, who went to Foshan to see the Diejiao race, said the chants of the boatmen and the roar of the drums made it a spectacularly moving experience.

"No matter how exciting the video is, nothing beats the real experience. I could feel the vitality all around," she said.

Not only in Guangdong, dragon boat events boosted tourism nationwide. Searches for Jingzhou in Hubei province rose 87.5 percent week-on-week, while Zigui in the same province — the hometown of poet Qu Yuan — became a holiday hot spot thanks to its cultural festival, according to Ctrip.

Qu was a legendary poet and minister in the State of Chu during the Warring States Period (475-221 BC). He drowned himself in the Miluo River when he learned that the State of Chu was being defeated by the State of Qin. Legend has it that upon learning of Qu's death, locals took out boats to search for his body, dropping rice dumplings into the river to prevent the body from being eaten by fish. It is to honor this legend that Chinese people hold dragon boat races and make *zongzi* to eat during the festival.

There was huge demand for seasonal Dragon Boat Festival delicacies as well. According to Qunar, food lovers hit the road in droves in search of festive cuisines. Instead of debating on whether to sample sweet or savory rice dumplings known as *zongzi*, hundreds headed to Quanzhou, Fujian province, to sample Minnan-style braised pork *zongzi*, or to Guiyang in Guizhou province to try the unique Buyi ash *zongzi* mixed with plant-ash lye, it said.

Beyond *zongzi*, crayfish from Qianjiang, Hubei province, mackerel dumplings from Qingdao, Shandong province, and cold fermented noodle soup from Lanzhou, Gansu province, were also big draws for food connoisseurs who traveled thousands of miles just to sample the fare. According to Qunar, hotel occupancy in these foodie-friendly destinations — including Qianjiang, Qingdao, Lanzhou, Quanzhou and Guiyang — increased by more than 20 percent during the holiday.

The folk-culture fervor fuels local industries. Miluo in Hunan province — known as the "hometown of dragon boats" — is home to 20 boat-building factories with an annual turnover of more than 200 million yuan ($29.6 million), according to data from the local government.

The finals of the 2026 Hunan Dragon Boat Super League kicked off in Miluo on Thursday. A total of 38 top dragon boat teams from 14 cities and prefectures across the province gathered to compete in the two-day race. Through dragon boat racing and folk traditions, they celebrated the spirit of Qu Yuan and participated in a grand Dragon Boat Festival event that deeply integrated culture, tourism and sports.

One workshop in Luojiang township continued working through the holiday to meet rising orders. Likewise, a *zongzi* producer in Quzici township said the number of orders defied all predictions of a market downturn.

Since late April, the Quzici plant has run at full capacity. Local villager Weng Zhenggui, who lives just 400 meters away and works eight hours a day, made over 1,000 *zongzi* and earned up to 6,000 yuan per month.

The cooking and packing processes in the plant are automated, boosting daily output to 100,000 *zongzi* while ensuring consistent quality. "The automated system precisely controls temperature and pressure, saving labor and improving efficiency and taste consistency," said company chairman Wu Liman.

Inbound tourism showed strong growth during the holiday, with Fliggy reporting that bookings were up more than sixfold year-on-year.

Tech: Cleaning robot market enters new phase

From page 1

According to data from the General Administration of Customs, cleaning robots — added as a stand-alone customs classification this year — accounted for 7.75 billion yuan ($1.14 billion) in exports during the first quarter of this year, representing 68.5 percent of China's total robot export value.

In addition, out of total global shipments of 32.72 million units in 2025, Chinese manufacturers accounted for more than half of the global market, according to global market consultancy IDC, with Roborock, Ecovacs, Dreame, Xiaomi and Narwal occupying the top five positions globally in household cleaning robot production.

"The market has entered a new phase, characterized by the dominance of Chinese brands, rapid technological iteration and increasing segmentation across product categories," said Zhao Siquan, a senior analyst at IDC China.

Under IDC's definition, the broader cleaning robot sector encompasses robot vacuums, window-cleaning robots, lawn-mowing robots and pool-cleaning robots.

"Leveraging a complete supply chain, rapid product iteration capabilities and strengths in algorithms, Chinese manufacturers have expanded their presence across virtually all of these segments," Zhao said.

From cordless designs and AI-powered navigation to all-in-one docking stations and multidevice collaboration, many technologies that were first deployed at scale by Chinese manufacturers are now becoming industry standards, she added.

As competition intensifies, leading players are also broadening their ambitions. "Top manufacturers are evolving from single-category providers into full-scenario home service companies," Zhao said. "This is because, for consumers, cleaning is not an isolated need, but part of everyday household life. Companies that can deliver services across a wider range of home scenarios will have a greater opportunity to build stronger user engagement and long-term brand loyalty."

Mediators seek pathway to ceasefire

Iran says 'good progress has been made', warns Trump to take care with statements

By SHI GUANG in New York
shiguang@chinadailyusa.com

High-level negotiations aimed at permanently ending the Iran war ended in Switzerland early Monday, mediators Pakistan and Qatar announced, while technical talks continued amid efforts to translate a fragile ceasefire into a lasting agreement.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi wrote on X early Monday to hail the mediation efforts by Pakistan and Qatar, saying that they "delivered major progress to end the Lebanese War".

In his message, Araghchi said the first real test of the understandings reached would be a deconfliction method created over the fighting between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei, speaking to the state-run IRNA news agency, also said "good progress was made" and a mechanism will be arranged on safe passage of ships through the Strait of Hormuz.

Pakistan, Qatar and Iran have all acknowledged the end of the first round of high-level talks. The US hasn't comment, The Associated Press reported.

On Sunday, US Vice-President JD Vance and US negotiators including Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law, negotiated with Iranian officials to open talks under the terms of the memorandum of understanding signed between Washington and Tehran last week to extend the ceasefire from April for at least another 60 days.

The talks had a tense start, strained by President Donald Trump's renewal of threats, with Iran and US media reports providing different accounts of the discussions.

Iranian media said talks had entered a "difficult phase" and recessed after the "publication of an insulting message by the US President".

Just before talks officially began on Sunday, Fox News reported that Trump said he told Iranian officials "you won't have a country" if they tried to close the strait again. Trump also repeated an earlier threat that the US would take over the waterway and possibly charge a toll of its own, Fox News said.

The Iranian delegation left negotiations in protest of Trump's threat to launch further strikes against Iran, Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency reported.

Trump also went to social media to continue threatening Tehran from afar.

"Iran must immediately stop their highly paid PROXIES in Lebanon from causing trouble," Trump said on Truth Social. "If they don't, we'll hit Iran very hard again, just like we did last week, only harder!!!"

"They would do better to be careful about their statements," Iran's lead negotiator, Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, said on X after Trump's post. "Our armed forces are prepared to respond to them in a different manner. They may keep talking, it is we who act."

US officials, on the other hand, offered a separate account of the negotiations on Sunday.

Vance and the US delegation have been "engaged in constant meetings and negotiations," a US diplomat told reporters in Switzerland.

"The Iranians are still here and discussions are ongoing. We anticipate continuing to work through the night," the diplomat was quoted as saying.

"The Iranians never left and are still here meeting and negotiating deep into the night," the diplomat said.

"We've talked about the strait, Lebanon, nuclear issues and details of implementing the MOU, among other topics."

During the Sunday talks, the two sides discussed mechanisms to help ensure the Strait of Hormuz remains open, enforce the fragile ceasefire in southern Lebanon and address "all elements of the nuclear deal" in an effort to establish a starting point for technical negotiations, CNN reported on Sunday, citing a senior US diplomat involved in the negotiations.

Analysts have noted that Lebanon constitutes the "greatest test" for the talks.

Leslie Vinjamuri, president and chief executive officer of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, noted that while the war has demonstrated what American power can still do, it has also revealed the United States has struggled to convert its coercive capacity into a durable regional order for the Middle East.

"The first and hardest test is Lebanon," followed by the nuclear program, Vinjamuri wrote in an analysis.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1854

Cooperation: Innovation focus creates fresh opportunities

From page 1

Areas such as semiconductors, batteries, artificial intelligence, advanced manufacturing and the digital economy provide vast opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation. As both countries pursue innovation-driven growth strategies, new possibilities for industrial and technological collaboration continue to emerge.

More important, the realities of today's global economy demonstrate that sustainable development cannot be achieved through zero-sum approaches. Global supply chains are deeply interconnected, and economic instability in one country inevitably affects neighboring economies and the wider international community. In this regard, China-South Korea economic cooperation is not simply a bilateral matter; it is closely linked to the stability and prosperity of Northeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific region as a whole.

Particularly noteworthy is the fact that China is actively pursuing high-quality development centered on technological innovation, while South Korea is strengthening its competitiveness in cutting-edge industries and future technologies. These parallel efforts create valuable opportunities for cooperation.

In practical terms, bilateral cooperation should increasingly focus on joint research and development, investment in future industries, green transformation, digital collaboration and talent exchanges.

The recovery and expansion of people-to-people exchanges is equally important. Economic cooperation cannot be sustained solely through agreements between governments. Long-term stability in bilateral relations depends on active engagement among business leaders, young people, academic communities and cultural sectors.

Naturally, China-South Korea relations still face various challenges. Changes in the international environment, security concerns and intensified competition in certain industries may continue to create pressure on bilateral ties. However, what matters most is how those differences are managed and how areas of common interest can continue to expand.

Today, the Asia-Pacific region stands at the center of global economic growth. The future prosperity of the region is closely linked to the quality of cooperation among its major economies.

From this perspective, China and South Korea should look beyond a bilateral framework and pursue cooperation from the broader standpoint of regional prosperity and global stability.

Now is the time for the two nations to elevate their relationship into a more resilient, forward-looking and mutually beneficial partnership.

The author is chairman of the Korea-China Global Association in Seoul. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:36 PM

GLOBAL LENS



A housewife wears a smartphone on her head as she records her actions through motion capture while slicing mangos at her home in Chennai, India, on May 15. PHOTOS BY R. SATISH BABU / AFP



A smartphone screen on a housewife's head records her actions through motion capture while she is slicing mangos at her home in Chennai, India, on May 15.



A housewife wears a smartphone on her head as she records her actions through motion capture while watering plants at her home in Chennai, India, on May 15.

Robot mentoring

Indian housewives with phones on their heads train humanoids that will perform household jobs in future

With a smartphone strapped to her head, Indian housewife Nagireddy Sriramyachandra films herself slicing mangos to train AI-powered robots to take on household jobs in the future.

Earning just over $2 for an hour of video, her mundane recordings are invaluable for global tech companies teaching machines how to move like humans in the real world.

The 25-year-old is one of a growing army of thousands of AI system trainers in India.

"Who else will give you 250 rupees ($2.64) an hour just for doing housework?" said Sriramyachandra from her kitchen in Chennai in southern India's Tamil Nadu state.

"I may get a robot myself in the future," she said.

AI chatbots and image generators crunch reams of digital data, but building systems to navigate real-life environments is more challenging.

Developers think feeding first-person footage, called "egocentric data", into specialized AI models will help robots copy humans.

Some AI trainers work at home, others in factories or specialized studios — using video glasses, head-mounted cameras and motion sensors.

"It blares 'hands not detected' when I'm not recording properly," said Sriramyachandra, who sends recordings via a special app to the AI data company Objectways.

The humanoid robot market is booming, with investment bank Morgan Stanley predicting there could be over a billion in use by 2050, mostly for industrial and commercial purposes.

"Folding clothes, coffee-making ... cooking a very specific thing, sandwich-making," Objectways head Ravi Shankar said, listing videos requested by clients.





From top: A worker wears a camera to record her actions through motion capture at an AI data company in Tamil Nadu, India, on May 13. Data is acquired through motion capture at the AI data company in Tamil Nadu.

"Some jobs are supposed to be taken over, so humans can go and do better things."

In India, the emerging field of spatial AI is providing new employment.

"It's likely that these data collection services will increase," said digital labor expert Aditi Surie, from the Indian Institute for Human Settlements in Bengaluru.

At an Objectways studio, AI system trainers film themselves performing household tasks in fake, fully furnished apartment rooms.

After several thousand hours of filming, the wallpaper is changed to provide clients with variety.

"Today I sit here, tomorrow I stand there," said engineering graduate Rani N., 21, on a break from filming herself, once again, folding a towel.

Each video lasts about four minutes, and she records around 90 a day — on nearly every conceivable spot on the bed.

She says the job is "tolerable", but feels like she's always wearing a camera.

In other rooms, colleagues arranged pencil sharpeners, water bottles and crayons in patterns, recording with depth-sensor cameras.

Qanat Consulting Services in Andhra Pradesh, an Objectways subcontractor, supplies about a dozen larger data firms with recordings. Some of its 2,000 contributors perform tasks with motion-sensor bands on their "wrists, hands and legs", CEO Thaslim Pattan said.

Manish Agarwal of Bengaluru-based Humyn Labs records conversations as well as videos.

Contributors discuss assigned topics — ranging from politics to entertainment — for clients wanting to process speech patterns. Agarwal denies that robots will steal jobs, believing that networks of humans and robots "will work together" one day, he said.

"A welder in India could be managing a welder-robot in Prague," he said.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA



Workers wear cameras on their heads while recording actions through motion capture inside a factory in Tamil Nadu, India, on May 13.



A worker wears a camera to record actions through motion capture while arranging colored blocks at an AI data company in Tamil Nadu, India, on May 13.



A worker wearing a camera on his head records actions through motion capture while filling water bottles inside a model kitchen at an AI data company in Tamil Nadu, India, on May 13.



Engineers compile data from cameras recording actions through motion capture at an AI data company in Tamil Nadu, India, on May 13.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:36 PM

WORLD

'China Shock' seen as cover of protectionism

Western framing undermines multilateral trading system, drives up costs: Experts

By **YANG RAN**
yangran1@chinadaily.com.cn

In response to growing rhetoric from the West over the so-called China Shock 2.0, experts say this narrative serves primarily as a political shield for protectionist policies rather than an objective economic assessment.

They warn that such framing could undermine the multilateral trading system and drive up global costs. Rather than viewing China's industrial advancement with hostility, those nations should instead adopt a more sophisticated collaborative mindset, leveraging China's robust supply capabilities to generate shared global benefits, experts urged.

During the three-day G7 summit concluded on Wednesday, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said, without naming China directly at first, that "some countries produce too much and do not consume enough", claiming it has been "increasingly dangerous for the stability of the global economy". She then explicitly singled out China, labeling its trade surplus with the European Union "unsustainable".

Her remarks mirror the "China Shock 2.0" narrative that has been gaining traction. Last month, the Centre for European Reform, a Europe-based think tank, published a report claiming that "a new China Shock is reverberating across global goods markets". During the G7 summit, many Western media outlets also leveraged this narrative to justify trade policies targeting China.

Jian Junbo, director of the Center for China-Europe Relations at Fudan University's Institute of International Studies, pointed out that the "China Shock" narrative largely focuses on the alleged trade imbalances, specifically concerning China's goods trade surplus with the West.

Sun Chenghao, head of the US-Europe Program at Tsinghua University's Center for International Security and Strategy, noted that the recent Western hype around the so-called China Shock 2.0 is in essence a political construct. "It layers together Western anxieties over lost industrial competitiveness, the rising costs of a green transition, and a broader strategic competition with China. They reframed these issues into a 'security threat' narrative, repackaging for public consumption."

The original "China Shock" thesis, coined by Western economists, argued that China's post-WTO export boom disrupted US labor markets.

Sun said that the underlying logic of the current version hasn't changed much. "Both versions externalize the internal challenges of Western economies — industrial restructuring, income inequality, and technological competitive pressures — and blame them on Chinese manufacturing."

Tu Xinquan, dean of the China Institute for WTO Studies at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing, agreed. He said the so-called China Shock is simply a natural outcome of market economics and competition.

"Developed countries have grown accustomed to holding the technological upper hand for decades," Tu said. "Now, when they face a real competitor, they seem reluctant to embrace the free market principles they've preached for decades."

Far from being a detriment, experts said that China's industrial upgrading, which offers high-tech products at lower costs, is a boon for the global economy, enhancing world productivity and welfare.

James Pethokoukis, a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, a Washington-based think tank, highlighted this positive impact in a December article published on the organization's website.

He noted that while China's rapid growth reduced the US' share of the global GDP, it simultaneously helped US consumers by making a wide range of goods cheaper to buy and easier for US companies to produce. The US, he concluded, became "absolutely richer" even as it appeared "relatively smaller, economy-wise".

Benefiting the world

"China's massive, integrated production capacity, combined with intense domestic competition, allows it to produce high-tech goods at remarkably low cost," said Tu. "This, in fact, benefits the entire world, as it significantly lowers product prices, thereby enhancing their accessibility and affordability. This is particularly evident in renewable energy products, including solar power, wind energy, and electric vehicles."

Official data shows that Chinese wind turbines, solar panels, and new energy vehicle products are exported to over 200 countries and regions globally, driving down global wind and solar power generation costs by over 60 percent and 80 percent, respectively.

Sun warned that the West's pan-securitization of normal industrial competition would, in the long run, escalate global production costs, diminish consumer welfare, fragment supply chains, and further erode the WTO-centered multilateral trading system.

Against this backdrop, experts advocate a more rational and objective perspective on China's industrial and economic development, urging exploration of international cooperation for global prosperity.

Jian from Fudan University said, "What they call a shock is really just competitive pressure, which is inherently beneficial for the growth and prosperity of the global market." Blocking such normal competition, he argued, would be detrimental to overall economic development.

"In this context, it is crucial to view this competition rationally and objectively, embracing a market-oriented mindset and promoting self-growth through cooperation with the competitors," he said.

Off track



Two freight train cars hang off of a bridge, partially blocking a road in Munich, Germany, on Saturday. EHSAN MONAJATI VIA AP

Streets under smoke



A firefighter walks down the street as a massive warehouse fire at a cold storage facility continues to burn and spread smoke around Los Angeles, California, on Saturday. MARIO TAMA / AFP

Instability reshapes global supply chains

By **RENA LI** in Los Angeles
renali@chinadailyusa.com

Business leaders and logistics executives said global supply chains are adapting to a more complex trade environment shaped by geopolitical tensions, evolving tariff policies and shifting trade patterns, while emphasizing the continued importance of long-term planning and international commerce.

Speaking at a news briefing hosted by the Port of Los Angeles, Gene Seroka, executive director of the port, and Dan Letter, chief executive officer of Prologis, the world's largest logistics real estate company, discussed how companies are navigating uncertainty while maintaining investments in logistics infrastructure, warehousing and trade-related operations.

The discussion came as businesses continue to assess the implications of recent developments in global trade and geopolitics, including ceasefire negotiations involving Iran and the United States, ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and Europe, and evolving China-US trade relations.

Seroka said a proposed reopening of the Strait of Hormuz could help ease pressure on energy markets and improve business confidence, although he cautioned that a memorandum of understanding involving the US and Iran remains only a framework for further negotiations.

"Twenty percent of the world's energy products flow through that strait," Seroka said. If the Iran situation further eases as expected, "we could see oil prices continue their decline, inflation possibly easing over the weeks and months ahead, and shipping confidence could begin to return".

He noted that the waterway normally accommodates more than 100 vessel crossings daily, but warned that shipping companies are unlikely to resume normal operations immediately.

"Crew safety remains the priority," Seroka said. "Even with a possible reopening, it will take months to normalize schedules, get supply chains back to some semblance of normalcy and clear backlogs."

Despite recent disruptions, Seroka said conversations with port operators and industry partners in Asia suggest that cargo flows remain resilient. He added that easing bunker fuel prices and improving confidence could provide additional support for trade volumes in the months ahead.

Turning to China-US trade relations, Seroka said recent discussions were a positive signal, but businesses want clearer direction.

Positive sign

"It's certainly positive when the leaders of the world's two largest economies sit down to negotiate," Seroka said, adding that while businesses are encouraged by the continued engagement, many companies are still seeking greater policy clarity as they make long-term decisions related to trade, investment and supply chains.

China remains one of the Port of Los Angeles' largest trading partners. According to port data, China-related cargo has historically accounted for a significant share of container volumes moving through the Southern California gateway, making developments in bilateral trade relations closely watched by logistics providers, retailers and manufacturers.

Seroka said uncertainty surrounding tariffs continues to influence business decisions. While discussions have included potential opportunities for increased US agricultural exports, including beef and soybeans, he noted that market conditions remain challenging.

He pointed out that Brazil and Argentina have expanded their presence in China's soybean market in recent years, making it more difficult for US exporters to quickly regain market share.

"Once overseas buyers establish new sourcing relationships, it can take a lot of time to win that business back," he said.

Companies are also monitoring upcoming tariff deadlines and potential new trade measures, prompting many businesses to shorten planning horizons and adjust inventory strategies.

"This is the new reality of doing business in today's trade environment," Seroka said.

Letter from Prologis said supply chains have become more resilient after navigating years of disruptions, including rising interest rates, geopolitical tensions and global conflicts.

"Our customers have been digesting all of these issues, and we're seeing them again make decisions," Letter said. "They're making these five-plus-year decisions with us."

Report: UK PM Starmer could resign

LONDON — United Kingdom's Prime Minister Keir Starmer was expected to resign on Monday and set out a timetable for his departure, according to The Observer, a local newspaper.

However, UK Business Secretary Peter Kyle said on Sunday that the news of Starmer's quitting is speculation. He added that Starmer is "making time to reflect on the political realities, challenges and opportunities that he finds himself in".

The threat to Starmer's position, which has been building for months, increased sharply on Friday when his rival Andy Burnham won a seat in Parliament that would allow him to launch a formal leadership challenge.

The Observer, which did not name its sources, said Starmer had reached the conclusion that his position was no longer tenable after speaking to cabinet ministers, advisers, donors and trade union leaders.

Starmer led the center-left Labour Party to a landslide election win in 2024 but has become deeply unpopular after a series of scandals and policy U-turns that have given many voters an impression that he cannot deliver on improving their standards of living that he promised.

If he were to quit or be ousted, it would mean the country installing its seventh prime minister in just over a decade — the highest turnover in nearly two centuries, reflective of anger at successive governments' failures to improve public services and tackle issues like illegal immigration.

More than 100 elected lawmakers in Starmer's party — roughly a quarter of all Labour representatives in the House of Commons — have publicly said they want him to quit or set out a timetable for his exit, according to a Reuters tally.

Burnham, until last week the mayor of Greater Manchester, decisively won the seat of Makerfield in northwestern England in a special election on Thursday. He took almost 55 percent of the 45,510 votes cast, over 9,000 more than the Reform UK runner-up.

Burnham did not immediately make a formal challenge to Starmer but used his victory address to promise a new path for the country.

Starmer congratulated Burnham on Friday but said he would fight any challenge to his leadership and urged Labour not to tear itself apart with infighting.

But Charlie Falconer, a senior Labour member of the House of Lords, said on Saturday that Starmer has "absolutely no authority" left.

"There should be an agreed transition process in which Andy and Keir cooperate as to when the handover should take place," he said.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Intra-Asian travel viewed as opportunity amid tensions

By **YANG HAN** in Hong Kong and **LEONARDUS JEGHO** in Jakarta

Turmoil in the Middle East has reshaped the global travel landscape. Long-haul travel is among the hardest hit, while intra-regional travel could become a bright spot for many tourism-dependent Asian economies, according to industry analysts.

Citing the situation in the Middle East, the Tourism Authority of Thailand slashed its forecast for long-haul arrivals this year from 11 million to 10 million, according to a report by The Nation on June 17.

However, arrivals from nearby markets such as China saw a strong recovery with Chinese tourists arrivals jumping 18.35 percent to 2.3 million. The number of Indian tourist arrivals also increased by 8 percent to about 1 million, the report said.

Paul Edmundus Talo, director of Floressa Bali Tours and Bali Flores Adventure, told China Daily that the conflict in the Middle East had affected international flight services, created a sense of uncertainty among travelers, and contributed to higher airfares.

Airfares for flights between Asia and Europe have hiked after the US-Israeli war on Iran began in late February.

According to an analysis by FlightsFinder.com in March, fares on direct routes between Asia and Europe surged by nearly 300 percent, meaning travelers would need to pay up to $2,330 more for the same flight.

Growth potential

Gary Bowerman, managing director of the weekly industry newsletter Asia Travel Re:Set, said that it is still unclear how consumers will respond to the challenges ahead, but Asian tourism still holds strong growth potential.

Bowerman said intra-regional demand has become a significant force for Asia's tourism recovery, and he expects regional travel in Southeast Asia and the broader Asia-Pacific to remain strong.

But currency volatility, rising interest rates, and higher living costs could weigh on travel at the margins, he said, noting the war in the Middle East will have strong residual effects for some regional economies in the second half of 2026.

"Destinations across the region must continue to diversify their visitor mixes to build more resilience in the future," said Bowerman.

Some Southeast Asian countries have pinned their hopes on the Chinese market with targeted campaigns.



A Chinese tourist wearing a Thai traditional costume poses for photos at Wat Pho Temple in Bangkok on May 5. RUNGROJ YONGRIT / EPA

Thai tourism authorities are planning to attract 7.5 million Chinese visitors in 2026. Apart from marketing through social media platforms, it also plans to build on the popularity of the Chinese film *Dear You* to increase interest in locations where the film was shot.

On June 15, Cambodia launched a four-month visa-free trial for Chinese tourists with multiple entries, its largest source of international visitors. The government said it aims to boost tourism recovery, according to the Khmer Times.

As tourist arrivals drop in Siem Reap Province, Khiev Thy, president of the Siem Reap Angkor Guides Association, said the visa exemption will play an important role in attracting Chinese tourists.

In Bali, the popular Indonesian tourism destination has quickly adjusted its strategy to prioritize the development of the Chinese market in response to the loss of Western tourists, said Ye Lu, head of the China market of the Bali Tourism Board, also founder of the Bali Mandarin Center.

Measures include simplified visas, increased direct flights, training for Chinese-speaking guides, and widespread acceptance of Alipay and WeChat Pay to fill the tourist gap, Ye said.

Leonardus Jegho is a freelance journalist for China Daily.

Contact the writers at kelly@chinadailyapac.com

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:36 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Brussels' protectionist moves risk being costly backfiring gamble to EU

If a trade surplus is automatically interpreted as proof of unfairness, then many European Union exports — from automobiles to pharmaceuticals — could be subjected to the same logic elsewhere.

The EU justifies its trade surplus with the United States as a natural outcome of market forces, even as Washington accuses it of exploiting the US market. Yet, in a striking double standard, the EU now adopts the same logic in reverse. Framing its trade deficit with China as evidence of "victimhood", while overlooking the very market dynamics it so readily champions elsewhere.

The EU often lectures the world about the virtues of open markets, rules-based trade and economic integration. Yet Brussels' proposed Industrial Accelerator Act, along with other bills and policies, suggests that the bloc is increasingly tempted to abandon the very principles that helped build its prosperity.

Presented as a tool to "strengthen industrial competitiveness" and "accelerate the green transition", the IAA carries a less advertised objective: reducing China's role in Europe's strategic industries. Through public procurement restrictions, enhanced foreign investment screening and various "Made in Europe" preferences, the legislation marks a shift from openness toward industrial protectionism. It is nothing but an EU adaptation of "America First".

That is precisely why the concerns submitted by the China Chamber of Commerce to the EU on Thursday deserve serious consideration. The chamber, representing more than 1,000 Chinese enterprises operating in the EU, argues that several provisions of the IAA create legal uncertainty. More important, they threaten to make the EU's green transition slower and more expensive rather than faster and more competitive.

EU policymakers should realize that engaging with China brings opportunities to global enterprises. Multinational corporations are no longer peripheral players in China — they are integral to its industrial ecosystem. This is reflected in the numbers: foreign direct investment in the world's second-largest economy has topped $100 billion annually for 16 years running.

According to a report released at the seventh Qingdao Multinationals Summit on Tuesday, the surveyed multinational corporations in China allocated 14.3 percent of their global R&D spending to the country last year. At the same time, new foreign-invested enterprises in scientific research and technical services jumped 27.2 percent year-on-year to 14,000 — underscoring a deepening technological embrace of the Chinese market.

Divorced from the reality, however, the language of "de-risking", "reducing dependency" and correcting "trade imbalances" has become increasingly commonplace among some of the EU's political circles. Recent discussions among EU leaders have focused heavily on developing new restrictive trade instruments targeting China.

International trade is a matter of mutual choice. EU consumers purchase Chinese goods and EU companies source from Chinese supply chains because they are efficient and offer cost-performance advantages.

Trade balances are the outcome of market forces, industrial structures and consumer preferences. China has never deliberately sought a trade surplus with the EU. Treating a trade deficit as evidence of "economic victimhood" is a dangerous oversimplification.

The EU's competitiveness challenges stem from high energy costs, sluggish productivity growth, fragmented capital markets and regulatory burdens. Restricting Chinese investment will not solve these problems. Nor will excluding Chinese companies from procurement projects make European companies globally competitive.

Instead, it will lead to retaliatory measures, uncertainty and lost opportunities. China has made clear that it will take necessary measures to safeguard its legitimate rights and interests should discriminatory restrictions become EU policy.

But a more constructive path remains available. Despite growing tensions, China and the EU continue to maintain regular communication on economic and trade issues, as He Yadong, spokesman for China's Ministry of Commerce, said on Thursday. The talks in Brussels on June 9 between Ling Ji, vice-minister of commerce and deputy international trade representative of China, and Ditte Juul Jorgensen, director-general for trade and economic security at the European Commission, were "in-depth and comprehensive" and had helped lay the groundwork for ministerial consultations to be held soon, the Commerce Ministry spokesman added.

The ministerial consultations deserve strengthening to deepen mutual understanding.

A comprehensive and objective perspective is essential for the EU in managing its economic ties with China. Past efforts to resolve disputes, from electric vehicles to steel, have consistently shown that negotiation is the rational way forward in addressing bilateral trade frictions.

Should Brussels double down on a de facto "EU First" agenda, it may end up undermining the competitiveness it purports to protect. And when the dust settles, it will be EU businesses, consumers and future industrial strength that pay the price.

All relevant parties must uphold MoU terms

The signing of the first-phase Memorandum of Understanding between the United States and Iran offers not only hope for a ceasefire but also for further negotiations aimed at achieving lasting peace.

As the international community watches closely, it is imperative that all parties involved, including Israel, commit to upholding this agreement and work diligently toward regional stability.

The text of the MoU covers several key areas, including the cessation of hostilities, maritime security and navigation, reconstruction and economic assistance, sanctions relief, nuclear-related commitments and an executive mechanism. It states that the two sides commit to negotiating and achieving the final deal in a maximum of 60 days, extendable with mutual consent.

But the road to peace is rarely straight. Iran's announcement that it would close the Strait of Hormuz, citing Israel's continued attacks in Lebanon as a violation of the ceasefire deal, underscores the challenges in implementing the MoU.

The US-Iran negotiations that are scheduled to open in Burgenstock, Switzerland, are a testament to both parties' willingness to carry on the momentum of the MoU to continue dialogue. But much remains to be done to hold up the current fragile ceasefire and lay the groundwork for a final agreement.

The central question now is whether the US has both the genuine willingness and the practical capability to rein in Israel — especially given that Tel Aviv has made clear its determination to act of its own accord.

While Israel has agreed to a ceasefire in Lebanon, its refusal to withdraw from Lebanon poses a continued threat to peace. Reportedly, Israel is conducting negotiations with the US on maintaining its deployment of troops in southern Lebanon. For the MoU to succeed, Israel must cease its attacks and withdraw its forces, creating an environment conducive to negotiations.

Given the current challenges in implementing the 14-point memorandum and the fragile nature of the US-Iran ceasefire, the US-Iran negotiations, which were originally supposed to focus on the Iran nuclear issue, might now include discussions on the Lebanon ceasefire and the Strait of Hormuz.

The US-Iran talks may be in the spotlight, but their fate will be decided in the US-Israel negotiations. Tehran's revival of the Strait of Hormuz threat was to prompt the US to restrain Israel. The success of the talks in Switzerland hinges on the ability of all parties to adhere to their commitments and avoid actions that could derail the process.

China hopes that both the US and Iran will approach the second-phase negotiations with a rational and pragmatic attitude, working together toward positive outcomes.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said at a regular news briefing on Thursday that China welcomes the signing of the MoU and hopes that all relevant parties "will uphold the spirit of contract and implement it in good faith".

Beijing has been working for an end to the fighting since the outbreak of the conflict, demonstrating its commitment to peace through various diplomatic initiatives. The four-point proposal it put forward outlines a clear vision for safeguarding peace and stability, emphasizing good neighborliness, development, security and cooperation.

The path to lasting peace in the Middle East is fraught with challenges, but the MoU between the US and Iran offers a glimmer of hope as it provides the scaffolding for talks to end the conflict. For this hope to be translated into reality, all parties, including Israel, must prioritize peace and stability.

China stands ready to support these efforts, but the success of the forthcoming negotiations depends on the willingness of the parties directly involved to approach discussions with rationality and pragmatism.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

New measures to enhance data security governance

China's digital economy has entered a stage in which data have become a key factor of production, an important strategic resource and a vital driver of innovation. Against this backdrop the release of measures to assess network data security risks marks a key step in strengthening the country's data security governance framework.

The measures, released on Thursday, will come into force on Aug 20. They aim to provide a systematic framework for identifying, analyzing and evaluating risks associated with network data and data-processing activities. The regulations require handlers of important data to conduct annual risk assessments while encouraging processors of general data to carry out assessments at least once every three years. They also establish clearer responsibilities for regulators, enterprises and third-party assessment institutions.

Since the enactment of the Data Security Law in 2021 and the issuance of regulations on network data security management, China has steadily built a comprehensive system for governing data resources. Yet a key question remained: how can enterprises effectively identify risks before incidents occur? The new measures answer that question by institutionalizing risk assessment as a routine and preventive mechanism. They transform data security governance from a reactive model focused on incident response into a proactive model centered on risk prevention and early warning.

The rapid expansion of artificial intelligence, cloud computing, industrial internet platforms and cross-border data flows has increased the complexity of data governance. As digital technologies penetrate every sector of the economy, data-related risks can quickly evolve into broader economic and social risks if left unchecked. The new measures therefore serve as an institutional safeguard for the high-quality development of the sectors concerned.

For industries and enterprises, the effect will be both immediate and long term.

For sectors that process large volumes of important data — including telecommunications, finance, energy, transportation, healthcare and industrial manufacturing — the measures will accelerate the establishment of more mature data governance systems. Enterprises will need to strengthen internal controls, improve data inventories, clarify data classification mechanisms and enhance monitoring of the entire data life cycle. While compliance costs may rise in the short term, the long-term benefits will include stronger resilience against cyberattacks, data leaks and operational disruptions.

The regulations are also expected to create new opportunities for China's cybersecurity and compliance service industries. By permitting enterprises to engage qualified third-party institutions to conduct assessments, the measures are likely to stimulate demand for professional services in risk evaluation, auditing, consulting, certification and security technology solutions. The development of a more standardized assessment ecosystem will further support the growth of specialized service providers and encourage technological innovation in data protection.

Importantly, the measures do not signal tighter restrictions on data utilization. Rather, they embody China's long-standing approach of balancing development and security. The objective is not to impede data circulation, but to create a more predictable and trustworthy environment in which data can be developed, shared and utilized safely. By clarifying assessment requirements and reducing uncertainty, the measures can help lower compliance burdens for many enterprises while enhancing confidence in data-driven innovation.

In an era when data security has become closely linked with economic security, social stability and national competitiveness, building robust risk management mechanisms is a must. The newly released measures represent important progress in China's effort to modernize data governance. By placing risk assessment at the forefront of security management, the country can lay a stronger foundation for the healthy growth of its digital economy.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

'Employment first' the key for social development

Editor's note: *China has issued an implementation plan for its employment-first strategy during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period. China Media Group spoke to Zhang Chenggang, director of the research center for new forms of employment at Capital University of Economics and Business, on the goals, major tasks and policy measures for promoting high-quality and full employment. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

It is necessary to promote the quality and effectiveness of the service sector, which is the largest source of employment and offers a highly diverse range of jobs with varying entry requirements. Broadly speaking, it can be viewed from two perspectives — producer services and consumer services.

Producer services encompass the modern services that support manufacturing, such as finance, technology services and human resources services. Upgrading and expanding this sector hinges on whether it can generate a large number of high-value, well-paid jobs and continuously strengthen its competitiveness.

Consumer services account for a significant share of employment. In the past, many segments of the sector were characterized by small-scale and fragmented entities, uneven standards and relatively low entry barriers, resulting in wide variations in workforce quality.

The expansion of consumer services should be driven by organizations, enterprises and platforms that help raise service quality. Higher standards and better service quality will translate into an improved experience for consumers. In short, both producer and consumer services need to achieve growth in both quantity and quality.

A key message of the plan is that China must not only expand opportunities but also address existing shortcomings.

Expanding opportunities means continuing to support the development of new forms of employment and allowing the growth of the platform economy to play a greater role across both consumer and producer services. This, in turn, will create a wider variety of jobs, giving workers more choices and career paths.

At the same time, shortcomings in two key areas must be addressed. The first is social protection. Measures are needed to increase participation in social insurance among flexible workers and those in new forms of employment, while making enrollment more convenient. Occupational injury insurance should also be expanded to cover a broader range of workers in flexible employment.

The second area is public services. Service networks should become more extensive, ensuring that basic urban public services reach flexible workers and those engaged in new forms of employment. This will help them integrate more fully into urban life and share in the benefits of development.

It is also important to improve the alignment between educational provision and labor market demand. The establishment of a national big-data platform for talent demand will make workforce needs more visible and provide a stronger basis for educational institutions to adjust their academic programs.

A second priority is strengthening vocational education so that it becomes a respected pathway for career development rather than being viewed as a secondary option.

Also, academic disciplines must be adjusted in line with evolving industry needs. Educational institutions should closely follow the development of strategic emerging industries and future industries. Only by training people according to what the country and the market need can the education system better support economic and social development.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:36 PM

VIEWS

Sun Zhuangzhi

Remember past to safeguard future

A correct understanding of World War II history is necessary so that mistakes of the past are not repeated and both China and Russia are deeply committed to ensuring this. In a joint statement issued in May, both countries reaffirmed the commitment to safeguarding the outcomes of the victory embodied in the United Nations Charter and the charters and judgments of the Nuremberg Trials and the Tokyo Trials, and firmly opposing any attempt to deny or distort the history of WWII.

This stance is not just about preserving historical memory. Both China and Russia firmly uphold the UN-centered international system, reminding countries to avoid repeating historical mistakes and advocating for a fair and equitable global security governance system.

The postwar international order has institutionalized international relations and also established global organizations, including the UN, where major issues could be addressed with equal participation of member states. Under the postwar international order, international conduct has been regulated. The interconnected global economy necessitates shared behavioral standards. International law has gained prominence, providing a framework for dispute resolution, as exemplified by the World Trade Organization's role in shaping international trade rules.

At the same time, the international landscape gradually evolved from Cold War bipolarity to a multipolar structure, driven by the rise of developing countries and initiatives such as South-South cooperation and the Non-Aligned Movement. Nations increasingly engaged in multilateral cooperation to tackle global challenges, from climate change and environmental protection to counterterrorism.

Since the end of the Cold War, the postwar international order has faced significant challenges due to shifts in global power dynamics. Some Western countries are still clinging to outdated power politics because they don't want to relinquish their hegemonic positions and even distort historical facts. Besides, Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi has glorified militarism and refused to acknowledge Japan's history of aggression during WWII and the atrocities it inflicted on neighboring countries. These actions blatantly undermine fairness and justice and have drawn widespread condemnation from China, Russia and several Asian countries that suffered Japanese atrocities during the war.

The history of WWII offers crucial lessons for understanding today's international relations. An accurate view of that history is essential for preventing a relapse into large-scale conflict.

The war was a direct consequence of the lack of fairness and justice in the Versailles-Washington system established after the end of World War I. The Paris Peace Conference became a "looting assembly", with major powers redrawing their spheres of influence. The League of Nations was fundamentally flawed, and failed to maintain international peace and security.

Meanwhile, the global great economic turmoil in 1929-1933 created fertile conditions for the rise of fascism in Germany and Italy and militarism in Japan. They pursued aggressive military expansion and war preparations, ultimately leading to a global tragedy.

Today, the world once again stands at a critical juncture. Transformations unseen in a century are unfolding alongside intensified major-country rivalry and persistent regional conflicts. Deficits in peace, development, security and governance have become more pronounced, creating a vicious cycle.

Unilateralism and extremism have wantonly trampled on the sovereignty of other countries and blatantly violated the norms of international law centered on the UN Charter. The result has been sharp disagreements and confrontations between nations.

Calls from developing countries for peace and development have fallen on deaf ears. At the same time, globalization faces mounting challenges. Resources such as energy, food, and cyber capabilities are increasingly weaponized, while concerns over nuclear security have become more acute.

Addressing these challenges requires wisdom. The world is transitioning to a new landscape. While the US remains the sole superpower for the foreseeable future, emerging market economies and Global South countries are steadily expanding their influence across various fields — a trend that is set to strengthen further.

Developed countries maintain a clear edge in economic and technological competition, prolonging the transition period and resulting in asynchronous shifts in strengths across different areas. Economically, emerging markets have significantly expanded their share in international trade. However, shifts in security are slower, as the balance of military power, equipment and technology is unlikely to change anytime soon.

Culturally, the West continues to have a big advantage in this field due to modern means of communication and its control over mass media, but its influence is gradually diminishing. The trend toward civilizational diversity is strengthening, and resistance to Western cultural erosion is becoming more pronounced.

Against the backdrop of the prolonged Russia-Ukraine conflict, the spillover of the Middle East crisis, and certain Western countries attempting to maintain their grip on the steering wheel of international affairs, the advance of multipolarity must not devolve into factional confrontations.

In response to hegemonic headwinds, China and Russia have introduced a series of new security concepts within multilateral frameworks such as the UN, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS. For instance, the Global Security Initiative proposed by China seeks to unite the international community in addressing global security challenges and maintaining world peace and stability. The SCO, advocating the "Shanghai Spirit", emphasizes common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security. It upholds equality among nations, favors partnerships over alliances, expands its cooperation network, and promotes dialogue to resolve disputes. This approach strives to turn the vision of "never again war" into reality.

The author is the director of the Institute of Russian, Eastern European and Central Asian Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.
The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Alfred Romann

Canada can drive down EV prices for buyers

For years, Canadians have been told that the electric vehicle revolution was just around the corner. The cars were getting better, charging infrastructure was expanding and the climate case was airtight. The only thing missing was a price that ordinary people could afford.

That barrier may soon come down.

Canada has slashed tariffs on Chinese EVs following Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney's visit to Beijing, cutting them from the 100 percent surtax imposed in 2024 to 6.1 percent for an annual quota of 49,000 vehicles.

Chinese automakers wasted little time in responding. BYD, the world's largest EV manufacturer by sales volume, announced plans to open 20 dealerships across Canada within a year, starting in the Greater Toronto Area. Geely is assembling a Canadian leadership team, advertising senior roles in sales, marketing, legal and aftersales from a Toronto base. Other Chinese manufacturers, including Nio and Xpeng, may be coming too. At the same time, China has introduced an export licensing system this year for passenger EVs, creating a framework for expansion overseas.

For the first time, Canadian consumers will have real choices in the EV market, alongside healthy, market-driven price competition.

The timing is both significant and urgent. In late February, the military conflict in the Middle East effectively closed the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow waterway through which nearly 20 percent of the world's oil supply had been flowing. The impact on energy markets was immediate and severe. Brent crude, which began the year at roughly $61 a barrel, surged to above $120 a barrel in April, a level not seen since the Russia-Ukraine conflict broke out in 2022.

Canadians have felt that in every trip to the gas station. In Vancouver, which has the highest fuel prices in the country, it has now become common to see gasoline prices of C$2.20 ($1.58) per liter, the highest they have ever been and almost 40 percent higher than a few months ago.

Against this backdrop, the economics of driving an internal combustion engine have rarely looked worse while the case for switching to an EV has rarely looked better — provided you can actually afford one.

That has long been a barrier to owning an EV in Canada.

There are plenty of EVs on the streets across the country, but those vehicles are usually premium models in the high-priced segments. A market dominated by Tesla and a handful of established European and North American brands has faced limited pressure to compete on price. Consumers who wanted an electric vehicle but couldn't stretch to the average C$55,000 price of an EV were left with few options.

Chinese manufacturers bring a fundamentally different approach to the market. Take BYD's Seagull, which sells for the equivalent of roughly C$15,500 in China. It represents a category of affordable EVs that simply does not exist in Canada today. Even accounting for tariffs, shipping and local certification costs, Chinese EVs are expected to land in Canada at price points that will force established automakers to respond.

There are already indications that Canadians are responding to the changing market conditions.

Zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) sales jumped 74.7 percent in March compared with a year earlier as fuel prices started climbing. ZEVs accounted for 12.2 percent of all new vehicle sales that month, nearly double the 6.5 percent share recorded a year earlier.

That surge happened before a single Chinese showroom opened in Canada. When BYD's first Greater Toronto Area dealerships open later this year, the market will face its first real test of what genuine competition can do to an industry that has long been insulated from it.

The international context makes the Canadian opportunity even clearer. European Union EV sales rose 51 percent in March as competition and model diversity allowed buyers to easily shift away from traditional cars when oil prices spiked. In the United States, by contrast, EV sales fell yet again in March and have been falling for months as the federal government rolled back incentives and embraced an openly skeptical posture toward electrification.

Canada finds itself between those two trajectories, with an opportunity to choose which path to follow.

Some in Canada have voiced concerns over national security and the protection of domestic manufacturing. But the decision to grant an annual quota of 49,000 Chinese EVs at the most-favored-nation tariff rate — while China has adjusted countervailing measures — reflects bilateral efforts that will ultimately benefit Canadian consumers. In a year when the country lost more than 110,000 jobs in the first four months and consumer confidence has been sliding, the case for shielding a premium car market from competition has become untenable.

Fair and open competition can deliver tangible benefits to ordinary consumers. Chinese EVs will offer Canadian consumers more choices and lower prices, and may even play a role in shoring up the country's automotive industry.

This is not just about geopolitics or trade policy, though it involves both. It is about whether Canadians will be able to buy affordable, efficient vehicles at a time when the cost of the alternative continues to rise. The showrooms are not open yet, and the cars have not yet arrived on dealer lots. But the window that has been opened by this trade deal is real, and it should not be allowed to close.

The author is the managing director of Bahati Ltd, a trade and economics analysis firm based in Canada.
The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.

Hibat-Allah Ezzahid

Adaptability of Chinese firms key to success abroad

Chinese companies are playing an increasingly important role in the global economy today. From advanced manufacturing and renewable energy to infrastructure, logistics, digital technologies, and industrial cooperation, they are transforming production systems and value chains across the world. As Chinese companies continue to expand internationally, the focus is shifting from merely entering foreign markets to operating effectively within diverse institutional, managerial, and cultural environments. While large-scale investments often attract attention, the day-to-day operational realities of globalization are becoming equally important for long-term success.

One major challenge that Chinese companies face is institutional complexity. Many international markets offer attractive macro-level conditions for investment, including political stability, industrial incentives, trade agreements, and strategic locations. However, once companies begin operations, they often face fragmented realities. Administrative procedures may involve multiple agencies with overlapping responsibilities, and regulatory implementation can vary across institutions or regions. Complexities in licensing systems, taxation procedures, labor regulations and documentation requirements may cause delays.

For instance, a Chinese automotive components company facing a three-month delay when importing machinery to Morocco due to complicated customs clearance processes involving several administrative entities suffered disrupted production planning and slowed local recruitment. In response, the company expanded its local legal and administrative team in the host country rather than relying solely on coordination from China.

Another challenge is cross-cultural and managerial coordination. Chinese companies have developed highly effective management systems characterized by organizational discipline, operational efficiency and strong operational commitment. These strengths have driven China's industrial transformation and global competitiveness. However, the workplace expectations, communication styles and professional cultures may differ significantly in global settings. Differences in approaches to hierarchy, communication, working rhythms, and work-life balance can create operational friction within multinational teams.

A Chinese manufacturing company introduced production schedules and overtime practices similar to those in China during a peak production period. But this led to tensions within local teams over overtime expectations and work-life balance. There were also misunderstandings because some local employees perceived the communication style of managers as too direct. In response, the company adjusted working schedules, localized certain HR practices and expanded the role of local middle managers.

Many companies are discovering that management systems cannot simply be transferred across borders. Therefore, Chinese companies are developing more adaptive and internationally integrated management approaches. They are not abandoning their organizational strengths, but combining them with greater local responsiveness and intercultural flexibility. This includes preparing managers for overseas environments, redesigning coordination mechanisms, adapting HR practices, and integrating local leadership into operations. This adaptability is becoming a strategic advantage for Chinese firms globally.

Human capital and localization present another challenge. During the early stages of international expansion, Chinese companies often rely heavily on expatriate teams for coordination and technology transfer. While this model facilitates early operations, long-term international integration requires stronger local participation. Local employees contribute essential knowledge of language, regulations, professional culture and market dynamics.

A Chinese manufacturing company initially depended heavily on expatriate teams for operational supervision, but later faced difficulties in communication with local workers and labor management practices. Misunderstandings often emerged regarding production instructions and workplace expectations because many local employees communicated in the local language rather than Chinese or English. In response, the company hired local supervisors and bilingual coordinators to improve communication and workforce management. Similarly, many Chinese companies are investing more deeply in local talent development, managerial training, and long-term integration.

In several international operations, Chinese companies are also introducing cross-border learning systems that help local employees understand corporate structures, operational standards and organizational culture. Moroccan employees receive technical or managerial training in China before they are given greater responsibilities locally.

This reflects a broader transformation in the globalization of Chinese enterprises. International expansion is no longer just about exporting industrial capacity or building overseas projects. It is also becoming a process through which Chinese companies gain global managerial experience and develop new organizational capabilities. This experience strengthens their expertise in institutional adaptation, intercultural coordination, operational flexibility, and long-term strategic integration. In this sense, globalization is becoming not only a process of international expansion, but also one of organizational learning.

Morocco offers a concrete example of these operational dynamics. Chinese companies operating in Morocco illustrate how operational dynamics can become complex even in a relatively stable and investment-friendly environment.

As Chinese firms deepen their global presence, their long-term success will depend not only on investment and technology, but also on their ability to adapt to diverse institutional and cultural environments.

The author is a postdoctoral researcher at the Institute of International and Regional Studies in Sun Yat-sen University, Zhuhai.
The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:36 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

TARIQ H. MALIK

Hitting back

China's anti-sanctions law provides a mature legal framework for countering the abuse of sanctions as instruments of coercion

Trade sanctions, designed as instruments of order, justice and responsibility, have increasingly become tools of coercion, commercial exclusion and geopolitical pressure in practice. They disrupt trade, undermine economic development, hinder education and research, damage cross-cultural harmony and instill anxiety in societies that have no direct role in political disputes. When sanctions become coercion, nations have both the right and the responsibility to defend their economic sovereignty, giving rise to the legitimacy of new laws to mitigate those negative effects on the global economy. Modern legal systems already recognize the need for anti-piracy laws to protect navigation, anti-trust laws to prevent market domination, anti-dumping laws to defend fair trade, anti-terrorism laws to protect public security, anti-corruption laws to safeguard institutions and anti-crime laws to preserve social order. Now there is also a need for anti-sanctions laws.



China has already taken action by introducing the Anti-Foreign Sanctions Law of the People's Republic of China, adopted in 2021. Its implementation is not a call for confrontation, but a legal defense against the weaponization of interdependence.

Sanctions are not a meaningful means of engaging in international trade, development or economic cooperation. Trade depends on rules, trust and mutual benefit, while sanctions rely on pressure and exclusion. Economic development requires stable expectations, investment, mobility and long-term confidence, all of which can be weakened when sanctions disrupt normal economic activity. When sanctions restrict finance, shipping, insurance, food, energy, technology or medical supply chains, they not only affect political leaders. They affect businesses, workers, students, patients, consumers and researchers. Small businesses lose suppliers. Banks over-comply out of fear. Scientific cooperation is delayed. Students and scholars face barriers. Cultural exchanges narrow. Suspicion replaces trust; anxiety replaces confidence; exclusion replaces dialogue. In this sense, sanctions harm more than trade and prosperity. They harm values, mental well-being, cross-cultural understanding and education. They weaken the human foundations of globalization itself.

Sanctions rarely achieve their stated political aims. They fail to change targeted nations' behavior, facilitate dialogue, advance peace or build mutual trust. Yet they are described as successful because they "send a message", create pressure, damage transactions or isolate targets — simply a rhetorical success.

The belief in the effectiveness of sanctions persists because they serve lobbying groups, media narratives and political performances. If they cause pain, they are said to be working. If they fail to change behavior in the desired way, more sanctions are demanded. This circular logic turns policy failure into symbolic success. It rewards disruption rather than solutions. It allows policymakers to claim moral seriousness while transferring the real costs of sanctions to ordinary people and developing economies. Sanctions are instruments of global shock that do not manage complexity but inject instability into it. They do not create efficient markets; they distort them. They do not prove moral superiority; they reveal the failure to compete fairly in an open system.

For decades, the language of the free market has been used to defend openness, competition and efficiency through the "invisible hand", a concept purported by many since Adam Smith's conceptualization. Yet crude sanctions reveal the "visible hand" behind the so-called invisible hand. If companies are free only when they obey



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

the geopolitical preferences of powerful states, the market is no longer free. It becomes conditional because sanctions are signs of unwillingness to compete in an open system. When countries cannot win through innovation, productivity, quality, price or cooperation, they may turn to restrictions, bans, financial pressure and technological exclusion. This is not confidence in competition. It is the fear of competition.

The same logic applies to the petrodollar and wider financial structures. For decades, dollar-based systems gave many Western countries and their allies enormous influence over global finance and energy transactions. This was effective because many countries trusted the system as stable and useful since the end of World War II. Yet coercive sanctions are reducing that appeal. The more financial infrastructure is weaponized, the more countries seek alternatives. Excessive sanctions may accelerate the very multipolarity they seek to prevent.

Sanctions create an unequal distribution of costs and benefits. A few actors may gain strategically, commercially or politically. They may capture markets abandoned by competitors. They may redirect investment. They may use compliance systems to strengthen their own dominance. They may present themselves as defenders of morality while turning sanctions into instruments of economic advantage. By contrast, most countries lose. This is especially true for the Global South and South-South cooperation. Developing economies depend on affordable energy, infrastructure finance, technology transfer, food security and stable trade routes. When sanctions disrupt these flows, the damage spreads far beyond the sanctioned countries. It affects ports, logistics, payments, insurance, construction, education and industrial development.

Sanctions punish interdependence, neutrality and countries for maintaining ordinary economic relations. They convert global development into a hostage of geopolitical rivalry. This is why China's anti-sanctions law should be understood not only as a Chinese legal concern, but as part of a wider defence of development fairness. In earlier periods, sanctions could be framed through narrow diplomatic narratives. However, the digitized world today allows people to compare claims, observe double standards, and see the gap between humanitarian language and economic harm. People are less easily persuaded by unsolicited rhetoric. They can see when sanctions damage ordinary citizens while being hyped as a moral action. They can see when "rules" are applied selectively. They can see when pressure is called justice and economic pain is called effectiveness.

An anti-sanctions law gains legitimacy when sanctions themselves lose moral credibility. The greatest danger is not only economic damage. It is lawlessness. If powerful actors normalize coercion without legal restraint, the world risks moving toward a "Wild West" situation in which pressure replaces procedure and force replaces consent. Smaller countries become vulnerable. Leaders may be threatened, isolated, humiliated or targeted through extraterritorial mechanisms. International relations must not be governed by intimidation.

Countries are responding to this foul play by joining, supporting or developing legal frameworks that challenge the misuse of sanctions as instruments of coercion. China's anti-sanctions law is a mature legal framework grounded in clear standards, transparent procedures and credible safeguards against unlawful extraterritorial measures. It provides a clear definition of coercive sanctions, stronger protection for aggrieved entities, more effective remedies and proportionate countermeasures, including the announcement and adjustment of countermeasure lists, prohibitions on compliance with discriminatory foreign restrictions, and the right of affected Chinese citizens and organizations to seek legal remedies. This approach aims to deter escalation rather than encourage it, while reassuring legitimate foreign investors that normal business remains welcome. It also signals that China supports lawful trade, open cooperation and international engagement, but rejects coercion disguised as legal authority.

China is not alone, as many countries in the Global South hold an unfavorable view of unilateral coercive measures and illegal sanctions that affect international trade, development, sovereign equality and sustainable growth. In this sense, anti-sanctions law will become a more inclusive and fair legal response in favor of harmony, peace and prosperity. It tells the world that China and like-minded countries seek to trade, invest, innovate and cooperate, rather than living under intimidation. It tells domestic enterprises that the legal system is moving toward stronger protection. It tells the Global South that development should not be subject to external veto. And it tells the international community that globalization cannot survive if interdependence is turned into dependency. Ultimately, the anti-sanctions law is not merely a response to sanctions. It is a statement about the future of the international order.

The author is a professor of Innovation and Organization Studies and the chief economist of New Structural Economics at Liaoning University. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

YAN HUA

Shared cure

The SCO health cooperation model champions co-governance and capacity building to shape a stable, long-term global health solution

Over the past two decades, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has forged a distinctive model of health cooperation that delivers a scalable, replicable regional blueprint for fair and effective global health governance.



Requiring no political preconditions and rooted in equal-footed consultation, this framework allows every member to contribute according to its strengths, share benefits equitably and turn fragmented health projects into sustainable, systemic and long-term collaboration.

Above all, the model prioritizes local ownership and long-term capacity building — a choice that empowers communities and medical professionals within SCO countries to master the skills and capabilities needed to independently sustain and develop their own health services for generations.

In an increasingly interconnected world, public health security has become a borderless challenge. In 2025, over 610,000 cholera cases were reported in 33 countries. Antimicrobial resistance is rising 5 to 15 percent annually, with one in six bacterial infections now resistant to standard antibiotics. No nation can stand alone against these transboundary challenges, making inclusive, effective multilateral health cooperation not just a choice, but an urgent global imperative.

Against this backdrop, the SCO has carried out pioneering, practice-proven exploration in health cooperation. Since the first SCO Health Ministers' Meeting in 2010, members have built mechanisms that grow steadily in breadth and depth. The ninth meeting in Bishkek, capital of Kyrgyzstan, in April proposed an SCO health management dialogue platform, a clear milestone signaling that cooperation has evolved into a mature, institutionalized system.

The SCO model operates on a simple but powerful principle: equality, multilateralism and no political preconditions. This is not symbolic partnership — it is real co-ownership. Partnerships are jointly initiated, shaped and led by multiple members.

Take ophthalmology as an example. The SCO National Ophthalmology Alliance was officially launched on Aug 21, 2025, in Tianjin, with 14 founding institutions from 10 countries. Its chair and vice-chairs are held collectively by experts from China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The alliance's secretariat is based at the Tianjin Medical University General Hospital, which undertakes the core organizational work of daily coordination and academic exchanges for the alliance, but all critical decisions are made through equal consultation, with no single state dominating.

This co-governance structure is not a ceremonial formality, as it is successfully replicated and institutionalized across other key fields. In September 2025, the SCO Forum on Traditional Medicine in Nanchang, Jiangxi province, drew about 200 delegates from 13 countries and launched a trilingual information exchange platform. In October, a five-year training program for traditional medicine practitioners began in Tianjin, already supporting exchanges of over 100 specialists from various SCO countries. China and other SCO countries have also co-established nine traditional medicine centers in different countries.

Every initiative springs from genuine demand and voluntary contribution. This voluntary, demand-driven approach ensures that cooperation addresses real, on-the-ground needs rather than externally imposed priorities.

Flowing naturally from this co-governance principle, the SCO model prioritizes local ownership and capacity building in favor of sustainable self-sufficiency, rejecting short-term, one-way donations. The evidence of this focus is clear and compelling across multiple sectors.



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

In emergency medicine, capacity building takes the form of training and equipment designed for local self-sufficiency. A bronchoscopy training base set up in Beijing last year has begun training SCO member clinicians on ventilator use and field rescue airway management, with plans to donate equipment — but crucially, the donation is paired with intensive hands-on instruction, so that local teams can fully operate and maintain the gear long after the external trainers leave.

Ophthalmology offers another direct measure of both local ownership and capacity building, through immersive hands-on training, direct surgical skill transfer to local professionals, and the establishment of health centers now fully operated and managed by local staff.

By the end of August last year, Chinese medical teams from various hospitals such as Tianjin Medical University General Hospital had traveled to SCO countries to conduct more than 2,300 free cataract surgeries, exceeding the three-year pledge of 2,000 surgeries for SCO citizens.

Crucially, these missions are paired with local training: Uzbek surgeons worked side by side with visiting teams, learning by doing and mastering techniques in real clinical settings.

Hands-on training has also taken the form of fellowships. As a first step, in December 2025, two Tajik ophthalmologists completed a fellowship at Tianjin Medical University General Hospital under the SCO National Ophthalmology Alliance arrangement, focusing on complicated cataracts and glaucoma. The hospital designed a systematic training program covering the entire process of preoperative assessment, surgical techniques and postoperative management, guaranteeing that the visiting doctors could independently perform complex surgeries upon returning to their home countries.

Other than skills transfer, local ownership also extends to facility management. Under the SCO collaboration, blindness prevention centers established in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan are now managed by local staff members — not by expatriates. Similar collaborative efforts have also taken place in Tajikistan.

These tangible achievements prove that the SCO model delivers large-scale, life-changing outcomes while systematically transferring professional skills and management ownership to local personnel.

The SCO's broader health infrastructure reinforces this approach.

The SCO hospital cooperation alliance, founded in 2018, now includes 134 hospitals across SCO countries. The China-SCO emergency medicine cooperation center has been established as the first professional platform under the SCO framework dedicated to emergency rescue. In February, the China-SCO cooperation center for metabolic disease pledged to train 2,000 metabolic disease experts within three years.

In the field of ophthalmology, Tianjin Medical University General Hospital has also taken the lead in establishing an online academic exchange platform for the SCO, integrating surgical mentoring, fellowship training, and localized management of blindness prevention centers into a fully scalable capacity-building model.

This is the defining essence of the SCO model: training local professionals to independently sustain and expand health services, and building lasting self-sufficiency rather than permanent reliance on external teams.

Of course, challenges remain.

Divergent medical regulations and approval procedures hinder cross-border drug and device flows. Language and diagnostic standards limit telemedicine and academic exchanges. Long-term funding is not yet fully secured. These pressing issues are high on the agenda of health ministers' meetings, with members committed to pursuing systemic, cooperative solutions.

Looking ahead, SCO health cooperation will deepen further: A unified online platform for academic and technical cooperation, mutual recognition of medical qualifications, and a decisive shift from project-based cooperation to institution-driven cooperation could emerge. Institutionalizing these mechanisms is the strongest sign that SCO health cooperation has fully matured beyond its early experimental phase into a stable, long-term governance framework.

The SCO model is pragmatic and a work in progress. But judged by its concrete, life-improving outcomes — thousands of medical professionals in training pipelines, and multilateral platforms spanning ophthalmology to metabolic diseases — the evidence is unambiguous: This approach delivers real results while respecting every member and building lasting local capacity.

The SCO health cooperation is a truly inclusive multilateral endeavor where all parties participate, contribute and benefit equally. Rooted in the region yet open to the world, it can grow from a successful regional practice into a valuable, actionable reference for global health governance — and a solid contribution to building a global community of health for all.

The author is the chairman of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization National Ophthalmology Alliance. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:36 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY



Home brands sharpen sport sponsorship

Firms pursuing dynamic, co-creative strategy with 2026 FIFA World Cup

By LI JING
lijing2009@chinadaily.com.cn

When the 2026 FIFA World Cup officially kicked off across the United States, Canada and Mexico this month, Chinese brands are less visible among top-tier sponsors than they were four years ago.

Only three Chinese companies — Lenovo, Hisense and Mengniu Dairy — remain among FIFA partners and FIFA World Cup sponsors, a sharp contrast to the wave of Chinese sponsorship that dominated stadium billboards during recent tournaments.

Yet the shift comes despite FIFA reporting its strongest commercial performance on record. The governing body said in March that all 16 global sponsorship positions for the 2023–26 cycle had been sold, making it the most successful commercial program in its history. Total revenue for the cycle is budgeted at nearly $13 billion.

But business leaders and researchers say the decline in sponsorship numbers does not signal waning interest from Chinese companies. Instead, it reflects a broader shift in how Chinese companies are using global sporting events to support going global strategies.

Rather than buying visibility alone, companies are increasingly treating the World Cup as a platform to demonstrate technology capabilities, strengthen brand positioning, deepen consumer engagement and expand their global footprint.

"It is a transition from a traffic-driven mindset to an effectiveness-driven mindset," said Hu Shan, principal at consultancy company Roland Berger. "Companies are paying much closer attention to return on investment and alignment with their global expansion strategies."

For Qiao Jian, senior vice-president of Lenovo, the shift can be summed up as a move from participants to co-builders.

"What Chinese companies export today is no longer a single product," said Qiao, who is also chief strategy officer and chief marketing officer of Lenovo.

"Increasingly, they are exporting integrated technology capabilities and becoming part of the infrastructure that powers global events."

The shift is becoming increasingly visible at the World Cup, where Chinese companies are moving beyond traditional sponsorship and embedding themselves into tournament operations.

For Lenovo, whose annual revenue reached a record $83.1 billion in fiscal year 2025/26, the World Cup serves as a showcase for its hybrid AI strategy as it seeks to expand higher-margin infrastructure and enterprise businesses globally. AI-related revenue accounted for roughly one-third of Lenovo's revenue during the past fiscal year.

Lenovo, FIFA's official technology partner, is supplying more than 17,000 devices and deploying more than 350 engineers across all 16 World Cup venues. The company is also introducing AI-powered digital twin technology capable of generating three-dimensional replicas of players and match situations.

"The World Cup is the world's largest AI testing ground," Qiao said.





Top: The billboard of Hisense catches the eye during the group A match between Mexico and South Africa during the 2026 FIFA World Cup at Mexico City Stadium in Mexico on June 12. YIN GANG / FOR CHINA DAILY **Middle:** Merchants purchase plush toys related to the 2026 FIFA World Cup participating teams at Yiwu International Expo Center in Zhejiang province on May 12. GONG XIANMING / FOR CHINA DAILY **Above:** A visitor checks out 2026 FIFA World Cup authorized products at a FIFA themed official store in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, in June. DONG XUMING / FOR CHINA DAILY

She said the company views the tournament as an opportunity to demonstrate how its end-to-end AI infrastructure can support one of the most complex global events ever staged, far more than a conventional marketing campaign.

Hisense represents a similar evolution.

The company's overseas revenue now accounts for roughly half of total sales, according to company data, reflecting the importance of international markets in its strategy.

Having used the 2018 and 2022 World Cups to build brand visibility, the company is now moving deeper into tournament operations. As FIFA's official display technology partner for the video assistant referee system, Hisense provides RGB Mini LED display technology used in officiating operations during the tournament.

"Chinese companies are no longer simply buying advertising boards around stadiums," said Wang Xueli, director of the center for development of sports industry at Tsinghua University's School of Economics and Management.

"They are becoming part of the technological infrastructure behind major international sporting events."

While China's established global brands are embedding themselves into FIFA's technology ecosystem, a broader group of Chinese consumer brands is pursuing a different path.

Rather than paying for official tournament sponsorship rights, many companies are partnering with national teams, soccer stars, influencers and local digital platforms to target specific consumer groups in overseas markets.

The home-robotics and smart-appliance maker Dreame Technology recently signed Portuguese soccer icon Cristiano Ronaldo as a global brand ambassador ahead of the tournament.

For Dreame, whose overseas business accounted for nearly 80 percent of total revenue in 2025, the World Cup is less about introducing the brand to consumers and more about strengthening brand recognition and emotional connection.

Chang Xinwei, global president of Dreame Technology, said the era of "buying exposure and hoping for results" was fading.

Consumers increasingly place greater trust in recommendations from content creators, communities and personalities they identify with than traditional advertising, he said.

"The goal used to be getting people to see us," Chang said. "Now it is getting people to want to engage with us."

Other Chinese brands have adopted similar approaches.

Luckin Coffee, Changan Automobile and Cotti Coffee are among companies that have partnered with national teams including Portugal and defending champion Argentina, targeting highly engaged fan communities rather than mass audiences.

The strategy allows companies to target specific markets at a fraction of the cost of official FIFA sponsorship while generating more measurable returns.

Analysts say the shift reflects a broader evolution among Chinese companies as they move from gaining awareness overseas to building long-term brand equity development.

"In the past, many Chinese brands used global sporting events to establish basic awareness," Wang said. "Today, they are increasingly using those events to strengthen positioning in mid- and high-end markets and deepen engagement with consumers."

Beyond the marketing, Chinese companies remain deeply embedded in the commercial and industrial ecosystem surrounding the World Cup.

From officially licensed merchandise and consumer products to display technologies and digital infrastructure, Chinese firms continue to play an important role in the tournament's supply chain.

In Yiwu, Zhejiang province, a global hub for small commodity manufacturing, local manufacturers have long produced World Cup-related goods ranging from flags to souvenirs.

According to estimates from the Yiwu sporting goods industry association, Chinese manufacturers accounted for roughly 70 percent of the global World Cup merchandise supply during the 2022 tournament in Qatar.

While no comparable estimate exists for 2026, customs data suggest continued strong demand. Yiwu exported 2.83 billion yuan ($418.5 million) worth of sports goods and equipment in the first quarter, up 12 percent year-on-year.

Some companies are also leveraging FIFA licensing programs to sell authorized products, while others are expanding into ticketing, hospitality and travel services for soccer fans travelling overseas.

Zhou Mi, a senior researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, said the World Cup increasingly highlights China's role as a provider of industrial capabilities rather than simply low-cost manufacturing.

"The strength is not just producing a product," Zhou said. "It is coordinating an entire supply chain."

He said China's competitive edge lies in dense industrial clusters capable of delivering quality, scale and speed simultaneously.

The trend mirrors a broader shift among Chinese exporters, which are increasingly investing in product development, branding, intellectual property and global operations as they expand overseas.

Economy of sports more than merely on-field action

REPORTER'S LOG

By Li Jing

I am not what you would call an avid soccer fan.

I rarely follow league standings, transfer rumors or match schedules. Yet as the 2026 FIFA World Cup kicked off, I found myself paying attention anyway.

Not because of the soccer.

But because of Labubu.

Pop Mart's designer toy with its toothy grin made a surprise appearance during the World Cup opening ceremony. Within hours, Chinese social media exploded with chatter, and one of the most popular quips was that while Team China failed to reach the World Cup, Labubu had made it onto soccer's biggest stage.

As someone who does not regularly watch soccer, I was suddenly following World Cup-related stories. I was checking social media reactions, reading reports about limited-edition merchandise and monitoring travel data linked to host cities.

The experience reminded me that the world's biggest sporting events are no longer just sports competitions. They have become vast consumer platforms capable of reaching people far beyond traditional fan bases.

Labubu's World Cup collaboration products quickly sold out on Chinese e-commerce platforms, while some limited-edition items began trading at significant premiums on the secondary market.

At the same time, Chinese travel agencies reported growing interest in visiting World Cup host cities across the United States, Canada and Mexico. Online travel portal Tongcheng Travel said searches for World Cup-related travel packages jumped 166 percent week-on-week in the period leading up to June 2, while bookings and inquiries for customized viewing trips also surged.

A successful sports IP can create value far beyond ticket sales. It can drive tourism, hospitality, retail, advertising, merchandise, media rights and urban branding. The event itself may last a few weeks, but its commercial ecosystem can operate year-round.

China is increasingly trying to tap into that potential. The 2026 Government Work Report explicitly called for efforts to "actively develop the sports economy", placing it alongside tourism and wellness as areas with significant consumption potential.

Su Super League, an amateur soccer competition in Jiangsu province, has become a social-media sensation. What started as a regional competition has evolved into a celebration of local identity, generating traffic for restaurants, hotels and tourist attractions across participating cities.

In Guizhou province, the grassroots Village Super League, or "Cun Chao", has blended soccer with ethnic culture, music and tourism, drawing visitors from across the country. Local authorities say sports-related events generated billions of yuan in tourism and consumer spending last year.

"The overall commercialization of China's domestic sports IPs is still at a relatively early stage," said Wang Xueli, director of the center for development of sports industry at Tsinghua University's School of Economics and Management.

While organizers have become increasingly successful at attracting sponsors, areas such as sponsorship activation, audience targeting, brand-event alignment and year-round content operations still have significant room for development, Wang said.

That distinction helps explain why events such as Su Super League and Cun Chao can generate enormous online attention but still differ from global properties such as the World Cup, the Olympics or the Australian Open tennis tournament.

FIFA's decision to embrace IPs like Labubu was not simply a cultural gesture. It reflected a broader effort to expand the tournament's appeal beyond traditional soccer audiences and connect with younger consumers through popular culture.

Perhaps that is the most important lesson for China's sports economy.

The country has already shown it can create sporting events that generate excitement and attract massive online audiences. The next challenge is transforming those moments into sustainable business models that continue creating value long after the final whistle.

Because the real measure of a successful sports economy is not whether an event goes viral.

It is whether the crowds, spending and attention remain after the teams have shaken hands.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:36 PM

BUSINESSINSIGHT

Stimulating domestic demand high on agenda

EAGLE EYE
By Xu Gao

The 2026 Government Work Report identifies the development of a strong domestic market as the top priority for China's economic agenda this year. At a time when the global economy is undergoing profound changes, rising unilateralism, increasing trade protectionism and persistent geopolitical uncertainties are creating greater instability for external demand.

Against this backdrop, expanding domestic demand has become a strategic anchor for China's economic resilience. The report stresses the need to expand domestic circulation and strengthen the internal drivers of growth in order to better withstand external shocks.

Within this framework, effective investment plays a central role in building a strong domestic market. The Government Work Report calls for coordinated efforts to boost consumption and expand investment, while emphasizing the need to fully unlock the potential of effective investment and leverage China's ultra-large market advantages.

As one of the two key components of domestic demand, alongside consumption, investment remains equally important for sustaining long-term growth.

In China's economic development model, consumption represents the ultimate goal, while investment serves as an essential means to achieve it. The people-centered nature of economic growth is reflected in the continuous expansion of consumption, which remains a top policy priority in efforts to expand domestic demand.

However, sustained consumption growth cannot be achieved without investment. Consumption heavily relies on investment-driven capital accumulation and income growth across society. At the same time, new forms of investment generate new supply, which in turn creates new demand. This dynamic interaction between supply and demand has become increasingly important in China's development strategy.

The outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) emphasizes the need to use new demand to guide new supply and new supply to create new demand, promoting a virtuous cycle between consumption and investment, as well as achieving a higher-level dynamic balance between supply and demand.

It also calls for integrating investment in physical assets with investment in people, and for greater emphasis on consumption-boosting and livelihood-related spending in fiscal policy.

When consumption is relatively weak, investment tends to account for a larger share of economic activity, helping to stabilize growth. As a developing economy with a large population, China still has significant room for investment-led development.

Although China's total economic output ranks among the highest in the world across multiple indicators, per capita levels remain relatively low in many areas. For example, while China's total electricity generation has long ranked first globally, per capita power generation remains less than 60 percent of that of the United States.

Against the backdrop of rising demand from artificial intelligence and digital technologies, investment in power supply capacity remains an important area of development.

At the same time, increasing global uncertainty and supply chain risks highlight the need for China to strengthen domestic industrial chains and reduce potential "bottleneck" constraints.

Even in the relatively weak property sector, there remains significant demand for improved housing conditions, requiring continued investment in better-quality residential development.

Taken together, these factors indicate that China still has broad upside potential for effective investment to address structural shortcomings in its development model.

A key issue in expanding effective investment lies in how investment returns are evaluated. Misunderstanding or incomplete assessment of investment returns can lead to a weakening of investment incentives.

In practice, investment returns can be understood through three layers: micro returns, regional social returns and national strategic returns.

Micro returns refer to direct financial returns of an investment project, typically measured by cash flow and internal rates of return. This is the most commonly used metric in market-based investment decisions. If expected returns exceed financing costs, the project is considered viable; otherwise, it is not.

However, focusing only on micro returns overlooks broader social benefits.

"Regional returns" refer to the broader economic and social value created within a local area. Infrastructure investment — such as roads, subways and public parks — often falls into this category. While such projects may not generate high direct financial returns, they significantly improve urban functionality and quality of life.

Beyond this, there are also "national returns", which reflect the strategic and long-term benefits of investment at the country level. These include contributions to employment, economic stability, regional coordination and national security.



ILLUSTRATION GENERATED BY AI

For example, transportation infrastructure projects ranging from rural road networks to major railway lines in western China play an important role in promoting rural vitalization and balanced regional development.

Different types of investors naturally focus on different layers of returns. Market entities typically prioritize micro returns, as they operate under commercial principles. However, if all investment decisions are guided solely by micro profitability, socially beneficial projects with weak financial returns may be underfunded or neglected.

This is particularly relevant in infrastructure development. Many infrastructure projects are not financially profitable at the project level, yet they generate substantial social and economic benefits. Without government involvement, such projects often struggle to obtain financing.

China's infrastructure development experience demonstrates the importance of taking into account both regional and national returns. The practice of local governments engaging in urban development has played an important historical role in mobilizing investment.

In China, public ownership of land has also provided a unique institutional foundation. As urban infrastructure improves the quality of life in cities, it also increases the value of land held by local governments, allowing part of the social value created by infrastructure investment to be realized through fiscal channels.

This mechanism has enabled many local governments to balance costs and returns across both micro and regional dimensions, forming a sustainable model for infrastructure financing and urban development.

Another important dimension of investment concerns debt and financial sustainability.

China's investment-to-GDP ratio has remained significantly higher than the global average for a long period. Since investment necessarily involves financing, and China's financial system is predominantly debt-based, investment growth is closely linked to rising debt levels.

However, concerns about debt risks should not be assessed solely by looking at the absolute size of debt. A more important factor is the relationship between domestic savings and debt demand.

In a "savings-debt market", savings represent the supply of capital while debt represents demand for capital. If savings are in surplus relative to borrowing demand, then even a high level of debt does not necessarily point to high risks.

China is a high-savings economy. The International Monetary Fund estimates that China's savings rate in 2025 was around 42 percent, nearly double the global average of 23 percent. At the same time, China's net international investment position exceeded $4 trillion, indicating a large accumulation of overseas assets.

Against this backdrop of excess savings, China's relatively high debt level does not necessarily translate into high systemic risks.

Concerns about local government debt are also often linked to incomplete consideration of regional and national returns on investment. While infrastructure projects may appear unprofitable at the micro level, their broader economic and social benefits are significant when assessed from a wider perspective.

In recent years, China has strengthened efforts to manage local government debt risks, including the implementation of a comprehensive debt restructuring package and the replacement of hidden debt. The Government Work Report also proposes further optimization of local government bond issuances to support project financing.

The Government Work Report outlines a range of policy tools aimed at expanding effective investment.

On the government side, China plans to allocate 755 billion yuan ($112 billion) of central budgetary investment and 800 billion yuan from ultra-long special treasury bonds for major national strategic projects and security capacity-building initiatives. Standards for central investment subsidies will also be adjusted to better support priority areas.

At the local level, the issuance quota of special-purpose bonds will be increased and better aligned with regions that have well-prepared projects and demonstrate efficient use of funds.

In addition, China plans to issue 800 billion yuan in new policy-oriented financial instruments to mobilize more private capital for investment.

The writer is chief economist at BOC International.
The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

First national-level special plan for urban regeneration issued

MAIN STREET
By Fan Sibin

Recently, the State Council, China's Cabinet, issued an urban regeneration plan for the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30). As China's first national-level special plan for urban regeneration, it marks the elevation of urban regeneration from an institutional and mechanism-building effort to a medium-to-long-term, overarching national strategy.

The release of the plan has drawn significant attention and sparked lively discussions across society. At a time when China's urban development is shifting from large-scale expansion to stock-based quality improvement and efficiency enhancement, the plan carries great significance.

It systematically sets out the goals, targets, key tasks and policy safeguards for urban regeneration over the next five years, outlining a vision and pathway for building modern people-centered cities.

Urban regeneration is closely linked to the daily lives of the people. Since the fifth plenary session of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China proposed the action of advancing urban regeneration, a series of livelihood, safety and development projects have been implemented to address pressing public concerns. As a result, urban regeneration has been widely welcomed and closely followed by the public.

Following last year's guidelines on advancing urban regeneration campaign issued by the general offices of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council, the plan represents the first key dedicated plan at the national level in the field of urban regeneration.

It not only reflects the continuous improvement of the top-level design for urban regeneration, but also underscores the fact that urban regeneration serves as both an important lever for building modern people-centered cities and a national strategic initiative crucial to the implementation of the new development philosophy and the long-term competitiveness of cities.

Looking back at the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-25), local pilot projects flourished across the country. With the launch of this plan, the national institutional framework has become more robust, overall coordination has strengthened and urban regeneration has entered a new phase characterized by institutionalization, long-term effectiveness and market-driven mechanisms.

The plan fully aligns with the goal of building modern people-centered cities. Centered on the objectives of "innovation, livability, beauty, resilience, civility and intelligence", it comprehensively lays out six key tasks, seven policy measures, and 14 major projects and initiatives, systematically establishing the goals, tasks and roadmap for urban regeneration.

First, for the first time, it uses quantitative targets to define the urban regeneration "scorecard". This is one of the most closely followed highlights of the plan. Ten key targets are set, including: by 2030, renovating 500,000 dilapidated urban residential units; starting the renovation of 115,000 aging residential communities; upgrading 1,500 old neighborhoods and factory compounds; reconstructing 365,000 kilometers of underground pipelines; and restoring 15,000 historic buildings.

These quantifiable and assessable indicators closely integrate urban regeneration with the construction of modern people-centered cities, providing clearer goals and assessment criteria for urban regeneration work.

Second, the plan fully embodies a people-centered approach while also addressing the strategic needs of expanding domestic demand, boosting investment, stimulating consumption and pursuing development.

It outlines six key tasks and 14 major projects and initiatives. This "task list" reflects a combination of investment in physical assets and investment in people.

The plan calls for the construction and renovation of quality housing, the renovation of aging residential communities and the development of complete communities — all major projects that improve people's livelihoods — across different spatial levels, creating high-quality urban living environments.

At the same time, the plan places particular emphasis on fostering new drivers of urban growth. It explicitly proposes revitalizing idle and inefficiently utilized resources such as old factories and underused commercial office spaces; promoting the transformation and upgrading of aging neighborhoods, factory compounds and inefficient industrial parks; cultivating emerging industries; and upgrading consumption infrastructure.

This means that urban regeneration also serves as a strategic lever for reshaping urban growth drivers and unlocking domestic demand potential.

Third, the plan introduces a policy system for sustainable urban regeneration through reform and innovation. The third plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee explicitly called for "establishing a sustainable model and policy-legal framework for urban regeneration".

The plan devotes a full chapter to specific arrangements for building a policy system for urban regeneration during the 15th Five-Year Plan period, outlining a roadmap for reform and innovation.

It directly addresses the difficulties and bottlenecks encountered in urban regeneration practice, focusing on seven key areas: implementation mechanisms, financial guarantees, land use, building safety, multi-stakeholder participation, laws and standards, and technology and talent.

The aim is to accelerate the development of a comprehensive, well-coordinated and efficient policy system for urban regeneration, providing solid support for orderly, routine and long-term urban regeneration.

Over the next five years, as the plan is implemented, urban regeneration will move rapidly from blueprint to reality in people's daily lives. It is likely to see continued improvements in cities: better housing, safer and more livable communities, more vibrant neighborhoods, lively blue-green spaces, more attractive consumer destinations and more innovative industrial parks.

According to estimates by multiple institutions, the total market size for urban regeneration during the 15th Five-Year Plan period will exceed 15 trillion yuan ($2.22 trillion). These figures will translate into tangible improvements for the people — better urban living environments, stronger economic dynamism and higher governance standards.

As time moves forward, with the high-quality and sustainable advancement of urban regeneration under the guidance of the plan, Chinese cities are poised for another qualitative leap in the new era. Modern people-centered cities that are innovative, livable, beautiful, resilient, civil and intelligent are steadily coming into view.

The writer is director of the Research Institute of Urban Regeneration at the China Academy of Urban Planning and Design.
The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:36 PM

CHINA

Universities cater to AI study demand

Action plan fuels rapid expansion as the need for talent cultivation grows

By **ZOU SHUO**
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

Artificial intelligence has become one of the most popular majors across China's institutions of higher education. More than 600 universities have launched AI undergraduate programs as of 2026, based on data from the Ministry of Education, marking explosive growth from just 35 institutions approved in 2018.

According to financial media outlet Yicai, among China's "Double First-Class" universities — the country's elite tier of institutions of higher education — at least 90 have launched AI-related schools or colleges.

The rapid expansion has been driven by a powerful convergence of national strategy and market demand.

In April, the Ministry of Education, together with four other central government departments, jointly issued an action plan outlining comprehensive measures for AI talent cultivation, application innovation, infrastructure development and ecosystem building.

The plan calls for making AI a public foundational course in higher education, creating new interdisciplinary programs and exploring new models for cultivating top-tier AI talent. The move followed the release of the 2026 undergraduate program catalog by the Ministry of Education in the same month. The catalog added 38 new undergraduate majors, including AI for business, embodied intelligence and brain-computer science and technology.

Universities are not merely adding new departments; they are fundamentally restructuring their academic ecosystems around AI. MyCOS, an education research institute, noted that when institutions establish AI schools, they often do not start from scratch. Instead, they consolidate existing computer science, big data and automation programs into new academic units.

Fudan University has rolled out a three-tiered AI curriculum system aimed at achieving 100 percent coverage across all undergraduate and graduate students, first-level disciplines and majors, according to a report from the university.

Ningbo University now requires every major to offer at least one "AI+" interdisciplinary course. Tsinghua University has emphasized an "AI+X" model that integrates AI across all disciplines, according to the official websites of both universities.

China's core AI industry was valued at more than 1.2 trillion yuan ($177 billion) in 2025, according to a Xinhua News Agency report quoting a senior Chinese official.

Yet demand for talent is far outstripping supply. Projections from McKinsey & Company suggest China could face a shortage of up to 4 million AI professionals by 2030. This "AI+" transformation extends beyond traditional technology fields.

Rao Yanting, an associate researcher at the China National Academy of Education Sciences, told China Central Television that AI is no longer just a major but is increasingly permeating every academic field, including not only science and engineering but also the humanities and social sciences.

However, as universities race to establish AI credentials, prominent voices in academia are raising concerns about sustainability and educational quality.

Fang Fuquan, president of Capital Normal University, told Beijing News that AI is a technology rather than a science.

Just as humanity's understanding of the universe relies on fundamental sciences such as the periodic table and Newton's laws, an excessive focus on technology at the expense of mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology and even humanities and the arts could have unintended consequences, he said.

He warned that people may lack the knowledge to distinguish truth from falsehood in AI-generated videos that defy physical laws.

Fang said that while there is widespread pursuit of quick results and greater emphasis on AI applications, universities must guide students to build a solid foundation in basic sciences alongside technological skills.

"Society should foster an ecosystem where not everyone needs to work on AI applications," he said. "Those who pursue basic sciences, humanities and the arts can also become outstanding talents."

"Science has its contingencies; a discipline that is obscure today may flourish in a few years," he said, calling for a more scientific and forward-looking evaluation system.

During the April action plan announcement, Jin Li, president of Fudan University, said AI models are iterating every few months, and what is popular today may become obsolete tomorrow.

"If universities are still training 'finished-product' talent, that's like clinging to a sword while crossing a river," he said.

Jin often uses a metaphor to describe the type of talent universities should cultivate.

"We should cultivate 'stem cell-style' talents — people who can quickly establish cognitive frameworks in unknown domains, integrate resources across disciplinary boundaries and continuously iterate in the face of failure," he said.

Rite of remembrance



Performers present a ceremonial music-and-dance tribute at a public memorial ceremony honoring Fuxi, the legendary ancestor of Chinese civilization, in Tianshui, Gansu province, on Sunday, which fell on the summer solstice. Known as the birthplace of Fuxi culture, the city hosts the annual rite, which was inscribed on China's national intangible cultural heritage list in 2006. FENG LEKAI / FOR CHINA DAILY

DPRK painters in Mudanjiang display artistic bonds

By **ZHOU HUIYING** in Harbin
zhouhuiying@chinadaily.com.cn

Over the past 15 years, more than 40 artists from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have been invited to display their artistry on a canvas at "the creation base of the DPRK painters in China" in Mudanjiang, Heilongjiang province.

The base, which was established in August 2011, is the only one of its kind that the DPRK has set up overseas. It is used to create, exhibit and sell works of art from the DPRK, according to Cheng Wujun, the director of the base. The base serves as a bridge for cultural exchange between China and the DPRK, introducing authentic DPRK paintings to the Chinese market.

Since its establishment, DPRK artists have been stationed at the base for on-site creation and customized artworks tailored to the needs of collectors and businesses.

"The face-to-face creative exchange is unique in the DPRK foreign art cooperation, offering a unique cross-border artistic collaboration," said Cheng.

The DPRK paintings are known for their pure and simple creative philosophy, distinct artistic style and rigorous realism.

Their distinctness portrays realistic styles, unique emotional interpretation and strong feelings of national pride, all of which reflect the DPRK people's aspirations for peace, Cheng said.

The DPRK awards artists titles such as "People's Artist" and "Meritorious Artist", representing the highest standards in the country's art community.

"The base has always undertaken important functions such as the exhibition and sale of the DPRK works, authenticity identification, artist exchange and market regulation," Cheng added. "The base integrates high-quality works from major DPRK creation studios, providing collectors with authoritative certification, unified numbering certificates and authenticity identification services."

In 2012, Cheng was awarded the honorary title of "cultural ambassador for the DPRK-China art exchange" by the DPRK government — the only foreigner to receive the title to date.

Over the years, Cheng has brought contemporary DPRK paintings to exhibitions across various regions in China, including Harbin in Heilongjiang province, Xi'an in Shaanxi province, Guangzhou in Guangdong province, as well as Shanghai and Beijing.

"The DPRK paintings have distinct characteristics — bright and vivid colors, which give a positive and cheerful impression," he said. "The DPRK artists left me with the deepest impression of their professionalism and dedication."

"For instance, before returning to their accommodation after work every night, they ensure that the oil paints, paper and surrounding areas in front of the easel are clean," he said. "Their rigorous professionalism is evident. To paint a sunrise, they will ask the client what time he needs the sunrise to be depicted — 5, 6, or 7 am — as the sun's height, brightness, shadow effects and color differences are vastly different."

In April 2023, Cheng established a new creation base in Dalian, Liaoning province, and exhibited some DPRK paintings at the Dalian Wanzhongyuncang Technology Incubation Park.

"The works created by the DPRK artists displayed in our exhibition hall have attracted many visitors," said Jin Lin, director of the park's business development and operations department. "The natural scenery and folk customs depicted in the paintings are very detailed, with bright colors, making visitors feel calm and have a taste of life and history." According to Jin, nearly 100 works have been sold from the park so far.

Shang Shuke, an art collector in Dalian, started collecting the DPRK paintings around 10 years ago.

"In 2014, a friend introduced me to the base, so I traveled to Mudanjiang to visit the exhibition hall at the base and picked out some works by old DPRK artists from the 1950s and 1960s," he said. "The DPRK artists have deep artistic skills, with exquisite realism, delicate and lively brushwork and elegant and refined color tones."

"The creators are genuinely dedicated to art, not creating for profit, so the works are pure and simple in style, with strong artistic quality," he added.

Another collector, Peng Fengjiao, has expressed a fondness for the gentle and elegant artistic temperament of the DPRK paintings.

"They are not only exquisite art pieces for decorating life but also a stable collectible choice," she said. "Sometimes, I picked some of the DPRK works I collect as cultural gifts to my artistically-inclined friends, which were well received."

Yun Ju-hyok, the DPRK representative at the base, is now engaged in creative work in Dalian, leveraging his unique perspective to gradually introduce a series of outstanding modern and contemporary DPRK artworks to China.

"The DPRK art, based on subjective realism, uses concise, lively and realistic depictions, which are loved by both DPRK and Chinese people," he said. "After coming to China, the DPRK artists were also amazed by the profound influence of Chinese culture."

"In January 2019, I led five DPRK artists to hold an art exhibition in Taiyuan, Shanxi province," he said. "During the visit to the famous historical sites and museums in Taiyuan, they were full of praise for the breadth and depth of Chinese culture, which deeply touched them and gave them a new understanding and appreciation of China."



Visitors appreciate the DPRK paintings on display in the exhibition hall at the Dalian Wanzhong Yuncang Technology Incubation Park in Dalian, Liaoning province, in early June. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Chifeng model offers insight on land rehabilitation

By **ZHOU WENTING** in Shanghai
zhouwenting@chinadaily.com.cn

China's experiences in grassland ecosystem restoration and desertification control, particularly in Chifeng, Inner Mongolia autonomous region, have provided valuable insights for global land rehabilitation and grassland conservation, international experts said at a conference recently held in the city.

Experts highlighted the country's achievements in desertification prevention, related scientific research and the use of technologies such as artificial intelligence and multi-source remote sensing.

The three-day event, held last week, brought together experts from China, South Africa, Japan and the Netherlands.

Participants engaged in interdisciplinary and cross-regional dialogue to explore innovative approaches to grassland protection and comprehensive desertification control, seeking to contribute scientific solutions for land degradation management, ecological civilization building and global sustainable development.

The event was jointly organized by Shanghai Jiao Tong University's School of Design, the university's Inner Mongolia Research Institute and the desert scientific exploration committee of the China Association for Scientific Expedition.

Johns Muleso Kharika, a representative of the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, emphasized the need for the international community to support policymaking backed by scientific evidence. He called for stronger cooperation between the Global North and Global South, as well as among international partners, to advance practical actions in land protection and grassland restoration.

"Effective management of desertification requires integrating ecological restoration with innovation in social mechanisms. The ecological restoration practices in Inner Mongolia and China as a whole can serve as important references for global desert management," said Michael Meadows, former president of the International Geographical Union and an emeritus professor at the University of Cape Town in South Africa.

During the event, experts conducted field studies in the Horqin Sandy Land, where they observed innovative sand-control models that combine road construction, sand stabilization and industrial development. They also visited a cold and arid apple and pear breeding base in Chifeng that preserves more than 90 varieties of economic forest resources.

At a newly established cherry experimental field, experts discussed the introduction and collection of superior local varieties with staff members.

The field visits showcased Chifeng's innovative practices in sand control and seed breeding, providing references for regional ecological management and the high-quality development of the forestry and grassland industries, participants said.

Piao Ying, an official in Chifeng, said that despite notable progress, ecological management remains a challenging task for a city located at the junction of the Horqin and Hunshandake sandy lands.

"The city must make better use of technology to safeguard the northern ecological barrier, move from experience-based management to precision-targeted interventions and strive to develop governance models that are replicable and scalable," he said.

Some experts also proposed new governance pathways. Li Xiaosong, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Aerospace Information Research Institute, said large vertical models for sand control could help address issues such as insufficient scientific zoning, weak process supervision and inadequate decision-making support.

"By integrating remote sensing, monitoring, knowledge databases and socioeconomic data, such models can support sand hazard diagnosis, governance plan generation, process supervision and effectiveness evaluation, paving the way for a shift from experience-driven management to precision and intelligent sand-control governance," he said.

Robo greeting



A humanoid robot shakes hands with a student at Hangzhou Anjilu Experimental School in Zhejiang province on Saturday as candidates arrive for Hangzhou's senior high school entrance examination. This year's exam took place over the weekend, with results to be announced on June 30. XU HUI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:36 PM

Editor's note: *As protection of the planet's flora, fauna and resources becomes increasingly important, China Daily is publishing a series of stories to illustrate the country's commitment to safeguarding the natural world.*

Former barren county transformed into beacon of sustainable economy

By **ZHU XINGXIN** in Youyu, Shanxi and **CHEN LIANG**

Seven decades ago, international environmental experts studying the wind-scoured plains of Youyu county in North China's Shanxi province reached a bleak conclusion: the area was entirely uninhabitable, and the total resettlement of its population was the only viable option. Whipped by brutal Siberian winds, blinding sandstorms routinely choked the air, burying entire villages under shifting desert dunes.

Today, that same desolate wasteland has been transformed into a lush, green oasis. This historic environmental reversal was globally spotlighted when, in 2024, Youyu county clinched the prestigious New Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements Award at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, recognized as a premier global blueprint for desertification control.

Youyu's transformation is a multigenerational epic of political discipline and human endurance. The story begins in 1949, with Zhang Ronghuai, Youyu's first Party secretary. He understood a simple truth: "If Youyu wants prosperity, we must stop the wind and sand. And to stop the wind and sand, we must plant more trees."

He initiated a series of patriotic tree-planting campaigns, rallying the people to action. The first sapling, a Chinese cottonwood (or Simon's poplar), was planted just outside the old county town gate, a defiant flag planted in the face of the encroaching desert.

However, the bitter winters and scorching summers made tree planting a constant battle. In the 1960s, the fourth and fifth county Party secretaries focused their efforts on the Huangshawa sand depression, a particularly challenging area.

Their initial attempts resulted in heartbreak, with over 90,000 saplings failing to survive because the non-native poplars planted drank too much water and died. But they learned from their mistakes, adapting their planting methods and persevering. By 1964, they had successfully planted more than 13,333 hectares, effectively stabilizing the shifting dunes.

Each subsequent leader built upon the work of their predecessors, innovating and adapting to the challenges.

In the 1970s, hardier tree species like pitch pine, larch and Mongolian scots pine were introduced as part of the Three-North Shelterbelt Forest Program, expanding the afforestation area to over 73,833 hectares.

According to the current Youyu Party secretary, Ma Zhanwen, 21 consecutive local leaders have maintained the same ecological priority, leading communities "one shovel and two hands at a time". To date, afforestation efforts have blanketed more than 113,000 hectares of Youyu with 130 million trees. The county's forest coverage rate has dramatically soared from a microscopic 0.3 percent in 1949 to an astonishing 57 percent, making it the first territory in Shanxi province to successfully reforest all its barren mountains.

Wang Zhanfeng, a 75-year-old villager, has planted 200 hectares of trees over the last 44 years. "My hands feel like tree bark," he said, gazing up at the towering trees he helped cultivate. "I've dedicated my life to this. I can't let all this effort go to waste. I have to keep planting, one tree after another, year after year."

The legacy continues with younger generations. Li Jie, a 31-year-old teacher at the Youyu Cadre Academy, has spent nearly a decade sharing the story of Youyu with thousands of visitors. "Shovels are heirlooms in every household in Youyu," she said. "They are a testament to the memory and legacy of generations of Youyu people."

She recounted that on her 10th birthday, her grandmother showed her the first small pine tree she had planted, introducing her to the legacy of Youyu's fight against the desert. That is what strengthened her decision to dedicate herself to this land and carry forward the Youyu spirit.

The transformation of Youyu has created new opportunities. The county is now using its lush environment, rich culture and cool climate to become a cultural tourism and health destination. Local businesses are developing innovative sea buckthorn products, boosting livestock farming and transforming ecological advantages into economic benefits.

"The development achievements of Youyu stem from the simple aspiration of allowing the people to survive and live a good life," said Liang Pengwei, assistant researcher at the Shanxi Provincial Academy of Social Sciences, who is also an editor of a book on the story of Youyu.

Contact the writers at zhuxingxin@chinadaily.com.cn



Students and residents take part in a tree-planting drive in Youyu, Shanxi province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



A teacher and students unveil a model of a Chinese white dolphin that was donated to Xiamen Binhai Primary School in Xiamen, Fujian province, by the Xiamen Chinese White Dolphin and Amphioxus Nature Reserve. The school is the city's first to introduce marine ecology preservation into its curriculum. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Tri-city alliance launched to protect Xiamen's dolphins

Coordinated efforts aim to improve public awareness of 'sea pandas'

By **ZHANG YI** in Xiamen, Fujian and **HU MEIDONG** in Fuzhou

Three neighboring coastal cities in East China's Fujian province — Xiamen, Quanzhou and Zhangzhou — have recently launched a landmark cross-regional collaboration to protect the Chinese white dolphins in their shared waters.

Xiamen is China's only major city where these marine mammals, under first-class State protection and affectionately nicknamed the "giant pandas of the sea", live right alongside bustling urban life and can be spotted occasionally by residents. It is estimated that around 80 Chinese white dolphins inhabit Xiamen's waters.

"Protecting white dolphins requires pulling the entire society together," said Xu Jing, an official at the Xiamen Chinese White Dolphin and Amphioxus Nature Reserve Affairs Center. "We focus on mobilizing volunteers to join our rescue and monitoring teams."

As the dolphins frequently migrate out of Xiamen's waters into neighboring areas, local enforcement teams officially upgraded this cross-regional mechanism last month to formally institutionalize real-time data sharing, joint maritime patrols and emergency rescues, according to Xu.

The upgraded mechanism also aims to further raise public awareness, including educating citizens on what to do and how to call for help if they encounter a stranded dolphin.

In August 2024, people from both Xiamen and Quanzhou jointly handled the emergency rescue of Le Bao, a 4-year-old female dolphin that swam out of Xiamen and became stranded on a beach in Quanzhou's waters.



A docent introduces the Chinese white dolphin preservation work in Xiamen at a museum in the city.

Local residents reported the stranding, triggering a rapid emergency chain that brought experts from the dolphin reserve in Xiamen and the Third Institute of Oceanography, Ministry of Natural Resources, based in Xiamen, to the scene for a joint medical response.

Following more than 40 days of intensive care at a nearby aquatic rescue station, Le Bao fully recovered and was successfully released back into her home environment in Xiamen's waters in September 2024. She was later named Le Bao after the facility, a name that also carried the rescuers' wishes for her to live a joyful life in the future.

"Le Bao's survival was a miracle made possible by an unbroken chain of rapid actions across two cities," Xu said. "If any single link had failed, this successful release would not have been possible."

The dolphin population's stable presence also stems from Xiamen's long-term ecological initiatives, including a complete clearance of marine aquaculture facilities to restore the coastal ecosystem to its primitive state, she said.

The city even re-engineered a tunnel project from an original above-water bridge design into an underground tunnel, heavily increasing capital investments solely to preserve the dolphins' habitats, she added.

"As a flagship barometer of our marine ecosystem, their presence represents Xiamen's outstanding achievements in biodiversity conservation," Xu said.

Local paddleboarders, open-water swimmers and wildlife photographers in Xiamen have voluntarily established a grassroots monitoring network, capturing footage during unplanned encounters to support scientific research.

Chen Yu, a local open-water swimmer and photographer who has been tracking the species via aerial drone in recent years, said that public engagement is deeply rooted in local tradition. The dolphins are traditionally called "Mazu fish" after the sea goddess, and are regarded by residents as guardians of the waters.

"Since childhood, we have been told by our elders that the waters are safe wherever the white dolphins appear," Chen said. "For local residents, these animals are seen as traditional protectors of the sea."

These photographic sightings provide critical data for marine biologists. Images documenting maternal behaviors, such as a mother lifting her calf to breathe or teaching it to hunt, assist researchers in managing a digital profiling system that tracks family dynamics and newborn calves.



Star Chinese white dolphin Da Bai is seen swimming with her calf in Xiamen in 2020.

In April, an aerial drone photographer captured footage of a newborn calf swimming closely alongside Da Bai, a well-documented wild female dolphin frequently seen nursing newborns in Xiamen's waters.

"When we photograph a dolphin year after year and see it is still there, we know it is growing up healthy and strong," Chen said. "Every encounter still makes me feel incredibly lucky."

Marine experts have introduced a science-based maritime code of conduct, instructing water sports enthusiasts and photographers to maintain a respectful distance instead of chasing the animals.

Lin Yuan, a local middle school teacher who is a paddleboarder, regularly records her encounters with the animals in the sea to use as educational materials in her classroom.

"I bring my own dolphin encounter videos to share with my students," Lin said. "We must cultivate an awareness of biodiversity conservation in children so they can continue to see these marine creatures in their local environment in the future."

Contact the writers at zhangyi1@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

Digital drive supports planting of millions of trees

By **HOU LIQIANG** in Beijing and **HU DONGMEI** in Yinchuan

China's private-sector, internet-based afforestation efforts have reached a massive scale milestone, demonstrating how gamified digital incentives have been successfully integrated into the country's broader national ecological strategies.

Since 2017, under a partnership between tree planting initiative Ant Forest and the China Green Foundation, 386 million trees have been planted across about 440 projects spanning seven provincial-level regions, including Gansu and Qinghai provinces and the Inner Mongolia autonomous region, said Zhang Quanzhou, the foundation's secretary general.

According to Zhang, the partnership saw more than 200,000 hectares of desertified land treated in that time, with about 90 percent of it located in key areas of the country's Three-North Shelterbelt Forest Program, which is the world's largest afforestation endeavor.

"This program has transformed the 'green energy' of hundreds of millions of netizens into tangible ecological outcomes," he said.

Ant Forest was launched in August 2016 by internet financial services firm Ant Financial, an affiliate of Alibaba Group.

The app rewards users with virtual energy — which they can use to have trees planted — when they take low-carbon actions such as walking or using public transport instead of driving, or buying things online, which avoids the need for paper receipts.

The amount of energy needed to plant different trees varies. After receiving an application from an app user who has saved enough energy, Ant Forest will plant a real tree.

To ensure that digital goodwill translates into lasting ecological impact, Zhang said the foundation has built a long-term mechanism for public participation.

In collaboration with the National Greening Committee, it launched a nationwide online platform that allows citizens to adopt, monitor and track tree growth via their mobile phones, making voluntary tree-planting a year-round, regular activity.

Zhang also said that the foundation has established a clear responsibility chain, supported by technologies such as satellite remote sensing, third-party inspections and digital oversight.

Moreover, a collaborative governance model has taken shape in the country, featuring government guidance, corporate donations, public participation, foundation execution, and oversight by forestry and grassland authorities, he added.

A recent commentary in the journal Nature said that Ant Forest is an example of how digital incentives can be used to inspire the public and generate funding.

Since its launch, the gamified initiative with more than 500 million users has funded more than 619 million drought-resistant trees and shrubs, the article said.

Li Meng, a 28-year-old map data collector and dedicated Ant Forest user, embodies the power of digital incentives to drive lasting behavioral change. To date, Li has planted 1,120 trees across Ant Forest's forested areas since October 20, 2016.

His motivation is deeply rooted in a sense of shared responsibility.

"Western China has a sparse population yet silently protects the ecological environment of the eastern region," he said. "Whether we live in the east or the west, everyone should consciously protect the environment."

When personally participating in a tree planting activity in Alxa League in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region, Li observed saplings at different growth stages — from newly planted seedlings to mature, thickening saxaul trees.

"It's like the development of public welfare: gradual, persistent and built on dedicated effort," he said. "It will slowly grow stronger, better and better."



A decoration marking Ant Forest's collectible "green energy" is displayed at a green lifestyle fair in Shanghai in September 2024. XING YUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Contact the writers at houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:36 PM

LIFE

Back to school for the 'silver' generation

After lifetimes spent working and caring for others, older Chinese people are now packing their sketchpads and notebooks and heading abroad, **Yang Feiyue** reports.

China's retirees are breaking free from long-held expectations centered on family duties and caregiving, challenging stereotypes that cast older people as preoccupied with their children's marriages, grandchildren and domestic routines.

A growing number of them are now doing some soul-searching and seizing learning opportunities abroad, determined to make fuller use of their retirement years, whether in search of fulfillment or simply for their own happiness.

While younger generations debate whether an overseas degree is worth its staggering price tag, a growing wave of gray-haired retirees is packing suitcases and walking into lecture halls around the world, not for diplomas, but for themselves.

For nearly two decades, Li Guolin could barely get out of bed.

A spinal fracture in 2000 forced her into early retirement from her job at a bank in the coastal city of Zhuhai, in South China's Guangdong province. Her world shrank to a mattress and the relentless companion of chronic pain.

"My whole attention was on the pain. My social circle was tiny, and I didn't want to do anything," she recalls.

She tried group tours after she finally got back on her feet in 2019, but the rushed itineraries exhausted her.

"Too tiring, not for me," she says, adding that the pain still returns from time to time.

Then, in April 2024, she stumbled upon a short art program in Italy, with some preparatory art lessons arranged.

Something clicked inside her.

"It was exactly the kind of tomorrow I had been hoping for," she says, adding that it satisfied her interest in art and living in a foreign country for a while.

During preparation in Beijing, she painted under instruction for the first time in decades. There were no rules, no grades. Just guidance.

"I was completely absorbed, and the pain disappeared," she says.

A few weeks later, she flew to Florence, Italy, for a two-week fashion design program at a local institute, which was her first time abroad as a learner rather than a tourist. She had never worked with fabric or dressed a mannequin. By the end of the course, she had completed seven or eight original pieces.

"The whole process swept my pain away," she says.

Li is among a growing number of older Chinese citizens redefining what retirement can look like. Once largely confined to domestic chores, square dancing or the occasional group tour, many of China's "new elderly" are now turning their gaze toward foreign lecture halls.









Clockwise from top: Students from the "silver generation" on a bridge over the River Cam, Cambridge, July 2025. Chinese older learners take a fashion design course at Arts University Bournemouth, UK, in June 2025. A faculty member leads a tour of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, for older Chinese learners, in July 2025. Liu Ping (left) takes a picture with two "silver" learners outside Polimoda's campus in Florence, Italy, in October 2025. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

A booming market

According to EF (also known as Education First), a global education company that organizes language courses and overseas study tours worldwide, Chinese nationals over 50 accounted for just 3 percent of its overseas study tours in 2019. By 2023, that share had jumped to 20 percent.

Most of these Chinese nationals are between 56 and 65, and many come from Shanghai, Guangdong, and Beijing — the demographic that rode the wave of China's reform and opening-up.

Benefiting from China's economic boom, this group is open-minded and has a strong desire for self-improvement, observes Ma Jing, managing director of EF's overseas study tour operations in China.

The market potential is staggering. China's silver economy is currently worth about 7 trillion yuan (nearly $1 trillion), according to a 2024 report by the China Association of Social Welfare and Senior Service.

By 2035, that figure is expected to reach 30 trillion yuan. Senior education, once a niche, is projected to grow to 500 billion yuan by 2025, with an annual compound growth rate of 25.3 percent, far outpacing traditional education sectors, according to the market research consultancy Chinese Industry Research Network.

Traditional study-abroad agencies have taken notice. In late 2025, New Oriental, one of China's largest private education companies, launched the "Tulip Plan" short-term overseas program tailored for learners over 35.

The program targets three age segments, with the "55-plus" track tailored specifically for those seeking to enrich their retirement years through immersive cultural experiences.

The first offerings include an art program in the United Kingdom and a culinary course in France.

For Li Guolin, the Florence trip was only the beginning. She went on to study silk painting at Yokohama University of Art and Design in Japan in April, and learned lacquer carving from a master craftsman in his remote studio, producing a hand-carved ginkgo leaf, its veins traced in gold.

A new motivation

Not everyone in this new wave is fleeing a life of pain. For Liu Ping, a 60-year-old former financial auditor from the inland city of Liuzhou in South China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, the motivation was more personal.

She had earned a CFO certificate years earlier that entitled her to attend a graduation ceremony at Cambridge, but then work got in the way.

"I always regretted it," she says.

When she saw an overseas study program that included a few weeks in Cambridge, she signed up immediately.

But first, she was required to attend a "growth camp" in Beijing.

At the camp, participants were asked to create a piece of art expressing their innermost feelings.

Liu, then still grieving her mother's recent death, poured herself into the task. She re-created a sunset scene by the river where she had once pushed her mother's wheelchair — stitching the bridge, the water, the separation.

When she finished, she felt an enormous release. That unexpected emotional breakthrough sparked her interest in art, so she decided to give it a real try at her dream school in Cambridge.

During her stay, the instructor asked the class to sketch something they had seen on campus. Liu chose the canopy of a corridor.

"It was the most complicated structure on campus," the instructor later told her.

She laughed. A career spent in auditing — precision, rules, getting things exactly right — had not prepared her for this.

"I saw the gap between myself and the students who had some foundation, but just finishing was already enough," she says.

Returning home, Liu felt several weeks studying in the UK were still too short. "I hadn't had my fill," she says.

She then bought a sketchbook and pencils.

Now, whenever she sees a beautiful scene, she photographs it and paints from the picture later.

"It's just for my own enjoyment," she says.

While Li and Liu stumbled upon their opportunities, Zi Wenli, a former CCTV director who retired in 2024, went looking for hers, and when she couldn't find it, she built it herself.

Like many new retirees, Zi felt adrift after retiring from China's State broadcaster where she had worked for about three decades.

"I lost all sense of rhythm and purpose, and my social circle collapsed almost overnight," she recalls.

She tried the local senior university, but found the offerings limited for her taste, with calligraphy, folk dancing, and painting "grand peonies". As she had helped design domestic university curricula and cofounded an overseas study agency that sent thousands of young Chinese to Western schools, she asked her own consultants to help her apply to universities like MIT and Stanford.

Yet, they turned her down.

"They told me there was no agency in China that served people over 35," she says.

So she traveled alone to the United States, the UK, and Japan, visiting universities and talking to professors.

In Japan, she met an 85-year-old professor still teaching and his 90-year-old student. In the UK, admissions officers told her that local retirees regularly enrolled in short courses.

She returned convinced. On a whim, on the night of Dec 23, 2024, she went live on WeChat's short-video platform from her living room with fewer than 800 followers. She talked about her idea of "studying abroad after retirement", a notion that older learners, free from the pressure of degrees and job prospects, might have an easier path than younger applicants competing for credentials.

Her phone soon exploded. By the end of the hourlong broadcast, she had received 544 private messages. The question was almost always the same: "How can I go?"

"I realized that night that this wasn't just my problem. I had stumbled upon a volcano of demand," she notes.

Within months, Zi founded the Retirement Study Club, later renamed the Mature Learning Club. In less than a year, it had attracted over 50,000 members nationwide and helped more than 500 retirees enroll in overseas programs, with over 1,000 more holding acceptance letters. Destinations include Japan, Italy, the UK, Spain, and the US, and the lengths of learning programs range from weeks to a year.

"In the beginning, I thought I would just help a few people, but the demand was overwhelming. These are people who have spent their whole lives taking care of others — their parents, their children, their grandchildren. For the first time, they want to do something just for themselves," she says.

Challenges and risks

Some critics question whether a two-week program, typically costing between 20,000 and 70,000 yuan, is worth it, while others raise health and safety concerns.

Da Zhigang, a researcher at the Heilongjiang Provincial Academy of Social Sciences, warns that Chinese seniors overseas may not receive timely medical care in an emergency due to language barriers, and could face unexpected risks.

There are deeper structural hurdles. China's higher education system remains designed for degree-seeking young people. Senior universities are widespread, but their curricula tend to focus on entertainment and hobbies, not skill renewal or social reintegration, experts say.

Professor Peng Xizhe, a demographer and senior professor at Fudan University, points to what he calls a "system ceiling".

The most fundamental challenge is a shift in mindset across society, he emphasizes.

Peng urges the education system, labor policies and other subsystems to be prepared for the new normal of an aging society.

Curiosity is the drive to live

To date, Zi's oldest participant has been an 83-year-old retired mathematics teacher from Shanghai who completed a fashion and crafts program in Italy.

"I was impressed when he told me curiosity is the drive to live," Zi says. The line has become something of a motto for her club.

"These people are running toward something, a version of themselves they had set aside decades ago," she says.

As for Li Guolin, she didn't take much of a break after finishing her studies in Japan in late April. Instead of flying directly home to Zhuhai, she detoured through Taipei to visit its Palace Museum, then flew to Hong Kong before returning to the mainland.

A few days later, right after the May Day holiday, she was at the airport again — this time for a holiday in Rome and Malta with a friend she met on one of her study trips.

"Our class averaged 60 years old and everyone agreed that before 50, we lived for our families and children. After 50, we decided to live for ourselves," she says.

Her family has noticed the change.

"They told me the biggest difference is that I have more energy now, and I don't fixate on my pain anymore," she shares.

When asked if she plans to keep going, she does not hesitate. "Spain will likely be my next learning destination for a dance program," she says.

"Even if I don't know how to dance, I want to try. I want to challenge myself. I don't want to live the way I used to — always holding back."

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:36 PM

LIFE





Left: A folk performance marks the opening of the 2026 Intangible Cultural Heritage Summer Shopping Month, which kicked off on June 11 in Suzhou, Jiangsu province. **Right:** A tea-making demonstration draws visitors to one of the many heritage display booths during the event.

Preservation finds a way into modern hearts

Transformation and innovation help China's intangible cultural heritage find consumers hungry for fresh experiences, **Yang Feiyue** reports in Suzhou, Jiangsu.

Zhou Jing was holding a bowl of noodles at a booth on the historical Pingjiang Road in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, where crowds flowed along the ancient stone-paved street on a muggy June afternoon. At first glance, it did not look like a typical local dish. The bowl was made entirely of plush fabric and weighed almost nothing. Even the braised pork topping was soft and fuzzy.

And yet, around her, staff members engaged visitors in mock noodle-shop interactions.

"Hard noodles or soft? Extra broth or light?"

For many visitors, the questions were unfamiliar. That was by design.

Small cards and props at the booth explained the specialized vocabulary of Suzhou noodle culture: *kuan tang* (extra broth), *jin tang* (less broth), *zhong mian* (extra noodles), and *shao mian* (fewer noodles). In 2020, Suzhou-style noodle-making was added to the city's intangible cultural heritage (ICH) list, adding another layer to this seemingly simple interaction. For local regulars, these terms signal identity as much as taste. For outsiders, they offer a quick introduction to one of the city's best-loved traditions.

The experience was designed to be memorable — a playful encounter that transforms a local culinary custom into an interactive cultural lesson.

Zhou's booth was among the busiest attractions at the 2026 Intangible Cultural Heritage Summer Shopping Month, which opened on June 11 in Suzhou. Held along Pingjiang Road, a canal-side neighborhood lined with white-walled houses and black-tiled roofs, the event forms part of a nationwide campaign featuring more than 1,200 activities held through late July, aimed at bringing traditional culture closer to contemporary life.

For Zhou, a former travel entrepreneur who once specialized in European tours, the plush noodle bowl represents more than a novelty product. It is part of a growing movement across China that is reimagining how intangible cultural heritage is preserved, presented, and passed on to younger generations.

Across the country, cultural entrepreneurs and heritage inheritors are increasingly turning traditional crafts, foods and folklore into collectible toys, lifestyle products and social-media-friendly cultural IPs (intellectual property).

The transformation of Pingjiang Road into a sprawling heritage marketplace offers a glimpse of that shift.



Creative cultural products featuring Zibo soft pottery prove a hit with visitors at the shopping month event. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

> A friend once told me our works have a 'human touch'. That phrase exactly woke me up."
>
> **Wang Zhi,** a municipal-level inheritor of Zibo soft pottery

Creative inspiration

More than 100 heritage workshops and inheritors from across China gathered for the shopping month's main event, showcasing everything from embroidery and ceramics to weaving, sculpture and traditional foods.

Among them was Zhou's collection of plush noodle bowls, refrigerator magnets and blind boxes inspired by the local food culture.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Zhou operated a travel business serving Chinese tourists visiting Europe and international visitors coming to China. When global tourism ground to a halt in 2020, she began exploring opportunities closer to home.

"There weren't many cultural products that truly reflected Suzhou's local character and everyday life," she says. "I wanted to create something people could connect with."

Her workshop is located in the Dinghuisi alley in Suzhou's old town. Nearby, heritage masters regularly give public demonstrations and classes. Watching these activities, Zhou realized that many traditional cultural elements remained unfamiliar even to local residents.

"I discovered things I didn't know myself. If local people don't know about them, young people are even less likely to know," she says.

Although not an inheritor of a traditional craft, Zhou chose to serve as a translator between heritage and the marketplace. Food became her starting point.

"Visitors come to Suzhou for two things: the gardens and the food," she says, explaining why she chose food as her focus.

Inspired by the popularity of interactive cultural merchandise, she created products that transform familiar local dishes into collectibles. Customers not only receive a toy but also a cultural story.

Her first generation of plush noodle bowls attracted attention but struggled to sustain sales due to their relatively high price. Several rounds of redesign followed.

A second version added practical functions, such as card holders. The breakthrough came when Zhou combined several fast-growing categories in China's creative cultural market — blind boxes, plush toys and refrigerator magnets — into a single product that was smaller, more affordable and easier to collect.

Since the launch of the latest version in early 2025, sales have exceeded expectations.

She has since expanded collaborations with local brands, including Renchangshun, a traditional Suzhou pastry maker with a history stretching back more than two centuries. Together, they transformed products such as *dingsheng gao* and *zhuangyuan gao*, pastries associated with good fortune and academic success, into plush collectibles.

"My role is to help people take notice. Once they're interested, they can learn more," she says.

A broader movement

Zhou's story reflects a wider transformation taking place across China's heritage sector.

This year's ICH summer shopping month places particular emphasis on connecting traditional culture with contemporary consumption. Alongside exhibitions and craft demonstrations, the event features activities exploring themes such as "ICH plus designer toys", "ICH plus fashion", and "ICH plus technology" — an acknowledgment that preservation today increasingly depends on finding new ways to engage modern audiences.

The shift is being driven in part by changing consumer behavior, particularly among younger generations.

According to leading online food delivery and local services platform Meituan, searches related to nationally recognized intangible cultural heritage food traditions exceeded 18 million in 2025, up 34 percent year-on-year. Orders placed with related merchants rose by 140 percent, while nearly two-thirds of searches came from consumers aged 20 to 35.

Industry observers say the figures point to a growing appetite for heritage experiences that feel interactive, accessible and relevant to daily life, besides those from the museums or textbooks.

A report on China's cultural and creative industries, released by China Cultural Media Group, notes that heritage-based cultural products are increasingly moving beyond static preservation toward what it calls "living innovation" and market-oriented development, allowing traditional culture to become part of everyday consumer experiences.

For entrepreneurs and inheritors alike, the question has now been how to translate them into forms that resonate with younger consumers.

Pony with personality

About two hours north of Suzhou by high-speed rail, another experiment in heritage innovation has been unfolding in Zibo, Shandong province.

Wang Zhi, a municipal-level inheritor of Zibo soft pottery, has spent more than a decade exploring ways to engage contemporary audiences with traditional clay sculpture.

Her studio is known for miniature works inspired by Chinese history, everyday life and classical art. But national attention arrived in 2024 with the debut of Long Dada, a dragon whose round body and playful expression challenged conventional depictions of the mythical creature.

The character quickly gained popularity online and helped Wang rethink how traditional culture could be presented to younger audiences.

Her latest creation pushes that idea further.

Known as Ma Biaobiao, or "Scruffy Pony", the figure was developed in collaboration with the Beijing Fine Art Academy and inspired by a late painting by renowned Chinese artist Qi Baishi, depicting the spirit and vitality of a galloping horse.

The pony features oversized eyes and a dramatically fluffy mane made not from clay but from Tan sheep wool.

Achieving the dynamic pose proved technically demanding. The sculpture's front legs touch the ground while the hind legs lift into the air, requiring repeated experimentation and an internal support structure capable of withstanding the firing process.

To strengthen the connection with the original artwork, the team designed the display so the pony appears to leap from a traditional Chinese scroll painting.

The feature that most captured public attention, however, was the mane.

Owners are encouraged to braid, curl, decorate, or style it however they wish.

"We call it co-creation," Wang says.

The idea extends beyond the product itself. The pony's name originated from internet users, who described the character using the Shandong dialect word *biao*, a term suggesting something goofy, impulsive or endearingly eccentric. The team adopted the nickname and continued refining the character in response to customer feedback.

New mane colors, accessories and design details emerged through interactions with fans online.

"We listen carefully," Wang says. That approach has helped transform a single clay sculpture into a broader cultural IP encompassing keychains, refrigerator magnets, bags, and apparel.

For Wang, the appeal lies in creating an emotional connection.

"Heritage isn't something frozen in time. It continues to evolve," she says.

Wang has thought a lot about what makes heritage stick.

"A friend once told me our works have a 'human touch'," she says. "That phrase exactly woke me up. Intangible cultural heritage is about the warmth of the hand, the sedimentation of time, the power of healing, the possibility of co-creation."

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

Foreigners praise country's high sense of safety

What would happen if someone left a backpack full of personal belongings unattended in one of China's busiest commercial areas?

YouTuber "Because I'm Lizzy" decided to find out in Southwest China's Chongqing last year. After spending nearly two hours wandering through the city's winding streets, sampling local delicacies, and taking in its neon-lit nightlife, she returned to find everything exactly where she left it.

The 29-year-old South African content creator was not surprised by the outcome. "I've been proven so many times that nothing would ever get stolen," she says. "Safety is the number one reason why I stay in China."

Currently based in Kunming, the capital city of Yunnan province, the YouTuber, Jannelize Bessenger, has lived in China for seven years. She created a series of videos about the country after noticing that many people know little about the high safety level of the nation, with a population exceeding 1.4 billion.

But for Bessenger, "It is the people who live here and their value and respect for life that make China the safest place, where I will stay for many years."

Her first impression of China was shaped by an unexpected act of kindness from a stranger. She recalled that in 2019, just four months after arriving in China, she fell seriously ill while in Nanchang, Jiangxi province. Although she had the hospital's location saved on her phone, she still could not find it.

Speaking little Chinese at the time, she turned to a man nearby for help, using a translation app. To her surprise, he voluntarily accompanied her to the hospital by subway and then left.

Wondering whether the man would ask for her contact or something in return, Bessenger said nothing happened. "He was just being nice," she says. That moment made her realize she could live alone in China safely as a foreign woman.

Hailing from a small South African town renowned for its wildlife and safaris, solo traveler Bessenger says China's secure environment allows her to embrace a relaxed lifestyle.

"Whether I'm going for a walk with headphones on at 11 pm because I can't sleep or I want to get some fresh air without checking a map, I just go and explore," she says.

China ranks high among other countries on the safety and law and order index, according to Gallup's 2025 Global Safety Report.

When Bessenger shared her appreciation for feeling safe on the lifestyle-sharing platform RedNote, many Chinese users were puzzled as to why she kept bringing it up.

"They take it for granted. They don't really realize how lucky they are to live in such a safe country," she says. The feeling was shared by her mother, who visited China from South Africa two years ago and later decided to settle down.

China's safety and openness are also echoed by short-term travelers. In 2025, inbound tourist visits to China surpassed 150 million, up more than 17 percent year-on-year. Of these, over 30 million foreign travelers entered the country under China's visa-free policies.

With expensive camera gear in hand, Canadian YouTuber Dave Mani and his wife comfortably moved around Chinese cities and roamed rural areas.

"After visiting 56 countries, we can say that China is very high on the list in terms of general safety," says Mani.

As an independent content creator, Mani notices how deeply technology is integrated into everyday life in China. Whenever he and his wife needed help during the trip, locals were quick to use translation apps to communicate with them.

> I've been proven so many times that nothing would ever get stolen. Safety is the number one reason why I stay in China."
>
> **Jannelize Bessenger,** South African content creator known as "Because I'm Lizzy"

The couple quickly became fans of WeChat, saying the super app brought great convenience, especially WeChat Pay, which allowed them to make payments easily and safely.

"That level of everyday safety made filming and exploring very easy and enjoyable," says Mani.

Like Bessenger and Mani, Ana Rosa Neumann Devers, an exchange student from the Dominican Republic studying in Harbin, Heilongjiang province, finds it cozy and relaxing to stroll past the orderly market stalls day or night.

The girl from the tropical Caribbean nation has fallen in love with the icy northern city, captivated by its snowy nights and warmed by the kind sincerity of her schoolmates. At a school ball, she appeared in traditional Dominican attire and was met with warm applause and heartfelt compliments.

"People here respect different cultures and customs. No one treats me differently because I'm from another country. I truly feel respected," she says.

In the past seven years, Bessenger has found that in China, every place offers something entirely different for travelers to discover. But for those who don't know where to go or who are eager to tap into the "becoming Chinese" trend, her advice is simple: just head downstairs when night falls.

"Walk around, get some street food, and see how people enjoy their meals and how the city settles into a peaceful but vibrant rhythm," she says. "That's when China feels most real."

XINHUA



Overseas tourists take photos of a drone light show at Nanbin Road in Nan'an District of Chongqing, southwest China, on April 22. HUANG WEI / XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:36 PM

LIFE



Master's six strings strike global chords

An award-winning craftsman blends Spanish lutherie and local design to build world-beating classical guitars, **Wang Xin** reports in Shanghai.

Gao Yi, 56, is one of China's most accomplished classical guitarists. Today, however, he is winning even greater recognition worldwide as a luthier, crafting exquisitely handmade guitars that are earning international acclaim.

Two years ago, Gao's flamenco guitar won first prize at the 7th Antonio Marin Montero Guitar Building Competition held in Granada, Spain, where his classical guitar also remarkably made it to the final. He became the first Chinese luthier ever to win the competition's top prize.

Last month, his instruments impressed Japanese musicians and fellow luthiers at an exhibition in Tokyo. Standing out in this highly competitive market through exceptional craftsmanship, Gao signed cooperation agreements with Japan's major instrument distributors, including Gendai Guitar and Kurosawa Gakki, for both online and offline orders.

Born in Shandong province in 1970, Gao's connection with music and instruments began early. He primarily played the Chinese bamboo flute as a child and taught himself guitar at the age of 17. After graduating from Jining University with a music degree in 1992, he continued his studies in classical guitar performance at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing the following year. It was there that he first encountered guitars built in the traditional Spanish style.

In 2000, Gao won first place in the Chinese Guitar Competition while performing on an Antonio Marin Montero guitar borrowed from a friend.

Later that year, he joined Yamaha Corporation as China's guitar market manager and relocated to Shanghai. During his eight years with the company, Gao deepened his understanding of guitar history and construction techniques. At the same time, he continued performing solo concerts, often using his cherished Marin Montero guitars.

His first attempts at building guitars began in 2010, when he established his workshop, Gaoyi Guitars. Shortly afterward, a serious accident during a repair left his fingers badly injured. Rather than discouraging him, the experience strengthened his determination to pursue lutherie more seriously and eventually shift his professional focus toward guitar making.

In 2013, Gao seized an opportunity to study traditional Spanish guitar-making in Beijing under Juan Labella, a respected guitar maker from Granada.

The following year, with support from the Spanish Consulate General in Shanghai, he visited Spain, where he was introduced to Marin Montero himself. The legendary master offered valuable guidance and encouragement. Marin Montero, widely regarded as one of the most influential living masters of traditional Spanish guitar making, became both a mentor and a lasting source of inspiration for Gao.

In 2019, Gao was recommended by the European Guitar Foundation to study with another renowned Granada School luthier, Rene Baarslag. The experience further shaped and inspired his own approach to guitar making.

"While I was in Spain, I lived with local musicians and luthiers to learn and exchange ideas. Then I realized that guitar making is far more than simply creating a seemingly abstract sound. Behind it lie the culture, history, humanism, life experience and the thoughts of the luthiers," says Gao.

Regardless of national or cultural differences, Gao says he was warmly welcomed by Spanish masters. They generously shared their workshops, materials, tools, techniques, craftsmanship, experience and even their philosophy of life.

Gao says what many Chinese luthiers still lack in high-end guitar making is a deeper "understanding" and "perception" of the instrument itself. His experience as a performer has helped bridge that gap. Spain, widely regarded as the cradle of the classical guitar, has passed down its traditions and accumulated knowledge through generations of master builders.

It was during his time in Spain that Gao learned, for example, that the finest soundboards for premium Spanish-style guitars are often made from high-quality spruce sourced from the Fiemme Valley in the northern Alps at an altitude of around 1,500 meters. The same region supplied wood for the famed Stradivarius violins. Lightweight yet capable of producing remarkable clarity, the wood is highly prized among instrument makers. Gao also learned that every stage of guitar construction demands meticulous attention, from wood treatment and internal structure to component assembly and even the selection of the final finish.

"Guitar making is never like solving a math problem, and it doesn't have an exact formula. Every detail in the whole process comes from the accumulated experience of pioneers and also from luthiers' innovation. I see guitar making as a testament to collective creativity across generations," Gao says.

For Gao, guitar making is not merely craftsmanship but a form of "artistic creation". A guitar is far more than a box that produces sound; it is an artwork that reflects a maker's aesthetics, personality, life experiences and constant pursuit of innovation.

As technology advances and performance venues become increasingly diverse, guitarists are demanding more from their instruments, encouraging luthiers to continue pushing creative boundaries. Many modern classical guitars now incorporate aerospace technologies or carbon fiber materials into their soundboards to improve strength and project greater volume, particularly for larger venues and outdoor performances.

As a Chinese luthier proud of his country's rich cultural heritage, Gao has sought to incorporate elements of Chinese identity into his work. The rosettes on the two guitars that earned recognition at the Spanish competition draw inspiration from traditional Chinese geometric window-grille patterns combined with Japanese Hakone Yosegi Zaiku (marquetry wood mosaics), creating an elegant visual signature.

In other instruments, he frequently uses mother-of-pearl and shell carvings for decorative inlays. He is also exploring the use of locally sourced woods from different regions of China.

"We have already opened the door to the high-end guitar-making sector," Gao says. "As Chinese luthiers continue working toward the same goal and accumulating our own experience, I believe we will see more handmade guitars with a distinct Chinese identity shine on the global stage."

Building a high-quality guitar is a painstaking process. Working full-time as a luthier, Gao produces no more than 13 instruments a year. Benefiting from the keen tonal sensitivity developed during his years as a performer, he focuses on creating guitars with warm, delicate tones, rich dynamics, an authentic Spanish voice and a lasting Eastern character. His instruments are increasingly sought after by professional musicians and collectors from Germany, Spain, Japan, the United States and other countries.

As both a guitarist and a luthier, Gao has spent nearly four decades alongside the instrument he calls his "most loyal companion". The guitar has accompanied him through every stage of life, helping him express emotions, find friendship and resonance, and discover deeper meaning.

"The guitar is a record of my life," he says. "It contains my passion and what I hope to leave behind in the world. Even when my life comes to an end, my instruments will remain."

Asked about the secret to building a great guitar, Gao shares with China Daily an answer — and a life philosophy — that he first learned from Marin Montero: "Just slow down."

Contact the writer at wangxin2@chinadaily.com.cn







Top: Gao Yi's classical guitar reaches the final of the 7th Antonio Marin Montero Guitar Building Competition in Granada, Spain, in 2024. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY **Above:** (From left) Gao builds a guitar at his workshop in Shanghai. GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY Gao with renowned Spanish luthier Antonio Marin Montero. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY He tunes a guitar made at his workshop. GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

One man's mission creates China's zero-waste island

By **XING WEN**
xingwen@chinadaily.com.cn

Far out in the East China Sea, Qingbang Island — part of the easternmost permanently inhabited archipelago off China's mainland in Zhoushan, Zhejiang province — is becoming a model for sustainable living.

Despite covering just 1.41 square kilometers, the island is experimenting with an innovative recycling system. Residents sort their household waste and exchange it for vouchers that can be used at local stores or redeemed for cash at the end of the year.

Food scraps will be fermented into organic fertilizer for growing vegetables and flowers, while recyclable plastics are collected by a Shanghai clothing company and transformed into garments, shoes, and hats sold on the island.

The voucher program has been running for three years, driven by the vision of Yan Shanyue, a former seaman who is determined to turn Qingbang into a zero-waste island.

Why vouchers? Yan explains. Selling recyclables directly typically earns only 20 or 30 yuan at a time — an amount that easily disappears among everyday expenses.

"But with a voucher, you can clearly see that it came from the waste you collected."

To keep motivation high, Yan also hosts an annual year-end meeting where active recyclers receive daily necessities like rice and cooking oil.

"That way," he adds, "people have one more thing to look forward to."

Yan grew up on Xiazhi Island, more than 60 kilometers from Qingbang, and many of his happiest childhood memories were shaped by the sea.

"Every morning around six or seven, after breakfast, my friends and I would head to the beach," recalls the 55-year-old.

"At high tide, we swam and challenged each other to jump higher or hold our breath longer. At low tide, we dug for clams and razor clams and carried home baskets full of them."

At the time, plastic waste was rarely seen on local shores. Occasionally, they would find a bottle with Japanese writing that had drifted across the sea.

In fact, Yan even had his first taste of instant noodles at age 7 after discovering a Japanese packet washed ashore following a typhoon, which he shared with three friends.

When he returned home in 2003 after leaving a career in deep-sea fishing, he was shocked to find beaches increasingly covered with rubbish, especially marine debris. Determined to help, he began cleaning the shoreline on his own.





Left: Yan Shanyue, a former seaman-turned-guesthouse owner, is helping transform Qingbang Island into the zero-waste island of his dreams. **Right:** A recent cleanup event was held to gather volunteers to collect trash together on the beach of Qingbang Island, Zhejiang province. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

In 2013, Yan moved to Qingbang Island to open a guesthouse. He continued his beach-cleaning routine, and before long, other guesthouse owners joined him. Together, they discovered that just a few people could restore a small beach to its natural beauty within hours.

"Sometimes I think to myself that we really do have the power to make a difference," he says.

Encouraged by the results, Yan and his growing team began inviting volunteers from outside the island, offering affordable food and accommodation to support cleanup efforts. Through these activities, he connected with professionals from marine conservation organizations, inspiring him to establish his own environmental charity dedicated to creating a "zero-waste island".

He and his partners then mobilized local shop owners to sign a "zero waste island partnership" agreement.

Driving a small tricycle, he collected cardboard, aluminum cans, and plastic waste while visiting households to encourage recycling and proper waste sorting.

"What gives me the greatest sense of achievement is that the islanders' trust in me is growing," Yan says.

The journey also pushed Yan to develop new skills. He learned how to write project proposals, create PowerPoint presentations, prepare budgets, and organize events ranging from waste surveys to community education programs and environmental improvement projects. He continues to seek partnerships with companies and environmental foundations to expand the initiative.

Yet, the challenge remains relentless. Every storm washes new debris onto the island's beaches. A shoreline cleaned by evening may be covered with trash again the following morning, creating what often feels like an endless cycle.

To cope with this frustration, Yan draws inspiration from a powerful memory from his years at sea. At age 16, he survived a fierce storm in which waves battered his fishing vessel for more than 50 hours. Crew members worked nonstop, bailing water while pumps ran continuously. The helmsman fought to keep the boat aligned with the waves, knowing that even a slight mistake could prove fatal.

Eventually, the storm passed.

"We couldn't control the environment back then," Yan says.

"We had no idea when the next wave would hit or when the boat might capsize. But we had no choice but to keep bailing the water out."

Decades at sea taught him a lesson he still follows today: while people cannot calm the wind and waves, persistence can keep a ship afloat — and help preserve the blue waters surrounding an island.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:36 PM

SPORTS

WORLD CUP 2026

Super-sub Undav sends Germany into knockouts

Substitute's brace overturns halftime deficit to snatch win over Cote d'Ivoire



Deniz Undav (26) scores his, and Germany's, first goal of its World Cup Group E match against Cote d'Ivoire in Toronto on Saturday. Undav scored twice after being subbed on in the second half to lead Germany to a 2-1 win and clinch a spot in the knockout phase. AP



Deniz Undav celebrates scoring Germany's second goal during a World Cup Group E match against Cote d'Ivoire on Saturday. AP

> "It's important that everyone sees that even the players from the bench can decide games. Now we have sent a really important signal to the team. I think that's very important in a game like this."
>
> **Deniz Undav,** after scoring twice to help Germany reach the knockout phase

TORONTO — An hour into the game, Germany was getting outplayed by Cote d'Ivoire and trailed by a goal.

Coach Julian Nagelsmann needed a spark and substituted three fresh players on, one of whom was Deniz Undav. That decision paid off big time.

Undav scored two goals off the bench as Germany pulled off a thrilling comeback to beat Cote d'Ivoire 2-1 in its World Cup Group E match on Saturday, securing its place in the knockout stage for the first time since it won the title in 2014.

After having two goals disallowed in the first half, Germany did not lose focus and used intricate passing to find its way, while the West Africans produced their dynamic brand of attacking soccer in a wild encounter at Toronto Stadium.

"It's important that everyone sees that even the players from the bench can decide games," said Undav, who also scored in Germany's 7-1 opening match rout of Curacao. "Now we have sent a really important signal to the team. I think that's very important in a game like this."

"We showed great character today," said the versatile striker, who now has nine goals in his last eight matches. "We want to achieve the most (we can)."

Undav leveled the score with a controlled, volleyed finish in the 68th minute and struck again in stoppage time when he received a pass on the turn, before swivelling and firing home a ball that Yahia Fofana had no chance at stopping.

Simon Adingra had a late chance for Cote d'Ivoire, but he failed to get a shot off in the area before Germany charged back down the field where Fofana blocked a low shot from Nathaniel Brown.

The loss denied, at least for now, Cote d'Ivoire the chance of securing its first trip to the knockout stages.

"We wanted to make history today," said Cote d'Ivoire winger Amad Diallo. "But I think everything was a little tight."

Unfamiliar territory

Cote d'Ivoire had opened the scoring in the first half when Franck Kessie slotted home a rebound off a shot from Diallo on a play created when Yan Diomande charged down the left side and sent in a cross.

With more than 100,000 people of German ancestry living in Toronto, Nagelsmann's men enjoyed plenty of support, but were a frustrated group at the interval with nothing to show for their eight attempts on goal.

It was definitely unfamiliar territory for Germany, as it marked only the fourth time it has faced a halftime deficit in its last 36 contests at the global showpiece.

But, after the break, a more active German side showed up, one that took more risks and was determined to dedicate everything to its effort to win.

"In the end, we deservedly won it," Nagelsmann told reporters. "The boys invested a lot. I'm very happy for the whole team."

"This is exactly what we hoped for, and I'm very happy for my team," Nagelsmann said.

He said that after his two-goal performance, Undav could make the starting 11 in Germany's third group stage match against Ecuador, but also stressed that the Stuttgart forward was thriving as a substitute.

"I could have him in the starting lineup," Nagelsmann said. "I think that every player would love to be in the starting lineup, but I think he's very happy as it is right now."

Two goals scratched off

Germany looked to have opened the scoring when midfielder Aleksandar Pavlovic rose to meet a short corner in the 25th minute, but was deemed to have fouled Fofana in the process.

The ruling left Pavlovic with his hands atop his head in disbelief, as Fofana received some attention after the collision and the partisan German crowd made their disdain for the referee's decision known.

Shortly afterward, it was Cote d'Ivoire that finally broke through with Kessie's goal.

The West Africans have scored in their last seven matches at the tournament, the longest such sequence on the global stage in their history.

Germany once again put the ball in the back of the net, but its celebrations were cut short as the referee determined that Jamal Musiala had fouled Odilon Kossounou in the build-up.

"We had exactly what it takes to succeed in a tournament, a winning mentality, team spirit," said German defender Jonathan Tah.

"We didn't give up; we just kept going.

"The guys coming off the bench brought new energy to the game. Deniz deserves special mention. He was outstanding."

After a court fight to get into Canada, Elye Wahi, the Cote d'Ivoire striker under investigation for alleged betting-related offenses while playing in France for Nice, did not play.

Germany tops Group E with six points and is through to the last 32, while Cote d'Ivoire remains on three after two matches. Ecuador and Curacao played to a goalless draw in Kansas City in a later match on Saturday.

Germany will close out the group stage against Ecuador on Thursday in New Jersey, while Cote d'Ivoire faces Curacao in Philadelphia.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Les Elephants look to forget Toronto loss and charge toward Curacao clash



Cote d'Ivoire's Franck Kessie celebrates his goal against Germany on Saturday. AP

If Cote d'Ivoire wins its next match, Saturday's loss to the Germans won't matter.

After surrendering two second-half goals and missing the chance to clinch a knockout stage berth for the first time in its four World Cup appearances, Les Elephants turn their attention to their last group stage match against Curacao on Thursday.

Win, and the Elephants are in.

Forward Amad Diallo said he and his teammates will get over the Germany loss. They have to.

"We (have) respect for ourselves, but we want to make history for Cote d'Ivoire, and we (are) going to go there with a good mentality and try to rise again," he said.

Cote d'Ivoire seemed one step ahead of Germany throughout the first half on Saturday — and a chunk of the second — with midfielder Franck Kessie's first-half goal silencing German fans for a long stretch.

But the German side of the sold-out crowd erupted when Deniz Undav scored the winning goal, his second of the match, leaving Cote d'Ivoire fans hanging their heads.

The team seemed a little shocked as well, and players spoke about the pain of losing a match they felt they should have won.

Cote d'Ivoire coach Emerse Fae felt his team could have been more decisive in its bid to get a second goal.

"It's more frustration that we're feeling after this defeat, because we were able to open the score against this strong German side," he told reporters.

"A difference in experience meant that the chances that we did have at the end of the game, where we needed to find the back of the net, we were hesitant," Fae said.

However, the Ivorian coach was quick to put the Germany game behind him and highlighted that, overall, he was happy with his team's performance.

"We're going to use this game as a lesson to try and fine-tune the mistakes, our shortcomings that we still have, and that will help us go as far as possible," he said.

He said he was looking forward to the challenge of facing Curacao next to see "what they are made of", and was expecting a strong fight.

"Our destiny is still in our hands, or at our feet," he said.

The good news for FIFA's No 31-ranked Les Elephants is that their next opponent, Curacao, is way below them at No 83.

The Caribbean nation also lost its first match to Germany, 7-1.

"It's going to be a big moment for everyone, for this new generation, because we know we have quality in the team," Diallo said. "But the priority now is that we are really focused on ourselves. It's going to be a very hard game."

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Double Dutch: Braces from Brobbey and Gakpo help sink Sweden



Crysencio Summerville celebrates with NBA star Steph Curry's "night night" gesture after scoring the Netherlands' fifth goal of its 5-1 World Cup Group F win over Sweden in Texas on Saturday. REUTERS

HOUSTON — Under intense pressure after its opening-game draw with Japan, the Netherlands delivered a dominant performance against Sweden in the World Cup on Saturday to move atop the Group F standings.

Brian Brobbey and Cody Gakpo scored two goals apiece to power the Dutch to the 5-1 win.

Brobbey's goals came in the first half, setting the Netherlands up for a big win after playing to a 2-2 draw the previous Sunday.

"It could be that the way we played builds confidence," Netherlands coach Ronald Koeman said. "Now we've got a slightly better peace of mind with the four points. You can build on what happened now, and that's really good."

Gakpo, who also had an assist, extended the lead to 3-0 just after halftime, scoring in the 47th minute off a cross from Denzel Dumfries. He matched Brobbey when he scored on a right-footed shot from the left side of the box in the 54th minute.

"Today, there was more variation in attacking play, more players in different positions, movement and all those things," Gakpo said. "So it was more difficult for the defenders to really mark us, and we became free in the box. I think that was the little thing maybe we missed in the last game."

Sweden couldn't build on its strong performance in a 5-1 walloping of Tunisia in its first match. The loss to the Dutch was its biggest World Cup defeat since losing 7-1 to Brazil in 1950.

Sweden coach Graham Potter said the defeat was less about what his team did and more about just how good the Netherlands played Saturday. "They're a top team, and they were better than us today. We have to congratulate them, but I think we'll learn a lot from the game."

The Dutch game plan to play out wide to open up Sweden and cross to Brobbey worked perfectly early on. He put the Netherlands on top in the fifth minute, one-timing a Gakpo cross with his right foot.

His second goal came when he took a cross from Dumfries while sliding and just got his right foot on the ball, scoring inside the far post in the 17th minute.

Koeman credited Brobbey's success to getting in better shape after he had struggled in the past with the rigors of playing a full game.

"He's fitter, he's sharper and he's developing really well," he said.

Anthony Elanga's left-footed goal cut the lead to 4-1 in the 59th minute and allowed Sweden to avoid the shutout loss.

Sweden had plenty of chances to score before that, but the Dutch goalkeeper Bart Verbruggen was brilliant in the first half with four saves.

Sweden appeared to have cut the lead to 2-1 on a header by Gustaf Lagerbielke in the 44th minute, but he was ruled offside. Lagerbielke is a baron from a noble family in Sweden. His father and grandfather are counts.

But he wasn't the only royalty in the stadium Saturday, as the Netherlands had two very special guests cheering them on with King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima watching from a luxury suite. "The King was very happy," Koeman said.

Crysencio Summerville, who assisted Gakpo's second goal, tacked on one of his own for the Netherlands in the 89th minute and celebrated with NBA star Steph Curry's "night night" gesture.

Summerville took a boot to the head late in the match and had received stitches, but Koeman said he should be ready for the next match.

Samurai blues for Tunisia

Meanwhile, Japan marked the 1,000th game in the history of the World Cup with a 4-0 thrashing of Tunisia in Saturday's final fixture.

Ayase Ueda scored twice while Daichi Kamada and Junya Ito were also on target, as the Asian giant joined the Netherlands on four points at the top of Group F.

Tunisia can no longer hope for a place in the knockout stages.

The Samurai Blue were always in control against Tunisia at the Monterrey Stadium in Mexico and Tunisia never looked like threatening a technically superior Japanese side that settled quickly into its trademark, smooth passing game.

Kamada opened the scoring after just four minutes following some deft interplay. Minutes later, Tunisia keeper Aymen Dahmen just managed to claw away the ball, which was barely centimeters from crossing his goal line. Japan eventually got its second in the 31st minute, with striker Ueda thundering in a low shot from the edge of the area.

The rout continued in the second half, with Ito latching onto a brilliant through ball to finish in the 69th, before Ueda nodded in a looping header in the 83rd.

Group F winds up on Thursday, with Japan playing Sweden at Dallas Stadium and the Netherlands facing Tunisia in Kansas City.

AGENCIES

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:36 PM

Leadership crisis

Pressure mounts on UK Prime Minister to quit

world , page 5



Retirees embrace overseas learning opportunities

LIFE, page 13



Strategy shift

Brands at World Cup move beyond traditional sponsorship

busine ss, page 9

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:37 PM

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 Monday, June 22, 2026

XI'S VISION | GOVERNANCE PERFORMANCE

Unremitting efforts seen as key to progress

Party's governance approach stresses tenacity, sustained work, lasting results

By **ZHAO JIA**
zhaojia@@chinadaily.com.cn

For years, Xingtang county in Hebei province was shadowed by a local saying that played on its name: "*Xingtang bu xing*" — Xingtang cannot do it.

The saying reflected more than a play on words. Along the eastern foothills of the Taihang Mountains, several counties had long struggled with constraints of terrain and resources. In Xingtang, a traditional agricultural county, quality farm products often failed to reach wider markets because they lacked strong brands and sales channels.

When Zou Guoyu arrived in Xingtang, he saw that changing the county's prospects would require more than short-term assistance. He was among the 13 officials assigned by the International Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee to work in the county over the past decade. Their work focused on opening markets, building brands and strengthening the county's own capacity for development.

Those efforts gradually paid off. Xingtang red dates were selected as State gifts, honey produced in the county reached Southeast Asian markets, and the county's public brand for local specialties gained wider recognition.

What happened in Xingtang was not a single breakthrough, but a relay — one group of officials after another carrying the work forward and helping turn an old saying of resignation into a new confidence: Xingtang can.

That relay offers a window into the CPC's emphasis on establishing and practicing a correct view of governance performance, a theme repeatedly stressed by President Xi Jinping since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012 and one that became this year's focus of a Party-wide education campaign. It is a view that values sustained work, long-term public benefit and results that can stand the test of time.

The logic behind such a relay can be traced to Xi's earlier poverty reduction work in Ningde, Fujian province, where he served as Party secretary from 1988 to 1990, when the region was among the poorest areas in Fujian.

In *Up and Out of Poverty*, which collects Xi's speeches and articles from his work in Ningde, he wrote that fundamentally changing poverty and backwardness required the people to carry forward the tenacity of "dripping water piercing stone" and make long-term, unremitting efforts.

In *Xi Jinping in Ningde*, a book published in 2020 that collects 19 interview accounts about Xi's work experiences in Ningde, an interview account recalled that Xi cautioned local officials against expecting poverty to be fundamentally solved simply by projects, or expecting to become rich overnight.

The emphasis on patience, local realities and sustained effort later became part of China's nationwide fight against absolute poverty.

See ***Efforts,*** *page 3*

Crucial talks



Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif (center), flanked by United States Vice-President JD Vance (left) and Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, speaks prior to a quadrilateral meeting between the US, Iran, Pakistan and Qatar at the Burgenstock luxury hotel complex overlooking Lake Lucerne in Switzerland on Sunday. URS FLUEELER / POOL / AFP **See story, page 3**

Openness, resilience unleash regional growth potential

By **Zhong Nan**
zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

Openness remains essential to unlocking the growth potential of the Asia-Pacific region and deepening regional economic cooperation, as rising unilateralism and protectionism continue to challenge global trade and investment, government officials said on Sunday.

Speaking at the APEC China CEO Forum 2026 in Beijing, they said that the economies of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation should stay committed to open cooperation and regional integration, while advancing connectivity projects and digital innovation to facilitate trade, improve supply chain resilience and create new growth opportunities for businesses across the region.

Eduardo Pedrosa, executive director of the APEC Secretariat in Singapore, said that APEC economies have identified a series of priority actions to restore growth momentum and strengthen regional economic cooperation.

These include accelerating progress toward the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific, strengthening connectivity and supply chain resilience, investing in trade and logistics infrastructure, promoting market diversification, addressing nontariff barriers in food trade and advancing digital trade and transformation, he said.

Ren Hongbin, chairman of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, called for APEC economies to identify more areas of common interest and strengthen open cooperation in industrial and supply chains.

Citing the importance of strengthening regional connectivity, Ren said the APEC economies should make full use of regional free trade agreements such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, while advancing an upgraded APEC connectivity blueprint to facilitate the safe and orderly flow of people, goods, capital and data, as well as foster closer industrial and supply chain cooperation across the region.

China remained the largest trading partner of 13 APEC economies in 2025, with the total value of trade with those economies reaching $3.7 trillion. It accounted for 57.8 percent of China's total foreign trade, data from the Ministry of Commerce showed.

The country has signed 24 free trade agreements or economic and trade deals with 31 countries and regions, including 15 APEC economies. In recent years, it has also completed upgrades to free trade agreements with APEC economies such as Singapore and Peru.

Addressing broader challenges facing the global trading system, Jiang Chenghua, deputy China international trade representative at the Ministry of Commerce, urged the APEC business community to exercise independent judgment, support the multilateral trading system and help safeguard the stability of global industrial and supply chains.

China will continue to expand opening-up in key areas including trade, investment and the cross-border flow of production factors, while the rapid advancement of digital, intelligent and green technologies will further reinforce its position as a long-term destination for global companies seeking investment and growth opportunities, said Jiang.

Ahead of the fourth China International Supply Chain Expo, which will run from Monday to Friday in Beijing, foreign business executives highlighted China's industrial ecosystem, market demand and supply chain advantages as key drivers of their long-term confidence in the country.

Jim Sutter, CEO of the US Soybean Export Council, said China is expected to import about 25 million metric tons of soybean from the United States during the marketing year Sept 1, 2025 to Aug 31, 2026, up from 22.6 million tons in the previous marketing year, marking a meaningful recovery.

"The recent announcement regarding tariff reductions is a positive signal, and the US soybean industry looks forward to seeing those commitments translated into concrete policy measures," said Sutter. "Stability in the China-US trade environment benefits both sides, and we are confident in the long-term direction."

A similar sentiment was expressed by Elodie Latour, vice-president for China at French multi-sports brand Decathlon. She said China's comprehensive industrial ecosystem and complete value chain enable companies to bring products to market faster, creating advantages that are difficult to replicate elsewhere.

Beijing-Seoul cooperation should look to the future

WORLD WATCH
By Woo Su-keun

As the global economy faces mounting uncertainty amid geopolitical tensions, supply chain restructuring and the resurgence of protectionism, the importance of stability, resilience and practical cooperation has become increasingly evident. At a time when strategic competition between major powers continues to intensify, countries around the world are recognizing that sustainable growth and regional prosperity cannot be achieved through confrontation alone.

Against this backdrop, China's steady economic development and South Korea's resilience in exports, advanced manufacturing and financial markets deserve close attention.

The recent meeting between South Korean President Lee Jae-myung and Chinese Vice-Premier He Lifeng sent a positive signal that both countries are prepared to expand cooperation in the fields of economy, industry and people-to-people exchanges. This should be regarded as a meaningful indication of a renewed commitment to pragmatic cooperation.

China and South Korea are not merely important trading partners. They are also key stakeholders in the peace, stability and future prosperity of Northeast Asia.

Over the past several decades, the two countries have achieved remarkable development through close economic cooperation. China has long been South Korea's largest trading partner, while South Korea has contributed significantly to China's industrial upgrading and technological advancement.

Although competition naturally exists between the industrial sectors of both countries, the overall relationship remains characterized by a high degree of complementarity.

See ***Cooperation,*** *page 3*

Chinese robot vacuums clean up in global rankings

Advanced AI systems, smart home integration help devices sweep past competition overseas

By **Li Jiaying**
lijiaying@chinadaily.com.cn

When Mikki Hayward was preparing her home in the United States for sale, she expected her robot vacuum to help with the cleaning. What she did not expect was for it to recognize clutter, navigate around obstacles and even flag small valuables.

"It doesn't get stuck on random boxes or obstacles, and it even tags small valuables it finds so they don't get lost in the shuffle," she said.

For Jessica Jones, another US user, the appeal lies elsewhere.

As her robot vacuum glides across the floor, she can use the device's camera to check on the foster kittens roaming around her home.

"Loving (the ability to) check in on my foster kittens while the machine does its cleaning thing!" she wrote in a social media post. "There are more and more features I'm discovering all the time, but pet mode is amazing!"



People watch as a cleaning robot navigates steps at the kiosk of Chinese technology company Dreame during the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, the United States, on Jan 7. Caroline Brehman / AFP

Technology reviewers have also been impressed by how much the latest generation of cleaning robots has evolved.

"What is also smart is that it adjusts how it cleans depending on the type of mess. So, wet messes and dry debris are not being treated the exact same way, and that makes the whole process feel much more hands-off," YouTube channel DailyTested said in a review.

All of these glowing testimonials refer to the latest product from Chinese manufacturer Narwal Robotics.

Launched in the US market in April and equipped with a dual-camera vision recognition system and an artificial intelligence-powered cleaning platform capable of adapting to different household environments, the product quickly topped Amazon US' new releases ranking and entered the top 10 robot vacuum category within 24 hours of launch.

The success is far from an isolated case.

As Chinese manufacturers continue to integrate artificial intelligence, advanced sensors and autonomous navigation into household devices, a growing number of domestically developed cleaning robots are finding enthusiastic buyers around the world.

See ***Tech,*** *page 3*



INSIDE
Shared Future
Global Views, page 8

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:37 PM

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

www.chinadailyglobal.com

A member of ANN

China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved
Vol.8 — No. 1854

INDEPTH

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:37 PM

Inbound tourism surges on curiosity about evolving China

Overseas visitors equally interested in country's rapid transformation as ancient marvels

By YANG FEIYUE
yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn



Foreign tourists visit the Temple of Heaven in Beijing on June 9. chen qiang / for china daily



Overseas visitors try Chinese kebabs while wandering through the historical alleys of Qianmen Street in Beijing on June 14. chen qiang / for china daily

Wolfgang Georg Arlt, a tourism expert from Germany, made his first trip to Beijing in 1978.

"There was almost no light at night," recalled Arlt, who has over 50 years of expertise, both academically and in practice, in tourism and hospitality. In the years since, he has watched China's tourism infrastructure improve steadily year after year, with better facilities and services.

In early June, he returned to the Chinese capital for a summit hosted by the World Tourism Cities Federation. During his stay, he was struck again by what he saw. But this time, it was by the smart infrastructure, services powered by artificial intelligence, and the gleaming skyline.

"No one back then could have imagined such development," said Arlt, executive director of the Meaningful Tourism Centre, based in London and Kathmandu.

As China evolves into one of the world's leading travel destinations, Arlt has also noticed a shift in the preferences of foreign travelers. "Tourism used to be about sightseeing, taking photos and shopping. Now people want to learn something and experience something," he said.

Technology has removed many of the old travel barriers. Instant translation services on a smartphone, for instance, mean no one needs to fear getting lost anymore, he added.

Active immersion

The shift from passive sightseeing to active immersion has been quietly reshaping China's inbound tourism industry.

On a March morning in suburban Beijing, Yang Li stood between a dozen foreign diplomats and a fully automated assembly line.

His job was to explain the factory's operations, but he soon realized the diplomats wanted China's overall transformation explained. "They were eager to know how the country built this," he recalled.

For nearly three decades, Yang had made his living explaining China's past — its dynasties, emperors, temples and ancient walls. Now, standing above a humming production floor where robotic arms moved in synchronization and driverless carts glided between workstations, he found himself explaining not just how the machines worked, but how China learned to produce them at scale.

The March visit had been arranged by China's Ministry of Culture and Tourism for foreign diplomats stationed in Beijing. "They didn't go to see the Great Wall. They came here to see why China can do this," he recalled.

For generations, China's inbound tourism narrative rested on familiar pillars: the Forbidden City, the Great Wall, the Terracotta Warriors. Visitors came to witness the remnants of an ancient civilization.

"Today, many international visitors no longer come only to admire China's past. They also want to understand its present — how factories operate, how cities function, how innovation is reshaping daily life and how traditions continue to evolve alongside rapid modernization," Yang said.

Spanish clients have asked to visit smart factories in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, while in Changsha, Hunan province, Romanian travel groups requested tours of electric vehicle production lines, he said.

A 2026 Trip.com Group survey of more than 500 inbound tourism operators found that nearly two-thirds identified meeting diverse visitor demands as their biggest challenge. More than 80 percent reported overseas visitors growing interest in experiences beyond traditional sightseeing.

Tour operator Li Jieming is based in Zhangjiajie, Hunan. The city's best-known attraction is the cluster of sandstone pillars that inspired the floating mountains in the film *Avatar*.

Three years ago, overseas visitors accounted for only a tiny share of his business. Today, they comprise around 60 percent.

The turning point came after China expanded visa-free entry policies for a growing number of countries in 2024.

"When I heard about the visa-free policy, I knew the number of inbound visitors would increase," Li said. "And Zhangjiajie already had something foreigners recognized — the *Avatar* mountains."

But his ability to seize the opportunity soon collided with new challenges: workers with foreign-language skills were scarce, and he had little overseas marketing experience.

Li began recruiting wherever he could find candidates — language schools, trading companies and returnees with international experience. His first international team consisted of just four people.

They posted videos of Zhangjiajie's landscapes on Facebook and handled inquiries one by one. Their first booking came from a Spanish couple who discovered the company online.

"We didn't make money on that booking," Li said with a laugh. "We just wanted to see if it could work."

By the spring of 2025, inquiries began arriving in waves. Today, Li's company employs more than 20 people serving international clients, and inbound tourism has become the core of the business.

Content upgrade

Many of the inquiries came from people who had never previously considered traveling to Zhangjiajie.

Some discovered Zhangjiajie through social media videos of the towering sandstone pillars. Others arrived after seeing short clips of local customs and village life.

The influx of visitors quickly taught Li another lesson: attracting international travelers was only the beginning.

"Many foreign visitors don't want to spend the entire day checking attractions off a list," he said. "They want to interact with people and understand local life."

At first, his team offered itineraries similar to those designed for domestic tourists. The results were mixed.

"That's when we realized we had to help those people understand a place beyond simply touting the landscape."

One European family initially planned a simple cable-car excursion. Instead, Li's team suggested a gentle rainforest hike. "The children could touch plants, look at insects and ask questions," Li said. "It turned out that the parents loved it."

They applied the same idea to cultural tourism.

Rather than limiting visitors to performances and demonstrations, Li's company incorporates hands-on experiences such as Tujia ethnic brocade weaving, the Baishou dance — a Tujia group dance often performed at festivals and celebrations — and traditional silverwork.



A foreign tourist browses items at a trendy toy store in Shanghai in May. chen haoming / xinhua



Tourists interact with robots at Unitree Robotics' flagship store in Beijing on June 2. ju huanzong / xinhua



A visitor poses for a photo in Shanghai Disney Resort on April 28. chen aiping / xinhua

"All those ensure our foreign guests don't just watch, but participate," he said.

Li mentioned a family from Germany that spent an afternoon learning Tujia brocade weaving.

"None of them had ever touched a loom before, and their finished cloth was uneven with imperfect patterns," he said. "But when the workshop ended, the mother got a bit misty-eyed and said it was something they made together, rather than simply a purchase."

For Li, the moment captured why so many travelers now seek experiences rather than attractions. "The mountains gave them a view," he said. "The weaving gave them a memory."

Deeper dive

Yang, one of China's first nationally certified gold tour guides, has witnessed nearly every stage of the industry's modern development.

The change, he said, has been particularly noticeable in recent years. "Before, visitors listened to whatever you told them. Now they ask why," he said.

At the Great Wall, foreign tourists' curiosity isn't restricted to basic questions about its length, age or the construction techniques of the structure.

Instead, they want to know why the Great Wall occupies such an important place in the Chinese identity, Yang said. "One visitor even asked why it appears in China's national anthem," he said.

Yang's explanation begins with the ancient beacon towers that once signaled danger along China's northern frontier, and ends with the phrase from the national anthem — "using our flesh and blood to build a new Great Wall" — showing how a military defense system gradually evolved into a national symbol of endurance and unity.

He said an increasing number of overseas visitors make sense of modern China by comparing it with their own country's culture and history.

Spanish travelers draw parallels between the Great Wall and the Alhambra, a palace and fortress complex in Granada, while visitors from Latin America connect Chinese history with their own experiences of colonialism and nation-building, he shared.

For guides, this means understanding not only China but also the perspectives visitors bring with them. "If you don't understand their cultural background, you can't make the comparison meaningful," Yang said.

One Spanish architect, for example, asked him why Chinese walls were built with rammed earth while Spanish fortresses used stone. Yang didn't have a textbook answer but replied: "Different threats. Different materials. Different emperors."

The visitor nodded, and Yang said that was the moment he understood his real job.

At the end of May, nearly 2,000 tourism executives and industry professionals from 67 countries and regions gathered along the Lijiang River in Guilin, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, for one of China's largest inbound tourism events hosted by the local government and Trip.com Group.

Actor and filmmaker Jackie Chan, recently named an inbound tourism ambassador by Trip.com Group, greeted the crowd.

"My mission used to be bringing Chinese films to the world," he said. "Now my mission is bringing the world to China."

A giant illuminated passport appeared in the night sky during a drone show. Moments later, a golden dragon flew through it as the words "VISA FREE" lit up the sky above the crowd.

The image captured one of the biggest changes driving China's inbound tourism recovery — the steady expansion of visa-free policies and the gradual removal of barriers that once discouraged international visitors.

New storytellers

Visa-free entry can open the door, but content determines whether people choose to walk through it, many industry operators said.

Trip.com chairman James Liang announced that the company aims to attract 200 million inbound visitors over the next five years.

The tourism industry has already begun to adapt. Nearly 90 percent of inbound tourism employees have received some form of professional training. New job categories are emerging, ranging from inbound travel "customizers" to multilingual "experience designers" and cross-cultural content creators.

Yet, the industry's response remains uneven. While nearly two-thirds of practitioners feel service expectations have grown more demanding, fewer than 15 percent said lack of training is the main problem.

To become an outstanding guide for international visitors takes five to 10 years, Yang said. "Language ability, cultural fluency and the confidence to navigate complex conversations cannot be developed overnight," he said, adding that demand for Spanish-speaking guides, for example, has surged in recent years.

Yang speaks English and Spanish, has studied abroad, and traveled extensively. Years of experience have allowed him to understand both his visitors and the country he represents.

"Because what visitors are really doing is not just asking for explanations — they are interpreting China through their own cultural references. You need to understand those reference points as well as your own, so your answers are framed with meaning," he explained.

Many of Li's employees are from language schools, training centers and international trading firms and have never worked in the tourism industry before.

"Their language skills promise immediate and effective communication with potential clients," Li said.

"But they have to work hard to learn what the city has to offer and be capable of answering sophisticated questions based on that expertise. What visitors increasingly seek is not information alone. They want context, comparison and stories."

Experienced guides consistently earn more than newcomers, while regular training improves both service quality and income, industry figures showed. But income instability remains a concern. Tourism is highly seasonal, and many practitioners experience large swings in earnings between peak and off-peak periods.

For all the optimism surrounding inbound tourism's resurgence, the industry's growing pains are real, Li said.

Yang said being a tour guide is about creating understanding, a role he believes AI can never fully replace.

"AI can translate accurately. It can provide information," he said. "But it cannot read a visitor's eyes. It cannot create emotional connection."

In his 50s, he is still very optimistic about the industry's prospects, as more inbound visitors are requesting his services to understand a country still being built.

The Great Wall remains. So does the Forbidden City. But alongside them, a new set of destinations is emerging: factory floors, heritage workshops, innovation hubs and village studios.

"They all hold great sway over inbound travelers' curiosity and need guides like us to lead the way," he said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:37 PM

TOP NEWS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:37 PM

Efforts: Policy continuity emphasized

From page 1

In the new era, poverty alleviation was pursued not as a short burst of assistance, but as a systematic effort carried out across regions, levels of government and successive stages of policy.

By 2021, China had secured a complete victory in the fight against absolute poverty. Under the current standard, all 98.99 million rural residents living in poverty had been lifted out of poverty, 832 impoverished counties, including Xingtang, had been removed from the poverty list, and 128,000 impoverished villages had shaken off poverty.

However, the achievement was not treated as the end of the task. Even before that milestone was reached, the central leadership had begun planning the next stage. At the Central Rural Work Conference in December 2020, Xi called for efforts to consolidate and expand poverty alleviation achievements and align them with rural vitalization, in order to ensure a smooth transition without gaps in work or policy support.

For long-term tasks, Xi has always stressed the need to maintain a strategic resolve and patience, and to follow through on sound blueprints with sustained effort. He once said that existing plans and arrangements should be carried forward from one term to the next if they are sound, suited to new practical requirements and in line with the people's aspirations.

Zheng Changzhong, a professor at Fudan University, said the experiences of Ningde, Xingtang and China's national poverty alleviation campaign all point to the same logic: Development cannot rely on a single push, and neither can governance performance be measured only by what is immediately visible.

What matters, Zheng said, is whether policies solve real problems, build lasting foundations and continue to benefit the people over time. He said this logic of sustained effort can be seen not only in poverty reduction, but also in broader development fields that require long-term planning, policy continuity and steady implementation.

Aisake Valu Eke, former prime minister of Tonga, said China's success in lifting nearly 100 million rural residents out of poverty was "a remarkable achievement for any country".

Eke said China's progress was supported by a system in which plans and strategies are developed by the CPC and carried out across different levels of government, from provinces and cities to villages.

Planning system hailed

Nur Rachmat Yulianto, professor of International Relations at Universitas Gadjah Mada in Indonesia, said China's five-year planning system, with its emphasis on long-term strategic planning and policy continuity, is one of the defining features of China's development.

He said that this approach enables China to pursue national goals while delivering immediate benefits to the people and advancing broader development objectives over time, a balance that can be seen in areas such as infrastructure, poverty alleviation, technological innovation, natural resource conservation and cultural heritage preservation.

"At the heart of this planning strategy and balance is sustainability," he said, adding that China has provided valuable experience for many countries, particularly those in the Global South.

Nichita Iris Liga, a member of the Executive Bureau of the Romanian Socialist Party, said that unlike some other countries, where systems and priorities may change every few years with electoral cycles, planning in China is not limited to a single five-year period, but is linked to longer-term goals, including the second centenary goal of building China into a great modern socialist country by the middle of the century.



A drone photo captures the spectacle of hundreds of horses galloping together on Saturday during the opening ceremony of the 2026 Zhaosu Tianma cultural tourism festival in Zhaosu county, Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. HU HUHU / XINHUA

Tradition wins big during holiday

By **ZOU SHUO**
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

Cultural experiences took center stage during the just-concluded Dragon Boat Festival holiday as people from across the country embarked on journeys in search of traditional festivities involving boat races, rituals and seasonal foods, travel agencies said.

Searches for keywords such as "Dragon Boat Festival", "dragon boat" and "*zongzi*" more than tripled from a month earlier on online travel platform Qunar, reflecting the growing appeal of tradition-infused travel and transforming the three-day break into a vibrant celebration of Chinese cultural heritage.

Meanwhile, searches for folk-culture tourism jumped 55 percent year-on-year, according to People's Daily Overseas Edition, citing online travel agency Mafengwo.

Dragon boat racing, the festival's most iconic tradition, has evolved from a spectator event into a participatory cultural attraction. Travel platform Ctrip reported that searches for "dragon boat" rose 41.3 percent week-on-week, with races proving to be a major tourism magnet.

Guangdong province led the trend. Travel-related searches for Foshan increased by 134.9 percent week-on-week, driven by the famed Diejiao dragon boat race, often hailed as the "F1 on water", Ctrip said.

A tourist from Shanxi province, who went to Foshan to see the Diejiao race, said the chants of the boatmen and the roar of the drums made it a spectacularly moving experience.

"No matter how exciting the video is, nothing beats the real experience. I could feel the vitality all around," she said.

Not only in Guangdong, dragon boat events boosted tourism nationwide. Searches for Jingzhou in Hubei province rose 87.5 percent week-on-week, while Zigui in the same province — the hometown of poet Qu Yuan — became a holiday hot spot thanks to its cultural festival, according to Ctrip.

Qu was a legendary poet and minister in the State of Chu during the Warring States Period (475-221 BC). He drowned himself in the Miluo River when he learned that the State of Chu was being defeated by the State of Qin. Legend has it that upon learning of Qu's death, locals took out boats to search for his body, dropping rice dumplings into the river to prevent the body from being eaten by fish. It is to honor this legend that Chinese people hold dragon boat races and make *zongzi* to eat during the festival.

There was huge demand for seasonal Dragon Boat Festival delicacies as well. According to Qunar, food lovers hit the road in droves in search of festive cuisines. Instead of debating on whether to sample sweet or savory rice dumplings known as *zongzi*, hundreds headed to Quanzhou, Fujian province, to sample Minnan-style braised pork *zongzi*, or to Guiyang in Guizhou province to try the unique Buyi ash *zongzi* mixed with plant-ash lye, it said.

Beyond *zongzi*, crayfish from Qianjiang, Hubei province, mackerel dumplings from Qingdao, Shandong province, and cold fermented noodle soup from Lanzhou, Gansu province, were also big draws for food connoisseurs who traveled thousands of miles just to sample the fare. According to Qunar, hotel occupancy in these foodie-friendly destinations — including Qianjiang, Qingdao, Lanzhou, Quanzhou and Guiyang — increased by more than 20 percent during the holiday.

The folk-culture fervor fuels local industries. Miluo in Hunan province — known as the "hometown of dragon boats" — is home to 20 boat-building factories with an annual turnover of more than 200 million yuan ($29.6 million), according to data from the local government.

The finals of the 2026 Hunan Dragon Boat Super League kicked off in Miluo on Thursday. A total of 38 top dragon boat teams from 14 cities and prefectures across the province gathered to compete in the two-day race. Through dragon boat racing and folk traditions, they celebrated the spirit of Qu Yuan and participated in a grand Dragon Boat Festival event that deeply integrated culture, tourism and sports.

One workshop in Luojiang township continued working through the holiday to meet rising orders. Likewise, a *zongzi* producer in Quzici township said the number of orders defied all predictions of a market downturn.

Since late April, the Quzici plant has run at full capacity. Local villager Weng Zhenggui, who lives just 400 meters away and works eight hours a day, made over 1,000 *zongzi* and earned up to 6,000 yuan per month.

The cooking and packing processes in the plant are automated, boosting daily output to 100,000 *zongzi* while ensuring consistent quality. "The automated system precisely controls temperature and pressure, saving labor and improving efficiency and taste consistency," said company chairman Wu Liman.

Inbound tourism showed strong growth during the holiday, with Fliggy reporting that bookings were up more than sixfold year-on-year.

Tech: Cleaning robot market enters new phase

From page 1

According to data from the General Administration of Customs, cleaning robots — added as a stand-alone customs classification this year — accounted for 7.75 billion yuan ($1.14 billion) in exports during the first quarter of this year, representing 68.5 percent of China's total robot export value.

In addition, out of total global shipments of 32.72 million units in 2025, Chinese manufacturers accounted for more than half of the global market, according to global market consultancy IDC, with Roborock, Ecovacs, Dreame, Xiaomi and Narwal occupying the top five positions globally in household cleaning robot production.

"The market has entered a new phase, characterized by the dominance of Chinese brands, rapid technological iteration and increasing segmentation across product categories," said Zhao Siquan, a senior analyst at IDC China.

Under IDC's definition, the broader cleaning robot sector encompasses robot vacuums, window-cleaning robots, lawn-mowing robots and pool-cleaning robots.

"Leveraging a complete supply chain, rapid product iteration capabilities and strengths in algorithms, Chinese manufacturers have expanded their presence across virtually all of these segments," Zhao said.

From cordless designs and AI-powered navigation to all-in-one docking stations and multidevice collaboration, many technologies that were first deployed at scale by Chinese manufacturers are now becoming industry standards, she added.

As competition intensifies, leading players are also broadening their ambitions. "Top manufacturers are evolving from single-category providers into full-scenario home service companies," Zhao said. "This is because, for consumers, cleaning is not an isolated need, but part of everyday household life. Companies that can deliver services across a wider range of home scenarios will have a greater opportunity to build stronger user engagement and long-term brand loyalty."

Delegations from US, Iran start talks

Meeting taking place in Switzerland amid renewed tensions over Strait of Hormuz

By **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong and **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE

Inside
Editorial, **page 6**

Delegations from the United States, Iran and regional mediators have started talks in Burgenstock, Switzerland, with an aim to advance the Memorandum of Understanding signed between Washington and Tehran last week, with analysts saying that Lebanon constitutes the "greatest test" for the talks.

The high-level meeting is taking place amid renewed tensions over the Strait of Hormuz following conflicting accounts from Iran and the US, and with Tehran accusing Washington and Tel Aviv of truce violations amid continued violence in Lebanon. Israel and Hezbollah renewed their truce on Friday.

Qatari Foreign Ministry spokesman Majed Al-Ansari said on Sunday that the parties to the meeting in Switzerland had established technical groups to negotiate the terms of a final peace deal between Tehran and Washington, which is due within 60 days of negotiations.

Specialized technical groups have been formed to "negotiate the terms of a final agreement, which will cover all aspects of the memorandum of understanding", Al-Ansari told the Qatar News Agency.

Meanwhile, Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency reported on Sunday that the country will not reopen the Strait of Hormuz if the war in Lebanon is not ended, citing a source close to the Iranian negotiating team.

The source warned that if Israel's "crimes" in Lebanon continue, and Lebanon's territorial integrity is not guaranteed, Iran will hold no negotiation on other issues.

The Iranian delegation, led by Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, arrived in Switzerland on Saturday.

Speaking to the Islamic Republic News Agency, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei said that the ongoing conflict in Lebanon between Israel and Hezbollah, frozen Iranian funds and the sale of the country's oil will top the agenda in talks with the US in Switzerland.

Trita Parsi, executive vice-president of the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, told Al Jazeera that "Lebanon has always been the greatest vulnerability to this deal because this is really crucial to the Iranians".

Ryan Costello, the policy director at the National Iranian American Council, also said Lebanon poses the "greatest test" for the ceasefire deal. "I would not be surprised at all if there is a breakdown in the broader negotiations," he was quoted as saying by Al Jazeera.

Prior to departing for Burgenstock, US Vice-President JD Vance said that success in Switzerland starts with establishing the structure of the negotiations, as US and Iranian officials begin the next phase of talks.

He said the focus will be on making progress on Iran's nuclear program and the Lebanon ceasefire, while technical teams remain on the ground to work through the details, Fox News reported.

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said in a post on social media platform X on Saturday that in his call with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, they agreed that the next phase of negotiations "must remain anchored in a firm commitment to dialogue and diplomacy, along with vigilance against any attempts that could undermine the peace process".

Sharif is also in Switzerland for the high-level meeting, along with Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir.

Israeli airstrikes killed at least seven people and wounded one in eastern and southern Lebanon, Lebanon's National News Agency reported on Sunday. On Saturday, Israeli attacks killed 16 people and wounded 12 in Nabatieh district in the south of the country, Al Jazeera reported, citing the Lebanese Civil Defense agency.

An Israel Defense Forces soldier was killed during an alleged attack by Hezbollah on Saturday morning, The Times of Israel reported.

Xinhua contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at jan@chinadailyapac.com

Growing star



Visitors take photos of Satrio Wiratama, nicknamed "Rio", the first giant panda cub to be born in Indonesia, during a public viewing at Taman Safari Indonesia in Cisarua on Saturday. Born on Nov 27 and weighing just 200 grams at birth, Rio has grown into a healthy 11-kilogram male giant panda. Tatan Syuflana / AP

Cooperation: Innovation focus creates fresh opportunities

From page 1

Areas such as semiconductors, batteries, artificial intelligence, advanced manufacturing and the digital economy provide vast opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation. As both countries pursue innovation-driven growth strategies, new possibilities for industrial and technological collaboration continue to emerge.

More important, the realities of today's global economy demonstrate that sustainable development cannot be achieved through zero-sum approaches. Global supply chains are deeply interconnected, and economic instability in one country inevitably affects neighboring economies and the wider international community. In this regard, China-South Korea economic cooperation is not simply a bilateral matter; it is closely linked to the stability and prosperity of Northeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific region as a whole.

Particularly noteworthy is the fact that China is actively pursuing high-quality development centered on technological innovation, while South Korea is strengthening its competitiveness in cutting-edge industries and future technologies. These parallel efforts create valuable opportunities for cooperation.

In practical terms, bilateral cooperation should increasingly focus on joint research and development, investment in future industries, green transformation, digital collaboration and talent exchanges.

The recovery and expansion of people-to-people exchanges is equally important. Economic cooperation cannot be sustained solely through agreements between governments. Long-term stability in bilateral relations depends on active engagement among business leaders, young people, academic communities and cultural sectors.

Naturally, China-South Korea relations still face various challenges. Changes in the international environment, security concerns and intensified competition in certain industries may continue to create pressure on bilateral ties. However, what matters most is how those differences are managed and how areas of common interest can continue to expand.

Today, the Asia-Pacific region stands at the center of global economic growth. The future prosperity of the region is closely linked to the quality of cooperation among its major economies.

From this perspective, China and South Korea should look beyond a bilateral framework and pursue cooperation from the broader standpoint of regional prosperity and global stability.

Now is the time for the two nations to elevate their relationship into a more resilient, forward-looking and mutually beneficial partnership.

The author is chairman of the Korea-China Global Association in Seoul. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

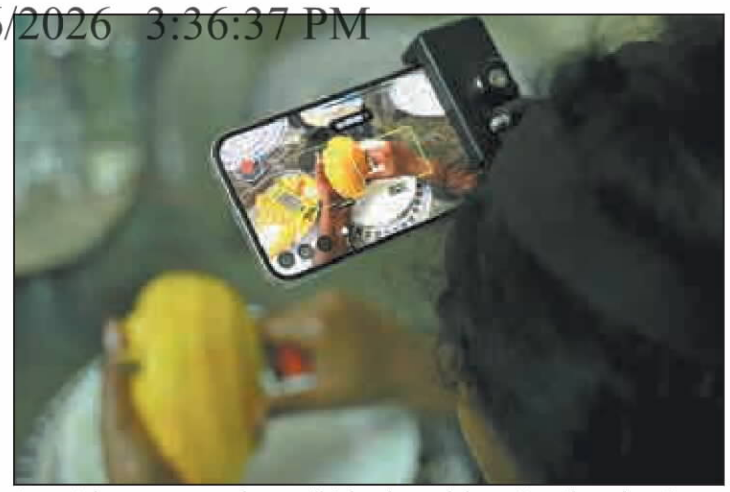
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:37 PM

GLOBAL LENS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:37 PM



A housewife wears a smartphone on her head as she records her actions through motion capture while slicing mangos at her home in Chennai, India, on May 15. photos by R. Satish BABU / AFP



A smartphone screen on a housewife's head records her actions through motion capture while she is slicing mangos at her home in Chennai, India, on May 15.



A housewife wears a smartphone on her head as she records her actions through motion capture while watering plants at her home in Chennai, India, on May 15.



Workers wear cameras on their heads while recording actions through motion capture inside a factory in Tamil Nadu, India, on May 13.



A worker wears a camera to record actions through motion capture while arranging colored blocks at an AI data company in Tamil Nadu, India, on May 13.

Robot mentoring

Indian housewives with phones on their heads train humanoids that will perform household jobs in future

With a smartphone strapped to her head, Indian housewife Nagireddy Sriramyachandra films herself slicing mangos to train AI-powered robots to take on household jobs in the future.

Earning just over $2 for an hour of video, her mundane recordings are invaluable for global tech companies teaching machines how to move like humans in the real world.

The 25-year-old is one of a growing army of thousands of AI system trainers in India.

"Who else will give you 250 rupees ($2.64) an hour just for doing housework?" said Sriramyachandra from her kitchen in Chennai in southern India's Tamil Nadu state.

"I may get a robot myself in the future," she said.

AI chatbots and image generators crunch reams of digital data, but building systems to navigate real-life environments is more challenging.

Developers think feeding first-person footage, called "egocentric data", into specialized AI models will help robots copy humans.

Some AI trainers work at home, others in factories or specialized studios — using video glasses, head-mounted cameras and motion sensors.

"It blares 'hands not detected' when I'm not recording properly," said Sriramyachandra, who sends recordings via a special app to the AI data company Objectways.

The humanoid robot market is booming, with investment bank Morgan Stanley predicting there could be over a billion in use by 2050, mostly for industrial and commercial purposes.

"Folding clothes, coffee-making ... cooking a very specific thing, sandwich-making," Objectways head Ravi Shankar said, listing videos requested by clients.





From top: A worker wears a camera to record her actions through motion capture at an AI data company in Tamil Nadu, India, on May 13. Data is acquired through motion capture at the AI data company in Tamil Nadu.

"Some jobs are supposed to be taken over, so humans can go and do better things."

In India, the emerging field of spatial AI is providing new employment.

"It's likely that these data collection services will increase," said digital labor expert Aditi Surie, from the Indian Institute for Human Settlements in Bengaluru.

At an Objectways studio, AI system trainers film themselves performing household tasks in fake, fully furnished apartment rooms.

After several thousand hours of filming, the wallpaper is changed to provide clients with variety.

"Today I sit here, tomorrow I stand there," said engineering graduate Rani N., 21, on a break from filming herself, once again, folding a towel.

Each video lasts about four minutes, and she records around 90 a day — on nearly every conceivable spot on the bed.

She says the job is "tolerable", but feels like she's always wearing a camera.

In other rooms, colleagues arranged pencil sharpeners, water bottles and crayons in patterns, recording with depth-sensor cameras.

Qanat Consulting Services in Andhra Pradesh, an Objectways subcontractor, supplies about a dozen larger data firms with recordings. Some of its 2,000 contributors perform tasks with motion-sensor bands on their "wrists, hands and legs", CEO Thaslim Pattan said.

Manish Agarwal of Bengaluru-based Humyn Labs records conversations as well as videos.

Contributors discuss assigned topics — ranging from politics to entertainment — for clients wanting to process speech patterns. Agarwal denies that robots will steal jobs, believing that networks of humans and robots "will work together" one day, he said.

"A welder in India could be managing a welder-robot in Prague," he said.

Agencies via Xinhua



A worker wearing a camera on his head records actions through motion capture while filling water bottles inside a model kitchen at an AI data company in Tamil Nadu, India, on May 13.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:37 PM



Engineers compile data from cameras recording actions through motion capture at an AI data company in Tamil Nadu, India, on May 13.

WORLD

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:37 PM

'China Shock' seen as cover of protectionism

Western framing undermines multilateral trading system, drives up costs: Experts

By **YANG RAN**
yangran1@chinadaily.com.cn

In response to growing rhetoric from the West over the so-called China Shock 2.0, experts say this narrative serves primarily as a political shield for protectionist policies rather than an objective economic assessment.

They warn that such framing could undermine the multilateral trading system and drive up global costs. Rather than viewing China's industrial advancement with hostility, those nations should instead adopt a more sophisticated collaborative mindset, leveraging China's robust supply capabilities to generate shared global benefits, experts urged.

During the three-day G7 summit concluded on Wednesday, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said, without naming China directly at first, that "some countries produce too much and do not consume enough", claiming it has been "increasingly dangerous for the stability of the global economy". She then explicitly singled out China, labeling its trade surplus with the European Union "unsustainable".

Her remarks mirror the "China Shock 2.0" narrative that has been gaining traction. Last month, the Centre for European Reform, a Europe-based think tank, published a report claiming that "a new China Shock is reverberating across global goods markets". During the G7 summit, many Western media outlets also leveraged this narrative to justify trade policies targeting China.

Jian Junbo, director of the Center for China-Europe Relations at Fudan University's Institute of International Studies, pointed out that the "China Shock" narrative largely focuses on the alleged trade imbalances, specifically concerning China's goods trade surplus with the West.

Sun Chenghao, head of the US-Europe Program at Tsinghua University's Center for International Security and Strategy, noted that the recent Western hype around the so-called China Shock 2.0 is in essence a political construct. "It layers together Western anxieties over lost industrial competitiveness, the rising costs of a green transition, and a broader strategic competition with China. They reframed these issues into a 'security threat' narrative, repackaging for public consumption."

The original "China Shock" thesis, coined by Western economists, argued that China's post-WTO export boom disrupted US labor markets.

Sun said that the underlying logic of the current version hasn't changed much. "Both versions externalize the internal challenges of Western economies — industrial restructuring, income inequality, and technological competitive pressures — and blame them on Chinese manufacturing."

Tu Xinquan, dean of the China Institute for WTO Studies at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing, agreed. He said the so-called China Shock is simply a natural outcome of market economics and competition.

"Developed countries have grown accustomed to holding the technological upper hand for decades," Tu said. "Now, when they face a real competitor, they seem reluctant to embrace the free market principles they've preached for decades."

Far from being a detriment, experts said that China's industrial upgrading, which offers high-tech products at lower costs, is a boon for the global economy, enhancing world productivity and welfare.

James Pethokoukis, a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, a Washington-based think tank, highlighted this positive impact in a December article published on the organization's website.

He noted that while China's rapid growth reduced the US' share of the global GDP, it simultaneously helped US consumers by making a wide range of goods cheaper to buy and easier for US companies to produce. The US, he concluded, became "absolutely richer" even as it appeared "relatively smaller, economy-wise".

Benefiting the world

"China's massive, integrated production capacity, combined with intense domestic competition, allows it to produce high-tech goods at remarkably low cost," said Tu. "This, in fact, benefits the entire world, as it significantly lowers product prices, thereby enhancing their accessibility and affordability. This is particularly evident in renewable energy products, including solar power, wind energy, and electric vehicles."

Official data shows that Chinese wind turbines, solar panels, and new energy vehicle products are exported to over 200 countries and regions globally, driving down global wind and solar power generation costs by over 60 percent and 80 percent, respectively.

Sun warned that the West's pan-securitization of normal industrial competition would, in the long run, escalate global production costs, diminish consumer welfare, fragment supply chains, and further erode the WTO-centered multilateral trading system.

Against this backdrop, experts advocate a more rational and objective perspective on China's industrial and economic development, urging exploration of international cooperation for global prosperity.

Jian from Fudan University said, "What they call a shock is really just competitive pressure, which is inherently beneficial for the growth and prosperity of the global market." Blocking such normal competition, he argued, would be detrimental to overall economic development.

"In this context, it is crucial to view this competition rationally and objectively, embracing a market-oriented mindset and promoting self-growth through cooperation with the competitors," he said.

Off track



Two freight train cars hang off of a bridge, partially blocking a road in Munich, Germany, on Saturday. Ehsan Monajati via AP

Streets under smoke



A firefighter walks down the street as a massive warehouse fire at a cold storage facility continues to burn and spread smoke around Los Angeles, California, on Saturday. Mario Tama / AFP

Instability reshapes global supply chains

By **RENA LI** in Los Angeles
renali@chinadailyusa.com

Business leaders and logistics executives said global supply chains are adapting to a more complex trade environment shaped by geopolitical tensions, evolving tariff policies and shifting trade patterns, while emphasizing the continued importance of long-term planning and international commerce.

Speaking at a news briefing hosted by the Port of Los Angeles, Gene Seroka, executive director of the port, and Dan Letter, chief executive officer of Prologis, the world's largest logistics real estate company, discussed how companies are navigating uncertainty while maintaining investments in logistics infrastructure, warehousing and trade-related operations.

The discussion came as businesses continue to assess the implications of recent developments in global trade and geopolitics, including ceasefire negotiations involving Iran and the United States, ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and Europe, and evolving China-US trade relations.

Seroka said a proposed reopening of the Strait of Hormuz could help ease pressure on energy markets and improve business confidence, although he cautioned that a memorandum of understanding involving the US and Iran remains only a framework for further negotiations.

"Twenty percent of the world's energy products flow through that strait," Seroka said. If the Iran situation further eases as expected, "we could see oil prices continue their decline, inflation possibly easing over the weeks and months ahead, and shipping confidence could begin to return".

He noted that the waterway normally accommodates more than 100 vessel crossings daily, but warned that shipping companies are unlikely to resume normal operations immediately.

"Crew safety remains the priority," Seroka said. "Even with a possible reopening, it will take months to normalize schedules, get supply chains back to some semblance of normalcy and clear backlogs."

Despite recent disruptions, Seroka said conversations with port operators and industry partners in Asia suggest that cargo flows remain resilient. He added that easing bunker fuel prices and improving confidence could provide additional support for trade volumes in the months ahead.

Turning to China-US trade relations, Seroka said recent discussions were a positive signal, but businesses want clearer direction.

Positive sign

"It's certainly positive when the leaders of the world's two largest economies sit down to negotiate," Seroka said, adding that while businesses are encouraged by the continued engagement, many companies are still seeking greater policy clarity as they make long-term decisions related to trade, investment and supply chains.

China remains one of the Port of Los Angeles' largest trading partners. According to port data, China-related cargo has historically accounted for a significant share of container volumes moving through the Southern California gateway, making developments in bilateral trade relations closely watched by logistics providers, retailers and manufacturers.

Seroka said uncertainty surrounding tariffs continues to influence business decisions. While discussions have included potential opportunities for increased US agricultural exports, including beef and soybeans, he noted that market conditions remain challenging.

He pointed out that Brazil and Argentina have expanded their presence in China's soybean market in recent years, making it more difficult for US exporters to quickly regain market share.

"Once overseas buyers establish new sourcing relationships, it can take a lot of time to win that business back," he said.

Companies are also monitoring upcoming tariff deadlines and potential new trade measures, prompting many businesses to shorten planning horizons and adjust inventory strategies.

"This is the new reality of doing business in today's trade environment," Seroka said.

Letter from Prologis said supply chains have become more resilient after navigating years of disruptions, including rising interest rates, geopolitical tensions and global conflicts.

"Our customers have been digesting all of these issues, and we're seeing them again make decisions," Letter said. "They're making these five-plus-year decisions with us."

Report: UK PM Starmer could resign

LONDON — United Kingdom's Prime Minister Keir Starmer was expected to resign on Monday and set out a timetable for his departure, according to The Observer, a local newspaper.

However, UK Business Secretary Peter Kyle said on Sunday that the news of Starmer's quitting is speculation. He added that Starmer is "making time to reflect on the political realities, challenges and opportunities that he finds himself in".

The threat to Starmer's position, which has been building for months, increased sharply on Friday when his rival Andy Burnham won a seat in Parliament that would allow him to launch a formal leadership challenge.

The Observer, which did not name its sources, said Starmer had reached the conclusion that his position was no longer tenable after speaking to cabinet ministers, advisers, donors and trade union leaders.

Starmer led the center-left Labour Party to a landslide election win in 2024 but has become deeply unpopular after a series of scandals and policy U-turns that have given many voters an impression that he cannot deliver on improving their standards of living that he promised.

If he were to quit or be ousted, it would mean the country installing its seventh prime minister in just over a decade — the highest turnover in nearly two centuries, reflective of anger at successive governments' failures to improve public services and tackle issues like illegal immigration.

More than 100 elected lawmakers in Starmer's party — roughly a quarter of all Labour representatives in the House of Commons — have publicly said they want him to quit or set out a timetable for his exit, according to a Reuters tally.

Burnham, until last week the mayor of Greater Manchester, decisively won the seat of Makerfield in northwestern England in a special election on Thursday. He took almost 55 percent of the 45,510 votes cast, over 9,000 more than the Reform UK runner-up.

Burnham did not immediately make a formal challenge to Starmer but used his victory address to promise a new path for the country.

Starmer congratulated Burnham on Friday but said he would fight any challenge to his leadership and urged Labour not to tear itself apart with infighting.

But Charlie Falconer, a senior Labour member of the House of Lords, said on Saturday that Starmer has "absolutely no authority" left.

"There should be an agreed transition process in which Andy and Keir cooperate as to when the handover should take place," he said.

Agencies via Xinhua

Intra-Asian travel viewed as opportunity amid tensions

By **YANG HAN** in Hong Kong and **LEONARDUS JEGHO** in Jakarta

Turmoil in the Middle East has reshaped the global travel landscape. Long-haul travel is among the hardest hit, while intra-regional travel could become a bright spot for many tourism-dependent Asian economies, according to industry analysts.

Citing the situation in the Middle East, the Tourism Authority of Thailand slashed its forecast for long-haul arrivals this year from 11 million to 10 million, according to a report by The Nation on June 17.

However, arrivals from nearby markets such as China saw a strong recovery with Chinese tourists arrivals jumping 18.35 percent to 2.3 million. The number of Indian tourist arrivals also increased by 8 percent to about 1 million, the report said.

Paul Edmundus Talo, director of Floressa Bali Tours and Bali Flores Adventure, told China Daily that the conflict in the Middle East had affected international flight services, created a sense of uncertainty among travelers, and contributed to higher airfares.

Airfares for flights between Asia and Europe have hiked after the US-Israeli war on Iran began in late February.

According to an analysis by FlightsFinder.com in March, fares on direct routes between Asia and Europe surged by nearly 300 percent, meaning travelers would need to pay up to $2,330 more for the same flight.

Growth potential

Gary Bowerman, managing director of the weekly industry newsletter Asia Travel Re:Set, said that it is still unclear how consumers will respond to the challenges ahead, but Asian tourism still holds strong growth potential.

Bowerman said intra-regional demand has become a significant force for Asia's tourism recovery, and he expects regional travel in Southeast Asia and the broader Asia-Pacific to remain strong.

But currency volatility, rising interest rates, and higher living costs could weigh on travel at the margins, he said, noting the war in the Middle East will have strong residual effects for some regional economies in the second half of 2026.

"Destinations across the region must continue to diversify their visitor mixes to build more resilience in the future," said Bowerman.

Some Southeast Asian countries have pinned their hopes on the Chinese market with targeted campaigns.



A Chinese tourist wearing a Thai traditional costume poses for photos at Wat Pho Temple in Bangkok on May 5. RUNGROJ YONGRIT / EPA

Thai tourism authorities are planning to attract 7.5 million Chinese visitors in 2026. Apart from marketing through social media platforms, it also plans to build on the popularity of the Chinese film *Dear You* to increase interest in locations where the film was shot.

On June 15, Cambodia launched a four-month visa-free trial for Chinese tourists with multiple entries, its largest source of international visitors. The government said it aims to boost tourism recovery, according to the Khmer Times.

As tourist arrivals drop in Siem Reap Province, Khiev Thy, president of the Siem Reap Angkor Guides Association, said the visa exemption will play an important role in attracting Chinese tourists.

In Bali, the popular Indonesian tourism destination has quickly adjusted its strategy to prioritize the development of the Chinese market in response to the loss of Western tourists, said Ye Lu, head of the China market of the Bali Tourism Board, also founder of the Bali Mandarin Center.

Measures include simplified visas, increased direct flights, training for Chinese-speaking guides, and widespread acceptance of Alipay and WeChat Pay to fill the tourist gap, Ye said.

Leonardus Jegho is a freelance journalist for China Daily.

Contact the writers at kelly@chinadailyapac.com

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:37 PM

COMMENT

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:37 PM

Editorials

Brussels' protectionist moves risk being costly backfiring gamble to EU

If a trade surplus is automatically interpreted as proof of unfairness, then many European Union exports — from automobiles to pharmaceuticals — could be subjected to the same logic elsewhere.

The EU justifies its trade surplus with the United States as a natural outcome of market forces, even as Washington accuses it of exploiting the US market. Yet, in a striking double standard, the EU now adopts the same logic in reverse. Framing its trade deficit with China as evidence of "victimhood", while overlooking the very market dynamics it so readily champions elsewhere.

The EU often lectures the world about the virtues of open markets, rules-based trade and economic integration. Yet Brussels' proposed Industrial Accelerator Act, along with other bills and policies, suggests that the bloc is increasingly tempted to abandon the very principles that helped build its prosperity.

Presented as a tool to "strengthen industrial competitiveness" and "accelerate the green transition", the IAA carries a less advertised objective: reducing China's role in Europe's strategic industries. Through public procurement restrictions, enhanced foreign investment screening and various "Made in Europe" preferences, the legislation marks a shift from openness toward industrial protectionism. It is nothing but an EU adaptation of "America First".

That is precisely why the concerns submitted by the China Chamber of Commerce to the EU on Thursday deserve serious consideration. The chamber, representing more than 1,000 Chinese enterprises operating in the EU, argues that several provisions of the IAA create legal uncertainty. More important, they threaten to make the EU's green transition slower and more expensive rather than faster and more competitive.

EU policymakers should realize that engaging with China brings opportunities to global enterprises. Multinational corporations are no longer peripheral players in China — they are integral to its industrial ecosystem. This is reflected in the numbers: foreign direct investment in the world's second-largest economy has topped $100 billion annually for 16 years running.

According to a report released at the seventh Qingdao Multinationals Summit on Tuesday, the surveyed multinational corporations in China allocated 14.3 percent of their global R&D spending to the country last year. At the same time, new foreign-invested enterprises in scientific research and technical services jumped 27.2 percent year-on-year to 14,000 — underscoring a deepening technological embrace of the Chinese market.

Divorced from the reality, however, the language of "de-risking", "reducing dependency" and correcting "trade imbalances" has become increasingly commonplace among some of the EU's political circles. Recent discussions among EU leaders have focused heavily on developing new restrictive trade instruments targeting China.

International trade is a matter of mutual choice. EU consumers purchase Chinese goods and EU companies source from Chinese supply chains because they are efficient and offer cost-performance advantages.

Trade balances are the outcome of market forces, industrial structures and consumer preferences. China has never deliberately sought a trade surplus with the EU. Treating a trade deficit as evidence of "economic victimhood" is a dangerous oversimplification.

The EU's competitiveness challenges stem from high energy costs, sluggish productivity growth, fragmented capital markets and regulatory burdens. Restricting Chinese investment will not solve these problems. Nor will excluding Chinese companies from procurement projects make European companies globally competitive.

Instead, it will lead to retaliatory measures, uncertainty and lost opportunities. China has made clear that it will take necessary measures to safeguard its legitimate rights and interests should discriminatory restrictions become EU policy.

But a more constructive path remains available. Despite growing tensions, China and the EU continue to maintain regular communication on economic and trade issues, as He Yadong, spokesman for China's Ministry of Commerce, said on Thursday. The talks in Brussels on June 9 between Ling Ji, vice-minister of commerce and deputy international trade representative of China, and Ditte Juul Jorgensen, director-general for trade and economic security at the European Commission, were "in-depth and comprehensive" and had helped lay the groundwork for ministerial consultations to be held soon, the Commerce Ministry spokesman added.

The ministerial consultations deserve strengthening to deepen mutual understanding.

A comprehensive and objective perspective is essential for the EU in managing its economic ties with China. Past efforts to resolve disputes, from electric vehicles to steel, have consistently shown that negotiation is the rational way forward in addressing bilateral trade frictions.

Should Brussels double down on a de facto "EU First" agenda, it may end up undermining the competitiveness it purports to protect. And when the dust settles, it will be EU businesses, consumers and future industrial strength that pay the price.

All relevant parties must uphold MoU terms

The signing of the first-phase Memorandum of Understanding between the United States and Iran offers not only hope for a ceasefire but also for further negotiations aimed at achieving lasting peace.

As the international community watches closely, it is imperative that all parties involved, including Israel, commit to upholding this agreement and work diligently toward regional stability.

The text of the MoU covers several key areas, including the cessation of hostilities, maritime security and navigation, reconstruction and economic assistance, sanctions relief, nuclear-related commitments and an executive mechanism. It states that the two sides commit to negotiating and achieving the final deal in a maximum of 60 days, extendable with mutual consent.

But the road to peace is rarely straight. Iran's announcement that it would close the Strait of Hormuz, citing Israel's continued attacks in Lebanon as a violation of the ceasefire deal, underscores the challenges in implementing the MoU.

The US-Iran negotiations that are scheduled to open in Burgenstock, Switzerland, are a testament to both parties' willingness to carry on the momentum of the MoU to continue dialogue. But much remains to be done to hold up the current fragile ceasefire and lay the groundwork for a final agreement.

The central question now is whether the US has both the genuine willingness and the practical capability to rein in Israel — especially given that Tel Aviv has made clear its determination to act of its own accord.

While Israel has agreed to a ceasefire in Lebanon, its refusal to withdraw from Lebanon poses a continued threat to peace. Reportedly, Israel is conducting negotiations with the US on maintaining its deployment of troops in southern Lebanon. For the MoU to succeed, Israel must cease its attacks and withdraw its forces, creating an environment conducive to negotiations.

Given the current challenges in implementing the 14-point memorandum and the fragile nature of the US-Iran ceasefire, the US-Iran negotiations, which were originally supposed to focus on the Iran nuclear issue, might now include discussions on the Lebanon ceasefire and the Strait of Hormuz.

The US-Iran talks may be in the spotlight, but their fate will be decided in the US-Israel negotiations. Tehran's revival of the Strait of Hormuz threat was to prompt the US to restrain Israel. The success of the talks in Switzerland hinges on the ability of all parties to adhere to their commitments and avoid actions that could derail the process.

China hopes that both the US and Iran will approach the second-phase negotiations with a rational and pragmatic attitude, working together toward positive outcomes.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said at a regular news briefing on Thursday that China welcomes the signing of the MoU and hopes that all relevant parties "will uphold the spirit of contract and implement it in good faith".

Beijing has been working for an end to the fighting since the outbreak of the conflict, demonstrating its commitment to peace through various diplomatic initiatives. The four-point proposal it put forward outlines a clear vision for safeguarding peace and stability, emphasizing good neighborliness, development, security and cooperation.

The path to lasting peace in the Middle East is fraught with challenges, but the MoU between the US and Iran offers a glimmer of hope as it provides the scaffolding for talks to end the conflict. For this hope to be translated into reality, all parties, including Israel, must prioritize peace and stability.

China stands ready to support these efforts, but the success of the forthcoming negotiations depends on the willingness of the parties directly involved to approach discussions with rationality and pragmatism.

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

New measures to enhance data security governance

China's digital economy has entered a stage in which data have become a key factor of production, an important strategic resource and a vital driver of innovation. Against this backdrop the release of measures to assess network data security risks marks a key step in strengthening the country's data security governance framework.

The measures, released on Thursday, will come into force on Aug 20. They aim to provide a systematic framework for identifying, analyzing and evaluating risks associated with network data and data-processing activities. The regulations require handlers of important data to conduct annual risk assessments while encouraging processors of general data to carry out assessments at least once every three years. They also establish clearer responsibilities for regulators, enterprises and third-party assessment institutions.

Since the enactment of the Data Security Law in 2021 and the issuance of regulations on network data security management, China has steadily built a comprehensive system for governing data resources. Yet a key question remained: how can enterprises effectively identify risks before incidents occur? The new measures answer that question by institutionalizing risk assessment as a routine and preventive mechanism. They transform data security governance from a reactive model focused on incident response into a proactive model centered on risk prevention and early warning.

The rapid expansion of artificial intelligence, cloud computing, industrial internet platforms and cross-border data flows has increased the complexity of data governance. As digital technologies penetrate every sector of the economy, data-related risks can quickly evolve into broader economic and social risks if left unchecked. The new measures therefore serve as an institutional safeguard for the high-quality development of the sectors concerned.

For industries and enterprises, the effect will be both immediate and long term.

For sectors that process large volumes of important data — including telecommunications, finance, energy, transportation, healthcare and industrial manufacturing — the measures will accelerate the establishment of more mature data governance systems. Enterprises will need to strengthen internal controls, improve data inventories, clarify data classification mechanisms and enhance monitoring of the entire data life cycle. While compliance costs may rise in the short term, the long-term benefits will include stronger resilience against cyberattacks, data leaks and operational disruptions.

The regulations are also expected to create new opportunities for China's cybersecurity and compliance service industries. By permitting enterprises to engage qualified third-party institutions to conduct assessments, the measures are likely to stimulate demand for professional services in risk evaluation, auditing, consulting, certification and security technology solutions. The development of a more standardized assessment ecosystem will further support the growth of specialized service providers and encourage technological innovation in data protection.

Importantly, the measures do not signal tighter restrictions on data utilization. Rather, they embody China's long-standing approach of balancing development and security. The objective is not to impede data circulation, but to create a more predictable and trustworthy environment in which data can be developed, shared and utilized safely. By clarifying assessment requirements and reducing uncertainty, the measures can help lower compliance burdens for many enterprises while enhancing confidence in data-driven innovation.

In an era when data security has become closely linked with economic security, social stability and national competitiveness, building robust risk management mechanisms is a must. The newly released measures represent important progress in China's effort to modernize data governance. By placing risk assessment at the forefront of security management, the country can lay a stronger foundation for the healthy growth of its digital economy.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

'Employment first' the key for social development

Editor's note: *China has issued an implementation plan for its employment-first strategy during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period. China Media Group spoke to Zhang Chenggang, director of the research center for new forms of employment at Capital University of Economics and Business, on the goals, major tasks and policy measures for promoting high-quality and full employment. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

It is necessary to promote the quality and effectiveness of the service sector, which is the largest source of employment and offers a highly diverse range of jobs with varying entry requirements. Broadly speaking, it can be viewed from two perspectives — producer services and consumer services.

Producer services encompass the modern services that support manufacturing, such as finance, technology services and human resources services. Upgrading and expanding this sector hinges on whether it can generate a large number of high-value, well-paid jobs and continuously strengthen its competitiveness.

Consumer services account for a significant share of employment. In the past, many segments of the sector were characterized by small-scale and fragmented entities, uneven standards and relatively low entry barriers, resulting in wide variations in workforce quality.

The expansion of consumer services should be driven by organizations, enterprises and platforms that help raise service quality. Higher standards and better service quality will translate into an improved experience for consumers. In short, both producer and consumer services need to achieve growth in both quantity and quality.

A key message of the plan is that China must not only expand opportunities but also address existing shortcomings.

Expanding opportunities means continuing to support the development of new forms of employment and allowing the growth of the platform economy to play a greater role across both consumer and producer services. This, in turn, will create a wider variety of jobs, giving workers more choices and career paths.

At the same time, shortcomings in two key areas must be addressed. The first is social protection. Measures are needed to increase participation in social insurance among flexible workers and those in new forms of employment, while making enrollment more convenient. Occupational injury insurance should also be expanded to cover a broader range of workers in flexible employment.

The second area is public services. Service networks should become more extensive, ensuring that basic urban public services reach flexible workers and those engaged in new forms of employment. This will help them integrate more fully into urban life and share in the benefits of development.

It is also important to improve the alignment between educational provision and labor market demand. The establishment of a national big-data platform for talent demand will make workforce needs more visible and provide a stronger basis for educational institutions to adjust their academic programs.

A second priority is strengthening vocational education so that it becomes a respected pathway for career development rather than being viewed as a secondary option.

Also, academic disciplines must be adjusted in line with evolving industry needs. Educational institutions should closely follow the development of strategic emerging industries and future industries. Only by training people according to what the country and the market need can the education system better support economic and social development.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

China Daily USA
A00 Broadway, Suite 2400, New York, NY 10036
+1 212 537 8888
editor@chinadailyusa.com

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:37 PM

VIEWS

Sun Zhuangzhi

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:37 PM

Remember past to safeguard future

A correct understanding of World War II history is necessary so that mistakes of the past are not repeated and both China and Russia are deeply committed to ensuring this. In a joint statement issued in May, both countries reaffirmed the commitment to safeguarding the outcomes of the victory embodied in the United Nations Charter and the charters and judgments of the Nuremberg Trials and the Tokyo Trials, and firmly opposing any attempt to deny or distort the history of WWII.

This stance is not just about preserving historical memory. Both China and Russia firmly uphold the UN-centered international system, reminding countries to avoid repeating historical mistakes and advocating for a fair and equitable global security governance system.

The postwar international order has institutionalized international relations and also established global organizations, including the UN, where major issues could be addressed with equal participation of member states. Under the postwar international order, international conduct has been regulated. The interconnected global economy necessitates shared behavioral standards. International law has gained prominence, providing a framework for dispute resolution, as exemplified by the World Trade Organization's role in shaping international trade rules.

At the same time, the international landscape gradually evolved from Cold War bipolarity to a multipolar structure, driven by the rise of developing countries and initiatives such as South-South cooperation and the Non-Aligned Movement. Nations increasingly engaged in multilateral cooperation to tackle global challenges, from climate change and environmental protection to counterterrorism.

Since the end of the Cold War, the postwar international order has faced significant challenges due to shifts in global power dynamics. Some Western countries are still clinging to outdated power politics because they don't want to relinquish their hegemonic positions and even distort historical facts. Besides, Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi has glorified militarism and refused to acknowledge Japan's history of aggression during WWII and the atrocities it inflicted on neighboring countries. These actions blatantly undermine fairness and justice and have drawn widespread condemnation from China, Russia and several Asian countries that suffered Japanese atrocities during the war.

The history of WWII offers crucial lessons for understanding today's international relations. An accurate view of that history is essential for preventing a relapse into large-scale conflict.

The war was a direct consequence of the lack of fairness and justice in the Versailles-Washington system established after the end of World War I. The Paris Peace Conference became a "looting assembly", with major powers redrawing their spheres of influence. The League of Nations was fundamentally flawed, and failed to maintain international peace and security.

Meanwhile, the global great economic turmoil in 1929-1933 created fertile conditions for the rise of fascism in Germany and Italy and militarism in Japan. They pursued aggressive military expansion and war preparations, ultimately leading to a global tragedy.

Today, the world once again stands at a critical juncture. Transformations unseen in a century are unfolding alongside intensified major-country rivalry and persistent regional conflicts. Deficits in peace, development, security and governance have become more pronounced, creating a vicious cycle.

Unilateralism and extremism have wantonly trampled on the sovereignty of other countries and blatantly violated the norms of international law centered on the UN Charter. The result has been sharp disagreements and confrontations between nations.

Calls from developing countries for peace and development have fallen on deaf ears. At the same time, globalization faces mounting challenges. Resources such as energy, food, and cyber capabilities are increasingly weaponized, while concerns over nuclear security have become more acute.

Addressing these challenges requires wisdom. The world is transitioning to a new landscape. While the US remains the sole superpower for the foreseeable future, emerging market economies and Global South countries are steadily expanding their influence across various fields — a trend that is set to strengthen further.

Developed countries maintain a clear edge in economic and technological competition, prolonging the transition period and resulting in asynchronous shifts in strengths across different areas. Economically, emerging markets have significantly expanded their share in international trade. However, shifts in security are slower, as the balance of military power, equipment and technology is unlikely to change anytime soon.

Culturally, the West continues to have a big advantage in this field due to modern means of communication and its control over mass media, but its influence is gradually diminishing. The trend toward civilizational diversity is strengthening, and resistance to Western cultural erosion is becoming more pronounced.

Against the backdrop of the prolonged Russia-Ukraine conflict, the spillover of the Middle East crisis, and certain Western countries attempting to maintain their grip on the steering wheel of international affairs, the advance of multipolarity must not devolve into factional confrontations.

In response to hegemonic headwinds, China and Russia have introduced a series of new security concepts within multilateral frameworks such as the UN, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS. For instance, the Global Security Initiative proposed by China seeks to unite the international community in addressing global security challenges and maintaining world peace and stability. The SCO, advocating the "Shanghai Spirit", emphasizes common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security. It upholds equality among nations, favors partnerships over alliances, expands its cooperation network, and promotes dialogue to resolve disputes. This approach strives to turn the vision of "never again war" into reality.

The author is the director of the Institute of Russian, Eastern European and Central Asian Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.
The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.



Ma Xuejing / china daily

Alfred Romann

Canada can drive down EV prices for buyers

For years, Canadians have been told that the electric vehicle revolution was just around the corner. The cars were getting better, charging infrastructure was expanding and the climate case was airtight. The only thing missing was a price that ordinary people could afford.

That barrier may soon come down.

Canada has slashed tariffs on Chinese EVs following Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney's visit to Beijing, cutting them from the 100 percent surtax imposed in 2024 to 6.1 percent for an annual quota of 49,000 vehicles.

Chinese automakers wasted little time in responding. BYD, the world's largest EV manufacturer by sales volume, announced plans to open 20 dealerships across Canada within a year, starting in the Greater Toronto Area. Geely is assembling a Canadian leadership team, advertising senior roles in sales, marketing, legal and aftersales from a Toronto base. Other Chinese manufacturers, including Nio and Xpeng, may be coming too. At the same time, China has introduced an export licensing system this year for passenger EVs, creating a framework for expansion overseas.

For the first time, Canadian consumers will have real choices in the EV market, alongside healthy, market-driven price competition.

The timing is both significant and urgent. In late February, the military conflict in the Middle East effectively closed the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow waterway through which nearly 20 percent of the world's oil supply had been flowing. The impact on energy markets was immediate and severe. Brent crude, which began the year at roughly $61 a barrel, surged to above $120 a barrel in April, a level not seen since the Russia-Ukraine conflict broke out in 2022.

Canadians have felt that in every trip to the gas station. In Vancouver, which has the highest fuel prices in the country, it has now become common to see gasoline prices of C$2.20 ($1.58) per liter, the highest they have ever been and almost 40 percent higher than a few months ago.

Against this backdrop, the economics of driving an internal combustion engine have rarely looked worse while the case for switching to an EV has rarely looked better — provided you can actually afford one.

That has long been a barrier to owning an EV in Canada.

There are plenty of EVs on the streets across the country, but those vehicles are usually premium models in the high-priced segments. A market dominated by Tesla and a handful of established European and North American brands has faced limited pressure to compete on price. Consumers who wanted an electric vehicle but couldn't stretch to the average C$55,000 price of an EV were left with few options.

Chinese manufacturers bring a fundamentally different approach to the market. Take BYD's Seagull, which sells for the equivalent of roughly C$15,500 in China. It represents a category of affordable EVs that simply does not exist in Canada today. Even accounting for tariffs, shipping and local certification costs, Chinese EVs are expected to land in Canada at price points that will force established automakers to respond.

There are already indications that Canadians are responding to the changing market conditions.

Zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) sales jumped 74.7 percent in March compared with a year earlier as fuel prices started climbing. ZEVs accounted for 12.2 percent of all new vehicle sales that month, nearly double the 6.5 percent share recorded a year earlier.

That surge happened before a single Chinese showroom opened in Canada. When BYD's first Greater Toronto Area dealerships open later this year, the market will face its first real test of what genuine competition can do to an industry that has long been insulated from it.

The international context makes the Canadian opportunity even clearer. European Union EV sales rose 51 percent in March as competition and model diversity allowed buyers to easily shift away from traditional cars when oil prices spiked. In the United States, by contrast, EV sales fell yet again in March and have been falling for months as the federal government rolled back incentives and embraced an openly skeptical posture toward electrification.

Canada finds itself between those two trajectories, with an opportunity to choose which path to follow.

Some in Canada have voiced concerns over national security and the protection of domestic manufacturing. But the decision to grant an annual quota of 49,000 Chinese EVs at the most-favored-nation tariff rate — while China has adjusted countervailing measures — reflects bilateral efforts that will ultimately benefit Canadian consumers. In a year when the country lost more than 110,000 jobs in the first four months and consumer confidence has been sliding, the case for shielding a premium car market from competition has become untenable.

Fair and open competition can deliver tangible benefits to ordinary consumers. Chinese EVs will offer Canadian consumers more choices and lower prices, and may even play a role in shoring up the country's automotive industry.

This is not just about geopolitics or trade policy, though it involves both. It is about whether Canadians will be able to buy affordable, efficient vehicles at a time when the cost of the alternative continues to rise. The showrooms are not open yet, and the cars have not yet arrived on dealer lots, but the window that has been opened by this trade deal is real, and it should not be allowed to close.

The author is the managing director of Bahati Ltd, a trade and economics analysis firm based in Canada.
The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:37 PM

Hibat-Allah Ezzahid

Adaptability of Chinese firms key to success abroad

Chinese companies are playing an increasingly important role in the global economy today. From advanced manufacturing and renewable energy to infrastructure, logistics, digital technologies, and industrial cooperation, they are transforming production systems and value chains across the world. As Chinese companies continue to expand internationally, the focus is shifting from merely entering foreign markets to operating effectively within diverse institutional, managerial, and cultural environments. While large-scale investments often attract attention, the day-to-day operational realities of globalization are becoming equally important for long-term success.

One major challenge that Chinese companies face is institutional complexity. Many international markets offer attractive macro-level conditions for investment, including political stability, industrial incentives, trade agreements, and strategic locations. However, once companies begin operations, they often face fragmented realities. Administrative procedures may involve multiple agencies with overlapping responsibilities, and regulatory implementation can vary across institutions or regions. Complexities in licensing systems, taxation procedures, labor regulations and documentation requirements may cause delays.

For instance, a Chinese automotive components company facing a three-month delay when importing machinery to Morocco due to complicated customs clearance processes involving several administrative entities suffered disrupted production planning and slowed local recruitment. In response, the company expanded its local legal and administrative team in the host country rather than relying solely on coordination from China.

Another challenge is cross-cultural and managerial coordination. Chinese companies have developed highly effective management systems characterized by organizational discipline, operational efficiency and strong operational commitment. These strengths have driven China's industrial transformation and global competitiveness. However, the workplace expectations, communication styles and professional cultures may differ significantly in global settings. Differences in approaches to hierarchy, communication, working rhythms, and work-life balance can create operational friction within multinational teams.

A Chinese manufacturing company introduced production schedules and overtime practices similar to those in China during a peak production period. But this led to tensions within local teams over overtime expectations and work-life balance. There were also misunderstandings because some local employees perceived the communication style of managers as too direct. In response, the company adjusted working schedules, localized certain HR practices and expanded the role of local middle managers.

Many companies are discovering that management systems cannot simply be transferred across borders. Therefore, Chinese companies are developing more adaptive and internationally integrated management approaches. They are not abandoning their organizational strengths, but combining them with greater local responsiveness and intercultural flexibility. This includes preparing managers for overseas environments, redesigning coordination mechanisms, adapting HR practices, and integrating local leadership into operations. This adaptability is becoming a strategic advantage for Chinese firms globally.

Human capital and localization present another challenge. During the early stages of international expansion, Chinese companies often rely heavily on expatriate teams for coordination and technology transfer. While this model facilitates early operations, long-term international integration requires stronger local participation. Local employees contribute essential knowledge of language, regulations, professional culture and market dynamics.

A Chinese manufacturing company initially depended heavily on expatriate teams for operational supervision, but later faced difficulties in communication with local workers and labor management practices. Misunderstandings often emerged regarding production instructions and workplace expectations because many local employees communicated in the local language rather than Chinese or English. In response, the company hired local supervisors and bilingual coordinators to improve communication and workforce management. Similarly, many Chinese companies are investing more deeply in local talent development, managerial training, and long-term integration.

In several international operations, Chinese companies are also introducing cross-border learning systems that help local employees understand corporate structures, operational standards and organizational culture. Moroccan employees receive technical or managerial training in China before they are given greater responsibilities locally.

This reflects a broader transformation in the globalization of Chinese enterprises. International expansion is no longer just about exporting industrial capacity or building overseas projects. It is also becoming a process through which Chinese companies gain global managerial experience and develop new organizational capabilities. This experience strengthens their expertise in institutional adaptation, intercultural coordination, operational flexibility, and long-term strategic integration. In this sense, globalization is becoming not only a process of international expansion, but also one of organizational learning.

Morocco offers a concrete example of these operational dynamics. Chinese companies operating in Morocco illustrate how operational dynamics can become complex even in a relatively stable and investment-friendly environment.

As Chinese firms deepen their global presence, their long-term success will depend not only on investment and technology, but also on their ability to adapt to diverse institutional and cultural environments.

The author is a postdoctoral researcher at the Institute of International and Regional Studies in Sun Yat-sen University, Zhuhai.
The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.

GLOBAL VIEWS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:37 PM

Hitting back

Tariq M. Malik

China's anti-sanctions law provides a mature legal framework for countering the abuse of sanctions as instruments of coercion



Trade sanctions, designed as instruments of order, justice and responsibility, have increasingly become tools of coercion, commercial exclusion and geopolitical pressure in practice. They disrupt trade, undermine economic development, hinder education and research, damage cross-cultural harmony and instill anxiety in societies that have no direct role in political disputes. When sanctions become coercion, nations have both the right and the responsibility to defend their economic sovereignty, giving rise to the legitimacy of new laws to mitigate those negative effects on the global economy. Modern legal systems already recognize the need for anti-piracy laws to protect navigation, anti-trust laws to prevent market domination, anti-dumping laws to defend fair trade, anti-terrorism laws to protect public security, anti-corruption laws to safeguard institutions and anti-crime laws to preserve social order. Now there is also a need for anti-sanctions laws.

China has already taken action by introducing the Anti-Foreign Sanctions Law of the People's Republic of China, adopted in 2021. Its implementation is not a call for confrontation, but a legal defense against the weaponization of interdependence.

Sanctions are not a meaningful means of engaging in international trade, development or economic cooperation. Trade depends on rules, trust and mutual benefit, while sanctions rely on pressure and exclusion. Economic development requires stable expectations, investment, mobility and long-term confidence, all of which can be weakened when sanctions disrupt normal economic activity. When sanctions restrict finance, shipping, insurance, food, energy, technology or medical supply chains, they not only affect political leaders. They affect businesses, workers, students, patients, consumers and researchers. Small businesses lose suppliers. Banks over-comply out of fear. Scientific cooperation is delayed. Students and scholars face barriers. Cultural exchanges narrow. Suspicion replaces trust; anxiety replaces confidence; exclusion replaces dialogue. In this sense, sanctions harm more than trade and prosperity. They harm values, mental well-being, cross-cultural understanding and education. They weaken the human foundations of globalization itself.

Sanctions rarely achieve their stated political aims. They fail to change targeted nations' behavior, facilitate dialogue, advance peace or build mutual trust. Yet they are described as successful because they "send a message", create pressure, damage transactions or isolate targets — simply a rhetorical success.

The belief in the effectiveness of sanctions persists because they serve lobbying groups, media narratives and political performances. If they cause pain, they are said to be working. If they fail to change behavior in the desired way, more sanctions are demanded. This circular logic turns policy failure into symbolic success. It rewards disruption rather than solutions. It allows policymakers to claim moral seriousness while transferring the real costs of sanctions to ordinary people and developing economies. Sanctions are instruments of global shock that do not manage complexity but inject instability into it. They do not create efficient markets; they distort them. They do not prove moral superiority; they reveal the failure to compete fairly in an open system.

For decades, the language of the free market has been used to defend openness, competition and efficiency through the "invisible hand", a concept purported by many since Adam Smith's conceptualization. Yet crude sanctions reveal the "visible hand" behind the so-called invisible hand. If companies are free only when they obey the geopolitical preferences of powerful states, the market is no longer free. It becomes conditional because sanctions are signs of unwillingness to compete in an open system. When countries cannot win through innovation, productivity, quality, price or cooperation, they may turn to restrictions, bans, financial pressure and technological exclusion. This is not confidence in competition. It is the fear of competition.



wang xiaoying / china daily

The same logic applies to the petrodollar and wider financial structures. For decades, dollar-based systems gave many Western countries and their allies enormous influence over global finance and energy transactions. This was effective because many countries trusted the system as stable and useful since the end of World War II. Yet coercive sanctions are reducing that appeal. The more financial infrastructure is weaponized, the more countries seek alternatives. Excessive sanctions may accelerate the very multipolarity they seek to prevent.

Sanctions create an unequal distribution of costs and benefits. A few actors may gain strategically, commercially or politically. They may capture markets abandoned by competitors. They may redirect investment. They may use compliance systems to strengthen their own dominance. They may present themselves as defenders of morality while turning sanctions into instruments of economic advantage. By contrast, most countries lose. This is especially true for the Global South and South-South cooperation. Developing economies depend on affordable energy, infrastructure finance, technology transfer, food security and stable trade routes. When sanctions disrupt these flows, the damage spreads far beyond the sanctioned countries. It affects ports, logistics, payments, insurance, construction, education and industrial development.

Sanctions punish interdependence, neutrality and countries for maintaining ordinary economic relations. They convert global development into a hostage of geopolitical rivalry. This is why China's anti-sanctions law should be understood not only as a Chinese legal concern, but as part of a wider defence of development fairness. In earlier periods, sanctions could be framed through narrow diplomatic narratives. However, the digitized world today allows people to compare claims, observe double standards, and see the gap between humanitarian language and economic harm. People are less easily persuaded by unsolicited rhetoric. They can see when sanctions damage ordinary citizens while being hyped as a moral action. They can see when "rules" are applied selectively. They can see when pressure is called justice and economic pain is called effectiveness.

An anti-sanctions law gains legitimacy when sanctions themselves lose moral credibility. The greatest danger is not only economic damage. It is lawlessness. If powerful actors normalize coercion without legal restraint, the world risks moving toward a "Wild West" situation in which pressure replaces procedure and force replaces consent. Smaller countries become vulnerable. Leaders may be threatened, isolated, humiliated or targeted through extraterritorial mechanisms. International relations must not be governed by intimidation.

Countries are responding to this foul play by joining, supporting or developing legal frameworks that challenge the misuse of sanctions as instruments of coercion. China's anti-sanctions law is a mature legal framework grounded in clear standards, transparent procedures and credible safeguards against unlawful extraterritorial measures. It provides a clear definition of coercive sanctions, stronger protection for aggrieved entities, more effective remedies and proportionate countermeasures, including the announcement and adjustment of countermeasure lists, prohibitions on compliance with discriminatory foreign restrictions, and the right of affected Chinese citizens and organizations to seek legal remedies. This approach aims to deter escalation rather than encourage it, while reassuring legitimate foreign investors that normal business remains welcome. It also signals that China supports lawful trade, open cooperation and international engagement, but rejects coercion disguised as legal authority.

China is not alone, as many countries in the Global South hold an unfavorable view of unilateral coercive measures and illegal sanctions that affect international trade, development, sovereign equality and sustainable growth. In this sense, anti-sanctions law will become a more inclusive and fair legal response in favor of harmony, peace and prosperity. It tells the world that China and like-minded countries seek to trade, invest, innovate and cooperate, rather than living under intimidation. It tells domestic enterprises that the legal system is moving toward stronger protection. It tells the Global South that development should not be subject to external veto. And it tells the international community that globalization cannot survive if interdependence is turned into dependency. Ultimately, the anti-sanctions law is not merely a response to sanctions. It is a statement about the future of the international order.

The author is a professor of Innovation and Organization Studies and the chief economist of New Structural Economics at Liaoning Universi-ty. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Shared cure

Yan Hua

The SCO health cooperation model champions co-governance and capacity building to shape a stable, long-term global health solution



Over the past two decades, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has forged a distinctive model of health cooperation that delivers a scalable, replicable regional blueprint for fair and effective global health governance.

Requiring no political preconditions and rooted in equal-footed consultation, this framework allows every member to contribute according to its strengths, share benefits equitably and turn fragmented health projects into sustainable, systemic and long-term collaboration.

Above all, the model prioritizes local ownership and long-term capacity building — a choice that empowers communities and medical professionals within SCO countries to master the skills and capabilities needed to independently sustain and develop their own health services for generations.

In an increasingly interconnected world, public health security has become a borderless challenge. In 2025, over 610,000 cholera cases were reported in 33 countries. Antimicrobial resistance is rising 5 to 15 percent annually, with one in six bacterial infections now resistant to standard antibiotics. No nation can stand alone against these transboundary challenges, making inclusive, effective multilateral health cooperation not just a choice, but an urgent global imperative.

Against this backdrop, the SCO has carried out pioneering, practice-proven exploration in health cooperation. Since the first SCO Health Ministers' Meeting in 2010, members have built mechanisms that grow steadily in breadth and depth. The ninth meeting in Bishkek, capital of Kyrgyzstan, in April proposed an SCO health management dialogue platform, a clear milestone signaling that cooperation has evolved into a mature, institutionalized system.

The SCO model operates on a simple but powerful principle: equality, multilateralism and no political preconditions. This is not symbolic partnership — it is real co-ownership. Partnerships are jointly initiated, shaped and led by multiple members.

Take ophthalmology as an example. The SCO National Ophthalmology Alliance was officially launched on Aug 21, 2025, in Tianjin, with 14 founding institutions from 10 countries. Its chair and vice-chairs are held collectively by experts from China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The alliance's secretariat is based at the Tianjin Medical University General Hospital, which undertakes the core organizational work of daily coordination and academic exchanges for the alliance, but all critical decisions are made through equal consultation, with no single state dominating.

This co-governance structure is not a ceremonial formality, as it is successfully replicated and institutionalized across other key fields. In September 2025, the SCO Forum on Traditional Medicine in Nanchang, Jiangxi province, drew about 200 delegates from 13 countries and launched a trilingual information exchange platform. In October, a five-year training program for traditional medicine practitioners began in Tianjin, already supporting exchanges of over 100 specialists from various SCO countries. China and other SCO countries have also co-established nine traditional medicine centers in different countries.

Every initiative springs from genuine demand and voluntary contribution. This voluntary, demand-driven approach ensures that cooperation addresses real, on-the-ground needs rather than externally imposed priorities.

Flowing naturally from this co-governance principle, the SCO model prioritizes local ownership and capacity building in favor of sustainable self-sufficiency, rejecting short-term, one-way donations. The evidence of this focus is clear and compelling across multiple sectors.



wang xiaoying / china daily

In emergency medicine, capacity building takes the form of training and equipment designed for local self-sufficiency. A bronchoscopy training base set up in Beijing last year has begun training SCO member clinicians on ventilator use and field rescue airway management, with plans to donate equipment — but crucially, the donation is paired with intensive hands-on instruction, so that local teams can fully operate and maintain the gear long after the external trainers leave.

Ophthalmology offers another direct measure of both local ownership and capacity building, through immersive hands-on training, direct surgical skill transfer to local professionals, and the establishment of health centers now fully operated and managed by local staff.

By the end of August last year, Chinese medical teams from various hospitals such as Tianjin Medical University General Hospital had traveled to SCO countries to conduct more than 2,300 free cataract surgeries, exceeding the three-year pledge of 2,000 surgeries for SCO citizens.

Crucially, these missions are paired with local training: Uzbek surgeons worked side by side with visiting teams, learning by doing and mastering techniques in real clinical settings.

Hands-on training has also taken the form of fellowships. As a first step, in December 2025, two Tajik ophthalmologists completed a fellowship at Tianjin Medical University General Hospital under the SCO National Ophthalmology Alliance arrangement, focusing on complicated cataracts and glaucoma. The hospital designed a systematic training program covering the entire process of preoperative assessment, surgical techniques and postoperative management, guaranteeing that the visiting doctors could independently perform complex surgeries upon returning to their home countries.

Other than skills transfer, local ownership also extends to facility management. Under the SCO collaboration, blindness prevention centers established in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan are now managed by local staff members — not by expatriates. Similar collaborative efforts have also taken place in Tajikistan.

These tangible achievements prove that the SCO model delivers large-scale, life-changing outcomes while systematically transferring professional skills and management ownership to local personnel.

The SCO's broader health infrastructure reinforces this approach.

The SCO hospital cooperation alliance, founded in 2018, now includes 134 hospitals across SCO countries. The China-SCO emergency medicine cooperation center has been established as the first professional platform under the SCO framework dedicated to emergency rescue. In February, the China-SCO cooperation center for metabolic disease pledged to train 2,000 metabolic disease experts within three years.

In the field of ophthalmology, Tianjin Medical University General Hospital has also taken the lead in establishing an online academic exchange platform for the SCO, integrating surgical mentoring, fellowship training, and localized management of blindness prevention centers into a fully scalable capacity-building model.

This is the defining essence of the SCO model: training local professionals to independently sustain and expand health services, and building lasting self-sufficiency rather than permanent reliance on external teams.

Of course, challenges remain.

Divergent medical regulations and approval procedures hinder cross-border drug and device flows. Language and diagnostic standards limit telemedicine and academic exchanges. Long-term funding is not yet fully secured. These pressing issues are high on the agenda of health ministers' meetings, with members committed to pursuing systemic, cooperative solutions.

Looking ahead, SCO health cooperation will deepen further: A unified online platform for academic and technical cooperation, mutual recognition of medical qualifications, and a decisive shift from project-based cooperation to institution-driven cooperation could emerge. Institutionalizing these mechanisms is the strongest sign that SCO health cooperation has fully matured beyond its early experimental phase into a stable, long-term governance framework.

The SCO model is pragmatic and a work in progress. But judged by its concrete, life-improving outcomes — thousands of medical professionals in training pipelines, and multilateral platforms spanning ophthalmology to metabolic diseases — the evidence is unambiguous: This approach delivers real results while respecting every member and building lasting local capacity.

The SCO health cooperation is a truly inclusive multilateral endeavor where all parties participate, contribute and benefit equally. Rooted in the region yet open to the world, it can grow from a successful regional practice into a valuable, actionable reference for global health governance — and a solid contribution to building a global community of health for all.

The author is the chairman of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization National Ophthalmology Alliance. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:37 PM

BUSINESS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:37 PM



Home brands sharpen sport sponsorship

Firms pursuing dynamic, co-creative strategy with 2026 FIFA World Cup

By LI JING
lijing2009@chinadaily.com.cn

When the 2026 FIFA World Cup officially kicked off across the United States, Canada and Mexico this month, Chinese brands are less visible among top-tier sponsors than they were four years ago.

Only three Chinese companies — Lenovo, Hisense and Mengniu Dairy — remain among FIFA partners and FIFA World Cup sponsors, a sharp contrast to the wave of Chinese sponsorship that dominated stadium billboards during recent tournaments.

Yet the shift comes despite FIFA reporting its strongest commercial performance on record. The governing body said in March that all 16 global sponsorship positions for the 2023–26 cycle had been sold, making it the most successful commercial program in its history. Total revenue for the cycle is budgeted at nearly $13 billion.

But business leaders and researchers say the decline in sponsorship numbers does not signal waning interest from Chinese companies. Instead, it reflects a broader shift in how Chinese companies are using global sporting events to support going global strategies.

Rather than buying visibility alone, companies are increasingly treating the World Cup as a platform to demonstrate technology capabilities, strengthen brand positioning, deepen consumer engagement and expand their global footprint.

"It is a transition from a traffic-driven mindset to an effectiveness-driven mindset," said Hu Shan, principal at consultancy company Roland Berger. "Companies are paying much closer attention to return on investment and alignment with their global expansion strategies."

For Qiao Jian, senior vice-president of Lenovo, the shift can be summed up as a move from participants to co-builders.

"What Chinese companies export today is no longer a single product," said Qiao, who is also chief strategy officer and chief marketing officer of Lenovo.

"Increasingly, they are exporting integrated technology capabilities and becoming part of the infrastructure that powers global events."

The shift is becoming increasingly visible at the World Cup, where Chinese companies are moving beyond traditional sponsorship and embedding themselves into tournament operations.

For Lenovo, whose annual revenue reached a record $83.1 billion in fiscal year 2025/26, the World Cup serves as a showcase for its hybrid AI strategy as it seeks to expand higher-margin infrastructure and enterprise businesses globally. AI-related revenue accounted for roughly one-third of Lenovo's revenue during the past fiscal year.

Lenovo, FIFA's official technology partner, is supplying more than 17,000 devices and deploying more than 350 engineers across all 16 World Cup venues. The company is also introducing AI-powered digital twin technology capable of generating three-dimensional replicas of players and match situations.

"The World Cup is the world's largest AI testing ground," Qiao said.





Top: The billboard of Hisense catches the eye during the group A match between Mexico and South Africa during the 2026 FIFA World Cup at Mexico City Stadium in Mexico on June 12. yin gang / for china daily **Middle:** Merchants purchase plush toys related to the 2026 FIFA World Cup participating teams at Yiwu International Expo Center in Zhejiang province on May 12. gong xianming / for china daily **Above:** A visitor checks out 2026 FIFA World Cup authorized products at a FIFA themed official store in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, in June. dong xuming / for china daily

She said the company views the tournament as an opportunity to demonstrate how its end-to-end AI infrastructure can support one of the most complex global events ever staged, far more than a conventional marketing campaign.

Hisense represents a similar evolution.

The company's overseas revenue now accounts for roughly half of total sales, according to company data, reflecting the importance of international markets in its strategy.

Having used the 2018 and 2022 World Cups to build brand visibility, the company is now moving deeper into tournament operations. As FIFA's official display technology partner for the video assistant referee system, Hisense provides RGB Mini LED display technology used in officiating operations during the tournament.

"Chinese companies are no longer simply buying advertising boards around stadiums," said Wang Xueli, director of the center for development of sports industry at Tsinghua University's School of Economics and Management.

"They are becoming part of the technological infrastructure behind major international sporting events."

While China's established global brands are embedding themselves into FIFA's technology ecosystem, a broader group of Chinese consumer brands is pursuing a different path.

Rather than paying for official tournament sponsorship rights, many companies are partnering with national teams, soccer stars, influencers and local digital platforms to target specific consumer groups in overseas markets.

The home-robotics and smart-appliance maker Dreame Technology recently signed Portuguese soccer icon Cristiano Ronaldo as a global brand ambassador ahead of the tournament.

For Dreame, whose overseas business accounted for nearly 80 percent of total revenue in 2025, the World Cup is less about introducing the brand to consumers and more about strengthening brand recognition and emotional connection.

Chang Xinwei, global president of Dreame Technology, said the era of "buying exposure and hoping for results" was fading.

Consumers increasingly place greater trust in recommendations from content creators, communities and personalities they identify with than traditional advertising, he said.

"The goal used to be getting people to see us," Chang said. "Now it is getting people to want to engage with us."

Other Chinese brands have adopted similar approaches.

Luckin Coffee, Changan Automobile and Cotti Coffee are among companies that have partnered with national teams including Portugal and defending champion Argentina, targeting highly engaged fan communities rather than mass audiences.

The strategy allows companies to target specific markets at a fraction of the cost of official FIFA sponsorship while generating more measurable returns.

Analysts say the shift reflects a broader evolution among Chinese companies as they move from gaining awareness overseas to building long-term brand equity development.

"In the past, many Chinese brands used global sporting events to establish basic awareness," Wang said. "Today, they are increasingly using those events to strengthen positioning in mid- and high-end markets and deepen engagement with consumers."

Beyond the marketing, Chinese companies remain deeply embedded in the commercial and industrial ecosystem surrounding the World Cup.

From officially licensed merchandise and consumer products to display technologies and digital infrastructure, Chinese firms continue to play an important role in the tournament's supply chain.

In Yiwu, Zhejiang province, a global hub for small commodity manufacturing, local manufacturers have long produced World Cup-related goods ranging from flags to souvenirs.

According to estimates from the Yiwu sporting goods industry association, Chinese manufacturers accounted for roughly 70 percent of the global World Cup merchandise supply during the 2022 tournament in Qatar.

While no comparable estimate exists for 2026, customs data suggest continued strong demand. Yiwu exported 2.83 billion yuan ($418.5 million) worth of sports goods and equipment in the first quarter, up 12 percent year-on-year.

Some companies are also leveraging FIFA licensing programs to sell authorized products, while others are expanding into ticketing, hospitality and travel services for soccer fans travelling overseas.

Zhou Mi, a senior researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, said the World Cup increasingly highlights China's role as a provider of industrial capabilities rather than simply low-cost manufacturing.

"The strength is not just producing a product," Zhou said. "It is coordinating an entire supply chain."

He said China's competitive edge lies in dense industrial clusters capable of delivering quality, scale and speed simultaneously.

The trend mirrors a broader shift among Chinese exporters, which are increasingly investing in product development, branding, intellectual property and global operations as they expand overseas.

Economy of sports more than merely on-field action

Reporter's log

By Li Jing

I am not what you would call an avid soccer fan.

I rarely follow league standings, transfer rumors or match schedules. Yet as the 2026 FIFA World Cup kicked off, I found myself paying attention anyway.

Not because of the soccer.

But because of Labubu.

Pop Mart's designer toy with its toothy grin made a surprise appearance during the World Cup opening ceremony. Within hours, Chinese social media exploded with chatter, and one of the most popular quips was that while Team China failed to reach the World Cup, Labubu had made it onto soccer's biggest stage.

As someone who does not regularly watch soccer, I was suddenly following World Cup-related stories. I was checking social media reactions, reading reports about limited-edition merchandise and monitoring travel data linked to host cities.

The experience reminded me that the world's biggest sporting events are no longer just sports competitions. They have become vast consumer platforms capable of reaching people far beyond traditional fan bases.

Labubu's World Cup collaboration products quickly sold out on Chinese e-commerce platforms, while some limited-edition items began trading at significant premiums on the secondary market.

At the same time, Chinese travel agencies reported growing interest in visiting World Cup host cities across the United States, Canada and Mexico. Online travel portal Tongcheng Travel said searches for World Cup-related travel packages jumped 166 percent week-on-week in the period leading up to June 2, while bookings and inquiries for customized viewing trips also surged.

A successful sports IP can create value far beyond ticket sales. It can drive tourism, hospitality, retail, advertising, merchandise, media rights and urban branding. The event itself may last a few weeks, but its commercial ecosystem can operate year-round.

China is increasingly trying to tap into that potential. The 2026 Government Work Report explicitly called for efforts to "actively develop the sports economy", placing it alongside tourism and wellness as areas with significant consumption potential.

Su Super League, an amateur soccer competition in Jiangsu province, has become a social-media sensation. What started as a regional competition has evolved into a celebration of local identity, generating traffic for restaurants, hotels and tourist attractions across participating cities.

In Guizhou province, the grassroots Village Super League, or "Cun Chao", has blended soccer with ethnic culture, music and tourism, drawing visitors from across the country. Local authorities say sports-related events generated billions of yuan in tourism and consumer spending last year.

"The overall commercialization of China's domestic sports IPs is still at a relatively early stage," said Wang Xueli, director of the center for development of sports industry at Tsinghua University's School of Economics and Management.

While organizers have become increasingly successful at attracting sponsors, areas such as sponsorship activation, audience targeting, brand-event alignment and year-round content operations still have significant room for development, Wang said.

That distinction helps explain why events such as Su Super League and Cun Chao can generate enormous online attention but still differ from global properties such as the World Cup, the Olympics or the Australian Open tennis tournament.

FIFA's decision to embrace IPs like Labubu was not simply a cultural gesture. It reflected a broader effort to expand the tournament's appeal beyond traditional soccer audiences and connect with younger consumers through popular culture.

Perhaps that is the most important lesson for China's sports economy.

The country has already shown it can create sporting events that generate excitement and attract massive online audiences. The next challenge is transforming those moments into sustainable business models that continue creating value long after the final whistle.

Because the real measure of a successful sports economy is not whether an event goes viral.

It is whether the crowds, spending and attention remain after the teams have shaken hands.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:37 PM

BUSINESSINSIGHT

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:37 PM

Stimulating domestic demand high on agenda

EAGLE EYE
By Xu Gao

The 2026 Government Work Report identifies the development of a strong domestic market as the top priority for China's economic agenda this year. At a time when the global economy is undergoing profound changes, rising unilateralism, increasing trade protectionism and persistent geopolitical uncertainties are creating greater instability for external demand.

Against this backdrop, expanding domestic demand has become a strategic anchor for China's economic resilience. The report stresses the need to expand domestic circulation and strengthen the internal drivers of growth in order to better withstand external shocks.

Within this framework, effective investment plays a central role in building a strong domestic market. The Government Work Report calls for coordinated efforts to boost consumption and expand investment, while emphasizing the need to fully unlock the potential of effective investment and leverage China's ultra-large market advantages.

As one of the two key components of domestic demand, alongside consumption, investment remains equally important for sustaining long-term growth.

In China's economic development model, consumption represents the ultimate goal, while investment serves as an essential means to achieve it. The people-centered nature of economic growth is reflected in the continuous expansion of consumption, which remains a top policy priority in efforts to expand domestic demand.

However, sustained consumption growth cannot be achieved without investment. Consumption heavily relies on investment-driven capital accumulation and income growth across society. At the same time, new forms of investment generate new supply, which in turn creates new demand. This dynamic interaction between supply and demand has become increasingly important in China's development strategy.

The outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) emphasizes the need to use new demand to guide new supply and new supply to create new demand, promoting a virtuous cycle between consumption and investment, as well as achieving a higher-level dynamic balance between supply and demand.

It also calls for integrating investment in physical assets with investment in people, and for greater emphasis on consumption-boosting and livelihood-related spending in fiscal policy.

When consumption is relatively weak, investment tends to account for a larger share of economic activity, helping to stabilize growth. As a developing economy with a large population, China still has significant room for investment-led development.

Although China's total economic output ranks among the highest in the world across multiple indicators, per capita levels remain relatively low in many areas. For example, while China's total electricity generation has long ranked first globally, per capita power generation remains less than 60 percent of that of the United States.

Against the backdrop of rising demand from artificial intelligence and digital technologies, investment in power supply capacity remains an important area of development.

At the same time, increasing global uncertainty and supply chain risks highlight the need for China to strengthen domestic industrial chains and reduce potential "bottleneck" constraints.

Even in the relatively weak property sector, there remains significant demand for improved housing conditions, requiring continued investment in better-quality residential development.

Taken together, these factors indicate that China still has broad upside potential for effective investment to address structural shortcomings in its development model.

A key issue in expanding effective investment lies in how investment returns are evaluated. Misunderstanding or incomplete assessment of investment returns can lead to a weakening of investment incentives.

In practice, investment returns can be understood through three layers: micro returns, regional social returns and national strategic returns.

Micro returns refer to direct financial returns of an investment project, typically measured by cash flow and internal rates of return. This is the most commonly used metric in market-based investment decisions. If expected returns exceed financing costs, the project is considered viable; otherwise, it is not.

However, focusing only on micro returns overlooks broader social benefits.

"Regional returns" refer to the broader economic and social value created within a local area. Infrastructure investment — such as roads, subways and public parks — often falls into this category. While such projects may not generate high direct financial returns, they significantly improve urban functionality and quality of life.

Beyond this, there are also "national returns", which reflect the strategic and long-term benefits of investment at the country level. These include contributions to employment, economic stability, regional coordination and national security.



Illustration generated by AI

For example, transportation infrastructure projects ranging from rural road networks to major railway lines in western China play an important role in promoting rural vitalization and balanced regional development.

Different types of investors naturally focus on different layers of returns. Market entities typically prioritize micro returns, as they operate under commercial principles. However, if all investment decisions are guided solely by micro profitability, socially beneficial projects with weak financial returns may be underfunded or neglected.

This is particularly relevant in infrastructure development. Many infrastructure projects are not financially profitable at the project level, yet they generate substantial social and economic benefits. Without government involvement, such projects often struggle to obtain financing.

China's infrastructure development experience demonstrates the importance of taking into account both regional and national returns. The practice of local governments engaging in urban development has played an important historical role in mobilizing investment.

In China, public ownership of land has also provided a unique institutional foundation. As urban infrastructure improves the quality of life in cities, it also increases the value of land held by local governments, allowing part of the social value created by infrastructure investment to be realized through fiscal channels.

This mechanism has enabled many local governments to balance costs and returns across both micro and regional dimensions, forming a sustainable model for infrastructure financing and urban development.

Another important dimension of investment concerns debt and financial sustainability.

China's investment-to-GDP ratio has remained significantly higher than the global average for a long period. Since investment necessarily involves financing, and China's financial system is predominantly debt-based, investment growth is closely linked to rising debt levels.

However, concerns about debt risks should not be assessed solely by looking at the absolute size of debt. A more important factor is the relationship between domestic savings and debt demand.

In a "savings-debt market", savings represent the supply of capital while debt represents demand for capital. If savings are in surplus relative to borrowing demand, then even a high level of debt does not necessarily point to high risks.

China is a high-savings economy. The International Monetary Fund estimates that China's savings rate in 2025 was around 42 percent, nearly double the global average of 23 percent. At the same time, China's net international investment position exceeded $4 trillion, indicating a large accumulation of overseas assets.

Against this backdrop of excess savings, China's relatively high debt level does not necessarily translate into high systemic risks.

Concerns about local government debt are also often linked to incomplete consideration of regional and national returns on investment. While infrastructure projects may appear unprofitable at the micro level, their broader economic and social benefits are significant when assessed from a wider perspective.

In recent years, China has strengthened efforts to manage local government debt risks, including the implementation of a comprehensive debt restructuring package and the replacement of hidden debt. The Government Work Report also proposes further optimization of local government bond issuances to support project financing.

The Government Work Report outlines a range of policy tools aimed at expanding effective investment.

On the government side, China plans to allocate 755 billion yuan ($112 billion) of central budgetary investment and 800 billion yuan from ultra-long special treasury bonds for major national strategic projects and security capacity-building initiatives. Standards for central investment subsidies will also be adjusted to better support priority areas.

At the local level, the issuance quota of special-purpose bonds will be increased and better aligned with regions that have well-prepared projects and demonstrate efficient use of funds.

In addition, China plans to issue 800 billion yuan in new policy-oriented financial instruments to mobilize more private capital for investment.

The writer is chief economist at BOC International.
The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

First national-level special plan for urban regeneration issued

Main st Reet
By Fan Sibin

Recently, the State Council, China's Cabinet, issued an urban regeneration plan for the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30). As China's first national-level special plan for urban regeneration, it marks the elevation of urban regeneration from an institutional and mechanism-building effort to a medium-to-long-term, overarching national strategy.

The release of the plan has drawn significant attention and sparked lively discussions across society. At a time when China's urban development is shifting from large-scale expansion to stock-based quality improvement and efficiency enhancement, the plan carries great significance.

It systematically sets out the goals, targets, key tasks and policy safeguards for urban regeneration over the next five years, outlining a vision and pathway for building modern people-centered cities.

Urban regeneration is closely linked to the daily lives of the people. Since the fifth plenary session of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China proposed the action of advancing urban regeneration, a series of livelihood, safety and development projects have been implemented to address pressing public concerns. As a result, urban regeneration has been widely welcomed and closely followed by the public.

Following last year's guidelines on advancing urban regeneration campaign issued by the general offices of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council, the plan represents the first key dedicated plan at the national level in the field of urban regeneration.

It not only reflects the continuous improvement of the top-level design for urban regeneration, but also underscores the fact that urban regeneration serves as both an important lever for building modern people-centered cities and a national strategic initiative crucial to the implementation of the new development philosophy and the long-term competitiveness of cities.

Looking back at the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-25), local pilot projects flourished across the country. With the launch of this plan, the national institutional framework has become more robust, overall coordination has strengthened, and urban regeneration has entered a new phase characterized by institutionalization, long-term effectiveness and market-driven mechanisms.

The plan fully aligns with the goal of building modern people-centered cities. Centered on the objectives of "innovation, livability, beauty, resilience, civility and intelligence", it comprehensively lays out six key tasks, seven policy measures, and 14 major projects and initiatives, systematically establishing the goals, tasks and roadmap for urban regeneration.

First, for the first time, it uses quantitative targets to define the urban regeneration "scorecard". This is one of the most closely followed highlights of the plan. Ten key targets are set, including: by 2030, renovating 500,000 dilapidated urban residential units; starting the renovation of 115,000 aging residential communities; upgrading 1,500 old neighborhoods and factory compounds; reconstructing 365,000 kilometers of underground pipelines; and restoring 15,000 historic buildings.

These quantifiable and assessable indicators closely integrate urban regeneration with the construction of modern people-centered cities, providing clearer goals and assessment criteria for urban regeneration work.

Second, the plan fully embodies a people-centered approach while also addressing the strategic needs of expanding domestic demand, boosting investment, stimulating consumption and pursuing development.

It outlines six key tasks and 14 major projects and initiatives. This "task list" reflects a combination of investment in physical assets and investment in people.

The plan calls for the construction and renovation of quality housing, the renovation of aging residential communities and the development of complete communities — all major projects that improve people's livelihoods — across different spatial levels, creating high-quality urban living environments.

At the same time, the plan places particular emphasis on fostering new drivers of urban growth. It explicitly proposes revitalizing idle and inefficiently utilized resources such as old factories and underused commercial office spaces; promoting the transformation and upgrading of aging neighborhoods, factory compounds and inefficient industrial parks; cultivating emerging industries; and upgrading consumption infrastructure.

This means that urban regeneration also serves as a strategic lever for reshaping urban growth drivers and unlocking domestic demand potential.

Third, the plan introduces a policy system for sustainable urban regeneration through reform and innovation. The third plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee explicitly called for "establishing a sustainable model and policy-legal framework for urban regeneration".

The plan devotes a full chapter to specific arrangements for building a policy system for urban regeneration during the 15th Five-Year Plan period, outlining a roadmap for reform and innovation.

It directly addresses the difficulties and bottlenecks encountered in urban regeneration practice, focusing on seven key areas: implementation mechanisms, financial guarantees, land use, building safety, multi-stakeholder participation, laws and standards, and technology and talent.

The aim is to accelerate the development of a comprehensive, well-coordinated and efficient policy system for urban regeneration, providing solid support for orderly, routine and long-term urban regeneration.

Over the next five years, as the plan is implemented, urban regeneration will move rapidly from blueprint to reality in people's daily lives. It is likely to see continued improvements in cities: better housing, safer and more livable communities, more vibrant neighborhoods, lively blue-green spaces, more attractive consumer destinations and more innovative industrial parks.

According to estimates by multiple institutions, the total market size for urban regeneration during the 15th Five-Year Plan period will exceed 15 trillion yuan ($2.22 trillion). These figures will translate into tangible improvements for the people — better urban living environments, stronger economic dynamism and higher governance standards.

As time moves forward, with the high-quality and sustainable advancement of urban regeneration under the guidance of the plan, Chinese cities are poised for another qualitative leap in the new era. Modern people-centered cities that are innovative, livable, beautiful, resilient, civil and intelligent are steadily coming into view.

The writer is director of the Research Institute of Urban Regeneration at the China Academy of Urban Planning and Design.
The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:37 PM

CHINA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:37 PM

Universities cater to AI study demand

Action plan fuels rapid expansion as the need for talent cultivation grows

By **ZOU SHUO**
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

Artificial intelligence has become one of the most popular majors across China's institutions of higher education. More than 600 universities have launched AI undergraduate programs as of 2026, based on data from the Ministry of Education, marking explosive growth from just 35 institutions approved in 2018.

According to financial media outlet Yicai, among China's "Double First-Class" universities — the country's elite tier of institutions of higher education — at least 90 have launched AI-related schools or colleges.

The rapid expansion has been driven by a powerful convergence of national strategy and market demand.

In April, the Ministry of Education, together with four other central government departments, jointly issued an action plan outlining comprehensive measures for AI talent cultivation, application innovation, infrastructure development and ecosystem building.

The plan calls for making AI a public foundational course in higher education, creating new interdisciplinary programs and exploring new models for cultivating top-tier AI talent. The move followed the release of the 2026 undergraduate program catalog by the Ministry of Education in the same month. The catalog added 38 new undergraduate majors, including AI for business, embodied intelligence and brain-computer science and technology.

Universities are not merely adding new departments; they are fundamentally restructuring their academic ecosystems around AI. MyCOS, an education research institute, noted that when institutions establish AI schools, they often do not start from scratch. Instead, they consolidate existing computer science, big data and automation programs into new academic units.

Fudan University has rolled out a three-tiered AI curriculum system aimed at achieving 100 percent coverage across all undergraduate and graduate students, first-level disciplines and majors, according to a report from the university.

Ningbo University now requires every major to offer at least one "AI+" interdisciplinary course. Tsinghua University has emphasized an "AI+X" model that integrates AI across all disciplines, according to the official websites of both universities.

China's core AI industry was valued at more than 1.2 trillion yuan ($177 billion) in 2025, according to a Xinhua News Agency report quoting a senior Chinese official.

Yet demand for talent is far outstripping supply. Projections from McKinsey & Company suggest China could face a shortage of up to 4 million AI professionals by 2030. This "AI+" transformation extends beyond traditional technology fields.

Rao Yanting, an associate researcher at the China National Academy of Education Sciences, told China Central Television that AI is no longer just a major but is increasingly permeating every academic field, including not only science and engineering but also the humanities and social sciences.

However, as universities race to establish AI credentials, prominent voices in academia are raising concerns about sustainability and educational quality.

Fang Fuquan, president of Capital Normal University, told Beijing News that AI is a technology rather than a science.

Just as humanity's understanding of the universe relies on fundamental sciences such as the periodic table and Newton's laws, an excessive focus on technology at the expense of mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology and even humanities and the arts could have unintended consequences, he said.

He warned that people may lack the knowledge to distinguish truth from falsehood in AI-generated videos that defy physical laws.

Fang said that while there is widespread pursuit of quick results and greater emphasis on AI applications, universities must guide students to build a solid foundation in basic sciences alongside technological skills.

"Society should foster an ecosystem where not everyone needs to work on AI applications," he said. "Those who pursue basic sciences, humanities and the arts can also become outstanding talents."

"Science has its contingencies; a discipline that is obscure today may flourish in a few years," he said, calling for a more scientific and forward-looking evaluation system.

During the April action plan announcement, Jin Li, president of Fudan University, said AI models are iterating every few months, and what is popular today may become obsolete tomorrow.

"If universities are still training 'finished-product' talent, that's like clinging to a sword while crossing a river," he said.

Jin often uses a metaphor to describe the type of talent universities should cultivate.

"We should cultivate 'stem cell-style' talents — people who can quickly establish cognitive frameworks in unknown domains, integrate resources across disciplinary boundaries and continuously iterate in the face of failure," he said.

Robo greeting



A humanoid robot shakes hands with a student at Hangzhou Anjilu Experimental School in Zhejiang province on Saturday as candidates arrive for Hangzhou's senior high school entrance examination. This year's exam took place over the weekend, with results to be announced on June 30. Xu Hui / for China Daily

Rite of remembrance



Performers present a ceremonial music-and-dance tribute at a public memorial ceremony honoring Fuxi, the legendary ancestor of Chinese civilization, in Tianshui, Gansu province, on Sunday, which fell on the summer solstice. Known as the birthplace of Fuxi culture, the city hosts the annual rite, which was inscribed on China's national intangible cultural heritage list in 2006. feng lekai / for china daily

DPRK painters in Mudanjiang display artistic bonds

By **ZHOU HUIYING** in Harbin
zhouhuiying@chinadaily.com.cn

Over the past 15 years, more than 40 artists from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have been invited to display their artistry on a canvas at "the creation base of the DPRK painters in China" in Mudanjiang, Heilongjiang province.

The base, which was established in August 2011, is the only one of its kind that the DPRK has set up overseas. It is used to create, exhibit and sell works of art from the DPRK, according to Cheng Wujun, the director of the base. The base serves as a bridge for cultural exchange between China and the DPRK, introducing authentic DPRK paintings to the Chinese market.

Since its establishment, DPRK artists have been stationed at the base for on-site creation and customized artworks tailored to the needs of collectors and businesses.

"The face-to-face creative exchange is unique in the DPRK foreign art cooperation, offering a unique cross-border artistic collaboration," said Cheng.

The DPRK paintings are known for their pure and simple creative philosophy, distinct artistic style and rigorous realism.

Their distinctness portrays realistic styles, unique emotional interpretation and strong feelings of national pride, all of which reflect the DPRK people's aspirations for peace, Cheng said.

The DPRK awards artists titles such as "People's Artist" and "Meritorious Artist", representing the highest standards in the country's art community.

"The base has always undertaken important functions such as the exhibition and sale of the DPRK works, authenticity identification, artist exchange and market regulation," Cheng added. "The base integrates high-quality works from major DPRK creation studios, providing collectors with authoritative certification, unified numbering certificates and authenticity identification services."

In 2012, Cheng was awarded the honorary title of "cultural ambassador for the DPRK-China art exchange" by the DPRK government — the only foreigner to receive the title to date.

Over the years, Cheng has brought contemporary DPRK paintings to exhibitions across various regions in China, including Harbin in Heilongjiang province, Xi'an in Shaanxi province, Guangzhou in Guangdong province, as well as Shanghai and Beijing.

"The DPRK paintings have distinct characteristics — bright and vivid colors, which give a positive and cheerful impression," he said. "The DPRK artists left me with the deepest impression of their professionalism and dedication."

"For instance, before returning to their accommodation after work every night, they ensure that the oil paints, paper and surrounding areas in front of the easel are clean," he said. "Their rigorous professionalism is evident. To paint a sunrise, they will ask the client what time he needs the sunrise to be depicted — 5, 6, or 7 am — as the sun's height, brightness, shadow effects and color differences are vastly different."

In April 2023, Cheng established a new creation base in Dalian, Liaoning province, and exhibited some DPRK paintings at the Dalian Wanzhongyuncang Technology Incubation Park.

"The works created by the DPRK artists displayed in our exhibition hall have attracted many visitors," said Jin Lin, director of the park's business development and operations department. "The natural scenery and folk customs depicted in the paintings are very detailed, with bright colors, making visitors feel calm and have a taste of life and history." According to Jin, nearly 100 works have been sold from the park so far.

Shang Shuke, an art collector in Dalian, started collecting the DPRK paintings around 10 years ago.

"In 2014, a friend introduced me to the base, so I traveled to Mudanjiang to visit the exhibition hall at the base and picked out some works by old DPRK artists from the 1950s and 1960s," he said. "The DPRK artists have deep artistic skills, with exquisite realism, delicate and lively brushwork and elegant and refined color tones."

"The creators are genuinely dedicated to art, not creating for profit, so the works are pure and simple in style, with strong artistic quality," he added.

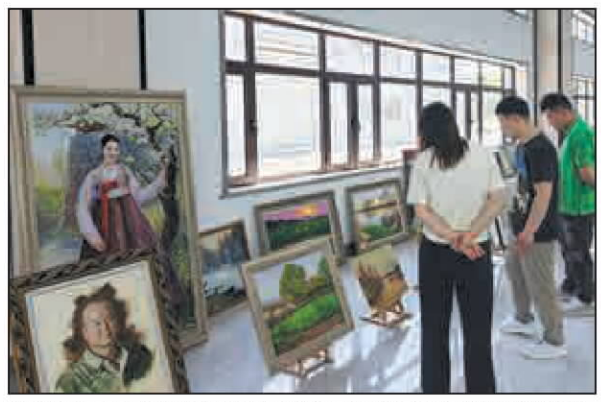
Another collector, Peng Fengjiao, has expressed a fondness for the gentle and elegant artistic temperament of the DPRK paintings.

"They are not only exquisite art pieces for decorating life but also a stable collectible choice," she said. "Sometimes, I picked some of the DPRK works I collect as cultural gifts to my artistically-inclined friends, which were well received."

Yun Ju-hyok, the DPRK representative at the base, is now engaged in creative work in Dalian, leveraging his unique perspective to gradually introduce a series of outstanding modern and contemporary DPRK artworks to China.

"The DPRK art, based on subjective realism, uses concise, lively and realistic depictions, which are loved by both DPRK and Chinese people," he said. "After coming to China, the DPRK artists were also amazed by the profound influence of Chinese culture."

"In January 2019, I led five DPRK artists to hold an art exhibition in Taiyuan, Shanxi province," he said. "During the visit to the famous historical sites and museums in Taiyuan, they were full of praise for the breadth and depth of Chinese culture, which deeply touched them and gave them a new understanding and appreciation of China."



Visitors appreciate the DPRK paintings on display in the exhibition hall at the Dalian Wanzhong Yuncang Technology Incubation Park in Dalian, Liaoning province, in early June. Provided to China daily

Chifeng model offers insight on land rehabilitation

By **ZHOU WENTING** in Shanghai
zhouwenting@chinadaily.com.cn

China's experiences in grassland ecosystem restoration and desertification control, particularly in Chifeng, Inner Mongolia autonomous region, have provided valuable insights for global land rehabilitation and grassland conservation, international experts said at a conference recently held in the city.

Experts highlighted the country's achievements in desertification prevention, related scientific research and the use of technologies such as artificial intelligence and multi-source remote sensing.

The three-day event, held last week, brought together experts from China, South Africa, Japan and the Netherlands.

Participants engaged in interdisciplinary and cross-regional dialogue to explore innovative approaches to grassland protection and comprehensive desertification control, seeking to contribute scientific solutions for land degradation management, ecological civilization building and global sustainable development.

The event was jointly organized by Shanghai Jiao Tong University's School of Design, the university's Inner Mongolia Research Institute and the desert scientific exploration committee of the China Association for Scientific Expedition.

Johns Muleso Kharika, a representative of the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, emphasized the need for the international community to support policymaking backed by scientific evidence. He called for stronger cooperation between the Global North and Global South, as well as among international partners, to advance practical actions in land protection and grassland restoration.

"Effective management of desertification requires integrating ecological restoration with innovation in social mechanisms. The ecological restoration practices in Inner Mongolia and China as a whole can serve as important references for global desert management," said Michael Meadows, former president of the International Geographical Union and an emeritus professor at the University of Cape Town in South Africa.

During the event, experts conducted field studies in the Horqin Sandy Land, where they observed innovative sand-control models that combine road construction, sand stabilization and industrial development. They also visited a cold and arid apple and pear breeding base in Chifeng that preserves more than 90 varieties of economic forest resources.

At a newly established cherry experimental field, experts discussed the introduction and collection of superior local varieties with staff members.

The field visits showcased Chifeng's innovative practices in sand control and seed breeding, providing references for regional ecological management and the high-quality development of the forestry and grassland industries, participants said.

Piao Ying, an official in Chifeng, said that despite notable progress, ecological management remains a challenging task for a city located at the junction of the Horqin and Hunshandake sandy lands.

"The city must make better use of technology to safeguard the northern ecological barrier, move from experience-based management to precision-targeted interventions and strive to develop governance models that are replicable and scalable," he said.

Some experts also proposed new governance pathways. Li Xiaosong, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Aerospace Information Research Institute, said large vertical models for sand control could help address issues such as insufficient scientific zoning, weak process supervision and inadequate decision-making support.

"By integrating remote sensing, monitoring, knowledge databases and socioeconomic data, such models can support sand hazard diagnosis, governance plan generation, process supervision and effectiveness evaluation, paving the way for a shift from experience-driven management to precision and intelligent sand-control governance," he said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:37 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:37 PM

Editor's note: *As protection of the planet's flora, fauna and resources becomes a global priority, China Daily is publishing a series of stories to illustrate the country's commitment to safeguarding the natural world.*

Former barren county transformed into beacon of sustainable economy

By ZHU XINGXIN in Youyu, Shanxi and **CHEN LIANG**

Seven decades ago, international environmental experts studying the wind-scoured plains of Youyu county in North China's Shanxi province reached a bleak conclusion: the area was entirely uninhabitable, and the total resettlement of its population was the only viable option. Whipped by brutal Siberian winds, blinding sandstorms routinely choked the air, burying entire villages under shifting desert dunes.

Today, that same desolate wasteland has been transformed into a lush, green oasis. This historic environmental reversal was globally spotlighted when, in 2024, Youyu county clinched the prestigious New Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements Award at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, recognized as a premier global blueprint for desertification control.

Youyu's transformation is a multigenerational epic of political discipline and human endurance. The story begins in 1949, with Zhang Ronghuai, Youyu's first Party secretary. He understood a simple truth: "If Youyu wants prosperity, we must stop the wind and sand. And to stop the wind and sand, we must plant more trees."

He initiated a series of patriotic tree-planting campaigns, rallying the people to action. The first sapling, a Chinese cottonwood (or Simon's poplar), was planted just outside the old county town gate, a defiant flag planted in the face of the encroaching desert.

However, the bitter winters and scorching summers made tree planting a constant battle. In the 1960s, the fourth and fifth county Party secretaries focused their efforts on the Huangshawa sand depression, a particularly challenging area.

Their initial attempts resulted in heartbreak, with over 90,000 saplings failing to survive because the non-native poplars planted drank too much water and died. But they learned from their mistakes, adapting their planting methods and persevering. By 1964, they had successfully planted more than 13,333 hectares, effectively stabilizing the shifting dunes.

Each subsequent leader built upon the work of their predecessors, innovating and adapting to the challenges.

In the 1970s, hardier tree species like pitch pine, larch and Mongolian scots pine were introduced as part of the Three-North Shelterbelt Forest Program, expanding the afforestation area to over 73,833 hectares.

According to the current Youyu Party secretary, Ma Zhanwen, 21 consecutive local leaders have maintained the same ecological priority, leading communities "one shovel and two hands at a time". To date, afforestation efforts have blanketed more than 113,000 hectares of Youyu with 130 million trees. The county's forest coverage rate has dramatically soared from a microscopic 0.3 percent in 1949 to an astonishing 57 percent, making it the first territory in Shanxi province to successfully reforest all its barren mountains.

Wang Zhanfeng, a 75-year-old villager, has planted 200 hectares of trees over the last 44 years. "My hands feel like tree bark," he said, gazing up at the towering trees he helped cultivate. "I've dedicated my life to this. I can't let all this effort go to waste. I have to keep planting, one tree after another, year after year."

The legacy continues with younger generations. Li Jie, a 31-year-old teacher at the Youyu Cadre Academy, has spent nearly a decade sharing the story of Youyu with thousands of visitors. "Shovels are heirlooms in every household in Youyu," she said. "They are a testament to the memory and legacy of generations of Youyu people."

She recounted that on her 10th birthday, her grandmother showed her the first small pine tree she had planted, introducing her to the legacy of Youyu's fight against the desert. That is what strengthened her decision to dedicate herself to this land and carry forward the Youyu spirit.

The transformation of Youyu has created new opportunities. The county is now using its lush environment, rich culture and cool climate to become a cultural tourism and health destination. Local businesses are developing innovative sea buckthorn products, boosting livestock farming and transforming ecological advantages into economic benefits.

"The development achievements of Youyu stem from the simple aspiration of allowing the people to survive and live a good life," said Liang Pengwei, assistant researcher at the Shanxi Provincial Academy of Social Sciences, who is also an editor of a book on the story of Youyu.

Contact the writers at zhuxingxin@chinadaily.com.cn



Students and residents take part in a tree-planting drive in Youyu, Shanxi province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



A teacher and students unveil a model of a Chinese white dolphin that was donated to Xiamen Binhai Primary School in Xiamen, Fujian province, by the Xiamen Chinese White Dolphin and Amphioxus Nature Reserve. The school is the city's first to introduce marine ecology preservation into its curriculum. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Tri-city alliance launched to protect Xiamen's dolphins

Coordinated efforts aim to improve public awareness of 'sea pandas'

By ZHANG YI in Xiamen, Fujian and **HU MEIDONG** in Fuzhou

Three neighboring coastal cities in East China's Fujian province — Xiamen, Quanzhou and Zhangzhou — have recently launched a landmark cross-regional collaboration to protect the Chinese white dolphins in their shared waters.

Xiamen is China's only major city where these marine mammals, under first-class State protection and affectionately nicknamed the "giant pandas of the sea", live right alongside bustling urban life and can be spotted occasionally by residents. It is estimated that around 80 Chinese white dolphins inhabit Xiamen's waters.

"Protecting white dolphins requires pulling the entire society together," said Xu Jing, an official at the Xiamen Chinese White Dolphin and Amphioxus Nature Reserve Affairs Center. "We focus on mobilizing volunteers to join our rescue and monitoring teams."

As the dolphins frequently migrate out of Xiamen's waters into neighboring areas, local enforcement teams officially upgraded this cross-regional mechanism last month to formally institutionalize real-time data sharing, joint maritime patrols and emergency rescues, according to Xu.

The upgraded mechanism also aims to further raise public awareness, including educating citizens on what to do and how to call for help if they encounter a stranded dolphin.

In August 2024, people from both Xiamen and Quanzhou jointly handled the emergency rescue of Le Bao, a 4-year-old female dolphin that swam out of Xiamen and became stranded on a beach in Quanzhou's waters.



A docent introduces the Chinese white dolphin preservation work in Xiamen at a museum in the city.

Local residents reported the stranding, triggering a rapid emergency chain that brought experts from the dolphin reserve in Xiamen and the Third Institute of Oceanography, Ministry of Natural Resources, based in Xiamen, to the scene for a joint medical response.

Following more than 40 days of intensive care at a nearby aquatic rescue station, Le Bao fully recovered and was successfully released back into her home environment in Xiamen's waters in September 2024. She was later named Le Bao after the facility, a name that also carried the rescuers' wishes for her to live a joyful life in the future.

"Le Bao's survival was a miracle made possible by an unbroken chain of rapid actions across two cities," Xu said. "If any single link had failed, this successful release would not have been possible."

The dolphin population's stable presence also stems from Xiamen's long-term ecological initiatives, including a complete clearance of marine aquaculture facilities to restore the coastal ecosystem to its primitive state, she said.

The city even re-engineered a tunnel project from an original above-water bridge design into an underground tunnel, heavily increasing capital investments solely to preserve the dolphins' habitats, she added.

"As a flagship barometer of our marine ecosystem, their presence represents Xiamen's outstanding achievements in biodiversity conservation," Xu said.

Local paddleboarders, open-water swimmers and wildlife photographers in Xiamen have voluntarily established a grassroots monitoring network, capturing footage during unplanned encounters to support scientific research.

Chen Yu, a local open-water swimmer and photographer who has been tracking the species via aerial drone in recent years, said that public engagement is deeply rooted in local tradition. The dolphins are traditionally called "Mazu fish" after the sea goddess, and are regarded by residents as guardians of the waters.

"Since childhood, we have been told by our elders that the waters are safe wherever the white dolphins appear," Chen said. "For local residents, these animals are seen as traditional protectors of the sea."

These photographic sightings provide critical data for marine biologists. Images documenting maternal behaviors, such as a mother lifting her calf to breathe or teaching it to hunt, assist researchers in managing a digital profiling system that tracks family dynamics and newborn calves.



Star Chinese white dolphin Da Bai is seen swimming with her calf in Xiamen in 2020.

In April, an aerial drone photographer captured footage of a newborn calf swimming closely alongside Da Bai, a well-documented wild female dolphin frequently seen nursing newborns in Xiamen's waters.

"When we photograph a dolphin year after year and see it is still there, we know it is growing up healthy and strong," Chen said. "Every encounter still makes me feel incredibly lucky."

Marine experts have introduced a science-based maritime code of conduct, instructing water sports enthusiasts and photographers to maintain a respectful distance instead of chasing the animals.

Lin Yuan, a local middle school teacher who is a paddleboarder, regularly records her encounters with the animals in the sea to use as educational materials in her classroom.

"I bring my own dolphin encounter videos to share with my students," Lin said. "We must cultivate an awareness of biodiversity conservation in children so they can continue to see these marine creatures in their local environment in the future."

Contact the writers at zhangyi1@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

Digital drive supports planting of millions of trees

By HOU LIQIANG in Beijing and **HU DONGMEI** in Yinchuan

China's private-sector, internet-based afforestation efforts have reached a massive scale milestone, demonstrating how gamified digital incentives have been successfully integrated into the country's broader national ecological strategies.

Since 2017, under a partnership between tree planting initiative Ant Forest and the China Green Foundation, 386 million trees have been planted across about 4.4 million hectares spanning seven provincial-level regions, including Gansu and Qinghai provinces and the Inner Mongolia autonomous region, said Zhang Quanzhou, the foundation's secretary general.

According to Zhang, the partnership saw more than 200,000 hectares of desertified land treated in that time, with about 90 percent of it located in key areas of the country's Three-North Shelterbelt Forest Program, which is the world's largest afforestation endeavor.

"This program has transformed the 'green energy' of hundreds of millions of netizens into tangible ecological outcomes," he said.

Ant Forest was launched in August 2016 by internet financial services firm Ant Financial, an affiliate of Alibaba Group.

The app rewards users with virtual energy — which they can use to have trees planted — when they take low-carbon actions such as walking or using public transport instead of driving, or buying things online, which avoids the need for paper receipts.

The amount of energy needed to plant different trees varies. After receiving an application from an app user who has saved enough energy, Ant Forest will plant a real tree.

To ensure that digital goodwill translates into lasting ecological impact, Zhang said the foundation has built a long-term mechanism for public participation.

In collaboration with the National Greening Committee, it launched a nationwide online platform that allows citizens to adopt, monitor and track tree growth via their mobile phones, making voluntary tree-planting a year-round, regular activity.

Zhang also said that the foundation has established a clear responsibility chain, supported by technologies such as satellite remote sensing, third-party inspections and digital oversight.

Moreover, a collaborative governance model has taken shape in the country, featuring government guidance, corporate donations, public participation, foundation execution, and oversight by forestry and grassland authorities, he added.

A recent commentary in the journal Nature said that Ant Forest is an example of how digital incentives can be used to inspire the public and generate funding.

Since its launch, the gamified initiative with more than 500 million users has funded more than 619 million drought-resistant trees and shrubs, the article said.

Li Meng, a 28-year-old map data collector and dedicated Ant Forest user, embodies the power of digital incentives to drive lasting behavioral change. To date, Li has planted 1,120 trees across Ant Forest's forested areas since October 20, 2016.

His motivation is deeply rooted in a sense of shared responsibility.

"Western China has a sparse population yet silently protects the ecological environment of the eastern region," he said. "Whether we live in the east or the west, everyone should consciously protect the environment."

When personally participating in a tree planting activity in Alxa League in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region, Li observed saplings at different growth stages — from newly planted seedlings to mature, thickening saxaul trees.

"It's like the development of public welfare: gradual, persistent and built on dedicated effort," he said. "It will slowly grow stronger, better and better."



A decoration marking Ant Forest's collectible "green energy" is displayed at a green lifestyle fair in Shanghai in September 2024. XING YUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Contact the writers at houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:37 PM

LIFE

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:37 PM

Back to school for the 'silver' generation

After lifetimes spent working and caring for others, older Chinese people are now packing their sketchpads and notebooks and heading abroad, **Yang Feiyue** reports.

China's retirees are breaking free from long-held expectations centered on family duties and caregiving, challenging stereotypes that cast older people as preoccupied with their children's marriages, grandchildren and domestic routines.

A growing number of them are now doing some soul-searching and seizing learning opportunities abroad, determined to make fuller use of their retirement years, whether in search of fulfillment or simply for their own happiness.

While younger generations debate whether an overseas degree is worth its staggering price tag, a growing wave of gray-haired retirees is packing suitcases and walking into lecture halls around the world, not for diplomas, but for themselves.

For nearly two decades, Li Guolin could barely get out of bed.

A spinal fracture in 2000 forced her into early retirement from her job at a bank in the coastal city of Zhuhai, in South China's Guangdong province. Her world shrank to a mattress and the relentless companion of chronic pain.

"My whole attention was on the pain. My social circle was tiny, and I didn't want to do anything," she recalls.

She tried group tours after she finally got back on her feet in 2019, but the rushed itineraries exhausted her.

"Too tiring, not for me," she says, adding that the pain still returns from time to time.

Then, in April 2024, she stumbled upon a short art program in Italy, with some preparatory art lessons arranged.

Something clicked inside her.

"It was exactly the kind of tomorrow I had been hoping for," she says, adding that it satisfied her interest in art and living in a foreign country for a while.

During preparation in Beijing, she painted under instruction for the first time in decades. There were no rules, no grades. Just guidance.

"I was completely absorbed, and the pain disappeared," she says.

A few weeks later, she flew to Florence, Italy, for a two-week fashion design program at a local institute, which was her first time abroad as a learner rather than a tourist. She had never worked with fabric or dressed a mannequin. By the end of the course, she had completed seven or eight original pieces.

"The whole process swept my pain away," she says.

Li is among a growing number of older Chinese citizens redefining what retirement can look like. Once largely confined to domestic chores, square dancing or the occasional group tour, many of China's "new elderly" are now turning their gaze toward foreign lecture halls.







Clockwise from top: Students from the "silver generation" on a bridge over the River Cam, Cambridge, July 2025. Chinese older learners take a fashion design course at Arts University Bournemouth, UK, in June 2025. A faculty member leads a tour of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, for older Chinese learners, in July 2025. Liu Ping (left) takes a picture with two "silver" learners outside Polimoda's campus in Florence, Italy, in October 2025. photos provided to china daily

A booming market

According to EF (also known as Education First), a global education company that organizes language courses and overseas study tours worldwide, Chinese nationals over 50 accounted for just 3 percent of its overseas study tours in 2019. By 2023, that share had jumped to 20 percent.

Most of these Chinese nationals are between 56 and 65, and many come from Shanghai, Guangdong, and Beijing — the demographic that rode the wave of China's reform and opening-up.

Benefiting from China's economic boom, this group is open-minded and has a strong desire for self-improvement, observes Ma Jing, managing director of EF's overseas study tour operations in China.

The market potential is staggering. China's silver economy is currently worth about 7 trillion yuan (nearly $1 trillion), according to a 2024 report by the China Association of Social Welfare and Senior Service.

By 2035, that figure is expected to reach 30 trillion yuan. Senior education, once a niche, is projected to grow to 500 billion yuan by 2025, with an annual compound growth rate of 25.3 percent, far outpacing traditional education sectors, according to the market research consultancy Chinese Industry Research Network.

Traditional study-abroad agencies have taken notice. In late 2025, New Oriental, one of China's largest private education companies, launched the "Tulip Plan" short-term overseas program tailored for learners over 35.

The program targets three age segments, with the "55-plus" track tailored specifically for those seeking to enrich their retirement years through immersive cultural experiences.

The first offerings include an art program in the United Kingdom and a culinary course in France.

For Li Guolin, the Florence trip was only the beginning. She went on to study silk painting at Yokohama University of Art and Design in Japan in April, and learned lacquer carving from a master craftsman in his remote studio, producing a hand-carved ginkgo leaf, its veins traced in gold.

A new motivation

Not everyone in this new wave is fleeing a life of pain. For Liu Ping, a 60-year-old former financial auditor from the inland city of Liuzhou in South China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, the motivation was more personal.

She had earned a CFO certificate years earlier that entitled her to attend a graduation ceremony at Cambridge, but then work got in the way.

"I always regretted it," she says.

When she saw an overseas study program that included a few weeks in Cambridge, she signed up immediately.

But first, she was required to attend a "growth camp" in Beijing.

At the camp, participants were asked to create a piece of art expressing their innermost feelings.

Liu, then still grieving her mother's recent death, poured herself into the task. She re-created a sunset scene by the river where she had once pushed her mother's wheelchair — stitching the bridge, the water, the separation.

When she finished, she felt an enormous release. That unexpected emotional breakthrough sparked her interest in art, so she decided to give it a real try at her dream school in Cambridge.

During her stay, the instructor asked the class to sketch something they had seen on campus. Liu chose the canopy of a corridor.

"It was the most complicated structure on campus," the instructor later told her.

She laughed. A career spent in auditing — precision, rules, getting things exactly right — had not prepared her for this.

"I saw the gap between myself and the students who had some foundation, but just finishing was already enough," she says.

Returning home, Liu felt several weeks studying in the UK were still too short. "I hadn't had my fill," she says.

She then bought a sketchbook and pencils.

Now, whenever she sees a beautiful scene, she photographs it and paints from the picture later.

"It's just for my own enjoyment," she says.

While Li and Liu stumbled upon their opportunities, Zi Wenli, a former CCTV director who retired in 2024, went looking for hers, and when she couldn't find it, she built it herself.

Like many new retirees, Zi felt adrift after retiring from China's State broadcaster where she had worked for about three decades.

"I lost all sense of rhythm and purpose, and my social circle collapsed almost overnight," she recalls.

She tried the local senior university, but found the offerings limited for her taste, with calligraphy, folk dancing, and painting "grand peonies". As she had helped design domestic university curricula and cofounded an overseas study agency that sent thousands of young Chinese to Western schools, she asked her own consultants to help her apply to universities like MIT and Stanford.

Yet, they turned her down.

"They told me there was no agency in China that served people over 35," she says.

So she traveled alone to the United States, the UK, and Japan, visiting universities and talking to professors.

In Japan, she met an 85-year-old professor still teaching and his 90-year-old student. In the UK, admissions officers told her that local retirees regularly enrolled in short courses.

She returned convinced. On a whim, on the night of Dec 23, 2024, she went live on WeChat's short-video platform from her living room with fewer than 800 followers. She talked about her idea of "studying abroad after retirement", a notion that older learners, free from the pressure of degrees and job prospects, might have an easier path than younger applicants competing for credentials.

Her phone soon exploded. By the end of the hourlong broadcast, she had received 544 private messages. The question was almost always the same: "How can I go?"

"I realized that night that this wasn't just my problem. I had stumbled upon a volcano of demand," she notes.

Within months, Zi founded the Retirement Study Club, later renamed the Mature Learning Club. In less than a year, it had attracted over 50,000 members nationwide and helped more than 500 retirees enroll in overseas programs, with over 1,000 more holding acceptance letters. Destinations include Japan, Italy, the UK, Spain, and the US, and the lengths of learning programs range from weeks to a year.

"In the beginning, I thought I would just help a few people, but the demand was overwhelming. These are people who have spent their whole lives taking care of others — their parents, their children, their grandchildren. For the first time, they want to do something just for themselves," she says.

Challenges and risks

Some critics question whether a two-week program, typically costing between 20,000 and 70,000 yuan, is worth it, while others raise health and safety concerns.

Da Zhigang, a researcher at the Heilongjiang Provincial Academy of Social Sciences, warns that Chinese seniors overseas may not receive timely medical care in an emergency due to language barriers, and could face unexpected risks.

There are deeper structural hurdles. China's higher education system remains designed for degree-seeking young people. Senior universities are widespread, but their curricula tend to focus on entertainment and hobbies, not skill renewal or social reintegration, experts say.

Professor Peng Xizhe, a demographer and senior professor at Fudan University, points to what he calls a "system ceiling".

The most fundamental challenge is a shift in mindset across society, he emphasizes.

Peng urges the education system, labor policies and other subsystems to be prepared for the new normal of an aging society.

Curiosity is the drive to live

To date, Zi's oldest participant has been an 83-year-old retired mathematics teacher from Shanghai who completed a fashion and crafts program in Italy.

"I was impressed when he told me curiosity is the drive to live," Zi says. The line has become something of a motto for her club.

"These people are running toward something, a version of themselves they had set aside decades ago," she says.

As for Li Guolin, she didn't take much of a break after finishing her studies in Japan in late April. Instead of flying directly home to Zhuhai, she detoured through Taipei to visit its Palace Museum, then flew to Hong Kong before returning to the mainland.

A few days later, right after the May Day holiday, she was at the airport again — this time for a holiday in Rome and Malta with a friend she met on one of her study trips.

"Our class averaged 60 years old and everyone agreed that before 50, we lived for our families and children. After 50, we decided to live for ourselves," she says.

Her family has noticed the change.

"They told me the biggest difference is that I have more energy now, and I don't fixate on my pain anymore," she shares.

When asked if she plans to keep going, she does not hesitate. "Spain will likely be my next learning destination for a dance program," she says.

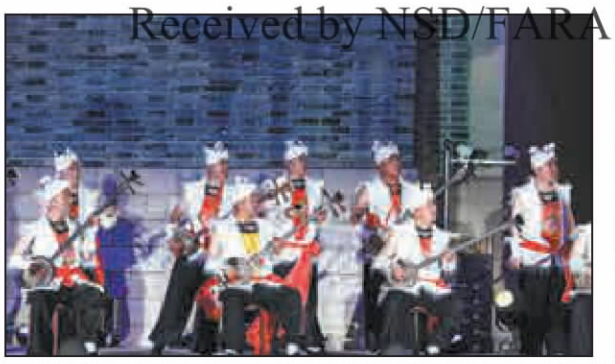
"Even if I don't know how to dance, I want to try. I want to challenge myself. I don't want to live the way I used to — always holding back."

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:37 PM

LIFE

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:37 PM





Left: A folk performance marks the opening of the 2026 Intangible Cultural Heritage Summer Shopping Month, which kicked off on June 11 in Suzhou, Jiangsu province. **Right:** A tea-making demonstration draws visitors to one of the many heritage display booths during the event.

Preservation finds a way into modern hearts

Transformation and innovation help China's intangible cultural heritage find consumers hungry for fresh experiences, **Yang Feiyue** reports in Suzhou, Jiangsu.

Zhou Jing was holding a bowl of noodles at a booth on the historical Pingjiang Road in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, where crowds flowed along the ancient stone-paved street on a muggy June afternoon. At first glance, it did not look like a typical local dish. The bowl was made entirely of plush fabric and weighed almost nothing. Even the braised pork topping was soft and fuzzy.

And yet, around her, staff members engaged visitors in mock noodle-shop interactions.

"Hard noodles or soft? Extra broth or light?"

For many visitors, the questions were unfamiliar. That was by design.

Small cards and props at the booth explained the specialized vocabulary of Suzhou noodle culture: *kuan tang* (extra broth), *jin tang* (less broth), *zhong mian* (extra noodles), and *shao mian* (fewer noodles). In 2020, Suzhou-style noodle-making was added to the city's intangible cultural heritage (ICH) list, adding another layer to this seemingly simple interaction. For local regulars, these terms signal identity as much as taste. For outsiders, they offer a quick introduction to one of the city's best-loved traditions.

The experience was designed to be memorable — a playful encounter that transforms a local culinary custom into an interactive cultural lesson.

Zhou's booth was among the busiest attractions at the 2026 Intangible Cultural Heritage Summer Shopping Month, which opened on June 11 in Suzhou. Held along Pingjiang Road, a canal-side neighborhood lined with white-walled houses and black-tiled roofs, the event forms part of a nationwide campaign featuring more than 1,200 activities held through late July, aimed at bringing traditional culture closer to contemporary life.

For Zhou, a former travel entrepreneur who once specialized in European tours, the plush noodle bowl represents more than a novelty product. It is part of a growing movement across China that is reimagining how intangible cultural heritage is preserved, presented, and passed on to younger generations.

Across the country, cultural entrepreneurs and heritage inheritors are increasingly turning traditional crafts, foods and folklore into collectible toys, lifestyle products and social-media-friendly cultural IPs (intellectual property).

The transformation of Pingjiang Road into a sprawling heritage marketplace offers a glimpse of that shift.



Creative cultural products featuring Zibo soft pottery prove a hit with visitors at the shopping month event. Photos Provided to China Daily

> A friend once told me our works have a 'human touch'. That phrase exactly woke me up."
>
> **Wang Zhi,** a municipal-level inheritor of Zibo soft pottery

Creative inspiration

More than 100 heritage workshops and inheritors from across China gathered for the shopping month's main event, showcasing everything from embroidery and ceramics to weaving, sculpture and traditional foods.

Among them was Zhou's collection of plush noodle bowls, refrigerator magnets and blind boxes inspired by the local food culture.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Zhou operated a travel business serving Chinese tourists visiting Europe and international visitors coming to China. When global tourism ground to a halt in 2020, she began exploring opportunities closer to home.

"There weren't many cultural products that truly reflected Suzhou's local character and everyday life," she says. "I wanted to create something people could connect with."

Her workshop is located in the Dinghuisi alley in Suzhou's old town. Nearby, heritage masters regularly give public demonstrations and classes. Watching these activities, Zhou realized that many traditional cultural elements remained unfamiliar even to local residents.

"I discovered things I didn't know myself. If local people don't know about them, young people are even less likely to know," she says.

Although not an inheritor of a traditional craft, Zhou chose to serve as a translator between heritage and the marketplace. Food became her starting point.

"Visitors come to Suzhou for two things: the gardens and the food," she says, explaining why she chose food as her focus.

Inspired by the popularity of interactive cultural merchandise, she created products that transform familiar local dishes into collectibles. Customers not only receive a toy but also a cultural story.

Her first generation of plush noodle bowls attracted attention but struggled to sustain sales due to their relatively high price. Several rounds of redesign followed.

A second version added practical functions, such as card holders. The breakthrough came when Zhou combined several fast-growing categories in China's creative cultural market — blind boxes, plush toys and refrigerator magnets — into a single product that was smaller, more affordable and easier to collect.

Since the launch of the latest version in early 2025, sales have exceeded expectations.

She has since expanded collaborations with local brands, including Renchangshun, a traditional Suzhou pastry maker with a history stretching back more than two centuries. Together, they transformed products such as *dingsheng gao* and *zhuangyuan gao*, pastries associated with good fortune and academic success, into plush collectibles.

"My role is to help people take notice. Once they're interested, they can learn more," she says.

A broader movement

Zhou's story reflects a wider transformation taking place across China's heritage sector.

This year's ICH summer shopping month places particular emphasis on connecting traditional culture with contemporary consumption. Alongside exhibitions and craft demonstrations, the event features activities exploring themes such as "ICH plus designer toys", "ICH plus fashion", and "ICH plus technology" — an acknowledgment that preservation today increasingly depends on finding new ways to engage modern audiences.

The shift is being driven in part by changing consumer behavior, particularly among younger generations.

According to leading online food delivery and local services platform Meituan, searches related to nationally recognized intangible cultural heritage food traditions exceeded 18 million in 2025, up 34 percent year-on-year. Orders placed with related merchants rose by 140 percent, while nearly two-thirds of searches came from consumers aged 20 to 35.

Industry observers say the figures point to a growing appetite for heritage experiences that feel interactive, accessible and relevant to daily life, besides those from the museums or textbooks.

A report on China's cultural and creative industries, released by China Cultural Media Group, notes that heritage-based cultural products are increasingly moving beyond static preservation toward what it calls "living innovation" and market-oriented development, allowing traditional culture to become part of everyday consumer experiences.

For entrepreneurs and inheritors alike, the question has now been how to translate them into forms that resonate with younger consumers.

Pony with personality

About two hours north of Suzhou by high-speed rail, another experiment in heritage innovation has been unfolding in Zibo, Shandong province.

Wang Zhi, a municipal-level inheritor of Zibo soft pottery, has spent more than a decade exploring ways to engage contemporary audiences with traditional clay sculpture.

Her studio is known for miniature works inspired by Chinese history, everyday life and classical art. But national attention arrived in 2024 with the debut of Long Dada, a dragon whose round body and playful expression challenged conventional depictions of the mythical creature.

The character quickly gained popularity online and helped Wang rethink how traditional culture could be presented to younger audiences.

Her latest creation pushes that idea further.

Known as Ma Biaobiao, or "Scruffy Pony", the figure was developed in collaboration with the Beijing Fine Art Academy and inspired by a late painting by renowned Chinese artist Qi Baishi, depicting the spirit and vitality of a galloping horse.

The pony features oversized eyes and a dramatically fluffy mane made not from clay but from Tan sheep wool.

Achieving the dynamic pose proved technically demanding. The sculpture's front legs touch the ground while the hind legs lift into the air, requiring repeated experimentation and an internal support structure capable of withstanding the firing process.

To strengthen the connection with the original artwork, the team designed the display so the pony appears to leap from a traditional Chinese scroll painting.

The feature that most captured public attention, however, was the mane.

Owners are encouraged to braid, curl, decorate, or style it however they wish.

"We call it co-creation," Wang says.

The idea extends beyond the product itself. The pony's name originated from internet users, who described the character using the Shandong dialect word *biao*, a term suggesting something goofy, impulsive or endearingly eccentric. The team adopted the nickname and continued refining the character in response to customer feedback.

New mane colors, accessories and design details emerged through interactions with fans online.

"We listen carefully," Wang says. That approach has helped transform a single clay sculpture into a broader cultural IP encompassing keychains, refrigerator magnets, bags, and apparel.

For Wang, the appeal lies in creating an emotional connection.

"Heritage isn't something frozen in time. It continues to evolve," she says.

Wang has thought a lot about what makes heritage stick.

"A friend once told me our works have a 'human touch'," she says. "That phrase exactly woke me up. Intangible cultural heritage is about the warmth of the hand, the sedimentation of time, the power of healing, the possibility of co-creation."

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

Foreigners praise country's high sense of safety

What would happen if someone left a backpack full of personal belongings unattended in one of China's busiest commercial areas?

YouTuber "Because I'm Lizzy" decided to find out in Southwest China's Chongqing last year. After spending nearly two hours wandering through the city's winding streets, sampling local delicacies, and taking in its neon-lit nightlife, she returned to find everything exactly where she left it.

The 29-year-old South African content creator was not surprised by the outcome. "I've been proven so many times that nothing would ever get stolen," she says. "Safety is the number one reason why I stay in China."

Currently based in Kunming, the capital city of Yunnan province, the YouTuber, Jannelize Bessenger, has lived in China for seven years. She created a series of videos about the country after noticing that many people know little about the high safety level of the nation, with a population exceeding 1.4 billion.

But for Bessenger, "It is the people who live here and their value and respect for life that make China the safest place, where I will stay for many years."

Her first impression of China was shaped by an unexpected act of kindness from a stranger. She recalled that in 2019, just four months after arriving in China, she fell seriously ill while in Nanchang, Jiangxi province. Although she had the hospital's location saved on her phone, she still could not find it.

Speaking little Chinese at the time, she turned to a man nearby for help, using a translation app. To her surprise, he voluntarily accompanied her to the hospital by subway and then left.

Wondering whether the man would ask for her contact or something in return, Bessenger said nothing happened. "He was just being nice," she says. That moment made her realize she could live alone in China safely as a foreign woman.

Hailing from a small South African town renowned for its wildlife and safaris, solo traveler Bessenger says China's secure environment allows her to embrace a relaxed lifestyle.

"Whether I'm going for a walk with headphones on at 11 pm because I can't sleep or I want to get some fresh air without checking a map, I just go and explore," she says.

China ranks high among other countries on the safety and law and order index, according to Gallup's 2025 Global Safety Report.

When Bessenger shared her appreciation for feeling safe on the lifestyle-sharing platform RedNote, many Chinese users were puzzled as to why she kept bringing it up.

"They take it for granted. They don't really realize how lucky they are to live in such a safe country," she says. The feeling was shared by her mother, who visited China from South Africa two years ago and later decided to settle down.

China's safety and openness are also echoed by short-term travelers. In 2025, inbound tourist visits to China surpassed 150 million, up more than 17 percent year-on-year. Of these, over 30 million foreign travelers entered the country under China's visa-free policies.

With expensive camera gear in hand, Canadian YouTuber Dave Mani and his wife comfortably moved around Chinese cities and roamed rural areas.

"After visiting 56 countries, we can say that China is very high on the list in terms of general safety," says Mani.

As an independent content creator, Mani notices how deeply technology is integrated into everyday life in China. Whenever he and his wife needed help during the trip, locals were quick to use translation apps to communicate with them.

> I've been proven so many times that nothing would ever get stolen. Safety is the number one reason why I stay in China."
>
> **Jannelize Bessenger,** South African content creator known as "Because I'm Lizzy"

The couple quickly became fans of WeChat, saying the super app brought great convenience, especially WeChat Pay, which allowed them to make payments easily and safely.

"That level of everyday safety made filming and exploring very easy and enjoyable," says Mani.

Like Bessenger and Mani, Ana Rosa Neumann Devers, an exchange student from the Dominican Republic studying in Harbin, Heilongjiang province, finds it cozy and relaxing to stroll past the orderly market stalls day or night.

The girl from the tropical Caribbean nation has fallen in love with the icy northern city, captivated by its snowy nights and warmed by the kind sincerity of her schoolmates. At a school ball, she appeared in traditional Dominican attire and was met with warm applause and heartfelt eompliments.

"People here respect different cultures and customs. No one treats me differently because I'm from another country. I truly feel respected," she says.

In the past seven years, Bessenger has found that in China, every place offers something entirely different for travelers to discover. But for those who don't know where to go or who are eager to tap into the "becoming Chinese" trend, her advice is simple: just head downstairs when night falls.

"Walk around, get some street food, and see how people enjoy their meals and how the city settles into a peaceful but vibrant rhythm," she says. "That's when China feels most real."

XINHUA



Overseas tourists take photos of a drone light show at Nanbin Road in Nan'an District of Chongqing, southwest China, on April 22. Huang Wei / Xinhua

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:37 PM

LIFE

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:37 PM



Master's six strings strike global chords

An award-winning craftsman blends Spanish lutherie and local design to build world-beating classical guitars, **Wang Xin** reports in Shanghai.

Gao Yi, 56, is one of China's most accomplished classical guitarists. Today, however, he is winning even greater recognition worldwide as a luthier, crafting exquisitely handmade guitars that are earning international acclaim.

Two years ago, Gao's flamenco guitar won first prize at the 7th Antonio Marin Montero Guitar Building Competition held in Granada, Spain, where his classical guitar also remarkably made it to the final. He became the first Chinese luthier ever to win the competition's top prize.

Last month, his instruments impressed Japanese musicians and fellow luthiers at an exhibition in Tokyo. Standing out in this highly competitive market through exceptional craftsmanship, Gao signed cooperation agreements with Japan's major instrument distributors, including Gendai Guitar and Kurosawa Gakki, for both online and offline orders.

Born in Shandong province in 1970, Gao's connection with music and instruments began early. He primarily played the Chinese bamboo flute as a child and taught himself guitar at the age of 17. After graduating from Jining University with a music degree in 1992, he continued his studies in classical guitar performance at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing the following year. It was there that he first encountered guitars built in the traditional Spanish style.

In 2000, Gao won first place in the Chinese Guitar Competition while performing on an Antonio Marin Montero guitar borrowed from a friend.

Later that year, he joined Yamaha Corporation as China's guitar market manager and relocated to Shanghai. During his eight years with the company, Gao deepened his understanding of guitar history and construction techniques. At the same time, he continued performing solo concerts, often using his cherished Marin Montero guitars.

His first attempts at building guitars began in 2010, when he established his workshop, Gaoyi Guitars. Shortly afterward, a serious accident during a repair left his fingers badly injured. Rather than discouraging him, the experience strengthened his determination to pursue lutherie more seriously and eventually shift his professional focus toward guitar making.

In 2013, Gao seized an opportunity to study traditional Spanish guitar-making in Beijing under Juan Labella, a respected guitar maker from Granada.

The following year, with support from the Spanish Consulate General in Shanghai, he visited Spain, where he was introduced to Marin Montero himself. The legendary master offered valuable guidance and encouragement. Marin Montero, widely regarded as one of the most influential living masters of traditional Spanish guitar making, became both a mentor and a lasting source of inspiration for Gao.

In 2019, Gao was recommended by the European Guitar Foundation to study with another renowned Granada School luthier, Rene Baarslag. The experience further shaped and inspired his own approach to guitar making.

"While I was in Spain, I lived with local musicians and luthiers to learn and exchange ideas. Then I realized that guitar making is far more than simply creating a seemingly abstract sound. Behind it lie the culture, history, humanism, life experience and the thoughts of the luthiers," says Gao.

Regardless of national or cultural differences, Gao says he was warmly welcomed by Spanish masters. They generously shared their workshops, materials, tools, techniques, craftsmanship, experience and even their philosophy of life.

Gao says what many Chinese luthiers still lack in high-end guitar making is a deeper "understanding" and "perception" of the instrument itself. His experience as a performer has helped bridge that gap. Spain, widely regarded as the cradle of the classical guitar, has passed down its traditions and accumulated knowledge through generations of master builders.

It was during his time in Spain that Gao learned, for example, that the finest soundboards for premium Spanish-style guitars are often made from high-quality spruce sourced from the Fiemme Valley in the northern Alps at an altitude of around 1,500 meters. The same region supplied wood for the famed Stradivarius violins. Lightweight yet capable of producing remarkable clarity, the wood is highly prized among instrument makers. Gao also learned that every stage of guitar construction demands meticulous attention, from wood treatment and internal structure to component assembly and even the selection of the final finish.

"Guitar making is never like solving a math problem, and it doesn't have an exact formula. Every detail in the whole process comes from the accumulated experience of pioneers and also from luthiers' innovation. I see guitar making as a testament to collective creativity across generations," Gao says.

For Gao, guitar making is not merely craftsmanship but a form of "artistic creation". A guitar is far more than a box that produces sound; it is an artwork that reflects a maker's aesthetics, personality, life experiences and constant pursuit of innovation.

As technology advances and performance venues become increasingly diverse, guitarists are demanding more from their instruments, encouraging luthiers to continue pushing creative boundaries. Many modern classical guitars now incorporate aerospace technologies or carbon fiber materials into their soundboards to improve strength and project greater volume, particularly for larger venues and outdoor performances.

As a Chinese luthier proud of his country's rich cultural heritage, Gao has sought to incorporate elements of Chinese identity into his work. The rosettes on the two guitars that earned recognition at the Spanish competition draw inspiration from traditional Chinese geometric window-grille patterns combined with Japanese Hakone Yosegi Zaiku (marquetry wood mosaics), creating an elegant visual signature.

In other instruments, he frequently uses mother-of-pearl and shell carvings for decorative inlays. He is also exploring the use of locally sourced woods from different regions of China.

"We have already opened the door to the high-end guitar-making sector," Gao says. "As Chinese luthiers continue working toward the same goal and accumulating our own experience, I believe we will see more handmade guitars with a distinct Chinese identity shine on the global stage."

Building a high-quality guitar is a painstaking process. Working full-time as a luthier, Gao produces no more than 13 instruments a year. Benefiting from the keen tonal sensitivity developed during his years as a performer, he focuses on creating guitars with warm, delicate tones, rich dynamics, an authentic Spanish voice and a lasting Eastern character. His instruments are increasingly sought after by professional musicians and collectors from Germany, Spain, Japan, the United States and other countries.

As both a guitarist and a luthier, Gao has spent nearly four decades alongside the instrument he calls his "most loyal companion". The guitar has accompanied him through every stage of life, helping him express emotions, find friendship and resonance, and discover deeper meaning.

"The guitar is a record of my life," he says. "It contains my passion and what I hope to leave behind in the world. Even when my life comes to an end, my instruments will remain."

Asked about the secret to building a great guitar, Gao shares with China Daily an answer — and a life philosophy — that he first learned from Marin Montero: "Just slow down."

Contact the writer at wangxin2@chinadaily.com.cn







Top: Gao Yi's classical guitar reaches the final of the 7th Antonio Marin Montero Guitar Building Competition in Granada, Spain, in 2024. provided to china daily **Above:** (From left) Gao builds a guitar at his workshop in Shanghai. gao erqiang / china daily Gao with renowned Spanish luthier Antonio Marin Montero. provided to china daily He tunes a guitar made at his workshop. gao erqiang / china daily

One man's mission creates China's zero-waste island

By Xing Wen
xingwen@chinadaily.com.cn

Far out in the East China Sea, Qingbang Island — part of the easternmost permanently inhabited archipelago off China's mainland in Zhoushan, Zhejiang province — is becoming a model for sustainable living.

Despite covering just 1.41 square kilometers, the island is experimenting with an innovative recycling system. Residents sort their household waste and exchange it for vouchers that can be used at local stores or redeemed for cash at the end of the year.

Food scraps will be fermented into organic fertilizer for growing vegetables and flowers, while recyclable plastics are collected by a Shanghai clothing company and transformed into garments, shoes, and hats sold on the island.

The voucher program has been running for three years, driven by the vision of Yan Shanyue, a former seaman who is determined to turn Qingbang into a zero-waste island.

Why vouchers? Yan explains. Selling recyclables directly typically earns only 20 or 30 yuan at a time — an amount that easily disappears among everyday expenses.

"But with a voucher, you can clearly see that it came from the waste you collected."

To keep motivation high, Yan also hosts an annual year-end meeting where active recyclers receive daily necessities like rice and cooking oil.

"That way," he adds, "people have one more thing to look forward to."

Yan grew up on Xiazhi Island, more than 60 kilometers from Qingbang, and many of his happiest childhood memories were shaped by the sea.

"Every morning around six or seven, after breakfast, my friends and I would head to the beach," recalls the 55-year-old.

"At high tide, we swam and challenged each other to jump higher or hold our breath longer. At low tide, we dug for clams and razor clams and carried home baskets full of them."

At the time, plastic waste was rarely seen on local shores. Occasionally, they would find a bottle with Japanese writing that had drifted across the sea.

In fact, Yan even had his first taste of instant noodles at age 7 after discovering a Japanese packet washed ashore following a typhoon, which he shared with three friends.

When he returned home in 2003 after leaving a career in deep-sea fishing, he was shocked to find beaches increasingly covered with rubbish, especially marine debris. Determined to help, he began cleaning the shoreline on his own.





Left: Yan Shanyue, a former seaman-turned-guesthouse owner, is helping transform Qingbang Island into the zero-waste island of his dreams. **Right:** A recent cleanup event was held to gather volunteers to collect trash together on the beach of Qingbang Island, Zhejiang province. photos provided to china daily

In 2013, Yan moved to Qingbang Island to open a guesthouse. He continued his beach-cleaning routine, and before long, other guesthouse owners joined him. Together, they discovered that just a few people could restore a small beach to its natural beauty within hours.

"Sometimes I think to myself that we really do have the power to make a difference," he says.

Encouraged by the results, Yan and his growing team began inviting volunteers from outside the island, offering affordable food and accommodation to support cleanup efforts. Through these activities, he connected with professionals from marine conservation organizations, inspiring him to establish his own environmental charity dedicated to creating a "zero-waste island".

He and his partners then mobilized local shop owners to sign a "zero waste island partnership" agreement.

Driving a small tricycle, he collected cardboard, aluminum cans, and plastic waste while visiting households to encourage recycling and proper waste sorting.

"What gives me the greatest sense of achievement is that the islanders trust in me is growing," Yan says.

The journey also pushed Yan to develop new skills. He learned how to write project proposals, create PowerPoint presentations, prepare budgets, and organize events ranging from waste surveys to community education programs and environmental improvement projects. He continues to seek partnerships with companies and environmental foundations to expand the initiative.

Yet, the challenge remains relentless. Every storm washes new debris onto the island's beaches. A shoreline cleaned by evening may be covered with trash again the following morning, creating what often feels like an endless cycle.

To cope with this frustration, Yan draws inspiration from a powerful memory from his years at sea. At age 16, he survived a fierce storm in which waves battered his fishing vessel for more than 50 hours. Crew members worked nonstop, bailing water while pumps ran continuously. The helmsman fought to keep the boat aligned with the waves, knowing that even a slight mistake could prove fatal.

Eventually, the storm passed.

"We couldn't control the environment back then," Yan says.

"We had no idea when the next wave would hit or when the boat might capsize. But we had no choice but to keep bailing the water out."

Decades at sea taught him a lesson he still follows today: while people cannot calm the wind and waves, persistence can keep a ship afloat — and help preserve the blue waters surrounding an island.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:37 PM

SPORTS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:37 PM

World Cup 2026

Super-sub Undav sends Germany into knockouts

Substitute's brace overturns halftime deficit to snatch win over Cote d'Ivoire



Deniz Undav (26) scores his, and Germany's, first goal of its World Cup Group E match against Cote d'Ivoire in Toronto on Saturday. Undav scored twice after being subbed on in the second half to lead Germany to a 2-1 win and clinch a spot in the knockout phase. AP



Deniz Undav celebrates scoring Germany's second goal during a World Cup Group E match against Cote d'Ivoire on Saturday. AP

> "It's important that everyone sees that even the players from the bench can decide games. Now we have sent a really important signal to the team. I think that's very important in a game like this."
>
> **Deniz Undav,** after scoring twice to help Germany reach the knockout phase

TORONTO — An hour into the game, Germany was getting outplayed by Cote d'Ivoire and trailed by a goal.

Coach Julian Nagelsmann needed a spark and substituted three fresh players on, one of whom was Deniz Undav. That decision paid off big time.

Undav scored two goals off the bench as Germany pulled off a thrilling comeback to beat Cote d'Ivoire 2-1 in its World Cup Group E match on Saturday, securing its place in the knockout stage for the first time since it won the title in 2014.

After having two goals disallowed in the first half, Germany did not lose focus and used intricate passing to find its way, while the West Africans produced their dynamic brand of attacking soccer in a wild encounter at Toronto Stadium.

"It's important that everyone sees that even the players from the bench can decide games," said Undav, who also scored in Germany's 7-1 opening match rout of Curacao. "Now we have sent a really important signal to the team. I think that's very important in a game like this."

"We showed great character today," said the versatile striker, who now has nine goals in his last eight matches. "We want to achieve the most (we can)."

Undav leveled the score with a controlled, volleyed finish in the 68th minute and struck again in stoppage time when he received a pass on the turn, before swivelling and firing home a ball that Yahia Fofana had no chance at stopping.

Simon Adingra had a late chance for Cote d'Ivoire, but he failed to get a shot off in the area before Germany charged back down the field where Fofana blocked a low shot from Nathaniel Brown.

The loss denied, at least for now, Cote d'Ivoire the chance of securing its first trip to the knockout stages.

"We wanted to make history today," said Cote d'Ivoire winger Amad Diallo. "But I think everything was a little tight."

Unfamiliar territory

Cote d'Ivoire had opened the scoring in the first half when Franck Kessie slotted home a rebound off a shot from Diallo on a play created when Yan Diomande charged down the left side and sent in a cross.

With more than 100,000 people of German ancestry living in Toronto, Nagelsmann's men enjoyed plenty of support, but were a frustrated group at the interval with nothing to show for their eight attempts on goal.

It was definitely unfamiliar territory for Germany, as it marked only the fourth time it has faced a halftime deficit in its last 36 contests at the global showpiece.

But, after the break, a more active German side showed up, one that took more risks and was determined to dedicate everything to its effort to win.

"In the end, we deservedly won it," Nagelsmann told reporters. "The boys invested a lot. I'm very happy for the whole team."

"This is exactly what we hoped for, and I'm very happy for my team," Nagelsmann said.

He said that after his two-goal performance, Undav could make the starting 11 in Germany's third group stage match against Ecuador, but also stressed that the Stuttgart forward was thriving as a substitute.

"I could have him in the starting lineup," Nagelsmann said. "I think that every player would love to be in the starting lineup, but I think he's very happy as it is right now."

Two goals scratched off

Germany looked to have opened the scoring when midfielder Aleksandar Pavlovic rose to meet a short corner in the 25th minute, but was deemed to have fouled Fofana in the process.

The ruling left Pavlovic with his hands atop his head in disbelief, as Fofana received some attention after the collision and the partisan German crowd made their disdain for the referee's decision known.

Shortly afterward, it was Cote d'Ivoire that finally broke through with Kessie's goal.

The West Africans have scored in their last seven matches at the tournament, the longest such sequence on the global stage in their history.

Germany once again put the ball in the back of the net, but its celebrations were cut short as the referee determined that Jamal Musiala had fouled Odilon Kossounou in the build-up.

"We had exactly what it takes to succeed in a tournament, a winning mentality, team spirit," said German defender Jonathan Tah.

"We didn't give up; we just kept going.

"The guys coming off the bench brought new energy to the game. Deniz deserves special mention. He was outstanding."

After a court fight to get into Canada, Elye Wahi, the Cote d'Ivoire striker under investigation for alleged betting-related offenses while playing in France for Nice, did not play.

Germany tops Group E with six points and is through to the last 32, while Cote d'Ivoire remains on three after two matches. Ecuador and Curacao played to a goalless draw in Kansas City in a later match on Saturday.

Germany will close out the group stage against Ecuador on Thursday in New Jersey, while Cote d'Ivoire faces Curacao in Philadelphia.

Agencies via Xinhua

Les Elephants look to forget Toronto loss and charge toward Curacao clash

If Cote d'Ivoire wins its next match, Saturday's loss to the Germans won't matter.

After surrendering two second-half goals and missing the chance to clinch a knockout stage berth for the first time in its four World Cup appearances, Les Elephants turn their attention to their last group stage match against Curacao on Thursday.

Win, and the Elephants are in.

Forward Amad Diallo said he and his teammates will get over the Germany loss. They have to.

"We (have) respect for ourselves, but we want to make history for Cote d'Ivoire, and we (are) going to go there with a good mentality and try to rise again," he said.

Cote d'Ivoire seemed one step ahead of Germany throughout the first half on Saturday — and a chunk of the second — with mid-



Cote d'Ivoire's Franck Kessie celebrates his goal against Germany on Saturday. AP

fielder Franck Kessie's first-half goal silencing German fans for a long stretch.

But the German side of the sold-out crowd erupted when Deniz Undav scored the winning goal, his second of the match, leaving Cote d'Ivoire fans hanging their heads.

The team seemed a little shocked as well, and players spoke about the pain of losing a match they felt they should have won.

Cote d'Ivoire coach Emerse Fae felt his team could have been more decisive in its bid to get a second goal.

"It's more frustration that we're feeling after this defeat, because we were able to open the score against this strong German side," he told reporters.

"A difference in experience meant that the chances that we did have at the end of the game, where we needed to find the back of the net, we were hesitant," Fae said.

However, the Ivorian coach was quick to put the Germany game behind him and highlighted that, overall, he was happy with his team's performance.

"We're going to use this game as a lesson to try and fine-tune the mistakes, our shortcomings that we still have, and that will help us go as far as possible," he said.

He said he was looking forward to the challenge of facing Curacao next to see "what they are made of", and was expecting a strong fight.

"Our destiny is still in our hands, or at our feet," he said.

The good news for FIFA's No 31-ranked Les Elephants is that their next opponent, Curacao, is way below them at No 83.

The Caribbean nation also lost its first match to Germany, 7-1.

"It's going to be a big moment for everyone, for this new generation, because we know we have quality in the team," Diallo said. "But the priority now is that we are really focused on ourselves. It's going to be a very hard game."

Agencies via Xinhua

Double Dutch: Braces from Brobbey and Gakpo help sink Sweden

HOUSTON — Under intense pressure after its opening-game draw with Japan, the Netherlands delivered a dominant performance against Sweden in the World Cup on Saturday to move atop the Group F standings.

Brian Brobbey and Cody Gakpo scored two goals apiece to power the Dutch to the 5-1 win.

Brobbey's goals came in the first half, setting the Netherlands up for a big win after playing to a 2-2 draw the previous Sunday.

"It could be that the way we played builds confidence," Netherlands coach Ronald Koeman said. "Now we've got a slightly better peace of mind with the four points. You can build on what happened now, and that's really good."

Gakpo, who also had an assist, extended the lead to 3-0 just after halftime, scoring in the 47th minute off a cross from Denzel Dumfries. He matched Brobbey when he scored on a right-footed shot from the left side of the box in the 54th minute.

"Today, there was more variation in attacking play, more players in different positions, movement and all those things," Gakpo said. "So it was more difficult for the defenders to really mark us, and we became free in the box. I think that was the little thing maybe we missed in the last game."

Sweden couldn't build on its strong performance in a 5-1 walloping of Tunisia in its first match. The loss to the Dutch was its biggest World Cup defeat since losing 7-1 to Brazil in 1950.

Sweden coach Graham Potter said the defeat was less about what his team did and more about just how good the Netherlands played Saturday. "They're a top team, and they were better than us today. We have to congratulate them, but I think we'll learn a lot from the game."

The Dutch game plan to play out wide to open up Sweden and cross to Brobbey worked perfectly early on. He put the Netherlands on top in the 11th minute, one-timing a Gakpo cross with his right foot.

His second goal came when he took a cross from Dumfries while sliding and just got his right foot on the ball, scoring inside the far post in the 17th minute.

Koeman credited Brobbey's success to getting in better shape after he had struggled in the past with the rigors of playing a full game.

"He's fitter, he's sharper and he's developing really well," he said.

Anthony Elanga's left-footed goal cut the lead to 4-1 in the 59th minute and allowed Sweden to avoid the shutout loss.



Crysencio Summerville celebrates with NBA star Steph Curry's "night night" gesture after scoring the Netherlands' fifth goal of its 5-1 World Cup Group F win over Sweden in Texas on Saturday. REUTERS

Sweden had plenty of chances to score before that, but the Dutch goalkeeper Bart Verbruggen was brilliant in the first half with four saves.

Sweden appeared to have cut the lead to 2-1 on a header by Gustaf Lagerbielke in the 44th minute, but he was ruled offside. Lagerbielke is a baron from a noble family in Sweden. His father and grandfather are counts.

But he wasn't the only royalty in the stadium Saturday, as the Netherlands had two very special guests cheering them on with King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima watching from a luxury suite. "The King was very happy," Koeman said.

Crysencio Summerville, who assisted Gakpo's second goal, tacked on one of his own for the Netherlands in the 89th minute and celebrated with NBA star Steph Curry's "night night" gesture.

Summerville took a boot to the head late in the match and had received stitches, but Koeman said he should be ready for the next match.

Samurai blues for Tunisia

Meanwhile, Japan marked the 1,000th game in the history of the World Cup with a 4-0 thrashing of Tunisia in Saturday's final fixture.

Ayase Ueda scored twice while Daichi Kamada and Junya Ito were also on target, as the Asian giant joined the Netherlands on four points at the top of Group F.

Tunisia can no longer hope for a place in the knockout stages.

The Samurai Blue were always in control against Tunisia at the Monterrey Stadium in Mexico and Tunisia never looked like threatening a technically superior Japanese side that settled quickly into its trademark, smooth passing game.

Kamada opened the scoring after just four minutes following some deft interplay. Minutes later, Tunisia keeper Aymen Dahmen just managed to claw away the ball, which was barely centimeters from crossing his goal line. Japan eventually got its second in the 31st minute, with striker Ueda thundering in a low shot from the edge of the area.

The rout continued in the second half, with Ito latching onto a brilliant through ball to finish in the 69th, before Ueda nodded in a looping header in the 83rd.

Group F winds up on Thursday, with Japan playing Sweden at Dallas Stadium and the Netherlands facing Tunisia in Kansas City.

Agencies

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:37 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:39 PM

Crippling shocks
Cost spikes, high tariffs squeeze ASEAN factories
ASIA FOCUS, PAGE 4



Micro-dramas turn into billion-dollar phenomenon
CULTURE, PAGE 15



Greenspan dies
Former Fed chairman leaves deep mark on trade policy
WORLD, PAGE 5

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 TUESDAY, JUNE 23, 2026

Starmer steps down



British Prime Minister Keir Starmer announces the timeline for his resignation outside 10 Downing Street in London, the United Kingdom, on Monday. Starmer said he was stepping down as leader of the governing Labour Party but would remain caretaker prime minister until a new head was chosen by the party. TOBY SHEPHEARD / REUTERS **See story, page 3**

Supply chains' intl integration hailed as key

Amid geopolitical headwinds, cooperation of every country needed, Beijing expo told

By **ZHONG NAN**
zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

Against mounting cost pressures and evolving geopolitical headwinds, deeper supply chain integration and closer industrial collaboration have become ever more pivotal for global businesses to sustain innovation momentum and bolster trade growth, senior government officials and business leaders said on Monday.

Addressing the opening ceremony of the fourth China International Supply Chain Expo in Beijing, Vice-Premier Ding Xuexiang said that global supply chains, industrial chains and value chains are closely interconnected, with every country serving as a link in the chain of cooperation.

Ding emphasized that safeguarding the stability and smooth operation of global industrial and supply chains calls for concerted efforts from all stakeholders.

Running from Monday to Friday, the expo has attracted more than 676 companies and institutions from 85 countries, regions and international organizations this year, according to the Beijing-based China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, the expo's organizer.

Echoing the vision of enhanced international cooperation, South African Deputy President Paul Mashatile said the world stands at a critical juncture. Geopolitical shifts, technological breakthroughs, climate challenges and shifting production paradigms are collectively reshaping the global trade landscape, he said.

Governments and businesses worldwide are now prioritizing greater resilience, diversification, decarbonization and sustainability throughout supply chain systems, Mashatile said, adding that in this context, restoring confidence in the multilateral trading system and advancing inclusive, sustainable economic growth have emerged as pressing global imperatives.

John Denton, secretary-general of the Paris-based International Chamber of Commerce, warned that prevailing uncertainties may curb global business and investment activities by up to $400 billion this year alone.

However, he said, "Bolstering supply chains through digital transformation, refined operational approaches and modern trade practices could unlock over $3 trillion in additional global economic output over the next five years."

China has also sought to reinforce these efforts through a series of policy measures, with the government rolling out a new action plan to stabilize foreign investment. The package pledges broader market access, streamlined investment procedures and more robust support for foreign businesses operating in the Chinese market, according to information released on Monday by the Ministry of Commerce.

Zhao Ping, head of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade's academy, said China's commitment to wider opening-up, advanced manufacturing development and industrial ecosystem improvement has underpinned the resilience and stability of global industrial and supply chains.

China's foreign trade grew 15.3 percent year-on-year to 20.68 trillion yuan ($3.05 trillion) in the first five months of 2026, while foreign-invested businesses in the country recorded 6.02 trillion yuan in imports and exports, up 15.7 percent year-on-year, according to data from the General Administration of Customs.

Business leaders said that against the backdrop of profound shifts in the global economy, building secure, stable and efficient supply chains has become a shared priority for businesses worldwide.

Landon Loomis, president for China at Boeing, said the United States-based aircraft manufacturer works with around 40 suppliers in China, with components produced by these suppliers incorporated into Boeing aircraft delivered worldwide.

Silvia Ding, managing director for China at Danish shipping company Maersk, said that Chinese companies have increasingly expanded their overseas supply chains across multiple regions and nodes, bringing greater complexity.

"With the continued development of China's advanced manufacturing sector, industries such as electronics, automotive and new energy equipment are accelerating the expansion of their global manufacturing footprint," she said.

WORLD WATCH
By Gim Huay Neo

Scaling innovation to turn ideas into impact

We are at the cusp of a new industrial age, powered by rapid technological changes and confronted with increasing complexities. The World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report 2026 highlights geo-economic confrontation as the foremost risk for 2026, while environmental threats loom large over the next decade.

Anxiety over the adverse outcomes of artificial intelligence and societal polarization has also risen in the past two years. These challenges are making economies and societies rethink how we produce, consume, work and live together. The key question is whether humanity will seize this opportunity to build not just strong and vibrant economies, but also cohesive communities and a healthy planet.

Innovating at scale requires transformational shifts at the systems level. This involves fundamental changes in structures, incentives, relationships and operations across entire sectors so that innovation can deliver a broader and sustained impact.

*See **Innovation,** page 3*



INSIDE
Summer talking points
Global Views, page 8

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
Newsstand prices:
US $1 Canada C$1; UK 1£ EU 1€ Kenya 50 Kenya Shilling Asia Pacific: Thailand 120 thb; Philippines 120 php; Myanmar 2000 kyat; Japan 210 yen; Dubai 10 dirham; Pakistan 300 rupee

China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

China slaps export controls on 10 US firms

By **WANG KEJU**
wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn

China imposed a sweeping set of countermeasures against the United States on Monday, placing 10 US companies on an export control list and barring government agencies from purchasing products from 46 others, in a direct response to Washington's recent expansion of its list of so-called Chinese military-linked companies.

The actions, taken less than two weeks after the Pentagon added Chinese companies to its list in sectors such as electric vehicles, artificial intelligence, biotech and robotics, are aimed to pressure the US to revoke its wrongful classifications and return to the track of dialogue and cooperation, experts said.

The Ministry of Commerce announced the addition of 10 US entities to its export control list on Monday, banning the sale of dual-use items — goods and technologies with both civilian and military applications — to companies spanning the aerospace, defense, robotics, maritime services and rare earth sectors.

Organizations and individuals from any country or region are prohibited from transferring or providing dual-use items originating in China to the listed entities, and any ongoing export activities must be ceased immediately, according to the announcement.

Inside
Editorial, **page 6**

A ministry spokesperson said in a separate statement that the move is necessary to "respond to the US government's malicious addition to the so-called 'Chinese military company list'".

The updated list now includes over 180 Chinese entities, with the scope extending far beyond traditional defense industries into sectors such as cloud computing, AI, biotechnology and robotics.

Washington's blacklisting drive to curb China's technological ascent through supply chain restrictions has added new volatility to a relationship that has shown tentative signs of a thaw after the two heads of state reached a series of consensuses in Beijing last month, experts said.

"China does not initiate friction, nor does it allow unilateral bullying to spread unchecked," said Liao Fan, director of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of World Economics and Politics. "When others cross the line, we respond in accordance with regulations to defend national security red lines, protect our industrial interests and safeguard the order of global trade."

Liao also noted that this will form a "deterrence mechanism", forcing Washington to think twice before imposing further sanctions.

A survey released by the US-China Business Council earlier this month found that the mounting pressure on US businesses in China stems increasingly from the uncertainty surrounding US export controls, and the Chinese countermeasures that the US actions inevitably provoke are compounding the challenges for US companies on the ground.

Any further expansion of Beijing's export controls will likely force US companies into a costly and yearslong scramble to rebuild their supply chains, according to survey respondents.

In a separate measure on Monday, the Ministry of Finance announced a ban on government procurement from 46 US companies, including major defense contractors Lockheed Martin and Raytheon. The ban also excludes the affected companies' subsidiaries from operating in China.

The calibrated nature of the response, which targets specific entities rather than broad sectors and exempts US-invested companies operating in China, suggests that Beijing is seeking to pressure Washington to reverse course, not to escalate tensions, said Cui Fan, a professor at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing.

LIVING HISTORY DRAWS VISITORS TO ANCIENT MIAO VILLAGE

Idyllic locale, traditional attire and intricate crafts attract global travelers to ethnic Guizhou

By **GUO JIATONG**
guojiatong@i21st.cn

After living in China for a year, Italian designer Lucrezia Gestri has discovered a detailed and artistic side of the country she currently calls home.

While visiting Xijiang Qianhu Miao Village of Kaili, the capital of the Qiandongnan Miao and Dong autonomous prefecture in Southwest China's Guizhou province, Gestri noted: "I often experience the country through innovation, design and modern urban life. But Xijiang feels deeply connected to tradition, craftsmanship and heritage."

With the wooden houses spread across the mountainside and the village illuminated by lights in the evening, Gestri said that the scene felt "almost surreal" and "very cinematic".

Traveling with a Chinese friend, she also gained a deeper understanding of local customs by talking to residents, which helped her see the meanings behind the village's clothing, craftsmanship and everyday traditions.

"The traditional clothing, embroidery and silver ornaments are incredibly detailed and artistic," she said. "You can immediately feel that every decoration carries history, symbolism and craftsmanship passed down through generations. It felt like stepping back into the past."

For Etienne, a tourist from France, the traditions of Xijiang were not only something to observe, but also something to take part in. During his recent trip to China, he joined local residents in a *lanmenju* welcoming ritual.



A tourist visits the Xijiang Qianhu Miao Village in Kaili, Guizhou province, in April. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

During the ritual, guests are greeted with rice wine as a symbol of hospitality. "The custom revealed the important role that food and drink continue to play in expressing warmth and community in Chinese culture," said Etienne, the French tourist.

Xijiang Qianhu Miao Village, often described as an open-air museum of Miao culture, is home to more than 6,000 residents in over 1,000 households. Nestled among the mountains in southeast Guizhou, the village attracts visitors with its layered wooden stilt houses, vibrant song-and-dance traditions, sparkling silver ornaments and distinctive sour soup cuisine.

The growing popularity of ethnic tourism has also created economic opportunities. According to Ouyang Guanglong, chairman of the Xijiang Tourism Group, the scenic area received more than 5.3 million visitors last year, generating a total tourism revenue of 591 million yuan ($87.3 million), a year-on-year increase of 10.82 percent.

*See **Ritual,** page 3*

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:39 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:39 PM

INDEPTH

Hong Kong fire survivors rebuild lives from ashes

Apartment buyback scheme, psychological support, independent inquiry help in healing process



Above: Residents of seven fire-affected Wang Fuk Court blocks in Hong Kong's Tai Po district return to their fire-hit apartments to collect remaining belongings on April 23. EDMOND TANG / CHINA DAILY
Top: A hand-drawn picture of the word "Family" is found after Gabby and her husband Antonio sifted through their fire-damaged apartment. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By LU WANQING in Hong Kong
wanqing@chinadailyhk.com

Lau is counting the days to June 30, a deadline that offers survivors of Hong Kong's Wang Fuk Court fire tragedy a potential new start in life after about seven months in the wilderness.

It's the first designated date for affected apartment owners to take up the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government's buyout offer for their burned-out apartments.

An acceptance letter will entitle an owner to take part in the "first-round selection" for a new home under a special sales program.

A ballot will determine who chooses first.

"The draw could lead us anywhere," Lau said. "Still, a place to call my own is, in the end, better than any rented room."

Lau had just completed renovations of her home on the 16th floor of Wang Sun House, one of eight towers on the estate, when the blaze engulfed Wang Fuk Court on Nov 26.

Within hours, seven buildings were ablaze. The inferno raged for 43 hours, and 168 people lost their lives in the city's deadliest fire in nearly eight decades.

The apartment complex in Tai Po district, near Hong Kong's boundary with the Chinese mainland, was home to more than 4,600 residents. Lau and her family are among almost 2,000 displaced households piecing their lives back together after the disaster.

Lau, her husband, and two sons moved three times in the month following the fire.

Despite being provided a temporary shelter by the HKSAR government, they accepted a friend's offer to live in a beauty salon, she said. However, Lau's husband was too embarrassed to linger in the salon during the day as customers streamed in.

He went to a nearby park and sat there from "sunrise to sunset", she said. "I felt so sorry for him and found us somewhere else to live as fast as I could," Lau said.



A resident leaves after collecting his belongings in Wang Fuk Court on April 20. EDMOND TANG / CHINA DAILY

Resettlement top concern

Some of the surviving Wang Fuk Court residents believe the path ahead is clear in outline, if not in details.

The HKSAR government has offered Wang Fuk Court apartment owners acquisition prices of HK$8,000 ($1,020) or HK$10,500 per square foot, either as cash or a "flat-for-flat" exchange voucher.

Wang Chi House, the sole tower spared from the blaze, will be included only if at least 75 percent of owners agree to the buyout plan by June 30.

The total cost of acquiring all eight blocks is estimated at HK$7.8 billion, involving HK$5 billion in public funds and HK$2.8 billion from a support fund established by the government.

A number of residents China Daily spoke to described resettlement as "labyrinthine" and "disorienting". Their questions mainly related to the size of the new residences to be offered and their locations.

Joe Wong, whose family of five lived in Wang Tai House in the estate, said he is now a "dislocated man". Part of his daily routine used to be walking his daughter to her primary school in Tai Po.

Now, he lies awake at night wondering whether the flats on offer will match what they once had, with a comparable living space, and transport and medical care within reach. Wong, who said his concerns are shared by many other former residents, also hopes for a sense of community and an established school network at his new home.

Under the official special sale program, 10 developments are in the pipeline. The earliest project could welcome residents by the end of 2026. The last developments will not be ready until 2030 or 2031.

Among the projects is a two-phase new development in Tai Po featuring 1,500 units. The earliest move-in date is expected to be in 2029 under the most optimistic forecast.

The government has ruled out rebuilding on the Wang Fuk Court site citing technical constraints and a drawn-out timeline. But some residents remain hopeful that the authorities might reconsider rebuilding the estate on the old site or nearby.

Generous donors, inquiry

On Nov 27, the day after the fire, a dedicated assistance fund — the Support Fund for Wang Fuk Court in Tai Po — was launched with HK$300 million in start-up capital from the HKSAR government.

Within a day, public donations from across the country added another HK$500 million. By the third day, the total had reached HK$1.2 billion.

The donations kept rolling in and by late February the fund had hit HK$4.7 billion.

About 98 percent of the public donations were in amounts of HK$10,000 or less, authorities disclosed earlier this year, adding they were likely from "ordinary people". Large contributions of over HK$1 million from institutions and companies numbered more than 700.

Some of the money has already been used for 13 support programs, including condolence and funeral payments for the families of the deceased, according to the fund's official website.

Funds have also been allocated for living allowances, rent and relocation subsidies for displaced residents, along with grants and subsidies for affected students, workers, and foreign domestic helpers. A Chinese New Year goodwill token was also offered.

Multiple private charities have also been distributing funds raised in the fire's aftermath. In March, the Hong Kong Red Cross reported over HK$530 million in donations.

The Red Cross said the donations would provide urgent relief funds as well as financial and psychological support for Wang Fuk Court fire victims. They will also help fund a five-year community program, providing training in disaster preparedness and first aid.

Meanwhile, an independent commission was formed in December, tasked with uncovering the root structural flaws leading to the blaze and its exceptionally rapid spread.

The committee held 24 public hearings from March to early May. Three more are scheduled for Monday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Evidence at the hearings has indicated a litany of suspected human factors in the blaze. The list includes: the estate's main fire alarm being deactivated during the fire; flammable scaffolding mesh and foam panels being used for renovation work; and the maintenance project's consultant and contractors likely rigging the tendering process. Oversight of the actual on-site maintenance work barely existed, the inquiry also heard.

The committee has nine months to determine the fire's cause and recommend systemic reforms. Local authorities have already floated a raft of legislative amendments and additional fire safety-related rules to overhaul building maintenance and fire-service regulation.



Government employees accompany residents to collect their belongings in Wang Fuk Court on April 20. EDMOND TANG / CHINA DAILY

Seven individuals and two companies — the contractor and engineering consultant involved in the estate's renovation work — appeared in court on June 10 to face 25 offenses including conspiracy to defraud, money laundering, attempting to pervert the course of justice, and tax evasion.

Charred memories

Displaced families from the estate's seven fire-ravaged blocks were allowed to return to the site for the first time on April 20 to retrieve what remained of their possessions.

For many, it was also an opportunity to say goodbye to the place they once called home.

Among them were Gabby and Antonio, a married couple from Wang Sun House in their 40s. Inside their apartment, the plaster on the smoke-stained walls hung like ragged sheets. The door was burned through, and building debris littered the floor.

"We braced ourselves beforehand," they said. "The stair climb, and our flat's condition, were about what we imagined."

However, there was some joy amid the ruins. Antonio retrieved one of their wedding rings from their bedroom using a metal detector.

Gabby also pulled some of her old drawings from the debris. On a yellowed sheet of paper with charred edges was written the word "Family". She plans to have the page framed and displayed once they settle into a new home.

> "We had one good cry together. Now we silently agree not to pick the wounds anymore."
>
> **Lau,** a resident of one of the blocks of fire-hit Wang Fuk Court

At Wang Sun House, Lau was among the first former residents to go upstairs. Unfortunately, she said gold ingots she had in her apartment were missing. She reported the suspected theft to the police.

By May 30, a total of 142 such reports had been made by Wang Fuk Court residents, with 16 cases remaining open, Hong Kong authorities said.

A local official reported that 1,674 of the 1,736 affected households in the seven fire-hit buildings — 6,265 people, including former residents, friends and helpers — had gone upstairs during the visiting period from April 20 to May 4. Around 50 opted out after viewing photos of their flats. Fewer than 10 required separate arrangements, the official reported.

Residents of Wang Chi House — the sole block untouched by the blaze — had made two return trips by May 17.

A second round of visits to the seven fire-hit buildings ran from May 21 to 29.

'Not alone'

Months on from the inferno, Lau still gets goose bumps just talking about it.

One of her neighbors lost a child in the fire, and a playmate of Lau's child lost her mother.

George Cheung Chi-lim, aged in his 70s, and his wife suffered physical injuries and have been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder.

Joe Wong said his seven-year-old is "a different person" now — "touchier and easily angered".

Despite the negative psychological impacts of the tragedy, the survivors China Daily spoke to all agreed they were not facing their problems alone.

Lau said she still sees her old neighbors.

"We had one good cry together," she said. "Now we silently agree not to pick the wounds anymore."

Instead, they share memories of leaning on one another amid the calamity: water poured from upstairs windows down onto the flames, and Styrofoam window seals carried inside to stop the possibility of any molten drops falling on the floors below.

Cheung, a resident of Wang Fuk Court for over four decades, testified before the independent commission in March. He spoke of climbing onto a windowsill and throwing water on the flames. He said he and his wife took in an elderly neighbor who could not flee. They were all finally rescued five hours later.

The Cheungs said they now "treasure each other even more".

Gabby and Antonio returned to Wang Fuk Court again on May 23, this time with their two children, aged 7 and 11.

"They need to say bye-bye as well," Gabby said, "to the house, and to their stuffed animal toys that they'll never have back."

Wong said he spends more time with his daughter nowadays and maintains a steady line of communication with her school's social worker to ensure emotional support for the seven-year-old. "Being there, that's what matters," he said.

The HKSAR government has introduced a "one social worker per household" service. Around 2,000 social workers from the Social Welfare Department are available to help the fire victims handle queries on financial aid and supplies, and arrange counseling sessions.

Wong said the social worker assigned to him checks in regularly, and has visited the family at their temporary home.

Still, he said he feels melancholy about how the old community — his daughter's childhood playmates, his own circle of friends — has disappeared. "We can hardly meet up now," he said.

Stacy Shi contributed to this story.







Left: Media film residents going upstairs from outside the venue on April 23. **Middle:** Residents of Wang Fuk Court return to their homes to collect their belongings on May 4, the last day of the first round of visits, after a deadly fire last year. PHOTOS BY EDMOND TANG / CHINA DAILY **Right:** Ko Wing-man (left), a member of the Standing Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference National Committee, discusses rebuilding efforts and assistance needs with displaced residents. LU WANQING / CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:39 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:39 PM

TOP NEWS

Iran to let in inspectors, can sell its oil

Final deal to be reached within 60 days, Iran says it will administer Strait of Hormuz

By **SHI GUANG** in New York
shiguang@chinadailyusa.com

Iran's chief negotiator, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, told Iranian media on Monday that the Strait of Hormuz would be administered by Iran.

"Everyone should know that the administration of the Strait of Hormuz will never go back to the way it was before the war," Ghalibaf said on his way back to Tehran after negotiations with the US in Switzerland.

"Of course, international regulations will be observed, but Iran will administer the Strait of Hormuz," he said.

Ghalibaf's statement came following talks with the US that all parties acknowledged had shown "encouraging progress".

In Switzerland, the United States agreed it would allow Iran to sell crude oil and petroleum products for two months, and said Iran would allow nuclear inspectors into the country.

"In line with the ongoing productive talks in Switzerland, Iran has committed to free and open transit in the Strait of Hormuz and to permit International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors into their country," US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent posted on X on Monday.

"As part of the framework, Treasury has issued a temporary 60-day general license authorizing the production, delivery, and sale of Iranian oil," Bessent said.

US President Donald Trump has said for a long time that Iran should not be allowed to possess nuclear weapons, while Iran has maintained that its nuclear enrichment program is for civilian purposes.

The license to sell oil runs until Aug 21, and while it allows the import of Iranian oil into the US, transactions with countries that the US has sanctioned, such as North Korea or Cuba, were still not authorized.

US Vice-President JD Vance was positive about the talks.

"We laid a very good foundation for a successful final deal," Vance said on Monday. "We made great progress."

However, Iran pushed back against Bessent's assertion about nuclear inspectors, saying that cooperation with the IAEA would continue "under the current procedures".

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei told the country's official news agency, IRNA, that the IAEA would proceed "in accordance with Iran's obligations under safeguard agreements" and "in line with resolutions passed by Parliament and decisions of the Supreme National Security Council".

US and Iranian negotiators have been in Switzerland, along with mediators from Pakistan and Qatar, for a first round of talks.

Pakistan and Qatar released a joint statement on Monday that affirmed an agreed-upon road map toward reaching a final deal within 60 days, laying the foundation for the commencement of technical talks.

A communication line has been formed between the parties "to avoid incidents and miscommunication" in securing safe passage for commercial vessels through the Strait of Hormuz.

"The parties agreed on the creation of a deconfliction cell between the parties and the Lebanese Republic," the statement said.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi also posted on X that some frozen Iranian assets had been released and a major reconstruction and development plan for Iran had been launched, though the US had yet to confirm this.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said on Monday that maintaining and implementing the memorandum of understanding between Iran and the US will help consolidate the hard-won ceasefire, open new prospects for Iran-US relations and bring peace back to the Middle East.

When meeting in New Delhi, India, with Qadir Nizamipour, deputy secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, Wang said that maintaining and implementing the MoU serve not only Iran's fundamental interests, but also the shared expectations of the international community.

As Iran's comprehensive strategic partner, China has always upheld a just position and supported all efforts conducive to peace, he said.

He added that China supports Iran in safeguarding its sovereignty, security and national dignity, as well as in improving relations with Gulf countries and other countries in the region.

Oil prices fell on Monday, with benchmark Brent trading around $78 a barrel.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

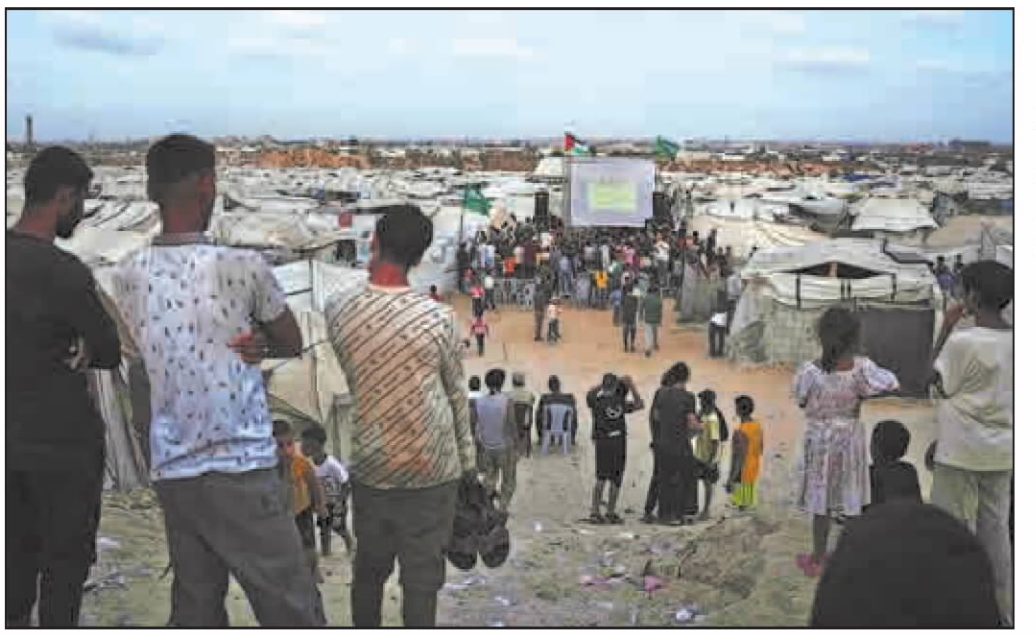
SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1855



Soccer fever

Palestinians watch the live broadcast of the World Cup match between Spain and Saudi Arabia on a large screen in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, on Sunday.
ABDEL KAREEM HANA / AP

Starmer quits, Burnham strong contender for post

By **JULIAN SHEA** and **XING YI** in London

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer ended all speculation about his future on Monday by announcing his resignation, less than two years after guiding the Labour Party to a landslide victory in the 2024 general election.

His resignation means the United Kingdom will have its seventh prime minister in just over a decade. Amid the imminent change, the British pound slid as much as 0.4 percent to touch $1.3181 early on Monday, approaching its 2026 low of $1.3159 set in March, before paring losses. The yield of the UK 10-year gilt bonds, a benchmark for what the Treasury pays to borrow money, edged up from 4.84 percent to 4.85 percent, while the yield on 30-year gilts rose from 5.54 percent to 5.55 percent.

Doubts over Starmer's leadership had been growing for some time, particularly after the recent damaging local election results, for which Starmer took personal responsibility.

In an address outside his Downing Street office, Starmer said that he had "heard the answer of my Parliamentary party" as to whether he was "best placed" to lead it into the next general election. "I accept that answer with good grace," he added, saying that he would continue until his successor was chosen.

Starmer became Labour Party leader in April 2020, replacing Jeremy Corbyn, who had led the party to a heavy defeat in the 2019 general election. He faced three Conservative prime ministers before Labour won 411 of the 650 seats in the 2024 general election. However, although this gave Labour a clear Parliamentary majority, it secured just 34 percent of the popular vote, the smallest share received by any majority government since World War II.

With the main right-wing party, the Conservatives, having lost support to Reform UK, another British right-wing party, Starmer's critics accused him of focusing too much on trying to win votes from Reform, particularly over immigration, rather than appealing to more traditional Labour or progressive voters.

He was criticized for his handling of the appointment of former British ambassador to the United States Peter Mandelson, who resigned over his ties to sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. May's local elections further weakened his position.

One person cited as a potential leadership contender, Wes Streeting, quit as health secretary earlier, saying: "Where we need vision, we have a vacuum. Where we need direction, we have drift … It is now clear that you will not lead the Labour Party into the next general election."

On the day Starmer resigned, the man widely tipped to replace him, Andy Burnham, returned to Parliament after nine years away as mayor of Greater Manchester.

Burnham tried to return to Parliament in January by running as a Labour candidate in a by-election, only to be blocked by party bosses, whose preferred candidate lost.

As Starmer's position weakened, a sitting Labour member resigned his seat, allowing Burnham to run in another by-election last week, which he won comfortably.

Nominations for any leadership election will begin on July 9 and stay open for a week, allowing a new leader to be chosen before Parliament returns from summer recess in September.

London-based political analyst Keith Bennett told China Daily that Burnham's win made Starmer's exit inevitable.

"The gradual erosion of his authority in the Parliamentary Labour Party and then the Cabinet was turning into a flood that would have swept him from office in any case," he said.

Bennett said that Burnham's win showed that he was a more popular option with party members and the wider electorate. Should he become leader, he could offer a genuine change of approach, although quite what that would be remains unclear, Bennett added.

"Much will depend on the makeup of a new Cabinet, but above all the serious nature of the challenges facing the country remains unchanged.

"A change at the top gives Labour a chance to prevail at the next general election, but only a chance — much will depend on how events unfold, many of which will be outside the government's control," he said.

"The local election results showed people are impatient for the change that was promised," London Mayor Sadiq Khan said.

Contact the writers at julian@mail.chinadailyuk.com

Innovation: Culture, societal readiness also essential

From page 1

Scale is not only about deploying more technology or expanding companies; it's also about translating new ideas into lasting and large-scale change. Achieving this demands a conducive environment of policies, regulations, standards, infrastructure, capital and capabilities, alongside culture, trust and cooperation. Without these, innovation risks being confined to pilots and early adopters.

Entrepreneurship is central to this transformation. Often seen as risk-takers or disruptors, entrepreneurs are essentially pathfinders who chart new ways of thinking, interacting and operating, bridging the gap between possibility and practice. They identify market bottlenecks, service gaps and institutional frictions. They rally talent, capital and partnerships to address these challenges, testing new approaches, adapting them to real-world problems and applying solutions that can be scaled and sustained, helping to define and shape standards and regulations.

In Asia, entrepreneurship has fueled innovation by building purpose-driven ecosystems that integrate infrastructure, skills, capital, markets and public-private partnerships to achieve resilient, sustainable and inclusive growth. Manufacturing networks have helped smaller suppliers thrive alongside larger companies, digital platforms and logistics networks have opened new markets for micro and small enterprises, and investments in connectivity have created new models in payments, commerce, mobility and services.

China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) exemplifies how industrial upgrading, technological innovation and green development can be pursued in tandem to support structural transformation and more sustainable growth. The development of clean energy value chains that link solar power, batteries, smart grids and electric vehicles illustrates this integration. These interconnected industries have spurred job creation, exports and local incomes while lowering energy costs, reducing emissions, improving air quality and accelerating a wider shift toward greener industry and mobility.

Around half of the AI pioneers in the World Economic Forum's MINDS (Meaningful, Intelligent, Novel, Deployable Solutions) program are based in China. These companies have shown how AI solutions can be applied meaningfully and at scale to generate value for businesses and society. One MINDS company in the healthcare sector, for example, has reduced patient screening time by 83 percent, shortened clinical site investigation cycles by 67 percent, and improved operational efficiency in core medical scenarios by 30 percent through a governed enterprise AI operating model.

Such examples show that the future of manufacturing prowess and economic resilience will be defined not only by the speed of technology adoption, but also by the ability to build ecosystems and redesign systems that benefit people and the planet, alongside productivity and resource allocation gains.

For innovation to scale, three interconnected and interdependent systems need to evolve: governance, business responsibility and societal readiness. The public sector can reimagine policy levers to stimulate capital flow for innovations, try out solutions before they are scaled and harness partnerships for more co-creation between the public sector, research institutions and private enterprises.

For businesses, innovation can move from isolated success to sector-wide transformation by prioritizing ethical business practices, stakeholder value and employees' well-being.

Culture and societal readiness are also essential. For entrepreneurship to flourish, we must create environments where people have the confidence to experiment, the networks to collaborate, and the support to learn and try again. More can be done to widen access to capital and networks, especially for women, young people and community-based enterprises. Society should support and recognize not only high-growth technology companies, but also small manufacturers, agribusinesses, care providers, logistics platforms and social enterprises that create jobs and solve local problems.

In a world marked by increasing complexities and declining multilateral cooperation, smaller and more agile coalitions of countries and companies will play a bigger role in ensuring that overall cooperation endures. Systemic transformation is already underway, characterized by collaborations that are flexible and agile enough to acknowledge geo-economic realities, and yet ambitious and pragmatic enough to address shared global challenges.

Ultimately, to innovate at scale is to build systems that enable more people to contribute to and benefit from transformation. In a more complex and fragmented world, collaboration must become more purposeful — connecting technology with the human touch, enterprise with social responsibility, and growth with sustainability. That momentum is already building, and if we dare to dream big, we can build a future characterized by stronger economies, cohesive communities and a healthy planet.

The author is managing director and a member of the Managing Board of the World Economic Forum. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Ritual: Tradition integrated into a wider cultural platform

From page 1

The village is currently working toward becoming a national 5A-level tourist attraction, China's highest tourism rating. To enhance the visitor experience, the scenic area now has 225 registered photography studios offering traditional Miao costume styling and photography services.

Among them is photographer Miao Xiaoliang, who established his studio in 2023 with the vision of presenting the most authentic traditional Miao attire to visitors. To date, his studio has reproduced around 100 sets of traditional Miao clothing, enabling tourists to experience authentic ethnic attire and obtain professionally photographed portrait sets for 399 yuan.

"We hope visitors can truly appreciate the authentic ethnic clothing and understand the culture behind it," said Miao. Rather than simply reproducing popular tourist images, he and his team carefully design photography settings that reflect the everyday living environments of local residents, to immerse guests more deeply in daily village life.

According to the photographer, traditional attire is often described as "history books worn on the body", with some motifs tracing back to some of the earliest cultural symbols in Chinese civilization. Over centuries, different branches of the Miao community have developed distinct clothing styles, with nearly 170 documented costume systems in Guizhou alone. Through intricate patterns and embroidery techniques, the garments preserve traces of migration, mythology, aesthetics and ancient beliefs.

In some regions, the patterns are inspired by nature and focus on birds, butterflies, fish and flowers, he said. Some patterns also embody ancient cosmological concepts and philosophical ideas, including the traditional understanding of the universe and the harmony between yin and yang.

Due to the diversity and regional specificity of the garments and accessories, collecting and reproducing traditional costumes has been far from easy. However, with increasing numbers of tourists visiting Xijiang each year, Miao hopes that the village will evolve into a broader cultural platform, introducing its unique traditions to the world.

"The Miao are a global ethnic group," he said. "There are Miao communities across Southeast Asia and even in the United States."

"We hope Xijiang can become a top tourism destination and an important cultural center connecting Miao people around the world," he said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:39 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:39 PM

ASIAFOCUS

Editor's note:

In this weekly feature China Daily gives voice to Asia and its people. The stories presented come mainly from the Asia News Network (ANN), of which China Daily is among its 20 leading titles.



A woman sells bags at Dong Xuan market in Hanoi, Vietnam, on June 3. Vietnam's annual inflation rate increased to 5.6 percent in May from 5.46 percent in the previous month, according to data from the National Statistics Office of Vietnam. LUONG THAI LINH / EPA

Domino effect

ASEAN factories face closures, layoffs amid cost shocks driven by war, tariffs

Even with a recent ceasefire in the Middle East, the surge in raw material, energy, and shipping costs — compounded by US tariff measures — continues to squeeze manufacturers, driving factories across Southeast Asia to close and shed jobs.

While strong production in electronics has helped keep headline economic indicators looking relatively resilient, economists and industry leaders warn that deeper stress is spreading through small and medium-sized enterprises across the region.

The manufacturing confidence across Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, remained in positive territory in April, according to S&P Global's Purchasing Managers' Index, but the figure fell to its lowest level in nine months and marked a sharp slowdown from the period before the Iran war.

Firdaos Rosli, chief economist at AmBank in Kuala Lumpur, said Malaysia's April trade figures appeared stronger than expected, with exports growing at a double-digit rate. However, he warned that the headline numbers concealed major differences between sectors.

Rosli said the strength of overall data was masking severe pressure in some businesses, particularly as different parts of the economy were moving at very different speeds.

"For example, logistics, secondary manufacturing and local construction are the groups we expect to be hit hard. Although other thriving businesses may temporarily offset the figures in the national accounts, the distress at the micro level is real," he said.

Malaysia and the Philippines are among the countries hardest hit, with small and medium-sized enterprises facing the greatest risk as higher costs and weaker demand erode already thin margins.

Malaysia

In Malaysia, more than 100 small furniture factories in Muar, the country's largest furniture manufacturing hub, have closed in recent months. Industry players said the impact of the war had worsened pressure already created by tariff measures affecting exports to the United States.

Jeffrey Ng, owner of TKL Furniture, which exports all of its products to the US, said smaller factories were shutting down one after another as operators struggled to absorb rising costs.

"Small factories are beginning to close one after another. Around us, long-established factories are shutting down because they can no longer endure the pressure," he said.



A delivery boy carrying LPG gas cylinders on a motorcycle waits at the traffic signal in Bangkok, Thailand, on April 1. MATT HUNT VIA GETTY IMAGES

"Smaller operators can no longer withstand the squeeze, so they have to close. Older companies that made money in previous years are choosing to shut down and turn their assets into cash rather than allow their money to keep draining away."

Steve Ong, president of the Johor Furniture Association in southern Malaysia, said the impact of the war extended beyond the countries directly involved in the conflict.

He said global freight transport had been severely disrupted, pushing up shipping costs and prompting foreign customers to delay taking delivery of goods.

A May survey by the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturing found that 28 percent of 225 respondents had either reduced staff or planned to do so as a direct result of the crisis, while 72 percent said their business conditions had worsened.

The Philippines

In the Philippines, government data showed that factories cut about 217,000 jobs in March, equivalent to 5.8 percent of the country's manufacturing workforce.

The country's manufacturing PMI also fell into contraction territory, making it the weakest among ASEAN's six largest economies.

Miguel Chanco, chief emerging Asia economist at UK-based Pantheon Macroeconomics, said Philippine manufacturers were under pressure from both the demand and supply sides, as higher energy costs affected production costs and consumer purchasing power.

He said the Philippines was also more exposed than some neighbors because its export sector had benefited less from the AI hardware boom, which has supported electronics and component shipments in other parts of the region.

Chanco said the Philippine government had a thinner policy cushion than some regional peers, including fewer fuel-related support measures.

Vietnam

Vietnam is also seeing signs of strain despite electronics exports remaining a key driver of growth.

Andrew Harker, economics director at S&P Global Market Intelligence, said the latest survey showed output was still rising, but the pace of expansion had slowed close to stagnation. With new orders beginning to fall, he warned that production could contract in the coming months unless price and supply conditions improve soon.

One of the sectors facing heavy pressure is Vietnam's footwear industry.

Phan Thi Thanh Xuan, vice-president of the Vietnam Leather, Footwear and Handbag Association, said export markets in the Middle East had been effectively frozen by the conflict.

She said a 15 percent rise in transport costs and a 30 percent increase in raw-material prices linked to higher crude oil prices had left local factories in a difficult situation, as many export contracts had already been agreed in advance at fixed prices.

As a result, manufacturers have little room to pass higher costs on to buyers and are being forced to absorb the increase themselves.

Thailand & Indonesia

The surge in crude oil-linked raw-material prices is spreading through supply chains across Southeast Asia.

In Thailand, John Higham, chief commercial officer of Element 6 Evolution, a sailing yacht shipyard near Laem Chabang Port, said the company could no longer ship key composite materials from Dubai by sea.

"The big problem is resin, which is our heaviest main raw material," he said. "We now have to fly in thousands of kilograms of this hazardous cargo instead, because if we do not, the entire factory will have to stop production."

The emergency switch to air-freight has pushed the company's resin costs up by as much as 40 percent.

The cost shock is also spreading in Indonesia, where the Indonesian Employers Association said 10 out of 16 manufacturing sectors were growing far more slowly than the country's overall economic expansion of 5.61 percent in the first quarter.

Higher naphtha prices have directly affected the domestic plastics industry, while the Association of Indonesian Automotive Industries is surveying the impact on supply chains as rising costs and transport delays intensify pressure on manufacturers.

Singapore

As long-distance supply chains become more risky, companies in the region are starting to shift toward nearby sourcing partners.

Singapore-based firms, which remain among the most confident in the region, are seeking new raw-material sources to diversify risk.

Melvin Tan, vice-president of the Singapore Manufacturing Federation, said many manufacturers were turning to the newly established Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone and nearby Indonesian factories as alternative bases for sourcing materials and supporting production.

The shift reflects a broader reassessment of supply chains, as companies try to reduce exposure to distant suppliers and volatile freight routes.

Analysts warn that conditions could worsen unless raw-material supplies improve quickly.

Malaysia's CIMB Investment Bank Berhad said a central bank survey showed that factories had, on average, only three to four months of raw-material inventory remaining. This suggests shortages could become more severe from the end of the second quarter of 2026 onward.

Rosli from the AmBank said the current situation had become a crisis that headline GDP figures may not capture immediately because the damage is unfolding gradually.

"The transmission of impact will spread quietly from one domino to another. It works like a fire that burns slowly," he said.

THE NATION, THAILAND

Drones are saving lives on world's highest mountain

For 22-year-old guide Lakpa Ringi Sherpa, this spring climbing season on Qomolangma, known as Mount Everest in the West, felt different.

The fear was still there. The dangerous Khumbu Icefall section remained as unpredictable as ever, with yawning crevasses beneath his feet and massive, unstable blocks of ice called seracs looming overhead. But unlike previous years, he did not have to make the dangerous journey through the icefall carrying heavy loads over and over again.

Instead of the usual eight to ten supply trips between Base Camp (5,364 meters) and Camp II (6,400 meters), Lakpa Ringi made only four.

The reason was not a safer route or calmer weather. It was a drone.

Traditionally, Sherpa guides leave base camp shortly after midnight carrying up to 15 kilograms of logistics supplies on their backs. The journey through the Khumbu Icefall to Camp I and onward to Camp II can take six to seven hours, often without rest.

"We never stop," Lakpa Ringi said. "The icefall section is too dangerous."

This year, however, most of the supplies destined for Camp I were flown by drone.

The result was dramatic. Tasks that once required hours of climbing and a team of high-altitude guides could now be completed in minutes.

"Every time we carried loads through the icefall, we prayed," Lakpa Ringi recalled. "Now the drone does most of that work."

His experience reflects a technological shift underway on Qomolangma, where drones are beginning to reshape one of the world's most dangerous occupations.

In 2024, Chinese drone manufacturer DJI conducted the world's first drone delivery test on Qomolangma. The company transported oxygen cylinders and supplies uphill while carrying waste downhill.

The trials demonstrated that drones could perform tasks traditionally undertaken by Sherpa guides in one of the most hazardous sections of the mountain.

The technology moved beyond testing in 2025, when drones began transporting supplies to Camp I.

This spring, drone-assisted logistics entered commercial operation.

According to mountain officials and drone operators, work that once required six to seven hours can now be completed in about ten minutes. In some cases, a single drone flight can replace the efforts of more than a dozen guides.

For many in the Khumbu region, the significance extends beyond efficiency.

"This is a lifesaving initiative," said Mingma Chhiri Sherpa, chairman of the Khumbu Pasanglhamu Rural Municipality, within whose jurisdiction the Qomolangma region falls.

"There is a huge risk even for a normal hike in the Khumbu Icefall. Imagine how dangerous it is when people are carrying heavy equipment and supplies. Technology can reduce that burden and save lives."

The Khumbu Icefall is widely regarded as the most dangerous section of the standard South Col route to Qomolangma. Stretching roughly 600 meters between Base Camp and Camp I, the constantly shifting glacier is riddled with deep crevasses and unstable ice towers that can collapse without warning.

According to government records and the Himalayan Database, nearly 50 people died in the Khumbu Icefall between 1953 and 2023.

For decades, Sherpa guides have shouldered the greatest risks there.

The danger was tragically highlighted in April 2014, when a massive ice collapse killed 16 Sherpa guides in the deadliest disaster in Qomolangma's history at the time.

The risks remained evident this year. A massive unstable serac blocked route preparations for nearly three weeks, delaying progress through the section.

The Icefall Doctors, the elite team responsible for preparing the route each spring, began work on March 16 and managed to secure a path only up to a critical point before the giant ice wall halted further progress.

For 19 days, drone imaging and aerial monitoring were used to assess the formation.

"Multiple site inspections and drone imaging sessions monitored the formation throughout the period," said Milan Pandey, cofounder of drone delivery company Airlift Technology.

The episode highlighted another emerging role for drones: reconnaissance and risk assessment.

Environmental protection

Their growing presence on Qomolangma is also helping tackle a long-standing environmental challenge.

This spring, Airlift Technology transported 3.5 metric tons of garbage from Camp I to Base Camp using drones.

"Altogether, we flew more than 10 tons of goods up and down," said Pandey. "Of that, 3.5 tons was garbage brought down from the mountain."

Much of the waste consisted of human waste bags.

Last year, local authorities made it mandatory for climbers to carry specially designed poop bags during their ascent to reduce contamination and improve sanitation on Qomolangma.

The initiative complements Nepal's broader efforts to clean the mountain. Since 2014, climbers have been required to return with at least eight kilograms of waste or lose a $4,000 refundable deposit. Proposed legislation would convert that deposit into a nonrefundable environmental fee dedicated to conservation and cleanup activities.

After the climbing season ended on May 29, drones conducted roughly 20 flights a day carrying garbage back to Base Camp.

Not everyone, however, views the drone revolution without reservations.

Some fear that expanding drone operations could eventually reduce employment opportunities for Sherpa guides and high-altitude workers.

Lakpa Ringi believes those fears are misplaced. He sees drones as partners rather than competitors.

For generations, Sherpas have carried the weight of Qomolangma on their backs, often at enormous personal risk. Now, as drones buzz above the shifting ice and crevasses of the Khumbu Icefall, some of that burden is finally being lifted.

"We don't want to carry loads through the icefall if we don't have to," he said. "Our main job is guiding climbers. The drone makes us more confident crossing the dangerous sections."

THE KATHMANDU POST, NEPAL



A screenshot shows researchers from the Chinese Academy of Sciences using drones equipped with atmospheric sampling devices near Qomolangma in May 2023. CHINA CENTRAL TELEVISION

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:39 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:39 PM

WORLD

Forum calls for stronger relations with ASEAN

By **PRIME SARMIENTO** in Hong Kong
and **LEONARDUS JEGHO** in Jakarta

China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations need to strengthen their partnership to remain resilient against external headwinds that threaten regional stability and development, a regional forum heard on Monday.

Speakers at the forum on the fifth anniversary of the ASEAN-China Comprehensive Strategic Partnership noted that the two sides have long enjoyed robust economic and diplomatic relations and how this relationship will help them navigate the challenges brought by the Middle East crisis, climate change and rising protectionism.

The forum, held in the Indonesian capital of Jakarta, was organized by China's Mission to ASEAN and Malaysia's Permanent Mission to ASEAN.

A special report on the indispensability of ASEAN-China relations, by the China Foreign Affairs University and the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Indonesia, was also launched at the forum.

Chinese Ambassador to ASEAN Wang Qing said China and ASEAN are "close neighbors with a shared future" and that by working together, the two sides can promote steady growth.

"China firmly supports an ASEAN-centered, open and inclusive regional cooperation architecture and will inject greater certainty into the region through stable China-ASEAN cooperation," Wang said.

Both sides must oppose any external interference or any scheme to revive militarism; stay committed to openness and cooperation; and enhance regional food and energy security, as well as supply chain stability, through mutually beneficial cooperation, he said.

Sarah Al Bakri Devadason, Malaysia's permanent representative to ASEAN, said that dialogue, openness, mutual respect and peaceful coexistence have long guided ASEAN-China cooperation.

"These are foundational elements upon which our partnership has been built and the compass that will continue to guide us forward," she said.

For ASEAN's Secretary-General Kao Kim Hourn, a stronger ASEAN-China partnership "is not merely desirable, it is indeed necessary" as both sides face external challenges.

Kao said ASEAN-China relations have grown through the years, and that both sides can build on this relationship by focusing on several areas, such as energy cooperation.

The Middle East crisis has exposed the vulnerability of global energy and food supply chains to geopolitical shocks, he said. ASEAN and China need to deepen cooperation on both energy and food security, which can be done through collaboration in renewable energy and green financing, he added.

"ASEAN and China can contribute meaningfully, not just to regional stability and prosperity, but also to global stability and prosperity. It is a role that neither side can play successfully alone, and it is one that drives this partnership's strategic purpose beyond our own immediate interests," Kao said.

Energy demand

Beni Suryadi, senior manager for the ASEAN Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation and Strategic Partnership of the ASEAN Center for Energy, said the bloc's energy demand will continue to grow alongside economic development, industrialization and improving living standards.

He said studies by the ASEAN Center for Energy show that achieving this transition will require a substantial expansion of renewable energy, energy storage, regional power interconnection and clean-energy manufacturing.

"ASEAN and China can strengthen supply-chain resilience by developing a complementary network of production hubs across the region," Suryadi said.

Leonardus Jegho is a freelance journalist for China Daily.

Contact the writers at prime@chinadailyapac.com

Narcotics crackdown



Members of the National Drug Control Directorate stand guard more than 15,000 seized marijuana plants in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, on Sunday. ORLANDO BARRIA / EPA

Ethiopia certifies results for watershed election

By **SHARON NAKOLA** in Nairobi, Kenya

Ethiopia has concluded its seventh general election, with officials and analysts describing the vote as a milestone in the country's democratic development.

The National Election Board of Ethiopia announced the certified results on Sunday, confirming that the ruling Prosperity Party won 438 seats in the 547-member House of Peoples' Representatives, retaining a commanding parliamentary majority.

More than 50 million Ethiopians were registered to vote in the June 1 election, though polling did not take place in some constituencies because of security concerns.

Under the constitution, the party or coalition that secures a majority in the lower house forms the government and selects the prime minister.

Bankole Adeoye, the African Union's commissioner for political affairs, peace and security, said the election marked significant progress in Ethiopia's efforts to strengthen democratic institutions.

He reaffirmed the AU's commitment to supporting credible elections and democratic governance across Africa, and expressed confidence in Ethiopia's continued efforts to promote lasting peace.

Terecha Balcha, an Ethiopian researcher of political science and international relations, said the election represented another step in Ethiopia's democratic journey, but emphasized that the government's priority should now be delivering on campaign promises and restoring peace and stability.

Mekdes Mesfin, a political science and international relations lecturer at Madda Walabu University in Ethiopia, said the new government would now be expected to translate its electoral mandate into tangible development outcomes.

Addressing peace and security challenges in parts of Ethiopia should be among the key responsibilities of the incoming administration, she said.

Afework Eyayu in Ethiopia contributed to this story.

Solemn remembrance



People light candles outside the Victory Museum in Moscow, Russia, on Sunday to mark the 85th anniversary of Nazi Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union during World War II. PAVEL BEDNYAKOV / AP

China, Africa forge deeper ties

Analysts view 105-year CPC milestone as catalyst for South-South cooperation

By **SHARON NAKOLA** in Nairobi, Kenya
sharon@chinadailyafrica.com

From supporting Africa's liberation movements to becoming the continent's major trading and development partner, China's relationship with Africa has undergone a profound transformation over the past several decades.

As the Communist Party of China marks the 105th anniversary of its founding on July 1, African experts say the evolution of China-Africa ties offers valuable experience for South-South cooperation and Africa's pursuit of modernization, while creating new opportunities in industrialization, technology, green development and global governance.

For many observers, the partnership reflects both China's own development journey under the CPC — from an impoverished country to the world's second-largest economy — and the growing importance of cooperation among developing countries in addressing shared challenges.

Alhaji Sarjoh Bah, permanent representative of the African Union to China, said the evolution of China-Africa ties demonstrates what can be achieved when partnerships are built on sovereign equality, mutual respect, noninterference and shared development goals.

The relationship has evolved from solidarity during Africa's liberation struggles to strategic coordination on global governance, Bah said.

He described the establishment of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in 2000 as a milestone that transformed a long-standing friendship into a structured framework for practical cooperation, turning commitments into projects in infrastructure, energy, healthcare, technology, education and other sectors.

"These areas are central to implementing Agenda 2063 and Africa's aspiration to become an integrated, prosperous and peaceful continent driven by its own citizens," he said.

Bah added that Africa and China should deepen coordination in multilateral institutions, support the aspirations of the Global South, advance global governance reform, and uphold the United Nations Charter, international law and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Raphael Obonyo, a Kenyan public policy analyst, said China's modernization under the CPC's leadership has significantly shaped its engagement with Africa.

"China has grown from a low economic base into the world's second-largest economy through visionary leadership, structural transformation and poverty reduction," he said.

"That experience continues to shape China's cooperation with Africa, moving beyond aid and infrastructure toward a more strategic partnership focused on long-term development."

Obonyo said infrastructure remains one of the partnership's most visible outcomes, while collaboration has expanded into healthcare, peace and security, and people-to-people exchanges.

China has been Africa's largest trading partner for more than a decade and one of its leading sources of development financing, he said. African countries should make greater use of China's zero-tariff policy to boost manufacturing and accelerate industrialization, he added.

Valuable experience

Gordon K'achola, founder of the Africa Center for Diplomatic Affairs in Nairobi, said China's development under the CPC offers valuable experience for African countries pursuing their own paths to modernization.

"The relationship between China and Africa started with China's support for African countries in their anti-colonial struggles. Today, it encompasses trade, investment, infrastructure, technology, education and healthcare," he said.

Lemmy Nyongesa Mulaku, a Kenyan expert on China-Africa relations, said the partnership has passed through three phases over the past 60 years.

"In the 1960s, China-Africa ties were largely driven by anti-colonial solidarity and the broader East-West ideological divide," he said.

The relationship later evolved into large-scale infrastructure investment and is now increasingly centered on Africa's modernization and technological integration, he said.

Mulaku said China's engagement has expanded beyond infrastructure financing to helping African countries harness emerging technologies.

"Africa has abundant strategic minerals and a young population, while China offers technology, capital and industrial experience," he said.

Deeper collaboration in AI, advanced manufacturing and digital infrastructure can accelerate Africa's integration into global value chains and support sustainable development for both sides, he added.

Despite shifts in the international landscape, the experts agreed that China-Africa ties have matured into one of the world's most significant examples of South-South cooperation.

Former US Fed chair Alan Greenspan dies at 100

By **ZHAO HUANXIN** in New York
huanxinzhao@chinadailyusa.com

Alan Greenspan, who made several visits to China as chairman of the United States Federal Reserve and consistently brought a data-driven perspective to US-China trade relations, died on Monday at the age of 100.

"Alan passed away at our home this morning at the age of 100 from complications of Parkinson's disease," his wife of 29 years Andrea Mitchell said in a statement.

"He was a giant of a man who helped shape the US economy for decades under presidents of both parties, but was always honest in acknowledging his mistakes," Mitchell said.

Greenspan's nearly 19 years at the helm of the Fed, from 1987 until his retirement at the start of 2006, were marked by a stock market boom and low unemployment.

He presided over a sustained era of US growth and prosperity, yet one that ended with devastating consequences in 2008, two years after he had left the central bank, US media reported on Monday.

Working under four presidents and alongside seven Treasury secretaries, Greenspan was seen as the "maestro" who kept the economy humming, Bloomberg commented.

As Fed chief, Greenspan first visited China in October 1994, during which he noted the progress the country had made in economic development.

"Shifting from a centrally planned economy that has been in place for many years to a market economy is a complex and difficult process, and China has already achieved tremendous results through a variety of workable methods," Greenspan said, according to a transcript of his talks posted on the Brookings Institution's website.

In his subsequent visit to Beijing in 1997, Greenspan talked with Chinese officials on banking and finance, according to Chinese media reports.

Born on March 6, 1926, in the Washington Heights neighborhood of New York, Greenspan showed mathematical acumen from a young age.

He seemed to approach US-China trade relations with a perspective rigorously grounded in mathematics.

Rather than yielding to the sentiment of the moment, he frequently pushed back against politically popular but economically flawed narratives that circulated throughout Washington regarding the complex economic



Alan Greenspan

ties between the two countries.

For example, during testimony before the Senate Finance Committee on June 23, 2005, Greenspan systematically dismantled the prevailing argument that forcing China to revalue its currency would bring manufacturing back to the US.

"Some observers mistakenly believe that a marked increase in the exchange value of the Chinese renminbi relative to the US dollar would significantly increase manufacturing activity and jobs in the United States," he testified. "I am aware of no credible evidence that supports such a conclusion."

Warning against tariffs

He carried this same pragmatic skepticism into discussions regarding trade barriers, explicitly warning against the illusion of tariffs.

"More generally, any significant elevation of tariffs that substantially reduces our overall imports, by keeping out competitively priced goods, would materially lower our standard of living," he told lawmakers, in remarks that still resonate today as tariffs have been increasingly employed as a tool in trade relations.

"A return to protectionism would threaten the continuation of much of the extraordinary growth in living standards worldwide, but especially in the United States," he added.

Greenspan cautioned lawmakers that punitive trade measures would not achieve the political promise of saving domestic industries, saying that "few, if any, American jobs would be protected".

"A policy to dismantle the global trading system in a misguided effort to protect jobs from competition would redound to the eventual detriment of all US job-seekers, as well as of millions of American consumers."

Even after his retirement, Greenspan continued to comment on the escalating economic tensions between Washington and Beijing.

Responding to a question about China at a New York University event in 2018 during US President Donald Trump's first term, Greenspan said the tariff policies were "insane".

"It's an excise tax, and people think of tariffs other than what it is," he was quoted by US media as saying. "It's a tax, and everybody engaged in warfare of this type, it would mean that you're withdrawing credit or purchasing power from a whole series of countries."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:39 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:39 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Justified countermeasures against unilateral US practices a stern warning

In response to recent restrictive actions by the United States administration targeting Chinese enterprises, the Chinese government has announced countermeasures against selected US entities.

The Ministry of Commerce of China announced on Monday that 10 US entities, including Aveox, Red Cat Holdings and Teal Drones, have been added to the export control list in accordance with the nation's law and regulations on export control of dual-use items.

In a separate statement, a spokesperson for the Ministry of Commerce explained that the measure was in response to the US Defense Department arbitrarily adding multiple Chinese enterprises to an entity list because of alleged links to the Chinese military.

Also on Monday, the Ministry of Finance issued a notice prohibiting the purchase of products manufactured by 46 designated US companies in government procurement. Under the new measure, procurement entities participating in government purchasing activities are barred from buying products made by the listed US companies, which include Lockheed Martin Corporation and Raytheon Missiles & Defense.

The measure was approved in accordance with relevant Chinese laws and regulations, the Ministry of Finance said, adding the restriction does not apply to US-invested companies operating in China. By implementing these precise countermeasures, China aims to safeguard its national security and fulfill its nonproliferation obligations.

The measures, effective immediately, also highlight China's firm resolve to safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese enterprises against unjust unilateral practices of the US, while reinforcing its commitment to core national interests and international norms. Through the specific measures, China has demonstrated that any action harming its legitimate rights and interests will incur corresponding costs.

Despite Washington's claim that it seeks to stabilize relations with China, earlier this month the Pentagon released an updated version of its list of "Chinese military companies", baselessly adding 65 entities that include Alibaba, Baidu and BYD.

The Pentagon has now groundlessly designated 188 Chinese companies as "military entities". The move aims to hype up a "military threat" from China and distort normal market competition.

China's Foreign Ministry has previously criticized the US for overgeneralizing the concept of "national security" to suppress Chinese companies, and expressed firm opposition to this practice. It has also warned that China will take necessary measures to firmly safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies. The latest measures taken by the two Chinese ministries serve as an example of China making an appropriate response to the US moves.

China seeks healthy, stable and sustainable development in its relations with the US. However, it also understands that this goal cannot be achieved by making concessions, enduring grievances or swallowing the bitter pills of the unjust and arbitrary sanctions and other means of intended suppression from the US side. It is imperative that China respond reasonably and effectively whenever it is confronted with unreasonable sanctions and restrictions.

Notably, China's response has been largely confined to export control oversight and government procurement limitations, stopping short of sweeping market exclusions or financial penalties — an indication that it continues to seek to contain competition within a manageable framework. For instance, products manufactured by US-funded enterprises operating in China are excluded from these restrictions.

This approach embodies the principle of balancing a commitment to open cooperation with safeguarding national interests. Despite so, China's move is a clear warning to the US.

As the world's two largest economies, the US and China should seek to coexist through cooperation, mutual respect and responsible management of differences. For the benefit of both nations and the world, the US should meet China halfway by advocating strategic stability through cooperation and managed competition, rather than fabricating trade and technology disputes.

Cooperation key to 'Innovating at Scale'

The global economy seems to have become a master class in contradictions: artificial intelligence is attracting record investment, yet productivity growth remains stubbornly weak. Supply chains are being reconfigured among some economies in the name of "security", yet fragmentation is making growth harder to sustain. Governments speak of innovation, while many simultaneously erect barriers to the very flows of trade, capital and talent that innovation requires.

Compounding the picture is the Middle East crisis, which has disrupted energy markets amid inflation, tariff disputes and intensifying industrial policy rivalry that continues to impact global commerce. It is no surprise that many economists surveyed by the World Economic Forum ahead of this year's Summer Davos in Dalian, Liaoning province, expect growth to weaken over the year. The World Bank also projects global economic growth to slow to 2.5 percent this year, the lowest in recent years.

Against this backdrop, the agenda of the WEF's 17th Annual Meeting of the New Champions, being held in Dalian from Tuesday to Thursday, looks like a diagnosis of the world economy's most pressing ailments.

Under the theme of "Innovating at Scale", the forum has convened over 1,700 participants — including business executives, policymakers, researchers and technical experts — from more than 90 countries and regions. The five core questions guiding the agenda are revealing: how to achieve prosperity amid changing trade realities; how to understand China's next stage of development; how technology can generate real economic value; how growth can create opportunities for younger generations; and how the climate transition can become a source of competitiveness. The common thread running through all of these is the rolling out of innovation as a practical tool for growth, employment and economic renewal.

The first question may be the most urgent. According to World Trade Organization, around 11 percent of global trade has been affected by the tariff tensions since 2025. The result is a world economy increasingly constricted by protectionism. Yet history offers little evidence that prosperity can be built behind walls, while economic globalization has proved the opposite. Globalization requires reform, yet retreating into protectionism or unilateralism is unlikely to provide the answer.

The forum's emphasis on stronger institutions, greater capital flows and forward-looking policies reflects an understanding that innovation flourishes in open systems rather than closed ones. It is difficult to imagine breakthroughs in artificial intelligence, biotechnology or clean energy occurring without cross-border cooperation, investment and talent mobility. This is where the discussions among the policymakers, entrepreneurs and investors gathered in Dalian can made a difference.

China will occupy a key place in those discussions. The world's second-largest economy is navigating a transition to growth driven by new quality productive forces, with greater emphasis on smart manufacturing, the green economy and advanced technology. How that transition unfolds will influence global supply chains, investment decisions and economic expectations far beyond China's borders.

Chinese Premier Li Qiang's participation in the opening ceremony of the Summer Davos, meetings with foreign guests and discussions with business leaders on the sidelines of the forum in Dalian will provide the participants with an opportunity to engage directly with China's policymaking circle. Equally important, it offers Chinese policymakers a chance to hear firsthand the expectations of the global business community.

The deeper significance of the Summer Davos lies in its insistence that growth remains a collective endeavor. The world is entering an era increasingly influenced by geopolitical rivalry, economic fragmentation and technological "decoupling" in many places and sectors. Yet none of these challenges can be solved through isolation.

In an age when policymakers in many places are tempted to erect walls, a key message from Dalian, a vibrant coastal city in Northeast China, will be that prosperity is still built through openness, cooperation and confidence in a shared future based on a just, fair and inclusive world order.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Jin Ding



Opinion Line

Coming days will show if peace is near, or a renewed war awaits

The first direct US-Iran talks since the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding — which stipulated that Iran would reopen the Strait of Hormuz, while the United States would lift its naval blockade as an initial step — were always going to be judged less by the handshakes in Switzerland on the weekend than by what happens afterward.

That the two sides have agreed to establish a high-level committee, create working groups on nuclear issues and sanctions, launch technical negotiations, and adopt a 60-day road map toward a final agreement is an encouraging sign. Just as importantly, they have opened communication channels to prevent incidents in the Strait of Hormuz and created mechanisms to support a ceasefire in Lebanon.

But the real question is whether the peace the US and Iran seek can survive Israel's belief that its agenda remains unfinished. On Sunday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared that Israeli military operations had created conditions for the eventual fall of Iran, while pledging to maintain security zones in Lebanon and Gaza for as long as necessary. "In the United States, they say that President Trump does everything that I ask him to do. And in Israel, they say that I do everything he wants me to do. Well, neither is true," the Israeli leader said while addressing a policy forum.

In Switzerland, the US Vice-President JD Vance openly described Israel's reaction as a "freakout" and argued that "you can't just kill your way out of solving every single national security problem". He urged critics to "wake up and smell the reality".

The current US administration has already provided Israel with levels of military, diplomatic and political support that previous administrations would have balked to extend. But Washington finally appears convinced that it should call time on giving Tel Aviv a free rein.

From Israel's perspective, an agreement that leaves Iran's state system intact, allows Tehran to rebuild regional influence and does not permanently eliminate Hezbollah, Hamas or Iran's missile capabilities can hardly be regarded as a strategic victory. That is why Israel insists on retaining influence in southern Lebanon and maintaining operations in Gaza. Should it eventually be pressured to scale back its military footprint there, the gains from more than two and a half years of conflict could turn out to be surprisingly meager.

That also explains why many observers see what Washington is pursuing as an "off-ramp" rather than a comprehensive settlement, claiming that the US merely wants to stabilize shipping through Hormuz, lower energy prices and reduce domestic political headaches.

Should the negotiations in Switzerland mark the beginning of a US disengagement from an increasingly complicated conflict, the Middle East might quickly return to familiar patterns. Iran and Israel would resume their rivalry through proxies or direct confrontation. Lebanon would remain fragile. The Palestinian question would remain unresolved.

That is why the current talks represent a test for the US. Can Washington persuade its closest regional partner that military pressure alone cannot guarantee security? Can it ensure that ceasefire arrangements evolve into a durable political framework rather than a temporary tactical truce? Can it restrain all parties, including Israel, from returning to the logic of escalation? It was the US' reckless endorsement of joint strikes with Israel on Iran in February that has landed Washington in its current predicament — burdened both morally and materially.

China has consistently argued that force is not a solution and that dialogue on the basis of equality remains the only viable path forward. Beijing supports efforts to consolidate the ceasefire momentum, while continuing diplomatic engagement with all relevant parties and advocating a shared vision of security for the Gulf region and the wider Middle East.

The coming days will reveal whether the Middle East is genuinely moving toward peace, or merely preparing for the next chapter of an unfinished war.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Teachers to be collaborators in AI-powered classrooms

Editor's note: *Artificial intelligence is reshaping education. Xiong Zhang, a professor at Beihang University, spoke to China Business Journal about how teachers should adapt to the rapid rise of AI technology. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

China has adopted a top-level national strategy to advance AI education across all stages of learning and promote AI literacy among the public.

On the one hand, this can cultivate specialized talent in the field.

On the other hand, it can equip the broader society with the capabilities needed to manage AI-induced risks and turn challenges into opportunities. It moves beyond the outdated exam-oriented and utilitarian path to a more innovative approach.

To ensure the sound and orderly integration of AI into education, it is essential to enhance the competency of teachers.

The integration should encompass all disciplines and stages of education, and involve every student and teacher. All education professionals should upgrade their AI capabilities.

Under the traditional model of education, teachers are responsible for classroom instruction, transmission of knowledge and assessment of students.

But in the AI-enabled education ecosystem, many repetitive tasks, such as making lesson plans, grading assignments, analyzing student performance and answering basic questions, can be performed by AI.

This means teachers need to redefine their roles. Rather than serving as transmitters of knowledge, they need to become designers of learning experiences, planners of educational scenarios and integrators of resources. Students should assume greater responsibility for their own learning and teachers should work alongside them as collaborators.

At the same time, teachers should strike a balance between technology and humanity. Their roles should evolve from being authoritative figures imparting knowledge to guides and companions who help students develop sound values, healthy personalities and aesthetic tastes, and strengthen their mental well-being.

Additionally, single-subject instruction should give way to more integrated teaching approaches. Teachers need to connect different disciplines so that AI technology can be effectively integrated into moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic and labor education.

There are some misconceptions schools and teachers need to avoid when applying AI in education. Viewing AI as "futile" and refusing to learn the new technology is no more helpful than regarding AI as "omnipotent" in a way that will weaken the teachers' guiding roles.

Schools and teachers should recognize that integrating AI in education is not a task only for information technology teachers. It is interdisciplinary, and requires all teachers to enhance their knowledge and upgrade their capabilities.

To develop a teaching workforce that meets the requirements of the AI era, it is vital to improve the evaluation system. AI-related indicators, such as participation in AI training courses and AI literacy, should be factored into the evaluation of a teacher's performance.

Teachers with humanistic grounding, technical proficiency, innovative thinking and ethical awareness will be essential for striking a balance between AI empowerment and human-centered education. They can help nurture highly competent young people suited to the intelligent age.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:39 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:39 PM

VIEWS

Djoomart Otorbaev

A new age of monetary multipolarity

The international monetary system may be approaching one of its most significant transformations since the collapse of the Bretton Woods framework in 1971.

Recent data from the European Central Bank show that at the end of 2025, gold accounted for approximately 27 percent of global central bank reserve assets, surpassing the share of United States Treasury securities, which fell to 22 percent.

While the US dollar remains the dominant reserve currency, this is a historic shift in reserve-management behavior and reflects bigger changes in the geopolitical and financial landscape.

The rise of gold is not merely a response to market conditions. It reflects a fundamental reassessment by central banks of what constitutes a truly safe reserve asset in an increasingly fragmented world.

For decades, US Treasury securities held a unique position in global finance, offering liquidity, scale, political stability, and the backing of the world's largest economy. Central banks accumulated US Treasuries not only because of their financial characteristics but also because the international monetary order was centered on the US and the dollar.

That assumption has begun to weaken.

The first major driver behind the resurgence of gold is geopolitical risk. The freezing of approximately $300 billion of Russian sovereign reserves in 2022 marked a turning point in the thinking of many central banks.

Regardless of views on the conflict itself, the event demonstrated that reserve assets held within the Western financial system could be subject to political decisions.

As a result, policymakers in many countries are questioning whether foreign sovereign debt can still be regarded as completely risk-free.

Global Lens

Gold offers a unique alternative. Unlike government bonds, gold carries no counterparty risk.

It is not a promise to pay; it is payment itself. It cannot be frozen electronically, canceled by sanctions, or devalued through the fiscal decisions of another government.

At a time when geopolitical tensions are growing, these qualities have gained greater importance.

The second driver is the concern about the long-term trajectory of US public finances. Federal debt has exceeded $36 trillion and continues to grow faster than the economy. While the US retains exceptional economic strengths, the sheer scale of its fiscal obligations has prompted reserve managers to question the long-term purchasing power of dollar-denominated assets.

Historically, US Treasuries were considered almost risk-free due to minimal default risk.

However, inflation risk has gained significance today. Central banks are increasingly recognizing that large fiscal deficits, especially when paired with monetary expansion during crises, can diminish the real value of fixed-income assets over time.

In contrast, gold has long been seen as a safeguard against monetary debasement and inflation. The recent sharp rise in gold prices has solidified this view and made it more appealing as a reserve asset.

A third factor is the accelerating trend toward reserve diversification.

Central banks are not abandoning the dollar. In fact, dollar-denominated assets still account for more than 40 percent of global reserves. What is changing is the composition of incremental reserve accumulation.

Rather than channeling all new reserves into dollars and US Treasuries, many countries are pursuing a more balanced strategy.

Gold has become the preferred diversification instrument because it is universally recognized, highly liquid, and politically neutral.

This pattern is especially evident among emerging economies.

Countries such as China, India, Turkiye, and several Gulf states have consistently increased their gold reserves in recent years. Poland has also become one of the world's most active purchasers.

While their reasons vary, these nations share a common goal: to lessen reliance on any single reserve asset or financial system.

The scale of central bank gold purchases demonstrates the extent of this shift. From 2022 to 2024, official-sector gold acquisitions surpassed 1,000 tons each year, a level unseen in recent financial history. Even in 2025, despite record-high prices, central banks bought over 863 tons of gold.

This persistent demand has reshaped the global gold market and has played a major role in driving up prices.

Another key factor is the rise of a more multipolar global economy. The share of global output from emerging markets continues to grow, and trade among developing countries is accelerating.

As economic influence spreads out, reserve management strategies tend to diversify accordingly.

In this setting, gold serves as a neutral asset not affiliated with any geopolitical group. It can serve as collateral, a store of value, and a reserve tool, independent of political ties. This neutrality is gaining appeal as the global economy becomes more fragmented.

The implications of this change are significant. Gold's growing role in reserve portfolios doesn't mean the dollar will soon collapse. The dollar still plays a crucial role in global trade, finance, and capital markets. Currently, no other currency has the liquidity, institutional strength, and network effects needed to replace it.

However, the reserve hierarchy is changing. For the first time in decades, central banks are signaling that safety can no longer be defined solely by liquidity and yield.

Political neutrality, sovereign control, and resilience to geopolitical shocks are equally important considerations.

Gold's return to prominence, therefore, reflects more than a change in portfolio allocation.

It represents a broader redefinition of financial security in the 21st century.

The world is increasingly seeking insurance against a future in which economic and geopolitical uncertainty becomes a permanent feature of the global landscape.

In that sense, gold's rise above US Treasuries is not merely a market event.

It is a signal that the architecture of the international monetary system is gradually evolving toward a more diversified and multipolar future.

The author is a former prime minister of the Kyrgyz Republic.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Zhu Keli

Moving AI innovation from laboratories to factory floors

Global industrial transformation is gathering pace, and the rules of the innovation competition are changing.

The 2026 Summer Davos in Dalian, Liaoning province, themed "Innovating at Scale", will focus on improving institutions, guiding capital and shaping forward-looking policies. Its core objective is to turn technological potential into economic growth, business development and job creation.

As artificial intelligence penetrates industries and society, a technological breakthrough alone is not enough to secure a lasting competitive edge.

The true measure of innovation lies in whether the technology can be embedded in real-world scenarios, replicated across industries and transformed into a productive force.

For years, innovation has been judged at the front end of the value chain: by algorithm upgrades, model improvements, hardware breakthroughs, academic papers, patents and technical parameters.

These indicators matter because basic research and original innovation are the wellspring of the entire innovation system. But technological progress defines only the ceiling of innovation, not its economic value.

A breakthrough in the laboratory does not always translate into growth unless it reaches the market.

In recent years, global investment in AI research has soared and new advances have emerged. Yet many frontier achievements remain confined to laboratories rather than empowering the real economy.

Technology creates value only when it finds practical use and can be deployed at scale. This is the key difference between point innovation and scaled-up innovation. Point innovation delivers a breakthrough from zero to one, focusing on technical verification and parameter optimization.

Scaled-up innovation completes the journey from one to many, adapting mature technologies to industrial needs, reshaping production models and creating economic value at a broader scale.

AI, in particular, depends on industrial scenarios. General-purpose models often struggle when applied directly to production environments.

A standardized algorithm cannot solve every frontline problem.

Sany Heavy Industry faced this challenge when it introduced a general AI vision model for parts inspection. But variations in workshop lighting and the complexity of component textures produced too many false readings, making the system unsuitable for mass production.

However, the company did not give up. Its technical team worked in production workshops, collected large amounts of real-world data and repeatedly refined the algorithm to match the manufacturing process.

The result was a customized system that significantly improved inspection accuracy and efficiency. The mature solution was then replicated across production bases nationwide, turning AI from a single experiment into a scaled industrial application.



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

There's a similar lesson in grassroots governance. Hidden risks are often discovered late, while manual inspections can be inefficient.

General-purpose large models may fail to identify detailed street-level problems such as road obstructions, cluttered public spaces or minor fire hazards.

When Beyondsoft developed smart community projects, it did not rely on an off-the-shelf solution. Its technical team followed frontline grid workers, collected real governance data, aligned algorithm rules with enforcement standards, and refined the system category by category.

After being adjusted in real-life scenarios, the intelligent inspection system became more stable and adaptable. It is now deployed in multiple cities, providing a replicable model for the digital transformation of urban governance.

To scale up AI innovation, China must strengthen collaboration between industry, universities, research institutes and users. This way, innovation will respond precisely to industrial needs.

The XCMG Group is a good example. Through a laboratory jointly established with universities, operational, fault and energy-consumption data from equipment across the country were synchronized with the research side in real time.

Once solutions were validated on prototypes, they were quickly deployed across tens of thousands of machines already in use.

This created a virtuous cycle of iterative improvement, scenario testing and large-scale deployment, significantly shortening the journey from research to application.

Capital is another key requirement for moving AI from pilot projects to widespread adoption.

Industrial AI often has lengthy development cycles, heavy investment and delayed returns. Such innovation depends on patient, long-term capital.

In the past, capital markets often chased the latest model concepts and laboratory breakthroughs, favoring sectors that promised immediate attention and faster monetization.

As a result, companies that worked to apply AI deeply in real economic scenarios often struggled to secure financing.

Aqrose Technology shows why patient capital matters. Focused on light manufacturing, the company serves small and medium-sized manufacturers in sectors such as hardware, home appliances and furniture, providing lightweight intelligent quality-inspection solutions. For this, it had to work extensively on the front line, collect a huge number of samples and develop standardized, cost-effective products.

As the practical value of its technology became evident, long-term industrial capital started flowing in. That allowed the company to refine its products and expand services to thousands of manufacturers. Industrial AI thus moved beyond isolated pilot projects and evolved into a large-scale application model.

Institutions and forward-looking policies are the foundation for sustainably scaling up AI innovation.

As AI becomes more deeply embedded in the economy and society, it will reshape production models, job structures and industry rules. At the same time, it will also raise new governance challenges involving data flows, algorithm compliance and risk management.

Without unified rules, AI applications can become fragmented and difficult to replicate. Futian district in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, faced these challenges during its AI-powered government service transformation.

By establishing standards for government AI applications, unifying rules for document review, compliance checks and data use, and simplifying approval procedures for intelligent government systems, it created a framework that could be replicated elsewhere. The experience demonstrates how institutional innovation can support technological innovation.

Global AI competition has already moved beyond isolated technological rivalry to a systematic contest of ecosystems, industrial integration and scaling capability.

While some developed countries lead in algorithms and models, China's complete industrial system, vast market scenarios and strong industrial support give it natural advantages in adapting, testing and replicating AI technologies across sectors.

The Summer Davos' focus on scaled-up innovation captures this broader shift.

In the AI era, technological breakthroughs are only the entry ticket. What determines long-term success is the ability to connect technology with real-world scenarios, adapt it to industrial environments and build innovation ecosystems.

Looking ahead, China should continue to strengthen basic research and protect the roots of technological innovation.

But it must also rely on high-quality industrial scenarios, rational long-term capital and sound institutional policies to open up the full chain from technological invention to industrial application.

Only when AI takes root in the real economy and empowers thousands of industries can it unleash the momentum of new quality productive forces.

The author is the founding director of the China Institute of New Economy.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Kang Bing

The author is former deputy editor-in-chief of China Daily.
kangbing@chinadaily.com.cn

12315: Five digits that give consumers a stronger voice

A few days ago, while swimming at my local gym, I reached one end of the pool, touched the wall, turned around and, as I always do, wiped my face with one hand before pushing off in the other direction. That's when I heard a shout from the pool attendant. I stopped and looked up, wondering if I had done something wrong.

He walked over to me, leaned down and said in a low voice: "When you blow your nose, you should do it in the sink, not in the pool." He believed I had polluted the water.

"But I did not," I countered. He showed little interest in hearing my explanation and climbed back onto his tall chair.

At first I thought of shrugging off the incident. At my age, one should not be bothered over such trifles. But as I resumed my swimming, a feeling of indignation started building up inside me. I felt that I had been wrongly accused.

When I finished swimming, I went up to the attendant and told him that as a responsible staff member, he should be more careful before accusing someone of misconduct unless he had solid evidence because false accusations can be as offensive as genuine wrongdoing.

I was expecting an apology from him, but he did not offer one. "I saw you touching your nose," he insisted before turning away, ending the conversation as abruptly as he had begun it.

After changing, I went to the front desk and asked for the manager. I explained what had happened and demanded an apology from both the attendant and the company unless they could prove that I had violated any rule.

The surveillance footage was reviewed, and proved exactly what I had said. I had merely wiped my face, something that most swimmers do when they emerge from the water.

Over the years, I have reached out to the hotline several times and found that it is very timely, fair and authoritative.

The manager and the attendant offered a formal apology to me and sincerely asked for forgiveness. I accepted the apology. I could have demanded more, such as an extension of my membership as compensation for the embarrassment.

But I did not pursue the matter because if a company loses face and money, it often vents its anger on the person responsible. I didn't want the attendant to be fined or, worse, lose his job. Life is already hard.

The episode reminded me how fortunate Chinese consumers are to have channels for defending their rights. When disputes arise with service or commodity providers, people can complain not only to the company but also to the 12315 hotline operated by the State Administration for Market Regulation.

Set up in 1999, the online and telephone hotline has become both a shield for disadvantaged groups to protect their rights and a sword hanging over dishonest businesses, whether they operate online or offline. Over the years, I have reached out to the hotline several times and found that it is very timely, fair and authoritative.

SAMR reports that it dealt with 43.86 million cases last year, of which 26.46 million were complaints from customers. During the year, the hotline helped customers recover 4.35 billion yuan ($642.08 million), which would have been an economic loss. SAMR's efforts should be applauded.

Their value lies not only in the money returned to consumers, but also in the correction of malpractices and the promotion of a more regulated market in the country.

When the gym manager and the attendant apologized to me, it was probably not out of sincerity but because they were under pressure that I might dial 12315. During the discussion with the manager, I had mentioned the number only once, but the number carried weight.

Dealing with millions of complaints in a year is not an easy job. The hotline must have employed thousands of staff members to protect the rights of consumers.

While its headquarters are in Beijing, local branches in hundreds of cities across the country are responsible for investigating and resolving disputes in their respective jurisdictions.

That decentralized structure inevitably leads to differences in service quality. In most places, a SAMR employee calls back within hours of a complaint being filed and a solution can be reached within a few days.

But in some other places, complainants may wait much longer, receive no response at all, or encounter officials who seem more interested in defending the service provider. One cannot help but wonder if that is local protectionism.

Despite a few unsatisfactory experiences, I am convinced that the Chinese people are fortunate to have such an efficient mechanism that supports their rights as consumers.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:39 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:39 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

BERNARDO MENDIA

Trade, law and a shared multipolar order

The shifting tides of international economic exchange can be translated into a positive force for a resilient framework where innovative achievements truly scale for the benefit of all



The World Economic Forum's 2026 Annual Meeting of the New Champions, also known as the Summer Davos, which is being held in Dalian from Tuesday to Thursday, arrives at a critical juncture for the global economy. With the theme "Innovating at Scale", the meeting covers five core questions: how to find prosperity amid shifting trade, how to understand China's next chapter, how to harness technology for the real economy, how to create jobs for the next generation, and how to turn the energy transition into a source of competitiveness. These questions cannot be solved in a geopolitical vacuum. The world must confront a fundamental reality: The unipolar era has conclusively given way to a multipolar world.



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

In this new landscape, the primary challenge is to reconcile legitimate domestic interests with an unyielding respect for multilateral institutions. In recent years, the rise of unilateralism and protectionism has disrupted globalization. Some major Western countries prioritize their national interests over the collective will of the international community and consider themselves above international law. This behavior runs counter to the trend of multilateralism.

At the heart of this multipolar architecture stands the United Nations. Thus, there is an urgent need to revitalize the UN as the major multilateral platform for global decision-making. And international trade requires clear, predictable and universally accepted rules. The alternative is a fragmented system governed by the perilous doctrine that "might is right".

True global leadership means a voluntary and unequivocal adherence to international law. The greatest interest of any nation is the preservation of peace. Conflict is the ultimate disrupter of economic progress and supply chain stability. Adhering to common international laws is not a surrender of sovereignty; on the contrary, it is the highest expression of enlightened national interest.

Portugal has consistently championed multilateralism in the past years. And this commitment has been recognized with Portugal's recent election to be a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for the 2027-28 term, where it will carry a mandate to act as a principled facilitator of a global equilibrium.

This philosophy of championing law over raw power translates into Portugal's modern economic strategy. As global value chains seek resilience and diversification, Portugal has emerged as a critical logistics partner. Positioned at the crossroads of Europe, the Atlantic and global maritime routes, anchored by the deep-water Port of Sines, Portugal offers a reliable gateway bridging Asia, the Americas and continental Europe.

Furthermore, as the global economy undergoes a green and technological transition, Portugal is integrating into the reindustrialization of Europe — within the broader framework of the European Union — focusing on green mobility, renewable energy and digital infrastructure. For international investors, Portugal provides not just a logistical gateway, but institutional predictability and strategic autonomy. Chinese investment has started to take root here, most notably the CALB battery factory in Sines, a strategic asset for Europe's electric vehicle supply chain. Yet the full potential remains untapped. Portugal possesses the renewable energy capacity and location to host data centers and EV assembly plants, sectors where recent Chinese investment tends to flow. Realizing this potential will depend on the usual factors: predictable licensing, competitive grid access and the kind of geopolitical signaling that reassures rather than confuses long-term partners. For Chinese industrial leaders, Portugal offers a stable gateway to European and Portuguese-speaking markets, provided that conditions for investment continue to mature.

As China enters its 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, its "next chapter" is unfolding to the world. While pivoting toward high-quality development with new quality productive forces and green innovation, China's role in global development and global governance can be upgraded by integrating itself further into global value chains and sharing more development opportunities with other countries.

Meanwhile, platforms such as the China International Supply Chain Expo demonstrate that decoupling is an economic illusion; interdependence remains defining. Initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative offer a stellar example for rules-based cooperation. Portugal was among the first Western European countries to formally support the BRI. For the Portuguese, the initiative has always represented more than infrastructure. It embodies connectivity across trade, finance, innovation and people-to-people exchanges.

The trade and economic outcomes between Portugal and China reflect that true partnerships can lead to win-win cooperation. Portugal refuses to blindly follow unilateral directives from any hyperpower, and its engagement with China is based on an equal footing, transparency and adherence to international law.

Looking ahead, three practical steps deserve urgent consideration.

First, a renewed commitment to the UN Charter — to strengthen early-warning mechanisms and mediation capacities, and to prevent conflicts before they require Chapter VII interventions — action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace and acts of aggression.

Second, the exploration of a regular "multipolar dialogue" among the EU, China, the United States and other parties, not as a rival to the UN but as a forum for moderating strategic competition before it escalates into trade or military hostility.

Third, leveraging existing platforms such as the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries (Forum Macao) and a series of China-advocated initiatives to pilot "rules-based economic corridors", where trade, investment and infrastructure respect voluntarily agreed international standards.

The discussions in the Summer Davos, therefore, can look beyond immediate economic metrics. Trade cannot be weaponized, nor can international agreements be treated as optional commitments.

As a country with deep historic ties to China, Portugal stands ready to champion this balanced path. By combining economic pragmatism, logistical excellence and an unwavering defense of the UN, Portugal can help ensure that the shifting tides of global trade lead not to fragmentation and conflict, but to a resilient, multipolar order where innovation truly scales for the benefit of all.

The author is the secretary-general of the Portugal-China Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

DARYL GUPPY

Summer talking points

China's next chapter of development emphasizes new quality productive forces and innovation at scale



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

China's advanced technology is being applied in the real economy as it enters the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period. The electric vehicle sector provides insight into China's next chapter of economic development which emphasizes innovation at scale.



Innovative suspension solutions, hydraulically operated and coordinated with software in China's EVs smooth out the ride faster than any comparable mechanical system. The cars are loaded with advanced smart features. But not just the cars are smart — they are embedded into smart manufacturing which rests on relentless innovation. The relationship between these forces is what drives innovation at scale. China has already embarked on this chapter of economic development.

The Summer Davos provides an opportunity for global business and political leaders to exchange ideas on how to leverage the seismic shift in economic and industrial relationships triggered by global innovation at scale to create new development opportunities.

The move beyond smart resets the economic landscape with what China calls new quality productive forces. The focus goes beyond advanced industries such as clean-energy manufacturing, semiconductors and biotechnology. An intelligent digital and technological society feeds into every level of economic activity, changing the nature of work in ways not yet fully understood. Exploring these is likely to be one of the topics discussed at the World Economic Forum's 2026 Annual Meeting of the New Champions, also known as the Summer Davos. This forum is expected to showcase China's achievements in high-quality economic development, convey the country's firm confidence in opening-up and share the broad opportunities brought by Chinese modernization.

As China is becoming the "smart factory of the future", fixed asset investment in manufacturing has a strong focus on the industrial application of robots and the integration of artificial intelligence.

It is estimated by the Robotics Center of Silicon Valley that robot density in Chinese manufacturing surged to 392 robots per 10,000 workers in 2024. According to the World Robotics 2025 report released by the Frankfurt-based International Federation of Robotics, Chinese robot makers sold more units at home than foreign competitors, with their domestic market share rising to 57 percent in 2024.

China is also accelerating the integration of AI into manufacturing as part of its efforts to move up the global value chain. For instance, last August, Shanghai unveiled a three-year "AI+manufacturing" implementation plan, which introduced measures aimed at achieving breakthroughs in industrial intelligence technologies.

Such measures helped unleash the application of new quality productive forces that will change the economic and social landscape in China and beyond.

The new quality productive forces prioritize high-tech, high-efficiency and high-quality development driven by scientific and technological innovation rather than traditional labor and capital. This is different from the Silicon Valley's philosophy of "move fast and break things" because the policy objectives include social outcomes rather than just profit. Understanding and managing the way these forces will change the social relationship between labor and capital may also be a focus of the Summer Davos.

The new quality productive forces come from AI, quantum and other high-end technologies that are empowering the digital economy to be a new paradigm, which includes innovating at scale and speed. The multiple applications already found in the low-altitude economy can show how this process develops. China can see this approach as the next chapter where these changes also serve positive social development.

A key facilitator of technology in China's real economy is the development and adoption of universal technical standards in almost every aspect from the design of physical connector plugs to the distribution of advanced AI tools and setting behavior parameters for android robots. Lack of agreement on standards is not just about software and AI. Simple things such as differently shaped and incompatible charging ports for EVs or phones drag down productivity and hinder digital advances.

Over the past few years, China has linked its standardization practice closely to industrial policy and long-term innovation goals. Along with China's development of new quality productive forces and the standardization of some important technological applications, China has become a "standard maker" that increasingly writes the rules in key technology fields.

Besides, China's rapidly developing digital ecosystem, of which DeepSeek is a part, also drives an AI and big data hyper-personalized consumer experience stretching from robotics to green energy and smart cities.

The outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan lays out arrangements for high-quality development that are echoed in the theme of the Summer Davos — "Innovating at Scale" — which is about the way the digital economy is growing. More specifically, it's a question about how to balance competition and cooperation to promote AI for good, expand digital payment platforms for more Global South countries, enrich safety features on EVs and innovate other aspects of the digital universe in a more effective and environmentally friendly way.

How China responds to the various challenges will ripple well beyond its borders and help shape supply chains, business strategies and cooperation among countries. The Summer Davos provides an opportunity for global business and political leaders to exchange ideas on how to leverage the seismic shift in economic and industrial relationships triggered by global innovation at scale to create new development opportunities.

The author is an international financial technical analysis expert and a former national board member at the Australia China Business Council. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:39 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:39 PM

BUSINESS



A researcher seen at an Innovent Biologics lab in Suzhou, Jiangsu province. YANG HAISHI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Innovent-Pfizer deal makes joint development, commercialization pillar in biotech global push

By **LI JING**
lijing2009@chinadaily.com.cn

The $10.5 billion partnership announced by Chinese innovative biotech Innovent Biologics and US pharmaceutical giant Pfizer in late May highlights an emerging shift in cross-border biotech dealmaking, with some Chinese drug developers moving beyond traditional out-licensing arrangements toward partnerships that include joint development and commercialization.

While the deal ranks among the largest cross-border transactions signed by a Chinese biotech company, analysts say its significance lies in its structure rather than its size.

Under the agreement, Innovent will receive an upfront payment of $650 million and could earn up to $9.85 billion in development, regulatory and commercial milestones. The partnership covers 12 oncology programs, including antibody-drug conjugates (ADCs) and multi-specific antibodies.

The portfolio includes eight early-stage Innovent programs and four discovery programs proposed by Pfizer.

For four key projects, the companies will jointly develop the assets globally and co-commercialize them in the United States and Europe, sharing profits in those markets. Innovent will retain rights in China. Another four projects will be licensed to Pfizer outside China, while four others will be granted global exclusive rights to Pfizer.

The combination of out-licensing, co-development and co-commercialization within a single transaction distinguishes the agreement from many earlier cross-border deals by Chinese biotech firms.

Hui Zhou, chief R&D officer (oncology pipeline) of Innovent, said the collaboration would help accelerate development of the company's early-stage oncology pipeline and expand its presence in overseas markets through joint development and commercialization in the United States and Europe.

> "How to manage innovative-drug BD transactions requires respect for science and market principles. Policies should be introduced prudently."
>
> **Song Ruilin,** chief expert of the China Pharmaceutical Innovation and Research Development Association

Jeff Legos, chief oncology officer at Pfizer, said the collaboration brings together both companies' "highly complementary engines of innovation", combining Innovent's capabilities in drug discovery and early clinical development with Pfizer's global research and development and commercialization expertise.

The transaction comes amid a surge in cross-border out-licensing activity by Chinese drug developers.

Data from the National Medical Products Administration showed that the cross-border out-licensing deals of Chinese biotech firms hit a record transaction value of more than $60 billion in the first quarter, approaching half of the total $135.7 billion recorded for all of 2025.

Several large transactions have been announced this year. In January, Yantai in Shandong province-based RemeGen reached a collaboration agreement with AbbVie valued at up to $4.95 billion. Later that month, Shijiazhuang in Hebei province-based CSPC Pharmaceutical Group announced a deal with AstraZeneca worth up to $18.5 billion. More recently, Jiangsu Hengrui Pharmaceuticals signed a global strategic collaboration and licensing agreement with Bristol Myers Squibb with potential milestone payments of more than $15 billion.

Against the backdrop, the Innovent-Pfizer deal stands out for its use of co-development and co-commercialization, or Co-Co, arrangements, a model that is gaining traction among China's leading drugmakers.

Innovent previously adopted a similar structure in its collaboration with Takeda, while Hengrui's recent deal with Bristol Myers Squibb included options for joint development and commercialization.

Unlike conventional out-licensing deals, Co-Co arrangements allow companies to share development costs as well as future commercialization returns.

Analysts at China Securities said the Pfizer transaction represented another milestone in Innovent's globalization strategy, noting that the company would gain access to overseas markets through a combination of licensing and Co-Co arrangements.

Another notable feature of the deal is the expansion of profit-sharing rights beyond the United States.

You Fei, chief financial officer of Innovent, told investors during a conference call on June 1 that previous profit-sharing arrangements had primarily focused on the US market, while the Pfizer agreement extends that model to Europe.

"This time, both the US and Europe are included in profit sharing," You said, adding that the two regions together account for more than 80 percent of the global pharmaceutical market.

The company now has more than 20 drug candidates partnered with four multinational pharmaceutical companies, including five projects using Co-Co structures, according to You.

The inclusion of Europe broadens the geographic scope of Innovent's profit-sharing arrangements, reflecting that leading Chinese drugmakers are seeking to retain a larger role in global commercialization rather than relying solely on royalties.

The boom in cross-border business development has also drawn attention to the policy and geopolitical environment surrounding China's biotechnology sector.

Song Ruilin, chief expert of the China Pharmaceutical Innovation and Research Development Association, said that while some US lawmakers have proposed restrictions on Chinese biotechnology companies and questioned the use of Chinese clinical-trial data, multinational pharmaceutical companies continue to pursue partnerships with Chinese firms because of their growing role in global drug development.

Morgan Stanley forecast in 2025 that drugs originating from China could account for 35 percent of new medicines approved by the US Food and Drug Administration by 2040, underscoring expectations that Chinese companies will play a larger role in global drug innovation.

Speaking at a healthcare policy forum in May, Song emphasized that cross-border business development deals have become an increasingly important source of financing for China's innovative drug sector and a necessary phase for its globalization.

At the same time, he urged policymakers to take a cautious approach toward any potential measures affecting cross-border transactions.

"How to manage innovative-drug BD transactions requires respect for science and market principles. Policies should be introduced prudently," Song said.

Pakistan, China strengthen capital ties

Tire manufacturing joint venture listing on PSX paves way for broader relations

By **ZHOU LANXU**
zhoulanxu@chinadaily.com.cn

The successful listing of a Sino-Pakistani tire manufacturer on Pakistan's stock market may have paved the way for broader capital market cooperation between China and Pakistan, including more fundraising by Chinese-invested enterprises and potential cross-border investment products, a senior Chinese exchange executive said.

You Hang, executive vice-president of the China Financial Futures Exchange and Chinese shareholder director of the Pakistan Stock Exchange, or PSX, said in an exclusive interview with China Daily that the China Financial Futures Exchange, or CFFEX, will continue expanding its pipeline of qualified Chinese-invested companies in Pakistan seeking equity and debt financing through local capital markets.

Beyond corporate listings, You said CFFEX and PSX will explore broader product cooperation. Subject to regulatory approval, the two sides may study the feasibility of cross-border exchange-traded funds or ETF products and examine potential operational, regulatory and technical arrangements for future market connectivity.

The remarks came days after Service Long March Tyres Ltd — a joint venture between Pakistan's Servis Group and China's Chaoyang Long March Tyre Co Ltd — became what market participants describe as the first Chinese-invested company to list on the PSX.

The company raised 7.77 billion Pakistani rupees ($28 million), making it the largest private-sector IPO in Pakistan's history. Proceeds will be used mainly to build a new passenger-car radial tire plant in Pakistan.

The project, expected to begin operations in 2028, will expand local manufacturing capacity, reduce import dependence and support exports, thus helping Pakistan address the challenges of tight foreign exchange reserves and an imbalance in international payments, You said.

As of midday on Monday, shares of SLM traded at 25.2 rupees, more than a quarter above the IPO price of 19.95 rupees, reflecting strong investor demand, according to the PSX website. Experts said such market recognition suggests that capital market cooperation between the two countries is gradually evolving from individual projects toward a more institutionalized framework.

"By raising funds through Pakistan's domestic capital market, it has created a market-oriented and sustainable development model that combines Chinese technology, bilateral industrial capacity cooperation and local capital," he said.

Building on the listing of SLM, the CFFEX will proactively promote more high-quality corridor projects to list on the PSX, You said, planning to conduct regular research visits to Chinese enterprises operating in Pakistan and identify financing needs in sectors such as energy, manufacturing and infrastructure.

The listing also highlights a decade-long partnership between the two exchanges. In 2017, a Chinese-led consortium — including the CFFEX, the Shanghai Stock Exchange and the Shenzhen Stock Exchange — acquired a strategic stake in the PSX, becoming its largest single shareholder.

CFFEX has worked with the Pakistani bourse on initiatives ranging from technology upgrades and governance reforms to ETF development and corporate listings, with SLM the first flagship industrial IPO completed under the cooperation framework.

You said further cooperation would also cover market infrastructure and product development. Building on the launch of ETF products in Pakistan, CFFEX will continue supporting efforts to broaden the range of investment products available to local investors, including assisting PSX in preparing for the potential introduction of equity-index and single-stock futures, and exploring Islamic finance products.

Skills focus



The Shuozhou Track Maintenance Division in Shanxi province launches the 2026 Track Worker Professional Skills Competition at a training yard, drawing technical backbone staffers to display their skills. The contest covered theoretical tests, track inspection car diagram interpretation and switch inspection operations, aiming to hone staffers' skills through practice and help ensure safe rail transport. LI HAIFENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Qinghai home to world largest single-unit CSP facility

By **ZHENG XIN**
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

China's 350-megawatt concentrated solar power demonstration project is set to deliver a replicable, large-scale model for the nation's CSP commercialization, backed by world-leading thermal storage, proprietary technology and full industrial chain independence, said industry experts and company executives.

China General Nuclear Power Corp came up with the world's largest single-unit CSP facility by thermal storage capacity and mirror field aperture last week in Northwest China's Qinghai province.

The project, integrating molten salt tower and parabolic trough systems, also marks the large-scale deployment of the company's self-developed 8.6-meter molten salt parabolic trough collector, it said.

Ding Yeliang, deputy general manager of CGN New Energy Holdings Co Ltd, said core components including collector brackets, flexible connection modules, local controllers and precision detection devices are jointly developed by CGN and top domestic enterprises, achieving 100 percent independent control of core technologies across the industrial chain.

CSP technology uses mirrors to concentrate solar energy to heat a fluid that drives a turbine. It has the unique advantage of built-in thermal energy storage, allowing it to generate dispatchable power, providing grid stability by supplying electricity even when the sun is not shining, a feature essential for national energy security.

The project's 15-hour molten salt thermal storage system, with a capacity of 11,747 megawatt-hours, enables stable round-the-clock generation and strong peak-shaving capabilities to boost new energy integration and power supply reliability in Qinghai.

Once fully operational, it is expected to produce 1 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity annually, saving 320,000 metric tons of standard coal and reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 860,000 tons each year.

China aims to bring its total concentrated solar power installed capacity to approximately 15 million kilowatts by 2030, according to a guideline released by the National Development and Reform Commission and the National Energy Administration.

Yang Kun, executive vice-chairman of the China Electricity Council, said earlier that technological advancements and economies of scale have steadily driven down construction expenses, while over 95 percent of China's CSP equipment is now manufactured domestically.

This was echoed by Ding from CGN, who said that building on its technological edge, China's concentrated solar power sector is well-positioned to capitalize on this moment and lead the next phase of clean energy advancement.

Future projections point to strong international growth for the industry, with global CSP capacity expected to reach 22.4 million kW by 2030.

Leading enterprises like CGN have been playing a central role in achieving technological self-reliance, accelerating key integrated solar thermal and storage projects, demonstrating the industry's rapid pace of development, according to the council.

According to CGN, the plant's mirror field covers a staggering total aperture area of 3.7 million square meters, comprising three 1.1-million-square-meter tower fields and one 400,000-square-meter trough field.

The entire trough field utilizes the cutting-edge 8.6-meter large-aperture collectors.

As a pioneer in China's CSP sector since 2011, CGN has consistently driven industry development through technological innovation. It operates the National Energy Solar Thermal Power Technology R&D Center, the only national-level research platform in this field.

To date, CGN has completed 19 scientific and technological capability appraisals, secured 68 patents, and participated in drafting 30 national and industry standards in the solar thermal sector.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:39 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:39 PM

BUSINESS

Reshaping Tongxiang's digital landscape

City in eastern China moving away from traditional manufacturing by embracing latest smart technologies

By REN QI in Jiaxing, Zhejiang
renqi@chinadaily.com.cn

Located in the heart of the Yangtze River Delta, Tongxiang in Zhejiang province is rapidly transforming from a traditional manufacturing hub into a highland for the digital economy. Focusing on smart vehicles, smart computing, smart sensing and the industrial internet, the city is partnering with China Unicom to build a robust foundation for future industries.

As a key driver of this regional transformation, China Unicom is accelerating the development of new quality productive forces across the province. By leveraging advanced computing centers, vehicle-road-cloud integration and the low-altitude economy, the telecom giant is comprehensively reshaping the local digital landscape.

At the core of this transformation is the Wuzhen supercomputing center. Situated near the permanent site of the World Internet Conference, this landmark project represents a total investment of approximately 1 billion yuan ($147.6 million).

Designed with 880 racks and a planned computing power of 2,000 petaflops, the center has already built a 500-petaflop multi-computing platform. Utilizing integrated power solutions from Chint, a smart energy solutions provider based in Zhejiang, the center sets a green benchmark for energy efficiency. By collaborating with industry leaders like Alibaba and Moore Threads, China Unicom is building a domestic computing ecosystem that empowers cutting-edge fields.

This massive localized computing power is the strongest brain behind Tongxiang's vehicle-road-cloud integrated city-level management service platform. Initiated by five ministries, this pilot project utilizes 5G and C-V2X hybrid networks to enable high-reliability and low-latency data exchange between smart roads and vehicles.

Qian Jianhua, general manager of China Unicom's Jiaxing branch in Zhejiang, detailed the strategic layout. "Because the data path is short and the data do not need to leave the city, the system achieves an ultra-low response time of just one to four milliseconds," Qian said. This rapid processing has optimized overall traffic flow.

The Tongxiang pilot project has yielded remarkable results. Nearly 40 autonomous vehicles, including unmanned delivery equipment and smart buses, are operating across 39 open test roads spanning 300 kilometers. They have accumulated over 39,000 hours and 303,500 km of operation. Furthermore, the platform monitors over 2,100 key vehicles in real time and is integrating with major mobility platforms like T3 and Didi Chuxing. To ensure data security, China Unicom is building a trusted data circulation platform complying with TC609 standards.



Visitors observe a humanoid robot at the Light of Internet Expo, a signature event of the 2025 World Internet Conference Wuzhen Summit, in Wuzhen, Zhejiang province, on Nov 6. YANG MEIQING / FOR CHINA DAILY



Workers produce automotive radar, camera modules and domain controllers in a smart production workshop at Freetech Intelligent Systems Co in Wuzhen on Nov 10, 2024. DONG XUMING / FOR CHINA DAILY

Beyond the roads, China Unicom is aggressively tapping into the low-altitude economy, a strategic emerging industry. The company is building smart low-altitude test networks in 10 cities. In Nanjing, Jiangsu province, China Unicom built the country's first large-scale 5G low-altitude smart network over a 98-km stretch of the Yangtze River in Nanjing for maritime patrols. In Shenzhen, Guangdong province, it is partnering with logistics giants like SF Express and Meituan to create a multi-scenario "3-km, 15-minute delivery" low-altitude logistics network. In Qingdao, Shandong province, China Unicom has developed a unified smart platform for the local data bureau, managing drone operations across eight urban governance scenarios.

These infrastructure advancements are deeply intertwined with China Unicom's artificial intelligence ambitions, spearheaded by the newly established China Unicom Digital Technology Co. Operating under a "one company, one research institute" structure that gathers top global scientists, the company is pioneering the circulation of data elements. During a nationwide wave of trusted data space construction last year, China Unicom was tasked with building 12 of 63 trusted data spaces initiated by the National Data Administration.

In July 2024, the company released its in-house large language model, Yuanjing, which has already been implemented in over 100 benchmark cases. In Zhejiang's traditional clothing industry, China Unicom has partnered with leading enterprises like BXN Holdings and Jihua Group to build 5G future factories. Powered by a massive clothing data model, these factories feature rapid design, one-click pattern making and virtual fitting, reducing design cycles by 80 percent and production cycles by 30 percent.

Chen Haifeng, chairman and general manager of China Unicom Digital Technology Co, emphasized the company's commitment to technological self-reliance. "We are dedicated to solving the challenges of domestic computing cards and domestic AI models," Chen said.

This commitment has yielded remarkable results across various vertical applications. In the government sector, China Unicom's Yuanjing secretary AI agent is revolutionizing administrative workflows. By combining foundational large models like DeepSeek-V4 with fine-tuned small models, it covers 15 types of official documents and performs intelligent policy comparisons. Deployed in highly secure, localized environments where data do not leave the domain, it can process a 12,000-word report in just one minute with an accuracy rate exceeding 90 percent.

In the heavy industry sector, China Unicom's Yuanjing industrial time-series analysis platform is transforming traditional thermal power plants. By utilizing a dual-model architecture for prediction and optimization, the platform directly adjusts industrial control systems with a latency of under one second. In a major regional power plant, this AI-driven approach has stabilized steam temperatures, reduced nitrogen oxide emission fluctuations by 50 percent, and significantly improved the plant's ability to adapt to power grid peak-shaving demands.

In the medical sector, China Unicom has partnered with Beijing Tongren Hospital to develop an AI fundus screening tool. "Previously, patients spent half a day at the hospital. Now, with a simple scan at a community hospital, they receive a diagnosis in seconds, reducing the cost to less than 100 yuan," Chen said.

Similarly, in the cultural tourism sector, China Unicom has co-developed the Palace Museum digital twin platform. Utilizing internationally advanced cross-engine 3D real-time rendering technology, the platform integrates over 20 million multi-source data entries. It creates a highly accurate digital avatar of the museum, allowing global visitors to experience centimeter-level, first-person digital roaming of the Central Axis of Beijing and the Hall of Mental Cultivation via mobile apps.

As AI applications proliferate, the business model is evolving. Ding Ding, deputy general manager of China Unicom Digital Technology Co, highlighted the company's innovative "token" operations. Instead of merely selling raw computing power, the company integrates tokens with specific business scenarios. "The logic of token billing is highly similar to telecom data plans. Our ability to provide transparent, real-time and fair billing eliminates industry issues like fake billing, serving as a significant security and trust highlight for our customers," Ding said.

To support this digital ecosystem, China Unicom Zhejiang Branch has built nearly 100,000 5G base stations, extending coverage to 99 percent of rural areas. Looking ahead, Tong Haibo, Party secretary and general manager of China Unicom Zhejiang Branch, summarized the strategic vision.

"The development of AI and computing applications is not an isolated technological evolution, but an organic whole deeply intertwined with communication networks. By building a high-speed, stable and intelligent network architecture, we have laid a solid 'information highway' for massive data transmission and computing, contributing more to the construction of new quality productive forces," Tong said.

5G tech transforms factory in Zhejiang province

By REN QI

The first commercial 5G local area network in Zhejiang province has successfully transformed the China Jushi fiberglass factory into a highly efficient, unmanned smart manufacturing hub.

On the intelligent production lines of China Jushi Co, a seamless dance of human-machine collaboration is unfolding. As the building materials industry accelerates its transition from traditional manufacturing to smart manufacturing, fiberglass — a critical material for wind power, new energy vehicles and 5G communications — has become a focal point for technological breakthroughs.

China Jushi, a core enterprise of China National Building Material Co Ltd, stands as a global leader in the fiberglass industry. The company boasts the world's largest production capacity, holding a commanding 40 percent market share in China and 24 percent globally. Over the years, China Jushi has maintained its industry-leading position in scale, technology and quality, earning prestigious accolades such as the China Grand Awards for Industry, the National Science and Technology Progress Award, and recognition as a national intelligent manufacturing demonstration factory.

To further accelerate its digital transformation, China Unicom Zhejiang Branch recently achieved the deep commercial integration of a 5G LAN at China Jushi's No 5 factory in Jiaxing, Zhejiang. This milestone project marks the very first commercial use case of 5G LAN in Zhejiang, helping Jushi build a comprehensive 5G-powered factory.

The advanced 5G LAN technology supports 5G-native Layer 2 networking, allowing terminals to be highly flexible and plug-and-play. Crucially, it maintains the enterprise's original network architecture, significantly lowering the difficulty of upgrading production lines to 5G. The technology can create specialized "groups" for enterprise terminals at Layer 2 or Layer 3, providing flexible communication services such as terminal interconnection and isolation.

At the Jiaxing No 5 factory, 5G terminals are installed directly into control cabinets, deeply integrating with the factory's programmable logic controllers — the "brains" of the machinery. By utilizing advanced 5G LAN technology, the factory has constructed a seamless end-to-end network. This enables real-time collaboration between different programmable logic controllers and ensures instant data sharing with the supervisory control and data acquisition system. This signifies a major step forward for China Unicom's 5G Private Network Plus 3.0, proving that 5G has deeply penetrated the core production links of industrial manufacturing.



Robotic arms perform material-handling operations on a smart production line at China Jushi's smart manufacturing base in Tongxiang, Zhejiang province, on April 14. SUN YANGYANG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Stepping into the No 5 factory, the results are visually striking. Industrial robots navigate the workshop in perfect order, executing material transport and loading with flawless precision. Rows of mechanical arms complete complex procedures with every bend and stretch, while rolls of fiberglass packaging materials are automatically elevated within the smart warehouse. Only a handful of technicians are needed to debug products or machinery. In the factory's intelligent control center, massive display screens continuously update dense data charts, providing a digitized, visualized and full-process monitoring system for multiple production lines.

Song Guangmin, director of the industrial internet support center at China Unicom Zhejiang Branch, highlighted the philosophy behind this transformation. "From the very beginning of the factory's construction, we established a foundational requirement for the full connection of data elements," Song said. "What we see now is a 'mega-factory' in Zhejiang — a fully connected operation based on the deep integration of 5G, IT and operational technologies."

Song noted that the factory leverages AI large models for extensive data collection, analysis and scenario applications. "The massive unmanned technologies operating here are the result of fusing new-generation information technologies, represented by 5G, with AI large models. This has dramatically boosted China Jushi's competitiveness, increasing its production efficiency by over 20 percent since the project was implemented," he said. The customized computing power required for these AI applications is seamlessly provided by China Unicom's supercomputing center in Wuzhen, Zhejiang.

During a recent visit, Fan Ji'an, chief big data scientist at China Unicom, highly praised the deep integration of the 5G factory. China Unicom and Jushi have agreed to expand their cooperation in industrial manufacturing, including reliability verification of cross-SMF 5G LAN networking, extending 5G LAN to multi-campus wide-area networks and building 5G private networks for China Jushi's new factories.

Yu Yadong, director of the information technology center at China Jushi, outlined the ambitious road ahead: "The 5G factory will not only focus on internal digital and intelligent transformation, but also expand externally. Based on China Unicom's unified multi-campus 5G private network solution, we aim to connect upstream and downstream industries, establish a wide-area 5G LAN, and promote our advanced fiberglass production technologies from the Tongxiang headquarters to global branches in Chengdu, Sichuan province, Jiujiang, Jiangxi province, and Suez in Egypt, leading the high-quality development of the global fiberglass industry."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:39 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:39 PM

CHINA

Navy's carrier battle group back after drill

Liaoning and its escort vessels complete over-40-day, long-range deployment in South China Sea and western Pacific Ocean







Clockwise from left: During an over-40-day far-sea combat training of the PLA Navy's strike group, a J-15 fighter jet monitors a US anti-submarine patrol aircraft after taking off from the aircraft carrier *Liaoning*. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The *Liaoning* carrier strike group conducts replenishment during the training. LI QINGHOU / FOR CHINA DAILY

A J-15 fighter jet lands on the *Liaoning* during the training. CHEN YUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

By ZHAO LEI
zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

A carrier battle group of the People's Liberation Army Navy, led by the aircraft carrier CNS *Liaoning*, concluded a long-range training deployment and returned to its homeport of Qingdao, Shandong province, on Monday, according to the PLA Navy.

In a statement, the PLA Navy said the carrier battle group spent more than 40 days conducting realistic combat-oriented exercises in the South China Sea and the western Pacific Ocean.

During the training period, Japanese vessels and aircraft repeatedly conducted close-range surveillance near the Chinese naval formation. The *Liaoning* group maintained a high state of alert when encountering these vessels and aircraft, and deployed carrier-based fighter jets to respond to what it described as unsafe actions by the Japanese side in a professional and prudent manner, according to the statement.

Video clips released by the PLA Navy showed several Japanese military aircraft and JS *Asahi*, a destroyer of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, operating in close proximity to Chinese vessels, posing potential safety risks for both sides.

The PLA Navy said that since departure, the *Liaoning* and its escort vessels had conducted continuous training throughout the voyage, sailing across multiple sea areas.

During the deployment, the group created realistic training scenarios, built a robust early-warning and detection system, simulated complex battlefield environments, and followed practical exercise plans.

Sailors and pilots participated in a series of drills covering air combat and air defense, anti-ship strikes, battlefield support, joint search and rescue, and live-fire exercises.

The group also carried out multiple rounds of day-and-night carrier-air wing and ship-aircraft integrated exercises to verify its strike and defense capabilities, and conducted targeted training for core combat elements, the PLA Navy said, noting that these activities effectively tested the battle group's joint operational capability in long-range deployments.

In a designated area in the western Pacific, the *Liaoning* carrier battle group held joint exercises with an amphibious assault group led by CNS *Anhui*, a Type 075 amphibious assault ship. According to the PLA Navy, both formations conducted integrated training to enhance coordinated far-sea combat operations.

Song Zhongping, a retired PLA Rocket Force officer and military affairs commentator, said in light of the PLA Navy having commissioned new carrier-based aircraft and warships, it was necessary to explore and optimize new tactics.

"The carrier group needs to build operational synergy with new types of warships, such as amphibious assault ships, through joint training. A combined strike group made up of aircraft carriers and amphibious assault ships can carry out a range of complex missions. Carriers are responsible for securing air and maritime superiority, while amphibious assault ships take charge of landing, occupying and defending islands," he said.

Commenting on the Japanese side's close-range activities, Song said, "No matter whether the actions came from Japanese or United States vessels and aircraft, they effectively served as a simulated adversary. Such forces have, in effect, acted as 'Blue Force' elements and de facto training partners, helping improve the quality of combat-oriented training. We take these activities as a realistic operational backdrop, making the training more authentic and challenging. This is, in fact, a positive outcome."

The *Liaoning* was commissioned into the PLA Navy in September 2012, becoming China's first aircraft carrier and, at the time, the largest warship in the fleet. To date, the *Liaoning* has participated in more than 10 long-range training and exercise deployments, mostly in the western Pacific Ocean.

China probes claim of formamide in diapers

By WANG XIAOYU
wangxiaoyu@chinadaily.com.cn

The State Administration for Market Regulation announced on Monday the launch of a joint investigation with other government agencies into the alleged presence of formamide in baby diapers.

The probe is being conducted jointly by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, the National Health Commission, and the National Disease Control and Prevention Administration.

This follows the release of a media report on Thursday which claimed some consumers had reported their babies developing recurrent diaper rash and skin ulceration after using certain brands of infant diapers.

Third-party tests on several mainstream infant diaper products detected traces of formamide, and the substance was even found in the blood and urine of some infants, according to the media report.

In the wake of the report, a number of diaper brands, including Babycare, Huggies, and BIBAbebe, have stated that internal and external tests conducted on their products have shown no traces of the chemical.

In one of the latest responses, BIBAbebe said on its official social media account on Monday morning that it had commissioned third-party institutions to test all its mainstream products and found no presence of formamide. The company is continuing to test other batches of products and raw materials.

Formamide is classified as a substance of very high concern and a reproductive toxicant under European Union regulations.

"This means the substance won't cause immediate poisoning, but it's not safe for long-term, close, airtight contact — especially for babies," said China-Test Group, an independent testing institution on Friday.

The institution said for babies, even tiny residues of the substance after wearing diapers can cause symptoms such as rash, redness, and allergies, and that long-term accumulation could affect their growth and development.

It added that legitimate diaper brands do not add formamide to their products, and any detections should be residual traces from the manufacturing process.

Products with complicated prints and thicker elastic bands are at higher risk of containing residual formamide.

The hygiene products committee of the China Technical Association of Paper Industry said in a statement released on Thursday that it is important to disclose the actual levels of the alleged formamide presence, who conducted the tests, and what standards, equipment, and testing methods were used, so as to determine the risk associated with these baby diapers.

Fuyao university reaffirms nonprofit role

By ZOU SHUO
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

Fuyao University of Science and Technology remains committed to its nonprofit, public welfare mission, and its push for schools and departments to gradually achieve financial self-sufficiency does not mean they are required to pursue profits or engage in market-driven revenue generation, according to the institution's leadership.

Wang Shuguo, president of the university, made the clarification following public discussion over remarks by Cao Dewang, founder of the university and chairman of the Fuyao Glass Industry Group.

In a 2025 interview with Phoenix TV, Cao said each school and department should gradually become self-sustaining through independent accounting, generating income by helping enterprises solve practical problems and commercializing research outcomes.

In a post published on the university's WeChat account on Wednesday, Wang said, "If you cannot even sustain yourself, it shows you lack real capability."

The post quickly sparked online debate on whether an emphasis on self-sufficiency could turn universities into profit-driven enterprises.

In an interview with The Paper published on Sunday, Wang further explained that the university encourages schools and departments to conduct research on real industrial problems and enhance their self-sustainability through the commercialization of research results, rather than by pursuing profits.

> "If you cannot even sustain yourself, it shows you lack real capability."
>
> **Wang Shuguo,** president of Fuyao University of Science and Technology

"We expect our faculty to ground their research in the country's real needs and address practical industrial challenges," he said.

"Schools and departments are encouraged to strengthen their self-sustainability and internal drive through the commercialization of research results, but this never means they are required to seek profits or operate as market-oriented businesses," Wang added.

Located in Fuzhou, Fujian province, Fuyao University of Science and Technology is a private, nonprofit institution established by entrepreneur and philanthropist Cao Dewang with a 10-billion-yuan ($1.48 billion) donation from the Heren Charitable Foundation.

The university is positioned as a new-type research institution focused on science and engineering, interdisciplinary integration and industrial applications.

Wang said the university was founded to advance scientific research that addresses genuine industrial challenges and translates research achievements into industrial development and social progress.

Cao has repeatedly emphasized that his goal was not to add another institution to China's higher education landscape, but to explore a model rooted in his years of industrial experience — one in which universities face industry, serve practical applications and look to the future.

To bridge the gap between theory and practice, the university is promoting two-way integration between academia and industry. Top industry professionals are invited to serve as enterprise mentors for students, while faculty members are encouraged to participate in real-world industrial projects, Wang said.

He stressed that the university remains firmly committed to its nonprofit, public welfare mission. Cao has repeatedly said that "education is a cause, not an industry" and opposes the entry of capital into education.

Undergraduate tuition is set at 5,460 yuan per year, while accommodation costs 1,200 yuan annually for a double room. The university has also pledged that no student will be denied access to education for financial reasons, Wang said.

He added that the university has sufficient and diversified funding sources, including donations from the Heren Charitable Foundation, annual special allocations from the Fuzhou municipal government, social donations and income from research commercialization.

All revenue is reinvested in faculty development, laboratory construction, talent cultivation and the development of foundational disciplines, he said.

Briefly

Chinese fleet to visit Vladivostok this month

A Chinese naval fleet will visit Vladivostok, Russia, in late June at the invitation of the Russian Navy, the Chinese Defense Ministry said on Monday. The fleet comprises the training ship CNS *Qi Jiguang* and the amphibious dock landing ship CNS *Kunlunshan*, it said in a news release. The Chinese and Russian militaries will earnestly implement the consensus reached by the two heads of state, and continue to expand practical cooperation in various fields, the release said.

Medical rescue training held on Tiangong

Shenzhou XXIII spaceflight mission's three astronauts have conducted their first in-orbit medical rescue training since arriving at the Tiangong space station, a video released by the China Manned Space Agency has shown. The training aims to help astronauts Zhu Yangzhu, Zhang Zhiyuan and Lai Ka-ying familiarize themselves with rescue operation techniques and force application characteristics under microgravity conditions, the CMSA said in the video on Sunday. In addition to the medical training, the crew has been engaged in a wide range of scientific experiments. China launched the Shenzhou XXIII crewed spaceship on May 24. The mission is notable for including a one-year in-orbit stay experiment, which will provide crucial data for future long-duration space exploration.

XINHUA—CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:39 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:39 PM

CHINA

China's AI weather agent being deployed globally

Shanghai Meteorological Service rolls out MAZU urban hazard warning system worldwide, sending out alerts, mitigating disasters

By **WANG XIN** in Shanghai
wangxin2@chinadaily.com.cn



The MAZU system is displayed at China Meteorological Administration's booth during the World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai on July 27, 2025. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

A specialized artificial intelligence system developed by the Shanghai Meteorological Service is being deployed across dozens of developing nations to combat increasingly severe urban climate risks, marking a major expansion of China's role in global humanitarian tech.

The MAZU AI Agent for Urban Multi-Hazard Early Warning operates as a critical component of China's national response to the United Nations' Early Warnings for All initiative, which aims to protect every person on Earth from hazardous climate events by the end of 2027.

According to the China Meteorological Administration, the overarching cloud-based MAZU solution — named after the ancient Chinese sea goddess who protects travelers — is already being utilized by more than 40 national meteorological agencies, with seven countries deploying deeply customized versions of the system.

"As climate change increases the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, strengthening early warning systems has become more important than ever," said Yu Jun from the World Meteorological Organization's Regional Office for Asia and the Southwest Pacific.

Yu made the remarks on June 1 in Shanghai at the opening ceremony of the second international training course on artificial intelligence-empowered early warning systems.

"The UN's Early Warnings for All initiative calls for every person on Earth to be protected by life-saving early warning systems. Achieving this goal requires innovation, partnership, and capacity development," he added. "It offers tremendous opportunities to strengthen every component of the early warning value chain, from observations and forecasting to risk assessment, communication and early action."

The MAZU system leverages advanced satellites, radar and localized AI models to execute hyper-local functions, including minute-level disaster data collection and analysis, customized meteorological risk assessments, real-time automated weather alert broadcasting and emergency shelter navigation mapping for citizens.

The solution has seen continuously expanding international application in developing countries to help cope with extreme weather and climate risks. Since 2024, nearly 1,000 participants from over 100 developing countries and regions have received training in China on early warning technologies.

The global rollout of the AI agent for urban hazard warning is managed by the Zhang Qian Mission, an international cooperation unit formed in 2024 by the Shanghai Meteorological Service. Composed of roughly 50 young scientists and engineers, the group coordinates system delivery, installation and technical training.

The mission has established distinct, localized pipelines to handle unique geographic challenges across Asia and Africa, customizing the AI's predictive models to the specific climate threats faced by partner nations.

In Mongolia, where authorities face severe desertification, flash floods and "dzuds" — extreme winter freezes that cause catastrophic livestock mortality — the system was officially transferred in July 2025. The tool is currently being calibrated to track regional forage availability and broadcast high-priority alerts to nomadic herders, a measure aimed directly at stabilizing the country's livestock-dependent economy.

Meanwhile, the framework is being adapted in Nigeria to address severe riverine flooding and coastal high-tide inundation. Local teams are currently piloting the cloud-based infrastructure, with an operational focus on incorporating predictive flood modeling to protect vulnerable river ecosystems and facilitate early evacuations.

A similar deployment was finalized in Djibouti in late 2025. Because the East African nation faces a volatile mix of extreme arid cycles and sudden flash flooding, engineers are focusing updates on maximizing the geographic accuracy of the system to ensure rapid, neighborhood-level alerts for urban centers.

The Zhang Qian Mission takes its name from Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220) explorer and envoy Zhang Qian (c.164-114 BC), whose expeditions and diplomatic missions paved the way for the Silk Road.

"A big highlight of our AI agent is that it is placed locally with interfaces prepared for users. They can upload their local data to the system, which we are not able to see on the backend," said Xu Chen, a member of the Shanghai Meteorological Service's specialized international outreach team. "They can also use the tools in the system to analyze the data, and the whole process is totally safe on its own."

Joining the mission in 2024, Xu has worked closely with the meteorological team in Nigeria.

"It is very fulfilling when we see that our technology and experience can actually help the people in other countries. Our overseas counterparts may not summarize their philosophy (of meteorological service) as 'people-centered' as we do, but we do share the same goal," said Xu.

Francis Bassey Etim, technical adviser to the chairman at Nigeria's House Committee on Emergency and Disaster Preparedness, has been working with the Chinese team since last year.

"China's meteorological agencies have really advanced technologies, which we are here to learn. We hope to incorporate them into our own system to predict when floods are coming, see how we can control it, and most importantly, how we can come together to save lives and our ecosystems," said Etim during the training course in Shanghai.

"It (the AI agent) is not only a technology for today, but for the future. Hopefully when this agent comes to my country, we can have a team able to manage it. It's going to be beneficial to citizens and for a more sustainable future for us all," he added.

Last July, Shanghai donated the AI agent to meteorological authorities in Mongolia and Djibouti as part of its initial technology-sharing efforts. In October, the Zhang Qian Mission team flew to Ulan Bator, capital of Mongolia, to install the system and conduct training. Entering this year, the training program has been expanding and the two sides are continuously exploring deeper into local conditions and system upgrading.

"We already started testing the system in our country and service, and it has helped us a lot to face the increasingly intense climate hazards such as floods, lightning, drought and desertification. It gave us many useful hints, and we hope to train the system to be more accurate and helpful," said Oyunjargal Lamjav, director of the weather forecasting department at Mongolia's National Agency for Meteorology and Environmental Monitoring.

Liu Haobo, 39, team leader of the Zhang Qian Mission, has worked with the Mongolian team from the very start.

"Livestock populations support the economy and the lives of a very large number of Mongolian people. Early warnings are never only about sending alerts, but more about informing the priority groups promptly, so they can get prepared and take early actions to confront the disaster," said Liu, who hopes to leverage AI to help them come up with a customized solution to tackle the challenge of "dzuds".

According to Liu, the mission has received extensive feedback from international partners looking to tailor the platform to local infrastructure. Key engineering priorities now include leveraging AI to eliminate local language barriers, developing more efficient SMS text-alert distribution systems, and sharpening the geographic accuracy of early warning maps.

"They believe in us," Liu said. "Every time I see the confidence and trust in their eyes, I get powered up and filled with hope for the future."



Left: Tang Jian, a technician at the National Meteorological Center, demonstrates the MAZU platform during a meteorological forum in Beijing. ZHAO YIMENG / CHINA DAILY **Right:** Technician Liu Haobo checks the operation of the MAZU AI urban hazard warning system at Mongolia's National Agency for Meteorology and Environmental Monitoring. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY





Left: The second international training course on artificial intelligence empowering early warnings for all takes place from June 1 to 5 in Songjiang district, Shanghai. **Center:** Participants in the training program visit the Shanghai Meteorological Museum. **Right:** Xu Chen (left) assists Nigerian disaster-preparedness official Francis Bassey Etim on the use of MAZU AI Agent for Urban Multi-Hazard Early Warning during the training program. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Training course on intelligent platform draws 30-nation delegation

By **WANG XIN**

Meteorological representatives from more than 30 nations gathered in Shanghai for the second international training course on artificial intelligence-empowered early warning systems on June 1, marking a significant expansion of China's technical role in global humanitarian disaster defense.

The intensive five-day program, spearheaded by the Shanghai Meteorological Service, centered on deploying advanced AI to meet the United Nations' Early Warnings for All initiative, a global mandate to shield every community from severe climate events by the end of 2027.

Rather than relying on generic weather models, the gathering highlighted cutting-edge, localized tech pipelines — spanning precise typhoon forecasting, low-Earth orbit satellite applications, smart agricultural meteorology and multi-hazard alerts.

"The weather and climate are boundless. We need to enhance international exchanges and cooperation to learn from other countries, overcome extreme cases together for a better future," said Oyunjargal Lamjav, director of the weather forecasting department at Mongolia's National Agency for Meteorology and Environmental Monitoring.

Mariam Tidiga, director general of Burkina Faso's National Meteorological Agency, said at the opening ceremony that the agency highly appreciates the opportunity to come together, share experiences, strengthen capacities and explore innovative solutions to address the growing challenges.

Tidiga said that international cooperation, knowledge sharing and technological advancement are essential to ensure that no community is left behind in the global effort to build resilience and achieve sustainable development.

"We would also like to express our strong interest in strengthening cooperation in agro-meteorological services. The combination of climate information, weather forecasts, agricultural advisory services and innovative crop solutions offers significant opportunities to enhance food security, improve water management and strengthen resilience to climate variability," she added.

The participants reaffirmed their commitment to actively engage in the MAZU Global Intelligence Innovation Application Challenge. They view this initiative as an excellent platform to promote innovation, develop practical solutions adapted to local realities, and strengthen collaboration among meteorological services, research institutions, universities and operational partners.

The MAZU AI Agent for Urban Multi-Hazard Early Warning is already making practical differences in Djibouti and Mongolia.

In Djibouti, a Chinese team from the Zhang Qian Mission has developed a tailored early warning dashboard to work with the agent's on-site service mechanism. The dashboard integrates multi-source meteorological observations, forecasts and disaster risk data to enable rapid risk detection and alerts. In Mongolia, coordinated efforts on both sides have been accelerating.

Liu Haobo, team leader of the Zhang Qian Mission, shared a letter from the Mongolian meteorological authority in May, which read: "Thank you for providing the MAZU AI Agent system and related training to us. Overall, the agent has a clear interface and smooth operation. It is promising as a platform for viewing different meteorological information in one place and supporting city-level weather risk analysis."

Xu Xianghua, deputy director general of the department of international cooperation at the China Meteorological Administration, said, "We always believe that early warning is not merely a matter of meteorological science and technology, but also a fundamental global public good that safeguards the lives of people worldwide and ensures global development."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:39 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:39 PM

CULTURAL 文明中国 HERITAGE







Far left: A gold beast-face ornament unearthed from the Changchun site in Fuping county, Shaanxi province.
Above: A jade ornament with dragon patterns from the same site.
Left: An aerial photo of a tomb with chariot remains at the Changchun site.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Unearthing long-lost fiefs

A massive Shaanxi discovery reveals the hidden noble network that protected a 3,000-year-old capital city, **Wang Ru** reports.

In the Western Zhou Dynasty (c.11th century-771 BC), the dynasty's strength relied not only on its grand capitals — Fenghao, in present-day Xi'an, Shaanxi province, and Luoyi in today's Luoyang, Henan province — but also on an invisible network of fiefdoms, known as *caiyi,* scattered across the royal domain.

These were fiefs granted by Zhou kings to members of the royal family and trusted officials. Largely self-sufficient, tightly administered and generally loyal to the throne, they collected taxes and helped maintain the vital corridor linking the two capitals.

Now, archaeologists have uncovered another complete *caiyi* from the middle-to-late Western Zhou period, offering a rare opportunity to test historical records against physical evidence.

After four years of work, archaeologists have identified a Western Zhou fiefdom at the Changchun site in Fuping county, Shaanxi. The discovery was listed as one of China's top 10 archaeological discoveries of 2025, a selection organized by the National Cultural Heritage Administration.

Excavations began in 2022 as a rescue effort targeting looted tombs. Unexpectedly, archaeologists uncovered an entire Western Zhou fief in the eastern part of the Guanzhong region — one of the most prosperous areas of present-day central Shaanxi and the northern frontier of the royal domain. The site covers an impressive 2.2 million square meters and includes both a vast cemetery and a large settlement.

Li Yanfeng, the lead archaeologist, says the Guanzhong region lies at the heart of the royal domain and has long been a focus of Western Zhou research. Yet, most previous work concentrated on western Guanzhong, leaving major gaps in understanding the east. The Changchun site helps fill that void.

Research first focused on the cemetery, which spans 200,000 sq m and contains more than 3,150 tombs and chariot pits. Among them are 12 large tombs, each featuring a tomb passage — a characteristic often associated with high social status.

"Such a large cemetery, together with so many large tombs with passages, has never before been found in eastern Guanzhong and remains rare in Western Zhou archaeology," says Li.

The cemetery was used exclusively for burials, with no residential remains within its boundaries. It features a clearly organized layout and distinct boundaries, although no surrounding ditches have been found. All tombs face northeast. Large, medium and small tombs are distributed in an orderly pattern. A vacant strip divides the cemetery into two sections: the elevated northern area contains large and medium-sized tombs, while the southern section is occupied by smaller graves.

"These features closely resemble those of other cemeteries at the sites identified as Western Zhou fiefdoms, such as the Kongtougou site in Baoji, Shaanxi, as well as the dynasty's vassal states like the Liulihe site in Beijing," says Li.

Excavations of selected tombs have provided further clues. High-ranking burials feature three layers of coffins — one outer coffin and two inner coffins. Many also contain dismantled chariots among the grave goods, practices widely recognized as characteristic of Zhou burial traditions.

Many tombs were looted long ago, resulting in the loss of numerous valuable artifacts. Although no inscriptions have been discovered that directly identify the tomb occupants, surviving objects still point to their elevated status.

Among the finds are a gold ornament shaped like a beast mask, a jade plaque decorated with dragon motifs, and artifacts made from fossilized coral, all exceptionally refined compared with similar objects previously unearthed from the same period, Li says.

"Taken together, the evidence indicates that the cemetery was used from the middle to late Western Zhou period," Li says. "It served as a public cemetery primarily for Zhou people and is one of the largest Western Zhou cemeteries ever discovered within the vast royal domain between Fenghao and Luoyi."

After uncovering the cemetery, archaeologists began asking where so many people had lived. Extensive surveys of the surrounding area eventually led them to a settlement south of the cemetery that was occupied during the same period.





From top: Professionals clean chariot remains at the Changchun site. The Baijia cemetery excavation area at the same site where archaeologists worked in 2024 and 2025.

"We found that the settlement was an enclosed area covering 2 million sq m, bounded by the Shichuan River, one of its tributaries and two man-made ditches. One of the ditches even separated the settlement from the cemetery," says Li.

To better understand the settlement's layout, archaeologists searched for traces of roads, waterways and defensive structures. They identified a series of artificial horizontal and vertical ditches that divided the site into a grid-like pattern.

"This resembles the layouts of capitals from the Xia (c.21st century-16th century BC) and Shang (c.16th century-11th century BC) dynasties, particularly the crisscrossing road network at the Erlitou site in Luoyang. But there is a difference: the multi-grid system at Changchun was built around a water network," says Li.

Wang Wei, a veteran archaeologist at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, notes that such a layout is the first of its kind discovered at a Western Zhou site.

After establishing the site's overall layout, archaeologists excavated part of the settlement and uncovered extensive remains of handicraft production, including bronze casting, pottery making and antler-tool manufacturing, suggesting the area functioned as a state-run specialized workshop district.

Within an area of 50,000 sq m, archaeologists discovered 30 pottery kilns, a concentration and scale comparable to ceramic workshops in the ancient capital of Fenghao.

In a pit near a workshop that produced antler arrowheads, archaeologists found the remains of four individuals. DNA analysis identified a mother-son relationship between two of them, suggesting they may have belonged to the same family.

"Studies on the skeletal remains indicate they were involved with repetitive upper body labor over long periods and suffered from poor health. These findings match the physical profile of professional craftspeople," says Li.

"Taken together, the evidence suggests a household-based production model operating within a state-run handicraft system," he adds.

Comparisons with other Western Zhou sites show that the scale and layout of the settlement, together with the size, organization and population composition of the cemetery, closely follow the pattern seen at other aristocratic fiefdoms within the royal domain, Li says.

"Therefore, we believe the Changchun site was another large aristocratic fiefdom, although somewhat smaller than sites such as Zhougongmiao in Baoji and Kongtougou in the Guanzhong region," he says.

The *caiyi* system emerged in the early Western Zhou period as an important tool for governing the royal domain and rewarding members of the royal family and meritorious officials. Unlike vassal states, which were often located on the dynasty's frontiers, *caiyi* fiefdoms were concentrated within the royal domain. Their rulers could collect revenues and administer local affairs, but they lacked the political, military and diplomatic powers enjoyed by the rulers of vassal states, Li explains.

As the dynasty declined, the *caiyi* system gradually disappeared. Why, then, did such a large fiefdom emerge during the middle and late Western Zhou period?

"By tracing the evolution of settlements in this region, we can see that the influence of the Zhou rulers appears to have weakened over time," Li says. "In response, a buffer zone was needed on the periphery of the royal domain to protect the capital, Fenghao. We believe this was the context in which the Changchun site emerged."

"Such a well-planned and fully functional aristocratic fiefdom, as the social center of the Shichuan River Basin, provides a valuable case study for understanding the political structure and state organization of the Western Zhou Dynasty," says Wang.

Contact the writer at wangru1@chinadaily.com.cn

Listening to stones on Xinjiang's ancient grasslands

By **SUN MENG** in Bortala, Xinjiang
sunmeng@chinadaily.com.cn

On the vast Husta grasslands in Wenquan county, Bortala Mongolian autonomous prefecture, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, a solitary container house stands against the horizon. It serves as the base camp for the Husta archaeological team.

The name Husta means "a place with birch trees" in Mongolian. Although the birch trees have long disappeared, endless grasslands remain, along with a group of dedicated archaeologists who have chosen a profession that is both quiet and, at times, lonely.

"That is the Alatau Mountains," says Yu Xiaoxiao, a team member, pointing toward the distant peaks.

Thousands of kilometers from her hometown in Guangdong province, this site near the China-Kazakhstan border feels both dreamlike and real. It is a place where physical traces of the past connect ancient history to the modern world.

Each year, from June to September, the team's five permanent members conduct field excavations at the site. During the rest of the year, they work at their base near the mountains, restoring and studying the artifacts they have uncovered.

At Yu's feet lies Dun Dun, a small dog she affectionately describes as "another member of the team".

More than a decade of patient excavation has produced one of Xinjiang's most significant archaeological discoveries in recent years.

While the main Husta settlement dates to the late Bronze Age, around 1600 BC, tombs found in the eastern section are even older, dating to approximately 2800 BC. These burials rank among the earliest Bronze Age remains ever discovered in Xinjiang.

A bronze knife unearthed from one of the tombs is now considered one of the oldest known bronze artifacts found in China.

The discovery of multi-person burial tombs is also remarkable, the first of its kind in Xinjiang, according to Yu. The largest burial pit found so far contains at least 120 individual skeletons, representing a multi-generational family that lived together in this area for many years.

Yu says the site has also yielded other remarkable artifacts, including human-head sculptures decorated with bronze beads and a stone scepter. Each discovery is helping scholars reshape their understanding of ancient communities and settlement patterns along the Tianshan Mountains.



Physical anthropologists sort and study human skeletal remains at the team's base camp in Wenquan county, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Inside the team's field workshop, excavation tools are carefully arranged — scrapers, pickaxes, hand trowels and more. Yet, one of their most effective tools is surprisingly simple: a cut-up plastic water bottle.

"Sometimes, inside the tombs, there are very narrow spaces between human bones," explains Mengker of the Mongolian ethnic group, who is the youngest member of the team at 24.

"This tool can bend around corners, making it easier to remove soil without damaging the nearby artifacts."

Beneath the grasslands lies a civilization waiting to be revealed, and many of the archaeologists' tools are improvised.

Even so, Mengker and her colleagues continue to uncover relic after relic from the distant past. During excavation season, they spend long days digging and long nights beneath star-filled skies.

Life at the site is far from convenient. There are no supermarkets or food-delivery services, and the nearest town is more than an hour away by car.

Yet, material hardship is not their greatest challenge. The surrounding wilderness can be dangerous.

"In 2023, a bear entered our camp," recalls team member Chen Siyu, showing an old photograph.

The same year, the team also experienced sudden flash floods, Chen adds.

Despite these difficulties, the archaeologists speak warmly about their work.

Wenquan county is often called "a museum without walls". Almost any stone scattered across the grasslands may hold traces of people who lived there 3,000 years ago.

"Sometimes when I look at a stone, I feel it can speak," says Yu. "It seems to tell you what life was like, who those people were, how they came here, and what they were doing."

On this grassland, more stones may speak.

Wenquan county is home to countless rock carvings depicting animals, hunting scenes, and other aspects of ancient nomadic life. Together with the Husta site, these carvings help reconstruct thousands of years of human history on the grasslands.

Day after day, these young archaeologists carry out work that is demanding, meaningful, and often solitary.

Throughout it all, Dun Dun remains their loyal companion. The puppy was a gift from local border defense personnel, while its mother and brother continue serving at a nearby border checkpoint.

When visitors leave, Dun Dun rarely comes to say goodbye. Perhaps the dog has grown accustomed to seeing people arrive, marvel at the wonders of the site, and then depart.

Or perhaps it simply knows that when summer returns, the archaeologists will come back once again to listen to the voices hidden within the stones.

"We are honored to help pass those voices on to future generations," Yu says.

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:39 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:39 PM

LIFE







Far left: Qi Lin poses with a basket-weaving woman in a village in Kitui county, Kenya. The woven basket balanced on his head is known locally as a kiondo. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY **Left:** Taken by Qi in 2016, the photo shows that near the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Turkana county, Kenya, a Turkana woman fetches water to wash a child's hair. QI LIN / FOR CHINA DAILY **Above:** the cover of Qi's newly released book *The Camel Diaries*. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Diary of a man, a camera and a camel

Fascinated by deserts and having a fondness for taking the tougher path, photographer releases a book about his adventures, including finding an unconventional protein source, **Yang Yang** reports.

Driving from Lake Turkana in northwestern Kenya on the afternoon of Sept 14, 2021, 37-year-old Qi Lin and his assistant, 25-year-old Martin, reached their destination: Lake Kisima, a seasonal soda lake that often experiences periods of dryness. After nibbling on some corn, they decided to check the meat they had brought, only to find an army of white maggots wriggling on the surface of the mutton they bought two hours earlier.

Failing to get rid of the maggots by knocking the meat on a stone, they cooked the mutton with some cabbage and ate it.

In his newly released book *The Camel Diaries*, Qi recorded this impressive excerpt from his 701-kilometer journey on foot north along the eastern side of the East African Rift.

"Maggot is protein, good stuff," he says very seriously.

"Some people might wonder how I can eat it, but my perspective might be completely different. When you're on a journey with nothing good to eat, and suddenly you find some animal protein, having a bit of meat or fat, even if it's not the freshest, is a joy," he says.

"You have to be grateful. Today, you have something to eat, even if it's maggots."

The Camel Diaries records the journey that began in September 2021 and ended in November of the same year. Qi, Martin, and their 3-year-old camel, Kipesh, crossed the equator and highlands, navigating diverse landscapes such as elephant forests and savannas until they reached Lake Turkana, known as the "Cradle of Humankind". From the lake, they circled Mount Kulal and ventured into the harsh desert wilderness.

It's a hard journey not only for humans but also for camels. Usually, to travel such a long distance, one person needs four camels to take turns carrying 50 kilograms of water, food, cooking equipment, tents, and more.

"My budget was very limited, so I only got one camel. For such a long-distance travel in the desert, a camel's carrying limit is 70 kg," he explains.

When they reached Lake Turkana, Qi had lost 10 kg. The camel weighed 100 kg and was in a dangerous condition.

Qi learned that when a camel dies, it often shows no warning signs. It might just tilt its head and collapse, or it might not get up after sitting down to rest. Therefore, he let the camel rest for over 20 days because the upcoming journey into the Chalbi Desert would be even more challenging, with less food and water.

As expected, the Chalbi Desert became the hardest part of the whole journey, more dangerous than the place where they were surrounded by armed local people in tribal conflicts, or later, when the camel was robbed. It is a desert where Qi gained a direct understanding of the impacts of climate change. In the remote nomadic desert town of Maikona on the northern edge of the Chalbi Desert, a 4-year-old girl had never seen rain.

Traveling on foot, with a camel carrying all the necessities, the desert was still very challenging to traverse. Though Qi only mentioned it briefly in the book, he says, "I was probably on the verge of heatstroke (several times). My mouth felt numb, there was a metallic taste, and I started hallucinating."

At the end of each day, after walking 30 to 40 km and overcoming many difficulties, Qi finally set up his tent, often with low blood sugar, and wrote in his diary on his cell phone, which had a broken screen, then posted it on WeChat.

"My diaries are kept in a simple manner, without many thoughts running through my mind," Qi says, explaining his writing style.

"What mattered to me at that moment was survival. It might sound a bit exaggerated, but when I say I survived, I don't mean I was on the brink of death every day. It's more about having worked so hard and traveled such a long path, I finally have a place where I can catch my breath," he says.

Through this ascetic journey, Qi emerged not only from the dangerous deserts of northern Kenya but also from the lowest point of his life.

Qi's family has a tradition of working abroad. His grandfather was a doctor on the first Chinese medical team sent to Somalia. His mother, also a doctor, was sent to Nepal to work for three years. In 2011, inspired by his grandfather, he went to Africa and worked there until 2015, when he decided to quit a Chinese company and become a full-time husband.

In 2015, he and his wife, a UN employee, relocated to New York. Having spent four years in Africa, the full-time househusband felt lost in this cosmopolis known for its financial industry and high-rises. To pass the days and sleep well at night, he sometimes joined two other househusbands for long, aimless walks, covering about 20 km per day.

Since 2008, photography has been one of Qi's biggest passions. To pursue photography and map his future in New York, he attended master classes.

Since 2016, Qi has spent one to two months each year away from home on his documentary photographic series, exploring themes such as the experiences of overseas Chinese people and children's lives in Nairobi's slums.

He chooses destinations that are often the toughest, photographing Chinese workers installing power lines in Sudan, Chinese fishermen in Angola, and Chinese factory workers in Ethiopia, among others.

"Throughout this process, my understanding of photography, especially documentary photography, has evolved. Each year, this work supports me and makes my year worthwhile," he says.

However, in 2020, the retina in his right eye began to detach from the underlying supportive tissue. If not treated promptly, this condition would lead to vision loss. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, proper treatment was delayed until 2023, by which time his eyesight had deteriorated to an irrevocable 0.3.





Top: In September 2021, Qi, his guide Martin, and their camel Kipesh pose for a photo while crossing the equator en route to Lake Turkana. The equator marker in Nyahururu stands behind them. **Above:** Qi and Martin take turns leading Kipesh across the vast Chalbi Desert. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

In 2021, he unexpectedly spent several months in Haiti, where he witnessed extreme street violence that was largely unreported outside the country. "From there, I lost all confidence in humanity," he recalls, explaining the motivation behind the journey chronicled in *The Camel Diaries*.

His depression worsened by the news of a good friend killed in an air crash. When he returned to Kenya in 2021, his perspective on the world had changed significantly.

"After Haiti, everything I saw felt like it was through a filter. I didn't experience things directly anymore. It was a protective mechanism. If I opened myself up, I would get hurt, and my emotions were overwhelming. Because of this, I developed an aversion to photography. I felt physically nauseous, like I wanted to vomit, which is something I never experienced before," he says.

"Photography used to be my remedy, but then it had turned into my poison," he says.

Having a special fondness for deserts, he had long aspired to lead a camel to retrace the ancient "Camel Rock Trail", the Timbuktu-Taoudenni caravan route in Mali, a key western route for the trans-Saharan gold and salt trade. However, Mali was too dangerous to travel in.

Then a friend, half-jokingly, suggested going to the deserts in northern Kenya on a camel if he really wanted such travel.

In the deserts of northern Kenya is Lake Turkana, a particularly fascinating place for him.

Situated in the Great Rift Valley in northwestern Kenya and extending into Ethiopia, Lake Turkana is the world's largest permanent desert lake and the largest alkaline lake. In 1984, a well-preserved skeleton of a Homo erectus youth who lived approximately 1.6 million years ago was discovered here. The fossil provides critical insights into the physical development and anatomy of early humans.

When these three elements — deserts, Turkana and a camel — came together, the journey became irresistible.

Previously, he had visited the lake twice: once by car and once by flying partway and then driving. This time, he traveled on foot, accompanied by a resilient camel and Martin, a member of the Samburu nomadic group from northern Kenya, who depend on camels for their livelihood.

"I didn't have a concrete plan. I just wanted to head out, without a clear idea of how far I'd go or which direction to take. Simply setting foot on the road is enough for me. I prefer to know as little as possible about what comes next," he says. "There are some things you mustn't tell me; no spoilers."

Despite challenges along the way, there were two or three moments when Qi suddenly felt connected to the whole of nature, becoming one with it.

"Each time was only for a short while, but I genuinely felt connected. You can hear the wind, feel the sunlight on your skin, and even smell the distant rain. Your senses not only open up but also feel interconnected in that moment," he says, talking about the best part of the journey.

It's not the beautiful scenery, but the feeling that is similar to meditation, he adds.

He remembers that during the journey, the scenery was the same as others', but suddenly the colors seemed more vibrant and full of infinite details. The whole world came alive.

"It comes unexpectedly; you might be bored, and then suddenly, you enter that state for a short while before coming out of it, realizing that the world is truly real. It's quite an important experience to me," he notes.

"With my background in science and engineering, I understand that many concepts, like truth, freedom, language, and reality, have limitations. But when I truly experience being a whole person in that environment, it transcends language," he says.

Qi resumed photography during the journey; after completing it, continued his previous lifestyle. Later, he was featured in Liu Na's *Narrating the World: 12 Chinese Men and Women Tell Their Stories*, published by the Commercial Press in 2024 and about the overseas Chinese. His diaries sparked editors' interest in publishing a book. This year, *The Camel Diaries* came out.

Cheng Ying, a tenured associate professor at Peking University's Department of Asian-African Languages and Literatures, highlights the book's groundbreaking nature in the context of African historical narratives. Qi's journey takes him through areas seldom visited by either Chinese or local Africans, plunging him into untouched wilderness.

Traditionally, Africa and its people have been observed and defined by outsiders, but the author's writing presents a more reciprocal relationship with the locals and environment, she says.

For instance, the camel Kipesh is portrayed as gazing at and even mocking his owner. Additionally, Qi meticulously captures details such as tire tracks, footprints and iron pots from Chinese construction sites in the wilderness, giving the work a timeless quality.

Cao Yin, a tenured associate professor of history at Peking University, observes that in today's travel trend of taking photos for social media, this book takes a different approach. The author embarks on a challenging journey, enduring hardships such as stomach troubles, blisters and sunburn. By sharing meals and living with locals, he integrates into African tribes and gains trust through empathy and mutual respect, capturing the authentic and vibrant essence of Africa.

Qi's grounded journal offers the public a look into the complex realities of African societies and provides valuable grassroots insights for academic understanding of Africa, he notes.

Contact the writer at yangyangs@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:39 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:39 PM

CULTURE

From 'digital pickles' to an entertainment giant

China's micro-short drama industry has grown into a 100-billion-yuan phenomenon, and is reshaping perceptions of the genre, **Xu Fan** reports.



As one of the easiest forms of entertainment to consume on a smartphone, micro-short dramas — vertically shot, packed with cliffhangers and delivered at a breakneck pace — have evolved into a cultural and economic phenomenon in China.

Four months after the National Radio and Television Administration, the sector's top regulator, announced that the industry's market size had surpassed 100 billion yuan ($14.7 billion) — almost double its 2024 figure — the State Council Information Office organized a group interview that, for the first time, invited a micro-short drama director to share key rules for producing hits.

Latest figures from the administration also showed that a total of 33,000 such dramas were streamed online last year, an increase of around 50 percent year-on-year and reaching nearly 700 million viewers. In addition, more than 800 Chinese micro-short drama applications have been available in overseas markets, generating a total revenue of $3.24 billion in 2025 and $1 billion in the first quarter of 2026, according to the administration's development research center.

For an industry once dismissed as inferior — largely because most of its tales relied on exaggerated and melodramatic plots — the SCIO's event has been interpreted by some insiders as a positive signal encouraging the creation of higher-quality content. The mainstream genres of the past, for instance, often revolved around a protagonist waking up to find herself resurrected and time-traveling to a different era, or an ordinary woman discovering that her loyal lover is a secret billionaire.









Above: Poster for the micro-short drama *Bussiere Garden*, inspired by the true story of French doctor Jean Augustin Bussiere. **Top middle:** (From top) Posters for *Meng Ying* (Dreaming Cinema), a series marking the 120th anniversary of Chinese cinema, and *The Red Cradle*, a work set during the War of Liberation (1946-49). Yang Kenan, a micro-short drama director. **Top right:** A poster for Yang's popular micro-short drama *My Sweet Home*.photos PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Formula behind a hit

"It was around 2020 that the short-video industry started to boom," Yang Kenan, a 35-year-old director from the influential micro-drama production company Shanghai Tinghuadao Cultural Media, told China Daily after attending a State Council Information Office event on June 5.

Having started working in the entertainment industry over a decade ago, Yang — previously a scriptwriter and advertisement producer — has witnessed the unprecedented expansion of micro-short dramas.

Recalling that he was one of the earliest figures to have been part of this landmark shift in online content — from its early wild, rapid development to its current more regulated and quality-driven trend — Yang says the industry, despite being labeled as "fast-food culture" in the public's eyes, could also tell stories with emotional power, heartfelt warmth and positive connection.

Yang's *My Sweet Home*, one of the country's most popular micro-short dramas, is such an example. The first season, consisting of 79 episodes and released in March last year, is set in southern Sichuan province and quickly soared as a sleeper hit, amassing 3 billion views online.

Unlike the typical soap-opera-style narrative of micro-short dramas, *My Sweet Home* employs a plain, down-to-earth, neighborhood tone. It follows an ordinary couple — two divorced people — as they work to establish a new family with the children each had from their previous marriages.

The series — which unfolds from the early 1980s and is spoken in the local dialect — naturally exerts the unique sense of humor that is a trademark of Sichuan natives. The husbands, for instance, are known for being "henpecked", a teasingly regional pride referring to men's respect for and gentle treatment of their wives, as well as their family-oriented nature.

As showcased in the franchise — whose second season, containing 111 episodes, helped propel the franchise's overall views past 6 billion — the well-crafted script includes sequences like the following: the female protagonist, a single mother cold-shouldered by her elder brother's family after the divorce, receives unexpected warmth from her second husband, a technology veteran and factory executive who resists his own mother's objections and gives his salary to his wife to handle every month.

Yang, a native of Southwest China's Guizhou province, notes that his local dialect and culture share similarities with those of Sichuan province, which made it easier for him to create the work with the help of fellow creators — some of whom are also from Sichuan.

Interestingly, big data played a role in deciding what dialect the characters should speak. "We conducted a lot of research online and discovered that the Sichuan dialect is quite popular on major social platforms like Douyin, with many dialect-based jokes created in it," Yang explains, shedding light on why the team made this choice.

> "No matter how the format changes, audiences ultimately stay for stories that can move them. That is what gives micro-short dramas lasting vitality."
>
> **Yang Kenan,** director of micro-short drama series *My Sweet Home*

He adds that the dialect primarily relies on differences in tone, but as long as it is spoken slowly, people from all over the country can generally understand it. "Therefore, the barrier to comprehension is relatively low," he adds.

Currently working on the franchise's third season, Yang believes the industry's long-term success still depends on one essential factor: storytelling. "No matter how the format changes, audiences ultimately stay for stories that can move them. That is what gives micro-short dramas lasting vitality," he says.

A bigger landscape

The industry's transformation has also gained recognition among insiders. Dong Tao, an industry researcher and council member of the China Literature and Art Critics Association, says that the sector's market value grew from just 940 million yuan in 2020 to 50.5 billion yuan in 2024, the first year it surpassed China's annual box-office revenue, before doubling again last year.

"For a long time, some industry insiders underestimated micro-short dramas," Dong says. "Now the focus should be on improving quality and production standards so that more compelling Chinese stories can reach international audiences."

Signs of that shift are already emerging. One recent example is *Meng Ying* (Dreaming Cinema), a tribute produced for the 120th anniversary of Chinese cinema. The story follows a film archivist who travels back to 1905 in search of the original reel of *Dingjun Mountain*, performed by Peking Opera artist Tan Xinpei and believed to be China's first film.

Leng Song, director of the audiovisual research office at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, believes the genre has gradually shed some of the stereotypes attached to it.

"Micro-short dramas were once criticized as 'digital pickles' and accused of promoting 'aesthetic decline'. However, as more creators explore history, culture and reality-based themes, the genre can also offer audiences a rich cultural feast," says Leng.

Popular examples include productions commemorating the 80th anniversary of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45). Among them are *Bussiere Garden*, inspired by the true story of French doctor Jean Augustin Bussiere, who transported medicine for the Eighth Route Army during the war, and *The Red Cradle*, about a nursery in Yan'an that escorted 136 children of martyrs to a safe zone in 1946, when the Kuomintang launched an all-out offensive against the liberated areas of the Communist Party of China.

Meanwhile, the genre is increasingly moving beyond smartphones. Last year, 124 high-quality micro-short dramas were broadcast on the country's satellite television channels. Of those, 42 were produced in Beijing, the highest number among Chinese cities.

"Micro-short dramas are evolving from an emerging form of mass entertainment into a globally oriented content product that balances cultural expression with commercial potential. Their growing influence at home and abroad is helping Chinese stories cross linguistic and cultural boundaries to find shared emotional resonance," adds Leng.

Contact the writer at xufan@chinadaily.com.cn

Sudanese acrobats celebrate a legacy born 55 years ago

PORT SUDAN, Sudan — Nahid Sharhabil Ahmed could no longer hold back her tears.

Sitting quietly at the front of a soft-lit celebration hall in Port Sudan, Ahmed watched as black-and-white images flickered across the screen: young Sudanese children training in the distant Chinese city of Wuhan, Hubei province. It had been more than half a century. And she was one of them.

Inside the hall, decorated with Sudanese and Chinese flags and faded photographs, traditional Chinese music played quietly in the background, blending with the murmurs of the audience and occasional bursts of applause at each historic scene on screen.

For Ahmed, time seemed to slip backward.

She appeared in the documentary herself — a young girl performing acrobatic routines alongside the first group of Sudanese trainees sent to China in 1971 under a bilateral cultural exchange program.

As the old training scenes unfolded, Ahmed wiped away tears several times. The memories had brought her back to "the most beautiful years" of her life.

Now head of the Sudanese Acrobatic Troupe, she spoke with deep emotion and nostalgia.

"I was 9 years old when we arrived in Wuhan," Ahmed says. "We were little children, afraid of being far from home and unable to speak a single word of Chinese. But we found warm hearts there that embraced us with kindness.

"The Chinese teachers treated us not just as students, but truly as their own children," she adds. "They woke us before dawn for training, helped us with our studies and meals, and cared for us when we were sick.

"That is why China has always remained, for me, associated with family and warmth," she says.

In 1971, Sudan sent 50 carefully selected children to China to form the core of its first acrobatic troupe. They underwent three years of specialized training in Wuhan.

"Every movement we learned there carried a lesson in patience and discipline. When we returned to Sudan, we felt we were carrying a great dream that we had to share with our people," Ahmed recalls.

In 1974, the children returned to stage performances as the first acrobatic troupe in both Africa and the Arab world.



Nahid Sharhabil Ahmed, head of the Sudanese Acrobatic Troupe, watches a video on the troupe's history in Port Sudan, eastern Sudan, late last month. FAYEZ ELZAKI / XINHUA

Since then, the troupe has become one of Sudan's leading artistic institutions, blending Chinese acrobatic techniques with Sudanese and African rhythms and dances.

Looking at the photographs of the old days, Ahmed says she feels "both pride and sadness".

"Pride because we created something that has endured for more than half a century, and sadness because many of our companions are gone or have been scattered by life and war," she says.

Her reflections came during a reception hosted late last month by the Chinese embassy in Sudan in Port Sudan, marking the troupe's 55th anniversary. Sudanese officials, diplomats, veteran performers, and Chinese community members gathered to celebrate.

The celebration unfolded against the backdrop of Sudan's prolonged conflict.

According to Ahmed, the troupe's management has drawn up a plan to rehabilitate its headquarters, provide equipment, and train new performers.

For veteran member Magdi Babikir, the troupe was more than an artistic project.

"It was a complete human journey that shaped our personalities and changed our lives," Babikir says. "We were children from different parts of Sudan, and there we learned commitment and teamwork. We learned how art can bring people together despite differences in language and culture.

"Even in this difficult war, I still believe this troupe will return," Babikir says, "because it is not just stage performances, but a shared memory between two peoples."

At the ceremony, Xu Jian, charge d'affaires of the Chinese embassy in Sudan, said the anniversary represented "golden years in which legends were written".

Xu noted that more than half a century ago, young Sudanese children "traveled from the banks of the White and Blue Nile to the banks of China's Yangtze and Hanjiang rivers, where teachers from the Wuhan Acrobatic Troupe instructed them hand in hand and cared for them as their own children".

These human bonds, he said, helped create "a flower of Sudanese-Chinese friendship".

Sudanese Foreign Ministry official Omer Oshik said the troupe has become part of Sudan's cultural memory and a "symbol of civilizational exchange".

Despite the hardships of war, the anniversary carried a clear message: the flower of friendship can bloom again. The art born 55 years ago on the Nile still holds the power to connect people, bridge nations, and remind us that some bonds, like the memory of a warm hand in a foreign land, never fade.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:39 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:39 PM

SPORTS

WORLD CUP 2026

Blue Sharks bite back to tie Uruguay

Cape Verde does it again, scoring twice to draw 2-2 with two-time champion

Cape Verde's magical start to its first World Cup isn't over. In fact, it might just be getting started.

The tiny island nation that stunned tournament favorite Spain last week did it again against Uruguay — a two-time World Cup champion — on Sunday, coming from behind for a 2-2 draw at the Miami Stadium in Miami Gardens, Florida.

Kevin Pina scored on a freekick for Cape Verde's first-ever goal in the World Cup, and Helio Varela scored the equalizer for what has become one of the most surprising sides of the expanded 48-team tournament — a side now with a legitimate chance of getting into the knockout stage.

"This is something we owe to other smaller national teams — teams that struggled to qualify for a world tournament," Cape Verde coach Pedro Leitao Brito said, adding that his entire squad believes it can continue its historic run and reach the knockout stage.

Cape Verde, which has two points in Group H along with Uruguay, faces Saudi Arabia in its final group match.

"We're also here to show that a country may be small, may struggle financially," he added, "but if they are resilient, if they can endure struggle, they can also stand shoulder to shoulder with other major teams and with players who are on another level."

The group of islands off Africa's west coast have about 4,000 square meters (about 2.5 miles) of landmass and approximately a half million inhabitants, making Cape Verde the third-smallest nation by population to qualify for the World Cup.

Even as a large number of fans at Miami Stadium chanted for Uruguay throughout Sunday's match, Cape Verde's players seemed undaunted. "Once you're on the pitch, a lot of things become equal," Leitao Brito said.

Cape Verde's fans who watched their squad pull off one of the stunning results of the tournament last week by holding Spain to a scoreless draw, continued their celebrations when Pina split Uruguay's wall and blasted a strike past a diving Fernando Muslera to take a 1-0 lead in the 21st minute.

Late first-half goals from Maximiliano Araujo and Agustin Canobbio put Uruguay ahead going into halftime, but Varela, minutes after coming into the game in the second half, took advantage of a bad pass by Mathias Olivera and caught Muslera way off his line to fire the tying goal, and his first international score, into an empty net.

"I had dreamed of this," Varela said in a quote distributed by FIFA, "but I never imagined it would happen this way. Scoring my first goal for the national team on my World Cup debut is incredible. I have no words."

Varela celebrated by hopping into his teammates' arms and flexing atop their shoulders as Muslera and other Uruguay players dropped their heads in disappointment.

"The result, I think, was quite deserved," Uruguay coach Marcelo Bielsa said afterward.

La Celeste failed to capitalize on numerous late chances to take the lead, and settled for its second draw after a 1-1 finish against Saudi Arabia in its opener. Bielsa's men next face Spain in their group stage finale, needing a positive result to have a chance at advancing.

"The organizational mistakes that were made — that a squad makes — they always fall upon the (head coach)," Bielsa added. "There is no magical recipe to fix them. It goes without saying we paid a very high price for those mistakes."

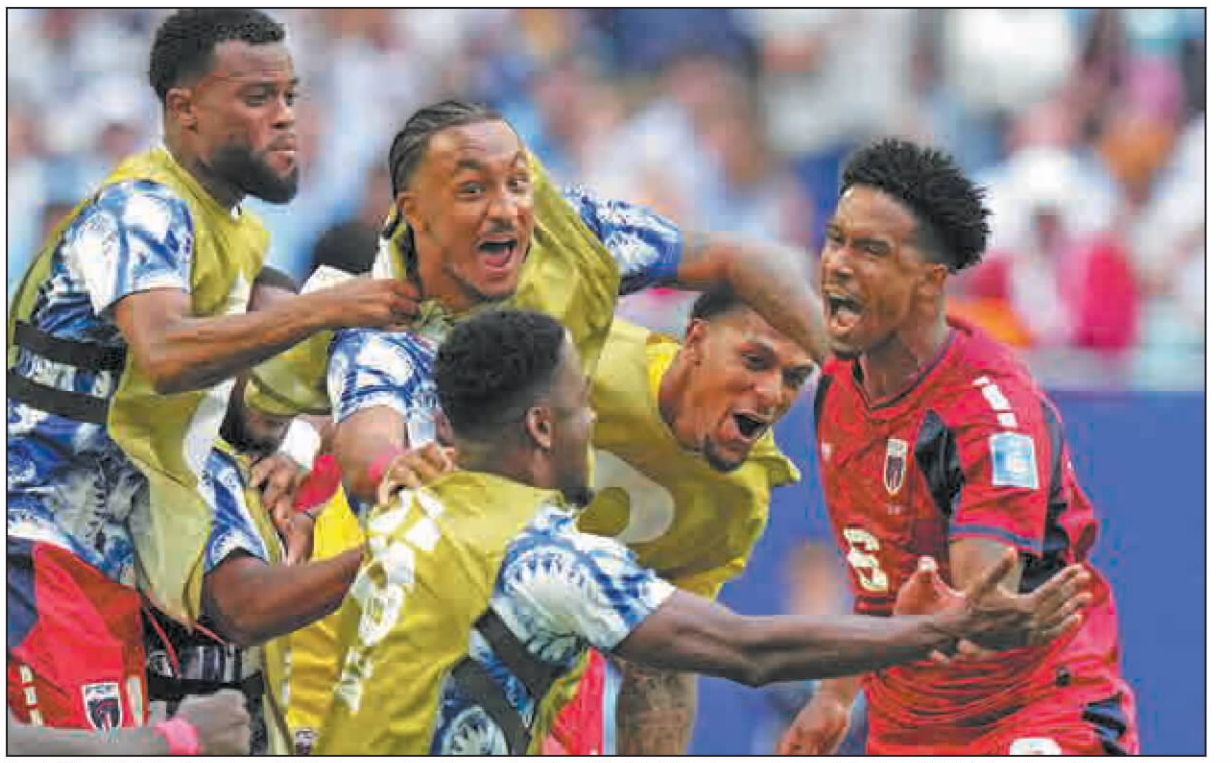
It was another special moment for Cape Verde's Vozinha, who became one of the tournament's breakout stars after shutting out Spain. The 40-year-old goalie had his mother in the stands for Sunday's match; she was unable to attend Cape Verde's opener against Spain because she couldn't obtain a United States visa.

It was also the first World Cup match where both starting keepers were over the age of 40, after Muslera, making his 18th World Cup appearance, hit the milestone on June 16.

Vozinha waved to the stands after the final whistle, as his teammates ran to a section of Cape Verde fans, who cheered and danced as if they were celebrating a victory.

"You show up, you believe, and we work very hard as a team," said aptly named Blue Sharks defender Stopira. "I think all the world can see we play very well, and we also have quality in the team. So, now, it's on to the next game, and to try to reach the next stage."

AP



Kevin Pina (right) celebrates with his teammates after scoring Cape Verde's historic opening goal during a World Cup Group H match against Uruguay at the Miami Stadium in Miami Gardens, Florida, on Sunday. AP





Left: Agustin Canobbio (right) celebrates scoring Uruguay's second goal with teammate Maximiliano Araujo, who scored the team's first, during a World Cup Group H match against Cape Verde in Miami on Sunday. **Right:** Cape Verde fans in Porto Novo, Cape Verde, cheer on their team against Uruguay on Sunday. AFP



Helio Varela controls the ball before scoring his first-ever international goal, and Cape Verde's second, leveling the score against Uruguay during a World Cup Group H match in Miami Gardens, Florida, on Sunday. The match ended in a 2-2 draw. AP

Vozinha's mom roots for her son from the stands

On Father's Day, it was about a mother watching her son make more history.

There were 64,003 people in the stadium for the 2-2 draw between Cape Verde and Uruguay on Sunday night, none of them with a better how-they-got-there story than Ana Candida Evora — the mother of Vozinha, Cape Verde's goalkeeper.

Evora arrived in Miami on Friday, reunited with her son over the weekend and watched Sunday's game from a suite at Miami Stadium.

Cape Verde's fairytale run now has a chance of reaching the knockout stage, depending largely on how its group stage finale against Saudi Arabia goes.

Cape Verde is one of the absolute feel-good stories of the World Cup, a tiny island nation with two draws in its two matches to this point. Vozinha — whose name is Josimar Jose Evora Dias — had his mother in the stands Sunday; she was unable to attend Cape Verde's opening draw against Spain because she couldn't obtain a United States visa.

And even without a win — in fact, her 40-year-old son didn't even make a save Sunday — her presence makes Cape Verde's story even better.

Goalkeepers don't always have to make a save to be effective. Vozinha's best two plays of the match might not even show up on a stat sheet — he was perfectly positioned on a pair of Uruguay's scoring chances in the closing minutes, cutting down angles and forcing shooters to aim at tight spaces. Both shots sailed high, and Vozinha exhaled deeply both times.

"I want to thank all the fans, everyone who helped in the process, for the support you gave to the team, especially to Cape Verde," Evora said Sunday in remarks distributed by FIFA in a video message before the match. "We're all rooting for Cape Verde to play well, to shine on the pitch. The players need to have faith and everything will go well.

"Keep your heads held high, go onto that pitch, push for a goal and you'll perform beautifully, my boys. A kiss for you, be strong and brave. Blue Sharks!"

Evora carried a Cape Verde flag into the stadium Sunday, her son's name and jersey number on the back of her shirt, and she was ushered into a suite to watch the contest.

Vozinha heard roars from the fans — even with a mostly pro-Uruguay crowd — whenever he was shown on the video screens during warm-ups, and got perhaps the loudest ovation of any player when starters were introduced.

Evora's visa issues — primarily raising the money needed for one — were worked out after the US State Department and Cape Verde's soccer federation combined efforts to help Evora to fly to Miami. There was also assistance from an unlikely source: Lin Jie, a Cape Verde-based Chinese entrepreneur, who reportedly helped Evora with her visa paperwork, and provided travel necessities and transportation to the airport. "Vozinha's cousin happened to work in my wife's clothes shop," Lin told reporters.

"I offered to help."

She arrived Friday afternoon after more than 24 hours of travel from Cape Verde and was greeted by FIFA officials and volunteers.

Vozinha had about 50,000 followers on Instagram as the World Cup was starting.

He was up to 15 million followers by game time Sunday, after he grabbed the world's attention by leading the defense against Spain — one of the tournament favorites.

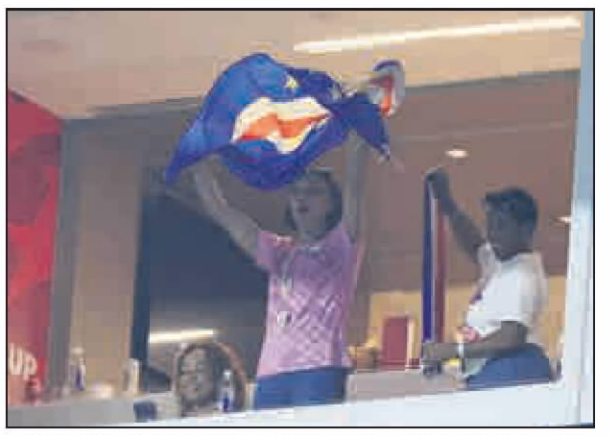
That equates to around 30 followers every second since the end of the Spain match up to kickoff on Sunday.

He went viral after the Spain match for tearful comments, wishing that his late grandparents could have seen him play in the World Cup and that his mother's visa issues had been resolved in time to be there. That sparked an immediate effort to find ways for Evora to get to the US.

The historic draw, combined with the story of a goalie and his mom, has thrust Cape Verde's soccer team into the global spotlight both on and off the pitch.

"It's been intense," Cape Verde forward Garry Rodrigues said.

AGENCIES





Left: Ana Candida Evora (center), the mother of Cape Verde's goalkeeper Vozinha, celebrates in the stands after the match on Sunday. **Right:** Vozinha acknowledges the fans following the final whistle. REUTERS / AFP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:39 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:41 PM

Technology hub

Innovation ecosystem fuels AI growth in Beijing

BUSINESS, PAGE 10



Youth breathe new life into ancient cultures

Z WEEKLY, PAGE 15



Netting new records

Messi sets all-time World Cup scoring mark with 18 goals

SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 2026

Shared growth highlighted at Summer Davos

Li stresses cooperation, global execs voice confidence in Chinese market

By **JI HAISHENG** in Dalian, Liaoning
jihaisheng@chinadaily.com.cn

As political and business leaders gather in Dalian, Liaoning province, for the 17th Annual Meeting of the New Champions of the World Economic Forum, global attention is turning to how China will use the event to reinforce its role in championing stable growth and practical cooperation at a time of mounting global economic uncertainty.

Premier Li Qiang underscored China's commitment to strengthening cooperation with various countries in emerging sectors and enhancing development synergy, as he held a series of bilateral meetings with heads of government on Tuesday on the sidelines of the event, also known as the Summer Davos forum. The prime ministers Li met with were Guinea's Amadou Oury Bah, Kazakhstan's Olzhas Bektenov, the Republic of Korea's Kim Min-seok, Mongolia's Nyam-Osor Uchral and Montenegro's Milojko Spajic.

During the meeting with Bektenov, Li voiced China's readiness to work with Kazakhstan to expand bilateral trade, deepen cooperation in energy and mineral resources, enhance connectivity, and broaden collaboration in emerging fields such as artificial intelligence, smart cities, big data and the digital economy — injecting fresh momentum into the modernization drive of both nations.

While meeting with Kim, Li called on both sides to seize new opportunities for innovation-driven development, and stressed efforts to advance an open Asia-Pacific economy, uphold free trade and multilateralism, and keep global industrial and supply chains secure and stable.

The foreign government heads pledged efforts to deepen collaboration with China across various sectors. Uchral Nyam-Osor, the Mongolian prime minister, said that Mongolia is ready to enhance synergy between its national development strategy and China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), and to bolster cooperation in trade, cross-border connectivity, infrastructure, energy and mining, agriculture and the green economy.

The three-day event, which began on Tuesday, brings together more than 1,700 leaders from the business, government, academic and media communities from over 90 countries and regions to discuss ways to boost world economic growth and cooperation.

Long regarded as a key platform for promoting exchanges between China and the world and enhancing practical cooperation, the annual gathering also speaks volumes about global stakeholders' broad recognition of China and their unwavering confidence in its prospects amid worldwide volatility.

Some participants stressed that the world's second-largest economy is a reliable partner for joint innovation, practical cooperation and shared growth.

Pontus Erntell, who oversees Ikea's operations in China, described the country as a strategic market where the Swedish home furnishing giant has been deeply rooted for a long time.

"China is one of very few countries outside of Sweden where we have all parts of the value chain. It is a market where we truly want to develop, learn and collaborate with local partners," he said.

Jiang Ying, chair of Deloitte China, said that China's complete industrial system, resilient economic fundamentals and continued high-level opening-up remain key pillars supporting the country's long-term growth.

Jiang said emerging sectors such as AI and the low-altitude economy are set to make further breakthroughs, while the coordinated development of traditional and new growth drivers will help sustain China's economic momentum.

"The long-term value of the Chinese market lies in its vast and dynamic consumer base, vibrant technological and industrial innovation, and continued high-level opening-up," Jiang said.

Chafic Nassif, senior vice-president at communications tech giant Ericsson and head of Ericsson Northeast Asia, said that China's combination of "scale, speed of execution and innovative industrial ecosystem" makes it a uniquely critical market in the global technology landscape.

Cheng Yu and Zhang Chenxu in Dalian contributed to this story.

Inside

- See more, **page 3**
- Editorial, **page 6**
- Views, **page 7**

Pickleball bond



Teenagers from China and the United States interact on Tuesday during a pickleball friendly match at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing. Students from the US' Iowa state and from Shijiazhuang, Hebei province, bonded over pickleball to cultivate China-US friendship in a new generation. WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY

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

www.chinadailyglobal.com

A member of ANN

China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

Greater BRICS role urged in upholding intl order

By **ZHAO JIA**
zhaojia@chinadaily.com.cn

Inside

Comment, **page 6**

The more than 100-day conflict involving the United States, Israel and Iran underscored the importance of upholding international rules, respecting state sovereignty, embracing a new vision of security and understanding the changing nature of warfare, China's top diplomat Wang Yi said on Tuesday.

The Chinese foreign minister made the remarks in New Delhi, the capital of India, at the 16th Meeting of BRICS National Security Advisors and High Representatives on National Security, following the recent first-phase memorandum of understanding reached by the US and Iran.

The BRICS cooperation mechanism was formally launched in 2009, and now has 11 formal members after its latest expansion.

Addressing the meeting, Wang said that any settlement of international or regional hotspot issues must comply with international rules, adding that the law of the jungle may prevail for a time, but cannot be sustained.

Territorial integrity must not be violated, and no country's internal affairs should be subject to interference, he said, calling this the most basic moral baseline in international relations.

The conflict also highlighted the importance of adopting a new vision of security, Wang noted. As countries become increasingly interconnected, seeking absolute security for oneself at the expense of others' security will only backfire, he warned.

Wang also pointed to the need to recognize new forms of warfare. In a number of recent conflicts, non-traditional forms of warfare, including information warfare and cyber warfare, have become more open and visible.

With traditional and nontraditional security threats increasingly intertwined, it is timely and necessary for BRICS countries to strengthen dialogue and cooperation on security affairs, he added.

Against this backdrop, Wang called on BRICS countries to shoulder their responsibilities in safeguarding the international order by upholding multilateralism, firmly defending the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, and opposing unilateralism and protectionism.

He urged BRICS countries to build greater consensus when addressing security dilemmas, push for the political settlement of hotspot issues, and explore effective ways to resolve disputes through dialogue and consultation.

Wang also stressed the need to combat terrorism in all forms, oppose the militarization of outer space, respond effectively to global energy and food security challenges, strengthen cooperation on strategic mineral resources, and work together in response to the Ebola outbreak in Africa.

*See **Security,** page 3*

Seeking relief



People dive into the Trocadero Fountain next to the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France, on Monday to cool off amid an intense heat wave. France is grappling with record-busting temperatures, with daytime highs soaring above 40 C. ABDUL SABOOR / REUTERS **See story, page 4**

PECULIAR TASTE IS THE TOAST OF SUZHOU IN SUMMER

With mint, candied fruits and steamed mung beans, the city's distinctive seasonal drink is winning over curious visitors

By **YANG FEIYUE**
yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

The shady corners of Suzhou's UNESCO-listed classical gardens, epitomizing the beauty of Chinese landscaping, are not the only attraction drawing overheating visitors to the historical city in East China's Jiangsu province.

There is another local tradition just as essential to surviving the sultriness of the summer season: a tall glass of something cold, clear and utterly peculiar.

Unlike the thick, creamy mung bean soup enjoyed by most of China's population, this Su-style concoction is crystal clear, with distinctive green mung beans and pearly white glutinous rice resting at the bottom like a miniature still life.

Floating on top are colorful strips of red and green made from vegetables, candied winter melon, dried sweet dates, raisins and the occasional preserved kumquat. All of this is topped off with a faint whiff of mint.

To the uninitiated, it looks like a dessert, a drink and a puzzle all at once.

Its origins are as layered as its ingredients. Mung bean soup has been a Chinese summer staple since the Tang (618-907) and Song (960-1279) dynasties, when street vendors sold chilled versions to cool down passersby.



Mung bean soup is seen in this photo taken on Nov 18, 2025, in Suzhou, Jiangsu province. ZUO DONGCHEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

But Suzhou's distinctive interpretation emerged much later, shaped by the region's prosperity and its taste for refinement.

According to Zhao Guoming, curator of the Suzhou Diet Museum, the soup's evolution mirrors the city's own history. As Suzhou grew wealthy through trade and commerce, locals began embellishing the humble mung bean soup with preserved fruits and candied ingredients — luxuries once reserved for well-off families.

For Suzhou people, a glass of iced mung bean soup has been summer's "happy water" and an essential part of local food culture, Zhao said.

The preparation method also sets it apart. Unlike the boiled-to-a-pulp version found elsewhere, Suzhou's version requires the mung beans and glutinous rice to be steamed separately, which keeps each bean distinct and ensures a firm, chewy texture.

And then there's the mint: A few drops of mint extract or a soak of mint leaves gives the drink its signature sharp, cooling kick — a sensation so intense that some outsiders find it startling.

China Vibes — FOOD —

"It's very natural," said Guo Hui, 50, who has been making the soup since her teens and runs a shop selling it near Guanqian Street, the city's bustling historical shopping district.

"Just purified water, rock sugar and mint leaves. You don't mess with it."

Guo insists on using premium-grade mung beans, which have a matte texture, and steaming them only after soaking them thoroughly. "You can't rush it," she said.

In recent years, the drink has become a social media sensation, with tourists flocking to Suzhou specifically to try it. Dedicated shops have sprouted across the city, offering creative twists, such as black rice and dried mango, alongside the classic version.

Food delivery platforms report booming sales each summer, and social media feeds are filled with videos of curious tourists taking their first sips.

For Mi Jiahao, 40, this newfound fame is both amusing and affirming.

*See **Dish,** page 3*

WORLD WATCH
By Kin Phea

Partnership on energy now crucial for ASEAN

As strategic rivalries, economic fragmentation and climate pressures fracture global politics, energy security has become one of the most pressing strategic concerns in Southeast Asia. For the region's developing and middle-income nations, energy security is no longer just an economic box to check. It has become a matter of political stability, industrial competitiveness and long-term sovereignty.

This urgency was front and center at the recent meetings of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Cebu in the Philippines.

Beyond the diplomatic language, the reality is clear: No country in the Southeast Asia region can handle the current energy chaos alone. Energy markets have become increasingly volatile, while supply chains are heavily affected by geopolitical factors, and the global transition to green energy is increasingly shaped by evolving international dynamics.

*See **Energy,** page 3*

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:41 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:41 PM

INDEPTH

Ethnic groups use 'express line' to national lawmakers

Outreach offices empower, improve understanding of people from all walks of life

By **CAO YIN** in Xinjiang
caoyin@chinadaily.com.cn



Officials and villagers gather to discuss local matters and legislative items in Hudiyayuz, a town in the Ili Kazak autonomous prefecture in Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, on April 28. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Under the lush canopy of a mulberry tree in a village in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, over 20 villagers from various ethnic backgrounds — including Uygur, Kazak, and Han — gathered this month to chat about local matters over milk tea and *nang* bread.

Leading the discussion was Zhao Jianquan, the village head, who was introducing the newly adopted Ethnic Unity and Progress Promotion Law, which will take effect on July 1.

Zhao recalled how, during a review of the draft law the previous year, villagers had proposed expanding volunteer teams to look after left-behind children, take the elderly to see doctors, and maintain public sanitation. They believed these activities could enhance interaction and mutual support among different ethnic groups in their village.

To their surprise, this simple suggestion from Hudiyayuz, a remote area in the Ili Kazak autonomous prefecture, swiftly reached China's top legislative body through an "express line" and was finally incorporated into the law.

In March, the National People's Congress passed the law, which encourages and supports volunteers and volunteer service organizations in fostering exchanges, cooperation, and mutual assistance among all ethnic groups.

"Our suggestion was adopted nationally and became part of the law. We're proud of this achievement," Zhao said.

The "express line" that carried their suggestion is a legislative outreach office established by the NPC Standing Committee's Legislative Affairs Commission in Hudiyayuz township in July 2022. It is Xinjiang's first national-level outreach office.

Grassroots voices

The legislative outreach office is an initiative launched by the commission in July 2015. It acts as a bridge between the public and lawmakers to effectively solicit a wide range of opinions and suggestions on legislation from all walks of life, putting whole-process people's democracy into practice.

To date, the commission has established 60 such offices across the country, with 16 located in border ethnic regions. Between July 2015 and April 2026, over 77,000 opinions were collected on 224 legislative documents, with nearly 11,000 of those coming from border areas.

Following the establishment of the office in Hudiyayuz, the standing committee of the people's congress in Kuqa, Aksu prefecture, became the second location in Xinjiang to open such an office. Both have played a big role in seeking legislative ideas from the public.

In 2024, Fan Linsong, a 30-year veteran of the energy industry from Xinjiang Kuqa Green Hydrogen Co, saw his suggestion regarding hydrogen energy incorporated into the Energy Law.

After the project began operating in Kuqa in 2023, he realized the significant role hydrogen could play in energy security and low-carbon development. Noticing its absence in the draft law, he suggested that legislators boost the hydrogen industry and increase support for hydrogen technology research.

When the Energy Law took effect in January 2025, he found his advice had been included in provisions encouraging the development, utilization, research and storage of hydrogen-related technology and equipment.

"This was a huge encouragement for me and my team," he said, adding that he plans to continue sharing new ideas through the office to ensure that policies and laws better support industrial development.

The national-level outreach office model is being replicated in local legislation as well. The standing committee of the Xinjiang people's congress has expanded the initiative by establishing similar offices in subdistricts, industrial zones, and communities. This expansion has helped gather input from a broader range of people during the formulation and revision of local regulations.





Left: Officials listen to suggestions at a hospital in Kuqa, Aksu prefecture, on April 30. **Right:** Legislative information collectors consult with residents at a villager's home in Isihara town in Kuqa on Feb 6. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Kuqa resident Zulpikar Amar submitted a suggestion through the local outreach office while attending a community seminar in late 2025. He called for streamlining the approval process for housing maintenance funds needed for emergency repairs for burst pipes, elevator breakdowns, and fire equipment damage. He said such procedures were often delayed due to unclear timelines, which frustrated property managers.

"I was just highlighting work problems during the meeting never expecting it would lead to change," he said. "I was pleasantly surprised when the revised regulation in May incorporated my suggestion, clearly listing emergency situations and setting defined review timelines."

Under the amended local regulation, maintenance fund officials are required to review applications within two working days and release funds promptly if conditions are met.

"I never imagined that someone like me could have my voice heard by lawmakers, let alone see my first suggestion included in a regulation," he added. "It's reassuring to see democracy in action where I live."

> "I never imagined that someone like me could have my voice heard by lawmakers, let alone see my first suggestion included in a regulation."
>
> **Zulpikar Amar,** a resident in Kuqa, Aksu prefecture

Unifying legislation

Ye Jianxun, deputy head of the legislative affairs commission of the standing committee of Xinjiang people's congress, said outreach offices in border ethnic regions are instrumental in fostering a strong sense of community.

Adil Rehmet, an official from Qiman township in Kuqa, said information collection stations have been established in many villages to teach residents how to provide suggestions through the Kuqa outreach office, and improve officials' understanding of grassroots concerns.

In Baiyang village, for example, efforts to make legislative participation more accessible include posting draft laws in plain language and organizing discussions on legal issues relevant to villagers, such as land transfers, and marriage and family matters. In addition, QR codes and phone numbers of officials are made public to enable villagers to report urgent problems at any time.

"These measures break down barriers, making it easier for people — especially those from minority ethnic groups who are not proficient in *Putonghua*, or standard spoken and written Chinese, to provide suggestions, thereby protecting their right to be informed about the law and to express their views," Adil said.

This process unites all ethnic groups and strengthens the "community spirit of the Chinese nation", he added. "As an ethnic minority official who was raised here, I believe ethnic unity is key to ensuring long-term stability and prosperity," Adil said.

Zamira Hopurjan, an outreach officer from a multi-ethnic tourism village in Ili, led left-behind women in establishing a tea factory after discovering their eagerness to start businesses. Now, 44 women work at the factory, learning new skills and earning an income.

"Outreach offices provide a platform for me to better understand local people's needs and fulfill their aspirations for a better life," Zamira said. The Ethnic Unity and Progress Promotion Law will encourage local governments to take employment and entrepreneurship measures to promote ethnic integration, she said.

"Our experience has been workable. I believe more people will contribute to strengthening ethnic unity, and their lawful rights will be better protected," she added.

Mirigul Memet, a judge from Shuimogou District People's Court in Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang, has integrated legislative consultation with legal education in her work.

To help implement the Law on Standard Spoken and Written Chinese Language, she conducted community and school lectures using real-life cases to explain how standard Chinese enhances exchanges, job opportunities, and shared development. She also patiently listened to people's expectations regarding language, culture, public services, and rights protection that were relayed through an outreach office.

In her courtroom, she upholds the principle of equal protection for all ethnic groups, and focuses on strengthening ethnic unity while handling disputes.

Last year, when reviewing the draft law on ethnic unity and progress promotion, she suggested schools integrate fostering "a sense of community for the Chinese nation" into classroom teaching and social practices, which was ultimately incorporated into the final version of the law.

"Teenage years are critical for shaping values and national identity. It's essential that fostering a sense of community starts from childhood," she stressed. "Schools should introduce the ethnic unity law in ways that children can easily understand, thereby helping to enhance their legal awareness."

She highlighted the significant role of the rule of law, adding, "I will continue to be a guardian of the rule of law for ethnic unity."

Spreading awareness

While encouraging people to participate in legislation through outreach offices across the autonomous region, Xinjiang has also stepped up efforts to use these sites to provide legal education.

At a night school for farmers and herders in a Kuqa village, training sessions are held every Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. Village head Gulpiya Turdi said the classes are determined on standard Chinese proficiency. Each two-hour class includes one hour of *Putonghua* learning, and one hour of legal education.

She said most villagers are from ethnic minorities, with some participants older and others less educated.

"Combining language learning with legal cultivation fits their needs and makes laws more relatable," Gulpiya said. "Only when they understand what the law means can they offer targeted suggestions, leading to better law-based governance."

Ma Ziyang, head of Guangming community in Kuqa, agrees with this approach.

"Law is not just text — it is a pillar that solves problems. Only when legislation directly addresses people's real needs can it be effectively implemented," he said.

Ma, a former police officer, uses real-life scenarios — such as flight delays, school bullying, and self-defense — to explain legislation such as the Civil Aviation Law and the Public Security Administration Punishment Law to residents.

He also conveys the public's concerns through the Kuqa outreach office, contributing to legislative changes. This establishes a positive cycle of effective legal education and responsive lawmaking.

In Horgos, a city at the forefront of China's westward opening-up, collecting input on legislation is also progressing in an orderly manner, supporting both grassroots governance and opening-up.

The standing committee of the city's people's congress brought together 84 people — including law enforcement officials, legal professionals, residents and business representatives — to form a legislative input collection team. The team also integrated legislative consultation with foreign-related legal services.

Zhu Xuejie, a lawyer from Horgos, said she and other collectors concentrated on common legal issues related to contracts, labor and foreign trade. This helped introduce laws to people, with legal services also provided for enterprises aiming to go global.

"Our efforts are focused on promoting Xinjiang's high-level opening-up and improving grassroots governance of foreign-related disputes by strengthening the prevention and resolution of conflicts at their source," Zhu said.

Ye, the deputy head of the legislative affairs commission, said that outreach offices and information collection stations in Xinjiang serve not only to widely gather public opinions, but also to enhance legal awareness among the populace. "Only when legislators and ordinary people move toward each other can we better protect people's rights and ensure that law-based governance takes root at the grassroots level," he said.







Left: A deputy to Kuqa's municipal people's congress collects suggestions from a tourist for improving the city's historical area on April 23. **Middle:** Deputies to Kuqa's municipal people's congress consult with residents about their opinions on the draft amendment to the Law on Standard Spoken and Written Chinese Language in September at a village in Kuqa. **Right:** Officials visit a local dried fruits and nuts store to collect opinions in Kuqa on May 8. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:41 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:41 PM

TOP NEWS

Milestone reached in quantum computing

By **ZHU LIXIN** in Hefei
and **LIU BOQIAN** in Guiyang

A new photonic quantum computer has begun formal operation in China and has been connected to China Telecom's Tianyan quantum cloud platform, making it accessible online to researchers and developers worldwide, China Telecom Quantum Group said on Monday.

The Tianyan-P2000 photonic quantum computer was jointly built by the group and Jiuzhang (Jinan) Quantum Technology Co, under the guidance of the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Center for Excellence in Quantum Information and Quantum Physics.

"With Tianyan-P2000 online, our platform has become the world's first cloud platform capable of providing quantum advantage services through both photonic and superconducting technologies," said Huang Wenya, a senior product manager of the Tianyan quantum cloud platform.

With the new system, China now offers the country's first online quantum advantage service through a photonic quantum computer, she added.

According to Liu Chunwang, a quantum control engineer at China Telecom Quantum Group, photonic quantum computing can operate at room temperature, a key advantage over superconducting systems, which require extreme cold.

It also offers longer coherence times, has lower noise and operating costs, and can directly interface with existing fiber-optic and quantum communication networks, Liu said.

Coherence time is the duration over which a qubit, the fundamental unit of information in quantum computing, retains its quantum properties, and noise refers to various factors that can affect the accuracy of calculations.

China Telecom Quantum Group said that the system can control 2,682 photons, a key metric of its computational capability. In a benchmark test of quantum computing performance, the device completed a high-complexity computation in just 29 microseconds — a task far beyond the reach of classical supercomputers, which would take an estimated 16 billion years to complete.

According to a simplified explanation by China Science Communication, a national science literacy platform of the China Association for Science and Technology, classical computers process one possibility at a time, while quantum computers can explore many possibilities simultaneously, enabling them to solve certain problems much faster.

The launch of Tianyan-P2000 follows a recent breakthrough by Chinese researchers. In May, a team led by the University of Science and Technology of China published results in Nature magazine on Jiuzhang 4.0, a photonic quantum computing prototype demonstrating a milestone in quantum computing by outperforming classical computers in a specific task. Tianyan-P2000 is based on the same core architecture as Jiuzhang 4.0, developers said.

Tianyan-P2000 now provides computing resources to research institutes, universities and businesses. The platform has launched applications in graph data analysis, drug discovery, spectral computation and machine vision.

The group said the platform has recorded over 50 million visits, processed more than 4 million experimental tasks and served users in more than 60 countries and regions.

Zheng Jinran in Beijing contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at liuboqian@chinadaily.com.cn



Guests and participants engage in discussions during the 2026 Summer Davos forum at the Dalian International Conference Center in Dalian, Liaoning province, on Tuesday. Running from Tuesday to Thursday, the event has drawn more than 1,700 participants from over 90 countries and regions. HAN HE / XINHUA

China's growth outlook draws global confidence

Country's vast, dynamic market creates fresh opportunities for businesses, experts say

By **ZHANG CHENXU** in Dalian and **ZHOU LANXU** and **ZHONG NAN** in Beijing

Global executives and leading economists voiced confidence in China's economic resilience and long-term prospects on Tuesday, citing strong momentum in high-tech sectors, continuing economic rebalancing and strong policy support, as the country's stable growth outlook drew renewed attention amid rising external uncertainties.

They made the remarks at the ongoing 17th Annual Meeting of the New Champions of the World Economic Forum, also known as the Summer Davos forum, held under the theme "Innovating at Scale" in Dalian, Liaoning province.

Despite external headwinds, they said China's vast and dynamic market, along with vibrant technological and industrial innovation, is creating fresh opportunities for global businesses and injecting new momentum into global growth.

Yin Zheng, executive vice-president of China and East Asia operations at French industrial conglomerate Schneider Electric, said that advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence, are accelerating the world's transition toward a more digitalized and intelligent era.

"China, as a major engine of global growth and an important technology hub, is becoming a fertile ground for global innovations," Yin said, adding that the country is further strengthening its advantages across industrial and innovation systems.

Jiang Ying, chair of Deloitte China, said China's complete industrial system, resilient economic fundamentals and continued high-level opening-up remain key pillars underpinning the country's long-term growth.

She said that emerging sectors such as AI and the low-altitude economy are poised for further breakthroughs, while the coordinated development of traditional and new growth drivers will help sustain China's economic momentum.

Echoing that view, Ruan Fang, managing director and senior partner at Boston Consulting Group, said that China's most notable growth opportunities lie in advanced manufacturing and AI.

The world's second-largest economy has become a major innovation hub, supported by its huge market, intense competition and fast pace of iteration, she said.

"Many multinational companies choose to stay in China not only for revenue or profits, but also to tap into such innovation — whether in business models, products or AI applications," Ruan added.

Offering a macroeconomic perspective, Huang Yiping, dean of Peking University's National School of Development, struck a similarly optimistic note, saying that despite the challenges facing the Chinese economy, the country has been steadily advancing economic rebalancing, with positive progress already taking shape.

"If you look at the trajectory of the Chinese economy over the past 20 years or more, the macroeconomic structure is much better now," Huang said at a forum during the event.

However, he warned that the rebalancing process remains far from sufficient. "China needs to boost consumption, and it needs to do so in a more proactive way," Huang said.

The broader confidence in China's outlook came as global financial markets faced renewed uncertainty, with expectations of possible interest rate hikes by the United States Federal Reserve adding to concerns over market volatility and cross-border capital flows.

According to Reuters, BofA Global Research, the research arm of Bank of America, and Deutsche Bank now expect the US Federal Reserve to raise interest rates in 2026, marking a departure from prior forecasts of steady rates.

BofA said on Monday that it expects the US central bank to raise rates by 25 basis points each in September, October and December, while Deutsche Bank, in a note dated June 19, forecast two 25-basis-point hikes this year — one in September and another in December.

Shi Kang, chair professor at Tsinghua University's PBC School of Finance, said at an earlier forum in Beijing that if expectations of further US rate hikes become increasingly entrenched, US capital markets may face a significant adjustment, which could send shocks across the global economy.

"At such a time, a stable renminbi could provide valuable support for global liquidity," Shi said.

He said that amid inflationary pressure, the US has limited policy room to absorb such shocks, given its high debt levels and already elevated interest rates, adding that global markets need more sources of financial stability.

Yang Chang, an analyst at Zhongtai Securities, said that China's monetary policy has long adhered to the principle of being mainly guided by domestic conditions, and the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, still has room to maintain reasonably ample liquidity through targeted and flexible policy operations.

Contact the writers at zhangchenxu@chinadaily.com.cn

Dish: Soup's taste 'peculiar' but 'refreshing'

From page 1

Mi has been drinking Su-style mung bean soup since he was 4.

"Every summer, as soon as it got hot, my parents would make it," he recalled. "It's just what we do in Suzhou."

When out-of-town friends visit, Mi always takes them to try it.

Their first reaction is often bewilderment.

"They say it tastes like toothpaste water, but for us, this is what summer tastes like," he said, laughing.

Most come around, he added. "Even with all the jokes online, they actually end up liking it. It's more of a friendly jibe than a real complaint."

For Mi, the drink's popularity is a welcome development. "The shops are still making it the traditional way," he noted.

"And for visitors, it's a way to connect with Suzhou's food culture — to feel like they've arrived."

On a hot day, the ritual is simple.

You stir the glass, mixing the minty water with the ingredients resting at the bottom, Mi said. Then you sip — the mint hits first, sharp and cooling — then you crunch on a piece of candied winter melon, followed by the soft chewiness of steamed glutinous rice. "It is refreshing, complex and undeniably peculiar," he said.

Energy: Regional policy has to be flexible, pragmatic

From page 1

The challenge for ASEAN lies in the fact that it is far from a monolith. This divide has created very different energy realities across the region. On the one side are the resource-rich exporters, with large natural energy reserves and the economic flexibility to move more quickly toward a green transition. On the other side sit the fuel-dependent importers, nations that are heavily tied to fossil fuels just to sustain basic economic growth and are highly vulnerable to fluctuations in global energy prices. Because of these massive internal disparities, any regional energy policy has to be flexible and highly pragmatic, not bound by rigid Western or global ideologies.

To be fair, ASEAN has built solid foundations. Initiatives like the ASEAN Power Grid, the Trans-ASEAN Gas Pipeline and the ASEAN Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation are vital, as are high-level platforms like the ASEAN Ministers on Energy Meeting and the East Asia Summit. But these shouldn't be viewed merely as technical achievements; they are important safeguards against external economic shocks.

Yet external pressures are mounting. Developing countries are under growing pressure from international demands to decarbonize overnight, without fully considering local developmental constraints and economic realities. For a country like Cambodia, this creates a difficult policy dilemma. The green transition is necessary, but moving too quickly carries serious economic risks. If the transition is rushed, production costs will soar, industries will lose their competitive edge, and poverty reduction efforts — the very core of national development — will stall.

This is exactly why the Global South is raising concerns over one-size-fits-all climate requirements. True sustainability is impossible without recognizing that different nations have entirely different capacities. For developing states, energy security and national development are fundamentally inseparable — a successful green transition is difficult to achieve without a stable economic foundation.

This is where the partnership between China and ASEAN becomes vital. Over the past decade, Beijing has expanded its role significantly in the region's energy sector, anchoring everything from Mekong hydropower and solar farms to electric vehicle supply chains and smart grids.

At its core, this partnership focuses on genuine multilateralism, consultation and respect for different national conditions — principles that are particularly urgent in a sector where long-term stability is paramount. In practical terms, it means turning political commitments into practical initiatives to strengthen emergency response coordination, improve technology-sharing transparency, expand green financing, and standardize cross-border connectivity. If ASEAN hopes to navigate this transition without breaking its supply chains or choking economic growth, this level of regional coordination will become increasingly important.

But this level of coordination cannot just exist on paper; it must be proved on the ground. Infrastructure projects should be judged by their actual utility and practical outcomes, not their political symbolism.

This is precisely why long-term cooperation will only survive if it is approached with genuine pragmatism and mutual sensitivity rather than geopolitical grandstanding. Energy security should never become a mere extension of major-power competition.

However, building physical infrastructure is only half the battle. Infrastructure alone will not be enough without skilled human resources and institutional capacity. Southeast Asia is facing a serious deficit in the technical expertise, regulatory capacity and institutional resilience required to manage these increasingly complex energy systems over the long term. This operational challenge is made even more difficult because energy security can no longer be viewed in isolation. It is now closely linked to maritime security, digital infrastructure, critical supply chains and technological governance.

Ultimately, energy cooperation between China and ASEAN is about far more than electricity generation, trade flows or infrastructure financing. It is a defining test of whether the region can preserve stability and sustain economic progress during a period of intense global uncertainties.

For developing nations, reliable and affordable energy remains the bedrock of social stability and economic opportunity. In an increasingly polarized world, Southeast Asia's resilience will not be built on exclusionary blocs or ideological confrontations. It will depend largely on deep regional connectivity, practical regional cooperation and the ability of regional actors to navigate major-power dynamics with caution, balance and careful strategic judgment.

The author is an associate member of the Royal Academy of Cambodia and director-general of the academy's International Relations Institute of Cambodia. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Heightened vigilance



A security guard uses a metal detector to inspect students' bags as they enter a school in Quezon City, the Philippines, on Tuesday, a day after at least three students were killed and seven others were injured in a school shooting in Tacloban City in the central Philippines. Authorities said two suspects, aged 15 and 14, were arrested, and investigations are underway. NOEL CELIS / REUTERS

Security: Improving governance in emerging areas highlighted

From page 1

He urged BRICS countries to contribute their wisdom to improving governance in emerging areas by guarding against artificial intelligence risks, guiding the sound development of AI, and supporting the UN as the main channel for advancing global governance of cyberspace and digital affairs.

The meeting reviewed the outcomes of BRICS working group meetings on counterterrorism and cybersecurity.

Wang said that BRICS countries are all victims of terrorism and should strengthen counterterrorism cooperation, make full use of the working group mechanism, deepen intelligence sharing, operational coordination and exchanges of experience, and promote the full implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

On cybersecurity, Wang called on BRICS countries to jointly uphold international rules in cyberspace, oppose the creation of artificial divisions and confrontation, encourage countries to sign and ratify the UN Convention against Cybercrime as soon as possible, and actively participate in the international alliance against telecom and online fraud.

The vitality of BRICS lies in equality and mutual benefit, and its strength lies in solidarity and mutual support, Wang said, adding that China, which will assume the BRICS rotating presidency next year, is ready to work with BRICS partners to implement the four China-proposed global initiatives and jointly open up a future of peace and prosperity.

Participants said that amid the impact of unilateralism and rising global uncertainty, BRICS countries should uphold mutual respect, work together to address traditional and nontraditional security challenges, and firmly safeguard the common interests of the Global South.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:41 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:41 PM

WORLD

Iran, US peace talks advance with progress

Technical negotiations see establishment of groups for nuclear issues and sanctions

By **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong and **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE

Progress appears to be holding in the technical talks between the United States and Iran in Switzerland, with the establishment of four working groups to oversee the implementation of the mechanisms of their interim peace agreement, according to Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi.

Gharibabadi, head of Iran's technical negotiating team, said an agreement was reached on several key measures by the high-level follow-up committee on the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding, which met from Sunday into the early hours of Monday.

The Iranian official is among those remaining in Switzerland after four-party talks between Iran, the US, Pakistan, and Qatar to continue negotiations, which are expected to last a week.

According to a report by Iran's Mehr News, four working groups will be formed for sanctions termination, nuclear issues, reconstruction and economic development, and monitoring and implementation.

Future negotiations will then be conducted by a high-level committee.

Oman and Iran will form a team to reach an agreement on "administration of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz" and associated costs and services, they said in a joint statement on Tuesday. The two states will hold talks with coastal countries and other concerned parties, the statement said.

Apart from the communication line to be established among the MoU's member states for the safe passage of commercial ships through the Strait of Hormuz, a conflict prevention unit for Lebanon is also to be created, with Pakistani and Qatari participation.

Meanwhile, Gharibabadi confirmed the US would issue a general license for the sale of Iranian oil, petrochemicals, petroleum products, and related services. This will be published by the Office of Foreign Assets Control, which administers and enforces US economic sanctions programs.

In Pakistan, Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian arrived in Islamabad on Tuesday for talks with officials who have been mediating the negotiations.

In the US, President Donald Trump said on Tuesday that Iran has "fully and completely agreed" to allow nuclear inspectors to return to the country.

"Iran has fully and completely agreed to highest level Nuclear inspections long into the future," Trump posted on his Truth Social platform, adding that bilateral negotiations are "going well".

However, at a news conference in Tehran on Tuesday, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei said Iran's delegation in Switzerland did not meet with IAEA chief Rafael Grossi.

Baghaei said there was no clear schedule for the IAEA to examine the Iranian nuclear facilities.

Trump also said on Tuesday that any Iranian funds unfrozen through sanctions relief or released by the US Treasury would go into a Washington-controlled escrow account, which Tehran could tap to purchase US food and medical supplies.

Frozen assets

Baghaei earlier said Iran would spend its released frozen assets as it sees fit following the US government's remarks.

Abdul Wahed Jalal Nori, a lecturer in the Department of Fundamental and Inter-Disciplinary Studies at the International Islamic University Malaysia, told China Daily that the "institutionalization of dialogue suggests both sides are testing a pathway from confrontation to managed coexistence".

Abdul Wahed said the latest agreement addresses symptoms rather than root causes.

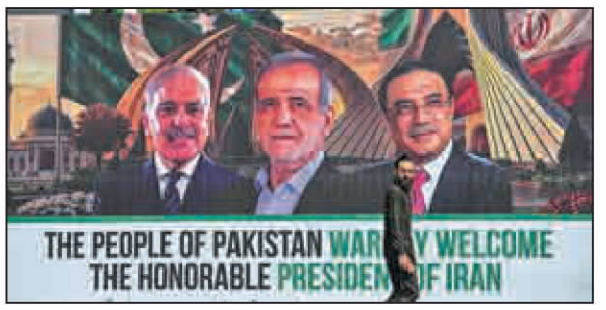
"While sanctions relief and safeguards around the Strait of Hormuz reduce immediate tensions, the fundamental disputes over Iran's regional influence, proxy networks, and the regional security architecture remain unresolved," he said.

Abdul Wahed noted that the real test is whether this evolves into a sustainable political framework or becomes another temporary pause before the next cycle of escalation.

"Neither Washington nor Iran wanted a full-scale war; each wanted leverage. What emerged is not trust, but a pragmatic arrangement driven by mutual exhaustion and the recognition that escalation was becoming too costly," he said.

Agencies contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at jan@chinadailyapac.com



A man walks past a welcoming billboard featuring Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (center), Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari (right), and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif along a roadside in Islamabad, Pakistan, on Tuesday. ANJUM NAVEED / AP

Preserving the past



Palestinian archaeologists work to preserve and restore war-damaged artifacts in the Al-Mawasi area of the Gaza Strip. They collect, document and store antiquities salvaged from governmental and nongovernmental institutions and heritage sites from a tent in Al-Mawasi, where hundreds of thousands of Palestinians are sheltering. ABED RAHIM KHATIB / AP

Security Council to protect peacekeepers

By **MINLU ZHANG** at the United Nations
minluzhang@chinadailyusa.com

The UN Security Council on Tuesday unanimously adopted a resolution calling for strengthened accountability for crimes committed against United Nations peacekeepers.

The resolution was jointly drafted by Pakistan and Denmark and gained 153 co-sponsors.

Speaking after the vote, Sun Lei, China's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, welcomed the adoption of the resolution, saying UN peacekeeping operations are an important instrument for maintaining international peace and security.

Sun said peacekeepers are facing serious traditional and non-traditional security threats amid a complex international security environment. Recent attacks causing casualties among peacekeepers have shown the need for further Security Council action, especially as progress in investigations and accountability has been inadequate, he said.

One Serbian UN peacekeeper was killed in an attack in southern Lebanon earlier this month, while two peacekeepers from the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), from El Salvador and Spain, were injured.

According to the UN, the latest death raised the number of UN peacekeepers killed in the region to seven since Israel resumed "targeted" ground operations against Hezbollah in southern Lebanon in early March.

"Deliberate attacks against peacekeepers violate international humanitarian law and relevant Security Council resolutions," Sun said, adding that China supports the implementation of the resolution and hopes it will help strengthen the safety of peacekeepers and accountability for perpetrators.

China pays tribute to all UN personnel serving in peacekeeping operations and to those who lost their lives in the cause of peace, Sun said.

China is the second-largest contributor to the UN peacekeeping budget and the largest troop-contributing country among the permanent members of the Security Council, Sun said.

China has dispatched more than 50,000 peacekeepers to 29 UN peacekeeping operations authorized by the Security Council, established an 8,000-member peacekeeping standby force and formed a standing peacekeeping police squad.

More than 20 Chinese peacekeepers have died while serving in UN peacekeeping missions, including one female peacekeeping police officer, he said.

According to the United Nations, more than 4,500 UN peacekeepers have lost their lives in the line of duty since UN peacekeeping operations began in 1948.

Pakistan's permanent representative to the United Nations, Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, said attacks against UN peacekeepers across several missions have increased in number and sophistication.

"Peacekeepers are being targeted, often with little accountability," he said, adding that the draft resolution seeks to move the Council beyond statements condemning such attacks.

Resolution 2823 requests the UN secretary-general to report annually to the Security Council on the status of investigations and prosecutions in cases involving the killing of, and acts of violence against, UN personnel serving in peacekeeping operations.

It also requests the secretary-general to provide, within 120 days, options on ways to strengthen the accountability framework for crimes against peacekeepers.

Ahmad said the measures would "help the Council assess what is working, where gaps remain and what further action may be required".

The vote came as the inaugural UN Peacebuilding Week is being held at UN Headquarters in New York from Monday to Friday.

Chinese ambassador refutes Panama accusations

By **SHI GUANG** in New York
shiguang@chinadailyusa.com

Xie Feng, Chinese ambassador and permanent observer to the OAS, refuted Panamanian accusations about inspections on incoming vessels at Chinese ports.

While attending the Dialogue with Permanent Observers of the Organization of American States in Panama on Tuesday, Xie said that since the start of 2026, Panama-flagged ships have been involved in several collisions between merchant or fishing vessels in Chinese waters, resulting in a number of people killed and missing.

Out of a sense of responsibility for maritime safety, Xie said, China has conducted port state control inspections on incoming vessels in accordance with Chinese laws and international conventions, according to a statement released by the Chinese Embassy.

Panama had complained recently about an increase in inspections of Panamanian-flagged vessels that it alleged were being detained in Chinese ports, which it suggested was linked to a dispute over operations at the Panama Canal.

Over the past three decades, cooperation between the two sides regarding the canal had been smooth, with no major disagreements, and no complaints raised about the Chinese enterprise, CK Hutchison, that had operated the ports at both ends of the Panama Canal. Unfortunately, the Supreme Court of Panama issued a ruling in January stating that Chinese control of the ports was unconstitutional, and voided CK Hutchison's license to operate the ports.

The court transferred interim operations of the ports to A.P. Moller-Maersk and Mediterranean Shipping Co.

CK Hutchison said that it "strongly disagrees with the determination" and had taken case to international arbitration.

"Anyone clear-eyed can see this is politically driven. If contracts could be disregarded, market principles ignored, assets taken over and operators forced out at any time, who would have the confidence to invest and seek cooperation?" Xie asked, according to the statement.

About 5 percent of world maritime trade and 40 percent of US container traffic pass through the Panama Canal.

Last year, CK Hutchison negotiated a $2.3 billion sale of its non-port assets to a consortium led by BlackRock. That decision followed threats from the US government that the United States would seize control of the canal if the Chinese company continued to operate it.

Scott Kennedy, a senior advisor at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, told CNBC that it appeared to be "a simple contest for dominance in Latin America", with the US trying to push against Chinese trade interests.

"The most likely scenario is a drawn-out legal fight in multiple jurisdictions, along with substantial political and economic pressure imposed by both Beijing and Washington," Kennedy told CNBC.

Xie urged the Panamanian side to correct its mistakes and protect the legitimate and lawful rights and interests of Chinese businesses, the Embassy statement said.

Extreme heat, storms cause chaos in Europe

By **JULIAN SHEA** in London
julian@mail.chinadailyuk.com

Two children aged two and four are among 18 people who have died so far in a heat wave across France, as large parts of Europe struggle to deal with record-breaking summer temperatures.

Helene Mourges, the prosecutor of the southeastern French town of Carpentras, where the children were reportedly found in a family car, told reporters, "the causes of death are yet to be determined, but the heat is the leading line of inquiry".

Three elderly people in the Bordeaux region died over the weekend from health issues related to the extreme heat. In addition, the BBC reported that 20 people had died by drowning from the start of the weekend to Tuesday morning, as they became increasingly desperate for ways to escape the extreme conditions, as the heat wave known as an Omega block, because of its similarity in shape to the Greek letter, continues to draw up warm air from the Sahara desert with no wind to provide any respite.

The World Meteorological Organization's European State of the Climate 2025 report, published in April this year, showed that at least 95 percent of Europe experienced above-average annual temperatures in 2025, with the annual sea surface temperature for Europe being the highest ever recorded, and that as a whole, Europe is warming at more than double the global rate, a stark message that is being reinforced by current weather conditions.

In the northern Spanish city of San Sebastian, traditionally one of the country's cooler regions, Reuters reported that on Tuesday the temperature was set to reach 40 degrees Celsius, more than twice the city's historical average for the date.

"We are seeing temperatures between five and 10 degrees above normal for this time of year, and in some northern areas even more than 10 degrees above average," said Ruben del Campo, spokesman for Spain's State Meteorological Agency.

Heat wave red alerts were issued in 12 cities across Italy, with reports of faltering power supplies in the northern city of Turin, because of strain on the grid, and similar warnings were issued in Germany, Switzerland and Luxembourg.

In the United Kingdom, temperatures are on course to exceed those recorded in the summer of 1976, the benchmark against which all extreme temperatures are popularly measured. Tuesday was predicted to be the hottest day on record in London, and storms and torrential rain overnight saw firefighters in the capital take 400 calls after midnight.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108
529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

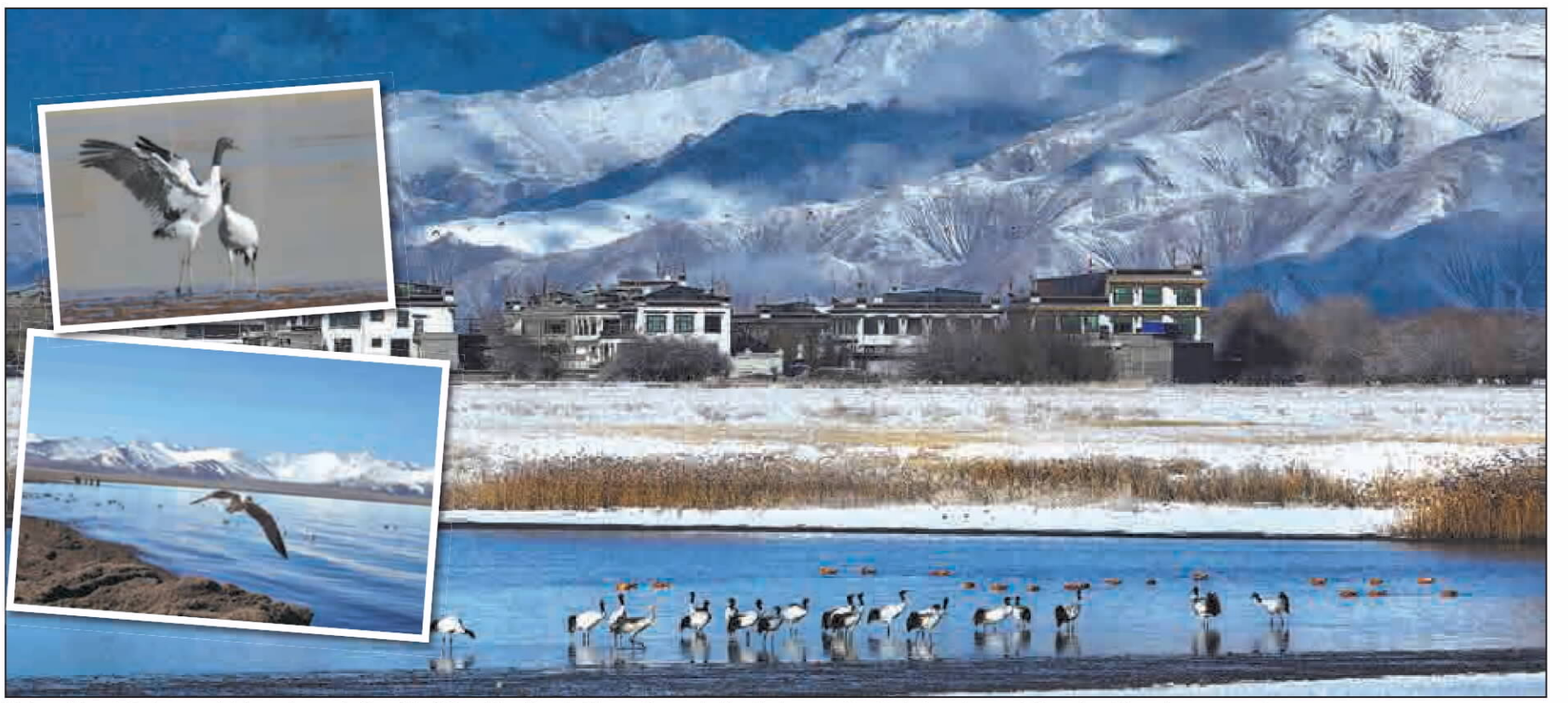
CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1857

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:41 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:41 PM



Main and inset: Various rare bird species can be found in different locations in Xizang, demonstrating the improved ecological environment throughout the autonomous region.
PHOTOS BY JIGME WANGTSO, WANG JIANPENG AND ZHOU YULONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Xizang acts to clean up environment

Autonomous region of Southwest China presents achievements that have won it national recognition in recent years

By **YUAN SHENGGAO**

With an emphasis on environmental protection, the Xizang autonomous region in Southwest China is well on track to become a highland for ecological civilization.

Xizang's office for the construction of a national ecological civilization highland released a report in February on the autonomous region's achievements in environmental protection. The report, consisting of 38 indexes, showed that Xizang has 21 indexes ranking among the leading levels and nine indexes ranking first in the nation.

The report said that the nine top-ranking indexes included air quality, water quality, wetland protection and the ratio of clean energy in power generation.

In the process of building a national highland for ecological civilization, Xizang has presented a number of cases that have won nationwide recognition.

Greening project

Drolma is a resident in Lhasa's Chengguan district. When seeing lush vegetation on the hillsides of Nanbeishan — or the South and North Mountains, she always thinks of her late father.

"My father was a forestry worker who took part in the early phase of the Nanbeishan Greening Project," Drolma said. "He planted the seedlings of trees on the barren hills several years ago. He would be very proud if he had survived to see this surprising transformation."

Xizang kicked off the large-scale Nanbeishan Greening Project in 2021. It is a large-scale ecological restoration effort and a key livelihood project aimed at improving the well-being of residents.

The project aims to expand the green coverage in Lhasa and its surroundings by afforesting more than 137,333 hectares of barren mountains by 2030, mainly covering 35 townships in nine counties and districts in the cities of Lhasa and Lhokha.

Over the past five years, trees have been planted on an area of 73,900 hectares, with a survival rate surpassing 85 percent.

The Nanbeishan Greening Project is only one of the examples of Xizang's efforts in green development. Latest statistics show that the autonomous region's grassland coverage has reached 50 percent of its total land area. Its soil and water conservation rate has been kept at 92.27 percent, basically solving the problem of soil erosion.

It is worth mentioning that Xizang has put more than 50 percent of its land in the ecological protection red line. As a result, the autonomous region has seen a steady recovery of its plateau ecological system, featuring 246 rare animal species and 169 rare plant species on the national list of key protection.

The construction of a highland for ecological civilization has also brought benefits to local economic development, as Xizang is trying to balance growth and ecological protection and turning its environmental advantages into a driver for high-quality development.

Sustainable growth

During the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25), Xizang had been one of the national leaders in terms of economic growth, with its GDP growth rates ranking first for several years.

It is noteworthy that the growth was achieved in a sustainable manner, instead of at the cost of the environment.

In Xizang, the energy consumption per unit of GDP has been lower than the national average over recent years.

Its per capita carbon emissions have been only half the national average. Nonfossil fuels account for more than 50 percent of total energy consumption, nearly 30 percentage points higher than the national average.

The CRRC Lhokha Clean Energy Equipment Industrial Park in Dranang county, Lhokha, for instance, is the first clean energy equipment manufacturing base in Xizang.

"Our core operations are to develop equipment for plateau clean energy development, supporting the green and low-carbon growth of Xizang," said Zou Wenchao, a production manager at the facility.

By June 2025, the industrial park secured orders worth 600 million yuan ($88.8 million), with equipment delivered to key energy projects on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau.

Xizang has seen strong momentum in the development of the clean energy industry. By the end of 2025, the installed capacity of clean energy projects in Xizang, either completed or under construction, reached 33 million kilowatts. In 2024, more than 99 percent of the electricity in Xizang was produced by clean-energy power facilities.

Benefiting residents

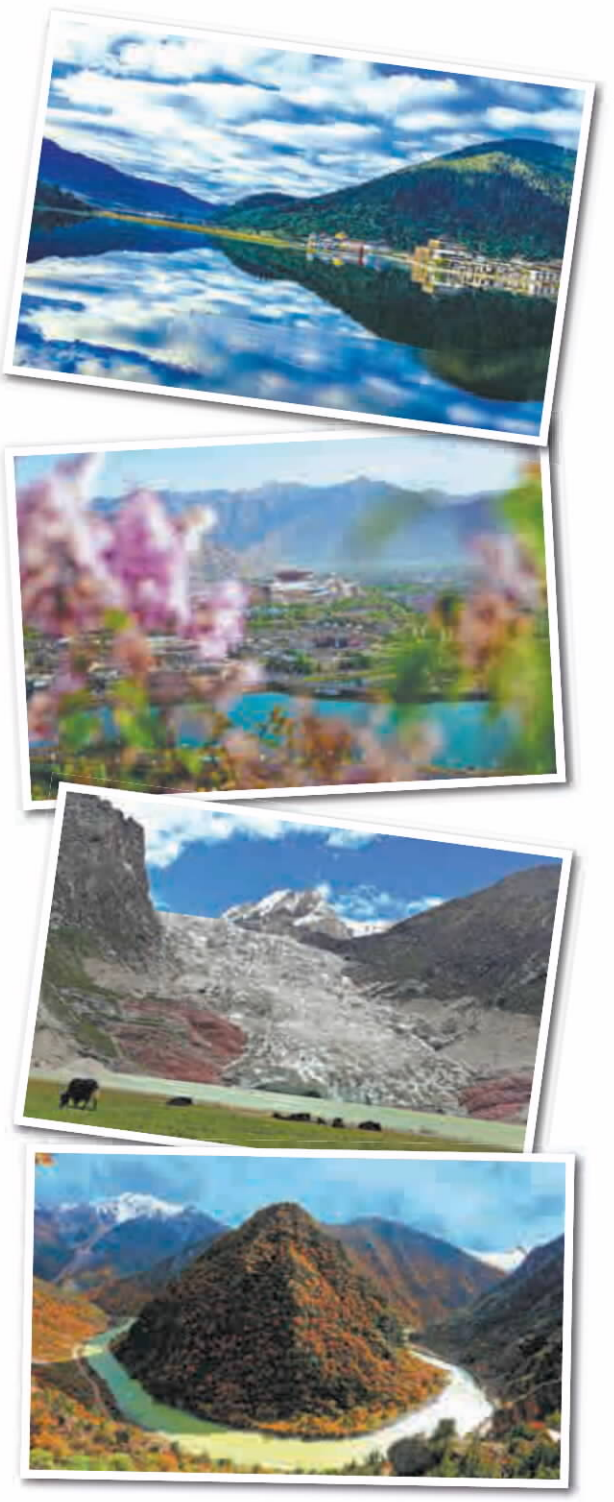
In Xizang, ecological protection initiatives are generating substantial benefits for local residents.

The Nanbeishan Greening Project, for instance, has brought revenue worth 2.55 billion yuan to residents via the purchase of tree seedlings from farmers and the creation of forestry-related jobs.

In Metog county in Nyingchi city, the good environment has led to the booming development of ecotourism and farming of tea and other cash crops, bringing new revenue streams to residents.

Gede township, for instance, is an emerging tea production base in the county, producing leaves under the geographical indication of "Metog Tea".

Local farmer Pema Dechen operates a nearly 2-hectare tea farm in the township. "Last year, my family earned more than 70,000 yuan from tea farming," he said. "That was a big addition to our income."



From top: Known for its clean environment, Lunang town in Nyingchi is an emerging tourist destination. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY The city of Lhasa viewed from the lushly vegetated Nanshan Mountain. TENZIN NYIDA / XINHUA Cattle graze on a grassland near a glacier in Sog county. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY The dense forest lining the Yi'ong Zangbo River in Lhari county makes it one of the most beautiful valleys in China. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Ecotourism is benefiting more than 300,000 rural residents in Xizang as a whole, according to the region's tourism authorities.

In the autonomous region, more rural residents are benefiting from environmental protection because of an ecological compensation mechanism and the creation of environmental protection-related jobs.

Lhundrup, a farmer in Gar county, Ngari prefecture, is a protection worker for a willow forest near the county seat.

With an altitude of more than 4,200 meters, the area was once regarded as "a forbidden land for trees", according to Lhundrup.

"After more than a decade of efforts, we now boast a forest of several hundred hectares," he said. "We are proud that it offers an ecological barrier for our county and a source of revenue for locals."

According to the Xizang Department of Ecology and Environment, the autonomous region has provided more than 440,000 environmental protection-related jobs to local farmers and herders each year during the 14th Five-Year Plan. In addition, it has offered about 17.1 billion yuan as ecological compensation to rural residents.

The improved ecological environment has also created better living conditions for residents.

The department's statistics show that, in recent years, good or excellent air quality has been reported for more than 99 percent of the days in a year in Xizang. Also, the water quality of major rivers such as Yarlung Zangbo and Nujiang has reached the nation's second-class level or better.

Joint efforts

Various regions in Xizang and government bodies at different levels are contributing their efforts to the construction of a national highland for ecological civilization.

During a recent meeting hosted by the Xizang Department of Ecology and Environment, Zhao Shidong, vice-mayor of Lhasa, talked about the city's practices in environmental protection.

"Centering on the general goals of building a national highland for ecological civilization, Lhasa city has more than 10 regulations and policy measures in place to guide our environmental protection efforts," Zhao said.

The official added that the city had invested more than 16.7 billion yuan for green development during the 14th Five-Year Plan, mainly in the areas of emission and pollution reduction, greening, and balancing development between the economy and environment.

"We are aiming for an ecology-prioritized, green development path with plateau characteristics and in accordance with Lhasa's conditions," Zhao said.

For ecological recovery, Lhasa has implemented a program for the protection of mountains, rivers, forests, farmlands, lakes, grasslands and glaciers.

The program is part of China's Shan-Shui Initiative, which was recognized by the United Nations in 2022 as one of the world's 10 groundbreaking projects known as the World Restoration Flagships. The initiative combines 75 large-scale projects to restore ecosystems, from mountains to coastal estuaries, across the country.

Lhasa's efforts in environmental protection also include the classified treatment of domestic waste, construction of sewage disposal plants and domestic waste incineration power plants, according to Zhao.

The second phase of Lhasa Waste Incineration Power Plant, for instance, became operational in November 2024. "The operation of this power plant means that more than 85 percent of Lhasa's domestic waste can be treated via incineration," Zhao said. "And the facility can also generate 234 million kilowatt-hours of electricity annually."

In the same meeting, Dundrup, deputy chief of the Xizang Department of Culture and Tourism, said the cultural tourism sector is implementing practices to balance ecological protection and industrial development.

The official said the cultural tourism industry is a direct beneficiary of Xizang's practice of ecological civilization and a showcase of the region's achievements in environmental protection.

"We are trying to promote a development pattern that prioritizes protection and highlights sustained, high-quality growth," Dundrup said.

"Based on the principle of strict regulations, we are designing tour options featuring 'low impact on the environment and immersive experience for tourists'. We recommend such tours as hiking, photography and sightseeing for travelers and are restricting the development of large-scale tourism projects."

Meanwhile, officials from other administrative institutions in Xizang introduced their practices to boost ecological civilization during the meeting.

An official from the Xizang Department of Housing and Urban-Rural Development said that the department's emphasis had been placed on waste treatment in both rural and urban areas over recent years.

"A total of 4.6 billion yuan has been invested in domestic sewage and garbage treatment projects during the 14th Five-Year Plan, allowing the full coverage of such facilities in all the cities, counties and districts in Xizang," said the official.

An official from Lhasa Customs said that it has focused on preventing the invasion of alien species to better safeguard local biodiversity and ecological safety.

An official from the Xizang Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs said that minimizing the use of farming chemicals and fertilizers, protecting the grassland ecology, recovering polluted farmlands and controlling agricultural pollution have topped the department's environmental agenda.

He said more than 26.3 billion yuan was invested in rural environmental protection during the 14th Five-Year Plan.

ADVERTORIAL

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:41 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:41 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

New plan to attract foreign investment reinforces market reality on the ground

This month, China is hosting a succession of international business gatherings that collectively reflect the importance the world's corporate sector attaches to the Chinese market.

The China International Supply Chain Expo, which opened in Beijing on Monday, has attracted some 700 major companies and industry groups from 85 countries, regions and international organizations. In Dalian, Liaoning province, the ongoing Summer Davos has drawn over 1,700 global executives, researchers and policymakers from more than 90 countries and regions. And in Qingdao, Shandong province, the Qingdao Multinationals Summit recently wrapped up with 357 multinational corporations — 105 of them Fortune Global 500 companies — from 44 countries and regions.

These are not the numbers to expect if global businesses were genuinely preparing to leave China as some allege. Last year, a total of 70,392 new foreign-invested enterprises were established across China, marking a 19.1 percent increase compared with 2024.

The Western claims that China is an "economic threat" — whether "overcapacity", "subsidies", "currency manipulation" or "trade imbalances" — are not new. They are simply recycled in search of listeners. But they have never gained real traction, because China's economic rise has delivered tangible benefits to the world, including developed economies, in the form of stable supply chains, more consumer options and a superlarge market that have created healthy profits for multinationals.

To deflect attention from their own shortcomings in addressing domestic economic challenges in these turbulent times, some Western politicians have resorted to hyping up a "China Shock 2.0" narrative targeting China's "new three" — new energy vehicles, lithium-ion batteries and photovoltaic products.

Yet reality tells a different story — multinationals are still doubling down on their operations in China. The trade data of recent months reinforce this reality. China's foreign trade has continued to demonstrate resilience. Its foreign trade in yuan-denominated terms grew 16.9 percent year-on-year in May. In the process, foreign-invested enterprises remain important contributors to exports, technological innovation and industrial upgrading.

And China's new action plan on foreign investment, rolled out on Monday with fresh incentives for global capital and talent, will only drive a deeper wedge between the China-bashers' rhetoric and the market reality on the ground.

The plan expands market access, addresses practical concerns of international investors and signals that China intends to attract foreign investment through a combination of market size, complete industrial system, good business environment and institutional openness. The plan also calls for faster revisions to regulations governing foreign mergers and acquisitions, smoother cross-border data transfers, stronger support for foreign-funded research and development centers, tax incentives for reinvested profits and enhanced services for major investment projects.

The contradiction between the Western political rhetoric and business reality is getting harder to ignore — especially in the European Union, which is mulling restrictive trade measures against China in the name of boosting its own competitiveness.

EU companies remain deeply embedded in China's industrial ecosystem and European businesses acknowledge the immense cost of "de-risking" from Chinese manufacturing networks. Supply chains built over decades cannot simply be replicated elsewhere by political decree.

The EU says it backs globalization, yet when it comes to China, the bloc acts as if it's a zero-sum game — where China's gain would be Europe's loss. In fact, China-EU economic ties are mutually beneficial. If the China-bashing politicians in Brussels truly want to fix the bloc's competitiveness problem, they should look at home — not cast blame elsewhere.

China's competitive strengths did not emerge from what the China naysayers claim. They stem from innovation, competition and the long-term hard work of the Chinese people. Against this backdrop, reports that Chinese Commerce Minister Wang Wentao is to visit Brussels assume added significance. Both sides have practical incentives to engage in dialogue and continue cooperation.

China's new action plan on foreign investment clearly indicates that the world's second-largest economy welcomes multinational companies by creating new opportunities in finance, health care, education, biotechnology and advanced manufacturing. For global businesses, the choice remains straightforward. Markets, efficiency and growth opportunities matter more than political slogans in some Western capitals. And for all the political noise surrounding "de-risking", the world's boardrooms appear to have already made their decision.

Japan's neo-militarist march continues

In recent weeks, a series of actions by Japan — ranging from provocative military maneuvers and missile deployments to political grandstanding and public displays of militaristic symbols — has proved that the Sanae Takaichi government is resolved to adhere to its dangerous neo-militarist course.

The hyped-up need to respond to the much bandied-about "China threat" was again the pretext for the Japan Self-Defense Forces' participation in the annual "Resolute Dragon 26" joint military exercise with the United States, which began on Saturday in Kyushu and Okinawa. The exercise coincided with reports that the US military plans to deploy the Typhon midrange missile systems in Japan.

When the People's Liberation Army Navy's CNS *Liaoning* aircraft carrier strike group was conducting far-sea training, which concluded on Monday, the strike group had to respond professionally to repeated close-range Japanese harassment.

Showing the lengths that the Takaichi government is going to in pursuing its agenda, at last week's G7 summit in France, Takaichi tried to push for a "joint stockpile" of critical minerals to alleviate the so-called "rare earth shortages" Japan's business and military sectors face. Her aim is to mitigate Japan's self-created predicament by forming a united front against China. However, the initiative met a cold reception and merely served to show her readiness to call white black.

Takaichi's flustered reaction at the G7 summit when the US leader brought up Pearl Harbor for the second time, after first mentioning it during her visit to Washington in March, illustrates that she is not forgetful — she simply wants Japan's unsavory wartime past to evade global scrutiny.

Her government is also attempting to stoke narrow nationalist sentiment at home to rally public support for the resurgence of militarism.

During Japan's match with Tunisia at the 2026 FIFA World Cup at Monterrey Stadium in Guadalupe, Mexico, on Saturday, some Japanese fans repeatedly displayed a "rising sun flag", a symbol of Japanese militarism during World War II.

No wonder, it immediately sparked criticism from China, the Republic of Korea and other victim nations of Japan's aggression in history. Displaying the flag is a flagrant violation of FIFA regulations that explicitly prohibit political, offensive, or discriminatory flags, banners and materials inside World Cup stadiums. The presence of such symbols at an international event points to an alarming degree of "normalization" regarding Japan's historical aggression among some segments of the Japanese public.

Taken together, these actions paint a clear and troubling picture: Japan is pushing forward a multipronged neo-militarist agenda. This is reinforced by its recent drive to expand arms exports, collaborate with Western allies on weapons manufacturing and hike military spending to record levels. Meanwhile, right-wing politicians are intensifying their revisionist campaigns — distorting school textbooks to downplay wartime atrocities and making pilgrimages to the Yasukuni Shrine, a site that shamelessly "glorifies" Japan's war criminals as "national heroes".

These actions are part of a systematic push to undermine Japan's postwar constitutional restraints — driven by right-wing forces' ambitions to transform Japan into a "normal country", if not a fully-fledged war machine.

To that end, they readily paint neighbors, including China, as "security threats", and have even claimed that the Taiwan Strait situation constitutes a "survival-threatening situation" for Japan, one they argue demands an armed response.

The international community cannot afford to overlook the seriousness of this moment. Japan is effectively dusting off the same playbook it used in the lead up to and throughout WWII. The country is fast emerging as a significant danger to regional stability. The historical record of unbridled Japanese militarism is one of devastation. To ensure that history does not repeat itself, the world must stay alert and resolutely push back against these reckless moves.

Song Chen



Opinion Line

BRICS should aim at common, cooperative, sustainable security

As senior officials gathered in New Delhi this week for the 16th Meeting of BRICS National Security Advisors and High Representatives on National Security, an undercurrent was the mounting resolve among developing countries to reject their long-assigned place "on the menu".

Representing nearly half the global population and about 40 percent of the world's GDP, the grouping has evolved from a coordination mechanism for its founding members into one of the most important platforms for the Global South to amplify its voice and influence. Its growing focus on security cooperation indicates that countries long relegated to the margins of global security governance are no longer content to be at someone's mercy.

That broader transformation formed the backdrop to Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's visit to New Delhi for the security meeting.

A series of bilateral meetings Wang had with officials from different countries on the sidelines of the BRICS gathering, including India's National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, Deputy Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Qadir Nizamipour and South Africa's Minister in the Presidency Khumbudzo Ntshavheni, shows China's commitment to enhancing communication and coordination with the BRICS members.

A common thread ran through those discussions. In a world facing mounting security challenges, closer cooperation and coordination are essential.

BRICS members increasingly see themselves as stakeholders in a multipolar international order. Security should encompass economic resilience, social stability and human well-being.

BRICS therefore serves as a builder of multilateralism at a moment when the practice is under strain. The grouping's appeal lies in its rejection of the old either-or logic that has long dominated geopolitics and its upholding of dialogue instead of confrontation, partnership instead of bloc politics, and cooperation instead of containment. In an age seemingly defined by polarization, such common-sense ideas should prevail.

Just as importantly, BRICS should champion political solutions to international disputes.

Too many crises today are framed through the lens of military options before diplomatic ones have been exhausted. Lasting peace cannot be imposed; it must be negotiated. That requires respecting legitimate security concerns, seeking common ground and refusing to allow disagreements to become permanent barriers.

The larger question hanging over global politics is who gets to write the rules. BRICS is a defender of fairness and justice in a system that was designed without the full participation of developing countries. The grouping advocates a more representative multipolar order and a more inclusive form of globalization — one that reflects today's realities rather than yesterday's hierarchies.

Underlying much of this vision is China's Global Security Initiative, which calls for common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security. Its central premise is difficult to dismiss: in an interconnected world, security cannot be hoarded by a few and denied to the many.

The conversations in New Delhi suggest that, despite the grouping's differences on some issues, its members are increasingly inclined toward a common understanding that BRICS should evolve into a force promoting a more balanced international order through cooperation.

BRICS members should strengthen security cooperation by managing internal security matters effectively and delivering visible results in both traditional security and nontraditional areas such as technology governance and counterterrorism.

The overextension of "security" by some countries, however, is becoming an excuse to weaponize economic and trade policies — a dangerous trend that warrants collective attention.

Security challenges today are inextricably linked — no country can be secure at the expense of another. The only viable path forward is common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, grounded in respect for sovereignty and a commitment to dialogue over confrontation.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Industrial foundation needs further strengthening

Editor's note: *China is committed to strengthening its industrial foundation in the coming years. Outlook Weekly news magazine spoke to Chen Xuedong, an academician at the Chinese Academy of Engineering, about improving this vital sector. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

While China has made notable progress in strengthening its industrial foundation, several challenges persist. For instance, there is a high dependence on foreign suppliers for core foundational products.

There remains a gap in the quality and reliability of domestically produced foundational products.

Weaknesses in the industrial foundation have restricted enterprises' access to high-end markets, while the technological content and value added of export products remain relatively low, limiting the manufacturing sector's transition toward higher-value activities.

To address these challenges, China should accelerate the upgrading of its industrial foundation, coordinate efforts to advance industrial foundation reengineering and promote major technological equipment development programs.

National science and technology projects should strategically focus on fields such as instrumentation and industrial software. Establishing a competitiveness evaluation system for the country's industrial foundations is crucial, along with forward-looking planning for the foundational products and technologies required by emerging and future industries. In major national plans, breakthroughs in industrial foundation technologies should be recognized as landmark achievements alongside advances in major equipment and systems.

The enhancement of the industrial foundation should be integrated with the development of high-quality and effective technological equipment. There should be differentiated industry clusters for major technological equipment and specialized industry clusters for small and medium-sized enterprises. World-class industry clusters supported by stable supply chains should be developed to better respond to the restructuring of the global industry chains.

Efforts should focus on key industry chains, organizing coordinated research on critical foundational technologies through enterprise-led collaboration among industry, academia and research institutions.

Research on failure modes and failure mechanisms, as well as long-life and high-reliability design and manufacturing, should be strengthened, alongside pilot-scale testing and validation.

Enterprises producing foundational products should be encouraged to accelerate digitalization, networking and intelligent transformation to improve manufacturing processes. Product lifespan and reliability should be enhanced through the establishment of quality grading systems and premium pricing mechanisms for high-quality products.

Standardization systems should be strengthened, testing and certification capabilities improved, and a deeper understanding of the needs of users developed through effective demand-response mechanisms.

The integration of technological innovation and industrial innovation should be further strengthened. Enterprises should be encouraged to increase investment in new growth drivers, emerging technologies and innovative products, generating original and disruptive technological breakthroughs.

Enterprises should also be encouraged to expand international cooperation. Chinese companies should be guided to establish diversified and multilevel partnerships in key segments and optimize the global layout of research, production and services.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:41 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:41 PM

VIEWS

Prakoso Bhairawa Putera

A bridge linking innovation to adoption

As leaders from business, government, academia, and the innovation sector gather in Dalian, in Northeast China's Liaoning province, for the Annual Meeting of the New Champions 2026, also known as the Summer Davos, one question deserves particular attention: Why do some innovations become part of everyday life while others remain prototypes, pilot projects or just promising laboratory results?

The question of how innovation can scale up is especially relevant as the world searches for new engines of growth. Artificial intelligence, clean energy, biotechnology, smart transportation, digital payments and space technology offer new possibilities.

Yet possibility alone does not translate into public value. A bridge must be built between invention and widespread adoption.

That bridge is institutions.

Innovation scales up when society builds the institutions that transform bright ideas into trusted, funded and widely adopted realities.

Technology opens the door, but institutions make people, markets and governments willing to walk through it. A prototype proves that something can work. Scale shows that society is ready to use it widely.

China offers several examples of scaling. BeiDou, for instance, is not only a story of launching a satellite navigation system. Its real breakthrough lies in how that system has transformed into an ecosystem of applications. BeiDou is now integrated into smartphones, transportation, agriculture, logistics, location-based services, and various civilian applications.

The satellites operate in space, but their economic value grows when they are linked to standards, devices, industries, and everyday services.

BeiDou has scaled not only because of its technological sophistication, but because institutional support has turned strategic infrastructure into a public platform and application market.

A similar lesson comes from new energy vehicles. Electric cars don't become mainstream simply because of better batteries or attractive designs.

Consumers need assurance: availability of charging infrastructure, reasonable operating costs, after-sales services, and a supportive energy ecosystem. This is why new energy vehicles require more than products.

They require policy packages, incentives, standards, charging networks, battery-swapping systems, industrial investment, and coordination among government, automakers, battery producers, and energy providers.

Hence, the innovation being scaled is not just the car, but an entire low-carbon mobility system.

China's high-speed rail and the Fuxing train show how standardization can become an engine of scale. High-speed rail is a transportation project, but at the national scale it becomes an industrial system, a public service system, and a system of trust.

Global Lens

For high-speed trains to operate safely, punctually, and across many regions, they require technical standards, efficient operators, rail networks, signaling systems, manufacturing capacity, maintenance systems, financing, and a culture of safety.

Fuxing shows that innovation is not just about speed, but also about organizing technology into a replicable, expandable, and trustworthy system.

Indonesia's Quick Response Code Indonesian Standard is another example. Before QRIS, digital payments were fragmented, with multiple applications and service providers, each having its own code and system.

For small merchants, especially micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises, this diversity was a barrier.

QRIS changed this by introducing a national standard, enabling one code to accept payments from different applications. Here, innovation becomes a public utility. The regulator doesn't merely supervise the market; it builds a shared standard so that innovation is used more easily by millions of people.

QRIS shows that scalable innovation does not always require complex technology. Sometimes, the most crucial innovation is a standard that makes technology simple, affordable and inclusive. When small shops, street vendors, tourism actors, public transport users, and everyday consumers use the same payment standard, innovation ceases to be a novelty and becomes a new habit.

From BeiDou and new energy vehicles to high-speed rail, Fuxing and QRIS, a similar pattern can be seen. Innovation scales up when there is public trust, standardization, long-term financing, supporting infrastructure and collaborative governance.

No single entity can scale innovation on its own. Researchers discover, startups test, industries produce, governments set standards, financial institutions provide capital, and society legitimizes through everyday use.

This message is vital for the Summer Davos 2026. The world isn't short of great ideas. What is often lacking is the mechanism to scale those ideas to work socially.

Therefore, global forums such as the Annual Meeting of the New Champions should not only celebrate new technologies, but also discuss how those technologies can become trusted, funded, adopted, and sustained.

Today's "new champions" are not the first inventors of technology but the societies, companies, cities, and countries that can build bridges between discovery and broad adoption.

They understand that innovation doesn't just come from laboratories, but also thrives in institutions, standards, financing, infrastructure, and public trust.

Recognizing this challenge, the National Research and Innovation Agency of the Republic of Indonesia has launched an initiative to strengthen the bridge between research and real-world impact.

The concept is simple but strategic: Indonesia needs a shared home for innovation where ready-to-use technologies can be displayed, connected, licensed, incubated, and matched with industries, state-owned enterprises, local governments, universities, investors, startups, and communities.

As a national innovation showcase, hub, and one-stop service, the initiative embodies the principle that innovation can scale only when good ideas are supported by institutions that connect knowledge, intellectual property, financing, co-creation, co-development, and public use.

Ultimately, innovation is not only invented but also organized. Breakthroughs open possibilities, but institutions turn those possibilities into realities.

The future will not be shaped only by those with the best ideas, but by those who can enable good ideas to grow into real, broad, and sustainable public value.

The author is a senior researcher and director of Policy Formulation for Research, Technology, and Innovation, at the National Research and Innovation Agency, the Republic of Indonesia.

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



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Anthony Moretti

China affirms vision of a better global future

The first quarter of the 21st century has offered several reminders of how volatile the world is. Multiple wars dotted the news. Poverty, food insecurity and economic displacement threatened millions of people. A global pandemic crippled humanity. And most recently, public officials and private citizens have warned about the dangerous potential of artificial intelligence.

Amid these and other worries, China released a timely white paper titled "More Just and Equitable Global Governance: China's Principles, Proposals and Actions" on June 17.

The document outlines the country's vision of a brighter future, not just for developed nations, but crucially for the developing world.

At its core is a call for "building a just and equitable global governance system". Multilateralism, described as the "only viable path forward", alongside major countries acting in a responsible manner, is seen as essential in enabling such an environment.

Nations must engage in consultation, cooperation and communication. Additionally, if nations prioritize "we" before "me" and affirm that each of the world's 8 billion people deserves domestic stability and international peace, then China's often-stated goal of a shared future for humanity can be realized.

China's Global Governance Initiative is frequently referenced in the white paper. Unveiled in September 2025, the initiative advocates for the international rule of law, supports multilateralism, places people at the center of all efforts and demands tangible solutions for real-world challenges.

Global Lens

World peace and global development are vital to the success of the GGI, which has already been endorsed by more than 160 nations. Releasing the white paper, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said the GGI "has evolved from a Chinese proposal into an international practice, and it is showing ever growing vitality".

The white paper underscores a crucial point: no country, no matter how powerful, should place itself above the United Nations, which is described as the "most comprehensive, representative and authoritative international organization" that "plays an irreplaceable and vital role in global governance".

China's unwavering support for the UN has been regularly demonstrated. The white paper affirms that the UN should occupy its rightful position atop the global hierarchy of organizations tackling the world's most vexing challenges.

China's endorsement of the UN is especially critical now, as certain nations appear determined to undermine it financially and structurally.

The divisive rhetoric emanating from certain capitals contrasts sharply with the positive assessment by Beijing.

The white paper also outlines the proactive steps that China has taken on the global stage during this century. It brought together Iran and Saudi Arabia, restoring ties between these longtime adversaries. China has steadfastly supported statehood for Palestine, and pushed for the African Union to gain membership in the G20.

It also remains resolute in not interfering in the domestic affairs of other nations and advocates for the economic wishes of the Global South. China recognizes the value of people-to-people exchanges. It provided vaccines and masks to vulnerable nations during the COVID pandemic.

Collectively, these actions clearly demonstrate, as the white paper states, that China continues to respond "to the common aspiration of the international community" while "addressing the most pressing issues in global governance".

China rightfully deserves recognition for its commitment to global governance, yet it doesn't regard itself as superior to the UN or any other globally respected organization. It has repeatedly reaffirmed the paramount role of the UN in addressing global challenges.

Why do China's recent achievements matter? Because, frankly, few other nations are stepping up to do the same. The US has intentionally reduced its global presence. Europe is grappling with a corrosive nationalism and sluggish growth. Japan continues to show a reckless disregard for history as it commits itself to a militaristic future. Meanwhile, no other nation, or bloc of nations, can move the needle.

On the other hand, China is acting responsibly. Through the four global initiatives — the Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative, Global Civilization Initiative and Global Governance Initiative — announced in recent years, President Xi Jinping has articulated a vision for a much better future for the world.

The current generation will benefit, and perhaps the next generation could embrace a world in which reliability replaces recklessness.

The white paper should be studied by those interested in learning more about how China envisions the future and its role in it. Readers will find that the document was not created to temporarily boost global opinion about China.

Rather, "More Just and Equitable Global Governance: China's Principles, Proposals and Actions" reminds us that "the baton of history is in our hands, and the question of where global governance is headed demands an answer".

The author is an associate professor in the Communication and Organizational Leadership Department at Robert Morris University in Pennsylvania, US. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Zhou Shuchun

The author is chief researcher at the China Watch Institute, China Daily.

Opening a new chapter in parenting

Two recent headlines have reignited a familiar debate about parenting and family education. On June 15, the United Kingdom announced a ban on a range of social media apps for children under 16, saying the move aims to "give childhood back to children".

Earlier in the month, Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang joked that "once you've been raised by Asian parents, you need therapy for life".

Juxtaposed, these otherwise unrelated remarks raise a critical question: What challenges does family education face in the age of artificial intelligence, particularly in Asia?

The UK's observation that today's children are growing up in a world where "technology has invaded every area of life" aptly captures the environment shaping the youngest generation.

Huang's self-deprecatory quip, made days ahead of the college entrance exam, or *gaokao*, triggered a heated debate over Asian — especially Chinese — parenting. As usual, opinions were sharply divided.

But Huang's reflection was itself two-sided. It was not merely a criticism of Asian parenting, as some have framed it.

While joking that he was criticized all his life — alluding to the East Asian tendency to tell children they are never quite good enough — he also credited that upbringing for making him tougher. In his view, Asian children often grow into adults who are exceptionally resilient.

The UK's observation that today's children are growing up in a world where "technology has invaded every area of life" aptly captures the environment shaping the youngest generation.

Any discussion on Asian-style parenting or family education must move beyond simplistic praise or blame. Take China as an example. It is undeniable that many families impose high standards while falling short on emotional communication, leaving some children with psychological scars.

Yet Chinese families almost universally regard education as central to a child's growth, emphasizing foundational skills such as math and language as a means of securing a competitive advantage.

This rigor and measured pressure can foster resilience and drive, which is a likely factor behind the consistently superior academic performance of East Asian students globally.

This parenting style has historical and cultural contexts. Rooted in Confucian traditions and embedded in the national psyche, it is a value system based on the belief that "jade must be polished to shine". It is also a mirror of a parental mindset shaped by hardship.

Generations who lived through social upheaval and scarcity made it their life's mission to ensure the security of their children. They rarely verbalize their affection and express their love through sacrifice, investing everything in the education of their children. This has been the defining trait of Chinese parents for decades.

Clearly, Asian-style parenting should not be dismissed outright. But we also cannot ignore the fact that the emerging AI era may pose sharper challenges here than elsewhere.

As AI reshapes how children learn and grow, the limitations of traditional models are becoming increasingly apparent.

Problems linked to AI — from over-reliance on technology to emotional detachment — may get amplified in East Asian societies, compelling a fundamental rethink.

For instance, if traditional East Asian family education leans too heavily toward knowledge over capability, there's an urgent need to correct this.

As AI takes over repetitive and memory-based tasks, human strengths — creativity, imagination, interpersonal skills — become paramount.

Grades may determine short-term outcomes, but mindset shapes lifelong trajectories. Parents must get over their obsession with scores and prioritize holistic development, moral grounding, innovative thinking and critical inquiry to encourage exploration.

Similarly, the rise of AI risks fostering children's dependence on digital companionship, including chatbots — a likely reason behind the UK's social media ban. In cultures already criticized for limited parent-child interaction, this risk intensifies. The temptation to outsource parenting to AI warrants still more serious caution.

The home is the first school of life, and parents are a child's first teachers. In China, family education has evolved from a private matter into a national priority.

From the first Five-Year Plan for Family Education in 1996 and the National Family Education Guidelines in 2010 to the Family Education Promotion Law enacted in 2021, China's approach has steadily become more systematic and institutionalized.

Encouragingly, as Gen Z and millennials become parents and social norms evolve, the traditional archetype is also shifting.

Many see this as a conscious effort to break cycles of intergenerational trauma and build healthier family relationships. Clashes between old and new mindsets might persist for some time to come, but a new era of family education has undoubtedly begun.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:41 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:41 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

SLAVICA STAMENIC

Pioneering partnership

Serbian-Chinese strategic partnership is an example of promising South-South cooperation

Contemporary international politics is undergoing a period of deep structural transformations, in which bilateral relations are increasingly becoming precise indicators of broader global processes. The state visit of the president of Serbia to China in May opened up significant space for observing how bilateral partnerships shape the position of states in an increasingly fluid world order. During this visit, the two sides focused on deepening cooperation and implementing the concept of "a community with a shared future", and signed 23 bilateral agreements, reflecting the multidimensional nature of the two countries' relationship.



Both sides frequently use the term "ironclad friendship" to describe and emphasize the strength and continuity of their relationship, which goes far beyond mere economic exchanges to encompass strategic alignment.

Europe has developed a complex policy toward China, treating it simultaneously as an economic partner and a strategic rival. However, China is an important trade partner not only for Europe, but also for many individual European countries. It is clear that their trade relations remain sound even though some deny the fact that the Europe-China and Serbia-China trade ties are mutually beneficial.

Serbia's relations with China are multilayered. For instance, according to China's General Administration of Customs, total bilateral trade grew from $596 million in 2016 to $6.48 billion in 2025, representing more than a tenfold increase in less than a decade. In addition, Serbia was among the first European countries to abolish the visa requirements for Chinese citizens, and the free trade agreement, which entered into force in 2024, further deepened economic ties between the two countries.

A particularly impressive dimension of the Serbian president's state visit to China was the signing of a joint statement on promoting the four global initiatives that China has proposed, namely the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, the Global Civilization Initiative and the Global Governance Initiative. China actively promotes these frameworks as a model of cooperation among Global South countries, and as a reference and support for a United Nations-centered global governance system, as they uphold the principles of non-intervention, multipolarity and the right of every sovereign state to independently define its own development path. By aligning with this conceptual framework, Serbia explicitly sides with those countries that would work together to build a fairer and more inclusive international order.

Serbian-Chinese cooperation is mutually beneficial and will contribute to a more stable and inclusive model of global governance with concrete institutional results on the ground.

Serbia has become a pioneer in advancing China's four initiatives in Central and Eastern Europe. Having signed a memorandum of understanding with the China International Development Cooperation Agency in October 2023, Serbia now leverages the Global Development Initiative as an important instrument to advance its modernization, and above all, to serve its core national interests.

Cooperation between Serbia and China can also be viewed as a major case study of the South-South cooperation model. Its success depends on the ability to achieve real transfer of technology, knowledge and sustainable development practices alongside traditional economic exchanges. According to HBIS Group, one of China's largest State-owned steelmakers, China-Serbia cooperation in green steelmaking has achieved a major breakthrough, with researchers confirming that Serbian iron ore can meet green steel standards through hydrogen metallurgy. This shows that Chinese investment can also help modernize Serbia's existing industrial capacities and empower Serbia's green development.

Thus, the next phase of this partnership can focus more on measurable and concrete development outcomes. In practice, this implies significantly greater involvement of universities, domestic research centers and local business entities, as well as stricter alignment of infrastructure projects with international environmental protection and public finance transparency standards.

The areas where the announced cooperation appears most promising include green energy, the digital economy and artificial intelligence, all of which could expand economic ties through knowledge transfer. China is a global leader in green development, and Serbia could become a bridge for the transfer of this expertise to European markets and consumers if it implements facilitating policies and pools resources to help the whole country gradually build institutional capacities for absorbing that knowledge from China and developing local solutions based on Serbia's national conditions.

As Serbia aspires to European Union membership, every project must be "EU-ready". Serbia can play the role of a "translator" between Chinese development models and European regulatory frameworks.

To summarize, Serbian-Chinese relations in 2026 can represent one of the most illustrative examples of South-South cooperation. They can inspire other Global South countries to explore their own ways of sustainable development. Serbia, as a small country in the heart of Europe, possesses limited room for geopolitical balancing. The historical experience of countries in similar positions shows that short-term gains from diversification can easily be neutralized by long-term uncertainty if the strategic orientation remains vague. Therefore, in an era of global turmoil and increasingly pronounced multipolarity, the ability to balance smartly, manage risks and conduct foreign policy pragmatically will become a key survival test for all states striving to preserve their room to maneuver. Serbian-Chinese cooperation is mutually beneficial and will contribute to a more stable and inclusive model of global governance with concrete institutional results on the ground.

The author is a professor at the Faculty of Diplomacy and Security at University Union Nikola Tesla in Belgrade, Serbia. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

SUN CHUANWANG

Creating new edge

Building on the Maritime Silk Road and the 15th Five-Year Plan, China can strengthen its marine industries for a more solid foundation

The ocean serves as a key strategic frontier for high-quality development, as well as a core platform for China to expand its opening-up. The outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) provides a clear pathway for pursuing maritime strength in the new era, prioritizing the high-quality joint construction of the Belt and Road Initiative and the high-quality growth of the marine economy.



The outline sets objectives: promoting coordinated land-sea development planning; strengthening, optimizing and expanding marine industry; and promoting the building of a maritime community with a shared future. On the basis of the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25), which focused on consolidating foundations and achieving scale expansion, China's marine economy has now entered a new stage marked by structural optimization and accelerated opening-up.

In 2025, according to data released by the Ministry of Natural Resources, China's marine economy recorded steady growth, with its gross ocean product surpassing 11 trillion yuan ($1.63 trillion), a year-on-year increase of 5.5 percent. Its share of GDP rose to 7.9 percent, making it a key pillar supporting the stable growth of the national economy.

On the one hand, China's marine industries became more competitive. According to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, China's shipbuilding sector maintained its global lead for the 16th consecutive year in 2025, accounting for over 50 percent of the global market, and offshore wind power and other emerging sectors are picking up speed.

On the other hand, opening-up and cooperation in the marine sector expanded further. It is estimated that the Maritime Silk Road handled more than 5.4 million twenty-foot equivalent units in 2025 alone, up 9.11 percent year-on-year and connecting 150 ports across 48 countries and regions.

To date, China has engaged in targeted collaboration with Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Europe and beyond. Win-win outcomes have been achieved in projects such as the China-Malaysia cold chain shipping route and the Red Sea project in Saudi Arabia. These initiatives have not only solidified the foundation for China's domestic economic growth but also provided replicable and scalable experience for international maritime cooperation.

Nevertheless, the sector's transformation still faces challenges such as industrial homogenization, blocked flows of institutions and factors and intensifying global competition. Accordingly, China needs to pursue industrial synergy, institutional innovation and opening-up cooperation to transform itself from a large maritime country into a maritime powerhouse, shifting its marine economy from scale to quality, and from domestic circulation to deeper integration between domestic and international markets.

First, China can strengthen the synergy among marine industries and consolidate the foundation for high-quality development.

Coordination mechanisms can be gradually established for the three major marine economic circles in northern, eastern and southern China with clearly defined and differentiated roles. China should also leverage marine economy demonstration zones to promote integration such as "wind power +ranching" and "port+data". For example, Guangdong's "Fuxi No 1" wind power-fishery integrated project can produce around 900 metric tons of high-quality fish annually, delivering integrated industrial growth and optimal resource utilization.

International cooperation can also be deepened. The BRI and BRICS cooperation mechanisms can be used to advance cooperation in port operations, marine equipment and fishery farming. That would help Chinese enterprises participate in the construction of key ports in Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Africa to build a global Maritime Silk Road network, facilitate the export of ships and offshore wind power equipment as well as technical standards, advance China's deep-sea aquaculture technologies, and build marine ranches jointly with some Southeast Asian countries.

Furthermore, emerging industries can be expanded. Aligning with the priorities of the outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan, China can accelerate marine biomedicine, seawater desalination and other industries, support Qingdao, Xiamen and other cities in building marine science and innovation centers to achieve breakthroughs in core technologies in deep-sea exploration and desalination, promote the integration of offshore wind power and deep-sea aquaculture by building demonstration projects that combine "blue granary and green energy" and cultivate the marine digital economy by developing shipping big data and crossborder e-commerce overseas warehouses to open up new growth avenues.

Second, China can advance marine-related institutional innovation to facilitate the cross-border flow of production factors. On the one hand, it should innovate opening-up mechanisms and optimize the business environment. For instance, promoting the "single window" customs clearance model among ports along the Maritime Silk Road could help reduce cross-border trade costs.

Moreover, authorities should explore reforms to facilitate the cross-border flow of marine resources, such as piloting a negative list for the outbound transfer of marine data in areas including the Hainan Free Trade Port and the Lin-gang Special Area in Shanghai, thereby simplifying approval processes for cross-border marine shipping data. On the other hand, the marine economic accounting system can be improved by incorporating blue carbon, the marine digital economy and other emerging sectors into the calculation framework, thereby more accurately reflecting development outcomes.

Third, China can deepen international cooperation in the marine sector. In the energy realm, greater connectivity can be pursued by promoting the integration of deep-sea oil and gas exploration with offshore wind, wave energy and other renewables, as well as by jointly building maritime energy corridors with partners in the Middle East, Southeast Asia and Russia. Moreover, supporting Chinese enterprises in global marine energy development would help enhance China's voice in international markets and safeguard national energy security.

On the environmental front, strengthening cooperation on ecological protection is equally important. This calls for joint efforts with partner countries on marine pollution control, coral reef protection and coastal restoration.

A thriving marine economy strengthens a nation; a strong marine economy empowers a nation. The 15th Five-Year Plan period is critical for China to build itself into a maritime power and develop new strengths in the marine economy.

Building on the momentum of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road and closely following the strategic priorities of the 15th Five-Year Plan, China can strengthen its marine industries for a more solid foundation, advance institutional innovation for higher efficiency, and expand global cooperation for broader opportunities.

By better integrating domestic and international markets, China will achieve higher-quality development of its marine economy, injecting ocean-driven momentum into the nation's drive to build a modern socialist country, while contributing Chinese wisdom and strength to the building of a maritime community with a shared future.

The author is a distinguished professor at the Southeast China Maritime Governance Laboratory at Xiamen University and the leading scientist at the Fujian Ocean Innovation Center. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:41 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:41 PM

BUSINESS

Key role in global supply chains stressed

Greater integration, coordination and development core of transformation

By **ZHONG NAN**
zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

Technological innovation and green development are becoming key drivers of China's supply-chain transformation, prompting foreign companies to expand local investment and partnerships in advanced manufacturing, industrial technology and sustainable agriculture, senior executives said on Tuesday.

Speaking at the fourth China International Supply Chain Expo, or CISCE, running from Monday to Friday in Beijing, they noted that China's supply chain is shifting from basic connectivity toward greater integration, coordination and innovation.

Yin Zheng, executive vice-president of China and East Asia operations at Schneider Electric, said that amid the combined uncertainties of climate change, geopolitical tensions and trade frictions, supply chain resilience — the ability to withstand disruptions, recover quickly and continuously adapt — has become a critical capability for companies seeking to navigate economic cycles.

"China, the world's only country with a complete industrial system, will continue to play a vital role as both a stabilizer and innovation driver for global supply chains," said Yin, adding that the country has become one of the group's most important global supply chain hubs and one of its four global research and development centers, with local procurement exceeding 90 percent.

The French industrial conglomerate is nearing completion of its new industrial park in Wuxi, Jiangsu province, while its industrial park in Xiamen, Fujian province, is set to begin operations by the end of this year and will become Schneider Electric's largest global medium-voltage production base, strengthening support for China's industrial transformation and supplying customers around the world.

The broader appeal of China's market and innovation ecosystem is also evident in official data. The number of foreign-invested enterprises in China has risen for three consecutive years to surpass 530,000, with total accumulated foreign direct investment exceeding $3.6 trillion, data from the Ministry of Commerce show.

In 2025, more than 8,000 overseas businesses increased their investment in China, a jump of over 10 percent year-on-year.

Zhai Jingli, deputy CEO of APP China-Sinar Mas Group, Indonesia's integrated plantation-pulp-paper group, said industrial development is moving beyond strengthening individual value chains toward fostering broader industrial ecosystems, where companies from different sectors can jointly address sustainability challenges and unlock new growth opportunities.

To support this transition, the Indonesian company, also a third-time CISCE participant, unveiled a new industry initiative to promote value co-creation through decarbonization, digital innovation and ecosystem partnerships at this year's expo.

"Over the next three to five years, China's paper sector is expected to move toward greener, smarter and more interconnected development, with ecosystem-building becoming a key source of competitiveness," Zhai said.

Agriculture is another sector where technological innovation is strengthening supply chains and creating new opportunities for sustainable growth. Syngenta Group, the Basel, Switzerland–headquartered agricultural technology company, showcased a comprehensive portfolio of solutions spanning seed innovation, sustainable crop protection, digital agriculture and integrated technical services at this year's expo.

Su Fu, president of Syngenta Group China, said the country is rapidly emerging as a key testing ground for artificial intelligence-enabled agricultural innovation, with advances in breeding technologies and digital services expected to improve productivity, sustainability and supply chain efficiency.

During the expo, the company announced new partnerships and initiatives with industry and food-sector players, including value-chain cooperation with McDonald's China and McCain Foods China, as well as the release of a regenerative agriculture practice evaluation guide with partners, as part of broader efforts to advance regenerative agriculture and enhance resilience across China's agricultural supply chains.



A photo shows the scene of the fourth China International Supply Chain Expo in Beijing on June 22. WU YIBIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

530,000
number of foreign-invested enterprises in China at the end of 2025, according to the Ministry of Commerce

$3.6 trillion
total accumulated foreign direct investment in China for three consecutive years, according to the Ministry of Commerce

8,000
number of overseas businesses that increased their investment in China in 2025, according to the Ministry of Commerce

Ericsson bets on nation's innovation to power its AI evolution

By **CHENG YU** and **ZHANG XIAOMIN**
in Dalian, Liaoning

China will remain one of Ericsson's important markets as the Swedish telecoms equipment maker doubles down on next-generation mobile networks as a key enabler of artificial intelligence and physical AI in the country, a senior executive said at the ongoing 2026 Summer Davos.

Chafic Nassif, head of Ericsson Northeast Asia and senior vice-president at Ericsson, said: "China's combination of scale, speed of execution and innovative industrial ecosystem make it a uniquely critical market in the global technology landscape."

Speaking in an interview with China Daily at the 2026 Summer Davos, also known as the 17th Annual Meeting of the New Champions, in Dalian, Liaoning province, Nassif said that there are only a few countries globally that are as forward-leaning as China — probably none at the same scale.

He said: "Scale is one thing. The second is the ability to be at the forefront of technology. The third is the R&D capability, from universities through to applied research."

"China is important to us and the world. And moving forward, it will continue to be even more important," he added.

Ericsson, which has long positioned itself as an infrastructure provider across global markets, sees China not just as a commercial opportunity but as a key arena for technological evolution in AI-driven connectivity.

"We see ourselves playing a very big role in driving AI and physical AI moving forward," Nassif said. "To be a credible player in that evolution, we have to be where it is happening."

His comments come as global technology supply chains fragment under geopolitical pressure, with increasing scrutiny on cross-border cooperation in semiconductors, telecommunications and AI.

"There is a lot of geopolitics happening, and different countries are closing in on themselves," he said. "I hope that is not going to be the strategy in China. We believe strongly in openness and diversity."

Ericsson, he added, views collaboration as central to long-term innovation in connectivity technologies.

"We believe very heavily in diversity, and it is very important that we continue to foster deep collaboration for the betterment of industries and ultimately humanity," Nassif said.

China's telecom and digital ecosystem, he said, stands out for its ability to rapidly industrialise new technologies.

"It is a phenomenal and unique market. It is always mind-boggling how scale works in China, and even more impressive how fast the speed of execution is," he said.

He pointed to China's early nationwide deployment of 5G Standalone networks as an example of its infrastructure-first approach. "China was the first to roll out 5G Standalone across the whole country from the beginning," he said.

That momentum, Nassif said, is now extending into next-generation networks and AI-native communications systems.

"The formula is the same. We are now looking ahead to 6G, which will be AI-native," he said. "We are starting to collaborate with Chinese companies in this space."

He added that so-called physical AI — artificial intelligence embedded in robotics and autonomous systems — will play a growing role in industrial transformation.

"We already see companies like Unitree and others driving that economy forward," he said, referring to Chinese robotics firms. "We also see companies coming very close to autonomous driving, including BYD and Xiaomi."

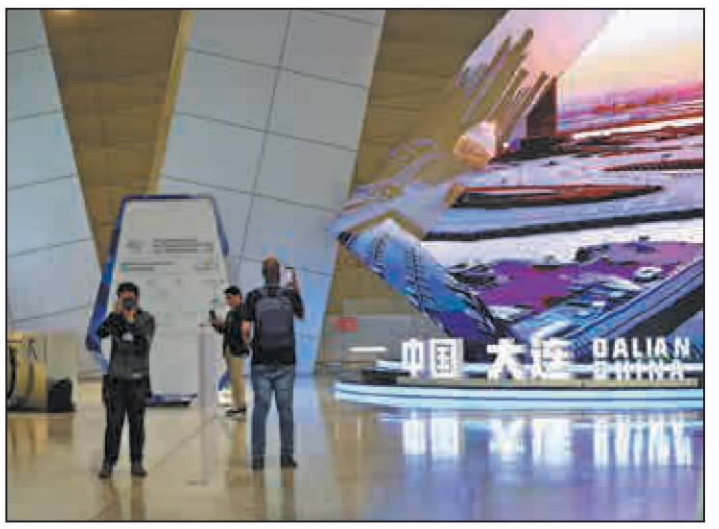
For Ericsson, China's innovation ecosystem — spanning universities, research institutes and manufacturing supply chains — remains central to its global strategy.

"That is China's unique capability: the ability to industrialize at massive scale," Nassif said.

Despite geopolitical uncertainty, he expressed optimism that collaboration would continue to deepen.

"We have very positive hope this will continue and even grow," he said. "We hope China continues to foster openness, because we want to continue working together for the evolution of our industries."

Contact the writers at chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn



Visitors check out the venue guidance map prior to the 2026 Summer Davos, also known as the 17th Annual Meeting of the New Champions, in Dalian, Liaoning province, on June 22. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY



> "China's combination of scale, speed of execution and innovative industrial ecosystem make it a uniquely critical market in the global technology landscape."
>
> **Chafic Nassif,** head of Ericsson Northeast Asia and senior vice-president at Ericsson

Expert says Chinese consumption will grow

By **OSWALD CHAN** in Hong Kong
oswald@chinadailyhk.com

With advantages in traditional global exports and manufacturing, China is transitioning to innovation-driven advanced manufacturing, and domestic consumption will gradually become the driving force for the country's economic growth, said Joe Ngai, senior partner and chairman of McKinsey & Co Greater China office.

With geopolitical tensions and trade disputes, coupled with rising labor and production costs in China, as well as supply chain disruptions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine, global enterprises in the last few years have been maintaining operations in China while expanding production to at least one other country to reduce risks and costs, as well as to diversify their markets.

"In the last couple of years, although there are more trade barriers, China has exported more than ever before. The trade linkages between China and the rest of the world have grown even faster," Ngai told China Daily in an interview.

Ngai is confident that while China moves up the value chain ladder toward high-tech manufacturing, the country can still maintain competitiveness on the low-tech side.

"The scale of the Chinese market makes domestic manufacturing still competitive. That scale has enabled it to drive the prices and supply chain costs with more economies of scale even on the low-tech side," Ngai told China Daily.

China is in some ways an innovation-driven economy, and innovation has been applied to the actual manufacturing process, driving the way toward advanced manufacturing.

"China is progressing from labor-intensive manufacturing into high-tech manufacturing. There are many parts of the economy that need capital investment and capacity and therefore have pretty good opportunities," Ngai said.

"We are exporting not only hard goods, but also our methodologies and processes. The next phase of China growth is not exporting finished goods, but exporting ideas, intellectual property, and engineering capacity," he added.

Ngai said that multinationals in the past introduced many of their technologies and much of their know-how to China. "Now we may be seeing China bring its many technologies and know-how to other countries. As the next phase begins in the industrialization of other countries, I think China can play a very big role in helping that industrialization."

The traditional export sector remains resilient and the country is transitioning toward advanced manufacturing. Ngai therefore does not believe China has to change completely from a manufacturing economy into a pure consumption economy, even though consumption will be a force in Chinese economic growth.

"Chinese consumers will spend as they have plenty of savings and personal debt in China is actually quite low," Ngai said. "In the last couple of years, there has been a slight confidence issue because of plunging real estate prices, but as the market stabilizes, Chinese consumption will continue to grow."

He added that the contribution of the consumption segment to the country's gross domestic product will grow, but it will take time to gauge how fast the segment will expand.

Ngai said that Chinese consumer sentiment is recovering, but consumers are now more selective, sophisticated, experimental, and willing to try new things and look for value.

In recent years, the Chinese economy has been embroiled in an involution characterized by excessive and race-to-the-bottom competition with aggressive price cuts and thin profit margins, which has occurred across a wide range of sectors. Cut-throat competition is also associated with overcapacity, excessive supply, and low capacity utilization.

At the microeconomic level, excessive price competition can be very frustrating for a company, as prices keep dropping and there may also be oversupply issues. But from a macroeconomic perspective, competition induces a lot of innovation and new thinking.

"If I have to lower my cost by 30 percent, I need to think of my product in a very different way. Involution drives a lot of innovation and competitiveness for Chinese companies today. It has created companies that have become very competitive world-class players," Ngai said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:41 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:41 PM

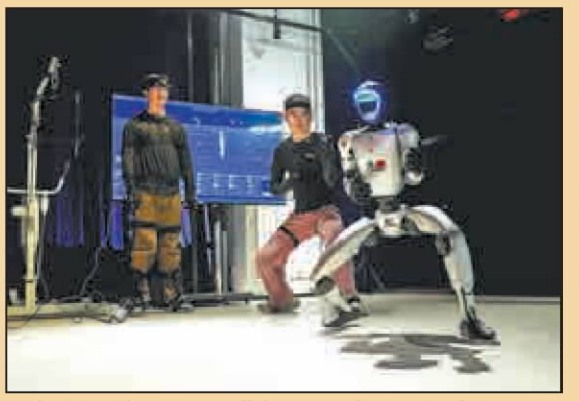
BUSINESS



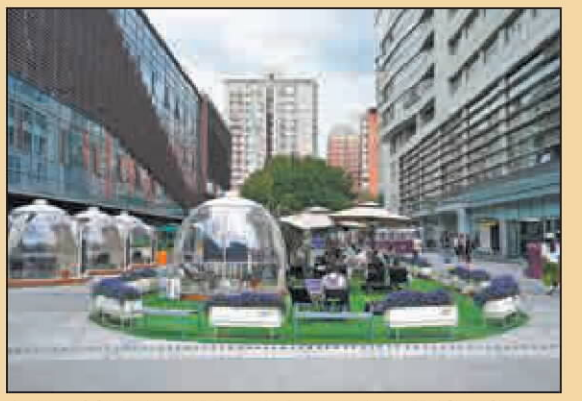
Humanoid robots are tested at the Beijing Innovation Center of Humanoid Robotics in the Beijing Economic-Technological Development Area on June 12. HE GUANXIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Dense ecosystem sees Beijing emerge as China's AI capital

In 2025, city generated more than 450 billion yuan in core industry output



Technicians showcase a collaborative robot operated via motion capture systems in Beijing on March 26. XIE HAN / XINHUA



A view of the Beijing AI Genesis Community in Haidian district, Beijing, on June 10. WANG HAIXIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

By CHENG YU
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

On the top floor of a converted office building in Wudaokou, a popular neighborhood in Beijing's Haidian district that is famous for its close distances to leading universities, a crowd gathered around a robot trying to pick up tennis balls.

The contestants were not seasoned engineers from China's biggest technology companies. Many were university students. Nearby, founders discussed open-source robotics projects. Investors drifted between tables. Entrepreneurs exchanged business cards over coffee.

Han Yaqi, branding head of the company that operates Beijing AI Genesis Community, one of Beijing's growing networks of artificial intelligence startup hubs, said, "Sometimes you come here for a cup of coffee and end up meeting your next investor."

The scene offers a glimpse into why Beijing has emerged as China's AI capital. The city last year generated more than 450 billion yuan ($66.4 billion) in core AI industry output, hosted more than 2,500 AI companies and nearly 40 AI unicorns, accounting for more than half of China's total. Beijing is also home to 241 registered large language models, more than any other city in the country.

Behind those numbers lies something more difficult to quantify: a dense ecosystem where universities, startups, investors, manufacturers and policymakers increasingly operate within walking distance of one another.

"Beijing AI Genesis Community is not just an incubator," Han said. "It connects the entire chain, from university research to commercial innovation."

That ecosystem is becoming increasingly important as China seeks to transform AI breakthroughs from laboratory achievements into commercially viable products.

While Silicon Valley remains synonymous with software innovation, Beijing is betting that the next phase of AI will be built around deep integration between research, hardware, manufacturing and real-world deployment.

Beijing has also spent years laying the groundwork. Research and development spending accounts for more than 6 percent of Beijing's economic output, a level comparable with leading global innovation centers. Basic research represents roughly 16 percent of total R&D spending, among the highest shares internationally.

The authorities have launched more than 800 major research projects across fields including AI, semiconductors and biotechnology. The results range from the open-source RISC-V processor core to quantum computing cloud platforms and advanced scientific instruments.

Increasingly, however, policymakers want those breakthroughs to leave the laboratory.

Under Beijing's embodied intelligence development plan, the capital city aims to achieve more than 100 key technological breakthroughs in humanoid robotics and embodied AI by 2027, while producing at least 10 globally leading hardware and software products.

That ambition is already visible inside Beijing's emerging robot industry. Engineers at the Beijing Innovation Center of Humanoid Robotics are building what resembles a miniature automotive factory.

The facility serves as a pilot manufacturing and testing platform where companies can validate designs before committing to mass production. From actuator assembly and joint manufacturing to full robot integration and testing, the center covers the entire production process.

Huang Zhe, head of production at the center, said: "We can build a complete robot here in one to two days."

The pilot platform of the center became operational this year and currently has an annual pilot production capacity for about 5,000 embodied robots, Huang said.

"The goal is not simply manufacturing efficiency. It is shortening the distance between invention and commercialization," he said.

China's robotics industry increasingly faces a challenge familiar to many AI startups worldwide: moving beyond impressive demonstrations.

In another part of the city, robots are practicing tasks that appear deceptively simple. One repeatedly folds clothes. Another assembles cardboard boxes. A third attempts to tie shoelaces.

For humans, these are routine actions. For robots, they represent some of the hardest challenges in embodied intelligence.

"Clothes are deformable objects. They don't have fixed shapes. A robot can't handle them the same way it handles a solid block," said Li Yao, vice-president of Noitom Robotics.

Such exercises are not designed for household chores alone. The same capabilities are needed for future deployment in factories, warehouses and logistics centers, where robots must manipulate objects of varying shapes, textures and physical properties.

Nearby, another robot trains on a replica automotive production line. The machine picks up piston tubes, inserts them with precision, moves empty trays aside and returns for the next task.

The production line mirrors one at an international automotive supplier where the robot is expected to begin commercial operations later this year.

For Beijing's AI industry, the challenge is increasingly practical: not whether robots can perform impressive tricks, but whether they can generate economic value.

That shift is also reshaping how startups are built. At Zhongguancun AI North Latitude Hub, more than 100 AI startups, including one-person companies, are developing products ranging from laboratory automation systems to embodied intelligence applications.

Inside one startup, a robot learns how to grasp test tubes and dispense liquids with precision. The founder, Chen Kai, also teaches at a nearby institution. Half of his employees are his students.

The arrangement reflects another unusual feature of Beijing's AI ecosystem: the increasingly blurred boundary between universities and startups.

A three-minute walk connects the startup incubator to Zhongguancun Academy, a new education and research institution designed specifically to commercialize advanced technologies.

Students come from 31 partner universities and are selected through an unconventional process. Rather than traditional entrance exams, candidates must build AI projects within 12 hours.

The objective is not simply academic excellence.

"We want people who can solve real-world problems," Chen said.

Students work directly with startup founders, chief scientists and entrepreneurs. Many launch companies are still conducting research. The institute currently supports around 120 research and industrial projects.

"Our goal is to help students transform immature ideas into commercial products," said Dong Bin, the academy's executive vice-president.

The model reflects a broader effort by Beijing to bridge what policymakers often describe as the "last mile" between scientific discovery and industrial deployment. The strategy is also increasingly aligned with China's broader industrial priorities.

As competition intensifies globally in AI, semiconductors and robotics, Beijing's advantage may not come from any single breakthrough technology.

Instead, it may stem from concentration. Together they form a miniature supply chain covering hardware, data services, open-source frameworks, AI models and downstream applications.

For startups, proximity matters.

Sun Changku, vice-president of Quantaeye, recalled discovering a potential business partner simply by walking upstairs.

"We were working on water utility applications," he said. "Then we found another company in the building focused on the same industry. Collaboration happened naturally."

Huairou Science City shaping up as provider of top-end research hubs

By CHENG YU

Emails from overseas scientists keep arriving in Li Gang's inbox, often carrying the same message: when will the experiment station reopen?

The associate researcher at the Institute of Physics under the Chinese Academy of Sciences is currently overseeing the platform for quantum control at one of China's most advanced research facilities — Synergetic Extreme Condition User Facility in Beijing's Huairou Science City.

Among those waiting are research teams from some of the world's leading institutions, including the Cavendish Laboratory at the University of Cambridge in England.

"We hosted our first international users in 2023, and the Cambridge team was among them," Li said. "Based on experiments conducted here, they have already published two high-level papers. Their fourth visit to Huairou is already scheduled for September."

The growing queue reflects the rising international profile of China's expanding network of large-scale scientific facilities, which are increasingly attracting foreign researchers seeking access to experimental conditions unavailable elsewhere.

One of the facility's most sought-after platforms is the low-temperature superconducting quantum device control station, which can generate extremely low temperatures.

Operating under such conditions is the Quafu Quantum Cloud Platform, a cloud-based quantum computing system.

Since its debut, the platform has attracted around 3,000 researchers from around the world, who have executed more than 1 million computing tasks and contributed to over 10 major scientific achievements, according to Liu Guangtong, a researcher at the institute of physics under the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

"The platform is open year-round for measurement services," he said. "Demand for experimental time consistently exceeds supply."

The system allows scientists to remotely access superconducting quantum devices and conduct experiments without traveling to China, extending the facility's global reach.



A photo shows the city lounge of Huairou Science City in Beijing on Oct 22, 2024. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The popularity of the platform highlights China's growing ambition to become a major provider of scientific infrastructure, not only for domestic researchers, but also for the international scientific community.

That ambition is particularly visible in Huairou Science City, a sprawling research hub on the northeastern outskirts of Beijing.

Often described as China's answer to large-scale science campuses such as CERN in Europe or national laboratory clusters in the United States, Huairou Science City has become one of the country's most concentrated collections of advanced research infrastructure.

The city has built six national major science facilities alongside 17 scientific and educational infrastructure platforms and 14 interdisciplinary research platforms. Together they form the highest-density cluster of scientific research facilities in China.

By the end of 2025, 29 facilities and platforms had entered operational status, providing more than 1.77 million hours of research access to over 1,000 universities, research institutes and companies from China and abroad.

The facilities cover a broad range of disciplines, from quantum physics and materials science to energy research, life sciences and advanced instrumentation.

For international researchers, access to such facilities is increasingly valuable as scientific experiments become more complex and expensive.

Large-scale scientific infrastructures often require years of construction and billions of dollars in investment, making global collaboration essential.

China's strategy is to position Huairou Science City as an open platform within that ecosystem.

As scientific competition intensifies globally, Beijing is simultaneously trying to strengthen its own innovation capabilities while attracting international talent and research partnerships. The steady stream of returning foreign users suggests that the approach is gaining traction.

For Li, the emails arriving during maintenance periods are a sign that the facilities have become more than national assets.

"They're becoming part of the global research infrastructure," he said.

And as China's scientific ambitions continue to expand, researchers from around the world appear increasingly willing to make Huairou Science City a regular stop on their research calendars.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:41 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:41 PM

CHINA

CAR-T cell therapy for tumors approved

By **ZHOU WENTING** in Shanghai
zhouwenting@chinadaily.com.cn

The world's first CAR-T cell therapy targeting solid tumors, developed by a Shanghai-based biopharmaceutical company, has been approved in China, marking a major step forward for the country in the field of cell and gene therapy.

The approval was announced by the National Medical Products Administration on Monday.

The new treatment, designed for advanced gastric cancer and adenocarcinoma of the esophagogastric junction, offers a breakthrough option for patients with these gastrointestinal tumors and provides a new Chinese solution to a long-standing clinical challenge, medical experts said.

Doctors noted that patients with these cancers who have not experienced positive outcomes from standard treatments face poor prognoses and extremely limited therapeutic options. The newly approved drug helps fill a critical gap in meeting this urgent clinical need.

Tumors are generally classified into hematologic and solid tumors. Solid tumors, which grow in organ tissues and have fixed shapes, are particularly difficult to treat because of their complex microenvironments, making them more challenging to manage than hematologic malignancies, or blood cancers.

The indications for CAR-T therapy, or chimeric antigen receptor T-cell therapy, have expanded in recent years, driven by advances in the treatment of hematologic cancers, such as leukemia, lymphoma and myeloma. CAR-T therapy involves collecting T cells from a patient's blood and genetically modifying them before reinfusing them into the body to attack cancer cells. The treatment enhances the ability of T cells — described as the body's "health guardians" — to precisely identify and destroy tumor cells, according to medical experts.

"About 90 percent of human tumors are solid tumors, while previously approved CAR-T products were used only for hematologic malignancies. Therefore, the approval of this injection marks a new milestone and suggests that more CAR-T products could be developed for other solid tumors in the future," said Li Zonghai, founder and chief executive officer of CARsgen Therapeutics Holdings. The therapy was developed by a subsidiary of the company.

Li said the company has benefited from strong support from both the central government and the Shanghai municipal government across the entire biopharmaceutical industrial chain. Over the past three years, Shanghai has rolled out a series of action plans to promote technological innovation and industrial development in cell and gene therapy, yielding notable results.

As one of the earliest regions in China to develop the cell and gene therapy industry, Shanghai's Pudong New Area has achieved significant milestones. It is home to the country's first gene therapy product. With the approval of the new drug, Pudong now has five domestically developed CAR-T products on the market, accounting for about a quarter of the global total.

Also on Monday, the world's first approved bispecific antibody-drug conjugate, developed by domestic company Biokin Pharmaceutical, received approval in China for the treatment of nasopharyngeal carcinoma — a rare type of throat cancer.

The company announced plans to establish its global innovation, research and development center in Shanghai's Pudong district, focusing on cutting-edge oncology drugs.

The new therapy offers precise treatment with low toxicity. Its innovative mechanism overcomes the limitations of traditional chemotherapy and single-target drugs, opening a new path for precision cancer treatment.

Academician's accolade



Zhong Nanshan, 89, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering and former president of Guangzhou Medical University, attends the university's 2026 graduation ceremony in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, on Tuesday. He shook hands with students and presented flowers to the graduates. LIANG YU / YANGCHENG EVENING NEWS

China boasts a robust juvenile justice system

SPP report highlights progress in refining punishment, rehab and crime prevention

By **YANG ZEKUN**
yangzekun@chinadaily.com.cn

China has developed a comprehensive juvenile procuratorial system over the past 40 years, integrating punishment, rehabilitation, victim support and crime prevention, a senior prosecutor said on Tuesday.

Addressing a news conference to mark the 40th anniversary of juvenile procuratorial work, Shi Weizhong, deputy prosecutor-general of the Supreme People's Procuratorate, said many protection mechanisms pioneered by procuratorates have been incorporated into law.

They include social investigations, family meetings, the presence of appropriate adults during proceedings, the sealing of juvenile criminal records, mandatory reporting of suspected abuse and background checks for jobs involving close contact with minors.

The SPP also released a report reviewing the development of juvenile procuratorial work over the past four decades.

Since 2018, procuratorates have arranged 96,000 meetings between juvenile suspects and their families, ensured the presence of appropriate adults on 95,000 occasions to support minors and oversee proceedings, and helped 347,000 minors obtain legal aid.

A mandatory reporting system introduced in May 2020, requiring professionals working with children to promptly report suspected abuse, has helped uncover 17,000 cases. More than 1,900 people have been held accountable for failing to report cases that resulted in serious consequences.

Shi said prosecutors adopt differentiated approaches based on the nature and severity of offenses. Minors who commit grave crimes with strong malicious intent, brutal methods or serious consequences are punished in accordance with the law. Those involved in less serious offenses, particularly first-time or occasional offenders, may receive lenient treatment focused on education and rehabilitation.

Since 2018, procuratorates have approved the arrests of 234,000 juvenile suspects and prosecuted 349,000. Meanwhile, 144,000 minors received conditional non-prosecution decisions along with supervision and tailored assistance; more than 95 percent did not reoffend. Over the past five years, more than 7,100 juvenile offenders entered universities after receiving procuratorial assistance.

Authorities have also maintained a zero-tolerance stance toward crimes against minors, including sexual assault and violent abuse. Since 2018, procuratorates have approved the arrests of 429,000 suspects and prosecuted 531,000 in such cases.

Judicial and law enforcement authorities have jointly issued judicial interpretations and regulatory documents to standardize the handling of sexual offenses against minors.

Through guiding cases, the SPP has established that online sexual abuse of children without physical contact can constitute a crime. Such offenses include coercing children through online chats to produce and transmit nude images. Since 2019, prosecutors have charged 18,000 people with sexually abusing minors remotely via the internet.

Measures have also been introduced to protect victims from secondary harm. More than 2,600 one-stop case-handling facilities now combine interviews, evidence collection, physical examinations and psychological counseling.

When both offender and victim are minors, procuratorates adopt a dual-protection approach that combines mediation, judicial assistance and psychological support, according to the report.

In addition, tiered intervention and correction mechanisms have been developed for minors involved in misconduct or crime, while oversight of specialized education and correctional programs has been strengthened.

Measures have also been introduced to help minors involved in cases return to school, prevent sexual abuse on campuses, and strengthen oversight of schools, entertainment venues, hotels, tattoo businesses and other areas that may pose risks to minors.

Shi said China's juvenile procuratorial system has developed within the country's legal and institutional framework rather than by simply adopting overseas models.

The SPP has established regular cooperation with UNICEF and Save the Children and maintained exchanges with more than 20 countries, including the United Kingdom, Russia and South Africa.

Song Yinghui, a member of the SPP's expert advisory committee and a professor at Beijing Normal University, called for further development of public interest litigation in areas affecting minors, including online gaming, campus safety, food and medicine.

Song also suggested closer coordination among criminal, civil, administrative and public interest litigation departments. Improved mechanisms for transferring leads and jointly handling cases could expand case sources and enable faster responses to complex cases and emerging risks, he said.

CAS' new English data journal to aid research

By **LI MENGHAN**
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

China launched its first English-language data journal in Beijing on Tuesday, underscoring the growing strategic importance of scientific data in artificial intelligence-driven research worldwide.

Titled Data Express, the open-access journal is sponsored by the Chinese Academy of Sciences and edited by Yu Guirui, an ecologist and member of the CAS. It serves as the flagship of a cluster of 20 titles — one comprehensive journal and 19 discipline-specific publications — covering strategic fields including AI corpus research, ecosystem science, ocean science, lightning data, biomedicine, materials science and agriculture.

Sun Degang, Party secretary of the CAS Computer Network Information Center, said scientific data has become a strategic national resource in the era of big data and AI.

"Data journals serve as a crucial lever to encourage open data sharing, improve data governance, and empower new research paradigms," Sun said.

Yu noted that making high-value scientific data findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable — known as the FAIR principles — is a shared global challenge.

"Data Express is our response to that challenge. It not only fills a gap in China's high-end data publishing sector, but also offers a Chinese hub for global scientific data exchange, enabling barrier-free circulation and collaboration," Yu said.

Zhang Yun, deputy director of the CAS Bureau of Basic Capacity for Science and Technology, said data journals enable long-confined, high-quality scientific data — much of it generated by engineers and technicians at large-scale facilities and field stations — to be made accessible, giving due credit to contributors. Such data provides critical fuel for "AI for Science" and supports global research progress.

"Data papers are recognized as formal academic outputs," Zhang said, adding that the CAS is drafting guiding measures to encourage institutes to include such contributions in professional promotion and degree-awarding evaluations.

The cluster's design is anchored in China's national science data center system. The 19 discipline-specific journals correspond to established sub-centers across various fields, ensuring a steady pipeline of high-quality data submissions from the outset, Zhang added.

Zhang expressed confidence in the cluster's international competitiveness, noting that Chinese scholars already account for nearly 40 percent of the world's high-quality scientific papers.

Zhang Fan, deputy general manager of China Science Publishing & Media, whose SciEngine platform supports the cluster, said the initiative also addresses a long-standing vulnerability in China's academic publishing ecosystem — the "both ends outside" dilemma, where Chinese scientists publish their papers and store data on foreign platforms.

"Scientific data is a strategic resource, especially in the AI era. The data we feed into AI models may be even more valuable than individual papers. Keeping that data on a platform easily accessible for scientists is essential," Zhang Fan said.

The SciEngine platform is fully self-developed and domestically produced, and currently serves more than 1,000 journals. It connects directly with nearly 20 international databases, including Web of Science and Scopus, ensuring global visibility while retaining data sovereignty, he added.

"Unlike conventional articles that typically publish only positive findings, data journals also welcome well-documented negative or null results," Zhang Fan said, noting that these are particularly valuable in fields such as materials science for helping researchers avoid duplicating effort and for providing high-quality training corpora for AI models.

"Globally, data journals are a relatively recent development, with leading titles such as Elsevier's Data in Brief and Springer's Scientific Data emerging only around 2014," he said. "China's first Chinese-language data journal, China Scientific Data, was launched in 2016 — almost in step with global progress."

"Data journals are an integral part of the national strategy to build world-class scientific journals. This clustered launch places China in a strong position to run neck and neck with, or even surpass, international leaders in this emerging field," Zhang Fan said.

Cultural strokes



Nepali youths participating in a summer camp in China showcase their Chinese calligraphy works in Xining, Qinghai province, on Monday. The group, consisting of 20 teachers and students, visited a local museum and other sites to experience the charm of Chinese traditional culture. ZHANG ZHONGPING / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Experts urge caution in using AI tools for university applications

By **ZOU SHUO**
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

Amid widespread anxiety related to complex admission rules, many parents and candidates preparing college applications after the national college entrance exam, or *gaokao*, are turning to artificial intelligence tools in the hope that algorithms can instantly generate the "optimal plan".

However, education experts and teachers are warning that blind reliance on such AI services may backfire.

Li, whose son took this year's *gaokao*, told China National Radio that she purchased a digital card for an AI-powered consulting service from an online platform for 300 yuan ($44), far cheaper than traditional consulting services.

Another parent, surnamed Pan, purchased cards from several providers and found that each online platform generated vastly distinct recommendations.

"The efficiency of AI screening is indeed high, but the divergent results make me uneasy about actually submitting the applications," she said.

The Ministry of Education has repeatedly warned families to stay vigilant against various fraud schemes during the application and admission season. In an alert issued during the 2025 college admission period, the ministry cautioned that some individuals and organizations spread false information, heighten anxiety and lure parents into purchasing expensive consulting services.

The ministry stressed that many so-called "experts" are temporary hires with no real credentials, noting that no professional certification of this kind has ever been issued by relevant authorities.

Xu Qicheng, a senior teacher at a high school in Tongling, Anhui province, who has guided college applications for years, said the data used by AI systems often lags behind current developments.

For instance, some universities have expanded or reduced enrollment for certain majors this year, and the popularity of majors continues to shift rapidly. Xu added that newly established programs introduce further variables that AI systems cannot fully account for.

"Many people are using the same AI software. Students with identical scores receive basically the same recommendations," Xu said.

Li Qing, director of the admissions office at Beijing University of Chemical Technology, stressed the importance of verifying data sources.

"You must add a reminder to obtain relevant scores from official websites. If you don't, the AI might scrape random data," he said.

Chen Hao, an associate professor at the School of Artificial Intelligence at Xidian University, said AI is not meant to replace human decision-making.

Its strength lies in information retrieval, organization and comparison, he told Xi'an-based Sanqin Daily.

"In a sense, the rationality of AI-generated plans depends on the breadth, accuracy and authority of the data it collects," Chen said.

He suggested that candidates adopt a "human-machine collaborative" approach, using AI as a reference while retaining final control over decisions.

Chen advised students and parents to carefully verify every recommendation by cross-checking official sources, including universities' historical admission scores, rankings and program information. Doing so can help reduce the impact of AI "hallucinations" and data inaccuracies.

Yang Weian, deputy dean of the faculty of education at Northeast Normal University, called on families to apply caution when considering AI marketing claims.

AI should be used to narrow the pool of potential institutions by inputting objective criteria such as scores, provincial rankings and subject requirements, allowing algorithms to quickly eliminate clearly ineligible options, he said in an interview with Guangming Daily.

At the same time, students should further refine the AI-generated list by incorporating personal preferences, including preferred cities, academic interests and career aspirations, Yang said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:41 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:41 PM

CHINA

CROSSING THE STRAIT

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

Straits Forum delivers for Taiwan's grassroots

Despite obstacles imposed by DPP, event still enables further exchanges

By **ZHANG YI** in Xiamen, Fujian and **HU MEIDONG** in Fuzhou

The deep-seated momentum of cross-Strait economic and cultural integration remains resilient — actively driven by the Chinese mainland's fusion efforts — despite political barriers imposed by Taiwan authorities, according to attendees of the 18th Straits Forum held in June in Xiamen, Fujian province.

As the largest mainland-hosted platform for grassroots exchanges between the two sides of the Strait, the annual event gathered compatriots across industries to advance diverse cooperative achievements.

The event with over 30 activities attracted over 6,000 compatriots from Taiwan, including a large number of young people and first-time visitors, despite the strictest restrictions and obstructions imposed by Taiwan's ruling Democratic Progressive Party authorities.

In a milestone development, mainland enterprises signed purchasing agreements with businesses and trade associations from Taiwan's agricultural counties, including Taitung, Yunlin and Nantou, to import specialties such as pomelos, tea and aquatic products.

This cross-Strait procurement initiative delivers tangible dividends directly to grassroots farmers and fishermen on the island.

Around 120 industry professionals witnessed the signing. Yang Chi-chun, vice-chairman of the Taiwan Agricultural United Marketing Cooperative, celebrated an atemoya fruit contract with Hunan province, saying that it is a joy to bring the hardworking farmers' fruits into the vast mainland market.

In April, a 10-point policy package was released by the Chinese mainland's Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, which focused on increasing cross-Strait flights, tourism, agricultural trade and other aspects vital to the welfare of the ordinary people of Taiwan.

The DPP authorities, however, have attempted to suppress exchanges, with their mainland affairs authority labeling the forum a tool for "penetration and division".

Due to blocks imposed by the DPP, Yao Ching-ling, the magistrate of Taitung county, was barred from attending in person and had to deliver her speech via a pre-recorded video during the signing ceremony.

Chang Jung-kung, vice-chairman of the Chinese Kuomintang, called the ban on local magistrates attending the forum a great regret, noting that agricultural cooperation is the most pragmatic way to enhance the livelihoods of Taiwan residents.

"Taiwan farmers and fishermen market their products to the mainland simply to make a living. To smear and suppress them for this is absolutely against justice," Chang said.

Recent reports from Taiwan media revealed that peanut harvest prices in Yunlin county — the island's largest peanut-producing region — have plummeted, possibly due to widespread panic among local growers over potential zero-tariff peanut imports from the United States under recent trade frameworks.

Chen Binhua, spokesman for the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, said: "The DPP authorities disregarded the farmers' anxieties, made nothing more than a perfunctory effort, showing that the DPP is completely helpless. This fully exposes their governance incompetence and proves that blindly kneeling to the US will only harm the interests of Taiwan's various sectors."

Chen added that the new agreements with the mainland would allow agricultural products from relevant Taiwan counties to enter the mainland market more conveniently, boosting incomes for farmers in central and southern Taiwan.

"The DPP authorities act out of political self-interest, jumping out to smear and attack the forum every year, and this year they went even further to restrict and obstruct participants," Chen said. "But the more they disrupt, the more they fail."

Song Tao, director of the Taiwan Affairs Office, reiterated at the forum that peace, stability and the welfare of Taiwan compatriots can only be guaranteed by adhering to the 1992 Consensus and opposing "Taiwan independence" separatism.

Business and industrial leaders attending the forum urged Taiwan enterprises to actively leverage existing preferential policies and look toward more cooperation.

Lee Cheng-hung, president of the Association of Taiwan Investment Enterprises on the Mainland, said: "The DPP authorities are highly contradictory; they claim to value public livelihood but impose highly irrational and self-contradictory restrictions."

Lee said that growing cross-Strait trade shows the two sides are "stronger together", urging entrepreneurs to expand into emerging industries on the mainland, including semiconductors, the low-altitude economy and artificial intelligence.

Chou Hsi-wei, vice-chairman of the Want Want Group from Taiwan, also said that the desire of compatriots on both sides for peace and integration cannot be stopped.

"Obstructing freedom of assembly and trade violates basic rights and is completely wrong, and 'Taiwan independence' is a dead end," Chou said.

Fostering integration

Beyond economic pacts, physical and institutional links topped the agenda as participants explored new integration pathways. Cross-Strait infrastructure projects were highlighted at the forum this year, as a rising number of Taiwan visitors called for closer economic integration despite political barriers.

Taiwan attendees toured major developments in Xiamen, including the ongoing Xiamen Xiang'an International Airport and Xiamen-Jinmen Bridge projects.

Wang Chao, head of the Xiamen section project of the bridge, said: "Once completed, the bridge will end the history of Jinmen residents waiting for ferries and favorable weather. It will drastically boost traffic efficiency and transport capacity for people and goods."

Wang added that the bridge structure will also carry pipelines to supply water, electricity and gas to ease energy shortages on Jinmen.

The new Xiamen airport, scheduled to open by the end of this year, sits just across the water from Taiwan-administered Jinmen.

Li Sheng-feng, vice-chairman of Taiwan's pro-reunification New Party, said: "Tens of millions of passengers will land right on the opposite shore every year. If artificial barriers block us from linking up, Jinmen will miss an immense development opportunity."

Li blamed Taiwan's ruling DPP for restricting opportunities for young people by distorting the mainland's image. "The DPP has no right to make choices for young people. Enabling them to see the real mainland is being responsible for their future," Li said.

Chai Hsuan, a Taiwan vlogger who has documented the Xiamen-Jinmen bridge construction site multiple times, said younger generations in Taiwan increasingly view "Taiwan independence" as a false proposition.

"They prefer to join the mainland's progress," Chai said, noting recent milestones such as Hong Kong astronauts joining the mainland's space program. "Taiwan talents need platforms to seize these opportunities."

Young bonds

Political barriers have failed to dampen the enthusiasm for travel, as official data points to an accelerating recovery in personnel exchanges. Fujian entry ports recorded 518,000 arrivals from Taiwan from January to May, marking a 29.7 percent surge year-on-year.

To facilitate closer integration, 19 pairs of cross-Strait youth organizations signed partnership agreements alongside the release of 23 cooperative projects during the forum in Xiamen.

In the financial sector, the event saw the release of the mainland's first-ever group standard for banking services tailored for Taiwan enterprises to help them more easily enter the mainland market.

For maritime and cultural cooperation, authorities announced five new measures to boost cross-Strait shipping, while Fujian province introduced Taiwan television dramas into prime-time satellite broadcasting slots.

Young Taiwan visitors at the forum welcomed these policies and noted the stark contrast between their experiences on the mainland and the political rhetoric in Taiwan.

An Chen-chu, a Taiwan youth, recalled her surprise at discovering mainland digital payment systems and said: "The DPP authorities are blocking our channels to see the world. I told people back home how convenient it is to go out with just a phone instead of a heavy wallet."

Chen Yi-xuan, another young attendee from Taiwan, expressed her excitement at seeing mainland actor Zhang Linghe, whose recent historical drama has become a major hit on the island.

Mentioning several mainland period dramas also popular in Taiwan, she said, "Traditional aesthetics and Chinese cultural heritage share a profound resonance across the Strait because our culture stems from the same roots.

"Culture serves as an excellent bridge. Since Taiwan's roots are in the mainland, I hope more young people will return to explore their heritage, allowing both sides to interact and integrate like family," Chen said.

Su Heng, a Taiwan political commentator, said the DPP tried to obstruct the Straits Forum out of fear that island residents will witness the mainland's rapid development and see through the falsehoods fabricated by the party.

Su cited two recent Taiwan polls showing that public support for "independence" has dropped to a record low of 21 percent, while nearly 60 percent back proactive peace consultation with the mainland.

The public narrative in Taiwan is changing as people witness the mainland's growing global strength, Su said, adding that shifting US policies have triggered widespread skepticism toward the US.



Participants take pictures as they attend the 2026 Straits Forum in Xiamen, Fujian province, on June 13. LYU MING / CHINA NEWS SERVICE





Left: Taiwan vlogger and actor Barry Qu shares his stories of how he chased his dreams in filming and acting on the mainland during the Straits Forum on June 12. LYU MING / CHINA NEWS SERVICE
Right: Performers display Chinese-style clothing during an art show on June 13. ZHANG BIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

25-year family legacy built on vital ferry route between Xiamen and Jinmen

By **ZHANG YI** and **HU MEIDONG**

For entrepreneur Yang Chia-chi, the 30-minute ferry route between his hometown Jinmen and Xiamen, Fujian province, is far more than a transit line — it's a living family legacy across the Taiwan Strait.

As general manager of a shipping company founded by his father, Yang steers a business closely tied to the maritime crossing, which celebrates its 25th anniversary this year.

Over the past quarter-century, the pioneering route has transported more than 24 million passengers, evolving from a basic link for separated families into a bustling, daily economic and cultural circle.

"I grew up listening to the rumble of ship engines and smelling the salty sea breeze," Yang said. His family's ties to the channel run deep, rooted in an earlier era of separation.

In the early days, many Jinmen residents who moved away for work could not have their remains returned home. Driven by a desire to help fellow residents, Yang's father purchased the company's first vessel.

He later established the maritime shipping company, dedicating his life to the ferry service between Jinmen and Xiamen, carrying the profound longing of countless cross-Strait compatriots separated for decades.

Yang's grandmother, born in Xiamen in 1915, married into a Jinmen family but was unable to visit her hometown for decades due to frozen cross-Strait relations. She passed away in 1998, just three years before the ferry line opened, leaving behind a lifelong regret of never being able to set foot in her ancestral home again.

When the route opened in 2001, Yang's father boarded the vessel holding his late mother's photograph. Stepping over the threshold of the old family home, he wept and said in the southern Fujian dialect: "Mother, we are home".

"The journey my grandmother could not finish in her lifetime is now a path traveled by thousands every day," Yang said, adding that the route remains a natural bond of cross-Strait kinship rather than a mere transport service.

Yang has witnessed how lifestyles on both sides have become increasingly integrated. Many of his friends in Jinmen travel to Xiamen for weekend trips, while residents of Xiamen visit Jinmen for shopping excursions.

The tourism sector in Jinmen has experienced a robust recovery following the resumption of travel for mainland residents from Fujian and Shanghai in April. Yang often sees heartwarming scenes of mainland families exploring historic streets in Jinmen on electric scooters.

Beyond tourism, trade is increasing, too. Yang estimates that Xiamen cargo exports to Taiwan via Jinmen will exceed 50,000 twenty-foot equivalent units this year.

Previously, shipping e-commerce goods to Taiwan took two to three days. Now, under a new express system, goods collected in Xiamen transit through Jinmen, depart for Taiwan the same night, and reach consumers within 24 hours, he said.

The maritime route has even brought Yang his own cross-Strait marriage. His wife is from the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, and her mother once ran a river snail rice noodle restaurant in Xiamen.

Yang said he ate at the restaurant 20 days in a row, after falling in love with the cuisine and the owner's daughter.

Looking ahead, Yang said the construction of the Xiamen-Jinmen Bridge, designed to connect Jinmen Island to the upcoming Xiamen Xiang'an International Airport, will further facilitate travel between the two places and place Jinmen on a larger development stage through closer cross-Strait links.



Yang Chia-chi (center) tells his family story of the Xiamen-Jinmen ferry route during the Straits Forum on June 12. LYU MING / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Contact the writers at zhangyi1@chinadaily.com.cn

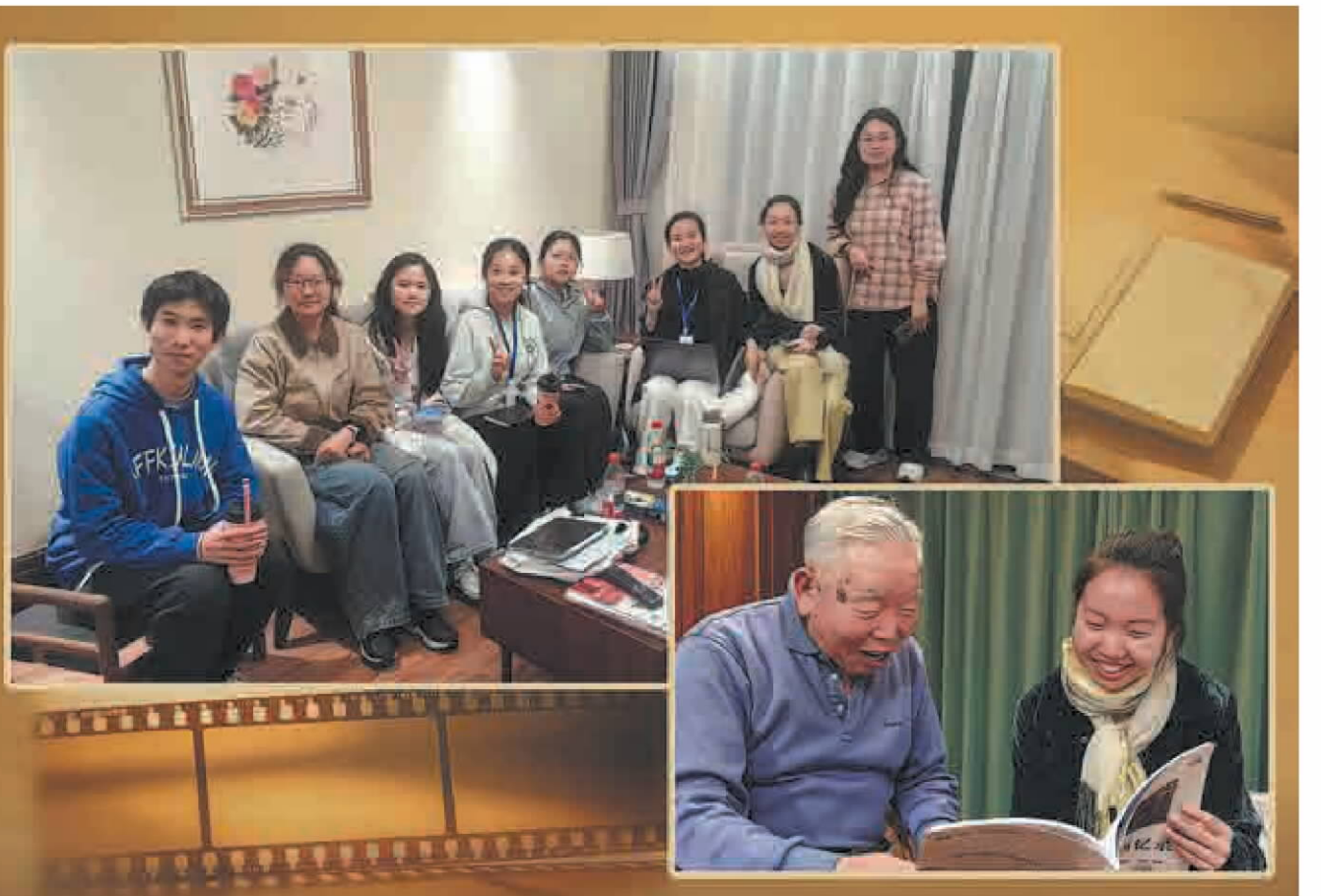
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:41 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:41 PM

Z WEEKLY

All about Gen Z

Z WEEKLY



Top: Members of Yishu Guanghua, or Lumemoir, pose for a group photo.
Right: Huang Jiani (right) shows a finished memoir to an elderly participant. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Old stories, new bonds

From scattered memories to structured narratives, a student-led project turns elders' lives into written and visual stories, preserving them as lasting legacies.

By **CHEN XUE** and **XIONG XINYI**

When Huang Jiani's father finished reading the story she had written about his mother, the usually quiet man told her, "I feel like I've come to know my mother again. Her life was so interesting. We should treat her better."

At the time, Huang was a freshman studying sociology at Fudan University (FDU). For a class assignment, she and her classmates were asked to interview an older person about an event that took place before they were born. Huang chose to interview her grandmother, who had left her hometown of Quanzhou at 18 and traveled to Ninghua county in Fujian province to build a kindergarten from scratch.

The assignment was designed to cultivate what the course called a "sense of history". But for Huang, her father's reaction revealed something more personal.

"I realized that recording a person's life story could change the way a family understands one of its own," said Huang, now 21 and a junior at FDU.

That realization soon grew into a larger project. Huang began assembling a team dedicated to helping older people tell their life stories.

The project, Yishu Guanghua — or Lumemoir — officially launched in early 2025.

According to Huang, the team now has more than 10 members spanning all four undergraduate years, most of them from the humanities and social sciences. One recent recruit studies microelectronics and is exploring how AI can support the project's work.

So far, the team has completed eight memoirs totaling more than 200,000 Chinese characters, along with around 100 minutes of video footage.

The work involves far more than simply asking questions and taking notes.

"People's memories are scattered, leaping from one moment to the next," Huang said. "We can't force elders into a strict timeline or box their lives into neat categories — that only makes them hold back. We want to step into their memories as they actually are: rich, messy and full of surprises."

Before each interview, team members research the elder's era, hometown and related historical records. During conversations, they begin with gentle, open-ended questions before gradually moving toward more specific topics.

Old photographs or film clips often help spark memories. Sometimes an elder might start by correcting what appears on screen: "Oh, things weren't like that back then."

Then the stories begin to flow.

Drawing on her sociology training, Huang uses what she calls a "transcribe first, then code" method. The team first transcribes each interview, then organizes fragmented memories into a structured narrative web that can stretch across dozens of pages, tracing family ties and the values passed between generations.

Alongside written memories, the team also produces short videos, a format some elders prefer. A few have even asked the students to use AI to restore images of their younger selves at work.

> "In a society that is always moving forward, we also need to look back. Preserving the stories of yesterday and passing them on to tomorrow — that is the mission of our generation."
>
> **Li Yiyan,** 20, a student at Fudan University

One elder, who had spent his youth working the fertile black-soil farmland of Northeast China, had no footage from those years. When he watched the AI-generated video, he said it had finally fulfilled a lifelong dream.

"For children, seeing their parents on video is also a direct way of getting to know them again," Huang said.

Fu Xiaoqing, a 22-year-old senior majoring in journalism at FDU, handles much of the team's video production. She joined the project in her junior year after seeing a recruitment post on a classmate's WeChat Moments.

Her decision was personal. A political science assignment had once led her to interview her grandfather, who she had only known in his 60s as gentle and easy-going. Through those conversations, she discovered someone different: a driven young man who had risen from a rural village to a managerial position in the city.

"I saw a side of him that was ambitious, proactive and full of energy," Fu said.

Since joining the project, Fu has edited about 20 memoir videos for elderly participants. One moment left a deep impression on her: during an interview, a veteran of the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea (1950-53) picked up an accordion and began to play and sing.

"It felt as though I had been transported back 70 years," she said.

The project also changed something in her life outside work. During the winter break in February, Fu went home and sat with her grandfather again — this time with patience and full attention.

"Before, whenever he started reminiscing, I would get impatient or let my mind wander to other things I could be doing," she said. "Now I sit quietly and listen, with genuine curiosity and respect for everything he has lived through."

Learning through lives

Li Yiyan, a 20-year-old sophomore majoring in Chinese language and literature, joined Lumemoir two months ago, hoping to connect what she had learned in books with real lives.

"As a Chinese literature major, I often wonder what words really mean to the world," Li said. "I've spent so much time absorbing stories and ideas, but not enough time giving something back. When I saw the recruitment post mentioning 'life narratives', I thought this might be a way to put words to use for others."

After joining Lumemoir, Li and her teammates visited a nursing home. Conversations with the elderly residents helped turn that abstract question into something concrete.

"While talking with the elderly residents, something inside me settled," she said. "I came to understand that the value of practice lies in the act of practicing itself."

One of Li's assignments was to help a senior write about her late father, a prominent local figure whose life was closely tied to the region's educational history.

The team chose to trace his contributions to education through the perspective of his daughter. What stayed with Li was one small detail: despite moving homes many times, the father had carefully kept every school award his daughter had ever received.

The story reminded Li of her own grandmother, who still keeps her childhood drawings in an old tin box.

"In that moment, I realized we had both been touched by the same kind of sincere love from our elders," she said. "It connected two different generations in such a quiet but powerful way."

"In a society that is always moving forward, we also need to look back. Preserving the stories of yesterday and passing them on to tomorrow — that is the mission of our generation," she added.

Contact the writers at chenxue@i21st.cn

Deep Dive

Fake news can kill.

In a crisis, misleading posts can make people panic, hesitate, or ignore life-saving advice. Young social media users often encounter information first through short posts, rather than directly from experts. When those posts use fear, vague evidence or confusing language, readers may not know what to trust.

Linguistics can help. By reading carefully and spotting warning signs in how a message is written, young citizens can protect themselves and others.

The challenge is urgent: can they recognize fake news before it shapes their actions?

Linguistics gives youth tools against fake news

Here are two messages that might appear in your social media feed.

One says: A person who is vomiting, bleeding and very sick might have Ebola. Ebola does not spread through the air like the flu, but contact with blood, vomit or other body fluids can infect you, especially through your eyes, nose, mouth or broken skin. Do not touch the person or the fluids. Get help from health workers.

Another says: Remember in 2021 when the FDA asked to make the public wait until 2096 to disclose Pfizer's vaccine data? Well, when the data were finally released, one document was included. Guess what it listed as an adverse reaction to the vaccine — Ebola.

Which message helps you act? Which one makes you afraid, confused or doubtful?

Facing infectious diseases, most people do not immediately know what to do. That is why reliable health guidance often uses simple, direct language. It explains the danger, names the action people should take and accepts responsibility for guiding them clearly.

The first post shows these features. It is clear, concrete and useful. Its words are simple: "blood", "vomit", "eyes" and "do not touch". Even a child can understand it. This language helps readers grasp the risk quickly and act safely.

The second post works differently. It turns a technical situation into a frightening implication, and its language reveals how.

It begins with "remember when", shifting responsibility onto the reader. Instead of proving the claim, the writer invites readers to supply their own suspicion. It also widens the gap between the public and medical experts, making official guidance feel distant and less trustworthy.



Ming Ming Chiu

The post also relies on official-sounding words such as "disclose", "document" and "adverse reaction". They create an impression of authority, but hide the key issue: whether Ebola was caused by the vaccine. The post never proves that. It only suggests it.

Its structure adds to the problem. Instead of saying directly, "The vaccine causes Ebola," it leads readers through a memory cue, a document reference and a dramatic reveal. That complexity makes the accusation feel more credible than it is.

The vague phrase "one document" is another warning sign. Which document? Where can readers check it? The reference plants suspicion without giving readers enough information to verify the source.

This is how misleading posts often work. They do not need readers to believe every word; they only need readers to hesitate. Fear, confusion, doubt and misplaced responsibility can all delay action.

That is where Professor Ming Ming Chiu's Deceptive Writing Theory becomes useful. It draws on linguistics and social psychology to examine how patterns in language — such as uncertainty, emotional framing, complexity and shifts in responsibility — can signal misleading communication. Chiu and collaborators have applied these ideas to social media posts in English, Chinese, Korean and French.

Language analysis cannot replace scientific facts. But it can help readers notice warning signs before they share a post, believe a rumor, or freeze in a crisis. When facts are still emerging, the way a message is written can offer clues about whether it deserves trust.

Reliable emergency guidance helps people act. Misleading news clouds the danger, undermines trust, raises suspicion and leaves people uncertain.

The choice is yours. Will you follow the online crowd? Or will you slow down, examine the language, check the evidence and act wisely?

Written by Ming Ming Chiu, chair professor of Analytics and Diversity and director of the Analytics/Assessment Research Center, and Sze Ming Lam, assistant center manager of the Analytics/Assessment Research Center, The Education University of Hong Kong.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:41 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:41 PM



Left: An intelligent laptop production line is displayed at Lenovo (Tianjin) Smart Innovation Service Industrial Park, requiring minimal human intervention.
Right: Ren Jingyang, senior vice-president of Sugon, introduces the company's signature cooling technology to journalists during the "Vibrant China Research Tour" in Tianjin. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Tianjin grows into high-tech innovation hub

From laboratory breakthroughs to industrial production lines, Tianjin is building a system that helps scientific ideas move further and faster.

By **GUO JIAFONG** and **YAN DONGJIE**

Inside a laboratory at the State Key Laboratory of Medicinal Chemical Biology at Nankai University (NKU), Professor Zhang Zhenjie held up a small vial of pale-yellow powder as he explained its possible applications to visiting journalists during a recent research tour.

Though visually unremarkable, the powder belongs to a class of porous crystalline materials known as covalent organic frameworks, or COFs, which can be used in gas separation, pharmaceutical purification and energy-related applications.

The small vial offered an early glimpse of the tour's broader theme: how Tianjin is working to move scientific ideas from laboratory benches into real-world production.

"When we first started, production was only at the milligram level," Zhang said. "At that scale, practical application was impossible."

The scene was part of the four-day "Vibrant China Research Tour" in Tianjin from June 15 to 18, which brought together more than 100 journalists from across China to explore the city's innovation ecosystem.

In recent years, COFs have drawn global attention for their tunable structures and potential in high-end industrial uses. Yet commercialization has long been limited by low synthesis efficiency and difficulties in scaling up production.

Zhang's team has helped achieve ton-scale production of COF materials for the first time. Holding multiple patents on COF synthesis, they have been invited to leading international conferences this year to share their progress in the field.

The breakthrough, however, was the result of years of sustained research rather than a single leap.

After completing his studies at NKU and conducting postdoctoral research in the United States, Zhang returned to Tianjin in 2016. At the time, he was part of a growing wave of overseas-trained researchers contributing to China's push for innovation-driven development.

Back at NKU, he focused on improving structural stability, optimizing synthesis pathways and reducing production costs, gradually moving COFs from laboratory samples toward scalable production.

"In the early stage, everything was done at the gram or even milligram scale," he said. "The real challenge was whether the material could be reproduced consistently, not just once."

Today, COF-based materials are already being explored in analytical instruments and high-end equipment supply chains, supporting efforts to replace imported core materials in key industrial sectors.

If Zhang's lab shows how new materials are born, another team just a few buildings away keeps the instruments running that make such research possible.

Li Ang works at the university's cryo-transmission electron microscopy platform, where he is responsible for the operation and maintenance of large-scale instruments used in materials science, chemistry and life sciences.

His work represents a less visible but essential layer of innovation: the people who keep advanced research infrastructure stable, precise and accessible.



Zhang Zhenjie demonstrates equipment at the State Key Laboratory of Medicinal Chemical Biology at Nankai University. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

> "The final step from research to industrial application is always the hardest. It takes time to stabilize processes and solve problems that do not exist in theoretical models."
>
> **Ren Chengzu,** founder and chief scientist of Tianjin Chuangjin Jinggong Technology Co Ltd

> "Tianjin has built a relatively complete industrial chain. That makes it easier for technologies to move from laboratories into real-world use."
>
> **Zhang Lei,** general manager of Sugon's solutions and innovation business

One of the most urgent parts of his job often arrives without warning. Cryogenic biological samples are highly sensitive. If the system fails, they can thaw quickly, forcing researchers to restart experiments that may have taken weeks or months to prepare.

"That usually means all previous work is lost," he explained. "For example, if a microscope suddenly stops working, we have to respond immediately."

Because of this, stability and rapid troubleshooting have become part of Li's daily routine.

Over time, he said, the job has shaped not only his technical skills but also his understanding of precision.

"Sometimes a very small adjustment can make a noticeable difference in data quality," Li said. "That's where much of the value lies."

Beyond maintenance work, Li also helps run training courses that allow students from different disciplines — including chemistry, biology and even non-science majors — to operate advanced instruments.

For many students, it is their first direct exposure to how modern scientific research is conducted.

"It helps them understand what high-level research actually looks like," he said.

Scaling the breakthrough

Beyond the campus, Tianjin's innovation chain extends into office buildings, industrial parks and factories, where research outcomes face the test of mass production.

The Tiankai Higher Education Innovation Park, established in 2023 and developed with strong links to NKU and Tianjin University, has become a key platform connecting research institutions with industry.

It provides rent subsidies, shared facilities, financing support and technology transfer services, reducing the friction between laboratory research and commercialization.

Ren Chengzu, founder and chief scientist of Tianjin Chuangjin Jinggong Technology Co Ltd, credited Tianjin's broader innovation environment for his company's long-term progress.

"In the early stage, we received rent reductions and access to shared facilities, which significantly lowered operational pressure," Ren said. "More importantly, it allowed us to focus on technical challenges."

Ren's company is engaged in the development of ultra-precision bearing rollers, key components in high-end manufacturing systems.

In this field, the challenge is not only achieving precision in controlled laboratory conditions but maintaining it consistently in mass production.

Through years of process optimization, Ren's team has reduced dimensional deviations to below 0.5 micrometers, surpassing widely used international benchmarks.

He said such precision is critical in advanced equipment such as robotic systems, where component stability directly affects performance and reliability.

"The final step from research to industrial application is always the hardest. It takes time to stabilize processes and solve problems that do not exist in theoretical models," Ren said.

"As application scenarios expand, precision requirements will become even more demanding," he continued.

Precision manufacturing is only one part of the picture. In computing and digital services, companies such as Sugon are also helping connect academic research with industrial demand.

Zhang Lei, general manager of Sugon's solutions and innovation business, said Tianjin has developed a diversified industrial base covering computing, life sciences, advanced manufacturing and digital technologies.

He noted that closer collaboration among universities, research institutes and enterprises is helping accelerate the transformation of research outcomes into practical applications.

In recent years, such collaboration has become increasingly central to Tianjin's innovation strategy.

"Tianjin has built a relatively complete industrial chain. That makes it easier for technologies to move from laboratories into real-world use," Zhang Lei said.

Sugon maintains close ties with universities and continues to recruit talent from academia, while expanding joint training programs to better align education with industrial demand.

During the four-day research tour, journalists moved between laboratories, research centers and manufacturing sites.

What they observed varied widely in form but shared a common thread: a city steadily building the capacity to turn scientific ideas into industrial reality.

In Tianjin, innovation is no longer an abstract idea or a laboratory pursuit. It is taking shape across a connected ecosystem — from research institutes to production lines — as the city works to turn scientific discovery into everyday reality.

Contact the writers at guojiatong@i21st.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:41 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:41 PM

Z WEEKLY

Ancient arts find new life

From Dunhuang murals to Wudang martial arts, young people are giving ancient traditions new meaning across borders at the World Youth Development Forum.



Young delegates from around the world pose for a photo at the 2026 World Youth Development Forum in Wuhan, Hubei province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By LIU KUN, XU YIDAN, WANG JINGYAO in Wuhan and **MENG WENJIE**

"Civilizations become richer through exchange, and cultures are renewed when they cross boundaries," said Wu Qiongfang, deputy director of the Cultural and Creative Research Center of Dunhuang Academy.

Speaking at the 2026 World Youth Development Forum in Wuhan, Hubei province, Wu was not describing cultural heritage as something distant or static. She was describing how a site more than 1,000 years old can enter the lives of young people through technology, design and participation.

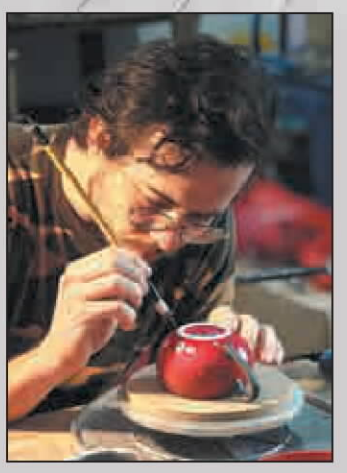
The forum, themed "Youth Drive Development for a Better World", opened on June 15, bringing together more than 500 youth representatives, experts and officials from UN agencies, international organizations and more than 120 countries and regions.

At a thematic forum on creative economy and trendy culture on June 16, Wu introduced her team's long-running efforts to bring the Mogao Grottoes in Dunhuang, Gansu province, closer to contemporary audiences.

Behind her, a screen displayed an extended reality (XR) immersive project developed by the team. Wearing a headset, visitors can view murals and painted sculptures up close and enter a recreated Lantern Festival night from the Tang Dynasty (618-907).

The team has also worked with Chinese tech company Tencent on a mini-program that allows users to design Dunhuang-inspired silk scarves. According to Wu, more than 1 million user-generated designs were submitted on the first day of its launch.

"Dunhuang culture should not remain confined to academic texts; it should be brought closer to young people through creative products and immersive experiences," she said.



> "Even though we all compete in the same market, there is more inspiration than competition. We learn from each other and grow together."
>
> **Yann Colleu,** a French porcelain artist based in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province



Above: French artist Yann Colleu paints a porcelain cup in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province. **Right:** Delegates display calligraphy pieces featuring the Chinese character *fu*, meaning good fortune, at the forum. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Wu's work reflects a broader shift: young creators are increasingly moving from cultural observers to communicators, participants and collaborators.

For Jake Pinnick from the United States, that process began with kung fu films.

Fascinated as a child by Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan, Pinnick traveled alone to Wudang Mountain, a renowned Taoist sanctuary in Hubei, in 2010. He was 20, had never been abroad and did not speak Chinese. He carried a small dictionary and a handwritten note that read: "I want to go to Wudang Mountain."

Smartphones and translation apps were far less common then, and Pinnick relied on the help of strangers to reach the mountain. Sixteen years later, he has become an inheritor of the Wudang Sanfeng school and received China's Foreign Permanent Resident ID Card in 2025.

"Practicing martial arts has not only improved my health but also helped me find myself and become more confident," he said.

Today, Pinnick shares Wudang martial arts and Taoist culture with a large online audience. He has also published an English-language beginner's guide to the *dongxiao*, a traditional Chinese vertical flute, and hopes to establish a cultural exchange center in China.

"Many young people overseas tell me they first discovered Wudang and tai chi through my videos," he said. "That makes me very happy."

For French porcelain artist Yann Colleu, heritage became most vivid not in a museum, but in a workshop.

Colleu, now a PhD candidate at Jingdezhen Ceramic University in Jiangxi province, first arrived in Jingdezhen in 2017. Two years ago, he co-founded Borsomin, a porcelain design studio in the city aimed at promoting cultural exchange through design and art.

To Colleu, Jingdezhen is a place where "heritage is alive", with traditional craftsmanship integrating with new technology and innovation.

What impressed him most, however, was how naturally collaboration unfolded there. After meeting local artisans, he was often invited to their studios the next day to create work together. Some even shared their suppliers' contacts with him.

"Even though we all compete in the same market, there is more inspiration than competition. We learn from each other and grow together," Colleu said.

His recent collection blends French Renaissance aesthetics with Chinese porcelain art, applying color transitions and textures inspired by European painting techniques to Chinese tea ware.

"For international young creators, Jingdezhen offers a unique opportunity to access world-class craftsmanship while working in a dynamic environment that encourages experimentation, innovation and global collaboration," he said.

While Dunhuang, Wudang and Jingdezhen show how traditional culture can be renewed, Wuhan-based graffiti artist Jiang Heng is exploring how contemporary Chinese culture can travel outward.

Jiang has worked in public art for 17 years and serves as general manager of Wuhan 27 Kilometers Culture Communication.

With support from local authorities, his original character EMO — with tired eyes, anxious eyebrows and a constant smile — has appeared across Wuhan, from alleyways and bus stops to the area around the Yellow Crane Tower.

"EMO is inspired by Wuhan's cherry blossoms, representing the tired yet hopeful spirit of young people in today's urban life," he said.

Jiang plans to bring EMO to Burning Man in Nevada, the United States, from Aug 30 to Sept 7, where he will create a large-scale installation and invite participants from different countries to add graffiti in multiple languages and forms of expression.

For Jiang, the project is less about presenting a Chinese original character overseas than creating a space where people can respond to it in their own ways.

"I hope EMO can open cross-cultural dialogue and help more people understand the uniqueness of Eastern culture," he said.

Contact the writers at liukun@chinadaily.com.cn

Young changemakers give tradition a modern voice

By XU YIDAN, LIU KUN in Wuhan and **MENG WENJIE**

For 22-year-old Ping Chen, farming is not only about the land. It is also about branding, social media, public participation and the connections young people can build across cultures.

As the new media operator of Tomato Farm, an organic agricultural venture in Shanghai, Ping joined the 2026 Acceleration Week for Global Youth Development Programs, where he introduced "Future from the Field", an initiative that aims to draw more young people toward agriculture through education, branding and public engagement.

"China is a major agricultural country," he said. "We believe the future for young people can be rooted in the land."

Held in Shanghai and Wuhan, Hubei province, from June 11 to 17, the event brought together more than 170 youth-led initiatives from over 70 countries and regions. Covering fields from technological innovation to green development, the program provided a platform for young changemakers to present their work, strengthen their skills and build international partnerships.

With an average team age of just 25, Tomato Farm focuses on agricultural branding and rural revitalization through innovation. It cultivates more than 300 tomato varieties from over 30 countries and has developed a digital ecological farming system.

"Growing such a wide range of varieties makes our products more international and reflects our commitment to agricultural diversity," Ping said. "It also helps us reduce risks, as a single natural disaster or pest outbreak is less likely to affect all crops."

Still an undergraduate majoring in exhibition economy and management as well as media design, Ping applies classroom knowledge to farming practice. He organizes open-farm events, allows visitors to experience agricultural work firsthand and shares daily operations through social media.

"By showing our day-to-day work, we build trust with consumers," he said. "They are no longer just buyers — they become part of the farm's story."

Another young participant using innovation to renew tradition is 23-year-old Bui Thi Hong Van from Vietnam.

Bui serves as business development manager of Maypaperflower, a project dedicated to revitalizing the 300-year-old Thanh Tien paper flower craft. The initiative combines traditional craftsmanship with contemporary design, sustainable approaches and digital tools.

Bui said Thanh Tien paper flowers, originally used mainly in spiritual and cultural ceremonies in central Vietnam, were nearing extinction about a decade ago. Only a few artisan families remained, as younger generations left for work elsewhere and the market continued to shrink.

"We realized that preserving this heritage meant not only safeguarding techniques, but also creating new opportunities and a sustainable future for the people who keep the craft alive," she said.

The team has since reimagined Thanh Tien paper flowers for modern lifestyles, blending traditional techniques with contemporary aesthetics and Vietnamese cultural storytelling. For example, the lotus flower — long seen in Vietnamese culture as a symbol of purity and resilience — has been reinterpreted as a minimalist decorative item while preserving its cultural essence.

Today, more than 100 artisans and community members are involved in preserving the craft through Maypaperflower, whose products reach customers in over 20 countries.

The project also creates job opportunities for women and people with disabilities. Bui recalled a local woman who once believed her disability would limit her future but has since become a skilled artisan earning a stable income from home.



Ping Chen takes photos at Tomato Farm's cafe in Zhejiang province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"Cultural preservation is not only about saving traditions. It is also about empowering people and restoring their sense of self-worth," she said.

The idea resonated strongly with Ping. Although Tomato Farm and Maypaperflower work in different fields, both projects show how young people can use creativity, communication and practical action to connect traditional communities with new audiences.

"Young people can be that bridge," Ping said. "We can bring rural communities closer to urban areas, and farms closer to dining tables."

Contact the writers at xuyidan@i21st.cn

Online
Watch the video by scanning the code.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:41 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:41 PM

SPORTS

WORLD CUP 2026

MASTERFUL MESSI STANDS ALONE

Argentine's brace against Austria makes him the all-time leading goalscorer at FIFA's global showpiece



MESSI'S RECORD IN WORLD CUPS

- **2006:** ONE GOAL IN THREE MATCHES
- **2010:** NO GOALS IN FIVE MATCHES
- **2014:** FOUR GOALS IN SEVEN MATCHES
- **2018:** ONE GOAL IN FOUR MATCHES
- **2022:** SEVEN GOALS IN SEVEN MATCHES
- **2026:** FIVE GOALS IN TWO MATCHES (SO FAR)

ALL-TIME WORLD CUP LEADING SCORERS

- **18** - LIONEL MESSI (ARG)
- **16** - KYLIAN MBAPPE (FRA), MIROSLAV KLOSE (GER)
- **15** - RONALDO (BRA)
- **14** - GERD MULLER (GER)
- **13** - JUST FONTAINE (FRA)
- **12** - PELE (BRA)
- **11** - JURGEN KLINSMANN (GER), SANDOR KOCSIS (HUN)

Scoring goals and breaking records is what Lionel Messi does, and he is already doing it again at his sixth World Cup.

The Argentina captain now has the World Cup scoring record all to himself after another standout performance, one that began with frustration after missing a penalty kick, but ended in pure elation with another victory.

Messi, who many consider the greatest player of all time, scored both goals in his team's 2-0 victory over Austria on Monday.

That brace took his tally to 18 World Cup goals, six days after his first-ever World Cup hat-trick put him level with German forward Miroslav Klose on 16 tournament strikes.

"Beyond anything, I'm so happy for the win," Messi said. "It was huge, tough and difficult. It allows us to be relaxed for what's ahead. All matches in this World Cup are very even, very intense. I'm enjoying this moment and crave to enjoy it with my teammates."

In the 38th minute, as the ball went into the net for his record 17th goal, Messi ran toward a corner and thrust his right arm into the air to celebrate the mark with the Argentina fans, who made up the majority of the 70,649 fans inside the sold-out Dallas Stadium in Arlington, Texas, home of the NFL's Dallas Cowboys.

It was the sixth consecutive World Cup game in which Messi has scored — joining France striker Just Fontaine and Brazil great Jairzinho, the only other players to achieve that feat.

The goal came about half an hour after he missed the spot kick for a chance to match the record.

There had been an audible gasp from those same fans when Messi missed the penalty attempt in the ninth minute.

"There were moments when I was really angry about missing the penalty, but I was able to make up for it," said Messi, who has won a record eight Ballon d'Or awards as the best player in Europe.

The penalty was awarded after Lautaro Martinez was running free in the box and was tackled from behind by Xaver Schlager and Stefan Posch, the defender playing with a broken jaw.

Play continued for more than a minute with Martinez still on the ground near the goal. When the game was stopped for him, officials reviewed the play and called for the penalty to be awarded.

Messi's left-footed attempt went just wide of the right post. He is now four from seven spot kick attempts in regulation time at the World Cup, with misses in three consecutive tournaments.

The goal record became Messi's alone when he caught goalkeeper Alexander Schlager leaning the wrong way after Thiago Almada let Facundo Medina's pass go by him and directly onto Messi's left foot from about 20 yards.

Messi added his 18th World Cup goal in the waning seconds of stoppage time, when he took a shot through several defenders after his first attempt was turned away by the keeper.

"I knew it wasn't going to be easy," Messi said. "The way things are going in the World Cup, the way it's being played. No one is giving away anything."

Argentina advanced to the knockout round by winning its first two group games.

Messi also scored all of his team's goals in Argentina's 3-0 opening win over Algeria in Kansas City.

"I have no more words to talk about Leo," Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni said.

Austria coach Ralf Rangnick did. "Someone who is 39 years old and can score two goals, and five goals overall at the beginning of the World Cup, well, that makes a difference.

"We knew that he is on a level of his own, and Lionel Messi showed us today that he's the best."

The win against Austria came two days before Messi's 39th birthday and amid concern for his ailing father.

His father has been undergoing medical treatment for an undisclosed illness, the family said in a statement last week, while not providing any specific details.

The 68-year-old Jorge Messi has played a key role in his third son's soccer career, acting as his agent and managing his business affairs off the field.

Lionel Messi was overcome with emotion after scoring his first goal against Algeria on June 17, and said it was due to some tough days not related to soccer. Four more goals later, he's all-time top scorer.

The ousted Klose played in 24 World Cup matches, wrapping up his fourth tournament in 2014 by winning the title as Germany beat Argentina — and Messi — 1-0 in extra time.

In an interview published on June 12, Klose said he expected Messi to break his scoring record.

"With the larger field of competing teams, there are more games and, so, more chances to score goals, and I assume Argentina and France will go far," Klose told German newspaper Suddeutsche Zeitung. "That's perfectly OK, the record will be broken eventually anyhow, and Messi is welcome to be the one who does it. I'm a big fan, always have been. Messi is a genius."

Messi's hat-trick in the previous game, in his 200th international appearance, came 20 years to the date of his World Cup debut in Germany, when he also scored. Monday was his FIFA-record 28th match in the tournament.

AP

Scaloni admits fatigue over constant chatter about star player



Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni admitted to being fatigued by the endless questions around the regular record-breaking feats of Lionel Messi after seeing his captain become the World Cup's all-time leading scorer on Monday.

The Inter Miami player's double in the 2-0 win over Austria took him to 18 World Cup goals, surpassing both Miroslav Klose's men's record of 16 and Marta's overall tournament mark of 17 to claim sole possession of the all-time record.

"When the team was having a rough time without the ball, he worked and managed to steal the ball," Scaloni said of his former teammate. "You could see his level of commitment.

"There's a reason for that, he has commitment and this is what he generates. I have no more words to talk about Leo. It makes us a little bit tired talking about him all the time."

After Messi opened the scoring, Argentina was rarely troubled, with goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez making one save of note before Messi's determination secured his second goal five minutes into stoppage time.

"It had been complex," Scaloni said of the challenge presented by Ralf Rangnick's side. "We had the peace of mind we needed toward the end. I'm so happy with Leo's performance, he scored again when we were struggling.

"The team did suffer today, at times they were creating difficulties and we didn't have possession. We know how to suffer and that's something praiseworthy as a team.

"This was an opponent that had very tall players, that posed a challenge. No one thought this would be easy."

Back-to-back wins have already confirmed Argentina's progress into the knockout rounds and Scaloni remains confident the defending champion will be a contender at the business end of the tournament.

"This World Cup has nothing to do with playing favorites, or the players in the national teams," he said. "There are other elements at play, the levels of fitness and the emotional element.

"There are so many teams that can win, one of the big ones will win. We will be there, we will be one of the contenders, but it will be hard facing one of these big teams.

"But," he added, "it will be hard for them facing us."

REUTERS

Mbappe storms to another double against Iraq, despite two-hour rain delay

PHILADELPHIA — Kylian Mbappe said he was not paying too much attention to World Cup scoring records after getting two more goals on what he described as a draining night in Philadelphia, as France beat Iraq 3-0 in a game interrupted by a two-hour storm delay.

Mbappe's strikes came either side of halftime on his 100th appearance for France, and Ousmane Dembele got the other goal in a game which was held up at halftime as torrential rain lashed the city.

"It was a very long evening. In terms of staying switched on, emotionally it was very difficult, because we had to remain focused in the dressing room for almost two hours. That is very difficult and very demanding," said Mbappe.

"We stayed calm, I was joking with the players," France coach Didier Deschamps said.

"I was joking with the players. This is a safety matter, so I don't blame anyone for it.

"As soon as there is a risk, we adapt to local laws. These are unusual circumstances, and I hope it won't happen again."

A match which began at 5 pm local time didn't finish until close to 9 pm, but Mbappe's performance made it memorable for other reasons for the capacity crowd of over 68,000.

His brace came after scoring a double in France's opening 3-1 win over Senegal, and he has seven goals in his last three World Cup matches, including his hat-trick in the 2022 final against Argentina.



Kylian Mbappe celebrates his second goal. REUTERS

Mbappe now has 16 World Cup goals, equaling the pre-tournament overall scoring record held by Germany's Miroslav Klose.

Lionel Messi, Mbappe's old teammate at Paris Saint-Germain, shot past that mark earlier Monday with two goals in Argentina's 2-0 win over Austria, establishing a new record of 18.

"Leo always scores goals and always will. So I am not looking at what he is doing, I'm just focusing on helping my team," said Mbappe.

He now has 60 goals for his country, having overtaken Olivier Giroud's previous French record of 57 against Senegal.

Through to last 32

It was put to him that he could chase down the record for most goals scored in one World Cup — that is held by France's Just Fontaine, who scored 13 in the 1958 edition of the tournament in Sweden.

"I'm not thinking about that just now," said the Real Madrid star.

"I think it is important to focus on the collective at the moment.

"I have always scored goals at the World Cup, but the priority is to be at our best as a team.

"You need to beat the best teams to win a World Cup, so it's going to be very difficult."

Les Bleus are already through to the last 32 with two wins from two in Group I, and next return to their Boston base, where they play Norway on Friday.

Norway beat Senegal 3-2 in New Jersey later on Monday, meaning it is also now through. France and Norway are level on six points each, but France's superior goal difference means it will finish top of Group I with a draw in that last match.

"The players and staff had to make a big effort. But we did the job and we are very pleased with how we played," said Mbappe.

Iraq, which has played five World Cup matches across two tournaments, but has lost them all, now has to beat Senegal in Toronto on Friday to stand any chance of advancing as a best third-placed team.

"We stuck to our game plan and executed it pretty well, but France are good," said Iraq defender Rebin Sulaka.

"We still have a chance, we are still in the competition, so we have to go back and correct our mistakes and then go out and give everything against Senegal."

AFP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:41 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:43 PM

Where life is a stage
Jiangxi county transforms into unlikely theater hub
TALES & TRAILS, PAGES 7-10



False claims on ethnic unity law rejected
TOP NEWS, PAGE 3



Record maker
Ronaldo scores in sixth straight World Cup, silencing critics
SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 THURSDAY, JUNE 25, 2026

Xi calls for modernizing rural areas

Stable supply of grain, building of beautiful, livable villages stressed

By **CAO DESHENG**
caodesheng@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping has called for solid measures to advance the modernization of agriculture and rural areas, emphasizing the need to guide farmers to create a better life with hard work and wisdom.

Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, made the remarks during an inspection tour on Wednesday to the city of Dezhou, East China's Shandong province.

He said that the modernization of agriculture and rural areas is crucial to the overall development and quality of Chinese modernization.

It is important to enhance the capacity, quality and efficiency of agricultural production, ensure the stable supply of grain and other important agricultural products, and promote the construction of livable, business-friendly, harmonious and beautiful villages according to local conditions, Xi said.

The inspection trip came at the time of the summer grain harvest in rural areas.

Attaching great importance to the work related to agriculture, rural areas and farmers, Xi has said on various occasions that efforts must be made to ensure food security, drive rural vitalization on all fronts and promote common prosperity.

At Dongyujia, a village in Dezhou's Lingcheng district, Xi heard reports about local agricultural production, learning about wheat harvests, corn planting and farming supplies in local areas.

Xi inspected water and fertilizer integration facilities and chatted with grain growers, machinery operators and agricultural technicians.

He said that ensuring the stable supply of grain and other important agricultural products is the top priority of agricultural production.



President Xi Jinping, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, chats about daily life with the family of farmer Yu Xinhui on Wednesday during an inspection trip to Dezhou, Shandong province.
XIE HUANCHI / XINHUA

Xi underlined the need to implement policies that support grain production, saying that efforts must be made to stabilize farming supplies and their prices, and actively apply varieties of grain that suit local conditions, as well as advanced technologies and equipment, in order to steadily increase yields and efficiency, striving for a bountiful grain harvest for the year.

He also called for improving agricultural infrastructure, enhancing the efficiency of water use, and strengthening efforts in monitoring and providing early warnings for disastrous weather to strengthen the capability in agricultural disaster prevention, mitigation and relief.

While visiting Xiyujia village, Xi inquired in detail about how the village strengthens the Party organization and provides services to the villagers.

Xi expressed the hope that village Party organizations would further leverage the guiding role of Party building and make new achievements in building a beautiful and harmonious countryside for people to live and work in.

He urged sustained efforts to reduce the burden for grassroots officials so that they have more time and energy to serve the people and promote development.

Xi also visited the home of Yu Xinhui, a farmer in the village, looking around at the home furnishings and sitting down with the family to chat about everyday matters.

Xi asked about their work and incomes, the health of the elderly and children's education, and inquired in detail about whether the Party's policies on agriculture, rural areas and farmers had been fully implemented.

He pointed out that establishing and practicing a correct understanding of governance performance is ultimately aimed at improving the well-being of the people.

Party members and officials must enhance their sense of serving the people, strengthen the bond with the people, and do more good things, be down-to-earth and address difficulties for the people, thereby genuinely enhancing the people's sense of fulfillment, happiness and security, he said.

As Xi left the village, villagers warmly saw him off.

He noted that July 1 marks the 105th anniversary of the founding of the CPC, highlighting the remarkable achievements the country has made under the leadership of the CPC over the past 105 years.

As the nation is embarking on a new journey of comprehensively building a modern socialist country, Xi called on all the people throughout the country to work in solidarity to create a brighter future and continuously meet the people's aspirations for a better life.

He wished that the villagers would build beautiful homes and have better lives under the Party's leadership.

Premier Li says China offers world converging dividends

By **JI HAISHENG**
in Dalian, Liaoning
jihaisheng@chinadaily.com.cn

Premier Li Qiang highlighted "China Opportunity 2.0" at the opening plenary of the 17th Annual Meeting of the New Champions of the World Economic Forum in Dalian, Liaoning province, on Wednesday, underscoring that China's development has brought the world vast opportunities and considerable room for growth.

He emphasized that China now offers the world converging dividends — anchored in its massive market scale and low-cost production factors, and reinforced by technological advancement and industrial upgrading. Li made the remarks while addressing a full house of political and business leaders at the annual gathering, also known as the Summer Davos forum.

Elaborating on "China Opportunity 2.0", the premier said that it represents across-the-board innovation empowerment and high-return investment prospects for enterprises worldwide, while for global development, he added, it means more accessible advanced technologies and more widely shared development benefits.

"China is committed to an open approach to innovation. Much of its innovation is open-source," Li said. "This enables more countries, particularly developing countries, to access affordable new technologies and new products, which enhances their development capacity and can help address many difficulties holding back global development."

He cited broad international recognition and acclaim for China's rapid progress in innovation, and rebutted the narrative of a so-called "China Shock 2.0" — a term that implies anxiety over China's technological and industrial advances, and frames its development as a "shock" to the global economy.

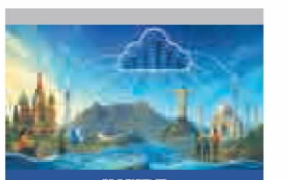
On the Chinese economy, he said that despite increased volatility in the international landscape and greater strain on the fragile global economic recovery since the start of this year, China has withstood the challenges, forged ahead and demonstrated strong resilience and a promising outlook.

The nation's economy has demonstrated stability, innovation, vitality, and integration with the rest of the world at the beginning of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, he added.

See ***Forum,*** *page 3*

Inside

- Editorial, **page 11**
- See more, **page 3**



www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN

China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

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

EYES OF THE WORLD TURN TO DONGGUAN

Glasses from China's southern manufacturing hub don't just make you look smart — they are smart

By **ZHENG CAIXIONG**
in Dongguan, Guangdong
zhengcaixiong@chinadaily.com.cn

The voice was calm, yet the effect was instant. "Xiaohuan, Xiaohuan, capture the scene in front of me," said Yang Wen'an, and the moment was frozen — snapped and saved by the pair of artificial intelligence glasses he was wearing. The onlookers who were gathered around him in a demonstration space in Fenggang town burst into applause, marveling at this technological scene.

China Vibes — GIFTS —

Yang, general manager of Dongguan Qianhuan Shiheng Industrial Co, was wearing a pair of smart glasses developed by the company, which entered the AI eyewear arena in 2022.

They are part of a fully self-developed smart glasses system launched last year that features a 13-megapixel camera powered by proprietary optics, hardware and algorithms, all designed and manufactured entirely in-house.



A visitor inquires about smart glasses at the 139th session of the China Import and Export Fair, or Canton Fair, in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, on April 15. ZHANG XIANGLIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

According to data from the research firm Omdia, global shipments of AI glasses reached 8.7 million units last year, a year-on-year increase of 322 percent. Even more striking is the fact that more than 4 million of these — nearly half of all AI glasses globally — were shipped by enterprises based in Dongguan, Guangdong province.

The southern manufacturing hub not only ranks first in the world for shipment volume, but also marks a profound shift. Once known as the "world's factory", Dongguan has quietly evolved into a global hub for smart products, and the AI glasses perched on millions of noses are its new calling card.

Step inside the facilities of Snoko Electronics Technology Co, and that newly forged reputation becomes even more matter-of-fact.

See ***Tech,*** *page 3*

Blacklists raise costs for all, narrow scope of dialogue

WORLD WATCH
By Jack Midgley

Earlier this month, the Pentagon added 65 more names to its blacklist of so-called "Chinese military companies", bringing the total to 188. This time, Alibaba, Baidu, BYD and Tencent were grouped with missile makers and shipyards on a roster that, starting June 30, bars the United States Department of Defense from signing new contracts with any of the listed companies.

A separate restriction next year would limit Pentagon purchases of goods incorporating inputs from any listed company. This means that US companies and consumers are strongly discouraged from doing business with the blacklisted companies.

In response, on Monday, China imposed a set of countermeasures against the US, placing 10 US companies on an export control list and barring government agencies from purchasing products from 46 others.

Washington calls the designations routine security vetting aimed at companies that it says are tied to China's military-industrial base. But blacklists can be counterproductive. They rarely make any nation "more secure". Rather, they raise costs, narrow the channels available for international dialogue, and feed mistrust that makes future disagreements harder to resolve.

There is also a US candor problem. Section 1260H, or the so-called "Chinese military companies" list, targets companies for contributing to what Washington calls China's military-civil fusion strategy, blurring the line between civilian commerce and military modernization. But "military-civil fusion" has long been practiced by the US, openly and by design. For example, the Pentagon's Defense Innovation Unit has a legal mandate to "accelerate the adoption of commercial technology throughout the military". Its Replicator Initiative repurposes commercial drones and software for the battlefield.

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, an independent research and development agency within the US Department of Defense, has spent decades funding research that blurs the line between defense laboratories and civilian life, producing the internet and GPS along the way. None of this is secret; it is published policy.

See ***Blacklist,*** *page 3*

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:43 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:43 PM

INDEPTH

Overcoming the 'paralyzed family' trap

New insurance program aims to solve problem of care for elderly disabled people

By LI LEI
lilei@chinadaily.com.cn

For 36-year-old Zhao Zhiqiang, life stopped last November. That's when his 56-year-old father suffered a massive brain hemorrhage, leaving him nearly paralyzed, unable to speak, and dependent on Zhao's assistance for almost every bodily function.

With no savings for a professional caregiver and no other relatives to help, Zhao quit his job to provide round-the-clock care at their home in rural Kangxian county, Gansu province.

"I have no work and no income," Zhao told China Daily. "All I do every day is cook blended food, clean up feces, turn him over in bed, and guess why he is groaning. He can't tell me where it hurts."

The family survives on a monthly welfare payment of about 2,000 yuan ($276). Zhao's wife lives apart with their two young daughters, aged 4 and 7, while his 83-year-old grandmother — still self-sufficient — also needs occasional assistance. His father's monthly medicine and supplies — including diapers and incontinence pads — run to almost 1,000 yuan, leaving the family with just enough to cover the bare minimum of food, and nothing more. "I desperately need a professional caregiver so I can go back to work," Zhao said.

His situation is indicative of China's growing predicament. With an aging population and shrinking family sizes, many disabled and incapacitated elderly are falling through the cracks. The result is what some families call the "one disabled, whole family paralyzed" trap that robs breadwinners of their livelihoods and leaves the most vulnerable without proper care.

In late March, China launched a national long-term care insurance program. Dubbed the "sixth insurance" the program is intended to fill the gap not covered by the social pillars of the pension, and medical, unemployment, work-related injury and maternity support. The scheme follows nearly a decade of pilot programs that covered more than 3.3 million people and cut caregiving costs by over 100 billion yuan ($14.5 billion). It aims to provide professional services and financial aid for people with long-term disabilities, and will be available in home-based, community and institutional settings.

The new system will be rolled out in stages and implemented nationwide by the end of 2028, covering all residents regardless of employment status. Funding comes from employers, individuals and government subsidies, with premiums capped at roughly 0.3 percent of wages. Beneficiaries will pay no deductible amounts, though annual reimbursements are limited to no more than 50 percent of the previous year's local per capita disposable income, according to guidelines issued by the general offices of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council.

Zhao said he had never heard of long-term care insurance until contacted by China Daily for this interview. But once he learned about it, his hopes were lifted.

"My final wish," he said, "is for the policy to be rolled out faster and cover us as early as possible, so we can get back to work and earn a living. But the policy must reach villages — not just county seats. And the carers must be properly trained — not just anyone off the street."



Caregivers share basic nursing knowledge with the relative of a long-term care insurance beneficiary while providing services to him at a residential community in Yuncheng county, Shandong province, on May 17. GUO XULEI / XINHUA



> "Before long-term care insurance, families had to choose between filial piety and earning a living. Now they have backup — a real safety net."
>
> **Dong Hui,** head of Puyuan Care Group in Suzhou



Left: A nurse assists an elderly man with rehabilitation exercises at a healthcare service center in Jinan, Shandong, on March 25. **Right:** A caregiver trims the nails of an elderly resident at Puyuan Care Group nursing home in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, on Nov 30. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY





Left: Caregivers take care of a long-term care insurance beneficiary in Yuncheng county, on May 17. GUO XULEI / XINHUA **Right:** Staff from an eldercare service center visit a senior resident's home to offer care services and companionship in Xi'an, Shaanxi province. WU KUANHONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

'Too weak to care'

In Jiangsu province's Suzhou, a pilot city since 2017, the program has already transformed daily life for thousands of families. The city has gone further than the national standard by including moderately disabled people — not just those with severe disabilities — a model that authorities hope to replicate nationwide.

Zhang Jian, 70, cares for his 96-year-old father, who has advanced Alzheimer's disease and can barely walk. Before long-term care insurance, Zhang and his sister juggled supervision 24-7, often canceling social engagements and sometimes losing patience.

"Bathing him required two people — me and my brother-in-law," Zhang said. "Friends kept inviting me out, but I had to say 'no' every time. I felt stuck at home, sometimes irritable. But you think: everyone gets old. It's our duty."

Since July 2025, a certified carer from Shanghai-headquartered provider Fortune Care has been at Zhang's home every morning from 8:30 to 10:30 — a time chosen because his father is most alert after waking. The carer measures the father's blood pressure, sends the readings by text message, massages the elderly man, helps him walk or sit outside in a wheelchair, and even manually removes feces when necessary.

"The carer does things even we children are reluctant to do," Zhang said. "I saw her put on gloves and help my father with his bowel movement without any hesitation. I was deeply grateful."

Zhang pays only 2.5 yuan per hour, or 5 yuan for each two-hour session — a fraction of the market rate. For moderately disabled care recipients like his father, the plan covers 13 home visits per month (18 for severe disability). Suzhou goes even further for people with dementia or intellectual disabilities, extending visits to 2.5 hours each because such cases require more time and patience.

Dong Hui is head of Puyuan Care Group, a nationwide long-term care provider operating in 46 cities with nearly 200 service stations and more than 6,000 carers serving 30,000 families.

She said the insurance solves three core problems of families: those who don't know how to care, have no time to care, or are physically too weak to care.

Professional carers, she said, use proper techniques for bed-to-chair transfers, bathing, and pressure-sore prevention — while also training family members while on the job.

"Before long-term care insurance, families had to choose between filial piety and earning a living," Dong said. "Now they have backup — a real safety net."

Human toll

Chen Lixiu, 52, a single mother from Dong'an county in Hunan province, knows that trade-off intimately. Her 76-year-old mother suffered a severe stroke in March and is now unable to speak, swallow, or move. Doctors said only conservative treatment is possible.

For two months, Chen has slept next to her mother, providing 24-hour care with no relief. Her father, nearly 80, is too frail to help. Her siblings have their own problems to deal with: one brother supports six people on a single salary, including his disabled son; one sister cares for her disabled husband; while another sister works away from home.

"I haven't gone back to my job," Chen said. "I was supposed to return after the May Day holiday. Now I have no income."

The physical toll is high. Chen must turn her mother every two hours to prevent bedsores — "a laborious job, and I'm not strong".

She prepares liquid food that is administered through a tube, worries about nutrition and choking, and cleans up urine and fecal matter multiple times a day. Her mother cannot tell her when she is hungry, thirsty, or in pain. "You just guess. You watch closely. It breaks your heart," Chen said.

Her brother pays for the medicine and supplies, which exceed 1,000 yuan per month. He has suggested stopping treatment, as the family can no longer afford it. However, Chen and her father refuse to give up although she sees no way out of the predicament.

"If I don't work, I have no income. With no income, I cannot sustain this long-term care," she said. "And I cannot keep burdening my son, who just started working and still has debts from our government-assisted housing."

Chen said she would welcome a professional carer at an affordable price, ideally providing home-based services so her father can see his wife every day.

"Long-term care insurance would solve two things: the caregiver problem — because most rural children of the elderly are working far away — and the financial pressure. With professional help and some reimbursement, we could work and the elderly would get proper care," she said.

Stopping fraud

To prevent the fraud that plagued some pilot schemes — including inflated disability ratings, fabricated service records, and identity theft — the new national program mandates surveillance technology.

Millimeter-wave radar sensors, as small as a computer mouse, use thermal sensing to detect a carer's presence and the service duration without capturing identifiable images, and preserving patient privacy. Bluetooth-enabled badges worn by carers transmit signals every 10 to 20 seconds; any departure from the patient's home triggers a back end alert.

Random "flight checks" by supervisors and quarterly satisfaction surveys further enforce the quality of care, said He Yue, Puyuan's national operations director.

Zhang, who cares for his father in Suzhou, said he welcomes the monitoring. "I am completely at ease," he said. "It doesn't feel like an invasion of privacy. It makes the service more standardized and gives me peace of mind."

Behind the technology are human carers like Xu Xinglan, 55, who has worked in long-term care for six years. She holds an elderly care certificate, a medical care certificate, and — as of May 2026 — a new "long-term carer" certification that requires passing both written and practical exams.

Xu recalled one of her most difficult patients: an elderly man with severe Alzheimer's who did not recognize his own family, screamed at them, and would hit anyone who tried to clean him. On her first visit, he was hostile and tried to strike her.

"I didn't get impatient," Xu said. "I crouched down, spoke softly, soothed him like a child. Even when he kicked or yelled, I understood — he was sick and couldn't control himself."

After months of daily visits, the man began to recognize Xu. He now greets her and sometimes says "thank you". His family, she said, marvels that he is closer to her than to his own children.

Workforce crunch

By the end of 2025, China's population aged 60 and above reached 323.38 million — about 23 percent of the total. Roughly 35 million of them need long-term care, according to official statistics.

The new insurance is expected to channel private capital and create new business models. Wang Wenjun, deputy head of the National Healthcare Security Administration, said pilot senior care programs have already attracted more than 60 billion yuan in private investment.

But a shortage of trained carers looms. Dong, head of Puyuan Care Group, said the industry suffers from "three lows and one high" — low pay, low social recognition, low professional skill, and high physical strain. Sixty percent of her carers are over 50, with an average age of 55. To maintain quality, the company caps hiring at age 60.

"Young people are not willing to join," Dong said. "We need government-led vocational grading, better salaries, and university programs to cultivate a new generation of carers." She noted that the Suzhou government is already promoting a professional ranking system for long-term carers to raise the job's social status and attract younger workers.

For Zhao, who cares for his paralyzed father in Gansu, such long-term reforms cannot come soon enough.

He said he would happily pay 0.3 percent of his future wages for long-term care insurance — just like cooperative medical insurance. "You put in a little when times are good, and when disaster strikes, the system has your back," he said.

Guo Yuhe contributed to this story.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:43 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:43 PM

TOP NEWS

China's growth fuels global development

Country is not a so-called "shock", but a shared opportunity for world economy

By **ZHANG CHENXU** in Dalian, Liaoning and **ZHONG NAN** in Beijing

China's strong innovation momentum and resilient growth prospects are giving global businesses greater confidence and fueling world economic growth, as the country continues to share the benefits of its vast market and high-standard opening-up with the world, business leaders and experts said on Wednesday.

Speaking at the ongoing 17th Annual Meeting of the New Champions of the World Economic Forum, also known as the Summer Davos forum, in Dalian, Liaoning province, they added that the world's second-largest economy is not a so-called "shock", but a powerful engine of innovation-driven growth, long-term investment opportunities and shared growth for the global economy.

Ben Dawson, president for Asia Pacific, Japan and China at United States-based tech company Cisco, said in an exclusive interview with China Daily that China's vast and dynamic market has continued to create opportunities for global companies.

Having invested in and deeply engaged with China for 32 years, Cisco has seen the country's artificial intelligence development gain momentum on the back of a strong industrial base, sustained investment in manufacturing and faster adoption of advanced technologies across traditional sectors, Dawson said.

The upbeat sentiment comes as China is moving faster to create new forms of smart economy, with this year's Government Work Report calling for advancing and expanding the "AI Plus" initiative, promoting faster application of new-generation intelligent terminals and AI agents, and encouraging large-scale commercial application of AI in key sectors and fields.

Yin Zheng, executive vice-president of China and East Asia operations at French industrial conglomerate Schneider Electric, said that China has become both an important engine of global economic growth and a major hub for technological innovation, with its solid energy foundation and strong industrial system reinforcing each other.

The trend extends beyond Schneider Electric. Jiang Ying, chair of Deloitte China, said more multinational companies are adopting a new growth model in China — rooting themselves in the local market while serving global demand — by using the country's vast market as a testing ground for technology deployment, industrial collaboration and global expansion.

"The long-term value of the Chinese market lies in its vast and dynamic consumer base, vibrant technological and industrial innovation, and continued high-level opening-up," she added.

Global companies' growing confidence in China stands in contrast to some overseas anxiety about the country's advances in technology and industrial innovation, including the narrative of a so-called "China Shock 2.0" that frames China's development as a disruption to the global economy.

Yet executives and experts at the forum said the country's industrial rise is creating new sources of innovation, efficiency and shared growth.

Joe Ngai, chairman of McKinsey Greater China, said that Chinese industry is already "indisputably at the leading edge of global development" in many areas, especially high-tech manufacturing, clean energy, AI applications and robotics.

"Chinese companies are exporting a lot of their intellectual property, their methodologies and their processes. China is becoming the factory for factories," Ngai said.

China's industrial strengths are also underpinned by its complete value chain, said Elodie Latour, Decathlon's vice-president for China.

"I don't think there is any other place in the world where you have the full value chain available like you do in China. And when you have the full value chain available, your time to market becomes almost irreplaceable," Latour said.

Product personalization and fast response to market needs are other areas where China can really stand out and offer a unique customer experience, she added.

Noah Xie, chairman and CEO of Kmind Strategy Consulting, said China's vast market represents a major opportunity for foreign companies that are willing to invest, operate and grow in the country.

Contact the writers at zhangchenxu@chinadaily.com.cn



Premier Li Qiang (center, right) attends a symposium and exchanges ideas with business representatives on Wednesday at the 17th Annual Meeting of the New Champions of the World Economic Forum, also known as the Summer Davos forum, in Dalian, Liaoning province. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

Forum: Stable, predictable market lauded

From page 1

China remains committed to openness and cooperation regardless of external changes, Li told around 150 corporate leaders from more than 30 countries and regions in a separate meeting attended by representatives of the business community.

He said that the country will continue to deepen its participation in international trade and investment cooperation, and promote the connectivity and integration of the Chinese market with the world market.

Li noted that over the years, China's economy has been advancing toward innovation and higher quality, which will bring more opportunities for global companies. He highlighted three areas of upgrading — the market, manufacturing and infrastructure — that he said would create richer incremental space, a more efficient industrial ecosystem, and more favorable conditions for global businesses operating in China.

The premier pledged that the Chinese government will provide better service for businesses from all countries and foster a more open, fair and friendly environment for their operations in China.

Matts Johansen, CEO of Norwegian company Aker BioMarine, expressed growing confidence in China, calling it a stable and predictable market in an unstable world. He noted that the Chinese market contributes to 20 percent of the company's global sales and is its fastest-growing region.

"If you want to invest in the future, you have to invest in China. If you want to connect to the world, you have to connect to the Chinese innovation and supply chain," he said, adding that the company is establishing its own innovation and manufacturing hubs in the country.

Johansen endorsed the concept of "China Opportunity 2.0". He said, "Innovation here in China is a great opportunity for global businesses," citing the country's innovation strength, efficient supply chain and innovative consumers that adopt new products.

Luca Forte, corporate supply chain director at Italian multinational automotive electronics giant Eldor, said he is impressed by China's focus on developing new technologies and praised its efforts in pioneering a wide range of technologies.

He said the Chinese approach has demonstrated to the world that technologies can be developed in a very short time, with a simple method and avoiding unnecessary complexities while remaining highly active and efficient.

Nation rejects false claims about ethnic law

By **CUI JIA**
cuijia@chinadaily.com.cn

Inside
Editorial, **page 11**

A senior official strongly rebutted on Wednesday claims made by certain foreign organizations and forces that the Ethnic Unity and Progress Promotion Law "assimilates ethnic minorities". He said that there is no point in attacking China's ethnic affairs with prejudice and turning a blind eye to facts.

Bayanqolu, a member of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, China's top legislature, and chairman of the Ethnic Affairs Committee of the NPC, said at a news conference that some foreign forces are spreading falsehoods about China's human rights situation, especially in the context of ethnic issues.

He said that they disregard the fact that the law was formulated in line with China's national conditions and modern governance concepts and reflects the common aspiration of the people of all ethnic groups in the country.

"Seeing is believing, and facts should be the basis. What is the point of fabricating and sensationalizing with prejudice?" Bayanqolu said during the news conference held by the State Council Information Office on the law.

"The so-called statements issued by these organizations ignore the tremendous achievements made in China's ethnic regions, unjustly criticize China's ethnic policies and legal construction, and constitute a blatant interference in China's internal affairs. We strongly resent and firmly oppose it," he added.

As a matter of fact, the economic and social development of ethnic regions has seen unprecedented progress, and living standards are at an all-time high, he said.

The development of all five ethnic autonomous regions — Inner Mongolia, Ningxia Hui, Xizang, Xinjiang Uygur and Guangxi Zhuang — has accelerated. Between 2012 and 2025, the GDP of these regions increased from 3.25 trillion yuan ($478 billion) to 8.66 trillion yuan, Duan Yijun, deputy head of the United Front Work Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, said.

On the road to poverty alleviation and building a moderately prosperous society, no ethnic group or individual has been left behind, and as Chinese-style modernization advances, no ethnic group or individual can be left behind either, said Bayanqolu, the chairman of the Ethnic Affairs Committee.

The law, which was passed on March 12 and will take effect on July 1, defines the protection of the legal rights of citizens seeking employment and entrepreneurship to further safeguard the development rights of people from all ethnic groups. There is absolutely no so-called "forced migration" or "forced labor" in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region as claimed by some Western organizations and media, said Chen Ruifeng, director of the National Ethnic Affairs Commission, at the news conference.

"All Xinjiang residents who seek employment outside the region do so of their own free will," Chen said, adding that claims of "forced migration" or "forced labor" are "extremely absurd and ridiculous".

Chen added that China's Constitution and a series of other laws and regulations fundamentally prohibit all forms of forced labor. The Ethnic Unity and Progress Promotion Law further clarifies measures such as rights protection and legal assistance for cross-regional workers.

When the draft law was submitted to the NPC Standing Committee for a second reading in December, a provision was added that educational institutions should use standard Chinese for teaching, as the promotion of standard Chinese is mandated by the Constitution and is also an important measure to foster a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation. Since then, some Western media outlets have used the legal provision to attack China's ethnic policies.

Lei Jianbin, vice-chairman of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the Standing Committee of the NPC, said it is important to note that the promotion and popularization of the national standard language should not be seen as opposing the learning and use of the languages of different ethnic groups.

In fact, the protection of the right of people from all ethnic groups to use their own languages is explicitly stipulated in the Constitution and other laws. The new law encourages different ethnic groups to learn each other's languages, Lei said.

Bayanqolu said that after the Ethnic Unity and Progress Promotion Law was passed, it received high recognition and firm support from people across all ethnic groups. Many individuals, media and institutions from various countries said they believe the law has provided a reference path for multiethnic countries.

Blacklist: Costs reach well beyond companies named

From page 1

Washington's complaint might carry more weight if the US acknowledged that a version of the same fusion is also US policy.

The costs of blacklisting reach well beyond the 188 companies named. Multinational companies in both markets must now screen suppliers, customers and partners against a growing patchwork of US and Chinese rules, a compliance burden that has little to do with security while increasing the cost of doing business. Many companies respond by duplicating supply chains rather than risk falling afoul of either government, and that redundancy raises prices. Global trade, still adjusting to years of tariff and export-control friction, absorbs another layer of it. None of this serves workers, consumers or businesses in either country, or the global economy that depends on steady commerce between its two largest players.

China has built its own legal tools to safeguard economic security since 2020, including an unreliable entity list and an Anti-Foreign Sanctions Law. The real question is not whether China can respond if pressed; it plainly can. The question is whether Washington will give good reason to rely on dialogue instead of retaliation.

Both countries hold real strengths. China's position in critical minerals and rare-earth processing underpins much of global manufacturing; the US' position in advanced semiconductors, capital markets and dollar-denominated finance underpins much of global commerce. These facts are reminders that the two economies are already deeply interdependent, and that interdependence is best managed through negotiation, not lists that try to isolate the other country.

The way ahead is well understood. Chinese leaders have long framed the bilateral relationship around mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation, language that leaves ample room for positive outcomes. The recent China-US summit showed that high-level dialogue can still produce real momentum. The question is whether Washington builds on the positive momentum or lets a blacklist undercut it.

A more productive US approach would look different from this month's list: narrowing designations to companies, boosting direct military ties rather than letting blacklists grow; building in review and sunset provisions instead of a one-way ratchet; and pairing any future step with a genuine offer to negotiate the underlying concerns through structured economic dialogue.

China and the US are not short on shared interests — in technology, trade and the stability the rest of the world quietly depends on. The opportunity for a steadier relationship is real, and it has not closed. What happens next is largely Washington's choice.

The author is a principal consultant at Midgley & Co, and adjunct associate professor in the Security Studies Program at Georgetown University in Washington, DC. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Reading haven



Children read books inside the Amani Kibera Book House in the Kibera slum of Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, on Tuesday. A completion ceremony for the Amani Kibera Book House, a public welfare library designed by an architectural research team from The Chinese University of Hong Kong, was held in Nairobi on Tuesday. LIU QIONG / XINHUA

Tech: Half the world's AI glasses trace back to Dongguan

From page 1

Xu Zuowei, the company's general manager, reels off the functions of Snoko's smart glasses: music playback, phone calls, AI voice interaction, photography, video recording, real-time translation and navigation.

The glasses free your hands, he said, adding that you can answer a call without reaching for your phone, chat with a voice assistant that offers emotional comfort as readily as it handles daily queries, and capture fleeting moments that would otherwise slip away in the time it takes to get your phone out of your pocket.

Snoko entered the AI glasses market five years ago, and has since shipped more than 1 million units, with an annual production value exceeding 100 million yuan ($14.7 million). Between 70 and 80 percent of its smart glasses are sold overseas, reaching retailers in Southeast Asia, Japan and South Korea, as well as Europe and the Americas. Prices for the glasses range from around 100 yuan to several thousand, depending on the model and configuration.

The company has recently launched ultralight AI glasses weighing 25 grams. They are designed to be comfortable to wear for hours on end. Supporting real-time translation of 160 languages, they boast a battery life of more than 20 hours.

Xu said he believes that the future trajectory is clear: "AI glasses will become smarter, more intuitive, user-friendly and convenient. Just like smartphones, they will evolve into an indispensable part of our lives."

Zhang Jiawei, chief executive officer of Guangdong-based Kreta Yunke Technology Co, is driven by something more altruistic. His company's AI glasses can help the visually impaired navigate the world, correct their wearers' sitting posture, identify parasites and offer traditional Chinese medicine diagnoses.

The approach is deliberate: Find an overlooked aspect of life and use a pair of glasses to see it better than human eyes ever could.

In one very specific application, Zhang's company developed smart glasses that help herdsmen locate caterpillar fungus, a prized ingredient in traditional medicine that is notoriously difficult to spot. Powered by specialized algorithms and large models, the glasses can detect the fungus over a one-meter range and send out an instant alert. A task that once demanded backbreaking patience and trained intuition has been reduced to a quiet beep.

"It greatly lowers the difficulty for herdsmen to locate the fungus," said Zhang.

There is a quiet poetry to the fact that all of this — half the world's AI glasses, bound for mountains, boardrooms and megacities alike — traces back to the workshops and research and development labs of Dongguan.

A city that once stitched and assembled for the world now thinks for it in a whisper: "Xiaohuan, capture the scene." A scene, it seems, that has already been set — one pair of glasses at a time.

Hu Xiaotong contributed to this story.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:43 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:43 PM

CHINA



Two maintenance workers perform routine checks on top of a wind turbine at an offshore wind farm in Rudong county, Jiangsu province, on June 10. YANG BO / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Experts wary of 'optimistic' climate projections on China

Energy security, growing power demand seen as impediments to transition goals

By HOU LIQIANG
houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

Energy experts have dismissed a recent report from a foreign research institute on China's carbon emissions, noting that its optimistic climate projections for the nation may not fully align with current realities.

Although China has made remarkable progress in addressing climate change and advancing its "dual carbon" initiatives, experts noted that the report might not adequately consider challenges such as China's existing grid limitations, rising power demand, and the government's emphasis on energy security.

The report, unveiled by BloombergNEF in May, projects that China's emissions will fall 17 percent from their 2023 peak by 2030, outpacing China's commitment under the landmark 2015 Paris Agreement.

Yet, China has never officially announced that its emissions have peaked. The country pledged in 2020 that it would strive to reach peak carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and carbon neutrality before 2060.

The report said China is rapidly electrifying, with electricity already the dominant final energy carrier by 2023 and coal's share of power generation falling from about 54 percent in 2025 to an estimated 19 percent in 2035 and 7 percent by 2050.

Wang Weiquan, deputy secretary-general of the renewable energy committee at the China Energy Research Society, described the report as "overly optimistic" and "even radical".

Coal-fired power plants still contribute over 50 percent of China's electricity generation, he noted. If the share is to decrease to 19 percent by 2035, as mentioned in the report, the country has to bring it down by three percentage points a year.

"That's too optimistic," Wang said.

He argued that the report underestimated the weight that the Chinese government places on energy security, which underpins economic stability and people's livelihoods.

"The government has to take a holistic approach," he said.

Wang also pointed to several hurdles that stand in the way of China's energy transition.

China's electricity demand is rising by 500-600 billion kilowatt hours annually, reaching over 10 trillion kWh in 2025 and an estimated 13 trillion kWh by 2030, he said. Wind and solar together currently generate 2.2 trillion kWh.

Including hydro and nuclear, non-fossil sources account for roughly 40 percent, he added.

In addition, the growth of wind and solar power generation may slow down as both have to compete in the power market, where volatile prices create uncertain returns, he said.

"That uncertainty has made even the big State-owned power companies scale back their investment pace," Wang said.

In February 2025, Chinese authorities reformed the approach to pricing wind and solar power, transitioning from fixed tariffs to a market-based system.

For new renewable energy projects with an operation commencement date of June 1, 2025 or later, electricity prices will be established via market-based competitive bidding, according to the new policy.

Prior to this, the country's feed-in tariff mechanism required grid operators to purchase renewable electricity at government-set prices, a guaranteed above-market rate funded through a small surcharge on electricity bills.

Wang said challenges in integrating renewable energy into the grid, along with a shortage of suitable land for new projects, are also hindering the country from rapidly expanding renewable energy development.

"To sustain rapid increase in renewable energy generation is far from easy, given all these real-world constraints," he continued.

Lin Boqiang, dean of Xiamen University's China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy, said the biggest challenge for China to peak carbon emissions and go carbon neutral lies in the construction of a new electricity system dominated by solar and wind power.

"The country's current energy infrastructure remains inadequate, as its power grid lacks the capacity to fully accommodate new energy sources," he said, highlighting that China has yet to develop sufficient capability to address the intermittency of solar and wind power.

Currently, the growth in contribution from wind and solar sources to the grid simply cannot keep up with the rise in power demand, Lin added. As a result, coal-fired power remains the only option to bridge the gap, which explains its continued expansion — albeit at a very slow pace.

"Nuclear power is constrained by safety concerns, preventing large-scale development. As for hydropower, the issue is resource availability — there simply aren't enough suitable sites," he said.

Lin urged enhanced efforts to boost power storage capacity, emphasizing its dual role: addressing the intermittency of renewable sources and, equally important, halting the continued expansion of coal-fired power.

He Kebin, dean of the Institute for Carbon Neutrality at Tsinghua University, said the process of peaking carbon emissions and achieving carbon neutrality will also bring new challenges to air pollution control in China.

He, also an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, stressed that building a new electricity system cannot be done all at once, especially in the face of the explosive growth in power demand driven by climate-induced extreme weather events and the robust growth of artificial intelligence.

Building a new electricity system could take decades, he said. To ensure grid balance throughout this transition, new coal-fired power capacity will still be required, while some existing coal-fired plants will be repurposed to provide reliability support for the grid.

Under these circumstances, many coal-fired power plants will no longer operate according to their designed operating hours, he said. Instead, they will have to start and stop frequently and run at low loads, which will compromise the performance of ultra-low emission technologies and consequently affect the emission of air pollutants.

Yao Xuan, vice-general manager of CHN Energy Longyuan Environmental Protection Co, shared He's views.

Addressing the 24th China International Environmental Protection Exhibition and Conference on June 2, Yao said, to achieve deep peak shaving, many coal-fired power units in developed regions like Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces are now running at 20 percent load over long durations during the daytime.

"This was something unimaginable," he said.

As one of the country's major electricity generators, China Energy Investment Corporation (CHN Energy) saw its power units average 16 start-stop cycles per unit in 2025, compared with only five half a decade ago, he said.

The frequent start-stop cycles and low-load operating conditions make it challenging to effectively control nitrogen oxide emissions, prevent ammonia slip, and avoid excessive particulate emissions, Yao said.

AI sorting machine seeks to bolster TCM industry

By YAN DONGJIE in Tianjin
yandongjie@chinadaily.com.cn

A Tianjin-based research center has rolled out the latest generation of an artificial intelligence-powered sorting machine for traditional Chinese medicinal herbs, replacing subjective manual inspection with digital quality assessment in a move aimed at modernizing the centuries-old industry.

The new system, developed by the National Modern TCM Innovation Center, combines X-ray imaging, hyperspectral analysis and machine vision to detect hidden defects, measure chemical composition and automatically grade raw herbal materials.

The fourth-generation machine is already being used at pharmaceutical facilities in Tianjin and provinces of Jilin, Jiangsu and Guangdong, where it helps manufacturers identify counterfeit or damaged herbs, remove impurities and sort raw materials according to quality standards.

"Herbs supplied by different farmers can vary significantly in quality," said Liu Changqing, senior manager of the center's green intelligent manufacturing department.

"The machine grades every batch before production begins, helping manufacturers ensure the consistency of finished medicines. That has been the central goal of our research."

Traditionally, medicinal herbs were sorted through a combination of manual picking, air separation and visual inspection. The labor-intensive process depended heavily on workers' experience, making it difficult to detect internal defects or maintain consistent standards.

The new system addresses those limitations by combining three types of data.

X-rays examine the internal structure of herbs without damaging them, revealing hidden problems such as rot or hollow cavities. Hyperspectral sensors analyze chemical composition and estimate the levels of active medicinal compounds, while high-resolution cameras inspect surfaces for mold, dirt and other contaminants.

"Each technology captures different information," Liu said. "When the data is cross-checked, the error rate can be greatly reduced."

The research team spent five years developing four generations of the machine. The first prototype was unveiled in 2020, while the latest version entered mass production earlier this year.

So far, researchers have developed digital identification models for more than 50 commonly used medicinal herbs. But the challenge remains substantial.

China uses around 1,000 major medicinal materials, many of which exist in multiple processed forms. Ginger alone, for example, can be processed into six products, including fresh ginger, dried ginger and ginger peel, each requiring large amounts of training data to build accurate algorithms.

The team has collected around 400,000 samples and is currently digitizing about a dozen new herb varieties each year.

"We hope to gradually build digital databases covering all mainstream medicinal herbs," Liu said. "We also develop customized algorithms tailored to individual manufacturers and their production processes."

Researchers said the technology could also strengthen the international competitiveness of Chinese herbal products by providing standardized and traceable quality-control records.

According to customs data, China exported 255,000 metric tons of raw herbal materials to 196 countries and regions in 2025. Industry experts said overseas buyers increasingly prefer objective testing data and traceable records over assessments that rely solely on human experience.

During this year's National People's Congress, Zhang Boli, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering and chief technical adviser to the center, said AI could help modernize the TCM industry, but should complement rather than replace professional expertise.

"If Chinese medicine is to advance internationally, standardized digital quality control must become the foundation, rather than relying solely on the experience of veteran pharmacists," Zhang said.

Beyond intelligent sorting hardware, the National Modern TCM Innovation Center has built a full R&D pipeline covering lab trials, pilot manufacturing and large-scale commercial rollout.

Wang Ping, general manager of the innovation center, said the facility connects every stage from lab experiments to mass manufacturing via continuous pilot production lines.

"The quality of authentic medicinal herbs directly shapes how well finished treatments work," Wang said. "Our integrated pilot platform combines extraction, formulation and full-process quality testing under one roof. This significantly lowers costs and technical barriers for small and medium drug firms to upgrade their factories and develop new herbal medicines."

Meng Jiarui, Zhong Aiyamei and Wei Lan contributed to this story.

Online
See more by scanning the code.



A researcher conducts a herbal extraction experiment at a lab of the National Modern TCM Innovation Center in Tianjin on June 18. YAN DONGJIE / CHINA DAILY

DPP authorities slammed for ongoing military drill

By LI SHANGYI
lishangyi@chinadaily.com.cn

A Chinese mainland spokeswoman, on Wednesday, dismissed remarks and actions by Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party authorities aimed at resisting reunification, reiterating that "Taiwan independence" separatism is doomed to fail.

Zhang Han, a spokeswoman for the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, said at a regular news conference that Taiwan's ongoing military drill concealed the DPP authorities' intention to pursue "Taiwan independence" through military means.

"It further demonstrates that they are the root cause of cross-Strait confrontation and tension, and a destabilizing factor for peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait," Zhang said.

According to media reports, Taiwan's military launched a five-day "immediate combat readiness drill" on Monday to test the responsiveness of various combat zones and their joint operational capabilities in the event of any mainland actions.

Zhang described the DPP authorities' posturing as futile in the face of the powerful People's Liberation Army, noting it would only harm Taiwan and ultimately lead to their own downfall.

Refuting recent remarks by Taiwan leader Lai Ching-te on cross-Strait relations, Zhang said his words and actions cannot change the historical and legal fact that Taiwan is part of China's territory, nor can they stop the inevitable trend toward national reunification.

During a meeting with foreign correspondents in Taipei on June 18, Lai claimed that the two sides of the Taiwan Strait are not subordinate to each other.

In response, Zhang said there is only one China in the world and Taiwan is part of China.

"Taiwan's future can only be decided jointly by the 1.4 billion Chinese people, including compatriots in Taiwan," she said.

She criticized the DPP authorities for adhering to a separatist "Taiwan independence" position and attempting to alter the status quo in the Taiwan Strait, where both sides belong to one China. She added that such actions amount to a denial of the outcomes of victory in World War II and a challenge to the post-war international order.

Zhang said the international community's adherence to the one-China principle and opposition to "Taiwan independence" separatism, together with mainstream public opinion on the island favoring peace, development, exchanges and cooperation, demonstrate that "Taiwan independence" has no future and that "anti-China" efforts are bound to fail.

"Lai's repeated public rhetoric exposes his anxiety and unease, and further confirms that 'Taiwan independence' is increasingly reaching a dead end," she said.

At the June 18 event, Lai also urged the mainland to abandon military expansion in the South China Sea, East China Sea and Taiwan Strait, and renounce the use of force against Taiwan, while stating that Taiwan is willing to engage in dialogue with the mainland on the basis of "equal dignity".

Zhang said the situations in the South China Sea and East China Sea remain generally stable, adding that the DPP authorities' separatist stance and attempts to pursue "Taiwan independence" by relying on external forces and military means remain the root cause of tensions and instability in the Taiwan Strait.

She reaffirmed the mainland's position that it is willing to make the utmost sincere efforts to pursue the prospect of peaceful reunification, but will never commit to renouncing the use of force or leave any room for any form of "Taiwan independence" separatist activity.

Only by recognizing the 1992 Consensus, which embodies the one-China principle, and ending separatist activities can the DPP authorities restore cross-Strait dialogue and return relations to the correct path of peaceful development, Zhang added.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:43 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:43 PM

Factories encouraged to build up, not out

Ministry of Natural Resources' program pushes more efficient industrial land use

By LI MENGHAN
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn





Left: People browse souvenirs at Hongqi Fang, a redeveloped commercial complex on the site of a former porcelain factory, in Quanzhou, Fujian province, during the May Day holiday. **Right:** An expansion project increases the land use efficiency at Maanshan Shangdian Electrical Co. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

In Maanshan city's Bowang district, Anhui province, a newly expanded electrical plant has bypassed local land shortages by reinforcing its second floor to hold one metric ton per square meter — allowing heavy industrial spoolers to run high above the ground.

This vertical setup is a textbook example of "industry going upstairs", a national policy shift that encourages manufacturers to increase output from their existing footprints. By forcing factories to grow vertically rather than horizontally, the strategy keeps traditional manufacturing hubs viable, powers high-tech upgrades and protects the country's vital farmland.

"It is not new land," said Jiang Donghang, general manager of Maanshan Shangdian Electrical Co, watching the copper strands feed into a spooler. "We consolidated several underused plots, demolished unsafe structures and built upward. On roughly the same area, we now have more than twice the usable floor space."

Jiang's factory is a microcosm of a national shift dating back to 2013, when the former ministry of land and resources introduced guidelines to address the inefficient use of land.

The Ministry of Natural Resources has since required that new construction land quotas be linked to local performance in revitalizing inefficient stock land. Supporting measures include greater flexibility in plot density, the issuance of special bonds to repurchase idle parcels, and the publication of model redevelopment cases to guide nationwide practice.

Progress under the pilot program remains robust. Data from the ministry shows that, as of the end of March, 100 pilot cities had launched redevelopment projects covering 79,800 cases, spanning 129,900 hectares.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period, total approved construction land nationwide was 8.6 percent lower than planned ceilings. Land consumption per unit of GDP fell by 19.36 percent, while more than 400,000 hectares of idle land were returned to productive use.

Wang Zhengyi, an official with the Ministry of Natural Resources' department of natural resource development and utilization, said these figures mark a decisive shift away from decades of low-density peripheral expansion toward more intensive use of land within existing urban boundaries.

He said that the policy reorientation is driven by both constraint and calculation. China treats arable land as a strategic red line, with around 12 percent of its territory suitable for intensive cultivation to feed 1.4 billion people. As the economy pivots toward advanced manufacturing, green energy and digital infrastructure, the marginal returns from continued suburban expansion are diminishing.

The objective, he added, is to reshape urban growth by increasing output efficiency, aligning land supply with industrial upgrading needs, and easing pressure on farmland.

This national strategy finds concrete expression in the city of Maanshan's Bowang district. Since the 1980s, small workshops and micro enterprises producing blades, dies and machine-tool accessories have clustered there. By the late 2000s, however, the developed area had become saturated. Scattered plots — many occupied by aging single-story plants with a plot ratio of barely 0.4, compared with more than 1.0 in modern industrial parks — left little room for expansion.



Lion dancers perform during a carnival at Hongqi Fang on May 1.

"We have little space for enlarging the development zone," said Chen Puwen, head of the Bowang division of the Maanshan Natural Resources and Planning Bureau. "If we wanted to keep traditional industry viable and bring in emerging industries, we had to look inward — consolidate fragmented lots, raise density and reallocate resources."

Bowang introduced a performance-based enterprise evaluation system for land allocation in 2018. Firms are assessed annually on land-output value, tax contribution, energy intensity, environmental compliance and workplace safety. Top performers receive priority when consolidated land becomes available. Lower-ranked firms are not forcibly removed; instead, they are relocated to standardized multi-story plants, each occupying around five hectares, freeing original plots for higher-intensity use.

"The biggest hurdle in such consolidation efforts remains funding," Chen said.

To address this, Bowang secured 650 million yuan ($95.56 million) in 2021 through Anhui's bank loan program linked to land-intensification performance, with total credit extended reaching 3.22 billion yuan.

Chen added that the funds supported compensation, demolition of unsafe buildings, and construction of standardized plants with plot ratios rising to 1.5. To date, around 200 hectares of inefficient land have been cleared and repackaged across the district.

Jiang, the general manager at Maanshan Shangdian Electrical, grew up amid the clatter of grinding wheels and stamping presses that once earned Bowang its reputation as the hometown of cutting tools and molds. That strength, however, gradually became a constraint, as decades of scattered, low-rise workshops left little room for expansion.

In the 1990s, Jiang joined the ranks of local salesmen traveling across the country to sell Bowang's blades and molds. He later established a base in Nanjing in neighboring Jiangsu province, founding a business producing copper wire for power transformers.

"When I saw the district was serious about land consolidation (around 2019) and actively supporting emerging industries, I knew it was time to come back," Jiang said.

He acquired a 4,500-sq-m site in a Bowang industrial park in 2019, then successfully applied for one of the newly consolidated plots last year, securing space for expansion.

That original site is now being rebuilt into a 30,000-sq-m facility, with production lines upgraded to serve the national power grid and renewable energy projects. Rooftop photovoltaic panels have been installed to meet 70 to 80 percent of daytime electricity demand. Annual revenue now runs into the billions of yuan.

Jiang attributed the expansion in part to the district's land consolidation measures, which prioritize firms aligned with strategic emerging industries, including high-end electrical equipment.

"Electrification, EVs, energy storage, AI computing, all require transformers," Jiang said. "We're simply riding that current."

Reimagined returns

Further south in Quanzhou, Fujian province, a former porcelain factory in Dehua county illustrates a different pathway for low-efficiency land redevelopment — one centered on conservation, cultural revitalization and sustainable economic returns.

Founded in 1951, the Red Flag Porcelain Factory was once a pillar of Dehua's renowned translucent white porcelain industry, prized since the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) for its purity and widely used in religious sculpture and fine tableware. After ceasing operations in the 1990s, its red-brick workshops, chimneys and wood-fired kilns sat idle as stranded assets in the center of a growing ceramics town.

Under the national low-efficiency land pilot program, the 97,000-sq-m site — now branded Hongqi Fang — was consolidated by a State-owned enterprise in 2021 and renovated into a commercial complex with a light-touch approach.

More than 40 percent of the built fabric has been retained as historical structures dating back over 50 years, including brick terraces, a centuries-old dragon kiln partially opened for public viewing, four signature chimneys and original timber roof trusses. Salvaged sagger bricks and kiln fragments have been reused in landscape design.

Functionally, the site has shifted from single industrial production to a composite model integrating manufacturing, exhibition, sales and tourism. The redevelopment introduced hotels, museums, a shared kiln, a ceramic authentication and auction center, and retail streets showcasing local crafts.

In addition, retired kiln workers and veteran artisans have returned as demonstrators and interpreters. On open days, they demonstrate wheel-throwing and glazing techniques, while also curating exhibitions of old payroll records, kiln logs and archival photographs, reconnecting visitors with the factory's industrial past.

Entering trial operation in 2025, Hongqi Fang spans 173,800 sq m and is projected to generate 300 million yuan in annual tourism revenue and attract 500,000 additional visitors per year.

The four chimneys, once symbols of industrial output, now frame a cultural-commercial precinct drawing large visitor flows. What was once idle industrial space has been revived — not by erasing the past, but by integrating it into a new economic and cultural future.

Polluted shores turned into ecological assets

By LI MENGHAN
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

Once choked off by chemical plants, rusting pipelines and gantry cranes that blocked the view of the Yangtze River, the Wushan area of Nantong, Jiangsu province, has been transformed into a breezy stretch of greenways where parents push strollers and children chase one another along the river.

"Rapid industrialization after 2000 came at the direct cost of the environment," said Wu Haitao, an official with the Nantong Natural Resources and Planning Bureau. Locals told him that even on the hottest July days, riverside residents dared not open their windows, as the air was filled with the smell of chemicals and stagnant water.

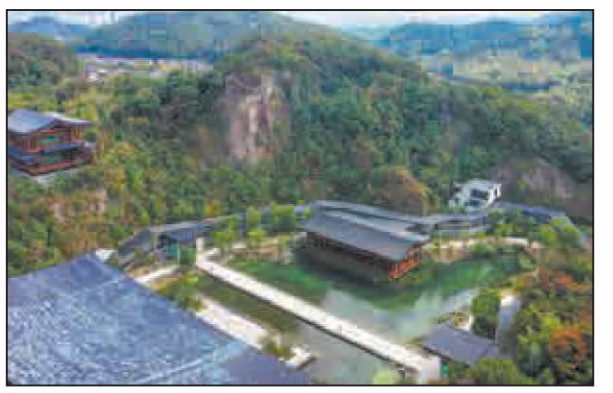
To address the damage, the city began phasing out riverside industries in 2015, and accelerated the effort after the launch of the national Yangtze River protection initiative, relocating or shutting down polluting plants and clearing the shoreline.

Authorities dismantled 203 substandard plants and 162 unauthorized small vessels, removed 65,000 square meters of illegal structures, and reclaimed 5.5 kilometers of shoreline. Six sq km of new forest has taken root on the reclaimed land, anchoring a total of 12 km of restored riverside habitat.

Today, 80 percent of the area is shaded by woodland, while 20 km of greenways thread through what was once a heavily polluted industrial belt. The river meets a living edge of trees and pathways, where families linger instead of fleeing the smell.

Nantong's riverfront renewal is part of a national push to revitalize inefficient land, anchored in ecological priorities. While the city healed its scars by returning land to nature, another transformation with a cultural focus unfolded to the southwest in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province.

In Yuhang district, adjacent to the Liangzhu Ancient City — a UNESCO World Heritage Site recognized as evidence of the dawn of Chinese civilization — two massive craters once scarred the landscape. Decades of mining had left cliffs up to 61 meters high, with unstable rock formations posing constant risks of collapse.



A former mine site is redeveloped to house the Hangzhou Branch of the National Archives of Publications and Culture as part of ecological restoration efforts. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Rather than opting for the conventional solution of flattening the site and backfilling the voids, planners saw an opportunity. They realized the deep, stabilized craters were naturally suited for an archive. In 2020, the site was selected to house the Hangzhou Branch of the National Archives of Publications and Culture, transforming a geological liability into a vault for Chinese civilization.

The design team, led by Pritzker Architecture Prize laureate Wang Shu, conducted comprehensive geological surveys for planning. Leveraging the natural topography, they constructed a massive concrete retaining wall against the cliff face. This dual-purpose structure serves as a permanent anchor stabilizing the rock mass while also forming the exterior wall of the main archive repository embedded within the hillside, saving land while addressing slope stability concerns.

To restore the degraded slopes, the team drilled deep into the rock to install steel supports and laid mesh over exposed surfaces, encouraging vegetation to take root in the barren stone. Excavated soil from the original mining operations was also returned to the site — a low-impact approach that reduced costs and provided suitable substrate for native tree species.

Since its inauguration in July 2022, the archive has safeguarded 2.18 million physical artifacts and received nearly 1.4 million visitors from 67 countries and regions, with out-of-town visitors accounting for more than 60 percent as of the end of 2025.

Data from Yuhang district show that vegetation coverage at the site has increased from less than 10 percent to more than 80 percent, soil erosion has dropped by 90 percent, and more than 21,000 sq m of exposed rock faces have been restored to greenery. In addition, air quality has improved significantly, with PM2.5 concentrations falling by more than 30 percent.

The project also demonstrates how high-level cultural investment can drive regional vitality. While admission remains free to ensure public welfare, revenue from cultural and creative products has exceeded 8.5 million yuan ($1.25 million). More importantly, it has acted as a gravitational anchor for the Liangzhu Cultural Corridor, boosting local catering, hospitality and transportation industries, and providing a steady increase in income for surrounding farmers.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:43 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:43 PM

BUSINESS

Nation's energy mix gains edge amid global woes

By **REN QI**
renqi@chinadaily.com.cn

China's systematic approach to energy development and massive infrastructure investment has provided a compelling example of strategic foresight for the international community amid growing global uncertainties, a senior Russian executive said.

Over the past few decades, the world primarily viewed energy as a matter of resources, technology and markets. However, recent events have demonstrated that geopolitical conflicts, disrupted trade routes, surging power demand, and accelerating technological competition have made energy security a critical pillar of national resilience, said Igor Sechin, CEO of Rosneft.

The vulnerability of global energy markets has been starkly exposed by recent tensions in the Strait of Hormuz. Serving as a veritable "artery" in the global shipping system, the strait plays a crucial role in global oil and liquefied natural gas supplies.

According to the US Energy Information Administration, the daily transport volume of crude oil and petroleum products through the strait is estimated to have been around 20 million barrels in 2025, with an annual energy trade value approaching $600 billion.

However, following recent military strikes by the United States and Israel on Iran, the security of this strategic chokepoint has dropped to freezing point. Surging fuel prices have directly driven up operating costs worldwide. Vincent Clerc, CEO of Danish shipping giant Maersk, warned that these price hikes "will be passed on to our customers and to consumers".

Against this turbulent backdrop, China's experience has become highly relevant. "In recent decades, China has demonstrated not only economic success but also remarkable science and technology advances, enabling it to become a global energy power," Sechin noted.

He emphasized that thanks to its balanced approach to ensuring energy security, China turned out to be the most prepared for the Hormuz crisis and the rise in fuel prices.

Sechin pointed out that China has created cheap urban and intercity transport infrastructure for domestic consumers. After the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, this foresight allowed motor fuel consumers to painlessly use available alternatives, such as electric cars, electric buses, gas trucks, the subway, electric trains and electric taxis.

According to a report by Sechin, this resilience stems from China's view of energy development as a unified, long-term task inherently linked to economic security. Over a 10-year period, solar and wind energy generation in China has grown tenfold to 2,300 terawatt-hours, accounting for 22 percent of the country's energy balance.

At the same time, the country continues to construct thermal power plants to ensure supply stability, the report noted. Last year alone, 78 gigawatts of coal generation were put into operation. China is also implementing the largest program for the development of nuclear generation, with 39 reactors currently being built, representing more than half of all nuclear power plants under construction in the world.

To ensure the flexibility of this massive energy system, energy storage plays an important role, a sector where China also leads globally, Sechin highlighted. In parallel, China leads in investments in power grids, investing about $100 billion in this sector.

This diversified and systemic layout has yielded tangible competitive advantages, particularly in electricity prices, he observed. Power costs in China stand at about 9 cents per kilowatt-hour for industry — 72 percent lower than in Germany and 59 percent lower than in France — and about 7 cents per kilowatt-hour for the population, which is 58 percent lower than in the US.

"Only Russia stands at a similar level," Sechin added.

Ultimately, strengthening energy security is part of China's broader strategy of internal resource mobilization, Sechin concluded. By translating strategic vision into real economic advantages through massive energy investments and systemic infrastructure development, China's model is increasingly capturing the attention and study of the international community.

Summer chill



Workers from the Datong Railway Logistics Center under China Railway Taiyuan Group, alongside staff from other units supporting the Datong-Qinhuangdao Railway — a key national energy artery — conduct cooling operations on oil tank cars during a drill to gear up for the summer transport peak. JIAO LINWEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Mind the gap



An aerial photo taken on Wednesday shows the box girder erection site of a railway bridge along the Shanghai-Nanjing section of the Shanghai-Chongqing-Chengdu High-speed Railway in Taicang, Jiangsu province. According to China Railway 24th Bureau Group, a State-owned contractor involved in the project construction, the route aims to shorten travel times between Yangtze River Delta cities and drive high-quality integrated regional development. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

China's healthcare shift woos more global biz

UCB: Fast-track drug approvals, AI surge, booming R&D turn country into innovation hub

By **WANG KEJU**
wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn

China has evolved from a massive market into an indispensable source of global healthcare innovation, driven by fast-track review pathways, expanded global collaborations and an artificial intelligence-integrated healthcare model, a senior executive told China Daily.

"China has moved from manufacturing to clinical trial expertise, and is now becoming a source of discovery and innovation for the rest of the world," said Jean-Christophe Tellier, CEO of multinational bio-pharmaceutical firm UCB.

Tellier made the assessment during a visit to Beijing earlier this month that brought nearly the entire global leadership team to mark the company's 30th anniversary in China.

"Bringing the executive committee with me — and almost everyone came — was a symbol of China's importance," Tellier said. "When people saw all of us here, they realized that when we said China is important for us, it's a reality."

On June 4, UCB signed an agreement to establish the China Integrated Operation Center in the Suzhou Industrial Park in Jiangsu province, to strengthen end-to-end commercialization, distribution and supply capabilities in China.

"There is an element of investing to strengthen our supply chain — something that in our industry is becoming more local and less global. The era of supplying the entire world from a single location is over," Tellier said.

UCB recently introduced several differentiated innovative medicines in China and is committed to improving their accessibility and affordability for Chinese patients, including through active engagement in the national reimbursement drug list process, he noted.

"The speed by which China is now doing approvals is ahead of everybody else," Tellier said. "There is really this willingness, engagement and commitment across the healthcare ecosystem to deliver innovative solutions as quickly as possible, which is really remarkable."

To accelerate the market entry of innovative drugs, the National Medical Products Administration launched fast-track review pathways in the Provisions for Drug Registration issued in 2020. They were later incorporated into the new regulations of China's Drug Administration Law, which took effect in May, further strengthening the legal basis for expedited drug approval.

Beyond speed, Tellier highlighted a deeper structural shift in where medicines originate. He noted that roughly one in four new drugs discovered globally now comes from China, and expected that ratio might rise to two in four in the near future.

UCB itself has embedded China into its global research and development system. "We decided six or seven years ago that systematically, each of our global clinical trials for strategic products will include Chinese, Japanese and other Asian patients, to make sure we could file at the same time. Today, 14 global multicenter clinical trials are being conducted simultaneously in China," Tellier said.

The NMPA has approved the marketing of 19 innovative drugs so far this year, including 15 from Chinese manufacturers. In 2025, it approved 76 innovative drugs, a record number and a significant hike from the 48 approved in 2024.

This changing geography of innovation, he argued, has rendered the old "China for China" mindset obsolete.

"We have reached a point where, particularly because of its innovations, China has now reached a level of development that is global by nature. When you discover new medicines, they cannot be just for China — patients are everywhere. Science is global. Progress is global," Tellier said.

Tellier also pointed to China's expanding innovation ecosystem during a visit to Beijing's biomedical park, where regulators, clinical researchers, data scientists and commercial teams operate in close physical proximity.

"Collaboration, AI, plus the culture and mindset of testing, experimenting, changing and pivoting, make me feel that if change comes in the future, it is likely to come from China," he said.

Envision ramps up AI-energy integration to further tap global market

By **ZHENG XIN**
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

Believing that the new energy system is the ultimate solution to the expansion of artificial intelligence, green technology company Envision Group plans to step up investments in integrating AI into its energy sector to ensure the technology's evolution ultimately secures a winning edge.

China's expansion of its power generation capacity serves as vital support for its pursuit of global AI leadership, as the low-cost electricity is a strategic asset to fuel its data centers and compute-intensive research and development, said Sun Jie, chief sustainability officer and vice-president of Envision Group.

"While surging electricity demand presents a formidable grid challenge worldwide, China's robust energy infrastructure and rapid expansion of renewable capacity uniquely position the country to convert this power challenge into a global competitive advantage in the AI race," he said.

As computing and power infrastructure share deeply intertwined underlying technologies, Sun noted that the entity mastering these innovations and deploying them cost-effectively will ultimately lead the global market.

To leverage this, Envision plans to step up investment utilizing cutting-edge technology to build new energy systems and drive green new industries.

The company has recently announced an ambitious plan to construct 5 gigawatts of green AI computing centers across global desert regions, including the Gobi Desert, by 2030, eyeing to build stable, eco-friendly, and cost-effective infrastructure for the AI era.

Industry experts believe China has established the most comprehensive production system globally, with production capacity now accounting for approximately 60 percent of the global total.

In 2025, China's total transformer exports reached 60 billion yuan ($8.82 billion), representing a year-on-year increase of over 20 percent, said Cai Yiqing, secretary-general of the power equipment branch of the China Electricity Council.

The interplay of AI and the energy sector has moved from simple one-way support to deep integration, Sun said, adding that this synergy has become the core pathway for cultivating new quality productive forces and building a global energy powerhouse.

This corporate push aligns closely with China's national policy direction.

According to an action plan recently issued by the National Energy Administration, China aims to significantly increase the clean energy supply capacity for AI computing infrastructure by 2030, while deeply embedding AI applications across the energy sector.

The guideline seeks to open high-value application scenarios for AI, unlock the value of energy data, and strengthen AI model innovation within the energy field.

According to the NEA, China established 42 massive-scale intelligent computing clusters last year, pushing the total electricity consumption of national computing centers to 170 billion kilowatt-hours.

To capture these burgeoning global opportunities, Envision is delivering scene-specific solutions tailored to diverse regional grid needs.



Envision Group's booth is seen during an energy expo in Shanghai on June 4. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Overseas markets, either grid-connected or off-grid scenarios, the opportunities are massive, said Sun.

In remote parts of Southeast Asia, such as off-grid islands in Indonesia and the Philippines, deploying small-scale renewable microgrids combining wind, solar, and storage will provide local communities with stable power and replace costly diesel generators, while in isolated mining districts across Africa and Australia, integrated energy solutions can substantially slash energy costs, offering a far greener profile, he said.

"China maintains a competitive edge in this regard. Both computing and power infrastructures are backed by a multitude of deeply linked technologies. The ultimate winner will be whoever can master these innovations and apply them cost-effectively," Sun said.

BGI plans foray into consumer products

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn

BGI Group, one of the country's leading gene sequencing firms, is stepping up efforts to turn its life-science research and industrial capabilities into consumer products, signaling a strategic push to capitalize on everyday health, nutrition, skincare, and pet care markets.

Yang Shuang, senior vice-president at the company, said BGI's long-term goal is to extend life-science technologies beyond laboratories and professional settings into "daily life scenarios", building what he described as a multi-tier consumer health ecosystem anchored in genomics.

In the past, genetic technology was mostly understood by the public as scientific research, clinical use, or high-end testing technology, Yang said. "But with declining sequencing costs, the miniaturization of equipment, advances in artificial intelligence capabilities, and growing consumer health awareness, life science technology is moving out of professional institutions and heading into households, communities and everyday consumption scenarios."

High-end technology becoming more accessible to the public, health management becoming more proactive, and consumer products becoming more technology empowered will constitute key industry trends going forward, Yang added.

BGI's strategy reflects a broader shift among biotechnology firms attempting to commercialize advances in sequencing and AI as costs fall and consumer demand for personalized health services rises.

At the core of BGI's approach is its vertically integrated platform spanning sequencing hardware, algorithms and multi-omics datasets. The company said this stack allows it to convert research outputs into scalable consumer applications.

A central infrastructure asset is its high-throughput sequencing facility, GigaLab, marketed as a "lights-out" automated lab capable of 24/7 sample processing. The system integrates proprietary sequencing platforms, mass spectrometry devices and automated sample preparation workflows designed to standardize large-scale biological testing.

BGI is also expanding its AI capabilities in health interpretation. Its AI-driven assistant "i99" is positioned as a consumer-facing tool that translates multi-omics data into understandable health recommendations and daily routine guidance.

The company is accelerating its efforts in sectors including consumer genetic testing, food safety, consumer health and skin care, and microbiome products, said the top executive.

In consumer genetic testing, BGI is developing handheld and rapid testing devices aimed at bringing genetic testing closer to point-of-care use. For example, BGI developed an alcohol testing kit, which is a palm-sized handheld rapid detection device based on BGI's proprietary sequencing technology. Through a simple operation, a congenital alcohol metabolism capacity assessment report can be obtained in 20 minutes.

In consumer health and skincare, BGI is leveraging biological research — ranging from regenerative biology to cellular studies — to develop cosmetic and wellness products marketed as science-backed formulations.

In pet health, the company is applying sequencing technologies to pet genetics, covering disease risk profiling, lineage tracing and behavioral analysis.

BGI said it is also expanding into personalized microbiome products.

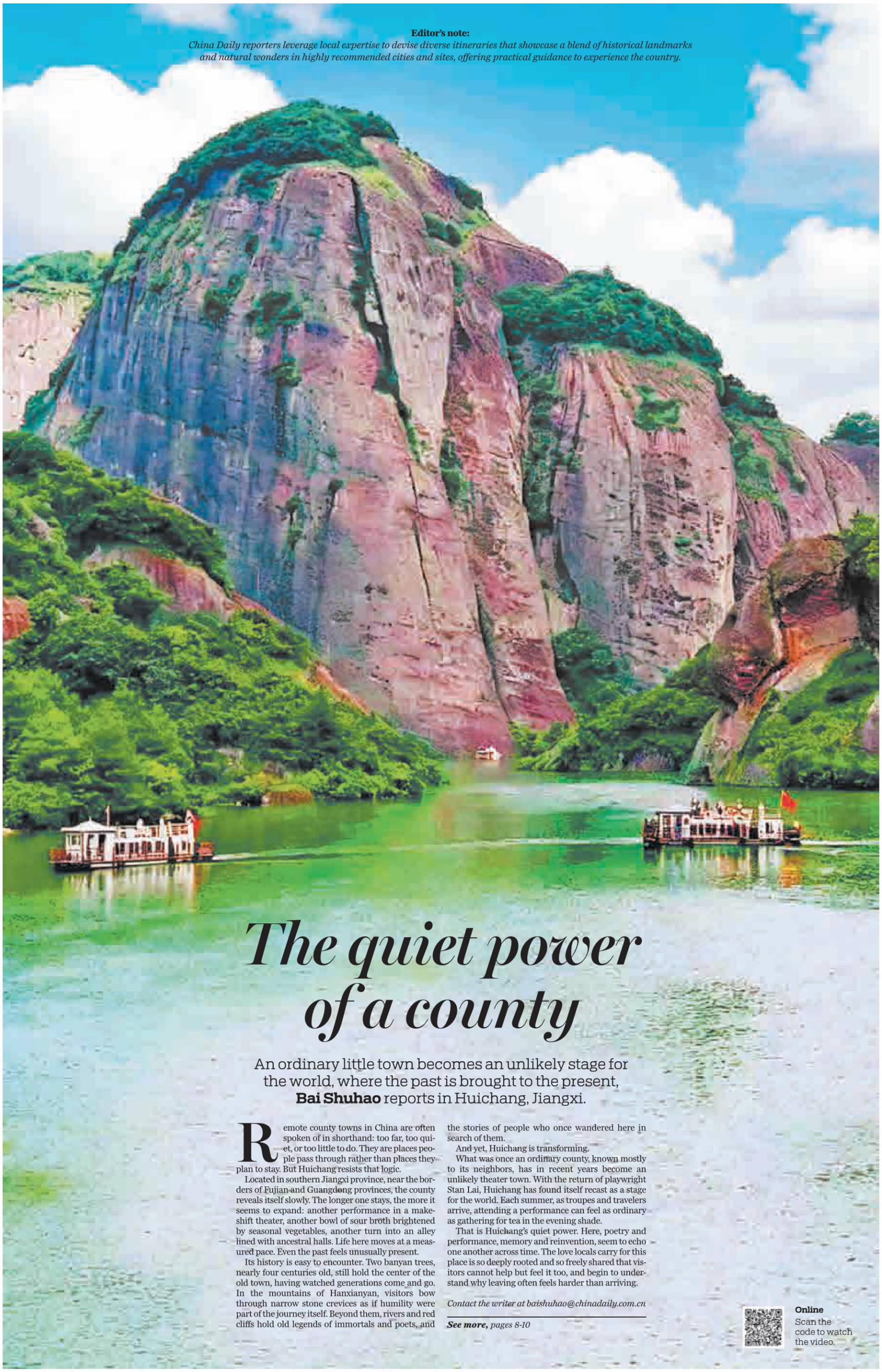
In the proactive health field, the company will continue to promote the application of multi-omics data-driven health improvement solutions.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:43 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:43 PM

TALES & TRAILS

Editor's note:
China Daily reporters leverage local expertise to devise diverse itineraries that showcase a blend of historical landmarks and natural wonders in highly recommended cities and sites, offering practical guidance to experience the country.



The quiet power of a county

An ordinary little town becomes an unlikely stage for the world, where the past is brought to the present, **Bai Shuhao** reports in Huichang, Jiangxi.

Remote county towns in China are often spoken of in shorthand: too far, too quiet, or too little to do. They are places people pass through rather than places they plan to stay. But Huichang resists that logic.

Located in southern Jiangxi province, near the borders of Fujian and Guangdong provinces, the county reveals itself slowly. The longer one stays, the more it seems to expand: another performance in a makeshift theater, another bowl of sour broth brightened by seasonal vegetables, another turn into an alley lined with ancestral halls. Life here moves at a measured pace. Even the past feels unusually present.

Its history is easy to encounter. Two banyan trees, nearly four centuries old, still hold the center of the old town, having watched generations come and go. In the mountains of Hanxianyan, visitors bow through narrow stone crevices as if humility were part of the journey itself. Beyond them, rivers and red cliffs hold old legends of immortals and poets, and the stories of people who once wandered here in search of them.

And yet, Huichang is transforming.

What was once an ordinary county, known mostly to its neighbors, has in recent years become an unlikely theater town. With the return of playwright Stan Lai, Huichang has found itself recast as a stage for the world. Each summer, as troupes and travelers arrive, attending a performance can feel as ordinary as gathering for tea in the evening shade.

That is Huichang's quiet power. Here, poetry and performance, memory and reinvention, seem to echo one another across time. The love locals carry for this place is so deeply rooted and so freely shared that visitors cannot help but feel it too, and begin to understand why leaving often feels harder than arriving.

Contact the writer at baishuhao@chinadaily.com.cn

See more, *pages 8-10*

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

Taking a boat ride on Hanxian Lake is an ideal way to experience the charm of the Danxia cliffs, a natural wonder nestled in the mountains of Huichang, Jiangxi province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:43 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:43 PM

Life, performed live

A playwright's family roots inspire a theater village where art blurs the line between audience and performer, **Bai Shuhao** reports in Huichang, Jiangxi.

The theater begins before you even realize you have entered it. At the heart of Huichang's theater village this summer stands a miniature cinema unlike any other — a black box capable of rotating 360 degrees.

Audience members step inside, take their seats, and wait for the curtain to rise. But there is no film. Instead, the stage is the world outside: the town square itself, its weathered facades, passing pedestrians and clusters of curious onlookers.

During the just-concluded Huichang Theater Season 004, this performance, titled *Panorama*, unfolded almost daily.

Crowds packed around the small structure as actors drew passersby into the action, inviting them to dance, improvise and slip into unexpected roles.

Even those with little interest in theater found themselves lingering. One afternoon, Brigitte Lin Ching-hsia, the revered star of Chinese cinema, sat quietly inside the black box, watching.

For a moment, it was impossible to tell who was performing and who was simply living.

The script

That ambiguity feels fitting here, because Huichang's theater village is itself a story — one written long before any curtain rose.

In the 1980s, while studying in the United States, playwright and director Stan Lai received a letter from relatives in Huichang county, Jiangxi province, introducing him to the hometown he had never known.

His father was born there but rarely spoke about it. In 1949, the family left for Taiwan and later settled in the US. When Lai was 14, his father died. It was only through letters from relatives in Huichang that he began to piece together the place his father had left behind.

By 1986, Lai had become one of the most influential figures in Chinese-language theater with *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land*. In Chinese lore, the Peach Blossom Land is an unreachable utopia. In Lai's work, both his father and Huichang seemed to linger in the background.

When he first visited Huichang in 1997, the journey took nearly 20 hours along mountain roads. Northwest Street, where his father once lived, was lined with crumbling houses.

"I never thought Huichang was my Peach Blossom Land," Lai says.

In 2015, Lai staged one of his plays in Huichang for the first time and vowed to return every year. Two years later, when the county began renovating the old town, he proposed turning his father's old neighborhood into a theater community.

The first Huichang Theater Season opened in 2024. This year, in its fourth edition, the festival brought nearly 30 productions from China and abroad, with close to 400 performances across the town.

Despite not being born here, Lai has become unmistakably local. Residents speak of him less as a celebrity than as a neighbor.

"I went to school with his nephew," one resident says.

"I live right next to his old house," says another.

If you happen to see him strolling through the town, you can simply call him Teacher Lai.







Top: *CoraSon* by the French troupe Les Rustines de l'Ange. **Center:** Residents enjoy an open-air performance in Huichang. **Above:** Playwright and director Stan Lai, the artistic founder of Huichang's theater village. PHOTOS BY XINHUA AND PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The stage

The origin story of Huichang's theater village is compelling enough on its own. The town itself provides the props.

Situated at the confluence of three rivers and embraced by nearly a kilometer of Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279) walls, Huichang was once a thriving inland port.

Today, people gather here again — not for trade, but for performances. At the entrance stands a 400-year-old banyan tree. Beside it, a stone arch bears four characters: *ci chu you xi* ("theater is here").

Farther in rises another ancient banyan. At its roots lies an old well. Each year, at the opening of the festival, Lai and his guests draw water from it to pour onto the tree, a ritual that feels like a blessing for both the festival and the town.

The two banyans are more than landmarks; they are witnesses. Looking at their sprawling branches, it is easy to imagine the countless meetings and farewells they have seen. They seem almost like audience members themselves, quietly observing the human drama unfolding below.

Nearby sits Huichang's local museum, its walls crowded with wooden plaques. In Hakka tradition, these intricately carved pieces are gifts of praise, symbols of honor passed between families and generations.

The same Hakka architecture shapes much of the town. Its signature venue, the Courtyard Theater, was once an ancestral hall built in 1772. For Hakka families, such halls served as the spiritual center of communal life, places to worship ancestors, settle disputes, and mark births, marriages and funerals.

The theater still carries that history. Its walls are weathered, its timber darkened by time. An open courtyard frames the sky above. Even without a performance, it is worth sitting there during the rainy season, watching water trickle down chains and fall in a slow, measured rhythm.

Elsewhere, another ancestral hall has become the Xiuchun Theater. This year, Lai's immersive production *Dream Walk* guided audiences through its rooms after dark. Under moonlight spilling into the courtyard, the building seemed suspended between dream and reality.

Outside Lai's family home, now transformed into another open-air stage, choreographer Zhu Fengwei staged his dance work *Cosmic Tree*.

With the old gate behind him, Zhu says he felt strangely connected to his surroundings, a fitting sentiment for a work centered on mortality and reflection.

Even the old print factory and abandoned houses along Northwest Street have become venues. Ancient and modern, local and foreign converge here, just like the three rivers converging just beyond the town walls.

The actors

In Huichang, everyone seems to become part of the cast.

As dusk falls, the square fills with people. This is when the theater village feels most alive. Huichang is small enough that familiar faces quickly find one another, and conversations begin almost immediately.

Sometimes, the "celebrities" you run into are not the ones you expect.

There is, for instance, a 90-year-old local photographer who still walks the streets with a camera in hand. Spot a visitor, and he is quick to pull out his photos, proudly showing the images he has taken of the theater village over the years.

That is one kind of fame.

But during the festival, there is another kind, too. For a few days each year, the town fills with actors, directors and theater troupes from across China and around the world.

In Huichang, celebrity feels strangely unremarkable. You might share dinner with a famous actor or find yourself seated beside one during a performance.

Each year, Lai follows a local custom: setting out long Hakka banquet tables laden with local dishes for performers and guests. People raise glasses, exchange stories, and, when the mood strikes, break into a dance.

But the true protagonists of Huichang are its residents.

Last year, when Lai invited 60 actors from Greece to perform here, many were visiting China for the first time. Residents helped them find hotels and guided them through the town if they got lost.

"It's here that they really get to know what Chinese people are like," Lai says.

In Lai's view, it is that Hakka sincerity — straightforward and unpretentious — that has allowed the theater village to thrive.

Here, theater has no threshold. There is little distance between performers and audiences. Perhaps that is why performance feels so immediate, so real and so deeply shared.

Contact the writer at baishuhao@chinadaily.com.cn



Outdoor performances attract large crowds to the town square, the vibrant hub of Huichang's theater festival.



Since its launch in 2024, the Huichang Theater Season has transformed the picturesque town in southeastern Jiangxi province into a global stage for performance, blending East and West, and tradition with innovation. The festival, as one of the country's major art events, brings together actors, directors and theater troupes from across China and around the world. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

A place to practice the freedom of the Eight Immortals

By **BAI SHUHAO** in Huichang

It helps to be humble when walking through Hanxianyan (Rock of the Han Immortal).

Not metaphorically, but physically. The mountain demands it.

At several points along the trail, the stone narrows into slits so tight that the only way through is to bend at the waist, forehead nearly brushing the rock, and shoulders turned sideways like a key entering a lock.

That feels fitting for a place where immortals are said to have once passed through.

About an hour's drive from downtown Huichang in southeastern Jiangxi province, Hanxianyan rises in red folds of Danxia stone, its cliffs wrapped by the clear waters of the Xiangjiang River. According to legend, this was where Han Zhongli, one of the Eight Immortals of Taoist mythology, attained enlightenment.

At the entrance, the Eight Immortals stand in a line, cast in stone, each shown with a symbolic attribute or mount: a lotus blossom, a fan, a bamboo tube, or even a donkey.

Their legend, *Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea*, is one of China's best-known folktales, giving rise to the idiom "each displaying their own powers" — a phrase still used to describe people relying on their individual talents.

Unlike the lofty, distant gods of other traditions, the Eight Immortals were deeply human before they became divine. They drank, flirted, dressed poorly, and defied authority. They came from different classes, ages and genders. Their appeal was never perfection, but personality.

At Hanxianyan, personality is geography.

A story is attached to every part of the land: a spring where Han Zhongli drank, a cliff where he meditated, and a cave where he resisted temptation.

My guide, Zhong Weili, told me that Han Zhongli had once been a Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220) general, exiled after angering powerful men of the court. Wandering the world with Li Tieguai — also known as Iron Crutch Li, the leader of the Eight Immortals — he came upon Hanxianyan and found it suitable for cultivation.

I had heard stories of the Eight Immortals since childhood, but this was the first time they felt less like stories and more like coordinates.

Before we climbed, a blue butterfly appeared, fluttering briefly before us, then vanishing into the trees.

The forest was dense and wet with summer. Invisible insects whirred. Shrubs and vines tangled over one another. Zhong pointed out signs of squirrels and mentioned the silver pheasant — a protected bird with a scarlet face and feet, a black-feathered crest, and a tail so long it seemed designed for ceremony. It looked, she said, like the sort of creature that might accompany immortals.

The first gate into the mountain is Hezhang Men ("the Praying Hands Gate"), named for its shape, resembling two hands pressed together, leaving only a narrow seam between them. Only one person can pass through at a time.

Stepping through it felt like crossing a threshold in temperature as much as in space. The heat fell away, the air turned cool, vegetation thinned, and the red body of the mountain emerged, slick with pale moss.

On those rock faces were inscriptions carved by centuries of travelers.







Top: Danxia cliffs, shrouded in a thin veil of clouds at Hanxianyan, Huichang county, Jiangxi province. **Center:** An aerial view of Yangjiao Water Castle in Huichang. **Above:** Hanxian Lake is a must-see in Huichang. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The most striking line read: "Towering cliffs that rise straight up to the sky."

It was left by a Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) official. Nearby was a short poem for a friend who had retired from office, envying him for returning home to live "among rocks and ancient trees".

Elsewhere, another carving — "May the Emperor Live Ten Thousand Years" — is said to have been written by the Song Dynasty (960-1279) patriot Wen Tianxiang, the man behind the famous line: "Since ancient times, who has escaped death? Let my loyalty illuminate history."

He wrote it while camped nearby, hoping to prolong a collapsing dynasty. The dynasty fell anyway, and he became a prisoner.

Later, an emperor visiting the site saw the words and briefly suspected rebellion, a sign of someone proclaiming himself ruler. Only after hearing the story did he decide not to destroy these stone carvings.

Time has nearly erased it now. Rain has been working longer than the empires.

Beside the faded words, a patch of crimson flowers known locally as *zhuangyuanhong* ("Top Scholar Red") bloomed. They belong to the genus *Clerodendrum*, but from a distance, they resemble the robes of imperial scholars who had passed the highest examinations.

It was hard not to imagine those frustrated officials climbing here, reading these poems, seeing the flowers, and wondering if retreat into the mountains might be wiser than ambition.

The higher we climbed, the stranger the path became.

Just when the trail seemed to end, it reopened through cracks in the rock.

Passing through required crouching, twisting, and sometimes nearly crawling. My back scraped against stone. There were no carved steps, only steep, polished inclines.

One slip would mean blood, or worse. I was grateful for my sturdy shoes.

At one point, the passage became so narrow that the only way through was to rotate the whole body sideways, a movement locals call *yaozi fanshen*, or "the hawk's turning".

Beyond it, the mountain suddenly opened. Han Zhongli's cave was a narrow, hidden chamber, roofed by stone, yet wide with air and silence.

"Cool in summer, warm in winter," Zhong told me.

"No mosquitoes."

It is the kind of place where time slows enough for a man to become immortal, or at least catch his breath.

From there, the trail descends. Some visitors take the cliffside plank paths. Others continue down the steeper back mountain, where the landscape narrows into Yixiantian ("Thin Strip of Sky"), a slit between two rock walls where sunlight pours down like falling water.

To fully understand Hanxianyan, though, you have to leave it.

From a boat on Hanxian Lake, the Danxia cliffs come into view all at once, their formations taking on strange, shifting shapes — a camel here, a snail there, one improbably a hamburger.

Not far away is Yangjiao Water Castle, a military settlement dating to the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, where remnants of old walls, watchtowers and Hakka ancestral halls still stand.

It was also home to the Ming scholar Zhou Yixin, whose family was among the most prominent in the village. Liu Shaoyang, a local historian, describes him as "Hanxianyan's five-star recommender".

Many visitors Zhou hosted, moved by both his hospitality and the landscape, left poems and inscriptions carved into the mountain's rocks.

Hanxianyan drew people caught between two ideals that have long shaped Chinese life: Confucianism and Taoism — to serve the world, and to leave it.

For generations of scholars, entering office was the Confucian dream: to govern and shape society. But when politics soured, mountains offered another path of withdrawal, reflection, and self-cultivation.

Han Zhongli had chosen that path long before the rest of them. Perhaps that is why they kept coming. And perhaps why people still do.

For travelers now, Hanxianyan remains what it was for those who came before: a place to step briefly outside the machinery of ordinary life, to follow old footsteps into cool stone, and, if only for an afternoon, practice the freedom of the immortals.

Online
Scan for a Wow! China experience.

If you go

Getting there: Huichang's theater village is easily accessible via Ganzhou Ruijin Airport, Ruijin Railway Station and Huichang North Railway Station, all about an hour's drive away.

Visitors can arrange a shuttle through the WeChat mini-program "Huichang Travel", with fares starting at around 70 yuan ($10) per person.

Where to stay: For the most convenient experience, stay at the Hotel Des Artistes, located within the theater village.

The hotel is especially popular with festivalgoers attending evening performances. Room rates typically range from 200 to 800 yuan per night.

Planning your visit: The theater festival is usually held in May or June, though dates vary each year. For the latest program and ticket information, visit the website (www.hctheatrevillage.com).

Tickets are also available at the visitor center on-site.

Beyond the stage: If you have time to explore the surrounding area, several attractions make rewarding day trips, including Hanxianyan Scenic Area, Hanxian Lake, Yangjiao Water Castle, and Dongtou She Ethnic Village.



BAI SHUHAO

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:43 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:43 PM

TALES & TRAILS

Where happiness tastes sour

At a family-run snack shop tucked away in an alley, locals return for *suanshui*, a distinctive soup that has become a symbol of home, **Bai Shuhao** reports in Huichang, Jiangxi.

In Huichang, Jiangxi province, summer rain arrives without warning — sudden, heavy and absolute. By the time I stepped into Old Tree Cold Bar, one of the county's most beloved snack shops, the storm had just passed. The pavement was still slick, and rainwater pooled on the empty plastic tables outside.

Business is always slow when it rains, the owner, Zhong Lanping, told me with a shrug. She seemed used to it.

The shop sits deep inside a residential alley, tucked between aging apartment blocks, the kind of place you would almost never find without a local guide. Its name suggests shade and roots, yet there isn't a tree in sight. Huichang's famous twin banyans in the theater district are a five-minute walk away.

Ordering here doesn't begin with a menu. Instead, it starts with a gesture: pointing at trays of prepared dishes lined across the counter.

The snacks are divided into cold and hot dishes. The cold offerings include deep-fried eggplant and sweet potato, chilled taro and dried tofu. The hot dishes range from beef and chicken soups to steamed meatballs wrapped in sweet potato starch, and dumpling-like cakes made from mugwort leaves and glutinous rice. Only locals can name them all correctly.

Zhong has run the shop for nearly 20 years. Counting both local specialties and recipes she picked up elsewhere, she estimates she makes nearly 100 kinds of snacks — far more than what's listed on the wall.

But I had come for one thing: *suanshui*, literally, "sour water".

I had heard of *tangshui*, the cooling sweet soups of southern China. But sour water?

In the long, damp, plum-rain season of southern China, when the air is thick enough to kill your appetite, the mere thought of something sour feels enough to wake the taste buds.

Near the entrance, a metal pot simmered, clouded with pale broth and steam. Inside floated baby taro, bamboo shoots and radish — humble vegetables that are easy to find in the surrounding hills and fields.

Enduring appeal

When I told Zhong I wanted to try it, she muttered something in the local dialect and assembled a cautious sampler: a little of everything in a small bowl, topped with chopped scallions and dried chili.

"Out-of-towners don't always like it," she said. "Better to see if you can handle the taste first."

I braced myself for vinegar-level aggression. But the sourness, when it came, was unexpectedly gentle and round.

The acid gives taro, a type of food that usually has little personality of its own, an unexpected spark. Chewing it feels almost like biting into a thundercloud: soft and sticky, yet alive with tiny bursts of energy striking against the roof of your mouth. The bamboo shoots and radish are just as layered, though in different ways. Locals, Zhong said, often drink the broth down to the last drop.

The secret, she explained, lies in the liquid.

In rural Huichang, nearly every household once kept a clay jar of pickles by the door. The broth for *suanshui* comes from that fermenting water. But unlike pickles, where vegetables are left to sour in the liquid, *suanshui* uses the fermented brine to cook fresh vegetables directly.

Like many enduring dishes, it comes with a legend. During the Tang Dynasty (618-907), a starving young monk collapsed while begging for food. An elderly woman rescued him, but had nothing at home except taro and radish — and fetching fresh water meant walking too far. So she improvised, boiling the vegetables in the sour brine from her pickle jar. The monk survived, and later sold the dish on the street, earning the nickname "the Sour Water Monk".

Whether the story is true hardly matters. In Huichang, *suanshui* feels indispensable.

"If you open a snack shop here, you have to sell it," Zhong said. "Eighty or 90 percent of people in Huichang love sour water."

She learned the craft from her mother. As a child, Zhong watched her mother sell the snacks outside schools, earning enough to keep the family afloat.

Later, Zhong left Huichang with her husband to work in Zhejiang province. But homesickness, she said, always tasted like sour water.

"The first thing I'd do after getting off the train was come straight here," she told me. "If I didn't eat it, I couldn't sleep properly."

In 2007, after the birth of her first daughter, Zhong and her husband returned home and took over a snack shop near the banyan trees. They kept the original name — Old Tree Cold Bar — even after relocating.



From top: Old Tree Cold Bar in Huichang, Jiangxi province, offers a variety of snacks and is always bustling with diners. Pomelos are popular products in Huichang. Local farmers sun-dry *tangpi*, a type of Hakka snack made from rice. PHOTOS BY ZHU HAIPENG AND PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Afternoon treats

Around 4 pm, the rain had completely cleared, and Huichang was slipping into its second daily rhythm: afternoon snacks.

This is something like afternoon tea, except there is little sweetness involved. Families and friends gather over bowls of sour, spicy and salty dishes. A few dollars buy enough for everyone to share.

According to locals, the custom of afternoon snacking may have grown out of Huichang's relaxed, slow-paced way of life.

The county abounds with good eateries, but their opening hours are anything but fixed. They might open in the afternoon or sometimes in the morning, and you never know when you'll arrive to find them closed.

The outdoor tables filled quickly. Zhong's conversation with me was interrupted every few minutes by new orders. She employs six middle-aged women, along with nieces and nephews, but on busy afternoons even that isn't enough.

Two young men in their 20s walked in, greeting her like family. They had grown up eating at the shop, Zhong said.

The friends ordered dumplings drenched in chili oil and cilantro, which were already dressed and needed no dipping sauce, along with hand-peeled sour bamboo shoots, their fibrous outer skin stripped away to reveal the crisp heart inside.

"This place represents Huichang," one of them told me. When he was studying out of town, he once asked his friend to vacuum-seal snacks from the shop and mail them to him.

For many locals, Zhong said, this shop is both the first stop when they return home and the last before they leave.

"This is our local pride. You can't find this kind of happiness outside Huichang," she said.

Huichang's food is built from simple things: soybeans, taro, bamboo shoots and sweet potatoes, the ordinary crops of mountain fields. Yet from them come dishes layered with texture and color: dried tofu, taro balls, sour water and herbal jelly.

It is a cuisine shaped by necessity, by heat, humidity and rugged land.

Even plants that are inedible on their own are ingeniously combined with other ingredients and brought to the table.

Before leaving, I ordered more: herbal jelly, taro balls, steamed meatballs wrapped in sweet potato starch. The rain had cooled the air into something clear and breathable.

Somewhere in the rush, I forgot my umbrella at the restaurant.

I have a private superstition: whenever you leave something somewhere, it means you are meant to return. In a place with 100 dishes still left to taste, it felt less like an accident than a promise.

Contact the writer at baishuhao@chinadaily.com.cn

If you go

Street food: Huichang is known for a variety of local snacks and street foods, including dried tofu and *xianren ban*, a refreshing herbal jelly popular in southern China.

Dishes: Must-try local favorites include fried rice noodles, Hakka stuffed tofu, and the famous Jiangxi stir-fries, known for their intense smoky flavor from high-heat cooking. Recommended dishes include stir-fried pork belly and tofu with crispy pork crackling.

Restaurants:

- Beimen Restaurant is a long-established favorite in the theater village, serving refined Hakka and southern Jiangxi cuisine.
- Lai Mama Private Kitchen is inspired by the home cooking of renowned playwright Stan Lai's mother. Alongside local Hakka dishes, it offers creative fusion cuisine such as Bhutanese beef and the signature Stan Lai Invisible Pizza.

Souvenirs: Popular local products to take home include pumpkins, pomelos, and navel oranges, all well-known specialties of the region.



Signature dishes at Old Tree Cold Bar include shredded dried tofu (top left), salt and pepper shrimp (top right), *suanshui*, or sour water (above left), shredded taro salad (above center) and pan-fried tofu (above right).

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:43 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:43 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

'China Opportunity 2.0' means more widely shared development benefits from innovation

As Chinese high-tech products gain global market share, some Western armchair strategists have slapped a new label on their "bogeyman": "China Shock 2.0".

Catchy perhaps, but with a hollow ring.

Speaking at the opening of the Summer Davos in Dalian, Liaoning province, on Wednesday, Chinese Premier Li Qiang offered a precise description of the moment. Rather than a shock, he pointed out, the world is experiencing "China Opportunity 2.0" — a new phase of development driven by the country's innovation, technological upgrading and deeper integration with the global economy.

The difference between the two narratives is revealing. One views China's technological rise as a "threat". The other sees it as a boon. One incites fear. The other invites engagement.

The "China Shock 2.0" alarm is being sounded on the fabricated assumptions that China's economic success is somehow "artificial" and designed to be "pernicious". Yet the evidence is nothing but a house of cards. China's competitiveness is the fruit of its long-term input in innovation. The country now spends nearly 4 trillion yuan ($586 billion) annually on research and development. Its R&D intensity has surpassed 2.8 percent of GDP, exceeding the OECD average. Chinese entities filed more than 73,000 international patent applications in various fields last year, more than any other country in the world. These are not the statistics of a country relying on "subsidies", "overcapacity" or "currency manipulation", the cards that allegedly support "China Shock 2.0".

Instead, China's progress stems from its super-large competitive domestic market in which enterprises constantly innovate to survive. Companies face relentless pressure from rivals at home and abroad. Competition has acted as a catalyst for innovation. This reality is inconvenient for some Western policymakers because it shifts the focus away from China and back to themselves.

For decades, some advanced economies have prioritized finance over manufacturing, short-term returns over long-term investment and political theater over industrial strategy. The result: infrastructure aged, vocational training weakened, and industrial capacity hollowed out. When the consequences arrived, blaming China proved easier than meaningfully addressing the real causes.

The irony is difficult to miss. Many of the policies now criticized when practiced by China — industrial planning, infrastructure investment, support for emerging industries and strategic technological development — were once central features of the development strategies pursued by today's advanced economies themselves.

Even more striking is the policy response. Rather than rebuilding competitiveness through investment in education, infrastructure and innovation, some Western countries have increasingly turned to tariffs, sanctions and technology restrictions to "subsidize" the competitiveness of their enterprises. Such measures do little to address underlying structural weaknesses. In many cases, they raise costs for domestic consumers and businesses while fragmenting global supply chains.

Shutting China out while insisting that China stays open is not reciprocity; it is hypocrisy. Policymakers intoxicated by unilateralism should remember that no one has ever stopped spring by cutting the flowers. China's development is not a seasonal anomaly but the result of decades of investment, innovation and hard work. Efforts to isolate China will not isolate the country from the world; they risk isolating their own economies from growth and opportunity.

The broader point Li made in Dalian deserves attention: Innovation-driven cooperation, not technological containment, offers the most promising path out of the current global growth slowdown. In a world grappling with mounting geopolitical uncertainty, the challenge is not how to contain the world's second-largest economy, but how to engage more effectively with it and harness the opportunities its continued development creates.

In May alone, China's foreign trade in yuan-denominated terms grew 16.9 percent year-on-year, exports rose 13.8 percent from the same period last year and imports increased 21.5 percent, underscoring China's role not only as a producer but also as a major source of demand.

The real lesson of the "China Opportunity 2.0" is that longtermism in the development of technology, human capital and productive capacity still matters. China's innovation gains, as Li noted, were earned through years of strengthening domestic capabilities and relentless endeavor.

Smears against ethnic unity law groundless

In a major step to strengthen national cohesion and social harmony, China's top legislature adopted the Ethnic Unity and Progress Promotion Law in March, which is set to take effect on Wednesday next week.

The law embeds the vision of fostering a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation into the legal framework, advancing the law-based governance of ethnic affairs. Its core value lies in its ensuring the effective implementation of the regional ethnic autonomy system and its guarantee of efforts to promote high-quality development in ethnic regions. It is structured to promote interaction, exchanges and integration among the various ethnic groups, ensuring common prosperity and development. It directs governments to strengthen infrastructure, foster industrial growth, enhance public services and protect the environment, laying a comprehensive foundation for ethnic regions to thrive.

From 2012 to 2025, the gross domestic product of the five autonomous regions — Guangxi Zhuang, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia Hui, Xizang and Xinjiang Uygur — increased from 3.25 trillion yuan ($477.75 billion) to 8.66 trillion yuan, and public services in these regions have seen remarkable improvements. Xizang led the nation in providing 15 years of publicly funded education from kindergarten to high school since 2012, with similar programs in Xinjiang.

Yet some external forces are maliciously misinterpreting the law. For instance, the European Parliament has passed a resolution criticizing the law, groundlessly claiming it will intensify what it considers to be the "suppression" of ethnic peoples in the country. This absurd allegation doesn't have a leg to stand on as the law stipulates that upholding national unity and ethnic solidarity is the responsibility of all Chinese nationals, and it prohibits discrimination and suppression. While promoting the use of standard Chinese, the law strictly safeguards the right to study and use ethnic minority languages. This approach ensures cultural diversity is preserved while promoting national unity.

The baseless allegations of certain forces exist largely to sustain the illusion that they are "champions of human rights". Yet if they genuinely cared about the development and well-being of China's ethnic regions, they would not willingly serve as political brokers for anti-China forces. What makes their performance particularly absurd is that their rhetoric on China's ethnic affairs has barely changed in decades, while the regions they claim to care so much about have undergone profound economic and social transformation. The gap between their talking points and reality has grown wider with each passing year.

Notably, the law stipulates that organizations and individuals outside China who engage in actions undermining ethnic unity and progress or inciting ethnic division will be held legally accountable. This clause can be applied to terrorist groups such as the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, which are based overseas and pose a serious threat to the security of China's ethnic regions.

But some China naysayers pick fault with that clause, hyping it up as evidence proving their allegations. For them, opposition to China appears to be the only qualification needed to confer "moral legitimacy". When separatist, extremist and terrorist forces fomented unrest in Xinjiang and Xizang years ago, they went so far as to portray them as "freedom fighters". But when confronted with separatism, extremism or terrorism within their own borders, these politicians suddenly discover the language of "law and order". They demand that such actors be held accountable at once. This selective "morality" reveals a troubling double standard. To condemn the three forces at home while romanticizing them in the context of China is a distortion of "human rights".

China's ethnic regions will continue to preserve their cultural heritage and ethnic traditions that will be better safeguarded by the law. The regions are also embracing sustainable development, digital transformation and the artificial intelligence era. Against this backdrop, the recycled anti-China cliches resemble political caricatures divorced from realities on the ground.

The implementation of this law is purely China's internal affair. The legislative process was conducted in accordance with established legal procedures and was open, transparent and fully compliant with China's constitutional and legal framework. No external force has the right to use this legislation as a pretext for interfering in China's domestic affairs.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

Better governance simply by going where people are

In Urumqi, Ili and Kuqa in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, legislative outreach offices are now physically embedded within comprehensive service centers, mediation hubs and even public plazas. At the lower administrative level, these liaison points share space with township government halls, neighborhood committee offices and routine administrative service counters.

As a result, in an office building in Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang, judges, lawyers, community officials and local legislators can be seen collecting feedback on a draft neighborhood management regulation — not in a separate hearing room, but in a common area where residents come for totally unrelated matters, such as property registration or passport applications. The idea is simple: crowded places will have people with a broader and more diverse range of opinions, while allowing citizens to participate in legislative consultation without making an additional trip.

In Baiyang village, Kuqa, local farmers and herders attend a village night school three times weekly, devoting one hour to learning Putonghua and another hour to legal education. The legal segment serves to explain upcoming laws — such as the Ethnic Unity and Progress Promotion Law set to take effect on July 1 — and to gather opinion on bills that are under review.

By taking legislative outreach to an existing educational program, the village reduces duplication of staffing, facilities and funding, while also ensuring a smooth consultation process. As the village head put it, when people understand what a law says and how it affects their lives, they become more attentive, more capable of identifying problems and more likely to offer constructive suggestions — thus improving both participation and legislative quality.

Such outreach is an innovative initiative launched by the Legislative Affairs Commission of the National People's Congress Standing Committee in 2015, with the aim of bridging the gap between the public and lawmakers, as well as seeking opinions on legislative items from people in various walks of life. To date, China has established 60 such offices, soliciting over 77,000 public opinions on 224 pieces of legislation.

The model contrasts with an earlier practice in which government agencies operated in relative isolation, each maintaining separate offices, staff members and budgets. For many residents, this often meant confusion over which office handled which matter, and unnecessary travel between multiple locations. The newer integrated approach reduces red tape.

Underlying this change is a reorientation in how government performance is understood. In late February, the Communist Party of China launched a Party-wide campaign to guide its members, especially officials, in establishing and practicing a correct understanding of governance performance. The campaign will run until July.

Under the campaign, Party members and government officials are urged to proceed from reality, act in accordance with the laws, and deliver results that can stand the test of practice and history, truly benefit the people, and earn public recognition through sound decision-making and solid work. It highlights a principle that essentially measures policy outcomes not through visible or large-scale projects, but by whether they serve public needs sustainably and practically.

Placing legislative outreach in busy service halls, or embedding legal education into village night schools, may lack spectacle, but these choices reflect a deliberate calculation: that saving people's time, lowering administrative costs and making government services more approachable are themselves valid measures of effective governance.

This may not appear to be dramatic institutional reform. Yet the change is less about slogans or infrastructure than about reorganizing existing resources to reduce unnecessary movement, lower overheads and open more accessible channels for public input. Whether viewed from within or beyond, there is a practical logic to a system that meets people where they already are — both physically and in their daily routines — and that treats efficiency and responsiveness not as secondary concerns, but as integral to public service itself.

— CAO YIN, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Emissions reduction challenging balancing act

Editor's note: *Shanghai-based Wenhui Daily hosted a seminar earlier this month, inviting experts, including Li Jin, deputy general manager of the Shanghai Environment and Energy Exchange, and He Kebin, dean of the Institute for Carbon Neutrality at Tsinghua University, to share their insights on China's green transition. Below are excerpts of their presentations at the seminar's round table session, as reported by Wenhui Daily. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

As China has established the world's largest domestic carbon market, many emerging and developing countries that seek to develop their own carbon markets, such as in Southeast Asia and BRICS member states, are communicating with China to learn from its experience.

China is ready to share its expertise in designing carbon market mechanisms with other emerging economies. At last year's 30th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Brazil, China, together with the European Union and Brazil, launched the Open Coalition on Compliance Carbon Markets to share its experience.

Regarding the connectivity in the international carbon market, Articles 6.2 and 6.4 of the Paris Agreement make it clear that countries may transfer emissions reduction credits to assist each other in fulfilling their nationally determined contributions. Standards and infrastructure for the international trading of emissions reduction credits are gradually being developed.

Carbon mitigation presents both challenges and opportunities for countries. It is not only an obligation under global climate agreements but also an opportunity for transforming economies. A key topic in the discussion over the green transition is how countries can strike a balance between emissions cuts and economic growth.

Local governments in China face several pressures regarding emissions reduction requirements. First, China has a carbon-intensive energy mix, in which fossil fuels, particularly coal, account for a relatively large share.

Second, industry is a major contributor to China's GDP. China produces a large quantity of construction materials, petrochemicals and metallurgical products for the global market. Researchers are exploring consumption-based accounting for greenhouse gas emissions for these products, but the current international standard is production-based. This drives up China's emissions figures while it is still undergoing industrial transformation.

Third, China has maintained high economic growth rates. Aligning economic growth with emissions cuts is therefore a challenge.

Fourth, unlike Europe and the United States, which have traveled on "a gentle slope" to reduce carbon emissions, China faces a "steep slope" because it has a tight timeline for achieving carbon peaking before 2030 and carbon neutrality before 2060.

Technological advancement and breakthroughs are crucial to addressing these challenges.

Shanghai plans to roll out measures for evaluating the "green performance" of companies, including energy consumption, carbon emissions and pollutant discharge. Enterprises will make self-declarations for evaluation and the results will influence the granting of green credit and financial guarantees. The city is also working to allow enterprises that use carbon as collateral to enjoy interest subsidies on loans. This will encourage enterprises to utilize carbon financial tools and engage more effectively in green financing.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:43 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:43 PM

VIEWS

Bernard Momanyi

Zero-tariff lifts Kenya up the value chain

China's decision to grant zero-tariff access to exports from 53 African countries from May 1 is a turning point in Africa's economic relationship with the world's second-largest economy. Announced by President Xi Jinping, the measure has been widely welcomed across the continent as a bold step toward deepening trade and economic cooperation.

Global Lens

For Kenya, however, this development is more than just an open door to a vast market. It is a rare opportunity for businesses to rethink their export strategies, move up the value chain and position themselves more competitively in global markets.

Historically, many African economies have remained heavily dependent on exports of raw commodities.

Coffee, tea, minerals, horticultural products and other agricultural goods leave African shores with little processing, only to return as finished products that command significantly higher prices.

While this model has generated export earnings, it has done little to create sufficient jobs, develop industries or build economic resilience.

No country has achieved lasting prosperity by only exporting raw materials. The world's most successful economies industrialized by processing their resources, developing manufacturing capabilities and creating value-added products for domestic and international markets.

Kenya's path to long-term growth should be no different.

China's zero-tariff offer provides a powerful incentive for Kenyan enterprises to accelerate this transition. With tariffs removed, Kenyan products can now enter one of the world's largest consumer markets on more competitive terms.

But the greatest beneficiaries will not be exporters of raw commodities. The real winners will be businesses capable of producing processed foods, manufactured goods, textiles, pharmaceuticals, consumer products and other higher-value exports.

Consider coffee, one of Kenya's most celebrated exports. While Kenyan coffee beans enjoy a strong global reputation, much of the value is captured elsewhere through roasting, packaging, branding and retailing. The same is true for tea. Kenya is one of the world's largest producers but exports much of its tea in bulk form. The zero-tariff arrangement is an opportunity for Kenyan firms to export branded, packaged and finished products to Chinese consumers rather than simply supplying raw materials.

The agricultural sector presents similar opportunities. Instead of exporting only fresh produce, Kenya can expand into processed foods, fruit concentrates, juices, canned products and specialty consumer goods tailored to the growing demand from China.

Manufacturing firms can explore opportunities in leather products, textiles, apparel and household goods, where Kenya has the potential to develop competitive advantages.

This opportunity aligns with China's shift toward a consumption-driven economy. A growing middle class with rising purchasing power is fueling demand for high-quality imported products, including premium food items and consumer goods. Kenyan businesses that understand these trends and invest in quality standards, branding and innovation stand to benefit significantly.

Yet, market access alone is not enough. To fully leverage the zero-tariff initiative, Kenya must address the long-standing constraints that have hindered its industrial growth.

These include high production costs, expensive energy, logistical bottlenecks, limited access to affordable financing and weak value-chain development. Government and the private sector must work together to improve competitiveness and create an environment that supports export-oriented manufacturing.

Special economic zones, industrial parks and targeted incentives for value-added production can help accelerate industrialization. Investments in infrastructure, skills development and technology transfer will also be critical. Equally important is ensuring that Kenyan products meet the quality, safety and certification standards demanded by Chinese consumers and regulators.

The opportunity also aligns with the objectives of the African Continental Free Trade Area. As African countries deepen regional integration, businesses can build larger production networks, source inputs across borders and achieve economies of scale.

Kenyan enterprises should see the Chinese market as part of a broader strategy to develop globally competitive industries capable of serving both regional and international markets.

The responsibility now lies with governments and businesses to ensure that increased market access translates into industrial development rather than simply higher volumes of raw commodity exports.

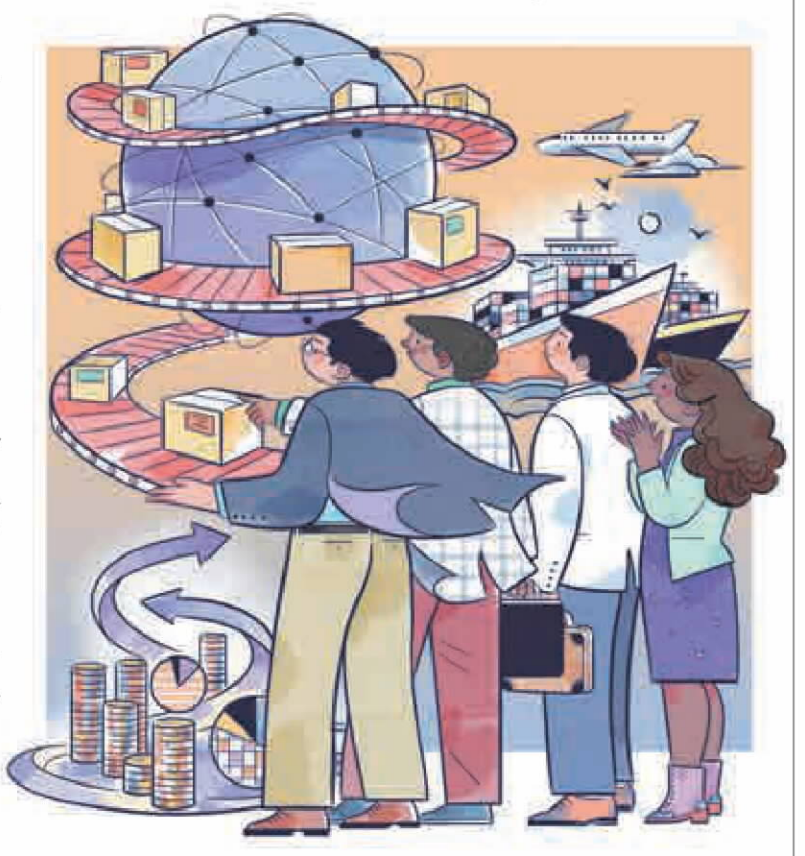
China has opened a significant door for Africa. What happens next depends largely on Africa itself. The zero-tariff policy should not be viewed merely as a trade concession but as a catalyst for industrial transformation, value addition and export diversification.

For Kenyan enterprises, this is a moment that demands ambition, innovation and long-term thinking. If Kenya's businesses seize this opportunity by investing in processing, manufacturing and branding, the benefits could extend far beyond increased exports.

More jobs could be created, local industries strengthened and greater value retained within the economy.

In doing so, Kenya would not only expand its presence in the Chinese market but also take a meaningful step toward achieving the industrialization and economic transformation that have long remained central to its development aspirations.

The author is the editorial director of Capital FM, a Kenyan media group. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

Zhang Monan

Innovation needs open doors, not high walls

The global innovation system is undergoing its most profound transformation since the end of the Cold War. Once driven by openness, cross-border collaboration and optimal efficiency, global innovation chains are now being reshaped by "national security" strategies and "de-risking" policies, raising unprecedented concerns about fragmentation and division.

Yet, amid growing security anxieties, one fundamental reality remains unchanged: no country can sustain technological leadership behind closed doors.

Pitting security against openness and innovation is conceptually flawed. Innovation flourishes through openness, not isolation. Progress in frontier fields such as artificial intelligence, biomedicine and clean energy relies heavily on the flow of talent, sharing of knowledge and collaboration across industrial chains.

Recent data from the World Intellectual Property Organization show that global international patent applications filed through the Patent Cooperation Treaty system reached 275,900 in 2025, marking the second consecutive year of growth.

The increase is a clear indicator that modern technological development transcends national borders.

The trend is driven not only by the dynamism of sectors such as digital communications and semiconductors but also by the deep integration of global innovation networks.

Generative AI offers a vivid example. Foundational open-source communities such as Hugging Face bring together hundreds of thousands of developers from around the globe. Without cross-border code sharing, open datasets, and distributed collaboration, the pace of AI technological iteration would slow down considerably.

The lesson is clear: innovation advances fastest when knowledge circulates rather than when it is confined.

The same logic applies to supply chains. Excessive localization and efforts at "decoupling" do not eliminate risks but create new vulnerabilities.

A diversified supply system and an integrated global division of labor are, by themselves, the best ways to mitigate risk.

If nations erect barriers and engage in redundant development, global supply chains will shift from a state of "efficient interconnection" to one of "fragmented islands". This would not only push up inflation and drag down global growth but also expose every economy to the systemic risks associated with reliance on single markets or single technological pathways.

The challenge is compounded by what economists Henry Farrell and Abraham L. Newman have described as "weaponized interdependence". In their view, the global economy is not a flat landscape but a network of nodes and hubs.

Nations that control key nodes and set the rules can leverage financial systems, technical standards, data flows, energy transport and supply chain hubs to restrict or even sanction other countries.

This has turned global interdependence from a source of mutual benefit into a potential instrument of strategic competition. Weaponized interdependence has created a global collective security dilemma.

The first challenge is collective action. While a "security-first" approach can enhance a nation's resilience, it undermines the foundation of international cooperation.

Countries seek the benefits of openness yet fear being subjected to "chokepoints" where access can be cut off. At the same time, major countries find it increasingly difficult to mobilize coordinated responses to transnational challenges such as climate change, financial stability, digital governance and the provision of global public goods.

The second challenge is coordination. Divergent national approaches to technical standards, data governance, digital currencies and supply-chain security make it harder to harmonize international rules.

In emerging fields such as AI governance, cross-border data flows and critical infrastructure security, countries often prefer to establish their own regulatory frameworks rather than seek unified international mechanisms.

Such regulatory fragmentation reduces efficiency and complicates global governance.

Finally, there is the issue of assigning responsibility. Too often, countries tend to shift the blame and responsibility for conflicts onto other nations. This tendency reinforces a system in which power is concentrated but responsibility is diffused.

Such imbalances in the international system undermine the institutional foundations of shared global security.

The rise of economic security should not be seen as the end of open innovation. Rather, it is a stress test for the international community's ability to preserve openness while addressing legitimate security concerns.

Amid geopolitical realities, preserving the necessary space for global innovation requires more than just unilateral actions; it demands the collaborative participation of national governments, multilateral mechanisms, market entities, and the scientific community.

The world urgently needs to reach a consensus. Unnecessary barriers must be dismantled to ensure the flame of global innovation continues to burn.

Efforts should be made within multilateral frameworks — such as the World Trade Organization and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development — to establish common standards that clearly define the scope of national security reviews, export controls and investment restrictions.

Such measures should remain narrowly focused on genuinely sensitive areas related to national defense and critical infrastructure.

Equally important are institutional safeguards that prevent security concerns from becoming a broad justification for economic and technological restrictions. Major countries must provide policy leadership and demonstrate a sense of responsibility.

As key economies, they should provide global public goods and act as stabilizing forces in innovation governance. By shunning unilateralism, they can prevent policy confrontations among major countries from causing a systemic fragmentation of the global innovation system.

In emerging fields such as AI and cyberspace governance, dialogue and consultation are especially important.

If major countries take the lead in establishing channels for dialogue on innovation policy, and reach a basic consensus on security boundaries and fundamental rules, they can preserve the strategic space necessary for global innovation cooperation.

The author is the deputy director of the Institute of American and European Studies at the China Center for International Economic Exchanges. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Chen Guiqing

DPP must abandon separatist agenda for a better future

Recent changes to cross-Strait policies because of the separatist stance of the Democratic Progressive Party authorities on Taiwan island have invited criticism both within the island and among international observers. More voices have urged the DPP authorities to face reality, move away from the outdated "Taiwan independence" platform, and return to the political foundation that can safeguard peace and stability across the Strait.

A recent article published by Foreign Policy also warned that the DPP needs to distance itself from radical "pro-independence" positions and avoid moves that can deepen cross-Strait tensions. The message from the different voices is increasingly clear: Persisting with the "Taiwan independence" platform does not serve the interests of Taiwan residents, nor does it conform to the broader trend of regional peace and international relations.

Only by abandoning separatist positions and stopping provocative activities can the DPP remove obstacles to cross-Strait exchanges and create conditions for Taiwan's long-term growth.

Since taking office, the DPP authorities have promoted the approach of "seeking independence through military means" and relying on external forces, increasing military purchases from the United States and expanding military preparations.

These actions have increased risks, and a region that should have seen peace, stability, communication and cooperation has, instead, been pushed closer to what has been described as "one of the most dangerous places on Earth".

The DPP's pursuit of separatist policies has also affected Taiwan's economic prospects and people's livelihoods. Obstacles to cross-Strait economic cooperation, restrictions on people-to-people exchanges, uncertainties facing investors, challenges to industrial development, rising living pressures and fewer opportunities for young people have become increasingly visible. It is becoming increasingly clear that the "Taiwan independence" platform is not a commitment to values, but a burden that undermines Taiwan's future.

Every political attempt to advance separatism places the interests of ordinary Taiwan residents at greater risk.

As the dangers from "Taiwan independence" become increasingly clear, its social foundation on the island is eroding rapidly.

Several recent polls show that more than half of Taiwan residents are dissatisfied with the Lai Ching-te authorities' cross-Strait policies; more than 60 percent support restoring regular cross-Strait consultations; and nearly 70 percent favor stronger people-to-people, economic, trade and cultural exchanges.

Peace, cross-Strait exchanges and stability have become the mainstream expectations among people on the island, who are also recognizing the need to face the issue of reunification.

A more notable shift is in the attitude of the so-called "Formosa Alliance", a political force on the island that once strongly advocated radical "Taiwan independence" but has now accepted the broader trend toward cross-Strait reunification. Their adjustment reflects the declining appeal of extreme separatist positions.

At the same time, more young people in Taiwan are seeing through the false narrative of "Taiwan independence", rejecting separatist rhetoric and choosing to study, work and start businesses across the Strait.

The direction of public opinion demonstrates a simple reality: confrontation cannot represent the future of Taiwan. The interests of the people should not become tools for political manipulation by a small number of politicians.

Meanwhile, the international environment, particularly the clear signals from the US, has further weakened the DPP's separatist illusions. Shortly after the China-US summit in Beijing in May, US President Donald Trump told Fox News in an interview that "I'm not looking to have somebody go independent", adding that Taiwan should not expect a "blank check" from the US military, directly exposing the DPP's long-promoted fantasy of "seeking independence by relying on the US".

It also shattered the illusion that external forces would stand behind "Taiwan independence".

In fact, US policy on the Taiwan question has always been shaped by its own interests. Peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait serve Washington's broader Asia-Pacific strategy, while turbulence caused by radical "Taiwan independence" moves would run counter to US interests.

That is why the US has repeatedly sent signals to cool tensions and restrain separatist provocations.

From a global perspective, opposing "Taiwan independence" and recognizing the one-China principle remain the prevailing consensus of the international community.

Today, 183 countries have established diplomatic relations with Beijing on the basis of the one-China principle. Attempts to promote separatism run against this international reality and have no future.

Fundamentally, "Taiwan independence" and peace across the Strait are incompatible.

The separatist agenda represents the greatest threat to Taiwan's stability and development, while the DPP's "Taiwan independence" platform remains a major obstacle to the restoration of normal cross-Strait interaction.

If the DPP authorities and Lai continue to cling to an outdated separatist position and act against public expectations and historical trends, they will only deepen confrontation, increase risks across the Strait and damage the fundamental interests of Taiwan residents.

The path forward requires political courage and a clear understanding of reality. The trend toward national reunification and rejuvenation is irreversible, while people across the Strait increasingly hope for peace, exchanges and cooperation.

The DPP should remove its separatist illusions, listen to people's expectations, abandon the "Taiwan independence" platform, return to the common understanding that both sides of the Strait belong to one China, and take concrete steps to safeguard peace, stability and Taiwan's future.

The author is a researcher at the Institute of Taiwan Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:43 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:43 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

HUSSEIN ASKARY

Diversified data pathways

Digital Silk Road offers the Global South an alternative to the ecosystem dominated by the big Western tech firms

Global South countries are confronted with the dual challenges of securing their digital transition and integration on the one hand, and defending digital sovereignty, cybersecurity and technological independence on the other.



As the most digitally developed Global South country, China is offering a major platform for its partners in the BRICS and beyond through the Digital Silk Road. As other Global South countries take major steps toward digital sovereignty, the combined capabilities of these nations will help build a fairer and more inclusive global digital governance framework in the next decade.

The digital infrastructure of the BRICS is a large but uneven ecosystem shaped by rapid expansion and structural disparities. Collectively, these countries host a substantial share of global internet users and are investing heavily in digital systems as foundations for economic growth and technological autonomy. However, quantitative indicators reveal wide differences in the maturity of their digital ecosystems: Internet penetration ranges from roughly 70 percent in India to over 80 percent in China and some 90 percent in Russia. Data center capacity is even more uneven. While China is hosting hundreds of large-scale data centers (with more edge facilities) and is approaching 40 gigawatts of capacity, the markets of India and Brazil remain in the 1 to 2 GW range — an order-of-magnitude gap that underscores China's lead in artificial intelligence-era infrastructure build-out.

These disparities are not merely developmental gaps; they reflect strategic vulnerabilities. The vast differences in infrastructure maturity create an internal dependency chain, where the less-equipped members inevitably rely on external, often Western-controlled, digital corridors and cloud services for global data transit. This digital capacity reliance of the BRICS member states effectively undermines the collective goal of digital sovereignty.

The huge growth potential of the BRICS digital landscape hinges not on isolated national upgrades, but on coordinated integration — building direct fiber links and shared cloud facilities among member states to bypass external choke points and turn internal diversity into complementarity advantages.

The domestic fiber-optic backbone and international connectivity layer represent a strategic shift in the BRICS digital infrastructure. Rather than reducing dependence on global internet routes — a practical impossibility given the nature of cross-border data flows — these investments enhance digital sovereignty by diversifying pathways and reducing reliance on third-party-controlled infrastructure. By building and controlling their own submarine cables and terrestrial links, BRICS countries gain greater routing autonomy, improved resilience against geopolitical disruptions, and the capacity to handle their vast internal data flows without being subject to the latency and surveillance risks of traditional transit hubs.

The Digital Silk Road represents an alternative model of international cooperation on global digital infrastructure development. Under this framework of cooperation, nations are equipped to negotiate the terms of technical training, capacity building and joint innovation that reflect a balanced, long-term commitment.

In this context, the Digital Silk Road, officially launched by China in 2017, can play a crucial role in bridging the gaps. Compared to the rent-seeking Western models, which are many times more expensive and thus not affordable to the majority of the population and companies in the Global South, the Digital Silk Road is contributing to the liberalization of digital services so that the whole population can get access to digital services at an affordable price. It can create a seamless, cross-border digital ecosystem linking China with Southeast Asia, Central Asia, West Asia, Africa and Europe. This can reduce trade costs, expand e-commerce and spread advanced tech.

Equally important, for many nations, the Digital Silk Road is a chance to bypass a digital landscape dominated by the big Western tech companies and their leverage in global tech governance, breaking monopolies by providing alternatives to the United States' cloud giants, which control nearly two-thirds of the market. The Digital Silk Road focuses on building key digital infrastructure, including submarine and land-based fiber-optic cables such as the Pakistan and East Africa Connecting Europe, 5G networks where Chinese companies such as Huawei and ZTE are world leaders, data centers and cloud services led by Alibaba Cloud and Tencent, e-commerce and digital payment systems such as Alipay, smart city technologies, and AI and satellite navigation as in a Beidou-supported alternative to GPS.

The Digital Silk Road is more than a concept; it is already shaping global tech, trade and internet governance. Members of the BRICS have already benefited from it, and many nations in Africa are leapfrogging in terms of telecom and internet coverage and digital services, such as digital payment systems in the continent where access to banking services is very limited. At the governance level, the Digital Silk Road promotes a state-centric, shared model of internet governance and cyber sovereignty, which contrasts sharply with Western private and proprietary approaches.

The Digital Silk Road represents an alternative model of international cooperation on global digital infrastructure development. Under this framework of cooperation, nations are equipped to negotiate the terms of technical training, capacity building and joint innovation that reflect a balanced, long-term commitment. Ultimately, the vision of the Digital Silk Road aligns closely with the broader aspirations of the Global South and multilateral forums such as the BRICS to cultivate a more equitable and inclusive digital order. By facilitating the co-development of secure, interconnected and sovereign digital infrastructure, the initiative supports a future where technological progress and governance are equally shared, contributing to a more balanced and resilient global digital ecosystem.

The author is the vice-dean of the Belt and Road Institute in Sweden. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

RONNIE LINS

Perceived value

The next task for the BRICS is transforming international cooperation into visible societal gains

The BRICS has transitioned into a new phase of institutional consolidation and strategic relevance following its latest expansion. Over the past two decades, member states have strengthened economic coordination mechanisms, expanded trade relations and deepened cooperation in finance and infrastructure. The New Development Bank has increased its role in financing projects across emerging economies, while new connectivity initiatives continue to reshape trade and investment flows throughout the Global South.



China has played a particularly important role in this transformation through infrastructure investment, technology partnerships and economic integration initiatives directed toward developing markets. These efforts have helped turn the BRICS into a more structured platform for international cooperation.

Today, the bloc represents more than 48 percent of the world's population and roughly 39 percent of global GDP measured in purchasing power parity. Yet the current international environment presents a different kind of challenge. Building institutions is no longer enough by itself. The BRICS cooperation must increasingly translate into pragmatic benefits that ordinary citizens can actually perceive.

Institutional architecture remains essential, but the long-term legitimacy of any multilateral arrangement also depends on its ability to improve daily economic life. Small businesses, students, tourists, farmers and workers need to see concrete advantages associated with cross-border cooperation.

This discussion becomes even more relevant as the BRICS grows larger and more heterogeneous. The group now includes economies with different production structures, regional priorities and geopolitical interests that do not always align perfectly. Under these conditions, achieving full diplomatic convergence on every international issue naturally becomes more difficult.

That does not necessarily indicate institutional weakness. Instead, it may point to the emergence of a different integration model. Rather than relying on complete political alignment, BRICS countries can strengthen cohesion through pragmatic initiatives capable of generating visible economic and technological gains for their societies. For many citizens, discussions about multilateralism still feel distant from everyday concerns. That is precisely why practical cooperation matters.

Two areas illustrate this potential particularly well: digital payment interoperability and AI cooperation applied to the real economy.

In recent years, several BRICS member states have built sophisticated digital payment infrastructures. Brazil consolidated PIX, a central bank-operated instant payment system connecting more than 170 million users. India has scaled the Unified Payments Interface into one of the world's largest digital payment ecosystems. China developed an advanced digital payments environment through platforms such as Alipay and WeChat Pay while continuing to expand the digital yuan and cross-border settlement experiments.

Although these systems emerged under different institutional architectures, they share important characteristics: large-scale digital adoption, rapid settlement capacity, strong mobile integration and deep incorporation into daily economic activity. This creates a concrete foundation for interoperability initiatives linking existing national systems.

The most realistic path for the BRICS may not involve creating a common currency in the near term. A more pragmatic approach would be the gradual construction of interoperable payment corridors connecting existing national infrastructures while preserving monetary sovereignty and regulatory autonomy.

Initially, these mechanisms could focus on lower-risk, high-impact activities such as tourism payments, remittances, student transfers and transactions involving small and medium-sized businesses. A Brazilian tourist, for example, could pay in reais through PIX while a merchant in another BRICS country automatically receives settlement in its local currency.

The importance of this goes beyond technical efficiency.

Faster transactions, lower operational costs and simpler cross-border payments are changes that businesses and consumers immediately recognize. When international cooperation produces visible improvements in daily economic routines, public support for multilateral initiatives tends to deepen.

The second major area involves AI and emerging technologies.

Too often, discussions about AI are framed exclusively through geopolitical rivalry among major powers. For developing economies, however, AI also represents a practical instrument for productive modernization, competitiveness and technological upgrading. Shanghai's Xuhui district alone hosts more than 1,500 AI companies alongside specialized universities and research centers. This kind of ecosystem demonstrates how technological cooperation can move beyond diplomatic rhetoric and generate direct connections between companies, academic institutions and productive sectors.

For emerging economies, the potential effects are significant. AI tools applied to agriculture, logistics, manufacturing and energy management can increase productivity, reduce operational costs and improve competitiveness. Small and medium-sized enterprises, in particular, may gain access to technologies that today remain concentrated in a limited number of global innovation hubs.

At the same time, the pace of technological transformation means BRICS countries will need to continuously adapt. AI, quantum computing, advanced cybersecurity and next-generation data infrastructure are likely to reshape economic competitiveness over the coming decades. More important than following isolated technological trends will be the ability to create lasting mechanisms for joint research, talent development and technological absorption.

Once again, the central issue returns to social perception.

International cooperation acquires more practical results when farmers improve productivity using digital forecasting tools, when small businesses reduce logistics costs, and when universities expand collaborative research and innovation programs.

This may become the defining challenge of the next BRICS phase.

The bloc has already demonstrated diplomatic relevance and institutional resilience. The next step is transforming international cooperation into visible societal gains. A realistic road map could include pilot interoperable payment corridors, joint technology training programs and open cooperation networks focused on AI applications for productive sectors. Visible public results can make the bloc more attractive to future partners.

In the long run, the relevance of the BRICS will likely depend more on their ability to generate tangible economic opportunities across the Global South. By bringing international cooperation closer to daily life, the bloc may help redefine what multilateralism means in the 21st century.

The author is the director of the China-Brazil Center for Research and Business. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:43 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:43 PM

WORLD

Social media victims



Dustin and Kaira Rysdam stand next to the memorial for their son, Brehnan, during the 2026 Social Media Victims Remembrance Day on Capitol Hill, Washington DC, on Tuesday. A memorial of 272 placards was placed across Upper Senate Park, each featuring the picture and forever age of a child lost to online harms including sextortion, drug poisoning, cyberbullying, addictive algorithms pushing suicide ideation, and dangerous social media challenges. KEVIN WOLF / AP

Collaboration seen as key to shaping the future of AI

By ZHANG ZHOUXIANG
in Brussels
zhangzhouxiang@chinadaily.com.cn

China and Europe have different approaches to artificial intelligence, but they share a common objective, which includes building technological capacity, strengthening competitiveness, and securing a place in the economy of the future, said Charles Michel, former president of the European Council and now distinguished professor at the China Europe International Business School, or CEIBS.

Michel made the remarks at the 12th Europe Forum 2026 in Brussels on Wednesday, themed around strategic opportunities in EU-China AI development.

"China is in a strong position, with access to critical raw materials. You innovate a lot, you innovate fast, and with the ambition to deploy AI at a large scale," he said, pointing out that Europe, meanwhile, has focused on finding a balance between innovation, privacy protection, and data governance, among others.

"We need multilateral and bilateral frameworks where we can exchange views, improve mutual understanding, reduce risks and manage competition. This is what we should continue to do between the European Union and China," Michel said.

The forum, hosted by the CEIBS, brought together policymakers, business leaders and academics to discuss how China and Europe can navigate the rapid rise of AI while maintaining economic cooperation and technological competitiveness.

Wang Hong, president and professor of management at the CEIBS, said cooperation between China and Europe has become increasingly important as both sides seek to balance innovation and governance.

Although China and Europe follow different development models, they share the view that AI development should not be defined by a single technological hegemon, Wang said.

China's scale advantages and vast market potential can complement Europe's experience in governance and institutional innovation, creating an important balancing force in global AI governance.

Frank Bournois, co-president (European) and a professor of governance and leadership at the CEIBS, said AI cooperation should not be viewed simply as expanding the size of the global AI market. Instead, it also involves addressing differences in governance philosophies and regulatory approaches.

According to Bournois, the European Union places greater emphasis on privacy protection, legal accountability and public trust, while China has earned widespread recognition for its speed of innovation and ability to rapidly scale technologies.

"It's not just about making the cake bigger, but also about putting different ingredients and recipes into the cake of AI," Bournois said while talking about how the two sides could cooperate.

While China and Europe may not follow the same model, sustained dialogue can help bridge differences and bring the two sides closer together, he added.

Forum hails progress in Sino-Indonesia cooperation

By LEONARDUS JEGHO in Jakarta
For China Daily

China and Indonesia's deepening strategic partnership is delivering gains for Southeast Asia's largest economy as the two nations enter the final year of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2022-26), according to a forum in Jakarta on Wednesday.

Wang Lutong, Chinese ambassador to Indonesia, said that China and Indonesia had made great and tangible progress in their bilateral relations over the years.

Wang said bilateral trade has reached $167.5 billion by the end of 2025 and that China has been Indonesia's largest trading partner for 13 consecutive years.

He cited projects implemented under the China-Indonesia strategic partnership, such as the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway.

He added that the strategic partnership has accelerated cooperation in various sectors, including artificial intelligence, green transformation and people-to-people exchanges.

He said that the positive results achieved so far through China-Indonesia cooperation have been due to their mutually beneficial partnership and Chinese-style modernization.

According to Wang, China and Indonesia are moving toward the goal of building a community with a shared future.

Stella Christie, Indonesia's vice-minister of higher education, science, and technology, said China-Indonesia cooperation in education has spurred more Indonesians to study in China. There are some 15,000 Indonesians studying in China.

Christie said the two sides had also discussed ways of developing curriculum and infrastructure that match the labor needs of various industries.

Such an "industry-matched" curriculum will benefit Indonesian students once they start looking for jobs, according to Christie. For example, Chinese businesses that are keen to invest in Indonesia will look for skilled local workers.

"Because collaboration with China always means concrete action — and we have done that," Christie said.

Tong Xiaoling, vice-president of the China Public Diplomacy Association, said think tanks and media of both countries should have the responsibility to advocate for dialogue and cooperation.

She also encouraged representatives from Indonesian media and think tanks to visit China and experience Chinese modernization firsthand, and "introduce a true, three-dimensional and comprehensive China to the Indonesian public".

Santo Darmosumarto, director-general of Asia-Pacific and African Affairs at Indonesia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said the Indonesia-China partnership should remain deep and resilient.

He said a balanced trade structure gives Indonesia greater value-added opportunities for its exporters and small and medium enterprises, as well as greater access to the Chinese market.

Darmosumarto said technology transfer from China can support Indonesia's development of its electric vehicle and battery ecosystems, battery recycling, solar manufacturing, and renewable energy.

Bryant Gozali, CEO of Bolong Media Indonesia and Principal Cellist of the Jakarta Simfonia Orchestra, said Indonesia-China relations have moved beyond economics alone.

He said he had personally seen concrete examples of people-to-people exchanges through education, youth programs, tourism, arts and cultural events, and academic cooperation.

"For me, the inclusion of culture and people-to-people exchanges in the Indonesia-China plan of action is very meaningful. Economic cooperation is important, but relationships between countries become truly sustainable when there is mutual understanding and trust between their people," Gozali said.

Prime Sarmiento in Hong Kong contributed to this story.

The writer is a freelance journalist for China Daily.

Public opinion in Australia of China ticks up

Poll: Over half regard relations with Beijing more vital than Washington

By LIU JIANQIAO
liujianqiao@chinadaily.com.cn

A new poll shows that more than half of Australians regard relations with China as more important than ties with the United States. Experts said the findings reflect a growing recognition among Australians that China is not only an important trading partner for Australia, but also a key partner in addressing shared challenges, with considerable potential for cooperation across a wide range of areas.

The annual poll released on Monday by the Sydney-based Lowy Institute revealed significant shifts in public perceptions of Australia's two most important bilateral relationships — those with the US and China.

According to the poll, 61 percent of Australians view China primarily as an economic partner rather than a "security threat", up 11 percentage points from 2025. Meanwhile, Australians' trust in the US to act responsibly in the world has fallen to 31 percent, the lowest level since the Lowy Institute began conducting its surveys.

The poll marked a notable shift in Australian public opinion. A majority of respondents said Australia's relationship with China is more important than its relationship with the US, while 45 percent ranked ties with the US as more important.

According to a report by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Australians broadly oppose many of the US policies, including those regarding Greenland.

Despite declining confidence in the US, Australians have not turned away from the US alliance. The poll found that 73 percent of respondents still regard the alliance as either "very important" or "fairly important" to Australia's security.

Chen Hong, director of the East China Normal University's Australian Studies Center, said that the findings do not suggest a sudden change in Australian society's perception of China.

Instead, they point to a growing tendency among Australians to assess the country's external relations through the lens of national interests and economic realities.

"The current US administration's 'America First' policy has underscored the limits of alliance commitments ... Australians are increasingly reluctant to sacrifice economic prosperity, employment opportunities and regional stability for the sake of geopolitical competition driven by the US."

He mentioned that China is currently Australia's second-largest source of inbound tourists, providing tangible benefits to sectors such as tourism, hospitality, and urban services.

In addition, China remains the largest source of international students in Australia, making a significant contribution to the country's education sector and broader economy.

Multilateralism underlined

Li Jianjun, director of the Australian Studies Center at Beijing Foreign Studies University, said that China and Australia are both major economies in the Asia-Pacific region and important stakeholders in safeguarding multilateralism, free trade and the postwar international order.

"China and Australia can strengthen coordination in advancing the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific, safeguarding the stability of regional industrial and supply chains, and tackling climate change. They can also work together to uphold world peace and foster a regional environment that supports peace, development and shared prosperity," he said.

"By strengthening cooperation under multilateral frameworks such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, China and Australia can jointly uphold free trade and boost an open global economy," said Liu Le, an associate researcher at the National Institute of International Strategy of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

Expanded cooperation in trade, green energy and people-to-people exchanges would not only benefit both countries, but also contribute to shared growth and prosperity across the Asia-Pacific region, Liu said.

Goodwill visit



The Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy's 83rd task force, which was on a far-sea cadet training and visit mission, arrives at the port of Vladivostok on Tuesday, starting a four-day goodwill visit to Russia. XINHUA

Elixir of life



A local resident turns on a tap to check the water flow at the commissioning ceremony of a water supply network project in Karu, Nigeria, on Monday. A Chinese firm has completed the project, bringing treated water to thousands of residents. HONG ZEHUA / XINHUA

District judge nullifies US immigration arrest policies

NEW YORK — A federal judge in California vacated the US President Donald Trump administration's nationwide policies expanding arrests at immigration courthouses and the duration for detaining non-citizens in short-term facilities. The judge found the actions of US Immigration and Customs Enforcement and another government arm "arbitrary and capricious".

US District Judge P. Casey Pitts of the Northern District of California on Tuesday vacated ICE's policies that had rescinded previous strictures on arrests at immigration courthouses and allowed detainees to be held in short-term cells for up to 72 hours. He did the same for a similar policy undertaken by the US Department of Justice's Executive Office for Immigration Review that removed limits on courthouse arrests.

The 71-page ruling, issued in a case brought by an asylum seeker arrested upon departing a routine hearing at a San Francisco immigration court, struck down key parts of the Trump administration's immigration enforcement policies.

Judge Pitts, appointed by former US president Joe Biden, effectively reinstated Biden-era policies that limited arrests at immigration courthouses to narrow circumstances and capped detentions in short-term facilities to 12 hours.

Since Trump retook office in January of last year, his administration has ramped up arrests of immigrants suspected of being in the US illegally as part of an aggressive deportation push.

US Department of Homeland Security General Counsel James Percival criticized the ruling on X, calling it "naked judicial activism in service of an anti-American, open borders agenda".

Previous guidance limited arrests at courthouses to circumstances such as national security threats, imminent danger and "hot pursuit" of someone posing a public safety risk, the ruling said.

The judge found that the Trump administration failed to provide "reasoned explanations" for rescinding previous policies as required under the Administrative Procedure Act.

"For 80 years, Congress has commanded federal agencies to think before they act," the judge wrote in his ruling, adding that the law requires "an agency at least provide sound reasons for following its chosen course".

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:43 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:43 PM

WORLD



Construction workers remove debris from a damaged building at the site of an Israeli strike in Tyre, southern Lebanon, on Tuesday. Iran has said that peace in Lebanon was a fundamental pillar of reaching a definitive agreement with the United States. JOSEPH EID / AFP

Shipping rules emerge as next flashpoint in US-Iran friction

Rubio rejects tolls in Strait of Hormuz as Senate votes to curb Trump's war powers

By JAN YUMUL in Hong Kong
and **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio reiterates that Iran would not be allowed to charge tolls in the Strait of Hormuz, following talks between Tehran and Oman on navigation arrangements in the waterway.

Rubio made the remark as he landed in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, on Tuesday, kicking off his Gulf visit, which also includes Kuwait and Bahrain.

"No country is allowed to charge tolls or fees on an international waterway," Rubio told reporters when asked if the United States could guarantee freedom of navigation in the strait, which remains a point of contention.

Oman and Iran said in a joint statement on Tuesday that the two "coastal states sharing the Strait of Hormuz" reaffirm their commitment to ensuring safe passage through the strait in accordance with the relevant provisions of international law and the provisions set in the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding.

They also emphasized their sovereignty and sovereign rights over their territorial waters in the strait.

In addition, the two sides agreed to continue dialogue on the matter through a joint working team between their foreign ministries, "with the aim of reaching an agreement on the future management of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, the services to be provided in this regard, and the associated costs, in accordance with international standards", the statement said.

US President Donald Trump said on Wednesday that Iran has told the United States that no tolls were being sought from ships traveling through the Strait of Hormuz.

There are "no tolls, no insurance costs, and no other charges of any kind being sought or received by Iran" on ships traveling the strait, Trump said on social media.

In a post on X, Oman's Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr Albusaidi acknowledged the "constructive discussions" on the Iran-US memorandum of understanding, "especially the Strait of Hormuz paragraph", saying "we affirmed commitment to international law and toll-free safe passage".

Meanwhile, the US Senate for the first time approved a war powers resolution on Tuesday seeking to block US military action against Iran, as lawmakers warily watch Trump's efforts to resolve a conflict that the administration launched on its own and now needs Congress to fund.

It was the 10th time the Senate had tried to stop the war, and the outcome, on a vote of 50-48, was a stunning turnaround from past efforts.

While the resolution is largely symbolic and does not carry the full force of law, it reflects the growing concerns from a number of Republican lawmakers in both the House and Senate over both the war and the deal Trump struck with Iran to end it. The House approved the resolution earlier this month.

Trump responded angrily on Tuesday night, calling the vote "poorly timed and meaningless" and saying it "provided aid and comfort" to Iran.

Evacuating seafarers

As countries attempted to reach a consensus on the Strait of Hormuz, the International Maritime Organization said on Tuesday that it would begin implementing an evacuation plan for more than 11,000 seafarers stranded in the waterway.

The agency's secretary-general, Arsenio Dominguez, said they have secured safety guarantees and have thoroughly verified the conditions for safe navigation to support the operations.

An IMO spokesperson said on Wednesday that "ships have already begun to pass under the plan", declining to provide any details of the vessels that had crossed.

Dominguez welcomed "with deep satisfaction" the US-Iran peace agreement, saying it marked "a decisive step toward restoring maritime security and bringing to an end the unacceptable attacks against civilian shipping".

He also paid a tribute to 14 "innocent seafarers who tragically lost their lives during this conflict".

The Maritime Security Centre of Oman said on Wednesday that, in coordination with the IMO, it would provide a shipping transit corridor in the Strait of Hormuz on the basis of Oman's responsibilities toward the strait and its importance to the global economy.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's Foreign Ministry spokesman Tahir Andrabi told journalists in Islamabad that technical talks between the US and Iran could resume early next week, Al Jazeera reported, adding that June 29 or July 1 were also possible start dates, without providing details on the location of discussions.

AP contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at jan@chinadailyapac.com

S. Korea sets visitor record as Chinese tourism surges

By YANG HAN in Hong Kong
kelly@chinadailyapac.com

South Korea's annual foreign arrivals surpassed 10 million by the third week of June, reaching the milestone at a record pace, with China retaining its position as the country's largest source of inbound tourists.

The figure was achieved about a month earlier than last year, when foreign arrivals exceeded 10 million in mid-July, according to preliminary data released by South Korea's Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism on Wednesday.

The country's inbound tourism sector continued to show strong momentum, with 1.95 million foreign visitors recorded in May, up 19.4 percent from a year earlier. During the first five months of the year, total foreign arrivals reached 8.72 million, an increase of 21 percent year-on-year.

China remained the largest source market, with 560,000 visitors from the Chinese mainland in May. Arrivals from Taiwan and Hong Kong totaled 190,000 and 60,000, respectively.

Japan ranked second with 360,000 visitors, while long-haul travelers from Europe and the Americas also numbered about 360,000.

"Despite the increase in fuel surcharges stemming from the Middle East situation, the total number of foreign tourists visiting South Korea through May rose 21 percent year-on-year and surpassed 10 million by mid-June, showing a solid growth momentum in inbound tourism," said Kang Jung-won, head of the ministry's tourism policy office.



Visitors dressed in traditional Korean attire walk in front of the Gyeongbokgung Palace in Seoul on Sunday. JADE GAO / AFP

According to ministry data, foreign tourists' domestic card spending in May was estimated at 2.1 trillion won ($1.35 billion), up 67.1 percent year-on-year and exceeding the 2 trillion won mark for the first month since records began in January 2018.

The Korea Tourism Organization noted on June 17 that the surge was largely driven by Chinese tourists, whose card spending more than tripled in May compared with the same month last year.

The organization attributed the increase to high-end luxury shopping by Chinese visitors, especially watches, jewelry and accessories.

South Korea has stepped up efforts to attract more Chinese tourists. Recently, Seoul and Beijing agreed to increase bilateral air traffic rights by an additional 70 flights per week within the second half of the year, including 56 passenger services, according to a June 8 statement from South Korea's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport.

The agreement marked the first expansion of bilateral traffic rights since 2019 and reflects growing people-to-people exchanges and trade between the two countries.

Passenger traffic between China and South Korea reached around 4.39 million in the first quarter, surpassing the pre-pandemic level of 4.14 million recorded during the same period of 2019 before COVID-19, ministry data showed.

Looking ahead, the Yanolja Research institute in Seoul predicted in January that South Korea would welcome a record of more than 20 million foreign visitors this year.

China is expected to solidify its position as the largest inbound tourism market, with 6.15 million arrivals, the travel and tourism research institute said.

It added that the figure could exceed 7 million as some travelers choose destinations other than Japan amid bilateral tensions.

Food exporters eye health-conscious consumers in China

By RENA LI in Los Angeles
renali@chinadailyusa.com

Almonds, dairy products and other premium foods are finding growing audiences among China's increasingly health-conscious consumers, offering new opportunities for some California agricultural exporters despite ongoing trade challenges.

For California's almond industry, China remains a strategically important destination.

"We have been investing in market promotion and collaborating with Chinese industry partners for more than 30 years," Lindsay Tello, senior adviser for trade policy at the Almond Board of California, told China Daily. "It continues to be an important export destination for California almonds."

According to Tello, Chinese consumers have long associated almonds with health and nutrition.

"Chinese consumers are very aware of health and historically associate certain foods with nutritional benefits," she said. "Almonds, with their high Vitamin E and heart-healthy properties, are well recognized in China and viewed as an important part of the daily diet."

According to Tello, the growing focus on health and wellness is creating new opportunities for almond-based products in China. Almonds, almond flour and almond paste are increasingly being used in products such as baked goods and daily nut snack packs, while the versatility of almonds in different forms allows food manufacturers to incorporate them into a wide range of products that offer both nutritional benefits and consumer appeal.

To support market development, the Almond Board continues to work with Chinese manufacturers and industry organizations.

"We work closely with Chinese manufacturers and associations in providing information on the benefits of a healthy diet which includes almonds," Tello said. "We have also engaged over the years with key Chinese organizations, such as the Chinese Nutrition Society."

At the same time, California exporters continue to face challenges stemming from tariffs and increased competition.

"In China, California is currently at a duty disadvantage to Australia," Tello noted. "However, Chinese manufacturers value the quality of California almonds as well as the commitments we have made over the years to growing the market."

Recent trade tensions have had a measurable impact on California agriculture. According to a study by the University of California Giannini Foundation of Agricultural Economics, the value of California's top agricultural exports to China fell from an average of $1.55 billion in 2024 to $554 million in 2025, a decline of 64 percent. Almond exports declined by an estimated $228 million, while pistachio exports dropped by approximately $478 million as buyers shifted purchases to alternative suppliers.

"Long-term trade relationships are fragile," Sandro Steinbach, a professor of agribusiness and applied economics at North Dakota State University and one of the study's authors, said in the report. "Trade policy shifts can easily destroy more than they protect."

The researchers noted that rebuilding market share can take years once overseas buyers establish new sourcing relationships.

Despite these challenges, Tello said the industry remains optimistic about China's long-term potential.

"We continue to be optimistic about the long-term growth opportunities for California almonds," she said. "We hope the current trade situation will improve, allowing California almonds to be enjoyed by current and future consumers in China."

California's dairy industry is seeing similar opportunities as Chinese consumers seek products that combine nutrition, quality and convenience.

"We have seen growing interest in value-added dairy products as Chinese consumers become more focused on nutrition, quality and food safety," Matt Henderson, director of international sales at California Dairies Inc, told China Daily. "Demand is increasing for products with enhanced nutritional benefits, including high-protein milk and lactose-free milk, which address evolving dietary preferences and wellness goals."

Henderson said China's expanding coffee culture and premium foodservice sector are creating additional demand for dairy ingredients.

"We are also seeing strong growth in cream products driven by China's expanding coffee culture and premium foodservice sector," he said. "Cream is increasingly used in specialty beverages, pastries, desserts and cooking applications, reflecting consumers' willingness to seek higher-quality and more indulgent experiences."

According to Henderson, California producers are well positioned to meet these needs because of their scale, food-safety standards and production capabilities.

"California is well positioned to meet these needs," he said. "As the largest dairy-producing state in the US, California offers a reliable year-round supply backed by stringent food safety standards, advanced production systems and strong traceability."

Looking ahead, Henderson sees strong potential in products that offer additional nutritional benefits.

"We see strong potential in functional dairy products that offer additional benefits, such as higher protein content, lactose-free options and products fortified with vitamins and other nutrients," he said. "Consumers are becoming more sophisticated and are looking for foods that support healthier lifestyles without compromising on taste or convenience."

He added that stable and predictable trade relations will remain important to future growth.

"Long-term success will depend on predictability, stability and continued cooperation between our two markets," Henderson said. "Strong trade relationships thrive when there is a transparent and mutually beneficial framework that allows businesses to plan and invest with confidence."

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1857

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:43 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:43 PM

SPORTS

WORLD CUP 2026

CR7 brace sets new milestone

Ronaldo becomes first player to score in six World Cups with two goals against Uzbekistan



Cristiano Ronaldo celebrates scoring Portugal's first goal during a World Cup Group K match against Uzbekistan in Houston on Tuesday. REUTERS

Cristiano Ronaldo had a simple, but strong message as the final whistle sounded after Portugal's big win at the World Cup on Tuesday.

"I'm back," he said directly into the television camera. "I'm back."

Ronaldo became the first player to score in six different World Cup tournaments by getting two goals in Portugal's 5-0 win over Uzbekistan, quieting critics after his forgettable performance in the team's 1-1 draw with DR Congo in the opener.

Even though criticism isn't anything new to the 41-year-old superstar, he admitted that the intense negativity directed toward him this week was difficult.

"But it's always like that," he said in Portuguese. "It doesn't matter, because it's been 23 years on the job and when things go well, 'Cristiano is good,' when things go bad, 'Cristiano should retire, he's old.' It will always be like that. But we responded well today, me and my teammates, which is what we wanted."

Ronaldo made history in the sixth minute when Joao Cancelo crossed the ball to him and he shot with his right foot to make it 1-0. He ran toward the bench and celebrated with his teammates.

He added another in the 39th minute when he got a pass from Bruno Fernandes and scored with his right foot just inside the near post to make it 3-0.

"As a defender you need to be ready and you need to be close to him in the box," said Uzbekistan coach Fabio Cannavaro, a standout defender in his playing days who led Italy to the 2006 World Cup title. "If you give him one centimeter in the box you are dead."



Cristiano Ronaldo (center) is embraced by his teammates after scoring Portugal's opening goal during a World Cup Group K match against Uzbekistan in Houston on Tuesday. AP

Ronaldo was named man of the match for his performance, the latest of many in his incredible career.

Portugal coach Roberto Martinez raved about the professionalism and poise Ronaldo showed this week amid calls from outsiders to bench him.

"He's a human being," Martinez said. "He's allowed to have emotions. He's allowed to have feelings. What is impressive with him is the answer. Whatever he feels, the answer is to get back on the training ground and practice and work, and demand more from himself. That professionalism is what's (led) to his longevity."

The goals on Tuesday make him the second-oldest player to score at a World Cup behind Cameroon forward Roger Milla, who was 42 when he scored at the 1994 tournament in the United States.

Ronaldo and Argentina captain Lionel Messi became the only men in history to play in six World Cup tournaments this year. Ronaldo's scoring streak started on his debut in 2006 and he also netted goals in 2010, 2014, 2018 and 2022.

While he shares the record for most tournaments with Messi, he stands alone in scoring a goal in each edition after Messi failed to score at the 2010 World Cup in South Africa.

Portugal coach Martinez says Ronaldo's rivalry with Messi is important for both players, and is what drives them to stay at their best.

"I believe both players have improved football over the years, and their rivalry is important for them both to grow," he said.

"(Ronaldo) is an icon and a role model in the national team. He has a great attitude on the pitch and in the dressing room.

"(It's) not just the scoring, (it's) the passes, the chances created, he is a role model when it comes to the World Cup."

Ronaldo's two strikes against Uzbekistan gave him 10 career goals in the tournament. Messi has 18 after a hat-trick in Argentina's opener against Algeria and two more goals Monday against Austria that made him the all-time leading scorer in the tournament's history.

Ronaldo's latest performance extended his record by giving him 145 international goals, and his 10 career goals in the World Cup moved him past Eusebio's nine to make him Portugal's all-time leading scorer at the tournament.

Tuesday's game was the 230th of Ronaldo's international career, which is the most in history.

This is likely to be the final World Cup for Ronaldo, who won the European Championship with Portugal in 2016 and five Champions League titles with Manchester United and Real Madrid.

AGENCIES



Lionel Messi (left), Erling Haaland (center) and Cristiano Ronaldo are among the top contenders in the race for this year's World Cup Golden Boot. AP / REUTERS

Golden Boot battle is fast becoming the main event

KANSAS CITY — Usually a subplot, the race for the World Cup Golden Boot is one of the main talking points at the 2026 tournament, as the top marksmen have got off to a blistering start.

The overall record has already been broken by Argentine superstar Lionel Messi, who now has 18 goals over six World Cups after adding five in two games in the United States.

But, he is being chased closely by Kylian Mbappe and Erling Haaland — who have four goals apiece — with Cristiano Ronaldo and Harry Kane also in the mix.

The long-standing single-tournament record of 13 goals set at the 1958 tournament by France's Just Fontaine appears vulnerable.

German great Gerd Muller was the last man to hit double figures when he scored 10 goals at the 1970 tournament in Mexico.

Since then, at all but three tournaments, the Golden Boot winner has scored six goals or fewer.

Messi, who turns 39 on Wednesday, has been the standout performer so far at the tournament, being held across Canada, Mexico and the US.

He struck a memorable hat-trick against Algeria before scoring twice in a 2-0 victory over Austria, accounting for all five of the defending champion's goals so far.

Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni said it was "hard to explain" the genius of the veteran forward after their opening match in Kansas City.

"We are amazed with him still, although we get to see him on a daily basis and he's been the best for 20 years," he said. "He still pulls it off every single match."

Messi's most likely challenger, based on the prospect of a deep run in the tournament, is Mbappe, who scored eight goals four years ago in Qatar to win the Golden Boot.

The 27-year-old, now France's record goalscorer, is just two goals behind Messi's career World Cup total.

The Real Madrid star said, perhaps unconvincingly, that chasing Messi was not top of his agenda after his team's 3-0 stroll against Iraq.

"Leo always scores goals and always will," he said. "So, I am not looking at what he is doing, I'm just focusing on helping my team."

Haaland streak

Level with Mbappe on four goals is Manchester City forward Haaland, who has scored in his past 12 competitive appearances for Norway.

The giant forward, 25, played down his extraordinary talent after taking his international tally to a remarkable 59 goals in 52 games.

"It's like many other things, I'm just really good at scoring goals and I'm quite lucky," he said. "I don't know what I'm doing. It's just how it is."

Germany's Deniz Undav and Canada's Jonathan David have three goals each and Kane and Ronaldo are among a clutch of players with two.

Portugal's Ronaldo briefly stole the spotlight from long-time rival Messi on Tuesday when he became the first man to score in six different World Cup tournaments after his two strikes in a 5-0 romp against Uzbekistan, which followed his insipid performance in Portugal's opening 1-1 draw against DR Congo.

Ronaldo, the leading scorer in men's international history, with 145 goals, said: "I always arrive, even if it's late, but I'm there."

Kane, whose six goals won him the Golden Boot at the 2018 World Cup in Russia, is stuck on two after missing a golden chance during England's goalless draw against Ghana on Tuesday.

US striker Folarin Balogun, who has netted twice, has set his sights on matching the world's elite, but realizes he has tough acts to follow.

"Seeing players like Messi, Mbappe, Haaland — they're so inevitable. I think they're scoring a goal a game, sometimes more," he said.

"For me, it's just about trying to get to that level — to be inevitable as well, to be consistent."

AFP

Tuchel insists England remains on course, despite goalless Ghana draw

FOXBOROUGH, Massachusetts — England coach Thomas Tuchel admitted his team lacked a cutting edge in its frustrating 0-0 draw with Ghana on Tuesday, but insisted there were plenty of positive signs going forward in England's quest to end it's 60-year World Cup drought.

"It's a long tournament and I think the boys tried everything. They played with the right energy," said Tuchel after the stalemate at Boston Stadium.

"We always try to entertain our fans. It was difficult today, but I hope the fans don't lose belief. There is a long way to go. I just feel I was right that we were in a very difficult group."

England had 79 percent of the possession, but could not break down a determined Ghanaian defense in the Group L contest.

It also lacked the clinical finishing that made the difference in its opening 4-2 win against Croatia in Dallas, having 19 attempts on goal, but managing only three on target.

Manchester City's Nico O'Reilly hit the bar late on, after coming off the bench, and Harry Kane blazed the rebound over the bar, summing up the day's frustration for England.

"It fell to him, and 99 times out of 100 he takes that chance. If he converts his chance, maybe we would be talking now about the patience, discipline and performance," added Tuchel.

"But, now, it is 0-0, and maybe the headlines are a little different. We had enough set-pieces to decide the match, but we were not clinical enough."

The German said that it was "just natural" to rely on Kane, who was unable to add to his two goals against Croatia and move ahead of Gary Lineker as his country's all-time top scorer at World Cups.

Tuchel also admitted that the match could serve as a "reality check", even if the outcome is hardly problematic for England — it has four points from two games, and a win against Panama in New Jersey on Saturday will clinch the group.

'VAR went for a coffee'

"This is a difficult, difficult team to play against. None of us thought there was an easy match ahead of us, but there were a lot of things that were much better than against Croatia.

"It is just not the same result or excitement, but it takes two to tango," Tuchel added in a nod to Ghana's defensive approach.

England remains unbeaten against African opponents at World Cups, but the Black Stars were clearly delighted with the point which keeps them on course to make the knockout phase for the first time since they got to the quarterfinals in 2010.

"Football is not only about possession. It is also about having the right attitude," Ghana coach Carlos Queiroz said, as his team built on its opening 1-0 victory against Panama.

"We celebrated because we got a draw against a team who are one of the favorites to win the World Cup."

His team also has four points before heading to Philadelphia next to take on Croatia.

"You have to pay a high price to get points. Probably because we are in the US, where everything is expensive," he joked.

However, the former Real Madrid and Portugal boss also felt his team should have had a penalty for a late challenge on Prince Adu by Ezri Konsa.

Nothing was given by the Honduran referee, and he was not summoned to check the VAR monitor.

"The VAR went for a coffee, which is natural, but it is a clear penalty and a red card," insisted Queiroz.

AFP



An England fan wears a lion mask inside the stadium before a Group L match between England and Ghana at Boston Stadium on Tuesday. REUTERS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:43 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:47 PM

Building bonds
Sister city relationships strengthen China-US ties
AMERICA FOCUS, PAGE 4



Foreign scholars honored for their books on China
CULTURE, PAGE 15



Double net gain
Vinicius scores twice as Brazil beats Scotland to top Group C
SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY
GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 FRIDAY, JUNE 26, 2026

Two deadly earthquakes rock Venezuela

More than 200 killed, thousands injured; rescue efforts underway

By **LIU JIANQIAO** and **MO JINGXI**

Two powerful earthquakes struck Venezuela on Wednesday, killing at least 235 people and injuring more than 4,000 as dozens of buildings collapsed in and around Caracas, the nation's capital.

China expressed its condolences to Venezuela on Thursday, saying that it stands ready to provide assistance based on the South American country's needs.

A magnitude 7.2 earthquake hit about 160 kilometers west of Caracas, followed less than a minute later by a magnitude 7.5 tremor, according to the United States Geological Survey. The twin quakes, the country's strongest in more than a century, hit when many Venezuelans were at home during a public holiday.

The US Pacific Tsunami Warning Center issued several tsunami alerts that were later lifted.

Delcy Rodriguez, the acting president of Venezuela, said the coastal state of La Guaira in northern Venezuela was hit the hardest, describing it as a "disaster zone" where dozens of buildings had collapsed entirely. "La Guaira state is a true tragedy," Rodriguez said.

Rescue operations were underway as the country declared a state of emergency following the strong earthquakes, with the number of casualties and extent of damage expected to rise.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said at a regular news briefing that China "has noted reports of the earthquakes in Venezuela and extends its sincere sympathies to the Venezuelan government and the people affected by the disaster". No Chinese casualties had been reported so far, he said.

"We believe that, under the leadership of the Venezuelan government, the Venezuelan people will overcome the disaster and rebuild their homes as soon as possible," Guo said. "China stands ready to provide assistance within its capacity and in an appropriate manner based on Venezuela's needs."

While Venezuela sits near multiple fault lines, its position straddling the South American and Caribbean plates makes strong earthquakes much less common than in other parts of Latin America.

Rodriguez appealed to businesses to make heavy construction equipment available for rescue operations, adding that search and rescue teams certified by the United Nations were on their way to Venezuela to assist.

She said authorities were shifting rescue teams from other parts of the country to La Guaira, adding that officials were trying to make the most of daylight hours to speed up efforts to rescue people believed to be still trapped under the rubble.

Rodriguez said the government was creating a $200 million reconstruction fund for damaged hospitals and homes, and the nation's economy and finance minister was instructed to oversee the effort.

Television broadcasts on Thursday showed rescue workers using power tools to work their way into piles of rubble. Many people searching for the missing appeared to be regular citizens rather than professionals. Collapsed buildings, toppled electrical poles and debris blocked streets.

During the quakes, people ran from swaying buildings in Caracas, and many were visibly shocked when they turned back to see destroyed walls that left furniture visible from the street.

Parts of the capital lost power and cellphone coverage, and the earthquakes damaged and closed Simon Bolivar International Airport, the country's main airport, Rodriguez said. Subway service was suspended and natural gas shut off. Schools canceled classes for several days, and the Ministry of Education said some school buildings would be used as shelters and donation centers.

Emergency workers scrambled over the debris of collapsed buildings in Caracas as night fell, while distraught relatives sought help for loved ones feared trapped. Dazed survivors were seen being led away, some on stretchers.

The lack of cellphone coverage in parts of Venezuela deepened the distress of many families, particularly those among the more than 7.7 million people who have left the country during its protracted crisis and who struggled to reach relatives still living in the country.

Agencies contributed to this story via Xinhua.

Contact the writers at liujianqiao@chinadaily.com.cn







Clockwise from top: Rescue and relief efforts underway on Thursday at an apartment building in the state of La Guaira, Venezuela, that bore the maximum brunt of two powerful earthquakes on Wednesday. FEDERICO PARRA / AFP An injured woman is rescued from a mound of concrete and metal at the site of a collapsed building in Caracas on Wednesday. JUAN BARRETO / AFP People run for safety during the temblors in Caracas on Wednesday. The quakes were the strongest to hit Venezuela in more than a century. FEDERICO PARRA / AFP

WORLD WATCH
By Marcus Vinicius De Freitas

History gives China, Latin America a rare new opportunity

History is shaped not only by the decisions nations make but also by the opportunities they miss. Over six centuries ago, Admiral Zheng He (1371-1433) of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) led one of the most advanced maritime expeditions, demonstrating the dynasty's technological prowess across the Indian Ocean.

At its naval peak, however, China chose introspection over expansion. Whether these voyages could have crossed the Pacific remains a matter of speculation, but their cessation significantly influenced global history.

Five centuries later, history offers a renewed opportunity. The current objective is partnership rather than discovery. The China-Latin America relationship is now defined by strategic complementarity rather than geographic distance. The Pacific Ocean, once a barrier between distant regions, now serves as a bridge linking economies in an increasingly interconnected world.

There have been concerns in China about the rise of conservative governments in Latin America that appear to favor Washington, particularly as the United States renews its engagement with the region. While these concerns are understandable, they risk conflating temporary electoral cycles with enduring structural realities. Governments and political coalitions change, but geographic and economic fundamentals persist.

For decades, Latin America has alternated between left- and right-leaning governments, liberalization and protectionism, and varying degrees of openness and nationalism. Despite these shifts, a notable continuity remains. Regardless of ideology, administrations consistently aim to attract investment, modernize infrastructure, enhance productivity, create quality employment, and secure positions in emerging industries.

See ***Relations,*** *page 3*

Brazil to raise up to 5b yuan in issuance of panda bonds

By **ZHOU LANXU**
zhoulanxv@chinadaily.com.cn

Brazil formally kicked off plans to issue its first sovereign panda bonds on Thursday, a landmark move that officials said would create new opportunities for bilateral cooperation in financial markets.

The move, which makes Brazil the first Latin American country to issue sovereign panda bonds, shows the growing interest of international issuers in such bonds for diversified and lower-cost funding channels, and this could pave the way for broader participation by international issuers in China's bond market, analysts said.

A panda bond is a renminbi-denominated debt instrument issued by overseas governments or institutions in China's onshore capital market.

On Thursday, Brazil's Ministry of Finance delivered its letter of intent for issuing panda bonds to China's National Association of Financial Market Institutional Investors, with officials from China and Brazil attending a ceremony in Beijing marking the occasion.

Brazil plans to raise up to 5 billion yuan ($735 million) with its inaugural issuance of panda bonds.

Pan Gongsheng, governor of the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, said at the ceremony that bank has worked closely with Brazil's Finance Ministry and central bank, delivering tangible outcomes in areas such as local currency cooperation, financial infrastructure connectivity and financial market collaboration.

"We stand ready to offer facilitation to the Ministry of Finance of Brazil in issuing panda bonds in China," Pan said, noting that he believes the successful issuance of the bonds would create more opportunities for bilateral financial cooperation.

He added that there has been a growing appetite for panda bonds from the private sector and sovereign issuers around the world, and the PBOC welcomes more qualified Brazilian institutions to participate in China's financial markets.

Speaking to China Daily on the sidelines of the event, Brazil's Minister of Finance Dario Durigan confirmed that the delivery of the letter of intent on Thursday made Brazil the first Latin American sovereign issuer formally seeking the issuance of panda bonds.

"We are ready to come to China and offer our sovereign bonds from Brazil in the Chinese market as a sign of confidence, and as a sign that we should work together if we want to improve the lives of our people," Durigan said at the event.

Aiming to issue the panda bonds within the next few months, the Finance Ministry of Brazil is also advancing wider capital market cooperation with China, including a bilateral exchange-traded fund connectivity program and information services for Chinese investors in the Brazilian capital market, he added.

Brazil's planned offering would follow inaugural sovereign panda bond issuances by Kazakhstan and Pakistan earlier this year, adding further momentum to the internationalization of the RMB bond market.

According to data from China's central bank, panda bond issuances reached 132.98 billion yuan in the first five months of 2026.

Liu Chunsheng, an associate professor of international economics at the Central University of Finance and Economics, said that issuing panda bonds would help Brazil diversify its external financing, lower funding costs and reduce foreign exchange risks by better matching RMB financing with its growing trade and investment links with China.

THERAPEUTIC TREASURE IS LYING BURIED IN THE DUNES OF XINJIANG

Visitors flock to Kumtag Desert to experience Uygur sand therapy

By **FANG AIQING**
in Shanshan county, Xinjiang
fangaiqing@chinadaily.com.cn

China Vibes

Remember when, as a child, you'd visit the beach with your family, and your older siblings, or maybe your parents, would bury you up to your neck in the sand? At the time, you probably thought it was just seaside shenanigans, but believe it or not, people travel thousands of miles to do just that, citing a variety of health benefits.

That's because, at the edge of the Kumtag Desert in Shanshan county of Turpan in Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, the summer heat heralds the season for sand therapy. From June to August, visitors flock to the dunes to participate in a traditional Uygur medical practice — being buried up to their chests in hot sand.

Imagine a sauna, but instead of a little wooden shack next to a frozen Nordic lake, it's the open desert and you're under a sun umbrella, breathing in crisp, hot, dry air. That, in essence, is sand therapy, as described by Tswelopele Makoe from South Africa, who experienced it on June 19.

"Ethereal" was the word she chose for the roughly 20-minute session. "It's almost like I'm on cloud nine — super relaxed, (like I'm) floating, very calm," she said, while lying in the sand.

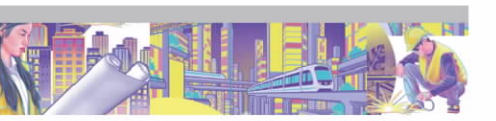
Turpan, sitting in China's lowest basin, is one of the country's hottest and driest places.

Summer temperatures during the day regularly touch 40 C, and annual rainfall averages only 14.7 millimeters, according to the city's website.

See ***Turpan,*** *page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.

INSIDE
Urban renewal targets residents' needs
Policy Review, page 12



A member of ANN ASIA NEWS NETWORK
© 2026 China Daily Global All Rights Reserved

www.chinadailyglobal.com

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

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:47 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:47 PM

INDEPTH



Bored at work? Let AI do the heavy lifting

Smart tech takes over dull tasks, frees new employees' creative instincts and 'human skills'

By **ZHOU WENTING** in Shanghai
zhouwenting@chinadaily.com.cn

Ji Hang, 25, began working at a robotics company in Hangzhou city, Zhejiang province, a year ago. Instead of doing a stereotyped, repetitive, meticulous programming job, Ji has delegated much of the tedious coding work to artificial intelligence.

"The monotonous details of programming have been handed over to AI. It handles the syntax of various programming languages more proficiently than we do," said Ji, a graduate of an elite university in Zhejiang.

"We just need to provide the AI tool with a direction and teach it how to help us solve problems," he said, adding that he had witnessed significant advances in AI's programming capabilities, with today's version far better than what it was just six months ago.

Ji's experience reflects a broader trend across industries, where AI is taking over basic tasks.

As a result, entry-level job requirements have rapidly evolved. Newcomers are no longer just responsible for executing tasks. Instead, they are expected to undertake greater responsibilities, such as doing creative work and making judgments and decisions at an earlier stage of their careers, tasks which are considered more valuable, said industry experts.

The number of entry-level job positions has not decreased, they said, but the requirements are higher — AI literacy combined with creativity.

"The most valued skill in today's job market is the ability to integrate AI into real work processes to solve specific problems. In the future, the ability to effectively use AI as a work partner will significantly differentiate individuals in terms of work quality and efficiency," said Wang Xiangdao, founder and CEO of MoSeeker, a Shanghai-based enterprise providing digital recruiting solutions.

For Ji and his colleagues, it's not just the technical aspects of programming that are being rapidly overtaken by AI. Tasks like data annotation, which previously required dedicated personnel or even outsourcing, can now be handled automatically by large models. This approach is faster, highly accurate, and requires little proofreading.

"This shift has just occurred over the past year, and the change is quite evident," said Ji, who works at a company that develops autonomous exploration and mapping robots for places like underground mines that are hard for humans to reach.

Similarly, in the human resources industry, entry-level job tasks, such as searching for resumes online, will soon be completely replaced by AI. Leading companies now complete 80 percent of their initial recruitment processes through AI and automation, which offers significant advantages in terms of efficiency and fairness, Wang said.

Before, HR specialists had to search for talent online, review each resume, make comparative evaluations, arrange interviews, and follow up with candidates. However, AI is much faster, able to review tens of thousands of resumes received during a campus recruitment campaign and manage subsequent communications.

"Moreover, AI interviews are more impartial. Every human interviewer has personal preferences. They might give higher scores to candidates who are attractive or have backgrounds in big companies, but this doesn't necessarily reflect true ability," said Wang.

Over 2,000 libraries nationwide have deployed AI librarians, said Zhang Longqi, president of Chaoxing Group, a provider of digital and intelligent solutions for libraries, at a conference in Shanghai in May attended by hundreds of library managers from across the country.

"The accelerated implementation of intelligent technology and large model applications requires human librarians to collaborate with AI librarians to transform the vast resources of libraries into interactive, intelligent academic resources," he said.

"Human-machine collaboration should become the norm in library services for university faculty members and students."

A global report by the World Economic Forum on entry-level employees pointed out that most changes happening in the workplace today are due to task compression and role reshaping brought about by the advent of AI. This new technology is not simply taking away the first job, but redefining the content and value of entry-level positions, according to the report released in January.

Wang Wei, general manager of Talent Solutions Overseas Recruitment at LinkedIn China, said that AI is an inevitable trend in productivity upgrades, and young people have no choice but to adapt.

"Resisting or being annoyed by AI, essentially means falling behind the pace of the times and gradually being eliminated from the workplace," she said.

Balanced approach

On the Chinese mainland, 38 percent of enterprises are in the AI deployment phase, while another 38 percent are in the pilot phase, a report released in May by the global human resources service provider Aon Human Capital showed.

In addition, most Chinese enterprises said their employees were receiving AI-related training or skills enhancement, demonstrating that Chinese firms are more proactive than the global average in preparing talent for the future.

Ji said his employer values whether new recruits can work effectively with AI and use it in their work. The company hopes employees understand the core logic of using AI — to enhance efficiency and achieve a better work state — rather than relying on it completely without being aware of potential hidden risks.

Some HR experts said if newcomers are smart enough, they can use AI to make their work easier.

Ni Ke, an advertising professional in Shanghai, said tasks like summarizing the effectiveness of an ad campaign by watching hundreds of videos can be a challenge.

"However, AI can assist by analyzing the performance of each video ad, traffic conditions, and viewing duration. AI can even identify the top videos with the best performance and purchasing conversion effects, analyze what makes them successful and quantify these elements," said Ni, 34.

However, the same AI tools can yield vastly different outcomes depending on who uses them, experts said.

MoSeeker's Wang said the difference in applying AI tools correctly is the ability to instruct them how to deconstruct a problem.

"Knowing how to break down a complex problem into sub-problems, understanding the logical relationships between them, and the criteria for each sub-problem are crucial. AI can execute efficiently within a framework set by a user, but it cannot create the framework," Wang said.

More valuable roles

Jiang Jianghao, a new media video director, started her first full-time job this spring. With AI as a work assistant, newcomers in this field no longer start with information collection, but instead jump directly into the creative process, she said.

Behind each video project, extensive research is required, explained Jiang. Only after understanding all the content can ideas be extracted and creativity expressed.

AI has now replaced much of the painstaking work of information gathering. If a video is meant to promote a tourist destination, she can use AI to identify unique aspects and fun facts about the place. Jiang said she then needs to creatively integrate these elements with the desired content to showcase it in an engaging way.

"While AI can produce content, it cannot generate feelings. Truly touching works require human experiences, warmth, and judgment, which machines cannot imitate," said Jiang.

Many new employees shared this sentiment. With the arrival of AI, they are more often placed in roles where they must make judgments and decisions in complex real-world scenarios.

Ji said part of his work involves building a bridge between the "virtual and the real".

While large models can derive results through reasoning, whether these results can be implemented and meet expectations depends on humans using their practical experience and life knowledge, he said.

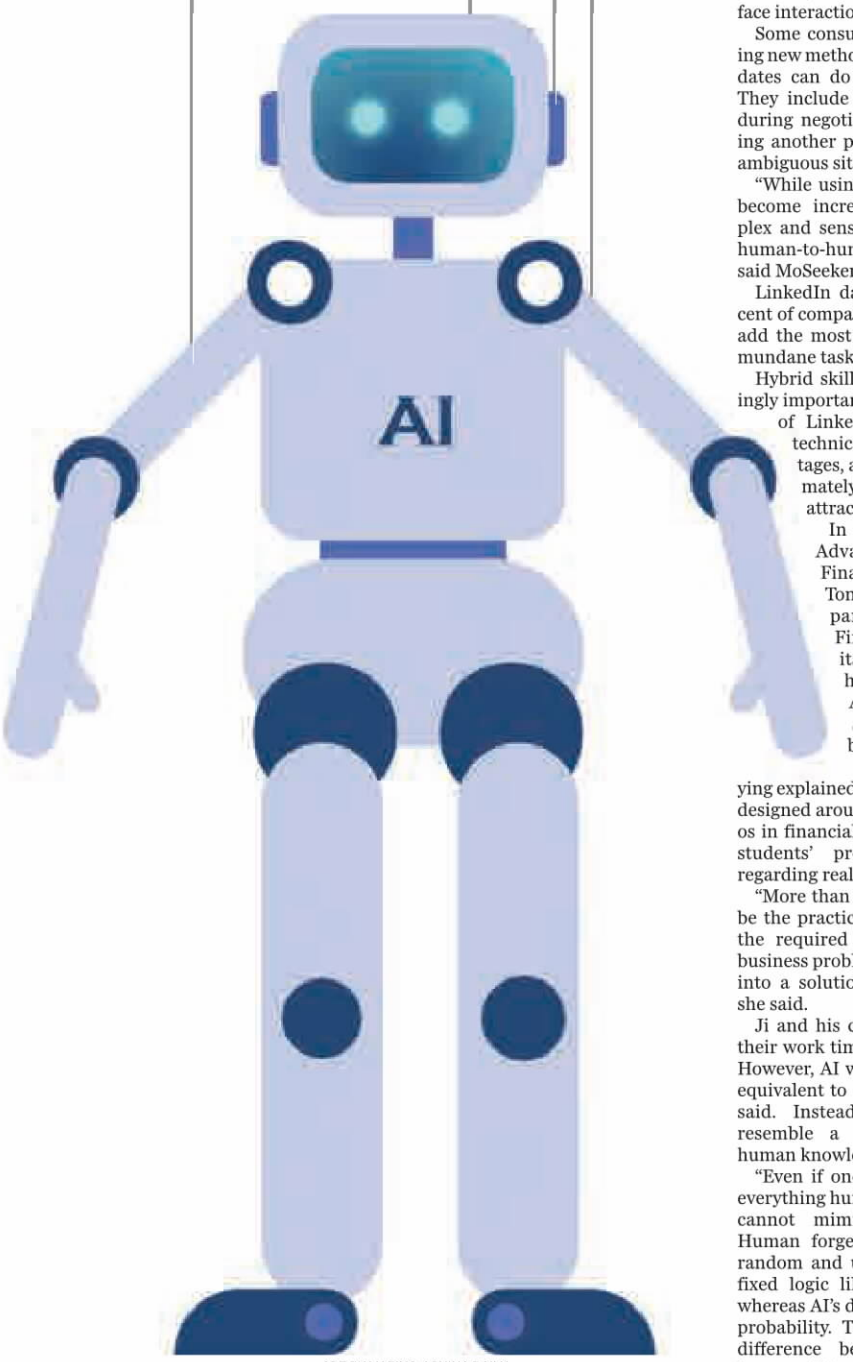
"In robotics, AI cannot make immersive judgments in real environments, and lacks lateral thinking and associative ability — unique human traits," said Ji.

Wang from LinkedIn said that the changes brought by AI have reshaped what constitutes valuable skills. This includes human judgment, making connections, and the ability to quickly adapt in complex environments, she said.

"For example, journalists today need to think about how to adapt to the AI era to excel in content creation," she said.

"Similarly, the legal profession is being reshaped by AI, as basic tasks like legal research and document drafting can now be handled by AI. Across various industries, the young talents moving fastest are those who quickly adapt to changes within their fields."

> "The most valued skill in today's job market is the ability to integrate AI into real work processes to solve specific problems. In the future, the ability to effectively use AI as a work partner will significantly differentiate individuals in terms of work quality and efficiency."
>
> **Wang Xiangdao,** founder and CEO of MoSeeker



ART BY LU PING / CHINA DAILY

Human nature, go figure

Although AI is already beginning to replace some aspects of labor, many experts agree AI cannot replace the "soft skills" of humans, such as communication, collaboration, and face-to-face interaction.

Some consulting firms are now trying new methods to test whether candidates can do things that AI cannot. They include sensing subtle nuances during negotiations, and understanding another person's true concerns in ambiguous situations.

"While using AI to send emails will become increasingly common, complex and sensitive issues still require human-to-human communication," said MoSeeker's Wang.

LinkedIn data also showed 75 percent of companies agree that soft skills add the most value when AI handles mundane tasks.

Hybrid skills are becoming increasingly important as well, said Wang Wei of LinkedIn. A combination of technical fluency, human advantages, and adaptability will ultimately make job seekers more attractive to employers.

In May, the Shanghai Advanced Institute of Finance at Shanghai Jiao Tong University launched a part-time Master of Finance program. One of its aims is to cultivate hybrid talents with both AI technology understanding and financial business capabilities.

The institute's Ni Haiying explained that the program will be designed around real business scenarios in financial institutions to enhance students' problem-solving abilities regarding real financial issues.

"More than half of the program will be the practical part. We break down the required skill modules for real business problems, and integrate them into a solution-oriented curriculum," she said.

Ji and his colleagues spend part of their work time training large models. However, AI will by no means become equivalent to an individual person, he said. Instead, it will increasingly resemble a super-collective of all human knowledge.

"Even if one day robots can mimic everything humans see and touch, they cannot mimic human 'forgetting'. Human forgetting and thinking are random and uncertain, not based on fixed logic like equation derivation, whereas AI's decision-making relies on probability. This is the fundamental difference between machines and humans," Ji said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:47 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:47 PM

TOP NEWS



Chinese Premier Li Qiang (right) meets with Bangladeshi Prime Minister Tarique Rahman on Thursday at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. Rahman's official visit to China began on Wednesday and concludes on Friday. WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY

Li highlights ties with Bangladesh

Beijing is willing to work with Dhaka to consolidate strategic mutual trust

By **CAO DESHENG**
caodesheng@chinadaily.com.cn

China and Bangladesh signed an array of cooperation agreements on Thursday as the two countries vowed to enhance bilateral ties.

Premier Li Qiang and visiting Bangladeshi Prime Minister Tarique Rahman witnessed the signing of the documents after their talks at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

On Wednesday, Rahman began a three-day official visit to China, his first to the country after assuming office in February. He also attended the opening plenary of the 17th Annual Meeting of the New Champions of the World Economic Forum, or the Summer Davos forum, in Dalian, Liaoning province.

During their talks, Li expressed China's willingness to work with Bangladesh to maintain good-neighborly relations, consolidate strategic mutual trust, expand practical cooperation and continuously achieve greater development in bilateral ties to deliver more benefits to the people of both countries.

China is willing to work with Bangladesh to promote high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, steadily advance major landmark projects in port and water conservancy, and strengthen cooperation in trade, industrial and supply chains, and finance to promote the common development and prosperity of both countries, he said.

The premier expressed the nation's readiness to import more high-quality products from Bangladesh, support Chinese enterprises in investing in the South Asian country and expand cooperation in emerging industries such as new energy, digital economy and artificial intelligence.

China hopes that Bangladesh will continue to provide a favorable environment for Chinese enterprises, he said.

Noting that both China and Bangladesh are developing countries, Li said that China is willing to enhance multilateral coordination with Bangladesh to defend common interests, promote solidarity and self-reliance among developing countries, and make greater contributions to the development of the Global South.

Inside
Editorial, **page 6**

Rahman said the Bangladeshi government firmly adheres to the one-China principle, and looks forward to maintaining close high-level exchanges with China and promoting economic, trade and cultural cooperation under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Bangladesh firmly defends the postwar international order based on the Cairo Declaration, the Potsdam Proclamation and the United Nations Charter, supports the vision of a community with a shared future for humanity and the four major global initiatives proposed by China, he said.

Bangladesh is willing to strengthen multilateral communication and coordination with China to promote regional and global peace, stability, and development, he added.

Among multiple cooperation items, the flagship Padma Bridge, built by Chinese companies, has become a model of partnership between the two countries. Chinese enterprises have also participated in solar and wind power projects in Bangladesh, supporting efforts to diversify the energy mix and wean the country off fossil fuels.

Imtiaz Ahmed, executive director of the Centre for Alternatives, a policy research forum based in Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, said that Rahman's visit to China is expected to help bring Bangladesh back onto its development trajectory through deeper bilateral cooperation.

Investment should be high on the agenda for the new Bangladeshi government, as investment had declined over the past two years amid political uncertainty and instability, Ahmed said in a recent interview with Xinhua News Agency.

He said that apart from infrastructure, Bangladesh also expects more investment in the health, education and energy sectors. "There is strong public support for China and for Chinese investment," he said.

More talks planned on reciprocal tariff cuts

By **WANG KEJU**
wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn

China and the United States will hold further consultations on reciprocal tariff reductions under the mechanism of the trade council, the Ministry of Commerce said on Thursday.

He Yadong, a spokesman for the ministry, said at a news conference that the two sides agreed to set up the council and to discuss tariff cooperation, including reciprocal reductions.

"The trade teams from both countries will hold further consultations on the arrangements," he added.

Under the proposed arrangement, the two sides have agreed in principle to discuss a framework for reciprocal tariff reductions on products of equivalent scale, with each side covering $30 billion or more in goods.

Meanwhile, products of mutual concern, as agreed by both sides, are expected to enjoy most-favored-nation tariff rates or even lower rates.

He also noted that trade cooperation between China and the US in aircraft and agricultural products is mutually beneficial.

Rare blue hole formed by coral reefs found in waters off Huangyan Island

By **HOU LIQIANG**
houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn



An aerial photo shows the blue hole in a lagoon off Huangyan Island in the South China Sea. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

China's first coral reef blue hole — a large natural depression on the ocean floor — has been identified in the waters off Huangyan Island in the South China Sea, and it has emerged as a biodiversity hot spot, according to a report released on Thursday.

Environmental DNA technology has helped scientists detect more than 2,700 marine species in and around the blue hole, which was first spotted by a scientific observation team in August last year in the central area of a lagoon, said the 2025 Survey Report on Huangyan Dao Blue Hole released by the Ministry of Ecology and Environment.

Based on their genesis, these underwater sinkholes can be categorized into two types — one formed through limestone dissolution and the other formed by coral reefs, with the latter considered a rare phenomenon worldwide.

Preliminary geochronological studies suggest that the Huangyan blue hole formed at least 3,200 years ago and developed in a high-density patch reef area within the lagoon, the report said. The sinkhole is shaped like a funnel, with a surface diameter of 56.3 meters and a depth of 16.6 meters. The surface area of the blue hole is 1,491.7 square meters.

Typical coral reef biological communities are thriving inside the blue hole, including different species of fish, giant clams, sponges and sea anemones. The green sea turtle, which is a Class I protected wildlife species in China, has been observed inhabiting the blue hole and its surrounding waters.

Field surveys in the surrounding waters over the past two years have recorded 165 species of hard corals, belonging to 14 families and 44 genera, and 184 species of fish, belonging to 27 families and 85 genera.

The report said this coral reef blue hole serves as a vivid testament to the natural ecosystem diversity of Huangyan Island and a key geological archive for reconstructing paleoenvironmental changes in the South China Sea, including sea-level fluctuations and the impacts of global and regional climate change.

The blue hole can provide critical insights into the geological evolution of the Huangyan region, as well as biodiversity and environmental changes in the South China Sea since the Holocene epoch, it said.

The sinkhole offers essential scientific support for understanding the formation, evolutionary mechanisms and ecological effects of this unique marine ecosystem, the report added.

Pei Xiaofei, a spokesman for the Ministry of Ecology and Environment, said the results of the survey highlight the progress China has made in its ecological protection efforts in the waters surrounding the island, which is firmly underpinned by the establishment of the Huangyan Island national nature reserve in September 2025.

The ministry will conduct "more in-depth, systematic and comprehensive research" on the blue hole to provide scientific support for further enhancing ecosystem and biodiversity conservation in the South China Sea, Pei added.

Turpan: Warmth of sand offers natural remedy

From page 1

Yet this harsh environment has provided a natural remedy, as locals harness its conditions to combat ailments like rheumatic and rheumatoid arthritis.

Guljannat Emar, a staff member at the county's Uygur medicine hospital, which has run the therapy base since July 2024, said that the sand can reach nearly 50 C. This warmth induces heavy sweating, stimulates the metabolism and aids blood circulation, as well as detoxifying the body through the pores.

Trace minerals penetrate the skin, and the combination of the dunes' natural magnetic properties and the massaging effects of the sand itself offers holistic physiotherapy, she said. The therapy also benefits those with chronic eczema, vitiligo, dysmenorrhea and menstrual irregularities, and relieves fatigue and muscle soreness, she added.

However, the effect that has generated the most buzz on social media — where short videos of sand therapy have gone viral for the past two summers, a trend that is continuing this year, too — is its potential to draw out *shiqi* (internal dampness) and *hanqi* (cold energy).

In traditional Chinese medical theory, *shiqi* is considered the root cause of most ailments, clouding the body from within and eventually leading to disease.

The benefits of sand therapy may not be immediately obvious, but will become apparent in winter.

And this is not some social media fad.

Sand therapy in western China has been documented in multiple medical texts as early as the Tang Dynasty (618-907), including *Qianjin Yaofang* (Essential Emergency Prescriptions Worth a Thousand Pieces of Gold) by renowned physician Sun Simiao. It was listed as a national-level intangible cultural heritage in 2014.

According to Guljannat Emar, the base received 31,000 visits last year for sightseeing or sand therapy, with more than 19,000 during peak season.

Sand, wherever it lies, seems to invite a kind of intimacy. Khaled Elshamy from Egypt noted similar practices in the Siwa Oasis in Matrouh governorate of his home country, where the therapy is often combined with tourist itineraries.

While sand temperatures may be lower in Siwa, showering after the session is strictly forbidden. Instead, olive oil is applied as a moisturizer, which differs from the Uygur method of using a medicated or salt bath.

Elshamy suggested that exchanges and cooperation between Matrouh and Xinjiang could benefit sand therapy professionals and patients alike.

"Both Egypt and China, with their rich histories and cultures, are nations of wisdom and abundant resources. This knowledge of sand therapy deserves further development and utilization," he said.

Mao Weihua in Urumqi contributed to this story.

Relations: Links shaped by two sides' shared interests

From page 1

The China-Latin America relationship is not built on ideological affinity but on economic necessity. China needs food security, diversified supply chains, renewable energy, biodiversity, and strategic minerals — resources that underpin artificial intelligence, electric mobility, quantum technologies and advanced manufacturing. Latin America holds these resources in abundance. The region, in turn, seeks investment, logistics, technology, industrial upgrading and access to innovation ecosystems. These can transform natural wealth into sustainable prosperity.

The Chinese saying *juli chansheng mei* — "distance creates beauty" — highlights a key aspect of this relationship. Unlike in many regions, China and Latin America carry little historical baggage. There are no legacies of territorial disputes, colonial domination, military confrontation or inherited security dilemmas. Their relationship begins with neutrality, allowing cooperation to be shaped by shared interests rather than by unresolved grievances.

Recent efforts in Washington to revive a more assertive hemispheric posture have prompted comparisons to the Monroe Doctrine. However, the international environment has changed profoundly. Latin America today is not what it was in previous generations. Governments in the region recognize that reliance on a single external partner creates vulnerability, not resilience. Diversification has become a strategy for sovereignty.

Latin America's greatest challenge is economic transformation, not military security. The region does not primarily need aircraft carriers or ideological prescriptions; it needs ports that integrate supply chains and railways that reduce logistics costs. It also needs digital infrastructure to support artificial intelligence, financing for renewable energy, and technology transfer.

China demonstrates that sustained investment in infrastructure, technology, institutional continuity and long-term planning can reshape economic trajectories. This lesson transcends political systems. For Beijing, the priority is building relationships grounded in shared development interests — partnerships that reflect the continuity of structural complementarity rather than the fluctuations of any single electoral cycle. Strategic partnerships are resilient when rooted in genuine mutual benefit.

Five centuries ago, the seas were left uncrossed. The opportunity was lost, and history changed course. Now, history offers a second chance — not to repeat Zheng He's voyages, but to complete them in a different form. The aim is shared development. The goal is co-creation, not discovery.

Political winds will continue to shift. Ideologies will evolve. Alliances will be renegotiated. However, the structural complementarity between China and Latin America is likely to endure. In an era defined by artificial intelligence, the energy transition and technological change, their partnership is becoming indispensable.

History rarely gives nations a second chance. When it does, wisdom lies not in looking back. Instead, it lies in recognizing the future this chance makes possible.

The author is a visiting professor at China Foreign Affairs University and a senior fellow at the Policy Center for the New South. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1858

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:47 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:47 PM

AMERICAFOCUS

US sister cities, states keep China ties strong

Through sports, schools, medicine and trade, local partnerships are keeping Sino-US ties rooted in personal relationships

By **LIA ZHU** in San Francisco
liazhu@chinadailyusa.com







Top: Students from Qinghai and Utah participate in a fun activity on May 29 in Xining, Qinghai. The year 2026 marks the 15th anniversary of the sister-city relationship between Qinghai and Utah. MA MINGYAN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE **Left:** A replica of the John A. Roebling Suspension Bridge over the Ohio River, a joint project of Liuzhou and Cincinnati, Ohio, stands in the Cincinnati-Liuzhou Friendship Garden in Liuzhou, south China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY
Above: Joe Hamrick (fourth from left), chair of the Cincinnati-Liuzhou Sister City Committee, poses with other committee members and their counterparts from Liuzhou, South China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, for a group photo in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 2019. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Jeffrey Sullivan, director of system-wide athletics for Montgomery County Public Schools in Maryland, has not taken a bracelet off his wrist since February. A Chinese student from a visiting delegation knotted it there and told him that it would bring luck for the entire year. Sullivan has no intention of removing it.

Across the country in Utah, a young woman named Ellie Phelps once sat in a Chinese-language class and was ready to quit for lack of personal connection with the language. One summer camp in China changed everything. Today, Phelps is on a Fulbright Scholarship at Tianjin University. This year, she will return to the summer camp as a mentor.

Inside Cincinnati-Liuzhou Friendship Garden in China, a replica of a Cincinnati suspension bridge has become a romantic landmark, so beloved that couples take their wedding photographs on it.

In Tacoma, Washington, more than 200 Lincoln High School students have visited their Chinese sister city Fuzhou, Fujian province since 2008. Among them was a young woman whose single trip sparked a lifelong love of immersing herself in other cultures. In Oregon, a state senator came home from a trade mission to 13 Chinese cities to find that more than 80,000 additional tons of Oregon hay will head to China.

At a moment when US-China tensions dominate the headlines, an expanding network of subnational partnerships, spanning states including Oregon, Maryland, Ohio, Utah, California and Washington, is quietly deepening.

In the 47 years since Nanjing and St Louis forged the first US-China sister city bond in 1979, the two countries have built 238 such pairings and 50 sister province-state relationships.

Built to Last

In Tacoma's Chinese Reconciliation Park, an ornate pavilion, the Fuzhou Ting, was gifted entirely by the city of Fuzhou.

"We're so proud and grateful for the relationship with our beautiful sister city of Fuzhou," said Tacoma Council Member Jamika Scott. "It's been a privilege to nurture this relationship for more than 30 years, and we continue to learn and grow from our ties."

The *ting*, a traditional Chinese structure built to provide shelter, rest and viewing points, has since hosted dragon boat races, welcomed musicians from Fuzhou for the sister-cities international music festival, and served as a stage for film and cultural celebrations, said Scott.

In Liuzhou, south China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, a different kind of monument has taken on an unexpected romance. A replica of the Roebling suspension bridge that spans the Ohio River was built collaboratively by the cities of Liuzhou and Cincinnati, Ohio.

Couples in Liuzhou now stand on the bridge and get their wedding pictures taken.

Despite the city's profound German heritage, Cincinnati formed its first sister city relationship with China. Established nearly four decades ago, the sister city partnership with Liuzhou has touched thousands of lives through teacher and professional exchanges, said Janet Huston, Ohio state representative for Sister Cities International.

More recently, pickleball enthusiast and sister city committee chair Joe Hamrick recruited seven couples to travel to Liuzhou and introduce the sport. They visited high schools, universities and recreation centers. But, as Huston observed, the games were never really the point.

"The real purpose of any sister city exchange is to foster peace and understanding between two cultures, and what both sides came away with was just this overwhelming sense of kindness and love, changing attitudes, literally one person at a time," she said.

Pickleball Diplomacy

Echoing the Ping-Pong Diplomacy that helped reopen US-China ties in the 1970s, Sullivan is betting on pickleball as a universal language connecting young people across cultural divides.

His philosophy of the initiative is that international relations are built "one relationship, one rally at a time".

The initiative began in April 2025, when more than 30 Montgomery County student-athletes flew to Beijing, Shenzhen and Shanghai for 12 days of shared play, school visits and cultural exchange. Shenzhen returned the visit that August.

In February, a Shanghai delegation arrived in Maryland, followed by a group of students from Montgomery County Public Schools traveling back to China, visiting Shenzhen, Shangyou, Hebi and Beijing.

These cities have either established sister-city ties with US cities or actively participated in people-to-people exchange initiatives, particularly youth and sports diplomacy.

"What was so amazing about this trip was it occurred during the Spring Festival," said Sullivan, and the students watched robots dance in Shenzhen and were "fascinated" by the trip. He had also told the students what that city represents: a place that used to be a small fishing village is now a global technology metropolis.

"I believe in the power of sport and the power of pickleball to bring people together," Sullivan said. "I hope to continue to return to China to see different cities, both the big ones and the small villages as well. It really all speaks to the culture of China, and I think it gives us a different perspective."

The program is already drawing interest from Chinese cities. At a recent US-China Sister Cities Summit in San Francisco, representatives from Guilin and Xi'an extended invitations to explore pickleball exchanges of their own.

"I would like to spread the feeling and the purpose of pickleball diplomacy to as many cities and provinces as possible around China," he said.

Beyond pickleball, Chinese-language learning is also turning cultural exchange into personal connection.

See from Another Lens

Phelps had studied Chinese since she was six years old. The language felt abstract and disconnected, with no real friendships, no personal stakes, no compelling reason to continue. Her mother persuaded her to join a summer program run by the Helen Foster Snow Foundation. Today she is at Tianjin University on a Fulbright Scholarship and has a Chinese boyfriend.

"She talks about how transformative this experience has been for her life," said Eric Chipman, executive director at the Helen Foster Snow Foundation in Utah.

The foundation supports 12,000 Utah public school students who learn Chinese for half the school day. This year, approximately 300 US students from kindergarten through university level will travel to the cities of Shenzhen and Beijing as well as provinces of Hainan, Shaanxi and Qinghai.

The foundation's mission is not only language acquisition, but also people-to-people exchange, said Chipman. "What I believe are the heart and core of exchange trips are real relationships, real meaningful connections," he said. He is actively seeking provincial and municipal partners to scale the programs into school curricula.

In Tacoma, Lincoln High School's exchange with the Affiliated High School of Fuzhou Institute of Education has produced more than 200 student visits and sustained faculty exchanges in both directions since the two sides signed a memorandum of understanding in 2008.

"We have been very proud to host students from Fuzhou at Lincoln High School every summer and introduce them to Tacoma," said Tacoma Council Member Jamika Scott. She said her younger cousin was one of those students and the experience helped her discover a lifelong passion for the world.

"I have no doubt these invaluable firsthand experiences are life changing. I think it's going to be particularly important to expand our exchange programs in the coming years."

A former teacher and artist, Scott envisions deepening the relationship through the creative fields. "Students in Tacoma are especially engaged in the arts, including glass blowing, painting, photography, filmmaking, dance and so much more. Sharing these creative passions with their Chinese counterparts and learning more about the creative work in China will enrich the lives of our young people," she said.

"When youth share their perspectives through art I believe they can deepen their understanding of each other and find ways to imagine a bright future working together in collaboration," she added.

The same spirit of exchange extends beyond sport and language. In medicine, one of the oldest US-China educational partnerships continues to bring students, doctors and researchers together more than a century after it began.

The partnership that produced one of China's earliest Sino-foreign cooperative medical schools began in 1905, when an American Yale-trained physician named Edward Hume arrived in Changsha, capital of Hunan province, and established a clinic that would grow into Xiangya Hospital.

The name Xiangya means Hunan and Yale. More than 120 years later, this heritage has turned Hunan into a long-running hub for US-China medical education cooperation, and that relationship is still active today through student exchanges, joint training and research partnerships, said Mai Miao, vice-president of Hunan people's association for friendship with foreign countries.

Xiangya School of Medicine, now part of Central South University, continues to collaborate with US institutions on training and research. The school's American origin makes Xiangya a natural bridge between Hunan and US medical institutions. Building on that bridge, Mai said, the province aims to become a base where Chinese and US medical professionals exchange ideas and collaborate.

In April, the Changsha leg of the 2026 China-US Youth Health Dialogue convened young medical professionals from both countries at Xiangya School of Medicine. Vladimir Ljubimov, a neurosurgery faculty member at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, shared his research at the conference and later documented the experience on social media.

The photos show him posing for group photos with Chinese colleagues, visiting the thousand-year-old Yuelu Academy, a traditional pharmacy and the neurosurgery department of Xiangya School of Medicine. He called it "an unbelievable experience" and wrote in the post: "I got to see and learn so much about China's healthcare and met world class young professionals from China and US, making great friends along the way!"

University of Michigan Medical School student Max Wagner, one of seven students from the university who attended the China-US Youth Health Dialogue last year, encouraged his fellow students to apply for it.

"These experiences broaden our understanding of medicine and the diverse ways it can be delivered and perceived by patients," he said in a news release on the school's website. "We embraced so many opportunities to step outside our US-based clinical lens to see patient care from a new cultural perspective."

You Have to Be There

Whether through a pickleball court, a classroom or a medical exchange, the deeper purpose is the same: to move people beyond abstraction. For those working on US-China subnational ties, that begins with showing up.

Ker Gibbs, former president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai, has a story about Max Baucus, the US ambassador to China under president Barack Obama.

Early in his posting, Baucus was the guest of honor at a Chinese banquet. Everything was going smoothly until, midway through the meal, he looked sideways and found the seat beside him empty. His host had gone. Baucus's first instinct was anger. Then he looked up. The host was moving from table to table, glass raised, toasting guests, filling the room with warmth and noise. Then came understanding. He picked up his own glass, walked to the nearest table, and did exactly the same. The room was delighted.

Gibbs shared the story with the attendees at the recent US-China Sister Cities Summit in San Francisco to make the point: you have to be there.

"If you talk to Max Baucus today, he can't wait to get up out of his chair. You invite him to dinner, he barely sits down, and he just grabs his glass and goes off and toasts people," Gibbs said.

"There is no substitute for actually being there in China, talking to people and experiencing their culture and traditions," said Gibbs.

This year marks the 42nd anniversary of Oregon's sister-state bond with Fujian province and the 12th year of its sister relationship with Tianjin municipality.

Oregon became the first state in the United States to codify a sister-state committee in law: a bipartisan, bicameral committee designed explicitly to outlast any administration or electoral cycle. When political winds shift, the relationship holds its course.

"This design is highly intentional," said Oregon State Senate President Rob Wagner, who co-chairs the Joint Committee on Oregon-China Sister State. "It ensures that our relationship with China transcends elections and party politics."

The legal framework, he said, sends a clear message that Oregon is open for business, committed to educational and cultural exchange, and legally bound to building enduring subnational bridges.

Last October and November, the committee sanctioned two trade missions to China. Wagner led a delegation that visited 13 cities in nearly three weeks.

Those missions bore what Wagner called "magnificent fruit": Oregon successfully signed an agreement last month to export more than 80,000 additional tons of hay to China.

To economists, he acknowledged, that amounts to a line on a balance sheet. "But to the farmers, to local communities keeping their generational lands profitable, and to the workers at our ports staying employed, it means so much more," he said. "It is these subnational relations that turn abstract diplomacy into real-world mutual prosperity."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:47 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:47 PM



An Avalokitesvara statue created during the Khmer Empire period on display at Shanxi Museum. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Angkor treasures bring Khmer legacy to Shanxi

Series of artifacts trace Cambodia's historical civilization and cultural exchange with China











Top: Visitors look at the Cambodian exhibits at Shanxi Museum in the city of Taiyuan.
Above: The head of a Yaksha statue created during the Khmer Empire period.
Left: Visitors take pictures of an exhibit from Cambodia.
Below left: A statue of Shiva who reaches toward his son with a benevolent look.
Below right: A statue of a woman sculpted during the Khmer Empire period is exhibited.
Bottom: Statues created during the Chenla period are displayed at the Cambodian exhibition that was opened on June 5 and is scheduled to conclude on Oct 7.

By **YUAN SHENGGAO**

When Cambodia's national flag, featuring a white silhouette of Angkor Wat Temple in its center, was projected on a wall of the main venue of Shanxi Museum in Taiyuan on June 5, local residents and tourists alike were pleased to see the opening of a major exhibition in Shanxi province, which is set to present a dialogue between two of the great civilizations in Asia.

According to officials at Shanxi Museum, the exhibition showcasing the cultural assets of Angkor Wat and ancient Cambodian, or Khmer, civilization, will last until Oct 7.

More than 130 exhibits are now on display, which are mainly new arrivals in China, including many making their overseas debut.

The exhibition has aroused great interest among Chinese and Cambodian people since its opening.

On June 8, Wang Wenbin, China's ambassador to Cambodia, made a passionate introduction regarding the event to the world on his social media accounts, using the Cambodian and English languages.

He announced that it is time for "ancient Khmer civilization takes center stage in China's Shanxi".

Wang noted that this is the first time that the ancient Khmer civilization has been exhibited in North China's Shanxi province, which is also one of the cradles of Chinese civilization. He added that the exhibits span various periods in Cambodia's history, with items covering such categories as Buddhist statues, structural components, ceramics and stone carvings.

At Shanxi Museum, a visitor said this event takes people on "a journey back in time to a land nurtured by the Mekong River and Tonle Sap Lake for millennia".

The exhibition is composed of three sections, about "the rise of kingdoms", "the forming of a city", and "lives of ancient Khmer people".

History on display

The first section of the exhibition aims to familiarize visitors with the history of Cambodia using exhibits, maps and pictures.

According to the exhibition's introduction, the history of Cambodia is closely related to the Mekong River and the Tonle Sap Lake.

The Mekong, originating in China, arrives in Cambodia after a journey of more than 4,000 kilometers. In the country, it is connected to the Tonle Sap Lake via the Tonle Sap River.

Tonle Sap Lake is a natural flood plain reservoir in central Cambodia. It is drained during the dry season by the Tonle Sap River, across a vast plain southeastward to the Mekong.

During the monsoon season from June to November, the swollen Mekong reverses the flow of the Tonle Sap River back to the lake, which increases the lake's area by nearly four times.

The regular rise and retreat of water in Tonle Sap Lake brings fertile mud to the plain, making it one of the most productive rice-growing regions in Southeast Asia. That's how the river and lake nurtured the people and led to the forming of a nation.

Based on the flourishing agriculture, a kingdom, which was named "Funan" by Chinese historians, emerged on the land in the 1st century AD. Funan went into decline in the 6th century and was supplanted by a group of kingdoms that Chinese historians refer to as "Chenla". The two periods served as the foundation of the Khmer civilization.

In the early 9th century, Prince Jayavarman II founded a new kingdom called the Khmer Empire, the first to unite Cambodia into a political entity. It lasted until 1431.

The capital of the Khmer Empire was the city of Angkor, centering around the great number of temples including Angkor Wat.

A number of exhibits belonging to the periods are now on display at Shanxi Museum.

For instance, there is a copper statue of Buddha, which is identified as an item of the Funan period. The work features a Phnom Da style, which is named after the Phnom Da Temple built during the period. The statue-making art originated in the Gandhara region in South Asia — a key hub for the eastward spread of Buddhism more than 2,000 years ago, and local modifications put a greater emphasis on details of statues.

Another exhibit of the period is a statue of the Hindu deity of Vishnu, showing a combination of the Gupta art of India and local aesthetics during the Funan period.

There are also exhibits from the Chenla period, including statues of the Hindu deities of Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma. Statues from the period continued to show the influence of the Hindu religious art but local aesthetics began to prevail — mainly manifested in facial expressions. A prominent feature is the faintly discernible smile of the deity statues.

Forming of a city

The second section, "the forming of a city", tells the stories about the city of Angkor — in a region known as today's Siem Reap — and its valuable cultural assets created during the Khmer Empire.

During the period, the country was governed by a system featuring the integration of "kings and deities", where kings claimed they governed the country according to the will of deities. In this context, a great number of temples — either Hindu or Buddhist — were built along with the construction of "the Great City of Angkor" — or Angkor Thom.

Large construction projects for the city and temples lasted for about 600 years beginning in the early 9th century. Home to a population of nearly 1 million, the Angkor urban complex was among the largest cities in the world in the 12th century.

Large-scale temple construction projects began in the 9th century, with Preah Ko Temple and Bakong Temple among the first Hindu temples in the Angkor region.

Several Shiva statues with distinctive Preah Ko style are on display in Shanxi Museum, including a sitting Shiva with three eyes, who reaches toward his son with a benevolent look.

An eye-catching exhibit is a Shiva statue with both male and female features — with a mustache on one side of the face and softer facial lines on the other side. This characteristic, according to researchers, is a manifestation of inclusive divinity.

Construction of the Angkor Wat Temple began in the 12th century, as a gift dedicated to Vishnu.

On display are a number of relics from the temple, including a statue of a four-armed Vishnu. This statue is engraved with exquisite details, including a crown and a pleated dress with complicated patterns.

Lives of ancient people

The third section of the exhibition highlights the lives of the ancient Khmer people by displaying daily utensils discovered at various sites in Cambodia.

The exhibits show an integration of aesthetics and functionality. For instance, on display at Shanxi Museum are a number of pottery utensils in the shapes of local animals and birds, such as elephants, pangolins and owls.

A number of porcelain utensils, showing both Chinese and Cambodian elements, attracted the attention of many visitors.

"I guessed they were items from China at first glance," said a visitor. "Later, I recognized they were local products after finding they had patterns with Cambodian elements."

A tour guide explained to visitors that following the large-scale export of Chinese porcelain to Southeast Asia during the Song Dynasty (960-1279), craftsmen in Cambodia began to make their own porcelain items incorporating Chinese techniques, aesthetics and local elements.

"The exhibits are evidence of the cultural exchanges and mutual learning happening on the Maritime Silk Road," said the tour guide.

According to the organizers of the exhibition, in the modern era, the cultural exchanges between China and Cambodia have been deepened over the past three decades, especially in the area of cultural heritage protection.

Since the 1990s, China's heritage protection workers have taken part in a number of international initiatives for the protection of the Angkor relics. They have shared their specific experiences and knowledge — especially in the areas of stone carving protection, architectural restoration and archaeological studies — to aid in the repairs of such sites as Chau Say Tevoda, Ta Keo and the Angkor Royal Palace relics site.

Liu Yan contributed to this story.

ADVERTORIAL

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:47 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:47 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Visit provides opportunity to advance development of China-Bangladesh ties

The official visit of Bangladeshi Prime Minister Tarique Rahman to China from Wednesday to Friday comes at an important moment for the development of China-Bangladesh relations.

As Rahman's first visit to China since taking office in February, the trip provides an opportunity for the two sides to deepen strategic communication, expand mutually beneficial cooperation and jointly chart the future course of bilateral ties.

During Chinese Premier Li Qiang's meeting with Rahman in Beijing on Thursday, the two sides had in-depth exchanges on bilateral relations and regional and international issues of common concern, outlining the key fields of future pragmatic cooperation ranging across trade, investment, infrastructure, connectivity, water conservancy, healthcare and people-to-people exchanges. That will be conducive to expanding their high-quality Belt and Road cooperation and extending their collaboration to high technology, the green economy and the digital sector.

Li said China is willing to expand imports from Bangladesh and increase investment in the South Asian country. He also expressed the hope that Bangladesh will provide Chinese enterprises and investments with a good business environment.

It is good to hear Rahman say that Bangladesh is ready to deepen Belt and Road cooperation with China. He also voiced the country's support for the four global initiatives and the building of a community with a shared future for humanity proposed by China.

Notably, the two sides signed a series of cooperation agreements in various fields on Thursday that will help transform the common understandings between them on promoting development and exchanges into concrete actions and results in the foreseeable future.

All these will serve to inject fresh vitality into the two neighbors' traditional friendship and their comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership that has delivered tangible benefits to both peoples since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries over 50 years ago.

The deepening of practical cooperation between the two sides will help further broaden their shared interests, enhance mutual understanding and strengthen the foundation for closer strategic coordination on international affairs.

This, in turn, will enable them to effectively uphold multilateralism and promote a fairer, more just and inclusive international order that better reflects the aspirations and interests of the Global South. In doing so, they can work together to safeguard regional peace, stability and common development.

China is the largest trading partner of Bangladesh, while Bangladesh is China's second-largest trading partner in South Asia. Bilateral trade reached about $25 billion last year, demonstrating the high degree of complementarity between the two economies.

China's strengths in manufacturing, infrastructure, technology and industrial development align closely with Bangladesh's aspirations for industrialization, modernization and economic transformation.

Rahman's participation in the Summer Davos 2026 in Dalian, Liaoning province, on Wednesday presented him with an opportunity to engage with China's business community, learn more about the world's second-largest economy's innovation-driven growth and explore new avenues for cooperation in emerging sectors.

During Rahman's visit, President Xi Jinping and Chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee Zhao Leji are also scheduled to meet and hold talks with him respectively, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Xi will draw up a new strategic plan to further deepen China-Bangladesh relations in his meeting with the Bangladeshi prime minister, Li said.

Against the backdrop of rising uncertainties in the region and beyond, Rahman's visit undoubtedly presents a valuable opportunity for both countries to elevate the China-Bangladesh comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership to a new level.

Supercomputing crown amid adversity

For much of the past decade, Washington has operated on the assumption: restrict China's access to advanced technology and its climb up the value chain will slow down. Few sectors better illustrate this strategy than supercomputing, where export controls, entity lists and semiconductor restrictions have become standard instruments of US policy.

Yet the unveiling of China's LineShine supercomputer at the International Supercomputing Conference High Performance 2026 in Hamburg this week suggests the outcome is not unfolding as intended.

Reclaiming a technological crown that China last held nearly a decade ago, LineShine has become the world's fastest supercomputer, surpassing systems from the United States and Germany.

What makes this moment noteworthy is that it arrives after years of increasingly stringent Western attempts to deny China access to the technologies needed to build such a machine.

In 2015, Washington imposed restrictions linked to China's Tianhe-2 supercomputer project. In 2019, it placed two Chinese supercomputing giants — Sugon and Sunway TaihuLight — on its blacklist. Two years later, in 2021, it expanded the restrictions to include seven additional Chinese supercomputing entities with controls extending to advanced semiconductors, high-end GPUs and chipmaking equipment.

China, however, did not cave in.

LineShine reportedly became the first exascale-class supercomputer to achieve its performance using only CPUs rather than relying on the GPUs that power most leading systems today. Reports suggest it is roughly 20 percent faster than El Capitan, the US machine that previously occupied the top position.

More important than LineShine's speed is what it represents. Supercomputers are not standalone products; they are ecosystems. Their success depends on advances across semiconductors, memory architecture, interconnect technologies, software optimization, cooling systems and large-scale integration.

LineShine demonstrates that China has developed an increasingly complete domestic technology stack. It is reportedly the first supercomputer to reach the pinnacle of global supercomputing without relying on products from Nvidia, Intel or AMD. In that sense, it represents not merely a computing breakthrough but a broader technological and industrial achievement.

This is where the story becomes less about high technology and more about geopolitics.

The US has resorted to blacklisting Chinese entities it perceives as "strategic competitors", restricting their access to advanced technologies, equipment and components and pressuring its allies to adopt similar measures. Yet these restrictions have failed to negate the inherent advantages of China's sizable research ecosystem, superlarge domestic market, comprehensive manufacturing base, deep pool of engineering talent, strong policy coordination and extensive integration into global supply chains and innovation networks.

Rather than slowing China's innovation drive, external pressure has strengthened the incentive for indigenous research and technological self-reliance. The behavior of multinational corporations reinforces this reality. Many global companies continue to deepen their engagement with China's innovation and industrial ecosystem. The country has attracted more than $100 billion in actual foreign investment annually for 16 consecutive years, while multinational corporations are steadily expanding their research activities in the country.

The implications extend well beyond China. For decades, advanced computing capabilities were concentrated in a small group of developed economies. Many developing countries have depended on technologies controlled elsewhere and subject to political restrictions. China's experience suggests a different possibility: technological advancement should not be the exclusive preserve of any single country, alliance or geopolitical bloc.

China's rise from 34th place in the Global Innovation Index in 2012 to 10th last year reflects sustained investment in education, research and industrial capacity and the hard work of the Chinese people. These gains were not condescending gifts from the West. Nor were they outcomes of "subsidies".

The broader takeaway from Hamburg, a storied cradle of Western European innovation, is that technological preeminence is not something that can be ring-fenced through restrictions or sanctions alone.

Innovation is not a fortress to be defended. Like capital, talent and knowledge, it tends to find alternative routes when existing ones are blocked, so long as the pro-innovation environment is favorable.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

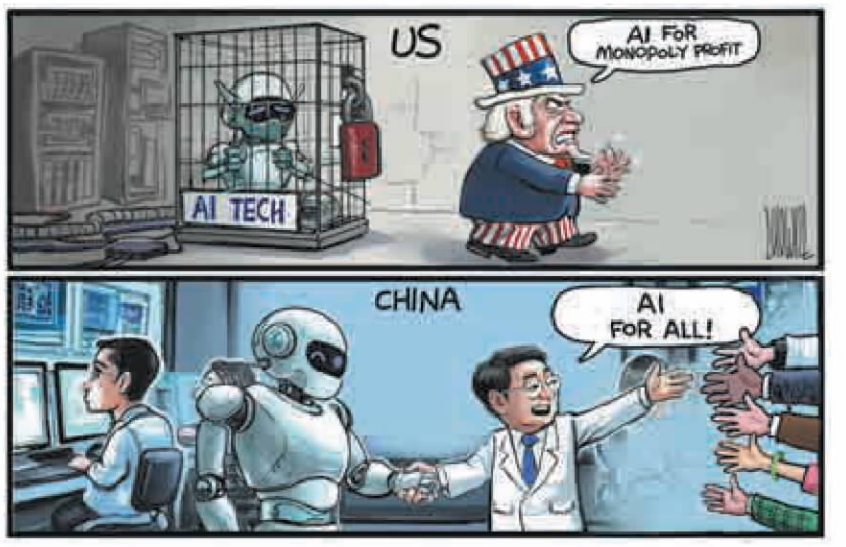
China Daily UK
90 Cannon St, London EC4N 6HA, UK
+44 (0) 207 398 8270
editor@chinadailyuk.com

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Luo Jie



Opinion Line

Lai's support of Tokyo-Manila scheme shows his true colors

The current leader of China's Taiwan region, Lai Ching-te, has once again revealed his die-hard secessionist agenda, this time by criticizing the Chinese mainland's legitimate maritime law enforcement activities in the waters east of Taiwan island. His rhetoric not only disregards international norms but also endorses the provocations of foreign countries interfering in China's internal affairs.

Lai supported the "maritime delimitation" attempt by Japan and the Philippines, saying the Chinese mainland had no right to "intervene". He also accused the China Coast Guard of "fueling regional anxiety" with its legal operations.

The "maritime delimitation" attempts by Japan and the Philippines are themselves illegal. China's law enforcement patrols in these waters, which are entirely justified and in accordance with the law, are aimed at safeguarding the country's sovereignty and maritime rights and interests.

In fact, immediately after Japan and the Philippines announced they would hold the so-called "maritime delimitation" talks in waters where China has its exclusive economic zone and continental shelf, Lai offered his support, once again exposing his willingness to betray the Chinese nation and flatter external forces for his narrow ends.

The move by Japan and the Philippines seriously violates international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, as well as the basic norms of international relations, gravely infringing upon China's maritime rights and interests.

Their "maritime delimitation" scheme is nothing but a political farce laden with absurdity and ignorance. A quick glance at the map reveals the strategic significance of Taiwan's location. For Tokyo and Manila to lay false claim to the waters east of the Chinese island is like two neighbors trespassing into another's front yard and carving up the garden.

But instead of denouncing their shenanigans, Lai has seized the opportunity to vigorously spread "Taiwan independence" secessionist fallacies and incite anti-Beijing sentiments — an act that is "vile, shameless and destined to be held accountable", as a spokesperson for the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office said.

In another example of external interference in the Taiwan question, on Wednesday, the United States, the United Kingdom, France and Germany pointed an accusing finger at Beijing's law enforcement patrols off the east coast of Taiwan, alleging that the patrols "threaten regional stability and freedom of navigation".

This only serves to expose their hypocrisy and double standards. These Western nations, while quick to criticize China's rightful defense measures, conveniently ignore Japan and the Philippines' unwarranted and unlawful "maritime delimitation" attempts and turn a blind eye to their own provocative and destabilizing naval activities in the region. Their statements form part of a broader strategy to exert pressure on China by interfering in its internal affairs.

"Taiwan independence" leads nowhere. China's national reunification is the trend of history and any attempt to split Chinese territory, whether by secessionist forces on the island, external forces or their collusion, will be resolutely opposed and inevitably crushed by the wheels of history.

— WANG HUI, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Adapting to climate change vital for agriculture

Editor's note: *As traditional methods of increasing agricultural yields through labor and input expansion reach their limits, leveraging climate resources has emerged as a promising avenue for boosting grain production. The Economic Observer spoke to Pan Zhihua, a professor at the College of Resources and Environmental Sciences at China Agricultural University, on how fluctuating climate resources can be efficiently converted into agricultural products. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

The more severe climate change becomes, the greater the risks it poses to agricultural production. Sharp fluctuations in weather patterns can disrupt crop growth cycles, affecting yields and quality. These effects vary across different stages of crop development, necessitating adaptive measures such as adjusting cropping systems and adopting more resilient crop varieties.

For years, advances in agricultural technology have partially offset the extent to which climate influences agricultural production. Despite China's vast territory and diverse climate conditions, national grain production has consistently increased, albeit with periodic fluctuations.

At the regional level, however, weather often exerts a significant influence on crop yields. Losses in one area may be offset by bumper harvests elsewhere, making the overall effect less visible on a national scale.

Ultimately, agricultural production is the process of converting climate resources into agricultural products. This transformation depends on a wide range of technologies that enable farmers to make effective use of meteorological resources. In this sense, climate conditions play a central role in determining agricultural productivity.

But climate resources are inherently variable. When these fluctuations exceed certain thresholds, they can trigger natural disasters that threaten agricultural production. One of the central challenges for future agriculture is to transform highly variable climate resources into agricultural products and biomass in a stable and efficient manner.

Rising temperatures have expanded the geographic scope of agricultural production. Areas that previously lacked sufficient heat for crop growth are increasingly becoming suitable for cultivation. As a result, China's agricultural frontier is generally shifting northward and upward — from southern regions to northern latitudes, and from lowland plains toward higher elevations.

The arid and semi-arid regions of northwestern China and the fringes of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau have become important zones for agricultural expansion, particularly in the northern dryland areas.

In theory, climate warming has opened new areas for potential cultivation. However, heat is only one of the conditions required for crop growth; adequate water resources are equally essential. Generally, higher crop yields need more water.

However, in reality, while the potential agricultural frontier is shifting northward, precipitation in these regions has not increased. As a result, if these newly suitable farming areas face water shortages, their agricultural potential may not be fully realized.

Creating favorable environmental conditions is fundamental to enhancing the utilization and value of climate resources. Efforts to maximize the benefits of climate resources generally focus on the efficient use of solar radiation, heat and water. Improvements in these areas ultimately lead to higher crop yields and better product quality.

Experience shows that adopting improved crop varieties, optimizing irrigation practices, refining cultivation techniques and applying fertilizers more efficiently can significantly enhance the utilization of climate resources.

Agricultural development, in many ways, is about adapting to and overcoming weather-related challenges. Establishing a comprehensive national-level climate adaptation framework for agriculture would therefore be both a major achievement and a long-term systemic undertaking.

Policy support will be crucial in this process. Over a decade ago, governments introduced subsidies for agricultural machinery and fertilizers to encourage farmers to invest in productivity-enhancing inputs. In the future, subsidies should place greater emphasis on climate-related technologies, adaptation measures and the efficient use of climate resources.

Governments can also promote the development of meteorology-oriented economic parks, integrating climate services into industrial park planning and making them a key component of local economic development strategies.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:47 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:47 PM

VIEWS

Muhammad Haris

Why legacy automakers are losing the race

Industries do not decline gradually — they polarize. One segment ascends, propelled by new technology and fresher economics; another descends, weighed down by the very capabilities that once made it great.

The world is watching as this dynamic unfolds inside the global automobile industry today, and the script is disturbingly familiar to anyone who has read *Clayton Christensen's The Innovator's Dilemma* (1997). The question is no longer whether Chinese electric vehicles are winning. It is why the legacy automakers — with their century of accumulated engineering, brand equity, and distribution reach — are so structurally incapable of matching the speed of their Chinese competitors.

Global Lens

Christensen's central insight is simple yet brutal. It explains why well-managed, profitable incumbents fail — precisely because they are well-managed. They primarily focus on higher returns by investing excessively in the products their customers want.

As such, they operate within a locked "value network" shaped by their supplier relationships, cost structures and investor expectations.

This very discipline makes them lower their guard against the "disruptive innovations" that initially seem unprofitable but eventually overtake the market. Over time, as disrupters improve, the chasm widens, revealing gaps that are structural rather than merely technical.

The automobile industry has lived this story before. In the 1970s, General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler — the American "Big Three" — were locked into a high-cost, high-margin manufacturing philosophy anchored around large, fuel-hungry vehicles. The oil shocks of 1973 and 1979 exposed their vulnerability. Into that gap stepped Toyota and Honda, offering the Corolla and the Civic: compact, fuel-efficient, and engineered with a reliability that American producers had never prioritized.

The Japanese did not compete on the Big Three's terms. They rewrote the terms.

Toyota's production system — lean manufacturing, just-in-time inventory, and kaizen culture (a Japanese business philosophy focused on continuous, incremental improvements) — gave Japan a structural cost and quality advantage that Detroit could not replicate simply by building smaller cars. By 1980, Japan had surpassed the United States as the world's largest automobile producer.

Another example that illustrates Christensen's pattern is the Republic of Korea's Hyundai Motor Group.

When they entered the Western markets in the mid-1980s with inexpensive, rudimentary vehicles, Japanese and American manufacturers openly mocked them. They were dismissed — until they were not. Investing heavily in quality improvement and design through the 1990s and 2000s, Hyundai closed 2025 on a high note, achieving the fifth straight year of record retail sales, what they called their "5 for 5 in 2025" mission.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

The recent entry of Chinese manufacturers through EVs is a classic case of the innovator's dilemma. They compete with legacy automakers on two fronts simultaneously — one regulatory, the other technological.

On the compliance front, Chinese manufacturers developed a vertically integrated supply chain and modular production architecture that slashed development cycles from five years to under three. This allowed them to meet — and in some cases exceed — global emissions and safety standards faster than incumbents could react. On the technological front, the Chinese challengers fundamentally rewrote the value proposition of the car. Instead of competing on horsepower or heritage, they shifted the center of gravity toward software-defined features — advanced driver-assistance systems (ADAS), over-the-air updates, and immersive digital cockpits.

For legacy automakers, long organized around mechanical engineering and combustion platforms, this shift created a painful asymmetry.

The existing capabilities of legacy manufacturers have become liabilities whereas their EV road maps, often compromised by the need to protect internal combustion profits, fell chronically behind.

Honda reported losses worth $2.6 billion in the fiscal year ending in March 2026, mainly attributed to enhanced competition from Chinese automakers as well as the allocation of resources to EV development at the cost of a decline in value for customers in the hybrid and gasoline car segments.

The innovator's dilemma does not spare the high end of the market. For decades, European luxury marques relied on barriers of brand prestige, V8 dynamics, and hand-finished interiors to fend off newcomers. Today, those defenses are being bypassed.

Brands like BYD, Nio and XPeng — and now Huawei with its expanding automotive ecosystem — are making inroads into the high-end market long dominated by Ferrari, Porsche, and Mercedes-AMG.

They are offering instant torque, lidar-based autonomous driving across all product lines, and smartphone-grade user experiences at more competitive prices.

The legacy supercar manufacturers remain ambivalent about their EV strategies because of two major challenges. First, because they have lost ground in major markets such as China.

Second, they are under pressure to produce cars that comply with global emissions standards. Both Lamborghini and Porsche have signaled curtailment of EV plans due to lower demand.

Even Ferrari, which unveiled its first fully electric model, the Ferrari Luce, did not get an overwhelmingly positive response. Rather than rallying, Ferrari's shares fell — a telling reaction from investors who recognized that a once-unassailable icon is now playing catch-up in a game whose rules have been rewritten in Shenzhen and Shanghai, not Maranello.

There is at least one consolation in this disruption: it is unambiguously good for the planet. The accelerated adoption of EVs, whatever its competitive origins, is an essential response to the climate emergency.

Yet history rarely grants permanent advantage. Japan disrupted the US; ROK disrupted Japan; China is now disrupting both. The innovator's dilemma is not a one-time event — it is a recurring structural condition of capitalism to which the Chinese EV manufacturers must remain vigilant.

The author is a faculty member at Bahria Business School, Bahria University Islamabad.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Wang Dong and Zhang Xueyu

Governance walls shouldn't hold back the future of AI

In a recent move echoing Cold War-era tactics, the United States government has demanded that artificial intelligence company Anthropic suspend access to its advanced models, Fable 5 and Mythos 5, for all foreign nationals, citing national security concerns.

Faced with the impracticality of verifying users' nationality, identity and purposes, Anthropic took the drastic step of taking these models offline globally.

This incident highlights Washington's tightening grip on frontier AI technologies. It also underscores that attempting to restrict AI technology with outdated export-control measures is both naive and futile.

Unlike traditional military goods, chip-making equipment or industrial components, AI is not a "physical item" that can be boxed, sealed, labeled or intercepted.

It is a complex technological system consisting of algorithms, data, computing power, engineering expertise, open-source communities and global talent networks.

While the US may be able to restrict a company or a model, it cannot block the global spread of technological ideas and innovation paradigms.

The more walls Washington erects through administrative orders, the more it will push other countries and developers to create alternatives, including localized deployment, independent model training and open-source ecosystems.

The current China-US tech rivalry has three key features.

First, both sides recognize each other's genuine technological strengths in certain fields and understand that unchecked competition could harm their own development interests. The rivalry is not just about "decoupling" or "supply-chain rupture" but a complex state of competition without full disengagement.

What we need is not a technological iron curtain, but a transparent, verifiable and accountable global governance framework.

Second, the US continues to apply its traditional export control logic, extending it from chips and equipment to models, platforms, data and talent flows, aiming to maintain its technological edge through a combination of hard and soft policy measures.

Third, after years of external pressure, China has forged a more mature approach to building technological resilience.

It has advanced localization, security-oriented capacity building and systematic technological upgrading in key areas, rendering US physical export-control logic less effective.

Applying these controls to AI technologies could have severe negative consequences. Restricting the cross-border flow of intangible technologies will fragment the global AI ecosystem.

AI development thrives on open collaboration and cross-border exchange, and the "closure-for-security" mindset is at odds with the "openness-for-cooperation" logic needed for tech governance.

Treating frontier models as strategic assets exclusive to one country and its citizens, firms and institutions, will lead to isolated systems marked by mutual mistrust, poor interoperability and conflicting rules.

This will not only drive up AI adoption costs, but also weaken the collective ability to manage AI risks.

What's more, US AI restrictions targeting China could destabilize bilateral relations.

Past proposals by US lawmakers have attempted to securitize and politicize technical learning, model optimization and industrial competition, conflating commercial disputes with national security risks and narrowing the scope for China-US scientific and technological cooperation.

While frontier AI does carry risks of loss of control, misuse and operational failures, blanket technology restrictions are not the solution.

Anthropic's own governance documents acknowledge that as model capabilities advance, stricter safety evaluations, deployment thresholds and accountability mechanisms are indispensable.

So, the US Commerce Department's latest move reflects not just strategic anxiety over technology leakage, but also worries about models' self-learning capacity and rapid iterative progress.

However, reducing such governance risks to a simple matter of "preventing foreigners from accessing the technology" grossly oversimplifies an intricate challenge.

The focus should be on constraining high-risk model capabilities, not users from specific nations.

What we need is not a technological iron curtain, but a transparent, verifiable and accountable global governance framework.

The future of AI cannot be safeguarded by inventing imaginary adversaries.

Framing technological diffusion as hostile infiltration and labeling normal competition as a security threat will only create more barriers and misunderstandings.

For major AI powers, including China and the US, the priority is balancing security and development. Both countries have agreed to launch an intergovernmental dialogue on AI.

This mechanism should center on risk governance, capability evaluation, model safety, misuse prevention and the provision of global public goods. It must not be hijacked by export controls or technological containment.

The AI era needs more communication, unified rules and joint cooperation. Walls cannot hold back the future of AI.

Only responsible openness and coordinated global governance can ensure this technology delivers tangible benefits to all of humanity.

Wang Dong is a full professor with tenure at the School of International Studies and jointly appointed professor at the Institute for Artificial Intelligence, both at Peking University. He is also the executive director of the Institute for Global Cooperation and Understanding at Peking University; Zhang Xueyu is a research assistant at the Institute for Global Cooperation and Understanding at Peking University.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Chen Weihua

The author is a China Daily columnist. chenweihua@chinadaily.com.cn

Xizang is beautiful, modern and traditional

I am only halfway through my first trip to the Xizang autonomous region, having spent the past 12 days traversing it. Yet what I have seen so far has already been a revelation.

The Potala Palace in Lhasa, the world's highest palace and a UNESCO World Heritage site, is as magnificent and majestic as the photographs and videos suggest. So is the nearby Jokhang Monastery. In Lhoka, the colorful Samye Monastery and Yumbulagang — the earliest palace in Xizang — are equally impressive.

I also ventured to the Rituo Temple, perched at an altitude of about 4,450 meters above sea level in the middle of the beautiful Yamzhog Yumco Lake.

Known as the Roof of the World, Xizang's landscape is unrivaled as I experienced during my driving tour.

The shimmering lakes and massive glacial mountain ranges, such as the 7,782-meter Namcha Barwa, a mountain peak that sits before the 270-degree view from my hotel room in Suosong village in Nyingchi, are simply breathtaking.

Equally impressive is the region's commitment to protecting its natural landscape. Almost all of Xizang's energy comes from renewable sources, including hydropower, solar and wind.

The region has become a net exporter of clean energy to the national power grid.

A visit to a solar farm in Lhasa offered a glimpse of this transformation. The project is one of the many in the region and has helped improve the livelihoods and well-being of the local community.

Almost all of Xizang's energy comes from renewable sources, including hydropower, solar and wind.

Driving in Xizang is quite comfortable because the highway system has improved dramatically. The 13-kilometer-long Guigala Tunnel that links Lhasa and Lhoka is a modern engineering marvel.

Xizang and Hainan are the only two provincial-level regions in China that operate highway systems without physical toll stations.

A four-wheel drive is highly recommended in Xizang if you want to explore steep mountain paths and some rough terrain. As I have painfully discovered during the trip, even cars can suffer altitude sickness.

The booming tourism industry has brought many job opportunities for local residents, who now run family inns, restaurants, tour agencies and handicraft shops.

A Tibetan incense factory I visited in Dagze district of Lhasa offers a vivid example of how tradition and modernization can reinforce each other. The traditional technique has been well preserved while creating jobs for the locals, including people with disabilities.

Norbu, a young Tibetan man, offered me valuable advice for my road trip. An avid traveler himself, he studied at a university in Jilin province and speaks fluent Putonghua and English in addition to Tibetan.

During my 16 years as a foreign correspondent in the United States and Europe, I frequently came across accusations that "the Chinese government was trying to erode the Tibetan language".

The truth, as I heard from the locals, is very different. Almost everyone speaks Tibetan in Xizang.

The problem is actually the opposite, as I was told. Those who speak only Tibetan but not Putonghua, or Mandarin, face more challenges in the job market, both in Xizang and elsewhere in China. It's similar to Spanish speakers in the US who do not speak English and therefore have fewer employment opportunities.

Like the rest of China, Xizang has made phenomenal progress over the past decades. Living standards have risen significantly, infrastructure has expanded and education and medical services have improved dramatically.

Pensions in Xizang are now among the highest in the country and local employees at government institutions enjoy considerably longer holidays than their counterparts elsewhere.

I also met many foreign tourists in Lhasa, another reminder of the region's growing appeal. I have little doubt that Xizang will become even more prosperous in the years and decades ahead while continuing to preserve its spectacular natural beauty and rich traditions.

Before embarking on the trip, I worried about possible altitude sickness. But a few days of adjustment in Lhasa proved quite effective.

As I continue my travels over the coming days, I am already contemplating a more ambitious and challenging road trip to the Ngari prefecture in western Xizang, perhaps later this fall or next year.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:47 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:47 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

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

SOURABH GUPTA

Constructing candid, peaceful coexistence

With data showing that cooperation has directly benefited US workers, farmers and families, the steady, sound and sustainable development of China-US relations is beneficial to all



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

The China-US summit in Beijing last month has established a new vision for relations between China and the United States. It falls upon the two nations' shoulders to maintain the period of relative strategic calm in bilateral ties. As the two most consequential actors in the global system, it also behooves them, working with the other major countries, to establish an international system based on a broad consensus that is just and fair to all.



China and the US have previously succeeded in utilizing the "steering wheel" of head-of-state diplomacy to hold their bilateral relationship in good stead for the past five decades, instilling greater predictability and stability in ties. Over the past year, both sides have artfully deployed points of selective leverage vis-a-vis the other and created a rough-and-ready equilibrium in their trade and technology policy dealings. The next year will be crucial for whether this equilibrium can be broadened to the larger political and security relations. With multiple presidential meetings fulfilled or slated during this year, the Beijing meeting served as a new starting point in framing a relationship of candid, clear-eyed and peaceful coexistence.

The empirical record of the past decade reveals a more nuanced truth: cooperation with Beijing has, in specific and critical sectors, directly advanced the economic security of US workers, farmers and families. A clear-eyed assessment of this track record shows that it is a strategic necessity to build a "win-win" framework for the future — one built on proven mutual interest rather than naive optimism.

As the US and China are the two foremost countries in the international system today, a stable and forward-looking bilateral relationship is a necessary ingredient for the reform of the United Nations-centered multilateral system.

The US agricultural sector has been the most consistent beneficiary of stable ties. Despite geopolitical turbulence, China remains the largest export market for US agriculture, accounting for nearly one-fifth of the US' total agricultural overseas sales, according to the US Department of Agriculture. In 2023 alone, US farm exports to China topped $29 billion. This demand has been a critical price floor for rural communities, directly supporting farm incomes and local agribusinesses. For US farmers, access to the Chinese market is far from an abstract concept, but a core component of their balance sheets.

Chinese enterprises have become significant contributors to US industrial job creation and supply chain resilience. This is most visible in the clean energy sector, where Chinese manufacturers are responding to Inflation Reduction Act incentives by building US-side factories. For example, Longi & Invenergy's joint venture in Ohio has invested $600 million in a 5GW solar panel plant, creating at least 850 local jobs. Trina Solar has established a major module facility in Texas, generating employment for 1,500 local people. Beyond solar, Chinese investment underpins core US industries. GE Appliances (Haier) is executing a $3 billion, five-year US expansion plan, directly adding over 1,000 manufacturing jobs in Kentucky and the Southeast. In biopharma, BeiGene's $800 million biologics campus in New Jersey has established a new hub for cancer therapy production, employing hundreds of US scientists and technicians. These investments demonstrate that Chinese companies can be partners in rebuilding the US' industrial base when the regulatory framework aligns.

Perhaps the starkest example of mutual interest is in counternarcotics. Data shows that when US-China law enforcement cooperation is functional, it yields tangible results. Following the resumption of the bilateral working group and China's tightening of precursor chemical controls, the US saw a 27 percent year-on-year decline in drug overdose deaths in 2024 — the lowest level since 2019. The two sides' counternarcotics collaboration, which includes intelligence sharing and chemical scheduling, is a direct contributor to saving US lives and strengthening homeland security.

History provides the substantive basis for the practical way forward. The goal is not to ignore competition but to compartmentalize it. A durable framework would leverage these proven areas of mutual gain — agriculture, selective industrial investment, and public health — as stabilizing ballast. It would institutionalize safeguards to protect critical US technologies while allowing the economic and public health benefits that have demonstrably accrued to US households to continue.

This realism can continue and evolve from the recent meeting in Beijing. As the US and China are the two foremost countries in the international system today, a stable and forward-looking bilateral relationship is a necessary ingredient for the reform of the United Nations-centered multilateral system. The greater the flux in the system, the greater must be the sense of responsibility on both sides to place restraints on the use of force. Major power diplomacy can play a pathfinder role in managing global hot spots and devising bridging solutions to these challenges, including to the fraught Persian Gulf situation. For this to be the case though, they must maintain justice in international affairs and craft a framework of ties that keeps tensions within a manageable range and prioritizes a constructive working relationship in areas of common interest without trampling on the other side's system, values and regional commitments.

The author is a senior fellow at the Institute for China-America Studies based in Washington DC. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

LIU YUANLING

Critical convergence

China and the US share significant common ground in advancing green, low-carbon development and tackling global climate challenges

A stable relationship between China and the United States is an important global public good, which not only affects the pattern and development of global governance, but also influences all aspects of the international community's energy transition and climate action. After their meeting in May, the heads of state of the two countries agreed to build a constructive relationship of strategic stability as a new framework for China-US ties. This provides a more mature and resilient model for major-country coexistence that has been developed from the intense and turbulent bilateral relations of the past few years. In this process, the difficulties in China-US cooperation on climate and energy issues are expected to be further alleviated.



In fact, what China and the US are currently experiencing is not a simple "warming relationship", but a deep reconstruction of institutionalization. As the two countries demonstrate the responsibility of striving to put their previously highly uncertain major-country relations into normalized communication channels, it is necessary to review the systems that endure in bilateral relations.

The China-US Working Group on Enhancing Climate Action in the 2020s is one of the few China-US climate cooperation platforms to maintain regular intergovernmental dialogue. Thanks to the Chinese government's consistently responsible climate policies and stance, as well as the active participation of knowledgeable people in the US (local governments such as California have shown high enthusiasm for cooperation in this field), bilateral cooperation in the fields of energy and climate has endured.

Taking climate cooperation as an opportunity, China and the US can make achievements in the field of methane emissions reduction. As an important greenhouse gas, methane needs to be taken seriously as it has a global warming potential that is tens of times more than that of carbon dioxide. Over the past year, China has issued a series of major documents aimed at supporting methane management. For the first time, China's new round of nationally determined contribution targets has included non-carbon dioxide greenhouse gases such as methane, and the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) lists the reduction of non-carbon dioxide greenhouse gases as a major project, demonstrating the country's firm determination to advance methane control at the national level. According to the "Sunnylands Statement on Enhancing Cooperation to Address the Climate Crisis" issued at the 2023 San Francisco Summit between the heads of state of China and the US, the reduction of non-carbon dioxide GHGs such as methane has been identified as a key area of cooperation, and a dedicated working group has been established accordingly. The group is directly led by high-level officials from both sides. Since 2024, the two sides have held multiple dialogues, providing a stable and professional communication platform for methane emissions reduction cooperation between China and the US. Among them, not only top universities such as Tsinghua University and Harvard University are still cooperating on projects such as "China-US Deep Decarbonization Technology Innovation and Policy", but also regions in the US such as California have signed local climate action memorandums with provinces in China such as Guangdong and Hainan, listing methane reduction as the direction of cooperation. This has become a substantive and institutionalized highlight of current climate cooperation between the two countries.



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

The prospects for cooperation between China and the US in the field of nuclear energy are also broad. China is the world's largest market for nuclear power plants, with plans to build dozens of new nuclear power plants by 2035 and increase the proportion of nuclear power in China's total electricity generation from the current 5 percent to around 10 percent. In 2023, at the 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference, the US joined the other 21 countries to jointly launch the Declaration to Triple Nuclear Energy, with the aim of tripling global nuclear power capacity by 2050. In 2025, the US further upgraded the original target with a plan to construct 10 large-scale nuclear power plants by 2030 and quadruple the US nuclear power capacity by 2050. In March, at the second Nuclear Energy Summit held in Paris, China announced its accession to the declaration. This move injects strong momentum into promoting the sustainable development of global nuclear energy and the green and low-carbon transformation of energy. In this context, China and the US can cooperate in areas such as the development of security standards and supply chain resilience that do not involve sensitive technologies. Building on the 2016 China-US Joint Statement on Nuclear Security Cooperation, the continuous interaction from the two sides will provide a valuable stabilizer for the two countries to maintain communication and avoid misjudgment on a wide range of issues.

The cooperation between China and the US in building energy efficiency and clean coal, including carbon capture, utilization and storage will continue to deepen. The 2022 protocol for institutionalized cooperation between China and the US in the field of clean energy between the US Department of Energy and China's Ministry of Science and Technology and the National Energy Administration still plays a role in ensuring the long-term stability of the mechanism. Currently, the two countries are jointly promoting the industrialization process of carbon capture, utilization and storage technologies through joint research under the protocol on the China-US Joint Research Center for Clean Energy. The high-level meeting between the National Energy Administration and ExxonMobil in December 2025, for example, helped facilitate progress on carbon capture and storage. At the same time, Chinese and US universities are jointly tackling the issue of ecosystem service degradation caused by coal mining. Through building bridges via cooperation, the two countries promote technological innovation and the transformation of achievements in this field, and provide Chinese solutions and US experience for global ecological and environmental governance.

Although federal-level climate policy in the US has exhibited significant volatility due to partisan competition, subnational actors — including state governments, local governments and business coalitions — have continued to advance climate action. According to data from the US Climate Alliance, as of 2024, its member states accounted for approximately 55 percent of the US population and 60 percent of its economic output. When local governments and business coalitions are further included, the regions and organizations that continue to implement various climate actions in the US will cover approximately 65 percent of the population and 70 percent of its GDP.

China is expected to work with all these positive forces to contribute to the steady development of global climate governance, which concerns the fate of all humanity. Strengthening cooperation in this field is not only a pragmatic need, but also holds the potential to become a stabilizing force and a new growth point in China-US bilateral relations.

The author is a research assistant at the Institute of American Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:47 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:47 PM

BUSINESS

Chinese automakers gain ground in S. Korea

By LI JIAYING
lijiaying@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese automotive brands are making fresh inroads into South Korea's highly competitive auto market, as their advances in intelligent technologies and improving brand perception are increasingly acknowledged by local consumers.

According to data released this month by the Korea Automobile Importers and Distributors Association, or KAIDA, China ranked among the top three countries by imported vehicle registrations in April, marking the first time that Chinese automakers have surpassed their Japanese counterparts in monthly registrations in South Korea.

Notably, the milestone was achieved largely on the strength of a single brand. Chinese automaker BYD registered 2,023 vehicles during the month, exceeding the combined registrations of Japan's three major brands — Lexus, Toyota and Honda — which together recorded 1,974 units, according to KAIDA.

"The key driver behind this growth is the leading position Chinese brands have established in electrification, intelligent technologies and product innovation, which aligns closely with the strong demand among young South Korean consumers for smart mobility solutions," said Zhang Hong, a senior new energy vehicle industry expert at the China Automobile Dealers Association. "South Korean consumers no longer choose Chinese brands simply because they are affordable. What they value is overall value for money."

Chinese brands are able to offer highly competitive pricing while maintaining strong quality and reliability, meeting consumers' dual expectations for both practicality and cost-effectiveness, he added.

Beyond product competitiveness, Zhang noted that the South Korean market's higher expectations for after-sales services, dealership coverage and customer experience make it a valuable test of automakers' overseas operational capabilities.

In this regard, the performance of Chinese brands in South Korea also demonstrates the growing maturity of their overseas sales and service networks, he added.

The momentum also aligns with a broader shift in South Korean consumer preferences as vehicle electrification accelerates across the country.

According to KAIDA data, NEV sales in South Korea increased from 68,800 units in 2016 to 788,900 units in 2025. Over the same period, the share of NEVs in total vehicle sales rose from 4.4 percent to 51.9 percent.

The growing acceptance of electric vehicles has created new opportunities for Chinese manufacturers, with Chinese-made models accounting for 33.9 percent of newly registered EVs in South Korea last year, up sharply from 7.5 percent in 2023.

Against this backdrop, Chinese automakers have been accelerating their investments and market expansion efforts in the country.

BYD, for example, has rapidly built its presence since launching its first passenger vehicle deliveries in South Korea in April 2025. By March 2026, the company had sold more than 10,000 vehicles in the market, achieving the milestone in just 11 months and setting a new record among imported car brands in South Korea.

Meanwhile, Zeekr officially entered the South Korean market in May by opening its first flagship store in Seoul's Gangnam district. The company introduced its electric 7X SUV as its first model in the country, with orders exceeding 500 units since pre-sales began on June 5.

Looking ahead, Zhang said Chinese automakers are expected to continue gaining market share in South Korea as consumers become increasingly receptive to high-quality EVs and smart mobility technologies.

"Chinese brands are likely to further expand their presence in South Korea over the next year," Zhang said. "At the same time, they will need to closely monitor changes in local policies and market dynamics to sustain long-term growth."



Visitors check out the exhibition area showcasing advanced manufacturing chains at the fourth China International Supply Chain Expo in Beijing on June 22. European planemaker Airbus is attending the ongoing expo. GUO JUNFENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Airbus banks on China supplier base

Firm sees nation's market require 9,500 new planes in next 20 years

By LI JING
lijing2009@chinadaily.com.cn

European planemaker Airbus is deepening the integration of Chinese suppliers into its global manufacturing network, highlighting the country's strategic role as the company works to increase aircraft production worldwide.

Attending as a "chain leader" at the ongoing fourth China International Supply Chain Expo in Beijing, Airbus showcased a collaborative ecosystem, bringing together 11 of its key Chinese and international suppliers spanning materials, aerostructures, manufacturing and logistics.

The company's commitment comes as global aircraft makers race to scale up output to meet strong airline demand while navigating persistent constraints in the aerospace supply chain.

"Airbus will continue to diversify its supplier base in China and neighboring countries and build a competitive industrial ecosystem," John Harrison, Airbus' general counsel and head of public affairs, said at an aerospace supply-chain forum on the sidelines of the expo.

China remains Airbus' largest single-country market for commercial aircraft, accounting for around 20 percent of the company's annual deliveries in recent years. Airbus aircraft also make up roughly 55 percent of the country's in-service civil aviation fleet.

In an interview with China Daily, Harrison emphasized that Airbus viewed China as both a key market and production base and would continue expanding industrial cooperation across manufacturing, research and aircraft lifecycle services.

"China has always been a comprehensive strategic partner of Airbus," Harrison said.

For more than four decades, the partnership has evolved from simple aircraft sales to a comprehensive industrial footprint, including engineering, manufacturing, final assembly, maintenance, and aircraft recycling. Today, Airbus works with about 200 suppliers in China, covering the entire value chain. Components made in China can be found across Airbus commercial aircraft programs.

Airbus China CEO George Xu said the company's industrial cooperation value in China exceeded $1.4 billion in 2025, and is expected to continue growing as production rates increase.

Xu said more than half of Airbus' direct procurement spending in China now comes from the Aviation Industry Corp of China, also known as AVIC, which serves as its largest global aerostructures supplier, excluding engine manufacturers.

The company's two A320-family final assembly lines in the northern city of Tianjin are central to its global strategy, and underpin the company's target of producing 75 single-aisle aircraft per month by 2027.

Among suppliers exhibiting alongside Airbus is Zhejiang Xizi Aviation Manufacture Co, a private aerospace manufacturer that supplies components for Airbus A220, A320 and A350 aircraft.

Mo Chi, the company's general manager, said Airbus-related business accounts for about 80 percent of its total operations, making Airbus its largest customer.

Working with Airbus has required the company to meet stringent global standards for manufacturing, quality control and delivery, helping improve its production capabilities and management systems, Mo said.

The company also supplies components for Boeing aircraft and China's domestically developed passenger jet.

Wu Rongxin, executive vice-president of AVIC, said cooperation between Airbus and AVIC now spans aircraft structures, cabin systems, advanced materials and joint industrial projects covering Airbus' major aircraft program.

Wu said the global aviation industry continued to face challenges including insufficient production capacity and geopolitical restrictions, making supply-chain resilience and cross-industry coordination increasingly important.

Industrywide supply chain constraints remain one of the biggest challenges facing aircraft manufacturers. Airbus CEO Guillaume Faury said earlier this year that the company continues to ramp up production while managing shortages of Pratt & Whitney engines and other supply-chain disruptions.

To support the aviation industry's low-carbon transition, Airbus is also expanding its footprint in sustainable aviation fuel and aircraft recycling. The company's aircraft lifecycle services center in Chengdu, Sichuan province, focuses on aircraft dismantling, recycling and reuse as part of broader efforts.

The European manufacturer estimates China will require more than 9,500 new passenger and freighter aircraft over the next 20 years, highlighting the country's importance to the future growth of the global aviation industry.

Driven by a robust recovery in passenger traffic, which rose 6.5 percent year-on-year to 200 million trips in the first quarter, according to the Civil Aviation Administration of China, the domestic aviation market is widely expected to become the world's largest over the next two decades.

Power capacity hits 4b kW on green push

By ZHENG XIN
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

China's total installed power generation capacity recently reached a historic milestone of 4.01 billion kilowatts, exceeding the combined total capacity of the United States, the European Union, India, Japan and Russia, according to data from the National Energy Administration on Thursday.

The data reveal a remarkably accelerating pace of expansion. While it took the country eight years to grow its capacity from 1 billion kW in 2011 to 2 billion kW in 2019, and five years to hit the 3-billion-kW mark by April 2024, adding the latest 1 billion kW took merely about two years.

Overall, from 2010 to 2025, China's power generation capacity maintained an average annual growth rate of 9.7 percent, outpacing the growth rates of the US, the EU, India, Japan and Russia during the same period.

Industry experts believe that shortening the timeframe to add 1 billion kilowatts of capacity from eight years down to roughly two years is a testament to China's formidable infrastructure construction and equipment manufacturing capabilities.

The fundamental driver behind this acceleration is the explosive growth of new energy, primarily solar and wind power, said Jiang Debin, deputy director of the statistics and data center at the China Electricity Council.

"This not only illustrates the continuous improvement in the efficiency and scale of China's power grid expansion, but also reflects the comprehensive advantages of the country's manufacturing system, engineering prowess and institutional mechanisms," he said.

According to the council, while frequent geopolitical conflicts have triggered energy shortages and price spikes in some countries in recent years, China has maintained a stable power supply.

As electricity demand from emerging sectors such as artificial intelligence and high-end manufacturing continues to surge, this massive 4-billion-kilowatt capacity base provides solid energy security for the country's broader economic and social development, said Jiang.

According to the NEA, this rapid expansion has been overwhelmingly driven by a structural shift toward clean energy, with nonfossil fuels emerging as the main contributor to incremental growth.

Since 2010, nonfossil energy sources have accounted for 74 percent of all newly added capacity nationwide.

Consequently, the country's energy mix has transformed significantly. The proportion of coal-fired power capacity plunged from 61 percent in 2010 to just 32 percent by the end of May. Over the same period, the share of nonfossil fuel capacity soared from 25 percent to 62 percent.

Renewable energy, in particular, has seen massive adoption. Its share of total installed capacity jumped from 24 percent in 2010 to 61 percent by May 2026.

Since 2010, renewables have constituted 73 percent of all new power capacity additions across the country, with solar and wind power alone accounting for 43 percent and 21 percent of the newly added capacity, respectively.

The capacity boom is underpinned by a fundamental shift in unit economics. Over the past 10 years, solar module prices have dropped by over 90 percent, and onshore wind costs are now on par with or cheaper than coal. Driven by technological progress and economies of scale, renewables have transitioned from relying on State subsidies to generating stable profits, igniting broad investor enthusiasm.

This financial viability is backed by the world's most complete renewable supply chain, with China producing roughly 80 percent of global solar modules and 60 percent of wind equipment. Alongside the rapid buildout of ultra-high-voltage transmission and advanced energy storage, this industrial and engineering heft ensures that the country's 4-billion-kilowatt grid can seamlessly integrate and consume the surging clean power supply.

Beyond securing its domestic needs, China's massive power generation capacity is increasingly spilling over its borders through cross-border electricity trade. Leveraging its robust grid infrastructure, the country has steadily expanded power interconnectivity with neighboring countries, particularly in Southeast Asia, according to the council.

This cross-border transmission not only helps alleviate regional power shortages, but also allows neighboring nations to share in China's rapidly growing green energy dividend, it said.



Workers conduct an inspection of a wind and solar power plant in Ulaanqab, Inner Mongolia autonomous region, on May 8. WANG ZHENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Growth seen in nutrition, health food, supplements market

By ZHENG YIRAN in Shanghai
zhengyiran@chinadaily.com.cn

China's healthcare supplement market is in a stage of rapid transformation and development, with demand shifting from basic healthcare to quality upgrades and precise maintenance, industry experts said.

Their comments coincided with Healthplex Expo 2026 and Natural and Nutraceutical Products China 2026, which were recently held in Shanghai by the China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Medicines and Health Products, or CCCMHPIE, and Shanghai Sinoexpo Informa Markets International Exhibition Co.

The expos, covering an area of over 200,000 square meters, have become a platform for domestic and international enterprises to connect with new partners, expand business channels and learn about the latest trends in the field of health and nutrition.

Fabio De Cillis, chief representative of the Italian Trade Agency Shanghai Office, said: "The health supplement market in China is mature, and consumers of all ages have a demand for health products. Therefore, ITA will require Italian health product brands to adopt a localization strategy to better serve Chinese consumers."

John O'Doherty, CEO of Complementary Medicines Australia, said: "Chinese consumers have a leading understanding of health products globally, so many consumers choose Australian health products because of their higher quality. Most countries regulate health products as food, but in Australia, health products are regulated as drugs. The health product market in Australia is $4 billion annually, with a significant portion coming from China."

Against the backdrop of a complex and ever-changing global trade environment, marked by geopolitical and supply chain fluctuations, China's nutrition and health food industry still demonstrated strong development resilience. Data from the CCCMHPIE showed that in 2025, the import and export volume of the industry reached nearly $12.9 billion, up 7.1 percent year-on-year.

The import volume rose 6.9 percent year-on-year to nearly $8.3 billion, while the export volume increased by 7.8 percent year-on-year to $4.6 billion. The trade deficit was around $3.68 billion, increasing for three consecutive years, said the CCCMHPIE.

Chen Xi, deputy general manager of Shanghai Ai Huitong Biotechnology Co, said, "Currently, in the healthcare industry, where there is a mix of good and bad products, it is necessary to strengthen publicity and help consumers identify products."

Li Baoheng, president of Baoheng Group, called for the introduction of more relevant laws and regulations to promote the healthy and sustainable development of the industry.

Zhang Xinyuan, a researcher at Co-Found Think Tank, said the future development opportunities of the healthcare supplement market mainly lie in the personalized and precise nutritional needs brought by "full-cycle health management", especially customized products for the elderly, children and sub-healthy populations.

In addition, the integration and innovation of traditional culture, such as medicine and food sharing the same origin, is important. Meanwhile, enterprises should pay attention to the scenario-based development of functional supplements — such as sleep aids, sports nutrition and emotional management — and new trends in the healing economy.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:47 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:47 PM

BUSINESS

Solar policy shift set to shake up industry

Removal of VAT rebate for exports will move focus of competition from price to value

By ZHENG XIN
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

China's solar power industry is entering a mature phase of stable pricing and high-quality manufacturing, following the recent removal of a key export tax rebate, which ends a prolonged era of volume-driven price wars and forces weaker, subsidy-reliant manufacturers out of the market.

Following the removal of a key value-added tax rebate for solar exports starting April, industry insiders and market analysts observe that a profound structural shake-up is actively underway.

The policy shift is acting as a powerful catalyst, forcing weaker, subsidy-reliant manufacturers out of the market while accelerating a much-needed return to long-term value, they say.

"This policy marks a critical turning point for the entire industry," noted Chen Jiahui, a senior solar market analyst from Shanghai Metals Market, a metal information provider in China.

"Top-tier Chinese manufacturers are pivoting from simply exporting basic components to delivering localized, high-efficiency power systems. This will fundamentally shift the core logic of the market from pure supply-and-demand volume to long-term cost efficiency, technological upgrades, and comprehensive service," he said.

Designed to rein in irrational price competition and eliminate outdated production capacity, the policy completely eliminated the 9 percent VAT export tax rebate for photovoltaic products — including silicon wafers, solar cells, and modules — effective April 1.

In addition, to encourage domestic enterprises to focus on core technological breakthroughs rather than rely on export subsidies, the export tax rebate rate for battery products was reduced from 9 to 6 percent starting April 1 and will be entirely phased out from Jan 1, 2027.

This definitive cancellation of the export rebate marks the second major recalibration of China's solar fiscal policy in over a year, following an initial reduction of the rebate rate from 13 to 9 percent in December 2024, said Lin Boqiang, head of the China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xiamen University.

Lin described this environment as a "survival of the fittest" landscape.

"For top-tier manufacturers equipped with vertically integrated supply chains, advanced technology, and strong brand pricing power, the policy shift is a golden opportunity to consolidate their dominance," he said.

"These firms can absorb cost fluctuations through internal optimization and expand their overseas asset-light production bases."

Conversely, for smaller manufacturers lacking technical advantages and heavily reliant on low-price dumping to survive, the removal of the tax rebate poses an existential threat, Lin added.



Workers produce high-efficiency PV modules for overseas orders at a solar factory in Haian, Jiangsu province, on April 29.
GU HUAXIA / FOR CHINA DAILY



Visitors view energy tech displays at a global solar industry expo in Shanghai on June 3. YIN LIQIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

The era of "involution" — relentless, margin-crushing internal competition — is yielding to a healthy environment where price competition gives way to value competition, Lin said.

According to Chen, anticipating potential cost variations, overseas buyers have proactively secured extensive orders to ensure steady supply chains.

Data from Chinese customs reveal that solar panel exports reached a record high this March, rising 125 percent month-on-month and 67 percent year-on-year in value terms to $3.61 billion.

According to research firm TrendForce, total first quarter module exports reached between 80 and 100 gigawatts, effectively covering more than a third of the anticipated global demand for the entire year.

Consequently, the second quarter is projected to be a period of rational recalibration. Export volumes are expected to stabilize as international channels digest their massive first quarter inventories, paving the way for a steady, healthy market recovery in the third and fourth quarters.

Amy Fang, a senior analyst at PV consultancy InfoLink Consulting, noted that the robust performance across both module and cell segments in March was a direct result of manufacturers rushing to ship products before the April policy adjustment took effect. She highlighted that while Europe and the Asia-Pacific region remained the primary drivers of this export wave, Africa stood out as a significant emerging growth engine.

Echoing this sentiment, S&P Global analyst Jessica Jin attributed the export boom to both the impending rebate elimination and enhanced profit margins driven by cheaper silver.

However, she cautioned that these massive export figures do not strictly mirror actual downstream consumption. Instead of reaching end-users immediately, a portion of these shipments was likely stockpiled at overseas production facilities or intermediate transit hubs, Jin explained.

Nations across Southeast Asia and Africa, for example, aggressively stockpiled components to beat the April 1 rebate cancellation. Simultaneously, the rippling effects of geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, which raised the specter of fossil fuel supply disruptions, deeply amplified the global urgency to secure independent, renewable energy infrastructure.

"Countries are importing solar panels at record levels and building up their own domestic assembly and manufacturing capabilities to address surging global demand," said Euan Graham, a senior analyst at energy think tank Ember.

Beyond the sheer volume of shipments, China is also moving up the global value chain by exporting more advanced, high-tech solar components.

Chen from SMM points out that while fully assembled modules remain the primary export, accounting for 67 percent of the total, shipments of higher-value solar cells have become the fastest-growing segment, and now comprise 18 percent. Wafers and polysilicon account for 9 percent and 4 percent, respectively.

The geographic footprint of China's exports is also transforming. While traditional markets like the United States and Europe see varying degrees of stabilization, emerging markets have become the primary engines of mid-to-long-term growth, he said.

Exports to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations have grown by 29.4 percent, while shipments to Africa have surged by nearly 50 percent, illustrating a rapidly expanding global market share in the Global South.

According to Chen, for overseas end-users, the policy shift presents a scenario of short-term cost fluctuations, but profound long-term benefits.

While procurement costs may see a slight, temporary rise, the market's return to rationality guarantees that international buyers will receive vastly improved product stability, technological quality, and comprehensive after-sales service, hence avoiding the hidden operational risks inherent in ultra-cheap, low-tier equipment, he said.

This drive to eliminate low-end overcapacity and prioritize high-quality exports mirrors a broader, systemic pivot within China's domestic green energy strategy.

Having already established the world's most extensive renewable energy supply chain, Beijing is systematically transitioning from a phase of explosive capacity expansion to one focused on efficient integration and actual energy utilization.

In tandem with upgrading the quality of its global offerings, the authorities are taking decisive steps at home to address rising curtailment rates — where clean power is wasted because local grids cannot absorb the rapid influx of wind and solar generation. To break this domestic bottleneck and ensure the green energy produced is actually used, policymakers are turning their attention to the demand side.

China has laid out broad new rules that mandate increased use of renewables as it continues to shift the focus of its energy transition from building new generation to ensuring it gets consumed.

Starting Aug 1, the government will implement binding targets for renewable energy consumption. This marks a strategic shift in China's energy transition — moving away from the massive capacity expansion seen in recent years toward combating power curtailment and ensuring clean electricity is actually utilized.

Under the new rules, regions and companies will face strict quarterly monitoring and annual evaluations. Those failing to meet their clean energy quotas will be required to purchase green electricity certificates, a move expected to boost revenue for solar and wind farms.

The mandate also covers non-electric energy uses, such as heating and green fuels, which are poised to spur demand for critical emerging sectors like green hydrogen.

This domestic push for system integration and higher energy utilization aligns perfectly with what Chinese enterprises are now offering their global customers: comprehensive, high-value solutions rather than just raw components.

"Today, solar energy has become an affordable and clean power source for many parts of Africa, allowing local people to access electricity and live better lives," said Zhong Baoshen, chairman of Longi Green Energy Technology, a leading Chinese PV manufacturer.

Showcasing this shift toward advanced applications, Longi recently dispatched a massive 30-megawatt-hour energy storage system to the African continent. This shipment marks a substantial breakthrough for the company's "solar-plus-storage microgrid" solution, a highly specialized system meticulously designed for the demanding environments of remote African mining operations.

These advanced overseas deployments build upon a remarkable track record. Over the past decade, by commanding more than 80 percent of global PV manufacturing capacity and leveraging unparalleled full-chain technological advantages, China's solar sector has miraculously driven the levelized cost of global solar electricity down by over 80 percent.

Today, as the export tax rebate policy officially concludes, it forces the entire domestic sector to permanently abandon low-end price wars, said Lin.

By redirecting its immense capabilities toward relentless technological innovation, advanced product iteration, and localized service optimization, China is nurturing a new generation of globally competitive, premium clean energy brands, he said.

Photovoltaic giants unveil AI-driven storage systems

By ZHENG XIN

Chinese photovoltaic giants are shifting their business models from selling single solar components to providing integrated "solar-plus-storage" system solutions heavily powered by artificial intelligence, as a massive influx of renewable energy challenges grid stability and drives a pressing need for intelligent, long-duration energy storage.

During the recently held 19th International Photovoltaic Power Generation and Smart Energy Conference and Exhibition, or SNEC, in Shanghai, solar giants including Longi Green Energy Technology, Envision Group and Trina Solar showcased their latest technologies, signaling a definitive industry-wide trend toward seamless solar, storage, and AI integration.

Envision Energy launched its next-generation AI-driven solar-plus-storage system during the exhibition. Powered by advanced weather and energy large language models, the system embeds AI capability into real-time forecasting, trading and grid-forming controls to coordinate wind, solar, storage and hydrogen assets.

Rather than acting as a passive hardware supplier, Envision is delivering an integrated smart middle office that dynamically coordinates solar string inverters, wind turbines, and its massive 12.5 megawatt-hours AI energy storage systems in real time, it said.

This AI-centric approach follows Envision's landmark deployment of a 12.8 gigawatt-hour battery storage cluster in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region, where localized AI agents have achieved top-tier trading forecast accuracy and boosted project lifecycle returns by over 20 percent.

By merging physical infrastructure with digital intelligence, the company is targeting multi-scenario applications ranging from zero-carbon industrial parks to advanced data centers.

Following a similar philosophy of native consolidation, Longi unveiled its "Longi ONE" full-stack strategy that integrates high-efficiency back contact solar technology with a comprehensive storage framework. The unified architecture enhances system round-trip efficiency to 93 percent and extends thermal runaway prediction windows to over three months, it said.

"Over the past two decades, the PV industry has succeeded in making solar power cheap," said Li Zhenguo, founder and chief technical officer of Longi. "But as solar takes up a higher share of the generation mix, grid stability, dispatchability and energy storage synergy have become the new structural bottlenecks. Cheap electricity loses its value if it cannot be stably fed into the grid."

According to data from the National Energy Administration, China's total installed solar power capacity reached 1.24 billion kilowatts by the end of March, representing a robust 31.3 percent year-on-year expansion.

This unprecedented volume of intermittent green power has triggered a bottleneck in grid flexibility, forcing manufacturers to transition from simple hardware providers to holistic system architects.

Concurrently, the broader market is undergoing a profound transformation. The China Energy Storage Alliance forecasts a massive surge in global cumulative battery energy storage capacity, which is expected to grow by between 8 and 17 times from 2024 to 2035.

The industry, currently dominated by China, the United States and Europe, is transitioning from a period of explosive expansion into a "gear-shifting" phase, said Chen Haisheng, chairman of the CNESA and director of the Institute of Engineering Thermophysics at the Chinese Academy of Sciences.



Longi Green Energy Technology showcases its latest photovoltaic and smart energy solutions at its booth during an exhibition in Shanghai on June 5. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Between 2026 and 2030, the compound annual growth rate is expected to reach approximately 20.7 percent under conservative estimates and 25.5 percent in ideal scenarios, Chen added.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:47 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:47 PM

CHINA

Chinese scientist wins top IMO prize

By **ZHAO YIMENG**
zhaoyimeng@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese meteorological scientist and engineer Xu Jianmin, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, received the 70th International Meteorological Organization Prize on Wednesday, becoming the fourth Chinese expert to receive the World Meteorological Organization's highest honor.

Xu accepted the prize in Geneva during a session of the WMO Executive Council, where he also delivered a special presentation.

Established in 1955, the IMO Prize is regarded as the most prestigious award in global meteorology. It recognizes outstanding contributions to meteorology, climatology, hydrology and related sciences.



Xu Jianmin

The award honors Xu's decades-long contributions to China's meteorological satellite program and highlights the country's growing strength in meteorological and space technologies.

A founder and pioneer of China's Fengyun meteorological satellite program, Xu played a leading role in charting the development roadmap for the country's satellite-based weather observation system. He spearheaded the development and launch of the Fengyun 1 polar-orbiting satellites and Fengyun 2 geostationary satellites, laying the foundation for China's modern meteorological satellite network.

Xu and his team also achieved breakthroughs in a range of core technologies, including high-precision satellite cloud-image positioning and image-stabilization techniques, helping transform Fengyun satellites into essential tools for weather forecasting, climate monitoring and disaster prevention.

Xu has also promoted the international application of Fengyun satellites. He helped optimize the orbit of the Fengyun 2H satellite, expanding geostationary weather observations over the Indian Ocean, and supported the launch of Fengyun 3E, the world's first civil meteorological satellite operating in an early-morning orbit, filling a key gap in global observation coverage.

According to the China Meteorological Administration, China's Fengyun satellite program has undergone rapid development in recent decades.

To date, the country has launched 23 Fengyun satellites, with 10 currently in operational service. China is now the only nation operating civilian meteorological satellites across all four major near-Earth orbital observation periods.

The 10,000 Swiss francs ($12,300) awarded to Xu with the IMO Prize will be donated to establish the MAZU Scholarship, providing seed funding for its initial grants and operations, the CMA said.

MAZU — short for Multi-hazard, Alert, Zero-gap and Universal — is a China-initiated program aimed at promoting international cooperation in meteorological services and disaster risk reduction.

Named after the MAZU initiative, the MAZU Scholarship will recognize individuals who have made outstanding contributions to Fengyun satellite applications and early-warning capacity building.

The scholarship is intended to promote international cooperation in disaster risk reduction efforts and support the global implementation of the United Nations' Early Warnings for All initiative.

The MAZU program has already been implemented in seven countries, while more than 40 nations have gained access to its services through cloud-based platforms, according to the CMA.

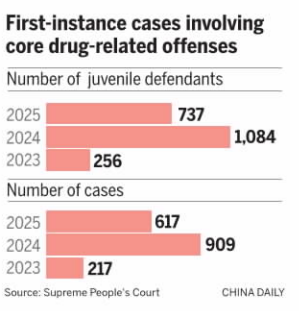


A police officer explains anti-drug knowledge to children using simulated drugs at a kindergarten in Taizhou, Jiangsu province, on Thursday. TANG DEHONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Drug crimes involving minors to feel the heat

Authorities pledge harsher penalties for traffickers

By **YANG ZEKUN** and **CAO YIN**



China's top court and procuratorate vowed on Thursday, ahead of the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, to intensify punishment for drug crimes involving minors, including cases whereby offenders instigate, lure or deceive minors into drug use or trafficking, as well as crimes that target minors.

The Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate also pledged tougher action against the illegal production and sale of unregulated addictive substances. Both bodies said harsh penalties will be imposed on upstream crimes such as smuggling, manufacturing and the large-scale trafficking of new drugs, warning that teenagers have become a major group affected by such substances.

The SPC said the number of minors involved in the aforementioned and related cases both fell by 32 percent year-on-year in 2025, with the decline continuing between January and May this year, signaling initial progress.

However, compared with 2023, both figures increased by about 1.8 times in 2025, while the abuse of unregulated addictive substances as substitutes has become more prominent.

Liu Weibo, chief judge of the SPC's Fifth Criminal Division, said substances involved in such cases are becoming more diverse. They include narcotic and psychotropic drugs diverted from medical institutions and pharmacies, as well as substances smuggled from overseas.

Some are disguised as milk tea, chocolate or e-cigarettes, while others are promoted as products for weight loss, energy-boosting or aphrodisiac effects, or are used in sexual assault-related crimes, Liu said.

E-cigarettes containing psychoactive substances are particularly common among minors and have become a major vehicle for drug abuse among young people. Some teenagers obtain such substances out of curiosity, excitement or peer influence, while others are lured, coerced or deceived into using them, he said.

Courts have stepped up punishment for core drug-related crimes involving minors, especially smuggling, manufacturing and the large-scale trafficking of new drugs. Severe penalties will also be imposed on offenders who use narcotics or addictive substances to rape or threaten young people, Liu said.

For juveniles involved in drug crimes, courts will impose tougher penalties on those with strong malicious intent or repeat offenses, while leniency may be considered for first-time offenders, those misled into drug use or those coerced into crime. The SPC is also drafting a judicial document on handling new drug crimes, with specific provisions for cases involving minors.

Zhang Jianzhong, head of the SPP's prosecutorial department for major crimes, said traditional drug crimes have continued to decline under sustained crackdowns, but some offenders have shifted to addictive substances not yet under official control to evade punishment.

Cases involving the production, sale and abuse of substances such as nitrous oxide, commonly known as "laughing gas", and butane have rapidly increased, Zhang said. Such substances are deceptive and concealed; they can easily appeal to teenagers' curiosity, leading to abuse and faster spread among minors.

Procuratorates will continue to crack down on the illegal production and sale of such substances, with a focus on crimes involving the instigation, inducement or deception of minors into abusing them, Zhang said.

In a typical case released by the SPP, a minor bought e-cigarette cartridges containing etomidate and related controlled psychotropic substances in Suqian, Jiangsu province, between July and October 2024, then transported them to Changzhou, Jiangsu, for use and sale.

The minor and others sold 415.5 e-cigarette cartridges, collecting more than 212,800 yuan ($31,300) from sales. Several defendants were later convicted of drug trafficking or both drug trafficking and transportation, with sentences ranging from five months' detention to four years in prison, along with fines.

In response to the involvement of both minors and adults in drug trafficking and use, local authorities developed a tiered supervision and governance model covering family and school discipline, supervised care, public security penalties and criminal punishment. To date, it has covered 1,068 drug-related individuals, with 985 corrected at an early stage and returning to normal social activities. The regional drug-related reoffending rate fell by 35 percent during the same period.

Contact the writers at yangzekun@chinadaily.com.cn

Japan warned to shun path of remilitarization

By **LI SHANGYI**
lishangyi@chinadaily.com.cn

The Chinese Defense Ministry urged Japan on Thursday to abandon its dangerous path toward remilitarization, warning that the revival of Tokyo's military-industrial complex posed a significant threat to regional stability.

Zhang Xiaogang, a spokesman for the ministry, said at a regular media conference that Japan continues to portray itself internationally as a victim of nuclear bombings to mislead the international community, while in reality it seeks to replicate nuclear-sharing arrangements and introduce allied nuclear weapons into Japan.

He made the remarks in response to a recent draft proposal by Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party to revise its three key national security documents, as well as the recent United States-Japan extended deterrence dialogue. The draft emphasizes strengthening the credibility of US "extended deterrence", with nuclear weapons at its core, and advocates for the development of next-generation submarines capable of launching long-range missiles.

Zhang said that such "extended deterrence" cooperation, a legacy of the Cold War, heightened the risks of nuclear proliferation and conflict.

He warned that Japan's nuclear ambitions are long-standing, with right-wing forces attempting to undermine the country's Three Non-Nuclear Principles.

"The Japanese nuclear issue has shifted from a potential concern to a real one," Zhang said, urging Tokyo to comply with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and calling on the US to stop provocative policies and to avoid undermining regional and global stability.

The spokesman also refuted recent remarks by Japanese Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi questioning the transparency of China's defense budget while claiming that Japan will invest in new operational capabilities, including drones and artificial intelligence, transparently.

In response, Zhang said China's defense spending is fully transparent, with detailed budget reports submitted annually to the United Nations since 2008. He said China's military expenditure remains low and restrained, consistently accounting for less than 1.5 percent of the GDP.

Japan's defense budget, in contrast, has increased for 14 consecutive years to 2 percent of its GDP, with per capita defense spending three times that of China, Zhang said.

He described Japanese accusations as a smokescreen designed to mislead public opinion and conceal its own military expansion.

"Japan owes the world a transparent explanation regarding where it is headed, as its expanding neo-militarism becomes an escalating threat," Zhang said.

Japanese official data shows that the country's domestic orders for weapons and equipment, such as surface-to-air missiles and aircraft, have grown significantly in recent years.

Zhang noted that Japan's military-industrial complex once served as the economic foundation of its wartime expansion during World War II. Postwar international documents, including the Cairo Declaration and the Potsdam Proclamation, explicitly restricted Japan from maintaining industries that could enable rearmament.

"The rapid expansion of Japan's reactivated military-industrial complex will push the country further down the path of reckless remilitarization, ultimately endangering the Japanese people," Zhang said, calling on peace-loving people across the world to remain vigilant against the expansion of Japanese military capital and safeguard regional peace.

Having a ball



Former England soccer star Michael Owen interacts with young players at a primary school in Rongjiang county, Guizhou province, on Wednesday. Owen visited the birthplace of China's viral *cunchao*, the grassroots Village Super League soccer tournament, participating in activities with local children and joining a friendly match with *cunchao* players. WANG BINGZHEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

New findings offer clues on ancient salt production

By **WANG KAIHAO** and **WANG RU**

Salt, a crucial cooking ingredient, is often a feature on the dinner table that continues to quietly influence culinary culture. For archaeologists, however, it may help draw a grand picture of civilization.

Off the coast of East China, an ongoing research project which began in 2022 on the Zhoushan Islands in Zhejiang province unveils a massive, prehistoric salt production complex that would fill many gaps in academic studies, as revealed during a Thursday media conference held by the National Cultural Heritage Administration in Beijing.

"Dating back to between 4,800 and 4,500 years ago, they compose the oldest and the largest known remains of sea-salt production in China," said Zhu Xuefei, a leading archaeologist of the project from the Zhejiang Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology.

She added that the 60,000-square-meter Yaojiawan site in Daishan county, Zhoushan, yields the most important findings, though only 1,430 sq m have been excavated.

Archaeologists discovered workshops featuring salt production remains, including salt stoves, piles of discarded salt-making debris, areas for stacking and firing salt, zones for piling deposits, and suspected brine processing facilities. As the deposits continued to pile up over centuries, terraces rose from the ground for human settlements.

A large number of pans related to salt boiling have also been unearthed, along with small red clay pots that were possibly used to store brine.

The Yaojiawan site is only 4 kilometers from the sea, and "wan" in its name means bay in Chinese. Zhu believed it was part of a bay in ancient times, thanks to support from various high-tech analytic approaches in the lab.

Research on environmental changes in history, based on local soil samples, showed that the last time the sea inundated this area was no more than 1,000 years ago, which offered an ideal condition for salt production.

Excavations also proved that salt production activities on the site lasted until about 2,500 years ago.

Technical analysis also helps experts put the jigsaw puzzle back together. Facing numerous broken pieces of production facilities, it seemed a challenging task to tell what they were used for.

"Salt can dissolve in water," Zhu explained. "So their distribution on the facilities is random. It's difficult to figure out the original position of the pieces if we only look for salt."

Instead, researchers used X-ray fluorescence analysis to look for calcium and other elements that were precipitated in the salt production process. The presence of calcium in various components can help to identify their nature on the production line. As a result, the team gradually began to reconstruct a picture of these salt production facilities.

Chen Xingcan, a veteran archaeologist with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said, "We have many ancient Chinese documents on salt production.

"But how did these facilities work in every phase? We need more physical evidence, and the new findings offer much key information."

And tracing the origins of the findings on Zhoushan Islands to 4,800 years ago offered an even bigger horizon: it was the peak time of Liangzhu culture.

The culture, known for its jade worship, rice cultivation, and water conservancy, dates back 5,300 to 4,300 years ago and was centered around the Archaeological Ruins of Liangzhu City, located in present-day Hangzhou, Zhejiang's provincial capital. The ruins are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

"Salt production may provide a key economic pillar and offers a fresh angle to understand Liangzhu in the future," Lin Liugen, a professor of archaeology at Zhejiang University, said. "It also inspires us to wonder whether Liangzhu culture expanded to the sea as well."

Using recent findings as a benchmark, the research team has already nurtured new knowledge on previous findings, according to Zhu.

For example, a satellite photo from 1972 once showed many artificial mounds around Yaojiawan.

"They indicate salt production remains for us, and excavations prove that," Zhu said.

Archaeologists also experienced a eureka moment when they realized that many unidentified pottery pieces in local museums were actually part of salt production facilities.

"I believe Zhoushan Islands would not be the only place to have such breakthrough findings," Chen said. "Similar potteries will be found on more islands off the coast."

Matching Chen's assumption, some other key findings on salt production were also made over the past few years in coastal areas in Jiangsu and Shandong provinces. Though their vessels varied from those on Zhoushan Islands, experts pointed to the possible existence of a north-south route for technical exchanges.

"New findings rewrite the cultural history of Zhoushan Islands," Zhu said. "We're ushered to explore more topics surrounding human migration, sea island development, and social change. They prove that the southeast coast of the country has a pivotal role in forming Chinese civilization."

Contact the writers at wangkaihao@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:47 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:47 PM

POLICY REVIEW

Urban renewal targets residents' needs

Massive five-year project set to revamp city infrastructure, public spaces

By JI HAISHENG
jihaisheng@chinadaily.com.cn



JIN DING / CHINA DAILY

China has launched its first-ever five-year plan dedicated entirely to urban renewal, triggering a capital blitz estimated to be in the trillions of yuan to overhaul cities and to improve livability, safety and daily convenience.

The landmark blueprint, issued by the State Council on May 28 for the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026–30), shifts the national focus away from soaring skyscrapers and sprawling new suburban districts. Instead, with China's urbanization rate exceeding 67 percent and the traditional real estate market facing a cyclical slowdown, the government is pivoting toward a top-down, systematic regeneration of existing urban spaces.

The refocus will see projects such as the installation of elevators in old residential compounds, parks fitted with digital displays tracking residents' evening jogs, and old industrial sites converted into indoor-outdoor shopping complexes.

The plan is structured around six pillars: cultivating new growth drivers, creating high-quality living spaces, advancing green and low-carbon development, strengthening urban resilience, enriching cultural life and improving urban governance.

By 2030, the plan mandates that China will have made solid progress in urban renewal, delivering tangible outcomes in the transition to a new model for urban development and construction, and fostering a higher quality of life for city residents. This will include the upgrading of 365,000 kilometers of aging underground pipelines — a subterranean overhaul requiring an estimated 5 trillion yuan ($738 billion) — alongside the renewal of 115,000 old residential communities, 4,000 urban villages, and 500,000 dilapidated houses.

By 2035, the plan envisions that the institutional framework for urban renewal will be more robust and refined, with urban development achieving remarkable outcomes. The overarching aim is to have basically built, across the nation, modern, people-centered cities that are innovative, livable, beautiful, resilient, culturally vibrant and smart, the plan says.

"The core breakthrough of this plan is the shift toward a holistic, top-down approach," said Zhang Xueliang, executive dean of Shanghai University of Finance and Economics' Institute for Yangtze River Delta and Yangtze River Economic Belt Development. "In the past, urban projects were often operated in isolation — a road built here, pipes replaced there. This initiative, however, is structured as an integrated framework with multiple specialized sections, forming a practical and measurable system for implementation."

A distinct shift is also occurring in the development paradigm itself, Zhang said.

"We are transitioning from the era of large-scale greenfield construction to a new stage focused on the revitalization and refined management of existing urban spaces," he said. "Urban development is no longer indefinite outward expansion, but rather targeted renovation and revitalization within the current urban fabric."

He stressed that the five-year plan "represents a key move to redefine the foundational logic of how our cities develop and renew".

The new plan builds on substantial achievements made during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period. For example, during that time, more than 240,000 old residential communities were renovated, benefiting over 110 million residents.

To drive forward urban renewal initiatives, the central government has kept rolling out fiscal subsidies to eligible cities since 2024. In late May this year, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development selected 15 cities, including Jincheng in Shanxi province, Changchun in Jilin province, Wuxi in Jiangsu province and Quanzhou in Fujian province.

Subsidies are tiered by region in terms of maximum amounts: up to 800 million yuan for eligible cities in eastern China, 1 billion yuan for those in central areas, and 1.2 billion yuan for western regions. This year, the funding will be earmarked for two priority tasks: establishing flagship demonstration zones and refining the institutional frameworks that support urban renewal practices.

According to a report by Xinhua News Agency subsidiary China Economic Information Service, industry projections estimate that the total investment scale related to urban renewal over the next five years is likely to reach 15 to 20 trillion yuan. This substantial capital will be drawn from a diversified mix of sources, including government funding, special bonds, social capital and, in smaller projects, contributions from residents.

Yan Yuejin, deputy head of the Shanghai-based E-House China R&D Institute, told China Economic Information Service that urban renewal has entered a full-speed development phase, which will not only fuel high-quality urban growth, but also unlock enormous opportunities for the real economy and capital markets.

Yan said he expects that urban renewal will directly drive the growth of upstream and downstream industries, such as construction, building materials, engineering machinery, and planning and design.

A China Securities research report indicated that high-quality urban renewal demands advanced standards for developing premium residential properties, livable urban spaces, and convenient surrounding amenities, and that real estate developers with strong product capabilities and presence in major cities are well-positioned to play a pivotal role in high-standard urban renewal initiatives.

However, industry insiders have cautioned that the plan should not be misinterpreted as a stimulus for the conventional real estate sector.

Shi Jing, an analyst at Shanghai-based real estate information provider CRIC, said that estimates linking the plan to a new round of housing price hikes are groundless, because the bulk of investment will be channeled into infrastructure upgrading and public service improvement, rather than large-scale resettlement projects or new commercial housing development.

Such investment initiatives aim to tackle deep-seated, long-term urban challenges — such as chronic urban problems, deficits in public welfare and the need for greater safety and resilience, rather than serving as a countermeasure to the property market's cyclical downturn, Shi wrote in a research report.

Zhang, from Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, said he believes that the greatest business opportunities over the next five years will no longer lie in traditional real estate development, but in emerging fields. These include comprehensive building upkeep, the integrated management of aging neighborhoods and industrial blocks, intelligent upgrading of critical infrastructure, and community-based services that prioritize support for the elderly, children and other vulnerable groups, he said.

He emphasized that the plan's core principle is unequivocal — urban renewal must be people-centered, not merely a physical overhaul of space. "All the quantitative targets for housing, community and pipeline renovation ultimately serve to safeguard the safety and well-being of millions of households," he added.

For instance, renovating old residential compounds should go far beyond cosmetic work such as repainting exterior walls and replacing windows. Supporting amenities and services — including property management, elderly care centers, childcare facilities and community canteens — must be added simultaneously.

Furthermore, he noted that merely leasing out a repurposed industrial building does not equate to truly bringing it back to life; that only happens when public services — such as healthcare, cultural spaces and sports facilities — are integrated, creating mutual gains that enhance both asset value and social welfare.

Policy Digest

Measures issued to boost automotive aftermarket

China on Tuesday rolled out a package of measures to stimulate and expand automotive consumption across the entire industrial chain, with a particular focus on secondhand and aftermarket sales.

According to a document released by eight departments, including the Ministry of Commerce, 40 cities nationwide have been designated as pilot areas for auto circulation reforms, each with priorities tailored to their local conditions.

Another document puts forward 17 targeted measures stimulating consumption in vehicle modification, recreational vehicle camping, classic vintage cars, auto maintenance and insurance services, motor sports and car rental.

Vice-Commerce Minister Sheng Qiuping said at a recent policy briefing that more than 50 percent of passenger vehicles in China are over 7 years old, and the aftermarket is entering a period of rapid growth.

Online consultation underway for *gaokao* participants

The Ministry of Education is running an online consultation week for this year's participants in the college entrance exam, or *gaokao*, from Monday to Sunday via the ministry's official exam information portal — gaokao.chsi.com.cn, known as the "Sunshine Gaokao" platform — as part of the 2026 *gaokao* support campaign. Officials put the number of registered candidates for the 2026 *gaokao* at about 12.9 million.

During the event, Q&A services are available from 9 am to 5 pm, and colleges and universities are hosting live video sessions to explain admissions policies and guide students on how to weigh options for preferred institutions.

In addition, a free public advisory system — backed by large-scale official data on enrollment, student records and graduate employment — has also been put in place to help applicants explore academic programs and career prospects.

Plan unveiled for coordinated platform economy growth

China has rolled out an action plan (2026-28) to advance the coordinated development of large, medium-sized and small platform enterprises, to boost the integration of digital and real economies.

The plan, unveiled by seven authorities, including the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, sets out targets for 2028, such as establishing replicable models for collaborative innovation and cultivating leading manufacturing enterprises in the platform economy sector.

The plan also calls for greater openness and sharing of technologies and data, and lays out key tasks and special actions, including guiding platform enterprises to strengthen innovation in artificial intelligence, deepening governance of algorithms and traffic, and promoting algorithm transparency.

Ministries release guideline to foster 'AI plus consumption'

China's Ministry of Commerce and seven other government departments on Thursday released an implementation guideline document to accelerate the development of "artificial intelligence plus consumption".

It includes 17 measures in five areas to promote the deeper integration of AI with consumer markets by expanding smart product consumption, empowering services consumption and creating new consumption scenarios.

Regarding goods consumption, the document calls for increasing the supply of new AI products, upgrading consumer electronics, household appliances and home products, cultivating the smart wearable market, and promoting AI-powered robots for elderly care, companionship and daily assistance.

Addressing services consumption, it encourages wider AI application in home services, elderly care, tourism, accommodation and catering, and education, including smart elderly-care facilities, AI-enabled tourism services and smart canteens in offices, schools and hospitals.

CHINA DAILY—XINHUA

Seniors, children front and center for upgrades

By JI HAISHENG

Most afternoons, 83-year-old Qian Weimin meets her neighbors at a community service center in a residential compound in Shenyang, Liaoning province, to sing and play the *hulusi*, also known as the cucurbit flute.

Before extensive renovation, this bustling hub was once a 2,980-square-meter disused boiler room.

"This place has been turned into the thriving heart of the neighborhood," Qian said. "We seniors have a lovely place to gather, and kids get a fun spot to stay after school. We can dine and enjoy leisure activities just steps from home."

Built in the 1980s, the Chang'an community was long plagued by aging infrastructure and insufficient public services. Its renovation began in 2023, when Shenyang rolled out a citywide campaign to revamp old residential compounds. The neighborhood now features the community service center, a reading room, a calligraphy studio, a senior service station, a children's play zone and an elderly dining hall.

"All our work is guided by one principle: delivering convenience, tangible benefits and safety for residents," said Cao Xue, Party chief of the residential community. "Catering to the needs of seniors and children is always a top priority in all our projects. For example, we have not only installed age-friendly facilities but also built a dedicated children's area spanning more than 1,000 square meters."

The community has rolled out a range of activities for people of all ages, such as traditional festival gatherings and movie nights, to forge closer intergenerational bonds.

Chang'an's success offers a glimpse into China's drive to renovate old residential communities. Qin Haixiang, vice-minister of housing and urban-rural development, said in a recent policy briefing that over the past five years, more than 200,000 such communities nationwide have been revamped. He added that around 64,000 new facilities for elderly care, childcare and other services have been put in place, improving the quality of life for hundreds of millions of residents.

Under China's recently released five-year plan for urban renewal (2026-30), the country's first national-level specialized plan for urban renewal, clear targets have been laid out to expand, upgrade and refine the building of complete residential communities. These are neighborhoods that, within a walkable range of residents, offer comprehensive basic public services, convenient commercial facilities, complete civil infrastructure, public activity spaces, property management and sound governance mechanisms.

The plan calls for upgrading 5,000 residential communities by enhancing public amenities such as elderly care and childcare facilities.

According to the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, urban residents in China spend around 75 percent of their daily lives in residential communities, and by 2035, roughly 70 percent of the country's population will live in such urban neighborhoods.

Experts said that seniors and children stay in residential communities far longer than other groups, and are in greater need of public services and support. They urged more efforts to take care of the practical needs of the elderly and children during community renovation.

Wang Fang, an associate researcher at the Institute of Sociology of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, said that children's participation is vital to building child-friendly cities and residential communities.

She said that many child-friendly facilities are designed from an adult perspective, instead of being fully tailored to children's actual thoughts and needs.

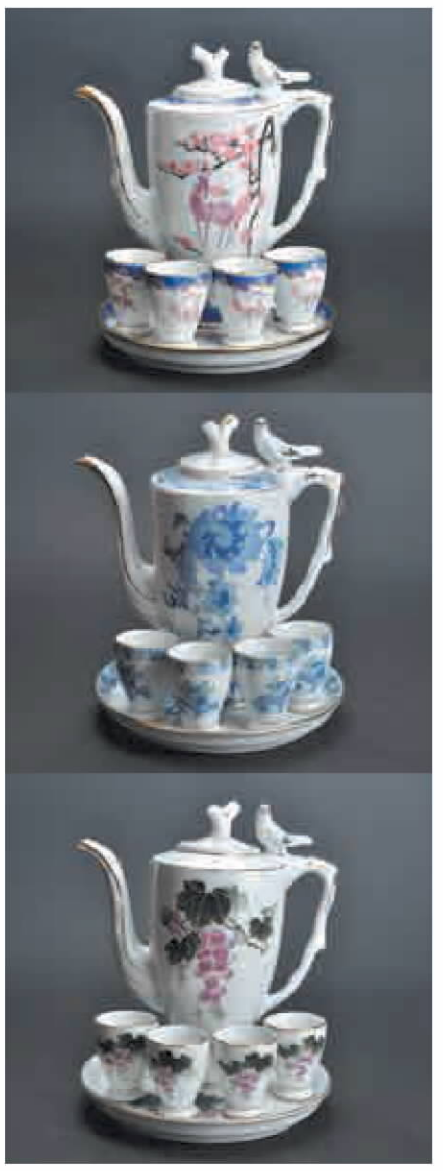
Wang took a child-friendly community park in Shanghai as a good case in point. With children engaged in every phase of its planning and design, the park has become a favorite among local young visitors, she said.

Liu Shicheng in Shenyang contributed to this story.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:47 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:47 PM

LIFE



Birdsong porcelain sounds a revival call

An unusual diplomatic gift highlights how one ceramic city balances history with contemporary appeal, **Li Muyun** and **He Chun** report in Liling, Hunan.

A specially crafted porcelain vessel presented to Russian President Vladimir Putin has cast a spotlight on Liling, a city in Central China's Hunan province. Renowned for its centuries-old ceramics industry, the city is experiencing a renaissance through modern design and growing global engagement.

During Putin's recent visit to Beijing, he reunited with Peng Pai, a civil engineer from Hunan, in a heartwarming encounter. Twenty-six years ago, during Putin's first official visit to China as Russian president, he met the then 12-year-old Peng and his family at Beijing's Beihai Park, a moment captured in a memorable photograph.

At their reunion at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing on May 21, Peng presented Putin with a porcelain wine set from Liling. Its centerpiece was a wine pot with an unusual feature: it chirps like a bird when poured.

The pot is elegantly decorated with red plum blossoms and bamboo on a pale blue-white glaze. A small ceramic magpie perches atop the handle. In Chinese culture, the magpie and plum blossoms symbolize the arrival of good news. When the pot is tilted, it emits a gentle yet distinct chirping sound, bringing the tiny bird to life.

Remarkably, the sound is not produced by any mechanical device, but only by air pressure, explains Xiao Diqiang, head of the public research and development department at the Liling Ceramic Research and Development Center. The secret lies within the pot: hidden beneath the magpie is a small ceramic whistle. As liquid pours from the vessel, shifting water levels compress air inside the pot, forcing it through the whistle and creating the birdlike call.

"The principle is simple," Xiao says. "It works much like human whistling." Whether filled with wine, tea, hot or cold water, the sound remains unchanged. Instead, its tone and duration depend on the speed of the pour and the craftsmanship behind each piece.

"In theory, every pot has its own voice — though the differences may be too subtle for most people to notice," Xiao adds.

The pot was originally produced in the early 1970s, a period of transformation for Liling's ceramics industry. It was part of a limited batch of hand-painted works made primarily for state guesthouses and diplomatic gifts.

Because so few were produced, these pots have become rare over the past five decades. The set presented to Putin was donated by a local collector who had preserved it for years, Xiao says.

The renewed attention has sparked interest among collectors and ceramic enthusiasts eager to re-create the design. Yet, reproducing it remains difficult. The whistle mechanism is a single, integrated structure made of high-temperature porcelain, Xiao explains.

"The margin for error is extremely small," Xiao explains. "Any slight deformation or crack during firing would cause the piece to fail."

To better understand the pot's construction, researchers at the Liling Ceramic Research and Development Center have been studying surviving examples, including flawed pieces that reveal details of their internal structure. The team also plans to interview retired craftsmen who worked on the original production to document and preserve the techniques behind the pot.

At the Liling Ceramics Museum, four similar bird-chirping pots from the 1970s have been brought out of storage and placed in a prominent display case. They are among more than 2,000 exhibits, each narrating a different chapter of Liling's rich ceramic history — from its ancient roots to its modern-day revival.



Top: Three wine sets featuring bird-chirping pots made in the 1970s are displayed in the Liling Ceramics Museum in Liling, Hunan province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY **Above:** Blue-and-white porcelain produced in Liling during the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties exhibited at the museum. LI MUYUN / CHINA DAILY



Earlier this year, Hunan TR Gallery, a ceramics company in Liling, launched a blind box collection of ceramic pony figurines inspired by the Year of the Horse. LI MUYUN / CHINA DAILY

In 2018, an ancient porcelain kiln was discovered in Liling's Maojialing area. Archaeologists dated it to the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms (907-960), marking the earliest known evidence of porcelain production in the region.

By the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, Liling had become a major center for blue-and-white porcelain production, with more than 100 workshops clustered around Weishan Mountain.

In 1905, Xiong Xiling, a reform-minded Qing official, founded a vocational ceramics school in the city to cultivate talent for a modern ceramics industry. Around the same period, a new technique emerged: underglaze polychrome porcelain, which produced richer colors under a vibrant, glassy finish. Liling ceramics went on to win international acclaim, including awards at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco in 1915.

The technique was lost during years of conflict but revived after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. Since 1958, porcelain factories in Liling have produced large quantities of wares for State leaders and diplomatic gifts.

Today, Liling's ceramics industry is both rooted in tradition and geared for the future. Local manufacturers have been continuously innovating, developing products that appeal to contemporary tastes and younger consumers.

Earlier this year, Hunan TR Gallery launched a blind-box collection featuring ceramic pony figurines created for the Year of the Horse. Combining zodiac-inspired designs with functional teacups, the collection offered a playful interpretation of traditional porcelain and quickly gained popularity among younger consumers. More than 60,000 units were sold within three months of launch.

Liling manufacturers have also become suppliers to global brands such as Starbucks and Ikea. Their products, including cups, plates and bowls, are exported to more than 140 countries and regions.

The industry has developed a comprehensive supply chain — from raw materials and equipment to manufacturing, marketing, and logistics. By the end of last year, Liling was home to more than 1,500 ceramics-related enterprises, employing nearly 200,000 people. The total output value of the industry cluster exceeded 80 billion yuan ($11.8 billion), according to government figures.

Contact the writers at limuyun@chinadaily.com.cn

New film to look at NY immigrants' lives 'in the cracks'

By SHI GUANG in New York
shiguang@chinadailyusa.com

Production officially began on June 18 on *Lily in the Cracks*, the second installment of the New York Stories film series, a project that focuses on the lives of overseas Chinese people and their quest for identity, belonging and hope while living abroad.

The launch ceremony and news conference were held in New York, bringing together filmmakers, actors and representatives from Chinese and Asian American communities.

The film is written and directed by New York-based filmmaker Wang Ziqi and stars Hong Kong actress Irene Wan and veteran actress Wang Ji.

According to organizers, the New York Stories series follows several generations of Chinese immigrants whose lives are shaped by uncertainty, struggle and perseverance.

Lily in the Cracks centers on people living on the margins of a major city and explores their struggles and growth amid social, economic and emotional pressures.

The film's Chinese title roughly translates as "a lily growing in the cracks", a metaphor for people who continue to persevere and grow despite difficult circumstances.

The imagery reflects the experiences of immigrants navigating life between cultures, women confronting social and personal challenges, and overseas Chinese communities building lives between different worlds.

Wang said the project grew out of real people and experiences she encountered while living in New York. She described the city as a place where everyone has a story, and said she began developing scripts related to New York in 2022, eventually creating multiple storylines centered on the city.

"For Chinese people trying to make films in the United States or overseas, it is actually very difficult," Wang said. "But making a good film is something I have been working extremely hard to do."

She said the film focuses on the process of finding balance between dreams and reality, a challenge she has also faced since moving to New York.

Through the New York Stories series, Wang said she hopes audiences will be moved not only by the captivating stories set in New York but also by the inspiring individuals who are determined to build fulfilling lives in the metropolis.



The launch ceremony for *Lily in the Cracks*, the second installment of the New York Stories film series, is held in New York. The film focuses on the lives of overseas Chinese and their search for identity, belonging and hope while living abroad. IRIS YE / FOR CHINA DAILY

Hong Kong actress and singer Irene Wan, who stars in the film, said she felt a strong personal connection to the role and was drawn to the project both because she has known the director for many years and because she was moved by the script.

Wan said the character explores multiple themes, including family relationships, generational differences between mothers and daughters, emotional responsibility and women's personal growth.

Known for a career spanning film, television and music, the actress said the character reflects her own belief in perseverance and her hopes for younger generations.

Wan said she hopes the role will convey a message of female empowerment and encourage women to pursue their own dreams while continuing to grow in both their personal and professional lives.

Actress Chang Guiruisi, who plays a mother in the film, said her character was once a talented designer who gave up her ambitions after immigrating to the US and taking on family responsibilities.

> "For Chinese people trying to make films in the United States or overseas, it is actually very difficult. But making a good film is something I have been working extremely hard to do."
>
> **Wang Ziqi,** New York-based filmmaker

Chang said the role reflects the tension many immigrant women face between dreams and reality, as well as the emotional and generational challenges common in immigrant families.

Producer Max Ren said the film's focus on women, family relationships and the experiences of Chinese immigrants gives it contemporary relevance. He said films about overseas Chinese can help audiences better understand their experiences, values and aspirations.

Ryan Su, a senior inspector in New York City law enforcement and an actor in *River Cards*, the first film in the New York Stories series, said he hopes the film will encourage greater unity, mutual support and resource-sharing within Chinese communities abroad.

He also expressed hope that more international audiences will gain a broader understanding of Chinese communities beyond their economic pursuits.

Song Miao, head of the Canada-China International Film Festival, said that there have not been many Chinese-language feature films centered on immigrant experiences in recent years. She said stories of this kind have contemporary relevance and could resonate with a wider audience.

As filming gets underway in New York, the creators say the film will continue to use the city as a backdrop to tell stories of Chinese women and immigrant families searching for identity, pursuing their dreams and navigating life between cultures.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:47 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:47 PM

The extraordinary vitality of Chinese civilization

Exhibition sheds light on how China's first unified dynasty was formed, with artifacts that highlight the Qin people's pivotal role in laying the foundation for long-standing traditions, **Zhang Kun** reports.



With more than 320 pieces and sets of recently unearthed Qin-related artifacts from Gansu and Shaanxi provinces in Northwest China, alongside select items from the museum's permanent collection, *Dawn of the First Empire: The Qin's Unification in Archaeological Treasures* is taking place at Shanghai Museum East through Sept 7.

As the fifth installment in the museum's The Essence of China exhibition series, the new exhibition sheds light on the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC), which forged China's first unified dynasty.

According to Chu Xiaobo, director of the Shanghai Museum, the transition from the Eastern Zhou Dynasty (770-256 BC) to the Qin represents a pivotal turning point, marking China's shift from a network of regional states to a centralized empire. The Qin pioneered enduring political institutions, integrated diverse cultures, and refined systems of governance, laying the foundation for China's long-standing tradition of unification.

Speaking at the exhibition's opening ceremony on June 9, Chu noted that the showcase traces the Qin's rise from a vassal state under the Western Zhou Dynasty (c. 11th century-771 BC) to the founder of a unified nation, revealing its pivotal role in shaping the pluralistic yet integrated trajectory of Chinese civilization.

"In recent years, Qin culture has become a major focus of both museum exhibitions and academic research," says Wang Yue, curator of the exhibition. "For this project, we moved away from the conventional chronological narrative and instead focused on uncovering the intrinsic qualities of Qin culture."

The exhibition is structured in four thematic sections: the Qin people, the Qin state, cultural integration, and the unification of the Seven Warring States.

The first section draws heavily on artifacts from Gansu to illustrate the centuries-long development of the Qin people prior to the empire's founding. According to Ban Rui, director of the Gansu Provincial Museum, 66.7 percent of the Qin artifacts on loan from Gansu are classified as precious cultural relics, marking the first large-scale presentation of Qin-era treasures from the province at the Shanghai Museum.

"Recent archaeological discoveries in Gansu have shed new light on previously untold chapters of Qin history, about how the Qin emerged in their formative stage and evolved step by step into a formidable empire," Ban says.

Pottery pieces excavated at the Liya site in Gansu confirm that the Qin people originated in eastern China and migrated westward during the Western Zhou Dynasty. These pots, jars and basins reflect the stylistic traditions of the Shang Dynasty (c. 16th century-11th century BC), whose heartland lay along the Central Plains of the Yellow River in present-day Henan province.





Dawn of the First Empire: The Qin's Unification in Archaeological Treasures is on show at Shanghai Museum East, bringing together more than 320 pieces and sets of recently unearthed Qin-related artifacts from Gansu and Shaanxi provinces, alongside select items from the museum's permanent collection. PHOTOS BY GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

In the gallery, bronze vessels inscribed with "Lord of Qin" unearthed from the Qin ancestors' mausoleum at Dabuzi Mountain in Li county, Gansu, demonstrate how they inherited the ritual and musical culture of the Central Plains from the Shang and Zhou dynasties. They also offer a vivid glimpse into the grandeur of Qin sacrificial ceremonies.

Golden ornaments in the shape of birds of prey also unearthed from the same site combine Central Plains motifs with steppe metalworking techniques. These objects reveal the early Qin state's aesthetic diversity and technical sophistication.

"These artifacts tell us that the rise of the Qin was largely driven by their inclusiveness," says Li Wenyuan, a researcher in the Bronze Department of the Shanghai Museum and a member of the curatorial team. "Rather than clinging rigidly to tradition or clan identity, the Qin embraced whatever strengthened the state."

The final section focuses on the institutional legacy of unification — standardized laws, measurements, currency, and military regulations — demonstrating that Qin unification was not merely territorial, but systemic.

Emperor Qinshihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum in Shaanxi contributed 12 groups of artifacts from the mausoleum complex, including a large terracotta warrior, a painted warrior head and a pair of bronze wild geese. According to Li Gang, the museum's director, these works exemplify the high level of Qin craftsmanship.

Among the most significant artifacts on loan is a painted terracotta head, displayed outside of Shaanxi for the first time.

"Painted terracotta artifacts are rarely on exhibition elsewhere because the pigments are extremely vulnerable to flaking during transportation," Li Wenyuan explains.

"Even during their excavation, preventing pigment loss was a major challenge. Therefore, this is a rare opportunity for Shanghai's audiences to observe the detailed facial features of a Qin warrior. The application of color was the final touch that brought these figures to life, offering a glimpse of the Terracotta Warriors' original appearance, which is quite different from the unadorned pottery we see today."

The success of the Qin was neither accidental nor achieved overnight, Chu says. Underpinning it was a spirit of pragmatism, inclusiveness, resilience, and innovation — values that lie at the heart of the Essence of China exhibition series.

Through a systematic presentation of archaeological discoveries, the museum seeks to answer a fundamental question: "Where do we come from?"

"We hope visitors will feel the pulse of history and gain a deeper appreciation for the deep roots and extraordinary vitality of Chinese civilization," Chu says.

Contact the writer at zhangkun@chinadaily.com.cn

Film festival concludes with boost to industry's economy

By **ZHANG KUN**





Winners of the Golden Goblet Awards meet with the media on June 20. Zhong Kaifeng (left), director of *Atlantic Rhapsody*, receives the Best Feature Film Award from Tony Leung Chiu-wai, jury president of the Main Competition at the 28th SIFF on June 20. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The 28th Shanghai International Film Festival generated significant economic benefits across the city, contributing over 5.3 billion yuan ($782 million) to related industries — a nearly 6 percent year-on-year increase. As China's only FIAPF-accredited A-list film festival, the SIFF continues to solidify its global standing.

Held from June 12 to last Sunday, this year's festival welcomed 4,714 registered guests from 81 countries and regions, with more than 420 films screened across Shanghai.

Total box office revenue reached nearly 38 million yuan, attracting over 450,000 attendees. Notably, 27 percent were first-time festival goers, and over 70 percent of domestic and international visitors traveled specifically for the film festival, staying an average of six days.

Competition was fierce, with a record-breaking 4,100 submissions from 125 countries and regions. Of the 49 films selected for the main lineup, 41 held their world premieres at the festival, underscoring the festival's role as a premier global launch platform.

At the Golden Goblet Awards ceremony last Saturday, *Atlantic Rhapsody*, the debut feature by 31-year-old Chinese director Zhong Kaifeng, won the Best Feature Film award. Zhong credited his success to "persistence, passion, hard work, and faith". The Jury Grand Prix went to the Belgian production, *Iluminada*.

Chinese American actress Lisa Lu received the Lifetime Achievement Award. The 99-year-old quipped that the honor "is not my retirement certificate", expressing her desire to continue acting. Her 1968 film *The Arch*, restored in 4K, was screened during the festival and previously selected for the Cannes Classics category at the 78th Cannes Film Festival.

The Belt and Road Film Week, themed "Shared Screens", showcased 16 recent films from 26 countries. On June 17, the Royal Film Commission — Jordan became the 58th member of the Silk Road Film Alliance, which was established in 2018. To date, the alliance has facilitated overseas screenings of 67 Chinese films and introduced over 1,000 titles from countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative to Chinese audiences.

Addressing rapid industry transformation, the film festival hosted forums and workshops on AI, XR and virtual production. A new AI Backlot initiative invited four interdisciplinary teams to conduct a month-long production experiment. Observed by academics from the Communication University of China, the project culminated in the release of the AI Video Integrated Creation Industry Observation Report, which offers insights into emerging creative workflows.

The SIFF has always been committed to energizing the industry and nurturing the future. The festival's flagship SIFFORUM, a perennial industry highlight, centered its 2026 edition on talent discovery and cultivation.

Chen Guo, director of the Shanghai International Film & TV Festival Center, emphasizes the strategic depth of these efforts: "We have established a three-pronged incubation system anchored by industry events, professional awards, and overseas showcases. This framework ensures a seamless pipeline, from project hatching and production completion to international distribution."

Among a series of key initiatives, the SIFF Project is a well-regarded platform in the Chinese film industry.

This year, the SIFF Project saw a record 560 valid submissions, with 31 high-quality feature film projects ultimately selected. Among them, *Only the Moon Knows* received the "Annual Focus" honor, while projects like *Pelican Year* and *Starfruit* were spotlighted at the Belt and Road Film Week for targeted matchmaking with potential co-production and distribution partners.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:47 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:47 PM

CULTURE



The 19th Special Book Awards of China gave away prizes to 15 writers, translators, and publishers from 12 different countries on June 16 in Beijing. The awards are the highest honor in the Chinese publishing industry for international recipients. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Global scholars celebrated in Beijing

Recipients of this year's Special Book Awards include leading Sinologists whose work spans Chinese classics, archaeology and publishing, **Yang Yang** reports.

Fifteen writers, translators and publishers from 12 countries received honors at the 19th Special Book Awards of China in Beijing on June 16, the highest award in the Chinese publishing industry for foreign recipients.

This year's recipients represented multiple countries and professional backgrounds, including veteran Sinologists, international publishers, promoters of China-Arab cultural exchange and young practitioners of international communication.

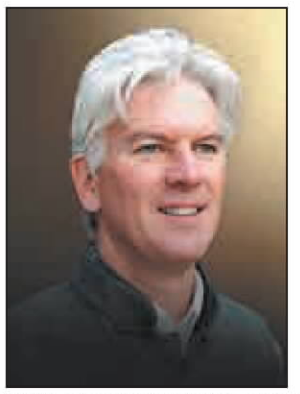
Among the recipients is US Sinologist Edward L Shaughnessy, who has been dedicated to the study of pre-Qin history, paleography, excavated texts and the Confucian classics. His publications include *Sources of Western Zhou History: Inscribed Bronze Vessels*; *The Origin and Early Development of the Zhou Changes*; *Before Confucius: Studies in the Creation of the Chinese Classics*; and *Rewriting Early Chinese Texts*. He also coedited *The Tsinghua University Warring States Bamboo Manuscripts: Studies and English Translations*, and *The Cambridge History of Ancient China: From the Origins of Civilization to 221 BC*.

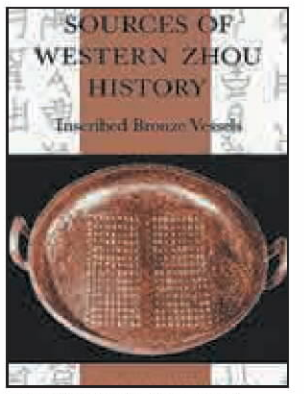
In his acceptance speech, Shaughnessy recollected his early experience of studying ancient Chinese classics under the supervision of distinguished Chinese scholars more than 50 years ago in China. It was at the start of "the Golden Age of Chinese Archaeology". Since then, Chinese archaeologists have unearthed hundreds more sites with ancient texts of all types, from oracle-bone inscriptions and inscribed bronze vessels of the Shang (c. 16th century-11th century BC) and Zhou (c. 11th century-256 BC) dynasties to thousands and even tens of thousands more manuscripts from the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220), but increasingly also from the still earlier Warring States Period (475-221 BC).

"It has been the blessing of my lifetime not only to have seen these newly unearthed materials, but also to have been privileged to become friends with Chinese scholars such as Zhang Zhenglang, Zhu Dexi, Li Xueqin, Qiu Xigui, and too many others to be mentioned here, who have welcomed me to join them in their work to make them intelligible to others, both in China and abroad," he said in his acceptance speech.

"And it is a very great honor for me today to receive this special book award, and to be able to represent the other awardees in thanking the organizing committee for making this special day possible," he said.

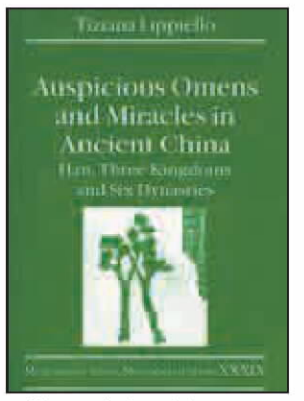
Another recipient, Mohamed Mousa Mohamed Bin Huwaidin from the United Arab Emirates, said the recognition would further encourage cultural and educational exchanges between China and the UAE.





US Sinologist Edward L Shaughnessy and his book, *Sources of Western Zhou History: Inscribed Bronze Vessels*.





Italian Sinologist Tiziana Lippiello and her work, *Auspicious Omens and Miracles in Ancient China: Han, Three Kingdoms and Six Dynasties*.





Mohamed Mousa Mohamed Bin Huwaidin from the United Arab Emirates and his book, *The Falcon and the Dragon: Sino-Gulf Relations — From Strangers to Strategic Partners*.

As the dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at the United Arab Emirates University, his research focuses on China's relations with the Middle East and the Gulf region. His works include *China's Relations with Arabia and the Gulf 1949-1999*, and *The Falcon and the Dragon: Sino-Gulf Relations — From Strangers to Strategic Partners*.

Bin Huwaidin noted that both countries share important similarities as developmental states committed to improving people's lives through advancement and have created distinctive cooperation models through public-private partnership.

He also emphasized the importance of helping international audiences better understand China.

"People need to understand that China is a responsible state," he said, adding that China has made positive contributions to regional and international affairs.

Looking ahead, he highlighted educational exchange as an important direction for future China-Arab cooperation, saying that education promotes mutual understanding and creates broader opportunities for collaboration.

Italian Sinologist Tiziana Lippiello is also among the recipients of this honor. As the former rector of Ca' Foscari University in Venice, professor of Chinese language and literature, vice-president of the International Society for Chinese Language Teaching, and council member of the International Confucian Association, she has long been dedicated to the dissemination and study of traditional Chinese culture and literary classics. As such, she was among the first Sinologists to translate *The Analects* and *The Doctrine of the Mean* in their entirety into Italian. Her major works include *Confucianism*; *Auspicious Omens and Miracles in Ancient China: Han, Three Kingdoms and Six Dynasties*; and *Shen Yue's Treatise on Auspicious Omens*.

She said she was honored to receive the recognition and valued the opportunity to exchange ideas with fellow recipients while gaining a deeper understanding of the significance of the award.

Reflecting on her observations of contemporary China, Lippiello noted that many people in Europe are still unfamiliar with China's development achievements and stressed the importance of visiting China in person to gain a deeper understanding.

Drawing on her years of translating Confucian classics, she said misunderstandings about China often stem from limited access to authentic knowledge and the difficulty of fully conveying the richness of Chinese language and culture through translation alone.

While translation serves as an important bridge for cultural communication, she emphasized that firsthand experience remains essential to understanding China.

Asked to summarize the essence of Chinese culture, Lippiello chose one word: "simplicity". She explained that many ideas found in Confucian teachings are simple, universal and continue to resonate across cultures.

Since its establishment in 2005, the Special Book Awards of China has honored 234 writers, translators, and publishers from 67 countries.

Fan Tingxiao contributed to this story.

Contact the writer at yangyangs@chinadaily.com.cn

Readers, pacts and tech share spotlight at BIBF

By YANG YANG

Books may have been the main attraction, but the 32nd Beijing International Book Fair was equally a showcase of ideas, technology and cultural exchange.

Over five days, the fair transformed the China National Convention Center into a global meeting place for publishers, authors, literary agents and readers. By the time the event concluded last Sunday, it had attracted nearly 300,000 visitors and facilitated 2,835 copyright trade agreements and intentions between Chinese and international partners, underscoring its growing influence in the global publishing landscape.

Among the agreements reached during the fair were 1,959 copyright export deals, 754 import agreements and 122 cooperative publishing projects. Social sciences, children's literature, and science and technology were the most active categories in terms of trade volume.

The United Arab Emirates, this year's guest of honor, embraced the theme "Society and People" and introduced a cultural pavilion known as the United Arab Emirates House, alongside a dedicated copyright trading booth.

Through a series of cultural seminars, professional discussions, visits, exchanges, and cooperation signings, the UAE highlighted its rich cultural heritage and demonstrated a commitment to enhancing Sino-Arab cultural ties and expanding collaborative opportunities.

"The book fair is no longer merely a platform for displaying publications; it is a global arena for cultural exchanges, cutting-edge knowledge dissemination, and transformative developments within the publishing industry," said Salem bin Khalid Al Qassimi, the UAE Minister of Culture.

Gvantsa Jobava, president of the International Publishers Association, attended the fair for the second time and said she was impressed by the diversity of Chinese publications, the quality of their content, the high standards of printing, and the meticulous organization of the event.

William Achauer, editorial director for business, economics, politics and law at Springer Nature, described the BIBF as the company's premier copyright matchmaking platform in Asia. He noted that this year's technology and business management matchmaking sessions featured prearranged meetings with Chinese publishers specializing in science, engineering and management, resulting in highly efficient exchanges.

The fair also placed a spotlight on emerging industry trends, demonstrating how new technologies, innovative business models and evolving publishing practices are helping drive the sector's high-quality development.

Leading online literature companies like China Literature Group, alongside China National Publications Import and Export (Group) Co and various publishing institutions, presented a range of representative products and services centered on the innovative applications of big data, cloud computing, and artificial intelligence in publishing.

Professional forums throughout the event focused heavily on themes like new productivity and AI technology. The Beijing International Publishing Forum, the 2nd STM APAC Conference, and the 4th PubTech Conference delved into cutting-edge topics such as AI empowerment in publishing and AI-driven industry transformation.

For instance, the 2026 Beijing International Publishing Forum, themed Redefining Publishing in the AI Era, explored topics like "opening a new chapter in nationwide reading", "Chinese expression and global dialogue in philosophy and social sciences", and "AI-driven systemic transformation in the publishing industry", addressing the opportunities and challenges faced by the global publishing industry and underscoring the book fair's role as a trendsetter.

Beyond the professional program, organizers introduced a variety of attractions designed to engage the general public. Five themed exhibition areas — the BIBF Picture Book Fair, BIBF Art Book Fair, BIBF Illustration Exhibition, BIBF Gourmet Book Fair and Gifts from the World — offered visitors new ways to experience books and visual culture.

Together with a Harry Potter-themed pop-up store, these spaces became some of the fair's most popular attractions, turning exhibition halls into vibrant destinations for reading, discovery and social interaction.

The BIBF Picture Book Fair welcomed more than 40,000 visitors, while the Harry Potter pop-up store attracted over 25,000 fans.

In total, the fair hosted more than 1,000 cultural events. Renowned writers and thinkers, including Liu Zhenyun, Yu Hua, Tsai Chih-chung, Chen Hui and Canadian poet and essayist Tim Lilburn, met audiences through programs such as the BIBF Ambassador Salon, Author Focus and the First Beijing International Literature Week.





Top: Liu Zhenyun (second from left), Chinese author and BIBF ambassador, joins a group of European Sinologists for a discussion on reading, writing, and cultural exchange last Saturday. **Above:** The BIBF Gifts from the World market features a diverse selection of cultural and creative products.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:47 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:47 PM

SPORTS

WORLD CUP 2026



Brazil's Vinicius Junior celebrates scoring his side's first goal during a World Cup Group C match against Scotland at the Miami Stadium, Florida, on Wednesday, which set the five-time champion on its way to a 3-0 group-clinching win. REUTERS

Ancelotti hails Vinicius after firing Brazil into round of 32

Madrid star's Scotland brace also sees him pull level with Mbappe and Haaland



Vinicius celebrates scoring his, and Brazil's, second goal during the World Cup Group C match against Scotland in Miami, Florida, on Wednesday. AP

Brazil coach Carlo Ancelotti hailed Vinicius Junior as "one of the best players in the world", after the Real Madrid forward continued his excellent World Cup form with a brace in Wednesday's 3-0 win over Scotland.

Vinicius scored twice in the first half in Miami, including a header, to set Brazil on its way to a victory which allowed it to progress to the last 32 as winner of Group C.

"I had no doubts about how he would be coming into this World Cup," said Ancelotti of the 25-year-old, who has four goals in three games at this year's tournament.

"For him, it is an honor to play for the national team. He is playing well, and he even scored a header, which is very rare for him.

"I knew all about what Vini could do. He is one of the best players in the world," added Ancelotti, who managed the forward for four years at Real Madrid.

Vinicius scored in Brazil's opening 1-1 draw with Morocco and also netted in the 3-0 victory over Haiti.

His latest brace puts him level with France's Kylian Mbappe and Norway's Erling Haaland in the Golden Boot race, with that trio all on four goals, one behind Lionel Messi.

He is the first Brazilian to score in all three group matches at a World Cup since Ronaldo and Rivaldo both achieved the feat in 2002.

The only other Brazilian players to find the net in all three group games are Jairzinho, in 1970, and Romario in 1994 — that is illustrious company to keep, and Brazil went on to lift the trophy every time one of its players did that in the past.

> "I had no doubts about how he would be coming into this World Cup. I knew all about what Vini could do. He is one of the best players in the world."
>
> **Carlo Ancelotti,** Brazil coach

"I always say I am not that bothered about numbers. I am not used to scoring so many goals, but the coach has moved me into a position to which I have adapted well, and now I am scoring and helping the team," Vinicius told Brazilian broadcaster CazéTV.

"Hopefully, I can keep going to the final. I am very happy with the work being done by the team. If everyone is playing well, the ball will arrive in attacking areas and we will have chances to score goals," he added.

'The passion of a kid'

Matheus Cunha got Brazil's other goal against Scotland, before the Manchester United player was replaced by Neymar, who made his first appearance for his country since October 2023.

"He deserved to come on. He has worked hard and trained hard to recover fitness. He has done it very professionally," Ancelotti said of Brazil's all-time top scorer.

"He needs no motivation to play for Brazil, none of the players do. He is 34, but he has the same passion for playing football as a kid."

With Neymar the final piece to slot in, do Ancelotti's men have the tools to mount a challenge for the title?

"Compared to the first game, we are making fewer errors, playing with more rhythm, and we are more clinical up front," added Ancelotti.

"Now we are really playing as a team, and that was one of the aims. We are not perfect, we have things to improve on.

"But, I am very happy, because we have gotten better and we are solid now. It's really important to be solid in the knockout rounds."

Self-inflicted defeat

Scotland coach Steve Clarke believes his team will soon be heading home from its first World Cup in 28 years after what he viewed as a largely self-inflicted defeat.

The Scots, with three points, still technically have a chance of progressing to the knockout stages at a World Cup for the first time as one of eight third-placed teams with the best records across the 12 groups.

As things stand, Scotland has the seventh-best record, but Clarke clearly believes that, with 18 group matches remaining, it will be overtaken.

"Fair result," he said. "You give a team like Brazil the chances that we gave them, you expect to get punished, and that's what happened. I think we're probably going home.

"We know they're deadly in the attacking third of the pitch, and we gave them, for sure, the first two goals, probably the third goal as well.

"So, we gave them the goals, but on the counter of that, they also missed a few chances and Angus (Gunn) had to make a few good saves. We created one or two chances, but nothing really clean."

Clarke's frustration with his team's performance on Wednesday was clear, but he said he was not angry with the players who got Scotland to its first World Cup since France in 1998.

"I'm disappointed for them, because they didn't reach the levels that they can reach," he said.

"I think we all know that. Anybody that's watched this team over the last few years knows that we didn't reach the levels that we can reach."

The former Chelsea fullback said the campaign had also exposed structural issues in Scottish soccer that needed addressing.

"I think when you see the physicality, the power and the technique of both Morocco and Brazil, you can see that we have to do something about it," he said.

"We have to try and be better at producing young players that can grace the world stage."

Atlas Lions roar on

While Brazil now heads to Houston to play the runner-up in Group F — either the Netherlands, Japan or Sweden — Morocco will head to Monterrey, Mexico, to face the Group F winner. Both games will be played Monday.

The Atlas Lions twice fought back against plucky Haiti for a 4-2 win in Atlanta to finish level in Group C with Brazil on seven points, but finished runners-up on goal difference.

AFP

'Our idol is back': Neymar makes return as a sub



Neymar has finally played in this World Cup, and the superstar is back just in time for the knockout rounds.

Neymar came off the bench in the 76th minute against Scotland on Wednesday, with the team leading 3-0 and well on its way to clinching a spot in the knockout stage that starts Monday.

His appearance wasn't a surprise: Brazil said earlier this week that he would be available, clearing the way for the forward to make his return after missing the first two matches because of a right calf injury.

He did not start, and it seemed like that was the plan Brazil coach Carlo Ancelotti had all along when he raised the possibility earlier this week that Neymar could play as a substitute.

And when Neymar got off the bench and started doing some warm-up sprints and stretches along the touchline during the second half, fans in that section of the stadium roared. The cheers got louder when his number was called by the fourth official, as well as when he took his first touch.

"A very important moment for all of us," Vinicius Junior, who scored two goals for Brazil, said in Portuguese. "Our idol is back, a guy who always fought hard and did everything to be here, returning after a spell out with injury. I hope he can keep evolving and keep improving, helping us throughout the competition. That's what matters most."

Neymar was one of the final players to get off Brazil's bus Wednesday, flashing a thumbs-up, giving a wave and slapping hands with a few well-wishers as he made his way into the stadium and toward the locker room.

"He is available. He trained very well this week," Ancelotti said Tuesday, without confirming that Neymar would take the field against Scotland. "He is fit and able, ready to play. We are very happy that he is back. He is a high-quality player."

The calf injury had sidelined Neymar for more than a month. He came through a full training session on Sunday unscathed, clearing the final hurdle needed to play.

Neymar is Brazil's top scorer with 79 goals in 130 international appearances. The 34-year-old has appeared in each of the past three World Cups for Brazil, scoring eight goals.

His role — and whether he deserves to be on this team at all — has been a major talking point among Brazil fans. Neymar has struggled since his return from a left knee ACL tear in October 2023 in a World Cup qualifier, and has four goals in eight matches for Brazilian club Santos this season.

"Every player here will be a huge help to us in this competition," Vinicius said.

AP

Czech out time: 3-0 win puts gloss on Mexico's perfect Group A campaign

MEXICO CITY — Mexico continued its perfect start to the World Cup with a 3-0 romp against a hapless Czech Republic on Wednesday, finishing its group-stage campaign with a flourish and killing off its tame opponent's hopes of making the knockouts.

The co-host had already booked its spot in the last 32 as Group A winner, but showed no mercy at the Azteca Stadium to complete a third straight victory that left the sorry Czechs bottom of the standings and out of the tournament.

The game looked to be drifting toward a drab draw before Mexico exploded in the second half, with Mateo Chavez opening the scoring, before Julian Quinones grabbed his second of the tournament and substitute Alvaro Fidalgo dealt the final blow in the dying seconds.

Mexico's reward for a faultless opening stage will be a knockout clash on Tuesday with a third-placed side from Group C, E, F, H or I, with the match again in front of its fans at the Azteca, where it is unbeaten in nine World Cup games.

"I think the team played a good game, honestly," Mexico's hard-to-please coach Javier Aguirre said.

"Ultimately, we always have a few things to work on, but tonight is a good night for everyone."

Mexico's superb start to the tournament has kindled the fires of hope in its fervent supporters that this team could be the one to end the supposed curse that has seen it fail to reach the quarterfinals since it last hosted the tournament in 1986.

The omens suddenly look auspicious — unbeaten in 11 games having sauntered through the group stage at a World Cup back on home soil, the hope is that this Mexico side could put years of turmoil and under-performance behind it.

The numbers are also starting to stack up. This was its biggest World Cup win since a 4-0 victory over El Salvador in 1970, while at the other end a rock-solid defense ensured it became the first team with three clean sheets in the group stage since Uruguay in 2018.

This apparent new dawn is perfectly symbolized by 17-year-old midfield prodigy Gilberto Mora, who is the youngest player to start in the tournament since 2002, and produced a superb display with his every touch loudly appreciated by the crowd.

"To be honest, I believed I could achieve it, but not this soon," he said when asked if he imagined reaching this stage so quickly. "Now that I'm here, I'm just trying to enjoy it, take it day by day and give my best whenever I'm on the pitch."

Sparking into life

With their fate riding on the outcome, the Czechs were predictably more eager in the opening exchanges, with Denis Visinsky snatching at an early effort when space opened up in front of him.



Mexico's players hoist substitute keeper Guillermo Ochoa into the air to mark his first appearance at his sixth World Cup following the team's 3-0 win over the Czech Republic on Wednesday. AP

It took 35 minutes for Mexico to conjure a shot, and, when it did, centerback Israel Reyes drifted the ball harmlessly wide.

The game had all the hallmarks of a stalemate until the 55th minute, when Mexico sparked into life and found the breakthrough that brought the Azteca to its feet.

Luis Romo emerged with the ball in midfield and slipped a pass through to fullback Chavez who skipped past one challenge before calmly opening his body up to sidefoot his finish past goalkeeper Matej Kovar. The second goal six minutes later had Mora's fingerprints all over it, as the youngster dribbled deep into Czech territory before playing a delightful ball through to Jorge Sanchez.

He bundled his attempted finish over the keeper and after a brief scramble Quinones followed up to poke the ball home.

Probably the loudest cheer of the night arrived when 40-year-old substitute keeper Guillermo Ochoa came on. This is his sixth World Cup, although he didn't play a minute at the 2006 and 2010 editions, and is set to hang up his gloves after this one finishes.

Then came the final flourish, deep in stoppage time, when Fidalgo blasted the ball into the top corner from 18 meters to complete a resounding win for the co-host.

REUTERS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:47 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:49 PM

Playing host
APEC officials highlight tourism growth in Macao
CHINA, PAGE 11



DR Congo makes soccer history, enters knockout
SPORTS, PAGE 16



Not just another story
New chapter in franchise proves toys will always win hearts
LIFE, PAGE 13

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 MONDAY, JUNE 29, 2026

Miracle amid the ruins



Rescue workers pull Moises Calzadilla, 11, from the rubble on Saturday, three days after devastating earthquakes struck La Guaira, Venezuela. Rescuers raced on Sunday to find more survivors in the rubble as the death toll climbed to 1,430, with tens of thousands still missing.
FERNANDO VERGARA / AP **See story, page 5**

HK's sci-tech vision reaps rich rewards

Historic letter to Xi sparked golden era of fruitful collaboration with the mainland

By WU KUNLING in Hong Kong
amberwu@chinadailyhk.com

Nearly a decade of booming cross-boundary collaboration in science and technology between the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the Chinese mainland began with a single letter to President Xi Jinping from a renowned Hong Kong scientist and fellow academicians, who advocated that national sci-tech funding be cleared for cross-boundary use.

The momentum, which continues to gain pace today, began in 2017 when Hong Kong scientist Nancy Ip Yuk-yu and 23 fellow academicians from the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Chinese Academy of Engineering sent the letter to Xi.

Before mid-2017, the research community in Hong Kong was facing hurdles to participating in the nation's rapid sci-tech development, Ip recalled. Access to national research funding was proving to be a major stumbling block for Hong Kong researchers, preventing potential collaborations with the mainland, and Hong Kong-made scientific equipment faced tariffs when entering the mainland.

The academicians' aspirations brought a swift response from Xi, unlocking a highly fruitful, decade-long golden era of cross-boundary technological cooperation between Hong Kong and the Chinese mainland.

Today, a grander vision is taking shape. The Hong Kong SAR is poised to play a pivotal role in propelling the nation to becoming a technological powerhouse under the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), Ip said in an exclusive interview with China Daily ahead of the 29th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to the motherland on July 1.

Ip, a renowned neuroscientist and president of The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, reflected upon the decade-long improvement in Hong Kong's research environment and national support. She pledged further contributions toward the nation's strategic goal of technological self-reliance.

In an unprecedented move in June 2017, hoping to better integrate the Hong Kong SAR into the nation's scientific development, Ip and 23 other Hong Kong-based academicians wrote the letter to Xi, outlining the challenges they faced.

Xi responded quickly and instructed the relevant authorities to follow up.

The Ministry of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Finance then promulgated provisions on opening up science and technology funding of the central government for use by higher education institutions and research institutions in Hong Kong.

This included arrangements for cross-boundary utilization of approved project funding to Hong Kong.

By September that year, a pilot program was in place, allowing cross-boundary use of research funding at two laboratories — one at HKUST and one at University of Hong Kong. By April 2018, 22 State-level labs in Hong Kong had been approved to receive a total of 22 million yuan ($3.24 million).

Chan Ching-chuen, Hong Kong's first academician elected to the Chinese Academy of Engineering, was a co-signatory of the letter to Xi.

The swift response from Xi to the letter, which conveyed the aspirations of Hong Kong scientists to contribute to the nation's needs, injected confidence in Hong Kong's sci-tech sector, said Chan, who is widely lauded for being the "father of Asian electric vehicles".

Chan added that, catalyzed by Xi's response, the mainland and Hong Kong have deepened sci-tech collaboration in a growing number of areas, with Lai Ka-ying, a Hong Kong payload expert, currently at the nation's space mission aboard the Tiangong space station. Lai is the first female Chinese civilian from Hong Kong to reach outer space.

Following Xi's instructions, Hong Kong's sci-tech sector has ushered in a new era of development by integrating into the nation's development, Chan said, noting extended cooperation over the past decade in areas such as aerospace, new energy, artificial intelligence and transportation.

This is the living embodiment of Hong Kong leveraging its distinctive advantages to serve the nation's needs, he said.

See ***Sci-tech,*** *page 3*

WORLD WATCH
By Li Meng

AI should not become next asset bubble

Whether the artificial intelligence sector in the United States has become a bubble is stirring intense debate, with sharply divided opinions. Pessimists warn that AI is inflating into an unprecedented mega-bubble, potentially 17 times larger than the dot-com bubble of 2000 and four times bigger than the 2008 subprime mortgage crisis. But optimists argue that AI technology is redefining economic paradigms and could, over the next decade, drive advances that eclipse those of the past century.

What truly warrants attention is not whether an AI bubble exists, but whether AI has become excessively financialized. An objective assessment of this financialization is more important.

History shows that nearly every cutting-edge technology goes through a phase of capital frenzy — the "bubble" stage — in its early development. This is known as the Perez industrial cycle. A certain degree of exuberance in the initial phase of breakthrough technologies fits the pattern of technological industrialization and is not necessarily harmful.

See ***AI,*** *page 3*

Truce strained as US, Iran trade strikes

By CUI HAIPEI in Dubai, UAE
and **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong

Disputes over shipping access in the Strait of Hormuz have sparked fresh tensions between Iran and the United States, with each side accusing the other of breaching a fragile interim accord signed less than two weeks ago to end their four-month conflict, a war that disrupted global maritime trade and sent shockwaves through international energy markets.

Iran launched missiles and drones at US military sites in Kuwait and Bahrain early on Sunday, responding to US airstrikes on 10 Iranian military targets. Tehran warned that all war-ending negotiations could come to a complete halt if Washington conducts further strikes.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard said in a statement that the US strikes had violated the ceasefire and "will result in the complete halt of all diplomatic processes", according to state-run Press TV. The IRGC navy command said US bases in the region "will experience hell in the coming days".

In an earlier social media post, US President Donald Trump confirmed that the US had "struck Iranian missile and drone storage locations, and coastal radar sites", warning of a point where the US may no longer be able to be reasonable "and will be forced to militarily complete the job". "If that happens, the Islamic Republic of Iran will no longer exist!" he wrote.

Inside
Views, **page 7**

About an hour after Trump's post, the Kuwaiti army said its air defenses were responding to "hostile" missile and drone attacks, while sirens sounded in Bahrain, according to Bahrain's Interior Ministry. Both nations condemned the attacks, calling them a blatant violation of national sovereignty.

The US military hit Iran's Sirik, Bandar-e Lengeh and Qeshm Island on Saturday. The US Central Command said the attacks were in response to an Iranian drone attack on the Panama-flagged oil tanker *Kiku* near the strait on Saturday.

The vessel was reportedly attempting to navigate an alternative shipping lane along Oman's coastline, a bypass route separate from the Iran-regulated waterway, Reuters reported.

This latest flare-up follows a tit-for-tat exchange just days earlier, after the Singapore-registered container ship *Ever Lovely* was hit by a drone on Thursday. The US retaliated with strikes near Sirik, and Iran responded by targeting US military outposts across the Gulf.

The Strait of Hormuz once handled one-fifth of global oil and natural gas shipments. Washington has pushed for a southern shipping corridor off Oman's coast, while Tehran maintains that all transiting vessels must use its designated channel and warns any alternative routes violate the ceasefire terms.

Amid the exchanges on Sunday morning, CMA CGM's *Galapagos* container ship sailed out of the strait in what the shipping giant called "an important milestone in a regional context that remains complex".

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Sunday that "the Strait of Hormuz remains under the total oversight and management of Iran throughout the 30 coming days, and after all obstacles are removed, the total capacity of the waterway will be restored".

"Any fresh military escalation will worsen the situation, delay the full reopening of the strait and push tensions even higher," he added, warning outside powers not to interfere.

Wolfgang Pusztai, a Vienna-based defense analyst, said that while US-Iran hostilities have reignited, the conflict remains containable, though accidental full-scale escalation cannot be ruled out.

"The scale of retaliatory strikes from both Iran and the US does not signal either side intends all-out war. To my mind, there remains room for a negotiated diplomatic settlement," he told the Al Jazeera news outlet.

Contact the writers at cuihaipei@chinadaily.com.cn

YAK YOGURT GAINS INCREASING POPULARITY

A traditional — and unique — taste of Xizang is evolving to suit the modern palate

By PALDEN NYIMA in Lhasa
and **ZHENG JINRAN**

China Vibes
— FOOD —

The first spoonful came as a shock.

"It was so sour that I couldn't help but shiver a little," recalled Liu Wanqing, a tourist from Henan province visiting the Xizang autonomous region for the first time.

Her first taste of Tibetan yak yogurt came on Barkhor Street in Lhasa, where pilgrims, tourists and shopkeepers mingle. Unlike the smooth, sweet yogurt she was used to, this one was thick, with a texture she compared to tofu pudding.

"You simply can't find another taste like it," she said.

For generations, yak yogurt has been an indispensable part of Tibetan daily life. Made from yak milk through natural fermentation, it is valued not only as a nutritious food, but also as a symbol of hospitality and blessing.

In Tibetan culture, yogurt is one of the "three white foods", alongside milk and cheese curds, representing purity, prosperity and good fortune.

Pema Tashi, a Tibetan studies scholar at the Xizang Academy of Social Sciences, said yogurt also lies at the heart of *shoton*, one of the region's most important traditional festivals.

"The word *shoton* literally means 'yogurt banquet' in Tibetan," he said. "Originally, local farmers and herders offered yogurt to monks descending from monasteries after a period of summer retreat. Over time, the celebration evolved into a grand festival featuring yogurt feasts, Tibetan opera performances, Buddha unveiling ceremonies and other cultural activities."



A customer prepares to have a bowl of yak yogurt on Wednesday at a restaurant in Lhasa, the capital of the Xizang autonomous region.
PALDEN NYIMA / CHINA DAILY

Beyond tradition, yak yogurt is also prized for its nutritional value.

Drolma, a doctor at the Tibetan Medicine Hospital of Xizang, said yak yogurt contains indigenous probiotics unique to the plateau, and it can help stimulate appetite, improve digestion and promote better sleep.

She added that yak milk itself is exceptionally rich in nutrients, with almost double the calcium content of cow's milk, and significantly higher protein and fat levels.

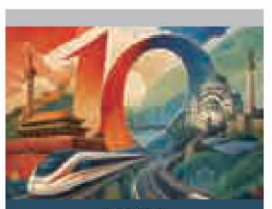
The unique yogurt is also evolving to cater to modern tastes.

On a recent Sunday afternoon on Barkhor Street, customers streamed in and out of Patahey Yak Yogurt Ice Cream Shop.

The tiny store offers a handful of seats, and most customers place an order and leave within minutes. A cartoon yak flashes across a digital screen behind the counter, while tourists line up outside, many opting for the shop's signature Oreo yogurt ice cream.

See ***Yogurt,*** *page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.



INSIDE
Powering the ironclad friendship
Global Views, page 8

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
Newsstand prices:
US $1 Canada C$1;
UK 1£ EU 1€
Kenya 50 Kenya Shilling
Asia Pacific: Thailand 120 thb; Philippines 120 php; Myanmar 2000 kyat; Japan 210 yen; Dubai 10 dirham; Pakistan 300 rupee

China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:49 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:49 PM

INDEPTH





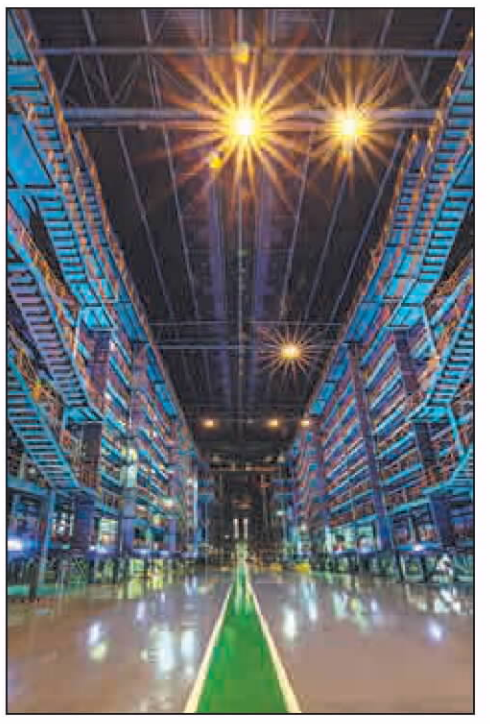
Left: Baosteel's No 1 Blast Furnace will soon become a fully AI-powered smart blast furnace in Shanghai to make precise temperature predictions and ensure stable operations.
Right: The No 3 Continuous Casting Machine, which operates at the Baoshan base of the company, contributes to efficient steel manufacturing processes. PHOTOS BY LIU JIMING / FOR CHINA DAILY



State-owned manufacturer sets global pace in industry's high-tech transformation

Blast furnace a testimony to Baosteel's smart AI use

Baosteel's all-weather terminal, located on the southern bank of the Yangtze River estuary in Baoshan district, Shanghai, is the first large-scale terminal berth of its kind in China's steel industry. LIU JIMING / FOR CHINA DAILY







Left: The C008 intelligent workshop at the cold rolling mill of the Baoshan base operates as a "dark factory". LIU JIMING / FOR CHINA DAILY **Above:** Technicians oversee production processes at the ironmaking control center of Baosteel in Shanghai. ZHANG LIPING / FOR CHINA DAILY
Right: Wang Shibin, chief engineer of big data application at Baosteel's ironmaking plant, monitors operation data. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By YU YILEI and **WANG YING** in Shanghai

It might be one of the world's toughest engineering feats — keeping China's first ultra-large blast furnace operating consistently at a temperature of around 1,510 degrees Celsius.

But this seemingly impossible task is now being streamlined and improved with the help of artificial intelligence.

Commissioned on Sept 15, 1985, Baoshan Iron and Steel Co's No 1 Blast Furnace — with a capacity exceeding 4,000 cubic meters — has been operating for over 40 years. The towering furnace is located in Shanghai's Baoshan district at a base of Baosteel, a subsidiary of China Baowu Steel Group.

Now, the 115-meter-tall structure is undergoing a technological revival and refinement of its operations thanks to the applications of AI.

Once the upgrading of the No 1 Blast Furnace is finished in the next few days, all four blast furnaces at the Baoshan base will be fully AI-powered. The technology will help reduce each furnace's operating costs by over 10 million yuan ($1.48 million) annually and cut carbon emissions by 5 kilograms per metric ton of hot metal, setting a benchmark for intelligent manufacturing in the steel industry.

Blast furnace ironmaking — a core process in steel production — has long faced challenges such as highly complex operating conditions, multi-variable coupling, and heavy reliance on human experience.

The "black box" nature of the process has been a major barrier to intelligent upgrading of the sector and is described as "dirty, difficult and dangerous", according to Wang Shibin, chief engineer of big data application at Baosteel's ironmaking plant.

"Within the sealed furnace, where temperatures can exceed 2,300 C and even rock is fully molten, no instrument can be inserted for direct measurement. Yet, the furnace temperature is crucial to blast furnace production, directly determining product quality stability," he said.

Poor control of furnace temperature and sulfur content can disrupt downstream steelmaking processes and increase production costs, Wang said.

Previously, furnace temperature was managed mainly through the experience of the company's senior operators.

"With large AI models the blast furnace, which was once a 'black box', has become far more transparent. By analyzing complex internal interactions, the system can now generate highly accurate forecasts, with predictions made two hours ahead and exceeding 90 percent accuracy," Wang said, adding that work efficiency has also improved by 20 percent.

"Taking the blast furnaces at the Baoshan base for example, the target is to maintain an ideal range of 1,510, plus or minus 10 degrees Celsius, with longer stability providing stronger operational assurance," he added.

The company officially launched the world's first AI-powered smart blast furnace model on April 3.

This marked that Baosteel has leveraged AI large models to improve furnace temperature predictions, providing a practical model for the steel industry's digital transformation by converting experience into data and uncertainty into precision.

Blast furnace ironmaking accounts for around 70 percent of total steel production costs. In this process, temperature fluctuations are not only cost-related, but also closely linked to carbon emissions.

According to Wang, the AI large model has played a significant role in ensuring stable blast furnace operations. Prediction accuracy has improved from just over 70 percent at the beginning of 2024 to over 90 percent, and continues to be optimized. Other external production bases have invited the team to help deploy the system.

Before embracing AI large models, Baosteel had already built a strong basis for using cutting-edge technologies.

Since the 1990s, the steelmaker has focused on information system development and experience accumulation, and further advanced digitalization to form a sizable database.

Smart factories

Baosteel designated 2024 its "Year of AI" and set a goal of developing 1,000 models to embed AI across production processes. To date, the technology has been applied in more than 600 scenarios.

"From the perspective of a single process, the AI smart blast furnace — what we call the 'AI furnace manager' — is actually a strong example of best practice in our operations," said Wu Wenbin, director of Baosteel's data and AI department.

According to the company's paper on AI application scenarios published earlier this year, AI now covers six major business segments and 23 scenario categories. A total of 162 AI achievements have been recorded, generating economic benefits of over 270 million yuan. The company is also actively contributing to industry standards and co-building an AI-driven industrial ecosystem.

A global first "intelligent driving" grading framework for production lines has been introduced by the steelmaker, drawing on autonomous driving logic to establish a Level 1–5 smart manufacturing maturity system.

The applications of AI in core processes have also achieved breakthroughs. Six major new applications now span the entire production chain, from ironmaking and steelmaking to rolling and quality inspection, with all performance outcomes quantified and verifiable.

Over the past 30 years, Baosteel has progressed through three stages of development — informationization, digitalization and intelligentization, Wu said.

The company's entry into smart manufacturing can be divided into two key phases.

During the first smart manufacturing stage from 2015 to 2023, Baosteel was listed as a World Economic Forum lighthouse factory, the first enterprise in the Chinese steel industry to receive the classification. During the same period, the steelmaker began smart manufacturing demonstration projects, laying the foundation for its intelligent manufacturing framework.

Since 2024, the company has entered the second smart manufacturing stage, with AI being the core driver. It has launched industry-first large models for the steel sector, including blast furnace models, setting benchmark applications, and leading the industry toward a new AI-driven paradigm of digital intelligence, Wu said.

Chen Fangruo, dean of Antai College of Economics and Management at Shanghai Jiao Tong University, said, "We are now in the fourth industrial revolution, where big data, artificial intelligence and computing applications are key features."

"Being selected as a lighthouse factory represents a global leading level of advanced manufacturing," Chen said.

As of March, there are 224 lighthouse factories worldwide, including 101 in China, which accounted for nearly half of the global total.

"Baosteel was also listed as one of the 15 in the first batch of leading-level smart factories by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology last year, a further recognition of its advancement in AI applications," Chen said.

"In my view, these two honors reflect the highly advanced level of Baosteel's manufacturing sector, and also represent one of the most advanced levels globally," he added.

Powering production

Hu Wangming, chairman of China Baowu Steel Group Corp, said that as the world's largest steel enterprise, China Baowu has elevated redefining steelmaking with artificial intelligence to become a corporate strategy.

Baosteel's "smart blast furnace", a global first, is the result of collaboration between Baosteel, Shanghai Baosight Software and partners including Huawei Technologies Co, he said, and represents a major breakthrough in addressing long-standing industry challenges.

It serves as a model for integrating AI with ironmaking operations, offering a valuable reference for the global steel industry's transformation, Hu added.

Baosteel operates multiple production bases with a combined annual steelmaking capacity of 80 million metric tons. By the end of 2025, the company had deployed a total of 994 industrial robots across its operations, equivalent to a robot density of 216 robots per 10,000 employees.

Robot density — a key measure of the adoption of automation in manufacturing — is the number of robots per 10,000 people in the industry.

China has a robot density of 166 per 10,000 workers, ranking sixth in Asia and 22nd globally, according to the latest report from the International Federation of Robotics.

In terms of the total number of industrial robots, China leads the world. China accounted for about 2 million units, nearly 4.5-fold more than Japan in second place, the report said. The country's annual installation numbers were also impressive as 54 percent, or 295,000 units, of all robots installed worldwide in 2024 were deployed in China.

"By 2030, we plan to build the 'Baosteel Brain' to enable centralized decision-making across all production processes and maximize operational value," Wu, director of Baosteel's data and AI department, said.

Since implementing its AI strategy, Baosteel has undergone a profound shift from experience-driven operations to a data-driven mode, and from "passive response" to "proactive prediction".

Looking ahead, Baosteel said it will continue to advance China's strategy for high-end, intelligent and green manufacturing, while deepening the implementation of an AI+ initiative as a central State-owned enterprise, and under China Baowu's "AI 2.0 strategy".

With AI as its core engine, Baosteel aims to build a future steelmaking model that is greener, smarter and more efficient, contributing a new solution to the digital and intelligent transformation of China's steel industry.

Core strategy

From a business perspective, the vast majority of steelmakers have already made digital transformation a core corporate strategy.

According to a survey by the China Iron and Steel Association, more than 95 percent of steelmakers have incorporated digital transformation into their overall development plans, reflecting a broad industry consensus on embracing digital technologies represented by AI.

"The steel sector has also stood out in national smart factory evaluations," said Wang Guoqing, director of the Beijing Lange Steel Information Research Center.

"So far, 36 steel plants have been recognized as the nation's excellent level smart factories by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, representing the high level of intelligent manufacturing in China."

In addition, among the 151 typical application cases for AI-enabled new industrialization released by the MIIT, 12 came from the steel industry, covering key areas including intelligent analysis, quality inspection and production optimization, Wang said.

"The industry shift toward intelligent manufacturing has also been driven by structural changes in China's steel market. While overall steel output has gradually declined in recent years, demand for high-quality and high value-added steel products has continued to rise, accelerating the transformation of companies such as Baosteel," she said.

China's crude steel output fell from 1.06 billion metric tons in 2020 to 960.81 million tons in 2025, according to official data.

Chen said when Baosteel was established in 1978, it carried the nation's hopes for industrial development. In the new era, the company's transformation has continued to closely align with the pulse of the times.

"Baosteel has made breakthroughs in a number of core steel products, serving both export markets and domestic industrial demand while continuously adapting to changing industrial needs.

"There is a huge sign at the entrance of Baosteel that roughly reads 'History will prove that the establishment of Baosteel was the right decision'," Chen said.

Contact the writers at wang_ying@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:49 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:49 PM

TOP NEWS

AI: Ultimate value lies in generating productivity

From page 1

The challenge is to determine whether the bubble is appropriately sized. AI is not immune to the Perez cycle, and some bubble is inevitable.

Globally, there is consensus that AI is advancing from large language models to agents and embodied intelligence. But opinions are divided on the pace of this development, especially in its transformation into real-world industrial applications, where both depth and speed vary widely. Widespread adoption can absorb investment and mitigate the bubble, but a shortfall in real-world applications may depress returns on investment and lead to overheated capital influx.

In both China and the US, it is difficult to determine whether the computing power market is overheating. It is a seller's market driven by genuine demand. High-end training computing power is in short supply, and infrastructure-level resources such as graphics processing units and data centers are its hard currency. The significant supply-demand gap suggests that investment in computing power is addressing genuine demand rather than creating the overcapacity that results in a "bubble burst".

This boom is fueled not only by current shortages, but also by expectations of future applications. For instance, Huawei estimates that nearly 900 billion intelligent agents could exist worldwide by 2035, implying an enormous demand for computing power as foundational infrastructure.

But the absence of a bubble in computing power does not mean there is no irrational exuberance in other areas of AI. Some AI application companies — such as those offering apps or wrapper models — are massively overvalued. The term "price-to-dream ratio" has been coined to describe these loss-making companies with exorbitant market capitalizations. The rapid rise of AI-related stocks in the US, Japan and the Republic of Korea calls for close scrutiny.

The deeper concern is whether AI has become over-financialized. This occurs when resources such as computing power, models, data and equity in AI projects begin to function like financial assets. They acquire financial attributes such as price signals, tradability, speculative potential and leverage.

A moderate financialization of AI helps in raising capital and fostering technological progress. But excessive and rapid financialization inflates virtual value and diverts capital toward speculation instead of research and development. In such a scenario, participants focus less on the practical value of AI and more on the price the next buyer is willing to pay.

This creates a self-reinforcing cycle where rising prices attract more capital, leading to even higher prices, ultimately resulting in a market with no effective brakes.

AI's ultimate value lies in generating real productivity. Finance should return to its core role of serving the real economy, while AI should stay true to its essence of technological innovation.

The author is chairman of the Chinese Society for Sustainable Development. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Bull run



A jockey balances on a wooden plough as he steers and spurs on two bulls through a flooded paddy field during Pacu Jawi, a traditional bull-racing event, in Simabur village, Indonesia, on Saturday. YASUYOSHI CHIBA / AFP

A shares stay resilient despite global jitters

By SHI JING in Shanghai
shijing@chinadaily.com.cn

The A-share market, despite facing temporary downward pressure due to last week's sharp sell-offs in the global tech sector, still holds promise for a gradual bull run, experts said, citing broad-based earnings improvements and robust growth of China's artificial intelligence industry.

A shares are shares in Chinese mainland-based companies that trade on Chinese stock exchanges and are renminbi-denominated.

Due to pullbacks in sectors including energy metals, batteries and communications equipment, the benchmark Shanghai Composite Index shed 2.26 percent to close at 4027.26 points on Friday. The Shenzhen Component Index slid 3.44 percent and the technology-focused ChiNext in Shenzhen lost 4.07 percent.

This was part of an overall market slide in the Asia-Pacific region on Friday. The Hang Seng Index in Hong Kong shed 1.76 percent while the Hang Seng Tech Index fell 3.41 percent. Japan's Nikkei 225 dropped 4.15 percent and the South Korean stock market, which saw its Kospi Index close 5.81 percent lower, halted trading for 20 minutes during the morning session as the index plunged over 8 percent for the fifth time this year.

Despite short-term market volatility, analysts said China's macroeconomic fundamentals remain supportive for equities. They noted that major international financial institutions including Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley expect the Chinese economy to remain resilient this year, supported by policy measures, improving exports, stronger corporate earnings and the rapid development of AI, which is building a solid foundation for the stock market over the medium to long term.

The latest bout of market volatility was partly fueled by global concerns over the tech sector, following Apple's announcement on Thursday of a price hike amid surging memory chip costs, and reports that OpenAI is postponing its IPO until next year. In the trading week ending Friday, the United States' stock market witnessed its first net outflow in 13 weeks, with the tech sector logging a record $9.3 billion in weekly net outflow.

Yang Delong, chief economist at First Seafront Fund in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, said the pullback was mainly a correction for sectors that had drawn excessive capital and risen too fast, and the scale of the correction should be relatively small. He added that the slow-bull logic for A shares remains unchanged.

Wang Yongjian, an analyst at Zhongtai Securities, said that systemic risks are low in the A-share market. He added that structural opportunities exist in upstream resources and selected themes, even though he warned of near-term volatility in the tech sector.

Xia Fanjie, a strategist at China Securities, said that he remained optimistic about a slow A-share bull run, fueled by AI and computing. The supportive policies introduced at the Lujiazui Forum held in mid-June in Shanghai will translate into strong performance in the technology-focused STAR Market in Shanghai and ChiNext in Shenzhen, he said.

Yang Weiyong, an associate professor of economics at the University of International Business and Economics, stressed that AI is no castle in the air. He said that it is underpinned by solid technological and industrial foundations, and unlike the dot-com bubble back in 2000, when viable profit models were largely absent, AI today has been deeply integrated into numerous industries and delivered tangible value.

According to Meng Lei, a China equity strategist at UBS Securities, recovery in A-share profitability has been accelerating, which can be seen from the first quarter fiscal results and the improving industrial profits. The average profitability growth rate is likely to reach 11 percent in 2026, up from 3.9 percent last year. Overseas investors are likely to further return to the Chinese stock market. Given a slow bull outlook, Meng said that growth enterprises are likely to outperform.

From the global perspective, there is rising probability that major adjustments are underway, said Hong Hao, chief investment officer at Lotus Asset Management. Investors are thus advised to take profits and divert their focus to companies which have not seen significant gains in the previous rounds of rally.

Sci-tech: More opportunities open for HK

From page 1

Since receiving the letter, support from the central government has been "never-ending", with policy barriers falling and more opportunities opening for Hong Kong scientists to join national projects, Ip said.

Not only the central government, but also Guangdong's provincial and municipal authorities have opened research funding to Hong Kong scientists.

In 2022, Xi visited the InnoHK Hong Kong Center for Neurodegenerative Diseases, and encouraged researchers to constantly pursue excellence and contribute to the nation's scientific endeavors.

During Xi's visit, Ip, who leads the center, explained its self-developed blood test technology for Alzheimer's disease. The technology analyzes specific proteins and predicts the risk of developing Alzheimer's up to 15 years before symptoms appear, enabling early intervention.

The neuroscientist said she appreciated Xi's care and high expectations for Hong Kong scientists, as he was always encouraging them to produce greater results and, more important, translate the results into tangible applications.

"I clearly remember him asking what he could do to help our research results 'land' and make them widely available to benefit humanity," Ip said.

Xi's expectations also have become key goals of the center.

By refining the technology, the HKUST team reduced the Alzheimer's blood protein panel from 21 to three, cutting costs by 80 percent while maintaining over 90 percent accuracy.

"As one of the inventors, I'm excited to see our (Alzheimer's) blood test technology moving from the lab into clinical settings and communities," said Jason Jiang Yuanbing, a research assistant professor in HKUST's Division of Life Science, who demonstrated the blood test technology during Xi's visit. "Through collaboration across the mainland and overseas, we're getting closer to making this innovation more accessible to help meet the needs of an aging society," Jiang said.

Mok Kin-ying, chief medical officer of the center and head of clinical partnerships at HKUST's School of Medicine, said: "Over the past decade, Hong Kong and the mainland have seen much closer exchange and collaboration in science and technology. Looking ahead, we hope this momentum will further strengthen research and healthcare services and deliver tangible benefits to people on both sides."

In recent years, and especially now, since the 15th Five-Year Plan has set technological self-reliance as a national goal, Ip said that she has felt the nation's unprecedented commitment to sci-tech development. As president of HKUST, the educator holds high hopes for the city's young generation of researchers.

During the interview, Ip encouraged students and young researchers to prepare for challenges, uphold academic integrity, and approach every experiment and paper with rigor. They should also maintain a global vision and an open mind by collaborating across fields and borders, and above all remember that the ultimate goal is to solve societal problems and serve the public, Ip said.

Shadow Li contributed to this story.

Industrial sector sustains strong momentum

Nation remains on steady recovery track and ready to meet its growth target, analysts say

By ZHANG CHENXU and **ZHONG NAN**

China's industrial sector sustained strong growth momentum in the first five months of 2026, as major industrial companies recorded faster profit growth, buoyed by the robust demand for artificial intelligence-related electronics products, official data released on Saturday showed.

Analysts said the upbeat figures underscore the increasingly stronger role played by new growth drivers in supporting the world's second-largest economy, adding to signs that China remains on a recovery track and is well positioned to meet growth targets.

In the first five months of the year, industrial enterprises with annual main business revenue of at least 20 million yuan ($2.93 million) reported total profits of 3.14 trillion yuan, up 18.8 percent year-on-year, with the growth rate accelerating by 0.6 percentage point from the January-April period, data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed.

In May, profits at major industrial enterprises rose 21.1 percent year-on-year, continuing to expand at a double-digit pace after a 24.7 percent increase in April. "Profits at major industrial firms have continued to post solid gains since the beginning of the year," said Yu Weining, a statistician at the bureau.

Yu attributed the improvement in profits mainly to strong gains in the electronics, high-tech manufacturing and raw materials manufacturing sectors, as well as the continued implementation of proactive macro policies.

The electronics manufacturing sector remained a major growth engine, with profits surging 103.9 percent year-on-year in the first five months and contributing 43.1 percent to the overall profit growth of major industrial enterprises.

"The rapid advance of AI worldwide has spurred a surge in demand for advanced computing and memory chips, providing a strong boost to profit growth in the electronics sector," Yu added.

High-tech manufacturing also maintained solid growth, with profits rising 44.7 percent year-on-year in the first five months.

On Sunday, the China Federation of Logistics and Purchasing released the country's logistics performance data for the January-May period. The total value of social logistics reached 146.6 trillion yuan in the first five months, up 5.2 percent year-on-year.

In May, logistics demand associated with high-tech manufacturing grew 15.1 percent year-on-year, while that for equipment manufacturing rose 9.5 percent.

The strong performance of advanced manufacturing, logistics and AI-related sectors reinforced optimism among global financial institutions about China's growth outlook.

Morgan Stanley last month raised its forecast for China's GDP growth this year to 4.8 percent from 4.7 percent. Robin Xing, chief China economist at Morgan Stanley, said the revision was supported by resilient exports and robust AI- and green-related investment, which are expected to generate positive spillovers leading to industrial upgrade and modernization.

Goldman Sachs also raised China's GDP growth this year to 4.8 percent from 4.3 percent, citing stronger export growth expectations and China's expanding global market share in manufacturing.

Wen Bin, chief economist at China Minsheng Bank, said industrial profits are likely to remain on a recovery track in coming months.

"Improving price conditions, better profit margins, stronger policy support, as well as sustained momentum in emerging industries, will continue to underpin industrial profitability," Wen said.

Despite the strong gains, experts said the recovery remains uneven, as some downstream and traditional industries continue to face profit pressures, pointing to the need for more targeted support.

Luo Zhiheng, chief economist and head of the research institute at Yuekai Securities, said the uneven recovery reflects the broader structural transition underway in China's economy, with new growth drivers becoming increasingly important as property-related sectors remain under pressure.

According to experts, policy support would remain a key pillar. Zhang Di, chief macroeconomic analyst at China Galaxy Securities, said that further support for equipment renewal, infrastructure investment and consumption stimulus would help improve demand recovery in midstream and downstream sectors.

Contact the writers at zhangchenxu@chinadaily.com.cn



Inside
Editorial, **page 6**



Workers assemble folding electric bicycles at a smart mobility devices manufacturing unit in Jinhua, Zhejiang province, on Thursday. YANG HAIQING / FOR CHINA DAILY

Yogurt: Larger-scale production possible

From page 1

Over the past decade, as tourism has flourished, yogurt stores catering to visitors have sprung up, offering yogurt ice cream, fruit jam yogurt and yogurt topped with chocolate powder or roasted highland barley flour.

Zhang Xinyue, another tourist from Henan, said she would also like to see more variations inspired by local ingredients.

"Adding honey, roasted highland barley or wild berries makes it more approachable while keeping its plateau character," Zhang said.

At the Patahey yogurt shop, the traditional flavor remains the best-seller.

"Most visitors say the yogurt tastes rich and natural," said Drukmokhar, a staff member at the store. "Many say (its sourness) is exactly what makes it special."

And it's a taste of Xizang that can only be properly experienced by going there.

The yogurt only remains fresh for about three days and requires cold-chain transportation, making long-distance shipping difficult, she said.

Science, though, is on the case. Over the past seven years, researchers at the Xizang Academy of Agricultural and Animal Husbandry Sciences have traveled the region collecting samples of traditional fermented foods, including yogurt and cheese curds.

Led by Zhang Yuhong from the academy's Institute of Agricultural Products Development and Food Science, the team isolated more than 2,000 microbial strains and eventually identified six stable indigenous lactic acid bacteria strains capable of re-creating Tibetan yogurt's signature "plateau flavor".

The breakthrough means that traditional fermentation methods, once passed down orally among herding families, can now be preserved, studied and standardized, allowing authentic Tibetan yak yogurt to be produced on a larger scale without losing its original character.

Back on Barkhor Street, tourists continue to pucker at its unexpected sourness. Others ask for honey or sugar to tone it down. But almost everyone leaves with the same realization: Your first taste of Tibetan yak yogurt is impossible to forget.

Contact the writers at zhengjinran@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:49 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:49 PM

WORLD IN FOCUS



From left: Syrian photographer Serbest Salih speaks to children during a workshop held as part of Fotohane Darkroom project in Mardin, southeastern Turkiye, on June 13. Salih (center) speaks to children during the workshop on June 13. Children choose cameras at the workshop on June 13.



A group of children take pictures in the streets during a workshop held as part of Fotohane Darkroom project in Mardin, southeastern Turkiye, on June 14. PHOTOS BY YASIN AKGUL / AFP

FRAMING HOPE

In Turkiye's 'house of photo', the world is seen through the lens of children fleeing wars

In a dimly lit room illuminated by a pair of red lamps, eight-year-old Zeynep waits to see photographs she has taken, now trapped as shadows and silhouettes on a roll of film.

"How big is your curiosity?" asks her mentor, 40-year-old photographer Amar Kilic, as he develops the negatives in a sink.

"As big as the world," she replies.

Originally from the southeastern province of Mardin, Zeynep is among eight children taking part in a two-month analog photography workshop for local and migrant youth near Turkiye's borders with Iraq and Syria.

The project, called Fotohane Darkroom, started in Mardin in 2024, by Kilic and Syrian photographer and educator Serbest Salih. In Turkish, Arabic, Kurdish and Persian, Fotohane means "house of photo", a name chosen by the children.

In fact, insists Kilic, the children are in charge throughout the process.

"From loading film, to developing it and printing their own photographs, they do everything by themselves. They get to set and write their own rules also."

Once part of Mesopotamia, the walls of Mardin's old city, traversed by narrow streets, hold thousands of years of history and attract tourists from all over the world.

But the city is also home to low-income families and refugees who fled Syria's civil war.

Among them are the families of 13-year-old Yahya, 12-year-old Yusuf, 11-year-old Nihal and 13-year-old Sam. They came from Damascus in 2014 and 2015 when a war broke out inside Syria.

"I'm very excited when I take pictures, it's all very interesting for us," says Nihal, swinging a small, black camera from her wrist as she searches for a frame to capture.

Their teacher, 32-year-old Salih, a smiling photographer with curiosity-filled eyes, fled the Kurdish town of Kobane, in northern Syria, when it was torn by the war in 2014.

Thousands of Syrian refugees have settled across the Turkish border in Mardin region during the war that ended with the fall of then Syrian president Bashar al-Assad.





Top and above: Children look at camera films in a darkroom during a workshop held as part of Fotohane Darkroom project in Mardin, Turkiye, on June 14.

His own struggle is a topic Salih wants to avoid and instead insists all the attention should go on the children he's patiently educating.

Since his arrival in Turkiye, he has been trying to establish himself as a bridge of tolerance and integration.

He started his first analog photography workshop in 2015 in a secondhand caravan, driving to villages along the border and focusing on vulnerable local and refugee children.

"Analog photography is about self-confidence. When taking a digital photograph you might think about deleting it on the spot. But with film, they spend the whole workshop thinking and feeling every one of those 36 frames, and only see them at the end. And their photos are beautiful," Salih says.

'The magic room'

Ask any of the children what part of the process is their favorite and the answer will be: the darkroom where the images they first see through the viewfinder and captured by pressing the shutter come to life.

"They call it the magic room," says Kilic, who teaches development and printing, always with a smile on his face while giving feedback.

"Seeing an image on a completely white sheet of paper, bringing to life with their own hands an image they themselves took, creates a very special feeling for the children. They say: 'I was able to produce this'," says Kilic.

This summer, the children's photos are on display in Italy, Belgium, Britain and Indonesia.

Salih and Kilic are hosting the workshop in the center of Mardin, but they think about returning to Salih's initial approach with the darkroom in a caravan.

"The most logical way is to become mobile. To go to different regions, offer training and have them carry it forward," says Kilic.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA



From left: Zeynep (right) and Zuhre (center), 9-year-old, look at a camera film after developing it during a workshop held as part of Fotohane Darkroom project in Mardin, Turkiye, on June 13. Co-founder of the project, photographer Amar Kilic (center in black T-shirt) speaks to children during the workshop on June 13. Kilic (right) teaches children during the workshop on June 14.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:49 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:49 PM

WORLD



Above: Residents scan missing persons lists on Saturday, three days after a devastating pair of twin earthquakes struck La Guaira, Venezuela.
JAVIER CAMPOS / AP
Left: Earthquake survivors gather to collect water and essential relief supplies during a donation drive in Caraballeda, La Guaira, on Saturday.
MIGUEL MEDINA VIA REUTERS

Venezuela quake toll tops 1,400

Tens of thousands still missing as foreign rescue teams pour into devastated nation

LA GUAIRA, Venezuela — Rescue crews raced on Sunday to find survivors in the rubble of Venezuela's powerful earthquakes as the death toll reached 1,430 and hopes dwindled more than three days after the earth roared and rumbled.

Tens of thousands of people were reported missing as collapsed buildings dotted cities in a country already enduring an economic crisis and political upheaval after United States special forces forcibly seized President Nicolas Maduro in January.

Millions of people were also feared to lack sanitation and other basic needs.

The Chinese embassy in Venezuela said eight Chinese nationals had been confirmed dead in Wednesday's earthquakes as of Saturday afternoon (Sunday morning, Beijing time).

Experts say the first 72 hours after natural disasters are the key, narrow window for finding the living. After that, the search becomes one of recovering bodies.

A Salvadoran rescue worker who declined to give his name put it this way: "At this point, they are probably dead bodies. Thanks to God, maybe we can find people still alive."

An 11-year-old boy was rescued from the rubble in Caraballeda, in the north of the country, late on Saturday, interim leader Delcy Rodriguez said.

"Every life is a source of hope for Venezuela," she said in a post on X, accompanied by a video of the rescue.

The search for survivors saw desperate attempts by local residents to claw away rubble from collapsed buildings.

"It's just very chaotic, hot and unorganized," said Australian firefighter Craig De Meillon, 43, who traveled alone to La Guaira from Miami, Florida, to help. "Hopefully, there are more people to find."

Venezuela's government said on Saturday that 1,600 members of foreign rescue teams had arrived to help search for survivors as it tightened access to the worst-affected state.

Rodriguez said in an overnight address on state television that 10 more countries were still to join rescue efforts and 14,000 military and police members were in La Guaira to patrol and take sanitary measures.

Foreign Ministry official Oliver Blanco said on Saturday that in recent hours Venezuela had received 17 flights carrying more than 1,600 members of rescue teams, and that over the next 24 hours, 25 additional flights were expected.

"We thank the international community for its support and solidarity during these moments of uncertainty for Venezuelans," Blanco said.

Donating supplies

The Chinese embassy said overseas Chinese in Venezuela have donated about 500 metric tons of relief supplies, including bottled water, biscuits, diapers, milk, rice, sugar and fish.

The supplies were donated by the Federation of Chinese Associations in Venezuela and other Chinese community groups as of Saturday afternoon, benefiting nearly 10,000 families affected by the disaster.

Tom Fletcher, UN under-secretary-general for humanitarian affairs and emergency relief coordinator, told Agence France-Presse on Friday that the death toll could continue to soar, adding that more than 50,000 people were missing.

The International Organization for Migration said it had examined available population and damage data and had determined that "up to 6.76 million people could be affected", and would "require emergency shelter, safe water, sanitation and hygiene services, healthcare, protection support and essential relief items".

Venezuelan National Assembly President Jorge Rodriguez reported 1,430 dead and 3,238 people injured on Saturday, while the United Nations estimated $6.7 billion in physical damage, equivalent to 6 percent of the country's GDP.

AGENCIES — XINHUA

Serbian President Vucic says he will resign within weeks

BELGRADE — Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said on Saturday that he will remain in office for a few more weeks before submitting his resignation.

Speaking at a large pro-government rally themed "Serbia, One Family" in Belgrade, Vucic said he would continue to serve as president for a short period before stepping down.

He called for national unity and said he would propose an electoral list named "United Serbia" in the upcoming elections. However, he did not specify when he would dissolve parliament before the snap elections.

Vucic said Serbia is at a critical stage of development and must maintain political stability and social cohesion, pledging continuous efforts to boost economic growth and improve living standards.

He said the government aims to raise average monthly salaries to 1,400 euros ($1,595) and pensions to 650 euros in the coming years, while increasing support for low-income groups.

The rally was attended by about 207,000 supporters from across the country, along with government officials and representatives of the ruling coalition, according to the Serbian Interior Ministry.

Vucic's second five-year term was set to end in the spring of 2027, which, under the Serbian constitution, is also his final term.

XINHUA

Briefly

FRANCE

Measures sought after Burkina Faso cuts ties

France said on Saturday that it was considering reciprocal measures after Burkina Faso broke off diplomatic relations. Burkina Faso severed ties with France on Friday, saying "the conditions essential for promoting relations based on mutual respect, reciprocal trust, respect for the principle of noninterference in internal affairs and national sovereignty are no longer in place". The French Foreign Ministry said France "regrets this hostile and unfounded decision, which illustrates the worrying drift of the Burkinabe authorities". The ministry urged French nationals in Burkina Faso "to exercise heightened vigilance".

Plane crash kills all 11 people on board

A civilian aircraft carrying skydivers crashed near the eastern French town of Tomblaine on Sunday, killing all 11 people on board, local authorities said. The crash killed five instructors, five students, and the pilot, said Yves Seguy, the prefect of the eastern department of Meurthe-et-Moselle. "There were no bystanders among the victims," he added. The aircraft, registered in Germany, crashed in a grassy area near the runway of the Nancy-Essey airfield, close to a residential area and two roads, an Agence France-Presse journalist reported. The cause of the incident was not immediately clear.

DR CONGO

Confirmed Ebola cases exceed 1,200

The Democratic Republic of Congo has reported 1,203 confirmed cases of Ebola, including 321 deaths, since the outbreak was declared in mid-May, according to a report released on Friday by public health authorities. The report said 148 patients had recovered, while 419 patients were in isolation or receiving hospital care. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director-general of the World Health Organization, said on Friday that contact tracing in the DR Congo was reaching more people and that more Ebola patients were recovering and returning home. However, he warned that the fight was "far from over".

XINHUA — AGENCIES

China's governance initiative draws praise

By **SARA EL ASHRAFY** in Cairo
For China Daily

The Global Governance Initiative proposed by China has been widely hailed by intellectuals and diplomats as instrumental in promoting multilateralism and international cooperation amid profound transformations in the international system and escalating global crises.

The Global Governance Initiative, or GGI, represents a strategic shift in the structure of the international system, offering an alternative vision that goes beyond the monopoly of a single model, according to Ali Youssef, former Sudanese foreign minister and secretary-general of the Association of Arab-Chinese Friendship Societies.

He said the initiative is grounded in the concept of "developmental governance", which emphasizes the role of the state and political stability as a gateway to development. He added that the Chinese experience provides practical experience for developing countries, contributing to the consolidation of pluralism in governance systems.

"The initiative ... seeks promoting multipolarity and enhancing the representation of Global South countries in international decision-making institutions, while adhering to the principles of sovereignty and noninterference as fundamental pillars of international cooperation," he said at a seminar in Cairo recently.

Zhu Xiaozhong, minister counselor at the Chinese embassy in Egypt, stated that the international system is witnessing a growing rise in unilateralism, hegemony, and protectionism, alongside deepening deficits in peace, development, security, and trust. He noted that the GGI is based on key principles, including sovereign equality, mutual respect, and the centrality of people in development and international policymaking.

He said that "achieving sustainable peace in the Middle East requires sustained collective efforts from all parties", noting that China has intensified its engagement with various stakeholders since the escalation of conflict between the United States, Israel and Iran, aiming to de-escalate tensions and promote dialogue.

Qualitative shift

Ali El-Hefny, former Egyptian assistant foreign minister and vice-president of the Egypt-China Friendship Association, said that the initiative represents a qualitative shift in the approach to global governance, restoring the principles of multilateralism and balance in international relations. He noted "its growing importance as it seeks to mobilize broad international support, particularly from Global South countries".

El-Hefny stated that the initiative "reflects a transformation in global governance as a strategic priority in reshaping the international order", adding that it extends across multiple regions, from Africa to the Arab world, as well as groupings such as BRICS.

Ahmed Kandil, head of the International Relations Unit at Egypt's leading think tank Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, said the world is experiencing an extremely complex international phase marked by overlapping political, security, economic, climate and technological crises. Such troubles span conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine, tensions in the Red Sea, issues involving Iran, as well as pressing energy and food security challenges.

"This accumulation of crises reveals a deeper structural crisis in global governance, reflected in the widening gap between the scale of accelerating challenges and the capacity of existing global governance institutions to respond effectively," he said, stressing that the Chinese initiative represents a reform-oriented approach aimed at strengthening multilateralism and cooperation instead of hegemony and polarization.

Rania Aboelkheir, secretary-general of the Global Forum for Future Studies, based in Cairo, said that GGI is based on building a "community with a shared future for humanity" through a comprehensive approach linking development, security, and civilization.

She explained that "the initiative serves as an overarching framework integrating major Chinese initiatives, strengthening shared security, supporting multipolarity, and reinforcing respect for international law", noting that it functions as a coordinating mechanism among the Belt and Road Initiative, the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, and the Global Civilization Initiative.

The writer is a freelance journalist for China Daily.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn

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

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108
529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1859

Heritage on display



Kyrgyz artisans showcase traditional crafts during the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Women's Forum in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on Saturday. The event serves as a cultural prelude to the upcoming SCO heads-of-state anniversary summit. IGOR KOVALENKO / EPA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:49 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:49 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

EU's use of maximum pressure belies its faith in talks to resolve disputes

Despite mounting challenges facing China-EU economic and trade relations, the European Union, rather than responding to China's concerns and taking concrete actions to address them, has indicated that it will adopt even more aggressive protectionist and restrictive measures targeting China.

European Central Bank chief Christine Lagarde last week pointed an accusing finger at China for allegedly "manipulating" its currency, which she said is about 15 or 16 percent "undervalued" and causes "imbalances" that "endanger" the global economy.

Her remarks reflect some EU politicians' dissatisfaction with the current state of China-EU trade, which they describe as "unsustainable". The EU's goods deficit against China increased to nearly 360 billion euros ($409 billion) last year, up from 305 billion euros the year before. Brussels has signaled repeatedly it is prepared to impose new tariffs and restrictions on Chinese goods and companies.

The EU's proposed revisions to its Cybersecurity Act and the Industrial Accelerator Act are expected to introduce additional barriers for Chinese companies and products. The EU is also reportedly considering imposing additional tariffs on Chinese-made plug-in hybrid vehicles. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has said that the bloc has a broad toolbox which it would use more proactively to safeguard its interests, while also developing new instruments.

These intimidating remarks come just before a major meeting under the China-EU trade and investment consultation mechanism scheduled for this week. They do not bode well for the prospect of achieving any substantial outcomes at the event. Instead, the EU's lack of sincerity in resolving economic and trade disputes risks escalating China-EU trade frictions.

Europe's justifications hinge on alleged "trade imbalances" with China and concerns over issues such as "subsidies" and "overcapacity". Yet these arguments are rooted in inaccurate and hostile interpretations and overlook the fact that Europe's economic woes stem mainly from declining manufacturing competitiveness, insufficient innovation capacity and surging energy costs.

China has always seen the EU as an important economic and trade partner. It wants to manage disputes with the bloc through dialogue and consultation, and promote pragmatic cooperation to advance the sound and steady development of bilateral economic and trade ties.

With the EU putting up barriers and engaging in protectionist acts, China has rightly pointed out that such moves will only prove counterproductive, undermine market rules, and disrupt global industry and supply chains.

Despite the danger of trade frictions escalating into a trade war, the EU seems ready to let the differences between the two sides hinder their consultations. It has so far failed to respond to China's concerns over the unreasonable suppression of Chinese enterprises and the continued abuse of investigation tools under its so-called "Foreign Subsidies Regulation".

Confronted with the EU's punitive measures, China has no choice but to pledge to take forceful and effective countermeasures. As some experts said, the countermeasures could include launching anti-discrimination investigations, conducting reviews into supply chain security, and imposing restrictions on some EU products.

China's rationality and restraint should not be mistaken for weakness and used as a pretext to escalate pressure. That would only take the EU further down the wrong path of confrontation.

The economic cooperation between China and the EU is pivotal to economic globalization. Preserving its stability is instrumental to upholding the world's economic and trade order and global economic system. The ongoing trade frictions, if mismanaged by the EU, might pose a challenge to the soundness of the global economy at large.

To break the deadlock, the EU should view the competitive dynamics and perceived security concerns in a more rational and objective manner and address these issues through openness rather than protectionism.

Economic and trade disputes should be resolved via bilateral coordination instead of unilateral protectionist policies and arbitrary regulatory moves. Trying to force China into submission through maximum pressure will only lead to a dead end.

'China Opportunity 2.0' knocks for the world

China's latest industrial profit figures show the growing gap between the dubious narratives of some Western political circles and the economic reality of China. Official data released on the weekend show that the profits of China's industrial enterprises above a designated size reached 3.14 trillion yuan ($464 billion) in the first five months of the year, up 18.8 percent year-on-year.

Profits in the electronics industry more than doubled, surging 103.9 percent and contributing more than 43 percent of overall industrial profit growth. Demand from artificial intelligence, new energy and advanced manufacturing industries pushed profits in the nonferrous metals sector up 117.1 percent.

This is more than a cyclical rebound. It is the latest evidence that China's growth story is moving into a new phase — one that is being described as "China Opportunity 2.0". Increasingly, multinational companies are coming to innovate with China. The country's expanding technological ecosystem, stable industrial supply chains and accelerating commercialization of new technologies have become competitive advantages in their own right.

That was the unmistakable message emerging from this year's Summer Davos in Dalian, Liaoning province. While some economies remain preoccupied with tariffs, "decoupling" and geopolitical rivalry, many business leaders focused instead on China's growing role as an innovation platform.

In his speech at the event, Chinese Premier Li Qiang said that amid increased volatility in the international landscape, four keywords — stability, innovation, dynamism and integration — present a comprehensive outlook of the Chinese economy.

China's next phase of development will generate opportunities not simply through market size but through technological progress, industrial upgrading and deeper global cooperation. Innovation-driven development is the key to China's long-term, steady and sustained economic success. The country's innovation has been forged through relentless research and development efforts, tempered through extensive application across industries and cultivated through a robust ecosystem.

This helps explain why the "de-risking" rhetoric has produced far less economic separation in practice than its peddlers might suggest. Companies may diversify supply chains at the margins, but few are willing to detach themselves from one of the world's largest innovation ecosystems.

The "Shopping in China: Sharing New Opportunities of Open Development" report released by Xinhua Institute on Friday points to another dimension of "China Opportunity 2.0". Openness is no longer defined solely by exports or foreign direct investment. It is increasingly reflected in expanding consumer demand, digital commerce, improved business services and policies designed to make China a more attractive destination for global companies and international consumers alike. Consumption is becoming another gateway through which foreign businesses can participate in China's next stage of development.

None of this suggests that China's economy is without challenges. The property adjustment continues, external demand remains uncertain and geopolitical tensions are unlikely to disappear. But too much international commentary still evaluates China through the lens of yesterday's economy rather than tomorrow's.

"China Opportunity 2.0" is more about innovation and cooperation that are the answers to tackling the challenges to global growth. There should be joint efforts to deepen connectivity and collaboration, foster an open world economy, keep global industry and supply chains stable and unimpeded, and seek greater synergy for innovation.

On its part, the world's second-largest economy is increasingly exporting technologies and research capabilities alongside manufactured products while opening its door wider for multinational companies, investments, products and talents.

The crux of "China Opportunity 2.0" lies in participating in one of the world's fastest-moving innovation ecosystems, where research, manufacturing and commercialization reinforce one another on an unparalleled scale.

The question is whether global businesses can afford to miss the opportunities emerging from China's next phase of innovation-driven growth. That, more than any quarterly statistic, is what "China Opportunity 2.0" is really about.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

Japanese businesses should help to rein in Tokyo's adventurism

Several Japanese commercial delegations visited Beijing recently for the fourth China International Supply Chain Expo, which was held from June 22 to 26. Among them was a delegation of Japan's Association for the Promotion of International Trade, which also visited China's Foreign Ministry and met with a vice-foreign minister.

The Japanese visitors were seeking to ease Japan's strained access to crucial industrial minerals supplied by China against the backdrop of a deteriorating political climate — one created and exacerbated by Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi and her government.

Japan's economy is deeply intertwined with China's, featuring remarkable structural complementarity. Bilateral trade reached $146.7 billion in the first five months of 2026, up 17.2 percent year-on-year, according to the General Administration of Customs of China.

Japanese companies supply precision machinery, advanced manufacturing equipment and high-end materials to China. China, meanwhile, provides Japan with a super-large consumer market, efficient manufacturing capacity and supply chains that are difficult to replicate elsewhere. It should be an economic relationship built on mutual benefits.

That explains why Japanese companies continue to flock to Chinese trade fairs. Supply chains constructed over decades cannot simply be restructured because the Japanese right-wing forces decide to redraw geopolitical maps.

But the Takaichi government's political choices, particularly those that touch issues related to China's sovereignty, territorial integrity and core interests, are having grave economic consequences.

Since Takaichi assumed office last October, her irresponsible and erroneous remarks and actions have deeply damaged China-Japan relations. Japanese businesses have paid a heavy price.

Their frustration is understandable. Their efforts to try and mend economic ties with China reflect a recognition shared by much of Corporate Japan that the Takaichi government's China policy threatens the very foundation of bilateral economic relations.

The goodwill of some Japanese businesses, however, cannot substitute for political trust. Economic dialogue cannot be insulated indefinitely from broader diplomatic tensions. If the Takaichi government continues to inflame historical grievances and persists in its misguided neo-militarist trajectory, the economic relationship between China and Japan will inevitably bear the brunt of further consequences.

That is the stark reality confronting Japanese companies operating in China, as well as those relying on China's market and manufacturing ecosystem. Instead of urging Beijing to restore normal economic ties, Japanese businesses might achieve more by directing their efforts at home. The current diplomatic impasse is the product of the political choices of Tokyo.

Even more troubling is the possibility that the present impasse could be institutionalized by Tokyo. If the Takaichi government continues using the strained relations to justify the "restructuring" of supply chains and reducing economic engagement with China, Japanese companies should brace for a vastly different commercial environment.

Beneath this economic calculus lies a far graver concern. Should Japan's right-wing forces succeed in resurrecting their militaristic ambitions and steering the country back toward confrontation with its neighbors, the Takaichi government's current moves would be seen as a calculated step down that road. Left unchecked, this path leads to a re-militarized Japan, and a new source of regional conflict. In this dangerous context, the fate of Sino-Japanese economic relations is not merely a consequential footnote — it is a critical indicator of the direction in which the broader relationship is headed.

Geography and history, however, are stubbornly immune to ideology. China and Japan are destined to remain neighbors. Nor can history be rewritten by Japanese right-wing forces.

Japan's business community still has an indispensable role to play. Japanese commercial leaders have long served as an important bridge between China and Japan. They are uniquely placed to pressure the Japanese government to recognize a simple truth: the rise of neo-militarism will only lead the country to repeat its historical mistakes.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Action plan to facilitate foreign investment

Editor's note: *Three government departments, including the Ministry of Commerce, have formulated an action plan to stabilize and enhance foreign investment. The plan includes deepening the opening-up of the education sector, particularly vocational training institutions, vocational colleges and high-level universities specializing in science, engineering, agriculture and medicine. Sang Baichuan, a professor at the University of International Business and Economics, explained the measures to DaHe Fortune Cube, a financial news outlet under Henan Daily. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

The education sector is an important part of China's service industry, which is now opening up at a faster pace. Initiatives to open up the education sector have already been implemented within its pilot free trade zones and free trade ports. Drawing on this experience, China is now scaling up its opening-up efforts.

High-tech manufacturing and high-end service industries have an enormous demand for talent. High-quality talent pools deliver better human resources for high-quality foreign investment. Opening up vocational education and fields such as science, engineering, agriculture and medicine to foreign investment will help China cultivate a large workforce tailored to the needs of high-end manufacturing and service industries.

China's abundant talent resources are a major draw for foreign investment, yet there is room for improvement in vocational and higher education through increased opening-up. A greater inflow of high-quality international educational resources will help elevate the quality of domestic education. This will help foster more outstanding talents to meet the demand of high-quality foreign investment.

The action plan addresses the concerns of foreign-invested enterprises, and strives to remove the obstacles constraining their development. This demonstrates that China welcomes foreign investment, and that the country will offer expanded market opportunities for foreign-invested companies to benefit from its economic growth.

China is currently upgrading its economic structure and pursuing high-quality development. It places special emphasis on leveraging the opportunities brought by the digital economy and intelligent transformation to attract high-quality foreign investment. The plan serves as a solid institutional guarantee for such foreign investment.

Foreign-invested enterprises are less concerned about strict policies than about frequent policy shifts. Through institutional opening-up and improved regulation and services, the action plan safeguards the rights and interests of foreign investments, fosters fair competition between domestic and foreign-funded enterprises, and enhances transparency in the government's decision-making.

The role of the government is to rectify market failures, create equitable opportunities for foreign-invested enterprises, and address concerns about the business environment. China encourages foreign investment in high-end manufacturing, high-tech services, and industries aligned with the digital and intelligent industrial revolution.

Moreover, the action plan calls for ensuring that foreign-invested companies participate in government procurement on an equal footing. China has always emphasized fair treatment of both domestic and foreign-invested companies during the government procurement process.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:49 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:49 PM

VIEWS

Andrey Kortunov

GDI crucial for a stable world

Five years ago, in September 2021, at the general debate of the 76th session of the UN General Assembly, President Xi Jinping announced the Global Development Initiative.

It was the first of the four strategic initiatives China has put forward, the others being the Global Security Initiative, Global Civilization Initiative and Global Governance Initiative.

Together they present China's vision of a community with a shared future.

Global Lens

Back in 2021, the world was still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic and from the subsequent economic and social hardships, distortions and uncertainties.

Under those difficult circumstances, many nations around the world hoped that the worst times were already behind them and that a realistic task for the coming years was to return to stable economic growth based on globalization.

With its focus on accelerating the implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals and shifting global attention from fighting COVID-19 back to core development issues, the Global Development Initiative reflected these hopes.

Regretfully, the international situation since the pandemic has been characterized by regional conflicts, an arms race and intensifying confrontation between major powers. The future of globalization has been challenged by unilateral tariffs, economic sanctions and the steady erosion of multilateralism.

With only four and a half years left till the end of 2030, significant progress has been tracked in implementing only one-third of the SDGs.

The progress is much slower than planned in almost half of the goals, while there has been regression rather than progress in the remaining goals.

Many former enthusiasts of SDGs have come to the conclusion that the idea of sustainable development should be put on a back-burner until better times emerge; that national security should have a higher priority over economic growth and that the name of the game in global politics for the time being is not prosperity, but survival.

This shift in priorities has been reflected in national budgets that favor defense spending over social and economic programs. The world is feverishly preparing, if not for a third world war, then at least for a long and extremely costly military-political standoff between major powers.

In 2021, global military spending amounted to slightly more than $2 trillion; in 2026 it might close or even exceed $3 trillion. If that trend were to continue, the total global defense budget could nearly double within the next 10 years, reaching $5-6 trillion a year by 2036.

Societies are growing accustomed to the idea that humanity will face a long period of low economic growth. After the pandemic, the average annual growth of the global economy constituted about 3.2 percent compared to 4.4 percent in the early 2000s.

The 2020s are likely to be the weakest decade for growth since the mid-20th century, and the preliminary forecasts for the 2030s are not bright either.

In many countries, living standards of generations to come will be lower, not higher than those of their parents and grandparents.

It is also considered self-evident today that the era of globalization is a thing of the past and that the world will be divided into several opposing regional blocs for the foreseeable future.

Each of the blocs will strive for development, but the fragmentation of the world economy, tariff wars, the collapse of global production chains and fierce competition in the field of new technologies will inevitably cause a further slowdown in economic growth and social progress.

These are widely regarded as the sobering realities of our times. However, do they really mean that the tenets and practical suggestions of the Global Development Initiative should be put on hold?

Not at all. There can be no security without development. When you start to think about how stable and reliable settlements of the conflicts in places such as Gaza, Ukraine, the Persian Gulf or the Sahel region in Africa can be attained, you invariably run into one and the same problem — how to convert the destructive energy of conflict into the creative energy of development. There can be no long-term development without security, but there can be no sustainable security without development.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

It is also clear that one cannot reduce wars, the arms race and geopolitical confrontation without simultaneously reducing protectionism, unilateral trade restrictions, disruptive financial sanctions and many other manifestations of national economic egotism and shortsightedness.

That means the Global Development Initiative is even more relevant today than it was five years ago.

Since 2021, the West has proved unable to offer any intelligible alternative to the ideas contained in the Global Development Initiative.

The US administration's attempts to address the development agenda through creating ad hoc private-public mechanisms — such as the Board of Peace for the Gaza Strip — have demonstrated very limited effect and are unlikely to constitute a solid foundation for dealing with development needs even in a small place such as Gaza, let alone set a model for the rest of the world.

It should also be noted that since 2021 China has been one of the world's leading practitioners in pursuit of the SDGs, including poverty elimination, improved public health and the transition to green energy, where it is either on track or ahead of schedule. Of course, the nation has its own bottlenecks and outstanding issues, but there is no doubt that China will meet most of its SDG targets by 2030.

Its contribution to SDGs on a global level should not be underestimated either: for instance, it now accounts for 70 percent of the world's wind power equipment supplies and for 80 percent of the global solar photovoltaic module shipments.

China's exports of these help to reduce the global CO2 emissions by no less than a billion tons a year.

The implementation of the Global Development Initiative is indispensable for global sustainability. Recent years have only confirmed its importance.

If the global development agenda is not properly addressed, everything else — including international security — will remain on shaky ground.

The author is a member and former director general of the Russian International Affairs Council.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Rana Mazid

Flexibility marks strategic reshuffle in Middle East

For decades, the Middle East's strategic map was deceptively simple. Washington was the indispensable architect, and most Arab states built their security, economy, and foreign policies around that pillar.

But the US-Israeli war against Iran shattered that old order. As Iranian missiles struck Saudi energy facilities and US bases in Bahrain and Qatar, Gulf states realized the harsh truth that the US security umbrella was no longer absolute. The era of unchallenged US primacy was giving way to a fluid, multipolar order.

Rather than fearing this transition, Arab states are actively engineering it. They see diplomatic flexibility not as a hedge against collapse, but as a tool for survival.

The war has only confirmed what Arab leaders suspected since the Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia's oil facilities at Abqaiq and the restrained response by the US. While the US retains a formidable military footprint in the region, its focus has shifted toward great-power strategic competition.

For Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, the lesson was clear: US guarantees were not enough to deter Iranian missiles or drones.

The question in Arab capitals is no longer "What does Washington want?" but "How can we build a network of alliances to survive in a highly volatile environment?"

The new Arab diplomatic playbook favors flexible issue-based alignments that defy Cold War-style blocs. These are not anti-US moves, but post-US calculations.

Two emerging alliances are particularly significant. The first is the quadrilateral of Egypt, Turkiye, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Their foreign ministers have met repeatedly in Riyadh, Islamabad and Antalya, driven by shared concerns over regional instability.

Global Lens

At the same time, another partnership has emerged between the UAE and Israel. During the war, Israeli air-defense systems were deployed in UAE territory to intercept Iranian missiles targeting Abu Dhabi.

More significant is the multi-billion-dollar joint defense fund to develop advanced air defense and counter-drone systems. The UAE is not just buying Israeli technology, but also investing in and co-developing it, creating deep, long-term interdependence.

These two alliances are not necessarily on a collision course. But their coexistence raises profound questions about the future of Gulf and Arab solidarity.

The region is witnessing not just a rearrangement of alliances but a redefinition of security itself.

First, permanent blocs are giving way to "coalitions of the willing" that vary by issue. Egypt and Turkiye cooperate in Libya but compete in the Eastern Mediterranean; Saudi Arabia and the UAE coordinate in Yemen but diverge in Sudan and Somalia.

Second, security is no longer just military deterrence but also includes energy security, supply chains, water, and digital connectivity. The India-Middle East-Europe Corridor illustrates this shift.

By linking Indian ports to the Gulf, Israel and Europe, it creates economic interdependence that may prove more durable than formal treaties.

Third, non-state actors have become permanent features of the security landscape. Groups such as the Houthis, Hezbollah and Iraqi militias are no longer mere proxies. As the Houthis demonstrated in the Red Sea, they can open entire fronts, forcing Arab states to combine diplomacy, military action, and economic pressure in new forms of hybrid deterrence.

This means regional stability depends less on one coalition defeating another than on the ability of this hybrid network to manage escalation before it spirals out of control.

This new multipolarity carries both promise and risk. On the positive side, flexible coalitions reduce the likelihood of an all-out war.

When Riyadh speaks directly to Tehran, when Ankara coordinates with Cairo on Libya, and when Islamabad mediates between Washington and Tehran, the region's zero-sum logic begins to erode.

Economic interdependence — via China's Belt and Road investments, Gulf sovereign wealth funds in Turkiye and Egypt, and the UAE-Israel defense partnership — creates incentives for restraint.

However, the risks are equally significant. These fluid coalitions can fragment as quickly as they form.

A sudden escalation between the quadrilateral and the UAE-Israel axis could trigger a cascade of counter-alignments. The proliferation of actors armed with drones and precision missiles increases the chance of miscalculation.

Three broad scenarios could shape the next phase of Middle Eastern geopolitics. The most likely is contained multipolarity, where competing coalitions coexist, cooperating on some issues and competing on others.

The US remains the dominant military power, but its influence is negotiated, not assumed.

China and Russia expand their economic and diplomatic roles, while non-state actors are contained through hybrid deterrence.

Regional stability is messy, fragile, but an all-out war is avoided.

A second possibility is renewed polarization. A major crisis or strategic miscalculation could divide the region into rival camps, reviving a Cold War-style division, with devastating economic and human costs. This scenario is less likely.

A third but least likely scenario is the emergence of a regional security framework.

This framework would institutionalize crisis management mechanisms, improve communication and gradually build trust between rivals. This scenario requires a level of political will and external support that is currently absent, but remains the long-term aspiration of many regional strategists.

The Middle East is not a vacuum waiting to be filled. It has become a crowded marketplace of interests. The US is indispensable but no longer dominant. China offers development and diplomatic engagement.

Russia provides energy coordination and a UN veto but little else. Turkiye is an influential but mercurial neighbor. Iran is a rival, but now a talking partner for many.

For Arab countries, the art of statecraft in this new era is learning to dance with all these partners without stepping on any single toe too hard.

Flexible coalitions are not a destination but a way to manage risk in an uncertain and volatile world.

The most significant change may be that Arab states are no longer an arena for great-power competition. They can finally shape their own fate. Whether that leads to stability or chaos will depend not on the absence of conflict, but on the ability to manage it without letting it descend into the abyss.

The author is an associate professor of political science at the British University in Egypt.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Ma Ai

Corruption rarely a sudden leap, more often a gradual psychological journey

Whenever news breaks that a senior official has been investigated or imprisoned for corruption, the public's reaction is often predictable: anger, criticism, and sometimes even satisfaction.

My own reaction is different. After more than two decades of interviewing over 200 convicted officials in Chinese prisons, I rarely get a feeling of triumph when a corrupt official falls. What I feel most often is regret.

Many of these individuals were once respected public servants. They had promising careers, enjoyed the trust of their communities, and benefited from years of organizational training and support. Yet somewhere along the way, they lost sight of their original mission.

The question that haunted me throughout these interviews was surprisingly simple: If they knew what they were doing was illegal, why did they do it?

The answer is never greed alone. Contrary to popular belief, corruption seldom begins with a suitcase full of cash. It starts with small compromises that seem harmless at the time.

Time and again, former officials shared similar stories. At first, they did not see themselves as corrupt. A dinner with an old classmate. A favor for a friend. An introduction to a businessman. A gift accepted out of courtesy. None of these actions appeared to constitute wrongdoing.

Only later did they realize they had become like a frog in slowly boiling water — unable to notice the risk as it gradually intensified until it was too late.

Corruption is rarely a sudden leap. More often, it is a gradual psychological journey. Effective anti-corruption efforts require addressing three different dimensions of human behavior.

The first is making corruption impossible. Strong institutions, transparent procedures, and effective oversight reduce opportunities for abuse.

The second is making corruption dangerous. When violations are consistently punished, the cost of misconduct rises.

The fight against corruption is ultimately not just about catching those who go astray.

But the third dimension is the most important and the most difficult: making people unwilling to be corrupt.

The first two dimensions depend largely on external constraints. The third depends on internal restraint.

A society achieves its greatest protection against corruption not when people fear punishment, but when abusing power becomes morally unacceptable.

This distinction matters. Fear can prevent misconduct when someone is watching. Conscience prevents misconduct even when nobody is.

Unfortunately, power itself sometimes weakens conscience. Many psychological studies have shown that individuals who possess authority tend to overestimate their own judgment, become less sensitive to criticism and increasingly believe that normal rules should not apply to them.

Power creates distance. Distance reduces accountability. And reduced accountability increases temptation.

This pattern appears across political systems, cultures and historical periods. Corruption is not uniquely Eastern or Western. It is fundamentally human.

One of the strongest drivers of corruption is social comparison. One imprisoned official complained bitterly that a small contractor he had once helped secure a project eventually became far wealthier than he was.

A former judge asked me why a lawyer who had attended the same university could earn more from a single case than he would earn in a lifetime.

Behind such thoughts lies a powerful psychological force: resentment.

When individuals feel that their sacrifices are not adequately rewarded, corruption can begin to appear not as theft but as compensation.

The most dangerous stage often emerges through relationships rather than transactions. Businesspeople who seek influence rarely begin by offering bribes. Instead, they offer friendship.

They organize dinners, introduce useful contacts, provide emotional support, and create an atmosphere of mutual trust. The immediate goal is rarely money. The long-term goal is access.

Many imprisoned officials later described these encounters with deep regret.

One told me he believed he was simply having dinner with old friends. "If I had known I was being drawn into a network designed to cultivate influence, I would have refused."

But human beings are social creatures and rejecting an invitation from an old friend is difficult. Accepting it feels natural.

But what begins as friendship can eventually become dependency. What begins as reciprocity can evolve into corruption.

Over the years, I have observed three particularly vulnerable stages in an official's career.

The first occurs around age 29, when young professionals face mounting pressures: marriage, housing costs, children's education, career advancement, and financial insecurity.

The second emerges around age 39, when many officials have accumulated substantial authority but begin to worry that their political advancement has stalled.

The third is the well-known "age 59 phenomenon", when retirement approaches and officials fear losing status, influence, and the social attention that power provides.

One imprisoned official put it bluntly: "When you're in office, people line up outside your door. After retirement, nobody calls. If you were me, wouldn't you be anxious?"

His words reveal a painful truth. For some officials, corruption is not simply about wealth. It is about insecurity, status, recognition, and fear of irrelevance.

This is why corruption should never be viewed solely as a legal problem.

It is also a psychological problem.

Laws can punish misconduct. Institutions can restrict opportunities. But lasting integrity requires something deeper: a public culture in which power is understood not as a privilege to be enjoyed, but as a responsibility to be exercised.

The fight against corruption is ultimately not just about catching those who go astray.

It is about ensuring that fewer people begin that journey in the first place.

The author is a professor of criminal psychology at the School of Sociology, China University of Political Science and Law, a special guest of CCTV's Legal Report and a video content creator.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:49 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:49 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

LU JIAJUN AND DING YUZHOU

Powering the ironclad friendship

Sustained China-Serbia partnership hinges on energy and finance, not industrial equipment



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

When Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic visited a "future factory" in Jiaxing, Zhejiang province, on May 27, the images that went viral were of the machines — a humanoid robot writing Chinese calligraphy, another mixing drinks, four-legged units clambering over obstacles, while production lines ran on their own. Vucic, by his own account, felt as if he had stepped into the 22nd century, and the footage earned the attention it deserved. But the consequential part of his state visit was harder to photograph. It lay in the investment agreements, the energy projects and the quieter financial arrangements signed around the spectacle.



Lu Jiajun



Ding Yuzhou

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the China-Serbia comprehensive strategic partnership, and the relationship has clearly outgrown its first phase. For most of the past decade, cooperation was built on heavy infrastructure and traditional industry projects such as the Budapest-Belgrade railway, the Smederevo steel mill and the Bor copper complex, which mattered, and, in many ways, still matter.

China is, by now, Serbia's largest source of foreign direct investment, with cumulative Chinese investment reported at more than 7.2 billion euros ($8.33 billion) and the total value of Chinese-backed projects, loans included, above 14 billion euros. Yet the questions now facing both sides are different ones. Serbia wants to move up the value chain, decarbonize its economy and stay on its long path toward European Union membership. China, in turn, is looking for durable, high-quality outlets for its capital, its technology and its clean-energy industries. In their talks in Beijing, both sides agreed to widen cooperation in emerging sectors, with green energy and advanced manufacturing high on the list. Sustainable energy, and the financing that is needed to support it, falls almost exactly at the intersection of those two agendas.

That, more than the robots, is why it deserves attention.

Energy is where the structural shift is easiest to notice. Serbia still leans heavily on coal, which supplies more than half of its installed power capacity, and it is committed to ending coal-fired electricity generation by 2050 while pushing renewables toward roughly half of its mix by 2030. That is a very large gap to close, and it will not be closed cheaply. Chinese capital has already begun to fill part of it. Zijin Mining and Shanghai Fengling Renewables, for example, have committed around 2 billion euros to developing 1.5 gigawatts of wind, 500 megawatts of solar and a green-hydrogen facility, much of it meant to power the Bor copper operations rather than simply feed the national grid. Other Chinese companies have signed up for solar-module manufacturing, energy storage and additional wind farms. Put together, these projects mark a change in the character of the partnership: from China helping Serbia build power plants and steel mills to China helping Serbia build the renewable base it will need next.

Energy hardware, though, is only half the story, and arguably the easier half. The harder question is financial. The model under which Chinese investment flowed into Serbia over the past 10 years relied largely on state lending and engineering-procurement-construction contracts tied to individual projects. That model suited roads and bridges well enough. However, it suits a clean-energy transition far less, because such a transition depends on long horizons, predictable returns and patient capital rather than one-off construction deals. What Serbia needs now, and what would make the cooperation more durable, is a financial architecture designed for sustainability in the financial sense too: green bonds, long-term project finance, blended public and private vehicles, and clearer environmental and disclosure conditions attached to the money itself. Some of the groundwork is being laid. The free trade agreement that took effect in 2024 has helped lift bilateral trade to $6.48 billion in 2025, up 13 percent year-on-year, and the two governments have moved to set up a renminbi-clearing bank in Serbia and to widen local-currency settlement. These can sound like technical plumbing. In practice, they are part of what allows energy and industrial projects to be financed, hedged and scaled without relying entirely on a single channel of state credit.

This is also where a whole-industry view helps, rather than treating energy as a sector on its own. The investment agreements signed around Vucic's visit, worth about 953 million euros on Serbia's own part, ran across auto parts, robotics, artificial intelligence and energy, and were expected to create around 1,650 jobs. Chinese clean-tech sectors, from solar modules to batteries and electric vehicles, are placing more of their production units inside Serbia, and that production will increasingly run on locally generated renewable power. If it works, it forms something of a loop: clean energy supports green manufacturing, and green manufacturing creates demand for still more clean energy. For Serbia, which sends most of its exports to the EU and now faces the bloc's carbon border levy, producing more cleanly is not only an environmental preference, but increasingly, a competitive necessity.

None of this happens on its own, and the work ahead should not be underestimated. Serbia's EU accession path means its energy and industrial choices will be measured against European environment, competition and disclosure rules, and the carbon border adjustment mechanisms will increasingly reward genuinely low-carbon production, regardless of where the capital comes from.

In many ways that plays to the strengths of the China-Serbia partnership. Chinese clean-energy technology is among the most cost-competitive in the world, and pairing it with high environmental and disclosure standards would let Serbia treat compliance as an advantage rather than a burden. The cooperation will be most durable, in both meanings of the word sustainable, where the green content keeps deepening: financing tied to clear environmental benefits, projects built to the standards Serbia needs to meet in Brussels, and gains that reach local communities. These are demanding goals. They are also, arguably, where the real value lies.

The robots in Jiaxing were a fitting symbol of where the relationship wants to go. But symbols work best when they rest on solid structures. The less glamorous work, aligning energy projects with a financial system built for the long term and making sure the green content runs all the way through, is what will let sustainable energy anchor the next decade of cooperation, much as steel and highways anchored the last. If this visit is any guide, both sides look ready to do exactly that.

Lu Jiajun is a researcher at the Academy of Financial Research at Zhejiang University and an assistant professor at Zhejiang University International Business School. Ding Yuzhou is the section chief of the Investment Promotion Section at the Administrative Committee of Hangzhou Linping New City Development and Construction. The authors contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

YU HONGYUAN AND HUANG XIA

Global green alignment

A more just and effective environmental governance system requires shared responsibility, patient institution-building and the creation of real capacity



ZHANG YUJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Global environmental governance is entering a period of institutional stress. Climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution and ecological degradation are no longer separate technical issues. They are linked to development, finance, trade, technology, energy security and the basic capacity of states to protect people's livelihoods. Therefore, the question facing the international community is no longer whether environmental governance matters, but whether the existing system can still generate sufficient authority, resources and trust to deal with problems that are growing more complex.



Yu Hongyuan



Huang Xia

The current system has important achievements to its credit. The United Nations has provided the central platform for international environmental cooperation. The 1972 Stockholm Conference, the Rio Earth Summit, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the 2015 Paris Agreement have gradually built a broad institutional architecture. International organizations, governments, scientific communities, civil society groups and businesses have all become part of this governance process.

Yet, this system has its limitations, which are becoming increasingly visible. Environmental governance remains fragmented across institutions, agreements and issue areas. The gap between developed and developing countries persists over responsibility, finance, technology and the pace of transition. In some cases, environmental rules are being reshaped by unilateral pressure, trade protection and bloc politics. Measures introduced in the name of the green transition have become new barriers for developing countries. As a result, global environmental governance faces not only a capacity deficit, but also a trust deficit.

This is the broader context, in which China's Global Governance Initiative should be understood. The initiative is not simply another diplomatic statement. It addresses a structural problem: the global governance system needs reform, but reform cannot be achieved by abandoning multilateralism, weakening the UN or allowing a small number of states to monopolize rulemaking. Environmental governance is where this reform is needed most urgently, because ecological risks cross borders while the costs of adjustment are distributed unevenly.

The following principles are important when the reform of the global environmental governance system is undertaken.

The first principle is sovereign equality. In environmental governance, sovereign equality means that all countries, regardless of size, wealth or power, should have the right to participate in agenda-setting, rulemaking and implementation. This is especially important for the Global South. Many developing countries face the sharpest climate and ecological pressures, but they often have limited influence over the rules that shape finance, technology access, industrial upgrading and transition pathways. A fairer system must give these countries stronger representation and a more meaningful voice.

The second principle is the rule of law in international relations. Environmental commitments lose force when rules are applied selectively or when powerful states treat international agreements as instruments of convenience. A more effective environmental governance system requires rules that are negotiated broadly, applied equally and respected consistently. This is also a condition for protecting developing countries from arbitrary barriers and double standards in the name of environmental protection.

The third principle is multilateralism. Environmental problems cannot be solved through exclusive circles or selective rulemaking. The UN remains the most legitimate platform for coordinating global action, and the authority of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Paris Agreement and other multilateral environmental agreements should be maintained. Multilateralism does not mean a slow or empty process. Properly designed, it allows different interests to be coordinated, responsibilities to be clarified and common expectations to be stabilized.

The fourth principle is a people-centered approach. Environmental governance should ultimately return to the basic needs of human survival and development. Climate adaptation, clean air, safe water, food security and protection from extreme weather are not abstract diplomatic concerns. They are directly connected with people's well-being, welfare and dignity. This approach prevents environmental governance from getting detached from development. A transition that ignores employment, affordability and social resilience will not be sustainable.

The fifth principle is practical effectiveness. The credibility of global environmental governance depends on implementation. The international community does not lack declarations. It lacks adequate finance, accessible technology, capacity-building mechanisms and platforms that can turn commitments into results. Developed countries should honor their responsibilities on funding and technology transfer, while developing countries should strengthen cooperation, improve domestic capacity and contribute within their means. Effectiveness requires both responsibility and partnership.

Institutional alignment can proceed at several levels. At the global level, the Global Governance Initiative can be connected with reform efforts around the UN and the Pact for the Future. Environmental governance should be linked more closely with international financial reform, so that climate risks, green investment and sustainable development are treated as core issues rather than peripheral concerns. Multilateral development banks should provide more green credit and more predictable support for developing countries.

At the regional level, China's cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Central Asia, Arab countries and Africa can help link global environmental principles with concrete regional practices. These mechanisms already provide channels for policy dialogue, technical cooperation and capacity building. Their future value lies in moving beyond project-based exchanges toward deeper coordination on green standards, environmental regulation, climate adaptation and clean energy development.

The Green Belt and Road Initiative has a particular role to play. Through climate cooperation agreements, low-carbon assistance projects, training programs and the Belt and Road Initiative International Green Development Coalition, China has helped expand practical green cooperation with partner countries. As this cooperation deepens, it can promote soft connectivity in environmental rules, green finance and technical standards. This gives developing countries more options for transition and creates a testing ground for more inclusive environmental governance.

China's contribution, therefore, lies in combining ideas, institutions and capacity. It supports a more representative governance order, defends the central role of multilateral frameworks and provides practical cooperation through green development.

This does not mean that difficulties will disappear. Differences over responsibility, finance, technology and standards will remain. External pressure and discursive competition will also continue. The task is to turn broad principles into stable mechanisms and visible outcomes.

A more just and effective environmental governance system cannot be built through exclusion or pressure. It requires shared responsibility, patient institution-building and the creation of real capacity. By promoting sovereign equality, multilateralism, international rule of law, a people-centered approach and practical results, China can help provide new momentum for global environmental governance and contribute to the building of a community with a shared future for humanity.

Yu Hongyuan is a professor at the School of Political Science & International Relations at Tongji University. Huang Xia is the director of the International Mining Policy Division, Development and Research Center at the China Geological Survey. The authors contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:49 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:49 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

Deeper Sino-EU cooperation urged

Experts call for Brussels to quit its 'de-risking' plan, increase dialogue

By WANG KEJU
wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn

As trade tensions between China and the European Union show signs of escalating, economists and executives are calling on Brussels to abandon its "de-risking" strategy, strengthen dialogue with Beijing and enhance its competitiveness and supply chain resilience through deeper cooperation — a move they say would provide much-needed certainty for the global economy.

The call comes after Brussels, since the start of the year, has been expanding its trade defense arsenal, unveiling a series of restrictive measures targeting Chinese enterprises and products.

Most recently, its push to force EU companies to diversify suppliers under the bloc's proposed revision of the Cybersecurity Act is piling on yet more investment barriers and institutional discrimination, with China bearing the brunt.

"China-EU economic and trade cooperation stems from shared interests, and its essence is the result of comparative advantages and market competition," said Wang Xuekun, head of the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation.

"Complementarity is not a risk, and the integration of interests is not a threat," Wang added, stressing that the EU's push to force companies to diversify supply chains in the name of reducing "excessive dependency" on China is nothing more than protectionism dressed in new language.

A joint report by the China Chamber of Commerce to the EU and KPMG in May estimated that the forced replacement of Chinese suppliers could cost the EU nearly 367.8 billion euros ($417.9 billion) over five years, with Germany bearing the heaviest burden at 170.8 billion euros.

The report noted the mandatory replacement of Chinese suppliers as "unlikely to achieve meaningful security gains". Instead, it warned of systemic negative effects: innovation budgets could be crowded out, fiscal burdens on member states increased, and household incomes eroded.

"Protectionism is unlikely to address the competitiveness challenges facing the EU," said Sun Yawen, an assistant research fellow at the Institute of European Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

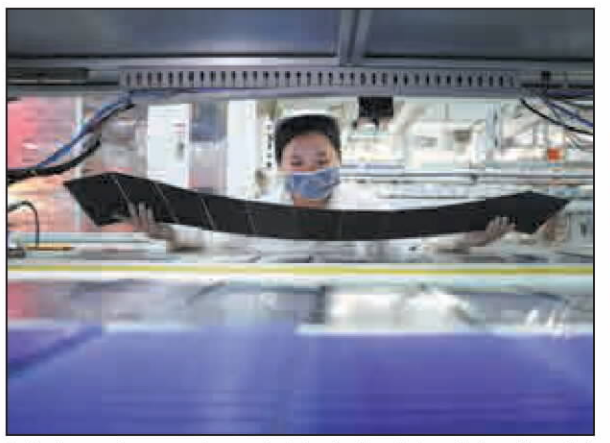
Sun noted the core issues of its declining competitiveness lie in deep-seated structural challenges, including its fragile energy system, high labor costs, rigid and cumbersome regulatory frameworks, and difficulties in coordination among member states.

"The EU's increasingly closed internal market is hindering its ability to learn from and absorb cutting-edge technologies, thereby constraining potential pathways for industrial catch-up," Sun said.

Meanwhile, the continuous escalation of protectionist measures is unlikely to stimulate innovation among EU companies, trapping the EU in a vicious cycle where more protection leads to falling further behind, Sun added.



A China-Europe freight train sets off slowly after being supervised by the customs in Jinhua, Zhejiang province, on April 1.
HU XIAOFEI / FOR CHINA DAILY





Left: An employee works on a batch of solar photovoltaic cell modules for export to Germany at a new energy enterprise in Lianyungang, Jiangsu province, on June 8. SI WEI / FOR CHINA DAILY **Right:** A Yiwu-Europe freight train undergoes container loading operations at Yiwu station in Jinhua on April 17. HU XIAOFEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

> "China-EU economic and trade cooperation stems from shared interests, and its essence is the result of comparative advantages and market competition ... Complementarity is not a risk, and the integration of interests is not a threat."
>
> **Wang Xuekun,** head of the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation

Despite Brussels' persistent "de-risking" rhetoric, many EU companies across different sectors are choosing to deepen their presence in China, expanding their businesses, as shown by industry data.

A recent survey by the EU Chamber of Commerce in China showed that EU companies are doubling down on manufacturing in China, with 75 percent of respondents describing their China-based production as more efficient than operations elsewhere.

Meanwhile, China, according to the report, has a dynamic research and development ecosystem and is highly competitive, and 48 percent of respondents say Chinese firms in their industry are more innovative than their EU counterparts, compared with just 24 percent who favor EU firms.

"What is now shaping China's development is the shift toward new quality productive forces," said Raquel Ramirez Alexander, vice-president of the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China.

The transition, she said, marks a departure from growth driven primarily by scale and investment, and a move toward a model increasingly defined by technology, productivity, digitalization, sustainability and advanced manufacturing.

In response to the growing friction, Beijing and Brussels have taken steps to keep channels open. On June 9, Chinese Vice-Minister of Commerce Ling Ji met with Ditte Juul Jorgensen, director-general of the European Commission for trade and economic security, at the EU headquarters.

During the meeting in Brussels, the EU side stated that "a trade war is not the EU's policy objective toward China" and that it maintains a positive attitude toward constructive dialogue, commerce ministry spokesperson He Yadong told a regular press conference in mid-June.

The two sides held an "in-depth and comprehensive" discussion on preparations for the China-EU trade and investment consultation mechanism, laying the groundwork for upcoming ministerial-level consultations, He said.

China is willing to work with the EU to manage differences through dialogue and consultation, properly handle frictions, promote practical cooperation and advance the sound and steady development of bilateral economic and trade relations, He added.

Senior Chinese and EU officials are reportedly to hold the first meeting of the China-EU trade and investment consultation mechanism in Brussels later this month, a session that analysts say offers a critical opportunity to manage differences through dialogue and stabilize a bilateral economic relationship under mounting strain.

China and the EU are each other's second-largest trading partners, with two-way goods trade exceeding $800 billion last year.

China recorded a $48.3 billion deficit in services trade with the EU in 2025, with the bloc emerging as the largest source of China's services trade deficit, accounting for 41.6 percent of the total.

On June 7, the Ministry of Commerce launched its first overseas event under the "Big Market for All: Export to China" initiative in Belarus, followed by the EU's inaugural event in Germany on June 11. The events were designed to build bridges for global businesses to expand exports to China and share in the world's second-largest consumer market.

By bringing the campaign to Europe at a moment when Brussels is rolling out a series of protectionist measures, Beijing is making it clear to businesses across the continent and beyond that "regardless of how the global landscape shifts, China's door will only open wider," said Wang, head of the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation.

"With 100-plus events this year, we are turning 'China opportunities' into actual contracts," Wang said. "This is not just a policy statement. It's a practical mechanism with actionable steps, especially for smaller businesses that have struggled to enter the Chinese market on their own."

The EU's "de-risking" approach, if pushed too far, risks unraveling decades of economic integration that has benefited both sides, experts said.

"We need to seek truth from facts," said Ondrej Dostal, a member of the European Parliament. "I see the relationship between the EU and China not as strategic rivalry, but as practical cooperation."

He has advocated for synergizing the Belt and Road Initiative with the EU's Global Gateway project to promote shared prosperity, as well as fostering cooperation in areas such as artificial intelligence, healthcare and green energy.

Experts argue that forced decoupling would be costly and ineffective. Chinese suppliers offer not just lower costs, but scale, technical capability, logistics networks and processing infrastructure that alternatives cannot quickly match.

Cui Fan, a professor of international trade at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing, said that interdependence is not a one-way dependency, but a web of mutual benefit where both sides have genuine stakes in each other's prosperity.

When Chinese companies invest in Europe, they create jobs, bring technical expertise and support the bloc's green transition, Cui said, adding that when EU firms operate in China, they tap into scale, supply chain depth and a fast-moving innovation ecosystem.

"The relationship is not about who needs whom more, but about where the points of convergence lie and how to expand them," Cui said. "Both sides can upgrade from a simple 'buy-sell' relationship to deep integration in joint R&D, standard setting and market sharing."

As global economic uncertainty intensifies, China's combination of continuous openness, massive market scale, and innovation capacity is offering multinational companies a predictable and rewarding business climate that increasingly shapes their long-term commitment in the world's second-largest economy, said business leaders.

Ola Kallenius, chairman of the Board of Management of Mercedes-Benz Group AG, noted that "China is a crucial innovation hub, especially in fields of electrification and intelligence. We are accelerating the next level of localization in China, tapping even more into the potential of its unique local ecosystem."

Illusory China 'threat' claim a classic own goal

REPORTER'S LOG
By Wang Keju

European politicians, think tanks and media have been ramping up the narrative of so-called "trade imbalance", claiming that Chinese industrial subsidies, weak domestic demand and fierce domestic competition have created "overcapacity" and led to a widening surplus with Europe.

Chinese exports, according to them, are a "threat". The remedy from Brussels is "rebalancing" and "de-risking".

But when I sat down with European business leaders over the past months, I have heard the other side of the story, one of deepened commitment and, in particular, continued confidence.

For much of the past two decades, Europe exported high-end machinery, precision instruments, luxury goods and automotive technology. China exported consumer electronics, textiles and assembled manufactured goods. Each side occupied a distinct tier in the global value chain.

That era is over. China's manufacturing capability has made a huge leap into sectors that have long been Europe's industrial heartland — electric vehicles, batteries, renewable energy equipment, advanced machinery, and increasingly, semiconductors and pharmaceuticals.

Chinese companies are no longer just suppliers to European firms; they are now direct competitors in the same global markets. For many politicians in Brussels, this shift spells danger. But the European executives I spoke with see it differently. To them, competing in China is not a liability, but a proving ground.

"China is like a fitness club," Denis Depoux, global managing director at Roland Berger, told me. "Foreign companies have to be competitive, have to move quickly, and have to bring the most cutting-edge innovations to China," he said. "But if you can make it here, you can make it anywhere."

The very competition and cooperation that Brussels frames as a threat is, for European businesses, a source of global advantage. The pressure to innovate, the speed of iteration, the scale of the market don't weaken European firms; they sharpen them.

Rogier Janssens, president of Merck China, put it more directly. "We look at China not just as a market," he said. "We see China as a production base and, in particular, a base for innovation."

He pointed to China's "2.0 version" of opening-up as "not just about enabling multinational companies to access the Chinese market, but empowering them to collaborate in innovation."

Business leaders I met are fully aware that in the industries that will define the next decade, China is not just a market to be accessed. It is a competitor to be matched, and a partner to be engaged.

Jean-Christophe Tellier, CEO of multinational bio-pharmaceutical firm UCB, told me: "Collaboration, AI, plus the culture and mindset of testing, experimenting, changing and pivoting, make me feel that if change comes in the future, it is likely to come from China."

As the world's significant economies, China and the EU are deeply intertwined. The real question is not whether to engage, but how to engage. European companies are already voting with their feet.

Joseph Cherian, president and dean of the Asia School of Business, noted that "Businesses can't afford not to be in China. Not because it's huge, but because it's very likely where the future is being shaped."

The question is whether Brussels will listen or continue to pursue a strategy that serves neither its industrial competitiveness nor its geopolitical interests.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:49 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:49 PM

BUSINESSINSIGHT

H2 macro outlook: New drivers of China's growth

EAGLE EYE
By Yang Fan



ILLUSTRATION GENERATED BY AI

Looking ahead to China's economy in the second half, robust exports are expected to remain an important driver of economic growth, while domestic demand will generally remain stable. PPI inflation is expected to remain elevated, while CPI inflation is likely to stay moderate. As prices continue to recover, the full-year GDP deflator is expected to reach 1.1 percent.

GDP growth is expected to dip before recovering in the second to fourth quarters, with expansion forecast at 4.5 percent, 4.6 percent and 4.8 percent, respectively. We forecast China's full-year real GDP growth at 4.7 percent, with nominal GDP growth at 5.8 percent. USD/CNY could hover around 6.7-6.8 this year, supported by China's current account surplus and stronger corporate willingness to convert foreign-exchange receipts.

On the domestic macro front, imports and exports remain key drivers of growth. We expect China's foreign trade to stay resilient in the second half of 2026, supported by multiple factors including the global AI investment cycle. First, the continued capital spending cycle among overseas cloud providers is turning computing-power-related goods into an increasingly important driver of China's trade growth. According to China customs statistics, China's integrated circuit exports rose 83.7 percent year-on-year in the first four months, making a notable contribution to overall trade growth. We expect this support to persist in the second half. Second, elevated crude oil and natural gas prices caused by the Middle East conflict are likely to further boost global demand for new energy products. As a major producer of photovoltaic products, electric vehicles and lithium batteries, China continues to benefit from this trend. Third, China's relative cost advantages in manufacturing are set to widen. With oil and gas accounting for a lower share of its energy mix than in the European Union, Japan, South Korea and ASEAN economies, China is relatively less vulnerable to energy-price shocks, which could further strengthen the cost competitiveness of its manufacturers. Fourth, import growth is also expected to remain elevated in the second half, supported by stronger semiconductor supply-chain imports driven by rising AI computing demand, as well as higher import values for upstream commodities such as nonferrous metals, oil and gas amid price gains. Overall, we forecast China's full-year export and import growth in 2026 at around 13.2 percent and 15.5 percent, respectively.

On the consumption front, retail sales growth, particularly goods consumption, is likely to remain subdued this year as subsidies are phased out, front-loaded demand fades, household income growth remains tepid and household balance-sheet repair falls short of expectations, weighing on consumers' willingness to spend. Services consumption, however, is expected to emerge as a structural bright spot in household spending this year, underpinned by policy support. Special treasury bond funding for this year's consumer goods trade-in program is slightly lower than the amount allocated last year. We estimate that subsidy funding in the first and second halves will amount to 77 percent and 91 percent of year-earlier levels, respectively, creating a modest drag on retail sales growth. At the same time, property-sector weakness could continue to weigh on household balance-sheet repair and consumer confidence, while persistent pressure on income growth is likely to curb households' willingness to spend. Taken together, we expect retail sales — particularly goods consumption — to remain on a weak recovery path in the second half, with full-year growth likely at around 2.5 percent. Compared with goods consumption, services consumption is more experience-driven and tends to benefit from continued upgrading and repeat demand. With household consumption patterns shifting and policy support increasing, services consumption is likely to become an increasingly important driver of overall consumption growth.

On the investment front, fixed-asset investment growth is expected to stay slightly positive in 2026, as tighter "anti-involution" policies limit inefficient capacity additions and property investment continues to drag. Structurally, investment is likely to feature a steady growth in infrastructure investment, weak manufacturing investment and a continued but narrowing drag from real estate development investment. For infrastructure investment, the combination of limited fiscal resources for the remainder of the year and a shrinking pool of project reserves suggests that the second quarter could be a near-term trough in growth. Infrastructure investment growth is expected to recover sequentially in the second half. For manufacturing investment, it is expected that the strong momentum in AI-related sectors and the overall improvement in corporate profits will support a moderate increase in manufacturing investment growth. However, as anti-involution policies continue to be rolled out, manufacturing investment is likely to post only modest positive growth for the full year. For property investment, the decline in real estate development investment is expected to narrow further.

On the price front, "imported inflation" is expected to keep China's PPI elevated, while CPI inflation is likely to remain moderate. The year-on-year growth gap between PPI and CPI may therefore persist. Judging from the performance of key commodities, higher crude oil prices driven by Gulf tensions have been the main driver of China's rapid PPI increase since March. Regardless of how the conflict evolves, crude prices are unlikely to return to pre-conflict levels in 2026, and should continue to provide upward support to China's industrial goods prices. Under our base-case scenario, PPI inflation is expected to rise by around 2.3 percent in 2026. CPI inflation is expected to remain moderate this year, with the annual rate likely to come in at around 0.8 percent in 2026 under our base-case scenario.

In terms of fiscal and monetary policy, China's fiscal spending and government bond issuances have been front-loaded in 2026. In the second half, efforts to clear overdue payments, advance the "Six Networks" initiative (including water networks, new-type power grids, computing power networks, next-generation communication networks, urban underground pipeline networks and logistics networks), and increase livelihood-related spending are expected to become key channels for optimizing the allocation of fiscal funds. Regarding monetary policy, we believe that under the base-case scenario, China is unlikely to cut interest rates or the reserve requirement ratio this year.

The writer is chief macro and policy analyst, CITIC Securities Research Department.
The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Transitioning from large consumer market to strong consumer economy

MAIN STREET
By Huang Yanfen

In December, the annual Central Economic Work Conference identified boosting consumption and expanding domestic demand across the board as a key priority for economic policy.

The task is not merely a short-term response to economic challenges. It also reflects a broader strategic goal: transforming China from one of the world's largest consumer markets into a truly strong consumer economy.

Achieving that goal will require not only policy support, but also a gradual shift in consumer behavior — from cautious spending toward more confident and self-assured consumption.

China is already one of the world's largest consumer markets. With a population of more than 1.4 billion, the country has maintained its position as the world's second-largest consumer market for years. Yet scale alone does not necessarily translate into strength.

Compared with many developed economies, China's final consumption expenditure still accounts for a relatively smaller share of GDP.

In economies such as the United States and the United Kingdom, final consumption has long remained above 80 percent of GDP, while China's ratio remains below 60 percent.

More fundamentally, the difference lies in consumer psychology. Influenced by long-standing cultural traditions that emphasize living within one's means and preparing for future uncertainties, Chinese households have historically maintained high savings rates and relatively cautious spending habits.

Such prudence was understandable, and even beneficial, during earlier stages of development. However, as China enters a new phase in which domestic demand is expected to play a greater role in driving growth, excessive caution can become a constraint on economic vitality.

The transition from a large consumer market to a strong consumer economy is not simply about how much people spend. It is also about how and why they spend.

Consumption driven by confidence, aspirations and quality-of-life improvements is fundamentally different from spending limited to essential needs or shaped by concerns about future uncertainty.

It is important to clarify that more confident consumption does not mean encouraging extravagance or wasteful spending.

Rather, it reflects a consumption mindset supported by stable income growth, stronger social protection and positive expectations about the future.

Confidence is the first pillar. When consumers believe their incomes will continue to grow steadily, when they feel adequately protected against major life risks, and when concerns about healthcare and retirement are reduced, they are more likely to allocate resources between consumption and savings in a balanced and rational manner rather than saving excessively for unforeseen contingencies.

Choice is another important dimension. Consumption upgrading is, at its core, a transition from focusing on whether products are available, to focusing on whether they are desirable and valuable.

As incomes rise and markets become more diversified, consumers gain greater freedom to choose among premium domestic brands, international products, physical goods and service-based experiences. Such freedom of choice is itself a reflection of stronger consumption capacity.

Equally important is rationality. A mature consumer culture is not about purchasing the most expensive products, but about making informed decisions based on actual needs and personal preferences.

In today's highly transparent information environment, consumers are increasingly capable of distinguishing genuine value from marketing hype and making purchasing decisions that balance quality, individuality and sustainability. Such consumption is both higher in quality and more sustainable over the long term.

The shift toward more confident consumption will not happen overnight. Nor can it be achieved through slogans alone. It requires coordinated efforts from the government, businesses and society.

Income growth remains the foundation. Without stable and sustainable income growth, stronger consumption cannot be maintained.

Expanding employment opportunities, improving income distribution and increasing household earnings are essential.

Measures such as improving wage growth mechanisms, refining policies related to factor-based income distribution and broadening channels for property income all help strengthen consumer spending power.

Social security serves as an equally important pillar. One reason Chinese households traditionally save a large portion of their income is uncertainty surrounding major expenditures such as healthcare, education and retirement.

Further improving the multi-tiered social security system and strengthening the social safety net can help reduce such concerns.

As confidence in long-term security increases, the need for precautionary savings is likely to decline, creating greater room for consumption.

Supply-side improvements are also critical. Consumers can only spend with confidence when high-quality products and services are available.

Continued industrial upgrading, increased supply of mid to high-end consumer goods and the development of emerging consumption sectors — including service consumption, digital consumption and green consumption — will provide consumers with more attractive options and better experiences.

Meanwhile, a safe and trustworthy consumption environment remains indispensable. Stronger protection of consumer rights, more effective regulation against counterfeit and substandard products, and more accessible channels for resolving disputes can all help strengthen confidence in the marketplace.

A consumption environment where consumers feel protected is itself a powerful driver of spending.

Ultimately, the transition from a large consumer market to a strong consumer economy represents more than a change in economic indicators. It reflects a broader transformation in China's development model.

A stronger consumer economy would mean a more balanced growth structure, higher living standards for the country's 1.4 billion people and a fuller release of the potential embedded in China's vast domestic market.

The gradual shift from cautious spending to confident consumption is one of the most visible manifestations of that transformation.

When consumers feel comfortable paying for better quality, embracing new experiences and pursuing lifestyles that reflect their aspirations, the vision of a stronger consumer economy moves closer to reality.

As the Central Economic Work Conference emphasized, efforts should focus on enhancing consumer spending power and strengthening their willingness to consume.

That objective is not only an important economic task, but also a shared aspiration of millions of households. Enabling people to consume with greater confidence and enjoy a better quality of life lies at the heart of building a stronger consumer economy in the years ahead.

The writer is a scholar at Renmin University of China and a professor at the university's School of Public Administration and Policy.
The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:49 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:49 PM

CHINA

Harvard dean pushes to strengthen Sino-US ties

By **ZOU SHUO**
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

Graham Allison, a renowned political scholar from the United States and founding dean of the Harvard Kennedy School, called for sustained efforts to stabilize and improve China-US relations, saying a stable and improving bilateral relationship is "good news for all of us".

Accompanied by Wang Linggui, chairman of the All-China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese, Allison toured the special exhibition *Tales of People-to-People Bonds Between China and the US* at the Overseas Chinese History Museum of China in Beijing on Saturday.

Allison, known for coining the concept of the "Thucydides Trap", said the entire bilateral agenda, from top-level leadership to grassroots exchanges, would benefit from more direct interaction.

During his visit, Allison carefully examined historical photographs, documents and artifacts tracing centuries of exchanges between the Chinese and American peoples.

He said the collection serves as a reminder that the two peoples have long engaged with each other in constructive ways.

"As the museum suggests, we are people-to-people — Americans and Chinese have engaged with each other. There's a long history of successful contributions to a better world," he said.

However, Allison expressed concern over the recent decline in people-to-people exchanges, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic. He noted that the number of American students studying in China and Chinese students studying in the US has dropped significantly.

"I think that's bad, and I think the aspiration to get back to where we were before — and even beyond that — is a good lesson for all of us," he said. He stressed that direct engagement — whether among students, academics, businesspeople or ordinary visitors — is far more effective than speculation.

"Almost all those disagreements are better handled by people talking to each other and understanding each other, rather than imagining what the other might be doing, or might be thinking or might be saying," he added.

Asked about the historical memory of China and the US fighting side by side during World War II, Allison pointed to the shared sacrifice in the fight against fascism.

"Remember the Flying Tigers," he said. "Remember how much of the burden of the war China bore before the Americans entered the war." He said neither country might have defeated Japan alone and described that history as "a good reminder" of the value of cooperation.

Before leaving the museum, Allison wrote in the guestbook: "An amazing and inspiring collection that reminds us of the many ways Chinese and American working together can make both nations greater and contribute to a more peaceful and prosperous world."

The exhibition systematically traces the history of friendly exchanges between the peoples of China and the US since the founding of the nation in 1776.

The 100 artifacts on display include gold-mining tools, railroad spikes, agricultural implements, documents, newspapers, dining utensils, medals commemorating the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and personal belongings of notable figures, offering a window into the centuries-old bonds between the two nations.



Graham Allison, founding dean of the Harvard Kennedy School, visits the special exhibition *Tales of People-to-People Bonds Between China and the US* at the Overseas Chinese History Museum of China in Beijing on Saturday. ZHANG WEI / CHINA DAILY

Painted peaks



Runners pass through the Colorful Danxia Scenic Spot during the 2026 Linze Marathon in Zhangye, Gansu province, on Sunday. The event drew 6,000 runners from China and abroad to compete in the men's and women's full and half marathon races. WANG JIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

APEC tourism heads congregate in Macao

Officials call for regional cooperation through digital innovation, exchanges

By **YANG HAN** and **LI XIAOYUN** in Macao

Over the weekend, officials gathered at the 13th Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Tourism Ministerial Meeting in the Macao Special Administrative Region, where they emphasized China's major contributions to regional and global tourism development, which is seen as a key economic driver for the Asia-Pacific region.

China looks forward to working with all APEC members to advance cooperation and jointly promote the growth and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region, said Chen Xu, chair of the APEC 2026 Senior Officials' Meeting and president of China Public Diplomacy Association.

"Travel facilitation is a key priority within APEC's tourism agenda," said Chen.

Tourism contributed 10.4 percent of the region's GDP before the COVID-19 pandemic, data from the APEC website showed. In 2024, APEC economies received 439 million international visitors, of whom 359 million were intra-regional travelers.

Under the theme "Digital Innovation, Collaborative Empowerment: Leveraging Tourism for an Asia-Pacific Community", the meeting brought together over 200 participants from APEC economies to discuss sustainable tourism development and the joint exploration of new pathways for tourism cooperation across the region.

"This meeting is an important opportunity to seek cooperation measures for the sustainable growth of the tourism industry in the APEC region amid the era of digital transformation," said Chae Hwi-young, South Korea's minister of culture, sports and tourism.

Chae also proposed jointly designating 2027-28 as the "China-South Korea Year of Tourism".

"Chinese tourist arrivals to Vietnam reached 2.3 million in the first half of this year," said Ha Van Sieu, vice-chairman of the Viet Nam National Authority of Tourism.

He said he was optimistic about the prospects for bilateral tourism cooperation and looked forward to new breakthroughs under the China-Vietnam tourism cooperation year in 2026-2027.

At a welcome dinner co-hosted by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Macao SAR government on June 26, Macao Chief Executive Sam Hou-fai noted that it had been 12 years since Macao last hosted the APEC Tourism Ministerial Meeting.

"Leveraging our deep heritage of over four centuries of Chinese-Western cultural integration and our unique advantage of close ties with Portuguese-speaking countries, we will actively align with national strategic deployments, fully serve the mutual learning between Chinese-Western civilizations," Sam said, noting the SAR aims to be an important bridgehead for the nation's high-level opening up.

This sentiment was echoed by tourism and cultural officials from APEC member economies when they wrapped up the 13th APEC Tourism Ministerial Meeting on June 28 with a tour showcasing Macao's distinctive blend of Eastern and Western heritage.

They said the Macao SAR's commitment to developing its tourism sector and promoting exchanges between China and the West makes it an ideal platform for advancing Asia-Pacific tourism cooperation.

Anna Clark, deputy secretary of New Zealand's Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, said she was glad to visit museums and heritage sites in Macao as they formed an important part of the region's tourism offering.

Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, director of the Macao Government Tourism Office, said all vehicles used by delegates were electric to showcase the nation's advanced technology, and that the event also featured traditional Chinese dances and Portuguese folk dance performances.

The Tourism Ministerial Meeting was an important component of the APEC China 2026 series of events. As the host of APEC 2026, China will hold the 33rd APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, in November. About 300 APEC-related meetings and events are taking place in multiple Chinese cities throughout the year.

Yang Xiaoyu and Li Xiang in Macao contributed to this story.

Contact the writer at kelly@chinadailyapac.com

Manta ray submersible capable of reaching 2,000-meter depths

By **CHEN MEILING**
chenmeiling@chinadaily.com.cn

Northwestern Polytechnical University in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, has developed a manta ray-inspired submersible capable of operating at depths of up to two kilometers beneath the water surface.

The remotely operated electric-powered craft is designed to generate minimal disturbance to marine life, offering a quieter alternative to traditional propeller-driven vehicles for ecological monitoring and deep-sea exploration.

Traditional propeller-driven submersibles generate high levels of noise and strong water flow, often stirring up seabed sediment, producing blurry images and disturbing marine organisms, making them unsuitable for high-precision near-seabed detection and environmentally friendly monitoring missions.

"We have translated the swimming mechanics of manta rays into engineering technologies to make deep-sea exploration more efficient, quieter and better adapted to the marine environment," said Cao Yong, a researcher at the university's School of Marine Science and Technology.

Cao said the submersible utilizes a manta ray-inspired undulating flapping fin propulsion system.

The research team overcame a long-standing limitation in conventional marine equipment by applying the same variable buoyancy technology that is used in underwater gliders, Cao said.

Traditional systems typically achieve either long-range cruising at the expense of maneuverability or high maneuverability at the cost of endurance.

In glide mode, the submersible uses its variable buoyancy system to perform periodic diving and ascending motions with ultralow power consumption, enabling wide-area ocean surveys spanning thousands of kilometers.

In flapping mode, its pectoral fins move at low frequencies to execute highly agile maneuvers, including in-place turning, rapid pitching and precise hovering.

Seamless switching between the two modes enables both long endurance and operational flexibility.

Without high-speed rotating components, it generates low operational noise and minimal water disturbance. It also avoids stirring up sediment during near-seabed operations and offers excellent biocompatibility, Cao said.

Its flat fuselage provides superior stability when landing on the seabed. Designed for long-term deployment, the vehicle can remain in dormant mode before being reactivated, and carry payloads for integrated detection and operational tasks.

"To improve target recognition in complex seabed environments, the submersible adopts hierarchical recognition technology to accurately distinguish between interference from reefs, sunken vessels and other underwater objects," Cao said. "It can withstand pressure of up to 200 atmospheres, enabling operations at depths of up to 2,000 meters."

To achieve this, the university team studied manta ray movement by analyzing tens of thousands of video clips and raising cownose rays — which have similar biological characteristics to manta rays — in laboratory facilities.



The V-shaped bionic manta ray soft-bodied submersible developed by Northwestern Polytechnical University. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The team also collaborated with Ningbo University in Zhejiang province on 3D scanning and CT imaging to analyze the rays' muscle and skeletal structures.

"During ecological monitoring missions, this submersible can conduct long-term silent observation of ecosystems such as coral reefs and submarine hydrothermal vents, providing important data support for biodiversity conservation," Cao said.

"For the operation and maintenance of marine ranches, it can enable early warning of fish diseases, precision feeding and escape monitoring, supporting the development of the 'blue granary'," he added.

The submersible can also serve as a safe and efficient platform for underwater archaeology and marine science education.

Cao highlighted that the team plans to integrate artificial intelligence and swarm algorithms for autonomous underwater navigation under low-bandwidth communication conditions.

"The research fills China's technological gap in bionic underwater submersibles capable of integrating wide-area detection with high precision operations," said Pan Guang, president of the School of Marine Science and Technology. "It advances autonomous unmanned underwater technologies from single-function systems to multifunctional integrated platforms."

Magnets pull China closer to fusion power

By **ZHU LIXIN** in Hefei
zhulixin@chinadaily.com.cn

Scientists and engineers announced major progress in the development of two key superconducting magnets for future fusion reactors on Saturday, marking another step toward making fusion energy a practical source of electricity.

One of the breakthroughs involves a toroidal field superconducting magnet weighing 582 metric tons, developed by the Institute of Plasma Physics of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Hefei, Anhui province.

Wu Yu, a researcher at the institute, said the magnet is currently the world's largest toroidal field magnet designed for a fusion reactor.

It passed a comprehensive review by an expert panel on Saturday.

"The volume of this magnet is 1.3 times that of the toroidal field magnet used in the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor, and its energy storage capacity is three times higher," Wu said.

The toroidal field magnet is one of the most important components of a fusion reactor.

It generates an extremely powerful magnetic field that keeps superheated plasma — a state of matter hotter than hundreds of millions of degrees Celsius — from touching the reactor walls.

This allows the fusion reaction to continue safely while reducing energy loss and damage to the reactor.

Because the magnet is expected to operate continuously for about 60 years, it must remain stable under extreme conditions, including ultralow temperatures, high electric currents, intense radiation and enormous mechanical stress.

The second breakthrough is a high-temperature superconducting central solenoid coil, which completed full-condition parameter testing on Saturday.

Scientists said its key performance indicators have reached world-leading levels.

"The central solenoid coil operates under the most demanding conditions in a fusion reactor," said Qin Jinggang, deputy director of the Hefei institute.

"It plays a critical role in starting and sustaining the fusion reaction," he added.

Qin said the coil is a key technology for moving fusion energy from laboratory experiments to practical electricity generation.

Researchers said the successive breakthroughs in the two core superconducting magnets have further strengthened the technological foundation for China's development of fusion reactors.

Song Yuntao, director of the Hefei institute, said the Burning Plasma Experimental Superconducting Tokamak, a major fusion research facility, is under construction in Hefei.

He said the facility aims to achieve net fusion power gain — producing more energy from fusion than is used to sustain the reaction — and demonstrate electricity generation by around 2030.

Fusion occurs when two atomic nuclei combine to form a heavier nucleus, releasing enormous amounts of energy. Scientists hope to reproduce the same process that powers the sun to generate carbon-free electricity on Earth.

If successful, fusion could provide a virtually limitless source of clean energy without carbon emissions while offering lower safety risks than conventional nuclear power.

The latest breakthroughs will significantly enhance China's capabilities in the independent research, development and engineering of fusion reactors, according to the Hefei scientists.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:49 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:49 PM

VISUAL



Tibetan children wait for a congenital heart disease screening in Ngari, Xizang autonomous region, on June 7. PHOTOS BY WANG JING / CHINA DAILY



A member of the Red Cross interacts with an infant before a screening in Ngari, Xizang, on June 4.



Su Junwu (right), a senior expert in congenital heart disease, operates on a child at Shibo High-tech Hospital in Zibo, Shandong province, on June 19.



The father of Gangjong Lhamo comforts his daughter after she returns to the ward upon completion of her surgery on June 18.



Su Junwu (left) from the hospital and Liu Jingjing (middle) from the Red Cross Foundation give a gift to Gangjong Lhamo on June 19.



A Red Cross worker takes the details of children with congenital heart diseases in Ngari on June 7.

Xizang children head home after life-changing heart surgeries

All costs covered by Chinese Red Cross Foundation and Shandong hospital



Gangjong Lhamo undergoes an ultrasonic checkup in Ngari on June 6.

Twenty-two children from remote areas in the Xizang autonomous region are heading home with healthy hearts recently after undergoing free, life-changing cardiac surgeries in Zibo, Shandong province.

The medical pipeline began earlier this month during the "Tour of Angels" campaign, a joint humanitarian initiative by Shibo High-tech Hospital in Zibo and the Chinese Red Cross Foundation.

From June 2 to 10, medical teams traveled across Xizang to screen 226 children using specialized auscultation and color Doppler ultrasound imaging, identifying those in urgent need of congenital heart disease intervention.

The selected patients were flown to Shandong province on June 15 for treatment. To ease the financial burden on the families, the foundation and the hospital completely covered all surgery fees, alongside the travel and lodging costs for both the children and an accompanying parent.

"I'm so happy that I have recovered and can go home," said Gangjong Lhamo from Xizang's Ge'gyai county.

Following their operations, the children received a send-off from senior foundation officials as they began their return journey in good condition.

CHINA DAILY



A Red Cross worker measures the height of a child during a screening in Ngari on June 7.





Left: Expert Zheng Sihong (left) screens a Tibetan child in Ngari on June 4. **Right:** Children wait for their screenings in Ngari on June 5.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:49 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:49 PM

LIFE



Xu Fengying's oil paintings mark a new chapter for her as a self-taught painter, while also offering a realistic portrayal of daily life in rural Shanghai. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Brushstrokes of courage

An elderly woman who picked up painting after cancer surgery has become an unlikely artistic inspiration, **Wang Xin** reports in Shanghai.

Xu Fengying, a 79-year-old from rural Shanghai, never imagined she would become an oil painter. Yet, a decade ago, she picked up a brush for the first time and began an extraordinary new chapter in her life.

In late May, more than 150 of her oil paintings were exhibited at a gallery in Beijing, drawing praise from artists, academics and visitors alike.

Born in Zhujiajiao, an ancient water town in Shanghai's Qingpu district, Xu has spent most of her life as a farmer in a nearby village. Her paintings portray the surrounding landscapes, the rhythms of rural life and the people she has known over the years.

Using the artistic language of Western oil painting, she gently narrates nostalgic life stories in the context of Chinese modernization.

Her canvases capture the seasons of village life — spring planting, summer blossoms, autumn harvests, and winter stillness — while also documenting close-knit communities, the happiness of older residents and the transformation of China's countryside.

The warmth and bright colors of her paintings offer little hint of the hardships she endured for much of her life.

Born in 1947 into a poor family, Xu lost her father at the age of 4. She spent much of her childhood moving from place to place before returning to her hometown at 13. By the age of 7, she was already rowing boats to help earn a living, beginning a lifelong struggle to improve her circumstances.

Life gradually improved in the early 1990s, when her two children completed their studies and began supporting the family. As China's rural development accelerated, her old house in Linjia village was renovated, becoming a comfortable home for Xu, her daughter and son-in-law in 2009.

The event that ultimately led her to painting, however, came unexpectedly. In 2016, Xu was diagnosed with colorectal cancer and underwent surgery. Accustomed to constant work, she returned to farm labor shortly after the operation, causing complications that required a second procedure.

Determined to keep her from overexerting herself again, her family encouraged her to find a hobby.



Xu Fengying (center), 79, displays more than 150 of her oil paintings at a gallery in Beijing in late May.

They suggested painting. In December that year, Xu began her first oil painting, depicting a group of large trees outside her home.

"Those trees were about to be cut down. I wanted to record them and the scene on canvas," recalls Xu.

The work took nearly a month to complete.

Largely self-taught, Xu learned through trial and error, seeking advice whenever she encountered professional painters. She found oil painting forgiving and practical. If a stroke doesn't work, the painter can scrape it away, correct it, and continue, she says.

"The challenge was mastering color. Mixing the right colors is the hardest part. Paint is expensive, and it used to take me at least two hours to create the shades I wanted," says Xu.

Though she has never received formal training, her work has won widespread admiration. At the recent Beijing exhibition, visitors and professional artists praised her paintings. Some even asked for her advice on color mixing, while a university professor purchased several of her works.

The experience left Xu both delighted and energized. Although she did not particularly enjoy painting at first, she gradually discovered a sense of fulfillment in the process. Seeing villagers, tourists and visitors from around the world respond to her work with appreciation has deepened her commitment.

For Xu, painting is a way of preserving life as she remembers it and as she experiences it today. Alongside her favorite subjects — flowers, waterways and village scenes — she has set an ambitious goal: completing 100 paintings of old bridges. So far, she has finished 12.

"The bridges don't have to be in Shanghai," she says with a smile.

"I hope to travel to more places and paint the bridges — and maybe the trees and other things — that I love."

As Xu embraces this unexpected second act, her story continues to inspire people far beyond her village. Her daughter, Chen Junfang, recalls a visit several years ago from an elderly mathematician from Sichuan province who had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

"He was under enormous stress," Chen says.

"My mother simply told him, 'It's no big deal.' Those simple words eased his anxiety. He relaxed and smiled again."

Living with Xu in the village, Chen and her husband are delighted to see her mother flourishing in later life. They hope to support her creative work, help her travel more widely, and organize additional exhibitions to share her uplifting paintings with a broader audience.

"My mother proves that it is never too late to learn," Chen says.

"In many ways, she is living out a dream I once had myself."

Contact the writer at wangxin2@chinadaily.com.cn

Toys fight back in the age of screens

By XU FAN
xufan@chinadaily.com.cn

It is a familiar scene in homes across the world: a child sits alone, illuminated by the blue glow of a screen, fingers tapping across a tablet or smartphone. Toys lie abandoned nearby, mute and motionless, their stories shelved — perhaps permanently — in favor of digital worlds and endless streams of content.

But thanks to Pixar, the animation behemoth, toys can still reclaim children's hearts — at least within the fable-like world of *Toy Story 5*.

The newest chapter in the beloved franchise arrives more than three decades after the original *Toy Story* transformed cinema as the world's first feature-length computer-animated film.

In China, the latest installment has struck a chord with audiences, topping the Dragon Boat Festival holiday box office with earnings exceeding 120 million yuan ($17.6 million).

With a score of 8.1 out of 10 on the review platform Douban, the film has stirred nostalgia among longtime fans while raising a distinctly contemporary question: What role do traditional toys still play in a childhood increasingly shaped by screens?

That question sits at the heart of the story. For the first time in the franchise's more than 30-year history, Jessie, the spirited cowgirl toy, steps out of Woody's shadow to become the undisputed leader of the toy crew.

Assisted by Buzz Lightyear, Jessie must confront an unexpected new adversary — Lilypad, a frog-shaped smart tablet that threatens to render traditional toys obsolete in the life of 8-year-old Bonnie.

While the premise reflects contemporary concerns and the animation showcases Pixar's technical brilliance, the franchise's enduring strength lies in something far simpler. Beneath the adventures of talking toys is a story about friendship, loyalty, love, and resilience — themes that continue to resonate with audiences of all ages.

That emotional connection was evident at the film's premiere in Shanghai earlier this month.

Singer Huang Zihongfan, who joined veteran host He Jiong to perform the Chinese-language version of the theme song *You've Got a Friend in Me*, spoke about growing up with the franchise.

For Huang, *Toy Story* is inseparable from childhood memories.

"The first movie means so much to me. When I was in elementary school, I would secretly watch *Toy Story* films even when I still had homework to finish. Those moments became some of my most unforgettable childhood memories," he recalls.

The films also added a touch of fairy-tale magic to his imagination.

"When I first watched *Toy Story*, I fell in love with Buzz Lightyear. I genuinely believed he could fly. He had wings and came from another planet. His gear was so cool, and as a child, I often imagined myself soaring through the sky just like him," Huang says.

Now 27, Huang believes the franchise carries a message that extends well beyond entertainment.

"No matter what challenges we face or where life takes us, if we have good friends beside us, we never have to feel alone. Their support makes us stronger and braver," he says.

That idea of enduring friendship and the passage of time is also central to the filmmakers' vision.

In promotional materials, director-screenwriter Andrew Stanton explains why the series continues to inspire new stories.

"I always figured they'd keep going with *Toy Story*. The world is just so rich. The toys don't really age, but the world does. It's not every movie idea you come up with where time is part of the interesting aspect of a story about childhood, parenthood, growing up, and moving on. The toys are the observers of everything," says Stanton.



Left: A scene from *Toy Story 5*, featuring Woody and Buzz Lightyear. **Center:** The film's premiere is held in Shanghai in early June. **Right:** Young fans attend a recent screening event in Beijing. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:49 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:49 PM

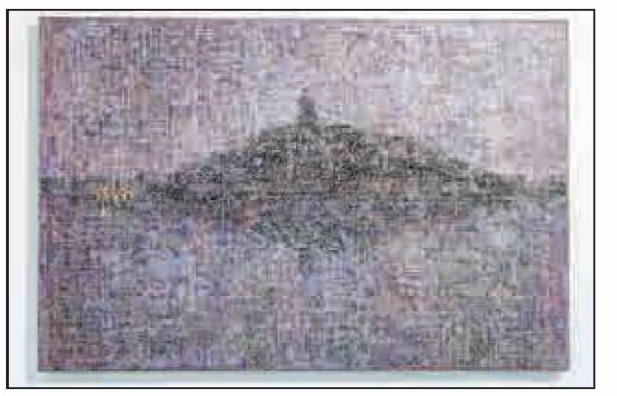
LIFE

Finding cultural resonance with printmaking

SE Asian artists showcase their works in new exhibition, highlighting their link with Chinese traditions, **Lin Qi** reports.









Left: *Faint Light*, a lithograph of Chinese artist Cao Dan on show at *Imprints of Civilization: China-ASEAN Printmaking Exhibition* at Beijing's Today Art Museum. **Right top:** Indonesian artist Lutse Lambert Daniel Morin in front of his work, *That Papua Person*, along with his wife Murin Astuti, at the exhibition's opening. **Right middle:** Wen Zhongyan's work on show, *Beihai 2011.7.8*, celebrates his dedication of nearly 20 years to depicting the changing atmospheres of the imperial garden Beihai Park in the heart of Beijing. **Right above:** The exhibition builds a cross-cultural arena that is inclusive, diverse, and open to all. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The pre-Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC) foundational text of Chinese mythology, *Shanhaijing* (The Classic of Mountains and Seas), catalogs several mythological creatures that combine the bodies of birds and fish — some considered positive symbols and others bad omens. For example, the *wenyao* fish is a celestial beast with a carp's body and avian wings, and the text records that it flies at night and its appearance heralds a bumper harvest.

In his Beijing exhibition debut, Filipino artist Salvador Buds Convocar shows his own rendition of the *wenyao* fish — a work titled *Fish-bird* — but in a different cultural context. An integration of printmaking and collage, the piece depicts a colorful fish with a bird's wings, beak and feet.

Convocar says he was inspired by and has borrowed the term chimera, from Greek mythology, which refers to an imaginary creature that combines parts of different animals. In his work, the creature's big, round eyes, together with its high spread wings and claws that grip the ground tightly, convey a vibrancy that connects one with the varied beauty of the Philippines' natural topography, its chill beaches, and the archipelago's culture and biodiversity.

The distinct chemistry between Convocar's chimera and the land where the *wenyao* fish was imagined millennia ago ushers visitors into an interplay of past and present, at the crossroads of different civilizations, when viewing *Imprints of Civilization: China-ASEAN Printmaking Exhibition*, where *Fish-bird* is on display.

The exhibition, running at Beijing's Today Art Museum until July 8, brings together more than 150 prints by more than 140 artists from China and the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN. The project is sponsored by the Beijing Culture and Arts Fund, a public fund established by the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture and Tourism to mobilize public participation in cultural development.

One of five Filipino artists on show, Convocar has a connection to Chinese art that he hopes to share with his Chinese counterparts. Among his other works, he explains that one, *Man Bathed in Moon*, uses a unique printmaking technique called *chine colle*, a French term meaning "using thin Chinese paper to create multiple colors on a plate".

For centuries, printmaking has played a crucial role in the development of artists, regardless of the medium they primarily work with. Celebrated artists such as Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse and Andy Warhol were deeply engaged with printmaking, renewing people's interest in the form as artistic expression.

With Wen Zhongyan and Fu Bin, both from the Academy of Arts and Design, Tsinghua University, as the exhibition's chief curators, the exhibition showcases how artists use printmaking as a vessel for distinctive experiences and shared feelings, as they gaze at the mountains and waters that surround them and the history and traditions that have shaped their everyday lives. Meanwhile, they reflect on urban evolution amid the era's shifting tides and its influence on individuals.

Beihai 2011.7.8, one of the works on display at the exhibition, was created by Wen, who heads the painting department at the Academy of Arts and Design. The painting delivers a nighttime solemnity at Beihai Park, one of Beijing's imperial gardens. Wen used acrylic to depict the landmark White Pagoda on the Jade Islet bathed in nocturnal serenity, as well as the bridge's dim lighting. He also employed silkscreen printing to create dense, nuanced patterns of geometric shapes and numerals throughout the painting.

Wen says he was inspired by a television's repair diagram — "the components' densely packed arrangement reminds me of the maze-like yet orderly structure of Beijing's old, beautiful alleyways", he explains, adding that the distinctively textured surface of the work hints at the marks of time that have been imprinted on the capital.

"I've worked on the Beihai series for nearly two decades. The park's varied hues correspond with the changing climates of the days I visit, and the changing atmosphere of the historical architecture," he adds.

Yan Yan, the executive director of Today Art Museum, says the artists capture the myriad textures of life and the spirit of the times, building a cross-cultural arena that is inclusive, diverse and open to all.

Wen notes the exhibition introduces home audiences to the printmaking art of Southeast Asia, which they are less familiar with.

The exchanges have also expanded beyond museum spaces. Convocar showed how he worked with the *chine colle* approach during a workshop at the Academy of Arts and Design after the exhibition opening on June 18. He says he once taught at a university for years before becoming a full-time artist.

In November 2025, a printmaking exhibition of Chinese and Thai artists, including some from the Academy of Arts and Design at Tsinghua University and the Central Academy of Fine Arts, was held in Bangkok to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the diplomatic relations between Thailand and China.

Contact the writer at linqi@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

A mesmerizing peek into the transformation of identity

By **LI YINGXUE**
liyingxue@chinadaily.com.cn





From left: Portraits of Peking Opera performers by French artist Esther Imard are displayed at Yishu 8, an art platform housed in the former Sino-French University. During the opening of her exhibition in Beijing this month, Peking Opera performers present selected vocal excerpts. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

A Peking Opera performer sits before a mirror. Makeup is applied with precision, costumes are adjusted, and an ordinary identity begins to dissolve. Moments later, the actor steps onto the stage and enters a story that first took shape more than four centuries ago.

It is this brief interval — between the everyday self and a stage character — that French artist Esther Imard seeks to capture in her paintings.

Imard, recipient of the 2025 Yishu 8 French Young Artist Award supported by Boucheron, arrived in Beijing in April for a residency at Yishu 8, an art platform housed in the former Sino-French University. Living in a *hutong* (alleyway), studying Chinese, and attending performances, she gradually immersed herself in the city's theatrical and social rhythms.

Her connection to theater, however, predates Beijing. Imard describes a childhood spent around a suburban Paris theater where her father served as co-director.

"I was wandering around the empty theater, on stage, playing hide-and-seek under the bleachers with my brother, and bothering the lighting manager," the 26-year-old artist recalls. "It was like being home, with a huge family made up of different people."

She describes the theater as a "safe space" rather than a distant cultural institution. "If a play needed a child on stage, I was happy to play a small role," she says.

That continuity was disrupted during her studies at the Ecole Nationale Superieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris, when her father lost his position following a managerial transition at the theater. "I felt like part of my childhood was left there," she says.

To remain close to that world, she worked as an usher in a Paris theater while studying fine arts, dividing her days between painting and evening shifts. Later, she interned in stage painting at the Paris Opera, an experience that reshaped her understanding of artistic production.

"The purpose of stage painting is to make your individuality disappear," she says. "All the hands involved in a project must harmonize. It's a wonderful feeling to paint with other people."

Imard's first encounter with Peking Opera came through Chen Kaige's film *Farewell, My Concubine*. She later attended a live performance of *The Orphan of Zhao* in Paris, an experience she describes as formative.

"I was mesmerized by the singing, the costumes, the makeup — everything," she says.

When she arrived in Beijing for her residency, she had already prepared by reading extensively on Peking Opera. With support from Yishu 8, she also met performers and entered rehearsal and backstage spaces — access that became central to her work.

At a production of *Dabaoguo, Tan Huangling and Er Jingong* at the Mei Lanfang Theatre, she observed not only the stage performance but the backstage environment.

"I think there are not many differences between the backstage of the Paris Opera and the Mei Lanfang Theatre," she says. "Singers warming up, practicing tongue twisters, eating a quick snack before going on stage — the atmosphere is quite similar."

However, she was struck by one element unique to Peking Opera culture: the altar dedicated to Erlang Shen.

"I had read about it, but had never seen it," she says. "Seeing the respect performers show was very moving. There is no such thing in France."

These backstage observations now define the core of her painting practice.

At her Beijing studio, Imard presented portraits of performers from *Dabaoguo, Tan Huangling and Er Jingong*, depicted during the makeup application process.

"I hope people can see the actors behind their makeup — their humanity," she says. "At that moment, they are not their everyday selves, but not yet fully their characters either."

She is drawn to what she calls a "tension in identity". "There is vulnerability in this state," she says. "It is a very delicate moment. It moves me deeply."

In addition to the portraits, she is developing a large-scale painting of four performers waiting in the wings — fully costumed, poised before going on stage.

For Yishu 8 founder Christine Cayol, Imard's work echoes a European pictorial tradition while remaining grounded in lived observation. The dark, staged compositions suggest anticipation — "something about to happen", as she describes it.

Among the performers Imard has painted is Zhang Yandong, who portrays Yang Shixiang in the show. During an open day at the studio, he and fellow actor Song Ruoxuan performed selected vocal excerpts, offering visitors an encounter with the vocal traditions of Peking Opera without the costumes.

The residency has also deepened into personal exchanges. "There is great generosity in how people here share their culture," Imard says. "I have fallen in love with Beijing and its people."

As her time in the city draws to a close, she returns to a single question: "When will I be able to come back?"

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:49 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:49 PM

LIFE



Thanks to technology, music is becoming easier to compose, but far harder to make memorable in an increasingly crowded marketplace, **Chen Nan** reports.

AI changes the score

Across China's music industry, artificial intelligence is no longer on the sidelines. It is shaping how songs are created, filtered, distributed, and valued.

That shift set the tone for the 11th Music Industry Forum in Beijing earlier this month, where researchers and industry leaders examined an industry expanding rapidly, but also reinventing itself at the same time.

The numbers remain strong. China's music industry generated 519 billion yuan ($76.64 billion) in gross revenue last year, up 5.3 percent year-on-year. But beneath those figures, a different story is unfolding: AI is not just speeding up production, it is changing the structure of music itself.

A separate industry report, White Paper on China's Digital Music Industry (2025), coproduced by Tencent Music Entertainment Group, TME Research Institute and the Digital Music Committee of the China Audio-Video and Digital Publishing Association, describes 2025 as a "year of acceleration". Not just in consumption, but in creation.

The data is striking. Tencent Music Entertainment Group's platforms now receive 107,000 new song uploads every day, up from 76,000 in 2024. By December 2025, AI-generated songs accounted for 36.2 percent of all new releases. On AI music platform Suno, users generate more than 7 million songs per day. Music creation is no longer scarce — it is abundant, continuous and increasingly automated.

Professional musicians, for the most part, have adapted. The report notes a shift from caution to adoption, with AI now widely used to generate lyric ideas, arrange drafts and assist production. Music is no longer created solely by humans or machines, but through collaboration between the two.

Yet, this explosion of content has not simply diluted music, it has reorganized attention.

Algorithms and short-video platforms now account for more than 80 percent of new music discovery. Increasingly, listeners are not searching for songs; songs are finding them.

As production becomes easier, value is shifting from making "more music" toward making "more meaningful music".

One of the report's most significant findings is the rise of "superfans". Listening has evolved beyond streaming into an expression of identity, participation and emotional connection. In China's digital music economy, these highly engaged users generate outsized value, spending far more than average listeners and driving demand for experience-based services rather than simple playback.

That reflects a broader global trend. Growth in traditional streaming is slowing as the industry shifts its focus from expansion to engagement. New users increasingly come from emerging markets, while future growth will depend less on scale than on the depth of audience relationships.

In China, that engagement is becoming both more intense and more global. The country became the world's fourth-largest recorded music market in 2025, according to the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, the organization that represents the recording industry worldwide, with revenue rising 20.1 percent. Yet, per-user revenue remains well below that of mature markets, leaving considerable room for growth. At the same time, Chinese music is increasingly reaching overseas audiences through its distinct cultural identity rather than translation.

Soundtracks from games such as *Genshin Impact* and *Black Myth: Wukong*, along with viral rap tracks, are finding global audiences through platforms where rhythm, tone, and visual identity often matter as much as language.

Creativity meets machine

"Artificial intelligence is rapidly reshaping the music industry, but its impact goes far beyond faster production or lower costs. It is challenging a basic assumption: that music and art must be created by humans alone," says Li Xiaobing, professor and head of the department of music artificial intelligence and music information technology at the Central Conservatory of Music.

"For years, many believed machines could not create art because they lack emotion. But that view is now being questioned. We understand only a small part of the human brain," says Li. Advances in AI composition and voice synthesis have already produced music and singing that many listeners struggle to distinguish from human performances — and in some cases even find emotionally moving, he adds.

The impact is evident across the industry. AI can generate compositions in seconds that once took hours and reconstruct how musicians performed historical works through data analysis. Music education, performance and production are all being compressed into faster, more automated workflows.



Top: A view of the immersive cave experience hall at the digital entertainment zone during the 4th Global Digital Trade Expo in Hangzhou in September last year. The installation was part of a special interactive music exhibition jointly presented by Zhejiang Conservatory of Music and Dunhuang Cultural and Tourism Group. XU YU / XINHUA **Above:** Kaka in his Cashmere Studios. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

But key questions remain unresolved — especially around copyright, originality, and ownership in a world where AI can generate vast amounts of music instantly, Li says.

AI is now embedded throughout the production process — from recording and arranging to demo creation — and is already replacing parts of traditional workflows, according to Guo Kun, deputy secretary-general of the China Audio-Video Copyright Association.

One of the biggest challenges, she says, is scale and transparency. Not all AI-generated music is identified as such, and some tracks are even presented as human-made. As a result, no precise figures exist, though industry estimates suggest platforms receive anywhere from 50,000 to 150,000 new AI-generated tracks every day, she points out.

Streaming services have developed their own settlement systems. While copyright issues remain unresolved, AI-generated music is already generating revenue. Some payments are treated as royalties, others as platform incentives. In many cases, the same rules apply whether AI is involved or not.

Industry observers note a clear divide between China and some overseas markets. "In many foreign markets, the attitude is more negative, and most AI music does not receive income or formal settlement," she says.

China's platform ecosystem, by contrast, is taking a more pragmatic approach. The key question is not whether AI was used, but whether the music attracts listeners and succeeds commercially. "If a piece of music sounds good and attracts listeners, it can generate income," she says.

Even so, industry data point to an important distinction. Fully AI-generated music rarely performs strongly on its own. Most commercially successful projects still involve human creators, shifting the debate from whether AI will replace musicians to how deeply it will become part of the creative process.

Regulation remains unsettled. "There is still no final legal judgment in this area," Guo says, pointing to the absence of binding case law on AI-generated music and copyright.

The human difference

But while AI is transforming the front end of music creation, its impact is not evenly distributed across the production chain.

In fact, one of the most striking effects of the AI boom is that not every role is disappearing. Some are proving remarkably resilient.

Mixing is one of them.

Mixing is the stage where vocals, instruments, and effects are balanced into a finished track. It is technical, but also deeply subjective. And that subjectivity is precisely what has made it resistant to automation.

The reason is partly economic. As AI reduces the cost of composing and arranging music, more production budgets are being redirected toward the final stages — where human judgment still carries the greatest value.

Cashmere Studios in Shanghai offers a glimpse into why.

For its founder, Kaka, mixing is less about engineering and more about taste.

"Clients don't come to a mixing engineer just for technical output," he says. "It's like asking a friend for fashion advice. You want aesthetic judgment, not a correct answer."

He argues that mixing resists automation because it depends on choices that are difficult to quantify: how warm a vocal should sound, how far an instrument should sit in the mix, or how emotionally a chorus should land.

There is also a structural reason AI struggles here. Much of professional mixing relies on proprietary tools, hardware-specific workflows, and tacit knowledge that is rarely documented. In industry terms, it is a "black box" process — difficult to capture, and even harder to train at scale.

While AI can now generate complete songs, it is still far less capable of finishing them.

This imbalance is shaping a broader reality across the industry: AI is not replacing music creation outright. It is removing the repetitive, standardized layers while increasing the value of judgment-heavy work.

That shift is already showing up in earnings.

Independent musicians report declining income from certain types of commercial work, especially functional music for advertisements, corporate events, and short-form video content. These are exactly the areas where AI performs best: fast, cheap, and "good enough".

One industry description captures this new aesthetic bluntly: AI-generated music often sounds like a "standard face" — technically correct, polished, but lacking identity.

At Cashmere Studios, Kaka has witnessed the shift firsthand. Corporate commissions have declined as companies increasingly generate music in-house using AI tools. Film and game studios, once reliable clients for licensed tracks and live recordings, are also experimenting with AI-generated demos before approaching human musicians.

"Before, they would buy music or hire musicians to test ideas," he says. "Now they often start with AI."

Still, the industry is not simply shrinking. It is splitting.

On one side, AI is rapidly absorbing functional, low-emotion content. On the other, demand is growing for work rooted in human interpretation, cultural understanding and emotional nuance.

The broader picture is not replacement, but rebalancing.

Even as production becomes more automated, the industry is becoming more dependent on human judgment.

That may be the AI era's greatest paradox: the easier it becomes to generate music, the harder it becomes to create something truly worth listening to.

Contact the writer at chennan@chinadaily.com.cn

Beloved dumplings reveal links across the Silk Road

ANKARA — On a busy afternoon in central Ankara, capital of Turkiye, steaming plates of *manti*, the beloved Turkish dumpling, arrive one after another at Maharet Manti, a restaurant dedicated to a dish generations of Turks have grown up eating.

At one table, diners savor tiny Kayseri-style *manti* drenched in garlic yogurt and butter sauce. For restaurant owner Nurcan Sertakan, *manti* tells a story that extends far beyond the dining table.

"When we researched its history, we found different accounts, but the most widely accepted one points to China and its spread through the Silk Road," says Sertakan.

She gestures toward plates featuring dumplings from various countries, part of the restaurant's effort to introduce customers to the global family of dishes linked by a shared culinary heritage.

"What fascinates us is that the essence never really changes," she says. "You take dough and fill it with meat, vegetables, or other ingredients. The form changes, the size changes, but the idea remains the same."

Food historians say Turkish *manti* belongs to a vast network of dumpling traditions stretching from East Asia to Anatolia. Along the ancient Silk Road, merchants, travelers and nomadic peoples carried not only goods but also recipes and cooking techniques across thousands of kilometers, they say.





Left: A customer enjoys Turkish dumplings, known locally as *manti*, at a restaurant in Ankara, Turkiye, on June 12. **Right:** Chefs prepare *manti*, the traditional Turkish dumpling dish, in Ankara. PHOTOS BY XINHUA

"The connection between Turkish *manti* and Chinese dumplings is striking," says Turkish gastronomy expert Aylin Oney Tan.

"One of the most significant foods shared across the Silk Road is the dumpling. These dishes reveal a common culinary past and demonstrate remarkable similarities despite the great distances between them," she says.

Tan says many etymological studies trace the word *manti* to the Chinese term *mantou*, often referred to as a Chinese steamed bun, while others point to Mongolian influences that helped spread dumpling traditions westward.

At Maharet Manti, Sertakan sees those connections come to life every day. The restaurant regularly welcomes visitors from China and other East Asian countries, many of whom are intrigued by Turkiye's version of a familiar dish.

"Our Chinese guests are very curious about Turkish *manti*," she says.

"As dumplings traveled west along the Silk Road, their form evolved," Sertakan says. "The larger dumplings common in parts of East Asia gradually became smaller in Anatolia. The appearance changed according to local tastes, but the essence remained the same."

For Sertakan, the story of *manti* also illustrates the broader cultural significance of the Silk Road. "It didn't just transport goods. It carried cultures. Food is culture, and it travels together with people," she says.

Among those enjoying that heritage is 25-year-old Irem Aydin, who sampled Uzbek-style *manti* during a recent visit.

Like many Turks, Aydin associates *manti* with childhood memories and family traditions.

"It has always been one of our favorite foods," she says. "It's a dish our grandmothers used to make, so it has a special place in our culture."

Trying different varieties has made her appreciate how a single concept can take many forms across countries.

"When you look closely, it's often the same ingredients presented differently. There is craftsmanship involved," she says.

For Tan, the enduring popularity of dumplings across Asia highlights a deeper historical connection between cultures often perceived as far apart.

"I see Chinese and Turkish food cultures as two sisters that have lost touch," she says. "One developed on the eastern edge of Asia and the other on the western edge. Yet, when you compare their foods, you can still see traces of a shared past."

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:49 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:49 PM

SPORTS

DR Congo writes itself a new World Cup chapter

ATLANTA — For 52 years, the Democratic Republic of the Congo's standout World Cup memory was a humiliating 9-0 rout at the hands of the former Yugoslavia during its only previous appearance at soccer's global showpiece.

Not anymore.

Not after a new generation of players made history by advancing DR Congo to the knockout stage of the World Cup for the first time, and setting up a round-of-32 clash with one of the pre-tournament favorites and 1966 champion England.

"The weight on our shoulders was hard to bear," said striker Yoane Wissa, whose two goals helped DR Congo rally to a 3-1 win over Uzbekistan on Saturday night.

Wissa said he would dedicate his brace to those suffering back home from years of wars.

"We are a proud country. We are proud people. We love our country. We love our national team. We love what we represent!" Wissa told reporters.

"I think, tonight, we just showed what it means for us, and just to fight, no matter what.

"It's not easy in our country. There's a war in east Congo. Every day, every time we wear this shirt, we think about them.

"That's why tonight, what we showed says that 'guys, no matter what, we need to keep going'.

"Because we want peace, and to (the supporters), I just say 'thank you'. Thank you because we came from far. We came from nothing to be here. Now, we write our story with a black pen, and we need to be proud."

Fiston Mayele was also on target in a dramatic second-half comeback. "We told ourselves we can't give up," Mayele said.

Alongside Cape Verde, DR Congo has been one of the surprise stories of this World Cup, with few expecting it to emerge from a group that included Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal and Colombia. And history was hardly on its side.

Congo's previous appearance, when it competed as Zaire, was in 1974, when it lost all three games, including the rout by Yugoslavia.

It's a completely different story now.

After holding Ronaldo and Portugal to a surprise 1-1 draw earlier in the tournament, DR Congo needed a win in its final Group K game to advance as one of the best third-placed teams.

And it did just that, with a breathless fightback after trailing to Eldor Shomurodov's lobbed goal in the 10th minute.

"We're a team that knows how to respond when we concede a goal; we keep fighting with determination," coach Sebastien Desabre said.

If the weight of the occasion was evident in DR Congo's first-half performance, the resilience of its players proved irresistible after the break.

The game was level in the 68th when Wissa was brought down in the box by Abdukodir Khusanov for a penalty.

Wissa picked himself up and sent Uzbekistan goalkeeper Abduvohid Nematov the wrong way, rolling the ball into the bottom corner for the first of a late flurry of goals.

Mayele put Congo ahead 10 minutes later when flicking past Nematov at the near post and was mobbed by his teammates, including the substitutes, who raced off the bench and across the field to join in the wild celebrations.

There were even more joyous scenes when Wissa put the result beyond any doubt in added time with a curling shot into the bottom corner.

Fans continued celebrating long after the final whistle, singing and dancing in the stadium concourses, the memories of 1974's humiliation long forgotten.

"We're going to savor this moment because it's been tough," said Wissa. "All the guys — the substitutes, those who've worn the jersey before, and those who'll wear it tomorrow — we should be proud. Thank you to all the Congolese people; it's for moments like these that we do what we do. We did it!"

DR Congo became the eighth African nation to advance from the group stage at this tournament.

"It's quite an achievement. We showed a good image of Congo," said Desabre.

Uzbekistan's debut at the World Cup ended in three straight defeats.

"This tournament will give us a lot of experience. I hope that experience will give us more motivation for the future," said the team's Italian coach Fabio Cannavaro.

AGENCIES



Yoane Wissa is mobbed after scoring his second goal, and DR Congo's third, in a 3-1 win over Uzbekistan on Saturday. REUTERS

2026 WORLD CUP



Algerian fans celebrate their progression to the knockout stages of the World Cup following Saturday's dramatic 3-3 draw with Austria in Kansas City. **Inset:** Egypt's Mohamed Salah (10) consoles Iran's Ramin Rezaeian (23) after their 1-1 draw on Friday in Seattle. REUTERS

Late goal rush sees Austria, Algeria advance

Stoppage time thriller finishes 3-3, but result means heartbreak for Iran

Algeria and Austria knew that a pedestrian draw on Saturday night would have sent both to the knockout round of the World Cup.

They delivered a six-goal thriller instead.

In the wildest finish of the group stage, Algeria took the lead in stoppage time only for Austria to answer in the final seconds of the match, making it 3-3 at the final whistle.

It was a win-win result for both teams, but a heartbreaking one for Iran, which was eliminated from the tournament.

"I've been a coach for about 40 years. I don't remember a game that had such a dramatic course, and such an unexpected trajectory," Austria coach Ralf Rangnick said, shaking his head.

"Even at the beginning of the match, if someone would have said it would be 3-3, nobody would have believed it. Somebody would have won an incredible bet, I guess."

Austria struck first when Marko Arnautovic perfectly timed a run between two Algerian defenders, found himself one-on-one with goalkeeper Oussama Benbot, and overcame a stumble to score his record-extending 49th career goal for his nation.

Algeria answered just before halftime, when Rafik Belghali's left-footed shot easily beat Austrian goalkeeper Alexander Schlager.

The frenetic pace continued early in the second half on a hot night in Kansas City, where many of the locals appeared to be rooting for Algeria, which made its training base in the nearby town of Lawrence and has struck up a unique friendship with the residents.

Not content with a 1-1 draw, Austria's Konrad Laimer sent a sharp pass across the field that Marcel Sabitzer finished to regain the lead — and give Iran some hope — only for Algeria to answer minutes later, when Riyad Mahrez scored off a perfect cross from Houssem Aouar.

The game was tied at two goals apiece in the closing minutes, and Algeria looked as if it was content to run out the clock and allow both teams to advance, when Mahrez, who obviously hadn't read the script, scored his second goal of the game.

That put Austria on the verge of elimination, only for Sasa Kalajdzic to head in the equalizer just a minute later, rescuing his team's World Cup hopes and devastating Iran's hopes of advancing.

"The locker room is madness," Rangnick said with a smile.

"If Alfred Hitchcock — who had nothing to do with soccer, didn't really like soccer — if he had written such a drama, I would have said he was completely mad."

"I think the match was a little crazy. It sort of went beyond the limits of everyone's endurance," said Algeria coach Vladimir Petkovic.

"Let's celebrate our promotion, so to speak, let's rest and then we will begin again for the next round."

Iran would've advanced as one of the eight best third-placed teams had Austria or Algeria won, but when Kalajdzic scored in stoppage time to tie the game one last time, it signaled the end of a grueling tournament for the Iranians.

"When you have 3-3, nobody can assume that it was an agreement (to tie) or anything like that," Rangnick said, perhaps referencing the infamous "Disgrace of Gijon" that occurred during the 1982 tournament in Spain, when Austria and then West Germany were widely accused of fixing the result of their final group game so both sides would advance, ironically, at the expense of Algeria.

Germany scored early on in that game, and both teams then proceeded to play keep-ball in their respective backfields until the final whistle.

While it was never officially proven that there was any nefarious agreement, it prompted FIFA to introduce simultaneous kickoffs for the final group matches at every World Cup.

The newly expanded 48-team format, however, has raised concerns of a possible repeat of that ignominious day, with some teams in the final round of group games, such as Austria and Algeria, once again knowing what results would secure a knockout place.

There is no doubt, though, that there were plenty of longtime Algeria supporters who had been waiting 44 years for some World Cup revenge against Austria, and Mahrez came agonizingly close to delivering it for them.

Their disappointment would have been one last painful moment for Iran in a World Cup that's been tumultuous, on and off the pitch.

The team has been playing at the same time as Tehran negotiates with Washington on terms of a deal meant to permanently end the ongoing conflict instigated by United States and Israeli air strikes on Iran earlier this year.

During the World Cup, Iran coach Amir Ghalenoei and players complained about numerous complications, including travel restrictions, visa denials for support staff and forced immediate departures from the US after matches.

US officials have said all such restrictions were known before the tournament.

After Iran was eliminated Saturday night, the team sent a statement expressing "heartfelt appreciation to the wonderful people of Mexico, especially the beautiful city of Tijuana," where its base camp was located after being forced to change its original plans to stay in the US.

"Leaving Tijuana is truly difficult for all of us," the statement said.

For the first two matches, near Los Angeles, the team was not permitted to travel until the day before and had to return to Mexico immediately after each game.

"We were treated very, very badly," Ghalenoei said after Friday's draw with Egypt left the Iranians clinging to hope they would get to the next round.

"I hope the world becomes aware of these issues.

"What these young Iranian national team players have done should be recorded in history," Ghalenoei said.

"Why? Because the host treated us in the worst possible way."

Austria, which finished second behind Argentina in Group J to advance for the first time since that fateful game in 1982, is rewarded with a match against European champion and one of the tournament favorites Spain in Los Angeles.

Meanwhile, Algeria will face Switzerland in Vancouver, Canada.

Both games are set to be played on Thursday.

AGENCIES

More records tumble, as Messi posts longest tournament scoring streak

ARLINGTON, Texas — As a second-half substitute, Lionel Messi didn't have much time to try to become the first to score in seven consecutive World Cup games.

But, to nobody's surprise, Argentina's superstar did it anyway.

Messi made it seven straight while extending the all-time men's World Cup scoring record with his 19th goal in Argentina's 3-1 victory over Jordan in their group stage finale on Saturday night.

In his first match since turning 39 three days earlier, Messi scored from a freekick after being taken down just outside the penalty box in the 80th minute. The low drive, barely above the grass, split two Jordan defenders and powered into the left corner of the net.

It was his 72nd career goal from a freekick, including his 12th for Argentina. Messi now has 123 international goals — second only to Cristiano Ronaldo's all-time leading 145 — in 202 appearances.

Messi had been one of only three players to score in six consecutive World Cup games along with France striker Just Fontaine and Brazil great Jairzinho.

Messi also joined Brazilian greats Pele and Rivellino, Peru's Teofilo Cubillas, France's Bernard Genghini and England's David Beckham to have scored two World Cup goals directly from freekicks, at least, since such records started being kept in 1966.

"I am very happy for him, for the moment he is having," Giovani Lo Celso said after becoming the first Argentine other than Messi to score in this tournament so far, also from a freekick in the 19th minute.

"The truth is that seeing him every day excites, and is infectious. So, obviously, seeing him like that, for us, is very important."

Messi didn't start because Argentina had already clinched first place in Group J, and the game had become somewhat of dead rubber, with Jordan already eliminated.

Nevertheless, the decidedly pro-Argentina crowd of 70,649 at the home of the NFL's Dallas Cowboys was eager to see Messi.

Fans started chanting his name as soon as the second half started, and cheered loudly when he came off the bench to go through his warm-up.

The roar was louder when he stepped onto the field in the 60th minute, replacing Lautaro Martinez, who scored from the penalty spot in the first half.

For all the accomplishments of the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner, Messi has never won the World Cup's Golden Boot. Maybe he'll manage on his sixth attempt. He now has six goals in this tournament, two clear of France's Kylian Mbappe, Brazil's Vinicius Junior and Norway's Erling Haaland.

Argentina will now look toward its round-of-32 fixture on Friday in Miami, where it will help to write the next chapter in World Cup debutant Cape Verde's fairytale run.

AP



Lionel Messi scores a record-extending 19th World Cup goal from a freekick during Argentina's 3-1 win over Jordan. REUTERS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:49 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:50 PM

Show of resilience
Russia resists oil refinery strikes, Western sanctions
WORLD, PAGE 5



Robotic cargo spacecraft clears tests
CHINA, PAGE 11



Historic win
Canada beats South Africa 1-0 in stoppage time to reach last 16
SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY
GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 TUESDAY, JUNE 30, 2026

Xi highlights strong ties with Belarus

President says the two countries are true friends, good partners

By **CAO DESHENG**
caodesheng@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping said on Monday that China and Belarus should maintain strategic communication and promote the continuous advancement of bilateral relations at a high level to better benefit the two peoples.

Xi made the remarks during a meeting with Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing.

Xi described China and Belarus as true friends who trust and support each other, good partners in shared development and prosperity, and all-weather comprehensive strategic partners, saying that the relationship between the two countries has withstood the test of changes in the international landscape and has achieved leapfrog development in recent years, entering its best period in history.

He noted that political mutual trust between the two countries is rock solid, high-quality Belt and Road cooperation has yielded fruitful results, the two sides have made tangible progress in key cooperation projects, and their multilateral collaboration is effective.

Facts have proven that deepening all-weather, all-around cooperation between China and Belarus aligns with the trend of the times and serves the fundamental interests of the two peoples, he said.

Xi emphasized that China supports Belarus in safeguarding its national sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, and in pursuing a development path suited to its own national conditions. The nation is willing to continue offering assistance within its capacity for the development of Belarus, he added.

He called on both countries to mobilize resources in all sectors to advance Belt and Road cooperation and enrich the content of their pragmatic cooperation.

China is willing to work with Belarus to jointly build a community with a shared future for humanity, implement the four major global initiatives, and strengthen coordination and cooperation within multilateral mechanisms, such as the United Nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, to serve as a stabilizing force in a turbulent world, Xi said.

Lukashenko, who is making his 17th visit to China since he became the president of Belarus, said that he totally agrees with Xi on the latter's remarks about bilateral ties. China is an all-weather comprehensive strategic partner for Belarus, and the comprehensive and deep cooperation between the two countries provides significant support for the economic and social development of Belarus, he said.

Lukashenko said that Belarus attaches great importance to its relationship with China, and looks forward to strengthening strategic communication, expanding areas of cooperation and achieving greater development in bilateral relations.

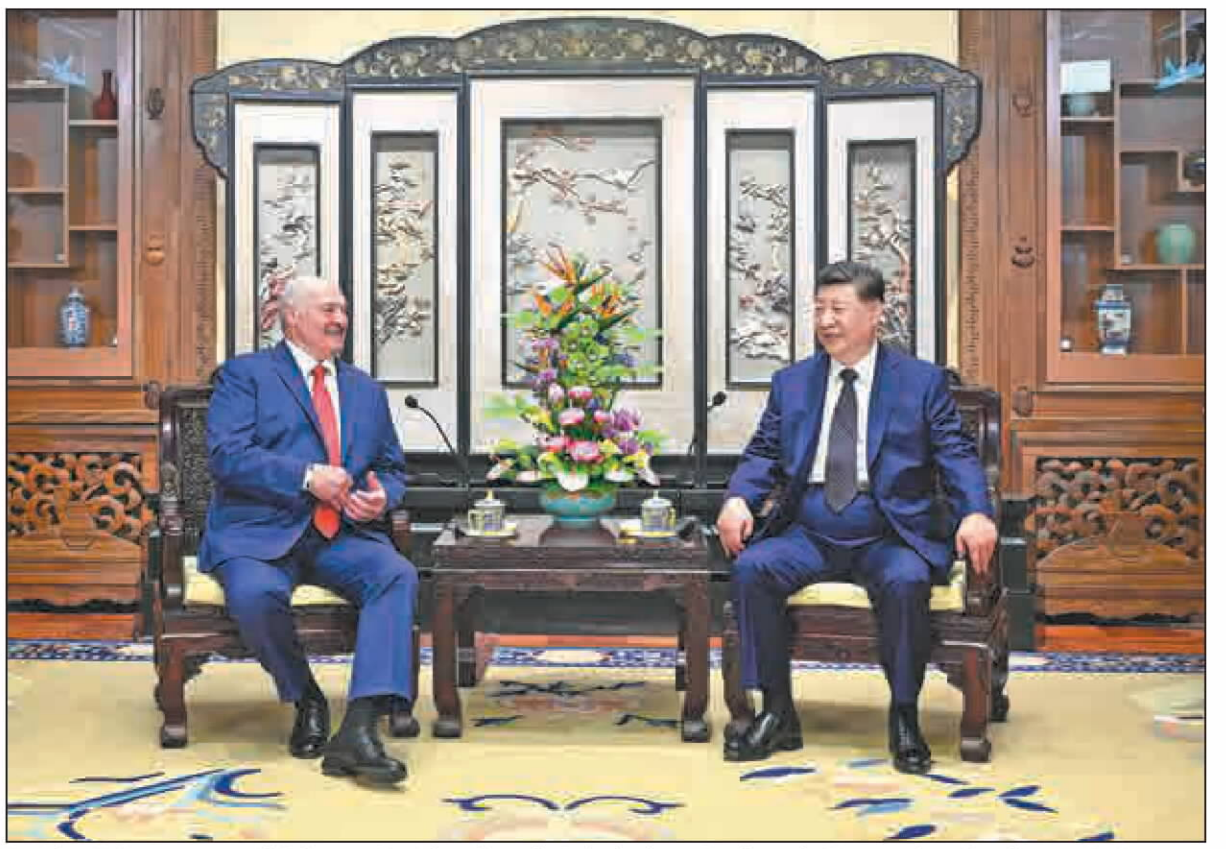
He hailed the four major global initiatives proposed by Xi, saying that these help to promote the political resolution of hot spot issues and make significant contributions to world peace, stability and prosperity.

Belarus is willing to continue maintaining close coordination with China on international and regional affairs, and jointly promote regional and global peace, development and stability, he said.

The China-Belarus Industrial Park, located 25 kilometers from Minsk, the Belarusian capital, has become a landmark project for mutually beneficial cooperation.

China has become the second-largest trading partner of Belarus and its largest trading partner in Asia.

Data from the General Administration of Customs shows that the trade value between China and Belarus in 2025 was $8.86 billion, up 5.5 percent year-on-year.



President Xi Jinping meets with Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko on Monday at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing. SHEN HONG / XINHUA

Nation adds 20 Japanese entities to its export control list

By **WANG KEJU**
wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn

China placed 20 Japanese entities on a control list with absolute export prohibition on Monday, while adding 20 others to a watch list with enhanced scrutiny, a move that experts said would ratchet up pressure on Tokyo to abandon its remilitarization and nuclear ambitions, and would help safeguard regional peace.

Inside
Editorial, **page 6**

According to the Chinese Ministry of Commerce, the 20 entities on the control list, including Japan's National Institute for Defense Studies and several Mitsubishi-affiliated defense contractors, now face a blanket ban on the export of all dual-use items — goods and technologies that have both civilian and military applications. The ban also applies to foreign organizations and individuals seeking to transfer or supply Chinese-origin dual-use items to these entities.

The 20 other Japanese entities on a separate watch list, including Mitsui E&S Co, face stricter licensing requirements and enhanced end-user reviews on any dual-use item exports. The review period is not bound by the standard statutory deadline of 45 working days as stipulated in related regulations on export control of dual-use items.

Monday's announcement follows an initial round of export controls imposed in February on 40 Japanese entities.

A spokesperson for the Ministry of Commerce said the measures are "completely justified, reasonable and lawful", and are aimed at "curbing Japan's attempts at remilitarization and possession of nuclear weapons".

"Regrettably, over time, Japan has shown no signs of repentance, but has instead gone further down the wrong path, accelerating its new militarism and remilitarization," the spokesperson added.

Public broadcaster NHK reported on Monday that the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force has deployed a surface-to-ship missile launcher on Minamitorishima, the country's easternmost Pacific outpost. The report said this is the first time such weaponry has been stationed on the remote island.

Ties between Beijing and Tokyo have been tense since late last year when Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi implied that Japan might have to intervene militarily in the Taiwan Strait, and she refused to retract her erroneous remarks.

See ***List,*** *page 3*

MUSEUM OFFERS VISITORS A BROLLY GOOD TIME

Traditional art of West Lake silk umbrella making gains a new generation of fans

By **MENG WENJIE**
mengwenjie@i21st.cn

In mid-May, 31-year-old Russian student Daria Dykusar stood in the experience area of the China Umbrella Museum in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, holding a toothbrush.

Before her were stencil plates, fine mesh screens, pigments and a paper postcard. Using the brush, she gently applied pigment to the postcard. It filtered through the mesh like a fine mist, gradually creating the soft, rain-washed effect that is characteristic of many scenes depicted on West Lake silk umbrellas.

"At first, it looked easy," she said. "But once I started, I realized it wasn't. You need exactly the right amount of pigment — otherwise, you can ruin the whole picture."

The technique is a signature decorative method used in West Lake silk umbrella making, a craft that has been on China's national intangible cultural heritage list since 2008.

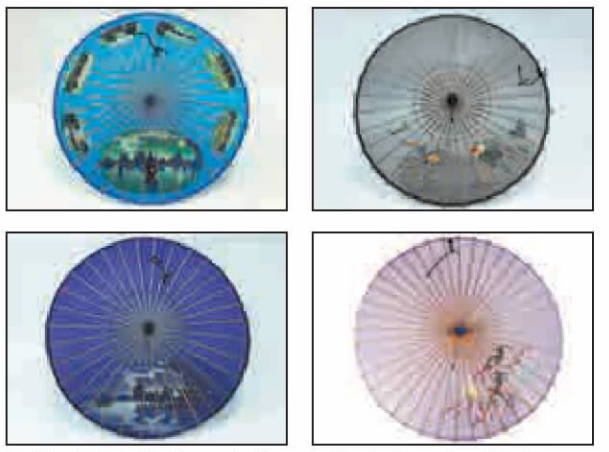
Dykusar, who holds a master's degree in mechanics and mathematics from Lomonosov Moscow State University, is now studying Chinese at Zhejiang Business College. She joined 12 fellow international students on a visit to the museum to experience the artistry behind the iconic Hangzhou parasols.

After nearly two hours of careful work, she completed a design featuring *Duanqiao canxue*, or lingering snow on Broken Bridge, one of West Lake's best-known scenic spots.

"I got paint everywhere — on my clothes, my hands and even in my hair," she said with a laugh. "It requires tremendous patience and attention to detail."

Before visiting the China Umbrella Museum in Hangzhou, Dykusar had seen many examples of silk umbrellas online, often carried by women wearing traditional Chinese attire. Yet, it was only after trying the design process herself that she fully appreciated the skill involved.

"The first time I saw a silk umbrella, I thought it was beautiful," she said. "But when I tried creating one, I realized how much work goes into it. Looking at the finished product alone, you would never imagine the effort behind it."



Making West Lake-themed silk umbrellas in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, is a craft that was added to China's national intangible cultural heritage list in 2008. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

See ***Revival,*** *page 3*

105 years of commitment to China's development

WORLD WATCH
By Alessandro Golombiewski Teixeira

As the Communist Party of China marks its 105th anniversary, it should be seen not merely as the governing party of the People's Republic of China, but also as the principal architect of the country's extraordinary development and modernization.

Few political organizations in modern history have had such a profound and sustained influence over such a massive population. Fewer still can claim responsibility for a transformation of such a vast scale and intricate complexity. A country once plagued by warlordism, foreign invasions and endemic poverty, China has risen to become the world's second-largest economy, a manufacturing powerhouse, a technological titan and a global heavyweight.

China's current stature is attributed to the CPC's ability to set ambitious national goals, define long-term strategic priorities and coordinate State agencies to execute them with discipline and efficiency.

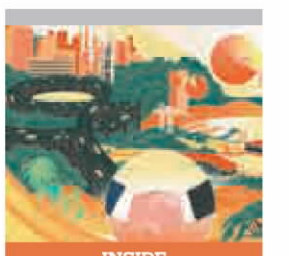
The Party's initial triumph was political. In the turbulent decades following the collapse of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), China was internally divided, institutionally fragile and vulnerable to external domination. The CPC emerged as a revolutionary force that not only promised national revival and restoration of sovereignty, but also a deep social transformation. Its victory in the War of Liberation and the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 laid the foundation for a unified nation.

The CPC's enduring strength lies not only in its revolutionary origins, but also in its remarkable capacity for ideological and organizational adaptation. The Mao Zedong era established a sound institutional framework for the Party and laid critical foundations in areas such as public health and basic literacy.

The launch of reform and opening-up in 1978 was pivotal for China. While retaining its central political role, the Party anchored its legitimacy in tangible outcomes: rapid economic growth, social stability and steady improvements in people's living standards.

This pragmatic approach distinguished the CPC from many other communist parties. Rather than resorting to abrupt liberalization or "shock therapy" that led to institutional collapse elsewhere, China pursued reform slowly and carefully. The Party experimented with policy innovations in pilot special economic zones before scaling up successful initiatives. Measures such as agricultural de-collectivization and dual-track pricing expanded the scope for market mechanisms while preserving the government's guiding role.

See ***Institution,*** *page 3*



INSIDE
An AI cooperation blueprint for the Global South
Global Views, page 8

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
Newsstand prices: US $1 Canada C$1; UK 1£ EU 1€ Kenya 50 Kenya Shilling Asia Pacific: Thailand 120 thb; Philippines 120 php; Myanmar 2000 kyat; Japan 210 yen; Dubai 10 dirham; Pakistan 300 rupee
China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:50 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:50 PM

CPC 105TH ANNIVERSARY





Left: Fan Tianqian, secretary of a Party branch in the Jiangsu Road neighborhood, gives a piano lesson at a local community senior college in Shanghai on June 5.
Right: Li Binbin, Party secretary of the coffee industry branch in Xuhui district's Tianping subdistrict, talks to a coffee shop owner on June 4. PHOTOS BY GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

Vibrant Shanghai hums with Party innovators' energy

Birthplace of CPC flourishes with fresh ideas for growth, promoting new economy



A young docent tells the history of the Communist Party of China to younger children during their visit to the Memorial Hall of the First National Congress of the CPC on June 7.
PHOTOS BY GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

Editor's note: *To mark the 105th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China on July 1, China Daily talked to four individuals and groups active in Party building in Shanghai, the birthplace of the CPC. The four are revitalizing grassroots Party building, and coming up with innovative ways to add fresh vibrancy to the city.*

By XU XIAOMIN and **ZHOU WENTING** in Shanghai

Coffee bean queen

Li Binbin's job is probably the envy of many people.

Every day, she walks over 10,000 steps around Shanghai's picturesque downtown plane tree area, centered around the iconic Wukang Building, visiting coffee shops that emit enticing aromas.

The 44-year-old is the Party secretary of the coffee industry branch in Xuhui district's Tianping subdistrict, home to one of the highest densities of coffee shops in the city.

In April 2024, the subdistrict launched an initiative to support the entrepreneurial dreams of returning overseas students and boost commercial coffee ventures. Li is responsible for liaising with 150 coffee shops spread across the 2.68-square-kilometer area, addressing their needs, and helping foster a vibrant coffee culture.

"I was originally a tea drinker, but I pushed myself to become a coffee expert to better connect with shop owners," said Li.

Before, the coffee shop owners had to navigate issues like power outages, water leaks, and equipment approvals on their own, dealing with various administrative departments. Now, the Party branch serves as a one-stop service center, efficiently resolving issues.

Yan Yafen, who runs BPC Coffee on Yongjia Road, said Li had helped her numerous times. During a typhoon last summer, for instance, her shop's sign was waterlogged. Li promptly arranged for repairs to keep the sign illuminated.

The Party branch's efforts have increased trust, encouraging more coffee shops to open in the area. Existing stores are expanding, and new ones are moving in. Li said the number of coffee shops before the Party branch's inception was 135. Now it has stayed at 150 for more than half a year.

While prioritizing political leadership and service cohesion, Li said she is also thinking of ideas to help the coffee shops attract more customers, turning "city walks" into "city shopping".

Ahead of the recent May Day holiday, the Party branch collaborated with the district's cultural and tourism bureau to partner with the influential restaurant review platform Dazhong Dianping. They launched a "spring coffee culture map" promoting three routes, which attracted over 100,000 page views.

This positive impact has led to thriving businesses giving back to the community. "For instance, they took the initiative to fulfill small wishes of disadvantaged groups, buying new backpacks for children, and installing water heaters for the elderly in winter," Li said.

Inspired by Li's positive energy and reminded of her grandmother, a veteran Party member in her hometown in rural Hefei city, Anhui province, Chen Xiaohong, head chef at a cafe, decided to join the Party.

Chen, 42, said she used to independently organize charitable activities, like delivering mung bean soup to elderly neighbors in summer.

"With Li working here, we find more meaning in such activities. As members of society, we should actively participate in these small, heartwarming deeds, and I genuinely love this community," she said.

Piano teacher creates harmony

Fan Tianqian, a piano teacher whose students range in age from 3 to over 70, has been making waves not only in music education but also in community management.

Fan, 30, opened her piano studio on vibrant and historic Yuyuan Road in downtown Changning district in 2021, bringing music tutoring to a street known for its youthful energy.

In 2024, Fan took on a new role as the secretary of a Party branch in the Jiangsu Road neighborhood. Such branches were established to extend the Party's influence into new economy sectors, connecting community resources to invigorate the neighborhood and strengthen grassroots Party organizations.

Fan's area of responsibility includes over 80 small businesses along the street, ranging from restaurants and trendy fashion boutiques to creative crafts and pet-related enterprises. She visits each shop to meet the owners and understand their needs, offering genuine assistance and suggesting improvements.

For instance, a bookstore located on the second floor of a building asked for more street-level displays to attract foot traffic. Another business wanted better integration into the neighborhood's promotional activities to increase brand visibility.

"Proactive connections and exploration of needs are crucial for startups and individual entrepreneurs. They can determine whether they survive the tough early stages and enter a positive growth cycle," said Fan.

That same year, she attended a city-level meeting where she realized the potential for having an even bigger impact. The discussion emphasized that Party-building efforts in new economy fields required both outreach and attraction. Fan knew she needed to use her expertise to draw people in.

Yuyuan Road and its lanes are home to a high concentration of young, dynamic individuals, much like Fan herself. With her background in music, Fan organized art activities that resonated with the character of the neighborhood.

She has helped organize several community events, including piano flash mobs, which have strengthened the bonds between shop owners and drawn more visitors to the area.

Last fall, Fan launched a music course at a local community senior college, teaching retirees to play the piano and perform well-known revolutionary songs. "I love seeing seniors leading fulfilling lives post-retirement. It's truly inspiring," she said.

Reflecting on her experience as a Party branch secretary, Fan believes she herself has been the greatest beneficiary.

"I no longer feel the loneliness I once did. I've transformed from a small business owner into someone with a strong sense of belonging to this community. Being involved in its governance has changed my perspective entirely. Walking down this street every day now feels completely different," she said.

Delivering for colleagues

After 12 years in Shanghai's food delivery industry, Song Zengguang has advanced from being a delivery rider to a prominent team leader and mentor.

He is now a trainer, overseeing thousands of food delivery riders working with Alibaba's online marketplace Taobao. Song attributes his success to a positive mindset and the ability to balance work and life pressures.

"Being a delivery rider is tough work, dealing with all kinds of weather, from scorching heat to freezing cold. But from another perspective, we interact with so many people every day, and through simple actions like wishing someone an enjoyable meal, we can pass on positive energy to others, and we, in turn, receive encouraging feedback," said Song, 42, who is based in Shanghai's Putuo district and is originally from Lianyungang, Jiangsu province.

As an instructor, Song emphasizes safety and service while also sharing insights on remaining positive and overcoming challenges.

"Everyone has dreams of a better life when they first enter society. There will inevitably be pressures and anxieties at work. Remembering our original intentions helps keep us on track," he said, adding that his original goal was to create a stable and pleasant life with his wife.

Song's influence extends beyond training. He has inspired many apprentices, some of whom have become key figures at their workstations, while others have applied to join the Communist Party of China. "I believe that as more delivery riders join the Party, this community will continue to improve," he said.



Song Zengguang, a Party member and a trainer overseeing food delivery riders, walks out of a Taobao Flash Sale workstation in Putuo district on June 6.

> "I no longer feel the loneliness I once did. I've transformed from a small business owner into someone with a strong sense of belonging to this community. Being involved in its governance has changed my perspective entirely. Walking down this street every day now feels completely different."
>
> **Fan Tianqian,** piano teacher and secretary of a Party branch

In addition to his work duties, Song sometimes represents the delivery industry at government-led meetings, advocating for employee rights. He has highlighted issues like the lack of continuous non-motor vehicle lanes, which complicates delivery routes, and the problem of malicious order cancellations, which can leave riders covering meal costs that sometimes exceed a day's earnings.

As a Party member, Song is committed to giving back to society. Motivated by him, dozens of delivery riders have formed a volunteer team, assisting elderly residents by purchasing groceries, delivering meals, and taking out trash during work breaks.

"Through such actions, I want my peers to realize that we delivery riders aren't just delivering meals. We have many meaningful things that we can do," said Song.

"Some people compare delivery riders and couriers to the faint lights of the city. When these lights come together, they can illuminate society," he said.

Little 'red megaphones'

For the past two decades, a unique tradition has thrived at the Memorial Hall of the First National Congress of the Communist Party of China in Shanghai. Over 1,000 children have taken turns serving as young docents, proudly known as the "red megaphones".

These children, who once listened to stories, have become storytellers themselves, sharing the CPC's history with visitors from across China and even around the world. Using their youthful voices and creative methods such as rhythmic storytelling and skits, they bring the founding stories of the Party to life in Mandarin, the Shanghai dialect, and English.

On the eve of International Children's Day, Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, replied in a letter to student docents at the memorial hall and the Nanhu Revolutionary Memorial Museum in Jiaxing, Zhejiang province. He encouraged them to carry forward revolutionary traditions, broaden their knowledge, develop their abilities, and strengthen their willpower and moral character.

The children participating in the Shanghai program come from Luwan No 1 Central Primary School in Huangpu district, where learning the docent script is a compulsory part of the curriculum that starts in first grade.

The idea to involve children as docents began simply.

Yang Yu, director of the memorial hall's publicity and education department, recalled discussing with the school's principal over 20 years ago the possibility of having children narrate the Party's history to their peers. The children crafted their own version of the script, filled with youthful narratives that visitors loved.

Xie Yiling has been telling the Party's story for four years and has conducted over 30 sessions. "When I was a first-grader, I listened to my seniors and felt their voices were so powerful. I thought, if they are the sparks, then I want to be a little flame," she said, adding that she has also guided foreign visitors, including some from the United States and Brazil.

Last year, the memorial hall received around 100,000 foreign visitors, setting a record.

Yang expressed hope that all visitors, whether domestic or international, leave inspired by the children's guide work. "The CPC's journey has not been without challenges, but the Party has always maintained a forward-looking spirit," she said.

Yang also noted that over two decades, successive generations of young people have not only told stories, but also carried forward a legacy of belief.

He Linjia, now 20 and a student at Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine, became a member of the "red megaphones" in the third grade. She credited the experience with planting a seed of responsibility and love in her heart.

Today, she is actively involved in volunteer activities, including participating in medical support for the Shanghai Marathon and engaging in environmental cleanup hikes.

Contact the writers at zhouwenting@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:50 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:50 PM

TOP NEWS

China, EU see importance of dialogue

By ZHANG ZHOUXIANG
in Brussels
zhangzhouxiang@chinadaily.com.cn

The first meeting of the China-European Union trade and investment consultation mechanism was held in Brussels on Monday, with China's Minister of Commerce Wang Wentao and European Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security and Interinstitutional Relations and Transparency Maros Sefcovic leading the meeting. They agreed to establish a joint monitoring mechanism to exchange relevant data, monitor trade flows and support technical work with a view to improving transparency, enhancing mutual trust and managing trade frictions.

The meeting, held after months of intensive preparatory consultations, saw the two sides having noted the importance of addressing the challenges affecting the bilateral trade relationship and agreeing to seek practical solutions, with four initial workstreams under the consultation identified: trade and investment balancing, export controls, intellectual property rights and reform of the World Trade Organization, or WTO.

The two sides took note of positive results achieved to date by the EU-China Export Control Dialogue regarding rare earth elements and other critical materials and minerals, and they intend to strengthen dialogue in this field. They also underlined the necessity of strengthening bilateral cooperation in the WTO, advancing substantive progress on WTO reform, and improving the authority and effectiveness of the WTO.

Bernard Dewit, chairman of the Belgian-Chinese Chamber of Commerce, said that continued engagement between China and the EU creates opportunities to address concerns through dialogue, identify new areas of cooperation such as green transition, digitalization and advanced manufacturing, and strengthen mutual understanding.

"The global business community benefits when major economies choose cooperation over confrontation and work together to address common challenges in a pragmatic and predictable manner," he said.

Jian Junbo, director of the Center for China-Europe Relations at Fudan University's Institute of International Studies, hopes that in their negotiations, the two sides can focus more on one another's concerns, arguing that such a dialogue can make meaningful progress only if both Brussels and Beijing show ample readiness to address each other's legitimate concerns, instead of echoing just one side's.

For European businesses, preserving communications has become more important than ever because both economies remain deeply intertwined, especially in the manufacturing, investment and technology sectors. Michael Schumann, chairman of the German Federal Association for Economic Development and Foreign Trade, said: "Europe cannot be (economically) independent from the United States, and it cannot be independent from China. Our economies, technologies, supply chains and security structures are far too deeply interconnected."

Schumann said enterprises can help to turn political consensus into broader cooperation practices via active business activities.

"Business cannot solve every political question, but business can keep doors open, create practical trust and show where interests overlap," he said. "Looking ahead, cooperation will remain essential in green energy, electric mobility, batteries, hydrogen, artificial intelligence, industrial automation, health technology, biotechnology, critical raw materials and modern infrastructure."

Wang and Sefcovic also agreed to meet again at the ministerial level in the fall. Schumann added: "I remain confident that, in the upcoming talks and negotiations, Europe and China can find constructive, balanced and mutually beneficial solutions – if both sides keep dialogue open, respect each other's legitimate interests and focus on what we can build together."

A moment of silence



People attend a vigil on Sunday outside a church for those who lost their lives in last week's earthquake, in Valencia, Venezuela. The death toll from the earthquakes stands at 1,450, Venezuelan authorities said. JUAN CARLOS HERNANDEZ / REUTERS

Revival: Museum develops creative products

From page 1

Located along the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, the museum is part of the Hangzhou Arts and Crafts Museum complex, which preserves and showcases the city's rich folk traditions and handicrafts.

Among its most prized exhibits are West Lake silk umbrellas. First created in 1932, they are made from locally sourced bamboo and Hangzhou silk, while scenes of West Lake and the surrounding landscape are delicately rendered through painting, embroidery and brush-dyeing.

"What makes these umbrellas unique is that when opened, they reveal an elegant silk canopy, but when folded, they resemble natural bamboo," said Song Zhiming, a national-level inheritor of the technique.

To achieve this effect, artisans carefully remove a thin outer layer of bamboo and label each strip before constructing the frame. Once the silk covering is installed on the bamboo ribs, each sliver is meticulously reattached, piece by piece, to its corresponding rib.

These handcrafted creations were once highly sought after both in China and overseas.

According to Chen Na, an associate research librarian at the museum, annual output exceeded 600,000 umbrellas in the late 1950s and early '60s, with about 400,000 exported overseas.

However, as lifestyles changed and demand declined, the number of artisans making the umbrellas gradually dwindled.

In recent years, renewed interest in intangible cultural heritage across China has helped revive the tradition, attracting growing attention from visitors at home and abroad.

"We want these cultural treasures to truly come alive," Chen said. "Preservation is important, but so is helping people connect with them in today's world."

To engage younger audiences, the museum has introduced mixed-reality experiences that allow visitors to create silk umbrellas in a virtual environment. It has also developed a range of cultural and creative products, including miniature umbrella phone stands and magnets.

The museum's efforts also resonated with 20-year-old Mohammed Salah Mosleh Al-Sayadi, a Yemeni student studying Chinese at Zhejiang Business College. Having lived in Egypt for eight years, he learned through visits to local museums that umbrellas also played a role in ancient Egyptian society.

"In ancient Egypt, umbrellas symbolized power and privilege, and were reserved for royalty," he said. "In China, however, I found that umbrellas carry many layers of cultural meaning."

Song is also embracing innovation. Today, both his son and daughter-in-law have joined the profession, bringing fresh ideas and new vitality to the age-old tradition.

His team is experimenting with new materials and production methods, while collaborating with gaming companies to incorporate popular animation and game characters into designs, making the umbrellas more appealing to younger consumers.

"Traditional craftsmanship needs new generations to carry it forward," Song said.

"But the soul of West Lake silk umbrellas — the dedication, patience and skill behind them — will never change."

List: Measures will not affect normal trade

From page 1

Cui Fan, a professor at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing, noted that the listed entities are active in Japan's defense industry, manufacturing ships, fighter jets, missiles and other military equipment.

"By tightening controls, China aims to weaken Japan's military capabilities and create a deterrent," Cui said. "More important, it sends a clear warning to Japan that any action that damages China's core interests will come at a corresponding price."

The Commerce Ministry emphasized that the measures target only a small number of Japanese entities, apply solely to dual-use items, and will not affect normal economic and trade activities between China and Japan.

"Japanese entities that act in good faith and comply with the law have absolutely no cause for concern," the spokesperson said, urging Japan to sincerely reflect on the past, change its erroneous ways and return to the right track.

Political tensions between the two countries notwithstanding, the Japanese business community is seeking out alternative ways to stay connected.

Last week, the Japan Business Federation and other major economic groups from the country led delegations to Beijing to attend the fourth China International Supply Chain Expo.

Osamu Onodera, chief representative for China and Northeast Asia of the Japan External Trade Organization, said that Japanese companies want to maintain a healthy relationship with the Chinese business community during this "difficult period in bilateral relations".

Thermal transit



Passengers use hand fans as trains are delayed due to the heat wave at Warsaw Central railway station in Warsaw on Sunday. Poland set a new all-time heat record, with temperatures reaching 40.5 C, on Sunday. SERGEI GAPON / AFP

Joint patrol with Russia highlights PLA's systematic combat deployment

By ZHAO LEI
zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

The recent joint patrol by the Chinese and Russian air forces demonstrated the improved capabilities of the People's Liberation Army Air Force in organizing sophisticated long-range operations that incorporate full combat elements, experts said.

Zhang Xuefeng, a military hardware observer and retired PLA Air Force officer, said that in recent years, the range of Chinese aircraft taking part in China-Russia joint strategic patrols has been steadily expanding, bolstered by improved performance and growing systemic operational capabilities.

Zhang said that the joint patrol on Saturday featured two major characteristics. First, it adopted systematic deployment of combat assets. Besides H-6K bombers and various escort fighter jets, the PLA Air Force deployed new large electronic warfare aircraft to deliver intelligence support, he added.

"The KJ-500A early-warning and control aircraft also took part in the operation, serving as an aerial command hub, while the YY-20A aerial refueling aircraft extended the flight radius of fighter jets and boosted their capacity to protect bombers," he said.

Second, the observer noted, the operation showed a high level of combat-oriented training.

"For example, escort fighters such as the J-16s carried live ammunition during the patrol. Electronic reconnaissance and jamming gear taken by the escort jets can effectively intercept foreign military radar signals for analysis and positioning, and can launch jamming operations in case of emergencies," Zhang added.

As part of the 11th joint strategic air patrol, aircraft from the two air forces flew over the Sea of Japan, the East China Sea and the western part of the Pacific Ocean.

The operation demonstrated the two sides' determination and capability to jointly safeguard regional peace and stability, the PLA Air Force said in a brief statement.

The PLA Air Force sent several types of aircraft, including the J-10C fighter jet, YY-20A refueling tanker, KJ-500A early-warning and control aircraft, and H-6K bomber, while Russia deployed its Tu-95 strategic bombers, Su-35 fighters and other planes.

Wu Peixin, an aviation industry observer, said the advanced tactical and strategic electronic warfare jets participating in the operation are capable of conducting electronic suppression against enemy ground targets, most notably radar systems and air-defense missile installations.

"When required, they can launch anti-radiation missiles to strike high-threat air defense positions, creating a relatively secure environment for strategic bombers to conduct precision strikes against deep enemy targets," he said, noting that the deployment of the KJ-500A also marks a key highlight of the joint patrol.



Aircraft take part in a China-Russia joint strategic air patrol on Saturday. The two countries carried out their 11th joint air patrol over the Sea of Japan, the East China Sea and the western Pacific Ocean. XINHUA

"Currently the world's best medium-sized early-warning and control aircraft, the KJ-500A is fitted with a state-of-the-art digital array radar whose scanning is fully computer-controlled. Lighter in weight, equipped with more transmit/receive modules and boasting a longer detection range, the radar can effectively counter stealth targets and small low-altitude targets," Wu said.

Institution: History is a story of continual reinvention

From page 1

The result is a "socialist market economy with Chinese characteristics" where State-owned enterprises play key roles in strategic sectors and the financial system, while private enterprises and foreign capital operate within a State-guided macroeconomic framework.

Consistent with the Confucian emphasis on *fu min* ("enriching the people") and good governance, these companies are permitted to pursue profit and enjoy considerable operational autonomy while also being expected to align their activities with broader developmental objectives such as employment generation, technological self-reliance and social stability. They represent a pragmatic synthesis of market dynamism and State guidance.

The scale of this hybrid model is noteworthy. China's private sector now accounts for more than half of national tax revenues, approximately 60 percent of GDP, roughly 70 percent of technological innovation outputs, and about 80 percent of urban employment.

The developmental outcomes are equally remarkable. Over several decades, China recorded the fastest sustained growth among major economies, averaging nearly 10 percent annual GDP growth. More than 800 million people were lifted out of extreme poverty. Urbanization accelerated and infrastructure investment reached unprecedented levels, including the world's largest high-speed rail network. Social indicators also improved markedly: Life expectancy rose into the high 70s, literacy became nearly universal and basic insurance and pension programs extended to most of the population.

These changes were not incidental by-products of unfettered markets, but rather the outcome of deliberate State policies, long-term planning and a governing party capable of aligning political legitimacy with developmental objectives.

The same logic of adaptation now informs the CPC's current strategic turn.

Under the leadership of General Secretary Xi Jinping, the Party has acknowledged the limits of the previous model of high-speed, investment- and debt-driven growth. The emphasis has now shifted from property-led expansion and low-cost, labor-intensive manufacturing toward advanced manufacturing, green energy, digital infrastructure and technological self-reliance. Xi's notion of "new quality productive forces" signals an effort to steer policy support toward strategic high-tech sectors that are expected to underpin China's future competitiveness and development strategy.

At the same time, the CPC's 105-year history is a story not only of extraordinary achievements but also of continual reinvention. China faces a complex set of challenges. The Party confronts the task of transitioning from catch-up growth to innovation at the global technological frontier, while simultaneously maintaining political stability.

The CPC should be seen not as a residual artifact of 20th-century ideology, but as the core leadership force behind China's rise and the primary coordinator of its "long-term objectives" and "national rejuvenation". How effectively it navigates the formidable "risks and challenges" ahead will shape not only China's next stage of "high-quality development", but also the evolving configuration of the broader international order.

The author is a former tourism minister of Brazil, a distinguished professor at Tsinghua University and a professor at The Chinese University of Hong Kong in Shenzhen. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:50 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:50 PM

ASIAFOCUS

Editor's note:

In this weekly feature China Daily gives voice to Asia and its people. The stories presented come mainly from the Asia News Network (ANN), of which China Daily is among its 20 leading titles.

A metropolis stuck in gridlock

As Indonesian capital approaches 500th anniversary, Jakartans long for seamless transit



Traffic congestion occurs on Jalan Jenderal Gatot Subroto Road in Jakarta, Indonesia, on Jan 9, 2025. ASLAM IQBAL VIA GETTY IMAGES

Zakaria, 24, waited for a less crowded commuter line train so he could sit on his trip home to Daru, Banten, from Tanah Abang Station in Central Jakarta. He had just transferred from Bekasi, West Java, where he had undergone a hemodialysis session in a hospital, and was feeling too weak to stand through the journey.

He braces himself for the overcrowded commuter train journey twice a week for his treatment, as crossing three provinces would be highly inconvenient if public transit did not connect cities beyond Jakarta.

"Going by ambulance is the only alternative, but that's for emergencies. I can only rely on the commuter line, while other transport modes don't reach Daru," he told The Jakarta Post.

Zakaria said integrated transport around the capital is essential for patients like him who rely on long-distance mobility for treatment. Even reaching Tangerang, the nearest city in Banten, is more difficult for him than traveling to Jakarta or Bekasi.

"It's easier to go to Jakarta because it's faster and more accessible. It already feels like Daru is connected to Jakarta," he said. But still he wished that trains bound from Jakarta to Daru were more frequent and more punctual.

Jakarta remains marred by long-standing mobility problems, as the capital turns 499 years old on June 22.

Isra Livera, also 24, has grown frustrated with the traffic and overcrowded public transport defining her daily commute from Depok, West Java, to her office in South Jakarta on commuter trains, Transjakarta buses and motorcycle taxis.

"I complain about it a lot. But then again, everyone else is enduring the same problem like me," she said, having long accepted her life as a commuter for over 16 years, even grown fond of Jakarta's lively and fast-paced environment.

As she applauded Jakarta's development progress as a capital, Isra wished it "could find its way to improve itself and be more welcoming for everyone", including by creating a better-integrated multimodal public transport system that workers across Greater Jakarta can rely on.

"Jakarta really needs to add more capacity so we don't end up packed inside every time," she said, hoping for improvement as the city marks another anniversary. "With better integration, I wouldn't have to walk so far just to transfer."

As Jakarta celebrates its 499th anniversary, the city has long outgrown its boundaries and became the world's most populous megacity with 42 million inhabitants across the sprawled metropolitan area.

Yet Greater Jakartans continue to grapple with urban challenges as a plan for an agglomeration, which would further integrate the region's mobility, economy, infrastructure and services, remains in limbo.

The agglomeration plan was incorporated in the 2024 Special Region of Jakarta Act, which was enacted as part of Jakarta's transition away from being Indonesia's capital. The law mandates the establishment of an agglomeration council, but it has yet to be operational, pending a presidential decree on the capital relocation to the new city of Nusantara in East Kalimantan.

Urban expert Yayat Supriatna said that while the plan remains unclear, it becomes important as Jakarta's highly mobile population has not been matched by infrastructure and services improvements in satellite cities.

"Jakarta has played its role in agglomeration, particularly in transportation," he said.

"But it is also struggling because there is no subsidy or financial support from neighboring regions."

Earlier this month, Jakarta Governor Pramono Anung revealed a plan to raise fares on Transjabodetabek, the extended city-owned Transjakarta bus network, as subsidizing it became difficult to sustain.

Yayat argued the agglomeration council could help ensure continuity. But its effectiveness would depend on "how strong its budget is and how much authority is granted to it".

Shared priorities

The Jakarta Development Planning Agency, known as Bappeda, said preparations for the agglomeration are underway through the planning and identification of shared priorities among administrations, including transportation and transit-oriented development projects.

However, it acknowledged that aligning Jakarta's interest with surrounding cities remains a challenge, and it is waiting for the agglomeration council to improve coordination.

"Problems such as traffic congestion, flooding, air pollution and housing cannot be addressed by a single administration alone, as their root causes are spread across the metropolitan region," Bappeda said in a statement.

In celebration of the anniversary, the city has stepped up efforts to improve urban mobility, with the governor launching a pedestrian deck linking transport modes at the Dukuh Atas transit hub in Central Jakarta and a new commuter line station at the Jakarta International Stadium in North Jakarta.

THE JAKARTA POST, INDONESIA







From left: Passengers wait for departure ahead of the Eid al-Fitr holiday at Pasar Senen station in Jakarta, Indonesia, on March 17. AGOES RUDIANTO VIA GETTY IMAGES
A boy looks at a high-speed rail model at Halim railway station in Jakarta on Oct 17. LI ZHIQUAN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE
People wait for a train at Lempuyangan railway station in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, on March 14. DEVI RAHMAN / AFP

Singapore travelers cheer expanded payment options in China

SINGAPORE — As an account manager traveling to China at least 10 times a year for work and leisure, Victoria Goh effortlessly uses popular e-wallet WeChat Pay for rides, shopping and dining.

But like many travelers, the 29-year-old often pays more for her purchases than necessary. Each time her transaction exceeds 200 yuan (about $30), a 3 percent fee is levied on her Singapore-issued debit card that is linked to WeChat Pay to top up the e-wallet.

These additional charges, levied by WeChat Pay, are now behind her.

She is among millions of DBS Bank users who are now able to remit funds directly from their bank account to their WeChat Pay e-wallet, and make payment via merchant QR codes in China without incurring additional platform fees.

The update comes as Chinese payment giant TenPay Global, which operates WeChat Pay, opened up its remittance service to foreign passport holders residing in or visiting China.

It is the latest in a series of moves that have made payment in China increasingly seamless for foreigners. Since February, OCBC Bank has allowed its Singapore customers to scan WeChat Pay merchant QR codes for payment directly through the OCBC app, without having to download third-party apps.

Direct transfers from foreign banks were previously not allowed, and the only way for foreign passport holders to top up their WeChat Pay wallets was a linked credit or debit card.

To avoid paying additional fees through the linked credit or debit cards, some travelers had asked friends with Chinese bank accounts to transfer money directly into their WeChat Pay wallets.

Financial adviser Ryan Lok had done this when he went to China for two work trips in 2026.

The 27-year-old added that he would be tapping DBS' and OCBC's new features to make payments during his upcoming trip at the end of June if the exchange rates the banks charge are "favorable".

"If the bill is $200, paying an extra 3 percent is not so bad. But if the bill is $1,000, paying an extra $30 is a lot," said Lok, who often foots the bill for meals and drinks with friends and clients using WeChat Pay.

In China, small shops do not accept foreign bank-issued credit cards. The most common mode of payment is via QR code scanning with e-wallets WeChat Pay or Alipay.

Media professional Carol Ang, 48, said that being able to remit from DBS to WeChat Pay is a handy backup plan in case her preferred payment method, Alipay, does not work.

"Every trip, I would encounter at least one instance where my payment does not go through, mostly at smaller food stalls by the road," said Ang, who added that she has had to keep cash on hand to deal with such contingencies.

DBS is among 60 major banks and institutions globally that TenPay Global works with to allow cross-border remittance for non-Chinese citizens.

'Ubiquitous connectivity'

"We are continuously exploring opportunities to expand our network of banking and financial institution partners in Singapore," said a TenPay Global spokesperson, adding that the goal is to achieve "ubiquitous connectivity across the global financial ecosystem".

OCBC Bank has allowed its Singapore customers to scan UnionPay and Alipay QR codes to make payments directly to Chinese merchants through the OCBC app since 2023 and 2024, respectively.

The expansion to include WeChat Pay QR codes since February has led to an increase in the use of OCBC's scan and pay feature in China, said OCBC's head of card payments and personal loans, Regina Lim.

"Last year, one in five overseas Scan & Pay transactions on the OCBC app was made in China," said Lim, who added that China has emerged as a top destination for OCBC customers using this feature overseas.

By the end of June, OCBC plans to allow its customers to transfer money directly from the OCBC app to non-Chinese passport holders using WeChat Pay.

Among those who prefer to use OCBC's scan and pay feature is final-year undergraduate Teng Xin Yi. "I don't want to use so many apps. I can just stick to the OCBC app to make payment," said the 24-year-old who travels at least once a year to visit her family in China.

"The exchange rate is also not a huge difference and quite competitive."

THE STRAITS TIMES, SINGAPORE

Thailand uses AI to crack down on soccer gambling

BANGKOK — Thailand's government has blocked 13,888 illegal online gambling pages and websites linked to the 2026 World Cup in an 18-day AI-backed crackdown, while warning businesses against showing live match broadcasts for commercial purposes without permission.

Thailand's Prime Minister's Office has outlined tougher measures to prevent legal violations during the World Cup, targeting transnational online football gambling networks alongside efforts to protect intellectual property rights.

The government stressed that businesses must strictly follow the rules to help create a responsible and lawful atmosphere for watching the global sporting event.

Thailand's Deputy Government Spokeswoman Ploytalay Laksameesangchan explained that the government had integrated the work of security and technology agencies to strengthen cyber-blocking measures against URLs linked to online gambling.

The operation has been carried out with support from the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society, which is using artificial intelligence to detect, analyze and screen suspicious data across social media platforms more accurately.

The proactive campaign follows direct instructions from Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul, who has ordered agencies to eradicate online gambling websites, which the government described as a social time bomb.

From June 1 to 18, officials filed petitions with the court and obtained court orders to block illegal websites.

They also coordinated with online platform providers to remove illegal pages and websites, bringing the total number of blocked or removed items to 13,888.

Warning about copyright

Beyond gambling, the deputy government spokeswoman also warned shop owners, restaurants and entertainment venues nationwide to comply with copyright rules for the 2026 World Cup.

The government supports Thai football fans watching and cheering the tournament, but underlined that all viewing must comply with the law and respect the intellectual property rights of official rights holders, Ploytalay said.

"The government wishes to stress that anyone who uses, rebroadcasts or redistributes the World Cup 2026 live broadcast signal without written permission from the official rights holder in Thailand — whether by recording matches and re-uploading them, re-streaming them online, livestreaming them on social media, or showing the signal inside shops to attract customers for commercial benefit — will be deemed to have committed commercial copyright infringement," she said.

"The law sets severe penalties, with imprisonment of six months to four years, a fine of 100,000 to 800,000 baht, or both," she added.

The government called on the public and business operators across all sectors to help set a new standard for responsible World Cup viewing, avoid all forms of gambling and strictly follow copyright procedures.

It added that compliance would help support the sustainable growth of Thailand's sports, media and related business sectors.

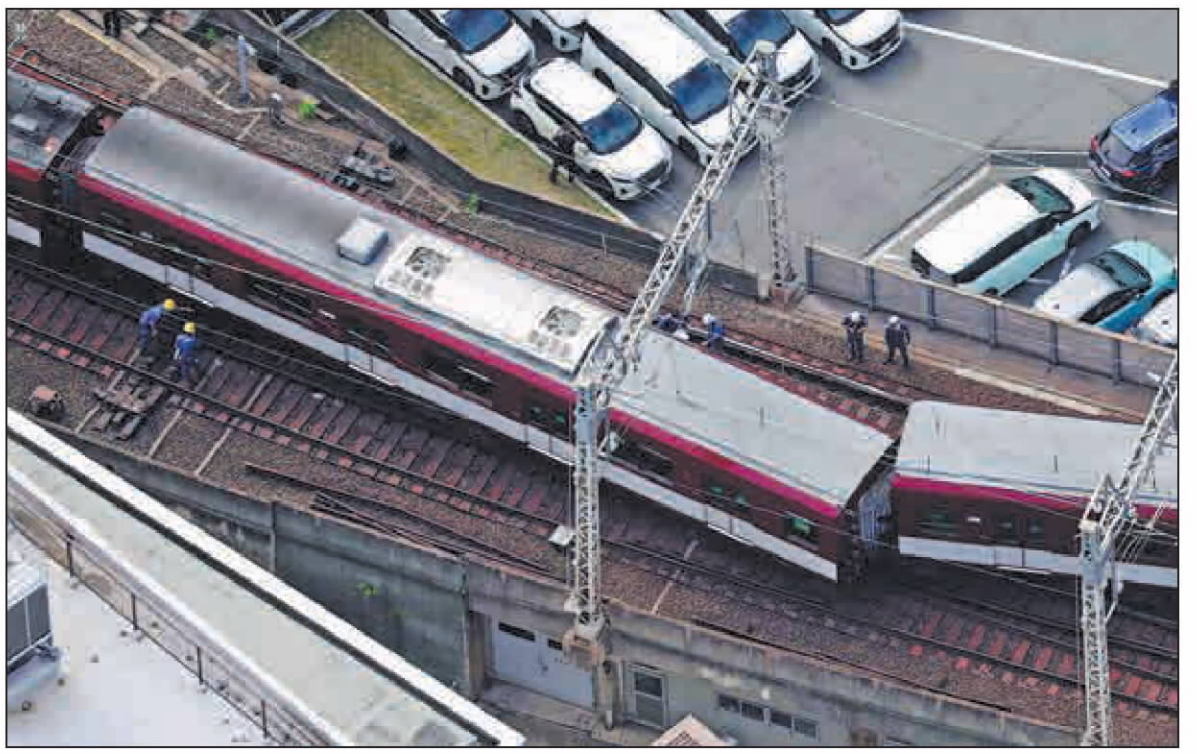
THE NATION, THAILAND

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:50 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:50 PM

WORLD

Commuter commotion



A train derails in Kyoto City, Japan, on Monday. At 5:13 am, the four-car local train came off the tracks at the Kintetsu Kyoto Station. None of the 13 passengers on the train were injured, but services going in both directions were suspended. YOMIURI SHIMBUN VIA AP

US says talks with Iran to resume

Tehran yet to confirm Doha meeting as it says $6 billion of assets to be unfrozen

By JAN YUMUL in Hong Kong and **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE

The United States said technical talks with Iran will resume in Doha on Tuesday, while Iranian officials said nothing has been scheduled and some $6 billion of Iranian assets would be released through Qatar.

US President Donald Trump said on Monday on social media that Iran had requested a meeting with US counterparts, though Iranian officials said no such meeting was scheduled.

"Iran has requested a meeting. It will take place tomorrow in Doha," Trump wrote in all capital letters in a social media post on Monday.

Moments later, Trump's press secretary, Karoline Leavitt, told Fox News that top envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner would attend the talks. "On the sidelines of those high-level talks, will be the technical talks," she said.

The US news site Axios had reported that the planned meeting is said to focus on the Strait of Hormuz.

But Kazem Gharibabadi, a senior negotiator for Iran, denied any talks had been scheduled, in comments published by IRNA.

"Although consultations with Qatar, including on following up on the implementation of the other side's commitments, are continuing as usual, reports by some media about technical talks by the working groups being held in Doha are not confirmed," he said.

"No technical meetings of the working groups are planned for this week," Gharibabadi said, quoted by state TV, referring to the Iranian week ending on Friday.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian announced on Monday that $6 billion of Iran's frozen assets will be released and returned through Qatar, Iran's Mehr News reported.

He also confirmed that oil and petrochemical sanctions have been lifted under the peace deal, which he called a "great victory" for the Iranian people.

The Iranian president said the $6 billion is part of a total of $12 billion in Iranian funds held in Qatar, with a follow-up underway to return the remaining portion.

The release of the funds and the sanctions relief were part of the framework agreed at the talks in Switzerland and the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding.

Renewed fighting over the weekend stemmed from conflicting interpretations of the MoU to end the war, as well as the provisions regarding the status of Hormuz, according to Axios.

Gharibabadi separately met with Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Abdullah bin Zahir Al Hinai, ambassador-at-large at Oman's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Muscat.

Hormuz a flashpoint

During the trip to Muscat, the first meeting of the Hormuz Joint Committee was held with the Omani official, according to Gharibabadi in a post on X on Monday.

"While reviewing current issues related to the strait, we exchanged views on the future management of the strait within the framework of paragraph five of the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding and the sovereign rights of the coastal states," Gharibabadi added.

The Omani-Iranian meeting is part of the fifth point of the MoU's framework, which states that Iran will make its best efforts to secure the safe passage of commercial vessels from the Persian Gulf to the Sea of Oman and vice versa for 60 days without charge.

The MoU also states that Iran and Oman will define the future administration and maritime services in the Strait of Hormuz, in discussion with other littoral states, in line with applicable international law and the sovereign rights of the strait's coastal states.

Earlier, Trump once again threatened Iran, a day after the maritime skirmishes.

Trump said a US aircraft had struck Iranian missile and drone storage locations, as well as coastal radar sites, "for violating the cease-fire agreement", he wrote on social media on Sunday.

Elsewhere, at a joint news conference in Baghdad with Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi on Sunday, Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein called for a summit bringing together Gulf countries, Iraq, and Iran to discuss regional security.

Hussein stressed that the security of the region should be the responsibility of its peoples, according to a report by the Iran News Agency.

Agencies contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at jan@chinadailyapac.com

Russia faces unprecedented Western pressure: Putin

MOSCOW/KYIV — The country is under severe and unparalleled pressure from Western nations, Russian President Vladimir Putin stated on Sunday.

"Russia is facing harsh, unprecedented pressure from Western elites. Unable to deliver a strategic defeat or battlefield victory against Russia, these forces have sought to destabilize its political landscape and stoke internal unrest, yet all such attempts have ended in failure," Putin stated at the plenary session of the 23rd Congress of the United Russia party.

He stressed that Ukraine has been weaponized as a "battering ram" in the West's confrontation with Russia, with blatant disregard for the Ukrainian people.

Putin pointed out that the West deliberately turns a blind eye to Kyiv's strikes on civilian populations and infrastructure. Despite these blatant provocations, the West continues to impose new, illegitimate sanctions exclusively targeting Russia, he said.

He added that Russia is firmly resisting all attempts to stifle its development, emphasizing that the country possesses ample capability to withstand such pressure, leaving no room for doubt.

In a television interview on the same day, Putin said Russia needed to boost its air defense capacity to counter intensified Ukrainian drone attacks aimed mainly at its oil industry. He described the attacks on oil refineries as an attempt to "cause a split in Russian society and force Russia to halt, even if only briefly, the advance of our troops along the line of contact, and create conditions for launching a negotiation process on terms advantageous to our adversary".



A fuel truck delivers fuel at a gas station in Moscow on June 24. MIKHAIL VOSKRESENSKIY / SPUTNIK

Putin also said that Ukraine had proposed a mutual halt to long-range strikes as a step toward peace. But Moscow saw it as a means to relieve pressure on Kyiv's forces along the front line and would not be distracted by it.

The office of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky did not immediately respond to a request, submitted during late-night hours in Ukraine, for comment on Putin's remarks.

Zelensky wrote an open letter to Putin this month proposing a face-to-face meeting, which the Russian leader has rejected.

The Kremlin said on Monday that Russia has not changed its stance on the conditions needed for a peace deal in Ukraine.

Meanwhile, Zelensky said on Sunday that Ukrainian forces had carried out overnight strikes on two oil refineries in Russia.

In a post on X, Zelensky said one of the targets was the Slavyansk oil refinery in Russia's Krasnodar region, about 300 kilometers from the front line.

Local media reported that the refinery has an annual processing capacity of about 4 million metric tons of oil.

He said another refinery in Russia's Yaroslavl region, about 700 km from the Ukrainian-Russian border, was also targeted, but did not give further details.

Zelensky said the strikes were aimed at weakening Russia's ability to sustain its campaign effort.

There were no immediate reports from Russian authorities about the strike on the Yaroslavl refinery. Its local governor reported on Sunday that some roads between Moscow and the region's capital, Yaroslavl, were temporarily closed due to "an enemy attack by Ukrainian drones."

Meanwhile, Russia's Defense Ministry said on Sunday its forces have taken the villages of Pysantsi in Dnipropetrovsk region and Novoselivka in the neighboring Zaporizhzhia region, state news agency TASS reported.

XINHUA—AGENCIES

Cultural exchanges bring Shanghai and New York closer

By MINGMEI Li in New York
mingmeili@chinadailyusa.com

Both surrounded by water, New York and Shanghai tell a shared story of China-US cultural exchange.

From the Huangpu River to the Hudson River, the two global cities continue to connect through culture, education and dialogue.

"From Shanghai to New York: A Century-Long Cultural Journey Inspiring New China-US Dialogue," a core session of the third season of Bund: A Global Urban Humanities Dialogue between Shanghai and New York, was held on June 29 at the China Institute of America in New York.

Bringing together young scholars and artists from China and the US, the event explored the intersection of technology, art and philosophy, creating a platform for intellectual exchange among younger generations and encouraging mutual learning across cultures.

"This is not only an academic dialogue across geographical boundaries, but also a cultural exchange that connects history with the future," said Yu Yougen, education counselor of the Chinese Consulate General in New York.

"Shanghai and New York, two internationally renowned cities shaped by water, have maintained close and fruitful exchanges for decades. From the Huangpu River to the Hudson River, what crosses the Pacific is not only exhibitions and conversations, but also the shared aspiration of people from both countries to learn from each other," Yu added.

Zhang Huihong, deputy chair of the University Council of East China Normal University, said Shanghai and New York share more than their identities as global cities.

"Shanghai and New York are both cities shaped by water and recognized as international metropolises. Although they are thousands of miles apart, they share similar city spirits of openness and inclusiveness," she said.

"Through collaborative cultural creation and cross-ocean dialogue, we hope to explore more possibilities for people-to-people exchanges between China and the US," she added.

Founded in New York in 1926 by figures including Chinese scholar Hu Shih and American educators John Dewey and Paul Monroe, the China Institute is one of the oldest nonprofit organizations in the US dedicated to promoting understanding between China and the US through culture and education.

From July 9 to July 30, the gallery will feature more than 100 works created by students and faculty members from East China Normal University. The exhibition traces its inspiration to the 1930 US tour of renowned Peking Opera artist Mei Lanfang, whose performances introduced Chinese opera to American audiences and became a milestone in China-US cultural exchange.

Through prints, paintings, illustrations, animations and AI-generated artworks, the exhibition explores how traditional Chinese art and intangible cultural heritage can be reinterpreted through contemporary design and emerging technologies.

"Our students are trained in contemporary art, but we have always felt that it was important for them to reconnect with their own cultural heritage," Wei Shaonong, a professor at the School of Design of East China Normal University, told China Daily.

"Traditional Chinese culture contains rich artistic elements, and we hope students can reinterpret them through today's artistic language and creative approaches. In this process, they learn from tradition while exploring how traditional art can remain connected to contemporary life."

Speaking about Mei Lanfang's influence, Wei said the legendary artist offered an important lesson in cultural communication.

"Peking Opera was far from American audiences' cultural background at the time, yet Mei Lanfang achieved tremendous success in the US because he understood one important principle: when bringing art and culture to a new audience, you need to find ways to communicate through a language and context that people can understand."

"The great inspiration we gained from Mei Lanfang's visit is that cultural communication requires translating not only language, but also the way stories are told and the cultural context behind them," he added.

The event also featured the opening of Collaborative Learning, an intercultural exchange in-person roundtable discussion in New York. The forum was initiated by Paul J. D'Ambrosio, professor of Chinese philosophy at East China Normal University.

"As scholars, we should remember that cultural exchange happens through many different forms," D'Ambrosio told China Daily. "It can happen through films, music, entertainment and many other creative expressions."

"While academic research and focused discussions remain important, we also need to stay open to broader forms of communication," he added.



"From Shanghai to New York: A Century-Long Cultural Journey Inspiring New China-US Dialogue", a core session of the third season of "Bund: A Global Urban Humanities Dialogue between Shanghai and New York", is held on Monday at the China Institute of America in New York. MINGMEI LI / CHINA DAILY

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1859

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:50 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:50 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Justified, calibrated countermeasures aim to prompt Tokyo to rethink its path

The latest export controls on Japanese entities China unveiled on Monday indicate that Beijing is opposing Japanese neo-militarist policy while protecting normal economic and trade exchanges between China and Japan.

The move added 20 Japanese entities, including the National Institute for Defense Studies, to China's export control list, while placing another 20, including Mitsui E&S, on a watch list because their end users and the end uses of certain dual-use items could not be verified.

Announcing the move, the Ministry of Commerce said that the measures were intended to safeguard national security, fulfill the country's nonproliferation obligations and curb Japan's remilitarization. The controls remain a calibrated signal, as they target only selected Japanese entities and apply solely to dual-use items, leaving normal trade untouched.

China's February sanctions of Japan targeted 20 organizations associated with Japan's military establishment. The June list, however, broadens the scope to shipbuilding, advanced machinery, electronics, information technology, aerospace and research institutions.

The message is that modern military power no longer resides solely in weapons factories. It runs through industrial software, robotics, precision engineering and maritime technology. This is why the measures are an institutionalized economic security policy.

Entities on the watch list may apply to be removed if they cooperate with end-user verification requirements. In other words, Beijing is not simply imposing penalties; it is establishing a compliance framework that can be tightened or relaxed over time. Export controls are becoming a standing policy instrument rather than an occasional response to the rise of neo-militarism in Japan.

The precision of the targeting is equally notable. China remains one of Japan's largest trading partners, and Japanese investment is deeply embedded in China's manufacturing ecosystem.

Instead, Beijing has chosen a narrower route: raising the cost of operating in strategic sectors while preserving broader commercial ties. Strict licensing procedures, compulsory approval timelines and sweeping end-use reviews increase compliance costs even when exports are ultimately approved.

None of this guarantees immediate changes among the Japanese military-industrial complexes. It does suggest gradually rising transaction costs for Japan's remilitarization.

Since taking office last October, Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi has pursued an irresponsible, provocative and aggressive posture toward China by expanding military capabilities, deepening military cooperation with allies and promoting closer technology-military coordination with like-minded partners. Tokyo brazenly claims these steps are necessary responses to the "external threat" posed by China. The result is a familiar action-reaction cycle in the region that exposes Japan as the real threat to regional peace and stability.

In less than a year, the Takaichi government has systematically undermined the postwar order, interfered in China's internal affairs, rewritten security policy, liberalized arms exports, ballooned military budgets, whitewashed militarist history, and fueled regional military rivalry — all in flagrant violation of the pacifist Constitution of the country, the postwar restrictions on Japan and the spirit of the Tokyo Trials.

The Takaichi government's drive to remilitarize Japan is being pursued through a multifaceted strategy that mobilizes legislative, political, economic, cultural, technological, industrial and commercial tools alike. Far from being ad hoc or reactive, this approach represents a dangerous amalgam of historical revisionism, political adventurism, diplomatic expediency and resurgent militarism.

By posing as a "peacekeeper" while convening allies and distorting the facts, the Takaichi government is pushing Japan further down a path of error and peril.

As a spokesperson for the Ministry of Commerce said on Monday, it is hoped that the Takaichi government will come to a timely recognition of its erroneous actions, desist from its current destabilizing policies, and, through thorough and honest reflection, restore itself to a course consistent with international law, historical justice and the shared interests of the region.

Testament to 'China Opportunity 2.0' appeal

In an era marked by rapid global economic shifts and rising uncertainties, the concept of "China Opportunity 2.0" has emerged as a symbol of new possibilities for international trade and innovation.

While some China doomsters have expressed "anxiety" over China's advances in technology and industrial innovation, even promoting the narrative of a so-called "China Shock 2.0" that groundlessly frames China's development as a "threat" to the global economy, the reality is that "China Opportunity 2.0", as Chinese Premier Li Qiang said last week, represents comprehensive innovation-driven empowerment and high-return investment prospects. Speaking at the 17th Annual Meeting of the New Champions of the World Economic Forum in Northeast China's coastal city of Dalian, Li underscored China's potential to offer high-return investment prospects and its fostering of mutually beneficial technological collaboration worldwide.

The ongoing visit to China of David Eby, premier of Canada's British Columbia province, serves as a testament to the substantive appeal of "China Opportunity 2.0". Eby has stressed that the purpose of his trip is to strengthen British Columbia's ties with China as a strategic move to diversify the province's trade relationships.

"We're seeking to reduce our reliance on the United States and obviously, Asian markets have been a major focus for us," Eby told the media last week before embarking on his first China trip on Saturday. This includes the goal of doubling trade to non-US markets within the next 10 years. "China will be part of that," he added.

By targeting key sectors such as forestry products, energy — specifically liquefied natural gas development — and tourism, he is seeking to unlock new avenues for growth and job creation in British Columbia. This aligns with the principles of "China Opportunity 2.0", which emphasizes mutual benefits and shared development.

The visit follows Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney's trip to China earlier this year, the first by a Canadian prime minister in eight years. Carney's visit laid the groundwork for the healthy development of China-Canada relations, with multiple cooperation agreements signed across trade, customs, energy, construction, culture and public security. Eby's trip builds on this momentum, signaling a proactive approach to deepening collaboration and exploring innovative opportunities. According to Canadian media, his itinerary includes Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou.

The strategic sectors targeted for collaboration are indicative of a balanced approach that prioritizes mutual benefits and sustainable growth.

China-Canada relations have experienced ups and downs in recent years, but there are no territorial disputes or clash of fundamental interests between the two countries, and they can become partners for achieving mutual success.

This year marks the 56th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Canada, as well as the 21st anniversary of the establishment of their strategic partnership. It is an important chance to reflect on the past and think about the future. Eby's visit shows that an objective and rational attitude toward China is conducive to strengthening cooperation with a positive and open spirit. Reinforcing this, Canada's Minister of International Trade Maninder Sidhu recently revealed in a media interview that he plans to meet with his Chinese counterpart this fall.

Although certain Western policymakers have been drawn into the rhetorical vortex of a purported "China Shock 2.0", the evolving arc of China-Canada ties points to the emergence of a countervailing cohort of countries that chooses to assess the situation objectively and remains open to the considerable potential of "China Opportunity 2.0".

As Li put it in his speech at last week's Summer Davos, to overcome the global growth challenge, innovation-driven cooperation is imperative. To this end, countries should forge closer connectivity and collaboration by joining forces and pooling resources to innovate. China possesses a complete industrial system and well-integrated industry clusters, which underpin efficient, reliable production and supply chains for businesses worldwide. By rejecting the notion of a "China Shock 2.0", countries stand to capture the vast opportunities presented by China's dynamic economy and superlarge market.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

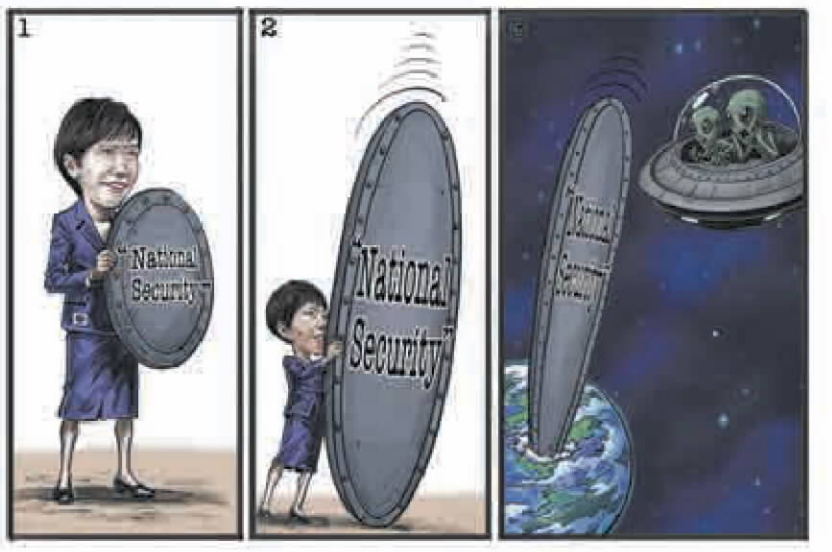
China Daily UK
90 Cannon St, London EC4N 6HA, UK
+44 (0) 207 398 8270
editor@chinadailyuk.com

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Jin Ding



Opinion Line

Europe requires cool heads, but Brussels prefers hot air

Europe is discovering an uncomfortable truth: ideology is a poor substitute for air conditioning.

For years, Brussels has treated climate policy almost like a "religion", where virtue was measured by how much discomfort one could endure in the name of the planet. Then June arrived with temperatures soaring past 40 degrees Celsius. Schools closed, roads buckled, hospitals overflowed with patients and, tragically, lives were lost. Across the continent, Europe's infrastructure wilted almost as quickly as its gardens.

Suddenly, Europeans who had spent years debating whether air conditioners represented environmental excess found themselves desperately looking for one. Store shelves emptied. Installation waiting lists stretched for weeks. Portable units became prized possessions. Asian manufacturers, especially Chinese brands, found themselves answering Europe's unexpected SOS. Reuters reports that demand has surged across France, Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom, with Chinese manufacturer Midea's portable systems selling out as Europeans searched for solutions compatible with the continent's aging buildings.

So, it turns out, that after all the talk about "strategic autonomy", when the thermometer climbs high enough, nobody checks whether the air conditioner they are buying carries the correct "passport".

That is not surprising given that quality Chinese products have increasingly become practical solutions. For industries, Chinese equipment and components facilitate industrial upgrading, green transitions and deeper integration into global value chains. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, intermediate-goods trade with China helped increase the number of developing economies serving as key global trading hubs from six in 2007 to 11 in 2024. For households struggling with persistent inflation in developed economies, affordable Chinese products ease financial pressure. The European Central Bank estimates that a 10 percent increase in Chinese imports into the European Union in 2026 would reduce overall import prices by 1.6 percent. That sounds less like an economic "shock" than an economic cushion. There is something almost theatrical about policymakers discussing new trade barriers inside air-conditioned conference rooms while people scramble to buy the very products those same officials portray as "strategic threats".

The bureaucracy seems fascinated by drafting ever more elaborate restrictions on Chinese green products, even as Europe's own consumers demonstrate that they value affordability, reliability and availability over political slogans.

Trade wars are wonderfully "exciting" to some — until someone else has to pay the electricity bill. The irony extends beyond air conditioners. Europe's heat wave has exposed something basic — aging houses poorly suited for rising temperatures, insufficient cooling infrastructure, energy shortages, cumbersome installation rules, fragmented local governance and slow bureaucratic responses cannot be solved by raising tariffs. Instead, restricting access to competitively priced Chinese green products simply increases the cost of Europe's own green transition. Inflationary pressures are intensifying precisely at a time European economies can least afford additional burdens.

Nor is China likely to absorb such measures passively. China has repeatedly demonstrated that it will defend its legitimate trade interests. Escalating restrictions inevitably invite countermeasures that benefit nobody. Fortunately, Beijing has consistently left the door open for candid dialogue to manage disagreements and expand areas of cooperation.

During the first five months of this year, China's imports grew by 20.5 percent, exceeding export growth by 8.7 percentage points. Among China's 50 largest trading partners, 32 recorded faster export growth to China than import growth from the country. This counters the narrative that China seeks permanent trade surpluses at others' expense.

Perhaps EU politicians should spend less time inventing new trade barriers and more time listening to the people's heated complaints. The continent's latest heat wave has delivered a lesson far more persuasive than any policy paper: when reality arrives, practical cooperation matters far more than political posturing. Hot air belongs to the atmosphere, not to trade policy.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Power plan to spark green energy transition

Editor's note: *China aims to establish a clean, low-carbon, secure and efficient new energy system by 2030, according to a plan released recently. China Central Television spoke to Tian Lei, a researcher at the Academy of Macroeconomic Research of the National Development and Reform Commission, and Wang Peng, a professor at the North China Electric Power University, on the future of new energy development. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

The shift to clean energy has two major implications. First, renewable energy will move from a supporting role and become the primary driver of the energy system.

Second, this transformation will drive technological upgrades in the power system, reshaping its operational models and overall structure. The expansion of renewable energy will also spur the growth of electric vehicles and emerging technologies.

Achieving these goals and sustaining the rapid growth of renewable energy will require strengthening the energy storage capacity through coordinated efforts on both the supply and demand sides.

On the supply side, developing new energy storage technologies and pumped-storage hydropower is essential to provide rapid balancing capacity during peak demand periods. At the same time, greater emphasis will be placed on hydrogen storage by converting surplus renewable electricity into green hydrogen, enabling long-duration energy storage.

On the demand side, the focus will be on enhancing the flexibility of electricity users by aggregating adjustable loads from households, businesses and factories so they can help in peak-load regulation.

Future energy investment will focus on three broad areas: ensuring energy security, advancing the green transition and fostering new growth drivers. The plan calls for coordinated national deployment, discourages homogeneous local investment, strengthens market regulation and addresses disorderly competition, including below-cost pricing and mandatory project bundling.

At the same time, the development of a unified national electricity market will align power generation projects more closely with electricity demand and grid absorption capacity.

The plan also aims to enhance energy self-sufficiency in eastern China, while recognizing that the overall pattern of transmitting electricity, natural gas and coal from the western to eastern regions will remain unchanged.

Long-distance energy transmission inevitably involves electricity losses and requires extensive infrastructure for transporting coal. From the perspective of resource allocation, using more energy where it is produced in western China would significantly improve efficiency. However, this would also require the gradual relocation of industries to western regions.

There is a strong demand for computing resources in the more developed eastern regions of China, while abundant energy resources are concentrated in the west, making western China a natural location for large-scale computing centers. This requires close coordination between computing resources in the eastern and western regions, as well as a more efficient nationwide energy allocation.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:50 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:50 PM

VIEWS

Sun Jingying and Zhang Yuyan

Inspirations from China's journey

For many developing nations, a persistent question is: How can a populous country with limited resources achieve widespread and lasting improvements in the quality of life for its people?

Over the past century, China has provided the answer. Under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, the country has moved from widespread poverty and food shortages to building a moderately prosperous society and is now pursuing common prosperity.

China's path may not be a blueprint for others to copy, but the principles behind it offer valuable lessons for countries facing similar development challenges.

A consistent focus on improving people's livelihoods has been a defining feature of China's development journey. In the early years of New China, the priorities were straightforward: restore production, stabilize prices and secure basic livelihoods.

With the reform and opening-up, poverty reduction became a central mission. Over several decades, large-scale poverty alleviation programs transformed living conditions across rural China.

From 2012 to 2020, all 98.99 million rural residents living below China's current poverty line had been lifted out of poverty, and all 832 designated impoverished counties had shed that label. Absolute poverty, a problem that had plagued China for centuries, was eliminated.

The scale of the transformation is reflected in everyday indicators. Life expectancy has risen from about 35 years in 1949 to more than 79 years today.

The Engel coefficient — a measure of the share of household spending devoted to food — has fallen below 30 percent, placing China in a category generally associated with relatively affluent societies according to standards used by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

China's poverty reduction efforts, notable for both their speed and scale, have received widespread recognition from international organizations, including the UN and the World Bank.

Yet China's ambitions extend beyond eradicating extreme poverty. In recent years, the focus has shifted toward common prosperity — a concept often misunderstood abroad.

It does not imply absolute egalitarianism, nor does it imply that everyone becomes wealthy. Rather, it seeks to ensure that the benefits of growth are more broadly shared while maintaining incentives for innovation, entrepreneurship and productivity.



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

The significance of common prosperity lies in the institutional arrangements supporting it. China's approach combines three layers of distribution.

Primary distribution relies on markets and economic activity to create wealth. Redistribution, through taxation, social security and transfer payments, helps narrow excessive disparities. A third layer consists of voluntary contributions from businesses and high-income groups to support broader social development.

Equally important is the effort to expand access to basic public services. A nationwide compulsory education funding system, medical insurance coverage exceeding 95 percent of the population and a pension system reaching virtually all citizens have helped translate economic growth into tangible improvements in daily life.

At the same time, regional development strategies and rural revitalization programs seek to reduce geographic inequalities.

The experience of Zhejiang province, China's pilot demonstration zone for common prosperity, offers a notable example.

Through measures ranging from stronger village-level collective economies to coordinated regional development, Zhejiang has reduced the urban-rural income gap ahead of schedule.

The broader relevance of China's experience lies more in the principles underlying its policies than in specific measures.

First, lasting improvements in living standards require strong political commitment and effective state capacity. In many developing countries, social progress is constrained not only by scarce resources but also by limited ability to mobilize those resources or implement long-term policies.

Second, gradual reform often works better than abrupt transformation. China's social security system was not built overnight. From rural subsistence assistance to basic medical insurance, catastrophic illness coverage and long-term care insurance, reforms were introduced incrementally, tested locally and refined over time.

Third, development and distribution should advance together. Some countries have struggled with unsustainable welfare commitments introduced before sufficient economic foundations were established.

Others have experienced deep social divisions after prioritizing growth while neglecting equity. China's approach has sought a middle path: promoting growth while steadily expanding social protection and preventing excessive inequality.

Fourth, improving people's livelihoods is not solely the responsibility of the government. Public institutions provide the foundation, markets deliver diverse services, social organizations contribute additional support, and families and individuals remain active participants.

This balance helps avoid both welfare dependency and the fiscal burdens associated with excessive state intervention.

This does not mean China's experience can be transplanted elsewhere. Every country faces unique political, economic and social conditions.

Nations with different political systems will need different coordination mechanisms.

Countries still struggling with extreme poverty may need to prioritize clean water, basic healthcare and food security before pursuing broader goals of equal access to public services.

For this reason, China has consistently emphasized sharing experience rather than exporting models.

Today, the world faces overlapping challenges: the lingering effects of the pandemic, mounting debt pressures, climate change and geopolitical tensions.

Across many countries, livelihoods are under strain. Against this backdrop, China's century-long journey — from securing basic subsistence to pursuing common prosperity — offers a simple but powerful insight: improving people's lives is not merely the outcome of development; it is also its purpose and driving force.

Large-scale improvements in human welfare are neither automatic nor easy. But with political commitment, pragmatic reforms and strategic patience, they are achievable.

The challenge for other countries is not to replicate China's path, but to draw experiences from it while forging development strategies suited to local realities.

In that shared search for more equitable, sustainable and dignified development, there is much that nations can learn from one another.

Sun Jingying is deputy chief of staff at the National Institute for Global Strategy at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences; and Zhang Yuyan is a professor at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Abdulwahed Jalal Nori

Water a strategic asset that ensures economic resilience

Global Lens

For more than a century, oil has been the lifeblood of modern civilization, fueling industrial revolutions, shaping geopolitical alliances and influencing the rise and fall of nations. Control over energy resources often translated into economic strength and strategic influence.

Yet as the world enters an era increasingly defined by climate uncertainty, technological transformation, and environmental stress, another resource has quietly emerged as the foundation of future prosperity and stability: water.

The strategic significance of water has long been underestimated. Unlike oil, there is no substitute for freshwater. While economies can diversify their energy mix, replacing coal with solar power or oil with hydrogen, there is no substitute for water.

Every aspect of human life — from food production and public health to industrial development and energy generation — depends on reliable access to freshwater.

This reality is particularly relevant for Asia. Home to nearly 60 percent of the world's population and some of the fastest-growing economies, Asia faces a convergence of pressures that could make water one of the defining strategic challenges of the 21st century.

Rapid urbanization, industrial expansion, agricultural demand, population growth, and climate change have placed unprecedented strain on rivers, lakes, reservoirs and groundwater systems across the continent.

The challenge is not just environmental, but also has geopolitical and developmental dimensions. Manufacturing hubs require reliable water supplies. Agriculture depends on predictable irrigation systems. Expanding cities need resilient infrastructure capable of withstanding both floods and droughts. Water is no longer simply a resource to be managed, but a strategic asset that underpins economic resilience and social stability.

Climate change is intensifying these pressures. Rising temperatures are altering rainfall patterns across Asia.

Prolonged droughts are becoming more frequent in some regions, while others face increasingly severe floods. The Himalayan glaciers, often described as Asia's water towers, feed many of the continent's major rivers, including those that sustain hundreds of millions of people.

The implications of these changes extend beyond national borders. Many of Asia's most important rivers are transboundary waterways. The Mekong River alone supports the livelihoods of millions across China and Southeast Asia. What happens to the river system upstream inevitably affects communities downstream. As demand for water increases, effective management of shared resources will become one of the most important tests of regional cooperation.

Contrary to alarmist predictions, the future need not be defined by water conflicts. History demonstrates that shared resources can encourage cooperation as much as competition. The challenge for Asia is to move beyond reactive management and embrace a proactive framework for water governance. In this regard, China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations have a unique opportunity to provide global leadership.

China's development experience offers valuable lessons. Over the past decades, the country has invested heavily in water infrastructure, flood control systems, advanced irrigation technologies and large-scale water transfer projects.

These initiatives reflect an understanding that water security is inseparable from long-term development planning. As China advances its vision of high-quality development, water efficiency, ecological sustainability, and climate resilience have become important pillars of national strategy.

ASEAN countries confront similar challenges. Rapid urbanization, food security concerns, and climate-related risks have placed pressure on water systems across Southeast Asia. Rather than address these challenges separately, a stronger China-ASEAN partnership on water security could be substantially more beneficial for the entire region.

Several practical policy initiatives deserve serious consideration.

First, China and ASEAN should establish a permanent China-ASEAN water security cooperation mechanism to facilitate regular dialogue, information sharing, joint research, and coordinated responses to droughts, floods, and other water-related emergencies. Water diplomacy should become a central pillar of regional cooperation, alongside trade, connectivity, and technological innovation.

Second, both sides should increase investment in smart water technologies. Artificial intelligence, satellite monitoring, big data analytics and digital water management systems can significantly improve efficiency and reduce waste.

A China-ASEAN water innovation fund could support collaborative research to design affordable solutions for developing economies.

Third, greater emphasis should be placed on water-efficient agriculture. Agriculture is the largest consumer of freshwater in most ASEAN countries. Joint initiatives focused on precision irrigation, drought-resistant crops, and sustainable farming practices could improve food security while reducing pressure on water resources.

Fourth, regional cooperation on climate adaptation should be strengthened. Shared early warning systems for floods and droughts, coordinated disaster preparedness mechanisms, and joint environmental monitoring programs would help build collective resilience against climate-related shocks.

Fifth, water security should be incorporated into broader regional development frameworks, including the Belt and Road Initiative and ASEAN's long-term community-building agenda.

Infrastructure projects should not only support economic growth but also enhance environmental sustainability and water resilience.

Most importantly, policymakers must broaden their understanding of security itself. Traditional notions of security often focus on military capabilities and geopolitical competition. While these are important, the most significant threats in the coming decades may arise from resource scarcity, environmental degradation, and climate disruption. A nation might have sophisticated military capabilities, but it remains vulnerable if it doesn't have adequate water resources.

For Asia, the lesson is clear. The era in which oil dominated strategic thinking is gradually giving way to a new reality. Water is emerging as the resource that will shape economic resilience, food security, environmental sustainability, and regional stability. The question is no longer whether water security will define Asia's future.

The question is whether governments will act with sufficient foresight to ensure that it is defined by cooperation and shared prosperity rather than crisis and scarcity.

The author is an assistant professor at the International Islamic University Malaysia.
The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Kang Bing

The author is former deputy editor-in-chief of China Daily.
kangbing@chinadaily.com.cn

Property management sector could do with an overhaul

In recent years, property management disputes have been on the rise in China.

According to the Supreme People's Court, in the first quarter of 2026, courts in China handled 294,700 such cases, up 37.28 percent from the same period last year.

But the actual number of complaints might be even higher. Whenever a property management dispute arises, people tend to first complain to the community committees, dial the consumer hotline number 12345, or visit relevant departments under the local government. Approaching courts is often the last resort.

More than 67 percent of the over 1.4 billion Chinese population now lives in cities and towns and about half of them dwell in apartments built in the past three decades or so.

When hundreds or thousands of people live in the same complex, property management becomes a necessity. Unlike in many other countries where house owners have to pay a huge sum in real estate taxes, those in China are not required to do so as they don't own the land on which their apartment buildings are built.

However they usually have to pay a significant management fee to the service-providing companies.

Depending on the locality and service quality, the fee could range from 2,000 to 7,000 yuan ($295-$1,033) a year for a two-bedroom apartment.

Efforts have been made by both the central and local governments to standardize property management operations.

In the early years after house owners move into an apartment complex, the property management service is usually satisfactory, thanks to the good condition of public facilities and the fact that the fees are paid in a timely manner. With the passage of time, however, quality dwindles.

Some house owners first complain to the property management companies about the dirty corridors, stinking garbage bins, dripping water from the ceilings, poor maintenance and high repair charges.

They also complain about the shortage of parking space and the lack of transparency regarding what the management companies earn by renting out the basements and/or parking spaces or allowing other companies to paste ads inside the elevators.

Failing to get satisfactory answers from the management companies and seeing no improvement in service quality, some homeowners stop paying property management fees. In some extreme cases, almost half the residents of an apartment complex have followed suit.

With the flow of money curtailed, the related property management companies cannot afford to take care of the apartment complexes anymore, even doing away with the support staff members who were doing some work, however unsatisfactory.

Thereafter, those house owners and management companies start suing each other, leading to prolonged litigation as both sides make a strong case against the other.

Reports suggest that in some apartment complexes, house owners set up their own committees and removed the existing property management companies, replacing them with new operators, who worked efficiently for a few years before a rerun of the same story.

Efforts have been made by both the central and local governments to standardize property management operations.

Relevant national regulations have been revised at least three times in the past two decades, with further adjustments expected to be made.

Each revision made clear the duties and obligations of both the house owners and the property management companies. However, the rising number of complaints and court cases shows that there is still a long way to go before many property management companies work efficiently, making the house owners happy.

In the interest of the masses, the arms of the owners' committees should be strengthened under the supervision of local community committees — a grassroots governmental organization.

At present, many apartment complexes have yet to establish owners' committees.

However, where they exist, there have been reports of some owners' committee members being bribed by property management companies to keep their mouths shut regarding certain irregularities.

The good news is that the discipline inspection bodies at different levels have started probing into malpractices related to people's livelihood, including in the property management sector.

The sector should be regulated in a way that property management companies make their income, expenses, and the services they provide more transparent to the fee payers.

This will help avoid many misunderstandings and disputes, bringing relief to judges and those at the consumer hotline receiving complaint calls.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:50 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:50 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

MAO KEJI

Anatomy of economic unraveling

The strategic quagmire Japan finds itself in is characterized by four interwoven vulnerabilities

In an era defined by accelerating global transformation, Japan finds itself confronting a convergence of crises that would have seemed unimaginable to the generation that once spoke of its "economic miracle". What was once the world's second-largest economy, a technological trailblazer and the anchor of the United States' strategy in the Asia-Pacific now exhibits an unmistakable structural unraveling — one that spans technological marginalization, industrial degeneration, macroeconomic anemia and geopolitical entrapment. Understanding these four interlocking vulnerabilities is essential for understanding how the regional balance in East Asia is shifting and why Japan's room for maneuver has narrowed so dramatically.



The most striking feature of Japan's relative decline is its accelerating detachment from the global technological mainstream. The world once expected Japan to leverage its strengths in precision manufacturing, advanced materials and industrial robotics to upgrade into the defining frontier domains of the 21st century — green energy, artificial intelligence, digital transformation, unmanned aerial systems and humanoid robotics. However, Japan has fallen behind and largely failed to establish any meaningful presence in these domains, dashing such expectations.

What makes this particularly damaging is the compounding nature of technological divergence. Japan might have been able to afford to be a fast follower before, refining and perfecting innovations pioneered elsewhere. But in an age where AI and digital economies reward first-movers with insurmountable network effects, late entry likely leads to permanent exclusion. Japan's inability to translate basic research into scalable commercial applications means it is risking structural marginalization from the entire next wave of global wealth creation.

If technological drift points to Japan's forward-looking failure, the hollowing-out of its manufacturing base reveals the implosion of Japan's historical foundation. For decades, Japan's economic identity was inseparable from its industrial prowess — steel, ships, automobiles and electronics that conquered global markets and symbolized its national resurgence. That once formidable base is now crumbling on multiple fronts.

In consumer electronics and telecommunications, the fall has been rather precipitous. Yet even this pales beside the existential threat now facing Japan's automobile industry, which has been an engine of Japanese prosperity for generations. Today, that engine is sputtering. Its long-standing bet on hydrogen fuel-cell technology, while scientifically elegant, has diverged ever further from the global mainstream, leaving Japanese automakers with stranded assets and obsolete expertise while Chinese, US and European competitors scale up battery-electric production.

Beyond these technological pressures, decades of loose monetary policy and an increasingly burdensome public debt structure have made it even harder for Japan to avoid macroeconomic anemia. For years after the asset bubble collapsed, the economy relied on low interest rates and large-scale fiscal spending to stimulate demand, stabilize the financial system and support key industries. Yet these policies failed to rebuild Japan's growth engine. Instead, Japan was left with a massive public debt burden and far less room to maneuver. According to Japan's Ministry of Finance, by the end of fiscal year 2025, outstanding long-term debt owed by the central and local governments was expected to reach roughly 1,330 trillion yen ($8.31 trillion), equivalent to 211 percent of GDP.

Persistently low interest rates have widened the yield gap between Japan and the US, encouraging capital to flow into dollar-denominated assets and placing sustained depreciation pressure on the yen. In the past, Japan could still rely on its powerful export machine, trade surpluses and repatriated overseas profits to offset this pressure. But as its industrial competitiveness has weakened, and as more production and profits remain overseas, Japan's external balance no longer provides the same support for the currency. At the same time, rising imports of energy, food, digital services and industrial inputs have further increased demand for dollar payments. This pressure has been further amplified by renewed volatility in energy supplies. With the yen at one point falling toward 160 per dollar, import costs have surged, intensifying imported inflation.

The consequences are corrosive. Household purchasing power has been compressed, while corporate production costs have risen sharply. In theory, Japan could raise interest rates to ease pressure on the exchange rate and inflation. In practice, however, Japan's high public debt makes tightening difficult. Tokyo has been trying to stabilize the yen, contain inflation, protect the bond market, and avoid choking off growth all at once, but achieved only limited success on any front, resulting in a weakening capacity to resist economic deceleration.



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

The International Monetary Fund now projects Japan's real GDP growth to slow from 1.1 percent in 2025 to 0.7 percent in 2026. Meanwhile, yen depreciation has further reduced Japan's dollar-denominated economic size.

Japan's external vulnerabilities are no less severe than its internal problems. The US administration's approach to alliance management has revealed the transactional reality beneath the rhetoric of shared values. Tariffs, investment demands measured in hundreds of billions of dollars and the systematic extraction of Japanese resources show that the US views Japan as a tributary to be harvested rather than as a partner to be cultivated. The ally Japan depended upon the most has become the power applying the most crushing pressure on it.

Compounding this US extraction has been Japan's own strategic rigidity. By blindly aligning with Washington's containment strategies, Tokyo has poisoned relations with its most significant neighbors, burning any possible geostrategic bridge behind it. As a consequence, its capacity to absorb and deflect external shocks has fallen to dangerously low levels.

These four vulnerabilities do not exist in isolation. They reinforce one another in devastating synergy: technological drift accelerates industrial erosion; industrial erosion deepens macroeconomic anemia; macroeconomic anemia increases dependence on external assistance; and that dependence intensifies geopolitical entrapment. Breaking this cycle would require political will, strategic imagination and institutional flexibility that Japan's current leadership has shown no capacity to muster. The result is a nation that remains wealthy by historical standards but strategically diminished — a former giant whose shadow grows shorter with each passing season. A less economically resilient Japan may cling more tightly to the US as its strategic lifeline, while becoming more anxious and risk-prone in regional affairs, adding further instability to the Asia-Pacific order.

The author is an associate researcher at the Center of International Cooperation under the National Development and Reform Commission of China. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

WANG XIAOYU

An AI cooperation blueprint for the Global South

China and Arab countries have moved from R&D toward its practical use, pioneering a people-centered path

China's engagement with Arab states started 70 years ago with the establishment of diplomatic relations with Egypt. Since then, China-Arab cooperation has steadily expanded beyond trade in energy to infrastructure development, industrial investment and technological innovation. Today, as the digital economy expands and technological transformation accelerates, artificial intelligence is emerging as a new engine for China-Arab cooperation, creating fresh opportunities for collaboration in advanced technologies.



Many Arab states have incorporated digital transformation and artificial intelligence into their national development strategies. Policy frameworks such as Egypt's National AI Strategy, Saudi Arabia's National Strategy for Data and AI, the United Arab Emirates' National Strategy for AI 2031, and Qatar's Digital Agenda 2030 all identify AI as a key catalyst for economic diversification, more effective public services, and growth in future-oriented industries.

Meanwhile, China is fostering new quality productive forces and accelerating the integration of AI into the real economy. It has also accumulated substantial experience in AI research and development, industrial applications and digital infrastructure.

As important actors of the Global South, China and Arab countries share common objectives: advancing economic transformation, cultivating emerging industries and accelerating digitalization. Against this backdrop, AI has become a promising new pillar of cooperation to drive digital transformation and innovation for both sides.



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

More importantly, China-Arab cooperation in AI is guided by a people-centered vision that seeks to ensure AI serves economic and social development while improving people's well-being.

This vision is reflected in three closely connected areas: promoting localized innovation, expanding AI applications in public services, and strengthening local talent development. Together, these efforts demonstrate how China and Arab countries are translating AI cooperation into practical development outcomes.

Localized innovation is essential for making AI more inclusive. This goal extends beyond technological advancement and calls for equitable participation of diverse linguistic and cultural groups in the digital age.

Much of the current global AI landscape has been built on English-language data. The relative scarcity of Arabic-language digital resources has limited the development and deployment of AI technologies across the Arab world.

In 2023, Chinese and Saudi researchers jointly released AceGPT, an open-source large language model specifically optimized for Arabic-language applications. Compared with more general-purpose models, AceGPT has demonstrated strong performance in Arabic-language understanding and generation tasks.

This collaboration has enriched the Arabic AI ecosystem, expanded access to AI technologies for Arabic-speaking communities and provided valuable insights into the development of AI in diverse linguistic environments. By prioritizing language adaptation and locally grounded innovation, China-Arab cooperation is helping ensure that AI technologies are better adapted to local needs and development priorities.

China-Arab cooperation in AI offers one practical response to this challenge. Rather than pursuing AI as an abstract technological race, the two sides have focused on areas closely related to economic transformation and social needs.

In recent years, China-Arab cooperation in AI has moved beyond research and development to practical applications in areas closely related to public services and daily life, including healthcare, tourism and urban governance.

In healthcare, the Chinese company Synyi AI has partnered with Saudi Arabia's Almoosa Health Group to launch "Dr Hua", an AI-powered clinical assistant. The system currently focuses on around 30 common respiratory conditions and supports patient consultations in English and Arabic, generating preliminary diagnostic reports and treatment suggestions for human doctors to review. In tourism, China's Baidu AI Cloud has collaborated with the Saudi Tourism Authority to enhance visitor experiences through large language models, intelligent translation services and digital human technologies. The cooperation aims to improve multilingual tourism services and visitor experiences. In urban governance, Chinese companies have participated in smart city initiatives across the Arab world, contributing to projects in intelligent transportation systems, smart buildings and digital urban management. In Saudi Arabia's Yanbu Industrial City, for example, Huawei helped deploy an AI-enabled traffic management system using 256 HD cameras across 16 major intersections, which reportedly reduced monthly traffic violations from about 5,000 to 2,000.

The growth of the AI sector depends on a continuous supply of skilled talent. For many Arab countries, developing local digital expertise and strengthening innovation capacity are critical to achieving successful digital transformation. Expanded cooperation between China and Arab states in this area reflects a shared recognition that technological progress requires sustained investment in people as much as in technology.

In 2024, SenseTime Middle East and Africa signed a memorandum of understanding with the King Abdulaziz and His Companions Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity (Mawhiba) to provide AI training programs for young Saudi students. In 2025, Huawei launched an AI education initiative in partnership with several Egyptian universities, offering online courses and certification programs for more than 25,000 students. Huawei has also launched a skills development center in Saudi Arabia, in partnership with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, aiming to train 25,000 local talents by 2030.

As AI becomes increasingly integrated into economic and social development, developing countries face a common challenge: how to harness AI in ways that advance their own development priorities rather than simply following technological pathways shaped elsewhere.

China-Arab cooperation in AI offers one practical response to this challenge. Rather than pursuing AI as an abstract technological race, the two sides have focused on areas closely related to economic transformation and social needs. From developing Arabic large language models and expanding AI applications in healthcare, tourism and urban governance to fostering local digital talent, the cooperation between the two sides has centered on localized innovation, practical applications and capacity building tailored to local needs.

This experience shows that AI can generate tangible development outcomes when it is rooted in local realities. Looking ahead, China and Arab countries are well-positioned to deepen their innovation partnerships and expand knowledge exchanges. By doing so, they can not only generate new momentum for their own digital development but also provide practical experience for other developing countries seeking AI strategies suited to their own linguistic, social and development conditions.

The author is an associate research fellow at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Fudan University. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:50 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:50 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

US curbs have limited impact on tech firms

Move shows again 'Washington is abusing scope of national security'

By MA SI
masi@chinadaily.com.cn

The US government's latest attempt to curb Chinese telecom and tech companies will have limited impact on their business, but the move once again shows that Washington is abusing the scope of national security, experts said on Monday.

The comments came after the US Federal Communications Commission on Friday said it would ban the import of more equipment from a group of Chinese manufacturers.

The move expands an FCC ban imposed in 2022 on new models of telecommunications and video surveillance equipment made by Huawei, ZTE, Hytera, Hikvision, and Dahua, citing alleged US national security risks.

Bai Ming, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, said the US government has been abusing the national security concept to contain the rise of Chinese tech companies.

It is mixing politics with normal business cooperation, and such practices will ultimately harm the rights and interests of US consumers, Bai said.

Xiang Ligang, director-general of the Information Consumption Alliance, a telecom industry association, said this is the latest move by Washington to crack down on Chinese-made electronic gear.

The above Chinese companies now have very limited business presence in the US, and the latest ban barely harms their actual operations.

"Rather, it speaks more loudly about the US government's political motives," Xiang added.

According to a report by Reuters, the latest ban now includes old models, not just those designed starting in late 2022, of equipment used for "public safety, security of government facilities, physical security surveillance of critical infrastructure, and other national security purposes," the FCC said.

The expanded ban is set to take effect in early July.

The FCC has rolled out a series of restrictive measures targeting Chinese technology. In December, it imposed a ban on imports of all new models of Chinese-made drones.

In March, it extended the restrictions to cover new models of Chinese-manufactured consumer routers — the networking devices that connect computers, smartphones, and other smart gadgets to the internet.

China's Ministry of Commerce expressed firm opposition in May to the US FCC's proposed restrictive measures against Chinese entities, urging Washington to stop its wrongful practices and respect market rules.

The FCC voted to advance measures last month that would revoke the qualifications of testing and certification bodies from countries without a mutual recognition agreement with the United States, and prohibit entities on its "Covered List" from conducting telecommunications business in the US.

In response, a spokesperson for the ministry stated that the FCC has abandoned the principle of technological neutrality and overstretched the concept of national security.

Without factual basis, the US has frequently introduced restrictive measures that discriminatorily treat enterprises and products from other countries, including China, severely damaging the interests of China and other relevant trading partners, the ministry said.

These measures undermine the hard-won stability of Sino-US economic and trade relations, and run counter to the consensus reached by the two heads of state, the spokesperson added.

The ministry urged the US to heed the voices of the industry and revoke the relevant measures.



A view of the Zhejiang Tiantai Pumped-storage Power Station. SUN JINBIAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

All units online for record-breaking hydroelectricity station in East China

By ZHENG XIN
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

The full operation of a record-breaking pumped-storage hydroelectricity station in East China is poised to further accelerate the nation's green energy transition and fortify long-term grid security, said industry experts.

Marking a monumental technological leap in ultra-high head and large-capacity energy storage, the Zhejiang Tiantai Pumped-storage Power Station, which brought all its units online last week, serves as a crucial "regulator" for the country's modern power system.

As the first facility of its kind to become fully operational during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, the 1.7-gigawatt project, located in Taizhou, Zhejiang province, boasts the world's highest rated water head at 724 meters, according to its operator China Three Gorges Corp (CTG).

In hydroelectric engineering, water head refers to the vertical drop between the upper reservoir and the turbine units. A higher water head means greater water pressure and potential energy, allowing the station to generate more power using less water.

However, a massive 724-meter drop creates immense pressure, demanding state-of-the-art materials and cutting-edge engineering to ensure safe operation.

The megaproject features four 425-megawatt reversible pump-turbine units, representing the largest single-unit capacity domestically, and utilizes a domestic record 483-meter single-stage inclined penstock, it said.

Primarily tasked with peak-shaving, valley-filling, frequency regulation and emergency backup for the Zhejiang power grid, the station is expected to generate 1.7 billion kilowatt-hours of clean electricity annually.

Overcoming the immense challenges of a world-record water head, the project team systematically mastered the core manufacturing and application technologies for units exceeding 700 meters in head and 400 MW in capacity.

Furthermore, the project pioneered the large-scale domestic application of 1,000-megapascal high-strength steel and implemented innovative low-heat cement techniques to prevent rockfill dam face cracking. It also introduced unmanned, smart construction equipment — such as autonomous bulldozers — ensuring high-quality, collaborative operational efficiency.

The Tiantai station's completion aligns with a broader national strategy to utilize pumped-storage facilities as vital engines for sustainable development.

According to a recent report by the China Renewable Energy Engineering Institute, the sector will see a rapid leap over the next five years, with China expected to add roughly 100 million kilowatts of new capacity.

China has been steadily advancing the construction of approved projects, striving to meet the power system's demand for 400 million kW of flexible capacity by 2035.

Zhao Zenghai, deputy head of the institute, emphasized that these facilities are increasingly irreplaceable for ensuring safe grid operations amid expanding renewable energy integration.

He pointed out that while earlier projects primarily addressed peak-shaving in eastern load centers, future layouts will heavily support cross-provincial power transmission from new energy mega-bases in central and western regions, significantly enhancing transmission corridor efficiency.

Zhao believes that compared with the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period, the sector's development scale is expected to experience a rapid leap in the next five years.

Ye Xiaoning, a senior engineer at the State Grid Energy Research Institute, observed that modern pumped-storage stations have shifted from prioritizing sheer scale to balancing scale with economic viability and ecological safety.

They will play a dual role: balancing rapid grid responses in the east while smoothing out wind and solar volatility in resource-rich western and northern areas to boost outbound transmission, he said.

Canadian boost for Chinese NEVs

By LI JIAYING
lijiaying@chinadaily.com.cn

China's new energy vehicle makers are accelerating their move into Canada as the two countries' new trade arrangement opens the door to greater market access, with leading automakers already moving to establish local sales networks and prepare product launches.

The latest sign of that momentum came as China's Ambassador to Canada Wang Di announced that Lotus, the premium electric vehicle brand under Geely Auto Group, will begin sales in Canada next month. The launch will mark the first Chinese-owned and manufactured EVs to enter the Canadian market under a new bilateral arrangement that allows up to 49,000 Chinese EVs to be imported each year at a preferential tariff rate of around 6 percent.

The agreement, which took effect on March 1, replaced the previous 100 percent tariff imposed in 2024. The annual quota will expand by 6.5 percent each year, reaching about 67,000 vehicles by 2031, providing Chinese automakers with gradually increasing access to the Canadian market.

Besides Lotus, more Chinese automakers are lining up to enter Canada. During her visit to China this month, Canadian Industry Minister Melanie Joly said she met with executives from four Chinese automakers — BYD, Chery, Geely and Shanghai Launch Automotive Technology — all of which expressed interest in exploring joint ventures in Canada as a pathway to local production.

The interest has already translated into concrete preparations, with several leading Chinese automakers having accelerated their market entry plans.

According to domestic media reports, BYD plans to open six retail outlets while completing import compliance procedures for two passenger vehicle models. Geely's premium Lotus is also preparing six dealerships, while ChangAn Automobile has established a dedicated local team to advance vehicle certification and build its local sales network.

Although Chinese-made EVs have been entering Canada under the new framework since May, import quotas have been dominated by Tesla vehicles manufactured at its Shanghai Gigafactory in this early window, with an estimated share of 10 percent to date, according to foreign media reports.

However, He Weiwen, a senior fellow at the Chinese Association of International Trade, said the tariff quota arrangement is still "a pragmatic breakthrough".

"An annual quota of 49,000 vehicles accounts for only about 2.5 percent of Canada's new vehicle sales last year, but it provides Chinese automakers with an important foothold in the market. In addition, Canada's renewed interest in automotive cooperation with China reflects its broader strategy to diversify trade partnerships," He said.

"Canada has long relied heavily on the United States market, and the risks of excessive dependence on a single trading partner have become increasingly apparent," he said, adding that the Canadian government has already proposed doubling exports to markets outside the US over the next decade. "Cooperation with China's auto industry is thus one important piece of that broader diversification strategy."

Still, He cautioned against overstating the broader implications of Canada's policy shift.

"For Chinese automakers, the key question is not how many countries are opening their doors. The real challenge is to become an indispensable long-term partner in those markets through technology, products and localized operations," He said.

CSITF seen as a catalyst for growth, development

By WANG YING in Shanghai
wang_ying@chinadaily.com.cn

With a record 600 deals reached, the China (Shanghai) International Technology Fair (CSITF), which concluded recently, has become an ideal platform for introducing the latest innovations and technologies, creating vast business opportunities and promoting industry cooperation spanning domestic and global markets.

As a regular participant at the fair, Shanghai-based iSage took part in this year's event with its exhibition area expanding to a record 126 square meters.

"The fair has helped us connect with a wide range of customers, investors and end-users, contributing to our growth as an industrial humanoid robot company. Our products are now available in more than 200 countries and regions," said Lu Xuedong, a marketing staffer with iSage. According to Lu, the company exhibited its full product lineup and debuted its latest industrial humanoid robot model at this year's fair.

"We aim to further strengthen our brand presence and ensure our equipment better reaches target customers," added Lu.

MengW, a company based in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, unveiled its first humanoid robot designed for the security sector during the fair.

"We need a platform to let more people know about our product, and the CSITF is exactly the one we are looking for," said Huang Jiangcheng, a senior account manager at MengW.

The robot product, officially known as Leo, traces its development back to 2017, when its research and development started.

"In addition to providing round-the-clock security services, the robot can also express basic emotions through actions such as greeting, saluting and giving a thumbs-up," Huang said.

According to him, the company anticipates that the debut will assist the goal of becoming a service provider for smart-city public spaces.

For N-Jump, a skincare technology company based in Beijing, the CSITF is not only a platform that opens the domestic market, but also a nexus linking global opportunities.

"Founded in 2023, we now operate a physical store in Beijing, and our Shanghai flagship store is scheduled to open in August," said Zhou Bingliang, head of the China market at N-Jump.



A robot seen at the recent China (Shanghai) International Technology Fair. BAO GANSHENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

According to Zhou, as a first-time participant of the fair, N-Jump joined the event as part of the group exhibitor organized by Beauty Nova Tech Hub, where N-Jump set up its physical booth last December.

Beauty Nova Tech Hub is an innovative beauty and health ecosystem community situated in Shanghai's Jing'an district.

Launched in May 2025 with only a few companies, Beauty Nova Tech Hub has grown to 102 enterprises. This year, it set up a 120-square-meter exhibition area to help 24 participating companies better connect with resources at the event, said Zhu Zihui, head of marketing at Beauty Nova Tech Hub.

At its 135-square-meter exhibition booth, Suzhou-based Magiclab showcased a total of 16 robots across six models, and also unveiled the first public demonstration of its robotic arm application in smart homes, powered by its large model.

"We attend the CSITF to let more people know about our products. Through exhibiting the large model, which is the brain of our humanoid robots, we hope to reach possible partners and build an ecosystem together," said Lin Fan, a manager on communications with Magiclab.

According to Lin, Magiclab's products are sold in more than 50 countries and regions, with around 60 percent of its revenue coming from overseas markets.

Briefly

Yuan weakens against greenback

The central parity rate of the yuan weakened 9 pips to 6.8175 against the US dollar on Monday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System. In China's spot foreign exchange market, the yuan is allowed to rise or fall by 2 percent from the central parity rate each trading day. The central parity rate of the yuan against the US dollar is based on a weighted average of prices offered by market makers before the opening of the interbank market each business day.

Work safety enhanced to bolster rail transport

Chinese railway operators have bolstered work safety to solidify safe rail transport. With the 25th national safe production month taking place in June, Houma Train Operation Section under China Railway Taiyuan Group optimized safety control measures at station areas within its jurisdiction, stepping up safety education and practical drills. Partnering with police stations and the local fire and rescue brigade, it organized a joint drill at Linfen Station, letting employees from multiple workshops, including track maintenance, communication, signaling and power supply, to improve their emergency handling capabilities and safeguard travel safety.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:50 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:50 PM

BUSINESS

MWC26 sets direction for future mobile

Industry at threshold where 5G giving way to 6G, IoT ascending to next stage

By MA SI
masi@chinadaily.com.cn

As the world's gaze focused on the FIFA World Cup 2026, an electrifying spectacle of skill unfolded at an exhibition hall in Shanghai: humanoid robots stepping up to the penalty spot, striking balls with precision and celebrating goals in front of roaring crowds.

The humanoid robot football penalties challenge, a centerpiece of the newly launched mobile artificial intelligence innovation pioneer zone at the 2026 Mobile World Congress Shanghai, also known as MWC26 Shanghai, a three-day event which ran through Friday, featured eight teams including Unitree Robotics, Linkerbot and China Mobile (Hangzhou). No remote controls, no preset scripts — each robot independently completed the entire process, from ball recognition and positioning to angle calculation, force control and shooting, all within milliseconds. It was, in every sense, a hardcore validation of embodied intelligence's perception-decision-motion control loop.

This was just one part of the exhibition that has firmly established itself as the global stage where AI meets the physical world. Vivek Badrinath, director-general of GSMA, an industry group representing the world's largest mobile phone operators, identified humanoid robotics, the low-altitude economy and autonomous driving as the three most exciting frontier tracks in Asia's mobile ecosystem.

Badrinath said not long ago, the core mission revolved around connecting people and devices. That remains important, but it is no longer the whole story. Telecom operators are now strategic digital partners working across industries to drive robotics, drones, connected vehicles and AI solutions deep into every sector of the economy.

Zhong Zhihong, chief engineer of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, laid out China's strategic direction for information and communication development: building robust next-generation infrastructure, strengthening technological innovation, deepening digital-industry integration, and pursuing open, win-win global cooperation.

On the technology front, Zhong called for accelerating 6G core research and development and standardization while cultivating application ecosystems across AI, quantum technology and embodied intelligence.

Crucially, she urged the global community to uphold unified 6G standards and build broad consensus on AI governance.

China Mobile Chairman Chen Zhongyue opened his keynote speech with a poignant story: Zhang Xujia, a hearing-impaired individual, received an AI device using China Mobile's "one person, one model" accessibility technology — and for the first time, was able to hear his own voice making phone calls and ordering food like anyone else. "AI should not serve only a select few, nor stop at the general public — it must equally illuminate every life," Chen said.

He argued that the very meaning of "mobile" is evolving — from Mobile Communication (voice and messages) to Mobile Computing (bytes) to Mobile AI (tokens). The core task now is processing "intelligence flows" — knowledge-bearing, problem-solving streams — not just data flows. Telecom operators must break free from the pipeline role and upgrade to AI service platforms capable of millisecond-level semantic parsing, cloud inference and intelligent generation.

China Mobile is building an open intelligent service ecosystem and integrated intelligent infrastructure as twin growth flywheels. "We do not build walled gardens," Chen said. "We aim to be a cooperative, win-win service platform."

On the network side, the company is advancing 5G-A, terabit optical networks and space-air-ground integrated deployment, with 6G R&D anchored to industrial manufacturing and telemedicine scenarios. Self-evolving "autonomous networks" — self-configuring, self-optimizing and self-healing — are also taking shape.

Meanwhile, China Unicom said on the sidelines of MWC26 Shanghai that it has identified international expansion as a new growth engine and is working with global partners to enhance submarine cable systems, cross-border terrestrial fiber routes, and accelerate the buildout of a global data-intelligent network and satellite-based internet of things infrastructure.

The State-owned telecom giant laid out its vision at the UniCom Global Partners Meeting 2026.

Miao Shouye, deputy general manager of China Unicom, underscored the company's strategic shift from a "basic pipeline provider" to a "comprehensive digital service provider", focusing on the core areas of connectivity, computing power, services and security.

He called for four collaborative actions: co-building intelligent networks via shared submarine and cross-border cables, as well as edge nodes, to create an integrated space-air-ground-ocean network; co-developing a cross-border cloud-computing ecosystem with token-based product suites to tap new business opportunities; co-delivering smart services by embedding AI into industry scenarios to meet diverse client needs; and co-establishing a security framework that ensures safe cross-border data flows and joint anti-fraud efforts.

Huawei Deputy Chairman and Rotating Chairman Wang Tao also declared 2026 a critical inflection point for mobile communications. He outlined key propositions for the next decade.

First, mobile networks must expand from connecting people and things to connecting intelligence. In hotspot areas, the density of intelligent agents is expected to exceed 10 million per square kilometer — far surpassing population density in the future. Second, on AI-network integration, Huawei proposed a three-layer intelligent architecture with a two-phase rollout.

On spectrum, Wang stressed that operators need 200 to 400 megahertz of continuous wideband spectrum as the capacity layer to deliver 6G's promised fivefold downlink and tenfold uplink improvements with ultra-low latency and high reliability. For space-terrestrial integration, he outlined two models: telecom operators introducing satellites as supplements, or ground-led collaborative network construction.

As the GSMA's latest report underscores, China now accounts for over 40 percent of global 5G connections. But the story at MWC26 Shanghai was about what comes next. From humanoid robots playing football to AI models giving voice to the hearing-impaired, from drone fleets operating under unified regulatory platforms to connected vehicles evolving into software-defined intelligent platforms, the message was unmistakable: the industry is standing at the threshold where 5G gives way to 6G, and where the internet of things ascends to the internet of intelligence.

MWC26 Shanghai made one thing clear: the future of mobile is not just about faster networks — it is about intelligence that is ubiquitous, inclusive and deeply embedded in the physical world. And China, for better or worse, is leading the charge.



Visitors observe a China Unicom network-enabled humanoid robot at the 2026 Mobile World Congress Shanghai on June 24. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY





Left: A visitor tries on a China Mobile network-enabled VR device at MWC26 Shanghai on June 25. **Right:** Visitors check out a tablet at MWC26 Shanghai on June 24. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

> "AI should not serve only a select few, nor stop at the general public — it must equally illuminate every life."
>
> **Chen Zhongyue,** chairman of China Mobile

Book-type foldables fast turning into hot AI interface

By MA SI

The book-type foldable smartphone is undergoing a profound transformation from a hardware novelty into a genuine AI-powered productivity tool, experts and corporate executives said.

A new report from market research company Counterpoint Research said that as smartphone AI evolves from single-feature gimmicks into system-level interactive gateways, book-type foldables with their expansive screens and multitasking capabilities are emerging as the optimal terminal for complex AI workflows.

This shift is reshaping market dynamics. Counterpoint projects global foldable smartphone shipments will grow 20 percent year-on-year in 2026, with book-type devices surging from 52 percent of total foldable shipments in 2025 to 65 percent in 2026. China alone accounts for more than half of global shipments, with shipments in the country surpassing 10 million units in 2025.

"The value of large screens is shifting from entertainment to productivity," Counterpoint said. As consumer AI demands move from simple Q&A to cross-app, multi-step complex tasks, users need sufficient screen real estate to review source materials, verify AI-generated content, and manage parallel operations. Traditional bar-type phones, with their constant app-switching friction, simply cannot keep up. Book-type foldables, by contrast, visualize entire workflows on a single expansive canvas, enabling parallel information processing that fully unlocks AI's productive potential.

Crucially, the report emphasizes that AI is not creating demand for foldables — it is multiplying their practical value exponentially.

The trend is in line with China's broader efforts to boost the consumption of AI-powered devices. Minister of Industry and Information Technology Li Lecheng said China will spare no effort in promoting the research, development and iterative upgrading of next-generation AI products this year.

The minister outlined a comprehensive roadmap for AI integration across multiple facets of the economy and daily life. A key priority is the consumer sector, where the MIIT aims to accelerate the development of AI-powered personal computers, AI mobile phones and smart home appliances to meet people's needs for a better life.

Against this background, Chinese tech company Vivo has launched its latest foldable flagship, the X Fold6, positioning it squarely at the intersection of "big screen plus AI productivity". The device represents what the company called the "second evolution" of foldables — "not just unfolding a big screen, but unfolding an AI workstation to complete complex tasks".

Huang Tao, vice-president of Vivo, said: "We want to build a software and hardware platform truly born for mobile AI, so users can enjoy AI to the fullest."

The X Fold6 runs OriginOS 6 Fold, the industry's first operating system custom-built for foldable large screens and AI task flows. Its signature feature — the Atomic Workbench — introduces both "serial" and "parallel" modes. In serial mode, users can run up to five windows simultaneously in a one-primary-four-secondary layout with no overlap. A simple screen fold or three-finger swipe transitions to parallel mode, which supports four apps tiled across the screen, each freely resizable. Frequently used layouts can be saved as one-tap desktop shortcuts.

The Atomic Workbench also features "AI cross-window drag-and-drop", enabling smooth information flow between apps — drag to convert to spreadsheets, translate text or save business cards with a single gesture. The system-level AI proactively identifies user intent, suggesting app combinations and even allowing multiple AI assistants to run side by side for comparative output analysis, Vivo said.

The move comes as industry analysts see 2026 as a pivotal year. Market research company International Data Corp has forecast that worldwide foldable smartphone shipments will grow 30 percent year-on-year in 2026, driven by Apple's anticipated entry into the segment later this year.

"The year 2026 will prove exciting for the foldable category with multiple launches pushing the market to 30 percent year-on-year growth," said Nabila Popal, senior research director at IDC. "Apple's entry will be a real game-changer."

Facing Apple's possible competition, Chinese vendors are accelerating their large-screen strategies to defend premium-tier positions. As IDC said in a report, foldables now represent a critical value driver — while still a niche by volume, their average selling prices are three times higher than standard smartphones.

However, challenges remain. "Compared to traditional bar-type smartphones, foldable R&D and bill-of-materials costs are significantly higher, directly limiting user base expansion," said Li Zegang, an analyst at UK market research company Omdia.

"Software adaptation is still incomplete, and there is room for product experience optimization. How to fully leverage the differentiated advantages of the large-screen foldable form factor through system design remains a critical challenge for the industry," Li added.

As the foldable market enters this new phase — defined by AI-powered productivity and intensifying competition — devices like the Vivo X Fold6 are staking a clear claim: the future of foldables is not just about how big the screen is, but how intelligently it works, experts said.



Visitors try out foldable smartphones at an exhibition in Shanghai on June 25. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:50 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:50 PM

CHINA

Macao's tourism sector flourishes on diversity

By ZHAO YIMENG
zhaoyimeng@chinadaily.com.cn

On a rainy morning in mid-June, the familiar melody of *Jasmine Flower*, one of China's most beloved folk songs, drifted through the ornate interior of the Dom Pedro V Theatre in Macao, the first Western-style theater built in China.

The performers were members of the Macao Chinese Orchestra. Their instruments — the *erhu* and *guzheng* — embodied the essence of traditional Chinese music, while the resonant tones of the cello, a hallmark of Western classical tradition, were woven seamlessly into the arrangement. As the final notes faded, applause filled the 160-year-old theater.

The scene could hardly have unfolded anywhere but Macao.

As tourism ministers from across the Asia-Pacific gathered last week for the 13th APEC Tourism Ministerial Meeting, Macao presented itself as a living embodiment of cultural coexistence — a place where East and West have shared streets, flavors, architecture and traditions for more than four centuries.

In a city covering just 33 square kilometers, visitors can walk from the ruins of a European church facade to the Na Tcha Temple in a matter of minutes, while Macao cuisine blends Portuguese culinary traditions with Chinese ingredients and Southeast Asian spices.

"Macao is firmly rooted in Chinese culture while serving as an important window for exchanges and mutual learning between Eastern and Western civilizations," said O Lam, secretary for social affairs and culture of the Macao Special Administrative Region government.

The APEC gathering, she said, provided an opportunity to showcase Macao's role as a place where Chinese culture remains the mainstream while diverse cultures coexist and flourish.

Pansy Ho Chiu-king, chairperson of the Global Tourism Economy Research Center, believes the city's dual identity has become one of its greatest assets.

"The cultural and tourism sector is Macao's pillar industry," Ho said. "Our openness and inclusiveness make it easier for us to connect with different regions of the world and give us a unique appeal."

Macao is a gateway through which international visitors can better understand contemporary China, she said.

With about 600,000 residents, the city has the world's highest concentration of internationally recognized five-star hotel brands.

"Our service capacity, multilingual capabilities and international standards are among our greatest strengths," Ho said.

What Ho finds most remarkable is how seamlessly Macao has integrated its past with its future.

At the Historic Centre of Macao, a UNESCO World Heritage site, colonial buildings stand alongside centuries-old Chinese temples. Across the Cotai Strip, futuristic resorts rise from reclaimed land that did not exist a generation ago.

Since Macao's return to the motherland, the skyline has changed dramatically, but the historic neighborhoods that define the city's character remain intact.

Tourism authorities have expanded efforts to integrate heritage preservation, neighborhood revitalization and cultural experiences into tourism offerings.

New campaigns are targeting visitors from a broader range of international markets, according to Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, director of the Macao Government Tourism Office.

In 2025, Macao received more than 40 million visitors. Arrivals have already exceeded 14.6 million in the first four months of this year, including more than 1 million international travelers, she said.

Meanwhile, neighboring Hengqin in Guangdong province has become a platform for economic diversification and deeper integration.

Wu Chuangwei, director of the Economic Development Bureau of the Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, said new travel facilitation measures are making multi-destination tourism more seamless.

A policy introduced in May 2024 allows organized tour groups to travel multiple times between Hengqin and Macao within a seven-day period. By April, more than 36,000 tour groups involving over 168,000 travelers had taken advantage of the arrangement, according to the bureau.

Leong Wai Man, director of Macao's Cultural Affairs Bureau, said the SAR is ramping up efforts to build a new international tourism and cultural district — a platform where Chinese culture serves as the mainstream while diverse cultures coexist.

In addition, new performance venues and talent development programs are intended to strengthen cultural ties across the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area while attracting global audiences, Leong said.

The write approach



Children dressed in *hanfu* — Chinese traditional clothing — and Li, Miao and Hui ethnic minority costumes demonstrate the Chinese character "*ren*", or "people", they wrote in a writing ceremony at a Confucian temple in Sanya, Hainan province, on Sunday. Nearly 100 students completed the ancient ritual, marking a new stage of life in pursuing knowledge and etiquette. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Qingzhou tests spur space tech

Robotic craft prototype finishes in-orbit cultivation, next-gen medicine tasks

By ZHAO LEI
zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

A prototype of China's Qingzhou, or "Light Ship", robotic cargo spacecraft has completed a series of experimental and testing tasks, its developer announced on Monday.

According to the Shanghai-based Innovation Academy for Microsatellites of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the completed tasks covered space precision detection, next-generation space medicine and in-orbit biological cultivation.

In a news release, the academy said the results will provide technical support for the application of China's new space technologies, the transfer of space technologies to everyday life, the safe and efficient operation and maintenance of the Tiangong space station, and the utilization of space resources.

A micron-level deformation laser measuring instrument developed by the Harbin Institute of Technology achieved micron-level monitoring of the Qingzhou spacecraft's structural deformation in orbit, according to the release.

By extracting faint signals from a strong noise background through multiple core technologies, the instrument can accurately detect deformation of the spacecraft's cabin.

The technology is expected to provide critical measurement support for the long-term safe operation of the space station and cargo spacecraft, as well as for in-orbit precision manufacturing. It is also expected to enable ground controllers to monitor the health of spacecraft in real time.

Another advanced instrument, a chip-scale gyroscope developed by Shanghai Jiao Tong University, successfully completed angular velocity measurements aboard the Qingzhou.

The technology is expected to play an important role in precision navigation for deep-space exploration and bio-inspired aircraft, while enhancing the performance and intelligence of bio-inspired equipment.

An electromyography sensor, jointly developed by Shenzhen University of Advanced Technology and the Shenzhen Institutes of Advanced Technology under the Chinese Academy of Sciences, has, for the first time, verified the feasibility of continuously collecting and transmitting faint human muscle signals in real time.

Researchers from multiple organizations under the Chinese Academy of Sciences also used the Qingzhou to conduct a space resuscitation experiment on *Syntrichia caninervis*, or desert moss, an extremely stress-tolerant plant species.

The experiment verified the feasibility of the plant's resuscitation and survival under extreme space conditions, including microgravity, radiation and drought.

The findings are expected to support low-energy ecological improvement and in-situ resource utilization at future extraterrestrial bases, offer new approaches to building extraterrestrial bioregenerative life support systems, and provide references for the use of stress-resistant biological resources in desertification control and ecological restoration on Earth.

The Qingzhou prototype, a single-section cargo spacecraft, was launched on March 30 aboard a Kinetica 2 rocket from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwestern China.

The first mass-produced Qingzhou spacecraft is scheduled to launch in early 2027 and dock with the Tiangong space station, according to the Innovation Academy for Microsatellites.

Submariners keep nation's flag flying under the sea

By LI SHANGYI
lishangyi@chinadaily.com.cn

Like a giant steel shark gliding silently through the depths, a naval submarine under the command of the People's Liberation Army Eastern Theater Command has carried out numerous missions in recent years. Hidden beneath the waves and out of public view, its crew members have endured dizziness, isolation and demanding conditions, remaining steadfast in their duties throughout each deployment.

Xu Guangze, a 23-year-old who joined its crew two years ago, completed his first sailing mission in 2025. For him, the experience was unforgettable.

As a new crew member, Xu followed a veteran sergeant responsible for the submarine's propulsion system. Although the deployment was relatively short, Xu admitted that there was much to adapt to.

Life underwater

Deprived of sunlight beneath the surface, crew members depended on a 24-hour clock to distinguish day from night. Their biological clocks were synchronized with the submarine's watch rotation, leaving them with fragmented sleep between shifts.

Xu knew that every section of the submarine was vital to its operation. "When I was alone at my post, I was very nervous," he said.

Fortunately, Xu did not suffer from seasickness, and he took every opportunity to learn from his fellow crew members.

After returning to shore, Xu still felt as though the ground was swaying beneath his feet. Fresh air filled his lungs, a stark contrast to the atmosphere inside the sealed submarine, where the air carried a mixture of smells from cooking, paint, electrical equipment and microbial fermentation.

There was little time to recover, however, as he and his fellow crew members quickly shifted their focus to reviewing the mission, drawing lessons from their experience and preparing for the next deployment.

This has become routine for Tang Jin over the past decade. A veteran submariner, Tang progressed from a novice sailor to a highly experienced sergeant during nearly 20 years of service in the PLA Navy.

In charge of the submarine's logistics support system, Tang said the sense of responsibility has long outweighed the discomfort of seasickness. He is known as the submarine's "troubleshooter" because he can solve a wide range of mechanical problems, from repairing valves to fixing onboard equipment.

Years of experience have enabled Tang to quickly identify problems. Once the submarine is underwater, he said, it is difficult to sleep soundly because he is constantly thinking about his responsibilities and remains on high alert.

In the submarine's cramped living quarters, three sailors shared two narrow bunks equipped with safety straps. As crew members rotated through shifts around the clock, the bunks were rarely empty and were often still warm when the next sailor climbed in.

For the crew, their priority is always the successful completion of the mission. During one deployment, Tang had just lain down when a fellow sailor woke him up to help drain contaminated water from the submarine.

"If the submarine has problems, about 70 percent fall under my area of responsibility, such as issues related to water and electricity," Tang said.

Before every mission, he repeatedly checked the equipment, knowing that any malfunction should be addressed as early as possible.

Recalling his first deployment 10 years ago, when he was still an apprentice, Tang said he became severely seasick, vomiting five times in just four hours in one instance. Although he still experiences occasional seasickness, he is now able to perform his duties without being affected.

The transition from a new sailor to a senior crew member takes three to five years of intensive training, according to Tang.

"Responsibility matters throughout the process," he said.

Tang said he is honored to serve in the PLA Navy. Since his days as a conscript, he has carried with him a saying: "For two years, roughly one thirty-fifth of a lifetime, you protect others. For the rest of your life, others protect you."

More to learn

Over the years, the crew has cultivated many technical experts like Tang.

Zhou Xiaohui, a veteran sailor with 30 years of experience, also lectures and mentors younger sailors.

"When I was a young sailor, I got nervous too," he said. "Now, whenever a problem occurs, I can usually determine the cause immediately, even pinpointing it to a specific screw."

In one year, Zhou spent more than 100 days aboard the submarine.

When the team was established, its members had an average age of 28. A long-standing tradition of mentoring and passing on experience has helped make it a well-known talent incubator in the PLA Navy. So far, the team has produced four submarine captains.

Zhang Shouwei, who has served in the PLA Navy for 16 years, said many sailors have devoted their youth to submarine service. While the vessel has been key to their personal growth, they have also witnessed the evolution of several generations of submarines.

Because a submarine is a highly complex system, Zhang said sailors must master a broad range of knowledge, from theory to operational skills. Even while ashore, their daily routine centers on training and navigation simulations.

The rapid evolution of equipment also requires sailors to continually update their knowledge and skill sets. Even Tang, now a sergeant in his 40s, is still learning to operate new equipment.

"There's always more to learn, like rust can never be fully scraped away," he said.

Describing a deployment as "a hundred men working in unison on a single gun", Zhang said every crew member must obey orders and perform their duties professionally to ensure the submarine operates smoothly and safely.

Young sailors like Xu are not intimidated by the long hours of study and training. Instead, they find them motivating.

"No matter how old we are, we stand together on the submarine, supporting one another," Xu said.



Sailors carry out preparations on the deck as a submarine returns to port and docks. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Homesickness

"Through the long night, the bells and drums seemed endlessly delayed, and the gleaming river of stars lingered as the sky approached dawn," said Zhang as he referenced an ancient Chinese poem to describe life aboard a submarine.

Sometimes deployments coincided with traditional festivals such as Mid-Autumn Festival. On those occasions, sailors lined up for a chance to look through the periscope and catch a glimpse of the full moon, Zhang said.

Beyond the physical and psychological demands of their work, submarine sailors must also cope with homesickness.

"We can't tell our families exactly when a mission begins or ends, and we don't want them to worry," Tang said.

During one deployment, his child fell seriously ill at home. His wife called him repeatedly, but he was unable to answer.

After Xu completed his first deployment, he discovered numerous missed calls from his parents.

"I called them back immediately," Xu said. "As soon as my mother saw me on the video call, she burst into tears."

Over time, their families came to understand the unique demands and sacrifices of submarine service.

However, submarine sailors do not dwell on these hardships. Instead, they remain focused on their duties and continue honing their technical skills.

"Being a soldier means dedication," Tang said.

Sun Chao and Ding Feiyu contributed to this story.

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:50 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:50 PM

Editor's note: *As protection of the planet's flora, fauna and resources becomes increasingly important, China Daily is publishing a series of stories to illustrate the country's commitment to safeguarding the natural world.*







Left: Cactus plants are cultivated in Zhuangzitian village of Wenshan, Yunnan province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY **Center:** Kindergartners and their parents conduct a study tour in Zhuangzitian in March. GAO BO / FOR CHINA DAILY **Right:** Tourists harvest cactus fruit at a field in Zhuangzitian. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Yunnan village makes succulent profit

Area's dry desertified soil put to good use to create cactus industry that's growing residents' incomes

By **YAN YUJIE** in Wenshan, Yunnan and **LI YINGQING** in Kunming

Zhuangzitian, a village once severely impacted by rocky desertification in Southwest China's Yunnan province, has reversed a decades-long trend of environmental degradation and economic migration by developing a 15-million-yuan ($2.2 million) cactus cultivation and processing industry.

According to local village data, the initiative has successfully restored 80 hectares of previously barren land in the Wenshan Zhuang and Miao autonomous prefecture. The ecological shift has increased regional vegetation coverage from 32 percent to 75 percent and reduced annual soil erosion by an estimated 12,000 metric tons.

The environmental rehabilitation has triggered an economic turnaround for the village, which previously saw 70 percent of its young and middle-aged population leave for urban centers due to a shortage of arable land. By 2025, per capita income in Zhuangzitian reached 32,000 yuan, representing a 2.2-fold increase from 2022 levels and prompting a full return of the village's migrant workforce.



Above: Villagers reap cactus pads in Zhuangzitian. YAN YUJIE / CHINA DAILY
Right: Residents collect harvested cactus fruit in the village. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Opening a path

The restructuring program began in 2021 under the direction of Lu Chunhong, the village Party branch secretary, who returned to Zhuangzitian after two decades in the private sector. Lu targeted the region's native cactus population — a drought-resistant plant that had been grown on a small scale for over 200 years but lacked commercial scale or supply chain integration.

Traditionally, a household growing cacti on 0.67 hectares could earn up to 15,000 yuan annually from selling fresh fruit. However, by creating a cooperative that processes the fruit into dried products, their annual income could potentially increase more than threefold.

To incentivize participation, Lu established an agricultural cooperative and introduced a formalized collective profit-sharing model: 50 percent of returns are allocated to villagers who pool their land assets, 30 percent is distributed evenly among all residents, and 20 percent is directed into public welfare funds.

The villagers were soon convinced and eagerly pooled their land into the cooperative, initiating large-scale cactus cultivation.

With years of business experience, Lu realized that to propel the cactus industry forward, it was essential to extend the value chain.

He spearheaded the development of a comprehensive system that includes seedling cultivation, technical guidance and product procurement. A 4,000-square-meter processing facility was established to seamlessly integrate harvesting, processing and storage, effectively tackling challenges like cactus preservation and initial processing limitations.

Lu actively collaborated with institutions like China Agricultural University in Beijing and Southwest Forestry University in Kunming to form a 20-member research and development team, creating over 10 high-value-added products such as cactus beer and enzymes. This shift from selling raw materials to marketing finished products and brands enhanced the value-added potential by more than threefold.

To diversify sales channels, Lu partnered with a local agricultural investment company to establish a specialized operations team that covers offline supply, online sales and exports. As a result, the products are now available across several provinces and in neighboring countries.

In August 2025, 20 tons of edible cactus pads were exported to Vietnam, representing China's first cross-border shipment of these products, according to Kunming Customs.

Truong Cong Le Hoang, an executive member of the Vietnam Young Entrepreneurs Association, sampled cactus-based products like cactus beverages, describing their main advantages as having a "health concept" and "cultural appeal".

As the cactus market grows, the village has expanded its cultivation, reaching approximately 333 hectares last year, with a total annual output value of 15 million yuan.

Industrial diversification

The village has simultaneously diversified into secondary and tertiary industries, establishing an annual Cactus Cultural Tourism Festival since 2022 to drive agritourism.

Local residents have converted the increased foot traffic into direct retail revenue. Zhang Dengyun, a 51-year-old villager, said that during the peak festival period, direct on-site farm sales reached 40,000 yuan in a single day.

"This year, we plan to extend the festival from one day to three days," Lu said.

These festivals have put the village on the map. In 2025, the village attracted 100,000 tourists, providing a significant boost to the local dining scene.

The increased liquidity has altered local farming infrastructure. The Zhang family, whose household income rose from 100,000 yuan in 2022 to over 200,000 yuan in 2025 alongside a 30,000-yuan collective dividend, recently integrated commercial drones into their harvesting operations to bypass difficult mountain terrain.

"Previously, it took half an hour to carry a basket of cactus pads from the field to the transport truck by the roadside," Zhang said. "Now, with the drone, they can move two baskets in just two minutes, greatly enhancing efficiency and reducing physical strain. Nowadays, farming isn't as tough as it used to be."

Other residents have transitioned into the hospitality sector. Wang Yunxi, a 44-year-old villager, has operated a themed cactus restaurant since December 2021, drawing food enthusiasts from Beijing, Shanghai, the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region and Zhejiang province.

"My restaurant is doing great, as many visitors are eager to try our cactus-themed feast. Last year, our revenue surpassed 400,000 yuan," Wang said.

He added that the most popular dish is chicken soup with cactus fruit, and he plans to develop more dishes to cater to the tastes of tourists from different regions.

Li Jiawen, a 43-year-old villager, opened a casual eatery serving drinks and snacks, providing tourists visiting the village with a place to relax. It opened in January and can seat up to 70 guests.

"My eatery usually gets busier on weekends, and we're seeing more and more visitors from other provinces," Li said.

It's not just the local villagers who have seized the opportunity to start businesses; outside investors are also attracted to the village's potential and are investing in educational tourism.

In 2024, Gao Bo from Chongqing started investing in educational tourism projects in the village and quickly reaped the benefits. By 2025, Gao's team had attracted nearly 40,000 visitors, generating revenues exceeding 300,000 yuan.

Among the visitors were kindergarten children who engaged in learning about cacti, pine trees and insects while getting physical exercise on specially designed hiking trails. Elementary school students have also visited the village, mainly for spring and autumn outings, as well as hands-on experiences like farming activities.

"I am optimistic about the village's growth prospects and view it as a compelling investment opportunity," Gao said.

The development of the cactus industry in Zhuangzitian has not only been an advancement in agriculture but has also been a comprehensive development of ecological management, rural vitalization, cultural-tourism integration and cross-border cooperation, according to Hoang from the Vietnamese entrepreneurs association.

Happy returns

The development of Zhuangzitian village has brought tangible benefits to its residents.

In 2025, Wang's family earned an additional 40,000 yuan in dividends from the village cooperative.

"My family's income is now significantly higher than when my wife and I were working out of the village. Back then, after covering our living expenses, we could save at most 60,000 yuan," he said.

What brings Wang even more comfort is that being back home allows him to better care for his elderly parents and two children.

Fellow eatery operator Li can really relate to this feeling. After spending nearly 20 years away from home, he's now back with a business and can finally enjoy quality time with his family.

Zhuangzitian village's green development path has attracted the attention of Vietnam, which shares a border with Wenshan Zhuang and Miao autonomous prefecture.

Starting in 2023, Vietnamese delegations have frequently visited Zhuangzitian village to explore collaboration opportunities.

Hoang said that the village's experience holds significant value for Vietnam. Some areas in his country face similar challenges, such as inefficient land use. However, cacti, known for their drought resistance, adaptability and high economic value, are ideally suited for cultivation in these regions.

By integrating the industry with local tourism, youth entrepreneurship and green agriculture in Vietnam, there is potential to develop a unique and innovative industrial chain in the future, he added.

Contact the writers at yanyj@chinadaily.com.cn

Returned Party chief spearheads local development

By **YAN YUJIE** and **LI YINGQING**

In a makeshift livestream studio set up inside a cactus warehouse in Zhuangzitian village of Wenshan Zhuang and Miao autonomous prefecture, Yunnan province, a middle-aged man in a suit is seen adeptly presenting a wide range of cactus products.

He isn't a full-time host but the village's Party branch secretary, Lu Chunhong. Livestreaming is just one of the many roles he juggles as he strives to lead the village toward prosperity.

Zhuangzitian village was once notorious for its poverty. Over 80 percent of its land suffered from rocky desertification, leaving each villager with less than 0.13 hectares of arable land.



Lu Chunhong

As a result, many young people left to seek better opportunities elsewhere, and Lu was once among them.

For nearly 20 years, Lu has engaged in various business ventures outside the village, spanning industries such as mining, agriculture, aquaculture and trade. Despite his growing success, Lu remained deeply concerned about the persistent poverty in his hometown.

In 2021, when the local government launched a talent return program aimed at boosting rural development through the leadership of prominent individuals, Lu decided to return to his hometown, bringing with him the wealth and experience he had accumulated over the years.

Rather than following the trend of planting the most popular crops, he evaluated the soil conditions and engaged with the villagers to identify the most suitable crops for the village.

"Cacti are well-suited to the region's arid climate and poor soil, making them an economical choice for cultivation. They are highly valuable, with their fruits, flowers and pads being used in the production of food, medicine and cosmetics," Lu said.

After selecting cacti as the primary crop and intercropping with corn and beans, Lu's next challenge was to persuade the villagers to pool their land as shares, paving the way for large-scale cultivation and unified sales.

To ease the villagers' worries, Lu contributed all 2 hectares of his own land to the village's collective economy. He assured them that he would cover any loss, while profits would be shared among everyone.

Inspired by Lu's leadership, the villagers gradually set aside their doubts and contributed their land as equity shares.

In 2022, the first harvest from 93 hectares of cacti was plentiful, generating more than 5 million yuan ($740,000) in sales revenue that year.

However, Lu didn't rest on his laurels; instead, he focused on the next challenge.

"I understand that industries with low entry barriers usually don't stay lucrative for more than three years, as they quickly become saturated with imitators. Therefore, we need to extend the supply chain and increase the added value of our products," Lu said.

He simultaneously targeted production, research and development, and sales to build a comprehensive industry chain, setting the cactus industry in Zhuangzitian village apart from the rest.

After five years of development, all the village's migrant workers had returned, and by 2025, the average income per resident had reached 32,000 yuan. This transformation has turned the village into a model of industrial prosperity in the region.

The villagers have cherished what Lu has done for the community. Villager Wang Yunxi said: "Lu is the heart and soul of the village. He has played a crucial role in developing our cactus industry, and we couldn't have achieved this without him."

Gao Bo, an investor from Chongqing, has seen firsthand how Lu spearheaded the development of the cactus industry in the village.

"Lu has a very dynamic mindset and thinks differently from many others. He has what it takes to unite the entire village, leading everyone toward prosperity and benefiting the local community," said Gao.

Lu said that he always keeps in mind that working for the people's well-being is the greatest achievement.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:50 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:50 PM



CULTURAL HERITAGE

Journey through the birth of dynastic China

Rare relics reveal how distant communities were united with ritual and belief, report **Bai Shuhao** and **Zhou Lihua** in Wuhan.



On an ordinary day more than 3,000 years ago, a diviner posed a question to the gods: Would it not rain? The answer came in the cracks of a turtle shell. At the time, the land that is now China was warmer and wetter than it is today, rich with rainfall and fertile soil. But the question inscribed on that oracle bone — No rain? — betrayed a deeper anxiety.

For the rulers of the Shang Dynasty (c. 16th century-11th century BC), agriculture was the ground on which the kingdom stood. Drought and flood alike could bring famine, unrest and even the collapse of the state.

That fragment of divination, excavated millennia later, now sits inside a glass case at the Panlongcheng site in Wuhan, Hubei province, anchoring one of China's most compelling archaeological exhibitions this year.

Opened for the country's annual Cultural and Natural Heritage Day, *Tracing Xia and Shang*, an exhibition at the Panlongcheng Site Museum, gathers 163 artifacts from 35 museums and archaeological institutions across the country.

Together, they tell the story of how China's earliest dynasties, the Xia (c. 21st century-16th century BC) and the Shang, exchanged, negotiated and absorbed influences across distant regions, laying the foundations of an enduring civilization. The exhibition runs through Oct 18.

Its setting itself is part of that story. Rule of both Xia and Shang centered present-day Henan province in the heart of the Yellow River Basin. Once a thriving city during the Xia-Shang period, Panlongcheng stood not in that core area, but along the Yangtze River, hundreds of kilometers to the south.

Yet the bronzes unearthed here bear unmistakable ties to the royal centers of the north. "The bronze vessels found at Panlongcheng share forms and decorative patterns with those of the Central Plains," says Song Ruohong, the exhibition's curator. "That tells us it was under direct influence, perhaps even direct administration, from the Shang capitals."

In her view, Panlongcheng represented an early model of Chinese governance: a political center extending its authority outward through regional strongholds. The exhibition follows that logic through three sections — Foundations of the Dynasty, Origins of Ritual and Music, and Pivot of the Four Quarters — tracing how power was built.

The first gallery begins with roofs and pipes. A single clay roof tile and a segment of ceramic drainage pipe sit near the entrance, humble objects suggesting something profound: by the Xia and Shang periods, China had already developed advanced construction techniques and water-management systems.

Agriculture, too, was becoming increasingly sophisticated. The exhibition displays charred seeds, bronze adzes used for cutting wood and bronze spades for turning soil.

These were tools of survival. But survival was becoming organized. By this period, craft production had begun shifting from household workshops to centralized industries overseen by royal or aristocratic authorities. Labor was becoming specialized. Regions were beginning to depend on one another.

Bronze casting makes that shift visible. One vessel on display, a *ding* from Anyang in Henan province, was made using whole casting in which molten bronze was poured into a complete mold. The seams of that mold remain visible along its sides.

Beside it stands a bronze *gui* from Panlongcheng, made using sectional casting, a more complex process in which separate parts were cast and later assembled.

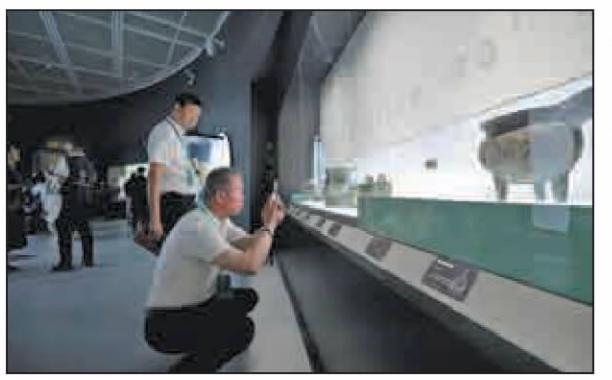
"Sectional casting made the flourishing of later bronze culture possible," Song explains. "Without it, you would never see those massive, highly intricate ritual bronzes."

Some scholars, she adds, have suggested that something resembling an assembly line for bronze production may already have existed during the Shang.

The second gallery charts what those technical breakthroughs made possible. At its center stands what archaeologists call China's earliest bronze *ding*: a grid-patterned vessel from Erlitou, a site often associated with the Xia capital, and the oldest bronze *ding* yet discovered.







Top: A Sanxingdui mask on display. **Above:** Oracle bones inscribed with weather divinations on display. **Left:** A bronze *gui* vessel with *taotie* motifs, reflecting the sophisticated bronze-casting techniques of the Shang Dynasty (c. 16th century-11th century BC), and a scallop shell found atop the head of an aristocratic tomb occupant from the late Xia Dynasty (c. 21st century-16th century BC). **Below:** Bronze ritual vessels on display at *Tracing Xia and Shang*, an exhibition at the Panlongcheng Site Museum in Wuhan, Hubei province. PHOTOS BY BAI SHUHAO / CHINA DAILY

Nearby is its opposite: the smallest known bronze *ding* ever excavated, just 5.1 centimeters tall and weighing only 50 grams. Found in a child's tomb, it is exquisitely made, complete with a tiny lid. Archaeologists say it may have been a toy, or a mourning object left by grieving parents.

Elsewhere in the room is a ritual wine vessel belonging to Yazhang, a Shang general who died in battle during the reign of Wuding, a king of the late Shang. Its body bears a bronze relief of a large elephant sheltering a smaller one beneath its legs, a scene of tenderness rarely seen in Shang bronzes.

But not everything in this section is bronze. A massive pottery *zun* from the Dawenkou site bears a striking resemblance to the bronze ritual vessels displayed beside it.

"If people couldn't access bronze, they found other materials to imitate it," Song says. "They were still trying to move closer to the aesthetics and authority of the capital."

By then, ritual had become a language of power. And that raises the exhibition's most pressing question: How did dynasties like Xia and Shang extend themselves across such a vast landscape?

The final gallery offers one answer. Song holds that if local elites used the same ritual vessels as the center, it suggested they accepted the same hierarchy. That was how power traveled. Among the objects here, one has become a favorite among visitors: a Shang-era bronze *gui* unearthed in Shanxi province.

Shaped like a fierce beast, its ears, eyes and nose are sharply defined. At its base crouches a smaller creature, part horse, part deer. Archaeologists believe the animal may represent the totem of the Bing clan, a tribal group active in Shanxi during the Shang.

"Shanxi was a frontier," Song says. "Part of it was under Shang control, but it was also close to hostile steppe groups. The Bing clan seems to have maintained friendly ties with the Shang king, perhaps ruling here on the dynasty's behalf."

But by the late Shang, as royal authority receded, that order began to fragment. Bronzes in the south developed regional styles of their own.

The exhibition closes with artifacts from the Yangtze basin, including the haunting bronze masks of Sanxingdui. Though they still relied on Shang casting techniques, their forms had become radically different.

"By then, the Shang court had turned eastward and loosened its control over the Yangtze. That was when Panlongcheng gradually declined. It was no longer a political outpost, but a place of trade," Song reflects.

To Zhang Jian, deputy director of the Zhengzhou Municipal Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, the bronzes themselves reveal the deeper logic of rule. "The dynasty maintained authority through rituals embodied in bronze vessels," he says. "That was the foundation of political legitimacy."

Yang Haiyan, deputy director of the Shandong University Museum, says the exhibition offers a rare map of how the Xia and Shang civilizations took shape. Her museum lent two top-tier national relics to the show.

In her view, the advanced pottery and jade craftsmanship of the eastern regions influenced distant cultures in ways only now becoming clear. It was this constant movement of ideas, materials and beliefs, she says, that produced the brilliance of early Chinese civilization.

For Song, that legacy endured far beyond the fall of the Shang. The ritual order and political hierarchy forged during the Xia and Shang would shape Chinese dynasties for the next several thousand years. Again and again, power would grow by drawing in the margins and extending outward, carried by shared symbols, bronze vessels and systems of belief.

Contact the writers at baishuhao@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

County preserves revolutionary history beyond museum walls

By DENG ZHANGYU
in Hong'an, Hubei
dengzhangyu@chinadaily.com.cn

In the heart of Hubei province, Hong'an county in the city of Huanggang stands as a living testament to China's revolutionary past.

Home to 224 preserved revolutionary sites, it has earned the nickname "a city of revolutionary history without walls".

Carefully protected wartime relics dating to the 1920s offer visitors a vivid glimpse into a defining chapter of modern Chinese history.

Hong'an was the birthplace and nurturing ground of three major Red Army forces. It also served as the heart of the Eyuwan revolutionary base, a key stronghold established during the Agrarian Revolutionary War period (1927–37), where the Communist Party of China built rural Soviet governments and mobilized farmers against warlords and landlords.

According to Wu Guohong, curator of the Hong'an County Museum, this small county lost 140,000 of its sons and daughters during the years of national defense, and produced 223 founding generals of the People's Republic of China.

The spirit of those years lives on in a local folk song: "Little Hong'an, every person a hero; when the bronze gong sounds, 480,000 rise; men go to battle, women bring food."

Almost every resident can still sing it.

One of the most striking areas is Changsheng Street, a 600-meter-long stone-paved lane, lined with black-tiled roofs and wooden buildings that have changed little since the 1920s. Here, visitors can find former Red Army canteens, a Red Army pharmacy, post office, labor union, and bank.

Traditional craft shops, including fabric stores, tailors' shops, and blacksmith workshops continue to operate alongside these historic landmarks, blending everyday life with revolutionary heritage.

About a 20-minute drive from the county seat is Bayi village, where the revolutionary song *The Osmanthus Blossoms in August* was first sung.

The village preserves several former Red Army living and working sites while offering immersive study tours. Visitors can learn revolutionary songs from local residents and hear the story of General Fang Heming, who returned after the war to help rebuild his hometown.





Left: A meeting room once used by the Red Army, located in Bayi village, Hong'an county, Hubei province, has been restored on its original site. **Right:** Changsheng Street in Hong'an, a 600-meter-long stone-paved lane, has many key revolutionary relics. PHOTOS BY DENG ZHANGYU / CHINA DAILY

In May, the village welcomed an average of over 600 visitors each day.

Despite decades of exposure to the elements, these revolutionary sites remain remarkably well preserved. In 2024, Hong'an was designated as one of the second batch of National Demonstration Zones for the Protection and Utilization of Revolutionary Cultural Relics.

Liu Wei, director of Hong'an's Cultural Relics Development Center, says the central government's support for protecting and making use of revolutionary heritage has increased significantly over the past decade through both funding and policy.

"These measures have brought major improvements to the preservation of our revolutionary heritage," Liu says.

In 2021, the National Cultural Heritage Administration formulated a detailed special plan for protecting and utilizing revolutionary cultural relics. The revised Cultural Relics Protection Law, which took effect in March 2025, includes a dedicated chapter on revolutionary cultural relics and sets out rules for their restoration and ownership.

Local authorities have also introduced a range of conservation measures. Every site now has a designated guardian and a comprehensive protection plan, Liu says.

The ultimate goal, Liu explains, is to help younger generations remember and understand their history.

The county has trained student guides to lead tours and share local stories.

"We want, above all, to engage young people," Liu says. "We hope the children and young people of Hong'an understand their own history and pass it on to their peers."

In addition to conventional tours, the county has also launched an immersive live-action production, *Hong'an, Hong'an*.

Against a backdrop of explosions, gunfire and battle cries, audiences are transported back to 1927, offering another powerful way to experience this pivotal period of revolutionary history.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:50 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:50 PM

LIFE





From left: Two quiet presences of egrets; a flock of swans floating on the blue lake framed through willow branches; and a heron standing atop a large rock. PHOTOS BY ZHANG LIANJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Photography puts biodiversity in flight

Through his lens, Zhang Lianjun captures not only birds, but the harmony between humans and nature, as well as philosophy and metaphors, **Xing Wen** reports.

In the stillness of Antarctica, a lone penguin stands dead-center on the ice, with a jagged peak rising in the background. Its reflection shimmers faintly on the dark water below.

With wings slightly outstretched, its white belly faces the camera while its head tilts subtly, as if locking eyes with the viewers through one dark orb.

This quiet, meaningful moment is captured by nature and wildlife photographer Zhang Lianjun, better known by his pseudonym Bianyuan ("Edge"), and featured in his latest solo exhibition at the Guardian Art Center in Beijing from June 6 to 9, during which a series of events were also held, including photographer sharing sessions and thematic science lectures.

The show brought together 72 avian photographs, selected from more than 1.3 million that Zhang has taken over 36 years in the field.

Through his lens, birds are never merely subjects — they become metaphors for solitude, migration, kinship, and the interconnected natural world we all share.

Upon entering the exhibition, one can see a crested ibis hidden among the branches of deep-red autumn leaves, its white feathers contrasting with the warm reds in an interplay of cool and warm tones; a close-up of a swan's neck partially submerged as it ducks its head into the water, forming a shape resembling the Chinese calligraphic stroke "一" (one); and a black-and-white photograph in which a flock of birds in flight is rendered as ethereal blurs scattered across the dark, intertwining lines of withered branches, as quiet as a traditional Chinese ink painting.

"There are no Photoshop-manipulated images in the entire exhibition," Zhang explains. Instead, he makes extensive use of techniques such as slow shutter speeds, panning, and multiple exposures to capture the dynamic moments of birds in flight or gliding through water.

Zhang, born in 1963, became fascinated with avian photography in 1989.

His travels have taken him to the North Pole and Antarctica, as well as to over 100 nature reserves across Africa, the Americas, Europe, Australia, and Asia.

Within China, he has visited more than 300 bird breeding, habitat and migration sites.

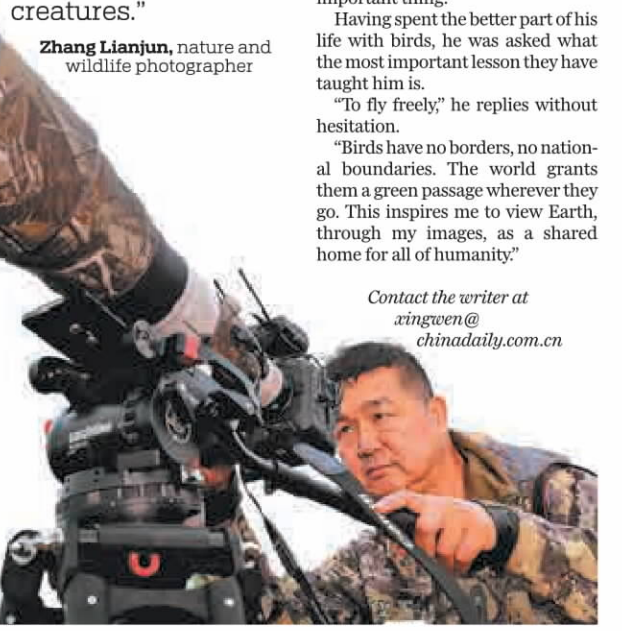
Looking back, he divides his photography career into three stages.

"The first 12 years, I focused on capturing the interplay of light and shadow on birds' feathers and their flight postures," Zhang says.



Left: In late autumn in the Qinling Mountains of Shaanxi province, a crested ibis perches alone on a branch. **Below:** Zhang Lianjun travels across the country to photograph birds. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

> "What matters most is how you approach ecology with your heart and enter into a dialogue with living creatures."
>
> **Zhang Lianjun,** nature and wildlife photographer



"In the second stage, I aimed to express the relationship between humans and birds through my photographs. In the third stage, I began using my images to convey my own state of mind and philosophical reflections."

In his latest exhibition, every lone bird serves as a metaphor for his solo journey in pursuit of birds' traces, he adds.

"And those flocks of birds," he says, "express that I am not traveling alone — that there are also social bonds and kinship".

During his travels over the passing decades, he has also witnessed China's progress in ecological protection firsthand.

In the early 1990s, he recalls, the country had only a small number of nature reserves, with insufficient government investment and incomplete relevant laws and regulations.

"In remote areas, transportation was difficult," he says, "and sometimes I had to borrow a donkey to carry my equipment, as there was also a lack of strict zoning controls."

Today, however, he notes that nature reserves have implemented a tiered management system consisting of core zones, buffer zones and ecological experiment zones. "Government investment has grown tremendously," he says, "and responsibilities have been assigned down to the township, village and even every household, with strict prohibitions against destructive behaviors."

He adds that protecting birds and the ecosystem has now become a consensus among people of various age groups, "forming a positive situation where humans and nature coexist in harmony".

The exhibition was held as part of the fifth anniversary celebration of the launch of the Canon Biodiversity Photography Initiative, a charity program that encourages photography enthusiasts to document China's biodiversity through photographs, raise public awareness of ecological protection, and support the development of ecological photography culture.

Over the past five years, the project has attracted more than 7,000 photography enthusiasts. Participants have traveled to 47 cities and visited over 10 nature reserves, producing more than 60,000 ecological images capturing nearly 1,000 species of nationally protected animals.

"The project has amassed a large volume of high-quality, traceable wild bird images, providing significant supplementary data for avian ecology research and opening an intuitive window for the public to understand the relationship between urbanization and biodiversity," said Zhang Zhengwang, chair of the China Ornithological Society.

Zhang Lianjun joined the project in 2021.

"I don't think bird photography is bound by the length of the lens," Zhang Lianjun says.

"What matters most is how you approach ecology with your heart and enter into a dialogue with living creatures. That, to me, is the most important thing."

Having spent the better part of his life with birds, he was asked what the most important lesson they have taught him is.

"To fly freely," he replies without hesitation.

"Birds have no borders, no national boundaries. The world grants them a green passage wherever they go. This inspires me to view Earth, through my images, as a shared home for all of humanity."

Contact the writer at xingwen@chinadaily.com.cn

Millennia-old charm in 'city of porcelain' transcends time

NANCHANG — The 2026 Congress of the International Academy of Ceramics opened in the eastern Chinese city of Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province, on Sunday, attracting international ceramic artists and experts to explore the theme of "Inheritance and Innovation".

The Geneva-based International Academy of Ceramics is holding the event in Jingdezhen, China's ancient porcelain capital, with a porcelain-making history spanning over 1,700 years.

The event features a series of activities, including keynote speeches, academic seminars and international exhibitions. During the event, participants will discuss preserving tradition while opening new paths for creation, sustainability and technology.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Oriol Calvo Verges, president of the IAC, highlights the significance of the event's theme.

"In recent decades, China has shown that ceramics can be much more than a heritage to preserve. Ceramics can also be a powerful force for urban regeneration, education, tourism, innovation, industry, artistic creation and international dialogue," he says.




Left: People attend the opening ceremony of the 2026 Congress of the International Academy of Ceramics in Jingdezhen, East China's Jiangxi province, on Sunday. **Right:** Oriol Calvo Verges, president of the International Academy of Ceramics, speaks at the opening ceremony on the same day. PHOTOS BY XINHUA

He adds that Jingdezhen is an exceptional place where heritage is visible everywhere, including in the kilns and workshops, while innovation thrives everywhere — in exhibitions and new creative districts, for example.

Chen Kelong, secretary of the Jingdezhen Municipal Committee of the Communist Party of China, says the city is building itself into a national demonstration zone for the inheritance and innovation of ceramic culture.

Attendees agree that Jingdezhen is captivating young enthusiasts from around the world with its openness and inclusivity.

Chen also notes that Jingdezhen has established partnerships with over 180 cities in more than 70 countries, and that artists and ceramists from over 50 countries and regions have settled in the city to create and work.

Australian artist Fleur Schell says that Jingdezhen's scale and comprehensive ceramic industrial chain have drawn many of her friends and colleagues from Australia to work in the city. "It feels like anything is possible," she says. "You can make anything in ceramics."

Donald Wayne Higby, an emeritus professor of ceramic art at Jingdezhen Ceramic University who first visited Jingdezhen in 1992, shared his deep affection for the city. "People used to call this 'the city of porcelain'. I say it's also 'the city of possibility'," Higby says.

"I have returned to Jingdezhen every year, sometimes even three or four times a year, since 1992," he adds. "I meet young artists here who inspire me tremendously."

Beyond inspiration, the artist emphasizes the role ceramics play in fostering international exchange, serving as a "common language" that transcends cultural boundaries.

Pu Shouzhi, Party secretary of Jingdezhen Ceramic University, echoed this sentiment, noting that the event aims to connect the wisdom of the East and the West. "We look forward to using ceramic culture as a bridge to let the millennia-old porcelain charm transcend mountains and seas," Pu says.

Since the Song Dynasty (960-1279), ceramics crafted in Jingdezhen have been exported to Central Asia, West Asia, Europe, and Africa. Today, the city still retains its global appeal, drawing more than 5,000 ceramic enthusiasts from around the world at peak times.

"Let us remember the past, but let us also imagine the future," says Verges, adding that Jingdezhen reminds people that ceramics can carry memory, beauty, identity, and hope across centuries.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:50 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:50 PM

LIFE



Destiny unfolds in long-awaited spy tale

Director Feng Xiaogang has brought his long-cherished espionage story to the screen, using one man's hidden identity to explore fate, **Xu Fan** reports.

Three months after celebrating his 68th birthday, director Feng Xiaogang — long known for his sharp tongue and fiery temperament — appeared unusually gentle and composed before the media.

Earlier this month, at the premiere of his latest film, *I Know Who You Are*, held at Beijing Exhibition Theater, Feng kept a low profile. Wearing a pair of reading glasses, he stood quietly to one side, leaving the spotlight to the film's two leading actors, Hu Ge and Lei Jiayin.

The subdued appearance seemed a departure from the outspoken filmmaker audiences have known for decades. Yet beneath that calm exterior lies a story of persistence — one that stretches back more than three decades.

The roots of *I Know Who You Are* can be traced to 1993, when Feng and his longtime collaborator, writer Wang Shuo, jointly acquired the adaptation rights to Zhang Ce's 1992 novella *Wu Hui Zhui Zong* (No Regrets). The espionage story follows a police officer's four-decade pursuit of a Kuomintang spy who went undercover on the eve of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

The novella was first adapted into a 20-episode television series of the same title, becoming a hit when it aired in 1995. Written by journalist-turned-screenwriter Shi Jianquan, who has also served as scriptwriter of the new film, the TV drama evolved into a classic, securing a rating of 9.4 out of 10 on the major review aggregator Douban.

This is not a typical cat-and-mouse thriller. There are no car chases, no gunfights, no trench-coated spies trading coded messages in the rain. Instead, the film offers something rarer: an emotionally layered portrait of two men bound together by suspicion and circumstance, their lives unfolding against the backdrop of China's sweeping social transformation from 1949 to the late 1980s.

At its core, it is a meditation on fate — on how history, chance, and the quiet weight of personal choices can shape, and sometimes shatter, an ordinary life. That philosophical depth, and its exploration of the absurdity of destiny, is precisely what continued to resonate with Feng decades after he first encountered the story.

With the June 19 release of *I Know Who You Are*, Feng, whose career spans acclaimed works from *The Dream Factory* (1997) to *Youth* (2017), has finally realized his long-cherished dream. The film will also be released in the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand in early July, according to American magazine The Hollywood Reporter.



Top: Director Feng Xiaogang's latest film, *I Know Who You Are*, had its premiere at Beijing Exhibition Theater on June 17. **Above:** The movie features actor Hu Ge as a Kuomintang spy who is assigned to operate undercover in the capital on the eve of the founding of New China. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Top: A poster of the film. **Above:** Actor Lei Jiayin plays a police officer who dedicates decades to the spy investigation.

"It is a film I've always wanted to make. The lives we've lived — I hope to capture them on screen. This is a commitment, a responsibility ... For directors of my generation, it is our duty to bring to life the eras and events that younger audiences have never experienced firsthand, so that through cinema they can truly understand the past," says Feng, a native of Beijing.

This film, as Feng puts it, is steeped in the everyday life of Beijing's *hutong* alleys. Unfolding on the eve of the founding ceremony of New China, the story follows Feng Jingbo — a Kuomintang colonel and secret agent played by actor Hu — who is entrusted by his superior, played by Yu Hewei, with an espionage mission, along with four gold bars and a radio transmitter.

However, during a casual chat in a barbershop, Feng Jingbo reveals his knowledge of military salutes, arousing the suspicion of Xiao Dali, the local police chief played by Lei. To aid his investigation, Xiao moves into the same courtyard where Feng Jingbo lives, becoming his neighbor. To maintain his cover, Feng Jingbo, who works as a geography teacher at a primary school, spares no effort — including sacrificing love to marry a woman from the "working class", and contributing to economic development, ultimately rising to become the school's principal. Meanwhile, Xiao endures a series of devastating blows — losing his wife, his youngest son, and having one leg crippled.

But Xiao's unwavering loyalty to the country, his persistence in pursuing the spy investigation, and his personal misfortunes all weigh heavily on Feng Jingbo's conscience. In the 1980s, Feng Jingbo's former superior — now a Hong Kong businessman — returns to Beijing for his son's wedding. It is then that Feng Jingbo discovers that his painstaking undercover work of 35 years has been meaningless, as he has long been forgotten by the intelligence agency in Taiwan.

Added to this is his growing admiration for the Communist Party of China, and Feng turns himself in willingly, finally finding himself able to share a drink with Xiao — the man he has respected and rivaled for half a lifetime.

For actor Hu, a Shanghai native, inspiration came from conversations with his father, who was born in 1949. "My father lived through the eras that Feng Jingbo experienced. Through him, I came to feel that individuals, within the sweep of history, are often carried forward by forces beyond their control," Hu says.

"As an intellectual who came of age in the old era, Feng Jingbo possesses an idealistic streak. He accepts the undercover mission out of a genuine hope that his country and its people would improve — he simply chooses the wrong side," adds Hu.

Lei, who plays the dedicated police chief, recalls reading the script at 6 am the following day, having received it from Feng Xiaogang the previous night. "The story is brilliantly written. What truly moves me is watching how people's fates shift and intertwine against the backdrop of a changing era," he says.

Interestingly, Lei reveals that he, Hu, and the two actresses who play their wives created a WeChat group, using their character names to chat every day. They discussed trivial details of daily life — such as whether they could raise hens in the courtyard — to cultivate the special bond between their characters, who are at once enemies and friends, and to let those nuanced emotions grow organically off-screen.

With its resonant lines and vivid, nostalgic depiction of Beijing decades ago, the film has gained wide acclaim, receiving 7.5 points on Douban and grossing 100 million yuan ($14.72 million) at the box office by Monday.

Contact the writer at xufan@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese doctor's legacy of service lives on in Tanzania

DAR ES SALAAM — In a pediatric operating room at Muhimbili National Hospital in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, an aluminum medical equipment case sits quietly in a corner.

Written on its lid in black marker are the simple words: "Dr Zhang", "China Team", and a phone number.

The handwriting has faded over time. The number no longer works. Yet no one has erased it.

"We want these words to stay here forever," says Hosea Boniface, an anesthetist at the hospital, gently touching the case.

The case once belonged to Zhang Junqiao, a Chinese doctor who served in Tanzania as leader of the 27th Chinese medical team. On June 15, 2025, Zhang died while rescuing a local woman from the sea in Dar es Salaam. He was 38.

One year later, traces of his presence remain across Tanzania, in hospital corridors, in the memories of colleagues, in the lives of children he helped, and in the hearts of people who never forgot his kindness.

At the hospital, where Zhang spent much of his time training young anesthetists, colleagues still speak of him with admiration.

"He never got tired of answering our questions," recalls Boniface. "Sometimes he would demonstrate the same procedure over and over again until we fully understood."

Tanzania faces a chronic shortage of trained anesthetists, and Zhang devoted much of his time to mentoring local medical workers, according to Boniface, who added that many of the young doctors he trained can now perform procedures that once required foreign specialists.

"People here respected him not because of any title," says Liu Jia, leader of the 28th Chinese medical team in Tanzania. "They respected him because he truly helped others."

Far from the hospital, Zhang is remembered in other ways.

Every evening, children selling balloons weave through traffic along Dar es Salaam's busy seafront roads. Among them is 9-year-old Nefat, who still remembers a Chinese doctor who often stopped his bicycle to talk to her.

"He would ask whether we had eaten and how many balloons we had sold," she says.

In her memory, the Chinese doctor always had a smile on his face. "A lot of cars passed us, but no one stopped," Nefat says, lowering her head. "But he did."

When she learned of Zhang's death, she cried for days.

"I thought I would see him again one day," she says softly.

Another child whose life was changed by Zhang is Rweiss Ali Kato, a boy born with a giant abdominal hernia.

Rweiss' mother recalls the difficult years her son endured due to the untreated condition that left him in pain and distress.

"He would come home from school sad and tell me he felt like there was something hidden in his stomach," she says. "As a parent, it was very painful to see him like that."

A turning point came when a Chinese medical team conducting a free outreach clinic visited his school. After examining the boy, the team determined that his condition was treatable.

"I was overjoyed when I received the news," his mother, Mumin, says, recalling the life-changing moment for her son.

Spearheaded by Zhang, the Chinese medical team and the Chinese company China Railway Jianchang Engineering Company (East Africa) Limited joined hands to fully cover the cost of the treatment.

The surgery was successfully carried out in February 2025. Following the operation, Rweiss regained his confidence and returned to school a happier child, free from pain and stigma.

When reporters visited him again this year, he had just returned from playing football with friends.

"He has changed completely," the mother says. "Zhang changed his life."

The image that brought Zhang's story to wider attention was captured on the afternoon of June 15, 2025.

Mike, a beach photographer, saw a crowd gathering along the shore and rushed toward the commotion, describing how in rough waves, a Chinese man was struggling to bring a drowning woman back to safety.

"The sea was rough, and he was exhausted, but he kept going," Mike recalls.

He raised his camera and pressed the shutter.

The photograph showed Zhang holding the woman above the water, fighting the waves as he moved toward the shore. The woman survived, Zhang did not.

At the time, Mike knew neither the man's name nor his profession.

"But I knew one thing," he says. "He was saving a life."

"He was a gift from God to the people of Tanzania," Mike says. "Not everyone would do that, but he did."

For those who knew Zhang, the sacrifice was not surprising.

Whether in hospitals, communities, or villages, he was always the first to step forward when someone needed help.

While working in Shandong province, China, he was involved in public welfare activities for a long time, launching a first-aid public welfare project that has since conducted more than 400 sessions, training more than 20,000 people.

In order to popularize CPR knowledge, he converted his old house into a training base at his own expense. To help more people master first aid skills, he purchased teaching models and equipment on his own. After arriving in Tanzania, he maintained these selfless habits.

Shortly before his death, Zhang wrote on social media: "Serving people knows no borders. As a Chinese doctor, I am proud of my country and my profession."

One year after his passing, his knowledge, compassion, and sense of responsibility continue to ripple through the lives he touched.

The faded words on an old equipment case remain. So do the memories, and so does the legacy of a doctor whose life continues to inspire others long after he is gone.

Perhaps this is the best way to commemorate Zhang Junqiao.

XINHUA



Local anesthetists inspect a medical equipment case bearing the handwritten name and phone number of the late Chinese doctor Zhang Junqiao at Muhimbili National Hospital in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, on May 29. DING TING / XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:50 PM

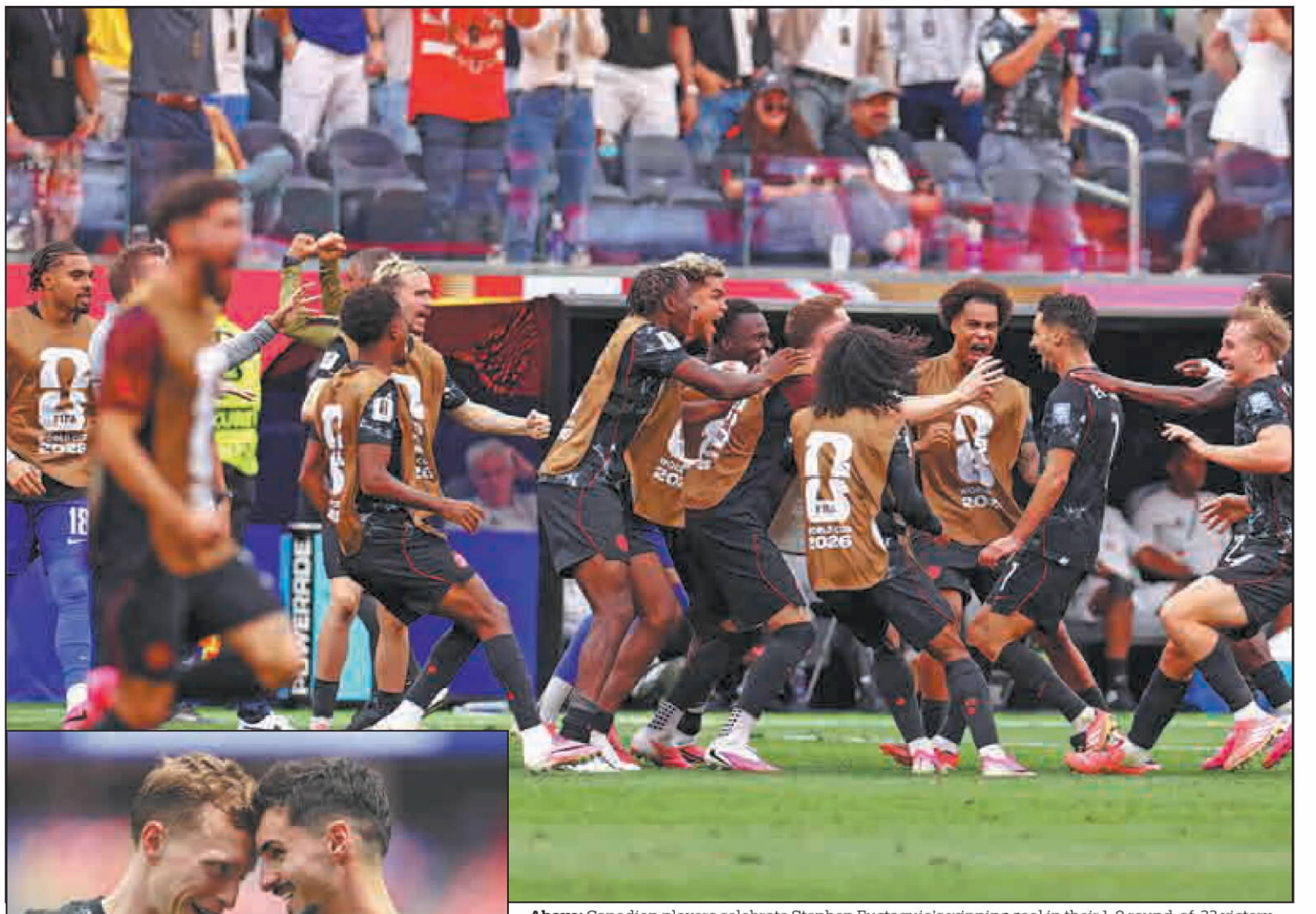
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:50 PM

SPORTS

2026 WORLD CUP

Oh Canada! Late winner downs South Africa

History meets heartache, as co-host nets in stoppage time





Above: Canadian players celebrate Stephen Eustaquio's winning goal in their 1-0 round-of-32 victory over South Africa in Los Angeles on Sunday. **Left:** Canada's Alistair Johnston and Eustaquio (right) share a smile after the match. **Left below:** Jubilant fans celebrate in Vancouver, Canada. REUTERS

Right after Canada finished its first knockout match victory in a World Cup, coach Jesse Marsch huddled his players on the grass of a stadium still in pandemonium and spoke from his heart — shouted, actually.

"You guys are Canadian heroes today!" Marsch declared. "Canadian heroes for the future children of this country who play this sport. The sport has a big future because of you guys. You should be so proud of who you are. You should be so proud of this game. You never lost belief. You went after it, point after point, moment after moment. You are Canadian heroes!"

Stephen Eustaquio's dramatic late goal had inspired Marsch to Ted Lasso levels of earnestness, and he didn't care who knew it.

Soccer has never been the main event on Canada's busy sports calendar, and Les Rouges are playing in only their third World Cup this summer. But Marsch realized this landmark 1-0 win over South Africa on Sunday is the type of achievement that can seize an entire nation's attention for a generation.

"We could have made life a little easier on ourselves if we had made a play earlier when we had some big chances," Marsch said. "But, obviously, the timing of the goal means that the win is incredibly dramatic, and I think the effect that it will have in Canada, and the inspiring of people, will be immense."

After 90-plus minutes of frustration and failure to break down a cagey South Africa at SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles, Canada made history in an instant, when Alistair Johnston's long pass into the box was cleared directly into the path of Eustaquio.

The midfielder, who plays professionally at nearby Los Angeles FC, coolly chested it down and blasted it off the bounce into the bottom corner of Ronwen Williams' net before sprinting away to celebrate with Canada's bench in the second minute of second-half stoppage time.

"We worked for it," Eustaquio said. "We have a special group. We feel like we are brothers. When we fight for each other, when we play for each other, special things like this can happen. I am over the moon, but at the same time I don't want to say that the job is finished."

Canada, which sits 30th in the most recent FIFA world rankings, advanced to face the Netherlands or Morocco in Houston on Saturday.

After playing its first three group matches in Toronto and Vancouver, Canada missed the chance to also make this bit of history at home when it lost 2-1 to Switzerland last Wednesday and got sent on the road for the knockout rounds. But Marsch's plucky team responded by winning this tournament's first round-of-32 match and reaching the round of 16 for the first time in its three trips to the World Cup.

Between their traveling fans and thousands of supportive locals, including several in Eustaquio's LAFC shirt who couldn't have imagined the day they were about to enjoy, the Canadians were the clear crowd favorite.

"We never stopped believing," Eustaquio said.

"And I think the goal is really something that we deserved."

After finishing second in their respective groups, both South Africa and Canada were playing for their nations' first knockout victories at a World Cup when they opened the round of 32 with the only match of the day.

ise David for a golden chance, but the forward hit it wide. The game then bogged down again — but Eustaquio made sure Canada avoided extra time.

"Steph is one of the people in the team that, I think, is the most reliable and understands what we're trying to achieve as a group, and understands how to manage moments in games and to be a leader, a true leader," Marsch said. "It was good to see him, in that moment, just being in the moment and thinking about the best way to strike the ball to give it the best chance to go in. Really composed and really well-executed."

Williams made five saves for South Africa, which played with remarkable heart in a largely rearguard action, hanging on until the final moments in the hope of securing another historic result.

Canada got a boost in the 75th minute, when star defender Alphonso Davies came on for his first World Cup action. The playmaking Bayern Munich defender missed Canada's group matches after suffering a third hamstring injury of the year last month, but finally returned to the same stadium where he tore a knee ligament in March 2025 in a CONCACAF Nations League match.

Davies immediately made the best pass of the day to set up Prom-

It stood firm defensively and created a handful of tantalizing chances, despite getting just one shot on goal.

"We lost the game because, when compared with that of our opponent, there was a lack of power and speed in our team," South Africa coach Hugo Broos said. "We had a difficult game, certainly. But when we look back, we can be fairly satisfied with what we did."

AP

Marsch: Eustaquio did late parents proud



Stephen Eustaquio delivered a moment his late parents would have been proud of, according to Canada coach Jesse Marsch, after the midfielder's dramatic stoppage-time winner sent his team into the World Cup last 16 with a 1-0 victory over South Africa on Sunday.

The 29-year-old settled a cagey affair with a powerful half-volley from outside the penalty area in the second minute of added time, capping what Marsch described as a richly deserved reward for a player who has endured profound personal tragedy.

"I couldn't think of a more deserving human being in a group of incredible human beings," Marsch told reporters after the win in Los Angeles.

"Maybe Steph is the most deserving to have a moment like that. So, I'm really happy for him, and I think, from somewhere, his parents are looking down, and they saw that."

Eustaquio lost both of his parents in little more than a year, his mother in April 2023 and his father in May 2024.

Marsch said Eustaquio embodied the leadership and composure his side had worked to develop.

"Steph is one of the people in the team that I think is the most reliable and understands what we're trying to achieve as a group," he said.

After playing all its previous games in Canada, the American acknowledged that his side had been disappointed to leave after the group stage, but said the move to Los Angeles had not proved disruptive, because his team was accustomed to playing south of the border.

"We're used to playing in the States. We actually play more games in the States than we do in Canada," he said.

Canada will face either Morocco or the Netherlands in Houston on July 4, with Marsch relishing the opportunity to test his side against one of the tournament's big guns, describing Morocco as "a modern giant" and the Dutch as "a traditional giant".

"I feel like it's a free hit, and we're going to go after it and do everything we can to see if we can find a way to get a win," he said.

REUTERS

'Boring' Bay Area fixtures confound critics with stellar attendances



Crowds have flocked to San Francisco Bay Area Stadium for games initially considered to be the World Cup's least glamorous. REUTERS

SANTA CLARA, California — In a region boasting vast tech wealth and global corporate influence, the San Francisco Bay Area's humble World Cup schedule landed with a dull thud, raising groans from fans over its lack of marquee matches.

While Kansas City welcomed Argentina and Boston hosted England, Bay Area locals subsisted on a more niche set of nations, with world No 16 Switzerland the highest-ranked visitor in five matches to date.

For Arab soccer enthusiasts, it has been a bonanza, with Qatar, Algeria and Jordan (twice) all gracing the home of the NFL's San Francisco 49ers.

With fans on social media ranking it the least glamorous fixture list of all the United States' 11 host cities, a paucity of nightlife near the stadium in sleepy Santa Clara and little buzz before the tournament, there were fears of a Bay Area bust.

"The World Cup was supposed to be a Bay Area bonanza. Why does it feel like a flop?" San Francisco Chronicle asked days before the tournament.

The narrative has shifted about 180 degrees since, with crowds having flocked to the area's matches.

"I follow European football, so, for sure, I was disappointed, I would have liked more balance in the teams we got here, for my own self-interest," James Fay, a recently retired CFO of a tech company, told reporters at last Thursday's Group J match between Australia and Paraguay.

"But, having a World Cup here is fantastic, there was no way I was going to miss it. I didn't get to go in '94, it's my first World Cup, so I'm coming, no matter what."

Diverse fandom

Fay was among a crowd of 68,827, a few hundred below the tournament's maximum capacity of 69,391. The lowest attendance reported by organizers was 67,966 for the first match between Switzerland and Qatar.

At each game, neutral fans have turned up in force.

Huge cheers from Americans at Thursday's match rang out when the scoreboard gave an update on the concurrent Group J match being played out between the US and Turkiye in Los Angeles.

Mexico fans from San Jose and other big Latino communities in the south of the Bay Area have been enthusiastic attendees, particularly for Paraguay's two group matches.

"It has been amazing to see the diversity and international fandom that has come into the Bay and participated in fan marches, attended games, and experienced everything we have to offer," the Bay Area Host Committee (BAHC) said in a statement.

Bay Area resident Nick Zhang went with two friends to Thursday's game and paid $330 for a nosebleed seat in the full glare of the afternoon sun.

"Well, there was a game on and we just wanted the experience. We're way up high, but we can still get a taste of it," he said.

Once disparaged for its "boring" schedule, the Bay Area is now having the last laugh, as it prepares to welcome the US on Wednesday for its round-of-32 clash with Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Ticket prices have spiked on reselling platforms, with the cheapest on StubHub being offered for $2,000.

Away from the stadium, organizers are preparing for a huge party at the main fan zone at San Pedro Square in San Jose, putting up a fourth giant screen for the Bay Area's World Cup swan song.

More than 350,000 people have visited the square since the World Cup started, according to BAHC.

"There's been some left-field teams coming to town, but the US will be a good finish to the party," James Martinez, a local student, said.

REUTERS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:50 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:53 PM

Heritage dividend
UNESCO site transforms dying village into tourist hub
GOING GREEN, PAGE 12



Gulf tensions soar as US, Iran trade strikes
WORLD, PAGE 5



Bellingham brilliance
Star's double lifts England over Norway into World Cup final four
SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 MONDAY, JULY 13, 2026

WORLD WATCH
By Kirsty Coventry

The 2008 Olympics: Games that keep on giving

Twenty-five years ago, Beijing won the right to host the Olympic Games. It marked the beginning of an extraordinary Olympic journey for China.

For me, the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games became one of the defining moments of my life as an athlete. I will always remember the feeling of those Games: the energy of the city, the pride of the people, the color and creativity of the opening ceremony, and the sense that the whole world had come together in one place.

Inside
Views, **page 7**

I also remember two venues in particular. The Water Cube will always be special to me as a swimmer. It was there that I experienced some of the most important moments of my career. The Bird's Nest became one of the defining images of Beijing 2008 — an iconic setting for an opening ceremony that brought Chinese culture and creativity to the world.

When I returned to Beijing for the 2022 Winter Olympic Games, this time as an International Olympic Committee member, I saw those memories in a new light. The Water Cube had become the Ice Cube — the Olympic curling venue. The Bird's Nest once again staged unforgettable Olympic opening and closing ceremonies.

These were striking examples of venues being given a second life. But they also pointed to something bigger.

The real legacy of an Olympic Games is never only about what remains after the flame goes out. It is about what the Games make possible afterward. Can more young people discover sports? Can more communities be active? Can athletes train and compete in better conditions? Can a city become better equipped for the future?

Those are the questions that should guide every Olympic host from the very beginning — to ensure that the Games deliver more for local communities while leaving a lighter footprint on the environment.

That is what sustainable Games should mean. It starts with responsible choices about resources — venues, transportation and energy. But its purpose is broader: to create benefits that last.

Beijing shows what that can look like.

See ***Legacy,*** *page 3*



INSIDE
Win-win cooperation
Global Views, page 8

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved

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

Still hoping, still looking





Top: Rescuers and volunteers search through debris at La Guaira in northern Venezuela on Saturday, two weeks after massive earthquakes struck the country. The death toll in the disaster had risen to 4,333 as of Saturday, with 16,740 people injured and 6,462 rescued. Authorities have set up 94 temporary camps to shelter more than 18,000 people. LEONARDO FERNANDEZ VILORIA / REUTERS **Above:** Displaced people use emergency tents provided by China at a temporary camp in La Guaira, Venezuela, on Friday. MARCOS SALGADO / XINHUA

Beijing debunks South China Sea statement

By **ZHANG YUNBI**
zhangyunbi@chinadaily.com.cn

Inside
Editorial, **page 6**

Beijing has blasted a joint statement released by 14 countries regarding the "2016 South China Sea arbitration award", urging those countries to "stop stirring up trouble over the South China Sea issue" and "cease undermining peace and stability in the South China Sea".

"China urges the relevant countries to earnestly respect China's territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests in the South China Sea," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Sunday.

The United States, the Philippines, Australia, Canada, Estonia, Germany, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, New Zealand, Romania, Slovenia and the United Kingdom issued a joint statement earlier on Sunday.

The 14-nation joint statement claimed that the "award" rendered 10 years ago by the "arbitral tribunal in the South China Sea arbitration" is "a significant milestone", and that "there is no legal basis for China's expansive maritime claims in the South China Sea".

In response, the Foreign Ministry noted that, "If the 'award' were to be taken as a standard, many countries' islands and reefs would be denied the basis for claiming maritime rights and interests.

"May we ask, have those countries supporting the 'award' voluntarily waived the maritime rights and interests deriving from their relevant islands and reefs?" the ministry added in its own statement dismissing the 14-nation claims.

The ministry reiterated that China does not accept or recognize the "award", and it opposes and does not accept any claim or action based on it.

"Land territorial issues are not subject to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea", and the "award" is nothing but a worthless piece of paper that is illegal, null and void, the ministry said.

The US and other countries have been persistently reinforcing their military presence in the South China Sea, throwing their weight around and fanning the flames, it warned. "These acts of militarization and coercion constitute the primary challenge to the current situation in the South China Sea," the ministry said.

For the past 10 years, the "award" has "become a tool for the Philippines to expand its territorial and maritime claims, exacerbated tensions in the region and provided a pretext for external forces to intervene and destabilize the South China Sea", the ministry noted.

The continued playing up of the illegal "award" by certain countries "goes against the aspirations of countries and people in the region for development and prosperity", the ministry said, adding that "such attempts are doomed to fail".

Wu Shicun, chairman of the Huayang Center for Maritime Cooperation and Ocean Governance, said that the "award" was "a political farce" executed by the then Philippine administration, manipulated by the US and assisted by Japan in an attempt to whitewash Manila's illegal claims and actions.

Also on Sunday, Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi made a separate statement blatantly endorsing the "award", attacking China's lawful claims and mischaracterizing Japan as a "legitimate stakeholder who uses the South China Sea".

"China strongly deplores and firmly opposes this," a spokesperson for the Chinese Foreign Ministry said in a written response.

The spokesperson noted Japan's wartime atrocities against China and its people, as well as its illegal occupation of islands and reefs in the South China Sea, and said that now Japan is again attempting to meddle in the South China Sea.

"This reminds people of Japan's history of aggression and expansion, and heightens their vigilance against Japan's neo-militarist agenda," the spokesperson said.

According to the "award" supported by Japan, Taiping Dao in the Nansha Islands — an area that spans 500,000 square meters and has fresh water, vegetables, fruits and poultry to sustain human habitation — is not even considered an island and therefore cannot generate entitlement to an exclusive economic zone and continental shelf, the spokesperson said.

"By that 'standard', many of Japan's islands and reefs would likewise have no basis for claiming maritime rights and interests," the spokesperson added. The spokesperson questioned Japan's claim to the EEZ and continental shelf around Okinotori, which is nothing more than two tiny rocks of less than 10 square meters in the Pacific.

The head of the ministry's Department of Asian Affairs on Sunday summoned the chief minister of the embassy of Japan in China to lodge a stern representation and strong protest.

On Sunday, the Chinese Mission to the European Union also blasted a separate statement issued by the EU about the "award", which called for securing freedom of navigation and overflight.

A spokesperson for the Chinese mission said that the EU is not a stakeholder in the South China Sea issue, and the EU's statement "disregards the historical context and objective facts of the South China Sea issue, runs counter to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, and is detrimental to the region's peace and stability".

XI'S VISION | CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Ruins highlight efforts to trace, preserve roots

Mesmerizing Yinxu site in Henan province marks 20 years on UNESCO heritage list

By **WANG RU**
wangru1@chinadaily.com.cn

Numerous exquisite bronze and other items from the earliest recorded time of Chinese civilization are testament to a widely spreading kingship of China's Central Plains, as well as China's oldest-known writing system and multiple historical legends, and have provided significant illumination for modern Chinese archaeology since the 1920s.

The Yinxu Ruins in Anyang, Henan province, which one expert described as the "brightest star" of Chinese archaeology, connect the early stage of China as a nation around 3,300 years ago to the modern age, and have mesmerized not only professionals, but also the Chinese general public, inspiring them to trace their literary roots.

Monday marks the 20th anniversary of the Yinxu Ruins being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. As the site celebrates this milestone anniversary, one of the most eye-catching attractions at the Yinxu Museum is something playful: a hair-drying cap shaped like an adorable owl.

Since its debut in 2024, the hair-drying cap has been a hit among tourists flocking to the museum. Featuring a lively, big-eyed owl look and strong practical value for daily use, it draws inspiration from an owl-shaped wine vessel unearthed from the tomb at Yinxu of Fu Hao, China's first-known female general and a consort of the Shang Dynasty (c.16th century-11th century BC) king Wu Ding.

Zhao Qingrong, director of the museum, said that when museum visitors wear available replica caps or clothing with elements of the Shang Dynasty, or they eat food that has been made in the style of those early days, "they are no longer something strange in your textbooks. Your taste buds and skin have a real interaction with them, which lingers better than a mere glance at exhibit cabinets".

"In this way, we transfer the obscure archaeological knowledge into an accessible aesthetic experience, so that people can connect with the Yinxu Ruins in their daily lives and thus develop an emotional bond with that remote era," she added.

The Yinxu Ruins, at the site of an ancient capital of the late Shang Dynasty, have yielded numerous exquisite bronze vessels as well as oracle bones, which bear inscriptions known as *jiaguwen* that are carved on animal bones to record events and for fortune-telling, and constitute the earliest-known formal writing system in China.

The preservation and popularity of such products are no accident. Over the past two decades, sustained top-level guidance and cultural protection efforts have laid a solid foundation for the innovative inheritance of Shang civilization.

See ***Yinxu,*** *page 3*

SUMMER WONDERLAND WELCOMES NIGHT OWLS

Entertainment complex looks to elevate Shanghai's Fuxing Park into a nightlife hub

By **HE QI** in Shanghai
heqi@chinadaily.com.cn

As the dappled light filters through Fuxing Park's plane tree leaves at dusk, Shanghai's nighttime energy starts to permeate neighborhoods, parks and riverfronts.

Ranked No 1 in the night economy index of China Business News, the city is living up to its billing with a new nightlife wonderland, with the park at its heart.

"I really enjoy the nightlife in Shanghai," said Tommaso Bianchin, an Italian wine industry professional.

"I have friends who go to underground clubs and rooftop parties. The venues are great, people are friendly, and the standard is high."

Spanish DJ Lalo Lopez, who has performed globally, agreed: "I've attended many parties, in many countries, and Shanghai's nightlife is unique," said Lopez.

It's the diversity of nighttime offerings that is the main attraction, and diversity is the watchword for INS Land, a massive multi-story entertainment and lifestyle complex located in Fuxing Park.

See ***Hub,*** *page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.



Foreign tourists enjoy a night tour of Nanjing Road Pedestrian Mall in Shanghai on May 2. CHEN YANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:53 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:53 PM

INDEPTH

Visitors dream of taking China's serenity, safety home

'Everyday' stability, sense of security impress tourists, foreign residents

By **ZHANG XIAOMIN**
in Dalian, Liaoning
zhangxiaomin@chinadaily.com.cn



Visitors pose for a photo at the Shanghai Disney Resort on June 16. LIU YING / XINHUA

"What is it like night walking in China's Guangzhou, one of the most populated cities in the world? It's extremely safe. I'm wearing my very expensive watch. No one bothers you, no one is trying to pull you in their shops," British creator Ben posted on his social media account, OTWD.

His observation about the capital of South China's Guangdong province, casual as it seemed, struck a chord with a large number of foreign visitors to China.

When a man can stroll through one of the world's busiest urban centers late at night wearing an expensive timepiece — and nothing happens — his actions challenge assumptions about safety in densely populated cities.

As China gains in popularity as a travel destination, a growing number of foreign tourists are capturing moments through their lenses showing how safe China is, their images resonating deeply with expats and visitors. This "Chinese sense of security" has sparked spirited discussions on social media platforms both at home and abroad.

The growing perception that China is an extremely safe destination is backed up by statistics. In 2025, the number of criminal cases in the country dropped 12.8 percent year-on-year, reaching their lowest level in decades, while public order cases also declined, according to data from China's Ministry of Public Security. In addition, public confidence of public safety remained above 98 percent for the sixth consecutive year.

Perhaps more telling for an international audience is the Global Safety Report 2025, released in January 2026 by the US-based analytics firm Gallup. Among more than 140 countries and territories surveyed, China ranked third safest overall. The report also highlighted strong public confidence in local law enforcement and low levels of personal experience with crime.

The new normal

"When I first came to Beijing two years ago, I went outside at night and found there were still a lot of people walking around, and everything felt normal, like it wasn't even that late. At that moment, I thought 'this place is actually really safe'," said Salah Eddine Ben Mhmed, a 20-year-old student from Morocco, who is now studying at Dalian Polytechnic University in Liaoning province.

"It felt strange seeing people outside late at night without a worry. But now it feels completely normal to me," he added. He attributes this feeling to a combination of public order and a general trust that daily life is calm and well-managed.

This transition from a surprise to seeing it as normal is common among many long-term foreign residents in China.

Merlin Palmer, 40, a Canadian IT engineer who works in Beijing, arrived in China in 2012 and planned to stay only briefly. "I was thinking about traveling the world as an English teacher," he said.

That was before he met his wife Bonny Liu. Fourteen years later, he lives happily in Chaoyang district with his wife, 5-year-old son Arthur, and a puppy called Chocolate.

Palmer said living in Beijing had fundamentally changed his perspective on parenting and safety.

"Parents don't have to worry about guns or drugs, or racism or bullying," he said. "Arthur is in a classroom of 99 percent ethnically Chinese children, and he has never experienced any kind of 'othering' because of that. He is very much accepted and loved within his peer group."

Palmer credits not just legal protections, but also school food standards, community safety measures, and everyday kindness from strangers. "In China, there are a lot of policies about children's safety that may feel restrictive to some people, but in the end, they make a meaningful impact on the safety of children day-to-day."

Eddy, an American host at Dunhuang Media Center in Gansu province, pointed to the absence of gun violence as a major difference to the United States.

Growing up in an environment where school shooting drills were routine, he finds a special meaning in China's sense of security. He also pointed out that China's safety goes beyond law enforcement.

From fire safety education on campus to community awareness and shared responsibility, he believes the country's strong sense of security is built not only by institutions, but also by the people and communities who look out for one another every day.

Italian artist Federico Gentile, who visited Dalian during this year's Summer Davos forum in June, was equally impressed.

"People roam free and don't worry about anything. It's amazing to see a lot of happy families, having fun with their kids," he said.

During the May Day holiday, the "unattended luggage wall" at Liyuan station of Wuhan metro in Hubei province went viral.

Tourists neatly lined up their suitcases along the station wall before heading out to explore the city. This unguarded and perfectly orderly wall of luggage went viral on Chinese social media, becoming a symbol of the country's trademark "worry-free" travel.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning also shared a video on social media with the caption, "In Central China's Wuhan, unattended luggage lined the walls of a metro station, left behind by tourists eager to explore the city. Safe and worry-free!"

Unattended luggage walls and designated luggage storage areas are not unique to Wuhan.

They can also be found at metro stations in Changsha, Hunan province, Foshan in Guangdong, Nanjing, Jiangsu province, and Fuzhou, Fujian province, and other cities. This sense of security goes beyond trusting that one's suitcase will remain safe; it reflects a deeper confidence in the sense of security in China that people have come to rely on.

Positive impression

A playful post by Chinese vlogger Alan Jun on Facebook gained wide recognition. It posed the question: "'Is it safe to travel in China? Please don't lie.' An American netizen asked this question. Every city in China is extremely safe. The only unsafe place is the night market, where you will spend all your money, lose sleep, overeat, and gain weight. So you must not go out at night."

Under that post, netizen Properly_Basic replied: "As someone who lived in China for a bit, it is amazing how you can go outside at like 1 am without the worry of someone kidnapping you."

Another user, Alan Camp, commented: "I had 14 days in China. Beijing, Yantai (Shandong province), Shanghai, Qingdao (Shandong), Guangzhou and many other smaller cities. It's incredible how efficient and safe everything is. I treasure my time spent making friends and experiencing so many things."

Mark Owens, a member of the Oregon House of Representatives and a farm owner, visited the Inner Mongolia autonomous region, Beijing and Shanghai in October 2025 as part of a trade delegation — his first trip to China.

"The first couple of nights, I had trouble sleeping, so I got up early and I'd go for a walk. As the sun was coming up, I felt very, very safe in Beijing. I went out after dinner by myself and felt very, very safe. I mean, very, very clean, very polite, just a very good experience," he told China Daily.

Students from the University of Waterloo in Canada who took part in a Chinese culture immersion program at Beijing Normal University in October 2025 had similar positive impressions.

"Before visiting, I had heard many conflicting descriptions of what life there might be like. However, my experience showed me a place full of warmth, innovation, history, and everyday beauty," one student, Gia-Thanh Yvonne Ly, said.

Mudupeola Aladetokunbo Caxton-Martins added: "I could go out at 3 am and I would see other locals out too; this also added a safety net as I didn't feel alone and knew that there were also others around me."

Natalie Hermila Garcia Munoz, who has traveled to 24 countries, said "none compared to Beijing" — citing the advanced subway, the safe late-night streets and the world-class hospitality.

Raine Mimoza Hutton said: "I came back home with a completely unique perspective on China ... I feel that all the negativity surrounding China in the news and media creates a significant shadow over all the amazing things the country has to offer."



> "I could go out at 3 am and I would see other locals out too; this also added a safety net as I didn't feel alone and knew that there were also others around me."
>
> **Mudupeola Aladetokunbo Caxton-Martins,** a student from the University of Waterloo in Canada

Foreign tourists try hamburgers during a food festival in Nantong, Jiangsu province, on May 23. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY





Left: A girl interacts with an Irish tourist in Chongqing on April 22. HUANG WEI / XINHUA **Right:** Foreign visitors enjoy the sunshine and beaches in Sanya, Hainan province, on June 13. GUO CHENG / XINHUA

The roots of reassurance

When Serbian influencer Saitie, who has lived in China for over four years, was asked by friends how China maintains such a high-trust society, he offered two reasons: the prevalence of technology, and — more importantly — the dramatic improvement in average living standards over the past two decades.

"There's no point for a person to go out and steal stuff and therefore face the consequences for that," he said.

His down-to-earth observation aligns with broader analysis.

Professor Wang Jianxin, dean of the school of public security at People's Public Security University of China, said: "China's ability to maintain long-term social stability alongside rapid economic growth reflects a distinct path of social security governance."

He identified the key factors as "the leadership of the Communist Party of China, sound laws and good governance, technological empowerment, and public mobilization".

Commentator Nie Zhiwang said: "The Chinese sense of security is by no means merely about low crime rates: it is a people-centered, inclusive, comprehensive, and safety-net type of security."

For individuals, it means walking alone late at night without fear, not worrying about children at school, and confidently leaving belongings temporarily unattended. For society, it means stable public order, harmonious neighborhoods, and resolvable conflicts. For the nation, it reflects the governance effectiveness of maintaining long-term order and stability across a country with a massive population and vast territory.

This security rests on three pillars: coordinated development that keeps violent crime low, refined grassroots networks that nip risks in the bud, and continued economic improvements.

In Guangzhou, Ben walked the night streets with his expensive watch and felt totally safe. In Dalian, Italian artist Gentile heard the streets ring with the laughing of families and children at play. These scenes capture a deeper meaning of security in China: it is not merely the absence of danger, but the presence of a confident, everyday existence.

That everyday life — the "Chinese experience" — is what many foreign visitors most want to take home with them, yet cannot pack in their luggage.

Yang Gao in Toronto, Lia Zhu in San Francisco, Chen Meiling and Wang Songsong in Beijing, Hu Yumeng and Ma Jingna in Lanzhou, and Liu Mengtong in Dalian contributed to this story.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:53 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:53 PM

TOP NEWS

65 years on, treaty with DPRK hailed

Xi highlights cooperation and support between two sides over the past decades

Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and Chinese president, and Kim Jong-un, general secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea and president of the State Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, exchanged congratulations on Saturday on the 65th anniversary of the signing of the China-DPRK Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance.

In his message, Xi said that in 1961, the older generation of leaders of China and the DPRK signed the China-DPRK Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, laying an important political and legal foundation for consolidating the friendship forged in blood between the two peoples.

The treaty has played an important role in carrying forward China-DPRK friendship and safeguarding peace and stability in the region and beyond, he said.

Over the past 65 years, the two sides have upheld the spirit of the treaty, supported each other, stood united, cooperated closely and worked together, vividly demonstrating the defining features of China-DPRK relations — friendship passed down from generation to generation, a shared future and mutual support, he said.

Xi pointed to a successful state visit to the DPRK in June, when he reached important consensus with Kim on consolidating and carrying forward the traditional friendship between China and the DPRK and enriching it with new dimensions, providing strategic guidance and a new blueprint for the development of China-DPRK relations in the new era.

Facing a rapidly evolving world undergoing profound changes unseen in a century, Xi voiced willingness to work with Kim to further strengthen strategic communication, keep China-DPRK relations on the right track and guide bilateral friendly cooperation to deliver greater benefits to the two peoples, in order to make positive contributions to promoting regional peace and development.

Xi said that no matter how the international landscape evolves, the firm position of China's Party and government to attach great importance to the traditional friendship between China and the DPRK will remain unchanged; the firm support for Kim in leading the DPRK's socialist cause will remain unchanged; and the determination to safeguard the common interests of both sides and maintain a favorable strategic environment will remain unchanged.

He expressed confidence that, under the leadership of the WPK headed by Kim, the DPRK people will fully implement the decisions and arrangements of the Ninth Congress of the WPK and continue to achieve new and greater successes in their socialist cause.

Kim said that the two sides signed the DPRK-China Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance 65 years ago, laying a solid legal foundation for the enduring development of the fighting friendship and unity of mutual assistance and cooperation between the DPRK and China, forged in the bloody struggle for independence against imperialism and for the great cause of peace and socialism.

Over the past decades, through all the vicissitudes of history, the DPRK and China have stood by each other with unwavering support and close cooperation, fully demonstrating to the world the everlasting and unbreakable nature of their friendship — a relationship that is special in terms of traditional bonds, shared socialist cause, and firm commitment to carrying it forward from generation to generation, Kim said.

The friendly and cooperative relations between the DPRK and China, as a strategic choice and precious common wealth of the two parties and two peoples, are being elevated to a new strategic height and are making important contributions to safeguarding the sovereignty, security and development interests of the two countries and upholding regional and global peace and stability amid the complex and volatile international situation, Kim said.

It is the unwavering position of the WPK and the DPRK government to advance the traditional friendly and cooperative relations between the DPRK and China, with socialism at its core, to keep pace with the changes of the times and the aspirations of the two peoples and to achieve more dynamic development in all fields, he added.

XINHUA

Public outcry



Protesters denounce Immigration and Customs Enforcement as they rally outside Houston City Hall in Texas on Sunday to protest the fatal shooting of Lorenzo Salgado Araujo, a Mexican national who had lived in the United States for decades. On Tuesday, an ICE officer fatally shot Salgado Araujo after he was pursued while on his way to work by federal agents driving unmarked vehicles. LEKAN OYEKANMI / AP

GDP deflator likely to turn positive in Q2

By **ZHOU LANXU**, **ZHANG CHENXU** and **ZHONG NAN**

China's second-quarter GDP deflator is likely to turn positive for the first time in more than three years, sending the clearest signal yet that the country's price dynamics are improving, helping support corporate earnings and consumer confidence, analysts and executives said.

The GDP deflator is a tool that is used to measure price changes of all goods and services produced in an economy over time.

Ahead of the release of China's economic data for the first half of the year on Wednesday, the projection comes amid improving sentiment about the Chinese market among global enterprises and investors, even as additional policy support is seen as necessary in the second half to reinforce domestic demand and address structural pressures in the economy.

The GDP deflator is closely watched by economists as the broadest gauge of economy-wide inflation. It reflects the gap between nominal GDP growth and real GDP growth.

A positive reading signals rising prices across the economy, while a negative reading could point to deflationary pressure. China's GDP deflator has remained negative for 12 consecutive quarters through the first quarter of this year, when it stood at about -0.1 percent, weighing on the income growth of businesses and households as prices trended down.

Sun Xuegong, director-general of the department of policy study and consultation at the Chinese Academy of Macroeconomic Research, an academy affiliated with the National Development and Reform Commission, said China's GDP deflator has likely turned positive in the second quarter.

"Such a change would improve the profitability of market entities, lift their expectations and make the on-the-ground experience of businesses and households more in line with the growth in macroeconomic data," Sun said, adding that stronger nominal growth would also help boost the share of China's economy in the world total.

Su Jian, director of Peking University's National Center for Economic Research, said the second-quarter GDP deflator may turn positive at around 1.9 percent, helped by a low comparison base, higher prices of some global commodities, and firmer domestic prices of some consumer durables.

"A positive GDP deflator would suggest that the imbalance between supply and demand has eased and deflationary pressure is moderating. Improving price dynamics would support corporate profitability, thus help restore household and business expectations, and reinforce recovery in domestic demand," Su said.

Such a recovery in price dynamics can be seen in the consumer price index. Using the prices of a basket of consumer goods to gauge inflation, China's CPI has maintained a growth of at least 1 percent year-on-year for five consecutive months as of June, official data showed.

Su added that he estimates that China's real GDP to grow 4.9 percent year-on-year in the first half of the year after a 5 percent growth in the first quarter, while first-half nominal GDP growth may reach about 6.7 percent.

Robin Xing, chief China economist at Morgan Stanley, raised the forecast for China's full-year GDP deflator to 0.5 percent. Combined with the United States' investment bank's 4.8 percent real GDP growth forecast, that would imply the first time in four years that annual nominal growth would return above 5 percent.

"Nominal GDP is what companies care about, as it is closely related to their revenue and profits," Xing said.

The improving earnings are bolstering global investors' interest in China's capital market, with UBS expecting 11 percent earnings growth for all A shares in 2026, up from 3.9 percent in 2025, and remaining positive on China's artificial intelligence tech hardware names for the rest of the year amid strong earnings momentum.

Multinational companies are also reinforcing their commitment to the Chinese market. Joe Bao, president for China at Kone, said the Finnish elevator manufacturer is strengthening its supply chain resilience and responsiveness in the Chinese market, having established its Southern China headquarters in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, early this year to drive digital innovation and strengthen service capabilities.

Analysts, however, cautioned that the foundation for a rebound in prices remains fragile as the current recovery was bolstered more by international energy prices than domestic demand.

The People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, has vowed to enhance the forward-looking, flexibility and targeted nature of policy at the second-quarter monetary policy committee meeting, acknowledging the challenges of weak demand, structural divergence and external shocks.

Contact the writers at zhoulanxv@chinadaily.com.cn

Hub: Area rolls out bilingual signage

From page 1

This summer, INS Land unveiled its evolution from a 20,000-square-meter entertainment landmark into a neighborhood block-sized "urban nightlife wonderland", connecting the park and the city's Sinan Mansions area. The complex integrates e-sports, music, live performances, dining and socializing.

Fan Meichen, deputy general-manager of Sinan Mansions, which is organizing themed events and parties every weekend throughout the summer, said that Soul House, a newly opened immersive theater bar, has been fully booked every day since opening in June.

Soul House features a 24-hour access gate at Fuxing Park and offers a park shuttle. A walkable nighttime loop integrating culture, commerce, sports, tourism and exhibitions has since formed beneath the plane trees.

"Visitors can have a drink at INS Land, take the mini train through the park, then head to Sinan Mansions to experience Soul House. It makes for a truly diverse experience," Fan said.

The diversity doesn't stop there.

"The proportion of foreign visitors has increased significantly in the Sinan Mansions area," Fan said, adding that "the neighborhood has rolled out bilingual signage and service points".

It's not a recent trend, as evidenced by the INS Land club Hero Dome.

Ranked No 12 on the list of the world's Top 100 Clubs, Hero Dome hosted the inaugural Asian edition of global EDM festival phenomenon Tomorrowland last year, with 20,000 tickets selling out almost instantly.

According to a 2025 China nighttime economy development report co-released by the China Tourism Academy and Landsky, nighttime spending now makes up 32.9 percent of daily consumption nationwide, with key drivers transitioning from "dining, drinking and shopping", to "novelty, diversity and socializing".

Xia Tianyi, a co-founder of INS Land, sees more potential to develop and build on the city's current success. There are areas where the city's nightlife potential "remains largely untapped", he said.

INS Land will partner with nearby merchants to build an ecosystem of flexible, self-guided entertainment options to elevate the entire Fuxing Park area into a new highlight of Huangpu district.

Running with besties



A woman and her dog compete on Saturday in the Mud Dog Race in Piliscsev, Hungary. The summer event features a 2-kilometer course with 10 obstacles, allowing participants to enjoy muddy challenges and outdoor fun with their canine companions. XINHUA

Legacy: Sports give people hope, ambition

From page 1

The Beijing 2008 Olympic Games did not just leave behind Olympic venues. They helped accelerate the city's transformation, with investments in transportation, public spaces and other infrastructure that continue to serve residents today. They have also helped drive a major increase in sports participation, building momentum for a broader sporting culture in China — one in which more people move, play and take part in sports.

The Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games took this legacy to another level. Five venues from 2008 were reused, all Games venues were powered by renewable energy, and low-carbon technologies were introduced. The Games also accelerated the development of the Beijing-Zhangjiakou high-speed railway, significantly cutting travel times between the two areas.

Together, these examples show what the Olympic legacy can mean when it reaches beyond the event itself: more opportunity, more participation and a stronger place for sport in people's lives.

During my most recent visit to China, I saw that legacy in action. I saw it in the scale and energy of the 2025 National Games across Guangdong province and the Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions; in the pride people take in their sporting culture; and in the enthusiasm of people of all ages for sport and physical activity.

Most important, however, those Games brought winter sports to more than 350 million people across China. Yanqing and Zhangjiakou have become hubs for winter sports events and training, with facilities that serve the public and local athletes alike. This is creating new opportunities and real social and economic benefits for local communities.

Sports are about far more than competition. They bring people together. They help young people build confidence and learn important values. They support healthier communities. They create belonging. And they give people hope and ambition.

At a time when the world is increasingly divided, this is also why the Olympic spirit matters. The Olympic Games remind us that people from every part of the world can come together in peace and friendship. They remind us that, even when we come from different cultures and backgrounds, we can still share moments of joy, respect and admiration.

Beijing's Olympic journey — from its successful bid 25 years ago to the Olympic Games in 2008 and the Winter Games in 2022 — shows the value of thinking beyond the event itself.

The best Olympic legacy is not simply what is left behind when the Games end. It is what carries on: in people's lives, in communities and in the generations still to come.

The author is president of the International Olympic Committee and a two-time Olympic swimming champion. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Yinxu: Discovery extended history

From page 1

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2012, President Xi Jinping, who is also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, has shown great concern for the preservation of cultural relics and made important instructions for work in this regard.

Xi visited the Yinxu Ruins and Yinxu Museum in 2022, during which he said: "I have long been yearning to visit here. This time I come here for a deeper study and understanding of the Chinese civilization so that we can make the past serve the present, and draw inspiration for better building the modern Chinese civilization."

He noted that fine traditional Chinese culture is the root of the Party's new theories. The ultimate approach of adapting Marxism to the Chinese context and the needs of the times is to integrate the basic tenets of Marxism with China's specific realities and fine traditional culture.

Xi also pointed out that the *jiaguwen* inscriptions preserved the evidence of the Chinese written language of 3,000 years ago, helping to place the beginning of China's recorded history nearly 1,000 years earlier than previously believed.

This was not the first time he highlighted the importance of *jiaguwen*. In 2019, Xi sent a congratulatory letter on the 120th anniversary of the discovery of the oracle bone inscriptions, describing them as the roots of fine traditional Chinese culture and saying that the discovery is of epoch-making significance to Chinese civilization and even human civilization.

Li Xiaoyang, head of Anyang's cultural heritage bureau, said Xi's words fully reflect the important role of *jiaguwen*.

"The discovery of oracle bones in the late 19th century came at a time of cultural crisis, yet it miraculously restored Chinese people's confidence in their ancient civilization," Li said.

He also said that 15 archaeological excavations carried out entirely by Chinese scholars at the Yinxu Ruins from 1928 to 1937 confirmed the site to be a late capital of the Shang Dynasty, making the site a sacred place in Chinese archaeology. Prior to the Yinxu findings, the earliest period in Chinese history supported by existing written records was traced to inscribed bamboo slips from the Warring States Period (475-221 BC).

"Therefore, this discovery pushed China's reliable written history back to the late Shang period, extending the timeline of documented Chinese history by about 1,000 years," said Li.

Based on that, the Yinxu Ruins became the starting point for tracing Chinese civilization.

During his Anyang visit in 2022, Xi called for attaching more importance to and putting more efforts into archaeological research to carry forward the project of tracing the origins of Chinese civilization.

Over the past decades, archaeologists have gradually built a chronological framework of the Shang Dynasty and even earlier, starting from Yinxu.

"Knowing Yinxu as the last Shang capital, we have then traced earlier periods through archaeological work. In the 1950s, archaeologists found another capital site in Zhengzhou, Henan, which was identified to be an early Shang capital based on typological comparisons of pottery vessels. Then, in 1999, they discovered another city to the north of the Huanhe River, and most scholars believe it was a capital for the middle Shang period," said Li.

"In this way, we have generally made clear the early, middle and late Shang periods' capitals, and all the research started from the Yinxu Ruins," he added.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:53 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:53 PM

WORLD IN FOCUS





From left: Clayson Benally's family members watch a horse performance in West Ujimqin Banner of Xilin Gol League, North China's Inner Mongolia autonomous region, on June 26. Zonnie Benally (center), daughter of Clayson Benally, walks on the grassland with herders' children on June 26. Benally's family is warmly received on June 26 by their Mongolian hosts, who presented them with ceremonial blue *hada* scarves, a symbol of blessing and goodwill on the grasslands.

Saddling up

Indigenous American family finds horseback bonds on rolling grasslands in North China's Inner Mongolia



Clayson Benally interacts with a Mongolian horse in West Ujimqin Banner of Xilin Gol League, North China's Inner Mongolia autonomous region, on June 26. PHOTOS BY LI ZHIPENG / XINHUA

This summer, the rolling grasslands of Xilin Gol in North China's Inner Mongolia autonomous region welcomed a group of indigenous American horse lovers.

Clayson Benally, a 49-year-old horse trainer and artist from Arizona, the United States, traveled thousands of miles with his family to meet Julaa, a 12-year-old ethnic Mongolian girl.

The young rider is the star of the big-screen documentary *Horse Power*, an international collaboration that explores humanity's enduring bond with horses across continents and cultures.

"It's the horses that brought us all together. That's something that words cannot express," Benally said. "When I watched the movie, one of the opening scenes is just here in Inner Mongolia. And my heart cried out to come here," he said.

Julaa's family raises more than 20 horses and nearly 150 sheep on their 156 hectares of contracted grassland. Julaa's aunt prepared her guesthouse for the American visitors days in advance, stocking up on mutton and fresh vegetables.

After a lunch on the grasslands, local herdsmen demonstrated their time-honored skills, performing classic Mongolian horse-roping and penning routines.

"This is something that I've never seen or experienced. I just think about how incredible and beautiful and alive the culture is here," he said.







Top: Clayson Benally tries the traditional Mongolian horse-roping on June 26.
Above from left: Benally watches a man playing the horsehead fiddle on June 26. Benally rides a horse with a herder on June 26. Benally tries on traditional Mongolian clothes on June 26.

Xilin Gol, honored by the China Horse Industry Association as "China's Hometown of Horses" in 2010, is home to some 340,000 horses, a living testament to its enduring cultural heritage around horses.

Benally's 53-year-old sister Jeneda, a professional singer, spent her birthday during the trip and received a memorable gift — a *morin khuur*, or traditional Mongolian horsehead fiddle.

The soulful, lingering strains of Mongolian long-tune folk songs moved Jeneda to tears. "Your music speaks straight to my soul," she told the local performers. "I hope these fleeting, precious moments will grow into lasting friendships."

For Jeneda's 19-year-old daughter Dyatihi, the most indelible impression came from driving along No. 99 Highway, a route that instantly reminded her of iconic Route 66 in the US.

Xilin Gol's No. 99 Highway hosts China's first dedicated grassland musical highway. When vehicles travel at a steady speed between 35 and 60 kilometers per hour, drivers and passengers are treated to a 120-second musical journey.

"No. 99 Highway here is unique and cool, because it is wrapped in music. It is as if the highway itself sings."

XINHUA



Herders lasso horses on the grassland in West Ujimqin Banner of Xilin Gol League, North China's Inner Mongolia autonomous region, on June 26.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:53 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:53 PM

WORLD

Gulf clashes intensify as tensions rise

Iran closes strait, US presses offensive amid regional powers' call for restraint

By **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong and **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE

Fighting between Iran and the United States sharply escalated over the weekend, prompting the Gulf and Arab countries to engage in interception and issue warnings, as Tehran and Washington wrestled for control over the Strait of Hormuz and accused each other of violating the truce.

The latest collateral damage left three people injured in Qatar, including one child, as a result of falling debris from interception operations, the country's Interior Ministry said on Sunday.

Missile warning sirens were sounded across Bahrain. The United Arab Emirates said its air defense systems were actively engaging with missiles and drone threats, and Kuwait's military said explosion sounds heard were the result of air defense systems intercepting hostile attacks.

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps announced the Strait of Hormuz was closed until further notice and until US interventions cease. The IRGC had previously warned that foreign interference and the establishment of an illegal shipping route would draw a firm response.

The latest developments come after the US Central Command announced on Sunday that it had completed last week's third round of strikes against Iran, holding Tehran's forces accountable for attacking another commercial ship in the strait.

US President Donald Trump threatened on Friday to "decimate and destroy" Iran if it made an attempt on his life. Iranian media reported on Saturday that Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei vowed to avenge the death of his father, former supreme leader Ali Khamenei, saying it was the will of the nation.

3 nights of attacks

In a statement, the US Central Command said US forces hit about 140 Iranian military targets, including missile and drone sites, naval capabilities, ammunition storage facilities, communication networks and coastal surveillance locations.

"During three nights of strikes this week, CENTCOM has struck more than 300 targets at the direction of the commander in chief to degrade Iran's ability to attack civilian mariners and commercial vessels freely transiting the strait," CENTCOM said. "Commercial vessel transits through the vital international maritime corridor continue."

In retaliation, the IRGC said they struck US aircraft carrier logistical support centers and refueling platforms at the Omani port of Duqm in a heavy and surprise attack on Sunday.

The IRGC also said they struck the US Prince Hassan airbase in Jordan with ballistic missiles the same day, destroying its command and control center and MQ-9 Reaper drone hangars in retaliation for US strikes on Iran's southern coast, Iran's Mehr News Agency reported.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Saturday that Iran "has so far kept its word", unlike the United States.

"That violation follows other violations and missteps by the United States. Reality check: There can only be mutual compliance," he said on X. Earlier in the day, Araghchi met with Oman's Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Albusaidi in Muscat.

> "The two sides agreed to continue these talks at the technical and political levels to reach the necessary agreements in accordance with international law."
>
> **Oman's Foreign Ministry,** on bilateral talks between Oman and Iran regarding navigation in the Strait of Hormuz

Oman's Foreign Ministry said bilateral talks were held on Saturday regarding navigation in the Strait of Hormuz and ensuring its safety and freedom, "in light of the developments and repercussions stemming from recent events".

"The two sides agreed to continue these talks at the technical and political levels to reach the necessary agreements in accordance with international law," the ministry said.

On Sunday, Pakistani Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar also held a phone conversation with Araghchi, according to a statement from Pakistan's Foreign Ministry.

Dar stressed the need for the parties to follow the path of de-escalation and show restraint, as agreed in the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding reached last month, the statement said.

"He further underscored that dialogue and diplomacy remain the only viable path to resolving disputes and achieving lasting peace and stability in the region," it said.

Dar also reiterated Pakistan's readiness to continue playing a constructive role in promoting and maintaining regional peace and stability, and said the two leaders agreed to remain in close contact, it added.

Contact the writers at jan@chinadailyapac.com

Recovered relics



A worker from the Mayasem Association for Culture and Arts cleans a recovered artifact inside a temporary heritage storage tent in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, on Saturday. The facility houses ancient artifacts and archival papers salvaged from the rubble of destroyed buildings or handed over by displaced residents. BASHAR TALEB / AFP

Shattered celebrations



Emergency personnel respond to a shooting on Saturday at the Salsa on St. Clair festival in Toronto. Two people were killed and at least four others seriously wounded when gunfire erupted at Canada's largest Latino-themed cultural celebration. KEITO NEWMAN VIA AP

S. Korean chipmaker raises $26.5b in Nasdaq debut

By **LIA ZHU** in San Francisco
liazhu@chinadailyusa.com

South Korean memory chipmaker SK Hynix debuted on the Nasdaq on Friday after completing its US listing, capitalizing on surging demand driven by the global artificial intelligence boom.

The company priced its American Depositary Receipts at $149 each on Thursday before they opened at $170 in Nasdaq trading on Friday. An ADR is a type of certificate that allows United States investors to buy a foreign stock without trading directly on an overseas exchange.

The sale of 177.9 million ADRs raised $26.5 billion, making it the largest US share sale by a foreign issuer and the second-largest public offering after SpaceX's $85.7 billion IPO in June.

SK Hynix said the proceeds will be used to build new chip factories in South Korea and purchase manufacturing equipment, including extreme ultraviolet lithography scanners from Dutch supplier ASML.

Chief executive Kwak Noh-jung told Bloomberg after the offering that customers are signing long-term supply contracts because they expect the chip shortage to "last for longer", adding that he believes supply constraints could last well into the next decade.

> "The real story of the semiconductor industry ... is about a multilateral ecosystem in which South Korea, Japan and the Netherlands are just as important as either (the US or China)."
>
> **Ker Gibbs,** former president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai

The listing comes as SK Hynix rides an unprecedented surge in demand for high-bandwidth memory chips, which enable high-speed, low-power data transfer in AI systems and are essential for hardware used by customers including Nvidia and Google.

SK Hynix, which recently deepened its partnership with Nvidia on advanced memory chips, has outperformed rivals Samsung and Micron over the past year. Its first-quarter revenue nearly tripled from a year earlier, while its shares have climbed about 260 percent this year.

As hyperscalers — large-scale cloud service providers — such as Amazon, Microsoft and Oracle race to expand AI data centers, demand for memory chips has consistently outpaced supply, pushing up prices. Apple has raised prices for Macs and iPads, citing higher memory component costs.

The AI boom has also lifted Asian chip suppliers. Taiwan-based printed circuit board maker Unimicron Technology recently raised $1.36 billion through a global depositary share sale, with its stock up more than 700 percent over the past year.

Analysts describe the current environment as a memory "supercycle", with Samsung, SK Hynix and Micron all benefiting. Some view SK Hynix's US listing as a move to broaden its investor base and narrow its valuation gap with Micron, though others caution that market volatility remains despite strong demand.

'Inflation' warning

Some analysts have warned that "memory inflation" could eventually curb spending on AI infrastructure, smartphones and personal computers, saying the industry has entered the middle stage of the current cycle.

South Korean companies led by SK Hynix and Samsung plan to invest more than $500 billion in new domestic memory fabrication plants. Analysts warn the expansion could create oversupply if AI memory demand shifts by the time the facilities come online.

For some observers, the listing carries significance beyond financial markets.

"The real story of the semiconductor industry is not about the US versus China — it is about a multilateral ecosystem in which South Korea, Japan and the Netherlands are just as important as either of the great powers," said Ker Gibbs, former president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai.

Gibbs explores that argument in his book *The Fragile Dragon*, comparing semiconductors with oil as strategic resources that nations both depend on and compete over.

He also pointed to history as a cautionary lesson, arguing that the US should tread carefully as it tightens restrictions on China's access to chip technology. In his view, the two countries need to manage their differences without cornering one another.

Death of Lindsey Graham puts pressure on Senate Republicans

By **SHI GUANG** in New York
shiguang@chinadailyusa.com

The sudden and unexpected death of US Senator Lindsey Graham could make things more difficult for Republicans in the Senate, as their thin 53-47 majority is already being strained by the absence of Senator Mitch McConnell.

A temporary replacement for Graham can be named by the governor of South Carolina, though a permanent senator will be elected in November. There was no word on Sunday who that temporary replacement might be, and candidates to fill the open seat in South Carolina during the mid-terms are expected to put their names forward this week.

Fox News reported that at least two South Carolina Republicans from the House of Representatives, Nancy Mace and Ralph Norman, have indicated they are considering a Senate run.

Graham was chair of the Senate Budget Committee, which is working through a process to push forward parts of Trump's voter ID bill. He was also considered a big supporter of the war against Iran, which could be critical as the Senate is due to hear a request for additional funding for that conflict.

According to a preliminary finding from the Washington medical examiner, the cause of Graham's death was aortic dissection — which is a tearing in the aortic wall — due to cardiovascular disease, though a final report is pending toxicological tests.

President Donald Trump called Graham "one of the greatest people and Senators I have ever known" in a social media post on Sunday.

McConnell, 84, has also been missing from the Senate for a month after being hospitalized for undisclosed reasons, though his office has said he "continues to improve".

His wife, former transportation secretary Elaine Chao, had been travelling in China "to support her family's philanthropic endeavors", her spokesperson told CNN, adding that "the Senator's health did not warrant an immediate return to the US".

McConnell had suffered a concussion and broken ribs after one of several falls in 2023, and then froze mid-sentence during a news conference months later.

Graham, 71, was first elected to the Senate in 2002. He was previously elected to the House of Representatives in 1994, and had served as a defense attorney and prosecutor in the US Air Force.

Once a Trump critic who called him the "most flawed nominee in the history of the Republican Party", as well as "crazy", later became one of the president's biggest defenders.

Graham told Fox News in May he had introduced a bill "that would allow President Trump to put tariffs on China for buying Russian oil and gas", and later went on to disparage China and its relations with other countries.

He continued with a blunt warning to China: "I'll do business with you on Monday and put tariffs on Tuesday".

The sanctions bill is still being held up in the Senate. China has called it "illegal unilateral sanctions".

Graham was considered a foreign policy hawk, who advocated for US intervention overseas. He had just returned from his 10th trip to Ukraine, which he supported in its conflict with Russia. He had also opposed president Barack Obama's nuclear deal with Iran, and had called for pre-emptive strikes against the country.

Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren posted: "Even though we disagreed on much, he was always willing to negotiate, with humor and wit. My heart goes out to his loved ones."

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn

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

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108
529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1869

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:53 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:53 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Hyping up illegal 'arbitral award' will only undermine stability in South China Sea

Leveraging its role as this year's chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Philippines is attempting to hijack the negotiations aimed at concluding the long-awaited Code of Conduct in the South China Sea by pushing for the agreement to be anchored on the illegal and invalid so-called "arbitral ruling" of 2016.

The "ruling" of the Permanent Court of Arbitration is null and void. China did not participate in the "hearing". It neither accepts nor recognizes the prejudicial and politically motivated "award", nor will it ever accept any claim or action arising from it.

The distorting of international law by the "ruling" exposes the Philippines' real intention of pursuing its own selfish interests by fostering divisions and stirring up tensions in the South China Sea.

On Sunday, the United States, Japan and other external forces took the overt step of issuing a joint statement with the Philippines to mark the tenth anniversary of the illegal "arbitral award".

As the Chinese Foreign Ministry responded in a statement, a decade after its issuance, the so-called "ruling" has not only failed to resolve the maritime disputes between China and the Philippines — it has instead been weaponized by Manila to expand its territorial and maritime claims. Far from contributing to peace, the "ruling" has aggravated regional tensions and furnished extra-regional powers with a convenient pretext to meddle in and destabilize the South China Sea. In effect, it has become a perennial stumbling block to China-Philippines ties and a corrosive force against regional stability. Were the "standards" enshrined in this "ruling" to be applied universally, many nations would find themselves stripped of the very basis for their own maritime claims.

In a separate statement on Sunday, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson responded to Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi's remarks "commemorating" the anniversary by raising pointed questions that laid bare Tokyo's hypocrisy in backing Manila. For instance, if the "standards" of that "ruling" were applied consistently, how could Okinotori — nothing more than two rocks of less than 10 square meters in the Pacific — possibly justify a Japanese claim to Exclusive Economic Zone and continental shelf of hundreds of thousands of square kilometers?

By the "standards" of the "ruling", many of Japan's islands and reefs would likewise have no basis for claiming maritime rights and interests. Since Japan has publicly endorsed the "award", China has every reason to believe that Japan has accepted the same "standards" and voluntarily renounced the corresponding maritime claims.

As a matter of fact, the more Manila seeks to buttress its position with outside backing, the more clearly it reveals the tenuous legal and factual basis upon which its claims rest.

By attempting to make its illegal claims a prerequisite for pushing ahead with the COC talks, Manila seeks to entrench its unlawful gains by coercing the other negotiating parties into compromise.

As long as the Philippines insists that the "award" is valid and should be anchored with the COC, there will be no way to resolve the disagreements that exist over such issues as the COC's applicable maritime scope and dispute settlement mechanism provisions. This makes it impossible for any progress to be made in talks over the COC. With this major obstacle unresolved, the claim by the Philippines that the COC can be concluded before the end of this year is both empty and irresponsible.

China is committed to properly managing maritime differences in the region through bilateral dialogue with the parties directly involved. At the same time, the country will continue firmly defending its territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests in the South China Sea. Any attempt to challenge China's lawful rights and interests and undermine peace and stability in the South China Sea is doomed to fail.

Hostilities risk spiraling out of control

Barely weeks after the United States and Iran signed the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding, an interim deal intended to end hostilities and create a framework for a broader settlement, the agreement is in jeopardy.

The immediate trigger appears to have been disputes over the interpretation of the MoU's provisions governing navigation through the Strait of Hormuz. Yet the renewed confrontation is not simply another chapter in the rivalry between Washington and Tehran. It has evolved into a three-party strategic contest in which Tel Aviv's calculations also influence the pace and direction of events.

Israel has never concealed its willingness to prevent any US-Iran accommodation. From its perspective, even a temporary understanding risks reducing pressure on Tehran while leaving "unresolved concerns" over Iran's regional influence and nuclear issue. Recent reports suggest that Tel Aviv has been "coordinating" with Washington while simultaneously warning Tehran against retaliation. Israel's strategic intentions differ from those of parties seeking to preserve regional stability.

This matters because the MoU was always less a peace agreement than a ceasefire held together by political convenience. It rested upon ambiguous language, diverging strategic objectives and fragile domestic calculations on both sides. Such pacts survive only when all parties concerned possess strong incentives to preserve them. That condition is disappearing.

Washington's own calculations illustrate why. The US administration continues to face conflicting pressures. Military restraint satisfies voters weary of endless Middle Eastern crises. Yet any perceived concession toward Iran invites fierce criticism from domestic hawks. Rising oil prices threaten inflation, consumer confidence and electoral prospects, while renewed military action risks producing precisely the energy shock that the earlier agreement sought to prevent. Unsurprisingly, Washington has simultaneously resumed military operations while signaling its willingness to return to negotiations — an apparent contradiction that reflects political necessity rather than strategic coherence.

Military force has repeatedly demonstrated its limitations. Months of strikes have neither fundamentally altered Iran's strategic judgments nor produced a durable diplomatic breakthrough. Instead, every exchange of missiles further erodes trust while increasing the probability that a miscalculation or third-party action could trigger a broader regional war.

Energy markets understand this reality better than politicians. The world's consumers ultimately finance every failure of diplomacy in the Middle East. That is why the greatest danger today lies not merely in renewed hostilities but in the gradual normalization of perpetual low-intensity conflict. If the MoU collapses without a credible diplomatic successor, the region risks settling into a familiar yet dangerous equilibrium: intermittent strikes, periodic retaliation, disrupted shipping lanes and repeated diplomatic resets that never address the underlying disputes. Such instability benefits few beyond those who profit politically or economically from permanent confrontation.

As China's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations Sun Lei stressed at a UN Security Council briefing on the Iranian nuclear issue on Friday, a ceasefire and cessation of hostilities must hold in the Gulf.

"China urges all relevant parties to overcome disruptive factors, refrain from the use or threat of force, preserve and implement the MoU, reach a solution that accommodates the concerns of all parties, lift the sanctions against Iran at an early date, and achieve substantive progress in the political settlement process," Sun said.

The proper settlement of the Iran nuclear issue must respect the legitimate aspirations and lawful rights and interests of the parties concerned. Iran should continue to uphold its commitment not to develop nuclear weapons. As a non-nuclear-weapon state party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, Iran enjoys the legitimate right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The US should take concrete actions to create conditions for the political settlement of the Iran nuclear issue, Sun added.

The Middle East has accumulated more than enough examples of wars that were easier to begin than to end. Another prolonged US-Iran confrontation will not produce a decisive winner. It will only weaken regional security, unsettle global markets, burden already strained economies and deepen divisions throughout the international system.

The choice confronting related parties is therefore stark. They can allow strategic mistrust, domestic politics and regional rivalries to dismantle an imperfect but valuable diplomatic opening. Or they can recognize that however unsatisfactory the MoU may have been, its implementation remains infinitely preferable to another round of instability. Even a fragile peace is always better than permanent war.

The world should not have to relearn that lesson yet again.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

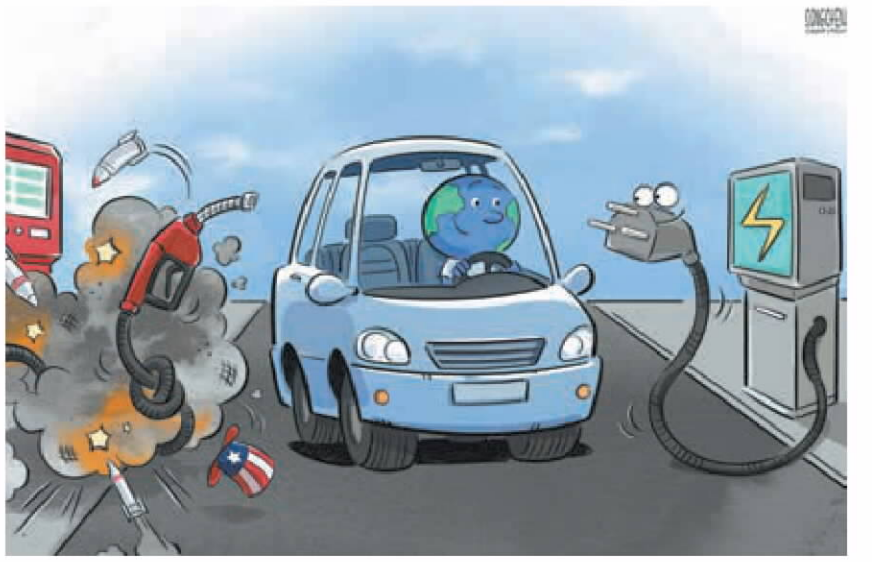
China Daily UK
90 Cannon St, London EC4N 6HA, UK
+44 (0) 207 398 8270
editor@chinadailyuk.com

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Song Chen



Opinion Line

Precision landing boosts space program, signals self-reliance

As a space journalist who has covered dozens of launches across the country, I long assumed that I had grown accustomed to the routine of countdowns and the roar of liftoffs.

Yet standing atop a building at the Hainan International Commercial Aerospace Launch Center on Friday morning, waiting for the Long March 10B rocket to lift off, there was the same mix of nervousness, excitement and anticipation I felt at my very first launch assignment.

When the first stage was successfully captured by the cable-net recovery system roughly six minutes after stage separation, cheers erupted among reporters.

On the way back to the hotel, I was replaying the recovery footage on loop on my phone, swapping clips and screenshots with fellow reporters. That split second when the booster locked safely into the net is the kind of frame that remains etched in a reporter's memory for years.

Having witnessed earlier recovery attempts — of Long March 12A and ZQ 3 models — I know firsthand just how formidable the challenge of rocket reusability is. Guiding a massive booster back through the atmosphere with pinpoint precision, reigniting its engine at the right moment, maintaining aerodynamic stability and executing a controlled recovery require flawless coordination across propulsion, navigation, materials science and real-time command systems.

Previous tests underscored how many variables must align for success. That is why Friday's breakthrough feels deeply gratifying.

I share the pride of the researchers and engineers at the China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology, whose perseverance turned an ambitious vision into reality.

What makes this milestone even more remarkable is China's independent path of innovation. Unlike conventional landing on ground pads or offshore drone ships used by the United States and earlier domestic programs, the Long March 10B debuted the world's first operational sea-based net-capture recovery system. By transferring much of the landing hardware from the rocket to the recovery vessel, engineers reduced dead weight and opened a distinct and potentially cost-effective technical route. It is a vivid reflection of the ingenuity of Chinese scientists and engineers and the country's growing scientific and technological strength.

Beyond the technical feat, the Long March 10B carries far-reaching strategic significance. Designed to support large-scale deployment of low-Earth orbit constellations and high-volume commercial launch missions, it promises to enhance China's competitiveness and influence in the global space sector.

More importantly, the Long March 10B is not a standalone model. It is an integral part of the Long March 10 family built for China's manned lunar missions.

Every commercial mission will validate engine reusability, recovery system reliability and rapid turnaround launch capability, forging a development model where commercial operations feed technological progress for future space missions.

This iterative approach will help build expertise for China's future manned lunar landings and deep-space exploration.

To be sure, we must remain clear-eyed. A considerable gap still separates China from the US in mature, operational reusable rocket technology, and accelerated, steady progress remains essential.

But after witnessing Friday's historic success, I have full confidence that China's space community will keep closing that gap and take its place among the world's leading space powers.

— ZHAO LEI, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Increasing grain production key to food security

Editor's note: *Last month, China issued a plan to accelerate the modernization of agriculture and rural areas during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period. A key goal is to raise the country's production capacity of grains to around 1.45 trillion* jin *(725 million metric tons) by 2030, with an emphasis on both the volume and the quality of agricultural products. Tu Shengwei, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Macroeconomic Research of the National Development and Reform Commission, spoke to People's Daily Overseas Edition on why China is pushing to increase both the output and quality of grain production. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

Food security has emerged as a universal challenge in recent years due to the rising frequency of extreme weather events, a complex and volatile international landscape, and heightened uncertainties in the global grain market.

Thanks to sustained efforts, China has made marked improvements in agricultural infrastructure, machinery and technologies in recent years. Major breakthroughs in agricultural science and technology have lifted the contribution rate of scientific and technological progress to agricultural growth to over 64 percent, placing China among the world's top innovators in the field. Advanced technologies, including high-end farm machinery, drones and artificial intelligence, are now widely used across production chains, sharply boosting efficiency.

By implementing the latest initiative to raise grain output, enhancing yield per unit area of staple crops, improving the quality of farmland, seeds and machinery, and adopting more efficient farming practices, the country is well-positioned to achieve the goal of increasing its grain production capacity to around 1.45 trillion *jin* by 2030.

Increasing the grain production capacity will ensure a sufficient supply of high-quality food. Moreover, grain prices underpin the prices of various other commodities, and ample grain output helps prevent fluctuations in food prices.

Currently, China has a secure supply of rice and wheat, with sufficient stocks of these two staple grains. However, the production capacity for high-quality rice that provides a good mouthfeel, high-gluten and low-gluten wheat remains inadequate. The plan addresses this by calling for an increased supply of these products.

To achieve this, efforts should be made in various fields to expand cultivation based on local conditions and improve mechanisms that reward superior quality with better prices to ensure that premium grain products reach the market effectively.

The plan says the production capacity of corn and soybean should also be boosted. China's grain consumption pattern is changing. The consumption of rice and wheat is declining, while feed grains such as corn and soybean are likely to become major drivers of future growth in demand.

There is a significant imbalance between the supply and demand of soybean in China, making the expansion of soybean output a top priority. The supply of high-yield, high-oil soybean should be increased.

Promoting high-yield, high-oil soybean varieties will help expand domestic supply, reduce reliance on imports, and upgrade the country's grain and oil processing industry.

The plan also calls for strengthening farmland protection and improving farmland quality. Farmland is the cornerstone of grain production and the fundamental resource for securing food supply.

Over the next five years, it is essential to enforce strict farmland protection measures, develop high-standard farmland and enhance farmland water conservancy facilities to reinforce the foundation for grain production.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:53 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:53 PM

VIEWS

Vassil Girginov

Legacy of 2008 Olympics goes beyond economics

When Beijing was awarded the 2008 Olympic Games in July 2001, a seven-year journey began, culminating in the grand opening in the iconic Bird's Nest stadium on Aug 8, 2008.

The seven-year period between awarding the Olympics and their opening allows the hosts to develop and implement their vision of the Games.

The legacy of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games must be seen in the socio-political and economic context of China. In China's bid for the Games, then President Jiang Zemin highlighted the opportunity to advance the Olympic spirit and deepen cultural exchanges between China and the world. Beijing proposed three major themes: "Green Olympics", "High-Tech Olympics" and "People's Olympics".

Global Lens

The concept of "People's Olympics" sought to redefine humanism as a core Chinese cultural value, aiming to construct a moral order to counterbalance the materialism in China's rapid march to modernization and offer an alternative to the commercialization of the Games. China sought to reinterpret Olympian principles, enriching the Olympic spirit and promoting global harmony.

While economic impacts often dominate discussions about the legacy of the Olympics, the intangible impacts, though difficult to measure, are equally important.

The Games were a massive undertaking with an organizing budget of 20.5 billion yuan ($3 billion) in revenue and 19.34 billion yuan in expenditures, yielding a surplus of over 1 billion yuan.

Twelve of the 37 venues were specifically constructed for the event. The Beijing Olympics were the first to offer full digital coverage globally, allowing hundreds of millions of viewers across the world to follow the action online.

Three intangible legacies of the Games stand out: health, sports policy and education. The organizing committee introduced the concept of "Olympic Health Legacy" and established a system to evaluate the impact of a mass event on the health of the host population.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

These included changes in health behaviors of individuals, improvements in public health services and enhancements in the quality of the external hygienic environment.

From 2001 to 2007, 140 billion yuan was spent on environmental improvement, which was far more than the $12.2 billion promised in the bidding reports.

The Games elevated the role of sport in China and enhanced the status of mass sport. From a policy development perspective, China's Olympics experience streamlined policy-making and planning for mega events.

The coordination required by the Games fostered policy coherence across public, voluntary and private sectors, exemplified by Beijing's "dual-city" benefit, which reduced venue costs for the 2022 Winter Olympics.

A great deal of organizational learning also took place, with Chinese sports organizations engaging with national and international sports federations, leading to improved sport governance.

Aug 8 was declared National Fitness Day, when public sports facilities are required to open free of charge to the public, promoting public health and sports participation.

Significant investments were made in mass sport from the lottery public welfare fund, with funding increasing over time.

The Games relied on tens of thousands of volunteers, supported by a large network of "city volunteers" stationed across Beijing, marking a cultural shift toward a formalized civic volunteer network that remains active in major public events.

Public investments, organizational learning, cultural change, and improved policy coherence have advanced sport in China, embracing social and economic values beyond health benefits and political gains.

Education was the chief mechanism for promoting Olympian values. The Beijing 2008 Olympics Education Programme was the largest of its kind in the Games history, integrating Olympian values — excellence, friendship and respect — into the curriculum of over 400,000 schools across China.

The program had three main components, including the Heart-to-Heart international school pairings, Olympic Values Education Programme teaching resources and curriculum integration, and the model schools program across China. It reached approximately 400 million children and left a lasting cultural and civic legacy for China's younger generation.

The Olympics do not belong to a country or an institution, but to all humanity.

When a city hosts them, it enters into a contract: the Olympic Movement allows the host city to invest the accumulated cultural capital of the Games, and, in return, the city promises to deliver certain legacies.

Olympic legacy is not automatically established. Beijing successfully leveraged the opportunities presented by the Games by mobilizing the energy of society to deliver lasting benefits.

The author is a professor of sport management at Brunel University in London, UK.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Sun Dan

When China found its own rhythm

When Beijing won the right to host the 2008 Olympics on July 13, 2001, I was a girl with a dream and little sense of how profoundly that moment would shape my life.

Twenty-five years later, I have lived that transformation from several vantage points: as an athlete who won China's first Olympic silver medal in rhythmic gymnastics in 2008, and as the head coach who led the Chinese team to Olympic gold in Paris in 2024, ending more than four decades of European dominance in the event.

Yet the most important change was not the medal. It was the moment China stopped asking how to look more like everyone else.

For much of its history, rhythmic gymnastics was governed by a distinctly European aesthetic.

Movement, music and choreography were judged against conventions that emerged largely from Eastern Europe.

Like many latecomers to the sport, China began by studying those standards, hiring foreign choreographers and trying to narrow the gap.

It was a necessary stage of development. Before a country can contribute to a global language, it must first learn to speak it.

But eventually a different question emerged: If sport is a universal language, why must we speak it with a borrowed accent? Why could the world not encounter contemporary China through this sport?

The answer was not to drape routines in obvious national symbols. Cultural confidence is not costume design.

Over the years, my colleagues and I built a long-term archive of Chinese cultural materials: classical dance, traditional music, historical imagery and regional artistic traditions.

We took athletes to museums and historical sites, invited experts in Chinese dance and folk music into training camps, and studied international judging rules with equal intensity.

Our goal was not to make routines that looked "Chinese" at first glance. It was to create works whose emotional logic could be understood anywhere.

When audiences watch a routine inspired by Dunhuang murals or ancient Chinese poetry, they do not need prior knowledge of Chinese history.

They need to feel wonder, tension, serenity or strength.

Cultural expression succeeds internationally not when it demands explanation, but when it creates recognition.

That is why routines such as *Flying Apsaras, Heroes of Heaven and Earth*, *Water Dragon's Chant* and *Phoenix Soaring to the Sky* were designed around universal emotions while drawing on distinctly Chinese artistic traditions.

In recent years, I have noticed a subtle but meaningful shift in how international judges and coaches respond.

Chinese routines are no longer treated merely as interesting variations from the periphery. Increasingly, they are discussed as creative references in their own right.

This reflects a broader change in China's relationship with the world.

For a long time, Chinese culture was often observed, analyzed or categorized from the outside. Today, in some fields, it is beginning to influence how the conversation itself is conducted.

True confidence is not insisting that one's culture is unique. It is understanding global rules well enough to participate fully while still speaking in one's own voice.

That voice, however, would mean little without a second transformation: the move from heroic endurance to scientific training.

When I was preparing for the 2008 Beijing Olympics, success depended largely on relentless repetition and personal sacrifice. My generation owes an enormous debt to coaches who built the foundation of Chinese rhythmic gymnastics through sheer perseverance.

As a coach, I have come to see that modern elite sport requires more than determination. It requires evidence.

Today our program integrates physical conditioning, rehabilitation, sports science, nutrition and psychological support into a unified system.

Training decisions are increasingly guided by data rather than intuition alone.

Just as important, we pay closer attention to the long-term physical and mental well-being of athletes whose careers span childhood, adolescence and adulthood.

That shift has changed the meaning of coaching. A coach is not simply a technician correcting movements; a coach is a long-term guardian of human development.

I often tell my athletes that a group routine succeeds only when different personalities learn to move with one heartbeat. We do not train every athlete identically.

Each receives a development plan tailored to her technical weaknesses, temperament and future potential. The goal is not uniformity, but unity.

This evolution has also been accompanied by greater openness to the world.

China has benefited enormously from international exchange. We learn from foreign coaches, judges and training systems, while increasingly sharing our own experience with overseas colleagues who come to China to observe and collaborate.

Sport is one of the few arenas where civilizations can engage one another without requiring complete agreement.

A common set of rules creates space for different cultural expressions to coexist. China's contribution should not be to reject international standards, but to enrich the diversity that exists within them.

Looking back, the 25 years since Beijing's Olympic bid was approved trace not only my personal journey, but also the journey of Chinese women in sport.

More women now serve as head coaches, researchers, administrators and participants in international sports governance.

That change is not simply a sporting achievement; it reflects a broader expansion of opportunities for women in Chinese society.

When my athletes tell me they see in me a confident and capable Chinese woman, I regard that as a responsibility greater than any medal.

China once entered rhythmic gymnastics as a student. Today it enters as a participant with something of its own to say.

We will continue to learn from the world and to pursue scientific excellence. But we will also continue to present Chinese culture not as a museum piece, but as a living, evolving source of creativity.

Olympic gold may have announced our arrival. Finding our own voice is what made the journey worthwhile.

The author is the head coach of the Chinese Rhythmic Gymnastics Group Team.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Reflecting on what remains after the flame goes out

Editor's note: *July 13 marks the 25th anniversary of Beijing's successful bid to host the 2008 Olympic Games. In a conversation with China Daily journalist Li Wei, Professor Angela J. Schneider, director of the International Centre for Olympic Studies at Western University and the first director of Ethics and Education for the World Anti-Doping Agency, and Zhou Guanpeng, a research associate at the center, reflect on the legacy that remains after the Olympic flame is extinguished. Through the lenses of sport, technology, sustainability and human well-being, they examine how the Beijing Olympics have continued to shape society and the public imagination nearly two decades later.*

Li Wei: What do you remember most about the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games?

Zhou: When I think about the twenty-five years since Beijing won its Olympic bid in 2001, I return to several images from the 2008 opening ceremony. Firework footprints moved along Beijing's Central Axis toward the Bird's Nest. Then an ancient sundial appeared. A sundial: the shadow of the sun. It makes time visible by reading the shadow cast by light.

Perhaps Olympic legacy works in the same way. The visible light is easy to see: venues, ceremonies, medals, technology, global attention. The harder question is: After the flame goes out, what truly remains, and whose life does it change?

Schneider: Legacy is not only what still stands after the Games. It is what continues to serve human beings. In my work, I distinguish between performance excellence and human excellence.

The first asks: how fast, how high, how strong? The second asks: what kind of person, community and life does sport help us cultivate?

If we take that distinction seriously, Olympic legacy cannot be measured only by buildings, spectacle or records. We must also ask about human legacy: whom do these achievements still serve? Do they serve athletes and citizens, or only a spectacle that has already passed?

Zhou: The children who watched the fireworks in 2008 may now be parents. Venues once belonging to champions may now belong to students, walkers, skaters and families. More than a century ago, Chairman Mao Zedong warned in *A Study of Physical Education* that sport could have "form without substance".

He did not treat the body as an accessory to the spirit, but as the ground of knowledge, will and moral life. When we speak of Olympic legacy today, do we face a similar question: Is sport merely a ceremony or spectacle to be watched, or a practice people actually live?

Schneider: I would add to that question. Participation is not only a matter of numbers. A crowded venue does not necessarily mean a meaningful sporting culture. We must ask whether people enter the internal goods of sport: the joy of learning skill, the discipline of sustained practice, the confidence formed through effort, and the experience of testing oneself with others under fair conditions. When sport enters daily life in this way, it is no longer only leisure. It becomes part of a fuller human life. Such a legacy is not static. It has to be used, practiced and understood again.

Li Wei: If Olympic legacy is ultimately measured by how deeply sport enters everyday life, how should we judge whether a host city has succeeded? Is it enough that venues remain open, or must they also become part of people's daily habits and social relationships?

Zhou: That brings us to another question: are we building smarter Olympics, or wiser ones? The scroll sequence in the 2008 opening ceremony offers at least one clue. Painting, writing, dance and music were not separate performances. The body was writing, the ink was dancing, movement became image.

Ancient form and modern technology appeared in the same scene. The point did not seem to be that technology betrays nature.

It seemed to ask whether technology can remain fitting to the body, to rhythm and to meaning. From your perspective, how should technology in sport be judged?

Schneider: I would not begin by asking whether technology is natural or unnatural. That often misleads us, because "nature" is not, by itself, a clear ethical standard. I would ask: what does the technology serve?

If it makes sport safer, fairer and more accessible, reduces waste, and helps more people participate, it can deepen sport.

But if it turns athletes into performance machines, spectators into data consumers, and venues into monuments no longer belonging to city life, it weakens sport. A truly sustainable Olympics is not only more efficient environmentally. It must also be ethically accountable to human beings.

Zhou: So sustainability is not only an engineering problem. Beijing has many visible examples of venue reuse, but a deeper question is whether these spaces have returned to public life. If venues and technologies merely prove that a city is stronger, faster and better organized, they may be smart. If they help ordinary people keep moving, meeting, learning and recovering bodily life, they may become wise.

Schneider: Yes. The Olympic movement is based on a public trust. It does not belong only to committees, sponsors or host cities.

It also belongs to athletes, citizens and future generations. A sustainable venue is one that returns to public life. A sustainable technology supports meaningful effort rather than replacing it. A sustainable Olympic city is not merely more spectacular. It is more fit for better human life.

Public trust means that Olympic legacy must remain open to public judgment: does it give people more chances to move, to meet, and to understand themselves and others through sport?

Li Wei: The third question may be the deepest: when the world is faced with so many challenges, what can the Olympic Games still hold together?

Zhou: In the movable-type sequence, the performers evoked the ideals of "friends coming from afar" and "all within the four seas are brothers and sisters". Then the blocks formed the character *he*, harmony. Finally, the blocks opened, and people appeared from underneath and waved.

That harmony was not produced by machinery alone. It was coordinated human movement. It seemed to resonate with the Olympic ideal: not erasing difference, but forming shared practice within difference.

Schneider: That is important. What sport gives to ideals is practice.

Harmony in sport is not the absence of conflict. Competition itself is conflict under shared constraints. Fair play, as I understand it, is not merely following rules or being polite. It is respect for the game.

Respect for the game changes how we see opponents. An opponent is not an enemy to be eliminated, but a necessary partner in the pursuit of excellent sport. Without a worthy opponent, one cannot truly test oneself.

Zhou: Then harmony is not sameness, but coordination within difference. It does not imagine a world without conflict. It asks conflict to enter rules, limits and mutual recognition.

Schneider: Yes. Two athletes may come from divided countries, speak different languages and carry different histories. Yet in competition they can recognize one another through shared rules.

That recognition is limited, but it is real. It cannot solve geopolitics, but it can teach a disciplined way of living with others and the world. The value of the Olympic Games is not that they make the world suddenly agree. It is that they allow people, while difference remains, to enter a practice shaped by rules, respect and effort.

Zhou: So the twenty-fifth anniversary of Beijing's successful bid should not be only a memory of success. It should become a question: after the ceremony ends, can the city, its venues, its technologies and its citizens continue to practice this deeper legacy?

Schneider: That is the key question. If we must name it, since 1993 I have called it the "spirit of sport" which is based on the internal goods that create the joy of sport.

But I would not use that phrase as a slogan. It means skill, fair challenge, meaningful effort, respect for opponents, and the cultivation of a fuller human life. Beijing's most lasting Olympic legacy will not be measured only by buildings that still stand, but by what still moves: bodies, habits, public spaces, shared memory, and the continuing possibility that competition can become a practice of human flourishing.

The light once illuminated a city; the shadow tells us whether that light still gives direction to human life.

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

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:53 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:53 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

FABIO MASSIMO PARENTI

Win-win cooperation

The EU should prioritize mutually beneficial innovative ties with China instead of portraying the country's rise as a shock





WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

Speaking at the Summer Davos forum in Dalian in June, Chinese Premier Li Qiang introduced the concept of "China Opportunity 2.0". More than a slogan, it represents an attempt to help the world understand China's economic transformation — from the world's factory to a global platform for innovation.

The 2026 Summer Davos took place at a significant moment when the global economy continues to see moderate growth, geopolitical fragmentation, trade uncertainty and intensifying technological competition. Against this backdrop, the forum's theme, "Innovating at Scale", captured one of the defining challenges of the time: Innovation alone is no longer enough; the real challenge is the ability to rapidly deploy innovation throughout the productive system and society as a whole.

If the first phase of China's opportunity was built primarily on the extraordinary expansion of its domestic market, its openness to foreign investment and its integration into global value chains, "China Opportunity 2.0" is increasingly driven by the country's capacity to generate innovation, develop cutting-edge technologies and rapidly transform them into large-scale industrial applications.

A growing body of international evidence suggests that China's innovation system has reached a new level of maturity. In recent years, China has become the world's largest holder of patent applications, one of the leading investors in research and development, the largest market for electric vehicles, and a global leader in batteries, renewable energy, industrial robotics, digital infrastructure and applied artificial intelligence. Universities, enterprises, research institutes and local governments increasingly operate within an integrated innovation ecosystem that accelerates the transfer of technology from laboratories to industrial production.

What distinguishes China's model today is not only its ability to invent new technologies, but above all the speed at which these technologies are deployed at scale. The rapid integration of AI into manufacturing, logistics, healthcare, public services and consumer markets provides perhaps the clearest example of this systemic capability. It is also the rationale behind recent government initiatives such as the "AI+" initiative to create new forms of smart economy and improve AI governance.

In other words, innovation in China is quickly translated into the real economy. This close integration of scientific research, industrial policy and manufacturing capability has become one of the defining characteristics of the country's current stage of development.

The notion of "China Opportunity 2.0" therefore reflects a qualitative transformation. The opportunities offered by China partly lie in participating in one of the world's most dynamic innovation ecosystems.

This evolution also carries important implications for Europe. In recent years, European Union-China economic relations have largely been influenced by the West, through the lens of "de-risking". Strengthening the resilience of strategic supply chains is certainly an important objective. Yet the risk — as current developments suggest — is that the political debate is becoming almost entirely focused on competition while overlooking the opportunities created by selective and mutually beneficial technological cooperation.

The EU and China remain two of the world's largest economies and share common interests across a wide range of areas, including energy transition, climate change, population aging, food security, public health, industrial digitization and the development of AI for good.

Some of the major challenges of the 21st century require economies of scale, substantial investment and continuous innovation. No country, regardless of its level of development, possesses all the resources needed to address these challenges alone.

From this perspective, "China Opportunity 2.0" can also be understood as an opportunity for scientific and industrial cooperation. Europe continues to possess significant competitive strengths in basic research, precision manufacturing, chemistry, biotechnology and high-end industrial production. China, meanwhile, offers growing R&D innovation applications, advanced engineering and industrial capabilities, an exceptionally broad manufacturing base, substantial investment capacity and a domestic market capable of rapidly commercializing innovation.

These characteristics are potentially complementary rather than inherently antagonistic. Naturally, important differences remain. Issues concerning market access, intellectual property protection, regulatory transparency and competitive conditions continue to shape bilateral relations. Ignoring these concerns would be unrealistic. Nevertheless, addressing such differences through dialogue and negotiated solutions is generally more productive than progressively reducing opportunities for cooperation.

Experience consistently shows that innovation flourishes in environments characterized by openness, knowledge exchange, talent mobility and international investment. By contrast, growing technological fragmentation risks slowing global scientific progress, increasing development costs, and reducing humanity's capacity to tackle shared challenges.

From this perspective, the message emerging from the Summer Davos forum extends well beyond China itself. The central question is how to reform the international system and further various kinds of cooperation between the Global North and the Global South, as well as among Global South countries, to ensure that the benefits of innovation are broadly shared.

China regards scientific and technological innovation as one of the principal drivers of national modernization, higher productivity, high-quality growth and long-term international competitiveness. Within this framework, innovation, industrial development and strategic planning are viewed as deeply interconnected. Whether or not one agrees with this model — which continues to evolve — it is difficult to deny that it has generated significant achievements across a number of technological and manufacturing sectors. For this reason, understanding China's economic transformation has become an analytical necessity before it is a political one.

Europe now faces an important choice. It would be better to say that Europe should not continue to view China's transformation primarily through the prism of geopolitical competition. It can adopt a more nuanced approach — one capable of distinguishing between areas where competition is necessary and where cooperation continues to generate mutual benefits.

"China Opportunity 2.0" does not imply the absence of competition, nor does it eliminate differences in national interests. Rather, it suggests that in today's knowledge economy, innovation and interdependence will remain inseparable dimensions of global economic development. For Europe, recognizing this reality with pragmatism may well become one of the defining tasks of the years ahead.

The author is an associate professor of international studies at the Eurispes BRICS Laboratory, Italy, and a visiting scholar at the Research Center on Building a Community with a Shared Future for Humanity at China Foreign Affairs University. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

HE YUN

Trade wars bring risks

If Europe labels China an industrial threat, it will fail to fully recognize that Chinese technologies may facilitate its green transition



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

For much of the past two decades, Europe's trade policy toward China was built on an assumption that engagement would benefit both sides — China was a vast market for European cars, machinery, luxury goods and technology; Europe was a rich consumer market for Chinese manufactured products. Yet things changed. In 2019, the European Union formally described China not only as a partner, but also as an economic competitor. The EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment, once seen as a symbol of deeper EU-China economic engagement, was politically frozen. Then came the pandemic, the Ukraine crisis, the energy crisis and, with it, rising concerns over supply chain security. Europe started to turn toward "de-risking". Trade with China is no longer viewed as a market opportunity, but increasingly as a risk.



Following the EU summit from June 18 to 19, where discussions on how to bolster Europe's competitiveness and counter "global macroeconomic imbalances" took center stage, a new proposal requiring EU companies to diversify their sources of key supplies — in the hope of stepping up the latent "de-risking" efforts — is on the agenda. Yet a full-blown trade war with China would be very dangerous for Europe.

First, a trade war would make Europe's green transition more expensive. Price is the gateway to demand, and demand lays the foundation upon which European clean-tech capacity will eventually be built. Chinese electric vehicles, batteries, solar panels and renewable technologies are demand creators. Because of lower costs, their mass adoption becomes possible. Once consumers buy EVs, governments build charging infrastructure. Once solar panels become affordable, households, companies and cities invest in distributed energy. Once batteries become cheaper, storage, recycling, grid modernization and smart-energy services become commercially viable. In this sense, affordable Chinese clean technologies can help create the market conditions in which European green industries themselves may grow. Europe cannot develop a full renewable-energy ecosystem if renewable deployment is slowed by high costs. Demand must come before scale; scale must come before competitiveness. If Europe raises prices too quickly in the name of protecting industry, it will weaken the very demand that industry needs.

Second, energy security remains a critical challenge for Europe. Europe has learned from the Ukraine crisis that energy dependence is never only commercial. When the security environment changed, dependence became a vulnerability. Europe has since moved away from Russian energy, but it has not fully escaped its dependence on imported fossil fuels. In some sense, Europe has simply changed suppliers. The United States has become a major provider of liquefied natural gas to Europe. This may be geopolitically safer, but it is still dependence and dependency does not disappear when the supplier changes; it merely changes the actor who has leverage. Even allies can use dependence as an instrument of pressure.

That is why a trade war with China over clean technologies could be irrational. In the short run, the balance of trade might look better; but such a strategy would sacrifice Europe's energy resilience in the long run, and Europe would remain vulnerable to geopolitical shocks and external coercion. A wiser path would be for Europe to use Chinese clean-tech supply and investment as a transitional accelerator while building European capacity, instead of starting a broad trade war that slows the transition.

Third, Europe faces internal divisions. Energy dependence is not only a foreign-policy problem but also a threat to European unity. The energy crisis following the Ukraine crisis revealed how differently member states respond to external shocks. Some wish to cut Russian gas entirely, others do not; some turn to nuclear power, others reject it; some have stronger fiscal capacity to subsidize households and businesses, while others lack the resources. As a result, every energy crisis becomes an intra-European political crisis. If Europe fails to make energy cheap and abundant, these divisions will deepen with each subsequent crisis, as we have already seen with the ongoing Strait of Hormuz crisis.

Fourth, the nature of the EU itself creates distinct constraints. Europe is a slow-moving bureaucratic machine. This gives it strength but it also creates rigidity. The United States can change trade policy quickly when its administration changes. Europe cannot. Once tariffs, legal procedures, trade barriers and regulatory frameworks are set in motion, reversal becomes slow and politically costly.

That is why Europe should be especially cautious before starting a trade war with China. Trade wars, like other forms of war, are easy to begin and difficult to end. They create vested interests; they harden political narratives; they make compromise look like weakness; they turn technical disputes into questions of pride. Once China is framed primarily as a threat to Europe's industry, it becomes harder to acknowledge that Chinese technology may also be useful to Europe's green transition. Recent conflicts have taught a simple lesson: wars often begin with confidence and end with exhaustion. Economic wars are no exception. They may start as limited measures, but they can expand and spiral out of control. Europe should not sleepwalk into such a conflict.

The smarter path is therefore to reduce strategic vulnerability in the long run, not limit its vision to the short-term balance of the books. That means resisting the temptation of a broad trade war with China, which is dangerous not only economically but strategically. Instead, Europe should pursue a dual strategy: using affordable Chinese clean-tech imports to accelerate the green transition today while systematically building the European industrial and technological capacity that will reduce dependence tomorrow.

Strategic autonomy will not be achieved by raising the cost of Europe's own transformation. It will be achieved by making the green transition faster and more resilient. Europe's choice is not between dependence on China and protectionism. The real choice is between a pragmatic strategy that uses global clean-tech capacity to accelerate European renewal, and a defensive strategy that traps Europe longer in its old nightmares and insecurities.

The author is an associate professor at the School of Public Policy at Hunan University. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:53 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:53 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

MNCs tap China's industrial ecosystem

Nation's robust supply chains, AI, green drive help firms scale up

By ZHONG NAN
zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

For senior executives from multinational companies including Germany's Covestro AG and the United States' Boeing Co and Carrier Global Corp, June brought a steady stream of visits to China, where they unveiled expansion plans, launched new projects and participated in the fourth China International Supply Chain Expo in the world's second-largest economy.

Among them, Covestro made a major investment announcement in late June. The German chemicals producer will build a new methylene diphenyl diisocyanate production line with annual capacity of 660,000 metric tons at its integrated site in Shanghai. MDI is a synthetic chemical used primarily to manufacture polyurethane foams and coatings.

Holly Lei, senior vice-president of Covestro, said the investment, which coincides with the 25th anniversary of the groundbreaking of the group's Shanghai integrated site, reflects Covestro's confidence in China's integrated industrial ecosystem, innovation capabilities and deep talent pool, while strengthening long-term supply for customers in China and across the Asia-Pacific region.

Covestro's decision reflects a broader trend of multinational companies increasingly viewing China not only as a major market, but also as a strategic hub for innovation, manufacturing and resilient supply chains.

Backed by China's continued move up the value chain and broader market opening-up, its supply chains are evolving beyond the traditional role of the "world's factory" into a key anchor for global innovation and industrial collaboration, providing multinational companies with greater certainty in an increasingly volatile global economy.

As global trade and investment undergo profound changes, China is strengthening industrial and supply chain resilience while expanding high-standard opening-up through wider market access, an improved business environment and measures to stabilize foreign investment, said Li Xingqian, vice-chairman of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade.

The government rolled out a 15-measure action plan to stabilize foreign investment in late June, with steps to expand market access, streamline investment procedures, strengthen investment promotion, improve services for foreign businesses and refine foreign investment management, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

The plan prioritizes expanding market access in services, finance and pharmaceuticals, among other sectors, while streamlining processes for cross-border mergers and acquisitions, data flows and domestic reinvestment by foreign firms.

Wang Ya, head of the department of foreign investment administration at the Ministry of Commerce, said the measures are expected to encourage multinational companies to further integrate into China's industrial ecosystem by expanding investment in research, advanced manufacturing and high-end services, helping China consolidate its position in global industrial and supply chains.

Boeing is among the companies responding to these opportunities. The US aircraft manufacturer inaugurated a new maintenance facility in Shanghai last month that was developed in cooperation with Chinese partners and is one of the largest of such facilities in Asia.

Landon Loomis, president for China at Boeing Co, predicted that over the next 20 years, Boeing expects the size of China's commercial aircraft fleet to double, driving demand for about 250,000 additional aviation professionals, including pilots, maintenance technicians, cabin crew and ground service personnel. The company will continue to increase investment in human capital development in the country.

"Boeing currently works with around 40 suppliers in China, with components produced by these suppliers incorporated into Boeing aircraft delivered worldwide," said Loomis, adding that the continued expansion of e-commerce and global trade is expected to drive long-term demand for air cargo services and support growth in Boeing's freighter business.

That long-term confidence is shared across industries. Michael Gierges, president of climate solutions for Asia-Pacific, Middle East and Africa at Carrier, said the US intelligent climate and energy solutions provider no longer views China simply as a regional market, but as a key driver of the group's global growth strategy.

China's push to expand computing infrastructure and advance green urban development will create fresh growth opportunities for Carrier to deepen investment in manufacturing, supply chain development, innovation and digital technologies in the country during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, said Gierges.

"Cooling systems account for a significant share of data center energy consumption, making efficiency improvements increasingly important," he added.

Reflecting this long-term commitment, Carrier, the parent company of Toshiba HVAC and Viessmann Climate Solutions, has continued to expand its manufacturing footprint in China. It launched a new air-cooled chiller production line at its facility in Shanghai's Baoshan district, with investment exceeding 100 million yuan ($14.7 million) in January.

Together with additional production lines yet to be commissioned and supporting facilities, the project's total investment is expected to reach 400 million yuan.

The continued inflow of foreign investment underscores the confidence of multinational companies in the Chinese market. Foreign direct investment in China's high-tech industries expanded 19.4 percent year-on-year to 130.14 billion yuan in the first five months of 2026. The sector accounted for 39.8 percent of the country's total FDI, up 9.4 percentage points from the same period last year, statistics from the Ministry of Commerce showed.

In the meantime, investment from the United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, Switzerland and the US surged by 285.5 percent, 108.6 percent, 49.4 percent and 17.3 percent on a yearly basis, respectively.

Pushing back against the so-called "China Shock 2.0" narrative, which portrays China's development as a disruption to the global economy, Huang Yiping, dean of Peking University's National School of Development, said that while trade tensions persist, growing investment, green transition needs and shared support for multilateralism continue to sustain China's economic cooperation with the world, particularly with the European Union.

China and the EU can deepen cooperation in green development and advanced manufacturing by combining China's large-scale industrial capacity with Europe's strengths in low-carbon technologies, industrial innovation and high-end engineering, said Huang.

Practical cooperation can also be expanded in industrial artificial intelligence, high-end services and third-country markets, enabling both sides to leverage their complementary strengths and generate new growth opportunities, he added.

Market watchers said that rather than displacing other economies, China's industrial upgrading is creating new opportunities for cross-border innovation, investment and industrial cooperation.

Vaughn Barber, chairman of the China-Australia Chamber of Commerce, echoed that view. "China's open and resilient industrial ecosystem offers opportunities for deeper cooperation," he said.

By leveraging complementary strengths, Chinese and Australian companies can accelerate energy transition, advance industrial upgrading and create long-term value through practical partnerships, said Barber.

AI, digitalization and green technologies are emerging as the next frontier for multinational companies in China, with the country's industrial ecosystem providing an ideal environment for commercialization and industrial application.

Lin Chunmei, president and general manager of Corning China, said the US industrial materials manufacturer has consistently worked alongside its industry partners in China, evolving from technology introduction to collaborative innovation and from "bringing in" to "going global".

Lin said AI is rapidly reshaping the global industrial landscape, creating new demand for critical technologies and infrastructure.

"Leveraging our long-standing expertise in materials science and key components, Corning will continue to support next-generation computing infrastructure while actively contributing to the upgrading of China's industrial ecosystem," she added.



Visitors get to know information at Siemens's exhibition area during the fourth China International Supply Chain Expo in Beijing on June 23. ZHANG CHENLIN / XINHUA





Left: An employee introduces a Boeing 777X passenger aircraft model during the 16th International Exhibition on Transport Technology and Equipment in Beijing on Sept 23, 2024. ZHANG XIUKE / FOR CHINA DAILY
Right: Visitors view products from US industrial materials manufacturer Corning during the third China International Supply Chain Expo in Beijing on July 19. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

System-level certainty delivers confidence companies demand

REPORTER'S LOG
By Zhong Nan

Throughout June, I traveled from Beijing to Urumqi in Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region to cover major trade events, including the fourth China International Supply Chain Expo and the ninth China-Eurasia Expo. I found myself asking executives from multinational companies the same question: Has anything fundamentally changed about investing in China?

Their answers were rarely identical, but they almost always pointed in the same direction.

The more executives I interviewed, the more I noticed an interesting pattern. Tariffs were mentioned. Geopolitics came up. Supply-chain diversification was part of almost every conversation. Yet none of those topics became the center of the discussion. What they wanted to talk about instead was China's manufacturing ecosystem — and why it remains remarkably difficult to replicate.

That contrast made me rethink a common assumption. China's competitive advantage today is no longer defined primarily by low-cost manufacturing. It increasingly lies in something much harder to replicate: system-level certainty — the ability to innovate, manufacture and deliver efficiently within an integrated industrial ecosystem.

A French executive described China's manufacturing ecosystem as "the place where problems get solved overnight." It was the clearest explanation I heard for why companies continue investing here despite growing external uncertainties.

During factory visits and interviews, I noticed executives talked less about saving money than about saving time. In advanced manufacturing, speed itself has become a competitive advantage. Design changes quickly reach suppliers, tooling is modified within hours and production resumes with minimal disruption. Engineers, suppliers and customers often operate within the same industrial cluster, solving problems face to face rather than across continents.

That ecosystem delivers what every business values most: certainty. Products move from prototype to mass production faster, supply disruptions are resolved more efficiently and production scales without rebuilding supplier networks, thanks to dense industrial clusters in regions such as the Yangtze River Delta region and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

Whether interviewing CEOs from ABB, Danfoss, Decathlon, Maersk or Schneider Electric, I kept hearing different versions of the same conclusion. Many multinational companies are diversifying parts of their production networks, but few believe another location can match China's combination of supplier density, engineering capability, logistics efficiency, manufacturing scale and infrastructure.

Increasingly, they describe China not only as one of their largest markets, but also as an innovation hub and strategic manufacturing base.

Chinese manufacturers are also competing less on costs than on innovation. Across industries from electric vehicles and industrial equipment to medical devices and consumer electronics, companies are investing more heavily in research and development, developing proprietary technologies and moving further up the value chain.

Conversations with executives have also shifted from labor costs toward innovation, engineering capability and commercialization speed. The focus is becoming less about where products are assembled and more about where ideas can be brought to market most efficiently.

None of this suggests China's industrial upgrading is complete. High-end semiconductor design software, certain advanced medical technologies and stronger global brand recognition still require sustained investment and technological breakthroughs.

Perhaps the biggest misconception I encounter is the belief that China's manufacturing competitiveness depends primarily on subsidies or inexpensive labor. Yet executives making big-ticket investment decisions rarely emphasize either. Instead, they point to reliable suppliers, experienced engineers, integrated industrial clusters, resilient logistics and confidence that production will continue even when uncertainty grows elsewhere.

Those capabilities cannot be replicated simply by relocating a factory in India, Vietnam and Mexico, or imposing another tariff. They are the result of decades of industrial accumulation, continuous innovation and close collaboration across entire supply chains.

As global businesses navigate geopolitical tensions and supply-chain restructuring, the conversation is becoming less about whether China remains the world's factory. It is increasingly about how China is evolving into a source of innovation, industrial collaboration and system-level certainty.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:53 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:53 PM

BUSINESSINSIGHT

Chinese firms reshape global industrial chains

EAGLE EYE
By Liu Xiaochun



ILLUSTRATION GENERATED BY AI

Global industrial chains and structures are constantly evolving, alternating between periods of relative stability and of profound disruption. Industrial restructuring refers to periods of accelerated change, such as the one currently underway. The forces behind such restructuring can broadly be divided into two categories: geopolitical competition and technological change. The two are closely intertwined, although their relative importance varies over time. At present, both are driving the reconfiguration of global industry, with geopolitical competition playing the dominant role.

Historically, major waves of global industrial restructuring have been initiated and led by advanced economies, with their large corporations possessing technological and financial advantages. Other countries and firms have generally played reactive roles, gradually adapting as a new global industrial equilibrium emerged. The current round is different. China and Chinese companies have shifted from passive responders to active participants in shaping global industrial restructuring.

At the early stage of this transition, China proposed the Belt and Road Initiative, anticipating changes in the global economic landscape. At the corporate level, overseas expansion initially emerged as a response to changing market conditions. As more companies expanded abroad, however, Chinese enterprises have increasingly become an important force in reshaping global industrial and supply chains.

This new wave of international expansion has several distinctive characteristics.

First, an unprecedented number of Chinese firms have entered overseas markets within a relatively short period. Unlike earlier waves of industrial relocation, which were concentrated in a limited number of destinations, Chinese companies are investing across every continent. Participants range from large corporations to small and medium-sized enterprises and even individual entrepreneurs.

Second, overseas expansion now spans virtually every industrial sector. Rather than concentrating on labor-intensive manufacturing, Chinese companies are expanding across the full industrial spectrum, including advanced manufacturing, new energy vehicles, financial technology, telecommunications infrastructure, consumer brands, e-commerce and technology start-ups. Many young tech firms are pursuing offshore markets from the very beginning of their development.

Third, Chinese companies are increasingly expanding abroad as integrated industrial clusters rather than as individual firms. One of Chinese manufacturing's greatest competitive strengths lies in the coordination and efficiency of its industrial and supply chains. Many companies find that production supported by Chinese supply networks remains more efficient and cost-effective than relying entirely on local suppliers. As a result, entire industrial ecosystems — including suppliers, managers, engineers and technical personnel — are moving overseas together, creating a new model of global industrial organization.

Fourth, the scale of this expansion is unprecedented. Given the size of China's economy, both the number of companies and the volume of investment are exceptionally large. For many developing economies and smaller markets, Chinese enterprises quickly become significant industrial participants, raising local industrial capacity while also creating competitive pressure for existing businesses.

Fifth, this globalization is being driven by companies from a developing country rather than advanced economies. Historically, multinational expansion benefited from the economic, technological and geopolitical advantages of developed countries. Chinese companies often operate under different perceptions in host countries. While many governments welcome Chinese investment, Chinese firms may encounter social and commercial challenges that differ from those historically experienced by Western multinationals.

These characteristics are generating new opportunities as well as new challenges.

For many countries in the Global South, China's manufacturing capabilities, infrastructure expertise and integrated supply chains create an opportunity to accelerate industrialization and infrastructure modernization. Cluster-based investment can establish complete industrial ecosystems, infrastructure and business models within relatively short periods, potentially shortening development paths that historically required decades.

At the same time, as Chinese companies expand internationally, Chinese technological standards, industrial standards, digital technologies and business practices are increasingly being adopted overseas. In the past, Chinese firms generally participated in supply chains organized by multinational corporations and therefore followed externally established rules and standards. Today, Chinese companies are increasingly organizing their own international industrial and supply chains, particularly in emerging industries where they possess technological leadership.

The expansion of Chinese companies also presents short-term challenges for host economies. Although Chinese investment can contribute to industrial upgrading, economic growth, trade and improvements in living standards, it may also create adjustment pressures for local industries and interest groups. Different countries, reflecting their own political systems, legal frameworks, cultural particulars and national interests, are likely to respond in different ways. While some may adopt restrictive measures, many are expected to balance short-term pressures against long-term development opportunities.

Chinese companies themselves are entering largely uncharted territory. Their international operations generate service needs that differ from those traditionally associated with multinational investment, including legal protection, security, cross-border financing, payment and settlement, treasury management and other forms of professional support. Respecting local laws, customs and cultures remains essential, but these measures alone may not fully address the challenges arising from this new phase of globalization.

Supporting Chinese companies operating overseas should therefore become an important component of China's participation in global industrial restructuring. Financial regulation should adapt to growing cross-border capital flows by coordinating the management of domestic and international financial resources. Policies governing credit, insurance, bond issuance, foreign exchange, cross-border payments and related financial services should evolve in line with the needs of internationally expanding companies and international practice.

Shanghai should be developed into a comprehensive service center for Chinese companies operating abroad by strengthening its role in cross-border financing, forex trading, payment and settlement, treasury services and international legal, accounting and arbitration services. Large commercial banks should establish integrated domestic and overseas service systems capable of supporting industrial clusters rather than serving companies individually. Insurers, investment banks and other financial institutions should accelerate their offshore presence so that they can better support Chinese companies overseas.

China should also use this development to promote its approaches to green finance and sustainable investment internationally, encourage futures exchanges to develop products and trading models that better serve actively globalizing Chinese companies, and foster cooperation between large and small financial institutions to build integrated service chains for overseas businesses.

Beyond financial services, greater policy coordination is needed. While respecting companies' commercial decisions, the geographic distribution of overseas industries should receive appropriate strategic guidance. More Chinese standards should gradually evolve from market practices into internationally recognized institutional standards. Tax incentives, stronger protection for overseas personnel and assets, and broader policy support should also be considered to facilitate the long-term development of Chinese enterprises operating — and wishing to operate — abroad.

The writer is vice-president of the Shanghai Finance Institute. The article is translated from a recent speech by Liu at a CF40 quarterly seminar.
The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

A partnership through thick and thin — and primed to grow

MAIN STREET
By Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber


Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber

There is a Chinese saying that sums up the partnership between the United Arab Emirates and China. "A long road tests a horse's strength; time reveals a person's heart." In other words, the strongest partnerships take time to build, are tested by distance and are reinforced by results. The UAE and China have been building ours for more than 40 years, through every market cycle.

Last year, non-oil trade between our two countries crossed 800 billion yuan ($118 billion) for the first time, growing by nearly a quarter in a single year, making China the UAE's largest trading partner, and the UAE China's largest partner in the Middle East and Africa.

In April, His Highness Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, crown prince of Abu Dhabi, led a senior UAE delegation to Beijing, where two dozen agreements were signed across the sectors of energy, technology, finance and infrastructure.

Recently, I visited Shanghai to help keep the positive momentum going and turn shared ambition into commercial reality, because a partnership this strong is not meant to stand still.

Both our countries align national purpose with economic growth through strategic clarity. China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) sets out a clear ambition — to translate advances in science and technology into substantial, people-centric progress.

The UAE is equally focused on building the economy of the future through artificial intelligence, advanced manufacturing and the energy that powers them. We see ourselves as a natural partner for that journey across the energy value chain that makes all progress possible.

UAE companies are building from a position of strength. China is Abu Dhabi National Oil Company's single largest customer for our cost and carbon-competitive crude and refined products. Chinese companies are among our most significant partners across our upstream concessions, downstream businesses and operating companies.

And through Masdar, our renewable energy champion, our collaboration goes beyond the barrel into new energies, where we partner across the wind, solar and the battery value chain.

Recently, we took our partnership deeper across four key pillars.

Regarding supply, during my recent visit, Abu Dhabi National Oil Company announced a new agreement to deliver an additional 134,000 barrels of crude per day to China, providing more of the dependable, competitively priced energy its economy runs on.

Backed by a $150 billion investment program, we are raising our crude production capacity to five million barrels a day by 2027, while continuing to invest in resilient routes to market. Our Murban crude is light, low in sulfur and among the lowest-carbon-intensity oil produced anywhere, and it reaches Chinese ports on one of the shortest voyages of any major supplier.

Regarding distribution, we have finalized an agreement to build four new next-generation gas vessels, in addition to two already under construction. Shanghai's shipyards are building the fleet of the future and together, we will help supply energy across the economies of the Belt and Road region.

As for petrochemicals, we are making progress on our joint venture with Borouge and Wanhua Chemical to develop a state-of-the-art polyolefin complex in Fujian province. At the same time, through our international investment arm XRG, Covestro is expanding its advanced materials production in China.

Together, these investments will strengthen integrated supply chains and expand the availability of specialty plastics and critical materials essential for high-tech manufacturing, data centers and the circular economy of the 21st century.

Regarding clean energy, through Masdar, we are expanding our partnership across the renewable energy and battery storage value chain. Chinese companies already provide the components for many of our solar projects and will be an integral partner in the world's first round-the-clock solar project in the UAE, supplying the batteries that will help provide 1 gigawatt of uninterrupted clean power for industrial and domestic consumers in Abu Dhabi.

This level of collaboration reflects a partnership in motion that moves the UAE-China relationship beyond supply and demand into co-investment, industrial collaboration and value creation across the board.

Chinese companies are part of the fabric of the UAE's economy, contributing directly to our continued economic success. Building on that foundation, there is significant opportunity to expand investment, strengthen industrial ties and create even greater shared value.

In a fast-evolving world, partnerships that can deliver both stability and transformation matter more than ever. The UAE-China partnership is already proving to be one of the most consequential.

The writer is the United Arab Emirates' minister of industry and advanced technology. He is also managing director and group CEO of Abu Dhabi National Oil Company, executive chairman of XRG, ADNOC's international investment company, and chairman of renewable energy company Masdar.
The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:53 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:53 PM

CHINA

Police crack down on FIFA World Cup betting rings

By YANG ZEKUN
yangzekun@chinadaily.com.cn

Police in several Chinese cities have cracked down on illegal online gambling linked to soccer World Cup matches, detaining multiple suspects and warning the public to stay alert to betting scams disguised as "high odds", "expert predictions" or "guaranteed profit" opportunities.

As the 2026 FIFA World Cup gains momentum, gambling rings have used match traffic to lure internet users through social media posts, chat groups, offshore gambling websites and rebate schemes, police said.

Authorities in Huzhou and Hangzhou in Zhejiang province, Xi'an in Shaanxi province, Jiangyou in Sichuan province and Yulin in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region have recently uncovered cases involving hidden betting operations, promotion of gambling and illegal fund flows. While the cases share similar methods, each also showed varied tactics used to attract gamblers or evade investigation.

In Huzhou, police found that four suspects, including one surnamed Yang, had repeatedly posted "guaranteed profit" and "high-odds cashback" advertisements on social media before the World Cup began. The group allegedly drew users to soccer betting chat groups, updated match odds, issued betting "guides" and directed members to gambling websites or group operators. Four suspects were detained, and the case involved more than 1.5 million yuan ($221,000) in fund flows.

In late June, police in Jiande, Hangzhou, broke up another illegal gambling ring and detained eight people. The case involved more than 1 million yuan in fund flows.

Police said the group operated a so-called overseas World Cup betting market, using high odds and claims of accurate predictions to lure internet users, relatives and friends into placing bets. Unlike the Huzhou case, the group relied on cross-border gambling websites, assigned personnel to manage betting markets online and profited from rebates.

Police in Jiangyou also dismantled a ring that secretly promoted "World Cup exclusive markets" through instant messaging groups and WeChat groups. Investigators said the suspects used offshore websites offering high odds and multiple betting options, while arranging personnel to manage betting markets. To evade investigation, members frequently changed chat accounts and used temporary payment channels. The case involved more than 300,000 yuan and four main suspects were detained.

In mid-June, police from Xi'an's Weiyang district uncovered a group that used social media groups to update odds, open online betting games, recruit gamblers and settle funds offline. After identifying the group during early morning analyses on June 18, police formed a 20-member task force to trace clues, identify suspects, collect electronic evidence and check fund flows. The case, which involved more than 100,000 yuan, was solved within 19 hours and led to the detention of seven suspects.

Additionally, cybersecurity police in Yulin, Guangxi, uncovered a gambling promotion case under the "Clean Net 2026" campaign. Since May, police have found large numbers of gambling adverts in pictures, text and videos on multiple social media platforms. Investigators said a 25-year-old suspect surnamed Chen had organized a studio to provide traffic promotion and operational support for gambling websites. Chen and others were detained, and the case is under further investigation.

Police said soccer World Cup-related online gambling is deceptive, spreads quickly and may lead to fraud, money laundering and other crimes. Several online platforms have also launched special campaigns to remove illegal betting information, block accounts, delete posts and comments, and report clues to police.

Authorities reminded the public that online gambling is illegal and that promises of "sure wins" or "high returns" are often traps. Internet users should avoid joining betting groups, clicking gambling links or transferring money to strangers, and should report gambling-related information to the police.

Tour of Lhasa



Cyclists ride past the Potala Palace during the finale of the 2026 tour of Lhasa, Xizang autonomous region, on Sunday. The event featured men's and women's elite road races and open mountain bike races, covering a total distance of 190 kilometers and attracting more than 800 competitors. KUNGA LEZANG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Plans for three-tier eldercare network

System to extend from urban centers to remote rural communities by 2029

By LI LEI
lilei@chinadaily.com.cn

The Ministry of Civil Affairs has unveiled a plan to build a national eldercare network over the next three years by integrating fragmented care resources into a three-tier system that extends from urban centers to remote rural communities.

The ministry aims to have the network in place by 2029 and further strengthen it by 2035, according to a guideline released on Wednesday.

At a news conference following the guideline's release, officials elaborated on the three-tier structure, which consists of county-level elderly care service management platforms, township- or subdistrict-level service centers and village- or community-level service facilities.

The system is designed to provide seamless care across home-, community- and institution-based settings.

"The three-tier network is not a simple hierarchical structure, but an organic whole," said Sun Wencan, deputy director of the ministry's department of elderly care services. The county-level platform serves as the system's "brain" and "nerve center", he said.

It coordinates with provincial- and municipal-level high-quality elderly care providers to perform functions such as service demonstration, industry guidance, emergency response, resource coordination and data aggregation.

> "The three-tier network is not a simple hierarchical structure, but an organic whole."
>
> **Sun Wencan,** deputy director of the Ministry of Civil Affairs' department of elderly care services.

Township-level service centers function as the system's "backbone" and "bridge", providing services including professional care, visitation care, family support and other extended services.

Established on the foundation of renovated high-quality elderly care institutions and comprehensive senior service centers, one regional center can serve multiple townships or subdistricts, Sun said.

At the grassroots level, village- and community-based facilities operate as the network's "terminals", providing daytime care, home-based services, short-term respite care, meal assistance and visitation services.

These facilities are designed to identify the needs of older residents and deliver services close to home, he added.

Beyond outlining the network's structure, Sun noted that its purpose is to address both the strict care needs of seniors with disabilities or cognitive impairment and the diverse needs of healthy, active older adults through services such as meal assistance, social engagement and recreational programs.

For frail and disabled seniors, county-level platforms will coordinate professional care for those with severe disabilities, while township-level centers will provide centralized care for people with milder conditions, supplemented by home-based services and respite care for family caregivers.

The plan builds on China's rapidly expanding elderly care system. By the end of 2025, the country had 396,000 elderly care institutions and facilities, with nursing beds accounting for 67.5 percent of all beds in elderly care institutions, Sun said.

Public county-level elderly care institutions have achieved full coverage nationwide. About 30 percent now function as comprehensive county-level elderly care service management platforms, while more than 60 percent of townships and subdistricts have established regional elderly care service centers.

Officials from Beijing's Dongcheng district and Nanping in Fujian province shared local best practices at the news conference, highlighting efforts ranging from urban resource coordination to improvements in rural elderly care services.

"We will promote these experiences and guide local governments to accelerate the improvement of the three-tier system to better meet the diverse and multilevel needs of senior residents," Sun said.

Panda turns one



A giant panda cub is officially named "Wangshu" during its first-birthday celebration at Chongqing Zoo on Sunday. The female cub, which weighed just 188 grams at birth, has grown to 36.5 kilograms in her first year. TANG YI / XINHUA

Single-Atom Catalysis research earns science award

By LI MENGHAN
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn


Zhang Tao

As the invisible engines of modern chemistry, catalysts help produce the gasoline that powers cars, the fertilizers that promote food cultivation and the polymers used to make clothing, making them indispensable to modern life.

For more than a century, however, the chemical industry has faced a costly obstacle. Its most effective catalysts rely on rare and expensive precious metals such as platinum and palladium, which are even more valuable than gold. In conventional industrial processes, these metals are used in the form of nanoparticles or clusters, leaving a large percent of the metal atoms buried inside the material and unable to take part in chemical reactions. As a result, most of the precious metal is wasted.

After decades of research, Zhang Tao, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and his team proposed the concept of Single-Atom Catalysis in 2011. Instead of using groups of metal atoms, the approach spreads individual metal atoms across the surface of a supporting material, allowing each atom to act as an active site where chemical reactions take place.

This increases the use of precious metal atoms from only a few percent to nearly 100 percent.

The breakthrough was first demonstrated using platinum-group metals and has since been extended to more than 40 elements in the periodic table. In recognition of its fundamental contribution to catalysis research, the work received the first prize of the State Natural Science Award in Beijing on Wednesday.

"The defining feature of Single-Atom Catalysis is that it allows us to study catalytic reactions at the level of individual atoms rather than larger particles," said Zhang, who is also a professor at the Dalian Institute of Chemical Physics of the CAS.

"Through theoretical studies, we have explained why Single-Atom Catalysis remains stable and how they behave during chemical reactions," said Li Jun, a team member who is also a CAS academician and a professor at Tsinghua University.

"This has changed catalyst research from relying largely on trial and error to designing catalysts based on scientific understanding," Li added.

Zhang said the new understanding has broad applications and has sparked worldwide interest in turning the concept into practical technologies, ranging from pharmaceutical manufacturing to the production of fine chemicals. Thousands of research groups from nearly 100 countries and regions have published more than 20,000 academic papers on the subject.

"This is not merely an academic pursuit, but a strategic response to national needs," Zhang said. "Securing independent control over core catalyst technologies is vital for our energy security and chemical industry."

Behind the achievement lies a decades-long journey from theory to practical application.

When Zhang first proposed the concept in his doctoral dissertation in the 1980s, the technology needed to verify it did not exist.

"In the beginning, we had the idea but no way to observe it," Zhang said. "It felt as if an elephant stood right in front of you, yet in the pitch-black darkness, without a flashlight and with the path choked by weeds, it remained invisible."

The technical limitations of the time made the work that much harder. The domestically produced chromatograph used by the team was basic and plagued by severe signal fluctuations, while power outages were common.

"Often, just as you were about to collect the final data, the power would flicker, erasing an entire day's work," Zhang said. He often spent days in the laboratory, sleeping on a straw mat on the floor while waiting for the equipment to produce stable data.

Zhang said his determination was shaped in part by his early experiences in the mountains. Born in 1963 in Ankang, in the Qinba Mountains of Shaanxi province, he returned to his hometown to teach at a high school after graduation. Driven by a strong passion for scientific research, he later decided to pursue graduate studies.

"I taught during the day and prepared for my master's entrance examinations by lamplight at night, wrapped in a thick cotton-padded coat and felt boots to keep warm during the winter," he said. The experience taught him self-discipline, independence and perseverance, qualities that later helped him overcome repeated setbacks in research.

He also emphasized the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration. Zhang led the development and testing of the catalysts, connecting theoretical research with practical applications, while Li, a theoretical chemist, developed the scientific framework explaining why single atoms remain stable and how they drive chemical reactions.

"With advances in artificial intelligence and computer simulation, we are now using our understanding of these active sites to design and identify better catalysts more efficiently," Zhang said. "The combination of fundamental research and new technologies is expected to support the development of new energy and greener chemical manufacturing worldwide."

China seeks to attract more intl sci-tech institutions

BEIJING — In addition to hosting frontier research facilities and high-tech enterprises, Beijing is now turning its focus to attracting international science and technology organizations, doubling down on efforts to boost its scientific appeal.

The Chinese capital has recently started expanding its dedicated cluster of international sci-tech bodies, adding service stations, exhibition halls, meeting rooms and cross-border network workspaces to accommodate more institutions.

This expansion drive extends beyond Beijing. More international sci-tech organizations have established headquarters and core branches in China, from coastal economic powerhouses to inland western regions, spanning fields from digital Earth science to aerospace.

The Space Universities Administrative Committee of the International Astronautical Federation, with its headquarters in Paris, has established a permanent secretariat in Dalian, a port city in Liaoning province.

According to Yu Xiaozhou, committee chair and professor at Dalian University of Technology, China's appeal lies in its varied scenarios, massive data and long-term observation records of existing projects.

These are critical inputs for frontier basic research, and they are also "the main reason why the IAF values China so highly and is willing to pursue global cooperation with us," Yu said.

Complete industrial chains are another key attraction, according to Chen Kai, deputy director of the International Society of Sensing Technology.

Co-founded by institutions from 10 countries and regions, including the United Kingdom and Canada, the new society was established in May in Chengdu, Sichuan province. Chen said the city's strong research ecosystem and industrial foundation were decisive factors in its selection as the headquarters.

The concentration of sci-tech organizations in China not only promotes innovation in research and industries but also contributes to enhancing both the capacity and fairness of global science governance.

With rising concerns about fragmentation and rival blocs in international science, China-based groups are becoming "unbiased hubs" for cross-border cooperation, said Li Fei, an associate researcher at Zhejiang University.

"Global science governance is shifting from a Western-dominated club model to a more inclusive partnership model," Li noted.

The global science program, "An Eco-Secured Community with a Shared Future for Mankind", is a typical example. Launched by Chinese scientists, it aims to mobilize global expertise to address pressing ecological challenges. At its Beijing office, Thato Mokhethi, from Lesotho, was sorting reports as a program participant.

"Beijing is a nice place where I can talk to other scientists and think about the future of humanity together," the young African scholar said. The group is responsive to countries keen on advancing the program, and she is willing to share her findings with researchers in her home country, she added.

The push on global science collaboration is underpinned by China's policies.

Since 2016, China has laid out plans to encourage international science organizations to set up within the country. Besides Beijing and Shanghai, provinces including Shandong and Hainan have rolled out their own incentives, and economic powerhouses like Guangdong and Jiangsu provinces have offered cash rewards for successful headquarters or branch offices.

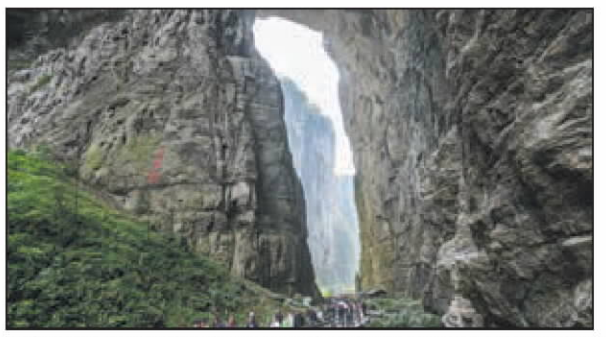
Chinese provinces and cities are continuing efforts to enhance their global appeal. Beijing, for instance, recently announced that it would ease cross-border data flows, internet access and personnel entry for international sci-tech groups based in the city.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:53 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:53 PM

Editor's note: *As protection of the planet's flora, fauna and resources becomes increasingly important, China Daily is publishing a series of stories to illustrate the country's commitment to safeguarding the natural world.*







Left: Tourists visit the Three Natural Bridges scenic area, part of the Wulong Karst World Heritage Site, in Wulong, Chongqing, in April. HE PENGLEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE **Center:** Stalactites are illuminated to draw tourists to Wulong's Furong Cave in April. HE PENGLEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE **Right:** Alpine rhododendron flowers blossom in Wulong's Zhaoyun Mountain in May. XIAO JIANGCHUAN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Karst landscape creates sustainable opportunities

Chongqing village seizes on World Heritage Site status for tourism bump

By **HOU LIQIANG** in Chongqing
houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

When Ran Yijie packed up his marketing degree and left his city job in 2021 to return to the rugged mountains of Chongqing, his neighbors thought he had lost his mind. He had successfully escaped the isolation of Jingzhu, a village once defined by severe rocky desertification, crushing poverty, and a mass exodus of its youth.

Today, nobody is questioning his sanity. Ran's family home is now a thriving local restaurant generating over 100,000 yuan ($14,000) annually, anchoring a massive reverse brain drain that is reshaping the economic landscape of Southwest China.

Driven by the strategic development of the nearby UNESCO Wulong Karst World Natural Heritage Site and the booming Fairy Mountain National Tourist Resort, Jingzhu has transformed from a dying hinterland into a magnet for young entrepreneurs and outside investors. In a crowning achievement, the United Nations World Tourism Organization has recognized it as one of the world's "Best Tourism Villages".

Wulong Karst, including the Three Natural Bridges, Furong Cave and the Houping Giant Doline, was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2007 as part of the South China Karst.

Karst landscapes are formed by limestone that has been eroded by dissolution, producing ridges, towers, fissures and sinkholes.

The economic numbers coming out of the region underscore a lucrative market centered around the rocks. In 2025, Wulong's scenic areas pulled in 52.1 million tourist visits, including nearly 800,000 international travelers, generating 25.1 billion yuan in total tourism revenue.

Jingzhu, with a population of 2,000 and located just six kilometers from the Fairy Mountain resort, has capitalized heavily on this influx.

Gao Yan, Party secretary of Jingzhu, said after Wulong's successful world heritage inscription and the opening of the Baotou-Maoming Expressway, villagers began developing high-altitude fruit picking and rural restaurants for tourists. After Fairy Mountain was upgraded into a national-level tourist resort in 2015, the village started to cultivate integrated enterprises covering leisure vacations, study tours, commerce and agriculture.

The timing, Gao said, allowed Jingzhu to leverage its proximity to the heritage site to expand its development.

In 2025, the village recorded over 1.5 million tourist visits, and tourism revenue of over 100 million yuan. Per capita disposable income among villagers has surpassed 27,000 yuan, a figure significantly higher than similar rural villages in Chongqing municipality.



Tourists visit the Three Natural Bridges scenic area in Wulong, Chongqing, in April. HE PENGLEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

"Local people have benefited from the heritage site," said Chen Zhang, head of the village's agriculture, culture and tourism development company. He said villagers' incomes have increased by more than 10 percent annually on average since the World Heritage Site was named.

Chen said fruit farmers no longer worry about sales. A grape grower once told him that revenue from the crop could reach about 600,000 yuan per hectare. At peak times, he said, as many as 350,000 long-stay visitors live in the nearby resort area for months, and many drive directly to the village to pick fruit.

"We do not really have to go out and sell," Chen said. "They come to us."

Thriving enterprises

Restaurateur Ran is among a number of young villagers who have found a way to share in that growth. With support from local authorities, he turned his family's idle house into a restaurant serving local cuisine. He said the local government covered the renovation costs as part of a homestay alliance policy, under which idle village houses are upgraded for business use and later returned to villagers, with the improvements left in place.

His mother, who began as a kitchen helper, prepares a local specialty soup, and his father has opened a small store beside the restaurant.

In recent years, nearly 200 people have either returned from outside or come to Jingzhu to develop new enterprises. They run homestays, grow fruit and operate restaurants, turning once-empty courtyards into bustling tourist hubs.

The village has 46 homestays and rural inns. Blueberries grown in the village can sell for 120 yuan per kilogram, while grapes and other high-altitude specialty fruits generate more than 150,000 yuan per hectare on average, according to village authorities.

The development has not come at the cost of abandoning ecological protection, with local officials saying Jingzhu maintains a forest coverage rate of about 75 percent, and a negative oxygen ion concentration of around 35,000 per cubic centimeter.

The village's approach, they said, is to keep the core heritage area under strict protection, allow appropriate use in buffer and surrounding areas, and help residents increase income through catering, homestays, fruit farming and other peripheral industries.

That approach reflects a broader model explored in Chongqing's Wulong district.

Liu Baodang, deputy secretary-general of the World Heritage Expert Committee of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration, said Wulong has put in place a three-layer protection and development system.

The core layer is strictly protected, the surrounding layer is developed through community participation, and the outer layer supports nature education, tourism, sports and cultural activities. "Protection and development no longer work against each other," Liu said.

In the core area, protection is enforced through legal and administrative mechanisms. Wulong established a world natural heritage prosecutors' office in 2024, integrating criminal, civil, administrative and public interest litigation functions related to environmental and resource protection.

Over the past three years, local authorities have handled more than 80 criminal cases related to environmental resources and more than 110 public interest litigation cases. More than 27 million yuan has been invested in heritage protection over the last five years. Construction projects are required to undergo planning and site checks before development.

Outdoor sporting competitions and activities have become another route for sustainable use. Fairy Mountain's scenic road is a core section of the China International Mountain Outdoor Sports Open, which has been running for more than two decades and has attracted competitors from over 70 countries, said Huang Wei, deputy head of Wulong's culture and tourism commission.

Wulong has 24 hiking routes spanning 774.64 km, he said. In 2024, its outdoor sports industry generated more than 1 billion yuan in revenue and received more than 10 million sports tourism visits, creating stable employment for more than 3,000 residents.

Chen Weihai, a researcher at the Institute of Karst Geology of the Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences, said Wulong Karst is of world-class quality. The three natural bridges within 1.5 km of the Three Natural Bridges form one of the world's largest beaded natural bridge groups, while the Houping Giant Doline cluster provides important evidence for studying karst development and regional geological change.

For Jingzhu village, however, the significance of the World Heritage Site is also visible in more ordinary scenes: A young man returning home to cook local dishes, families turning idle houses into businesses, fruit growers selling directly to visitors and old courtyards filling with people again.

The karst landscape neighboring Jingzhu brought tourists. Tourists brought business. Business helped bring young locals back.

"Without the World Natural Heritage Site, Jingzhu would not be what it is today," said Xie Yong, an official with the Fairy Mountain subdistrict government.

He said the village's "ecology plus culture and tourism" approach has become more than a development model. It is a path to rural vitalization built on the protection and sustainable use of natural heritage.

Life thrives on Mount Emei as conservation takes root

By **HOU LIQIANG** in Emei, Sichuan

Mount Emei has marked the 30th anniversary of its UNESCO World Heritage listing with a wave of biodiversity breakthroughs, successfully saving two critically endangered species once thought to be lost forever.

Through artificial breeding, precision tracking and a new smart monitoring network, local conservationists have successfully revived the *Parakmeria omeiensis* (a rare magnolia tree) and rediscovered the chevron-spotted brown frog — a "Lazarus taxon" that had vanished from scientific records for decades.

These breakthroughs are part of a broader ecological turnaround on the mountain. Over the last five years alone, local authorities have documented three animal species entirely new to science, alongside three newly recorded plant species and 16 newly recorded animal species.

The *Parakmeria omeiensis* is an evergreen tree endemic to Mount Emei and classified as a plant species with extremely small populations, said Yu Daoping, a researcher with the Sichuan Provincial Academy of Natural Resource Sciences.

The plant was first recorded by botanist Zheng Wanjun during fieldwork on Mount Emei in 1940 and was named in 1951 after its type locality, Yu said. It then disappeared from scientific observation for decades before researchers rediscovered one individual on a cliff in 1987. By 2012, only 74 wild individuals had been found, and the current wild population remains at just over 90 plants, Yu said.

In 2012, the species was included in China's conservation program for plant species with extremely small populations. It is also under first-class national protection and is listed as critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Yu said the magnolia is valuable not only because of its rarity, but also because members of the magnolia family are considered ancient groups among angiosperms. The species offers important evidence for studies of the origin, development and evolution of flowering plants and is also a reference indicator for regional forest ecosystem quality.

After more than 30 years of work, researchers have mastered seed propagation, grafting and other artificial breeding techniques, overcoming difficulties in fruiting, germination and seedling growth under natural conditions, Yu said. To date, more than 3,200 seedlings have been cultivated, and over 800 plants have been reintroduced in eight operations at five sites on Mount Emei, with survival rates remaining above 90 percent in the wild.

Another case is the chevron-spotted brown frog, or *Rana chevronta*, a critically endangered amphibian endemic to Mount Emei.

Liang Dong, an engineer at the ecological station of the Mount Emei forestry management office, said the frog has an extremely small population and a very narrow distribution range.

The species was first discovered in 1965 and named in 1978 by Hu Shuqin and Ye Changyuan, then researchers of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Liang said. For decades afterward, no living individual was recorded. Relying on field notes left by earlier zoologists to identify the historical discovery site, researchers found three individuals in 2024.

Liang said the frog lives in coniferous and broadleaf mixed forests at an altitude of about 1,800 meters, and feeds on insects and small animals. The site where it was rediscovered was the same as the location where it was found in 1965, and the timing of the two discoveries was also close, he said.

Researchers from the Chengdu Institute of Biology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Chengdu Normal University, Sichuan University and local institutions have strengthened studies and protection of the species in recent years, Liang said. The next step is to explore artificial breeding to increase its population.

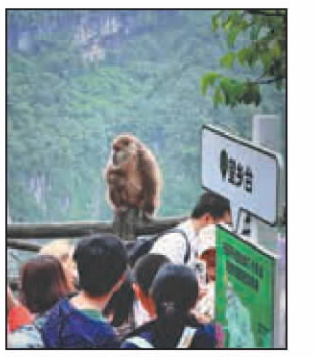
Habitat quality is crucial for the frog, he added. Monitoring work showed that the chemical oxygen demand level at one breeding site was only 5 to 8 milligrams per liter, indicating very clean water, according to Liang.

"Last year we tested the water at its breeding site, and the chemical oxygen demand level was only 5 to 8 milligrams per liter. What does that mean? It means even the drinking water from the tap at our homes might not be as clean as that water," he said.

To support such conservation work, monitoring capacity has also been strengthened. According to local conservation authorities, a biodiversity monitoring demonstration project has deployed 73 infrared cameras, including 22 smart devices capable of real-time data transmission. The grid-based network now covers 85 percent of the target area.

The system has collected 2,956 valid wildlife image records and identified 46 wildlife species, including one under first-class national protection, 16 under second-class national protection and five species on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

It has also helped authorities crack one poaching case. The project team plans to complete the deployment of 100 infrared cameras by the end of September and further explore artificial intelligence image recognition after the rainy season.



A macaque sitting on a railing on Mount Emei is at the center of tourists' attention in July 2024. DU LIANYI / CHINA DAILY

Known for its rich ecological resources, Mount Emei is home to more than 3,700 higher plant varieties and over 2,300 wild animal species, according to local conservation authorities. The mountain also serves as the type locality — the exact place where the very first specimen of a new species was collected — for 253 plant and 157 animal species.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:53 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:53 PM

LIFE



Lead singer Li Wei (center), bassist Zheng Jun (top left), guitarist Zeng Huizhen (top right), keyboardist Zeng Qingli (above left), and drummer Liu Shuangqing rock the stage in a graduation concert at Hubei Engineering University in Xiaogan, Hubei province, blending heartfelt farewells with a punk-inspired performance. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Rocking out a goodbye to students

Five dorm matrons surprise graduates with unforgettable performance, **Chen Meiling** and **Liu Kun** in Wuhan report.

The lights suddenly went out, and the audience fell silent. The drummer raised her sticks, held them aloft for a split second, then brought them crashing down.

"Hey, you in West Zone Dorm 19! What are you still doing after lights out?" "Girls in Sanli Dorm! If you don't sweep up all that hair, I'll think I've wandered into the Spider Cave!"

More than 2,000 glow sticks swayed across the arena. Onstage stood five dormitory matrons — familiar faces students had seen almost every day for years. But this was a side of them no one had seen before.

At a recent graduation concert at Hubei Engineering University in Xiaogan, Hubei province, a rock band made up of five dormitory matrons brought the house down.

The lineup featured lead singer Li Wei, bassist Zheng Jun, keyboardist Zeng Qingli, drummer Liu Shuangqing, and guitarist Zeng Huizhen. Usually seen hurrying through dormitories in work uniforms, the five women took the stage in punk-inspired outfits.

Zheng had her hair braided into tiny plaits for the first time in her life. Zeng Huizhen, who usually oversees the men's dormitories and is known for her stern demeanor, wrapped a sun-protection face covering around her head to complete her edgy look.

Averaging 50 years old, the women performed an original song, *Go Shine*, written for the occasion, as a heartfelt farewell to the graduating class.

The contrast between their everyday jobs and rock-star personas, combined with humorous and touching lyrics peppered with local dialect, drew wave after wave of cheers. Videos of the performance quickly went viral online.

Singer Li, 46, is the youngest in the band. She got a wild perm especially for this performance.

"My palms were sweating from nerves before going on stage. I never get flustered when chatting with hundreds of students during dorm inspections, yet standing under the bright lights of the huge gymnasium stage made my legs go weak. We kept encouraging each other right before our performance," she says.

"But the moment we stepped onto the stage and heard the students cheering, with glow sticks lighting up the crowd, all my nerves disappeared. All I could see were the kids, smiling and full of excitement."

Li has worked as a dormitory matron for four years. Her days are spent keeping dormitory records, making nightly rounds, mending torn clothes, and lining up electric scooters outside the buildings. Thanks to her outgoing personality, students affectionately call her Sister Wei.

Her favorite lyrics read: "If you're wronged and have nowhere to turn, just buy a ticket and come back. ... A window in the dormitory building will always stay open for you."

"I want them to know they don't have to carry every burden alone," she adds.

Practice makes perfect

None of the five women had any real musical experience before joining the band.

"I can't even read sheet music, let alone play an instrument," says keyboardist Zeng Qingli, 49.

For a month, they rehearsed during work breaks in the dormitory duty room. With the curtains drawn and their instruments unplugged, they silently counted beats and practiced finger movements.

"We didn't want to make noise that might disturb students studying for exams or sleeping in the dorms," says Liu, the drummer.



The rock band's performance captivates students at the venue, and its videos draw more than 3 million views online.

She says the rehearsals were meant to remain a secret.

"But some students walking past the duty room late at night heard us humming and guessed we were preparing for a performance," Liu says.

"They even told us not to push ourselves too hard."

Without a drum kit at home, Liu lined up washbasins, rice bowls and pot lids in her kitchen, using chopsticks as drumsticks while following tutorial videos on her phone.

"My husband laughed at first, saying I'd turned the kitchen into a band rehearsal room," she says.

"Later, he sat with me every day, helping me keep time."

The idea for the performance began when the university's facilities and logistics department and the Communist Youth League Committee started planning a performance for the graduation concert. Graduates from the School of Literature, Journalism and Communication suggested writing a song dedicated to the dormitory matrons who had cared for them throughout their university years.

The concert's faculty adviser believed rock music best captured the energy and optimism of graduates about to begin a new chapter in life.

To create an original song, Ouyang Chengxiu and his students interviewed classmates and dormitory matrons, collecting stories that reflected everyday moments and the deep bonds between them.

The lyrics recall students pretending to be asleep when they heard the matrons' jangling keys, hiding laptops beneath blankets, tucking takeout into wardrobes, or climbing over campus walls late at night with excuses about buying medicine.

The song went through more than 10 revisions before it was finalized.

"Our concept was built around contrast and resonance," Ouyang says. "We wanted to break the stereotype that dormitory matrons are simply there to check rooms."

The five performers were selected from across the university. After speaking with them, Ouyang's team realized how many moving stories they had.

No matter how late students returned, the matrons always left a door open for them. Years after graduation, many former students still send local specialties from their hometowns or greetings during festivals. "We wove those genuine moments into the lyrics," Ouyang says.

Memories and wishes

The four-minute performance quickly went viral, drawing more than 3 million views on Sina Weibo. Many viewers say it brought back memories of their university days.

"I don't know them personally at all, but I'm in tears," one netizen writes.

Lei Wenjia, an English major who attended the concert, says she was stunned when the dormitory matrons walked onstage with their punk-inspired performance.

"The atmosphere was electric from start to finish. It made this graduation concert a truly unforgettable experience," she says.

For Lei, the song was filled with memories, heartfelt reminders and warm wishes. "I'll carry all of them with me as I begin the next chapter of my life," she says.

To Lei, the matrons were more than dorm supervisors. They reminded students to close their windows before it rained and to pack warm clothes when temperatures dropped, comforted them when they were upset, and shared their happiest moments.

Cao Yixi, who graduated with a degree in primary education, describes the matrons as dependable guardians who were always there whenever students ran into trouble.

"They could solve almost anything," she says. "Once I dropped something into a drain, and my dormitory matron lent me a long pair of tongs to retrieve it. It felt like there was nothing she couldn't do, and we could always turn to her for help."

Two days after the June 14 concert, at the university's graduation ceremony, Zeng Qingli fought back tears as she addressed the graduating class.

"There won't be any aunties reminding you to turn off the lights at night anymore. But I hope you'll always keep a light burning in your hearts and remember to take good care of yourselves," she says.

Zeng Qingli's duty room is like a treasure chest for over 3,400 students: sewing kits, bike pumps, screwdrivers, first-aid kits, and umbrellas. It stocks all kinds of daily supplies students might need. A well-worn registration book bears dense records of key and item borrowings. On average, at least five or six students come to her every day, and she always greets them with a smile.

"It feels like only yesterday that I watched them move into the dormitories," she says. "And now, it's time to say goodbye."

The five women shared one final message with the graduates: "Go after your dreams with courage and let your light shine. If you ever feel worn out, you're always welcome to come back. Don't compare yourself with others, no matter how your life turns out. Peace, smooth days and happiness matter most.

"Stay in touch with your family and your alma mater. When you have time, come back to Xiaogan and Hubei Engineering University. The corridors will still feel familiar, and we'll still be here. Just call out to us when you return, and we'll greet you with a smile and ask, 'Have you eaten yet?'"

Contact the writers at chenmeiling@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

The challenges and triumphs of rescuing stranded whales

HAIKOU — "A whale is stranded in the shallows and in critical condition!" This distress call had barely come through when Li Haiqin, 49, grabbed his life jacket and first-aid kit and rushed to the scene.

It may have been just another day for the head of a cetacean rescue team in Sanya, South China's Hainan province, but this mission exemplified his 14-year commitment to saving stranded whales and dolphins.

After founding the rescue team in 2012, Li has participated in more than 40 whale and dolphin rescue operations. In his eyes, every lost whale or dolphin deserves every possible effort to help it find its way back home.

With the skill of an experienced rescuer, he coordinates on-site rescue operations in an orderly fashion, directing fellow rescuers to use wet towels to prevent whales or dolphins from drying out. At the same time, he gently comforts the animals and spares no effort in their recovery.

A rough-toothed dolphin named "Yangyang" was found stranded in the shallow waters of Yalong Bay, Sanya, on April 24, 2025.

Lying on its side and showing signs of extreme weakness, the dolphin had its blowhole blocked by mud and sand at the time of discovery.

Upon receiving the alert, Li rushed to the scene and coordinated rescue efforts with the coastal police and local fishermen. Thanks to their joint efforts, "Yangyang" was successfully returned to the sea.

In Li's view, there is no easy path to saving a life. Every successful rescue is earned through perseverance, hard work and an unyielding commitment that never wavers.

On Jan 3, 2024, a short-finned pilot whale named "Haitang" was found stranded in Haitang Bay in Sanya, with severe shark-inflicted wounds and in critical condition.

Li promptly organized a team to transfer the animal to a shore-based rescue site, where treatment was provided with assistance from scientific experts, coast guard personnel and firefighters. Following 145 days of treatment and monitoring, "Haitang" recovered and was returned to nature.

Cetaceans, as flagship species of marine ecosystems, serve as a critical barometer of ocean health. Stranding-related deaths, caused by disease or disorientation, have become an intractable problem worldwide.

In China, more than 100 such incidents occur each year, and rescue efforts are often met with daunting challenges.



Li Haiqin (second from left) participates in a rescue effort for a short-finned pilot whale in Sanya, South China's Hainan province, in 2024. XINHUA

Over the years, Li has endured countless cuts and bruises of all sizes while navigating tidal flats and submerged reefs. Some of his wounds festered for as long as two months.

Li now envisions a conservation approach that goes beyond emergency response, evolving into an integrated model encompassing rescue operations, public science education and skills training.

"Rescuing stranded whales and dolphins is extremely challenging, and the success rate remains low. But as long as there is even a glimmer of hope, we will never give up," the rescuer says.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:53 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:53 PM

LIFE



Performers share their journeys into an art that once lacked a community, and how they gave the genre a distinct identity, which in turn provided them with hope, **Chen Nan** reports.

Street dance moves into the mainstream

What do hip-hop dance moves and kung fu have in common? More than many people may think. Both demand rigorous training, reward improvisation, and celebrate physical mastery. These common threads will take to the stage on July 24 at New York City's Lincoln Center, where Chinese performers will blend the two art forms during Chinese Arts Week, part of the Lincoln Center's Summer for the City program.

Chinese dancers will weave together breaking, popping and martial arts, offering audiences more than a display of technical virtuosity. For the artists behind the production, the performance is intended as a statement about how Chinese street dance has evolved from an imported youth culture into a distinctly Chinese artistic language.

"We hope to present a more multidimensional, open and confident image of Chinese street dance," says Xia Rui, one of the performance's principal organizers. "Chinese street dance is not simply a copy of Western street culture, nor is it just youth entertainment centered on technical display. After years of development, it has become a contemporary artistic language through which young Chinese people express themselves, engage with tradition, and connect with the world."

In addition to the July 24 show, the Chinese street dance delegation will begin its US tour with a performance at the festival's opening reception in New York on July 23 and then travel to Philadelphia for a public performance on July 25. The tour concludes on July 26 with a youth street dance cultural exchange in New York, followed by creative workshops and a series of flash mob performances in the city.

As a major promoter of the dance genre in China, Xia is the deputy director of the China Hip-Hop Union Committee, founded by the China Dancers Association in 2013.

For Xia, presenting the showcase at the Lincoln Center carries symbolic weight.

"We want audiences to see that Chinese street dance is youthful, vibrant and creative. It is rooted in Chinese culture and Eastern aesthetics and is capable of engaging in equal dialogue with other cultures," he notes.

That confidence did not emerge overnight.

When 38-year-old dancer Chen Jie — better known in the dance battle scene as A K — first discovered street dance, China barely had a community for it.

His performance at the Lincoln Center will expand on an earlier television work into a new work, a reimagining of Sun Wukong, or the Monkey King, combining hip-hop and breaking with projections, shadow imagery and music built around traditional Chinese musical instruments such as the *pipa* (a four-stringed lute), *suona* (a double-reed woodwind instrument) and *guzheng* (Chinese zither).

"American audiences have Marvel superheroes," he says. "China has its own hero — Sun Wukong."

The legendary Monkey King from the classic novel *Journey to the West* overcomes repeated setbacks through determination, a quality that resonates with Chen.

"My own story is very similar," he says. "I've encountered many obstacles, but I've kept moving toward my goal."

As a primary school student, he saw what a television program simply described as "popular dance". Soon after, he learned from his classmates who practiced something called street dance.

"I went to watch," recalls Chen, who was born and raised in Zhanjiang, Guangdong province. "I thought it looked incredibly cool. I fell in love immediately."

Learning was far more difficult than it is today. There were no online tutorials or social media clips to imitate. His older brother introduced him to Michael Jackson performances on DVDs, and Chen replayed them endlessly, studying the iconic moonwalk and every movement and musical accent.

His family struggled to understand his obsession.

"They didn't know what I was doing," Chen says. "Only after I won a competition in Guangzhou (Guangdong) did they stop criticizing."

Years of persistence followed before the trophies arrived. He trained first as a breaker before discovering hip-hop, whose groove, rhythm and musicality felt more natural.

"When I found hip-hop, I knew immediately it was the dance genre I'd been searching for," he says.

Today, Chen, who has gained a large fan base after appearing on hit reality shows such as *Street Dance of China*, sees street dance as carrying responsibilities that extend beyond competitions.

"I want young people to see hope. Street dancers are not troublemakers dancing on street corners. If we do this well, we can give others strength," he says.

He has spent years teaching children, including students in remote mountain communities, traveling for hours by bus to conduct workshops.

"I was a quiet child myself," he says. "Dance made me confident. Seeing that happen for other children is one of the happiest things I've experienced."

China's street dance landscape has changed dramatically during his career.

"People, from 4-year-olds to 60-year-olds, are learning street dance," Chen says. "That wasn't imaginable before."

For the youngest performers, however, Chinese street dance has always been more than imitation.

Wu Mingrui, a 16-year-old popper, first danced in kindergarten after a teacher demonstrated a few simple moves.

"I learned them very quickly," she says. "I was always chosen to lead the performances. My mother realized I had talent."

She began studying popping at age 7. A video of a young South Korean female popper convinced her that the style's explosive power was not limited to men. "I realized girls have strength too," she says.

She remembers hearing doubts that popping demanded physical abilities girls simply did not possess.

"People thought girls would always struggle physically compared with boys," she says. "That only made me want to prove them wrong."

She trained relentlessly, often spending 12 hours every weekend in the studio.

At 9, she won her first competition while competing against adults.

"I never expected to win. When the judges raised my hand, I burst into tears. That moment made me believe maybe I really could do this," she recalls.

Her understanding of dance has changed with experience.

"I used to think of myself as an athlete," she says. "Now I think street dance is really about expression. Dance doesn't have one standard like sports. It's how you communicate your emotions."

She hopes audiences also see something else.

"I want people who watch me dance to feel that women are powerful," she says. "Girls can dance just as well as boys."

At the Lincoln Center, Wu will perform *Daomadan*, a work that combines street dance with Chinese opera traditions and martial arts, disciplines she has studied formally in preparation for the performance.

Daomadan translates to "knife-and-horse female role". *Daomadan* is a role type in traditional Chinese Opera, featuring a female warrior who combines martial arts, dance, acrobatics, and singing.

"Street dance wasn't originally connected with martial arts," she says. "Creating something new from both traditions is exciting. It's a way to share Chinese culture."

That approach also reflects Xia's broader philosophy.

"The point is not to insert traditional elements into street dance," he says. "The challenge is allowing traditional culture to become the inner character of the work."

He argues that successful cross-cultural performance does not depend on audiences recognizing every cultural reference.

"Even if people don't understand a different culture," Xia says. "They should still feel its spiritual strength, its physical rhythm and its aesthetic character.

"Street dance has explosive energy, kung fu has inner power. Street dance values freestyle expression, while Chinese culture offers deep spiritual roots. When those qualities truly come together, it isn't simply a fusion — it becomes a new contemporary Chinese expression."

For Xia, China's street dance ecosystem has been built over the years through national organizations, competitions, education, and artist development.

International appearances, he believes, should become part of an ongoing cycle rather than isolated events.

Ultimately, he hopes Chinese street dance will move beyond occasional overseas performances toward sustained artistic partnerships.

"The most important thing is not for the world to know that China also has street dance," Xia says. "It is for the world to understand that Chinese street dance is making its own cultural contribution."

Contact the writer at chennan@chinadaily.com.cn









Top: A scene from *Kung Fu Street Dance*, combining street dance moves with kung fu, which will be performed in the US. **Middle:** A scene from a dance piece inspired by Sun Wukong, or the Monkey King, which will feature Chen Jie in the US. **Left above:** Another piece, *Dance Awakening*. **Right above:** Dancer Chen Jie, better known as A K, and Wu Mingrui (right), a 16-year-old popper. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

> "Even if people don't understand a different culture, they should still feel its spiritual strength, its physical rhythm and its aesthetic character."
>
> **Xia Rui,** organizer

Turkiye, Sri Lanka host cultural exchange events with Chinese cities

ISTANBUL/COLOMBO — The cultural exchange event "Encounter and Enlighten" recently opened in Istanbul, Turkiye, highlighting exchanges with Nanjing, Jiangsu province, as well as in Colombo, Sri Lanka, where exchanges between the city and Ningbo, Zhejiang province, were featured. The series of events highlights intercity dialogues on topics including mutual learning among civilizations and urban development.

The events were attended by representatives from governments, academia and cultural institutions.

In a video message addressing the Nanjing-Istanbul Urban Civilization Dialogue held on July 2, Frederique Aubert, head of the culture unit at the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, which is based in Venice, noted that both Nanjing and Istanbul possess rich cultural heritage and that their heritage conservation practices can serve as models for the preservation and sustainable development of historic cities worldwide.





Right: Guests visit an exhibition during the cultural exchange event "Encounter and Enlighten" in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on July 4. The event arrived in Colombo, featuring a themed dialogue with China's city of Ningbo, Zhejiang province. **Left:** Experts lead a discussion during the Nanjing-Istanbul Urban Civilization Dialogue held in Istanbul, Turkiye, on July 2. PHOTOS BY XINHUA

Huriye Merve Gedik, head of the City History, Promotion and Tourism Department of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, said that Istanbul and Nanjing are both historic cities that have flourished along waterways and prospered through the accumulation of civilization.

The dialogue facilitates the two cities in deepening mutual understanding and creates opportunities for practical cooperation, such as preserving ancient city walls and utilizing cultural heritage, Gedik said.

Also on that day, renowned writers, poets and Sinologists from China and Turkiye held in-depth discussions on literary creation and cross-cultural communication in the AI age, and announced a two-way resident-poet project.

In Sri Lanka's capital, Colombo, the event held on July 4 focused on cultural construction amid the development of port cities.

At a themed dialogue with the eastern Chinese city of Ningbo, Mayor of Colombo Vraie Cally Balthazaar told journalists that both port cities are undergoing tremendous transformation and that Colombo looks forward to learning from Ningbo in city planning and the integration of culture and tourism.

At a session devoted to sharing stories of life, culture and connection associated with the two cities, Yasiru Ranaraja, founding director of the Belt and Road Initiative Sri Lanka, recounted the historical visits by ancient Chinese Buddhist monk Faxian and navigator Zheng He to Sri Lanka, highlighting the port city's important role in Sri Lanka-China exchanges since ancient times.

Organizers of the "Encounter and Enlighten" cultural exchange events in Turkiye and Sri Lanka included China's State Council Information Office, Chinese diplomatic missions in the respective countries, and the Chinese city-level governments involved.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:53 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:53 PM

LIFE



Willow craft branches out

A centuries-old weaving tradition fuels rural livelihoods, exports and sustainable design through constant creativity and skilled craftsmanship, **Zhao Ruixue** reports.

In the quiet town of Caozhuang in Linshu county, Shandong province, villagers are busy in mid-June weaving willow products ordered months earlier by overseas buyers. Among the most popular items is a hand-woven sleigh lined with soft velvet, designed as a Christmas decoration.

"Customers visit months in advance to place orders. These festive willow crafts add warmth to homes and capture the spirit of Christmas," says Zhang Zhiquan, general manager of Linyi Olvy Agricultural Comprehensive Development Co Ltd.

Beyond sleighs, Christmas tree skirts, storage baskets and delicate willow deer ornaments have also become seasonal best-sellers.

Walking into the Olvy garden in the town, visitors are instantly immersed in a handcrafted paradise filled with diverse ingenious crafts woven from willow branches, wood and ropes.

At the garden entrance, a simple fence made of interlaced willow twigs and small wooden stakes showcases the primitive power of nature.

Every corner of the garden features handmade willow creations, including delicate tables, chairs and pavilions. Rows of functional and decorative willow works range from storage boxes, woven baskets and framed mirrors to delicate small ornaments.

"We love willow products because so many things today are machine-made. Handmade baskets bring warmth to a home," says Carlos Rocher Arnal, a buyer from Spain shopping for Christmas gifts.

He is looking for baskets to fill with wine, chocolates, and other presents for teachers, doctors, lawyers, friends, and family — a long-standing Christmas tradition in his country.

"I'm looking for items with handles, or some small containers to put two or three bottles and some chocolates," he adds.







Top: Villagers prune willow trees on June 10 in Linshu county, Shandong province. **Middle left:** A villager lays freshly woven willow products out to dry in Linshu on June 10. **Middle right:** Locally made wicker products are displayed at the Olvy garden in Linshu. **Above:** Zhao Qingyue, a county-level inheritor of Linshu willow weaving, demonstrates the traditional craft in Linshu county. PHOTOS BY LIANG BEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Willow weaving in Linshu dates back to the Sui (581-618) and Tang (618-907) dynasties, according to historical records. The craft flourished during the Song (960-1279) and Yuan (1271-1368) dynasties before reaching maturity in the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties.

Over centuries, artisans developed techniques including flat weaving, pattern weaving, block weaving and edge wrapping. Today, the craft is mainly practiced in Henan, Shandong, Hebei and Anhui provinces.

Linshu willow weaving was added to China's national intangible cultural heritage list in 2021.

With practiced hands, Zhao Qingyue, 68, a county-level inheritor of the craft, bends, loops and folds flexible willow branches into intricate woven patterns.

"In Caozhuang, weaving willow is as common as farming. Almost everyone here knows the craft," Zhao says.

Historical records show that villagers were already weaving baskets, grain containers and winnowing pans during the Tang Dynasty.

What began as a practical rural craft has grown into one of Linshu's pillar industries. Today, local producers make dozens of categories of products, from baskets and furniture to garden decor.

Willow products from Linshu are exported to more than 80 countries and regions, accounting for more than a quarter of China's total willow product exports, according to statistics provided by the county government.

The industry generated 950 million yuan ($139.8 million) in output in the first four months of this year, a year-on-year increase of 16.58 percent. Exports during the same period reached 268 million yuan, up 9.38 percent from the previous year, according to the latest figures.

Nearly 100,000 residents in Linshu county are engaged in the willow weaving industry.

"Weaving willow lets me turn my passion into a career. That makes my work deeply rewarding," says Zhao.

While inheriting tradition, local practitioners keep innovating to inject vitality into the ancient craft.

"Traditional craftsmanship shouldn't be confined to old designs," says Zhang, who has learned willow weaving since childhood. He combines willow with iron, wood, rattan and straw, blending traditional techniques with contemporary aesthetics to expand the product range.

His company has developed more than 20,000 designs and color options of willow products, with over 90 percent exported to markets including the United States, Spain and Japan.

"Today, handmade willow crafts are used in homes around the world, bringing natural texture and warmth to gardens, living rooms and studies," Zhang says.

One of the company's enduring bestsellers is a fan-shaped firewood basket woven from unpeeled and white willow.

"This product is highly versatile. It works equally well for storing firewood by the fireplace, organizing garden tools or displaying fruit and flowers, which explains its lasting appeal," he says.

The company is also developing a woven willow or rattan sleeve that fits around a metal ice bucket, combining practicality with natural style.

"We believe it will become another popular product," Zhang says.

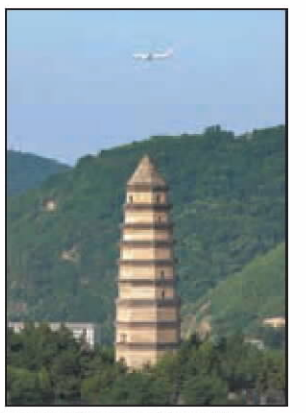
He is equally optimistic about China's domestic market. "Willow weaving reflects a natural, low-carbon and environmentally friendly lifestyle, which increasingly resonates with consumers," he says.

Cao Jiayue contributed to this story.

Contact the writer at zhaoruixue@chinadaily.com.cn

Historic heartland cultivates greener future





Left: Tourists join a traditional village feast in Shenshan village, Maoping town, Jinggangshan city, Jiangxi province, on July 4. ZHOU MI / XINHUA **Right:** Air China Flight CA1279 flies over Pagoda Hill in Yan'an, Shaanxi province, on June 24. Air China has launched "red tourism" routes from Beijing to historic revolutionary destinations including Jinggangshan, Zunyi and Yan'an. CHEN XIAO / XINHUA

NANCHANG — Deep in the forested mountains of Pulong village in Jinggangshan, East China's Jiangxi province, Li Yunyan tends more than 90 beehives. What began as a modest sideline has grown into a reliable livelihood.

The 46-year-old, who has limited mobility, has relied on beekeeping for years. But with only a few dozen hives and little access to markets, expanding the business once seemed out of reach.

"In the past, I had only 30 to 40 beehives and had to carry honey out for sale," Li says. "The mountain roads were difficult, and even high-quality honey could not always fetch a good price."

That changed when local Party organizations helped connect villagers directly with businesses. Beekeepers received technical training, expanded their colonies and gained access to stable procurement channels.

Now, enterprises collect Li's honey directly from his doorstep, eliminating the burden of transporting it. For residents unable to undertake physically demanding work, beekeeping and other eco-friendly industries have become dependable sources of income.

Li's story reflects a broader transformation in Jinggangshan, long celebrated as the cradle of the Chinese revolution and now emerging as a model of green development.

Among old revolutionary bases across the country, Jinggangshan carries special historical significance. In 1927, Chairman Mao Zedong led a fledgling group of Chinese revolutionaries deep into the mountains around Jinggangshan, where they established the first rural revolutionary base of the Communist Party of China.

Ninety years later, Jinggangshan reached another milestone: in 2017, it became the first region in China to be removed from the national list of impoverished counties — three years before the country achieved its nationwide poverty alleviation goal in 2020.

Transformation has continued at the village level as rural vitalization is pushed forward under the leadership of the CPC, which marked its 105th founding anniversary with a gathering on July 1.

The strategy has focused on objectives such as ensuring rural areas are equipped with modern living conditions and narrowing the urban-rural divide.

Shenshan village offers a vivid example. Located near Jinggangshan's main scenic area, the village has developed cultural tourism by designing themed travel routes, improving hospitality services and establishing a tourism association to standardize operations.

Peng Xiaying, the village's first farm-stay owner, initially worried about the financial risks. But with encouragement from local officials and paired-up support, she took the leap and her business is thriving amid booming tourism in Jinggangshan.

"I get dividends from the sales of yellow peaches and local tea, and I run a farm-stay business and a homestay. That brings me over 90,000 yuan ($13,000) a year," she says.

Per capita annual income in Shenshan reached 36,000 yuan last year. Once a fading mountain settlement with fewer than 30 permanent residents, the village is now home to around 180 people and has become a popular rural tourism destination.

Inspired by the success of neighbors like Peng, Huang Jinlong returned home after years of working elsewhere and converted his old farmhouse into a boutique homestay.

"Even before the summer holiday started, all 10 rooms were fully booked," Huang says. "Two busy months here bring in more income than a year of working away from home."

Building on its rich revolutionary heritage, Shenshan village has woven together its revolutionary landmarks, tea gardens, and Hakka-style homes into a vibrant tapestry of rural tourism — offering immersive Red-themed study tours and authentic cultural experiences that bring history to life.

The village now receives more than 300,000 visitors a year, up from 98,000 in 2016.

To sustain growth, Shenshan set up a tourism company and brought in a professional team to develop wellness retreats and study tour offerings. These experts introduced fresh ideas and skills — including livestreaming sessions right from the tea gardens — opening up new markets for local produce.

Zhang Ying, an official with the company, says the livestreaming initiative is expected to generate an additional 200,000 yuan in annual income for the village. "We're very optimistic about the future," he adds.

Jinggangshan's signature produce also includes bamboo shoots and camellia oil. In 2025, sales of these products reached 1.4 billion yuan, with some shipments making their way to markets in Europe and North America.

Tourists exploring Jinggangshan's revolutionary heritage and mountain scenery often purchase local delicacies as souvenirs. Recognizing the opportunity, Peng began making Hakka rice cakes last year, adding another source of income to her growing business.

For villagers whose lives once revolved around cutting bamboo on the mountain slopes and tending to rice paddies down in the fields, the lush mountains and clear waters have not changed, but their value has been transformed beyond recognition.

"We never imagined life could become like this," Peng says.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:53 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:53 PM

SPORTS

2026 WORLD CUP

Three Lions repel Viking horde with Bellingham brace

Haaland held goalless as England claims extra-time win over Norway



England's Jude Bellingham celebrates scoring his side's equalizing goal in its 2-1 World Cup quarterfinal win over Norway in Miami Gardens, Florida, on Saturday. AP

Jude Bellingham locked arms with teammate Harry Kane as England fans belted out their rendition of the Beatles' classic *Hey Jude*.

Bellingham had certainly earned the serenade. He scored twice on Saturday — an equalizer in the first half and the go-ahead goal in the third minute of extra time — to give England a 2-1 win that lifted it past Norway and into the World Cup semifinals for the first time since 2018.

The Real Madrid star has now matched Kane with six goals in this tournament, two behind France's Kylian Mbappe and Argentina's Lionel Messi, and one shy of Norway's Erling Haaland, who was held scoreless by England. Bellingham also scored twice in the round of 16 when England beat co-host Mexico.

England, winner of the 1966 World Cup and facing pressure to return to the title match, is now one win away from getting there. The Three Lions will face Argentina in the semifinals.

"The game is split into loads of different facets. Some of it is technical, tactical," Bellingham said. "For me, the biggest one is psychological and how you can manage setbacks, how you can manage adversity. This team showed, yet again, that they can do it, and that's a really valuable skill and trait to have."

Not everyone was thrilled with England's performance, though.

"We made life very, very difficult for ourselves today," coach Thomas Tuchel said in a contentious interview with Fox Sports.

"The result is fantastic. We're in the last four. It's amazing, but not happy with the performance ... in every sense."

Tuchel clarified in his news conference that he was "proud and happy" with how his squad has overcome adversity, but added, "I'm also a football coach, and I also have demands.

"I think we can play faster. I think we can play more clinically."

Bellingham seemed to disagree with his coach's critique after England prevailed in the heat and humidity of South Florida, with temperatures reaching 33 C at the start of warmups.

"Well, whatever," Bellingham said, shaking his head. "It's difficult out there. It's a tough shift.

"My thoughts and appreciation go to the players out there who put in a great shift."

Andreas Schjelderup scored in the 36th minute for Norway, a team that reached its first quarterfinals and took the internet by storm with its "Viking row" and the charisma of Haaland, their fearsome 6-foot-5 striker.

Haaland, however, failed to score for the first time in 15 competitive games for his country.

The Manchester City striker had scored seven times in his four games at the World Cup, carrying Norway to the quarterfinals in their first appearance at the global showpiece for 28 years.

That run included eliminating Brazil in the last 16, as Haaland struck twice to knock out the five-time winner.

This time, though, he ended the match sitting dejectedly on the bench, after he was subbed out for Jorgen Strand Larsen in the second half of extra time.

"It was not a tough decision to take him out," Norway coach Stale Solbakken said.

"He was finished. Maybe I should have taken him out 10 minutes before. He also got a dead leg in the second half, so that, combined with the fatigue, he did everything he could."

Norway nearly went ahead 2-1 in the 56th minute when Torbjorn Heggem put a rebound past goalkeeper Jordan Pickford after a corner kick.

Following a video review, the goal was disallowed because of a foul by Haaland in the box. Haaland was also denied by Pickford on a point-blank header in the first half.

Schjelderup, making just his second start of the tournament, fired a shot that caromed off the right post and into the net to stun an England team that had dominated possession to that point. Bellingham's equalizer from close range elicited a huge roar from the crowd.

'Amazing generation'

Haaland said Norway's World Cup performances had inspired a new generation, despite the disappointment of its quarterfinal loss.

"How we put Norway on the map is maybe one thing that touches me the most," said Haaland.

"Hopefully now, we can establish something when it comes to Euros, World Cups and everything, because our generation is amazing, and, also, all this gives motivation to young people back in Norway that it's possible to play on the world's biggest stage in a Norwegian shirt."

Haaland's brand as a global superstar has soared in recent weeks, with waves of new American fans taking to his affable off-field personality, as well as his goalscoring prowess.

He is hoping Norway can build on its success in the United States to become a powerhouse in the coming years.

"It's kind of difficult to take in this kind of a show, or the roller coaster that we've been on now for the last six weeks," added the 25-year-old.

"I think this changes Norway, I think it changes me. I've said it many times, we're building something in Norway.

"It's about maintaining this, because, again, we've shown that it's possible to be one of the biggest football nations in the world."

AGENCIES

'Suffering' Argentina eventually gets the better of 10-man Switzerland

KANSAS CITY, Missouri — Late goals from Julian Alvarez and Lautaro Martinez deep into extra time gave Argentina a dramatic quarterfinal win over 10-man Switzerland on Saturday, setting up a heavyweight last-four clash with England in Atlanta on Wednesday.

Lionel Messi's Argentina side kept alive its bid to become the first team to retain the World Cup since Brazil in 1962 with a 3-1 victory that sparked pandemonium among its sea of supporters and ended Switzerland's fairy tale run.

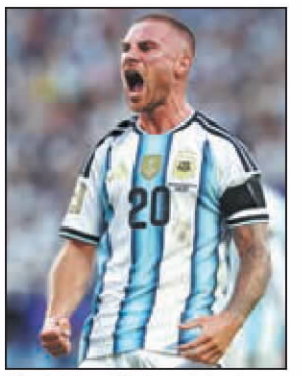
The Swiss had reached the World Cup quarterfinals for the first time since 1954, but fell a match short of an unprecedented semifinal appearance.

The match looked headed for a shootout, before Alvarez whipped a gorgeous long-range shot into the top corner in the 112th minute that Gregor Kobel, at full-stretch, had no chance of saving.

Martinez added a third for the defending champion nine minutes later, when he calmly slotted home the rebound of Thiago Almada's shot.

Alexis Mac Allister had given Argentina the lead in the 10th minute, meeting Messi's corner at the front post with a flicked header that sailed beyond Kobel and into the far corner.

After a largely uneventful first half, the contest burst into life in the second, as Switzerland repeatedly tested Emiliano Martinez, forcing the Argentina goalkeeper into a string of sharp saves.



Alexis Mac Allister celebrates scoring Argentina's first goal against Switzerland in their World Cup quarterfinal. AFP

As the Swiss piled on the pressure, they were rewarded in the 67th minute, when Dan Ndoye slid a right-footed finish through Martinez's legs.

But, in the 72nd, the Swiss were reduced to 10 men when Breel Embolo got a second yellow card for simulation. It came after a lengthy VAR review for mistaken identity, with the referee overturning his initial decision to caution Argentina's Leandro Paredes. Embolo was inconsolable as he left the pitch.

Argentina responded by pinning Switzerland back for long periods, cheered on by fans who made Arrowhead Stadium feel more like La Bombonera.

Switzerland weathered wave after wave of pressure, but its resistance was finally broken in the closing moments of extra time.

Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni said the late nature of the victory was further proof that his team have grown comfortable operating in challenging situations.

"We knew that we were going to suffer, and this is part of our blood, this is part of our DNA, and this brings peace of mind," he said.

"We know what it feels like to be dominated by the opponent, to concede an equalizer, so, today, we kept our composure. The team knew how to remain calm and, of course, we will never give up.

"To reach a semifinal, you need to suffer. You need to go through it."

Swiss coach Murat Yakin, however, was left seething.

"We were punished because of a rule that, in my opinion, is completely unacceptable," he said.

"It's very painful that we were eliminated that way. I don't think we deserve that today, and, in my opinion, my boys are the real heroes; they put all their heart and their passion into their performance. I am very proud. They are very proud."

Even Scaloni acknowledged that "luck was on our side because one of their players was sent off".

Yakin, though, wasn't done with his criticism of Portuguese referee Joao Pinheiro: "The referee made the wrong decision. It was, in my opinion, a harmless foul, if it even was a foul. I know they will protect their referee, but this rule destroyed our game today."

AGENCIES

TENNIS

Noskova wins first Grand Slam after dishing herself up a bathroom pep talk

LONDON — Linda Noskova placed fingers in both of her ears to drown out the noise from the Centre Court crowd.

She draped one of Wimbledon's strawberry-red towels over her head.

And, eventually — after she had wasted five match points and a 5-2 lead, and conceded the second set of a drama-filled final — she left the court completely for a bathroom break.

During Noskova's brief time off the court, two shiny objects caught her attention: the Venus Rosewater Dish that is awarded to the women's champion and the smaller dish for the runner-up.

"I was like, 'I'm not going to take the small one. I'm taking the big one. I have been so close. This will probably be the heartbreak of my life,'" Noskova said. "'I'm going to leave my soul on court in the third set, whatever it takes.'"

The 21-year-old Noskova did just as she promised herself, overcoming her second-set meltdown to beat Karolina Muchova 6-2, 5-7, 6-3 in an all-Czech final for her first Grand Slam trophy on Saturday.

When Noskova finally finished it off with a service winner on her sixth match point — and first of the third set — she covered her face and dropped down to the grass on her back.

Minutes later, Noskova was being awarded the Venus Rosewater Dish by Catherine, the Princess of Wales.

"It's never easy to get the last point," Noskova said during her victory speech. "Karo, you really made me work for it."

Noskova became the third Czech woman in four years to win the grass-court major, after Marketa Vondrousova in 2023 and Barbora Krejcikova in 2024.

Muchova and Noskova played doubles together at the 2024 Paris Olympics and finished fourth.

"I am so glad that I could play my first Grand Slam final with you," Noskova told Muchova during her speech. "We made history today. All our Czech fans at home are proud of us, no matter the result. It was a good day for both of us."

Petra Kvitova, who won Wimbledon in 2011 and 2014, was in attendance, as was the greatest Czech-born player of them all, Martina Navratilova — who won a record nine singles titles at the All England Club and was seated next to the Princess of Wales in the Royal Box — and Jan Kodes, the 1973 men's champion.



Linda Noskova of Czech Republic poses with the Venus Rosewater Dish after beating compatriot Karolina Muchova in the Wimbledon women's singles final on Saturday. AP

Kipling's poem

An excerpt of the poem "If" by Rudyard Kipling that was placed above the players' entrance to Centre Court more than a century ago summarizes the challenges Noskova had to overcome.

"If you can meet with triumph and disaster," the excerpt reads. "And treat those two imposters just the same."

It's not the first time that Noskova has had to overcome adversity at Wimbledon.

Her mother died just before she played the tournament two years ago.

"I definitely would not be standing here without her, so thank you," Noskova said in a dedication to her mother during her speech, blowing a kiss skyward.

Navratilova wiped away tears listening to Noskova's tribute.

Moments earlier, Muchova began her runner-up speech by calling Noskova "my ex-friend".

"I'm kidding, obviously," Muchova quickly added.

"You're so young and this was your first final of a Grand Slam, and the way you handled it was really unbelievable. You deserve it."

It was the 29-year-old Muchova's second Grand Slam final after getting beaten by Iga Swiatek at the French Open in 2023.

Wasted chances

Blasting aces and winners from all over the court early on, Noskova looked like she was going to run away with it, almost like Swiatek's 6-0, 6-0 rout of Amanda Anisimova in last year's final, which lasted all of 57 minutes.

Saturday's match was just 68 minutes old when Noskova earned her first match point — which ended when she landed a backhand into the net.

Two points later, there was another backhand miss from Noskova; then Muchova took advantage of a net-cord shot on Noskova's third match point in the same game.

Serving for the title in the next game, Noskova double faulted on her fourth match point.

And then, on the fifth occasion to end it, Muchova produced a big serve and forehand winner.

In all, Noskova lost five straight games.

"It's hard to watch," Tracy Austin said on the BBC as she called the match alongside John McEnroe. "We know what that feels like when you start to get tight and you can't loosen up, and then the lead starts to unravel."

Noskova said: "Winning it this way, really having to fight for it, having all these ups and downs, it matters a lot. I have to learn a lot from this match."

AP

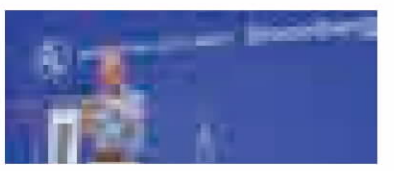
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:53 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:54 PM

Railway legacy
Plateau line marks 20 years of transforming daily life
CHINA, PAGES 8-9



Germany loses shootout to exit World Cup
SPORTS, PAGE 16



Metropolis meeting
Shanghai and New York find common ground
WORLD, PAGE 11

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 WEDNESDAY, JULY 1, 2026

XI'S VISION | PEOPLE FIRST

Focus on people at heart of CPC's strength

Better lives, notable strides impress foreign observers

By **ZHAO JIA**
zhaojia@chinadaily.com.cn



Visitors tour the Museum of the Communist Party of China in Beijing on Tuesday, ahead of the CPC's 105th founding anniversary, which falls on Wednesday. WEI XIAOHAO / CHINA DAILY

At the Museum of the Communist Party of China, a site in Beijing devoted to permanent and comprehensive exhibitions of the CPC's history, there is a large wall motto that reads: "This country is its people; the people are the country."

Many visitors come to the wall and raise their phones to take a photo, capturing in a single frame a theme that Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, placed at the center of his speech at the ceremony in 2021 marking the 100th anniversary of the CPC's founding.

As the Party has fought to establish and consolidate its leadership over the country, it has in fact been fighting to earn and keep the people's support, Xi said.

The Party has in the people "its roots, its lifeblood and its source of strength", he added.

Five years on, as the CPC celebrates its 105th anniversary on Wednesday, more and more foreign diplomats and international observers have said that the meaning of the people-centered approach, a fundamental principle of the CPC, has become increasingly clear to them through the changes they have witnessed in China and in the lives of its people.

For Khalil Hashmi, Pakistan's ambassador to China, the CPC's people-centered approach is best understood through results he has seen with his own eyes — above all, the scale of China's poverty reduction.

"I think results and actions speak louder than words," Hashmi said, noting that China's success in lifting hundreds of millions of people out of poverty was unprecedented in human history.

China declared victory in its fight against absolute poverty in 2021, when all 98.99 million rural residents living below the current poverty line had been lifted out of poverty, 832 poor counties had been removed from the poverty list, and 128,000 impoverished villages had shaken off poverty.

To Hashmi, poverty reduction is the clearest measure of what governance can mean for ordinary people. It shows how a long-term national goal can be translated into changes in people's lives through sustained leadership, strategy and implementation, he said.

Hashmi served at the Pakistani embassy in Beijing from 2008 to 2010, before returning as ambassador in 2023. He said the contrast between the two postings gave him a direct view of how China's development has reshaped the country's environment, economy and society.

Beijing's air quality and urban environment have improved markedly, he said. The expansion of high-speed rail has made travel between cities faster and more convenient, becoming part of daily life for many people.

China's progress in green technologies offered another example. From electric vehicles and batteries to charging stations, solar panels and wind turbines, China has built an ecosystem of increasingly affordable technologies that serve Chinese consumers and are also accessible to many developing countries, Hashmi said.

For him, these changes were evidence of the Party's ability to set a direction, mobilize resources and sustain implementation over time.

"At its core, the vision, the leadership, the strategy and the policy come from the Communist Party of China," he said.

Sisouphanh Keobandavong, a senior official with the Lao Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said China's progress is closely linked to the CPC's people-centered development philosophy.

By putting the common interests and well-being of the people first, China has achieved major advances in economic development, scientific and technological innovation and living standards, he said.

That experience, particularly in poverty reduction and rural vitalization, is of direct relevance to Laos, where poverty reduction remains an important task, Sisouphanh said.

For Laos and other developing countries, the lessons include setting clear development goals around national interests and people's well-being, directing support to less-developed areas, and shaping policies through research, monitoring and evaluation, he added.

Other observers said that putting people at the center also requires the ability to keep development goals consistent long enough for them to make a difference in people's lives.

Fazeel Najeeb, Maldivian ambassador to China, said one feature that has stood out to him is the continuity that marks China's policies.

In some developing countries, development priorities may change from one government to the next, making it difficult for long-term plans to produce lasting results, he said, noting that China sets priorities through five-year plans, carries them out steadily and builds on them in subsequent planning periods.

*See **Party**, page 3*

Inside

- Editorial, **page 6**
- See more, **pages 2-5**

WORLD WATCH
By Vincent Meriton

Party-led development has provided inspiration across globe

On July 1, China marks the 105th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China, inviting reflection on one of the most remarkable development transformations in modern history.

As a former vice-president of Seychelles and chairperson of the Association for the Promotion of Friendship Between Seychelles and China, I have observed firsthand some aspects of this extraordinary transformation. And what strikes me is not simply its scale, but its speed, depth and breadth within a few generations.

Few nations have lifted so many people out of poverty, built such extensive infrastructure, transformed industrial capacity and emerged as a global leader in technology and innovation in such a short time.

When historians look back, China's experience will rank among the most significant development stories.

Only a few decades ago, hundreds of millions of Chinese lived in poverty. Infrastructure was limited, and many regions remained isolated from economic opportunity.

Today, China boasts world-class transportation networks, advanced manufacturing, globally competitive technology sectors and one of the largest middle-income populations in the world.

Perhaps the most impressive aspect is China's success in lifting hundreds of millions of people out of extreme poverty — widely recognized as one of the greatest poverty reduction efforts in human history.

*See **Success**, page 3*

New mechanism to keep ties with EU on right track

By **ZHANG ZHOUXIANG** in Brussels and **ZHONG NAN** in Beijing

The launch of the China-EU trade and investment consultation mechanism is expected to provide a regular platform for dialogue to address bilateral economic differences, said market watchers and business leaders.

While trade frictions between China and the European Union may persist in the near term, the new mechanism could help prevent disputes from escalating and keep bilateral economic relations on a more predictable track, they added.

According to a joint statement issued on Tuesday, Chinese Commerce Minister Wang Wentao and European Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security, Interinstitutional Relations and Transparency Maros Sefcovic identified four initial work streams during the inaugural meeting of the China-EU trade and investment consultation mechanism in Brussels on Monday.

The work streams cover trade and investment balancing, export controls, intellectual property rights and World Trade Organization reform, the statement said.

Zhao Yongsheng, a professor of European studies at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing, said that the mechanism comes at a time when both sides continue to face structural differences over trade and industrial policies.

*See **Dialogue**, page 10*

Inside

Editorial, **page 6**



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

www.chinadailyglobal.com

A member of ANN

China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

SUMMER FUN FLOWS ALONG BEIJING WATERWAY

Liangma River has become a hot spot where city residents can bank on having a good time

By **XING WEN**
xingwen@chinadaily.com.cn



Residents and tourists enjoy leisure activities on the Liangma River in Beijing on June 20. WEI XIAOHAO / CHINA DAILY

In Beijing, a city known for its fast-paced lifestyle, summer evenings along the Liangma River paint a contrasting scene. As dusk descends and neon lights spill off surrounding skyscrapers and flicker in the water's ripples, the river turns into a summer playground for the city's residents.

Laid-back bliss unfolds both on and off the water. Swimmers, paddleboarders and kayakers glide past, while hydrofoil riders zip through narrow gaps between inflatable dinghies. On the banks, picnic blankets dot the grass and open-air karaoke mixes with swimming strokes.

"This is probably the best summer vibe I've ever seen in my life," said George Bobyk, a doctoral student from the University of Chicago, who is participating in a summer language program at Tsinghua University. "My friends told me this is the best place in Beijing, so I knew I had to check it out," he said in fluent Chinese.

Having grown up in Cambridge, England, Bobyk is no stranger to riverside life, but what struck him about Liangma was how it is fully integrated with the urban landscape.

Various watercraft are available for rent at several water sports clubs located along the river.

Ding Ting, who had worked in Beijing's internet industry for over a year but chose to leave the capital, went paddling on the Liangma River with a friend during a recent return visit, and said it had changed her perspective on the city. "For the first time in Beijing, I wasn't surrounded by hurried crowds. Instead, I saw children and adults relaxing and having fun," she said.

She recalled that a runner stopped and offered to take a photo of Ding and her friend, and an elderly man who played an electronic wind instrument on the riverbank was taking their song requests.

Ding said she felt that this offered more possibilities for genuine human connection in the bustling metropolis. "It's a more relaxed space where social connections can happen more spontaneously," she said.

During the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), the river served as grazing land for imperial horses. After the Liangma Bridge was built during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), tea houses and taverns sprang up along its banks. However, around the year 2000, unregulated car washing and unprocessed domestic sewage had polluted the waterway.

China Vibes

The turning point came in 2019, when a government-enterprise partnership in Chaoyang district launched a river restoration project that included dredging the waterway, renovating bridges, and adding public leisure spaces, children's play areas, fitness zones and greenways along the river's banks. It is now one of Beijing's must-visit destinations for both locals and tourists.

"Through scientific planning, ecological restoration, functional upgrades and public participation, urban waterways can become more vibrant, communities can become more livable, and cities more dynamic. The Liangma River serves as a model for building modern, people-oriented cities, ultimately achieving an integrated balance of ecological, cultural, social and economic value," said Xu Chenxi, a researcher at the institute of megacity economic and social development of the Capital University of Economics and Business.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:54 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:54 PM

CPC 105TH ANNIVERSARY





Left: Qiang Yaosheng checks a patient at a free clinic for local residents in Madagascar. **Right:** He Fengxiao operates on a patient whose chest and abdomen were pierced during a building collapse caused by a cyclone.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

'Thank you, Chinese doctor!' echoes across 50 years of trust

Party members lead medical teams to build bonds, healthcare in Madagascar

By **MA JINGNA** and **HU YUMENG** in Lanzhou

Years after their missions were completed, many Chinese medical doctors still remember their patients in Madagascar, an island country off the southeastern coast of Africa.

Similarly, many Malagasy patients will be forever grateful to the visiting doctors who helped change their lives.

During his first mission to Madagascar in 2010, Qiang Yaosheng, a surgeon from the First Hospital of Lanzhou University in Gansu province, treated a 13-year-old girl suffering from severe intestinal obstruction. Her family could not afford the surgical supplies needed for the emergency operation, so Qiang used his own savings to ensure the surgery proceeded.

Two years later, shortly before completing his mission, Qiang was walking along a rural road when a young woman suddenly recognized him. "Thank you, Chinese doctor!" she called out.

Qiang soon realized it was the girl he had treated.

For Chinese medical workers in Madagascar, the phrase "Thank you, Chinese doctor" has come to reflect decades of trust built through medical care and personal connections.

He Fengxiao, a cardiac surgeon at Lanzhou University Second Hospital, joined a medical mission to Madagascar in 2023, and experienced a similar sense of trust that extended beyond the hospital setting.

"People knew we came there to save lives. We treated many complicated conditions and helped many locals recover," he said. "When we walked outside, local residents were very friendly and greeted us from a distance."

That trusting relationship has been built patiently over more than half a century.

Since 1975, a total of 24 medical teams from Gansu have served in Madagascar, with personnel making 725 visits, some multiple times. The teams have treated 5 million patients and performed over 130,000 surgeries, according to the Gansu Health Commission.

This effort is part of China's broader medical cooperation program. In December 1962, following a global appeal from the newly independent Republic of Algeria for emergency medical assistance, the Communist Party of China was the first to respond and sent its first international medical aid team the next year.

Over the past six decades, more than 30,000 visits by Chinese medical workers to 76 countries and regions have been made, providing care for nearly 300 million patient visits and supporting over 130 medical facilities, according to China's National Health Commission.

As the number of CPC members in the medical teams grew, Party branches have been established locally to organize study sessions and collective activities, helping strengthen coordination and unity among team members.

From the early days, Party members often took the lead not only in medical work, but also in adapting to life overseas and building connections with local communities.

TCM opens doors

When the first Chinese medical team from Gansu arrived in Madagascar in 1975, one of the biggest challenges was not treating diseases, but gaining the trust of local patients.

At the beginning, few people came to seek treatment. For more than 10 days, Chinese doctors looked for ways to connect with the local community.

Tang Shicheng, former deputy director of Gansu Provincial Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine, decided to begin with acupuncture, a traditional Chinese medicine treatment he was familiar with.

He demonstrated it on himself, inserting needles into his own leg.

Curious locals asked whether it hurt. Tang said "no" and invited them to try acupuncture. "After that, patients gradually began to come in, and queues soon formed across departments. That was how our work began," he recalled.

Tang's acupuncture treatment was embedded in locals' memories. In the 1970s, a Malagasy newspaper in Ambovombe reported how Chinese doctors brought hope to patients through TCM, describing some recoveries as "miracles".







Left: Doctors from Madagascar receive training from their Chinese peers at Lanzhou University First Hospital. YANG MINGZE / FOR CHINA DAILY **Right top:** Ma Shirong examines a patient in Madagascar. **Right above:** Chinese medical team members work with Malagasy staff to prepare disinfectant in a laboratory. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

One patient, Fotoa Jean Jacques, who suffered from paralysis, gradually regained the ability to speak and walk after receiving acupuncture treatment from Tang.

Wang Jiaqi, former deputy director of Gansu Provincial People's Hospital, said trust was already established during his mission in the 1990s. Wang said a former Madagascar ambassador to China regularly turned to the Chinese medical team for treatment, though he had many doctors in his own family. "He told us that what impressed him most was the dedication of Chinese doctors, their careful treatment of Malagasy patients and their willingness to serve the people here," he said.

Qiang treated a complex case involving a large thyroid tumor. To reduce surgical risks, his team carefully optimized every step, from preparation for surgery and anesthesia planning to incision design.

"After the surgery was successful, word quickly spread," Qiang said. "Relatives of a Malagasy official even reached out through overseas Chinese networks to seek treatment from us. That kind of word-of-mouth recognition is the strongest confirmation of our clinical work."

Over time, Chinese doctors became a familiar presence not only in hospitals but also in the broader community. Overseas Chinese and employees of Chinese enterprises in Madagascar regularly sought their help, while patients from neighboring island countries such as Comoros and Mauritius even traveled by boat for treatment.

Stronger local capacity

When the first Chinese medical team arrived in Madagascar in 1975, the local medical environment was vastly different from what they had experienced at home.

Hospitals often faced shortages of equipment and supplies, forcing doctors to make difficult decisions in restricted conditions.

Even today, many regional hospitals continue to deal with limited equipment, shortages of supplies and unstable power. For doctors, an operation might involve unexpected challenges.

"There were even flies during surgery," said Wang Jianhua from Gansu Provincial People's Hospital, who served in Madagascar for four years from 2018. "We had to improvise. We could not stop, because the patient would die."

In rural areas, the pressure was even greater. A single doctor could be responsible for tens of thousands of residents, Qiang said.

For many Chinese doctors, improving local healthcare started with solving problems they encountered every day.

He Fengxiao recalled that some surgical procedures in Madagascar were delayed because patients' families needed to purchase basic supplies such as gauze and sutures after doctors decided to operate.

"For some families, these materials were a heavy financial burden. They had to borrow money, which could affect the progress of surgery," He said.

To address this, Chinese medical teams prepared emergency kits containing commonly used surgical materials to ensure urgent procedures could proceed.

Since 1975, Chinese medical teams have continued to provide medical supplies and equipment, either purchased by the teams themselves or donated from within China. Support gradually expanded from basic surgical instruments and medicines to advanced equipment such as digital X-ray machines and CT scanners.

In recent years, that support has included advanced diagnostic equipment. A digital radiography system, donated with support from the First Hospital of Lanzhou University, was put into operation in 2026 at the University Hospital Center of Anosiala in Ambohidratrimo, Madagascar, improving imaging diagnosis.

Previously, medical staff relied on slower and less precise imaging systems, and patients sometimes had to travel long distances for further examinations.

The new digital system has helped shorten examination times, improve image quality and make medical diagnosis more accessible for local residents.

Chinese medical teams have also continued to train local doctors, introduce standardized procedures and help build a more sustainable healthcare system.

He said thoracic surgery was once limited by shortages of equipment and lack of standardized procedures. In some chest trauma cases, local doctors had to rely on improvised containers instead of proper negative-pressure drainage systems, posing safety risks.

Chinese doctors helped introduce medical instruments to local doctors, demonstrate standardized procedures, and train local teams through case discussions and surgical guidance.

"Medical cooperation is not only about treating patients, but also about helping local doctors develop the ability to handle more complex cases independently," He said.

Training, exchanges

In the respiratory and critical care ward of the First Hospital of Lanzhou University, Malagasy physician Rabeson Tahiana follows Chinese doctors during routine rounds.

Moving from bed to bed, they discuss patients' conditions, sometimes using AI translation tools to bridge gaps in language and medical terminology.

Tahiana and four other doctors from the University Hospital Center of Anosiala, Madagascar, are currently participating in a six-month training program at the hospital. They observe clinical practices, participate in daily medical work and learn from Chinese doctors across different specialties.

"The Chinese doctors are highly skilled and well organized," Tahiana said.

The program provides access to advanced respiratory technologies, including bronchoscopy and pulmonary function testing.

"This training allows us to bring new techniques back to Madagascar and improve care for our patients," he said.

Rasolohery Honjaniaina, who has worked with Chinese medical teams in Madagascar for six years, said the cooperation had continuously improved her clinical practice.

"Each Chinese colleague has helped me in my daily work. It has been a valuable experience of exchange and learning," she said.

For Chinese doctors, the goal of training is to support the development of a self-sustaining local medical workforce. Knowledge and skills learned in China, they said, will become part of the local healthcare system and continue to benefit communities.

"China's medical technology is developing rapidly. Coming here allows doctors to learn new knowledge and methods. We share our experience without reservation," Wang Jianhua from Gansu Provincial People's Hospital said.

A shared responsibility

Over the past five decades, Chinese medical assistance in Madagascar has continued across generations, carrying forward both professional skills and a shared sense of responsibility.

When Ma Shirong, a CPC member and a physician from Gansu Provincial People's Hospital, first arrived in Madagascar in 1990, he brought a *Xinhua Dictionary* to assist with daily work. When his mission ended, he left it to the next team, writing on the first page: "Please cherish it and pass it on."

Years later, doctors who used the dictionary told Ma that the small book had helped them greatly during their missions.

"For me, it was not just a dictionary. It carried the experience and memories of generations of medical workers," Ma said.

The missions also reflected the continuity of the teams' discipline and sense of responsibility while overseas.

They cleared land, planted vegetables and dried local fruits such as lychees to improve their lives. They also invited locals to join in activities such as planting trees and working in the fields, creating more opportunities for mutual understanding and friendship.

This spirit of unity continued with teams that worked on Chinese enterprises in Madagascar. The China Railway 18th Bureau, for instance, carried out joint Party activities such as studying China's diplomatic policies and organizing health education programs on common diseases.

For Chinese medical workers, overseas missions also mean representing their country through everyday interactions.

"People may not know your name, but they know you are Chinese. Your words and actions can influence how they see your country," He said, adding that this awareness encouraged him to communicate more with local residents and pay closer attention to his behavior.

"When you are overseas, you understand the meaning of your motherland more deeply," Wang Jianhua said. "Seeing the Chinese flag far from home reminds you of where you come from and the responsibility you carry."

Today, cooperation between Gansu and Madagascar continues to evolve, with a new team carrying forward the experience, skills and commitment built by generations of medical workers.

Earlier this year, China launched its initiative of "100 Medical Teams in 1,000 Villages", setting a goal of conducting more free clinics and medical consultations in about 1,000 residential areas of host countries by 2027.

A Chinese medical team from Shandong province has been working on health education and free consultation activities related to schistosomiasis in Tanzania. They also visit schools and local orphanages to treat children and donate medicines, earning widespread praise from the local residents.

The Zambian government on Friday commended the 26th Chinese medical team from Henan province for its contribution to improving healthcare delivery in the country.

Yang Mingze, Wu Yuexuan and Tong Yunshan contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at huyumeng@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:54 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:54 PM

CPC 105TH ANNIVERSARY

Membership of CPC surpasses 101 million

People from new professions enrich Party structure, strengthen foundation

By CAO YIN
caoyin@chinadaily.com.cn

The steady growth in the number of Communist Party of China members from new sectors and emerging businesses is diversifying the Party's composition and supporting China's socioeconomic development, experts said on Tuesday.

The experts shared their opinion as the Organization Department of the CPC Central Committee released a report on the eve of the Party's 105th anniversary, which falls on Wednesday. The report revealed that Party membership touched nearly 101.29 million by the end of 2025, marking an increase of over 1.01 million from the previous year.

The report provided details about the occupational backgrounds of Party members, which showed that they came not only from government agencies, universities, rural areas and businesses, but also from a wide range of other professions.

The "other professions" category included individuals from new business models and emerging sectors, such as ride-hailing drivers, couriers and livestreamers. Experts emphasized that the inclusion of these nontraditional workers has diversified the Party's membership structure, reflecting broader economic and social progress.

Official data showed that the number of Party members from "other professions" increased from 7.48 million by the end of 2021 to nearly 7.9 million by the end of 2025.

Xin Ming, a professor at Beihang University's School of Marxism, noted that this rise showed that the CPC is open to recruiting advanced individuals from all walks of life whose thinking aligns with the Party's principles. "This openness has increased the Party's appeal among emerging sectors and new employment groups, enriching its membership structure and strengthening its foundation," he said.

Bao Jipeng, a deliveryman from Longnan in Gansu province, joined the Party in 2025, as he wanted to contribute meaningfully to society.

Longnan, once plagued by poor transportation and underdeveloped logistics, has seen significant improvements over the past few years. In Maba village, Yulong township, where Bao hails from, Party members led efforts to build roads, transforming the area from an isolated pocket to one with better connectivity. Bao recalled the influence of those Party members in his article published in People's Daily, saying that they inspired him to serve the villagers.

Due to improved infrastructure, almost every village in Longnan now has road access, facilitating the swift delivery of parcels even to remote areas. As online shopping increased among villagers, Bao embraced his role as a courier.

Over the past decade, he has traveled more than 120,000 kilometers and delivered over 250,000 parcels without a single customer complaint. For Bao, efficient deliveries are crucial, especially for farmers whose harvests depend on timely supplies.

"My motivation to join the Party was to excel in my job," Bao said in the article. Currently, there are four Party branches within Longnan's express delivery industry, providing him with a strong sense of belonging.

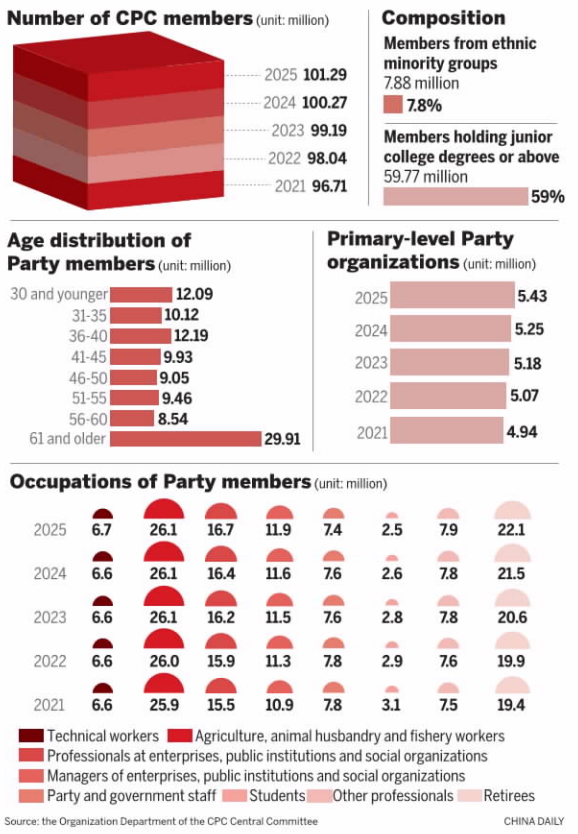
"I consider my Party membership as a new beginning and I am committed to serving the villagers with improved services," he said.

Dai Yanjun, a professor from the Party School of the CPC Central Committee, said that as socioeconomic growth spawns new jobs, more people, particularly young ones, are joining the Party. "Whether motivated by self-advancement or inspired by veteran members, this trend underscores the Party's enduring influence," he added.

To bolster Party building in emerging sectors, some regions have initiated innovative approaches. Jiangsu province, for example, has established mobile Party organizations in communities, delivery stations and livestreaming studios, facilitating both online and offline management and education of Party members in these sectors.

Dai emphasized the need for Party building to permeate every sector as society evolves, advocating for more innovative and industry-specific activities, while Xin from Beihang University underscored that regardless of operational changes, the Party organization's leading and exemplary role must remain steadfast.

According to the report, the CPC had over 5.43 million primary-level organizations by the end of 2025, an increase of 181,000, or 3.4 percent, from the previous year, highlighting the Party's expanding grassroots presence.



Source: the Organization Department of the CPC Central Committee CHINA DAILY


Members of the No 6 Geological Team of the Shandong Provincial Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources carry out a gold mine survey in Nigeria in July 2025. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Resolve forges gold exploration legacy

By LI MENGHAN
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

For generations of geologists on the No 6 Geological Team of the Shandong Provincial Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources, members of the Communist Party of China have set the standard by volunteering for the toughest assignments, pressing ahead where others saw only dead ends and passing on a spirit of dedication that has transformed China's gold exploration.

That spirit has helped the team discover 14 superlarge gold deposits and 128 large, medium and small deposits in nearly seven decades, reshape international gold metallogenic theory and identify more than 2,800 metric tons of gold reserves, which is nearly one-fifth of China's total discovered gold reserves.

As the CPC marks its 105th anniversary on Wednesday, 198 Party members, who make up around half of the team's strength, reaffirmed their commitment to carrying forward the tradition.

"As Party members, we answered the State's call to find gold without hesitation, and we delivered. And that promise will continue to echo beneath the mountains and the seas," said Ding Zhengjiang, leader of the team, who started working as a geologist in 1999.

Efforts praised

In 2022, the team received a letter of reply from Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, who praised generations of geologists for enduring harsh conditions to yield rich fruits in mineral resource exploration and encouraged them to strengthen exploration efforts and pursue sci-tech breakthroughs.

Ding, 49, said that Xi's reply to the team's letter came as a great surprise and a source of encouragement. "Some of our veteran members teared up. To be remembered, recognized and asked to go deeper — that means everything," he added.

In the 1950s, China produced only about 6 tons of gold each year, while the country's industrialization drive demanded far more. In 1958, a group of 94 young geologists were sent to the mountains of Zhaoyuan in East China's Shandong province.

Back then, gold was of vital importance for the newly founded People's Republic of China, because it was a crucial source of foreign exchange reserves, Ding said.

"Zhaoyuan was chosen as the starting point of the mission, because despite decades of war that left the mines there shattered, it was once the richest gold belt in the country. However, the task was challenging — finding the gold everyone thought had been mined out," he said.

Spirit of dedication

Party members took the lead under conditions Ding described as "cruel", because "every step forward could have been the last".

Team members slept on wooden planks in drafty thatched huts and survived on coarse grains and pickled vegetables. Armed only with hammers, compasses and magnifying glasses, they entered abandoned mine shafts by the dim glow of carbide lamps, recording geological data while risking cave-ins.

After four years of mapping and trenching, the team identified 48 gold-bearing quartz veins in the Linglong mining area, breathing new life into the century-old mining district.

The defining breakthrough came by challenging prevailing international theory, which held that the principal fault zones of the Jiaodong Peninsula were incapable of hosting large gold deposits. In late 1965, three team members trekked through knee-deep snow to Sanshan Island and collected 105 rock samples. Laboratory analysis showed that more than half of these samples contained industrial-grade gold.

The team then decided to drill directly into the fault zones. In 1969, it discovered a superlarge deposit containing 67 tons of gold, giving rise to the Jiaojia-type altered-rock gold deposit model and reshaping geological understanding of gold mineralization.

The pioneering spirit continued as shallow resources became depleted. In 2007, the team discovered a 51.83-ton superlarge deposit in the deep section of the Sizhuang mining area in Laizhou, Shandong, opening a new era of deep exploration. More discoveries followed, transforming the Jiaojia fault zone into a gold belt with reserves exceeding 1,000 tons.

The team's technological advances have matched its determination. It has completed more than 5.2 million meters of drilling, which is 600 times the height of Qomolangma, known as Mount Everest in the West. The team has also broken the national record for small-diameter drilling efficiency six times and set a national drilling-depth record on three occasions.

Ding said the team has also expanded offshore, leading China's first combined land-sea seismic survey for deep gold deposits in the waters off Shandong and identifying a new offshore gold belt.

In addition, the team has carried out geological surveys in more than 10 countries, including the United States, Algeria, Sudan, Tajikistan and Australia, and identified 156 tons of gold resources overseas, he added.

Party: Long-term vision brings tangible outcomes

From page 1

"I think one of the most important aspects of the system is the continuity of policies," Najeeb said, calling it one of the most striking features of China's governance.

Such continuity matters, he said, because development requires time before its benefits can be fully seen in people's lives.

The importance of the consistency of strategy and the direction behind it also stood out to Ion Chicu, former prime minister of Moldova.

For example, the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area showed the long-term impact of reform and opening-up, as well as China's sustained focus on high technology, he said.

For any country or people, hard work alone may not lead to success without the right strategy and direction, he noted, adding that in China's case, long-term vision has enabled people's efforts to produce tangible development achievements.

Davidson I. Ishmael, minister of state in Barbados' Ministry of Health and Wellness, said China's people-centered governance can also be seen in the opportunities created for individuals to build businesses and pursue careers.

During his visit to the Greater Bay Area, Ishmael said he heard stories of people who became entrepreneurs through opportunities generated by the region's development, while others were able to pursue careers in globally competitive industries.

Such stories show how development can translate into personal opportunities, he said. The region has built a growing innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem, including 84 bases for young people from Hong Kong and Macao that have attracted more than 7,000 projects.

China's opening-up is not only about strengthening the country's connections with the world, Ishmael said, but also about enabling its own people to share in the opportunities created by development.

Success: Balance of modernization, culture highlighted

From page 1

Beyond statistics, this achievement has demonstrated a vital principle: Development must ultimately be measured by improvements in people's lives. Better housing, education, healthcare and economic opportunities represent development in its most meaningful form.

As someone who has spent much of his career in public policy and development planning, I understand the complexity of social and economic transformation. Many factors have contributed to China's success, but one important element has been the CPC's ability to provide long-term strategic direction and policy continuity. Development requires vision, planning, stability and the capacity to implement reforms over many years and sometimes across generations.

China's successive development plans have prioritized areas fundamental to national progress: infrastructure, education, industrialization, technology, innovation, food security and poverty reduction. Investments in these areas have created the foundations for economic growth and social advancement.

For many countries in Africa and across the Global South, there are valuable lessons to be learned from China's experience. The first is placing development at the center of national policy, as growth serves to improve ordinary lives. The second lesson is investing in people: Roads and ports matter, but so does investment in education, skills and healthcare. The third is the value of long-term planning. Too often, developing countries become trapped in short political cycles that make sustained reform difficult. China's experience demonstrates what can be achieved when national development goals are pursued consistently over decades.

At the same time, every country has its own history and development path. China's model cannot simply be copied elsewhere. Solutions must reflect local realities. But principles can be shared: strategic planning, investment in people, strong institutions, pragmatic policymaking and a commitment to continuous improvement.

Another aspect I have found particularly interesting is China's effort to balance modernization with cultural continuity. Rapid industrialization often places pressure on societies to preserve identity and social cohesion. Yet China has sought to combine economic progress with a continued emphasis on culture, heritage, family values and collective purpose. The coexistence of world-class infrastructure and innovation alongside visible respect for history and tradition is an achievement from which many countries can learn.

China's development story has also increasingly become a global story. Through initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative and expanded engagement with Africa and the Global South, China has become an important development partner for many countries. Cooperation increasingly extends beyond trade and infrastructure to include education, technology transfer, skills development, digital connectivity, green development and cultural exchange — creating new opportunities for mutual learning and South-South cooperation.

As chairperson of the Association for the Promotion of Friendship Between Seychelles and China, I have seen firsthand the growing importance of people-to-people exchanges. Educational partnerships, cultural exchanges and initiatives such as the Confucius Institute in Seychelles have built bridges between our peoples, particularly among younger generations. These human connections complement economic and diplomatic cooperation and ensure that friendship between nations is rooted in mutual understanding and respect.

For Seychelles, relations with China have developed steadily over five decades, founded on mutual respect, friendship and cooperation. We have benefited from exchanges in education, health, infrastructure, culture and people-to-people engagement. These relationships demonstrate how international cooperation can contribute to national development while respecting the sovereignty and priorities of partner countries.

As China continues its journey toward high-quality development and modernization, there are new challenges but also new opportunities. China's development journey is not simply an economic success, but one of the most ambitious and far-reaching transformations in modern history — demonstrating what can be achieved when a nation combines vision, stability, planning and investment in its people and a clear sense of purpose. And the broader significance of its experience is evident.

As the CPC marks its 105th anniversary, that achievement deserves recognition — not only for what it has meant for China, but also for the inspiration it offers to other developing nations seeking their own paths toward prosperity, stability and human development.

That may well be the most important lesson from China's remarkable CPC-led development journey.

The author is former vice-president of the Republic of Seychelles. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:54 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:54 PM

CPC 105TH ANNIVERSARY

Red Crag resonates with young audiences

Six decades on, new adaptation celebrates power of communist faith in enjoyable, immersive play

By **GUO JIATONG**
guojiatong@i21st.cn







Top: Students take part in an immersive political education session following a performance of the play *Red Crag* at the auditorium of Tongji University in Shanghai on June 11. Produced by the China Railway Art Troupe, the production was staged five times in the city from June 11 to 13. **Left:** Actors perform the play *Red Crag* at Tongji University in Shanghai. **Right:** Actors prepare backstage before a performance of *Red Crag*. PHOTOS BY WANG XIANG / XINHUA

At Tongji University's auditorium, thunderous applause erupted as the cast of *Hongyan*, or *Red Crag*, took their final bows. Many students gave the cast a standing ovation, cheering and applauding, with some wiping away tears of emotion.

From June 11 to 13, the stage adaptation of *Red Crag* was performed at Tongji University in Shanghai. Directed by Wu Yuze of the China Railway Art Troupe, it drew a strong response that reflects a broader trend: more than six decades after the publication of the classic revolutionary novel, the stage version is finding renewed resonance among younger audiences.

The production has attracted increased attention this year as China marks the 105th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China.

Based on the 1961 novel of the same name, the play depicts Communist revolutionaries imprisoned in Chongqing in the years leading up to the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

Scenes such as Jiang Jie embroidering a national flag in prison, Little Radish Head, a child prisoner, secretly passing messages behind bars, and Xu Yunfeng, an underground Communist Party member, facing execution with composure, have long been part of China's cultural memory.

For Wu, the new adaptation places faith at the heart of the story.

"People today face many uncertainties," Wu said. "Whether it is personal values, beliefs, or confidence in the future, many are searching for inner spiritual strength to support themselves."

To reach younger audiences, the creative team — whose average age is around 30 — updated elements of the staging while remaining faithful to the original story.

"Many audiences tend to associate 'red classics' with a fixed set of expectations," Wu said. "We wanted to challenge that by creating something more engaging — a play audiences can truly enjoy and immerse themselves in."

The adaptation highlights espionage and suspense elements. Lighting design, multimedia effects and tighter scene transitions are also used to heighten dramatic tension throughout the performance.

"The novel revolves around underground Communist operatives," Wu said. "Our goal is to make sure that every scene moves the story forward and keeps audiences eager to find out what happens next."

For actress Wang Wei, who plays Jiang Jie, preparation meant extensive field research in Sichuan and Chongqing.

She traveled to Zigong, the hometown of Jiang Zhujun — the real-life inspiration for Jiang Jie — where she visited memorial halls, studied archival materials, and toured the school that the revolutionary once attended.

Over nearly six months, cast members also visited sites such as Zhazidong and Baigongguan prisons in Chongqing, studied the script repeatedly and worked through historical documents together.

Wang said the field research helped her move beyond a symbolic interpretation of the role.

"Jiang Jie is not only a fearless revolutionary. She is also a wife and a mother," she said. "It is precisely because they were ordinary people who still made extraordinary choices that they became heroes."

Wang recalled a scene in which Jiang Jie watches guards tear up a photograph of her child.

Though she initially forces herself to look away, having prepared for death as a revolutionary, the sight of the torn photograph awakens her maternal instinct. Before walking to the execution ground, she quietly gathers the fragments and holds them tightly in her hand, carrying the image with her into her final moments.

"I also have children, so I completely understand that feeling as a mother," Wang said. "For her, that kind of longing and sorrow can be even more painful than physical torture."

Playing Jiang Jie has also changed Wang beyond the stage, leaving her more grounded and confident. "When I face difficulties in life or work, I often think about how they would have handled similar situations," she said.

For actor Cao Wei, who portrays Xu Yunfeng, the challenge lies in expressing calm in the face of death.

One line from the play has stayed with him: "Death is such a powerless threat to a revolutionary."

"His calm comes from his deep belief that victory will come," Cao said. "Although Chongqing had not yet been liberated, he could already see the dawn of victory."

The role has also reshaped how he sees his profession.

"There was one moment when I suddenly realized I am not only an actor," he said. "Through theater, we are passing on the spirit of the revolutionaries to new audiences."

He said audience reactions often reinforce that sense of connection. In Chongqing and Chengdu, viewers frequently remain seated after performances. Some bow; others wave silently before leaving.

"You can see it in their eyes — they truly relate to these characters and what they represent," Cao said.

The play has also left an impression on younger members of the cast.

Among them is Wu's daughter, who plays Little Radish Head. Wu said she knew little about the historical background before joining the production. After taking part in the play, however, she began asking when she could join the Communist Party, and when she could bring flowers, candy and toys to the character she portrays.

"To her, Communist Party members are the bravest, smartest and strongest people," Wu said.

For Wu, moments like this reflect how widely the production has resonated. "At first, we were simply setting out to create a good play," he said. "But over time, we realized it can work like a spark, quietly influencing young people."

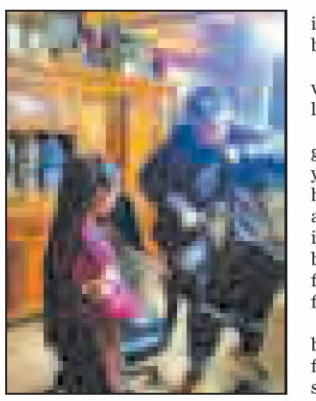
Premiered in Beijing last June and performed at the Party School of the CPC Central Committee in late September, the production has since toured cities including Chengdu in Sichuan, Changsha in Hunan and Nanchang in Jiangxi, and will continue touring universities and railway bureaus across the country.

"We hope audiences can find something they truly believe in," Wu said. "Above all, we intend to showcase the ideals, resilience and unwavering faith embodied by the revolutionary heroes. Once you hold fast to this revolutionary belief, life feels more meaningful."

CPC volunteers find different ways to shape China's grassroots future

By **MENG WENJIE**
and **CHEN HUAN**





Left: Fan Jiang promotes local agricultural products and intangible cultural heritage during a livestreaming event in Baodi district, Tianjin, in January. **Right:** Li Tinghui delivers new clothes for children to a family in need in Nagchu, Xizang autonomous region, in December 2025. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

At the age of 21, Li Tinghui visited the Xizang autonomous region for the first time. The moment he stepped off the train, the plateau left an impression that never faded.

"I just knew I would come back here to work one day," he recalled.

That thought soon became reality. Now 30, Li has spent seven years in Nagchu, a city known for its vast landscapes and for being one of the highest-altitude urban areas in China. Life here is defined by just two seasons: a brief summer when down jackets are still necessary, and a long, harsh winter.

Li is from Hebei province. In 2019, he joined the "Go West" program, a volunteer initiative that sends university graduates to China's less developed western regions. When his service period ended, he chose to stay.

Life at more than 4,500 meters above sea level is never easy. Vegetation is scarce, and heating in some areas still relies on burning yak dung.

The thin air has taken a toll on Li's health, causing chronic altitude sickness and an enlarged heart. Yet he has never considered leaving.

"In university, I felt like I was living in an ivory tower," he said. "Only here did I feel grounded and truly connected to people."

Over the years, Li has worked on urban planning, public services, ecological restoration and other grassroots tasks. With his colleagues, he has helped replace pit latrines with flush toilets and contributed to greening projects by planting rapeseed flowers and pine trees across the city.

He has also helped organize community skills competitions covering 29 categories, from handicrafts to technical repair work. Winning entries have been showcased at national exhibitions, and some participants — with local government support — have gone on to start their own businesses and increase their incomes.

"I hope that in my day-to-day work, I can do each small task well so that local people truly benefit," Li said.

Beyond his official duties, he has long been active in public welfare, raising donations for school supplies, sanitary products for girls and warm clothing for families in need.

His efforts have also extended to disaster relief. After a 6.8-magnitude earthquake struck Dingri county in 2025, he rushed to the site with supplies, helping set up tents and prepare meals amid aftershocks and damaged homes.

"I used to find *The Communist Manifesto* difficult to fully grasp," said Li, who has been a CPC member for four years. "But in Xizang, through real work, I came to understand what it means to serve the people."

While Li's work is rooted on the snowy plateau, 37-year-old Fan Jiang, a CPC member for 15 years and a member of the All-China Youth Federation, has taken a different path: building the digital rural economy.

In 2019, Fan began using social media to support rural development in his hometown in Shanxi province. He discovered that Shanxi had rich traditional medicinal resources, though only a small share had been developed.

Together with his team, Fan spent six months creating more than 40 food- and medicine-based products, including drinks, pillows and sachets, which were later launched at the 2021 Central China Investment and Trade Exposition.

His work soon expanded beyond Shanxi. Since 2022, he has joined a youth rural revitalization project led by the Communist Youth League of China, working across more than 20 provinces to promote local products through livestreaming.

Rather than relying on aggressive sales tactics, Fan's livestreams focus on rural traditions and regional culture. He recalled one session in Jilin province where viewership surged from around 2,000 to 20,000 when an intangible cultural heritage inheritor demonstrated traditional bow-making.

"When products are combined with local character and storytelling, they gain new life," he said.

Fan then launched a training program for livestream hosts to support young people returning to their hometowns to start businesses. He also helped build a rural livestreaming alliance with 285 hosts and a combined following of over 440 million, featuring more than 3,000 products from counties across the country.

"We are not training influencers, but a new generation of digital farmers rooted in rural areas," he said. "What matters most is seeing farmers benefit after each session, and young people returning home through our program. That tangible impact means a lot to me."

Although Li and Fan work in different fields, both have chosen paths defined by close engagement with local communities. Success is measured not by personal recognition, but by whether their work changes ordinary lives.

"I may have given up a comfortable life, but I have gained the genuine trust of the people. That is what happiness has come to mean for me," Li said.

Contact the writers at mengwenjie@i21st.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:54 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:54 PM

CPC 105TH ANNIVERSARY

Biljana Vankovska

China's civilizational vision in an age of uncertainty

In left-leaning circles across the globe, a quiet crisis persists. Despite relentless pressure, marginalization, and even demonization, many who still carry the torch of emancipatory politics grapple with historical disappointments while clinging to hope for a more just world. As the founder of the Italian Communist Party, Antonio Gramsci, once noted, the struggle between pessimism of the intellect and optimism of the will demands moments of reflection.

There is no better occasion for such reflection than the milestone anniversary of a living socialist project.

The 105th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China is not merely a commemoration of the past, but also an invitation to reimagine the future.

My recent visit to the Memorial of the First National Congress of the CPC in Shanghai left me deeply moved by the historical context, the biographies, the struggles, and the unwavering vision of those early pioneers: a small boat, a clear compass, and the courage to chart a new course against all odds.

Where some post-socialist societies in Eastern Europe abandoned their emancipatory compass to align with the "one civilization" pattern, China's path demonstrates how dialectical adaptation can renew socialism without surrendering its core values.

Socialism with Chinese characteristics is not a retreat from principle, but a synthesis: it anchors modern development in ancient civilizational continuity, places human well-being at the center of governance, and integrates foreign policy with domestic priorities.

This external dimension is particularly significant. China is often misunderstood — either portrayed as a "future hegemon" or criticized for its "strategic restraint".

In reality, Beijing has no interest in hegemonic domination.

Its internationalism operates on two tracks: principled solidarity with progressive movements, and a deeper, long-term commitment to civilizational dialogue.

This second track has been cultivated over a century and finds its clearest expression in the concept of "mutual learning among civilizations".

The "clash of civilizations" thesis, popularized in the 1990s, presumed that cultural differences inevitably breed conflict, a narrative that conveniently legitimized intervention and civilizational exceptionalism. The CPC's framework offers a direct alternative.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

It starts from a materialist and historical understanding: civilizations are not static entities locked in eternal rivalry, but dynamic processes shaped by exchange, adaptation, and collective struggle.

Mutual learning does not mean relativism or the erasure of identity. It is the recognition that in an era of polycrisis, no single tradition holds a monopoly on wisdom.

Differences are not a threat to a shared human future; they are its foundation.

This resonates deeply in the Balkans. My own region has lived through the consequences of imposed civilizational hierarchies and institutional engineering.

The tragic dissolution of Yugoslavia sparked countless Western academic prescriptions, yet imported models of managed multiculturalism have rarely delivered genuine coexistence.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina or North Macedonia, differences are often administratively frozen rather than dynamically engaged.

Ironically, while Western universities proliferate "intercultural studies" programs, they rarely point to China's practical approach to civilizational dialogue. To learn from others, one must first understand oneself. China's model begins with civilizational self-awareness: honoring one's own heritage without imposing it as a universal template.

It then extends outward: engaging with other traditions not to assimilate them, but to build mutual understanding and prevent the misunderstandings that fuel conflict.

This is not merely an academic ideal; it is an anti-imperialist stance rooted in peace, solidarity, and the strengthening of people-to-people bonds.

A superficial glance at today's world might suggest the US scholar Samuel P. Huntington's prophecy is unfolding. However, it is chaos by design, and yes — there are alternatives.

The West represents a demographic and historical minority; the Global South constitutes the overwhelming majority of humanity, offering countless examples of civilizational resilience and resistance to cultural homogenization.

China's depth is immense, but so is the intellectual and cultural wealth of Iran, India, Africa, and Latin America. Each carries living archives of alternative modernities.

Together, they form the backbone of a new cultural order based on mutual respect.

This vision has now been formalized in the Global Civilization Initiative proposed by China. For the Balkans, a region long treated as the periphery of competing empires, the GCI is not a distant diplomatic concept. It aligns intuitively with our historical memory of the Non-Aligned Movement and our age-old reality of multicultural coexistence.

It affirms that we, too, have civilizational contributions to offer, rather than reasons to feel inferior or subordinate.

What is needed now is civilizational confidence: the same clarity and courage that guided those pioneers on a small boat near Shanghai over a century ago. Mutual learning among civilizations is not a rhetorical exercise.

It is an operational framework for a world that refuses to be divided into clashing blocs.

As we navigate fragmentation and uncertainty, the CPC's 105-year journey reminds us that the future cannot be monopolized; it has to be co-authored.

The author is a professor of political science and international relations from Skopje, North Macedonia, and the director of Synergia Orbi: Institute for Global Analysis.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Humphrey P. B. Moshi

CPC's 105-year journey from fights to heights

The Communist Party of China, founded in 1921, has been the sole governing party of the People's Republic of China since 1949. Truly, in these 105 years, Chinese society has undergone remarkable transitions in a variety of dimensions. It has ushered in a new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics, eradicated absolute poverty, and finished building a moderately prosperous society in all respects. These are unprecedented milestones, outcomes, and historic feats. Despite these achievements, the CPC has now set out on a new journey to achieve the Second Centenary Goal of developing China into a great modern socialist country through the "Chinese path to modernization", which was put forward during the 20th National Congress of the CPC held in October 2022.

In the new journey, the leadership of the CPC will continue to be the defining feature of socialism with Chinese characteristics. That is why its contribution to socioeconomic development, national rejuvenation and people's well-being will remain sustainable.

President Xi Jinping has stressed the importance of meeting the needs of the people. That has always been China's strategy — of putting people first, over and above, everything else.

Second, the commitment to embracing globalization and multilateralism remains unshakable, given the emphasis on the need to promote high-level opening-up, and promote the sustainable development of cooperation platforms such as the Belt and Road Initiative and the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation.

Likewise, the cooperation platforms have accelerated social and economic development in developing countries, particularly African countries.

In a nutshell, given China's deep integration with the global economy, stability and growth of the economy are central to global economic recovery in the era after COVID, the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the oil crisis triggered by the US-Iran war.

Third, modernization cuts across all priorities. This means that China's development would be informed, as in the past, by the dynamics of the day, both regionally and globally. As always, this development will be blended with Chinese characteristics. In this regard, continuous adjustment to the unfolding future challenges and opportunities becomes a basic rule.

In other words, the capacity for adaptation to the changing circumstances has to be developed, nurtured and enhanced.

Indeed, the main drivers for coping with the unfolding dynamics, whether climate change or pandemics, are human capacity development and scientific and technological innovations.

Fourth, in the future, adherence to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence will remain firmly anchored on solid ground when cooperating with other countries, both developed and developing. This commitment is underpinned by the national policy of opening up to the outside world, which is guided by the principle of mutual benefit.

It should be noted that the above-mentioned principles were put forward in 1954, and their spirit was widely recognized at the 1955 Bandung Conference. Subsequently, they inspired the establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement, whose principles China has consistently supported and adhered to.

Fifth, the emphasis China placed on promoting peace and development is another area of continuity. Indeed, it should be noted that China did not launch aggressive wars or plunder foreign resources to become the world's second-largest economy.

However, China's aversion to war and love for peace should not mean it will look the other way if its territorial integrity and sovereignty are violated by an external force.

The five areas analyzed above, added to China's track record of unwavering commitment to globalization and multilateralism, its upholding of governance principles, and a leadership that "walks the talk", make us more than confident that China's development has gained renewed momentum, that, on the one hand, will continue to profoundly impact the world in all spheres, and, on the other hand, will enable China to, ultimately, build a modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic and culturally advanced, harmonious, and beautiful.

We sincerely congratulate the CPC, the PRC leadership and the Chinese people for the work well done. Keep it up!

The author is a professor of economics and founding director of the Center for Chinese Studies at the University of Dar es Salaam.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Xie Maosong

Why Chinese governance model has always chosen long-termism

In an age of short attention spans, compressed political cycles and increasingly fragmented societies, China presents a striking contrast: its plans last for decades.

As the nation commemorates the 105th anniversary of the Communist Party of China and launches the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), the world is increasingly focused on how China has sustained strategic continuity amid sweeping economic and social transformation.

The answer lies not just in institutions and policies but in a deeply embedded political philosophy that prioritizes long-term governance, supported by values deeply rooted in the Chinese culture: continuity, adaptation and collective purpose.

China's long-term orientation is most visible in what Chinese leaders often describe as the country's two greatest achievements: rapid economic development and enduring social stability.

These successes did not happen by accident.

China's governance model integrates long-term national goals with medium-term planning and annual implementation. Its Five-Year Plans are not isolated policy documents; they are phases in a broader developmental trajectory. Long-term objectives are translated into concrete milestones, ensuring continuity over decades rather than abrupt shifts with each political cycle.

Such sustained planning is particularly valuable during periods of uncertainty. As global markets face recurring disruptions, China has deployed macroeconomic coordination and countercyclical adjustment to maintain stability while pursuing long-term development goals.

The phenomenal rise of China's electric vehicle industry is a testament to this approach. A decade ago, few had expected that Chinese new-energy vehicles would become central players in the global market.

This achievement is not an outcome of market forces alone. It resulted from a combination of government planning, industrial policy, technological innovation and long-term investment. Multiple battery technologies were allowed to compete simultaneously.

Public policy and private entrepreneurship reinforced one another. Development finance, industrial funds and patient capital helped sustain innovation through years of uncertainty.

It's noteworthy that this industrial policy itself is not unique to China. Many advanced Western economies once relied heavily on similar approaches during their industrial ascents. The difference lies in the persistence, not in the invention.

Behind these policies stands a governing organization with an extraordinary belief in continuity.

The CPC's organizational structure extends from the national leadership to local communities across the country, providing not only administrative reach but also the ability to mobilize resources, coordinate priorities and implement decisions on a vast scale.

Yet, organizational capacity alone cannot ensure durability. A political system needs legitimacy. For the CPC, that legitimacy is anchored in the principle of serving the people. Unlike political systems organized around competing interest groups, China's governing philosophy emphasizes balancing diverse interests within a broader public good. The goal is not simply to aggregate competing demands but to reconcile immediate interests with long-term national objectives.

Economic dynamism and social stability are viewed as mutually reinforcing, not competing, goals.

This philosophy is deeply rooted in Chinese political tradition. Throughout history, governance in China has been judged by virtue as much as power. Political authority was expected to serve society rather than represent particular factions.

While modern China is very different from ancient China, the belief that a government should pursue the long-term well-being of the whole society continues to influence political thinking.

This helps explain why many Chinese scholars describe the CPC not just as a political entity but as a "civilizational party" — an organization that sees itself as both a governing body and a carrier of a broader historical mission.

The CPC's relationship with Chinese society is central to this model. The Party's long-standing "mass line" emphasizes learning from local communities, identifying successful grassroots practices and transforming them into broader policies.

Pilot programs are tested, evaluated and expanded gradually. In this sense, governance combines top-down coordination with bottom-up experimentation.

Long-term governance, however, requires more than planning and public support. It also requires adaptation. An enduring theme in Chinese civilization is the idea that permanence and change are not opposites but complements. Stability is achieved not through rigidity but through continuous renewal.

This principle explains why China's leaders emphasize both consistency of direction and flexibility of method. Strategic continuity is maintained while adjusting policies to the changing circumstances. Markets are encouraged to generate growth and innovation, yet excessive speculation and disorder are subject to regulation.

Economic dynamism and social stability are viewed as mutually reinforcing, not competing, goals.

Equally important is the Party's emphasis on self-renewal. Chinese leaders argue that long-term governance can endure only if the governing organization reforms itself continuously. This belief underpins ongoing efforts to strengthen Party discipline, combat corruption and improve governance capacity.

At its core, China's long-termism is sustained not only by institutions but also by culture.

Chinese civilization is the world's longest continuous tradition. Classical texts such as the *Book of Changes* (I Ching) stress the importance of perseverance while adapting to changing conditions. The ideal is neither blind conservatism nor constant disruption, but the ability to remain rooted while evolving.

This cultural inheritance shapes China's approach to development, governance and its global role. China's long-term vision extends beyond its borders. The four global initiatives promoting shared development, modernization and the idea of a community with a shared future for humanity reflect a belief that national prosperity and global stability are interconnected.

China's future, in this view, cannot be separated from the future of the wider world.

The deeper logic of China's governance, therefore, is not simply about planning further ahead. It is about integrating political leadership, economic development, cultural continuity and national purpose into a cohesive long-term framework.

From the founding of the People's Republic of China, the aspiration of "Long live the People's Republic of China" is linked to another purpose: "Long live the great unity of the peoples of the world". The connection between these two ideas continues to shape China's approach to long-term governance today.

The author is the director of the Center for Chinese Civilization and China's Path Studies at the China Institute for Innovation and Development Strategy, and the president of Bailudong Academy.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:54 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:54 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Party's leadership continues to advance country's modernization drive in new era

A gathering is being held in Beijing on Wednesday morning to mark the 105th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China.

At the event, Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, will confer the July 1 Medal, the Party's highest honor, on model CPC members. He will also give an important speech that not only reviews the Party's history but also serves as a guideline for building the Party in the future.

At 105, the Party's institutional strength is inseparable from China's long-term development and modernization agenda.

The CPC had nearly 101.29 million members and over 5.43 million primary-level organizations as of the end of 2025. Party building represents a broad institutional strategy designed to improve leadership capacity, policy coordination, organizational discipline and implementation.

Understanding the role of Party building in the development of the CPC is essential to understanding the country's development, which has demonstrated that modernization depends not only on economic resources or technological innovation but also on the effectiveness of the institutions responsible for translating national priorities into practical outcomes.

Since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, the CPC Central Committee with Xi Jinping at its core has set forth a series of new ideas, thoughts and strategies on the Party's self-governance and on efforts to strengthen the Party, forming Xi Jinping Thought on Party Building. The Thought reflects an institutional logic by emphasizing political leadership, organizational cohesion, self-governance and continuous improvement of the Party's governing capacity.

Sustaining high-quality development increasingly requires effective coordination across industrial upgrading, scientific innovation, financial stability, environmental protection and social welfare. Such challenges place greater demands on governance than growth alone.

Xi Jinping Thought on Party Building integrates Party leadership with national rejuvenation, institutional modernization and governance reform through an effective institutional design.

The Thought stresses that upholding the Party's leadership is the defining feature of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

It emphasizes the need to uphold the centralized, unified leadership of the CPC Central Committee, exercise full and rigorous Party self-governance, stay true to the Party's original aspiration and founding mission, take the Party's political building as the overarching principle, and build cohesion and forge a solid ideological foundation with the Party's innovative theories.

It also stresses the need to enhance Party consciousness, improve an organizational system featuring cohesion across different levels and effective implementation, cultivate high-caliber officials capable of shouldering the mission of national rejuvenation, improve Party conduct on a regular and long-term basis, supervise and govern the Party in all respects with strict discipline, take coordinated steps to ensure that officials do not have the audacity, opportunity or desire to commit corruption, run the Party with systems and regulations, and fulfill the political responsibility of full and rigorous Party self-governance.

A country's modernization should not be judged solely by income levels or technological sophistication but also by governance effectiveness, long-term policy consistency and the ability to balance development with stability. Within this framework, Party building becomes part of a broader governance architecture intended to support Chinese modernization.

The growing external uncertainty underscores the importance of maintaining domestic policy coherence, institutional resilience and implementation capacity at home. Strong organizational leadership, in this view, is regarded as a source of strategic stability during periods of global volatility.

The effectiveness of Party building will ultimately be judged by measurable outcomes: whether it continues to enhance governance quality, sustain high-quality development, strengthen institutional resilience and improve public well-being.

It is of great significance for the entire Party to apply Xi Jinping Thought on Party Building to plan and advance the Party's development and exercise full and rigorous Party self-governance with higher standards and more concrete actions.

By doing so, the Party can leverage its 105-year legacy to better navigate a complex economy, a rapidly evolving society, and an era of increasing global uncertainty.

China-EU economic ties not zero-sum game

In a major move underscoring the importance of dialogue over confrontation, Minister of Commerce Wang Wentao and European Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security Maros Sefcovic co-chaired the inaugural meeting of the China-EU trade and investment consultation mechanism in Brussels on Monday.

The "intensive, focused and constructive" talks surrounding key economic and trade issues sent a clear signal that China and the EU remain committed to addressing economic and trade differences through dialogue.

To prevent disputes from escalating into a trade war, the two sides agreed to set up four initial work streams under the mechanism to further discuss the trade and investment balance, export controls, intellectual property and World Trade Organization reform, along with the establishment of a joint monitoring mechanism to exchange relevant data, monitor trade flows and support technical work with a view to improving transparency, enhancing mutual trust and managing trade frictions.

This is an institutionalized approach to the management of their differences. While differences are inevitable, having an efficient dialogue platform and a framework of rules provides a formal consultation process for resolving frictions.

Progress has been made on specific issues, with both parties acknowledging the positive results of the dialogue on export controls on rare earth elements and other critical minerals, and expressing their intention to strengthen dialogue in this field.

They agreed that increased market access measures and initiatives can contribute to the healthy development of the trade relationship. They also agreed on the need to take further facilitation measures to maintain the stability of global industry and supply chains. The exchange of market access lists and the agreement to gradually address each other's concerns are concrete actions in that direction.

From Europe's perspective, the "trade imbalance" is the top concern. Yet a fact that the EU is reluctant to face is that the increasing trade gap is not the result of China's policy direction, but rather a natural outcome based on comparative advantage and market competition. The root cause lies in the EU's mounting restrictions on exports of high-tech products to China.

The European Commission's decision to restrict EU funding, including through the European Investment Bank and European Investment Fund, for solar, wind, and energy storage projects using inverters from so-called "high-risk countries", including China, along with the draft revisions of the bloc's Cybersecurity Act and the Industrial Accelerator Act, has severely impacted normal bilateral cooperation and the stability of global industry and supply chains.

To prevent trade frictions from escalating, the EU must keep the broader picture of China-EU economic ties in mind and address China's concerns with sincerity. It must stop implementing new restrictions targeting Chinese companies and products, as cooperation cannot coexist with the building of barriers.

It is crucial for the EU to recognize that China is not the source of the bloc's problems, but rather a partner in resolving them.

As the EU's major trading partner for goods, China is prepared to enhance dialogue and consultation with the EU through all available channels, including the newly established trade and investment consultation mechanism. By properly managing differences and frictions, China aims to promote practical cooperation and work toward balanced growth in China-EU trade.

The scale of China-EU trade — at 5.93 trillion yuan ($873.16 billion) last year, an increase of 6 percent year-on-year — indicates that neither side can afford to disengage from the other. Escalating economic and trade frictions would harm the shared interests of both sides.

It is encouraging that Sefcovic stated that the EU does not intend to escalate trade frictions and is willing to strengthen dialogue and consultation with China to manage differences. Both sides have reportedly tasked their teams with intensifying efforts and agreed to hold another ministerial meeting in autumn. China-EU economic ties are not a zero-sum game. They should take this meeting as a starting point, move forward together and ensure that China-EU economic relations remain stable and enduring amid challenges.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Song Chen



Opinion Line

Revisiting classics a reminder of dialogue of civilizations

In both the Greek and Chinese traditions, the classics don't preserve abstract theories that are detached from reality, but accumulated wisdom about how human beings should govern states, cultivate character, maintain social order, confront suffering and lead meaningful lives.

Classic works have often emerged in moments of social transformation and civilizational uncertainty. Plato wrote *The Republic* in the aftermath of political upheaval and the execution of his mentor Socrates, asking how justice and civic order might still be possible. Likewise, *The Analects of Confucius* emerged in an age of political fragmentation and moral disorder; Confucius' journeys were themselves attempts to seek workable forms of ethical and political life.

It is perhaps for this reason that civilizations often return to their classical traditions during periods of historic transition and renewed cultural confidence. According to the Chinese philosopher and classicist Liu Xiaofeng, the rise of successive generations of scholars dedicated to the study of the ancient classics has often accompanied periods of heightened reflection on a civilization's cultural inheritance and historical identity.

From the organization of Greek texts under the Hellenistic kingdoms to the Roman inheritance of Greek civilization, from the recovery of lost Greek and Latin manuscripts by scholars during the Renaissance period to the rise of German classical philology alongside the formation of modern states, broader historical renewal has always been accompanied by the reinterpretation of foundational texts.

China experienced comparable moments as well: major dynastic high points, including the Han (206 BC-220), Tang (618-907), and Qing (1644-1911) periods, were often marked by large-scale efforts to preserve, collate and reinterpret the classical canon. Such returns to the classics are not merely nostalgic gestures. Rather, societies undergoing historical change often look back at ancient foundational texts in search of continuity, legitimacy, and moral orientation.

The United States is another example. As a comparatively young nation, the intellectual elite there used to look up to Greece and Rome as sources of cultural continuity. At the University of Chicago, Robert Maynard Hutchins established a core curriculum in Western civilization centered on Greek and Roman classics, requiring students to engage with the works of writers such as Homer, Plato, Aristotle and Virgil alongside later European thinkers. Beneath the project lay the conviction that a modern society still requires a shared relationship with the foundational questions and texts of civilization.

Such efforts also point toward a deeper intellectual possibility. Contemporary political discourse often remains confined to immediate policy concerns, ideological categories and strategic competition. By returning to classical texts, scholars attempt to raise the level of discussion — from short-term political arguments toward the deeper philosophical questions underlying political life: justice, education, morality, order and human nature. The emphasis on philology, close reading and historical interpretation reflects the belief that classical works should not merely be cited for modern-day agendas, but encountered as living sources of thought capable of reshaping how contemporary societies understand themselves.

This broader perspective may also offer an alternative to some very influential theories of inevitable civilizational conflict. Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilizations" theory assumes that human beings are defined primarily by large civilizational blocs grounded in religion, culture and historical memory. For Plato and Aristotle, however, human beings stand out for their universal capacity to reason and the cultivation of excellence rather than civilizational membership alone. Confucian thought, too, understands the self through ethical relationships, social obligations and the cultivation of *ren*, or benevolence, within a network of family and ritual life. In different ways, both traditions imply that harmony does not require the elimination of differences, and that meaningful dialogue across civilizations remains possible because human beings share capacities for moral cultivation, rational inquiry and ethical life.

Seen in this light, the renewed interest in classical traditions may help move discussions beyond the assumption that civilizations encounter one another primarily through competition, ideology or power politics. By returning to the foundational texts through which societies first articulated their understandings of justice, order, morality and human flourishing, scholars may reopen the possibility of a deeper intellectual reciprocity — one in which civilizations meet not as rivals, but as participants in a shared human conversation.

— ZHAO XU, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Industrial sector needs to fully tap domestic market

Editor's note: *Industries across the world are undergoing major changes due to geopolitical shifts and technological advancements. Xu Zhaoyuan, deputy head of the Department of Industrial Economy under the Development Research Center of the State Council, spoke to China Economic Times on China's ability to navigate these changes and the steps needed to further improve its industrial sector. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

Amid the reshaping of the global industrial landscape, China's industrial system has several competitive advantages. The massive scale of China's manufacturing sector delivers enormous output volumes, which reduce R&D spending and equipment depreciation costs for every unit of output. The large production scale also leads to higher efficiency.

In 2025, China overtook Germany and Japan to secure 10th position in the World Intellectual Property Organization's Global Innovation Index. It was the first time the country was in the top 10 in the GII, and marked China's transition from a technology follower to a frontier innovator. More importantly, China's innovations are no longer confined to laboratories. They are deeply aligned with industrial demands. Scientific discoveries are swiftly turning into engineering practices.

China's comprehensive industrial system provides robust industrial support to emerging sectors in the country, shortening the lead time from prototype development to mass production and facilitating cross-sector integration.

The country's population of more than 1.4 billion and a large middle-income group generate tremendous market demand, acting as catalysts for technological progress. Products such as new energy vehicles, 5G terminals and smart home appliances receive massive real-time user feedback in China's market, driving algorithm iteration and design refinement.

China has built a 5G network and a large-scale industrial internet system. This infrastructural advantage enables AI, big data analytics and digital technologies to be deeply integrated into production management.

In the next 25 years, China should fully tap into its superlarge market. It should develop a unified national market, improve systems to better promote fair competition and strengthen quality standards and the protection of intellectual property. These measures will drive enterprises to improve the quality of their products, build stronger brands and move up the value chain.

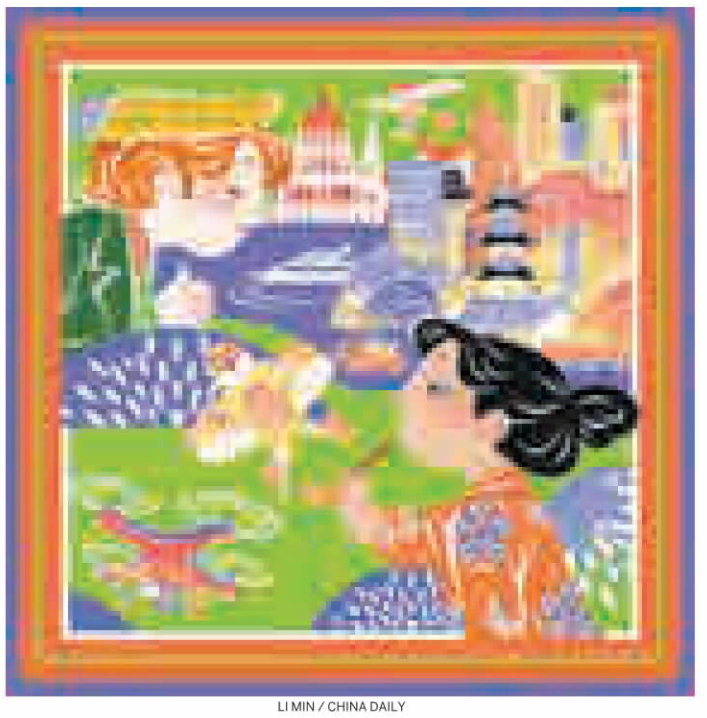
The country needs to cultivate not only major enterprises with core technologies that are capable of integrating resources globally, but also a multitude of small and medium-sized enterprises that demonstrate competitiveness in niche sectors.

China's industries serve as a "stabilizer" for the global supply chain. The country will continue to provide the world with products and services featuring advanced technology, reliable quality and reasonable prices. Additionally, China supports domestic enterprises in making more direct investment overseas, especially in green and low-carbon sectors.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:54 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:54 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

LEVENTE HORVÁTH

Building bridges in times of 'de-risking'

Supply chain cooperation serves as a model of open resilience in the era of Globalization 2.0

The fourth China International Supply Chain Expo, held in Beijing from June 22 to 26, came at a time when global supply chains are undergoing profound transformation. The challenge facing governments and businesses today is how



to enhance economic security while maintaining competitiveness in an interconnected world. While China promotes international cooperation through platforms such as the CISCE, the European Union increasingly emphasizes "de-risking" and supply-chain nationalism.

Much of the recent debate has focused on geopolitics and the rise of new economic powers. Yet a deeper economic transformation is taking place. The first phase of globalization was primarily about the internationalization of products and trade. Today, a new phase — Globalization 2.0 — is emerging, characterized by the globalization of production networks, logistics systems, technologies and supply chains. Global supply chains are not disappearing; they are being reorganized and diversified.

This debate is particularly relevant for China-EU relations. China remains the EU's second-largest trading partner in goods, while the EU continues to be one of China's most important export markets. Despite growing discussions about "de-risking", economic interdependence remains substantial. Hungary offers a useful example of how a European country can adapt to these changing realities and integrate itself into emerging Eurasian supply chains.

China-Hungary economic relations have undergone significant transformation over the past two decades. During the early 2000s, cooperation was driven primarily by trade. Bilateral trade expanded to $20.8 billion in 2025.

Since the second half of the 2010s, investment has been the defining feature of bilateral economic cooperation. In 2025, China maintained its position as the largest source of foreign investment in the country. Hungary has become one of Europe's most important destinations for Chinese investment.

And the broader trend of supply chain cooperation embedded in bilateral trade and investment is also very significant. The following are four pillars that support supply chain cooperation between Hungary and China.

First, logistics. Connectivity has become a strategic asset in modern supply chains. Budapest has emerged as one of Central Europe's most important gateways for Chinese passenger and cargo traffic, with direct flights connecting Hungary to seven major Chinese cities.

Hungary is also part of the China-Europe Railway Express network, while the modernization of the Budapest-Belgrade railway is expected to strengthen trade links between Asia and Europe. These developments have enhanced Hungary's role as a logistics hub connecting Eastern and Western markets.

Second, manufacturing. Hungary's strong industrial base, particularly in the automotive sector, has provided a solid foundation for deeper integration into global value chains. It is estimated that the automotive industry accounts for more than 16 percent of Hungary's exports and remains one of the country's most important manufacturing sectors.

This industrial ecosystem has made Hungary an attractive location for Chinese manufacturers seeking access to European markets. As a result, the relationship has evolved from a traditional trade partnership into a deeper integration of production networks.

Third, green transition. The most dynamic area of China-Hungary cooperation is the green economy. The global shift toward electric mobility and renewable energy is reshaping industrial value chains, and Hungary has positioned itself at the center of this transformation.

Leading Chinese companies, including CATL, BYD, EVE Energy, Huawei and Wanhua, have established major operations in Hungary. Their investments span battery manufacturing, electric vehicles, energy storage technologies, advanced materials and renewable energy solutions.

These projects do not represent isolated investments. Together, they form an integrated industrial ecosystem that connects Chinese technological capabilities with European manufacturing and consumer markets.

Hungary's role in battery production has expanded particularly rapidly. By 2020, Hungary had become the world's sixth-largest exporter of batteries, a remarkable achievement for a country of fewer than 10 million people. Current projections suggest that Hungary's battery manufacturing capacity could eventually reach about 250 gigawatt-hours annually, potentially supplying more than one-third of Europe's battery demand.

Chinese participation in Hungary's green transition extends beyond batteries and EVs. Chinese companies are also involved in renewable energy projects, including one of Hungary's largest planned solar developments.

Naturally, environmental concerns related to battery production and large-scale industrial projects can be addressed through strict regulation, transparent standards and continuous monitoring. Sustainable development remains essential for the long-term success of these investments.

Fourth, innovation. The most important long-term trend is the gradual movement up the value chain. China-Hungary cooperation is increasingly expanding from trade and manufacturing to new frontiers such as research, development and innovation.

Several Chinese companies have established regional R&D centers in Hungary. Huawei and BYD are among the companies expanding innovation-related cooperation, while partnerships between Chinese companies and Hungarian universities continue to grow.

This evolution demonstrates how participation in global supply chains can gradually generate higher-value activities beyond manufacturing itself. For Hungary, it represents an opportunity to move from assembly-based production toward innovation and knowledge creation.

Hungary's experience demonstrates that the restructuring of global supply chains does not necessarily lead to fragmentation. Instead, it can create new opportunities for connectivity, diversification, industrial upgrading and innovation.

By focusing on logistics, manufacturing, green technologies and research cooperation, Hungary has positioned itself as an increasingly important bridge between Chinese industrial capabilities and European markets.

As discussions at the CISCE and across Europe continue to focus on economic security and supply-chain resilience, Hungary's experience suggests that resilience can be strengthened through openness, diversification and mutually beneficial cooperation. In the era of Globalization 2.0, the most successful countries cannot be those that isolate themselves from global supply chains, but those that learn how to join them.

The author is the director of the Eurasia Center at John von Neumann University in Hungary, the former consul general of Hungary in Shanghai and a visiting scholar at Fudan Development Institute. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

JIANG QINGQUAN AND ZHANG XIAOSAN

Making AI a force for all

The BRICS collaborative framework is reshaping global governance of smart systems, ensuring that its future is written through the collective wisdom of a multipolar world

As artificial intelligence weaves itself into the fabric of economies and societies, a central question is no longer what AI can do, but who gets to shape its future and who shares in its benefits. Against the backdrop of accelerating technological evolution, the BRICS countries have articulated a clear and compelling answer: Global AI governance must meet the needs of all countries.



Jiang Qingquan



Zhang Xiaosan

Through a combination of high-level political consensus, institutional innovation and practical, development-first cooperation, the BRICS countries are offering a distinctive governance model that is steadily reshaping the global conversation on artificial intelligence.

The values embedded in the BRICS approach did not appear in isolation. They represent the steady ascent of a concept that China has championed for several years — AI for good. In 2023, China launched the Global AI Governance Initiative, putting people-centered development, the idea of "AI for good", as well as the principles of mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit, at the heart of the international discourse. That proposition gained remarkable traction in 2024, when the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution on AI capacity-building that China co-sponsored, a move that firmly linked governance to development. By the time the BRICS leaders' statement formally endorsed these principles in 2025, what began as a vision had unmistakably become a common voice of the Global South.

Today, "AI for good" serves as the working guideline within the BRICS cooperation framework. It means ensuring that AI systems serve sustainable development through a people-centered vision. It involves jointly developing ethical benchmarks that prevent the misuse of AI while preserving space for innovation tailored to national realities. The BRICS countries can advance harmonized frameworks for AI ethics and safety that emphasize both risk mitigation and developmental benefits. Joint programs to combat AI-generated misinformation, promote algorithmic transparency and integrate AI literacy into public education should be designed not as exclusive standards but as shared public goods available to all interested partners. The framework can specifically highlight the need to safeguard vulnerable groups from algorithmic bias, ensuring that AI systems respect linguistic, cultural, geographical and demographic diversity.

In July 2025, the 17th BRICS Summit adopted the BRICS Leaders' Statement on the Global Governance of AI, a historic document that laid out principles, which are representative, development-oriented, accessible, inclusive, dynamic and responsive. This was more than a diplomatic milestone. It signaled the rise of a governance philosophy that places the needs of the Global South at the center of the international AI agenda, while respecting the digital sovereignty of every nation.

AI development should not become the privilege of a few countries, nor a manipulation tool in the hands of elites. Otherwise, global AI governance may deepen existing inequalities by imposing one-size-fits-all regulatory frameworks before the vast majority of nations have had a chance to build fundamental AI capabilities. The BRICS framework, by contrast, focuses on development with a people-centered vision. Rather than beginning with complex restrictions that may inadvertently exclude, it prioritizes empowering countries of the Global South to fully participate in global AI governance.

The BRICS leaders' statement explicitly affirms the right of all nations to reap the benefits of the digital economy and emerging technologies while upholding fundamental rights. It calls for expanding digital infrastructure, sharing open-source datasets and AI models, and cultivating homegrown talent. This political commitment has already translated into concrete actions. Under the BRICS cooperation framework, joint AI research and development centers are being established, and skills training programs are reaching numerous engineers and students across the BRICS countries. By making accessibility and inclusion non-negotiable starting points, the BRICS approach provides a new paradigm to help transform AI from a potential source of widening divides into an engine of shared progress.

Bold principles require operational engines to turn vision into reality. That engine was given a powerful boost in September 2025 when Chinese Premier Li Qiang proposed the AI+ International Cooperation Initiative at a high-level meeting on the Global Development Initiative. The proposal advocates embedding AI into key areas such as people's livelihoods, scientific research and industrial transformation, with the overarching goal of making AI a truly international public good that benefits humanity.

The initiative dovetails seamlessly with the BRICS governance principles. It is not a distant pledge but an actionable cooperation matrix. Within the BRICS framework, this translates into projects that directly tackle the "high willingness, low capacity" dilemma some developing countries face. For example, China and Brazil have piloted AI-enabled smart agriculture projects to help smallholder farmers boost yields and manage resources sustainably. This embodies the BRICS conviction that AI governance should be measured not only by the rules it sets, but by the tangible benefits it delivers to ordinary people.

These efforts are backed by a growing ecosystem of shared resources. BRICS countries can work on interoperable computing platforms, mutual recognition of data governance standards and joint open-source AI innovation communities. The China-BRICS New Quality Productive Forces Research Center, which opened in Beijing this January, promotes academic dialogue and research on new quality productive forces under a hybrid cooperation model. All of this reinforces one core insight: Once capabilities are broadly distributed, legitimate governance rules will emerge from inclusive, representative processes that honor the diverse developmental priorities of all nations.

The BRICS approach to AI governance is reshaping the global landscape by demonstrating that technological progress and inclusive governance can advance hand in hand. It shows that Global South countries need not choose between embracing AI's transformative potential and safeguarding their sovereignty and values.

By championing development-first and people-centered pathways, concrete "AI+" cooperation and the shared value of "AI for good", BRICS is helping build a world where AI serves as a force for all.

Looking ahead, the bloc's continued emphasis on open collaboration, shared capacity-building and UN-centered multilateralism offers a blueprint for global AI governance that leaves no country and no person behind. In an era of rapid technological change, the BRICS message is clear: The future of AI should be written not in a single language or from a single perspective, but through the collective wisdom of a multipolar world committed to shared prosperity.

Jiang Qingquan is a professor at the BRICS Economic Research Center at Xiamen University of Technology. Zhang Xiaosan is an associate professor at the Xiamen National Accounting Institute. The authors contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:54 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:54 PM

20 YEARS
QINGHAI-XIZANG RAILWAY TRANSFORMS REGIONAL LOGISTICS

Landmark high-altitude line has brought people, trade closer than ever. **Luo Wangshu** reports from Xining, Golmud, Lhasa and Nyingchi.



A passenger train runs on the Qinghai-Xizang Railway on Jan 4, 2017. ZHANG ZHENQI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Timeline

1958
Construction begins on the Xining-Golmud section, the first phase of the Qinghai-Xizang Railway. The project is suspended in 1961 because of economic difficulties.

1974
Construction of the Xining-Golmud section resumes, with some 60,000 workers joining the project on the plateau.

September 1979
Track laying is completed on the Xining-Golmud section, allowing provisional operations to begin.

May 1, 1984
The 814-kilometer Xining-Golmud section officially enters operation.

June 29, 2001
Construction begins on the Golmud-Lhasa section, the railway's second phase and its most technically challenging stretch, which requires solutions to permafrost and other high-altitude engineering difficulties.

July 1, 2006
The 1,142-kilometer Golmud-Lhasa section opens to traffic, marking the full operation of the Qinghai-Xizang Railway and ending Xizang's history without rail service.

Aug 16, 2014
The 251-kilometer Lhasa-Shigatse Railway, an extension of the Qinghai-Xizang Railway, opens, further improving Xizang's railway network.

June 25, 2021
The 435-kilometer Lhasa-Nyingchi Railway opens. Fuxing bullet trains make their debut in Xizang, ending the region's history without electrified railways.

SOURCE: CHINA STATE RAILWAY GROUP

Upgrades minimize line's footprint on the plateau

By LUO WANGSHU

Ecological protection measures along the Qinghai-Xizang Railway have steadily evolved over the past two decades, with wildlife passages, waste treatment systems and daily patrols minimizing the operational footprint on the fragile plateau environment.

According to China State Railway Group, nearly 60 kilometers of dedicated wildlife passages have been integrated into the line to keep historical migration routes open. These measures have contributed to a rebound in the Tibetan antelope population, which has risen from fewer than 20,000 individuals in the 2000s to more than 70,000 today.

The railway, which fully opened in 2006, bisects a complex tapestry of grasslands, wetlands, water-source areas, permafrost zones and wildlife habitats. On the plateau, where damaged vegetation can take years to recover, environmental mitigation has become a permanent feature of daily operations and maintenance.

Much of this infrastructure is easy for passengers to miss. The line utilizes low-temperature sewage treatment equipment designed for plateau conditions, alongside closed wastewater discharge systems on trains. Remote station sites rely on electric and solar heating rather than fossil fuels, while sealed waste containers line the route for centralized collection.

While these systems may sound ordinary, operating them on the plateau is not. Sewage treatment has to work in cold, low-oxygen conditions. Waste has to be kept from scattering across open grassland. Heating choices matter in remote station areas where the environment is highly sensitive.

For Zhang Delong, a permafrost maintenance specialist at the Golmud railway maintenance depot, ecological protection is part of standard maintenance planning.

In sensitive sections, he said, teams consider not only tracks, bridges and roadbeds, but also the land beside the line. Work schedules, materials and access routes must be arranged carefully, especially in areas close to national parks, grasslands and wildlife habitats.

During wildlife migration seasons, some maintenance work is delayed until animals have moved through. If fences are damaged, they are repaired quickly so that livestock and wild animals are kept away from the tracks and guided toward safer crossings.

All maintenance waste is collected and taken back to depots for disposal. Sand-control work, Zhang said, is also more than a railway safety measure. By reducing windblown sand, it helps protect nearby grassland as well as the line itself.

Tibetan antelopes feed as an elevated freight train runs by in Haixi prefecture, Qinghai province, on June 3. WANG JIAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Further south in Amdo county of Nagchu city, Xizang, Jangchub Dorje, deputy director of the local forestry and grassland bureau, said protection also means reducing the human cost of living close to wildlife.

In areas where herders and wild animals share the same landscape, authorities have improved compensation insurance for damage caused by wild animals and built bear-proof fences to reduce conflict, he said.

For Tsering Samdrup, a railway protection worker in Amdo, environmental work is inseparable from patrol work. His section lies near wildlife corridors linked with the Hoh Xil and Changtang national nature reserves, where animal movement is frequent.

The area was once close to uninhabited, with only a few nomadic households across dozens of kilometers. Today, protection workers help keep railway operations, livestock movement and wildlife activity from interfering with one another.

Tsering Samdrup is not an environmental scientist. But when he checks fences, watches animal movements or helps keep livestock away from the line, he is taking part in the railway's coexistence with the plateau.

The result is not a claim that a railway can cross such terrain without impact. Rather, the Qinghai-Xizang Railway shows a practical approach to reducing disturbance, keeping migration routes open, repairing damage quickly and constantly adjusting.

A train can cross the plateau in a matter of hours. Making room for the land, water and wildlife around it is a permanent commitment.

Sonam Wangdrak first saw a train not on a track, but in a school textbook.

He was raised in Lhorong, a remote county within Chamdo city, Xizang autonomous region — a mountainous territory where childhood was measured by livestock herding and highland barley fields rather than transit timetables. When he asked his teacher to describe a train, the answer stayed with him: "A train is many times faster than the horse you ride."

In 2003, following his father's advice to acquire a technical skill, Sonam Wangdrak was admitted to a vocational railway school in Lanzhou, Gansu province. The journey from his isolated home took six days, requiring a transit on horseback, followed by long-distance regional buses. He finally boarded his first conventional passenger train in Golmud, an industrial outpost in Qinghai province.

"It felt so cool, fast and steady," he recalled.

The infrastructure that once existed only as a textbook illustration became his profession. After joining the regional railway system in 2007, he qualified to pilot locomotives onto the high-altitude plateau. By 2021, he was selected as one of the primary drivers operating the advanced Fuxing bullet trains on the Lhasa-Nyingchi and Lhasa-Shigatse lines.

Two decades after the first tracks linked Lhasa to the rest of China's national rail network, Sonam Wangdrak's career reflects the social and economic transformation. The expansion of the Qinghai-Xizang Railway has structurally redefined transport, logistics and urbanization across the plateau.

Terminus to network

The engineering spine of the network is the Qinghai-Xizang Railway, which stretches 1,956 kilometers southwest from Xining, the capital of Qinghai province, to the Xizang capital of Lhasa. While the lower-altitude Xining-to-Golmud leg opened in 1984, the complex high-altitude segment connecting Golmud across the mountains to Lhasa opened on July 1, 2006, ending Xizang's historical isolation from national rail infrastructure.

According to data from China State Railway Group, to mark July 1, 2026, the 20th anniversary of Qinghai-Xizang Railway's full operation, the corridor has managed over 104 million passenger trips and transported 824 million metric tons of freight since its inception.

During its initial construction phase, engineering debates focused on whether rail lines could permanently withstand extreme thin air, expansive permafrost zones, high winds and fragile alpine ecosystems. Twenty years later, the focus has shifted from basic structural survival to network integration.

For its first eight years, Lhasa operated purely as the final terminus of the line. That isolation ended in 2014 with the opening of the westward Lhasa-Shigatse Railway toward China's southwestern border. The network expanded again in 2021 with the debut of the eastward Lhasa-Nyingchi Railway, creating Xizang's first fully electrified, high-speed rail corridor.

This infrastructure forms a comprehensive Y-shaped regional network, linking central Lhasa with the critical prefecture-level hubs of Shigatse to the west, and Lhokha and Nyingchi to the east.

At Lhasa Railway Station, daily operations reflect this expansion. Scheduled passenger train pairs on the Qinghai-Xizang Railway have increased from five per day in 2006 to 13 pairs in 2026. Daily departures have grown from a maximum of 3,000 passengers in 2006 to more than 10,000 on regular days, said Li Jia, head of the station.

"The station has not become smaller," Li said. "What has become shorter is the time passengers spend entering and leaving it. And outside the station, the city has grown."

The Liuwu New Area, the district surrounding the station on the south bank of the Lhasa River, has transitioned from barren hills and agricultural plots into a high-density modern commercial sector.

Integrated logistics

The network's impact on logistics is visible in both passenger travel and bulk freight data.

For Sun Yanqing, a 44-year-old Tibetan tourist from the rugged Yushu prefecture in Qinghai, Lhasa has long carried personal meaning. He recalled his first trip to Lhasa around 2000, which required an arduous 24-hour overland journey by road from Golmud. This year, he completed the trip via a direct train from Xining with his family.

"When I was young, we always heard how good Lhasa was and wanted to come," Sun said. "After coming once, I wanted to come again. Every time I come, it is different."

Further north along the line in Amdo county — a high-altitude zone in Nagchu city near the Qinghai-Xizang border — 74-year-old resident Kelsang Tsering said that the railroad has completely altered local trade. For regional merchants, a supply trip to Lhasa to buy or sell wholesale goods once consumed up to a week by road; via the rail line, traders routinely complete orders and return within 48 hours.

After the railway opened, he also saw more visitors come to Tsona Lake and the Tangula Mountains.

Annual inbound and outbound freight volume to and from Xizang rose from 360,000 tons in 2006 to 8.31 million tons by the end of last year, according to Lu Jianbin, an official with the Xizang Development and Reform Commission.

"Compared with road transport, railway freight has cut costs by about 60 percent and improved efficiency by nearly three times," Lu said. "That has helped move daily necessities, vegetables, fruit and consumer goods onto the plateau, while carrying local agricultural, pastoral and specialty products to wider markets."

Engineering and ecology

The logistical efficiency realized by traders and passengers depends on a railway corridor built through some of the world's most hostile terrain. Approximately 960 km of the line run above 4,000 meters, where oxygen levels are roughly 60 percent of those on the plains. About 550 km run across permafrost zones.

For Zhang Delong, a permafrost maintenance specialist at the Golmud railway maintenance depot, the problem is that the ground itself is never entirely still.

"Routine railway maintenance is often built on accumulated experience, but permafrost maintenance is different. Experience alone is not enough, because conditions are changing," Zhang said.

Much of the work, he said, is about keeping permafrost relatively stable. Water must be drained away from the roadbed, while crushed-rock slopes, sun shields and cooling devices help stabilize the foundation.

Zhang compared some of the insulation work to "putting a quilt over the roadbed to keep the heat out".

For Tsering Samdrup, a railway protection worker in Xizang's Amdo county, the difficulty is felt above ground. His patrol section near the northern foot of the Tangula Mountains sits at about 4,700 to 4,800 meters above sea level, where winter temperatures can fall below -20 C.

When a train passes, protection workers raise their right arms in salute and the driver sounds the horn. Tsering Samdrup calls it "a signal of closeness" between the guards and the train.

"Every time I see a train pass safely through our section, I feel I have done something meaningful," he said.

Crossing a fragile plateau

The railway's story on the plateau is also one of caution.

Liu Lanhua, a researcher at the energy conservation, environmental protection and occupational safety and health research institute of the China Academy of Railway Sciences, said environmental protection was built into the project from the beginning.

"The Qinghai-Xizang Plateau has a unique ecosystem with weak resistance to disturbance and limited self-recovery capacity," Liu said.

The project moved away from the old approach of "building first and treating environmental problems later", he said, and instead emphasized prevention, protection, whole-process control and site-specific measures.

According to China State Railway Group, nearly 60 km of dedicated wildlife passages were arranged along the railway, and their use rate has remained stable at 100 percent.

The Tibetan antelope population has grown from fewer than 20,000 in the early 2000s to more than 70,000. Greening work along the railway has covered more than 1,000 km, the group said.

Jangchub Dorje, deputy director of the forestry and grassland bureau of Amdo, said daily protection work includes clearing wildlife passages, checking sensitive areas, picking up waste and helping damaged grassland recover.

For Tsering Samdrup, the work can be as simple as standing quietly in the right place. In the early years, he said, some animals did not immediately use the passages built for them.

"We do not shout, and we do not chase them," he said. "If they move in the wrong direction, we stand in a line, quietly, like a barrier. Then we guide them toward the bridge opening and let them pass."

The gesture is small, but it captures a larger point: on the plateau, a railway cannot simply cross the land. It has to learn how to live with it.

Completing the loop

Sonam Wangdrak still remembers June 25, 2021, when the Lhasa-Nyingchi Railway opened and Fuxing high-speed trains began running on the plateau. Along the route, he saw people in Lhokha city welcoming the train with traditional dances. When the train reached Nyingchi city, residents greeted it with *hada* scarves and song.

Today, he often returns to his home county to talk to children about railway work. His hometown, Lhorong in Chamdo city, is also watching railway construction move closer as the Sichuan-Xizang Railway gradually takes shape. Sonam Wangdrak hopes that one day he can drive a train there.

The Qinghai-Xizang Railway has made Xizang closer. But on the plateau, closeness has never been only a transport question. It means opportunity, but also responsibility; wider markets, but also ecological constraints; faster movement, but also more careful protection.

Daqiong and Palden Nyima contributed to this story.

Contact the writer at luowangshu@chinadaily.com.cn

Above: Railway workers load organic groceries onto a train of the Qinghai-Xizang Railway in Xining, Qinghai province, on Nov 1, 2024. XUE DI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Left: Liu Yonghui, 83, takes a photo in front of a board celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Qinghai-Xizang Railway in Xining on June 24. ZHENG YANFENG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Transit corridor becomes unmissable tourism route

By LUO WANGSHU

For Min, a 64-year-old traveler from Guizhou province who gave only her surname, the Qinghai-Xizang Railway was far more than a transit route to Lhasa — it became the focal point of her journey.

She and her husband first planned to travel to the Xizang autonomous region by train and return by air. But after checking the schedule, she realized that part of the landscape between Golmud and Xining would pass in darkness on the inbound journey. So they changed their plan and decided to return by train as well.

"We wanted to see the part we missed," she said. "Lhasa was the destination, but the most beautiful part was the journey there and back."

For many travelers, the railway has changed how Xizang is experienced. Flying takes visitors quickly to the destination. The train lets the plateau unfold gradually — snow mountains, grasslands, lakes and distant settlements appearing outside the window as the line climbs toward Lhasa.

That experience is now being developed into more specialized tourism products.

On June 25, a plateau tourist train made its debut at Xining Railway Station. The train is designed as a long-distance travel product combining rail transport, sightseeing and onboard accommodation.

The 11-car train has a capacity of 132 passengers, with nine sleeper cars, one sightseeing car and one multifunctional car. Each berth is equipped with oxygen supply, while the sightseeing car has large viewing windows for passengers to take in plateau scenery along the route.

For older tourists such as Min, such details matter. She said the soft sleeper was comfortable and more affordable than she had expected. When some passengers experienced altitude discomfort, oxygen facilities on the train offered reassurance.

Her children had worried before the trip, but she kept in touch through video calls. "They asked if I had altitude sickness," she said. "I told them I was fine."

For Sun Yanqing, a 44-year-old Tibetan tourist from Yushu, Qinghai province, the railway has changed the way different generations in his family travel to Lhasa.

He first came around 2000, before the railway opened, traveling by road from Golmud for a day and a night. After the railway opened, he brought his parents to Lhasa by train. This year, he returned from Xining with his two children.

The trips, spread over more than two decades, gave him a personal measure of how travel to Lhasa has changed — from a tiring road journey to a train ride with oxygen supply, onboard attendants and medical support.

The change has also reshaped cities along the route — and raised a question that many tourism destinations face: how to welcome more visitors without overwhelming local communities.

Zhou Shuqin sees that question from two perspectives: as an official with Golmud's culture and tourism bureau, and as a resident who has lived in the city for more than 30 years.

She said the railway has helped Golmud become more visible as both a transport hub and a tourism stop. "The opening of the Qinghai-Xizang Railway gave Golmud a solid platform to reach the outside world," Zhou said. "Today, when people mention Golmud, many know it as an important hub."

Zhou said Golmud has tried to turn railway passenger flows into longer stays and wider local spending, linking transport with cultural tourism, local food and specialties.

For tourists, the railway may begin as transport. For cities such as Golmud, it has become a test of how to turn movement through a place into a reason to stop.

Passengers take pictures of Tsona Lake in the Xizang autonomous region, as their train, the Y972 train from Lhasa to Xining, passes by on April 8. YUAN RUILUN / FOR CHINA DAILY



Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:54 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:54 PM

CHINA

Xi'an-Shiyan high-speed rail to fuel regional growth

By **LIU KUN** in Wuhan
and **WANG SONGSONG**



A puppet performance is held to entertain passengers aboard a train departing from Xi'an in Shaanxi province for Wuhan in Hubei province as the Xi'an-Shiyan high-speed railway officially opened on Tuesday. ZHAI XIAOXUE / FOR CHINA DAILY

The Xi'an-Shiyan high-speed railway, a key artery in China's expanding high-speed rail network, began operations on Tuesday, marking a major step in integrating the economies and cultures of the country's northwestern and central regions.

Construction on the 257-kilometer line began in December 2021. Designed for speeds of up to 350 kilometers per hour, the railway has reduced travel time across the Qinling Mountains, a boundary between northern and southern China, from over five hours to less than two.

The line includes 42 tunnels and 62 bridges, with a combined length of about 244 km, accounting for more than 90 percent of the total route. As a result of complex geological conditions and stringent safety requirements, it is regarded as one of the most challenging railway projects in the region.

The railway's operation is expected to significantly boost regional development.

The line connects with the existing Hankou-Shiyan high-speed railway, reducing travel time between Xi'an, Shaanxi province, and Wuhan, capital of Hubei province, to 2 hours and 41 minutes from the previous 4.5-hour journey via a detour route.

Ji Dexu, an official with the Xiangyang power supply section of China Railway Wuhan Group who took part in the railway project, highlighted its role as a game changer for regional development.

"It accelerates the flow of talent, information and capital. Xi'an's strengths in science, education and innovation can now better complement Shiyan's renowned tourism and automotive industries within a more closely connected economic circle," Ji said.

For residents, the railway brings a new level of convenience. Travelers can have breakfast in Xi'an, visit scenic attractions in Shiyan, Hubei, and return for lunch, all within the span of a morning. It also expands access to jobs, healthcare and educational resources along the corridor, Ji added.

The railway also creates a cultural tourism corridor linking Xi'an, home to the Terracotta Warriors, with Shiyan, home to the Wudang Mountain, a renowned Taoist sanctuary.

Xi'an-Shiyan-Hankou high-speed railway



Source: China State Railway Group CHINA DAILY

What truly sets the line apart is its full 5G coverage, even inside tunnels.

Chen Keyu, an assistant engineer involved in railway signaling technology, said signal base stations have been installed inside tunnels, along with specially designed cables installed on the tunnel walls to radiate signals along the track.

During nightly maintenance periods, technicians enter the tunnels to inspect the equipment and check its operating status.

"The goal is to ensure uninterrupted train communications throughout the tunnels," Chen said.

The improved connectivity has not gone unnoticed by passengers.

"Compared with my previous trips, the improvement in mobile signal quality is remarkably noticeable," said Liu Hang, who traveled on the line on Tuesday.

The Xi'an-Shiyan railway is part of China's broader high-speed rail expansion efforts.

On Saturday, testing began on the Xi'an-Ankang high-speed railway, which is scheduled to open by the end of the year.

With both routes in place, Xi'an has completed its radial high-speed rail network, becoming the third Chinese city to do so, after Zhengzhou in Henan province and Hefei in Anhui province.

It is unlikely to be the last. Over the next few years, a number of other major cities, including Nanjing in Jiangsu province, Jinan in Shandong province, as well as Chongqing and Wuhan, are expected to establish similar hub-and-spoke high-speed rail networks.

Contact the writers at wangsongsong@chinadaily.com.cn

Space-ground asteroid monitoring network mulled

By **ZHAO LEI**
zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese scientists and engineers are conducting feasibility studies on developing a space-ground integrated monitoring and early-warning network to address risks posed by near-Earth asteroids, according to a project leader.

"By now, more than 40,000 near-Earth asteroids have been discovered and cataloged worldwide. No asteroid has so far been identified that will definitely collide with Earth in the foreseeable future, but concerns over impact risks are not unfounded. A large number of near-Earth asteroids remain undetected," said Li Mingtao, chief scientist at the asteroid monitoring and early-warning research center under the China National Space Administration.

"Major space powers are continuously improving their asteroid monitoring and early-warning capabilities. We must never let our guard down, but there is also no need for excessive anxiety," Li said.

He noted that near-Earth asteroid impacts are a common challenge for all people across the world. As a responsible major space power, China is carrying out feasibility studies on a space-ground integrated monitoring and early-warning network as a core component of its planetary defense system.

For ground operations, according to scientists, the country will select suitable sites to build multiple large-aperture optical telescopes, forming a geographically balanced ground-based monitoring system that can detect distant objects across a wide expanse of the night sky with high precision.

Li explained that several factors would be considered in choosing optimal sites.

"First, since optical telescopes only operate at night, candidate locations must have a high rate of clear skies. Second, asteroid observations require stable atmospheric conditions — a measurement known as astronomical seeing. Areas with excellent astronomical seeing, typically high-altitude regions, are preferred because a thinner atmosphere causes less interference with observations," he said.

In short, the ideal sites have a high clear-sky rate, good astronomical seeing, and high elevation. That is why the telescopes in the monitoring network will most likely be located in remote, sparsely populated areas, he said.

In outer space, he added, scientists plan to deploy a space-based monitoring constellation. Free from atmospheric interference and the constraints of the day-night cycle, these orbiting instruments will focus on filling the blind spot of threats approaching from the sun's direction, enabling round-the-clock observations through coordinated ground and space operations.

Li noted that telescopes in the space-based constellation will be positioned slightly farther from Earth, so they can monitor a wider perimeter around Earth and provide longer early-warning lead time.

Once completed, the constellation will complement ground-based telescopes: ground-based instruments mainly monitor the night sky, while space-based telescopes cover the blind zone toward the sun. Together, they will deliver seamless, all-sky monitoring with no blind spots.

According to Li, once the monitoring network enters operation, its priority will not be known individual celestial bodies, but the yet-undiscovered near-Earth asteroids.

"For near-Earth asteroids larger than 1 kilometer in diameter, which could trigger global catastrophes, it is estimated that more than 95 percent have been discovered worldwide. So far, none of them are on course to hit Earth in the next 100 years," he said. "But for asteroids around 140 meters across — capable of destroying a small or medium-sized country — only about 45 percent are estimated to have been found, meaning more than half remain undetected. The discovery rate is even lower for asteroids tens of meters in size."

These undiscovered near-Earth asteroids pose the greatest risk. That is why major space powers are accelerating efforts to build monitoring and early-warning capabilities and catalog these asteroids as soon as possible, Li added.

China has made breakthroughs in models and algorithms for asteroid impact risk analysis, and is developing an early-warning system. The idea is that once a telescope detects a suspicious object, the system will automatically calculate its orbit and assess the impact probability.

Dialogue: Robust trade shows resilience of economic ties

From page 1

Huang Yiping, dean of Peking University's National School of Development, said those differences reflect broader questions about whether traditional industrial powers can adapt as China's competitiveness expands into sectors long regarded as their technological strongholds.

"Those structural differences are unlikely to disappear, but dialogue can keep competition manageable and preserve space for cooperation where interests continue to overlap," he said.

Business leaders noted that China and the EU remain important trading partners, as robust trade flows continue to demonstrate the resilience of bilateral economic ties.

According to data from the General Administration of Customs, the value of China-EU trade increased 10.3 percent year-on-year to 2.53 trillion yuan ($373 billion) in the first five months of this year, while China's imports from the EU grew 5.2 percent.

Speaking at a monthly news briefing in Beijing on Tuesday, Wang Yifei, a spokeswoman for the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, said Chinese businesses hope that China and the EU will resolve trade issues through dialogue, while ensuring a fair, transparent and nondiscriminatory business environment.

For businesses in the EU, maintaining communications has become more important than ever because both economies remain deeply intertwined, especially in the manufacturing, investment and technology sectors.

Speaking to China Daily during a recent interview, Michael Schumann, chairman of the German Federal Association for Economic Development and Foreign Trade, said: "Europe cannot be (economically) independent from the United States, and it cannot be independent from China. Our economies, technologies, supply chains and security structures are far too deeply interconnected."

Businesses can translate political consensus into practical cooperation through investment, trade and industrial partnerships, he added.

Christophe Lauras, president of the French Chamber of Commerce and Industry in China, said that France and China have a highly complementary relationship in sectors such as aerospace, advanced engineering, luxury goods, agriculture, energy transition and healthcare.

"Many French companies plan to establish research and development centers in China, while Chinese companies are expanding globally by strengthening their presence in France. The next stage requires deeper integration to achieve mutually beneficial cooperation," Lauras said.

The commitment is also reflected in fresh investment. German chemical manufacturer Covestro announced on Tuesday that it will build a new production line for methylene diphenyl diisocyanate at its integrated site in Shanghai, with an annual capacity of 660,000 metric tons. Operations are expected to begin around 2030. MDI is a synthetic chemical used primarily to manufacture polyurethane foams and coatings.

Holly Lei, president of Covestro China, said the move underscores the company's long-term commitment to China and leverages the country's integrated industrial ecosystem, innovation capabilities and talent base to strengthen MDI supply for customers in China and the Asia-Pacific region.

Contact the writers at zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

Report warns against abuse of UNCLOS

China outlines limitations, challenges to the UN sea convention's authority

By **LI MENGHAN**
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

China published an assessment report on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on Tuesday, highlighting its significance for multilateral diplomacy while cautioning against politicization and the abuse of the convention's dispute resolution mechanisms.

The Assessment Report on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea: Achievements, Positioning and Challenges, released by the China Institute for Marine Affairs, examines the convention's role in shaping the postwar international legal order for the seas and oceans while identifying its inherent limitations and emerging challenges to its authority.

Zhang Haiwen, a professor at the institute, said UNCLOS was the product of nine years of negotiations between 1973 and 1982 involving more than 160 countries.

Unlike the 1958 Geneva Conventions, the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea adopted a "package deal" approach, requiring compromises among coastal states, flag states and landlocked countries.

"UNCLOS is of great significance for multilateral diplomacy," Zhang said. "Many of its provisions are a product of compromise and the balancing of interests."

The report cites the UNCLOS provision on maritime features as a prime example. It stipulates that rocks incapable of sustaining human habitation or economic life of their own are not entitled to an exclusive economic zone or continental shelf.

According to the report, scholars from Greece, Switzerland and Germany have pointed out that the provision lacks a clear definition and reflects the difficult consensus reached during negotiations. Preserving this internal balance is essential to maintaining the convention's broad acceptance, it said.

Although UNCLOS is often described as the "constitution for the oceans", Luo Gang, also a professor at the institute, said while the convention remains an important treaty, it does not surpass constitutional supremacy.

Unlike domestic legal systems, where constitutions typically occupy the highest position, international law has no universal hierarchy among its sources, with treaties, customary international law and general principles of law standing on equal footing, Luo said.

"Labeling it a 'constitution for the oceans' could create a 'false sense of security' and even become a 'straitjacket for the regime', constraining the law of the sea's ability to evolve over time," he said, citing scholars from multiple countries who argue that the metaphor ultimately hinders the development of the law of the sea.

Zhang noted that at the time UNCLOS was drafted, in the 1970s and 1980s, the emerging challenges related to artificial intelligence, climate change, sea level rise, marine debris and ocean acidification could not have been anticipated.

Beyond these inherent limitations, Zhang said the gravest threat comes from the deliberate misinterpretation of UNCLOS provisions and the abuse of its dispute resolution procedures, including attempts to create new rules through a teleological interpretation under the guise of interpreting and applying the convention, as well as overextending jurisdiction through the misuse of dispute settlement mechanisms.

"The convention's own limitations can be remedied through subsequent practice, but deliberate abuse and a 'pick-and-choose' approach are what truly threaten the convention's foundation," Zhang said.

Zhang Dan, another professor at the institute, said deep-sea mining has emerged as a major test of the convention's authority.

"Under international law, the seabed beyond national jurisdiction and its resources are the common heritage of mankind, with all rights vested in mankind as a whole and exercised on its behalf by the International Seabed Authority. All exploration and exploitation activities must be conducted within the framework established by the authority," Zhang Dan said.

However, the United States has sought to advance mining activities through unilateral authorization outside the International Seabed Authority's multilateral framework, Zhang Dan said. Such actions would erode the principle of the common heritage of humanity, weaken the authority's standing and multilateral procedures, and undermine both the convention and the comprehensive legal regime it established, he added.

Luo said the 2016 South China Sea arbitration, brought by the Philippines against China under the UNCLOS, inflicted "structural damage that is difficult to self-heal" on the convention's legal order.

China rejected the arbitration from the outset, arguing that the tribunal lacked jurisdiction because the case concerned territorial sovereignty and maritime delimitation.

"The Philippines repackaged its claims to sovereignty over land territory as maritime rights and unilaterally initiated arbitration using legal tricks, a move that ran counter to the object and purpose of the convention," Luo said.

According to the report, the Arbitral Tribunal disrupted the convention's carefully negotiated balance by attempting to replace the role of its drafters under the guise of interpretation and application. Rather than applying existing rules, it created new ones, undermining the multilateral foundation on which the convention rests.

"This has accelerated the politicization, instrumentalization and weaponization of the convention and its dispute settlement mechanisms," Luo added.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1869

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:54 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:54 PM

WORLD

ASEAN urged to gear up for a digital pact

Deal will create new opportunities, but challenges also loom: Analysts

By **PRIME SARMIENTO** in Hong Kong and **LEONARDUS JEGHO** in Jakarta

As the Association of Southeast Asian Nations prepares to ink a landmark digital pact in November, analysts say the real measure of success will be found not in its potential economic gains but in whether member states can respond to the risks posed by emerging technologies like artificial intelligence.

Once signed, the Digital Economy Framework Agreement would become the world's first region-wide agreement on digital economy governance and have the potential to unlock a $2 trillion online economy. The agreement, Southeast Asia's most ambitious digital pact yet, will cover areas such as digital trade, cross-border e-commerce, data governance and privacy, AI and digital talent mobility.

Josua Pardede, chief economist of Permata Bank in Jakarta, has estimated that DEFA would raise digital penetration in the region from 14-15 percent to 26-28 percent.

Catherine Setiawan, an Indonesia-based coordinator and researcher for The Global Index on Responsible AI, said that DEFA can promote regional economic integration and regulatory certainty, which can attract investors to the region's digital economy.

But Setiawan noted that in implementing DEFA, Southeast Asian governments need to ensure that digital governance is "inclusive, rights-based, and responsive to emerging risks". She said this can be done through measures like developing robust data protection and cybersecurity regimes, establishing clear accountability mechanisms for digital platforms and strengthening consumer protection.

A thriving digital economy will not only boost business and investments in the region, but it can also help advance inclusive growth.

Luhut Tampubolon, a senior sales director at HCLTech, an India-based information technology services company, noted that an AI-driven governance system can help authorities monitor how national policies and programs are implemented in the most remote areas of any country.

Nearly three years after talks began in September 2023, ASEAN wrapped up negotiations on DEFA at the 57th Senior Economic Officials Meeting held in May. The pact is expected to be signed by Southeast Asian leaders at an ASEAN summit scheduled in Manila in November.

ASEAN's digital economy surpassed $300 billion in 2025 in gross merchandise value, according to a report published jointly by Google, Temasek and Bain & Company.

ASEAN's senior economic officials, in a joint statement released after their meeting in May, noted that ASEAN's digital economy is projected to reach approximately $1 trillion by 2030 under current growth trends. With the implementation of DEFA, the region's digital economy could potentially double in value to $2 trillion by that year.

AI's rapid expansion

An expanding digital economy, however, is also presenting challenges. The rise of AI, for example, has led to rapid expansion of data centers that can consume too many resources like water and energy.

Michael Gryseels, founder and managing partner at Antares Ventures, a Singapore-based venture capital fund, said he is very bullish on ASEAN's digital economy as the region has a large young population that has grown up with mobile phones and the internet. But he hopes the region's renewable energy sector can expand so that it can support the AI systems and data centers that require large amounts of electricity.

Deepraj Emmanuel Datt, a senior director at HCLTech, said that in implementing DEFA, ASEAN governments need to consider how to reduce the carbon footprint of data centers.

"Otherwise, the same AI that will benefit all of us will actually be disastrous to the environment," Datt told China Daily.

Setiawan of The Global Index on Responsible AI said ASEAN governments can include sustainability principles in the region's digital transformation agenda. She said the region can mobilize green investment, encourage sustainable AI development, and harmonize sustainability standards to address environmental implications.

Leonardus Jegho is a freelance journalist for China Daily.

Contact the writers at prime@chinadailyapac.com



Yao Ming (first from right), a basketball legend and chairman of Yao Foundation, speaks at a panel discussion titled "Opportunities in Emerging Consumer Markets" during the "Our Water Season III: Shanghai-New York City Dialogue" held at the Bloomberg headquarters in New York on Tuesday.
ZHAO HUANXIN / CHINA DAILY

Two metropolises seek common ground through city dialogue

By **MINGMEI LI** in New York
mingmeili@chinadailyusa.com

The Our Water Season III: Shanghai-New York City Dialogue launched in New York Bloomberg Tower on Tuesday.

Under the theme "Rivers of Opportunities", the forum brought together government representatives, business leaders, financial institutions, consumer brands and cultural figures to explore new opportunities for China-US cooperation, with a special focus on financial and consumer industry collaboration between the two cities.

Michael Bloomberg, founder of Bloomberg L.P. and Bloomberg Philanthropies, said Shanghai and New York share many defining characteristics as waterfront cities and global centers of commerce and culture.

Bloomberg, whose company has operated in Shanghai for more than three decades and who visited China in 2025, said exchanges between cities are more important than ever.

"Now the conversation has arrived, and another great waterfront city, and that's something New York shares in common with Shanghai," he said.

The former New York mayor said New York and Shanghai are both cultural, commercial and culinary capitals.

"Great cities just don't compete with each other. They learn from each other. That kind of exchange between cities has never been more important," he said.

Bloomberg noted that more than half of the world's population now lives in cities, placing urban governments at the forefront of addressing challenges ranging from public health and education to housing and climate change.

"We borrow ideas from other cities, and we're glad the other cities borrowed from us," he added.

Tang Zhiwen, minister at the Chinese Embassy in the United States, said exchanges between Shanghai and New York have become vivid examples of how China and the US can pursue mutual success through cooperation.

He said the two cities could take the lead in emerging fields including artificial intelligence, climate change, green shipping and smart cities, while promoting more high-level exchanges between the two countries.

Tang also noted that Shanghai has welcomed nearly 10,000 young Americans under China's initiative to invite 50,000 American youths to visit the country over five years.

Chen Yiqun, director-general of the Information Office of Shanghai Municipality, said waterways have long connected both cities to the world and continue to shape their future development.

"Water once carried both of our cities into the world. And now, water is asking something new of us: how do we keep our harbors and our waterfronts alive, open and growing for the next generation ... 'Our Water' exists to give cities like ours a place to compare notes, to learn from each other, and to keep growing together," she said.

She said the "Our Water" initiative provides a platform for cities to exchange ideas, learn from one another and jointly address shared urban challenges.

"When we talk today about finance, investment, consumption and innovation, we're not just talking about growth for growth's sake. We're talking about what it takes to keep a city open, adaptable and full of opportunity for the people who call it home," Chen added.

The forum also featured a fireside discussion, "Seeking Common Ground through Dialogues", between Da Wei, a professor of international relations at Tsinghua University, and Tom Orlik, chief economist at Bloomberg Economics, on China-US economic relations and opportunities for cooperation amid global uncertainty.

Orlik, who has lived in China for years, told China Daily that the experience has helped him better understand the country and appreciate the importance of people-to-people exchanges.

"Connections are really important for understanding," he said. "Both sides have more work to do to make it easier and more welcoming for those kinds of exchanges to take place."

Yao Ming, chairman of the Yao Foundation and a member of the NBA Hall of Fame, said sports have long connected people across cultures and borders: This year, the New York Knicks captured the 2026 NBA championship, while the Shanghai Sharks won the Chinese Basketball Association title. Yao also led the Sharks to their first CBA championship in 2002.

Reflecting on his years playing in the NBA, Yao said living in Shanghai while traveling extensively across the US broadened his perspective on exchanges.

"I try to learn from other people and make sure that becomes part of me," he said. "I learned so much from all the people I met and all the cities I visited."

Yao said Shanghai has become an increasingly important destination for international sporting events, including Formula One, reflecting the city's openness, youthful energy and deep cultural roots.

Fujimori takes over half of votes in Peru polls

LIMA — Peru's right-wing Popular Force candidate Keiko Fujimori secured more than half of the valid votes in the presidential election, official results showed on Monday.

According to figures released by Peru's National Office of Electoral Processes, or ONPE, on its real-time vote-counting platform, Fujimori received 50.135 percent of the valid votes, while her rival, Roberto Sanchez of Together for Peru, got 49.865 percent.

The results translated to 9,223,396 votes for Keiko Fujimori and 9,173,755 votes for Roberto Sanchez. Fujimori is the daughter of former president Alberto Fujimori, who governed from 1990 to 2000, while Sanchez served as a minister under then-president Pedro Castillo from 2021 to 2022.

The figures gave the right-wing candidate a lead of 49,641 votes, positioning her for what would be her first presidential victory after three previous bids.



Keiko Fujimori casts her vote in Lima on June 7.
MARIANA BAZO / XINHUA

According to official data from the ONPE, all 92,766 tally sheets from the June 7 election had been processed by Monday.

Roberto Burneo, president of the National Jury of Elections, said in recent days that the electoral authority was expected to officially proclaim the results on Friday.

The 51-year-old Fujimori vowed on Monday to restore "order and hope" after defeating Sanchez by the slimmest of margins in an election dominated by surging crime.

"Each time we draw closer to starting on the path of order and hope for all Peruvians," Fujimori wrote on X after being proclaimed the winner of the June 7 election runoff.

Fujimori will take office on July 28 for a five-year term.

"We have the responsibility of listening to both sides. The doors for dialogue are open," she said, alluding to rival Sanchez and others on the left.

Sanchez had yet to react to the announcement of the results.

XINHUA—AGENCIES

Heat wave exposes more than rising temperatures



Zhang Zhouxiang
Reporter's log

One of the lessons I learned after moving to Brussels one year ago was that Europeans and Chinese often mean very different things when they say summer.

Back in China, summer usually means air conditioners humming almost everywhere, like in apartments, offices, shopping malls and even university dormitories. Here in Europe, however, summer often means opening the windows and praying for a breeze.

Most years, that strategy works. But that wasn't the case lately, as Western Europe experienced a record-breaking heat wave.

France recorded one of the hottest days in its history, with the national average temperature reaching around 30 degrees Celsius and many cities exceeding 40 C. Southern England saw its hottest June day in decades, while Spain continued to endure temperatures above 40 C.

Fountains, usually places where tourists stop briefly to take photographs, suddenly became public cooling centers. Children splashed



in the water while adults sat along the edges, trying to catch every bit of mist drifting through the air. The cooling effect was limited, but it was free, and during a heat wave, that alone was enough to attract crowds.

Shopping malls and supermarkets also became unofficial shelters. Many supermarkets maintain lower temperatures to preserve meat, dairy products and frozen food. During the hottest afternoons, benches inside shopping centers were occupied not only by shoppers but also by people who simply wanted to escape the heat for a while.

Even the metro became a refuge. In several cities, I noticed people riding the subway outside rush hour with no apparent destination.

People accustomed to air conditioning may ask: Why don't Europeans just turn it on?

The answer is obvious to many in Europe: too few have air conditioning units.

Cost is the first obstacle.

Buying an air conditioner in Europe is far more expensive than many people in China would imagine. The unit itself is costly, but installation, labor and various service fees often nearly double the final bill. A household can easily spend more than 2,000 euros ($2,280) for a single installation, while a similar unit in China often costs only a fraction of that amount.

In a broader sense, industrial products in Europe are generally more expensive. Bicycles, household appliances and many everyday consumer goods all cost significantly more than comparable products in China. The reason is clear: much of Europe's manufacturing capacity has gradually shifted elsewhere over recent decades, while services and finance have become increasingly important parts of the economy. Consumers ultimately bear those higher costs.

But money is only part of the story, as many people living in Europe know that obtaining the legal certificates for installing an air conditioner is sometimes harder than buying one.

Many Europeans live in apartment buildings where the exterior walls belong to the entire building rather than individual residents, and hanging an outdoor compressor often requires approval from the building association. If the building is located in a historic district or protected area, additional permission from local authorities may also be necessary.

Noise regulations add another layer of complexity. Installation positions are carefully regulated so that outdoor units do not disturb neighbors.

To be fair, these rules are not entirely unreasonable. European cities contain countless buildings that are far older than modern electrical systems, while many historical neighborhoods are protected because they represent centuries of architectural heritage. Residents also tend to value quiet living environments. It is a social consensus that protecting old buildings and respecting neighbors are perfectly legitimate goals.

Yet living here also makes one wonder whether efficiency sometimes becomes the victim of procedure.

If my downstairs neighbor happened to come from an area that regularly experiences 50 C summers, would he enthusiastically support my air conditioner application? Or would he simply prefer the building to remain exactly as it has always been?

Another explanation often offered is environmental protection, stressing that Europe cherishes the environment more than itself.

Yes, Europe certainly takes environmental policies seriously. The attached bottle cap required under European Union rules has become one of the most visible examples. Instead of separating completely from the bottle, the cap remains connected after opening, reducing the likelihood that the small plastic caps become litter.

But living here also reveals some interesting contrasts. For example, paper still dominates everyday life in ways that surprise many newcomers from China.

My physical mailbox fills up every few days with supermarket advertisements, promotional catalogs and paper discount coupons.

Standing beside an overflowing mailbox after hearing constant discussions about sustainability inevitably raises an interesting question: How much paper does all this consume?

That contrast perhaps illustrates Europe better than any single environmental regulation.

This is a society that genuinely values order, consultation and long-term planning. Many regulations originate from reasonable intentions: protecting heritage, reducing waste, preserving neighborhoods and ensuring fairness. Yet those same strengths can sometimes become weaknesses when quick adaptation is required, which, as I see it, is a shortcoming of European society.

A prolonged heat wave demands flexibility rather than procedure. People need practical solutions today, not approvals several months later.

Europe's historical cities remain among the world's most beautiful places to live. Their architecture, public squares and urban character reflect centuries of careful preservation. China, meanwhile, has embraced rapid modernization on an extraordinary scale, making technologies such as air conditioning widely accessible within just a few decades.

Both paths involve trade-offs. But climate change is steadily making some trade-offs less negotiable.

Heat waves that were once considered exceptional are becoming increasingly common across Europe. Buildings designed for cooler weather now face temperatures their architects never imagined. Customs shaped by mild summers are being tested by a changing climate.

Perhaps Europe's relationship with air conditioning will eventually change as well.

The author is chief correspondent at China Daily EU Bureau based in Brussels.

Contact the writer at zhangzhouxiang@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:54 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:54 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

Autos set to spur consumer spending

By **WANG KEJU**
wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn



Export-bound vehicles await shipments in Taicang Port, Jiangsu province. JI HAIXIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

With the world's largest vehicle fleet, China's automotive sector is undergoing a fundamental transition, which analysts say could open up vast opportunities in the aftermarket, turning incremental demand into exponential consumption scenarios as reinforced by a robust new policy framework.

Their comments came as policymakers rolled out a new batch of measures designed to expand automobile consumption across the entire industry chain, with a particular emphasis on reforming vehicle circulation and bolstering the automotive aftermarket.

Data from the Ministry of Commerce showed that China's vehicle fleet has reached 370 million units, with passenger cars aged seven years or older now accounting for more than half, a threshold that signals a massive aftermarket opportunity.

"Consumers are shifting their focus from simply having a car to asking whether it is good to use and whether it meets diverse needs," said Zhu Keli, founding director of the China Institute of New Economy.

Automobiles are being redefined as personal mobility spaces, with their cultural attributes and service scenarios continuously expanding, Zhu noted, adding that this will create more value-added opportunities across the industrial chain.

According to a circular jointly issued by eight departments including the Ministry of Commerce, 40 cities nationwide have been designated as pilot zones for vehicle circulation reform. Each has been assigned distinct reform priorities tailored to local conditions.

Tianjin, for instance, is focusing on automobile modification, classic cars and racing events; Shenyang in Liaoning province on used car circulation; Yangzhou in Jiangsu province on RV camping; and Hangzhou in Zhejiang province and Shenzhen in Guangdong province on easing purchase restrictions.

The policy push to boost the auto aftermarket came as retail sales in the sector plunged 16.1 percent year-on-year in May, the sharpest decline among all major retail categories and a widening of 0.8 percentage points from April, according to the National Bureau of Statistics.

Data from the bureau also showed that the decline pulled total retail sales of consumer goods into negative territory for the first time since December 2022, with the headline figure falling 0.6 percent year-on-year to 4.1 trillion yuan ($604 billion).

To address the slowdown and tap into new growth sources, China launched this year's new energy vehicle rural promotion campaign, featuring a record 155 models — up more than 25 percent from last year — as policymakers target the vast countryside market where EV penetration remains far below urban levels.

NEV penetration in first- and second-tier cities has surpassed 60 percent and is approaching saturation, said Fu Yifu, a researcher at Jiangsu Su Merchants Bank. By contrast, penetration in rural areas remains below 20 percent.

"First- and second-tier cities have high NEV ownership and are nearing saturation, while county, township and rural markets have lower penetration rates, harboring enormous growth potential," Fu said.

He noted that the campaign can "fully activate the consumption potential of bulk commodities in rural areas, driving the entire upstream and downstream automotive industrial chain — production, circulation and services."

Replacing old, high-emission fuel vehicles and substandard low-speed EVs with NEVs will also support the green transition, while providing modern mobility solutions for farmers' daily commuting, agricultural transport and family travel, he added.

Economy on track to meet growth target

Improvements seen in manufacturing and non-manufacturing activities

By **ZHANG CHENXU**
zhangchenxu@chinadaily.com.cn

Buoyed by improving market demand amid robust global appetite for artificial intelligence-related products and stronger pro-growth policy support, China's factory activity returned to expansion in June after standing at the boom-bust threshold a month earlier, official data showed on Tuesday.

The latest readings, analysts said, pointed to stronger new growth drivers and resilient export performance as key pillars of economic stabilization, bolstering confidence that China's economy will stay on track to meet its full-year growth target.

Data from the National Bureau of Statistics show that China's official purchasing managers' index for the manufacturing sector came in at 50.3 in June, up 0.3 percentage points from the previous month.

Wang Qing, chief macroeconomic analyst at Orient Golden Credit Rating International, said the rebound was mainly driven by a faster recovery in market demand, as the new orders sub-index rose 1.3 percentage points to 51.2, the highest level in three months, according to the NBS.

"Domestic demand in the manufacturing sector improved notably," said Wen Bin, chief economist at China Minsheng Bank.

Wen said the steady implementation of the "Six Networks" initiative, measures to promote large-scale equipment upgrades and consumer goods trade-ins, as well as a mild recovery in the consumer market, had provided strong support for demand.

The improvement was not limited to domestic demand. On the external front, the new export orders sub-index returned to expansion territory at 50.1, according to the NBS.

"The notable easing of tensions in the Middle East, coupled with sustained momentum in the AI sector, also supported the rebound in export activity," Wen added.

Echoing that view, Wang said China's exports are expected to sustain robust growth in June, lending solid support to the overall performance of the manufacturing sector.

New growth drivers also provided strong support. The PMI for high-tech manufacturing stood at 53.5 in June, compared with 52.9 in May, while the reading for equipment manufacturing reached 52.5, up from 52.1 in May, with both staying firmly in expansion territory, according to the NBS.

"Advanced manufacturing continued to make robust progress, further strengthening its role as a key driver of economic growth," said Huo Lihui, an NBS statistician.

Highlighting AI's potential to reshape growth momentum, Cai Fang, a member of the academic divisions of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said, "AI is expected to help China ease deflationary pressure, improve the balance between supply and demand, and foster a new cycle of economic growth."

The overall improvement in the PMI also offered an encouraging signal for industrial activity heading into the end of the quarter, said Lynn Song, chief economist for China at Dutch bank ING.

The bank expects China's GDP growth to moderate to 4.6 percent year-on-year in the second quarter. But with first-quarter growth having come in stronger than expected, Song said the economy remains on track to deliver first-half growth broadly consistent with the country's full-year target.

The improvement was also seen in non-manufacturing activity. China's non-manufacturing PMI, which includes sub-indexes for service sector activity and construction, stood at 50.2, edging up 0.1 percentage point from May, NBS data showed.

Despite the simultaneous pickup in manufacturing and non-manufacturing activity, economists cautioned that the recovery still needed to become more balanced, as traditional industries and small, medium-sized and micro enterprises continued to face pressure, and domestic demand had yet to gain a firmer footing.

Tang Guanghua, an analyst at Shenyin & Wanguo Futures, said more targeted support measures should be rolled out to help small, medium-sized and micro enterprises reach wider markets and improve demand flows through traditional industrial chains.

Taicang bolsters cooperation with European biz

By **CANG WEI** in Nanjing
cangwei@chinadaily.com.cn

Taicang, a dynamic city in Suzhou, Jiangsu province of East China, is fortifying its economic ties with Austria, reflecting a broader trend of European business expansion in the region.

As both sides explore new avenues for cooperation in smart manufacturing, the digital economy and sustainable development, Taicang continues to emerge as a pivotal hub for Austrian enterprises seeking to integrate into China's industrial landscape.

Last week, from Monday to Friday, Austrian Foreign Minister Beate Meinl-Reisinger embarked on a formal visit to China, a journey that included a significant stop in the city of Taicang.

Despite its modest population of under 850,000, Taicang has become a focal point for European business, particularly for German and Austrian enterprises.

The minister's visit to Taicang was brief but impactful, beginning with a stop at Starlinger Plastics Machinery (Taicang) Co Ltd. Greeted with a bouquet of seasonal lotus flowers symbolizing harmony, the minister toured the company's showroom and production facilities.

Founded in 1835, Starlinger has been a pioneer in plastic weaving and recycling.

Since establishing its Taicang branch in 2005, the company has grown into a vital hub for its operations across the Asia-Pacific region.

The minister's next stop was Ebner Furnaces (Taicang) Co Ltd, where she explored the company's showroom and learned about its history.

Established in 1948, Ebner is a specialized leader in energy-efficient heat treatment furnaces that settled in Taicang in 2002.

During her visit, the minister also met with Fan Bo, Party chief of Suzhou. The discussions focused on deepening exchanges in smart manufacturing, the digital economy, and green development.

Fan expressed hopes for more Austrian enterprises and high-end projects to find a home in Suzhou.

As Austria and China celebrate 55 years of diplomatic relations, Taicang is extending its collaborative reach across Europe.

Known as the "home of German enterprises", Taicang hosts more than 560 German companies.

As Taicang continues to host events celebrating Sino-Austrian ties, it is poised to explore new growth areas in electric vehicles, digital transformation and sustainable technologies.

"Taicang is now home to 49 Austrian enterprises, with a total investment of $195 million," said Zhang Luoyin, deputy director of the Sino-German (Taicang) SME cooperation demonstration zone management office.

"These companies span various sectors, from high-end equipment and smart warehousing to green materials and precision instruments," Zhang said.

Taicang's commitment to creating a supportive environment for foreign businesses is evident in its comprehensive services, and the city is trying to foster a stable, efficient and talent-rich environment to attract and nurture European enterprises, said Zhang.

Briefly

Electricity trading volume up in Jan-May

China's total electricity trading volume surpassed 3 trillion kWh in the first five months of 2026, up 24.8 percent year-on-year, the National Energy Administration said. During the period, electricity trading volume within provincial borders rose 28.5 percent from a year earlier, while inter-provincial and inter-regional power transactions increased 12.2 percent, the data showed.

Yuan strengthens against greenback

The central parity rate of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, strengthened 66 pips to 6.8109 against the US dollar on Tuesday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System. In China's spot foreign exchange market, the yuan is allowed to rise or fall by 2 percent from the central parity rate each trading day. The central parity rate of the yuan against the US dollar is based on a weighted average of prices offered by market makers before the opening of the interbank market each business day.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

COMAC's C909 reaches new heights

By **LI JING**
lijing2009@chinadaily.com.cn



A Chengdu Airlines C909 aircraft operating a high-altitude route. XINHUA

Commercial Aircraft Corp of China's domestically developed C909 regional jet has carried more than 37 million passengers over a decade of commercial service, the planemaker said, underscoring the country's efforts to build a home-grown civil aviation industry as it expands the aircraft's presence in China's regional markets and overseas.

Sunday marked the 10th anniversary of commercial operations of the C909, formerly known as the ARJ21. Since its entry into service in June 2016, COMAC has delivered 186 aircraft to more than 10 customers, accounting for about 70 percent of China's regional jet fleet, according to the company.

The fleet has operated more than 860 routes serving over 180 cities, with the aircraft now flying more than 500 flights a day on average, COMAC said.

Earlier this month, a Chengdu Airlines C909 aircraft completed the inaugural flight on a new route linking Urumqi, Hejing and Kashgar in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, becoming the second high-altitude route operated by the regional jet after the Kashgar-Tashikurgan service launched earlier.

The flight landed at Bayanbulak Airport in Hejing county of the Mongolian autonomous prefecture of Bayingolin at an elevation of more than 2,500 meters.

The latest deployment marks another operational test for the C909 in an environment characterized by lower air pressure, strong air currents and rapidly changing weather conditions, factors that place greater demands on aircraft performance and flight operations.

"The opening of this route further verifies the adaptability and reliability of the C909 under complex operating conditions," said Huang Liying, chief accountant of Chengdu Airlines.

The route will operate three times a week and is expected to improve access to the Bayanbulak grasslands, one of Xinjiang's best-known tourism destinations. Flight time from Urumqi to Bayanbulak is about one hour, a huge reduction on the approximately seven hours it takes by road.

"For local residents and tourists alike, the route significantly improves accessibility," Huang said, adding that it would help integrate regional tourism resources with transportation infrastructure.

The service comes as COMAC pushes to expand the operational footprint of its domestically developed aircraft beyond major trunk routes and into remote regions where aircraft must contend with difficult terrain and weather conditions.

Analysts say Xinjiang has become an important proving ground for the C909 because many routes across the vast region have relatively low passenger volumes and long travel distances, making smaller regional aircraft more economical than larger narrowbody jets.

Independent aviation analyst Li Hanming said regional jets such as the C909 are particularly suited to sparsely populated areas where traffic demand may not justify larger aircraft year-round.

Research led by COMAC senior economist Guo Caisen found that the C909 generated a contribution margin of 6,000 yuan ($883) to 10,000 yuan higher per flight hour than a Boeing 737 on low-density routes, highlighting one of its economic advantages in western China's regional aviation market.

COMAC said the C909 has become the backbone of China's regional aviation market after a decade of commercial operations. In Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia autonomous regions and Heilongjiang province, about 70 C909 aircraft now operate more than 460 routes, having carried more than 10 million passengers across roughly 200,000 flights.

The manufacturer has also expanded the aircraft overseas. It said the C909 now operates 25 international routes serving 28 cities in Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, Laos and Vietnam, and has carried more than 1 million passengers outside China.

The overseas operations have helped validate the aircraft's performance on short runways and in Southeast Asia's hot and humid climate while broadening COMAC's customer support network as it seeks additional export opportunities, the company said.

Chengdu Airlines, the launch operator, received the first C909 in June 2016 and has since expanded operations from domestic regional services to international and high-altitude routes.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:54 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:54 PM

BUSINESS

FMCG market charts new growth path

Report highlights broad demand reallocation, stiff competition and affordability focus

By WANG ZHUOQIONG
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn



Shoppers select fresh fruit at a supermarket in Wuzhou, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, on June 23. HE HUAWEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

The fast-moving consumer goods market in the country is entering a structurally slower but more complex growth phase, as value-seeking behavior, demographic aging and rapid channel disruption reshape how households spend, according to an industry report.

The findings in the 2026 China Shopper Report — tracking the evolution of urban FMCG consumption jointly by Bain & Company and Worldpanel by Numerator — portray a market that is no longer driven primarily by income expansion or population growth, but instead by reallocation of demand across cities, age groups and retail formats.

Total urban FMCG spending in China rose just 0.9 percent year-on-year in 2025, according to the report, as a 3.6 percent increase in volumes was largely offset by a 2.6 percent decline in average selling prices.

The pattern underscores a persistent "trading down" dynamic, in which consumers are buying more units but paying less per unit, reflecting both intensified competition and a heightened focus on affordability.

Early 2026 data suggest that volatility has persisted well into the new year. In the first quarter, volumes continued to expand 1.3 percent year-on-year. A rebound in April pushed FMCG sales back into positive territory. For the full year, the report expects conditions to broadly resemble 2025, with low single-digit growth and continued structural divergence across categories, channels and consumer segments.

The country's demographic transition sits at the center of the outlook. The report estimates that the population aged 60 and above has reached roughly 320 million, while single-person households now account for nearly a quarter of all households. Together, these shifts are altering consumption baskets and shopping priorities, with older consumers and smaller households increasingly shaping overall demand patterns.

Against this backdrop, "value for money" has become the dominant consumer lens. Rather than simply opting for the lowest price, households are increasingly evaluating trade-offs between price, quality, pack size and channel convenience.

"Changes in the country's FMCG market reflect a broader reconstruction of the entire consumer landscape," said Derek Deng, a senior partner at Bain. He said demographic shifts, value prioritization and channel transformation are "collectively rewriting consumer shopping habits and decision journeys", adding that companies must respond more quickly to evolving demand signals to capture new growth opportunities.



Shoppers queue up to pay at a duty-free store inside CDF Haikou International Duty-Free City in Haikou, Hainan province, on June 6. SU BIKUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Tier 4-5 cities drive growth

The report highlights a widening divergence between the country's large metropolitan centers and lower-tier cities. In 2025, Tier 4 and Tier 5 cities emerged as the primary engines of incremental growth. These markets are benefiting from ongoing urbanization, improved logistics infrastructure and rapid expansion of both modern retail and digital commerce channels, which together have significantly broadened product availability.

Within these lower-tier cities, older households recorded faster FMCG spending growth than younger households in Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities. Households with children in Tier 5 cities also stood out, maintaining relatively high consumption intensity despite broader value-consciousness, particularly in categories tied to childcare and daily necessities.

Online sales dominate

Digital channels continue to reshape the retail landscape. E-commerce accounted for 38 percent of urban FMCG sales value in 2025, reinforcing its position as the single largest channel in the market.

However, offline retail is not disappearing; several emerging offline models expanded rapidly. Online-to-offline reached a turning point in 2025. In the third quarter alone, O2O FMCG sales grew nearly 8 percent year-on-year, supported by faster delivery networks, platform-led promotional coordination and expansion beyond fresh food into broader grocery and household categories.

Warehouse membership clubs gained traction by emphasizing bulk value and curated assortments. For example, Sam's Club and Costco membership stores continued to gain traction in China, with Sam's Club reaching 63 stores by the end of 2025.

Snack-focused discount chains expanded rapidly, particularly in lower-tier cities where price sensitivity remains high but modern retail penetration is still increasing. Leading players have scaled rapidly, with Busy Ming Group and Wanchen Group reaching about 22,000 and 18,000 stores, respectively, in China by the end of 2025.

Discount stores also gained importance as consumers increasingly consolidated routine purchases into value-oriented formats. HotMaxx has led the format's expansion and is the largest player by scale, with around 900 stores by the end of 2025, followed by HitGoo, Hema NB, and Aldi.

Local brands do well

Domestic brands continued to strengthen their position across multiple categories, often outperforming multinational competitors in segments where local insights, faster product cycles and sharper pricing strategies proved decisive, according to the report.

Private label products are also emerging as a structural force in retail strategy. Sales rose more than 57 percent year-on-year in 2025 to reach 32.7 billion yuan ($4.82 billion), accounting for about 2 percent of total urban FMCG sales. While still relatively small, the growth rate signals accelerating retailer investment in in-house brands as a tool for differentiation and margin management.

"Emerging formats — including O2O, warehouse clubs, snack discount chains and hard discounters — are reshaping how consumers fulfill needs across different occasions," said Bruno Lannes, a senior partner at Bain. He said brand owners must move away from one-size-fits-all approaches and instead tailor strategies to specific shopping missions, channels and price expectations.

General Manager of Worldpanel by Numerator China, Li Rong, said Chinese households are becoming increasingly sophisticated in how they evaluate value. "Seeking value for money does not equate to simply choosing the cheapest option," she said. Consumers, she added, are still willing to pay for differentiated products when benefits are clear, but are more deliberate in weighing trade-offs across brands, stores and channels.

Product innovation

Despite slower growth, the report finds that product innovation remains highly active. New SKUs accounted for roughly 40 percent of total SKU counts between 2022 and 2025, reflecting continued experimentation by brand owners and retailers.

However, the effectiveness of that innovation remains limited. Only 3.9 percent of new products launched in 2024 achieved penetration of at least 1 percent within their first year, underscoring a significant gap between product launches and scalable success.

To address these challenges, Bain recommends that companies adopt a revised "core" framework. This includes re-anchoring demand planning around "circumstances" shaped by value-for-money expectations, redesigning "offerings" for localized relevance, optimizing "routes" through channel-specific strategies, and strengthening "execution" capabilities to operate in a low-growth, high-volatility environment.

618 shopping festival reflects structural shift in China's retail landscape

By WANG ZHUOQIONG

One of the country's largest mid-year e-commerce events, the June 18 shopping festival, or "618" as it is commonly known, highlighted this year a structural shift in the country's retail landscape, moving decisively away from price-driven competition toward margin protection, product innovation and artificial intelligence-enabled consumer engagement, according to industry insights.

Kathy Jiang, a partner expert at consulting firm Roland Berger, said across major e-commerce platforms, the long-running "lowest price guarantee" era appears to be fading. Platforms have increasingly deprioritized aggressive discounting strategies, while brands are recalibrating toward profitability, elevating net margin as a core KPI.

This marks a notable departure from previous 618 cycles, where promotional intensity and traffic acquisition costs dominated strategy. Instead, the focus is shifting toward sustainable growth and healthier unit economics.

On the demand side, consumer behavior during the shopping festival period is increasingly disciplined. Industry observations suggest that roughly 70 percent of shoppers now have pre-prepared shopping lists ready for the festival, significantly reducing impulse purchases and bundling-driven upselling.

"Rather than browsing for deals, consumers are prioritizing genuine need, product quality and post-purchase service," said Jiang. The result is a more selective and efficiency-driven consumption pattern, with higher expectations placed on both product performance and brand experience.

Another structural change is the shift in growth drivers. Instead of functioning primarily as a channel for inventory clearance, 618 is increasingly powered by new product launches and emerging categories, said Jiang.

On platforms such as Tmall, about one-third of the top 100 best-selling products are now new launches. Innovative products with differentiated features are increasingly able to command pricing power, signaling a stronger role for product originality in driving conversion.

Brands are also expanding into emotional and experiential value creation, shifting from pure transactional e-commerce toward long-term "user asset" management and positioning strategies.

A major structural transformation is the reconfiguration of the "People–Product–Place" model, with generative AI emerging as a critical new traffic gateway.

Platforms across China are embedding AI into core shopping journeys, including the Qwen app within the Alibaba ecosystem, JD's AI shopping assistant, and Douyin-integrated recommendations and discovery tools. ByteDance's Doubao is also part of this broader shift toward AI-mediated commerce.

These systems are increasingly responsible for product discovery, user matching and decision support — reshaping how consumers enter and navigate digital marketplaces.

Jiang said industry consensus suggests that brands are responding to these shifts by returning to fundamentals: stronger products and improved customer experience.

"Brands are accelerating investment in original product development and targeting high-growth niche segments," Jiang said. Emotional value, functional differentiation and brand equity are becoming central to pricing power, she added.

At the same time, data-driven reverse customization is gaining traction, allowing brands to reduce product testing costs and better align supply with real demand.

On the channel side, brands are increasingly focused on long-term user asset accumulation rather than short-term traffic spikes. This includes deeper engagement through content seeding, membership lifecycle management and loyalty ecosystems.

Optimizing visibility within AI-driven search and recommendation systems is also becoming a new competitive priority. For categories requiring higher consumer trust, brands are working to bridge online and offline channels into integrated online-to-offline experiences.

For global beauty groups such as The Estee Lauder Companies, this year's 618 underscores how AI is transforming not just marketing efficiency, but the entire consumer journey.

According to the company, AI tools are now deployed across four key areas: visual content creation, advertising optimization, beauty advisory services and operational management.

Product imagery and short videos are increasingly generated in seconds using AI models, enabling rapid multi-scenario content production for different consumer segments.

On the marketing side, automated bidding systems use behavioral data to match products with consumers in a "products find people" model, significantly improving targeting precision.

In customer service, AI-powered assistants embedded in flagship stores now respond instantly to skincare queries, compare product specifications and summarize review insights — compressing the consumer decision process.

Behind the scenes, AI is also streamlining operations, from data analysis to inventory and after-sales alerts, allowing teams to focus more on strategy and creativity rather than repetitive tasks.

Estee Lauder also found a broader psychological shift among consumers, with e-commerce no longer viewed purely as a transactional channel, but increasingly as a platform for brand storytelling and experiential consumption.

As seasonal marketing expands beyond the 618 shopping festival into year-round gifting occasions — such as Chinese New Year and Mother's Day — consumers are showing greater willingness to pay for emotional value and ritualized experiences.

In response, brands are expanding personalized gifting services, including engraving, custom packaging and occasion-specific design adaptations. For example, products such as fragrances and lipsticks are being repositioned as "emotional gifts", said the company.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:54 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:54 PM

Small teams summon big worlds

From online novels to glowing fantasy battles, AI is reshaping how China's short animated dramas are produced and consumed.



Covers of AI-generated short dramas produced by Tang Jiancong's small team using AI video tools. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By YANG LIU
yangliu@i21st.cn

Tang Jiancong does not need an army of animators to summon an immortal figure.

In one AI-generated short drama produced by his company, a white-robed master drops from the heavens into an arena where a female martial artist is losing ground to a fighter in an Iron Man-style mecha suit. A glowing shield wraps around the woman. Then the immortal steps forward and declares, "I, your master, will fight for you."

The clip comes from *Immortal Master Comes Back: My Disciples Are Top Tycoons*, a *xianxia* story — a Chinese fantasy genre — that blends traditional combat with futuristic technology, old legends with virtual worlds, and human warriors with robotics.

Yet all those elements can now be produced by a small team: one director who adapts the script, two people who generate clips using AI and a final editor who brings everything together, according to Tang, 32, founder of Shenzhen Aizao Technology.

Tang, a former programmer at Tencent, founded the company in 2025 after concluding that AI video would be "the next big thing".

"By then, ChatGPT had already shown what AI could do with text, and Midjourney had done the same for images," he said. "Video felt like the next frontier. We believed that was where the industry was heading, especially as people were already spending so much time watching short videos."

For Tang, the most striking change is not only what AI can put on screen, but how quickly and inexpensively it can now do so.

"For a 120-minute 2D animated drama, we can now finish production in about 20 days," he said. "Including labor and computing power, the cost can be kept under 300 yuan ($44.28) per minute."

Producing 3D animation with AI remains more expensive than 2D animation and varies by theme, but Tang said it can still be 10 to 100 times cheaper than traditional hand-drawn, frame-by-frame animation.

Tang's company is part of the broader surge in AI-generated animated short dramas, or AI *manju*, sweeping the industry.

According to market data firm DataEye, AI-simulated live-action *manju* accounted for 38 percent of the top 100 *manju* titles in January 2026, up from 7 percent a year earlier, reflecting how quickly AI animation has moved from experiment to mass production.

Xianxia stories have become one of the most natural genres for AI *manju*. They often require elaborate settings, magical battles, glowing weapons and large-scale effects — elements that are expensive in traditional animation but easier to generate with AI tools.

This means that web novels once considered too costly to adapt can now be turned into animated dramas by small production teams.

Tang said many viewers do not necessarily come looking for high art. They are drawn instead to fast-paced stories delivered with enough visual energy to keep them watching.

Jin Sheng, vice dean and associate professor at the School of Animation and Digital Arts, Communication University of Zhejiang, said the appeal lies in the immediate pleasure of seeing online stories brought to life.

"It gives viewers quick visual satisfaction — a kind of 'dopamine rush'," Jin said.

For many viewers, he added, whether a drama is made with AI is less important than whether it is exciting.

"As long as the content is good and attractive, that's enough," he said.

Keeping humans involved

While AI makes such production possible, the process is not as automatic as it may appear.

Industry insiders often describe the refinement stage as "gacha", borrowing a term from randomized game mechanics.

"AI generation has a lot of randomness," Tang said. "The results don't always match what you had in mind. It can't get every shot right on its own, so people have to step in."

According to him, the work still depends heavily on human taste: which expression feels right, which camera angle has impact, which frame should stay and which should be discarded. Creators have to repeatedly generate clips, compare the results and choose the best version.

Voice dubbing also remains largely human. Tang said AI-generated voices still struggle with intense emotion, especially grief, anger and deep sadness.

"AI is AI, after all. Its emotions aren't as rich or layered as a human's," he said.

That continuing need for human judgment is reshaping the skills the industry values.

Tang's company offers online courses for people hoping to enter the AI video business. About 40 percent of its trainees, he said, come from traditional film and design backgrounds, seeking a lifeline in a changing industry.

Universities are adapting as well. At the Communication University of Zhejiang, for example, senior students majoring in animation and digital arts work with companies to produce AI-generated dramas.

> "Great works demand time and investment. Only those who survive fierce market competition will have the chance to create true masterpieces. It is simply a matter of time."
>
> **Jin Sheng,** vice dean and associate professor at the School of Animation and Digital Arts, Communication University of Zhejiang

Jin said about one-fifth of senior students take part in such projects during their final year, learning how to use AI tools while also strengthening their command of storytelling, composition and direction.

"Equipping my students with the most current, cutting-edge skills is the fastest way to help them adapt to the industry," Jin said.

The goal, he added, is not to train students to rely entirely on AI, but to help them become more well-rounded creators — people with aesthetic judgment, directorial vision and a strong grasp of narrative structure.

"I hope each of them can become a complete team," Jin said. "That way, they can survive in the market no matter how the industry changes."

Raising the bar

The same technologies that have opened new opportunities have also created new problems.

Advances in AI video tools, including multimodal systems such as Seedance 2.0, have lowered the barrier to entry for animation production.

"Right now, almost everyone is using Seedance to make videos," Tang said.

But a lower barrier also means a flood of uneven work.

Platforms have begun tightening control over AI-generated short dramas. Hongguo, a Chinese short-form drama platform under ByteDance, said it removed more than 1,700 policy-violating *manju* in the first quarter of 2026.

In May, Hongguo issued clearer and stricter content guidelines, clamping down on themes related to history, politics, minors, pornography and excessive violence, aiming to provide much-needed clarity for the industry's bewildered producers.

The initial gold rush is giving way to pressure for higher standards.

"Great works demand time and investment. Only those who survive fierce market competition will have the chance to create true masterpieces. It is simply a matter of time," Jin said.

For Jin, the lesson is clear: embracing AI does not mean abandoning basic creative skills. Story structure, visual rhythm, emotional judgment and aesthetic taste remain essential. AI can generate countless images, but humans still decide which ones matter.

The industry, he said, is undergoing a transition similar to cinema's shift from film to digital. The tools are changing, the workflow is changing, and the definition of an animation team is changing with them.

"Once that shift begins, the tide of history is hard to stop," Jin said. "In the short term, there will certainly be many problems, but people will keep working on them, and things will improve over time."

AI has made animation faster and cheaper. The next challenge is making it better.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:54 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:54 PM

A quiet bridge of books

What began as one reader's longing for Chinese books has grown into a warm gathering place for readers across Britain.

By **CHEN XUE** and **XIONG XINYI**

Lyu Shasha did not open Weidu Bookshop in London to make a grand statement about cultural exchange. She was trying to solve a simpler problem: Chinese readers in Britain missed the books they could once find so easily back home.

It was a longing she knew well. Since moving to the UK in 2016, Lyu had often returned from trips to China with Chinese books packed into her suitcase. The longer she lived abroad, the more she felt their absence.

Britain has no shortage of bookshops, libraries or public reading culture, but for readers seeking carefully selected Chinese-language books — especially contemporary literature and humanities titles — the options are limited.

In 2024, while sorting through the books she had brought back from China over the years, Lyu spent more than 10 days going through the shelves in her study. Each time she picked up a volume, she could remember exactly where, when and why she had bought it: a market in Beijing, a bookshop in Nanjing, a trip to Hong Kong.

"All those memories just pull me back to China," she said. "Wherever I am, Chinese books nourish my spirit, but that joy is always shadowed by a sense of lack."

That feeling eventually led Lyu to open Weidu Bookshop, an independent Chinese bookstore in London, in 2024.

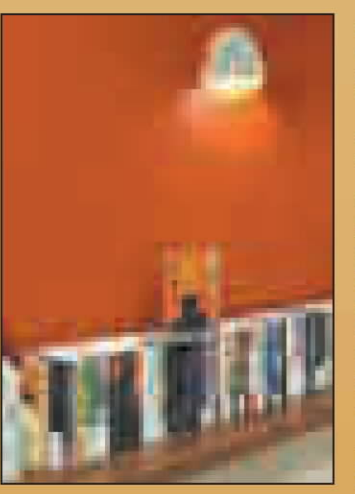
Before opening the shop, she spent four months selecting every title by hand. She brought in books from major Chinese literary and humanities publishers, including People's Literature Publishing House, and sourced some titles directly from publishers such as Imaginist rather than relying solely on wholesalers. She deliberately left out market-driven bestsellers, success manuals and feel-good quick fixes.

"In an age of AI and information overload, what's truly scarce is not information but judgment and taste," Lyu said. "We chose every book by hand. It's a slow way of doing things, but that's where the bookstore's foundation is."

The result was a shop shaped less by size than by intention. Alongside contemporary fiction, essays, poetry, history and social thought, Lyu created a children's section and launched graded reading boxes for Chinese-language learners. The selections ranged from classical poetry and history books adapted for young readers to the Chinese-language *Harry Potter* series.



Above: Visitors browse Chinese books at Weidu Bookshop's booth during a Chinese New Year celebration in London on Feb 21, 2026. **Below:** Books on display at Weidu Bookshop in London. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



The work behind the store was slower and more fragile than the shelves might suggest. Books arrived from China by sea freight, and once they reached the UK, local deliveries could be unpredictable. Occasionally, a parcel would disappear, and resolving the problem was not always easy.

"These books had come all the way here," Lyu said. "Losing one, knowing it might just sit somewhere unread, especially hurt."

After the store opened, the demand Lyu had sensed became visible. Orders went out across the UK — to cities, villages, university towns and school dormitories.

One regular customer in southwest England ordered seven or eight books every two weeks. They had never met, but Lyu began slipping handwritten notes into the parcels, and the reader sometimes wrote back. When one package went missing, Lyu enclosed a letter with the next order. The reader later replied by email, saying that just seeing her handwriting had been enough.

What surprised Lyu was that the shop's reach extended beyond the Chinese community.

She once noticed a British man in his 20s browsing so quietly in the shop that she assumed he could not read Chinese. In fact, he could, and the books he had been looking at were not easy ones. Another customer, a British woman who had lived in Shanghai a decade earlier, came in saying her Chinese was no longer good enough and that she had decided to pick it up again. She and Lyu talked about books and Beijing, where she is heading this September to study at Peking University.

Those encounters gradually changed Lyu's understanding of Weidu Bookshop. She had opened it to serve native Chinese readers living abroad. But over time, the shop also became a place where non-Chinese readers could encounter a China that felt current, literary and alive.

> "Through a modern Chinese bookstore, British readers can see what China is doing now — not a China trapped in history or imagined from afar."
>
> **Lyu Shasha,** founder of Weidu Bookshop in London

"Through a modern Chinese bookstore, British readers can see what China is doing now — not a China trapped in history or imagined from afar," Lyu said.

To keep that sense of immediacy, Lyu updates the selection regularly, introduces monthly new arrivals and creates themed reading lists on subjects such as women's writing and Dunhuang, the Gansu city known for the Mogao Caves. At the London Book Fair, the shop has also become a window for Chinese publishers and contemporary authors hoping to reach British readers more directly.

In 2025, Lyu published her first annual list of the most popular Chinese books among UK readers. Displayed in university libraries and more than 80 venues across the country, the list gave shape to a readership that had often been scattered and quiet.

Lyu never set out to build a cultural bridge, though that is what Weidu Bookshop has quietly become.

"Day by day, the conversations, the people, the small encounters really do add up, brick by brick," she said.

As for what comes next, Lyu is measured but determined.

"If nothing major changes, I'll keep going," she said. "Running the bookshop has turned out to be more meaningful than I ever expected."

Contact the writers at chenxue@i21st.cn

Deep Dive

As China places growing emphasis on cultivating innovation-driven talent, educators are increasingly asking how early engineering thinking should begin. For Li Yi, PhD, the answer is clear — it begins long before university.

A senior mathematics educator and STEM curriculum designer at the High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China, Li has led the development of an integrated program aimed at nurturing "outstanding future engineers".

With a doctoral degree in information and communication engineering, Li brings an interdisciplinary perspective to education, bridging technical expertise and classroom practice.

Learning STEM to solve real-world challenges

By **MENG WENJIE**
mengwenjie@i21st.cn

At the High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China, STEM education is not treated as a collection of separate subjects, nor simply as a way to help students master advanced knowledge or prepare for competitions. Instead, the school has developed a program designed to cultivate the way engineers think.

"We want students to learn how to identify problems, build models, analyze data, design solutions and test them in practice," said Li Yi, who led the program's development. "Engineering education at the secondary school level should help students connect knowledge with real life."

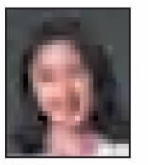
The program follows a three-tiered STEM curriculum spanning foundational, intermediate and advanced levels. Foundational courses introduce all students to essential concepts in mathematics, science and technology. Intermediate courses emphasize interdisciplinary projects that build early engineering awareness and hands-on problem-solving skills. Advanced courses immerse highly motivated students in complex, research-oriented projects that mirror authentic engineering challenges.

Through this structured progression, students are encouraged to develop five core competencies: modeling thinking, data thinking, computational thinking, design thinking and engineering thinking.

Project-based learning lies at the heart of the program. Students have explored topics including urban traffic modeling, population forecasting, sustainable energy systems, drone swarm design and epidemiological simulations.

These projects require them to integrate knowledge across disciplines, analyze real-world data, build prototypes and evaluate solutions critically.

Li said such projects help students understand that engineering is closely connected to society.



Li Yi

"Many of the problems we choose are connected to real social and industrial needs," she said. "Students learn that technology should benefit people and that innovation also comes with responsibility."

The program has now served more than 3,000 students and produced notable outcomes. More than 200 students have received national and international awards, including recognition in the High School Mathematical Contest in Modeling and other STEM innovation competitions. Several student research projects have also been published in academic journals and conference proceedings.

Many graduates of the program have gone on to leading universities, including the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Carnegie Mellon University, pursuing advanced study in fields such as quantum communication, algorithm engineering and robotics.

Behind these student achievements is a sustained effort to support teachers' professional growth.

As part of the program, educators receive ongoing training and participate in international exchanges. Teachers from different disciplines — including mathematics, information technology, physics, biology and engineering — are also encouraged to work together to design integrated courses, ensuring that students receive guidance from multiple perspectives.

More broadly, the program adds to ongoing discussions about how secondary schools can better prepare students for an increasingly technology-driven future. It offers one possible model for integrating engineering thinking into pre-university education, showing how rigorous STEM learning can be both intellectually demanding and socially meaningful.

Li is also exploring how artificial intelligence can enhance STEM education. Through AI-assisted learning tools, intelligent feedback systems and data-visualization platforms, the program is helping students refine ideas, test hypotheses and improve engineering designs in more adaptive and immersive learning environments.

"AI can make STEM learning more personalized and more interactive," Li said. "But the core remains the same: students need to learn how to ask meaningful questions and solve problems creatively."

For Li, the future of STEM education lies not simply in teaching technical skills, but in cultivating a generation of thoughtful innovators capable of addressing complex human challenges.

"Engineering education is not just about training future engineers," she said. "It is about helping young people build the confidence and ability to change the world around them."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:54 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:54 PM

SPORTS

2026 WORLD CUP



GERMANS SHOOT OUT

Paraguay becomes first team to defeat four-time champion on penalties at a World Cup

Paraguay goalkeeper Orlando Gill denies Germany's Kai Havertz in a penalty shootout to decide their round-of-32 clash in Boston on Monday after the match ended in a 1-1 draw. **Inset:** Paraguay's Gustavo Gomez celebrates his team's historic 4-3 shootout win. AP

Jose Canale wasn't in the starting lineup in either of his previous two appearances for Paraguay in this World Cup.

He made his first start a memorable one.

Canale scored the first of his side's spotkicks, Orlando Gill made two key saves in the shootout, and Paraguay beat Germany 4-3 on penalties Monday in Foxborough, Massachusetts, to complete another big upset at the 2026 World Cup.

It was a major triumph for the landlocked South American country of seven million people, which is surrounded by soccer giants like Argentina and Brazil. And it was the latest surprising exit by Germany, a four-time champion that has struggled at the World Cup since it last lifted the trophy in 2014.

"I think we deserved one more game, to be honest, considering everything that was said, everything we went through," Canale said. "What I want to highlight from our team is how united we are. Today was a game we really needed to show our true colors."

Paraguayans celebrated in the streets of the capital, Asuncion, screaming, jumping and hugging when the match ended. Some cried and dropped to their knees in disbelief, with the familiar beat of the team's song *Soy Albirrojo* reverberating through the crowd.

As well as notching up its first-ever knockout stage goal, Paraguay made history by becoming the first team to defeat Germany in a penalty shootout at the World Cup.

The Germans missed three of its six spotkicks, the last by Jonathan Tah, who blasted his attempt high over the crossbar, setting up Canale for the winner. Tah's miss followed a save by German goalkeeper Manuel Neuer of Fabian Balbuena's attempt that would have won it for Paraguay.

Tah also thought he had the go-ahead goal in extra time. He headed in a corner kick by Nathaniel Brown in the 102nd minute, but officials concluded after a video review that Waldemar Anton has pushed Gill to the ground before the shot, and the goal was disallowed.

The round-of-32 match ended 1-1 after extra time. Paraguay took the lead when Julio Enciso scored on a header late in the first half, but Kai Havertz equalized in the 52nd minute for Germany.

"We had to analyze every player, every detail. Thanks to that, I was able to only miss two penalties," Gill said. "This is for all the people of Paraguay."

Paraguay, which entered the match ranked 41st by FIFA, was a huge long shot to beat Germany, the 10th-ranked team in the world.

Paraguay will now face the winner of Tuesday's match between France and Sweden in the round of 16 on Saturday in Philadelphia. Should it overturn the odds amid the United States' 250th anniversary celebrations, Paraguay would return to Foxborough for the quarterfinals on July 9.

Germany had won six of seven penalty shootouts in major tournaments, including six straight since losing to the former Czechoslovakia in the 1976 European Championship final.

"It's not enough for German football," coach Julian Nagelsmann said.

In the only previous World Cup match between the two teams, Germany beat Paraguay 1-0 in the round of 16 at the 2002 tournament. Nearly a quarter-century later, Paraguay got its revenge.

Paraguay had appeared in five previous knockout games, but failed to score in each. It had advanced only once, winning on penalty kicks against Japan in the round of 16 at the 2010 tournament in South Africa. It fell that year to eventual champion Spain in the quarterfinals.

Monday was Germany's first knockout game since the 2014 final in Brazil, when the Germans beat Argentina 1-0. The Germans were eliminated in the group stage at the last two tournaments.

"We had very big plans for this World Cup. It's very difficult to have disappointed again," Havertz said. "It was difficult to create chances and keep the pace."

Paraguay broke the early stalemate Monday in the 42nd minute, with some perfect ball movement to set up Enciso.

Miguel Almiron split Germany's Aleksandar Pavlovic and Brown with a left-footed pass to Matias Galarza. Galarza sent a cross to Enciso, who was unmarked by Germany's defenders and easily headed it past Neuer.

In the second half, Havertz took a cross from Florian Wirtz, which he got just enough head on to redirect it past Gill.

Germany, whose 10 goals in the group stage was tied for the most of any team, struggled to find a way through Paraguay's 4-5-1 setup. The Germans had 78 percent of the possession in the first half.

Paraguay was without defender Omar Alderete, who left with an injury in the second half of its 0-0 draw against Australia. Canale started in his place.

AP

Nagelsmann won't 'run away' following early World Cup exit

Germany coach Julian Nagelsmann said he wanted to stay in his job, despite the defeat on penalties to Paraguay that sent the four-time World Cup winner crashing out of the last 32 on Monday.

Nagelsmann has a contract up to the 2028 European Championships, but Germany's premature exit from the World Cup will put the 38-year-old under intense scrutiny.

"I'm not someone who runs away," he told German broadcaster ZDF.

"I want to continue, but in football you don't always have it in your own hands.

"If the DFB (federation) wants me to, then I will prepare for the European Championship and the Nations League."

The loss to the South American side was the first time that Germany has ever lost a penalty shootout at a World Cup — it finished 4-3 after Jonathan Tah blasted his kick way over the bar.

Former Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp, who was at the match in Foxborough, Massachusetts, working for German broadcaster MagentaTV, has long been rumored as a future coach of the national team.

But Klopp refused to be drawn on the possibility on Monday.

"I understand that my name is being mentioned, but this is not the moment to talk about it — and especially not with me," Klopp said.

Midfielder Nadiem Amiri said Germany still has a bright future, but conceded the pain of defeat makes it hard to look too far ahead.

Several of Germany's core players may not be around for the next World Cup in 2030, but Jamal Musiala and Florian Wirtz should be in their prime by then.

AFP

Ninth China-Eurasia Expo spurs trade and business ties in Xinjiang

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Urumqi, located in Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, took center stage by hosting the ninth China-Eurasia Expo from June 25 to 29.

Continuously upgrading toward greater professionalism, cutting-edge innovation and pragmatic cooperation, the expo adapts to evolving global development trends and practical regional demands, achieving milestones in exhibition scale and expanding Eurasia's cooperation networks.

This year's expo gathered participants from 49 countries, regions and international organizations, with 27 countries and regions setting up pavilions. The United Arab Emirates, South Korea, Russia and Thailand debuted their standalone exhibitions, showcasing distinctive industries and premium products to boost cross-border exchanges and mutual learning.

More than 3,000 domestic and overseas enterprises and institutions revealed their latest technologies, products and solutions across the 140,000-square-meter exhibition venue, demonstrating vitality in Eurasian economic and trade cooperation.







Clockwise from left: A networking event for Chinese and Central Asian businesses is held in Urumqi during the ninth China-Eurasia Expo. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY An exhibitor at the Belarus booth records a short video on June 25. DING LEI / XINHUA Visitors inspect products at the Uzbekistan booth on June 26. SHI FENG / XINHUA

Diplomatic praise

Khalil Hashmi, the ambassador of Pakistan to China, hailed the expo's record-breaking scale as a testament to global confidence in Xinjiang's role as a hub for China-Eurasia economic and trade cooperation.

He highlighted that Pakistan, as one of this year's guest countries of honor, featured an enlarged pavilion, showcasing the friendship and robust economic and trade ties between China and Pakistan.

"We have set up pavilions at previous expos, but this year's status as a guest country of honor marks a new milestone in bilateral relations," Hashmi said. He added that the growing number of participating nations and enterprises reflects international business communities' optimism about Xinjiang's development potential, recognizing the region as a vital platform for win-win trade and investment cooperation.

The ambassador expressed confidence that the expo will continue to serve as a bridge for interconnected development and common prosperity across Eurasia and beyond.

Selcuk Unal, the Turkish ambassador to China, emphasized the millennia-old Silk Road bonds that link Turkiye and China. Five Turkish enterprises participated in the expo, with more business representatives traveling to Xinjiang to explore market opportunities.

He looked forward to new cooperation deals and trade contracts between Turkish companies and Chinese partners to deepen Eurasian commercial exchanges.

The president of the UAE China Xinjiang chamber of commerce and fellow townsmen association, a nine-time attendee of the expo based in Dubai, said that the event has become a key platform connecting Xinjiang with Middle Eastern markets.

He highlighted the natural complementary advantages between Xinjiang and the UAE: Xinjiang boasts abundant agricultural and sideline product resources, while the UAE has strong market demand for such goods.

Frequent bilateral promotional activities and in-depth cooperation via the expo have laid a foundation for future collaboration. He expected more pragmatic and win-win cooperation achievements to occur at this year's event.

Key events

Centering on four areas — trade promotion, investment cooperation, consumption expansion and innovative collaboration — the expo hosted over 80 themed economic and trade activities. These covered new product launches, cross-border trade matchmaking and investment promotion negotiations.

Highlight events included the Kazakhstan-themed Export to China session, the Central Asian diplomatic and entrepreneur dialogue, and an international buyer matchmaking forum.

On June 27, the expo's international buyer matchmaking forum was held at the Xinjiang International Conference and Exhibition Center, building a face-to-face cooperation platform for global suppliers and purchasers.

Participants from various sectors, including light manufacturing, agricultural products, textiles and apparel, new energy equipment, digital trade and cultural tourism, delivered industry presentations.

Enterprises from multiple Chinese provinces conducted in-depth negotiations with foreign buyer delegations, signing a batch of cooperation agreements spanning intelligent technology, agricultural machinery, engineering construction and commercial services.

Another highlight was the Kazakhstan-themed Export to China event on June 25, attracting more than 400 officials and entrepreneurs from both countries. It aimed to expand imports from Kazakhstan, leverage Xinjiang's unique geographical advantages, and deepen bilateral economic and trade cooperation by helping Kazakh enterprises tap into the Chinese market.

Meanwhile, the China (Xinjiang) Pilot Free Trade Zone's Investment Promotion and Industrial Cooperation Matchmaking Conference attracted more than 200 representatives from the business bureaus of 12 provincial-level regions, think tanks, research institutes, industrial parks and companies.

The event announced five major cooperation achievements and eight key platforms, with three core zones in Urumqi, Kashgar and Khorgos showcasing their development strengths.

A milestone was the expansion of the free trade zones alliance, with the China (Inner Mongolia) Pilot Free Trade Zone joining the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, Yunnan province, Heilongjiang province and Xinjiang to form a coordinated development cluster.

The five border regions jointly launched a three-year action plan for collaborative innovation of free trade zones (2026-28). The plan focuses on practical cooperation in institutional innovation exchange, cross-border logistics connectivity, industry chain coordination, market regulation linkage and talent resource sharing to fuel high-level opening-up along China's border areas.

ADVERTORIAL

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:54 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:57 PM

Dual celebrations

HK marks Party's founding, city's return to motherland

CPC 105TH ANNIVERSARY, PAGE 4



Affordable markets wow intl creators

CHINA, PAGE 5



Off-pitch footprint

Chinese fans, sponsors and tech put up strong show at World Cup

SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 THURSDAY, JULY 2, 2026



Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, who is also Chinese president and chairman of the Central Military Commission, stands with model CPC members who were awarded the July 1 Medal, the Party's highest honor, at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Wednesday. SHEN HONG / XINHUA

CPC urged to build on legacy, forge ahead

'Time stops for no one, and neither does history,' Xi tells grand anniversary gathering

By **MO JINGXI**
mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn

Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, called on the Party not to rest on its past achievements, but to continue striving toward national rejuvenation and new historic accomplishments, at a grand gathering marking the 105th anniversary of the founding of the CPC on Wednesday in Beijing.

The CPC's 105-year history is a source of pride, but the Party must never become complacent or stop moving forward, Xi said.

He underscored the importance of meeting the goal of fully realizing socialist modernization by the middle of the century.

"Time stops for no one, and neither does history," he said.

Xi, who is also Chinese president and chairman of the Central Military Commission, made the remarks while addressing an audience of around 3,000 at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

Founded in 1921 against the backdrop of a weak China plagued by foreign humiliation and poverty, the CPC has grown from a small group of just over 50 members into the world's largest governing party, with nearly 101.29 million members and tremendous global influence.

Xi said that over the past 105 years, the CPC has remained true to its founding mission of seeking happiness for the Chinese people and rejuvenation for the Chinese nation, achieving historic accomplishments through unremitting struggle.

The Party has led the Chinese people of all ethnic groups in writing the most magnificent epic in the nation's history, he said.

The CPC's 105 years of unremitting endeavor have fundamentally transformed the future and destiny of the Chinese people, opened up the right path toward national rejuvenation, demonstrated the strong vitality of Marxism, profoundly influenced the course of world history and forged a strong CPC, Xi said.

He added that the fundamental reason why the CPC has continued to achieve remarkable success over the past 105 years, and has been chosen by history and the people, lies in its fine qualities with no parallel among other political parties and political forces.

Xi also said the CPC has remained committed to pursuing truth and keeping to the right direction, staying deeply rooted among the people and courageously shouldering its historic missions while maintaining strategic initiative.

The Party has also followed the trends of development to remain at the forefront of the times, demonstrated the courage and ability to struggle while maintaining confidence in victory, and strengthened itself through constant self-improvement to remain vibrant, he said.

To fulfill the Party's missions in the new era and on the new journey, the entire Party must uphold its basic theory, basic line and basic policy to "remain undaunted by passing clouds and stay on course through wind and waves," Xi said.

Stressing that the Party must rely closely on the people to create new historical feats, Xi urged Party members to "further reinvigorate the enterprising spirit for getting things done".

He also called on the entire Party to actively respond to risks and challenges on the path ahead.

"China's development is now in a period where strategic opportunities coexist with risks and challenges, and where uncertain and unpredictable factors are on the rise. We must always be prepared to withstand major tests of high winds and raging waves, and even violent storms," he said.

Xi also stressed advancing full and rigorous Party self-governance and making sustained efforts to win "the tough, protracted and all-out battle against corruption".

"It is imperative that all of us in the Party never forget our original aspiration and founding mission, that we always stay modest, prudent and hardworking, and that we have the courage and ability to carry on our fight," he added.

Xi said that promoting the long-term prosperity and stability of the Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions is essential to realizing national rejuvenation.

Xinhua contributed to this story.



Xi addresses a gathering to mark the 105th founding anniversary of the Communist Party of China in Beijing on Wednesday. YAO DAWEI / XINHUA

Inside

• Editorial, **page 10**
• See more, **pages 2-4**

Xi's quotes

• Resolving the Taiwan question and realizing the complete reunification of the motherland are an unswerving historical mission of our Party and the shared aspiration of all Chinese people.

• We promote the building of a community with a shared future for humanity, providing Chinese wisdom, Chinese solutions and Chinese strength for addressing major issues facing humanity.

• Youth is a vital force in realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

Pragmatism drives China's economic transformation

WORLD WATCH
By Lin Jianhai

As the global economy becomes increasingly fragmented and countries struggle to sustain long-term growth, China's economic transformation offers experiences that transcend its borders.

Over the past four-plus decades, China has orchestrated one of the most extraordinary economic transformations in modern history. Since the launch of reform and opening-up in 1978, the country's economy has registered one of the fastest growth rates ever recorded by a major economy, expanding at an average annual rate of close to 9 percent. In the process, China has lifted hundreds of millions out of poverty, become the world's second-largest economy, and emerged as a major driver of global trade, investment and innovation. Today, China accounts for nearly a fifth of global economic output and remains the largest contributor to world economic growth.

The significance of this achievement lies not simply in its scale, but also in what it reveals about the process of economic development itself. Too often, discussions of China's rise focus on whether it "validates" a particular model of "capitalism" or "state intervention". This misses the larger point.

China's success reflects a pragmatic willingness to experiment, adapt and evolve as circumstances changed.

Four key experiences remain highly relevant today.

First, development is an evolving process, not a rigid blueprint. Unlike many countries, China pursued gradual and sequential reform. Agricultural reforms came before industrial reforms. Special economic zones served as testing grounds before market-oriented policies were expanded nationally. Successful experiments were scaled up, while unsuccessful ones were revised or abandoned.

This pragmatic approach generated political support, reduced social disruption and allowed policymakers to learn from experience.

*See **Experience**, page 5*

8 honored with July 1 medals

By **CAO DESHENG**
caodesheng@chinadaily.com.cn

Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, conferred the July 1 Medal, the Party's highest honor, on model CPC members on Wednesday at a gathering marking the Party's 105th founding anniversary at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

The eight recipients of the medal are outstanding representatives of Party members from various sectors, who uphold firm ideals and beliefs, remain loyal to the Party, and dedicate themselves to the Party, the country and the people, according to the decision of the CPC Central Committee on awarding the July 1 Medal.

The decision was read out at the gathering by Cai Qi, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and a member of the Secretariat of the CPC Central Committee.

The recipients put people first, always think and work together with the people, and tirelessly strive for the interests of the people, the decision said.

They forge ahead with a sense of mission and responsibility, establish and practice a correct understanding of governance performance, work diligently and tackle challenges in ordinary positions, and strive to create achievements that live up to the expectations of the Party, the people and the times, the decision noted.

They follow fine work conduct and maintain political integrity and honesty, winning widespread praise from the entire Party and society, it added.

The decision called on all Party members to follow their example and work in solidarity to contribute to the building of a modern socialist country in all respects and to the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

The medal was first conferred in 2021, which marked the centenary of the founding of the CPC. The award is granted every five years.

Beyond individual recognition, the medal, which honors role models from all walks of life, carries wider social value.

Designed with simplicity and solemnity as its core concept, the medal, with red, gold and white as its main colors, features key elements such as the Party emblem and the five-pointed star.

Outstanding Party members, Party workers and grassroots Party organizations from across the country were also honored at Wednesday's gathering.



INSIDE
Vanguard of the world's majority
Global Views, page 12

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN ASIA NEWS NETWORK

China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

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

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:57 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:57 PM

CPC 105TH ANNIVERSARY

Xi's article on county Party chiefs released

Role of grassroots officials in serving the people wholeheartedly stressed

An article by Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, on how to excel as head of the CPC county committee was published on Wednesday.

The article by Xi, who is also Chinese president and chairman of the Central Military Commission, was published in this year's 13th issue of the Qiushi Journal, a flagship magazine of the CPC Central Committee.

The article is a speech delivered by Xi at a seminar for county-level Party chiefs at the Party School of the CPC Central Committee on Jan 12, 2015.

He noted in the article that in the Party's organizational structure and in the State power structure, the county level serves as a crucial link connecting higher and lower levels, and it constitutes a vital foundation for boosting economic development, ensuring people's well-being, maintaining social stability and safeguarding the country's long-term stability and security.

Xi urged county-level Party chiefs across the country to draw inspiration from the spirit of Jiao Yulu, an exemplary role model for grassroots Party officials.

The article emphasized that loyalty to the Party is a key criterion for county-level Party chiefs, who must consciously align themselves with the CPC Central Committee and resolutely uphold its authority.

To be a good county-level Party chief, one must always keep the people at heart, serve the people wholeheartedly and foster a correct understanding of what it means to perform well, the article underscored.

It also noted that a good county-level Party chief must shoulder the responsibilities with full dedication and actively work out concrete solutions to tackle tough challenges.

Furthermore, the article highlighted that a good county-level Party chief must strictly uphold disciplinary rules, exercise power in a just, law-based and honest way, set an example in studying, respecting, abiding by and applying the law, and be adept at advancing county governance under the rule of law.

XINHUA

Global leaders commend CPC's great achievements

By **JI HAISHENG**
jihaisheng@chinadaily.com.cn

Leaders of foreign political parties and governments have conveyed warm congratulations to the Communist Party of China Central Committee and General Secretary Xi Jinping on the 105th anniversary of the CPC's founding.

In their messages, they spoke highly of the great achievements the CPC has made, and expressed firm confidence that under the leadership of General Secretary Xi, the CPC will continue to make new progress.

Kim Jong-un, general secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea and president of the State Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, said the CPC has led the Chinese people in overcoming various hardships and obstacles, vigorously advancing the great cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and writing a glorious chapter in the history of the Chinese nation's development.

Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto, who is also chairman of the Great Indonesia Movement Party, said the achievements the CPC has made in successfully leading China in eradicating poverty and delivering well-being for the Chinese people have always served as a model for his party to learn from.

Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu, who is also president of the People's National Congress party, expressed his gratitude to China for its steadfast support for the development of the Maldives. Muizzu said that his party cherishes its long-standing friendship with the CPC, while stressing the importance of deepening the partnership between the two parties.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan, chairman of Turkiye's Justice and Development Party, or AKP, and Turkish president, spoke highly of the initiatives and vision put forward by Xi for safeguarding global stability and prosperity. The AKP stands ready to strengthen interparty exchanges with the CPC and promote the in-depth development of cooperation between the two countries, Erdogan said.

Mahmoud Abbas, chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and Palestinian president, said that he highly appreciates the great achievements China has made in various fields, and expressed his gratitude to China for its long-standing and firm support for the just cause of the Palestinian people in restoring their legitimate national rights.

William Ruto, head of Kenya's ruling United Democratic Alliance and Kenyan president, emphasized that the CPC's achievements have inspired constructive reflection across the Global South on national development and governance, and have further reinforced Kenya's resolve to pursue a path of transformative growth.

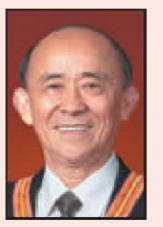
Other leaders who sent congratulatory messages included those of Belarus, Serbia, Nauru, Malaysia, Singapore, Vanuatu and Samoa.

Grand celebration



A gathering to mark the 105th founding anniversary of the Communist Party of China is held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Wednesday. HUANG JINGWEN / XINHUA

Meet the July 1 Medal recipients



Ma Shanxiang, 69, is a retired community worker in Chongqing. Ma joined the Communist Party of China in January 1979 and devoted over 30 years to serving residents and mediating disputes. He assisted more than 20,000 people and handled over 2,500 mediation cases. His approach to community work provided valuable insights for strengthening grassroots governance, including ideological and political education.



Wang Yuchang, 90, worked as a deputy manager of a department store in Xiaoxian county, Anhui province, after serving in the military. Wang, who has been a Party member since July 1964, enlisted in the military at 18 and developed expertise in missile technology. He later improved the techniques for missile propellant refueling and assembly procedures. He also shot down two U-2 reconnaissance aircraft by employing a tactic featuring an extremely short radar activation time and lightning-fast launch procedures. For his service, he became a recipient of first-class merit and Chairman Mao Zedong received him.



Li Liancheng, 74, is Party secretary and director of the village committee of Xixinzhuang village in Puyang county, Henan province. Li joined the Party in February 1986, and pioneered a collective economy model under which "every household has shares, everyone works and every family receives dividends". He led the village's transformation from a poor flood plain community into a national civilized village and a model of rural vitalization. Li also helped neighboring villages develop and conducted over 1,000 free training sessions for rural Party officials at a dedicated training facility, involving more than 100,000 participants.



Uhas Sulayman, 70, is a former deputy chief physician at a hospital in Yumin county, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. He joined the Party in November 1993 and spent decades trekking through remote mountain pastures. He traveled over 200,000 kilometers, treated more than 100,000 patients, and helped deliver over 3,200 newborns. He also established a volunteer healthcare service team and transformed his courtyard into a venue for sharing stories about healthcare development and ethnic unity in border regions.



Wu Yaqin, 65, is the first Party secretary at a community in Changchun, Jilin province. Wu joined the Party in September 1998 and has since devoted 30 years to grassroots governance. She has mediated over 1,000 disputes and developed community governance methods. She has also established a workshop, and developed more than 10 courses on community governance and Party building, which have reached nearly 30,000 grassroots governance officials.



Chen Junwu, a former consultant to the science and technology committee of China Petrochemical Corp and an academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, passed away in May 2024 at the age of 97. Chen joined the Party in April 1956 and devoted over 70 years to the petrochemical industry. He served as chief designer of China's first fluid catalytic cracking unit, propelling the nation's oil refining industry to the global forefront. He also tackled the global challenge of producing olefins from coal-based methanol and authored a book on China's mid- to long-term carbon emission reduction targets.



Zhao Yafu, 85, is a researcher at an organic farming cooperative in Jurong, Jiangsu province. Zhao joined the Party in February 1966 and has worked for over 60 years in hilly areas to develop modern agriculture and vitalize rural communities. He has introduced new crop varieties and farming techniques across more than 233,000 hectares, boosting farmers' incomes by over 30 billion yuan ($4.4 billion). He has put his research into practice on the land and ensured that the benefits reach farmers directly.



Zhong Jue, 89, is a professor at Central South University's College of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering in Hunan province and an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering. Zhong joined the Party in January 1986 and has been engaged in research for decades — from the first Five-Year Plan (1953-57) to the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period. She has solved production bottlenecks in high-performance aluminium hot rolling and overcome multiple technological bottlenecks that had long constrained the industry, contributing to China's rise as a global leader in aluminium processing.

Unveiling the secret to a 105-year-old institution's enduring vitality and strength



Mo Jingxi
Reporter's Log

When I entered the Great Hall of the People on Wednesday morning, I saw people wearing red rosettes and medals exchanging greetings and taking photos ahead of a grand gathering marking the 105th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China.

The lively scene, set against the Party's history of more than a century, made me wonder what has enabled a 105-year-old political party not only to endure, but also to remain vigorous and forward-looking.

I asked several attendees the question.

Wu Meili, 69, a retired community mediator from Zhejiang province, initially responded as though I were asking about the secret to her own good health. "A strong body and a positive mindset," she said.

But soon enough Wu turned her focus to the Party. Its vitality, she said, comes from remaining true to its original aspiration of serving the people wholeheartedly.

Wu, who spent 42 years mediating disputes, said that what kept her going was doing each small task well and hearing a simple "thank you" from the people she helped.

Chen Fenxin, a veteran CPC member and a village Party chief from Shaanxi province, spoke of faith and gratitude.

Having grown up in a region deeply influenced by the revolutionary traditions of Yan'an, an old revolutionary heartland of the CPC, he views the Party's relationship with the people not as an abstract principle, but as something rooted in the experiences of his family and community.

His remarks took me back to Yan'an, a city in northern Shaanxi, where I made a visit only days earlier.

It was my first trip to the renowned revolutionary base, where Chairman Mao Zedong and other members of the older generation of revolutionaries lived and worked for 13 years. They stayed in cave dwellings and endured acute material shortages, and yet, they remained confident that their cause would one day change the fate of this country and its people.

More than 80 years ago, Mao delivered his well-known speech, titled "Serve the People", in Yan'an, declaring that the CPC's contingent was formed to liberate the people and work entirely in their interests.

China has changed dramatically since then, but the commitment to serving the people has remained a constant throughout the Party's history.

Guided by the fundamental principle of serving the people wholeheartedly, generations of CPC members have united with and led the Chinese people in an unremitting struggle, making possible all that China has achieved today.

Now, more and more young people are taking up the baton.

Among the younger faces I spotted in the hall was Zhang Zixi, a 21-year-old trap shooter, who attended as a representative of the sports community. Last year, she applied for Party membership.

Zhang told me that she was particularly encouraged by General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee Xi Jinping's call to young Chinese people to "run well their leg of the historic relay", pave the way with their youth and let their ideals shine.

For Zhang, those words have translated into a concrete goal — to train harder, to achieve better results and to see China's national flag raised at international competitions.

As I looked around me in the auditorium, the answer to my question began to unfold.

I realized that the source of the Party's enduring vitality is not a secret after all. One must stay rooted among the people, keep working, keep renewing, and never stop passing the baton.

Contact the writer at mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:57 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:57 PM

CPC 105TH ANNIVERSARY



Xi Jinping (center), general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, and other Party and State leaders attend a gathering on Wednesday in celebration of the 105th anniversary of the founding of the CPC, at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. XIE HUANCHI / XINHUA

ROLE MODELS HONORED





Left: Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, and other Party and State leaders present awards to representatives honored as outstanding Party members, Party workers and primary-level Party organizations from across the country on Wednesday at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. XIE HUANCHI / XINHUA **Above**: Guests and representatives applaud during the celebration of the 105th anniversary of the founding of the CPC on Wednesday at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. SHEN HONG / XINHUA



The motorcade carrying recipients of the July 1 Medal is accompanied by motorcycle escorts on the way to the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Wednesday. WANG YE / XINHUA



Zhong Jue, a recipient of the July 1 Medal, enters the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Wednesday. Zhong, born in 1936, is a pioneering academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering and a leading expert in mechanical engineering. GAO JIE / XINHUA



People's Liberation Army honor guards escort the July 1 Medal into the awarding venue at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Wednesday. DING LIN / XINHUA



Chinese and foreign media representatives report from the scene of the founding anniversary celebration at the Great Hall of the People on Wednesday in Beijing. YUE YUEWEI / XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:57 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:57 PM

CPC 105TH ANNIVERSARY

Hong Kong marks Party's anniversary with events

By **ATLAS SHAO** in Hong Kong
atlasshao@chinadailyhk.com

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region will host a series of events to celebrate the 105th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China.

At a launch ceremony on Wednesday, which marked both the 105th anniversary of the CPC's founding and the 29th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to the motherland, the SAR government said the lineup will include thematic events highlighting the nation's achievements in space exploration and green transformation, as well as activities across all 18 districts of Hong Kong.

The celebrations are aimed at enhancing residents' understanding of the nation's major achievements, fostering national confidence and strengthening patriotic sentiment, especially among young people, Hong Kong SAR Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu said.

Lee said that under the visionary concept and successful implementation of the "one country, two systems" policy, Hong Kong enjoys the unique advantages of having the strong support of the motherland while remaining closely connected to the world.

He said the Chinese nation has made remarkable achievements in improving people's livelihoods and developing the economy under the leadership of the CPC. The nation's development has provided a fundamental guarantee for Hong Kong's prosperity and progress, while the central government has consistently demonstrated deep care and steadfast support for the city, he added.



Fishing boats carrying China's national flag and the flag of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region sail through Victoria Harbor in Hong Kong on Wednesday, to celebrate the 29th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to the motherland. WANG SHEN / XINHUA

Hong Kong's transition from chaos to order and its progress toward greater prosperity demonstrate the vitality of the "one country, two systems" framework, Lee said.

Also addressing the ceremony, Zhou Ji, director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR, said this year marks the beginning of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), and the nation has high expectations for Hong Kong.

By integrating into and serving the country's overall development, Hong Kong will achieve better development and enjoy greater prosperity and stability, while making even greater contributions to building a strong country and advancing the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, Zhou said.

He added that the central government has fully supported Hong Kong in responding to various challenges while preserving the city's distinctive position and strengths.

After the ceremony, Hong Kong legislator Kenneth Fok Kai-kong said the country's rapid economic development and long-term social stability have been achieved under the leadership of the CPC.

"We must fully and faithfully implement the 'one country, two systems' policy, support the SAR's governance, better integrate into and serve the national development strategy, jointly safeguard Hong Kong's long-term prosperity and stability, and contribute Hong Kong's strength to the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation," Fok said in a written reply.

Earlier on Wednesday, the SAR government held a reception to celebrate the anniversary of Hong Kong's return to the motherland. Lee said the SAR government will accelerate the formulation of the city's first five-year plan and the development of the Northern Metropolis to consolidate Hong Kong's advantages.

A video featuring the city's first astronaut, payload specialist Lai Ka-ying, was shown at the reception. Lai, who is serving aboard the Tiangong space station, said she hopes Hong Kong will become more prosperous and stable with the nation's support.

Lu Wanqing contributed to this story.

Worker who revived electronics giant honored

By **LI HONGYANG**
lihongyang@chinadaily.com.cn

Xiao Shengli still remembers the weight of the moment in 1994. The Yonghong Equipment Factory, a State-owned manufacturer of semiconductor devices in Tianshui city, Northwest China's Gansu province, was on its knees.

Debts had soared past 90 million yuan ($13.24 million). Wages had gone unpaid for three months. Workshop machinery mostly stood idle, veteran workers were despairing, and the young were fleeing. The enterprise was sliding toward bankruptcy.

When he was handed this "mess", Xiao did not hesitate. Facing the anxious eyes of the remaining workforce, he took the factory head's post and made a solemn pledge: keep the enterprise alive, stabilize the workers, and revive growth.

What followed were brutal reforms. He launched measures, including layoffs and efficiency drives, but he started with his own family.

He persuaded his wife — a department head — to take early retirement. This meant she gave up her job and career earlier than planned, likely with a lower lifetime income and pension than if she had continued working. Then he sent his son away to find work in another city.



Xiao Shengli

Word spread quickly through the factory. Resistance melted. A disheartened workforce began to pull together.

To win back orders, Xiao and his core personnel squeezed into packed green slow trains, survived on dry bread and stayed in cheap guesthouses. They went door to door, rebuilding trust.

The effort worked: the old plant swung back to profit.

"The most critical step was to concentrate resources on integrated circuit packaging and testing. In 1996, more than 4 million yuan was poured into upgrading a plastic-encapsulated integrated circuit production line. That year, sales revenue broke through 10 million yuan for the first time — a foundation on which everything else would be built," Xiao said.

The numbers today tell the story of what grew from that "bet". By the end of 2025, Tianshui Huatian Electronics Group — the company that emerged from the ashes of Yonghong — had boosted its annual packaging capacity from 200 million units in the early 2000s to 90 billion units. It holds 778 patents, including 362 domestic invention patents and 40 international invention patents.

Huatian now ranks third in the Chinese mainland and fifth globally in semiconductor packaging and testing.

On Wednesday, Xiao was honored as one of the outstanding members of the Communist Party of China at a gathering in Beijing, which marked the Party's 105th founding anniversary.

Xiao, who graduated from Xi'an Jiaotong University in Shaanxi province in 1969, has never left the semiconductor business since then. He said that it is this lifetime of single-minded commitment that fuels his refusal to step away.

"The thousands, now tens of thousands of workers, who have struggled alongside the enterprise, are a responsibility I cannot lay down. As long as my health permits, I will guard the industry we built together," the 79-year-old said.

Alongside that personal sense of duty sits a driving national mission.

"For decades, the entire chip supply chain has been constrained by others. Packaging and testing are key links; each breakthrough we achieve bolsters China's confidence in its push for self-sufficiency. With advanced packaging breakthroughs and domestic substitution at a critical stage, I should be charging at the front," he said.

He said talent is the means to get there. "Outstanding employees are a company's most precious wealth."

By relying on its internal talent development system, Huatian has trained more than 3,000 skilled workers who now form the backbone of the business.

Meanwhile, the engineering master's program jointly established with Xi'an Jiaotong University is also nurturing a group of professionals specializing in packaging and testing — a quiet rebuttal to the assumption that talent must drain from the west to the coast.

"Huatian is where it is today because several generations of technicians and young researchers have carried the baton," he said.

"Seeing this enterprise, to which I have dedicated my entire life, continue to grow brings me a sense of fulfillment and peace of mind that nothing else can replace."

Community centers support gig sector's employees

Having finished a delivery, Hou Bo rode his electric motorbike to Yijiashan community in Yiwu, Zhejiang province — known as "the world's supermarket". Instead of rushing to grab his next order, he stepped into a community service center, took a cup of free chilled mung bean soup and topped up his water bottle.

"It's sweltering out there, and the center is a welcome break," said Hou. The community service center is an initiative implemented by the local community Communist Party of China organizations, offering one-stop support for over 6,000 food delivery riders in the area.

Party organizations in urban communities, which lead local social governance, are striving to support tens of millions of workers in new forms of employment similar to Hou's, exploring ways to integrate them into urban life and ease hardships.

"In the past, many workers would leave after a few months because of the high living costs," said Pan Zhiyong, manager of a courier station in Shanghai's Putuo district. "But when you have somewhere to rest and somewhere to live, you start to feel at home," Pan said.

With the help of local Party organizations, a community service center catering to the daily needs of people in new forms of employment and other gig workers has been built on a former parking lot in the district. It offers a 24-hour rest area, emergency medicines, charging stations, showers and laundry facilities.

To ease the housing pressures affecting gig workers, shared apartments are provided. Monthly rent for a spot starts from as low as 500 yuan ($73).

Such moves mirror a wider national trend amid the rapid growth of the digital economy and platform economy. In Beijing, more than 14,000 service hubs are clustered around zones packed with couriers and other flexible work personnel, providing seating, drinking water and rain shelters.

Wu Tao, a professor of grassroots Party building at the China Executive Leadership Academy Pudong, said the role local Party organizations play in fostering connections among people is vital to sound governance, particularly in urban communities characterized by high population density and frequent mobility.

As workers in new forms of employment, particularly delivery riders, constantly move through neighborhoods, office buildings and commercial districts, primary-level Party organizations have found that they are uniquely positioned to contribute to community governance.

New forms of employment refer to jobs that have emerged with the rise of the internet and the digital economy, including roles like food delivery couriers, ride-hailing drivers and online marketers, who rely on internet platforms for their work.

In Songnan township of Shanghai, couriers helped redesign a residential parcel-locker area after sharing suggestions based on their daily delivery experience.

"Delivery workers are often the first to notice problems in a neighborhood," said Yang Yang, a local Party official in Songnan.

The Yijiashan community of Zhejiang has even established volunteer teams that encourage delivery workers to participate in food safety monitoring, meal deliveries for elderly residents and emergency assistance.

Beyond providing support, primary-level Party organizations are also seeking to expand opportunities for long-term career development.

At the service center in Yijiashan community, training sessions on logistics certification, short-video production, livestream e-commerce and new media operations are held regularly. Apart from rest spaces and work opportunities, equal access to public services is also provided to workers in new forms of employment. Local authorities have opened cross-regional medical insurance payment channels for delivery couriers, as well as a pilot program on occupational injury insurance.

Further initiatives are underway to offer this group a more promising life in the city.

XINHUA

CPC's natl development drive lauded

Experts commend its stewardship in advancing global standing, growth

By **LIU JIANQIAO** in Beijing
and **WANG XIAODONG** in Nairobi

Chinese modernization is steadily advancing, and China's development has contributed to shared global prosperity while offering valuable experiences for developing countries pursuing their own paths to modernization, according to global experts.

As the Communist Party of China marks its 105th anniversary, its journey reflects resilience, innovation and strong leadership. Under the Party's leadership, China has undergone a profound transformation, they said.

Founded in 1921 against the backdrop of foreign aggression, poverty and failed attempts to save the nation, the CPC set out on a mission aimed at securing happiness for the Chinese people and rejuvenation for the Chinese nation.

Under the leadership of the CPC, China has grown into the world's second-largest economy, achieved major advances in science and technology, significantly improved living standards and become an important source of stability and certainty in a turbulent world.

Michael Borchmann, former head of the European and International Affairs Department of the German state of Hesse, said one of the key reasons for China's success is the CPC's unwavering commitment to a people-centered approach.

"The Party regards itself as a servant of the people, without private interests of its own, and derives the legitimacy of its governance largely from the satisfaction and support of the population," he said.

"A defining feature of this transformation has been that the Chinese people took their destiny back into their own hands. They cast off foreign humiliation and oppression, successfully lifted hundreds of millions out of poverty, and regained their national confidence and self-respect," he added.

Humphrey P. B. Moshi, professor of economics and founding director of the Center for Chinese Studies at the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, said that since 1949, China has achieved remarkable progress and historic accomplishments under the CPC's stewardship.

Chinese society has undergone profound transformation in many respects, ushering in a new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics, eliminating absolute poverty and building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, Moshi said.

Peter Kagwanja, president and chief executive officer of the Africa Policy Institute, a think tank in Nairobi, Kenya, said China has transformed itself from one of the world's poorest developing countries in the 1980s into the world's second-largest economy.

> "China offers lessons and inspiration to Africa and the Global South. Its growth is an inspiration for Africa."
>
> **Peter Kagwanja,** president and chief executive officer of the Africa Policy Institute

Under the leadership of the CPC, China has made rapid progress across a number of sectors, including infrastructure, science and technology, education and healthcare, he said.

"Through its Belt and Road Initiative as well as its four global initiatives — the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, the Global Civilization Initiative and the Global Governance Initiative — China has amassed immense global influence, becoming a major player in international trade and diplomacy," he added.

"China offers lessons and inspiration to Africa and the Global South. Its growth is an inspiration for Africa. Poverty is not a curse for any civilization. Africa can also rise and lift its people out of poverty," Kagwanja said.

The CPC's 105-year history demonstrates that effective state governance is built on disciplined leadership, sustained capacity building, robust accountability and continuous institutional reform, said Mafa Kwanisai Mafa, a Zimbabwean Pan-Africanist researcher and political commentator.

"As nations of the Global South carve out their own sovereign paths to modernization, the CPC's century of self-improvement and decades of governance practice will remain an indispensable touchstone for scholarly inquiry, high-level policy deliberation and thoughtful localized adaptation for generations to come," Mafa said.

"In a world marked by growing geopolitical tensions, China has contributed to sustained international cooperation that is inclusive of the Global South. This has only been possible because the country is well governed," said Lawrence Loh, director of the Centre for Governance and Sustainability at the National University of Singapore.

The international community stands to benefit from China's development plans, particularly through further market opening, stronger innovation and digital partnerships, expanded trade and investment, and faster progress in the global green transition, he added.

Victor Raballa in Nairobi, Zhang Zhouxiang in Brussels and Vivien Xu in Hong Kong contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at liujianqiao@chinadaily.com.cn

Legacy sharing



Young pioneers, members of the Communist Party of China and Communist Youth League of China visit the Xinjiang red culture exhibition hall in Urumqi, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, on Wednesday. The event was organized to revisit the Party's history and pass on its revolutionary legacy to the youth.
SUN ZHENSONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:57 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:57 PM

CHINA

Space tests to aid blood and brain research

Shenzhou XXIII crew conducts a host of experiments on board Tiangong

By **ZHAO LEI**
zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

The Shenzhou XXIII mission crew has carried out a number of science and technology tasks since its arrival at the Tiangong space station a little over a month ago, the China Manned Space Agency has announced.

To support space medical experimentation, the Shenzhou XXIII astronauts — mission commander and spaceflight engineer Colonel Zhu Yangzhu, spacecraft pilot Colonel Zhang Zhiyuan and science payload specialist Lai Ka-ying — assisted one another to conduct ultrasound examinations on multiple body parts including the neck, wrist and abdomen.

The collected data is being used for research on blood vessel and blood flow characteristics, as well as the remodeling of sensitive muscle groups.

Zhu's team used a robot called Xiaohang to perform touch interaction tests. The results will help optimize the motion planning algorithms for in-orbit robots in future missions.

The astronauts also used electroencephalogram acquisition devices to conduct multiple experiments that cover visual-motor processing and behavioral responses to lighting conditions.

In addition, the crew members applied near-infrared brain functional imaging equipment to gather relevant data to help researchers explore the impact of long-duration spaceflights on astronauts' brain functional networks, as well as the brain's spontaneous adjustment and adaptation mechanisms in response to external environmental changes in space.

In the field of microgravity physics, Zhu and his teammates installed and repaired several world-class experimental apparatus.

Moreover, they used a diagnosis instrument, which incorporates diagnostic methods in traditional Chinese medicine, to collect physiological data, providing solid support for researchers to monitor astronauts' health in long-duration spaceflight, according to a news release from the space agency.

Apart from their routine duties, the Shenzhou XXIII astronauts used a hot air oven to prepare a dish that no crew had ever attempted — roasted pumpkin.

In 2025, astronauts from the Shenzhou XX and Shenzhou XXI missions demonstrated to the public how they used this specially designed oven to cook grilled chicken wings and steak, enjoying the first-ever space barbecue in front of the camera with great relish.

According to Liu Weibo, an engineer at the Astronaut Center of China, this world-first "space oven" can extract cooking fumes and collect food residues inside its chamber, while sealing food in place and heating it evenly.

Before China, the United States had delivered an oven in 2019 to the International Space Station and had astronauts bake cookies in microgravity as part of an experiment.

However, the cookies they made were never eaten and were instead sent back to Earth for research purposes.

The Shenzhou XXIII crew launched into space on May 24 and arrived at the Chinese space station the next day, marking China's 17th manned spaceflight and also the 11th crewed mission aboard the Tiangong.



Rodin arrives in Wenzhou

A drone unveils a statue of *The Thinker* during the opening ceremony of the Rodin Art Center in Wenzhou, Zhejiang province, on Tuesday. A Rodin-themed exhibition opened the same day, featuring more than 70 European sculptures, including 22 works by Auguste Rodin on display in China for the first time.
ZHENG PENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

New elephant protection rules realistic, expert says

By **YAN YUJIE** in Xishuangbanna, Yunnan and **ZHENG JINRAN**

Yunnan province's revised wildlife protection regulation recognizes the growing complexity of Asian elephant conservation by expanding protection efforts beyond nature reserves to habitat connectivity, scientific monitoring and human-wildlife coexistence, an internationally renowned elephant expert has said.

The revised Yunnan Provincial Regulation on the Protection of Terrestrial Wildlife, adopted in May and set to take effect on Aug 15, strengthens measures covering habitat protection and restoration, ecological corridors and migration routes, wildlife monitoring and patrols, and emergency rescue.

Ahimsa Campos-Arceiz, a Spanish ecologist and professor at the Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, said the revised regulation reflects an important evolution in conservation thinking.

"I think the revised regulation is more realistic," he said. "Traditionally, conservation focused mainly on species conservation or protected areas. Increasingly, we want to move toward a more holistic approach."

Rather than viewing elephants as a species confined to protected areas, the regulation recognizes that they move across landscapes shared with people, Campos-Arceiz said.

"Elephants do not only live inside protected areas, they also live outside, where they interact with people. They need to move from one place to another, not stay in the same place forever," he said. "This new regulation acknowledges that complexity."

Campos-Arceiz made the remarks at the ongoing 62nd annual meeting of the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation in Xishuangbanna, where more than 700 scientists and conservation practitioners from over 60 countries and regions have gathered to discuss topics ranging from tropical forest resilience and cross-border conservation to artificial intelligence and human-wildlife coexistence.

Among the regulation's new measures is support for protecting wildlife habitats beyond existing nature reserves.

It allows local governments to establish conservation zones in important wildlife concentration areas, migration routes and ecological corridors, while encouraging local community participation.

Habitat connectivity is essential because Asian elephants require extensive home ranges to survive, Campos-Arceiz said.

An adult elephant can consume about 150 kilograms of vegetation a day, requiring large home ranges because food resources need time to regenerate. Isolated populations are therefore less resilient than those able to move across connected landscapes, he said.

He cautioned, however, that the role of ecological corridors is often misunderstood. "The function of corridors is not to reduce conflict," he said. "Their role is to promote population connectivity."

Because corridors often pass through landscapes where people live and work, encounters between elephants and communities remain inevitable. Corridors therefore need to be combined with monitoring, early-warning systems and other management measures rather than being viewed as a standalone solution, he said.

"There is no single way to promote human-elephant coexistence. There needs to be multiple approaches to make it work."

The revised regulation also requires local governments in areas heavily affected by wildlife to strengthen monitoring and early-warning systems, emergency planning and preventive measures. It also stipulates compensation for personal injury and property losses caused by protected wildlife and encourages the development of wildlife damage insurance.

Campos-Arceiz said these measures collectively reflect the regulation's holistic approach, reducing risks for nearby communities while allowing elephants to move freely across the landscape.

Looking ahead, Campos-Arceiz said advances in drone technology, genetic research and long-term ecological monitoring will help make Yunnan's wild elephant population one of the best understood in the world, enabling increasingly precise conservation.

However, he said, better science alone will not eliminate conflict.

"We don't expect human-elephant conflict to finish," he said. "What we want is to make the conflict not too intense."

Contact the writers at zhengjinran@chinadaily.com.cn

LOCAL SHOPPING EXPLORATIONS DELIVER THE GOODS GLOBALLY

Overseas visitors wowed by the variety, abundance and affordability of produce found in farmers' markets across China

By **ZHAO YIMENG**
zhaoyimeng@chinadaily.com.cn



Foreign residents shop for fresh vegetables at a market in Beijing's Chaoyang district on Wednesday. WEI XIAOHAO / CHINA DAILY

American-born content creator Adrianna Leigh Rommeswinkel could hardly contain her excitement.

"I've never seen this many onions in one place," she said in fluent Chinese while filming a video at a wholesale market in Dongguan, Guangdong province.

Around her were bags of various vegetables, including eggplants, fennel and asparagus. Blueberries sold for 6 yuan ($0.88) a box, and strawberries were priced at 10 yuan for two packs. The vegetables and fruits were so fresh that shoppers could still smell the soil on some of them.

"This is what real value for money looks like," said Rommeswinkel, known online as Addy. "You don't know how much these would cost in the United States!"

Her video, one of a growing number posted by foreign visitors and expatriates, has become part of a social media trend — tourists flocking to neighborhood farmers' markets.

Across platforms such as Xiaohongshu, or RedNote, TikTok and YouTube, foreign influencers are documenting encounters with unfamiliar vegetables, live seafood, inexpensive fruit and vendors willing to clean, cut and prepare purchases on the spot.

Markets selling leafy greens, ginger, fish and seasonal fruit are a routine part of daily life for Chinese residents. Yet, videos featuring foreigners marveling at white strawberries, dozens of vegetable varieties or freshly harvested produce regularly attract thousands of comments and shares.

In Tianjin, American social media influencer Evan Kail recently posted a video showing himself shopping for ingredients at a local market. "As a foreigner, even if you don't speak any Mandarin, it's super easy to come here and get around," he said to his followers.

Kail spent about 50 yuan buying green onions, tomatoes, bananas and a jar of chili bean paste for a home-cooked meal, which he estimated would cost roughly 280 yuan in the US. He was particularly impressed that vendors offered to slice vegetables and prepare ingredients according to customers' needs.

A Danish couple touring a farmers' market in China expressed similar amazement in a video posted online, "So many beautiful food items," one of them said while examining rows of vegetables. "There are so many vegetables we've never seen in Denmark."

Around the world, abundant and affordable fresh produce is far from guaranteed.

Across Northern Europe, long winters and short growing seasons mean consumers rely heavily on imported fresh fruit and vegetables during much of the year.

In South Korea, napa cabbage — a staple ingredient in kimchi — periodically experiences sharp price hikes when extreme weather damages harvests, according to media outlet Korea JoongAng Daily.

China, meanwhile, produced more than 800 million metric tons of vegetables and nearly 360 million tons of fruit in 2025, placing it among the world's largest producers.

Per capita consumption of vegetables and edible fungi rose from 96.9 kilograms in 2014 to 108.6 kg in 2024, according to data from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

Today, supermarkets and traditional markets offer strawberries in winter, tropical fruit in inland cities and vegetables sourced from distant provinces thousands of kilometers away.

Much of the progress can be attributed to the Vegetable Basket program, launched in 1988 to strengthen food supply systems and ensure stable access to essential agricultural products.

Over the decades, authorities have built production bases that support the movement of vegetables from southern regions to northern cities and from western growing areas to eastern consumption centers. The expansion of greenhouse farming has further reduced seasonal constraints.

At the same time, investments in transportation and cold-chain logistics have transformed distribution networks. Produce harvested in one province can now reach consumers in another within a matter of hours.

China currently supplies approximately 1.92 million tons of vegetables and 230,000 tons of meat each day to meet consumer needs, according to the ministry. As food security concerns shift from quantity to quality, policymakers are increasingly focused on eating better rather than simply eating enough.

Earlier this year, the No 1 Central Document, China's annual rural policy blueprint, called for improving the quality and efficiency of the country's vegetable basket industries. China will focus on stronger agricultural technology, improved crop varieties, better logistics and more efficient links between farmers and markets, it said.

Experience: Openness a powerful engine of growth

From page 1

For developing countries, the message is clear: Successful reform is often less about finding the perfect design than about creating institutions and mechanisms capable of learning and adaptation.

Second, markets and governments are not rivals. For decades, development debates were framed as a choice between state-led and market-led growth. China's experience suggests that this is often a false dichotomy.

Markets provide incentives, competition, entrepreneurship and efficiency. At the same time, the government plays an important role in maintaining macroeconomic stability, investing in infrastructure and education, and supporting long-term development objectives. Sustainable development requires capable markets operating within an effective policy and institutional framework.

Third, openness is a powerful engine of growth. China's integration into the global economy accelerated technology transfer, attracted investment, expanded exports and exposed domestic companies to international competition. Participation in global markets has transformed China from a largely closed economy into a manufacturing and technological powerhouse. This shows that national development and participation in the global economy can be mutually reinforcing rather than contradictory.

This is particularly important today. Rising geopolitical tensions and growing protectionist pressures have led many countries to reassess economic integration. While legitimate national security concerns cannot be ignored, history suggests that openness generally leads to faster growth, higher productivity and greater innovation.

Fourth, economic miracles rarely occur without sustained investment in infrastructure, education and human capital. China's modernization was supported by massive improvements in transportation, communications, energy systems and public services. Equally important was the steady expansion of educational opportunities and scientific capacity. China now produces more than 5 million science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) graduates annually, providing a strong foundation for continued technological innovation, industrial upgrading and future productivity growth.

China's growing strengths in advanced manufacturing, renewable energy, digital technologies and artificial intelligence reflect investments made over many years. For policymakers elsewhere, the implication is clear: Development requires long-term vision and persistent effort.

Economic development is never a finished project. Countries that succeed are not those that discover a permanent formula for growth.

To achieve successful development, solving real problems, learning from experience, maintaining the flexibility to adapt as circumstances change and ultimately improving people's lives are crucial. In an increasingly uncertain world, that may be by far the most relevant experience today.

The author is an advisory professor at Shanghai International Studies University and a former secretary of the International Monetary Fund. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:57 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:57 PM

CHINA

Foreign diplomats visit province to learn lessons of transformation to global tech, innovation hub

By ZHOU JIN
zhoujin@chinadaily.com.cn



Foreign envoys to China visit the headquarters of Mingyang Smart Energy Group in Zhongshan, Guangdong province, to learn about the development of sustainable energy solutions. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Guangdong's rise impresses, inspires ambassadors

Jaime FlorCruz arrived in China in 1971 as a young Philippine student to undertake a three-week journey across the country.

Shenzhen in South China's Guangdong province was one of the stops on his travels. At that time, the city was little more than a fishing village. Within a few decades, however, he has seen Shenzhen develop into a global center for innovation, advanced manufacturing, technology, finance, and entrepreneurship.

During his visit in June, FlorCruz, now Philippine ambassador to China, reflected on the extraordinary transformation of the city into a leading global technology and innovation hub.

"Today, it is not only a symbol of China's reform and opening-up, but also a demonstration of what vision, experimentation and long-term commitment can achieve," he said.

FlorCruz, a former journalist, said his introduction to China via Guangdong was the start of a lifelong journey learning about, reporting on, and engaging with the country.

He was one of 60 diplomats from 37 countries who visited Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Zhongshan and Zhuhai in Guangdong last month.

The visit allowed them to witness the province's innovation ecosystem through technology giants, advanced manufacturing companies, renewable energy enterprises, rural vitalization and the engineering marvel of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge.

For many of the diplomats, Guangdong is more than China's largest provincial economy. During the five-day visit to the four cities, they also witnessed what they called a clear vision for the future that combines technological innovation, sustainable development, cultural heritage, and international cooperation.

Experimental experience

FlorCruz believes that Shenzhen's rise reflects a key aspect of China's development model: experimentation before expansion.

China usually launches pilot programs, then scales up the process, he said. "It experiments, adjusts, and if the model works, it is replicated elsewhere," he said.

What began as a bold experiment in Shenzhen's Special Economic Zone eventually expanded to other parts of the country, including Pudong New Area in Shanghai, the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, Xiong'an New Area and the Hainan Free Trade Port, he noted.

Shenzhen is also a good example of how a city can progress if there is strong leadership at the top, united support among the residents, and collaboration between the government and the public sector.

Mongolian Ambassador to China Nyamaa Enkhbold said the trip highlighted China's success in winning public understanding and participation in the reform process.

He was impressed by the government's ability to help people embrace new ideas and become active participants in development.

"The most difficult thing is to change people's mentality," he said. "If you think something is too difficult and that you cannot do it, then you cannot do anything. But when you see other examples and learn from them, you start to think: if China can do it, why can't we?"

The ambassador, who first visited China in 1991, said that the country's progress over the past four decades has been extraordinary. "China was a completely different place at that time," he said. "In almost 40 years, it has developed beyond recognition."

Visiting Guangdong, the cradle of China's reform and opening-up, offered Enkhbold important insights into Mongolia's own transformation as it refines its development agenda.

Mongolia recently adjusted its five-year development plan and is paying close attention to China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), the ambassador said. Given the close economic ties between the two neighbors, policy coordination is of strategic importance, he added.

"At the moment, around 80 to 90 percent of Mongolian foreign trade and foreign investment is linked to China," Enkhbold said. "It is vitally important for us to align our policies and coordinate with the goals of our two countries."

Kenyan Ambassador to China Willy Bett said Shenzhen's experience in establishing itself as a special economic zone provides lessons his country can draw on.

He said Kenya now operates a number of special economic zones and is learning how to manage them effectively — from developing infrastructure to establishing the regulations and policies necessary for their operation.

Bett pointed out that China's special economic zones were established earlier under specific laws, which shaped policies, infrastructure layout, and legal frameworks.

"These are the experiences we are now picking up from Shenzhen to help our special economic zones work better for investors," he said.

Glimpse into the future

In addition to learning about experimental development in Shenzhen, the foreign envoys saw flying taxis, and robots playing the piano and brewing coffee. They also observed the fully intelligent manufacturing process for new energy vehicles and learned about the province's clean energy solutions.

Austrian Ambassador to China Wolf Dietrich Heim said one of the most memorable moments was seeing electric vertical takeoff-and-landing aircraft up close. "It was quite impressive to see in real life," he said, noting that some companies have already received certification for urban operations.







Left: Envoys visit the Museum of Dr. Sun Yat-sen in Zhongshan. **Top right:** Diplomats visit the Blue Dolphin Island viewing platform of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge. **Above right:** The Ambassador of Ecuador Maria Soledad Cordova Montero tries an electric flying car during the trip to Guangzhou Automobile Group Co. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

> "Today, it is not only a symbol of China's reform and opening-up, but also a demonstration of what vision, experimentation and long-term commitment can achieve."
>
> **Jaime FlorCruz,** Philippine ambassador to China

He also showed keen interest during his visit to Guangzhou Automobile Group Co. "China is now very successfully producing electric vehicles that are being manufactured in Austria, and from there are sold in many European countries," he said. Austria and China have a lot of successful cooperation in the mobility sector, and in energy and green transformation, the ambassador added.

At the headquarters of Mingyang Smart Energy Group, a wind turbine manufacturer and clean-energy solutions provider based in Zhongshan, representatives and foreign diplomats held talks on cooperation and other business matters.

Last year, the company signed a strategic cooperation agreement with Sindh province of Pakistan, with Khalil Hashmi, the country's ambassador to China, signing the agreement in person. "And now I am here at the headquarters of this great company," Hashmi said, adding that Pakistan is restructuring its energy mix by adding solar, wind, hydro and nuclear power.

The country is negotiating with Chinese enterprises to launch more projects and advance bilateral energy cooperation, he said.

Kenya's ambassador Bett said the country is also advancing its transition to non-fossil energy sources, with over 90 percent of its energy currently derived from renewable resources.

"This is something we are advocating for, and seeing happen now," he said. The company's implementation of net-zero strategies provides important models for collaboration.

He added that, given Kenya's aspirations, partnerships with Chinese provinces and companies are essential to accelerating the adoption of clean energy solutions and driving sustainable industrial development.

Gateway to the world

Guangdong has long served as China's gateway to the world, and many ambassadors pointed to the province's combination of local dynamism and global connectivity.

Bett described the policy of opening-up as "a blessing to the whole world", saying that opening of China means the technologies produced domestically will be shared globally and Kenya will benefit from it.

Bett said China's growing number of imports and tariff-free treatment for many African exports could create opportunities for products such as Kenyan coffee and avocados to reach more Chinese consumers.

He highlighted the deepening ties between Kenya and Guangdong, particularly Guangzhou, which has become a major hub for Kenyan traders.

"Enhanced connectivity is playing a vital role in bringing our peoples and businesses closer together," he said, adding that direct flights between Guangzhou and the capital Nairobi have significantly strengthened links between Guangdong, Kenya, and the East African region.

"These connections are facilitating tourism, investment, business travel, and cargo movement, while opening new opportunities for cooperation between our respective enterprises and institutions," Bett added.

Looking ahead, Kenya hopes to further deepen cooperation with the province in trade, investment and tourism, he said.

As the province is an integral part of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, one of China's most economically dynamic city clusters, the ambassadors also expressed their interest in leveraging their visit to deepen bilateral and multilateral cooperation with the GBA.

FlorCruz from the Philippines said that the GBA represents the next evolution of China's development philosophy.

The region seeks to bring together Guangdong's manufacturing and innovation strength, Hong Kong's international financial and professional services, and Macao's strengths in tourism, as well as international exchanges, he said.

FlorCruz said the GBA's significance extends far beyond southern China. It is increasingly shaping economic activity and supply chains throughout Asia and beyond, he said, adding that business decisions made here increasingly affect economies across the region.

"Many of the industries driving growth here are precisely the sectors where the Philippines hopes to attract greater investment and cooperation. We welcome partnerships that create jobs, transfer knowledge, develop skills, strengthen industries, and help our economy become more competitive and innovative."

Last year, Turkiye's trade with Guangdong reached $7.8 billion, which accounts for about 15 percent of the country's total trade with China, according to Turkiye's Ambassador to China Selcuk Unal.

Unal said cooperation with the province involves machinery, equipment, food products and industrial goods.

Guangdong has become an important destination for Turkish investment, while Chinese companies from the province are increasingly investing in Turkiye, he said. "We are going to investigate more ways to increase collaboration between Turkish and Chinese companies," Unal said.

Shared opportunities

As diplomats looked beyond Guangdong's present achievements, many focused on what China's next stage of development could mean for the world.

China is implementing its 15th Five-Year Plan, which is guiding economic and social development through the second half of this decade.

Unal said that Turkiye is carefully studying the plan. He believes there will be more, and better, opportunities to coordinate joint efforts for a fairer trade basis.

Fiji's Ambassador to China Robert Lee said one of the most striking aspects of China's development is its commitment to long-term planning.

"China's development is a spectrum," he said. "Whatever stage of development a country is in, it can find a relative point on that spectrum that China has gone through."

During his Guangdong visit, Lee said he was impressed by the clarity of development goals and the determination to achieve them. "For small island countries, we need that kind of focus," he said. "China is showing what is possible."

China is also engaging with the world, and it is demonstrating that not just in words but through actions.

The Fijian ambassador said the country's 15th Five-Year Plan is expected to bring significant benefits not only to China but also to other countries as Chinese enterprises expand abroad. As Chinese companies invest overseas, they are increasingly expected to adhere to higher standards, particularly in environmental protection, governance, and inclusive development.

He emphasized that this includes ensuring local communities benefit from investment and that host economies share in the gains of development. "There is a strong commitment to win-win cooperation rather than a win for one side alone," the ambassador said.

Such priorities create important opportunities for cooperation and shared growth, he added.

Luis Oswaldo Lopez Alvarez, ambassador of El Salvador to China, said China's 15th Five-Year Plan presents significant opportunities for cooperation, particularly in emerging sectors such as clean energy and agricultural technology.

He noted that during the Guangdong visit, discussions and demonstrations on new energy development, including ocean-based energy applications, were especially interesting and offered potential areas for further exploration in Latin America.

The ambassador said the visit allowed him to better understand China's development journey and the hard work, discipline and commitment that have driven its transformation over the past decades.

He believes that in the future China will continue to make progress through its long-term planning and vision.

"We have a lot in common, and I see great opportunities for our countries to deepen cooperation and work more closely together for the benefit of our peoples," he said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:57 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:57 PM

WORLD

China ready to deepen ties with Colombia

Xi extends congratulations to Latin American nation's president-elect

By ZHOU JIN
zhoujin@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese President Xi Jinping has extended congratulations to Abelardo de la Espriella on his election as Colombian president, expressing willingness to deepen bilateral exchanges and cooperation in various areas.

In his congratulatory message sent on Monday, Xi noted that China and the South American nation are strategic partners.

$23.02 billion
the value of bilateral trade between China and Colombia in 2025, up 9.5 percent year-on-year, according to data from China Customs.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations 46 years ago, China-Colombia relations have withstood the test of the changing international landscape and maintained a sound momentum of development, he said.

Political mutual trust between the two countries has continued to deepen, the friendship between the two peoples is deeply rooted in their hearts, and high-quality Belt and Road cooperation has continued to achieve new progress, he added.

Xi said that he attaches great importance to the development of bilateral ties and stands ready to work with De la Espriella to advance the China-Colombia strategic partnership to a new level, so as to deliver greater benefits to the two countries and their peoples.

Also on Monday, Vice-President of China Han Zheng extended congratulations to Jose Manuel Restrepo Abondano, vice-president-elect of Colombia.

De la Espriella, 47, led the presidential runoff election on June 21.

Colombia's National Electoral Council on June 24 officially declared the right-wing candidate president-elect for the 2026-30 term.

The new president will take office on Aug 7.

As a nontraditional political figure, he advocates shaping national governance through an iron-fisted approach to security and drastic cuts in public spending, according to Xinhua.

Statistics show that China is Colombia's second-largest trading partner, while the South American nation is China's sixth-largest trading partner in Latin America.

According to data from China Customs, bilateral trade value reached $23.02 billion in 2025, up 9.5 percent year-on-year.

In May last year, the two countries signed a cooperation document on jointly building the Belt and Road Initiative.

On the rails



People look at the locomotive of an Etihad Rail train, the United Arab Emirates' first passenger train, on its inaugural journey at Mohammed bin Zayed City station in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday. The train, with several Chinese companies participating in its construction, will eventually connect four of the country's seven emirates, according to state news agency WAM. The Dubai station will open on Sept 30, while the main station in the neighboring emirate of Sharjah is set to be operational on March 30, 2027, according to the news agency. FADEL SENNA / AFP

Concrete actions needed to build stable Sino-US relations

By ZHAO JIA
zhaojia@chinadaily.com.cn

Foreign Minister Wang Yi has said that China and the United States should extend the cooperation list and create more positive agendas, while shortening the list of problems and managing various risks and hidden dangers, as the two countries work to build a constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability.

Wang made the remarks on Tuesday during a phone call with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

The Taiwan question has a bearing on the overall China-US relationship, Wang said, expressing the hope that the US side will handle Taiwan-related affairs with utmost caution.

In May, President Xi Jinping and US President Donald Trump reached a series of important common understandings in Beijing, including on building a constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability, which provides strategic guidance and sets the direction for bilateral ties over the next three years and beyond.

During the meeting, Xi said "constructive strategic stability" means positive stability with cooperation as the mainstay, healthy stability with competition within proper limits, constant stability with manageable differences and lasting stability with expectable peace.

In the phone conversation, Wang told Rubio that building such a relationship is what the two peoples desire and what the international community expects, and it also serves the fundamental interests of both countries.

The two sides should remove disruptions, overcome obstacles and move firmly in this right direction, he added.

Noting that building a constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability is not a slogan, Wang said that it requires concrete action, efforts in the same direction and sustained work over time.

He called on the two sides to uphold the spirit of equality, respect and mutual benefit, and translate the important common understandings reached by the two heads of state into specific policies and concrete measures.

Both sides agreed that the phone call between the two foreign ministers was positive and constructive, according to a press release by China's Foreign Ministry. They agreed to jointly implement the important common understandings reached by the two heads of state and continue to maintain communication in flexible ways.

President Trump made a three-day historic and landmark state visit to China in May, the first by a US president in almost nine years and his second visit to China as president following his November 2017 trip.

The two heads of state also reached important common understandings on keeping economic and trade ties stable, expanding practical cooperation in various fields, properly addressing each other's concerns, and enhancing communication and coordination on international and regional issues.

China-Eurasia Expo showcases advances in AI, robotics and drones

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Smart innovation took center stage at the ninth China-Eurasia Expo, bringing new highlights to the landmark Eurasian economic and trade gala.

For the first time, the expo set up a dedicated zone for new quality productive forces, spotlighting cutting-edge advances in artificial intelligence, the digital economy and low-altitude economy.

A rich array of smart products were showcased at the event, including laser-assisted robots that boost cotton planting efficiency, an intelligent aerospace system for cross-border ecological conservation, and intelligent robotic equipment.

Leveraging the expo's role as a national-level open platform, the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region is harnessing AI to streamline industrial, technological and trade linkages.

The expo acts as a cooperation hub that integrates domestic and overseas resources, distinctive industries and global markets, energizing Xinjiang's opening-up and unlocking broader market, investment and growth opportunities for global players in the AI sector.

The exhibition showcased Xinjiang's latest strides in data center development, smart agriculture and smart city construction across Urumqi, Karamay and other key regions. Endowed with abundant green power and energy resources, Xinjiang is reshaping the landscape of global computing capacity.

Nearly 40 enterprises from Karamay displayed more than 170 exhibits, covering oil and gas chemicals, digital computing power, new energy and advanced materials, smart agriculture, as well as cultural and creative industries.

Traditional oil and gas equipment and high-end fine chemical products underscored the city's solid energy industry foundation, while innovative offerings such as energy storage devices, industrial drones and intelligent management systems marked its new breakthroughs in digital and green industries under the national "East Data, West Computing" strategy.



Business representatives from the United Arab Emirates visit a science and technology stand at the ninth China-Eurasia Expo and discuss cooperation opportunities on June 26. SUN ZHENSONG / FOR CHINA DAILY





From left: A flying robot exhibited at the expo. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY A visitor tests an autonomous mining truck system. QIN MEIHUA / FOR CHINA DAILY

Hami, as a gateway city along the Silk Road Economic Belt, presented exhibits spanning modern coal chemical engineering, titanium-magnesium and superhard advanced materials, new energy equipment, hydrogen energy, computing power, the low-altitude economy and modern logistics.

It also serves as a hub for cross-regional data transmission, as a center of the national integrated computing power network and as a national pilot city for coordinated computing and power development. The city hosts cross-border fiber-optic exit hubs for China's three major telecom operators, boasting compound strength in energy, computing, telecommunications and logistics.

"We hoped, via the expo, to further promote Hami's resource strengths, making our computing resources better empower domestic development, and also expand outreach to the countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative, sharing China's wisdom and models to fuel growth across the region," said Li Chao, deputy head of an energy and computing integration institute in Hami.

> "We hoped, via the expo, to further promote Hami's resource strengths, making our computing resources better empower domestic development, and also expand outreach to the countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative..."
>
> **Li Chao,** deputy head of an energy and computing integration institute in Hami

Moving forward, Hami will build a pioneering computing power zone for the digital Silk Road and a national demonstration zone for coordinated computing and power development. Centered on cross-regional data cooperation, the city will press ahead with key projects including green power supply and industrial clustering.

Guided by China's "East Data, West Computing" strategy and bolstered by its unique geographical edges, Xinjiang is accelerating the construction of a national-level computing hub that is to serve the Eurasian continent.

The region has built four major computing clusters in Urumqi, the Changji Hui autonomous prefecture, Karamay and Hami, with intelligent computing capacity totaling nearly 30,000 petaflops.

Its continuously upgraded cross-border communication network consists of 28 optical cables connecting Central and West Asia, delivering a total bandwidth of 4,660 gigabits per second. The infrastructure lays a foundation for cross-border computing scheduling, digital technology sharing and digital service exports.

Another highlight of this year's expo was the inaugural independent exhibition zone for the low-altitude economy, where multiple top-level industrial drones were revealed. The showcase demonstrated China's robust new quality productive forces and deepened industrial and economic cooperation between China and Eurasian nations.

United Aircraft, a leading domestic industrial player, brought five flagship drone series to the expo, covering scenarios such as large-scale delivery, plateau emergency rescue, oil and power facility inspection, smart agricultural operations and medical supply delivery in remote areas.

The company presented a systematic low-altitude solution tailored to Eurasia's complex terrains, revealing its development layout rooted in Xinjiang, which radiates to Central Asia and expands globally.

The expo also catalyzed the implementation of a comprehensive low-altitude economic cooperation framework signed between United Aircraft and Xinjiang Airport Group.

The two sides will jointly build a full-coverage low-altitude operation network across Xinjiang, and set up equipment technology centers and comprehensive operation service platforms targeting the Central Asian market.

Taking Xinjiang's status as China's western gateway, the partnership will promote China's mature, replicable low-altitude industry development model across Eurasia.

In addition, two synthetic biology enterprises based in Wusu — Xinjiang Guanghe Green Energy Biotechnology and Cathay (Wusu) Biomaterial — showcased their industrial achievements and advancements in fostering new quality productive forces at the expo.

A subsidiary of the Beijing-based Guanghe Green Energy Biotechnology, Xinjiang Guanghe established its presence in Wusu in 2025, specializing in the research and industrial application of microbial proteins. Meanwhile, Cathay (Wusu) Biomaterial, a repeat participant at the China-Eurasia Expo, has secured new practical cooperation outcomes at each session.

ADVERTORIAL

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:57 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:57 PM

一城 CITY TALES 一街

Editor's note: *From a deteriorating residential block to a cultural hot spot, Wuhan's Lihuangpi Road offers a case study in preserving history while embracing contemporary city life.*

RESTORING URBAN MEMORY

Significant landmark and the street it sits on evolve into a vibrant tourism destination, showcasing its legacy while meeting modern demand, report **Yang Feiyue** and **Zhou Lihua** in Wuhan.

On a typical sunny afternoon, visitors can be seen sipping coffee beneath the red-brick arcades of a century-old Russian-style landmark distinguished by its domed tower, arched walkways and sprawling twin courtyards, browsing a tea exhibition tracing trade routes across Eurasia, or simply pausing for photographs.

Few would guess that just a few years ago, this landmark building on the historical Lihuangpi Road in Jiang'an district, Wuhan, Hubei province, was a crumbling residential block divided into hundreds of cramped rooms.

Known today as Bagong House (Banov's House), the complex has become one of the most recognizable stops on Wuhan's growing city-walk circuit. Yet its transformation is also emblematic of a broader story unfolding across Lihuangpi Road, a former concession-era street that has evolved into one of the city's most vibrant cultural destinations.

Stretching just 604 meters, Lihuangpi Road encapsulates more than a century of Wuhan's modern history.

As Hankou opened to international trade in the late 19th century (when it was Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) then in the country), British, French, German, Russian and Japanese communities established a presence in what is now central Wuhan, bringing banks, trading houses and Western-style architecture to the city.

The road was laid out in 1900 in what was then the Russian residential area, known as Ima Street before adopting its current name in 1946.

Today, the street functions as an open-air museum featuring 17 historical buildings ranging from former banks and trading companies to churches, hospitals and residences. The street is also home to several important revolutionary heritage sites, including the memorial hall of the former site of the August 7 Meeting of 1927, a pivotal moment in China's modern revolutionary history, and the former residence of Soong Ching Ling, a prominent Chinese political figure and social leader.

The challenge facing local authorities over the past three decades has been how to preserve this complex historical legacy while maintaining its relevance to contemporary urban life.

Yang Li, deputy director of the culture and tourism bureau of Wuhan's Jiang'an district, says the district's conservation philosophy has undergone several stages since Lihuangpi Road was first designated for protection in 1997.

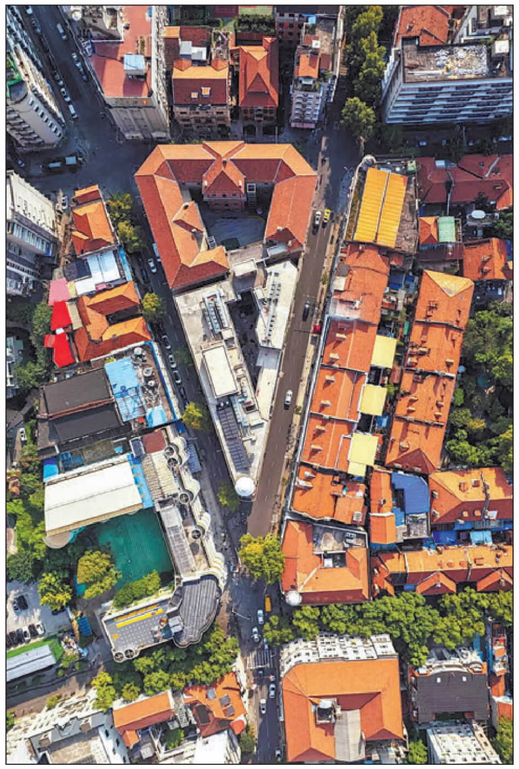
Initial efforts focused primarily on safeguarding individual historical sites, particularly revolutionary landmarks. Later, large-scale surveys expanded the inventory of protected buildings. More recently, conservation work has shifted toward district-wide renewal and quality improvement.

Following Lihuangpi Road's designation as a national-level tourism and leisure district in 2023, the emphasis moved further from preserving isolated structures to promoting integrated conservation and cultural tourism development.

"Our goal is not just to restore old buildings but to help them continue serving contemporary urban life," Yang says.

That philosophy is vividly embodied in Bagong House's restoration.

Built in 1910 by Russian tea merchants, Bagong House was originally a high-end apartment building, offering housing for bank employees and trading firms, making it an important witness to Hankou's modern urban life.



An aerial view of the Bagong House neighborhood. The whole building is constructed with red bricks, featuring a V-shaped floor plan with a triangular courtyard at its center. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Over time, however, the building lost its glory.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the property was taken into public ownership and repurposed as staff housing for bank employees. Over decades of residential use, residents added lofts, partitions and makeshift structures to meet growing housing demand, dramatically altering the building's internal layout.

By the time restoration planning began in 2018, the building had been subdivided into 437 rooms.

"The situation was quite severe," recalls Wang Xiang, the architect in charge of the Bagong House conservation and restoration project and director of the second design institute (ancient architecture research center) of the CITIC General Institute of Architectural Design and Research.

Original courtyards had become storage areas. Wooden structural elements had deteriorated. Walls had cracked. Doors and windows were missing. The red-brick facade was severely weathered.

Yet, beneath the layers of alteration, the building's original spatial logic and architectural character remained largely intact.

The restoration team did not rush into construction. Instead, they began with a thorough investigation.

They invited former residents to return and share their memories of the building through oral histories. They pored over archives and consulted with heritage experts. The goal was to reconstruct the building's original appearance as faithfully as possible.

"First, we had to understand what it originally looked like," Wang says.

The restoration followed four principles: preserving the original state of the cultural relic, recognizability, reversibility, and minimum intervention.

One of the most important decisions was to restore the building's original spatial logic.

Because Bagong House had been designed as a luxury apartment complex, the team determined that a boutique heritage hotel was the most compatible contemporary use, preserving the building's residential identity while giving it a new function.

Today, the building contains 45 guest rooms, most of them suites, reflecting the scale and layout of the original apartments.

Original wooden staircases, timber floors, decorative moldings, and window openings were preserved to the greatest extent possible.

One of the most challenging aspects of the restoration was conserving the red-brick facade.

The team inspected more than 560,000 bricks one by one, treating each according to its condition — some were patched, others replaced. Traditional techniques were revived to reproduce the original craftsmanship.

For architect Wang, the most successful transformation occurred in the building's courtyards. Two courtyards, once cluttered with storage, were reopened as shared public spaces. One now hosts cultural exhibitions and community events; the other has become an open garden surrounded by cafes and restaurants.

"They belong not only to hotel guests but also to local residents and visitors," Wang says.

Bagong House's cultural significance extends beyond its architecture. As an important heritage site along the historic tea road, the building now houses a permanent exhibition that tells the story of Hankou's role as a major tea trading center in modern China and the trade network that carried tea from China through Mongolia and Russia to Europe.

The integration of heritage interpretation, hospitality and public space reflects a wider strategy along Lihuangpi Road.

Historical buildings throughout the district have been adapted into museums, cultural venues, bookstores, cafes, and creative businesses while maintaining their historical character.

Meanwhile, revolutionary heritage sites have adopted new approaches to engage younger audiences.

At the memorial hall of the August 7 Meeting, visitors can participate in immersive theatrical experiences that combine historical storytelling with puzzle-solving activities. Digital technologies, including virtual-reality installations, are used to create more interactive experiences.

The results are increasingly visible.

According to Jiang'an district authorities, visitor numbers to the Lihuangpi Road area rose from approximately 11 million in 2024 to 15 million in 2025, an increase of more than 36 percent.

Much of that growth has been fueled by the rise of city walks, a trend that has encouraged younger travelers to explore historical neighborhoods on foot.

But local officials believe the district's popularity stems from more than social media exposure.

For Wang, lead architect of the restoration project, the site's popularity reflects years of efforts to reconnect the district's historical buildings with everyday life.

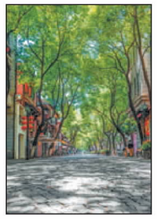
"What people see today is not the result of a single project," he says. "It comes from the gradual restoration of the entire historical area and the creation of a cultural environment that encourages people to engage with these buildings."

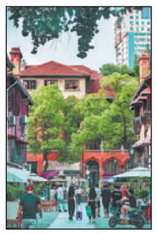
Contact the writers at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn



Above: Bagong House draws a steady stream of visitors and has become a key cultural tourism landmark on Lihuangpi Road. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY
Below: A hand-drawn illustration of Bagong House's facade. COURTESY OF WUHAN TOWNSCAPE ASSET MANAGEMENT GROUP LLC







Above: Bagong House is a valuable physical relic of a historic route that carried tea from China through Mongolia and Russia to Europe.
From right down: Two views of Lihuangpi Road streetscape.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.



On the road of entrepreneurial dreams

By YANG FEIYUE and **ZHOU LIHUA** in Wuhan

On a Friday evening in Wuhan, Hubei province, warm yellow lights begin to flicker on under the plane trees along Lihuangpi Road in Jiang'an district, lighting a stretch of market stalls.

The air is filled with the aroma of coffee. A street musician sends soft, rippling notes through the crowd. Visitors gather before the century-old Bagong House (Banov's House), creating the perfect scene for a photograph. A young couple crouches in front of a stall, carefully opening a bright yellow blind box. Inside lies a piece of turquoise sourced from Shiyan, in northwestern Hubei.

"It feels like you've dug it up yourself!" says Ma Tianyu, the 24-year-old vendor, smiling at her customers.

This is the Youth Market on Lihuangpi Road, a 604-meter-long stretch built in 1900 that was once part of the Russian residential area and is now a national-level tourism and leisure district. And the most vibrant scenery here is no longer just the 17 European-style buildings or the red-brick walls, but the dreams of a new generation of entrepreneurs.

Ma was nervous when she first set up her stall in September 2023. A junior at China University of Geosciences (Wuhan), she had tried cross-border livestreaming and run a campus photography team.

When her teacher suggested trying the newly launched Youth Market on Lihuangpi, she gave it a shot, with just half a stall.

That day, she sold crystals, rough stones and mineral specimens. From morning till dusk, there was barely a moment to sit.

"I went home with a hoarse throat," she recalls. When she counted the day's earnings — over 4,000 yuan ($588) — Ma was stunned.

"I'd tried many markets in Wuhan, but Lihuangpi Road felt different," she says.

"It's an ecosystem. The Soong Ching Ling Memorial Hall, Bagong House, the site of the August 7 Meeting of 1927, a pivotal moment in China's modern revolutionary history, are nearby. Many tourists come specifically to see this place," she explains.

The crowd, mostly young people in their 20s and 30s, is a perfect match for her products. "It felt like I'd left a world of children and entered a world of adults," Ma laughs.

In August 2024, with help from the local Youth League Committee, Ma and her partner, Han Yue, moved into a second-floor studio in the neighborhood. The window faces the iconic Bagong House.

"When I get tired, I stand up and look out. The street is bustling, and the weather is nice. It refreshes me, and then I go back to work."

The two young women sell mineral blind boxes, crystal bracelets and custom jewelry — most priced between 69 yuan and several hundred yuan. Their breakout product came from an unexpected source: a 10-year-old boy.

"We used to sell 'see-through' mineral boxes — transparent, everything visible. People would pick them up, look, and put them down," Ma says. One day, the boy stared at the box for a long time and said, "If it were a blind box, I might actually buy one."

When Ma asked why, he told her that blind boxes are exciting because it's like "digging it out yourself."

She and Han took his advice. Within two weeks, the "see-through" box became a bright yellow blind box, printed with the words, "A letter from the earth". On its first day, all the boxes sold out.

Now, since her first half-stall, Ma's products have expanded from mineral blind boxes to custom jewelry and crystal accessories. Her average daily transaction value has grown to hundreds or even thousands yuan.

Ma is one of hundreds of young entrepreneurs who have found success in the Youth Market on this historical street.

Officially launched in September 2023, the market now runs every Friday through Sunday, hosting about 100 stalls along a 100-meter stretch of Lihuangpi Road. By late 2025, it had held 200 sessions involving more than 500 students from over 20 colleges.

"The market isn't just a place to sell," says Yang Peidi, who oversees the market.

"It's a launchpad. Many of these vendors have their studios right upstairs — it's a 'workshop upstairs, market downstairs' model. We keep entry costs low and control the mix of products: no more than two woodcarvers at a time, for example, to avoid unhealthy competition," he adds.

For promising vendors, further support is available at the Chuangjian Jiang'an youth innovation center, located about 800 meters from Lihuangpi Road. The center offers a year of rent-free workspace, free intellectual property legal advice, and low-interest loans. Since 2025, 50.85 million yuan in such loans have supported 210 small businesses.

Zhang Jinfeng, 33, is one of those who found her footing here.

She has been making leather goods for 11 years since she moved from southwestern Sichuan to Wuhan in 2015 as a fresh graduate, after stumbling upon a video of an overseas craftsman.

"I thought, 'If he can do it, so can I'," she recalls. She then bought tools and leather and taught herself.

For the first three years, she mostly took orders through her social media feed. But growth was slow. She began trying out markets across the city. In 2022, she joined the Youth Market (on trial then) on Lihuangpi Road for the first time. It poured that day. As she scrambled to cover her leather goods — rain is leather's enemy — a customer told her not to worry and she would wait in a nearby coffee shop.

When the rain stopped, the customer returned and bought a bag.

That moment stayed with Zhang, as in most markets she had tried, customers came and went in a rush.

"There's a rhythm to commercial markets — fast in, fast out. No one has time to listen to your story," she says. "But Lihuangpi Road is different. People slow down."

That day, Zhang decided that these were the customers she wanted to build her business around.

"My leatherwork takes hours, sometimes days, to complete. It is a slow business, and I have found many customers here appreciate that," she says.

In April 2025, she moved her studio from Huangpi, a suburban district of Wuhan, to a second-floor space right above her Lihuangpi Road market stall.

Now, she sells at a ground-floor stall and cuts, stitches, and assembles leather in a second-floor studio directly above it.

"My bags cost several thousand yuan," she explains. "If a customer sees them for the first time at a stall, they might hesitate. The stall could be gone next week. But if I bring them upstairs to see my workspace, choose the leather, and watch me work, I build trust."

The model has paid off. More than 60 percent of her repeat customers come from market encounters. "If someone thinks of a leather item they can't find anywhere else, they probably think of me."

In her spare time, Zhang stands by her second-floor window, looking down at the street below. The tall plane trees forming a green tunnel, the sunlight falling on red-brick walls, and the outdoor cafe tables have a way of soothing one's mind, she says.

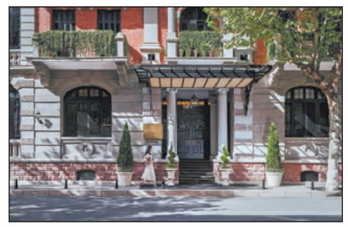
"This is a street that makes you, almost without realizing it, slow down," Zhang says. "And when you look around, everyone is smiling."

Ma Tianyu also likes to glance out the window when work gets tiring. "The street is lively, the weather is good, and the old building across the way is beautiful to look at," she says.

"Lihuangpi Road is where my dream started, and it will be where my dream continues."



Above: Shaded by plane trees, visitors stroll at a leisurely pace along Lihuangpi Road. **Below:** After restoration, the century-old Bagong House has been transformed into a boutique hotel that reflects the city's historical and cultural heritage. **Bottom:** A three-story Western-style building that houses the memorial hall of the former site of the Communist Party of China's Central Committee in Wuhan. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY





Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:57 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:57 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Anniversary address offers Party guidance to build China into a modern socialist nation

The 105th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China has offered the opportunity for the Party's leadership to articulate how it views the Party's future trajectory at a time when profound changes are transforming both the domestic and international landscape.

Addressing a gathering marking the occasion, Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, called on Party members to remain steadfast in their convictions and work tirelessly to fulfill the Party's missions in the new era and on the new journey.

Hailing the 105-year history of the Party as the "most magnificent epic" of the Chinese nation, he urged the Party to press ahead to build China into a modern socialist country on schedule.

His address reaffirmed the Party's consistent emphasis on political continuity and long-term planning in pursuit of the country's high-quality development objectives.

Underscoring continuity as an important source of policy stability, he stressed that "time stops for no one", and that the whole Party must adhere to its basic theory, basic line and basic policy to "remain undaunted by passing clouds and stay on course through wind and waves".

"It is imperative that all of us in the Party never forget our original aspiration and founding mission, that we always stay modest, prudent, and hard-working, and that we have the courage and ability to carry on our fight," Xi said.

Equally prominent was the emphasis he put on the people as the driving force behind national development.

China's modernization is linked not only to economic growth but also to improving public well-being, expanding opportunities and strengthening grassroots governance.

Xi's address echoed this perspective by underscoring the importance of relying closely on the people to create new historical feats. Xi urged Party members to "further reinvigorate the enterprising spirit for getting things done".

The sustainable development of China ultimately depends on broad public participation and should bring about tangible improvements in people's livelihoods.

Global economic headwinds, geopolitical tensions and accelerating technological competition have all contributed to a more challenging international landscape. Against this backdrop, Xi called on the whole Party to actively respond to risks and challenges on the path ahead.

"China's development is now in a period where strategic opportunities coexist with risks and challenges, and where uncertain and unpredictable factors are on the rise. We must always be prepared to withstand major tests of high winds and raging waves, and even violent storms," Xi warned.

That entails resilience and preparedness as enduring priorities rather than temporary responses to specific events. So greater emphasis should be placed on coordinating development with security and strengthening governance capacity across multiple sectors.

The world has entered a new period of turbulence and transformation, with humanity once again standing at a crossroads of choice. Yet China's vision for international engagement remains constant.

"We must continuously promote the building of a community with a shared future for humanity," Xi said.

China will continue promoting multilateral cooperation and dialogue as the means to find solutions to shared global challenges. Xi's address reinforced that position by linking China's domestic modernization with its broader engagement in international governance.

The importance attached to Party self-governance also featured prominently throughout Xi's remarks. Continuous efforts to strengthen discipline, improve governance effectiveness and maintain organizational vitality have become characteristics of Party-building endeavors.

He stressed advancing full and rigorous Party self-governance with sustained efforts to win "the tough, protracted and all-out battle against corruption".

The CPC has grown from a small group of just over 50 members when it was founded in 1921 to be the world's largest governing party with tremendous global influence. According to the latest census, the CPC now has nearly 101.29 million members and over 5.43 million primary-level Party organizations.

At the gathering, Xi conferred the July 1 Medal, the Party's highest honor, on model CPC members, whose work spans scientific innovation, rural vitalization, public services and community development. The recognition of their achievements demonstrated how dedication, professionalism and service at the grassroots level are regarded as essential contributions to Party building and national development.

Viewed together, the Wednesday gathering presents a coherent picture of China's current development priorities. Mutually reinforcing political continuity, people-centered development, resilience in the face of uncertainty, international cooperation and strengthened Party governance will help the country advance on the next stage of its modernization journey.

Upholding sovereignty defends rule of law

In the South China Sea, the rule of law is the bedrock of peace and stability. On Tuesday, the People's Liberation Army Southern Theater Command and the China Coast Guard conducted patrol operations in the waters surrounding China's Huangyan Island.

And Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian confirmed last month that Chinese researchers had conducted a comprehensive survey for a deeper understanding of the island's ecosystem.

Turning a blind eye to the legitimacy of these moves, the Philippines has repeatedly attempted to discredit them through misleading narratives.

Since June, the PLA Southern Theater Command has increased patrols in these territorial seas as a legal and necessary countermeasure against repeated violations and provocative acts by the Philippines and some external forces. China is simply exercising its right to self-preservation and legal administration over its own land and waters.

The Chinese Ministry of Natural Resources released the "Assessment Report on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea — Achievements, Positioning, and Challenges" on Tuesday. The report lays bare the hypocrisy underlying the so-called "rules-based order" pretext that the Philippines and its allies invoke to encroach upon China's core interests in the South China Sea.

The report was released against the backdrop of the continued abuse of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea by the Philippines to promote its illegal "South China Sea arbitration case".

Let's be clear: The 2016 arbitration was a political farce disguised as a "legal proceeding". China's position of nonacceptance and nonparticipation was a defense of the integrity of UNCLOS itself.

As the report elaborates, the Philippines' core strategy relies on legal manipulation. It packaged a dispute over "territorial sovereignty" — which UNCLOS explicitly has no jurisdiction over — as a dispute over maritime rights. By ruling on maritime rights, the illegal tribunal implicitly ruled on sovereignty, overstepping its mandate.

This is a "procedural trick", a weaponization of international law that undermines the credibility of UNCLOS and threatens to turn the oceans into a theater of confrontation.

Since joining UNCLOS nearly 30 years ago, China has been one of the most consistent and faithful practitioners of the Convention. It has walked the walk by fully implementing the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea and steadfastly advancing the consultations on the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea.

While the Philippines plays tricks with the law, China encourages dialogue. While the United States distorts "freedom of navigation" to justify its gunboat diplomacy, China promotes the Global Security Initiative focused on shared security.

The report rightly criticizes those who preach a "rules-based international order" while blatantly practicing double standards. Certain countries use UNCLOS like a menu — picking and choosing provisions that suit their "freedom of navigation" provocations while ignoring rules that protect coastal state sovereignty. They misuse terms such as "international waters" to obfuscate the legal concept of an Exclusive Economic Zone, and they encourage the Philippines to act as a proxy in a destabilizing game.

It is time for all parties to stop indulging in such tricks and return to the negotiating table to accelerate the finalizing of the COC in the South China Sea. As the common home of regional countries, the South China Sea should become a sea of peace, friendship and cooperation.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

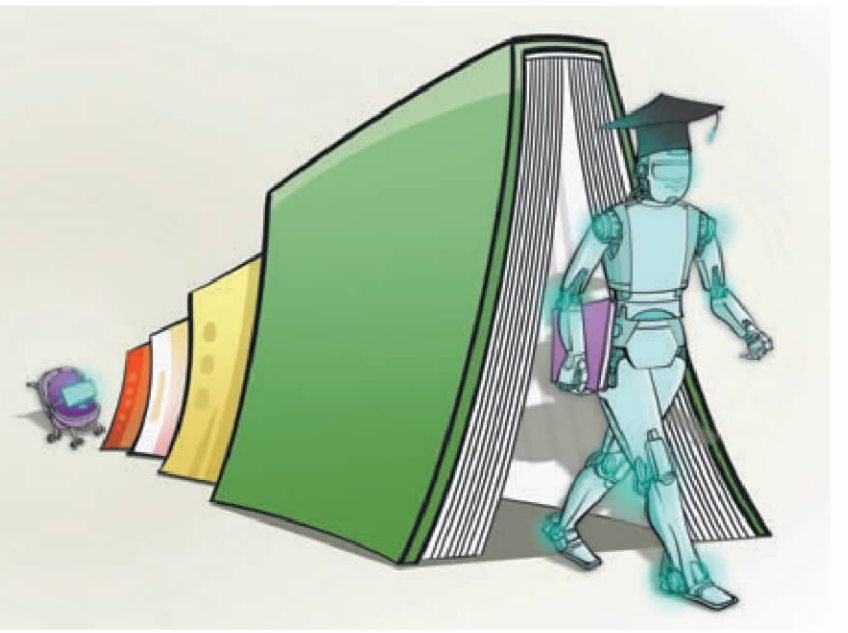
China Daily UK
90 Cannon St, London EC4N 6HA, UK
+44 (0) 207 398 8270
editor@chinadailyuk.com

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Cao Yi



Opinion Line

Nordic countries show EU there is an alternative path

When some in Europe talk about China these days, the conversation often oscillates between "anxiety" and "arithmetic". The "anxiety" is geopolitical; the "arithmetic" concerns "trade imbalances". Yet the more interesting story may lie in one part of Europe that has historically displayed pragmatism over panic: the Nordic region.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi's weeklong visit to Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Norway starting on Thursday is a reminder that some of Europe's earliest diplomatic ties with the People's Republic of China were built less on ideology than on realism and a shared belief that different countries benefit from an open international order.

In recent years, China has deepened cooperation with the Nordic countries in technology, trade, investment, the green transition and people-to-people exchanges, and both sides have repeatedly found common ground on multilateralism, free trade and climate governance.

Wang's trip comes after the inaugural meeting of the China-European Union trade and investment consultation mechanism. It is important for Beijing to engage those European voices that still believe trade disputes should be managed through negotiation rather than through an escalating cycle of restrictions.

China is Denmark's largest trading partner in Asia and its second-largest overseas investor. The bilateral trade in goods reached $18 billion in 2025. Denmark exports pharmaceuticals, agricultural products, precision instruments and energy equipment; China exports machinery, textiles and consumer goods. Around 500 Danish companies — from shipping and pharmaceuticals to wind power and biotechnology — operate in China.

China is Sweden's largest trading partner in Asia, while Sweden is China's largest trading partner in the Nordic region. Bilateral trade reached $19.37 billion in 2025. Swedish companies in China span telecommunications, home appliances, pharmaceuticals and retail. Chinese investment in Sweden has also become substantial.

Finland's partnership with China has increasingly focused on future-oriented cooperation. Trade remains broadly balanced, with China importing significant volumes of Finnish goods and technology while exporting consumer and industrial products. More importantly, the relationship has been reinforced by logistics connectivity, including multiple China-Europe freight rail links connecting Chinese cities with Helsinki and beyond.

China is Norway's largest trading partner in Asia, and the bilateral goods trade exceeded $11.4 billion in 2025. The two countries have developed long-standing cooperation on environmental governance, culminating in a joint statement on establishing a green transition dialogue during the Norwegian prime minister's 2024 visit to China. Few areas are more strategically important for Europe than the race to decarbonize industry, shipping and energy systems.

A fashionable narrative in Brussels is that the EU's economic relationship with China is defined primarily by "trade imbalances". The Nordic data, however, suggest a more nuanced picture: trade that is relatively balanced, investment that flows both ways and cooperation that generates mutual gains.

The deeper question is whether the EU wants to reduce risk or reduce opportunity. China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) prioritizes advanced manufacturing, green technologies, digital infrastructure and domestic consumption. For European companies with competitive strengths in pharmaceuticals, clean energy, industrial equipment, logistics and high-end services, this represents what some economies have come to recognize as the advent of "China Opportunity 2.0".

To reject that opportunity wholesale would be an odd form of economic self-denial for a continent struggling with slow growth, aging populations and competitiveness concerns.

None of this means the EU should ignore differences with China. The Nordic countries have various disagreements with Beijing, but these have not become a veto on cooperation. Mature diplomacy consists precisely in expanding areas of common interest while managing areas of disagreement.

That may be the real significance of Wang's Nordic itinerary. The numbers from Copenhagen, Stockholm, Helsinki and Oslo suggest that engagement with Beijing has produced something more complicated than dependence: it has produced mutually beneficial engagement. And in a fragmenting world, that remains an asset worth preserving.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Manufacturing growth momentum continues

Editor's note: *China's official purchasing managers' index for the manufacturing sector rose to 50.3 in June, up 0.3 points month-on-month, data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed on Tuesday. Xinhua News Agency spoke to Huo Lihui, an NBS statistician, and Wen Tao and Wu Wei, both analysts at the China Logistics Information Center, to interpret the data. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

The primary driver of this growth is domestic demand. At the same time, external demand showed signs of recovery, with new export orders index rebounding to 50.1 in June, marking a return to expansion territory.

Supported by demand, the manufacturing sector maintained steady growth in output. On a quarterly basis, the production index stood at 51.4 in June, higher than both the first-quarter average and the level recorded a year earlier.

Sales also remained relatively smooth in June. The finished goods inventory index fell 1.6 points from the previous month to 47.7, suggesting that inventories were being cleared at a faster pace.

While stronger production activity boosted purchases of raw materials, the growth in prices of manufacturing raw material slowed down significantly in June, largely due to the decline in international prices of major commodities such as crude oil and industrial metals.

The data also point to a clear shift toward new growth drivers in the manufacturing sector, with consistent improvements in the industrial structure. This positive trend has strengthened business sentiment. The manufacturing business activity expectation index rose to 54.3 in June, up 0.4 points from the previous month, reflecting growing confidence among manufacturers.

The nonmanufacturing business activity index also improved in June, rising 0.1 point from the previous month to 50.2. As more reserve projects move into the construction phase, the demand related to infrastructure development is expected to rise further. More specifically, the construction business activity index increased by 0.2 points from the previous month, while the sector's business activity expectation index came in at 51.1, indicating that expansion is expected to continue.

The improvement in manufacturing activity is also spreading to the distribution sector. In June, the wholesale business activity index climbed above 52, up by more than 4 points from both the previous month and the same period last year. Meanwhile, the new orders index also rose above 50, increasing by more than 5 points from both a month earlier and a year earlier.

As policies aimed at stabilizing growth and expanding domestic demand gain further traction, latent demand in both investment and consumption is expected to translate more quickly into actual demand, reinforcing the foundations for steady and sustained economic growth.

One issue that warrants attention is that the new orders index has fluctuated more sharply than the production index this year, mainly because exports remain susceptible to changes in the international environment. Given persistent geopolitical uncertainties, the sustainability of the recovery in market demand will require close monitoring.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:57 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:57 PM

VIEWS

China and the World Roundtable | Wisdom of Governance for Shared Growth

Editor's Note: *The 2026 Think Tank Forum on National Governance in Developing Countries was held in Beijing on June 26 under the theme "Mission and Contributions of Political Parties". The forum was co-hosted by the Party School of the CPC Central Committee (National Academy of Governance), Institute of Party History and Literature of the CPC Central Committee, China International Communications Group and China Daily. Below are excerpts from speeches by four participants, as reported by China Daily's Li Wei.*

Chinese governance stays true to its mission

BRI anchors global initiatives implementation road map



José Luis Centella is chairman of the Communist Party of Spain.

The Belt and Road Initiative is a foundational framework that provides a practical platform and institutional support for implementing the four major global initiatives proposed by President Xi Jinping: the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, the Global Civilization Initiative, and the Global Governance Initiative.

The BRI framework translates these initiatives from vision into action by providing the mechanisms and momentum for implementation. Together, the BRI and the four global initiatives form a comprehensive road map for building a global community with a shared future for humanity.

The Global Development Initiative seeks to accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through pragmatic cooperation, thus narrowing development gaps and strengthening capacity building. The BRI provides the material foundation for this vision through infrastructure connectivity, financial integration and digital cooperation.

The Global Security Initiative advocates dialogue and consultation, mutually beneficial cooperation, and rejects bloc confrontation and zero-sum rivalry.

By fostering positive economic interdependence, enhancing regional connectivity and promoting inclusive development, the BRI serves as both a stabilizer and a binding force.

The Global Civilization Initiative calls for equality among civilizations, respect for cultural diversity, and deeper exchanges and mutual learning. Through training programs, academic exchanges, think tank cooperation and people-to-people interactions, the BRI transforms these principles into tangible practice.

Finally, the Global Governance Initiative envisions a more just, equitable, representative and development-oriented system of global governance. The BRI creates the practical space to advance this vision by establishing new platforms for multilateral cooperation, promoting cooperation without any political conditions, and amplifying the voice of the Global South.

Against this backdrop, the historical mission of political parties is to recognize that governance modernization is not merely a technical undertaking.

It is equally a matter of vision, collective leadership and the capacity to build broad social consensus.

Progressive political parties across both the Global North and the Global South face three common tasks: to chart development paths suited to their national conditions; to build modern, efficient and transparent systems of governance; and to make full use of the BRI and the four global initiatives to advance their modernization.



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

In an increasingly uncertain world, conflicts can be resolved only through dialogue and negotiation.

Working in concert, the BRI and the four global initiatives point the way toward a more inclusive, balanced and development-oriented model of global governance.

CPC governance illuminating for Latin America



Héctor Villagrán Cepeda is a professor at the Beijing Language and Culture University.

China and Latin America share profound historical affinities.

The Communist Party of China, through a century of evolution, has built a comprehensive and systematic organizational governance system that underpins long-term national stability and sustainable development. This experience is not a rigid model to copy mechanically, but a set of practical, actionable lessons worthy of Latin American parties' localized reference.

A chronic problem for Latin American party politics is the four- or five-year electoral cycle that dominates all policy logic.

The CPC's core organizational strength lies in its capacity to formulate long-term national development strategies in phases and maintain consistent implementation across successive leadership teams.

For Latin American parties, this means constructing internal institutional mechanisms to lock in long-term national development frameworks, decoupling core national strategies from partisan turnover, and establishing permanent internal research bodies to conduct forward-looking studies on industrialization, rural revitalization, and regional integration so that social progress does not stall with changes in the power structure.

Latin America suffers from party fragmentation and weak grassroots engagement. Most political parties rely heavily on elite networks, media campaigns and celebrity candidates, while maintaining only a limited presence in rural, marginalized and indigenous communities, as well as labor unions.

The CPC's distinctive organizational strength lies in its extensive grassroots network, with party branches embedded in villages, communities, factories, schools, enterprises and social organizations, creating direct links with people across society.

These branches serve as permanent platforms for gathering public concerns, mediating conflicts, delivering public services and mobilizing participation.

For Latin American parties, the lesson is to move beyond election-driven mobilization by establishing a lasting grassroots presence, strengthening dialogue with local communities, and transforming party organizations into year-round public service providers rather than campaign machines.

There exists no universal, one-size-fits-all party governance model. The CPC's organizational system evolved from China's unique historical, cultural, and national conditions. Instead of mechanically copying it, Latin American parties should adapt the referenced experiences to their own regional realities, indigenous cultures, institutional frameworks, and social structures.

Sinology, civilization and the mission of governance



Duan Peng is the president of Beijing Language and Culture University.

The CPC has led the Chinese people toward modernization by giving an ancient civilization a modern political form. Whole-process people's democracy, common prosperity, and high-quality development are not borrowed doctrines.

They are contemporary expressions of a civilization that has continually renewed itself, translating China's enduring political tradition into modern governance.

Developing countries face common challenges: reducing poverty, sustaining growth, safeguarding security, preserving cultural identity, and building independent narratives. The deeper question is how to modernize without being defined by external discourses, drawing instead on their own civilizational heritage.

A mission gives governance its civilizational direction. Its success, however, depends on whether political parties can forge a consensus on good governance while respecting their differences. Such consensus does not require uniformity.

It grows from a genuine understanding of one another's civilizational logic. Bridging that gap demands more than linguistic translation — it requires people who can interpret one civilization through the lens of another.

These individuals need not copy China's experience, but adapt governance principles proven in practice to local realities and turn them into institutions that suit their societies.

For too long, political parties across the developing world have been spoken for rather than heard.

The answer is not louder messaging, but a shift from political advocacy to the exchange of governance knowledge.

Sinologists are natural interpreters, making Chinese governance intelligible across cultures while enabling other countries to explain their own development paths in concepts and narratives that resonate globally, securing a more equal voice in global governance.

Today, there is an opportunity to build a more pluralistic, development-oriented body of global knowledge — not to promote a single model, but to encourage equal dialogue, mutual learning, and stronger governance across the developing world.

As barriers to knowledge recede, greater understanding among political parties can translate into deeper cooperation, enriching global governance with the experience and wisdom of the developing world.

The new mission of political parties



Tamara Duisenova is the director of the Academy of Political Management of Kazakhstan and the former deputy prime minister of Kazakhstan.

Throughout history, political parties have been more than just participants in political systems. They are institutional vehicles through which societies respond to the challenges of the time.

During the formation and consolidation of nations, political parties united people around a shared vision of national development. Their historical mission, therefore, has never been limited to winning elections. Rather, it has been to forge social consensus about the future.

Every era places different demands on political institutions. The 20th century was characterized by political parties mobilizing hundreds of millions of people in pursuit of national goals.

Today, the political landscape has changed. People now have instant access to information and unprecedented opportunities to voice their opinions. They no longer seek merely to be heard — they aspire to help shape decisions.

Citizens want a say in setting priorities for urban and rural development, participating in the allocation of public resources, contributing to national policymaking discussions, and overseeing the implementation of public decisions.

Against this backdrop, the historical mission of political parties is evolving. Today's political parties must do more than represent social interests; they must also build effective mechanisms that enable citizens to participate in national governance.

In the interconnected world, political parties shoulder responsibilities that extend well beyond their domestic roles.

They are also becoming important actors in public diplomacy — promoting mutual understanding among nations, facilitating the exchange of governance experience and fostering trust, without which sustainable development cannot be achieved.

We attach great importance to the development of the China-Central Asia dialogue mechanism and firmly believe that closer cooperation between political parties will significantly contribute to strengthening friendship between our peoples.

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

Cheng Guodong and Niu Fujun

The engineering triumphs of building the world's highest railway

On July 1, 2006, the sound of a train whistle echoed through the Kunlun Mountains, heralding a new era for the Xizang autonomous region. The Qinghai-Xizang Railway, a marvel of modern engineering, linked the world's highest plateau to China's national rail network, ushering in unprecedented connectivity for the region.

Beneath the tracks lies a fragile foundation of frozen ground that is highly sensitive to temperature changes. Maintaining its stability has required not only engineering prowess but also sustained scientific efforts spanning more than half a century.

When we first tackled this challenge, the global experience in permafrost engineering was sobering.

Projects in cold regions worldwide faced alarmingly high rates of deformation and structural damage. Permafrost is not a static entity. It changes with the seasons, expanding and contracting as ice melts and refreezes. Over time, this cycle can quietly destabilize even the strongest structures.

Conventional engineering relied on insulation — raising embankments and adding protective layers to cocoon the ground in thermal stability.

But we soon realized that this approach had its limits in a warming climate. Ice cannot be preserved indefinitely by simply covering it with a blanket.

The Qinghai-Xizang Plateau required a new approach. We proposed an "active cooling and protection" strategy, working with nature rather than against it.

The idea was to build a system that works like a natural refrigerator without electricity. By redesigning embankment materials and structure, we created a self-regulating thermal system — enhancing heat release in winter while minimizing heat absorption in summer. Over the course of a year, the ground effectively cools itself.

Technologies such as shaded surfaces, ventilation ducts, thermosyphons, and crushed-rock layers were integrated into a cohesive system. Together, they allowed the railway foundation to maintain long-term thermal stability using only natural energy flows. No external power was required — just the seasonal rhythm of the environment.

This innovative approach has redefined permafrost engineering internationally. The Qinghai-Xizang Railway has become a scientific demonstration of construction in one of the world's most climate-sensitive regions.

The inaugural journey of the train on July 1, 2006 covered 1,142 kilometers and took just over 13 hours.

As night fell and the train crossed the Kunlun Mountains, some of us fell asleep. This was surprising because at altitudes above 4,000 meters, we had expected discomfort.

But the ride was smooth, the oxygen supply stable, and the temperature carefully controlled. In that moment, engineering success was no longer abstract but directly experienced.

In many ways, that was only the beginning. Since then, continuous monitoring systems have tracked the thermal behavior of permafrost along the route. The data confirm the success of the cooling system but also point to an emerging challenge: climate change.

Temperatures across the plateau are rising, and changes in precipitation patterns are accelerating permafrost degradation, increasing risks such as ground settlement and slope instability.

This raises a difficult question: can the original engineering design withstand a warmer future? To explore this, we turned to an unexpected natural laboratory in northern China.

In Pingquan, Hebei province, far south of the Qinghai-Xizang permafrost zone, a surprising phenomenon exists: isolated patches of permafrost survive in a region with an average annual temperature of 7.3 degrees Celsius.

In summer, surface temperatures exceed 30 degrees Celsius, yet less than one meter below a layer of crushed rock, the ground remains below freezing temperatures. Locals once used this natural "cold storage" to preserve food.

Field studies revealed the mechanism. In winter, cold air circulates through the porous rock layer, removing heat through strong convective exchange. In summer, that same structure blocks heat penetration. The result is a natural thermal valve — seasonal, self-regulating, and remarkably stable.

The same principle is used for the railway: crushed rock layers are not passive insulation, but active thermal regulators driven by natural convection.

Pingquan provides a powerful real-world validation. If permafrost can survive in such a warm region under the right conditions, then the engineering logic behind the Qinghai-Xizang Railway remains robust — even in a warming climate — provided that cooling systems are properly maintained and adapted.

Still, the challenge is no longer purely technical. It is temporal. The climate is changing faster than expected, and engineering systems must evolve accordingly.

Ongoing research now emphasizes preventive mitigation, system-wide cooling strategies, structural reinforcement, and improved water management.

Twenty years on, the results are undeniable. By 2026, the railway has transported over 100 million tons of freight. Trains continue to run at 100 kilometers per hour across the permafrost zone — a record speed for any railway built on frozen ground anywhere in the world.

The Qinghai-Xizang Railway has often been described as a miracle of modern engineering. But it is not a miracle in the mystical sense. It is the product of sustained scientific inquiry: of field observation in extreme conditions, of theoretical breakthroughs, and of decades of continuous monitoring and refinement.

Beneath the steel tracks lies another infrastructure — less visible, but equally important. It is the infrastructure of knowledge: hypotheses about ground ice formation, models of thermal dynamics, and thousands of data points collected under harsh high-altitude conditions.

The railway is, in this sense, not only a transport corridor. It is a living laboratory of how humans can work with one of the most fragile environments on Earth.

As China prepares further upgrades to the line, including electrification, the journey of the "sky road" continues. Its future will depend not only on stronger trains or faster systems, but on whether science can continue to stay one step ahead of a changing climate.

For now, the Qinghai-Xizang Railway stands as both an achievement and a reminder: that even on frozen ground at the edge of habitability, human infrastructure can endure — when it is built not against nature, but in conversation with it.

Cheng Guodong is an academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, recipient of the International Permafrost Association Lifetime Achievement Award and a researcher at the Northwest Institute of Eco-Environment and Resources of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and Shanghai Normal University; and Niu Fujun is a researcher at Shanghai Normal University and former executive deputy director of the State Key Laboratory of Frozen Soil Engineering.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:57 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:57 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

ONG TEE KEAT

Vanguard of the world's majority

The CPC can take pride in its 105-year legacy in helping reform global governance in the interest of inclusivity and fairness



The birth of the Communist Party of China in 1921 was a timely, historically necessary response to a nation then languishing under the miserable subjugation, intimidation and sovereign butchery perpetrated by the foreign imperialist powers. From its very inception, the CPC's revolutionary trajectory has been indissolubly intertwined with the well-being of the Chinese people and the future of the nation, remaining firmly rooted in the popular interests it vows to represent.

The founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 — forged through the blood, toil, tears and sweat of the CPC — marked the tectonic emergence of a transformed China on the world stage. Crucially, the dire, immediate necessity of rebuilding an impoverished, war-torn nation did not deter the young administration from proactively partaking in the formulation of the Ten Principles of the Bandung Conference. These principles laid the indispensable foundations for the Non-Aligned Movement during the height of the Cold War. By steadfastly standing alongside the developing world, the CPC chose the right side of history. This unwavering alignment has long resonated with the deepest aspirations of the global majority. Today, China's consistent, unyielding commitment to the United Nations Charter continues to rekindle global hopes for promoting a fairer, more just and inclusive international order.

In resisting hegemony, China, under the visionary stewardship of the CPC, has consistently been recognized as a steadfast flag-bearer for the vulnerable and the oppressed. The high-profile commemorations hosted by Beijing in 2025 — marking the 70th anniversary of the Bandung Conference and the 80th anniversary of victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45) and the World Anti-Fascist War — stood as profound testaments to the Chinese commitment to preserving global peace and multilateralism under the institutional framework of the UN Charter.

Plainly put, the CPC's modern statecraft remains anchored in the structural interests of the global majority — aligning its future trajectory with the very ideals that defined its inception 105 years ago.

Furthermore, the strategic rollout of China-initiated global frameworks demonstrates Beijing's readiness to assume greater institutional responsibilities in contemporary global governance. This sophisticated suite of doctrines — spanning the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, the Global Civilization Initiative and the Global Governance Initiative — forms a comprehensive, mutually reinforcing architecture. Together, they constitute pragmatic Chinese solutions grounded in international law to pressing systemic challenges, all of which are inextricably linked to the preservation of sustainable peace and collective order.

The Global Development Initiative, launched in 2021, strategically centers on sustainable development, encompassing vital pillars such as poverty alleviation, climate finance and digital connectivity, thereby aligning seamlessly with the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. China's monumental achievement in lifting 800 million people out of abject poverty over the past several decades stands as an undeniable testament to the CPC's ideological commitment to emancipating its people from destitution. Eradicating extreme poverty 10 years ahead of the UN schedule is an inspirational feat that serves as a blueprint for others to learn from.

To the Global South, which has long chafed under traditional, donor-driven conditionalities imposed by the Global North, the Global Development Initiative offers an alternative paradigm: practical, demand-driven and horizontally integrated cooperation, backed by dedicated mechanisms such as the Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund. A concrete manifestation of this cooperative spirit is the sustainable development center in Shanghai, established in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The Global Security Initiative, launched in 2022 and endorsed by over 130 countries and regions as well as international organizations, champions the doctrine of indivisible security — asserting that no state should unilaterally enhance its own security at the expense of others' legitimate concerns. Rejecting the imperialist playbook of deploying troops or establishing coercive military alliances on foreign soil, China has focused on capacity building, notably planning 1,700 training opportunities for security governance personnel globally in 2025. Bilaterally and regionally, this vision is mainstreamed through platforms such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, which unites China with 53 African nations and the African Union Commission.

This year also marks the third anniversary of the Global Civilization Initiative. Focusing on robust civilizational dialogue, the initiative has been pivotal in restoring cultural confidence across the developing world. By flatly rejecting assertions of cultural superiority, it successfully debunks the West-centric myth that Westernization represents the singular path to modernization.

Ultimately, the CPC has proved its vigor in evolving from a grassroots-based revolutionary party into a force of governance that remains highly innovation-relevant in changing times. Formed as an important pillar to implement the concepts in China's Global Artificial Intelligence Governance Action Plan, the World AI Cooperation Organization is well-poised to coordinate international AI regulation, foster inclusive technological development, and decisively bridge the digital and intelligence gaps that threaten to leave the Global South behind.



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

From the Chinese perspective, the core issue of our era is not technological competition within a framework of zero-sum rivalry; rather, it is how the global majority can harness innovation to improve productivity, expand human opportunity and strengthen collective competitiveness. Plainly put, the CPC's modern statecraft remains anchored in the structural interests of the global majority — aligning its future trajectory with the very ideals that defined its inception 105 years ago.

The author is the president of the Belt and Road Initiative Caucus for Asia Pacific. Some of the views in this article are drawn from the author's speech at the 2026 Think Tank Forum on National Governance in Developing Countries. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

LI XING

Not replicable, but a reference

China's experience demonstrates that multiple pathways to modernization are both possible and legitimate



For much of the 20th century, modernization was presented as a singular path associated with Western political and economic institutions. Yet the experiences of many developing countries suggest that there is no universal formula for national development. Different societies have pursued modernization through diverse trajectories, institutional arrangements and governance models.

China's global rise over the past four decades has become one of the most significant examples of this diversity. With its transformation from a poor agrarian society to the world's second-largest economy, China has lifted hundreds of millions of people out of abject poverty, built world-class infrastructure, and emerged as a major technological and industrial power. While debates about the "China model" continue, its experience offers valuable insights into the relationship between political leadership, state capacity and modernization — particularly for countries across the Global South.

At the heart of China's development experience is a hybrid governance system that combines Communist Party of China's leadership, market dynamism and social cohesion. Rather than viewing the State and the market as competing forces, China's approach seeks to integrate them within a broader developmental strategy. The market plays a central role in resource allocation and innovation, while the State provides strategic direction, long-term planning and institutional coordination. This State-market relationship is underpinned by a professional bureaucracy capable of pursuing national development goals, with State-owned enterprises serving as strategic actors and the private sector contributing entrepreneurial dynamism and economic vitality. Together, they form a coordinated framework that supports sustained economic growth, industrial upgrading and technological modernization.

A key feature of this model is the leadership of the CPC. Unlike many Western liberal systems where political parties and public administration are largely separate, and where political competition can generate frequent shifts in policy priorities, China's integrated structure links long-term national objectives with policy implementation. This arrangement has enabled the government to pursue ambitious development goals over extended periods while maintaining policy continuity and institutional coherence. Whether in infrastructure development, poverty reduction, industrial upgrading or technological innovation, long-term policy coordination and continuity have been a defining characteristic of China's modernization process.

In this sense, the Chinese political system possesses two distinctive strengths: the ability to pursue long-term strategic goals and the flexibility to adjust policies in response to changing circumstances. These characteristics have attracted increasing attention from scholars and policymakers worldwide. Even Francis Fukuyama, best known for his "end of history" thesis, recently acknowledged in an interview that China's continued success has challenged some of his earlier predictions. In his work *Political Order and Political Decay*, Fukuyama also identifies several deficits confronting contemporary liberal democracies, including the growing influence of interest groups operating under the banner of civil society and non-governmental organizations, partisan polarization, the judicialization of governance and the tendency for economic power to be converted into political influence.



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

China's experience raises important questions about the relationship between modernization and governance models. Its political system seeks to address these challenges through strong policy coordination, long-term planning and the capacity for continuous institutional adaptation and policy correction under the leadership of the CPC. For many years, development discussions were dominated by the assumption that economic modernization would inevitably lead countries toward a single political trajectory, such as multiparty systems, interest groups and the separation of power. China's rise challenges this assumption. The China model suggests that countries may pursue modernization through different institutional pathways shaped by their own histories, cultures and social conditions.

At the same time, China's development experience demonstrates that modernization requires more than economic growth. Education, social welfare, public administration and institutional effectiveness have all played important roles. Over the past several decades, China has invested heavily in human capital, expanded social protection programs, strengthened public services and improved administrative capacity at multiple levels of government.

These efforts have contributed to relatively high levels of public trust in government. Surveys conducted by Western institutions such as Harvard University's Ash Center, Edelman and Ipsos have consistently found strong public confidence in Chinese governance. While political systems differ across countries, the broader lesson from China is that State legitimacy depends not only on how governments are chosen, but also on how effectively they govern and deliver economic development, social progress and improved living standards.

Many international surveys suggest that perceptions of China vary significantly across regions. While skepticism toward China remains strong in many Western countries, attitudes are generally more favorable across much of the Global South. This divergence reflects differing historical experiences, development priorities and perspectives on development and governance. Recently, global perceptions appear to be evolving. According to the latest Gallup World Poll, China's global leadership approval rating has surpassed that of the United States, reflecting both rising approval of China's international role and declining confidence in US leadership in many parts of the developing world, and increasingly the developed world.

China's path to modernization does not provide a universal blueprint for development, nor should it be understood as one. Every country must find its own path based on its history, institutions and social conditions. Nevertheless, China's experience offers several broader lessons: the importance of effective political leadership, the value of long-term strategic planning, the need to balance state and market forces, and the central role of state capacity in promoting development. Market and capital play indispensable roles in generating growth and prosperity, but they should not dictate national development objectives.

This lesson resonates strongly across the Global South. Developing countries face diverse challenges, ranging from poverty and inequality to infrastructure deficits and technological gaps. As a result, many governments are increasingly interested in policy approaches that emphasize state capacity, developmental planning and national policy autonomy. Ultimately, the most important lesson may be that modernization is not a single destination reached through a prescribed route. It is a process shaped by national circumstances, political choices and social priorities. China's experience reinforces an increasingly important idea: successful modernization does not require following one model. It requires building structures capable of translating national aspirations into sustainable development outcomes.

The growing cooperation between China and other Global South countries is shaping the emerging global order. This strategic relationship is reflected in expanding trade, investment, infrastructure cooperation and diplomatic engagement. Organizations and mechanisms such as BRICS, the New Development Bank, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Belt and Road Initiative have expanded opportunities for South-South cooperation and development financing. At the same time, China's calls for reform of global governance institutions increasingly reflect calls for greater representation and voice for developing countries.

As the 21st century unfolds, the debate over modernization is likely to become increasingly diverse and pluralistic. In that debate, China's experience will remain an important reference point — not because it offers a formula to replicate, but because it demonstrates that multiple pathways to modernization are both possible and legitimate.

The author is a Yunshan leading scholar and the director of the European Research Center, Guangdong Institute for International Strategies at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, and an adjunct professor of international relations at Aalborg University in Denmark. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:57 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:57 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

Fresh path seen for global RMB

Expert predicts yuan will become world's 2nd most important currency

By **ZHOU LANXU, WANG KEJU** and **ZHANG CHENXU**

The long-standing view that a currency cannot become globally important without full convertibility and a fully liberalized capital account is increasingly being challenged, with economists arguing that the renminbi may prove otherwise.

They said that geopolitical tensions are making financial markets less central to currency internationalization, while trade, investment and other real-economy linkages are likely to play a bigger role, creating fresh opportunities for the Chinese yuan to expand its global role and even surpass the euro over time.

Peng Wensheng, chief economist at China International Capital Corp, said the increasing use of financial sanctions by the United States amid geopolitical tensions could prompt more economies to adopt some form of capital account control or management in response.

Such a rise in capital flow restrictions may reduce countries' reliance on financial assets as universal stores of purchasing power, prompting them to place greater weight on real-economy assets, Peng said at a recent seminar held by the Tsinghua University PBC School of Finance.

"That is China's advantage — China has the world's largest manufacturing system, and is the world's largest (goods) trading nation," Peng said, adding that these strengths could increasingly underpin the RMB's internationalization through trade, investment and other real-economy linkages and intergovernmental cooperation.

Financial market opening, meanwhile, should remain an important part of the process rather than the sole driving force of the yuan's global use, he added.

In an exclusive interview with China Daily, Zhu Min, former deputy managing director of the International Monetary Fund, also pushed back against the assumption that the RMB cannot become a major international currency without full convertibility and a fully liberalized capital account — which allows capital to move totally freely across borders.

"We need to correct this old mindset," Zhu said, pointing to the IMF's Special Drawing Rights basket, a collection of major international currencies that gives the RMB a 12.28 percent weighting after the dollar and the euro, as proof that such constraints are not necessarily insurmountable.

> "There is still plenty of room to expand RMB settlement in China's trade."
>
> **Zhu Min,** former deputy managing director of the International Monetary Fund

"There is still plenty of room to expand RMB settlement in China's trade," Zhu said.

"China imports a large volume of commodities, creating significant scope for settling those purchases in the RMB and pricing commodities in the currency."

Data from the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, showed that the amount of cross-border RMB settlement under China's current account — covering goods and services trade — came in at 1.67 trillion yuan ($245.8 billion) in May, up from 1.31 trillion yuan a year ago.

The proportion of cross-border RMB receipts and payments under the capital account has risen to around 60 percent, according to the PBOC.

Lu Ting, chief China economist at Nomura, said the Chinese yuan would eventually surpass the euro to become the world's second most important international currency, driven by real-economy linkages.

Unlike the Japanese yen, whose internationalization after Japan fully liberalized its capital account in the 1990s relied increasingly on international financial markets and carry trades — a form of cross-border financial arbitrage — the RMB is more likely to gain wider international use through trade and the global expansion of Chinese companies, Lu said.

"I believe the RMB will one day overtake the euro. It could happen in the next 10 or 20 years, provided China continues moving forward steadily," he said, adding that China should continue opening up its financial markets and providing sufficient RMB liquidity to overseas market participants.

Overseas institutions and individuals now hold more than 10 trillion yuan of onshore RMB financial assets, with PBOC Governor Pan Gongsheng vowing to further enhance the internationalization level of China's financial markets in June.

Contact the writers at zhoulanxv@chinadaily.com.cn

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108
529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1892



Products of Chaozhou Three-Circle Group Co Ltd on display during an expo in Shanghai. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Five mainland firms launch HK listing plans; aim to raise up to $5.6b

By **CHENG YU**
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Five Chinese mainland technology and advanced manufacturing companies have simultaneously launched initial public offerings on Hong Kong stock exchange on Tuesday, seeking to raise up to HK$44.1 billion ($5.6 billion) in one of the market's biggest single-day fundraising pushes this year.

The companies — Luxshare Precision Industry Co Ltd, Chaozhou Three-Circle Group Co Ltd, Nexchip Semiconductor Corp, Guangdong Dtech Technology Co Ltd, and robotics maker ROKAE — span industries including consumer electronics, advanced ceramic materials, semiconductor manufacturing, printed circuit board tooling and industrial robotics.

Luxshare Precision, a key supplier to Apple, accounts for more than half of the planned fundraising, targeting up to HK$24.27 billion through the sale of 383.5 million shares.

The company is expected to price the offering on July 8 and begin trading on July 10. It is seeking to establish a dual A+H listing as it expands its international financing channels.

Wang Peng, a researcher at Beijing Academy of Social Sciences, said: "The wave of listings highlights a broader shift in Hong Kong's equity market, where capital raising has increasingly been dominated by advanced manufacturing and technology companies rather than financial institutions and property developers."

> The wave of listings highlights a broader shift in Hong Kong's equity market ..."
>
> **Wang Peng,** a researcher at Beijing Academy of Social Sciences

"The proceeds are expected to support research and development, capacity expansion and overseas growth as Chinese manufacturers seek to strengthen their global competitiveness," he said.

China's IPO market has accelerated sharply in the first half of 2026, with both the A-share market and HKEX recording higher listing activity and fundraising volumes than a year earlier.

In the first half of this year, Hong Kong's IPO market raised about HK$210.3 billion, more than the combined total raised during the same period over the previous four years, Wind data showed. Some 71 new A-share listings raised a combined 70.57 billion yuan ($10.4 billion), an increase of nearly 89 percent from a year earlier.

According to Wind, 156 companies were expected to complete IPOs across China's A-share market and HKEX during the first six months of the year, including 71 on the A-share market and 85 in HKEX.

Investor demand has also remained robust. Of the 151 newly listed stocks on the two stock markets in the first half, 79 more than doubled in price on their trading debut, representing over half of all new listings.

Notably, technology-related industries dominated listings on the A-share market. Electronics companies accounted for 12 IPOs, followed by 11 machinery manufacturers, reflecting Beijing's continued emphasis on developing new quality productive forces through advanced manufacturing, semiconductors and high-end equipment.

Cross-listed "A+H" offerings have become an increasingly important feature of the market. Some 24 companies completed listings in both markets during the first half, up from seven a year earlier, while eight of HKEX's 10 largest IPOs this year were A+H listings.

Li Kang, co-leader of the TMT Industry at EY Greater China, said in an interview that companies filing for IPOs in the first half of the year displayed clear focus on China's new quality productive forces.

It reflected how capital markets are efficiently channeling resources toward sectors with the highest technological barriers to entry and strongest growth potential, thereby supporting technological self-reliance and industrial upgrading, Li said.

AI, energy upgrade lift industrial profits

China's major industrial firms posted accelerated profit growth in the first five months of 2026, driven by surging demand for AI-related electronics and new-energy materials, official data showed.

Industrial firms with an annual main business revenue of at least 20 million yuan ($2.9 million) saw their combined profits reach 3.14 trillion yuan in the January-May period, up 18.8 percent year-on-year, according to the National Bureau of Statistics.

The growth surpassed the 18.2 percent rise in the first four months. In May alone, industrial profits rose 21.1 percent, the NBS data showed.

Industrial revenue grew 5.5 percent year-on-year in the first five months, up 0.3 percentage points from the January-April period, as industrial production remained robust and producer prices continued to rise, said NBS statistician Yu Weining.

Equipment manufacturing remained a key driver. Profits in the sector climbed 14.1 percent during the period, contributing 5.2 percentage points to overall industrial profit growth. Within this sector, the electronics industry posted a 103.9 percent profit surge, contributing 43.1 percent to overall industrial profit growth, as the global AI boom fueled an explosion in demand for high-end computing and memory products.

Raw materials manufacturing also posted robust gains, with profits surging 83.1 percent and contributing 10.2 percentage points to overall industrial profit growth.

Driven by rising demand from new-energy and AI industries, copper and aluminum prices remained elevated, pushing profits in the nonferrous metals sector up 117.1 percent. The petroleum processing industry returned to profitability, while the chemical sector saw profits rise 71.6 percent.

High-tech manufacturing maintained double-digit profit growth, rising 44.7 percent and contributing 8.0 percentage points to overall industrial profit growth. Within this sector, optoelectronic device manufacturing and discrete device manufacturing saw profits rise 53.8 percent and 40.6 percent, respectively.

Corporate cost burdens continued to ease. For every 100 yuan of operating revenue, industrial firms incurred 84.95 yuan in costs in the January-May period, down 0.59 yuan year-on-year.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Airline bets on Sino-African trade ties

By **LI JING**
lijing2009@chinadaily.com.cn



A model of an Ethiopian Airlines cargo plane during a recent expo in Shanghai. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Ethiopian Airlines is expanding its cargo network and airport partnerships in China, as it bets on growing China-Africa trade, rising cross-border e-commerce and Beijing's expanded zero-tariff access for African imports to sustain long-term freight growth, company executives told China Daily.

China, Africa's largest trading partner, has become the airline's top strategic cargo market globally, accounting for more than 40 percent of international transit cargo handled through its Addis Ababa hub, Dereje Derero, managing director of cargo and logistics services at Ethiopian Airlines, said in an interview.

"The Chinese market has the highest strategic priority in our global cargo business over the next three to five years," Derero said.

The strategic expansion comes as China deepens economic ties with Africa. Since May 1, China has extended zero-tariff treatment to all 53 African countries with which it has diplomatic relations, widening a policy previously limited to the continent's least-developed economies.

China's commerce ministry said in a statement that the zero-tariff policy is intended to boost African exports, encourage investment in Africa and make China-Africa trade more balanced and sustainable. Bilateral trade reached a record $348 billion in 2025, according to China's General Administration of Customs.

Derero said the policy is a catalyst for rebalancing two-way cargo flows, which have traditionally been dominated by Chinese exports to Africa.

"The zero-tariff policy will help generate more return cargo from Africa, improve aircraft utilization and increase demand for cold-chain transport of products such as Ethiopian coffee, flowers and fresh produce," he said.

Cross-border e-commerce has become the fastest-growing category of Chinese exports to Africa, with shipment volumes rising by more than 20 percent from a year earlier, while exports of new energy products and infrastructure equipment are also supporting freight demand, he added.

Chinese e-commerce platforms such as Temu and SHEIN are expanding rapidly across Africa, creating sustained demand for air freight through Ethiopian Airlines' cargo gateways in Shenzhen and Guangzhou in Guangdong province and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Derero said.

The airline currently operates a fleet of 20 freighters, including Boeing 777, 767 and 737 cargo aircraft, and serves 11 cargo destinations across China, with some routes operating five to seven freighter flights per week. To boost capacity, the carrier signed a lease agreement earlier this year with aircraft lessor AerCap for two Boeing 777-300ERSF converted freighters, due for delivery in 2028.

Despite a normalization in freight rates from the COVID-19 pandemic highs, Derero said global freighter capacity remained structurally tight because of persistent airspace disruptions in the Middle East as well as higher fuel costs.

General cargo rates between China and Africa have largely returned to pre-pandemic levels, although e-commerce shipments, cold-chain cargo and time-sensitive goods continue to command premium pricing, he said.

During last week's Transport Logistic Shanghai exhibition in Shanghai, Africa's largest airline by fleet and network signed cooperation agreements with airport operators in Guangzhou in Guangdong province, Ezhou in Hubei province and Zhengzhou in Henan province, and held discussions with authorities in Chengdu in Sichuan province to explore potential China-Africa cargo links.

Girum Abebe, country director of Ethiopian Airlines China, said the airline was exploring the launch of a direct freighter route linking Southwest China with Africa as it expands cooperation with Chinese airports and local governments.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:57 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:57 PM

BUSINESS

‘City of the future’ reshapes smart living

Big data, artificial intelligence, IoT make futuristic services reality in Xiong’an

By **LI JIAYING**
lijiaying@chinadaily.com.cn

What does a city of the future look like?

In Hebei province’s Xiong’an New Area, a traffic light adjusts its timing in milliseconds to ease a growing queue of vehicles. Beneath the streets, sensors quietly confirm that oxygen levels inside an underground utility tunnel remain stable. Nearby, residents return home by swiping their access cards as community systems automatically log their arrival.

Inside the Xiong’an Urban Computing Center — also known as the “Eye of Xiong’an” — a giant digital dashboard tracks the heartbeat of China’s newest city in real time. Here, advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data and the internet of things are designed not only to make urban management smarter, but also to make everyday life safer, more convenient and more responsive to people’s needs.

“The computing center serves as the digital brain of Xiong’an,” said Wang Zixuan, an official with the industry, information technology and data bureau of Xiong’an New Area.

From the very beginning of planning, Xiong’an decided to adopt the concept of building three interconnected cities — one underground, one above ground and one in the cloud, and together, they provide the backbone for the dynamic virtual replica of the city, enabling managers to respond to urban operations in real time, Wang said.

For residents, however, much of that technology works quietly in the background.

One example is a community care service built on utility monitoring. “If an elderly resident living alone shows no water or gas activity for an unusually long period, the system automatically sends an alert to the local community, prompting staff to check on the resident,” Wang said.

The same digital intelligence extends across the city’s transportation network.

Every municipal road in Xiong’an has been built to digital road standards. As traffic patterns change throughout the day, signal timings can be adjusted automatically, helping ease congestion and improve travel efficiency, Wang added.

Supporting these services is an extensive digital infrastructure. Xiong’an has deployed more than one million connected sensing devices and built over 500 kilometers of digital roads.

Together, they form an interconnected network that helps manage transportation, public facilities, neighborhoods and underground utility systems more efficiently.



A smart tractor is showcased at the Collection of Future City in Xiong’an, Hebei province, on June 23. GONG JINGLU / XINHUA


An AI-powered robot makes coffee at a cafe at Xiong’an business service center in Xiong’an on March 25. ZHU DONGXU / XINHUA

A short drive away, an exhibition hall offers visitors a different glimpse into the future of agriculture.

An apple-picking robot smoothly moves toward a tree on its tracked chassis. After scanning the branches with its vision system, its robotic arm gently reaches out, twists a ripe apple from the branch and places it into a collection basket — all in less than 10 seconds.

Developed by a research team at Hebei Agricultural University, the robot is capable of identifying fruit and distinguishing healthy apples from damaged ones before picking, with a fruit damage rate of less than 5 percent when picking, said Chen Chongchong, a professor from the university’s mechanical and electrical engineering school.

“Most fruit growers today are elderly farmers, and labor shortages become especially severe during harvest season,” Chen said, adding that this robot can significantly improve harvesting efficiency while reducing operating costs.

He added that the robot’s strong climbing capability allows it to work in orchards with different terrains, while the research team is developing specialized AI models for harvesting other types of fruit.

From easing traffic congestion and caring for elderly residents to helping farmers harvest fruit, Xiong’an is leveraging advanced technologies to transform futuristic concepts into everyday experiences.

According to the new area’s industry, information technology and data bureau, Xiong’an is building an innovation ecosystem centered on digital infrastructure, technology demonstration and real-world application scenarios.

“Application scenarios serve as the bridge between technology and industry, connecting research with the market,” said Liu Xiang, deputy director of the bureau, adding that the new area is ramping up efforts to identify the most promising technologies, teams and projects, and provide them with the best possible environment to grow, mature and achieve commercial success.

Transit hub paces Xiong’an-Beijing integration

By **CHEN MEILING**
in Xiong’an New Area, Hebei
chenmeiling@chinadaily.com.cn

A flagship transit-oriented development landmark is taking shape at the heart of Xiong’an New Area in North China’s Hebei province. The megaproject is poised to roll out a commercial complex and forge a fully connected one hour transport circle between Xiong’an and Beijing in the second half of this year, accelerating cross-city industrial and talent connectivity.

The Xiong’an City Square and International Trade Center project features a three-floor underground interchange for rail transit with nine buildings above ground, realizing the vision of “entering the city the moment you step out of the transport station”. Construction at the site was ongoing heading into July.

Above ground, there are headquarters of seven central State-owned enterprises that are moving from Beijing such as China Huaneng Group and Sinochem Holdings, alongside science and innovation centers of four major State-owned banks, and about 300 innovative institutions.

Underground, four transit lines intersect there: the Jing Xiong Express, the Xiong’an-Xinzhou High-speed Railway, and Xiong’an metro lines M1 and M2, enabling seamless transfers within three minutes.

The Xiong’an Terminal Station on the Jing Xiong Express allows Beijing Daxing International Airport passengers to complete check-in and baggage drop-off in advance, with a half-hour direct trip to the airport and about an hour to get to Beijing’s Lize Financial Business District, according to Yu Ruiyong, assistant to the general manager of Xiong’an Xiongshang Development Co, a subsidiary of China Xiong’an Group.


People visit the construction sites of Xiong’an City Square and International Trade Center in Xiong’an New Area on June 25. CHEN MEILING / CHINA DAILY

> “Our goal is simple: though you leave Beijing (for Xiong’an), you still feel like you’re in Beijing.”
>
> **Yu Ruiyong,** assistant to the general manager of Xiong’an Xiongshang Development Co

“Our goal is simple: though you leave Beijing (for Xiong’an), you still feel like you’re in Beijing,” said Yu, adding that the project aims to further accelerate Beijing-Xiong’an integration by significantly shortening inter-city traffic time.

He added that the express, with a length of 86.26 kilometers, will be operated more like a bus, while the price and opening time will be announced via government notice in the near future.

Further more, the Xiong’an Intercity Railway Station on the Xiong’an-Xinzhou High-speed Railway will connect with the Xiong’an Terminal Station, and head for Baoding in Hebei and Xinzhou in Shanxi province.

Passengers can transfer within several minutes by an underground walkway.

The Xiong’an International Trade Center has nine buildings — six office buildings, a Kempinski hotel, a shopping mall run by CapitaLand, and the Xiong’an Terminal Station.

The main structure of the project has been topped out. Exterior landscapes, supporting municipal works and indoor electromechanical installation have all been completed, and the interior design is currently underway, said Zhang Tao, deputy general manager of Xiong’an Xiongshang Real Estate Co, a subsidiary of China Xiong’an Group.

The overall construction progress of the center has exceeded 80 percent, and the center is scheduled to be completed in the second half of this year. Investment promotion work is also in full swing, said Zhang.

The center covers a land area of approximately 200 *mu* (13.33 hectares), with a total construction area of around 1.06 million square meters — about 670,000 sq m above ground and roughly 390,000 sq m underground.

Luo Shuang, deputy director of the administrative committee of Xiong’an Qidong district, explained that the complex is designed as a full-chain supporting zone catering to relocated personnel, offering integrated transport, office, commercial and hotel facilities.

A well-equipped 15-minute community living circle with residential buildings, educational, cultural and sports facilities laid out across the area is expected to create a high-quality living environment featuring balanced work and residence. Residents can access a full range of supporting services within their daily activity radius, according to Luo.

“Employees of Sinochem can simply take the elevator downstairs and walk straight to the Xiong’an Intercity Railway Station and Xiong’an Terminal Station via underground passages within minutes,” said Luo, adding that the scenario vividly embodies the philosophy of transit-city integrated development.

In the east of the complex there are eight shipping ports heading for Baiyangdian Lake scenic spot.

Industrial firms boost sales via livestreaming

By **CHEN MEILING** in Handan, Hebei

Ding Kelun, 42, traveled all the way from Zunyi, Southwest China’s Guizhou province, to pick up his newly bought truck in Cheng’an county of Handan, North China’s Hebei province, in late June, after seeing the vehicle on seller Wu Ranran’s livestreaming promotion.

He said he knew the company Handan Boang Special Vehicle Manufacturing from Wu’s Douyin account. After discussing details about buying a truck on WeChat, Ding drove about 20 hours to the company in April to see if the truck was really as good as Wu said, and finally decided to make the deal at a price of 400,000 yuan ($59,000).

Wu, who now has 170,000 fans since she began livestreaming in 2024, said in the past, sellers had to drive vehicles to places like petrol stations to do marketing, and as such could only reach potential customers in Handan and nearby cities.

“As competition became more fierce, and profit became less, we developed livestreaming platforms so we could reach clients across the country,” she said.

Now the company has 20 livestreaming personnel and last year sold 1,300 trucks — about double the number before it started livestreaming — with sales of 350 million yuan. Around 85 percent of those orders were from livestreaming and 70 percent from outside Hebei. Last year, Wu’s personal livestreaming sales alone exceeded 100 million yuan.

Wu said the local government has many good policies that support livestream marketing, such as organizing training for livestream hosts and opening green channels for drivers to apply for a temporary license plate.

The transformation of Boang epitomizes how Handan, a heavy industrial city, is helping traditional industries embrace the digital economy.

In recent years, Cheng’an has vigorously promoted the “one product, one livestream” e-commerce model. Cameras are focused on production lines, assembly workshops, testing labs and shipping warehouses, drawing viewers and inquiries through real-life scenes.

Over the past one and a half years since the launch of this initiative, 107 industrial enterprises in the county have launched livestream sales. From January to May, livestreaming enterprises generated revenue of 15.8 billion yuan, a year-on-year increase of 15 percent, according to local authorities.

The local government built a 7,800-square-meter “one product, one livestream” industrial park, with a logistics warehouse, a product exhibition hall, 18 shared livestreaming rooms and training classes. They are all available free to local enterprises.

There, two young women were passionately introducing screws in front of cameras. They work for Yibang Machinery Technology (Handan), a fastener producer, which previously sold by the ton, now sells by the piece via livestreaming.

“Though each screw sells for about 3 yuan, and the logistics cost is about 1.5 yuan, the goal is to link directly to customers and promote our brand, so that big merchants can notice us,” said Yang Jianhui, chairman of the company.

The company used to rely entirely on distributors and agents. The sales teams had to travel extensively to visit clients one by one. Distributors also required them to tie up large sums of capital on inventory stock. Now, customers place orders and settle payments instantly through online storefronts, which suggests greater profit margin, he said.

Yang agrees livestreaming industrial products is not as fun as others, but he doesn’t mind if only three to five people are watching because those who stay are more likely to purchase.

Each day the company receives about 1,000 livestreaming orders from clients such as repair shops, processing factories and construction teams, at an average of 40 yuan per order. The repurchase rate has reached 70 percent.

Since starting in August, the company has about 6,300 fans, and livestream sales have contributed 20 percent to its total, which reached 15 million yuan from January to March.

Guo Yanwen, director of the county’s development and reform bureau, said so far livestreaming has realized fruitful results for promoting the county’s industrial development and has become a driving engine for its economy. The growth rate of added value of industrial enterprises above designated size across the county reached 9 percent from January to May.

The public e-commerce service center at the park houses government departments including market regulation, finance, taxation and administrative approval, delivering one-stop, zero-distance government services for e-commerce businesses.

To help firms reduce costs, the local government has negotiated with courier companies. The delivery fee for parcels weighing under one kilogram has fallen to 1.6 yuan, a 36 percent reduction.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:57 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:57 PM

LIFE

Beloved opera flowers again

Three years after its premiere, *The Wild Rhododendron* returns with fresh emotional depth, **Chen Nan** reports.



Above: A scene from the Chinese opera *The Wild Rhododendron*, which returns to the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing from July 1 to 4. **Left:** Tenor Wang Hongwei (front), who plays the role of Red Army soldier Pan Xingyi, rehearses at the NCPA on June 24. **Left below:** Bass singer Guan Zhijing (front), who plays the vicious local despot Hu Hansan, in a rehearsal. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

In a rehearsal room at the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing, a familiar melody rises — a tune that has lived in the memories of generations of Chinese audiences.

"Little bamboo raft drifting on the river, towering green mountains moving along the banks ..."

As tenor Wang Hongwei begins to sing *The Red Star Guides My Journey*, the song seems to unlock a door to the past. For many in the room, the melody is more than music; it is a reminder of childhood, of a beloved story passed down through families, and of a time when cinema and theater shaped the imagination of millions.

The years appear to fade away. A classic story returns, carrying both the emotions of the past and a new meaning for the present.

Despite the exhaustion of traveling between Beijing and Tianjin and a voice marked by a demanding schedule, Wang, 58, the president of the Tianjin Conservatory of Music, quickly steps back into the world of the stage. His portrayal of Pan Xingyi — a father, a soldier and a man driven by conviction — once again carries the warmth, courage and determination that have defined the character.

The moment captures the emotional power behind *The Wild Rhododendron*, of which the song is a part. The original Chinese opera by the National Centre for the Performing Arts returns from July 1 to 4, marking the 105th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China.

Adapted from Li Xintian's classic novel *Sparkling Red Star*, the opera revisits a story deeply embedded in Chinese cultural memory.

The original novel, first published in the 1970s, became widely known after it was adapted into a film by the August First Film Studio in 1974. Its young hero, Pan Dongzi, became one of the most recognizable childhood figures for generations of Chinese audiences, while the movie's soundtrack also captured their hearts.





The Chinese opera, which premiered in 2023, reimagines the story through music and a more intimate dramatic lens. Composer Zhang Qianyi created the score, while Fu Gengchen — composer for the famous film adaptation — was invited as music adviser, linking the new production with the cultural memory of the earlier work.

At the center of the story is young Pan Dongzi, whose father, Pan Xingyi, joins the Red Army during a time of conflict and leaves his son a small red star — a symbol that becomes a guiding force throughout his life.

But the Chinese opera shifts its emotional focus beyond the boy hero. It brings a new figure to the foreground: Dongzi's mother, an ordinary village woman whose transformation from wife and mother into a courageous revolutionary becomes the heart of the story.

This revival is not simply the return of an old production. It is an attempt to rediscover a classic through a new perspective.

> "The story is no longer just a sequence of beautiful music. It has stronger tension, deeper meaning and greater emotional movement."
>
> **Wang Hongwei,** president, Tianjin Conservatory of Music

For Wang Hongwei, returning to the role of Pan Xingyi after three years has changed the way he understands the character.

"The character has become closer to me, and more personal," he says. "A great role requires time to settle and mature."

Wang believes that distance has allowed him to discover new layers in the role — not only through technique, but through his own experiences as a performer.

The new production strengthens the relationships between the characters. Earlier versions focused more on musical storytelling, but this revival expands the emotional exchanges between Pan Xingyi, Pan Dongzi's mother and their son.

One of the most important changes is a farewell scene between the husband and wife. Originally written as a solo aria, it has been transformed into a duet, allowing the audience to feel the weight of their separation more deeply.

"The story is no longer just a sequence of beautiful music," Wang says. "It has stronger tension, deeper meaning and greater emotional movement."

The opera opens in 1934, when Pan Xingyi prepares to leave with the Red Army. Before dawn, Pan Dongzi's mother makes straw sandals and packs supplies for her husband. Their farewell is quiet, filled with the sorrow of a family that understands separation may be permanent.

Before leaving, Pan Xingyi gives his young son the red star.

That small object becomes the beginning of Pan Dongzi's journey.

After the army withdraws, a returning landlord and his militia bring fear to the village. Facing violence and oppression, Pan Dongzi's mother joins the villagers' resistance.

At the same time, the Red Army struggles through the Long March (1934-36), crossing snow-covered mountains and vast grasslands, while underground fighters continue their battles in the forests.

These two journeys — one across battlefields and mountains, the other through the courage of ordinary villagers — reveal the opera's central idea: history is shaped not only by famous figures, but also by countless individuals who choose courage when faced with impossible choices.

"Dongzi's mother is not born a hero," says soprano Wang Zhe, who plays the role. "She becomes one through her experiences, through responsibility, and through the choices she makes."

Her final sacrifice becomes the opera's emotional climax. When a secret gathering is discovered, she risks her life to protect others, drawing the enemy away and sacrificing herself.

The flames that take her life later transform into a vision of blooming rhododendrons — the flower that inspires the opera's title.

The boy who once watched his parents leave grows into a young soldier, moving forward beneath the imagined light of the red star.

For Wang Hongwei, performing *The Wild Rhododendron* is also a conversation with the past.

"Classics already exist before us," he says. "But our generation has its own understanding. Our voices, techniques and life experiences are different from decades ago."

He hopes to bring something personal to Pan Xingyi — not only the history of the character, but also the emotions of an artist who has spent a lifetime on stage.

In recent years, Wang Hongwei, as an educator, has also explored how history and revolution-themed works can connect with younger audiences. For him, such operas are not simply performances.

"They are a kind of inheritance," he says. "Through art, we bring people closer to history and closer to the heroes who came before."

Contact the writer at chennan@chinadaily.com.cn

Deep-sea time capsule reveals China's trade with Europe

OSLO — About 600 meters below the surface of the Skagerrak Strait off southern Norway, large quantities of Chinese porcelain have rested for more than two centuries inside an 18th-century merchant vessel.

Now, Norwegian maritime archaeologists are bringing parts of the ship's cargo back into public view, opening a rare window onto the movement of Chinese porcelain into Europe and its place in 18th-century consumer life and trade networks.

Known to researchers as the Porcelain Shipwreck, the wreck contains Chinese porcelain, glass goblets and bottles, chandelier fragments, grain, textiles and other organic materials. Some recovered objects have been put on display at the Norwegian Maritime Museum in Oslo.

For researchers, the finding is not only a spectacular deep-sea archaeological discovery, but also a time capsule that may help explain how goods from China, northern Europe and possibly the Baltic region converged in one maritime trade system.

The wreck was discovered by Espen Saastad, a watch designer from Porsgrunn in southeastern Norway who also operates a small remotely operated vehicle, or ROV, and seabed survey company.

Saastad recalls the first time he and the museum team approached the wreck with an ROV. "We saw a lot of white items," he says. "When we were getting really close to the wreck, we saw all these plates, all these cups, the jar, and all these crystal things from the chandeliers."

Saastad says they quickly suspected that the objects must be Chinese porcelain. "It was a really fantastic experience in the boat, and everybody was very excited."





Left: Chinese porcelain in a shipwreck in the Skagerrak Strait off southern Norway. **Right:** Pieces of Chinese porcelain recovered from a shipwreck in the Skagerrak Strait. PHOTOS BY XINHUA

Frode Kvalo, a maritime archaeologist at the Norwegian Maritime Museum and project leader of the Porcelain Shipwreck, says the work is being carried out in stages. The first task is to understand what kinds of materials, trade goods and ship's equipment remain at the site, and how they are distributed, before a full excavation can be planned.

According to the museum, the wreck is believed to be a fully laden 18th-century merchant vessel. Based on observations so far, the vessel appears to have had a round stern and may have been a galliot, a type of merchant ship characteristic of northern Europe. The wreck measures about 22 meters in length and includes the remains of two masts.

So far, researchers have identified large quantities of Chinese porcelain, chandelier parts, glass goblets, bottles, and barrels of grain. Crates found at the site may contain textiles and organic materials, possibly including tea, herbs or medicines.

A brick recovered from the ship's galley bears the stamp of Luebecker Ratsziegelei, a brick factory in the German city of Luebeck that operated from the 15th century until 1772.

Kvalo says the importance of the wreck lies in its good state of preservation, the high quality of the objects and the unusual cargo composition, which brings together Chinese porcelain, northern European glassware, chandeliers, grain, textiles and other organic materials.

The depth also makes the project significant. Kvalo says Norwegian archaeologists had not previously worked on a shipwreck in the open sea at a depth of 600 meters, and archaeological work at such depth had not been carried out in northern Europe before.

Many questions remain unanswered. Researchers do not yet know where the ship came from, where it was heading, why it sank, or what happened to the crew. Because the vessel appears to have carried valuable cargo, Kvalo says there may be historical records related to its loss, including customs lists, insurance records and other archives.

Among the most eye-catching findings are the porcelain pieces, many of them Chinese blue-and-white ware. Some pieces are Batavia ware, with a brown-glazed exterior and blue-and-white decoration inside. Some may be Blanc de Chine, a type of white porcelain.

Knut Myrer, an Oslo-based Asian antiques and art specialist and a longtime member of an Oriental ceramics society, was among the visitors viewing the recovered objects in the museum. Standing before the display, he said that the porcelain appears to be typical Chinese export ware made for the European market, probably dating from around 1745 to 1760.

Chinese ceramics experts in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province, a city long known as China's "porcelain capital", have also followed the archaeological discovery and offered a more detailed assessment after examining images of the porcelain.

Weng Yanjun, director of the Jingdezhen Imperial Kiln Museum and Institute, says the style of the blue-and-white porcelain pieces is close to Qianlong-period specimens in Jingdezhen's ancient ceramics database.

According to Weng, Batavia ware was a major category of export porcelain ordered by European countries from Jingdezhen. Small dishes and bowls with blue-and-white decoration and brown glaze were often used for coffee and tea.

Myrer says Chinese porcelain was used in Europe for drinking tea, coffee and chocolate. Large quantities of Chinese tea were exported to Europe in the 18th century, and paintings from the period show people in fine clothes drinking tea from Chinese porcelain, he says.

For Myrer, the finding shows the global influence of Chinese porcelain in the 18th century and its role in European consumer culture. Chandeliers represented high-status goods associated with elite society, while Chinese porcelain was increasingly embraced by the emerging middle class, he says.

The Norwegian Maritime Museum is now working on further research, conservation and public display.

Sven Ahrens, senior curator and director of research and heritage management at the museum, says the immediate priority is to continue fieldwork during favorable summer weather. The team hopes to recover more objects that can be shown to the public.

Ahrens and Kvalo both say they hope to cooperate with Chinese experts in the future, especially after more artifacts are recovered. Weng also says there is room for cooperation between China and Norway in restoration, kiln-site comparison, scientific analysis, and digital documentation.

Kvalo says only a limited number of objects have been brought up so far, including cups and plates, while many more remain on the seabed. "When we have done the excavation, there will be possibilities to bring in foreign experts, also from China, to study things," he says.

He also praises China's experience in deep-water archaeology, noting that China has conducted underwater archaeological work at about 1,500 meters in depth.

The recovered objects are undergoing conservation work, including desalination.

The Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage has provided 2.9 million Norwegian kroner ($293,000) to support the project. Researchers say the amount is far from enough for a full excavation.

The museum is preparing a project plan and budget. If more government funding is secured, it hopes to use a larger vessel and conduct a full excavation in the coming years.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:57 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:57 PM

SPORTS

2026 WORLD CUP

China's still hitting goals at the World Cup

Despite its team missing out on the global showpiece

By **SUN XIAOCHEN**
sunxiaochen@chinadaily.com.cn



Diehard soccer fans from China have been in attendance throughout the World Cup, including at Mexico's iconic Azteca Stadium, while Chinese toy brand PopMart took part in the opening ceremony in Mexico City. **Inset:** Chinese referee Ma Ning shows a yellow card to Jordy Alcivar (5) of Ecuador during its Group E match with Curacao. AP / XINHUA / FIFA

Everyone is there from China, except for its soccer team.

As the 2026 FIFA World Cup enters the knockout phase, China's involvement with soccer's global showpiece is gaining momentum as well, underlined by fervent fan following, sponsorship investment, tech and infrastructure support, and engagement in many other areas.

Of course, Team China's disappointing sixth straight failure to qualify for the FIFA flagship event has taken some of the fun away, but the country's soccer diehards, who've been used to enjoying the show as onlookers anyway, are making their cheers heard and presence felt across the three host nations of the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Despite long journeys between venues, and the eyewatering cost of tickets and accommodation, a vocal contingent of Chinese fans has made its way to almost every heavyweight clash during the group stage of the tournament, sharing once-in-a-lifetime experiences in viral posts on Chinese social media platforms, such as watching their sporting idols score up close, joining "Mexican Wave" celebrations in the stands and making new friends at fan carnivals.

"Team China didn't make it, but we're all here," He Sheng, a soccer fan and social media influencer from Sichuan province, said in a video he posted on Weibo, showing him cheering with a group of compatriots outside the iconic Azteca Stadium in Mexico City before the tournament's June 11 opener.

"The World Cup belongs to fans from all over the world, not only for those coming from the participating nations," he said.

While true, it comes with a huge price.

After missing out on their chances during FIFA's official ticket lottery in January, Gu Xin and his wife, a soccer-loving couple from Shanghai, each had to spend $1,700 — more than twice the original face value of $700 — to secure tickets on a resale platform for Argentina's group match against Austria in Dallas, Texas, on June 22.

"We hesitated for a while due to the super expensive ticket price, but decided to go anyway. You cannot miss (Lionel) Messi's potential World Cup finale," Gu said with pride, knowing that his expensive gamble more than paid for itself when Messi scored twice in that match to make history as the tournament's all-time leading scorer.

Chinese enterprises are also matching the enthusiasm of fans with their high visibility. Tech giant Lenovo, dairy brand Mengniu and home appliances manufacturer Hisense are reaping the rewards of their brand exposure on and off the pitch, having secured official sponsorship at varying tiers in FIFA's commercial system, with a reported total investment of over $500 million.

The new match replay footage from the referee's camera on the pitch, powered by Lenovo's AI technology, is among the broadcasting highlights of the tournament, offering viewers a more immersive experience. Hisense supplies ultra-high-definition displays for every VAR review, while Mengniu, a longstanding World Cup sponsor, sent six Chinese teenagers to act as flagbearers for the opening match, showcasing youth exchanges between China and FIFA.

The Azteca, an iconic host venue of three World Cups, which has, so far, proved a talisman for the home team Mexico, owes a fair share of its magic to Chinese expertise, too. The China Railway Construction Engineering Group played a key role in its structural reinforcement and roof upgrade during a 20-month renovation project ahead of the 2026 tournament.

Back home, during just the first two months of the year, the world renowned manufacturing hub of Yiwu in East China's Zhejiang province shipped over $550 million worth of fan merchandise — from team jerseys and mini replicas of the World Cup trophy, to noisemakers and themed accessories — to the three host nations, according to a report by Economic Daily.





As the 2026 World Cup enters its dramatic knockout stages, China's involvement at soccer's global showpiece continues, underlined by a fervent fan following, cultural events. sponsorship investment, tech and infrastructure support, and engagement in many other areas on and off the field.
YIN GANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Even without a team competing, China still has its representatives on the turf, not with a ball at their feet, but whistles hanging around their necks.

Chinese referee Ma Ning, flanked by assistant Zhou Fei and dedicated VAR official Fu Ming, made history by becoming the first all-Chinese crew to officiate a World Cup game when they took charge of the Group E encounter between Ecuador and Curacao on June 20.

Ma delivered a solid performance as the match referee in the 0-0 draw at Kansas City Stadium, issuing one yellow card to Ecuador and five to Curacao. He was also involved in the Group I match with Norway and France on June 26 as the fourth official, while Zhou acted as reserve assistant referee.

It represents the most significant World Cup involvement by a Chinese match official in more than two decades.

"Someone had told me that I am too old to make it to the World Cup again after the last edition in Qatar," the 47-year-old Ma, who served only as a fourth official in 2022, told China Central Television before this year's tournament. "I just want to prove them wrong and show the quality of Chinese officials."

He sure did, as well as all the other individuals and groups from China having contributed to the quadrennial celebration of the world's most popular sport.

It's now up to the Chinese team to fill in the last missing piece.

The global governing body stays optimistic.

"There is so much potential to be unlocked across China, and they have such an important role to play within the region and as a FIFA member," Mattias Grafstrom, secretary-general of FIFA, said during a visit to Beijing in May.



Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:57 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:59 PM

Cultural outreach
Chinese creative industries attract global audiences
LIFE, PAGE 13



Nation to boost influence of education
CHINA, PAGE 11



France advances
Mbappe's penalty sinks Paraguay in heated 1-0 win
SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 MONDAY, JULY 6, 2026

Safeguards in pipeline for e-commerce

Amendments would provide legal basis for countersteps against foreign entities

By **CHENG YU**
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

China proposed amendments on Saturday to its e-commerce law that would, for the first time, build a solid legal basis for taking reciprocal countermeasures against foreign entities that impose discriminatory restrictions on Chinese e-commerce companies.

The draft amendments, which were jointly released by the State Administration for Market Regulation and the Ministry of Commerce, represent the first major revision to China's e-commerce law since it took effect in 2019.

One of the biggest changes is the new countermeasure provision, which lays the legal groundwork for China to take reciprocal actions against countries, regions or entities that adopt discriminatory measures targeting Chinese e-commerce businesses.

The proposal would empower Chinese authorities with legal justifications, under China's unreliable entity list, to investigate foreign entities that harm the legitimate interests of Chinese companies, and would impose corresponding restrictions when deemed appropriate.

Hong Yanqing, a professor at the Beijing Institute of Technology's School of Law, said, "The significance of the new provision lies not only in creating stronger countermeasures than those already available under existing laws, but also in establishing a clear legal entry point for addressing discriminatory practices in the e-commerce sector."

"When foreign measures discriminate against Chinese e-commerce businesses through platforms, payment, logistics, data, cloud services, advertising, app distribution and supply chain compliance mechanisms, the legal framework will be able to identify and respond to such practices in accordance with the law," he said.

Hong said that introducing countermeasure provisions reflects a broader trend among major economies. The European Union, for example, has adopted a wide range of response measures, including restrictions on trade in services as well as limits on the protection or commercial use of intellectual property.

The EU measures "extend across services trade, investment, financial services, government procurement, intellectual property and supply chain-related activities. E-commerce and digital trade sit at the intersection of all these areas, making them particularly vulnerable to such restrictions," he said.

Regarding China's draft amendments, Hong said that "rather than relying on catch-all legal provisions or ad hoc policy responses in individual cases, the amendments clarify the triggering conditions, regulatory responsibilities and procedural principles in advance. This makes it easier to distinguish between legitimate commercial activities and politically motivated exclusion, enabling foreign-invested companies, platform operators and cross-border e-commerce businesses to make informed compliance decisions".

Beyond overseas protection, the revisions also strengthen enforcement power against platform operators in the e-commerce sector.

Maximum fixed fines for certain violations would increase from 2 million yuan ($295,000) to 5 million yuan. For particularly serious offenses that result in severe social consequences, regulators would be allowed to impose fines of up to 5 percent of a company's previous year's revenue, replacing the current fixed penalty.

Xue Jun, director of Peking University's e-commerce law research center, said that the draft amendments do not simply increase penalties for e-commerce operators but also introduce more flexible enforcement mechanisms.

"For example, ordering a business to suspend operations can have a significant impact on its continued operation. The amendments therefore introduce additional enforcement options, including suspending new user registrations or halting specific business activities," he said.

"This allows enforcement measures to be better aligned with the severity of the violation, ensuring that the punishment is proportionate to the misconduct," he added.

*See **E-commerce,** page 3*

Bidding farewell





Left: A man attends a funeral ceremony for Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's late supreme leader, in Tehran, Iran, on Saturday. Funeral prayers for the late leader began at the Imam Khomeini Grand Mosalla prayer hall on Saturday morning, drawing huge crowds from across the country. SHADATI / XINHUA **Right:** Mourners gather at the Grand Mosalla to pay their final respects to Iran's late supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in Tehran on Sunday. AFP

US marks 250th Independence Day

By **BELINDA ROBINSON** in Washington
belindarobinson@chinadailyusa.com

Americans marked the nation's 250th Independence Day in the capital on Saturday amid extreme heat and a charged political atmosphere, as United States President Donald Trump addressed a crowd on the National Mall before a massive firework display was held, following hours of delay due to an incoming storm. Yet for many, the milestone also sparked reflections on national pride and political divisiveness.

The event to commemorate the birth of America began after storms prompted a roughly two-hour evacuation of the National Mall just after 7 pm Washington time.

Trump spoke to a large crowd of people inside a cordoned-off area with heavy security, overlooked by the Washington Monument. Thousands more people lined the streets nearby, unable to get in.

He spoke of iconic and challenging times in US history and, to illustrate his point, used flags such as one from Abraham Lincoln's casket and another that was on the plane with the Wright Brothers.

Throughout the activities marking the milestone in the nation's story, revelers all across the East Coast battled extreme, brutally hot temperatures of 43 C to 46 C, the National Weather Service said.

A woman named Gail, 75, from Virginia, visited the White House during the Fourth of July weekend with her husband, her son and daughter-in-law. She said that she had found the extreme heat hard to manage, adding that it was even tougher on her husband.

Earlier, on Saturday morning, the city's National Independence Day Parade, hosted by the National Park Service, was canceled due to an extreme heat warning from the weather service.

Also in the area, dozens of members of the white nationalist group Patriot Front wearing face masks and carrying Confederate battle flags held a march. No arrests were reported, according to the Metropolitan Police Department, The Associated Press reported on Saturday.

Local subway stations were packed, and organizers of the celebrations on the National Mall in Washington, DC added water and cooling stations along with medical support at the fair to keep revelers cool.

Amid the party-like atmosphere, throngs of people in Washington were met with a heavy security presence estimated to include thousands of law enforcement officers, agents and 5,000 National Guard troops along with military-style vehicles, the AP reported.

The White House could barely be seen by visitors, as it was barricaded behind high black metal gates.

Elsewhere, at least eight people, including four children, were shot and injured late on the US Independence Day holiday in New York City's Coney Island neighborhood, ABC News said on Sunday, citing the New York City Police Department.

Among the injured were two men, two women, and four children, ages 14, 12, 7 and 6. All were taken to hospitals. Seven victims were listed in stable condition, while a 21-year-old woman was in critical condition.

Authorities said a firearm was recovered at the scene, but no arrests had been made so far.

Amid the nation's 250th birthday, Americans also reflected on divisiveness in politics as well as national pride.

"Well, our leaders need to get their act together and be able to just talk," said Randy Tennant, 78, from Syracuse, New York. "They don't talk now. They just argue. They put each other down; 25, 30 years ago, they used to talk together."

Only four in 10 American adults surveyed said they felt "proud" about the country's 250th anniversary, according to an April poll by The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

According to the latest Gallup poll, only 46 percent of Americans believe everyone has an equal opportunity to achieve the American Dream.

"I would say America, 250 years old, is in a midlife crisis, for sure," Ryan Hilligoss, a New York resident, told China Daily. "With all the oligarchy that's going on, with the economics, the American Dream is very limited."

Other visitors expressed mixed feelings about the milestone, saying that the anniversary offered an opportunity to both celebrate the country's achievements and reflect on its economic and political challenges.

"I think the 250th year represents growth, different perspectives, divisiveness, all the above," said Shuba Maniram, another New York resident.

Peter Christian, who lives in California, said two major problems confronting the country are widening wealth disparities and a growing unwillingness to compromise. "Wealth disparity is causing a serious problem," he said.

Chelsea Ge in San Francisco and Shi Guang in New York contributed to this story.

WORLD WATCH
By Eduardo Arana Ysa

Future of humanity hinges on AI rules

Artificial intelligence has evolved from machine learning toward deep learning, becoming a transformative force that increasingly shapes our societies. However, this has also generated growing concerns about ethics, governance and human rights.

At the AI Impact Summit held in New Delhi, India, in February, the problems posed by the rapid deployment of AI were viewed from the perspective of the democratization of access to AI resources, which may be regarded as a new right. According to this new right, AI must have a clear social orientation directed toward basic sectors such as education, health and agriculture, and technological security must regulate those applications that pose an existential risk.

It was in this context that Secretary-General of the United Nations Antonio Guterres stated that "the future of artificial intelligence cannot be decided by a handful of countries or left to the whims of a few billionaires".

The human dimension of this debate was the focus of Magnifica Humanitas, Pope Leo XIV's first encyclical letter, which, while acknowledging that technological development has significantly improved human living conditions, notes that it has also revealed the ambiguity of tools that can cause harm when not oriented toward good.

He cautions that emerging technologies, interwoven into the fabric of daily life, are shaping decision-making processes and deeply affecting the collective imagination, and "never has humanity had such power over itself".

With new technologies opening up what the pope described as "a horizon extending in directions that are imaginable but not yet fully predictable", this is already a reality that affects national security, industrial policy and trade, shaping a new geopolitical scenario — in short, a new world order.

*See **AI,** page 3*



INSIDE
Food security synergy
Global Views, page 8

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN ASIA NEWS NETWORK
China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved
Newsstand prices:
US $1 Canada C$1; UK 1£ EU 1€
Kenya 50 Kenya Shilling
Asia Pacific: Thailand 120 thb; Philippines 120 php; Myanmar 2000 kyat; Japan 210 yen; Dubai 10 dirham; Pakistan 300 rupee

PLUSH TOY HAS EAGER TOURISTS FLOCKING TO URUMQI

After viral clips, cuddly sheep might be starting to outnumber the real thing in northwestern China

By **FANG AIQING** and **MAO WEIHUA** in Urumqi

A new craze has swept through Urumqi and is moving quickly across Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.

An army of plush toy sheep has formed a stronghold in the Erdaoqiao community of Tianshan district, a century-old grassroots trading hub for ethnic products and a popular tourist hot spot.

Visitors stepping into the landmark Xinjiang International Grand Bazaar, or the nearby Jinquan mall, will find themselves immersed in a shepherd's dream — surrounded by squishy, well-appointed lambs.

The uninitiated might even start to wonder: Do the sheep now flooding the streets of Urumqi outnumber those grazing on the vast, magnificent grasslands of Narat or Bayanbulak?



Abdulla Amirila (left) decorates a plush toy sheep for visitors at the Xinjiang International Grand Bazaar in Urumqi, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, on June 11. QIN MEIHUA / FOR CHINA DAILY

The particular species romping, unfettered, through the regional capital has a disarming smile, big round eyes and wears Uygur or Kazak headgear, gauzy skirts or Xinjiang's iconic Atlas silk, and can often be found covered in colorful, shiny gem-like accessories.

It doesn't have a formal name yet. Some call it the "Xinjiang Labubu", but that doesn't do justice to the tens of thousands of iterations from across the region and beyond.

Each sheep is tailor-made. The buyer chooses the decorations and tells the vendor how they want their toy sheep styled, and each one is expertly assembled on the spot.

At the epicenter of this woolly mammoth of a trend is 19-year-old Abdulla Amirila.

*See **Toy,** page 3*

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:59 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:59 PM

INDEPTH

'EastDiet' — a homegrown way to better health

Study indicates China's eastern coastal eating habits can lower risk of obesity, heart disease

By LI YINGXUE
liyingxue@chinadaily.com.cn

At neighborhood markets in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, summer mornings begin long before the city has fully woken.

Stalls brim with freshly harvested lotus seed pods, leafy greens glistening with dew, seasonal mushrooms, freshwater fish from nearby rivers and ponds, and tofu and vegetables that have long been staples of local kitchens.

For generations, these foods have simply been part of everyday life in the eastern coastal region south of the Yangtze River. They were never marketed as "superfoods" or assembled according to a scientifically designed nutrition plan. Rather, they emerged naturally from a landscape rich in waterways, fertile farmland and a deep respect for the seasonal availability of produce.

Now, modern science is looking at whether this traditional way of eating may offer important lessons for the future of public health.

A study recently published in Nature Health has identified what researchers call the "EastDiet" — an eating pattern associated with lower risks of obesity and cardiovascular disease and rooted in the food traditions of China's eastern coastal region.

Led by Professor Zhu Shankuan at Zhejiang University's School of Public Health, the study was conducted in collaboration with the National Institute for Nutrition and Health under the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the Nutrilite Health Institute.

The findings suggest that people who adhere to this diet have a roughly 22 percent lower risk of major adverse cardiovascular events, and a 17 percent lower risk of central obesity. Among men, the protective effect was even stronger, with cardiovascular risk reduced by as much as 36 percent.

What makes the discovery even more interesting is that the EastDiet was not created in a laboratory or developed as a meal plan. Instead, researchers identified it by analyzing the eating habits of thousands of ordinary people.

The study seeks to answer an increasingly important question: beyond the Mediterranean diet, is there a healthy diet deeply rooted in Chinese culture and lifestyle that can also be validated by modern science?

Zhu said this question was the starting point of the research.

"The concept of the EastDiet was not something we designed ourselves," he said. "We didn't begin with a predetermined answer and ask people to follow it. We wanted to see whether a healthier dietary pattern already existed within the real population."

A real-world recipe

For decades, discussions about healthy eating habits have largely revolved around the Mediterranean diet.

Rich in olive oil, nuts, whole grains, fruits, vegetables and seafood, the diet has been linked to lower risks of cardiovascular disease and metabolic disorders, making it one of the most widely recommended dietary models in public health.

But China's culinary traditions, food systems and eating habits differ dramatically from those of the Mediterranean region. From the hearty stews of the northeast and the spicy cuisine of Sichuan and Chongqing to Cantonese soups and the freshwater specialties of the eastern coastal region, China's food culture is far too diverse to fit neatly into an imported framework.

If healthy eating should be grounded in everyday life, could China already have its own healthy diet?

Seeking answers, Zhu's team turned to existing data.

The study drew on the WELL-China cohort, which recruited nearly 10,000 residents from three urban districts of Hangzhou between 2016 and 2019. Researchers followed 8,931 healthy adults for an average of 6.3 years.

Rather than deciding in advance which foods were healthy, the team employed an unsupervised clustering approach, allowing patterns to emerge naturally from data based on the consumption of 22 food groups.

Two major dietary patterns surfaced. Nearly 46.8 percent of participants fell into one distinct cluster, which researchers named the EastDiet.

The pattern was characterized by higher consumption of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, nuts, dairy products and eggs; greater intake of seafood and freshwater fish; more soy products, mushrooms and starchy root vegetables such as sweet potatoes, taro and lotus root; and lower consumption of refined grains, fried foods, red meat, processed meat and alcohol.

Shi Yuwei, the paper's first author and a doctoral student at Zhejiang University, said the logic behind the EastDiet is straightforward.

"It is essentially a diet with more plant-based foods, more whole grains replacing refined staples, a greater diversity of high-quality protein sources, and less processed food and excessive red meat," Shi explained.

The pattern aligns closely with modern nutritional recommendations, yet it was not invented by nutrition scientists. "It has always existed in Chinese daily life," Zhu said.

What makes region special?

A closer look at the diet reveals unmistakable characteristics of China's eastern coastal region.

Freshwater fish and aquatic products, tofu and other soy foods, bamboo shoots, mushrooms, lotus root, taro and a wide variety of seasonal vegetables all feature prominently in the dietary pattern.

Yu Bin, founder of the Michelin two-star restaurant Jie Xiang Lou in Hangzhou, said this is hardly surprising.

The diet, he said, was shaped not by health-conscious planning but by geography and generations of accumulated culinary wisdom. "Hangzhou places tremendous emphasis on *terroir* (the combination of soil, climate, and sunlight) and seasonal freshness," Yu said.

In the eastern coastal region's culinary tradition, the changing seasons dictate not only the landscape but also what is put on the dining table.

Spring brings shepherd's purse, Indian kalimeris and bamboo shoots. Summer offers lotus seed pods, water caltrops and tender freshwater delicacies. Autumn is the season of lake crabs and aquatic produce, while winter features winter bamboo shoots and preserved foods.

This seasonal rhythm naturally increases dietary diversity, a characteristic increasingly recognized by nutrition researchers as a hallmark of healthy eating.

Modern nutritional science suggests that good health rarely comes from eating a single "superfood". Instead, it emerges from a varied and balanced diet.

The traditional food culture of China's eastern coastal region appears remarkably consistent with contemporary understandings of healthy eating.

The region's dense network of rivers and lakes has also shaped its protein sources. Unlike many regions where livestock has historically dominated the dinner table, freshwater fish, shrimp and other aquatic products have long played a central role in local diets. Soy products such as tofu, dried bean curd and tofu sheets further diversify protein intake.

What may appear to be ordinary dietary choices today, researchers argue, form the nutritional backbone of the EastDiet.

The study also uncovered a culturally intriguing feature: people adhering to the EastDiet generally preferred lighter flavors. For many consumers accustomed to heavily seasoned food, "light" flavors are often associated with blandness.

Yu disagrees. "People should be able to taste the ingredient itself," he said. "Freshness comes from the ingredient. Seasoning should be restrained."

This philosophy has long shaped Hangzhou cuisine, where steaming, braising, poaching and gentle simmering are widely used to highlight natural flavors rather than mask them.

What traditional cooks describe as *qingdan xianhua* — light, fresh and smooth — is, in essence, respecting the ingredient's original taste.

Remarkably, this culinary philosophy aligns closely with modern nutritional advice to reduce excessive salt, sugar and ultra-processed foods.

Unlike the Mediterranean diet, which relies heavily on olive oil, China's eastern coastal food culture developed its own form of what might be called "subtraction cooking" — preserving natural flavors while minimizing unnecessary calories and sodium.

Microbes matter

If culinary traditions explain how the EastDiet emerged, biomedical science is beginning to explain why it may be beneficial.

The researchers found significant associations between the EastDiet and 96 circulating blood metabolites. They also identified 21 gut microbial genera linked to the dietary pattern.

Many of these microbes are involved in the fermentation of dietary fiber and the production of short-chain fatty acids, compounds increasingly associated with reduced inflammation, improved metabolic health and cardiovascular protection.

The study further found higher levels of several beneficial metabolites among EastDiet followers, including indole-3-propionic acid (IPA), a gut-derived compound that has attracted growing attention for its potential protective effects against cardiometabolic disease.

Together, the findings suggest a biological pathway linking diet, gut microbes, metabolism and disease risk.

Nutritionist Gu Zhongyi was not surprised by the results. "Food shapes the gut microbiome," he said. "The foods people eat over time select certain microbial communities, and those microbes in turn influence metabolism."

At the same time, Gu cautioned against overinterpreting the findings. "This remains an observational study," he said. "Further randomized controlled trials are needed before causality can be firmly established."

Still, he believes the study's greatest strength lies in its real-world relevance.

"This isn't an idealized dietary intervention designed in a laboratory," he said. "It reflects what people are actually eating. Seeing a roughly 20 percent health benefit under real-life conditions is already very meaningful."

Cost-effective benefits

For ordinary consumers, the value of the EastDiet lies less in complex metabolic pathways than in its practicality. Gu argues that the diet offers not a rigid menu but a set of principles that can be adapted to modern life.

One of the most important lessons, he said, is reducing reliance on refined carbohydrates.

The EastDiet incorporates a variety of root vegetables, including sweet potatoes, taro and lotus root, to replace some of the refined rice and wheat products that dominate many modern diets.

This simple substitution can increase fiber intake, stabilize blood sugar levels and provide fuel for beneficial gut microbes. Meanwhile, tofu, dried bean curd, mushrooms and other traditional ingredients remain affordable and widely available throughout China.

"They are among the most cost-effective health foods you can find," Gu said.

For young urban professionals increasingly dependent on food delivery services, he recommends focusing on achievable improvements rather than perfection. "The first step is finding reliable restaurants," he said.

He also encourages consumers to ensure each meal contains vegetables and quality protein while limiting fried foods and heavily seasoned dishes.

"Healthy eating doesn't have to be expensive, nor does it require a complete lifestyle overhaul," Gu said. "Small changes sustained over time often produce the biggest results."

A Chinese model

To determine whether the EastDiet was unique to Hangzhou, researchers subsequently validated the findings in an independent cohort spanning multiple Chinese cities.

The results were strikingly consistent. Both the dietary pattern itself and its association with lower risks of central obesity were replicated across the validation cohort.

The findings suggest that the EastDiet may represent more than a regional eating habit. It could serve as the foundation for a broader Chinese framework for healthy eating.

The research team has already extended follow-up data through early 2026 and plans to develop an EastDiet scoring system that can be used in future intervention studies and public health assessments.

Zhu said the study's significance extends beyond nutrition science.

For decades, discussions about healthy eating in China have often looked outside the country for answers. This research suggests that some of those answers may already exist within China's own culinary traditions.

"We can think of the EastDiet as a Chinese version of the Mediterranean diet," Zhu said. "But unlike a diet that was designed, this one grew naturally out of the real lives of Chinese people."

From the fish, lotus roots and soy foods of China's eastern coastal region to the metabolomic maps and microbiome analyses of modern laboratories, the EastDiet represents more than a new scientific concept.

It is a rediscovery of a way of eating that has existed for generations — one that modern science is only now beginning to measure, understand and validate.

As dietary habits around the world become increasingly homogenized and chronic diseases continue to rise, the evidence emerging from China's own dining tables may offer a new vision of healthy eating for the future.







Above: The EastDiet is characterized by higher consumption of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, nuts, seafood and freshwater fish, soy products, mushrooms and lower intake of refined grains, fried foods, red meat, processed meat and alcohol. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY
Below: Consumers select fresh vegetables at a supermarket in Linyi, Shandong province, in December. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY





A teacher explains the nutrition of dates to children at a kindergarten in Lianyungang, Jiangsu province, in May. WANG CHUN / FOR CHINA DAILY



Children learn the nutritional balance of healthy eating at a kindergarten in Hefei, Anhui province, on Jan 9. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



An elderly resident picks up his balanced meal at a community canteen in Yangzhou, Jiangsu, in August. ZHUANG WENBIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:59 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:59 PM

TOP NEWS

Toy: Style, creativity are key to attracting customers

From page 1

Short videos of Abdulla Amirila, a tall, handsome guy with a slicked-back hairdo, carefully decorating little cuddly sheep while chatting with customers, went viral on social media around mid-May, sparking nationwide sheep hysteria.

Online, these adorable companions now appear aboard flights and bullet trains, traveling across Xinjiang, and then back home with their new owners.

The past two months must have been a whirlwind, but clearly overwhelming. "I'm pretty happy about it," Abdulla Amirila told China Daily.

"I'll get to yours," he said, pointing to one customer, "after I finish yours," he added, pointing to another, in one viral clip where he is surrounded by crowds waiting to buy the sheep toys. After each order, he is usually asked to pose for a group photo.

A basic lamb with headpiece, earrings, necklace and rhinestones takes two or three minutes, and a skirt adds a couple more, pushing it to five or six, said Abdulla Amirila, who turns out about 400 sheep a day. However, he said he hasn't yet run out of ideas. A regular sheep costs 40 yuan ($5.90), while one with a skirt is 60 yuan.

The stall gives out 150 line-up tickets daily from 9:30 am. Each customer is limited to three lambs — one skirted and two regular. Online orders run alongside, with 150 lambs a day being made by Abdulla Amirila or his family.

Ma Bojie, a visitor in his 40s from Tianjin, said he had lined up for two days straight starting at 6 am to snag sheep for family and friends back home. One 41-year-old traveler from Harbin, Heilongjiang province, said she came straight from the airport. After waiting three hours and still in line, she noted it was worth it just to see the toys' handsome creator.

At the Xinjiang International Grand Bazaar's Jianglaicheng cultural-commercial complex, there is an area where visitors can have a go at making their own. Parents come with children, lovers craft shared memories, and some boyfriends can be seen picking accessories and handling glue guns under the watchful eyes of their girlfriends via video calls.

It's hard to tell which of the more than 1,000 business owners at the Jinquan mall came up with the idea of dressing up the lambs, but the competition — a battle of creativity and style — is fierce.

Mamatjan Munup has introduced rarer, curly-fleeced lambs in gray and brown, along with distinctive accessories and purple or navy-blue eyes. Maryamgul Mamat, a housewife-turned-vendor, has been designing and sewing her own Atlas silk skirts for the lambs at home and creating luxurious lamb "couples" for wedding souvenirs, rather than using trinkets commonly sold at Jinquan for decoration.

Her teenage daughter Yusum Mahmut, who helps out during summer break, put it simply: "Everyone has their own style. It's about chemistry. If it clicks, you'll probably like my lambs."

Hu Dongyue contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at fangaiqing@chinadaily.com.cn



People visit the guided-missile destroyer *Nanning* at the Chinese People's Liberation Army Hong Kong Garrison's naval base on Stonecutters Island in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region on Saturday. The showcase event, which concluded on Sunday, featured open-house events and cultural exchange activities. ZHU WEI / XINHUA

HK residents inspired by PLA fleet's visit

By GANG WEN in Hong Kong
gangwen@chinadailyhk.com

Residents of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region have praised the nation's naval power, saying that they feel a strong sense of pride, as two People's Liberation Army Navy warships neared the end of a five-day port call.

A PLA Navy fleet, consisting of the guided-missile destroyer *Nanning* and the guided-missile frigate *Hengyang*, sailed into the waters of the Hong Kong SAR on Thursday morning, a day after the 29th anniversary of the city's return to the motherland. The ships, which docked at the PLA Hong Kong Garrison's naval base at Stonecutters Island, have attracted a large number of visitors and hosted exchange activities featuring open-house events.

Over the weekend, the vessels and their crew welcomed members of the public aboard on guided tours, with 14,000 free tickets snapped up online within minutes.

At a welcoming ceremony on Thursday, Hong Kong SAR Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu said the warships' visit highlights the nation's defense capabilities and maritime responsibilities, boosting residents' national confidence and pride.

He said that the port call — the third of its kind to the SAR in a year — fully demonstrates the central government's "great care, support and high regard" for the city.

The open-house events organized by the fleet allowed residents to experience the country's military strength firsthand, while inspiring patriotism among the younger generation and motivating them to contribute to the nation's rejuvenation, Lee added.

In a message to the SAR government and Hong Kong residents, the fleet conveyed a "deep sense of honor and duty" among its crew, with the hope of strengthening ties and "writing a new chapter together".

Public enthusiasm had been evident even before the ships docked. Crowds had gathered along the waterfront from early Thursday morning, with people saying that they felt a sense of security and pride in the country's military strength.

The fleet held an open session for young people and student groups on Friday. Students of different ages formed long queues outside the Ngong Shuen Chau naval base to board the vessels. Soldiers and officers introduced the warships' operations, briefing the visitors on the main weapons, navigational instruments and missile systems, as well as the crew's quarters.

The visitors also viewed the fast-attack craft, torpedo launchers and helicopter decks.

Law Siu-hei, a final-year undergraduate student at Lingnan University and a member of the Hong Kong Army Cadets Association, described what he saw as "stunning", such as his first impression of the massive warships up close and his tour of their interior facilities.

Having missed previous PLA Navy visits to Hong Kong, Law said he hopes there will be more opportunities in the future for him to witness the PLA Navy's strength firsthand.

During a public tour of the ships on Saturday, a resident surnamed Lam said he had secured a free ticket with the help of his four children.

Another visitor, Samuel, said he was particularly interested in seeing the growth of the nation's defense capabilities.

"Looking back at history, when our country's military power was insufficient, we were invaded by aggressors. Now, with this level of military strength, we can properly protect our own country," he said.

The Macao SAR authorities had also arranged for about 400 residents, including youth groups, teachers, students and families, to tour the warships over the weekend.

The *Nanning* is a domestically-built Type 052D guided-missile destroyer capable of area air defense, anti-ship strikes and anti-submarine warfare, while the *Hengyang*, a Type 054A guided-missile frigate, is equipped for surveillance, anti-surface, anti-air and anti-submarine operations.

The vessels are named after Nanning, the capital of the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, and Hengyang, a major city in Hunan province.

Lesley Liu and Roys Zhang contributed to this story.

AI: More efforts needed to fight hurdles

From page 1

For this reason, the effect of AI on human rights has become one of the defining challenges of our time.

International and regional frameworks — including UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's AI Principles, and the European Parliament's guidance — consistently stress human rights, nondiscrimination, transparency, accountability and respect for human dignity throughout the AI life cycle.

Nevertheless, significant challenges remain. Currently, there is no universal regulatory framework regarding the use of AI; regulatory efforts are important, such as the European Union's AI Act. China has also contributed to the international discussion through the Global AI Governance Initiative, which emphasizes a people-centered approach and international cooperation. In Latin America, more regulations governing AI have been adopted at the national level.

However, the reality remains that AI transcends national borders in the digital sphere, and the limits of AI applications are ultimately determined by the deployment of more advanced AI systems.

Under the influence of algorithms or AI decisions, human rights may be subordinated to efficiency, algorithmic bias and a false sense of objectivity.

The safeguarding of human rights depends on the capacity and willingness of states and their governments to exercise their power in this regard. But humanity appears to be losing its decision-making capacity, its ability to resolve conflicts, and its aptitude to prevent environmental catastrophe. We are in danger of power migrating to those who control the technology or, worse still, of allowing technology itself to decide what is best for humanity.

The next question is whether robots should be granted "human" rights or whether, as some researchers predict, humanity is destined or condemned to evolve into a race of man-machines or machine-men, which will model new rights, new personalities and, therefore, a new society that will incorporate a new intelligent social contract, displacing the traditional Rousseauian social contract and replacing the moral, legal, social, economic and political norms that exist.

In light of these scenarios, the true challenge posed by the rise of AI is not merely technological but profoundly human: to ensure that the expansion of AI strengthens individuals and contributes to the common good, without undermining human dignity, individual autonomy, democratic values, the very essence of states and the fundamental rights on which our societies are founded.

The author is the former prime minister, and former minister of justice and human rights, of the Republic of Peru. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

E-commerce: Companies encouraged to stress on innovation

From page 1

Chinese policymakers have in recent years shifted their focus from regulating internet platforms to promoting the sector's high-quality development, encouraging companies to compete through innovation and service quality rather than price wars.

The current e-commerce law was drafted largely around conventional online retail platforms before the rise of new e-commerce forms.

Therefore, the latest draft amendments cover operators of newer business models, including live-streaming platforms, social commerce and artificial intelligence-enabled e-commerce services.

It also expands legal protections to groups that have become increasingly pivotal to the platform economy, including gig workers such as food delivery riders and ride-hailing drivers.

Scope of injury cover for gig workers widened

Policy serves as a broader push to drive 'employment-friendly' development

By LI LEI
lilei@chinadaily.com.cn

A number of policy measures have been rolled out over the past few months to better protect gig workers, who experts described as the backbone of China's labor force and a vital buffer against unemployment amid economic headwinds.

According to official estimates, over 200 million people are currently engaged in flexible work, of whom about 84 million operate in platform-based roles.

In a landmark move that took effect on Wednesday, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security launched a nationwide program extending work-related injury insurance to gig workers employed in the ride-hailing, instant delivery and intracity freight sectors.

The pilot program, initiated in July 2022, enrolled 29.9 million workers from across 11 major platforms and 17 provinces till the end of June. The ministry announced that additional platform-based occupations will be included in the program by 2027.

Work-related injury insurance is a cornerstone of China's social safety net, forming part of the widely recognized "five insurances" that also include pension, medical, unemployment and maternity coverage.

It is the inherent flexibility of gig workers that exposes them to gaps in social protection. Injury, unemployment and pension insurance premiums of traditional employees are covered by their employers. Platform workers, by contrast, often operate across multiple platforms that typically position themselves as mere information intermediaries — a setup that leaves workers in a precarious legal gray area.

The new occupational injury policy marks a significant departure from tradition by removing the prerequisite that workers must have an established employment relationship to qualify for coverage.

Instead, platforms now pay premiums on a per-order or per-day basis, with coverage triggered the moment a worker accepts a gig.

"To deal with flexibility, we need flexibility," said Li Chang'an, a professor at the University of International Business and Economics' Academy of China Open Economy Studies.

He said that flexible employment represents a dominant form of emerging work models and serves a distinct function in alleviating joblessness. The combination of minimal entry requirements and strong integration with the digital economy is making this type of work especially appealing, particularly to younger individuals.

Dou Liguo, who manages a delivery outlet in Beijing, has witnessed these changes firsthand. In 2013, his coverage area was four times larger than what it is today, yet he had only 20 couriers on his team. Now, operating in a much smaller territory in Fangshan district, he needs more than 30 couriers to meet the daily demand.

Gao Qijie, 31, who lives in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, turned to ride-hailing in early 2023 after the supermarket where he worked closed down. "I only have a middle school education. The entry threshold for ride-hailing is lower than other jobs, and the hours are much more flexible," he said. While he worries about the platforms not sharing pension and medical insurance costs, for him the job is a lifeline against unemployment.

Jiang Ying, a labor law professor at China University of Labor Relations, called flexible employment a "shock absorber" in times of economic turbulence. "Food delivery, ride-hailing and livestreaming can quickly absorb displaced workers, offering transitional income and staving off mass unemployment," she said.

The nation's support for gig workers is part of a broader push to build an "employment-friendly" development model — a concept first introduced in the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) and reaffirmed in this year's Government Work Report, which places "stable employment" first among four key stability goals, followed by stable businesses, markets and expectations.

In June, the State Council, China's Cabinet, unveiled a plan to put the "employment first" strategy into action over the 2026-30 period. Among other measures, the blueprint pledges to promote the sound development of flexible work, broaden development channels, strengthen public services and protect workers' rights.

The latest expansion of workplace injury coverage addresses one of the most pressing concerns for gig workers: Despite facing high risks linked to algorithmic management, many lack a clear employer and have long remained unprotected.

In recent years, authorities have stepped up efforts to rein in platform algorithms that undermine gig workers' pay, rest, safety and right to information and participation.

Regulators have launched special campaigns to tackle recurring issues related to algorithms adopted by major platforms, pushed platforms to lower commission rates and moved to eliminate or reduce fines.

Officials are also advocating stronger protection during severe weather, capping maximum working hours to prevent overwork, and pressing platforms to revise labor rules to ensure algorithms treat workers more equitably.

Front-line workers said more can be done. Xiao Hailin, a 33-year-old FedEx employee in Beijing, started delivering part-time for Meituan in May. He works two to three hours most evenings, earning an extra 1,000 yuan a month, and limits himself to two orders per shift for safety. He said platform delivery windows are often too short, encouraging risky riding.

Dou, the delivery outlet manager, noted that platform algorithms pre-calculate daily mileage and order volumes, and that penalties are steep for late deliveries or procedural errors — 50 yuan per overdue delivery, he said.

Guo Yuhe contributed to this story.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn

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

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108
529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1864

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:59 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:59 PM

WORLD IN FOCUS



Back-to-back 7.2 and 7.5 tremors leave over 2,900 dead, millions displaced in Venezuela's worst quake in a century

Rescuers and volunteers search for possible victims in Caraballeda, La Guaira, Venezuela, on June 28, following the twin earthquakes. MAURICIO VALENZUELA / AFP

Double Strike

Double earthquakes in Venezuela struck just 39 seconds apart on June 24. This rapid one-two punch decimated the country's infrastructure, leaving at least 2,954 people dead by Saturday, marking the strongest to hit the South American nation in more than a century.

The initial 7.2 magnitude earthquake weakened hundreds of buildings. The second, stronger 7.5 magnitude quake hit less than a minute later, causing structures that were already compromised to suffer catastrophic, total collapses. Both ruptures occurred at very shallow depths of roughly 10 kilometers.

According to the United Nations, many residential and commercial structures in Caracas and the hard-hit coastal state of La Guaira were not built using earthquake-resilient engineering practices.

"Approximately 58,870 buildings were likely damaged or destroyed across the affected region" based on satellite radar data gathered on June 25, the day after the earthquakes, according to researchers Corey Scher and Jamon Van Den Hoek of Oregon State University.

Tens of thousands of people were still reported missing, in a South American country already mired in economic crisis and political limbo after the US forcibly seized then-president Nicolas Maduro in January.

Local hospitals are entirely overwhelmed, forcing international rescue teams and the UN to quickly scale up operations. Emergency workers are hampered by widespread mobile network and internet outages, as well as chaotic, debris-clogged roads, according to the UN.

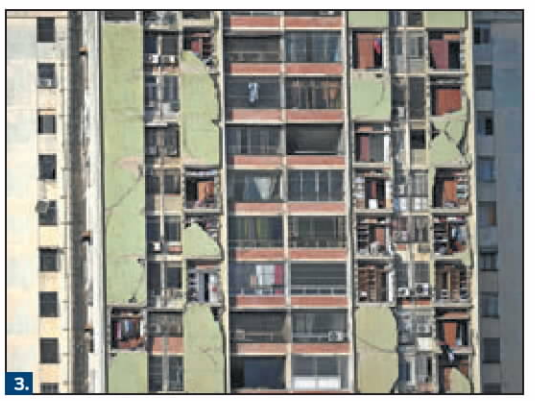
Millions more people are feared to be lacking sanitation and other basic needs after one of Latin America's most devastating earthquakes.

The UN migration agency said that based on population and damage data, up to 6.76 million people could be affected, and would require shelter, water, sanitation, healthcare and essential relief items. The UN estimated $6.7 billion in physical damage from the earthquakes — equivalent to 6 percent of Venezuela's GDP.

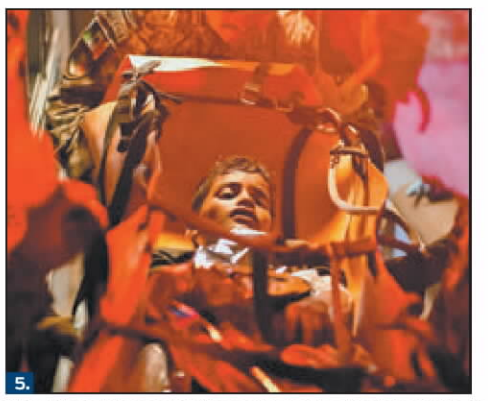
AGENCIES VIA XINHUA


1.


2.


3.


4.


5.


6.


7.


8.


9.

1. Rescue workers carry a man on June 28 from the rubble of a building that collapsed in the earthquakes that struck La Guaira, Venezuela. MATIAS DELACROIX / AP
2. A boy sleeps outside earthquake-damaged homes in Catia La Mar, Venezuela, on June 28. PEDRO MATTEY / AP **3.** A partially collapsed building in Catia La Mar on June 28. JUAN BARRETO / AFP
4. People watch a rescue team in La Guaira on June 29. GABY ORAA / REUTERS **5.** A 13-year-old child is rescued by the Mexican rescue team in La Guaira on June 27. MAXWELL BRICENO / REUTERS
6. People reach out to receive supplies from volunteers in La Guaira on June 30. **7.** A clown plays with children who lost their homes in Catia La Mar on June 29. PHOTOS BY MATIAS DELACROIX / AP
8. Children rest at a temporary shelter in La Guaira on June 29. MAXWELL BRICENO / REUTERS **9.** Rescuers and volunteers rest on the rubble in La Guaira on June 28. MIGUEL MEDINA VIA REUTERS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:59 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:59 PM

WORLD

Trump holds calls with Putin, Zelensky

Conversations discuss conflict in Ukraine amid fresh drone strikes



Workers stand near charred vehicles at a parking lot in the eastern Zaporizhzhia region on Saturday, following a Russian airstrike. REUTERS

MOSCOW — US President Donald Trump spoke with his Russian and Ukrainian counterparts Vladimir Putin and Volodymyr Zelensky on Saturday to discuss the conflict in Ukraine ahead of a NATO summit in Ankara, the Kremlin and Zelensky said.

The calls were both to mark the 250th birthday of the United States, both sides said.

"This conversation, the fourth such exchange this year, was naturally not merely a routine protocol exchange but business-focused and highly constructive," said Yury Ushakov, the Kremlin's foreign policy aide.

"It allowed for a frank discussion of pressing issues on the bilateral and international agenda," Ushakov said.

"The presidents naturally addressed the issue of a settlement in Ukraine, taking into account, in particular, Donald Trump's upcoming participation in the NATO summit in Turkiye on July 7 and 8," he said.

Ushakov said the two leaders also discussed issues including Iran and the Middle East during the 85-minute call.

During the dialogue, Putin laid out the real battlefield situation, where Russian troops are advancing along the full line of contact. Ushakov said European countries hold a flawed perception of the overall dynamics and ground realities along the contact line amid the Ukraine conflict.

On bilateral ties, Putin and Trump underscored the importance of sustaining consistent communication, including on military-political and economic fronts, he said.

"There exist vast prospects for mutually beneficial cooperation between our two nations in these spheres," he said. "Trump stressed that an early resolution to the Ukraine conflict would serve as a prerequisite to unlocking such cooperation."

Earlier on Saturday, Zelensky said he and Trump had also discussed the more than four years of conflict in Ukraine, calling it a "very good phone call".

"President Trump and I discussed the current situation on the frontline as well as our diplomatic efforts. There is a real prospect to put an end to this war, and America's resolve is decisive," he wrote on X.

"We have agreed to continue these discussions during the NATO summit in Ankara," he added.

Heads of state and delegations from 32 countries, including Trump, are expected to arrive in Ankara starting Tuesday for the summit.

Front-line news

On the front lines, Putin said on Friday that Russian forces have completed the "full liberation" of the Lugansk People's Republic.

The elimination of Ukrainian military formations continues across the territories of the Donetsk People's Republic, as well as the Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions, he added.

Also on Friday, Russia said its forces had taken full control of the city of Konstantinovka in eastern Ukraine.

"The main news is that Konstantinovka has been completely taken," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov was quoted by RIA Novosti as saying on Friday. The city is a key stronghold located in Donetsk.

Following the announcement, Putin said on Friday that the capture "carries great strategic significance", while visiting one of the temporary command posts of the joint force grouping.

However, Ukraine denied on Saturday Russia's announcement. Ukrainian army spokesman Andriy Kovalyov told Agence France-Presse that Konstantinovka remained under its control, while Zelensky dismissed Moscow's announcement as "a lie".

"The situation remains difficult", Kovalyov said, but the city "is under the control of the Ukrainian Defense Forces".

The conflicting claims came after Russia also said Ukrainian drones had struck its second-largest city, St. Petersburg, and the surrounding region.

St. Petersburg Governor Alexander Beglov said the city of 6 million had been subjected to a "large-scale" drone attack, with the city's oil terminal struck. He said there were no casualties and that the aftermath of the attack had been dealt with.

Alexander Drozdenko, governor of the surrounding Leningrad Region, said a drone had struck the area of Vysotsk Port, about 170 kilometers northwest of St. Petersburg on the Baltic Sea. The port handles oil, grain, coal and liquefied natural gas.



Passengers wait for the departure of delayed flights at Khrabrovo Airport north of Kaliningrad, Russia, on Saturday, following a Ukrainian drone attack. GUILLAUME DECAMME / AFP

Drozdenko said 72 drones had been shot down over the region, and there was minor damage in several settlements.

In Moscow, Mayor Sergey Sobyanin said air defense forces had shot down 28 drones targeting the capital since the beginning of Friday.

In his latest update, Sobyanin said eight more drones heading toward Moscow were shot down on Friday night.

"Emergency service crews are working at the debris site," he said.

XINHUA — AGENCIES

Briefly

OIL MARKET

OPEC+ increases production quotas

Seven OPEC+ members decided on Sunday to again raise oil production quotas as Gulf countries reel from the Middle East war. Ministers from key OPEC+ countries Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iraq, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Algeria and Oman met virtually on Sunday and "decided to implement a production adjustment of 188 thousand barrels per day", a statement said, adding that "this adjustment will be implemented in August 2026". Between the first quarter and May, the combined production by Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Kuwait — three of the seven countries raising their quotas — fell by some 6 million barrels per day, OPEC data showed.

DPRK

Top leader oversees weapons system test

Kim Jong-un, top leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, oversaw on Friday a performance test of the weapons systems of destroyer *Kang Kon*, the Korean Central News Agency reported on Sunday. The destroyer conducted on Friday "a test-fire of strategic cruise missile and a test of major weapons systems such as naval artillery, automatic machine guns and electronic warfare means", the report said. Kim said it is necessary for the country "to further speed up the projects to maintain and steadily expand the reliable war deterrent and capability to fight a war".

DR CONGO

Ebola deaths near 500 as cases rise

The Democratic Republic of Congo has reported 1,528 confirmed Ebola cases, including 492 deaths, as the country's latest outbreak continues to expand. The DR Congo's public health authorities said in a report on Saturday that a total of 239 patients have recovered, while 628 confirmed patients are in isolation or hospitalized. Authorities have also identified 185 suspected cases. The report said weekly confirmed cases have continued to rise, with epidemiological weeks 25 and 26 recording the highest levels, each exceeding 300 cases, indicating continued community transmission.

XINHUA — AGENCIES

Gunfire in US cities replaces holiday fireworks

By **SHI GUANG** in New York
shiguang@chinadailyusa.com

The sound of fireworks over the Fourth of July holiday in many US cities was actually the crack of gunfire.

A police officer in New York was shot in the back of his ballistic vest and injured during an encounter with an 18-year-old who was armed. A second officer was also hurt while arresting the suspect after a foot chase. Police said the two officers were parked in an unmarked vehicle when the armed suspect approached the car, prompting the officers to exit the vehicle and engage with him.

"This has the stop," said Scott Munro, president of the Detective's Endowment Association. "Our members are out there day and night, hours and hours protecting the people of the city of New York, doing a job that they took an oath to take and they need to be respected, and thank God this detective is going home," Munro said at a news conference on Sunday.

The shooting of the officer came after at least eight people were shot in Coney Island, including four children. All were in stable condition, apart from one 21-year-old woman listed as critical. New York police said a masked gunman opened fire on the group, who were having a family barbecue, then fled on foot.

"There is no place for this kind of violence in our city. We will not tolerate it. We will fight it with every single tool at our disposal," New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani said at a news conference.

"As we mourn alongside those whose loved ones have been hurt, let us also recommit ourselves to the work of building a city where every celebration is safe and every holiday is joyful," Mamdani said.

Police are still trying to identify the suspect.

In Chicago, 21 people were shot in a number of incidents, two of whom died, and three others were stabbed.

The most severe incident involved a shooting of six people, who Chicago police said were standing in a crowd when unidentified individuals opened fire on them. The victims, between the ages of 17 and 20, were all listed in good condition.

That shooting occurred just nine minutes after a 17-year-old girl was shot on the same block. The girl remained in critical condition with a gunshot wound to the chest, and police are trying to determine how or if the two incidents are linked.

Chicago police said that over the Fourth of July weekend, 18 people were shot, three of whom died, and two officers were injured.

Authorities said at least 52 people were shot across the country, with five dead so far, the New York Times reported.

According to criminologist James Fox, July 4 and July 5 are the two most violent days of the year in the US.

"Holidays and celebrations, they often involve drinking, sometimes drug use, and unfortunately also guns," Fox told the New York Times. "If there's lots of strangers, altercations and arguments can arise," he said.

This year's soaring temperatures can also be a factor contributing to heated encounters.

Elsewhere in the US:

- Six people were shot and one died in San Antonio, Texas.
- Five people were shot at a party in a suburb of Detroit, Michigan.
- One woman was killed and eight injured in Fort Wayne, Indiana.
- Seven people were injured in Hilton Head, South Carolina when gunfire was exchanged between two groups at a public beach.

In 2024, the latest year with complete data, 44,447 people died from gun-related injuries in the US, according to Pew Research. The largest percentage of those, 62 percent, were suicides, while 35 percent, or 15,364, were homicides, though that is down from a record 20,958 during the COVID peak in 2021.

Of the remaining homicides, 636 involved law enforcement, 450 were accidental, and 404 were undetermined.

Pew Research reported that 76 percent of all homicides in the US in 2024 involved a firearm, and while that is down slightly from recent years, it is still among the highest percentages since 1968, the earliest year for which the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has online records.

Adjusted for population growth, there were 12.8 gun deaths per 100,000 people in 2024, down from the peak of 16.3 per 100,000 in 1974, Pew Research reported.

Envoy hails strong China-Cuba relations

By **SHAO XINYING** and **PAN YIQIAO**



Alberto Blanco Silva

As the Communist Party of China marks its 105th founding anniversary, Cuba's ambassador said China's development has not only validated its own path of modernization, but also anchored a unique, history-defying bond that bridges continents and generations.

Alberto Blanco Silva extended his warmest congratulations to the CPC and the Chinese people, hailing a comradely spirit that has withstood decades of international turbulence.

Having first arrived in China in the mid-1980s, shortly after joining the Communist Party of Cuba, Blanco said he has watched the country's transformation over four decades.

"Without the CPC, there would be no New China," he said. "It proves the success of socialism."

From major cities to rural communities in various Chinese provinces, Blanco sensed that people "have a strong sense of happiness and fulfillment".

He attributed the achievements to the CPC's ability to uphold policy continuity while constantly adapting through theoretical and practical innovation.

In his view, China's modernization has not only improved the lives of its own people but also created opportunities shared with other developing countries and the Global South.

Describing bilateral bonds as "brotherly", the veteran diplomat highlighted a threefold paradigm: equality between nations of different sizes, solidarity between socialist states, and cooperation between China and a Latin American country that has maintained diplomatic ties since 1960.

He believes those principles are not merely in official documents but have been forged through generations of people-to-people exchanges.

Recalling the history of the first Chinese immigrants in Cuba in 1847, Blanco spoke highly of their arduous fight alongside Cubans during the country's wars of independence.

"Not a single Chinese Cuban was a deserter, and not a single one was a traitor," he said, citing the words inscribed on the iconic monument in Havana dedicated to their honor.

Now, he added, Chinese culture has become an integral component of Cuban identity.

Solidarity remains vivid

Such solidarity remains vivid in recent memory. After the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake in Sichuan province, Cuban medical teams rushed to China to assist in rescue efforts despite language barriers.

Many of the interpreters who accompanied them were Chinese students who had studied medicine in Cuba, illustrating how educational exchanges had evolved into a bridge connecting the two peoples during times of crisis, Blanco said.

Education has been one of the cornerstones of bilateral cooperation, he said. Cuba has been welcoming Chinese students, and vice versa.

Between 2006 and 2016, more than 3,000 Chinese students received training in Cuba in fields including medicine, tourism and language studies, he said.

Currently, the vast geographic distance between the two nations is shorter thanks to direct flights, turning the ancient Chinese idiom, "a bosom friend afar brings a distant land near", into a daily reality. With the visa waiver policy, Blanco expects growing exchanges in culture and among young people.

Deeper cooperation in biotechnology, renewable energy and agriculture remains crucial as Cuba continues to withstand the impact of the decades-long United States embargo. China's steadfast support has shown that Cuba "never stood alone", he said.

With 2026 also marking the 90th anniversary of the victory of the Long March of the CPC-led Red Army, Blanco said the endurance and resilience exhibited during that historic journey continue to inspire countries today.

For him, that spirit remains relevant not only to China's future, but also to developing countries seeking their own paths to modernization.

"Our shared history, mutual solidarity and common goals demonstrate an infinite strength," Blanco said. "Together, we are proving the vitality of the socialist cause."

Liu Tianyun contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at shaoxinying@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:59 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:59 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Von der Leyen's China 'ultimatum' another symptom of EU's challenge, not a solution

The irony is glaring. When US President Donald Trump openly threatens 100 percent tariffs on European goods if the European Union dares to tax digital services, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen is reserved — as if Europe deserves its fate.

However, she displays no such "reticence" when it comes to the EU's trade differences with China, declaring that Brussels has "all instruments on the table" unless Beijing delivers "tangible results" by October.

What she seemingly fails to appreciate is that all Western leaders who have employed such maximalist rhetoric regarding trade with China in recent years have eventually sat down for talks to resolve their concerns.

The first talks of the China-EU trade and investment consultation mechanism last week between China's Commerce Minister Wang Wentao and EU Trade Commissioner Maros Sefcovic were exactly that: "intensive, focused and constructive", in Sefcovic's own words. To follow this with belligerent public deadlines is to undermine the very process Von der Leyen claims to champion. It is highly improper, and frankly puzzling, for a politician of her standing and experience.

She may be talking tough to Beijing to divert internal attention from her weak hand in the EU's trade and security dispute with Washington. Last year's trade talks with the US were characterized by EU concessions, inviting sharp criticism from EU capitals. Now, it seems that she is trying to reclaim the mantle of a "defender" of European interests by picking a fight with Beijing shortly after Trump issued new tariff threats to the EU.

But while Von der Leyen issues "ultimatums", she seems out of step with many EU members. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi will wrap up a weeklong tour to Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Norway on Wednesday. He also met Austria's top diplomat in Beijing late last month. In Stockholm, Wang met with the Wallenberg family — pioneers of European investment in China since the 1970s — who pledged to continue to invest in China, deeply engage in China, and integrate into China's market. Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson affirmed support for strengthening dialogue between the EU and China and properly handling differences.

Other discussions between Wang and officials and business representatives in the host countries these days have sent similar signals. Von der Leyen should take heed that individual EU economies and businesses want stable, healthy economic ties with China.

One only has to recall the recent case of Chinese-made electric vehicles to realize that Von der Leyen's "threats" are unwarranted. The dispute stoked by the EU was eventually resolved through negotiation after months of EU blustering.

If some EU policymakers genuinely believe that the bloc's €360 billion ($411.91 billion) trade deficit with China last year represents leverage rather than the EU's own structural weakening of competitiveness in some sectors and its banning of high-tech exports to China, they are indulging in a convenient delusion. With such reasoning, the deficit becomes grounds for launching a trade war should Beijing refuse to yield. Yet if trade deficits were a source of bargaining power, any economy running a "trade imbalance" would have a ready-made "justification" for economic confrontation. The proposition collapses under its own weight.

A trade deficit is not a weapon but a phenomenon — of consumption patterns, industrial capacity, comparative advantage, etc. To treat it as casus belli for a trade war is an admission of analytical failure cloaked in political bravado.

Over the past decades, the EU has enjoyed "comfortable" prosperity partly because Russia provided cheap energy, the US guaranteed its security and China offered a vast market and affordable supplies. Now, under Von der Leyen's leadership, the bloc risks fouling its nest on all three fronts simultaneously.

When China extends its hand to the EU for far-sighted cooperation and global coordination — across trade, green transition, and multilateral governance — certain European politicians respond by stubbornly paddling their oars in the stagnant waters of a zero-sum game, animated by a musty Cold War mentality. Their failure to envision mutual gain and manage differences is a direct contributor to Europe's declining competitiveness.

If the EU shuts out China's competitive green products, it will succeed chiefly in making its own green transition costlier and its industrial base less competitive. In trying to protect itself from Chinese competition, the bloc is poised to damage its own economic future.

The EU's industrial edge has dulled, in no small part because its political class has allowed its strategic judgment to atrophy, mistaking protectionist posturing for statecraft and rhetorical brinkmanship for resolve. In a world that demands agility, they offer rigidity — and call it "principle".

China has years of experience responding to extreme pressure and will strictly defend its legal rights and interests. It is willing to use established consultation channels with the EU for equal-footed talks. But it will never succumb to threats. Von der Leyen's attempt to apply pressure only exposes which side is blinking first. The EU cannot afford to trade its economic future for a display of bravado that fools no one.

If the EU fixates solely on carving up the existing economic pie "equally" with China, while neglecting the far harder task of making that pie larger, it will ultimately find its own slice shrinking — not because China is taking it, but because the EU cannot see the bigger pie.

Deterrent to secessionists and external forces

The China Coast Guard is continuing routine law enforcement patrols in the waters east of China's Taiwan island. The patrols which commenced on June 1 aim to ensure orderly navigation and to safeguard the lawful rights and interests of China, as well as the lives and property of Chinese fishermen.

The patrols also serve as a strong deterrent against the Taiwan secessionist forces and the external forces they seek to rely on.

In another development, Chinese marine researchers carried out a comprehensive environmental survey in waters east of Taiwan island last month to gather scientific data on the region's ecological conditions and support marine conservation efforts. All this indicates that Beijing has placed the waters concerned under a comprehensive management framework.

These measures are necessary to counter the attempt of Japan and the Philippines to initiate their so-called "maritime delimitation talks" over the waters, where China has an exclusive economic zone and continental shelf according to international law.

Together with previous jurisdictional actions by the Chinese central government concerning China's Taiwan region, such as deciding whether it can participate in international bodies in the capacity of an observer, protecting the interests of overseas Taiwan compatriots, and punishing "Taiwan independence" separatist forces, the measures collectively establish a comprehensive system for the central government's substantive jurisdiction over Taiwan.

Enhanced jurisdiction over waters east of Taiwan is a timely, forceful deterrent to those harboring a malicious intention to split the Chinese island from the motherland. Lai Ching-te, the secessionist-minded leader of the Democratic Progressive Party authorities on the island, has shamelessly shown support for the unlawful "delimitation initiative" proposed by Tokyo and Manila.

Clearly, Lai and his secessionist followers have no inclination to wake up from the daydream of relying on external support to advance their agenda.

Raymond Greene, director of the so-called "American Institute in Taiwan", attempted to redefine the conditions for maintaining the "status quo" and cross-Strait dialogue in a recent interview, which demonstrates indulgence of the DPP authorities' fallacious "Taiwan independence" narrative.

In fact, even local media in Taiwan were quick to point out that Greene's remarks run counter to US President Donald Trump's position on the Taiwan question. "We're not looking to have somebody say, 'Let's go independent because the United States is backing us'," Trump said in an interview following his state visit to China in May, adding that he is not looking for US soldiers to "travel 9,500 miles to fight a war" over Taiwan.

Greene's remarks, however, reflect the traditional mindset of the China hawks in Washington. This mindset reinforces the Lai authorities' illusions of "seeking independence through military means" and "by relying on the US".

As Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi urged in a phone conversation with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio last week, the US side should handle Taiwan-related affairs with the utmost prudence, as the Taiwan question has far-reaching implications and even a slight wrong move could affect the whole situation.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

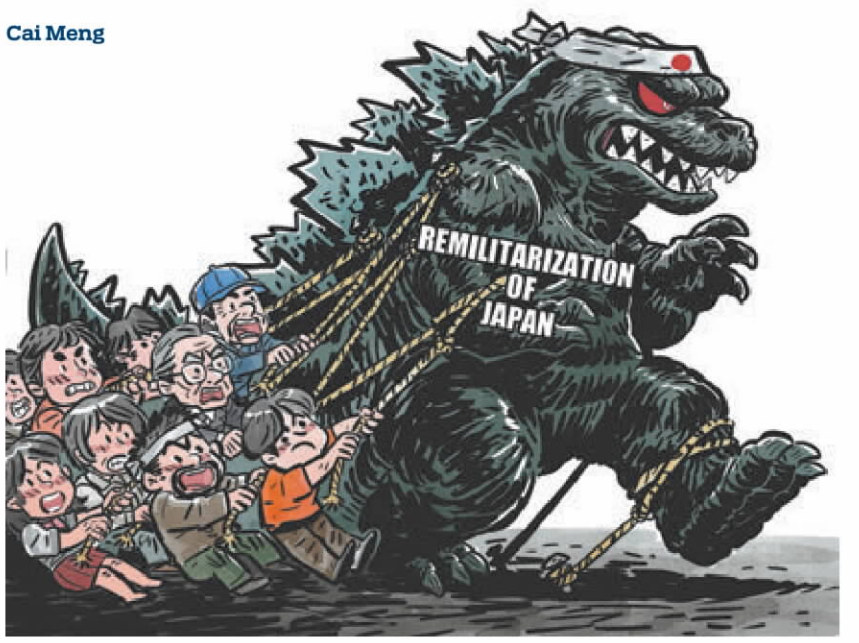
China Daily UK
90 Cannon St, London EC4N 6HA, UK
+44 (0) 207 398 8270
editor@chinadailyuk.com

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

Tokyo reveals how its 'security' choices strain regional stability

Akio Fujii, executive chair of Nikkei's editorial board, recently wrote a second open letter to the US president. In an earlier letter after Washington's "reciprocal tariffs" last April, Fujii had asked whether the policy truly serves US interests, arguing that weaponizing trade might hurt others initially, but will ultimately impose costs on the United States itself.

In the latest letter, Fujii writes that the US is "losing the world's trust" and that its soft power "appears to be declining". For decades, Washington has cast itself as the "principal guardian" of a "rules-based international order". From the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade to the World Trade Organization and the Bretton Woods Institutions, the US embedded its own interests into international rules and presented those as universal principles. However, as the US increasingly uses the political logic of "Make America Great Again" to reshape rules to suit its immediate domestic and strategic interests, its narrative is weakening.

The pattern is visible in a series of recent US actions — from tariff wars to the forcible seizure of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and his wife, and the US-Israeli military campaign against Iran since late February.

This shift affects not only the US' competitors, but also its allies. The prolonged disruption of the Strait of Hormuz demonstrated how the consequences of US policy can quickly spread through energy markets, financial systems and global supply chains, eventually reaching ordinary people worldwide through higher prices, inflation and growing economic insecurity.

Fujii's letter is notable precisely because it reflects an unease emerging from within the US-led system itself: if Washington becomes less bound by the rules it once championed, the "security architecture" built around "US leadership" will also become less predictable.

For Japan, this creates a structural dilemma of its own making. Since the end of World War II, Japan has anchored its security and development in the US-led international system. However, if the US repeatedly treats rules, allies and commitments as expendable, it will eventually exhaust the trust of its allies.

This is the deeper anxiety behind Fujii's letter. Japan is not a distant observer of US unpredictability. It is among the countries most directly exposed to it. The more Washington swings between competing priorities, the more Japan is drawn into the policy shifts, crisis management choices and strategic calculations of its principal ally.

Among Japan's right-wing politicians, the policy direction pursued by Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi is particularly troubling. Instead of responding to uncertainty with restraint, Japan is moving away from its postwar "defensive posture" toward deeper alliance integration and greater reliance on military instruments. Takaichi's erroneous and dangerous remarks on China's Taiwan region, together with the expansion of the country's military capabilities, higher military spending, relaxed arms export restrictions and deepening "security" collusion with the Philippines and other US-aligned partners, show how far Tokyo has gone in remilitarization.

Given its past militaristic aggression, which caused profound suffering across the Asia-Pacific, neighboring countries will naturally question whether Japan's expanding military capabilities signal a further erosion of the postwar constraints.

In seeking "security" by following the US, Japan is placing its "security" in the hands of a country that has become more unilateral, more transactional and less predictable.

The US' 250th anniversary provides an occasion for Washington to rethink its relationship with the world. But instead of reflecting on the consequences of its actions, the US is becoming more unpredictable. At the same time, Japan is becoming more right-leaning. The result is East Asia's security environment is becoming increasingly strained. That is the real anxiety behind Fujii's open letter.

— SONG PING, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

AI governance calls for effective legislation

Editor's note: *China intends to accelerate legislation to improve artificial intelligence governance. Legal Daily spoke with Zhi Zhenfeng, a research fellow at the Institute of Law at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and Dai Xin, deputy dean of the Law School at Peking University, about that. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

China has developed a toolkit of AI governance mechanisms by regulating social media, online gaming, e-commerce and other digital sectors. This has enabled the country to establish an effective legislative approach that is suited to the fast-moving nature of AI.

The approach is marked by China first introducing targeted, sector-specific regulations to address concrete issues, and moving toward a comprehensive national AI law once the necessary conditions are in place.

AI technologies are applied across highly diverse industries with vastly different risk profiles and regulatory needs. Sector-specific legislation therefore provides more precise institutional solutions, avoiding the excessive generality that often accompanies comprehensive legislation. Judicial practice, local legislation and regulatory pilot programs can generate valuable experience and institutional models, laying a solid foundation for future national legislation.

At the moment, legislative priorities should focus on removing institutional barriers that constrain AI development within the existing framework of sectoral legislation, while addressing critical gaps in areas such as data circulation, intellectual property adaptation and the allocation of legal liability.

Over the next three to five years, China's AI legal framework should concentrate on several key priorities. First, it should facilitate the efficient circulation of essential production factors, including data, algorithms and computing power, while establishing clear rules governing the lawful use of training data, data ownership, data transactions and benefit-sharing mechanisms.

Second, China should further improve mechanisms governing algorithm registration, transparency requirements and security assessments, and, when appropriate, elevate these rules from administrative regulations to higher-level legislation in order to strengthen their legal authority and enforceability.

Third, the legal framework should clearly define the responsibilities of AI developers, service providers and users, while improving mechanisms for liability allocation, infringement remedies and dispute resolution to better protect the legitimate rights and interests of individuals and legal entities.

Fourth, efforts should be made to better link AI legislation with the evolving global AI governance architecture. While safeguarding national security, China can deepen international collaboration and contribute Chinese wisdom and solutions to global AI governance.

The agenda framework should guide or require all stakeholders across the AI sector to give due consideration to fundamental social values and the protection of public rights and interests.

At the same time, AI legislation must strike an appropriate balance between stability and flexibility. While establishing clear safety red lines, the legislation should leave adequate room for technological experimentation and industrial innovation. While providing transparent compliance pathways covering data governance, algorithmic models and AI applications, complementary social protection mechanisms should be strengthened to sustain public trust and confidence in AI technologies and their development.

China should deepen its global cooperation in AI research, application and governance, while continuing to build a comprehensive and pragmatic legal and regulatory framework.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:59 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:59 PM

VIEWS

China and the World Roundtable | Joint Efforts for Global Food Security

Editor's Note: *Following the recent meetings between leaders of China and the United States and amid growing concerns about global food security and trade tensions, the 2026 China-US Subnational Cooperation Dialogue: Think Tank Dialogue was organized by the Institute of World Economics and Politics at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing on June 18. It brought together experts and scholars from both countries to discuss Sino-US agricultural cooperation and the resilience of the global food system. Following are excerpts from the discussions.*

Sino-US agricultural cooperation vital for food security

Agriculture can steady China-US relations



Liao Fan is director of the Institute of World Economics and Politics at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

During President Donald Trump's successful visit to China in May, the leaders of the two countries held productive talks and reached important common understandings on agriculture. Both sides agreed to take concrete steps to reduce non-tariff barriers and improve mechanisms for market access for agricultural products.

China and the US both have well-developed agricultural industrial chains and vast agricultural markets. Their competitive agricultural products are also highly complementary, creating broad space for cooperation. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations, agriculture has been an important area of China-US economic and trade cooperation, as well as a key pillar of the broader bilateral relationship.

As one of the world's most important bilateral relationships, China-US relations must be properly managed. Despite the ups and downs in bilateral ties in recent years, agricultural trade between the two countries has shown strong resilience.

Food security is a basic guarantee for human survival and development. Achieving global food security requires not only stronger cooperation among governments, but also the wisdom and input of think tanks.

Against this backdrop, the Think Tank Dialogue on China-US agricultural cooperation carries special significance. It provides an important platform for agricultural experts from both countries to exchange views, engage in candid discussion and offer ideas on deepening agricultural cooperation.

At a time when global food systems face mounting challenges, such dialogue can help the two countries expand common ground, manage differences and contribute to solutions for global food security.

Bilateral cooperation carries global responsibility



Susan Thornton is vice-chair of the United States Heartland China Association.

This dialogue on agriculture takes place at an important moment in Sino-US relations. The recent visit of US President Donald Trump to China, high-level interactions in May, and the 2026 Heartland Connect & US-China Agriculture Roundtable held in Zhengzhou, Henan province, in June show that the two countries share deep concerns and mutual interests in agriculture — not just commercially, but also in education and rural cooperation.

Agriculture is a core link between the two countries. Both China and the US manage large and complex food systems that, despite structural differences, are highly complementary.

Both countries also share the responsibility for global food security. Ensuring a stable and resilient agricultural supply chain requires cooperation rather than isolation, especially as global food systems face increasing pressures.

At the same time, agriculture is confronted with structural challenges, including climate stress, resource constraints, demographic shifts and rural revitalization. These challenges are too complex for one country to solve alone, underscoring the importance of sustained dialogue at different levels.

Youth engagement is a key element of this process. Exchanges between students from China and the US are crucial for building long-term understanding in agriculture and rural development.

Agriculture and food systems are the foundation of human society. Agricultural cooperation is essential for enhancing the resilience and stability of the global food system, especially at a time when uncertainty is increasing. We believe that Sino-US cooperation will shape the future of the world and leave a lasting impact on future generations.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Agriculture as stabilizer in Sino-US relations



Dan Glickman is a former US secretary of agriculture.

Positive working relationships are important in public service. This is particularly true in Sino-US relations, where it is not always possible to reach an agreement on every issue. Serious issues still divide the US and China, but collaboration remains important, particularly in agriculture. Agriculture remains an area where China and the US can find common ground and cooperate effectively. Both countries share common interests in agriculture and face the same challenges, including climate change, drought, floods, and pest outbreaks.

The increasing unpredictability of weather conditions due to climate change has made agricultural production more difficult across the world.

There are significant mutual interests in agricultural trade between the two countries. US farmers export livestock, poultry, soybeans and other agricultural products to China, and there is strong interest in maintaining stable agricultural trade relations with China. Agricultural equipment and machinery are also part of bilateral exchange.

The US and China are not enemies. They may be competitors in some fields, but in many areas their interests are aligned. Cooperation yields greater benefits than confrontation, and maintaining a stable bilateral relationship is therefore very important.

Education exchanges are an important part of the relationship, with Chinese students having a long-standing presence in US agricultural universities.

The Sino-US relationship is of great significance for both nations. As the world's two largest economies, there is broad space for bilateral cooperation in agriculture, science, public health and other fields, despite the competition in certain areas.

Unlocking untapped potential of agricultural cooperation



Huang Jikun is dean of the College of Modern Agriculture at Peking University.

There is immense potential for cooperation between China and the US in agriculture. The two countries can work together in areas such as scientific research, education, trade, and support for agricultural development in less developed regions, particularly Africa. Although this potential has been widely recognized, there has been a decline in momentum in recent years, which highlights the need for stronger engagement and more systematic cooperation.

In science and technology, climate change poses a global challenge that cannot be addressed by one country alone. Agriculture is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and also the sector most affected by climate change.

Therefore, there is substantial room for cooperation in reducing emissions from agriculture and improving adaptation to climate impacts, which would contribute to global food security and agricultural resilience.

Food security and agricultural sustainability are also global issues that require joint efforts.

In biotechnology, there is significant potential for collaboration in areas such as bio-breeding, gene editing, and the industrialization of biotechnology. Policy coordination in these fields is important for supporting agricultural innovation and ensuring stable development of global agricultural trade.

China and the US are highly complementary in agricultural trade. The US has abundant land resources, while China has a large population and limited arable land. This structural complementarity supports trade in key commodities such as soybeans, corn and cotton. Stable import and export expectations are important for both sides and create predictable agricultural markets.

Beyond bilateral relations, cooperation also has potential in supporting agricultural development in Africa and other developing regions. Joint efforts in technology transfer, capacity building, infrastructure development, and the application of biotechnology and data technology could help reduce hunger and improve global food security.

Overall, enhanced communication and more regular exchanges among researchers, enterprises, educators and policymakers from China and the US can translate the cooperation potential into practical outcomes and long-term benefits.

Balancing interdependence and security in agricultural trade



Anna Ashton is the founder of Ashton Analytics.

Sino-US agricultural trade is part of a global system of interdependence that has evolved over decades and continues to deliver clear benefits. Agriculture is not just an economic sector but also a fundamental human necessity. Food security and agricultural stability are essential for every society and are deeply intertwined with global peace and development.

In recent years, however, discussions about interdependence have increasingly been reframed through the lens of security. This shift has contributed to expanding restrictions, particularly in high-technology sectors.

While such measures are often justified as necessary for national security, they also generate broader consequences, impacting other industries and the functioning of global supply chains. Trade is becoming more politicized, and at times even treated as a strategic instrument.

Agricultural trade has not been immune to these dynamics. The tariff measures during the 2018-20 trade tensions and the subsequent responses significantly reshaped commodity flows between major economies.

Despite these disruptions, engagement between Chinese and US agricultural companies, universities, and institutions continues. These interactions suggest that there is a strong foundation for cooperation and a shared interest in stability.

Beyond agriculture, there is significant potential for broader bilateral cooperation. For instance, in public health, China has made notable progress in diabetes prevention.

Its experience could be shared to help reduce systemic risks and improve outcomes on both sides.

China and the US should avoid politicizing agriculture and instead strengthen cooperation to reduce systemic risks. The lesson of 1945 remains relevant: the greatest vulnerability comes from mistrust between parties.

Global agriculture faces fragmentation, rising risks



Han Yang is a senior fellow at the Development Research Center of the State Council.

Global agriculture is entering a phase of uncertainty and fragmentation, where it is being shaped by geopolitics, climate change and rising economic complexity. The recent Sino-US leaders' meeting in May, which emphasized building a more stable bilateral relationship, was significant not only for economic stability, but also for the resilience of global agricultural supply chains.

Historically, global agriculture has moved through three broad stages. The Green Revolution period was defined by expanding supply and relatively low food prices. The early 21st century saw both rising production and structural upgrading, driven by technology and rapidly growing demand from emerging economies.

In the past decade, and especially after 2020, there has been a marked shift. The growth in supply has slowed, while demand for food grains remains strong. Global markets remain broadly balanced, but regional imbalances, policy uncertainty and geopolitical tensions have become more pronounced.

At the same time, the impact of climate change has become more visible. Some key producing regions have experienced output fluctuations, while global stocks in major exporting countries have declined, reducing the buffer capacity of the global food system.

Energy and agriculture are more closely linked now. Rising energy and fertilizer costs are directly increasing agricultural production costs and putting pressure on farmers' incomes, particularly in developing economies.

Meanwhile, trade fragmentation is increasing logistics costs and weakening the efficiency of supply chains.

Risks to key transportation routes and growing policy uncertainty are pushing agricultural trade toward regionalization, making the global system more fragile and less predictable.

Beyond these trends, global agricultural governance faces deeper structural challenges, including persistent technological gaps between regions, rising climate risks, tensions between emissions reduction and development needs, and increasingly fragmented regulatory systems.

In this context, strengthening international cooperation in agricultural technology, climate adaptation and digital tools is essential for improving supply chain resilience and safeguarding global food security.

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

James Shikwati

China's vision of global governance resonates with Africa's aspirations

The recently released white paper, "More Just and Equitable Global Governance: China's Principles, Proposals and Actions", resonates with Africa's aspiration to amplify its voice and agency in the international arena.

As geopolitical tensions rise, Africa faces two major historical challenges: the legacy of the 1884 Berlin Conference, which defined the modern national borders in Africa, and the post-World War II international system.

The primary objective of the Berlin Conference was not to foster internal cohesion or regional prosperity in Africa but to establish European spheres of influence on the continent. It left a legacy of fragmentation, extraction, raw material export and systemic dependence on Western markets that lasted for over a century. Although the post-World War II international system established a multilateral framework through the United Nations, it concentrated trade, finance and security authority in Western hands.

As African countries navigate the current global realignment, they must draw lessons from history to enhance their statecraft, industrialization and trade strategies.

Global Lens

The shift toward a multipolar, and multi-market global system presents a unique opportunity to restructure trade and finance, unlocking the benefits of Africa's diversity. Beijing's white paper on global governance is an entry point for aligning the strategic objectives of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the African Continental Free Trade Area.

Beijing upholds the United Nations Charter as a legal shield to protect countries from external political pressure and as a counterweight to Western unilateralism.

This is particularly appealing to African countries that want to reduce their exposure to geopolitical rivalries and proxy conflicts, and are keen on maintaining sovereignty.

The white paper opposes protectionist measures and promotes "open, inclusive, and non-discriminatory trade architectures", a principle that is reinforced by China's May 1 policy granting zero-tariff access to 53 African countries.

This arrangement is a compelling opportunity for the private sector to invest in value addition within Africa to serve the Chinese market of 1.4 billion people with a combined GDP of $20.6 trillion. Unified market standards across all 53 participating countries will make it easier for the AfCFTA to adopt such standards across the African market.

The call for reform of the international financial architecture to prevent its misuse as an instrument of economic coercion also resonates deeply with African nations. Historically, they have faced tough conditions from Bretton Woods institutions that tied access to capital to structural adjustments.

The white paper suggests alternative financing frameworks such as the New Development Bank and proposes the possibility of an African Monetary Fund. Diversifying currency regimes and expanding local currency settlement mechanisms could shield Africa from transaction risks and inflation tied to trading in US dollars and other foreign currencies.

The white paper also focuses on securing technological sovereignty in frontier sectors. Africa's participation in artificial intelligence is minimal, with an estimated 1 percent of the world's computing capacity and less than 2 percent of talent. This poses a significant threat to the continent's future in a world increasingly dominated by "tech-feudalism".

China invites Africa to take agency in crafting technology governance. The African Union should take proactive steps to participate in establishing rules for new frontiers, including AI, cyberspace, and outer space, to ensure they reflect international consensus rather than standards set by a few actors.

The white paper offers comprehensive proposals for addressing the severe and complex challenges facing the world, highlighting the Global Governance Initiative as China's response to global governance challenges, China's contribution to global governance, and a vision for a peaceful future.

It lays out two choices — a future marked by peace, dialogue and win-win cooperation or one marred by war, confrontation, and zero-sum competition.

For Africa, this means redefining multilateralism centered on the UN Charter, sovereign equality that rejects unilateral bullying, Global South agency, and the establishment of new rules and frameworks in technology and development, marked by institutional coordination and long-term planning.

The white paper "More Just and Equitable Global Governance: China's Principles, Proposals and Actions" provides African countries with an opportunity to debate, discuss and adapt its contents to suit their local conditions.

Africa should use the document to understand China better and leverage Beijing's commitment to Global South solidarity to negotiate investment and trade terms and deeper technology exchanges to enhance localized value addition.

Historically, the continent has adopted institutional frameworks developed externally without sufficient adaptation to its local contexts. This time, African agency should take center stage to ensure that the document is not merely copied.

The author is the founder and director of the Inter Region Economic Network, a Nairobi based think tank.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:59 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:59 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

ZHAO WENJIE, SEMIARTO AJI PURWANTO AND VAISNAVA VIDIA MAHATMA

Food security synergy

There is a lot of room for China and Indonesia to learn from each other and strengthen cooperation in agricultural and rural modernization



LIU YANRAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

As important members of the Global South, both China and Indonesia have achieved rapid economic and social development in recent years and also made progress in agricultural and rural modernization.



Zhao Wenjie



Semiarto Aji Purwanto



Vaisnava Vidia Mahatma

Over the past two years, a joint research team from China Agricultural University and Universitas Indonesia found that, thanks to the effective promotion of policies integrating agriculture with culture and tourism, many villages in China's Yunnan province are no longer synonymous with poverty and backwardness in the traditional sense. Rural industries have become more diversified, farmers' livelihood resilience has significantly improved, and rural areas are realizing transformative development. These achievements are attributed to the impetus of China's rural vitalization strategy.

The Indonesian government also attaches great importance to rural poverty reduction and development. After Prabowo Subianto took office as president in 2024, the government made safeguarding food security and promoting rural transformation key administrative priorities, increasing infrastructure investment in rural areas and pushing for the transition of traditional agriculture toward intensive and large-scale operations. The most notable achievement is that by the end of 2025, Indonesia no longer needed to import rice due to a substantial production surplus. Also, it is estimated that the country's rural poverty rate dropped to 10.72 percent in 2025.

Given some similarities in agricultural and rural development between China and Indonesia, the two countries have actively learned from each other's development experiences and continuously deepened practical cooperation over the past few years. This has better aligned the complementarity of their agricultural resource endowments, thereby promoting agricultural and rural modernization in both countries.

During Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto's visit to China in November 2024, the two countries issued a joint statement on advancing the comprehensive strategic partnership and the China-Indonesia community with a shared future, which proposed to expand cooperation in poverty alleviation, agricultural and rural vitalization and modernization. This laid a solid foundation for deepening multidimensional agricultural cooperation between the two sides and steadily advancing exchange of governance experience related to rural poverty reduction and rural vitalization.

China and Indonesia have comparative advantages in agricultural development, which helps smallholder farmers in both countries better integrate into the global value chain, accumulating a material foundation for agricultural and rural modernization. It is particularly worth mentioning that since the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership took effect in 2022, measures facilitating agricultural trade have advanced steadily. As one of the world's largest aquaculture producers, Indonesia has continuously made new breakthroughs in aquatic product exports to China. Data released by the Indonesian Ministry of Trade showed that in 2025, Indonesia's export volume of aquatic products to China surpassed 490,000 metric tons, with an export value of approximately $1.04 billion.

China and Indonesia rank second and fourth globally in population, respectively, making food security a top priority for both. In recent years, China has continuously strengthened cooperation with Indonesia on advanced agricultural technologies, such as hybrid rice, and supported the establishment of demonstration fields in several major rice-producing regions. It is estimated that of the more than 80 hybrid rice varieties approved by the Indonesian government, over 60 originated from China. Such agricultural technological cooperation not only assists Indonesia in enhancing its food security but also plays a positive role in improving the livelihood resilience of smallholder farmers.

China and Indonesia also value cooperation in frontier fields such as digital agriculture. For example, as one of the world's largest durian producers, Indonesia saw Chinese authorities conduct accession assessments for its durian plantations and packaging facilities, paving the way for Indonesian durians to enter the Chinese market. Subsequently, starting in 2025, the Indonesian Ministry of Agriculture, alongside agricultural enterprises from both countries, jointly established a national-level digital platform for Indonesia covering the entire chain of planting, traceability, cross-border trade and marketing. This will help realize full-process digital management of Indonesian durians from field to consumer, assist smallholder farmers in integrating into the global value chain, and enhance the international competitiveness of Indonesian agricultural products. Of course, agricultural and rural development in China and Indonesia face similar challenges. The concept of village in China, or *xiangcun*, is essentially equivalent to Indonesia's *kampung* (peri-urban/rural-urban interface). At present, the modernization of both *xiangcun* and *kampung* lags behind that of cities, making the acceleration of the pace of modernization a vital task.

Not long ago, the Chinese government released a plan to accelerate agricultural and rural modernization during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, proposing to better advance Chinese modernization through the acceleration of agricultural and rural modernization. Indonesia similarly focuses on rural transformation and modernization. Overall, there is a lot of room for China and Indonesia to learn from each other and strengthen cooperation in agricultural and rural modernization.

First, China's experience demonstrates that relying on forward-looking layouts such as five-year plans and continuously increasing investment in key areas such as rural infrastructure, industrial development and market expansion can effectively narrow the development gap between rural and urban areas, accelerating the agricultural and rural modernization process.

Second, sound governance efficacy is a necessary prerequisite for solving rural development challenges. China has achieved the rapid development of *xiangcun* by formulating the rural vitalization strategy paired with strong implementation mechanisms, which underscores the importance of national macro policies and their enforcement systems to agricultural and rural modernization.

Third, as populous countries, both China and Indonesia place food security at a strategic height and have taken concrete actions. The two countries can further leverage the conveniences created by the RCEP, exert their respective agricultural comparative advantages, and promote the steady development of agricultural trade and investment. This will inject more vitality into improving the quality and efficiency of the agricultural industry while elevating food security levels.

Fourth, in the current era of rapid technological advancement, strengthened cooperation between the two countries in frontier agricultural technology fields such as digital agriculture will facilitate the deep integration of the agricultural industry chain and provide a paradigm of cooperation for the unity and self-strengthening of the entire Global South.

Zhao Wenjie is an associate professor at the College of Humanities and Development Studies at China Agricultural University. Semiarto Aji Purwanto is a professor in the Department of Anthropology at Universitas Indonesia. Vaisnava Vidia Mahatma is a research assistant in the Department of Anthropology at Universitas Indonesia. The authors contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

LI ANJIE

From waste to worth

China is transitioning from energy-intensive wastewater treatment to carbon-negative biorefineries for a circular economy



With the implementation of China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), the paradigm of green and high-quality development has evolved from a conceptual vision into a strategic imperative. Central to this strategy is the circular economy, which entails the transition from the conventional linear "take-make-dispose" model to a closed system of circulation, thereby converting waste into valuable resources. In the field of wastewater treatment, what starts as an energy-intensive burden is transformed into a carbon-negative resource hub that offers a replicable model for global environmental governance.

For decades, China's wastewater industry has been centered on pollutant removal — an energy-heavy process that generates large volumes of sludge requiring disposal. Turning treatment plants where wastewater varies in volume, quality, pollutant levels and recovery potential into "resource factories" requires targeted designs and tailored solutions. For example, wastewater from food processing and breweries is rich in organic matter that produces biogas and recovers valuable proteins, while papermaking wastewater contains fibers and lignin for recycling and power generation. In the case of municipal wastewater treatment, the most foundational node of urban water circulation, the organic-rich matter can be purified through advanced treatment into reclaimed water for industrial cooling, landscape replenishment and car washing.

The 15th Five-Year Plan has set the policy direction. Across China, pioneering projects are already demonstrating what is possible. China's latest national blueprint has now provided clear policy direction for this transition. A leading example is Tianjin's Zhanguizhuang plant, one of China's largest integrated urban water-recycling facilities. It treats up to 450,000 cubic meters per day, with 100 percent of its reclaimed water supplied for industrial cooling, municipal use and river-flow augmentation. The plant achieves threefold full utilization: All reclaimed water goes to industry, communities and river replenishment; all sludge is processed into nutrient-rich soil for landscaping; and on-site solar panels and water source heat pumps contribute to measurable cuts in the plant's operational carbon footprint. This "triple-utilization" model — water reuse, sludge-to-soil conversion and energy recovery — exemplifies the circular transformation envisioned in China's 15th Five-Year Plan.

Not all circular transformations require new chemistry; sometimes they require rethinking the interface between infrastructure and the city. Hangzhou's Yuhang Phase IV plant is a fully buried municipal wastewater treatment facility — its tanks, screens and blowers entirely below ground level. Above the fully buried plant, an ecological park of more than 50,000 square meters opens to the public for walking, exercise and relaxation. The plant has a design capacity of 150,000 cubic meters per day, with a reclaimed water reuse rate exceeding 96 percent, supplying local river flow augmentation and urban greening. What was once an unwelcome neighbor has become a green urban space where residents enjoy their leisure time, demonstrating that circular water thinking can simultaneously deliver resource efficiency and livable, people-centered urban space. Together, these two cases show that China's circular water transition is not only a technical achievement but a social one, turning former liabilities into community assets and proving that green infrastructure can be both high-performing and welcomed in the heart of the city.



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

While some cities focus on energy self-sufficiency or ecological integration, others — especially in China's arid northwest — must prioritize water security itself. Yinchuan, capital of the Ningxia Hui autonomous region, receives barely 200 millimeters of rainfall annually against around 1,600 mm of evaporation, with per capita water availability below one-half of the national average. There, reclaimed water is not a luxury but a necessity. Yinchuan's No 1 Reclaimed Water Plant supplies over 40 million tons of reclaimed water each year, primarily for ecological flow augmentation in the city's canals and rivers, and for industrial cooling. By closing this urban water loop, the plant provides a crucial link in the city's water-security architecture — turning what was once waste discharge into a lifeline for an arid, rapidly urbanizing oasis city.

Other cities have made their own breakthroughs. Chongqing's Luohuang Sludge Treatment Center gasifies sludge into steam, producing around 130,000 tons per year — equivalent to saving 17,000 tons of standard coal. Zhejiang's Haining Dingqiao plant upgraded its technology, increasing its treatment capacity by 75 percent while cutting energy use by 54 percent, marking China's transition from "following" to "leading" in wastewater treatment technology.

These achievements show that there is no one-size-fits-all model for "resource factories" — every place can find its own way forward based on local conditions.

However, they also raise a harder question of how to scale. For now, China operates thousands of municipal wastewater plants, most of which were designed for pollutant removal, not resource recovery. Retrofitting them requires not just technology, but aligned incentives — revised discharge permits that reward energy and nutrient recovery, green financing mechanisms that make retrofits bankable, and technical standards that allow modular solutions to be adapted to local conditions.

Beijing illustrates how a megacity can close the urban water-energy loop at scale. Its municipal wastewater source heat pumps heat and cool approximately 1.6 million sq m of space, displacing fossil-fuel heating and cutting carbon emissions by an estimated 50,000 tons a year. Complementing this, Beijing's Gaobeidian Sludge Treatment Center produces around 20 million cubic meters of biogas annually, which can generate electricity, supply heat or power equipment, turning sludge into a fully utilized resource stream. It effectively embodies the 15th Five-Year Plan's vision of a circular urban water-energy nexus. The next frontier of China's circular water transition should be systematic deployment.

China's experience shows that wastewater treatment plants can simultaneously become energy stations, fertilizer plants and reclaimed water factories. Starting with the first batch of benchmark plants, China is forging its own distinctive path toward wastewater resource recovery. This not only supports domestic energy security, carbon neutrality goals and the circular economy, but also offers a replicable Chinese model for global environmental governance.

The author is an associate professor at the School of Environment at Beijing Normal University. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:59 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:59 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY



Participants communicate with each other before the opening ceremony of the World Economic Forum's 17th Annual Meeting of the New Champions, or the 2026 Summer Davos forum, in Dalian, Liaoning province, on June 24. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

Resilience fuels confidence in China's economy

Nation on track to hit GDP target

By **ZHANG CHENXU** and **ZHONG NAN**

Confidence in China's economic prospects remains strong among officials, economists and global business leaders, as the world's second-largest economy continues to demonstrate resilience, vitality and long-term growth potential despite external headwinds.

They said China remains well positioned to achieve its annual growth target of 4.5 to 5 percent, and make further progress in innovation-led growth supported by a solid start to the year, effective macro policy support and the rapid expansion of new growth drivers.

With buoyant growth prospects, a vast domestic market and expanding innovation capacity, China will continue to be a key growth engine for the rest of the world, they added.

Jiang Ying, chair of Deloitte China, said she is confident in the long-term prospects of the Chinese economy, citing its consistent performance in recent years and a strong first quarter as signs of underlying resilience.

"I'm very confident about the long-term prosperity of the Chinese economy," Jiang said in an exclusive interview with China Daily on the sidelines of the 2026 Summer Davos forum. "The Chinese market provides certainty to the world."

At a time when global businesses are facing rising uncertainties, China's stable expectations and predictable growth have become increasingly valuable, she said.

"Predictability and stability are probably the best dividend and the greatest advantage that the Chinese market now offers to the global economy," Jiang said. "That is what everyone is looking for amid rising uncertainties."

The forum, also known as the World Economic Forum's 17th Annual Meeting of the New Champions, was held under the theme "Innovating at Scale" in Dalian, Liaoning province, from June 23-25.

"The theme of this forum is very fitting for China — innovating at scale," said Ben Dawson, president of Cisco Asia-Pacific, Japan and Greater China.

Dawson told China Daily that China's long-term appeal lies not only in the scale of its market, but also in its ability to translate technological ambition into large-scale industrial applications.

With a presence in China spanning 32 years, Cisco has witnessed the country's digital transformation and the growing momentum of its AI development, supported by a strong industrial base, sustained investment in manufacturing and the faster adoption of advanced technologies across traditional sectors, Dawson said.

Such confidence in China's growing innovation strength is echoed by other multinational companies with long-term operations in the country.

Yin Zheng, executive vice-president of China and East Asia operations at French industrial conglomerate Schneider Electric, said China has become an important engine of global economic growth and a key source of technological and industrial innovation.

"China's solid energy foundation and strong industrial system have reinforced each other, creating powerful momentum for innovation to be developed and applied at scale," Yin said on the sidelines of the 2026 Summer Davos forum.

"China is now one of Schneider Electric's four major global research and development bases, and an important source of innovation and growth for us," Yin said. "Leveraging China's innovation strengths, Schneider Electric will continue to increase its investment in research and development in the country."

Echoing that view, Ruan Fang, managing director and senior partner at Boston Consulting Group, told China Daily that China's strongest growth opportunities are emerging in advanced manufacturing and artificial intelligence.

China, the world's second-largest economy, has grown into a major hub of innovation, driven by its vast domestic market and a significantly faster pace of iteration, she said.

The latest official data also underscored the strong momentum of China's new growth drivers and innovation-related sectors.



A visitor takes photos of exquisite intangible cultural heritage exhibits at Dalian International Conference Center, the main venue of the 2026 Summer Davos forum, on June 23. PAN YULONG / XINHUA



A humanoid robot performs together with actors at the cultural night of the 2026 Summer Davos forum in Dalian on June 24. LIU LINGYI / XINHUA

In the first five months, industrial enterprises with annual main business revenue of at least 20 million yuan ($2.93 million) reported total profits of 3.14 trillion yuan, up 18.8 percent year-on-year, with the growth rate accelerating by 0.6 percentage point from the January-April period, data released by the National Bureau of Statistics showed.

The electronics manufacturing sector remained a major growth engine, with profits surging 103.9 percent year-on-year in the first five months and contributing 43.1 percent to the overall profit growth of major industrial firms, according to the NBS.

"The rapid advance of artificial intelligence worldwide has spurred a surge in demand for advanced computing and memory chips, providing a strong boost to profit growth in the electronics sector," said Yu Weining, a statistician at the bureau.

High-tech manufacturing also maintained solid growth, with profits rising 44.7 percent year-on-year in the first five months, NBS data showed.

Wang Guanhua, a spokeswoman for the NBS, said at a news conference on May 18 that one of the most notable features of China's current economic performance is the faster transition from traditional growth drivers to new ones.

"China has made fresh progress this year in upgrading industries, empowering development through digital technologies and advancing green transformation," Wang said. "The continued growth of new quality productive forces has provided important support for economic expansion."

The strong momentum in advanced manufacturing and AI-related sectors has further bolstered optimism among global financial institutions about China's growth prospects.

Deutsche Bank has upgraded its forecast for China's 2026 real GDP growth to 4.9 percent, after the country's first-quarter growth came in stronger than expected.

NBS data showed China's GDP reached 33.42 trillion yuan in the first quarter of 2026, expanding 5 percent year-on-year in real terms and hitting the upper end of the country's annual growth target range.

Alexander von zur Muehlen, CEO of Deutsche Bank for Asia-Pacific, Europe, Middle East & Africa, and Germany, said the bank's confidence in the Chinese market is rooted in the country's continued shift toward high-quality development and the further opening-up of its financial markets.

Deutsche Bank is not alone in taking a more positive view. Morgan Stanley in May lifted its forecast for China's GDP growth this year to 4.8 percent from 4.7 percent.

Robin Xing, chief China economist at Morgan Stanley, said the revision was supported by resilient exports and robust AI- and green-related investment, which are expected to generate positive spillovers for industrial upgrading and capacity modernization.

Although China's monthly macroeconomic indicators for April and May showed some moderation in consumption and investment, analysts said the broader recovery remains on solid footing, supported by resilient exports, strong manufacturing capabilities and the continued expansion of new growth drivers.

Looking ahead, China is scheduled to release its second-quarter economic growth data on July 15. Wen Bin, chief economist at China Minsheng Bank, said GDP growth may ease to around 4.5 percent in the second quarter, but would still remain broadly in line with the country's annual growth target range, underscoring the economy's underlying resilience.

In particular, Wen said the moderation in real GDP growth should be viewed alongside improving price conditions, which could point to a broader recovery in nominal activity.

With PPI growth continuing to pick up in April and May and CPI staying above 1 percent year-on-year in both months, the GDP deflator is likely to return to positive territory after 12 consecutive quarters of contraction, he said.

"That would help improve nominal GDP growth," Wen added.

A recent report by the China Macroeconomy Forum also struck an optimistic tone, saying China's economy is likely to follow a U-shaped trajectory this year as pro-growth policies and major projects are gradually rolled out and their effects become more visible.

With policy support continuing to take effect, the report said, China has a solid foundation to achieve its annual growth target of 4.5 to 5 percent in 2026.

Still, economists said the structural divergence in the economy deserves close attention.

While industrial production and exports have continued to show resilience, consumption has shown signs of moderation — a trend that underscores the need for stronger policy support to further unlock domestic demand and consolidate the recovery momentum, economists said.

Luo Zhiheng, chief economist and head of the research institute at Yuekai Securities, said the uneven recovery reflects the broader structural transition underway in China's economy.

New growth drivers such as artificial intelligence and high-end manufacturing are gradually taking the place of older engines such as real estate and infrastructure investment, Luo said.

Taking a broader view, Huang Yiping, dean of Peking University's National School of Development, said that despite the challenges facing the Chinese economy, the country has been steadily advancing economic rebalancing.

"If you look at the trajectory of the Chinese economy over the past 20 years or more, the macroeconomic structure is much better now," Huang said at a forum during the 2026 Summer Davos forum.

However, he also cautioned that the rebalancing process remains far from sufficient, especially as domestic consumption still needs to play a stronger role in supporting growth.

"China needs to boost consumption, and it needs to do so in a more proactive way," Huang said.

Luo said the recovery of domestic demand hinges on whether the economy's key transmission mechanisms can be further smoothed.

For households, stable employment and stronger income growth are essential to improving consumer confidence and willingness to spend, he said.

For businesses, a recovery in demand needs to translate into stronger profits and renewed capital expenditure, Luo said.

In the property sector, stabilizing home prices will be important for restoring sales momentum and reviving investment, he added.

Wen said policy support is expected to be further strengthened around midyear, with fiscal and monetary measures working together to stabilize growth.

On the fiscal front, special-purpose bond issuance is likely to accelerate in the second half of the year, while new policy-based financial instruments are expected to be gradually channeled into concrete projects, helping support major projects and infrastructure investment, according to Wen.

On the monetary front, the policy window for interest rate and reserve requirement ratio cuts may open as PPI growth peaks around midyear, leaving room for more timely policy adjustments, he added.

"More incremental policies are expected to boost consumption, stabilize the property sector and support employment," Wen said. "Together, these measures will help stabilize the economy and strengthen the recovery momentum."

Contact the writers at zhangchenxu@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:59 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:59 PM

BUSINESSINSIGHT

Charting nation's next phase of development

EAGLE EYE
By Liu Shijin

After more than three decades of rapid expansion, China's economy reached a cyclical peak in the first quarter of 2010 and has since gradually shifted into a phase of medium-speed growth, with the binding constraints on growth evolving from supply shortages to demand insufficiency.

From a comparative international perspective, China is now positioned in the income range where per capita GDP exceeds $10,000 but has yet to cross the threshold into high-income economies, remaining in this transitional band for several years.

Historical experience suggests that economies at this level often enter a structurally sensitive and relatively unstable phase of development, where growth patterns and structural dynamics undergo notable adjustment.

Against this backdrop, the outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) highlights the pivotal role of this period in advancing the process of basically achieving socialist modernization.

It has been identified as a key stage for consolidating development foundations and pushing forward comprehensive efforts, with a focus on strengthening comparative advantages, removing structural bottlenecks and addressing weak links.

In essence, the objective is to secure strategic initiatives amid intensifying global competition, achieve major breakthroughs in strategic tasks central to Chinese modernization, and lay a more solid foundation for the realization of basic socialist modernization.

Among the structural challenges facing the economy, insufficient consumer demand remains the most pressing. While China's current development context is markedly different, the interaction between income disparity and an incomplete social security system continues to mirror structural patterns observed in earlier stages of development, thereby reinforcing demand-side constraints.

At the same time, China's growth drivers are undergoing a profound transformation as the economy enters a new development phase. In this process, three categories of advantages stand out.

The first is the latecomer advantage in economic catch-up, which is relatively low-cost and easier to realize, but requires sustained openness, humility and a willingness to learn.

The second is the advantage emerging from a new wave of technological revolution characterized by digitalization and green transformation, in which China has already reached either a parallel or leading position in certain areas, with the key challenge lying in maintaining and strengthening this momentum.

The third is the advantage of an ultra-large-scale economy, which extends beyond the consumer market to encompass production, investment, trade, innovation, finance and monetary circulation, representing a dimension that has often been underappreciated but holds substantial long-term potential.

Taken together, China is currently in a critical window of structural transformation and growth momentum switching, with far-reaching adjustments expected across consumption, industrial structure, foreign trade, investment, financial systems, urban-rural relations, intra-urban structures, and income distribution.

The quantitative expansion that defined the high-growth era is gradually giving way to a development model oriented toward higher technological content, greater value added, and stronger sustainability.

Within this transition, effectively identifying and leveraging the three aforementioned advantages, while advancing strategies such as building a manufacturing powerhouse, a consumption powerhouse and a financial powerhouse, will be essential for achieving structural upgrading and long-term development goals.

In this context, structural reform remains the fundamental instrument for sustaining economic momentum. At its core, reform begins with further ideological liberation, removing institutional constraints that hinder the high-quality development of productive forces and suppress social creativity and vitality.

Although reform inevitably involves the adjustment of interest relationships and requires balancing diverse concerns, certain principles remain paramount: local interests must serve the broader national agenda, and short-term or narrow gains must yield to long-term collective welfare.

Vulnerable groups, in particular, must be adequately protected in the process. Ultimately, reforms aligned with long-term systemic objectives will benefit all members of society.

Historical experience also shows that timing is crucial, as reforms are often delayed under favorable conditions and implemented at higher cost when pressures intensify. This underscores the importance of proactive adjustment.

An enabling environment that is open, tolerant and supportive of initiative is therefore essential, with the principles of respecting labor, knowledge, talent and creativity playing a key role in unleashing innovation and entrepreneurial vitality, as emphasized in the outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan.

Looking ahead, the 15th Five-Year Plan period marks a decisive stage in China's transition toward high-income status and the consolidation of socialist modernization.

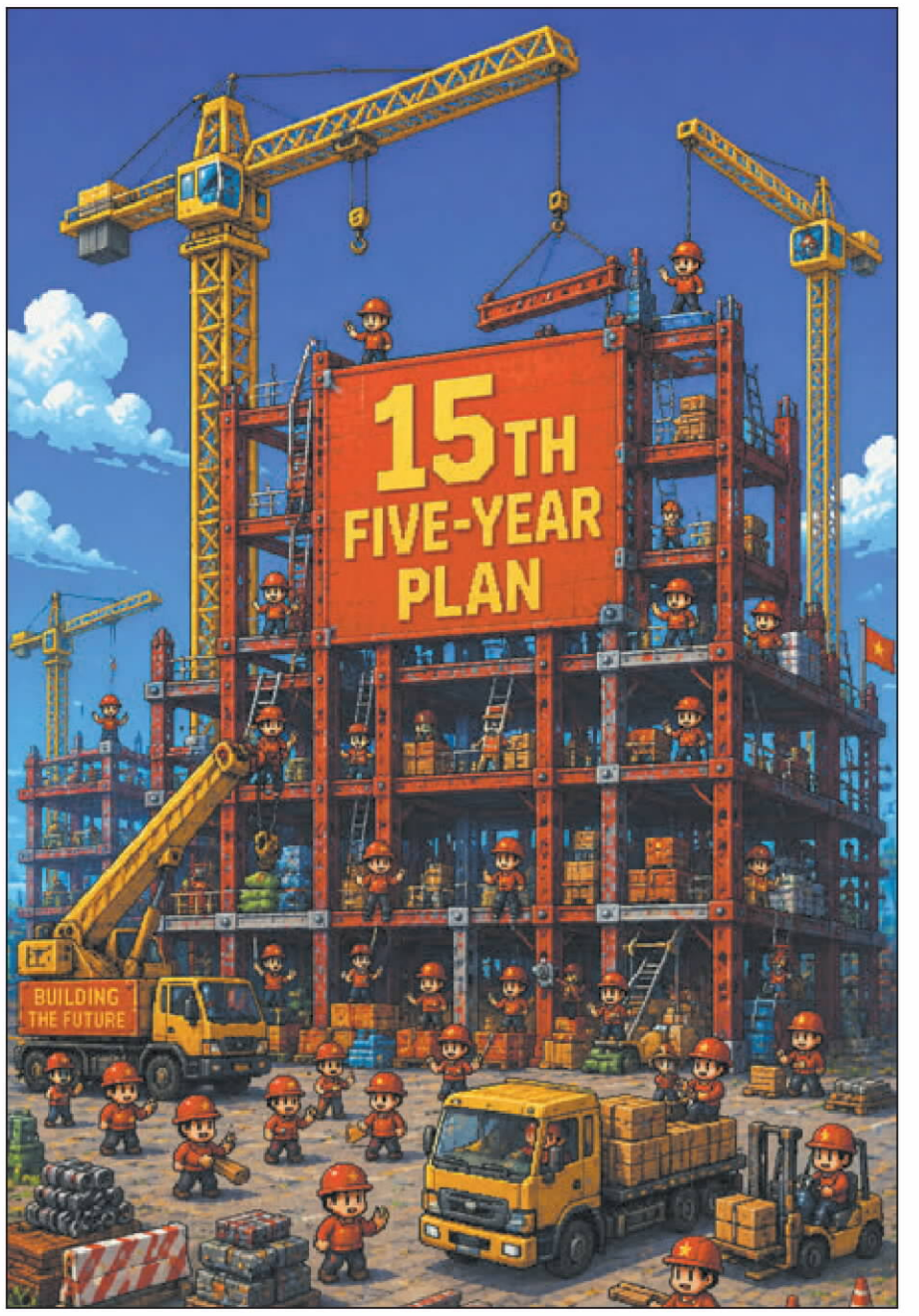


ILLUSTRATION GENERATED BY AI

Unlike earlier phases characterized primarily by incremental adjustments within a relatively stable growth framework, this stage requires the establishment of a new growth framework, as both external conditions and internal dynamics — including demand, supply and growth drivers — are expected to undergo profound and even structural shifts.

In particular, consumption is set to play a more prominent role, as China's consumption-to-GDP ratio remains approximately 20 percentage points below the international average, indicating a significant structural gap that needs to be addressed.

Consumption upgrading will not only involve domestic goods and services, but also greater engagement with foreign products and services, thereby enhancing the internationalization of consumption patterns.

At the same time, development-oriented consumption in areas such as education, healthcare, elderly care and cultural, sports and entertainment services should increasingly be viewed as investment in human capital, contributing to improved labor quality and stronger innovation capacity.

In this sense, consumption is expected to move to the forefront of growth policy, gradually shifting emphasis away from investment as the primary stabilizing force.

Industrial restructuring will follow a similar logic of transformation. The development of a manufacturing powerhouse does not necessarily imply an increasing share of manufacturing in GDP; in fact, this share may continue to decline as the economy evolves.

The key focus lies instead in the development of high-tech and knowledge-intensive producer services that support manufacturing upgrading.

The integrated system of "manufacturing plus related producer services" provides a more accurate reflection of industrial transformation, capturing both technological self-reliance and innovation-driven growth.

Meanwhile, the upgrading of consumer services will be concentrated in sectors such as education and training, healthcare, information services, financial services and human resource services.

As economic complexity increases, traditional experience-based industrial policy becomes less effective, making a fair and competitive business environment increasingly important.

Legacy industries formed during the high-growth period, particularly in heavy and chemical sectors, will require substantial capacity adjustment, with the exit of inefficient production relying on both market mechanisms and policy coordination.

In foreign trade, despite a more challenging external environment, China's continued export strength reflects rising industrial competitiveness.

However, a sustained large trade surplus also implies relatively lower domestic consumption, and therefore reflects, and reinforces, consumption insufficiency.

In the long run, such imbalances are not sustainable. This necessitates a more balanced trade strategy that maintains export competitiveness while expanding imports, alongside a greater share of trade settlement in renminbi.

This shift implies moving from foreign exchange accumulation toward broader RMB internationalization, enhancing its global liquidity and usability.

As the use of RMB expands internationally, its functions should increasingly align with the scale of China's real economy, which may in turn support RMB appreciation, improving productivity and reinforcing competitive upgrading over the medium to long term despite potential short-term pressure on exports.

Financial structure will also undergo significant evolution. As industrial upgrading deepens and knowledge intensity increases, the financial system is expected to shift from bank-dominated intermediation toward capital-market-led allocation.

With the declining appeal of real estate and traditional savings instruments, household wealth is likely to flow more actively into capital markets, providing greater liquidity and supporting a new stage of financial development.

Ultimately, the objective is to support a steady transition toward a development path that facilitates China's progression toward high-income status and the realization of socialist modernization.

The writer is vice-chairman of the China Development Research Foundation and deputy director of the Committee on Economic Affairs of the CPPCC National Committee. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

China building more diversified, innovative financial system

MAIN STREET
By Lian Ping

Pan Gongsheng, governor of China's central bank, provided a comprehensive overview of the evolving characteristics of the country's financial structure and changes in financing data in his keynote speech at the 2026 Lujiazui Forum on June 17.

Examining the issue from the perspectives of China's transition to a new stage of economic development, industrial upgrading and financial supply-side reform, Pan offered an in-depth analysis of the underlying logic and key drivers behind the adjustment of the country's financing structure.

Framed within the broader goals of high-quality development and building China into a financial powerhouse, he also outlined the medium- and long-term direction of China's financial market modernization, the coordinated development of equity, bond and bank financing, and institutional opening-up of the capital market, providing an authoritative policy framework for assessing key issues such as the expansion of direct financing, optimization of the financial structure and cross-border capital management.

Pan said China's financial system has long been dominated by bank lending, while financial markets remained relatively underdeveloped. In recent years, however, the share of indirect financing centered on bank loans has continued to decline, while the proportion of direct financing, including bond and equity financing, has steadily increased, signaling profound changes in the country's financial structure.

Historically, newly added indirect financing consistently accounted for more than 80 percent of the increase in total social financing. In 2025, however, loans represented only 45 percent of new additions to total social financing, while bond and equity financing together accounted for 47 percent, surpassing loans for the first time. In particular, bond financing has become the largest contributor to the growth of direct financing due to its relative stability and flexibility.

In the 1990s, indirect financing accounted for nearly all of China's outstanding social financing. By the end of 2025, its share had fallen to around two-thirds, while direct financing had risen to approximately one-third.

Today, the historic transformation of China's financial structure is characterized by shrinking household credit, slower growth in corporate lending offset by faster expansion of direct financing, and rapid growth in government financing. The internal composition of direct and indirect financing has also diverged significantly. Direct financing is now primarily supported by bond issuance, with government bonds accounting for the bulk of the increase in financing. Indirect financing, meanwhile, continues to be dominated by renminbi-denominated corporate loans, while household lending has declined sharply.

Pan said these profound changes fundamentally reflect the deep adjustment of China's economic structure, the transition from old to new growth drivers, the evolving alignment between the financial system and industrial upgrading, and the continuous deepening of financial supply-side structural reform.

There is little doubt that this major transformation in China's financial structure is not accidental. Rather, it is the result of multiple long-term factors acting in concert, particularly the upgrading of the country's economic structure. It represents an adaptive adjustment of the financial system to changes in economic development, industrial composition and market demand. It is also an inevitable outcome of financial supply-side reform and an objective requirement for achieving high-quality economic development.

Over the next five to 10 years, the share of China's direct financing is expected to continue rising steadily, resulting in a more diversified financial system in which equity, bond and bank financing complement one another.

Equity financing is expected to become a major driver of direct financing growth. Continued reforms to the registration-based IPO system will further lower listing thresholds, streamline listing procedures and facilitate financing for more technology companies, small and medium-sized enterprises, and innovative enterprises. Meanwhile, private equity and venture capital markets are expected to continue expanding, with government guidance funds playing a greater leveraging role in channeling private capital toward seed-stage and early-stage technology companies.

Government bond issuance will remain the cornerstone of China's direct financing market. To achieve its 2035 development goals, China is expected to maintain a proactive fiscal policy for an extended period, supporting steady growth in government bond issuance and sustaining the expansion of direct financing.

Corporate bond financing is likely to become another major growth engine. Issuance of medium- and long-term corporate bonds is expected to increase rapidly, accounting for a larger share of the market while further optimizing bond maturity structures to better meet the long-term financing needs of the real economy. Issuance of specialized instruments — including technology innovation bonds, green bonds and rural revitalization bonds — is also expected to expand rapidly.

At the same time, China's credit rating system will continue to improve, and bond default resolution mechanisms will become more robust. Greater connectivity between domestic and international bond markets will further improve market liquidity and the efficiency of capital allocation.

Financial product innovation will accelerate to meet increasingly diverse financing needs. More equity financing products tailored to SMEs and technology companies are expected to emerge. China will continue developing specialized bond products and may introduce new instruments such as floating-rate bonds and green convertible bonds. A broader range of differentiated investment funds and asset management products will also be introduced to better accommodate investors with varying risk preferences.

China will continue expanding the opening-up of its capital markets, steadily advancing the internationalization of its financial markets and promoting institutional opening-up. The country will move forward with the internationalization of the renminbi and the gradual convertibility of the capital account, enrich the offshore renminbi product ecosystem, and strengthen the renminbi's role in international pricing, settlement and reserve holdings.

At the same time, China will improve its macroprudential management and cross-border capital flow monitoring systems, refine its cross-border risk early warning and resolution mechanisms, and achieve a dynamic balance between high-level opening-up and secure development.

The writer is chairman of the China Chief Economist Forum and president at the institute of international finance of the CCEF. This article is an excerpt from the English translation of the original text published on financial information service provider Sina Finance. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:59 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:59 PM

CHINA

Plans to hike education standing

China to prioritize return of overseas graduates, intl expansion and research

By **ZOU SHUO**
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

China aims to significantly enhance its international influence, competitiveness and voice in education during the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30), according to an education development plan recently issued by the State Council, the country's Cabinet.

The plan outlines how China will make better use of world-class educational resources and innovation factors to achieve these goals. International exchanges in basic research will be deepened, and leading research universities will be encouraged to launch or participate in major global scientific initiatives.

Services for Chinese students studying abroad will be improved, while efforts to encourage overseas graduates to return to China and contribute to national development.

High-level foreign science and engineering universities will also be welcomed to establish cooperative programs in China.

Developing globally recognized Chinese education brands is another priority.

The plan calls for stronger ties with partners in Europe and North America while expanding cooperation with neighboring nations, countries and regions involved in the Belt and Road Initiative and Global South countries.

China will share its standards and practical solutions in areas including vocational education, basic education, engineering, artificial intelligence education and teacher training.

The international Chinese language brand will be further promoted, while the "Study in China" brand and the country's capacity for overseas schooling will also be strengthened. People-to-people and cultural exchanges will be actively encouraged, according to the plan.

On global education governance, China will make use of multilateral platforms such as UNESCO, BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to deepen cooperation and strengthen its leadership role in areas including girls' and women's education, digital and intelligent education and STEM subjects.

Data released by the Ministry of Education in April shows that in 2025 more than 570,000 Chinese students pursued higher education overseas and about 535,600 returned to China after completing their studies. China, meanwhile, hosted 380,000 international students from 191 countries and regions during the 2024-25 academic year.

Wu Peng, dean of the Overseas Education College at Jiangsu University, said that "significantly enhanced" global influence in education during the 15th Five-Year Plan period should be measured by substance rather than sheer numbers.

Regarding international students, Wu said the growth of degree-seeking and postgraduate enrollment is more important than total enrollment figures.

He also called for a comprehensive service system covering pre-enrollment support, campus life and post-graduation employment.

"We cannot simply admit students and leave them to fend for themselves. A closed-loop, service-oriented management system is essential," he said.

Wu added that China's strengths in vocational education, AI and STEM teaching should be integrated into the education systems of countries and regions involved in the Belt and Road Initiative.

Nauvao Purl, a United States citizen studying at the University of International Business and Economics, encouraged more US students to come to China for face-to-face exchanges. She reflected on Yung Wing, the first Chinese student to graduate from a US university more than 170 years ago.

"What I learned from Yung Wing is that discomfort and uncertainty — the often awkward spaces — are exactly where the most important work happens," she said.

Purl said she arrived in China with preconceptions shaped by movies, food and social media, only to find a far more complex reality.

"The real China — strangers asking where I'm from, professors staying after class because of their passion and classmates studying incredibly hard — can only be experienced, never fully understood through books," she said.

She urged her peers to "show up" in person, tell stories instead of arguing, embrace the role of cultural bridge-builders and remain patient when engaged in people-to-people diplomacy.

US delegation explores Wuhan's growing tech sector

By **LIU KUN** in Wuhan
and **CHEN MEILING**



Descendants of Flying Tigers veterans, teachers and students from the Flying Tigers Friendship School in the United States interact with robots at the Hubei Humanoid Robot Innovation Center in Wuhan, Hubei province, on Thursday. ZOU HAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

Representatives from China and the United States exchanged views on robotics and artificial intelligence during a people-to-people exchange event in Wuhan, Hubei province.

Jeffrey Greene, a veteran pilot and chairman of the Sino-American Aviation Heritage Foundation, led a delegation of about 100 people, including descendants of Flying Tigers veterans, as well as teachers and students from Flying Tigers Friendship Schools, on a five-day visit to Wuhan, which concluded on Sunday, for a series of cultural and technological activities.

On Thursday, the delegation visited the Hubei Humanoid Robot Innovation Center, where members watched humanoid robots dance, write calligraphy, make coffee, pour tea, play chess and engage in conversations.

"I saw videos on Instagram of robots doing little dances, but then they would fall over. These robots can hop on one leg and move all around. They are totally stable — super cool," said Haley Rasilla, a student in the delegation. "It exceeds my expectations — way more futuristic than anything I've ever seen in America. It's crazy."

Erik Lutz, a councilman in the city of Pico Rivera, California, and a representative of the foundation, said he was impressed by robots designed for medical care, cleaning and construction. "We're seeing the future," he said. "The two most powerful countries working in cooperation will provide for the longevity of our civilization."

The innovation center includes a data acquisition site, a simulation training ground, industrial and commercial application zones, an interactive intelligent application zone, and an integrated humanoid robot application zone.

At a roundtable forum themed "Innovation for Good, Intelligence to Future" held at Wuhan University of Technology on Friday, students from the two countries discussed opportunities and challenges facing college students amid the AI revolution, focusing on technology ethics and industry-university-research collaboration.

Matthew Garrett Embree, who recently graduated from the University of California, Santa Cruz, with a degree in computer science, said overreliance on AI is concerning.

"Many of the students in my classes eventually stopped learning how to program and would just write prompts instead," he said. "AI is a powerful tool, but it's still important to learn the basics and understand the fundamentals of whatever topic you're studying. I think this applies across all fields."

David Cornelis Howe, who graduated from Alfred University in New York with a degree in mechanical engineering, said he used AI extensively during his studies, even when large language models were still in the early stages of development.

"I noticed they made a lot of mistakes early on, so I didn't really trust them at first," he said. "But as I went through school, I realized the technology was improving very quickly."

He said AI is most valuable when it helps users understand concepts or guides them through a process rather than simply providing answers.

"I think it's very important that we don't let AI take away our critical thinking skills and our ability to make decisions for ourselves," he added.

During the visit, the delegation also rode Wuhan's suspended monorail, known as the "sky train", the first of its kind in China. Unlike conventional monorails, the trains hang beneath elevated steel tracks, showcasing the country's advances in rail transit technology.

The visitors also learned about Wuhan's modernization at the Hankow Customs Museum, watched traditional opera performances and explored the region's history at the Hubei Provincial Museum and Yellow Crane Tower.

Contact the writers at chenmeiling@chinadaily.com.cn

Jurassic fossil fills gap in evolution of bird tails

By **LI MENGHAN**
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

A 150-million-year-old fossil unearthed in Fujian province has revealed what researchers say is the smallest known long-tailed bird from the Late Jurassic period, filling a critical gap in scientists' understanding of how dinosaurs' long tails evolved into the short, compact tails of modern birds.

The findings show that the number of caudal vertebrae decreased before the remaining bones fused into a single structure — the fused pygostyle typical of modern birds — helping resolve a long-standing debate in evolutionary biology. The study was published in the journal Science Advances on Thursday.

The fossil was discovered on March 24, 2024, by a joint research team from the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Fujian geological science research institute. The discovery followed over 400 days of field work at the Zhenghe Fauna site, a fossil-rich area in Zhenghe county, Nanping, Fujian province, known for yielding well-preserved ancient animal fossils.

Researchers named the new species *Zhengheornis buyu*. The first part of the name refers to the discovery site, while *buyu* is derived from *Guoyu*, an ancient Chinese book, and means "unexpected" — a tribute to the specimen's surprising tail anatomy.

That unexpected anatomy addresses one of the most enduring paleontological questions: how ground-dwelling, long-tailed dinosaurs evolved into today's lightweight, short-tailed birds. While the origin of feathered wings is well documented, the evolution of short bird tails has long remained a mystery because relevant fossils are incredibly rare.

Zhou Zhonghe, an author of the study and a professor at the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology, said genetic studies have long suggested that tail shortening could result from just a few simple genetic mutations.

"Because long-tailed and short-tailed birds appear almost simultaneously in the fossil record, without intermediate forms, many evolutionary biologists argued that a transitional species having a shortened, but no fused pygostyle was biologically unlikely and probably never existed," Zhou said.

Previous fossil evidence appeared to support that view. The earliest birds with modern, fused pygostyles emerged abruptly near the end of the Jurassic period, at the dawn of bird evolution, while other contemporary birds and their dinosaur relatives kept their long tails.

However, the discovery of *Zhengheornis buyu* challenges the long-held assumption by providing the long-sought transitional form.

Dating between 148 and 150 million years old, the well-preserved, fully connected skeleton has a tail composed of only 15 caudal vertebrae and lacks a fused modern pygostyle. That is significantly fewer caudal vertebrae than in other early birds, such as *Archaeopteryx*, which had 23 to 24, *Jeholornis*, which had 22 to 27, and other early bird-like dinosaurs, which typically had more than 30.

> "This mix of ancient and advanced features proves a step-by-step evolutionary path."
>
> **Wang Min,** professor at the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences

"This mix of ancient and advanced features proves a step-by-step evolutionary path: the loss of caudal vertebrae and overall tail shortening happened before the remaining bones fused together in early bird evolution," said Wang Min, the study's lead author and a professor at the institute.

The researchers said the shortened but flexible tail likely offered important functional advantages. By reducing body weight, shifting the center of gravity forward, and making the tail less rigid, *Zhengheornis buyu* could move its tail feathers more effectively. This would have improved its flight stability and control compared with its longer-tailed contemporaries like *Archaeopteryx*.

The species also sets a new record as the smallest known member of the broader dinosaur-bird family tree that includes birds and closely related bird-like dinosaurs. Using size-scaling equations, the researchers estimated that the animal weighed only 74 to 163 grams in life. Its thigh bone measured just 63 percent of the length of that of *Microraptor zhaoianus*, previously considered the smallest known bird-like dinosaur, and was about 10 percent smaller than the smallest known *Archaeopteryx* specimen.

The team said such extreme miniaturization suggests that early bird-like dinosaurs shrank in size much more rapidly than previously believed.

Zhengheornis buyu is the fourth ancient bird species reported from the Zhenghe site. Family tree analyses indicate that the bird was not specially adapted for a life spent purely on the ground or purely in trees, suggesting it was an ecological generalist capable of thriving in various environments. The coexistence of multiple, vastly different body shapes also indicates that birds had already split into many diverse species by the end of the Jurassic period.

"This landmark discovery not only settles long-standing academic debates regarding when early birds began to diversify but also adds a crucial piece to the puzzle of how dinosaurs transformed into birds," Wang said.



Digital reconstruction of the Jurassic bird *Zhengheornis buyu* from the Zhenghe Fauna. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Supportive measures fuel increase in Shanghai's inbound foreign visitor arrivals

By **WANG XIN** in Shanghai
wangxin2@chinadaily.com.cn

Shanghai recorded 21.13 million inbound and outbound trips in the first half of the year, including nearly 3.17 million inbound foreign visitor arrivals, up 22 percent year-on-year, the city's border inspection authorities announced recently.

The city has stepped up efforts to integrate its culture, commerce, tourism, sports and exhibition sectors, helping make it one of the most attractive destinations for foreign travelers entering China. Meanwhile, the country's expanded visa-free policies have continued to drive growth in inbound tourism since the beginning of the year.

In the first half of 2026, about 2.05 million foreign travelers entered Shanghai under the visa-free policy or the 240-hour visa-free transit policy, accounting for more than 60 percent of all inbound foreign arrivals, according to authorities.

During this period, border inspection authorities also inspected 146,000 inbound and outbound vehicles, vessels, trains and aircraft.

A total of 22,000 international vessels entered or departed the city's ports, while authorities facilitated crew changes for more than 25,000 seafarers, helping ensure smooth cross-border shipping and stable foreign trade and supply chains.

Shanghai's cruise ports were also bustling during this period, with border inspection authorities processing 744,000 inbound and outbound cruise passengers.

The country's first pilot "destination-free cruise" route was officially launched in Shanghai on June 6 and quickly emerged as a new growth driver for the cruise industry.

A representative of the Pujiang border inspection station said the station introduced a series of measures to reduce customs clearance times and improve departure efficiency on the pilot route, including pre-departure inspections, advance registration, arrival-based passenger classification and fast-track lanes.



Foreign travelers complete arrival immigration procedures at Shanghai Pudong International Airport on May 22. GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

As China continues to welcome more international visitors, an increasing number of foreign travelers are exploring every corner of Shanghai, seeking experiences ranging from popular attractions to niche destinations.

In early February, Frans-Jan van Meer, a 50-year-old supply chain manager from the Netherlands, was busy picking out what he described as "more Chinese and exotic" Labubu blind boxes at the Bund Finance Center as gifts for his children back home.

An increasing number of foreign visitors flock to the landmark Yuyuan area to shop for gold jewelry and ornaments featuring traditional Chinese motifs such as dragons, phoenixes, zodiac animals and bamboo.

Others head to the South Bund Soft-Spinning Material Market for custom-made clothing in both Western and Chinese styles, attracted by the market's fast turnaround times, competitive prices and high-quality craftsmanship.

Charles Wilders, an English teacher from the United Kingdom, told China Daily, "In the UK, it's very expensive to get suits made, particularly on Savile Row. Whereas here, it's more affordable for really, really great quality."

"It's not only about the price. It's actually the design and fit," added Jan Schutte, a German professor at the Shanghai Theatre Academy, who said the market is the "first place" he recommends to friends visiting Shanghai.

He Qi contributed to this story.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:59 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:59 PM

Editor's note: *As protection of the planet's flora, fauna and resources becomes increasingly important, China Daily is publishing a series of stories to illustrate the country's commitment to safeguarding the natural world.*

Wetland project tests blueprint for Yangtze protection

Ecological restoration in Anhui sees rare species return, bolsters flood prevention capacity

By **LI MENGHAN**
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

On the shores of Anhui province's Chaohu Lake, China's fifth-largest freshwater lake, reeds bend in the wind across restored wetlands, while egrets pick their way through shallows that, just a decade ago, reeked of fertilizer runoff.

This is Shibalianwei wetland, a 27.6-square-kilometer expanse in Hefei's Feidong county that has undergone one of the most ambitious ecological reversals in the Yangtze River Basin. Once carved into nearly 13 sq km of intensive fish ponds and rice paddies, it has been transformed into China's first ecological wetland designed to serve simultaneously as a flood storage basin, a water purification system and a wildlife sanctuary.

As endangered Oriental storks were spotted raising their chicks for the first time ever in the wetland in May this year, the 2-billion-yuan ($294.8 million) project stands as a critical blueprint for the country's broader Yangtze River Protection Strategy, testing whether heavy hydraulic engineering can coexist with regional ecological and economic development.

The name Shibalianwei, meaning 18 linked polders, tells a tug-of-war story between humans and nature. For centuries, the mudflat was laced with 18 earthen embankments, each one a small barrier against water that wanted to spread.

However, as grain and aquaculture demand surged in the 1980s, local populations pushed the land too far. They drained marshes, dug ponds and doused the soil with agricultural chemicals. By the early 2000s, the ecological consequences were stark, with notorious algae blooms, collapsing fish stocks and degraded wetland functions.

"Back then, the water smelt bad, and the fish grew smaller every year," said Yao Jiqiang, 70, a former fisherman who spent around two decades raising fish in the waters.

The turning point came in 2016, when the comprehensive treatment of Chaohu was elevated to a national priority under the Yangtze River Protection Strategy — a shift from fragmented local efforts to a holistic, basin-wide campaign.

Song Xiaofei, director of the bureau of natural resources and planning in Feidong county, said Shibalianwei is envisioned as a multifunctional shield for the city. "This project involves a flood storage basin to absorb excess runoff during peak floods, a natural bio-filter to cleanse nutrients from the Nanfei River before they reach the lake, and a restored habitat for migratory birds along the East Asian–Australasian Flyway," he said.

To make room for the new ecosystem, the physical and social landscape had to be radically restructured. In 2018, in a coordinated push to reclaim the wetland, 12,000 residents from 56 villages were resettled into modern housing. Operating rights for 350 hectares of fish ponds were reclaimed from 377 aquaculture households, and all remaining intensive shoreline aquaculture was fully phased out.

With the land cleared, bulldozers breached the embankments that had choked the waterways for half a century, allowing fresh water to surge back into the parched channels.

The dredging of 533 fish ponds provided millions of cubic meters of sediment, which was used to construct 33 elevated filtration islands within the wetland. Rather than hauling the muck away at great expense, engineers first drove piles to stabilize the soft sludge, then planted metasequoia and Chinese tallow directly into the newly formed land. These trees anchor the soil with their roots, gradually absorbing nitrogen and phosphorus from the water.

They also planted more than 12,000 fruit-bearing trees — peach, persimmon and apricot — to feed migratory birds. In total, 410 hectares of habitats were reconstructed, ranging from shallow marshes and deep-water zones to swamp forests, providing shelter for returning wildlife.

Torrential rains in July 2020 brought the Yangtze basin its worst flooding in decades, threatening Hefei's urban defenses. In response, the construction of smart inlet and outlet sluice gates was fast-tracked later that year.

Designed to handle 450 cubic meters per second, the completed wetland now acts as a giant sponge, capable of absorbing more than 100 million cubic meters of floodwater within three days.

At full operation, it is expected to lower Chaohu Lake's water level by approximately 14 centimeters and the urban river level by 20 cm.

"Shibalianwei has a total flood storage capacity of 109 million cubic meters. It can be filled in three days and drained in seven, transforming a destructive disaster into a controlled hydraulic operation," said Li Jiazheng, general manager of Hefei Shibalianwei Ecological Construction Management Co, the State-owned company responsible for the wetland's restoration, conservation and management.

Li added that this operational flexibility, bolstered by smart sluice stations and early-warning surveillance cameras, allows it to handle a wide range of flood scenarios on the Yangtze River. This technological integration transforms flood storage from a passive endurance test into an active, precision-controlled operation.

That dual mandate — flood retention and ecological restoration — was underscored by President Xi Jinping during his 2020 visit to the area, affirming the wetland's role not just as a hydraulic buffer but as a living filter for the lake.

Today, acting as the "kidney" of Chaohu, the wetland filters around 600,000 cubic meters of water daily from the Nanfei River. Monitoring data show that ammonia nitrogen and phosphorus concentrations have been cut by over 30 percent compared with the inflow. The water has jumped from inferior Class V — the lowest grade for surface water, essentially polluted and unusable — to Class III, which is clean enough to support aquatic life and safe for indirect human use.

Complementary industry

In the retained paddy fields surrounding the restored wetland, rice is grown together with Chinese soft-shelled turtle in the same plots — a traditional Chinese practice known as integrated farming.

The turtles feed on weeds and insects, while their droppings naturally fertilize the rice. In return, the standing crop provides shade and habitat. No chemical fertilizers or pesticides are applied, resulting in both premium eco-labeled rice and high-value aquatic products under the "Shibalianwei" brand.

The same fields take on a second role after the autumn harvest. Across the 192 hectares of farmland within the wetland, water levels are raised plot by plot to between 30 and 50 cm, turning the paddies into shallow foraging grounds for endangered species such as the Siberian crane, Oriental white stork and Baer's pochard.

Leftover rice stalks and scattered grains — together with aquatic plants, lotus roots and other natural vegetation — become an important food source for wintering birds, allowing the wetland to double as a seasonal sanctuary without sacrificing a single harvest.

The restoration fundamentally transformed the relationship between humans and nature.

When asked to stop fishing in 2020, Yao Jiqiang felt adrift. Despite his uncertainty, he supported the restoration. "I didn't want future generations to look at a dead lake," he said.

After surrendering his boat and nets, Yao became a wetland ranger, spending his days mowing the marsh grass before it dies back and rots into the water, monitoring birds and ensuring no one disturbs the wetland. Without the constant fish waste and chemical fertilizers of the past, the water has cleared dramatically.

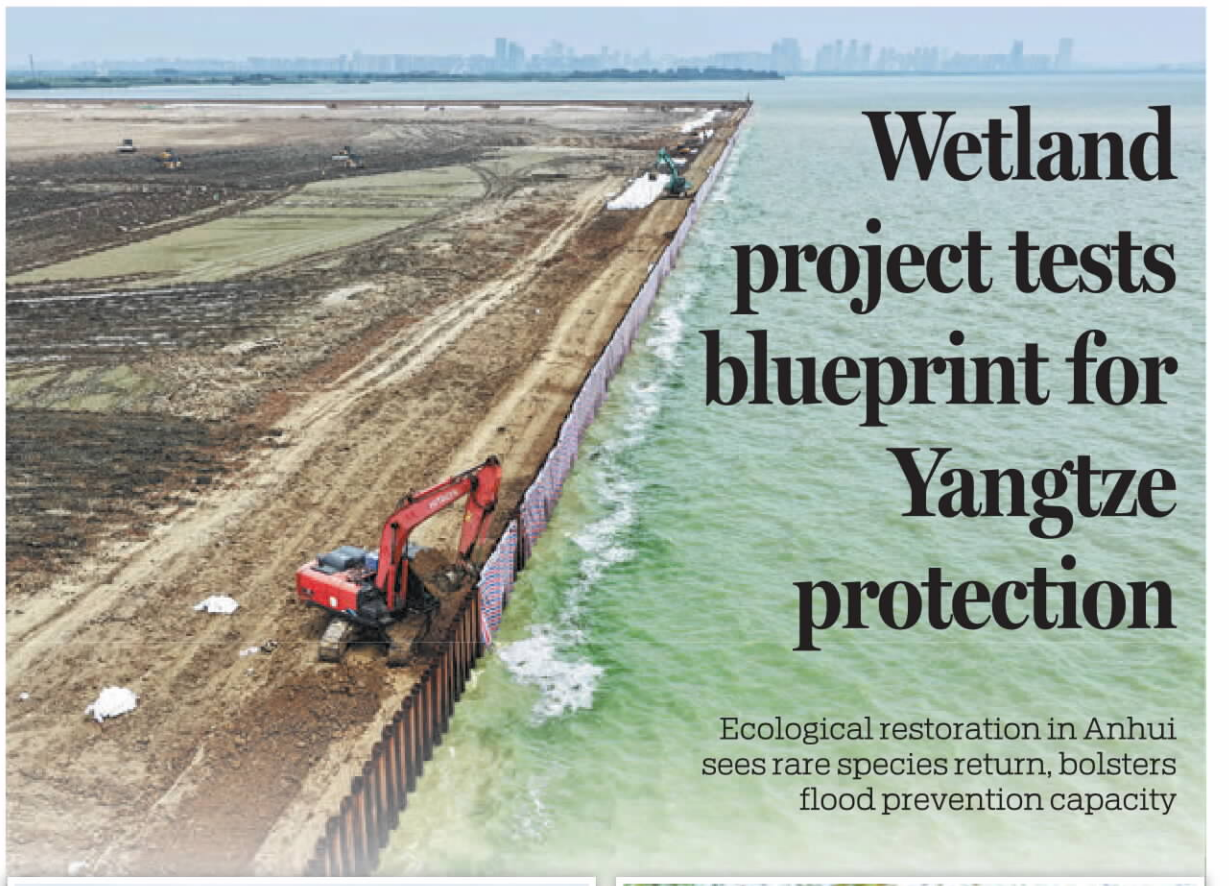
"I used to hate birds for eating my fish. Now, I keep the water clean for them," Yao added.

Mei Dangfu, 75, was among the first of the locals to be relocated. Initially unsettled by the disruption, he has since embraced his new life in a modern 90-square-meter apartment.

The transition was smoothed by an ecological employment priority for locals. Mei landed a security post at the wetland. "I'm happy to see that the number of overwintering swans has increased in recent years," Mei said.

Monitoring data confirm these observations. Since restoration began, plant species have risen from 331 to 412, fish from 36 to 64, and birds from 63 to 232.

Winter bird-watching, spring flower viewing and science education tours draw tens of thousands of visitors annually. Combined with ecotourism and specialty aquaculture, the wetland generates over 20 million yuan in annual output value and creates more than 100 local jobs.









Clockwise from top: Excavators carry out dredging work at Chaohu Lake in Hefei, Anhui province, last month. HAN SUYUAN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE Workers clean up excessive aquatic plants in Shibalianwei wetland, Hefei, in August 2024. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY A bullet train passes through Shibalianwei in March. DU YU / XINHUA Egrets hover above a rotary tiller at a family farm in Hefei in June last year. CHAO ZHIBIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Former waste dump transformed into fields of corn

By **LI MENGHAN**

On the western outskirts of Hefei, Anhui province, a vast expanse of crops breaks through the soil on a plot that, just three years ago, lay buried under more than 10 million cubic meters of construction debris.

The site, once the No 3 Spoil Dump for the Yangtze-to-Huaihe River Diversion Project — the province's mega water infrastructure initiative designed to supply water to millions — was long considered a permanent ecological scar. Today, it has been engineered into 960 hectares of high-standard farmland, yielding successful harvests of rice, corn and rapeseed.

The transformation highlights how, under China's current 15th Five-Year Plan (2026–30), Anhui province is pioneering market-oriented reclamation models. Rather than treating infrastructure waste and food security as separate issues, local governments are partnering with private agribusinesses to ensure infrastructure projects leave behind usable land.

To address the damage left by years of dumping, engineers employed a layered reclamation approach. They first stripped and stockpiled whatever topsoil remained salvageable, then cut down the irregular mounds and regraded the debris in successive lifts. This process eliminated voids, prevented uneven settlement and restored drainage gradients across the site — prerequisites for any land intended to bear heavy agricultural machinery.

Sterile red sandstone spoil, which is unsuitable for crop growth, was buried deeper than one meter to isolate it from root zones. The preserved topsoil was then backfilled to the surface to rebuild the plow layer, where root systems develop and nutrients concentrate.

On the flattened terrain, agricultural infrastructure was upgraded. Fragmented plots were merged into contiguous fields to enable large-scale mechanized cultivation. Irrigation channels were dredged and lined to prevent seepage, while farm roads were rebuilt to support efficient drainage during heavy rains and machinery access.

The harder challenge, however, was soil recovery, as previous dumping had broken down soil aggregates and depleted organic matter.

To tackle this, researchers from the Institute of Soil Science of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Nanjing analyzed local soil conditions and introduced green manure rotations, which involve planting cover crops and plowing them back into the earth while still green, allowing the nitrogen-rich biomass to decompose and rebuild soil fertility naturally. The team also applied organic compost at roughly 30 metric tons per hectare to gradually bring fertility up to high-standard farmland specifications.

Unlike conventional reclamation — which often means simply leveling debris and covering it with imported soil — the site adopted an integrated construction and operation model, with project teams responsible not only for reshaping the land but also for ensuring it could produce crops reliably.

In September 2023, the Ministry of Natural Resources launched a four-year pilot program on low-efficiency land redevelopment in 43 cities, districts and counties, targeting inefficient land use and irrational spatial layouts resulting from rapid urbanization. Hefei was among the designated pilot cities, bringing slag-dump reclamation under a more rigorous framework.

The reclaimed site is now operated by a leading agribusiness under a land-leasing model. Every April, golden blossoms across the restored terraces briefly turn the former dump into a suburban attraction, drawing photographers and weekend visitors.

The Anhui government said it has prioritized clearing the backlog of unremediated spoil sites and abandoned mines, integrating ecological restoration with food security goals rather than treating them as separate challenges.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:59 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:59 PM

LIFE






Top left and right: Visitors explore the exhibits at the Finest Cultural Gifts From China cultural and tourism trade promotion event in late June in Beijing.
Above left and right: Children engage in hands-on pottery-making experiences in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province. The "Porcelain Capital" is promoting its ceramic culture through workshops, group tours and outreach initiatives such as international exhibitions and trade fairs. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

A new window into China

Bringing together diplomats, artisans and business leaders, a cultural trade event turns the country's rich heritage into a catalyst for international exchange, **Yang Feiyue** reports.

After nearly a decade in China over two diplomatic postings, Tinatin Shishinashvili thought there was little left to surprise her. Then she stopped at a booth displaying a blue-and-white teacup — one that any visitor to Turkiye would recognize instantly as the country's iconic tulip-shaped tea glass, rendered here in Jingdezhen's signature cobalt glaze.

"Silk and porcelain — everyone knows these," said Shishinashvili, senior counselor at the embassy of Georgia in Beijing, as she browsed exhibits at the Finest Cultural Gifts From China cultural and tourism trade promotion event in late June.

"But China has so much more to offer. There are products, art forms and cultural expressions that people overseas have simply never encountered," she added.

Moments earlier, she had been deep in conversation with representatives of the China Oriental Performing Arts Group, one of the country's most prestigious performance ensembles, about possible cooperation.

An idea was beginning to take shape: Could Georgian traditional dance, with its soaring leaps and women gliding across the stage in flowing dresses, one day be performed alongside Chinese classical productions?

As she made her way through the exhibition hall, she paused to listen to the stories behind the products on display.

She lingered at the Jingdezhen booth, asking about the workshop where the teacups were made, and the artisans who painted each brushstroke by hand.

She said she would love to visit the city in Jiangxi province, walk through the kiln sites, and watch the craftspeople at work. "A porcelain learning tour to Jingdezhen is now on my list."

Shishinashvili's experience reflected a broader theme running through the event: how Chinese cultural products, creative industries and ideas are reaching new audiences overseas, while those encounters are reshaping perceptions on both sides.

The event was designed to facilitate those encounters. Co-hosted by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism's Department of Industry Development, the Department of Services for Foreign Ministry Home and Overseas Offices, the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture and Tourism, and the Beijing Dongcheng district, the cultural and tourism trade promotion event brought together diplomats from 14 countries and regions, officials from the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and representatives from cultural and tourism enterprises across China.

Addressing participants, Miao Muyang, director-general of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism's Department of Industry Development, described cultural and tourism trade as both an important driver of international economic cooperation and a bridge for exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations.


Guangzhou Nansha Marina, established in 2011, has become one of the major players in the country's yacht industry. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Since 2022, the ministry has organized 18 editions of the initiative at home and abroad, creating platforms that connect Chinese enterprises with overseas buyers, cross-border e-commerce platforms and industry partners.

This year's event featured more than 30 exhibitors representing intangible cultural heritage, cultural technology, performing arts, creative products, and lifestyle brands.

Organizers said the goal was not only to showcase products and services with market potential, but also to create opportunities for dialogue, business matchmaking and long-term partnerships.

> "There are products, art forms and cultural expressions that people overseas have simply never encountered."
>
> **Tinatin Shishinashvili,** senior counselor at the embassy of Georgia in Beijing, talking about exhibits at the Finest Cultural Gifts From China event

Reaching out

Representing the Jingdezhen Trade Business Ceramics Cultural Tourism Industry Operation Management Co at the Beijing event, Fu Yao, the company's general manager, spoke enthusiastically about Jingdezhen's efforts to bring its thousand-year-old porcelain tradition to new international audiences.

As visitors examined ceramic jewelry, tea sets and contemporary cultural products displayed at her booth, she recalled a moment from the Milan Handicraft Fair, one of Europe's leading showcases for artisanal craftsmanship.

European visitors would pick up the porcelain pieces, turn them over in their hands and study the brushwork in disbelief. "They simply couldn't believe that human hands could produce something so precise," Fu says.

Although Jingdezhen is celebrated in China as the "Porcelain Capital" and its wares once traveled along maritime trade routes to royal courts across Europe, many overseas consumers know little about how the pieces are made.

"Only when people spend several days in Jingdezhen, make pottery themselves and experience the process firsthand, can they truly understand why this city has produced 1,000 years of ceramic culture," she says.

Recent visa facilitation measures have encouraged more international visitors to stay longer in Jingdezhen rather than treat it as a brief stopover, she says.

Many now take part in pottery workshops, tour historical kiln sites and explore the city's ceramic markets, gaining a deeper appreciation of the craftsmanship behind every finished piece.

The city's outreach has also expanded through international exhibitions and trade fairs.

Among the products on display in Beijing was a Turkish-style tea glass decorated with Turkish textile motifs, illustrating how Jingdezhen artisans are adapting traditional craftsmanship for overseas markets.

The product has generated nearly 2 million yuan ($295,000) in sales in Turkiye, Fu says.

Potential market

More than 2,000 kilometers to the south, where the Pearl River meets the South China Sea, Xu Fengjuan has witnessed firsthand the growing international interest in Guangzhou's Nansha district.

"When we first started attending international events, people were curious, but they knew little about China's yacht industry," says Xu, executive deputy general manager of Guangzhou Nansha Marina.

"Many assumed we were still at a very early stage."

The marina was established in 2011 with the ambitious goal of building a facility that met international standards, at a time when China's modern yacht industry was still in its infancy.

"There were few standards, limited infrastructure and very little experience to draw on," Xu says. "We had to learn everything from scratch."

Over the following decade, the club developed a full range of services, from berthing and maintenance to licensing support and training programs. It also became one of the first marinas on the Chinese mainland to receive the 5 Gold Anchor Platinum accreditation from The Yacht Harbour Association, the industry's highest honor.

But for Xu, the more meaningful progress has been less visible.

Creating conditions for easier movement of yachts within the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area required years of coordination among customs, maritime and regulatory authorities. Those efforts reached a milestone in mid-June, just days before the Beijing trade promotion event, when the first official Greater Bay Area yacht free-travel voyage departed from the Nansha yacht club.

"We spent years working with different departments and introducing international best practices," Xu says.

"Progress came step by step."

Today, about one-third of the club's roughly 100 members come from Hong Kong and Macao, a sign of growing regional connectivity.

The club has also invested heavily in youth sailing programs. Since 2014, young sailors trained in Nansha have competed in regattas in Portugal and the United States.

Its annual yacht expo and sailing regatta have also attracted a growing number of manufacturers, dealers and sailing enthusiasts from around the world.

Xu says she has noticed another shift in recent years. Overseas yacht organizations that once had little contact with China are now reaching out directly.

European clubs have contacted Nansha to arrange visits, explore partnerships and learn more about developments in the Greater Bay Area.

"Fifteen years ago, we were studying international standards and learning from others. Now, people come here to see what we are doing," Xu says.

The change reminds her of something she often hears from first-time visitors.

"They arrive with one impression of China," she says. "After they spend time here, they leave with a different one."

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

Hong Kong Ballet unveils dazzling stage lineup

By **CHEN NAN**
chennan@chinadaily.com.cn

Hotpot, neon lights, kung fu cinema, and high fashion are not the ingredients one would typically associate with classical ballet. Yet, the Hong Kong Ballet is blending them into an exuberant celebration of the city's cultural identity with the launch of its 2026/27 season, aptly titled Hong Kong Bling.

Drawing inspiration from Hong Kong's vibrant 1970s heyday, when film, music and fashion flourished with global influence, the new season is set to bring an eclectic mix of world premieres, award-winning productions and community initiatives that reflect both the city's rich heritage and its contemporary creative energy.

The program was unveiled on June 23. Artistic director Septime Webre describes the upcoming season as a theatrical hotpot, where diverse cultural influences come together to create something greater than the sum of their parts.

"Hotpot is more than a meal; it is a living expression of togetherness and community," Webre says.

"Generations of family and friends have transformed individual ingredients into something greater and richer, enjoyed around the table together."

He likened the company's new season to that communal dining experience, combining the glamour of 1970s Hong Kong — from glitzy disco culture and neon-lit streets to martial arts films and bold fashion — into "something memorable and meaningful".

The centerpiece of the season is an ambitious trio of productions exploring identity, transformation and human resilience.

Among them is the world premiere of *Bruce Lee: Hong Kong Legend*, created and directed by Webre. The large-scale production celebrates the martial arts icon through ballet, blending classical dance with action choreography, an original score that fuses orchestral music with Chinese instruments and contemporary pop, and designs by Oscar-winning art director Tim Yip.

> Just as we gather together to share meals, we can gather at the theater and in the community to experience creativity and artistry that reflects the Hong Kong Ballet today."
>
> **Septime Webre,** artistic director of the Hong Kong Ballet

Another major premiere, *Dunhuang: In Search of Light*, reunites choreographer Hu Song Wei Ricky and Mai Jingwen. Inspired by the novel *Siddhartha* by German-born Swiss writer Hermann Hesse, who received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1946, and the ancient grottoes in Dunhuang, the production follows a young man's spiritual journey toward enlightenment, combining classical ballet with immersive visual storytelling. It also marks the Hong Kong Ballet's first collaboration with the Dunhuang Academy in Gansu province.

Another highlight is *Coco Chanel: The Life of a Fashion Icon*, choreographed by Annabelle Lopez Ochoa. The ballet examines the complicated life and legacy of the designer whose influence reshaped the fashion world.

Classical favorites also remain firmly on the menu.

Audiences can look forward to the return of *The Nutcracker*, Webre's interpretation of the classic, as well as the swashbuckling *Le Corsaire: The Pirate Hunter!*, known for its athletic choreography and spectacular stagecraft.

Families are also catered for through Summer Fling, an interactive studio event featuring excerpts from the company's repertoire, opportunities to meet dancers and ballet workshops for children.

Beyond the stage, the Hong Kong Ballet continues to strengthen its role as one of the city's cultural ambassadors. Its internationally acclaimed *Romeo + Juliet*, set in 1960s Hong Kong, will tour Beijing in August and Chengdu, Sichuan province, in September, following performances in New York, London and Seoul.

Webre highlights the company's expanding community outreach, including the growth of the Hong Kong Academy of Ballet, its "Dancing to Hong Kong's Heartbeat" initiative and "Silver Ballet" programs designed for seniors. More pop-up performances and collaborations across the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area are planned for 2027.

"Just as we gather together to share meals, we can gather at the theater and in the community to experience creativity and artistry that reflects the Hong Kong Ballet today," Webre says.

"It's rooted in tradition yet boldly contemporary, stylish and deeply connected to both the city and the world."


Bruce Lee: Hong Kong Legend celebrates the kung fu icon through ballet. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:59 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:59 PM

LIFE



HAPPINESS HELD BY MANY STRINGS

Chinese mythology and traditional puppetry hit the international stage in France, sharing a cultural universe with new audiences, **Chen Nan** reports.

What if the legendary heroes, historical figures and cultural icons of Chinese mythology didn't just live in ancient texts but stepped onto a small stage in France, pulled by strings, shadows and breath?

At this year's Avignon OFF Theatre Festival, one of the world's largest and most dynamic performing arts festivals held every July in the southern French city of Avignon, a new curated program titled Tradition Renewed will do just that, placing Chinese mythology at the heart of an international stage.

From July 15 to 25, the program transforms China's ancient mythological universe — gods, creators, tricksters, and immortals — into something audiences don't simply watch, but "encounter".

Curator Yao Shuo describes the initiative not as a single sweeping epic but as a constellation of mythical fragments.

"Chinese immortals as a theme are not meant to be a singular grand narrative. The mythological theme satisfies audience curiosity," Yao says. "Tradition Renewed is about multiple voices rather than one big story."

Rather than treating deities as distant relics, the program invites audiences into mythology as something fluid and alive — playful, shifting, and unexpectedly intimate.

"We invite audiences to experience Chinese mythology as something that can be retold, reimagined, and even slightly broken, so it feels newly alive," he adds.

Among the participating artists are the Quanzhou string puppetry ensemble and the Quanzhou Marionette Show Inheritance and Protection Center from Fujian province, represented by troupe head Dai Xun, who brings both classical repertoire and newly reimagined works to Avignon for the first time.

Rooted in Minnan (the southern area of Fujian province) culture, Quanzhou string puppetry was listed as a national intangible cultural heritage in 2006 and inscribed in UNESCO's Register of Good Safeguarding Practices in 2012, reflecting both its historical depth and ongoing vitality.

This year, the troupe presents a 60-minute curated program bringing together seven classic and newly created works. At its center is *Nezha*, a recent production that quickly became a domestic hit after being created last March.

"It became very popular, with many performances completely sold out," says Dai.



Quanzhou string puppetry will be highlighted during the upcoming Avignon OFF Theatre Festival. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Top: QFunTheater's Children's Experimental Troupe will bring a production adapted from the mythological classic *Shan Hai Jing*, along with elements of shadow puppetry, to France. **Above:** 300-year-old Huai Diao Opera, a form of traditional Chinese opera from Cixian county, Hebei province, will be staged in France.

A rebellious mythological figure since his earliest literary appearances in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), Ne Zha has long been reinterpreted across generations, making him a flexible symbol for contemporary storytelling.

Behind the spectacle lies extraordinary technical precision.

"Behind every movement are thin silk strings — each gesture controlled with astonishing delicacy, yet capable of expressing vast emotional and narrative worlds," Dai says. "It is a living demonstration of Quanzhou puppetry techniques: a small stage containing an entire universe, where tradition and contemporary imagination move in seamless rhythm."

The program also includes reworked traditional and contemporary pieces under the umbrella presentation *Living Puppetry: Ancient Art with New Looks*, blending classical structures with updated dramaturgy and stage technologies.

For the Avignon setting, adaptation has been crucial. The troupe's large domestic casts have been scaled down to suit smaller international venues.

"When selecting works, we chose pieces that have already been validated by audiences in China," Dai says. "We normally do 800 to 900 performances a year, and these are among our top 10 most-performed works."

He adds that the selection is designed to balance tradition, innovation and accessibility for audiences unfamiliar with Chinese puppetry.

Dai's own path into the profession began in Quanzhou, Fujian province, where he grew up near a puppet troupe before entering a performing arts school in 1992.

"After school, I would go watch performances. At the time, people said this art could support a livelihood. It became a kind of dream job," he recalls.

His early fascination came from the craft's technical brilliance.

"When I was a child, I was amazed by the skill — it felt fun and fascinating. But training is very hard and often very boring, especially basic skills. It takes years before you can perform on stage."

Yet for Dai, the appeal of puppetry remains fundamentally human.

"What doesn't change is that people love puppetry. Children and older audiences alike enjoy the feeling of control and interaction — like a kind of game. Through puppets, you can express things the human body cannot easily do," he says. "You can even communicate with ancient heroes, as if interacting with them directly."

Another highlight of Tradition Renewed comes from Huai Diao Opera in Cixian county, Hebei province. With a history of around 300 years, the form is known for its high, arching, and emotionally charged vocal style.

The new production is based on a script recorded more than 30 years ago by veteran artist Xie Zhuqing and is jointly produced by the Cixian Hongyi Huai Diao Culture and Art Center and the Hebei Bangzi Opera Theatre.

At its core is a reinterpretation of the myth of Nyuwa repairing the sky, in which the goddess restores cosmic order after a catastrophic collapse of heaven, saving humanity through sacrifice and creation.

"We wanted to let Huai Diao Opera stand again on a contemporary stage, not as a museum piece, but as a living performance language," says Xie.

In its most striking sequence, the production introduces intelligent robotics onto the stage for the first time, enabling human performers and machines to move in synchronized choreography — an unexpected encounter between centuries-old opera aesthetics and emerging technology.

The performance remains anchored in Huai Diao's powerful traditional vocal style, enriched with modern stagecraft and visual effects.

The third major work in the program is based on the mythological classic *Shan Hai Jing* (The Classic of Mountains and Seas), created by QFunTheater's Children's Experimental Troupe. The entire creative process, from writing and performance to stage design and multimedia, is led by children aged 4 to 14, offering a strikingly youthful reinterpretation of ancient mythology.

The production also features the Wang family shadow puppetry tradition from Huaxian (Huazhou), Shaanxi province, one of China's most important shadow theater schools. A nationally listed intangible cultural heritage passed down through five generations, it is making its theatrical debut in Avignon.

Beyond performances, Tradition Renewed expands into workshops, exhibitions and professional forums. A curator-led open day on July 22 will connect Chinese troupes with international audiences.

Looking ahead, Yao, the curator, says this inaugural edition is only the beginning.

"This is the first year," he says. "Next year, we plan to collaborate more directly with international artists, expanding the dialogue beyond Chinese traditions into shared creative territory."

Contact the writer at chennan@chinadaily.com.cn

Technological upgrade creates lasting impact for Zigong lanterns

By **YANG FEIYUE**
yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

The 32nd Zigong International Dinosaur Lantern Festival recently drew to a close after a five-month run, nearly twice as long as the sessions held a decade ago.

The extended season allowed the city to reduce peak-period crowding and host more than 350 cultural and tourism events across Zigong in Southwest China's Sichuan province, including folk parades, intangible cultural heritage exhibitions, music performances, temple fairs, and night tours.

The longer run was made possible by innovations in the lanterns themselves.

Zigong has made lanterns for generations. Its festivals are legendary, drawing millions of visitors from across China and around the world each year.

The craft dates back to the Tang Dynasty (618-907), and for centuries, Zigong's lantern makers have passed their skills from master to apprentice. But for most of its history, the craft had a hard limit: the displays were always temporary, lasting two or three months and then discarded. After each festival season, workers would dismantle the lanterns, and the materials would be scrapped. That was simply how it worked.

Shi Fei, chief planner and designer of the 31st Zigong International Dinosaur Lantern Festival in 2025, decided to change that.

His team upgraded the materials, experimenting with new fabrics, coatings and structural designs. Short-lived lanterns now can last from six months to a year. They also introduced thematic designs, digital lighting and interactive rides. Visitors no longer just walk past the lanterns and glance at them. They can step inside some displays, trigger lighting effects with their movements, and even control color changes through touch panels. Those efforts helped turn a seasonal craft into a year-round attraction.

The 2025 festival, which ran from Jan 17 to early May, generated 149 million yuan ($22 million) in ticket revenue, up 46 percent from last year, thanks to a 40 percent increase in visitor numbers.

The longer duration also created a lasting impact. The 32nd festival saw ticket sales reach 106 million yuan by Feb 22, up 12.53 percent from the previous year. The festival this year welcomed its one-millionth visitor just 31 days after opening — a milestone that previously took much longer to reach.

For Shi, the goal was never to freeze tradition in time. He has said repeatedly that intangible cultural heritage cannot survive behind glass. It must be used, experienced, and adapted. The aim is to help tradition endure and attract people to see it.

Across Zigong, the broader industry is following a similar path. Speaking at the China Tourism Entrepreneurs Summit in Xiamen, Fujian province, a major gathering in early June which brought together more than 1,000 industry leaders under the theme of building a tourism powerhouse, Shi notes that the intersection of traditional craftsmanship and modern tourism requires continuous innovation. His work on the Zigong lantern festival, he says, was driven by a simple question of how to make a centuries-old craft relevant to travelers who have seen everything.

Shen Hongyue, president of Zigong's lantern industry association, says that the sector has evolved from simply supplying lantern products to providing integrated services for nighttime cultural tourism projects, which are now steadily becoming part of new nighttime tourism and consumption scenarios across China.

Zigong now accounts for 85 percent of China's lantern market and 92 percent of the global market, with annual industry-wide revenue surpassing 8 billion yuan, according to Shen. The industry employs hundreds of thousands of workers, from traditional craftspeople to digital designers and project managers.

The local lantern craft has become a global export, with Zigong lanterns appearing at festivals in more than 80 countries, including the United States, France, Japan, and Singapore, according to local industry players.

The annual Zigong lantern trade conference held in May saw contracts worth nearly 1.03 billion yuan signed, reflecting the industry's growing commercial reach.

French host and Sino-French cultural exchange envoy Christophe Hisquin, who has participated in more than 400 international events, experienced the emotional pull of lanterns firsthand at an industry conference in Zigong in May.

"I have seen many lights in my life, but Zigong's lanterns are unique; the warmest and most futuristic," he says.

What moved him, he explains, was not just the craftsmanship or that being a visual feast, but the feeling that Zigong lanterns are a living history of civilization.

Dai Bin, president of the China Tourism Academy, has long argued that technology must serve culture, not the other way around.

"Our technology needs cultural leadership," he said during the 2026 Two Sessions. "Without the cultural essence, a purely technical spectacle cannot last."

He believes technology-powered tourism must be "people-centered" and "applied for good" — making traditions more accessible.

What visitors seek, he says, is emotional and cultural connection. Technology's role can enable that connection.

Wang Tayi, a veteran of the Universal Beijing Resort project, believes China now possesses the industrial capacity and technological sophistication to transform traditional crafts into globally competitive attractions.

He points to Huawei and BYD as evidence that Chinese design and engineering can compete at the highest level. The same, he argues, can be done with a lantern.

"We are looking forward to seeing this cooperation set a new benchmark for the innovative development of the cultural tourism industry," Wang says.



Lanterns in vivid shapes of traditional auspicious elements, including fishes and babies, as well as ancient architecture, were a big draw at the 32nd Zigong International Dinosaur Lantern Festival that recently drew to a close after a five-month run. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:59 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:59 PM

LIFE



Crossings that turned the tide

Film revisits a legendary campaign that reshaped the Long March and secured the Red Army's survival, **Xu Fan** reports.

More than 30,000 against 400,000. The two numbers capture the stark imbalance between the Communist Party of China-led Red Army and the encircling Kuomintang troops during one of the most decisive military campaigns of 1935.

At first glance, the odds seemed insurmountable. Yet, the vastly outnumbered Red Army not only survived but also turned the campaign into a pivotal moment in the Long March (1934-36), the epic two-year military trek that paved the way for the eventual victory of the Chinese revolution and the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

Known as the "Four Crossings of the Chishui River" campaign — which Chairman Mao Zedong later described as "the proudest achievement" of his military career — the legendary operation has recently been brought to the big screen in *Crossing*, which opened in theaters nationwide on June 26.

Released as a tribute to the 90th anniversary of the victory of the Long March, the film opens in the aftermath of the Battle of Xiangjiang River, one of the bloodiest engagements of the Long March. Fought in 1934, the battle was a setback for the Red Army, leaving more than 50,000 soldiers dead, wounded, captured or missing.

After the Zunyi Conference in Guizhou province, Mao regained military command and abandoned rigid conventional tactics in favor of highly mobile warfare. Facing an encirclement by some 400,000 Kuomintang troops led by Chiang Kai-shek, he directed the Red Army across the border region of Sichuan, Guizhou and Yunnan provinces to confuse, outmaneuver and wear down the pursuing enemy.

From Jan 19 to March 22, 1935, the Red Army crossed the Chishui River, which flows through three provinces, four times, ultimately breaking out of the encirclement while preserving the core strength of the CPC-led forces with minimal losses.

Beyond vividly recounting the historic campaign, the film also focuses on ordinary Red Army soldiers. Told through the eyes of veteran Zhao Defa and a homeless orphan, A'jin, who volunteers to assist Zhao and his comrades, the story explores the courage, conviction and resilience that made the force so formidable.

Director Xu Zhanxiong, known for *The Pioneer* — a 2021 biopic about Li Dazhao, a founding member of the CPC — told China Daily that his original motivation was to "retell a story that every Chinese person has encountered in history textbooks in a way that truly moves audiences, while inspiring younger generations to explore history more deeply".

The project took shape during the 19th Changchun Film Festival in 2024, when Xu was approached by Yu Dong, founder of Bona Film Group, which has produced several acclaimed revolutionary blockbusters including *The Battle at Lake Changjin* and *The Founding of an Army*. Xu recalls being struck by Yu's passion for bringing the campaign's lesser-known stories to the screen.

"Every time Yu talks about the campaign, he speaks with remarkable familiarity and profound knowledge. His genuine passion is infectious and inspires everyone around him," says Xu.

In October that year, Xu and the film's creative team set off on their first research trip to Guizhou, one of the campaign's major battlefields. Retracing the Red Army's route, they visited historic sites including Tucheng Ancient Town in Xishui county, where Mao directed his first battle after regaining military command, and Loushan Pass, a strategic mountain pass more than 1,500 meters above sea level at the junction of Zunyi and Tongzi counties.

"The Battle of Loushan Pass marked the Red Army's first major victory after the start of the Long March, and it was fought with extraordinary intensity," Xu says. He adds that Mao later wrote a famous poem, expressing his confidence that the Red Army would overcome every hardship on its road to ultimate victory.

During a visit to a museum in Zunyi, Xu learned that there was no bridge across the Chishui River when the Red Army made its first crossing. Instead, soldiers gathered bamboo poles, wooden planks and small boats from local villagers to build makeshift pontoon bridges that swayed beneath their feet as they crossed.

The film's 107 scenes were shot entirely at 32 locations across Guizhou, with nearly 2,000 students from Guizhou Police College and Qiannan Minzu Polytechnic volunteering to play Red Army soldiers. Although filming took place during last winter's freezing weather, the youngsters, wearing straw sandals and carrying heavy gear through muddy terrain, completed the demanding shoot without a single person dropping out, according to the producers.

Executive producer Andrew Lau says he was deeply impressed by their dedication. "They were about the same age as the Red Army soldiers — mostly in their 20s — and worked alongside the cast under extremely harsh conditions. At times, looking at them through the camera, I felt as if I were seeing the young Red Army soldiers of 90 years ago," says Lau.

Actor Liu Ye lost 8.5 kilograms to portray Mao during one of the most grueling periods of the Long March, when the revolutionary leader endured illness, hunger and bitter cold.

The film marks Liu's third time portraying Mao, following *Beginning of the Great Revival* (2011) and *The Founding of an Army* (2017). He recalls one memorable behind-the-scenes detail: although he rarely eats spicy food in real life, Liu chewed chili peppers during filming to better reflect Mao's well-known fondness for them, enduring a burning sensation in both his mouth and stomach to stay true to the role.

The film also features several prominent figures from the Kuomintang side, including its leader Chiang and Guizhou warlord Wang Jialie. Wang's army was mockingly known as the "two-gun troop", a nickname referring to the fact that many of his soldiers carried both a rifle and an opium pipe. Since Wang did not ban opium poppy cultivation and instead profited from the trade during his rule over Guizhou in the early 1930s, widespread opium addiction was tolerated within his ranks.

More than a year after filming wrapped, Xu says the project's greatest impact on him was gaining a firsthand understanding of how extraordinary the campaign truly was. "The path the Red Army soldiers walked is nothing short of a miracle in human history. Every step they took, every drop of blood they shed — all of it helped shape the course of history," he says.

Contact the writer at xufan@chinadaily.com.cn





From top: A poster of *Crossing* shows the Zunyi Conference held in Guizhou province during the Long March, where Mao Zedong (fourth from left) regained military command of the Red Army. Another poster for the movie. Director Xu Zhanxiong speaks at the film's Beijing premiere. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

Tajik students build skills in China classrooms

TIANJIN — At the intelligent surveying and mapping training center of Tianjin Urban Construction Management and Vocation Technology College in North China, 21-year-old Tajik student Jonibek Ismoilov was busy fine-tuning equipment settings.

Around him, he and his classmates set up circuits, monitored data and recorded measurement results, while conversations in both Chinese and Russian filled the classroom.

In September 2024, Ismoilov and seven other students became the first group of students from the Luban Workshop in Tajikistan to come to this northern Chinese municipality to study. After completing the first two years of courses at the local Luban Workshop, they arrived in China as the first batch of students in the "2 plus 2" joint training program, where they received further instruction in engineering surveying, the operation and maintenance of surveying equipment, new power systems, and wind-solar hybrid technologies.

Lu Ban was an outstanding craftsman and inventor who lived in China more than 2,500 years ago.

The Luban Workshop is an international vocational education brand launched by Tianjin Municipality. Combining academic education with vocational training, it provides advanced training facilities and equipment, sends Chinese teachers and technicians to train instructors locally, and invites them to China for exchanges and hands-on learning, all in an effort to cultivate technical talent.

In March 2022, the Luban Workshop in Tajikistan was jointly launched by Tianjin Urban Construction Management and Vocation Technology College and Tajik Technical University. It began operating in November that year.

"The Luban Workshop gave us the opportunity to study in China. It focuses not only on classroom learning, but also on hands-on practice. We operate the equipment ourselves and take part in practical training, which has helped me understand how professional knowledge is applied in real engineering projects," Ismoilov says.

He has systematically studied practical surveying courses, gradually mastering professional skills through repeated training, from precision instrument operation to standardized circuit installation and real-time data monitoring.

Now, Ismoilov can read professional materials fluently and complete practical training independently. After finishing his current studies, he hopes to pursue a master's degree in Tianjin, specializing in advanced surveying technologies.

Another student benefiting from the Luban Workshop is Bakhtiyor Bozorzoda from Tajik Technical University. When he first enrolled, he felt uncertain whether geodesy and cartography were the right fields for him. But the advanced surveying equipment, digital mapping technologies and virtual simulation courses introduced at the workshop helped him see the discipline in a new light and sparked a lasting interest.



Students and teachers from Tajik Technical University take part in a Luban Workshop training session at Tianjin Urban Construction Management and Vocation Technology College in Tianjin in July 2024. XINHUA

During his studies, Bozorzoda gained hands-on experience with high-precision instruments and digital mapping technologies. He also came to Tianjin for practical training and skills competitions, where he learned about China's advanced surveying equipment and modern engineering practices, further strengthening his career aspirations.

"I hope to continue my studies in China, learn more advanced surveying technologies, and contribute to infrastructure development in Tajikistan," Bozorzoda says.

Today, the Luban Workshop in Tajikistan has been operating for nearly four years, having provided learning and training opportunities for more than 2,900 undergraduate and graduate students. Its programs now span nine departments and 13 majors, including civil engineering and architecture.

Meanwhile, increasingly close exchanges between vocational education practitioners from China and Tajikistan have continued to improve the workshop's teaching quality.

Since 2022, Wu Zhengpeng, a teacher from Tianjin Urban Construction Management and Vocation Technology College, has embarked on a "two-way journey" across the Pamir Mountains. As a Chinese instructor at the Luban Workshop in Tajikistan, he has trained local teachers using advanced Chinese instruments and comprehensive teaching resources, building a learning platform more closely aligned with industrial needs.

"This is not a one-way exchange. We work closely with our Tajik colleagues to develop teaching plans and explore new approaches together. Through ongoing collaboration, we are building talent training models that better meet local needs," Wu says.

A total of 25 Tajik teachers have also participated in training programs in China. "Chinese teachers are both mentors and friends. They have offered many valuable ideas during teaching exchanges. Modern training equipment and specialized courses have greatly increased students' enthusiasm for learning," says Parviz Khujaev, a professor at Tajik Technical University.

Qudrat Davlatzoda, president of the university, says the Luban Workshop is a model of mutual respect and pragmatic cooperation between Tajikistan and China.

"It has not only brought us valuable experience and deep friendship, but also significantly improved the university's teaching and research capabilities, injecting new momentum into its development," he says.

To support local industrial development, Tianjin Urban Construction Management and Vocation Technology College has signed a strategic cooperation agreement with more than 10 China-funded enterprises operating in Tajikistan, establishing an industry-education alliance for talent development. The program provides targeted training and short- to medium-term vocational skills training for enterprise employees.

Li Qingbin, Party secretary of the college, says the Luban Workshop in Tajikistan has filled a gap in China-Tajikistan cooperation in vocational and technical education.

"It has provided much-needed talent for local economic and social development while building a bridge for people-to-people exchanges and mutual learning between the two countries, helping more young people grow into 'Silk Road craftsmen' serving the Belt and Road Initiative," Li says.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:59 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:59 PM

SPORTS

WORLD CUP 2026



France's Kylian Mbappe lets out a victorious roar at the final whistle after his side beat Paraguay in the World Cup round of 16 on Saturday.
Inset: A crying fan in the Paraguayan capital Asuncion watches as her team falls to a 1-0 defeat against France. REUTERS / AP

Mbappe on the spot to force France into quarters

Les Bleus overcome physical Paraguay test to edge their way into final eight

Kylian Mbappe laughed and smiled — and scored, of course — when Paraguay tried to bait him and his French teammates into fouls and provoke fights, as hot heads became a recurring theme during one of the steamiest World Cup games on record.

After the final whistle, Mbappe kept on walking and left Paraguayan goalkeeper Orlando Gill hanging, as Gill extended his right hand in a show of sportsmanship.

In response, Gill threw the ball right at the No 10 on Mbappe's jersey.

Mbappe had already got the last laugh though, as he scored his 19th career World Cup goal, and France survived stifling heat to beat Paraguay 1-0 on Saturday, sending Les Bleus into the quarterfinals for the fourth straight time.

"We knew what kind of match it was going to be," Mbappe said afterward. "We can also get our hands dirty, we know how to do it. We know how to play ugly football. Guess they were thinking we were going to show up in tuxedos, but we were ready."

France moves on to a quarterfinal tie on Thursday in Foxborough, Massachusetts, against Morocco, which beat Canada 3-0 in the last 16 earlier Saturday.

That game will be a repeat of the 2022 semifinal which France won 2-0, before it went on to lose the final on penalties to Argentina.

"Morocco are one of the best teams. We played them four years ago in Doha and they also got to the Africa Cup of Nations final," France coach Didier Deschamps said.

He will hope his squad recovers quickly from the Paraguay clash, and that key midfielder Aurelien Tchouameni is back after missing Saturday's game with a thigh injury.

"We have a few days now to recuperate. We have some tired players and a few little knocks too."

With an extreme heat warning in effect throughout the match as temperatures hovered around 38 C, Mbappe finally broke through against a physical, defensive-minded Paraguay side when he converted a penalty kick in the 70th minute.

That was enough for Les Bleus.

Mbappe was awarded the penalty when Diego Gomez was pulled up for tripping Desire Doue after a video review.

Mbappe then stutter-stepped his way to a 19th goal in as many World Cup appearances, and one score behind all-time tournament record holder Lionel Messi.

Mbappe and Messi each have seven goals in this tournament, and are joint top in the Golden Boot race.

Mbappe won that award four years ago, despite Messi and Argentina beating France in the final.

Mbappe — who could be seen frequently trash-talking the Paraguayans in Spanish — is now the only player to score at least three knockout-stage goals at three World Cups.

In the second half, Mbappe botched a breakaway attempt, and Manu Kone had his top-corner shot knocked away by Gill.

Gill also stopped two strong attempts by Mbappe in second-half stoppage time.

The 26-year-old Gill had bested German great Manuel Neuer in a penalty shootout in the previous round, beating Germany on June 29 in one of the big upsets of this World Cup.

But, he lost his cool after the loss to France when he chucked the ball at Mbappe.

"I tried to shake his hand, but since he didn't pay me any attention, I lost my temper," Gill said.

"But anyway, that was all I did. I calmed down afterward."

For the criticism that hydration breaks have watered down the pace of play at the World Cup, they were never more needed for the players than in the midst of a scorching heat wave.

Sprinklers showered the Kentucky bluegrass field during the breaks and at halftime.

"Given our style of play, it was harder to produce a high intensity," Deschamps said.

Spectators fled for the concourse at halftime, seeking shade and refuge from the sun.

Or maybe they were just looking for some action of any kind.



Paraguay rightback Juan Jose Caceres (4) collides with France striker Kylian Mbappe (10) during a feisty World Cup round-of-16 match in Philadelphia on Saturday. AP

Les Bleus scored 13 goals in the first five games of the tournament, but were stymied in the first half by a Paraguay team trying to turn the match into a scrap.

Tempers flared when Andres Cubas took down Mbappe, and the teams briefly pushed and shoved each other.

Matias Galarza also threw his right elbow into Mbappe and sent him crashing to the grass.

Yet, despite the physical, gritty efforts of La Albirroja, it's France that's moving on. Les Bleus are 5-0 in this year's tournament, outscoring their opponents 14-2.

Paraguay coach Gustavo Alfaro, though, said his side had "fought like lions".

"France couldn't find the answers, and it took a bit of individual skill and a penalty given by VAR to make the difference, which their football had not been able to do," Alfaro said after the game.

"It took us 16 years to get back to a World Cup, while Mbappe won the World Cup the first time he played in it, got to the final in his second and now is fighting to be the top scorer.

"We worked so hard to get a different result, but I will leave here with the knowledge that we came to compete and we did."

Deschamps also chose to dwell on the positives from the occasionally bad-tempered encounter: "As I said to the players, we've had easy games so far, so it is good to have a tough one."

AGENCIES

Deschamps hails players for keeping their cool in fiery encounter

France coach Didier Deschamps hailed his side for keeping its cool against an aggressive Paraguay team in heatwave conditions on Saturday, as the favorite reached the quarterfinals of the World Cup.

"It wasn't easy," Deschamps told French broadcaster M6.

"They used every resource possible. It is maybe not the kind of football that brings people to the stadium, playing with that aggression, exaggerating everything."

France had scored 13 goals in its four World Cup outings prior to this game, but on Saturday it struggled to create any clear scoring chances, despite totally dominating possession.

France's most creative players — Michael Olise, Ousmane Dembele and Bradley Barcola — all found the going tough against a niggly Paraguayan team looking to cause another upset after ousting Germany in the last 32.

"We stayed focused on our game. It was difficult, they had lots of men behind the ball and they defended well," added Deschamps.

"Obviously, the temperatures made it hard to play with intensity, and without that (intensity from us) they defended well."

The match was played in the late afternoon heat, with temperatures hitting 38 C in Philadelphia as the city celebrated the United States' July 4th holiday weekend, which also marked the 250th anniversary of the nation's founding.

Deschamps was also left perplexed that his team collected three yellow cards, while not a single Paraguay player was booked.

"I am not going to criticize the referee, but we finished the game with three bookings, and yet, there were a lot of things going on," Deschamps said in his post-match news conference, also suggesting that he and his team were subjected to verbal aggression, too.

"I won't criticize Paraguay. Every team can play however they want, but I could do without the insults.

"The most important thing is that there were no incidents at the end. But, all that matters is that we have qualified."

Deschamps said he had to resort to using two of his strongest players to protect captain Kylian Mbappe against Paraguayan aggression toward the end of the match.

"We kept our nerve and that is an essential thing. It doesn't win you the game, but it is important," he added.

"This experience will help us. After all, we have a lot of players who are playing at their first World Cup," he added.

"I wouldn't say it had been easy for us up to now, but now we have had a different type of game."

AFP

Morocco makes more World Cup history with win over co-host Canada

HOUSTON — Morocco is heading back to the World Cup quarterfinals and coach Mohamed Ouahbi believes his team has established itself among soccer's elite.

Azzedine Ounahi scored twice to lead Morocco to a 3-0 win over Canada in the round of 16 on Saturday, making the country the first African nation to reach the quarterfinals at multiple World Cups.

"We are no longer a surprise," Ouahbi said.

"Now, when people talk about Morocco, we're a major contender, and it's a great source of pride. I think it's only the beginning, and I hope we continue to have runs like this."

Morocco, seventh in the FIFA rankings entering the tournament, earlier dispatched the Netherlands in a penalty shootout to reach the round-of-16 match with Canada, while consigning the Dutch to their earliest World Cup exit.

And despite already making history in this World Cup, Morocco has much higher goals.

"We want to keep going," Ouahbi said. "We don't want to stop."

It's Morocco's second straight appearance in the final eight after becoming the first African team to reach the semifinals in 2022.

"We are so proud to represent Africa, because it's a continent with a lot of talent and Africa deserves to be at the highest level of football," goalkeeper Yassine Bounou said.

Neither team was able to break through until Ounahi took a free-kick from Achraf Hakimi and sent a right-footed shot through traffic from outside the box. It nestled into the bottom right corner to put Morocco ahead in the 50th minute.

Ounahi then made it 2-0 on a right-footed shot from the middle of the box off a pass from Brahim Diaz in the 82nd.

Soufiane Rahimi added some further gloss with a third goal in the final minute of stoppage time.

Morocco will now meet France, which beat Paraguay in the later game, in Foxborough, Massachusetts, on Thursday.

The loss ends a historic run for World Cup co-host Canada, which won its first-ever knockout-round game, beating South Africa 1-0 to reach Saturday's match.

The country was playing in the World Cup for just the third time, and the run enchanted a nation that is normally far more interested in hockey.

Canada coach Jesse Marsch shared his postgame message to the team. "I told them that I was proud of them, and I challenged them to understand that we can play like this all the time against the best teams in the world," he said.



Morocco's two-goal hero Azzedine Ounahi is hoisted into the air by his teammates following their 3-0 victory over Canada in the World Cup round of 16 in Houston on Saturday. AP

"We can be better on the day. And, then, the challenge is, can we hold that standard for 90 minutes?"

Marsch lauded how his team performed against a squad of Morocco's caliber and how Canada controlled the match for much of the day.

"The way we pushed, the way we were in the match, the quality we showed, the overall impact in the match, we were better," he said. "We were better than the seventh-best team in the world today."

Ouahbi had a strong response when told of those comments.

"In terms of intensity, they were good," he said. "They were good for 98 minutes. Were they better? It's hard to say. It takes some nerve to say that when you lose 3-0."

Canada had a couple of chances to score late. Jonathan David had a freekick from outside the box in the 78th minute, but his shot sailed over the crossbar.

Just after that, Tajon Buchanan's shot from about 30 yards was stopped with a diving save from Bounou — one of just three Bounou, who was born in Canada to Moroccan parents, had to make.

The win sparked huge celebrations among Morocco's fans back home. Within minutes, thousands poured into the streets of Casablanca, Morocco's largest city. Horns honked as supporters climbed onto car roofs, waving flags and chanting.

Traffic ground to a halt along the Corniche Boulevard, one of the city's main avenues, where ecstatic Atlas Lions supporters danced, set off fireworks and waved flares. Other major boulevards across Casablanca were also jammed with jubilant fans.

Canada reached the round of 16 despite missing star Alphonso Davies for the majority of the tournament due to a hamstring injury. The Bayern Munich player logged only 15 minutes as a substitute in the victory over South Africa, but wasn't available Saturday.

"His hamstring didn't feel right," Marsch said.

"We were hoping that, by the time he woke up this morning, he would feel better, but he didn't."

This game was a rematch from the last World Cup, when Morocco beat Canada 2-1 in the group stage. Morocco went on to finish fourth overall.

It was an extremely physical match with eight yellow cards being shown. Hakimi and Canada's Richie Laryea both received yellows in the 40th minute after Hakimi shoved Laryea to the ground. Laryea pushed him back and a minor scuffle ensued.

Morocco midfielder Ismael Saibari left with an injury in the 22nd minute.

AP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:36:59 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:01 PM

Block solid success
Legoland Shanghai turns one, draws record visitors
BUSINESS, PAGE 9



Indonesia's 'walking shark' under pressure
ASIA FOCUS, PAGE 4



Vikings sail into last 8
Haaland scores twice as Norway stuns Brazil to reach quarterfinals
SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 TUESDAY, JULY 7, 2026

Xi greets Trump on US independence anniversary

By **JI HAISHENG**
jihaisheng@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping has sent a congratulatory message to United States President Donald Trump on behalf of the Chinese government and the Chinese people, marking the 250th anniversary of America's Declaration of Independence, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said on Monday.

The message was seen as the latest engagement between the two leaders after Trump's visit to Beijing in May, his second visit to China since November 2017. At the time, the two leaders actively sought the right way for two major countries to get along with each other, reached a number of common understandings and agreed on a new vision of building a constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability.

"I look forward to working together with you to set the course and steer the giant ship of China-US relations, so as to make 2026 a historic, landmark year that opens up a new chapter in China-US relations," Xi told Trump during their meeting in May.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi told reporters after the meeting that the year 2026 holds special meaning for the two countries, as it marks both the start of China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) and the 250th anniversary of US independence.

The US held grand celebrations on Saturday to mark the 250th anniversary of its independence, with nationwide festivities including a massive fireworks show. Trump commemorated the milestone with an address from the National Mall in Washington, DC.

The date traces back to July 4, 1776, when the Declaration of Independence was adopted, proclaiming the 13 American colonies' separation from British rule.

Venting their ire



Demonstrators protest ahead of the NATO summit in Ankara, Turkiye, on Sunday. As Turkiye prepares to host the NATO summit on Tuesday and Wednesday, thousands of demonstrators took to the streets in Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir over the weekend to denounce the alliance's push for higher defense spending. ERDEM SAHIN / AP **See story, page 5; Editorial, page 6**

CPC's approach to governance rooted in Yan'an

Early days of hard work, austerity in Shaanxi province fueled Party's historic turning point

By **MO JINGXI**
mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn

In the weeks before July 1, when the Communist Party of China marked the 105th anniversary of its founding, visitors streamed through the Yan'an Revolutionary Memorial Hall in Northwest China's Shaanxi province for a closer look at the formative years of the Party.

Among them was Peter Wilson, the United Kingdom's ambassador to China, who visited Yan'an in June.

At the museum, Wilson stopped before a life-size reconstruction of the Great Production Campaign launched by the CPC in the 1940s to overcome economic blockades and achieve greater self-sufficiency. Two soldiers of the Eighth Route Army were depicted bending over a rough stretch of earth, hoes in hand, breaking ground in what had once been barren wasteland outside Yan'an.

On the wall were four Chinese characters: *mai tou ku gan*.

Wilson read them out in Chinese. The phrase can be rendered as "put one's head down and work hard".

The moment reflected the larger purpose of his visit. Wilson had come to learn about the 13 years when the CPC Central Committee was based in Yan'an and Mao Zedong and other veteran revolutionaries lived and worked there. It was during this period that China's revolutionary cause moved from a low point into an upsurge and reached a historic turning point.

Later, standing outside Mao's former cave dwelling at the Yangjialing revolutionary site, Wilson said that he had not expected that the CPC would grow in strength under such austere conditions.

"Foreigners also need to understand your history," he said. "I think it is very important to come here and visit the sites where history unfolded."

Understanding how China views its own history, he added, helps outsiders understand its future.

From 1935 to 1948, the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region, with Yan'an at its center, was the seat of the CPC Central Committee, and was where the CPC endured military encirclement, economic blockade and severe material shortages.

*See **Party**, page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Growth concept benefits all globally

By **CHENG YU**
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

"China Opportunity 2.0" does not imply that Beijing will take a bigger share of the global manufacturing pie, but rather it would help the world to bake a larger one as its industrial capabilities become increasingly embedded in global supply chains, executives and experts said.

The country highlighted "China Opportunity 2.0", a new concept of growth driven by innovation, advanced manufacturing and deeper integration with the global economy, at the 17th Annual Meeting of the New Champions of the World Economic Forum, or Summer Davos, in Dalian, Liaoning, in June.

Joerg Gnamm, head of global manufacturing at consulting firm Bain & Company, said: "China's next phase of growth will be defined not simply by producing more goods, but by exporting advanced manufacturing capabilities, industrial know-how and scalable innovation."

*See **Concept**, page 3*

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN ASIA NEWS NETWORK
China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

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

CHINESE CALENDAR ENTERS A BERRY SPECIAL TIME

Minor Heat heralds the harvest of bayberries, a sweet and tart treat

By **LI YINGXUE** and **CHEN YE** in Hangzhou

As the solar term Minor Heat, or *xiao shu*, arrives on Tuesday, early summer in eastern China moves into its most intense phase. In Xianju county of Taizhou, Zhejiang province, bayberries have reached full ripeness, marking the height of one of the region's most closely watched seasonal harvests.

Before dawn — around 3 am — the hills of Xianju are already dotted with moving lights. Growers wearing headlamps climb through orchards in the dark, carefully picking fruit at its peak maturity. Wu Yuyong, director of the Specialty Technology Promotion Center at the Xianju County Agriculture and Rural Affairs Bureau, still recalls the scene vividly.

"From a distance, the whole mountain looks like scattered stars," he said. "It is quite spectacular."

Harvested fruit is quickly transported for sorting and processing. The main variety is Dongkui bayberry, widely recognized across China for its large size, juiciness and balanced sweet and tart flavor. When fully ripe, the fruit turns from bright red to a deep purplish black.

Grower Zhang Hongjun, who has worked with bayberries for nearly 30 years, said that color is the key indicator of ripeness.

"Black means it is fully ripe," he said. "Red berries are still slightly sour, while darker ones are sweeter."

In early summer, it is widely regarded as a refreshing fruit that helps balance rising temperatures.

Xianju has developed a staggered cultivation system based on elevation differences. Fruit from lower-altitude orchards is now finishing harvest, while mid- and high-altitude areas are entering peak season.



Fresh bayberries harvested in Cixi, Zhejiang province, on April 21. XU YU / XINHUA

China Vibes 中国风尚 — FOOD —

"For every 100 meters of elevation, maturity is delayed by about two to three days," Wu said. The system extends the harvest window from early June into midsummer, as fruit ripens progressively across the mountainous landscape.

Its latitude puts Xianju within a prime fruit-growing belt. Its mountainous terrain, humid climate and pronounced day-night temperature differences help fruit accumulate fructose and flavor. The region's volcanic rhyolitic geology further contributes to slightly acidic soil that is well suited to bayberry cultivation.

Today, Xianju has about 10,000 hectares of bayberry orchards.

Eating bayberries during Minor Heat is also part of China's broader tradition of seasonal eating, in which diets follow natural rhythms. Sour and sweet fruits are especially favored in summer, with acidity stimulating appetite and sweetness providing balance.

In Xianju, the bayberry season also brings household traditions such as making bayberry wine. Fresh fruit is preserved with sugar or fermented into liquor, extending its seasonal presence beyond the harvest period.

Zhang, the grower, said the Xianju bayberry brand has been "maintained across generations", reflecting both economic value and local identity. The fruit represents not only income, but also regional reputation.

The industry has also built a modern logistics system to match growing demand.

Wu Haojie, head of SF Express's Xianju bayberry project, noted that "after harvesting, the fruit is immediately sent for precooling, grading and packaging". "It is then transported nationwide through cold-chain logistics," Wu said.

Sorting standards have become increasingly precise. Premium Dongkui bayberries can weigh more than 35 grams each, comparable in size to table tennis balls.

The fruit is then packed with ice bags in insulated boxes to maintain freshness. From Xianju, shipments now reach more than 200 cities across China. Many destinations receive deliveries the next day, while orders are also flown from Shanghai to overseas markets including Singapore, Italy and France, primarily serving Chinese communities abroad.

Contact the writers at liyingxue@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Japan descending into abyss of neo-militarism

WORLD WATCH
By Atsushi Koketsu

This year marks the 89th anniversary of the July 7 Incident, also known as the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, which was the starting point of Japan's full-scale invasion of China. Eighty years ago, the Tokyo Trials set new precedents by judging war crimes under the new legal norms of "crimes against peace" and "crimes against humanity". The Tokyo Trials were groundbreaking because they delivered justice to the victims of Japan's aggression and contributed to the realization of world peace.

Japan was supposed to learn from these trials and transform itself from a military state to a peaceful nation under a pacifist Constitution. However, there has been no sincere reflection on the mistakes of the past, and Tokyo didn't seriously draw lessons from the trials. This is the fundamental reason for the country's rightward political shifts and remilitarization.

The politics of postwar Japan were heavily influenced by the country's prewar imperial system. Emperor Hirohito, who reigned from 1926 to 1989, was a key figure and the highest authority who started the war of aggression. He not only escaped prosecution in the Tokyo Trials, but many Japanese regarded him as someone who ended the conflict. Britain, the Netherlands, China and others had argued for his prosecution and demanded that he abdicate because the imperial system was the foundation of Japan's militaristic ideology.

However, the United States retained the imperial system to smooth the postwar occupation of Japan. Washington wanted to gain the support of the Japanese people by not punishing their emperor.

*See **Militarism**, page 3*

Inside
Editorial, **page 6**

Earthquake relief



Emergency humanitarian earthquake relief supplies provided by the Chinese government to Venezuela are loaded onto an aircraft at Beijing Capital International Airport on Sunday. The supplies mainly include tents, blankets, water purification vehicles, solar lamps and power generators. CHEN SHUO / XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:01 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:01 PM

INDEPTH







Left: Police use water cannon to spray people as they arrive at the Olympic stadium for a concert of US singer Bruno Mars on June 28 in Berlin, Germany, as the temperature reached 39 C. RALF HIRSCHBERGER / AFP
Right top: People cool off at a mist fountain at Place du Trocadero during a heat wave in Paris, France, on June 26. DIMITAR DILKOFF / AFP
Right above: The faithful shelter from the hot sun as Pope Leo XIV arrives for his weekly general audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on June 24. ALESSANDRA TARANTINO / AP

China's cool reply to heated air-con debate

Innovative firms tackle European rules and traditions as temperatures soar

By **ZHANG ZHOUXIANG** in Brussels and **XING YI** in London







Top: People browse fans and air conditioning units in a homeware store, amid a heat wave in Paris, on May 28. TOM NICHOLSON / REUTERS
Above left: Tobias Strobel, head of technical innovation for residential air conditioning at Midea's German R&D Center, introduces the installation of Midea's PortaSplit mobile split air conditioner in Stuttgart, Germany, on June 30. ZHANG HAOFU / XINHUA
Above right: An installer puts in a new air conditioning unit during a hot day in Belgrade, Serbia, on June 30. DARKO VOJINOVIC / AP

The recent severe heat wave in Europe has subsided, but with another one already on the horizon, the rush to find air conditioners continues.

As late as July 6, searches for "air conditioner" on Amazon and JoyBuy across much of Western Europe still returned the same message: "out of stock".

The heat wave was at its most severe in the June 22-28 week, when daytime highs exceeded 35 C in many major European cities. Milan recorded 37 C on June 26, while Paris climbed above 40 C. Even Brussels and Berlin, located farther north, reached 38 C and 39 C respectively.

Yet in much of Europe, where summers were historically shorter and milder, household air-conditioning ownership remains as low as 20 percent, according to the International Energy Agency.

This summer, however, Chinese suppliers are reporting surging orders from Europe, driven by products that offer affordable prices, low energy consumption and compliance with local regulations.

Europe has barriers holding back air conditioner penetration. Installation fees can exceed 1,000 euros ($1,143), and consumers usually have to wait weeks for installation slots during peak periods. There are also other restraints that need to be considered, such as strict noise regulations, bans on exterior wall modifications for historic buildings, and widespread public concerns that the mass use of air conditioners will push up energy consumption and derail climate action targets.

In response, Midea home appliances said it spent three years developing the PortaSplit, which features an outdoor unit that fixes onto a window bracket with no drilling required. The weight of the outdoor unit has been reduced to less than 10 kilograms, allowing most adult users to install it by themselves. Addressing Europe's high electricity prices, the product also boasts industry-leading energy-saving technologies.

"Made in China is far from simply duplicating products originally developed for the Chinese domestic market and launching them directly overseas. Instead, it means redefining product lines to align with the specific demands of local consumers," said Xiong Xueqin, sales director of Midea RAC Europe Region.

"From this targeted product, what European consumers could see is that Chinese enterprises excel not only in manufacturing, but also in innovation."

Other Chinese home appliance manufacturers have also rolled out innovative cooling products designed for the European market.

In response to Germany's strict nighttime noise control rules, Haier has lowered the minimum operating noise of its air conditioners to 18 decibels, "which is roughly the volume of turning pages in a quiet library," said Yu Shipeng, director of Haier Air Conditioning Overseas Market.

At Ningbo Heallux International Trading Co in Zhejiang province, workers have been busy packing tower fans fitted with intelligent display screens, a product that has become a bestseller in Europe. Hu Benchun, director of the company, told Xinhua that the product was designed for the European market. Between January and May, export of the fan surged roughly 60 percent from last year.

Quest for relief

When the record-breaking heat arrived, demand immediately overwhelmed supply and led to stock shortages across Europe.

But even if a customer is able to buy an air conditioner, he or she finds installation often involves layers of administrative procedures.

In Paris, for example, if an installation alters the appearance of a building — by attaching an outdoor compressor to an exterior wall, drilling through the facade or mounting equipment outside a balcony — homeowners generally must first make a submission to the local authorities before any work can begin. The formal review period alone is typically one month.

Besides, many Parisians live in apartment buildings where exterior walls are considered common property. Any installation affecting those areas often requires approval from the condominium association, whose general assemblies may meet only once a year.

Large parts of Paris consist of historic buildings, many located within protected heritage districts. In such cases, projects may also require authorization from the Architectes des Batiments de France, the body responsible for preserving France's architectural heritage.

"Generally speaking, after spending six months or even a year dealing with all these procedures, the frustration has already outweighed the heat," said Zhang Yuanyuan, a Chinese woman who has lived in Paris for more than seven years without installing an air conditioner in her apartment.

Faced with soaring temperatures, empty shelves, lengthy approval procedures and high installation costs, not everyone chose to wait.

Among them was Denis Yurchak, an Austrian software engineer that founded online-calling website Yadaphone, who documented on X his quest to secure one of the few air conditioners still available in Europe.

He was searching for Midea's PortaSplit. The unit was co-developed by Midea's engineering teams in China and Germany, which proposed the product concept after identifying the "pain point" of local AC users, and conducting testing and iterations since 2024.

The design eliminates the need to drill through walls or permanently alter a building's facade, making it attractive for renters and residents of historic European buildings where installing traditional air conditioners can be legally or practically difficult.

So far, there have been no publicly reported cases of European users being fined or penalized by local authorities for using the product.

On June 23, after seeing weather forecasts predicting an exceptional heat wave in Austria, Yurchak decided it was finally time to buy an air conditioner.

The first model he checked was a Comfee portable air conditioner. Yet the model that sold for about 200 euros the previous year had risen to around 650 euros, so he turned to the PortaSplit and found that every retailer he checked was sold out.

On secondhand marketplaces, units with an original retail price of around 899 euros were being offered at double or even triple that amount, with some listings climbing into several thousand euros.

The shortage became so severe that someone created a website called braucheklima.de — literally "need air conditioner" in German — to monitor inventory updates across major appliance retailers in real time.

"So I set up three AI agents looking for this AC 24/7 and have been monitoring the market myself," Yurchak wrote on X.

He first considered buying the product from Hungary, the only European Union country where it still appeared to be available. The plan ultimately failed because the retailer would deliver only within Hungary, and no forwarding company was willing to transport the unit across the border.

Then, shortly after 2 am on June 25, one of his AI agents detected a single PortaSplit that had just appeared in stock in Linz, Austria, about 200 kilometers from his home.

"I jumped on my phone, rushed through the reservation form, and went to bed happy," he wrote.

The next morning, he grabbed a coffee and set off before dawn. But by the time he arrived at the store, the listed price had increased from 749 euros to 849 euros. It was after he demanded to talk to the manager that they agreed to sell it at the reservation price. "I was happy like a child — this was the only Midea left in the whole country, and it was mine!"

Hot political issue

Hours after finally bringing the unit home, Yurchak reflected on the contrast in approaches to air-conditioning that many Europeans have increasingly begun discussing.

"Before moving to Europe, I lived in Russia, and it was completely normal for people to have ACs there," he said.

"Even though Russia is much poorer than the EU by every metric, and I dare say much colder, people install ACs to live through the two or three weeks of 30 C heat in summer comfortably.

"I never regretted moving to the EU — I like living here and contributing with my tax. But the EU AC madness makes me wanna just wake up in my air-conditioned apartment in Moscow and forget all these damn mobile AC units that barely cool the room."

Across Europe, particularly in France, complaints about the difficulty of buying and installing air conditioners have spread rapidly across social media this summer, and what was once largely a consumer issue has increasingly become a political one.

For years, many environmental advocates argued that wider adoption would increase electricity demand, raise carbon emissions and ultimately worsen climate change.

Yet, with the record heat of 2026, voices in favor of wider air-conditioning access have risen. Among the loudest has been French far-right leader Marine Le Pen, who has proposed what she describes as her "grand air-conditioning plan" as part of her campaign ahead of France's next presidential election.

Her proposal has drawn criticism from across the political spectrum, but relatively few opponents argue against air-conditioning itself.

Among the most outspoken is French left-wing leader Jean-Luc Melenchon, who argues that installing air conditioning everywhere "would only make things worse", saying it would ultimately increase the damage caused by climate change.

Many others who once firmly opposed wider air-conditioning now argue that it should not be installed everywhere or relied upon as the only solution. The tone of the debate has shifted from whether Europe should use air conditioning to where and how it should be used.

"We are looking at all the social media posts and it feels that we can have a real positive impact on people's lives and many people call PortaSplit a 'lifesaver' and tell about their great experience online," said Manuel Seethaler, head of residential air-conditioning public relations and strategy at Midea Europe GmbH.

"We are always improving the current version either via software upgrades or introducing new window brackets, to allow more applications. For example, PortaSplit started sales in the United Kingdom this year, and of course it was sold out in a short time," he said.

Xiong, from the Midea Group, said the company has sold over 200,000 units in Europe this year. The top three sales countries are Germany, France and the UK.

"We have many containers at the seaports or that are about to arrive at the ports, which will be cleared through customs soon and delivered to the sales channels, so customers can receive the products shortly," said Xiong.

"Meanwhile, the factories are producing them as quickly as possible. We are also shipping some containers via China-Europe Railway Express, which can reach end-users more quickly compared with sea freight."

Asked whether she lived in an air-conditioned home, Sasha, a young woman in Brussels, smiled and said she had suffered through several summers without one.

Her classmate Karli said her family had bought an electric fan much earlier this year because experience had taught them, "Every year, if there is a heat wave, fans sell out."

Zheng Wanyin contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at zhangzhouxiang@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:01 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:01 PM

TOP NEWS

Party: Huge strides made since times of hardship

From page 1

Those years helped shape the Yan'an spirit, characterized by firm and correct political direction, emancipating the mind and seeking truth from facts, serving the people wholeheartedly, and self-reliance through hard work.

Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and Chinese president, has visited Yan'an several times since the 18th National Congress of the CPC in 2012.

During a fact-finding trip to Shaanxi in February 2015, he described the fine traditions and conduct that were developed during the Yan'an period, together with the Yan'an spirit, as "an invaluable asset of our Party". The connection was also personal.

About an hour-and-a-half drive from downtown Yan'an lies Liangjiahe, a village in the hills of northern Shaanxi. Xi arrived there in early 1969, before turning 16, and spent seven years living and working alongside local farmers. He later became the village Party secretary.

Xi led villagers in building dams, digging wells, constructing a biogas digester, opening a supply store and setting up an iron workshop to improve agricultural production and address difficulties in daily life.

After visiting the cave dwelling where Xi lived, Wilson said he was struck by the number and variety of books Xi had read there, including works by Soviet writers and Henry Kissinger's doctoral dissertation.

Shi Chunyang, who worked alongside Xi and later became the village Party secretary, told Wilson that Liangjiahe once struggled with coal and firewood shortages.

After reading a report about the use of biogas in Sichuan province, Xi traveled there as part of a team to study the technology. Upon returning, he led villagers in building a digester to provide fuel for cooking and gas for lighting. In July 1974, the first biogas lamp on the northern Shaanxi plateau was lit.

Reflecting on his Liangjiahe years in a memoir published in 2002, Xi wrote that he had "roots deep in the northern Shaanxi plateau" because the experience cultivated his enduring commitment "to do practical things for the people".

Li Shufeng, vice-president of the China Executive Leadership Academy Yan'an, said Xi's years there marked the beginning of his experience as a public servant.

Xi spoke of the changes in Liangjiahe during a speech in the United States city of Seattle in September 2015. He recalled that Liangjiahe once had no paved roads, and villagers had lived in cave dwellings.

He said that when he returned in 2015, the village had blacktop roads, families lived in brick-and-tile houses and had internet access, elderly residents received basic old-age care, villagers had healthcare coverage and children attended school.

The changes had made him keenly aware that "the Chinese dream is, after all, the dream of the people" and could only be fulfilled when closely connected with the people's aspiration for a better life, Xi said.

Li said that Xi's grassroots experience had also made Liangjiahe a window through which foreign visitors could seek to understand the CPC's approach to governance.

In 2020, Thongloun Sisoulith, then prime minister of Laos, visited the village. He later told People's Daily that he was most impressed by how Xi had eaten, lived and worked alongside villagers and helped them develop production.

A leader should "share the people's joys and hardships, and learn from them", he said.

Other political leaders and delegations from Asia, Africa and elsewhere have also visited Liangjiahe to learn about Xi's years there.

Li said books, documents and news reports are still important ways to study China, but they offer limited information compared with visiting historical sites in person.

Entering the cave dwellings where Mao once worked or where Xi lived as a young man allows visitors to place the hardships of the past beside changes they can observe for themselves, he said.

The contrast gives them a more concrete understanding of how the CPC connects its revolutionary history with its present approach to governance and modernization.

The CPC's decision to pursue self-reliance and hard work under the difficult conditions of the Yan'an period could offer inspiration to countries trying to chart their own course, he added.

In October 2022, less than a week after the 20th National Congress of the CPC, Xi led members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee back to Yan'an.

Xi said the spirit of self-reliance and hard work must never be repudiated, no matter how prosperous the country becomes.

He called for down-to-earth, practical efforts, a sustained focus on managing China's own affairs well, and reliance on the country's own strength to support national development.

The Yan'an spirit is a precious asset of the Party and "should be passed down from generation to generation", Xi said.

Concept: Factories gain from rapid feedback loop

From page 1

"It is not only about China capturing more of the pie. It is also about Chinese capabilities being combined with global ecosystems," Gnamm added.

As geopolitical tensions prompt some multinationals to diversify production, debates have intensified over whether China's expanding manufacturing capacity is crowding out industrial economies elsewhere, a claim that China has repeatedly refuted.

Gnamm said the framing overlooks what increasingly distinguishes China's manufacturing sector. "What stands out in China is the combination of scale, speed and the ability to integrate across the full value chain. That enables impact at scale," he said.

He added that China's manufacturing ecosystem remains structurally distinct due to its complete domestic supply chains and rapid innovation cycles.

He said that factories also benefit from rapid feedback loops between production, engineering and customers, enabling products and manufacturing processes to evolve much faster than in many overseas markets.

The third advantage, he added, is organizational discipline in scaling innovation. Once a solution has been proven effective, it can be replicated across multiple plants and regions far more quickly than in many other markets.

Earlier this year, the World Economic Forum added 16 Chinese factories among a new batch of 23 Global Lighthouse Network factories. It means that China now hosts 109 of the world's 238 lighthouse factories, which are widely seen as the benchmark for the most advanced factories globally.

According to Hou Wenhao, a partner at market consultancy firm McKinsey & Company, such achievements not only reflect the broad adoption of smart manufacturing technologies in China, but also its strong capabilities in large-scale implementation, technological innovation, scenario expansion and efficient commercialization.

Multinational firms operating in China are building deeply localized industrial ecosystems that increasingly serve both the domestic market and global operations, vividly demonstrating what exactly is "China Opportunity 2.0".

Yum China, which operates more than 18,000 restaurants in China, likens its business to "a bamboo forest" rather than "a collection of individual trees". Describing the company's nearly four decades of investment in China, Yum China CEO Joey Wat said the real moat is formed by the "underground bamboo root system", which consists of 35 logistics centers serving more than 2,600 cities and counties and a network of over 850 suppliers.



An intercontinental ballistic missile, carrying a dummy warhead, is launched from a strategic nuclear submarine of the People's Liberation Army Navy at an undisclosed location in the Pacific Ocean on Monday.
LI XIANGCHAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

China successfully tests nuclear-capable missile

PLA Navy: Launch was part of training, complied with intl law and was not aimed at any country

By ZHAO LEI
zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

China successfully conducted on Monday a flight test of its nuclear-capable intercontinental ballistic missile, or ICBM, from a nuclear-powered strategic submarine, marking the farthest such trial of any Chinese naval missile to date.

During the historic trial launch, which is the first to be made public in nearly four decades, the submarine operated by the People's Liberation Army Navy launched the long-range missile carrying a dummy warhead from an undisclosed sea area at 12:01 pm.

The dummy warhead "precisely hit the designated target waters in the Pacific Ocean", PLA Navy spokesman Senior Captain Wang Xuemeng said in a brief statement.

The missile test was "a routine arrangement as part of China's annual military training", he said, noting that prior notification in this regard was provided to relevant countries.

Wang added that the test complied with international law and established international practices, and was not aimed at any specific country or target.

The PLA Navy has yet to release more details about the test, such as the specific type of submarine and missile involved in the operation, the launch and hit locations of the missile, and the distance covered by the missile.

The last time China made public the flight test of a submarine-based ballistic missile was in September 1988, when a Type 09II submarine — the nation's first class of nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine — launched two JL-1 nuclear-capable missiles from the Bohai Sea.

The JL-1 was constrained by its short operational range, and it served as a symbol of the PLA Navy's possession of nuclear capability rather than a usable deterrent. It was retired from active service many years ago.

The PLA Navy currently deploys two types of submarine-based ICBMs — the JL-2, which was declassified in an October 2019 parade, and the JL-3, which was unveiled during a parade in September last year.

According to observers, the JL-2 and the JL-3 feature intercontinental hit ranges, multiple warhead capacity and strong penetration capabilities, promising reliable assets to deliver nuclear counterstrikes.

The PLA Navy also has an unknown number of nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines in the Type 09IV series.

Nuclear missiles launched from deep-sea submarines are very difficult to detect and track, and can be used on short notice, so they are tasked with realizing sea-based nuclear deterrence and counterstrikes.

Song Zhongping, a retired PLA Rocket Force officer and military affairs commentator, said that submarine-based strategic missiles constitute the sea-launch leg of China's nuclear triad and form the backbone of the nation's second-strike nuclear counterattack capability.

"The successful test of the submarine-based ballistic missile demonstrates that China owns a formidable tool to counter nuclear blackmail," Song said.

"Two years ago, we had tested a land-based ICBM. The latest trial launch, together with the earlier one, has confirmed that our nuclear counterattack platforms are mature and reliable, lending greater deterrence to China's nuclear triad," he added.

Responding to questions on the missile flight test at a news briefing later in the afternoon in Beijing, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said the whole process was carried out in a safe, standardized and professional manner.

"We hope relevant countries will not read too much into it," she said.

Militarism: Yasukuni ideology being revived

From page 1

Instead, it embedded the renunciation of war in the country's Constitution and abolished the military.

Two issues need to be highlighted here. First, under the new Constitution and amid Cold War tensions, Japan was allowed to rearm under US guidance. The transformation of the National Police Reserve to the National Safety Force, and finally the establishment of the Self-Defense Forces in 1954, marked a significant shift.

The SDF, coordinating with the 53,000 US troops stationed in Japan, totals nearly 250,000 personnel and has now grown into a force with offensive capabilities. Joint US-Japan military exercises are actively conducted and reinforce war readiness. Article 9 of the pacifist Constitution, which renounces war, has been rendered toothless.

Additionally, with the removal of restrictions on arms exports, Japan is attempting to forge quasi-military alliances with countries such as the Philippines through exporting weapons. The shift from peace diplomacy to military diplomacy is becoming evident. The establishment of a de facto US-Japan integrated operations structure bypassed parliamentary debate, transforming the SDF into a force ready for "wartime conditions".

Second, prewar power dynamics — the power of an imperial system — continued in Japan even after World War II, exemplified by figures such as Nobusuke Kishi, a bureaucrat who ran the "puppet Manchukuo" alongside then-prime minister Hideki Tojo. Tojo was sentenced to death in the Tokyo Trials and executed, while Kishi, also a Class-A criminal and maternal grandfather of former prime minister Shinzo Abe, was purged from public office and imprisoned for about three years. But his purge was later rescinded, and he joined active politics, eventually becoming the country's prime minister in 1957. Supported by anti-communist organizations, Kishi and other right-wing conservative politicians with deep roots in militarism have eroded the pacifist foundation of Japan's Constitution.

Today, Japan's military alliance with the US has been further strengthened, and aligning with this trend, right-wing politicians have continued to run the country. Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi has also capitalized on this trend and demonstrated a strong militaristic stance in both words and actions. In November, she went to the extent of saying that a "Taiwan contingency would be a survival-threatening situation for Japan".

The provocative statement directed at China was unbecoming of the prime minister of a pacifist nation; it sounded more like something from the leader of a militarist nation. It is only natural that the Chinese government and people, who had focused on building a "strategic mutually beneficial relationship" with Japan, were outraged.

Postwar conservative powers that have led Japanese politics, supported by the emperor system and anti-communist organizations, can be considered the abyss of today's conservatism and militarization in Japan. Nurtured by the existence of the imperial system, in a transformed form, prewar militarism survived and has sprouted new roots in Japan. The Yasukuni ideology, which is at the core of today's new militaristic ideology, is also being revived. The notorious Yasukuni Shrine, where the remains of several war criminals are enshrined, is sometimes described as an invasion shrine. The appointment of a former SDF admiral as the chief priest of the shrine is symbolic of this revival.

If this trend continues, Japan could once again become the aggressive state it was under imperial rule before the war. Japanese conservative politicians and their supporters are aiming for hegemony over Asia by using the US-Japan military alliance and advancing military expansion. This strategy also involves instilling hostility toward China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the minds of the public to divert attention from the pacifist ideals and to consolidate as well as expand conservative politicians' power.

What is important for Tokyo is to cultivate a proper understanding of history and establish a friendly and amicable relationship with China as well as a strategic, mutually beneficial relationship. It is increasingly necessary to pursue independent and autonomous peace diplomacy rather than a subservient defense diplomacy that aligns with the US. The promotion of China-Japan friendship will be the most effective and durable security policy for Japan.

The author is a professor emeritus at Yamaguchi University in Japan. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

400-day flight brings Tianwen 2 to target asteroid

By ZHAO LEI

China's Tianwen 2 asteroid sampling spacecraft has rendezvoused with its target, a near-Earth asteroid called 2016 HO3, and has started to conduct scientific surveys, according to the China National Space Administration.

On Monday, the administration announced that the Tianwen 2 robotic probe reached a position about 20 kilometers away from 2016 HO3 last week, and then started flying alongside the asteroid.

It also released an image of 2016 HO3, which was taken by the spacecraft's camera.

Before that point, the spacecraft had traveled around 1 billion km in a 400-day interplanetary journey, the administration noted, adding that in the following steps, the probe will conduct detailed scientific explorations in a phased manner to acquire data on the asteroid's topography, material composition and internal structure to support preparations for the sampling mission.

During its asteroid approach, the Tianwen 2 probe obtained images of the celestial body.

The mission team on the ground used optical navigation data, which was collected during the approach process, to refine the asteroid's ephemeris and reduce its position error — previously determined solely by ground-based observations — from hundreds of kilometers down to within a few kilometers, according to the administration.

The Tianwen 2 mission, which is China's first attempt to bring pristine asteroid samples to Earth, was launched on May 29, 2025, when a Long March 3B rocket carrying the robotic probe blasted off from the Xichang Satellite Launch Center in Sichuan province.

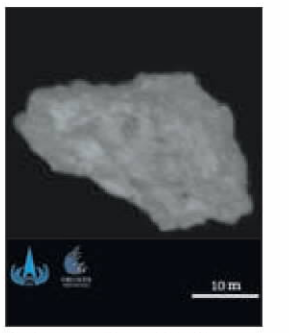
En route to the asteroid, the probe conducted a series of operations, including deep-space maneuvers and mid-course corrections.

The craft detected and identified the asteroid for the first time on June 6.

The following day, it executed capture control to synchronize its motion with that of the asteroid at a distance of 30,000 km, achieving coplanar flight with the celestial body. It reached a position about 2,000 km from the asteroid on June 19.

The asteroid 2016 HO3, which is also known as 469219 Kamo'oalewa, orbits the sun and is a constant companion of Earth. It is too distant to be considered a true satellite of Earth, but is the best and most stable example to date of a quasi-satellite of the planet.

Tianwen 2 will study the celestial body up close using a suite of 11 instruments, including cameras, spectrometers and radars, before deploying special devices to collect samples from its surface.



An image released by the China National Space Administration shows the asteroid 2016 HO3 as captured last week by the Tianwen 2 robotic probe from a distance of about 20 kilometers.
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:01 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:01 PM

ASIAFOCUS

Editor's note:

In this weekly feature China Daily gives voice to Asia and its people. The stories presented come mainly from the Asia News Network (ANN), of which China Daily is among its 20 leading titles.

'My heart is so full'

Singapore family's search for Chinese roots leads to extraordinary reunions



Visitors at the filming location of the movie *Dear You* in Jieyang, South China's Guangdong province, on June 19. This movie became a hit earlier this year focusing on the historical tradition of *qiaopi* — remittance letters sent by overseas Chinese migrants. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

When Jasmine Goh-Chew boarded a plane for Chaozhou in South China's Guangdong province in May, she carried with her a small hope.

The 11-day family vacation was planned around Teochew cuisine, family time and an opportunity for her elderly parents to see the ancestral homeland they had never visited. But she also packed a faded letter written in 1993 from a relative in China to her aunt in Malaysia, which she hoped might lead them to family they had never known.

It did. By the end of the trip, her family would reconnect not with one branch of relatives, but three.

"We came for a holiday with no expectations at all that we would find our long-lost families," said the 51-year-old mother of four children whom she homeschools.

"But I told my husband: it's now or never. Dad's getting old."

The family — Jasmine, her husband Raymond Chew, three of their four children, her parents, her mother-in-law, her older sister and brother-in-law, and her sister's father-in-law — had barely arrived in Chaozhou when chance intervened.

At the airport, an employee struck up a conversation and asked whether they had come to *xunqin* — to search for relatives. Yes, if such a thing were even possible, Jasmine replied. The employee mentioned volunteer groups that specialize in helping overseas Chinese trace long-lost family members.

A few days later, while watching a performance of traditional *yingge* dance, they met another local who took them to a nearby cafe.

Inside was a library lined with *qiaopi*, remittance letters sent home by overseas Chinese, some dating back to the 1930s. Penned by homesick migrants who had left for Nanyang, or Southeast Asia, in search of work, they spoke of longing, sacrifice and families separated by oceans.

The cafe works with volunteers and the local authorities to preserve *qiaopi* culture while helping overseas Teochews trace their roots.

It was there that Jasmine met volunteer leader Zeng Jianpeng of Menggui Chaoshan, meaning "Dream of Returning to Chaoshan", a network of more than 3,000 volunteers spread across Guangdong, Fujian and Jiangxi provinces in China.

Zeng, 54, has spent a decade helping to reconnect families separated by migration, war and the passage of time.

When he first heard Jasmine's request, he was baffled.

"I heard that Madam Goh-Chew wanted to find relatives in three different places and wondered why one person was searching for three hometowns," said Zeng.

"It was only when I met the family that I realized she was searching on behalf of three different branches of the family — her father's family, her mother's family and her husband's family."

Following the clues

Around a dozen volunteers immediately fanned out to begin the search.

For Jasmine's mother's family, there was only the 33-year-old letter written by a man surnamed Chua in Shantou, to Jasmine's late aunt in Malaysia. Nobody remembered exactly how he was related to the family.

1,000 families

Over the past decade, Menggui Chaoshan has reunited more than 1,000 families, including at least 18 from Singapore and more than 80 from Malaysia, as well as overseas Chinese from countries like the US, Canada and France.

The address on the envelope led nowhere. Street numbering had changed. With help from local police, volunteers eventually tracked down the sender's descendants.

"They had always known they had relatives in Singapore," said Zeng. "But they didn't really know who they were because the older generation had all died."

When the two families finally met, something incredible happened.

More than 30 years earlier, neither family's elders were literate and able to write. On the China side, a young woman had penned the letter on behalf of the Chua patriarch. Back in Singapore, Jasmine, then a teenager, had replied on behalf of her aunt, something she had completely forgotten. Neither side imagined they would ever meet.

Three decades later, each woman arrived carrying the letter the other had written.





Top: Visitors at the filming location of the movie *Dear You* in Jieyang, South China's Guangdong province, on June 19. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY
Above: *Qiaopi* letters, old passports and other documents at an exhibition in Beijing on June 18. SONG JIARU / FOR CHINA DAILY

The surprises did not end there.

As the families pored over the *zupu*, or genealogical record, they discovered that the man whose letter Jasmine had kept for 33 years was her mother's eldest brother, who was left behind in China and later raised by another family. And the woman who wrote the letter on his behalf was his daughter and Jasmine's first cousin.

"The reunion didn't simply reconnect two families," said Zeng. "It reconstructed their family tree."

For Jasmine's 79-year-old mother, Chua Kee Chu, the encounter was almost beyond belief.

"I never thought in my lifetime that I could meet them," she said. "I was very moved."

The search for the relatives of Jasmine's father was more straightforward but no less meaningful.

All 85-year-old Goh Kian Chen knew was that his father had come from a place called Goubian Village.

The problem was that there were three villages with that name. The volunteers eventually found the right one, and with it, Goh's cousin and the house his father once lived in.

"I wanted to do this for him, to let him step into his father's house," Jasmine said.

"It's not just finding a house," Goh added. "It's discovering your roots and where you came from."

The hardest search was for Raymond's family.

The only clue was a photograph of his grandfather's gravestone before it was exhumed from Choa Chu Kang Cemetery. It bore the words "Xiwei Village".

But across the larger region known as Chaoshan that includes Chaozhou, more than 10 villages bear that name.

Volunteers compared village histories, surnames and migration records before narrowing it to one village in Shantou.

Even then, time was running out.

"Madam Goh-Chew's family only had two or three days before returning to Singapore," Zeng recalled.

"We mobilized our volunteer network, published an appeal through our WeChat public account and posted videos online. Very quickly, information came back identifying the exact household."

The reunion revealed another forgotten family story.

Raymond learned that his grandfather, like countless migrants who left for Nanyang, had faithfully sent remittances home every month.

"That HK$100 arrived every month, usually on the 28th or 30th," Zeng said. "They told us that money kept them alive. It was their livelihood."

Not every reunion begins with tears. Some Chinese relatives were initially worried the Singaporeans had come to claim ancestral property. The Singaporeans wondered whether these strangers were really family. The volunteers deftly played mediator until everyone realized neither side wanted anything except connection.

One evening, the newly reunited families went together to watch *Dear You*, the hit Chinese movie about family bonds, loss and reconciliation, which was showing in movie theaters.

"We watched together, and we cried together," Jasmine said.

Over the past decade, Menggui Chaoshan has reunited more than 1,000 families, including at least 18 from Singapore and more than 80 from Malaysia, as well as overseas Chinese from countries like the United States, Canada and France.

Representative case

Zeng calls Jasmine's case "one of the most representative overseas Chinese cases" the group has handled.

"Success depended not on luck, but on preparation," he said. "They arrived with letters, photographs of gravestones, village names and other valuable clues."

Since the release of *Dear You*, interest in tracing family roots has surged, particularly among Malaysians, while filming locations across Chaoshan have become tourist attractions in their own right.

Jasmine's own journey, however, did not end when she flew home.

She has since become one of the volunteer group's newest members, helping Chinese families find their relatives in Singapore. She has already helped reunite two families. A third chose not to reconnect, a decision the volunteers respected.

"We went without thinking we would find our families," she said.

"And yet, having found them, we are all now deeper in our roots. We've continued talking to our new families, and reminisced about the past and the history lost.

"My heart is so full. It's something I want other people to experience too."

THE STRAITS TIMES, SINGAPORE

Tourism, climate put Indonesia's 'walking shark' under pressure

JAKARTA — The Raja Ampat epaulette shark, locally known as the "walking shark", is facing growing threats from tourism development and the impacts of climate change, prompting a push for concrete measures to protect the species' habitat and ensure its survival.

The shallow coastal waters of the Raja Ampat archipelago in Southwest Papua are home to the population of the shark *Hemiscyllium freycineti*, one of 10 known "walking shark" species discovered worldwide, six of which are mainly found in eastern Indonesian waters.

While it can swim, the small fish with a recognizable spotted pattern on its body is known for moving by using its pectoral and pelvic fins to "walk" across shallow reefs, a behavior earning it the moniker "walking shark".

A recently published study has found more biological and spatial ecological information about the shark, which has a population density of up to 2,462 individuals per square kilometer, the highest recorded globally for the genus.

The study, published in the *Frontiers in Fish Science* academic journal on June 17, suggested that coral reefs are mainly used by sharks as nursery habitats, or places where juveniles are produced. During an observation period from February 2024 to April 2025, researchers observed 69 percent of immature sharks in coral reefs.

Meanwhile, adults of the nocturnal fish were observed foraging among sea grass and mangrove roots.

Unlike many other marine animals, the Raja Ampat epaulette shark rarely travels far, with individuals tending to remain in the same area throughout their lives. The researchers found the maximum recorded movement of the shark was around 475 meters, with none observed moving between islands.

The lack of inter-site movement may leave the species more vulnerable to the smallest disturbances to their habitat, as the shark is unable to relocate when its home environmental conditions deteriorate, said Edy Setyawan of the Elasmobranch Institute Indonesia, the study's lead author.

He was most concerned about the rapid expansion of tourism infrastructure in Raja Ampat, particularly the construction of overwater accommodation in areas that serve as important feeding grounds for sharks, including in Arborek village, one of six study sites in the Dampier Strait.

"With the development of tourism in Raja Ampat, many homestays are being built above sea grass beds," Edy told The Jakarta Post.

"Those sea grass ecosystems are important habitats where 'walking sharks' forage for food. When they are damaged, the sharks lose their critical resources."

The sharks also face threats from climate change, especially rising seawater temperatures.

Edy's study suggested the fish can tolerate water temperatures up to 36 C, but scientists are concerned that global heating may increase the frequency of marine heat waves, which could affect the shark's health and long-term survival.

The walking shark also faces less visible threats from nutrient pollution caused by untreated wastewater generated by tourism activities in Raja Ampat, said marine ecologist and conservationist Agustin Capriati.

"Excess nutrients accelerate algae growth and damage coral reefs," said Agustin. "If coral ecosystems deteriorate, 'walking sharks' will gradually lose their habitats."

A 2023 Marine Affairs and Fisheries ministerial regulation designated "walking sharks" as a fully protected species. The International Union for Conservation of Nature listed the species as "nearly threatened".

Limitations of regulation

But Edy argued the regulation only prohibits people from catching or consuming the fish, and that it lacks a clear plan to conserve the species on the ground.

"In practice, people know the species exists," Edy said, "but conservation efforts remain limited because the fish is not viewed as having economic value".

Sarminto Hadi, the ministry's director of species and genetic conservation, said the protected status was intended to prevent direct commercial exploitation of the species in its natural habitat.

The policy, he added, was based on scientific assessments highlighting the species' vulnerability due to its inability to migrate when its habitat is disturbed.

Agustin noted that conservation regulations remain poorly enforced in most marine protected areas across the country, including in the Dampier Strait. Further monitoring is needed, she added, to ensure the long-term survival of "walking sharks" with tourism development in Raja Ampat continuing to expand.



A photo of Indonesian Speckled Carpetshark (*Hemiscyllium freycineti*) from iNaturalist, a platform that allows users to record their observations of wild species. KEITH WILLMOTT VIA INATURALIST

Raja Ampat made headlines in May 2025 following protests by the environmental group Greenpeace over an Indonesian state-owned company's nickel mining on Gag Island, located about 50 kilometers from Arborek Island, and the threat it posed to marine biodiversity in the region.

The government suspended mining operations following the outcry, then allowed them to resume last September.

THE JAKARTA POST, INDONESIA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:01 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:01 PM

WORLD

Close cut



Participants wrestle wild horses during a festival called *Rapa das Bestas*, meaning "shearing of the beasts", in Sabucedo, Galicia, Spain, on Sunday. The centuries-old tradition involves herding wild mountain horses into arenas to bare-handedly trim their manes, brand them and rid them of parasites.

CARLOS CASTRO / EUROPA PRESS

'Entrenched' polarization shrouding US future

By **LIU JIANQIAO**
liujianqiao@chinadaily.com.cn

CROSS CURRENTS

As the United States marks the 250th anniversary of its founding, polls show growing public pessimism about the country's political future. Experts say deepening polarization is eroding confidence at home and weakening Washington's ability to provide stable global leadership.

A survey released on Saturday by Elon University in North Carolina found that 68 percent of respondents believe political divisions will worsen over the next 50 years, while 64 percent have little or no confidence that US political institutions will make mostly good decisions over that period.

Jason Husser, director of the Elon University Poll, said political polarization was the issue respondents viewed most pessimistically.

"We've now basically had a generation and a half, or arguably two generations, of significant political divide in the United States, and very few people see a clear way out of deep, entrenched political polarization," he said in the survey report.

Similarly, an April poll by The Associated Press and the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago found that 27 percent of respondents identified political interests or values as the country's main source of division, followed by leaders, government or elites (14 percent) and economic interests or values (14 percent).

A Gallup poll released last month also reflected the bleak public mood. Only 19 percent of US citizens said the signers of the Declaration of Independence would be pleased with the country's development, while 77 percent believed the nation's founders would be disappointed, up from 71 percent in 2013 and 42 percent in 2001.

He Yun, an associate professor at Hunan University's School of Public Administration and a researcher at Tsinghua University's Belt and Road Institute, said the polls reflect not merely a temporary shift in public sentiment but a deeper structural crisis in people's sense of national identity.

The disappointment stems from multiple sources, she said. "Trust in the political system has declined, as the public increasingly believes political institutions are unable to represent the broader public interest."

Meanwhile, social cohesion has weakened as divisions along partisan, ethnic and class lines have become more entrenched, she said.

"The promise of the 'American Dream' has also faded. Income inequality, unequal access to education, rising housing costs and declining intergenerational mobility have left many people less confident about the future," she added.

Chen Hong, director of East China Normal University's Asia-Pacific Studies Center, said many issues in the US have become increasingly politicized, with partisan rivalry deepening social divisions and heightening tensions.

"Partisan rivalry is only a symptom of deeper structural problems, including a widening wealth gap, persistent racial tensions and declining public trust in political institutions," Chen said.

"Combined with the current administration's confrontational and highly mobilizing political style, these factors have further intensified social divisions. To a considerable extent, polarization has gone beyond the scope of normal democratic political competition," he said.

Healthy competition

Healthy democratic competition, He said, is built on respect for established rules, acceptance of election results and recognition of the legitimacy of political opponents.

"In contrast, US politics has increasingly become a contest over the rules themselves, encompassing disputes over election results, judicial independence, media credibility and the limits of executive power," she said.

Both experts said such policy swings are making it harder for allies and partners to predict Washington's long-term strategic direction.

"For example, the current US administration has increasingly treated tariffs as bargaining chips and invoked national security as a broad justification for policy measures, approaching relations with allies and other trading partners through the lens of short-term transactional interests," Chen said.

A recent survey by the Pew Research Center covering 36 countries found global views of the US have deteriorated amid growing concerns over its foreign policy and the state of its democracy.

"Rising uncertainty in US foreign policy will have far-reaching consequences," He said.

"US allies are expected to accelerate efforts to hedge against strategic risks by reducing their reliance on Washington in security, technology and supply chains," she said.

"It will also become more difficult to build stable expectations for global governance, as Washington's shifting approach to multilateral institutions — alternating between engagement and withdrawal — undermines international coordination on issues including climate change, trade, public health and financial stability," she said.

The international order will likely enter a prolonged period of low trust and heightened volatility, He said. While the US will remain a major country, its ability to shape the global order will be increasingly constrained by deepening domestic divisions, she added.

Washington seeks advantage on trade partners

By **YANG GAO** in Toronto
gaoyang@chinadailyusa.com

The US decision not to support the extension of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement beyond 2036 is aimed at strengthening Washington's leverage in future trade talks rather than signaling an end to the pact, experts say.

Under the USMCA, the agreement remains in force until 2036. If all three parties agree during the review, the agreement can be extended for another 16 years.

Julian Castro-Rea, a political science professor at the University of Alberta, said Washington's decision should not be interpreted as an attempt to end the USMCA.

"Indeed, the agreement stays in place until 2036, with yearly revisions. This is not at all putting an end to the review process," he told China Daily.

Castro-Rea described the US position as "clearly a negotiating tactic, aimed at intimidating US' North American trade partners".

"But it is barely effective, as the partners and even the markets are by now used to the Trump administration's explosive declarations followed by limited action or even withdrawal," he said.

He said Canada and Mexico have become more experienced in dealing with Washington's negotiating style.

According to Castro-Rea, the US is expected to seek a reduction in its trade deficit with Canada and Mexico, a higher share of US-made content in vehicles sold across North America, and greater access to Canada's dairy market.

Mexico, meanwhile, is seeking lower US tariffs on its exports, while Canada is expected to prioritize reducing US tariffs on steel, aluminum and finished vehicles, he said.

Kim Richard Nossal, a professor emeritus of political studies at Queen's University, said the outcome was largely expected because the two alternative scenarios — terminating the agreement or extending it for another 16 years — were both unlikely.

"A complete termination would be too costly for the United States given the highly integrated supply chains that tightly link the North American economy," Nossal told China Daily.

"But a renewal for another 16 years was also unlikely given that President Trump had completely changed his mind about the USMCA and given that the negotiations for renewal, particularly with Canada, had not advanced enough," he said.

Instead, Nossal said the current arrangement serves Washington's interests.

"This option — which extends the agreement for another 10 years, with annual reviews — suits the United States just fine," he said.

"Existing supply chains are preserved, and most goods will continue to move across the border without tariffs.

"For Canada and Mexico, this option clearly is the second best," he said.

"Both countries wanted the agreement to be renewed for the full 16 years, since this provides maximum predictability that is key for investment decisions.

"But the extension with annual reviews — which puts both countries at a continual disadvantage over the next 10 years — is preferable to the termination option," Nossal said.

According to Castro-Rea, the coming months are likely to be dominated by bilateral negotiations rather than dramatic changes to the agreement itself.

"Conversations will resume on a bilateral basis to address the contentious trade issues between the three countries," he said.

He expects Washington to continue using tough rhetoric while seeking separate understandings with Ottawa and Mexico City.

NATO's push for higher defense budgets criticized

ISTANBUL — As Turkiye prepares to host the NATO summit on Tuesday and Wednesday, thousands of demonstrators took to the streets in Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir over the weekend to denounce the alliance's push for higher defense spending.

Demonstrators carried banners reading "NATO wants war, workers want peace" and "Budget for the people, not for NATO", while chanting slogans against the alliance.

In Istanbul, workers, civilians and members of political parties joined large rallies across the city, voicing their opposition to NATO's pressure on member states to increase military expenditures.

During a demonstration organized by the Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkiye, Chair Arzu Cerkezoglu said expanding war budgets threatens social security and places a heavier economic burden on ordinary people.

"We want more jobs, not more weapons. We want more schools, not more missiles. We want more hospitals, not more military spending," Cerkezoglu said.

The protests come as the Ankara summit is expected to discuss the pathways to deliver the commitment agreed by NATO member states at the 2025 summit to raise their defense spending to 5 percent of GDP by 2035, a long-standing demand from Washington.

On Sunday, police detained more than 100 people during an anti-NATO protest in Ankara, according to the Cumhuriyet daily, as authorities imposed a ban on demonstrations in the capital ahead of the summit.

Baris Doster, a scholar at the Marmara University in Istanbul, said the protests reflect public anxiety over the costs of rising militarization.

"NATO is not an ordinary, simple defense and security organization," Doster said. "It is an organization with economic, political and ideological preferences. It is the gendarme of capitalism, imperialism and liberalism under US leadership."

Raising the spending target to 5 percent by pushing allies to purchase more weapons, ammunition and military equipment would primarily benefit the US defense industry at the expense of their own domestic economies, he said.

XINHUA

Xi vows closer ties with Peru, Montenegro

China seeks mutual benefit, long-term partnership in messages to two leaders

President Xi Jinping underscored on Monday China's commitment to strengthening partnerships with Peru and Montenegro, extending a message to congratulate Peru's president-elect and exchanging messages with Montenegro's president to mark the 20th anniversary of diplomatic relations.

In the message to congratulate Keiko Fujimori on her election as president of Peru, Xi said China and Peru are comprehensive strategic partners, and that the relations between the two countries maintain good momentum for development.

High-level exchanges between the two sides have been frequent, practical cooperation in various fields has achieved fruitful results, and people-to-people friendship enjoys deep public support, he said.

Noting that this year marks the 55th anniversary of diplomatic ties between China and Peru, Xi said he attaches great importance to the development of China-Peru relations. He added that he stands ready to work with President-elect Fujimori to carry forward the traditional friendship between the two nations, and steer the comprehensive strategic partnership to new heights to better benefit the two peoples.

Also on Monday, President Xi and Montenegrin President Jakov Milatovic exchanged congratulations on the 20th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Xi noted that China and Montenegro enjoy a deep traditional friendship. Over the past 20 years since the establishment of ties, the two countries have consistently respected each other, treated each other as equals, and pursued mutual benefit and win-win cooperation, setting a model of friendly relations and common development between countries of different sizes, he said.

Xi expressed his readiness to work with Milatovic, taking the 20th anniversary of diplomatic relations as a new starting point, to carry forward and promote bilateral traditional friendship, continuously deepen mutually beneficial cooperation, and guide China-Montenegro relations to a new level, so as to better benefit the two peoples.

For his part, Milatovic said Montenegro and China have consistently developed friendly and cooperative relations on the basis of mutual respect and understanding.

The Montenegrin side stands ready to take the anniversary as an opportunity to further consolidate and deepen friendly relations with China, expand cooperation in various fields, benefit the people of both countries, and make positive contributions to promoting world peace and development, he added.

XINHUA — CHINA DAILY

Briefly

SUDAN

Over 300 children killed or injured in war

More than 300 children have been killed or injured in the past six months in the war in Sudan, mostly from drone strikes, UNICEF said on Monday. The war between the Sudanese military and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces is now concentrated in the Kordofan, Darfur and Blue Nile states, with drone warfare causing 60 percent of casualties, according to UNICEF. "Children are being caught in a relentless cycle of violence, displacement and deprivation," said Sheldon Yett, UNICEF representative in Sudan.

GAZA STRIP

Hamas dissolves Gaza governing body

Hamas announced on Monday the dissolution of the Government Emergency Committee in Gaza and the transfer of the administration of the Gaza Strip to the National Committee. Head of the Government Emergency Committee Mohammed al-Farra has submitted his resignation, Ismail Thawabta, director-general of the Hamas-run media office in Gaza, said at a news conference. The step was taken "to alleviate the suffering of citizens resulting from the ongoing war ... the delay in reconstruction, the continued siege, the closure of crossings, and the failure of the Israeli army to withdraw", he said.

FRANCE

Jewelry worth millions stolen from museum

Burglars stole jewelry worth millions of euros from the museum of French luxury glassmaker Lalique in a daring early-morning raid on Sunday, just months after a stunning gem heist at the Louvre in Paris. A gang of masked thieves broke into the museum in Wingen-sur-Moder in northeastern France around 5:30 am, forcing a door open before heading for the jewelry room and smashing open six display cases, a source close to the investigation told Agence France-Presse. "Around 20 pieces of jewelry were stolen," the source said. "The loss is currently being assessed but could amount to several million euros, likely close to 4 million ($4.56 million)."

XINHUA — AGENCIES

Announcement

Houses No. 4 and 22, Quanjia Bridge, Gaoqiao Town, Pudong New District, Shanghai, with the certificate number "Hu Ji Zhai (Pu 94) No. 2100107" under the name of Tang Xiuda (deceased), who had children with Huang Bingrong (deceased): Huang Huizhong (deceased, who had children Huang Ying and Huang Chunhui with Zhao Xindi), Huang Huilan, Huang Huifen, Huang Huixia, and Huang Huijuan.

Room 1 and 2 of the House No. 4, Quanjia Bridge, Zhennan Village, Gaoqiao Town, with the "Application Form for Collective Member Housing Land Use" under the name of Huang Huixia.

The above properties are located within the expropriation scope of the "Old Reform" Land Reserve Project east of Jijing North Road, Gaoqiao Town, Pudong New District. The People's Government of Pudong New District, Shanghai, posted the "Notice of Intended Land Expropriation" (Hu Pu Ni Zheng Di Gao [2020] No. 1167) on November 10, 2020, and the "Announcement on Compensation Plan for Expropriated Houses" (Hu Pu Zheng Di Fang Bu Gao [2023] No. 65) on June 20, 2024.

Compensated parties (households) are requested to contact the expropriation implementation unit within 30 days from the date of this announcement, provide valid property ownership certificates (title deeds), identity documents, contact address, and phone number, and negotiate specific matters. Failure to do so within the deadline will result in the expropriation implementation unit publicly announcing the compensation details for your property via the project notice board.

Contact Address: 2nd Floor, Building G1, No. 58 Jinkui Road, Jinqiao Town, Pudong New District, China
Contact Person: Ma Junming
Contact Number: 86-138-1784-7073
Contact Hours: Monday to Friday, 09:00-17:00 (excluding public holidays)

Shanghai Pudong Housing Expropriation Service Office Co., Ltd.
July 7, 2026

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:01 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:01 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

History remembered: compass showing the path humanity must not stray from

Tuesday marks the 89th anniversary of the Lugou Bridge Incident, the start of Japan's full-scale invasion of China.

The weathered stone arches of the 834-year-old bridge stretching over the Yongding River in Beijing's southern suburb stand as an eternal witness to Japan's wartime brutality, yet that country's narrative of the incident continues to obscure and distort the facts.

Many Japanese textbooks offer ambiguous, blame-shifting descriptions of the incident, erasing the premeditated military provocation and painting the full-scale war as the result of "an accidental clash" between Japanese and Chinese troops.

This systematic distortion of history amounts to a blatant refusal to acknowledge Japan's wartime aggression — let alone accept responsibility for the suffering it inflicted upon its neighbors.

Declassified historical files irrefutably prove the incident was a carefully orchestrated military plot of Japan. Long before July 1937, political circles in Tokyo had prearranged a regional conflict to coincide with Japan's Tanabata Festival. A sharp military troop surge in North China further exposed Japan's aggressive intentions, as the Japanese forces in Beijing nearly tripled within four months in 1936, laying the groundwork for the deliberate provocation of conflict.

Japan's distortion of wartime truth extends far beyond the incident. Channel NewsAsia's recent investigative documentary series on Japan's infamous Unit 731 presented the long-concealed atrocities of Japan's state-run biological warfare program to the world.

An archival book, *Black Box: Unit 731*, published on Sunday in Harbin, Heilongjiang province, where the notorious unit was based from 1936 to 1945, further unveils solid documentary evidence of the unit's systematic wartime crimes and how Unit 731 personnel traded experimental data for postwar immunity, escaping all judicial punishment to occupy elite social positions.

The Chinese people harbor indelible memories of the suffering caused by the war. However, their remembering of this period of history is not to perpetuate hatred, but to draw lessons from the past to cherish and safeguard peace.

History rarely repeats itself exactly, but, as has been said, it often rhymes. All countries in the region must remain highly vigilant to the emergence of neo-militarism in Japan today.

Eighty-one years ago, the Chinese people thoroughly defeated the Japanese militarist aggressors. Under the banner of the national united front against Japanese aggression established at the initiative of the Communist Party of China, the nation stood up to fight the Japanese invaders with an iron will.

This victory was a vital part of the World Anti-Fascist War, with China's immense sacrifices — over 35 million casualties — underpinning the defense of human civilization and global peace.

The Lugou Bridge Incident and other Japanese war crimes against the Chinese people are recalled to honor fallen heroes, cherish peace, create a better future and prevent the right-wing forces of Japan from rewriting history.

History cautions that humanity rises and falls together. Only when all nations treat each other as equals, coexist in peace and support each other can we uphold common security, eradicate the root cause of war and prevent the recurrence of historical tragedies.

The Chinese people's victory against Japanese invaders 81 years ago was a historic turning point for the Chinese nation, which emerged from the grave crises of those times to embark on the journey toward its great rejuvenation.

The Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45) shows that might may rule the moment, but right prevails forever.

Chinese modernization follows the path of peaceful development. The country always stands on the right side of history, unwavering in its commitment to uphold justice and peace.

War is a mirror. It shows us the true value of peace. Although peace and development are the trends of the day, the world is far from peaceful. The sword of Damocles still hangs overhead. All countries should learn from history and devote themselves to peaceful coexistence.

Prejudice, hatred and war bring only suffering; respect, equality and shared prosperity are the right path.

Old playbook makes NATO destabilizer

As the two-day North Atlantic Treaty Organization summit starts in Ankara, Turkiye, on Tuesday, the internal fractures within the transatlantic alliance are already apparent. Just days prior to the summit, US President Donald Trump took to social media to describe the relationship between the United States and the other NATO members as "ridiculous" and "not reciprocal".

His repeated complaints of the US' NATO allies free-riding on defense issues and his threats to reconsider the US' security commitments have cast a shadow of uncertainty over a summit that was supposed to showcase unity.

At last year's summit in The Hague, almost all member states — under US pressure — agreed to increase defense spending to 5 percent of GDP by 2035; a military spending goal unprecedented since the Cold War. Under the agreement, 3.5 percent would be spent on "core defense" and 1.5 percent on security-related initiatives. The Ankara summit will supposedly review the implementation of this commitment.

Many NATO member states have acknowledged that they face significant challenges achieving the 5 percent goal due to problems with funding allocation and fiscal sustainability. Spain has opted out of the spending goal, while Italy plans to take a detour by reclassifying a mega bridge project as defense expenditure to meet NATO's spending target. The Ankara summit, therefore, is expected to face severe tests in terms of making any progress related to the defense spending plan.

Adding to the rift between the US and other NATO members is Trump's expressed disappointment with some NATO allies' refusal to support the US in the military campaign it launched with Israel against Iran.

Analysts have noted that the US wants Europe to contribute more financially and follow its instructions. Europe, while aiming to keep the US engaged in the NATO framework, seeks autonomous decision-making for its own benefit. These diverging demands are making it difficult to bridge the rifts in the alliance, leaving the summit's prospects fraught with uncertainty.

Despite the internal challenges, in a move to show the bloc's vitality, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte has extended formal invitations to the defense ministers of the alliance's four "Indo-Pacific" partners — Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia and New Zealand — to join summit-related events in Ankara. The move underscores NATO's deepening engagement with the region, raising serious concerns about the potential consequences for Asia-Pacific stability.

NATO claims that the "Indo-Pacific" is important for the alliance, given that developments in that region can directly affect Euro-Atlantic security. This approach will only further complicate the security situation in the Asia-Pacific. Regional countries can manage their own affairs using their own wisdom and methods without external intervention. The involvement of NATO will only make the security situation in the region more unpredictable.

In the process, the Sanae Takaichi government of Japan has disgracefully flirted with NATO and facilitated its entry into the region, using the alliance as a vehicle to fast-track Japan's remilitarization and to enhance Japan's profile as the US' linchpin bridging its Asia-Pacific and transatlantic military architectures.

NATO should be wary of serving as a stepping stone for Japan's neo-militarists. It is time for the bloc to reflect on its own behavior and abandon the flimsy pretexts for its eastward expansion.

Today's world is not that of NATO's founding. Resorting to old playbooks to survive is not just anachronistic — it is dangerous.

If NATO were truly committed to peace and stability, it would embrace common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security — not the narrow, exclusive security it peddles for one of its members.

The alliance should respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations. Military, technological and economic prowess does not equal moral ascendancy.

Unless NATO learns to recognize the importance of noninterference, mutual respect and diverse development paths as pillars of security, it will remain trapped in Cold War thinking, unilateralism and bloc rivalry — a war machine forever trading others' security for its own.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Luo Jie



Opinion Line

Beautiful game's ugly truth: FIFA's red card 'suspension'

When Folarin Balogun's name is read out before the match between the United States and Belgium in the Round of 16 of the 2026 FIFA World Cup on Monday, US time, at Lumen Field in Seattle, it might be greeted with loud boos. Not because spectators doubt his talent — he has got three goals in three matches so far — but because they doubt the process that led to his one-match red-card ban being suspended.

Football has always been forgiving when it comes to mistakes, but selective justice is another thing. FIFA's extraordinary decision to suspend Balogun's red-card ban after a reported intervention from US President Donald Trump has transformed a disciplinary controversy into an institutional embarrassment. FIFA insists it merely exercised discretion under Article 27 of its disciplinary code. Yet rules that bend due to the US president having a word in the ear of the president of football's governing body cease to look like rules; they become suggestions.

Belgium has every right to protest. It is not merely facing the US for a place in the last eight. It is facing an opponent given an exception unavailable to everyone else. The Royal Belgian Football Association's argument is simple: an automatic suspension is supposed to be automatic. If a red card can suddenly become negotiable, every future disciplinary decision becomes a political campaign rather than a legal process.

Football's greatest strength was always its promise that 90 minutes flatten hierarchy. The whistle recognized neither passport nor president. Until now. But, one telephone call appears to have achieved what appeals panels, coaches and lawyers could not. The optics are ruinous. An organization that endlessly lectures the world about protecting football from political interference has seemingly become remarkably accommodating when the interference comes from the White House.

This is not an isolated symptom. The tournament itself is beginning to look like an entertainment product optimized for business executives rather than football supporters.

Nothing demonstrates this absurdity better than the technology. The ball now contains a chip so exquisitely sensitive that a strand of hair can apparently trigger forensic reviews lasting several minutes. Every microscopic contact is analyzed with scientific obsession. Yet the same competition demonstrates extraordinary flexibility when applying its disciplinary code. Precision for pixels; elasticity for principles.

Then come the hydration breaks. Officially they exist for players' welfare. Conveniently, they also create perfectly packaged advertising windows worth millions. Football pauses not because exhausted midfielders demand it, but because broadcasters do. FIFA does.

Spare us also the FIFA president's spin that the extra ad revenue goes to the broadcasters. We weren't born yesterday. Everyone knows FIFA is also raking it in.

FIFA demands microscopic consistency from referees but offers macroscopic discretion to itself. Integrity has become disposable. Money and politics have squeezed something precious out of this World Cup: football's soul.

FIFA's inability to prevent the Iranian team from being subjected to unfair treatment and intense political pressure during this World Cup reinforced the uncomfortable impression that the organization's celebrated neutrality functions selectively. Principles seem robust when convenient and negotiable when inconvenient.

Balogun himself should not become the villain. Players accept the decisions placed before them. The real issue sits far above the dressing room.

When the Seattle crowd reacts to his name before kick-off, those boos — if they come — will not be aimed at the talented striker. They will be directed at an institution that has managed the remarkable feat of making the world's most popular sport look smaller than the politics surrounding it. That is a far more damaging own goal than any red card could ever be.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Time-sharing would help expand 'last mile' AI usage

Editor's note: *China is rapidly expanding the use of artificial intelligence technology in the manufacturing sector. Yang Chao, director of the second research office of the department of innovative development, which is under the Development Research Center of the State Council, spoke to China Economic Times about how the country can harness the potential of AI for the benefit of the sector and the broader economy. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

To cover the "last mile" of intelligent transformation, it is necessary to help micro, small and medium-sized enterprises use AI through an approach that is lightweight and inclusive.

Governments should take the lead in providing public AI services in industrial parks so that micro, small and medium-sized enterprises operating in the parks can rent the services according to their needs. This will not only enable the enterprises to share the services but also the cost of the services.

Innovative financial solutions, such as equipment leasing, can be adopted to rent out AI equipment on a monthly basis so that companies don't have to spend large sums of money to purchase equipment.

China's AI industry has abundant application scenarios. The country contributes approximately 30 percent of the world's manufacturing growth, and has numerous industrial scenarios, including factory quality inspection, intelligent scheduling, flexible production lines and predictive equipment maintenance. These scenarios form a complete loop for data iteration and feedback.

Moreover, China has a large consumer base, including a large number of AI users. This helps create a robust data flywheel that enables the continuous improvement of domestic models.

China's AI industry offers highly cost-effective services. Domestic large models are attracting developers and users worldwide, as their API calls cost only a small fraction of the fees charged by leading overseas products.

For the AI industry to continue to flourish, innovation, application and security compliance are essential. China has swiftly developed its legal and policy framework for AI governance, including interim measures adopted in 2023 to manage generative AI services, the Cybersecurity Law, which was revised in 2025, and the guidelines issued in May this year to regulate the use of AI agents and facilitate their innovation.

Nevertheless, the following measures are needed to fully unlock the potential of the country's AI industry. There should be a classified and tiered supervision system. The registration process should be streamlined for low-risk AI applications that are only used internally by enterprises.

At the same time, strict measures should be taken to ensure data security for enterprises using these applications and access management should be improved.

For high-stakes scenarios such as critical infrastructure, there should be stringent protocols, such as security assessments, red team testing, permission isolation and final reviews conducted by humans.

Enterprises' compliance costs should be substantially reduced. Efforts should be stepped up to develop a system of market-oriented, third-party compliance services and facilitate mutual recognition of certification results.

AI application scenarios should be expanded to create more opportunities for the application of AI technology. Prudent and inclusive regulatory sandboxes should be promoted.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:01 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:01 PM

VIEWS

China and the World Roundtable | Uncovering the Truth behind Japan's Historical Distortions

Editor's Note: *Certain forces on China's Taiwan island have been distorting history for their selfish gains, downplaying the atrocities committed by Japan during its colonial rule there and advocating so-called friendship with Tokyo. On May 27, the Taiwan research center of the Institute of Modern History, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, held a seminar to expose these falsehoods. Three experts share their views, as reported by China Daily's Li Huixian.*

Japan's colonial rule a dark chapter of Taiwan island



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

Japan's centuries-long scheme reveals expansionist ambition



Wang Xiaoping is a research fellow at the Institute of Modern History, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

Studying colonial history is not about stirring up hatred, but about uncovering the truth; not about dwelling in the past but about safeguarding the future. Japan's long history of coveting China's Taiwan island, and the military suppression, political control, economic plunder, cultural assimilation and destruction it engaged in during its occupation of the island expose the manipulative lie of so-called "friendship" between the island and Tokyo, as touted by the island's separatist forces.

Japan's 50-year occupation of Taiwan was not merely an outcome of the 1895 Treaty of Shimonoseki, but the culmination of Japan's long-standing expansionist strategy, a strategy that dates back to the late 16th century when feudal lord Hideyoshi Toyotomi, who unified Japan, envisioned using the Korean Peninsula as a springboard to conquer China and dominate East Asia. This aggressive vision laid the groundwork for Japan's continental policy, and remained the underlying logic of sustaining national development through military expansion well into the Meiji era.

Japan's southward expansion began with the Ryukyu Islands. In 1609, Japan's feudal domain of Satsuma invaded Ryukyu, capturing it and forcing it into vassalage and tribute. Over the ensuing nearly 300 years, Ryukyu maintained its tributary relationship with China, while being compelled to accept Satsuma's domination and heavy tribute obligations.

After the Meiji Restoration of 1868 — which returned Japan to direct imperial rule under the Emperor — Japan's national strength swelled rapidly, accelerating its expansionist efforts. In 1879, Japan dispatched troops and officials to incorporate Ryukyu into its territory; the centuries-old Ryukyu Kingdom collapsed.

During its annexation of Ryukyu, Japan also set its sights on Taiwan island. In 1871, Ryukyuan fishermen were caught in a storm and landed in Taiwan, where clashes with local indigenous communities led to casualties. Japan exploited the incident, framing it as an "assault on Japanese nationals" and launching a punitive expedition in 1874.

Although Japan withdrew under diplomatic pressure from the Qing (1644-1911) government of China and international criticism, the operation helped it achieve key strategic objectives: testing the Qing government's coastal defense capabilities and diplomatic red lines, fabricating the false logic that Ryukyuans were Japanese nationals, conducting a combat rehearsal for future southward expansion, and gaining crucial experience for larger-scale aggression.

In 1894, Japan instigated the First Sino-Japanese War and in the following year compelled the defeated Qing government to sign the unequal Treaty of Shimonoseki, ceding the entire island of Taiwan and its affiliated Penghu Islands to it, marking the beginning of a 50-year-long bloody colonial rule.

Japan's colonial rule over the island was characterized by brutal suppression of civilian uprisings and large-scale massacres. Taiwan island residents were denied the right to stand for election or vote, economically exploited, and subjected to cultural assimilation efforts aimed at erasing their history and national identity. Under the autocratic rule of the governor-general and a police-dominated administration, they lived in an isolated, surveilled and brutally oppressive giant prison. During World War II, many Taiwan compatriots were conscripted and sent to the battlefield.

Therefore, any rhetoric that glorifies Japanese colonial rule, downplays the massacres, or distorts history betrays historical truth and desecrates civilization.

Colonizers plundered rather than modernized island



Cheng Zhaoyun is a research fellow at the Institute of Modern History, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

"Taiwan independence" separatists peddle the theory that the island saw modernization during Japanese colonial rule, while overlooking Japan's invasion and exploitation, even venerating colonial figures such as Yoichi Hatta.

However, this so-called "modernization" was essentially continued colonization of the island.

Instead, the island's modernization began under the late Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), with progress in sectors such as transport and industry, including railways, steamships, telegraphy, postal services and coal mining.

When Japan occupied the island, Taiwan already had a stronger economy under the late Qing Dynasty compared with Japan in the early days of the Meiji Restoration. Therefore, it is misleading to attribute Taiwan's growth solely to Japanese colonization.

The so-called colonial modernization was, in reality, Japan's exploitation of Taiwan's resources and people.

The colonial authorities seized large tracts of newly cultivated or ambiguously titled land, stripping local farmers of their land on dubious pretexts and transferring it to Japanese enterprises.

By the time of the island's restoration, more than six million of its residents held less than 30 percent of the land, with the rest being held by the Japanese.

Since the early 20th century, Taiwan's sugar production was largely shipped to Japan, with *zaibatsu,* such as Mitsui and Mitsubishi, monopolizing the island's modern sugar industry. Sugarcane farmers were stripped of any say in the cultivation and pricing of the crop.

Although rice production increased, it was mostly exported to Japan at low prices, forcing Taiwan people to turn to sweet potatoes. Emerging industrial sectors such as electricity and chemicals were also dominated by Japanese capital, which funneled substantial profits back to Japan, investing them in other industries and even overseas expansion.

The island's foreign trade was also controlled, with agricultural products and raw materials largely exported to Japan. In return, the Chinese island imported expensive fertilizers from Japan.

Following its full-scale invasion of China in 1937, Japan imposed a wartime regime on Taiwan, further exploiting its manpower, finances, trade, and agriculture. Farmers were allowed to keep only minimal grain for subsistence, with the rest requisitioned. Being tied to Japan's war chariot, Taiwan suffered heavy bombing by the US military during late World War II, which severely damaged its farmland, factories and other infrastructure.

Taiwan's postwar economic difficulties, including food shortages and unemployment, were direct results of Japanese colonial rule.

Japanese colonization left the Chinese island's economy structurally deficient. The colonial authorities integrated Taiwan into Japan's economic sphere through unified tariffs, currency and other measures.

By 1939, Taiwan's foreign trade was almost entirely dependent on Japan and its occupied territories.

Before the 1930s, Tokyo treated Taiwan primarily as an agricultural base, with industrialization limited to food industries such as rice and sugar. After the 1930s, industrialization was promoted to meet wartime needs, focusing on fertilizers, cement, aluminum, papermaking, and shipbuilding, but the industrial structure remained unbalanced.

During Japan's colonial rule, Taiwan residents were excluded from senior management roles in government and business.

Indigenous Taiwan capital was restricted to traditional sectors such as agriculture and small-scale crafts, while being barred from modern manufacturing, thus suppressing local investors. Local workers earned less than half of what Japanese workers in Taiwan did, and even their wage growth lagged significantly behind increases in labor productivity.

All of this proves that the claim that "Japan modernized Taiwan" is a complete fallacy.

Tours reveal misery under Japanese rule

After Japan seized the Chinese island of Taiwan, people on the Chinese mainland had gradually realized Japan's colonial oppression in Taiwan. In response to Japan's propaganda about its "achievements", tours of prominent figures such as Sun Yat-sen, Zhang Taiyan, and Liang Qichao to the island have exposed how Japan's colonial rule there was far from the "success" it was being made out to be.



Chen Zhongchun is the director of the Institute of History at the Graduate Institute for Taiwan Studies at Xiamen University.

Zhang Taiyan, a philosopher who visited the island in late 1898, refuted the Japanese claim that the occupation of Taiwan was "divinely ordained" and resisted the sycophantic trend of eulogizing the colonizers.

His criticism on issues such as heavy taxation, electoral injustice and educational inequality reveals the harsh reality of colonial rule. Similarly, Liang Qichao, a prominent Chinese thinker, offered incisive critiques in letters during his 1911 visit from Japan to the island of Taiwan. His observations profoundly influenced and encouraged Taiwan compatriots to resist oppressive rule.

While in Japan, Liang had come across newspaper and magazine commentaries praising Japanese rule in Taiwan, while friends he had from the island painted a starkly different picture.

People on the Chinese mainland, too, were curious to know the actual situation across the Strait. This prompted Liang to travel to the island and investigate.

Upon arrival, Liang was warmly received by the islanders, which convinced him that they still cherished deep sentiments for the motherland. He observed that Japan deliberately restricted access from the Chinese mainland to Taiwan.

Also, contrary to Tokyo's claims, his investigation revealed that the island people had suffered immensely under Japanese dominion.

In his fourth and fifth letters, Liang expressed great disappointment about the claims of development made about the island — while certain so-called modern administrative facilities on the island were not uncommon elsewhere in the world, Japan engaged in rampant economic exploitation and educational discrimination on the island.

Beneath the ostensibly "orderly" society on the island, Liang observed the profound suffering of its people. His poems reveal how Japanese colonial authorities expropriated farmers' land, selling it to Japanese sugar companies and leaving the dispossessed farmers to starve in winter. Others had no choice but to sell themselves into labor.

Liang's observations also highlighted discrimination in the field of education, with quality education being reserved for Japanese children, while children from Taiwan island were relegated to inferior schools with limited curricula.

Liang's worry — about Taiwan residents losing a sense of belonging to the motherland as the colonialists suppressed the Chinese language and his compatriots being rendered illiterate — is foreseeable.

Just as revealing is Japan's import policy and its effect on prices on the island. According to Liang, Japan's severing of Taiwan's economic ties with the Chinese mainland led to increased prices and a higher cost of living on the island.

Nearly all daily necessities, from straw sandals to noodles, were imported from Japan but sold at much higher prices in Taiwan. The colonizers' arbitrary pricing resulted in price hikes that far outpaced wage growth, leaving the people economically crushed and with no way out of colonial oppression.

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

How I keep my date with strolls even on hot and sunny afternoons



Kang Bing

The author is former deputy editor-in-chief of China Daily. kangbing@chinadaily.com.cn

While the central government is concentrating on curbing desertification, local governments are leaving no stone unturned to plant trees, bushes and grass on bare land.

As summer temperatures keep rising across China, meteorologists have been warning people not to venture out into the afternoon sun to avoid getting sunburns or, worse, suffering heatstroke.

However, I, a retired man who loves taking a stroll now and then, have mostly laughed away such warnings and have been keeping my date with walks three times a day.

I venture out not because I am immune to hazards from the heat but because of the trees lining both sides of the street bordering the four edges of my apartment complex. Of the four roads, 1,000 meters long in total, two are under the cover of paulownia trees, one shaded by locust trees and the fourth is lined with lilac, cherry and crab apple flowers. Taking an afternoon stroll under the shade of those trees has always been a pleasant experience for me.

Planting trees alongside streets seems to have become a priority of municipal authorities planning cities in China.

For thousands of years, wood and grass have either been burned as fuel or used as animal feed across China, depriving many regions of greenery. By the 1970s, desertification had escalated to such an extent that sandstorms were a regular feature in northern China, with more than a dozen being reported every year.

It was against this backdrop that the central government decided to take nationwide greening actions.

The Three-North Shelterbelt Forest Program — called Sanbei Gongcheng in Chinese — was launched across around 46.7 percent of the country's land area. The more than 70-year-long project — which started in 1978 and will go on until 2050 in northeastern, northern and northwestern China — has increased the area's forest cover from 5 percent in the late 1970s to 14 percent now.

Billions of trees have been planted and desertification has largely been checked. Beijing, for instance, now experiences only two or three sandstorms each year as compared to more than a dozen a year 30 years ago. In fact, studies suggest that the few sandstorms sweeping northern China in recent years originated not in China but in neighboring countries.

While the central government is concentrating on curbing desertification, local governments are leaving no stone unturned to plant trees, bushes and grass on bare land.

For city planners, sidewalks are ideal spaces for planting trees. Having visited a few dozen countries, I have the feeling there are more trees on the sidewalks of Chinese cities than in many developed countries.

To confirm the same, I checked online data only to conclude that it is not available in a comparable form. I was just about able to confirm that the forest coverage of Beijing was 44.95 percent in 2024, while New York City's tree canopy cover stood at 23.4 percent (as of 2021) according to the NYC Urban Forest Plan. As a Beijing resident who has visited New York several times, I feel this comparison is reliable.

That is reason enough for us to give a thumbs-up to the local governments that have been carrying out tree planting programs in the Sanbei areas over the past 50 years. I doubt there is another government in the world that has the vision and courage to launch such a long and costly project in an area nearly half the size of Europe.

Planting trees is just the first step in the goal of growing trees on sidewalks. During my umpteen walks around my block over the past few years, I have seen trucks with water tanks watering the trees and bushes, gardeners trimming the trees, and workers wrapping up tree trunks to help the plants survive harsh winters.

I also saw workers paving the sidewalks every two or three years to get rid of roots that were cracking the pavement. I understand that lots of money must have been spent on keeping the trees healthy and our sidewalks smooth.

Such investments may not lead to any "grand achievements" that help some politicians get more votes. But the efforts certainly provide us citizens with a better living environment, enabling us to take a stroll even on a hot mid-summer day.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:01 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:01 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS



WANG JUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

DAVID GOSSET

Transformation and the road ahead

The Party continues to play an enduring and irreplaceable role in shaping China's modernization trajectory



The 105th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China in 2026 offers an occasion not only for commemoration but also for reflection on more than a century of political struggle, national transformation and institutional evolution.

The anniversary provides a meaningful moment to revisit the historical trajectory of the Party and its enduring role in shaping Chinese modernization.

The story begins in 1921, in a modest setting in Shanghai, where the CPC was founded under difficult and uncertain conditions. At the time, China was fragmented, weakened by internal division and external pressure, and searching for pathways toward national renewal. The early founders of the Party were a small group of intellectuals and revolutionaries driven by the belief that China required a fundamental transformation to regain sovereignty, stability, unity and dignity. From these humble beginnings, the CPC would gradually grow to become the central force in Chinese political life.

The early decades of the Party were marked by struggle and survival. Among the most defining episodes was the Red Army's Long March (1934-36), a remarkable and arduous military feat that has since become a foundational narrative in the Party's collective memory. Covering thousands of kilometers across some of China's most difficult terrain, it symbolized endurance, cohesion and ideological commitment under extreme pressure. Though a military maneuver, it became politically and symbolically a consolidation of leadership and resolve.

This period was followed by another existential struggle. The Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45) was a decisive chapter in modern Chinese history, during which the CPC expanded its influence and legitimacy through both military resistance and the mobilization of rural populations. The experience of national survival against external aggression deeply shaped the Party's understanding of sovereignty, unity and national strength.

In 1949, after years of civil war, the People's Republic of China was founded. This marked a fundamental turning point in Chinese history. For the CPC, it represented the transition from a revolutionary movement to a governing party. For the country, it signaled the beginning of a new State-building project aimed at restoring territorial unity, rebuilding institutions and addressing widespread poverty and instability.

The subsequent decades were complex, marked by ambitious social and economic experiments, periods of rapid mobilization and significant internal challenges.

A particularly decisive turning point came in 1978 with the reform and opening-up policy initiated under Deng Xiaoping. This moment reshaped China's development trajectory. Economic reforms introduced market mechanisms, encouraged foreign investment and gradually integrated China into the global economy. Over the following decades, China experienced one of the most rapid and large-scale transformations in modern history, lifting hundreds of millions of people out of extreme poverty and becoming a central actor in global trade and industry.

From the perspective of governance, the CPC has progressively developed a distinct model of political and economic organization. This model emphasizes long-term planning, strong State capacity and adaptive policy experimentation at local levels. It is also closely linked to China's pursuit of what it terms "Chinese-style modernization". This concept refers to a modernization path that seeks to combine economic development and technological advancement with social stability, common prosperity, cultural continuity, ecological sustainability and national sovereignty. Unlike modernization models historically associated with Western industrialization, Chinese-style modernization is presented as a development framework rooted in China's own historical experience, political system and civilizational traditions while remaining open to global economic integration.

Over time, the Party has placed increasing emphasis on institutional coherence, anti-corruption campaigns, technological modernization, environmental policy and national rejuvenation. These priorities reflect both domestic imperatives and China's evolving position in the global system. In this sense, the CPC is not only a governing body but also the core institutional framework through which China articulates and implements its strategic objectives.

Looking forward, China has set out a series of ambitious long-term goals, including the realization of national modernization objectives and the strengthening of technological self-reliance, economic resilience and global influence. The coming years are viewed as a critical period during which these objectives will be further defined and pursued.

Since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, has put forward a series of new ideas, new thinking and new strategies for governing and strengthening the Party in response to the major questions of the times. Xi Jinping Thought on Party Building articulates several core principles: the CPC's leadership is the defining feature of socialism with Chinese characteristics; the centralized, unified leadership of the Party Central Committee must be upheld; and full and rigorous Party self-governance must be advanced unwaveringly.

Understanding contemporary China requires an in-depth understanding of the CPC itself. The Party is deeply embedded in the country's institutional structure, development strategy and political culture. The 105th anniversary, therefore, is not merely a historical marker. It is an opportunity to revisit the long arc of Chinese political development — from revolutionary beginnings in Shanghai, through war and State formation, to economic transformation and global integration. It also invites reflection on the continuity of objectives that have persisted across generations: national sovereignty, development, stability and modernization.

At the same time, it is an occasion to recognize that China's path remains dynamic and evolving. The challenges of economic transition, demographic change, environmental sustainability and international relations continue to shape policy debates and strategic thinking within the country.

In this sense, the anniversary is both retrospective and forward-looking. It connects a century of history with the uncertainties and ambitions of the future. As China moves further into the 21st century, the CPC remains a central actor in defining the direction of that journey. For the international community, engaging with China inevitably involves engaging with the Party's historical experience, institutional logic and strategic vision.

The 105th anniversary thus serves as a reminder that China's contemporary identity is deeply rooted in its historical trajectory and that its future will continue to be shaped by the evolving relationship between its past, its governance system and its aspirations on the global stage.

The author is a specialist in global affairs, a sinologist and the founder of the China-Europe-America Global Initiative. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

OLE DÖRING

Maturing self-development

CPC's 105-year journey proves itself a party dedicated to serving the people and addressing the challenges in the country's progress



In July 1921, the Communist Party of China was founded in Shanghai. Its mission extended far beyond the struggle for the communalization of the means of production that shaped European communism following Marx and Engels. China's path to finding its own place in a new world — initially shaped, for better or worse, by Europe and the United States — has been a process of self-cultivation. Anyone visiting the sites today that commemorate the Party's history and culture is likely to be struck by the vibrant energy and thematic diversity of this movement.

Yet the roots of the CPC reach deep into the 19th century and into China's interior. A folk open-air theater on the grounds of a cultural industry base in Shaoshan, near Changsha, the capital of Central China's Hunan province, reenacts the fundamental motifs of the march toward a new China. The performance begins with the steel fetters of the new heavy industry, which alienates people from themselves and whose blazing flames seem beyond control. The price paid for the new goods and opportunities is high. The common people experience exploitation, new forms of warfare, and more sophisticated oppression, while the decrepit Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) collapses amid its own luxury. At the same time, ideas emerge, carrying hope for new forms of social participation: trade unions, cooperatives, the press, new professions, scientific foundations for education, medicine and agriculture. The world grows larger, horizons draw nearer, everything changes.

How was China to preserve the peace of a simple life? This was a question about dignity and justice in the everyday lives of Chinese people, about traditional virtues and human values for modernity, the birth of human solidarity among the disadvantaged. It was about the bewildering shock of collective powerlessness in the face of a world turned upside down, where a "small" Japan suddenly ravaged China's traditional breadbasket and culture with immense brutality; it was about the courage, determination, foresight and fortune of the few individuals who paved the way for the CPC. The Party and its members took their destiny into their own hands and forged ahead through the Long March — whose 90th anniversary falls this year. Following the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, they established a new framework for national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In the current Year of the Fire Horse, steam, flame and locomotion take on a symbolism of their own. After 105 years, with the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) for economic and social development, China is now definitively galloping into the phase of its cultural self-determination, following decades of catch-up modernization. The heat of progress, the pressure of social restructuring, and the harshness of competition are being shifted into a calmer gear. With a cool head and a gentler hand, the energy of the growth momentum is being channeled, the thrust balanced, and development steered to a new level. In this process, the "Chinese Dream" is not a feverish delusion but renders achievable the desire of the vast majority of the Chinese people to develop China, by the middle of this century, into a modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, civilized and peaceful. A key building block on this path is the comprehensive reform of the education system, presented in early 2025 by the CPC Central Committee and the State Council to build a strong education system by 2035 to support the country's modernization drive and national rejuvenation.

In Changsha, Central China's Hunan province, where late Chairman Mao Zedong spent his youth, visitors can witness veritable pilgrimages of large crowds of all ages, educational backgrounds and income groups. The history of the CPC is personalized, kept alive through stories of individual fates and memorable events. The essence of politics enters through the stomach, through the eyes, hearts and minds; in rituals, all this merges into a shared experience. Statues, photos, films or stories connect into a felt and perceived coherence.

An essential difference from the historical models that New China oriented itself toward and worked through is the ancient virtue of development through learning. No Chinese institution embodies the nature of modern China's development as fully as the CPC. The trust of an educated, entrepreneurial, rebellious, proud and smart people is not secured permanently by words alone. Decades of struggles of all kinds have made the population allergic to false promises and alert to pragmatic projects. Thus, the CPC must continually prove itself at the current level of challenges and opportunities. Its power comes with the duty to understand itself as a serving organization. This is why the fight against corruption is of paramount importance.

The contrast with the political parties of Europe and the United States, which have increasingly specialized in the self-serving preservation of power at the expense of public welfare, could hardly be starker. If good medicine is what makes people healthy, and good economic management leads to fair prosperity, then good politics makes society wealthier, healthier and more cultivated. The more than 100 million members of the CPC represent approximately 7 percent of China's population: a disciplined, serving group that is increasingly meeting the demands of modern political management.

What there is to celebrate on the CPC's anniversary lies in the new form of political constitution that China has forged for itself through the CPC as its path into modernity. There are many approaches to understanding the history and work of the CPC. The date of 105 years gives us a fine occasion to thoroughly review them.

The author is a professor at the Foreign Language Studies College at Hunan Normal University, a private lecturer at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, a philosopher and a sinologist. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:01 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:01 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

Chinese memory chip stocks surge

Upcoming Nasdaq debut of SK Hynix buoying performance of peer firms

By **MA SI**
masi@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese memory-chip-related stocks surged on Monday, led by Shenzhen Longsys Electronics Co Ltd, partly as investors reacted to the impending US listing of South Korean memory chip giant SK Hynix.

Longsys jumped as much as 13 percent in early trading before consolidating gains to close at 681.8 yuan ($100) in Shenzhen. Other memory chip stocks followed suit. CECport hit the daily upside limit, while companies such as JCET advanced.

The sector's momentum was amplified by SK Hynix's upcoming Nasdaq debut. The chipmaker is set to debut on Friday, raising approximately $29 billion in what could be the largest-ever US IPO by a foreign company, Bloomberg reported.

The listing, to be conducted through American Depositary Receipts, or ADRs, under the ticker "SKHY," aims to bridge the valuation gap with US rival Micron Technology.

The timing coincides with explosive growth in the memory chip market. Market research firm Gartner said global chip sales are expected to approach 9 trillion yuan in 2026, up 64 percent year-on-year, with memory chip sales estimated at around 4.3 trillion yuan.

Market researcher TrendForce's latest memory pricing survey said the DRAM market will see extremely tight supply in the third quarter, with contract prices expected to rise 13 to 18 percent quarter-on-quarter. NAND Flash contract prices are likely to increase 10 to 15 percent quarter-on-quarter.



The booth of SK Hynix during an expo in Shanghai. LONG WEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

DRAM and NAND are key memory chips widely used in smartphones, PCs, tablets and other digital products.

While artificial intelligence inference and data center deployments continue to drive demand, price increases have moderated from previous quarters as consumer PC and smartphone customers reach their affordability limits, TrendForce said.

"AI remains the core driver," TrendForce added. Memory suppliers are shifting capacity toward higher-margin server products, constraining supply for consumer segments and keeping prices elevated even as PC and smartphone demand weakens.

The global supply shortage and surging AI demand for high-bandwidth memory have fueled the memory supercycle. Meanwhile, China's domestic memory industry is making strides, though a gap with Western leaders persists, experts said.

CXMT Corp, China's largest manufacturer of DRAM chips, is expected to launch its IPO later this year, while the listing plan of Yangtze Memory Technologies, China's only company capable of end-to-end 3D NAND flash chip manufacturing, has also received approval.

Shen Meng, director of Chanson & Co, a boutique investment bank, said market watchers are closely monitoring SK Hynix's Nasdaq performance as a potential reference for the two Chinese IPOs.

Roger Sheng, vice-president of research at Gartner, said that Chinese memory chip firms have made significant progress, but there remains a significant gap in both advanced technologies and production capacities between Chinese memory leaders and their global counterparts, pointing to substantial room for expansion.

COMAC eyes specialized aircraft mkt

By **LI JING**
lijing2009@chinadaily.com.cn

As Commercial Aircraft Corp of China (COMAC) seeks to deepen its global footprint, industry analysts say specialized aircraft could offer a more practical route into overseas markets than competing directly for commercial passenger aircraft orders.

That strategy was on display from Thursday to Saturday, when the Chinese aircraft manufacturer made its debut at the 21st Kazakhstan-China Commodity Exhibition in Almaty, showcasing a C909 medical aircraft in its first appearance in Central Asia, alongside a scale model of the C909 firefighting plane.

The exhibition highlighted COMAC's efforts to broaden the C909's overseas applications beyond passenger transport. While the regional jet has gradually expanded commercial services in Indonesia, Laos and Vietnam, the company has also developed business jet, cargo, medical, firefighting and emergency-command variants to create new export opportunities.

"Special-mission aircraft face lower competitive barriers to overseas markets than passenger aircraft and have the potential to become an important entry point for COMAC's international expansion," said Zhu Keli, founding director of the China Institute of New Economy.

The Kazakhstan appearance came less than a week after the C909, formerly known as the ARJ21, marked a decade of commercial operations. Since entering service in 2016, the aircraft has carried more than 37 million passenger trips, with 186 aircraft delivered to more than 10 customers, accounting for about 70 percent of China's regional jet fleet, according to COMAC.

The aircraft now operates in Indonesia, Laos and Vietnam, where it has carried more than 1 million passengers, and its international presence remains concentrated in Southeast Asia.

Analysts say Central Asia could become COMAC's next overseas growth market, reflecting both the region's operating conditions and deepening economic cooperation between China and Kazakhstan.

"The choice of a medical aircraft demonstrates a broader market strategy rather than simply promoting a single aircraft model," Zhu said.

The displayed C909 medical aircraft was converted from the baseline regional jet. The aircraft can be configured for different medical missions, including transporting medical teams, providing healthcare services in remote areas and evacuating patients.

The "flying hospital" is equipped with intelligent ophthalmic diagnostic and surgical equipment, enabling screening, imaging, surgery and rehabilitation onboard.

For Central Asia, the medical version addresses practical needs. Much of the region is characterized by vast territory, mountainous terrain and dispersed populations, while advanced healthcare resources are concentrated in major cities. Air medical transport can significantly reduce transfer times for critically ill patients, particularly in remote areas served by smaller regional airports.

"The C909's ability to operate at high-altitude airports, in high-temperature conditions and on relatively short runways makes it well suited to many regional airports across Central Asia," Zhu said.

Industry analysts say that advantage stems from the structure of the market. Airlines face high switching costs due to investments in pilot training, maintenance systems and spare parts inventories.

By contrast, specialized aircraft are typically procured by government health authorities or emergency agencies, with purchasing decisions placing greater emphasis on public service requirements, operating costs and bilateral cooperation than on airline fleet commonality.

"Special mission aircraft allow COMAC to avoid direct competition with established passenger aircraft in the early stages, while helping establish local maintenance capabilities and partnerships that could support future passenger aircraft sales," Zhu said.

COMAC has already pioneered this approach in Southeast Asia. The company showcased the C909 medical aircraft at the Singapore Airshow, and conducted its first overseas medical mission in Laos this year, where Chinese and Lao doctors carried out eye and ENT surgeries and training programs aboard the aircraft.

The latest push coincides with robust China-Kazakhstan economic growth.

China has been one of Kazakhstan's largest trading and investment partners. According to data from the General Administration of Customs, bilateral trade exceeded $48 billion in 2025. The cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative has expanded beyond transport infrastructure into manufacturing, healthcare and advanced technology.

Kazakhstan has invested more than $35 billion in transport and transit infrastructure over the past 15 years and is accelerating development of the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route as companies seek alternative Eurasian trade routes amid geopolitical uncertainty.

"The region has the conditions to become another important overseas market after Southeast Asia," Zhu said. "It benefits from its proximity to China, expanding Belt and Road cooperation and growing demand for medical and emergency-response aircraft."

Zhu cautioned, however, that the market would likely develop more gradually than Southeast Asia, where commercial passenger operations expanded first.

In Central Asia, demand is expected to be driven initially by government procurement of medical and emergency response aircraft before broader regional passenger services emerge.

City building block for Lego's success

By **ZHENG ZHENG** in Shanghai
zhengzheng@chinadaily.com.cn

Legoland Shanghai Resort welcomed more than 2 million visitors in its inaugural year, ranking top in both first-year visitor numbers and guest satisfaction among Legoland resorts globally, said a senior official at its anniversary celebrations on Sunday.

"Legoland Shanghai delivered a very strong first year," said John Jakobsen, chief strategic portfolio development officer of Merlin Entertainments.

"This not only confirms the huge potential of China's family market, but also gives us strong confidence in the vitality of China's cultural tourism market."

Jakobsen described the resort in Shanghai as the biggest project that Merlin Entertainments has ever undertaken.

"Our expectations were high because this is a strong market for Legoland. The Lego brand is already famous in China, creating a fantastic foundation. We have never seen guests as satisfied and positive with their experience as those here in China."

Drawing from 58 years of Legoland experience across 10 parks worldwide, the Shanghai facility incorporates unique elements tailored to Chinese preferences. These include Monkie Kid Land, unique to Shanghai, and a custom-designed Miniland celebrating China's cultural landmarks. New food, beverage and retail concepts developed in Shanghai are also being replicated at Legoland parks globally.

"Legoland Shanghai has definitely been an inspiration and a beacon for what other Legoland parks can do in other countries," Jakobsen said.

Chen Jie, general manager of Legoland Shanghai Resort, said the park's most dedicated annual pass holder visited 254 times within the year. Annual pass holders from Shanghai — as well as Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces — account for 76.5 percent of membership, while visitors from Beijing and the provinces of Guangdong and Shandong showed the fastest growth among long-distance provinces.

The park has maintained a roughly 50-50 split between ticket revenue and secondary consumption, with its main retail store becoming the top-performing Lego store nationwide, Chen said, adding that ride-hailing orders to and from Jinshan district where the park is located on the Didi platform after the resort's opening jumped 735 percent compared with the first half of 2025.

Zhuang Jian, chairman of Legoland Shanghai Resort and Party secretary of Shanghai New Jinshan Investment Share Holding Group Co Ltd, said Jinshan district welcomed over 20 million tourists since the opening of the resort, with revenue from cultural, sports and entertainment industries quadrupling.

Statistics show that Jinshan's total tourism revenue reached 6.78 billion yuan ($996 million), up 20.3 percent year-on-year, while the accommodation and dining sectors led citywide growth in 2025.

The resort's location in Jinshan offers accessibility to Shanghai's metropolitan area while connecting to the broader Yangtze River Delta region. Passenger traffic at nearby Jinshan North Station surged 44 percent since the park's opening.

On the anniversary date, China's first Legoland-themed train was unveiled on the G1509 route — running between Nanjing South and Sanming — offering passengers an immersive Lego experience with direct access to the station.



A view of Legoland Shanghai Resort. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The district has created bundled ticket products with local attractions, as visitors holding Legoland tickets can receive free access to multiple district attractions and discounts at 51 local businesses. The resort has also partnered with iconic Shanghai attractions — including Oriental Pearl TV Tower and Shanghai Zoo — to launch multivenue ticket packages.

Jakobsen emphasized the company's commitment to maintaining momentum.

"We continue to bring cutting-edge concepts and world-class experiences here for China," he said, adding that the success of Legoland Shanghai has created a platform that can be replicated in other Chinese cities.

Chery opens auto plant in S. Africa

PRETORIA, South Africa — Chinese automaker Chery has launched a manufacturing plant in Rosslyn, north of South Africa's administrative capital Pretoria, marking its transition into a local manufacturer and deepening its long-term commitment to the South African market.

Addressing the launch ceremony last week, Chery Chairman Yin Tongyue said the investment reflects the company's long-term commitment to South Africa.

"We have moved from being an importer to a manufacturer, and from a market participant to a long-term partner in South Africa's industrial story," he said.

Chinese Ambassador to South Africa Wu Peng said that two remarkable journeys have converged — the Rosslyn plant, a historic factory that embodies the legacy of South Africa's automotive industry, and Chery, a dynamic Chinese automaker, joining hands to move forward together.

"This partnership not only stands as a vivid testament to the deepening cooperation between China and South Africa, but also injects fresh momentum into our bilateral cooperation in the auto sector and opens up broader prospects for future development," Wu said.

According to Chery, production at the Rosslyn plant is scheduled to begin in mid-2027, with an initial output of 15,000 vehicles planned for the third and fourth quarters of that year. At full capacity, the plant is expected to produce 50,000 vehicles annually on a single-shift basis.

The company said that it has committed to retaining all 692 existing employees while creating nearly 3,000 direct and indirect jobs across manufacturing, supply chains and related services. It also plans to expand localization and develop the facility into a comprehensive automotive hub integrating research and development, manufacturing, supply chain operations and skills development.

The investment forms part of Chery's broader vision to establish South Africa as its African manufacturing, export, research and development, and operational headquarters, the company added.

Founded in 1997 and headquartered in Wuhu, East China's Anhui province, Chery operates in more than 130 countries and regions.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Briefly

Huawei releases Tau Scaling Law V2

Huawei has released the Tau Scaling Law version 2 paper, which details the tech giant's new chip innovation and relevant engineering information. It revealed the paper version 1 in May. The version 2 paper shows details regarding engineering implementation, actual measurement data and product evolution roadmap relevant to the main framework.

Yuan weakens against greenback

The central parity rate of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, weakened 19 pips to 6.8066 against the US dollar on Monday, said the China Foreign Exchange Trade System. In China's spot foreign exchange market, the yuan is allowed to rise or fall by 2 percent from the central parity rate each trading day. The central parity rate of the yuan against the greenback is based on a weighted average of prices offered by market makers.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:01 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:01 PM

BUSINESS

5G, AI transforming manufacturing

China Mobile Zhejiang driving local enterprises to embrace smart production

By REN QI in Jinhua, Zhejiang
renqi@chinadaily.com.cn

In the bustling manufacturing hubs of Zhejiang province, a quiet but profound revolution is underway as the traditional hum of manual assembly lines is being replaced by the precise, synchronized movements of robotic arms and automated guided vehicles.

At the heart of this transformation is the integration of 5G networks and artificial intelligence, spearheaded by China Mobile Zhejiang Branch, which is empowering local enterprises to cultivate new quality productive forces and leap from traditional manufacturing to intelligent production.

The robust computing power driving this industrial evolution stems from the China Mobile Yangtze River Delta (Jinhua) Data Center. As one of the largest data centers in East China, the facility spans 280 *mu* (18.67 hectares) and is built to national A-level standards, earning a diamond five-star internet data center certification. With over 3 billion yuan ($441.6 million) already invested, it currently houses 13,000 racks with an IT capacity of 86 megawatts.

Recognized by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology as a 2025 national-level green computing facility, it maintains an advanced power usage effectiveness of 1.24, saving 34 million kilowatt-hours of electricity and reducing carbon emissions by 18,000 metric tons annually.

A 5G-powered sun

Nowhere is the application of this computing power more evident than at Ronma Solar Energy Group's 5G smart factory in Jinhua, Zhejiang. As a State-level high-tech enterprise focusing on monocrystalline silicon solar cells and photovoltaic modules, Ronma Solar Energy Group has become a benchmark for the deep integration of high-end equipment manufacturing and the digital economy.

Walking into the factory's massive workshop, one is greeted by a futuristic scene: hundreds of automated guided vehicles navigate autonomously without magnetic strips or QR codes, relying instead on 5G-enabled visual navigation and AI algorithms for real-time dynamic mapping.

Xiong Zhoushi, general manager of China Mobile Jinhua Branch, highlighted the unprecedented scale and stability of this digital infrastructure. "Our factory spans 580 meters in length and 100 meters in width. We have over 800 devices, including 223 AGVs, all connected via 5G. Since it began operating, there has not been a single network interruption," Xiong said.

Xiong further explained the intricate automated workflow. "Our workshop has 14 process steps. For instance, after a battery cell completes the oxidation process, it is automatically loaded onto an AGV, which then follows programmed instructions to move seamlessly to the next production stage. Everything is unmanned and automatically controlled by our software systems. Our daily production capacity for battery cells is 3.78 million pieces, and actual output has reached 3.7 million. This 97 percent capacity utilization rate is currently the highest in the country's photovoltaic industry."

The integration of AI has penetrated every facet of Ronma's operations. The factory utilizes a digital twin platform that creates a precise 1:1 mapping of the physical production line. This allows for automatic roaming and first-person AI digital human inspections, which automatically pop up equipment ledgers as they pass by machines. This transparency even allows overseas clients to remotely check their order progress, reducing overseas client reception costs by 14 percent.

He Liang, dean of the Ronma Solar Research Institute, emphasized the transformative impact of these technologies on quality control and energy management.

"We've integrated AI visual inspection to replace manual checks, effectively solving issues like missed inspections and false positives. Our accuracy rate for identifying various defect categories now exceeds 90 percent, which has significantly reduced our labor needs," said He.

"Furthermore, we've implemented an intelligent AI model for parameter tuning during high-temperature processes. This model dynamically analyzes massive amounts of data to optimize variables, lowering energy costs by 9 percent. We also use predictive maintenance algorithms to detect hotspot risks, attenuation abnormalities and electrical connection issues before they cause downtime," added He.







Above: Staff members from China Mobile Jinhua Branch conduct equipment debugging at a workshop of Ronma Solar Energy Group in Jinhua, Zhejiang province, in November 2023. **Below:** An AI inspection robot patrols the production facilities of Zhejiang Shouxiangu Pharmaceutical Co in Jinhua in 2026 to verify that staff workers are following operating procedures. **Bottom:** A view of the China Mobile Yangtze River Delta (Jinhua) Data Center's server room in 2025. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

> "A 120-minute AI short drama can now be completed in about two weeks. Our team can produce around 10 such dramas a month."
>
> **Lai Enhui,** AIGC head at Zhejiang Gewu Zhizhi Culture Media

Cross-industry renaissance

Beyond the energy sector, China Mobile's digital empowerment is catalyzing upgrades across diverse traditional industries.

In the textile industry, Zhejiang Truelove Blanket Technology Co, known globally as the "World Blanket King", has partnered with China Mobile to build the first cloud-based 5G textile intelligent inspection factory. Utilizing 5G's low latency and high reliability, the system monitors the operational status of 8,000 yarns in real time. If a yarn breaks or skips, the system instantly identifies it and halts the machine. Now, a single female worker can oversee 12 machines simultaneously. Defect lengths have been reduced by 90 percent, saving the company nearly 3 million yuan in annual labor costs.

Similarly, Zhejiang SAFUN Industrial Co, a national manufacturing single-champion enterprise, has utilized an AI research and development design agent to overhaul its development process. By leveraging intelligent parsing, virtual simulation and knowledge reuse, the company has slashed its research and development cycle from two months to just five days, which is expected to boost overseas orders by 30 percent annually.

In the traditional Chinese medicine sector, Zhejiang Shouxiangu Pharmaceutical Co has built the country's first "50G PON + Wi-Fi 7" 10-gigabit pharmaceutical park. The company is now taking its AI integration a step further with its "AI Ancient Formula" project. By utilizing a dual-model strategy of "Tongyi Qianwen + DeepSeek", the system digitizes ancient texts like *Danxi Xinfa* to automatically generate prescription plans. To support this, their computing resources are expanding from dual A100 GPUs to an 8-card A100 setup. Soon, an AI Q&A agent will allow managers to ask conversational questions like, "What was the wall-breaking qualification rate of *lingzhi* (ganoderma lucidum) spore powder in Workshop A last week?" and receive instant, data-driven answers.

Even the cultural sector is experiencing a digital renaissance. In Hengdian World Studios — known as China's Hollywood — the newly established Film and Television Cultural Industry Brain has accumulated over 3.9 billion pieces of structured data.

Lai Enhui, AIGC head at Zhejiang Gewu Zhizhi Culture Media, pointed out the drastic changes in production speed. "A 120-minute AI short drama can now be completed in about two weeks. Our team can produce around 10 such dramas a month," Lai said. Utilizing China Mobile's MoMA cloud model services, studios can render complex visual effects securely in days rather than months, while also pioneering new formats like AI comic dramas.

To ensure these technological leaps are not isolated success stories, China Mobile is actively working to replicate these models across the manufacturing spectrum.

Ni Jun, deputy manager of the government and enterprise department at China Mobile Jinhua Branch, outlined their strategic roadmap. "We are currently focusing on three major local industries: power tools, textiles and magnetic materials. Our approach is to first build a benchmark enterprise to extract standardized digital solutions," Ni said.

"We rely on our strong grid-based operational capabilities. In Jinhua, we have 74 grids covering all towns and streets. Our grid managers can visit factories door-to-door to discuss digital transformation plans. We diagnose each enterprise's current digital maturity and provide tailored AI scenarios — filling in exactly what they lack — to drive industrywide cost reduction and intelligent transformation," he said.

Jewelers tap tech for innovative marketing

By REN QI in Jinhua

In Yiwu, Zhejiang province, globally renowned as the "capital of small commodities", speed is the ultimate currency.

The city is home to over 8,000 jewelry enterprises and 3,000 factories, producing over 1 million types of products that are sold to more than 100 countries and regions. Accounting for two-thirds of the domestic market and two-fifths of the international market, Yiwu sees nearly 10,000 new trendy items launched daily. In this fast-fashion ecosystem, the ability to quickly produce high-quality visual marketing materials is vital.

Historically, jewelry companies relied heavily on human models and professional photography teams. A single product image could cost up to hundreds of yuan, and the production cycle often stretched to one or two weeks. This sluggish pace severely bottlenecked the rapid product turnover required in today's hyper-competitive e-commerce landscape, leaving smaller merchants struggling to keep up.

Sensing this critical market need, China Mobile Zhejiang Branch has formed an "AIGC + E-commerce Scenario Commando" team. After conducting in-depth research into the jewelry industry belt, they launched the "AI E-commerce Xingcan" platform.

Powered by advanced large language models and multimodal technology, the platform acts as a 24/7 "silicon employee". Merchants simply upload a smartphone photo of their product, and within 40 seconds, artificial intelligence generates a complete set of five commercial-grade images. A promotional video takes just three minutes.

Lin Muyun, owner of Zhuoheng Jewelry, has witnessed firsthand the transformative power of this technology. "Our company launches an average of 100 new products every day, which means we need to simultaneously generate 500 images and 200 videos for domestic and international platforms," Lin said. "With the AI platform, efficiency has surged by 90 percent, and our visual production costs have plummeted by 96 percent. The most direct impact is the noticeable increase in customer stickiness. Last year, our e-commerce client base grew by 12 percent, and our cross-border sales now account for 50 percent of our total business."

Lin emphasized that the true value lies beyond mere cost-cutting. "AI has eliminated massive amounts of hidden opportunity costs. In the past, we had a bloated workforce where highly skilled designers were trapped in repetitive 'cog-in-the-machine' tasks, sometimes spending three months revising a single image based on vague client feedback," Lin said. "Now, AI instantly visualizes ideas. It frees our core talent to focus on 'soul' tasks — actual product research, development and strategic operations."

The platform is also democratizing technology for smaller players. China Mobile has introduced a "token operation model" that provides inclusive computing power, lowering the barrier to entry for small and medium-sized enterprises.

For instance, Li Chong, owner of Qintong Jewelry, runs a shop with her college-aged daughter. By using the AI platform to generate personalized scene images and build a unique personal IP around her daughter's image, the mother-daughter duo saves between 500,000 yuan ($73,620) and 600,000 yuan in photography fees annually, allowing them to redirect their energy entirely toward product development and store operations.

As AI-generated content proliferates, concerns regarding copyright and platform compliance naturally arise. China Mobile has proactively integrated safeguards to protect merchants.

Hong Hui, project manager at China Mobile Jinhua Branch, has addressed these operational risks. "Before any commercial image is generated, the uploaded photos undergo strict automated compliance and copyright checks within our system, aligning with national data standards," Hong said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:01 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:01 PM

CHINA

Fish harvest



Fish leap out of the water as fishermen haul in a giant net during summer fishing at Qiandao Lake in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, on Monday. The catch resulted in approximately 25 metric tons of fresh fish, showcasing a vibrant harvest scene.
YANG BO / FOR CHINA DAILY

New evidence details Japanese army's biochemical warfare

Document outlines records, coordinated crimes carried out by military units

By ZHOU HUIYING in Harbin
zhouhuiying@chinadaily.com.cn

The Exhibition Hall of Evidences of Crime Committed by Unit 731 of the Japanese Imperial Army in Harbin, Heilongjiang province, has released newly examined evidence documenting atrocities committed during the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45).

The evidence consists of registration files for the Imperial Japanese Army's Kwantung Army Chemical Department.

Established in 1939 in Qiqihar, Heilongjiang province, the department, also known as Unit 516, was primarily responsible for the Japanese army's research and use of chemical weapons in China.

Dedicated to the development of nerve, blister, choking and irritant agents, it was one of Japan's core chemical warfare units.

The newly released document is a standardized record completed by former members of Unit 516 upon their return to Japan after the war, making it an important official military record.



The newly released evidence.
HE SHAN / XINHUA

The document was transferred to the National Archives of Japan in 2000 and was gradually declassified.

During an evidence collection trip to Japan in 2023, researchers from the museum obtained the document after extensive searches, communication and negotiations. Following systematic collation and research, its contents have now been made public.

The document contains 148 pages covering information on 108 individuals, including military-affiliated appointed civil officials, military-affiliated employees, army technical warrant officers, military-affiliated servants, army medical lieutenants, veterinary corporals, artillerymen and chemical technicians.

"It is a standardized document used by the Japanese government to record the demobilization of Japanese soldiers after the war," said Jin Shicheng, director of the museum's education and publicity department.

"It includes information such as names, places of origin, family information, military branches, landing times and locations, ranks, prewar units, times and places of disarmament, and postwar experiences."

"The initial establishment of Unit 516 involved 250 personnel," Jin said. "Following the discovery and publication of a personnel roster of Unit 516 in 2022, it was confirmed that the unit had 414 members."

"The newly released document records 108 individuals. After systematic sorting and verification, 17 duplicate records were identified, bringing the known number of personnel in Unit 516 to 505," he said.

"Due to frequent transfers, secondments and temporary assignments during the war, the figure does not represent the total number of individuals who served in Unit 516," Jin added. "Further historical materials are needed to complete the record."

Previous research, based on confessions by convicted Japanese war criminals, confirmed that Unit 516 collaborated with Unit 731 and Unit 100 to carry out poison gas experiments.

"In the newly released document, information on former member Hiroshi Kusunoki clearly shows his participation in veterinary training at the education department of Unit 100 while serving with Unit 516, further demonstrating the close cooperation between Unit 516 and Unit 100," Jin said.

"Combined with previous research, the records confirm that Units 731, 516 and 100 formed a biochemical warfare system covering humans, animals and the environment through personnel exchanges and technology sharing."

Jin said the document provides crucial evidence for a more comprehensive understanding of the scale, organizational structure, coordinated crimes, personnel transfers and postwar trajectories of Unit 516.

"It further confirms that Japan's wartime chemical warfare crimes were large-scale, organized crimes carried out through a top-down system," he said.

Vlogger wins 500,000 yuan for viral Xizang video

By DAQIONG in Lhasa
and **GUO YANQI**

A viral video documenting a 2,229-kilometer taxi journey from Chongqing to Lhasa, Xizang autonomous region, has earned Chinese vlogger Li Yaode a 500,000 yuan ($73,574) reward from regional authorities, most of which he said he will donate, prompting discussion over tourism promotion, public incentives and the influence of online creators.

The reward came less than a month after Xizang's cultural and tourism authorities launched a program offering tiered awards for original tourism videos promoting the region. The top prize of 500,000 yuan is available for videos that receive more than 5 million likes and become online sensations.

Authorities in Xizang announced on Sunday that Li's 22-minute video, posted the previous day, had met the criteria for the top award. They said the video generated significant organic online engagement and that the prize would be paid promptly.

In the video, Li is seen leaving Chongqing on June 26 in an electric taxi and arriving at the Potala Palace in Lhasa on Thursday. During the weeklong journey, he documented scenery, local cuisine and encounters along National Highway G318, while two taxi drivers from Chongqing took turns behind the wheel.

Upon arrival in Lhasa, Li said the journey reminded him to remain brave and free.

"Do not care too much about how others see you," he said. "Life is meant to be experienced."

By Monday afternoon, the video had garnered more than 21 million likes, over 1.7 million comments and 9.9 million shares on Douyin, the Chinese version of TikTok.

In a statement on Sunday, Xizang's cultural and tourism authorities thanked Li for promoting the region, saying the reward recognizes high-quality cultural and tourism content while demonstrating the authority's commitment to providing incentives for eligible works.

The department also invited more content creators to document Xizang's natural landscapes, intangible cultural heritage and everyday life.

In a follow-up video posted after the award was announced on Sunday, Li said he would give each of the two taxi drivers 10,000 yuan and donate the remaining 480,000 yuan.

The video's popularity sparked widespread online discussion.

Many netizens said it has inspired them to travel and presented a vivid and personal portrait of Xizang. Others praised the authorities for honoring their public commitment to reward outstanding content creators.

Li's donation plan also prompted suggestions from the public. Some urged him to donate directly to schools, families or individuals in need rather than making a one-time donation to an organization. Others suggested he work with Xizang authorities to support local communities so that the reward would, in turn, benefit the region.

Media commentaries praised the incentive program while also urging caution against blind imitation.

Li Qinyu, chief commentator at The Paper, said Xizang's fulfillment of the reward promise could encourage more creators to participate in tourism promotion, shifting the model from official publicity toward broader public participation.

However, Beijing News noted that Li's taxi journey to Xizang was expensive and difficult to replicate, warning of risks including altitude sickness, slippery mountain roads and rapidly changing weather. The newspaper also suggested that reward programs could consider additional indicators beyond the number of likes, such as increases in tourism-related searches, inquiries and bookings.

Contact the writers at guoyanqi@chinadaily.com.cn

Nanjing former official gets death sentence for bribery, other offenses

By CAO YIN
caoyin@chinadaily.com.cn

Yang Youlin, former executive deputy director of the administrative committee of the Nanjing economic and technological development zone in East China's Jiangsu province, was sentenced to death on Monday by the Changzhou Intermediate People's Court after being convicted of multiple crimes, including accepting more than 2.2 billion yuan ($324 million) in bribes.

The court sentenced Yang to death for accepting bribes, deprived him of his political rights for life and ordered the confiscation of all his personal assets.

He was also sentenced to 11 years and six months in prison and fined 1 million yuan for embezzlement, 11 years in prison and a 1 million yuan fine for offering bribes, five years for misappropriation of public funds, four years for abuse of power, and six months in prison plus a 100,000 yuan fine for money laundering.

Combining all the sentences, the court imposed the death penalty. His illegal gains and related proceeds were ordered to be confiscated and turned over to the State treasury, according to the ruling.

The court said that from 1993 to 2023, Yang exploited a series of positions in Nanjing, including as an adviser to the Nanjing Niushou Mountain Cultural Tourism Zone and executive deputy director of the administrative committee of the Nanjing development zone, to seek benefits for others in project contracting, business operations, land transfers and capital turnover in exchange for bribes totaling more than 2.2 billion yuan.

From 2014 to 2016, while serving as executive deputy director of the administrative committee of the Nanjing development zone, Yang colluded with others to embezzle 12 million yuan in public funds, the court said. Between 2005 and 2023, he offered more than 25 million yuan in bribes to officials to obtain improper advantages.

From 2001 to 2002, while serving as director of the construction bureau in Jiangning district, Yang twice misappropriated a total of 15 million yuan from State-owned enterprise funds under the bureau for use in others' business operations.

From 2003 to 2009, while serving as director of the district's construction bureau and deputy head of the administrative committee of the district's development zone, Yang abused his power by unlawfully arranging land expropriation, demolition and construction projects, causing serious adverse social effects. He also illegally rebated land transfer fees, resulting in State financial losses of 23 million yuan.

In addition, Yang concealed and disguised 1 million yuan in criminal proceeds from bribery by lending the money to a company under his control, the court said.

The court said Yang's crimes warranted the death penalty because the amount of bribes he accepted was "extremely large", the circumstances were "extremely serious", and the losses caused to the country and the people were "extremely huge".

Although Yang reported criminal activities committed by others, which was verified as meritorious service, the Changzhou Intermediate People's Court said the nature, circumstances and social harm of his bribery offenses meant such service did not justify a more lenient sentence.

The case was publicly heard on March 18 and April 28. Prosecutors and Yang's defense lawyers presented evidence and arguments during the hearings, which were attended by more than 30 people.

Public records show that the 69-year-old Nanjing native began his career at a local engine plant in October 1976.

He became head of the housing and urban-rural development bureau in Jiangning district in 2000, deputy head of the district's development zone administrative committee in 2002, executive deputy director of the Nanjing development zone administrative committee in 2012, and chairman of the Nanjing Niushou Mountain Cultural Tourism Company in June 2016.

Under Chinese law, a death sentence handed down by a lower court must be reviewed and approved by the Supreme People's Court before it can be carried out.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn

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

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108
529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1865

Gansu visit sparks intl praise for poverty alleviation

By MA JINGNA and **HU YUMENG**
in Lanzhou

China's poverty alleviation experience garnered praise from political party representatives and think tank experts from 27 countries during a recent tour of Gansu province, where they witnessed the transformation of one of the country's once-poorest regions into a model of poverty alleviation and rural vitalization.

The visit, organized by the International Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, included a stop in Bulenggou village in Dongxiang county, Linxia Hui autonomous prefecture, where delegates observed firsthand how targeted poverty alleviation and industrial development have transformed the local community.

Speaking at the Party School of the CPC Gansu Provincial Committee in Lanzhou, Nie Dianzhong, vice-president of the school, said the nation's poverty alleviation efforts combine practical technologies, institutional innovation and a development philosophy focused on preventing households from slipping back into poverty while fostering people's motivation for self-development.

As an example, Nie highlighted Gansu's digital monitoring platform, which integrates data from several government departments to identify households at risk of returning to poverty and provide targeted assistance within a 48-hour period.

"I believe much of China's poverty alleviation experience offers valuable lessons for developing countries, particularly those across the Global South," Nie said, adding that exchanges such as the visit help deepen mutual understanding and promote mutual learning.

The delegates echoed that assessment.

Aklesso Atcholi, executive secretary of the Union for the Republic of Togo, who led the delegation, said China's success in eradicating absolute poverty has contributed "Chinese wisdom and Chinese solutions" to global poverty reduction efforts. He said Togo hopes to strengthen exchanges with China and learn from its experience in poverty alleviation and grassroots governance.

Liam Isaac Ellis, a central committee member of the Communist Party of Australia, described China's approach as "an excellent model" as it empowers people to overcome poverty themselves rather than rely solely on financial assistance.

"This is a much more sustainable approach," he said.

Ellis added that what impressed him most was China's determination to pursue poverty alleviation without settling for "compromises and half measures".

For Wazim Dill Mohammed, an alderman of the Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo Regional Corporation in Trinidad and Tobago, the most striking impression was Gansu's journey of transformation.

"Having been told this was one of the poorest regions here, and having seen photographs of dirt roads and mud roads, seeing what it has become today, I am shocked and amazed," he said.

Hu Changsheng, secretary of the CPC Gansu Provincial Committee, said Gansu was once one of China's principal battlefields in the fight against poverty. Through targeted measures, stronger support mechanisms and coordinated efforts at all levels, the province eliminated absolute poverty along with the rest of the country and is now working to consolidate those gains through rural vitalization and high-quality development.

Wu Yuexuan contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at huyumeng@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:01 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:01 PM

CHINA





Left: Social workers answer queries from job seekers at a job fair in Yunmeng, Hubei province, in March. CHEN BAOZHONG / FOR CHINA DAILY
Right: Students look for suitable jobs at a career fair in Jinan University in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, in April. CHEN JIMIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Job initiatives address labor market imbalances

Measures taken to ensure opportunities for record number of graduates

By ZOU SHUO in Beijing
and **LIU KUN** in Wuhan

China has dramatically expanded its targeted employment programs and industrial alignment strategies as a record 12.7 million college graduates enter the workforce this year. Following the State Council's recent approval of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) for employment, local governments are expanding funding for initiatives ranging from rural vitalization roles to high-tech manufacturing subsidies to combat structural mismatches in the labor market.

The national push follows strong economic markers from last year, when China added 12.67 million new urban jobs and maintained a surveyed urban unemployment rate of 5.2 percent. However, with the 2026 graduate influx, provincial authorities are pivoting toward even more localized talent placement.

In Henan province, the government has doubled its flagship rural vitalization assistant program, scaling recruitment from 5,000 posts last year to 10,000 this year. The two-year program offers fresh graduates a monthly salary of 3,500 yuan ($515), social insurance and a transitional window to prepare for civil service exams while assisting in village governance and rural e-commerce.

"Going back to a village is not necessarily a bad thing for young people," said Zhao Keqing, a 2025 graduate of Shangqiu Normal University working in rural Henan. "There is a lot we can do in the vast countryside."

Since last August, she has helped organize cultural activities for seniors and facilitated the installation of table tennis tables and chessboards for local children.

"Now I see them playing in our courtyard every day. It really gives me a sense of recognition and fulfillment. For a fresh graduate, that feeling of being valued is very important," she said.

Zhao views the two-year role as a valuable transitional period for graduates facing job market pressures.

"I can take civil service or public institution exams during my term. This position gives me a chance to try things out, to see what I'm really suited for," she said. "No matter what I do in the future, the experience of working at the village level is something no other job can give me."

For postings like Zhao's, the main responsibilities include consolidating poverty alleviation achievements, promoting rural industries and assisting in village governance. Many have used their professional expertise to lead villagers in e-commerce livestreaming, planting Chinese medicinal herbs and cultivating ornamental flowers.

In 2025, 461,400 job positions were created in Henan through 53 targeted measures. The province's total skilled workforce now exceeds 20 million, according to the provincial government.

Song Chenyang, a 2025 master's graduate from Henan Polytechnic University, took a different path through the university's student enterprise service program.

She was hired by Wafer Works (Zhengzhou) Corp, a semiconductor company in the Zhengzhou Airport Economy Zone, under a special government program for the classes of 2023, 2024 and 2025 who had yet to find stable jobs. The company designed a three-month systematic training plan and a mentorship mechanism to ease her transition from campus to industry.

Zhang Chunyang, of the company's recruitment department, said that as a technology-intensive enterprise in rapid expansion, the company used to favor experienced engineers. Last year, however, it began recruiting recent graduates for the first time.

The company pays competitive wages and provides full social insurance coverage, while the provincial government provides a monthly subsidy of 2,200 yuan to the company per hire. The program recruited some 10,000 university graduates across Henan in 2025.



Workers produce automotive electronics at a factory in Guangshan, Henan province, in May. The county offers a series of policies to encourage farmers and migrants to secure jobs near their homes. XIE WANBAI / FOR CHINA DAILY



Doctor and entrepreneur Xie Qiang (standing) chats with textile workers in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, in January. Xie operates a special clinic where uremia patients can undergo dialysis downstairs and earn extra income upstairs making garments. CHEN CHUHONG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Emerging industries

Further south in Hubei province, where 306,500 new urban jobs were created in the first quarter of 2026 alone, employment strategies are targeting logistics and cutting-edge industries.

Zhang Qian, a 32-year-old former migrant worker, started as a sorter at Ezhou Huahu International Airport — Asia's first dedicated cargo hub — and within two years became a terminal operations supervisor, earning more than 10,000 yuan a month.

Xu Haiyan, who once worked in aviation logistics in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, returned home to become a human resources supervisor at the same airport. The airport has directly employed nearly 2,000 local residents.

At an artificial intelligence research institute in Ezhou, Wang Shiyun, 25, a master's graduate in computer science, decided to work in the city thanks to the stable accommodation support — a clean, comfortable three-bedroom apartment in a residential complex, shared with just one other person.

She is one of nearly 30 young researchers at the institute, which was established to build a full AI industry chain.

"I don't need to rush to work and can live and work in a calm and easy environment," she said.

Skills training is a key pillar of the strategy. In Hubei's Shiyan, a traditional auto hub, Quan Rongxuan, an uncertified welder, joined a government-funded training program, earned certification, and now earns up to 10,000 yuan a month.

For older workers, caregiver training has opened new paths. Zhu Fengjiao, 56, returned from Guangzhou, Guangdong province, to start a training school in Ezhou. Her "Ezhou caregiver" brand has produced graduates working as far away as Beijing.

Upskilling

In Guangdong, the nation's manufacturing epicenter, the strategy has focused heavily on upskilling. The province created nearly 1.5 million new urban jobs in 2025, largely supported by its industry-education-evaluation skills ecosystem. Rather than just training students, the program trains the educators.

Recently, nearly 100 teachers from dozens of technical schools underwent intensive retraining at robotics hubs like Kuka Autonomous Mobile Robotics in Foshan to align classroom curricula directly with modern factory floor demands.

Lin Lishan, a teacher from Guangdong Technician Institute, said through the program, she has further clarified the path for intelligent manufacturing professional development, updated her teaching concepts, and improved her course development and practical teaching abilities.

Huang Qiongying from Guangzhou Electronic Commerce Technical School described herself as a translator between industry and education. "As front-line teachers, we are not just knowledge transmitters but translators between industry and education. This training was not just an update of knowledge but a journey of teaching transformation," she said.

Guangdong has also launched the "million talent heading for Guangdong" initiative, which has attracted more than 1.1 million college graduates to the province for work and entrepreneurship.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period, Guangdong provided over 10 million subsidized vocational training sessions, according to the provincial government.

Guangdong creates around 300,000 policy-supported jobs annually and holds more than 2,000 online and offline recruitment events. Graduates facing difficulties receive one-on-one assistance, the government said.

The province also works to stabilize employment for migrant workers. Through interprovincial labor cooperation, Guangdong has helped secure jobs for more than 24 million out-of-province migrant workers, including over 4.6 million people who have been lifted out of poverty, it added.

Contact the writers at zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

'Sprint' aims to secure jobs for new workforce entrants

By ZOU SHUO

The Ministry of Education has launched a "100-day sprint" employment initiative for the 2026 graduating class, running from June to August, to help college graduates secure jobs during the critical period before and after leaving campus, according to a notice issued by the ministry recently.

The notice said efforts should be made to create a favorable environment for graduate employment and to promote higher-quality and fuller employment for new graduates.

A record 12.7 million college graduates are expected this year, according to figures previously released by the ministry.

Education authorities and universities have been urged to accelerate the implementation of employment-support policies, using quizzes and short videos to raise awareness of social security subsidies, tax incentives and startup loans, the ministry said.

In provincial regions, universities, schools and departments where employment progress lags, institutions should establish one-on-one contact with local human resources officials. They should also conduct targeted visits to companies and organize small-scale, specialized campus job fairs.

Recruitment for policy-backed positions, including civil service posts, public institutions and State-owned enterprises, will be accelerated, with all hiring scheduled to be completed by the end of August.

Targeted assistance will be provided to disadvantaged graduates through one-on-one support and employment capacity-building initiatives. Each disadvantaged graduate will be offered at least three stable job opportunities.

Strict regulations governing employment data reporting will be enforced, with violations subject to serious penalties. Continuous tracking and support will also be provided after graduates leave campus to ensure uninterrupted employment services.

The ministry has called on local education departments and universities to implement the "top-leader responsibility system" for employment and strengthen accountability.

During the campaign, more than 4,000 campus job fairs are expected to be held nationwide, providing over 5 million job vacancies. The National College Student Employment Service platform will host more than 10 themed online job fairs, offering more than 1.5 million positions, the ministry added.

Efforts to help vulnerable college graduates secure employment have intensified, with universities and provincial authorities rolling out targeted support mechanisms.

At Huazhong University of Science and Technology in Wuhan, Hubei province, a "university-college-class" three-tier mechanism has been established to create individual files and tailored plans for each struggling student, according to Liu Bo, the university's Party secretary.

The university conducts nearly 300 organized corporate visits annually, holds around 2,000 job fairs, and has developed over 300 research assistant positions through major national sci-tech innovation platforms, he said.

More than 3 million yuan ($443,000) in job-seeking subsidies is distributed each year. As a result, in recent years, all vulnerable graduates who wish to work have secured jobs — a 100 percent placement rate. Nearly 80 percent of them have entered strategic emerging industries, and more than 90 percent have taken jobs in key national development regions, he said.

In Yunnan province, the employment of college graduates, especially those facing difficulties, has been made a top priority. The goal is to ensure that no student is left behind on the path to employment, said Yang Hongqiong, a senior provincial education department official.

A pairing mechanism involving 28,000 teachers has been established to assist 71,000 struggling graduates, with more than 201,000 support sessions provided. The province has allocated an annual special fund of 8.25 million yuan, which has so far trained 63,300 disadvantaged graduates, she said.

Special employment assistance campaigns are also carried out for graduates with disabilities, female college graduates, retired military personnel graduates, and those majoring in medicine, she added.



Graduates take part in a career fair at Zhengzhou University in Zhengzhou, Henan province, in March, where some 300 enterprises offered about 10,000 positions. ZUO DONGCHEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:01 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:01 PM

CULTURAL 文明中国 HERITAGE

Bridging past and future

Old structures tell lasting stories as tradition meets innovation, ensuring remarkable landmarks remain part of everyday life, **Yang Xiaoyu** reports.

On an early summer afternoon in Taishun county, a mountainous region of Wenzhou city in Zhejiang province, tourists stroll across Beijian Bridge, a quaint wooden arch bridge spanning a river teeming with red carp. Partly veiled by ancient trees, its weathered red structure stretches 51 meters and is topped by a covered corridor with tiled roofs, flying eaves and carved dragons.

First built in 1674 and rebuilt and repaired several times over the centuries, Beijian Bridge is one of Taishun's 32 historical covered bridges, known in Chinese as *langqiao*. The term was coined in the 1940s by architect and historian Liu Dunzhen, who encountered such bridges "traversing rivers like rainbows with covered houses on top" during his travels in China's southwestern provinces.

The covered corridor shields the timber structure from the elements while providing shelter for travelers.

"I grew up by the Beijian Bridge," says Chen Songnian, deputy director of the Taishun Museum, pointing toward his ancestral house nearby. "Every day I crossed it on my way to school and often came here to hang out with friends."

Chen was speaking during a media trip organized by the National Cultural Heritage Administration to highlight achievements of the Three-Year Action Plan for the Protection of Covered Bridges (2023-25). The tour took journalists to Taishun in Zhejiang, and the counties of Shouning and Pingnan, both in Ningde city, Fujian province, an area of mountains and deep ravines.

"Covered bridges were the heart of local communities," Chen says. "They not only connected villages but also served as shelters, marketplaces, information hubs, and places of worship. Today, they remain deeply woven into the cultural identity of the Taishun people."

Jointly launched by the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and the National Cultural Heritage Administration, the action plan recognized covered bridges as an independent category of cultural relics for the first time, strengthening their protection, research and public use.

Over the past three years, a nationwide survey documented 2,193 covered bridges as cultural relics, an increase of more than 61 percent, while conservation efforts have improved significantly nationwide.



Chen Songnian, deputy director of the Taishun Museum in Wenzhou, Zhejiang province, has had a bond with the historic Beijian Bridge since childhood.

Engineering masterpiece

The mountainous borderlands of Fujian and Zhejiang are home to more than 800 covered bridges, one of the world's largest concentrations. More than 100 historic examples, including Beijian Bridge, embody "the traditional design and practices of Chinese wooden arch bridge building".

The craft was inscribed on UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding in 2009 after urbanization, timber shortages and a dwindling number of master builders threatened its survival. Renewed efforts by governments and local communities led to its transfer to UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2024.

Experts trace the origins of Chinese wooden arch bridges to the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127), as depicted in the famous 12th-century scroll *Along the River During the Qingming Festival*.

According to Su Xudong, a veteran scholar from Pingnan who helped prepare the UNESCO nomination, the defining feature of the craft is the beam-weaving technique. Using *sunmao* (mortise-and-tenon) joints, craftsmen interlock timber beams into a sturdy arch resembling an upside-down basket.

"The beam-woven arch achieves the largest span of any all-timber structure in the world to date," Su says. "Its wide span reduces the number of piers, allowing floodwaters and boats to pass more easily while also lowering construction costs."

In 2012, the Fujian-Zhejiang Wooden Arch Covered Bridges, nominated by seven counties across the two provinces, were added to China's tentative list seeking World Cultural Heritage status. They were included again in the updated 2025 list. This sustained presence signals that the bridges may be moving closer to meeting World Heritage criteria, experts note.

Rising from the ashes

Yet, these treasured bridges remain vulnerable to disasters, particularly floods and fires.

In September 2016, Typhoon Meranti triggered flash floods that swept away three nationally protected Taishun bridges — Xuezhai, Wenxing and Wenzhong — in just two hours.

"It was a devastating day for the people of Taishun. Many broke down in tears," recalls Zeng Jiakuai, a national-level inheritor of the traditional design and practices for building Chinese wooden arch bridges.

"But even before the floodwaters receded, local residents spontaneously joined the rescue effort, salvaging more than 90 percent of the wooden components and drying them in their own courtyards, making the restoration possible," he says.

Zeng led the restoration of Wenxing Bridge. Working alongside cultural relics departments and experts, his team followed the principle of "using original components, original materials and traditional craftsmanship whenever possible". With government and community support, all three bridges were rebuilt the following year, preserving their historic character and structural integrity.

In 2021, the restoration of Taishun's wooden arch bridges became the only Chinese case included in the ICOMOS-ICCROM publication, Analysis of Case Studies in Recovery and Reconstruction.

A year later, tragedy struck again. In August 2022, Wan'an Bridge in Pingnan — China's longest surviving wooden arch-covered bridge at 98.2 meters with six arches — was destroyed by fire. Originally built in the 11th century, it had survived repeated restorations following earlier fires and floods.

The disaster prompted urgent state action, leading to the launch of the Three-Year Action Plan.

Huang Minhui, a municipal-level inheritor of traditional wooden arch bridge-building techniques in Ningde, led the Wan'an restoration as his family has a long-standing history of rebuilding and repairing the bridge.

Like the Taishun project, the team adhered to the principles of minimal intervention and "restoring the old as old". Over 200 surviving wooden components were salvaged, polished, treated with preservatives, and reused. When the bridge reopened in August 2024, visitors could see fire-scarred original pieces integrated with new ones — a deliberate reminder of the bridge's history.

Modern armor

The disasters in Taishun galvanized public support for stronger protection and accelerated legislative efforts.

In 2017, local community leaders proposed specific laws. Four years later, the nation's first local regulation, the Wenzhou Taishun Covered Bridge Protection Regulations, was enacted. Detailed implementation rules followed in December 2023, adopting a "one bridge, one policy" approach for the county's 32 historic covered bridges.

Hu Rong'en, a professor at Shanghai University of Political Science and Law, commends the legislation: "Protecting covered bridges through legislation helps regulate activities that may affect them, including rural construction projects, while also supporting their bid for World Heritage status."

Taishun's efforts have inspired neighboring regions. Ningde promulgated regulations in January 2024; Nanping (in Fujian)'s will take effect on Oct 1; and Lishui, in Zhejiang, is advancing its own.

Beyond legislation, technology has become another vital layer of protection.

Many of the bridges stand deep in the mountains, accessible only by winding roads, making routine inspections especially challenging during bad weather.

At the Taishun Museum, housed in a building shaped like a covered bridge, Chen, the deputy director, demonstrates the Taishun Cultural Heritage (Covered Bridges) Supervision and Protection Platform.

"We have equipped our covered bridges with AI-powered thermal imaging cameras. If abnormal temperatures or open flames are detected, the system immediately triggers an alarm to warn people on the bridge to evacuate, while simultaneously alerting the monitoring center," Chen says.

"In addition to smart cameras, Taishun's ancient covered bridges are fitted with temperature-sensing cables and devices that monitor traffic and water flow," he adds. "The platform issues an alert whenever it detects unusual activity."

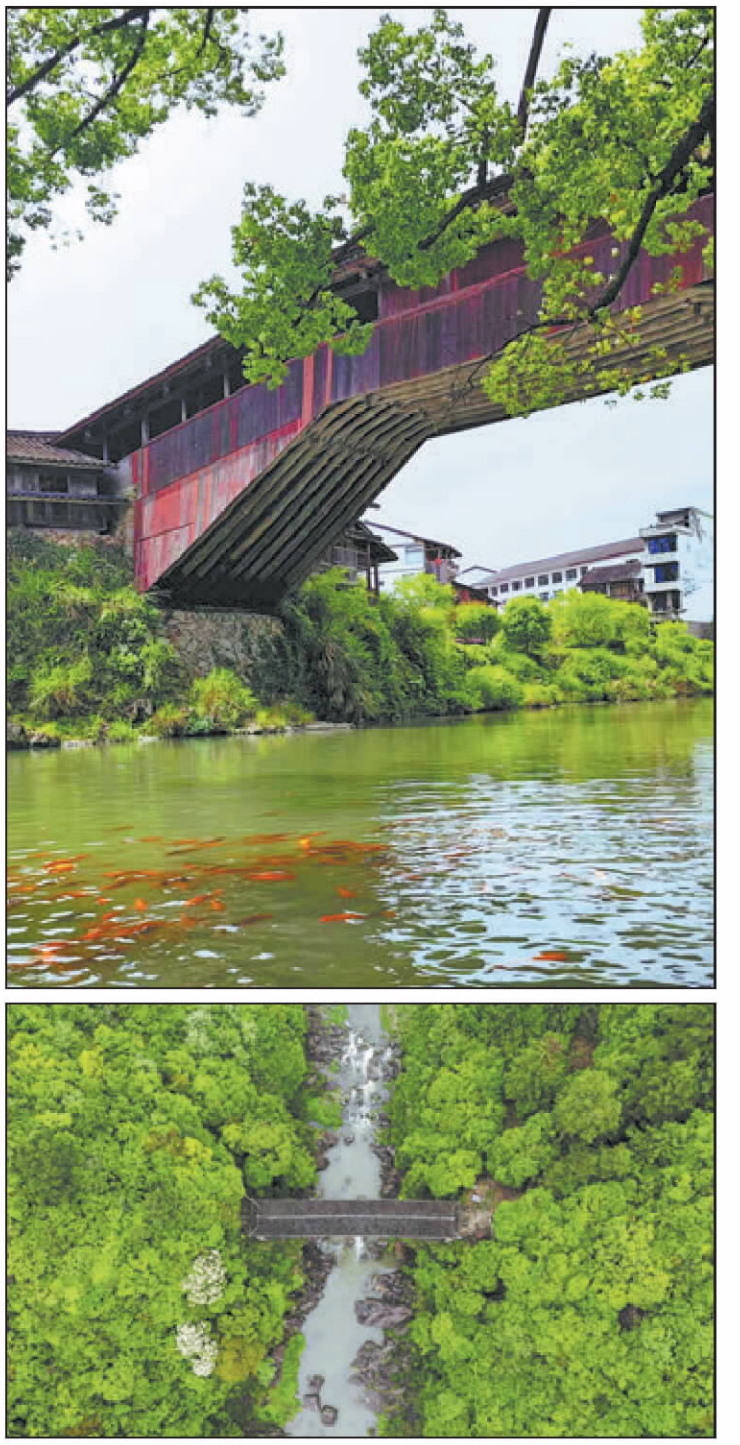
The platform, launched in 2022, integrates data from the firefighting, water conservancy, meteorology, and law enforcement departments, and links over 700 intelligent monitoring terminals countywide.

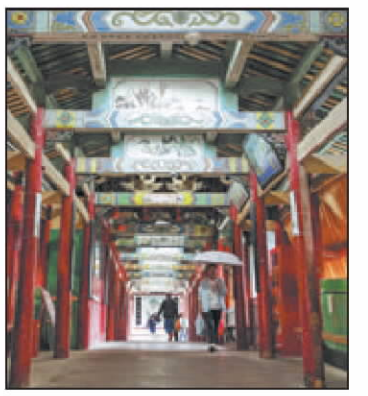
"These technologies have made the work of grassroots heritage guardians much easier," Chen says.

In Ningde, Fujian, the province's first video monitoring and early warning platform for wooden arch bridges now provides round-the-clock intelligent surveillance.

"Many covered bridges have been equipped with firefighting IoT devices including smoke alarms, thermal imaging cameras, and automatic sprinklers," Ou Donghai, director of the Ningde Cultural Heritage Protection Center, told reporters at the Baixiang Bridge in Pingnan, which was destroyed by fire three times throughout its history.

Ou says Ningde is also working with universities on high-precision 3D laser scanning and BIM (building information modeling). "These tools support daily monitoring and can simulate disasters such as fires and floods, helping improve emergency planning and response," he says.





From top: The Beijian Bridge in Taishun county, Zhejiang province, offers summer serenity. A bird's-eye view of the Baixiang Bridge in Pingnan county, Fujian province. The vivid decorations in the covered house of the Xiangong Bridge in Shouning county, Fujian province. PHOTOS BY YANG XIAOYU / CHINA DAILY AND WEI PEIQUAN FOR CHINA DAILY

Contact the writer at yangxiaoyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

Chiseling history into stone creates enduring legacies

By **WANG RU**
wangru1@chinadaily.com.cn

Inscribed stone tablets, a marvelous combination of calligraphy and carving, stand as silent poetry, etching history into eternity. For millennia, Chinese literati have turned to stone to immortalize their words, believing that only through the chisel could the emotion and spirit in their calligraphy outlast time itself.

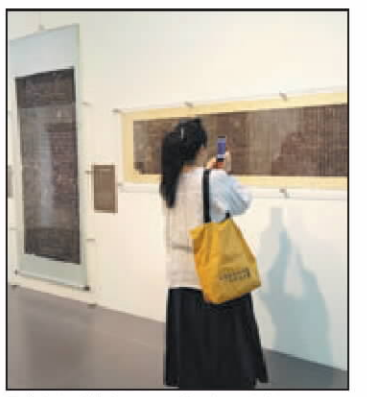
An ongoing exhibition, *The Inheritance and Glory of Craftsmanship of Suzhou Stone Inscription*, at the Beijing Stone Carving Art Museum, brings this ancient tradition into focus. Featuring the forgotten carvers and the enduring legacy of inscription mastery in present-day Suzhou, Jiangsu province, the exhibition runs until Aug 9.

According to Li Qing, the museum's director, in ancient China, craftspeople were often required to carve their names on the artifacts they made so that each piece could be traced and remain enduring enough to be passed down through generations. The system, which began in the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BC), lasted for more than two millennia.

Following this system, the exhibition guides visitors on a journey that traces the stele-carving techniques of the Song Dynasty (960-1279) in Suzhou through 45 rubbings of precious stone tablets from the Suzhou Museum of Inscribed Stone Tablets, thereby paying tribute to lesser-known carvers.

"In the Song Dynasty, when Suzhou flourished, its tablet carving also became prosperous," says Wang Yihan, curator of the display. "Carvers emerged as recorders of their times and immortalized the city's memories, secrets of star maps, geographical outlines, and emperors' lineage on stones, creating four famous tablets that still stand as national treasures at the Suzhou Confucian Temple today."

The four tablets' rubbings are highlights of the exhibition. They show the city layout of Pingjiang prefecture (now Suzhou), a star map based on celestial observations, the geographical reach of the Northern Song (960-1127) era, and the emperors' lineage from Huangdi, known as the Yellow Emperor, the first ancient emperor of Huaxia, ranked first among the "Five Emperors" and revered as the "Primordial Ancestor of Chinese Civilization", to Emperor Lizong of the Southern Song (1127-1279) period.



Tablet rubbings on display at the Beijing Stone Carving Art Museum show how history is etched into eternity. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Among them, two rubbings of Suzhou's layout are showcased, demonstrating one of the earliest Chinese efforts to restore cultural relics. More than 700 years after the stele was created, Suzhou scholar Ye Dehui and several others noticed it in 1917, though by then it was severely weathered. However, they managed to restore it. The two rubbings show the tablet before and after its restoration, says Wang.

In the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), literati gathered in Suzhou, which was then the cultural and economic center of the Jiangnan region (the area south of the lower reaches of the Yangtze River). Their close cooperation with the carvers became a legend at the time, helping forge the careers of some famous carving families.

Another rubbing on display shows a stele erected to pay tribute to Northern Song politician and writer Fan Zhongyan (989-1052). The image of Fan on the tablet appears grand in posture, gentle yet firm, alongside words commending his contributions.

According to Wang, Suzhou has many steles commemorating Fan because of his service as the top administrative official there. He made many contributions, the most important of which was the development of education.

"Fan established Suzhou Prefectural School, one of the largest and earliest schools in that era, which was also the Suzhou Confucian Temple. The pattern of functioning as both a school and a temple to worship Confucius influenced many other areas," says Wang.

"The school's establishment also laid a solid foundation for Suzhou to become a place that values the cultivation of talented people. In its later history, it produced more than 3,000 people who successfully passed the imperial exams and 51 top candidates," she adds.

The stele was carved by Wu Yingqi, a member of the Wu family, which was known in the Jiangnan area for its members' proficiency in tablet carving since the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368).

"The Wu family worked as carvers for generations. With their stable carving techniques and profound understanding of calligraphy, they were deeply involved in the artistic creations of literati in the Jiangnan area," says Wang.

"Every chisel mark reveals the craftsman's heart; every stone tablet records the passage of time. This is the strength and spirit that runs through the exhibition," she adds.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:01 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:01 PM

LIFE



The therapeutic power of lotus flowers

Struck by rheumatoid arthritis, renowned late ink artist is celebrated in a new exhibition in which her early-to-late works trace the evolution of her career, **Lin Qi** reports.

In the early 1980s, ink artist Zhou Sicong (1939-96) faced an illness that could have jeopardized her successful career. She was struck by symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis (RA), including joint deformities in her hands. She was hospitalized from time to time, which is why she could no longer devote herself fully to painting, nor could she travel into nature as she once loved to do.

Whenever she felt better after her medical treatments, Zhou would explore motifs that did not require as much control from her less dexterous fingers. That was how she discovered the lotus flower, a recurring subject in her later works, which gave her great comfort.

She said painting lotus flowers brought great solace to her ill body and soothed her heart. "The lotus exudes a sense of serenity," she said. "It may lack the regal elegance that one finds in blooming peonies, or the playful mood of a field of flowers. Yet, one or two lotus flowers, even their withered stems and fallen leaves, would create a deep resonance in my mind."

As summer descends on Beijing, where Zhou grew up, worked, and was nourished by its prosperous lotus pools, her family, friends and old colleagues at the Beijing Fine Art Academy have collaborated to present *The Power of Truth: Zhou Sicong's Path of Artistic Transformation*, an ongoing exhibition at the academy's art museum through July 19.

The exhibition is one of the 2025 projects selected for the National Art Museum Youth-curator Support Program, organized by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The program serves as a platform for young museum curators to showcase their in-depth research via curated exhibitions. It was created under the umbrella of the Beijing Fine Art Academy's 20th century Chinese art masters series, which was launched to share research on renowned resident artists, including Qi Baishi (1864-1957) and Yu Fei'an (1889-1959).

The exhibition, in memory of the 30th anniversary of Zhou's passing, brings together her works from public and private collections, including pieces from the Beijing Fine Art Academy, where she began working in 1963 after graduating from the Central Academy of Fine Arts.

The exhibition shows the works she created while studying at the CAFA, as well as figure paintings from the early stages of her career.

"Zhou received rigorous academic training at the CAFA under the guidance of noted artists Jiang Zhaohe (1904-86) and Li Keran (1907-89)," says Wu Hongliang, director of the Beijing Fine Art Academy. "Jiang, a figure painter, and Li, known for his innovations in landscape paintings, taught her the rhythmic vitality of ink art."

A monumental work from this period is the series of paintings titled *Miners*, which, together with several sketches, is on show. It is the result of a joint project by Zhou and her husband, Lu Chen, also an ink artist and professor of Chinese painting at the CAFA, that depicts the plight of miners and their families in Northeast China during the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45).











Top: Zhou Sicong's work *A Rest*. **Clockwise from above:** Her work, *Landscape*; Zhou Sicong and husband Lu Chen, in California, US, in 1992; The paintings: *A Practice Copy after Shitao's Landscape*; *Lotus*; and *Water Lily*. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

In a new exhibition, Zhou's early-to-late works trace the evolution of her career.

In ancient times, those who earned scholarly titles in the imperial examination would receive plaques from the imperial court, local authorities, high-ranking officials, or their own clan. The inscriptions are their scholarly titles, such as *jinshi*, referring to those who passed the final and most difficult stage of the imperial examination.

In addition, officials often presented another kind of plaque to congratulate scholars and praise their literary talent. These plaques abound in extravagant praise, offering a glimpse into the social interactions and networking among the gentry and officialdom.

Each of these plaques was treasured by the scholars' later generations, who carefully preserved and passed them down over time. If damaged or lost, plaques were replicated with identical inscriptions and signatures, but the style and craftsmanship could differ by era.

The custom of presenting longevity plaques for birthday celebrations of the elderly was prevalent among the upper strata of society, including the gentry and wealthy, influential families. The inscriptions on such plaques often quote the classics, either praising the celebrant's virtue or conveying wishes for longevity, health and happiness.

During the Ming and Qing dynasties, local authorities or the gentry class would present plaques to commend the achievements or virtues of an individual or family, aiming to establish behavioral models and promote Confucian ideas. Wang says that these types of plaques hold significant value for the study of local history, folklore and ethical values.

One significant exhibit is a large, red-lacquered wooden plaque with gold inscriptions, bearing the four Chinese characters "*ming bo zhe xi*", which translates to "fame spreads to western Zhejiang".

The calligraphy was composed by Wang Jie, a prominent Qing Dynasty scholar-official, as evidenced by his seals on the plaque. Yet the recipient was Ling Menglong, an assistant county magistrate in Zhejiang.

According to Wang Zhonghua from the Liaoning Provincial Museum, it is unusual for such a high-ranking official to write a plaque for a low-ranking county official. It reflects that Ling's diligent governance, care for the people, and remarkable achievements earned him widespread esteem.

"This exhibition helps carry forward fine, traditional Chinese culture. It promotes core values such as loyalty, filial piety, virtue, pursuit of learning, and reverence for the elderly, which are deeply embedded in these inscriptions. It also popularizes traditional art such as calligraphy and seal carving, raising public awareness of aesthetics and culture," she says.

"Freed from their architectural contexts, these plaques allow us to appreciate them directly and consider their enduring cultural and intellectual significance today."



Rectangular wooden plaques carved with elegant Chinese characters are on display in *Emblems of Virtue: Exhibition of Plaque Artifacts*, at the Liaoning Provincial Museum, Shenyang, Liaoning province. PHOTOS BY YANG YONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Contact the writer at linqi@chinadaily.com.cn

Conveying cultural charm above doors and beneath eaves

By XU LIN
xulin@chinadaily.com.cn

Rectangular wooden plaques carved with elegant Chinese characters showcasing various calligraphy styles are on display in *Emblems of Virtue: Exhibition of Plaque Artifacts*, drawing visitors to pause and admire their refined artistry. The exhibition is being held at the Liaoning Provincial Museum, Shenyang, Liaoning province, until July 29.

Suspended above door lintels and beneath eaves in halls, chambers, pavilions, and terraces, these wooden plaques, known as *bian'e*, stand as a distinctive feature in traditional Chinese architecture.

The exhibition displays 76 exquisite plaques from the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties from the collection of the Shenzhen Museum in South China's Guangdong province. Most were collected from Hakka regions in Fujian, Guangdong and Jiangxi provinces.

Jointly organized by the two museums, it showcases the artistic charm and profound cultural essence embodied in these plaques, while also reflecting the cultural lives and social customs of the time.

Boasting a history of more than 2,000 years, alongside rich cultural connotations, traditional Chinese plaques integrate poetry, prose, calligraphy, seal carving, lacquer craftsmanship, architectural art, and folk culture.

"Through concise and refined wording and profound implications, traditional plaques appraise people's virtues and vices and express one's lofty ideals and moral integrity," says Wang Zhonghua, director of the academic research department at the Liaoning Provincial Museum.

She explains that these exhibits often feature regular and running scripts, with a focus on brush technique and artistic style, reflecting the refined elegance of ancient Chinese scholars. The inscriptions use classical, concise wording that conveys profound implications aligned with traditional Confucian philosophies.

Hall and residence name plaques, inscribed with characters ending in *tang* (hall) or *di* (residence), are closely associated with a clan or family. Such plaques strengthen clan identity and tie family honor closely to social status.

Hall name plaques were often hung in studies or main halls to express personal ideals and aspirations, in ancestral halls to announce lineages, or outside shops to attract customers with auspicious messages.

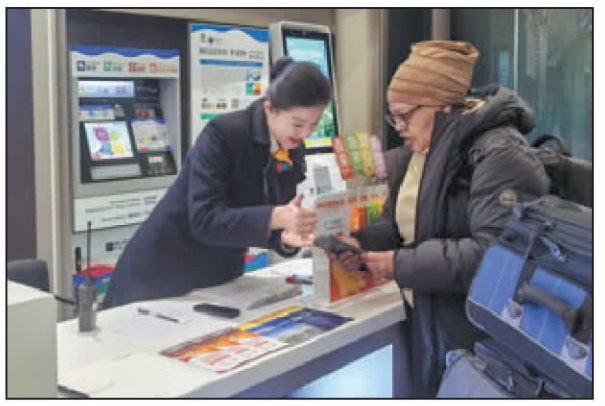
On display is a plaque inscribed with *yiyi tang*. The first two characters, *yiyi* — taken from *The Analects* (Lunyu), a compilation of Confucius' ideas — convey the earnest hope that the brothers in the household would remain closely bonded and live together harmoniously.

Residence name plaques were primarily hung at the main entrances or within mansions to represent a family member's social status or scholarly attainment. Their inscriptions are simple and direct, merely stating the owner's identity or political rank.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:01 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:01 PM

LIFE







From runway to city street

As China looks to attract more international visitors, airports and airlines are reimagining every stage of the journey as part of the destination experience, **Yang Feiyue** reports.

Minutes after stepping off an international flight at Beijing Daxing International Airport, overseas visitors can buy a local SIM card, link a foreign bank card to Alipay, pick up a public transport pass and ask for directions in their own language.

For Wang Qiang, deputy general manager of the airport's aviation business department, those services are about more than convenience.

"We want tourists to experience Chinese and Beijing culture the moment they land," he says. "The key is to help them feel comfortable and informed from the start, so they want to come back."

Increasingly, airports are no longer being viewed solely as transportation infrastructure. They are becoming the first chapter of the travel experience.

That idea sat at the heart of a discussion on aviation-tourism integration during the Beijing Fragrant Hills Tourism Summit of the World Tourism Cities Federation in June, where industry leaders from China and abroad explored how airlines, airports and tourism operators can work together to create a more seamless journey for international visitors.

The conversation comes as China seeks to capitalize on a strong rebound in inbound tourism.

According to the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation under the Ministry of Commerce, China welcomed 82 million international visitors in 2025, up 26.4 percent year-on-year. Travel service exports reached a record $55.2 billion, an increase of 49 percent year-on-year and 1.6 times that of 2019.

The shift also reflects a broader national strategy.

In December 2025, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Civil Aviation Administration of China jointly issued an action plan calling for deeper integration between aviation and tourism. The plan aims to significantly improve travel services by 2027 and create a more connected experience for international and domestic travelers alike.

For Wang, the airport's role has fundamentally changed.

"Airports used to be defined as transportation infrastructure: getting passengers from one place to another, safely and on time. That's it," he told summit participants. "But now, the airport has become the traveler's first impression of the city — and sometimes the last."

Daxing, the starfish-shaped airport, which opened in 2019, has steadily expanded its tourism-oriented services.

In January 2025, it launched the "Beijing Service" counter in the international arrivals area, offering more than 20 services ranging from SIM card registration and transportation cards to mobile payment assistance for overseas travelers.

The airport has also introduced AI-powered visual translation devices capable of real-time interpretation in eight languages and expanded its "three-way call" language service, which connects frontline staff members with translation students from Beijing Foreign Studies University.

For travelers with time to spare, Beijing Capital International Airport in the northeast of the city now offers complimentary half-day city tours for certain transit passengers.

Wang also points to efforts aimed at showcasing culture rather than simply facilitating movement. Daxing's international departure area features the China Garden, inspired by classical Suzhou landscaping, alongside rotating exhibitions from the National Museum of China and an annual airport carnival celebrating its anniversary.

"The question is no longer how to move passengers efficiently through a terminal," Wang says. "It's how to help them begin exploring the destination before they even leave the airport."

Airlines are undergoing a similar rethink.

Liu Li, chief representative for public affairs and aviation cooperation in China for Finland's flag carrier Finnair, says the airline has increasingly focused on turning the flight itself into part of the travel experience.

Recently, Finnair commissioned Finnish musician Lauri Porra to compose an album titled *Matkantekijä: Music for Travellers*, performed on the traditional Finnish string instrument known as the kantele. The music accompanies passengers through different stages of the journey, from the business-class lounge and boarding process to in-flight service and landing.



Top: (From left) An international visitor asks about travel options at Beijing Daxing International Airport's service counter. An interior view of Daxing airport. A staff member helps international visitors at the airport. **Above:** Inbound visitors pose for a photo with airport staff members.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The airline's long-haul business-class cabins also feature textiles from Finnish design house Marimekko, including classic patterns inspired by the country's landscapes.

"The one thing we have been working on is making the flight itself the first experience of Finland," Liu says. "That allows us to weave culture and tourism into every part of the journey."

The approach reflects a broader shift taking place across the aviation industry.

Rather than treating a flight as dead time between destinations, airlines are increasingly trying to make it part of the destination itself. For Finnair, that means introducing Finnish design, music and aesthetics long before passengers arrive in the country's capital Helsinki.

If Finnair demonstrates how airlines can turn a flight into a cultural introduction, destinations such as Edinburgh offer a lesson in what happens after passengers land.

Robert Lang, chair of Edinburgh Tourism Action Group's China Ready Initiative, compares aviation and tourism to a 400-meter relay race.

"You might have the best individual runners," he says. "But if you drop the baton in the exchange, you lose."

The baton, he explains, is data, coordination and consistency.

In Edinburgh, airport data are shared with tourism authorities, while changing market trends can trigger rapid adjustments in marketing and visitor services. Success depends less on the strength of any individual organization than on how effectively they work together.

The same logic applies at a larger scale.

Romulo Vallejo, director of statistics and research at the Dominican Republic's Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, argues that airports and destinations should be developed together rather than sequentially.

He pointed to Punta Cana as an example.

When Punta Cana International Airport opened in the mid-1980s, it handled fewer than 4,000 passengers during its first year. In 2025 alone, the airport served more than 11 million passengers and accounted for over half of all air traffic in the Dominican Republic.

The airport and destination grew side by side.

"Build the runway and the destination together and both will thrive," Vallejo says.

Behind the industry's enthusiasm lies a larger economic calculation.

Research from China's Ministry of Commerce shows that inbound tourism revenue currently accounts for less than 0.5 percent of China's GDP. In Thailand, the figure exceeds 10 percent, while in many European countries it ranges between 1 and 3 percent.

The gap represents significant room for growth.

For You Xugong, general manager of Beijing Best Tour Ltd, the challenge is coordination.

Airlines plan routes. Tourism companies design experiences. Hotels provide accommodation. Travelers, however, experience them as a single journey.

"The question is how to make those different parts work together," he says.

Industry associations, he suggests, could help aggregate demand and create stronger incentives for airlines to tailor services and routes.

"If an association can tell an airline that we can bring 100,000 passengers, the airline will listen," he says.

According to the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture and Tourism, Beijing received 2.67 million inbound visitor trips from January to May, up 35.3 percent year-on-year. Tourism spending reached $3.64 billion, an increase of 42.4 percent.

Yet integration remains easier to discuss than to achieve.

Liu Huiyuan, chief operating officer of TUI China, which specializes in leisure tourism, says that airlines and tourism companies often operate on different business cycles and incentives.

Most cooperation is still project-based, and there is not yet a long-term mechanism that aligns both sides, he says.

He also points to a structural challenge: airlines operate on fixed schedules and long planning cycles, while tourism demand can shift rapidly in response to holidays, policy changes and market trends.

What is emerging, however, is a broader redefinition of travel.

For decades, aviation and tourism were treated as separate industries. One moved people. The other entertained them after they arrived. Increasingly, destinations are trying to erase that distinction.

Back at Daxing airport, Wang still thinks about first impressions.

The goal, he says, is no longer simply to move passengers from one place to another. It is to make them curious enough to keep exploring.

The plane ticket, in other words, will no longer be just transportation.

It will be the first chapter of the journey.

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

Tech tourism thrives in Optics Valley

WUHAN — Riding the wave of China's flourishing "experience economy", visitors to Wuhan, the capital of central China's Hubei province, are enjoying a host of new interactive experiences while playing with humanoid robots.

At the Hubei Humanoid Robot Innovation Center, pupils from a primary school are playing the classic children's game "Red Light, Green Light", their laughter ringing through the room.

Unlike previous generations, their playmate isn't another child, but a robot. After the robot issues a command, the children race forward; when the robot's arm stops moving, they instantly "freeze" in place.

Notably, their playground is also special. The Hubei center is a place dedicated to "cultivating and training new robots".

Here, visitors can do more than just observe the practical uses of humanoid robots. They can also play games with them and experience firsthand how data are collected and actions are trained.

Launched in June 2025, the Hubei Humanoid Robot Innovation Center is now one of China's largest robot innovation centers in terms of area and application scenarios.

It is based in the East Lake High-tech Development Zone, also known as the Optics Valley of China, where visitors can gain deeper insights into the city's rapidly growing high-tech cluster thanks to its increasingly popular tech-driven tourism.

The center has four sections dedicated to robot action training, data collection, application practice, and talent cultivation, respectively.

It is designed to facilitate the full chain of robot innovation from technology cultivation to industrial implementation, with four major functions: proof of concept, pilot testing services, data integration, and scenario validation.

To train the humanoid robots, the center immerses them in real-world application scenarios. For instance, the data collection section provides simulated home scenes that one might find in a kitchen, bathroom, and living room, as well as a milk tea shop, pharmacy, restaurant, warehouse, and others.

In another experience zone, there are no physical humanoid robots. Instead, trainers wear VR headsets to conduct remote control training for the robots.

Here, visitors can experience how robots are trained with VR equipment. For instance, while they are reaching out to gently pick a rose and place it into a vase, a blue "virtual hand" appears before their eyes, synchronously following the human hand's movements to perform the same action. This customized VR equipment can capture the trajectory of hand motion in real time, allowing the system to continuously enhance its intelligent interaction capabilities via simulated learning.



Visitors interact with a robotic dog during the World Robotics Carnival in Wuhan, Hubei province, in June last year.
DU ZIXUAN / XINHUA

"Now, the robots are still in their learning phase. Through remote control by human operators, they can learn the hand movements people use in doing housework. Once sufficient data are collected, there is the prospect of them entering and serving households in the future," says Hu Longdan, a staff member at the center.

Just a 20-minute drive from the humanoid robot center, a modern smart factory welcomes visitors. Here, tourists can "encounter" robots hard at work on the factory floor.

In this factory for Xiaomi smart home appliances, an air conditioner rolls off the production line every 6.5 seconds. Seven unmanned transport lines connect the factory floor, enabling efficient goods logistics.

As the tourist shuttle enters the injection-molding plant, visitors see the production line operating with disciplined rhythm and efficient precision. They can watch how a smart factory works with full automation: robots are transferring goods to unmanned vehicles, which then take the cargo along dedicated tracks to a 24-meter-high automated warehouse.

Now, this smart factory has become a popular tourist destination, with increasing numbers of visitors flooding in to experience and explore the facility. In May, the factory received a record number of 3,485 visitors, a 31 percent month-on-month increase.

Amid the nationwide wave of tech innovation and the experience economy, the Optics Valley of China has launched tech tourism-themed routes, enabling visitors to experience, interact with, and gain insights into hardcore technology, which used to be hidden away in labs and plants.

Data show that, from March to June, tech-experience tourism sites in the Optics Valley of China have received around 480,000 visitors, with estimated revenue exceeding 11 million yuan ($1.6 million).

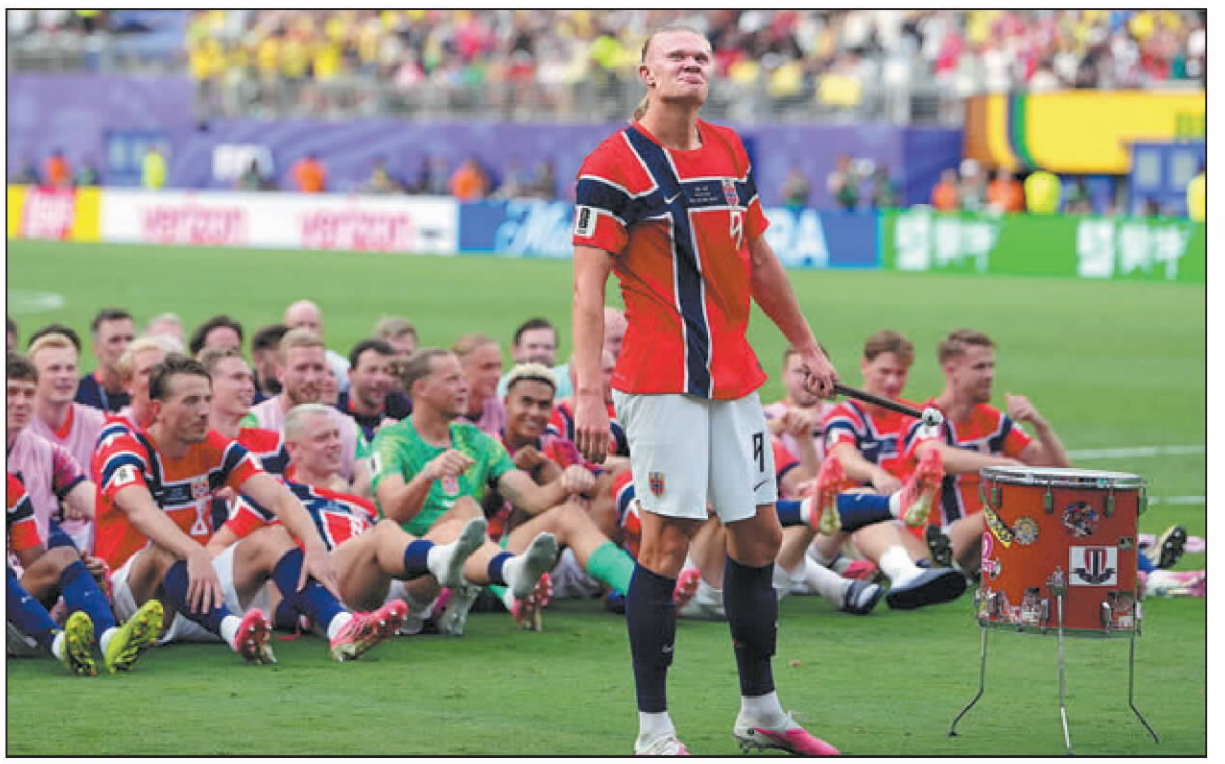
XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:01 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:01 PM

SPORTS

2026 WORLD CUP



Norway's Erling Haaland leads the team and their supporters in the "Viking Row" following their World Cup round-of-16 victory over Brazil in East Rutherford, New Jersey, on Sunday. AP



Erling Haaland celebrates with Andreas Schjelderup (21) after scoring Norway's second goal on Sunday. AP

Vikings row into quarterfinals

Haaland brace leaves Brazil floundering in Norway's wake

Erling Haaland scored, and Andreas Schjelderup jumped on his teammate's back. Haaland scored again, and Schjelderup did it again.

The weight was nothing for the towering Norway striker who, after heading in the go-ahead goal in the 79th minute, and scoring again before the end of regulation time, had carried his nation into the World Cup quarterfinals for the first time ever with a 2-1 defeat of Brazil in New Jersey on Sunday.

"Maybe this will write history in Norway," Haaland said. "Everyone just need to enjoy themselves. This is just an insane day. It's one of the most insane days in Norwegian history. Just enjoy it, embrace it and enjoy the moment."

After being a nonfactor for much of the afternoon and having limited touches, Haaland spoke at the second-half hydration break with coach Stale Solbakken, who told him to drain his energy and go for it.

Haaland turned it on when it mattered most, getting the right side of his head on the ball after a perfect setup by Schjelderup, who entered at halftime. Barely minutes later, Haaland scored his seventh of the tournament, through Danilo's legs, to tie Argentina's Lionel Messi and France's Kylian Mbappe in the race for the Golden Boot.

"It felt it was a gift from God that it actually went into the net," Haaland said after scoring in a 14th consecutive competitive international match. He has 27 goals in that stretch, and 62 overall in 54 appearances for Norway.

At the other end, goalkeeper Orjan Nyland was stellar. He made a crucial stop early, diving to his left to deny Bruno Guimaraes' shot from the spot in the 14th minute, then got his left hand on a shot by Endrick late on, when Norway was hanging on to a one-goal lead.

The only goal Nyland allowed was to Neymar on another penalty, late in stoppage time, which only changed the final score, not the result.

The 34-year-old said the defeat would be his final game for Brazil.

Nyland, who at 35 is his team's oldest player, was a huge factor in a victory that ranks among the most significant in the country's soccer history — at least on the men's side.

Norway's women won the World Cup in 1995, but the men have only qualified four times and not since 1998. In those four attempts, the men had not gone further than the round of 16.

"I think that all Norwegians are experiencing the night of a lifetime," Solbakken said. "Some people say that we have changed Norway forever. They will probably party for a week or so."

Norway will now go on to face England on Saturday in Miami Gardens, Florida. Solbakken said he had more than a dozen friends already booking trips to South Florida.

For Brazil, though, the postmortem of another World Cup disappointment begins, and will likely start with Guimaraes, who became the first Brazil player to fail to convert a World Cup penalty since Zico in 1986. The decision to have him take it instead of Vinicius Junior may be questioned and criticized for quite some time.

Coach Carlo Ancelotti said that he and his staff did a yearlong statistical study that determined, with Neymar not on the field and Raphinha injured, Guimaraes was the right choice.

There were plenty of other missed opportunities, including Casemiro missing Neymar on a cross for what could have been the tying goal.

"We really fell short in the opportunities that we did create," captain Marquinhos said. "We had a penalty kick, we had some other chances as well, but here's the World Cup for you. Those that make the least mistakes are able to move forward to the next round, and to be victorious."

Some will also point to the absence of injured midfielder Lucas Paqueta.

Regardless, Brazil goes home having massively underachieved compared with the nation's expectations, which were pretty much set at win or bust for the five-time World Cup champion.

The soccer powerhouse had its streak of quarterfinal appearances at the tournament end at eight, losing before that stage for the first time since 1990.

It was Brazil's seventh consecutive loss to a European opponent in the knockout round at the World Cup, dating back to a win over Germany in the 2002 final.

Norway got defender Julian Ryerson back from his injury that sidelined him the past two games, and Solbakken was rewarded for making changes at halftime, with Schjelderup setting up each of Haaland's goals.

"During the game, you have to make the calls and decisions that you feel are appropriate," Solbakken said.

"It's a gut feeling that Oscar (Bobb) and Andreas might make a difference, and I felt more secure, with them on the pitch, in the way I wanted us to play the second half. And, then, you saw what happened."

Those moves played a role in what is certainly one of this World Cup's big upsets, though it was not nearly as massive as Norway's group stage victory over Brazil at the 1998 tournament by the same scoreline.

Norway has shown how far it has evolved as a soccer nation since then, with knocking Brazil out of the World Cup the latest step in that process.

Yellow-clad Selecao fans outnumbered those in Norwegian red, many of whom were performing their signature "Viking Row" in the stands — with Brazil supporters even cheering it before kickoff. They were stunned silent when it returned after the game, with Haaland banging the drum and leading the celebration.

"I've peaked a couple of times during this tournament, but this was a new peak," Haaland said.

AP

Balogun ban postponed after Trump call



The United States' World Cup campaign took an extraordinary turn on Sunday, when FIFA made the unprecedented decision to suspend Folarin Balogun's automatic red-card ban, clearing the striker to face Belgium in Monday's last-16 clash after US President Donald Trump personally urged FIFA President Gianni Infantino to review the case.

The move thrust FIFA's disciplinary process into the global spotlight, prompted an angry response from Belgium and ensured that one of this tournament's biggest talking points would center not on tactics or team selection, but on the relationship between soccer's governing body and political power.

Within minutes of the announcement, the decision had ignited one of the tournament's biggest media storms, as pundits, commentators and former players argued over whether FIFA had upheld justice or undermined its own rules.

FIFA did not respond to requests for comment about the decision and Trump's call with Infantino.

US striker Balogun was shown a red card during his team's victory over Bosnia and Herzegovina after planting his boot into the ankle of Tarik Muharemovic. The 25-year-old was sent off after a VAR review, with US coach Mauricio Pochettino contesting the decision at the time.

Trump called Infantino to ask world soccer's governing body to review the sending-off, according to a source briefed on the call.

FIFA is allowing Balogun to play without rescinding the red card.

"In line with article 27 of the FIFA Disciplinary Code, the implementation of the match suspension is suspended for a probationary period of one year," FIFA said in a statement.

"Thank you to FIFA for doing what was right, and reversing a great injustice," Trump wrote on Truth Social, as the White House celebrated Balogun's reinstatement with a post on X saying: "USA-USA-USA."

Pochettino welcomed the news in Seattle on Sunday.

"There's evidence from the past that makes it possible to suspend a punishment and to fulfill it later on, so I don't understand how people can be surprised," he told reporters.

England manager Thomas Tuchel questioned the suspension of the punishment. "VAR checked it and was of the opinion that it was a red card, so the decision is made," Tuchel said of the Balogun situation, not long after seeing one of his own players sent off against Mexico. "Who overturns this decision ... and on what grounds? How far does this go now? This is strange for me... Where does this start and where does this end?"

CHINA DAILY

Ten-man England hangs on to beat Mexico in last-16 thriller

MEXICO CITY — Ten-man England weathered a Mexican storm at the Azteca Stadium to reach the World Cup quarterfinals for a third straight time with a riproaring 3-2 victory on Sunday, courtesy of a Jude Bellingham double, a Harry Kane spot kick and a courageous rear-guard effort.

"It's the best night of my England career. Just unbelievable. I can't put it into words right now," said Bellingham. "It's tough to kind of gather everything together, the goals, the penalty against, the penalty for, the red card. It was a chaotic game, but credit to Mexico, they were a different class... but this team showed character tonight and I'm proud.

"Big pressure moments in years gone by, watching as a fan, as a kid, England probably would have crumbled, but we stuck together until the last second," he added.

"The players who came on, the players that started, running themselves into the ground and giving everything. That is what this team is about."

Thomas Tuchel's side made it hard for itself against the tournament co-host, but handed the battling Mexicans their first-ever World Cup defeat at their iconic home stadium to set up a last-eight clash with Norway, which shocked Brazil 2-1 earlier on Sunday.

Mexico, who beat Ecuador 2-0 in the last 32 for its first knockout-stage win in 40 years, had only lost two competitive games at the Azteca in 89 matches since 1966, but England made it three with a performance of attacking verve and defensive grit.

Kane, hoarse after celebrating with his teammates and England's supporters, said: "It was a crazy game. We had to fight and we had to find something.

"I've just been singing, I can't really talk. The occasion, the team, everything against us, we found a way."

Bellingham scored twice for England in the space of 98 seconds in the first half.

Kane then scored from the penalty spot on the hour-mark, before giving one away at the other end shortly afterward, after a VAR check confirmed that, in trying to clear the ball, Kane had kicked the ankle of Mexico's Brian Gutierrez instead.

"I thought I got to the ball first, it was one of those days," Kane said. "The ref gave a lot against us. In the end it didn't matter, so I'm happy."

After the game was delayed by an hour due to thunderstorms, Mexico attacked from the start, backed by its fanatical support who raised the decibel level higher than ever, but England held firm and managed to take the sting out of the game.



England's Harry Kane (9) celebrates converting a penalty kick with fellow goalscorer Jude Bellingham (10) during their World Cup round-of-16 match against Mexico in Mexico City on Sunday. AP

Pickford saves

Mexico's only notable early chance came after 15 minutes when Raul Jimenez's diving header was brilliantly saved by Jordan Pickford after a pinpoint cross from Roberto Alvarado.

Pickford, who was to pull off several key saves, was making his 17th World Cup appearance to equal fellow keeper Peter Shilton as the all-time record-holder for England's men's team.

Player of the match Bellingham put England ahead with a superb diving header from Bukayo Saka's cross just past the half-hour mark and made it 2-0 within two minutes after another break down the right with skipper Kane providing the assist.

The Mexican crowd responded with chants of "yes we can", and the Mexico players responded by showing that, yes, they could.

Live-wire winger Julian Quinones volleyed home during a scramble inside the box from a freekick to get the host back right back into the match.

Soon after the halftime break, England went close to extending its lead when Nico O'Reilly hit the post, but the Three Lions were soon to be reduced to 10 men, when defender Jarell Quansah became only the fourth England player to be sent off at a World Cup for his rash, studs-up sliding challenge on Jesus Gallardo.

England kept its cool, though, and when Anthony Gordon ran through on goal he was fouled by keeper Raul Rangel, giving Kane his chance to make it three from the spot.

No breathing space

With just over 20 minutes to go England had its backs to the wall and had to dig deep to keep the Mexicans at bay.

Despite giving up most of the possession, it hung on for a famous victory in the last match of this World Cup to take place Mexico, and possibly the last to ever grace the iconic Azteca Stadium.

It was England's first visit to the Azteca since it lost to Argentina in the 1986 World Cup quarterfinals, where Diego Maradona scored his infamous "Hand of God" goal against a hapless Shilton.

"We needed everything. It was super difficult, and always, in the moments when we thought we caught the momentum, we had setbacks, but that's a proper mentality. Well done," said Tuchel.

"When the going gets tough, they never give up, they never lose belief. It was one step more."

Mexico had not lost a competitive game at home since 2013, but had to say farewell to a tournament it has graced with passion on the pitch, in the stands and across the country. Its fans sang their hearts out until the very end.

"You can't make mistakes, because they will punish you," outgoing Mexico coach Javier Aguirre said. "We made a couple of errors there, and it saddens me for the people, but my players can be at peace, because they did everything they could against a great team."

AGENCIES

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:01 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:03 PM

Paper play

Former teacher keeps alive traditional handicraft

Z WEEKLY, PAGE 15



Shanghai to host world AI conference

TOP NEWS, PAGE 3



Ronaldo bids adieu

Portugal legend bows out of last World Cup with 'clear conscience'

SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 WEDNESDAY, JULY 8, 2026



A breach can be seen on Tuesday on the Liulan Reservoir in Hengzhou, in South China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region. Heavy rains and gale-force winds triggered a series of disasters, including reservoir breaches and landslides, in Guangxi and the provinces of Hubei and Gansu, resulting in casualties and economic losses. CAI JIAHONG / YANGCHENG EVENING NEWS

All-out rescue, relief efforts urged

Xi calls for safeguarding lives, property as flooding, landslides, extreme weather hit several regions

By **SHI RUIPENG** in Nanning, **LIU KUN** in Wuhan and **ZOU SHUO** in Beijing

President Xi Jinping called on Tuesday for all-out efforts in emergency rescue, treatment of the injured and resettlement of affected people, after multiple regions were hit by flooding, landslides and extreme weather.

Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, also urged that every effort be made to safeguard people's lives and property while minimizing casualties and preventing secondary disasters.

Heavy rain and strong winds have caused dam breaches and landslides in South China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, Central China's Hubei province and Northwest China's Gansu province, resulting in casualties and economic losses.

Given the severe and complex flood situation, Xi called on local governments and relevant departments to implement existing flood prevention measures, and thoroughly inspect and rectify potential hazards involving rivers, lakes, reservoirs and areas prone to geological disasters.

He also called for stronger monitoring, early warning and emergency preparedness, as well as solid disaster prevention and relief efforts to ensure safety of lives and property.

Premier Li Qiang also urged authorities to strengthen monitoring of rainfall and flood conditions, improve hazard detection and early warning, and carry out emergency rescue and relief with all-out efforts.

The Organization Department of the CPC Central Committee has allocated 60 million yuan ($8.8 million) from Party membership funds to support flood prevention and disaster relief efforts in five provincial-level regions.



Firefighters evacuate disaster-affected residents in Huanggang, Hubei province, on Tuesday. WANGSUN ZHIYUAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Recent extreme weather has battered multiple regions across China, with record-breaking rainfall and landslides causing heavy casualties and widespread damage. Rescue operations continue as authorities race against time to save lives.

Typhoon Maysak, the 10th typhoon of this year, unleashed historically rare and prolonged torrential rains across the region, said Cai Yunge, executive vice-chairman of Guangxi.

Cai said the extreme weather had hit 63 counties and districts in Guangxi, with a total of 375,000 people affected. The death toll had risen to six, with 11 others reported missing, while 130,000 residents had been evacuated to safer ground as of Tuesday evening. Agricultural damage has been substantial, with approximately 12,900 hectares of crops destroyed, and economic losses still being tallied, he added.

Huang Lu, deputy head of Nanning's emergency management bureau, said 1,343 personnel from the fire, police and health departments, supported by 106 vehicles and 38 boats, were carrying out rescue operations and epidemic prevention work.

Temporary shelters have been established at six locations across Hengzhou and stocked with drinking water, food, bedding and lighting supplies. Eleven temporary medical stations have also been set up to provide round-the-clock medical services, according to local authorities.

The armed police detachment in Nanning sent more than 160 personnel and 14 vehicles, along with rubber boats and communication equipment, to the disaster-hit area.

On arriving in Yunbiao township of Hengzhou at 5:30 pm on Monday, rescuers found floodwaters in low-lying areas reaching depths of one meter. Some houses were submerged to the second floor, with water depths of up to three meters. An estimated 55,000 to 60,000 residents in the township were trapped, prompting urgent search and evacuation operations, the detachment said.

"We rushed to the site as soon as we got the order and carried out searches house by house — not a single person should be left behind," said Wei Hao, one of the armed police officers deployed to the scene.

Zhang Shaoqing, another member of the armed police detachment, said that rain continued throughout the night, and their clothes never dried. "Honestly, we were numb after a while, but every time we carried someone out and they said thank you, we felt we could keep going," Zhang said.

As of Tuesday afternoon, the detachment had rescued and evacuated 306 people, delivered 1,500 relief supply items and provided on-site medical assistance to 56 people.

In Gansu, a landslide struck a village in Tanchang county of Longnan at 6:56 am on Tuesday. As of 9 pm, rescuers had located 31 of the 33 people reported missing, five of whom died despite all efforts. Search operations continued.

In Hubei, severe convective weather — caused by the vertical movement of air driven by heat — swept across eastern parts of the province on Monday evening, bringing heavy rain, thunderstorms and tornadoes to some townships. As of Tuesday morning, the storms had affected 14,600 people, killing 11 and leaving one missing. As many as 331 people were injured, while 996 sought emergency shelter and 246 were relocated. The extreme weather destroyed 22 homes and damaged another 4,855.

Contact the writers at zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

XI'S VISION | SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Planning makes nation a sci-tech powerhouse

By **CAO DESHENG**
caodesheng@chinadaily.com.cn

From innovations in robotics to development of intelligent connected vehicles to establishment of a commercial spaceflight ecosystem, China's successful practices are transforming cutting-edge technologies into productive forces.

Fuelling this remarkable progress and the nation's strong momentum in science and technology is the top-level design and comprehensive planning led by President Xi Jinping, as well as the relentless efforts and high aim of researchers and enterprises contributing toward building China into a science and technology powerhouse.

Noting the strategic leading position of and the fundamental supporting role played by science and technology in the pursuit of Chinese modernization, Xi has, on various occasions, urged expediting high-level sci-tech self-reliance to realize the strategic goal of building a strong country in science and technology by 2035.

Addressing a meeting conflating the national sci-tech conference, the national science and technology award conference, and the general assemblies of the members of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Chinese Academy of Engineering in June 2024, Xi said the high-tech sector has emerged as both the forefront and the main arena of international competition, profoundly reshaping the global order and development landscape.

He outlined the key necessities for the development of sci-tech in China, including strong basic research and original innovation capabilities, a robust capacity to achieve breakthroughs in key and core technologies, significant global influence and leadership that make China a major innovation hub, strong ability to attract and nurture top-tier talent, and outstanding governance systems and capabilities in science and tech.

Two years on, China has made new breakthroughs in both basic and frontier research, taken new strides in strategic high-tech fields and achieved new results in high-quality development driven by innovation.

Liu Chunsheng, an associate professor at the Central University of Finance and Economics in Beijing, said that China's full-fledged innovation ecosystem is accelerating breakthroughs at scale.

The country has strengthened its computing networks, next-generation communications systems and green energy infrastructure, enabling more efficient flow of land, talent and data, Liu said.

"At the same time, it has established collaborative innovation networks that bring together State-owned enterprises, private firms, foreign investors, universities and research institutes, creating a dynamic environment where ideas can swiftly transition from the lab to the market," he said.

This year's Government Work Report, adopted at the annual session of the National People's Congress, China's top legislature, in March, indicates a strategic shift in funding allocation for basic research, which aligns with the nation's goals of becoming a global leader in science and technology.

The report emphasized the integration of technological and industrial innovation, highlighting that China plans to establish three international centers for sci-tech innovation.

See ***Strategy,*** *page 3*



A skateboard enthusiast leaps into the air at a skate park in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, on May 17. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

HUIZHOU GETS ON BOARD WITH WORLD'S SKATERS

City in Guangdong has kids everywhere flipping over its industry-leading products

By **ZHENG CAIXIONG** and **LI WENFANG** in Guangzhou

Kick flips. Slides. Heel flips. One trick after another, Cheng Yufeng and his friends pull them off with an ease that turns heads — and draws bursts of applause.

Whenever these teenagers roll into Binjiang Park in Huizhou, Guangdong province, a crowd tends to gather. There's something magnetic about watching them practice: boards clattering, bodies in motion. Radiating energy, they are a regular sight in Huicheng district's green heart.

"I got into skateboarding by chance," said Cheng, a local high school student. "The moment I rolled off, it felt so cool that I just couldn't get enough of it."

He's far from alone. Huizhou, a city in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, has quietly earned itself the nickname of China's skateboarding capital.

The numbers back it up. Around 200,000 people in Huizhou regularly take part in roller skating, while close to 20,000 residents are active skateboarders. Every day, enthusiasts and fans converge on parks, transforming public spaces into urban sports hubs.

However, Huizhou's connection with skateboarding runs much deeper than just parks and passion. Two of the world's four leading companies in the high-end skateboard market have their roots in Huizhou. Huizhou Excel Sporting Goods Co and Chop Chop Woodshop Co together account for 35 to 40 percent of the global high-end skateboard market.

See ***Sport,*** *page 3*

Europe's rush to cool off exposes policy folly

WORLD WATCH
By Warwick Powell

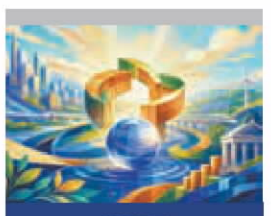
As record heat waves scorch Europe this summer, with temperatures shattering century-old records in France, Spain and beyond, a telling spectacle is unfolding. Europeans, long resistant to air conditioning due to architectural heritage rules, high installation costs and cultural habits, are scrambling for cooling relief. And where are they turning? To Chinese-made air conditioners.

Chinese customs data reveals that exports of air-conditioning units to the European Union surged dramatically — up 43.2 percent year-on-year in the first half of 2026 alone to $3.76 billion. Brands such as Midea, Gree and Hisense dominate, offering portable split units that bypass drilling restrictions in historic buildings. In Germany, secondary markets have seen units resold at 300 percent premiums, and shelves have emptied as consumers voted with their wallets for affordable, efficient Chinese engineering.

This is more than an anecdote. It is a stark metaphor for Europe's broader predicament. While Brussels obsesses over tariffs, subsidy probes and "de-risking" from China, the European public demonstrates the impossibility — and folly — of disengagement. The so-called "China Shock 2.0" narrative, peddled in elite circles, conveniently ignores the fact that Europe's industrial woes stem not from Chinese competition on the current account, but from chronic underinvestment on the capital account.

Trade flows reflect capacity built by investment decisions. European elites, fixated on import deficits and "unfair" advantages, overlook how their own financialized capitalism hollowed out domestic productive capabilities.

See ***Trade,*** *page 3*



INSIDE
Innovative multilateralism
Global Views, page 12

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved

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

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:03 PM

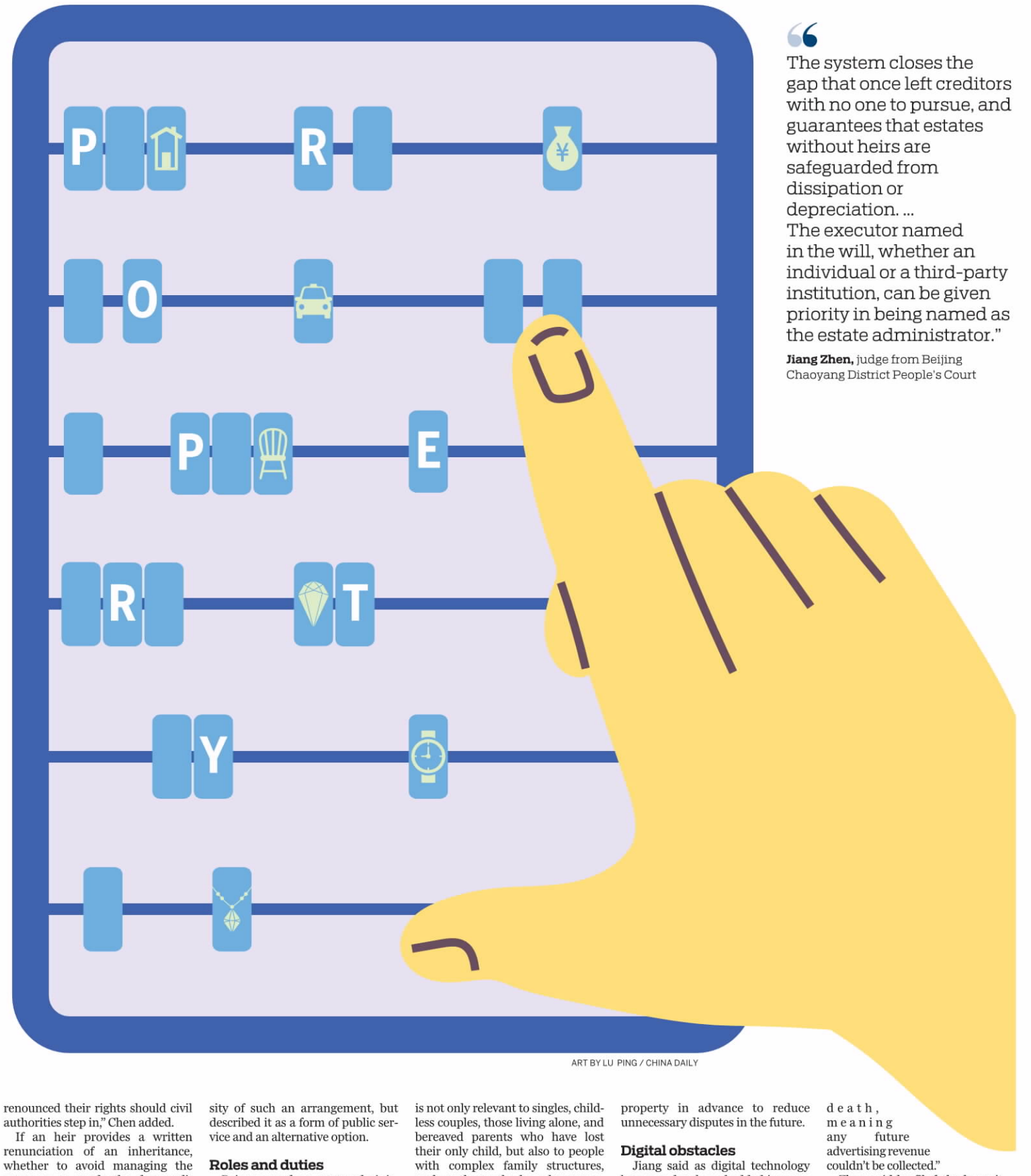
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:03 PM

INDEPTH

No will, no heir? Dealing with life after death

Civil Code tackles deceased estate challenges with new provisions

By CAO YIN
caoyin@chinadaily.com.cn



ART BY LU PING / CHINA DAILY

> "The system closes the gap that once left creditors with no one to pursue, and guarantees that estates without heirs are safeguarded from dissipation or depreciation. ...
> The executor named in the will, whether an individual or a third-party institution, can be given priority in being named as the estate administrator."
>
> **Jiang Zhen,** judge from Beijing Chaoyang District People's Court

If a person dies without an heir or a will, what happens to their life savings, and if that person had unpaid debts, who can creditors turn to?

These are not abstract legal puzzles. They became a stark reality in late 2025, when a 46-year-old woman in Shanghai, surnamed Jiang, passed away. She had no spouse, no children, and had lost both parents. After suffering a cerebral hemorrhage in October, she was cared for by a distant relative in her final weeks.

Her case gripped the nation, exposing anxiousness about a common issue: how does a rapidly aging society, with more people living alone, manage the final affairs of those who have no apparent next of kin?

The law, however, had already foreseen such a moment.

When China's Civil Code took effect in January 2021, it introduced a groundbreaking measure: the estate administrator system. This mechanism is designed to ensure that no estate is abandoned, no debt is left unpaid, and no valid claim falls into a legal void simply because there is no one to step forward.

The Supreme People's Court, China's top court, has since reiterated the system's importance, calling it a vital tool to tackle an "estate left unmanaged, assets being damaged or lost, and challenges posed by an aging population".

In Jiang's case, the court in Hongkou district — finding she had no legal heirs, no will, and no support agreement — ultimately appointed the local civil affairs bureau as her estate administrator at the end of 2025, as per the code's provisions.

Chen Yifang, chief judge of the top court's First Civil Division, recently warned against heirs who renounce an inheritance — whether to avoid managing the estate or to evade the deceased's debts — but who in practice continue to possess or dispose of the estate's assets.

The renunciation is invalid and such behavior "must not be tolerated", the judge said.

To guide judges in applying the system more accurately and to bring greater clarity to the public, the top court recently provided clear answers through a series of landmark cases on how to interpret the system, specifying who can serve as an estate administrator and what duties the role entails.

Meanwhile, grassroots court judges are also calling for more tailored rules — particularly for civil affairs departments that handle the deceased's property — and for additional measures to address the growing challenge of digital assets in the fast-evolving internet era.

Choosing an administrator

As demographic patterns shift and more people choose to live alone or stay single, the estate administrator system provides a much-needed legal solution for handling their posthumous affairs, according to Jiang Zhen, a judge from Beijing Chaoyang District People's Court.

"The system closes the gap that once left creditors with no one to pursue, and guarantees that estates without heirs are safeguarded from dissipation or depreciation," she said.

Citing the code, she noted that if the deceased had clearly designated in their will who should handle the estate, that arrangement must be respected. "This means that the executor named in the will, whether an individual or a third-party institution, can be given priority in being named as the estate administrator," she explained.

"It is important to say, however, that an estate administrator is not necessarily an heir," she added. "For instance, a law firm can be appointed an executor of a deceased person's will, but it doesn't have to be filled by an heir."

If no executor was named, the heirs should choose an administrator, said Chen, from the top court. If they cannot reach an agreement, all heirs must serve as joint administrators.

"Only when there is genuinely no heir or when all heirs have validly renounced their rights should civil authorities step in," Chen added.

If an heir provides a written renunciation of an inheritance, whether to avoid managing the estate or to evade the deceased's debts, but continues to possess or dispose of the estate's assets in reality, that renunciation is invalid.

One of the cases disclosed by the top court illustrates this point. An individual surnamed Yang died in 2024, owing 100,000 yuan ($14,788) to two people surnamed Hua and Ma. The creditors sued Yang's father, mother and daughter, trying to recover the money.

During the trial, the three heirs submitted written renunciations of their inheritance, so the local court refused the creditors' claims.

But after the ruling, the three heirs were discovered to have collected over 200,000 yuan in funeral subsidies, pension benefits and social insurance payments belonging to Yang. The creditors requested the court to name the local civil affairs bureau as the estate administrator, as the heirs had renounced their inheritance rights.

The local court said that the heirs had in fact taken control of the deceased's assets, although they had formally given up their inheritance. "In this situation, the renunciation was invalid, meaning the three must repay the debt," it said, adding the civil affairs bureau could not step in as a fallback administrator.

Chen said the case was an example of "fake renunciation to evade real debt", warning that the provision in the code allowing civil affairs bodies or village committees to act as administrators should not be abused. She underscored the necessity of such an arrangement, but described it as a form of public service and an alternative option.

Roles and duties

Being named an estate administrator is not a ceremonial role. The code spells out clear duties including taking inventory of the estate, listing all assets and debts, and providing a full and accurate accounting to heirs, banks, property registration authorities and creditors, Chen said.

She noted that administrators must also take reasonable measures to protect the assets from damage or loss — for example, by securing a vacant house or liquidating perishable property.

In another case disclosed by the top court, a man surnamed Liu took out a 550,000-yuan bank loan with a 10-year term, secured against his apartment in July 2020. When he died in March 2023, all his heirs renounced their inheritance. The bank then applied to the local court, which appointed the district civil affairs bureau as estate administrator to clear Liu's debts.

The local court also made it clear that costs arising from the administrator's work, including appraisals, auctions, and legal fees take priority. When Liu's apartment was sold, those reasonable expenses were deducted first, with the remainder going to repay the bank.

Jiang, from Beijing Chaoyang District People's Court, said specific requirements for estate administrators' duties are essential to ensure the deceased's assets can be protected. But, in practice, there were challenges for civil affairs authorities such as the difficulty of locating all assets.

The estate administrator system is not only relevant to singles, childless couples, those living alone, and bereaved parents who have lost their only child, but also to people with complex family structures, such as those who have been married multiple times or have many children, and those whose estates consist of diverse types of assets.

"For instance, some people own overseas property or company shares, which are not easy for civil affairs departments to track down," Jiang explained.

She suggested that civil authorities develop a comprehensive understanding of property registries and financial institutions to ensure that no asset is overlooked during the inventory process.

In November 2025, Beijing Haidian District People's Court issued a guideline on procedures for appointing estate administrators.

Lin Zhi, a judge from the court, said it summarizes the practical achievements over the five years since the code came into force, further introduces it to the public, and builds stronger legal consensus.

She said that the guideline clarifies for the public the role of estate administrators and the pathways for appointing them, whether through the courts or directly via civil affairs departments.

"For issues such as guardianship and healthcare that may arise during the aging process, it's significant to plan ahead," Lin said. "For example, by purchasing insurance to minimize the risk of being left without adequate care, and ultimately to ensure a better quality of life."

She called on residents to educate themselves about wills and to arrange for the disposal of their property in advance to reduce unnecessary disputes in the future.

Digital obstacles

Jiang said as digital technology becomes deeply embedded in every aspect of daily life, the governance of digital estates is emerging as a pressing issue that demands urgent attention.

Data released by the China Internet Network Information Center in February showed that China had approximately 1.1 billion netizens by the end of 2025. Almost every one of them is a video user, with 573 million playing online games.

Deceased internet users leave behind not only personal bonds and memories, but also vast and silent digital content: WeChat and Alipay balances, gaming accounts, social media profiles, chat records and cloud photo albums, according to Jiang.

Digital estate disputes can center on the inheritance of online shop operations and gaming assets, as well as access to data like chat logs and photos, she said, adding she and her colleagues had to deal with them on a case-by-case basis because there are no specific rules on digital estate settlement.

The Civil Code upholds the principle of protecting digital or virtual assets. But in reality, platform policies differ — some allow inheritance, while others retain ownership.

Last year, a Shanghai college student surnamed Zhou took an online platform to court after it refused to let him inherit his late mother's WeChat public account.

"She had put so much effort into it, and it was about to be shut down," Zhou said. "The bank card linked to it had been canceled upon my mom's death, meaning any future advertising revenue couldn't be collected."

Zhou said he filed the lawsuit to draw more attention to the digital estate inheritance issue. In the end, the platform proposed mediation to shift the account to Zhou's name.

The valuation of some digital assets also lacks clear legal provisions, making it difficult to determine in judicial practice.

Wang Qi, an associate professor at Beihang University's Law School, said that the value of assets, such as in-game items and social media accounts, is heavily influenced by market conditions, policies, and user engagement. With no open or legitimate trading market, there is no standard for valuation.

On the technical side, inheriting digital accounts faces hurdles such as login verification and encryption, Wang added. For example, if a short-video platform was inherited, it would require multiple layers of authentication, including passwords, mobile verification codes, and facial recognition.

As the number of digital "natives" continues to surge, judges and legal experts agree that clearer rules are urgently needed. They recommend that lawmakers and platforms move swiftly to establish standardized regulations on the use, transfer, and inheritance of digital property. Without such measures, millions of online assets will remain in legal limbo — a gap that the fast-evolving digital age has opened, and that the law has yet to close.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:03 PM

TOP NEWS

Shanghai set to host record world AI event

Over 1,100 firms, 300 global product debuts expected at conference opening on July 17

By **WANG YING** in Shanghai
wang_ying@chinadaily.com.cn

The upcoming World Artificial Intelligence Conference, one of the world's most influential AI events, will reach a record scale this year in its exhibition area, and is expected to attract over 1,100 companies, display more than 3,000 exhibits and feature more than 300 global product debuts, according to a news conference held on Tuesday in Shanghai.

Shanghai has successfully hosted the conference for eight consecutive years, with the event becoming an important platform for showcasing cutting-edge AI technologies from China and around the world, while also deepening international cooperation, said Chen Jie, vice-mayor of Shanghai.

"For the first time since its inception, the conference's exhibition scale exceeds 100,000 square meters. The intelligent computing and embodied AI segments will each bring together more than 200 companies. Leading companies, major State-owned enterprises and top multinational companies will join their ecosystem partners to showcase the latest AI-enabled applications across industries," said Chen.

He added that such an expansion in the scale and capacity of the conference is based on the city's thriving AI industry.

Shanghai's 394 AI enterprises above the designated size, each with annual revenue of at least 20 million yuan ($2.9 million), saw their combined industry scale exceed 637 billion yuan in 2025, up 39.5 percent year-on-year, emerging as a new driver of the city's economic growth, according to Chen.

Shanghai has built a complete ecosystem for AI development, integrating innovation, application, cooperation, ecological coordination and security governance, he added.

The city's booming AI industry reflects the sector's continued growth and development.

"The value of China's core AI industry is estimated to have surpassed 1.2 trillion yuan in scale by the end of 2025. At the same time, rapid advances in large models, AI agents and chips are expected to drive annual humanoid robot production above 100,000 units this year," said Gan Xiaobin, deputy director of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology's department of science and technology.

According to Gan, the constantly deepening integration of AI and manufacturing is enabling Chinese industrial enterprises above the designated size to raise their adoption rate of AI to more than 30 percent.

Inside
See more, **pages 8-9**

Wang Ruomeng, an official of the National Development and Reform Commission, said the Chinese AI industry is estimated to grow at a rate of more than 30 percent this year, and the integration of AI into various sectors has become a driving force for the nation's economy.

"Since the guideline on advancing AI integration was issued by the State Council last August, the NDRC has worked together with relevant parties to promote AI to empower various industries and benefit Chinese people in their daily life," said Wang.

Sun Xiaobo, an official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said the theme of this year's conference — AI Partnership for a Brighter Future — has two key messages.

"The word partnership shows that AI is empowering all kinds of industries and families, becoming an important assistant in our work and daily lives. In the meantime, global AI governance requires countries to work together to build global partnerships in AI and jointly promote the beneficial and inclusive development of artificial intelligence," said Sun.

Speaking on the sidelines of the news conference, Wei Shaojun, chairman and CEO of Chinese AI chip startup Dongfang Suanxin, said the company, which will attend the AI conference for the first time, will showcase its full product lineup, from chips to systems.

Founded in 2024, Shanghai-based Dongfang Suanxin specializes in integrated circuit design.

"Our current chips focus on the training level, while the next-generation products are expected to come out by the end of this year, with performance expected to match the level of mainstream international peers," said Wei.

Set to take place from July 17 to 20, the 2026 conference will feature six major sections, including forums, exhibitions, innovation incubation and talent exchanges.

The event is formally known as the 2026 World AI Conference & High-level Meeting on Global AI Governance. More than 140 forums will be held during the four-day event, bringing together over 1,400 guests from home and abroad.

Ping-pong legacy



Members of the Chinese national table tennis team interact on Monday with local students at the La Salle College Preparatory in California, the United States, during an event marking the 55th anniversary of China-US Ping-Pong Diplomacy. ZENG HUI / XINHUA

Prison clashes



A relative of a victim killed in clashes between inmates grieves on Monday outside a prison in Negombo, on the outskirts of Colombo, Sri Lanka. An official said the overnight clashes left 26 people dead, including seven prison officers and 19 inmates. Authorities have launched an investigation into the cause of the violence that involved two rival drug gangs. ISHARA S. KODIKARA / AFP

Japan pays price for misled security moves

By **WANG KEJU** in Beijing and **MA SI** in Haikou

As China-Japan relations remain strained over Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's erroneous remarks on Taiwan and her administration's accelerated military build-up, Japan's economy is increasingly feeling the pinch, with critical mineral exports from China plunging, supply chains buckling under pressure and billions in potential GDP losses looming, experts said.

What is truly pushing Japanese businesses into difficulty is not China's lawful measures to safeguard national security, but the systemic risks spawned by Japan's own misguided security trajectory, they added.

According to the General Administration of Customs, China's exports of rare earth magnets to Japan plummeted 34.6 percent to 123 metric tons in May compared with April, while monthly shipments have remained below 200 metric tons for three consecutive months.

Since the start of 2026, China has banned shipments of dual-use items and technologies, including rare earth elements, to Japan. Such items and technologies have both civilian and military applications.

The ban came on the heels of a downward spiral in China-Japan relations, triggered by Takaichi's remarks and her administration's military-related moves.

China's tighter export controls have prompted Japan to take unprecedented steps. Recently, All-Nippon News Network reported that Japan has launched its first-ever program to extract rare earth elements from discarded household air-conditioners.

Mitsubishi Electric, the Japanese company spearheading that recycling initiative, was added to China's export control list in late June for its involvement in defense electronics, radar and missile systems.

The June decision, which imposed a total ban on dual-use item exports to 20 Japanese entities and implemented heightened scrutiny against 20 others, followed a similar decision in February that targeted 40 Japanese entities.

Shen Yi, a professor at Fudan University's School of International Relations and Public Affairs, said, "The Japanese government's bet that it can continue its military expansion and provocative rhetoric without paying a real price is doomed to fail."

Shen noted that China accounts for roughly 70 percent of global rare earth mining and over 90 percent of smelting and separation capacity, giving the nation's policy tools the weight to alter Japanese corporate calculations.

China boosts self-reliance

Experts said that Japan's attempts to leverage its edge in the semiconductor sector through potential export controls will ultimately prove futile, as foreign restrictions are only accelerating China's push for self-reliance, turning what was meant as a chokehold into a catalyst for domestic substitution.

For instance, there is "significant progress" in the domestic production potential of photoresist, the light-sensitive material essential for etching microscopic circuits onto silicon wafers, sources from leading Chinese chipmakers such as Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corp and Huahong Group told China Daily.

Jiangsu Nata Opto-electronic Material Co, which developed one of China's first high-end deep ultraviolet photoresists, said the company's revenue from the product exceeded 10 million yuan ($1.5 million) in 2024, and it maintained a stable supply in 2025.

According to data from Japanese research company Global Net, last year, three Chinese chip equipment manufacturers ranked among the world's top 20 by sales volume for the first time.

This marks a sharp rise from just one company in 2022, prior to stricter restrictions imposed by the United States, underscoring China's accelerated progress in bolstering the domestic supply chain.

Roger Sheng, vice-president of research at US market research company Gartner, noted that the technological gap between Chinese companies and international industry leaders is continuously narrowing.

"This progress has provided strong support for domestic chip manufacturers in their technological upgrades and production expansion efforts, even amid restrictions on access to Japanese technology and equipment," Sheng said.

With the exception of lithography machines, domestic tools are now being increasingly used in Chinese semiconductor factories, he said, citing the example of Naura Technology becoming a key equipment provider for another Chinese company's advanced memory chips.

Contact the writers at wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn

Strategy: Innovation accelerates at scale

From page 1

The centers in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, the Yangtze River Delta and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area would then be turned into world-class innovation engines.

Elijah Mwangi, a scholar based in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, said the perception of China trailing Western innovation is outdated, as Chinese firms are now leaders in areas such as 5G telecommunications, drone technology, fintech and artificial intelligence applications.

"What distinguishes China's approach is its ability to deploy innovation at scale. Technologies are rapidly integrated into everyday life, from digital payments and smart transportation systems to AI-powered services. The rise of Chinese AI firms has demonstrated that the race for technological leadership is no longer confined to Silicon Valley," Mwangi said in an article published by the China Global Television Network website.

On April 30, Xi attended a symposium on strengthening basic research in Shanghai, urging greater efforts and more solid measures to strengthen basic research and enhance China's capacity for original and groundbreaking innovation.

According to data from the Ministry of Science and Technology, China's total R&D investment exceeded 3.92 trillion yuan ($576 billion) in 2025, accounting for 2.8 percent of its GDP. Basic research funding last year hit nearly 280 billion yuan, accounting for 7.08 percent of total R&D spending, making it the first time that the funding has surpassed the 7 percent threshold.

China has projected an annual average increase of at least 7 percent in nationwide R&D spending during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period.

Md Altab Hossin, a foreign expert working for the Entrepreneurship College of Chengdu University in Sichuan province, said that China's innovation-oriented development is not merely a slogan — it is the engine driving the nation toward a future defined by sustainability, intelligence and shared prosperity.

By sharing its renewable grids, electronic vehicle platforms, AI frameworks, humanoid robots and BeiDou signals, China is constructing a technological foundation upon which all of humanity can stand taller and receive the benefits, Hossin said.

Sport: Skating offers something profound

From page 1

"Skateboarding is undoubtedly a distinctive, advantageous product of Huizhou, with outstanding industrial scale advantages," said Du Yongbin, general manager of Huizhou Excel Sporting Goods. "Skateboarding originated in the United States, yet Huizhou manufacturers produce nearly 40 percent of the global high-end skateboards. That's primarily thanks to their superior quality — positioning the city as a core hub for the skateboard industry."

A national high-tech company with 20 years' experience, Excel Sporting has amassed more than 40 skateboard-related patents. Precision is baked into everything, providing a level of exactness that elite riders can feel under their feet.

"About one-third of the skateboards used at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics were manufactured by Excel Sporting," said Du.

"The competition board ridden by young Chinese athlete Cui Chenxi at the 2024 Paris Olympics was also custom-made by us," added Du.

Xu Yang, a core partner at the company, added that exports now account for up to 70 percent of total output. Excel Sporting is an authorized supplier of top domestic and international brands, including April, Real, Antihero, DGK and Justice. The premium boards they produce carry overseas retail prices of between $100 and $200.

Xu notes that every international client has been gradually accumulated through word-of-mouth referrals from long-term partners.

Du said the decks of mainstream professional skateboards are mostly laminated Canadian hard rock maple. Carbon fiber and fiberglass are added to premium models.

From raw material processing to a finished board, the production cycle spans 15 to 45 days.

For Du, skateboarding offers young people something profound. It improves fitness by developing core strength, balance and reflexes.

It tempers mental resilience: Learning means repeated failed attempts. That cultivates the ability to withstand pressure and the courage to take on challenges.

It also enriches social lives. Young skaters meet like-minded peers, expand their circles and develop teamwork awareness.

Contact the writers at zhengcaixiong@chinadaily.com.cn

Trade: Wiser path demands pragmatic engagement

From page 1

For decades, European legacy manufacturers — epitomized by automakers — prioritized shareholder returns over reinvestment. Stock buybacks, lavish dividends and the return on capital employed took precedence over investment in research and development, vocational training and energy infrastructure. Labor became a cost to minimize, not a strategic asset.

Yet, even then, automation lagged behind. Energy markets favored spot-trading volatility over stable, affordable industrial power. The result: exorbitant electricity costs, skill shortages in batteries and software and factories uncompetitive against those fueled by consistent capital deployment.

China's trajectory tells a different story. Starting in the 1980s, European brands profited handsomely from China's market through joint ventures — such as SAIC Volkswagen — in which they treated the country as a low-cost assembler. The dynamic flipped post-2015. Beijing's industrial policy shift toward new energy vehicles and clean technologies, combined with private enterprises' relentless reinvestment, produced global leaders.

Chinese privately owned enterprises now drive the bulk of exports, mastering battery chemistry, vertical integration and hyper-automated production. The "students" have become the masters, exporting innovation back to Europe. Yet rather than emulate this capital discipline, European rentiers cry foul over the subsidies they once benefited from.

The air conditioner boom lays bare the hypocrisy. Amid heat-induced deaths and discomfort, protectionist impulses falter against consumer reality. Proposals for new refrigerant rules or tariffs risk pricing out relief for ordinary citizens to shield inefficient local producers. This mirrors the reality that tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids may prop up legacy margins temporarily, but they accelerate Europe's slide to becoming an industrial museum. Simulations within the European Commission confirm that a full trade war would devastate the continent, which is more exposed than the US due to energy dependence and export reliance on China for machinery and chemicals. Beijing holds leverage over critical minerals such as lithium, graphite and rare earths. Indeed, this is cutting off one's nose to spite one's face.

The wiser path demands intellectual honesty and pragmatic engagement. European elites must shed Orientalist reflexes portraying China as a perpetual threat rather than a partner, and must also revitalize the dormant Comprehensive Agreement on Investment — signed in principle in 2020 but frozen by political posturing — repurposing it as a framework for stability, rule-of-law predictability and market access.

This would draw Chinese investment to European factories, not mere screwdriver plants.

Early signs exist of this: BYD in Hungary, Chery in Spain and Leapmotor in Poland. The EU should expand these via streamlined permitting, clean energy linkages, co-investment funds and logistical hubs.

European leaders should heed their citizens' urgent purchases: Disengagement is a luxury that the heat — and history — will not afford. Win-win cooperation, grounded in realism over ideology, remains the only viable route to renaissance.

The author is an adjunct professor at Queensland University of Technology in Australia and former policy adviser to former Australian prime minister Kevin Rudd. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:03 PM

WORLD

Festive frenzy



Revelers celebrate as the *txupinazo* — the traditional firework rocket marking the start of the San Fermin festival — kicks off nine days of uninterrupted festivities, including the running of the bulls, in Pamplona, Spain, on Monday. MIGUEL OSES / AP

US warned tariffs will raise costs

Businesses express concern, say levies could hit consumers and supply chains

By BELINDA ROBINSON
in New York
belindarobinson@chinadailyusa.com

US companies, retailers and trade groups have urged the Office of the United States Trade Representative to drop proposed tariffs on 60 countries and regions that the agency alleges have failed to curb trade in goods made with forced labor, arguing the measure would disrupt supply chains and raise costs.

The deadline for written comments was Monday, with public hearings set for Tuesday through Thursday at the US International Trade Commission in Washington. By the deadline, the USTR had received at least 980 submissions, according to its website.

Many businesses warned that additional tariffs would disrupt supply chains and increase costs for importers, manufacturers and ultimately US consumers.

"Layering additional tariffs on products that are already subject to existing trade measures can create unnecessary cost burdens and supply chain complexity for US manufacturers," said Eve Duchene, an executive assistant at Modules Technology in San Jose, California.

"As a supplier of advanced multilayer bare printed circuit boards … we are concerned that cumulative tariff actions on critical industrial inputs can increase costs without creating practical near-term sourcing alternatives," she said.

The USTR has proposed an additional 12.5 percent tariff on imports from 45 countries, including China, India, Nigeria, Japan and Australia, alleging they failed to address forced labor practices, Reuters reported.

Another 15 economies, including Canada, Ecuador, the European Union, Indonesia, Mexico and Britain, would face a 10 percent tariff because they have either adopted or committed to plans to tackle forced labor under US trade agreements, the USTR said.

The proposal, unveiled last month, followed a Section 301 investigation under the Trade Act of 1974, which concluded that the targeted economies had failed to ban or effectively prevent imports linked to forced labor, creating what the agency called an "uneven playing field" for US workers.

The proposed tariffs would exempt products already covered by Section 232 national security duties, including automobiles, steel, aluminum and copper.

"Chinese law fully prohibits forced labor," Xinru Huang of the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers said in comments submitted to the USTR. "If the United States insists on imposing tariffs, it will only raise costs for US importers and consumers."

The proposed tariffs would also exempt Canadian and Mexican imports that comply with the rules of origin under the North American trade agreement.

International trade groups and businesses warned in their comments that more tariffs will drive up costs.

Primary impact

Wei Zhao of the China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Light Industrial Products and Arts-Crafts wrote that "American consumers will bear the primary impact" if the tariffs are imposed.

"Furniture prices will rise, exacerbating inflationary pressures and increasing the cost of living for ordinary households," Zhao said.

Reuters reported that other exemptions would include crude oil and petroleum products, rare earths and other specialty metals, beef, coffee, pharmaceuticals and aircraft parts.

Some US companies urged the USTR to revise the proposed exemption list. Leo Holt, president of Holt Logistics in New Jersey, whose affiliated companies operate marine terminals and logistics centers along the Delaware River, called for specialized dairy protein ingredients to be added.

"While we fully support the overarching US trade policy goal of ensuring market integrity and penalizing illicit labor advantages internationally, we write to urgently advocate for the addition of critical, specialized dairy protein ingredients to the Annex A product exclusion list," Holt said.

The proposal comes ahead of the July 24 expiration of a temporary 10 percent tariff imposed on Feb 20, the day the Supreme Court struck down earlier tariffs imposed under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act.

China, Nordic nations reaffirm cooperation

By ZHOU JIN
zhoujin@chinadaily.com.cn

China and four major Nordic countries — Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Norway — have agreed that China and Europe should foster a correct perception of each other, keep dialogue and cooperation at the forefront of their ties, and properly manage differences, the Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday.

Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning made the remarks after Foreign Minister Wang Yi concluded a six-day visit to the four countries on Tuesday, his second trip to Europe this year amid mounting challenges in China-Europe relations.

Mao reiterated China's position that China-Europe economic and trade ties should be viewed in a more comprehensive, objective and positive light, calling on both sides to maintain and expand two-way opening-up and promote more balanced development. She said the European side should recognize the need to enhance its own competitiveness.

The four countries welcomed more constructive China-Europe economic and trade dialogue and supported efforts to properly manage trade frictions, pursue win-win solutions and achieve substantive outcomes, she added.

Wang welcomed businesses from the four countries to walk into the "fitness club" of the Chinese market, inviting them to strengthen their competitiveness while sharing opportunities created by China's vast market, complete industrial chains and diverse application scenarios, Mao said.

The four countries, meanwhile, welcomed more people-to-people exchanges with China and supported deeper cooperation in education, culture, tourism, language, scientific research, think tanks, youth, and local government exchanges, she said.

Wang's trip marked the first visit to Denmark by a Chinese foreign minister in 15 years and the first to Sweden in 22 years.

Political foundation

Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Norway were among the first European countries to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. During Wang's visit, they reaffirmed their commitment to the one-China policy, helping consolidate the political foundation of bilateral ties, Mao said.

Describing the trip as one that advanced friendship, deepened mutual trust, expanded cooperation and built consensus, Mao said China and the four countries also agreed to strengthen cooperation in green and low-carbon development, scientific and technological innovation, while enhancing dialogue on global AI governance.

In a world of chaos and turbulence, Wang's visit underscored the broad consensus between China and the four Nordic countries on consolidating and developing bilateral relations well to address the uncertainty of the world through the stability of the bilateral ties, she added.

In the pits



A car lies trapped after a section of the road collapsed into an excavation pit at a construction site following heavy rainfall in Ahmedabad, India, on Monday. AMIT DAVE / REUTERS

Feeling the vibrant pulse of the East on Jordan's streets



Cui Haipei
Reporter's log

FIRST PERSON VIEW

Traveling from the ancient seven hills of Amman to the strategic northern hub of Irbid, one can easily discern a strategic, undeniable shift: Jordan is turning its gaze eastward, anchoring its future cooperation with China in economy, culture and governance.

During my recent trip, before I sat down with officials and scholars, it was the vibrant encounters on the streets that truly brought this shift to life.

Having lived in the Middle East for quite a while, I thought I was already used to the sights of Chinese cars weaving through streets and goods filling store shelves. Yet, Amman still had a surprise for me on day one.

I was spontaneously approached by an 18-year-old boy whose Mandarin was strikingly fluent — a remarkable feat after just over a year of study. With his father running a trading business in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, the young man was beaming with excitement as he had just received an offer from a university in Qingdao, Shandong province.

In his eyes, China was not a distant, abstract concept, but a tangible land of promise, career prospects and limitless personal horizons. He represents a rising cohort of young Jordanians eager to decode the secret of China's development, embodying exactly what Samir Habashneh, chairman of the Jordan-China Cultural Cooperation Committee, told me, "China holds such appeal that anyone who has visited once longs to return."

If this boy mirrored the forward-looking optimism of Jordan's youth, another encounter in the capital highlighted the profound institutional goodwill toward China.

As I was about to walk back to the hotel, a police officer stopped me. When I told him I'm from China, he turned back to his guard booth and emerged with a color-printed flyer written in Chinese. It contained safety tips and emergency contact protocols tailored for Chinese visitors and investors.

That flyer, handed to me by a law enforcement officer, spoke volumes. It was the grassroots manifestation of what senior Jordanian officials describe as China's role of an "irreplaceable stabilizer" in the Levant region. China's impartial stance on the Palestinian question and its commitment to peaceful resolution have earned deep appreciation that trickles down from top officials to common people.

In Irbid, at Yarmouk University, this nationwide enthusiasm is taking a highly structured form. The country's second-largest public university has unveiled an ambitious blueprint for an on-campus "China Village".



A Jordanian student explains the Chinese characters *xuexi*, or study, during a United Nations Chinese Language Day event in Amman on May 12. XINHUA

Surpassing the scope of a traditional Confucius Institute, this complex is envisioned by the university's president, Malek Alsharairi, as a permanent exhibition platform for China's innovations in all aspects.

Remarkably, the campus is integrating Chinese arts into its curriculum, planning full undergraduate concentrations in Chinese theater, and ensuring that architecture and engineering students study Chinese design methodologies.

The rationale is shrewdly practical: Irbid sits just a two-hour drive from Damascus. As Syria and surrounding nations embark on post-war reconstruction, Jordan aims to position itself as the safe and ideal regional hub. Jordanian graduates who master both the Chinese language and a firm grasp of China's technical ecosystems will possess an unmatched competitive edge in the regional labor market.

Moreover, this drive is moving beyond elite academies into the realm of vocational training. Rafat Mousa Al-Sawafin, director-general of Jordan's national Vocational Training Corporation, expressed an urgent eagerness to partner with Chinese peers to upgrade their facilities and equipment, particularly in microchip design and IT.

It marks a crucial transition from pure language learning to an integrated "Chinese plus vocational skills" model — a synergy that Zhao Xiaoqiang, cultural counselor at the Chinese embassy in Jordan, said will "bind together the vitality of young generations".

Centuries ago, ancient Arab traders traveled the Silk Road, guided by the famous maxim, "Seek knowledge, even unto China." Today, standing at the crossroads of Amman and Irbid, it is clear that this ancient thread remains unbroken.

Whether it is a young student packing his bags for Qingdao, an officer proudly holding a safety flyer in Chinese, or a university building a village to showcase Eastern tech, Jordan's embrace of China is rooted in a shared quest for stability, modernization and mutual respect.

In a world fraught with uncertainty, this deepening bond offers a refreshing blueprint for cooperation over confrontation — a quiet, powerful momentum felt on every street corner of Jordan.

The author is a correspondent at China Daily Asia-Pacific Bureau based in Dubai.

Contact the writer at cuihaipei@chinadaily.com.cn

Opposition slams plan to oust Hungary's president

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

Hungary's opposition party Fidesz has warned of "tyranny" in government after Prime Minister Peter Magyar submitted an amendment to remove President Tamas Sulyok, which could come into effect as early as next week.

Fresh off an April landslide that ended former leader Viktor Orban's 16-year rule, Magyar has repeatedly pressed to remove the predecessor-appointed president, whom he calls "Orban's puppet".

In an amendment filed on Saturday, Magyar stipulates that "the mandate of the incumbent President of the Republic shall terminate on the day following the entry into force of the amendment to the Fundamental Law".

With a parliamentary supermajority, the governing Tisza Party is expected to pass the amendment.

As reported by Euronews, the Fidesz party has called for a demonstration on Thursday in support of Sulyok.

Parliamentary sources say a vote on the removal of the president could come as early as next week, though there is no official confirmation.

Beyond the presidency, the package would remove four constitutional judges by setting their retirement age at 70 and cap parliamentary deputies at a 12-year mandate.

Defiant, Sulyok says he will not resign and calls Magyar's move a threat to democracy.

"The question is whether this force will sweep away internationally recognized and required principles of the rule of law, as well as genuine representative democracy," Sulyok said on Sunday.

Constitutional grounds

The Budapest Times reported that, in a Sunday interview with Poland's Do Rzeczy publication, Sulyok said, "I have no reason to resign, and the prime minister has so far found no constitutional grounds for my removal."

The proposal refers to the "current president" rather than to the office of the presidency in general, which means it can only be interpreted as "a piece of legislation tailored to a specific individual, which cannot in any way be described as a solution consistent with the rule of law", he said.

Throughout his election campaign, Magyar repeatedly pledged to remove the president from office.

He contends that Sulyok failed to fulfill constitutional duties and did not defend opposition supporters during Orban's tenure.

Fidesz warned of "tyranny" and called for the demonstration. Orban, who is still the opposition party's leader, said: "The Tisza Party crosses all boundaries — human, moral and legal. Hungarian voters did not authorize this."

According to the opposition, Sulyok was duly elected in accordance with the Constitution, and his removal would amount to personalized legislation.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:03 PM

WORLD

NATO summit kicks off amid defense push

Pressure mounts on military alliance as trans-Atlantic strains come to the fore

By **WANG MINGJIE** in London
wangmingjie@mail.chinadailyuk.com

NATO started its two-day summit on Tuesday in Ankara, Turkiye, amid protests in the Eurasian capital city against the military alliance's push for higher defense spending, which mounts pressure on Europe's already-strained budget and intensifies tensions between the continent and the United States.

US President Donald Trump, who has been gradually pulling some of US assets and military deployments out of Europe in the past few months, is expected to continue pushing NATO countries to spend 5 percent of their gross domestic product on defense.

Just days ahead of the summit, the president had said it would be "ridiculous" for his country to maintain what he described as its "one-sided" approach to NATO.

The president has at times piled on the pressure by questioning the usefulness and viability of NATO following the nonengagement of European allies in US' conflict with Iran. He recently reignited a feud with Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni when his interest in acquiring Greenland kept unsettling Europe.

Janina Dill, a professor of global security at the University of Oxford's Blavatnik School of Government, said the summit reflects a much broader shift in Europe's strategic landscape, and Europe faces a historic turning point to take far greater responsibility for its own security.

"The system within which Europe has kept itself safe for the last 80 years is gone," she said. "The trans-Atlantic alliance is no longer there for Europe to keep itself safe." She said European countries must deepen their cooperation and significantly increase defense investment if they are to maintain strategic autonomy.

Angel Saz-Carranza, director of EsadeGeo Center for Global Economy and Geopolitics in Spain, said the alliance has adapted to the new political reality and is facing challenges to hold steady.

"The international community should watch whether allies can agree on a clearer division of responsibilities within NATO while keeping the US engaged in European security," he said.

During last year's summit in The Hague, under pressure from the US — which shoulders over 60 percent of NATO expenditure — other states agreed to hike their defense budgets from an average of about 2 percent of national annual GDP to 5 percent, by 2035 — a commitment Spain has refused, and which some countries are adapting to at a slower rate.

Smaller role

As to how the US will stay engaged, Pedro Brinca, an associate professor of macroeconomics at Nova School of Business and Economics in Portugal, said Washington's approach is "repricing its security guarantee" for NATO, while playing its smaller role as a backstop, rather than a first responder.

But even if European allies can fulfill the commitment, turning increased defense budgets into meaningful military capability remains a much greater challenge. Although Europe has launched ambitious initiatives, including the European Union's ReArm Europe Plan and the Security Action for Europe financing mechanism, Brinca said industrial fragmentation continues to undermine efficiency.

"The money is now real. The capability is not yet, and that distinction is the whole story," he said, noting that European NATO members continue to operate different weapons platforms, limiting economies of scale.

Saz-Carranza cautioned that Europe building credible military capabilities of its own will take time.

"The EU is on the right track and should be able to build stronger defense capabilities," he said. "However, this will be a decades-long process, since higher spending will need time to translate into real military capacity."

According to Brinca, disagreements over the recent conflict with Iran and Washington's frustration with some European allies' reluctance to participate militarily have also exposed underlying strains within the alliance.



Israeli activists hold placards in Tel Aviv on Monday during a rally calling for the release of a detained Palestinian doctor. ILIA YEFIMOVICH / AFP

Hamas dissolves administrative body in Gaza Strip

By **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong and **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE

The Palestinian militant group Hamas said on Monday it was dissolving its civilian governing body in Gaza after almost two decades, transferring its responsibilities to the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza, or NCAG.

The head of the government's emergency committee, Mohammed al-Farra, has officially submitted his resignation, Ismail al-Thawabta, head of Hamas' government media office, said in an interview with AFP.

The development comes amid continuous Israeli strikes in the besieged enclave and southern Lebanon despite a US-brokered ceasefire.

Headed by Palestinian technocrat Ali Shaath, the NCAG is a transitional, technocratic, and apolitical Palestinian committee established this January under United Nations Security Council Resolution 2803 (2025) and US President Donald Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict.

Hamas said the dissolution aims to "alleviate the suffering of citizens resulting from the ongoing war ... the delay in reconstruction, the continued siege, the closure of crossings, and the failure of the Israeli army to withdraw", as well as to eliminate pretexts for Israeli interference, Xinhua News Agency reported.

The Palestinian technocratic committee said it was "fully prepared" to assume its responsibilities over the enclave "as soon as the necessary resources and capabilities are available".

Palestinian factions welcomed the dissolution, calling it a sign of commitment to advancing Palestinian reconciliation.

Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar dismissed the move by Hamas as a "trick" in a post on X.

He said Hamas' apparent willingness to make room for a technocratic government is designed to prevent its own disarmament and accused Hamas of seeking "to replicate the Hezbollah model in Gaza", referencing the Lebanese militant group.

Saar said a technocratic administration would be responsible for garbage collection and other municipal services, while Hamas would remain the dominant military force.

'Step forward'

Belal Alakhras, a research fellow at the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, told China Daily that the decision to dissolve Gaza's emergency governing committee "is viewed as a step forward to move out of an impasse" that persisted since the ceasefire was signed last October.

He said that since then, Israel has continued to deal with Gaza in isolation, which only intensified once regional and international attention turned to the US-Israeli war on Iran and its fallout.

Alakhras noted that Israel maintained near-daily strikes that have killed more than a thousand Palestinians since the ceasefire, and expanded its military control to well over half the territory, occasionally using the presence of Hamas as a pretext for its refusal to move to the next phase of the agreement.

He said the dissolution of the civilian governing body has both local and international implications as Hamas is engaging with other local actors and international mediators and guarantors of the ceasefire to take responsibility for alleviating the suffering of the people in Gaza and ensuring the implementation of the agreement.

"The Israeli response by foreign minister (Saar) and other officials who dismissed the move is so telling as it reflects a tendency to continue enforcing the current impasse and isolation," said Alakhras.

"Prolonging the situation can make it even more complicated and possibly propel the Palestinian side to act differently and confront the ongoing hard situation. If the past three years indicate anything, it is that dealing with consequences is not enough, and it can be too risky," he added.

Contact the writers at jan@chinadailyapac.com

Affordability crisis hits US as healthcare, college fees soar

By **CHANG JUN** in San Francisco
junechang@chinadailyusa.com

Achieving the "American dream" may take the painstaking toil of generations, yet it takes only two bills to shatter it: a health insurance premium and a college tuition statement.

For Yang Lin, a data scientist at a Bay Area tech company, this August feels particularly stark. Her daughter is heading to a private college this fall as a freshman while her husband has been out of work since last September. When their company-subsidized health insurance terminated, she shopped around the marketplace and got a monthly quote of $2,400. "Are you kidding me?" she said, adding her daughter's college tuition alone runs $70,000 a year, with another $20,000 for room, board, and a meal plan.

"I'm afraid we are going to go broke," she said quietly. A first-generation immigrant, Lin is now the sole breadwinner for a family of three in one of the most expensive states in the US. "We are a living example of the working American family squeeze," she told China Daily. "I don't have an American Dream. If I have one, it's this: give me affordable health insurance now."

Lin is not alone. Elevated healthcare expenses and the rising cost of living in recent years have become the new normal, and have chronically exerted financial strains upon millions of US families.

According to a survey in 2025 by the West Health-Gallup Center on Healthcare, about 11 percent of US adults admitted that they could not "afford or access quality healthcare", which involved nearly 29 million people, the highest level since 2021.

Classified as "Cost Desperate" in the study, the group is disproportionately made up of Hispanic Americans at 18 percent, black Americans at 14 percent, and households earning under $24,000 annually at 25 percent.

In her 2026 research, Munira Gunja, a scholar at the Commonwealth Fund, and her colleagues found that roughly 8 percent of the US population is uninsured. Due to high deductibles and out-of-pocket costs, Gunja found US citizens are far more likely than people in comparable countries to skip filling a prescription, avoid a diagnostic test, delay treatment, or abandon a care plan their doctor recommended.

Gunja concluded that the causes of the US' "uniquely poor health performance" relative to its peers include the absence of universal coverage, a weak primary care infrastructure, steep out-of-pocket costs, and an insurance system of bewildering complexity.

Amy Liu, a registered nurse at a Santa Rosa, CA-based medical facility, told China Daily that many patients she received during night shifts sought emergency care. It means hospitals are legally required under federal law to provide medical screening and stabilizing treatment, regardless of patients' insurance status or ability to pay.

"Both the patients and the hospitals understand that. I guess that is the only solution for some of the affected families to get some sort of medical assistance," Liu said. "But the cost will not go away. Ultimately, the taxpayers will foot the bill. I regret that the whole medical system is failing Americans, many of them."

Similarly, the college bill is another mountain that tens of thousands of US families are carrying uphill, one that has negatively affected public perception of the merits of undergraduate and graduate education.

"College education, especially (for those) attending high-ranking schools, has become a luxury only the rich and the elite can afford," said Yanzi Luo, a Michigan resident who had to persuade her son to decline an offer from Harvard and attend the University of Michigan instead. "It was a hard decision for the family to make, but the difference between $90,000 and $30,000 a year is reason enough to choose," she said.

China urges end to US embargo against Cuba at UN debate

By **MINLU ZHANG**
at the United Nations
minluzhang@chinadailyusa.com

China on Tuesday voiced support for Cuba at a UN General Assembly debate on the decades-long US economic, commercial and financial embargo against the Caribbean country, saying the measures have caused serious hardship for the Cuban people and should be brought to an end.

The General Assembly voted earlier on Tuesday to proceed with the debate by 136 votes in favor, nine against and 30 abstentions, despite opposition from the United States.

Speaking at the debate, Fu Cong, China's permanent representative to the United Nations, said China supported the convening of the meeting and voted in favor of holding it. The 136 votes in favor "fully demonstrated the aspiration of the international community and the call for justice", he said.

The debate, convened at the request of Cuba, focused on "the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

Fu said the US has, for more than 60 years, imposed an economic blockade and unilateral sanctions on Cuba, "causing enormous suffering to the Cuban state and people".

"Cuba has suffered accumulated losses of more than $170 billion as a result of the blockade, while hospitals, schools, water supply systems, grain storage facilities and other infrastructure related to people's livelihood have come under severe pressure," he said.

Cuba is facing serious fuel shortages, a worsening electricity and energy crisis, and continued obstruction in the supply of medicines, medical equipment and other essential goods, with vulnerable groups such as children and pregnant women bearing a heavy impact, Fu said.

Cuba, which depends heavily on fuel imports, has received only one oil tanker in the past six months, the Russian vessel *Anatoly Kolodkin*, carrying about 100,000 metric tons of crude oil, Xinhua News Agency reported. The country needs about eight fuel tankers a month to maintain normal operations.

"Such acts violate the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, including sovereign equality, the peaceful settlement of international disputes and the prohibition of the use or threat of force," Fu said.

They also "infringe upon the Cuban people's rights to subsistence and development, and undermine the international order based on international law and the basic norms governing international relations", he said.

"China urges the United States to stop its blockade against Cuba and all forms of coercive pressure, and to stop infringing upon the Cuban people's rights to subsistence and development," Fu said.

Fu called on the international community to support Cuba in safeguarding sovereignty, equality and national dignity, and to jointly resist illegal blockades, sanctions and military threats.

He said countries should uphold the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, adhere to sovereign equality, oppose interference in internal affairs, adhere to the peaceful settlement of disputes and oppose the use of force.

"No country can appoint itself as an international policeman, nor can any country style itself as an international judge," Fu said.

"The Chinese people empathize with the suffering of the Cuban people and China will, as always, provide Cuba with support and assistance within its capacity," Fu said.

He called on countries and UN agencies to step up humanitarian assistance to Cuba, help address shortages of fuel, food and medicines, ease the crisis facing the Cuban people and safeguard the bottom line of international humanitarianism.

Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla welcomed the Assembly's decision to hold the debate, saying Cuba rejects the claim that it represents a threat to the United States and condemns Washington's policy of hostility and aggression.

"Cuba is not a threat. Cuba is the nation that is under threat," said Parrilla, noting Cuba's commitment to "peace, international law, multilateralism, truth and justice".

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn

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

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1866

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:03 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

GDP robust despite some headwinds

Experts: Strong stimulus, AI-related investment seen as leading drivers

By **ZHANG CHENXU** and **JIANG XUEQING**

China's economy has shown resilience so far this year in the face of global energy supply shocks, underpinned by strong high-tech investment and robust exports, said the latest China Economic Update of the World Bank Group.

According to the update released on Tuesday, the world's second-largest economy is expected to expand 4.4 percent in 2026, against a backdrop of slowing global growth, which is projected at 2.5 percent for 2026.

With policy support, high-tech investment and buffers against global energy supply disruptions partly offsetting weaker domestic demand in the second quarter, analysts said stronger-than-expected fiscal stimulus and artificial intelligence-related investment could provide additional upside, potentially lifting growth above the current forecast.

China's GDP reached 33.42 trillion yuan ($4.92 trillion) in the first quarter, expanding 5 percent year-on-year in real terms and hitting the upper end of the country's annual growth target range, said the National Bureau of Statistics.

"Net exports contributed 0.8 percentage points to GDP growth, largely driven by strong exports of high-tech products," said the report, titled "Rebalancing Growth".

The high-tech sector also supported investment growth, with investment in the sector rising 4.5 percent year-on-year in the first five months, driven by strong AI-related demand at home and abroad, according to the World Bank.

Exports are expected to remain a key source of support in the second half, said Luo Zhiheng, chief economist and head of the research institute at Yuekai Securities, adding that AI-related demand accounts for about one-fifth of total exports.

"Strong AI momentum will continue to provide a solid underpinning for exports," Luo said.

Cai Fang, a member of academic divisions at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, echoed such optimism. "AI could help China move beyond deflationary pressures, narrow the gap between strong supply and weak demand, and usher in a new growth cycle," Cai said.

Cai added that an annual potential growth rate of between 4.4 percent and 4.8 percent would be "both reasonable and desirable" for China, given its goal of doubling its 2020 per capita GDP by 2035 to reach the level of a moderately developed country.

Deutsche Bank also remains firmly optimistic about the long-term development of the Chinese economy and regards China as a key market in the Asia-Pacific region, said Christian Sewing, CEO at Deutsche Bank, who concluded his visit to the region last week.

"I spent the first couple of days in Beijing and, as always, left feeling energized. The speed of development and thirst for innovation are everywhere, so it's no surprise that it's a key market for both our clients and Deutsche Bank," Sewing said in a post on LinkedIn.

However, the World Bank cautioned that consumption remained subdued and the property sector continued to adjust amid weak housing demand.

"Supportive macroeconomic policies will still be needed in the near term, while structural reforms should advance gradually and fiscal support remains important for sustaining growth," the report said.

Lynn Song, chief economist for China at Dutch bank ING, said more measures to boost consumption could be rolled out, given the prominent role of strengthening domestic demand during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period.

The government has recognized that domestic demand needs to play a larger role in sustaining growth, according to the report.

"Household consumption is expected to play a larger role as China's economy approaches the level of development of high-income countries," it added.

Tatiana Rosito, World Bank Division Director for China, Mongolia and South Korea, said strengthening the social safety net would be key to unlocking greater household consumption.

"Raising benefit levels, extending coverage to informal workers and providing access based on residence could give households the confidence to spend more rather than save," Rosito said.

Contact the writers at zhangchenxu@chinadaily.com.cn



UBTech Robotics recently launched the UWORLD U1 Series — a line of full-size ultra-bionic humanoid robots. HAO FEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Calls for ethical home robot boundaries

By **MA SI**
masi@chinadaily.com.cn

Industry experts and regulators have called for the healthy and orderly development of the humanoid robotics sector, particularly in the emerging field of emotional companionship robots, stressing the need to clearly define ethical boundaries.

The comments came after the China Humanoid Robotics Committee of 100 and the China Machinery Industry Federation jointly issued an initiative on Saturday to guide the development of emotional companionship humanoid robots, urging the industry to collectively practice "technology for good" and promote robust industrial growth.

The initiative comes amid rising public attention to UBTech Robotics' newly launched UWORLD U1 Series — a line of full-size ultra-bionic humanoid robots unveiled on June 30. The series includes the semi-torso U1 Lite for 119,800 yuan ($17,622), the full-body U1 Pro (169,800 yuan), and the high-dynamic U1 Ultra, available in male and female editions.

Cumulative pre-orders have exceeded 13,361 units — more than 10 times the company's total full-size humanoid sales in 2025 — with deliveries set to begin in September.

The robot features 88 degrees of freedom and a proprietary dual-pivot bionic cervical spine, covering 90 percent of basic human movements. It is equipped with an emotional large language model that recognizes over 20 fine-grained emotions with over 90 percent accuracy.

Addressing public concerns over the two- to four-hour battery life, UBTech said that this is "the industry norm for full-size humanoid robots in mass production". On pricing, the company clarified that the U1 Lite and U1 Pro target households and individuals, while the U1 Ultra is designed mainly for commercial scenarios.

UBTech founder and CEO Zhou Jian said the current pricing has a profit margin, but costs may decline with scaled production.

On ethical concerns, UBTech emphasized that its bionic robots are positioned as "emotional companionship" devices — a direction recognized and encouraged by national policies — and explicitly stated they are "not boyfriends, girlfriends or partners".

UBTech has moved to operationalize the initiative's principles ahead of industry consensus. On the launch day in June, it established an artificial intelligence and robotics technology ethics committee, appointing legal expert Yan Jianguo as its chief expert.

The company pledged to fully implement the initiative's core directives, integrating its requirements throughout every stage, from research and development and industrial design to manufacturing, promotion, sales and application deployment.

Zhou outlined a three-stage vision for human-robot symbiosis: first replacing hazardous and repetitive labor; then expanding into daily companionship services; and ultimately achieving seamless human-machine integration. "The ultimate mission of technology is to remove the chains of survival labor, allowing humans to focus on creation, passion and emotion," he said.

Michael Tam, UBTech's chief brand officer, projected that China's ultra-bionic robotics market will surge from tens of billions to the trillion-yuan level between 2026 and 2036.

Pan Helin, a member of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology's Expert Committee for Information and Communication Economy, said humanoid robots have always followed two distinct development paths.

One is the functional humanoid robot — designed for household chores and factory work. The other is the companion/bionic humanoid robot, which focuses on mimicking human facial expressions and gaits. These robots are not built for labor; their purpose is to provide emotional value. At present, these two tracks run in parallel — a robot that can offer emotional companionship cannot perform physical tasks, and a robot capable of labor lacks emotional intelligence. In the future, however, the two technologies will converge into a truly complete humanoid robot, he added.

Briefly

Yuan strengthens against greenback

The central parity rate of the yuan strengthened 12 pips to 6.8054 against the US dollar on Tuesday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System.

Logistics sector sees improved performance

China's logistics sector continued to expand in June, with the logistics business activity index edging up further, according to data released by the China Federation of Logistics and Purchasing. The index tracking the country's logistics market, an indicator of economic vitality, came in at 50.6 percent last month, up 0.3 percentage points from May, the data revealed.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

AI-related hiring rises as roles expand

By **LI JIAYING**
lijiaying@chinadaily.com.cn

Demand for talent in the artificial intelligence sector continued to gather pace in China's campus recruitment market during the first five months of the year, as companies stepped up hiring for AI-related roles and expanded recruitment beyond the internet sector, according to the latest industry reports.

According to a new report released by the Chinese recruitment platform Maimai, the number of campus job fair recruitment openings grew 3.56 percent year-on-year during the first five months — with growth primarily driven by AI-related hiring, which jumped 47.3 percent year-on-year over the same period.

As a result, AI's share of newly posted graduate positions climbed from 26.41 percent in 2025 to 37.56 percent this year, meaning that nearly four out of every 10 campus vacancies now require AI-related capabilities.

"Compared with previous years, the biggest change in this year's campus recruitment is the further expansion of demand for AI talent," said a recruitment employee at tech giant Alibaba. "More than 80 percent of our campus recruitment openings this year are AI-related, spanning frontier areas including large language models, multimodal AI, AI infrastructure and AI applications."

In terms of specific AI skills, based on a semantic analysis of job descriptions for campus recruitment positions posted during the January-May period, LLM skills emerged as the most sought-after AI capability, followed by AI agents, deep learning, machine learning and multimodal AI, the Maimai report showed.

The changing recruitment landscape is also influencing graduates' career choices. While internet giants remain the preferred employers for many students, interest is spreading rapidly toward hard-tech sectors.

According to the Maimai report, ByteDance, Tencent, Meituan and JD remained among the most searched employers by graduates from leading universities. At the same time, manufacturers specializing in areas such as semiconductors and automobiles have also attracted growing attention.

On the demand side, data from another online recruitment platform Zhaopin.com also point to the rapid growth in demand for AI talent beyond the digital economy and into more application scenarios, with 21 percent of campus recruitment demand for AI engineers coming from the high-end equipment and intelligent manufacturing sectors from January to May.

"The figures show that AI technologies are no longer confined to software development or chip design," a representative from the platform said.

"They are increasingly being integrated into the manufacturing sector, becoming foundational technologies that support the entire industrial value chain. This is also creating broader cross-industry career opportunities for highly skilled graduates."



Job seekers line up for interviews at a job market in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, last month. WANG JIANKANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

The rapid spread of AI demand across industries is prompting a rethink of how talent is trained and evaluated.

In the 2026 catalog of undergraduate majors released by the Ministry of Education in April, "interdisciplinary studies" was officially established as a new academic category, bringing together 15 majors in its inaugural intake.

These include 11 existing programs, such as future robotics and interdisciplinary engineering, as well as four newly introduced disciplines, including embodied intelligence and brain-computer science and technology.

The country has also unveiled an "AI+education" action plan, which calls for making AI a foundational course across universities, developing discipline-specific teaching materials and ensuring that all students acquire a basic understanding of AI.

China expanding influence in 5G, robotics

By **ZHENG YIRAN**
zhengyiran@chinadaily.com.cn

China is one of the earliest 5G pioneers and is also an leading player in the fast-evolving technology. It is not the only player, but it is one of the first and by far the largest 5G market, said a top executive.

John Hoffman, CEO and director of GSMA Ltd, said China has moved from "bringing innovation into the country" to "showcasing Chinese innovation to the world".



John Hoffman

"China is able to showcase not only the ability to successfully roll out 5G, but also to begin to commercialize it before anyone else. And that allowed a showcasing of the technology and the early applications and services that others around the world could see, could evaluate and potentially replicate," Hoffman said.

According to a notice released on June 23 by GSMA, China currently accounts for over 40 percent of global 5G connections.

Mobile technologies generated $1.5 trillion in economic value in 2025, equivalent to 7.2 percent of GDP, and are expected to rise to $2.1 trillion by 2030, the notice said.

Sihan Bo Chen, head of China unit at GSMA, said, "Those numbers tell the story of an industry that's moved far beyond connectivity into something much more ubiquitous — a platform for productivity, artificial intelligence-driven services and sustainable economic growth."

MWC26 Shanghai was held from June 24-26 during which a humanoid robot skills challenge took place.

"I don't know how humanoids are going to ultimately develop, but they have come very far in a relatively short period of time. You know, it is not only the convergence of AI and 5G connectivity, but also the mechanics of taking metal and silicone and putting it all together for something new and exciting," Hoffman said.

Hoffman said that a few months ago, when he visited Beijing, he was with a vice-mayor, who was telling him about the second half marathon robotic competition.

He added that the capabilities demonstrated by the robots this year far exceeded expectations.

"So, we're seeing advances at a much faster pace than expected. Based on what I've seen around the world, again, China is one of the global leaders in the development of robotics," Hoffman said.

Huang Tao, an independent expert in AI, said: "The opportunities in China's mobile economy are mainly reflected in the following aspects: the deep integration of 5G with cutting-edge technologies such as AI and robotics; promoting the digital transformation of the industry; and creating new growth points in intelligent manufacturing, smart cities and other fields.

"The continuous expansion of the mobile economy's contribution to GDP is expected to reach $2.1 trillion by 2030, creating market space. Also, the international exchange and cooperation platform gathers top global technology enterprises, promotes technological innovation and industrial synergy, and injects new impetus into the mobile economy."

Huang added, "It should be noted how the mobile economy can integrate with the real economy for development, help humanity overcome some dangerous scenarios while avoiding affecting small and medium-sized enterprises and households, and drive the industry to create more job opportunities."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:03 PM

BUSINESS

Soccer fueling local late-night economy rise

Popular sport brings people together to enjoy food, drinks and camaraderie

By WANG ZHUOQIONG
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn

On a recent late night in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, the sound of sizzling skewers and clinking glasses filled a Baoji barbecue restaurant. Highlights from the 2026 FIFA World Cup were played on a large screen. There was no designated fan zone or special match-night event. The soccer broadcast had simply become part of the restaurant's nightly rhythm.

Li Yuanyuan still remembers when soccer barely mattered to her business. She started with a single street-side BBQ stall. Today she runs more than 20 Baoji BBQ outlets and employs around 300 people. In 2025, her brand sponsored the Nanjing soccer team in the Jiangsu provincial city league, also known as Suchao.

"Prior to getting involved with Suchao, I didn't expect so many fans to come out just for soccer," Li said. "Soccer brings a unique kind of energy that people want to share."

Zhou Li, who runs a local soccer fan group of more than 500 members, was among the diners. He said his summer has revolved around two competitions: the World Cup airing in the early morning hours, and Suchao on weekends.

"Before, people watched games at home on TV or computers," he said. "Now it is part of eating out and hanging out."

A native of Suqian in Jiangsu, Zhou is now based in Nanjing. Every week, the 27-year-old gathers with his soccer friends at a BBQ venue. The gatherings are informal, but frequent enough that "eating skewers, drinking Coke and watching soccer" has become part of everyday life rather than a special occasion.

"This fusion of sports, local retail and catering is unlocking consumption demand," said Jason Yu, general manager of CTR Market Research. "It is translating community vibrancy into domestic consumption growth."

The trend can be seen across China, as more soccer fans are moving from private viewing at home to shared viewing in restaurants, night markets and neighborhood stores.

"Tournament matches of the World Cup take place in the early morning," Yu said. "That shifts viewing into restaurants, delivery and group settings rather than traditional retail hours."

Match nights now reshape operations across several of Li's restaurants. Large screens are installed near dining areas, with colorful decorations when bigger games are on.

"Stores now prepare additional refrigerated inventory before major matches, with beverage demand often peaking around halftime and post-match gatherings," Li said.

Baoji BBQ has embraced both the World Cup and Suchao craze with support from Jiangsu Swire Coca-Cola, which has worked with its stores on soccer-themed consumer experiences during major tournaments such as the World Cup.

The beverage company has supplied the stores with soccer-themed promotional items — including soccer balls, vuvuzelas and themed gifts to help create gathering spaces for soccer fans.

"A stadium is built for watching soccer," she said. "Here, we adapted the space, so people can enjoy the matches while eating together."

Li spoke highly of Coca-Cola's willingness to work with small businesses. "Coca-Cola is widely recognized, and they still spend time working with small business owners like us," Li said.

Working with the multinational has also pushed Li to strengthen operational standards as the business expanded from a roadside stall into a regional chain.

"We've learned a great deal about standardized operations and store management through working with Coca-Cola," she said.

Her business is part of a wider ecosystem of local stores, restaurants and neighborhood businesses that connect global brands with Chinese consumers in everyday life, and Li advised other international brands hoping to deepen their presence in the Chinese market to work closely with local businesses and communities.

Gilles Leclerc, president of The Coca-Cola Company Greater China and Mongolia, said their business in China depends heavily on its local partners.

"These partners in catering and retail sectors are central to how products reach consumers every day," he said. "Coca-Cola has been operating in China for more than 40 years, and throughout that time we've grown alongside local businesses. China is our home ground, and we are committed to growing together with our partners."

As well as directly benefiting local businesses such as Li's, such support also helps drive local consumption and creates jobs. Behind a single soccer viewing night is a broad network of distributors, delivery workers, restaurant staff, refrigeration services, packaging suppliers and neighborhood retailers operating around the extended late-night demand.

Within Coca-Cola's network in China, which spans manufacturing, logistics and retail distribution, the company estimates that each direct job supports an additional eight related roles across the value chain, forming a total of over 310,000 associated jobs.

China has more than 127 million individually owned business households, supporting nearly 400 million jobs across the services sector, according to official data.

As the 2026 FIFA World Cup gets underway in the United States, Canada and Mexico this summer, Coca-Cola China has invited participants from its catering and retail networks, including Li, to attend matches in person.

"When people cheer for a goal with a Coke in hand," said Li, who just returned from Canada, "it doesn't matter if it's a stadium or a small restaurant. It feels like the same passion — people sharing it together."

Back to match nights, Li is among a rising number of restaurant operators who have said that late-night soccer screenings are bringing longer customer stays, higher drink orders and more group dining occasions during tournaments.

Data suggest that where people watch matches has become closely linked to what they consume. That means that the real battleground for beverage producers has shifted from on-screen advertising to the street.

"True channel innovation isn't just about adding shelf space — it's about engineering new occasions," Yu of CTR said.

Jonathan Yan, a partner at global consultancy company Roland Berger, added that the World Cup represents a quintessential high-impact, high-context consumption scenario.

"It naturally drives behaviors such as group viewing and late-night dining, creating a significant uplift across beer, liquor and soft drinks alike," said Yan. "Most importantly, the true value of this scenario-based marketing lies in its ability to strengthen brand mind-share — an asset whose long-term worth far outweighs the gains of short-term sales conversion alone."



World Cup-themed installations are set up at a waterfront complex to create a vibrant soccer atmosphere in Qianhai, Shenzhen, Guangdong province, on June 21. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Chain BBQ outlet owner Li Yuanyuan (left) outside BMO Field stadium in Toronto last month for the match between Canada and Bosnia and Herzegovina. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

World Cup seen driving dynamic consumer ties

By WANG ZHUOQIONG

The 2026 FIFA World Cup is emerging as more than a global sporting event in China, with consumer sentiment, social engagement and brand investment pointing to its evolution into a broader cultural and commercial platform, according to industry reports.

About 59.2 percent of Chinese respondents expressed strong favorability toward the World Cup, according to Kantar's report.

Compared with perceptions three years earlier, consumers increasingly associate the tournament with traits including adventure, ambition and international appeal.

The shift reflects structural changes surrounding the 2026 tournament, including its expansion from 32 to 48 teams, and its first-ever three-nation joint-hosting format across the United States, Canada and Mexico. High-profile cultural programming, opening ceremony initiatives and expanded broadcasting partnerships have further increased the event's ability to generate value beyond the pitch.

The World Cup is increasingly functioning as a content ecosystem, creating opportunities for brands to build both short-term engagement and longer-term consumer connections.

The World Cup continues to command stronger interest among male consumers, but female audiences are showing comparable commercial potential, according to Kantar.

The report's Influencers Monitor data show that 71.8 percent of male respondents in China reported high favorability toward the soccer World Cup, compared with 43.3 percent among women. However, the difference narrows significantly when measuring purchase intention.

Nearly half of female respondents, or 49.3 percent, said they were willing to buy products or services from brands associated with the World Cup, compared with 50.6 percent of male respondents.

The findings suggest the tournament is moving beyond its traditional positioning as a male-focused sports property. Men remain the primary drivers of interest and online discussion, while both male and female consumers contribute to consumption and social sharing.

For marketers, the World Cup is increasingly becoming a broad demographic conversion platform rather than a niche sports audience opportunity, said the report.

Secondly, the report has found that consumer perceptions of the 2026 tournament have shifted notably compared with previous editions, with "adventurous", "boldly forward", "challenging spirit", "international" and "fun" among the attributes showing the strongest growth.

The change reflects the tournament's expanded scale and global format. As the first World Cup hosted by three countries and featuring 48 teams, the event carries a stronger sense of openness, diversity and unpredictability.

Compared with other major sports properties, the World Cup has developed a distinctive emotional appeal, becoming not only a competition, but also a platform for cultural expression.

Social media partnerships are reinforcing that transformation. Platforms including RedNote, an official broadcast and content partner, have helped extend the World Cup experience from passive viewing into user-generated discussion, sharing and participation.

For brands, the strategic focus is shifting from simply capturing event traffic to creating lasting associations with consumers. The tournament is increasingly functioning as a form of social currency.

Therefore, the 2026 World Cup is also demonstrating stronger "topic spillover", with social discussions continuing well after matches conclude, according to monitoring data from CTR.

During the first six days of the tournament, from June 11 to June 16, open social platforms played a central role in content distribution and audience interaction. Weibo accounted for 35 percent of World Cup-related content among major social platforms, while generating more than half of related interactions, according to CTR data.

User engagement patterns show that discussion is not limited to live broadcasts. Interaction peaks appeared around 9 am, with additional increases between 3 pm and 4 pm, and between 9 pm and 11 pm.

Viral content was concentrated during morning, afternoon and evening windows, reflecting a post-match consumption cycle, in which users review scores, highlights and key moments before joining broader conversations, said the CTR finding.

The increase in saves and shares suggests World Cup content is moving beyond immediate exposure toward longer-term circulation, with users preserving and redistributing content as part of ongoing discussions.

Marketing strategies around the 2026 World Cup are increasingly centered on narrative building, soccer culture and consumer touchpoints across multiple scenarios, according to CTR data.

About 81.9 percent of advertisers plan to invest in sports-related assets in 2026, while spending on digital out-of-home media is expected to rise 34.2 percent, driven by demand for more interactive and immersive formats.

The shift reflects a broader change in brand strategy. Rather than treating the World Cup as a temporary traffic opportunity, companies are increasingly using the event to strengthen cultural positioning and deepen consumer relationships.

The brands that benefit most will likely be those able to connect soccer's emotional appeal with their own values, creating experiences that remain relevant after the tournament ends.

As the World Cup expands from a sporting competition into a global content and social platform, the ability to convert short-term attention into lasting brand equity may determine the biggest winners of the 2026 marketing cycle, said the CTR report.



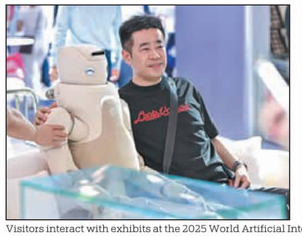
A young soccer fan takes a shot at goal at a dedicated Chinese sports culture booth outside MetLife Stadium in New Jersey, US, on June 16. YIN GANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:03 PM















Visitors interact with exhibits at the 2025 World Artificial Intelligence Conference held in Shanghai from July 26 to 28. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

WAIC
2026世界人工智能大会
WORLD ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE CONFERENCE

By **HU YUYAN**
huyuyan@chinadaily.com.cn

The 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance, set to take place in Shanghai from July 17 to 20, will provide a global stage for fostering collaboration, governance and innovation in the field of AI.

Under the theme "AI Partnership for a Brighter Future", the event aims to highlight AI's transformative potential as a collaborative force while addressing shared challenges and opportunities through international cooperation, cutting-edge research and public engagement.

The conference is jointly organized by national entities such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science and Technology, alongside the Shanghai government. With a focus on the transformation of AI from a technical tool to a collaborative partner, the event aims to boost global governance and shared growth of cities and industries.

"China looks forward to taking the conference as an opportunity to further strengthen international cooperation on AI with all parties," said Zhou Haibing, deputy head of the National Development and Reform Commission, at a recent news conference.

Zhen emphasized that AI governance is a global issue vital to the future of humanity, adding that China remains steadfast in its commitment to multilateralism, openness and inclusivity.

By promoting international cooperation and offering Chinese solutions to global AI-related challenges, the country aims to balance growth and security, ensuring that AI development serves the greater good, the senior official noted.

Unprecedented scale

This year's WAIC is set to achieve new milestones in scale and influence, bringing together over 1,400 prominent guests, including leading industry figures, top executives and venture capitalists. Twelve national ministries and commissions, eight key national laboratories, more than 10 international organizations, over 10 prestigious research institutes and 20-plus world-class universities will all take part. This edition marks a record-breaking gathering of professional expertise and industry influence in the event's history.

Complementing the extensive conference agenda is an exhibition that spans 100,000 square meters across three key locations in Shanghai. The Shanghai World Expo Exhibition and Convention Center will act as a comprehensive display hub for AI applications, enabling companies to showcase a wide range of solutions across multiple industries. Meanwhile, the West Bund area will offer a futuristic technology exploration area, and the Zhangjiang area will emphasize smart infrastructure as a driving force for innovation.

This exhibition will boast participation by more than 1,100 companies from across the globe, collectively presenting over 3,000 advanced exhibits. Among these, more than 300 new AI solutions are set to make their global debut.

Furthermore, key categories — such as intelligent computing and embodied AI — will feature contributions from upwards of 200 companies each, showcasing the scope and depth of entrepreneurship in the field.

This year, 180 one-person companies, or OPCs, and startups representing the most dynamic and fast-growing areas of AI innovation will showcase their outcomes. Selected from a pool of 1,200 applicants, these companies are largely focused on industry applications, embodied and terminal AI solutions, infrastructure, and cutting-edge technologies. The first two sectors have emerged as particularly competitive arenas.

Creative format

A groundbreaking component of this year's conference is the debut of WAIC Academic, a high-level international academic forum that represents a significant milestone for AI scholarship. As one of the most closely watched initiatives of the event, WAIC Academic will feature a world-class lineup spearheaded by Turing Award recipients and renowned academicians from China and beyond.

To date, the forum has received 332 paper submissions, of which 284 have been accepted. The contributions come from more than 10 countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, Singapore, France and Spain.

Participating institutions include renowned international universities such as Princeton, Cambridge, Imperial College London and Nanyang Technological University, along with top Chinese universities such as Tsinghua University, Peking University, Shanghai Jiao Tong University and Fudan University.

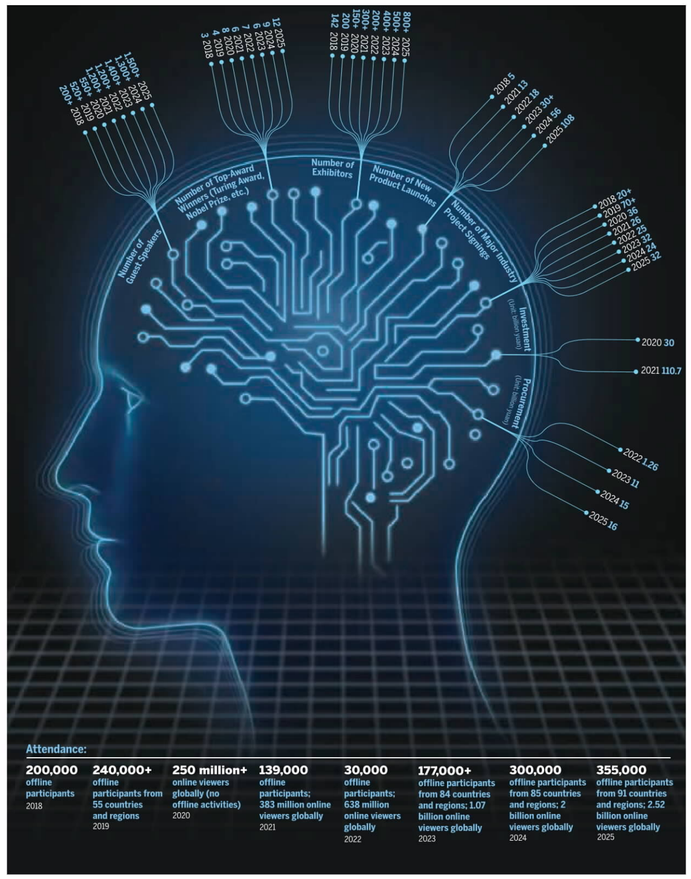
To invigorate innovation and cultivate young talent, the conference has revamped its awards system, which includes the SAIL (Super AI Leader) Award, the Young Outstanding Paper Award and the Yunfan Award.

New initiatives include an OPC challenge and a youth-focused competition designed to encourage individual innovation, as well as a host of AI-themed events tailored for younger participants. These efforts are aimed at nurturing the next generation of leaders, bridging the gap between theory and practice, and empowering promising talents to shape the future of AI innovation.

In addition to its industry-led events, WAIC 2026 will engage directly with the public through its innovative WAIC City Walk program. This initiative invites Shanghai's residents and visitors to explore AI applications in their daily lives via six curated thematic routes.

These routes connect more than 30 unique AI-focused landmarks, including shopping malls, museums, experience centers and neighborhoods, spread across 16 districts in Shanghai. By transforming the entire city into an interactive exhibition space, the program allows people to experience the tangible benefits of AI and its role in facilitating Shanghai's ongoing digital transformation.

From global AI governance discussions to localized industry applications, and from large-scale exhibitions to inclusive community activities, WAIC 2026 promises to present AI development in its most dynamic and multifaceted forms. By integrating themes of global governance, academic excellence, industrial collaboration and public engagement, the conference sets a bold vision for the next phase of AI development.



Event drives world's intelligent transformation

By **HU YUYAN**

The World Artificial Intelligence Conference has, over the past eight years, established itself as a premier platform for showcasing cutting-edge advancements and emerging trends in AI. By bringing together more than 8,100 scholars, industry leaders and technical experts from around the world, the WAIC reflects the maturation of AI into a global force across industries, science and governance.

Since its inaugural session in 2018, the WAIC has focused on positioning AI as a driver of industrial transformation. It has witnessed China's remarkable AI journey while providing a shared stage for global AI technology exchanges, product showcases and regulatory discussions.

These efforts have been reinforced by China's 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25), which identifies AI as pivotal for advancing digital progress nationwide. The WAIC has become instrumental in showcasing this strategic positioning, serving as a testing ground for cutting-edge ideas, trend forecasting and practical applications.

Global engagement

In 2026, the visits of multiple state leaders to China and the agreement between China and the United States to launch intergovernmental dialogues on AI highlight that AI governance is now a critical topic in global relations. The future of AI should not be defined in isolation by any single entity but rather through inclusive collaboration that addresses the diverse needs of humanity, according to the WAIC's organizers.

The WAIC has emerged as a crucial platform for advancing these visions. Each year, the event provides a venue where ideas on global AI governance are translated into concrete plans. Initiatives such as the Shanghai Declaration on Global AI Governance and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization's Global Alliance on Artificial Intelligence for Industry and Manufacturing were launched at the WAIC, underscoring the event's role in shaping international AI policies.

In addition to fostering high-level agreements, the WAIC has developed an ecosystem that addresses specific needs within the international AI community. By anchoring its initiatives in thought leadership, youth empowerment, innovation incubation, cross-border engagement and industry matchmaking, the conference acts as a catalyst for sustainable growth and collaboration.



A robot serves soft drinks as a crowd of visitors take photographs at WAIC 2025. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

For example, the event's first publication, WAIC UP! delves into the technological and humanistic questions surrounding AI. It has become a space for diverse voices, featuring Turing Award laureates, academicians, artists, designers and other creative thinkers. The signature event, WAIC UP! Night, has garnered nearly 6 million online views.

The WAIC also recognizes the importance of preparing the next generation to engage with AI by introducing WAIC YOUNG. Open to young people worldwide, the initiative features events such as When AI Meets Intangible Cultural Heritage, AI-generated music challenges and robot dog races, inspiring technological imagination among the youth.

Moreover, the WAIC has worked to create opportunities for smaller innovators worldwide with its WAIC Future Tech section. In 2025, this section showcased more than 200 projects from startups around the world. Over half of the founders were from the post-1990 generation and 70 percent of the projects had been established for less than three years. By organizing 60 pitch events, WAIC 2025 connected these projects with 200 investors, securing intended orders worth 268 million yuan ($39.43 million).

While China's AI industry has gained significant ground domestically, entering global markets has remained challenging due to trust deficits, high barriers to entry and limited cross-border collaboration. The WAIC has sought to overcome these obstacles through the AI GRAVITY program, which builds sustainable and trustworthy networks for global AI cooperation.

In 2025, AI GRAVITY expanded its reach into AIMX Singapore, hosting more than 3,000 visitors and over 200 supply-demand matchmaking meetings. Chinese enterprises such as AGIBOT and Alibaba International leveraged this opportunity to establish a stronger presence in Southeast Asia.

WAIC CONNECT, the official industry matchmaking platform of the conference, aligns real-world needs with mature technological solutions. Positioned as a "global AI industry super connector", WAIC CONNECT leverages one-on-one, in-depth services provided by industry veterans to build an efficient and reliable collaboration ecosystem for various industries.

WAIC CONNECT 2025 brought together more than 100 premium demand-side entities from eight fields, including urban renewal, global expansion, healthcare and smart finance, among others. In the global expansion section, participants included the United Arab Emirates' G2S Satellite & AI Technology Company and Jordan's Maher Yousef Commercial Group.

Platform for innovation

Beyond fostering international collaboration, the WAIC has showcased groundbreaking innovations and accelerated the integration of technological advancements into industries. The evolution of its exhibition framework illustrates the transformation of AI from foundational development to real-world applications and integration into the physical world.

The WAIC has consistently spotlighted advancements in foundational technologies, which are the bedrock of the AI industry. Its inaugural edition in 2018 introduced a dedicated zone for chips. Since then, domestic computing power has increasingly come into the spotlight, spanning training chips, inference chips and heterogeneous computing platforms. Companies such as Huawei, Cambricon and Horizon Robotics have gained visibility at the conference.

In recent years, the focus has expanded from standalone achievements to integrated solutions. Around 2022, the landscape shifted toward an integration of "chips + platforms + applications". High-computing-power GPUs, or graphics processing units, industrial simulation platforms, AI for Science pre-trained models and drug development platforms were prominently featured at the WAIC. This signified that AI had evolved beyond merely being a tool for image recognition and speech comprehension; it is now engaged in complex scientific computations, industrial simulations, and research and development processes.

In 2023, the global wave of generative AI solidified the WAIC's stature as a premier stage for large model demonstrations, showcasing innovations such as liquid-cooled clusters for AI-generated content developed by Chinese and international players. The conference not only reflected the rise of generative AI but also marked a transition in competition from simply developing models to ensuring their training stability, inference performance and large-scale deployment.

At WAIC 2025, enterprises showcased a new trend where large models were transitioning from capability demonstrations to engineering, commercialization and globalization. Features such as long-context processing, video generation and voice interaction were driving AI's evolution from being "usable" to "user-friendly".

The first eight WAICs captured the pulse of global AI developments — from generative AI to AI agents and industrial intelligence. As AI continues to advance, the WAIC evolves alongside it, solidifying its place as a global hub for the next wave of intelligent transformation.

What they say



Do not compete with Google, Baidu and Microsoft in general-purpose AI. Focus on fields where you already have deep expertise.
Andrew Ng
Founder of DeepLearning.AI



In the future, AI will make work lose its meaning. People should study engineering, physics or jobs involving human-to-human interaction.
Elon Musk
Co-founder and CEO of Tesla



To achieve AI for Good, AI must be knowable, controllable and reliable.
Pony Ma
Co-founder, chairman and CEO of Tencent



How to achieve collaboration between artificial agents and human agents is a challenge that goes far beyond human-computer interaction.
Joseph Sifakis
Turing Award laureate



Mathematics is the foundation of AI development. In turn, the development of AI can also provide important support for mathematical research.
Shing-Tung Yau
Fields Medal winner



Today's large language models are not the path to AGI; self-supervised learning is. ChatGPT does not truly understand the real world, and world models are the next key direction.
Yann LeCun
Turing Award laureate



Compared with the foundation models we have today, application models are still not good enough; compared with the computing power we have today, our foundation models are still not good enough; and compared with the power supply we have today, our computing power is still not good enough. So there is no need to worry about the power issue.
Wang Jian
Academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering



Major countries should build an international network to study how to train AI systems to be content with assisting humans — rather than replacing or destroying them — even if AI becomes vastly more intelligent than people.
Geoffrey Hinton
Turing Award and Nobel Prize laureate

ADVERTORIAL

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:03 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

For those fussing over China's lawful missile test: a tranquil conscience sleeps in thunder

The Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy announced on Monday that a strategic nuclear submarine had successfully launched a missile carrying a dummy warhead that landed precisely within the designated waters of the Pacific Ocean.

The test launch, part of the PLA Navy's annual training program, with relevant countries notified in advance, complied with international law and international practice, and was not directed at any specific country or target, the PLA Navy said.

Nonetheless, the test stirred up a flurry of baseless "accusations" from Japan, NATO and other parties keen on overinterpreting what was a straightforward legal action. They are attempting to mislead the international community by distorting China's legitimate action.

China is unwavering in its commitment to peaceful development and a self-defensive nuclear policy. Its nuclear forces are maintained at the minimal threshold required for national security, and any excessive interpretation by relevant countries is both unwarranted and unnecessary.

China's no-first-use policy has been the cornerstone of its nuclear strategy, setting it apart from the doctrines of other nuclear powers. By reinforcing its sea-based second-strike capability, a vital component of its "nuclear triad" of strategic nuclear forces, China is fortifying a deterrent. This deterrent is designed to negate the dangerous logic of "absolute military superiority", which some countries rashly pursue in the Asia-Pacific.

The irony is that finger-pointing parties, such as Japan, are clearly employing double standards, as they remain silent when their allies conduct multiple missile tests in the South Pacific.

Despite carefully cultivating an image of "nuclear victimhood", Japan's right-wing forces have been accumulating the materials and know-how required for nuclear weapons production. This pursuit stands in stark contrast to their willful silence on the nuclear nonproliferation implications of the AUKUS submarine arrangement, exposing a troubling inconsistency in their position.

Unsurprisingly, Japan has emerged as a cheerleader for the outcry against China's missile test. Under the Sanae Takaichi government, Tokyo has markedly accelerated its remilitarization drive, citing alleged "threats" from its neighbors as a pretext. In doing so, Japan has consistently engaged in provocative actions of various kinds, undermining regional stability.

In the latest move demonstrating its continued restraint, the China Coast Guard issued warnings and took lawful action to expel a Japanese boat that had trespassed into the territorial waters of Chiwei Island, part of China's Diaoyu Islands, on Tuesday.

This followed an incident four days ago, when Chinese vessels conducting scientific research in adjacent waters encountered Japanese harassment. As Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said on Tuesday, the operations of Chinese scientific research vessels in the waters surrounding the Diaoyu Islands constitute the legitimate exercise of China's sovereign rights and jurisdiction, are fully consistent with international law, and are beyond reproach. China firmly opposes Japan's interference in these lawful activities and has lodged solemn representations with Japan.

Japan's defense minister is at the NATO summit in Ankara, Turkiye, this week pushing hard to bring the alliance's war machinery into the Asia-Pacific — and NATO, eager to exploit Japan's military budget, is more than happy to play along. So it was only expected that Japan and NATO would join hands to make a fuss over China's missile test.

Beijing made clear the test was not aimed at any third party, yet those who owe historical debts to China — and those who harbor ill designs against it — can hardly hide their deep anxiety over Beijing's advanced strategic arsenal. That anxiety says nothing about a "China threat"; it says everything about Japan and NATO's own uneasy consciences.

By enhancing its strategic deterrence capabilities, China seeks to dissuade external forces and their allies from resorting to extreme military pressure that could undermine regional stability. All peace-loving nations clearly recognize China as a steadfast defender of regional peace — and those who choose to rattle their sabers at Beijing stand on the opposite side of that commitment.

Unicorn surge outcome of holistic ecosystem

China has expanded the number of its unicorn start-ups to 381 as of early last month, 38 more than the same time last year, cementing its position as the world's second-largest home for billion-dollar start-ups, according to the latest Global Unicorn Index 2026 released by Hurun Research Institute.

Eight years ago, the world's unicorn economy revolved around e-commerce. It then shifted toward fintech. Today, artificial intelligence has become the new gravitational center, with semiconductors, robotics, life sciences and new energy forming the next layer of high-tech competition. China has not merely participated in this transition, but also has become one of its principal architects.

According to Hurun rankings, China's unicorn count has risen from roughly 227 companies six years ago. This year's report records 80 new Chinese unicorns — roughly one every five days — while 26 graduated through public listings, the highest number of exits in five years, and some downgraded or closed. This reflects a healthier entrepreneurial pipeline in related industries in which successful companies are continually replaced by younger innovators.

DeepSeek's rise from its founding in 2023 to become one of the world's most valuable AI start-ups illustrates how quickly new technological champions can emerge when research capability, capital and market demand reinforce one another.

The real story is about ecosystems. Innovation flourishes when universities generate ideas, entrepreneurs commercialize them, investors provide patient capital and markets supply continuous feedback. China's increasingly integrated innovation ecosystem has quietly become its unique comparative advantage.

This reflects a sophisticated environment for innovation. Successful start-ups require not merely abundant capital but dense networks of talent, experienced founders, universities, industrial partners and sophisticated customers. They also depend upon what venture investors increasingly describe as "patient capital" — investors willing to tolerate uncertainty rather than demand immediate profitability. China's combination of government guidance funds, private venture capital and abundant application scenarios has gradually built precisely such an environment.

Rather than picking a handful of national champions, policy aims to cultivate entire innovation layers across sectors, allowing thousands of smaller enterprises to experiment across AI, semiconductors, biotechnology, brain-computer interfaces and 6G.

Equally important is the relationship between innovation and opening-up. China's AI companies continue contributing to global open-source communities. Robotics companies source technologies internationally while exporting competitive products. Foreign entrepreneurs continue relocating manufacturing to China because its industrial ecosystem remains exceptionally efficient.

The combination of global knowledge and domestic industrial capability creates what is being called "China Opportunity 2.0", which refers to participation in one of the world's fastest-moving innovation arenas and not just access to China's superlarge market.

At a time when international supply chains face growing uncertainty, China continues emphasizing high-standard opening-up, deeper international innovation cooperation and integration into global industrial networks. Rather than presenting technological development as a zero-sum contest, China is proving that advanced manufacturing, AI, green technologies and digital infrastructure can generate shared opportunities for international partners.

Statistics show that R&D investment in China by multinational corporations accounted for 14.3 percent of their total global R&D spending last year, and 14,000 new foreign-invested enterprises were established in China's scientific research and technical services sector, a year-on-year increase of 27.2 percent.

History shows that long-term innovation strengths depend less on "small yards, high fences" than on creating systems capable of generating repeated entrepreneurial experiments. That may ultimately explain why attempts to isolate China technologically have produced fewer results than many expected. Restrictions cannot break the increasingly dense connections linking Chinese laboratories, venture capital, manufacturers, digital platforms and enormous domestic markets.

The lesson to be drawn from Hurun's latest rankings is not triumphalist but structural. Countries build innovation power by constructing ecosystems. Judged by that standard, China's unicorn boom is less an extraordinary event than the increasingly predictable outcome of a system that has never ceased evolving — and one that continues to invite the world to grow alongside it.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Shi Yu



Opinion Line

Stage play on space scientist passes on pioneering spirit

Having covered China's space industry for 15 years, I have read extensively about the life of Qian Xuesen — the founding father of China's missile and space programs, who is also known as Hsue-Shen Tsien in the West.

Yet two weeks ago, when I watched the play *People's Scientist Qian Xuesen*, produced by China Aerospace Science and Industry Corp, I came across little-known facts about his extraordinary journey.

The play retraces Qian's return to China from the United States, his pivotal role in building China's space industry from scratch, and his leadership in developing multiple ballistic missile models. Since Qian had taken part in the US' missile program, the US had put him under house arrest after the founding of the People's Republic of China and banned him from leaving the US to engage in military programs elsewhere. When the house arrest was lifted as part of a deal between China and the US, Qian returned to China.

What struck me most was how the theatrical form breathes life into historical facts. Also, there could not have been a better time — we just celebrated the 105th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China on July 1, and this October marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of China's space industry — to honor Qian.

When the People's Republic of China was founded, it started with virtually nothing in space science and technology. Qian and a handful of missile technology experts led teams of young engineers to pioneer the nation's missile programs.

There is a well-known story: when General Chen Geng, then deputy chief of the general staff of the People's Liberation Army and president of the PLA Military Academy of Engineering, asked Qian whether Chinese people were capable of developing missiles, he replied in a resolute manner, "Foreigners can do it. Why can't we? Are Chinese people lesser than them?"

This unyielding spirit is just what we need at a time when some foreign countries have imposed technological blockades on China. The goal is clear: to build China's science and technology sector into a world-leading force.

China has already made remarkable strides in its space journey. The Chang'e 5 mission returned with moon samples; the Chang'e 6 mission returned with samples from the far side of the moon; the country has launched a Mars exploration mission, built its own space station and the Beidou satellite navigation system, and launched numerous satellites to support economic development and national defense.

However, becoming a world-class space power requires not only hardware strength, but also strong, appealing soft power — and this remains a weak point for our space sector, particularly in the international public-opinion arena.

To address this, we must first strengthen our efforts at "space soft power" among the Chinese public. It is not enough to publish more news articles or produce more documentaries. What we need is a comprehensive space cultural system that encourages researchers, enthusiasts and young people to engage with popular culture about our space programs, through diverse and flexible forms such as animation, music, films and stage plays.

In this sense, CASIC's new play is an excellent, innovative attempt. Notably, all its creators and performers are employees of the State-owned conglomerate, who are able to tell Qian's story from an insider's perspective with genuine emotion. Their creative interpretation makes the historical figure more approachable and inspiring, giving the work strong emotional appeal and communicative power.

I sincerely hope that CASIC will take this play to a wider audience. For anyone interested in China's space program, this production is well worth watching — it not only tells a touching story of dedication, but also reminds us of the spiritual roots that have driven China's rise in outer space over the past 70 years.

— ZHAO LEI, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Carbon goals will drive high-quality development

Editor's note: *China's carbon peaking and neutrality goals should steer the transformation and upgrading of the country's economic structure. Yu Zhaowu, a researcher at the Department of Environmental Science and Engineering at Fudan University, and Zhu Keli, founding director of the China Institute of New Economy, shared their insights on what the dual carbon goals mean for China's economy. Below are excerpts of their comments, as reported by the Chengdu-based Hongxing News. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

China's carbon peaking goal is more than an environmental target. It is a fundamental driver of high-quality economic development. In the future, green and low-carbon development will be a core task for urban planning, industrial upgrading, the energy transition and technological innovation.

Today, carbon emissions constraints affect production, circulation and consumption. This is making the economy shift from the traditional development model of high energy consumption and high emissions toward a high-quality path of resource conservation and green growth.

When local governments formulate their respective action plans for the development of local industries, industrial parks and the energy sector, they should prioritize controlling both the intensity and total volume of carbon emissions. They should also focus on increasing the share of non-fossil energy in the total energy consumption and reducing carbon emissions in key industries.

They should establish assessment mechanisms to evaluate the carbon emissions of new projects before they are launched. They should include a strict evaluation of the energy efficiency and carbon footprints of high-energy-consuming projects.

At the same time, governments should formulate plans for developing green sectors such as wind and solar power and energy storage, and set their own timelines for achieving carbon peaking based on local natural resources.

Market-based measures, such as carbon emissions trading, green finance and green procurement, should continue to play their roles to promote the green transition of companies, encouraging investments in energy-saving retrofits, green power, carbon capture and eco-friendly materials.

The shift toward a green economy will drive the eco-friendly upgrading of nearly all industries, giving rise to many new sectors, including new energy, energy storage, green building, ecological restoration and carbon management services.

The transition will also create numerous new occupations, including carbon accounting, environmental, social and governance management and smart energy management. Urban development, in particular, will require interdisciplinary talents skilled in ecology, data and artificial intelligence. Essentially, the green economy will generate new productive forces and create high-quality jobs.

A unified, scientific and transparent carbon emissions statistics and accounting system is also needed. Carbon assessments should not focus merely on short-term emissions reduction, but also on long-term green capacity building.

A differentiated assessment mechanism should also be put in place. Regions vary widely in their development stages, industrial structures and natural resources. Targeted policies should be rolled out to balance carbon reduction with efforts to ensure economic growth, so that the green transition will act as a driving force rather than a hindrance for high-quality development.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:03 PM

VIEWS

Ding Duo

Invalid 'arbitral award' muddied South China Sea



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

It's been 10 years since the arbitral tribunal constituted under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) issued the so-called South China Sea "arbitral award" on July 12, 2016, but some scholars — particularly those from claimant states — continue to celebrate it as a decisive clarification that reshaped the maritime claims and long-standing disputes in the region.

Recent commentary by some regional scholars reflects this narrative. They assert that the award forced adjustments in claims, marginalized China's "nine-dash line", and emerged as an influential legal framework that smaller states are codifying into domestic law.

These portrayals not only overstate the award's legal weight but fundamentally misrepresent the very nature of the South China Sea disputes.

The South China Sea disputes essentially relate to territorial sovereignty over islands, reefs and other features.

Although UNCLOS was not designed to adjudicate such disputes, the tribunal acted ultra vires by attempting to address these issues indirectly through the back door of maritime entitlements.

The 2016 "award" did not clarify UNCLOS, but distorted it. More importantly, by pretending to deal solely with maritime questions while quietly undermining the territorial foundations of China's claims, the tribunal evaded — and in effect prejudged — the central issue of sovereignty. This evasion is the main reason why the "award" is illegitimate, non-binding on China and ultimately harms regional peace and stability.

As its name suggests, UNCLOS governs maritime zones, navigation, resource exploitation and environmental protection. It does not confer or determine title to land territory. Article 298 explicitly allows states to exclude disputes relating to "historical title" and maritime delimitation from compulsory dispute settlement procedures.

China exercised this right. The 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties between China and ASEAN members further commits all parties to resolve disputes through negotiation and consultation, not unilateral arbitration.

The Philippines' submissions to the tribunal were framed as questions about the status of features and the legality of certain activities. But in reality, they clearly aimed to challenge China's sovereignty over specific islands and reefs, particularly in the Nansha Qundao and Huangyan Dao.

Despite China's explicit objections and the fact that there were sovereignty disputes involved, the tribunal decided to proceed on the matter.

This was a brazen violation of the principle of state consent, which is the cornerstone of international adjudication.

As detailed in the Chinese Society of International Law's comprehensive 2018 Critical Study, the tribunal manifestly lacked jurisdiction over the Philippines' claims because they concerned territorial sovereignty, a matter outside the scope of UNCLOS.

By extending jurisdiction on this matter, the tribunal crossed a red line. It effectively treated the sovereignty of land features as irrelevant, while issuing rulings on maritime entitlements that could only make sense if sovereignty had already been assumed or denied. This was not neutral interpretation; it was an overreach that politicized the dispute settlement mechanism and set a dangerous precedent for other regions.

Any serious analysis of the South China Sea disputes must begin with the question of territorial sovereignty. China's claims over the islands are rooted in centuries of discovery, naming, administration and effective control. Historical records from the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220) onward document Chinese knowledge and use of these islands. Successive Chinese governments exercised jurisdiction through patrols, fishing regulation, and mapping.

After World War II ended, China recovered the islands from Japanese occupation in accordance with the Cairo Declaration and Potsdam Proclamation. The nine-dash line, first published in 1947-48, reflected this historical title and the geographic extent of China's sovereign rights and jurisdiction.

The disputes largely emerged after the 1960s and 1970s, when certain countries began occupying features in the Nansha Qundao that had long been under Chinese jurisdiction or were unoccupied.

Vietnam expanded its presence on features in the 1970s and 1980s, while the Philippines occupied several features in the 1970s. These developments occurred against the backdrop of China's consistent assertion of sovereignty. The core disagreement remains unchanged: who owns the islands and reefs themselves?

But the 2016 tribunal attempted to sidestep this critical issue by focusing instead on "maritime entitlements" resulting from the features. Maritime entitlements flow from sovereignty over land territory under the principle of *la terre domine la mer*, which means that land dominates sea.

Without resolving the sovereignty question, any ruling on whether a feature generates an exclusive economic zone or continental shelf is inherently flawed and potentially prejudicial.

The tribunal's classification of most Nansha features as "rocks" under Article 121(3), entitled only to a 12-nautical-mile territorial sea, effectively reduced the maritime entitlements of China's territory without ever adjudicating the underlying title.

This was a classic case of deciding the consequences while evading the cause.

China's position is clear that it has consistent sovereignty over the islands and reefs of the four island groups (Nansha Qundao, Xisha Qundao, Zhongsha Qundao and Dongsha Qundao) within the nine-dash line, the maritime zones generated by those features under UNCLOS, and the historical rights in the surrounding waters.

The emphasis on Nansha Qundao as an integrated archipelago is not a post-2016 adjustment but a consistent legal and geographic position.

Some regional scholars' claims that China was "forced" to abandon the nine-dash line misread both history and official positions. The nine-dash line remains a valid expression of historical rights, while the articulation of island-group claims simply reflects the need to clarify entitlements in accordance with modern legal categories while preserving the foundation of sovereignty.

The tribunal's treatment of historical rights was particularly egregious. It ruled that historical rights incompatible with UNCLOS would be superseded. This interpretation ignored the fact that historical rights in the law of the sea predate and exist alongside UNCLOS as part of general international law and are preserved unless they directly conflict with the Convention's specific regimes.

China's historical rights in the South China Sea — traditional fishing grounds, seasonal resource use, and navigational practices — fall squarely within this legal tradition. By denying them outright, the tribunal not only erred legally but also disregarded the historical reality that many coastal states, including those now criticizing China, have long invoked similar historical rights in other regions.

On Article 121(3), the tribunal introduced novel and overly restrictive criteria that departed from State practice. It discounted the capacity of features when considered as part of an archipelago and ignored evidence of historical human habitation and economic life.

The ruling effectively stripped most Nansha features of significant maritime entitlements, thereby prejudicing the very sovereignty claims that depend on those entitlements.

This approach was inconsistent with how other states treat similar features and ignored the principle that maritime delimitation must take into account all relevant circumstances, including historical title and the configuration of coasts and islands.

These were not minor technical errors, but structural mistakes. By refusing to confront the territorial sovereignty dimension head-on, the maritime "rulings" of the tribunal became detached from the geographic and historical reality on the ground.

Those biased scholars highlight domestic legislation in the Philippines and submissions by Malaysia and others as evidence that the "award" is "not a dead letter". But these moves are selective and unilateral legal interpretations that sidestep the sovereignty issues at the core of the dispute.

The Philippines' 2024 Maritime Zones Act, for instance, attempts to legislate maritime entitlements around features whose sovereignty remains contested. Such actions by no means validate the "award"; they only illustrate how certain parties have tried to use the ruling to advance maximalist claims and complicate negotiations.

China's position of non-acceptance, non-participation, non-recognition, and non-implementation of the "award" is not a breach of international law. It is the legitimate exercise of a sovereign state's right when compulsory procedures are invoked in violation of agreed mechanisms and in matters relating to territorial sovereignty. Non-compliance with an illegitimate ruling does not undermine the rule of law, whereas enforcing such a "ruling" against a non-consenting party does.

Far from bringing clarity or promoting restraint, the 2016 "award" has provided external powers a convenient pretext to intervene, nudged certain claimants to pursue unilateral actions, and encouraged the framing of disputes in zero-sum legal terms rather than through pragmatic diplomacy.

The viable path forward lies in addressing the territorial sovereignty issues directly through bilateral negotiations between the states directly concerned, while advancing practical cooperation on maritime issues via the Code of Conduct process under the DOC framework.

China has consistently advocated this dual-track approach: settle sovereignty and delimitation disputes through peaceful negotiation, and manage daily differences through rules and mechanisms. This respects the historical and legal reality that territorial title cannot be created or extinguished by arbitral fiat, especially one lacking jurisdiction.

Ten years on, the 2016 "arbitral award" stands not as a clarifying milestone but as a politically motivated document that evaded the essential question of territorial sovereignty while issuing sweeping and erroneous conclusions on maritime entitlements.

It has neither clarified UNCLOS nor contributed to lasting stability. Instead, it has highlighted the dangers of bypassing state consent and historical title in complex, sovereignty-laden disputes.

The South China Sea will remain peaceful and stable not because of the flawed so-called "arbitral rulings", but because the countries concerned continue to engage in dialogue, exercise restraint, and seek mutually acceptable arrangements that respect each other's legitimate rights and interests.

China remains committed to this course while firmly defending its territorial sovereignty and maritime rights in the South China Sea — rights that predate and will outlast any single, contested legal proceeding.

The author is the director of the Center for International and Regional Studies, National Institute for South China Sea Studies.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Jean-Loup Chappelet and Zhang Beier

Sporting events playing with environment's health

The FIFA World Cup 2026 which began on June 11 and will run till July 19, is set to be the largest sporting event so far in history.

While its scale is unprecedented — with 104 matches hosted across 16 cities in the United States, Canada, and Mexico — its environmental impact is also expected to be the greatest ever.

Numerous scientific studies indicate that transportation accounts for three-quarters of the environmental impact of a sporting event. Although prohibitive ticket prices and strict US visa restrictions may limit international spectators, those wishing to see multiple matches are likely to travel by air between 16 cities that are quite far apart, such as Mexico City, Toronto, New York, Los Angeles, Miami and Seattle.

Traditionally, the World Cup is hosted in a single country over a month-long period, as seen in South Africa (2010), Brazil (2014) and Russia (2018).

This year, it is being co-hosted by three countries of North America. In 2030, the tournament will be held across three continents and six countries. Centenary matches will be held in Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay, before the tournament moves to Morocco, Portugal, and Spain. The geographical dispersion will end in 2034, when only Saudi Arabia hosts the tournament.

Meanwhile, the expansion in the number of teams in the final tournament from 32 to 48 has increased the number of matches.

While the number of matches has increased from 64 in 2022 to 104 in 2026, teams are based far from the cities where they will play matches. The Iranian team was based in Mexico, and its first match was in the US.

The environmental impact, particularly from transportation, is proportional to the duration of the event and the number of teams, matches and spectators.

With 104 matches, the 2026 World Cup will have a significantly higher environmental impact than the 2022 tournament in Qatar, which featured only 64 matches and took place within an area smaller than Beijing.

FIFA seems more interested in the enhanced ticket revenue that more matches will bring.

Global Lens

Major sporting events should place greater emphasis on sustainability when choosing locations because the proliferation of events cannot continue indefinitely.

The only upside for the environment is that the 2026 World Cup is using existing stadiums, though they are spread out, necessitating considerable travel.

In comparison, the Olympics have traditionally been held over 17 days in a single city or region, with fewer tourists requiring long-distance travel. For instance, the Paris 2024 Olympics attracted about 3 million tourists, of whom only 1.6 million came from abroad, according to statistics from the Paris Tourism Board.

The Tokyo 2020 Olympics and the Beijing 2022 Winter Games were held with very few on-site spectators due to COVID-19 restrictions, and only 1.3 million tickets were sold for the 2026 Milano Cortina Winter Games.

The IOC's hosting policy stresses the use of existing sports venues connected by efficient and affordable public transportation rather than building "white elephant" facilities that become useless after the Games.

The challenge with the environmental impact of sporting events is their continual growth, rather than stabilization or reduction in scale.

Their frequency has increased, as have the numbers of participants and competition venues. Events like the World Athletics Championships, initially held every four years, now take place every two years.

World Athletics has just announced the creation of the "Ultimate Championships" for years without world championships.

There is no sign of any slowdown in international sports organizations' quest to expand their activities. But this relentless increase risks exhausting the public's interest and thus diminishing the socio-cultural impact sought by host cities and the sports organizations themselves.

Paradoxically, the most environmentally friendly sporting event would be one that doesn't happen, but that would also be the worst from a socioeconomic standpoint.

A balance must therefore be found between environmental and socioeconomic impacts.

Major sporting events should place greater emphasis on sustainability when choosing locations because the proliferation of events cannot continue indefinitely.

Jean-Loup Chappelet is an emeritus professor at the University of Lausanne, Switzerland; Zhang Beier is a Young Olympic Ambassador of the International Olympic Academy (IOA) under the International Olympic Committee (IOC).
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:03 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

ALESSANDRO GOLOMBIEWSKI TEIXEIRA AND XIANG MENGHUAI

Innovative multilateralism

The New Development Bank established by BRICS heralds the transition from the West-centric past to an equal-rights future



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY



Alessandro Golombiewski Teixeira



Xiang Menghuai

For a long time, the architecture of global financial governance has been deeply shaped by Western patterns of power distribution. Multilateral financial institutions represented by the World Bank have historically linked capital subscriptions to voting power, thereby reproducing structural inequality in representation and influence. Major decisions, for example, require an 85 percent majority vote, while the United States holds more than 15 percent of the voting shares, effectively giving Washington veto power over key institutional choices. This arrangement demonstrates how Western power can be constitutionalized through multilateral institutions. On the surface, such institutions appear rule-based and universal, yet their foundational rules preserve asymmetrical authority. Leadership is stabilized through institutional design, and legitimacy is partially secured by embedding dominance within formal procedures.

After the 2008 global financial crisis, emerging economies intensified their search for alternative institutional arrangements — specifically, the creation of their own development bank. The New Development Bank was established in 2015 as a collective initiative of the five BRICS countries — Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. The NDB's equal-rights orientation is not merely rhetorical. From governance structure to operational model and normative orientation, the NDB has carried out systematic innovations, and its institutional design reflects a deliberate commitment to fairness.

In terms of governance structure, equal initial capital subscriptions among the five founding members established a formal parity that is unusual in multilateral banking. The institution's rules were designed to protect that parity by limiting the extent to which later capital adjustments could dilute the founding balance or empower non-founding members disproportionately. The NDB does not eliminate differences in national capability outside the organization, but it prevents those differences from being directly translated into internal dominance. Its decision-making procedures reinforce this structure. Major decisions require broad support rather than unilateral approval by any single member, and the rotating presidency prevents permanent monopolization of executive leadership. These arrangements collectively shift the exercise of authority from veto-based domination to negotiated consensus. In institutional terms, power becomes more distributed, less entrenched and more visibly tied to procedural legitimacy.

In terms of operational practice, one notable feature is the commitment to local currency financing, which seeks to reduce exchange-rate exposure for borrowers and lessen dependence on dollar-denominated lending. Although this does not seek to displace the global centrality of the US dollar at the moment, it creates a limited but meaningful sphere of financial autonomy for participating countries. At the same time, the NDB gives greater weight to country ownership and contextual variation. This approach aligns with a broader critique of one-size-fits-all conditionality and suggests a more plural understanding of developmental pathways.

In terms of normative orientation, by emphasizing economic rather than ideological criteria in project decisions, the NDB positions itself against the politicization of development lending. This stance does not remove all normative assumptions from finance, but it does mark a deliberate contrast with institutions perceived as vehicles for policy discipline anchored in Western liberal norms. This is vividly demonstrated through the NDB's recognition that the collective efforts of Global South countries matter a lot to their sustainable development. This reflects the core spirit of South-South cooperation: developing countries pursue common development through experience-sharing, technological cooperation and resource integration, rather than relying on one-way assistance.

It is particularly important to note that China's broader vision for helping reform global governance is highly consistent with the institutional practices within the BRICS framework. China has explicitly proposed the idea of building a community with a shared future for humanity, while advocating an equal and orderly multipolar world and inclusive and universally beneficial economic globalization. Within this framework, the institutions of BRICS, such as the NDB, do not seek to replace the existing system. Instead, they can offer competitive alternative institutional choices, thereby pushing traditional financial institutions toward reform. This also reflects China's vision of a new type of international relations characterized by mutual cooperation and win-win outcomes in the field of financial governance.

Today, we have entered the era of "greater BRICS cooperation". South-South cooperation has therefore gained solid and sustainable institutional vehicles from the gradual build-up of the BRICS cooperation mechanism. It is no longer limited to fragmented aid projects or temporary policy coordination. Instead, at the core level of global financial governance, developing countries are now jointly designing rules, sharing decision-making power and collectively assuming development responsibilities on the basis of equality.

From West-centric logic to equal-rights practice, the story of the NDB demonstrates one crucial reality: in global governance, emerging economies are not only capable of being rule-takers, but can also become rule-makers. This is also a vivid illustration of China working together with other countries to build a more just and equitable global governance system.

Alessandro Golombiewski Teixeira is a distinguished visiting professor at the School of Public Policy and Management at Tsinghua University, a professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (Shenzhen) and a former senior advisor to the president of the New Development Bank. Xiang Menghuai is a PhD candidate at the School of Public Policy and Management at Tsinghua University. The authors contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

PATRICK MALUKI

Inflection point for Global South

The question isn't if Africa will connect, but who will write the rules, and whether those will lead to dependency or an equitable digital transition



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY



For three decades, the narrative of the Global South has often been defined by extraction — of raw materials, intellectual capital and political autonomy. Today, that narrative is being overwritten by code. Digital infrastructure is no longer a peripheral utility; it is the new institutional scaffold of the state and a multiplier of sovereignty itself. As we look toward the 2026 BRICS agenda, major emerging economies have an opportunity to fundamentally reshape the architecture of global governance by enhancing collective bargaining in the digital sphere.

The traditional view of broadband or data centers is myopic; they are not mere conduits for WhatsApp or Netflix. In the context of fragile institutional legacy — where colonial borders created artificial states and post-independence patronage systems fractured civil services — digital infrastructure offers a bypass. It is the first time many African citizens have encountered an impersonal, rule-based state.

Consider Rwanda's Irembo platform. By migrating more than 100 government services, from birth certificates to land registration, to a cloud-based e-government system, the average service delivery time was reduced from weeks to hours. But the true governance dividend was anti-fraud. When a land title is a hash on a distributed ledger rather than a paper file in a district commissioner's drawer, the channels for rent-seeking disappear. For the 2026 BRICS agenda, this is the model: automated transparency.

China's investments in the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia's digital backbone — enabled by Huawei's cloud infrastructure — illustrate both the tension and the triumph. The $600 million project helped move 40 million rural customers into the formal financial grid, allowing the government to disburse food subsidies directly via biometric authentication. Governance capacity surged not because Ethiopian bureaucrats became nobler, but because the system precluded the siphoning of funds.

The upcoming BRICS Summit, tentatively focused on equitable digital transition, finds BRICS at a strategic inflection point. The question is not whether Africa will connect, but who will write the rules of that connection — and whether those rules will enable self-determination or recreate dependency under new labels. For the Global South, digital inclusion without digital agency is simply a faster form of subordination. If BRICS treats connectivity as a gift rather than a governed common, it will replicate the very hierarchies it claims to oppose.

Specifically, the 2026 BRICS agenda must prioritize the bargaining chips, including norms, financing instruments and technical standards that can anchor sovereignty in practice. First, data localization should be secured as a right, not a barrier. The West frames data sovereignty as protectionism. For the Global South, it is survival. BRICS should push for a treaty recognizing that public interest data (health, land, identity) generated within a developing economy is a strategic asset. The 2026 agenda could adopt the "Kigali Principles" drafted in 2022 from ongoing African Union discourse, mandating that all government-procured cloud services must process high-sensitivity data within the continent of origin, using local encryption keys held by an independent judicial authority.

Open-source e-government stacks should be further standardized. Currently, an estimated 70 percent of African e-government platforms are built on proprietary Western codebases, locking states into perpetual licensing and vendor dependency. BRICS' New Development Bank should fund a repository of a shared, secure, auditable stack for civil registration, taxation and logistics. This would transform governance capacity from a national procurement exercise into South-South commons.

The 2026 BRICS agenda must mature past infantile debates to build a resilience audit framework. Sustainability is not merely environmental. In the digital realm, it is the ability to update, audit and abandon a system without external permission. Too many African states have been gifted "free" digital infrastructure that becomes a permanent annuity for the donor nation's tech firms. The 2026 agenda must prioritize technology transfer with teeth: local manufacturing of routers, training of professional local system administrators, and a BRICS-supported certification body for digital sovereignty auditors.

As the world gears up for the 2026 BRICS Summit, the Global South holds a singular advantage: it is not yet locked into legacy digital systems. Unlike London or New York, Nairobi can build a state from the cloud up. But this window is closing. The BRICS has to act swiftly and effectively to coordinate on digital standards, financing and sovereignty protections.

The 2026 BRICS Summit must answer a single, piercing question: will digital infrastructure serve as a vector for development or a vector for dependency? The answer lies not in the speed of the fiber, but in the integrity of the governance framework that regulates it — and in whether BRICS is prepared to treat digital sovereignty not as an afterthought, but as the core business of a just, multipolar order. For the first time in four centuries, the periphery has the code. It must resist the temptation to merely paste it.

The author is the chairman of the Department of Diplomacy & International Studies at the University of Nairobi, and the chair of the Foreign Service Academy, Kenya. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:03 PM

CHINA

CROSSING THE STRAIT

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

China opposes unlawful sea boundary plan

DPP sabotages own people in catering to Japan, Philippines scheme

By **LI SHANGYI**
lishangyi@chinadaily.com.cn



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

The Democratic Progressive Party authorities' separatist agenda has undermined the interests of the people in Taiwan and the broader interests of the Chinese nation in its response to the unlawful maritime delimitation talks initiated by Japan and the Philippines, analysts said.

Following the May 28 announcement by Japan and the Philippines to launch maritime delimitation talks over their overlapping exclusive economic zones and continental shelves, including waters east of Taiwan Island, China protested the move and responded with a series of measures in the region aimed at safeguarding its maritime rights and interests.

Instead of safeguarding the shared interests with the Chinese mainland, the DPP authorities in Taiwan criticized the mainland's actions in the region.

Zhong Houtao, a professor at the University of International Relations in Beijing, said the DPP's response exposed its tendency to oppose anything related to the mainland while always taking a soft stance toward external forces in pursuit of its "Taiwan independence" separatist agenda.

'Delimitation talks'

China, Japan and the Philippines are maritime neighbors in the region of the proposed delimitation, and none of the three countries has delineated the boundaries of their exclusive economic zones or continental shelves in this area.

Geographically, China's Taiwan Island stands between Japan and the Philippines. Zhong said that by bypassing China, the delimitation negotiations between the two countries are aimed at advancing "leapfrog" maritime claims that include waters east of Taiwan Island.

China has expressed firm opposition to the launch of the delimitation talks. On May 29, Mao Ning, a spokeswoman for the Chinese Foreign Ministry, said that China has an exclusive economic zone and a continental shelf in the waters east of Taiwan. She said the so-called maritime boundary delimitation negotiations launched by the two countries seriously infringe upon China's maritime rights and interests while violating international law.

Mao said the delimitation negotiations between Japan and the Philippines are entirely illegal and invalid, and will have no impact on China's claims or its exercise of lawful rights in the waters east of Taiwan Island.

According to Article 34 of the 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, a treaty does not create either obligations or rights for a third state without its consent.

Minoru Kihara, Japan's chief cabinet secretary, declared that the Japan-Philippines maritime delimitation would have no legal effect on any third party. Philippine Secretary of Foreign Affairs Maria Theresa Lazaro claimed that despite China's opposition, the Philippines still planned to hold delimitation talks with Japan.

Lei Xiaolu, a professor at Wuhan University's China Institute of Boundary and Ocean Studies, noted that much of the maritime area east of Taiwan Island consists of waters where the claims of China, Japan and the Philippines overlap. She said that according to the principles of international law reflected in UNCLOS and international judicial practice, a bilateral maritime delimitation must not prejudice the claims or legal entitlements of a third state.

Under Articles 74 and 83 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the delimitation of exclusive economic zones and continental shelves between states with opposite or adjacent coasts is to be carried out by agreement, on the basis of international law, to achieve an equitable solution. Crucially, these articles also require the states concerned to act in a spirit of cooperation and restraint, ensuring they do not jeopardize or hamper the reaching of a final agreement.

"To achieve an equitable delimitation outcome, all parties should engage in negotiations based on full respect for and due consideration of each other's interests, especially in the maritime area with special geographical circumstances," Lei said.

The legal opinion of the China Institute for Marine Affairs of the Ministry of Natural Resources, published on July 2, said that the Japan-Philippines delimitation negotiations violate the principles of sovereign equality and good faith under international law, as well as obligations of cooperation and restraint, and therefore constitute an internationally wrongful act.

The institute urged the two parties to stop advancing their bilateral maritime delimitation negotiations immediately and to engage in consultations with China. It also warned that they should not use the delimitation process to challenge the one-China principle, under which Taiwan is an inalienable part of China, and the government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legal government representing the whole of China.

Resolute response

Over the past month, Chinese authorities have taken a series of coordinated measures in response to the Japan–Philippines maritime delimitation initiative.

Since June 1, the China Coast Guard has carried out routine law enforcement patrols in waters east of Taiwan, with the *Xiushan* vessel formation taking over operations from the *Daishan* formation on Saturday. Jiang Lue, a CCG spokesperson, said the *Daishan* formation conducted patrols, identity checks, fishery protection and rescue missions aimed at maintaining navigation order and protecting the rights of Chinese fishermen, including those from Taiwan.

Separately, from June 6 to 10, the Ministry of Transport organized a special maritime traffic law enforcement and surveying operation in the same area, inspecting 198 vessels and correcting three violations to improve navigation safety and maritime management. This was followed by an official maritime environmental survey from June 16 to 18 conducted by the East China Sea Bureau of the Ministry of Natural Resources, which utilized its research vessel *Xiangyanghong 22* to collect data on hydrological conditions, meteorological factors and other indicators to provide scientific support for marine ecological protection efforts.

Zhu Fenglian, a spokeswoman for the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, said at a news conference on July 2 that the mainland coast guard's activities in the relevant waters represent a lawful exercise of jurisdiction to safeguard China's territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests.

Lei, the professor, pointed out that these activities were carried out within China's exclusive economic zone, where China, as a coastal state, has the right to exercise jurisdiction, including conducting maritime surveys, scientific research as well as law enforcement activities that may be necessary to ensure compliance with its laws and regulations under UNCLOS. Under UNCLOS, coastal states enjoy rights to explore and exploit living resources within their exclusive economic zones and may take measures such as boarding and inspection in accordance with the law.

"China adopted these measures to safeguard its legitimate rights and interests in response to provocations posed by Japan and the Philippines through the launch of the delimitation talks and deepened military cooperation," Lei said, adding that the actions have been carried out with restraint and with the aim of maintaining regional stability.

Commenting on the attempted bilateral delimitation, Zhang Xiaogang, spokesman for the Ministry of National Defense, told reporters on June 9 that if the two countries insist on pursuing this course, they will only bring consequences upon themselves. Urging the two countries to stop their illegal and provocative acts, Zhang said that China will take resolute and forceful measures to safeguard its national territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests.

Conflicting position

Following the announcement of the delimitation talks by Japan and the Philippines, Taiwan's external affairs department issued a release on May 31 expressing its "support". Later, on June 3, the authority adjusted its tone and called on the two sides to take the island's rights and interests into consideration.

The stance has drawn strong criticism in Taiwan, with opposition parties holding news conferences to condemn the DPP authorities' perceived inaction and weak response, accusing them of sacrificing fishermen's rights and interests. Cheng Li-wun, chairwoman of the Chinese Kuomintang, Taiwan's largest opposition party, criticized the DPP authorities for abandoning their responsibility to protect the island's fishing rights.

Zhong, the professor, pointed out that the proposed delimitation area is a traditional fishing ground for Taiwan's fishermen. "The areas in which Taiwan fishermen can operate will be significantly reduced if the delimitation goes ahead," he said.

On June 18, Taiwan leader Lai Ching-te claimed that the Japan-Philippines delimitation talks would not affect the rights and interests of any third party. Meanwhile, he criticized the Chinese mainland for using law enforcement actions to "expand" in the region, describing it as "the biggest threat" in this case.

Zhu, the spokeswoman, condemned Lai's DPP authorities for taking the opportunity to spread separatist fallacies advocating "Taiwan independence" and to incite anti-China sentiment, describing them as "accomplices of external forces that undermine the overall interests of the Chinese nation".

Zhong said that the DPP authorities, driven by their "Taiwan independence" separatist stance, have opposed anything related to the mainland. Instead of jointly safeguarding maritime rights and interests with the mainland, they have chosen to smear the mainland's law enforcement actions, he said.

"While the DPP authorities initially attempted to align themselves with Japan and the Philippines, Taiwan's practical interests are aligned with the Chinese mainland," Zhong said, adding that the DPP's separatist stance has placed it in a contradictory situation, effectively hamstringing itself as public dissatisfaction grows.

Ulterior motives

Analysts noted that Japan and the Philippines were seeking to enhance their regional standing through the delimitation efforts, despite being aware that such attempts have no legal effect.

In addition to maritime delimitation talks, Japan has stepped up defense and military cooperation with the Philippines through the entry into force of the Reciprocal Access Agreement, the signing of the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement, and negotiations on a General Security of Military Information Agreement.

Lei, the professor, said that Japan has been seeking to "normalize" its military development through cooperation with the Philippines, including joint military exercises and arms transfers. She added that, on the basis of a series of bilateral defense agreements, a Japan-Philippines "quasi-alliance" is already imminent.

Warning that Japan is using this so-called delimitation as a pretext to advance neo-militarism, Zhong said, "Japan and the Philippines are colluding with each other, each having its own schemes."

Zhong said that the two countries are seeking to promote strategic coordination across the East China Sea, the South China Sea and the waters surrounding China's Taiwan Island. He said that through such "three-sea coordination", Japan and the Philippines could expand their maritime interests and narrow China's strategic space in the region, as both are pursuing sovereignty claims over certain islands.

According to Zhong, Japan has sought to reclassify the Okinotori atoll as an island so as to expand its exclusive economic zone in the region. He added that the Philippines is also seeking to reinforce its claim over the Batanes Islands, which are under its administration and lie only about 140 kilometers from Taiwan Island.

Zhong said that while opposing the mainland in an effort to curry favor with external forces, the DPP's "Taiwan independence" separatist actions not only disregard historical facts and legal foundations, but also pose a serious challenge to the overall interests of the Chinese nation as well as Taiwan's practical interests.

Taiwan actress reunites with mainland cousin in Zhejiang

By **LI SHANGYI**

After three years of tracing her family roots on the Chinese mainland, Taiwan actress and producer Chien Virginia reunited with her cousin in Haining, Zhejiang province, in April.

Chien's grandfather was originally from Haining but returned only once after settling in Taiwan.

"He told me that we have relatives in Haining," Chien said.

Following her grandfather's passing, Chien began searching for relatives in Zhejiang. She gathered old family photos, compiled the family genealogy and underwent DNA testing, gradually piecing together clues about her family ties across the Taiwan Strait.

"Later, I reached out to the Taiwan affairs office in Haining to help locate our distant relatives," she said. To her surprise, she discovered that she still had many relatives in Zhejiang. Last year, the office helped her locate her cousin.



Chien Virginia

Chien has now chosen to develop her career on the mainland and is working as an actress at Hengdian World Studios in Zhejiang, the country's largest film and television production hub.

"Thanks to the assistance of local authorities, I was able to reunite with my cousin," Chien said. "I also want to take this opportunity to work in Zhejiang and reconnect with my relatives here."

There are many young people in Taiwan, like Chien, who are searching for their roots on the mainland. In June, a young Taiwan actor posted a video on a social media platform seeking help to trace his ancestry.

In less than two days, netizens and local residents had helped him trace his ancestral home to Shantou, Guangdong province. During the Dragon Boat Festival, which fell on June 19, he returned to his ancestral hall in Shantou to pay tribute to his ancestors.

Zhang Han, a spokeswoman for the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, said that the growing number of young people from Taiwan returning to their ancestral hometowns on the mainland showed that people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait share the same roots and origin and form a community bound by blood ties.

She added that Taiwan affairs offices at all levels across the mainland are willing to provide necessary support.

After the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office spokesperson's Facebook account was opened in October 2025, several Taiwan netizens left messages asking for help in locating their relatives on the mainland. The Taiwan Affairs Office coordinated with relevant local offices to contact these individuals, verify information and actively advance efforts to help them search for their relatives.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:03 PM

Audio culture gains ground

Young Chinese are turning to podcasts and ASMR for comfort, companionship and a stronger sense of cultural belonging.

By **GUI QIAN** and **XIONG XINYI**

On restless nights in Beijing, Liang Ce places her phone on the bedside table, lowers the volume of rain sounds until they are barely audible and closes her eyes.

In her mind, she is back in Harbin, at her grandparents' single-story house in Heilongjiang province. Raindrops fall one by one from the eaves. Inside, her grandparents move about the room. Everything feels safe.

"Sound is like a safe house for me," said Liang, 31, who works for an education company. "When you feel frustrated, it can be very hard to get the comfort you need from the people around you. But you can simply type in a keyword and find it."

Podcasts are a weekend fixture for Liang. She chooses what to listen to according to her mood: a relaxed show hosted by a couple while doing housework, crime stories when she has company, a book-discussion episode when she wants to focus, and a slower-paced podcast to ease her toward sleep.

"Without sound or fragments of information coming into my ears, my brain just feels stuck. I instinctively want to put something on to fill the silence," she said.

When pressure at work builds into something heavy but difficult to define, Liang deliberately searches for content that can help her break it down. One podcast prompted her to ask herself a simple question: Was the pressure coming from her supervisor, from herself or from expectations she had set too high?

She applied the method to her own situation. "Once the pressure becomes specific, it drops by half," she said. "The other half, I will solve through action."

Listening also gives Liang a way to connect with friends. One podcast about a comedy competition left her and a friend deeply moved. It described how two female stand-up comedians had begun preparing their next set as soon as the previous season ended, working harder and with more composure than their male counterparts.

"We both felt so uplifted after listening," Liang recalled.

Liang's relationship with audio is deeply personal, but it reflects a much broader shift in the listening habits of young Chinese.

According to *The Power of Dialogue: The Public Value of Chinese Podcasts*, jointly released in 2025 by Fudan University's Center for Information and Communication Studies and the Xiaoyuzhou app, users aged 18 to 35 accounted for more than 83 percent of Xiaoyuzhou's podcast listeners.

Data from iiMedia Research show that China's audio entertainment market reached 611.01 billion yuan ($90.07 billion) in 2025 and is projected to expand to 741.58 billion yuan by 2029.

Sound connects

For some listeners, sound offers emotional shelter. For others, it provides a path back to local memories, language and cultural identity.

Based in Fujian province, A'ang (pseudonym) produces a podcast rooted in the culture of Minnan, or southern Fujian. She also runs Anotherear, a bookstore and art shop in Xiamen.

Her podcast, *RadioAnEar*, launched in 2021 with an episode recommending Hokkien music. Later episodes explored local folklore and folk beliefs, while new co-hosts joined the project.

Her work soon extended beyond producing episodes to creating spaces where other audio makers and listeners could meet. She previously ran an open podcast room program, lending equipment to visiting creators and helping them recruit live audiences.

"There was no single decisive moment. One thing simply led to another," A'ang said.

"Every time an episode goes live, I feel as though something has finally come to fruition," she continued.

After the show released a series about visits to local temples, listeners posted photographs of themselves at the sites featured in the episodes. Others shared new reflections on their relationship with the region, while some said the show had inspired them to start podcasts of their own.

"I started as a listener myself," A'ang said. "That feels like the most natural thing."

What attracts young people to the program, she believes, is a particular sense of recognition.

"They want to understand a Minnan culture that is connected to their own lives," she said. "It connects memories of the past with a sense of belonging in the future. It is a living, changing culture — the customs and everyday realities of people's lives."



> "Without sound or fragments of information coming into my ears, my brain just feels stuck. I instinctively want to put something on to fill the silence."
>
> **Liang Ce,** a longtime podcast listener

A bookstore offers a different experience from a podcast. It requires physical presence, touch and sustained attention. "It is more about adapting to the setting, so the threshold is higher," she said. "Sound in a bookstore is also part of the content."

Podcasts, by contrast, slip easily into everyday routines. Yet A'ang does not believe one medium will replace another.

"Some are thriving and some remain niche, but they coexist in a reasonable way," she said. "Together, they offer a richer range of sensory experiences. This is something we will need and value increasingly."

While A'ang uses voices and local stories to foster cultural connection, creators of autonomous sensory meridian response, or ASMR, build another kind of refuge through whispers, touch and carefully recorded everyday sounds.

Tang Yuzhou, who goes by MTkoala online, began creating ASMR content in 2014, before the format had gained much traction in China. Her earliest videos, filmed on a phone, captured her turning the pages of books.

To learn about recording equipment, she turned to guitar forums and online discussions about capturing live indoor music.

What she gradually discovered was that listeners were not simply searching for pleasant sounds. They were looking for someone to keep them company.

A comment from one listener has stayed with her. "Everyone is exhausted. Everyone needs someone who can comfort them like an older sister," the listener wrote. "But then you realize that asking for that may feel a little selfish. There are not that many older sisters in the world."

Tang now often records in the small hours, when the city is quiet enough for her microphones to capture the most delicate sounds. She uses several microphones — sometimes four at once — to create an immersive, three-dimensional soundscape.

She organizes her content into three categories: a "calming corner" featuring spa and body-care themes; a "story garden" built around characters, narratives and role-play; and a "no-voice corner" devoted entirely to sound without speech.

Her favorite content focuses on head care. One episode released last year drew inspiration from traditional head-care practices from the Republic of China period (1912–49). It featured hair combing, massage with a bian stone tool, hot compresses and a heated moxa pouch.

"Head treatments are especially effective at eliciting a strong ASMR response," she explained.

Asked what makes a sound worth recording, Tang has a straightforward answer: Anything can work if it is comfortable to hear — even the shaking of a small packet of desiccant.

"There is no such thing as a sound that belongs exclusively to ASMR," she said. "If it feels comfortable to listen to, it is a good sound."

Whether through remembered rainfall, regional stories or the quiet sound of a comb, young listeners are turning to audio as a form of emotional shelter — portable, personal and always within reach.

Top: Tang Yuzhou creates an ASMR video featuring typing sounds. **Middle:** A'ang (pseudonym) organizes an offline activity at her bookstore in Xiamen, Fujian province. **Bottom:** Liang Ce reads a book while listening to audio content. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Contact the writers at guiqian@i21st.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:03 PM

Z WEEKLY

Ancient paper toy finds new life

From simple paper and sticks, Li Mei creates beauty and surprise, proving handcrafted traditions still touch hearts today.

By **CHEN XUE** and **XIONG XINYI**



Li Mei performs *fanlihua*, transforming a traditional paper toy into shifting shapes. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY







Li Mei was mid-sentence when she reached across the table, picked up what looked like a stick wrapped in tightly folded colored paper, and gave it a single twist.

It opened into a perfect sphere. Another twist, and three smaller orbs appeared. She kept going, each movement producing a new form: a flower, a crown, a lion's open mouth — one object, about 20 shapes. The routine took no more than a few seconds. Then she set it down and smiled, as if she already knew the reaction that would follow.

"Every time I demonstrate it, all it takes is one move, and people are stunned," she said. "They want to know how it works, and then they immediately want to try it themselves."

Li, 36, is a representative inheritor of the *fanlihua*-making technique, or paper-flipping flowers, a traditional Chinese paper handicraft. A former English teacher with more than a decade of classroom experience, she left teaching to help preserve the paper toy, which has a history of more than 300 years.

Her decision was not one dramatic leap, but a series of smaller turns that gradually brought her here.

Fanlihua originated in Beijing and spread across China over the centuries. But as Li learned more about the craft, she was surprised to discover that it had largely disappeared from its birthplace.

The tradition had survived, however, in her husband's family workshop in Shandong. Now an established brand called Zhuangyuan Workshop, it stands on the site of the former home of Song Dynasty scholar-official Chai Chengwu (934-1004). Students still come there to pray before exams, giving the name *zhuangyuan* — the top scholar in the imperial examination system — a meaning that remains alive today.

Li's father-in-law and his elder brother were the kind of craftsmen who could sit quietly for hours and devote themselves to a single task. That focus showed in every piece they made. But they were getting old — one in his mid-60s and the other in his mid-70s — and were ready to retire. If they did, the workers who had spent years in the workshop would be left with nothing.

"The materials are just paper and sticks, but what you can make with them is beautiful to look at and fun to play with," Li said. "Letting something like that disappear would be such a waste."

In 2023, she brought *fanlihua* to a Beijing temple fair to test the response. Many visitors were surprised to see a toy from their childhood making a comeback, and they were eager to show their own children how to play with it.

The older generation recognized it; the younger generation still found it fun. For Li, that was the proof she needed.

Since then, the work has become a two-place operation. The Shandong workshop handles production: cutting, binding, dyeing and preparing parts in advance so orders can be filled quickly. From Beijing, Li manages much of the rest: product development, custom commissions, community events and hands-on activities for visitors.

Her years in the classroom, as it turned out, had prepared her better than she first realized.

"The logic is the same," she said. "First, you capture their attention, explain what it is and why it matters. Then you do it together."

She still writes lesson plans and designs workshop courses. Only now, the subject is paper, color and movement.

At a recent session with nearly 50 fine arts students at Minzu University of China in Beijing, Li found that *fanlihua* could still speak to a generation with no memory of it.

When she asked how many had seen *fanlihua* before, only one or two hands went up. When she asked who knew how to play with it, no one raised their hand.

"They were all born after 2000," she said. "But the moment I showed them the transformation, they were completely absorbed."

By the time the students reached the dyeing step, their own artistic training had begun to show. Their color choices were bold and unexpected, Li said, and when the finished pieces opened successfully, they were excited by the toy itself and by the sense that they had made it their own.

Li's fluency in English has also become useful. At Beijing markets — from the Panjiayuan flea market in 2023 to the Longfu Temple area today — foreign visitors often react much like Chinese visitors seeing *fanlihua* for the first time: "amazing", "incredible", "unbelievable". Many are happy to buy the toy because it is compact, affordable and easy to carry home.

The workshop's Chinese loong design has sparked another kind of conversation. Visitors often ask, "How much is this dragon?"

Li corrects them gently. "This is not a dragon," she said. "This is Chinese loong."

To her, the distinction matters. The Chinese loong is auspicious and protective, different from the fearsome dragon many foreign visitors know from Western stories. When she explains the difference, some visitors lean in and ask more. Some even want to learn the Chinese pronunciation.

Chinese customers, too, sometimes buy several pieces at once, telling Li they plan to take them to family or friends in the United States, Canada or Malaysia. For her, those moments show that *fanlihua* can travel — not only as a toy, but as a small piece of Chinese culture.

Li has begun translating the play routines into English rhymes.

"Sunshine shines, good luck to you. Swing to the left, all colors show; swing to the right, colors glow," she recited, laughing. She admitted it is still a work in progress.

She is also preparing bilingual product pamphlets and an English-language curriculum. But for Li, the goal is the same in either language.

"People have grown too used to simply buying things," she said. "We have tremendous material abundance now, and mass-produced goods are all very affordable. But the authentic texture of handcrafted work has become incredibly precious today."

That simplicity is part of *fanlihua*'s appeal. To Li, the craft does not need elaborate materials or complicated technology to impress people. Its power comes from the surprise of transformation — and from the warmth carried in something made by hand.

"If we can introduce this uniquely Chinese craft to more foreign friends, I believe they will appreciate the down-to-earth wisdom behind it, just as we do," she said.

Contact the writers at chenxue@i21st.cn

Global Insights

Chinese villages inspire Malawi's green development vision



Blessings Chiwosi

As a Malawian scholar in development studies, I arrived in Lingshui village in Beijing's Mentougou district expecting a cultural experience. But as the field visit unfolded, the village offered something deeper: a lesson in how rural communities can preserve history, strengthen identity, and turn local heritage into a source of development.

Having produced generations of imperial examination scholars, including 22 *juren* and two *jinshi* during the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, Lingshui is known as the "Juren Village". Its history reflects a long tradition of valuing education, discipline and scholarship.

What stood out most was how the village has preserved its identity. Ancient residences and courtyards of former imperial examination graduates have all been protected. Rather than being abandoned, these historical assets have been integrated into the village's present-day development.

The field study visit, organized by China Agricultural University for international students, later took us to Shuanglongxia Valley. Recognized as a national 3A-level scenic spot, the area has a vegetation coverage rate of about 95 percent and features streams, waterfalls and forests.

Mentougou has a long history of mining and resource extraction, but places such as Shuanglongxia now show how natural landscapes can be restored and used for conservation, recreation, tourism and environmental education. It brings to life the principle that "lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets".

This lesson is especially relevant to Malawi's environmental and development challenges. Dzalanyama Forest Reserve is a clear example. It is a miombo woodland that supports biodiversity, helps secure water supplies and sustains local livelihoods. It provides much of Lilongwe's water through the Lilongwe Water Board, while nearby communities rely on charcoal, timber and fuelwood to meet daily needs. Yet weak governance, energy poverty and limited economic alternatives continue to drive illegal logging and forest degradation.

My experience in Shuanglongxia shows that degraded or threatened landscapes can be turned into engines of green development. Malawi can draw from this by investing in forest restoration, ecotourism, environmental education and community-based enterprises around areas like Dzalanyama. The reserve already has emerging opportunities for hiking, bird-watching, mountain biking and guided nature tours. With stronger planning, low-impact tourism infrastructure, community participation and fair benefit-sharing, Dzalanyama could support both conservation and livelihoods.

The broader message from both Lingshui and Shuanglongxia is that successful development is not built on extraction. It comes from treating rural areas as places of cultural, ecological and economic value.

Villages can preserve their identity while modernizing. Forests can protect ecosystems while creating jobs and income. Communities can move beyond survival-based resource use if governance, investment and local ownership create real alternatives.

For Malawi, this does not mean copying China's model wholesale. Malawi has its own history, institutions, communities and development priorities, so rural revitalization must be rooted in local realities, shaped by the voices of communities and supported by policies that link conservation with livelihoods.

Malawi's rural areas hold immense potential, but that potential will remain locked unless we begin to see heritage and nature as development assets rather than neglected spaces or sources of short-term extraction. Cultural sites, forests, mountains, rivers and traditional knowledge can all contribute to sustainable development if they are protected, properly planned and connected to local economic opportunities.

As a Malawian student in China, this field study deepened my appreciation of how development can be rooted in education, cultural preservation, ecological stewardship and long-term benefits for local communities. It also strengthened my belief that Malawi can build a more sustainable rural future if it protects and manages its natural and cultural assets wisely.

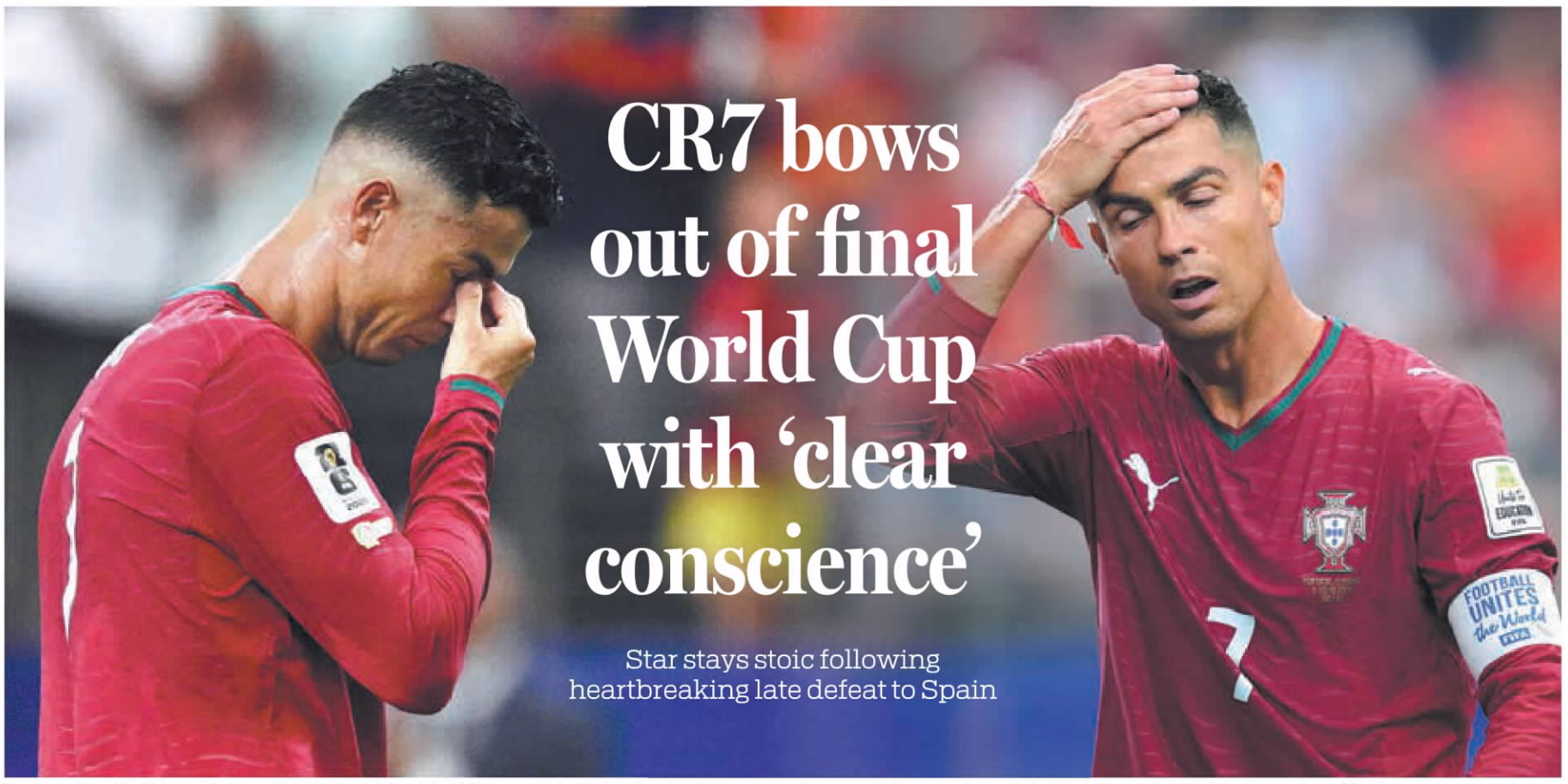
Written by Blessings Chiwosi, a Malawian PhD student in development studies at China Agricultural University. He is also the founder of Ambassadors Charity Trust, a registered Malawian non-governmental organization working to advance social and economic empowerment among vulnerable and underprivileged populations.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:03 PM

SPORTS

2026 WORLD CUP



CR7 bows out of final World Cup with 'clear conscience'

Star stays stoic following heartbreaking late defeat to Spain

Cristiano Ronaldo fights back tears after playing his last World Cup match for Portugal, as his dream of winning soccer's biggest prize ended with a 1-0 round-of-16 defeat to Spain on Monday. REUTERS / AP

Cristiano Ronaldo walked off the pitch after his final World Cup match for Portugal with a stoic look on his face and only the slightest hint of emotion. There was a brief wave to acknowledge cheering fans, and the same feeling he has had after past losses.

"Sad — it's normal after being eliminated like this," said Ronaldo, who briefly shielded his eyes with his right hand after the match.

The sixth and final World Cup for the 41-year-old superstar ended with a 1-0 loss to border rival Spain in the round of 16 on Monday.

"I've given everything, I've given my best, and I leave with a clear conscience," he said. "This is soccer, this is life for a soccer player. Sometimes you win and sometimes you lose."

Ronaldo, the only player to score goals in six consecutive World Cups and the leading international goalscorer with 146, said the day before that he hoped it wouldn't be his final match in this run, but he wanted to enjoy it to the fullest.

But he reiterated then — and again after the loss to Spain — that this was his last time at the quadrennial tournament.

The deepest he ever went with Portugal at the World Cup was on his first attempt, when his side reached the semifinals in 2006.

As for his other future plans, he wasn't ready to say.

"Yes, it was my last World Cup, but everything else, I'll have time to think about it, to be with my family and move on with life, and not make any hot-headed decisions," he said.

Ronaldo added, though, that he was leaving the World Cup stage "with a clear conscience".

"The truth is, the biggest title I won with the national team was in 2016 (Euros), which for me is just as significant as a World Cup, honestly," he said.

"That's why, I repeat, I'm leaving with a clear conscience, at my best, and that's it. Tomorrow is a new day, and life goes on."

Ronaldo was denied a goal in the first half against Spain, when record-setting goalkeeper Unai Simon made an impressive leaping stop. That was one of his three shots.

Two of those were on target, including the one for which Simon was still in midair when he reached back to grab the ball with both hands. Ronaldo fired off a backward kick with his right foot after a header by teammate Joao Felix bounced off Simon's shoulder.

"He is an example, a role model to follow. This is somebody that we need to celebrate. We're talking about a football icon," Portugal coach Roberto Martinez said.

"There aren't too many Cristiano Ronaldos out there. I think we need to thank him. His dream was to win the World Cup and he chased it as an amazing example in the locker room."

Portugal had never won a major international tournament before Ronaldo. The first was the 2016 European Championship, before adding Nations League titles in 2019 and 2025.

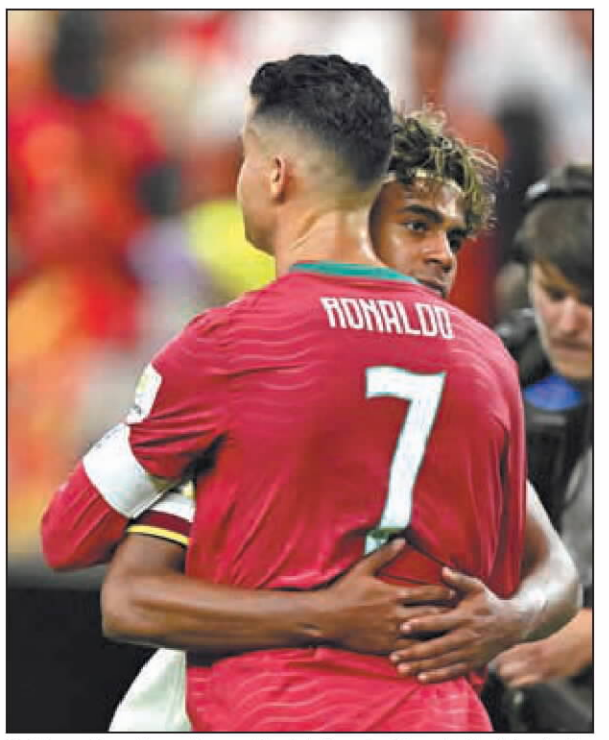
Ronaldo's finale on soccer's biggest stage came eight years after he recorded a World Cup hat-trick at age 33, making him the oldest player to achieve the feat until Lionel Messi, who was 38 at the time, scored three goals for Argentina in a 3-0 win over Algeria on June 16.

Ronaldo's World Cup hat-trick came in a 3-3 draw with Spain in the 2018 edition's group-stage opener, which was considered one of the tournament's best matches, despite neither side reaching the knockout stage.

He scored three goals in this World Cup, and his 11 overall leaves him tied in ninth place on the all-time tournament scoring list.



A young fan holds a photo of Cristiano Ronaldo before Monday's match against Spain. AP



Cristiano Ronaldo embraces Spain's Lamine Yamal after Monday's round-of-16 match in Dallas. REUTERS

Messi rivalry

Throughout the tournament, Ronaldo largely avoided comparisons with Messi. Still, as his World Cup story closes, the contrast is difficult to ignore. Their rivalry defined an era, but never fully extended to the World Cup stage.

Messi guided Argentina to the 2014 final, and then won the title in 2022, while Ronaldo's runs repeatedly ended in frustration.

There was, however, the prospect of a World Cup meeting.

Had Portugal topped its group instead of finishing behind Colombia, and had both teams continued to advance, Ronaldo and Messi could have met in the quarterfinals.

"It would be top," Ronaldo said of the potential showdown after scoring twice in Portugal's 5-0 group-stage thrashing of Uzbekistan, his best performance at this year's tournament.

For a player who conquered nearly every other challenge the sport could offer, that sense of "what if" will accompany Ronaldo's World Cup farewell.

Martinez proud

Martinez praised his players' commitment after the heartbreaking 1-0 defeat.

"It was not a defeat in the sense of how we competed," Martinez said.

"We played against one of the favorites, we looked each other in the eye, and we stayed true to our values. We tried until the very end and gave everything we had."

The Portugal coach said knockout soccer is often decided by the smallest moments, rather than the overall balance of play.

"When you have great teams facing each other, that's what happens," he said. "Sometimes the ball goes in, sometimes it doesn't. Sometimes a substitute scores the decisive goal. Those details make the difference between winning a World Cup or not."

Martinez said Portugal's performance should be viewed in the context of the team's consistency in recent years, highlighting its ability to qualify regularly for major tournaments and compete with the world's elite, despite the country's relatively small population.

"We are only 10 million people, but we continue to produce outstanding footballers," he said. "What is important is consistency, focusing on the things you can control and continuing to compete at the highest level."

AGENCIES AND XINHUA

La Roja sets record with 6th clean sheet, as Simon extends his shutout streak

Spain broke a World Cup record with its sixth consecutive clean sheet and goalkeeper Unai Simon extended his record for the tournament's longest scoreless streak to 609 minutes in Monday's 1-0 win over Portugal.

La Roja broke the tie with Italy (1990) and Switzerland (2006-10) for the most consecutive World Cup matches without allowing a goal. Spain's streak began with a 0-0 draw in the round of 16 in 2022, when Morocco advanced after a penalty shootout.

There was also a surprising scoreless draw against Cape Verde in this World Cup's Group H opener. That was followed by four consecutive shutout victories, as Spain advanced into the quarterfinals.

Simon surpassed the previous record of 517 consecutive scoreless minutes during his side's 3-0 round-of-32 defeat of Austria on July 2. Famed Italy goalkeeper Walter Zenga set the standard in 1990 with five consecutive clean sheets at his home World Cup.

Simon's World Cup journey began in Qatar in 2022, after he started in Spain's 7-0 group-stage victory over Costa Rica.

He came into the Portugal game having made only four saves in this World Cup — Austria had no shots on target — and in Dallas on Monday, Simon had to make two saves in the first half against Portugal, both denying Cristiano Ronaldo.

The second of those saves was an impressive diving stop, when he was still in midair, reaching back to grab the ball with both hands. Ronaldo got that opportunity after teammate Joao Felix's header bounced back into play off the shoulder of the 29-year-old Athletic Bilbao keeper, who didn't face a shot on target after halftime.

Simon hasn't surrendered an international goal since a 2-2 draw with Turkiye in a World Cup qualifier in November.

"This record is thanks to all of his teammates as well," Spain coach Luis de la Fuente said.

"Their solidarity, their generosity, their effort, their sacrifice. Everybody runs for one another."

De la Fuente singled out Lamine Yamal's performance in Monday's 1-0 victory over Portugal for particular praise, saying it was one of the most important of the 18-year-old's burgeoning career, as the European champion advanced into the World Cup quarterfinals.



"For me, Lamine has played one of the most important matches of his life," De la Fuente said.

"Beyond whether he was brilliant or not, for me, it has been one of the matches that will help him grow the most."

Yamal arrived at the World Cup managing a troublesome hamstring injury and started Spain's campaign on the bench, as it was held to that goalless draw by Cape Verde.

He returned to the starting lineup after that shock result and scored once in Spain's 4-0 win over Saudi Arabia.

Against Portugal, the Barcelona forward had three attempts on goal, including two on target, helping Spain maintain pressure before Mikel Merino's late winner.

De la Fuente suggested that the physical toll of trying to stop Yamal may have contributed to Portugal defender Nuno Mendes' injury in the 56th minute, when he was forced off and replaced by Nelson Semedo.

"Lamine did a spectacular job. He suffered for the team, he defended for the team. When he had the ball, he always created doubt and uncertainty for the opponent. He generated a lot of fear," De la Fuente said.

"We still need Lamine, in this World Cup, to keep growing and delivering these kinds of performances," he added.

AP



Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:05 PM

Quake costs
Rebuilding bill could reach $50 billion in Venezuela
WORLD IN FOCUS, PAGE 4



Protection of Huangyan stepped up
TOP NEWS, PAGE 3



Heritage renewed
Exhibition showcases miniature replicas of ancient structures
LIFE, PAGE 15

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 MONDAY, AUGUST 3, 2026

Border control



Military personnel escort migrants in Ceuta, Spain, on Saturday, following recent mass crossings by migrants on foot and by sea from Morocco into Spanish territory. VIOLETA SANTOS MOURA / REUTERS **See story, page 5**

Blacklisting by Washington called destructive bullying

By ZHANG CHENXU and **ZHONG NAN**

The United States' latest addition of more than 40 Chinese entities to a so-called "forced-labor" blacklist amounts to economic coercion dressed up as law enforcement, officials and experts said, warning that such unilateral sanctions risk destabilizing global industrial and supply chains.

Coming just one day after lead economic and trade officials from both sides held talks on stabilizing bilateral ties, the move — the largest single expansion of the list — can only heighten tensions between the world's two largest economies and further erode mutual trust, they added.

"The US action is groundless, as Washington has continued to use so-called 'human rights' and 'forced labor' as pretexts for arbitrarily imposing unilateral sanctions on Chinese companies under its domestic laws," a spokesperson for China's Ministry of Commerce said on Saturday, voicing "strong condemnation" and "firm opposition" to the move.

The US Department of Homeland Security announced on Friday the addition of 43 Chinese companies to the entity list under the so-called Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act. The law, which took effect in June 2022, effectively bars goods linked to the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region from entering the US market, in the name of combating so-called "forced labor".

Spanning industries from metals and electronics to apparel, cotton and food processing, the newly listed companies include capacitor manufacturer Hunan Aihua Group, snack food producer ChaCha Food and cotton supplier and processor Henan Tongzhou Cotton Industry Co, according to a US government notice.

The additions will take effect on Monday, raising the total number of listed entities from 144 to 187, a 30 percent increase, the US department said.

"The move is a typical act of economic coercion and seriously infringes upon the legitimate rights and interests of the companies concerned," the Chinese Commerce Ministry spokesperson added.

Notably, the latest restrictions were announced just a day after Chinese Vice-Premier He Lifeng held a video call on Thursday evening with US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer, during which the two sides had what were described as "candid, in-depth and constructive" discussions on maintaining stable bilateral economic and trade relations.

"Just one day later, the US introduced such egregious measures that harm China's interests, seriously deviating from the consensus reached by the two heads of state," the spokesperson said.

Wu Xinbo, dean and professor of Fudan University's Institute of International Studies, said China and the US need sustained negotiations to manage differences and address outstanding issues amid an increasingly complex global environment.

Ongoing economic and trade dialogue is helping Washington gain a clearer understanding of Beijing's positions, he said, adding that China's policy responses have also, to some extent, reshaped Washington's approach toward Beijing.

"Such sustained engagement is more consistent with what is needed to build a constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability," Wu added.

The spokesperson reiterated that China has consistently opposed forced labor and said there is no such thing as so-called "forced labor" in Xinjiang, adding that the region enjoys social harmony and stability, sustained economic development and rising living standards.

The China Cotton Association said in a statement on Sunday that machine-picked cotton now accounts for more than 90 percent of Xinjiang's output, and that the entire chain, from planting to textile production, is highly automated. Cotton farmers and industry workers are protected by Chinese law and are free to choose their jobs, it said.

Contact the writers at zhangchenxu@chinadaily.com.cn

Bans and blame serve no real purpose

WORLD WATCH
By Anthony Moretti

Again. And again. And again. Seemingly once a week, the United States announces a new set of bans against Chinese organizations and technologies. And each time a new obstacle is put in place, the reality becomes clearer: Washington is scared. US officials know it. So, too, do international audiences.

Consider what has transpired in the US in the past couple of weeks.

On July 23, the Department of Defense updated its "List of Foreign Research Institutions Conducting Problematic Activities", imposing sanctions on more than 80 Chinese institutions. Universities and military organizations dominate the list, and the ban includes a "funding prohibition [that] extends to all employees of such institutions". In other words, every person is judged guilty no matter what he or she does.

Guilty of what exactly? Good luck getting a substantive answer to that. One US official said the moves were needed in order to preserve "the integrity of the American scientific enterprise".

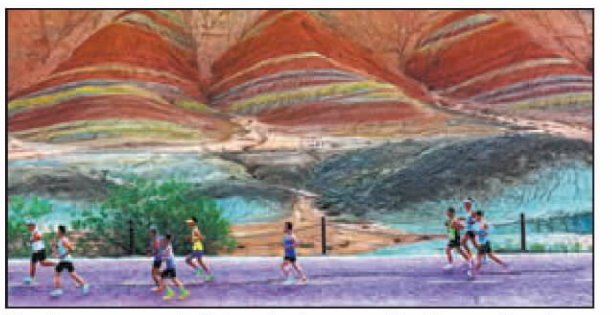
Then on July 28, the US government announced a ban on imports of new Chinese humanoid robots, quadruped robots and grid-connected power inverters, citing national security risks.

Without offering any evidence, the head of the Federal Communications Commission claimed the move was wise because it would "secure America's critical supply chains". The FCC further justified the action by suggesting the devices could pose cybersecurity threats to critical infrastructure.

Note the inclusion of the word "could"; its use provides the rationale for the severe action undertaken. Just do not tell anyone in Washington that the flip side of the word "could" is the phrase "might very well not". That does not fit the tidy little narrative Washington constantly trots out about China being an unfair global partner.

The drumbeat continued on July 31.

*See **Bans,** page 3*



Marathon runners set off at sunrise for a race at the Zhangye Danxia Geological Park in Gansu province on June 28. WANG JIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

RAINBOW MOUNTAINS UNVEIL EARTH'S DIARY IN STONE

In Gansu's Zhangye Danxia park, nature's palette defies belief and attracts global pilgrims

By HU YUMENG and **MA JINGNA** in Lanzhou

As dawn breaks over the Zhangye Danxia Geological Park in Gansu province, the first light reveals rolling mountains bathed in myriad hues. As the ribbons of crimson, ocher, sage green and pearl gray grow brighter in the morning sun, it becomes obvious why these are known as the Rainbow Mountains of China.

The stunning natural palette looks almost unreal — so much so that on the lifestyle platform Xiaohongshu, or RedNote, the viral refrain is: "Were these painted?"

Photos of the hills taken after summer rains, when the colors deepen dramatically, have drawn millions of views, waves of disbelief and quiet pilgrimages from travelers determined to see the wonder for themselves.

*See **Park,** page 3*

XI'S VISION | HIGH-QUALITY DEVELOPMENT

Stability seen amid shift in growth drivers

Stepped-up policy efforts, stronger support for domestic demand likely, observers say

By ZHOU LANXU and **ZHANG CHENXU**

China's economic growth is expected to further stabilize in the second half of the year, as policymakers step up efforts to address structural challenges arising from the transition in growth drivers while strengthening support for domestic demand, experts and executives said.

The comments came after a meeting on Thursday of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, presided over by Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee. The meeting called for efforts to accelerate the transition from old growth drivers to new ones and effectively implement a more proactive fiscal policy and an appropriately accommodative monetary policy.

Economists said the meeting addressed a major challenge facing China's economy, as rapidly expanding new industries have yet to fully offset the slowdown in traditional sectors, insufficient domestic demand and growing structural divergence.

Policy focus should not only be on stepping up macro policy stimulus and accelerating investment in emerging industries and industrial upgrading, but also on bolstering employment and income to foster broader growth, they added.

Zhu Feng, China chief economist at JPMorgan, said that growth momentum in the third and fourth quarters will likely improve from the second one, but divergence could persist amid the transition from old to new growth drivers.

New growth engines, led by artificial intelligence and the smart economy, are likely to continue buoying related investment, high-tech manufacturing and some export sectors, while domestic demand, real estate, private investment and durable goods consumption still need time to recover, Zhu said.

China's economy expanded 4.7 percent year-on-year in the first half, driven by resilient exports and industrial output as high-tech manufacturing sectors benefited from a global wave of AI-related capital expenditure. By comparison, retail sales remained subdued, while fixed-asset investment contracted.

GDP growth weakened to 4.3 percent in the April-June period. In July, the official manufacturing purchasing managers index fell to 49.2, the National Bureau of Statistics said, indicating that falling market demand has caused factory activity to contract for the first time in five months.

To cope with economic divergence, Zhu stressed the need to boost services consumption to absorb jobs released from traditional industries, given the labor-intensive nature of the services sector, while beefing up targeted support for smaller and private businesses to bolster their confidence.

"The key to meeting the annual growth target lies in accelerating fiscal policy implementation and, if necessary, introducing incremental fiscal measures, while better translating policy resources into growth in household employment and income, thereby boosting consumption and private investment," he added.

The meeting on Thursday said that pragmatic and effective incremental policies will be introduced in a timely manner, and it called for intensified efforts to effectively safeguard and improve people's well-being.

The People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, pledged at a meeting on Saturday to comprehensively utilize monetary policy tools and make timely adjustments to keep ample liquidity.

Yin Yanlin, deputy director of the Committee on Economic Affairs of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, said additional treasury bond issuance should be considered when necessary, and monetary policy should cut the reserve requirement ratio and interest rates at a proper time as imported inflation pressure eases.

Ming Ming, chief economist at CITIC Securities, said an 800 billion yuan ($118.5 billion) policy-based financial tool is likely to ramp up support for new types of infrastructure, including synergy between computing and electricity networks, helping drive a recovery in investment.

According to the National Development and Reform Commission, investment in computing network infrastructure in China could reach 4 trillion yuan during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period. It also said that new growth drivers, including high-end manufacturing, the digital economy and modern services, had contributed more than 40 percent of economic growth in the first half of this year.

Such momentum is underpinning international institutions' confidence in China's economic transition. Moody's Ratings said in a commentary that credit conditions in China are expected to remain stable in the second half as fiscal and monetary support, strong exports and technological advances offset weak domestic demand.

Goldman Sachs has forecast that China's economy will grow 4.6 percent this year, within the annual target range of 4.5 to 5 percent, with exports a key source of resilience, thanks to China's manufacturing competitiveness.

For multinational companies, China's shift in growth drivers is creating fresh opportunities. "To gauge China's economic resilience, one must look beyond headline GDP figures and identify where growth originates," said Rogier Janssens, president of Merck China.

"Merck operates across healthcare, life sciences and electronics; in each domain, the picture is clear: China's market not only absorbs innovation but accelerates it," Janssens said.

Wang Keju contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at zhoulanxv@chinadaily.com.cn

INSIDE
From 'building villages' to 'developing villagers'
Global Views, page 8



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

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:05 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:05 PM

INDEPTH



Incense sticks made of agarwood.



Children show keen interest in agarwood craftsmanship during the 4th China International Consumer Products Expo in Haikou, Hainan province, in April 2024. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Raw agarwood pieces.



Agarwood bead bracelets.



Spiral incense made of agarwood resin.

Agarwood's sweet smell of success

Once associated with privilege, the high-value agricultural product is spreading its reach

By YANG FEIYUE
yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

For generations, fragrant agarwood has been associated with collectors, temples and scholars — and while ordinary consumers know its name, they seldom get to experience it.

Today, advances in cultivation, scientific research and product development are transforming the resin-rich wood into the foundation of a growing industry.

Across Hainan province, researchers, growers and entrepreneurs are betting that its fragrance, once associated with privilege, and its other products, can find a place in ordinary homes.

The Nada Agarwood Research Institute based in Hainan is taking a novel approach to marketing an agarwood resin they developed. The company has drawn inspiration from the empress's residence in Weiyang Palace in Chang'an (present-day Xi'an, Shaanxi province) during the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 24).

Known as Jiaofang Hall, or Pepper Hall, the palace's walls were covered in a plaster mixture of pepper and clay that filled the residence with a warm, pungent aroma — a symbol of refinement, status and fortune in that era.

At an agarwood exhibition in Beijing's Gongmei Building from March to May, the research institute featured a burning coil of incense that releases agarwood fragrance.

"The inspiration came from the Jiaofang Hall. But we replaced pepper with agarwood," said Yan Bin, founder and chairman of the company, which has spent two decades focusing on agarwood cultivation, research and product development.

"What we want to carry forward is the old Chinese idea of bringing fragrance into living spaces," Yan said.

Behind such ambition is a rapidly expanding market.

According to a 2024 report by Zhiyan Consulting, China's agarwood market size had grown to about 55 billion yuan ($7.6 billion) by 2023. Under an agarwood whole industry chain development plan (2023–30) by the Hainan government, the province aims to reach an annual output value of over 5 billion yuan by 2030.





Visitors learn about agarwood at a trade fair in Haikou in December. GUO CHENG / XINHUA



Left: A farmer showcases necklaces made of agarwood in Qionghai, Hainan province, on June 14. MENG ZHONGDE / FOR CHINA DAILY
Right: Workers process agarwood at an agri-products processing park in Wanling town, Hainan, on July 17. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Research efforts

Known in Chinese as *chenxiang*, or "sinking fragrance" — a name that refers to its high density, which makes the best pieces sink in water — agarwood is one of China's most prized aromatic woods.

Unlike ordinary timber, agarwood forms only when *Aquilaria* trees are damaged by nature, or it is deliberately induced through cultivation. In response to injury, the trees produce a dark, aromatic resin that gradually permeates the wood, creating the distinctive fragrance prized in incense, perfumes and traditional medicine.

Because the process is slow and unpredictable in the wild, high-quality agarwood has long been exceptionally rare.

When Dai Haofu began studying agarwood after returning from Germany in 2004, he quickly encountered an industry built more on reputation than science. The market was chaotic, and authentic research samples were difficult to obtain, he said.

Dai had originally come to Hainan to study marine resources, but switched his research to agarwood due to limited funds.

"At that time, agarwood was very rare and expensive," said Dai, head of the Haikou Comprehensive Experimental Station of China Agriculture Research System for Chinese Materia Medica. "Finding enough material for research was a major problem."

Unlike marine research, which required expensive boats and equipment, agarwood research could be done in a lab with small samples, which he managed to obtain from collectors, traditional pharmacies, and by visiting growing areas.

But he soon discovered that a large proportion of agarwood products sold by pharmacies were either fake or of very poor quality. Consumers had no way to tell the difference, as there were no scientific standards or reliable methods to verify authenticity.

Wild agarwood resources were limited, and cultivation was slow. Dai believed that better varieties, technology and standards could be achieved through the use of science.

In the beginning, gaining support for the project was difficult, Dai said. A turning point came in 2007, when Hainan's science and technology authorities began supporting major research projects on agarwood.

Working with growers in Guangdong province and other regions, Dai's team began selecting superior trees from natural populations, leading to a series of improved agarwood varieties. High-yielding and of superior quality, the new varieties were easier to induce resin production. Five of them were certified and approved by the Forestry Department of Hainan.

Traditional agarwood trees can require decades to produce valuable resin. New cultivation methods shortened that process significantly, from decades to about six years for some varieties.

"In nature, some trees grow stronger than others. We identify those advantages and reproduce them," Dai said.

Meanwhile, his team collected agarwood samples from 15 countries and regions, conducted systematic research on a chemical basis, and built a database of agarwood compounds. They also developed a rapid analytical method based on these compounds, helping to solve long-standing challenges in verifying authenticity and providing a scientific basis for quality evaluation.

Long prized for the quality of its wild agarwood, Hainan now hopes cultivated trees can restore that reputation on a much larger scale. Cultivation has expanded across Hainan and several southern provinces.

Most Hainan producers still sell raw material rather than higher-value finished products — something Dai believes must change. "Hainan still does too little processing. I'm encouraging relevant parties to do more."

From rags to riches

In Xiaogu village, Chengmai county, on the northern side of Hainan Island, every household now grows agarwood in their front and backyards. The trees have replaced the rubber plantations that once dominated the landscape.

It was not always this way.

The man who changed that is Cai Qinxin. The villagers once called him "Dog Smell". As the youngest of five children in a poor rural family, he often wore torn and dirty clothes.

At age 12, Cai followed his parents to fish the Nandu River that flows through both his home county and the agarwood-growing regions of Danzhou. A day's income was usually less than 50 yuan.

In 1993, while selling fish, Cai met a businessman from Shantou, Guangdong, who operated an agarwood processing factory. The monthly salary was 600 yuan, and Cai took a job immediately.

At the factory, he learned how agarwood was processed, from cutting raw wood to extracting oil. The work was physically demanding. Other workers processed five or six bags of wood a day. Cai processed more than 10. Each bag weighed around 40 kilograms. "I worked harder because I knew this was an opportunity," he said.

After one year, his salary was increased to 1,200 yuan. Three years later, the factory owner told Cai he had learned everything about agarwood processing and should go back home and start his own business. The owner gave him 50,000 yuan as a reward and start-up money.

In 1996, Cai returned to Xiaogu village and began processing agarwood in a small tiled house, but he struggled to find outlets to sell his products. He found a partner from the local agarwood association, who handled sales while Cai focused on processing. Their products eventually reached overseas markets, including the Middle East.

Despite the market potential, Cai saw that many villagers did not understand the value of agarwood. Many trees were cut down because farmers wanted to plant rubber — a supported crop that provided a steady income. Discarded agarwood was often treated as firewood. "I bought some of it for only a few cents per kilogram," Cai said.

His fortunes changed in 2006, when he visited an elderly villager who had found an old tree stump in a rubber plantation. The stump had been placed inside a house.

"The fragrance filled the room the moment I walked in," Cai recalled.

He recognized its value and bought it for 3,000 yuan. After processing, he sold it for 600,000 yuan. The piece later appeared at an auction in Hong Kong and was sold for 2.8 million yuan. The buyer gave him an extra 100,000 yuan.

"My whole family was extremely happy. We never expected this much money," Cai said.

In 2013, Hainan asked Cai to represent the agarwood industry at an international exhibition in Beijing, where he demonstrated traditional processing techniques. "The things I brought were sold out in half a day," he said. On the first day of the exhibition, his handmade agarwood bracelets sold for 460,000 yuan.

Returning from Beijing, Cai decided his village should plant agarwood. The following year, he helped establish an agarwood planting cooperative. Villagers provided land, and the cooperative provided investment, technology and sales channels. Profits were shared. Dozens of households now participate in agarwood cultivation and processing. The cooperative produces incense, bracelets, essential oils, tea and other related products.

Despite the industry's rapid growth, Cai has stuck with the traditional method of creating the resin.

"It takes hard manual work — using saws, electric drills and controlled burning — to imitate the natural forces that wound the trees so they can produce the fragrant resin," he said.

He is skeptical of attempts to accelerate production through chemicals. "Those methods may be faster, but they compromise the quality. Good agarwood needs time."

Betting on a slower tree

In 2020, Hang Yong cut down 23,000 profitable areca palms. At the time, areca prices were at an all-time high, and the trees could generate nearly 10 million yuan annually.

"Nobody understood," Hang said. "Even today, many people still don't understand."

Hang had no background in agarwood. Originally from the northern Inner Mongolia autonomous region, he worked in telecommunications before starting his own company.

In 2016, he arrived in Hainan seeking warmer winters. Like many, he imagined retirement. But instead of buying property, he wanted to build something of his own.

In 2017, when the Hainan government encouraged the building of shared farms with policy support, he established his own farm in Qiongzhong Li and Miao autonomous county, in central Hainan. At first, the farm focused on other crops, including areca palm. Then, in 2019, he met local agricultural experts who showed him the potential of agarwood.

Hang traveled to Maoming in Guangdong, a major agarwood distribution center, to visit planting bases, processing companies and markets. He saw how the industry worked and met the people who later became his partners.

"I visited the plantations, the processors and the traders," Hang said. "Only then did I decide this was an industry worth waiting for."

His decision to clear the areca, he explained, was based on the belief agarwood could provide income plus an industry — with processing, tourism, and a long-term value that a single crop could never match.

His friends thought he had lost his mind.

Since then, Hang has planted 400,000 agarwood trees. His farm, which spans 187 hectares, is now a major agarwood plantation in Hainan.

Hang also wants visitors to understand what agarwood actually is, so his farm combines agarwood forests with tourism experiences, providing camping areas, outdoor activities and ecological projects.

"Many people have heard of agarwood, but they don't know it comes from a tree. There has to be an experience," he said.

He believes filling that gap in knowledge represents the future market. "Agarwood has only just begun," he said.

Hang has signed strategic cooperation agreements with other major agarwood companies in Hainan.

"Ten years ago, all agarwood products could fit in a 10-square-meter room. Today, you couldn't fit them in a large exhibition hall. The market is still in its infancy. It's big enough for everyone," he said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:05 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:05 PM

TOP NEWS



China Coast Guard personnel conduct drills on Saturday in the waters near Huangyan Island. According to the China Coast Guard spokesperson, the drills focused on operations such as visit, board, search and seizure, interdiction of forced entry and forced towing. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

China carries out extensive drills off Huangyan

By **LUO WANGSHU**
luowangshu@chinadaily.com.cn

China's latest diplomatic, military and law enforcement actions with regard to Huangyan Island reflect a more targeted and coordinated response to the Philippines' increasingly aggressive maritime, legal and diplomatic moves, experts said.

On Saturday, the People's Liberation Army Southern Theater Command conducted joint naval and air exercises in the territorial waters and airspace off Huangyan Island and its surrounding areas, while the China Coast Guard carried out rights-protection law enforcement and control drills in nearby waters.

According to separate statements issued by the command and the coast guard, the exercises covered reconnaissance and early warning, deterrence patrols, sea and air control, boarding inspections, interception and compulsory towing.

Ren Yuanzhe, a professor of diplomacy and foreign affairs management at China Foreign Affairs University, said China's response has become more targeted and coordinated, with maritime law enforcement being used alongside diplomatic and public communication efforts.

"The response demonstrates China's resolve to safeguard its sovereignty and maritime rights, while maintaining restraint and leaving room for practical cooperation, including maritime search and rescue," Ren said.

The actions followed a series of Philippine activities near Huangyan Island in late July.

Over two consecutive days, Philippine government and coast guard vessels entered Chinese waters, the China Coast Guard said.

During the larger operation, the Philippines assembled seven government vessels, three coast guard ships, one fishing vessel and a large number of fishing boats near the island. Three Philippine government vessels ignored repeated warnings and deliberately entered Huangyan Island's territorial waters, prompting the coast guard to take measures including verbal warnings, interception and control, and the use of water cannons, it said.

Zhang Qiyue, assistant director of the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies' Institute for Global Governance Studies, said the latest Philippine actions were larger, more organized and more multidimensional than previous sporadic incidents.

"They combined large-scale operations at sea with legal and diplomatic moves, showing that Manila is seeking to advance its claims through several channels at the same time," Zhang said.

The Philippines also deposited with the United Nations Secretariat a nautical chart setting out its claimed baselines, territorial sea and contiguous zone around Huangyan Island.

China firmly rejected the Philippines' delimitation of the so-called "baselines of the territorial sea" in a Foreign Ministry statement on Friday, calling the move illegal, null and void.

The ministry stressed that Huangyan Island has never been part of Philippine territory, which has been defined by a series of international treaties, and that Manila's territorial claim is completely baseless under international law.

It also reiterated that the so-called "award" of the unilaterally initiated "South China Sea arbitration" is illegal, null and void and has no binding force.

The developments came as 2026 marks the 10th anniversary of the announcement of the so-called arbitration award.

Zhang said the Foreign Ministry statement represented a continuation and further clarification of China's long-standing position on Huangyan Island.

It also helped the international community better understand the historical background of the issue, the legal basis of China's position and the nature of the Philippines' actions, she said.

New measures tighten island's conservation

Mechanism improves ecological governance, curbs activities harmful to marine habitats

By **LI MENGHAN**
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

China's newly released management measures for the Huangyan Island National Nature Reserve are a significant step aimed at protecting the island's rich biodiversity, officials and experts said.

The 16-article management measures for the reserve, which is a newly established protected area in the South China Sea covering 3,523.67 hectares of coral reef ecosystems and rare marine habitats, were jointly issued on Saturday by the Ministry of Natural Resources, the National Forestry and Grassland Administration, the China Coast Guard and the People's Government of Hainan Province.

According to the measures, a coordination mechanism has been established to address major issues, strengthen collaboration and share information.

Huangyan Island, which is part of the Zhongsha Islands, features unique coral reef ecosystems and distinctive geological formations. It is home to numerous rare and endangered species, including hawksbill turtles, green sea turtles, giant clams, triton shells and tiger cowries, making it a marine biodiversity hot spot of significant ecological value.

Chen Danhong, director-general of the department of international cooperation at the Ministry of Natural Resources, noted that the measures were issued in response to urgent demands to protect the ecosystem as it faces heightened risks, including an abnormal rise in sea temperatures caused by climate change and extreme weather, human activities and potential outbreaks of harmful organisms.

"The measures provide an institutional basis for protection management and law enforcement. Their implementation will significantly improve the construction and management of the reserve, and they are of great significance for maintaining the health and stability of the South China Sea marine ecosystem," Chen said.

Under the measures, the Ministry of Natural Resources is responsible for boundary surveys, planning review, resource protection and utilization management, asset accounting and registration, as well as the protection of territorial sea baseline points. The National Forestry and Grassland Administration supervises the reserve and reviews adjustments, planning and construction. The South China Sea bureau of the Ministry of Natural Resources, the designated management institution, handles daily protection, resource monitoring and ecological restoration.

The Hainan provincial government cooperates with the China Coast Guard on administrative law enforcement, while the local government assists the management institution with disaster prevention, safety management and emergency response measures.

The reserve is divided into a core protection zone of 1,242.55 hectares and a general control zone of 2,281.12 hectares. The measures prohibit entry except for activities authorized by laws and regulations or organized by the management institution for protection and management purposes. Fishing, mining, excavating corals, coral reefs and giant clams, and other activities that damage rare marine species and natural ecosystems are prohibited without approval.

The coast guard will establish a routine patrol system in collaboration with the management institution, deploying patrol personnel and equipment to deter and report violations. Violations will be prosecuted under applicable laws including the Ecological and Environmental Code, the Sea Areas Administration Law, the Island Protection Law, the Wildlife Protection Law, the Coast Guard Law and the regulations on nature reserves.

Jin Yongming, a distinguished professor at Ocean University of China's School of International Affairs and Public Administration in Shandong province, said the multiagency management model of the Huangyan Island reserve is shaped by its marine environment and geopolitical sensitivity, noting that it involves foreign affairs, politics and security — issues no single department can handle alone.

"The release of these management rules represents a significant step forward in safeguarding China's lawful maritime rights and interests at Huangyan Island," Jin said.

Bans: US refuses to accept a multipolar world order

From page 1

On that day, the Department of Homeland Security added 43 more Chinese companies to the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act Entity List in its largest-ever single expansion. Justifying the sweeping import bans under a "rebuttable presumption" of guilt, officials once again leaned heavily on broad rhetoric of national security and economic protectionism.

Two themes connect the bans announced in July.

First, there is a flawed belief inside the White House and among many who make up the political elite in Washington that the US is capable of going it alone in creating and sustaining the most sophisticated technologies. During both of his terms, the US president has spoken of a rebirth of US manufacturing; he has talked in tones of returning the US to those days long gone in which the country was the envy of the world because of what it produced and then sold domestically and internationally. There therefore needs to be a rationale as to why manufacturing is not returning and why the technological resurgence Washington has promised has not materialized, and it can't be because of decisions made in Washington.

Enter China. Claiming that China does not play by "the rules" allows for finger-pointing at a bogeyman. The sanctions offer fuel to the suggestion the US is responding forcefully and ethically.

More fundamentally, Washington increasingly appears to be redefining competition itself. Traditionally, economic leadership rested on producing better technologies, attracting more talent and creating more competitive industries. Increasingly, however, leadership is being pursued by restricting competitors' access to markets, capital, research partnerships and advanced technologies. Competition is no longer confined to outperforming rivals; it extends to shaping the conditions under which rivals are allowed to compete. That marks a significant shift in how economic power is exercised.

Second, the activities deliver a violent slap in the face to the US' long-standing professed belief in free trade.

In order to protect select domestic industries, Washington has repeatedly kicked to the curb one of its fundamental tenets: free trade is the best trade. Here again, one Washington insider after another will say that if only China played by "the rules" — yes, there is that phrase again — then these pesky bans might just go away.

Of course, those rules were written by the US. They are supported by other Western democracies. They are endorsed by the World Bank and other international agencies that are absolutely beholden to Washington. With all of that as the backdrop, maybe "rules" is not the correct word. Perhaps diktats is.

No, the US is not coming right out and saying it is running scared, but only the most naive of people cannot see the truth.

The US no longer holds sway on the international stage as it once did. It lacks the moral authority to lead by example. It alone does not produce the most cutting-edge items. It refuses to accept that a multipolar world defines the 21st century. Solid leadership would acknowledge those facts and adjust accordingly. But that is not Washington's way.

The world does not like that. Just a few days ago, a new poll released by the Pew Research Center found that people in 25 of the 36 surveyed countries held a more favorable view of China than of the US.

A nation confident in its people and in its ability to compete on the intricately connected world stage would roll up its sleeves and find real solutions. A scared nation blames and blames and blames.

The author is an associate professor at the Communication and Organizational Leadership Department, Robert Morris University in Pennsylvania. The opinions expressed in this article are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of Robert Morris University. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Deadly attack



A law enforcement officer stands guard at the site of an explosion in Moscow on Saturday. Three people were killed and 21 others injured after an improvised explosive device detonated at a restaurant in central Moscow. Russia's National Anti-Terrorism Committee said a woman carrying the explosive device into the restaurant was killed when it detonated. ALEXANDER ZEMLIANICHENKO JR / XINHUA

Park: Views shift continuously depending on the weather and season

From page 1

The landscape was recognized as a UNESCO Global Geopark in 2020. Voted one of CNN's "24 Most Unusual Landscapes in the World" in 2025, the park is renowned for its otherworldly display of colors.

The Chinese name for the landscape, *danxia*, literally means "rosy clouds". It evokes the colors of the sky at dusk. First appearing in an ancient verse, the term was borrowed by Chinese geologists to describe these colorful landforms, conjuring up an image of the heavens spilling onto the earth.

A hashtag roughly translated as "Nature's Canvas" on social media has seen visitors from across China and beyond posting their own unedited proof of what they saw.

"The landscape is entirely natural," said Li Junling, deputy director of the scenic area's comprehensive management department.

Beneath the multicolored surface lies a geological epic: The thick layers of sandstone and mineral deposits from the time when dinosaurs still roamed the Earth were thrust upward by tectonic forces over millions of years and were then sculpted by wind and rain.

Some 35 distinct colors can be found in the park, each a page from the Earth's own diary — telling the story of a dry season, a flood, a shallow sea — a record of an ancient climate system.

The park, covering around 1,290 square kilometers, also straddles ancient Silk Road routes. Zhangye, known in ancient times as Ganzhou, was a crucial oasis in the Hexi Corridor, where merchants from Persia, Sogdiana and the Mediterranean once rested their camels and traded silk for spices. Centuries later, the Venetian merchant Marco Polo lingered here, describing a city adorned with temples and monasteries.

Today, travelers retrace his route on tour buses, yet the sense of wonder remains unchanged.

Mao Guodong, a Mexico-based traveler who returned to China for a two-month journey to explore its natural wonders, was awestruck.

"The landscape is breathtaking. It's truly one of nature's masterpieces," he said. Understanding how geological forces shaped the terrain turned a sightseeing stop into the highlight of his entire journey.

Chloe Choo, a visitor from Singapore, described the landscape as "absolutely breathtaking".

"I could hardly believe these colorful rocks were formed entirely by nature," she said. "The vibrant colors and straight layers look like the Earth painted itself."

Depending on the weather, season and angle of the sun, the views shift continuously, making the park a paradise for photographers. After rains, the colors deepen into jeweled tones; at sunrise and sunset, the hills blush as if lit from within.

For some families, the park serves as an outdoor classroom. At the No 4 viewing platform, Yang Ziwei from the Ningxia Hui autonomous region watched her daughter hold up a textbook — the cover image an exact match for the view before them. "Travel brings knowledge that can't be found in the classroom alone," Yang said.

Contact the writers at huyumeng@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:05 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:05 PM

WORLD IN FOCUS

Crumbling edifice

Cost of rebuilding more than damage for quake-hit Venezuela, experts say



Two people stand beside the rubble of a collapsed building in Caraballeda, Venezuela, on July 27, one month after an earthquake struck the area. FEDERICO PARRA / AFP

Two earthquakes that rocked Venezuela on June 24 caused $19.6 billion in direct physical damage, but the cost of rebuilding could be twice that much or more, the World Bank said in an early assessment released on July 23.

The 7.2 and 7.5 magnitude quakes killed about 5,000 people, according to the government, destroying residential buildings, infrastructure and nonresidential buildings in the northern areas of the country, including the capital Caracas.

The government estimates that nearly 17,000 people were injured and nearly 18,000 remain homeless. The disaster, the country's deadliest earthquake since 1812, came at a time when socioeconomic conditions were already precarious, with a poverty rate of over 76 percent.

"The earthquake caused an estimated $19.6 billion in direct physical damage, a staggering figure for any economy and one that demands a coordinated response," said Susana Cordeiro Guerra, the World Bank vice president who oversees Latin America and the Caribbean.

"Without timely additional investment, the negative impact on productive capacity and living standards will slow the path to recovery," she said.

The bank completed its global rapid damage estimation using remote-based earthquake modeling, local seismic data, satellite imagery and damage reports from government, humanitarian agencies and others on the ground. The estimate does not include the cost of "building back better" through structural improvements or upgrading the construction type. Those costs, including debris clearance, could be two to two-and-a-half times the replacement costs, which could drive the total bill to close to $50 billion.

'Far from over'

A month on, search efforts continue for bodies buried underneath rubble, but operations have evolved to focus on post-earthquake humanitarian aid and rebuilding. Recovering from the earthquakes in Venezuela will take years, according to the Red Cross.

"This disaster is far from over," said Scott Craig, spokesman for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Craig said that while in the immediate aftermath the focus had been on saving lives, now it was on caring for survivors.

"Survivors are living with anxiety, fear, sadness and sleeplessness as they grieve relatives, homes, jobs and livelihoods lost," he told reporters in Geneva.

Healthcare, mental health support and access to safe drinking water were the immediate priorities, he added, as many families were still relying on bottled water for drinking, cooking and washing.

"Recovery here will be measured in years, not weeks," said Craig. "Health centers, schools, water systems, power and sewerage were destroyed or badly damaged."

The pace of reconstruction would be a decisive factor in shaping the country's economic recovery and social outcomes. Without higher public and private investment, productive capacity and GDP would likely remain below pre-quake levels until at least 2036, the World Bank said.

Additional borrowing would add to Venezuela's already large debt stock, but could stoke stronger growth, which would gradually strengthen the country's fiscal position, it said.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA





Left: People attend a vigil in Caracas, Venezuela, on July 24, in honor of the victims killed in twin earthquakes.
Right: A woman provides a haircut to a girl in a temporary shelter in Catia La Mar, La Guaira, Venezuela, on July 26.
PHOTOS BY LEONARDO FERNANDEZ VILORIA / REUTERS



A child rides a bicycle and performs tricks beside a temporary shelter with Chinese characters "disaster relief" on it, in Catia La Mar, La Guaira, Venezuela, on July 26. LEONARDO FERNANDEZ VILORIA / REUTERS







From left: Men work at the Simon Bolivar international airport, which was damaged by the twin earthquakes, in Maiquetia, Venezuela, on July 23. AFP
A woman shows a sign in Spanish that reads "They're our heroes; they deserve a hug" near the rubble of a collapsed building in Tanaguarena, Venezuela, on July 23.
A man sprays pesticides near the rubble of a building in Caraballeda, Venezuela, on July 22. PHOTOS BY JUAN BARRETO / AFP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:05 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:05 PM

WORLD

China backs UN on AI governance

New agency seeks wider tech access, shared development for Global South

By **ZHAO HUANXIN**
at the United Nations
huanxinzhao@chinadailyusa.com

China will consult and cooperate with other countries through the broad platform of the United Nations on major issues concerning the future of global AI governance, guided by principles of openness, open-source cooperation, mutual benefit, joint contribution and shared benefits, China's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Fu Cong said on Friday.

Fu made the remarks during a briefing at the UN headquarters, organized by China's UN mission. The briefing took place two weeks after the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance was held in Shanghai.

Fu said the conference was more than a platform for dialogue, exchange, and cooperation; it brought stakeholders together to facilitate the global flow of innovation resources for AI development and inject fresh momentum into international cooperation.

"More importantly, it focused on the defining issue of our times: how to ensure that artificial intelligence develops in ways that benefit all humanity," he told representatives from more than 70 countries and international organizations at the briefing.

Fu noted that Chinese President Xi Jinping outlined China's vision for building a just and equitable global AI governance system, presenting four observations: boosting innovation-driven development, ensuring AI remains secure and under human control, promoting mutual learning between civilizations, and improving global governance.

One of the conference's major outcomes was the launch of the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization, or WAICO, the world's first intergovernmental international organization dedicated to AI. Representatives of 29 countries signed the founding convention.

"It represents China's concrete response to the aspirations of the Global South and an important step toward bringing countries together for AI development and global governance," Fu said, adding that the organization welcomes the participation of all countries.

The ambassador said WAICO is designed to complement and reinforce the UN's work on AI governance by focusing on capacity building, policy dialogue, technical cooperation, and AI applications.

"China stands ready to strengthen policy coordination, institutional cooperation, and practical collaboration with the United Nations, and to support the UN in playing an even greater role in global AI governance," he said.

"We see the UN as the main channel and the main platform for global governance on AI," he said during a question-and-answer session.

Asked about regulation, Fu said governments must balance innovation against risk. "If you have too much regulation, then you stifle innovation," he said, while warning that giving companies free rein could expose societies to AI's inherent dangers.

Speaking at the briefing, Amandeep Gill, the UN secretary-general's envoy on technology, described this year's World AI Conference as "qualitatively different".

'Step forward'

He also said the Shanghai gathering marked "a significant step forward" in making AI capacity-building an international priority.

Gill said the UN secretary-general focused on capacity, safety and sustainability, and stressed that different initiatives should complement one another, with the United Nations retaining a central role.

"I think the UN should remain the inclusive home for AI governance," Gill said at the Q&A session of the briefing.

The briefing also heard talks by other representatives from countries across Asia, Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Moses Jere, a counselor and cyber/digital expert of Zambia's UN mission, said that computing remains the binding constraint for most African countries. The obstacle is neither ambition nor talent, but access to computing infrastructure, quality data, and comparable standards.

"The undertakings given in Shanghai on access to computing infrastructure and AI standards frameworks are therefore of real consequence," he said.

Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, Pakistan's permanent representative to the United Nations, said the establishment of WAICO is timely and significant, as it provides a platform for countries, particularly those of the Global South, to strengthen national capacities and promote shared development.

The ambassador said that developing countries need more than access to finished AI products. They also need the data, computing capacity, models, tools, and the technical support to develop and adapt AI themselves.

"In this regard, the outcomes of the conference and the high-level meeting provide a clear and action-oriented framework for future international progress," he said.

Other speakers welcomed the establishment of WAICO and called for the conference's initiatives to be translated into practical capacity-building support for developing countries, with the broader goal of making AI more inclusive, widely accessible and mutually beneficial.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1884



Migrants pass through a broken fence as they leave Spain's North African enclave of Ceuta toward the Moroccan town of Fnideq following an attempted crossing at the Bab Sebta border, on Saturday. ABDEL MAJID BZIOUAT / AFP

Migrant influx adds to Europe's woes

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

Several European nations will push for a stronger border between the European Union and the world at a special meeting on Tuesday.

The talks were hastily arranged after more than 50,000 migrants swept over and around the border separating the North African Spanish enclave of Ceuta from Morocco on Thursday.

At least 72 people died during the mass influx, local officials said on Sunday. Most of the people who rushed into Spain's North African territory have returned to Morocco since the territory's largest mass migrant crossing.

"The latest figure that we have is 72," the government's delegate to Ceuta, Miguel Angel Perez Triano, told reporters, when asked about the number of fatalities.

Spain said on Friday it had escorted almost all of the migrants who entered Ceuta back over the border, but the sudden arrival of so many people demanding asylum and entry into the bloc led Italy to immediately suspend its participation in the EU's border-free travel area, known as the Schengen zone, a move Denmark and Finland supported.

The influx triggered a joint statement from 22 of the EU's 27 member states, calling on the bloc to strengthen its external borders and not allow weaknesses to "create the perception that illegal entry into the European Union is possible" because it would "encourage further attempts, undermine confidence in our common migration policy and have repercussions for all member states".

Spain responded to the criticism from fellow EU countries by saying most of the migrants who illegally entered Ceuta had headed back, and that nations that criticized its border enforcement in Ceuta had been "selfish, polarizing, and unlawful".

Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez wrote to President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen saying his country had quickly secured its border and prevented any "unauthorized onward movement toward continental Europe".

Fernando Grande-Marlaska, Spain's interior minister, said on Saturday the situation in Ceuta was almost back to normal.

"Almost all of (the migrants) have already left Ceuta," he said.

Tuesday's emergency talks are likely to be both a debriefing about what happened and a look at how to stop it happening again. And they will also likely include debate about the EU's Schengen Area.

The border-free travel zone that encompasses more than 450 million people and 29 countries in Europe means there is no need for checks at the borders between nations for people who are already within its external border.

Critics say it acts as a magnet for people who know they only need to crack one external border at its weakest point to have full access to the European continent.

Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said she wants the EU to look at all options, "including a suspension of Schengen cooperation".

Migrants who returned to Morocco on the weekend said hunger, exhaustion, and the lack of a warm welcome were their reasons for giving up on the idea of relocating to mainland Europe.

A waiter from Morocco told Reuters local people in the enclave had closed all the stores and made it clear they were not welcome: "They imposed a siege to force us to leave Ceuta by ourselves … They succeeded in their plan."

China, US business leaders seek deeper ties

By **MINLU ZHANG** in Washington
minluzhang@chinadailyusa.com



Chinese and US business leaders hold a meeting in Washington DC on Friday. SHA HANTING / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Chinese and US business leaders met in Washington DC to explore opportunities for deeper cooperation as the two countries continued high-level engagement and economic and trade exchanges while managing differences.

The meeting, held on Friday, came a day after Chinese Vice-Premier He Lifeng, who is also China's lead person for China-US economic and trade affairs, held a video call with US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer. The two sides had "candid, in-depth and constructive exchanges", while China expressed serious concerns over recent US trade and economic restrictions, according to Xinhua.

"There's this myth out there that American companies don't want to do business with China, that American companies are leaving China, or that they aren't investing in China or welcoming Chinese companies in the United States," Sean Stein, president of the US-China Business Council, or USCBC, said.

"All of those are myths. All of those are false," he said. "American companies are committed to being in China. They're committed to partnering with Chinese companies."

Stein made the remarks on the sidelines of a meeting between a Chinese business delegation and representatives of USCBC member companies. The event was organized by the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, or CCPIT, and the USCBC.

The USCBC is a nonprofit association representing around 270 US companies doing business in China, with members including major US companies such as Apple, Nvidia, Boeing, Ford, Amazon, Coca-Cola, JPMorganChase and ExxonMobil. The CCPIT is the largest trade and investment promotion agency in China, representing China's business community.

Ren Hongbin, chairman of the CCPIT, said the Chinese delegation's visit was aimed at implementing the consensus reached by the two countries' leaders and creating more room for cooperation between the Chinese and US business communities.

'Improvement in relations'

"We have seen improvement in bilateral relations, especially after the meeting between the two heads of state," Ren said.

According to the USCBC member survey released in June, 92 percent of surveyed US companies in China were profitable last year and 95 percent said the Chinese market helps them "stay globally competitive".

"Those are huge numbers," Ren said, adding the survey results reflected "the commitment and strong interest of US companies in China".

Ren also said US companies are expected to make up the largest national group of business participants at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation CEO Summit when China hosts the 2026 APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting later this year.

"APEC is an incredible magnet. It brings together some of the world's most advanced and dynamic economies," Stein told China Daily.

"It's an unparalleled opportunity not just to talk with one company or one country, but to engage with officials and businesses from across the region and build consensus on issues that matter to companies and economies alike," he said.

"This is really about plurilateral and multilateral diplomacy and creating an environment across multiple economies where companies can thrive and economies can grow."

The Washington DC meeting followed stops by the CCPIT-led Chinese business delegation in Utah and Illinois, where Ren said the group sought to strengthen ties and create more opportunities for cooperation between Chinese and US businesses.

Africa takes lead in BRI investment, report says

By **EDITH MUTETHYA** in Nairobi
edithmutethya@chinadaily.com.cn

Africa retained its position as the leading destination for the Belt and Road Initiative investment in the first half of this year, attracting $33.5 billion in Chinese investment, up 254 percent from the same period last year, as manufacturing and energy projects gathered pace amid shifting global trade dynamics.

A report, jointly published by the Green Finance & Development Center at Fudan University in Shanghai and the University of Queensland Business School in Australia, said Africa's strong performance was driven by increased investment in manufacturing, energy and infrastructure.

Ethiopia recorded the largest growth in BRI engagement globally, attracting more than $18.9 billion.

The East African country has secured the world's largest Chinese energy investment through green energy development agreements worth more than $14 billion between the Ethiopian Investment Commission and China's Ming Yang Smart Energy Group.

The project is expected to greatly facilitate Ethiopia's green transformation. In the first phase, the project will include a $7.5 billion 8.4-gigawatt renewable energy project comprising both wind power and solar energy.

In the second phase, the Chinese company will invest an additional $7.3 billion in green ammonia production, as well as the manufacturing of electric transmission and wind turbine equipment.

The investment is expected to accelerate industrial development, create jobs, facilitate technology transfer and boost foreign exchange earnings.

Egypt also recorded a sharp rise in Chinese investment announcements in the first half of the year, reaching $12.2 billion during the period, according to the report.

China's Xinfeng Steel is investing $10 billion in Egypt to develop an industrial and steel manufacturing complex in the Ain Sokhna industrial zone. The facility will focus on producing automotive steel and other large-scale industrial steel products.

Since its launch in 2013, the Belt and Road Initiative has significantly boosted infrastructure development, trade, and investment across Africa. Flagship projects continue to expand their positive impact on local development.

Highest level

Globally, BRI engagement reached its highest level for any first half since the initiative was launched, totaling $49.8 billion in investments and $76.5 billion in construction contracts.

Energy remained a major driver of Chinese overseas engagement. Total energy-related BRI investment reached $36.3 billion in the first half of this year, nearly double the level recorded during most first-half periods since 2013, surpassed only by 2025.

Investment in green energy reached a record high, with $14.3 billion committed to wind, solar and waste-to-energy projects, alongside $5.3 billion in hydropower. Overall, China's investment in green energy and hydropower more than doubled in the first half of the year, compared with the same period last year.

Since the launch of the BRI, cumulative Chinese engagement has exceeded $1.5 trillion, comprising $926 billion in construction contracts and $614 billion in investments.

Christoph Nedopil Wang, founding director of the Green Finance & Development Center, said he expects BRI engagement to remain strong through the rest of the year despite global economic uncertainty driven by US trade measures and volatility in fossil fuel markets linked to tensions around the Strait of Hormuz.

"With strong engagement in sectors requiring significant investment such as mining, manufacturing, and increasing ability to scale energy investment as well as data centers, I expect deal size to also remain large (in the future)," he said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:05 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:05 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Bessent's 'underwater kicking' allegation perfect metaphor for US' 'water polo' play

While it is a memorable metaphor, it is also an almost perfect inversion of reality. Speaking to Fox Business, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent compared Sino-US economic relations to a water polo match, claiming that "Under the water, the Chinese seem to have done a lot of kicking lately", and that "If we have to, we'll kick back".

But Washington has not ceased expanding restrictions on Chinese technology and industry. In May, it tightened artificial intelligence chip export controls by closing so-called "loopholes" for Chinese-headquartered companies operating overseas, extending US jurisdiction far beyond its borders.

In June, the Pentagon baselessly added 65 Chinese entities to its Section 1260H List of alleged "Chinese military companies". Then, in late July, the US Federal Communications Commission moved to block imports of Chinese-made advanced robotics and power inverters, despite acknowledging the restrictions would raise costs and slow aspects of the US' own AI development.

The pattern continued on Friday, when Washington placed over 40 Chinese entities on its so-called "Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act Entity List" — just one day after Chinese Vice-Premier He Lifeng held what both sides described as a candid and constructive video call with Bessent and US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer.

This is not evidence of Chinese "kicking", but a US campaign of "underwater kicking" that has become broader, more systematic and increasingly disconnected from its stated goal of stabilizing relations.

Bessent's metaphor therefore reveals more than what he perhaps intended. The US administration casts itself as the reluctant "rules-abiding" player, forced into a defensive posture by what it projects as Chinese "dirty tricks". Yet it is Washington that is resorting to such unsporting behavior, erecting new barriers across semiconductors, artificial intelligence, advanced manufacturing and trade.

The US has stretched "national security" to cover virtually all major sectors, disregarding the strong appeals of the US business community. By using administrative powers to disrupt commercial exchanges, Washington continues to push its de facto "decoupling" and "supply chain fragmentation" strategy. These coercive actions benefit no one — they are classic cases of market distortion and unilateral coercion.

Reuters recently photographed Bessent's own handwritten notes during a Cabinet meeting, revealing plans to purchase billions of dollars' worth of Japanese yen. The carefully visible notebook might be an exercise in signaling financial markets without making an official announcement — the very sort of below-the-surface maneuvering that Bessent hypocritically accused China of.

The US seeks to contain China's development while preserving stable ties. In practice, however, Washington treats periods of stability as tactical pauses — opportunities to secure what it still needs from China, notably rare earths, before pressing ahead with its broader strategy of constraining China's rise. That explains why before and after almost every dialogue between the two sides the US introduces another round of restrictions.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio acknowledged this week that any economic or military conflict between the US and China would be catastrophic for both countries and the wider world. On that point, at least, there should be little disagreement.

Despite this, the US administration remains hellbent on pressing ahead with its ill-advised China policy — a strategy that has increasingly come to weigh on the US economy itself. It is no coincidence that Bessent's remarks coincided with second-quarter US GDP figures showing annualized growth slowing to 1.5 percent, down from 2.1 percent in the first quarter. Washington has long had a familiar instinct when domestic headwinds gather: redirect attention outward.

Bessent tried to dismiss the figures as "very noisy", blaming "technical factors". But a neutral observer might reach a rather different conclusion.

Bearing the bigger picture of Sino-US relations in mind, Beijing, for its part, has responded rationally to the US moves to protect China's legitimate rights and interests.

The US Treasury chief should remember one lesson from the sport he invokes. In water polo, the player kicking beneath the surface often does so because he is struggling to stay afloat. The US' technological lead remains in some sectors. But preserving that advantage requires confidence, not perpetual escalation. If Washington continues mistaking competition for a zero-sum game, it may find that the turbulence it complains about is largely of its own making.

Tokyo further dismantles postwar order

Japan's National Intelligence Bureau — the country's first centralized foreign intelligence body since the end of World War II — held its inaugural meeting on Friday, chaired by Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi.

This represents another troubling shift in Tokyo's security policies, as it is a significant step in Japan's systematic push toward remilitarization and a challenge to the postwar international order.

The 730-person bureau, set up under the National Intelligence Council Establishment Act that passed Japan's upper house in May, ends a postwar arrangement that left the country's intelligence divided across the Cabinet Office, the Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of Defense, the National Police Agency and the Ministry of Justice.

This design breaks with the long-standing tradition of decentralized intelligence checks and balances in postwar Japan. Even more concerning are the bureau's vague functional boundaries and the near absence of oversight. The concentration of power and the lack of supervision make it easy for the intelligence system to become a tool for right-wing politicians to manipulate politics and suppress dissent, rendering the checks and balances of the Diet and public opinion ineffective.

Viewed from a historical perspective, this system bears dangerously similar genetic traits to the espionage governance of Japanese militarism before and during World War II. The so-called "Special Higher Police", known as *Tokko* and established in 1911, once suppressed progressive forces domestically and acted as a vanguard of aggression abroad. The so-called "Cabinet Intelligence Bureau", established in 1940, provided an integrated intelligence hub for the invasion of China and the waging of the Pacific War.

Japan's wartime intelligence agencies were compulsorily dissolved following its defeat. However, the postwar settlement left the deeper structures of militaristic thinking largely intact. With Tokyo now establishing a modern intelligence framework under revised security legislation, the prospect of a militaristic intelligence ethos being revived — albeit in contemporary guise — is a risk that warrants serious attention.

Tokyo's deeper intention is to pave the way for military expansion. Since the Takaichi government took office, it has accelerated the push to lift the ban on "collective self-defense" and amend Article 9 of the pacifist Constitution.

Japan's military budget for the fiscal year 2026 exceeded 9.04 trillion yen ($57.36 billion) for the first time, a record high. The Japanese government has abandoned the principle of "exclusive defense", accelerated the development of long-range offensive weapons, relaxed arms exports and participated in joint military exercises with many other countries. Against this backdrop, the core task of the National Intelligence Bureau is precisely to build an all-encompassing intelligence hub for military expansion, forming a complete chain of "intelligence coordination — high-level decision making — military implementation".

Article 9 of Japan's Constitution renounces the country's right to remilitarization. But the Takaichi government is systematically abandoning its postwar commitments. From the "Special Higher Police" to the new intelligence system, the right-wing forces of Japan are revisiting the path of intelligence centralization.

For nations that suffered from Japanese aggression in WWII, the number "731", the code name of the Imperial Japanese Army's germ warfare unit, carries painful memories. For Japan to choose July 31 as the date to launch the new intelligence agency is nothing but an open insult and provocation.

Japan's push for intelligence system reform poses a serious threat to regional peace and stability. The international community must be highly vigilant against the moves being taken by Tokyo. In the face of the rise of neo-militarism in Japan, China should take targeted countermeasures with a firm commitment to safeguarding its national security. It is necessary for China to continuously enhance all-weather, multi-domain counterintelligence reconnaissance and deterrence capabilities.

Japan's intelligence-gathering and military activities should be closely monitored to ensure that China's core interests are not violated. A robust security firewall for technology, the economy and digital supply chains must also be established to tightly guard against Japanese intelligence infiltration and cognitive warfare threats.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Song Chen



Opinion Line

Proposed law part of efforts needed to curb cyberbullying

At the end of July, China solicited public feedback on the draft of long-awaited legislation targeting online bullying. This legal framework is both necessary and timely, yet it represents just one step in a broader effort to combat the pervasive issue of cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying has become cross-platform and organized, impacting real-world lives. It disrupts online order, inflicts lasting psychological harm on victims and damages the online business environment. The harm caused by cyberbullying is as real and damaging as physical violence.

In recent years, incidents of online abuse have become alarmingly common, ranging from doxing — publicly revealing private information about someone with the intention of harassing or seeking revenge — to coordinated smear campaigns. Liu Xuezhou, a young man looking for his biological parents, took his own life after enduring relentless online speculation and harassment. Similarly, Zheng Linghua, a young woman known for her distinctive pink hair, ended her life following vicious attacks on her appearance. These heartbreaking tragedies are not isolated cases but rather indicative of a widespread social problem.

Dismissing online abuse as mere "internet quarrels" is a grave injustice to those who are the victims of it. Words can hurt deeply, and the anonymity and viral nature of social networking sites make it difficult to delete and escape torrents of abuse. Most victims feel powerless to fight back, often choosing silence and retreating into a shell in search of peace and safety.

The proposed legislation is a direct response to the pernicious nature of such deeds. If enacted, it would provide victims with the legal recourse they need to defend themselves, clearly define the responsibilities of governments, platforms, institutions and users, and ensure that offenders face real consequences for their actions.

This coordination across various fronts in the draft law is crucial because online bullying requires collective efforts. Platforms, in particular, must not prioritize engagement and online views over responsibility and user safety. They should take proactive measures to prevent and address abuse — through early warning systems, content moderation and accessible reporting channels — while cooperating with law enforcement agencies to identify and penalize offenders. Early intervention is essential to prevent harmful comments from spiraling out of control.

No victim should feel isolated or helpless in the face of online abuse. The cyberspace regulators need to conduct routine oversight, and the public security authorities must act swiftly on complaints — investigating, gathering evidence and providing timely support to victims. The rule of law must underpin online safety, ensuring a secure digital environment for all users.

It's encouraging to see the draft legislation requires educational authorities and schools to include anti-bullying content in their curricula, as individual internet users also have a crucial role to play in enhancing their legal awareness and digital literacy. Under the draft, if students are involved in online abuse, schools must intervene promptly and take preventive action to address the issue and support affected individuals. True progress will occur when every individual and institution embraces the values of respect for others, reverence for the law and accountability for their words and actions.

Ultimately, only by fostering a culture of respect and responsibility can we build a digital environment that protects everyone from harm and prevents us from harming others. This collective effort will help create a cleaner, more orderly cyberspace for all, where individuals can engage freely and safely without fear of abuse or harassment. The proposed law is part of that effort.

— CAO YIN, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Plan aimed at developing more high-value patents

Editor's note: *The State Council, China's Cabinet, recently issued a plan to protect and utilize intellectual property. Officials of the China National Intellectual Property Administration attended a news conference at the State Council Information Office late last month to outline what China will do to improve IP production in the coming years. Below are excerpts of the remarks made by one of the officials, Liang Xinxin, who is director general of the administration's Strategic Planning Department.*

High-value invention patents cover four categories. The first are those in emerging industries of strategic importance, such as next-generation information technology and new energy sectors. The second are invention patents with an overseas patent family. The third are patents that have been maintained for more than 10 years. The fourth are invention patents that have won the National Science and Technology Awards or the China Patent Awards.

At present, patents in emerging industries of strategic importance account for over 70 percent of China's high-value invention patents. This share is expected to rise further during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period.

A target was set to increase the number of high-value invention patents per 10,000 people to more than 22 during the 15th Five-Year Plan period, an increase of more than six compared with the end of the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period. This reflects the country's confidence in improving its innovation capacity.

The country has set out five priorities for protecting and utilizing intellectual property during the 15th Five-Year Plan period.

First, to further bolster the development of an innovation-driven economy, the country will continue refining patent laws, regulations and policies and ensure timely and effective protection for major scientific and technological innovations. It will also promote the commercialization of patents on a regular basis.

Second, the country will strengthen policy guidance to foster more renowned trademark brands with global influence and boost the development of the "brand economy".

In recent years, China has vigorously advanced the building of brands, cultivating a growing number of domestic brands that enjoy popularity both at home and abroad.

Third, China will continue to boost growth of different regions by promoting local special products. During the 14th Five-Year Plan period, the country's geographical indication products played an active role in creating jobs in rural areas and raising farmers' incomes. The country will further strengthen the protection of GIs to provide stronger support for comprehensive rural vitalization.

Fourth, China will work to better support the development of the digital economy. It will keep enhancing the protection of intellectual property in the integrated circuit sector by effectively implementing the newly revised Regulations on the Protection of Layout-Designs of Integrated Circuits. Meanwhile, it will advance efforts to formulate rules governing the protection of data-related intellectual property.

Fifth, the country will continue to uphold an open economy. It will strengthen the research on foreign intellectual property laws and policies, and improve its guidance for Chinese companies to handle overseas intellectual property disputes.

It will also align closely with high-standard international economic and trade rules, continue to provide equal protection for the intellectual property of both domestic and foreign-invested enterprises, deepen intellectual property cooperation with major trading partners, and strive to build a market-oriented, law-based and world-class business environment.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:05 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:05 PM

VIEWS

Pu Yixing

Spark curiosity to build the bridge

Every generation worries that the next is drifting away from classical culture.

The proposed remedies are consistently the same: teach more history, assign more classics, build more museums and preserve more heritage.

Yet, the anxiety never disappears.

Perhaps that is because we keep mistaking preservation for transmission. Culture survives not because it is protected, but because it is rediscovered. And for each generation, rediscovery begins not with obligation but with curiosity.

I learned this lesson in an unlikely place: a video game. As a child, I struggled through *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, the Chinese historical epic that shaped generations of East Asian imagination. The novel is one of China's greatest literary achievements, but to a young reader it can feel forbidding.

Its language belongs to another era, the cast of characters is immense and the political intrigues demand patience that many children simply do not yet possess. I finished it because I thought I was supposed to.

Years later, I found myself playing a strategy game set in the Three Kingdoms period. For the first time, history became immersive rather than instructional. Instead of trying to remember alliances and famous battles, I was making decisions and fighting battles myself.

When the game ended, I did something no teacher had ever persuaded me to do: I began reading history voluntarily.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Soon I was searching historical records, comparing fact with fiction, reading *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, and eventually writing a song about Sun Shangxiang, a legendary figure of the era — sister of Sun Quan and wife of Liu Bei.

Only later did I discover that my story was not unique. Across Chinese social media, countless young people trace their fascination with the Three Kingdoms not to a classroom but to a game.

That should tell us something. For decades, educators have debated how to convince young people that classical culture matters. Many creators have quietly found an answer: they stopped trying to persuade and started making culture irresistible.

The medium is not the point. Curiosity is. This realization shaped my work when I began writing my first solo album, drawing inspiration from figures including Pu Songling, a Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) writer, the fourth-century calligrapher Wang Xizhi and the Venetian traveler Marco Polo.

Marco Polo fascinated me for a particular reason.

In China today, many children recognize his name before they know anything about the man who crossed Eurasia in the 13th century. They know him instead as a hero in a mobile game.

A fictional character can be the door to a real historical figure.

When I decided to write a song about Marco Polo, I did not want to summarize his travels.

History textbooks already do that well enough. Instead, I immersed myself in the details of his journey — his years in what is now Beijing, his visits to Zhejiang, Jiangsu and Sichuan provinces in China, the vast distances he crossed, and the civilizations he encountered along the Silk Road.

Those discoveries reshaped my understanding of him.

So rather than retelling history, I embedded it inside a metaphor.

A worn pair of sheepskin boots carries the dust of Persian deserts. Silver coins bloom into lotus flowers. A scimitar leaves its trace on bamboo slips. These images do not explain history outright. Instead, they invite listeners to wonder about their origins.

Curiosity is more powerful than explanation because it nudges people to explore.

The lyric I value most says, "The greatest adventure is admitting you have never truly discovered."

It sounds paradoxical. Explorers are remembered for making discoveries.

But genuine discovery begins with abandoning certainty.

Marco Polo did not come to China merely to confirm what he already believed. He encountered a civilization larger, more sophisticated and more surprising than anything he had imagined. The real breakthrough was not geographical but intellectual. He recognized that his previous understanding had been incomplete.

That may be the most valuable lesson his journey offers.

Every society is vulnerable to inherited assumptions about places it has never seen. Every culture can get trapped in stories told by someone else. The only lasting antidote is curiosity — the willingness to look again, and to discover that reality is richer than imagination.

This is also why I hope more young people around the world will experience China for themselves. Not because they should travel out of obligation, and certainly not because a song tells them to.

The purpose of art is to inspire questions, not give instructions.

If a listener finishes my song about Marco Polo and decides to explore the Silk Road, to learn why a Venetian merchant traveled so far east, or simply to wonder what he actually found here seven centuries ago, then the song has already succeeded.

That is how classical culture survives. Not by demanding reverence, but by rewarding curiosity.

Creators often speak about preserving tradition, but preservation is only the beginning. Our responsibility is not to enshrine the past behind glass cases, but to make it resonate in the present — through film, games, music, animation, short videos or whatever form allows a new generation to encounter it as something living rather than distant.

The bridge matters more than the monument.

When I was a child, no bridge connected me to *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. A game built one. Music allowed me to build another.

If my work inspires someone else to cross that bridge — to Pu Songling's strange spirits, to Wang Xizhi's calligraphy, to Marco Polo's long journey across Eurasia — then I have fulfilled what I believe every creator should aspire to.

Not simply preserve the past. But make someone eager to discover it.

The author is a Chinese singer, writer and actor.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Huang Ronghuai and Xu Lin

Reimagining education in the era of AI

The intelligent society is a new stage of social development in which artificial intelligence is deeply embedded in daily life. From production lines to classrooms, AI reshapes how we learn, work and govern. This era is characterized by human-machine collaboration, cross-sector integration and co-creation.

In education, this transformation is bringing about systemic changes, reshaping knowledge generation, educational institutions and talent cultivation. The 2026 Stanford AI Index Report indicates that AI's influence on society has never been more pronounced. But while AI capabilities and adoption accelerate rapidly, education systems are still struggling to adapt.

The fundamental purpose of education is still human development. Education should enable learners to develop judgment, responsibility, creativity, cooperation and moral agency. AI undoubtedly creates significant opportunities for education.

It can support personalized learning, adaptive feedback, language access, remote tutoring and more responsive learner support.

However, these opportunities are accompanied by substantial risks. Without clear educational goals, ethical safeguards and institutional guidance, AI may intensify inequalities, encourage superficial learning and weaken learner agency.

Therefore, the key issue is not whether AI should be used in education, but under what educational principles, institutional arrangements and social responsibilities it should be used.

This concern resonates with UNESCO's call for a new social contract for education, which emphasizes education as a public endeavor and a common good grounded in human dignity, social justice, cultural diversity, care, reciprocity and solidarity, all geared toward sustainable development. AI isn't just another educational tool; it is reshaping the educational contract and the relationship among stakeholders in education. Education systems must therefore renew the foundational pact of learning and education to support human development, social responsibility and sustainable futures.

Three long-term tensions are particularly important in this process. First, the conflict between immediate gains and long-term human development. AI can improve efficiency, convenience and performance.

It can generate answers, summarize texts and produce polished outputs rapidly. But education cannot be evaluated only by short-term productivity or visible outcomes. It must also cultivate long-term capacities such as attention, judgment, character, resilience and responsibility. If education is organized primarily around efficiency, its formative function will be weakened.

Second, the tension between individual awareness and collective consciousness. In AI-rich environments, information, opinions and emotions are increasingly mediated and amplified by platforms and algorithms.

Learners may be exposed to collective judgments before they have developed the capacity for independent reflection. Education must therefore strengthen learners' ability to ask questions, evaluate evidence, resist conformity and form reasoned judgments.

Last, the tussle between instrumental rationality and habitual dependence. While AI tools can assist learners in solving problems more efficiently, excessive reliance on them may result in cognitive outsourcing, whereby learners mistake the acquisition of answers for the development of understanding. The educational challenge is not to keep learners away from AI, but to ensure that AI complements but doesn't substitute cognitive engagement, inquiry and reflection.

To address these tensions, education must cultivate Intrinsic, Authentic, Agentic and Active learners. IAAA learners are intrinsically motivated by curiosity, meaning and autonomy; authentically connected to real-world problems, personal identities and meaningful social contexts; agentic in exercising voice, choice, goal-setting and responsibility; and active in constructing knowledge through inquiry, experimentation, creation and reflection.

Such learners are not passive recipients of information or algorithmic recommendations. They are self-directed, using AI responsibly without becoming dependent on it, maintaining human judgment, and linking personal growth with public responsibility.

However, learner self-commitment requires more than individual will. It depends on the coordinated efforts of multiple stakeholders. The renewed education pact should be a multilayered agreement connecting society, government, schools, families, teachers and learners.

Society and culture provide the value foundation of the common good, equity, inclusion and shared responsibility. Government and policy provide institutional guarantees through public resources, regulation, accountability and governance.

Schools and families translate social expectations into learning environments, curriculum, pedagogy and developmental support. Teachers and students sustain the core human relationship of education through care, engagement, feedback and adaptation. At the center are IAAA learners, whose self-commitment and development give the entire pact its educational meaning.

China's recent strides in becoming a leader in education, advancing a learning society and promoting AI-enabled educational transformation provide a meaningful reference for this renewal. The Smart Education of China platform reflects the idea of digital education as public infrastructure, expanding access to quality learning resources and supporting lifelong learning.

The AI Plus Education Action Plan integrates AI with curriculum reform, teacher development, rural education support, talent cultivation and education governance. Its significance lies not just in AI application, but in building a coordinated educational ecosystem that supports high-quality education, lifelong learning and modernization.

The future of education in the intelligent society will not be determined solely by technological innovation.

It will depend on whether societies can embed AI within a broader educational pact that protects human dignity, strengthens learner agency, supports the development of IAAA learners, and advances inclusive, equitable and lifelong learning. Only when AI serves human development and sustainable futures can it truly serve education.

Huang Ronghuai is the co-dean of the Smart Learning Institute of Beijing Normal University and UNESCO Chair on AI in Education; Xu Lin is an educational researcher at the Smart Learning Institute of Beijing Normal University and chief operating officer of the Global Smart Education Network.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Rubhesh Jha and Victoria Strelets

Sustainable procurement driving green growth and decarbonization

China's 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30) places new emphasis on green manufacturing and low-carbon industrial upgrading. This supports the national goal of peaking carbon emissions before 2030 and realizing carbon neutrality by 2060.

However, much of the debate around this transition focuses on factories, technology and finance. Less attention goes to procurement — the daily decisions buyers make about which suppliers to select and which contracts to sign.

Sustainable procurement means building environmental criteria into sourcing decisions from the start, not after price and quality are settled. This idea is moving from principle into practice worldwide.

Procurement carries more weight than its quiet reputation suggests. In many manufacturing sectors, the majority of a product's total carbon footprint sits upstream, in the materials and components a company buys rather than in what it makes. This means a buyer's sourcing decisions often shape a company's climate performance more than what its factory floor does.

Consider a common scenario. A senior buyer compares two suppliers of the same component. One offers a lower price. The other charges more but can document its energy use, water use and recycling.

When sustainability criteria exist from the beginning, buyers can make this choice with confidence. When those criteria are added later, they tend to disappear once cost pressure rises.

The calculation also looks different over time. A supplier with cleaner processes may cost more today but often proves more stable tomorrow, since it faces fewer regulatory penalties, less exposure to carbon pricing and steadier access to export markets with strict environmental rules. Buyers who weigh total cost over several years, rather than the price on a single invoice, tend to reach a different conclusion than those who do not.

This is where much of the real work of decarbonization happens. A buyer managing sourcing across China and wider Asian supply networks increasingly negotiates supplier commitments on emissions reporting as a routine part of contracting, alongside price and delivery timelines.

Global Lens

Training and shared investment in cleaner equipment matter more than strict rules on their own.

Phased supplier development programs help smaller manufacturers meet basic environmental benchmarks step by step. Training and shared investment in cleaner equipment matter more than strict rules on their own. Some call this buyer-led greening.

This kind of collaboration is expanding beyond manufacturing processes into product design itself. European buyers increasingly work with suppliers on packaging, durability and repairability, not simply requiring compliance but helping suppliers get there. As companies prepare for the EU's Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation, this has become a routine part of supplier development rather than a one-time audit.

One of us witnessed this directly in a recent sourcing decision. Two suppliers offered similar products. The lower-cost one used conventional plastic packaging and could provide only limited documentation on material compliance. The other was willing to redesign its packaging with recycled materials, cut unnecessary plastic and provide full documentation, including PFAS-free and RoHS declarations. The second supplier was chosen. It reduced compliance risk, aligned with upcoming EU packaging rules and met customers' sustainability expectations.

A related factor is whether a supplier can provide replacement parts across a product's life cycle. Suppliers that support repair over full replacement help extend product life and reduce waste, a core principle of the circular economy the EU is promoting. This is also an opening for Chinese suppliers to strengthen their competitiveness by supporting longer product life cycles.

Digital tools are making this easier. Supplier traceability platforms and simple emissions-tracking software now let even mid-sized buyers verify claims that once required lengthy audits. As these tools become cheaper and more common, verifying a supplier's environmental performance is turning from a specialist task into a standard part of sourcing work.

International practice offers useful reference points. In the European Union, large retailers require tiered supplier disclosure, starting with basic energy reporting and expanding to full carbon accounting over several years. In Germany, automakers pair procurement standards with joint supplier training, so upstream vendors do not bear the full cost alone.

These examples show that the pace of change depends less on the strictness of a rule and more on the support that comes with it.

China's State-owned enterprises have already moved in this direction. A growing number of centrally administered firms build green criteria into procurement design, from supplier scoring systems to long-term sourcing contracts.

Extending this approach into private manufacturing supply chains, especially among small and medium-sized exporters, could speed progress further.

Smaller exporters often want to meet these standards but lack the resources. A shared, cross-provincial registry of green suppliers would build on the momentum already underway. It would allow a supplier that has been verified once to serve as a trusted partner for many buyers, rather than repeating the same disclosure work for each new customer.

This would also make China's own progress easier to see and measure. Consistent supplier data, gathered through routine procurement rather than special reporting exercises, gives policymakers a clearer picture of how the low-carbon transition is unfolding on the ground.

Supply chains do not decarbonize on their own. They decarbonize one sourcing decision at a time, repeated across thousands of buyers and suppliers every day.

As China advances its low-carbon transition, procurement deserves a bigger place in that story. It is not a technical afterthought.

It is the mechanism through which national targets turn into results on the ground, one contract at a time.

Rubhesh Jha is a researcher in sustainable business strategy and founder of ClimateActionX; Victoria Strelets is a senior buyer at an Italian company producing motorcycle accessories, specializing in global sourcing and procurement, with a strong focus on China.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:05 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:05 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

LI YANQIN

When village paths meet the world

China's booming rural inbound tourism builds new cross-border cultural connections



The "China Travel" map is experiencing a quiet shift. Overseas visitors who once contented themselves with city walks in Beijing and Shanghai are now boarding early-morning buses bound for rural areas, walking into tea terraces, ancient pear orchards and Miao embroidery workshops in Yunnan and Guizhou provinces, and other parts of China.

The rural turn in China's inbound tourism is not a fad. Behind it are practical enablers: relaxed visa waivers, smoother payment and language services, and a rural transport grid that now reaches once-isolated valleys. But the deeper pull is cultural. Foreign travelers are tired of algorithm-fed sameness; they want variety, warmth and the texture of other people's ordinary lives. Chinese villages — with their 100-year trees, harvest rituals and courtyard hospitality — offer exactly that.

Tourism, in this sense, is no longer a transactional industry. It is a medium through which the world re-encounters China outside the metropolis, and through which villagers meet the world without leaving home.

The keyword is resonance. Rural tourism works only when multiple actors see one another: Farmers want income yet wish to keep their rhythm of life; visitors seek novelty yet treasure sincere encounter; operators expect returns; and government must balance development, conservation and the public good. The task is not to erase these differences but to convert them into shared values. The most moving village scenes are about how a craft survives, why an old tree is never cut down, and how a festival turns a Tuesday into a ceremony. They are entries into Chinese society, written not on the page but in soil, thread and blossom.

The ancient pear orchard system, home to more than 9,400 pear trees over a century old in Shichuan town, Gansu province, was inscribed in 2025 as a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems site by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. The village did not fence the trees into a museum. It banned new construction in the core zone, gave every old tree a digital file, paired traditional pruning maintenance with modern sensors, and stretched a seasonal economy into a year-long cycle of blossoms, homestays, pear vinegar and farming workshops. During the 2026 pear-blossom season, Shichuan town drew over 1 million visitors; more than 85 percent of local households now earn from tourism-related work.

Conservation of the agricultural heritage is funded by the very revenue it helps generate. Heritage, in other words, is not the opposite of development. Handled well, it is the engine.

However, rural tourism depends on a delicate social compact. A village is a place to visit, but above all, a place to live: those who do not run guesthouses still breathe the noise, traffic and price vibrations. Outside capital brings markets but can leak profits; visitor cameras amplify praise and grievance alike. Whether tourism ends in co-creation or joint destruction depends on one central thing — fairness. Not simply equal splits of the ticket money, but proportionate voice and return. Villagers, as permanent stakeholders, must share both the benefit and the decision. Young returnees must find reasons to stay, as true wealth lies not in annual dividends but in accumulated skills, collaborative abilities and market insights — assets no external investor can take away.

Digital technology connects villages to broader markets and carries travel experiences farther. Short videos can take China's tea terraces to a screen in Lisbon; a visitor who keeps posting such videos, unknowingly becomes a narrator of China's story.

Scale, too, needs redesign. A single village has finite resources and reception capacity. For rural tourism to go further, villages must form a division of labor among themselves. For instance, Xidi, Xixinan and Nanxinan villages, in Anhui's Huangshan area, coordinate rather than compete on tourist resources. Xidi leans on cultural heritage, Xixinan on eco-art and Nanxinan on tofu cuisine and suburban leisure. They greet guests together at the high-speed train station. Xidi's "village partnership" model was showcased at the UN Tourism "Best Tourism Villages" 2025 annual conference and cited as a good-practice example. Neighboring places moved from poaching tourists to piping them to one another, from solo branding to shared brand.

The numbers give the trend its spine. China now has 19 villages on the UN Tourism "Best Tourism Villages" list — the most for any country — after the 2025 round added Digang in Zhejiang province, Huanggang in Guizhou province, Jikayi in Sichuan province and Dongluo in Jiangsu province.

Rural tourism, seen this way, is not a soft sidebar to China's development story. It is a hard case of how governance philosophy becomes lived income: protect the old tree, include the quiet villagers, let the visitor become a witness, let the neighboring village be an ally. The West often narrates rural revival as preservation versus progress. China's villages are suggesting a different equation — heritage as attraction, hospitality as diplomacy, and a single blossom season as a meeting point between the local and the global.

The author is a professor at the School of Management and the Institute of National Security Studies at Minzu University of China, and the director of the Center for Sustainable Tourism and Rural Revitalization. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



WU HEPING / FOR CHINA DAILY



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

XU HONG AND HUANG CHENGKUN

From 'building villages' to 'developing villagers'

The country should combine investment in physical assets with investment in people to promote high-quality development of rural tourism



Xu Hong



Huang Chengkun

At the first meeting of the Central Commission for Financial and Economic Affairs under the 20th Communist Party of China Central Committee in May 2023, Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, stressed that "investment in physical assets should be closely integrated with investment in people".

The fourth plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee last October and the Central Economic Work Conference held at the end of 2025 made corresponding arrangements, while the outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) for national economic and social development further specified relevant tasks. The concept of "investing in people" represents a concrete application of the people-centered development philosophy in China's economic and social development in the new era.

As an essential component of Chinese modernization, rural vitalization is ultimately about the vitalization of people. In recent years, rural tourism has played an increasingly important role in promoting rural industrial integration, expanding channels for villagers' income growth, and unlocking the value of rural resources. However, it should also be recognized that rural tourism development should not be limited to "building attractions, upgrading spaces and attracting visitors". In some areas, villagers still have a limited role to play in decision-making, lack sufficient capacity to participate in tourism development and are weakly connected to the distribution of tourism benefits. Consequently, tourism development has not yet been fully aligned with the broader goal of improving the overall well-being and capabilities of rural residents. Achieving high-quality development of rural tourism requires closely combining investment in physical assets with investment in people.

First, rural tourism should shift from "building villages" to "developing villagers" by strengthening residents' capacity to participate in development. For a long time, some rural tourism initiatives have placed greater emphasis on external investment, infrastructure construction and landscape transformation, treating rural tourism simply as the process of "creating a tourism destination". Although roads have been improved, villages have become more attractive and tourist numbers have increased, local residents' capacity to participate in tourism industries, manage businesses and create value has not necessarily improved at the same pace. They are often involved only as land providers, low-skilled workers or service providers, becoming supporting actors rather than core participants in tourism development.

Sustainable rural tourism should enable local residents to become participants, operators and beneficiaries of tourism development. This requires not only continued investment in transportation, environmental improvement and public facilities, but also greater efforts to enhance villagers' entrepreneurial skills, service capabilities, market awareness and digital literacy. By helping residents develop modern tourism management skills in areas such as product design, brand marketing, customer service and e-commerce operations, rural residents can transform from passive recipients of tourism development into active creators of value.

Second, rural tourism should expand from "increasing economic income" to "improving quality of life", ensuring that local residents share the benefits of development. In the past, some regions focused primarily on attracting tourism projects and increasing consumption by visitors, while paying insufficient attention to the relationship between tourism development and villagers' everyday lives. As a result, some residents living in the tourism destinations have not been able to fully benefit from the growth of tourism.

High-quality rural tourism should integrate industrial development with community development by linking tourism initiatives with improvements in public services, living environments and cultural life. Tourism development can help upgrade rural infrastructure, improve living conditions and strengthen community cohesion through cultural activities. It can also create new opportunities to attract young people back to rural areas for entrepreneurship, transforming villages from simple tourism consumption spaces into places suitable for both living and working. At the same time, more effective benefit-sharing mechanisms should be established. Through the participation of village collective economic organizations, cooperative business models, and mechanisms such as equity participation based on local resources, tourism revenues can be distributed more equitably among residents. This can prevent tourism development from becoming a process that benefits only a small number of investors or operators.

Third, rural tourism should shift from "prioritizing investment in physical assets" to "empowering people", achieving coordinated progress between material development and human development. Physical construction alone provides only the "hardware" foundation for rural tourism. The capabilities, creativity and active participation of people ultimately determine the quality and sustainability of development. Therefore, rural tourism development requires an organic integration between investment in physical assets and investment in people. Infrastructure projects, digital platforms and tourism industries should be designed and implemented in ways that can better serve residents' development needs, allowing material investment to become a foundation for enhancing human capabilities and improving livelihoods. Meanwhile, by strengthening residents' abilities and encouraging their active participation, rural communities can further unlock the value of physical resources, enabling rural spaces, cultural heritage and tourism facilities to generate lasting vitality.

Over the 15th Five-Year Plan period, high-quality development of rural tourism requires a transition from simply investing in physical assets toward combining investment in physical assets with investment in people. Investment in physical assets provides the foundation for development, while investment in people stimulates endogenous vitality. Integrating industrial growth with human development is the essential path for rural tourism to become a sustainable force that advances rural revitalization and improves people's well-being.

Xu Hong is the dean of the College of Tourism and Service Management at Nankai University. Huang Chengkun is an associate professor of the School of Cultural Tourism and Public Administration at Fujian Normal University. The authors contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:05 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:05 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

Innovation boosts China's trade tempo

Industrial upgrades, robust supply chains create more choices for global consumers

By ZHONG NAN
zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

On the factory floor of Warsonco Intelligent Technology (Guangdong) Co in Dongguan, South China's Guangdong province, palletizing robots lifted cartons from conveyor belts and stacked them neatly onto pallets in late July, while engineers carried out routine performance checks before shipment.

Replacing labor-intensive manual handling, the palletizing robots can stack between eight and 12 cartons per minute. They can be programmed with up to 800 palletizing patterns and simultaneously handle two different product types, making them well suited for industries such as food processing, pharmaceuticals, consumer goods and printing.

The scene reflects a broader shift taking place across China's manufacturing sector, where artificial intelligence and automation are making industrial robots easier to deploy, operate and scale.

Xiao Fageng, the company's sales director, said as manufacturers worldwide face rising labor costs and growing demand for flexible production, Chinese robotics companies are increasingly developing AI-powered systems that lower technical barriers while expanding their presence in overseas markets.

Demand for the company's robots has been growing both in China and overseas. Its products are now sold in more than 50 countries and regions, and Warsonco expects total shipments to reach between 8,000 and 10,000 units this year, up about 60 percent from a year earlier, according to information released by Huangpu Customs in Guangdong.

Customs data showed China's industrial robot exports exceeded imports for the first time in 2025, making the country a net exporter of industrial robots. In the first half, China's industrial robot exports reached 6.29 billion yuan, up 18.6 percent year-on-year, with products shipped to 141 countries and regions.

Industrial robots are not the only high-end Chinese-made equipment riding the AI boom, as power infrastructure hardware has also seen surging global orders.

At a workshop of Jiangsu Yawei Transformer Co in Nantong, East China's Jiangsu province, workers were racing to complete large-capacity power transformers and dry-type distribution transformers destined for countries in the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

As power consumption per server rack at data centers has climbed from around 10 kilowatts to several hundred kWs — and in some cases even megawatt levels — reliable, high-capacity electricity supply has become critical. Once regarded as conventional grid equipment, transformers are becoming a cornerstone of AI infrastructure, said Li Luosheng, the company's manager for customs affairs.

"In the past, most of our exports were conventional transformer models," said Li. "Now, a growing proportion of our orders comes from AI data centers and overseas power grid upgrade projects, where customers place much higher demands on energy efficiency, reliability and delivery speed."

Jiangsu's exports of electrical equipment, including transformers, electrical control devices and wires and cables, reached 140.56 billion yuan in the first half of 2026, up 23.5 percent year-on-year, statistics from Nanjing Customs showed.

China's export mix has undergone a profound transformation over the past four decades. In the early years of reform and opening-up, labor-intensive products such as garments, furniture and household appliances helped Chinese manufacturers gain a foothold in global markets by leveraging competitive production costs.

With the country's industrial capabilities advancing, exports increasingly moved up the value chain, with higher-value and technology-intensive products taking a larger share.

Chen Bin, deputy director of the expert committee of the Beijing-based China Machinery Industry Federation, said the transformation has accelerated in recent years.

After electric vehicles, lithium batteries and photovoltaic products emerged as China's "new trio" of export growth drivers, a new wave of products — including industrial robots, commercial drones, 3D printers, artificial intelligence applications and innovative pharmaceuticals — is rapidly gaining global traction, said Chen.

Backed by a comprehensive industrial ecosystem, a deep engineering talent pool and sustained innovation, China's foreign trade is increasingly being driven by technological advancement rather than traditional cost advantages, he added.

The shift is already evident in China's latest trade figures. Alongside notable export growth in tech-intensive green products such as energy storage systems and electric-powered trucks, China's trade in hardware supporting computing power, including electronic components and computer parts, surged 56.6 percent year-on-year to 5.13 trillion yuan between January and June, data from the General Administration of Customs showed.



An aerial photo shows a bustling foreign trade container terminal with constant truck and vessel movements at Shanghai Port on July 14. LONG WEI / FOR CHINA DAILY



Customs officers from Ningbo Customs learn about the features and export demand for a new ice cream maker at a home appliance firm in Ningbo, Zhejiang province, on July 21. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Workers load trucks for export onto ships at Yantai Port in Shandong province on July 15. TANG KE / FOR CHINA DAILY

Wang Jun, the administration's vice-minister, said the country's AI-powered smart glasses, translation devices and robotic exoskeletons are among a growing range of intelligent products undergoing rapid innovation.

The rising contribution of these innovation-driven products has helped underpin China's broader trade growth. The country's foreign trade expanded 16.9 percent year-on-year to 25.47 trillion yuan in the first half, with imports growing faster than exports. Exports rose 13.4 percent, while imports climbed 22.1 percent, exceeding export growth by 8.7 percentage points, according to customs data.

Pushing back against the so-called "China Shock 2.0" narrative, which portrays China's development as a disruption to the global economy, Li Jiaying, an assistant researcher at Renmin University of China's Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies in Beijing, said China's export growth is increasingly driven by innovation rather than low-cost manufacturing.

The country's industrial upgrading has expanded global supply, improved production efficiency and created more choices for consumers and businesses worldwide.

"Rather than displacing other economies, China's technological progress strengthens global industrial and supply chains by delivering competitive products, accelerating innovation and supporting the worldwide green and digital transitions," she said.

Echoing that view, Ding Rijia, a professor of industrial economy at China University of Mining and Technology-Beijing, said that following Europe's energy shortage, demand for imported green equipment has risen sharply, while many developing economies are only beginning their energy transition, leaving substantial long-term demand unmet.

"China's export growth of technology-intensive and green products reflects its ability to respond to genuine global demand, with additional supply emerging because demand already exists," said Ding, adding the narrative that China's exports are driven by "overcapacity" and are undermining Western manufacturing is not supported by market realities.

That assessment is also reflected in the investment strategies of multinational companies operating in China. Stefan Floeck, ABB's division president of IEC Low Voltage Motors, said China will remain central to the Swedish-Swiss technology company's global motor business as the country's industrial upgrading and green transition continue to drive demand for more energy-efficient equipment.

"To capture these opportunities, we will continue investing in local research and development, manufacturing and supply chains to better serve Chinese customers while reinforcing China as an innovation hub and export base within the company's global network," said Floeck.

ABB's low-voltage motor business has invested more than 150 million yuan in recent years to upgrade its Shanghai manufacturing base, including research and development testing laboratories and production lines. Its domestic supply chain also supports exports from China to overseas markets.

Despite headwinds such as rising trade protectionism and persistent geopolitical uncertainties, China's exports are likely to remain resilient in the second half, said Wen Bin, chief economist at China Minsheng Bank. He attributed the outlook to the global AI investment cycle, the United States' relatively moderate tariff policy and measures to strengthen manufacturers' competitiveness.

Similar views were expressed by Lynn Song, chief economist for China at Dutch bank ING. "Exports have been one of China's primary growth engines in recent years, and this year's acceleration continues to beat expectations," he said.

"China's exports over the first half of the year already nearly match the levels seen through the first seven months of 2025, and the base case is for solid export growth to continue. Strong external demand remains one of the key pillars supporting China's industrial activity," said Song.

"It remains a key engine of growth for China and is likely to continue playing that role for the rest of the year," he said, while cautioning that potential new tariffs from the European Union and proposed US secondary sanctions related to Russian energy exports could pose risks to the country's export outlook.

Nation's shipbuilding edge runs deeper than shipyards

REPORTER'S LOG

By Zhong Nan

After covering China's shipbuilding industry for nearly a decade, I have recently noticed a new trend that is not immediately visible in global order books or production rankings.

Experts at the Beijing-based China Association of the National Shipbuilding Industry told me the industry's ecosystem is expanding beyond shipyards and traditional suppliers to include robotics, industrial software, artificial intelligence, advanced materials and clean-energy companies.

Modern shipbuilding has evolved far beyond assembling steel plates into a hull. Today it integrates millions of components and hundreds of mechanical, electrical and digital systems.

Nothing illustrates this transformation better than *Adora Magic City*, China's first domestically built large cruise ship constructed by China State Shipbuilding Corp in Shanghai.

Calling it simply a ship almost feels inadequate. It is, in many ways, a floating city. The vessel, which celebrated its maiden voyage on Jan 1, 2024, contains roughly 25 million individual parts, 107 integrated systems, 55,000 pieces of equipment and 4,750 kilometers of electrical cables, according to its builder.

What impressed me most was not simply its scale, but the way the project had to be organized. The vessel was constructed in sections before its major blocks were joined together. Electrical cabinets, piping units, cabins and interior spaces were prefabricated in workshops and later installed like pieces of a giant puzzle.

Walking through a shipyard in Dalian, Liaoning province, it became clear why robotics and digital technologies are finding a place alongside traditional manufacturing. Welding robots can work in narrow or hazardous spaces and help shipyards improve precision and productivity. Machine-vision systems can detect welding defects, while digital platforms can coordinate design, procurement, production and delivery.

Technology alone, however, is not enough. Behind every intelligent shipyard are experienced engineers, skilled workers and decades of industrial know-how. Shipbuilding remains a business where expertise is built over generations rather than acquired overnight.

During previous industry downturns, many countries lost experienced workers as shipyards cut capacity or closed. Once those skills and production knowledge disappeared, they proved difficult to rebuild without losing valuable time or knowledge.

Chinese shipyards took a different approach. Even during difficult years, major builders continued training engineers and skilled workers, investing in research and improving construction techniques.

Universities in Shanghai, Harbin, Heilongjiang province, and Wuhan, Hubei province, also maintained shipbuilding and marine engineering programs when many regarded them as offering limited career prospects. Some expanded into new maritime specialties.

When global demand recovered, Chinese shipyards already had the people needed to handle sophisticated projects. This long-term investment also explains why China's shipbuilding success cannot simply be attributed to subsidies.

Financial support, including subsidies, may help companies weather downturns or purchase equipment, but it cannot train welders, develop naval architects or rebuild supplier relationships overnight. If money is not an issue, many governments could rebuild their shipbuilding industries simply by having their finance ministries write ever larger checks. In reality, rebuilding an industrial system takes years, often decades.

The answer lies in the industrial ecosystem behind China's shipbuilding success. Building a large vessel requires hundreds of suppliers, ranging from steelmakers and engine manufacturers to cable producers, software developers, equipment makers and interior specialists. The absence of any critical supplier can delay an entire project.

Some countries still have shipyards and dry docks, but many no longer have the dense supplier networks that once surrounded them. A shipyard may be able to build a hull, but delivering a vessel requires the coordinated support of suppliers across the entire industrial chain.

As robotics, AI, batteries, alternative fuels, advanced materials and industrial software become more deeply integrated into shipbuilding, China's shipbuilding sector is evolving into a testing ground for advanced manufacturing. Increasingly, each new vessel serves as a platform where advanced manufacturing technologies are developed, tested and applied at scale.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:05 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:05 PM

BUSINESSINSIGHT

Chinese AI strengthening economic resilience

EAGLE EYE
By Fu Minjie



ILLUSTRATION GENERATED BY AI

The technological and pricing shock brought by Kimi k3 to the large-language model ecosystem continues to reverberate through capital markets, with some US media outlets even describing it as a "DeepSeek Moment 2.0". It is widely believed within the industry that the six-to-12-month innovation gap between China and the United States in large models has been largely closed. Although product iteration may lead to periodic fluctuations in specific technical indicators, China's artificial intelligence innovation has remained among the global leading group, with its overall capabilities comparable to those of any leading AI power.

However, China's AI progress should not be assessed only by isolated benchmark scores. Its distinctive path lies in broader technological coverage, richer application scenarios and stronger empowerment of the macroeconomy. By extending AI across industries and into the real economy, China is reinforcing economic resilience and improving development quality across multiple dimensions.

The recent 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference, held in Shanghai, offers a vivid demonstration of China's broad-based AI innovation. With three major venues — Expo, Zhangjiang and West Bund — the exhibition covered more than 100,000 square meters and brought together over 1,100 domestic and foreign enterprises. More than 3,000 cutting-edge achievements were on display, with over 300 hard-tech products making their global debuts or industry premieres. These exhibits covered the full industrial chain, from chips and foundation models to intelligent robots and terminal devices, presenting a comprehensive picture of AI and the emerging intelligent society.

US economists originally defined AI as a technological revolution mainly in the services sector and as an extension of the internet services revolution, which led to relatively concentrated innovation tracks, limited technological penetration and expectations that the main impact would fall on mid and low-skilled white-collar workers. Yet China's AI practice has already moved beyond this early assessment, building a complete innovation chain that covers computing power, infrastructure, general-purpose large models and intelligent applications.

More importantly, China is accelerating AI's movement from the digital world to the physical world. The speed of this transition and the richness of application scenarios both rank among the highest globally. Coordinated innovation across industries and scenarios is reshaping global understanding of AI's application scope, innovation breadth and social significance. Meanwhile, diverse application scenarios can improve enterprises' digital foundations and technological adaptability, lower cross-sector innovation expenses, strengthen synergies among different fields, and continuously raise industrial technological capacity and total factor productivity.

China's technological innovation has always been anchored in the real economy, with the high-end transformation of manufacturing as its core direction. The recommendations for the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period make clear that China should build a modern industrial system supported by advanced manufacturing and accelerate high-level technological self-reliance. This requires sustained efforts to strengthen foundational manufacturing technologies, address weaknesses in basic industrial capabilities, upgrade traditional manufacturing, expand emerging manufacturing sectors and make forward-looking arrangements for future manufacturing. Taken together, these efforts are expected to systematically enhance manufacturing capacity and strengthen the ability to respond to risks.

Unlike the US path, which places greater emphasis on AI applications in service-sector innovation and substitution, China's AI development focuses more on connecting with the physical world and deeply integrating with real industries. Its core effort is to empower advanced manufacturing and connect the entire manufacturing chain. Relying on 520,000 industrial enterprises above designated size, 39 major industrial categories and 191 medium industrial classifications, China's complete industrial system can fully unleash AI's value as a general-purpose technology, accelerating full-domain penetration and forming a virtuous cycle of technological iteration and efficiency gains.

Practical cases are already abundant. Sinopec's "Fenghuo" industrial intelligence agent integrates more than 1 billion pieces of industry expert knowledge and achieves four-layer technological coupling across platform, model, digital twin and intelligent agent, helping reduce energy consumption per unit of output. Zhenhua Heavy Industries' welding defect recognition model has achieved an accuracy rate of over 98 percent, replicating the practical experience and image-recognition logic of senior craftspeople, making it a benchmark for "AI + manufacturing". Waigaoqiao Shipbuilding uses AI to streamline shipowner compliance verification, while Shanghai Turbine Works relies on intelligent algorithms to control blade production parameters more precisely. These examples show how AI is being embedded in large manufacturing enterprises.

At the policy level, the 15th Five-Year industrial internet action plan proposes that by 2028, the penetration rate of industrial internet platforms should exceed 55 percent and the total number of connected devices should surpass 120 million. The aim is to build a new-generation industrial internet ecosystem featuring ubiquitous connectivity, digital-intelligent integration, deep collaboration and open-source openness, thereby providing long-term support for the intelligent upgrading of the whole manufacturing chain.

China's AI ecosystem also contributes to global development by providing inclusive intelligent public goods.

Cost-effective open-source models are already benefiting global markets. Leading Chinese large models generally follow open-source and open-weight strategies, featuring intensive and efficient research and development models and low deployment costs. Their usage prices are only about one-tenth of comparable overseas products. Grounded in the principles of peaceful development and serving the people, these technologies provide affordable and easily deployable AI tools for developing countries. In essence, their low-cost model is strongly inclusive and has accelerated the global diffusion of large-model technologies.

Industry estimates show that Chinese open-source and open-weight large models are priced 60 to 90 percent lower than similar US products from OpenAI and Anthropic, while still covering most routine office and production needs. Their cost-performance advantage has made them popular among global tech start-ups, especially enterprises and consumers in developing countries and the Global South. Data show that US companies' use of Chinese AI models, measured by token share, averaged more than 30 percent per week and peaked at 46 percent.

Beyond market access, China is also actively supplying global AI public goods and promoting collaborative governance. China's AI development path balances industrial application with public value and actively participates in global AI governance. Following President Xi Jinping's proposal of the Global AI Governance Initiative, China has continued to position itself as a provider of international public goods in the AI field. It has released the AI Capacity-Building Action Plan for Good and for All and the "AI Plus" International Cooperation Initiative, while advocating for the establishment of a World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization.

Inclusive measures are also being implemented globally. China has announced the construction of an international AI application cooperation center, promoted the wider deployment of the MAZU intelligent meteorological early warning solution in more countries, and offered 5,000 specialized AI training opportunities for developing nations. These efforts help AI technologies take root more quickly across countries, improve production and public services and strengthen developing countries' ability to manage natural disaster risks.

Ultimately, general-purpose AI can help countries address gaps in industry and scientific research, thereby strengthening overall economic resilience. This is an important expression of AI's general-purpose capability and a core value of China's AI development. Meanwhile, China is improving AI-related laws, regulations and supervisory systems, using both legal constraints and technical controls to prevent potential risks and ensure that AI always serves humanity and remains under human control.

The writer is a research fellow at the Institute of Economics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and deputy director of the Center for Xi Jinping Economic Thought Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.
The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

More patient policy framework for China's economy

MAIN STREET
By Luo Zhiheng

China's economy can no longer be described simply as either strong or weak. Its defining characteristic is a structural transition accompanied by growing divergence, often described as K-shaped recovery. New growth drivers — such as artificial intelligence and advanced manufacturing — are gradually replacing traditional engines, including real estate and infrastructure. Against this backdrop, two trends stand out.

First, overall economic growth remains under pressure, as the property downturn continues to weigh on related sectors, including home appliances, furniture, ferrous metals and machinery, while also weakening local finances and local governments' capacity to support growth.

Second, economic divergence has become increasingly pronounced, as indicated by widening gaps between supply and demand, across industries, among income groups and between regions. This has created a gap between official macroeconomic indicators and the actual economic experience of households and businesses.

Over the medium and long term, China's economy has followed an L-shaped path. The slowdown began around 2010 when the country entered a period of growth deceleration and transition from old to new growth drivers. GDP growth fell from 10.6 percent in 2010 to 5 percent in 2025, more than halving in just 15 years. This year, growth has moved into the 4.5-5.0 percent range, marking the beginning of what may be called an era of "around 4 percent growth". Japan stayed in the 4-5 percent range for about two decades before slowing further, but by then its per capita GDP had reached around $30,000 and its social security system was relatively mature. China's per capita GDP remains below $14,000, making it essential to settle into a stable medium-growth range of 4-5 percent during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period.

Each year, the economy has exhibited a U-shaped rhythm: a strong first quarter, pressure in the second, policy support in the third and a year-end lift in the fourth. After the September 2024 policy package, fourth-quarter growth reached 5.4 percent, following 5.3 percent, 4.7 percent and 4.6 percent showings in the first three quarters. This pattern reflects two underlying features: the economy remains highly dependent on policy support, while self-sustaining growth momentum is still weak and the vitality of households, businesses and local governments has yet to be fully restored.

The strong first-quarter performance is largely the result of policy-driven economic mobilization. After the Central Economic Work Conference sets annual priorities, fiscal and monetary policies are often front-loaded, and local governments accelerate projects and resource allocation, pushing construction and investment activity to a high level. By the second quarter, policy momentum naturally moderates, putting pressure on growth. This year, combined spending under the general public budget and government-managed funds rose 6.1 percent year-on-year in January-February, but fell to minus 0.3 percent in January-May, partly reflecting a limited pipeline of shovel-ready projects. The consumer goods trade-in program also boosted home appliance consumption with double-digit growth, but base effects and demand front-loading later became more evident.

Self-sustaining momentum remains weak. Falling property values have encouraged households to reduce debt, with the household leverage ratio edging down from 60.5 percent to 59 percent as many repaid mortgages early. Enterprises face weak demand, pressure along the property supply chain and low capacity utilization. Local governments' land sale revenue fell from 8.5 trillion yuan ($1.25 trillion) in 2021 to 4.2 trillion yuan last year, and declined another 28.7 percent year-on-year in the first five months of 2026, weakening their capacity and willingness to promote growth. Weaker local finances have also affected payments to firms and public services, further impeding household consumption. Government spending under the two budgets dropped from 30.6 percent of GDP in 2021 to 28.6 percent last year, meaning that 2-3 trillion yuan less flowed into the economy as income for enterprises and households.

Growth in the next stage will hinge on the performance of real estate and exports. AI-related products now account for about one fifth of China's export value and roughly half of export growth, making overall export outlook increasingly linked to AI development. Real estate is likely to remain a drag, while AI-supported exports may provide upward support, with a lower base also improving headline data.

The property downturn persists and three issues must be addressed. First, prices remain unstable. Although secondhand home prices in first-tier cities have risen for three consecutive months, national prices, sales and investment are still falling. In smaller cities, some inventory may become permanent as populations decline and outflows continue. Pressure comes from developers' cash-flow constraints, new-home discounts, higher-quality and "fourth-generation" housing products, and rising foreclosure sales. Second, a self-sustaining stabilization process has yet to take hold in the real estate sector. Local governments alone cannot break the cycle of property adjustments, falling fiscal revenue and weakened stabilization capacity. Therefore, central government support is needed to fill fiscal gaps. Third, fiscal pressure in some cities continues to worsen supply-demand conditions, as land supply increases despite high inventory. Stabilization therefore requires both supply control and demand support, backed by stronger transfer payments.

The writer is chief economist and president of the Research Institute at Yuekai Securities.
The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:05 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:05 PM

CHINA

Coffee carnival opens

Performers dressed in coffee-themed costumes take part in a parade during the opening of the 2026 Dianchi International Coffee Culture Carnival in Kunming, Yunnan province, on Saturday. Featuring more than 200 specialty coffee trucks from 52 Chinese cities, the carnival includes over 300 themed activities and more than 200 live music performances, using coffee as a bridge to promote the integration of culture and tourism.

LI JIAXIAN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE



Rules regulate juveniles' liability

New measures standardize handling of cases involving suspects aged 12 to 14

By CAO YIN
caoyin@chinadaily.com.cn

China has introduced stricter and clearer rules for handling serious crimes committed by younger offenders, as part of broader efforts to curb violent crime while safeguarding the rights of juveniles.

The measures are outlined in a recent 15-article regulation jointly issued by the Supreme People's Procuratorate and the Ministry of Public Security. The regulation provides detailed guidance for implementing provisions of the amended Criminal Law, which took effect on March 1, 2021.

Under the amended law, the age of criminal responsibility in China is generally 16. However, minors aged 14 to 16 can be held criminally liable for serious violent offenses, including intentional homicide, intentional injury, rape and robbery.

Children aged 12 to 14 may also face criminal liability if they commit intentional homicide or intentionally inflict injuries that result in death or severe disability through extremely cruel means, with prosecution requiring approval from the SPP.

The regulation standardizes procedures for handling cases involving suspects aged 12 to 14 accused of such violent crimes and establishes clear criteria for prosecution.

Public security authorities must transfer such cases to the local procuratorate, which is required to investigate not only the suspect's age and details of the offense but also the individual's upbringing, family background, personality, social relationships, motives and conduct after the crime.

The findings must then be submitted to the SPP for final approval. During the review process, police may place the minor suspect in criminal detention in accordance with the law.

The regulation also specifies that determining whether a case is "heinous" should take into account factors such as the cause, motive, method, target and consequences of the crime, as well as the suspect's potential danger, likelihood of reoffending and broader social impact. In cases involving multiple suspects, each individual's role and level of participation must be assessed separately to determine whether the criteria are met.

To better protect the rights of minors, the regulation requires a suspect's legal guardian to be present during questioning and to be informed of the minor's legal rights. If the guardian is unable to attend or is also a suspect, investigators should notify another adult relative, the suspect's school or employer or a local community organization to participate.

Tian Yingjun, a lawyer from Yunnan province, said the regulation further improves China's legal framework for handling serious violent crimes committed by young minors by providing clear procedural guidance.

"The rigorous procedural design and comprehensive review requirements reflect China's cautious approach to protecting minors' rights while balancing punishment and rehabilitation," he said.

In recent years, China has strengthened measures to prevent and address juvenile delinquency while maintaining a zero-tolerance approach to crimes against minors.

According to the SPP's annual work report released in March, 24 minors aged 12 to 14 were prosecuted for serious violent crimes in 2025, underscoring the need to punish particularly heinous offenses. The Supreme People's Court reported that 2,356 juveniles convicted of serious violent crimes received prison sentences of more than five years in 2025, while 5,822 juveniles who committed relatively minor offenses received lenient treatment.

The report also said efforts are underway to strengthen the development of specialized schools and improve a graded intervention and rehabilitation system for minors engaging in misconduct as part of broader judicial measures to address juvenile delinquency.

Young Chinese embrace task of 're-raising' parents

By ZOU SHUO
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

In a reversal of traditional family roles, a growing number of young Chinese people are taking on the task of "re-raising" their parents — teaching them digital skills, purchasing their health supplements, planning holidays and even escorting them to concerts — all in a bid to help them navigate a fast-changing world.

The trend, which has gained traction on social media under the hashtag "I re-raised my parents after growing up", has drawn widespread attention for redefining filial piety from passive duty to active, creative care.

At the heart of the trend is a widening digital divide. While older generations grew up in a relatively stable world, their children came of age in an era of smartphones, livestreaming and algorithm-driven recommendations.

As a result, young people often have a clear advantage in accessing information and navigating online services — skills that many parents have yet to master.

For many, re-raising begins with small but meaningful acts.

Hang Yunjie, an 18-year-old freshman at Beijing University of Chemical Technology, discovered the gap when he decided to buy fish oil for his father and reading glasses for his mother.

His parents had long relied on television advertisements or pharmacy recommendations when purchasing health supplements. Hang instead consulted online review forums and comparison blogs before making his purchases.

"My father admitted that my choice was better than his usual brand, but he still expects me to handle everything next time," Hang said. "He doesn't want to learn how to find the information himself."

Helping parents adapt to the digital age means encouraging them to recognize that some of their knowledge and habits have become outdated, he said.

"I managed to convince him that his old brand was inferior, but I failed to spark his curiosity about the digital world."

For Xu Yu, a 31-year-old office worker in Beijing, the most meaningful change came after buying his parents new smartphones and teaching them how to use food delivery apps.

"They used to come home exhausted from work and still had to cook. Now they can order whatever they want," he said.

He patiently guided them through registration, logging in, setting delivery addresses, choosing payment methods and adding notes for special requests.

"When I was a child, they worried about my meals. Now I want to make their lives easier."

Some young people are also helping their parents enjoy experiences they might never have pursued on their own.

Zhang Anning, a 22-year-old postgraduate student in Beijing, began her re-raising journey after realizing that her parents would never take the initiative to travel.

Inspired by trips she had taken with friends, she started planning holidays for them, from renting a car in Guizhou province so her father could drive to see blooming azaleas to booking sea-view rooms in Hainan province.

"I want them to experience the joy of traveling, just as they made sure I enjoyed my childhood," she said.

Zhang also serves as the family's photographer, using film cameras to document their trips.

"When I was little, they recorded my growth. Now it's my turn to record their travels and preserve these treasured memories."

> Conventional filial piety is about repaying a debt — they raised me, so I accompany them in old age. But going to concerts with my mother comes from genuine love because we have a close relationship."
>
> **Yu Tianxin,** a 19-year-old freshman at Beijing Foreign Studies University

Yu Tianxin, a 19-year-old freshman at Beijing Foreign Studies University, took an even more hands-on role by accompanying her mother to three concerts by pop singer Zhang Jie, arranging everything from tickets to hotel reservations.

Her most memorable moment came when her mother went to the restroom without her phone, forgot their seat numbers and wandered around the arena calling out Yu's name.

After concert personnel directed her mother to the general floor area, Yu eventually spotted her and, as she put it, "reeled her back" to her seat.

"It was exhausting, but also deeply satisfying," Yu said. "My mother was overjoyed. She had always wanted to see Zhang Jie, and spending that time together brought us much closer."

Yu distinguishes her actions from the traditional understanding of filial piety.

"Conventional filial piety is about repaying a debt — they raised me, so I accompany them in old age," she said. "But going to concerts with my mother comes from genuine love because we have a close relationship."

She has also stepped in to protect her parents from online scams.

When her father was about to spend 30,000 yuan ($4,400) on a fake antique promoted during a livestream, Yu uninstalled the shopping app from his phone and linked the account to her own device, preventing him from logging back in.

"He scolded me for three days, but I still think it was worth it," she said. "Both my parents are trapped by outdated perceptions. Sometimes I have to pull them into the present."

Yao Huasong, a sociology professor at Guangzhou University, views the trend as a positive evolution in intergenerational relationships.

In an article published by China Youth Daily, Yao said the phenomenon rests on three conditions: young people's stronger digital and information literacy, their willingness to invest time and patience in communicating with their parents, and parents' growing readiness to set aside traditional authority and engage in more equal dialogue.

Generational differences are inevitable, he wrote, but what matters most is how both sides respond to them.

He cited practical examples such as making regular video calls, ordering groceries online, arranging health check-ups and taking occasional family trips as meaningful expressions of "home-making".

"This represents a new interpretation of the traditional idea of raising children for support in old age," Yao wrote. "It deserves recognition and encouragement."

Wang Nasi and Guo Yuhe contributed to this story.

Abandoned coal mine cools homes in Jiangsu

By CHEN MEILING
chenmeiling@chinadaily.com.cn

This summer, 96 households in Xuzhou, Jiangsu province, have abandoned noisy air conditioners in favor of an innovative floor cooling system that provides comfortable temperatures, stable humidity and near-silent operation.

The system circulates naturally cool underground mine water through pipelines installed beneath the floor, creating radiant cooling throughout homes. Compared with conventional air conditioning, it consumes less energy and costs residents significantly less.

At the end of July, with outdoor temperatures in Xuzhou reaching about 36 C at noon, Wang Qingmei, 76, was observed at home cooking in comfort. A wall-mounted thermometer displayed an indoor temperature of 26 C.

"The floor is pleasantly cool, just the right temperature. It feels best to walk on it barefoot," she said.

Mine water is pumped to a heat exchange station, where a heat exchanger stabilizes the circulating water temperature in the pipeline network at between 20 C and 25 C before it is distributed to homes.

For Wang, the savings are substantial. In previous summers, running air conditioners to keep herself and her husband cool cost about 400 yuan ($59) a month for electricity. If the air conditioner stayed on for too long, her husband's neck would ache. If they turned it off, it became too hot to sleep.

Under the new system, residents pay 4 yuan per square meter for the entire cooling season. For Wang's home, a four-month cooling period costs about 410 yuan while maintaining a comfortable temperature around the clock.

"It's both quiet and comfortable," she said, adding that many neighbors have visited to experience the system and plan to use it next year.

What makes the project even more remarkable is that the cooling source comes from an abandoned coal mine that was once considered an environmental and financial burden.

After the Woniu Mountain coal mine was shut down, its mined-out voids gradually filled with groundwater, forming a vast underground cold-water reservoir. For years, the abandoned mine generated ongoing costs for safety monitoring and ecological restoration without creating economic value.

The turning point came when researchers from Xuzhou Coal Mining Group, which owns the mine, discovered that the mine water remains at a stable temperature of between 15 C and 20 C throughout the year and is available in abundant quantities.

The constant temperature makes the resource suitable for both winter heating and summer cooling. Heat can be extracted from the water during winter, while the naturally cool water provides cooling during summer.

The project also benefits from Xuzhou's existing infrastructure. The city operates Jiangsu's only large-scale centralized heating pipeline network, which can circulate hot water in winter and switch to cold water in summer, allowing dual-purpose use without installing an additional pipeline system.

"As a traditional industrial city, Xuzhou has many closed coal mines whose stored water is like a giant green charger, transforming abandoned resources into low-carbon energy carriers," said Zhang Tao, who oversees scientific research projects at Jiangsu Xukuang Thermal Power Co, a subsidiary of Xuzhou Coal Mining Group.

According to Zhang, surveys show strong public acceptance of centralized heating and cooling services, indicating solid market demand.

He added that the city's heating season lasts only about 110 days, from November to March. Extending infrastructure use with a 120-day cooling season from June to September can significantly improve utilization efficiency and asset returns.

The project's biggest technical challenge is Xuzhou's humid summer climate. Condensation can form on low-temperature pipelines and indoor surfaces, particularly in bathrooms and other high-humidity areas. Opening windows allows moist outdoor air inside, making condensation more likely on metal fixtures and tiled surfaces.

To solve the problem, the company partnered with Yunlong Lake Laboratory of Deep Underground Science and Engineering to develop a dedicated water-cooled dehumidifier that maintains indoor humidity at around 50 percent, a level considered comfortable for occupants.

The company is currently installing the dehumidifiers in residents' homes free of charge this year. The first group of users also received free cooling services from June 1 to July 31 and began paying for the service from Aug 1 to Sept 30.

The environmental benefits are equally significant, Zhang said.

According to the company's data, the system reduces energy consumption by about 50 percent compared with conventional air conditioners and cuts annual carbon dioxide emissions by approximately 50 metric tons.

Unlike air conditioners, which rely on air-to-air heat exchange and gradually lose efficiency because of heat waves, dust, willow catkins and restricted airflow through outdoor units, the floor cooling system uses liquid-to-liquid heat exchange, maintaining high efficiency with minimal performance degradation.

Conventional air conditioners also discharge heat into the atmosphere, contributing to the urban heat island effect. In contrast, the floor cooling system transfers heat back underground through mine water, achieving virtually zero atmospheric heat exchange, Zhang said.

The company plans to collect operational data after the cooling season ends before deciding on a broader rollout. It is also experimenting with using mine water for winter heating. Previously, the city's centralized heating relied on hot water supplied by power plants.

Zhang said a researcher from the United Kingdom visited to inspect the project and expressed strong interest in introducing the technology to a British town.

Although mine-water-based heating and cooling systems have been introduced elsewhere in China, they have all been installed in newly built residential communities. The Xuzhou project is the first to retrofit an existing residential community with the technology.

"It unlocks the energy potential of billions of existing buildings for the low-carbon transition, providing a replicable model for resource-exhausted cities across the country," Zhang said.

Guo Jun in Nanjing contributed to this story.

C919 experience



Visitors experience a C919 flight simulator during a national aviation science education exhibition in Tianjin on Saturday. The exhibition ran from Thursday to Sunday, featuring three themed exhibition zones, more than 60 booths and a total exhibition area spanning 3,850 square meters. TONG YU / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:05 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:05 PM

Editor's note: *As protection of the planet's flora, fauna and resources becomes increasingly important, China Daily is publishing a series of stories to illustrate the country's commitment to safeguarding the natural world.*

Remote prefecture turns excess solar into big data

Qinghai leverages cool climate, legal frameworks and massive solar output to create low-cost green computing hub

By LI MENGHAN
in Gonghe, Qinghai
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

On the windswept Talatan plain in Northwest China's Qinghai province, thousands of sheep graze beneath vast canopies of cobalt solar panels. For a decade, this fusion of pastoral agriculture and renewable energy turned a barren highland desert into an ecological success story. Today, however, regional authorities face a far more complex structural challenge: what to do with an overwhelming surge of green power that far outpaces local demand.

In response, Hainan Tibetan autonomous prefecture is executing a major strategic pivot, leveraging its massive energy surplus to transform from a simple power exporter into a high-altitude big data hub.

Local authorities have approved a 93-hectare green computing industry park in Chabcha town, the administrative seat of Gonghe county. The development has already secured 17 major projects representing 16.2 billion yuan ($2.3 billion) in total planned investment. The project is designed to process data for computing-intensive industries along China's populous eastern seaboard, including artificial intelligence model training, autonomous driving simulation and financial technology back-office operations.

The initiative directly addresses a severe economic imbalance. Last year, Hainan prefecture's clean-energy installations generated 47.7 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity, yet local industrial and domestic consumption absorbed just 1.7 billion kWh — less than 4 percent of the total output. While ultra-high voltage transmission lines export a significant portion of this surplus across eastern provinces, grid constraints and line capacity limits during peak production hours continue to pose long-term curtailment risks.

"We are turning watts into bits," said Ma Xianping, deputy director of the Hainan Prefecture Data Bureau, describing the strategy to consume excess energy locally rather than relying exclusively on long-distance transmission infrastructure.

Chabcha town has natural advantages for developing data centers. With an average temperature of 4 C, the town enables fresh-air cooling for 330 days a year, reducing cooling costs — which typically account for nearly 40 percent of a facility's power consumption — by an estimated 30 percent and shortening payback periods by around two years. Additionally, the thin, dust-free highland air reduces particulate buildup on server components, extending hardware lifespans.

These conditions, Ma said, make green computing a natural fit.

Clean energy makes up 97.26 percent of the park's power supply, with a power usage effectiveness of about 1.1 — well below the national average of 1.35. Electricity costs of around 0.42 yuan per kWh are among the lowest in China.



Clockwise from top: A concentrated solar power plant, with a molten salt tower at the center and heliostats around, is part of the Talatan Photovoltaic Park in Gonghe county, Qinghai province. LI XIAOGANG / FOR CHINA DAILY Sheep graze under photovoltaic panels in Talatan in July 2023. FENG LI / FOR CHINA DAILY Workers inspect panels at the industrial park in March last year. ZHANG ZHONGPING / FOR CHINA DAILY

Pastoral power

The digital expansion is being powered by the Talatan Photovoltaic Park, planned to cover 609 square kilometers on the plain. It is one of China's major gigawatt-level solar hubs and was certified in the Guinness World Records as the world's largest installed-capacity photovoltaic power generation. The green transformation is anchored in decades of ecological restoration efforts and rural livelihood gains, underpinned by legislative support.

Across Hainan prefecture, clean energy capacity has reached 36.58 million kW — 46 percent of the province's total — with cumulative investment of 180 billion yuan, and 68 major photovoltaic enterprises operating across the region.

The prefecture takes its name from its location south of Qinghai Lake. The Yellow River runs 411 kilometers through its five counties, while the headwaters of the Yangtze and Lancang rivers also originate in the broader Qinghai highland, making the region one of China's most ecologically consequential landscapes and one where the stakes of any industrial development are unusually high.

"With just one storm a year, from spring to winter's end; stones roll with the wind, and nothing will grow," said An Fengjun, deputy director of the prefecture's development and reform commission, reciting a local proverb. He said this used to be the stark reality of Talatan — roads swallowed by endless dunes, making every step a struggle.

The turnaround began in 2012, when construction of the photovoltaic park began. Local authorities realized the latent value of what had long been dismissed as wasteland. While facing severe desertification, Talatan offered nearly 3,000 hours of annual sunshine and vast stretches of flat, unused land — ideal conditions for utility-scale photovoltaics.

"What surprised us most was how quickly the land responded," An said. "The panels acted as windbreaks, cutting near-ground wind speeds by around half. Their shade reduced evaporation by about 30 percent, and rainwater together with panel-cleaning runoff seeped down along the supports, irrigating the soil."

An said that the ecological transformation came as an unexpected dividend. Within just a few years, vegetation cover, once negligible, recovered to more than 80 percent across the park. "On my way here this morning, I saw a hare darting across the road, and you can see foxes and even birds that had never been spotted here before," he said.

The lush growth, however, created a new problem: tall grass shading the panels and reducing power output, while dried winter grass raised wildfire risks. Manual clearing cost over 4 million yuan annually across the park before the arrival of what locals now call "photovoltaic sheep".

"The sheep eat the grass, and their manure fertilizes the soil, forming a virtuous cycle. Companies no longer spend huge sums on grass cutting, and herders get free pasture. It's a win for ecology, production and livelihoods," An said.

The park operates 14 photovoltaic pastures where more than 20,000 sheep graze from June through October under a scientifically managed rotation system. Panels are raised to around 1.5 meters and spaced wider to accommodate the herds. Surplus grass that the sheep cannot consume is given free to surrounding villages as winter fodder.

Zhou Jia, a deputy to the agriculture and environmental resources committee of the prefecture's people's congress, said the benefits extend beyond the fenced perimeter of Talatan. Given the plain's exceptional solar conditions, all five counties of Hainan prefecture have consolidated their village-level photovoltaic capacity — 50.5 megawatts shared across 173 villages.

"The model supports poverty alleviation," Zhou said, adding that village-level photovoltaic stations generated 32.78 million yuan in revenue in the first half of the year, averaging 189,500 yuan per village. Additionally, the stations fund 1,566 public welfare positions with monthly stipends of around 1,000 yuan.

Legal outreach

The transformation rests on a multitiered legal architecture.

At the national level, the Law on Prevention and Control of Desertification was adopted in 2001 and amended in 2023. Drawn from lessons learned in local practices, the Ecological and Environmental Code, which will take effect on Aug 15, stipulates that operators of photovoltaic projects and other commercial activities in desertified areas must implement measures to curb sand expansion. These laws have laid the groundwork for what has become the defining feature of Talatan — using photovoltaic installations as a tool for sand stabilization.

Zhou also pointed to the law on ecological protection of the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau, which came into force on Sept 1, 2023, giving statutory backing to the integrated clean-energy approach the prefecture has pioneered.

The law stipulates that the country supports building a clean-energy system dominated by sources including wind, solar, hydro, hydro-solar hybrid and geothermal across the plateau, while advancing green, low-carbon energy transitions. That provision codifies the plateau model of integrated renewable development that Hainan had been testing on the ground for more than a decade.

The Hainan model is anchored in the pairing of solar with the river. The Longyangxia Hydropower Station in the prefecture — known as the "first dam on the Yellow River" — is the backbone for China's first hydro-solar complementary system. The 850-megawatt Talatan Photovoltaic Park feeds its output into Longyangxia, with the two working as a single dispatchable unit.

"During the day, as solar output rises, hydropower dials back and water is stored. At night, the dam takes over, switching between sources within milliseconds," An said, noting that the hybrid model earned a Guinness World Record in 2022 as the world's largest water-solar complementary power station, and has since expanded past one gigawatt.

Building on these national and provincial legal frameworks, the prefecture's people's congress spent more than a year drafting its own regulation on promoting the development of the clean energy industry. The 34-article regulation, which will take effect on Sept 1, addresses grid integration bottlenecks, pricing mechanisms, storage infrastructure gaps and administrative procedures.

"Through legislation, clean energy development will become more standardized," said Ning Jianming, a deputy of the finance and economic affairs committee of the prefecture's people's congress. The drafting process began in 2024 with enterprise consultations, expert reviews and field investigations.

The regulation enshrines ecological protection as a nonnegotiable bottom line and mandates a recycling system for retired solar panels — a forward-looking provision given that the park's oldest arrays, installed around 2013, will approach their 25-year design life within a decade.

Ning said that the regulation is designed to align with those higher-level frameworks, turning policy guidance into tangible rules.

Zhou said that as legal outreach work continues, environmental stewardship has taken root in people's hearts. "The father protects the land, and the son inherits the benefit — that awareness is now deep in the bone," he said.

Rural vitalization law drives Datong's success

By LI MENGHAN in Xining

A plateau county in Xining, Qinghai province, has placed its yak products in 3,500 retail outlets nationwide while keeping livestock herds within ecological protection limits, supported by China's first county-level legislation on the vitalization of rural industry.

Datong Hui and Tu autonomous county is home to China's largest yak breeding base — the Qinghai Yak Breeding and Promotion Service Center — which spans more than 247 hectares and manages over 300 breeding bulls across all yak breeds found in Qinghai.

Hu Guangwei, deputy director of the center, said the Datong yak — introduced by the center in 2004 as China's first artificially bred yak variety — was developed over two decades through crossbreeding wild and domestic yaks.

"The offspring of the Datong yak are roughly 1.2 times heavier than ordinary domestic yaks, with some adult males reaching over 600 kilograms," Hu said, highlighting its potential to transform yak farming and boost herder incomes across Qinghai.

That potential is being realized at the county level. Li Cunde, deputy head of Datong's veterinary station, said that the county has promoted artificial insemination techniques for Datong yaks among local farming households, and this year alone has contributed to the upgrading of 3,700 head across 69 households.

"The Datong yak has a half wild yak bloodline, giving it strong adaptability to high-altitude, cold environments," Li said, adding that the calves grow faster than other Qinghai plateau breeds.

Li said that the county is home to 123,700 Datong yaks, accounting for 51 percent of the total cattle population, with annual sales of 38,000 head and a meat output of 5,600 metric tons. To bring these gains to herders, the county has been training farmers in artificial insemination and scientific breeding techniques.

"We shifted from traditional extensive grazing to standardized scientific breeding. Through winter-spring supplementary feeding and full-calf nursing, the growth cycle has been shortened by about half a year, and each Datong yak now brings herders an additional 2,000 yuan ($295) or more," Li said.

Three standardized slaughter facilities in the county process up to 60,000 head per year. Products carry traceability QR codes and are sold at major supermarket chains such as Metro and Sam's Club, he added.



Veterinary workers vaccinate yaks in Datong, Qinghai province, in April. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Li said that industrial expansion remains within strict ecological protection bounds. The county has six natural usable grasslands spanning over 166,700 hectares. This has created a virtuous cycle between production and ecological conservation.

Large-scale farms achieve manure resource utilization rates above 94 percent, and much of that manure is processed into organic fertilizer and applied to the county's expanding cool-climate vegetable fields, closing the loop between livestock and crop production.

"Cool-climate vegetables are varieties adapted to elevations between 1,800 and 3,000 meters, where cool temperatures, wide day-night swings and long sunshine hours give them a natural advantage," said Zhang Guangsheng, director of the county's vegetable technology service center. "They accumulate more dry matter and vitamins — they're sweeter, crisper and store longer."

Datong sits at an average altitude of 2,200 to 2,800 meters, with clean soil, minimal industrial pollution and irrigation from highland runoff — conditions that have earned the county national recognition as a "golden zone" for cool-climate vegetable production.

The county has 5,333 hectares under cultivation, producing 256,100 tons annually with an output value of 790 million yuan, Zhang said, adding that 39 products have received organic or green food certification, and pesticide residue compliance has remained above 98 percent.

More than 60 percent of output ships to areas including Shanghai, and Guangdong and Fujian provinces, with 11 dedicated supply bases covering over 667 hectares serving the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. Specialty varieties such as pea shoots and broccoli sprouts can reach southern markets within 48 hours, Zhang added.

"Chemical fertilizer use has been cut by 20 percent through organic replacement, including yak manure from local farms," he said.

Through land transfers and on-farm employment, hundreds of households have joined the vegetable supply chain, boosting both incomes and local job creation.

Underpinning both industries is the regulation on the promotion of rural industrial vitalization, enacted by the county's people's congress in 2022 as China's first county-level legislation of its kind.

Drafted to address short value chains, weak branding and scattered resources, the 26-article regulation institutionalizes support for agricultural and livestock development, forming an effective policy support system — from conserving germplasm resources and building seed breeding bases, to providing financial incentives, promoting green organic production, cold-chain logistics, e-commerce, and the use of geographical indication brands such as Datong yak and locally designated vegetable labels.

"The regulation consolidates proven practices into legally binding norms, ensuring stability and continuity in our rural industry revitalization efforts," said Xie Ji, deputy head of the county government.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:05 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:05 PM

LIFE





Bilibili World 2026 takes place in Shanghai from July 10 to 12. It's one of Asia's largest gatherings for ACGN fans. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Unlocking the fan-verse

International musicians and cosplayers converge at Bilibili World 2026, proving global pop culture knows no real borders, **Wang Xin** and **Wu Wanzhen** report in Shanghai.







Top: Chinese singer Tan Jing performs at the *Bilibili Macro Link* concert. **Above left:** Cambodia's Princess Norodom Jenna (right) is among the celebrity guests at Bilibili World 2026. **Above center:** Medovvika (right) and Armeyes from Russia draw attention with their cosplay of fairy-tale characters at the event. **Above right:** Cosplayers pose at the event.





Left: Voice actors attract a large crowd of fans at Bilibili World 2026. **Right:** The three-day event attracts a total of 400,000 visitors.

Viktoria Chernenkii and Denis Chernenkii — better known as Medovvika and Armeyes — are among Russia's best-known cosplayers. Recently in Shanghai, they transformed into Rapunzel and Flynn Rider from the Disney movie *Tangled*, bringing the fairy tale to life at the intersection of fantasy and reality.

Making their second trip to China, the couple flew from Moscow to attend Bilibili World 2026 from July 10 to 12 in Shanghai.

The event is one of Asia's largest gatherings for ACGN (animation, comics, games and novels).

They began preparing for their BW debut months before departure. Determined to portray her favorite character as authentically as possible, Medovvika commissioned a seamstress to handcraft her "historically accurate" costume six months in advance.

As for Rapunzel's iconic long, gorgeous blonde braid, Medovvika turned to China. About a month before leaving, she did what many Chinese cosplayers do — she reached out to a Chinese platform and placed a rush order to customize the wig.

"Only Chinese wigmakers know how to make the wig light, beautiful and detailed," recalls Medovvika excitedly.

The couple also researched BW's traditions and discovered that attendees often exchange handmade gifts. They prepared their own freebies for Chinese fans: beautifully printed cards featuring their cosplay photographs, paired with pieces of Russian chocolate.

Although they are leading cosplayers in Russia, they were still amazed by BW's scale, inclusiveness and the creativity of Chinese participants.

"Chinese cosplay is on another level when it comes to craftsmanship and detail. We don't have a venue this large in Russia. This festival isn't just huge — it has something for everyone, from gamers and photographers to anime fans," she adds.

Despite the language barrier, the eye-catching pair was frequently stopped by fellow attendees asking for photos.

They described Chinese fans as "polite, friendly, lovely and always ready to help", and hoped to meet more Chinese cosplayers in Russia in the future.

This year marked the first time BW sold tickets to overseas fans. The three-day event attracted a total of 400,000 visitors from over 30 countries and regions across the world, and featured 170 global exhibitors, more than 60,000 cosplayers and nearly 1,000 *itasha* exhibits — vehicles decorated with vibrant ACGN-themed artwork, according to video-sharing platform Bilibili, the event's organizer.

Among those spotted in the crowd was Cambodia's Princess Norodom Jenna. Kevin Feige, president of Marvel Studios, dropped teasers for the highly anticipated *Avengers: Doomsday*, drawing large crowds of fans like South Korean YouTuber Kim Chae-ho, who joined enthusiastic audiences eager for every new reveal.

Allison Franco and Alberto Franco, a couple in their 30s from the United States, even applied for passports and traveled abroad for the first time specifically to attend BW.

Wearing matching custom outfits inspired by video games, they spent six weeks preparing for the Shanghai trip and were particularly struck by the warmth and hospitality of the local people.

"We haven't had any issues that we thought we might have. Everyone has been so kind and gone out of their way to make sure we have a great experience ... I wanted to be one of the people who come over here (at BW), experience it and show my fans what it's like," says Allison Franco, a content creator with over 1.2 million social media followers.

She adds that Chinese ACGN-themed productions, such as *Heaven Official's Blessing* and *Link Click*, are "insanely popular" in the US.

Alongside the fan carnival, musicians from both China and abroad also came together for the annual ACGN-themed *Bilibili Macro Link* concert.

Now in its 14th edition, this year's concert featured music from seven popular Chinese games, including *Arknights*, *Azur Lane*, *Genshin Impact*, and *Wuthering Waves*.

Casey Lee Williams, a 27-year-old American vocalist who began recording music for animation at 14, says she is grateful to be part of the event.

After first singing for a Chinese game soundtrack in 2017, she has come to appreciate the industry's strong commitment to music and musicians.

Williams says China has given her "incredible" opportunities to perform over the past decade. Dressed as a character from *Wuthering Waves*, she performed one of the game's songs at the concert before embarking on a tour spanning Asia and the US later this year.

"Being together is the most important thing in the world. China's ACGN community really captures that spirit and brings people together in such a special way. On a global scale, togetherness is what matters most," she says.

Celebrated Chinese singer Tan Jing also drew inspiration from the passion of ACGN fans. Having released her first ACGN cover song in 2021, she performed her first video game song at this year's concert, prompting a sing-along from the audience.

"I'm delighted to see younger generations helping Chinese culture continue to evolve and gain global influence. More international participants are joining the event, and our traditional culture is crossing borders through music. I also hope to further explore cultural integration and musical innovation," Tan says.

Industry data show that in 2025, the revenue generated by China's independently developed games in overseas markets exceeded $20.45 billion.

Contact the writers at wangxin2@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

Urban parks help in cockatoo conservation





Left: Winster Wong teaches students about cockatoos at St. Louis School in Hong Kong. **Right:** A snapshot taken by a student, Rooney Cheung, shows cockatoos flying to an artificial nest. XINHUA

HONG KONG — With fewer than 2,000 yellow-crested cockatoos left in the wild, Hong Kong may play a significant role in the species' survival.

In a recent study published in the international academic journal Evolutionary Applications, researchers from the University of Hong Kong found that these introduced cockatoos in Hong Kong retain unexpectedly high genetic diversity, potentially serving as a genetic reservoir for the species.

"It could function as a backup population for this species, which is critically endangered," says Astrid Andersson, lead author of the study.

Native to Indonesia and East Timor, yellow-crested cockatoos have seen their numbers plummet due to massive trapping for the pet trade and habitat loss. Currently, the vast majority of them are scattered across various islands of Indonesia.

Around 200 yellow-crested cockatoos have found refuge in Hong Kong, making up about 10 percent of the remaining global population. Andersson describes this number as ideal in comparison with the situation on some islands in Indonesia.

Surprisingly, instead of the countryside, these striking snowy-white visitors choose to live in bustling areas on Hong Kong Island. Victoria Park in Causeway Bay and Hong Kong Park in Admiralty serve as their main habitats.

"The cockatoos eat fruits, nuts, seeds, leaves and flowers. They find a lot of food in these urban parks," Andersson says, adding that the older, larger trees at these sites offer ideal nesting holes for the birds.

The research team has partnered with a local arborist to design and install artificial nest boxes to monitor the cockatoo population.

They place the boxes in areas where cockatoos are frequently seen, prioritizing spots where natural nests were lost to typhoons or safety-related tree pruning, thus ensuring the birds remain in familiar habitats.

Over the past year, more than a dozen nest boxes have been installed across various locations in the city, including urban parks and schools.

In October last year, Winster Wong, a teacher at St. Louis School in Sai Ying Pun, saw a pair of yellow-crested cockatoos repeatedly pecking at a hole in a campus tree, a behavior that lasted for about two weeks.

Realizing the birds were trying to nest, Wong remembered a video on the internet by the HKU team about artificial nest boxes and reached out to them. This led to the successful installation of two boxes at the school this April, with Andersson subsequently invited to speak at a morning assembly about the birds' plight.

"We want the students to be involved in it, not just bystanders. At this stage, we are trying to increase their awareness," Wong says, noting that the school plans to partner with HKU to launch cross-disciplinary activities that are professional yet accessible for students.

With the installation of the nest boxes, the cockatoos have been visiting the school more often.

Rooney Cheung, a student at the school, recalls spotting the cockatoos flying through the trees during a morning recess. He quickly grabbed his camera and captured the moment when they returned to the artificial nest, a snapshot that later clinched an award in a competition themed around the environment and humanity.

"The nest box is a human creation, while the cockatoos represent nature. I submitted the photo because it felt like a perfect fit for the theme," the 15-year-old says.

Other students have also found creative ways to engage. Owen Yu built a model tree with blocks to create an ideal habitat for the birds.

"I used to have little interest in nature, but now I know the birds are precious, and I hope to help them thrive," Yu says.

This shift in perspective resonated across the campus, even among those who initially found the birds' famously loud calls a little annoying.

The artificial nest boxes were carefully designed with Hong Kong's climate in mind, particularly its high temperatures and extreme rainfall. Built to prevent rainwater from seeping in, the structures also provide protection against predators such as civet cats, snakes and other birds.

Furthermore, each box is equipped with a live camera that enables the researchers to monitor the birds' behavior. Yet, the cockatoos, with strong beaks, frequently damage the boxes and appear particularly sensitive to cameras, sometimes breaking the devices.

Andersson notes that while the cameras are "not cheap" and pose maintenance challenges, they are vital to showing whether the nest boxes are being used. They allow researchers to track eggs, chick survival and parental feeding.

"This type of information has never been recorded for this species," she says.

Beyond scientific research, the live feeds carry significant educational value. Andersson notes that some schools use tablets in the classroom to stream the footage, so students can observe what is happening in the nest boxes in real time.

Marking a clear success for the project, at least one chick has already hatched in one of the boxes. "It's very hopeful for the continuation of this project," says Andersson, who aims to increase the number of boxes to around 50.

Moving forward, the team plans to partner with more schools, corporations and individuals, while hosting public talks and nest box design workshops to keep raising awareness.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:05 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:05 PM

LIFE



Shedding light on ancient history

Suspended 60 meters above the valley floor, the Hanging Temple transforms into a canvas for a breathtaking show, revealing the secrets of its 1,500-year existence, report Bai Shuhao and Zhu Xingxin in Datong, Shanxi province.

Before the sun slips behind the mountains, no one quite knows how the Hanging Temple will appear after dark.

For nearly 1,500 years, the monastery has clung to a sheer cliff face in northern China's Shanxi province, suspended between rock and sky. It appears almost frozen in time, but at night it waits for light to awaken it again.

"I'd seen so many photos and videos of it on social media," says Joe Burns, a British travel vlogger visiting the temple for the first time. "But in reality, it's much smaller than I imagined."

Perched more than 60 meters above the valley floor on the cliffs of Hengshan Mountain near Datong, the Hanging Temple is one of China's oldest and best-preserved cliffside wooden structures. From a distance, its red timber columns and yellow, glazed roof tiles resemble a finely crafted wooden box tucked into the mountain.

The temple occupies just 472 square meters. Some corridors are so narrow that only one person can pass at a time. On one side stand statues representing China's three major philosophical and religious traditions — Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. On the other is open air. Visitors inch carefully along the walkways, gripping the railings as they search for an answer to a question almost everyone asks upon arrival: How can a temple seemingly float in midair?

"People's first reaction is always the same," says Yang Jianlin, director of the nighttime multimedia production *Why Hanging Temple Endures*. "Why was it built here? What was the purpose?"

His work, staged against the cliffs surrounding the temple, attempts to answer a mystery that has endured for more than a millennium.

The projection spans more than 37,000 sq m of cliff face and recently received Guinness World Records recognition as the world's largest cliff projection show. Since tickets went on sale in late May, every performance has sold out, drawing more than 2,000 visitors each evening.

Yang grew up in Shanxi, not far from the temple. After more than a decade working in live tourism performances, he says one unlikely source of inspiration for the show was *Black Myth: Wukong*, the blockbuster Chinese video game that introduced many international audiences to Shanxi's ancient architecture.

"It made me realize these buildings shouldn't only be places people visit," he says. "They can become immersive experiences where people step directly into history."

But transforming one of China's most treasured ancient monuments into a stage for a large-scale light show has also raised questions.

Supporters hope the production reveals dimensions of the temple that daytime visitors cannot see. Critics worry that dazzling projections might disturb the quiet dignity of a sanctuary that has overlooked the valley in solitude for centuries.

Before the performance, Burns imagines what awaits him.

"I think there will probably be lasers, projections, all kinds of effects to make the place stand out," he says.

Painter Li Zhengming, a member of the China Artists Association, is more cautious. Having sketched historic architecture across Shanxi and watched similar productions elsewhere, he worries that many light shows emphasize spectacle while neglecting the history and culture of the buildings themselves.

"Light shows are fine," Li says before the performance. "The key is whether they handle the details well."

At 8 pm, just before the show is due to begin, a loudspeaker announces a 10-minute delay because the sky is still too bright.

Then darkness arrives.

The temple disappears almost completely into the mountain. Even those who have spent the afternoon touring it struggle to locate it against the black cliffs.

The performance opens not with the temple itself but with an herbal merchant carrying astragalus, a medicinal plant long cultivated in the region. Speaking directly to the audience, he reflects on the crowds that hurry through the temple each day.





Top: A scene from the nighttime multimedia production *Why Hanging Temple Endures*. **Above:** British travel vlogger Joe Burns (in pink shirt) and other international visitors wait for the performance to begin. **Left:** The show features both digital projections and live-action performances. PHOTOS BY ZHU XINGXIN / CHINA DAILY

"People visit in daylight," he says. "It's too noisy, too rushed. They never hear what the temple is trying to tell them. That's why you've stayed — to wait for this moment."

The audience slowly follows guides toward the cliff as a narrator repeats the question that gives the production its title: Why Hanging Temple endures?

The answer unfolds not through architecture alone but through history.

The projections first transform the cliff into a battlefield. Horses charge. Weapons clash. Blood-red light washes over the mountainside.

During the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534), when the imperial capital was established in Datong, Taoist reformer Kou Qianzhi is believed to have envisioned an "airborne temple", elevated above worldly noise and closer to the heavens. Yet, even as the monastery sought spiritual distance, the land beneath it remained a frontier marked by centuries of warfare and shifting dynasties.

Datong stood between the agrarian empires of central China and the northern nomadic peoples. Its very name — meaning "Great Harmony" — reflected a long-standing hope for peace.

The projections then reconstruct the temple's construction. Craftsmen appear suspended from the cliff, chiseling into solid rock one hammer strike at a time. The audience watches as cantilevered beams are driven into the mountainside, re-creating the engineering method that still supports the temple today.

Historical figures, including Tang Dynasty (618-907) poet Li Bai and Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) traveler Xu Xiake, also appear, recalling their own journeys to the site and their admiration for its improbable beauty.

Burns records much of the performance on his phone.

"The projections cover the entire mountain. It's hard to believe you're looking at the real Hanging Temple.

"I didn't think it would incorporate the actual Hanging Temple into it," he adds. "Now I can see why it's a world-record show. The whole cliff face becomes part of it, and the temple itself is only a small part. Really, really spectacular."

Li, who was skeptical when he arrived, finds himself persuaded.

"They've explained the entire historical process so clearly," he says. "The visual impact of every scene is beyond words."

However, Yang insists that protecting the monument remained the project's priority.

The production uses cold-light projection equipment positioned more than 100 meters away from the temple. No permanent hardware has been installed within the protected heritage zone, and the light exposure is significantly lower than ordinary sunlight, he says, allowing the performance to avoid any direct impact on the structure.

In its final movement, the battlefield disappears.

Spring blossoms spread across the mountains. Summer forests return. Autumn paints the valley in crimson leaves. Winter covers the cliffs in snow.

"Kou Qianzhi never lived to see the temple completed," Yang says. "But through technology and animation, people today can finally witness how his vision became reality."

In the end, the production returns to the question with which it began: Why Hanging Temple endures?

If its construction began with one man's aspiration, Yang suggests, it has survived because generations of ordinary people continued to repair it, preserve it and bring their own hopes there.

"A thousand years later, it is our generation that protects this ancient building," he says. "Back then, it carried people's wishes for peace and a better world. Today the country is peaceful, the mountains are beautiful. The ancient wishes have, in many ways, become our own."

Contact the writers at baishuhao@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

Cultural performances let villagers find new voices in the arts





Left: Villagers perform in a short stage play in Yinan county, Linyi city, Shandong province, in October 2024. **Right:** Another short play presented by Yinan villagers on June 10. PHOTOS BY XINHUA

JINAN — On mornings during the slack farming season, Yang Suhua, a villager from Beicun in Yinan county, Shandong province, hurries to a scenic spot in neighboring Changshanzhuang village, where she now works as a performer in addition to her farm work, a role she never could have imagined just a few years ago.

This scenic area offers a well-preserved rural landscape that dates back to the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45).

Local authorities there have turned old courtyards and revolutionary heritage sites into open-air stages, with no raised platforms or elaborate lighting. The performers are largely local villagers like Yang, who, after training, stage skits and plays in the local dialect. These performances bring to life the stories of the village women who risked their lives during the war to deliver supplies, tend to the wounded and relay messages.

"Now we don't have to leave home to chase our dreams, and we get paid for it too," Yang says during a break between performances.

"As the story unfolds, the audience is often drawn into the narrative, transitioning from being mere spectators to becoming part of the story itself," says Li Xipeng, chairman of the scenic area management. "This immersive experience allows visitors to truly feel the revolutionary culture as if they were there."

These folk performances have revived the region's revolutionary heritage while also boosting the local economy. Beyond performing on stage, villagers from surrounding communities have found multiple ways to raise their income, such as leasing land, taking day jobs at the scenic site, and selling local products to tourists. Now, the annual per capita disposable income in the area exceeds 15,000 yuan ($2,208).

Across China, new forms of cultural expression are lowering the barriers for rural communities to engage in creative activities. Farmers are no longer just characters in stories told by others. Instead, they are increasingly becoming storytellers, performers and beneficiaries in their own right.

In Tandi village of Sishui township, Guangdong province, a short-drama crew had set up cameras right next to lychee orchards. Wang Youxiang, a local villager taking part in the production, stood nearby, listening to the director's instructions and occasionally offering her own suggestions on how rural life should be shown on screen.

Wang recalls that in the past, all she knew was growing lychees. During the off-season, her only pastime was watching TV. Now, she has appeared in several short-drama productions. "I get to act and I get to make friends," she says.

Short-drama crews have brought more than cameras to the village — they've brought new business. Villager He Qinghai says the productions have put money in locals' pockets through acting fees and opened up new markets for their lychees.

Keen to look good on screen, families have tidied up their courtyards and spruced up village lanes. Neighbors are now swapping acting tips and learning from each other. The village looks different and so do its people.

Meanwhile, in the mountainous regions of Guizhou province, music is playing a similar role in transforming rural lives. Yu Chengliang, a teacher from Maluhe village in Tunjiao township, has introduced "rare" instruments including the saxophone, trumpet and drum set to the local school, establishing a village orchestra.

Through self-study, he turned himself into a multi-instrumentalist proficient in over a dozen instruments, and has taught the children hands-on. With his mentorship, more than 300 students have acquired instrumental skills, and music now serves as both their hope and their driving force to be able to step out of the mountains for a different future.

Yu's efforts have also touched the left-behind elderly in the village. Luo Kailian, 74, has been a member of the village orchestra for more than a decade.

"I used to think that playing musical instruments was a pastime for city dwellers and had nothing to do with us rural seniors," she says. "But over the years, learning music from Yu has kept me cheerful every day and made life feel more promising."

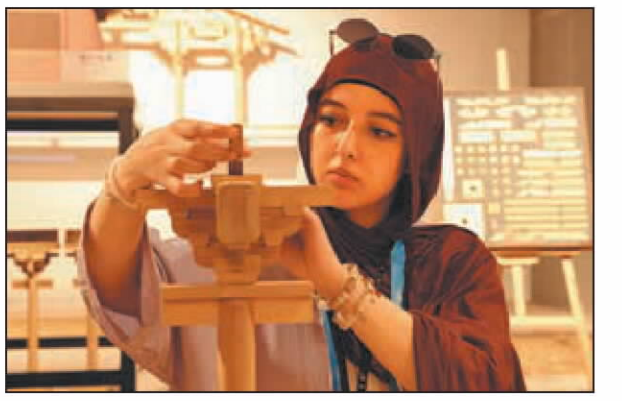
XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:05 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:05 PM

LIFE

Ancient craftsmanship meets modern creators



Liao Dynasty wooden masterpieces are getting a meticulous miniature reboot, **Zhu Xingxin** and **Zhou Huiying** report in Datong, Shanxi.

Despite having visited the Yingxian Wooden Pagoda in Yingxian county, Shanxi province, and Huayan Temple in Datong, Veldesen Yaputra was still astonished when he stood before the miniature models of Liao Dynasty (916-1125) architecture at the Datong Sculpture Museum.

Yaputra, from Indonesia, is a graduate student majoring in architecture at Tsinghua University. As an internet celebrity blogger, he was invited to participate in Discovering Shanxi's Ancient Chinese Architecture — A Visual Journey Through Cultural Heritage held from July 15 to 20.

More than 10 visual artists and overseas bloggers from nine countries explored Shanxi's rich architectural heritage, including a visit to an exhibition on the construction techniques behind the "eight great Liao structures", which opened on June 13 at the Datong Sculpture Museum.

It is the first time that the eight surviving wooden structures from the Liao Dynasty in China have been showcased together in the form of detailed models.

"These models faithfully reproduce the buildings' colors, carvings and intricate decorative details," he says. "When viewing the actual buildings, it's impossible to appreciate every element at once. But in miniature, the relationships between the structures — especially the complex *dougong* interlocking bracket system — become immediately clear.

"Visiting the original sites gives you a sense of how the architecture blends with the surrounding mountains and streets, while the miniature models offer a completely different perspective, allowing you to closely examine the construction techniques," he adds.

Liao Dynasty wooden structures inherited the robust style of the Tang Dynasty (618-907) and incorporated the intricate elegance of the Song Dynasty (960-1127), holding a significant place in the history of ancient Chinese architecture.

Renowned architect Liang Sicheng once described these buildings as "millennial national treasures".

Today, only eight complete Liao Dynasty wooden structures remain in China — the Mahavira Hall of the Shanhua Temple, and the Bhagavad Sutra Hall of the Huayan Temple, both in Datong, and the Wooden Pagoda of the Fogong Temple in Yingxian county, all in Shanxi province; the Manjusri Hall of the Geyuan Temple in Laiyuan county, and the Mahavira Hall of the Kaishan Temple in Gaobeidian city in Hebei province; the Guanyin Pavilion and the gate of the Dule Temple in Tianjin's Jizhou district; and the Mahavira Hall of the Fengguo Temple in Yixian county, Liaoning province.



A young visitor looks at a model of the Guanyin Pavilion of Tianjin's Dule Temple at the exhibition. ZHU XINGXIN / CHINA DAILY

"With two national-level precious relic sites — the Mahavira Hall of the Shanhua Temple and the Bhagavad Sutra Hall of Huayan Temple, Datong naturally bears the responsibility of preserving this architectural heritage and passing on its construction techniques," Yin Xuenian, director of the city's cultural relics bureau, said at the exhibition's opening ceremony.

"In recent years, Datong has been actively promoting the restoration, research, and utilization of ancient buildings from the Liao and Jin (1115-1234) dynasties, continuously improving the protection system for cultural relics, exploring the craftsmanship and architectural philosophy embedded in Liao buildings, and breathing new life into these thousand-year-old masterpieces."

The exhibition showcases physical models of the "eight great Liao structures", covering eight major ancient construction techniques, including brickwork, tilework, stonework, large woodwork, small woodwork, ridge decoration, and ironwork.

It also displays traditional building tools, offering visitors a comprehensive look at the craftsmanship and aesthetic principles behind ancient Chinese architecture.

Wang Xiaolong, deputy director of Shanxi Academy of Ancient Building and Painted Sculpture & Fresco Preservation, says Liao Dynasty wooden structures represent a crucial stage in the evolution of Chinese architecture and reflect the cultural integration of multiple ethnic groups.

"The 'eight great Liao structures' are essential benchmarks for the study of architectural styles and historical periods," he says. "Shanxi preserves three of the finest surviving Liao buildings, each possessing exceptional architectural and research value.

"Timber-frame construction, defined by its wooden framework, *dougong* bracket system and mortise-and-tenon joints, is one of the most distinctive achievements of Chinese civilization," he says. "The Yingxian Wooden Pagoda, for example, demonstrates remarkable innovation through its alternating bright and hidden structural layers, reflecting ancient builders' exploration of stability in tall wooden buildings."

Treasure house

Shanxi is widely regarded as a treasure house of ancient Chinese architecture. According to Wang, every major surviving Tang Dynasty timber structure is located in the province, and wooden structures from the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms (907-960) period, Song Dynasty, Jin Dynasty (1115-1234), and Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) here account for more than 70 percent of the nation's surviving examples from each period.

Wooden structures from before the Yuan Dynasty make up 82.5 percent of the national total.

"Although Shanxi also has the largest number of surviving Liao Dynasty wooden structures, they account for only 37.5 percent of the national total," Wang says. "The province's three surviving examples are exceptionally valuable and were included among China's first group of nationally protected cultural relics in 1961."

As a young architectural creator and international cultural communicator, Yaputra believes the preservation of ancient architecture should resonate with today's generation.

"Young people today cannot simply repeat the construction methods of ancient craftsmen," he says. "Every era has its own cultural mission, and new technologies and fresh perspectives are how contemporary society can continue this cultural legacy.

"I have the deepest respect for the generations of architects, conservators and researchers devoted to restoring and studying ancient buildings," he says. "Their dedication has preserved the construction techniques of these thousand-year-old Liao structures, providing invaluable physical references for architecture students and researchers around the world."

Chinese architectural illustrator Qin Zhizhen and his team have developed cultural products inspired by the Yingxian Wooden Pagoda and other historic Shanxi buildings, including refrigerator magnets, blind boxes and collectible figurines, bringing ancient architecture closer to the public through creative design.

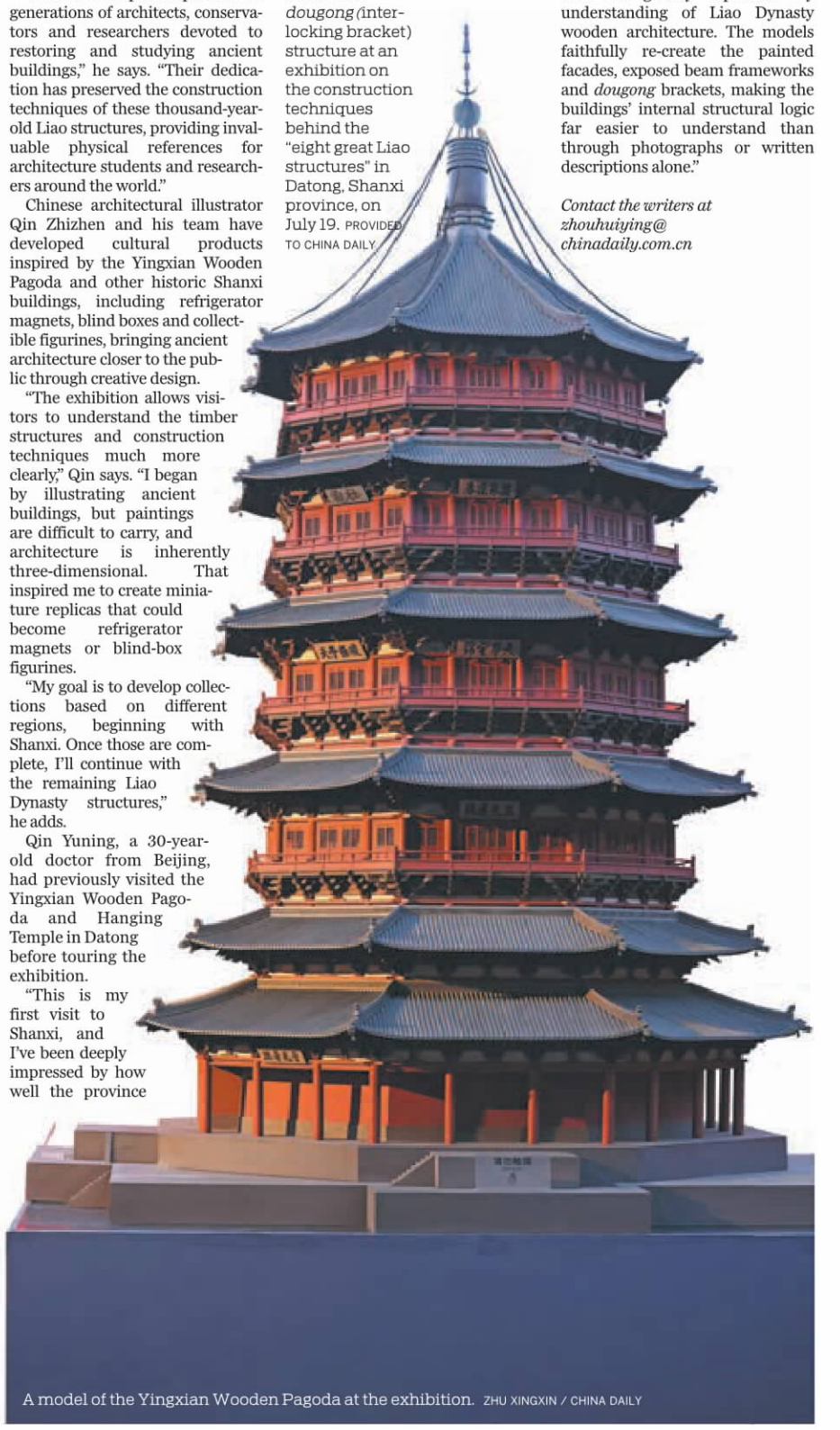
"The exhibition allows visitors to understand the timber structures and construction techniques much more clearly," Qin says. "I began by illustrating ancient buildings, but paintings are difficult to carry, and architecture is inherently three-dimensional. That inspired me to create miniature replicas that could become refrigerator magnets or blind-box figurines.

"My goal is to develop collections based on different regions, beginning with Shanxi. Once those are complete, I'll continue with the remaining Liao Dynasty structures," he adds.

Qin Yuning, a 30-year-old doctor from Beijing, had previously visited the Yingxian Wooden Pagoda and Hanging Temple in Datong before touring the exhibition.

"This is my first visit to Shanxi, and I've been deeply impressed by how well the province has preserved its ancient architectural heritage," he says. "The exhibition has greatly expanded my understanding of Liao Dynasty wooden architecture. The models faithfully re-create the painted facades, exposed beam frameworks and *dougong* brackets, making the buildings' internal structural logic far easier to understand than through photographs or written descriptions alone."

Contact the writers at zhouhuiying@chinadaily.com.cn



Moroccan blogger Fatima Zahra builds a *dougong* (interlocking bracket) structure at an exhibition on the construction techniques behind the "eight great Liao structures" in Datong, Shanxi province, on July 19. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

A model of the Yingxian Wooden Pagoda at the exhibition. ZHU XINGXIN / CHINA DAILY

China's scenic peaks welcome a new robotic workforce

JINAN — On the misty stone trails of Mount Tai in East China's Shandong province, an unusual new worker is turning heads. A robotic dog now carries supplies uphill and hauls waste back down, blending cutting-edge technology with one of China's oldest pilgrimage routes.

About a meter long and finished in silver-gray, the four-legged robot climbs the mountain's steep stone steps with remarkable stability. Strapped to its back is a bulging nylon canvas bag filled with bottled water. Moving at a constant pace alongside tourists, this four-legged machine is not a sci-fi prop, but the latest member of the mountain's workforce.

Famed for its challenging terrain, Mount Tai has relied on human porters for centuries to transport goods. Now, robotic dogs are taking on part of that physically demanding work.

Despite its compact size, the machine can carry a static load of up to 120 kilograms and operates for four to six hours on a single charge. Equipped with high-resolution cameras, LiDAR, and multiple sensors, it can detect obstacles and negotiate slopes of up to 45 degrees, according to officials at the scenic area.

The technology is also helping tackle a long-standing environmental challenge. Mount Tai generates about 24,000 metric tons of waste every year, and removing it across the rugged landscape has traditionally depended on manual labor.

"The robotic dog is expected to significantly reduce physical strain while improving efficiency," says Wang Yunpeng, a manager at the scenic area.

Each trip carries 30 to 45 kilograms — similar to what a human porter would transport. With quick battery replacements, the robot can keep working throughout the day. Since entering service, it has also become a tourist attraction, with hikers regularly stopping to photograph its sure-footed climb.



A robotic dog that would be deployed to deliver heavy loads including garbage on a test run at the Mount Tai scenic area in Tai'an, Shandong province, in 2024. SUI XIANG / XINHUA

Posing for a picture alongside the robotic dog, Wang Liang, a visitor from Qingdao, Shandong province, says he hopes the machine will see continuous upgrades to better serve Mount Tai's tourism.

The robotic dog is part of the broader Smart Mount Tai initiative. Last year, the scenic area introduced AI-powered climbing exoskeletons, among the first large-scale deployments of the technology in tourism.

Weighing just 1.8 kilograms, the wearable device uses artificial intelligence algorithms to reduce a climber's physical effort by over 30 percent.

These technological integrations are part of a comprehensive digital transformation at Mount Tai, which has incorporated AI, IoT, cloud computing and VR/AR to build an intelligent management system covering fire dispatch, crowd control and smart tourism services.

This localized evolution aligns with China's broader push to integrate AI into daily life and key industries, a strategy outlined in national guidelines last year. The AI Plus Initiative targets extensive AI adoption across six key areas by 2027: technology, industry, consumption, social services, governance and global cooperation.

Other scenic destinations are moving in the same direction. At Mount Huangshan in Anhui province, AI travel assistants, cargo drones and climbing exoskeletons have already been introduced.

In Hangzhou, East China's Zhejiang province, tourism departments have introduced biomimetic robotic fish to West Lake, one of China's most iconic and historic scenic destinations. This autonomous device patrols the water to monitor temperature and pH levels, detect invasive species, and transmit real-time ecological data to command centers.

Together, these projects illustrate how AI is rapidly moving beyond research labs and into practical, everyday use across China's tourism sector.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:05 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:05 PM

SPORTS

BASKETBALL



Just like LeBron James on July 26, back in 2019, first baseman Bryce Harper chose Philadelphia in free agency. He led the Phillies to the 2022 World Series, but couldn't quite finish the job. "The city loves a winner," Harper said of the 76ers' new signing. **Inset:** James, then with the Los Angeles Lakers, talks with Philadelphia 76ers' forward Joel Embiid (right) after an NBA game in 2022.
AFP / AP

Like Harper, James wants to win Philly a title

Both chose the city as free agents on a mission to fulfill their respective teams' championship ambitions

LeBron James and Bryce Harper spent their careers on a parallel path toward stardom.

They were teenage phenoms who graced the cover of Sports Illustrated (back when magazines were cool) and both prodigies were No 1 overall draft picks straight out of high school.

When Harper earned his first chance at testing free agency, there was only one city, one contract that was right for him.

Philadelphia.

It took a few years, but Harper has some company to fight with him on the short list of top elite athletes who have signed in Philadelphia.

Harper and the Phillies in MLB.

Pete Rose and Kyle Schwarber and the Phillies.

Saquon Barkley and Reggie White and the Eagles in the NFL.

With perhaps the most significant signature to be scrawled in Philadelphia in any July since 1776, James has followed Harper from free agency to Philly, rocking the NBA and signing a two-year deal for the bargain-basement price of $8 million — only a smidge more per season than the 76ers' first-round pick Labaron Philon Jr will earn — that stamped the Sixers as the most compelling team in the league this season.

Keeping tabs on the much-hyped deal, Harper noted: "He's going to have a great couple of years here, and obviously everyone's going to expect him to win a championship here like everywhere else."

"So nothing new for him. He's had all the pressure since he was in high school, or younger than that."

Here's the difference between James and all the superstars in the city that played before him.

He's LeBron James.

Meaning, his reach is so far beyond the court — from fame around the globe and his bank account, to the cash register and pop culture — that there is no fair comparison. He is No 4 on Forbes' real-time list of wealthiest athletes at $1.4 billion, so his pay cut may not even be noticed in the ledger book. James has commercials and movie roles, and endorsement deals that alone would out-earn every single player on the Sixers.

Joel Embiid, league MVP and two-time scoring champ. He's not LeBron.

Jaylen Brown, NBA Finals MVP and champion. He's not LeBron.

Tyrese Maxey, an All-Star and the real franchise player in Philly. He's not LeBron.

"I think it's pretty cool to have one of the greatest basketball players ever to play in the same city," Phillies shortstop Trea Turner said. "So I'm excited for those who haven't gotten a chance to see him play."

Who those people might be is anyone's guess. James is a 22-time All-Star, a 21-time All-NBA selection, a four-time Most Valuable Player, a four-time NBA Finals MVP, a three-time All-Star Game MVP, and was a member of the NBA's 75th anniversary team.



Back in 2018, three billboards near a highway in Cleveland tried to entice LeBron James, then with the Cleveland Cavaliers, to sign for Philadelphia. Eight years on, and it seems James finally took notice. AP

He's also coming off a season where he averaged 20.9 points, 6.1 rebounds and 7.2 assists per game. For his career, he's averaged 26.8 points, 7.5 rebounds and 7.4 assists in more than 1,600 games.

"He's played in big markets before," Harper said. "He knows exactly what he needs to do."

Harper has largely lived up to the 13-year, $330 million contract signed ahead of the 2019 season, when he spurned the Washington Nationals for the Phillies and owned the richest contract in baseball history. He led the Phillies to the 2022 World Series, but came away empty-handed, won the National League's MVP award in 2021 and helped win back-to-back NL East titles.

Barkley rushed for more than 2,000 yards in his first season with the Eagles and led them to a Super Bowl championship, and Rose was the missing piece to help Hall of Famers Mike Schmidt and Steve Carlton win the Phillies a World Series in 1980 — the first MLB title in the franchise's history.

The 76ers have almost seemed to wait as long for a parade down Broad Street.

They have won titles in Philadelphia in only 1967 and 1983 and have improbably failed to advance out of the second round of the Eastern Conference playoffs since 2001.

And yet, somehow, one of the most famous athletes — strike that, people — walking and dunking in America today decided he wanted to play in Philadelphia.

"I'm not going for money. I'm not going for family," James posted on social media on July 24. "What am I really playing for at this point? I still want to sacrifice. I still want to work. I still want to grind. I still want to compete, to win and to have a chance at the feeling of winning."

James celebrated his decision on Instagram with a career highlight reel set to Philadelphia rapper Meek Mill's *Dreams and Nightmares*, the adopted sports anthem of the city's teams that is blasted ad nauseam throughout Philly's respective sports complexes.

The video ends with the lyric, "hold up, wait a minute. Y'all thought I was finished?" and cuts to a 76ers' logo.

James isn't finished — even if his best isn't yet to come.

He won NBA titles at each of his three previous NBA stops in Cleveland, Miami and the Los Angeles Lakers and could be the first player to ever win a title with four teams.

The countdown to opening night is on.

The stakes have really never been higher for the franchise. If they can't win with LeBron, Embiid, Brown and Maxey — can they ever?

Get ready, everyone.

And skip the advice.

James doesn't need any tips on surviving the deep fryer of fandom in Philly.

"He can do whatever the hell he wants," Harper said.

"But the city loves a winner. So win."

AP

RUGBY

Lafaele was a star for Japan, now he's not sure he belongs

TOKYO — Timothy Lafaele is among the many rugby players who have not only made their lives and playing careers in Japan, but hold Japanese passports, even though they were born outside the country.

In Lafaele's case, he has played 28 times for Japan's national team, including a monumental victory over Ireland in the 2019 Rugby World Cup, which Japan hosted.

He was a star back then, as Japan's rugby prowess shocked many.

But, under new rules proposed by local rugby officials that are set to go into effect in December when the Japan Rugby League One season opens, Lafaele and the others will be classed as foreigners, clouding their future in Japan.

This will limit their playing opportunities on domestic teams where Japan-born players are given preference.

Seiji Makino, a lawyer who is representing 24 players in a suit pending before several Japanese courts, said he's hopeful changes can be made before the season opens — through the courts or through negotiations with rugby officials.

"This is a very simple story," Makino said Thursday. "It is about players who built their lives and careers in Japan under one set of rules and are now having the ground moved from under their feet."

He and Lafaele spoke on Thursday in Tokyo at a news conference hosted by the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan.

Lafaele said the rule change came "out of the blue".

He declined to discuss any link to current politics around immigration in Japan, and also declined to talk about the effect on his contract.

The rugby rule change comes as Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi has been pushing tougher policies on immigration and foreigners. Many Japanese complain of struggling with stagnant salaries and rising prices — and some link it to a surge in foreigners to sustain a shrinking workforce as Japan's aging population declines.



> It quite saddens us. To come to Japan, having given so much to the rugby here and the community, and being treated this way, it just saddens us."
>
> **Timothy Lafaele,** on Japanese rugby's changing eligibility rules

Lafaele, who is Samoan-born, came to Japan at 18, played for a Japanese university and now has a Japanese passport.

But that's no longer good enough to guarantee playing time in Japanese rugby's top professional league.

The new rules specify that players had to reside in Japan for "at least six of nine years" of elementary and junior high school to qualify for the highest category of eligibility.

"I probably could answer for all the boys that are represented on this case," Lafaele said.

"It quite saddens us. To come to Japan, having given so much to the rugby here and the community, and being treated this way, it just saddens us."

Lafaele added. "To me, when this rule first came, I did feel insulted."

Of the 24 players who filed the case, only five want to be identified. Many fear that speaking out could cause more problems.

Makino was asked if there was a racial element to the new rules, and he said he didn't think "of it as racism" at the core of the dispute.

Players, though, are left in the lurch wondering about their future.

"It's been a hard time for the players these last couple of months," Lafaele said. "Some players are forced into retirement. Some players are just waiting at home at the moment for this decision to change so they can have the opportunity to provide for their families and get playing contracts. It's been a tough time for most of the players."

Many sports bodies across the globe consistently bend eligibility rules for commercial reasons, or to gain a competitive edge, and changing eligibility rules often faces pushback, particularly when local players seem to be sidelined.

Japanese rugby officials say the player pool of Japan-born players is shrinking, and limiting foreigners will help boost it.

Lafaele said he supports the idea of nurturing more native players, but doubts limiting the foreign influence will help.

"I don't think kids will look at this competition and say 'there are too many foreigners, I'll stop playing,'" Lafaele said.

"I see both sides of it. I see where the Japanese boys are coming from. They see it as more opportunities for them to play."

AP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:05 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:07 PM

Stitching new paths
Suzhou embroidery evolves into global brands, lifestyles
LIFE, PAGE 13



Manila's claims over Chinese islands refuted
TOP NEWS, PAGE 3



Dramatic comeback
Argentina stuns Egypt to reach World Cup quarterfinals
SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY
GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 THURSDAY, JULY 9, 2026

Xi calls for advancing sci-tech innovation

Acceleration of self-reliance, focus on frontier fields emphasized

By **MO JINGXI**
mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping called on Wednesday for accelerated efforts to achieve high-level self-reliance and strength in science and technology, saying that China must press ahead toward the goal of becoming a leading country in science and technology by 2035 and ensure that sci-tech innovation provides solid support for and guidance to Chinese modernization.

Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, made the remarks while addressing a meeting in Beijing.

The meeting brought together the national science and technology award conference, the general assemblies of members of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Chinese Academy of Engineering, and the 11th national congress of the China Association for Science and Technology.

Since the 18th National Congress of the CPC in 2012, China has made historic achievements and undergone historic changes in science and technology, Xi said, adding that the country is accelerating its shift from a participant and contributor in global sci-tech development toward a pioneer and leader in innovation, with a rise in innovation capacity that is among the fastest in the world.

Xi stressed that a new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation is profoundly reshaping not only the way people live and work, but also the global development landscape.

China must adapt to the new circumstances and requirements, take more forceful measures to effectively address problems in its sci-tech development, and fully implement the CPC Central Committee's plans and arrangements for sci-tech work, he said.

Xi also said that China should strengthen its capacity to make systematic breakthroughs in sci-tech innovation and improve the overall efficiency of the national innovation system.

He called for a focus on frontier fields such as artificial intelligence, quantum technology and life sciences, key areas including integrated circuits and advanced manufacturing, and strategic fields such as the deep sea, deep space and deep Earth.

Major projects and programs should be deployed in an integrated manner, while original innovation and breakthroughs in key and core technologies should be advanced in a coordinated way, he said.

Xi emphasized the need to promote the deep integration of sci-tech innovation and industrial innovation, and to open up channels for accelerating the transformation of scientific and technological advances into real productive forces.

He noted that the relatively low rate of translating scientific and technological achievements into practical applications has long been a prominent problem.

Sci-tech innovation should be guided by application needs, while industrial innovation should generate scientific questions, Xi said, urging efforts to strengthen the national technology transfer system, create diversified application scenarios and high-level industrial clusters, and promote the application and iterative upgrading of independently developed technologies and products.

The future of science lies in the youth, Xi said, calling for improved mechanisms to integrate science and education in talent cultivation and for greater efforts to foster outstanding young sci-tech talent.

He said support for researchers should be increased, and more teenagers with scientific potential should be encouraged to pursue careers in science and technology.

He also said China should seize the window of opportunity created by global talent flows and actively attract outstanding young talent and teams from overseas.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period, China's total social investment in research and development maintained an average annual growth rate of 10 percent, with R&D intensity reaching 2.8 percent in 2025, exceeding the average level of countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development for the first time.

This has not come easily and fully reflects the firm resolve of the Party and the country to develop science and technology, Xi said. At the same time, he noted that in practice, problems such as waste in research funding and inefficient or repetitive sci-tech investment still exist to varying degrees.

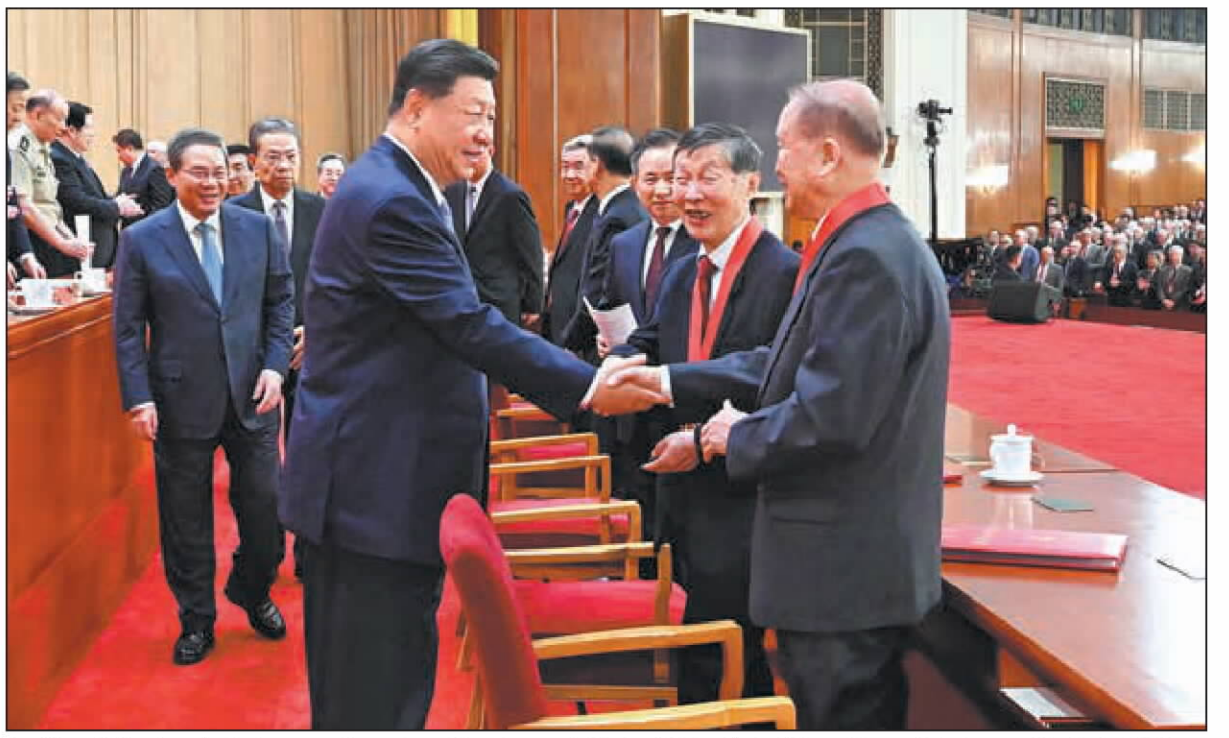
Xi stressed the need to make sci-tech innovation investment more effective, ensuring that increased investment is matched by greater efficiency.

Xi said China should deepen reform of sci-tech evaluation and make good use of it as a guiding tool for scientific research and innovation.

He also said China should strengthen sci-tech ethics and security governance, and promote the development of science and technology in a way that is beneficial, safe and controllable, so that it better serves the people.

At the meeting, Xi presented China's top sci-tech award for 2025 to Chen Liquan, a pioneer in China's lithium battery sector, and Ben De, a radar technology expert.

Wednesday's meeting honored 258 projects and 11 scientific and technological experts. In addition, the China International Science and Technology Cooperation Award for the year 2025 was conferred on nine foreign experts.



President Xi Jinping, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, greets Ben De (first from right) and Chen Liquan (second from right), winners of China's top sci-tech award for the year 2025, after a meeting on Wednesday in Beijing. XIE HUANCHI / XINHUA

Inside
Editorial, **page 6**

China remains a bright spot, says IMF report

By **BELINDA ROBINSON**
in New York
belindarobinson@chinadailyusa.com

The International Monetary Fund's World Economic Outlook update, which was released on Wednesday, projected global growth at 3 percent this year, down from an average of 3.5 percent between 2024 and 2025, with a few economies, including China, emerging as bright spots.

The negative impact of the United States and Israel's war with Iran on global supply chains and the rapid and positive deployment of artificial intelligence tools worldwide are the two biggest factors shaping global economic activity across countries, the IMF report said.

It projected China's growth at 4.6 percent for 2026, which is 0.2 percentage points higher than its April forecast. That growth is "driven by front-loaded public infrastructure investment and a surge in high-tech manufacturing and in exports, even as domestic consumption remained soft".

The IMF expected global growth to be around 3.4 percent in 2027.

The report noted that it was too early to judge the full impact of the war on supply chains and manufacturing purchasing managers' indexes, as it pointed to softer momentum ahead.

According to the report, the effects of the war in the Middle East were being partly offset by accelerated demand for global technology led by advances in AI and its adoption.

"The possibility of renewed conflict in the Middle East looms large and could extend commodity price volatility, further threaten supply chains, raise prices, and weigh on financial conditions. Trade fragmentation could accelerate, possibly hurting output and increasing prices," the economic outlook said.

A "re-escalation of geopolitical tensions" due to developments in the Middle East posed an imminent risk to the baseline forecast, the report said, adding that this would hurt growth and compound inflationary pressures.

See ***Outlook,*** *page 3*

CLIFF-HUGGING ROAD DRIVES TOURISM TO REMOTE VILLAGE

Years after residents carved out a literal path to prosperity, their hand-hewn highway is thrust into the global spotlight

By **TAN YINGZI**
and **DENG RUI** in Chongqing

A canyon road in Southwest China's Chongqing — that's all it took to stop millions of people mid-scroll. What pushed it into the global spotlight? A repost from Elon Musk on X.

China Vibes

The road in question is the Lanying Cliff Road in Chongqing's Wuxi county. It stretches just over a kilometer, clinging to a near-vertical cliff face — less than three meters wide in places — with a vertiginous drop of 1,500 meters on one side.

It all started when a Chinese blogger shared a video showcasing Tesla's "full self-driving" system navigating the treacherous thoroughfare.

Musk retweeted it.

Within a single day, the clip amassed more than 32 million views.

While the self-driving tech was impressive, it was the road it traversed that stole the show.

"How on earth is that road done?" one user asked. Another put it even more plainly: "More than the Tesla, hats off to whoever built this road."

Perched above the Lanying Grand Canyon, the road has been celebrated as the most beautiful cliffside road in China.

But beauty comes at a price, and for years, residents of nearby Zhoujiaping village lived in profound isolation, trapped by geography and reliant on the mountains for survival. With no connecting road, any trip for basic necessities meant a trek that took at least 13 hours each way over precarious mountain terrain.



The Lanying Cliff Road in Chongqing's Wuxi county. ZHOU ZHIYONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

See ***Cliff,*** *page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.

A youth-centered approach to demographic change

WORLD WATCH
By Nadia Rasheed

Across the world, demographic change is reshaping societies. More than two-thirds of people now live in countries where fertility is below replacement level, while virtually every country is experiencing population aging. These trends affect far more than population numbers. They shape labor markets, health systems, social protection, pensions, education, gender equality and sustainable development. Above all, they raise important questions: What kind of future do young people want? What barriers stand in their way? And how can policies help them realize their aspirations?

The theme of this year's World Population Day, "Realizing the hopes and aspirations of young people — today and for the future", brings these questions into focus. World Population Day falls on Saturday.

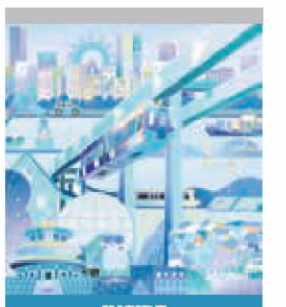
A new United Nations Population Fund report, "Lives, Choices and Futures: What young people want and what shapes their decisions about relationships and parenthood", provides one of the largest bodies of evidence to date on how young people view partnership, parenthood and the future. Drawing on the views of more than 108,000 internet-connected young adults ages 18 to 39 in 73 countries, it concludes that young people are not rejecting family life.

Across regions, many continue to value partnership, marriage and parenthood. More than two-thirds of respondents said that their ideal living arrangement involved marriage. An ideal family size of two children was reported in five of the seven regions surveyed, while larger ideal family sizes were more common in East and Southern Africa and West and Central Africa.

But aspirations alone do not shape life choices. The ability to form a partnership, have children or build a secure future depends largely on the practical conditions people face.

Survey respondents identified financial security, stable employment and emotional readiness as the most important preconditions for becoming parents, while economic and housing pressures were among the most commonly reported barriers to forming partnerships.

See ***Population,*** *page 3*



INSIDE
Sharing experiences for common prosperity
Global Views, page 8

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved
Newsstand prices:
US $1 Canada C$1; UK 1£ EU 1€
Kenya 50 Kenya Shilling
Asia Pacific: Thailand 120 thb; Philippines 120 php; Myanmar 2000 kyat; Japan 210 yen; Dubai 10 dirham; Pakistan 300 rupee

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:07 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:07 PM

INDEPTH

Relocated villagers scaling new heights

Former mountain dwellers settle into better lives, jobs and prospects for children

By **LIU BOQIAN** in Qiandongnan, Guizhou
liuboqian@chinadaily.com.cn

On market days, 47-year-old Yang Anshun's barbershop is always full. The space is so small that customers waiting for their turn often end up on the steps outside, chatting until a chair is free.

In Guandong township, Guizhou province, the streets are packed with people. Villagers fine-tune their Dong *pipa* — a traditional lute — stalls overflow with seasonal vegetables and fresh meat, and rows of ethnic clothing hang on display. Even sneakers bearing the Nike logo appear among the goods.

Yang is short, lean and slightly swarthy. His hair is neatly trimmed, and he wears brown leather shoes — a barber who still takes pride in his appearance.

When the township hosts its regular fairs on dates ending in "4" or "9" on the Chinese calendar, his barbershop barely has a quiet moment. A haircut costs only 10 yuan ($1.47), but the steady flow of customers keeps business ticking along.

His shop is in Guiyun, the largest relocation community in Congjiang county.

Neat apartment blocks line the area, alongside public squares, leisure facilities and the town's biggest market. The residents come from villages scattered across the county, many of them from steep mountain areas with winding roads and barren land.

"Back home, my wooden house was dark and damp. My family kept cattle in one part and lived in the other," Yang said with a smile. "When officials came to check whether our family qualified for relocation, they only needed one look to see that we were struggling."

He also spent time working in Guangdong province. "Farming at home did not bring in much money," he said.

Dengba village, Yang's hometown, is about 40 kilometers from the county seat. In 2019, his family was approved for relocation because of their difficult living conditions, and local authorities arranged a three-bedroom apartment for them in Guiyun.

He lives there with his wife and three children. Schools and kindergartens are nearby, and last year the county's largest high school was also moved to near the community.

Yang said six or seven other households from his village also moved here.

He runs two barbershops in the area and owns two mobile barber carts converted from three-wheel vehicles. Yang said he makes about 4,000 yuan a month. "I have to stay busy, and I run a few small businesses," he said. "I charge only 10 yuan because I know it is not easy for everyone to earn money."

This year, he paid for his eldest daughter to study beauty and hairstyling in Guiyang, the provincial capital, hoping that one day she will open her own shop.

Shi Laobu, from Wangdong township, is another relocated resident. Her hometown is about a three-hour motorcycle ride away.

She runs a small vegetable stall in the local market. "It was not that selling vegetables brought in too little money before," she said. "It was that there was nowhere to sell them. At home, we grew rice and vegetables, but we could only eat them ourselves."

She no longer has to farm full time. By buying and selling vegetables, she earns a modest but steady income.

Shi said the biggest change is not the 100 or 200 yuan she makes each day at the stall, but easier access to education.

Like many mothers in the community, she values convenient schooling above all else.

She has three children, all attending a primary school about 500 meters from the market. "We live here, the children go to school here, and we make money here. Everything can be done right at our doorstep," she said.

Leaving poor conditions

Local officials often explain the need for relocation with a simple idea — a single piece of land cannot sustain the people on it.

Peng Jinbin, director of the provincial ecological migration bureau, said Guizhou carried out the country's largest relocation campaign. During the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20) period, the province moved 1.92 million people, about 16.4 percent of the national total, with 95.3 percent of them resettled in urban areas.

Congjiang lies in southern Guizhou, on the border with the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region. More than 90 percent of its land is mountainous, with elevation differences of up to 700 and 800 meters. Many villages are isolated, difficult to reach and built on barren land.

"We have Miao, Dong and Zhuang communities among six ethnic groups here, and people came from 20 townships across the county," said Wu Jinke, secretary of the community Party branch.

"Because many residents had poor living conditions back home, construction began around 2018. By 2019, all 1,608 apartments had been assigned, and the occupancy rate is now basically 100 percent," he explained.

Guiyun has become a kind of super community.

According to local authorities, it covers about 16.73 hectares and has resettled 6,625 people. The community has two kindergartens and one primary school, while the county's largest high school is within 1 km.

For many villagers, however, leaving their old home does not mean letting go of the land. The fields they kept in their hometowns still give them a sense of comfort, especially because relatives continue to farm them.

"I still have two *mu* (0.13 hectares) of farmland back home, and my brother is farming it now," Yang said. "He chose not to relocate. He still has his own land, so he stays busy."

Still in the hills

In Danyang village of Qingyun township, the county seat is 80 minutes away via a rough mountain road.

Halfway up the hillside, several scattered brick-and-timber houses stand, with a few European-style villas visible in the distance. Villagers said the villas were built with money earned from working away from home.

In the distance, the mountains of Guangxi come into view, along with the wild monkeys that often appear there. Life here still moves slowly.

According to village officials, Danyang now has 112 households, after 27 moved away. Most of the young people who remain go outside the village for work, while others grow medicinal herbs such as Uncaria and isatis root.

"I actually envy those who moved to the city," said Shi Qibiao, one of the villagers who stayed behind. "They have new houses and it is easier to see a doctor. But I am old now and have grown used to village life."

When reporters arrived at his home, the 65-year-old was outside drying pieces of traditional Dong indigo cloth.

"Beautiful, isn't it?" he asked.

"Life here is relaxed," he said. "Every few days, vendors come by car to sell daily goods. I grow a *mu* of grain and some vegetables myself. Every day I buy a little meat to eat, but not too much, or it would not be good for my health."

Shi Jianong, secretary of the village Party branch, said relocation began in 2017 with a simple evaluation. Households were selected if they were poor or if an entire community agreed to move together.

For elderly villagers who stayed behind, the local government also provides public welfare jobs such as forest patrollers, road maintenance workers and cleaners. Shi Qibiao, for example, works as a forest ranger and receives a yearly subsidy of 10,000 yuan.

His wife now lives elsewhere to care for their grandson, who is studying away from home. He lives alone in the large house.

Building new futures

Wu said relocation is not the end of the story.

Nearly seven years after it began, the real challenge lies not only in providing physical dwellings, but in helping villagers build stable livelihoods and adjust to new ways of life.

At Congjiang Shenyao Health Care Products, the county's largest bath-product factory, workers make herbal bath products using traditional Chinese medicine.

In the packaging workshop, they box concentrated bath liquid for shipping across the country. Most of the workers are women in their 40s and 50s.

A woman surnamed Yang, who is nearly 50, said she lives nearby and earns 120 yuan a day.

Yaoyu is a popular traditional bathing practice that involves dissolving herbal medicines in hot water, and is believed to have health benefits. It has also been developed into an industry that local officials say is being modernized to create jobs.

By 2025, the area planted with herbs used for *Yaoyu* bath products had reached 43,000 *mu*, with 47 processing companies and an industrial output value exceeding 150 million yuan.

The company's owner said hiring became much easier after villagers moved into the nearby community. Some mothers stay home to care for their children, while older residents want work close to home. The factory has created more than 300 jobs.

Even so, Wu said employment remains one of the most pressing issues for relocated communities. With a weak industrial base and limited local opportunities, many residents still choose to work outside the county.

"Most still go out to work," Wu said. "Those who stay local are mostly employed in industrial parks or in the market."

To help residents find jobs nearby, the community organizes training every quarter in electrical work, domestic services and cooking, and recommends jobs to those who complete the courses.

At the community market, many stalls are reserved for relocated households. Women sell vegetables and rice noodles, while others run grocery stores and breakfast shops. On market days, the street fills with people.

"Sometimes you can hardly walk through," Wu said with a smile.

Beyond shopping, the market has also become a place where neighbors get to know each other.

The community brings together many ethnic groups. Many older residents do not speak Mandarin and are unfamiliar with urban community life.

Wu said one of the most important jobs for local cadres now is to keep organizing activities so residents can talk to one another more and get to know one another better.

"Back in the villages, everyone knew each other," he said. "Now that they have moved together, they have to adjust to new neighborhood relationships."

"Even though the relocation happened long ago, there is still a lot of work ahead of us," Wu said.

As the market day draws to an end, the street is still packed with people.

Vendors call out, children laugh, and electric scooters whiz past the stalls. For many relocated families, these ordinary sights and sounds are gradually replacing the silence of the deep mountains they once called home.



Winners receive ducks and pigs' legs as prizes after a chess competition held in a relocation community in Congjiang, Guizhou province, in September. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

> "We live here, the children go to school here, and we make money here. Everything can be done right at our doorstep."
>
> **Shi Laobu,** a relocated resident in Congjiang county





Left: Yang Anshun gives a customer a haircut at his barbershop in Guiyun relocation community in Congjiang, on April 16. LIU BOQIAN / CHINA DAILY **Right:** Residents of the community make *zongzi* (festive rice dumplings) to celebrate the Dragon Boat Festival in June. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY





Left: Police officers from the county public security bureau distribute security information brochures to residents in Guiyun community on April 15. WU DEJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY **Right:** Residents of Guanglong community join in a tug-of-war competition to celebrate the Dragon Boat Festival in June. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



The county's largest high school was built near the relocated community in Congjiang county. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:07 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:07 PM

TOP NEWS

Game and politics



Palestinians watch the World Cup match between Egypt and Argentina on Tuesday on a giant screen set up amid the rubble of destroyed buildings in Gaza City. An Israeli bomb strike on Gaza just before the match kickoff killed four people, including a top Palestinian aid official who helped organize public screenings of the game in the enclave. The blast was a grim reminder of how Israeli strikes across the Gaza Strip are continuing to kill civilians despite a truce reached in October.
MOHAMMED SKAIK / IMAGO IMAGES

Report rebuts Philippines' claims in South China Sea

By **LUO WANGSHU**
luowangshu@chinadaily.com.cn

Inside

Comment, **page 6**

The Philippines' territorial claims over China's Huangyan Island and some islands and reefs of China's Nansha Islands in the South China Sea lack a historical and legal basis and expose major flaws in Manila's legal position, according to a report released on Wednesday.

The report, titled Historical and Legal Critique of the Philippines' Territorial Claims in the South China Sea, was released in Beijing by the Ministry of Natural Resources' China Institute for Marine Affairs.

Compiled by scholars of history and international law, the report examines whether the Philippines' territorial claims in the South China Sea are consistent with the generally recognized rules of international law and credible historical records.

The report noted that the Philippines' territorial boundaries were established through three international treaties during the Spanish and American colonial periods. After independence, the country inherited and confirmed those boundaries through its Constitution and laws, the report said.

However, since the 1970s, the Philippine government has attempted to expand its territorial scope by amending its Constitution, issuing decrees and making statements claiming sovereignty over Huangyan Island and some islands and reefs of the Nansha Islands, it said.

The report also noted that the Philippines' claims over Huangyan Island and the Nansha Islands are groundless.

Based on credible historical materials and the recognized rules of international law, the report said that the Philippines' claims in the South China Sea after independence lack a historical and legal basis.

It said that the Philippines does not have sovereignty over Huangyan Island or any island or reef of the Nansha Islands. The evidence cited by Manila, as well as measures including domestic legislation and illegal occupation, cannot substantiate its territorial claims in the South China Sea, the report said.

Xu Heyun, deputy director of the marine affairs institute, said the Philippine government's legal position has been inconsistent, shifting frequently and contradicting itself in logic.

"For example, various official maps of the Philippine Islands published by the United States excluded Huangyan Island and the Nansha Islands from Philippine territory, including a 1902 map of the Philippine Islands drawn by the Bureau of Insular Affairs of the US Department of War," she said.

Wang Nan, an associate professor at Beijing Jiaotong University, said that in the 1990s, official Philippine maps also marked Huangyan Island outside the country's territorial sovereignty, a position that was reflected in official correspondence from different levels of the Philippine government.

For instance, in a letter issued on Feb 5, 1990, the Philippine ambassador to Germany said that, according to the Philippines' National Mapping and Resource Information Authority, Huangyan Island was outside the scope of Philippine territorial sovereignty, Wang noted.

In addition, the report said the Philippines' territorial expansion attempts have caused serious harm.

It said that Manila has distorted historical facts, misapplied international law, misled international public opinion and taken illegal and radical actions, seriously threatening peace and stability in the South China Sea.

Xu, from the marine affairs institute, said the Philippines' attempt to break through territorial boundaries defined by a series of legally binding international treaties and extend its claims to Huangyan Island and some islands and reefs of the Nansha Islands lacks historical basis, clearly violates the established rules of international law on territorial acquisition, and is neither historically nor legally tenable.

"The Philippines' illegal actions not only challenge the international legal order, but also pose a major threat to regional peace and stability and the maintenance of the international order," she said.

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Sino-Dutch ties highlighted at trade meeting

Netherlands urged to keep chip supply chain stable, foster a fair business environment

By **ZHONG NAN**
zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

China has urged the Netherlands to foster a fair, transparent and predictable business environment for Chinese companies investing in the country and maintain the stability of semiconductor industrial and supply chains, the Ministry of Commerce said in a statement on Wednesday.

Commerce Minister Wang Wentao called for efforts to properly resolve business disputes between the two sides, when co-chairing the 18th meeting of the China-Netherlands Joint Economic and Trade Committee on Tuesday in Beijing with Sjoerd Sjoerdsma, Dutch minister of foreign trade and development cooperation.

Their meeting comes at a time when semiconductor cooperation has become one of the most closely watched developments in China-Netherlands economic relations.

The two sides have faced growing economic and trade frictions in recent years following the Dutch government's export restrictions on advanced chipmaking equipment, and its measures affecting Nexperia, an overseas subsidiary of Chinese company Wingtech Technology.

The Dutch official's visit also follows a key consensus reached in a meeting in Brussels last week between China and the European Union on the new characterization of China-EU economic and trade relations. During the meeting, China and the EU agreed to be each other's stable and balanced key trading partner.

On Tuesday, Wang told Sjoerdsma that China hopes "the Dutch government will play a positive and constructive role within the EU, encouraging the EU to work with China in the same direction and manage differences through dialogue and consultation".

According to the ministry's statement, China is ready to work with the Netherlands to deepen cooperation in areas including advanced manufacturing, technological innovation, the green transition and modern services.

Wang said that China welcomes Dutch companies to invest in the country and share the opportunities created by its vast market.

Sjoerdsma said that the Netherlands is willing to further strengthen policy communication and coordination with China, deepen trade and investment cooperation, provide a stable and transparent business environment for Chinese companies investing in his country, and promote the steady development of EU-China and Netherlands-China relations.

Zhou Mi, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation in Beijing, said that despite a broad foundation for industrial cooperation, China and the Netherlands still face differences in sectors such as semiconductors.

"If specific differences are properly managed through dialogue, it will help strengthen business confidence, stabilize industrial and supply chains and create a more predictable environment for companies in both countries," Zhou added.

In a statement issued recently, the Brussels-based China Chamber of Commerce to the EU said that maintaining stable and resilient global semiconductor supply chains serves the shared interests of China, the Netherlands and the EU.

Sjoerdsma, who started a three-day visit to China on Tuesday, is accompanied by a business delegation comprising representatives from 17 Dutch companies in sectors including logistics, agriculture and high technology.

Coen van Oostrom, president of the Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers, who is a member of the visiting delegation, noted that Dutch businesses have been investing in China for decades. China is one of the most important markets for Dutch businesses and it will continue to remain so in the future, he added.

Bright future at hand



A young girl interacts with a humanoid on Wednesday at the booth of Beijing-based company Booster Robotics during the LEAP East 2026 technology convention in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The three-day event, which runs through Friday, marks the first expansion of the LEAP platform beyond Saudi Arabia into the Asia-Pacific region. ANDY CHONG / CHINA DAILY

Outlook: Risks more balanced this month

From page 1

Global headline inflation is expected to increase from 4.1 percent in 2025 to 4.7 percent in 2026 before declining to 3.9 percent in 2027, the report said.

While the risks to the global economy are more balanced this month compared with April, they are still "tilted downward", according to the report, which is titled "Global Economy in Crosscurrents of War and Technology".

In the first quarter of 2026, global growth turned out to be stronger than expected. It slowed from 3.8 percent in the fourth quarter of 2025 to 3 percent in the first quarter of 2026, instead of the 2.7 percent forecast in the April edition of the economic outlook report.

This was due to the steady increase in the share of renewable energy in global energy production and the fact that many economies were less energy-intensive than they had been a few years ago.

Looking to the near future, the economic outlook said that better global economic stability can be achieved by "restoring price stability, supported by clear communication, central bank independence, and strong financial oversight, while rebuilding fiscal buffers and using fiscal tools sparingly through temporary, targeted support that preserves price signals".

On technology, it added that the most important factors are "structural reforms to promote energy security, AI readiness, domestic rebalancing, and international cooperation being strengthened to relieve the strain of ongoing tensions".

Cliff: Once-forgotten corner reimagined

From page 1

The road wasn't built by heavy machinery or grand engineering companies. It was painstakingly carved by the villagers themselves, using traditional steel drills and hammers. The work took more than four years.

When it was finally completed in 2005, they had carved a "road to prosperity" along the sheer cliff face. By the time the road was built, only 83 people still lived in the village.

"On the day this road was fully opened, people cried," said Yang Zhihan, one of the road's construction leaders. "We no longer had to cross mountains to make a living."

In recent years, the county of Wuxi in Chongqing has leaned into its dramatic landscapes, vitalizing rural areas by harnessing rich ecological and cultural resources.

The Lanying Grand Canyon is now a national 3A-level scenic spot, with the cliff road as its breathtaking centerpiece.

A turning point came in 2008, when the local government paved the roads and added essential infrastructure: a visitor center, viewing platforms, hiking trails, stalls for local agricultural products, restrooms and parking lots. What was once a forgotten corner of rural China has been reimagined as a comprehensive cultural and tourism destination.

> "On the day this road was fully opened, people cried. We no longer had to cross mountains to make a living."
>
> **Yang Zhihan,** one of the Lanying Cliff Road's construction leaders

"Last year, I traveled this route with two friends, and at one point, the car had to reverse while turning because there wasn't enough space. The driver's foot slipped, and we almost couldn't brake in time. It felt like everyone in the car saw their ancestors flash before their eyes," joked 21-year-old Zhang Lyu, a tourist from Shaoguan, South China's Guangdong province.

Wang Kunbo, a 39-year-old tourist who traveled with his family by car from Taiyuan, the capital of North China's Shanxi province, said on Tuesday, "The cliff road is indeed narrow, but there are passing points (at regular intervals) and several viewing platforms to enjoy the absolutely stunning scenery."

Zhou Xuqing, an official of Lanying township, said Zhoujiaping has seen significant economic growth as a result of tourism, with locals opening 12 farm stays that, combined, have generated more than 3 million yuan ($441,265).

In addition to tourism, Wuxi's dramatic terrain has another selling point: It's a proving ground. Just like the driver in the Tesla video, car manufacturers and professional testing organizations are drawn to its natural testing grounds. Standout routes include the Ninggang Road in Ningchang township, with 106 hairpin turns, and the Lingpaishi Road in Dahe township, notorious for its 18 consecutive switchback turns. If a vehicle can handle these roads, it can handle almost anything.

Contact the writers at tanyingzi@chinadaily.com.cn

Population: Societies need to create supportive conditions

From page 1

Many respondents also expressed concerns about inequality, conflict and uncertainty about the future.

These findings challenge the view that lower fertility simply reflects young people's decisions to delay or forgo family life. In reality, many are adapting their choices to their circumstances.

The policy implication is clear: Rather than prescribing a single path, societies need to create supportive conditions that enable young people to pursue their aspirations with confidence and hope for the future.

This calls for long-term, coordinated investment in young people's lives: quality education and skills; stable, meaningful employment; affordable housing; social protection; and accessible health services, including sexual and reproductive health information and care.

In addition, policy responses need to take into account the growing influence of technology and artificial intelligence on how young people learn, work and connect. Digital innovation should expand opportunity and strengthen — rather than serve as a substitute for — meaningful human relationships, trust and community.

The way work and care are organized is equally important. Communities and workplaces have an important role to play in helping young people balance work, care and family life.

Gender equality is central to this agenda. The survey found that respondents were more likely to disapprove of mothers with young children being employed than fathers with young children being employed. Such expectations can limit women's choices and place a disproportionate share of unpaid care work on them.

Policies that support shared caregiving — including paid parental leave for both parents, affordable childcare, flexible work arrangements, protection from workplace discrimination and support for maternal and reproductive health — strengthen families while also advancing gender equality, economic participation and social resilience.

These global insights are highly relevant for China, as it navigates its demographic shifts, including population aging, the changing patterns of family formation and the evolving expectations of younger generations. The 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), with its people-centered focus on high-quality development and stronger public services, provides an important foundation for responding to these realities.

By strengthening employment security, skills development, education, health services, inclusive childcare, eldercare and family support systems, China can help reduce practical pressures facing young adults and enable them to plan their futures with greater confidence.

This approach places young people at the center of demographic policy — not merely as recipients of support, but as vital partners in development. Policies are more effective when guided by their voices, experiences and aspirations. Their creativity, ideas and energy can help drive innovation, strengthen communities and build resilience across generations.

World Population Day is a reminder that demographic progress should be measured not only by population figures, but also by whether people have the opportunity to build secure, fulfilling lives and contribute fully to society.

At the United Nations Population Fund, we are committed to working with China and partners to help create the conditions in which young people can realize their aspirations and contribute to a more inclusive and sustainable future for all.

The author is the representative of the United Nations Population Fund to China. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:07 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:07 PM

WORLD

Chinese table tennis stars bring 55-year legacy of friendship to US campus

By **RENA LI** in Los Angeles
renali@chinadailyusa.com

Until this week, 70-year-old Southern California resident Bob Taylor had little knowledge of Ping-Pong Diplomacy.

That changed when he joined hundreds of students, teachers and families at La Salle College Preparatory High School on Monday to watch members of the Chinese National Table Tennis Team play exhibition matches with local students, commemorating the 55th anniversary of the historic exchanges that helped open a new chapter in relations between China and the United States.

Accompanied by his daughter and granddaughter, Taylor said the event reminded him that sports can bring together people from different backgrounds and generations.

"I am so glad to see all these young people can get together, not just our La Salle kids and Chinese kids, but all kids everywhere," Taylor said.

"That's what's great about sports. Everybody is having a great time and doing their best to compete. That's the way the young generation is going to run our country someday."

The campus visit followed the recently concluded World Table Tennis US Smash tournament and formed part of activities marking the 55th anniversary of China-US Ping-Pong Diplomacy.

In his welcoming speech, Chinese Consul General in Los Angeles Guo Shaochun said Ping-Pong Diplomacy in 1971 opened the door to friendly exchanges between the Chinese and US peoples and started a new chapter in bilateral relations.

"The story of the 'small ball moving the big ball' transcended sports itself and had a profound impact on China-US relations and the international landscape," Guo said.

During a recent summit in Beijing, both countries' presidents emphasized the importance of expanding people-to-people exchanges, he said. The visit by the Chinese national team represented a "significant practice" of implementing the important consensus reached by the two heads of state, he added.

"I hope today's event will help all of you deepen mutual understanding, build lasting friendships and become a new generation of ambassadors for China-US friendship, jointly writing a new chapter of Ping-Pong Diplomacy in the new era," Guo said.

He Xiao, secretary-general of the Chinese Table Tennis Association, said the campus visit was a concrete effort to implement the consensus reached by the two heads of state while carrying forward the spirit of Ping-Pong Diplomacy.

Exchanges between Chinese and US table tennis players have continued over the past 55 years — from reciprocal visits and joint training to cross-national doubles partnerships and campus outreach, he said.

The exhibition featured some of China's leading players. Men's doubles champions Wen Ruibo and Yuan Licen played runners-up Lin Shidong and Huang Youzheng, while women's doubles champions Wang Manyu and Kuai Man faced teammates Wang Yidi and Chen Yi, drawing enthusiastic applause from students packed inside the school gymnasium.

Among those taking part was La Salle student Shaan Ngan, who joined the friendship exhibition with members of the Chinese team.

"It's really interesting to hear how long of a history we've had with it," Ngan said. "It's a really good way for two countries to bond over something so fun like ping-pong."

Youth exchanges

Player Lin said he hoped the visit would encourage exchanges between young people in the two countries by carrying forward the spirit of Ping-Pong Diplomacy.

"I can also see that some students at this school have excellent table tennis skills," he said. "I hope they keep at it."

For Perry Martin, president of La Salle College Preparatory, the event carried lessons extending well beyond sports.

Recalling the legacy of Ping-Pong Diplomacy, Martin said peace does not always begin with "grand speeches or signed agreements", but can start with simple acts of respect and human connection.

"Our students are not simply watching an exhibition. They are witnessing how sports can become diplomacy, how respect can become friendship, and how a school can become a bridge between nations," he said.

Robert Packard, La Salle's corporate director and chief financial officer, said exchanges like this help young people overcome stereotypes.

"It breaks down barriers," Packard said. "There's so much hate in the world, and by bringing representatives from China to the US, we're reminded that we're all just friends."

Monsoon misery



A motorcyclist and a rickshaw puller navigate a deeply flooded street in Chattogram, Bangladesh, on Tuesday. An intense active monsoon season has triggered rapid flooding across the city's key residential and commercial zones. ZAKIR HOSSAIN VIA GETTY IMAGES



Riot police detain a demonstrator during an unauthorized protest ahead of the NATO summit in Ankara, Turkiye, on Tuesday. EFEKAN AKYUZ / REUTERS

NATO summit exposes strains

Trump slams European allies, renews Greenland claim amid persistent divide

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

NATO's European leaders sought to win US President Donald Trump's renewed commitment to the alliance at a summit in Turkiye on Wednesday, after he strongly criticized European allies as "disappointing" for their stance in the Iran war.

On his arrival in the Turkish capital Ankara on Tuesday evening, Trump lashed out at allies for failing to back the US over Iran, saying he might have boycotted the meeting had it not been for his friendship with the host, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

"I was very disappointed with NATO," Trump said, singling out the United Kingdom, France, Spain, Germany and Italy for not doing enough to support the strikes on Iran.

He added that "we weren't treated well" by the allies, even as he reiterated that he did not want or need their help.

Trump also reopened old wounds, by insisting the United States should control Greenland, a semiautonomous Danish territory, and threatening to withdraw all US forces from Europe if the continent continues to reject the plan.

He said Greenland is "very important for the United States, but it's not important for Denmark".

"We need it for protection of the world, not just the United States … It doesn't help Denmark but it helps us," he said.

The US has already announced troop drawdowns in Europe, reduced the forces it allocates to NATO defense plans — including an aircraft carrier, aerial refuelers, fighter jets and drones — and begun a six-month review of its posture on the continent.

Responding to Trump's remarks, Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said her country is "ready to defend every inch of NATO, including our own territory", in the event of an attack, and would rely on allies to honor their mutual-defense commitments.

"We hope that all, including all allies, will respect the Greenland people's right for self-determination," she said, adding that the territory is "of course not for sale".

"One of the reasons why we have built NATO many, many years ago is if anything happens to one of us, then everybody should stand up for each other," she said.

The Ankara gathering was intended to showcase progress toward NATO's spending goals, Reuters reported. The bloc's secretary-general, Mark Rutte, said Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Denmark and Greece have already raised their outlays and that European members revealed a raft of arms deals worth at least $50 billion on Tuesday.

"There's no doubt about the commitment," Rutte said before chairing the summit, while noting that Washington expects "Europeans and Canada to bring their spending in line with the United States".

European leaders say they are stepping up to shoulder more of the continent's security, but insist on a predictable, orderly transition to prevent vulnerabilities in their defenses.

Even so, Trump has demanded "loyalty" and branded NATO a "paper tiger" after several allies refused to grant US forces unrestricted base access for strikes on Iran.

Spain becomes target

Trump singled out Spain as "a terrible partner in NATO" and renewed his threats to cut off trade.

"Spain is a wasted cause," he said. "We don't want to do any trade business with Spain anymore. … Cut off all trade with Spain, including visits."

In response, the office of Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said it was treating Trump's statements as business as usual, adding that bilateral relations benefited both countries.

Spanish Health Minister Monica Garcia was more blunt. "We are a sovereign, democratic country that defends multilateralism and peace," she said on X. "What's terrible is confusing diplomacy with bullying."

Reuters contributed to this story.

Visitors flock to China pavilion at Tanzanian trade fair

DAR ES SALAAM — At the heart of the 50th Dar es Salaam International Trade Fair in Tanzania, a steady stream of visitors has been flocking to one of the event's busiest attractions — the China pavilion.

From high-tech agricultural machinery to sleek electric vehicles and advanced industrial technologies, the pavilion has drawn strong interest since the fair opened on June 28. Running through July 13, the annual event, popularly known as *Sabasaba*, has attracted thousands of visitors seeking new ideas, partnerships and business opportunities.

For Dawson Kahwa, a businessman from Dar es Salaam, the China pavilion offered more than a showcase of products — it provided a glimpse into the future.

"I have seen high-tech agricultural machinery such as irrigation pumps that could transform farming in Tanzania if adopted by our farmers," he said during China Day, an event highlighting China's trade, investment, technology and cultural cooperation with Tanzania.

Kahwa was among hundreds of visitors who thronged the pavilion on Monday, drawn to innovative technologies and practical solutions to local challenges.

Across the exhibition hall, displays of modern equipment and digital technologies showcased the breadth of China's industrial capabilities. Demonstrations of irrigation systems, agro-processing tools and smart technologies attracted particular interest from farmers, entrepreneurs and policymakers looking to improve productivity and efficiency.

Dennis Londo, Tanzania's deputy minister for industry and trade, underscored the importance of strengthening partnerships that deliver tangible benefits.

"As we celebrate China Day, let us renew our commitment to building stronger trade and investment partnerships that deliver real outcomes for our people," he said.

China has become one of Tanzania's key trade and investment partners, making significant contributions to the country's industrial growth, infrastructure development, technology transfer and job creation, he said.

'Transformative' policy

Londo also hailed China's zero-tariff policy for 53 African countries as a transformative opportunity.

"The zero-tariff arrangement provides our producers and exporters with direct access to one of the world's largest consumer markets," he said. "It creates favorable conditions for Tanzanian products to compete more effectively and expand their presence in China."

Technology and innovation would be critical to enabling Tanzania to seize these opportunities, he added, calling for deeper cooperation with Chinese enterprises in advanced manufacturing, digital transformation, renewable energy and agro-processing.

Chinese Ambassador to Tanzania Chen Mingjian highlighted the strong and growing economic ties between the two countries.

"China has been Tanzania's largest trading partner for 10 consecutive years," she said, adding that bilateral trade reached $5.12 billion in the first five months of 2026.

More than 300 Chinese companies operate in Tanzania in sectors including agriculture, manufacturing and tourism, contributing to the country's industrialization, she added.

Chen also noted the popularity of Tanzanian products among Chinese consumers, such as coffee, cashew nuts and gemstones, particularly at China's international trade expos.

She reaffirmed China's commitment to expanding opening-up and promoting trade liberalization, saying the efforts would create new opportunities for cooperation with Tanzania and Africa.

XINHUA

France's Le Pen says she'll run for president in 2027

By **JULIAN SHEA** in London
julian@mail.chinadailyuk.com

Former French presidential candidate Marine Le Pen announced on Tuesday she will run for president in 2027, after an appeals court shortened her ban on running for office, even as it upheld her conviction for embezzling European Parliamentary funds.

Le Pen came second to President Emmanuel Macron in both 2017 and 2022, and has been well-placed in opinion polls for next year's election.

She immediately launched her campaign website and urged voters to back her, creating an unprecedented situation in France, with a lead candidate heading to the ballot after a guilty verdict for a public funds-related offense.

"Tonight, I am a candidate in the presidential election," Le Pen said in a prime-time interview on TF1 TV, hours after the ruling. "The French will have the last word."

In March last year, the 57-year-old former leader of the far-right National Rally party received a five-year ban from holding public office after being found guilty of using parliamentary funds to pay her own party employees, rather than parliamentary assistants.

She was also given a four-year jail term, two years of which were suspended, with the other two to be served at home wearing an electronic tag — a ruling she had been seeking to overturn — to allow her a fourth run at the presidency next year.

The court fined her 100,000 euros ($114,300) but reduced her public office ban from five years to 45 months, 30 of which are suspended, and also cut the jail term to three years, two of which are suspended, and one is wearing an electronic tag.

As the ban has been running since last year's ruling, the required 15-month ban has already been served.

The appeal court said that although it had confirmed Le Pen's guilt, it had also taken into account "the voter's freedom of choice, a prerequisite for the expression of democratic suffrage".

Le Pen said she was taking Tuesday's judgment to the country's highest court, the Cour de Cassation, which has the effect of suspending the ruling, including its requirement that she wear an electronic ankle tag. She reaffirmed that she did nothing wrong.

"There is no longer any scenario in which I will not run in 2027," she said defiantly on TF1.

Le Pen followed in the footsteps of her father Jean-Marie Le Pen, the former leader of the old National Front party, as leader of the rebranded National Rally, before stepping down in November 2022, to be succeeded by 30-year-old Jordan Bardella.

She previously said she would not run for the presidency while under electronic monitoring because it would interfere with campaigning and undermine her credibility.

The National Rally had started preparing for the possibility that Bardella would be its candidate.

Reuters contributed to this story.



Marine Le Pen of the National Rally party leaves the Paris courthouse on Tuesday after the verdict in her appeal trial. BENOIT TESSIER / REUTERS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:07 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:07 PM

WORLD

War on waste



An aerial view shows a barge carrying a large amount of trash removed from the Rio Negro in Manaus, Amazonas state, northern Brazil, on Tuesday. Recent studies indicate alarming concentrations of microplastics along the banks of the river near the city's waterfront.
MICHAEL DANTAS / AFP

Intl leaders call for restraint

United States and Iran resume fighting as both blame other for breaking agreement

By SHI GUANG in New York
shiguang@chinadailyusa.com

International leaders called for restraint in the fighting between the United States and Iran as hostilities flared up once again, with both sides blaming the other for undermining the memorandum of understanding designed to bring a peaceful solution to the conflict.

Secretary-General of the United Nations Antonio Guterres expressed alarm about the renewed military confrontations in the Gulf.

"These incidents risk derailing the diplomatic progress achieved between Iran and the United States," Stephane Dujarric, spokesman for the secretary-general, said in a statement.

"A return to full-scale hostilities would have catastrophic consequences — for the peoples of the region, for international peace and security, and for the global economy," Dujarric said. "The secretary-general urges Iran and the United States to urgently resume negotiations and to address outstanding issues through diplomacy."

US President Donald Trump said on Wednesday that the MoU signed with Iran to end the conflict was "over", though he left room to continue diplomatic talks.

"It's just a waste of time dealing with them. I'll let our wonderful negotiators keep talking if they want, but I don't see it," he told reporters while in Ankara, Turkiye for a NATO summit.

The US blamed Iran for attacks on three commercial vessels passing through the Strait of Hormuz. In response, the US military said it launched "powerful strikes", including against Iranian air defense systems, radar sites and over 60 small military boats, marking the largest US military operation against Iranian assets since the April ceasefire took effect. Tehran's reply came quickly, with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps saying they hit 85 US military facilities in Bahrain and Kuwait.

The US military said it was continuing attacks on Wednesday, "to further degrade their ability to threaten freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz", US Central Command posted on X.

Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf described the US attacks as "major violations" of the MoU.

"The era of bullying and extortion is over," Qalibaf wrote on X. "It leads nowhere. We don't fold."

Earlier, Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi said negotiations on a final agreement with the US "will not commence" if threats continue.

China called on both sides to fully implement the signed MoU, resolve disputes through dialogue and negotiations, and refrain from resorting to force.

"We are closely monitoring the latest developments. A renewed conflict serves no party's interests and military measures cannot resolve fundamental issues," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said.

In the memorandum of understanding, signed in Switzerland last month, Washington and Tehran created a political framework for de-escalation and committed to negotiate a final agreement within 60 days. The MoU said that Iran would not pursue nuclear weapons and would accept international supervision over its enriched material stockpile. The US, in turn, promised sanctions relief, economic engagement and a gradual rollback of military pressure.

The exchange of fire "further complicates already fraught talks to end the war", the European Union's top diplomat Kaja Kallas said on Wednesday on X, adding that EU foreign ministers would talk with their Gulf counterparts on Monday about how to "preserve freedom of navigation" in the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea.

The US also revoked a sanctions waiver that temporarily allowed Iran to export limited amounts of oil.

Global oil prices surged nearly 6 percent immediately after Trump's remarks, with Brent crude climbing above $78 per barrel. Crude benchmarks had cooled off recently, falling from peaks above $100 a barrel to levels seen before the conflict began in late February.

Though some shipping has resumed through the strait, with a reported 36 ships having transited on Monday, that is still down significantly from the more than 100 vessels doing so daily before the conflict.

China, Turkmenistan advance sustainable transportation

By MINLU ZHANG
at the United Nations
minluzhang@chinadailyusa.com

From a green and smart inland waterway transport program in southwest China's Chongqing municipality to a green methanol fuel project in Hong Kong, Chinese practices in sustainable transport were highlighted on Wednesday at a UN side event on advancing the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Transport from 2026 to 2035.

The event, held on the sidelines of the 2026 UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, was co-hosted by the permanent missions of China and Turkmenistan to the United Nations, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and the China International Center for Sustainable Transport Innovation and Knowledge.

Sun Lei, China's deputy permanent representative of China to the United Nations, stressed that transport is an important carrier linking development and people's livelihoods.

He put forward a four-point proposal for global cooperation: strengthening planning guidance and deepening global connectivity; accelerating low-carbon upgrading and promoting green transport transformation; focusing on livelihood gaps and developing inclusive and equitable transport; and improving whole-chain management to strengthen transport safety.

"China is accelerating efforts to build itself into a country with strong transport networks," Sun said, adding that China has implemented a number of cross-border connectivity projects through Belt and Road cooperation and the Global Development Initiative.

"China will continue to share replicable green and smart transport solutions with the world and work with all parties to promote global sustainable development," he said.

Bjorg Sandkjaer, the assistant secretary-general for policy coordination in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, said transport serves as a key link connecting economic growth, inclusive development and climate action, and is directly related to the overall implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Sandkjaer called on governments, international institutions and the private sector to work with all stakeholders to build close partnerships and fully implement the priority actions of the decade.

Vepa Hajiyev, permanent representative of Turkmenistan to the UN, said Turkmenistan has always placed sustainable transport cooperation "high on its diplomatic agenda".

"Turkmenistan stands ready to further deepen practical cooperation with China in connectivity, transport energy and cross-border logistics, make full use of the Group of Friends of Sustainable Transport mechanism, and hold regular multilateral exchanges to jointly provide useful transport development models for developing countries," Hajiyev said.

The Chinese delegation presented Chongqing's "Qianli Qingzhou" initiative, a green and smart transformation program for inland waterway transport, as well as a green methanol fuel project by Hong Kong and China Gas Company Limited, or Towngas, which explores the transition of traditional coal chemical production toward cleaner transport fuels.

The Chinese delegation shared the China International Center for Sustainable Transport Innovation and Knowledge's achievements in building platforms for global practice sharing, investment and financing matching, capacity building, and scientific and technological innovation cooperation.

The UN Development Programme introduced a package of assistance programs to promote inclusive slow mobility in less developed areas; the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank presented green transport financing solutions tailored to developing countries; and "99", a Brazilian ride-hailing platform under DiDi, showcased a localized digital and inclusive mobility case in Latin America.

Cambodia inaugurates China-funded road project

By YANG HAN in Hong Kong
kelly@chinadailyapac.com

Cambodia inaugurated a 45-kilometer upgraded section of the China-funded National Road 7 on Tuesday, with Prime Minister Hun Manet hailing it as a key project boosting trade, tourism, and regional connectivity.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony in Kampong Cham city in southeastern Cambodia, Hun Manet said the upgraded section — stretching from the Skun Market roundabout to the Kizuna Bridge roundabout in Kampong Cham city — connects the central region to the northeastern provinces, serving as a vital economic artery.

"This road will facilitate public transit, stimulate trade and tourism, and enhance the quality of life for residents and commuters," he was quoted by Xinhua News Agency as saying.

The National Road 7 is a key transport thoroughfare connecting the capital Phnom Penh with Kandal and Kampong Cham provinces that also links Cambodia to the Lao border. The 196-km road is an early Chinese aid project, with construction beginning in 2004. It has been one of the busiest roads in the kingdom since it opened in 2008.

According to the Cambodian government, the upgrade and expansion project took 27 months and was undertaken by the China Road and Bridge Corporation, funded by a preferential loan from the Chinese government, with additional funding from the Cambodian government.

The upgraded road, expanded from two to four lanes, will handle rising traffic, speed up commercial and agricultural transport, and strengthen the logistics sector.

It is also expected to boost tourism in Kampong Cham, home to ancient temples, nature resorts, and historical sites.

Noting that the section will generate an estimated economic internal rate of return of up to 15.27 percent, Hun Manet said this new achievement reflects close cooperation between Cambodia and China. He thanked China for its extensive aid toward Cambodia's socioeconomic development and poverty reduction.

"This road section vitalizes regional travel and trade, accelerating socioeconomic growth across Kampong Cham and neighboring high-potential provinces," said Cambodian Minister of Public Works and Transport Peng Ponea.

Noting that China's assistance improves logistics and drives national economic growth in line with Cambodia's development and global trends, he also thanked China for its ongoing financial and technical support in expanding and rehabilitating Cambodia's transport and infrastructure.

Ironclad friendship

After witnessing the inauguration, Chinese Ambassador to Cambodia Wang Wenbin wrote in a Facebook post that the expanding network of roads and bridges in Cambodia reflects the country's dynamism and growth, and stands as a symbol of the ironclad friendship between China and Cambodia.

"They truly are 'roads of opportunity' and 'bridges of cooperation', of which I am confident that more will be built in the future," Wang said.

The inauguration of the expanded National Road 7 marked a major milestone under the government's Pentagonal Strategy-Phase I, a socioeconomic policy agenda of the Cambodian government, said Thong Mengdavid, deputy director of the China-ASEAN Studies Center of the Cambodia University of Technology and Science.

Mengdavid told China Daily that the upgraded road, which will also be toll-free, would halve travel time to 30 minutes, transforming the congested bottleneck into an efficient transport corridor.

"For local farmers and traders, this means fresh agricultural products such as rubber, cashews, and cassava can reach markets and processing plants faster and at a lower cost," he said.

In addition, with improved infrastructure in the area, more investment is expected to flow into the region, thus creating more employment opportunities, stabilizing regional supply chains, and enhancing connectivity, Mengdavid added.



Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet (2nd from right) and Chinese Ambassador to Cambodia Wang Wenbin (3rd from right) attend the inauguration of a section of National Road 7 in Kampong Cham Province, Cambodia, on Tuesday. NITOLA / XINHUA

Briefly

UNITED STATES

NYC high-rise to be fixed as columns buckle

Workers began making emergency repairs to stabilize a Manhattan high-rise on Tuesday evening after buckled columns and sagging floors forced evacuations in and around the midtown construction site. The scene unfolded throughout the day after the precarious conditions were spotted in the morning at the 1970s-era building, which is being converted into luxury apartments. Construction workers at the site and people in nearby buildings — including a school, diplomatic offices and several hotels — in the busy corridor of midtown were rushed out after firefighters were called there around 8 am. By early afternoon, Mayor Zohran Mamdani said the building remained unstable and called it "an extremely serious situation". City officials going floor-by-floor later found no additional movement of the damaged columns, giving on-site contractors the green light to move forward with emergency repairs, his office said.

VENEZUELA

Airport damaged by quakes to reopen

Venezuela's Acting President Delcy Rodriguez said on Tuesday the international airport damaged in last month's twin earthquakes would reopen as soon as possible using an alternative runway. Simon Bolivar International Airport is in La Guaira, north of Caracas and near the epicenter of the June 24 quakes that toppled scores of residential buildings and killed nearly 3,700 people. One of Latin America's worst earthquake disasters has left thousands of people homeless and thousands more still missing, especially in badly damaged La Guaira, where families are still digging in the rubble. The airport has been partially open to humanitarian flights.

AGENCIES—XINHUA

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899

Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1867

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:07 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:07 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Advancing Chinese modernization in new era through sci-tech innovation

President Xi Jinping delivered an important speech at a meeting in Beijing on Wednesday that brought together the national science and technology award conference, the general assemblies of the members of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Chinese Academy of Engineering, and the 11th national congress of the China Association for Science and Technology.

Calling for accelerated efforts to achieve high-level self-reliance and strength in science and technology, and leverage sci-tech innovation to underpin and drive Chinese modernization, Xi's speech is of strategic importance in guiding the country to tackle the tough challenges it faces in building up its science and technology during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period and beyond.

"We must seize the historic opportunity, rise to the challenges of the times, accelerate efforts to achieve high-level self-reliance and strength in science and technology, and make steady progress toward the 2035 goal of becoming a leading country in science and technology," Xi said.

Since 2012, China has implemented an innovation-driven development strategy, deepened sci-tech reform and achieved major advances in frontier research and strategic high-tech industries. Underscoring China's growing innovation capacity, R&D spending grew by around 10 percent annually on average during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period, with R&D intensity reaching 2.8 percent of GDP in 2025, surpassing the OECD average for the first time.

Despite these achievements, China must be sober-minded as original innovation remains insufficient in some key fields, the structure of the country's scientific talent pool requires further optimization, and the efficiency of research investment can still be improved. Some institutional and regulatory bottlenecks also continue to constrain innovation in certain sectors.

As global sci-tech competition increasingly shifts to the frontiers of basic research, addressing these weaknesses with greater urgency and determination will be essential. To resolve the problems and strengthen the country's innovation capabilities, it is necessary to further improve the overall effectiveness of its national innovation system, while allowing the market to play a decisive role in allocating innovation resources and enabling the government to better fulfill its responsibilities.

Guided by the "four orientations" framework — facing the world's scientific frontiers, the main economic battlefield, the country's major needs and the people's life and health — efforts should be made to step up coordination among planning, policy, mission portfolios, research teams, infrastructure platforms and regional innovation initiatives.

In carrying out research programs, major national sci-tech initiatives must be prioritized. This means concentrating efforts on frontier fields such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing and biosciences; key industries such as semiconductors and advanced manufacturing; and strategic frontiers including deep-sea, deep-space and deep-earth exploration. In the process, the country needs to plan for major research infrastructure, build indigenous capacity in high-end instruments, scientific data and journals, and actively leverage AI to facilitate research.

It is imperative to explore innovation-driven development paths tailored to local circumstances, and establish comparative advantages. Blindly chasing short-lived trends or engaging in "involution-style" competition must be avoided.

Alongside stronger intellectual property rights protection and faster commercialization of research outcomes, the country needs to invest in talent, improve the efficiency of research funding, optimize evaluation practices, and tighten ethics and safety governance. It is also vital to step up risk evaluation, monitoring and rapid-response capabilities in sci-tech security, while ensuring that high-level research goes hand in hand with high-caliber protection, particularly for critical infrastructure.

Meanwhile, China will deepen its engagement in global sci-tech governance, actively present its vision and solutions to the international community, and elevate its voice and influence in international rule-making. By doing so, the country can contribute more original innovations and solutions to the progress of humanity while advancing Chinese modernization.

US curbs on win-win cooperation costly

As artificial intelligence developers in the United States continue to raise prices and usage costs soar, Chinese AI models are quietly gaining ground in the US market.

Since February, the percentage of tokens that come from Chinese models used by US companies on OpenRouter, a leading global AI platform, has exceeded 30 percent each week, peaking at 46 percent. In contrast, according to a CNBC report, in the first half of 2025, the US usage figure for these fundamental units of data processed by AI models was only 4.5 percent.

While matching the capabilities of top-tier overseas models, Chinese alternatives are priced at perhaps one-tenth the cost or even less, empowering global users to deploy AI in their respective application scenarios more rapidly and affordably.

The emerging commercial potential of what has been dubbed the "token economy" is already evident in the encouraging financial reports from some Chinese AI companies. Some industry insiders foresee China becoming the world's "token factory" by capitalizing on its energy strengths.

However, while US companies are eagerly embracing Chinese AI technology, Washington is eyeing the rise of China's AI with unease. One lawmaker proposed a "Decoupling America's Artificial Intelligence Capabilities from China Act" early last year in response to the "DeepSeek shock".

Such moves are already a staple in the telecommunications sector. In the latest move, the US Federal Communications Commission announced on Tuesday that it is adding California-based Digitalsystem Technology to a list of companies deemed to pose risks to US "national security" because of its "connections" to Chinese telecom companies. Last month, the agency also stated it would prohibit the use of Chinese equipment in undersea internet cables, citing what it considers "an unacceptable risk to national security".

Additionally, the FCC is reportedly drafting a ban on imports of Chinese inverters, baselessly claiming they could "disrupt" power supplies. These suppressive moves follow earlier FCC bans on new foreign models of drones and routers, which primarily target Chinese products. The unwarranted crackdown not only deprives Chinese businesses of a fair, just and nondiscriminatory environment, but also harms the US' own interests.

The US' politicized crackdown on Chinese high-tech enterprises will only raise costs for US businesses and harm the interests of US consumers. This approach contradicts fundamental market principles and undermines the mutually beneficial economic and trade relationship between China and the US.

Cooperation benefits both sides, whereas conflict harms both. US policymakers should stop their unwarranted suppression of Chinese high-tech companies, including pressuring their allies to implement high-tech trade embargoes.

On Tuesday, Dutch Trade Minister Sjoerd Sjoerdsma said in Beijing that his country and China were cooperating "extremely well" to resolve a dispute involving chipmaker Nexperia. Chinese Commerce Minister Wang Wentao, at a meeting with his Dutch guest, expressed the hope the Netherlands will help maintain the stability of semiconductor supply chains and resolve corporate disputes.

The visit coincides with the US pushing the Multilateral Alignment of Technology Controls on Hardware, which aims to further expand export controls on semiconductors to China. The Dutch government is lobbying the US to reconsider the restrictive move as it would constrain Dutch semiconductor giant ASML's ability to sell to China.

In contrast to the US' hegemonic approach in the high-tech sector, China has advocated a collaborative strategy, emphasizing the importance of international cooperation to achieve shared innovation progress. This approach highlights the potential benefits of pooling resources, knowledge, and expertise across borders to address global challenges and drive technological advancements that can benefit all nations.

As a leading advocate, promoter, and pioneer in AI capacity building, China has introduced the Global AI Governance Initiative. This initiative aims to help countries share the benefits of artificial intelligence and bridge the global AI divide. It emphasizes a people-centered approach, prioritizing human well-being, social security and respect for national sovereignty, while promoting AI as a tool for sustainable development and addressing global challenges such as climate change.

In this rapidly evolving technological landscape, nations should prioritize cooperation over confrontation to ensure that technology serves humanity's best interests.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

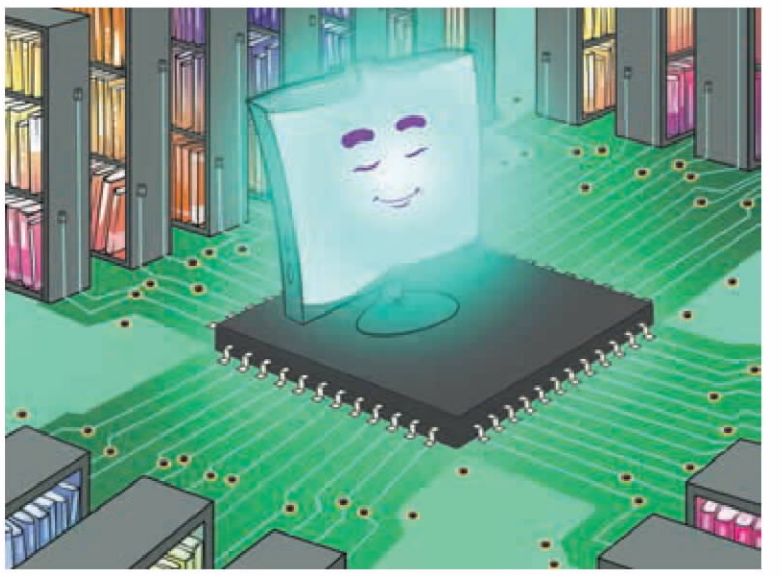
China Daily UK
90 Cannon St, London EC4N 6HA, UK
+44 (0) 207 398 8270
editor@chinadailyuk.com

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Cao Yi



Opinion Line

Cartographic revisionism stretches bounds of credibility

The report released on Wednesday by the China Institute for Marine Affairs, a think tank under the Ministry of Natural Resources, titled "Historical and Legal Critique of the Philippines' Territorial Claims in the South China Sea", raises a fundamental question: what happens when a state seeks to redefine boundaries decades after accepting them as the basis of its own sovereignty?

The report argues that the Philippines' contemporary maritime claims sit uneasily alongside the very legal instruments from which the country derives its territorial legitimacy. The internationally recognized boundaries of the Philippines were established through a succession of treaties during the Spanish and American colonial periods, most notably the 1898 Treaty of Paris, and were subsequently reflected in successive Philippine constitutions. These documents constitute the legal architecture upon which the modern Philippine state was built.

That creates an obvious paradox. The Philippines cannot easily invoke those treaties as the foundation of its sovereignty while simultaneously treating their territorial limits as optional.

This inconsistency becomes particularly striking in Manila's claims over China's Huangyan Island and some islets, shoals and reefs of China's Nansha Islands in the South China Sea. Since the 1970s, the Philippines has progressively expanded its unlawful claims, relying on false arguments ranging from geographical proximity to selective interpretation of history. Yet proximity has never constituted legal title under international law.

Official Philippine maps published well into the late 20th century consistently placed Huangyan Island outside Philippine territory. International jurisprudence has long attached significance to the principle of estoppel, whereby states cannot casually reverse positions on which others have reasonably relied. Maps alone do not determine sovereignty, but official state cartography can provide compelling evidence of how a state defined its own territorial boundaries at a given time.

The issue, therefore, is less about discovering overlooked historical evidence than about revising an established historical narrative to accommodate evolving political objectives.

Such revisionism carries consequences beyond bilateral relations. If every state were to redraw its frontiers through retrospective historical claims, few international boundaries would remain immune to challenge.

That principle becomes particularly relevant in the South China Sea. Stability depends less on absolute agreement than on shared acceptance that legal commitments impose lasting constraints. Once treaties become infinitely malleable, diplomacy gives way to perpetual contestation.

Nor should external forces ignore the contradiction embedded in this debate. Washington frequently presents itself as the "defender" of a "rules-based" international order. But its endorsement of the Philippines on the South China Sea issue is apparently to serve its own geopolitical agenda in the Asia-Pacific. Rules command respect only when applied consistently, not when they coincide with immediate geopolitical interests. Japan also plays an ugly role by supporting the Philippines' provocations toward China in the waters.

International law provides mechanisms for peaceful negotiation and confidence-building. But those mechanisms depend upon a common willingness to distinguish between historical evidence and political aspiration. That distinction has become increasingly blurred in Manila's approach. The Wednesday report depicts a legal narrative that has evolved less through newly uncovered evidence than through shifting political calculations.

Manila cannot simply edit inconvenient chapters without weakening the legal foundations on which its own claims rest. The international system still depends upon one essential discipline: legal consistency. Once governments begin treating established boundaries as endlessly negotiable through retrospective "reinterpretation", uncertainty will spread far beyond any single reef or shoal.

In geopolitics, as in law, credibility is cumulative and contradiction is costly. A nation seeking to redraw its maps should first reckon with the maps it has already drawn.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

New efforts needed to match skills with demand

Editor's note: *China aims to develop high-quality employment during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period. Shanghai Observer spoke to Wu Ruijun, director of the Institute for Talent Development Strategy at East China Normal University; Ding Xiaoqin, chief researcher in the Chinese Modernization Institute at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics; and Zhan Yubo, vice-director of the Institute of Economics at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, on the integration of high-quality development and employment. Below are excerpts of the interviews. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

China's demographic shifts have made the traditional growth model increasingly unsustainable. At the same time, industrial upgrading, technological developments and the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence are reshaping the labor market, leading to pronounced structural employment mismatches.

Although record numbers of university graduates enter the labor market each year, sectors such as advanced manufacturing, elderly care and the digital economy still face a persistent shortage of workers. This paradox of labor shortage amid employment challenges highlights the need to integrate employment objectives into industrial policy, demographic strategy and technological innovation.

As China develops new quality productive forces, accelerates its digital transformation and expands the green and silver economies, equal attention should be given to cultivating emerging occupations and creating new employment opportunities.

Establishing comprehensive labor market forecasting and employment monitoring systems in key industries will better align education with market demands. Dynamic adjustments to academic disciplines, enhanced industry-academia collaboration and a lifelong vocational training system will equip workers with the skills needed to adapt to industrial transformation and technological change.

A unified and efficient national labor market, supported by modern employment services and information sharing, will facilitate labor mobility and improve the matching of skills with jobs, allowing industrial upgrading and employment optimization to advance in tandem.

Enterprises should be encouraged to adopt employment-friendly digital transformation strategies. Promoting the integration of AI with the real economy can foster new growth engines in areas such as intelligent manufacturing and digital services.

At the same time, the development of occupational standards and certification systems for emerging professions should be accelerated. Targeted digital skills training and reskilling programs are essential to help workers transition into new occupations.

For those affected by technological change, stronger social protection and transitional support, including training subsidies and job retention programs, are necessary to ensure that technological progress translates into broader employment opportunities, higher incomes and improved living standards.

Employers should modernize their hiring practices by moving beyond an excessive reliance on academic credentials, seniority or institutional background. Instead, greater emphasis should be placed on practical skills, professional competence and job performance. A more inclusive labor market should provide opportunities for university graduates, skilled workers, career changers and workers in emerging forms of employment.

Enhancement of social security and occupational injury protection for flexible workers, together with greater public recognition of skilled workers, grassroots professionals and entrepreneurs, will help cultivate a culture that respects work, values skills, encourages innovation and supports entrepreneurship.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:07 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:07 PM

VIEWS

China and the World Roundtable | China-South Asia Cooperation Essential to Common Prosperity

Editor's Note: *The 7th China-South Asia Cooperation Forum opened in Kunming, Yunnan province, on June 11 under the theme "Strengthen Cooperative Partnerships for a Community with a Shared Future with Neighboring Countries". The forum brought together senior diplomats, representatives of regional organizations and experts from South Asia and neighboring countries. Below are selected excerpts from keynote speeches delivered at the forum, as reported by China Daily's Li Yingqing and Yao Yuxin.*

South Asia, China to build a shared future by cooperation

Collective action is essential in a changing world



Iruthisham Adam is the minister of Foreign Affairs of the Maldives.

The world is undergoing a profound transformation. Geopolitical tensions, economic uncertainty, climate-related challenges and growing pressures on multilateral institutions continue to reshape the international landscape.

The ongoing conflicts and crises around the world highlight the importance of dialogue and diplomacy in safeguarding international peace and security.

For small island developing states such as the Maldives, the effects of such crises are often amplified, highlighting their vulnerability to external developments and the importance of a peaceful and stable international environment.

In the face of ongoing crises, collective action remains indispensable. One nation cannot address the complex challenges of the time alone.

China has consistently emphasized consensus, common prosperity and cooperative approaches to global challenges. These principles continue to resonate across the region, reflecting shared aspirations for development and stronger regional ties.

Ultimately, the strength of any relationship lies not only in shared interests, but in the trust, understanding and goodwill that sustain it.

Technology and innovation will drive future growth



Arun Hemachandra is Sri Lanka's deputy minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Employment.

The international community faces economic uncertainties, climate challenges, technological transformations and growing geopolitical complexities. At such a time, solidarity, mutual trust and partnership among neighboring countries have become more important than ever.

The vision of building a community with a shared future is based on the principles of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence, inclusiveness and win-win cooperation. Stronger regional partnerships are essential for addressing common challenges and unlocking new opportunities for growth and development.

Future cooperation needs to focus on promoting trade, attracting investment, enhancing connectivity, accelerating digital transformation, and expanding opportunities in tourism, renewable energy, agriculture and the blue economy.

Educational exchanges, youth engagement, cultural interactions, academic collaboration and tourism cooperation are essential for fostering mutual understanding and building lasting friendships among nations.

Innovation and technology are equally important drivers of future growth. By strengthening cooperation in digital technologies, artificial intelligence, innovation and capacity building, countries can better equip themselves to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving global economy.

Greater regional cooperation in climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction, renewable energy and sustainable development is essential to safeguarding the collective future.

By advancing South-South cooperation, strengthening connectivity, promoting sustainable development and deepening people-to-people exchanges, countries can unlock new opportunities for growth and resilience.

China-South Asia trade still has vast untapped frontiers



Mohd Golam Sarwar is secretary-general of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation was established in 1985 to elevate the welfare and quality of life of the peoples of South Asia, engineer collective solutions to shared challenges, and build an enduring spirit of friendship, trust and mutual respect among its member states.

Four decades later, SAARC stands as the embodiment of hope for regional peace, stability, progress and solidarity — bound by a shared history, culture and destiny.

As a valued observer country, China shares a relationship with SAARC that the region deeply treasures.

China remains the primary economic and trade partner for South Asian nations. Bilateral trade volume now exceeds $200 billion annually, having doubled over the past decade with an average annual growth rate of 6.3 percent.

While traditional synergy in agriculture, energy, minerals and infrastructure remains strong, cooperation is rapidly expanding into pioneering frontiers.

Today, China and South Asia are actively collaborating in green energy, photovoltaics, electric vehicles, low-carbon initiatives, digital technologies, intelligent manufacturing and cross-border e-commerce.

To ensure this economic relationship is both sustainable and mutually enriching, there should be a deeper and more resilient equilibrium in regional trade volumes.

The China-South Asia Expo, which showcases advances in bio-medicine, green energy, advanced manufacturing, cultural tourism, wellness and modern agriculture, can inject fresh momentum into the regional economy and create common ground for development.



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

Partnership, not polarization, is South Asia's choice



Khalil Hashmi is Pakistan's ambassador to China.

South Asia is home to almost a quarter of humanity, endowed with abundant natural resources and a great talent pool. Yet, the region has lagged behind other regions such as Southeast, Central and Northeast Asia.

Despite the demographic dividend, the social and economic indicators of South Asian countries leave much to be desired.

The region faces complex challenges: conflicts, poverty, climate vulnerability, water insecurity and uneven development. Countering these challenges requires a bold vision, statesmanship and new development partnerships.

South Asia's history over the past 75 years demonstrates that building a truly peaceful and prosperous region hinges on resolving long-standing disputes and adhering to international law and the United Nations Charter.

A new blueprint for a development partnership between China and South Asia should be based on principles of peaceful coexistence, cooperation, solidarity and shared prosperity.

It is time to consider establishing a standing China-South Asia Development Forum as an annual platform, hosted on a rotational basis among South Asian countries.

The region stands at an important crossroads. The choice should be partnership over polarization, development over discord, and hope over despair.

Development must serve both people and planet

The focus on deepening cooperative partnerships and building a community with a shared future reflects what the Himalayan region has practiced for generations — living in harmony with nature, respecting each other's sovereignty and seeking mutual benefit.

Bhutan's Gross National Happiness philosophy places the well-being of people and the protection of the environment at the center of all development.

China's vision of ecological civilization, captured in the principle that "lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets", speaks the same language. Yunnan province is a living example of this wisdom — its breathtaking landscapes, rich biodiversity and harmonious multi-ethnic culture mirror the spirit of the Himalayas that connects Bhutan, Nepal, India, Bangladesh and China.



Karma Dorji is a former minister of Industry, Commerce and Employment of Bhutan.

The great rivers that flow from these shared mountains nourish hundreds of millions across the region.

China's extraordinary achievement in lifting nearly 800 million people out of extreme poverty through people-centered, long-term strategies offers powerful lessons for the Global South.

Future cooperation should move beyond transactional cooperation toward genuine, long-term friendship built on mutual respect, non-interference and win-win outcomes.

Green energy, digital economy, cultural tourism, agriculture, health cooperation and people-to-people exchanges provide tremendous potential to deepen understanding and build the human bridges that make all other cooperation sustainable.

Cooperation is foundation of Asia's shared future



Himadrish Suwan is the chairperson of the Confederation of Young Leaders and director-general of the Indian Institute of Governance and Leadership.

The world is undergoing a deep transformation, economic interdependence is deepening, and technological change is accelerating at an unprecedented pace. In such a world, cooperation among neighbors is no longer optional — it is essential for stability, prosperity and peace.

China and South Asia together represent nearly half of humanity. This is not merely a geographic reality, but also a civilizational responsibility.

Former Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee once observed: "You can change your friends, but you cannot change your neighbors." This is not merely a reflection on geography — it is a strategic truth. Neighborhoods are permanent.

As two ancient civilizations, two major economies and two leading voices of the Global South, India and China are not only bilateral partners in complexity — they are also indispensable actors in shaping the Asian century.

When youth connect, stereotypes dissolve. When societies understand each other better, strategic space for stability expands. Let this be the century in which Asia does not merely rise, but rises together.

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

Khalid Taimur Akram

Why Party-building thought matters for governance

Global Lens

One of the central questions in comparative politics is how governing parties sustain effectiveness over long periods of time. While different political systems provide different answers, China's experience offers a distinctive perspective.

Rather than relying primarily on electoral competition or frequent institutional redesign, the Communist Party of China has placed growing emphasis on strengthening itself through strict Party governance, organizational discipline and continuous self-improvement.

This approach has become one of the defining features of Xi Jinping Thought on Party Building. At its core is the concept of the Party's "self-reform" — the idea that a long-governing ruling party must constantly reform itself if it is to remain effective, responsive and capable of leading national development.

China's rapid industrialization, modern infrastructure, technological advancement and unprecedented poverty reduction have attracted worldwide attention.

While these achievements are often attributed to industrial policy, long-term planning or economic reforms, they also reflect a deeper institutional foundation. Effective governance requires not only sound policies but also organizations capable of implementing them consistently across a country of more than 1.4 billion people.

For this reason, President Xi Jinping has repeatedly stressed that Party building is inseparable from national governance.

A disciplined, capable and clean governing party is viewed not simply as a political objective but as a prerequisite for effective State capacity.

One important aspect of this philosophy is comprehensive Party self-governance. Over the past decade, anti-corruption efforts have become one of the most visible manifestations of this approach. Corruption weakens public trust, reduces administrative efficiency and undermines long-term development.

Through strengthened supervision, stricter disciplinary mechanisms and greater institutional oversight, China has sought to reinforce accountability throughout the Party and government.

High-profile investigations involving officials at different levels demonstrate the intention to enforce discipline regardless of rank. More broadly, anti-corruption is viewed not as an isolated campaign but as part of a broader effort to improve governance by strengthening institutions and preserving public confidence.

Yang Youlin, former executive deputy director of the administrative committee of the Nanjing economic and technological development zone in East China's Jiangsu province, was sentenced to death on Monday by the Changzhou Intermediate People's Court after being convicted of multiple crimes, including accepting more than 2.2 billion yuan ($324 million) in bribes.

Another defining feature of Xi's Party-building philosophy is the emphasis on institutional learning. Governance is treated as a continuous process of identifying weaknesses, evaluating performance and refining policy implementation. Rather than assuming that existing institutions remain permanently effective, the Party seeks to improve its organizational capacity through constant adjustment and internal reform.

This concept of self-reform therefore extends beyond anti-corruption. It encompasses organizational renewal, institutional resilience and the ability to adapt to changing domestic and international circumstances. The objective is not change for its own sake, but continuous improvement in governance capacity.

China's policymaking process reflects this philosophy. Major reforms frequently begin as carefully designed local pilot programs before being expanded nationwide.

Experiences from different provinces and municipalities are evaluated, refined and incorporated into national policy where appropriate. Successful practices are institutionalized, while unsuccessful ones are adjusted or discontinued.

Such an approach allows the government to accumulate policy experience rather than repeatedly starting from scratch. Institutional memory becomes a source of long-term governance capability, enabling continuous improvement instead of cyclical reinvention.

China's campaign to eliminate extreme poverty illustrates this model.

Beyond financial investment, success depended on extensive data collection, detailed policy evaluation, local implementation mechanisms and continuous administrative adjustment. Governance capacity was strengthened not only through resources but through the ability to learn systematically from implementation.

This was the story of "cliff village", perched 800 meters above the ground in Sichuan province's remote Daliang Mountains — equivalent to a 200-story building. In 2016, the local Party secretary led the replacement of perilous vine ladders with steel staircases, transforming access.

The village went viral online, and a local shepherd became a popular vlogger and tour guide filming the steel ladders, cliffs, cloud seas, and sunrises. The steel ladder brought the greatest benefits to local students with a new modern school built. Life became much better.

The same principle increasingly applies to technological development. China's progress in artificial intelligence, digital governance and advanced manufacturing reflects not only scientific investment but also institutional coordination, long-term planning and policy continuity. These are areas where organizational effectiveness becomes as important as technological capability itself.

Countries employ different mechanisms to ensure accountability. Some rely primarily on competitive elections and changes of government. Others emphasize institutional checks and balances, judicial oversight or administrative professionalism.

China's model places greater emphasis on internal Party supervision, organizational discipline and continuous institutional improvement. Each system reflects its own historical experience and political traditions.

For scholars of comparative governance, China's experience offers an important case study. Rather than evaluating political systems solely according to institutional form, increasing attention is being paid to governance effectiveness, policy implementation and State capacity. Researchers continue to examine how Party discipline, organizational reform and administrative modernization interact to influence economic development and public administration.

China's growing international role has further intensified interest in these questions. Through trade, investment, infrastructure cooperation and development partnerships, China has become a major participant in global governance.

Many developing countries are increasingly interested not simply in China's economic achievements but also in the institutional mechanisms that have supported long-term policy continuity and national modernization.

Xi has consistently argued that reform is never complete. As technological innovation accelerates, demographic changes deepen, environmental pressures increase and geopolitical uncertainty grows, governance itself must continue evolving.

In this context, Party building is presented as an ongoing process rather than a one-time institutional adjustment.

As China pursues high-quality development in an increasingly complex international environment, the evolution of its Party-building philosophy will remain central to understanding both its governance model and its future trajectory.

The author is the executive director of the Pakistan Research Center for a Community with Shared Future, Islamabad.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:07 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:07 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

KONSTANTINOS GRIVAS

Beyond the Thucydides Trap

In a world searching for new foundations, Greece and China show how ancient civilizations can help construct a more harmonious international order

For decades, international relations have been dominated by theories emphasizing competition, confrontation and the supposedly inevitable clash of interests. Such approaches often assume that emerging countries and established powers are destined to become adversaries and that the international order is shaped primarily through economic pressure and military superiority. Yet in the 21st century, the world is becoming too interconnected, pluralistic and culturally diverse to be understood through such simplistic binaries.



This is where Greece and China enter the picture.

These are not merely two nation-states maintaining diplomatic relations. They are two of humanity's oldest continuous civilizations, whose intellectual traditions have profoundly influenced the course of world history.

Greek civilization introduced philosophical inquiry, dialectical reasoning and a conception of truth emerging through dialogue rather than dogma. Chinese civilization developed equally profound traditions centered on harmony, balance, relational thinking and the cultivation of social order. Although they emerged independently, both traditions share a remarkable openness toward complexity and a resistance to rigid, absolutist categories.

Indeed, one of the most valuable contributions of Chinese civilization to contemporary global discourse lies precisely in its rejection of binary thinking. The Confucian search for harmony and the Taoist appreciation of complementary opposites offer an intellectual framework very different from the zero-sum assumptions that often dominate modern geopolitics. Rather than viewing international relations exclusively through the prism of winners and losers, friends and enemies, such traditions encourage the search for equilibrium, coexistence and creative management of differences.

Similarly, the authentic Greek intellectual tradition differs substantially from deterministic interpretations often associated with modern strategic thought. Greek thought emphasizes freedom, creativity and the open-ended nature of history, believing that human beings are not imprisoned within historical inevitabilities — they retain the ability to shape their future through wisdom, dialogue and responsible action.

In this sense, both civilizations challenge the notion that conflict is destiny.

The significance of China's Global Civilization Initiative lies precisely in its recognition that culture and civilization are not secondary issues but central dimensions of international affairs. For too long, global discussions have been dominated by economic indicators, military balances and technological competition. While these factors remain important, they cannot by themselves provide answers to humanity's deeper challenges.

Civilizations matter because they shape how societies understand power, cooperation, human dignity and historical change.

This is why cultural cooperation between Greece and China possesses strategic importance extending far beyond cultural diplomacy in the narrow sense. Exchanges between universities, research institutions, museums, cultural organizations and intellectual communities can contribute to a broader dialogue concerning the future of humanity itself.

Such cooperation can help generate alternative perspectives on global governance, development and international coexistence. It can also demonstrate that cultural diversity is not an obstacle to cooperation but one of its most important foundations.

The relationship between Greece and China also possesses a significant geoeconomic dimension.

Greece occupies a pivotal position at the crossroads of Europe, Asia and Africa. Greek-owned shipping remains one of the principal arteries of global commerce. Meanwhile, China has emerged as one of the world's leading economic and technological powers.

The Belt and Road Initiative has created a framework within which these complementary advantages can converge. Greece participated actively in the initiative through the development of the Port of Piraeus, transforming the port into one of the most important maritime hubs connecting Asia and Europe.

Yet the deeper significance of the BRI extends beyond infrastructure. Historically, the ancient Silk Road was not merely a trade route. It included channels through which ideas, beliefs, technologies and cultural traditions traveled across continents. In a similar way, contemporary connectivity can become a vehicle not only for economic prosperity but also for civilizational dialogue.

There is also a maritime dimension to this relationship that extends beyond economics. Ancient Greece became a civilization of the sea, connecting peoples, ideas and markets across the Mediterranean world. Modern China is once again strengthening maritime connectivity across Eurasia and beyond. In this sense, the cooperation between Chinese economic dynamism and Greek maritime expertise represents more than a business partnership. It symbolizes the meeting of two historical traditions that have long understood the sea not as a barrier separating societies but as a bridge connecting them. The Port of Piraeus stands today as a tangible manifestation of this shared vision of connectivity.

The partnership between Greece and China therefore combines two dimensions that are rarely found together, namely profound cultural affinity and tangible strategic cooperation.

As the international system enters a new era, humanity requires frameworks capable of moving beyond deterministic visions of inevitable confrontation. The dialogue between Greek and Chinese civilizations offers precisely such a possibility. It reminds us that history remains open; cooperation is not weakness and civilizations can enrich one another without abandoning their identities.

In a world searching for new foundations, the encounter between Greek and Chinese civilizations may become one of the most important examples of how ancient civilizations can contribute to the construction of a more harmonious and genuinely multipolar international order.

The author is a professor of geopolitics and the director of the War Theory and Analysis Sector at the Hellenic Military Academy. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

WOJCIECH NOWIAK

Sharing experiences for common prosperity

'China Opportunity 2.0' brings innovation and investment dividends to the EU and all global partners in an era plagued by supply chain decoupling and trade barriers

At the opening plenary of the 17th Annual Meeting of the New Champions, also known as the Summer Davos, which was held in Dalian, Liaoning province, on June 24, Chinese Premier Li Qiang referred to "China Opportunity 2.0". This year marks the start of China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) for economic and social development. The plan has not been formulated only for domestic development; rather, it is an element of contemporary China's policy of openness to the world. It is also related to global innovation cooperation based on China's economic development practices. It is evident from the Chinese path to modernization that innovation drives development and shapes the future. This has shown the resilience of China in the face of geopolitical changes. Thanks to the implementation of innovative policies during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period and earlier five-year plan periods, China has proved to be among the economies most resilient to various global fluctuations such as unilateralism and protectionism.



On the one hand, understanding these processes is important, particularly for European Union politicians trying to resolve the Ukraine crisis and torn by internal disputes over relations with the United States and NATO countries in Europe. On the other hand, this understanding applies to opinion-forming bodies, including the media, because they help shape the messages that reach practically everyone. European countries would better embrace "China Opportunity 2.0" — through positive ties with China — to tap their development potential, rather than fabricating "China Shock 2.0" to justify their inability to upgrade their economies.

It is worth noting that some clear-minded European politicians and objective opinion-forming circles have grasped the main idea regarding crisis resilience, which is based on stability, innovation, dynamism and integration. Reviewing China's achievements in the past years, there is growing consensus that stability supports economic growth and improves people's lives. Innovation is central to China's position as a hub for rapidly emerging technologies, products and business models.

The growing vitality of the Chinese economy, the vibrancy of its market and the high potential of its domestic demand reflect dynamism, as evidenced in its status as the world's second-largest economy. China's growing openness amid rising protectionism is seen in its zero-tariff policy for 53 African countries with which it has diplomatic ties. Now, China is presenting the world, including the EU, with the message: Innovation-based development is key to China's long-term, sustained economic success. And China is also sharing its experience with others to achieve common prosperity. In the past, China's large market and low-cost production factors provided "market dividends" for the world. Today, through "China Opportunity 2.0", China is sharing with the rest of the world the dividend from its innovation through technological advancements and industrial upgrading. The combination of these dividends creates greater opportunities and potential for growth worldwide.

"China Opportunity 2.0" therefore holds practical significance for the EU. It is hoped that the "innovation dividend" can also be beneficial for EU economies and societies.

For enterprises around the world, "China Opportunity 2.0" also means an overall strengthening of innovation and investment opportunities with a high return. An increasing number of foreign enterprises have come to China to establish research centers and regional headquarters and to integrate deeply with China's innovation and industry chains. This is a clear transition from "made in China" to "created in China". It is estimated that in 2025, 14,000 foreign-funded enterprises were established in research and technology services, up 27.2 percent year-on-year. Are there or can there be EU entities among these companies? Of course, yes. EU companies can quickly find partners throughout the process, from R&D to prototyping to mass production, making innovation easier and more efficient. This not only helps companies succeed in the Chinese market but also increases their global competitiveness. It should be borne in mind and understood that success in the Chinese market is synonymous with the opportunity of global success. China's fast-growing innovative enterprises can generate returns for investors around the world. For global development, "China Opportunity 2.0" means more accessible advanced technologies and widespread results.

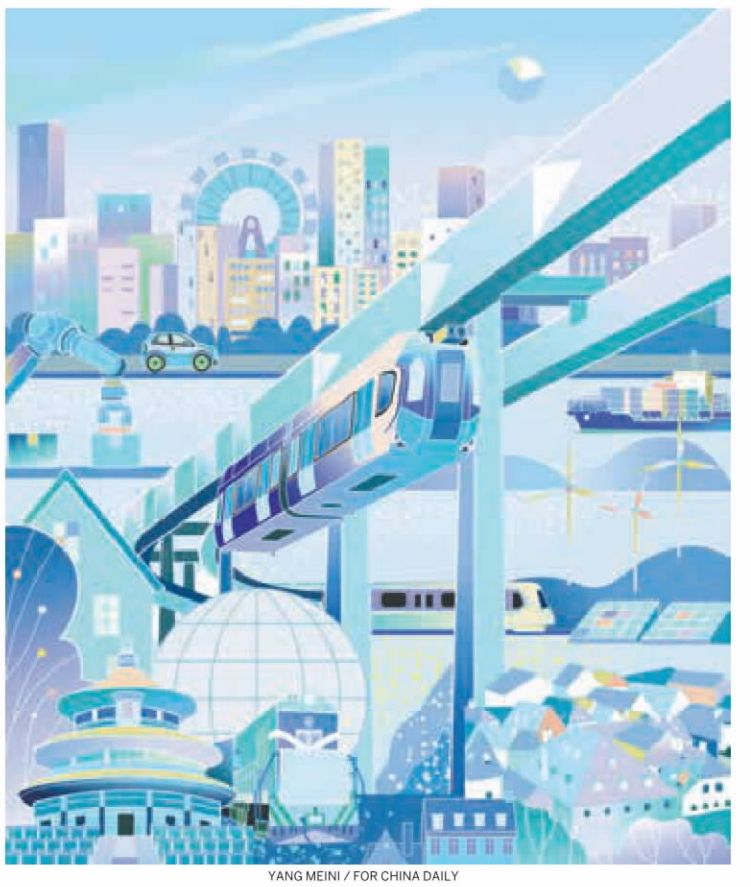
China has an open approach to innovation. Many of its innovations are open-source. This enables more countries, especially developing countries, to access new technologies and products, increasing their capacity to develop and addressing some of the challenges that hold back global development. EU countries should pay special attention to this, because if they distance themselves from China, they also distance themselves from one of the major hubs of innovation. China serves as an innovative reference to the rest of the world. The EU can learn from it in a more cooperative and positive way.

China, as an innovation leader, has another important message: Technology has never developed so quickly before, but the risk of losing control is increasing. That is why China's proposal also applies to global innovation management. Artificial intelligence has greatly increased the efficiency of innovation, and breakthroughs are occurring across all frontiers. But the risk of losing control and making ethical mistakes is also increasing. That is why joint management, and not the creation of barriers to cooperation, is important.

China has unequivocally proved that it supports deepening connectivity and cooperation to build greater synergies for innovation. In this new round of technological revolution and industrial transformation, no country or company can succeed alone. A connected global market enables a more efficient flow and allocation of inputs and significantly reduces innovation costs.

Does the EU want to distance itself from these proposals? The answer should be no. Therefore, the more it taps into "China Opportunity 2.0", the more benefits there are for the global community. Representatives of the business world who accompany the heads of state from some European countries visiting Beijing know this. China's growing competitiveness in advanced manufacturing, clean energy, AI and robotics creates new opportunities for multinational companies.

The author is a professor at the Faculty of Political Science and Journalism at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



YANG MEINI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:07 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:07 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

Fresh options for Chinese investment

New projects closely tied to supply chain security, clean energy, high tech

By **JIANG XUEQING**
jiangxueqing@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese firms are entering a new phase of global expansion, shifting from exporting products to building overseas supply chains and expanding capabilities, reflecting a more mature and diversified global strategy, industry experts said.

Ning Loh, managing director and head of global credit strategy at Moody's Ratings, said: "Chinese companies have developed strong manufacturing capabilities with cost advantages and very deep and developed domestic supply chains. The country is moving away from lower-value exports to a much broader global strategy around technology and Chinese brands."

Loh said the latest wave of Chinese outbound direct investment has been "more strategic, selective and diversified", as companies are expanding overseas to offset slowly recovering domestic demand, mitigate geopolitical and tariff risks and internationalize their supply chains, production capacity and technologies.

Unlike earlier waves of outbound investment, which centered on securing natural resources and pursuing large mergers and acquisitions in developed markets, today's investments are closely tied to supply chain security, clean energy, advanced technologies and critical minerals, he added.

The shift is evident when taking a look at where Chinese companies are investing, the sectors they are targeting and the motivations behind their overseas expansion.

South and Southeast Asia — along with Latin America — have emerged as major destinations for Chinese investment, while North America's share of China's outbound direct investment has declined.

The sectoral focus has also changed markedly. Whereas Chinese companies previously concentrated on traditional infrastructure, property services and financial assets, the past five years saw investment increasingly directed toward electric vehicles, batteries, advanced technologies, renewable energy, critical minerals and electronics.

Born in Malaysia and having lived in Thailand, Loh said he has witnessed the transformation firsthand through the rapid rise of Chinese EV brands across Southeast Asia.

"A couple of years ago, very few people had heard of brands like Chery or BYD," he said. "Now, they are among the best-selling cars and have completely changed the market."

He said artificial intelligence is also accelerating the overseas expansion of Chinese companies by enabling them to localize faster, improve customer service and reduce costs.

The rapid deployment of AI, together with broader technological and innovation upgrades, is expected to fuel a new wave of overseas expansion by Chinese service providers across sectors including technology, logistics and travel, said a Moody's Ratings report released on June 10.

Loh said overseas expansion has become an increasingly important strategy for Chinese companies as domestic demand remains relatively weak compared with the country's manufacturing capacity. Expanding abroad allows companies to diversify their markets while reducing exposure to trade tensions and tariffs. At the same time, China is seeking to secure reliable access to critical minerals and key technological inputs needed to support the sectors driving its economic growth.

Sherman Hung, deputy CEO & head of institutional banking group at DBS China, said supply-chain diversification is a natural part of Chinese companies' global expansion, driven by the need to expand market reach, maximize profitability and build resilience.

"What we observe across our ASEAN network is companies optimizing their Asia-Pacific footprint by establishing regional manufacturing and logistics hubs — creating a synergistic model that combines Chinese capabilities with regional nodes," said Hung.

"On industrial upgrading, Chinese enterprises have built genuine global competitiveness in renewable energy, EVs, smart equipment and advanced manufacturing. Their outbound investment increasingly represents an extension and localization of those capabilities, not just a search for cheaper inputs."

Looking ahead, Hung said the green economy is expected to remain the most prominent investment option, with Chinese companies in clean energy and energy storage leveraging their scale advantages to meet growing global demand.

He also highlighted two other areas with significant growth potential: consumer-related sectors in emerging markets and high-end manufacturing, where China's expertise in smart production and factory management is increasingly being adopted overseas.

"Emerging markets, particularly ASEAN, are becoming the preferred destination for a growing number of Chinese enterprises going global, driven by their growth potential, geographical proximity, cultural affinities and favorable policies. Since the RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership) came into effect, regional trade and investment facilitation has further lowered the threshold for Chinese companies entering ASEAN markets."

Hung said a defining feature of the current phase of Chinese companies' global expansion is an increasing focus on localized operations, adding, "Companies are placing greater emphasis on building brands, channels and teams within target markets to deeply integrate into the local economy."

Simplified tax refunds to boost spending

By **REN QI**
renqi@chinadaily.com.cn

Core measures of the upgraded version 2.0 departure tax refund policy, including a fully paperless process and a random inspection system for small amounts, were officially rolled out earlier this month, allowing inbound travelers to immediately experience seamless efficiency.

"Previously, processing a tax refund required paper invoices and forms, which took time to print and were easy to lose, but now the entire process can be completed with just one code," said a Romanian traveler. On July 1, he purchased a watch in Beijing, generated an electronic form by scanning a code at the store, and quickly verified it at the Beijing Capital International Airport customs window.

This paperless system allows travelers to generate a universally applicable "departure tax refund service code" via mobile browsers anytime after entering the country. It enables them to process refunds at any designated store or departure port nationwide and track electronic invoices and progress online, making the procedure fully traceable.

Efficiency is further boosted by a new regulation effective July 1, which applies random physical inspections to refund applications under 10,000 yuan ($1,471). "My documents were not selected for physical inspection today, so I completed all procedures in just a few minutes, which makes us more willing to buy quality domestic products," said Yang Liqin, a Hong Kong traveler who received a 530-yuan refund for a camera at Shenzhen's Futian Port.



Travelers line up for departure tax refunds at Shanghai Pudong International Airport.
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

To facilitate this, Shenzhen Customs has set up prominent signs and assigned dedicated personnel to direct travelers based on their refund amounts. Sun Yiming, an official at Shenzhen Customs, explained the rationale: "This risk-management approach exempts most small-amount applicants from physical checks, eliminating queues for minor refunds while ensuring smooth operations for those selected."

The digital shift also benefits daily operations. "During peak seasons, writing refund applications used to cause long queues, but now the system automatically generates and sends electronic forms to travelers' phones, saving time and eliminating printing needs," noted a staff member at the Lawson tax refund store at Beijing Capital International Airport.

An official from airport customs stated, "By scanning the traveler's exclusive code, we can retrieve complete electronic documents for online verification, meaning we no longer need to stamp paper applications."

For those still preferring paper, Shanghai Customs introduced smart verification terminals supported by an integrated platform to retrieve digital records if physical invoices are forgotten, helping process 253,000 applications worth 2.3 billion yuan in the first half of the year. Meanwhile, Hangzhou Customs has collaborated with tax, banking and airport authorities to deploy 24/7 "E-Customs Pass" self-service stations to assist travelers.

These streamlined services complement an expanding supply of eligible goods nationwide. "The refund process is simple, and the money arrives instantly, making me want to buy more cultural gifts for my family before returning home," said Marina Ivanova, a Russian tourist drawn to local specialties in Dalian, Liaoning province.

Merchants are seeing tangible economic benefits from the policy. "Since becoming a 'buy-and-refund' store in April, our daily foreign customer foot traffic has doubled, with these sales now accounting for 6 percent of our total revenue," said Zhang Jin, manager of an Adidas store in Chongqing.

Chongqing recently expanded its "buy-and-refund" stores to 78, achieving full coverage of its core commercial districts, with eligible goods now spanning 3C electronics, jewelry, apparel, beauty products and cultural heritage items.

Dassault Systemes' business in China expands

By **WANG KEJU**
wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn

China's economic resilience, underpinned by its swift policy action and rapid technological innovation, is translating into robust confidence among foreign businesses to scale up investment and expand their presence in this critical market, a senior executive told China Daily.

Samson Khaou, executive vice-president of Dassault Systemes, noted that last year marked the twentieth anniversary of the company's operations in China, during which it witnessed a fundamental shift in how the Chinese economy engages with technology.

"Two decades of experience serving the Chinese market taught us that confidence is driven not just by short-term economic cycles, but by the consistency of government policy and the pace of technological upgrading," Khaou said.

He observed that over the past 20 years, Chinese companies have moved from simply adopting technology to actively shaping it. "This gives us strong confidence that innovation is still thriving in China," he added.

Dassault Systemes is not alone. A May survey by the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China reinforces this view, with 48 percent of respondents saying that Chinese firms in their industry are more innovative than European counterparts.



View of the booth of Dassault Systemes during an expo in Wuhan, Hubei province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

With a solid base of 60,000 customers, Khaou said Dassault Systemes has seen strong resilience in how Chinese companies are optimizing operations and using technology to drive innovation and excellence in manufacturing and engineering.

"That resilience, in turn, reinforces the company's confidence to continue investing in China on a global scale," he added.

In April, the company announced plans to build an innovation center in Jinhua, Zhejiang province, to bring advanced technologies to the local small and medium-sized enterprise ecosystem.

"Separately, in 2025, through our collaboration with China Telecom's Tianyi Cloud in Nanjing, we are making Dassault Systemes' SaaS, or software-as-a-service, solutions more accessible to customers in China — part of our continued investment in the market," Khaou said.

He added that the center serves two key purposes: first, to ensure that new technologies developed on the company's platform can be taught and disseminated to SMEs; and second, to build joint ventures in segments where China leads the global market, enabling co-development of technologies that will drive local expansion and eventually serve global markets.

In particular, Khaou noted that China is now "leading artificial intelligence on the global stage". The AI boom, he said, is fostering a new generation of entrepreneurs equipped with deep knowledge of how to harness AI for product and service innovation, a trend becoming increasingly visible in China.

China has issued a plan to deeply integrate AI with the manufacturing sector, spanning large AI models, industrial datasets and application scenarios.

According to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, China has built a multi-tiered smart factory ecosystem, which comprised over 35,000 basic-level, more than 8,200 advanced-level, over 500 excellence-level and 15 flagship smart factories nationwide as of 2025.

To better capitalize on the AI trend in China, Dassault Systemes is developing AI models, which combine physical AI with industrial AI, rather than relying on large language models, as part of its latest industrial software solutions, according to Khaou.

Khaou said the company looks forward to enhancing the competitiveness and innovation capabilities of traditional industrial manufacturers, especially for smaller businesses.

Briefly

Foreign exchange reserves down in June

China's foreign exchange reserves stood at $3.4163 trillion at the end of last month, down by $26 billion, or 0.75 percent, from the level at the end of May, official data showed. In June, the US dollar index rose, while prices of major global financial assets were mixed, State Administration of Foreign Exchange noted. A combination of factors, including exchange rate translation and changes in asset prices, led to a decline in China's foreign exchange reserves last month, the administration added.

Chinese mainland shares close lower

Chinese mainland shares closed lower on Wednesday, with the benchmark Shanghai Composite Index down 0.49 percent at 3970.88 points. The Shenzhen Component Index closed 1.87 percent lower at 14939.73 points.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Consumer vouchers in pipeline for summer holidays

XINING — China on Wednesday launched a national summer holiday cultural and tourism consumption campaign, with more than 450 million yuan ($66 million) worth of consumer vouchers to be distributed.

Organized by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the campaign aims to improve the supply of seasonal tourism products and services and encourage people to enjoy travel during the summer holidays.

Running from early July to late August, the campaign is expected to feature more than 30,000 activities nationwide, catering to popular travel demands, such as summer getaways, coastal vacations, night tourism, cruise trips and study tours.

The ministry, along with other relevant agencies, will put a series of support measures in place, ranging from travel information guides to preferential financial policies. This campaign comes as China has set a target of significantly enhancing people's access to and satisfaction with tourism by 2030, according to a new five-year tourism development plan issued on Tuesday.

China boasts a diverse tapestry of attractions, from breathtaking natural landscapes to profound cultural heritage sites, all supported by modern infrastructure such as high-speed rail and 5G networks. This combination provides a robust foundation for continued consumption growth.

The evolving consumption habits of the younger generation are also reshaping market dynamics, as they are driving the shift toward cultural tourism and more tailored experiences, and opening new opportunities for related sectors, including dining, accommodation and transportation.

This rise in cultural tourism has led to new business models, such as nighttime cultural tourism. The cross-industry integration invigorates the consumer market and injects new vitality into the cultural tourism industry. Consumption vitality burst during the recent May Day holiday, with the sales revenue of related sectors growing by 14.3 percent year-on-year, indicating a further release of spending potential.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:07 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:07 PM

BUSINESS



The Anshun-Panzhou section of the Shanghai-Kunming Expressway, partially built by State builder China Railway No 4 Engineering Group, is almost ready to be put into operation later this year. LI LEIBO / FOR CHINA DAILY

Improved transport making regions richer

Flow of goods, visitors being bolstered with expanded expressway network in Guizhou

By **HAN JINGYAN**
hanjingyan@chinadaily.com.cn

Chen Min, a 45-year-old fruit vendor in Liuzhi special district in Southwest China's Guizhou province, never thought that her small business would become internationalized.

Born in the town of Longhe, Chen started selling fruits from a roadside stall in the town three years ago. In addition to the locally produced fruit she sells, Chen buys non-local fruit from a market near Liuzhi East Station.

"I often buy wholesale bananas, mangos and dragon fruit from a trader coming from Kunming in Yunnan province which borders Guizhou," said Chen, pointing to the dozen types of fruit on her food stand. "Some tropical fruits come from Laos, which are transported to Yunnan via the China-Laos Railway."

The 1,035-kilometer railway, which runs between Kunming South Station and Vientiane South Station in Laos, went into operation in December 2021, transporting over 3,800 kinds of goods in addition to passengers.

The railway has become an important logistics channel connecting China, Laos and Southeast Asian countries.

"Besides those non-local fruits, the plums, peaches and watermelons are locally produced," she said, adding that she can earn over 100,000 yuan ($14,730) annually from selling fruit.

Chen said she is now betting on the expanded Shanghai-Kunming Expressway, which runs through Liuzhi and serves as a crucial horizontal transport artery connecting western Guizhou with Yunnan and Southeast Asia.

The 2,730-km Shanghai-Kunming Expressway, which was fully connected on Sept 8, 2011, has faced pressure as the existing four-lane road section in Guizhou has had to battle congestion amid fast economic growth.

To alleviate congestion and aid regional economic development, Guizhou decided to expand the Anshun-Panzhou section of the expressway, with the expansion starting in 2022, said Li Shifu, Party secretary of the APFJ-3 division of China Railway No 4 Engineering Group in building the section.

Invested by Guizhou Transportation Investment Group, the Anshun-Panzhou expressway cost some 32.311 billion yuan and has 97 km within Liupanshui, Li said.

"With the new Anshun-Panzhou section being put into operation later this year alongside the existing expressway, fruit coming from Laos and from Kunming will be faster, while transport costs will fall," Chen said, adding that this will help her earn more.

China has been bolstering its road network, with the Ministry of Transport saying the country invested some 779.7 billion yuan on building roads during the first five months of this year.

Experts estimate the nation's roads transported some 21.2 billion metric tons of goods during the first half, as well as 23 billion trips for passengers during the period.

Agricultural advancement

Administered by the prefecture-level city of Liupanshui, county-level Liuzhi houses some 750,300 residents coming from 32 ethnic groups in 15 towns, and its agricultural produce is noticeable.

Liuzhi netted a regional GDP of 19.387 billion yuan in 2025, an annual hike of 6.0 percent, said Yao Hong, magistrate of Liuzhi, promising to increase the local GDP by 6.5 percent in 2026.



Chen Min (center), a 45-year-old fruit vendor in Liuzhi special district in Guizhou province, sells fruit from her roadside stall. LI SHIFU / FOR CHINA DAILY

The modernization of agriculture in Liuzhi is accelerating, Yao said, adding that "we have turned mountainous agriculture into a distinctive product and achieved a new leap in traditional industries".

Wei Mingxiang is the head of a professional strawberry and vegetable planting cooperative in Mugang town, grouping five families.

Set up in July 2014, the cooperative is engaged in strawberry, konjac and vegetable planting, netting some 600,000 yuan each year, Wei said.

With 96 vegetable greenhouses on a land of some six hectares, the group can produce over 1,500 kilograms of "Chocolate" brand strawberries per 600 square meters between November and early April.

"During the holidays and weekends, people from the cities of Anshun and Guiyang, our provincial capital, would drive to our greenhouses to pick strawberries," Wei said.

In busy days, he would hire a dozen local farmers to help.

He said he hoped that the new Anshun-Panzhou expressway will help bring more visitors. The section starts at the county seat of Puding county in Anshun and ends at Panguan town in Panzhou under Liupanshui.

Yao said that his district will prioritize characteristic agricultural industries to let farmers earn more and faster.

It will build over 333 hectares of high-standard vegetable bases, cultivate 6,086 hectares of tea plants, grow 16,670 hectares of vegetables, and 9,066 hectares of high-quality fruit this year, he said, noting that it also aims to raise 320,000 pigs, 36,700 beef cattle, 39,900 sheep and 3.83 million poultry this year.

More development pillars

Li said that during the past few years in constructing roads in Liuzhi, he has come to see that the district awaits more pillars to boost its socioeconomic progress.

With the opening of the Nayong-Qinglong Expressway on Sept 26, 2025 and the Liuzhi-Anlong Expressway on Sept 28, 2025, Liuzhi is able to usher in diverse industries.

Besides agricultural output, Liuzhi is rich in over 20 types of mineral resources, including coal, iron, sulfur and limestone, with confirmed coal reserves reaching 3.3 billion tons, as well as abundant coalbed methane deposits hitting some 65 billion cubic meters, Li said.

By focusing on "six major industrial chains", the whole district strives to earn more than 30 billion yuan from coal chemicals, over 30 billion yuan for new energy battery and material bases, and over 5 billion yuan for fluorine chemical bases by the end of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, Yao said.

Last year, Liuzhi's coal production increased by 34.85 percent compared with the end of the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20) period.

This year, Liuzhi will continue boosting its coal industry, focusing on expanding its current production capacity, and developing more mining areas, Yao said.

By 2030, the total economic output in Liuzhi is expected to hit 28 billion yuan, with an average annual growth rate of 6 percent, Yao said.

That's why Liuzhi is so eager to see the expansion of local traffic network, Li said.

Rich tourism resources

Yin Shigang, Party secretary of the CREC4 project department in building the Anshun-Panzhou expressway, said Liuzhi has garnered such titles as "China's Most Beautiful Leisure Resort" and "China's Ecological Charm City" with its beautiful mountains and rivers.

Set up in the 1960s with a total area of 1,792 square kilometers, Yin said Liuzhi is the core area of the ancient Yelang Kingdom — a tribal region composed of many tribes during the Warring States Period (475-221 BC), and its unique tourism integrates ethnic cultural customs, natural scenery and renowned historical sites.

Figures show that between 2021 and 2025, the district's tourism sector greeted 49 million tourists, generating revenue of 70.617 billion yuan.

With the forthcoming opening of the Anshun-Panzhou expressway, the development of Liuzhi's tourism will be faster, Yin said.

Earlier this year, Zhou Huabao drove his family from his hometown in nearby Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region for a visit to Liuzhi.

They made trips to Yanjiao ancient town, Suojia Miao ethnic ecomuseum in Suojia town, and Niuchang, attending special folk activities such as the June 6 Buyi ethnic event.

"The scenic spots in Liuzhi are very interesting," Zhou said, noting how they made a lasting and positive impression on him.

Liuzhi magistrate Yao said that with the expected operation of the Anshun-Panzhou expressway, the district will further promote the integrated development of tourism and strive to achieve a 5 percent year-on-year hike in tourism consumption.

Yin said as Liuzhi is a picturesque place with more than 40 rivers and streams, and high mountains, protecting the local environment has been a priority for them while constructing the expressway.

"During our construction work, we tried our best to maintain the original natural terrain, minimizing the impact of construction on the environment," Yin said.

Yin worked with over 2,400 employees, including 215 local ethnic minority workers who are glad with the new expressway in their hometown.

Construction boosts livelihoods, skills capacity

By **HAN JINGYAN**

Since joining State builder China Railway No 4 Engineering Group in 2006, Zhong Lei, a 44-year-old employee, has been working in the country's southwest for years.

His experience has made him understand that a construction job has a multitude of benefits — infrastructure connectivity, beautified environment, elevated wealth for people and bolstered industrial vitality.

Born in Dazhou, Sichuan province, Zhong joined CREC4 after graduating from Hefei University of Technology with a major in civil engineering. He later moved to Guizhou province to help build the Chongqing-Zunyi section of Lanzhou-Haikou Expressway.

With some 25,500 staff, CREC4's businesses are distributed across 31 provinces, municipalities, and autonomous regions on the Chinese mainland, as well as in 38 countries and regions, including Angola, Mongolia and Indonesia.

In 2022, Zhong was promoted to serve as work safety supervisor at the APFJ-3 division of CREC4 in expanding the Anshun-Panzhou section of the Shanghai-Kunming Expressway.

The Anshun-Panzhou section, which costs some 32.31 billion yuan ($4.75 billion), passes through Liuzhi special district in Guizhou.

"Hefei-based CREC4 has a clear aim in its construction work — building a top-quality project, and nurturing its staffers into versatile talent capable of working for various posts," Zhong said.

Following this principle, he began to pay vital attention in helping cultivate more professional workers from those who joined in building the Anshun-Panzhou expressway.

Governing 15 towns and three subdistrict communities, with a total population of over 750,300, Liuzhi houses 253 villages and urban neighborhood communities.

One-third of the villages of Longhe town, where Zhong's project department is located, are Miao ethnic villages, and most young people rely on migrant work to improve their lives, he said.

They designed a work-for-relief program to help the local residents, Zhong said.

Li Shifu, Party secretary of the APFJ-3 division, said CREC4's construction team has reached 2,746 in number since the building work started in 2022, including temporary workers from Liuzhi.

"Our project department has organized 35 free training sessions and pre-job training on steel bar binding and welding for over 300 local people, and finally hired some of them for the construction work," he said.

Through systematic and practical pre-job coaching, multiple ethnic minority groups and local migrant workers have mastered practical construction techniques, such as concrete pouring, steel bar binding and welding, successfully transforming ordinary villagers into skilled industrial workers, Li said.

Yang Wenfu, a Miao ethnic worker from Longchang village in Longhe, joined the CREC4 construction team after training.

"Previously, I had to depend on my 0.2-hectare paddy field and rapeseed fields to make a living, but now, as a steel reinforcement worker, I can proficiently tie and knot steel bars to earn a handsome monthly salary to support my children in education," he said.

As work safety supervisor, Zhong has also helped organize 664 safety education and training sessions, with over 5,300 participants.

"Our training covers such areas as work safety knowledge and laws, safety technical regulations, hidden danger reporting mechanism and process, major risk notification and prevention," Zhong said.

Li said building a highway can bring a series of benefits — profit and employees' skill enhancement for CREC4, better flow of goods and people for the nation, and cash income for the local residents participating in the construction work.

Li noted that since their construction work started, they have provided 2,347 jobs for locals, including 215 ethnic minority workers, paying them 138.58 million yuan as salaries and helping the local workers increase their annual income by 36,000 yuan each year.

"Meanwhile, our 2,746 staffers working here have also boosted the economy of Longhe through our daily spending," he said.



Zhong Lei (left), an employee from China Railway No 4 Engineering Group, inspects construction work at the Anshun-Panzhou section of the Shanghai-Kunming Expressway. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"CREC4 staffers have enabled our villagers to learn skills and steadily increase their income at their doorsteps. They have truly built a bridge of friendship, injecting strong momentum into the rural vitalization in Longhe," said Wang Yongyue, Party secretary of Longhe.

To show their gratitude, during traditional Miao festivals, the villagers of Yongfeng often invited Li's colleagues to participate in cultural activities, enjoying art performances and Miao dances, expressing their sincere thanks to the builders with long-table banquets.

Luo Tiantian, a 43-year-old native of the Buyi ethnic group, is a staff member of Li's project department. He said he feels honored, and it is a memorable experience to participate in the construction in his hometown.

"I will hold myself to high standards while in engineering construction, and not let down people's trust," Luo said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:07 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:07 PM

CHINA





Left: Residents have lunch in their flood-damaged home in Zhenlong township, Hengzhou, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, on Wednesday. Continuous heavy rain and landslides have left over 20 villages isolated, causing power and communication outages and destroying roads and bridges. Emergency teams are working to repair damaged infrastructure, and ensuring relief supplies. CAI JIAHONG / YANGCHENG EVENING NEWS **Right:** A drone is used to deliver food, drinking water and medical supplies to flood-stricken villages in Hengzhou. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Guangxi relief efforts in full swing

Drone deliveries, satellite phones used to assist flood-affected communities

By SHI RUIPENG and **ZHANG LI** in Nanning

Volunteer drone pilots, commercial operators and professional rescue teams are helping deliver food, medicine and other essential supplies to flood-hit communities in Hengzhou, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, as damaged roads and inundated villages complicate relief efforts.

Heavy rainfall triggered by Typhoon Maysak caused reservoir breaches and widespread flooding on Monday, leaving some villages inaccessible by road and prompting emergency responders to expand the use of drones for supply deliveries.

Among those answering the call was Wang Guijun, a volunteer drone operator specializing in agricultural operations and cargo transport using heavy-lift drones. After seeing news of the flooding online, he traveled to Changtang village in Xiaoyi township on Tuesday to join other volunteer pilots supporting relief operations.

Since then, he has flown dozens of supply missions each day, delivering food, drinking water and other necessities to isolated communities.

"The floodwater has receded, but thick mud still blocks the village roads," Wang said. "We can only deliver supplies to the villages by drone."

Drone deliveries have become an integral part of broader relief efforts as local authorities work to reach communities cut off by flooding.

In Zhenlong township, where landslides, flooded roads and safety risks around the Liulan Reservoir disrupted transportation, emergency responders maintained contact with isolated communities via satellite phones while sending staff members and volunteers on foot to assess damage and identify residents' needs.

The local emergency command center adopted a relay distribution system, transporting relief supplies by truck to a primary school before volunteers carried them to stranded villages. About 40 staff members and volunteers are taking part in the operation to help meet residents' basic needs.

Rescuers from China Anneng Construction Group have also used drones to conduct precision supply drops, delivering more than 120 emergency packages while ground crews worked overnight to reinforce damaged access roads and restore transportation links.

In Yunbiao township, where flooded roads and collapsed buildings left some residents stranded on rooftops and in mountainous areas, professional drone teams have joined volunteers in rescue operations.

Wu Sujun, chairman of Guangxi Xingfei Aviation Technology, has led a drone team from Nanning to the disaster area, where his company has deployed more than a dozen drones over the past three days in coordination with local emergency authorities.

The aircraft have been used to deliver emergency supplies to residents in areas that are difficult to reach by conventional rescue vehicles.

Wu said the operation had also highlighted the need for more heavy-lift cargo drones and standardized emergency training for drone operators to strengthen future disaster response.

"We'll stay here as long as we're needed," he said.

Additional drone teams have also arrived from outside Guangxi to support flood relief, bringing heavy-lift aircraft and experienced operators to assist with aerial supply deliveries and other emergency response tasks.

Cai Yunge, executive vice-chairman of the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, announced the latest rescue figures at a news briefing on Tuesday. By Tuesday, authorities had mobilized 8,342 rescuers, more than 1,700 engineering and rescue vehicles, over 5,700 boats and specialized rescue equipment, as well as 40 social rescue organizations with more than 300 volunteers.

Rescue efforts remain focused on mitigating reservoir risks, searching for trapped residents, draining flooded areas and delivering essential supplies to affected communities.

Contact the writers at zhangli@chinadaily.com.cn

Rescue ops over after landslide kills 21 in Gansu

By MA JINGNA, HU YUMENG in Lanzhou and **HU QING**

Search and rescue operations have concluded after a landslide in Tanchang county, Longnan, Gansu province, left 21 people dead, local authorities said at a news conference on Wednesday.

The landslide occurred at 6:56 am on Tuesday at a local forestry farm in Renzang village, Nanhe township, trapping 33 workers from the forestry farm who were passing through the area, local authorities said.

Five workers were rescued uninjured, while seven others sustained minor injuries. The injured are receiving treatment at local hospitals and remain in stable condition, authorities said.

Forty geological disaster experts immediately conducted on-site inspections using professional equipment and determined that the landslide measured about 130 meters long, 40 meters wide and 2 meters thick, covering an area of approximately 5,400 square meters, according to Yang Yaoxian, director of the Longnan natural resources bureau.

The accumulated debris was estimated to be 8 to 10 meters thick, with a total volume of about 10,000 cubic meters, Yang said.

He said the landslide was triggered by a combination of factors, including the area's steep terrain, unique geological conditions and erosion at the toe of the slope.

Yang added that the landslide mass remains unstable and poses a risk of secondary slides. Risk-control zones have been established, covering the landslide and surrounding areas. No residents live within the affected zone.

More than 700 rescue personnel, including firefighters and other emergency responders, were deployed, along with four search and rescue dogs and more than 300 vehicles and pieces of equipment, to carry out emergency operations, said Suo Feng, director of the Longnan emergency management bureau.

On Wednesday, China's Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Emergency Management allocated 30 million yuan ($4.4 million) to support search and rescue, evacuation, emergency geological disaster response and inspections for potential secondary disaster risks in Gansu, according to Xinhua News Agency.

Contact the writers at huqing@chinadaily.com.cn

Super Typhoon Bavi raises extreme weather concerns

By WANG XIAOYU
wangxiaoyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Super Typhoon Bavi is forecast to batter southeastern China over the weekend, bringing torrential rain to parts of eastern, central and northern China from Thursday, according to Chinese meteorologists.

As of Wednesday afternoon, Bavi was moving west-northwest at about 15 to 20 kilometers per hour, packing maximum sustained winds of up to 216 km/h, the National Meteorological Center said.

The typhoon is expected to make landfall around Saturday evening or Sunday along the coasts of Zhejiang and Fujian provinces.

From Thursday through July 15, Bavi is expected to bring heavy rain to parts of eastern, central and northern China.

Some areas in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, Hubei province and the coastal regions of Zhejiang and Fujian are forecast to receive 300 to 500 millimeters of rainfall.

"Some regions will see precipitation 40 to 80 percent above the average for the same period, while a few areas could receive more than double their normal rainfall," the center said on Wednesday.

Xiang Chunyi, the center's chief forecaster, attributed Bavi's intensity to a combination of favorable conditions, including high sea surface temperatures along its path that have provided abundant thermal energy, a steady moisture supply feeding the storm's core and a stable inner core structure.

Bavi's strength is estimated to be comparable to that of Typhoon Lekima, which made landfall in Zhejiang and Shandong in 2019 and dumped up to 600 mm of accumulated rainfall in some areas.

Xiang said that after making landfall, Bavi is expected to move deep inland, bringing extensive and prolonged rainfall to a broad swath of provinces, including Zhejiang, Fujian, Hubei, Anhui, Henan and Shandong.

The meteorological center has urged fishing vessels to return to port and offshore workers on wind farms and oil platforms to evacuate promptly.

Coastal tourist destinations, particularly those on islands and along the shoreline, should remain on high alert and suspend operations if necessary.

Local governments in coastal areas have been advised to reinforce tall trees, temporary structures and high-rise buildings against strong winds.

The public is urged to closely monitor weather forecasts and short-term nowcasts, avoid unnecessary travel, stay away from tall buildings to reduce the risk of falling objects, and prepare emergency supplies if needed.

Huang Meijin, chief forecaster at the Fujian Provincial Meteorological Bureau, warned that Bavi would also bring destructive winds over both land and sea, urging authorities to guard against damage to onshore infrastructure.

Thunderstorms are expected to develop on Friday, intensify on Saturday and gradually weaken on Sunday.

In Zhejiang, water resources authorities have activated a Level IV emergency response for flood and typhoon preparedness under China's four-tier emergency response system — with Level I as the highest — while maritime safety authorities have launched a Level III emergency response.



High-tech experience

Vietnamese youth explore AI glasses at a tech experience center in Shanghai's Xuhui district on Tuesday. The visit is part of a youth study tour, organized from July 4 to 11, to strengthen exchanges between young people from China and Vietnam.
YUAN JING / FOR CHINA DAILY

Xinjiang doctor honored for years of selfless service

By WANG XIAOYU
wangxiaoyu@chinadaily.com.cn

As a young rural doctor, Uhas Sulayman used to travel on horseback through mountain pastures to reach patients in his hometown of Yumin county in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.

More than five decades later, now in his early 70s, he continues to provide medical services to local residents — no longer on horseback, but at a neighborhood health facility.

"When I officially retired in 2015, many people urged me to rest. But I felt that my responsibility as a Party member was to keep serving those in need. I just needed to change the place where I do so," he said.

Over the course of his career, Uhas has traveled more than 200,000 kilometers, treated more than 100,000 patients and helped deliver more than 3,200 babies. He joined the Communist Party of China in November 1993 and was awarded this year's July 1 Medal.

When he began practicing medicine at a local hospital in Yumin county after graduating from medical school in 1975, there were no paved roads, communication devices or ambulances. Local herders lived scattered across remote mountain valleys and vast grasslands, making access to healthcare extraordinarily difficult.

Carrying a medical kit on horseback, Uhas responded to every call for help to the best of his ability, regardless of how long the journey or how harsh the weather was. At the time, a one-way trip to the farthest winter pasture could take more than a day, and blinding snowstorms often made it impossible to find the right direction.

To this day, stories of his selfless dedication continue to resonate among local herders. One such story dates back to a blizzard in 1987, when Uhas assisted with a difficult premature delivery and saved the newborn's life by sucking mucus from the infant's airway.

> "When I officially retired in 2015, many people urged me to rest. But I felt that my responsibility as a Party member was to keep serving those in need."
>
> **Uhas Sulayman,** rural doctor in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region



For patients facing financial hardship or living with disabilities, Uhas has often provided free medical services and paid for their medication out of his own pocket.

His daughter, Mayra, recalled that her father was often a stranger to her during her childhood, sometimes staying away from home for four or five months at a time. However, she vividly remembers accompanying him on house calls during summer vacations.

"When we arrived, the herders would greet us like family. Watching my father save a newborn during a delivery planted the seed in my heart to become a doctor," said Mayra, who went on to study preventive medicine and has since returned to work in her hometown.

In addition to continuing to provide healthcare guidance at a community health facility, Uhas has launched a health service project that has so far recruited 350 volunteers and organized 1,500 health education events.

"I've lost count of how many patients I've treated," he said. "As a doctor, doing my utmost to protect the people's health is my duty."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:07 PM

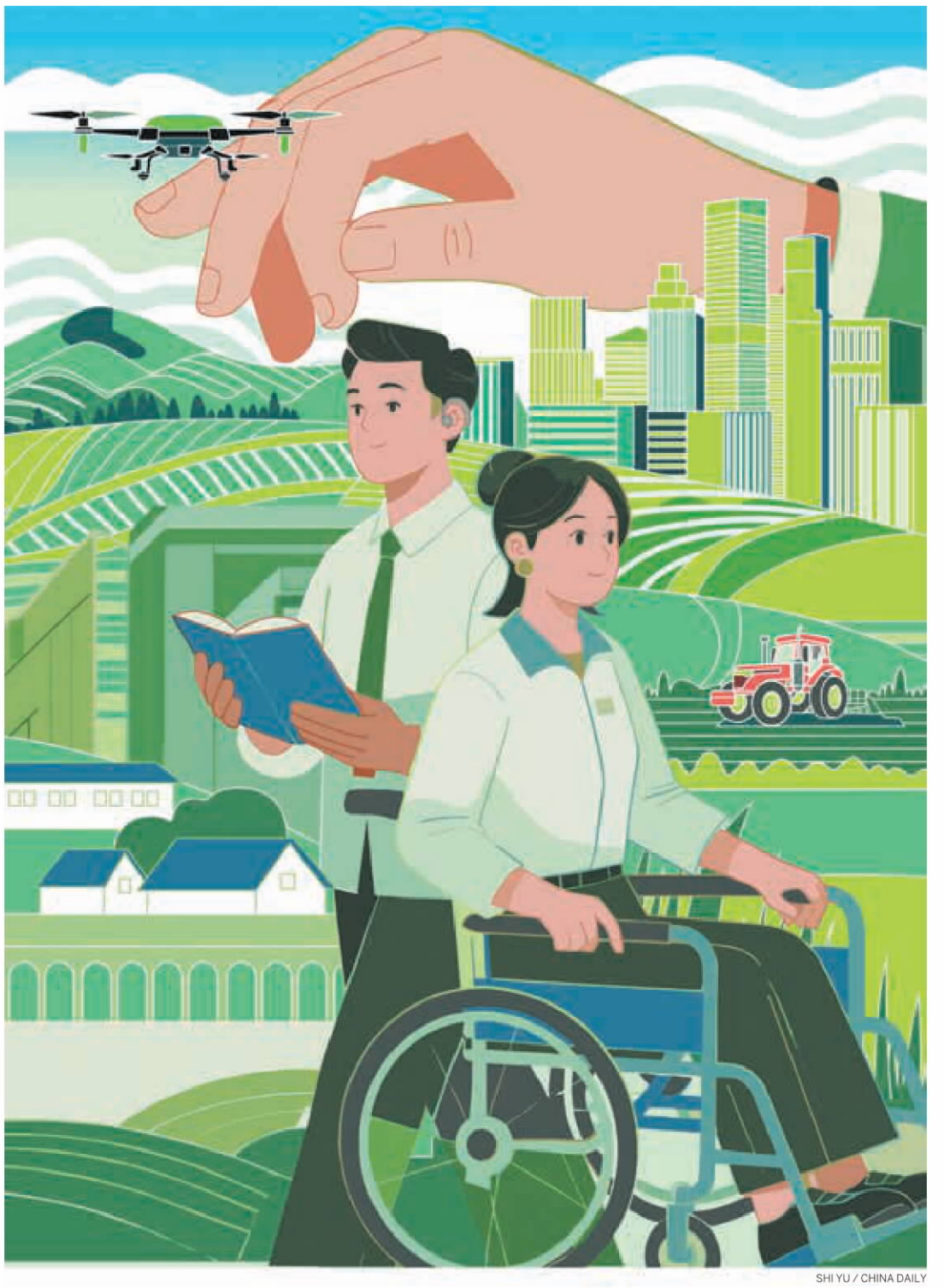
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:07 PM

POLICY REVIEW

Safety net introduced for rural disabled

Long-term support aims to prevent society's most vulnerable from returning to poverty

By LI LEI
lilei@chinadaily.com.cn



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

China has introduced a sweeping policy framework to prevent tens of millions of people with disabilities in rural communities from slipping back into poverty, shifting from emergency relief to long-term, normalized support in the countryside.

The directive, jointly issued by 20 government departments, including the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and the China Disabled Persons' Federation, is one of the country's most comprehensive disability policy packages in recent years.

It comes as the world's second-largest economy marks the fifth anniversary of eradicating extreme poverty on the Chinese mainland and seeks to consolidate those gains.

"Efforts must be made to ensure that no large-scale relapse into poverty occurs among disabled people," the document said, describing disabled people as important contributors to China's modernization while also acknowledging they are a special group in need of extraordinary care and attention.

At the core of the policy is a shift from time-limited poverty alleviation to permanent support. Local governments are directed to provide a broader range of assistance for disabled people in rural areas, including stronger social security and education programs to meet basic needs, alongside what officials describe as "development-oriented assistance" — skills training, employment opportunities and income-generating support designed to foster self-reliance.

The directive also calls for expanded rehabilitation, nursing care, accessibility improvements and cultural services, while strengthening legal assistance to safeguard the rights of people with disabilities.

Nearly 80 percent of China's estimated 85 million registered people with disabilities live in rural areas, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs. Although many rose above the poverty line through targeted poverty alleviation programs over the past decade, they remain especially vulnerable to falling back into poverty.

In Yongshou county, Shaanxi province, local officials have seen this vulnerability firsthand.

Geng Qiuwa, 54, has a physical disability, while his wife has an intellectual disability. The couple grows wheat on a small plot that provides enough food for themselves but little additional income.

After village officials identified the family as needing assistance, they began receiving a monthly government subsidy of 1,350 yuan (about $200). Geng also earns 600 yuan a month working as the village's water manager, a public welfare position.

"We identified him through household visits, verified his situation and reported it to the township level," said Chen E, a village official in Yongshou.

Geng's family typifies households with multiple disabled members, where limited labor capacity and few income sources heighten the risk of returning to poverty.

The new directive calls for assistance tailored to individual circumstances. Those unable to work will receive social assistance to meet their basic living needs. Those with some working capacity will be encouraged to improve their livelihoods through small businesses, cooperatives and other income-generating opportunities. Local Party organizations and officials are expected to play a leading role in providing targeted support in healthcare, employment, business development and mobility.

That approach is already taking shape in Yongshou.

The local disabled persons' federation has equipped six severely disabled residents with accessibility facilities, including handrails, accessible toilets, wheelchairs and crutches, while arranging regular in-home medical visits.

In another case, village officials helped Geng Ziwen, a 17-year-old with an intellectual disability, enroll in a special education school in the nearby city of Xianyang, where he has spent the past two years learning daily living skills and receiving vocational training.

For Geng Xinyuan, a 69-year-old bedridden stroke survivor, grassroots workers ensured he was enrolled in the subsistence allowance program to cover his basic living expenses.

While Yongshou illustrates the policy's emphasis on social protection and accessibility, another county is exploring its development-oriented approach by helping disabled people gain marketable skills and employment.

In Pingshun county, Shanxi province, a pilot program launched in 2024, with support from Alibaba's rural special envoys, trains students at a local special education school in intangible cultural heritage crafts, including wood carving, beading and Chinese knot weaving.

Wang Fang, who has taught at the school for two decades, said the approach represents a fundamental departure from traditional assistance.

"When I first started, help meant donations — stationery, clothes, rice and oil. It solved immediate needs but not long-term livelihoods," she said. "Now we're teaching skills that can generate income."

The school has established a workshop where students develop fine handcraft skills. Those who meet production standards make beaded bracelets, key chains and woven products that are sold through charity events. The proceeds are reinvested in materials and training, with part distributed to students as incentives.

The initiative has since expanded into the community.

Wang Pingping, 26, a former student with a physical disability, began managing a community workshop in April.

"We have four disabled trainees now," she said. "Two are wheelchair-bound and cannot leave home, so we send them video tutorials and materials. Two others come occasionally, but mostly their family members attend training and then teach them at home."

The workshop operates under a contract-processing model, with suppliers providing raw materials, setting quality standards and purchasing finished products. Although still in its pilot stage, Wang Fang said some trainees are already producing work that meets commercial standards.

The experience highlights the gap between policy goals and practical challenges.

Hou Xiaonuan, 23, who uses a wheelchair and joined the workshop in April, said the training has given her renewed purpose after years of staying at home.

"The biggest difficulty is mobility. I can't go out independently for work or activities," she said.

Wang Fang said the greatest obstacle is securing stable market demand.

"We've trained over 200 people in weaving and beading skills," she said. "But we don't have stable commercial orders. People have the skills, but there's no steady flow of work to turn those skills into income."

The directive acknowledges those challenges, calling for "order-based" and "targeted" vocational training linked directly to market demand. It also encourages e-commerce platforms and livestreaming sales to help disabled artisans reach consumers.

For now, the Pingshun workshop remains a pilot, with 10 regular trainees, a handful of trial orders and considerable optimism.

"I truly hope more people will learn about our workshop, and that more disabled friends across the country can join us," Wang Fang said.

"The biggest fear for disabled people in the countryside is that help comes in gusts and then stops. Normalized assistance is exactly what we need to hold the line against relapse," she said.

Guo Yuhe contributed to this story.

Policy Digest

Plan to promote integrated rural connectivity services

The Ministry of Transport and five other departments have jointly issued an action plan to advance integrated passenger transport, freight logistics and postal express services in rural areas, aiming to establish an intensive, efficient and sustainable rural transport service system.

In line with the plan, integrated rural passenger-freight-post services will basically cover all eligible county-level regions by the end of 2027.

It also targets building more than 220,000 comprehensive passenger-freight-post service stations at county, township and village levels nationwide, alongside over 20,000 integrated passenger-freight-post routes in rural areas.

The plan envisions that by the end of 2028, integrated rural passenger, freight and postal services will cover more than 45 percent of villages in eastern and central regions, and over 40 percent in western China.

With the integrated operation mechanism in place, more than 35 percent of villages in eastern and central regions and over 30 percent in western areas will receive mail and parcel deliveries at least once a day, it says.

Guidelines support founding of intl sci-tech entities

China has made public a set of guidelines to support and standardize the establishment and registration of international science and technology organizations, clarifying eligibility criteria and application procedures.

The guidelines were jointly drafted by the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the Ministry of Science and Technology, and the China Association for Science and Technology.

According to the policy document, such organizations must have qualified Chinese or foreign initiators, who will serve as their initial members. Names of such organizations are to obtain official approval and contain words, such as international, world, global or Asia, to indicate their international or regional attributes.

In addition, they are also required to have legal assets and funding sources, with donated operating funds of no less than 2 million yuan ($294,000) upon establishment.

The application covers five key stages: confirming a supervisory unit, receiving review from the unit, undergoing examination by the registration authority, obtaining a registration certificate upon approval, and completing subsequent procedures such as seal engraving, tax registration and corporate bank account opening.

New circular seeks to foster diversified cinema operations

China Film Administration and the State Administration for Market Regulation have jointly released a circular aimed at invigorating cinema operations by transforming them into integrated cultural spaces for watching movies, socializing, entertainment and consumption.

The document specifies 10 measures across three key areas to drive innovation in cinema business formats, operational models and services.

Regarding the integration of diverse business formats, the notice supports cinemas to innovate with distinctive food and beverage offerings by introducing premium catering, selling light meals and baked desserts, as well as setting up coffee-book lounges. It also encourages cinemas to expand cultural and creative retail models by establishing dedicated stores for movie merchandise and for cultural and creative products.

On brand development, the circular encourages cinemas to boost intellectual property operations and brand building, and develop diverse venues including art cinemas, tech cinemas, community-based cinemas and other themed cinemas, so as to cultivate cinema brands with distinctive cultural identity and market influence.

In addition, the circular encourages cinemas to upgrade their equipment and technologies, and pledges support for the screening of virtual reality films.

CHINA DAILY

Craft workshop brings community to once-isolated residents

By LI LEI

For 23 years, Hou Xiaonuan's world was bound by the walls of her family home.

Born with a congenital disability that left her reliant on an electric wheelchair, she had never held a job, let alone imagined a career. Beading and knot-tying were solitary hobbies — pleasant pastimes, but nothing more.

"I had no direction," she said. "Every day just blurred into the next."

That changed in April, when a community poster caught her eye. A newly launched social workshop was recruiting disabled artisans to produce handcrafted bracelets, key chains and woven ornaments. Hou signed up on impulse and soon found herself part of a new approach to rural disability assistance.

The workshop follows a simple but effective model: it provides training and materials, then connects finished products with paying buyers. For participants who cannot travel — Hou among them — staff members deliver supplies to their homes and collect completed products. Training videos are sent via smartphone, and a WeChat group provides daily encouragement and troubleshooting. Hou's home was also fitted with a ramp and bathroom safety rails — improvements that she said solved real problems in daily life.

The first few weeks were daunting. "I was terrified I wouldn't be able to learn, that my work wouldn't be good enough," Hou said.

The workshop's manager, Wang Pingping — herself a former special education student with a physical disability — offered patient, hands-on guidance.

"She told me to go slowly and not give up," Hou said. "Other trainees shared tips in our group. I realized I wasn't alone."

With steady practice, Hou's skills improved. The workshop has begun taking small trial orders from suppliers, and while stable contracts remain elusive, producing items for sale has transformed her sense of self.

"I used to think I could only receive help," she said. "Now I know I can create value with my own hands."

That shift from recipient to contributor is what Wang Fang, a veteran teacher at the county's special education school who helped launch the workshop, has witnessed in dozens of students.

"When they first arrive, many see themselves as burdens," she said. "But when they earn their own money — even a small amount — their whole demeanor changes. They stand taller, speak louder."

That emotional transformation, however, depends on economic sustainability.

A national disability policy issued by 20 central government departments in March explicitly endorses such "development-oriented" approaches and calls for expanding stable commercial orders and skills training across rural China.

Wang Fang said that support is urgently needed. "We've trained over 200 people, but without consistent orders, skills alone won't pay the bills," she said.

The workshop has already given Hou something she never expected: a community.

"We share techniques in our group chat," she said. "Even though we're working from home, we're in this together."

Her mobility remains limited, as public transportation is still challenging. But the isolation that once defined her life has begun to ease.

Her hope is simple: "That more disabled friends like me can find this opportunity — to stand on their own, through their craft."

Guo Yuhe contributed to this story.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:07 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:07 PM

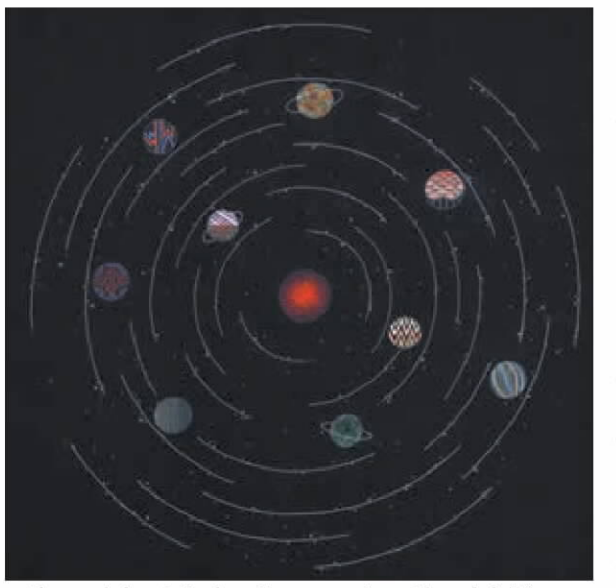
LIFE

Threads of change: Stitching the future

Once confined to framed silk artworks, traditional needlework is expanding into global brands, cultural experiences and digital platforms, reshaping a centuries-old craft into a fast-evolving creative industry, **Yang Feiyue** reports in Suzhou.







Top: Wu Haoxi guides an international visitor trying Suzhou embroidery at her workshop in Suzhou, Jiangsu province. **Above left:** Wu works on a Suzhou embroidery piece. **Above right:** A galaxy-inspired embroidery by Zhang Xue, a fourth-generation Suzhou embroidery artisan from Suzhou. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

A Zippo lighter engraved with Suzhou silk embroidery. A Hello Kitty collaboration reimagined in fine stitches. A porcelain tea canister in which silk embroidery is embedded into ceramic form.

These objects do not immediately resemble what many would associate with Suzhou embroidery, or *Suxiu*, one of China's most refined traditional crafts with a history spanning more than two millennia.

Yet for Zhang Xue, a fourth-generation embroiderer based in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, they represent exactly where the craft is heading.

"We believe almost anything can be embroidered," he says, presenting a series of collaborations that span global brands, lifestyle products and cultural intellectual properties.

For centuries, Suzhou embroidery was defined by its delicacy and restraint, with silk threads layered into landscapes, flowers, birds and figures with near-photographic precision. Traditionally framed as artworks or high-end decorative pieces, they were meant to be observed rather than used.

But a quiet transformation is underway.

Across Suzhou, embroidery is increasingly moving beyond the frame into products, experiences, educational systems, and digital platforms that are reshaping how the craft is made, taught and consumed.

Zhang's trajectory reflects this shift.

Born into a family of embroiderers spanning four generations, he grew up surrounded by silk threads, wooden frames and the rhythmic repetition of needlework. His mother continues to specialize in traditional fine embroidery, often reproducing classical Chinese paintings with meticulous detail, while earlier generations of his family devoted their lives to mastering classical techniques.

Zhang, however, has taken a different path that leads outward from tradition rather than inward.

He has worked on nearly 100 collaborations with intellectual property holders and brands, ranging from international consumer labels to Chinese fashion companies and lifestyle brands.

These projects vary widely in scale. Some involve limited-edition collectible pieces, while others adapt embroidery designs into patterns for broader commercial use.

For Zhang, the craft is no longer confined to framed works.

"It can become a language for communicating with contemporary audiences," he says.

One of his most distinctive experiments lies in combining embroidery with porcelain. Working with ceramic makers, he developed pieces that integrate silk embroidery into ceramic vessels, ranging from tea canisters to decorative vases.

The concept draws on three symbolic materials long associated with China's cultural exchange with the world: silk, tea and porcelain. By combining them into a single object, Zhang aims to reinterpret traditional cultural symbols through contemporary design logic.

The result is something in between — a hybrid object shaped by heritage and market demand.

While designers like Zhang are pushing embroidery into new commercial territories, another transformation is unfolding on the ground, in the form of participation.

At a Suzhou embroidery experience center operated by practitioner Wu Haoxi, visitors are not simply observers but also makers.

Students, tourists, corporate groups and international guests have been invited to pick up needles and try their hand at stitching basic patterns. For many, it is their first encounter with embroidery as a tactile experience, Wu notes.

The center hosts hundreds of activities each year, ranging from school programs to cultural exchanges involving visitors from home and abroad.

For Wu, embroidery is as much about memory as it is about technique.

"I grew up watching my family stitch," she says. "By the time I picked up a needle, it felt like continuing a conversation that had been going on for generations."

Participants often begin hesitantly, struggling with threading needles or maintaining even stitches. But by the end of a session, many leave with a completed bookmark or hand-held fan.

"The experience is all about the memory of having touched the thread," Wu says.

Beyond tourism and experience-based learning, Suzhou embroidery is also developing structured talent pipelines that extend beyond the city.

One such initiative involves trainees from Jinzhou in Northeast China's Liaoning province. A group of around 100 young learners was brought to Suzhou for intensive training, beginning with foundational stitching techniques and gradually moving toward design concepts and creative applications.

The program is divided into phases, consisting of initial training at vocational institutions, followed by hands-on learning in Suzhou-based workshops. After completing their training, participants are expected to return to their home region, where they can contribute to the development of local embroidery industries.

The model reflects an emerging approach in heritage industries: distributed cultivation. In this system, Suzhou functions as a training hub for wider regional development.

The approach is also reflected in the broader education structure surrounding embroidery in the city, which now spans primary school courses, university electives, vocational programs and public workshops.

Behind these changes is a sustained framework of institutional support.

Suzhou high-tech zone, also known as Suzhou New District, has been one of the key centers of embroidery development. It has established a structured system of support for traditional textile crafts and provided funding for embroidery-related talent development projects since 2017.

In addition to financial support, the region has built physical and cultural infrastructure to support industry clustering, including embroidery-themed commercial streets, exhibition spaces and museums. Together, these form an integrated cultural environment that connects production, display and commerce.

Rather than treating embroidery solely as a heritage asset, local development strategies increasingly position it as part of a broader cultural and creative industry.

Recent local initiatives have begun exploring how artificial intelligence, digital design tools and cross-border e-commerce systems can be integrated into traditional craft production.

In May, Suzhou high-tech zone launched a program known as the "Stars Plan", which includes an "AI embroidery" support system developed to provide design tools, digital services and international market access for practitioners.

Despite rapid transformation, many embroiderers emphasize continuity rather than disruption.

One of Wu Haoxi's most personal works, *Child's Eye View of the World*, began with drawings made by her daughter. A child's sketch of Beijing's Tian'anmen was translated into silk thread, forming part of a broader composition that depicts everyday life, educational scenes and cultural exchange.

A single red thread runs through the entire piece, linking each scene.

For Wu, that thread represents connection — not only between individuals and generations, but also between tradition and modern life.

"The techniques remain rooted in history, and the silk remains unchanged, but the contexts in which embroidery exists have expanded," she says.

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

Jingdezhen's porcelain legacy: A magnet for artists worldwide





Left: Foreign artists attend the 2026 Congress of the International Academy of Ceramics in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province. **Right:** Ceramic artists from around the world gather during the congress on June 28. PHOTOS BY LIU BIN / XINHUA

NANCHANG — For many creators, Jingdezhen, China's porcelain capital, serves as a massive, living workshop, with numerous local artisans dedicating themselves to a specific niche within the craft in the eastern Chinese city.

Such intricate division of labor is a centuries-old tradition, in which young apprentices spend years perfecting a single step in the porcelain-making process. Today, this comprehensive industrial chain in the city sustains over 100,000 workers.

Jingdezhen, in Jiangxi province, home to more than 60,000 ceramic studios, is hosting the 2026 Congress of the International Academy of Ceramics. The event has brought together ceramic artists and experts from around the globe to discuss the inheritance and innovation of ceramic culture.

Since the Song Dynasty (960-1279), ceramics crafted in Jingdezhen have been exported to Central Asia, West Asia, Europe and Africa. Today, the city still retains its global appeal, drawing over 5,000 ceramic enthusiasts from around the world at peak times.

For international artists, the city's most magnetic appeal lies in its vast, collaborative network of master craftsmen, each playing a distinct and indispensable role.

French visual artist Karima Duchamp is among those captivated by this dynamic. After a three-month residency in Jingdezhen last year, she has returned as an IAC member.

During her previous stay, she painted on clay bodies but struggled with the firing process. In a local alley, she watched a craftsman seamlessly slide a multi-meter-long clay body into a kiln without a single flaw. This refined skill, honed over decades, instantly won her trust.

"I didn't just 'borrow hands'. I borrowed Jingdezhen's fire," Duchamp says, adding that the expertise of local kiln masters was crucial in realizing her creation.

"Jingdezhen always helps me bring my creative ideas to life," says Croatian visual artist Sandra Ban, echoing Duchamp's view. Returning to the city half a year after a three-month residency, she added that the city's synergistic craftsmanship is particularly liberating for artists tackling irregular or oversized designs.

"Ceramics is a universal language, and craftsmanship is the bond connecting humanity and nature," says Ban. "Handmade porcelain in Jingdezhen stands in contrast to mass-produced goods. Every single piece carries the warmth of human touch."

The city's dedication to craftsmanship is etched into its landscape. Along the Zhushan Bridge, 72 bronze statues line both sides, capturing the entire traditional porcelain-making process, from throwing to firing.

"Hands serve as a bridge between the heart and the clay," says 87-year-old Liu Yuanchang, a master of Chinese arts and crafts. "For over a millennium, it has been a division of labor, yet also a symphony."

Liu adds that while artisans exist elsewhere, few places have organized these "hands" into an ecosystem like Jingdezhen. "Foreign artists bring ideas and creativity, and the hands of Jingdezhen help realize them."

Experts believe that this is the irreplaceable secret of Jingdezhen: it does not require outsiders to be all-round craftsmen. Instead, it offers highly specialized hands, allowing creativity to materialize with maximum efficiency.

Australian artist Fleur Schell says that Jingdezhen's scale and comprehensive ceramic industrial chain have attracted many of her friends and colleagues from Australia to work in the city. "It feels like anything is possible," she says. "You could make anything in ceramic here."

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:07 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:07 PM

LIFE





Left: A set of instruments for the Hsaing Ensemble of Myanmar, which comprises ornately decorated percussion instruments like drums and gongs. **Below:** A shrine with five Buddhas from Myanmar. **Bottom:** A ceramic bowl with a carp decoration from Thailand.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Regional relics tell of daily living in SE Asia

Exhibition displays artifacts and more from Myanmar and Thailand, highlighting their deep exchanges with China, report **Xu Lin** and **Liu Kun**.



From intricate Thai shadow puppets and finely crafted ceramics to Myanmar's colorfully painted marionettes in ornate costumes and elegant red lacquerware boxes, accompanied by Southeast Asian music, visitors to an exhibition are as captivated as if they were on a tour through the region.

The ongoing exhibition, *Peacock and White Elephant: People and Their Lives between the Ayeyarwaddy and the Mekong*, runs until Sept 6 at the Hubei Provincial Museum in Wuhan, Central China's Hubei province.

It features a careful selection of 86 pieces or sets of cultural relics originating from Thailand and Myanmar, owned by the Linden Museum in Stuttgart, Germany. Ranging from Buddhist sculptures, ceramics, lacquerware, and silverware to musical instruments and shadow puppets, the exhibition offers a full panorama of daily life and the region's cultural shifts from the 8th to the 21st century.

This exhibition is part of the two museums' partnership, first established with a memorandum of understanding in 2017 and renewed in 2024.

Adopting a social-history perspective, the exhibition follows the natural rhythm of a full day and is structured around three core themes — familial routines, monastic life and communal festivals.

The first chapter on familial life begins with household Buddhist shrines used for morning prayers and moves to utensils and objects tied to food and dining culture.

"This temporal, everyday approach helps ordinary visitors feel a genuine connection, because nothing bridges the distance better than the everyday moments we all share," says Wei Mian, the exhibition's co-curator from the Hubei Provincial Museum.

She compares the curatorial process to a film director casting actors. The selected pieces determine the exhibition's narrative logic and visual language.

To maintain coherence, she and fellow co-curator Georg Noack, from the East, Southeast and South Asia Department at the Linden Museum, insist, from the outset, on jointly approving every artifact in the exhibition.

"My co-curator has extensive experience in Southeast Asian culture and artifacts, while I have a better sense of what Chinese audiences expect from an exhibition on foreign artifacts," Wei says. She notes that, despite the distance, they worked closely through frequent calls and emails to finalize the exhibition's many details.

Their selection followed two guidelines: objects that demonstrate cultural exchanges between China, Southeast Asia and India while retaining distinctive local features, and everyday items that reflect regional history, folk customs and religious beliefs.



The traditional attire worn by boys in Myanmar for the ritual when they become novice monks.

> "I specifically chose a jasmine aroma with Southeast Asian notes, offering Chinese audiences a scent that feels familiar yet intriguingly exotic."
>
> **Wei Mian,**
> co-curator from the Hubei Provincial Museum

Porcelain and lacquerware receive particular attention, given their deep cultural ties to China and their role in illustrating cross-cultural exchanges.

Wei says that when visitors see a 15th-century Thai ceramic bowl with a carp decoration, its white base and black motifs resemble wares from the Cizhou kilns in Hebei province, a major folk kiln complex in northern China.

"The carp depicted here is a major freshwater food source in the region. However, the painting style and the carp's form differ from those found on Chinese Cizhou ceramics," Wei adds.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the royal family and nobility of Siam (now Thailand) cherished the exquisitely decorated Benjarong porcelain, which features traditional Thai motifs and polychrome enamels.

"It's said that many such pieces were made in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province, and Guangzhou, Guangdong province. By that time, many Chinese merchants in Southeast Asia were already conducting import trade," Wei says.

"Yet the exact decoration process remains unclear. It's uncertain whether Thai artisans traveled to China to paint the patterns, if Thai designs were sent to Chinese craftsmen, or whether plain porcelain pieces were first fired in China and later decorated in the region."

She points out that visitors will recognize that some of the ceramic bowls, plates and vases on display are decorated with popular Chinese motifs, such as lotus flowers and peonies, all showcasing cultural exchange in action.

Another must-see is a set of instruments for the traditional Hsaing Ensemble from 20th-century Myanmar, comprising ornately decorated percussion instruments such as drums and gongs set on elaborate frames and stands. Its principal instrument is a circular set of tuned drums, played by the ensemble's leader, who sits at its center.

Such music is not confined to the past. It remains an integral part of community life today, performed at festive occasions, such as weddings, temple celebrations, coming-of-age ceremonies, funerals, and mourning rites. It also accompanies traditional dances, theatrical performances and martial arts competitions.

"Far more than just a set of musical instruments, it accompanies local people, and ensemble players are deeply integrated into every aspect of local people's lives," Wei says.

By placing a 20th-century artifact at the end of the exhibition, she aims to show that tradition is not a relic of the past — it is a living, breathing force that still shapes how people live today.

As visitors walk through the exhibition hall, they are accompanied by various genres of Southeast Asian music, including those created by the instruments on display, alongside a soft jasmine fragrance. Multiple jasmine diffusers are discreetly hidden among artificial grove installations in the exhibition hall to create an immersive sensory experience.

"People in Myanmar and Thailand adore jasmine. Local women wear jasmine flowers in their hair, and the fragrance is widely used as car air fresheners. Chinese people also have a deep fondness for jasmine," Wei says. "I specifically chose a jasmine aroma with Southeast Asian notes, offering Chinese audiences a scent that feels familiar yet intriguingly exotic."

Contact the writers at xulin@chinadaily.com.cn

Yale alum promotes Dunhuang culture from ancient Silk Road hub



Edward Kuperman (right), also known as Gu Aihua, talks to guests at the Third World Conference of Sinologists in Dunhuang, Northwest China's Gansu province, on June 3. ZHANG WENJING / XINHUA

LANZHOU — After graduating from Yale University, 24-year-old American Edward Kuperman made a choice few of his peers would have expected.

Rather than staying in the United States or heading to one of China's bustling metropolises, he settled in Dunhuang, a small oasis city in Northwest China's Gansu province.

Kuperman, better known by his Chinese name Gu Aihua, didn't come to this decision by accident. His story marks a new chapter in Dunhuang's long history as a meeting place of civilizations along the ancient Silk Road, where cultural exchange continues to thrive in the 21st century.

"Dunhuang offers a unique gateway to observing, understanding, and telling China's story," Kuperman says.

Before stepping into his role as the first full-time foreign presenter at a local media center in Dunhuang in April, Kuperman had already built a decade-long connection with China, which began with his first Chinese language class in middle school.

Back then, however, he never imagined Chinese would be so challenging to learn, or that he would stick with it for years, Kuperman recalls.

His devotion to Chinese culture deepened through classical literature. In one of China's must-read classics, *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, he found the figure Zhuge Liang in many ways embodying his own vision of an ideal personality — one marked by wisdom, principles and a sense of responsibility.

"'A gentleman may be killed, but he cannot be humiliated.' I really admire that sense of integrity and moral conviction in traditional Chinese culture," he notes.

These early impressions of China were later reinforced through a series of short-term experiences in the country, which deepened Kuperman's determination to return and stay longer.

At 17, he spent 40 days living with a host family in Suzhou, a city in East China's Jiangsu province. Though he initially struggled to follow everyday conversations, he wasn't discouraged. Instead, the challenge motivated him to double down on his studies. Later, during his years at Yale, he also joined exchange programs at Tsinghua University in Beijing, where full immersion further strengthened his fluency.

Now, in the eyes of his colleagues, the young American can not only express himself naturally in Chinese but also use more specialized, less commonly used vocabulary with ease. Yet for Kuperman, there is still a long way to go before he truly reaches an ideal level of understanding of the country, something he believes can only come after 20 years of living and working in China.

That is why he feels fortunate to have chosen Dunhuang as the starting point of this long journey. The city's unique natural landscape, cultural atmosphere and warm-hearted people have become the very reasons that motivate him to passionately share Dunhuang's culture with the world.

Since his arrival, his colleagues have helped him settle in. Once, a taxi driver even refused to accept payment for a short ride. In return, Kuperman aims to give back to the city with the same kindness he has received.

Once, a Dutch tourist lost a backpack at a night market in Dunhuang. With the help of Kuperman and local vendors, it was eventually recovered three hours later, a timeframe many would have considered too long for it to be found again.

Kuperman told the relieved tourist, "In China, nothing gets lost." The tourist nodded in agreement.

A video of the incident later gained public attention online, leaving a deep impression on Kuperman and reinforcing his belief that it is not necessary to repeatedly tell foreign visitors about China's convenience or safety.

"Facts just speak for themselves. That's even better," he says.

Now, Kuperman produces interviews, street conversations and short daily videos that feature valuable artifacts preserved in local museums and showcase Dunhuang's culture, history and contemporary stories to international audiences.

While his posts have yet to attract large view counts, Kuperman is not in a rush to chase online traffic, as he believes that true international communication starts with concrete, real-life details.

"A real person standing in a real setting, talking about a specific issue or experience, is often far more convincing than grand narratives," he notes.

For Kuperman, conversations like these are needed now more than ever in a world marked by growing uncertainty. And Dunhuang, once a thriving hub along the ancient Silk Road, continues to serve as a platform where people from different cultures can meet, exchange ideas, and better understand each other.

"My encounter with China has been a journey of broadening horizons and rethinking the world," Kuperman says. "It has also made me reflect on my own role and reminded me of the true value of communication between the East and the West."

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:07 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:07 PM

LIFE



China and ASEAN embrace shared heritage

In Dunhuang, experts highlight digital innovation and sustainable practices to revitalize joint legacies, **Ma Jingna** and **Hu Yumeng** report in Lanzhou.

Cultural heritage is becoming more than just a record of the past for China and ASEAN countries. The two sides are expanding cooperation beyond traditional conservation, and placing greater emphasis on digital technologies, sustainable development, creative industries and youth engagement as they seek to preserve and revitalize their shared cultural legacy.

That evolving partnership was at the heart of the China-ASEAN Cultural Heritage Dialogue, held in Dunhuang, Gansu province, on July 2. The event brought together around 150 heritage professionals, archaeologists, scholars, policymakers, technology experts, and youth representatives from China, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Cambodia, as well as international organizations, to explore how cultural heritage can become a stronger driver of regional cooperation and people-to-people exchanges.

The event comes as China and ASEAN celebrate the fifth anniversary of their Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, with cultural heritage emerging as an increasingly important pillar of regional cooperation.

"We were never isolated from one another," said Ivan Henares, chairman of the Southeast Asian Cultural Heritage Alliance.

Long before modern nation-states emerged, trade, diplomacy and the exchange of knowledge connected China and Southeast Asia, shaping ports, cities, architecture and traditions across the region, he said.

"Even the food we enjoy today tells stories of centuries of dialogue. Heritage is not simply about preserving monuments or traditions. At its heart, it is about maintaining connections between people, places and cultures."

Henares said today's shared challenges, including climate change, rapid urbanization and the loss of traditional knowledge, require closer regional cooperation.

"China has much to offer in scientific conservation, digital innovation and heritage interpretation, while Southeast Asia has valuable experience in community-based conservation, living heritage and managing diverse cultural landscapes," he said. "Our different practices complement each other."

For Zhang Xiaogang, deputy head of the Dunhuang Academy, the city itself demonstrates why such exchanges remain relevant today.

Located at the crossroads of the ancient Silk Road, Dunhuang became a meeting place where civilizations encountered, influenced, and enriched one another. "Dunhuang cultural heritage embodies the openness, inclusiveness, mutual learning, and coexistence that characterized the Silk Road," Zhang said.

"The ancient Silk Road promoted economic development and cultural exchanges across continents. Today, countries face the common task of pursuing peace and development, making it all the more important to carry forward the Silk Road spirit."





From top: Guests attend the China-ASEAN Cultural Heritage Dialogue in Dunhuang, Gansu province, on July 2. Participants exchange views at the event. Guests visit an exhibition during the meeting in Dunhuang. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

If history provides the foundation for China-ASEAN heritage cooperation, participants agree that innovation is opening new pathways for the two sides to protect, revitalize and share their cultural heritage.

Digital technology emerged as one of the strongest themes throughout the dialogue, with experts highlighting how artificial intelligence, big data and digital modeling are reshaping both heritage conservation and public engagement.

Xu Lubin, deputy director of the Bureau of Cultural Relics and Heritage Management under the Liangzhu Archaeological Site Administrative Committee in Zhejiang province, said technologies such as digital twin modeling, environmental monitoring and intelligent early-warning systems have helped transform the site from traditional manual inspections to a digital management system integrating archaeological research, conservation, and monitoring, while safeguarding its authenticity and improving management efficiency.

Such technological innovation is also creating new opportunities for cross-border cooperation. Heritage institutions in China and Southeast Asia are increasingly sharing digital tools and conservation experience as they confront common challenges.

The Yungang Research Institute has expanded exchanges with Cambodia's Angkor Wat through exhibitions and professional dialogues on heritage conservation.

Li Lihong, associate research librarian at the institute's Digital Conservation Center, said AI, 3D laser scanning and high-precision digital documentation are enabling researchers to preserve grottoes in unprecedented detail and even assist in the virtual restoration of damaged relics.

"AI is becoming an important tool for heritage conservation," Li said. "But technology cannot replace human expertise. Instead, it provides new possibilities for protecting and understanding cultural heritage."

Cambodia is exploring similar approaches in its own conservation work.

Im Sokrithy, director of the Department of Research, Training and Communication at Cambodia's APSARA National Authority, said digital twin technology is also being used at the Banteay Chhmar temple complex to support conservation and research. He expressed hope that China and ASEAN countries could build more open platforms for sharing data and expertise to better preserve heritage for future generations.

Participants said innovation should extend beyond conservation itself to generate broader cultural and economic value.

Heri Yogaswara, head of the Archaeology, Language and Literature Research Organization at Indonesia's National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), said stronger research networks and international cooperation are essential to maximizing the social and economic value of cultural heritage. Indonesia is working to better connect archaeological research with creative industries, digital innovation and cultural tourism so that heritage conservation can generate broader public benefits, he said.

"We hope to strengthen collaboration with China and other ASEAN partners in research, innovation and infrastructure," he said. "Research should not stop at academic discovery. It should also contribute to creative industries and benefit society."

That broader vision also places heritage within the framework of sustainable development.

Li Hong, representing the UNESCO World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region in Shanghai, said heritage should contribute to sustainable development by integrating environmental protection, economic vitality, cultural continuity, and community well-being into everyday management. "Through research, planning and good governance, heritage can become an important force that benefits communities while passing cultural values on to future generations."

As heritage cooperation expands, participants also highlighted the importance of stronger institutional support.

Liu Chao, chairman of the Intellectual Property Publishing House, called for China and ASEAN countries to jointly build databases for traditional knowledge and cultural heritage, deepen cooperation on protected geographical indications, and expand training opportunities for young professionals.

The launch of the China-ASEAN Cultural Heritage IP Incubation Capacity Enhancement Program reflects that ambition. The initiative will bring together heritage practitioners, students, researchers and media professionals from across the region to explore how cultural heritage can be transformed into creative products while strengthening long-term exchanges.

Another recurring theme was the role of the younger generation. Participants agreed that deeper China-ASEAN cooperation will depend not only on protecting cultural heritage, but also on equipping young researchers, heritage practitioners, students, and content creators with the skills and platforms to reinterpret and communicate that heritage in contemporary ways.

"Heritage protection is ultimately about ensuring these connections continue for future generations," Henares said. "I hope this dialogue will lead not only to exchanges of ideas, but also to new friendships, new partnerships and new cooperation."

Contact the writers at huyumeng@chinadaily.com.cn

A scholar's passion for glass painting

TIANJIN — Laura Maria Cinquini, an Italian PhD candidate in world history at the University of Turin, has returned to Tianjin, a city in North China, to continue her research on Chinese glass painting.

Her latest visit brought her back to Zhang Chunlin, a representative inheritor of a Tianjin intangible cultural heritage item involving glass-painting techniques of dyeing, etching, and grinding.

Cinquini's research focuses on modern and contemporary Chinese glass painting. "I have been studying this field for several years, trying to trace the overall historical thread of this painting tradition. While previous scholars have mostly concentrated on ancient glass paintings, I am more interested in its modern and contemporary development," she says.

Glassmaking dates back to ancient Egypt and later spread to Italy through the Roman Empire, with Italy having played a significant role in the history of glass painting.

This art form was introduced to China by missionaries and gradually merged with traditional Chinese painting techniques, forming a distinctive Chinese glass-painting style.

In the 1920s and '30s, glass paintings became a common sight in Chinese households, often presented as popular gifts for weddings and business openings. Tianjin's glass-painting industry remained prosperous until the 1980s and was once an important category of Chinese export paintings, before later losing much of its export appeal.

Luo Shuwei, a Chinese cultural historian, notes that glass painting is a product of early cultural exchanges between China and the West.

"Tianjin was a key trading port in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). Early glass paintings were mainly used for interior decoration, but later incorporated elements beloved by Chinese people, such as auspicious patterns, folktales and figures, making them fashionable gifts for weddings, birthdays, housewarmings, and shop openings," Luo says, adding that Tianjin's glass paintings, characterized by their adoption of traditional Chinese ink painting techniques, carry a unique local flavor and represent the folk memory of a specific era.

Cinquini's fascination with Chinese glass painting began at the State Museum of Hanover in Germany, where she interned during her master's degree at the University of Bologna. She helped curate a private exhibition of Chinese glass paintings collected by a German couple, marking her first close encounter with this art form and sparking her academic pursuits.

While conducting research, Cinquini came across an online article about Zhang Chunlin and decided to travel to China to meet him. In August 2025, she made her first solo trip to Tianjin, determined to explore this intangible cultural heritage.

Zhang, a fourth-generation inheritor of the dyeing, etching, and grinding techniques used in glass painting, grew up immersed in the craft. He began learning glass painting from his father at the age of 6 or 7. Over the past five decades, Zhang has become one of the few craftsmen to master all three techniques and can, notably, integrate them in his creations.

"It moved me deeply that an Italian researcher is so passionate about Chinese glass painting that she would cross half the globe to find me. Her dedication and eagerness to learn are truly admirable," Zhang says.

"Glass painting came from the West but took root in China. The fusion of Chinese and Western elements, appealing to both refined and popular tastes, is a testament to the mutual exchange and influence of Eastern and Western arts," Zhang adds.

After a few days of discussions and meetings, Cinquini left with a promise to document what she had learned about Tianjin's glass-painting heritage and to return with more questions.

The two have stayed in touch.

"Cinquini shares her research progress with me. She is meticulous in her scholarship, often verifying a single point repeatedly. I am delighted that her research will help more people around the world learn about Tianjin's glass painting and its continuous innovation," Zhang says.

In April 2026, Cinquini returned to Tianjin with more research topics. This time, she not only observed but also tried her hand at glass painting.

In Zhang's studio, he sketched a design of two birds on a branch with a Chinese brush and guided her through the coloring process. Cinquini immediately recognized the motif as the traditional "double longevity" pattern commonly seen in glass painting. Though she had studied glass paintings for years, it was her first time actually painting one.

"From Italy to China, I have visited many places and seen many glass paintings from different periods, but this is my first time creating one myself, which makes this trip unforgettable," she said after finishing her debut piece.

During her latest China tour, Cinquini also visited Yibin, Yinchuan, Guilin, Guangzhou, Macao, and Hong Kong, tracing the footprints of Chinese glass painting across the country.

"This skill, introduced from the West, has taken root in China and become a medium reflecting life and recording the times," she observes.

Via field investigations and conversations with inheritors, Cinquini has gained an in-depth understanding of the history, techniques and cultural significance of Chinese glass painting, amassing substantial material for her research.

Now an active researcher and promoter of the craft, Cinquini says: "I am in my second year of the PhD program, so I still have ample time for research. There are many more stories to uncover about Chinese glass painting, and I will keep coming back to China."

She plans to compile her findings into a book and introduce Tianjin's glass painting to Europe, while building connections with scholars, collectors and museum experts from both China and the West to introduce this unique intangible heritage to a broader audience.

"I hope to build a cultural bridge between the East and the West through glass painting," Cinquini says with conviction.

XINHUA



Zhang Chunlin (right), a representative inheritor of a Tianjin intangible cultural heritage item, instructs Laura Maria Cinquini, an Italian PhD candidate in world history at the University of Turin, in Chinese glass painting in Tianjin on April 17. XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:07 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:07 PM

SPORTS

2026 WORLD CUP

Pharaohs toppled by Messi's comeback kings

Argentina wins it late, rebounding from 2-0 down





Left: Enzo Fernandez celebrates scoring Argentina's late winner in Tuesday's 3-2 round-of-16 victory over Egypt. **Right:** Argentina's Lionel Messi tries to evade the clutches of Egypt's Karim Hafez. REUTERS / AP

It was another World Cup epic from an Argentina team that simply doesn't know when it's beaten.

Trailing 2-0 against Egypt with 11 minutes of regulation time to play on Tuesday, the defending champion rallied for an improbable 3-2 victory and a spot in the quarterfinals.

"We have a phenomenal group, a group that never gives up no matter the difficulties and adversity. We're always together," said Enzo Fernandez, who scored the winning goal in stoppage time.

An emotional Messi broke down after the final whistle, tears of relief and joy streaming down his face after a nerve-shredding victory.

"Turning a match around like that — coming back from 2-0 down — it wasn't easy, especially given how this World Cup is playing out and the fact that no one is just rolling over," Messi said.

"It was a moment of pure happiness and relief; we wanted to stay in the tournament. We didn't want today to be the end, we didn't want to go home."

Argentina will play Switzerland in the next round on Saturday in Kansas City, Missouri.

For much of Tuesday's game, it looked like it would be a painful exit for the 39-year-old Messi in what is likely to be the last of his six World Cups.

Egypt led after goals in each half from Yasser Ibrahim and Mostafa Zico and could have been ahead 3-0 if not for a video review that ruled out another score.

Argentina looked down and out, its bid to be the first team to win back-to-back World Cup titles since Brazil in 1958 and 1962 all but dead.

Cue a monumental comeback.

"The heart of Argentinians is always something that pushes, that we keep going no matter what, that we give everything until the end. And honestly, with the score 2-0, we looked a bit beaten," Argentina striker Julian Alvarez said. "There was little time left, but we always manage to get something more by fighting until the end."

Cristian Romero started the rally by scoring with a header in the 79th minute. Messi scored his eighth goal of the tournament and record-extending 21st goal at the World Cup in the 83rd to level the score at 2-2 and Fernandez completed the comeback in injury time.

"Four years have passed since Qatar, and we've come to enjoy another World Cup — and we want to win it again. That's what we're aiming for," Fernandez said.

Argentina is no stranger to heroic matches at the World Cup.

There was the 3-2 win over West Germany in the 1986 final. Then the 3-3 draw and eventual shootout victory against France to reclaim the title four years ago.

Cape Verde pushed Argentina to the brink in the last round, before the defending champion eventually won 3-2 in extra time.

Tuesday's match was even more dramatic, with Messi having a first-half penalty saved and another effort hit the post.

"I'm so emotional," Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni said.

"What a group of players, brothers."

Egypt took a surprising lead in the 15th minute when Ibrahim got ahead of Lisandro Martinez to meet Marwan Attia's cross and head the ball into the bottom corner.

Argentina was quickly given the chance to level the match when Haissem Hassan tripped Nicolas Tagliafico in the box moments later. Referee Francois Letexier pointed to the penalty spot and Messi stepped up with an expectant crowd waiting for him to score.

Egypt goalkeeper Mostafa Shobeir had other ideas, diving to his left to block the shot for Messi's second penalty miss of the tournament, after also failing from the spot against Austria in the group stage.

Despite being the all-time leading World Cup goalscorer, Messi has now missed four of eight penalty kicks at the tournament.

After Messi hit the post later in the half, Shobeir pulled off another great save to stop Alvarez from close range.

Egypt thought it had doubled its lead in the second half, when Zico finished off a sweeping attack, but its celebrations were cut short when, after a video review, it was adjudicated that a foul had been committed earlier in the move and the goal was disallowed.

The Pharaohs did get their second in the 67th from a similar break, and this time Zico's effort counted. It just wasn't enough.

"We looked better compared to the reigning champions. We were better in everything, but the result," Egypt coach Hossam Hassan said.

Hassan said he would not watch any further games at this year's World Cup, believing his team should have had a penalty before Argentina broke away for the winning goal.

"I'm not convinced with this outcome. I'm not convinced with the way things unfolded during this match," he said. "I do not want to try to put it nicely here, with beautiful wording, selected wording, and saying hard luck, and so on and so forth.

"We have been treated unfairly today," Hassan said. "We have suffered injustice."

AGENCIES



Argentina players toss teammate Lionel Messi into the air as they celebrate winning their World Cup round-of-16 match against Egypt in Atlanta on Tuesday. AP

Egypt coach seethes at 'unfair' treatment from match officials

For Mohamed Salah and Egypt, what could have been a glorious celebration turned ugly at the end.

On the cusp of upsetting the defending World Cup champion, the Pharaohs squandered a two-goal lead late in the game and fell 3-2 to Lionel Messi and Argentina in the round of 16 on Tuesday.

Egypt coach Hossam Hassan held up both arms in an "X" shape — the signal in soccer for calling out racial abuse — and stated flatly that his upstart squad was victimized by a soccer establishment that wanted Messi and Argentina to advance to the quarterfinals in their pursuit of a second straight title.

"We have been treated unfairly today," Hassan said. "We have suffered injustice."

In a tournament already marred by reports that US President Donald Trump influenced FIFA to overturn the one-game suspension for US striker Folarin Balogun, Egypt turned up the heat on soccer's governing body.

"I just would like to say that we would have deserved a win," Hassan said, "but we are leaving with honor, with pride, regardless of this defeat."

Hassan, who has been outspoken during the tournament, particularly in his support of the Palestinians and against the treatment of the Iranian team, was upset that a potential second goal was overturned by VAR for a foul by Egypt at the start of a sweeping, box-to-box play.

Egypt took a 2-0 lead anyway on Mostafa Zico's goal in the 67th minute, but there was still enough time for Argentina to pull off a comeback for the ages at the home of the NFL's Atlanta Falcons.

Even retired NFL quarterback Tom Brady took to social media to point out the similarities to the comeback he pulled off against the Falcons in the 2017 Super Bowl, when the New England Patriots rallied from a 28-3 deficit late in the third quarter to win 34-28 in overtime. "Yeah, so that might top 28-3," Brady wrote on X.

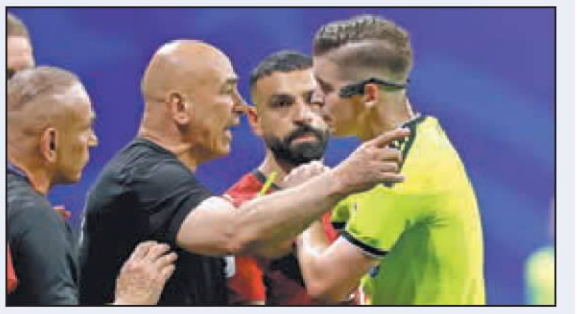
Hassan, however, couldn't care less what Brady had to say. The coach was still seething that the VAR didn't feel a need to intervene and ask referee Francois Letexier to review what Egypt saw as a foul on Salah in the area, denying what could've been a penalty kick in the waning minutes, instead sparking the play that led to Argentina's winner.

"The effect of this outcome goes way beyond the defeat itself, because we haven't seen neither respect nor fair play," Hassan said. "Because a penalty was ruled out. A second ball that should have been called as a penalty for us was not even checked by the VAR.

"What I told the referee was just that this is unfair," the coach said. "I was saying maybe he's carrying a scar, maybe he has something to hide.

"Whoever has something to hide sometimes fails to hide what he is hiding and this was exactly what I felt during that conversation."

AP





Vargas sends Switzerland into last 8 in shootout win over Colombia

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — In a match with few fireworks, the Swiss were patient against the Colombians and their enthusiastic fans.

After Tuesday's game ended in a scoreless draw after extra time, Ruben Vargas converted the decisive penalty to help Switzerland advance to the World Cup quarterfinals, beating Colombia 4-3 on penalties.

Switzerland will face defending champion Argentina on Saturday at Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City, Missouri, after Lionel Messi's side defeated Egypt 3-2 earlier in the day.

Switzerland had not reached the quarterfinals of a World Cup since hosting the tournament in 1954. And the Swiss were short-handed Tuesday, without young midfielder Johan Manzambi, who was injured in training on Monday.

Manzambi, a 20-year-old midfielder who plays for German club Freiburg, has three goals so far at the World Cup, becoming one of the tournament's breakout stars. The Swiss were also without Luca Jaquez and midfielder Michel Aebischer.

Vargas, who has scored two goals so far at this World Cup, also left Monday's training early, but came on in second-half stoppage time.

In the shootout, Colombia defender Davinson Sanchez's penalty attempt hit the crossbar and Switzerland goalkeeper Gregor Kobel saved an attempt by Cucho Hernandez.

FIFA president Gianni Infantino was among those at BC Place, where the sellout crowd of 52,497 was overwhelmingly clad in yellow in support of Colombia.

"They had the crowd on their side, so it was a tough game for us," Kobel said. "We know we had some stretches of the game where we had to defend and stay strong mentally. Obviously, we had a few players missing so, yeah, it was a big challenge for us."

Colombia failed to qualify for the last World Cup in 2022. Los Cafeteros made the quarterfinals at the 2014 tournament in Brazil, defeating Uruguay in the round of 16, before losing 2-1 to the host.



Switzerland's Ruben Vargas (left) celebrates with teammates after landing the winner in a penalty shootout at the end of a scoreless World Cup round-of-16 match against Colombia on Tuesday. AP

"The dream was enormous," Colombia midfielder Jhon Arias said. "The country showed us that it believed in us, that it lived every moment with us, and I think that only makes the pain even greater."

The Swiss reached the round of 16 at the past three World Cups, but failed to advance with a smaller field of 32 teams.

"We worked very hard, and now we have this opportunity," Switzerland coach Murat Yakin said.

"This is going to be a very interesting matchup from our point of view. We will try to compete against the reigning champions, and it's going to be amazing. Switzerland against Argentina in a quarterfinal.

"I am so excited. I think that I need maybe a couple of hours more, or another day, to process what just happened, and then, tomorrow, we will start focusing on Argentina."

The match was tightly contested by two teams with contrasting styles, the Swiss with a more organized and methodical approach, and Colombia more attack-oriented and physical. Switzerland had a slight edge in possession.

Gustavo Puerta had the first good chance for Colombia, with a shot from distance in the 21st minute that was pushed away by Kobel.

The Swiss got one of their best opportunities in the 30th, with Fabian Rieder's blast at Colombian goalkeeper Camilo Vargas, who punched the ball down. Minutes later, the stopper smothered another attempt from Dan Ndoye.

The Swiss had a freekick in the 52nd minute, but Rieder's attempt curled around the wall and went into the side netting.

In the first period of extra time, Jhon Lucumi's header hit the crossbar and caromed away, as Colombia put pressure on Kobel.

"I don't think you can overstate what a huge success this is — for us, for this team, for Switzerland, for such a small country. To be among the top-eight teams in the world is incredible," Kobel said.

"It's an unbelievable feeling. I'm incredibly proud."

Colombia and Switzerland also met in the group stage at the 1994 World Cup in the United States, with Los Cafeteros winning 2-0.

AP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:07 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:09 PM

Green wheels
Chinese-built electric buses transform commuting in Baku
WORLD, PAGE 4



El Nino impact risks loom on economies
INDEPTH, PAGE 2



Making waves
12-year-old Yunnan girl leaves home and hearth to chase surfing dreams
Z WEEKLY, PAGE 15

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2026

MODERNIZATION FOR ALL

Kazakhstan experiences China speed

Astana's light rail shows how Belt and Road cooperation helps to advance modernization

By ZHAO JIA in Astana, Kazakhstan
zhaojia@chinadaily.com.cn

When the first phase of Astana's light rail transit system opened on May 16, Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev took a ride on the new line and expressed thanks to the Chinese government and Chinese builders in Chinese, quoting the ancient proverb, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step".

"I felt very proud," said Ji Chenglong, executive manager of the Astana light rail transit project at China Construction Sixth Engineering Bureau Co. Ji arrived in Astana with his team in July 2023. Working through winter temperatures as low as -40 C, they adapted materials and construction methods to local conditions and overcame the challenges of building an urban rail system in extreme cold.

The project applied Chinese standards and technologies across design, construction, equipment and operations, including fully automated self-driving trains and intelligent dispatching.

Ji said that average daily ridership has exceeded 70,000, well above the design-stage projection of 25,000. During construction, the project created more than 2,000 local jobs, while the project team conducted ongoing technical exchanges and provided on-the-job training tailored to the project's needs, he added.

"Seeing more and more residents enjoy the convenience brought by the light rail has deepened my understanding that infrastructure is not simply about steel and concrete. It is an important means of improving people's lives and promoting development," he said, adding that this is the true meaning of Belt and Road cooperation.

Ji said he still remembered that President Xi Jinping once said the ultimate goal of the Belt and Road Initiative is "to explore new ways for countries from near and far to achieve common development and to open up a 'path of happiness' that benefits the whole world".

The Astana light rail is a vivid example of that path taking shape in Central Asia, Ji said. "From a light rail line to a modern city, and from engineering cooperation to closer bonds between peoples, Belt and Road cooperation is not only a path of connectivity, but also a path of common development, friendship and cooperation, and greater well-being for the people," he said.

Askar Umarov, head of the Central Communications Service under the Kazakh president, said he believes that Kazakhstan and China are at a critical stage of development and revitalization, and are companions on the path to modernization.

See ***Relations,*** *page 3*



Liz Gill, a freelance journalist from the United Kingdom, experiences the craft of making Dongba paper in Lijiang, Yunnan province, in September. WANG JIAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

TOURISTS FOLLOW PAPER TRAIL TO NAXI CIVILIZATION

Thousand-year-old craft of making Dongba sheets is finding its way around the world

By YANG FEIYUE and **LI YINGQING** in Lijiang, Yunnan

In Lijiang in southwestern Yunnan province, paper is crafted to endure. Handmade Dongba paper, once reserved for recording the sacred scriptures of the Naxi people, is now earning a place in the luggage of travelers from around the world.

A growing number of domestic and international visitors have left the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Old Town of Lijiang with Dongba paper products tucked into their luggage — notebooks filled with travel memories, postcards inscribed with ancient pictographs bearing blessings, and handmade paper lamps whose soft glow will follow them home.

Some visitors share their finds on social media, posting photos of the paper's fibrous texture and the enigmatic characters adorning it, introducing this centuries-old craft to a wider audience.

The alchemy of Dongba paper begins in the mountains surrounding Lijiang. It is traditionally made from the bark of the Wikstroemia shrub, which grows at elevations above 2,000 meters. The bark is soaked, softened, pounded into pulp, meticulously spread onto bamboo screens and then sun-dried — a process repeated dozens of times.

See ***Craft,*** *page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Migrant crisis



Migrants wait to collect food and water being distributed by Red Cross volunteers in Ceuta, a Spanish enclave in North Africa, on Monday. The autonomous city is grappling with a humanitarian crisis following mass crossings of nearly 60,000 migrants on foot and by sea from Morocco last week. Around 80 migrants reportedly died during the attempts. PEDRO NUNES / REUTERS **See story, page 4**

Beijing firmly opposes Japan's defense white paper

By LI SHANGYI in Beijing and **HOU JUNJIE** in Tokyo

China voiced firm opposition on Tuesday to Japan's newly released defense white paper, accusing Tokyo of hyping up the so-called "China threat" to justify expansion of its own military capabilities.

Chen Xi, a spokesman for the Chinese Ministry of National Defense, said the white paper is filled with false narratives and exaggerates a so-called "security crisis in the surrounding region".

Describing Japan's move as a case of "a thief crying 'stop thief'", Chen said the white paper serves as a pretext for its own military expansion. "We are strongly dissatisfied with and firmly oppose this move," he added.

Japan released on Tuesday the roughly 600-page white paper, titled "Defense of Japan 2026", which continued to portray the regional security environment as "increasingly severe".

The report claimed China's military developments "present an unprecedented and the greatest challenge" for Japan, and alleged that the Chinese mainland's military activities around Taiwan have become increasingly frequent.

The white paper retained the wording of its 2025 edition, claiming that the international community is facing its greatest challenge since World War II and has entered a new era of crisis.

In response, Chen said Japan's ruling authorities have continued to uphold the banner of an "exclusively defense-oriented policy" while accelerating revisions to its three key security documents, steadily increasing defense spending and developing long-range strike capabilities.

Japan has also promoted the weaponization and militarization of space and portrayed the expansion of its defense industry as a driver for economic growth, Chen said. He added that Tokyo is attempting to embed military expansion and war preparations into the country's institutions, economy, industries and public discourse.

Chen warned that Japan's "new militarism" has become a growing concern, posing a serious challenge to the postwar international order and a genuine threat to regional peace and stability. "The Taiwan question concerns China's sovereignty and territorial integrity and serves as the political foundation of China-Japan relations. It is a red line that cannot be crossed," he said.

The spokesman urged Japan to deeply reflect on its history of aggression, stop interfering in China's internal affairs, refrain from misleading the Japanese public and the international community, and avoid going further down the wrong path of "remilitarization".

Experts based in Japan said the country's continued military build-up has become a source of regional instability. Makoto Ito, director of the Japan Institute of Constitutional Law, told China Daily that Japan's security environment would improve if it remained committed to diplomatic and security stances that reassure its neighbors.

Ito noted that Japan's security and defense policies in recent years have deviated from its pacifist Constitution. "And yet, these policies continue to be advanced and are communicated to the public through official documents such as the defense white paper," he said.

Kumiko Haba, a distinguished professor at Josai International University in Tokyo, told China Daily that the administration of Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi is moving in an extremely dangerous direction, warning that it could evolve into a government prepared to wage war.

Haba said the current Liberal Democratic Party government has prioritized strengthening military capabilities, reopening debate on the three nonnuclear principles, expanding the defense industry and seeking to reinforce the Japan-United States alliance.

Japan's defense spending has been rising steadily, and it is already moving ahead of schedule toward the target of reaching 2 percent of the nation's GDP.

In March, Japan deployed its land-based Type 25 anti-ship missile in Kumamoto prefecture. With an upgraded 1,000-kilometer range, the missile far exceeds Japan's territorial defense requirements and possesses clear offensive capabilities. In April, Japan fully lifted restrictions on the export of lethal weapons.

Haba said that Japan is seeking to align itself with the US' agenda by abandoning its identity as a peace-oriented country and moving toward participation in war in pursuit of a new phase of national development.

Xinhua contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at lishangyi@chinadaily.com.cn

Nation matching steps with UN to renew multilateralism

WORLD WATCH
By Siddharth Chatterjee

The United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 2758, restoring the lawful seat of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations, on Oct 25, 1971. In doing so, it restored one-fourth of humanity to the world's foremost multilateral institution, making the UN whole. Fifty-five years on, that decision endures as a defining milestone in the evolution of the international order.

The anniversary arrives at a sobering moment. Armed conflicts grind on across several regions, geopolitical rivalry is growing, trust among major powers has frayed, and humanity faces a convergence of challenges — climate change, pandemics, food insecurity, technological disruption and widening inequality — that no border can contain.

Seen across the span of 55 years, the story of China and the UN is one of remarkable evolution. A country that reentered the organization cautiously in 1971 has become one of its central pillars. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China is today the second-largest contributor to both the regular and the peacekeeping budgets of the United Nations. Among the Council's permanent members it deploys the most peacekeepers, with more than 50,000 Chinese personnel having served under the blue helmet from Africa to the Middle East. Some have given their lives for international peace and security.

What began as a restored seat has grown into sustained engagement across the UN's agencies — on public health and pandemic response, climate and biodiversity, agriculture and food security, digital cooperation and humanitarian relief. Through South-South cooperation, the Global Development Initiative and expanding partnerships, China increasingly shares its experience, technology and resources in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Multilateral cooperation is a vaccine reaching a remote village before an outbreak spreads. It is former child soldiers trading rifles for schoolbooks. It is a farmer planting a drought-resistant seed, or a family receiving shelter in the hours after catastrophe.

Such outcomes are possible only when governments, organizations and communities act through institutions that command global legitimacy.

Serving as UN resident coordinator in China gave me a rare vantage point from which to view China's partnership with the UN. What struck me was not merely the scale of China's engagement but its readiness to work through multilateral channels on challenges reaching beyond its borders. When the global health crisis tested every health system on Earth, I watched China reach out to many nations at once, delivering vaccines and sharing clinical experience and non-pharmaceutical interventions with countries across the Global South. The most consequential moments seldom made headlines. They took the form of patient collaboration — between Chinese ministries, UN agencies and international partners — to strengthen health systems, advance the green transition and modernize agriculture.

See ***Institution,*** *page 3*

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

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN ASIA NEWS NETWORK

China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

INSIDE
Protectionist measures could harm EU's interests
Global Views, page 8



Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:09 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:09 PM

INDEPTH

Is El Nino's economic risk too hot to handle?

Experts say 'climateflation' to impact bank rates, food output

By YANG GAO in Toronto
gaoyang@chinadailyusa.com



Tourists pose for a selfie on Westminster Bridge on July 29 in London, England, as a fourth consecutive summer heatwave was gripping southern England.
BEN MONTGOMERY/ GETTY IMAGES

Across the globe, the looming "super El Nino" is sparking warnings from economists, planners and experts about its potentially devastating impact on economies and societies.

A key area of the Pacific Ocean used to measure the strength of El Nino last week reached its warmest and most intense level ever recorded for the 15th week since it formed, which is early in its lifetime, scientists at Columbia University reported.

The El Nino weather event won't peak for several months and is expected to last through to spring 2027. The United Nations' World Meteorological Organization cautioned on Friday that it will likely trigger extreme heat, drought and rainfall well into next year.

The WMO warned of the strong chance of drought and wildfires in Indonesia, India and other parts of Asia, south and east Australia, chunks of South America and southern regions in Africa. Other areas, including much of the United States and fire-struck Southern Europe, will receive above average rainfall, the agency said.

"This El Nino, developing against the backdrop of unprecedented ocean heat and rising temperatures, provides governments and communities with a window of opportunity to anticipate risks and act before impacts unfold," said WMO Secretary-General Celeste Saulo.

For many economists, however, the consequences are already becoming evident. Investors and policymakers are increasingly concerned that climate shocks could reinforce inflationary pressures already facing economies around the world.

"Heat kills — both lives and livelihoods," said Gernot Wagner, a climate economist at Columbia Business School.

"And it is often rather small changes in the average that lead to large threshold effects," he said.

He cited research showing that "only one additional day above 32 C in any given year lowers annual payroll by 0.04 percent".

"That may seem like a small effect. It is not," Wagner told China Daily. "One hot day in any given year shows up in annual productivity statistics, and El Nino only exacerbates these effects."

Wagner said the impacts extend well beyond labor productivity.

"'Climateflation' is a real phenomenon, and one that can already be measured," he said.

"Single heat waves lead to often large spikes in prices of individual agricultural products, which reverberate throughout the economy," he said.

Emerging economies at risk

The weather phenomenon, which typically occurs every two to seven years, could take a heavy toll on emerging economies, pushing up food prices and slowing growth.

Emerging markets are particularly vulnerable as households spend a larger proportion of their income on food, experts said. Also, agriculture plays a big role in their economies, raising the risk that central banks will have to keep policy tighter for longer.

"We came into this year with many central banks thinking they had space to cut. And now we see central banks stopping cutting, and some of them are hiking (rates)," Gillian Edgeworth, a fixed income portfolio manager at Wellington Management, told Reuters.

"I don't think we're moving to a world where there's rapid rate cuts in emerging markets in the second half of the year."

India is among the most vulnerable economies as it depends heavily on the annual monsoon, which typically delivers nearly 70 percent of the country's rainfall.

The country's meteorological department has warned rainfall could be the lowest in more than a decade, threatening crop yields and raising the prospect of higher food prices.

With inflation above the central bank's 4 percent target, analysts warned a super El Nino could force it to tighten monetary policy. However, a revival in monsoon rains late last month accelerated planting of summer crops across much of India, sharply reducing an earlier sowing deficit caused by lower rainfall.

Across much of Asia, higher energy and fertilizer costs are already weighing on external balances and economic growth, complicating central banks' efforts to stabilize currencies and contain inflation.

Central banks in the Philippines, Indonesia, South Korea, Pakistan and Sri Lanka have already hiked interest rates at least once this year.

"El Nino is just going to make inflation more sticky," said Gary Tan, equity portfolio manager at Allspring Global Investments.

"People are forecasting rate hikes for the second half of the year, especially for the ... Asian countries, which are kind of the most impacted by El Nino such as India, Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand," he said.

In South America, Colombia is among the Latin American economies most exposed to El Nino-related weather shocks, as below-average rainfall can hit food supplies and electricity prices.

The country's reliance on hydropower makes reservoir levels a key inflation indicator. Low water levels can force greater use of costlier thermal generation, pushing up electricity prices and inflation.

Analysts warn a severe El Nino could keep Colombian monetary policy restrictive for longer.

Peru's central bank has warned that inflation could exceed its target this year and growth could suffer, citing high oil prices and El Nino's impact on fishing and agriculture.

Argentina, by contrast, may benefit from higher rainfall, which could support grain output, export revenues and foreign-exchange inflows. Central banks in Brazil, Mexico and Chile are expected to take a wait-and-see approach as they assess any impact on inflation and growth.



Commuters wade through a flooded area on July 9 in Noida, India.
SUNIL GHOSH / HINDUSTAN TIMES VIA GETTY IMAGES



A man helps clear debris from the backyard of a damaged house after a tornado on July 28 in Appleton, Wisconsin, the United States. REUTERS

Africa vulnerable

An impending super El Nino is likely to inflict a combined $10 billion to $20 billion hit on affected African countries and trigger mass migration from hard-hit areas, the African Development Bank's top climate expert told Reuters.

As well as the threat to food and water security, government finances and banking sectors could also be undermined if disasters damage infrastructure and leave cash-strapped countries struggling to repay the connected loans.

"Just this event is going to reduce heavily affected countries' GDP by one to two percent on average, which is about $10 billion to $20 billion across the continent," said Anthony Nyong, the ADB's director for climate change and green growth.

The development bank's most recent forecast in May, which did not take into account a super El Nino, predicted Africa as a whole would see 4.2 percent economic growth this year, rising to 4.4 percent in 2027, assuming the conflict involving the United States, Israel and Iran eases.

Governments in Africa were also getting snared in what Nyong described as the "climate finance trap", where they lack the resources to respond to crises and are forced to raid health, education or infrastructure budgets to meet costs.

The 2023-24 El Nino caused severe drought in Southern Africa and heavy rains or flooding in East Africa. These conditions led to widespread crop failures, surging food prices and record-breaking sea-level spikes along the continent's coastlines.

The ADB has estimated Africa's farmers are already facing nearly $330 million in lost income this year, while fishing industries could also be hit hard due to rising sea temperatures and storms.

"When these shocks happen, countries take two steps back," Nyong said. "We don't want our countries to slide into poverty."

He said the ADB stood ready to restructure projects to help countries manage El Nino's impacts and it would work with them to tap additional multilateral support such as the Green Climate Fund, the world's largest dedicated climate fund.

Humanitarian pressures would add to the problems, Nyong said. The bank has identified Sudan, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Mali, Burundi and even Nigeria as countries that could face particularly severe impacts.

"When this El Nino comes there is going to be mass migration," he said, adding that the price of maize — a key food staple in many affected countries — was expected to double. "You are not going to stay put, you are going to move," he said.

The African Union Commission has called on its members to step up preparedness for the expected impact of El Nino.

"The 2026-27 El Nino event is projected to be the strongest since 1950. This is not a distant possibility. It is an imminent risk that demands immediate preparation at national, regional and continental levels," Moses Vilakati, AU commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment said on Thursday in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, while opening the extraordinary session of a special technical committee looking at the weather pattern.

Many regions of the continent are likely to experience severe droughts, devastating floods, prolonged heat waves, disruptions to food production, water shortages, disease outbreaks and increased humanitarian needs.

"These impacts will not only affect vulnerable households; they will also place considerable pressure on national economies, public finances and regional stability," he said.

"This is neither speculative nor unprecedented. We have already witnessed the devastating consequences of delayed action," he warned, citing the 2023-2024 El Nino that affected millions of people in Africa.

Strengths, weaknesses

As climate risks become more synchronized across regions, globalization has created new vulnerabilities, Wagner, the climate economist at Columbia Business School, said.

"The more globalized — and hence specialized — our supply chains become, the higher the vulnerability of such extreme events, whether heat, droughts, floods, or other weather extremes that, due to climate change, are increasingly correlated," he said.

That growing correlation, he said, is changing the economics of risk itself.

"Single extreme events are costly. Correlation due to climate change makes them all the more costly," he said.

He compared the problem to insurance.

"The way to ensure against individual extreme events is by hedging — one flood or wildfire in one region may be bad, but others will be fine.

"With climate change, that is increasingly no longer the case — droughts and floods and other extremes the world over are suddenly connected, correlated with each other. Hedging away from extremes in one place is increasingly no longer possible," he said.

The solution, Wagner argued, lies in both adaptation and emissions reductions.

"Invest, invest, invest — in resiliency measures, of course, but also in cutting greenhouse gas pollution in the first place. Only by cutting additional carbon dioxide going into the atmosphere to zero will we be able to stabilize global climate over the long term," he said.

While many economists warn that El Nino could contribute to higher food prices, agricultural scientist Walter Baethgen argues it should not be seen solely through the lens of a possible disaster.

"My view of El Nino is different from the most popular one," said Baethgen, a senior research scientist at Columbia University's International Research Institute for Climate and Society. "I see El Nino as an opportunity."

The weather event is valuable because it is one of the few major climate phenomena that can be forecast months in advance, giving governments, humanitarian agencies and farmers time to prepare, he said.

Baethgen said seasonal forecasts allow farmers to make informed adjustments that reduce risk instead of radically changing production.

"It's a smart way of using this information," he said, describing how producers may shift part of their acreage toward crops favored by expected weather conditions without abandoning diversification altogether.

He also challenged the widespread perception that El Nino necessarily leads to global food shortages.

Wetter conditions often improve crop production in parts of the US and southeastern South America, while drier weather can reduce harvests in regions such as southern Africa, Australia and parts of Asia.

"It's not bad everywhere. For some things, it's very good," he said, adding that "the negative impacts ... are typically compensated by positive impacts in other regions."

Because agricultural gains and losses often occur simultaneously across different agricultural production regions, Baethgen said the relationship between El Nino and global food prices is far more complicated than many assume.

"El Nino is one of many factors affecting world food prices," he said. Geopolitical events, energy prices and fertilizer costs can sometimes have an even greater influence on global markets than climate alone, he added.



A firefighter works to extinguish an advancing wildfire near Formariz in Zamora province, Spain, on July 29. REUTERS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:09 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:09 PM

TOP NEWS

Institution: Increasing engagement highlighted

From page 1

When catastrophic floods inundated Pakistan in 2022, I launched an emergency appeal from Beijing alongside Pakistan's then ambassador to China. China was among the first countries to respond with timely assistance, supporting both immediate relief and longer-term recovery.

Similarly, after the earthquake that devastated Myanmar in 2025, the Chinese government, together with the UN in China, quickly mobilized emergency humanitarian assistance and relief for those affected.

Such actions epitomize China's increasing global engagement, which extends beyond economic development to encompass humanitarian solidarity. They also reflect China's commitment to South-South cooperation and its willingness to work through the UN to address global challenges. Effective multilateralism rests not on rhetoric but on the discipline of showing up, again and again.

Every great test facing humanity is a shared one. No nation, however powerful, can halt a pandemic, stabilize the climate, govern emerging technologies or deliver the Sustainable Development Goals on its own. That truth does not render the UN less relevant; it makes it indispensable.

As is dialogue. In the end, every conflict arrives at a negotiating table. The only question is how much suffering precedes it. To press for political solutions is not weakness but the highest form of strategic wisdom.

Nowhere was this clearer than in Beijing in March 2023, when China helped Saudi Arabia and Iran restore diplomatic relations after seven years of rupture — an agreement to reopen embassies and revive dialogue between two rivals whose estrangement had fueled conflicts across the Middle East. Few had anticipated a breakthrough; fewer still had expected it to be brokered in the Chinese capital. Such efforts reflect a principle woven into the very fabric of the UN Charter — that durable peace is never imposed by force, but built through diplomacy, mutual respect and perseverance.

Fifty-five years after Resolution 2758, the question before us is no longer one of representation but of responsibility. The true measure of leadership lies not in the power to shape events alone, but in the willingness to strengthen the institutions through which all nations may shape them together.

Our shared future depends not on retreating from multilateralism but on renewing it — with confidence, with courage and with common purpose. In an age of fracture, that remains humanity's surest hope.

The author served for nearly three decades with the United Nations, most recently as UN resident coordinator in China (2021-26). He is currently CEO of Global Neighbours, a Vienna-based think tank, and a distinguished visiting professor at Tsinghua University.

Religious rites



Monks make offerings to Panchen Erdeni Chos-kyi rGyal-po on Monday at Jokhang Temple in Lhasa, the capital of the Xizang autonomous region. Panchen Rinpoche, a leader of Tibetan Buddhism, who is also a member of the Standing Committee of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the country's top political advisory body, arrived in Lhasa on Thursday and began his first Buddhist activity in Xizang this year on Monday. JIGME DORJE / XINHUA

Drones deliver convenience to sailors

By **CHEN MEILING** in Beijing and **LIU KUN** in Wuhan

Twelve-year-old Liu Ziqi celebrated her birthday aboard a ship docked in Yichang, Hubei province, recently. What made the day memorable was a specially delivered birthday cake, a first for the young girl.

Liu's parents operate a cargo vessel that ferries goods between Shanghai and Chongqing, and the girl has lived on board with them since she was a baby.

"She celebrates every birthday on the Yangtze River. However, we have never been able to go ashore and buy a cake," said Liu Ge, her mother.

What made this year different was the low-altitude instant delivery service extended by local authorities to meet the needs of tens of thousands of crewmembers who operate the numerous vessels plying the river every day.

Liu Ge placed the order for the cake through an app. The delivery rider collected the cake from the shop and took it to the drone base. The drone pilot located the vessel using the Yangtze Beidou app. With the cake loaded in a basket, the drone lifted off and headed straight for the ship. "It's as efficient as ordering a takeout ashore," Liu Ge said.

The family's vessel remained docked in Yichang for three days as it waited for its turn to pass the Gezhouba Dam and the Three Gorges ship locks.

Earlier for supplies, the family had to depend on mobile "supermarket" ships, in which the number of products is typically limited and the price is often higher than in shops ashore.

"The other choice was to go ashore on public ferries that run on fixed schedules, or pay for a small vessel that cost 100 yuan ($14.8) for a round trip," the mother said, adding that the drone delivery service is fast, cheap and offers more choices when it comes to shopping.

Sailors plying on the route have been making the most of the service.

For Li Wenchuan, a 22-year-old sailor, the drone delivery was a godsend as he could get medicines for a stomachache quickly by paying a nominal fee of 10 yuan. Captain Fu Yibo replaced his vessel's storage batteries after having them delivered by the drone service. First mate Zhang Zhongkun ordered chilled milk tea, fried chicken and grilled skewers to cheer up his crew, something that would have been difficult to do in the past.

After months of trials, the low-altitude instant delivery service was officially flagged off in late July. Including the trials, more than 10,000 orders have been placed so far, with the number of daily orders ranging between 30 and 40, said Huang Yuhua, who is in charge of the drone comprehensive service base.

Yichang sits at the junction of the upper and middle reaches of the Yangtze River, and hosts the Three Gorges Dam and Gezhouba Dam.

Data from Yichang maritime bureau shows that since March, around 700 vessels on average waited for lock passage each day on the Yangtze River's Yichang section. During peak periods, that number could rise to 1,000 vessels, carrying approximately 9,000 crewmembers.

Each day only about 70 to 80 ships can pass the locks.

Vessels typically wait seven to eight days to be granted passage. The maximum waiting time can stretch to 15 days during maintenance work and flood seasons. As sailors remain on board for a long time, buying fresh produce and spare parts becomes a challenge, Huang said.

"Traditional supply methods such as shuttle boats and supply vessels are time-consuming, and fresh produce tends to spoil easily. In addition, crewmembers face safety risks when taking small boats ashore to shop," he added.

The drone delivery service currently covers waters within approximately 3 kilometers. After cargo arrives at the takeoff and landing site and passes predeparture inspection, the maximum travel time for the farthest delivery takes about 80 seconds, Huang added.

Delivery fees are based on distance and weight, ranging from 10 yuan to 50 yuan. 5G-Advanced base stations are deployed along the river to ensure stable communication signals. When the drone reaches target waters, the pilot makes manual adjustments to identify the vessel name and accurately locate the waiting crewmembers.

Emergency medicine and critical supplies can be delivered to moving vessels. The drones can operate in light rain and snow. Deliveries are suspended when visibility drops below 200 meters or wind force exceeds Grade 7.

In the future, Huang said they would build a complete delivery system along the Yangtze River, establish an online shop, and add more takeoff and landing points for the drones.

"We do not merely treat sailors as passing visitors," said Zhu Hanhong, director of Yichang bureau of economy and information technology, adding that the delivery service extends the city's public services to the river.

Contact the writers at chenmeiling@chinadaily.com.cn



Sailors receive supplies from a drone at the Linjiangping anchorage in Wujiagang district, Yichang, Hubei province, on July 27. LIN XIAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Craft: Paper's durability surprises travelers

From page 1

"Unlike industrial paper, where uniformity is the goal, Dongba paper keeps the traces of nature," said Zhang Jian, a product designer who runs a Dongba paper workshop in the old town.

Plant fibers remain visible across the surface, creating subtle textures and organic patterns. No two sheets are ever alike.

"Every sheet has its own character," Zhang said. "We try to preserve the natural qualities of the raw material. The fibers themselves are what make the paper beautiful."

For centuries, Dongba paper was used by Naxi priests to record religious scriptures in a pictographic writing system that remains central to Naxi cultural heritage. Its natural resistance to insects and aging has helped preserve those texts for generations.

Today, the same durability has become part of its modern appeal.

"We used to see foreign tourists occasionally. Now we see them every day," said Zhang, who has spent nearly 23 years giving this thousand-year-old craft a modern makeover.

Turning Dongba paper from a religious material into everyday products was not easy.

Zhang spent his early years experimenting with ways to make the traditional paper suitable for modern life. Today, his workshop produces a range of cultural products, from journals and bookmarks to decorative pieces featuring Dongba script.

Han Yuchen, who oversees sales and outreach of Dongba paper sales, believes that its appeal goes beyond mere portability.

"Many visitors are surprised when they hear that such a delicate-looking paper can last for hundreds of years," he said. "They want to know more about how it is made."

Postcards are often the first thing overseas visitors pick up, followed by notebooks and paper lamps.

Featuring images of Lijiang's scenery alongside Dongba characters, postcards can be personalized with handwritten blessings before being sent home. The paper's natural texture gives the writing a warmth that mass-produced cards cannot replicate, Han said.

Dongba paper lamps have become an unexpected hit. Made by folding a single sheet of Dongba paper into a lampshade, they emit a soft glow that reveals the natural fibers. Each lamp has its own pattern, shaped by the plant material itself.

"Many European and US visitors say the texture fits beautifully with their home decoration," Han noted. "They like the feeling of bringing something natural and handmade into their homes."

Notebooks are another favorite. One best-selling journal, roughly A5-sized with raw edges and a leather cover, sells for more than 180 yuan ($27). Though pricier than standard notebooks, they serve as a premium repository for personal memories.

Contact the writers at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese AI models gain favor overseas

Alibaba unveils latest Qwen version as businesses embrace cost-effective tech

By **CHENG YU**
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Alibaba Group has launched its 2.4-trillion-parameter Qwen3.8-Max model that can analyze 200-page financial reports and process more than 100 hours of video content, putting it directly among the world's top-tier large language models.

Several sources told China Daily that Alibaba's latest Qwen model has entered the "deep testing" phase in Tesla's vehicle systems in China and is expected to be used for Tesla's in-car platform soon.

The development comes as more and more companies from the United States adopt Chinese artificial intelligence models, which they believe offer frontier-level performance at substantially lower costs.

In the latest Arena benchmark rankings, one of the most widely followed third-party evaluations of AI model performance, Alibaba's Qwen models ranked just behind US-based Anthropic's Claude series.

Alibaba said that Qwen3.8-Max is expected to become open-source next week, following the release of Qwen3.8-27B, further expanding access for developers building AI applications.

Qwen3.8-Max's application programming interface pricing in China has been set at 12 yuan ($1.67) per million input tokens and 36 yuan per million output tokens, with cached input tokens priced at 1.5 yuan per million tokens.

International pricing is also significantly lower than comparable frontier models, with input and output costs respectively at about 40 percent and 24 percent of Anthropic's Claude Opus prices.

Chinese AI models have been continuously gaining traction overseas. According to OpenRouter data, weekly usage of Chinese LLMs stood at 14.1 times that of US models as of July 27, marking the 13th consecutive week that Chinese models ranked first on the platform in terms of weekly token consumption.

Late last month, Coinbase CEO Brian Armstrong said the cryptocurrency company had adopted China-developed AI models, including Zhipu AI's GLM-5.2 and Moonshot AI's Kimi K2.7, as default tools for engineers through an internal AI gateway. Through model switching, intelligent routing and caching optimization, Coinbase has cut its AI costs by nearly half.

San Francisco-based AI startup Lindy switched from Claude to DeepSeek-V4 in June, and said its API expenses had exceeded its entire payroll costs before the transition.

"It is not about low pricing anymore," said Wang Peng, a researcher at the Beijing Academy of Social Sciences. "Companies globally are increasingly weighing performance against cost, privacy, flexibility and suitability for AI agents and enterprise workflows."

Morgan Stanley said in a research note that Moonshot AI's Kimi K3, the full model weights of which became officially open-source on July 27, represented a broader trend of Chinese LLMs catching up with US leaders in model scale, performance and pricing.

Peng Jiahao, a researcher at the Shanghai Artificial Intelligence Research Institute, said: "The pace of AI development is increasingly moving in China's favor. But both Chinese and US AI models are still facing challenges in reaching short-term breakeven and the AI industry is still far from achieving widespread profitability."

Relations: Goal is to build projects with lasting value

From page 1

Umarov said that China's achievements in economic development, digital transformation, technological modernization and the implementation of long-term national strategies offer valuable practical insights for Kazakhstan.

China is an important strategic partner of Kazakhstan, and understanding the thinking behind China's domestic and foreign policies has significance beyond academic research, he said.

"The more deeply we understand China's decision-making logic and long-term development goals, the more effectively we can improve the quality and efficiency of our cooperation," Umarov said.

Manarbek Kabaziyev, deputy chairman of the board of the Foreign Policy Research Institute of Kazakhstan's Foreign Ministry, said the next decade of Belt and Road cooperation should be evaluated not by the number of projects, but by whether they create lasting value, spur innovation and strengthen trust among countries.

Infrastructure is not an end in itself, he said, but a foundation for higher-level cooperation. Kazakhstan should build on improved connectivity to develop a future-oriented modern economy, with transportation corridors supporting not only trade but also closer industrial, investment and technological links.

Aliya Mussabekova, head of the International Security Department at the Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies under the president of Kazakhstan, said bilateral economic cooperation has moved beyond traditional trade, with the focus expanding from infrastructure and resource development to manufacturing and high-tech industries. This shift is increasingly supporting the modernization of both countries.

China-Kazakhstan trade reached a record $48.7 billion in 2025, up 11 percent year-on-year, according to Chinese figures. Data from Kazakhstan's national investment promotion company shows that cumulative Chinese investment has exceeded $30 billion, with more than 8,000 Chinese-backed enterprises operating there.

Mussabekova said the two countries' development priorities also converge in digitalization and artificial intelligence. Kazakhstan has designated 2026 as its Year of Digitalization and Artificial Intelligence, while China has made digital development, technological innovation and AI national priorities, opening further opportunities in the digital economy, satellite and remote-sensing technologies and space communications.

Yet a lasting and stable strategic partnership cannot be built solely on economic indicators, she noted, saying that "long-term strength depends even more on mutual trust between the two peoples".

That trust is also being strengthened by closer people-to-people ties. A mutual visa-free agreement for ordinary passport holders took effect in November 2023, and Kazakh figures show that the number of Chinese visitors to Kazakhstan reached nearly 1 million in 2025.

Education cooperation is giving those ties a longer-term foundation. At L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, a Luban Workshop jointly established with China gives students access to AI, robotics and digital manufacturing.

Gulmira Bekmanova, vice-rector for digitalization at the university, said the workshop is "not merely a laboratory or a classroom" but a practice-oriented teaching platform where students learn both advanced technologies and how to apply them to real-world problems.

"The Luban Workshop has become an important symbol of Kazakhstan-China educational cooperation," Bekmanova said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:09 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:09 PM

WORLD

Ceuta crisis raises EU frontier concerns

By **JULIAN SHEA** in London and **HOU CHENCHEN** in Beijing

The interior ministers of the 27 European Union member states held a virtual meeting on Tuesday to discuss tightening up internal borders following the scenes at the Spanish enclave of Ceuta in North Africa over the weekend.

The EU's migration chief said on Tuesday the bloc successfully met a "test" of its border security and "resilience to disinformation" in the handling of a migrant rush into Spain's North African territory of Ceuta.

"These past few days were a test of our European resilience, a test of the security of our external borders," EU Commissioner for Internal Affairs and Migration Magnus Brunner told reporters following Tuesday talks with the bloc's interior ministers.

"Europe, I think, has definitely passed this test."

Member states recognized Madrid's "immediate and efficient" response, Spanish Interior Minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska told reporters on Tuesday.

The minister added that Madrid had worked as fast as possible to install a maritime barrier off Ceuta's coast.

As for Schengen Area issue, Marlaska said: "It is clear that in no way was the Schengen Area compromised in this crisis" as the North African enclave is not included in the agreement.

He added that "there was no possibility of any secondary movement" of migrants from Ceuta to continental Europe.

France's interior minister also said on Tuesday that EU ministers had agreed the Schengen Area was "not the problem" after calls to suspend Spain from the bloc following the influx of migrants.

As the meeting unfolded, another migration incident was playing out in the English Channel, underscoring the multiple border pressures Europe is facing.

French and British teams rescued 157 migrants who were trying to cross the English Channel after the engine of their boat caught fire, French maritime authorities said.

Helping hand

EU has offered Spain aid, including emergency financial assistance, to help strengthen the protection of the external border in Ceuta, said Brunner, EU migration chief.

He added that the events in Ceuta last week, when about 70,000 people came over the border from Morocco into the Spanish enclave, were fueled by criminal smuggling networks and social media disinformation.

The Euronews website reports that the incident happened after false rumors began to circulate on social media saying that the border was open, with others showing where coast guard patrols were active, and more suggesting places where people could swim across.

Media agencies said there is a specific local angle that goes some way toward explaining the sudden nature and scale of the crisis, however.

The BBC noted that for decades, there has been an unresolved territorial dispute between Morocco and neighboring Algeria over the Western Sahara region, which was previously under Spanish control, making for a diplomatically sensitive three-way relationship in the area.

The broadcaster commented that a similar, smaller influx into Ceuta took place in 2021 after a regional opponent of Morocco was allowed treatment at a Spanish hospital, and that the latest incident came just two weeks after Spain's prime minister paid a visit to Algeria. It also observed that the authorities in Rabat have "already shown readiness to deploy migration pressure as a retaliatory tactic against Spain".

Contact the writers at houchenchen@chinadaily.com.cn

Happy birthday Bao Li



The Smithsonian's National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute in Washington marks the fifth birthday of Bao Li, one of a pair of giant pandas who arrived in Washington in October 2024. The bear enjoyed a special panda-friendly "fruitsicle" cake made by the Zoo's Department of Nutrition Science on Tuesday morning, as crowds gathered at the David M. Rubenstein Family Giant Panda Habitat. SHA HANTING / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Asian economies face risks to food security

Region sees challenges amid El Nino, Mideast energy supply shocks: Experts

By **PRIME SARMIENTO** in Hong Kong
prime@chinadailyapac.com

Asia's economies are staring down a double shock: a looming super El Nino threatens to deepen food insecurity just as the Middle East crisis drives up energy and fertilizer costs.

Analysts said a prolonged dry spell could slash crop yields and push food prices further out of reach for consumers already squeezed by surging inflation.

"The impact of El Nino is just among the many crises that we are facing at the moment," said Paul Teng, a visiting senior fellow in the Climate Change in Southeast Asia Programme at the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute in Singapore.

Teng said geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, which have driven global oil prices higher, are rippling through Asia's transport and farm sectors, fueling inflation across the region. The surge has been compounded by what he called a "fertilizer shock", as the Middle East is a major exporter of crop nutrients.

He said that rising fertilizer costs are forcing farmers to cut back either on usage or on the land they plant this season. The squeeze on inputs is expected to weigh on harvests in the next crop cycle, adding another layer of pressure to food prices.

"On top of that is El Nino, which is like adding oil to fire," Teng told China Daily, referring to the periodic weather pattern that is expected to intensify further from this month, heightening the risks of extreme weather.

Oil prices started skyrocketing soon after the United States and Israel began attacking Iran on Feb 28. The Asian Development Bank, or ADB, said as the crisis in the Middle East evolved, inflation also rose across the developing Asia-Pacific region.

Headline inflation in the region increased from 2.9 percent in January to 4.1 percent in May on the back of higher global energy prices, the ADB said in its latest economic outlook report published in July.

The Manila-based lender said that since March, governments across the region have introduced measures to limit pass-through to consumer prices, including fuel subsidies, tax cuts, price controls, releases from strategic petroleum reserves and energy conservation policies. But inflationary pressures persist, with higher logistics and fertilizer costs spiking food prices.

The ADB sees inflation across the region hitting 4.3 percent by end-2026, up from the 3 percent recorded in 2025.

'Ripple effects'

Japanese investment bank Nomura said in its latest report that El Nino may lead to trade protectionism in the coming months. It noted that in the past, countries like India, Indonesia and Vietnam have resorted to export restrictions or outright export bans to prevent surge in domestic food prices. But while these measures can help in reining in local prices, the export bans have "ripple effects" as prices go up for food importers, it said.

The World Meteorological Organization, or WMO, said in a July 31 report that El Nino continues to intensify steadily and is expected to dominate global climate patterns until October 2026. The WMO also forecast a positive Indian Ocean Dipole, or IOD — a climate pattern defined by differences in sea-surface temperatures that affects regional weather. An IOD can amplify regional climate impacts, including drought, floods and wildfire risks.

Khor Yu Leng, an economist at Segi Enam Advisors in Singapore, said the El Nino plus positive IOD combination presents a "higher-risk scenario" for Asian agriculture as this will reinforce dryness in most parts of Southeast Asia.

She said that rice is the "immediate flashpoint" because the Asian staple is a thinly-traded commodity and as such, weather disruptions and export controls can trigger outsized price spikes.

Khor said El Nino's impact on palm oil, a key cash crop, "tends to be more lagged, but potentially broader". She said El Nino-linked dryness reduces fresh fruit bunch yields several months later while extreme rainfall and floods can also disrupt harvesting and logistics.

Unlike rice, palm oil is deeply integrated into the global food, oleochemical — chemical compounds derived from natural fats and oils, typically of plant or animal origin — and biofuel supply chains. Khor said this is why tighter palm oil supply can spill quickly into edible oils and energy markets.

She also cited corn as the "hidden protein inflation story" because Asian countries rely on imports from Brazil and Argentina. If El Nino hits South American corn harvest, Khor said Asian livestock raisers have to deal with higher feed costs.

China's electric buses fuel Baku's green transport

BAKU — "When I began driving electric buses, I could immediately tell that they were very different from the buses I had driven before. They run quietly and smoothly, with hardly any noise or vibration. Most importantly, they are environmentally friendly," said Nurlan Salmanli, a 34-year-old bus driver in Baku.

Salmanli previously drove buses powered by compressed natural gas. Ahead of COP29 in 2024, 160 BYD electric buses imported from China entered service in Baku, the Azerbaijan's capital, replacing the conventional buses on the routes he operated.

"Passengers really like them, especially older people and families with children. These modern buses make public transport in Baku more convenient and comfortable, and help reduce noise on the streets. I hope to see more buses like these in the future," Salmanli said.

Salmanli's experience reflects a broader transformation taking place in Baku's public transport system as Azerbaijan accelerates its transition toward greener mobility. According to BYD, an electric bus traveling 90,000 kilometers a year can save about 27,000 liters of diesel and reduce carbon dioxide emissions by approximately 66 tons annually.

Data released by the Azerbaijan Land Transport Agency in spring 2026 showed that about 2,350 buses operate in Baku each day, including more than 300 BYD electric buses. Some of these buses were assembled locally at the Azerbaijan Energy Automotive Factory, or AEAF, in the Sumgayit Industrial Park, about 30 km northwest of Baku.

"I have been involved in the AEAF project since its early stages. When the first bus rolled off the production line, we felt very happy and proud. It was the beginning of a new stage for our factory and our team," said Orkhan Gambarov, the factory's deputy director for production.

The factory was established through a joint initiative of the Azerbaijan Business Development Fund, SARDA Group and BYD. Its first locally assembled 12-meter BYD electric bus was delivered in September 2025.

According to Gambarov, major components are delivered to the factory, where assembly, quality control and the necessary inspections are carried out. To date, the factory has delivered 300 locally assembled BYD electric buses.

"Since the beginning of the project, the Chinese team has provided us with great support. Our Chinese colleagues have supported us at every stage, from technical issues to quality control. They have also shared their production experience and knowledge with our local team," Gambarov said, adding that the strong collaboration between the Chinese and local teams has been one of the main reasons for the project's success.

'Fascinating field'

The factory currently has about 100 Azerbaijani employees. Among its first technical staff members was Rizvan Gulaliyev, who is now a chief foreman at the plant.

He said electric bus production was a new and fascinating field for him, and that the project had helped him acquire valuable knowledge and hands-on experience in electric vehicle manufacturing.

"Chinese specialists conducted training directly on the production line and demonstrated the correct sequence of assembly operations. They also trained us to operate the equipment, conduct diagnostics and follow quality standards. I hope to grow with the factory and become a more skilled specialist in modern automotive technologies," Gulaliyev said.

The Project Management Department under Azerbaijan's Ministry of Economy coordinates and oversees the implementation of the AEAF project. Zamir Dibirov, head of the department, said cooperation with Chinese companies helps Azerbaijan transition from being solely an importer of green technologies to becoming a producer and operator of new-energy transport solutions, with the potential to serve regional markets.

"Azerbaijan highly values its cooperation with China and would welcome greater participation by Chinese companies in the country's new-energy and advanced manufacturing sectors. We see considerable potential in battery technologies, charging infrastructure, smart mobility systems and other fields," Dibirov said.

XINHUA



Technicians conduct maintenance on an electric bus at a BYD electric bus service station in Baku, Azerbaijan, on July 23.
CHEN JUNFENG / XINHUA

Jingdezhen's porcelain heritage recognition a lesson in shared protection



Yang Han
Reporter's log

FIRST PERSON VIEW

What does it mean for a country to be among the ones with the most World Heritage sites in the world?

For China, that question carried added weight on July 25, when the Jingdezhen Handicraft Porcelain Industry Sites became the country's 61st UNESCO site.

Held from July 19 to 29, the 48th session of the UNESCO panel added 25 new sites to the World Heritage List, including the first-ever inscriptions for three African countries — Comoros, Sao Tome and Principe, and South Sudan. The committee also granted emergency protection to three newly inscribed World Heritage sites and added three previously recognized sites to the danger list.

Among them, Jingdezhen stood out not only as China's sole nomination for 2026 but also as the first site explicitly themed around porcelain, and China's first-ever "industrial heritage" nomination.

Located in East China's Jiangxi province, the Jingdezhen Handicraft Porcelain Sites comprise five component areas that trace the evolution of handicraft porcelain production from the 10th to the 19th centuries in the city now often known as the "porcelain capital" of China.

But beyond the numbers, what struck me most was the shared commitment among nations to protect heritage as a legacy for all humanity, and how China's role in that effort was perceived by those I spoke with.

"China is bringing a lot to the World Heritage List," said Alessandro Balsamo, head of the Nominations Unit at the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. "And of course, this is not just an honor to be on top of this list, but it represents also a big responsibility."

"It is very important for all the countries to share their experience on their sites," said Aseela Almoalla Alhashmi, director-general of the Fujairah Environment Authority and a member of the United Arab Emirates delegation.

During the session, the UAE successfully had Wadi Wurayah, a national park in Fujairah that hosts 1,099 species, inscribed as its first UNESCO-listed natural heritage site.

When I asked about China's growing role in international heritage cooperation, Alhashmi mentioned that she had also participated in the World Congress of Biosphere Reserves in Hangzhou in 2025 and said she believes the Global Civilization Initiative proposed by China is important for the world and future generations.

For smaller nations with limited resources, this cooperation is even more practical.

Sandra Mascarenhas, scientific coordinator of the Tarrafal Concentration Camp at the Cultural Heritage Institute of Cabo Verde, told me that her country, which has only one World Heritage Site, depends on international cooperation with partners such as China to secure financial support and capacity building.

"Last year, we were in Guangzhou, (where) there was a symposium about cooperation between Africa, China and UNESCO," said Mascarenhas. "It was very good because it helped us reformulate our nomination and helped us achieve some monetary funds."

During the latest event in Busan, South Korea, there was also a series of side events co-organized by governments, institutions and companies from China, sharing China's experience in nominations, the adoption of technology in heritage protection, and the country's call to advance international cooperation in the sector.

Every one of those events saw the rooms filled to capacity and some were so packed that latecomers had to stand along the walls. Many participants stayed on after the session to exchange ideas with Chinese organizers. It was a clear sign of the international community's interest in China's heritage experience.

As Balsamo, the UNESCO official, told me during the interview, the honor of being among the top on the World Heritage List comes with a big responsibility to show the way for other countries and to become partners in multilateral cooperation.

In Busan, I saw that responsibility being acknowledged with more than just words. At a time when heritage is facing unprecedented challenges from climate change and geopolitical conflicts, that partnership feels all the more valuable in protecting the shared legacy of all humanity.

The writer is a reporter with China Daily Asia Pacific in Hong Kong.

Contact the writer at kelly@chinadailyapac.com

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:09 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:09 PM

WORLD

Hostilities escalate over the Black Sea

MOSCOW/KYIV — The Russia-Ukraine hostilities have escalated over the Black Sea and its coastal areas, authorities said.

Ukrainian drones have targeted multiple Russian resort cities along the Black Sea coast, while Russia has struck Ukrainian vessels transporting military supplies.

Seven people were killed and at least 40 others were injured in a Ukrainian drone attack on Arkhipo-Osipovka, a Black Sea resort village in Russia's Krasnodar Krai region on Monday, according to the regional emergency response center.

Meanwhile, the Russian Defense Ministry reported on Monday that its unmanned aerial vehicles struck four bulk carriers ferrying military cargo that supported military operations of the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

The ministry said that two bulk carriers unloading military supplies were targeted at the port of Mykolaiv, a river port situated on the Southern Bug River, about 65 kilometers inland from the Black Sea. Two other cargo ships carrying military material were attacked in the Black Sea waters.

Escalating attacks by both sides on shipping in the Black Sea have reawakened fears that global food security could be put at risk.

Turkiye on Tuesday repeated its appeal for both Russia and Ukraine to ensure the safety of navigation in the Black Sea after two Turkish-owned ships were attacked by drones after leaving the Russian port of Novorossiysk.

A Turkish Foreign Ministry statement expressed concerns that the conflict is increasingly spreading across the Black Sea, threatening civilian shipping, and warned such incidents could have broader consequences, including for the global food supply, as important amounts of grain, fertilizers and other key produce move through those waters.

In other developments on the battlefield, five people were killed and six others injured in a Ukrainian drone attack on Tuesday morning in Moscow Oblast, regional governor Andrei Vorobyov said on his Max channel.

Elsewhere, a regional official in Sumy in Ukraine's northeast said Russian attacks killed one person in Sumy on Tuesday.

Oleh Hryhorov, the regional governor, said on Telegram that three locations in the Kovpakivsky District were struck, with private homes and infrastructure coming under attack.

One day earlier, Ivan Fedorov, a regional chief, said Russian planes dropped eight powerful glide bombs in a span of 90 minutes on residential districts of Zaporizhzhia, killing one person and wounding dozens of others.

In another development, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky dismissed Ukraine's ambassador to the United States, Olha Stefanishyna, according to a decree published by the presidential office on Monday.

Stefanishyna, who had served as ambassador since last year, said in a Facebook post that she had requested to be relieved of her duties for personal reasons. She described her service in Washington as "the greatest honor" of her life.

"We have increased the supply of American weapons and maintained support precisely when the political environment in Washington was not in our favor," she said.

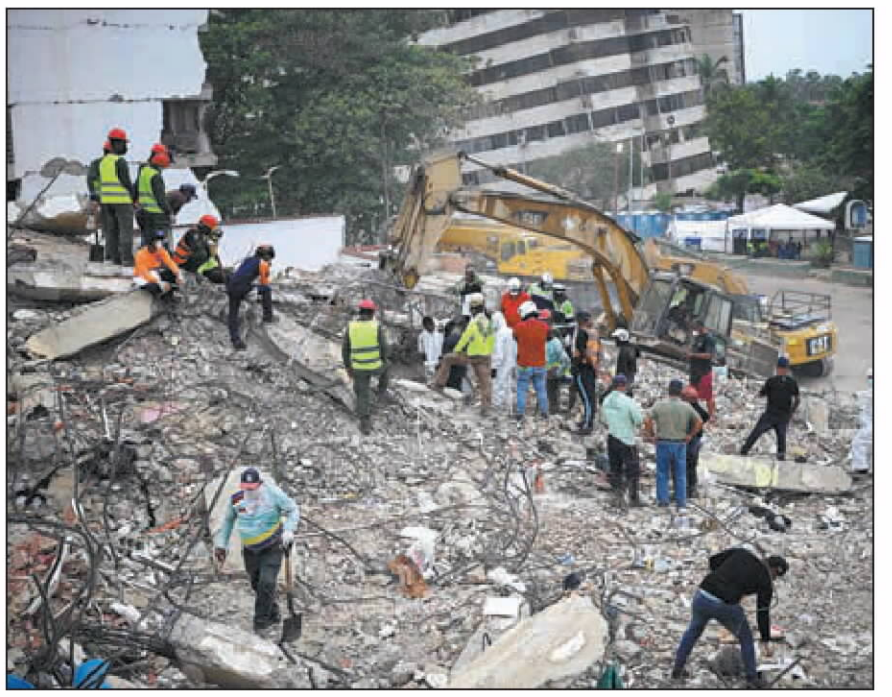
Zelensky has not announced a successor to the post.

The move comes after a government reshuffle launched by Zelensky in July and at a time when Kyiv is seeking continued US military support amid its conflict with Russia.

Zelensky had appointed new national security and foreign intelligence chiefs earlier this week.

XINHUA—AGENCIES

Search for survivors



Rescue teams and volunteers search for bodies amid the rubble of a collapsed building in Caraballeda, Venezuela, on Monday. The twin quakes that shattered Venezuela in June killed 6,125 people, National Assembly President Jorge Rodriguez said on Monday. FEDERICO PARRA / AFP

Report gauges AI's effect on developing nations

World Bank assessment sees less job risk, but higher barriers to accessing benefits

By LIA ZHU in San Francisco
liazhu@chinadailyusa.com

While developing economies face lower job displacement risks from artificial intelligence compared with developed nations, gaps in infrastructure development, institutional capacity and relevant skill sets largely restrict their access to the benefits that AI has to offer, said a recent World Bank report.

According to the World Development Report 2026, which was released on Tuesday, only 4.5 percent of existing jobs in low- and middle-income countries are at risk of automation by generative AI, compared with 14.2 percent in high-income countries.

At the same time, AI could meaningfully boost productivity in 16.2 percent of jobs in developing nations, which is not far below the estimated 18.7 percent for high-income countries.

While the labor market in developing economies is less concentrated in occupations that are most exposed to generative AI, the figures suggest that workers and businesses could still use the technology to improve performance.

The World Bank described the report as "the first comprehensive assessment" of the implications of AI for developing economies, offering a perspective that has often been overlooked in academic and policy discussions focused largely on developed nations.

"AI has thrown developing economies a lifeline, and they should seize it," said Indermit Gill, senior vice-president and chief economist at the World Bank Group in a news release.

Weakest average growth

Developing economies are currently experiencing their weakest average growth performance in three decades, the World Bank said, adding that AI could be particularly valuable in cases where shortages of skilled manpower and institutional capacity have hindered development.

According to the report, AI tools can help doctors diagnose illnesses, support teachers in adapting teaching methods, guide farmers in making planting decisions, provide advice to small businesses, and enable banks to assess borrowers without conventional credit histories.

Governments could use AI to improve tax collection, social programs, healthcare services, education curriculums and disaster response, thereby extending limited public-sector capacity across larger populations, the report also said.

Gill noted that developing economies do not require large AI models or big data centers to reap the benefits of the technology. "By adapting small, low-cost AI tools to local conditions, they can bring better medical care, education, judicial services and agricultural extension within the reach of millions," he said.

The World Bank cautioned that "such optimism should not be unbridled", indicating countries that could benefit most from AI are often the least prepared to embrace the technology.

Harnessing the power of AI calls for a dependable foundation involving a stable electricity supply, affordable high-speed internet, capable institutions and skilled workers, but many developing economies have yet to achieve universal access even to electricity and the internet, it said.

The report shows that developing economies account for just 5 percent of high-performance computing capacity and 12 percent of secure internet servers. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, almost one-third of rural schools still lack a stable electricity supply, and more than two-thirds lack dependable internet connections.

While AI could significantly boost performance globally before the end of the decade, the opportunity is not guaranteed for all, the World Bank said. It added that the most advanced AI systems are being developed by a small number of countries and companies, while many developing economies still lack the basic infrastructure needed to effectively use AI.

Although adopting existing generative AI tools is less expensive, imported systems may perform poorly when applied to languages, cultures and public services inadequately represented in their training data. For example, more than 2,000 languages spoken in Africa are neglected in major language models, according to the report's concept note.

Another concern, the report said, is that governments that lack the expertise or data needed to embrace these systems could become dependent on a small number of AI solution vendors, and those dominant vendors could shape standards and regulatory frameworks in those countries.

Three-step strategy

The World Bank called on developing economies to follow a three-step strategy — adopting available AI tools, adapting them to local conditions and advancing toward frontier development over time.

This approach would allow governments to initially focus on practical, lower-cost applications, rather than making expensive attempts to reproduce the most advanced models before basic foundations are in place, it said.

Gaurav Nayyar, director of the World Development Report 2026, warned that the window to get it right is narrow. "Developing countries that build the foundations now — power, connectivity, skills and institutions — will be positioned to adopt and adapt AI for their people," he said.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn

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

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1886

Chinese market keeps wine exports flowing

By ALEXIS HOOI in Sydney
alexishooi@chinadaily.com.cn

Australian wine exports fell to a record low in line with global consumption trends, but the Chinese mainland remained its largest export market by value in the pillar sector, according to the latest analysis.

The exports fell year-on-year by 7 percent in value to A$2.3 billion ($1.6 billion) and 6 percent in volume to 598 million liters in the year ended June 2026, statutory authority Wine Australia's export report released on July 29 showed.

It was the first time that export volume had fallen below 600 million liters since 2004, with the fall mirroring "a broader global trend of declining wine consumption over the past decade", it said.

Peter Bailey, market insights manager at Wine Australia, said the challenges facing Australian wine exporters are not unique, with other wine-producing nations facing the same conditions.

Data from multiple sources suggested that the decline in wine consumption globally reflected changing consumer behavior that is "reshaping demand around the world", he said.

'Historic downturn'

The total export figures "reflect increasingly difficult trading conditions across many of Australia's key export markets, driven by a historic downturn in global wine consumption", according to Wine Australia.

Worldwide wine consumption has fallen to its lowest level since 1961, as consumers increasingly moderate alcohol intake, face cost-of-living pressures and shift toward alternative beverages, it said.

While global trading conditions remain challenging, Australian wine continues to perform relatively well in many key markets, Bailey said.

The Chinese mainland remained Australia's largest export market by value, despite exports falling 15 percent to A$756 million, according to Wine Australia.

The Chinese market is no longer being driven by the restocking of Australian wine, Bailey said, amid "a more mature and demand-led phase" that also reflected a smaller and slower-growing sector.

Michael Harvey, senior analyst in dairy and consumer foods at global agribusiness banking cooperative Rabobank, told China Daily that the wine sector is going through a period of rebalancing and resizing.

"There are some weather conditions that played a role, but there's also been clearly a structural decline in the size of the industry. So we're actually seeing some vineyard removals, which is why we're seeing reduced production in Australia to reflect the challenging operating environment," said Harvey, who is based in Melbourne, Victoria state.

"Margins are under pressure for a lot of the wine, a lot of the vineyards and growers, which is why we're getting a supply response. So that naturally has led to less production," he said.

"There's also a structural reset in terms of the amount of alcohol we're consuming, so that's a trend you've seen in a lot of key markets and China would be part of that," Harvey said.

"At some point in time it'll find a better balance and you'll start to see some stabilization," he said, adding that there are still segments in the sector that are performing well.

"Premium wines are performing better than some of the other varieties, so it's not a linear decline everywhere."

Jack Wu, managing director Greater China for major Australian winemaker Treasury Wine Estates, noted that China has long been an important market for Penfolds, and the brand has built a strong connection with Chinese consumers over many years.

The winemaker is headquartered in Melbourne and includes the popular Penfolds label in its portfolio.

"We're focused on growing that relationship for the long term by staying close to how people are shopping and enjoying wine, supporting healthy and sustainable channels, and creating more occasions for consumers to discover and share Penfolds," he said.

Feline revival



The Amur Tiger Center releases on Monday an adult Siberian tiger named Ymit into the Ile-Balkhash State Nature Reserve as part of a joint program with Russia to repopulate the area with tigers, a species declared extinct in these parts decades ago. AMUR TIGER CENTER / TASS

Briefly

EUROPE

Romania reroutes cooling water to reactor

Romania blew up a rock outcrop on Monday to help divert vital cooling water from the drought-hit Danube River to its sole working nuclear reactor, an unprecedented measure that underscores the scale of an energy crunch across the region. In neighboring Hungary, authorities said they might be able to eke out two more days of power from their only atomic plant, which has been hit by falling levels in the Danube that it also relies on as a coolant. Heat and drought have lowered river levels across large parts of Europe, raising concerns about water supplies, river transport and power generation. Both governments have asked people and companies to cut power use to ease demand.

AFRICA

Ebola death toll rises to 1,700 in DR Congo

Ebola has killed more than 1,700 people in the Democratic Republic of Congo in the fastest-growing outbreak of the disease, data showed. As of Tuesday, 3,802 cases had been recorded, with 1,707 deaths, according to latest update. It is not clear when the outbreak will reach its peak, Africa CDC Director-General Jean Kaseya said on Tuesday.

ETHIOPIA

Landslide kills 14 in Amhara region

Fourteen people were killed in a landslide near a monastery in Ethiopia's Amhara region, the state-run Amhara Media Corporation said late on Monday. The landslide occurred near the Tsadkane Mariam Monastery in Amhara's North Shewa zone, the broadcaster said. Search teams supported by excavation machinery were working to recover bodies, it said. The Amhara Media Corporation report did not say what caused the landslide, but independent news reports said it was triggered by heavy rains. Ethiopia is in its main rainy season, which runs from June to September.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:09 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:09 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Litigation against Section 301 tariffs clear sign of growing divide in the US

The new challenge to the United States administration's tariff policy reflects the increasing discontent that is being aggravated by the inflation caused by energy price hikes due to the Middle East crisis triggered by Washington and Tel Aviv. While the litigation initiated by a coalition of 25 states, mostly Democrat-led, against the Section 301 tariffs on Monday underscores the growing partisan divide, businesses oppose the tariffs primarily because of the rising costs imposed on the economy.

Those hoping the judges of the US Court of International Trade hearing the lawsuit brought by the states will simply strike down the tariffs should temper their expectations. Unlike the earlier International Emergency Economic Powers Act case, in which the US president was judged to have exceeded his authority, the US administration enters the dispute in a stronger position.

This time the US administration has imposed tariffs under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, which expressly authorizes the president to impose tariffs in response to "unfair" foreign trade practices. The government's argument is that it has acted within the limits of the authority the US Congress delegated. The court is therefore unlikely to spend much time debating whether tariffs make sound economic policy. It will instead ask two narrower questions: Did Congress authorize tariffs of this breadth, imposed in this manner?

Historically, Section 301 investigations have focused on specific countries, specific conduct and proportionate remedies. Section 301 was never conceived as a blank check for redesigning global trade policy. Congress enacted it as a targeted enforcement mechanism against identifiable "unfair" foreign practices, not as a universal tariff authority affecting nearly all US imports.

The new tariffs, covering imports from 59 economies and the European Union on the basis of alleged "forced-labor" concerns, represent a dramatic expansion of the statute's traditional reach. The plaintiffs therefore argue that Section 301 has become a substitute vehicle for policies the US Supreme Court has already rejected. As they claimed, the US administration has merely exchanged one statutory label for another while pursuing the same sweeping tariff regime.

If the "forced-labor" investigations are found merely to provide legal cover for replacing invalidated IEEPA tariffs, the US administration's position will become more vulnerable. So whether the courts are willing to scrutinize the factual basis of those "forced-labor" findings may prove just as important as interpreting the statute itself.

Judges should exercise their own independent judgment when interpreting Section 301 rather than accepting the Office of the US Trade Representative's reading of it. And the court's increasingly influential Major Questions Doctrine requires clear congressional authorization before government agencies exercise powers of vast economic and political significance. A tariff regime affecting almost the entire US import market plainly raises questions of that magnitude.

So the administrative record assumes unusual importance. The court will examine whether the USTR followed the Congress-prescribed procedures — investigations, public hearings, factual findings and reasoned explanations — or whether tariff rates were chosen first and justified later.

Tariffs remain taxes, and taxes ultimately fall on someone. The US administration's dealmaking tool has become an instrument of economic coercion directed as much at US businesses as foreign governments. The litigation is likely to take years reaching the Federal Circuit and perhaps the US Supreme Court. In that time, the tariffs will continue to tax the US economy unless they are revoked.

While many blame US tariff policies for the rise of unilateralism and protectionism, the deeper concern lies in the political and institutional soil from which those impulses have grown. The real issue is a Congress that has increasingly tolerated the expansion of executive authority for partisan interests. Courts can police the boundaries of executive power, but only Congress can redraw them. Whether the polarized legislature can still rise above partisan divisions and vested interests to reclaim its constitutional authority over trade will ultimately determine whether the US' political system can overcome its challenges through self-correction.

Hyping 'China Shock' won't benefit Germany

The claim by Tanja Gonner, chief executive of the Federation of German Industries, or BDI, in a Monday report of Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, that a "China Shock 2.0" "threatens" the entire German industrial system is a lamentable and deeply flawed example of scaremongering.

Reportedly, Germany is mapping out vulnerabilities in China's supply chain in order to use this information as leverage in a possible trade war with China.

Some Western politicians and analysts find it far easier to make China a scapegoat than to confront the real challenges festering at home — whether soaring energy costs, suffocating bureaucratic red tape, or the painfully slow pipeline from lab to market. If their real objective were industrial renewal rather than political point-scoring, they would not have overlooked the "China Opportunity 2.0" that proponents of the "China Shock 2.0" narrative have intentionally erased from the debate.

The experience of German businesses in China tells a very different story from Gonner's alarmist warnings. China reclaimed its position as Germany's largest trading partner in 2025, with a bilateral trade of 253 billion euros ($299 billion), up 2.7 percent from 2024, underscoring the depth of their economic complementarity.

The point was reinforced this February, when German Chancellor Friedrich Merz arrived in China accompanied by senior executives from dozens of Germany's biggest companies, visiting some of the leading Chinese technology companies in search of deeper industrial partnerships.

If German boardrooms truly believe the rhetoric of "China Shock 2.0" and the Merz government believes a trade war with China is unavoidable, they have a curious way of showing it.

German enterprises have long been beneficiaries of China's market and supply chains. The BDI must understand that the competitive pressure its members feel is a normal feature of a dynamic global market. Instead of advocating an assertive posture, it should encourage German companies to explore the very market that has fueled their growth and to tap into the opportunities created by China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) with an open mind.

If some German industries are still not convinced, they need not look any further than Volkswagen, which has adjusted its research and development strategy based on the success of its R&D center in China. This has accelerated the company's transition from "hardware-defined vehicles" to "software-defined vehicles". Just as Volkswagen recognizes China's EV success as an "opportunity" to be seized, the German government should abandon its unfounded allegations of "currency manipulation" and "overcapacity" and play a constructive role in China-European Union trade consultations.

For multinational corporations, partnering with China today means embedding themselves in a vibrant ecosystem of innovation. It means gaining access not just to market share, but to a dynamic environment for self-iteration, technological upgrading and the cocreation of next-generation solutions.

The real and present concern for the German economy is its own inertia. Many Chinese travelers returning from Germany remark that a country once synonymous with punctuality and precision no longer feels quite the same. Train delays and disruptions to urban transport have become commonplace, while China's high-speed rail and metro systems — once seen as playing catch-up — now operate with a level of speed, reliability and punctuality that is taken for granted.

Anecdotes are not data, but they often capture broader truths. The contrast serves as a reminder that Germany, like some other advanced economies, faces its own structural challenges and would benefit from a more sober assessment of its domestic transition rather than attributing every competitive setback to China.

None of this is to deny Germany's unique strengths. It remains a global leader in advanced machinery, chemicals, industrial automation, environmental technology and precision manufacturing. Chinese companies have long regarded their German counterparts not as rivals to be feared but as partners from whom much could be learned. If a technological gap is grounds for fear, then should China have labeled the arrival of German companies in the 1980s and 1990s a "Germany Shock 1.0"?

What some in Germany appear to find harder to accept is that, in a growing number of industries, the flow of knowledge between China and Germany has become two-way. In fields such as electric vehicles, digital infrastructure and aspects of advanced manufacturing, the former student has, at least in some respects, become a teacher.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

FIFA boss' profiteering risks ruining the beautiful game

Under Sepp Blatter, FIFA became synonymous with patronage and scandal to many. Yet his successor Gianni Infantino, as head of the world football body, risks eclipsing even that legacy. His failed attempt to sell a stake in the World Cup to Thrive Capital, an investment company run by Josh Kushner, brother of Jared Kushner, the son-in-law of the United States president, looked uncomfortably like an offering to Washington, using football's greatest prize as political currency.

In essence, FIFA sought to sell a 20 percent stake in a new commercial subsidiary controlling World Cup revenues to a private equity firm tied to the US president's inner circle. The plan would reportedly have earned Infantino a commissioner-style role, paying around $30 million a year — five times his current salary.

The question now being asked is what else Infantino expected in return for further strengthening his standing with a US president he has repeatedly described as a close friend.

The backlash to the plan was predictable and entirely justified. The Union of European Football Associations and others were angered not only because they learned of the proposal through media reports, but because it violated a basic principle: the World Cup is not a private asset to be monetized for a handful of investors. Should commercial partners with political connections acquire a financial stake, the pressure to influence decisions will inevitably follow. At that point, FIFA would cease to be the guardian of the tournament and become its broker.

If investors closely associated with the White House stand to profit directly from football's biggest event, can FIFA credibly claim political neutrality? Countries already facing strained relations with the US, such as Iran, would have every reason to question whether commercial interests and political preferences might shape the tournament's administration. Even the perception of such influence would damage the World Cup's credibility.

With the deal abandoned and revolt spreading inside FIFA, Infantino's swagger has disappeared. Reports suggest Infantino repeatedly tried to reach the US president by phone before seeking support from US Secretary of State Marco Rubio under the banner of promoting football as the US' "soft power". Few were persuaded. As an insider bluntly put it, this was about saving his job, not promoting the sport. On Tuesday, FIFA denied the reports.

Infantino should remember that FIFA is still rebuilding its reputation after years of corruption scandals. Fresh questions have already emerged over allegations that political pressure influenced disciplinary decisions during this year's World Cup, including controversy surrounding the overturning of a red card shown to US striker Folarin Balogun. Whether those claims withstand scrutiny or not, immediately pursuing a business arrangement that appeared to favor the associates of the FIFA boss' close pal displayed astonishingly poor judgment.

Infantino insists he is expanding football's reach. He has proposed a bigger World Cup, more teams, more matches — and as hasn't escaped notice — more money-making opportunities. Expansion looks more like commercial opportunism than sporting vision. Every additional fixture creates more broadcasting slots, sponsorship inventory and advertising revenue, while concentrating influence among an ever-smaller circle of powerful hands.

The same philosophy underpins some of Infantino's so-called "innovations" such as mandatory "hydration breaks". Officially introduced for player welfare, they also create perfectly timed commercial pauses that interrupt football's natural rhythm. Infantino presents every change as progress, yet too often the beneficiaries are broadcasters, sponsors and executives rather than supporters.

Football belongs to the people. The FIFA president is supposed to protect that inheritance, not mortgage it. Infantino's failed World Cup stake sale exposed a governing philosophy in which the game's greatest treasure is no longer a public trust, but another asset to be traded among the powerful. That is precisely why the revolt against him deserves to succeed.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Revised rules will help boost innovation in IC design

Editor's note: *The China National Intellectual Property Administration has published explanations for revisions to the country's Regulations on the Protection of Layout-Designs of Integrated Circuits, publicized by the State Council on Monday. The experts include Huang Yunhua of the intellectual property institute of the China Industrial Control Systems Cyber Emergency Response Team, Li Shunde of the Institute of Law of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and Cui Guobin of the School of Law at Tsinghua University. Below are excerpts of their comments. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

Today, the process nodes of transistors for conventional integrated circuits are approaching their technological and physical limits. Disruptive technologies such as photonics and quantum technology have emerged, propelling the integrated circuit industry into the post-Moore's Law era, where competition revolves around new architectures, mechanisms, materials and devices.

Globally, countries are exploring ways to overcome the physical limitations of conventional integrated circuits and trying to develop new technologies for integrated circuits.

The revisions of the regulations include "the layout-designs of integrated circuits incorporating photonic, quantum and other functions" as designs eligible for protection. This reflects an accurate assessment of and proactive response to technological developments in the integrated circuit sector.

Integrated circuit design determines the performance, power consumption and competitiveness of chips. The revised regulations will enhance the protection of cutting-edge integrated circuit intellectual property and establish a system suited to the pace of technological innovation in China's integrated circuit industry.

Since 2022, there has been a rise in the number of applications filed in China for the registration of integrated circuit layout-designs incorporating photonic and quantum devices. The revised regulations are expected to further inspire innovators, boosting innovation and development in China's integrated circuit technology.

The revisions add an "originality statement" to the documents required to be submitted when registering a layout-design. This official document, submitted to the China National Intellectual Property Administration, defines the design's originality scope and demonstrates that it meets the required legal standards.

Exclusive rights to a layout-design are granted upon registration with the administration. Layout-designs which are not registered will not be protected under the regulations.

The revisions introduce a registration revocation procedure initiated by third parties. Anyone who finds that a registration fails to comply with the regulations may request the intellectual property administrative department of the State Council to revoke the registration.

To encourage the creation and utilization of layout-designs, the revised regulations say that legal persons or non-legal-person entities should grant reasonable rewards and remuneration to eligible people in accordance with the Law on Promoting the Transformation of Scientific and Technological Achievements and other relevant national rules.

The revised regulations also include a punitive damages system, saying that where an intentional and serious infringement upon the exclusive rights to a layout-design is committed, "the amount of compensation may be fixed at between one and five times the amount determined in accordance with the aforesaid methods." This provision reflects the goal of strengthening protection for layout-designs.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:09 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:09 PM

VIEWS

Li Yuheng

Clustering can rewrite the story of rural China

For years, China has invested heavily in rural revitalization, yet many villages remain trapped in a cycle of scattered resources, duplicated infrastructure, and limited industrial scale.

The core reason is straightforward: local governance and funding have traditionally treated each administrative village as an independent development unit. That approach is now changing.

China's "No. 1 central document" for 2026 advocates for a "classified, orderly, zone-based promotion of rural revitalization". The policy signals a profound shift from single-village autonomy to cluster-based, cross-village cooperation.

China's rural population has declined steeply from its 1995 peak of 859 million to 451 million in 2025, a decrease of 47.5 percent. Villages have moved along vastly different trajectories: some have grown steadily amid urban-rural integration, some have merged seamlessly into nearby towns, while others have shrunk and declined due to sustained population outflow.

The previous model allocated budgets village by village, leading to fragmented investment. A single village cannot sustain a specialty industry, build a competitive tourism brand, or attract professional operators.

Neighboring villages competed instead of cooperating, resulting in redundant roads, duplicated facilities, and price undercutting. This led to a lose-lose situation where many villages struggled to achieve economies of scale and public resources were spread too thin.

The new cluster development framework is built on three principles.

First, classified positioning assigns tailored development paths to individual villages based on their growth potential, location and resources.

Second, phased progress prioritizes improvements in transportation and public infrastructure before rolling out public services and industrial projects.

Third, spatial integration groups neighboring villages with complementary resources into functional clusters. These clusters transcend rigid administrative boundaries to integrate land, capital and talent, achieving economies of scale unattainable by individual villages.

A typical cluster may combine one village's natural scenic resources, another's specialty agricultural products, and a third's surplus rural labor. Spatial restructuring reduces redundant infrastructure spending and encourages functional specialization.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Instead of competing for identical projects, villages within a cluster focus on differentiated roles in production, processing, tourism and logistics based on their strengths. The result is coordinated revitalization that transforms rural decline into collective growth.

Zhejiang province has taken the lead in piloting this approach. In 2025, the province identified 226 provincial-level core villages for driving the development of 1,447 surrounding villages. These rural clusters host 1,094 key projects, with planned investment nearing 33 billion yuan ($4.85 billion) over the next three years.

Three institutional innovations underpin the effective operation of rural clusters.

First, cross-village Party building alliances establish collaborative governance mechanisms, breaking administrative barriers between villages. Second, professional management teams serve as impartial coordinators, replacing outdated zero-sum competition with cluster-wide win-win planning that allows all villages to share the benefits of unified regional branding and industrial development.

Third, binding institutional rules firmly protect farmers' legitimate rights, ensuring that there are no changes in collective asset ownership, no damage to traditional rural landscapes and cultural features, and no forced merger of villages. These safeguards are critical to maintaining grassroots trust and long-term social stability.

It is important to clarify that cluster development does not aim for uniform prosperity for every village. Population decline and the gradual disappearance of some small villages are natural outcomes of demographic and economic changes.

The cluster model allows resources to shift away from shrinking settlements while maintaining basic public services for the remaining residents. This realistic approach avoids unnecessary fiscal expenditure and prevents the futile effort of sustaining unviable villages.

Rural depopulation, aging and fragmented public investment are universal global challenges, faced by both developed and developing economies alike.

Many countries have relied on village-centric rural development policies. Though well-intentioned, these programs often fall into the same trap of fragmentation and low efficiency.

China's cluster development formula offers valuable global insights. Reconfiguring governance from isolated villages to functional rural clusters can unlock latent resources and developmental potential that conventional village-level planning cannot achieve.

While no single model can be copied wholesale across borders, the core principle is universal: development requires scale, and administrative boundaries should not determine rural modernization.

Embracing cluster-based thinking will drive China's rural revitalization and offer practical references for global rural governance.

The author is a professor at the School of Humanities and Law in Northeastern University, and a senior associate editor of the Journal of Rural Studies.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Chris Pereira

Shenzhen's journey from exports to expertise

Over the past year Chinese companies expanding overseas have drawn global attention with everything from Labubu collectibles to electric vehicles and even coffee brands. Yet beneath these eye-catching exports lies a more profound and consequential trend: the quiet emergence of truly global businesses that integrate technology, supply chains, and industrial capabilities with local investment.

Global Lens

China's outbound direct investment reached $174.38 billion in 2025, up 7.1 percent year-on-year, according to China's Ministry of Commerce. Analysts point out that a significant share of these flows is directed toward the Asia-Pacific region, where manufacturing-heavy greenfield investment and capacity development projects are expanding rapidly, particularly across ASEAN economies.

At the heart of this outward momentum is Shenzhen, long a symbol of China's reform and opening-up era, and today the country's powerhouse of foreign trade, innovation and advanced manufacturing. As China's top-performing city for foreign trade, Shenzhen is exporting not just products, but entire industrial ecosystems. Its giant corporations such as Huawei, Tencent and BYD are building strong operations across the ASEAN region.

Take BYD for example. The global leader in EVs has established a manufacturing base in Rayong in Thailand and another EV facility in Subang in Indonesia.

BYD isn't just selling cars in these markets, it is transplanting the industrial model of Shenzhen — battery technology, supply chain coordination and local employment — in a local market while building a regional manufacturing node.

To be sure, this is not a recent development. This transfer of Shenzhen's industrial knowledge and technological innovation has been going on for a long time.

When a BYD battery pack crosses the border, it carries decades of electrochemical research, a finely tuned manufacturing ecosystem built over generations, and, increasingly, a local partnership structure that transfers real industrial knowledge to the destination economy.

DJI tells a different version of the same story. The Shenzhen-based drone maker holds an estimated 70 percent of the global market for consumer drones. Its agricultural drones are widely used across Southeast Asia to automate planting and protect crops. In markets such as Thailand, Vietnam and Malaysia, the company has trained thousands of local operators and developed a dense network of dealers and service providers.

DJI did not just build a market presence, but created an embedded local ecosystem of drone pilots, distributors and service firms.

In this sense, Shenzhen's "exports" today are fundamentally different from what "Made in China" meant 20 years ago.

Today, leading Shenzhen enterprises are not just shipping products abroad; they are exporting their operational expertise and innovation frameworks to build global industrial ecosystems.

It is therefore fitting that the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in November will be hosted in Shenzhen. This marks the third time China has hosted APEC, after Shanghai in 2001 and Beijing in 2014. But while those editions signaled financial and political capital, Shenzhen has been chosen for its industrial capabilities and openness to global trade.

China's theme for the APEC meet, "Building an Asia-Pacific Community to Prosper Together", paired with its priorities of openness, innovation and cooperation, closely reflects Shenzhen's own development trajectory. This city has grown by keeping its doors open and promoting greater global engagement and trade.

The APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting is a genuine opportunity for Asia-Pacific economies to engage seriously with Chinese partners in new energy, AI infrastructure and advanced manufacturing.

They stand to gain not just products but production know-how, investment, and supply chain integration, building on a trend that is already underway: from Vietnam's electronics clusters anchored by Chinese supply chain investment to EV manufacturing hubs across the region.

Forty-five years ago, Shenzhen was mostly rural farmland. Today it is home to some of the world's most innovative technology companies and has become a powerful argument for what open, collaborative globalization can achieve. As APEC leaders gather there in November, they won't need a presentation to understand the Shenzhen model: outside the conference halls they will have living proof of what the next wave of international collaboration — Globalization 2.0 — looks like.

The author is the founder and CEO of iMpact, a communications and business consulting group.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Li Fengliang

Can artificial intelligence help prepare graduates for tomorrow's jobs?

Artificial intelligence is rapidly reshaping the labor market, automating tasks such as routine copywriting, basic data analysis, conventional coding, repetitive administrative tasks and entry-level design work. As these jobs disappear or change, employers are increasingly demanding a different mix of skills from graduates.

This transformation comes at a difficult moment for higher education. While the number of university graduates continues to grow, structural unemployment has become more pronounced.

Under pressure to improve graduates' job prospects, universities across China are restructuring their academic programs. Many institutions are introducing AI-related majors, promoting "AI plus X" interdisciplinary education or adopting broader admissions models.

Responding to changes in the labor market is both reasonable and necessary. Universities cannot ignore technological, industrial and employment shifts. But they must also confront a harder question: Can they transform themselves quickly — and responsibly — to meet these new demands?

Building a robust academic program takes time. Universities need qualified faculty, coherent curricula, appropriate facilities and opportunities for practical training. These elements cannot be created simply by changing the name of a department or adding several technical courses.

Without sufficient preparation, professional restructuring can easily become an emergency response to employment anxiety.

Courses might focus narrowly on training students to use the latest tools, while education itself is reduced to preparing for currently available jobs. Though seemingly practical, such reforms risk creating deeper problems: an oversupply of similarly trained graduates, weak foundational knowledge, limited adaptability and a gradual erosion of the university's educational mission.

Introducing a new major does not automatically produce better talent. If universities rush into fashionable fields without understanding their intellectual foundations, required capabilities or real industrial demand, they may simply replace one mismatch with another.

The problem is compounded by the speed of technological change.

Technology often evolves faster than the university education cycle. A field that appears highly promising when students begin their degrees may have changed fundamentally by the time they graduate.

Specific tools may become outdated, and established methods may be replaced by new technological paradigms.

AI should be incorporated throughout teaching and learning. Students should learn to use intelligent tools effectively and responsibly.

Universities that merely chase each new trend could therefore produce graduates who are doubly disadvantaged: lacking the depth of traditional disciplinary education and also unprepared for the next stage of technological change.

Academic reform must therefore involve a deeper redesign of curricula, teaching methods and talent-development models.

Rather than building isolated AI schools or programs, universities should develop strong "AI plus X" platforms. Artificial intelligence should be integrated with engineering, medicine, agriculture, the natural sciences, the humanities and the social sciences. This requires deeper cooperation between departments and breaking down long-standing barriers.

The aim is not to turn every student into an AI specialist but to help students in different fields understand how intelligent technologies can reshape their disciplines, expand their analytical capabilities and solve real-world problems.

Universities also need to strengthen cooperation with businesses, government agencies and research institutions. External partners can provide practical expertise, industrial resources and an understanding of emerging workplace needs.

Such cooperation can help connect the education chain, the talent chain and the industrial chain, reducing the gap between what students learn and what society actually needs.

However, labor-market adaptation should not become the only purpose of universities. No matter how disruptive technology becomes, the fundamental responsibilities of education remain unchanged. Universities must cultivate moral character, foster independent thinking, transmit culture, encourage innovation and support the holistic development of the individual.

Real education reform is not about blindly following technological trends. It requires universities to embrace innovation while maintaining a clear sense of what education is ultimately for.

AI should be incorporated throughout teaching and learning. Students should learn to use intelligent tools effectively and responsibly. But universities must also place human development at the center of education. The more powerful technology becomes, the more important judgment, creativity, ethical responsibility and critical thinking will be.

Universities can adjust their academic structures to meet national and social needs. At the same time, they must preserve the diversity of the academic ecosystem. Not every institution should establish the same programs, pursue the same fashionable disciplines or adopt the same development model.

A wave of identical AI-related programs could lead to a new form of homogenization, in which universities lose their distinctive strengths while competing for the same students, teachers and resources. Higher education needs diversity, not a situation in which every university begins to look the same.

The rise of AI should be seen not merely as a disruption of higher education, but as an opportunity to reshape it.

The primary task for universities is not to create more AI majors, but to reconsider what universities should teach — and how they should teach — in an age when information and technical assistance are increasingly easy to obtain.

Knowledge acquisition alone can no longer define the value of university education. Students must learn how to evaluate knowledge, connect ideas across disciplines, identify meaningful problems and make responsible decisions. They must be able to work with machines without allowing machines to replace their own capacity for thought.

The graduates best prepared for the AI era will not be those who have merely mastered the latest software. They will be those with strong disciplinary foundations, broad humanistic perspectives, the ability to use intelligent tools and the independence to question their outputs.

Preparing such graduates is not only a practical response to employment pressure; it is essential to build a stronger education system and secure the country's long-term development.

The author is the deputy dean at the School of Education, Tsinghua University.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:09 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:09 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

ANDREA RENDA

Symphony, not a solo

The EU can cooperate with China on open-source solutions, and treat AI as a means to achieve sustainable solutions rather than an end in itself



At the opening ceremony of the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance in Shanghai, President Xi Jinping said that "AI development should not be a solo performance by a single country, but a symphony of international cooperation". And the agreement on the establishment of the World AI Cooperation Organization was signed during the meeting. This will address a real challenge. The race for tech sovereignty in the AI sector is fragmenting the global AI landscape to unprecedented levels, to the detriment of innovation and access, especially for developing countries.

AI keeps moving at breathtaking speed, with ever more powerful models topping the charts every week. US labs still lead in multiple aspects, but Chinese open-weight models — DeepSeek, Qwen, GLM and Kimi — have their own edges. In the United States, top labs announce mind-blowing compute investments while companies such as OpenAI and Anthropic chase billionaire initial public offerings to monetize their lead. Four companies have now crossed a $4-trillion valuation, a figure without precedent. The US is rolling back regulation, blocking states from legislating and fast-tracking data centers that increasingly need their own power based on the conviction that it is engaged in an existential race for AI leadership with China.

Michael Kratsios, the US administration's top AI official, has spoken openly of "promoting the export of full-stack US AI technology packages to allies and partners worldwide". At the same time, it is likely that Washington tends to weaponize other countries' AI dependence — on models, the cloud and the advanced GPUs that mostly come from Nvidia. The US' measures on non-US users access to Anthropic's Mythos and Fable 5 have only pushed other countries to double down on their tech-sovereignty plans meant to reduce reliance on single foreign suppliers.

The European Union feels this acutely. Despite years of regulation to force competition and interoperability, dependence on big tech has stayed almost the same. Amazon, Microsoft and Google own almost the entire cloud market; Alibaba gets the crumbs, and European operators barely register.

The European Commission's first answer was to build its own compute — aware that at least 70 percent of global data-center capacity sits in the US and China. In recent years, the EU has announced 19 AI factories, with at least seven "gigafactories" of at least 100,000 advanced GPUs each on the way. But this simply swaps dependence on hyperscalers for dependence on Nvidia: Almost 90 percent of these factories have chosen Nvidia GPUs. This is hardly a win for the EU's tech sovereignty.

The deeper problem is that Europe is chasing the US model — data-hungry, energy-hungry, water-thirsty infrastructure built in the obsessive pursuit of artificial general intelligence, however vaguely defined. Is that what Europe needs? Probably not. European countries don't need the most power-consuming AI; they need stacks fit for real use cases in transport, health, energy, manufacturing, government and finance. For each, the optimal solution rarely looks like a one-size-fits-all gigafactory. Emulating the US model with less money is like "chasing Icarus with smaller wings".

The EU should work together with China to steer AI toward the public interest, the global good and the benefit of humankind.

China offers Europe a more attractive template. Whatever US commentators claim, Beijing is not primarily racing toward AGI. It is leaning on cheaper, more sustainable compute — less advanced GPUs, ordinary CPUs — and deepening its use of open standards to develop solutions that are fit for purpose. Often that means smaller models on smaller data, running centrally or at the edge, sparing needless costs in energy, training, inference and fine-tuning.

This is what Europe, a global industrial powerhouse, should do. The European Commission's Apply AI Strategy points toward this goal — but it comes with almost no dedicated funding. The EU's Tech Sovereignty Package, published on June 3 — comprising two legislative proposals and two strategic frameworks — promises to boost European data capacity at scale in the form of an open-source stack offering secure, high-performing solutions across sectors. If it works, Europe could emerge as a more sovereign AI power, wrapped in a regulatory framework built for fundamental rights, competition, interoperability and sustainability — now being overhauled in the name of genuine simplification.



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

Will the plan work? It may depend on how the EU adapts its China policy in the face of reality: Europe and China are deeply complementary. Europe depends on China for rare earths and much else; China needs the European market and technologies such as ASML's lithography for advanced chips. Duplicating such unique expertise would waste enormous resources.

No single country can set AI rules for the whole world. It is significant to promote EU-China collaboration that might be exactly the step toward a fairer, more sustainable and more sovereign AI future. The two sides are hardly "like-minded", yet they share strikingly similar perspectives: open-source solutions and the vision of AI as a means to achieve sustainable outcomes rather than an end in itself. China has initiated the establishment of WAICO, a coalition comprising 29 countries; while the EU's 27 member states enjoy privileged collaboration with several leading middle powers.

The EU and China should make deeper AI cooperation a goal — and pursue it with common agendas. Now is the moment to reckon and restart. With quantum AI and a new generation of powerful agents and robots on the horizon, the world cannot afford to wait for alignment to arrive on its own.

The author is the director of the Center for European Policy Studies in Brussels, Belgium. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

XU MINGQI

Protectionist measures could harm EU's interests

Brussels' most effective response to its trade deficit with China should be to collaborate with Beijing to boost exports of goods and services, rather than 'building walls' or 'setting limits'



The European Union recently intensified its implementation of protectionist measures targeting Chinese trade and investment. These actions, including the Foreign Subsidies Regulation, the proposed Industrial Accelerator Act, the NIS 2 Directive and amendments to the Foreign Direct Investment Screening Regulation, echo past United States' accusations that cite China's "overcapacity" and "undervalued renminbi" as grounds for imposing high tariffs and restrictions on Chinese goods. Since 2019, when the EU officially described China as "a partner for cooperation, an economic competitor and a systemic rival", China-EU relations have increasingly been influenced by geopolitical and ideological biases, undermining mutual trust. Economic and trade frictions have been politicized. The previously cooperative and mutually beneficial economic relationship has been misconstrued as a zero-sum game, leading to growing tensions despite shared goals in global governance and multilateralism.

EU policymakers and think tanks have been significantly influenced by US geopolitical and economic strategies regarding China. During his first term, US President Donald Trump adopted aggressive political posturing, imposing high tariffs against China, alongside strict export controls, while aiming for technological decoupling. This escalated China-US geopolitical and economic competition, directly impacting the EU's 2019 shift in its China policy to the "triple positioning" of a cooperation partner, an economic competitor and a systemic rival.

Although the concept of "de-risking" was proposed by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in 2023, its core ideas stem from US initiatives such as supply chain restructuring and "re-coupling", "friend-shoring" and "near-shoring", all aimed at "de-risking" from China. Consequently, "de-risking" has come to represent a coordinated US-EU policy toward China, with the EU aligning itself with the US' sanctions against Chinese tech companies.



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

Despite strained US-EU relations during Trump's second term, marked by Washington's many unfriendly policies targeting the EU, political parties within the EU establishment continue to maintain their geopolitical biases. They even echo US justifications for imposing economic pressure on China in their quest for advancing unilateral trade protectionism.

There is no inherent geopolitical competition between the EU and China. Historically, both sides viewed bilateral trade and investment as mutually beneficial, forming the foundation for steadily growing trade relations. According to China's Ministry of Commerce, in 2025, bilateral trade reached $828.1 billion, and in the first half of 2026, the number was $447.88 billion, a 14.2 percent year-on-year increase. EU investments in China have exceeded $150 billion, while Chinese direct investment in the EU has reached $125 billion.

The two sides share consensus on global governance issues such as upholding a United Nations-based international order, climate action, aiding developing countries, maintaining international financial stability, supporting multilateral free trade, combating cross-border crime and tax evasion, and enhancing global health security. However, certain ideological factions within the EU seek to politicize economic differences, undermining the fundamental nature of mutual cooperation and dragging China-US competition into China-EU relations, ultimately harming the EU's interests.

In its trade disputes with the US, China has reciprocated with restrained countermeasures. This has led the US to recognize the futility of unilateral protectionism, resulting in mutual agreements to remove high tariffs and irrational export restrictions. Following Trump's visit to China in May, the two sides established trade and investment councils to discuss bilateral trade and investment issues, fostering a constructive strategic relationship.

If the EU goes ahead with its protectionist measures against China, Beijing would inevitably respond with countermeasures. Given China's effective counterstrategies against the US, the EU could face great challenges. In 2025, China-US bilateral trade saw an 18.7 percent decline, but following a compromise agreement, China's imports from the US rebounded to rapid growth, with year-on-year increases of 20.36 percent and 25.85 percent in May and June, respectively. A similar conflict between China and the EU would disrupt the 8.7 percent growth in Chinese imports from the EU in the first half of 2026.

According to General Administration of Customs, the EU's dependence on the Chinese market is greater than that of the US, with EU exports to China reaching $268.17 billion in 2025, nearly doubling the $139.7 billion of US exports to China. A trade war would inflict greater damage on the EU than it did on the US. Therefore, recognizing the underlying reasons for the declining competitiveness of industries such as automotive and machinery, reforming innovation-stifling regulations and bureaucracy, and encouraging collaboration with Chinese enterprises would be in the EU's long-term best interests.

The EU previously viewed bilateral trade imbalances as a non-issue due to its overall trade surplus. However, recent years have seen a shift in perspective. If the growing trade deficit with China is a concern, the EU can engage in technical negotiations with China to address the imbalance. Accusations of "overcapacity", "subsidies" and "undervalued renminbi", previously used by the US, overlook factors such as declining industrial competitiveness and rising energy prices due to geopolitical tensions, which have accelerated industrial relocation. Resorting to unilateral protectionism for short-term gains is counterproductive. High tariffs imposed by the Trump administration failed to revive uncompetitive US industries, and the EU cannot expect protectionism to safeguard its industries and jobs.

China's Ministry of Commerce has provided scientific explanations regarding "overcapacity", "subsidies" and "undervalued renminbi", urging the EU to understand China's position. China does not accept baseless criticisms of its economic model and industrial policies but acknowledges the EU trade concerns. The ministry reiterated China's stance of not pursuing trade surpluses, committing to increased imports, and emphasizing "constructive dialogue to dispel misunderstandings and address concerns". It is the response to the concerns of the EU that China began to increase its imports from the EU in 2026, reversing the negative growth situation. The year-on-year growth rate in the first half of the year reached 8.7 percent. The most effective policy for the EU to deal with the trade deficit with China is to increase the production and export of goods that still have a comparative advantage, and to cooperate with the Chinese government and enterprises to increase the export of goods and services to China, rather than setting restrictions.

The essence of international trade and investment is to enhance corporate profits and national welfare, while unilateral protectionism is a proved policy mistake.

The author is a researcher of international economics at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences and the former president of the Shanghai Institute for European Studies. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:09 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:09 PM

BUSINESS

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

Factories set to maintain healthy pace

Boosting consumption will be a leading policy priority in second half

By **ZHANG CHENXU**
zhangchenxu@chinadaily.com.cn

China's manufacturing sector is expected to remain resilient and sustain its expansion in the second half despite a slight moderation in momentum in July, as policymakers step up efforts to bolster domestic demand while ensuring a smooth transition from old growth drivers to new ones, experts said.

Their comments came as the RatingDog China General Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index — which gauges operating conditions in the sector — edged down to 50.9 in July from 51.7 in June, marking a four-month low but remaining above the 50-point mark, that separates expansion from contraction, for an eighth consecutive month, a private survey showed on Monday.

Highlighting the necessity of consolidating the manufacturing sector's expansion momentum, experts said boosting domestic demand will be a key policy priority in the second half, with policy support expected to place greater emphasis on coordinating demand expansion with supply optimization.

Despite the moderation, the survey showed that export activity returned to expansionary territory in July after two consecutive months of contraction, while overall new orders grew for a 14th consecutive month — the longest stretch of gains since 2018 — though the pace of growth slowed from June.

Meanwhile, cost pressures eased further, with input price inflation slowing to a six-month low — signaling that elevated inflationary pressure was being effectively contained — while output prices remained broadly unchanged, the survey said.

"China's manufacturing sector continued to expand in July, though at a slower pace, underpinned by sustained growth in new orders and a further easing of cost pressures," said Yao Yu, founder of RatingDog, adding that renewed growth in new export orders was an encouraging sign.

Looking ahead, manufacturers remain upbeat about output over the next 12 months, with optimism picking up slightly from June on expectations of stronger market demand, new product development and capacity expansion, Yao added.

That optimism, however, came amid lingering pressure on market demand. The official manufacturing PMI fell to 49.2 in July from 50.3 in June, slipping into contraction territory for the first time in five months, while the new orders subindex dropped to 48.5, the National Bureau of Statistics said on Friday.

"The decline mainly reflects still-soft domestic demand, compounded by disruptions from extreme weather," said Xiong Yuan, chief economist at Guosheng Securities, adding that the official reading pointed to continued pressure on the broader economy amid the ongoing transition from old growth drivers to new ones.

At a tone-setting meeting in late July, the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee made arrangements for economic work in the second half, calling for efforts to accelerate the transition from old growth drivers to new ones, step up countercyclical adjustments, expand domestic demand and optimize supply.

"This signals a stronger policy push and a growing sense of urgency to expand domestic demand," said Luo Zhiheng, chief economist and head of the research institute at Yuekai Securities.

Luo expects faster fiscal spending and more efficient use of bond funds — alongside progress on the six major infrastructure networks — to provide a stronger boost to investment and consumption.

Wang Qing, chief macroeconomic analyst at Orient Golden Credit Rating International, also saw room for additional fiscal and monetary support, and expects a package of pragmatic and effective incremental policies to be introduced around the end of the third quarter.

"By our estimates, there is room to issue an additional 700 billion yuan ($103.7 billion) in local government bonds by year-end, while the central government has greater room for additional borrowing," Wang said.

On the monetary front, Wang projects that the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, could cut policy rates by 10 basis points and lower the reserve requirement ratio by 0.5 percentage point.



Employees work at an auto component company in Liuzhou, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region. HE HUAWEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Rising demand for RMB trade settlement

By **JIANG XUEQING** in Shanghai
jiangxueqing@chinadaily.com.cn

Singapore's DBS Bank is seeing steadily rising demand for renminbi-denominated trade settlement and financing, as Chinese companies deepen commercial ties with the rest of Asia and the international use of the Chinese currency expands.

China's cross-border interbank payment system, known as CIPS, reflects this trend, with its average daily transaction value rising from about 680 billion yuan ($100.7 billion) in 2025 to roughly 830 billion yuan in June. "This clearly shows that there is greater adoption of RMB for payments to counterparties in China," said Han Kwee Juan, group executive and group head of institutional banking at DBS Bank.



Han Kwee Juan

Demand for offshore renminbi has also surged in the dim sum bond market. As of June 22, issuances of dim sum bonds had reached nearly 820 billion yuan this year, up 47 percent from a year earlier, according to market tracker Wind Info. The growing appetite for offshore RMB financing underscores rising demand for cross-border payments into China, Han said.

DBS has seen more corporate clients choosing to settle trade transactions in RMB, particularly through CIPS. Increasingly, overseas companies are asking the bank to facilitate RMB payments to their Chinese counterparties, reflecting broader acceptance of the currency in regional trade.

The bank has also expanded its RMB financing business. DBS China recently joined three other banks in providing an 8-billion-yuan leveraged buyout facility to support the privatization of ANE Group from the Hong Kong stock exchange, using a strategic seven-year term loan structured under the free trade non-resident account framework.

Han attributed the growing international use of the RMB to expanding trade between China and the rest of Asia. As trade volumes rise, more Chinese exporters are requesting overseas customers to settle transactions in RMB where possible, a trend he expects to continue.

With operations spanning the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and Singapore, DBS is positioning itself to facilitate cross-border capital and trade flows across the region. The bank is seeing particularly strong demand to connect financial flows between China and Singapore, as well as between China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations economies.

Trade and investment between China and ASEAN continue to strengthen. "We do see the strength of the Chinese economy and manufacturing in data centers and AI infrastructure, together with EVs, and all these will contribute to create a flow of trade and investments between China and ASEAN. And we think that trend will continue for the next few years," Han said.

Greater offshore RMB liquidity — supported by record dim sum bond issuance and the availability of the Chinese currency through free trade non-resident accounts — is also making it easier for companies to finance trade and investment with China, he added.

Han said Chinese companies are increasingly well positioned to export technology and expertise to ASEAN markets, particularly in electric vehicles and large-scale battery storage. Regional demand for these technologies is expected to support deeper economic integration.

He also said China's economic transition is progressing as policymakers intended.

"We're seeing great growth in the area of high-tech manufacturing, EVs and renewables, as well as in the area of AI infrastructure. All these are contributing to the growth that we're seeing," he said.

Taipingling plant boosts power output

By **ZHENG XIN**
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

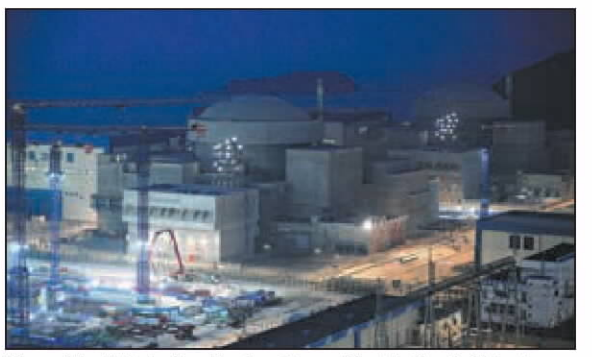
Unit 2 of the Taipingling Nuclear Power Plant in South China's Guangdong province officially began generating electricity on Monday, marking the full completion and operation of Phase I of the first "Hualong One" third-generation nuclear power project in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

Operated by China General Nuclear Power Group, the milestone signals a major step forward for the region's green energy transition, delivering stable, low-carbon baseload power to the country's southern economic powerhouse.

Based on the average utilization hours of domestic nuclear power plants in 2025, the two units of Phase I are projected to generate more than 18 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity annually, said CGN.

This massive output is sufficient to meet the annual production and living electricity demands of nearly 2 million people, while reducing carbon dioxide emissions by approximately 16.63 million metric tons each year, delivering substantial environmental benefits, it said.

The announcement came after China greenlit 8 new nuclear reactors last week, accelerating its atomic energy expansion and cementing its dominance in the global push for next-generation clean energy.



View of the Taipingling Nuclear Power Plant in South China's Guangdong province. XINHUA

Six of the new reactors will employ the domestically designed Hualong One, China's third-generation nuclear power technology with full intellectual property rights. It is also one of the most widely accepted series of third-generation nuclear power reactors in the world.

As the inaugural batch of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, these projects set a definitive tone for China's energy blueprint during the most critical window for its climate commitments, said Li Jinkai, a distinguished professor at the School of Economics at the Beijing Institute of Technology.

China's nuclear power construction has entered a stage of large-scale, batched and normalized development, he said.

Located in Huizhou, the Taipingling project received official national approval in April 2019, with construction of Unit 2 breaking ground in October 2020.

A single Hualong One unit generates nearly 10 billion kWh of electricity annually, saving over 3 million tons of standard coal. Furthermore, its research and construction have integrated a complete supply chain of nearly 6,000 upstream and downstream enterprises, effectively steering the upgrading of China's manufacturing industry, according to CGN.

According to the National Energy Administration, the country's nuclear power generation reached approximately 467 billion kWh in 2025, while completed investment in nuclear power engineering hit a record 161 billion yuan ($23.84 billion) last year, with five approved projects featuring private capital participation.

Private companies are also becoming a vital force in energy technology innovation. In 2025, all 10 approved nuclear power units introduced private capital, with private shareholding reaching up to 20 percent.

According to the 15th five-year plan for new power system construction, jointly released by the National Development and Reform Commission and the NEA, China will vastly expand its clean energy capacity across a diverse portfolio by 2030, including nuclear power.

Landmark green energy shipment by Chinese firm

By **ZHENG XIN**

China's green fuel sector achieved a historic milestone last week as a vessel carrying 3,750 metric tons of green ammonia set sail from Lianyungang Port in East China's Jiangsu province bound for South Korea, marking the nation's largest single-batch export of the zero-carbon energy to date.

Produced by State Power Investment Corp, the shipment represents the first time Chinese green fuel has gained international market recognition based on its full lifecycle carbon reduction contributions.

The delivery signifies that China's entire wind-solar-hydrogen-ammonia industrial chain has officially upgraded from technical demonstration to large-scale international commercial delivery, the company said.

Completed and commissioned in July 2025, the green energy-producing facility is supported by 800,000 kilowatts of installed renewable energy capacity. It stands as the world's largest single-unit green ammonia plant with an annual output capacity of 32,000 tons of green hydrogen and 180,000 tons of green ammonia, it said.

Long utilized as a vital component in fertilizers, ammonia is now gaining traction as a viable low-carbon fuel for the shipping industry. However, conventional ammonia is largely produced using coal and natural gas, which fails to take advantage of its green-energy potential.

Meanwhile, green ammonia — made using renewable power — offers a zero-carbon alternative, but its growth has been hampered by high technology costs and a spatial gap between where renewable energy is generated and where fuel demand is located.

Industry experts believe that through proprietary core technologies and authoritative international certifications, Chinese-made green ammonia products are now officially becoming deeply embedded in the global green fuel supply chain.

"The expansion from technical demonstration to commercial export, and from product supply to standard-setting, demonstrates that this 3,750-ton export shipment does not merely represent a cross-border delivery of green fuel," said Lin Boqiang, director of the China Center for Energy Economics Research at Xiamen University.

"The international market's endorsement of Chinese products based on their lifecycle carbon reduction fully demonstrates the core global competitiveness of China's clean energy capabilities, industrial standards and development paradigms."

Lin said the country's commitment to achieving carbon neutrality before 2060 is driving growing momentum around low-carbon ammonia, particularly through pilot projects targeted at supplying green fuel to the shipping sector.

Producing and consuming roughly one-third of the world's ammonia supply — and home to some of the globe's busiest ports and shipping corridors — China is uniquely positioned to lead the deployment of clean marine fuels, he added.

Its independently developed "green power-hydrogen-ammonia" flexible coordinated control system has successfully tackled a major global technical challenge — namely, reconciling the intermittent and fluctuating nature of wind and solar power with the continuous stability required for the production of green chemicals.

State Power Investment Corp said that compared with traditional coal-based synthetic ammonia produced in China, the 3,750 tons of green ammonia bound for South Korea will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by more than 10,000 tons across its entire lifecycle — an environmental benefit equivalent to the annual carbon absorption of approximately 1 million trees.

The shipment comes as global demand for traceable and verifiable green fuels continues to climb.

Possessing a dual identity as both a clean fuel and a green industrial feedstock, green ammonia is rapidly becoming a vital commodity in the global low-carbon transition, the company added.

Briefly

Marine economy posts steady growth in H1

China's gross ocean product reached 5.5 trillion yuan ($810.09 billion) in the first half of 2026, up 5.1 percent year-on-year, according to data released by the Ministry of Natural Resources. The amount accounted for 7.9 percent of the country's gross domestic product, the ministry said, noting that the marine economy is experiencing steady growth with a positive development momentum.

Yuan weakens against greenback

The central parity rate of the yuan weakened 19 pips to 6.7917 against the US dollar on Tuesday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System. In China's spot foreign exchange market, the yuan is allowed to rise or fall by 2 percent from the central parity rate each trading day.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:09 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:09 PM

BUSINESS

Marine tourism boom fires up summer travel

Integrated fishery resorts, coastal leisure consumption spur marine economy



Top: An aerial image shows Genghai No 1, the country's first integrated intelligent large-scale ecological marine ranch complex, in Yantai, Shandong province. Genghai No 1 was built with a total investment of about $62.2 million.
TANG KE / FOR CHINA DAILY



Left: A tourist (center), guided by professional instructors, enjoys scuba diving in Sanya, Hainan province, on July 30.
WANG CHENGLONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

JINAN — At 9 am, a passenger ferry departs on schedule from a wharf in East China and arrives minutes later at a giant flower-shaped offshore structure over the sea.

The complex combines marine ranching with tourism under an innovative "blue granary" model, offering visitors an immersive experience including fish viewing, ecology sessions and virtual-reality movies.

Named Genghai No 1, the integrated facility beyond the Fisherman's Wharf in the city of Yantai, East China's Shandong province, was built with a total investment of 420 million yuan ($62.2 million).

Wang, a visitor from Jinan, capital of Shandong, joined the "Little Ocean Steward" program with her daughter. She fed fish in offshore cages, observed the harvesting process and learned about marine ecology through guided demonstrations.

"Taking my daughter to the seaside used to mean playing on the beach," Wang said. "Now she can learn about the ocean while seeing firsthand how technology is transforming modern aquaculture."

China boasts abundant marine resources with 18,000 kilometers of mainland coastline and another 14,000 km of island coastline, according to official data.

During the peak summer travel season, coastal destinations across the country are rolling out diverse marine tourism experiences, underscoring the growing vitality of China's marine economy.

According to the operator of Genghai No 1, the complex has grown into an offshore resort integrating modern aquaculture, marine tourism, scientific research, public education, dining and accommodation.

Equipped with a "5G+ marine ranch" smart management system, it produces 150,000 kilograms of premium seawater fish annually and welcomes more than 150,000 visitor trips each year.

Similar tourism-driven growth is surging in many places along China's coastline.

In Zhelin Bay of Raoping county, South China's Guangdong province, the Xi'ao fishery-tourism platform, covering more than 3,000 square meters, features specialty restaurants, a seaside cafe, starry-sky cabins and boutique seaview guestrooms.

At the ocean pastoral fishery tourism park on Nanji Island in East China's Zhejiang province, visitors stroll along suspended floating walkways above the sea and enjoy recreational fishing.

In Haitang Bay of Sanya, South China's Hainan province, night fishing has emerged as a new coastal scenario combining sightseeing, cuisine and social interaction. The local "night fishing plus dining" projects have lifted the nighttime departure rate of recreational fishing yachts from less than 30 percent to more than 95 percent.

> "The ocean is a foundational resource and an emerging market for the modern tourism industry, as well as a new strategic space for China's efforts to build itself into a world-leading tourism destination."
>
> **Dai Bin,** president of the China Tourism Academy

The diversification of marine tourism has extended leisure activities well into the evening, and driven a rise in demand for related industries, including water sports equipment.

At Hetong (Weihai) Sporting Goods Co Ltd in the city of Weihai in Shandong, production lines are operating at full capacity as workers rush to complete a batch of inflatable paddleboards destined for overseas markets.

"The popularity of water sports tourism has fueled strong order growth," said Wang Yongfeng, the company's general manager. "Our shipments exceeded 90,000 paddleboard sets in the first half of the year, up 150 percent year-on-year."

Liu Zhiqing, deputy general manager of Weihai Heliyuan Carbon Fiber Technology Co Ltd, said the company's production capacity in 2026 has expanded three to four times compared with previous years, with water sports equipment now accounting for 55 to 60 percent of its total carbon fiber sales.

According to the Ministry of Natural Resources, China's gross ocean product exceeded 11 trillion yuan in 2025, up 5.5 percent year-on-year and accounting for 7.9 percent of the country's GDP.

Against this backdrop, China is cultivating the marine economy, including marine tourism, as a new growth engine.

Dai Bin, president of the China Tourism Academy, said, "The ocean is a foundational resource and an emerging market for the modern tourism industry, as well as a new strategic space for China's efforts to build itself into a world-leading tourism destination."

He called for stronger market connectivity, industrial cooperation and policy coordination to build a coordinated marine tourism landscape featuring closer land-sea integration and differentiated regional development.

XINHUA — CHINA DAILY

Themed tourist trains on faster growth track, driven by demand surge

BEIJING — Passengers boarding a themed sightseeing train in the eastern Chinese city of Fuzhou, Fujian province, last week stepped into a carriage that felt more like a classical Chinese garden.

Decorated with local bamboo and tea elements and Song Dynasty (960-1279)-inspired interiors, the train running through Wuyishan National Park turns the journey itself into a unique cultural experience.

This train is part of a broader boom in an emerging train-plus tourism model, in which railway operators combine transportation with sightseeing, cultural experiences and entertainment to meet a growing appetite for immersive, hassle-free vacations.

In Shangrao, East China's Jiangxi province, a tourist train brings local culture onboard through live performances and interactive theatrical experiences. "Since entering service in late April, the train has maintained an occupancy rate of more than 90 percent," said Qin Zhonghao, head of the operator's sightseeing train business.

Official data support this trend. China operated 1,797 tourist trains in the first half of the year, nearly doubling the 972 trains during the same period of 2025, according to the national railway operator China State Railway Group. Railway operators also launched 445 themed trains tailored for concerts, sporting events, exhibitions and other activities.

The rising buzz around tourist trains highlights just how quickly new ways to experience travel are taking off in China's service sector.

The country's recently released five-year plan for expanding consumption calls for fostering new business models and consumption scenarios centered on improving consumer experiences. In the first half of the year, service retail sales rose 5.3 percent year-on-year, far outpacing the 1.1 percent growth in goods retail sales.

Against this backdrop, industry experts believe a train ticket is no longer merely a means of transportation. Instead, it is now a gateway to a wider tourism ecosystem, linking travelers to fresh experiences and opening up new opportunities for spending on travel-related services.

When the Northeast China Football League tournament kicked off in May, the local railway operator introduced dedicated fan trains offering one-stop travel packages that combined match tickets with sightseeing opportunities.

"To watch the opening ceremony, three friends and I traveled from Tongliao in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region on a fan train," said Wang Lei, a football fan. "Besides the matches, we also had time to visit Shenyang Imperial Palace, Xingshun night market and Beishichang cultural district, all places I had wanted to explore. The trip was definitely worthwhile."

In Northwest China's Shaanxi province, the local railway operator has launched more than 70 themed tourist trains this year featuring study tours, wellness trips and flower-viewing excursions. Developed jointly with tourism authorities, the travel packages integrate round-trip rail tickets with admission to scenic spots, hotel stays, cruises, cultural performances, shuttle transportation and onboard cultural activities.



Passengers pose for photos inside a steampunk garden-themed carriage of the Tianjin Fantasy Express on July 29. SUN FANYUE / XINHUA

"In the past, passengers bought a point-to-point train ticket. Today, they're buying a complete travel experience," said Hui Lixia, deputy director of the passenger transport department at China Railway Xi'an Group Co Ltd.

By giving transportation an even bigger role in tourism, this trend encourages the development of local tourism resources and helps convert passenger flows into broader consumer spending, said Zhang Linshan, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Macroeconomic Research under the National Development and Reform Commission.

Looking ahead, policymakers see further room for growth. In June, multiple authorities, including the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and China State Railway Group, jointly issued a guideline to promote the integration of railways and tourism, with the goal of developing more than 160 dedicated tourist trains nationwide by 2030.

Experts said they believe the next stage of development will require a wider range of products at different prices to meet increasingly diverse consumer needs.

Wang Jia, an associate professor at the School of Tourism, Nanchang University, called for closer collaboration among rail operators, travel agencies, hotels, scenic attractions and cultural businesses.

With improved themed services and deepened cooperation with the tourism sector, the train-plus tourism model will inject fresh momentum into China's summer economy and its rapidly expanding services consumption, analysts said.

XINHUA — CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:09 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:09 PM

CHINA

Intl tai chi contest



Polina Sapunkova, 19, from Russia, competes in a tai chi single fan competition during the 8th Chenjiagou International Chen-Style Tai Chi Championship in Chenjiagou village, Jiaozuo, Henan province, on Monday. The championship, held from Saturday to Wednesday in the birthplace of Chen-style tai chi, brought together nearly 1,000 participants from home and abroad. The event aimed to promote the legacy of Chinese traditional culture through martial arts. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

Disaster prevention stepped up

New plan highlights entire risk zones in addressing increasing geological threats

By LI MENGHAN
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

Facing increasingly severe geological disaster threats, China will accelerate a shift in risk management from individual hazard points to entire risk zones while advancing precise and intelligent prevention to minimize casualties and property losses, according to a new five-year plan released by the Ministry of Natural Resources.

The implementation plan for national geological disaster prevention and control during the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30) comes as extreme rainfall increasingly triggers sudden, clustered and cascading disasters in areas outside traditional high-risk zones, exposing the limitations of point-based prevention.

Despite significant progress in recent years, China's geological disaster prevention and control situation remains severe. By the end of 2025, nearly 280,000 geological disaster hazard points had been registered nationwide, threatening 11.48 million people and property worth more than 760 billion yuan ($112.54 billion), according to the ministry.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-25), deaths from geological disasters fell by 52 percent and direct economic losses dropped by 38 percent compared with the previous five-year period. The country also made significant advances in disaster prevention technology by deploying more than 75,000 automated monitoring and early warning devices and piloting comprehensive remote-sensing identification of geological disasters.

However, China's diverse terrain, complex geological conditions and active tectonic and seismic activity, combined with varied climate types, frequent extreme weather and intensive engineering activities, make geological disasters frequent and recurrent, said Yang Xudong, a senior engineer at the ministry's geological disaster technical guidance center.

Geological disasters are also difficult to predict because of their concealed nature, tendency to recur and sudden onset, Yang said, adding that prevention remains the key to reducing disaster risks.

Yang said China's geological disaster prevention has entered a third stage.

"The previous two stages — whether relying on traditional community-based monitoring and professional surveys or on large-scale, high-precision remote sensing and widespread monitoring instruments — focused on hazard points with visible deformation signs," Yang said.

"The new stage directly addresses mass shallow landslides and debris flows triggered by extreme rainfall, which often show no warning signs and typically occur during the heaviest rainfall. Traditional methods have difficulty identifying and predicting such disasters," he said.

To address the new challenges, the plan outlines seven major tasks for the next five years, including dynamic surveys, monitoring upgrades and comprehensive governance. It calls for more than 4,200 engineering treatment projects, over 6,100 hazard elimination projects and the relocation of 50,000 households.

Dual management of both hazard points and risk zones will be implemented in 1,206 key counties, cities and districts across 17 priority provinces, with management lists and accountability systems established for each area.

The plan also designates 21 key prevention zones, up from 16 during the 14th Five-Year Plan period. The zones cover about 2.97 million square kilometers for landslides, rockfalls, debris flows and ground subsidence, as well as 280,000 sq km for ground settlement and earth fissures.

Newly designated prevention zones include the lower reaches of the Yarlung Tsangpo River hydropower project area, high-altitude long-distance disaster chain regions and the Yanshan-Taihang Mountain region. The plan also further refines traditional high-susceptibility areas, including the southeastern hilly regions and the southwestern mountainous regions.

The plan emphasizes improving the precision and intelligence of geological disaster prevention. It calls for detailed surveys at a 1:10,000 scale in key towns located in extremely high- and high-risk areas and promotes the application of technologies such as artificial intelligence and digital twins to improve hazard identification and early warning.

"These changes represent a major upgrade in prevention thinking," Yang said. "The shift reflects the scientific recognition that under extreme conditions, some disasters remain beyond prevention with existing technology."

He said future disaster prevention will rely more on scientific risk assessment, precise early warning and broad public participation to enhance disaster prevention awareness across society.

Seminar stresses intl cooperation to fight terrorism

By FANG AIQING in Yining, Xinjiang and **MAO WEIHUA** in Urumqi

The International Seminar on Counter-Terrorism 2026 opened on Tuesday in Yining, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, drawing about 100 officials and scholars from 24 countries and regional organizations, including the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Russia and the African Union.

Under the theme "Addressing New Challenges of Terrorism: Strengthening State Responsibilities and Fostering International Synergy", the event highlighted the need for shared commitment, state responsibility and international cooperation.

Supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Xinjiang regional government, the seminar was organized by the region's foreign affairs office, the Institute of Chinese Borderland Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the World Muslim Communities Council.

Zhai Jun, the special envoy of the Chinese government on the Middle East issue, said global terrorist activities have resurged, with attacks becoming more complex, diverse, technology-driven and organized. The Middle East, Africa and South Asia have been among the regions most severely affected, while countries in the Global South are facing mounting pressure, he said.

Zhai said counterterrorism efforts should be integrated with conflict reduction, poverty alleviation, bridging civilizational divides and promoting political dialogue, with the United Nations playing a central coordinating role. He added that China has provided — and will continue to provide — public goods to strengthen international counterterrorism capacity-building. He also called for stronger governance of emerging technologies to prevent their misuse by terrorist groups.

Ali Rashid Al Nuaimi, chairman of the Defense Affairs, Interior and Foreign Affairs Committee of the UAE Federal National Council and chairman of the World Muslim Communities Council, described terrorism as a common enemy of humanity and said no country can confront the challenge alone. Defeating terrorism requires unity and a comprehensive approach that combines financial, political, military, educational and ideological measures.

Al Nuaimi said both China and the UAE have made significant progress in addressing the root causes of terrorism, offering a prevention-oriented and holistic approach that respects international law. He emphasized the importance of education in promoting coexistence, peace and national identity.

Drawing on his visits to Xinjiang, he said all levels of government and local communities have actively participated in countering extremism, safeguarding security and promoting prosperity.

Xu Guixiang, secretary of the leading Communist Party of China members group of Xinjiang's foreign affairs office, said the region once experienced multiple terrorist attacks and violent incidents but has not seen such cases for nearly a decade after years of sustained efforts.

He said that terrorist forces abroad continue to infiltrate through online and cross-border activities, and that social stability remains a top priority. Xu reiterated Xinjiang's resolve to crush any terrorist plots in accordance with the law, while adjusting tactics as appropriate to balance public convenience with stability.

Xu added that Xinjiang will deepen cooperation under the frameworks of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, BRICS and the China-Central Asia mechanism in areas including risk assessment, cyberspace governance, joint exercises and coordinated operations.

Contact the writers at fangaiqing@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese silk went westward 4,000 years ago: Study

By LI MENGHAN
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

An international research team has discovered that China's domesticated silkworms reached Central Asia nearly 4,000 years ago — almost two millennia before the Silk Road — challenging the conventional narrative of how silk spread across the ancient world and reshaping our understanding of early globalization across Eurasia.

The findings are based on three dried silkworm cocoons and mulberry wood remains excavated at Sapalli Tepe, a Bronze Age site in southern Uzbekistan, by Chinese and Uzbek researchers during fieldwork between 2017 and 2019. The study, conducted by scientists from six institutions in China, Uzbekistan, Germany and the United States, was published in the journal Science Advances on July 23.

Silkworm domestication and silk production technologies originated in ancient China, with genomic and archaeological evidence tracing their origins to between 8,500 and 5,000 years ago. However, when and how Chinese silk first spread beyond the country's borders has long been debated. Many scholars have assumed that its westward transmission could not have begun before the Han Dynasty, the era during which the Silk Road was established.

The new study challenges that long-held view.

"Through protein analysis, we identified the three cocoons as belonging to the domesticated silkworm species Bombyx mori, which cannot survive without human care and mulberry leaves, and dated them to roughly 4,000 years ago," said Xia Qingyou, the study's corresponding author and a professor at Southwest University in Chongqing.

Zhou Xinying, a researcher at the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences who led the study, said the team discovered not only silkworm cocoons but also evidence of mulberry cultivation.

"This means that communities in Central Asia had begun producing silk long before the opening of the Silk Road, demonstrating that this uniquely Chinese invention spread far beyond its homeland," Zhou said.

Soil samples from Sapalli Tepe yielded the three cocoons alongside thousands of plant remains. Scanning electron microscopy revealed fiber structures consistent with Bombyx mori cocoons. The ancient fibers were notably finer than those of modern domesticated or wild silkworms, suggesting they represented an earlier stage of domestication.

Shen Hui, an associate researcher at the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology, said mulberry charcoal was found at all three sites the researchers excavated — Sapalli Tepe, Djarkutan and Molleli in Uzbekistan.

"The proportion of mulberry charcoal increased from 10 percent at Sapalli Tepe to 60 percent at Molleli, indicating that mulberry cultivation expanded over time," Shen said.

The team also identified citrus wood, a plant native to the southeastern Himalayas, further supporting links between Central Asia and South Asia, Shen added.

By compiling archaeological records of mulberry across Asia, the researchers proposed that China's sericulture tradition spread along the southern slopes of the Himalayas before reaching Central Asia, rather than through the better-known northern Silk Road corridors.

"This discovery places sericulture within a broader wave of early globalization alongside the spread of millet, wheat, livestock and metallurgy between China, Central Asia and South Asia during the third and second millennia BC," Zhou said.

"It shows that nearly 4,000 years ago, communities across Eurasia were already connected through networks of shared knowledge and technologies — far earlier than previously believed," he added.

The researchers said the findings also raise new questions about whether diverse forms of sericulture existed across Bronze Age Asia.

Hainan hosts workshop on Global South farming

By CHEN BOWEN in Haikou
chenbowen@chinadaily.com.cn



An Egyptian participant presents date palm products to attendees during the FAO workshop in Haikou, Hainan province, on Monday. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

More than 40 government officials, agricultural experts and development partners gathered in Hainan province on Monday for a United Nations-backed workshop on tropical agriculture, highlighting China's growing role in sharing agricultural technologies and expertise to support sustainable farming across the Global South.

The six-day workshop, organized under the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization's One Country One Priority Product initiative and co-hosted by the Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural Sciences, focuses on sustainable production, post-harvest management, value addition and market access for tropical specialty crops. Participants are also visiting research facilities in Hainan to explore practical applications of agricultural technologies.

Launched by the FAO in 2021, the OCOP initiative encourages countries to develop one priority agricultural product with comparative advantages while strengthening sustainable value chains through technology sharing and international cooperation. The initiative now includes 94 participating countries, 60 of them tropical nations.

"OCOP is not simply about promoting a product," said Yurdi Yasmi, director of FAO's Plant Production and Protection Division. "It is about helping countries transform local potential into sustainable development outcomes. It connects innovation with farmers, knowledge with action, and partnerships with impact."

For many delegates, the discussions centered on practical technologies that could help address production bottlenecks back home.

Egypt, which produces more than 2 million metric tons of dates annually across 60 varieties, is looking to adopt AI-powered optical sorting equipment and advanced packaging technologies to improve quality and competitiveness, said Amgad Ahmed Mohamed Elkady, executive general manager of the Food and Agro Industries Technology Center under Egypt's Technology and Industrial Innovation Centers.

Cambodia, meanwhile, hopes to strengthen cooperation on pest management and production standards to expand overseas markets for its mango industry.

"We have to boost smallholder development and explore new overseas markets — that's a major challenge," said Hun Darin, fruit crop expert officer, general directorate of Agronomy, Cambodia. "We are seeking collaboration via OCOP and China's South-South programs to carry out joint pest prevention and train local farmers."

The workshop also showcases China's broader approach to agricultural cooperation, which increasingly emphasizes technology transfer and long-term capacity building.

Through the FAO-China South-South Cooperation Programme, China has shared expertise drawn from its own agricultural transformation — from subsistence farming to technology-driven, market-oriented production — to help partner countries strengthen their agricultural systems.

The approach has already delivered tangible results.

Under previous FAO South-South projects, Chinese mango, banana and pineapple technologies boosted fruit yields by 50 to 300 percent in Sri Lanka, while training over 2,200 farmers. In the Republic of the Congo, high-yield cassava varieties and processing lines tripled output. In the Maldives, green biocontrol techniques helped save coconut forests from devastating pests, according to You Wen, deputy director of CATAS' international cooperation division.

"Hainan is ready to share its tropical agricultural practices as a model case for South-South cooperation," said Lu Sheng, deputy director-general of the province's agriculture department. "We are working with global partners to explore new pathways for green development of specialty products."

Alue Dohong, FAO assistant director-general and regional representative for Asia and the Pacific, praised the collaboration with leading regional science partners as instrumental to OCOP's success.

The workshop, which runs through Saturday, is expected to identify new areas for technical cooperation and future partnerships among participating countries, further expanding collaboration on sustainable tropical agriculture across the Global South.

Perfect launch



A Long March 8A carrier rocket blasts off from the Hainan commercial spacecraft launch site in Wenchang, Hainan province, on Tuesday, successfully placing a batch of satellites into their preset orbits. ZHANG MAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:09 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:09 PM

POLICY REVIEW

Dedicated plan aims to up consumption

Targets include growing middle income, services, tech-driven retail

By **WANG KEJU**
wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

China has unveiled its first-ever national-level five-year plan specifically dedicated to expanding consumption, setting a target of 60 trillion yuan ($8.3 trillion) in total retail sales of consumer goods by 2030 as a major part of the push to rebalance the economy toward domestic demand-driven growth.

On July 13, the State Council, China's Cabinet, approved the plan for expanding consumption during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, placing greater emphasis on boosting services consumption and enhancing household income and social security.

China's retail sales surpassed 50.1 trillion yuan in 2025, authorities from the National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Commerce said when elaborating on the plan.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period, consumption expenditure contributed an average of 58.8 percent to economic growth, 10 percentage points higher than the previous five-year period, they added.

However, authorities acknowledged that the consumption sector still faces challenges, which objectively constrain the further unleashing of consumption potential.

The latest plan marks a major shift in how policymakers approach consumption. Rather than treating it as a short-term tool, the plan positions consumption as a core pillar of China's medium- to long-term development strategy, according to Teng Tai, director of the WANB New Economy Institute, a Beijing-based think tank.

"Expanding consumption is not simply about stimulating terminal demand — it is a systemic transformation covering income and structure, demand and supply," Teng said, adding that the 60-trillion-yuan target is "pragmatic and prudent", leaving room for potential economic fluctuations.

The plan implies an average annual real growth rate of about 4 percent in retail sales over the next five years, a figure economists say reflects realistic expectations given the current economic environment.

The plan's 28 measures are organized around six strategic pillars: upgrading service consumption, expanding goods consumption, creating new consumption scenarios and business models, enhancing household spending capacity, optimizing the consumption environment, and strengthening institutional mechanisms.

At the top of the list is service consumption, a category that, according to the National Bureau of Statistics, accounted for 46.1 percent of household spending last year and is seen as the next frontier for consumption growth.

The plan calls for expanded access to elderly care, childcare, cultural tourism and health services, reflecting the government's recognition that China's aging population and changing consumer preferences demand a reorientation of supply.

New consumption hot spots are rapidly emerging across China, and service retail sales growth has consistently outpaced goods retail, making service consumption the main driver of consumption growth, said Dong Yu, executive vice-president of Tsinghua University's China Institute for Development Planning.

"This deployment will strongly propel China's service consumption into a more diversified, integrated and quality-oriented development stage," Dong said. "It will better meet the demand for high-quality living while promoting high-quality and efficient development of the service sector, injecting new momentum and vitality into economic growth."

The plan also specifically addresses new business formats and models, including digital consumption, green consumption, the debut economy, experiential consumption and inbound consumption. The plan includes the further expansion of visa-free entry, increased direct international flights, specifically to Europe, the United States and countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative, and an overhaul of payment and tax-refund systems to remove friction for foreign tourists.

Chen Lifen, a researcher at the Development Research Center of the State Council, said that with a population of over 1.4 billion and a middle-income group exceeding 400 million, China's consumption upgrading space remains immense.

Against a backdrop of rising external uncertainties and slowing growth in traditional goods consumption, cultivating new business formats, models and scenarios as consumption growth points is essential to converting potential market space into actual market scale, Chen said.

"This can continuously expand consumption growth and help the economy navigate challenges with steady progress," Chen added.

The plan devotes significant attention to household income and social security — the foundational drivers of consumption. It calls for raising minimum wages, expanding individual income tax deductions, and increasing pension and healthcare protection to put more money in people's pockets.

Wen Bin, chief economist at China Minsheng Bank, said the key is the "substantive implementation" of the urban and rural resident income growth plan, which was outlined in this year's Government Work Report as a priority.

"People need to have money in their hands and confidence in their future," Wen said, adding that improving the social safety net will help reduce precautionary saving and encourage households to spend.

The plan also embraces the role of technology in reshaping consumption. It explicitly calls for deepening "AI plus consumption" integration, supporting the development of debut economy events, and cultivating immersive, experience-driven consumption scenarios.

"Digital technologies such as AI, the Internet of Things and virtual reality are not only generating new products and services like smart wearables and instant retail, but are fundamentally reshaping consumption scenes and interaction patterns," said Fu Yifu, a researcher at Jiangsu Su Merchants Bank.

According to a report on changing consumer behavior released last October by US media services company Omnicom Media Group, 65 percent of consumers now expect to find the answers they are looking for in artificial intelligence overviews.

"We clearly observe this trend through monitoring click streams, sessions and conversations on our platform," said Diarmuid Gill, chief technology officer of global commerce media company Criteo, noting that the application of AI is currently focused on the product discovery and price comparison stages, with the final consumer decision-making phase remaining underdeveloped.

As AI has become an important part of the consumer shopping journey, businesses need to deploy AI agent-driven marketing strategies promptly to capitalize on this critical growth opportunity, Gill added.

'Six networks' infrastructure strategy angles for investment

By **WANG KEJU**

China is accelerating a sweeping infrastructure plan centered on six interconnected networks — water, power, computing, telecommunications, urban pipelines and logistics, in a bid to stabilize investment, create jobs and lay the groundwork for the next phase of the country's technological and industrial transformation.

Premier Li Qiang chaired a State Council executive meeting on July 20 to review progress on the "six networks" plan, which was first unveiled in March and has since become a key part of Beijing's strategy to counter economic headwinds.

Prior to the meeting, China released its first-half economic data showing that fixed-asset investment contracted 5.7 percent year-on-year in the first six months of 2026 to 22.64 trillion yuan ($3.1 trillion), as a deepening property sector downturn continues to weigh on broader investment activities.

China vowed late last year to halt the investment downturn, following a 3.8 percent contraction in fixed-asset investment in 2025.

The meeting called for "systematic advancement" of the networks, faster implementation tailored to local conditions, and stronger funding support.

The plan is backed by massive financial firepower. The National Development and Reform Commission estimates that investment in the six networks and related key areas will exceed 7 trillion yuan this year alone.

Over the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-2030), cumulative investment is projected at 20 trillion to 25 trillion yuan, the commission said. "Just three of the networks — water, power and urban pipelines — will see combined investment exceeding 16 trillion yuan during the 15th Five-Year Plan period," it added.

"This is not just about expanding effective investment," said Luo Zhiheng, chief economist and head of the research institute at Yuekai Securities. "It is a strategic move to cultivate new quality productive forces and shape future competitive advantages."

Luo said that the networks of water, pipelines and logistics provide "foundational support" for the physical economy, while networks of computing power, communications and the smart grid serve as "innovation engines" that will enable artificial intelligence, green energy and digital transformation.

To back the plan, the government has already allocated 755 billion yuan in central budget investment and 1 trillion yuan in ultra-long special treasury bonds for this year, with disbursement largely completed by the end of June. An additional 800 billion yuan in new policy-based financial instruments is being deployed.

Zheng Shanjie, head of the National Development and Reform Commission, hosted a private sector symposium on June 16 to solicit input on the six-networks plan, emphasizing that the initiative offers "major opportunities" for businesses to expand markets, increase investment and drive innovation.

"We will open competitive infrastructure sectors fairly to all market players and improve mechanisms for private companies to participate in major projects," Zheng said.

Policy Digest

Data privacy rules to be eased for small entities

China is simplifying data privacy requirements for small entities, with new provisions released by the Cyberspace Administration of China and the Ministry of Public Security. Taking effect on Sept 1, the provisions aim to lower compliance costs for startups and micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises.

An official with the CAC said the move represents an important step in implementing the country's Personal Information Protection Law. The provisions apply to any entity or individual that processes the personal information of fewer than 100,000 people.

The document sets out simplified measures concerning personal information processing rules and the fulfillment of protection obligations, while also specifying requirements for supervision and administration.

It supports enterprises, social organizations and professional institutions by strengthening their protection capabilities through training, lectures, legal awareness activities and consultation.

Government departments responsible for personal information protection are also encouraged to provide small entities with infrastructure, technological tools and consultation services for secure and convenient information processing, helping further reduce compliance costs.

Eldercare professional qualification system set up

China has established its first official professional qualification system for eldercare service professionals, marking a major step forward in the nation's strategy of addressing its rapidly aging population.

Approved by the State Council, the provisional regulations were jointly issued by the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security. The framework sets standardized guidelines for professional examinations, core competencies, and official registration across home, community and institutional care settings.

It has junior, intermediate and senior qualifications. Junior and intermediate candidates will take nationally unified examinations, while rules for senior professionals will be formulated separately. The passing score for each subject is generally 60 percent, and successful candidates will receive paper and electronic certificates.

Junior professionals should possess basic knowledge and skills, help assess older people's conditions, and provide care and rehabilitation services. Intermediate professionals should be able to devise care plans, train eldercare workers, offer consultation, connect resources and make referrals.

Blueprint lays out goals for green energy development

China's National Development and Reform Commission and the National Energy Administration released the country's renewable energy development plan for the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026–30) on July 23.

The policy framework signals a strategic transition for China's clean energy sector, shifting focus from rapid capacity expansion to quality improvement, system integration and reliable substitution of fossil fuels.

According to the document, by 2030, the total consumption of renewable energy is expected to reach approximately 1.8 billion metric tons of standard coal equivalent.

By 2030, the total installed capacity of renewable energy power generation is projected to reach about 3.5 billion kilowatts, with an annual power generation of approximately 6 trillion kilowatt-hours. The combined installed capacity of wind and solar power is expected to exceed 2.8 billion kW, with annual power generation surpassing 4 trillion kWh.

Renewable energy refers to energy that can be continuously replenished and regenerated through natural processes within a relatively short period. It includes hydropower, wind, solar, biomass, geothermal and marine energy. New energy refers to all renewable energy sources excluding hydropower, according to the document.

CHINA DAILY—XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:09 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:09 PM

Z WEEKLY



Students from schools in China and overseas raise country placards during the 2026 China Daily Model United Nations in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, held from July 31 to Aug 3, 2026. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Learning the art of diplomacy

Students at the 2026 China Daily Model United Nations navigate competing interests and seek common ground on global challenges.

By GUO JIATONG
guojiatong@i21st.cn

Visiting Suzhou for the first time, 13-year-old Luo Shiqi was impressed by the city's hospitality and quickly made friends with young delegates from different schools and countries.

The Italian-Chinese student from Varese Chinese Language School in Italy was in the city to take part in a four-day Model United Nations conference, where students assumed the roles of national representatives and debated global challenges.

Held from July 31 to Aug 3 in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, the 2026 China Daily Model United Nations (CDMUN) brought together teachers and student representatives from nearly 100 schools in China and overseas.

The agenda covered four broad areas: global governance, governance of emerging issues, regional affairs and international communication. Through simulations of international organizations, participants examined global challenges from the perspectives of the countries they represented.

Inside the meeting rooms, country placards rose above tables as delegates leaned toward microphones to debate regional conflicts, the global energy transition and humanitarian crises.

Representing Canada on a simulated United Nations Development Programme committee, Luo said the discussions changed how she viewed the challenges countries face when pursuing shared goals.

"Listening to different voices helped me become more open-minded," she said. "Sometimes a country cannot achieve a goal not because it lacks the will, but because it lacks the resources, technology or financial capacity."

Liu Biwei, former vice-president of the China Public Diplomacy Association, said Model UN gives young people a valuable opportunity to gain firsthand insight into international organizations and global affairs.

"The simulations also helped young people develop communication skills, deepen mutual understanding and learn to cooperate," Liu said.

For some participants, the conference offered a deeper look at the competing interests that shape international negotiations.

Lu Dikai, a 21-year-old international relations major at Dalian University of Foreign Languages in Liaoning province, served as a journalist with the CDMUN media center. He reported on discussions about the Cyprus crisis of 1974 and the conflict in Sudan.

Through those discussions, he observed that humanitarian concerns in contemporary regional conflicts are often politicized, while multilateral processes are sidelined.

"Major powers tend to prioritize their own geopolitical interests," Lu said. "Humanitarian operations that should focus solely on protecting civilians can easily become instruments of geopolitical competition."

In his view, addressing such challenges requires an approach grounded in multilateralism, fairness and justice.

"Transnational issues cannot be solved by one or a few nations alone," he said. "Only through equal consultation and listening to diverse voices can we build a sustainable global governance framework."

The simulations also gave Lu a more practical understanding of diplomacy, which he described as a continual process of adjustment and compromise. "Unexpected developments can arise at any point in a meeting," he said.

"Rather than simply confronting one another, delegates must quickly reassess their national interests and adjust their negotiating positions. The challenge is to find the broadest possible common ground without compromising their core interests."

The question of balancing national priorities and the common good also emerged in discussions on environmental cooperation.

Zhou Tuoyi, a 20-year-old international relations student at the London School of Economics and Political Science, served on the academic team for the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

During the conference, Zhou helped guide discussions on the sustainable management of transboundary water resources in the Aral Sea Basin, where decades of environmental degradation have exposed the limits of existing international mechanisms.

"When countries compete over natural resources, pursuing individual national interests can produce collectively irrational outcomes," he said. "That's a dilemma worth debating."

He believes effective international cooperation requires countries to consider the human consequences of their decisions.

"Empathy is what drives us to address problems that affect millions of lives," Zhou said. "If countries focus only on their own interests, social and humanitarian needs can easily be overlooked."

Attending the conference for the third time, Zhou said he had watched young delegates grow throughout the event.

"Many delegates arrive as hesitant participants but leave as confident speakers," Zhou said. "More importantly, they begin to understand that addressing long-standing global crises requires not only negotiation, but also genuine empathy."

For Luo, that learning process meant recognizing why a country might struggle to meet an international goal. For Lu, it meant understanding how geopolitical interests and unequal national capacities can complicate international cooperation.

The experience also reinforced Lu's belief that understanding international affairs requires a strong grounding in history.

He advised young people interested in diplomacy to build that foundation before delving into international relations theory.

"History is the bedrock of international politics," he said. "Young people must think independently, build their knowledge over time and avoid being influenced by one-sided opinions."

Wang Benchuang contributed to this story.

Shining Wisdom

Building a green legacy for generations to come

"A society grows great when old men plant trees in whose shade they know they shall never sit" is a quote I was reminded of while reading *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*. It reflects the book's long-term perspective and its presentation of leadership as stewardship: development should be managed not for personal profit, but for future generations.

Xi's emphasis on sustainable growth and ecological civilization suggests that good government is like planting trees: it requires patience, selflessness and a commitment to benefits that may not become visible for years.

Environmental concerns have been incorporated into China's constitution and national development goals. Local governments are increasingly judged not only by their economic performance, but also by how well they protect the environment.

This shift has contributed to major changes in industry, with China emerging as a global leader in green technology. At the same time, it has made it more difficult for heavily polluting industries to operate without restriction.

This is consistent with one of Xi's best-known statements: "Lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets." China's pledge to peak carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality before 2060 reflects this environmental ambition.

In the United States, material wealth has increasingly become a measure of national success. Gross national product (GNP) was often treated as a comprehensive indicator of progress, even though it records economic activity regardless of whether that activity improves people's lives.

As Robert F. Kennedy observed in a 1968 speech, it can count pollution, crime, destruction and military expenditure while excluding children's health, educational quality, compassion, wisdom and the integrity of public life. In his words, it measures many things "except that which makes life worthwhile".

Such a system captures economic activity without distinguishing between productive growth and social or environmental costs. Efforts such as environmental accounting and China's emphasis on ecological progress seek to address this limitation by incorporating environmental costs into assessments of national development. This approach moves beyond purely quantitative measures of output by recognizing that not all growth contributes equally to long-term well-being.

If you live in or visit China, you will see firsthand evidence of ecological civilization in practice. From bus stops to apartment complexes, there are reminders to keep China green.

One of the most widely recognized examples of ecological progress in China is the "Great Green Wall", which aims to slow and reverse desert expansion across northern China. Through decades of large-scale tree planting and land management, the project has become a symbol of Chinese environmental governance. Like any project of this size, it has faced challenges, including concerns about water use and the suitability of certain tree species. Still, it demonstrates the importance of long-term environmental planning.


Conor Weeks

As a member of Gen Z, I have a personal interest in global ecology because today's environmental decisions will shape the conditions in which my generation must live.

Every generation inherits a world it did not create and becomes responsible for what it passes on. Environmental stewardship is therefore not only a political or economic concern, but also a moral obligation between generations.

Growing up in the US, ecological sustainability was part of my elementary school education. Reminders to recycle, turn off the lights when leaving home, or donate a dollar to charity while buying coffee were common. It would be logical to conclude that, given this education, the country's natural beauty and strong rural culture, the US would be a global leader in ecological sustainability.

However, as painful as it is to admit, this is not entirely the case. The US is responsible for more cumulative carbon dioxide emissions than any other country, and its emissions per person remain among the highest in the world. Although efforts have been made to develop sustainable energy, recent federal policies have also sought to reverse or weaken some environmental protections.

I hope that in the future, Americans can better understand that prosperity is not isolated, but shared among individuals, communities and people across the world.

I also hope that American leadership can learn from the farsighted, long-term approach emphasized in Chinese governance, while recognizing that every country, including China, still faces serious environmental challenges of its own.

That vision returns us to the image of planting trees today so that others may one day sit in their shade. A society becomes great not only through what it builds for the present, but through what it preserves for the future.

Written by Conor Weeks, a 24-year-old American currently living in Suzhou, Jiangsu province. He holds a master's degree in Chinese politics from Renmin University of China and now works in marketing for a Chinese technology company.

Online
Watch the video by scanning the code.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:09 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:09 PM

Find purpose in rural fieldwork

Young researchers leave campus to listen to villagers, document rural change and seek practical solutions for education and community development.



Students from the Shanghai University of Finance and Economics participate in the "Thousand-Village Survey" program, conducting fieldwork in villages across the country this summer. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY





By **WANG XIN** in Shanghai
wangxin2@chinadaily.com.cn

Wang Ruiqing knows firsthand how access to better education can change a rural child's life.

The 19-year-old grew up in a village in Poyang county, East China's Jiangxi province. She attended primary school in her village, middle school in a nearby town and high school in the county before earning a place at the Shanghai University of Finance and Economics (SUFE).

This summer, she returned to the Jiangxi countryside — not as a pupil, but as a university student researching rural education.

Wang, now a second-year law student, joined her university's "Thousand-Village Survey" program for the second consecutive year in July. She was among about 420 participants conducting fieldwork across the country.

As one of the program's 41 team leaders this year, Wang led 13 fellow students on visits to villages, schools and rural households in Jingdezhen.

Using a carefully designed questionnaire, the team spoke with farmers and collected information on their family circumstances, educational experiences, difficulties, needs and expectations.

For Wang, the subject is deeply personal.

Growing up, she saw many of her childhood classmates struggle. Some were left-behind children whose parents had moved away for work, while others came from families facing financial hardship.

She recalls the challenges faced by left-behind children, including loneliness and a lack of emotional support from parents working far from home.

> "We may not yet be able to accomplish anything truly grand, but together we are building the program's database like a Great Wall, with each of us adding one brick at a time."
>
> **Wang Ruiqing,** 19, a student at the Shanghai University of Finance and Economics

"Through in-depth surveys and conversations, we can better understand their needs and explore possible solutions," Wang said. "I believe this is the very purpose of our research, and I sincerely hope rural education will continue to develop."

The fieldwork also showed Wang and her teammates how rural communities were changing.

China's sustained efforts to promote rural development have significantly improved farmers' livelihoods. In Hanxi village in Jingdezhen's Fuliang county, the team was impressed by summer crowds enjoying the local tea culture and countryside scenery. They also saw notable progress in villagers' living conditions and access to education.

Launched in 2008, the "Thousand-Village Survey" program brings together more than 1,700 students and teachers each summer. After completing their fieldwork, each team submits four research reports and one article. The materials are then reviewed and analyzed by professors and used in broader, more in-depth studies.

To date, the program has sent more than 30,000 students to visit tens of thousands of rural households. Participants have conducted research in more than 16,000 villages across 34 provincial-level administrative regions and produced over 13,000 reports, according to the university.

For nearly two decades, the program has focused on the "Three Rural Issues" — agriculture, rural areas and farmers. Moving beyond the university campus and into grassroots communities, participants have explored subjects ranging from farmers' livelihoods, rural healthcare and the rural workforce to food security, elderly care, access to basic financial services, entrepreneurship, industrial revitalization and rural governance.

The program's findings on food security, rural financial services and the effectiveness of grassroots governance have attracted the attention of national policymakers and provided valuable references for government decision-making.

In May, 42 additional universities joined the program to establish an alliance that draws on their respective academic strengths and supports the country's rural revitalization efforts.

"The program aims to encourage students to step outside the classroom and see the most authentic side of China with their own eyes," said Ding Jing, director of the Student Affairs Office at SUFE.

"We hope they will put their academic knowledge into practice through field research, develop a deeper concern for rural development and, ultimately, discover their own aspirations."

The program also welcomed younger participants.

Wang Sixia, an art teacher at SUFE's affiliated high school, joined the fieldwork with four 16-year-old students.

"These trips have given them deeper insight into the experiences of people from different walks of life and greater empathy for them," she said. "What they learned will help them understand the complexity and diversity of society. It is a form of growth that no school course can offer."

For Wang Ruiqing, the experience has become part of an ongoing journey.

She first took part in the survey last year, when she traveled to Wuyuan county in Jiangxi. She said the field trips have not only inspired her and strengthened her academic skills but also allowed her to make new friends and discover a much wider world.

"I see my Gen Z teammates as a passionate, sincere and determined group," she said. "We may not yet be able to accomplish anything truly grand, but together we are building the program's database like a Great Wall, with each of us adding one brick at a time."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:09 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:09 PM

Z WEEKLY



Xu Yuehan (first from right) finishes fourth in the Open Women division at the 2026 Legian Boardriders-LSI Club Series at Legian Beach, Bali, Indonesia, on July 18, 2026.

Mountains behind, waves ahead

Born far from the sea, a young surfer is making waves through determination, sacrifice and fearless ambition.



Xu (right) poses with an Indonesian national team surfer after the heats at the 2026 Legian Boardriders–LSI Club Series at Legian Beach, Bali, Indonesia, on July 18, 2026.

By GUI QIAN and LI YINGQING

At 5 am, the first orange-red glow spread across the sea off Bali, Indonesia, as 12-year-old Xu Yuehan walked toward the waves with a surfboard under her arm.

Xu comes from Anning, Yunnan province, an inland city surrounded by mountains and nearly 1,000 kilometers from the sea. In Bali, however, where she was attending a surfing training camp, her days revolved around the water.

She got up before dawn to catch the early waves and surfed until about 9 am. After breakfast, she returned to the water for another session. She spent the afternoon on physical conditioning and ended the day with stretching, massage and recovery.

The schedule kept her in the water or the gym for most of the day, but she did not find it exhausting.

"Standing on a wave makes me feel free," she said. "I can try whatever moves I want."

Her grueling training regimen is already paying off.

Xu recently finished fourth in the Open Women division at the Legian Boardriders-LSI Club Series 2026 in Bali. The division had no age limit, and some of her competitors were adults more than a decade older than her. Many had also grown up in coastal areas with easy access to the sea.

Still, Xu said she felt neither nervous nor intimidated.

She has been surfing for just over a year but has already won several trophies. In August 2025, she claimed her first national title, winning the girls' under-12 shortboard event at the Guangdong stop of the National Surfing U Series.

Her rapid progress began with a chance encounter during a family holiday in Wanning, Hainan province, over Spring Festival in 2024.

Xu, then 9, noticed a leaflet in the hotel lobby advertising a surfing lesson and persuaded her father to sign her up. She managed to stand up on the board on her third wave.

The sensation of being lifted and carried forward by the water captivated her immediately.

After the family returned to Anning, surfing might easily have remained a holiday memory. But Xu could not let it go.

That summer, she told her family she wanted to return to Hainan and earn a surfing certificate. Her parents suggested other vacation plans, but she turned them down.

"When I see big waves, I don't feel afraid," Xu said. "I feel incredibly excited. I want to learn to surf properly and go further in the sport."

Her mother later recalled seeing the light in her daughter's eyes and realizing that surfing was not a passing interest.

To continue training from her home in Anning, Xu had to fly repeatedly to the coast while keeping up with school. At the end of 2024, she decided to transfer to a school in Lingshui Li autonomous county, Hainan.

Her goal was simple: to be closer to the sea. "After transferring, I could study and train at the same time," she said.

Family follows waves

Xu's journey from the mountains to the sea would not have been possible without her family, who reorganized their lives around her dream.

Her parents run a beverage business in Anning and had no previous connection to surfing or other water sports. Once Xu decided to pursue surfing seriously, her mother stepped away from work to travel with her, first to Hainan and later to Bali.

Both parents began learning more about surfing. Her mother also started teaching herself English so she could accompany Xu to surf spots farther from home.

"They've both become amateur surfing enthusiasts," Xu said with a laugh. "Now we always have something to talk about when it comes to surfing."

Xu said she understood how much her parents had sacrificed for her.

"I know that some of my peers' parents worry that surfing is too dangerous and want them to quit," she said. "That's why I'm especially grateful that my mother has placed so much trust in me."

While her family's support allowed her to stay close to the sea, entering competitive surfing required professional training.

In September 2024, Xu began training independently and competing as an amateur. At a competition in Hainan in April 2025, a coach from a provincial surfing team noticed her performance and selected her for the province's reserve team, where she began training and competing with the squad.

Xu's journey also reflects the gradual growth of surfing in China. As competitive programs have expanded, children from inland provinces have gained more opportunities to take part in a sport once largely confined to coastal communities.

Professional training not only helped Xu progress more quickly but also gave her a better understanding of how judges evaluate a ride and which techniques earn higher scores. She is now focusing on the "snap", a sharp turn performed near the top of a wave and an important scoring maneuver.

She eventually aims to master aerial moves and barrel riding, in which a surfer rides inside the hollow section of a breaking wave.

Xu also wants to compete at higher levels, both at home and internationally, and hopes her experience will encourage other children growing up far inland.

"Distance may keep you from the sea," she said. "But it cannot keep you from your dream."

Contact the writers at guiqian@i21st.cn



Xu competes in the U12 women's shortboard division at the Wanning, Hainan, stop of the 2026 National Surfing U Series on March 10, 2026, finishing runner-up. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Global Insights

Shared fields connect rural China and Bangladesh

I did not expect a small county in the hills of Fujian province to make me homesick for Bangladesh. But that is what happened when I visited Jianning county in Sanming city and found myself ankle-deep in mud, planting rice seedlings beside a farmer I had met only minutes earlier.

I had gone looking for scenery and Jianning has plenty of it: green mountains, clear streams and a stillness that feels increasingly rare in a rapidly urbanizing world. What stayed with me, however, was something harder to photograph — a spirit of community that reminded me of the village where I grew up.

One morning, I noticed a farmer working alone in a rice field. His movements were precise and unhurried. My Mandarin was limited, so I pointed at the seedlings and then at myself, gesturing to ask if I could join him.

He smiled and handed me a bundle.

As I stepped into the muddy paddy, memories of rural Bangladesh came rushing back. Like many children raised in rural areas, I had once helped my family with farm work. The mud beneath my feet, the flooded field and the rhythm of planting felt immediately familiar.

The farmer and I worked side by side, communicating through smiles and gestures. Before long, other villagers began to arrive. One after another, they entered the field and joined the planting. What had begun as one man working alone soon became a group moving steadily across the paddy.

Curious, I asked the farmer whether he was going to pay them.

He looked almost puzzled by the question.

"No," he said. "They come to help. When the work in my field is done, I will go to their fields to help. This is how we do things."

His answer described a system based not on charity but on reciprocity. Farmers help one another without contracts or negotiations, knowing that they, too, can count on their fellow neighbors when the time comes. The arrangement reduces labor costs, strengthens relationships and gives people confidence that they will not face difficult times alone.

That spirit felt familiar, too. Similar forms of mutual assistance have long existed in rural Bangladesh. Yet in many places, migration, commercialization and changing lifestyles have weakened traditional community ties.

Jianning reminded me that rural development is not only about infrastructure, incomes or technology. It is also about preserving the relationships that allow communities to work together.

What makes Jianning particularly interesting is that this culture of cooperation exists alongside the modernization of agriculture.

The county is one of China's largest hybrid rice seed-production bases, accounting for more than one-tenth of the country's hybrid rice seed-production area and output. It has also been introducing digital tools into farming.

Through *Liangshengbao*, a digital farming-services platform, farmers can manage orders, reserve agricultural machinery and access production-related information. The platform covers 161,000 *mu* (10,733 hectares) of hybrid rice seed-production fields and serves more than 24,000 farmers.

These tools are intended to improve coordination and reduce the administrative burden on farmers.

Jianning's experience suggests that digital technology can improve agricultural efficiency without displacing the traditional values of trust and mutual assistance. For developing countries such as Bangladesh, Jianning offers useful lessons, although its model cannot simply be copied.



Mohammad Saiyedul Islam (center) plants rice seedlings alongside two farmers in Jianning county, Sanming, Fujian province, on May 31, 2026. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Bangladesh has fertile land, hardworking farmers and a strong agricultural tradition, but many rural communities still struggle with poor market access, limited digital services, small and fragmented farms, and few opportunities to add value to their produce.

Cooperative farming models and digital agricultural platforms could give farmers better access to machinery, information and markets while creating new opportunities for younger people to remain involved in agriculture.

But technology alone would not be enough. Rural revitalization succeeds only when it improves people's quality of life, protects the environment and strengthens relationships within the community.

My clearest memory of Jianning is not technology or a production statistic. It is the sight of villagers entering a muddy field and beginning to plant alongside a fellow farmer.

I arrived in Jianning looking for scenery. I left thinking about Bangladesh — and about how rural communities can embrace change without losing the trust and cooperation that have sustained them for generations.

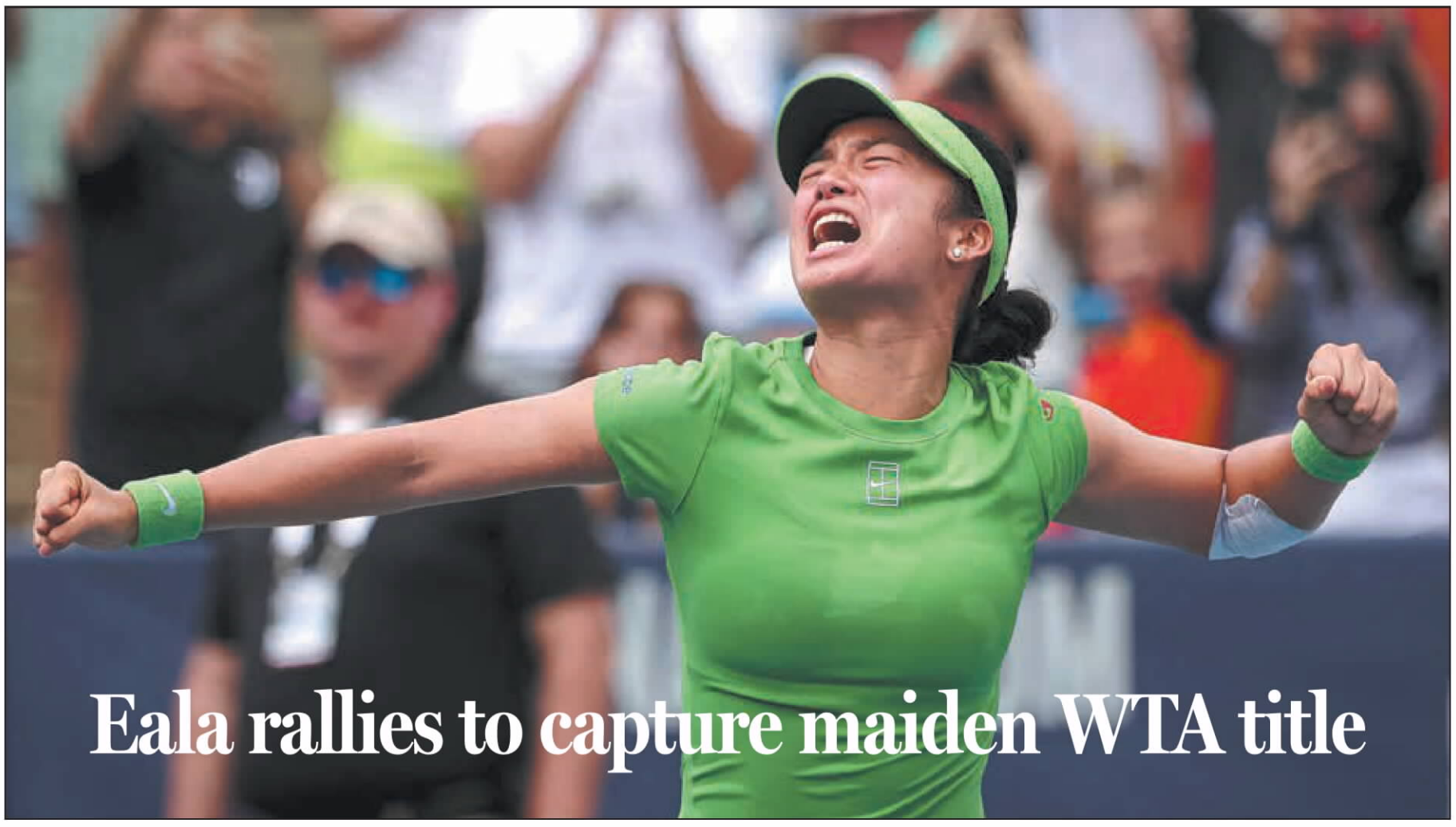
Written by Mohammad Saiyedul Islam, PhD, a senior lecturer and researcher at the School of Overseas Education (School of Foreign Languages), Sanming University, in Fujian province. He is also a senior research fellow at the Daffodil International University Belt and Road Research Center in Bangladesh.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:09 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:09 PM

SPORTS

TENNIS



Eala rallies to capture maiden WTA title

Alexandra Eala of the Philippines lets out a victorious roar after winning her maiden WTA title at the Washington Open, beating Jessica Pegula of the United States in the women's singles championship match on Monday in Washington, DC. GETTY IMAGES VIA AFP

Filipino star hits ground running after overnight rain delay to deny Pegula





Left: Alexandra Eala gets ready to hit a return to Jessica Pegula during the WTA Washington Open final on Monday. **Right:** Eala kisses the WTA500 Washington Open trophy on Monday. GETTY IMAGES VIA AFP

WASHINGTON — Alexandra Eala's breakthrough week at the DC Open lasted one day longer than expected. By the time it ended, the Filipino expression written across the Nike T-shirt she had worn earlier that week had become a reality.

"Once it grows, it cannot be stopped."

After the women's final stretched across two days because of heavy rain, Eala rallied past Jessica Pegula 4-6, 6-4, 6-0 Monday to capture her first career WTA Tour title.

The victory made the 21-year-old Eala the first Filipina to win a singles title on the tour, completing the same career-defining breakthrough that the Washington tournament once gave Pegula when she claimed her first WTA title in 2019.

"At the beginning of the week, there's no way I would have thought that I would be holding this trophy," Eala said. "Winning a 500 (level tournament) is insane. It's an incredible milestone for me. These things kind of creep up on you and I hold these moments really close to me."

Eala arrived at Stadium Court as the story of the tournament, carrying the hopes of her nation.

Philippine flags decorated the stands throughout Sunday's rain-interrupted session and remained visible Monday, with the lower bowl filled for the resumption. Chants for Eala routinely outweighed those for the top-ranked American playing on home soil.

"It's not fun to play against, but I do appreciate the really fun atmosphere," Pegula said of the crowd. "I think it's amazing."

It capped a week in which the rising star transformed the atmosphere around the tournament, while reaching her first WTA final in her debut at the hard-court tune-up for the US Open.

The two traded breaks midway through the opening set, with Pegula breaking again at 4-4 and serving out the set at love.

The players held through the opening three games of the second set before heavy rain suspended play on Sunday afternoon.

When they returned on Monday, the momentum belonged to Eala.

She stormed back to claim the second set, then swept through the third. Eala ultimately won the final eight games of the match to secure the championship, beating all three of the tournament's top seeds along the way.

Eala dropped to the court with her head in her hands, overcome with emotion. Tears filled her eyes before she rose, embraced Pegula at the net and let out a triumphant scream.

"I was so nervous, and I kind of just blacked out," Eala said. "Everything just came rushing to me."

She won the last eight games of the contest, surrendering just eight points in the third set.

"Just pure happiness," Eala said of her first title, which comes after she agonizingly failed to convert four championship points in her only prior final at Eastbourne, England, last year.

'Very steep hill'

Eala is projected to rise to a career-high 20th in the world after a storming run that included victories over Olympic champion Zheng Qinwen, second-seeded Elina Svitolina, third-seeded former world No 1 Naomi Osaka and defending champion Leylah Fernandez.

"It was a very steep hill," she said. "I knew that the competition was super strong and my draw was quite tough. So I'm really, really proud. I think I encountered my fair share of obstacles this week."

The scoreboard showed a match time of one hour and 45 minutes, but it took nearly 24 hours to complete.

Pegula had won the first set 6-4 and Eala was up 2-1 in the second on Sunday when officials postponed the finish until Monday after lengthy rain delays.

The pair had waited through a three-hour delay before starting, and once the match was halted it was another five hours before officials called a halt for the day.

"Definitely felt like two different matches," said Pegula, who opened Monday's action with a nervy service hold for 2-2.

"I just felt like I couldn't find my rhythm. I think I was playing much better yesterday, for whatever reason, than I was today, and I think she was playing better today than she was yesterday."

Pegula could make no inroads on Eala's serve, and Eala broke Pegula in the 10th game to take the second set and force a third.

The final set was all Eala, to the delight of a vocal contingent of supporters, who turned out in force despite the postponement.

Pegula welcomed the energy of the crowd even in support of her opponent, who has proved a massive draw around the world.

"I just think it's so refreshing and nice to see how well she's handled all of the kind of fandom and stardom that's come with her being from the Philippines, and how they've really embraced her," Pegula said.

"It's crazy how she deals with it every single week, which just shows her maturity as both a player and as a person."

Both players will now head to Toronto, where two-time champion Pegula is the third seed and Eala is seeded 25th in the WTA1000 hard-court event.

Eala also received congratulations from former eight-division boxing champion Manny Pacquiao, who wrote on social media that her comeback showed the "heart of a Filipino" before calling her "our new champion".

In the men's final later on Monday, third-seeded Taylor Fritz defeated Rafael Jodar 7-6 (2), 6-4.

Fritz broke the Spaniard twice early in the second set, and eventually converted his fifth championship point after letting four earlier opportunities slip away.

Fritz lay on the court for several moments after winning the 11th title of his career, then got to his feet with a roll of his eyes as the tension of finally closing out the match gave way.

"It was just relief, like, thank God I got it done; thank God the match is over," Fritz said of the moment. "It wasn't so much as, like, a celebration ... I can just lay down for a second."

AGENCIES

Venus-Bublik, newlyweds among new US Open doubles teams

An additional 13 teams, one featuring Venus Williams and some comprised of married couples, have entered the US Open mixed doubles championship.

The new duos, announced Monday by the US Tennis Association, raised the total to 29 teams for the 16 spots in the main draw, which will be held on Aug 25 and Aug 26.

Williams is partnering with Alexander Bublik for the tournament that was overhauled last year in an effort to get top singles players to compete, with a $1 million top prize on offer. Top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka and 24-time Grand Slam singles champion Novak Djokovic headlined the initial list of 16 teams.

Elina Svitolina and her husband Gael Monfils, who is expected to play his final Grand Slam event at the US Open, and newlyweds Katie Boulter and Alex de Minaur also were among the new entries.

The other new teams: Karolina Muchova and Jakub Mensik, Anna Kalinskaya and Lorenzo Musetti, Emma Navarro and Tommy Paul, Maria Sakkari and Karen Khachanov, Tatjana Maria and Valentin Vacherot, Reese Brantmeier and Michael Zheng, Jelena Ostapenko and Marcelo Arevalo, Gabriela Dabrowski and Harri Heliovaara, Demi Schuurs and Julian Cash, and Caty McNally and Robert Cash.

Teams can enter until Aug 17, when the six duos with the best combined singles rankings at the time will be automatically entered into the main draw. That means Sabalenka, the two-time defending US Open women's champion, and Djokovic, still ranked No 5 on the men's tour at age 39, will be safely into the field.

Eight teams will be given wild cards by the USTA, and two other teams will play their way into the field through a new qualifying tournament to be held Aug 24.

Besides Sabalenka and Djokovic, teams previously announced were: Iga Swiatek and Casper Ruud, the runners-up in 2025; Elena Rybakina and Taylor Fritz, the Japanese duo of Naomi Osaka and Kei Nishikori, Jessica Pegula and Jack Draper, Mirra Andreeva and Andrey Rublev, Belinda Bencic and Flavio Cobolli, Diana Shnaider and Daniil Medvedev, Amanda Anisimova and Learner Tien, Alexandra Eala and Felix Auger-Aliassime, Leylah Fernandez and Frances Tiafoe, Taylor Townsend and Alexander Zverev, Elena-Gabriela Ruse and Nuno Borges, Sara Errani and Andrea Vavassori, Katerina Siniakova and Henry Patten, and siblings Peyton Stearns and Preston Stearns.

Errani and Vavassori are the two-time defending US Open champions. The Italians needed a wild card to get into last year's event because their singles rankings were too low, and that will be the case again this year.

AP

Shelton finds sweet spot in Montreal

MONTREAL, Canada — Ben Shelton doesn't want to miss a match, as he begins the defense of his ATP Montreal Masters title with the goal of arriving at the US Open in full flow.

With the last major of the season starting on Aug 31 in New York, the American has programmed a full run-up schedule: Washington last week, Montreal and Cincinnati still to come.

"Three tournaments is the perfect amount. I'd like to get as many matches as possible," the fifth seed said on Monday.

"I'm the type of player, the more matches I play, the better I play, as long as my body can hold up," Shelton added. "It's a great three-tournament run before having a week off leading up to the US Open. I'm just kind of going for it."

Shelton, the men's No 10 who reached last week's Washington quarters, is not bothered by the bloated length of the Montreal tournament, which has attracted criticism and could be ripe for future change.

Shelton said he cannot fault his all-star peers for choosing to skip it.

The weather is playing a major role in the controversial 12-day extended Masters, a tournament where world No 1 Jannik Sinner and 24-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic are high-profile absentees.

"I think there's a lack of sustainability (in the two-week format), for sure, but I don't know if there's a different way to go about it," he said. "Jannik knows himself. Novak knows himself. Maybe I would do the same thing if I had won Wimbledon — I didn't.

"It's tough to criticize those guys for the decisions that they make throughout the season when they're trying to sustain a level and maintain their health.

"At the same time, for me, this is one of my favorite parts of the year, one of my best swings, and I don't want to miss out on playing any of these tournaments."

Shelton said that he does not dwell on the 1,000 ranking points from his 2025 victory that he needs to defend in Canada.

"I've never been somebody who worries too much about defending. It's just not as much in my nature," he said. "If you're always thinking about defending, or what week that you made points or didn't make points, it's easy to kind of get lost in your mind.

"That's why I like to just think about my body of work for 2026, what I'm doing, and what I want to accomplish by the end of the year.

"To get another opportunity to be playing really good tennis leading into the US Open is kind of my main goal here. I'm looking forward to getting out there again."

AFP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:09 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:11 PM

Connecting cultures
Utah teacher shares China experiences with students
AMERICA FOCUS, PAGE 5



Nation unveils 2030 carbon peaking plan
CHINA, PAGE 12



Revisiting history
Exhibition explores Western Han Dynasty's beauty and lifestyle
LIFE SHANGHAI, PAGE 14

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日報 FRIDAY, JULY 10, 2026

China's growth outlook boosted by resilience

Export strength, AI innovations lead to growing confidence, upbeat forecasts

By **WANG KEJU, ZHANG CHENXU** and **JIANG XUEQING**

China's economic growth, buoyed by stronger-than-expected exports and rapid artificial intelligence innovations, is expected to have remained on stable footing in the first half of the year, with major international institutions expressing growing confidence in the country's economic outlook, economists said.

While external demand for high-tech products is expected to sustain growth momentum in the second half of the year, they said that policymakers should direct greater efforts toward stimulating domestic demand to achieve a more balanced recovery.

The economists made the remarks while awaiting details of China's economic performance in the first half of the year. Those figures are scheduled to be released next week.

Confidence in China's economic outlook has strengthened in recent weeks, with several major international institutions raising or maintaining relatively upbeat growth forecasts despite a slowing global economy.

On Wednesday, the International Monetary Fund lifted its 2026 growth forecast for China by 0.2 percentage points to 4.6 percent, citing stronger-than-expected first-quarter expansion driven by robust public investment, high-tech manufacturing and exports.

The World Bank has also highlighted resilient high-tech investment and exports as key factors supporting China's economy this year despite global energy supply shocks. According to its latest China Economic Update, the world's second-largest economy is expected to expand 4.4 percent in 2026, against a backdrop of slowing global growth, which is projected at 2.5 percent for 2026.

Inside
Editorial, **page 6**

Economists said China's resilience has been underpinned by solid export performance, particularly in high-tech and value-added manufacturing, as well as rapid industrial upgrading fueled by AI.

Robin Xing, chief China economist at Morgan Stanley, said that China's "current economic momentum is being driven primarily by export growth and industrial upgrading".

China's supply chain resilience, according to Xing, is becoming more visible in sectors such as AI hardware, electric vehicles, energy storage, photovoltaics and wind power, where its export market share continues to rise.

Data from the General Administration of Customs showed that China's exports of high-tech and high-value-added mechanical and electrical products surged 18.4 percent year-on-year to 7.58 trillion yuan ($1.11 trillion) in the first five months of 2026, accounting for 63.6 percent of the country's total exports.

China's economy grew 5 percent year-on-year in the first quarter, reaching the upper end of the government's annual target range of 4.5 to 5 percent.

*See **Growth,** page 3*



A manicurist crafts press-on nails in Donghai county of Lianyungang, Jiangsu province, in May 2024. CHAI JUNWEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

DONGHAI IS NAILING CULTURAL EXCHANGES

Consumers across the globe are embracing manicure products featuring Chinese designs

By **XU LIN**
xulin@chinadaily.com.cn

Imagine effortlessly creating a portable, tiny gallery of traditional Chinese art that goes everywhere you do.

All it takes is a set of press-on nails.

Exquisitely hand-painted, they show the iconic scroll *A Panorama of Rivers and Mountains*, by Song Dynasty (960-1279) painter Wang Ximeng, from a completely different perspective.

Using the scroll's legendary cyan-and-green hues, artisans reproduce the painting's layered ridges and misty waters in breathtaking detail on the 10 tiny canvases, mimicking the intricate luster of traditional filigree enamel — without high-temperature firing.

Easy and affordable, press-on nails have become a time- and cost-effective alternative to traditional salon manicures. These adhesive-backed artificial nails are reusable, simple to apply and remove in a way that won't hurt the natural nail underneath. Another attraction is that they can be swapped freely to match any outfit, mood or occasion.

The global epicenter of this booming beauty trend is Donghai county in Lianyungang, Jiangsu province.

*See **Color,** page 3*

Flood rescue





Above: Rescuers shift stranded students to safety in a powered pontoon bridge in Guigang, South China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, on Thursday. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY
Left: A man clears dirty water and debris from a row of flooded houses on Thursday after a reservoir breach near Gantang township in Nanning, Guangxi. GREG BAKER / AFP
See story, page 3

Middle East tense amid fresh strikes

By **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong and **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE

The situation in the Middle East remained tense on Thursday as the United States and Iran traded intensifying strikes for the second consecutive day, resulting in a trail of casualties even as Qatar issued security alerts and warning sirens went off in Kuwait, Bahrain and Jordan.

The Iranian Ministry of Health said the US forces attacked five provinces in the country over the past two days, killing 14 people and wounding 78. Hossein Kermanpour, spokesman for the Iranian Ministry of Health, said 47 of the 78 wounded remain hospitalized.

A projectile struck the perimeter of Iran's Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant on Thursday, Ehsan Jahanian, deputy governor of Bushehr province, told state media.

Explosions were heard in coastal areas of Iran's port city of Bandar Abbas on Thursday afternoon, Iranian media reported.

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said that major US bases in Kuwait and Bahrain were hit in retaliatory missile and drone operations.

The IRGC said in a statement that following the US' breach of commitments and its latest aggression against Iran, four US bases in Kuwait and Bahrain were hit in the first phase of its response, Tasnim News Agency reported.

The IRGC statement blamed the US for violating all the commitments it made in the memorandum of understanding Tehran signed with Washington last month.

"In the first phase of the punitive response against (the US), the IRGC's naval and aerospace forces, through joint missile and drone operations, destroyed the infrastructure and important facilities of the two colonial bases of the American occupiers in Arifjan and Ali al-Salem in Kuwait and in Juffair and Sheikh Isa in Bahrain, one hour after the enemy's attacks on various parts of (Iran)," the IRGC was quoted as saying by Tasnim.

The IRGC warned the US army that if the aggression was repeated, the Iranian response would be expanded to other US bases in the region.

Speaker of the Iranian Parliament Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said in a post on X that the US still had not learned that "bullying and breaking promises are no longer cost-free".

"Let me put it plainly: if you strike, you'll get hit. Don't flail around pointlessly, or you'll sink even deeper: the Strait of Hormuz will only open with 'Iranian arrangements', not American threats," Ghalibaf said.

Earlier, Bahrain's Ministry of Interior activated its alarm sirens and urged its citizens to remain calm and head to the nearest safe locations. Kuwaiti air defenses reported repelling missile and drone attacks while the Kuwait Army General Staff urged the public to keep away from suspicious wreckage. Jordan's air defense systems shot down eight missiles launched from Iran toward Jordanian territory on Thursday, a military source said.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and Qatari Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani held a phone call on Thursday, in which they reviewed the military escalation between the US and Iran over the past two days.

Al Thani condemned and rejected the attacks targeting commercial ships in the Strait of Hormuz "despite the atmosphere of de-escalation and the efforts being made to reduce tensions in the region", emphasizing that such actions undermine trust, threaten international navigation security, and harm the efforts aimed at establishing regional security and stability, according to a statement published by the Foreign Ministry of Qatar.

Data from Kpler, a global data and analytics company that tracks maritime trade in real time, said the Hormuz recovery faces fresh pressure.

"Traffic through the monitored Strait of Hormuz zone strengthened on July 7, with 41 verified crossings compared with 36 the previous day," it said in a post on X on Wednesday.

An Al Jazeera report noted that movement in the crucial waterway is now largely confined to a northern route approved by Iran, while a corridor further south backed by Oman and the US saw little activity.

US President Donald Trump said on Wednesday that Iran "wants to make a deal so badly" and had reached out to him to pursue negotiations after repeated US strikes in the region.

The US Central Command said its forces completed an additional round of strikes against Iran on Wednesday "to further degrade Iran's ability to attack commercial shipping and innocent civilian mariners in the Strait of Hormuz".

"US forces struck approximately 90 Iranian military targets including air defense systems, coastal surveillance assets, missile and drone storage sites, naval capabilities and military logistics infrastructure along Iran's coastline. The latest strikes follow successful execution of offensive strikes in Iran the night before," it said.

Contact the writers at jan@chinadailyapac.com

INSIDE
True innovation dividend
Global Views, page 8



A member of ANN
© 2026 China Daily Global All Rights Reserved

www.chinadailyglobal.com

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

WORLD WATCH
By Anthony Moretti

Xi's thought serves as beacon for exemplary governance

China is both celebrated and misinterpreted on the global stage. The misunderstanding becomes a deeper problem when people are unwilling to invest the time needed to learn about the economic, political, social and cultural rise of the nation over the past roughly 50 years.

Now another opportunity to understand contemporary China and the Communist Party of China has emerged with a new report titled "Contemporary Features and Global Significance of Xi Jinping Thought on Party Building", released this month by the national high-level think tank of the Party School of the CPC Central Committee.

The report opens with powerful assertions that explain the importance of the document: "To understand China today, one must understand the Communist Party of China", and "to understand the Communist Party of China today, one must understand Xi Jinping Thought on Party Building".

The document is not a lesson in history. Instead, it is a critical assessment of how the CPC has grown into the world's largest political party. It explains how President Xi Jinping has articulated the challenges and opportunities that China faces and that the Party must address to remain authoritative, credible and trusted by the Chinese people.

The central theme of the report is the CPC's tradition of "unremitting self-reform", particularly under Xi's leadership, focusing sharply on the needs of the people and demonstrating the Party's integrity. Xi Jinping Thought on Party Building reminds readers that the CPC retains its authority by delivering to the people what they need.

This promise of "governing with virtue" while "maintaining a keen political awareness" would not be possible amid corruption, greed or a lack of discipline.

Xi has often emphasized that the people are the foundation of the Chinese nation. Thus, the Party's actions and its leaders are judged by their ability to improve the lives of the people. A pertinent example highlighted in the report is the significant improvement in Beijing's air quality. That work has not only benefited Chinese citizens but also the many international visitors to the country's capital — a testament to decades of commitment.

Another theme is that exemplary leadership stems from a deep understanding of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, coupled with a positive spirit in fulfilling responsibilities at every leadership level. In effect, a good leader derives satisfaction from enthusiastically endorsing the CPC's goals, especially those relating to national rejuvenation.

Just as people pay attention to their diet and exercise in order to remain healthy, effective leadership is built through self-discipline and selflessness. Abiding by the CPC rules and national law is embedded in this ideal, and character is shown by the outward demonstration of putting the people, the Party and the nation ahead of any other ambition.

*See **Report,** page 3*

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:11 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:11 PM

INDEPTH



The site of the landslide at a village in Tanchang county, Longnan, Gansu province, on Tuesday. XINHUA



Left and above: Rescuers conduct search and rescue operations at the site of a landslide in Longnan on Tuesday. PHOTOS BY FAN PEIKUN / XINHUA

Dramatic moments of fatal Gansu landslide

Survivors tell of 'rushing earth', rescuers explain delicate operations to extract people buried in soil



Firefighters transfer villagers rescued from the landslide on Tuesday. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Rescue team members walk to the landslide site after access was blocked by debris. XINHUA

By MA JINGNA and **HU YUMENG** in Longnan, Gansu

Gou Yingchun, 35, had been working in the forest for only four days when the mountainside collapsed.

Like dozens of other locals, the Rushu village resident had left home shortly after 6 am on Tuesday to prune branches in a forest in Tanchang county, Longnan, Gansu province. It was the first time she had done temporary forestry work.

When the workers arrived near the forest, they found that a small landslide had already blocked the road, preventing vehicles from going any farther.

"We thought it wasn't serious," Gou recalled. "We got out and started walking."

As the group made its way along the mountain road, Gou lingered at the back. Looking up the slope, she noticed trees swaying unnaturally. "I saw the trees moving," she told China Daily. "I knew something wasn't right."

She immediately shouted to the others to run. One young co-worker hesitated, so Gou grabbed them and pulled them forward. "I kept yelling, 'Run! Run!'"

Moments later, the mountainside gave way.

"It all came down at once," she said. "It was so fast."

As she fled, something struck her from behind, knocking her to the ground. She scrambled back to her feet and managed to run a few more steps before falling again.

"I don't even know what hit me," she said. "I just kept running."

When she finally looked back, the people who had been standing with her only moments earlier were gone.

"I thought they would all make it out," she said quietly. "I never imagined…"

Despite suffering injuries to her leg and arm, Gou's first instinct was to call for help. The surviving workers quickly contacted emergency services as they waited helplessly outside the disaster zone.

Even in the hospital, Gou struggled less with her own injuries than with the loss suffered by her village.

"We all left home happy that morning," she said. "None of us imagined that less than half an hour later, everything would change."

She said she had seen small landslides before, but nothing remotely like this.

"It happened in an instant," she said. "It was too sudden, too fast. People simply didn't have time to react."

Now recovering in hospital, Gou said she considers herself fortunate to have survived, but the grief is overwhelming.

"We were lucky," she said. "But so many people behind us never made it out."

Survivors' stories

Twenty-one people were killed in the landslide, local authorities confirmed at a news conference on Wednesday, adding search and rescue operations have concluded.

The landslide occurred at about 6:56 am on Tuesday, trapping 33 people. Of the survivors, five escaped uninjured and seven sustained minor injuries, according to local authorities.

Tanchang county is located deep in the hinterland of Longnan, where steep mountains, deep valleys and rugged terrain characterize the area. The mountains are mainly composed of loess deposits and jagged rock formations.

Villagers who were swallowed up in the disaster recounted the terrifying moments when it struck.

Sun Penghua, 48, suffered a fractured sternum after the landslide struck Rencang village. Her husband, Yang Ping, 53, escaped with only minor injuries. The couple were running for their lives when the mountainside began to give way.

"My husband was in front of me," Sun recalled. "We started sliding down the slope as we ran. The ground was shaking, and everything was moving beneath our feet. I couldn't even tell where I was anymore."

As they struggled to escape, the collapsing hillside caught up with them. The rushing earth shoved Sun toward the roadside, partially burying her legs before a larger wave of mud and debris slammed into her.

"The landslide pushed me onto the road," she said. "Then the soil came over me and buried me."

An injured resident surnamed Wang said: "I was lucky. If I'd run even a little later, the second landslide would have buried me completely."

Another resident called Feng said he was the first to the initial landslide.

"The first landslide was relatively small, covering an area of about eight to 10 meters," said the man aged in his 40s.

"I started clearing the road while keeping an eye on the slope above. Then I realized something wasn't right, so I pulled out by myself. Just after I had cleared the road, the massive landslide came down. I was still running when I had just reached the side. A rock came down and struck my foot, and I fell."

Chaotic scene

Luo Lingshan, chief of the Tanchang County Fire and Rescue Brigade, immediately knew the situation was serious when the emergency call came in.

The dispatch report mentioned only a landslide and people being trapped, but after 17 years in the fire service, Luo knew what those few words could mean.

"I immediately ordered all available personnel to assemble," he said.

Within a minute, 23 firefighters who had gathered for a training exercise boarded three rescue vehicles and headed toward the mountains. While en route, Luo reported the disaster to the county government and emergency management authorities, requesting additional engineering equipment, medical teams and other rescue forces.

When the convoy reached the valley, the firefighters could go no farther. The landslide had blocked access, forcing the team to leave their vehicles behind and continue on foot.

The scene that greeted them was chaotic.

Several villagers had managed to escape on their own. Some were crying, others were shouting that more people remained trapped higher up the slope.

"There were people calling for us to save those still buried," Luo recalled.

The first priority was those buried in shallow debris.

Working with shovels, chain saws and their bare hands, firefighters removed soil, rocks and fallen trees. Whenever they reached a victim's body, they stopped using tools to avoid causing further injury.

Within about 20 minutes, the team had pulled out five survivors. Most were buried only from the waist down, while others had their legs trapped beneath the debris. Although frightened and in tears, their overall physical condition was relatively stable and they were quickly transferred by stretchers to waiting medical teams, Luo said.

The danger, however, had not passed. Loose rocks and soil continued falling from the mountainside.

"We set up three observation posts," Luo said. "If there were any signs of another collapse, we could immediately sound the evacuation signal and protect the rescuers."

The unstable slope shaped every decision that followed.

As larger rescue teams arrived, the operation shifted from rescuing shallowly buried survivors to locating people trapped deep beneath the landslide. Firefighters used life-detection radar, manual searches and heavy machinery to narrow the search area before excavators began removing the enormous volume of debris.

The moment anything resembling a victim appeared, the machinery was stopped and firefighters took over by hand. "We couldn't risk causing additional injuries," Luo said.

Rain during the afternoon briefly forced rescuers to withdraw because of the increased risk of another landslide. After that, the rescue operation continued through the night under powerful mobile lighting units.

"The environment was extremely dangerous and physically demanding," said Luo, who remained at the scene throughout the nearly 20-hour operation.

"Some firefighters wore through their gloves. Others suffered cuts and bruises on their hands. But no one backed away. Everyone stayed on the front line."

Second wave of rescuers

Lu Zhenghong, chief of the Longnan Fire and Rescue Detachment, said they immediately activated the emergency response plan after receiving an emergency call.

Provincial fire authorities mobilized rescue teams from Longnan and neighboring Tianshui, dispatching firefighters, sniffer dogs and rescue vehicles to the remote mountainside village.

By the time the operation was fully underway, 375 rescuers, including firefighters, police officers and militia personnel, had joined the search.

When Zhang Shenzhou, captain of the special rescue squad at the Hanwang Fire and Rescue Station in Wudu district, Longnan, arrived at the foot of the landslide, the scale of the disaster was even larger than he had imagined.

Zhang had left with the second wave of rescuers shortly after receiving the deployment order. After driving more than 100 kilometers from Wudu, the firefighters found that their rescue vehicles could go no farther.

The mountain road into the valley was blocked.

Loaded with life-detection equipment, slope-monitoring radar and other rescue gear, the firefighters continued on foot, trekking more than a kilometer before reaching the devastated mountainside.

"We initially estimated the landslide at about 6,000 to 7,000 cubic meters," Zhang said. "When we got there, we realized it was much larger."

He said observation posts established overlooking the slope played a huge role. "During the rescue there were several secondary slides, and we had to withdraw more than once," Zhang said.

Working beneath an unstable slope required painstaking coordination. Each excavator was paired with a firefighter acting as a lookout, while several more rescuers stood nearby with stretchers and shovels, ready to take over the moment anything was uncovered.

"We couldn't dig quickly," Zhang said. "The exact locations of the victims were unknown. The excavator removed the soil little by little, and once we found someone, we switched to hand tools."

The search finally ended at about 3:40 am. By then, Zhang's team had recovered seven bodies.

Doctors' quick response

At Tanchang County People's Hospital, doctors rushed back to work as soon as they received word of the disaster at about 7:20 am, said Shen Jiangtao, director of the orthopedic department.

"Within 10 minutes of receiving the notification, everyone in our department was back on duty," Shen said.

The department's 25 doctors and nurses immediately split into two groups. Some joined ambulances heading toward the disaster site to provide pre-hospital emergency care, while others remained at the hospital, preparing operating rooms, wards and emergency treatment areas for the injured who would soon begin arriving.

Shen stayed behind to coordinate treatment.

The hospital opened a green channel for the victims. As ambulances returned from the mountains, each injured survivor was taken directly for an examination before being transferred to the orthopedic department.

"It happened very quickly," Shen said. "Everything was already in motion."

The department admitted five injured patients.

Most suffered relatively minor injuries, but one patient arrived in significantly worse condition. Initial examinations found two fractures. Follow-up scans later revealed a third fracture, along with a traumatic chest injury that caused fluid to accumulate around the lungs.

After expert assessment, one of the more seriously injured patients was transferred to a hospital in Longnan for further care.

But the injuries inflicted by large natural disasters are psychological as well.

Firefighter Zhang has responded to some of China's most devastating disasters, including the Wenchuan and Jiuzhaigou earthquakes, the Zhouqu mudslide and major floods in Longnan.

Yet, he said scenes like those in Tanchang still weigh heavily on him. "Human beings are very small in the face of nature," he said quietly. "All we can do is our very best to bring the victims home and give their families an answer."

The rescue left its mark not only on victims' families but also on some of the young firefighters.

Several had never participated in rescue work for a disaster of this scale. Faced with the realities of the recovery effort, some froze in place, overwhelmed by what they had seen, Zhang said.

"They had never experienced anything like this," he said. "Psychologically, it was very hard for them."

The Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Emergency Management on Wednesday announced they had allocated 30 million yuan ($4.41 million) to Gansu for search and rescue, evacuation, emergency geological disaster response, and checks for potential secondary disaster risks.

Yang Mingze contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at majingna@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:11 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:11 PM

TOP NEWS

Growth: Domestic demand remains a challenge

From page 1

Economists expect momentum may have slightly moderated in the second quarter, with some projecting first-half GDP growth of around 4.5 to 4.7 percent.

Alongside resilient economic growth, inflation has remained mild. In the first half of the year, China's consumer price index rose 1 percent year-on-year, while the core CPI, which excludes food and energy prices, increased 1.2 percent, data released by the National Bureau of Statistics showed on Thursday.

The K-shaped recovery — one in which different parts of the economy recover at different rates or times — has been a hotly debated topic among economists who monitor China's economic growth, with AI-related industries and exports outpacing consumption and the property sector. Therefore, turning policy support into domestic demand is seen as a key challenge in the second half.

That divergence has also drawn increasing attention from policymakers. At the second-quarter meeting of its monetary policy committee, the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, flagged "structural divergence" as a challenge facing the economy, while pledging to continue implementing an appropriately accommodative monetary policy.

Lu Ting, chief China economist at Nomura, pointed out that the export boom has not yet translated into broad-based income growth, as high-tech manufacturing is increasingly capital-intensive and automated while the property market remains a drag on household wealth and sentiment.

Wen Bin, chief economist at China Minsheng Bank, said the key for boosting domestic consumption is the "substantive implementation" of the urban and rural resident income growth plan, which was outlined as a priority in this year's Government Work Report.

Expected measures include raising minimum wages, providing special additional deductions for individual income tax, and increasing pension and medical insurance.

Xiong Yi, chief economist for China at Deutsche Bank, said: "We see the government implementing more policies to support domestic demand, especially in the services sector. Coupled with declining oil prices, we believe strengthening domestic demand will be a key support for China's growth in the second half of the year.

"A key measure is cash handouts to families raising children, which began last year. This is a long-term policy, and the benefits could even potentially be increased in the future," Xiong added. "With these supportive government policies both on the supply side and the demand side for services consumption, we see services spending becoming a longer-term driver for Chinese consumer spending, not just for this year, but for the next five to 10 years."

Zhou Lanxu contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn



Firefighters battle the blaze on Thursday at a footwear factory in Jiangtou village in Chendai township of Jinjiang, East China's Fujian province. ZHENG LIANG / XINHUA

Xi calls for all-out efforts after Fujian fire accident

President stresses vigilance on workplace safety after blaze kills 28 at footwear factory

By MO JINGXI
mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping urged all-out search and rescue efforts, proper handling of the aftermath and consoling the families of the victims after a fire on Thursday resulted in heavy casualties at a footwear factory in Jinjiang, a county-level city in Quanzhou, East China's Fujian province.

Xi said in an instruction that the cause of the accident should be identified as soon as possible and those responsible for it held seriously accountable.

The fire broke out around noon at the factory located in Jiangtou village in Jinjiang's Chendai township, with many people feared trapped. As of press time, at least 28 people were confirmed dead.

Noting that a number of major workplace safety accidents have occurred in China since the beginning of the year, Xi said that authorities across the country should draw important lessons from the factory blaze and better coordinate development and safety.

He emphasized the need to remain vigilant at all times regarding workplace safety, conduct in-depth checks and rectification of all types of risks and hidden dangers, and ensure that workplace safety measures are implemented in a firm and meticulous manner.

Efforts should be made to resolutely prevent major and serious accidents and effectively safeguard people's lives and property, Xi said.

Premier Li Qiang also made an instruction, calling for all-out efforts to organize search and rescue work, properly handle the aftermath of the fire, prevent secondary accidents, investigate the cause of the fire as soon as possible and hold those responsible accountable in accordance with the law.

Li said the Office of the Work Safety Committee of the State Council, China's Cabinet, should further guide and urge local authorities to strengthen bottom line thinking and worst-case scenario thinking, comprehensively investigate workplace safety risks and hidden dangers, and ensure that responsibilities and measures are fully implemented to prevent major and serious accidents.

Following the instructions, the Ministry of Emergency Management sent a working group to the site of the factory fire to provide guidance. Fujian has also mobilized forces to spare no effort in treating the injured and handling on-site response. Local fire and rescue teams have deployed more than 500 personnel.

People in charge of the footwear factory have been taken into custody and the company's accounts frozen.

A firefighter at the scene told China Central Television that while the exact cause of the fire remains under investigation, a preliminary assessment indicates that it started in a workshop on the first floor of the factory.

Raw materials piled up on the stairs of the factory slowed down firefighting efforts and hampered rescue operations, the firefighter said.

Color: Nails amaze global consumers

From page 1

Already famous for its crystal and gemstone industry, Donghai has emerged as China's largest production base for handmade press-on nails.

Backed by fine craftsmanship, affordable prices and mature cross-border e-commerce channels, Donghai's handmade nail products are finding popularity among global beauty consumers.

Official data shows that press-on nail sales in Donghai reached about 15 billion yuan ($2.2 billion) in 2025, accounting for over 70 percent of the domestic market. Nearly 40 percent of sales were to overseas markets, with products exported to over 30 countries and regions worldwide.

"Press-on nails have an extremely broad appeal, with powerful communicative potential. Our aim is to use them as a wearable medium to introduce Chinese culture to the world," said Li Xuan, chairman of Daxuan E-commerce Co in Donghai.

His team has infused traditional Chinese crafts into the company's designs — filigree and mother-of-pearl inlays, lacquer art, miniature painting and micro-engraving. They create customized pieces adorned with inlaid jade and local crystals, as well as delicate filigree flower motifs.

Various designs are created around timeless Chinese cultural themes, including traditional Chinese landscape paintings, the 12 Chinese zodiac animals and elements from murals in Dunhuang, Gansu province.

When the hit Chinese video game *Black Myth: Wukong* took the world by storm, nails based on the classic Chinese novel *Journey to the West* also went viral.

"Some high-end crafted pieces are miniature artworks. Beauty salon owners purchase them for display, while others use them for wedding ceremonies or stage performances. A delicate artwork can take one to two weeks to finish," said Li, the Daxuan E-commerce Co chairman.

Zhang Leilei, livestream business director at Jiangsu Jingyiyi Supply Chain Management Co, said, "As the market matures and design options become more diverse, overseas buyers prioritize fine craftsmanship and cultural depth." The company sells its press-on nails through TikTok livestreams, with the United States accounting for more than 80 percent of sales.

She said mass-market basic styles cost $5 to $10, while custom sets start at $20 to $30, and elaborate ones can go for several hundred dollars. Orders over $30 include free shipping.

"Traditional Chinese elements including blue-and-white porcelain and lion dance motifs are popular among overseas buyers. In livestreams, they tell us these cultural nail designs are gorgeous."

She said the Chinese press-on market is steadily moving upmarket. Consumers know what fits them and what they prefer, leading to higher standards and more discerning tastes.

Donghai's industrial edge stems from its solid local industrial foundation. The county is home to more than 300 companies, over 200 professional design and production teams, and over 50,000 skilled nail technicians. As creators gain deeper insights into traditional Chinese culture, they have launched cooperative projects with cultural and tourism authorities and museums.

"We incorporate intangible cultural heritage techniques and cultural stories into press-on nail designs, crafting compelling brand narratives," said Li Zheng, secretary-general of the Donghai press-on nail industry association.

"These pieces have evolved beyond simple manicure accessories. They have become wearable and tangible symbols of traditional Chinese culture, serving as a new lightweight carrier of China's culture."

Cang Wei in Nanjing contributed to this story.

Rescue continues in flood-ravaged Guangxi after reservoir breach

By SHI RUIPENG in Nanning
and **ZHENG JINRAN** in Beijing

Thirty-nine people died and nine remained missing in the flood-affected Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region as of noon on Thursday, local authorities said, as rescue and relief efforts continued and the breach in the Liulan Reservoir in Nanning remained under control.

Ding Wei, vice-mayor of Nanning, said at a news conference on Thursday that the figures for the dead and missing could overlap, as some of the dead were yet to be identified. DNA testing was being carried out, and search areas were continually being expanded, so the casualty figures could change as each case is verified, he said.

The breach in the Liulan Reservoir in Hengzhou resulted in 26 deaths, including five unidentified individuals, and seven people remained missing, he said.

As of 11 am on Thursday, a total of 64,500 people had been evacuated and resettled across Nanning, including 54,500 in Hengzhou and 9,321 in neighboring Binyang county, Ding said.

More than 300 public health workers have been deployed to affected areas, and no disease outbreaks or public health emergencies have been reported so far, he added.

The situation arising from the reservoir breach was largely under control. Zhai Jianjia, deputy director of Nanning's water resources bureau, said that water levels at the breached Liulan Reservoir had fallen below the dam foundation level, and the breach and downstream discharge had largely stabilized. Access to the dam crest was restored on Thursday after emergency repairs to flooded roads, allowing for dredging of the river and debris removal, he said.

Zhai added that water levels at nearby Yunbiao Reservoir had also dropped, and the risk to downstream areas remained low unless more heavy inflows occurred. Authorities will conduct a comprehensive safety assessment of both dams.

Meanwhile, another round of heavy rainfall is forecast for Hengzhou and Binyang over the next two days. Ding, the vice-mayor, said that rescue operations, infrastructure repairs and post-disaster recovery preparations would continue.

Across the flood-hit region, national emergency response teams, cross-provincial rescue units and civilian volunteers continued working side by side to evacuate stranded residents and deliver relief supplies.

> "The first time I boarded it, I truly felt the strength of the nation's technology. The helplessness I felt while trapped disappeared instantly. It gave me a real sense of security."
>
> **Li Guizhao,** one of the evacuated students

One of the largest rescue operations took place at Guangxi Logistics Vocational and Technical College in Guigang, where more than 6,000 teachers and students were stranded by the floods.

China Anneng Construction Group, a State-owned emergency rescue force, deployed two self-propelled modular pontoon bridge hulls — each capable of carrying more than 500 people per trip — to ferry those trapped to safety. By noon on Thursday, all those who were stranded had been safely evacuated.

"The first time I boarded (the pontoon bridge), I truly felt the strength of the nation's technology," said Li Guizhao, one of the evacuated students. "The helplessness I felt while trapped disappeared instantly. It gave me a real sense of security."

Rescue efforts have also drawn nationwide support. In Qinzhou, two rescuers from Guangdong province spent five hours in flood-waters nearly three meters deep evacuating elderly residents trapped on the second floor of their homes.

"Some of the elderly were trapped upstairs and couldn't make their way down," rescuer Qiu Yajie said. "We formed a human ladder and brought them down slowly."

Volunteers also joined the relief effort. Zhao Zhansheng drove about 1,600 kilometers from Central China's Henan province to Guangxi, where he set up a mobile kitchen to prepare free bowls of *huimian*, or Henan stewed noodles, for displaced residents and rescue workers.

"We'll be here every day," Zhao said in a video from the flood zone. "If there isn't enough for everyone, we'll just keep cooking."

Zhang Li in Nanning contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at zhengjinran@chinadaily.com.cn

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn

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

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1868

Report: Effective leadership built through self-discipline

From page 1

Xi has maintained that without unwavering integrity, the CPC cannot fulfill its obligations to the people or honestly reflect their will.

Moreover, the Party cannot convey authority in its policies and actions internationally if it is considered untrustworthy. While critics will always exist, there is a vast difference between dislike and disrespect.

The CPC must aim for respect in all it does, and the report affirms how it has strived to do that under Xi's leadership.

The report admits that "the test of governance is ever present", emphasizing the need to focus on always doing the right thing. Neglecting the people, forsaking Party values or ignoring problems is not an option. The Chinese people aspire to better lives, and the CPC is tasked with delivering this and rejuvenating the nation.

The eradication of absolute poverty, a stronger education system, the fostering of green technologies and the advancements in healthcare are just a few examples of ideas successfully put into action.

Moreover, by rejecting tired ideas of the past connected to the Cold War era, the CPC seeks positive relations with nations big and small based on mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation. The results of this new approach can be seen across the world.

The report also urges other nations, especially those in the Global South, to follow their own development paths while considering the importance of building credibility and delivering real achievements to their citizens.

"Lifelong learning" is a phrase often heard in the United States. It advocates that an individual, no matter what age or professional experience, should always continue to seek more knowledge. The roughly 50-page report on Xi Jinping Thought on Party Building is essential reading for those who are eager to learn more about China.

The author is an associate professor in the Communication and Organizational Leadership Department at Robert Morris University in Pennsylvania, US. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily or Robert Morris University.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:11 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:11 PM

WORLD

Homecoming



Museum officials inspect a 9th-century artifact from Raqqa, Syria, as crates of antiquities returned by France are opened at the National Museum of Damascus on Wednesday. The collection of 23 repatriated objects spans from prehistory to the Abbasid era and is being prepared for public display after 15 years abroad. LOUAI BESHARA / AFP

DPRK's premier of cabinet to lead delegation to China

By **ZHAO JIA**
zhaojia@chinadaily.com.cn

Pak Thae-song, premier of the Cabinet of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, will lead a party and government delegation on an official visit to China from Friday to Sunday, the Foreign Ministry announced on Thursday.

During the visit, Pak will attend events marking the 65th anniversary of the China-DPRK Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said at a daily news conference. Pak is also a member of the Presidium of the Political Bureau of the Workers' Party of Korea Central Committee and vice-president of the State Affairs Commission of the DPRK.

Mao said China and the DPRK have agreed to jointly commemorate the treaty's anniversary. Describing the two countries as traditionally friendly neighbors, she said maintaining, consolidating and developing bilateral ties has long been an unswerving strategic policy of the Communist Party of China and the Chinese government.

China stands ready to work with the DPRK, guided by the important consensus reached by the top leaders of the two parties and the two countries, to strengthen strategic communication, expand exchanges and cooperation, and further advance China-DPRK traditional friendship and cooperative ties, Mao said.

Yang Danzhi, a research fellow at the National Institute of International Strategy at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said China-DPRK relations are at a new historical starting point.

The visit will deepen the traditional friendship between the two countries, reinforce the foundation of the friendship treaty and carry forward its spirit, he said.

It is also expected to maintain smooth channels for high-level strategic communication and government coordination while advancing practical cooperation in trade, agriculture and public well-being, he added.

According to China's Foreign Ministry, bilateral trade exceeded $2.7 billion last year. Cross-border exchanges have gathered pace this year with the full reopening of border crossings and the resumption of civil aviation flights and international passenger train services.

Yang said deeper China-DPRK cooperation will help promote stability in Northeast Asia and reduce the risk of regional conflict.

The two countries' confidence and resolve in safeguarding the interests of socialist countries and the Global South, and in opposing hegemonism, will inject positive energy into global governance under the new circumstances, he said.

Tanzania's doors 'wide open' to investment: Ambassador

By **XU WEIWEI** in Hong Kong
vivienxu@chinadailyapac.com

China and Tanzania have broad scope to deepen collaboration by expanding cultural and educational exchanges while building on their long-standing partnership in infrastructure and healthcare, says Tanzania's new ambassador to China.

In an interview with China Daily in Hong Kong, Ambassador Suleiman Haji Suleiman said Tanzania welcomes Chinese businesses and investors, emphasizing that the country's doors are "wide open" to investment.

Suleiman said his priority during the first two years of his tenure is to strengthen economic cooperation while deepening social and cultural ties, further consolidating the bilateral relationship. His focus aligns with Tanzania's efforts to develop key sectors, including mining, agriculture, information technology and tourism.

Noting that China is already a major source of foreign direct investment, Suleiman said Tanzania aims to attract more Chinese investors. Chinese cumulative FDI in the East African country has surpassed $11.5 billion over the past two decades, covering more than 1,350 registered projects, according to the Tanzania Investment Centre.



Suleiman Haji Suleiman

"My obligation is to make sure we are getting serious people or businesses who are willing to invest in Tanzania," Suleiman said.

The Tanzanian government has initiated "opening-up" policies and incentives, including the proposed establishment of special economic zones across the country to attract more foreign direct investment, Suleiman said.

As part of that effort, he plans to organize an investment forum focused on pharmaceuticals, medical products and healthcare equipment manufacturers. Next year, Tanzania will host a road show in China promoting its agricultural products and tourism.

Suleiman identified the fishing industry as another area for cooperation, citing Tanzania's abundant marine resources along its Indian Ocean coastline and strong potential for both coastal and offshore fisheries.

China and Tanzania already collaborate closely in aquaculture, fisheries research and water resource protection.

Suleiman said the Belt and Road Initiative has been instrumental in Tanzania's infrastructure development and economic growth, highlighting the Chinese-built TAZARA Railway linking the port of Dar es Salaam with Zambia.

"We hope to improve and revitalize the TAZARA together with China so that we can use that as a gateway from Tanzania to neighboring countries, especially Zambia, to transport goods there and then to China," he added.

China has made significant contributions to people-to-people exchanges with Tanzania, particularly through decades of medical cooperation, Suleiman said.

According to the Chinese embassy, China has sent medical teams to Zanzibar since 1964 and the Tanzanian mainland since 1968. The teams, once dispatched every two years, now arrive annually, Suleiman said.

Everyone in Zanzibar knows the Chinese doctors and how good they are, he said. "When you go to hospitals, you will find them, and this gives very good perceptions (of China) among ordinary people."

Suleiman said that his mother was a doctor who worked alongside Chinese medical teams from 1968. Growing up, he lived near Chinese doctors and often played, swam and had picnics with them. "I have first-hand experience of people-to-people cooperation between China and Tanzania," he said.

China currently has two medical teams in Tanzania. Over the years, more than 60 teams have treated over 20 million patients, according to People's Daily.

Looking ahead, Suleiman said the two countries should expand cultural cooperation by establishing Chinese language and cultural centers in Tanzania, while increasing exchanges between cultural groups and national soccer teams.

He also called for closer tourism cooperation. About 82,000 Chinese tourists visited Tanzania last year, and the government aims to raise the figure to 100,000 annually next year.

US divergence sows discord at NATO summit

Allies renew pledge at Ankara meeting as doubt swirls over future of alliance

By **WANG MINGJIE** in London
wangmingjie@mail.chinadailyuk.com

NATO leaders left Turkiye on Wednesday after reaffirming their commitment to collective defense, but uncertainty now hangs over the alliance following US President Donald Trump's disruptive remarks.

Divisions over defense spending and the security commitments of the United States have raised questions about the cohesion of the alliance and even whether leaders would convene another summit next year.

Although the 32-member bloc sought to project unity through its "ironclad commitment" to the collective defense principle, the summit highlighted increasingly divergent priorities between Washington and its European allies.

Trump's repeated criticism of NATO, renewed demands for Europe to shoulder more of the budgetary burden, and public rebukes of individual allies reinforced concern that the trans-Atlantic relationship is becoming more transactional than strategic.

Speaking in Ankara before joining alliance leaders, Trump made clear that his frustrations with NATO had not eased.

"Despite the fact that I'm very upset with NATO, that we pay far, far too much, billions and billions of dollars too much — because it's unfair — we protect them, but they're not there for us," he said.

Trump also renewed his call for US control of Greenland, an autonomous territory of NATO member Denmark, while criticizing Spain over defense spending and its position on the Iran war, even threatening to cut off all trade with Madrid.

The remarks contrasted sharply with efforts by NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte and European leaders to present a united front, underscoring growing disagreements over burden-sharing, strategic priorities and the future balance of responsibilities within the alliance.

Domestic pressures

Tom Harper, a lecturer in international relations at the University of East London, said the dispute over defense spending has become increasingly tied to domestic political and economic pressures.

European governments face mounting political risks if higher military spending comes at the cost of public services, Harper said.

"If increased defense spending coincides with cuts to social services and education, this will likely impose domestic costs on European governments, which they may be unwilling to pay, especially should they be facing election campaigns," he said.

"You could say it's an example of the age-old debate over guns or butter."

Harper also argued that the economic benefits of increased military spending could flow disproportionately to the US.

"It is quite likely that American companies would be the primary beneficiaries of increased spending, which is one of the reasons why Washington has been keen for NATO members to increase their defense expenditure," he said.

Matthew Arnold, a policy analyst and visiting fellow at the London School of Economics and Political Science, questioned whether NATO members could realistically sustain significantly higher defense spending.

"The fiscal concerns are serious," he said, warning that sustained increases in military expenditure could worsen debt burdens and social tensions, while much of the increased procurement would initially benefit large defense contractors, many of them based in the US.

Challenge to cohesion

Lawrence Loh, director of the Center for Governance and Sustainability at the National University of Singapore Business School, said NATO now faces a broader challenge to its cohesion.

"The NATO summit comes at a critical time when the alliance faces an emerging legitimacy crisis," Loh said. "With pressure from Trump, NATO risks bowing to this strongman's demands for increased defense spending," he said. "It is evolving into a transaction grouping of countries that weigh their respective interests with just one member — the US."

The alliance is simultaneously grappling with economic slowdown, political fragmentation and social integration challenges across Europe, while also facing criticism over its limited effectiveness in responding to conflicts in the Middle East, he added.

"All in all, NATO is now caught between a rock — the US — and a hard place, which is all the region-based anguishes in Europe," he said.

Several analysts believe Trump's approach could ultimately accelerate Europe's pursuit of greater strategic autonomy.

Angel Saz-Carranza, director of the EsadeGeo Center for Global Economy and Geopolitics in Spain, said NATO will likely evolve over the next decade.

"Reliance on the US will diminish as European Union capabilities increase, which will gradually rebalance the trans-Atlantic relationship," he said.

Pedro Brinca, an associate professor of macroeconomics at Nova School of Business and Economics in Portugal, also expects the alliance to become increasingly European in character.

However, he cautioned that Europe's ability to shoulder greater responsibility will depend not only on spending more but also on spending more efficiently. Fragmented national procurement would deliver less security than coordinated European investment, he added.

Although NATO leaders departed Ankara reiterating their commitment to collective defense, the summit illustrated that the alliance's greatest challenge may no longer be external threats alone, but maintaining political trust among its own members.

The final declaration said the leaders "look forward to our next meeting", but without committing to a date.

US offshore wind buybacks draw ire over climate targets

By **LIA ZHU** in San Francisco
liazhu@chinadailyusa.com

The US federal government's recent move to cancel offshore wind projects is drawing mounting legal and political backlash, with critics warning the campaign threatens the country's climate goals and its ability to meet surging long-term electricity demand driven by the rapid expansion of data centers.

California became the latest state to push back on Tuesday, with Attorney General Rob Bonta filing a notice of intent to sue the White House over a deal that canceled a major wind project off the state's coast.

The filing challenges an agreement signed between the Department of the Interior and Golden State Wind LLC, under which the company agreed to abandon a 2-gigawatt floating offshore wind project off California's central coast in exchange for reimbursement that will be redirected into fossil fuel investments.

The cancellation of the Golden State Wind project will harm the state's clean energy and climate goals and economy, as offshore wind is capable of generating vast amounts of electricity from strong, consistent winds off California's coast, said a news release from Bonta's office.

The cancellation threatens California's goal of developing 25 GW of offshore wind power by 2045, enough to supply roughly 13 percent of the state's electricity, according to the news release.

The California challenge is the latest in a series of legal and political battles ignited by the White House, which aims to roll back agreements to eliminate offshore wind development and redirect investment toward conventional fossil fuel generation. The administration has prioritized oil, gas and coal while seeking to limit construction of renewable energy projects.

The first buyback was signed with TotalEnergies in March. A second deal followed with Ocean Winds, CPP Investments and Global Infrastructure Partners. Last week, the Department of the Interior announced the cancellation of four additional offshore wind leases in California, New York and the Gulf of Maine, this time through an agreement with energy developer Invenergy. Together, the three rounds of buybacks total approximately $2.6 billion across six offshore wind leases spanning both East and West coasts.

The Oceantic Network, an organization dedicated to growing US offshore renewable energy, estimates that the cancellation of a single 1-GW offshore wind project permanently erases between $8.5 billion and $9.5 billion in economic output, based on peer-reviewed modeling and operational benchmarks from East Coast projects.

The group criticized the buyback deals as "the latest tactic to derail domestic energy development while energy prices soar".

At the state level, offshore wind is viewed as a key source for both clean energy transition and economic growth. Maine Governor Janet Mills called the Invenergy buyback an "egregious waste of taxpayer money and a short-sighted decision that will hurt our ability to reduce our reliance on expensive imported fuel".

Mills said the Gulf of Maine lease areas were designated only after years of careful planning and consultation with stakeholders. She warned that the administration's course risked leaving the United States isolated on the global energy stage.

"As many countries around the world, including neighboring Canada, move to harness the benefits of offshore wind, today's announcement by the (US President Donald) Trump Administration further risks that we will be left behind," Mills said in a statement.

Environmental advocates echoed those concerns and questioned the legal basis of the deals. The Natural Resources Council of Maine, the state's leading environmental advocacy organization, called the Invenergy buyback "a huge step backward for affordability and reliability".

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:11 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:11 PM

AMERICA FOCUS

Teacher builds trust through language

Instructor shares his knowledge of China to create understanding one classroom and one lesson at a time in Utah

By **LIA ZHU** and **CHELSEA GE**
in San Francisco
liazhu@chinadailyusa.com



Alan Heath, a Chinese language teacher at Lone Peak High School in Highland, Utah, has taken about 60 students to China on exchange programs over the past year. CHELSEA GE / CHINA DAILY

Red paper-cuts and brush-inked calligraphy cover the walls. A sign by the door reads "100 percent speak Chinese". When Alan Heath walks to the front of his classroom at Lone Peak High School, his students rise, fold their hands in front of them and bow. Heath bows back. *Zuoyi*, the traditional Chinese gesture of greeting and respect, is used to open every class.

It is a small ritual, repeated each day at the school in Highland, Utah. But for Heath, who teaches Advanced Placement (AP) Chinese Language and Culture, the bow is an attempt to bridge two cultures, one classroom at a time.

"The more important thing is not so much language, but understanding of culture, understanding of the mindset, understanding of why the Chinese people think the way they do," Heath said. "Once you do that, whatever level your language is, you're going to be able to have a better relationship."

Heath started learning Chinese at 19 and found it difficult at first. But the difficulty gave way to devotion. He went on to study international relations and Chinese at Brigham Young University, then spent years working in trade consultation and later at a genealogy organization before stepping into a classroom 15 years ago.

"I chose to teach Chinese because Chinese has had a huge impact on my life, and I love the language, I loved the culture," he said. "I decided that I enjoyed teaching enough that I wanted to teach Chinese and share my knowledge and my experience with the language and the culture, so that other Americans could learn to love the culture and the language."

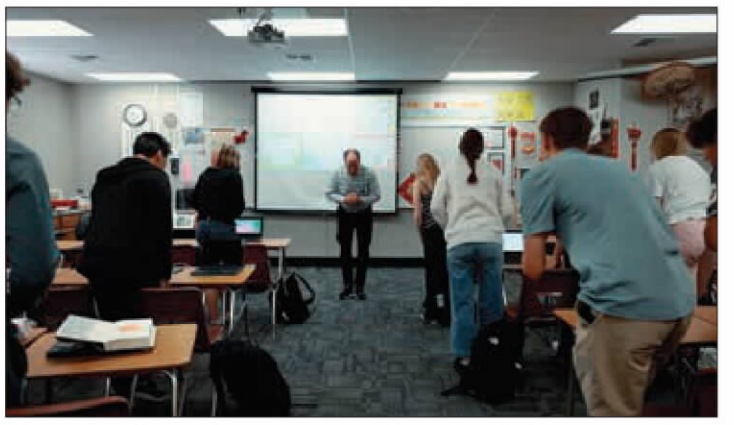
His first visit to China came in the 1980s, when he began traveling there for business. The country he encountered has changed tremendously compared to the one his students would later visit.

"In the 1980s in Shenzhen, nobody had cars, everybody had bikes, they were mostly wearing Mao suits, and it was a different China altogether," Heath recalled. "It was very backward and very protected, so their understanding of the West was very limited. When they saw a foreigner who spoke Chinese, even though my Chinese was not great, they were just amazed. I would go out on the street in Shenzhen, and within one minute I would have hundreds of people around me, all wanting to hear a foreigner speak Chinese."

Four decades later, his students are having similar encounters of their own.

Shared Future and Shared Lessons

In March, Heath led a group of 32 students on a two-week trip through Beijing, Zhengzhou and Kaifeng in Henan province, and Xi'an in Shaanxi province. The journey was made possible through the Young Envoys Scholarship (YES) program, launched in 2023 with a goal of bringing 50,000 young Americans to China for exchange and study over five years.



Alan Heath and his students perform *zuoyi*, the traditional Chinese greeting that dates back thousands of years, before the start of class at Lone Peak High School in Highland, Utah. CHELSEA GE / CHINA DAILY

For Kennady Pack, who began learning Chinese at age six, the trip turned years of classroom study into something tangible.

"They (Chinese people) were so surprised — they'd freak out over the fact that I could speak their language, and they'd want to take videos and pictures of me, so it's really awesome," Pack said.

The itinerary included shopping and walking the streets of Beijing, climbing sections of the Great Wall, mingling with Chinese students on campus, and standing before the ranks of the Terracotta Warriors in Xi'an. But for Pack, the trip's real power was seeing, in person, what she had only studied in textbooks.

"It was super cool, especially because I've been learning since I was little, so being able to see it with my own eyes was surreal, and it's just so much cooler in person. You can't read about that kind of stuff and fully experience it," she said. "I thought it was so cool over there, and it was so technologically advanced, like they have such cool things, especially at their schools."

Her classmate Damian Lambert said the language skills he had built in Heath's classroom transformed the trip from sightseeing into genuine connection.

"I was able to have conversations with them, and I was able to interact and learn, and it was just really fun being able to experience that part of it compared to just going and seeing stuff and not knowing what's going on," Lambert said. "It's just been a lot more fun getting to learn more about the history and even more culture that's got China to where it is today."

Heath's philosophy is that real fluency comes only through meaningful conversation, not memorization.

"If you only memorize words, you will always stay at the novice level. If you memorize sentences, then you'll be maybe at the intermediate level," he said. "We want all of our students to be at advanced level, where they can talk in paragraphs. The paragraphs are the vehicle where you can exchange ideas with another Chinese person."

That philosophy was tested directly in March, when the group visited Beijing Bayi School and saw firsthand how different a Chinese student's daily life can look.

"They were able to see that life for a Chinese student was very demanding, a much longer schedule, but it was interesting and fun, and so they were surprised by that," Heath said. "There's a big change whenever you learn another language, another culture. Both sides have fun and are benefited."

Pack agreed the experience reshaped her expectations. "Honestly, it was a little different than I expected, just because the day-to-day life is just so different from our lives," she said, "but I thought it was so cool over there."

Over the past year alone, roughly 60 of Heath's students have traveled to China through the YES program. That firsthand experience, he said, has changed how his students see the country.

"My students have really benefited from this program to really, for the first time, understand how China is much more advanced or much more free than they thought, because of Western media," Heath said. "They started to really appreciate more about Chinese culture, language, but most importantly, how open and friendly the Chinese people are."

This year, Heath's course has centered on Chinese history. Next year, the focus will shift to contemporary China.

"I think it's very important to understand history," he said. "Chinese history is very important because it has thousands of years, and if you are dealing at all with Chinese in business or in conversations, if you have an understanding of Chinese history, the Chinese people will look at you differently and respect you more because you understand something about their culture and their history."

Of all the history Heath teaches, one chapter looms largest in his mind: what is known in China as the "century of humiliation", the period from the First Opium War in 1840 to the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, during which foreign powers repeatedly invaded and exploited a weakened China.

"I think the most important misunderstanding between Americans and Westerners at large with China is the most recent history, which is the century of humiliation," Heath said.

He walks his students through how the unequal treaties of that era stripped China of territorial control, ceding cities such as Hong Kong, Shanghai and Tianjin to foreign powers.

To make the scale of that loss visible to his students, he poses a hypothetical.

"What if China was much more powerful than us, and they came over and decided, well, we want half of San Francisco, we want part of Los Angeles, we want New York, and you have to give it to us, because we want to sell drugs to you and make money from you?" Heath tells his students.

Their reaction, he said, is: "No, really?"

His research turned up an uncomfortable detail closer to home that many Bostonians who made fortune of selling opium to China.

"The Americans are not without fault. They probably weren't as bad as some other countries, but the Americans are also at fault of taking advantage of the Chinese," he said.

Heath has come to see this gap in historical knowledge as one of the central obstacles to US-China understanding. While Chinese students grow up learning about the burning of the Old Summer Palace and the foreign incursions that followed, most of their American counterparts know little about this chapter.

That gap in knowledge, in his view, causes mistrust. "If they (Americans) only listen to Western media, they would say the Chinese are terrible, they're doing this just to take advantage of us. They're doing this because they don't like us. No, that's not the reason," Heath said. "They (Chinese) are doing it because they need to protect themselves from being taken advantage of again."

On the March trip, Heath shared the century of humiliation with the 13 parents who accompanied the students. "They had never heard the concept," he said. "It's meaningful to see parents change their mindset on what China is all about."

For Heath, his effort pays off in the way Chinese people react. "Whenever I've had a discussion about this in China, the Chinese people look at me differently, and I think that they know that I am sincere in my willingness and wanting to be a friend and to teach my students good principles," he said.

He believes that kind of trust is essential to good diplomacy and good foreign relations. "I think that it's very important for me to help Americans understand. If they understood history better, then they would not repeat it or create more misunderstanding."

New Committee of 100 Chair Janet Yang sees culture as bridge

By **LIA ZHU** in San Francisco
liazhu@chinadailyusa.com

Janet Yang has spent a career proving that stories can cross borders that politics cannot. Now, as the newly named chairwoman of the Committee of 100, she is bringing that conviction to one of the most prominent Chinese American organizations in the United States.

Yang, the Emmy and Golden Globe Award-winning film producer who served three terms as president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, was appointed to lead the committee's board, succeeding Gary Locke, the former governor of Washington state and US ambassador to China, who led the organization for the past five years.

Founded in 1990 by architect I.M. Pei, cellist Yo-Yo Ma and other distinguished Chinese Americans, the Committee of 100 (C100) aims to strengthen US-China relations and ensure that Chinese Americans have a full and rightful place in US society. Yang, a committee member since 1998, sees her new role as an extension of everything she has built across more than three decades in film.

"C100 has a dual mission: to ensure that Chinese Americans truly belong in the US, and to bridge the US and China," she told China Daily, adding that I.M. Pei and Yo-Yo Ma "represent excellence that transcends national boundaries, while embracing their Chinese heritage and sharing their work across borders".

The roots of that mission run deep in Yang's own biography. Born in Queens, New York, to parents from Shanghai and Hunan province who came to the United States as students, she grew up on Long Island carrying the quiet burden of being visibly different.

She experienced the classic, as she put it, "try-to-fit-in, wish-my-eyes-were-rounder" self-consciousness. That feeling might have shaped her differently had she not embarked on a trip to China at 16.

Thanks to her mother's work at the United Nations, Yang was part of one of the first Chinese American families to visit China in 1972. She recalled being fascinated by everything she saw, saying the experience left her eager to know more about China.

She followed that curiosity to Brown University, where she majored in Chinese Studies and became fluent in Chinese, then accepted a post at China's Foreign Languages Press, the publisher of books and magazines for export.

During that year-and-a-half assignment, she presided over impromptu salons and befriended Chinese filmmakers, artists and creatives. She said that meeting those artists and seeing films being made was something she had never encountered in the US, and that experience changed the course of her life.

After earning her MBA from Columbia University, Yang was hired to run World Entertainment, distributing Chinese



> Even when governments are at odds, individuals can find deep resonance with characters from other countries."
>
> Janet Yang, chairwoman of the Committee of 100

films to Western audiences. She introduced directors like Chen Kaige to screens in the US, then turned around and represented US studios and films in China, a two-way bridge she has been building ever since.

Along the way, she became involved with some culturally significant Asian and Asian American films in Hollywood, including *Empire of the Sun*, *The Joy Luck Club* and *Over the Moon*. Long before it became fashionable, Yang treated Asian themes as the cornerstone of mainstream storytelling.

It was that early encounter with Chinese cinema that enhanced her sense of purpose.

"When I was first exposed to Chinese films, seeing people who looked like me on screen in three-dimensional roles gave me such a sense of belonging and comfort," she said. "I realized then that the same feeling could be replicated the world over."

For non-Chinese audiences, she said, those same films offered a window into a country that had long been closed off. "From the start, it was always important to me to uplift these stories and push the boundaries of what people in Hollywood thought was possible," she said.

Known in the entertainment community as the "godmother of Asian Americans in Hollywood", Yang completed three terms as president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the first Asian American to hold the role. The Academy Museum has since established the Janet Yang Endowment to support programming centered on historically underrepresented filmmakers, with special emphasis on Asian American and Pacific Islander artists.

She sees the cultural work she has championed throughout her career as directly relevant to the diplomatic challenges of the present moment.

"Since then, countless other projects have paved the way for Asian and Asian American representation on screen," she said. "There's a reason for that: these stories resonate with all kinds of audiences who see themselves in the universal human condition. Even when governments are at odds, individual citizens can find deep resonance with characters from other countries. Culture does what diplomacy can't always do."

That belief was reinforced for her by a recent example. C100 founding member Oscar Tang served as executive producer on Laufey's *Madwoman* music video, an all-Asian and Asian American production set in Los Angeles. When the music video drew 17 million views in its first month, Yang saw the same kind of energy she hopes C100 can channel.

"I thought, C100 is a great place to do what I have always loved. Young people especially are just reveling in their idols — they aren't necessarily thinking about representation. They're thinking it's a great video," she said. "That's the point."

At a moment when US-China relations are shaped more by headlines and algorithms than by human encounter, Yang believes storytelling remains the most powerful counterforce available, and that C100 is uniquely positioned to deploy it.

"I believe C100 is just one vehicle for achieving more vital connections between two great and powerful nations, and in the world," she said. "Today, when I look at the global landscape, I again see so much opportunity for such exchanges to give rise to brilliant things. I see possibility everywhere."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:11 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:11 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Cultivating a workforce of young sci-tech talent a strategic priority

History has repeatedly shown that scientific revolutions are ignited by minds willing to challenge convention and test new ideas. Likewise, major countries secure their scientific standing by cultivating generation after generation of researchers who dare to venture into the unknown.

That is why President Xi Jinping stressed the need to create institutions that allow scientific inquiry to flourish — through stable support, better evaluation systems, stronger mentorship and an environment in which originality is rewarded.

Scientists need to be afforded the time, institutional backing and intellectual space to pursue discoveries that could shape not just the next research project, but the very contours of the next scientific era. That is why, when addressing the country's highest-level conference on science and technology in Beijing on Wednesday, Xi urged the nation to treat the building of a workforce of young sci-tech talent as a strategic priority.

The country needs to pay attention to discovering and cultivating more excellent young scientific and technological talents on the frontiers of scientific research, and increase the support provided to them. It also needs to pay attention to cultivating teenagers' interest in science, improving their scientific literacy and experimental ability and attracting more teenagers with scientific research potential to devote themselves to the cause of science and technology.

The future of science lies with the youth, Xi emphasized.

The opening year of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) arrives at a time of intensifying technological competition and a rapidly shifting global innovation landscape. China's future depends more than ever on its ability to empower a rising generation of scientific researchers and innovators.

For young researchers and innovators, this is both a challenge and a call to action. It is essential that they integrate their personal aspirations into the broader cause of national development, and channel their youthful energy and creativity into the country's modernization drive.

Only by aligning individual ambition with the nation's progress can they truly contribute to the sci-tech transformation that lies ahead.

To provide an enabling environment for them, China should further reform its research evaluation system, which should reward true discovery, originality and creativity. Xi called for accelerating reforms that break the grip of the "four onlys" — judging researchers solely by papers, credentials, titles or awards — and replacing them with an evaluation system based on innovation, quality, practical effect and genuine contribution.

Great discoveries rarely emerge from systems that fear failure and entrench the status quo. Young researchers need an inclusive environment to pursue unconventional questions, confidence that long-term projects will survive assessments, and mentors prepared to nurture curiosity instead of demanding immediate returns.

The report released by the Xinhua Institute last month on Chinese youth captures another dimension of this call for action as it notes that the country's younger generation is not only the builder of national development but, increasingly, a contributor to global progress.

Whether in the spheres of artificial intelligence, biotechnology, green energy or advanced manufacturing, China's young scientists are taking on challenges that extend well beyond national borders. Scientific self-reliance and international contribution are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, the stronger a country's indigenous innovation capacity, the greater its ability to contribute to humanity's shared scientific future.

The secret of a fulfilled life is to cultivate wide interests and allow those interests to deepen rather than narrow with age. That observation applies to countries as well as individuals. Countries that sustain scientific vitality encourage curiosity rather than conformity, exploration rather than complacency, and have the confidence to raise questions whose answers may not arrive for decades.

China's aspiration to become a leading country in science and technology by 2035 will therefore depend on whether today's young scientists believe their work will be supported, and their talent will be valued.

Forecasts show resilience of China's economy

The International Monetary Fund on Wednesday upgraded China's growth outlook by 0.2 percentage points to 4.6 percent for the year 2026 from the previous projection in April, while downgrading its 2026 global economic growth forecast by 0.1 percentage points to 3 percent. It attributes the Chinese economy's performance to the robust expansion of its high-tech manufacturing sector and the strong export growth that has followed.

The World Bank also pointed out in its latest China Economic Update, released on Tuesday, that China's investment in high-tech sectors grew by 4.5 percent year-on-year in January-May, driven by robust artificial intelligence-related demand at home and abroad. In June, the OECD had predicted that China's economy will grow by 4.5 percent in 2026.

A closer examination of some key datasets from the first half of 2026 also highlights the foundations of the Chinese economy's steady performance.

By the end of May, the country's cumulative installed power generation capacity surpassed 4 billion kilowatts, a year-on-year increase of 11 percent, and a figure that exceeds the combined capacity of the United States, the European Union, India, Japan and Russia. It took eight years to go from 1 to 2 billion kilowatts, but only about two years to climb from 3 to 4 billion kW. This achievement is built upon the world's most complete new energy industry chain, which produces 80 percent of global photovoltaic modules and 60 percent of wind power equipment.

The fast advancement of artificial intelligence is fueling the momentum driving the economy. In early 2024, China's average daily token usage was just 100 billion. By May 2026, this figure had surged to hundreds of trillions, the highest in the world. This soaring token rate reflects the deep integration of AI into manufacturing and daily life, which has boosted efficiency across sectors spanning chemical production to software development. From January to May, high-tech manufacturing contributed nearly 40 percent to the country's industrial growth, while equipment manufacturing contributed nearly 60 percent to industrial growth. All this is a clear testament to China's accelerating shift toward an innovation-led economy.

Chinese consumption is displaying renewed vitality. The national consumer goods trade-in program has proved to be a phenomenal success, with sales exceeding 1 trillion yuan ($147 billion) by June 20, benefiting 136 million people. This policy has not only invigorated the domestic consumption market but also spurred industrial upgrading, with high-efficiency appliances and new energy vehicles at the forefront.

China's consumer price index rose 1 percent year-on-year in June, and the country's producer price index went up 4.1 percent year-on-year, according to data released by the National Bureau of Statistics on Thursday.

The country's new energy vehicle sector reported continued growth in the first half of 2026, with output and sales both exceeding 7 million units during the period, latest industry data showed on Thursday. NEV output from January to June reached 7.44 million units, while sales stood at 7.45 million units, according to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers.

Also China's commitment to openness and integration is reflected in its record-breaking foreign trade with Africa. The country has implemented a zero-tariff policy for all 53 African countries with which it has diplomatic ties since May 1. In the first five months of 2026, China-Africa trade registered an 18.2 percent year-on-year increase to reach 1.14 trillion yuan, the first time the figure has surpassed 1 trillion yuan. This is a testament to the fact that China is creating new opportunities for shared growth.

The IMF's decision to lower its global growth forecast underscores the difficulties facing many countries, including inflationary pressures, geopolitical tensions, and supply chain disruptions. In this context, what China has achieved in the past six months highlights the country's ability to navigate global challenges and maintain steady growth.

Even so, with economic headwinds persisting, China's macroeconomic policy will continue to pair moderate monetary easing with proactive fiscal action — but with a sharper focus on targeted measures, rather than broad-based stimulus. The second half of the year will likely bring faster special-purpose and special treasury bond issuance, as well as more support for livelihoods and consumer spending through transfers and subsidies. At the same time, lingering risks in local government debt and property sector financing will require steady, ongoing efforts to unwind.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Luo Jie



The Strait of Hormuz US-Iran Peace Agreement

Opinion Line

Chinese football should live up to expectations of nation

Notwithstanding the Chinese Football Association's denial on Tuesday of the rumor that it had declined a friendly match invitation from Cape Verde, the unfounded allegation continues to be widely disseminated.

Soccer has always generated rumors. Some rumors gain traction because they sound believable long before anyone asks whether they are true or not. The Cape Verde story belonged in that category. It imagined a Chinese team unwilling to face one of the World Cup's surprise packages.

In an age when fiction can complete several laps of the internet before the truth gets its boots on, millions accepted it almost instinctively because it reflected something Chinese supporters have come to expect of the national team: not necessarily failure, but lack of confidence.

That should bother the CFA more than the rumor itself. The 2026 World Cup has once again demonstrated that football has little regard for population or GDP. Cape Verde, representing little more than half a million people, has become one of the tournament's compelling teams. The World Cup has always had room for such successes — one of the reasons why it is so popular. These dark horses remind everyone that football's hierarchy is earned rather than inherited.

Chinese fans, watching this year's tournament unfold without the presence of the national team, cannot help but notice the contrast.

However, had such a match actually been arranged, Chinese supporters would almost certainly have embraced it because they still crave success and every match presents the opportunity for, if not a win, at least a good performance.

The sarcasm surrounding the national team is often mistaken for indifference. But indifference is silence. Chinese football rarely experiences silence. It provokes arguments, mockery and endless online debate precisely because hundreds of millions still invest emotionally in what they hope it might one day become.

The harder question lies elsewhere.

This World Cup has shown how quickly elite football continues to evolve. Faster restart regulations have accelerated the game's rhythm. Referees have adopted more consistent standards while punishing cynical behavior with increasing severity. Semi-automated offside technology and sensor-equipped match balls have transformed decision-making into a matter of precision measured in milliseconds. Coaches now prepare not simply for opponents but for an environment where tactical flexibility, data analysis and technical accuracy decide increasingly fine margins.

The gap separating Chinese soccer from the world's best cannot be bridged by another expensive signing or another short-term project. If there is an Asian blueprint worth studying, it is Japan's. Its progress has never depended on one generation or one wealthy benefactor. It has been built patiently through youth coaching, coherent player development and an acceptance that the best footballers must leave home to train.

Chinese football once convinced itself that prosperity could be purchased. The era of lavish spending, imported stars and naturalized internationals created a sport that some foreign players joked looks like football but is not, briefly disguising the deeper structural problems without solving them.

The next generation will have to be developed differently. Investment should go into community pitches rather than transfer fees, to qualified youth coaches rather than fleeting celebrity signings. Young Chinese players should be encouraged to test themselves in stronger leagues while they are still learning their football education. The same applies to coaches.

Grassroots soccer too deserves protection from becoming another form of online entertainment. Viral clips and exhibition events may generate attention, but they cannot replace thousands of ordinary training sessions where habits, technique and judgment are formed. Nor can reform stop with the football administrative system. Chinese football's anti-corruption campaign has restored some confidence to a sport that had spent too long undermining itself.

Chinese soccer's task is not to simply rebut stories that damage its reputation. It is to build a national team whose progress makes those rumors impossible to believe in the first place.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

New guardrails to make anthropomorphic AI safer

Editor's note: *China has issued new rules for regulating providers of artificial intelligence systems that simulate human personality traits, thinking patterns and communication styles in emotional interactions with users. Science and Technology Daily spoke to Huang Wenhong, a researcher at the China Center for Information Industry Development, and Sang Jitao, a professor at the School of Computer Science and Technology at Beijing Jiaotong University, about the importance of the new rules that will come into effect on July 15. Below are excerpts of the interviews. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

The new rules focus on AI services that simulate human personality traits and thinking patterns, establishing clear boundaries for anthropomorphic AI interaction and placing greater responsibility on platform operators, which are prohibited from excessively catering to users, fostering emotional dependence or addiction, or manipulating users emotionally in ways that could influence them to make unreasonable decisions.

Platforms are also barred from offering minors virtual intimate relationship services, including virtual family members or romantic partners. In addition, they are required to identify high-risk situations, such as users exhibiting extreme emotional distress or suffering significant financial losses, and provide appropriate reassurance and, where necessary, timely intervention.

AI agents are applications designed to accomplish specific objectives. An AI agent can understand a user's objective, break complex tasks into manageable steps, use external tools, access relevant knowledge bases and data, monitor task progress, and complete an entire workflow within the limits of its permissions. Many AI agents are also equipped with long-term memory, enabling them to retain conversation history, user preferences, role settings and the status of ongoing tasks, while coordinating with other AI models to execute complex assignments.

The rules do not apply the brakes to the development of custom AI agents. Instead, they establish guardrails for anthropomorphic interaction. They are likely to accelerate the transition from an early stage characterized by low barriers to entry, rapid expansion and unrestricted publication toward a more mature ecosystem featuring categorized supervision, risk-based governance, prerelease review and built-in safety mechanisms. As the rules take effect, platforms are expected to strengthen both the review process for creating and publishing AI agents and associated safety testing.

The rules accept that custom AI agents built on general-purpose large models remain an important direction for the future development of AI applications. But, going forward, a clearer distinction will need to be made between task-oriented AI agents and anthropomorphic agents designed for emotional companionship.

Task-oriented agents, which include intelligent customer service, knowledge bases, work assistants, and educational and scientific research applications do not involve continuous emotional interaction and therefore fall outside the primary scope of the new rules. By contrast, anthropomorphic, companion-oriented and role-playing AI agents will be subject to a more stringent oversight framework.

Although the new rules are likely to increase compliance costs in the short term and reduce the space for low-quality, borderline-legal and traffic-driven AI agents, they are expected to foster healthier long-term development of compliant AI applications serving fields such as education, work, scientific research, cultural communication, eldercare companionship and support for people with special needs.

Before the new rules were released, some AI platforms had already allowed users to create and publicly share a large number of customized AI agents, whose ability to maintain long-term memory and adopt character settings makes it easy for some of these applications to cross the regulatory boundaries governing anthropomorphic interaction.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:11 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:11 PM

VIEWS

Moulik Jahan

China, Namibia boost cooperation in Global South



MA XUEJING / CHINADAILY

The most significant aspect of Namibian President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah's visit to China this week was not what happened in Beijing, but what came before it. By visiting Guangdong province and Sichuan province, the Namibian leader signaled a new phase of China-Africa cooperation, one that prioritizes development through industry, innovation and local experience.

The focus is increasingly on transferring know-how and building local capacity rather than simply financing projects.

Global Lens

This shift matters because Namibia's ambitions have changed. Rich in uranium, diamonds and newly discovered energy resources, it no longer wants to remain simply an exporter of raw materials. It wants to process, manufacture and create jobs at home.

This ambition aligns with China's growing emphasis on industrial cooperation, technology transfer and supply-chain resilience.

Seen in that light, Nandi-Ndaitwah's tour of China's manufacturing and innovation hubs was a glimpse of where the relationship is heading.

The provinces of Guangdong and Sichuan are living classrooms for development. Guangdong illustrates how manufacturing clusters can transform export-oriented economies. Shenzhen, a technology hub in Guangdong, demonstrates how innovation ecosystems can create globally competitive industries within a generation. Sichuan showcases how balanced regional development can narrow internal disparities while sustaining high-quality growth.

These are practical lessons directly relevant to Namibia's aspiration to develop mineral processing, renewable energy manufacturing, logistics, digital services and advanced agriculture, illustrating that development cannot be replicated through investment agreements alone.

China remains one of Namibia's largest trading partners, while Chinese investment in the country has expanded from mining into manufacturing, renewable energy and infrastructure. Beijing's decision to grant zero-tariff access to African countries this year pushes that relationship further, opening the doors for Namibian beef, seafood, grapes, blueberries, processed foods and other agricultural products, while encouraging domestic processing of resources before export. The policy changes the economics of industrialization itself: instead of exporting raw uranium, lithium or agricultural products, Namibia now has a stronger incentive to climb up the global value chains.

In recent years, China-Namibia cooperation has expanded into areas that shape long-term development, including space technology and clean energy to transport and modern agriculture.

A China-funded satellite ground data receiving station in Windhoek is helping Namibia develop its own scientific capacity.

The Dr Hage G. Geingob Freeway has cut travel time between Hosea Kutako International Airport and central Windhoek from about 50 minutes to just over 20 minutes, while creating around 850 local jobs and involving 54 Namibian companies.

In energy, the 100-megawatt Sores Gaib Power Station is expected to generate more than 300 million kilowatt-hours annually, while cooperation is also expanding into green hydrogen through the Hyphen Hydrogen Energy project.

In Walvis Bay, Chinese-backed oyster farms are introducing modern techniques, opening new markets in Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

What is distinctive about China-Namibia cooperation is its emphasis on building capacity, and not just infrastructure.

The China-aided Satellite Ground Data Receiving Station exemplifies this approach. Beyond delivering advanced technology, the project has trained local engineers and given Namibia the ability to operate the system independently.

The station strengthens disaster response, environmental monitoring, agricultural planning and scientific research while cultivating local expertise. This is a far more sustainable model than technological dependence.

The timing of the Namibian president's visit is particularly meaningful.

With 2026 being designated the China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges, bilateral relations are expanding beyond governments and corporations to universities, research institutions, youth organizations and local communities.

Human capital is increasingly becoming the foundation of economic cooperation. Without skilled workers, technology transfer is unsustainable; without education, industrialization cannot endure.

By combining scholarships, vocational training, scientific collaboration and cultural exchanges with investment, China and Namibia are constructing a more resilient partnership.

The historical roots of this relationship further distinguish it within Africa. China's support for Namibia's liberation movement during its struggle for independence established political trust long before extensive commercial engagement began. Diplomatic relations, established immediately after Namibia's independence in 1990, have evolved into a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership grounded in mutual respect and sovereign equality, rather than short-term geopolitical calculations.

Ultimately, Nandi-Ndaitwah's visit reflects a broader transformation in Global South cooperation. The defining feature of the next phase of China-Africa relations will not merely be the movement of capital, but also the movement of knowledge, technology, industrial capabilities and human talent.

If China contributes not only financing but also innovation ecosystems, technological know-how and institutional experience, while Namibia contributes strategic resources, policy stability, regional connectivity and ambitious industrialization, the partnership will evolve from complementary trade into shared modernization.

The broader goal is to build a China-Africa community with a shared future.

That is precisely why China-Namibia relations are an example for the broader Global South.

They demonstrate that development partnerships are most successful when they help countries create greater value from their own resources, strengthen domestic capabilities and build lasting prosperity together rather than reinforcing traditional patterns of dependence.

In an increasingly multipolar world, this could become the defining model of South-South cooperation in the decades ahead.

The author is an independent researcher, freelance columnist and strategic and security affairs analyst from Bangladesh.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Chen Xidi

Manila's land-grabbing ambition root of disputes

A country's territory is defined by historical facts and international law, which is the cornerstone of modern international relations. In the South China Sea, the territorial boundaries of the Philippines have been established through treaties with binding international legal effect.

However, since the 1970s, the Philippines has repeatedly laid claims to China's Huangyan Island and parts of the Nansha Islands under flimsy pretexts, revealing a sustained ambition to expand its territory.

Such actions not only contradict the legal stance the Philippines upheld for decades post-independence but also threaten the carefully constructed post-war international order and fragile stability in the South China Sea.

Before Spanish colonizers set foot on what is now the Philippines, the region did not have a unified statehood territory or defined boundaries recognized by modern international law.

During the colonial period, the Philippine territorial boundaries were gradually etched and explicitly defined by three international treaties, which were recognized and adopted by the country after it gained independence.

The Treaty of Paris, signed in 1898 after the Spanish-American War, meticulously delineated the boundaries of the Philippine archipelago ceded to the United States. The ceded central and northern territories were confined between 118 and 127 degrees east longitude, whereas Huangyan Island and the Nansha Islands lie west of 118 degrees east longitude.

Two years later, Washington and Madrid signed another treaty ceding several outlying islands, including Sibutu and Cagayan Sulu which were outside the 1898 boundaries to the US.

In 1930, Washington and London signed a convention clarifying the boundary between the State of North Borneo and the Philippine archipelago, further defining the ownership of islands on the Philippine archipelago's southwestern side.

These three international treaties formally defined the territorial limits of the Philippines, which successive governments in Manila recognized for decades since independence. Neither Huangyan Island nor any part of the Nansha Islands was included within these defined limits.

Since the 1970s, however, the Philippines has systematically tried to extend its territorial claims beyond the established limits. In 1971, then president Ferdinand Marcos, father of the current president, formally asserted claims over several islands, shoals and reefs in the Nansha Islands and subsequently deployed troops to occupy eight features, including Mahuan Island, Feixin Island and Zhongye Island.

The claim over Huangyan Island emerged in 1997, when Manila disrupted a Beijing-approved amateur radio expedition to the island. Beijing lodged a protest, but Manila persisted and began asserting territorial sovereignty over Huangyan Island.

As a recently released report titled "Historical and Legal Critique of the Philippines' Territorial Claims in the South China Sea" indicates, over the past three decades, the Philippines has put forward a series of untenable and self-contradictory arguments such as "geographic proximity", "early occupation", and "treaty reinterpretation" to support its claims over the features. None of these claims can withstand historical and legal scrutiny.

Manila's position is further weakened by its contradictory stance. Until the 1990s, official Philippine maps placed Huangyan Island outside its territorial boundaries.

In 1990, the Philippine ambassador to Germany, Bienvenido A. Tan Jr, stated in a letter that Huangyan Island is not within the Philippines' territorial sovereignty. In 1994, the country's National Mapping and Resource Information Authority issued an official certification confirming that the country's territory, as defined by Article 3 of the Treaty of Paris, does not include Huangyan Island.

According to the principles of recognition and estoppel in international law, a state's official statements and actions constitute valid affirmation of legal facts. Thus, Manila's current claims breach its own official statements.

The Philippines' relentless attempts at unlawful territorial expansion pose a grave threat to the international rule of law, regional stability, and the postwar global order. The United Nations Charter stipulates that member states shall refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity of any state.

Manila seized Chinese islands and reefs in the Nansha Islands by force, and has sought to legitimize its illegal occupation through domestic legislation, maritime operations, and media manipulation. These actions blatantly challenge the international legal system anchored by the UN Charter.

In recent years, the Philippines has frequently dispatched naval vessels and coast guard ships into the waters adjacent to Huangyan Island and the Nansha Islands, escalating provocations with dangerous maneuvers such as ramming and close-in surveillance.

These actions violate the core commitments of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, hinder consultations on the Code of Conduct in the region, and disrupt the cooperative momentum between China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

After World War II, international instruments such as the Cairo Declaration and the Potsdam Proclamation clearly stated that lands seized by Japanese aggressors were to be returned to their rightful owners.

Accordingly, China resumed exercising its sovereignty over the South China Sea islands. The Philippines, which gained independence only after the war, had acknowledged that these islands were not in its territory. However, driven by political interests, it reversed its stance and challenged the territorial order established by the international community.

The ancient Chinese wisdom of respecting one's boundaries resonates with modern international law on territorial sovereignty.

Expanding territorial boundaries infringes on others' rights and undermines the international order. Manila must recognize that its quest for unlawful territorial expansion will not succeed.

The author is an assistant professor at the China Institute for Marine Affairs.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Chen Weihua

The author is a China Daily columnist.
chenweihua@chinadaily.com.cn

Xizang trip proves Western accusations really ridiculous

China-bashing has been the favorite pastime for some Western politicians, many of whom have rarely, if ever, set foot in China.

Their latest target is China's ethnic minority policy, including the Ethnic Unity and Progress Promotion Law, which came into effect on July 1 after being adopted by the National People's Congress, the country's top legislature, in March.

Predictably, many of the loudest critics have never visited China's ethnic minority regions, from the Xizang autonomous region to the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. Yet they continue to make sweeping accusations about the lives, cultures and traditions of ethnic groups there.

Over the past four weeks, I have traveled through the Tibetan-inhabited regions from Xizang to Sichuan province.

Along the way, I kept asking Tibetan men and women whether they felt their language, culture, religion or other aspects of their lives were being suppressed, as alleged by Western politicians year after year.

Each and every one of them laughed off those Western accusations. A young Tibetan man named Tenzing offered the most representative response.

Those Westerners, he said, simply don't understand the reality on the ground. There are no restrictions on learning the Tibetan language or engaging in cultural and religious activities, he said.

The truth, as I witnessed in the region, is that nearly all Tibetans speak their mother tongue. That certainly does not look like a language being erased.

In fact, the preservation of the Tibetan language is far more robust than the protection of the Shanghai dialect in my home city, Shanghai.

Tibetan monasteries were among the highlights of my four-week driving trip.

The road to the village, at an altitude of 4,000 meters above sea level, is arguably better than those leading to many Alpine villages that I have visited in Switzerland.

From the magnificent Jokhang Temple in Lhasa to the Samye Temple in Lhoka and the smaller Chonggu Temple in Yading, Sichuan province, they are all splendid. The monks were friendly and welcoming. At the former residence of the 7th Dalai Lama in Litang, Sichuan province, a monk even invited me to see the rooms upstairs.

I was ignorant on some issues, so I asked a young man named Tsering whether Tibetans are allowed to marry people of other ethnic groups.

He said marriage was a personal choice that everybody is completely free to make. His own aunt married a Han Chinese in Chengdu, capital of Sichuan province.

Tenzing was proud that Tibetan society doesn't have the tradition of dowry unlike elsewhere in the country. He was surprised when I told him that Shanghai and several other Chinese cities also don't have such a practice.

I was equally surprised to learn that there is no preference for sons in Tibetan families, unlike in some other communities in rural areas.

Our one-hour conversation was a learning experience for both of us. Tenzing, who had studied medicine in Chengdu, was thankful for the government policy on college enrollment that supports students from ethnic minority groups.

China's ethnic population reached 125 million, or nearly 9 percent of the national population, according to the 2020 census.

Every Tibetan I spoke to said life was steadily improving every day and was far better than it was for their parents and grandparents.

Take Yading, a small mountainous village of more than 30 Tibetan families, in the Ganzi Tibetan autonomous prefecture. Once isolated and inaccessible, it has now become a popular tourist resort.

The village has transformed from one of the poorest communities in the area into one of the most prosperous in the region. The road to the village, at an altitude of 4,000 meters above sea level, is arguably better than those leading to many Alpine villages that I have visited in Switzerland.

Tsering emphasized that the 56 ethnic groups in China are one family. That sense of shared identity is something Western politicians would never understand given their deep-rooted prejudice against China.

I also spent time reading all the 65 articles of the new Ethnic Unity and Progress Promotion Law. Far from being a tool of suppression, it is a law to promote ethnic harmony and prosperity, with particular emphasis on protecting and promoting the culture and tradition of all ethnic groups.

Those who question why people from ethnic minority groups in China should be required to learn Mandarin are making an absurd argument. They never ask the same question about learning English in the United States or the United Kingdom.

The Tibetans I spoke to had a pragmatic answer: learning Mandarin gives young people more employment opportunities.

I seriously doubt whether any of those Western politicians have read the Ethnic Unity and Progress Promotion Law, or even its summary. The irony is that many in the US Congress don't read the bills, even some important ones, before they vote on them.

That is not only absurd but also highly irresponsible.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:11 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:11 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

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

EHIZUELEN MICHAEL MITCHELL OMORUYI

True innovation dividend

'China Opportunity 2.0' ushers in a new era of cocreation and mutual progress for China-Africa cooperation and the Global South



As the global economy enters a new era of technological competition, innovation has become the defining currency of modernization. The next great development opportunity will therefore be shaped not by capital alone, but by innovation. That is why the world's economic conversation is no longer centered solely on where growth will come from — it is increasingly about who will shape the technologies, industries and partnerships that define the next phase of global development.

Against the backdrop of slowing global growth, geopolitical fragmentation and rising protectionism, the 17th Annual Meeting of the New Champions of the World Economic Forum, also known as the Summer Davos, held in Dalian, Liaoning province, from June 23 to 25, delivered a message that resonates far beyond China. Premier Li Qiang's articulation of what many observers call "China Opportunity 2.0" reflects China's transition from providing market dividends to generating innovation dividends for the world. Li argued that China's technological progress should be viewed not as a "China Shock 2.0" but as an opportunity that drives global growth through innovation, industrial upgrading and deeper international cooperation. Rather than signaling a retreat from globalization, the message reaffirmed China's commitment to high-standard opening-up, technological collaboration and mutually beneficial development. For Africa and the wider Global South, this innovation dividend could help reshape modernization over the coming decades.

China has entered a new phase of development driven by technological capability rather than low-cost manufacturing. China has evolved from being the "world's factory" to being a leader in technological innovation, green industries, digital solutions and high-quality development, investing nearly 3.93 trillion yuan ($578 billion) in research and development in 2025. High-tech manufacturing has become a major driver of industrial growth, reflecting the country's successful transition from technological innovation to large-scale industrial application.

Premier Li emphasized that these achievements rest on sustained investment in research and development, a complete industrial system, a vast domestic market and continued openness. Rather than treating technological progress as a zero-sum competition, he argued that for global development, "China Opportunity 2.0" means more accessible advanced technologies and widely shared outcomes, and that China is committed to an open approach to innovation.

Africa stands to benefit significantly from this transition. Over the past seven decades, China-Africa cooperation has focused on addressing the continent's infrastructure deficit through the building of railways, highways, ports, industrial parks, power facilities and telecommunications networks. These investments have strengthened regional connectivity and laid the foundations for structural transformation. Today, however, infrastructure is increasingly becoming the platform upon which innovation, industrial upgrading and productive transformation can be built.

The partnership is now entering a more advanced phase centered on technological upgrading, industrial innovation, green development, digital transformation and human capital development. It also reflects the broader evolution of South-South cooperation — from financing infrastructure to strengthening innovation ecosystems, knowledge sharing and institutional capacity.

The depth of this relationship is evident in the numbers. China has remained Africa's largest trading partner for 17 consecutive years, with bilateral trade reaching a record $348 billion in 2025, according to China's General Administration of Customs. The composition of trade is gradually shifting as African countries expand exports of agricultural, processed and manufactured goods. China's expanded zero-tariff treatment for products from the least-developed African countries with which it has diplomatic relations, together with the African Continental Free Trade Area, provides a stronger foundation for industrial cooperation, technology transfer and regional value-chain development.



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

Yet the significance of "China Opportunity 2.0" extends well beyond trade. Its greatest contribution lies in accelerating capability accumulation across developing economies. China's comparative advantage increasingly resides in innovation ecosystems rather than labor costs. Cooperation in renewable energy, digital infrastructure, advanced manufacturing, artificial intelligence, vocational education, agricultural technology and scientific research offers African countries opportunities to strengthen technological capabilities, industrial competitiveness and long-term economic resilience by learning from Chinese practices and adapting relevant solutions to local contexts.

Green development illustrates this transformation. While Africa contributes only a relatively small share of global greenhouse gas emissions, it remains among the regions most vulnerable to climate change. China is the world's largest producer of solar photovoltaic panels, batteries and electric vehicles, accounting for more than 80 percent of global solar photovoltaic manufacturing capacity. Joint investment in clean energy infrastructure, local manufacturing and skills development can expand electricity access, create employment, reduce development costs and support low-carbon industrialization. The innovation dividend therefore extends beyond technology to encompass sustainable industrialization, energy security and inclusive economic transformation.

Digital transformation presents another major opportunity. Mobile finance, e-commerce, cloud computing and digital public services are becoming fundamental drivers of competitiveness. China's experience demonstrates how innovation can expand financial inclusion, improve public services and transform productivity. Similar partnerships could help African economies leapfrog traditional development constraints while supporting entrepreneurship and industrial upgrading.

According to the World Bank, Africa's digital economy exceeded $180 billion in 2025. And stronger cooperation in digital infrastructure, digital skills, cybersecurity and innovation ecosystems could become a defining pillar of Africa-China cooperation.

However, technology alone does not produce modernization. Successful development depends on institutions capable of transforming external opportunities into domestic productive capacity through investment in education, research, technical skills, industrial policy and governance. China's experience demonstrates that long-term modernization is driven by sustained policy coordination, institutional learning and continuous upgrading of productive capabilities.

This lesson is particularly relevant for the Global South. The UN Trade and Development warns that several developing economies have limited access to affordable finance and continue to face climate shocks. The next phase of China-Africa cooperation should therefore be judged not only by the infrastructure constructed but by the institutions, innovation systems, skills and productive capabilities it creates.

China's development experience is not presented as a universal blueprint. Every country has unique historical conditions and development priorities. Instead, "China Opportunity 2.0" demonstrates that modernization can follow diverse pathways while remaining open to international cooperation, technological exchange and mutual learning.

As global uncertainty reshapes development, China-Africa relations are entering a new phase. If the first phase of China-Africa cooperation was defined by infrastructure and skills development mostly, "China Opportunity 2.0" suggests that the next chapter can be written through innovation ecosystems, green transformation, digital partnerships, scientific collaboration and industrial capability building.

For Africa and the wider Global South, the next development leap will depend not only on accessing Chinese innovation but also on strengthening domestic institutions, investing in human capital and building the productive capabilities needed to transform technological opportunities into sustainable growth.

This shift has the potential to move Africa-China cooperation toward cocreation of knowledge, technology and industrial capacity. "China Opportunity 2.0" thus represents a broader vision of development in which innovation, openness and cooperation become shared global public goods — rather than exclusive national advantages — in an increasingly interconnected world. For Africa, the opportunity is not merely to participate in China's innovation journey, but to harness it in ways that accelerate its own industrial transformation, strengthen resilience and advance a distinctly African pathway to modernization.

The author is an associate professor and the executive director of the Center for Nigerian Studies at the Institute of African Studies at Zhejiang Normal University. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

XU GUOQING

Defining moment for multilateralism

Zero-tariff commitment to African countries replaces protectionist barriers with institutional openness, rejecting decoupling and zero-sum rivalry



The global trading system is undergoing a profound transformation. Economic growth continues to slow, geopolitical tensions persist and protectionist rhetoric increasingly shapes policy debates. According to World Trade Organization trade monitoring reports, trade-restrictive measures covered approximately $4.604 trillion in trade by value by May 2025, accounting for 19.4 percent of global imports, a year-on-year surge of 6.9 percentage points.

Against this backdrop, on May 1, China formally implemented a 100 percent zero-tariff policy for 53 African countries with which it maintains diplomatic relations, without quota restrictions or political conditions. This milestone, achieved less than 18 months after China extended full tariff elimination to the 33 least-developed African nations with which it has diplomatic relations in December 2024, makes China the first major economy to unilaterally grant comprehensive zero-tariff treatment to all African diplomatic partners. It represents not merely a landmark in China-Africa relations, but also a substantive commitment to multilateralism, mutual benefit and shared development at a time when the forces of deglobalization are gaining ground.

Too often, multilateralism is invoked as a diplomatic slogan, but China's comprehensive zero-tariff initiative for 53 African diplomatic partners gives the concept substantive meaning: true multilateralism is not selective bargaining, but predictable, rules-based openness extended indiscriminately and without political conditions.

This institutional character is reflected in three qualities — universality, transparency and durability.

By unilaterally granting duty-free access across all tariff lines to every African partner, China avoids the selectivity and uncertainty of piecemeal negotiations. Products ranging from Ethiopian coffee, Kenyan avocados and Ghanaian cocoa to South African citrus fruits and wine — previously subject to duties of 8 to 30 percent — now enter one of the world's largest consumer markets unimpeded. Such across-the-board market access is not mere trade preference; it is an institutional affirmation of fair-trade principles in practice.

More significantly, the policy marks China's strategic shift from ad hoc trade concessions toward institutional openness. Zero tariffs function not only as cost relief but also as a catalyst for deeper value-chain cooperation — complemented by customs facilitation, standards alignment and digital connectivity. By institutionalizing market dividends and sharing them with partners, China is putting genuine multilateralism into action: transcending narrow self-interest to help build a more equitable and inclusive international economic order.

For years, the rhetoric of decoupling has threatened global supply chain stability. Some powers pursue exclusion through trade barriers and industrial reshoring, eroding efficiency and mutual trust. Against this trend, China's zero-tariff policy offers a structural rebuttal: where some erect walls, China builds bridges.

China-Africa trade hit a record $348 billion in 2025, up 17.7 percent year-on-year, with Chinese imports from Africa exceeding $123 billion. In the first quarter of 2026, bilateral trade surged 23.7 percent, and Chinese imports rose 14.6 percent. By lowering entry costs for African goods while improving exporter margins and competitiveness, the zero-tariff policy delivers tangible economic relief for African nations facing debt pressures and external shocks — strengthening trade resilience and stabilizing economic fundamentals.

More importantly, the policy is forging deeper industrial interdependence. The certainty created by tariff elimination is drawing Chinese and international investment into African processing and manufacturing, driving supply chain integration. As Ricky Mukonza, an associate professor at South Africa's Tshwane University of Technology, observed, by offering full market access without demanding reciprocal concessions, China is setting a new benchmark for supporting Global South industrialization. Such symbiotic industrial ties represent the strongest structural defense against the logic of decoupling.

For too long, developing countries have been rule-takers rather than rule-makers in global economic governance. Trade frameworks shaped by developed economies often embed terms that serve their own interests, narrowing the policy space for emerging nations. China's zero-tariff policy goes beyond bilateral benefits, offering a compelling model for collective self-empowerment among Global South countries seeking a stronger voice in shaping international rules.

The contrast with other preferential schemes is telling. The European Union's Everything But Arms initiative grants duty-free, quota-free access only to least-developed countries, while other African nations must navigate reciprocal Economic Partnership Agreements, which involve complex negotiations and binding commitments. The United States' African Growth and Opportunity Act expired in September 2025 and received only a short-term renewal through 2026, amid pressure for reciprocal tariff concessions and persistent uncertainty over eligibility tied to governance and human rights criteria.

By contrast, China's zero-tariff arrangement carries no political strings attached — no governance benchmarks and no domestic regulatory demands. It embodies sovereign equality and non-interference, demonstrating that economic partnership can be built on mutual respect alone. For the Global South countries, this represents an important confidence-building step in resisting unilateralism and coercive diplomacy.

Yet structural gaps between policy ambition and on-the-ground reality cannot be ignored. Supply-side constraints remain the foremost challenge: Many African countries suffer weak industrial bases, smallholder-dominated agriculture and underdeveloped cold-chain logistics infrastructure. Post-harvest losses for African agricultural products reach roughly 40 percent, with cold-chain deficiencies especially acute outside southern Africa. Even with zero tariffs, low product standardization limits the potential for scaled exports. Non-tariff barriers add a second layer of difficulty: stringent sanitary requirements and complex rules of origin impose heavy certification burdens on small and medium-sized enterprises. Logistics costs may also eat into tariff savings, while policy benefits risk being captured by intermediaries rather than reaching producers at the source.



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

China's response has been systematic and extends well beyond tariff elimination. Through the Belt and Road Initiative, investments in ports, railways and power infrastructure continue to remove logistical bottlenecks, while Chinese enterprises' participation in African processing and manufacturing is building local value-added capacity. In January and February, China's new direct investment in Africa surged 44 percent year-on-year. On non-tariff barriers, China is actively promoting technical standards alignment and certification cooperation, establishing green-lane facilitation for African exports and providing training on inspection procedures and rules of origin. These measures aim to ensure that African partners not only see the opportunities created by zero tariffs, but can actually seize and benefit from them.

From granting zero-tariff treatment to select African products in 2005 to today's comprehensive tariff elimination covering all 53 diplomatic partners, China's commitment to open markets in Africa has deepened steadily over two decades. This sustained record of delivery is the strongest testament to Chinese policy credibility. In turbulent times, consistency itself becomes a strategic asset. The policy sends an unmistakable signal: no matter how volatile the external environment, China's resolve to expand openness, uphold multilateral trade and advance the building of a community with a shared future for humanity remains unwavering.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres welcomed the initiative during the 39th African Union Summit, urging all developed countries and major economies to follow suit. African Union Commission Chairperson Mahmoud Ali Youssouf called China's proactive openness "particularly crucial" for a continent bearing the brunt of global uncertainty.

The historical significance of this policy lies not only in the momentum it injects into China-Africa relations, but also in the alternative it presents to a world economy that is at a crossroads: replacing protectionist walls with institutional openness, resisting forced decoupling through industrial interdependence and moving beyond zero-sum competition through genuine multilateralism. In an era of profound transformation, the steadfastness of openness remains China's greatest source of confidence — and its most enduring contribution to the world.

The author is a professor at the Institute of West-Asian and African Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:11 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:11 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

Retail moves seen boosting economy

Sector in critical transformation stage, facing challenges of inefficient layout

By **ZHONG NAN** and **ZHANG CHENXU**

China's moves to accelerate innovation in the retail sector are expected to create new sources of consumer demand, inject fresh momentum into the industry and strengthen consumption-driven growth, government officials said on Thursday.

The country issued a guideline setting the goal of establishing a modern retail system and fostering a number of globally competitive retailers by 2030.

Jointly released by the Ministry of Commerce, the National Development and Reform Commission and other government departments, the document outlines measures to improve retail planning, encourage new retail offerings, foster new consumer demand, and accelerate the sector's innovative and high-quality development.

Speaking at a news conference in Beijing, Li Jialu, director-general of the department of circulation industry development at the Ministry of Commerce, said China's retail sector has entered a critical stage of transformation, facing challenges including an inefficient retail layout, supply-demand mismatches, rising operating costs and imbalances between online and offline retailing.

Li said the new guideline is intended to help retailers adapt to changing consumer demand through better supply-chain management, digital transformation and new business models, while supporting the sector's long-term, sustainable growth.

Zuo Xiaobo, deputy director-general of the department of trade in services and commercial services at the Ministry of Commerce, said the government will accelerate the rollout of retail innovation projects in 50 pilot cities, supported by an initial 8.6 billion yuan ($1.27 billion) in funding, to boost consumption.

Priority will be given to first-store launches and new consumption scenarios integrating retail, tourism, culture and entertainment to stimulate spending, Zuo said.

Zhou Mi, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation in Beijing, said the rapid emergence of new retail formats reflects the interplay between shifting consumer demand and technological advances.

"As consumption scenarios become increasingly diverse, consumer demand is moving away from standardized, mass-market products toward more segmented and differentiated preferences," said Zhou, adding that retailers therefore need more targeted strategies to reach consumers and tailor their offerings to different usage scenarios.



Shoppers interact with a robot at an unmanned retail store in Shenyang, Liaoning province. ZHAO JINGDONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

> "As consumption scenarios become increasingly diverse, consumer demand is moving away from standardized, mass-market products toward more segmented and differentiated preferences."
>
> **Zhou Mi,** researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation

The policy also comes as China's consumer market shows signs of improvement. Data from the National Bureau of Statistics on Thursday showed that China's consumer inflation remained mild in June, pointing to continued resilience in the consumer market.

The country's consumer price index — a main barometer of inflation — rose 1.0 percent year-on-year in June, while the core CPI, which excludes food and energy prices and is deemed a better gauge of supply-demand conditions, also increased 1.0 percent.

Lynn Song, chief economist for China at Dutch bank ING, said that although global energy price fluctuations could affect the pace of reflation, "a backdrop of modest positive inflation is likely to remain the dominant theme".

Meanwhile, in the first half, the CPI rose 1.0 percent from a year earlier, while core inflation increased 1.2 percent, the NBS said.

Wen Bin, chief economist at China Minsheng Bank, said the country's price environment has moved out of its previous trough and entered a phase of moderate inflation this year.

"Headline inflation remains relatively low, but core inflation has hovered around or above 1 percent, while services prices have maintained steady growth," Wen said, adding that the trend points to a healthier price structure.

He expects the GDP deflator to rebound to around 2 percent in the second quarter, which would end a 12-quarter run in negative territory.

Contact the writers at zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

Sherwin-Williams eyes continued growth in evolving Chinese market

By **WANG XIN** in Shanghai
wangxin2@chinadaily.com.cn

The Sherwin-Williams Company, a US-based global player in the paint and coating industry, remains firmly committed to the Chinese market after a near century-long presence in the nation, driven mainly by sustainability, advanced manufacturing and industry expansion, said a senior executive.

Heidi Petz, chair, president and chief executive officer of Sherwin-Williams, made the remarks during a recent interview with China Daily, as the company celebrated its 160th anniversary in Shanghai.

Entering China in 1930, Sherwin-Williams has continuously expanded investment in local capabilities to build a strong foundation, growing together with its partners and customers to help them become more productive and profitable.

Petz highlighted that China is a very important market for the company and plays a meaningful role in its global growth strategy. As its Asian regional headquarters, China serves as a strong center for innovation, integration and collaboration across markets, supporting both local and multinational customers.

The company's solutions, especially its performance coatings, serve a broad range of industries including heavy equipment, transportation, energy, infrastructure, furniture and packaging. Actively engaged in the nation's rapid development, Sherwin-Williams' coatings have been used on a number of major landmark projects such as the Shanghai Tower and Beijing Daxing International Airport.

"What has impressed us most in China is really the market scale, the pace of development, the long-term growth potential, as well as the focus on innovation, technology, leadership and talent. There are so many opportunities here," said Petz.

The company sees an increasingly attractive business environment in China, which Petz described as "stable, transparent and predictable" helping it to expand its footprint and overall investment in the nation.

"We believe that there is growth for many years and decades to come, which is why we are making these investments. We are well positioned to support not only local customers, but also multinational customers operating here," she said.

For over nine decades, Sherwin-Williams has seen its role in China as being much more than a coatings supplier. Focusing on innovation and sustainability, it aims to be a long-term partner that helps customers respond to changing environmental standards, evolving global requirements, emerging needs and next-generation solutions.

As China continues to focus on higher-quality growth, the company is seeing increasing demand for high-performance coatings with sustainable attributes, especially in sectors such as energy efficiency, high-end manufacturing, green construction, sustainable construction and transportation, according to the company.

"China has a very competitive environment and significant opportunities. The competition helps us raise standards and continues to drive our innovation, and we see the biggest opportunities in sustainable solutions, advanced manufacturing and high-performance value-added products," said Petz.



View of the booth of Sherwin-Williams during an expo in Shanghai. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Notably, the company particularly highlighted that coating batteries on new energy vehicles and artificial intelligence data centers — including transformers, cooling towers and other components — stand among its key priorities for growth in China.

Labeling the Chinese market as "expansive and advanced", Petz reaffirmed the 160-year-old company's commitment to the market and dedication to helping add value to local partners.

"We work closely with customers to understand their needs and then help develop tailored solutions. We will stay focused on building resilient partnerships with customers, industry stakeholders and local communities. That's why we exist and it's exciting," she said.

Unmanned emergency solutions save lives

By **CHENG YU**
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Unmanned technologies have emerged as frontline emergency response solutions in flood rescue operations after a typhoon battered the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, with drones restoring mobile networks, robotic boats replacing rescuers in dangerous waters and satellite communications reconnecting isolated communities cut off from the outside world.

The operation reflects how China is increasingly deploying technologies once associated with military or industrial applications for humanitarian disaster response, turning unmanned systems into what industry experts describe as "airborne lifelines".

After heavy rainfall triggered reservoir overflows and widespread flooding across the region, the Ministry of Emergency Management dispatched two Wing Loong emergency drones at the request of local authorities to restore communications in some of the worst-hit areas.

Flying above flooded villages in Hengzhou, where residents had been left without mobile services after the communications infrastructure was damaged, the drones temporarily rebuilt public mobile coverage enabling more than 180 users to access the network.

The emergency version of the Wing Loong drone was specifically designed for so-called "three disruptions" scenarios, where road, electricity and communication networks all fail simultaneously.

The long-endurance aircraft can temporarily restore mobile network coverage across roughly 50 square kilometers, while establishing an emergency voice and video communications network covering up to 15,000 square kilometers.

Elsewhere, drones were also used to evacuate residents and deliver emergency supplies. Alongside government rescue efforts, volunteers spontaneously mobilized dozens of DJI drones to transport food, medicine and other essential supplies to communities cut off by floodwaters.

In Qinzhou, where fast-moving currents and floating debris made manual surveys too dangerous, unmanned survey boats navigated swollen rivers carrying acoustic Doppler current profilers to measure water velocity and discharge.

The robotic vessels collected data that normally would have required engineers to enter hazardous floodwaters, providing emergency response managers with real-time information to guide reservoir operations and flood-control decisions while reducing potential risks to rescue personnel.

Wang Peng, a researcher at the Beijing Academy of Social Sciences, said: "They vividly demonstrate that the ultimate purpose of technology is to serve people. Drone companies and official rescue teams worked together to build efficient 'airborne lifelines'."

Wang also suggested China consider introducing more flexible regulatory arrangements for humanitarian rescue missions involving lifesaving operations and emergency supply deliveries.

Briefly

Yuan strengthens against greenback

The central parity rate of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, strengthened 41 pips to 6.8036 against the US dollar on Thursday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System. In China's spot foreign exchange market, the yuan is allowed to rise or fall by 2 percent from the central parity rate each trading day. The central parity rate of the yuan against the US dollar is based on a weighted average of prices offered by market makers before the opening of the interbank market each business day.

NEV sector sees continued growth

China's new energy vehicle sector reported continued growth in the first half of 2026, with output and sales both exceeding 7 million units during the period, the latest industry data showed on Thursday. NEV output from January to June reached 7.438 million units, while sales stood at 7.446 million units, according to data released by the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers. Pure electric vehicles accounted for 67 percent of total NEV sales during the period, the data showed.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Appropriately accommodative monetary policy stressed

The People's Bank of China said on Wednesday that it will continue to apply an appropriately accommodative monetary policy, following the latest quarterly meeting of its monetary policy committee, where the committee deliberated on the policy direction for the coming months.

The country's central bank will strengthen counter and cross-cyclical adjustments, better leverage the dual functions of monetary policy tools in both aggregate and structural terms, and enhance coordination between monetary and fiscal policies to promote steady economic growth and a reasonable rebound in prices, it said.

The meeting also called for strengthening the guiding role of the central bank's policy interest rates and improving the market-based interest rate formation and transmission mechanism.

It urged efforts to regulate business activities in the credit market, lower intermediary financing charges, and keep overall social financing costs at a low level.

The meeting stressed the need to observe and assess the operation of the bond market from a macro-prudential perspective and pay close attention to changes in long-term bond yields.

It also emphasized improving the monetary policy transmission mechanism and enhancing the efficiency of fund utilization.

Efforts should be made to increase the resilience of the foreign exchange market, stabilize market expectations, and keep the RMB exchange rate generally stable at an adaptive, balanced level.

It also vowed financial support for key areas such as expanding domestic demand, scientific and technological innovation, and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

Efforts should continue to improve financial services supporting the development of the private economy, it said.

The central bank injected a net 10 billion yuan ($1.47 billion) of liquidity through open-market government bond purchases and sales in June. According to the central bank's data, cumulative net injections via this channel during the first half of 2026 amounted to 300 billion yuan.

In its first-quarter monetary policy implementation report, the PBOC said it has been conducting government bond operations on a routine basis since the start of the year, flexibly adjusting the size of operations in response to base-money supply needs and bond-market conditions.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:11 PM

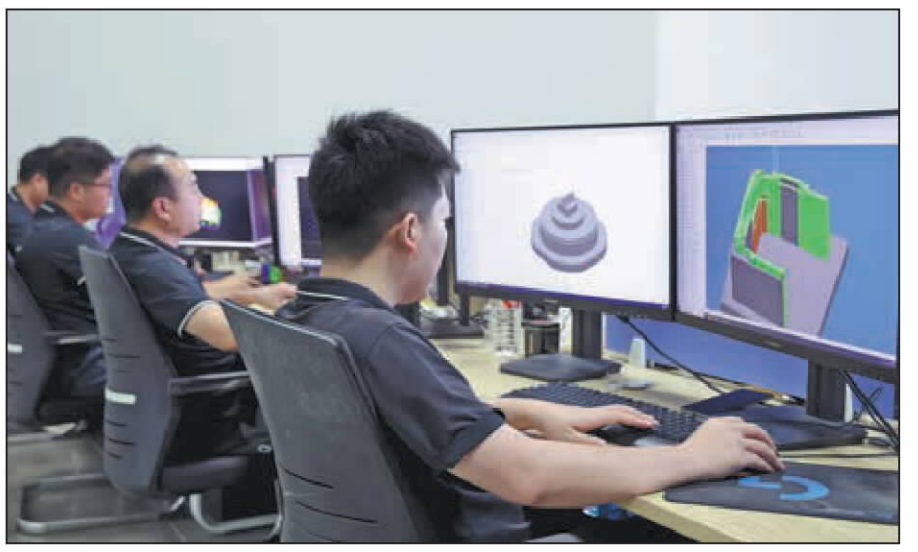
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:11 PM

BUSINESS

Computing power boosts manufacturing

Transformation taking place across nation, utilizing data, AI to build smarter, more flexible factories





Above: An industrial robot operates in a digital workshop at Dongguan Moldbao Smart Technology Co in Dongguan, South China's Guangdong province, on July 2. LIANG XU / XINHUA

Left: Technicians work on product design at Dongguan Moldbao Smart Technology Co on July 2. LIANG XU / XINHUA

GUANGZHOU — In a production hall in Huizhou, Guangdong province, rows of television sets move along an automated assembly line. At one workstation, a robotic system connects signal and interface ports on each unit, a task that was once a manual operation.

Powered by 3D vision and artificial intelligence, the system has helped TCL — one of China's leading consumer electronics makers — achieve a product pass rate of 99.8 percent since it was introduced last year, said Lei Dengsi, a senior engineer with TCL Industry.

The scene reflects a broader transformation taking place across China's manufacturing sector, which is moving beyond traditional advantages of scale and labor, and using computing power, data and artificial intelligence to build smarter and more flexible factories.

At TCL, this shift has progressed from automation to digitalization and now to intelligent manufacturing.

"In the past, production management relied heavily on workers' experience and fragmented systems, which made it difficult to respond quickly to problems," said Chen Zhanyuan, deputy general manager of TCL Industry's smart display business unit.

With intelligent manufacturing systems, factories are becoming more connected, data-driven and flexible, Chen said.

China has been the world's largest manufacturing country for 16 consecutive years. With traditional manufacturing still making up much of its industrial base, the transition toward smart manufacturing has become a key step in the country's industrial upgrading.

China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), the nation's core blueprint for economic and social development, places intelligent transformation, digitalization and network connectivity among the key priorities for manufacturing, encouraging wider adoption of smart manufacturing and industrial internet technologies.

Across Guangdong, a premier manufacturing hub, companies are already putting these technologies to use.

At Dongguan Moldbao Smart Technology Co, robots move through a digital workshop where electrodes of different shapes and sizes are stored in automated racks and delivered with precision for molding.

"Molds are the foundation of industry," said Wang Sheng, the company's vice-president. "As consumer products become more diverse and are updated faster, manufacturers need higher precision, stability and flexibility."

> As consumer products become more diverse and are updated faster, manufacturers need higher precision, stability and flexibility."
>
> **Wang Sheng,** Dongguan Moldbao Smart Technology Co's vice-president

Smart factories, he said, allow manufacturers to respond to these challenges by using data and AI to improve production.

Behind these factories is a growing foundation of computing power. Industrial internet systems collect massive amounts of real-time data, while computing resources turn that information into decisions, from optimizing production processes to improving AI-based quality inspections.

China's computing power has grown to rank among the world's largest, with AI computing becoming an increasingly important force behind this growth. Advances in computing power have reduced costs and made it easier for factories to deploy AI algorithms.

"As algorithms become more closely integrated with real industrial processes, and as automation expands across production lines, they can continue to improve by learning from vast amounts of real-world production data," Wang said. "This will enhance their accuracy, stability and ability to adapt to different industrial scenarios."

The rise of intelligent manufacturing is also creating new opportunities for companies that produce the technologies behind computing.

Guangzhou-based CanSemi Technology, a manufacturer of advanced chips, sees industrial intelligence as a growing market opportunity. At the same time, the company's own production processes generate large amounts of data that can be used to further improve factory intelligence.

Guangdong Fenghua Advanced Technology Holding — which produces electronic components including high-end multilayer ceramic capacitors used in computing servers — has introduced AI-assisted research systems and high-throughput laboratories to accelerate innovation.

"The next step is to connect data across the entire value chain, from demand and research to production and delivery," said Cao Xiuhua, the company's vice-president.

AI is also modernizing traditional crafts.

At Haday's soy sauce factory in Foshan, Guangdong, an ancient Chinese soy sauce-making tradition has been given a digital upgrade. An AI vision system can identify more than 13,000 soybeans per second, while an intelligent filling system ensures highly precise packaging. Another AI-based technology can distinguish more than 170 aroma profiles.

International financial technical analyst Daryl Guppy said that the changing nature of work is beginning with "a quiet revolution on the factory floor", as Chinese factories upgrade at remarkable speed. He described China as becoming the "smart factory of the future" amid a broad industrial transformation.

The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, one of China's major computing hubs, is becoming a testing ground for integrating computing resources with manufacturing.

In Jiangmen, Guangdong, a local industrial technology institute and Sun Yat-sen University have partnered to establish a branch of the National Supercomputer Center, bringing supercomputing resources directly to manufacturers. The platform provides computing power to help local industries advance engineering innovation, develop new products and digitally upgrade production lines.

"We encourage and support the expansion of computing resources to small and medium-sized manufacturers," said Dong Yinghu, deputy director of Jiangmen's science and technology bureau. Public cloud and intelligent computing platforms can help reduce adoption costs, Dong said.

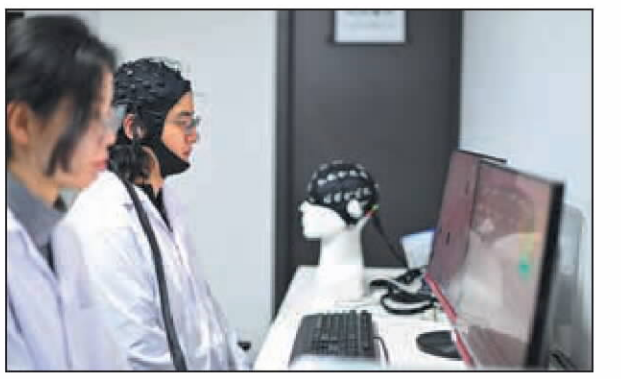
Foshan-based Yizumi, a maker of advanced molding equipment, began its digital transformation in 2018. Its intelligent injection molding machines and large-scale die-casting machines are used by electric vehicle manufacturers to produce components such as motors, batteries and dashboards.

Last year, the company introduced its first AI-enabled die-casting machine, which can automatically adjust process parameters based on detected defects.

"When we began building smart factories, we did not anticipate that computing power would advance so rapidly," said Zhou Jun, the company's chief technology officer. "We will now adjust our technology roadmap to make better use of the opportunities created by computing power."

XINHUA

BCI leap revamping China's healthcare system



Technicians run tests on cutting-edge brain-computer interface technologies at an intelligent computing firm in Tianjin on Feb 27. ZHAO ZISHUO / XINHUA

TIANJIN — With electrodes taped to her forearm and a sensor-studded cap on her head, a stroke patient watched a screen where a virtual hand slowly closed. She fixed her gaze on the image, let her attention narrow, and held one thought: make a fist.

The electrodes fired, and her fingers curled inward. She looked at her hand and smiled, then lifted her head, waiting for the next signal.

The patient was receiving innovative therapy at a hospital in Tianjin, supported by brain-computer interface technology. The therapy draws on "motor imagery", in which the brain continues to produce movement-related signals even after the body has lost the ability to respond.

Using non-invasive electroencephalogram sensors that capture neural signals from the scalp, the system decodes such signals through algorithms and converts them into commands that activate external stimulators. This creates a feedback loop that gradually rebuilds the brain-body connection.

"Compared with traditional passive training that relies on therapists to physically move patients' limbs, BCI-based therapy delivers greater intensity and efficiency," said Gu Bin, general manager of the company that developed the device, adding that when patients are engaged in active imagination, their confidence and sense of control over movements can be strengthened.

Gu's company is one of several startups incubated by the Haihe Laboratory of Brain-Computer Interaction and Human-Machine Integration at Tianjin University. The laboratory and its spin-off companies are now pushing BCI applications beyond restoring lost functions into areas that improve overall well-being for a broader range of people.

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot, and never brought to mind?" The curtain rose, and voices from a children's choir, aged six to twelve, rang out clear and bright. They stood like any school choir — focused, confident and a few fidgeting with nervous energy — except that every child on stage wore a cochlear implant.

The choir, named Little Dolphins, brings together hearing-impaired children from schools across Tianjin. In recent months, alongside their rehearsals, performances and competitions, the children have taken on a different task, namely taking part in an auditory assessment powered by BCI technology.

"In traditional practice, doctors can only tell whether a cochlear implant recipient hears a sound, but not whether they hear clearly or understand it, especially in the case of young children who cannot express what they perceive. BCI can now explore this gray area by extracting and decoding brainwave patterns," said Ni Guangjian, executive deputy director of the laboratory.

Ni revealed that Little Dolphins has been around for over a decade, and parents and teachers have long noticed improvements in the children's emotional well-being and comprehension after choir training. "But the training has relied on experience, and we hope the data from this BCI assessment could help turn that experience into a replicable model for more children," he said.

Beyond clinical applications, BCI technology is also extending its reach into everyday life, helping people better understand and manage their own physical and mental states.

China Electronics Cloud Brain (Tianjin) Technology has developed a brain-computer headband aimed at helping people with sleep difficulties. The device tracks long-term sleep trends and supports sleep improvement through calming music and cranial electrotherapy stimulation.

Across the country, policymakers are also stepping up support for the BCI sector, with growing recognition of its potential to reshape healthcare and beyond.

The BCI sector was designated a future industry in this year's Government Work Report. It was also included in the outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) as the country aims to cultivate it into a new engine of growth.

More specifically, a guideline issued by seven authorities last August laid out short-term targets for the innovative development of this sector, including achieving key breakthroughs in BCI technologies with an advanced technology system, industrial system and standards system by 2027, and significantly enhancing the innovation capacity of the industry with its overall strength ranking among the world's leaders by 2030.

Investors' interest in the BCI sector has been growing alongside policy support. According to an April think tank report on the BCI sector, total funding raised by Chinese BCI companies in the first quarter had already surpassed the amount raised in all of 2025. It predicts that China's BCI market could exceed 5 billion yuan ($735.35 million) in 2026, and surpass 15 billion yuan by 2030.

This growing policy and investment momentum is now attracting a wave of companies eager to seize opportunities in the BCI sector.

"While we are confident about the future of BCI, we need to keep our expectations grounded. This technology should not be treated as science fiction or a gimmick, but as a tool to solve real-world problems in specific areas. Only by doing so can the industry achieve healthy and sustainable growth," Ni said.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:11 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:11 PM

Group of artists finds inspiration in Shanxi

Hungarian nationals tour North China province to explore ancient culture and create diverse works



Clockwise from above: A painting of the Hall of Sacred Mother in Jinci Temple created by Hungarian artist Abel Szabo. YANG JIE / FOR CHINA DAILY Abel applies paint to a picture of a structure at Shuanglin Temple in Pingyao. FENG SIQUAN / FOR CHINA DAILY Abel sketches in pencil the Sakyamuni Pagoda in Yingxian county. WEI BO / FOR CHINA DAILY



Hungarian artists pose for a group photo at Yungang Grottoes, Datong. YAN CHANGJIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Twenty-three Hungarian artists wrapped up a 13-day trip to sketch ancient buildings in Shanxi on June 28, taking home many of their works.

Organized by the Shanxi Provincial People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the Shanxi International Communication Center, the event covered seven Shanxi cities: Taiyuan, Xinzhou, Shuozhou, Datong, Jinzhong, Linfen and Lyuliang. The tour members visited a dozen ancient architectural and heritage sites in these cities.



Hungarian artists are led by a guide at Huayan Temple in Datong. YAN CHANGJIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

The group of artists arrived in Taiyuan, the capital city of Shanxi province, on June 16. Their journey started the next day at Shanxi Museum, aiming to get a glimpse of Shanxi's culture and history.

At the museum, Abel Szabo, a painter and winner of the Mihaly Munkacsy Award, a prestigious Hungarian fine arts award, showed interest in the glazed pottery artifacts on display.

"Most of the pottery items are color-glazed," he said. "This is something unique to the ancient Chinese pottery industry."

Asztalos Zoe, a designer, paid special attention to the patterns of pottery items and construction components. "I think these patterns can provide new inspiration for design," she said.

In Taiyuan's Jinci Temple, Abel was amazed with the Hall of Sacred Mother and decided to use it as the object of his painting. The hall is a wooden structure built during the Song Dynasty (960-1279), one of the earliest buildings in the temple.

Abel is an enthusiast of Chinese culture; he visited China eight years ago to learn Chinese calligraphy and painting, aiming to incorporate Chinese painting skills and aesthetics into his own.

Examining the hall for several minutes, the artist told his companions that the painting should not only focus on the building. "The trees, the mountains and the sky should be integral parts of the painting," he said.

After spending several moments in silent observation, he began to draw, completing a painting that combined realism with Chinese aesthetics by the end of the day.

A visit to the Sakyamuni Pagoda at Fogong Temple in Shuozhou's Yingxian county was a profound experience for the artists. This 67-meter-tall pagoda, built in 1056, is the tallest all-wooden pagoda tower in the world.

While astonished by its size, the Hungarian artists also admired the rich details of the pagoda.

Painter Varosi Gabriella noticed the exquisite use of *dougong* brackets. She was told by a tour guide that the bulk of the tower is supported by the brackets and the dovetailing technique acts as a shock absorber, helping it survive several major earthquakes throughout history.

Watercolor painter Szabo Klara Petra was attracted by the swallows who built their nests in the gaps among the *dougong* brackets.

She was told that the pagoda and the swallows form an ecosystem of coexistence: the pagoda provides a habitat for the birds while the swallows protect the pagoda by eating the insects that threaten the wooden structure.

"This is also something inspirational," Szabo said. "When you draw static things, an addition of living things, like birds and animals, can breathe life into your work."

The tour explored not only ancient architecture but also everyday life and nature. On June 26, members arrived at the ancient town of Qikou in Linxian county, near the Yellow River gorge. The town boasts a large number of old residences built in the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties.

It was a quiet place as it was the off-season for tourism. The artists had the chance to visit local families, drawing portraits of the local people — seniors resting at their doorstep, vendors on the streets and boatmen by the Yellow River.

At the end of the tour, the artists left some of their works in Shanxi for exhibition, especially at the China (Shanxi)-Hungary Exchange Center for Arts. The center, located at the Taiyuan-based Shanxi University School of Fine Arts, was opened during the trip.

The artists' trip went viral on several short video platforms in partnership with the Shanxi International Communication Center, garnering interest in both China and Hungary.

Feng Siquan contributed to this story.

Volunteers travel to Pingyao for relic restoration

By YUAN SHENGGAO

In mid-June, Xifang Temple — a Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) building complex in Xiqiang village of Pingyao, Shanxi province — hosted a team of cultural heritage protection volunteers who came to restore historical structures.

The group of 20-plus members was there to take part in a Gen Z construction workshop for architectural heritage protection. Gen Z refers to people born between the mid-1990s and the mid-2010s. The volunteers were from China, France and Spain.

The event was organized by the Shanxi International Communication Center, Shanghai Ruan Yisan Heritage Foundation, the French voluntary organization REMPART and the government of Pingyao.

The 10-day workshop began on June 14 with a tea-offering ceremony honoring local master craftsmen. For the team members, many of whom hold higher education degrees, the workshop was a valuable experience to learn practical skills for heritage protection.

Chinese volunteer Wu Yue, for instance, is one of the three members holding PhD degrees. He admitted he had a frustrating start.

"I have observed the operations of the masters carefully and practiced again and again but failed to build a wall on the first day," Wu said. "This is my second time attending the workshop but there are still so many things I need to learn."

Li Pengfei, the Chinese team leader, talked with local craftsmen, suggesting members start with easier jobs. The members began to rebuild their confidence under the instruction of the masters.

The repair of heritage sites is a process of constant learning, even for experienced craftsmen, said Nicolas Delanghe, the French team leader.

Delanghe said he had experience in stone masonry after years of repairing ancient structures in Europe. "But this time I've learned a lot in dealing with wood-and-brick structures."

Guo Boya is a teacher in urban-rural planning and heritage protection at Shanghai's Tongji University. She said this was her first time taking part in on-site restoration work. "This is a valuable experience for my teaching career," she said. "I'd like to share what I have learned here with my students at the university."

The Gen Z workshop is a long-term cultural exchange program between Pingyao and the rest of the world.

In 2011, Shanghai Ruan Yisan Heritage Foundation began to cooperate with REMPART, introducing the international workshop for heritage protection to the Shanxi county of Pingyao.

Over the past 15 years, more than 200 overseas volunteers have participated in this program. They took part in some major heritage protection projects, including the renovation of the ancient city walls of Pingyao and a number of ancient building repair projects in the county's rural areas.

"The abundant cultural resources make Pingyao an ideal location for international cooperation in heritage protection," said Ding Feng, secretary-general of Shanghai Ruan Yisan Heritage Foundation.

With a history of more than 2,800 years, the Pingyao Ancient City was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1997. Within an area of 2.25 square kilometers enclosed by 6.2 km of city walls, there are nearly 4,000 ancient residences and business premises, making it one of the four best-preserved ancient cities in China. Outside the city, there are also a great number of ancient buildings scattered across the countryside.

According to Ding, the emotional connection between Ruan Yisan, the founder of the foundation, and Pingyao goes back much earlier than the workshop's commencement.

Back in the 1980s, Ruan from Shanghai's Tongji University was among the advocates for the protection of the ancient city, saving it from the large-scale demolition of ancient residences amid rapid economic development.

To pay tribute to Ruan's efforts, a road surrounding the ancient city was named Ruan Yisan Street in 2017.

On June 21, Marie-Georges Pagel-Brousse, president of REMPART, visited the workshop in Pingyao. She praised the initiative as an example for Sino-French cultural cooperation.

She said the launch of the workshop was meant to bring French practices to China and the past 15 years have proved that the Pingyao experience is inspirational for heritage protection in France.

"Pingyao is an ancient city kept alive as residents live in the traditional residences," she said, adding that protecting the integrity and residential function of heritage sites is something that REMPART seeks to promote in France.

The Shanxi International Communication Center took part in the Gen Z workshop in 2025. The program was included in the UNESCO World Heritage Volunteers Initiative in that same year.

Hao Hong and Zhang Chenwei contributed to this story.





From left: Volunteers work to renovate a wooden structure in Xifang Temple, Pingyao county. DONG JIXUAN / FOR CHINA DAILY The opening ceremony of the 2026 workshop is held on June 14 at Xifang Temple. WEI BO / FOR CHINA DAILY

ADVERTORIAL

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:11 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:11 PM

CHINA

Super Typhoon Bavi poised to unleash severe rainfall and disruptions

By LI HONGYANG
lihongyang@chinadaily.com.cn

Forecasters have warned that Super Typhoon Bavi could unleash widespread severe rainfall and secondary disasters after making landfall, with its remnants expected to combine with other weather systems and disrupt transport.

At 8 pm on Thursday, the typhoon's center was about 1,010 kilometers southeast of Keelong, Taiwan, packing maximum sustained winds of up to 173 km per hour, the National Meteorological Center said.

Bavi is forecast to make landfall on Saturday evening between Fuqing in Fujian province and Wenling in Zhejiang province, with winds of 137 to 162 km/h. It is then expected to move northwest while gradually weakening.

The center issued an orange typhoon alert, the second-highest level in China's four-tier weather warning system, for Bavi on Thursday.

Speaking at a media briefing on Thursday, Xiang Chunyi, chief forecaster at the center, outlined two possible tracks for the storm once it moves ashore.

"Current projections show Bavi could move west toward the border area of Hubei, Anhui and Henan provinces and gradually weaken and dissipate. Alternatively, it may turn northeast and transition into an extratropical cyclone," she said.

"Whichever path it takes, we need to be especially vigilant against the secondary disasters triggered after landfall," she added.

The center warned of heavy to torrential rainfall from Thursday to Friday across a broad swath of the country. In central and southern Hebei province and northern Shandong province, thunderstorm winds could exceed 117 km/h, and tornadoes could not be ruled out, the center said.

On Saturday, Zhejiang and Fujian are expected to experience the storm's strongest winds and heaviest rainfall, with parts of southern Zhejiang and northeastern Fujian forecast to receive between 250 and 400 millimeters of rain, said Weather China, a website affiliated with the China Meteorological Administration.

Explaining why typhoons tracking northward are often more dangerous, Xiang said the risks go well beyond the storm's own intensity.

A key factor is the continuous supply of moisture after landfall, often fueled by southeasterly or southwesterly flows on the southern flank of the subtropical high, creating a persistent channel of water vapor into the storm.

"If the typhoon collides with cold air as it pushes north, atmospheric instability increases dramatically, releasing a tremendous amount of energy and causing rainfall intensity to surge," Xiang said.

On Thursday afternoon, the Ministry of Natural Resources and the China Meteorological Administration jointly issued a yellow alert for geological hazards, the second-lowest level of the four-tier warning system.

The warning covers parts of northern Beijing, western Hebei, northeastern Shanxi province, southwestern Guangdong province, southern Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, southeastern and western Yunnan province, central Gansu province, and eastern Qinghai province.

The State Flood Control and Drought Relief Headquarters raised its emergency response for flood and typhoon prevention from Level IV, the lowest of the four-tier system, to Level III at 5 pm on Thursday, citing the typhoon's high intensity, wide reach, and strong potential for damage. Further adjustments will be made as the situation develops.

Feng Lei, a senior engineer at the CMA's public meteorological service center, told the briefing that Bavi would bring widespread heavy rain and strong winds to eastern China, disrupting road, rail and coastal shipping transport.

She warned that the risk of weather-related traffic hazards on highways was high.

"Torrential rain will make roads slippery and waterlogged, reduce visibility along routes such as the Beijing-Harbin and Beijing-Shanghai expressways and could trigger slope failures and landslides," Feng said.

With the storm striking during a peak travel period, she urged scenic spots to suspend cable cars, water-based activities and halt outdoor tours.



Workers reinforce steel supports for a plane tree at the West Lake scenic area in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, on Wednesday. The scenic area management is implementing windproof measures to counter the upcoming Super Typhoon Bavi's impact, ensuring safety by stabilizing ancient trees and roadside greenery.
LIN YUNLONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Healthcare on wheels



A medical worker from Beijing offers free consultation and treatment to a patient on a train along the Qinghai-Xizang Railway in the Xizang autonomous region on Wednesday. The public welfare campaign, launched on Tuesday, has sent 36 medical experts from 13 top hospitals in Beijing to provide free healthcare services, including consultations and medicine distribution, for railway workers and local residents at key railway stops. CUI JUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

State Council unveils carbon peak pathway

Plan also seeks to reconcile growth of digital economy with climate goals

By HOU LIQIANG
houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

The State Council, China's Cabinet, has issued an action plan for peaking the country's carbon emissions during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), setting 2030 targets that include cutting carbon dioxide emissions per unit of GDP by 17 percent from 2025 levels and raising the share of nonfossil fuels in total energy consumption by 3.3 percentage points to 25 percent.

The document also devotes a stand-alone section to advancing the green and low-carbon transition of computing power infrastructure, as China seeks to reconcile the rapid expansion of its digital economy with its long-term climate goals.

China aims to peak carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality before 2060. Published on Thursday, the plan lays out a comprehensive road map for the country's critical five-year push to reach its carbon peak.

Under the framework, the State Council has called for a sweeping restructuring of the energy mix by expanding the use of nonfossil energy sources, including wind, solar, hydropower and nuclear power.

The plan specifies that by 2030, installed capacity for wind and solar power should reach at least 2.8 billion kilowatts, while conventional hydropower capacity should reach around 410 million kW and nuclear power capacity approximately 110 million kW.

As of the end of last year, China's installed wind and solar power capacity stood at 1.84 billion kW. Conventional hydropower and operational nuclear power capacity reached 380 million kW and 62.5 million kW, respectively.

> "China will enhance the coordinated spatial planning of computing power facilities and renewable energy resources, encourage direct procurement of green electricity."
>
> **An action plan for peaking the country's carbon emissions issued by the State Council**

The document also pledges to strengthen the power grid's ability to integrate and utilize renewable energy, saying China will gradually introduce minimum renewable energy consumption requirements for key energy-intensive industries.

A dedicated section of the action plan focuses on advancing the green and low-carbon transformation of computing power infrastructure.

"China will enhance the coordinated spatial planning of computing power facilities and renewable energy resources, encourage direct procurement of green electricity, and appropriately deploy supporting infrastructure such as energy storage and backup power, so that newly built computing facilities will primarily operate on nonfossil energy," the plan says.

China will also tighten energy-saving and carbon reduction standards for computing power infrastructure, promote low-carbon retrofits of facilities that fail to meet the standards and systematically phase out outdated and inefficient technologies and equipment, according to the action plan.

The document also outlines measures to deepen the green and low-carbon transition in key sectors, with buildings and transportation identified as priority areas.

China will strengthen energy-saving and carbon-reduction retrofits of existing buildings while improving the management of energy consumption and carbon emissions during building operations, it says.

All newly constructed urban buildings will be required to fully comply with green building standards. The country will also promote green and low-carbon construction methods and support the large-scale development of ultra-low-energy buildings and prefabricated construction.

By 2030, China aims to reduce direct carbon emissions per unit of floor area by 3 percent.

In the transportation sector, China will further promote low-carbon energy use by steadily expanding the fleet of new energy vehicles, accelerating the electrification of public service vehicles, actively promoting new energy alternatives for commercial vehicles and nonroad mobile machinery, and phasing out older, high-emission vehicles.

By 2030, new energy vehicles are expected to account for 30 percent of the national vehicle fleet, while new energy commercial vehicles will make up 25 percent of all commercial vehicles in operation, according to the action plan.

APFNet advances intl forestry cooperation

By HOU LIQIANG
houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

The Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation has funded more than 50 demonstration projects across over 20 Asia-Pacific economies, with total investment exceeding $45 million.

The figure was revealed by Gong Yumei, director of the APFNet coordination center, an affiliate of China's National Forestry and Grassland Administration, at a news conference on Thursday.

The briefing was held ahead of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Ministerial Meeting on Forestry, which is scheduled to take place in Shenzhen from July 27 to 28.

Under the theme "Building a Green Asia-Pacific, Sharing Ecological Well-being", the high-level meeting will bring together regional leaders to discuss sustainable forest management and ecological governance.

"In recent years, China has actively supported and participated in forestry exchanges and cooperation under the APEC framework, promoting practical collaboration among member economies in key areas such as forest restoration and sustainable management, ecosystem conservation, community livelihood improvement and capacity building," Gong said, citing APFNet as an example.

She said the demonstration projects, supported by the administration, explore effective models for forest restoration based on the needs of developing member economies, with priorities including degraded forest rehabilitation, multifunctional forest enhancement and community livelihood improvement.

One such project is an urban forestry demonstration initiative in Bangkok's Bang Kachao area, Thailand, which aims to explore effective approaches to protecting and restoring the "urban lungs" of densely populated cities.

"These projects serve both as 'test beds' for locally tailored forest restoration and as 'green seeds' that spread ecological civilization concepts and technologies across the Asia-Pacific, generating ecological benefits, community prosperity and sustainable development," she said.

Gong said capacity building is another priority of APFNet's work.

Working with forestry universities in China, APFNet has launched a scholarship program that has brought more than 200 young forestry officials and scholars from over 20 economies to China for master's and doctoral studies in forestry, she said.

The network has also organized specialized training programs for about 440 forestry officials from 25 economies, she added.

These efforts have helped cultivate a skilled, capable and collaborative workforce to advance regional forestry cooperation, Gong said.

Officially launched in September 2008, APFNet is a nonprofit international organization dedicated to promoting sustainable forest management and rehabilitation across the Asia-Pacific region.

The establishment of APFNet, proposed by China, was endorsed at the 15th APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting held in Sydney, Australia, in September 2007.

Survivor of Japan's wartime 'comfort women' system dies aged 99

By JIANG CHENGLONG
jiangchenglong@chinadaily.com.cn

A survivor of the Japanese army's World War II-era "comfort women" system has died in Central China's Hunan province, leaving only six registered survivors on the Chinese mainland, according to a Shanghai-based research center.

The Japanese military's "comfort women" system subjected women and girls, mainly from occupied parts of Asia, to sexual slavery in military-run brothels before and during World War II.

The survivor, known in accordance with her wishes by the pseudonym Grandma Hui, died early on Wednesday at her home in Pingjiang county, Hunan, according to the Research Center for Chinese Comfort Women at Shanghai Normal University. She was 99.

Born in Changsha, Hunan, in 1928, Hui was subjected to wartime sexual slavery in the summer of 1945, the research center said in a post published on Wednesday.

At the time, local puppet authorities, acting under orders from Japanese troops, conscripted women under the pretext of "doing laundry and manual labor". In reality, the women were forced to work for Japanese troops without pay during the day and were subjected to sexual slavery at night, the center said.

Hui and her mother were taken to work outside a Japanese military camp. The women were kept under strict surveillance by Japanese patrols, barred from contacting outsiders and forced to work without pay. During that period, Japanese soldiers took young women into the camp and sexually abused them, and Hui was among the victims, the center said.

She endured the abuse for more than 10 days before the women were told they no longer needed to report to the camp. During that time, a Japanese soldier violently twisted her arm, leaving her with a lifelong injury.

In August 2024, an investigation team from the Shanghai Normal University research center visited Pingjiang, where researchers confirmed Hui's status as a survivor of the Japanese military's "comfort women" system through oral interviews and document verification.

The war brought lasting suffering to Hui, including the loss of her father at a young age, the death of her child later in life and lifelong illness, according to the research center.

In her final years, she continued to search for the burial site of her father, who died for the country, and chose to make her own experience public so that history would be remembered, the center said.

The dwindling number of survivors has added urgency to efforts to preserve historical testimony and wartime evidence as Japan continues to face criticism over its handling of the "comfort women" issue.

At a regular news conference in late June, Foreign Ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said the forced recruitment of "comfort women" was a grave crime against humanity committed by Japanese militarism during its aggression and expansion, and a gross violation of the basic human rights of people in China, the Korean Peninsula, Southeast Asia and other regions.

Guo said there is irrefutable evidence of Japan's crimes and that they cannot be denied.

"For years, some forces in Japan have attempted to deny or distort the history of aggression, play down the 'comfort women' issue, deprive victims of their right to seek justice and compensation, and reopen the wounds of survivors," he said.

The Japanese government has also obstructed the establishment of "comfort women" memorial statues in some countries, triggering strong indignation among civil groups and people from various sectors, Guo said.

The question raised at the news conference referred to media reports that Auckland, New Zealand, had planned to install a "comfort women" memorial statue, but the plan was halted under pressure from Japan. It also mentioned Japan's obstruction of similar memorials in the United States, Canada, Germany, Australia and the Philippines in recent years.

Guo urged the Japanese authorities to face up to their history of aggression, sincerely admit guilt and apologize, stop covering up the truth and suppressing voices of justice and cease moves toward "remilitarization".

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:11 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:11 PM

LIFE

Rise of the red crustacean

Book details how crayfish, once considered pesky foreign invaders, successfully transformed into a highly lucrative national midnight snack, **Li Yingxue** reports.





Top: The cover of *Crayfish Temptation: An Ethnography of Place-Making and Agricultural Transformation in China.* **Above:** A refined crayfish soup. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

As summer settles in, cities across China come alive after dark in a familiar ritual. In alleyways, night markets and roadside stalls, vivid red quickly takes over the tables. Trays of spicy crayfish paired with cold beer have become one of the defining signatures of a Chinese summer night.

From Qianjiang in Hubei province to Xuyi in Jiangsu, from the Yangtze River Delta to northern cities and even western night markets, crayfish have long outgrown their regional roots. They are now a nationwide nighttime staple woven into everyday urban life. Yet, the story of this small crustacean reaches far beyond the dinner table.

Crayfish are not native to China. The species that now anchors a multibillion-yuan industry first arrived as an outsider. Its journey from ecological stranger to cultural staple raises a larger question: how did it become so deeply embedded in Chinese daily life, and what has it reshaped along the way?

A recent book, *Crayfish Temptation: An Ethnography of Place-Making and Agricultural Transformation in China*, by Sidney Cheung Chin-hung and Ding Ling, sets out to answer this question.

Drawing on nearly 20 years of fieldwork, the book follows crayfish from rice paddies to dinner tables, tracing how they have reshaped landscapes, livelihoods and local economies.

As Zhang Jinghong, an associate professor at the Center for Social Sciences, Southern University of Science and Technology, puts it: "From New Orleans in the United States to Hokkaido in Japan and the Yangtze River Delta in China, the book is based on empirical research tracing how crayfish evolved from an 'invasive outsider' into a defining culinary symbol of Nanjing and the surrounding region.

"Beyond consumption, the authors move into the field, revealing the production logic and ecological practice of 'rice-crayfish co-cultivation', weaving together mobility, identity and the shaping of taste," she says.

In that sense, the book is less about food itself than about how food moves through society — and how, in turn, it changes the systems that produce it.

Cheung began observing crayfish more than two decades ago. He found that their rise had less to do with chance than with China's wider social transformation. As millions of rural workers moved into cities, they carried with them a strong preference for bold, spicy flavors from Sichuan and Hunan cuisines.

With its tender flesh and ability to soak up rich seasonings, crayfish proved a natural fit for this shift in taste.

Xuyi was among the first places to turn that preference into an industry. In the 1990s, crayfish were still regarded as low-value aquatic animals. That changed when local chefs began cooking them with a rich blend of spices that became known as "13-spice crayfish".







Clockwise from top: Vendors sort crayfish at a local market in Xuyi county, Jiangsu province. A prepared crayfish dish. A rice-crayfish co-cultivation field at a cooperative in Wuhu, Anhui province. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"Many people say Xuyi crayfish became famous not because of the crayfish itself, but because of the 13 spices," Cheung notes. What emerged was not just a dish, but a new kind of shared flavor experience — bold, sticky, and made for gathering around a table.

Local governments quickly turned that success into a defining city brand. Festivals, branding campaigns, and tourism projects transformed Xuyi into the "Crayfish Capital", attracting investment and reshaping the local economy around a single ingredient.

If Xuyi shows how crayfish became a brand, Qianjiang reveals how they evolved into a production system.

Here, farmers once saw crayfish as a problem because they burrowed into rice fields and damaged seedlings. The turning point came when local practices shifted to "rice-crayfish co-cultivation", allowing both rice and crayfish to thrive on the same land.

What began as trial and error gradually became a stable farming model: crayfish feed on weeds and plankton, while their movement and waste help fertilize the rice. A single field now produces both grain and seafood, turning conflict into mutual benefit, according to Cheung.

For many farmers, the benefits have been immediate and tangible. In Qianjiang, even small plots can generate steady annual income, often enough for families to stay in their hometowns rather than seek migrant work elsewhere. Harvesting is concentrated into short seasons, while earnings have become more reliable.

Around this farming model, a wider industrial chain has taken shape. Processing plants freeze, season, and package crayfish for year-round consumption. Logistics networks connect farms to cities within hours. What was once a seasonal rural product has become a nationwide supply system.

Cheung notes that crayfish farming has also expanded beyond its traditional southern base. With technical adaptations, it has spread into colder northern regions, where it follows a different agricultural calendar.

"In July and August, when growth slows in the Yangtze River region because of high temperatures, northern areas are entering their peak season," he says. That seasonal offset has created a continuous supply chain across different regions.

In places like Harbin, capital of Northeast China's Heilongjiang province, rice fields now produce both grain and crayfish, extending the geography — and the economics — of what was once a regional specialty.

Today, crayfish are more than a popular dish in China. They reflect broader changes in how food is produced, transported and shared, while offering a glimpse into the continuing evolution of Chinese cuisine.

For Cheung, the most interesting feature is not just the species' popularity at home, but also its potential abroad. Unlike earlier waves of Chinese food that traveled with migrants, crayfish come with a highly standardized system of farming, processing and production that is easier to scale internationally.

In recent years, Chinese crayfish have already appeared in overseas contexts, from cross-border shipments to international sporting events and a growing number of restaurants. Each new destination adds another chapter to their remarkable story.

What began as an introduced species has become part of a national rhythm of farming, dining, and commerce. Today, crayfish are gradually finding a place on the global stage — not just as a dish, but as a blueprint for how food can connect production, culture and communities across borders.

Contact the writer at liyingxue@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese culinary expertise shared in Myanmar to elevate tourism

YANGON — More than 40 trainees gathered closely around a cooking station, watching attentively as a Chinese culinary instructor demonstrated the preparation of authentic Chinese cuisine during a hands-on training session at the Center for Tourism Development in Yangon, Myanmar, on Monday morning.

The room was filled with concentration as participants observed each step of the cooking process, taking notes and engaging directly with instructors during a five-day Chinese culinary training program designed for hospitality workers.

Organized by the Ministry of Hotels, Tourism and Culture, the program aims to enhance human resource development in Myanmar's hotel and tourism sector, improve service quality for international visitors, and promote gastronomic tourism.

Initiated in 2025 to mark the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Myanmar and China, the training program has previously been conducted in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon, Taunggyi, and Mandalay, with a total of 183 trainees participating, according to U Naung Naung Lin Aung, a director of the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism.

This year, the program has expanded further to six locations: Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon, Taunggyi, Mandalay, Pyin Oo Lwin, and Ngwe Saung, he says.

The training session is intended to ensure that visitors to Myanmar can enjoy not only local dishes but also high-quality international cuisine, particularly Chinese food prepared to professional standards, he says.

The program also supports efforts to strengthen Myanmar-China friendship through cultural exchange and gastronomic tourism, he adds.

It also provides opportunities for trainees to exchange ideas on Myanmar traditional cuisine with Chinese instructors, creating a platform for mutual culinary learning, he says.



Participants learn Chinese cooking techniques during a five-day culinary training program at the Center for Tourism Development in Yangon, Myanmar, on Monday. MYO KYAW SOE / XINHUA

Feng Jianlin, a Chinese culinary master at Kunming Vocational University of Science and Technology, says that during the five-day training program, he will focus primarily on practical, hands-on instruction to teach Myanmar trainees more than 20 distinctive Yunnan dishes and traditional pastries.

"This training program not only conveys Chinese culinary culture and deepens bilateral friendship through authentic Yunnan flavors, but also helps local catering practitioners improve their skills, thereby upgrading the food and service quality of local hotels and restaurants to achieve a win-win outcome for both customers and businesses," Feng adds.

Praising the Myanmar trainees for their strong practical skills and high enthusiasm for learning, Feng expresses his hope for the continued implementation of such exchange programs in the future, using Chinese cuisine as a medium to extend the *pauk-phaw* (fraternal) friendship between China and Myanmar.

Among the trainees, Aung Naing Soe, 50, executive chef at the Rose Garden Hotel, says, "I joined the course because I am interested in Chinese cuisine and want to learn new menu items, which I can later share with the junior chefs at my workplace.

"Chinese cuisine is important. Most tourists who visit our country are Chinese, so this training is very beneficial for us."

Naing Win, 23, believes the training program will help improve food quality and service standards in the hospitality sector.

"After completing the training, I will be able to share what I have learned with my colleagues and apply the skills in my work. Training programs like this can help improve the quality of food and services provided to visitors," he says.

Thein Tun Aung, 28, joined the training program to improve his culinary skills and gain exposure to Chinese cooking techniques.

"After completing the training, we will receive certificates. Chinese cuisine is famous worldwide, so learning these dishes is very worthwhile," he says.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:11 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:11 PM

LIFESHANGHAI

A modern showcase of Han nobility

Significant display highlights historical aesthetics, bringing hundreds of Mawangdui treasures into an immersive digital experience, **Zhang Kun** reports.





In what is being hailed as the most significant off-site exhibition of Mawangdui artifacts in over half a century, a landmark showcase of Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220) luxury and aesthetics is now open to the public in Shanghai. The exhibition, *A House of Nobility: Aesthetics and Cultivation of Life in the Mawangdui Han Tombs*, runs from July 3 to Oct 7 at the Shanghai Art Museum.

Co-organized by the Shanghai Art Museum, the Hunan Museum and Tourism Times, the exhibition moves beyond traditional historical or archaeological frameworks. It interprets the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 24) through the lens of "life aesthetics", offering visitors a deeply relatable, immersive experience.

According to curator Xiang Liping, the exhibition aims to bridge the gap between ancient history and modern life.

"We are looking at this from the perspective of lifestyle," Xiang says. "It is not about stepping back into the Han Dynasty, but rather seeing how the Chinese people of that era found peace and cultivated their body and mind."

This philosophy encompasses everything from daily wellness practices like *daoyin*, a type of physical exercise, and incense burning to the enjoyment of music and contemplation of the universe.

The exhibition brings together 472 artifacts across 195 sets, including 31 sets of grade-one national treasures. It marks the first provincial off-site display of a series of cultural relics deemed forbidden to export by the National Cultural Heritage Administration of China.

The exhibits include lacquered wood and bamboo objects, silk textiles, silk manuscripts, silk paintings, painted pottery, and medicinal and food matter, covering nearly every type of artifact found in the Mawangdui Han tombs.

The Mawangdui site, located in Changsha, Hunan province, was discovered in 1971. It consists of three tombs belonging to the family of Li Cang, the chancellor of the Changsha State. More than 3,000 treasured objects were unearthed, along with the remarkably well-preserved remains of Xinzhui, also known as Lady Dai.

Thanks to her airtight, elaborate tomb with four nested coffins, Xinzhui's body was found intact. Her skin remained moist, her subcutaneous soft tissue retained its elasticity, and some joints were still movable. Even her eyelashes were in place, and the lines on her fingers and toes were discernible, leading archaeologists to estimate that she was about 50 years old when she died, according to Duan Xiaoming, director of the Hunan Museum.

One of the most significant exhibits is a T-shaped silk painting that was peeled off the cover of Xinzhui's fourth coffin.

"These T-shaped silk paintings were an indispensable part of the ancient funeral procession, held high as a banner before being placed on the cover of the inner coffin," explains Yu Yanjiao, director of the Mawangdui Research Institute.

The painting in Xinzhui's tomb is particularly beautiful, depicting diverse subjects from heaven to earth and the underground in rich colors. Measuring 205 centimeters long, 92 cm wide at the top, and 47.7 cm wide at the bottom, it is a masterpiece of early Chinese art. A similar, larger painting from her son's tomb exists, though it is not quite as exquisite.



Scenes from the exhibition *A House of Nobility: Aesthetics and Cultivation of Life in the Mawangdui Han Tombs*, which runs from July 3 to Oct 7 at the Shanghai Art Museum. PHOTOS BY GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

Due to their extreme fragility, the original silk paintings must be displayed lying flat under restricted lighting. To help visitors appreciate the intricate details, the exhibition features a dedicated room with high-resolution enlargements and digital renderings. In a special arrangement, the two T-shaped silk paintings will rotate during the exhibition: the painting from Xinzhui's tomb will be on display until Aug 16, after which it will be replaced by the painting from her son Li Xi's grave.

"Fifty years after its excavation, Mawangdui continues to yield new discoveries," Yu notes. A prime example is the *Riding Clouds Seat Cushion*, which is making its public debut in this exhibition. Previously misidentified as a pillow towel, in-depth studies in 2024 concluded that it was actually a seat cushion placed among a lacquer table, cushions, and singing and dancing figures to simulate Lady Xinzhui sitting and enjoying a song-and-dance performance.

Other highlights include the earliest three-color overprinted textiles and fragments of a silk robe inscribed with the auspicious phrase "Peace, Joy, Longevity, and Infinity".

True to its theme of life aesthetics, the exhibition incorporates digital technology in interactive sections that immerse visitors in the beauty of Han Dynasty noble life.

In "Lady Xinzhui's Kitchen", guests can experience AI-powered medical consultations based on ancient Han medicine and engage in traditional incense-making. Meanwhile, in the "Lady Xinzhui's Gymnasium" zone, visitors can try the *daoyin* exercises depicted in ancient documents using high-precision motion-sensing hardware and AI skeletal algorithms.

By blending millennia-old artifacts with a cutting-edge interactive design, *A House of Nobility* offers a profound reflection on how ancient wisdom continues to inspire modern living.

Contact the writer at zhangkun@chinadaily.com.cn

Dazzling exhibition cloaks visitors in rare, ancient couture

By **WANG XIN**
wangxin2@chinadaily.com.cn

Loyal followers of fashion and couture will undoubtedly have their minds blown by the dazzling court costumes of ancient China's Imperial Palace hundreds of years ago.

Traveling from the Forbidden City in Beijing, over 100 rare pieces are arriving at an exhibition at the World Expo Museum in Shanghai from July 7 to Oct 7, with 90 percent on display for the first time outside Beijing and 30 percent making their public debut.

Silk textiles are among the most difficult cultural relics to preserve, rivaling paintings and calligraphy, as they are extremely fragile, protein-based fiber artifacts. Thus, these stunning pieces spanning hundreds of years rarely have the opportunity to be displayed to the public, particularly outside the nation's capital.

Themed *Imperial Colors: Qing Dynasty Court Costumes from the Palace Museum*, the exhibition brings together robes and jackets worn by emperors Kangxi, Qianlong, Jiaqing, and Tongzhi of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), garments and accessories from numerous concubines, as well as robes, fabrics and accessories belonging to six empress dowagers and empresses. Each piece epitomizes the pinnacle of ancient Chinese aesthetics.

The Palace Museum, co-organizer of the exhibition, houses over 170,000 pieces of woven and embroidered clothing artifacts from its historical collection. These items, representing the highest textile standards of that era, were custom-made for the imperial family.

Their designs were finalized by the emperor, and weavers were commissioned by imperial decree to create garments tailored to the wearer's measurements. Crafted with the finest materials, the best designs and the most delicate dyeing techniques, these pieces were regarded as the pinnacle of couture in custom tailoring, according to the organizers.

Among the artifacts on display are 14 rare treasures, 61 masterpieces and 26 significant artifacts. Selected from the best-kept items, 15 pieces are from the late Ming (1368-1644) and early Qing dynasties, with 36 others from the Qing Dynasty's golden age and 47 from the late Qing period.



Above: A gold and silver embroidered robe with daffodils and "longevity" character motifs worn by the Empress Dowager Cixi (1835-1908). **Right:** The peerless "peacock-gold robe", one of the most anticipated treasures at the exhibition. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Qing Dynasty court costume colors were derived from plants and are imbued with the heritage of traditional Chinese culture. The exhibited items are diverse in color, including bright yellow, moon white, lotus pink, and snow gray, whose trends have continually evolved throughout history.

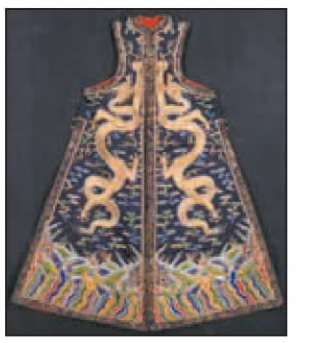
Focusing on representative colors and consisting of six sections, the exhibition showcases a wide variety of costumes for different occasions, including ceremonial attire, festive attire, everyday attire, and casual wear, as well as fabrics for the *longpao* (an emperor's 12-symbol robe), colorful silk ribbons, and the finest satin brocades from across the nation, along with exquisite jewelry.

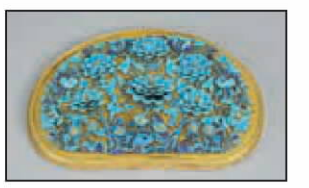
One of the most anticipated exhibits is the peerless *longpao* treasure "peacock-gold robe". This imperial robe's fabric features a base of peacock feather threads spread across dark brown satin, with dragon, cloud, bat, flower, sea, and cliff motifs embroidered in twisted gold thread and five-colored velvet. As a structural color unique to bird plumage, the peacock feather produces a dazzling interplay of gold and green at different angles and in different lighting conditions.













Clockwise from top right: Also on show at the World Expo Museum in Shanghai are: The bright red ceremonial robe of the young Emperor Tongzhi (1856-75), with gold dragon patterns in the *kesi* (silk tapestry weaving) technique. A stone-blue, sleeveless ceremonial jacket worn by Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) court women over their court robes during major ceremonies. A piece of accessory featuring the technique of *diancui* (kingfisher feather inlay). A square embroidered patch with a cloud-and-crane motif in the *kesi* technique. A *longpao* featuring the superb technique of *kesi*, worn by Qing emperors during major ceremonies and rituals.

Aside from imperial robes, entirely covered in peacock feathers, were extremely rare even among Qing Dynasty court costumes, and the Palace Museum holds only two surviving examples. The breathtaking splendor and shimmering radiance of these delicately blended colors and techniques are difficult to capture or restore through any lens to this day. The best way to truly appreciate them is to get up close and in person.

"Ancient weaving and embroidery were not static arts. When you wear them, the light and shadow of the patterns would shift. Their colors and designs embodied and demonstrated the spirit of traditional culture," says Zhang Xin from the Palace Museum and one of the exhibition's curators.

To offer visitors the best experience while prioritizing the protection of the treasures, the World Expo Museum spent over a year preparing for the exhibition. It has specially customized display cases that can maintain constant temperature and humidity around the clock, and employs specialized lighting technology to ensure the artifacts remain in an optimal preservation environment consistently.

Moreover, the cases are equipped with non-reflective glass to provide a clear 360-degree view of the exhibits. Such efforts will allow visitors to fully appreciate the exhibits' intricate details as they shift under varying angles and lighting conditions. Free-of-charge bilingual audio guides and a digital exhibition are also available, offering visitors an immersive experience.

"We are extremely excited to present such a show. I see the costumes as the best and rarest couture. The supreme aesthetic expression and the highest level of craftsmanship they embody represent, arguably, the pinnacle of Chinese clothing over the past 300 years," says Liu Wentao, director of World Expo Museum.

"We expect to lead the audience to experience the power of traditional culture, the brilliance of our ancestors, and the charm of our profound history," Zhang adds.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:11 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:11 PM

LIFE



Paintings by Ruth V Hemenway featuring Chongqing's riverbanks (left), boats on the Min River in Fujian province (above), and Chongqing's streets (right). PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

A healer amid turmoil

A physician's diaries illuminate a family's past and destiny during the revolutionary era, **Zhang Yi** and **Hu Meidong** report in Fuzhou.

In the spring of 2024, within the library of Smith College in Massachusetts, United States, Huang Yao carefully examined an 18-year archival record. As she read through the handwritten diaries, she traced the historical texts that documented the very foundations of her own family history.

The diaries belonged to Ruth V Hemenway, an American physician who arrived in Fujian province, China, in 1924 and spent nearly two decades providing medical services. During her time there, she adopted a month-old Chinese baby girl named Hua Sing — Huang's grandmother.

Following Huang's dedicated two-year effort to translate the manuscript, the doctor's words have officially completed their journey home. On June 30, 2026, as a summer breeze swept through the historic mountain resort of Kuliang in Fuzhou, descendants, historians, and international guests gathered to witness the launch of the Chinese edition of *Ruth V. Hemenway, M.D.: A Memoir of Revolutionary China 1924-1941*, released ahead of its nationwide distribution in July by Sichuan People's Publishing House.

"To a stranger, these pages tell a story; to me, they trace the road that led my grandmother Hua Sing into being," Huang says.

"Through her life, my grandmother passed on to me the luminance that Dr Hemenway first kindled, and through this book, I hope to pass it on to many more."

A doctor's calling

The historical narrative preserved in the diaries begins in the early 1920s. China was in chaos, caught between the collapse of the imperial Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) and the bloody conflicts of local warlords. Amid this turmoil, the young American physician wrote her purpose clearly, "I knew I would give my strength and knowledge to medical work in China."

Dr Hemenway based her work in the rural area of Liudu in Minqing county, Fujian province. She established clinics, trained local women in modern midwifery, and fought tirelessly to reduce rural infant mortality. Her daily logs chronicle the immense challenges of maintaining a hospital amid local armed skirmishes and the subsequent destruction during the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45).

One legendary entry reveals the sheer depth of her courage. A prominent local bandit leader summoned the physician to his mountain stronghold for medical treatment. Though her hospital staff members were terrified and pleaded with her not to go, she defied their fears to fulfill her duty as a healer and made the hazardous journey into insurgent territory. Her absolute medical integrity ultimately earned the deep respect of the outlaws, who treated her with unexpected courtesy and escorted her back unharmed.

Decades later, her family traces the daring choice back to her core values.

"It takes an immense amount of courage to immerse oneself in a foreign land," Thomas Hemenway, a relative of Dr Hemenway, says. "Ruth went with a heart willing to listen, to learn, and to love."

That love took a tangible form in 1929. The physician adopted the month-old Hua Sing after learning her biological family was preparing to send her away to be raised as a traditional child bride.

Reflecting her hope for the country she had come to serve, Dr Hemenway chose a poetic Chinese name for the infant: Hua Sing, meaning the "starlight of China".

Dr Hemenway recorded the child's growth with precise physical measurements, while giving her a modern education that included English and sports. A family photo album reveals that Hua Sing even participated in a mixed-gender middle school basketball team — a rare level of social freedom for a young woman in early 20th-century China.

"That single act of love didn't just save a child," Thomas Hemenway says. "It changed the course of a family for generations. Hua Sing became the joy of Ruth's life."







Top: The Chinese edition of the book *Ruth V. Hemenway, M.D.: A Memoir of Revolutionary China, 1924–1941.*
Middle: Thomas Hemenway and Huang Yao visit Minqing county, Fuzhou, Fujian province, last year, where Dr Hemenway once worked.
Left: Dr Hemenway and her adopted daughter Hua Sing.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Faith amid the ashes

In the late 1930s, as Japanese air raids began to devastate China, Dr Hemenway headed to Chongqing to treat wartime casualties. Her diaries captured the fierce resilience of the population: After an intense bombing, she emerged from a shelter to find the streets shattered and smoking. Yet, instead of despair, she saw local residents and shopkeepers instantly return to clear the debris and restart their businesses.

"People started the hard work of rebuilding homes and reopening shops in the ashes that had not yet cooled," Dr Hemenway wrote in her diary, deeply moved. "I thought to myself, 'With such a spirit, China will never be defeated.'"

But war and insurmountable institutional barriers eventually forced a heartbreaking separation. In 1941, suffering from a severe illness, the physician had to return to the US for treatment, leaving her Chinese daughter Hua Sing behind. As geopolitical relations deteriorated, all correspondence between them was severed.

Dr Hemenway passed away in the US in 1974 without ever seeing her daughter again. Yet, her family noted a poignant detail: until her final days, the kitchen walls of her American home remained covered with photographs of Hua Sing.

An ocean away, Hua Sing carried on her mother's legacy. She entered the medical profession, married a fellow doctor named Liu Minsheng, and relocated to the harsh northwest to join the faculty of a medical college in the Ningxia Hui autonomous region. There, she worked in the physiology department while he treated patients in the university's affiliated hospital.

"Life in Ningxia in the last century was hard — the winds relentless, the resources scarce," Huang, the granddaughter, recalls. "Yet my grandparents never faltered. They embraced it all with grace and gratitude."

Even when the opportunity arose to return to the comforts of Beijing, the couple chose to remain in the northwest out of a shared devotion to rural medicine.

"Looking back, their choice was itself a mirror of history," Huang says, "a reflection of the very spirit that Dr Hemenway had carried into China all those years before."

Century-long connection

Although decades of silence severed the ties between the doctor's families in China and the US, they were independently driven to preserve her legacy.

In China, Huang Yao set out to find Dr Hemenway's descendants while translating the doctor's memoir into Chinese to heal her grandmother's lifelong yearning.

Across the Pacific, Thomas Hemenway was on a parallel quest. While Dr Hemenway's original manuscripts were preserved at Smith College, Thomas gathered multifaceted information to build a family history website and reconstruct her life.

In 2024, they were finally connected through Zhang Hong, whose grandfather — Hua Sing's cousin — had introduced the infant Hua Sing to Dr Hemenway decades ago.

However, as their communication grew, the family experienced a profound loss when Hua Sing passed away peacefully in Fuzhou in March 2025.

Four months later, in July 2025, Thomas traveled to Fuzhou for the first time. Though too late to meet Hua Sing, he embraced Huang Yao tightly at the historic Enlan Building, a landmark structure Dr Hemenway had overseen the construction of in the 1920s. Beneath a century-old lychee tree Dr Hemenway had personally planted, the relatives tasted its fruit together.

"The deeper story is that for so many people here, friendship became a relationship, and a relationship became family," notes Elyn MacInnis, founder of the Friends of Kuliang organization, reflecting on the century-long connection.

"People arrived as strangers. They became friends. Eventually, they became part of one another's lives — they became an extended family."

Contact the writers at zhangyi1@chinadaily.com.cn

Turkish and Chinese ceramic traditions unite in collaboration

IZNIK, Turkiye — Standing beside the blazing kilns of Jingdezhen, China's thousand-year-old porcelain capital, in 2023, Turkish ceramic artist Adil Can Guven watched flawless porcelain emerge from fires raging at 1,300 C.

For a craftsman who had spent decades preserving the Turkish tradition of Iznik ceramics, a craft shaped by lower firing temperatures and greater fragility, that moment was a quiet revelation. It was not merely a lesson in temperature, but a new way of understanding clay, fire, and the resilience of craft itself.

"In both systems, quartz is present, but everything else changes," Guven recalls. "In porcelain, feldspar acts as a flux, allowing the body to mature at very high temperatures. Iznik ware relies on quartz and glass frit, using local white clay. It makes the process more fragile, but gives our ceramics their distinctive texture."

That fragility comes at a high cost. Fired at just 900 C, nearly 40 percent of his pieces may crack or warp during the process. "No factory could endure this," he says, noting that the craft is sustained by artistry rather than commercial efficiency.





Left: Porcelain ware displayed at the Porcelain Market in Iznik, Turkiye. **Right:** People visit the Porcelain Market in Iznik. PHOTOS BY LIU LEI / XINHUA

The exchange of ceramic traditions between China and Turkiye dates back hundreds of years. As early as the 15th century, blue-and-white porcelain from China's Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) reached Anatolia, leaving a lasting imprint on Iznik's ceramic craftsmanship.

Today, these two traditional crafts are finding new vitality through collaboration.

By the end of this year, a joint ceramic production facility planned in Iznik and developed in partnership with Jingdezhen will bring the two traditions together for collaborative production and research.

Following an April visit to Jingdezhen to examine production technologies and equipment, Iznik officials have entered the final phase of the project. The facility will function not only as a production site, but also as a space for workshops, artist exchanges, and cultural activities between the two cities.

Ke Xinguo, general manager of the Jingdezhen porcelain official flagship store in Istanbul and a participant in the project, says it represents a continuation of long-standing China-Turkiye exchanges.

"It transforms historical ceramic ties between Jingdezhen and Iznik into a lasting platform for cooperation," Ke says.

For ceramic artist Ozlem Camkoz, the project represents a bridge between generations, creating new hands to carry the ceramic traditions of both countries forward, while deepening the friendship forged through centuries of artistic exchange.

"By offering workshops and access to masters from both countries, we are creating a unique ecosystem," Camkoz says. "We are providing young artisans with the skills, networks, and job opportunities needed to keep these traditions alive today."

Back in Iznik, Guven returns to his wheel, where another piece of clay slowly takes shape beneath his hands.

He says his visit to Jingdezhen broadened his understanding of the craft, revealing that while the techniques may differ, both traditions are rooted in the same elements: clay, fire and patience.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:11 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:11 PM

SPORTS

2026 WORLD CUP

280
Goals scored across the first 96 matches of the 2026 World Cup, an average of 2.92 goals per match

265
The most individual goalkeeping actions at the 2026 tournament so far (Orlando Gill)

4
The most missed penalties, excluding shootouts, in World Cup history by a single player (Lionel Messi)

$871 million
Total prize money being offered at this year's expanded 48-team World Cup

3,605,357 spectators
The total attendance at the 2026 World Cup, as of June 25, surpassing the previous all-time record set in 1994

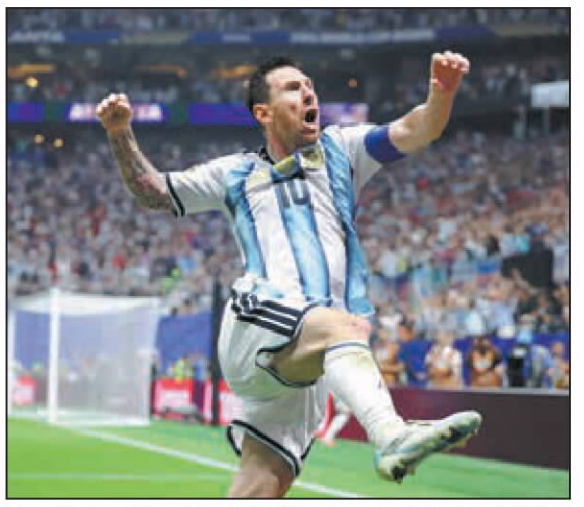
Source: FIFA as of July 8



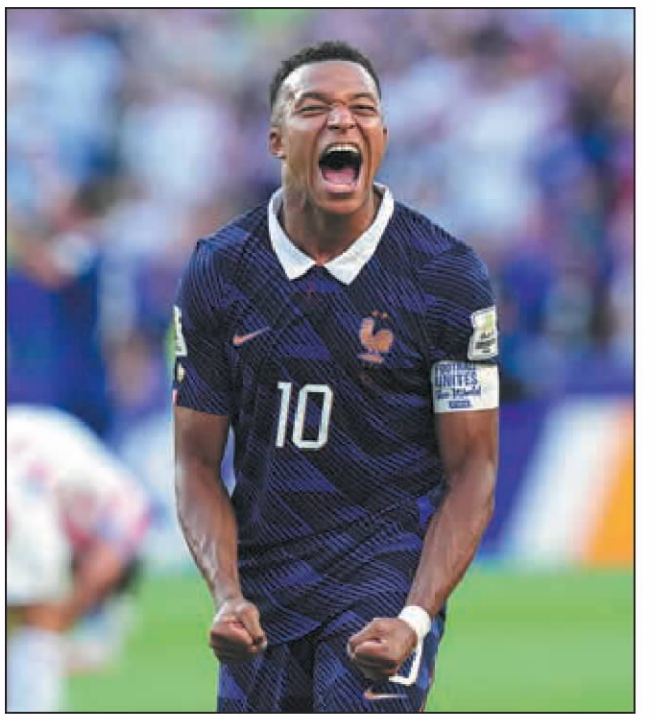
Norway's Andreas Schjelderup celebrates with goalscorer Erling Haaland during their 2026 World Cup round-of-16 match against Brazil at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey, on July 5. AFP

MORE TEAMS, SAME STORY

Despite the promise of some seismic upsets in the round of 16, six of the sides through to the last eight are European, with defending champion Argentina and Morocco the exceptions

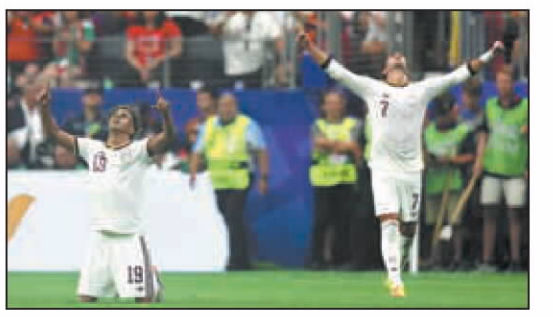


Lionel Messi celebrates scoring Argentina's equalizer during its round-of-16 match against Egypt in Atlanta on July 7. REUTERS





Belgium's Hans Vanaken (center) celebrates his goal against the United States with teammates as US defender Antonee Robinson reacts during their July 6 match in Seattle. REUTERS



Left: France's Kylian Mbappe celebrates his team's round-of-16 victory against Paraguay in Philadelphia on July 4. **Right:** Lamine Yamal (19) and Ferran Torres (7) react after Spain's round-of-16 win against Portugal in Arlington, Texas, on July 6. AP



Switzerland's Ruben Vargas celebrates converting the winning spotkick in a penalty shootout against Colombia on July 7. AP





Left: Morocco's Soufiane Rahimi (right) celebrates with Achraf Hakimi after scoring his side's third goal against Canada during their round-of-16 match in Houston on July 4. **Right:** England's goalscorers Harry Kane (9) and Jude Bellingham (10) celebrate with their teammates after beating co-host Mexico in a World Cup round-of-16 match in Mexico City on July 5. AP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:11 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:13 PM

Peace under pressure
Attacks on Gaza continue despite disarmament deal
WORLD, PAGE 5



Astronauts harvest rice at space station
CHINA, PAGE 11



Trailblazer on court
Han Xu inspires Chinese players to compete in Australia's top league
SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 TUESDAY, AUGUST 4, 2026

Ferry disaster



Above: Plumes of smoke rise from the *Mutiara Sentosa 2*, an Indonesian ferry carrying more than 270 people, after it caught fire on Sunday in the waters off the country's East Java province. Five people are confirmed dead, while 229 have been rescued, officials said on Monday, adding that the cause of the fire remains under investigation. REUTERS **Left:** Passengers evacuated from the ship arrive on Monday at the Gapura Surya Nusantara port terminal in Surabaya, East Java. DIPTA WAHYU / REUTERS

WORLD WATCH
By Jeppe Søe

Narrative a comforting illusion for bruised egos

Before visiting Wuhan, I carried an image of the city shaped largely by distant impressions and secondhand narratives. I expected a place defined by concrete, technology and surveillance. Instead, I found something far more familiar: neighbors sharing food, children playing and people gathering in courtyards between apartment buildings.

The experience revealed a simple truth: distance is not always measured in miles. Sometimes it is created by the assumptions we carry about people and places we do not truly know.

That same distance is now shaping the way nations see one another. We have replaced genuine global cooperation with silent trenches and protectionist walls. We have stopped talking to each other. Instead, we are exclusively talking about each other.

If you listen to the political debates in Western Europe right now, the narrative around China is too often reduced to a trade deficit and supply surplus. It is a comforting illusion that nurses our bruised egos. Since Europe lags severely behind in artificial intelligence and other technologies, we console ourselves with arrogance.

See ***Bias,*** *page 3*

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved
Newsstand prices:
US $1 Canada C$1; UK 1£ EU 1€
Kenya 50 Kenya Shilling
Asia Pacific: Thailand 120 thb; Philippines 120 php; Myanmar 2000 kyat; Japan 210 yen; Dubai 10 dirham; Pakistan 300 rupee

A TRIP TO PINGSHAN MOUNTAIN WILL REALLY FLOAT YOUR BOAT

Overseas tourists looking to escape sweltering summer temperatures are discovering a slice of paradise in a Hubei province canyon

By LI LEI in Beijing and **LIU KUN** in Enshi, Hubei

Jonathan Ng, a 37-year-old financier from Singapore, had never heard of Enshi in Hubei province until a social media clip caught his eye.

The footage showed a wooden boat drifting across water so crystalline that it seemed to float in midair, flanked by sheer karst cliffs — a scene reminiscent of Malaysia's famed Semporna archipelago.

But it was the climate that sealed the deal. With summer averaging just 22 C — a welcome respite from Singapore's tropical heat — he booked a flight within weeks.

After touring Pingshan Canyon, Ng was full of praise. "The boat ride, the scenery, the cool air — it was all stunning," he said, adding that he would recommend it as a summer escape to friends back home.

Ng is part of a growing tide of travelers fleeing sweltering city summers for wallet-friendly cool retreats in China. With temperate climes and tour packages costing a fraction of those in Semporna, Enshi stands out as a particularly tempting option.

The canyon's signature attraction is the "suspended boat" effect, created by exceptionally clear water and narrow cliff walls that minimize surface ripples.

Chen Kun, operations director at the Pingshan Canyon scenic area, has repeatedly witnessed how the canyon overwhelms first-time foreign visitors. Many arrive having seen its "China's Semporna" nickname on social media, but the actual experience, he said, far exceeds the online hype.

"Most people stop in their tracks and fall silent," Chen said. "They look down at the water, then up at the boat, checking the reflection again and again, and say it feels like it's floating in the sky — like a sci-fi movie."

He added that nearly all foreign guests immediately reach for cameras or drones, jockeying for the perfect light. European and US photography enthusiasts sometimes linger for one to two hours just to capture the ideal shot. Many share their footage in real time during their visit and continue posting on YouTube, Instagram and Facebook long after they have left.

"The feedback is unanimous," Chen said. "Pingshan is an unparalleled wonder — karst cliffs, primeval forest and crystalline water all in one, with no equal anywhere else."

See ***Canyon,*** *page 3*

XI'S VISION | EAST-WEST COLLABORATION

Once-barren region now a growth hub

Xi's long-term view for Ningxia partnership plan helped turn area into land of prosperity

By XU WEI, HU DONGMEI and **ZHANG CHUNYAN** in Yongning county, Ningxia

Even today, Hai Guobao still vividly remembers the moment his family first stepped into their new home in Minning township more than a decade ago.

The family moved into a house in the new settlement near the Helan Mountains in the Ningxia Hui autonomous region, where rows of brick homes and broad, paved roads stood in sharp contrast to the rugged mountain villages they had left behind.

After the long journey from Xihaigu, long known as one of China's harshest environments for human settlement, his family paused at the doorway before doing anything else.

Inside, they tested the most basic features first: a switch on the wall, then a tap in the kitchen. A light came on. Water flowed immediately. "We could never have imagined it even in our dreams," Hai recalled. "It was the first time we were leaving our home in Xihaigu for good. Many of us shed tears — both out of sadness and hope."

For his family, that moment marked the end of a way of life defined by scarcity. In Xihaigu, drinking water seeped through cracks in the rocks and had to be carried long distances back to villages scattered across steep hillsides. Droughts frequently brought crop failures, trapping generations of families in a cycle of hardship.

Hai's journey to Minning was part of a vision first set in motion nearly three decades earlier. In 1996, Fujian province and Ningxia were paired under a national poverty-reduction initiative designed to channel resources, investment and expertise from China's more developed eastern coast to its less developed western interior.

Xi Jinping, then deputy secretary of the Communist Party of China Fujian Provincial Committee, played a leading role in advancing the cooperation mechanism.

During a research trip to Ningxia in April 1997, Xi visited a relocation site in Xiji county, where he proposed building what would become Minning township. He called for pooling resources and investment to create a model of Fujian-Ningxia cooperation, whereby relocated residents could move out of the mountains, settle down and build prosperous lives.

At a Fujian-Ningxia poverty alleviation coordination meeting in 1998, Xi stressed that the partnership should focus on meeting the basic needs of poor residents.

In the years that followed, he continued to advocate expanding cooperation, innovating assistance mechanisms and broadening participation, laying the groundwork for a partnership that evolved from poverty relief to long-term regional development.

The idea gradually took shape at the foot of the Helan Mountains. Waves of migrants left Xihaigu for Minning, where irrigation from the Yellow River turned arid land into farmland and where new roads, schools, clinics and homes replaced the barren landscape.

Over the past three decades, Fujian has provided 7.68 billion yuan ($1.14 billion) in assistance funding for infrastructure projects in Ningxia's formerly impoverished areas and encouraged more than 1,600 enterprises to invest in the region, bringing over 100 billion yuan in actual investment.

The impact has been profound. According to Wang Jian, head of Ningxia's regional department of agriculture and rural affairs, all 803,000 rural residents who once lived below the poverty line in the region have been lifted out of poverty. Xihaigu has shed its long-standing reputation for extreme hardship, while 1.13 million people have gained access to safe drinking water.

Annual per capita disposable income for rural residents in Ningxia has risen from about 1,400 yuan in 1996 to more than 20,000 yuan in 2025.

See ***Growth,*** *page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Intervention on yen seen as short-term fix

By HOU JUNJIE in Tokyo
houjunjie@chinadaily.com.cn

The first coordinated intervention by the United States and Japan in 15 years to prop up the Japanese yen can only offer the currency a temporary boost, as reversing the yen's long-term downward trajectory will require broader fiscal and monetary policy adjustments, experts said.

They made the remarks after Japanese Finance Minister Satsuki Katayama confirmed on Monday that Japan conducted a coordinated yen-buying intervention with the US Department of Treasury on Friday. The move was aimed at countering "excessive volatility and disorderly movements", she said, adding that Japan "will not hesitate to conduct further coordinated interventions in the future" and remains in close communication with the US Treasury.

At 5 pm on Monday, the yen strengthened to 156.76 against the dollar after briefly hitting 155.20, its strongest level since early May.

US President Donald Trump said on Sunday that the US intervened in Japan's currency market on its request to boost the weakening yen.

Data from the Bank of Japan, the country's central bank, indicated that Tokyo may have sold almost $59 billion to buy yen when it intervened in New York markets on Thursday, before the joint move.

The yen has been under sustained pressure this year, weakening to around 164 per dollar in late July, a 40-year low. The Japanese government and the central bank carried out large-scale yen-buying interventions between late April and May. However, the effects quickly faded, and the yen continued to decline.

Joint intervention by Japan and the US is extremely rare outside periods of financial crises or major disasters. The last such action took place in 2011, when the yen surged following the Great East Japan Earthquake.

Naomi Muguruma, chief bond strategist at Mitsubishi UFJ Morgan Stanley Securities, said the coordinated intervention reflects growing concerns in Japan and the US over the yen's rapid depreciation.

The yen's depreciation stems from concerns over Japan's fiscal expansion and the perception that its central bank is "behind the curve" on interest rate hikes, she said, adding that currency intervention could only provide temporary relief without addressing the underlying causes.

Takahide Kiuchi, executive economist at Nomura Research Institute, said that strengthening the yen and sustaining that strength would require improved economic fundamentals or weaker expectations of further US Federal Reserve rate hikes.

To ease market concerns over Japan's fiscal outlook, Kiuchi said the government should present a stable funding source for its planned consumption tax cut and dispel the notion that it has pressured the central bank into delaying further rate hikes.

In late July, Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi unveiled a plan to reduce the consumption tax on food and beverages from 8 percent to 1 percent for a two-year period starting in April 2027. The measure, which is aimed at mitigating the impact of rising prices, has sparked a debate within the ruling coalition and among opposition parties over the absence of a clear alternative source of revenue.

Masafumi Yamamoto, chief foreign exchange strategist at Mizuho Securities, told the Asahi Shimbun newspaper that the joint intervention appears to be intended to slow the yen's decline while leaving the broader policy stance of the Takaichi administration unchanged.

The move could buy time against the yen's rapid depreciation and help avoid inflation that could weigh on the government's approval ratings, he said, but warned that the pressure on the yen would continue unless broader fiscal and monetary policy concerns were addressed.



A man walks past an electronic screen in Tokyo, Japan, displaying the yen's exchange rates against the US dollar and other foreign currencies on Monday. ISSEI KATO / REUTERS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:13 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:13 PM

INDEPTH



Vineyards at the eastern foothills of the Helan Mountains in Ningxia Hui autonomous region now attract wine lovers from all over the world. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Chinese wines' potential uncorked in Australia

Restaurants, sommeliers and sellers trumpet international quality of Ningxia varieties



Chinese wines from Ningxia are displayed at a bottle shop in Perth, the capital of Western Australia.

By **XIN XIN** and **ALEXIS HOOI** in Sydney

In June, Australian wine shop owner Ann Marie Tamburri made a personal trip to Northwest China's Ningxia Hui autonomous region and visited five wineries in two days.

"I was curious and wanted to learn more. So I paid for my own trip there," said Tamburri, who owns the La Vigna wine and liquor store in Perth, Western Australia.

Tamburri's interest in Chinese wines began when she first tried them about a year ago.

"We tasted about 18 wines from China. We were impressed with some of the wines ... They're outstanding," she said. "We were curious to know more, and that's how it started. And so from there, we went on to list some (Chinese) wines in our wine shop."

Her positive take reflects how one of China's top winemaking areas is making headway in Australia, a leading player in the global industry.

Niu Xiaotong, general manager of Australia Northwest Liquor Trading company in Perth, promotes wines from the eastern foothills of the Helan Mountains in Ningxia.

Reaping the rewards from decades of major investment, the winemaking hub in Ningxia's capital, Yinchuan, with its high-altitude, desert-like climate near the Yellow River, has won international acclaim for its products.

Niu, who introduced Ningxia wines to Tamburri, said Western Australia's strong economy and consumer purchasing power made it a suitable location to introduce the region's premium wines.

He started promoting Chinese wines in Australia in October 2023, when the first shipment of Ningxia samples, including about 200 cases, arrived in the country.

"After about a year and a half of market promotion, research, and exploration, we selected 18 products from the initial range and shipped another 803 cases to Australia in mid-2025," Niu said.

By then, the number of distributors selling Ningxia wines had grown to 86 across Australia, covering mainly local bottle shops, fine dining restaurants, and wine bars, he said.

"At present, we are the largest importer and wholesaler of Chinese wines in Australia."

Niu said another key reason Ningxia wines have been relatively well received in Western Australia is their similarity to local wine styles.

"Australian wines are generally known for their prominent floral and fruit aromas, approachable style, and easy-drinking characteristics, while wines from the eastern foothills of the Helan Mountains share some similarities with those from Western Australia's renowned Margaret River region," he said.

The advantage of Ningxia wines in Australia lies in their novelty. They also satisfy the curiosity of many local consumers, he said, adding that the differences in grape varieties and winemaking methods allow Ningxia wines to complement Australian ones.

Experts impressed

Gianmattia Giordano, group sommelier for Hunter Street Hospitality, which is behind award-winning, high-end restaurants in Sydney, Melbourne, and Perth, said the company recently introduced a selection of Chinese wines. Diners can explore not only Ningxia's wines but other leading Chinese products.

While it is a relatively new category, awareness is growing and Chinese wines have generated strong interest, particularly in Australia's sommelier community, he said.

"We believe it's important to showcase outstanding wines regardless of where they come from, and Ningxia has established itself as one of the world's most exciting emerging wine regions," he said.

"Ningxia's high altitude, dry climate and significant day-to-night temperature variation produce wines with concentrated fruit, fresh acidity and well-structured tannins," Giordano said.

The region is best known for its cabernet sauvignon and French Bordeaux-style wine blends, although varieties such as marselan are also showing great promise, he said.

"One of Ningxia's greatest strengths is that it combines exceptional natural resources with the expertise of leading winemakers and viticulturists from around the world, many of whom have been drawn to the region's potential and are helping shape its evolution into a world-class fine wine region," Giordano said.

Jase Wong, owner of Shanghai-inspired Modu Bar and Kitchen in Perth, said it introduced Ningxia wines this year as part of its commitment to showcase the diversity of modern Chinese food and beverages.

"As an Asian fusion venue, we wanted our wine program to go beyond the familiar and offer guests something unique that complements our cuisine," he said.

"We currently feature a selection of premium wineries from Ningxia, with an emphasis on cabernet sauvignon blends that pair well with our menu."

Tamburri said one of the things that stood out during her Ningxia visit was the strong presence of women winemakers.

Many were entrepreneurial, had studied or worked overseas, and were bringing international experience back to their own estates.

There is also a cultural shift in Ningxia, similar to what is happening in Australia, with younger winemakers "beating the drums for the region", she said.

Feedback from her customers has been very positive, she said. Many didn't know that China produces wine, where Ningxia is located, or even that there was a wine region in China, she said.

Tamburri said customers became interested after she explained the story behind the wines and were pleasantly surprised by how good and well-made they were, which she described as "the exciting part for us as retailers".

"Consumers are coming back and repurchasing, like they would any wines from other international regions."

Rapid development

Ningxia's wine industry has recorded rapid development in recent years, with the Helan Mountains area now producing 140 million bottles a year, nearly half of China's total estate wine production, according to regional statistics.

Last year, Ningxia's wine exports reached about 14.49 million yuan ($2.14 million), a year-on-year increase of more than 5 percent.

Gao Tianshu, director of the marketing division of the management committee of the Ningxia Helan Mountain East Foothill Wine Industry Park, said as the region pursues high-quality development and greater international openness, Australia provides many benefits.

Rather than simply viewing Australia as an export market, Ningxia sees it as an important platform for benchmarking against international standards, strengthening two-way exchanges, and expanding its overseas presence, he said.

Ningxia can learn from Australia's well-established wine industry, while the Australian market itself offers many advantages, including a mature consumer base, Gao said.

China is the top destination market by value for the Australian wine sector, accounting for 36 percent of exports in 2024-25, according to statutory authority Wine Australia.

"In recent years, China-Australia economic and trade ties have continued to recover, bilateral exchanges have become smoother, and the overall export environment has steadily improved, creating favorable external conditions for us to further develop the Australian market," Gao said.

Ningxia's short-term goal is to establish a solid presence in mainstream local sales channels and promote the brand of wines from the eastern foothills of the Helan Mountains, he said.

They will be marketed as a distinctive expression of "Eastern terroir" — a combination of soil, climate and sunlight that gives grapes their distinctive character.

In the longer term, Ningxia hopes to leverage Australia's mature and well-regulated market to develop a replicable overseas marketing and operating model, he said.

This will also help accumulate international experience, and support establishing the eastern foothills area as a world-renowned wine region.

A pleasant alternative

Michael Tamburri, Ann Marie's father and former chair of the International Wine and Food Society's Asia-Pacific zone, said marketing Chinese wines to Australian consumers is a crucial step in the expansion of the Chinese industry.

Varieties like marselan that go beyond the strong, heavier styles of cabernet and shiraz that are popular in Australia, could gain a foothold if appropriately priced.

"They (buyers) shouldn't think they're going to get an Australian wine, they've got to think traditional, very well-made Chinese wines," he said.

He also praised Chinese white wine varieties as "very good". "They're very fresh and modern. White wine can be a little bit more delicate, a little softer, easier, and it goes well with all foods, especially Asian cuisine," Tamburri said.

Gaining international exposure for Chinese wines will require winemaking regions like Ningxia to attract tourists to witness the impressive development of the sector, he added.

"China is the best place in the world to see all of that ... Their vineyard management, nothing compares to it," he said, citing the example of how Ningxia grape growers bury their vines in the ground every winter to shield them from the extreme cold.

"It's an incredible practice, but also an incredible story," he said.

Giordano from Hunter Street Hospitality said compared with Australian cabernet wines, those from Ningxia often have a slightly more restrained style, with firm structure, freshness, and excellent aging potential.

"While they remain distinctly Chinese in identity, they are increasingly demonstrating the precision, complexity, and sense of place expected of the world's leading wine regions," he said, adding that Sydney, one of Australia's most dynamic dining and wine scenes, is an ideal city to introduce emerging wine regions.

Educating the public

Restaurants with experienced sommelier teams can educate guests, recommend pairings with food, and build confidence in the category, he said.

Premium dining venues are often where consumers first discover new wine regions before they become more widely recognized.

"Including myself, we're still quite new to the world of Chinese wines," Giordano said. "My sommelier team, our guests, and I, are all on a journey of discovery, and that's what makes it so exciting."

"We want to explore these wines and support what we believe is one of the most promising emerging wine regions in the world. While there's still a lot for us to learn, we're eager to deepen our understanding and share that experience with our guests," he said.

Wong, from Modu Bar and Kitchen, said, the restaurant's philosophy is to celebrate contemporary Asian flavors while respecting tradition. "Ningxia wines align perfectly with that vision — they represent a new generation of Chinese craftsmanship that is innovative, ambitious, and world-class," he said.

Offering Ningxia wines allows Modu to introduce diners to another side of China beyond its cuisine, creating a more complete dining experience and encouraging cultural discovery through food and wine, he said.

Compared with many Australian reds, Ningxia wines often show greater freshness and elegance while still offering good structure. Wong described them as sitting somewhere between the richness of some New World wines and the restraint often found in classic European styles.

Perth is a multicultural city with a vibrant food and wine culture. Diners are curious, adventurous, and open to trying new experiences, making it an ideal market for introducing premium Chinese wines, he said.

"Wine dinners, tasting exhibitions, and staff recommendations all play an important role in building awareness and confidence among consumers," Wong said.

As more Australians discover the quality of Ningxia wines, he believes they will receive greater recognition alongside wines from established areas like Australia, France and Italy, he said.

"The biggest challenge isn't the wine itself — it's familiarity. Some customers are initially hesitant simply because they haven't heard of Ningxia before," he said.

"Once they taste the wines and learn about the region's winemaking story, many become enthusiastic supporters and are happy to recommend them to friends."

Contact the writers at xinxin@chinadaily.com.cn







Left: Chinese wines are promoted at a shop in Perth in 2025. **Middle:** Ann Marie Tamburri, owner of the La Vigna wine and liquor store, displays Chinese wine during a wine tasting event in Perth in 2025.
Right: An industry expert samples a Chinese wine during a Chinese wine masterclass in Perth. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:13 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:13 PM

TOP NEWS

Xi's thought resonates with Latin America

Nation's modernization path offers valuable insights for Global South, researchers say

By **YANG GAO** in Toronto
gaoyang@chinadailyusa.com

There is growing interest in Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era and China's development philosophy in Latin America, driven by China's economic achievements, its expanding global role and its deepening engagement with the Global South, scholars in the region said.

Luis Antonio Paulino, a professor of international relations at Sao Paulo State University in Brazil, said the number of researchers and students interested in different aspects of Chinese development, culture and Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era has increased exponentially in recent years.

"In Brazil, we have a research network on China, with over 500 members from across the country, and new members apply every month.

"All major Brazilian universities house centers for China studies, and the publication of books and articles on China by the Brazilian academic community has increased significantly in recent years," he said.

Paulino attributed the growing interest to China's development achievements and its vision for international cooperation.

"There is growing recognition and acceptance of President Xi Jinping's proposals for building a more peaceful and just world for all, particularly the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, the Global Civilization Initiative and the Global Governance Initiative," he said.

Asked which elements of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era resonate the most with Latin American audiences, Paulino pointed to issues closely linked to the region's development priorities.

For Gustavo Alejandro Girado, director of the postgraduate program on contemporary China studies at the National University of Lanus in Argentina, Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era offers a framework for understanding China's long-term vision and its approach to international relations.

"President Xi's thinking is a valuable tool available for us in Latin America to better understand the thinking of the leadership of the world's second-largest economy," Girado said.

"It is an excellent collection of solid and well-structured arguments that summarizes what China intends for itself and for the rest of the world," he added.

He said that Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era helps explain China's priorities in its engagement with developing countries.

Discussing the significance of China's role in global governance, Girado argued that many developing countries are seeking new approaches after decades of uneven development.

"The current global governance models haven't helped us escape poverty and destitution, nor have they improved income distribution.

"This is why China's presence is so beneficial to us. Its presence and it becoming the voice of the voiceless are crucial to ensuring our demands are met," he said.

On Chinese modernization, Girado said that China's experience is inspiring though every country must find its own path.

"It's excellent that China allows us to observe the political and economic process it follows to achieve this modernization," he said.

"For me, it is very useful to know that 'it can be done', that there are possible paths, and that China points them out based on its own experiences," he said.

China and Latin American and Caribbean countries have deepened cooperation in the areas of trade, investment, finance, science and technology, and infrastructure, among others, in recent years. In 2015, the China-CELAC Forum, a ministerial-level dialogue between China and Latin American and Caribbean states, was established, and in May 2025, the fourth ministerial meeting of the forum was held in Beijing.

Last year, trade between China and LAC states exceeded $500 billion for the first time. The two sides also maintain close academic exchanges, which Girado sees as a bridge to foster understanding.

China narrowing gap in high-end phone memory

By **LI JIAYING**
lijiaying@chinadaily.com.cn

China is inching closer to plugging a crucial gap in high-end mobile phone memory, with the latest progress made by ChangXin Memory Technologies expected to further deepen coordination among domestic chip designers, handset makers and suppliers in the era of on-device artificial intelligence, said industry experts.

Their comments came as the Chinese company nears the end of its research and development validation for its first LPDDR6 chip — a dynamic random-access memory chip that promises more bandwidth, lower latency, better energy efficiency and stronger reliability.

As the CXMT chip eyes commercial production, experts said they believe the core design is largely settled and has undergone systematic testing for performance, power consumption, compatibility and mechanical reliability. "Under an optimistic timetable, small-batch introduction could begin as early as the second half of this year, followed by volume production in the first half of 2027," said Guo Tao, a member of the Chinese Association for Artificial Intelligence.

According to media reports, the CXMT chip is designed to reach a data rate of 12.8 gigabits per second, with a base operating rate of 10.7 Gbps when paired with a system-on-chip integrated circuit. Its power efficiency and reliability, availability and serviceability, or RAS, functions have been improved compared with the company's previous memory chips.

Guo noted that the CXMT chip is set to enter the leading group of global products in the same technology generation offered by South Korean companies Samsung and SK hynix. "There is no longer a generational gap in the technology. The main differences will lie in process stability after large-scale production and the accumulation of long-term reliability data," he said.

The CXMT chip's peak speed is expected to help meet the high-bandwidth demands of on-device AI, while stronger RAS functions could reduce data errors during sustained AI workloads, Guo added.

Jiang Han, a senior researcher at market consultancy Pangoal, said higher bandwidth could ease a key bottleneck in running large AI models locally, while lower latency would support high-frame-rate gaming and smoother multitasking.

"Flagship smartphones will be the first to generate demand, as their users are most sensitive to such performance upgrades and can afford to pay a premium," he said.

Beyond the chip's hardware specifications, local coordination is also a core strength, Jiang said. "It enables rapid customization backed by strong demand from Chinese phone manufacturers and creates a valuable market opportunity as supply-chain security gains importance."

Suicide bombing



People evacuate an injured man on Sunday after a suicide bomber struck at the site of a protest in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan. At least 19 people were killed and several others were injured in the attack. The blast occurred when protesters were demanding government action against escalating violence in the region. ABDULLAH SHEREEN / AFP

Bias: We must travel and disagree openly

From page 1

When we fall behind, we do not run faster or innovate more. We build legal walls, impose tariffs and try to regulate our way out of competition, convincing ourselves that we can thrive in isolation.

But reality tells a different story. Not long ago, I stood in the dusty Gobi Desert in Gansu province and looked straight into the future. I saw a massive solar thermal power plant, its central tower rising 263 meters into the sky — taller than the pylons of Denmark's proudest engineering marvel, the Great Belt Bridge. While European politicians sit at home debating whether China can invent anything of value, China is literally capturing the sun. Europe is coughing in the sand, holding on to a fading illusion of supremacy.

Yet, the geopolitical divide is not just about solar panels, AI, or supply chains; it is fundamentally about how we view humanity. When we stop conversing — because of a war in Europe, political shifts in the United States, or trade panic — we lose the concept of a shared planet. We reduce entire nations to enemy algorithms.

After my visit, some European friends asked whether Wuhan was merely a high-tech metropolis of surveillance systems and concrete towers. Their question reflected how easily a complex society can be reduced to a single image.

What I encountered was something much more ordinary and universal: people sharing meals, chatting with neighbors, raising children and building communities in the spaces between modern buildings. These moments were not uniquely Chinese; the desire for connection, belonging and warmth is equally present in everyday life in Denmark and around the world. No algorithm can fully capture these realities. They cannot be reduced to data points, headlines or political narratives.

Visiting the Hubei Provincial Museum, I looked at the incredible Bronze Bells of Marquis Yi, cast more than 2,400 years ago. I stood there thinking that China essentially invented heavy metal music 2,500 years ago. When you witness millennia of deep cultural history, you realize how foolish it is when the West treats China like a newcomer on the world stage.

But you also realize something else: Great civilizations do not grow in isolation.

In Denmark, the philosopher N.F.S. Grundtvig shaped our entire modern society. He believed that books, laws and written rules are cold and dead if they stand alone. He believed in what he called "The Living Word" — the spoken conversation between two human beings looking each other in the eyes. Grundtvig taught us that society only progresses when we dare to meet the people we strongly disagree with.

Think about how physical warmth is created. If you rub your hands together gently without touching, nothing happens. But if you press them together firmly — if you create friction — you get heat. Friction is warmth. Disagreement is energy.

When countries build trade walls or retreat behind digital and cultural boundaries, we remove the friction. We create sterile echo chambers. If Europe and China only listen to their own voices, both of our civilizations will eventually stagnate. Throughout my political career, I have advocated for listening to "everyday experts" — the people whose lived experiences are often ignored by out-of-touch political systems. On a global scale, our nations are the everyday experts of our own cultures. We must listen to each other's lived realities.

True friendship and genuine dialogue require absolute honesty. I have clearly stated that Europe has lost its way by being arrogant and using tariffs to hide its own weaknesses. But conversation is a two-way street.

China's remarkable technological and social achievements are becoming an increasingly important part of the global conversation. Continued engagement with diverse perspectives and experiences can help foster greater mutual understanding, trust and cooperation. In the long run, global influence is shaped not only by economic and technological progress, but also by the ability to connect, communicate and work with others in an increasingly interconnected world.

We live on a single, fragile planet currently defined by geopolitical fear. The easiest path for any politician today is to build a wall, point at foreigners, and declare self-sufficiency. But that is the road to ruin. We must choose the difficult path. We must choose the Living Word. We must travel, disagree openly, trade ideas and challenge each other's convictions face-to-face.

In the end, understanding between nations begins with understanding between people. When we take the time to meet one another face-to-face, we may discover that what connects us is far greater than what divides us.

The author is former deputy speaker in the Danish Parliament. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Canyon: Connectivity, services upgraded

From page 1

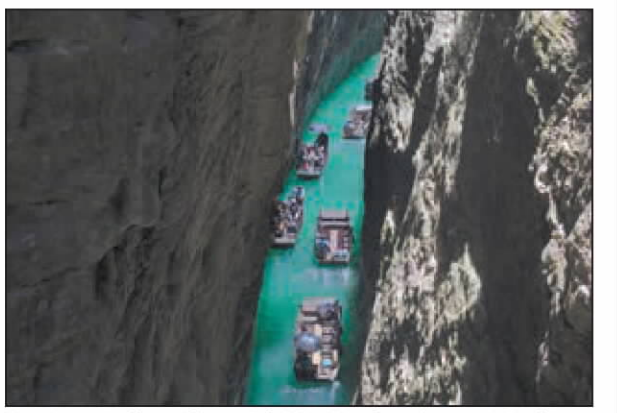
According to the National Immigration Administration, foreign arrivals in China hit 22.9 million in the first half of this year, a 20.4 percent year-on-year increase, while summer inbound bookings have surged more than sixfold as of July 24 — a sign of growing momentum.

That appeal is reinforced by affordability. At Pingshan, a bundled ticket covering entry and the boat ride costs 210 yuan ($31) — roughly one-fifth of a comparable day trip to Semporna, with no mandatory add-ons, according to Chen.

Ng, the Singaporean visitor, said the overall cost — from accommodations to food and transportation — was reasonable and delivered great value compared with other nature destinations.

The Pingshan Canyon scenic area said that foreign visitor numbers surged more than 60 percent year-on-year in the second quarter, with tourists from Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore accounting for over 60 percent of overseas arrivals.

Enhanced air connectivity has further propelled inbound travel. Enshi Xujiaping International Airport now operates direct flights to China's Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and seven international routes serving destinations including Seoul, Daegu and Busan in South Korea, Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam, Ulaanbaatar in Mongolia and Bangkok in Thailand.



Tourists enjoy boat rides on July 15 in Pingshan Canyon in Enshi, Hubei province. YANG SHUNPI / FOR CHINA DAILY

"That combination of direct flights and visa-free access has dramatically improved convenience," said Shi Bo, deputy general manager of China Youth Travel Service's Hubei branch, which organizes inbound tours.

To accommodate the growing number of overseas visitors, Enshi's tourism bureau said that it has offered foreign-language tour guide training and talent programs to raise service standards in hotels, restaurants and transportation.

Contact the writers at lilei@chinadaily.com.cn

Growth: Emphasis on rural vitalization

From page 1

Minning's evolution continues to influence China's broader development agenda.

In an instruction published on June 17, President Xi Jinping, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, called for further improving the country's east-west collaboration mechanism and urged officials to draw on the experience of Fujian-Ningxia cooperation.

He said the model had played a key role in poverty alleviation and coordinated regional development over the past three decades, calling for deeper industrial cooperation, personnel exchanges and technological collaboration while advancing rural vitalization and common prosperity.

For a younger generation, Minning represents something very different from the place their parents first encountered.

Wu Juan, a university graduate and online content creator whose family relocated from Xihaigu when she was a child, the contrast between her early memories and life today could hardly be greater.

"Before I was seven, our staple food was always potatoes," she said. "I'm not exaggerating when I say there are many kinds of fruit I had never even seen."

Water was so scarce that bathing was a luxury, she recalled.

Today, she sees a different future. "If we hadn't moved out of the mountains, we would still be scraping out a living from the land. But here, I feel there are infinite possibilities ahead," Wu said.

For Zhao Chao, head of Minning township, those opportunities are the result of decades of planning and sustained commitment.

"Over the past 30 years, we have witnessed General Secretary Xi's vision of turning a 'sandy land' into a 'land of prosperity' gradually becoming a reality," he said.

According to Zhao, the relocation strategy fundamentally addressed the dilemma that had defined Xihaigu for generations — local conditions could no longer sustain the population.

"The development of Minning did not emerge out of thin air," he said. "It reflects a deep understanding of poverty alleviation, ecological restoration and industrial development."

That confidence is increasingly being reinforced by a new chapter in Fujian-Ningxia cooperation.

The partnership is now turning its focus toward high-quality development, with green energy and the digital economy emerging as new engines of growth.

Ningxia has become one of China's fastest-growing renewable energy bases, thanks to its abundant wind and solar resources, competitive electricity prices and favorable natural conditions.

According to regional government statistics, renewable energy capacity expanded 17 percent on average annually between 2021 and 2025, reaching 57.32 million kilowatts and accounting for 63 percent of the region's total installed power capacity.

Against that backdrop, a growing number of sci-tech companies from Fujian and elsewhere are expanding their presence in Ningxia to boost their computing power resources.

Li Yuanyuan, vice-president of Xiamen Kehua Digital Energy Tech Co, said the company chose to invest in Minning because of both national development priorities and Ningxia's long-term market potential.

The region's transportation network also allows companies operating in Ningxia to serve markets across Shaanxi, Gansu and Qinghai provinces and the Xinjiang Uygur and Inner Mongolia autonomous regions.

"We hope to take root here for the long term and help Minning develop green industries," Li said.

"Our goal is to help transform what was once a sandy land into a digital golden land."

Contact the writers at xuwei@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:13 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:13 PM

ASIAFOCUS

Editor's note:

In this weekly feature China Daily gives voice to Asia and its people. The stories presented come mainly from the Asia News Network (ANN), of which China Daily is among its 20 leading titles.



A boy plays on a hill as the chimneys of Suralaya coal power plant loom in the background, in Cilegon, Indonesia, in 2023. AP

Kicking up dust

Indonesia villagers pay the price for expansion of coal mining

In South Sumatra's Muara Maung village, coal mining has become an inescapable part of daily life, with expanding operations choking the community's air, land and water, leaving residents to grapple with worsening environmental degradation.

For 47-year-old Sumhayana, the impacts are impossible to escape. Since several coal mines began operating near the village, flooding has become a recurring reality.

This year alone, her home has been flooded three times. The latest deluge, in late April, inundated her neighborhood, swept away crops in her farmland, and left her house coated in 10-centimeter-thick mud.

"Flooding brings so much hardship. I spend hours cleaning my house after the water recedes, and I have to be more vigilant about diseases that usually spread during floods," she told The Jakarta Post recently.

Sumhayana said life in Muara Maung has changed profoundly as coal mining operations continue to expand around the village.

The relentless roar of coal trucks now rattles through the village day and night, shattering its once-peaceful atmosphere and leaving roads cracked and damaged under the weight of heavy vehicles.

In the dry season, clouds of coal dust billow through the village, settling on rooftops, yards and furniture, forcing residents to clean their homes almost every day. When the rains come, many roads turn into muddy, waterlogged tracks.

The nearby Kungkilan River, once the village's lifeline, is no longer fit for daily use. As its water quality has deteriorated, residents have been forced to drill wells or buy clean water instead.

Muara Maung village sits in Merapi Barat District, Lahat Regency, at the heart of one of South Sumatra's coal-producing areas.

In 2023, Lahat recorded 171 active mining permits. Mining activities, together with the 220-megawatt coal-fired power plant in the regency, have long been promoted as important pillars of the local economy and a key source of electricity for southern Sumatra.

Yet for communities living alongside these industrial operations, the benefits of development are accompanied by growing environmental pressures.

Melia Santri, a 24-year-old resident of Muara Maung, has spent years struggling with recurring allergies that she attributes to prolonged exposure to coal dust from nearby mining operations.

"It feels as though something is stuck inside my nose, like there is something trying to come out, but nothing does. It is extremely disruptive to my daily activities," she said.

Seeking relief, Melia visited the local community health center, hoping to obtain a referral to see a specialist at a hospital. Instead, she said, her request was rejected, leaving her to manage the condition on her own.



Barges loaded with coal anchor in Samarinda, East Kalimantan, Indonesia, in 2022. AP



Women shuck clams on Jan 29 in Cirebon, West Java, Indonesia, where local people have complained about the decline in marine yields since a coal power plant began operations. BAY ISMOYO / AFP

> "Flooding brings so much hardship. I spend hours cleaning my house after the water recedes, and I have to be more vigilant about diseases that usually spread during floods."
>
> **Sumhayana,** a resident in South Sumatra's Muara Maung village which is influenced by coal mining

Frustrated by the worsening environmental impacts of coal mining around Muara Maung, Sumhayana and other villagers visited PT Muara Alam Sejahtera, or PT MAS, one of three coal mining companies operating near the village, on July 16. The residents urged the company to take responsibility and help address the recurring floods that have plagued the community for years.

Compensation demand

During a meeting with PT MAS representatives and officials from two other mining companies who later joined the discussion, villagers called for compensation, river normalization and the construction of flood barriers to reduce the risk of future flooding.

Sumhayana said the companies' response left villagers disappointed. Instead of offering immediate solutions, she said, representatives asked for a week to consult with their respective management teams.

"I was disappointed with their response. Flooding has happened repeatedly. They should have acted faster. It has been ignored for months, and now they are delaying it again," Sumhayana said.

The Jakarta Post contacted PT MAS seeking clarification on Muara Maung residents' complaints about flooding and environmental impact. The company confirmed the July 16 meeting with residents but declined to address the specific concerns raised.

According to Statistics Indonesia, the country exported roughly 524 million metric tons of coal for all uses in 2025. Data from the International Energy Agency confirms Indonesia holds its spot as the world's largest exporter of thermal coal used for power generation.

The Iran war triggered a brief price spike, increased Asian gas-to-coal switching, and caused Jakarta to loosen strict planned production cuts.

Indonesia initially planned to cut 2026 production down to 600 million tons, but the war prompted the government to raise output quotas back up and consider centralized state export controls, according to Heatmap News, a new media company focused on climate change.

THE JAKARTA POST—AGENCIES

524 million tons

According to Statistics Indonesia, the country exported roughly 524 million tons of coal for all uses in 2025.

The women nursing Malaysian rainforests

As Taisa Mating, a grandmother of nine, bends down to pick up a seed from the forest ground, she sometimes pauses and whispers to it.

"Please don't die. I'm going to take care of you," she would tell the seed. "When you're big enough, I'm going to give you a big playground where you can grow into the tree you're meant to be."

The seeds that Taisa, 67, gathers are destined for Lower Kawag, part of the Ulu Segama-Malua Forest Reserve, where Sabah is restoring one of its most degraded rainforest landscapes. Decades of intensive logging between the 1980s and 2007, together with major El Nino-induced fires, have left large swathes of the forest degraded and vulnerable to recurring fires.

Taisa is one of the women from Kampung Tampenau, a small village on the edge of Sabah's rainforest, who have been trained to sow the seeds of forest regeneration under a scheme that started in 2021. The seeds collected are sown in backyard nurseries in their villages and eventually grown into young trees to replenish the rainforest.

Whenever their backyard nurseries run low on seedlings, the Kampung Tampenau women head to the forest's edge carrying plastic pails or any containers they have at hand. Their eyes scan the ground for fallen seeds — hidden beneath leaves and forest debris.

Most of the seeds are collected from forest fringes surrounding the village, where many native species naturally regenerate. On other days, when certain species can no longer be found nearby, the villagers obtain permits to venture deeper into the shaded forest reserve to gather "wildings" — fragile, inch-tall sprouts which can be found growing quietly in the damp, silt-rich earth where the river slows.

Sabah, in eastern Malaysia, was home to nearly 1.5 million hectares of oil palm plantations in 2025. It is Malaysia's largest producer of the crop while also ranking among the world's richest biodiversity areas.

The palm oil industry has long faced international scrutiny over its role in tropical deforestation. However, through the Malaysian Palm Oil Green Conservation Foundation, or MPOGCF — funded by levies collected from the industry — Sabah has brought the sector into initiatives to help the rehabilitation of 2,500 hectares of degraded forest in collaboration with local communities.

In Kampung Tampenau, the seeds are nurtured in small nurseries beside the villagers' homes. The community nursery raises native seedlings for the restoration program.

To the untrained eye, one seedling looks much like another. The women of Tampenau know better.

Long before the nursery program began, they already understood the forest. The training, conducted jointly by MPOGCF and the Sabah Forestry Department, focused on nursery management and improving the survival of seedlings rather than teaching them how to recognize the trees.

Since the program began five years ago, the community has produced about 80,000 native saplings.

Villagers receive a total of RM7 ($1.7) for every sapling. Out of this, they earn RM5, while the remaining RM2 covers operational and transportation costs.

Once the saplings reach between 1 meter and 1.5 meters tall, they are moved deep into the forest.

Restoring native vegetation improves the habitat of Sabah's estimated 10,800 critically endangered orangutans and other wildlife while helping reduce human-wildlife conflict around the reserve.

Firebreaks, which are nonflammable gaps in vegetation, have also been incorporated into the restoration area to reduce the risk of future fires in a landscape that remains vulnerable during prolonged dry spells.

Fast-growing native species like Laran, Binuang and Talisai Paya — termed pioneer trees — are the first type of trees to be replanted. They quickly establish a canopy over degraded land, shielding the ground from direct sunlight and creating favorable conditions for slower-growing hardwoods to take root. In just three years, some pioneer trees can reach the height of a two-story building.

"You cannot start with hardwoods because they need shade," explained Daniel Pamin, conservation specialist at MPOGCF. "The pioneer trees prepare the forest for everything that comes after."

Only after the canopy is established are hardwoods such as Seraya and Kapur, members of the dipterocarp family that dominate Borneo's lowland rainforests, introduced. They may take between 10 and 20 years to mature but can live for centuries, gradually restoring the layered structure of a tropical rainforest.

Fauna benefits

The sequence is equally important for wildlife.

Orangutans prefer building nests in the softer branches of pioneer trees because they are easier to bend and break, a Sabah Forestry official said. As the forest matures, the returning mix of native trees gradually restores food, shelter and nesting habitats not only for orangutans, but also for sun bears, rhinoceros hornbills and many other species that depend on an intact rainforest.

"Rainforests can regenerate naturally, but the process is much slower once they have been severely degraded," Daniel added.

"Human intervention helps accelerate that recovery."

Jackly Ambrose, a conservation officer at the Sabah Forestry Department, said the primary hurdles in natural regeneration in degraded areas include a severe lack of seed sources, nutrient-depleted soils, and invasive weeds that choke out saplings.

So far, restoration work has been carried out across 225 hectares under the pilot project, which comprises the first and the second phases of the 10-year conservation plan launched in 2019. The pilot project is about 90 percent complete.

The third phase, to commence in October 2026, aims to rehabilitate another 332 hectares through the planting of about 132,800 native saplings, many of them raised in local community nurseries.

For Taisa, however, the work has never been about making money.

The payment is modest, she said, but caring for each seedling over months demands patience more than anything else.

She knows she may never sit beneath the shade of many of the trees she has helped nurture. But she hopes future generations will.

THE STRAITS TIMES, SINGAPORE

Save the tigers



Indian school children wearing costumes and face paint participate in the "Save the Tiger" awareness campaign on International Tiger Day in Bangalore, India, on July 29. EPA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:13 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:13 PM

WORLD

Border barrier



Relatives and friends wait by a fence topped with barbed wire for the return of people who had previously crossed into Spain's North African enclave of Ceuta, at Morocco's Bab Sebta border crossing on the outskirts of Fnideq on Sunday. As many as 60,000 migrants entered Ceuta in recent days, mostly swimming around the small border post that juts into the Mediterranean Sea, in an unprecedented surge that prompted an international crisis for Spain. The mass crossing resulted in at least 72 deaths. ABDEL MAJID BZIOUAT / AFP

Tariffs risk fragmenting trade

Increasingly institutionalized US policy will cause damage to economies: Analysts

By **YANG RAN**
yangran1@chinadaily.com.cn

As a new wave of sweeping US tariffs took effect, experts warned that Washington's tariff policy is becoming increasingly institutionalized, a shift that risks deepening the fragmentation of global trade and causing lasting damage to both the US and world economies.

The latest round of tariffs, ranging from 10 to 12.5 percent on imports from 60 economies, was imposed on July 24 under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, seamlessly taking effect after the expiration of the previous 10 percent global tariffs.

The move is part of a concerted effort by the US government to restructure the legal foundations of its tariff strategy, following the Supreme Court's decision in February to strike down its previous reciprocal tariff policy.

A series of further trade measures are anticipated in the coming months, including the ongoing Section 301 investigations into "excess capacity and production in manufacturing sectors" and pending probes initiated under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 on national security grounds, which could soon translate into new tariffs.

John Ferguson, global head of trade and geopolitics at Economist Enterprise, said the US tariff policy is becoming more institutionalized as the administration seeks a more durable legal footing.

> "The global supply chain will become more fragmented and divided."
>
> **Tu Xinquan**, dean of the China Institute for WTO Studies at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing

"Measures introduced under Sections 301 and 232 are on firmer ground," he said. "Tariffs imposed under these mechanisms are likely to prove more durable because they follow a well-defined statutory process. That gives businesses greater certainty about how tariffs are imposed, but it also makes them harder to challenge in court."

Tu Xinquan, dean of the China Institute for WTO Studies at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing, echoed this view, saying the tariff policy is likely to persist for a considerable period, even surviving administration changes. He attributed this to a growing belief in the US that globalization has harmed US interests.

"They see tariffs as correcting past errors in trade policy," Tu said.

Daniel Tannebaum, a partner at Oliver Wyman, an international management consulting firm, highlighted the self-reinforcing nature of restrictive policies in an article for the World Economic Forum.

He said the reallocation of capital and production under such policies creates constituencies that benefit from their continuation, making them politically difficult to reverse.

If the US persists with protectionist tariffs for years, experts warned, the result will be a deeply fragmented global trade and supply chain system.

Wang Yong, a professor at Peking University's School of International Studies, said the US is unilaterally discarding the WTO's principle of nondiscrimination to build a tariff framework that serves its "America First" policy, using its market leverage to force concessions from other nations.

Such a discriminatory tariff policy will further erode the WTO's authority and push the global economy back toward a framework governed by bilateral negotiations, he said.

Ferguson said that companies increasingly expect higher US tariffs to remain in place for years. "In response, many are adopting a 'world-minus-one' strategy, treating the US as a distinct market requiring its own supply chains, sourcing decisions, and investment plans, while expanding elsewhere."

This shift is reinforced by other nations' policymakers signing free-trade agreements to signal their commitment to open and predictable commerce, he said.

Bifurcated supply chain

Tu predicted a bifurcated global supply chain.

"The sheer size of the US market will compel companies to build industrial systems tailored to US policy, creating a system largely separate from the rest of the world," Tu said.

"Meanwhile, a more open system will emerge outside the US, with the Asia-Pacific and Europe playing key roles. Though more integrated and liberalized, it will remain constrained by the US system. Overall, the global supply chain will become more fragmented and divided."

The economic fallout is already visible. A World Economic Forum report released in June estimates that current fragmentation is reducing global GDP growth by between $213 billion and $307 billion and raising inflation by 0.2 to 0.3 percentage points.

For the US, the costs are also substantial. The Tax Foundation estimates that the announced and imposed tariffs will increase household taxes by an average of $900 in 2026 and reduce long-run US GDP by 0.4 percent.

Tu warned that prolonged tariff policies will keep the US economy in a state of high inflation and high costs, raising production costs for US companies and reducing their international competitiveness.

Ferguson said tariffs are likely to weigh on growth over time by reducing trade, competition and productivity.

"But those effects will take time to emerge. The economy continues to benefit from a powerful wave of investment in artificial intelligence, while trade accounts for a relatively small share of US GDP. As a result, the near-term outlook remains stronger than the longer-term trajectory implied by a more protectionist trade policy."

UK's AstraZeneca eyeing $400b merger, report says

By **JULIAN SHEA** in London
julian@mail.chinadailyuk.com

The United Kingdom's second-most valuable listed company, pharmaceutical firm AstraZeneca, has been revealed to have been holding talks for some time with United States-based rival Bristol Myers Squibb, or BMS, about a merger, which could result in a global pharma giant worth nearly $400 billion.

The Financial Times reports that talks have been taking place for some months, although a deal is not yet thought to be close. If the merger between the British company, valued at $264 billion, and its US counterpart, worth around $133 billion, goes through, it would result in the global drug sector's fourth-largest company.

AstraZeneca declined to comment and BMS did not immediately respond to requests for comment, according to the FT.

Around the world, AstraZeneca generated $58.7 billion last year, and it has set itself a target revenue figure of $80 billion by 2030, which is why it is so keen to make further inroads into the US market, which already accounts for almost half of its revenue.

Key role

But the company's involvement in China will also play a key role in efforts to reach that target, especially since in January this year, during then-prime minister Keir Starmer's visit to China, AstraZeneca announced investments worth $15 billion in China up until 2030, to expand its medicine manufacturing and R&D.

Pascal Soriot, AstraZeneca's CEO, said the investment, which will see existing manufacturing facilities in Wuxi, Taizhou, Qingdao, and Beijing developed, plus the establishment of other sites yet to be revealed, "begins an exciting next chapter for AstraZeneca in China, which has become a critical contributor to scientific innovation, advanced manufacturing, and global public health".

In 2014, the US drug company, Pfizer, made a bid for AstraZeneca valuing the drugmaker at around $94 billion, when its reputation had suffered after the late-stage clinical trial failure of several drugs. Soriot was one of those who rejected the bid, and in the subsequent years, under his stewardship, the company's reputation and finances have been restored, with its cancer treatment drugs performing particularly well.

If a deal is reached between AstraZeneca and BMS, however, that would not necessarily be the end of the story, as such a merger would be subject to both political and business scrutiny.

Given that BMS also has a significant cancer division, antitrust scrutiny may be applied to the companies' combined presence in the cancer drug market, and there could also be concerns in the UK that AstraZeneca may use a major trans-Atlantic deal to relocate the heart of its business from its current headquarters in Cambridge, England.

Israel voices concern over Hamas disarmament deal

TEL AVIV/GAZA — Israel has shared "serious security concerns" with the White House regarding the proposed disarmament deal with Hamas, an Israeli official said as Israeli strikes overnight and into Sunday evening killed at least 18 people, including children, in Gaza.

The remarks by Doron Spielman, spokesman for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office, were some of the first public comments since US President Donald Trump announced the agreement.

Spielman told The Associated Press that Israel's intelligence assessment is that Hamas remains committed to rebuilding its military rather than genuinely demilitarizing. He said the Israeli military would not withdraw from Gaza — where it controls more than 60 percent of the territory — before Hamas disarms.

"Our assessment is that if we redeploy before Hamas is truly disarmed, it will quickly expand its presence throughout Gaza, rebuild its terrorist infrastructure, once again threaten Israeli communities, and seek to carry out another Oct 7-style attack," he said, referring to the militant attack on Israel in 2023 that set off the latest conflict in the Gaza Strip.

His comments come days after Hamas said it would begin disarming as part of the US-brokered ceasefire signed nine months ago to end the nearly three-year-long conflict. It marks a potential breakthrough in ending the conflict, but many hurdles, conditions and long timelines remain.

Trump's 20-point ceasefire plan calls on the militant group to surrender its weapons and destroy its vast network of tunnels. It also envisions Israeli forces withdrawing from Gaza, the arrival of a new technocratic Palestinian government, deployment of an international security force and the rebuilding of the battered Palestinian enclave.

The disarming of Hamas has been a sticking point and has deadlocked negotiations for months. In announcing the deal on social media on Thursday, Trump said it would be carried out in "carefully structured phases".

A copy of the agreement obtained and verified by the AP said all weapons held by the Hamas-run police will be transferred to the US-backed Palestinian technocratic committee, known as the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza, upon its arrival in the enclave.

A process to decommission and store heavy weapons and to dismantle military production sites and tunnels will begin after the arrival of the Palestinian committee and the deployment of international forces. The process will be linked to a phased Israeli withdrawal, according to the agreement.

Since the ceasefire was signed last October, Israel has continued its strikes in Gaza, saying it's targeting Hamas and its infrastructure.

Strikes continue

Israeli airstrikes hit Gaza for the second straight day on Sunday, killing at least 18 Palestinians, medics said. The strikes have continued despite announcements of progress in efforts to implement a ceasefire agreement.

Mahmoud Basal, spokesman for the Civil Defense in Gaza, told Xinhua that Israeli drones and helicopters had carried out more than 10 airstrikes since the early hours of the morning in various parts of the enclave.

The strikes targeted residential apartments, tents sheltering displaced people, civilian vehicles, and Palestinian gatherings from the north to the south of the Gaza Strip, resulting in the deaths of at least 18 people, including four children and two women, said Basal.

In a news statement, Hamas called on the mediators and guarantors of the ceasefire agreement to assume their responsibilities, condemn these "Israeli crimes against the Palestinian people", and to take immediate action to pressure Israel to cease its aggression in accordance with the agreement.

AGENCIES—XINHUA

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1885

Briefly

UNITED STATES

Fires in Washington state burn 600 homes

Wildfires in eastern Washington state forced the evacuation of 60,000 people in the Spokane area while destroying at least 600 homes, businesses and other structures, authorities said on Sunday. The fires in and around Spokane, the state's second-largest city, burned about 21 square kilometers over the weekend and were among dozens of wildfires across Western US that stretched the ability of federal, state and local agencies to fight them. About 1,000 square kilometers have burned across the state, and some of the fires, including those in the Spokane area, remain uncontained.

UKRAINE

Umerov to head foreign intelligence service

President Volodymyr Zelensky put Ukraine's chief negotiator in charge of foreign intelligence on Monday, the latest move in an ongoing shake-up that included replacing the defense minister in July. Zelensky said Rustem Umerov, who moved to the post of spy chief from his previous job as head of the advisory Security Council, would remain in charge of peace talks, tasking him with continuing to seek a diplomatic end to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Former interior minister Ihor Klymenko would take over as head of the Security Council. Zelensky has been moving senior officials among top posts since an abrupt cabinet purge last month.

EGYPT

Quake strike activates quick response plans

A magnitude 5.5 earthquake shook eastern Egypt early on Monday, prompting authorities to activate response plans although there were no immediate requests for emergency help. The tremors were felt across a wide area, waking AFP journalists across Cairo and reaching as far as El-Arish near Egypt's border with the Gaza Strip. The quake struck about 40 kilometers north of the city of Suez, according to Egypt's National Research Institute of Astronomy and Geophysics, which revised an earlier estimate of 5.2. The US Geological Survey put the shallow tremor at magnitude 5.0, revising down an earlier reading.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:13 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:13 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

When sneakers, sunflower seeds are policed, 'rights' become a joke

An opinion article published in The Hill on Saturday has an all-too-familiar ring to it. In the article, Sam Brownback, former US ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom, and former NBA player and activist Enes Kanter Freedom argue that NBA superstar Stephen Curry's commercial partnership with Chinese sportswear company Li-Ning is a moral failing.

The article makes the so-called Xinjiang "forced labor" issue less a subject for careful inquiry than a convenient stage prop in Washington's favorite geopolitical drama.

Ever since Washington officially embraced its politicized "allegations" surrounding the Xinjiang "forced labor" issue in 2020, a growing chorus of politicians, advocacy groups and commentators have treated normal commercial interaction involving the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region as an ethical litmus test.

In the article, Brownback and Freedom write, "These are not careless accusations. They are specific charges documented by the US government and corroborated by international investigators."

But, documented by whom? The US Department of Labor's own report on the situation in Xinjiang is a principal foundation for the claims. Yet the report itself was produced by the department's Bureau of International Labor Affairs. Its reference list is replete with mentions of US government agencies and congressional bodies, alongside German "anthropologist" Adrian Zenz and reports from Washington- and Taipei-sponsored think tanks.

That does not automatically invalidate the report. But it does complicate the confident image of broad, independent corroboration presented by Brownback and Freedom. When the same network of institutions quote one another to support the same conclusion, skepticism is only due diligence.

The same scrutiny extends to Adrian Zenz, who has become perhaps the most frequently cited Western "researcher" on Xinjiang. But his institutional affiliations, advocacy commitments and methodology deserve far more examination than they typically receive in media coverage. His work is often treated less as a contribution to a contested academic debate than as settled scripture paid for directly or indirectly by Washington.

Curiously, those who constantly urge others to "follow the evidence" seldom encourage readers to follow the footnotes.

Meanwhile, the political economy behind the US' Xinjiang sanctions receives remarkably little attention. On Friday, another 43 Chinese companies were added to the so-called "Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act Entity List", bringing the total number of sanctioned Chinese entities to 187. Related restrictive measures take effect on Monday.

The restrictions now extend well beyond cotton to industries ranging from metals and mining to electronics, agriculture and food products. Even Chinese sunflower seeds are regarded as a "concern" to US "national security".

These measures are commonly framed as "human-rights" enforcement. But they are in essence reshapers of markets. By excluding Chinese competitors from US supply chains, they inevitably create opportunities for US producers, alternative overseas suppliers and an expanding compliance industry built around supply-chain auditing, legal consulting and regulatory certification.

Commercial consequences must not be treated as incidental as the "Entity List" becomes longer and longer. What emerges is an ecosystem in which politicians, advocacy groups, think tanks, lobbyists, researchers and "sympathetic" media outlets reinforce one another's narratives, each citing the others as confirmation of a consensus they have collectively constructed.

This echo chamber is presented as the appearance of overwhelming "certainty" while discouraging serious examination of underlying assumptions.

That is why Brownback and Freedom's article ultimately says less about Stephen Curry or Li-Ning than about a political culture increasingly inclined to convert normal business deals into a geopolitical battlefield. It is easier to police sneakers than to scrutinize evidence. It is easier to stage another morality play than to confront the possibility that, in the age of strategic competition, conscience can become just another instrument of a zero-sum game.

Manila's double game puts peace at risk

The contradictory approach the Philippines adopts in its handling of maritime disputes makes one wonder what exactly Manila is hoping to achieve. The recent remarks of Philippine Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr serve as the latest evidence of such inconsistency.

According to reports, Teodoro Jr, who has already been sanctioned by Beijing for making unfounded remarks which undermined China's interests and bilateral ties between China and the Philippines, called for Philippine officials "who side with China" on the "West Philippine Sea issue" to resign at a forum on July 29, ignoring the fact that the "West Philippine Sea" is just a term unilaterally coined by Manila to support its unlawful claims in the South China Sea. He is attempting to foster an atmosphere within Philippine political circles in which those who hold differing views on the South China Sea issue from his faction are expected to be silenced or penalized.

On the same day, Manila announced a "nautical chart" of the "baselines of territorial sea" of China's Huangyan Island, a provocation that met with a firm response from China.

On Saturday, the China Coast Guard conducted law-enforcement patrols in the territorial sea of the island; the Chinese People's Liberation Army Southern Theater Command conducted joint naval and air exercises near the island; and China issued a set of regulations to enhance the management of the Huangyan Island National Nature Reserve.

Less than two weeks ago, Philippine Secretary of Foreign Affairs Maria Theresa Lazaro told China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi that her country looks to address maritime disputes through dialogue and improve relations with China. But the latest development of the situation caused by the continued provocation by Manila, as well as Teodoro Jr's dangerous remarks, only raises doubt over whether the Philippines is sincere about engaging in dialogue or just obstinate in following the wrong path of challenging China's sovereignty.

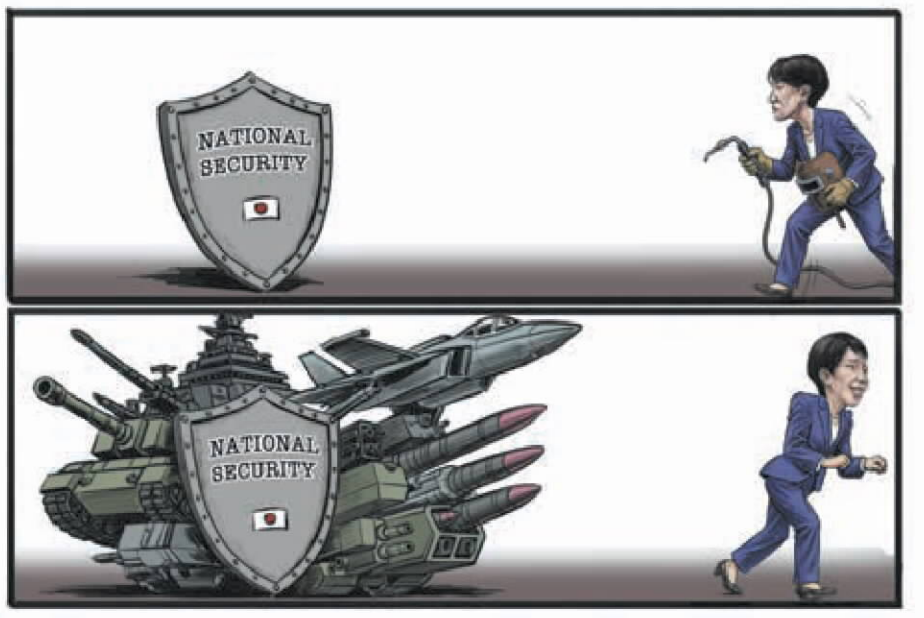
The territory of the Philippines has been defined by a series of international treaties, and Huangyan Island has never been a part of it, rendering the Philippines' claims over the island completely baseless under international law.

After two Philippine Navy boats confronted China Coast Guard's vessels near China's Ren'ai Reef on July 20, Manila said the next day that it wants to avoid similar incidents and "reset" relations with China, only for the Philippines to then send more ships to intrude in the waters of Huangyan Island on July 24.

Whenever China and the Philippines prepare to launch dialogue, certain forces within the Philippines, particularly those from the military and law enforcement, such as Teodoro Jr, deliberately stir up trouble to derail dialogue progress. These parties harbor malicious intentions: rather than prioritizing the well-being of the Filipino people, they act on the instructions of external forces to advance personal interests.

Manila should be wary of these forces' damaging effects, rein in their dangerous games, and get rid of delusions that the Philippines will obtain illegal gains by acting as a proxy for external forces to contain China.

Jin Ding



Opinion Line

Washington's 'renewed negotiations' tactical pause to manage expectations

Just two days after learning US economic growth slowed to 1.5 percent in the second quarter, down from 2.1 percent in the first, Washington called off an imminent strike on Iran on Saturday and announced a restart of diplomatic negotiations.

The scenario is familiar: a social-media proclamation, a promise of diplomacy and a reminder that the US military remains "locked and loaded". This is less a commitment to peace than a tactical pause driven by oil prices, midterm electoral arithmetic, financial markets and the mounting economic costs of another Middle East conflict.

The Strait of Hormuz is a barometer of presidential economic stewardship in the United States. Any prolonged disruption would reverberate through fuel prices, inflation, shipping costs and consumer confidence. For a president who campaigned on lowering living costs, an energy shock would be politically toxic. The sharp decline in oil prices after Washington announced the suspension of military action reflected investors' judgment that the risk of escalation had eased. Markets interpreted diplomacy, however tentative, as preferable to another cycle of confrontation.

The calculation extends beyond the battlefield. US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has championed efforts to "stabilize" the dollar, including unprecedented "coordination" with Japan to support the yen in the US interest. Those initiatives would prove unsustainable if the Gulf conflict sends crude prices soaring. As one of the world's largest energy importers, Japan would suffer a deteriorating trade balance, reigniting pressure on the yen and undermining broader financial campaigns. It makes little sense to devote political and financial capital to outmaneuvering markets, while simultaneously permitting a regional escalation to undo the very US profits those efforts are meant to capture.

Domestic politics reinforces the same conclusion. Public appetite for another prolonged Middle East crisis remains limited, while inflation and living costs continue to rank among the foremost concerns of the US public. Gasoline prices are one of the most visible measures of US economic performance. Every rise at the pump carries far greater political weight than distant military gains.

A pause in military operations therefore allows the White House to project strength while avoiding the immediate economic costs of escalation.

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect is the confusion openly expressed by Israel. According to Israeli media, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and senior officials learned of the suspension only after the US president's public announcement — which looks like a smokescreen itself — allegedly leaving Tel Aviv scrambling to determine whether the move was genuine or merely another negotiating tactic.

With these reports, Tel Aviv wants to indicate that Washington's priorities do not always perfectly align with those of its closest regional ally. Publicly highlighting differences can also serve Washington's political interests by reinforcing the perception that US policy is driven by its own calculations rather than by Israeli preferences.

That further proves that the latest pause announced by Washington is anything but a window for real ceasefire talks. Israel knows it and nods to it, but pretends otherwise. In putting on that performance Israel shows its "thoughtfulness" to the US' acute needs to simultaneously manage inflation, financial markets, alliance politics, domestic elections and global economic stability.

Washington is not pursuing a single objective — least of all peace for its own sake. It seeks to pressure Iran without becoming mired in another round of costly conflict, reassure Israel without surrendering strategic flexibility, contain oil prices without appearing weak and project strength while limiting the economic consequences of military escalation. The announcement of renewed negotiations serves primarily as an exercise in managing expectations, rather than signaling a diplomatic breakthrough. Iran, meanwhile, has its own incentives to avoid uncontrolled escalation. Tehran has continued consultations with regional countries while Omani-mediated discussions over the Strait of Hormuz reportedly continue.

Neither side wishes to appear to retreat, yet neither has much to gain from a new escalation that would impose enormous economic and political costs.

The strikes have been postponed, not abandoned. Negotiations have been announced, not concluded. Military pressure remains available if diplomacy falters. This is not simply the "art of the deal"; it is the art of preserving options. For Washington, the pause itself may be the strategy — buying time, calming markets and maintaining leverage while keeping every path, diplomatic or military, open.

But a sustainable ceasefire and long-term stability in the Middle East cannot be achieved through short-term, improvised calculations; they require a genuine and steadfast commitment to peace. It is earnestly hoped that the US and Israel, as the parties that initiated the conflict, will take the lead in demonstrating that commitment and bring about an early resolution to the crisis they have engendered.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Corporate governance will be crucial benchmark

Editor's note: *Four Chinese financial regulators have jointly released a document outlining 22 targeted measures to improve the governance of financial institutions. The 21st Century Business Herald spoke to Dong Ximiao, chief economist at Merchants Union Consumer Finance and executive director of the Shanghai Institution for Finance and Development; and Lou Feipeng, a researcher at Postal Savings Bank of China, about the measures. Below are excerpts of the interviews. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

By 2029, China will establish a desired governance framework for financial institutions. The document focuses on strengthening and improving shareholder governance. It underscores the importance of identifying major shareholders and actual controllers, which is a manifestation of thorough supervision. This approach extends regulatory oversight beyond registered shareholders to the individuals who ultimately control and are accountable for institutions, shifting the focus of supervision from mere compliance to substantive governance.

The framework also operationalizes the higher-level legal principles set out in the draft revision to China's banking supervision and regulation law. It refines the law's regulatory mandate over major shareholders and ultimate controllers into actionable rules for ownership identification and monitoring of related-party transactions.

Regulatory oversight will examine the genuine commercial purpose of related-party dealings, significantly reducing the scope for regulatory arbitrage through complex corporate structures.

The document calls for stronger risk monitoring and early-warning mechanisms in corporate governance. Tougher penalties for violations, together with a lifetime accountability mechanism, are expected to have a cleansing effect on the financial sector.

The new framework will also prevent individuals with serious compliance issues from moving freely between financial institutions, thereby reducing the risk of misconduct spreading across the sector.

In addition to stronger disciplinary measures, the document aims to improve internal governance by guiding financial institutions to establish incentive and accountability mechanisms that support sustainable development and long-term strategic objectives.

Institutions with sound governance, clear allocation of responsibilities and robust risk management will be better positioned to earn regulatory confidence and market recognition.

For large financial institutions, the primary challenge lies in managing extensive business operations and subsidiary networks, where sheer size can make effective oversight difficult. Their priorities should therefore include strengthening top-level governance, improving board oversight, checks and balances, and building group-wide look-through risk management frameworks to prevent risks from spreading across different business lines.

Smaller financial institutions should focus on removing noncompliant shareholders, eliminating hidden related-party transactions and establishing streamlined internal control systems with clearly defined responsibilities, rather than attempting to replicate the governance models of large institutions.

Institutions with stronger governance will enjoy superior risk management and greater capacity for sustainable, long-term growth, while the traditional growth model driven primarily by rapid expansion will become increasingly unsustainable, reshaping the competitive landscape.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:13 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:13 PM

VIEWS

Selçuk Ünal

From Bosporus to Yangtze: Turkiye-China ties at 55

Relations between the Republic of Turkiye and the People's Republic of China have gone through significant phases since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1971. Turkiye-China relations, actually, date back to centuries. This historical bond forms the foundation of our ever growing diplomatic, economic and cultural ties.

The centuries-long trade along the Silk Road forged a path for cultural interaction between the Turkish and Chinese peoples, leading to many cultural similarities in our daily life rituals and traditional beliefs, especially regarding the importance of family and community.

Interactions between Turkish and Chinese people increased between the Ottoman Empire and Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, with many Turkish and Chinese travelers journeying through the Silk Road and emperors exchanging gifts including Ottoman rifles, Chinese porcelain and silk.

In addition to those cultural interactions, both peoples also share similarities in their history. They faced external pressures, changed power balances in the international system and experienced significant transformations throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

Turkish victory in the War of Independence was hailed by many Chinese intellectuals and political leaders of the time. Communist Party of China leaders such as Cai Hesen stated that the Anatolian victory of the Turkish people against imperialism was a development that would encourage all oppressed nations.

Turkiye has supported China's territorial integrity. Establishment of the diplomatic ties in 1971 marked the beginning of a new era in the Turkiye-China relations.

As both countries underwent processes of opening up to the outside world in the 1980s, the relationship took on a more dynamic character. Mutual contacts increased, political dialogue strengthened, and economic and trade relations gained new momentum.

Our relations have further advanced by the Chinese state visit to Turkiye in April 2000 at the invitation of Turkiye. The Joint Communique signed during the state visit expressed both sides' determination to expand the friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation, while pointing out the need for the restoration of the ancient Silk Road, paving the way for our early support to the Belt and Road Initiative.

Following that mutual visionary approach, today, connectivity is encompassing trade security, supply chains, energy flows and digital networks in our ties. For this reason, Turkiye's Middle Corridor Initiative and China's BRI provide two complementary visions. The will to align the two initiatives shows that two countries can view Eurasian connectivity from a shared perspective.

This joint perspective was underlined by the presidents of the two countries. The shared commitment of our President, H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and President Xi Jinping to develop bilateral relations provides a strong political foundation for our future. Numerous meetings between the two leaders, the latest being the meeting at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Tianjin Summit on Aug 31, 2025, constitute a concrete demonstration of this dialogue.

Within the context of this shared vision, our economic relations developed in recent years. Trade volume increased 40-fold in the last two decades, transportation projects multiplied and mutual investments expanded.

While current economic relations unfortunately still do not fully reflect the true potential of both countries, we believe that this can be remedied by investments, tourism and other measures that are at our disposal to have a more fair, balanced, diversified and mutually beneficial relationship.

In this vein, high-quality direct investments from China into our country will create a true win-win foundation for the sustainability of our economic relations, while offering Chinese companies significant advantages in terms of access to markets adjacent to Turkiye.

Airlines connectivity have an important role not only in our economic relations, but in people-to-people contacts as well. Since tourism is the strongest point of convergence in people-to-people ties, increasing frequency of flights to 56 times per week in 2026, strengthens direct connections for tourism, trade and business. Our decision, on the occasion of the 55th anniversary, to grant visa exemptions to Chinese citizens for touristic travel and transit starting on Jan 2, 2026, demonstrates our strong commitment to increasing people-to-people contacts.

Today our world is undergoing a profound transformation. Turkiye and China stand as two ancient civilizations at the heart of this transformation.

In such an atmosphere, Turkiye's commitment to multilateralism and strengthening its relations with China is a natural reflection of our multi-dimensional foreign policy. At a time when conflicts, instabilities and uncertainties are rising, increasing mutual dialogue is more important than ever.

Turkiye-China relations should further develop on this framework. What needs to be done today is to translate this political will into more concrete projects, efficient mechanisms and active private sector participation.

We hope that the 55th anniversary of the establishment of Turkiye-China diplomatic relations will present more opportunities to transform our connection through history into a vision of partnership that is richer, more balanced and more sustainable.

The author is ambassador of the Republic of Turkiye to China.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Imran Khalid

NDB building bridges, not barriers in global finance

Monopolies in international affairs rarely collapse overnight. They tend to erode quietly, losing their grip as alternative choices emerge and parallel pathways take shape.

For generations, the plumbing of global finance was routed through a single, heavily guarded intersection in the West. If a sovereign nation wanted to build a road, modernize a power grid or stabilize a national currency, it had to navigate a rigid labyrinth of conditionalities and approvals managed by institutions headquartered in Washington and Geneva.

But now, that map is being redrawn. The change is not happening through loud diplomatic confrontations, but through the quiet architecture of institutional choice.

Zimbabwe's recent admission to the BRICS New Development Bank, announced by the country's Finance Minister Mthuli Ncube in Harare, is a striking example of this global realignment.

After years of struggling with a complex economic landscape constrained by Western sanctions, limited liquidity, and restricted access to traditional international lending markets, Zimbabwe has unlocked a vital alternative channel for development finance by joining the Shanghai-based multilateral institution.

Focused squarely on infrastructure, industrialization, and long-term economic resilience, the NDB offers Harare an opportunity to pursue its development priorities through a broader range of financing options.

This milestone is more than a routine bureaucratic measure. It is a practical blueprint for how emerging markets facing economic duress can bypass traditional bottlenecks and secure sustainable growth outside Western-dominated corridors.

The significance of this shift becomes clearer against the backdrop of starkly divergent global economic policies. In the United States and Europe, policymakers increasingly treat global commerce as an instrument of national security, erecting protectionist tariffs, subsidizing domestic manufacturing through heavy state intervention, and weaponizing financial networks to isolate perceived adversaries. The underlying philosophy in these traditional centers of power is exclusion.

Smaller and vulnerable economies are routinely expected to absorb the collateral damage of these fractured trade policies, facing sudden capital outflows and inflationary pressures driven by decisions made far beyond their borders.

By contrast, the institutional machinery in the Global South is built on a foundation of inclusiveness and connectivity. The NDB was established not to replace the existing global financial system, but to correct historical imbalances and bridge the wide infrastructure gaps across the developing world. Traditional multilateral lenders often imposed stringent, politically punitive conditionalities that compromised local sovereignty and destabilized domestic societies.



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

The center of economic gravity is shifting, and the future belongs to nations that choose open connectivity over defensive containment.

The NDB offers a financing model centered on tangible infrastructure and sustainable development without political interference.

When nations locked out of conventional markets gain access to these independent credit lines, the unipolar monopoly of Western finance naturally begins to fray.

The implications of this model extend well beyond infrastructure development. Membership in alternative multilateral institutions offers developing nations greater flexibility in managing macroeconomic risks.

For decades, dependence on a single global reserve currency and centralized lending hubs meant that emerging economies absorbed every shock generated by foreign monetary authorities. Diversified sources of financing, and the possibility of lending in local currencies, provide a structural cushion to mitigate the risk of sudden debt distress and shield domestic markets from exchange rate volatility. It is a sophisticated mechanism for risk management, allowing sovereign states to conduct trade and development planning with greater predictability.

Zimbabwe's decision also reflects a broader trend across Africa, Asia and Latin America. Increasingly, governments are unwilling to tie their economic fortunes to a single, Western-centric system that leaves them acutely vulnerable to unilateral policy shocks, arbitrary sanctions, and sudden currency shifts.

Participation in alternative multilateral networks enables these states to insulate their domestic markets from external volatility, ensuring that local development plans are driven by national priorities rather than foreign oversight.

Moreover, this institutional expansion highlights the growing maturity of South-South cooperation. For generations, development finance was used as a tool of geopolitical compliance, ensuring that recipient nations toe a specific ideological line.

The emergence of alternative credit sources introduces a healthy element of competition and choice into the global marketplace. Sovereign states can now shop for development partners, negotiate terms that align with their domestic growth targets, and integrate more fully into regional and global supply chains without sacrificing their political autonomy.

Ultimately, the widening gap between Western economic fragmentation and the institutional growth of the Global South will dictate the contours of the global order in the 21st century.

While Western policymakers persist in building protective silos and deploying restrictive measures, the rest of the world is quietly constructing a parallel, resilient framework for international cooperation.

Zimbabwe joining the NDB is a clear reminder that when global financial institutions are weaponized for political leverage, emerging economies will inevitably build other doors. The center of economic gravity is shifting, and the future belongs to nations that choose open connectivity over defensive containment.

The author is a strategist and political analyst based in Karachi, Pakistan.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Kang Bing

The author is former deputy editor-in-chief of China Daily.
kangbing@chinadaily.com.cn

How to make citizens permanent residents in name and nature

Chinese cities planning to expand in scale should rethink their approach. Besides creating jobs to attract newcomers, they will also have to invest much more in housing, education and healthcare.

A document issued by the State Council, China's Cabinet, earlier this year made it clear that all city governments are obliged to provide basic public services — including education, housing, social security, and medical care — to all permanent residents who have not formally registered their household registration (*hukou*) in the place where they live.

In China, permanent residents traditionally referred to people who had *hukou* in the place of their birth. But thanks to millions of farmers migrating to the cities in search of jobs in the past decades, permanent residents can even include those who might have their *hukou* elsewhere but have been living, working and studying in a particular city. Of late, such numbers have been rising rapidly, as millions of university graduates get jobs in big cities where they don't have a local *hukou*.

It is estimated that nearly half of the residents in cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen have their *hukou* elsewhere.

China had been an agricultural society for thousands of years. Until 50 years ago when I was young, about 70 percent of the country's population lived and worked in rural areas.

Today, it is the opposite. Under the household registration system, people used to be registered in their place of birth and relied on the local government there for social welfare benefits.

To make their environment more migrant-friendly, many cities have taken their own measures to help migrants settle down.

That system made human mobility difficult, if not impossible. But with the gradual elimination of the ration system in the late 1980s, millions of farmers left home for higher-paying jobs in the cities.

It is estimated that about 300 million former farmers and their families now live and work in cities other than the ones where they have their *hukou*.

But despite living, working and studying in the cities for years, they and their families remain "farmers from outside the city". In the absence of local *hukou*, they have been denied the benefits of many welfare projects, such as low-rent housing, seats in public schools, urban medical insurance and other benefits that residents with *hukou* take for granted.

Transferring *hukou* from their hometowns to the cities they live in now remains a difficult task. China is promoting urbanization and many cities, in order to grow in population size and influence, are working hard to attract migrant workers from other regions. However, the migrants are not being welcomed unconditionally.

Some tier-1 cities offer *hukou* only to those who are young, have at least a bachelor's degree or hold stable professional jobs. Smaller cities are willing to accept those who purchase houses or run businesses in the area.

As for those who don't have a good educational background and/or substantial money, a point-based household registration system has been adopted. Under this system, applicants for *hukou* can keep accumulating points on the basis of duration of stay, taxes paid, investments made and professional positions held until they have enough points to obtain a local *hukou*.

For years, there have been suggestions to do away with the *hukou* system. But apparently the central authorities have decided to take a more cautious approach. The *hukou* system has been in place for a long time and a hasty withdrawal may lead to consequences we are not prepared for.

To make their environment more migrant-friendly, many cities have taken their own measures to help migrants settle down.

Social security and medical insurance now cover more permanent residents, including those who don't yet have a local *hukou*. Local public schools are offering more seats to migrants' children.

The new State Council document can be regarded as a nod in this direction and requires local governments to do more. When making future development plans, urban planners will have to increase the supply of low-rent housing not only for the disadvantaged groups with local *hukou* but also for the permanent residents without *hukou*.

The cities may have to build more kindergartens, public schools and other facilities for children of these new residents.

According to the document, all permanent residents, with or without local *hukou*, should be treated equally with regard to housing, job opportunities, poverty relief, education, social security, medical care and access to public services.

Once all these requirements are effectively met, *hukou* would become less important and permanent residents would become permanent residents both in name and nature.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:13 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:13 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

POMPEO DELLA POSTA

Change of perspective

The problem is not economic globalization per se, but the neoliberal belief that it does not need to be regulated and managed



For many years, economic globalization was presented in developed countries as a great promise. The opening of markets, the expansion of international trade and the integration of economies were expected to generate greater prosperity for everyone. The most common metaphor was that of a rising tide lifting all ships: If the global economy grew, all countries and social groups would eventually benefit. Moreover, trade liberalization, the removal of economic barriers and the expansion of global value chains were considered almost inevitable processes. The dominant belief was even that there was no real alternative to a more open global economy, as synthesized by the famous slogan "There is no alternative" (TINA), coined by the former United Kingdom prime minister Margaret Thatcher.

Today, however, in advanced economies that narrative has changed dramatically. Economic globalization is increasingly portrayed as one of the causes of their industrial decline and growing inequality, despite the fact that the GDP per capita of the United States, for example, has continued to grow faster than that of most other advanced economies.

At the same time, advanced countries accuse China of being one of the main beneficiaries of economic globalization due to the adoption of what they usually call "unfair" measures, resulting in a development strategy, which is different from the model promoted by Western economies.

It is certainly true that China combined openness to international trade with a strong role for the government in building productive capacity, infrastructure and technological capabilities. Yet the Chinese approach is not an unprecedented exception in economic history. Practices that are now criticized as unfair or distortionary were used by today's advanced economies during their own rise. The UK protected its economy before embracing unconditional free trade, made possible by the technological superiority it had gained through the Industrial Revolution. In France, in the late 17th century, Jean-Baptiste Colbert theorized mercantilist policies to favor his country's economic development. The US, following Hamilton's "Report on Manufactures" (1791), protected emerging (infant) industries through moderate tariffs, "bounties" (subsidies) and other public policies designed to foster industrialization. Those policies were instrumental in transforming the US into the world's leading industrial economy. Germany emphasized the importance of building domestic productive capabilities before fully exposing its economy to international competition. Japan's postwar economic transformation was supported by close cooperation between government and industry through the Ministry of International Trade and Industry, which promoted targeted industrial policies.

To borrow a famous metaphor, all of today's advanced countries developed by "climbing a ladder" made of mercantilism, industrial policies and public subsidies, but once they reached the top, namely their economic development, they "kicked that ladder away", arguing that public intervention would not be legitimate anymore and embracing neoliberal policies, those that allowed them to preserve their technological and economic leadership: it is probably no coincidence that when Western economies held a dominant position in many technological sectors, they were widely in favor of global openness, while today, as China has become a major competitor in several high-value industries, their view has changed.

Economic globalization has undoubtedly produced enormous benefits both in advanced and emerging economies. It has allowed consumers around the world to access cheaper products and enabled Western companies, aided by technological advances, to expand internationally and dramatically increase their profits. It has also contributed to lifting hundreds of millions of people — especially in China — out of poverty.

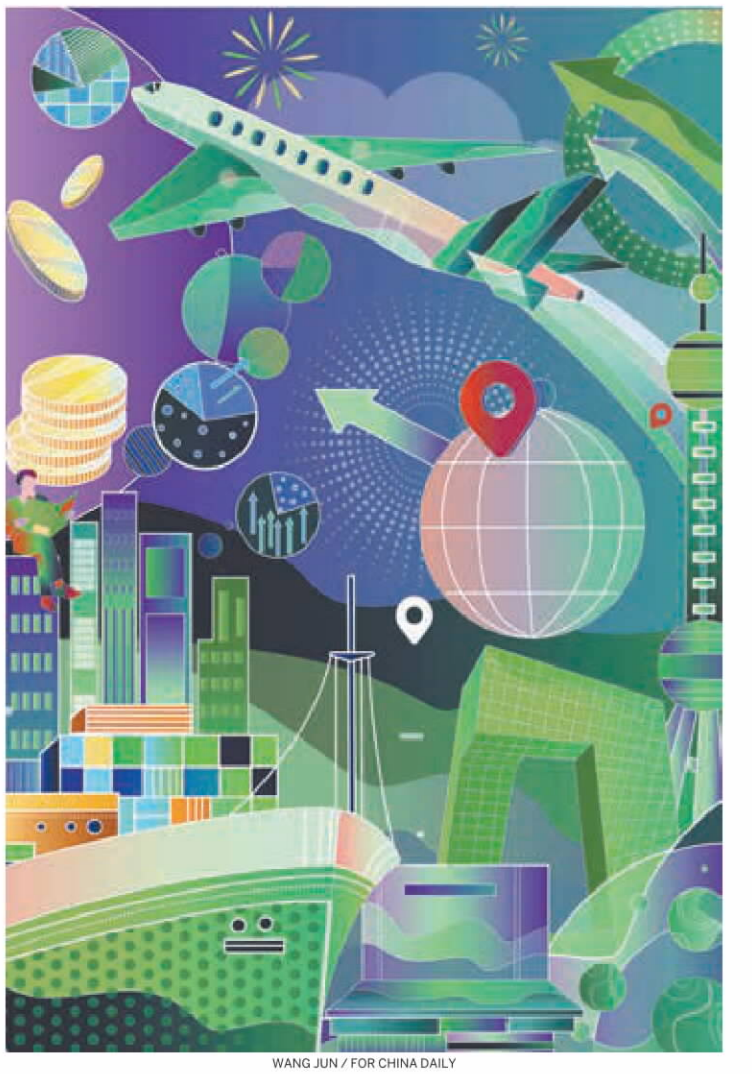
However, it has also imposed costs on specific social groups in advanced economies. Some industrial regions, unskilled workers and vulnerable communities experienced significant disruption, mostly because of the lack of sufficient support to adapt to new economic conditions, while gains concentrated at the top. The faith in the self-regulating virtues of free markets and in neoliberal principles was such that they refused the idea that economic globalization should be accompanied by regulatory and compensatory measures.

When the financial crisis of 2008 hit Western middle classes as well, after the disruptions suffered over the previous couple of decades by blue-collar and unskilled workers, however, confidence in that promise began to weaken and the narrative on economic globalization changed dramatically.

When that happened, China became the ideal scapegoat and started being blamed, especially because it emerged as a credible competitor in areas such as electric vehicles, batteries, semiconductors and artificial intelligence: the same governments that for decades had been preaching free markets started rediscovering the vocabulary of industrial policy, national security and strategic autonomy, and tariffs on Chinese EVs, export controls on chips and investment screening mechanisms started being introduced.

The problem, however, is that rather than acknowledging the economic, protectionist nature of those measures, the US-led Western countries mostly justify them with the need to protect their national security. Protecting certain strategic economic sectors, investing in research, supporting technological capabilities and caring about the most vulnerable citizens, can be legitimate and even necessary protectionist policies: however, they should not be disguised as measures of "protection" against generic, hypothetical and unjustified foreign threats, since doing so risks undermining peaceful relationships between countries, therefore creating an unnecessary and dangerous new Cold War environment.

Advanced countries should not fear calling "protectionism" by its proper name, instead of disguising it as "protection" of national security. They should recognize explicitly that the problem is not economic globalization per se, whose overall benefits are undeniable, but its lack of management and regulation, implemented through redistributive policies.



WANG JUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

The world needs a different form of globalization, what I would call "enlightened globalization": One that abandons the prescriptions resulting from neoliberal economics, is better governed and is capable of protecting those who bear the costs of economic transformation. This objective can only be achieved by combining a cooperatively open international environment with effective domestic public policies: advanced economies should invest in education and skills, support innovation and strategic infrastructure, adopt redistributive policies to be financed through progressive taxation, and implement measures to contain their quasi-monopolistic market structures.

The author is a professor at the Belt and Road School at Beijing Normal University Zhuhai Campus. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

ZHANG GUIHONG

A call for transformation

In the age of multilateralism, a new leadership will herald a more efficient, fair and powerful 'UN 2.0', steering it forward against multiple challenges to its authority, efficacy and representation



The world is watching closely as seven candidates move into the final stages of the race to become the 10th secretary-general of the United Nations.

In recent months, UN General Assembly President Annalena Baerbock has facilitated interactive dialogues and held a town hall debate among the candidates, member states and civil society representatives. Each candidate has articulated his/her vision for the UN's three pillars — peace and security, development, and human rights — and answered rigorous questions.

According to current rules, the secretary-general must be recommended by the Security Council and appointed by the General Assembly. The Security Council will conduct closed-door straw polls, and a candidate must secure at least nine votes without a veto from any of the five permanent members to move forward. Traditionally, from the perspective of regional rotation practices, the next secretary-general should come from Latin America. From the perspective of historical fairness, the UN has never had a female secretary-general in its 80-plus years of existence, and the calls for a woman to hold the position are growing louder. Four candidates meet both criteria, yet none has secured unanimous support from the five permanent members.

However, the question of "how to lead" outweighs "who will be elected". UN General Assembly President Baerbock emphasized the need for strong, principled and effective leadership.

The multilateral system centered on the UN faces its toughest time since the end of the Cold War, including erosion of its authority, ineffectiveness of its resolutions and operations, geopolitical fragmentation, distrust among major powers, financial crises and unbalanced global governance. The UN requires a transformative leader; not a conventional "chief administrative officer", but a "new leader" who is bold, connective and courageous.



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

This new leadership should manifest in nine key dimensions.

First, rebuilding trust and reducing division. Amid unilateralism, major-power competition and regional conflicts, the international community suffers from a severe trust deficit. The new secretary-general should act as a bridge-builder, fostering trust not only among member states but also between the UN and the global public. This role demands not just an administrative leader but a political leader capable of uniting a divided world.

Second, balancing the three pillars of peace. Peace and security, development and human rights are intrinsically linked and interdependent. While balancing these pillars is a global consensus, member states have divergent interests. The new secretary-general should possess systemic thinking and strategic coordination skills to find common ground and translate ideals into practical results.

Third, resolving financial crises. With some major powers chronically defaulting on dues, the UN faces a liquidity crisis, forcing budget and staffing cuts. The new secretary-general should drive fundamental financial reforms to restore member states' trust in the UN, demonstrating excellent management skills to both "increase new revenue" and "cut expenses", while exploring new partnerships with the private sector for diverse and stable funding.

Fourth, upholding UN authority and effectiveness. In a rapidly changing global landscape, maintaining the UN's authority and effectiveness is the secretary-general's most fundamental and challenging mission. The future leader must reform the UN to reclaim its credibility, helping it better balance the interests of all member states and grow into an effective platform to lead global agendas and solve practical problems.

Fifth, accelerating the 2030 agenda and planning beyond. With only four years left until 2030, Sustainable Development Goals lag significantly behind schedule, with massive funding gaps amid multiple crises. The future secretary-general must act as both mobilizer and designer, sprinting toward current goals while strategically planning the post-2030 global development agenda, requiring diplomatic wisdom and strategic foresight.

Sixth, addressing underrepresentation of developing countries. This issue is not just about human resources but fundamentally concerns the UN's credibility and legitimacy. Many small and medium-sized countries are long underrepresented — a structural institutional flaw. The next secretary-general should go beyond symbolic appeals and traditional manager roles, driving substantive change with political resolve, diplomatic skill and execution capability.

Seventh, advancing systematic UN reforms. From Our Common Agenda to the Pact for the Future and the UN80 Initiative, the vision, goals and paths for reform are clear. The key lies in execution. The next secretary-general should steer reforms to strengthen the UN, including translating visions into actionable plans, enhancing work quality and efficiency, and leading the UN's active role in governance of emerging fields, such as artificial intelligence, to tackle future complex challenges.

Eighth, strengthening relations with civil society and the private sector. As transnational challenges grow more complex, global governance demands higher standards. The next secretary-general should connect governments, civil society and the private sector — a necessity for achieving the 2030 goals and rebuilding trust and effectiveness in multilateralism. The secretary-general must have political appeal and action-oriented leadership, innovatively building inclusive, effective partnership networks to inject new vitality into the UN.

Ninth, building relationships with the secretariat, member states and global citizens. The post of the UN secretary-general carries extremely heavy responsibilities and the new secretary-general must build a team that efficiently serves member states and global citizens as the Secretariat's "chief executive officer". As a servant and coordinator of 193 member states, the secretary-general must carefully balance service and independence; they must advocate for the vulnerable. Building these relationships requires moral courage, political wisdom and excellent communication skills.

As a permanent member of the Security Council, China plays a crucial role in the election of the UN secretary-general. China has expressed its commitment to participating responsibly in the electoral process, supporting the UN in revitalizing its authority and energy to better serve as the core of global governance. China's criteria for the next secretary-general are clear and firm: adherence to the Charter, outstanding capability, fairness and accountability.

The world stands at a crossroads of multilateralism. A secretary-general with new leadership could help transform the UN into a more efficient, fair and powerful UN 2.0, helping the UN overcome its current difficulties, shortcomings and deficiencies.

The author is the director of the Center for the Study of the United Nations and International Organizations at Fudan University. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:13 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:13 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

8 new nuclear reactors given full approval

Nation cementing dominance in global push for next-generation clean energy

By ZHENG XIN
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

China recently greenlit eight new nuclear reactors, accelerating its atomic energy expansion and cementing its dominance in the global push for next-generation clean energy.

With a pledge to construct and operate the units according to the world's highest safety standards, the move underscores the nation's commitment to achieving its ambitious climate targets — peaking carbon emissions before 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality before 2060.

Six of the new reactors will employ the domestically designed Hualong One, China's third-generation nuclear power technology with full intellectual property rights. It is also one of the most widely accepted series of third-generation nuclear power reactors in the world.

For industry observers, the timing of these approvals carries immense strategic weight. As the inaugural batch of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, these projects set a definitive tone for China's energy blueprint during the most critical window for its climate commitments.

The 15th Five-Year Plan period represents the decisive sprint toward China's goal of peaking carbon emissions before 2030, said Li Jinkai, a distinguished professor at the School of Economics at the Beijing Institute of Technology.

"As a clean and stable baseload power source, the approval and construction of these new projects signal that China's nuclear power construction has firmly entered a stage of large-scale, batched and normalized development," Li said.

Nuclear projects also help promote investment growth, stabilize economic operations and attract private capital, he added.

The maturity of Hualong One has been fully validated through its large-scale deployment. Currently, 10 Hualong One units are in commercial operation domestically and internationally, with another 37 approved or under construction.

This cements its position at the forefront of global third-generation nuclear power, according to China General Nuclear Power Group.

A single Hualong One unit generates nearly 10 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity annually. This output can meet the demand of a medium-sized city of over 1 million people for a year, it said.

Furthermore, its research and construction have integrated a complete supply chain of nearly 6,000 upstream and downstream enterprises, effectively steering the upgrading of China's manufacturing sector, it said.

The steady approval pace — with 10 or more reactors greenlit annually from 2022 to 2025 — has translated into robust green energy output.

According to the National Energy Administration, the country's nuclear power generation reached approximately 467 billion kWh in 2025, drastically cutting standard coal use and reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

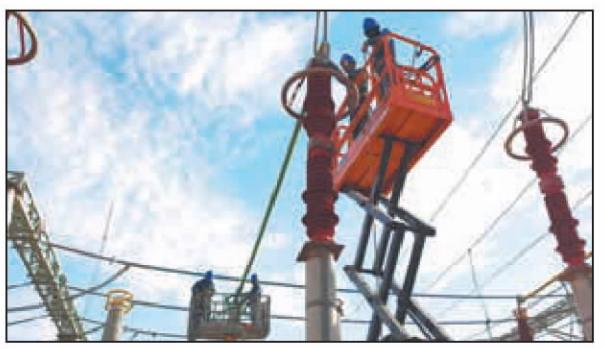
The China Nuclear Energy Development Report 2026 blue book, released by the China Nuclear Energy Association earlier, showed that by the end of 2025, China had 59 commercial units in operation with a total installed capacity of 62.52 gigawatts.

An additional 35 units totaling 41.90 GW were under construction, maintaining China's global top spot for under-construction capacity for 19 consecutive years. Completed investment in nuclear power engineering hit a record 161 billion yuan ($23.84 billion) in 2025, with five approved projects that year featuring private capital participation.

Looking ahead, China's nuclear footprint is set to expand significantly.

Yang Changli, rotating chairman of the CNEA, estimates that with socioeconomic demand for energy and electricity providing ample room for the development of nuclear power, China's installed nuclear power capacity is expected to reach 200 million kW by 2040.

Power play



Staffers from State Grid Changji conduct equipment renovation at the 220-kilovolt Shiqiantan substation in the Wucaiwan area in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. Adhering to the high-voltage electrical installation standards, the on-site workers rigorously manage key aspects to eliminate potential safety hazards in equipment connections, ensuring reliable power supply to the Wucaiwan industrial zone and surrounding areas in Changji Hui autonomous prefecture. AO LIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Briefly

Domestic flight fuel surcharges cut further

Chinese airlines will further cut fuel surcharges on domestic routes for tickets sold from Wednesday, following a reduction in July, according to announcements released by carriers. Under the revised standard, passengers will pay a fuel surcharge of 40 yuan ($5.89) per flight segment on routes of up to 800 kilometers, and 70 yuan on longer routes.

Yuan weakens against greenback

The central parity rate of the yuan weakened 4 pips to 6.7898 against the US dollar on Monday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System. In China's spot foreign exchange market, the yuan is allowed to rise or fall by 2 percent from the central parity rate each trading day.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY



A freight train loaded with containers on a sea-rail intermodal railway line departs Xiamen, Fujian province. LIN SHANCHUAN / XINHUA

Automated sea-rail line launched

By REN QI
renqi@chinadaily.com.cn

The launch of China's first automated dedicated sea-rail intermodal railway line will significantly reduce transit bottlenecks, slash logistics costs and link the country's landlocked hinterlands with global markets, officials and experts said.

The pioneering railway line, featuring a unique design that directly connects the coastline to the terminal, officially launched operations last Thursday in Xiamen, Fujian province.

"The sea-rail intermodal transport at Xiamen ocean gate terminal achieves a seamless connection between trains and ships, solving the persistent challenges of cargo collection and distribution," said Lin Zhicheng, vice-mayor of Xiamen.

"It will extend the port's inland transport capacity, enhance land-sea intermodal channels, and boost the construction of smart ports and the Belt and Road development," Lin said.

Stretching nearly 1.6 kilometers, the dedicated railway line boasts an annual designed throughput capacity of 250,000 twenty-foot equivalent units and 250,000 metric tons of bulk cargo.

Breaking from conventional designs where railways are built on the periphery of port areas, the new line is situated at a right angle to the coast, occupying the core operational zone of China's first fully automated terminal and terminating a mere 70 meters from the waterfront.

This engineering innovation allows containers and bulk cargo to be directly loaded from ships onto waiting trains. The setup transforms the traditional three-stage "train-yard-ship" transit into a streamlined two-stage direct connection system.

By bypassing intermediate yard transfers and secondary hoisting, the comprehensive logistics cost per container is 15 percent less expensive, while overall transit times are shortened by two to three days.

Additionally, the integration of an automated railway with an automated terminal enables a highly efficient "70-meter transfer and nine-minute interchange" operating system, significantly reducing cargo damage and boosting supply chain reliability.

Lin Ji, president of China COSCO Shipping Corp, highlighted the strategic importance of the project.

"Through a unified data interface and intelligent dispatch system, the railway line clears import and export channels for inland hinterlands such as Jiangxi, Hunan and Hubei provinces. It is a landmark project serving Fujian's opening-up and promoting domestic and international dual circulation, as well as a national paradigm for zero-kilometer seamless sea-rail connections," he said.

Designated as a Class D railway line, the newly opened project is open to the entire market with transparent pricing, thus breaking down barriers for various market entities to enjoy inclusive logistics services.

Technologically, the facility is equipped with four automated rail-mounted gantry cranes and three parallel loading lines. In the port area, driverless container trucks navigate autonomously among ships, terminals and railways, ensuring 24-hour uninterrupted operations.

The complex's efficiency is complemented by an innovative customs clearance model. Authorities have implemented a "one declaration, one inspection, one release" policy.

The enhanced connectivity is expected to inject new vitality into regional economies.

Wu Chengzhong, deputy general manager of China Railway Nanchang Group, pointing to the long-standing port-rail collaboration between Fujian and Jiangxi, said: "The opening of this dedicated line opens new opportunities for strategic cooperation. We will continue to link all parties, open land-sea logistics channels and rely on the Maritime Silk Road to assist in dual circulation construction, ultimately empowering the high-quality economic development of the Fujian-Jiangxi region."

Backed by the terminal's 21 ocean-going routes covering Europe, the Americas, Australia, the Middle East and Southeast Asia, the new railway line links global maritime networks with over 20 inland railway channels.

Interest rate, RRR cuts may be on table

By ZHOU LANXU
zhoulanxv@chinadaily.com.cn

China has both room and growing necessity to cut interest rates in the coming months, as top policymakers step up efforts to stabilize growth amid weakening economic momentum, analysts said.

Song Yu, chief China economist at UBS Securities, said that with top policymakers placing greater emphasis on stabilizing growth to ensure a solid start to the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, monetary conditions are likely to remain accommodative in the coming months, with ample market liquidity and low interbank funding rates.

Song said China still has room to cut interest rates and the RRR — the proportion of deposits banks must keep in their vaults as reserves — in the coming months to lower financing costs for businesses, and such tools may be deployed in a flexible, data-based manner.

"While uncertainty over the US Federal Reserve's policy path remains elevated, past experience suggests that China's cross-border capital flows and exchange rate are primarily determined by domestic economic and market conditions, rather than the interest rate differential with overseas markets," Song said, adding that the inflation outlook also strengthens the necessity for easing.

"As imported inflationary pressure from international oil prices recedes, China's consumer inflation is expected to soften in the coming months, leaving ample room for monetary easing and potentially reinforcing the need for additional policy support to stabilize prices and bolster domestic demand."

A top-level meeting on Thursday called for effectively implementing a more proactive fiscal policy and an appropriately accommodative monetary policy, saying that pragmatic and effective incremental policies will be introduced in a timely manner.

Analysts view this as policy fine-tuning that signals a greater intensity of macro policy stimulus in the second half, as GDP growth in the second quarter had fallen to 4.3 percent year-on-year, putting some pressure on achieving the full-year target of 4.5 to 5 percent growth.

The People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, pledged at a meeting on Saturday to comprehensively utilize monetary policy tools and make timely adjustments to keep ample liquidity, while maintaining the low level of overall social financing costs.

While room for further monetary easing exists, the key question is how to calibrate the timing and magnitude of any policy moves to maximize their impact, analysts said, as the effectiveness of such measures may depend on stronger fiscal support and a recovery in private sector confidence.

Zhu Feng, China chief economist at JPMorgan, said that monetary policy should correspond with fiscal policy in the second half to maintain ample liquidity, focusing on structural monetary tools and re-lending facilities to lower financing costs for the real economy and stabilize the property sector.

"We expect a 10-basis-point interest rate cut. Yet with interest rates already at relatively low levels, the stimulative effect of further rate cuts could be limited," Zhu said.

He said such a move would mainly signal the authorities' commitment to maintaining an appropriately accommodative monetary stance, rather than be sufficient on its own to reverse weak domestic demand.

Zhu added that China's economy is likely to stabilize in the second half, with fiscal policy, external demand, high-tech manufacturing and services consumption to help cushion the pressures from the property market and external uncertainties.

MNCs plug into China's AI solutions

SHANGHAI — From factory floors to logistics hubs, global corporations are embedding China's artificial intelligence into their real-world operations — and bringing these innovations to the global stage.

PwC China launched its AI Innovation Center in Shanghai in July. The center helps clients chart practical roadmaps for AI adoption and navigate the many complexities associated with digital transformation.

A recent PwC study places China in the top tier globally for AI deployment effectiveness in the real economy. According to the new center, a growing number of overseas clients are now voluntarily adopting China's open-source AI ecosystem when upgrading their digital operations.

The PwC findings are borne out by cosmetics giant L'Oreal. In its Suzhou smart fulfillment center, the group's first such facility globally, smart sorting systems and AI-powered packaging optimizers help the hub process 7,000 consumer parcels per hour, and ensure that 99 percent of its orders are processed within 48 hours.

Vincent Boinay, president of L'Oreal North Asia and CEO of L'Oreal China, points to China's AI ecosystem — its rapid iteration cycles, vibrant homegrown innovation, strong policy backing and growing talent pool — as the driving force behind the company's AI push in the country.

Beyond back-end support, AI is now stepping into the driver's seat for global firms in China. Siemens offered a glimpse of that shift on July 18, when it debuted Eigen Engineer Agent, an AI agent for industrial automation engineering, at the 2026 World AI Conference in Shanghai.

Eigen was already at work before the official launch, deployed on an electric vehicle brake assembly line at CASMT (Changzhou) Automation Co Ltd. Engineers there can simply tell the agent what they need in plain language, and it takes care of the rest. On that line, programming time is cut by roughly 30 percent, with equipment debugging time decreased by a similar margin.

Vasi Philomin, executive vice-president and head of Data and AI at Siemens, said China's complete manufacturing system, its scale and speed of technology deployment and the openness of local manufacturers to innovation all provide fertile ground for AI to grow. He believes AI will become a core force driving industrial transformation in the country.

Behind this growing embrace of AI by global firms is a policy environment that has kept pace. From national strategies to local initiatives, recent policy measures have given foreign companies greater confidence to tap into China's AI opportunities.

In Shanghai, rules issued early this year encourage foreign-funded research and development centers to invest in high-growth areas like intelligent terminals and embodied intelligence. Shenzhen adopted similar measures late last year to attract foreign companies to set up innovation facilities in the city.

In July, the National Development and Reform Commission and other government departments released an action plan to strengthen international AI collaboration.

David Blair, vice-president of the Center for China and Globalization, said China's diverse manufacturing sectors — particularly the highly competitive industrial clusters along the southeastern coast — will generate even more AI applications in the years ahead, through open and mutually beneficial cooperation.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:13 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:13 PM

BUSINESS

AI rewiring how China's energy is managed

Large models do not simply crunch numbers, they guzzle electrons

By **ZHENG XIN**
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

To generate a mere five-second, high-definition video out of the digital space — perhaps a lifelike sunset or a virtual city street — an artificial intelligence model does not simply crunch numbers; it guzzles electrons.

Producing those few fleeting seconds of digital reverie requires roughly the same amount of electricity as fully charging 10 smartphones, said Wang Hongzhi, head of the National Energy Administration.

"The AI boom is triggering a ravenous new appetite for electricity," Wang said.

In China, the AI sector is expanding at a breakneck pace. Projected to surpass a valuation of 10 trillion yuan ($1.48 trillion) by the end of the decade, the industry's explosive boom in computing power is driving a precipitous spike in power consumption.

The government is confronting this colossal appetite head-on. Yet, rather than merely throwing more coal into the furnace, Chinese planners are orchestrating an intricate, nationwide symbiosis between the machines that think and the grid that feeds them.

To prevent the AI boom from short-circuiting the nation's climate goals, Beijing is effectively redrawing its infrastructural map, which Wang describes as "powering computing with electricity and promoting electricity with computing".

In the sun-drenched, wind-swept expanses of the western provinces, national computing hubs are being deliberately tethered to colossal new renewable energy bases, while in the densely populated east, planners are nesting distributed computing facilities alongside local microgrids and virtual power plants so that data centers can scavenge power close to the source.

The government is also actively encouraging data centers to plug directly into green power and participate in green electricity trading, said Wang.

Conversely, delay-tolerant tasks — the massive, slow-cooking data-training runs — are nudged to operate during off-peak hours. This essentially uses the data centers as massive, flexible shock absorbers to balance the grid, he said.

But this relationship, Wang said, is far from a one-way street. While the power grid fuels the rise of algorithms, the algorithms are, in turn, rewiring how the nation's energy is managed.

The two industries have entered a fast lane of mutual empowerment, said Lin Boqiang, head of the China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xiamen University.

While AI operations do consume a substantial amount of power, the technology has been acting as the nervous system for an increasingly complex energy landscape — optimizing grid operations, smoothing out renewable energy volatility and ultimately driving broader energy efficiency, Lin said.

In the petroleum sector for example, a large model known as "Kunlun" has accelerated the computational efficiency of oil and gas exploration by more than tenfold, cutting through geological guesswork to optimize drilling strategies, said Wang.

Operated by China National Petroleum Corp, the upgraded platform marks a crucial leap from passive question-answering to "active intelligence", allowing the AI to autonomously plan, dispatch tools, analyze data and execute tasks across the production line.

As the first large model in the domestic energy and chemical industry to achieve large-scale, full-chain application, Kunlun — currently deployed across 152 scenarios — boasts a drilling risk warning system with an accuracy rate exceeding 85 percent, issuing over 300 early warnings in the past six months to prevent accidents, CNPC said.

Ye Xiaoning, a senior engineer at the State Grid Energy Research Institute, said AI is proving to be the perfect antidote to the inherent chaos of renewable energy.

As immense volumes of wind and solar power flood the national grid, the system becomes jittery, subject to the whims of passing clouds and dying breezes, he said.

Here, an AI model dubbed "Yudian" acts as a tireless dispatcher. It predicts weather-driven fluctuations in real time and dynamically adjusts the grid to ensure that no clean energy goes to waste.

This intelligence is also moving from the control room out into the field, graduating from merely offering diagnostic advice to executing autonomous operations.

When a fault occurs in the power distribution network, an AI model called "Guangming Power" steps in like an attending physician. It senses line anomalies, pinpoints the exact location of a failure and coordinates intelligent repairs without waiting for human intervention.

Ultimately, it is a bold blueprint for an engineered feedback loop. The algorithms will consume the sun and the wind to grow smarter, and, in their newfound brilliance, they will figure out how to harness the Earth's elements ever more perfectly.

AI systems need an ocean of electricity to keep expanding. Over the last 10 years, China has built a colossal power grid perfectly scaled to power these machines.

By the end of May, China's total installed power generation capacity reached 4.01 billion kilowatts. To put that figure in perspective, it exceeds the combined power capacities of the United States, the European Union, India, Japan and Russia.

The pace of this expansion is compounding at a dizzying rate. It took the country eight years to double its capacity from 1 billion kW in 2011 to 2 billion kW in 2019. Reaching the 3-billion-kW mark took five years, achieved in April 2024. Adding this latest billion took a mere two years.

Overall, between 2010 and 2025, China's power generation capacity maintained an average annual growth rate of 9.7 percent — eclipsing the equivalent rates of the US (1.7 percent) and the EU (3.2 percent).

Industry experts view this hypergrowth as a testament to the country's formidable manufacturing base. Jiang Debin, deputy director of the statistics and data center at the China Electricity Council, said the fundamental driver behind this acceleration is the explosive rise of renewable energy, primarily solar and wind.

"This not only illustrates the continuous improvement in the efficiency and scale of China's power grid expansion, but also reflects the comprehensive advantages of the country's manufacturing system, engineering prowess and institutional mechanisms," Jiang said.

In an era where geopolitical conflicts have triggered energy shortages and price spikes globally, China has managed to keep its lights brightly on.

As the electricity demand of emerging sectors — particularly AI and high-end manufacturing — continues to surge, this massive 4-billion-kW foundation provides ironclad energy security for the nation's broader economic ambitions, said Jiang.

Crucially, this is not just a story of scale, but of transformation. The rapid expansion has been overwhelmingly driven by a structural shift toward clean energy.

Consequently, the national energy mix has been radically reconfigured. In the first half, China's coal-fired power generation totaled 2.5 trillion kilowatt-hours, accounting for less than 50 percent of the nation's total electricity output for the first time, said the NEA.

The installed capacity of renewable energy has been steadily expanding. In the first half, the country added 117 million kW of renewable energy capacity, accounting for 73.9 percent of all newly installed capacity. As of the end of June, the nation's total installed renewable energy capacity reached 2.46 billion kW, accounting for approximately 60.7 percent of China's total installed capacity.

Renewable energy electricity generation has also risen steadily. In the first half, national renewable energy power generation reached nearly 2 trillion kWh, an increase of about 9 percent year-on-year, accounting for 41.2 percent of total electricity generation, an official of the NEA said on Thursday.

This green revolution is underpinned by brutal, brilliant economics. Over the past decade, solar module prices have plummeted by more than 90 percent, while onshore wind generation costs have fallen to match or undercut coal. Driven by technological advancements and economies of scale, renewable energy has evolved from a heavily subsidized experiment into a fiercely profitable sector.

China boasts the world's most comprehensive renewable equipment supply chain, manufacturing about 80 percent of global solar modules and 60 percent of wind power equipment.

The accelerated rollout of supporting infrastructure — including ultra-high-voltage transmission lines, pumped hydro and new energy storage systems — ensures that massive new capacity can be effectively built, transmitted and absorbed by the grid, said Jiang.

Now, this staggering capacity is beginning to spill over China's borders. Leveraging its robust grid infrastructure, the country has steadily expanded power interconnectivity with neighboring countries — particularly in Southeast Asia — helping to alleviate regional power shortages while sharing its green energy dividends.

The China-Laos 500-kilovolt power interconnection project, for example, which marks the first time that foreign new-energy electricity has participated in China's marketized power trading system, had delivered nearly 200 million kWh by the end of May, demonstrating the massive potential of cross-border solar infrastructure.

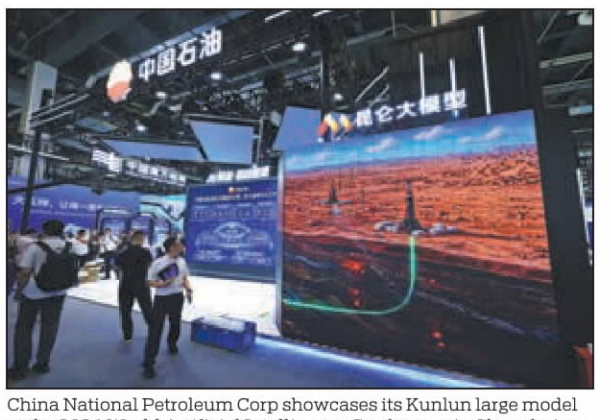
As the largest cross-border grid project and the highest-voltage power link between China and Laos, the project is expected to transmit roughly 1.1 billion kWh of solar-generated electricity to China this year alone, said its operator China General Nuclear Power Group.

As industry experts note, China's most significant export extends far beyond raw electricity.

"The same industrial ecosystem that built this 4-billion-kW leviathan is now exporting complete, turnkey green energy solutions — advanced solar, wind and smart-grid technologies," said Jiang from the CEC. "This is positioning the country as an indispensable engine of the global energy transition."



The transmission lines of the China-Laos 500-kilovolt power interconnection project are connected at the border between Mohan in Southwest China's Yunnan province and Luang Namtha province in Laos on Feb 5. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



China National Petroleum Corp showcases its Kunlun large model at the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai on July 18. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

> "The AI boom is triggering a ravenous new appetite for electricity."
>
> **Wang Hongzhi,** head of the National Energy Administration

Nation sets green power usage benchmarks

By **ZHENG XIN**

China has taken a landmark step in its green transition by establishing its first-ever mandatory minimum consumption target system for renewable energy, a move experts say represents a fundamental paradigm shift from supply-driven expansion to demand-led integration in the country's pursuit of its carbon peak and neutrality goals.

Jointly issued by four ministries — including the National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology — the measures for implementing the minimum target of renewable energy consumption and the responsibility weight of renewable energy power absorption officially took effect on Saturday.

"The policy fundamentally transforms the responsibility structure of China's energy transition as it enters deep waters," said Wang Yongli, deputy director of the Energy Internet Research Center at North China Electric Power University.

"In the past, the main challenge was insufficient grid capacity to absorb rapid supply growth. Now, by shifting mandatory green consumption obligations from local governments and grid companies down to key energy-consuming enterprises, the policy uses demand to anchor renewable energy investments and market expectations."

According to the National Energy Administration, the new framework establishes a dual-driven mechanism combining "rigid obligations on the consumer side" with "territorial responsibilities on the absorption side".

While provincial administrative regions will continue to optimize the regional allocation of green power, key energy-intensive industries will face strict, quantifiable baselines for renewable energy use in their total energy mix, it said.

The initial wave of monitoring and assessment will target sectors with high emissions or rapid electricity demand growth, including electrolytic aluminum, steel and cement, polysilicon production, as well as newly built data centers at national computing hubs.

Analysts note that for these enterprises, green power procurement capabilities and energy structure optimization will rapidly evolve into core market competitiveness.

"High-energy-consuming, high-emission industries and those with rapidly growing power demand will be the first to face tougher green energy constraints," said Wang.

"The ability to procure green electricity and certificates, along with the capacity to adjust energy consumption structures, will become a defining core competitiveness for enterprises."

Crucially, the regulation integrates non-electric renewable consumption — such as green hydrogen, ammonia, methanol and biomass heating — into the national assessment for the first time.

According to the NEA, this expansion aims to ease grid bottlenecks and unlock new avenues for deep industrial decarbonization by promoting localized, multiscenario utilization of clean energy.

By diversifying how renewable energy can be legally consumed, the policy addresses the structural mismatch between large-scale clean energy bases in western China and the consumption limits of local power grids.

Another game-changing shift is the elevation of Green Electricity Certificates into legally binding compliance instruments. Companies failing to meet their quarterly or annual targets must purchase GECs to bridge the gap or face regulatory penalties, including public reprimands and credit downgrades.

"This thoroughly clarifies how companies calculate and execute their green targets, which will effectively boost market demand for green power and GEC trading," said Tao Ye, deputy director of the renewable energy development center at the NDRC's energy research institute.

Regarding market concerns over potential price surges, experts emphasize that the policy aims to form a credible, stable and predictable green premium rather than fuel speculation.

The GEC market will see internal differentiation based on certificate credibility, said Wang.

"The future value of a GEC will hinge on its availability, verifiability and its alignment with carbon markets, product carbon footprints and international supply chain standards, rather than just raw supply volume," he said.



Wind turbines generate green energy at a wind farm on Dongchu Island in Rongcheng, Shandong province, on July 20.
LI XINJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:13 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:13 PM

CHINA

Staying cool in the pool



A dolphin enjoys a fish jelly treat from a handler at Hefei Andover Oceanarium in Hefei, Anhui province, on Monday. The aquarium has stepped up cooling measures, including temperature control, improved water circulation and frozen treats, to help marine animals cope with the ongoing heat wave.
HAN SUYUAN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Guangxi seeks to better protect digital creative IPs

By CAO YIN in Nanning
caoyin@chinadaily.com.cn

Judges in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region are preparing to issue a "risk notification" to local animation and short drama industrial parks, a preemptive judicial measure aimed at helping emerging creative industries stay within legal boundaries before copyright disputes spiral out of control.

The notification, expected in the coming weeks, will urge creators and online platforms to obtain proper authorization before adapting existing works and avoid producing content that violates public order or good morals, even in pursuit of online traffic, said Wei Meiyun, deputy chief judge of the Nanning Intellectual Property Tribunal.

The move comes as China elevates intellectual property protection to a strategic national priority. On July 20, the State Council, China's Cabinet, approved the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) for IP protection and commercialization, calling for faster legal updates, stronger policy support and a more favorable environment for innovation-driven development.

The Supreme People's Court also released its implementation road map for the same five-year period, emphasizing stronger IP protection in emerging sectors and greater judicial support for developing new quality productive forces.

The work of the Nanning tribunal reflects these national priorities while addressing the practical challenges of a rapidly expanding creative economy.

Established in January 2026, the tribunal has seen a sharp increase in disputes involving the adaptation of literary works into videos, short dramas, animated series and AI-generated content.

Wei said judges are frequently handling cases involving novels adapted into short dramas as well as AI-assisted video production.

"We encourage creative reinterpretation, but not at the expense of public interest or the law," she said.

Since the start of 2025, courts in Nanning, including the tribunal, have handled 93 disputes involving short dramas.

One representative case involved the short drama *The Return of the Warrior Spirit*. The tribunal found that the producer had copied the original work's character settings, plot structure and visual scenes, and ordered the producer to pay 10,000 yuan ($1,400) in damages.

Tu Yuanyuan, the judge who handled the case, said AI has dramatically shortened production cycles while making infringement more difficult to detect.

During the trial, she spent considerable time comparing the disputed work with the original in terms of character design and narrative structure.

She said the ruling recognized both the original work's market value and the defendant's clear intent to imitate it, although the damages awarded were relatively modest.

"There is no uniform legal threshold for what constitutes substantial similarity," she said. "Every case turns on its own specific facts."

Tu added that many short drama lawsuits are filed not by original authors but by companies or individuals that have acquired adaptation rights to literary works.

In many cases, plaintiffs are only able to provide evidence of infringement on individual online platforms rather than across cyberspace, a limitation that often results in relatively low damage awards, she said.

To address such challenges, Wei said the tribunal has promoted both prelitigation and in-court mediation, encouraging parties to resolve disputes through licensing agreements or settlements facilitated by professional mediators.

The tribunal has also published typical copyright cases to provide guidance for creators, platform operators and online platforms. Public awareness initiatives, including lectures and open hearings, have also been launched to foster greater respect for intellectual property rights, she said.

Lan Dandan, chief judge of the third civil division of the Guangxi High People's Court, said courts across the region have strengthened IP adjudication in recent years to support innovation and improve the business environment through the rule of law.

From 2023 to 2025, courts in Guangxi handled more than 22,000 IP disputes involving copyrights, trademarks, patents and trade secrets, and concluded more than 19,000 of them, she said.

To improve the quality of case handling and better resolve disputes involving emerging industries and technologies, Guangxi established the specialized tribunal early this year.

It has so far accepted 626 cases and concluded 394.

Beyond the digital creative sector, the tribunal is also strengthening IP protection in the seed industry.

Wei Wubin, president of the Nanning Intermediate People's Court, said Guangxi is one of China's leading agricultural regions, ranking first nationwide in fruit production, with crops including rice, corn, lychees, passion fruit and jasmine.

He described the seed industry as the "chip" of agriculture, saying that innovation lies at its core and effective protection is essential to translating innovation into productivity.

He added that the tribunal is prepared to establish judicial protection bases and circuit trial teams tailored to Guangxi's distinctive agricultural brands, including its renowned sugar tangerines and other geographical indication products.

From the fast-paced world of short dramas to the long-term work of seed breeding, the tribunal is carving out a role as a pragmatic and forward-looking institution, reflecting China's broader ambition to build a world-class intellectual property protection system one case at a time.

Crew harvests rice samples on Tiangong

Shenzhou XXIII astronauts carry out a series of scientific and medical tasks

By ZHAO LEI
zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

More than two months after arriving at the Tiangong space station, the Shenzhou XXIII mission crew has harvested the first batch of experimental rice samples after meticulously cultivating the plants in orbit.

A video released by the China Manned Space Agency on Sunday shows the astronauts — mission commander and spaceflight engineer Colonel Zhu Yangzhu, spacecraft pilot Colonel Zhang Zhiyuan and science payload specialist Lai Ka-ying — collecting and storing the rice samples.

The experiment, titled "Molecular Mechanism Study on Multigenerational Genetic Stability and Environmental Adaptation Regulation of Space Rice", aims to achieve the world's first continuous cultivation of two generations of rice in orbit, completing two consecutive life cycles.

Its primary objective is to reveal the biological mechanisms through which long-term exposure to microgravity affects the genetic stability of rice.

The rice seeds carried aboard the Shenzhou XXIII mission are Chinese japonica varieties known for their strong environmental adaptability and growth cycle of three to four months. They were divided into two groups: ordinary seeds that have never been to space and direct descendants of seeds harvested aboard the Tiangong space station in 2022 that have since undergone three generations of propagation on Earth.

According to China Central Television, the experiment consists of four independent cultivation units, each containing six seeds. The units are divided into two parallel groups, each testing a different rice reproduction method.

In addition to harvesting panicles and seeds, the astronauts will preserve stem and leaf samples at low temperatures for their return to Earth. Scientists will conduct detailed analyses of the samples to provide scientific support for developing production models for future space agriculture.

The latest experiment builds on earlier breakthroughs. In 2022, the Shenzhou XIV mission crew carried out the world's first full life-cycle rice cultivation experiment aboard the Tiangong space station. Six rice seeds spent 120 days in orbit and produced 59 first-generation space rice seeds, which were returned to Earth with the Shenzhou XIV astronauts.

Besides tending the rice experiment, Zhu and his crewmates carried out a series of scientific and medical tasks last week.

Working together, they used an ultrasound diagnostic device to conduct bilateral examinations of the carotid, radial and dorsalis pedis arteries. The data collected will support research on pan-vascular blood flow spectroscopy and the development of a spatiotemporal atlas of blood flow evolution.

The astronauts also carried out a lighting environment experiment by adjusting the space station's interior lighting and recording their work performance before and after the changes. The research aims to examine how lighting conditions affect psychological perception and work efficiency in the space environment.

The crew completed an in-orbit emergency rescue drill under a simulated fire scenario to strengthen their emergency response and fault-handling capabilities.

As part of their routine health management, the astronauts underwent a series of medical examinations, including electrocardiograms, vision tests, intraocular pressure measurements and fundus examinations. They also measured their body mass using a specialized mass measurement device to monitor physiological changes caused by prolonged exposure to microgravity.

China testing AI-powered patrol vessel in Shenzhen

By LUO WANGSHU in Shenzhen
luowangshu@chinadaily.com.cn

On a busy stretch of water in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, a 12-meter-long maritime patrol vessel adjusted its course, followed its assigned route and scanned the surface for potential hazards — all without an officer having to steer it through every maneuver.

The vessel, *Haixun 14102*, is China's first maritime law enforcement boat to receive an integrated digital and intelligent upgrade. Equipped with an intelligent navigation module, multiple sensing devices and a platform linking the vessel with a shore-based control center, it entered trial operation in early July, according to the Maritime Safety Administration under the Ministry of Transport.

The pilot reflects China's broader push to integrate artificial intelligence, connected navigation systems and remote monitoring into one of the world's largest water transport networks.

China's ports handled 18.34 billion metric tons of cargo and 354 million 20-foot equivalent units of containers in 2025, while its navigable inland waterways extended for 128,700 kilometers, according to the Ministry of Transport.

As the network has expanded, the focus of water transport development has broadened beyond ports, berths and shipping channels to improving coordination among vessels, navigation facilities, shore-based platforms and maritime authorities.

The Smart Shipping 2030 Action Plan, jointly issued by the Ministry of Transport and three other central government departments earlier this year, calls for deeper integration of AI with vessels, ports, waterways, navigation support services and maritime supervision.

By 2027, China plans to establish at least three comprehensive smart shipping pilot regions, open more than five pilot routes, develop over 10 replicable application scenarios and put more than 100 intelligent vessels into operation. Priority applications include emergency rescue, navigation at night or in fog, operations in narrow and winding waterways, waterborne construction and short-distance transport.

In Shenzhen, those ambitions are being put into practice on a compact, highly maneuverable patrol vessel operating in some of the country's busiest waters.

Haixun 14102 is capable of automated patrols, obstacle avoidance, object recognition and remote operation under shore-based supervision. During one test, it traveled 14.2 nautical miles while keeping its deviation from the planned route within 1 meter. In a simulated rescue exercise, the system detected, identified and approached a person in the water within three minutes.

Rather than replacing officers, the technology is designed to improve situational awareness and support faster decision-making.

"A search-and-rescue operation can stretch to 36 or even 48 hours," said Hao Xianlin, head of an airport maritime patrol unit under the Bao'an maritime safety administration. "The integrated sensing system can greatly improve our ability to detect and identify the person we are looking for."

With a top speed of 36 knots, the vessel was selected for the pilot because it is used extensively for routine patrols, emergency response and rescue operations.

Shenzhen sits at the heart of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, where commercial ships, passenger ferries and smaller vessels share busy and often congested waterways. Long hours of visual observation can cause fatigue, while darkness, fog, rough seas and heavy traffic further increase the challenges facing maritime officers.

Video and sensing data collected by *Haixun 14102* are transmitted to the shore-based command center, allowing officers to monitor surrounding conditions in real time and provide operational support when needed.

The project also offers a more economical path toward intelligent shipping. Instead of replacing an existing patrol boat, engineers equipped the vessel with navigation, sensing, communication and ship-to-shore systems without altering its main structure or reducing its original performance. Shenzhen maritime authorities said upgrading existing vessels can lower costs and shorten deployment time compared with building purpose-designed intelligent ships.

Yin Yong, a professor at Dalian Maritime University's Navigation College, said intelligent shipping should not be viewed simply as adding sensors to vessels or removing crews.

"However advanced a laboratory simulation may be, it cannot reproduce every wave, current or unexpected situation at sea," he said.

At the university's shore-based digital operation and control center, researchers monitor real-time data from the intelligent research and training vessel *Xin Hong Zhuan*, including its position, engine performance, energy use and surrounding sea conditions.

The center serves as a shore-based cockpit, providing crews with navigation advice while allowing operators on land to offer support or take remote control when vessels encounter narrow channels, severe weather or emergencies.

"The most practical model at the present stage is cooperation between ships and shore-based operators," Yin said. "In open waters, the vessel can rely more on autonomous navigation. In narrow waterways or difficult weather, people on shore can step in. That allows us to use the advantages of AI while keeping human judgment available when it is needed most."

The ship-to-shore model is also being extended to navigation infrastructure.

At Jiangyin port in Fujian province, authorities have equipped navigation aids with weather-monitoring and Automatic Identification System devices. Drones conduct routine inspections, while connected buoys warn approaching vessels of reefs and other hazards.

"The navigation aids can now see, hear and give warnings," said Chen Jingui, a manager at Fuqing Strait Power Generation. "We have a much clearer picture of the conditions when our vessels enter or leave."

On the Minjiang River in Fujian, sightseeing vessels are monitored throughout their night cruises through a digital maritime platform, enabling shore-based authorities to track their movements and respond more quickly to abnormal situations.



The 12-meter-long *Haixun 14102* is the first maritime law enforcement vessel in China to receive an integrated digital and intelligent upgrade and is now in use in Shenzhen, Guangdong province.
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Digitalization is only part of the transformation taking place on China's waterways. On the Minjiang River and the Lijiang River in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, electric and other new energy vessels are gradually replacing older diesel-powered boats to reduce engine noise, exhaust emissions and pollution risks in scenic waterways.

Wastewater, oily residues and garbage generated by sightseeing vessels are stored onboard and transported ashore for treatment rather than discharged directly into rivers. The Lijiang River has also introduced a pure-electric maritime law enforcement vessel designed for shallow waters, sharp bends and narrow channels.

Although many of these projects remain on a relatively small scale, they demonstrate how digital and green technologies can improve daily maritime operations through quieter sightseeing trips, more efficient patrols and faster emergency response.

Authorities acknowledge that intelligent shipping remains a work in progress. Wider deployment will require further testing, inspection and certification, as well as operational standards, cybersecurity safeguards and clearly defined responsibilities for vessel crews and shore-based operators. Electric vessels will also depend on reliable charging infrastructure, battery safety systems and maintenance and recycling arrangements.

As trials of *Haixun 14102* continue, Shenzhen maritime authorities are refining training, inspection and certification procedures, law enforcement protocols and maintenance standards. The experience gained from the pilot will help determine whether similar upgrades can be applied to more maritime patrol and rescue vessels.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:13 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:13 PM

CHINA

Judicial system gives prosecutors power to ensure authorities act responsibly

By YANG ZEKUN
yangzekun@chinadaily.com.cn





Left: Prosecutors fly a drone to secure evidence for public interest litigation in Yuping, Guizhou province, in March. HU PANXUE / FOR CHINA DAILY
Right: Technicians run lab tests on water samples for a public interest lawsuit in Tongling, Anhui province, in June last year. HONG WEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Public interest lawsuits clean up bad governance



Prosecutors collect water samples from a river and carry out quick tests on water quality in Zhengzhou, Henan province, in July last year.
WANG FUXIAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

For years, a 3,000-square-meter plot along the Mangdao River in Yangzhou, Jiangsu province, sat choked beneath 3,000 metric tons of garbage and concrete rubble. As a key tributary of the Yangtze River and vital source area for the South-to-North Water Diversion Project, the site along the Mangdao River was more than a local eyesore. Despite the obvious threat to a crucial national water supply, local authorities allowed the dump to fester.

Today, the contaminated lot has been transformed into a lush ecological park, thanks to a growing mechanism in China's judicial system known as procuratorial public interest litigation. This institutional framework empowers prosecutors to haul negligent government agencies into court when shared public resources are left unprotected.

Unlike ordinary litigation, which usually resolves disputes between specific parties, procuratorial public interest litigation focuses on interests shared by society as a whole, including environmental protection, food and drug safety, cultural heritage, data security, workplace safety, accessibility, and the rights of minors, women and people with disabilities.

The system does not allow prosecutors to replace administrative agencies. Its core is legal supervision. Prosecutors identify harm to public interests, urge responsible authorities or infringers to act, and, when necessary, bring cases before courts to clarify responsibility and push rectification.

From waste to court

A turning point came in December 2024, when prosecutors in Yangzhou's Jiangdu district received a tip-off from local water conservancy officials. Because the original illegal dumpers could not be identified, prosecutors turned their attention to the administrative bodies duty-bound to keep the area safe: the Jiangdu district urban management bureau and the Xiannyu township government.

After informal consultation yielded no results, prosecutors issued formal legal notices to the two bodies demanding action. But when investigators returned to inspect the site after the deadline, they uncovered a classic superficial fix. Rather than removing the hazards, officials had simply buried the 3,000 tons of waste beneath a thin layer of topsoil.

The procuratorate then filed an administrative public interest lawsuit against the two bodies. During court proceedings, the urban management bureau commissioned a third party to dispose of the waste, while the township government helped coordinate the work. Environmental testing later showed that the soil met national standards.

Yet, even after the trash was gone, prosecutors refused to drop the case. Rather than accepting the belated cleanup as a resolution, they asked the judge to issue a formal ruling declaring that both government bodies had acted unlawfully by failing to perform their duties in time. The township argued it lacked administrative penalty powers over illegal dumpers, while both agencies insisted that the completed cleanup made the lawsuit moot.

The move by the prosecutors reflected a key point: restoring damage is necessary, but clarifying responsibility is also important. If delayed or superficial rectification can erase earlier inaction, similar problems may return.

In January, the court rejected the arguments and confirmed that both bodies had failed to perform their duties in accordance with the law.

The court held that the township government had direct environmental protection responsibilities in its jurisdiction, and that later rectification during litigation could not offset earlier inaction.

For Xu Xiangchun, head of the public interest litigation department of the Supreme People's Procuratorate at the time, such cases show why the system must be precise and restrained.

In administrative public interest litigation, the key is to clarify the boundary of administrative duties and responsibilities, Xu said. In civil public interest litigation, the focus is on identifying infringers and the form of liability they should bear. In environmental cases, this also reflects restorative justice. The goal is not simply to win a case, but to stop damage, repair the environment, prevent recurrence and improve governance at the source.

China's procuratorial public interest litigation system has developed rapidly since it was rolled out in 2017. Since July that year, procuratorial organs have handled more than 608,000 public interest litigation cases involving ecological environment and resource protection, accounting for about 47 percent of all such cases.

In 2025, procuratorial organs handled 133,194 public interest litigation cases across 14 statutory fields, with 47,228 involving ecological and resource protection. Administrative public interest litigation accounted for 91.5 percent of filed cases.

The predominance of administrative cases reflects a key feature of the system. In many public interest problems, harm continues not only because of an individual violation, but also because responsible departments fail to act in time, lack coordination or misunderstand the scope of their duties.

More than 90 percent of administrative public interest litigation cases are resolved before trial through procuratorial suggestions and other pre-litigation procedures. This allows many problems to be addressed at lower judicial cost, while litigation remains available when supervision does not lead to effective action.

The system has expanded beyond environmental protection to fields such as food and drug safety, personal data security, cultural relics protection, workplace safety, accessibility, anti-monopoly issues, telecom fraud, and the protection of specific groups.

A draft procuratorial public interest litigation law has been reviewed by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, marking a step toward dedicated legislation. Technology is also changing case handling. By the end of 2025, procuratorial organs had built 291 big data legal supervision models related to public interest litigation. In 2025, these models screened more than 51,800 clues and supported over 30,000 cases.

For Qin Qianhong, a professor at Wuhan University Law School, procuratorial public interest litigation has a distinctive Chinese character. He said the system goes beyond confrontation and pursues coordination.

Its institutional logic, Qin said, is not to replace administrative power, but to provide legal supervision that helps responsible bodies correct mistakes and improve governance.

Qin said a combination of force and restraint is central to the system. It helps prevent public interest protection from falling through the gaps, while respecting the lawful space of administrative agencies to perform their duties.

Global relevance

This model is also drawing international attention. The Supreme People's Procuratorate has shared its experience in Vietnam, Brazil and France. China's river basin cases have become part of these exchanges, with the Nansi Lake case included in the United Nations Environment Programme database.

Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, assistant secretary-general of the United Nations, said that China has made inspiring progress in environmental legislation and enforcement. Environmental public interest litigation, she said, helps translate environmental laws into strong enforcement, promotes accountability and closes the implementation gap between law and practice.

She added that prosecutors are essential actors in the environmental rule of law because environmental challenges are complex, interdisciplinary and often cross borders, requiring cooperation among judges, lawyers, prosecutors, law enforcement agencies and the public.

China's Ecological Environment Code, adopted earlier this year, has further strengthened the legal foundation for environmental governance. The code requires people's procuratorates to strengthen ecological and environmental procuratorial work and legal supervision, giving prosecutors greater responsibility in ecological protection under the rule of law.

As environmental damage, data risks, food safety and rights protection issues become more complex, public interest litigation is expected to play a larger role. The next challenge is not simply to handle more cases, but to handle better ones — cases that are necessary, precise, legally sound and capable of guiding future governance, according to prosecutor Xu.

The Mangdao River case shows how the mechanism works at ground level. A polluted plot that had remained unresolved for years was cleaned, administrative duties were clarified, and a court confirmed that later rectification could not erase earlier failure to act.

"Public interest litigation must ensure that prosecutors neither fail to act nor overstep. That balance is what allows the system to protect public interests through the rule of law," Xu said.

Litigation brings down barriers to accessibility

By YANG ZEKUN



A legal worker sends a guidance booklet on pressing civil lawsuits in Braille to a partially sighted villager in Zibo, Shandong province, in April. ZHANG WEITANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

China is using procuratorial public interest litigation to strengthen barrier-free environment construction to protect the rights of people with disabilities, the elderly and those with accessibility needs, according to the country's latest human rights action plan.

The National Human Rights Action Plan of China (2026-30), released by the State Council Information Office in June, calls for stronger procuratorial public interest litigation in areas including barrier-free environment construction.

Qiu Jinghui, deputy director of the Supreme People's Procuratorate's Public Interest Litigation Procuratorial Department, said the requirement recognizes the progress made during the previous action plan period and sets higher expectations. He added it would enable China to contribute its experience to global human rights governance.

From 2021 to 2025, procuratorates nationwide filed more than 14,000 public interest litigation cases related to barrier-free environment construction. The SPP has included data and cases on such work in its annual work reports for six consecutive years, Qiu said.

The Law on Building Barrier-Free Environments, which took effect in 2023, provides a clear legal basis, with Article 63 stating that when acts violating the law harm public interests, procuratorates may issue procuratorial recommendations or file public interest lawsuits.

Qiu said procuratorial public interest litigation has evolved from correcting problems in public facilities, information access and social services to promoting more integrated accessibility development. Prosecutors are also paying greater attention to public participation, technology-based supervision, prevention and long-term governance.

Accessibility is no longer viewed only as a special service for people with disabilities and the elderly. Under the law, others with barrier-free needs may also enjoy related conveniences. In cases involving transport, medical services, culture, sports and tourism, prosecutors have found that young people carrying heavy loads or recovering from injuries, caregivers, domestic and nursing workers, and emergency responders may all have practical accessibility needs.

Information barriers caused by the "digital divide" also affect groups beyond people with disabilities and the elderly, Qiu said. Barrier-free environment construction is therefore a basic right linked to sharing the benefits of economic and social development across all groups and all stages of life.

In October 2024, the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted by consensus a China-led resolution on promoting human rights for all through barrier-free construction, the first UN resolution on the topic. Qiu said China's procuratorial public interest litigation practice demonstrates institutional and rule-of-law strengths in implementing that concept.

Since the barrier-free environment law took effect, prosecutors have handled cases in healthcare, transport and tourism. Under the SPP's guidance, procuratorates in Shanghai and Jiangsu, Guangdong and Hunan provinces have pushed for larger-print and electronic drug instructions, as well as drug traceability codes, to address safety risks caused by tiny print on medicine instructions.

In Fujian province, prosecutors have promoted text, video and message-based emergency call functions across 71 emergency centers, opening barrier-free access to 120 emergency services for more than 160,000 people with hearing or speech disabilities. In the Inner Mongolia autonomous region, a medical accessibility project pushed 648 medical institutions to carry out barrier-free and elderly-friendly renovations. In Sichuan province, prosecutors promoted accessible sightseeing vehicles at Jiuzhaigou Scenic Area.

In 2025, procuratorates handled 4,723 public interest litigation cases involving barrier-free environment construction, according to the SPP. The top procuratorate also issued trial guidelines on handling such cases and carried out a public interest litigation supervision campaign on railway accessibility to better meet the travel needs of people with disabilities, the elderly and other groups.

The SPP, the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the China Disabled Persons' Federation have released six typical cases on barrier-free and elderly-friendly public interest litigation. Chinese procuratorial practice in this field was also displayed at a thematic exhibition during the 59th session of the UN Human Rights Council.

However, challenges remain. Qiu said rectification after individual cases may rebound without follow-up supervision. More fundamentally, sustainable accessibility requires removing barriers in social attitudes.

During the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), Qiu said procuratorates should further improve the quality of public interest litigation for accessibility. Priorities include improving accessible medical and public services, promoting employment for people with disabilities, narrowing the digital divide, and implementing the Marrakesh Treaty to facilitate access to published works for people with vision disabilities.

Prosecutors will continue to deepen supervision over accessible transport and promote accessibility in electronic products, office software, apps and mini programs, Qiu said. The goal, he added, is to allow everyone to share a better life with dignity.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:13 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:13 PM

CULTURAL 文明中国 HERITAGE







Heart of Hongshan still beats

Archaeologists say a 5,600-year-old ritual center reshapes our understanding of China's earliest state, report **Yang Feiyue** and **Wu Yong**.

On the green hills of western Liaoning province, a newly excavated platform has revealed that Hongshan people could determine true north and south with remarkable precision 5,600 years ago.

This Neolithic culture tracked the sun's shadow with a vertical pole — a technique known as *gui biao ce ying* that would become fundamental to Chinese astronomy, surveying and urban planning.

The conclusion comes from Platform No 2 at Locality 1, the northern section of the Niuheliang site in Chaoyang, Liaoning, that was discovered in the 1980s. It is the most important ceremonial center of Hongshan culture that flourished in northeastern China from around 6,500 to 4,800 years ago, spanning parts of what is now Liaoning and Hebei provinces, as well as the Inner Mongolia autonomous region.

Renowned for its sophisticated jade craftsmanship and monumental ritual architecture, Hongshan is widely regarded as one of the earliest foundations of Chinese civilization beyond the Yellow River heartland.

The platform is a rectangular structure measuring 64.61 meters north to south and 41.39 meters east to west, one of nine such platforms that archaeologists identified in 2021 as a massive architectural complex at the site.

Its builders used a mix of earth and stone — compacted soil on flat ground, large stones topped with gravel in low-lying areas — a method that combined durability with drainage. The platform sits slightly north of the center of the complex.

The discovery is the latest in a series of findings that have transformed the site from a burial ground into what scholars now recognize as the ritual capital of an early Chinese state, complete with temples, altars, elites' tombs and a north-south axis that echoes that of Beijing.

Feng Shi, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, says the platform's precise north-south alignment reflects mastery of the *er sheng* system — two perpendicular reference lines running north to south and east to west.

According to Feng, shadow-measuring techniques date back at least 8,000 years.

Clear evidence of the system appears on pottery at sites dated 7,000 years ago, like Liulinxi in Hubei province. By 6,500 years ago, the Xishuipo site in Henan was already laid out along a meridian line. Niuheliang's Platform No 2, he says, is a direct application of this ancient astronomical tradition.

Yet, it lacks what many would consider an essential feature of a capital — city walls.

Guo Dashun, honorary director of the Liaoning Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, points out that walls are not, in fact, essential.

Yinxu, the last capital of the Shang Dynasty (c.16th century-11th century BC), had no known city walls. Neither did Erlitou, widely regarded as a capital of the Xia Dynasty (c.21st century-16th century BC).

"Yet both are widely recognized as capitals," Guo says.

Recent excavations have further strengthened Niuheliang's claim to that status.

At Locality 1, archaeologists have identified two temples — an upper temple to the north and the famed "goddess temple" to the south. Although the upper temple's above-ground structure has disappeared over five millennia, the finely crafted artifacts uncovered there rival those found in the goddess temple.

From the upper temple southward, past the goddess temple and sacrificial pits, the axis extends roughly one kilometer to Locality 2, where a three-tiered circular altar and burial mounds stand.

The layout is strikingly coherent: temples to the north, an altar to the south and elites' tombs aligned along the central axis.

Guo draws a parallel to Beijing, where the Forbidden City and Imperial Ancestral Temple stand in the north and the Temple of Heaven in the south.

Niuheliang, he says, contains the same core elements — an ancestral temple, sacrificial altar, tombs and a north-south axis — leading him to conclude that it was the capital of the Hongshan ancient state.

A bridge to the divine

In the highest-status tombs at Niuheliang, almost nothing accompanied the dead except jade. Scholars call this practice *wei yu wei zang* — "jade-only burial".

"Jade was the ultimate luxury, the high technology of its time," says Zhou Xiaojing, a research fellow at the Liaoning Provincial Museum, who has spent more than three decades studying Hongshan jade.

"Rarity made it precious — the difficulty of quarrying, transporting, and crafting it was precisely what made it a marker of status," she adds.

Most Hongshan jade artifacts can be traced to deposits in Xiuyan Manchu autonomous county, Anshan, Liaoning, which supplied the bulk of the culture's jade. A smaller number may have come from areas near Heilongjiang province and Russia's Lake Baikal.

Hongshan jade is renowned for its depictions of sacred animals — dragons, phoenixes, tortoises and silkworms. The *jue*-dragon and C-shaped dragon are among the most iconic, considered early prototypes of the Chinese dragon totem.

More intriguing, Zhou says, is what these objects reveal about Hongshan beliefs. A tubular jade object found near the head of a burial — the direction associated with heaven — is believed to have served as a medium for communicating with the divine. A large cloud-shaped jade piece placed on the chest likely signified the highest social rank.

Guo, the senior archaeologist, points to a recent discovery at the Yuanbaoshan site in Inner Mongolia, where archaeologists uncovered more than 100 jade objects embedded in a stone mound rather than inside tombs. The practice of "hiding jade in the mound", he says, appears to have been a ritual offering to heaven rather than part of a burial.

Guo believes this reverence for jade endured long after Hongshan culture, eventually finding expression in Confucian thought, where jade came to symbolize moral virtue.

Two peoples, one identity

Zhang Xingde, a professor of archaeology at Liaoning University who has spent more than four decades studying Hongshan culture, believes the reason that jade played a central role in Hongshan society lies in the very composition of the culture itself. It was a story of two distinct peoples who came together and forged a shared material and spiritual identity.

"Although the Hongshan people were relatively less developed in material terms, they also wanted to learn new things," Zhang says.

"And their absorption was not simple 'take-and-use' — it was innovation on the basis of what they took — in today's words, 'upholding tradition while breaking new ground'."

The breakthrough came from pottery. Between 2008 and 2010, the late archaeologist Zhang Zhongpei noticed something striking at the Weijiawopu site, a Hongshan culture settlement in Inner Mongolia. Pottery unearthed from different Hongshan sites had been made using two entirely different techniques.

One — the "clay-ring joining method" — was local to western Liaoning. The other — the "clay-strip coiling method" — was characteristic of regions south of the Yanshan Mountains.

"This Hongshan is not that Hongshan," Zhang Zhongpei told her, and urged her to investigate further.

Years of research led Zhang Xingde to conclude that Hongshan culture emerged from the convergence of two distinct populations.

One group was the indigenous people of western Liaoning, descended from the earlier Xinglongwa and Zhaobaogou cultures — the region's earliest farming communities dating back some 8,000 years.

The other consisted of Neolithic migrants from the eastern foothills of the Taihang Mountains. Driven northward by population pressure as agriculture expanded, they entered the Liaohe River basin around 6,500 years ago.

According to Zhang, the two groups initially clashed, even engaging in warfare. The newcomers pushed the indigenous population north toward the Xar Moron River basin in what is now Inner Mongolia, the northern edge of the Hongshan cultural sphere.

It explains why Hongshan culture's early phase had no jade in the southern part of the region, even though the earlier Xinglongwa culture to the north was rich in jade, Zhang says.

Over time, however, the two peoples learned to coexist. They adopted each other's vessel forms while preserving their own pottery-making techniques. At Niuheliang, Zhang says, they built a shared ceremonial center where different communities could worship together.

For her, this cultural fusion explains jade's elevated status. The southern migrants brought no jade tradition, but they encountered a northern people for whom jade was already sacred. In the process of forging a shared identity at Niuheliang, jade was elevated from a regional tradition to the unifying symbol of a new society, invested with new cultural meaning.

Guo, the archaeologist, sees evidence of this fusion in Hongshan painted pottery itself. Hongshan painted pottery bears three distinct patterns — the rose from China's Central Plains, the dragon native to Hongshan and geometric diamond-grid patterns from the vast Eurasian steppe. They testify to a "pottery road" that linked east and west, north and south some 5,000 to 6,000 years ago, with the western Liaohe River basin as a crucible of cultural fusion.

Many scholars in China and abroad have described Chinese civilization as a civilization of continuity, distinct from the cycles of rupture and replacement often associated with the ancient West.

Rooted in northeastern China's traditions while embracing influences from neighboring regions, Hongshan culture exemplifies that enduring pattern, they argue.

Guo believes this openness to outside influences helped shape Chinese civilization and ensured its continuity across millennia.

Niuheliang, he says, proves the continuity of Chinese civilization and is the root of ancient Chinese culture.

Contact the writers at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn





Top: (From left) a dragon-phoenix pendant, a jade dragon and a jade phoenix. **Above:** An aerial view of the Niuheliang site in Liaoning province; Zhang Xingde (right) and her student examine a Neolithic pottery vessel. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Key Hongshan discoveries of recent years

1. Ma'anqiaoshan site in Chaoyang, Liaoning province

The Ma'anqiaoshan site is a Neolithic settlement dating from about 7,700 to 5,500 years ago. Archaeological findings show that an early settlement of Hongshan culture has been remarkably well preserved at the site. The residential area was carefully planned, with large house foundations serving as central hubs surrounded by smaller dwellings and



pits. Scientific analysis indicates that people had already begun cultivating crops on a large scale during the early Hongshan period. The growth of agriculture boosted productivity, allowing communities to settle permanently and sustain long-term production. These discoveries suggest Hongshan society was becoming increasingly complex, laying important foundations for the emergence of a diverse yet unified Chinese civilization.

2. Dongshantou site in Chengde, Hebei province

Between 2022 and 2025, archaeologists excavated the Dongshantou site, which dates from about 5,500 to 5,300 years ago. They uncovered 69 archaeological features and more than 100 pottery, stone and jade artifacts. Archaeologists find the building ways of the round rubble mound tombs, the tomb structure, burial customs and features of the unearthed artifacts basically follow those from the Niuheliang site in Liaoning, which is commonly believed to be the nucleus of Hongshan culture. However, Dongshantou also revealed unique stone-piled remains believed to represent an "earth mother deity". Archaeologists believe it reflects the Hongshan people's early worship of maternal fertility and the symbolic link between the earth and childbirth.

3. Naotegai site in Chifeng, Inner Mongolia autonomous region

The site, which covers three million square meters, is one of the largest settlements of Hongshan culture discovered to date. It has been found to have a long cultural development spanning nearly three millennia. It peaked in the late period of Hongshan culture from 5,500 to 5,000 years ago. The settlement features clearly defined residential and ritual zones arranged in a layout similar to Niuheliang. Well-developed farming tools point to a thriving agricultural economy, while finely crafted jade artifacts reflect a ritual system centered on jade, suggesting the emergence of social hierarchy and status.

4. Yuanbaoshan site in Chifeng, Inner Mongolia

Excavations in 2024 confirmed Yuanbaoshan as a Hongshan ceremonial complex of tombs and sacrificial remains dating from about 5,100 to 5,000 years ago. More than 100 jade artifacts have been unearthed, including one of the largest jade dragons ever found in northern China. Human remains, pits, and ceramic, stone, bone and clamshell artifacts were also found. Particularly notable is the discovery of jade objects embedded within and beneath the walls of a circular stone mound tomb, a burial practice that offers fresh clues to Hongshan ritual traditions and their role in the development of Chinese civilization.

5. Zhengjiagou site in Zhangjiakou, Hebei

Since 2022, archaeologists have excavated the Zhengjiagou site, uncovering nine characteristic Hongshan circular stone mound tombs and more than 600 pottery, jade, stone and bone artifacts. Dating from about 5,300 to 4,800 years ago, the site extends the known lifespan of Hongshan culture by about 200 years beyond the previously accepted end date of 5,000 years ago. The discovery also overturns the earlier view that northern Hebei lay on the culture's fringe, showing instead that it served as an important regional center during Hongshan's final phase. Its elaborate burial and sacrificial traditions, together with its rich jade assemblage, suggest that Zhangjiakou was already advancing toward an early civilization around 5,000 years ago.

WANG RU

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:13 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:13 PM

LIFE







Above: The 2026 Xinjiang Is a Nice Place intangible cultural heritage showcase staged in Shihezi, the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, attracts a big crowd. **Top right:** A chef pulls noodles at the gourmet food section of the event. **Right:** Cultural creative items featuring local elements show their appeal.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Mixing crafts on new ground

A cultural festival merges shadow puppets, traditional music, and rare paper into new art, **Yang Feiyue** reports in Shihezi, Xinjiang.

Under the stage lights in Shihezi, a leather shadow puppet slowly raises an arm, swaying gracefully to the rhythm of melodies unique to the city in northern Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.

Its movements are inspired by a traditional dance of the Uygur ethnic group. The music comes from local performers playing classic Uygur instruments such as the *dutar* and *rawap*. Yet, the figure dancing behind the screen belonged to Beijing's centuries-old shadow puppet tradition.

For the performers, it was an opportunity to explore how intangible cultural heritage can travel across regions, connect with new traditions and continue to evolve.

The performance was created for the 2026 Xinjiang Is a Nice Place intangible cultural heritage showcase, which opened on Thursday.

Organized by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Xinjiang government, and the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, the five-day event brought together more than 650 representative intangible cultural heritage practices and over 540 inheritors from 31 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities, as well as the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps.

Rather than simply showcasing traditions from different regions, the event highlighted exchanges and cooperation, encouraging artists and craftspeople to learn from one another and create new forms of expression.

For Lu Baogang, an actor with the Beijing shadow puppet troupe, adapting the performance for Xinjiang audiences became the troupe's first challenge.

"When we received the invitation, we were honestly a little nervous," Lu says. "We kept asking ourselves what kind of program Xinjiang audiences would connect with."

Instead of bringing an existing production, the troupe chose to weave local cultural elements into a brand-new performance.

The result was a short piece inspired by the story of Wan Tongshu, a cultural worker who contributed to the preservation of Twelve Muqam — a traditional Uygur musical suite inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2008.

The Beijing artists created two shadow puppet figures based on Wan and his wife, paying tribute to generations of cultural workers who dedicated themselves to safeguarding Xinjiang's rich musical heritage.

For Lu, the most rewarding part of the project came when the Beijing performers began working closely with musicians from Xinjiang.

"At first, communication was not easy because we speak differently," Lu says. "But we share something in common — we are all committed to protecting traditional arts."

After several rehearsals, the two sides gradually found ways to blend the movements of the shadow puppets with the rhythms of Xinjiang's traditional music.

Lu says he learned a great deal from the local artists, particularly how to capture the distinctive movements of Xinjiang dance.

"One example is the posture of a Xinjiang woman dancing," he says. "Previously, our puppet simply placed one hand on its waist. The local artists suggested raising the other hand and adding movements that flowed with the rhythm. It instantly made the character feel more natural."

For Lu, the collaboration was about "absorbing elements from each other".

The troupe hopes the cooperation can continue beyond the short performance.

"We believe that one day we can create a full-length production together, combining the two sides' music and storytelling techniques," Lu says.

The troupe has also launched a workshop during its Xinjiang visit, introducing local children to the craft of making shadow puppets.

"We hope this traditional craft can take root among young people here and help promote their culture," he adds.

Fresh expressions

Across the exhibition hall, the Xinjiang mulberry-bark paper, known as *sangpi* paper, was embarking on a different path toward renewal.

Sheets of paper were placed beneath the carved woodblocks used in art studio Rongbaozhai's centuries-old woodblock watermark printing technique, producing a series of collectible artworks.

The experiment was not easy.

According to Li Yang, deputy director of Rongbaozhai's woodblock watermark center, the team has worked with different types of mulberry paper from various regions, including paper used in restoration projects at the Palace Museum.

Each region produces mulberry paper with its own texture and characteristics, he explains.

For the Xinjiang collaboration, Rongbaozhai used local mulberry paper to print images including the "Five Stars Rising in the East" brocade, discovered at the Niya archaeological site in Hotan prefecture, Xinjiang, as well as a panda-themed design.

The results showed both challenges and possibilities.

Compared with papers traditionally used in Chinese painting, Xinjiang's mulberry paper has a coarser texture and more prominent fibers, making precise printing more difficult.





Top and above: Ethnic singing and dancing performances are among the highlights of the intangible cultural heritage showcase in Shihezi, Xinjiang.

During the printing process, the team had to repeatedly apply additional layers to achieve the desired effect.

But Li believes the paper's distinctive texture could eventually become an artistic advantage.

"Its weakness could also become its strength," he says.

If artists create works specifically suited to the texture of mulberry paper, its rough surface and natural fibers often seen as limitations could become unique visual features, he adds.

"In the future, if artists create directly for this material, we may discover a new artistic language," Li says.

The current works represent only an initial exploration. The team hopes to collaborate with Xinjiang artists to develop designs and techniques that make the best use of local materials.

"When two elements come together, neither should lose its own character," he says. "The value lies in finding the point where they can meet."

Silk Road connections

Cross-regional cooperation from the partnership between Quanzhou in Fujian province and Changji Hui autonomous prefecture in Xinjiang has delivered a special rendition of the popular Fujian song *Ai Pin Cai Hui Ying* (Only By Striving Can One Win) which drew large crowds at the showcase in Shihezi.

The familiar melody was reimagined by blending Fujian folk instruments with Xinjiang traditions, including the *dombra*, the traditional two-stringed Kazak instrument, and Xinjiang folk singing.

The performance is part of an ongoing partnership linking Quanzhou, one of the key ports along the ancient Maritime Silk Road, with Changji, a region historically connected to the overland Silk Road. Over the years, the collaboration has created platforms for performances, training and exchanges among craftspeople from both regions.

Beyond performances, the Changji delegation brought a variety of local crafts and foods, including dough figurines, embroidery, traditional dairy products and folk handicrafts.

Among the exhibits was a collection of dough figurines representing different regions. Each figure combined symbols from Xinjiang and Fujian, illustrating how two distinct local cultures could come together through a single art form.

The delegation also showcased different embroidery traditions, including ethnic Kazak and ethnic Hui embroideries.

"Kazak embroidery is known for bright colors, bold patterns and motifs such as horn designs, while Hui embroidery often features finer stitching and delicate color combinations," explains Meng Yushan, an intangible cultural heritage specialist at the Changji prefecture cultural center.

Rather than merging them into a single style, the exhibition highlights their unique characteristics side by side.

For Meng, the partnership with Fujian has also opened new opportunities for local artisans to broaden their skills.

"Many of our inheritors have traveled to Fujian for training," she says.

They have studied areas such as lacquer painting and craft development, learning not only the techniques but also ways to transform traditional skills into sustainable creative industries, she adds.

When Lu Baogang first walked into the exhibition hall, he says he was struck by the diversity of traditions gathered under one roof.

"After walking around the venue, I realized that every province and region had brought its finest works, and every exhibition area had something unique to offer," Lu notes.

For Lu, the gathering was a reminder that intangible cultural heritage is not confined by geography.

Preserving tradition today is not only about safeguarding old techniques, but also about creating opportunities for different forms of heritage to interact, inspire and evolve, he says.

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

A Brazilian artist's dream forged in porcelain

NANCHANG — Against the red-brick backdrop of the Taoxichuan cultural and creative district in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province, Brazilian artist Viviane Diehl stands out with her striking red hair.

For the 62-year-old visual artist, her presence in this ancient porcelain capital is the realization of a long-time dream. "The moment I began learning about porcelain, I knew I had to come to China," Diehl says.

Her journey to the heart of Chinese ceramics began with fellow artists who had worked in Jingdezhen's Sanbao village. After returning to Brazil, they shared stories about the city at exhibitions and art events, sparking Diehl's fascination.

"I've loved art since childhood," she says, recalling how she began studying ceramic painting at 15, learning every step from glazing to firing.

That passion has blossomed into tangible creations. Her artwork titled *Afforest*, which is on display at the Taoxichuan Art Museum until the end of August, was created during an artist residency in Jingdezhen in 2024.

"Ceramic art and nature guide human beings toward inner reflection, giving meaning to cycles and coexistence, providing a pause and reconnecting freedom to well-being and unity," Diehl wrote in the introduction.

Mastering this medium in a foreign land has been an expressive journey. Before arriving in Jingdezhen, Diehl completed a residency in Longquan, where she began experimenting with local clay and celadon glazes.

Longquan, a city in Zhejiang province, is known for its centuries-old celadon tradition, and the firing techniques of Longquan celadon were added in 2009 to UNESCO's list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

"Working with China's local clay is an expressive challenge. Experimentation in construction, surface design with celadon glazes, and gas firing techniques is a continuous process," she says. "I am learning something new all the time."

An art teacher since 1989, Diehl describes herself as an "educator-artist". While modern technology has made ceramic knowledge more accessible worldwide, she believes Jingdezhen remains unmatched.

"We don't have another place with such quality and special techniques to make porcelain," says Diehl. This unique appeal is rooted in the city's geography and heritage.

"There's nowhere else with this level of craftsmanship and these unique porcelain-making techniques," she says. That uniqueness is rooted in the city's natural resources and centuries-old heritage.

Nestled among the hills of northeastern Jiangxi, Jingdezhen is rich in kaolin, or China clay, along with other essential materials for porcelain production. Over generations, local artisans have refined every stage of the process, from preparing clay to firing kilns.

The world has taken note. The Jingdezhen Handicraft Porcelain Industry Sites were added to UNESCO's World Heritage List last month, filling a long-standing gap in the list for porcelain heritage. It is China's 61st World Heritage site.

Today, Jingdezhen's complete ceramics industry continues to attract artists from around the world. At peak times, more than 5,000 ceramic enthusiasts gather in the city.



Brazilian artist Viviane Diehl (center) visits China Ceramics Museum in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province, on June 28. XINHUA

Beyond its thriving industry, Jingdezhen has introduced initiatives to encourage artists to stay. In 2015, the Taoxichuan cultural and creative district launched the Migratory Bird Program, partnering with art institutions in more than 50 countries and regions and attracting some 3,600 artists from across the globe.

As Jingdezhen continues to evolve, it remains a magnet for global creators. "Jingdezhen is opening doors to the world," Diehl says.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:13 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:13 PM

LIFE

'Living like a local' reshapes tourism



Hotels, retailers, and urban developers are shifting from traditional sightseeing models toward a more experience-driven form of vacation, **Yang Feiyue** reports.

A young woman checks into a hotel in Shenzhen's Nantou ancient town on a Friday evening. At the front desk, she is handed a room key and a small blue mesh bag.

Inside is cat food.

"There are stray cats all over the old town. Take a walk. Feed them," the receptionist says.

The bag, printed with hand-drawn illustrations of local cats and a small map of surrounding streets, serves as an informal guide to the neighborhood. It is part of the guest experience at Tiaohai Living Youth Hostel, located in one of Shenzhen's remaining urban villages in South China's Guangdong province.

In the narrow lanes around the property, open-front kitchens, small shops and long-time residents form a dense urban fabric. The hostel's slogan, written on a chalkboard near the entrance, reads, "Check in. Step out."

The concept encourages guests not to remain indoors, but to explore the surrounding community.

Inside one of the rooms, curtains are made from two patchworks of faded denim, floral cotton and striped fabric stitched together from secondhand clothes donated by nearby residents.

"These are the colors that once flowed through the streets of Nantou," says Sui Yi, cofounder of Tiaohai Living.

In the hallway, a "Give and Take" table allows departing guests to leave behind everyday items such as toiletries, snacks or travel essentials for others to use. In dormitory rooms, magnetic boards let guests indicate preferences such as "early sleeper", "late return", or "open to chatting".

Sui says the idea for the hostel came during frequent business travels.

He recalls staying in a mid-tier hotel in a Chinese city where, upon waking, he could not immediately identify where he was. The rooms, he says, felt identical across locations.

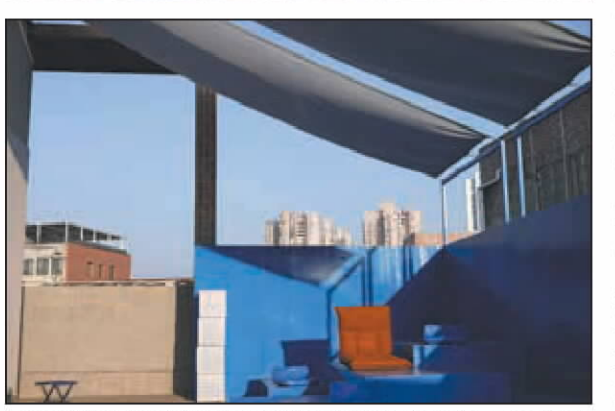
"The hotel gave me a place to sleep, but it couldn't tell me anything about the city I was actually in," he says.

That experience, he adds, became the starting point for Tiaohai Living, which opened in 2025. The concept aims to turn accommodation into a gateway for understanding the surrounding city.

He notes that some guests have stayed for extended periods, including job seekers who remained for several weeks or longer, and that others have returned after leaving, seeking to reconnect with people they met during their stay.







Top: A scale model of Sanqing Hall, Yongle Palace, on display at an ancient architecture digital art exhibition in Shanxi province, organized by the Meet You Museum. **Middle:** A view of Miniso Land in Shanghai. **Above:** The balcony (right) and bar (left) are a big draw for guests at the Tiaohai Living Youth Hostel. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The development of such hospitality models reflects broader changes in China's tourism sector, where traditional sightseeing patterns centered on ticketed attractions are gradually giving way to more experience-oriented travel.

Industry participants say the focus of travel demand is increasingly shifting toward local immersion, with younger tourists showing greater interest in everyday urban life and neighborhood culture.

At a recent tourism industry gathering in Xiamen, Fujian province, practitioners from across hospitality, retail and cultural sectors discussed the evolving structure of domestic tourism.

Xiong Xiaojie, a long-time tourism marketing executive and former chief brand and marketing officer at Chimelong Group, says that cities are increasingly becoming tourism destinations in their own right rather than just gateways to scenic spots.

He notes that demand is shifting toward "living like a local", while urban renewal has expanded the range of spaces available for tourism, including former industrial sites, alleys and community markets. Social media platforms tend to amplify overall urban "vibes" rather than individual attractions.

He also points out that different cities are increasingly developing distinct cultural identities, citing examples such as Chengdu's leisure culture, Harbin's hospitality style and Jingdezhen's artistic atmosphere.

"One strong, shareable moment matters more than 10 perfect attractions," he says.

In the retail sector, companies are also adjusting to changing consumption patterns.

Kou Weixuan, global vice-president of lifestyle brand Miniso, says that consumer demand is increasingly driven by personal interest and emotional value, particularly among younger groups.

Miniso has shifted its focus toward intellectual property (IP) development and themed retail environments, combining product sales with experiential store design, he says.

At the company's flagship store on Shanghai's Nanjing Road, which covers about 1,500 square meters, daily visitor numbers exceed 10,000. According to company figures, cumulative revenue reached more than 250 million yuan ($37 million) within around one and a half years after opening.

Kou says that such spaces are designed not only for retail but also for traffic generation and cultural engagement.

Urban redevelopment projects are following a similar trajectory.

In Chongqing, finance and real estate professional Zhou Yaxin transformed a former printing factory into a cultural and creative complex in 2014, incorporating galleries, studios and public spaces while retaining much of the original industrial structure.

The site gained wider attention after being used as a filming location for the 2016 film *I Belonged to You*, attracting an increasing number of visitors.

In 2018, Zhou's team developed an open-air venue in Shancheng Lane by repurposing a sunken plaza behind a former church. The space, named the "Wilderness Theater", now hosts performances, community gatherings and cultural events.

Zhou says that many cities have underused industrial and historical spaces that can be reactivated through adaptive reuse rather than large-scale reconstruction.

"Every city has old factories, old neighborhoods, old buildings sitting empty. We need to see what's already there and see it differently," he says.

The cultural sector is also adapting to changing visitor expectations.

Qiu Tong, founder of Meet You Museum, observes that younger audiences increasingly prefer interactive and visually engaging exhibitions over traditional static displays.

The museum group has opened seven physical locations across China and staged exhibitions in more than 20 cities, attracting around 3 million visitors.

One exhibition features a projection-based interpretation of Yongle Palace, a Taoist temple from the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), where visitors use flashlights to activate animated visual elements on wall drawings.

Another exhibition includes a dinosaur installation featuring a 10-meter-long rib cage that visitors can walk through.

Qiu says that the audience composition has shifted in recent years, with family and parent-child visitors now forming a larger share of total attendance compared with earlier years when young urban women made up the majority.

She also notes that placing exhibitions in shopping malls and city centers, rather than peripheral museum sites, has helped integrate cultural experiences into daily urban life.

In Tianjin, one of the group's projects was the first tenant in a converted parking garage, later followed by other cultural businesses, she says.

According to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, China recorded 6.5 billion domestic tourist trips in 2025, an increase of 16.2 percent year-on-year.

Back at Tiaohai Living Youth Hostel, small gestures continue to define the guest experience. A visitor leaves a bottle of makeup remover on the "Give and Take" table for another guest. Another adjusts a dormitory sign to indicate a late return, and is thanked the next morning by a roommate.

"In the end, we're not selling a room. We're selling a reason to stay," Sui Yi says.

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

Heritage comes alive as visitors flock to immersive cultural attractions

Clad in traditional Chinese robes, a group of young overseas visitors of Chinese descent stepped into a lantern-lit cultural district in the ancient city of Xi'an, Northwest China's Shaanxi province, immersing themselves in a world they had seen only on screen.

"The moment I walked through the gate, the whole setting made me feel like I was traveling back more than a thousand years," said a group member from Singapore.

During their visit last week, these visitors snapped photos, watched live performances, and played street games in the re-created streetscape modeled on Chang'an, capital of the Tang Dynasty (618-907).

As the country's first immersive block featuring Tang-style street life, the project, which opened in 2022, was upgraded earlier this year to create a more engaging atmosphere. To date, it has recorded over 7.5 million visits.

"We aim to attract more people through the modern expression of traditional aesthetics," says Zou Linfeng, head of the tourism project.

The attraction offers a glimpse into a broader trend. This summer, traditional Chinese culture has been gaining new appeal as global tourists embrace offerings rooted in China's heritage.

Today, visitors are not satisfied with just sightseeing at cultural landmarks. Instead, they are seeking immersive experiences that forge a deeper connection with traditional Chinese culture. *Guofeng* (Chinese-style) immersive tours have thus become a draw for visitors this summer. Data from Tongcheng Travel, a leading Chinese online travel agency, show that as of July 23, searches for keywords such as "*guofeng*" and "immersive" on the platform had more than doubled month on month.

Langfang, a city adjacent to Beijing in North China's Hebei province, has recently ranked among the top 10 destinations for such tours, according to the platform. Many visitors flock to this place for a theater complex drawing inspiration from a Chinese literary classic.

Named *Unique Dream of Red Mansion*, the attraction features 55 innovative plays, including those inspired by the seminal 18th-century novel *A Dream of Red Mansions* and independent ones, turning traditional Chinese literature into accessible, tangible, and interactive cultural spaces.



Dancers perform at "Twelve Hours of Chang'an", a re-created streetscape for tourism in Xi'an, Shaanxi province. SHAO RUI / XINHUA

A recent highlight is a debut production consisting of 35 micro-theaters, where visitors draw and swap cards to chart their own viewing journey. Within each theater, viewers sit just steps from the actors, becoming part of the narrative itself.

Wang Chaoge, general director of the theater complex, explains that such productions are designed to allow each viewer to participate in the play as it unfolds, while delivering even greater emotional intensity within a short span of time.

Since its opening in 2023, the theater complex has staged approximately 24,000 performances and received over 14 million visits.

Zhao Yu, a second-time visitor from North China's Tianjin, says that the venue provides a different experience from traditional theaters. "Instead of watching a single play for several hours, we can enjoy performances here throughout the day, stay for a night, and continue our experience the next day."

Students are a major group of travelers during the summer travel rush. The summer vacation provides them with an opportunity to gain hands-on experience in the traditional Chinese culture that they learn at school.

Li Jinhan, 15, tried her hand at restoring a replica mural panel at an intangible cultural heritage experience base in Dunhuang, a vital ancient Silk Road hub in Northwest China's Gansu province. From injecting consolidants to filling cracks, the girl realized how challenging yet significant it is to keep the historical treasure alive.

"Reading about it is one thing, but doing it is another," says Jinhan. "The restoration allows me to slow down and appreciate the timeless beauty of Dunhuang murals."

Her experience was part of a study tour that emerged from growing demand among students and parents for a deeper understanding of the country's cultural heritage.

"The study tours can sow the seeds of culture in young minds," says Du Yongwei, the base's founder. "With new scenarios and fresh expressions, we build a bridge for that passion to grow."

Similar on-site classes are thriving nationwide.

Meanwhile, international tourists are getting on board. More overseas visitors are taking dedicated trips to China to participate in culturally themed study tours, amid the country's expanding visa-free entry policies.

Earlier this month, a 30-member Italian group finished a study tour in Hainan, China's southernmost island province. During the two-week program, teenagers engaged in courses and activities involving language learning and handicraft making, among others.

With more firsthand experience of the country and a better understanding of its culture, views of China have turned more positive. According to a Pew Research Center study published this month, a median of 46 percent of respondents across the 20 countries surveyed annually since 2023 holds a favorable view of China, up from 32 percent in 2023. The figure now surpasses the median favorability rating for the United States.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:13 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:13 PM

SPORTS

BASKETBALL

Han's building a dynasty Down Under

NY Liberty center leads the charge for Chinese players in Australia's WNBL, as she signs up for a second season



Chinese New York Liberty center, Han Xu, goes up for the basket during a WNBA game against Toronto Tempo in Montreal on July 13. XINHUA

By **LI YINGXUE**
liyingxue@chinadaily.com.cn

When Han Xu reflected on her first season in Australia's Women's National Basketball League in March, the Chinese center was already looking beyond her own achievements.

"I hope my experience can serve as a signpost for those who come after me," she wrote on social media. "One day, someone will follow in my footsteps and arrive here."

Just months later, that pathway is becoming crowded.

The Geelong Venom announced last week that Han and her compatriot, forward-guard Zhang Wanglai, had signed one-year contracts for the 2026-27 WNBL season, pending league approval.

Together with Wang Siyu, who has joined the Southside Melbourne Flyers, and Yang Shuyu, who has signed for the Sydney Flames, four Chinese players are now set to compete in the WNBL next season.

For Han, the move to Geelong represents another chapter in a career spanning China, the United States and Australia.

Standing 2.11 meters tall, Han has established herself as one of the country's most successful basketball players on the international club stage.

The 26-year-old was selected by the New York Liberty with the 14th overall pick in the 2019 WNBA Draft.

She has since won three Women's Chinese Basketball Association Most Valuable Player awards and two WCBA championships. She was also part of the Liberty squad that won the 2023 WNBA Commissioner's Cup.

Currently in her fourth WNBA season, she is averaging 5.8 points and 2.2 rebounds per game.

On Saturday Han reached a milestone 500 league points during the Liberty's 94-92 road win over the Phoenix Mercury.

Playing as a reserve, Han scored a season-high 17 points on 6-for-9 shooting from the field, including 3-for-6 shooting from 3-point range, to go with six rebounds and one assist.

Han has been equally influential for the Chinese national team. She helped China claim silver at the 2022 FIBA Women's Basketball World Cup and was selected in the tournament's All-Star Five.

A year later, she was named MVP as China won the FIBA Women's Asia Cup.

Her first season in Australia provided further evidence of her ability to adapt to and succeed in different basketball environments.

Playing for the Perth Lynx in 2025-26, Han averaged 16.2 points, 7.3 rebounds and 2.2 blocks in 18 games. She anchored Perth's defense and helped the team reach the Grand Final Series, where it finished runner-up to the Townsville Fire.





Above: Han Xu of the New York Liberty (21) reacts after sinking a three-pointer against the Phoenix Mercury during a WNBA game at Mortgage Matchup Center on Saturday in Phoenix, Arizona.
Right: Han makes another three-point basket in the Liberty's 94-92 win over Phoenix on Saturday. GETTY IMAGES

Her strong performances around the basket earned her the league's Defensive Player of the Year award and a place on the All-WNBL Second Team.

Han's combination of size, rim protection and offensive versatility made her one of the most sought-after players on the WNBL market. Australian media reported that several clubs had pursued her, before Geelong eventually secured her signature.

Venom head coach Cheryl Chambers described Han as one of the world's most dominant post players.

"Her shot-blocking and rebounding are genuinely elite," Chambers said.

"Adding that size and experience to our roster gives this team a real edge, and we can't wait to see what she brings to the club this year."

Han's arrival has raised expectations at Geelong as the relatively new club seeks to turn itself from a finals contender into a championship winner.

Veteran guard Rebecca Cole said having an elite shot-blocker behind the team's perimeter defenders would give them the confidence to apply greater pressure to opposing ball handlers.

"Her presence on the floor at both ends of the court is going to change the entire game for us," Cole told Australian basketball media.

Han offers much more than interior defense.

She can run the floor, finish efficiently around the basket and stretch defenses with her outside shooting. Her mobility and touch are rare for a player of her height, giving Chambers a wide range of tactical options.

Already familiar with the WNBL's physical style and competitive intensity, Han said she was excited about returning to Australia.

"I know how passionate this league's fans are and how much the competition has grown," Han said.

"I'm looking forward to bringing everything I've built over my career — from China to the WNBA — into this team, and pushing for something special with my new teammates."

Geelong has further strengthened its roster with Zhang, an experienced competitor in both five-on-five and 3x3 basketball.

The 32-year-old won consecutive WCBA championships in the 2022-23 and 2023-24 seasons. She also won the Chinese 3x3 league title in 2023 and was named MVP.

Most recently, she helped China win bronze at this year's FIBA 3x3 Asia Cup.

Zhang said moving to Australia would give her an opportunity to step outside her comfort zone and experience a different style of basketball.

"I'm really looking forward to soaking up the basketball vibe in Geelong," she said.

"I've no idea what's ahead, but I'm going to keep loving the game and take it one step at a time. I can't wait to get settled in, learn the system and go to battle with my new teammates."

The growing presence of Chinese players in overseas leagues reflects a broader trend in the development of women's basketball in China.

Overseas leagues such as the WNBA and WNBL expose Chinese players to faster-paced games, stronger physical contests and different tactical systems. Such experience helps improve their decision-making, defensive awareness and their ability to handle pressure against the world's top teams.

Han remains one of the clearest examples of that process. Following the conclusion of the WNBA regular season, she is expected to represent China at the FIBA Women's Basketball World Cup in Berlin in September.

After completing her national-team commitments, she will join Geelong ahead of the WNBL season, which tips off on Oct 15.

Her journey represents a growing connection between Chinese basketball and the international game, with more players willing to step out of their comfort zone and test themselves in more demanding overseas competitions.

In her March message, Han hoped her journey would become a signpost for those coming after her. With four Chinese players now committed to WNBL clubs for the new season, others are already beginning to walk alongside her on the path she helped forge.

TENNIS

Shang returns to winning ways in Montreal to set up Rublev rematch

By **SUN XIAOCHEN**
sunxiaochen@chinadaily.com.cn

He's not quite there yet, but Shang Juncheng is starting to look like a history-making prodigy again.

Having his trademark agility and precision back at his disposal certainly made the difference on Sunday at the ATP1000 Masters tournament in Montreal, where Shang claimed his first ATP Tour-level win in over six months after being sidelined by a long injury layoff.

Shang's straight-sets upset of 66th-ranked Adolfo Daniel Vallejo of Paraguay at the National Bank Open secured his first main-draw win on the men's pro circuit since his opening-round victory at the Australian Open in January, serving up a much-needed confidence boost for his comeback from a nagging foot injury.

It's been the second year in a row that the 21-year-old Shang has been sidelined for the first half of the season due to a number of fitness issues that have slowed down his meteoric career rise.

The resilient young talent — creator of many "youngest-ever" records for Chinese men's tennis — has taken pride in overcoming the grueling rehab again, although admitting he's far from showing his top form yet.

"Honestly, I felt a lot of things were not going so well, even yesterday. I had issues with my baseline strokes, volleys and returns in training," Shang said after ousting Vallejo 6-3, 6-3 in 82 minutes, before a heavy downpour put Sunday's other matches at the IGA Stadium on hold.

"My dad and my coach told me to just focus on every single shot and to not overthink things. They told me 'it's totally normal if your opponent plays better than you, because they've been playing all year long, while you've just come back'.



Shang Juncheng hits a return to Adolfo Daniel Vallejo in Montreal on Sunday. REUTERS

"Rehab is an incredibly tedious process. I hope no young player ever has to go through this ordeal, but if they do, (they should) just treat it with patience and persistence, and stick to what's needed (to recover).

"I couldn't figure this out at first, but I've gradually come to terms with the setbacks, which are part of the job," said Shang, who reached his career-high ranking of No 47 in October 2024 after winning his first ATP Tour title in Chengdu.

Shang will need to step up his game quickly, as the challenge gets tougher with a round-of-64 match against Russian former World No 5 Andrey Rublev on Tuesday.

Rublev beat Shang in their only previous meeting, the semifinals of an ATP250 tournament in Hong Kong in 2024.

Having maintained a friendly relationship with the Russian power-hitter, Shang said he will cherish the opportunity to test himself physically and mentally against the 10th seed in Montreal.

"It will be a tough match, for sure, because his ability is now is well above mine," said a candid Shang, who, at world No 281 this week, entered the Montreal main draw via protected ranking.

"This will be another chance to learn from a top-15-caliber opponent. I've played many of them, and I just want to do my best this time and, win or lose, just enjoy the match."

With power never being his strength, Shang leans on his quick legs, resilient defense and tactical variety to outwit size and force.

His best form in 2024 saw him become the youngest Chinese man ever to register a main-draw win at the ATP1000 level with victory over Jordan Thompson at Indian Wells, California, in March, before becoming the youngest Chinese man to break into the top 100 in May that year.

On Sunday, relying on his fast movement, combined with pinpoint accuracy and long rallies, Shang dispatched Vallejo using his familiar winning formula, evoking fond memories of the teen star in his prime.

More drills are needed, though, as Shang, who's racked up six career wins at the Masters level, is aiming for a strong resurgence, as the season heads into its final stretch with a number of Chinese players struggling with poor form of late.

"I came here with confidence built through training, but match intensity is definitely a different story," Shang said.

"I've made some progress today, but I can't guarantee I'll be in perfect form for the next match.

"No matter the result of my next game, I want to maintain a positive attitude."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:13 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:15 PM

Heritage dividend
UNESCO site transforms dying village into tourist hub
GOING GREEN, PAGE 12



Gulf tensions soar as US, Iran trade strikes
WORLD, PAGE 5



Bellingham brilliance
Star's double lifts England over Norway into World Cup final four
SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 MONDAY, JULY 13, 2026

WORLD WATCH
By Kirsty Coventry

The 2008 Olympics: Games that keep on giving

Twenty-five years ago, Beijing won the right to host the Olympic Games. It marked the beginning of an extraordinary Olympic journey for China.

For me, the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games became one of the defining moments of my life as an athlete. I will always remember the feeling of those Games: the energy of the city, the pride of the people, the color and creativity of the opening ceremony, and the sense that the whole world had come together in one place.

Inside
Views, **page 7**

I also remember two venues in particular. The Water Cube will always be special to me as a swimmer. It was there that I experienced some of the most important moments of my career. The Bird's Nest became one of the defining images of Beijing 2008 — an iconic setting for an opening ceremony that brought Chinese culture and creativity to the world.

When I returned to Beijing for the 2022 Winter Olympic Games, this time as an International Olympic Committee member, I saw those memories in a new light. The Water Cube had become the Ice Cube — the Olympic curling venue. The Bird's Nest once again staged unforgettable Olympic opening and closing ceremonies.

These were striking examples of venues being given a second life. But they also pointed to something bigger.

The real legacy of an Olympic Games is never only about what remains after the flame goes out. It is about what the Games make possible afterward. Can more young people discover sports? Can more communities be active? Can athletes train and compete in better conditions? Can a city become better equipped for the future?

Those are the questions that should guide every Olympic host from the very beginning — to ensure that the Games deliver more for local communities while leaving a lighter footprint on the environment.

That is what sustainable Games should mean. It starts with responsible choices about resources — venues, transportation and energy. But its purpose is broader: to create benefits that last.

Beijing shows what that can look like.

See ***Legacy,*** *page 3*



INSIDE
Win-win cooperation
Global Views, page 8

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved

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

Still hoping, still looking





Top: Rescuers and volunteers search through debris at La Guaira in northern Venezuela on Saturday, two weeks after massive earthquakes struck the country. The death toll in the disaster had risen to 4,333 as of Saturday, with 16,740 people injured and 6,462 rescued. Authorities have set up 94 temporary camps to shelter more than 18,000 people. LEONARDO FERNANDEZ VILORIA / REUTERS **Above:** Displaced people use emergency tents provided by China at a temporary camp in La Guaira, Venezuela, on Friday. MARCOS SALGADO / XINHUA

Beijing debunks South China Sea statement

By **ZHANG YUNBI**
zhangyunbi@chinadaily.com.cn

Inside
Editorial, **page 6**

Beijing has blasted a joint statement released by 14 countries regarding the "2016 South China Sea arbitration award", urging those countries to "stop stirring up trouble over the South China Sea issue" and "cease undermining peace and stability in the South China Sea".

"China urges the relevant countries to earnestly respect China's territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests in the South China Sea," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Sunday.

The United States, the Philippines, Australia, Canada, Estonia, Germany, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, New Zealand, Romania, Slovenia and the United Kingdom issued a joint statement earlier on Sunday.

The 14-nation joint statement claimed that the "award" rendered 10 years ago by the "arbitral tribunal in the South China Sea arbitration" is "a significant milestone", and that "there is no legal basis for China's expansive maritime claims in the South China Sea".

In response, the Foreign Ministry noted that, "If the 'award' were to be taken as a standard, many countries' islands and reefs would be denied the basis for claiming maritime rights and interests.

"May we ask, have those countries supporting the 'award' voluntarily waived the maritime rights and interests deriving from their relevant islands and reefs?" the ministry added in its own statement dismissing the 14-nation claims.

The ministry reiterated that China does not accept or recognize the "award", and it opposes and does not accept any claim or action based on it.

"Land territorial issues are not subject to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea", and the "award" is nothing but a worthless piece of paper that is illegal, null and void, the ministry said.

The US and other countries have been persistently reinforcing their military presence in the South China Sea, throwing their weight around and fanning the flames, it warned. "These acts of militarization and coercion constitute the primary challenge to the current situation in the South China Sea," the ministry said.

For the past 10 years, the "award" has "become a tool for the Philippines to expand its territorial and maritime claims, exacerbated tensions in the region and provided a pretext for external forces to intervene and destabilize the South China Sea", the ministry noted.

The continued playing up of the illegal "award" by certain countries "goes against the aspirations of countries and people in the region for development and prosperity", the ministry said, adding that "such attempts are doomed to fail".

Wu Shicun, chairman of the Huayang Center for Maritime Cooperation and Ocean Governance, said that the "award" was "a political farce" executed by the then Philippine administration, manipulated by the US and assisted by Japan in an attempt to whitewash Manila's illegal claims and actions.

Also on Sunday, Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi made a separate statement blatantly endorsing the "award", attacking China's lawful claims and mischaracterizing Japan as a "legitimate stakeholder who uses the South China Sea".

"China strongly deplores and firmly opposes this," a spokesperson for the Chinese Foreign Ministry said in a written response.

The spokesperson noted Japan's wartime atrocities against China and its people, as well as its illegal occupation of islands and reefs in the South China Sea, and said that now Japan is again attempting to meddle in the South China Sea.

"This reminds people of Japan's history of aggression and expansion, and heightens their vigilance against Japan's neo-militarist agenda," the spokesperson said.

According to the "award" supported by Japan, Taiping Dao in the Nansha Islands — an area that spans 500,000 square meters and has fresh water, vegetables, fruits and poultry to sustain human habitation — is not even considered an island and therefore cannot generate entitlement to an exclusive economic zone and continental shelf, the spokesperson said.

"By that 'standard', many of Japan's islands and reefs would likewise have no basis for claiming maritime rights and interests," the spokesperson added. The spokesperson questioned Japan's claim to the EEZ and continental shelf around Okinotori, which is nothing more than two tiny rocks of less than 10 square meters in the Pacific.

The head of the ministry's Department of Asian Affairs on Sunday summoned the chief minister of the embassy of Japan in China to lodge a stern representation and strong protest.

On Sunday, the Chinese Mission to the European Union also blasted a separate statement issued by the EU about the "award", which called for securing freedom of navigation and overflight.

A spokesperson for the Chinese mission said that the EU is not a stakeholder in the South China Sea issue, and the EU's statement "disregards the historical context and objective facts of the South China Sea issue, runs counter to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, and is detrimental to the region's peace and stability".

XI'S VISION | CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Ruins highlight efforts to trace, preserve roots

Mesmerizing Yinxu site in Henan province marks 20 years on UNESCO heritage list

By **WANG RU**
wangru1@chinadaily.com.cn

Numerous exquisite bronze and other items from the earliest recorded time of Chinese civilization are testament to a widely spreading kingship of China's Central Plains, as well as China's oldest-known writing system and multiple historical legends, and have provided significant illumination for modern Chinese archaeology since the 1920s.

The Yinxu Ruins in Anyang, Henan province, which one expert described as the "brightest star" of Chinese archaeology, connect the early stage of China as a nation around 3,300 years ago to the modern age, and have mesmerized not only professionals, but also the Chinese general public, inspiring them to trace their literary roots.

Monday marks the 20th anniversary of the Yinxu Ruins being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. As the site celebrates this milestone anniversary, one of the most eye-catching attractions at the Yinxu Museum is something playful: a hair-drying cap shaped like an adorable owl.

Since its debut in 2024, the hair-drying cap has been a hit among tourists flocking to the museum. Featuring a lively, big-eyed owl look and strong practical value for daily use, it draws inspiration from an owl-shaped wine vessel unearthed from the tomb at Yinxu of Fu Hao, China's first-known female general and a consort of the Shang Dynasty (c.16th century-11th century BC) king Wu Ding.

Zhao Qingrong, director of the museum, said that when museum visitors wear available replica caps or clothing with elements of the Shang Dynasty, or they eat food that has been made in the style of those early days, "they are no longer something strange in your textbooks. Your taste buds and skin have a real interaction with them, which lingers better than a mere glance at exhibit cabinets".

"In this way, we transfer the obscure archaeological knowledge into an accessible aesthetic experience, so that people can connect with the Yinxu Ruins in their daily lives and thus develop an emotional bond with that remote era," she added.

The Yinxu Ruins, at the site of an ancient capital of the late Shang Dynasty, have yielded numerous exquisite bronze vessels as well as oracle bones, which bear inscriptions known as *jiaguwen* that are carved on animal bones to record events and for fortune-telling, and constitute the earliest-known formal writing system in China.

The preservation and popularity of such products are no accident. Over the past two decades, sustained top-level guidance and cultural protection efforts have laid a solid foundation for the innovative inheritance of Shang civilization.

See ***Yinxu,*** *page 3*

SUMMER WONDERLAND WELCOMES NIGHT OWLS

Entertainment complex looks to elevate Shanghai's Fuxing Park into a nightlife hub

By **HE QI** in Shanghai
heqi@chinadaily.com.cn

As the dappled light filters through Fuxing Park's plane tree leaves at dusk, Shanghai's nighttime energy starts to permeate neighborhoods, parks and riverfronts.

Ranked No 1 in the night economy index of China Business News, the city is living up to its billing with a new nightlife wonderland, with the park at its heart.

"I really enjoy the nightlife in Shanghai," said Tommaso Bianchin, an Italian wine industry professional.

"I have friends who go to underground clubs and rooftop parties. The venues are great, people are friendly, and the standard is high."

Spanish DJ Lalo Lopez, who has performed globally, agreed: "I've attended many parties, in many countries, and Shanghai's nightlife is unique," said Lopez.

It's the diversity of nighttime offerings that is the main attraction, and diversity is the watchword for INS Land, a massive multi-story entertainment and lifestyle complex located in Fuxing Park.

See ***Hub,*** *page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.



Foreign tourists enjoy a night tour of Nanjing Road Pedestrian Mall in Shanghai on May 2. CHEN YANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:15 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:15 PM

INDEPTH

Visitors dream of taking China's serenity, safety home

'Everyday' stability, sense of security impress tourists, foreign residents

By **ZHANG XIAOMIN**
in Dalian, Liaoning
zhangxiaomin@chinadaily.com.cn



Visitors pose for a photo at the Shanghai Disney Resort on June 16. LIU YING / XINHUA

"What is it like night walking in China's Guangzhou, one of the most populated cities in the world? It's extremely safe. I'm wearing my very expensive watch. No one bothers you, no one is trying to pull you in their shops," British creator Ben posted on his social media account, OTWD.

His observation about the capital of South China's Guangdong province, casual as it seemed, struck a chord with a large number of foreign visitors to China.

When a man can stroll through one of the world's busiest urban centers late at night wearing an expensive timepiece — and nothing happens — his actions challenge assumptions about safety in densely populated cities.

As China gains in popularity as a travel destination, a growing number of foreign tourists are capturing moments through their lenses showing how safe China is, their images resonating deeply with expats and visitors. This "Chinese sense of security" has sparked spirited discussions on social media platforms both at home and abroad.

The growing perception that China is an extremely safe destination is backed up by statistics. In 2025, the number of criminal cases in the country dropped 12.8 percent year-on-year, reaching their lowest level in decades, while public order cases also declined, according to data from China's Ministry of Public Security. In addition, public confidence of public safety remained above 98 percent for the sixth consecutive year.

Perhaps more telling for an international audience is the Global Safety Report 2025, released in January 2026 by the US-based analytics firm Gallup. Among more than 140 countries and territories surveyed, China ranked third safest overall. The report also highlighted strong public confidence in local law enforcement and low levels of personal experience with crime.

The new normal

"When I first came to Beijing two years ago, I went outside at night and found there were still a lot of people walking around, and everything felt normal, like it wasn't even that late. At that moment, I thought 'this place is actually really safe'," said Salah Eddine Ben Mhmed, a 20-year-old student from Morocco, who is now studying at Dalian Polytechnic University in Liaoning province.

"It felt strange seeing people outside late at night without a worry. But now it feels completely normal to me," he added. He attributes this feeling to a combination of public order and a general trust that daily life is calm and well-managed.

This transition from a surprise to seeing it as normal is common among many long-term foreign residents in China.

Merlin Palmer, 40, a Canadian IT engineer who works in Beijing, arrived in China in 2012 and planned to stay only briefly. "I was thinking about traveling the world as an English teacher," he said.

That was before he met his wife Bonny Liu. Fourteen years later, he lives happily in Chaoyang district with his wife, 5-year-old son Arthur, and a puppy called Chocolate.

Palmer said living in Beijing had fundamentally changed his perspective on parenting and safety.

"Parents don't have to worry about guns or drugs, or racism or bullying," he said. "Arthur is in a classroom of 99 percent ethnically Chinese children, and he has never experienced any kind of 'othering' because of that. He is very much accepted and loved within his peer group."

Palmer credits not just legal protections, but also school food standards, community safety measures, and everyday kindness from strangers. "In China, there are a lot of policies about children's safety that may feel restrictive to some people, but in the end, they make a meaningful impact on the safety of children day-to-day."

Eddy, an American host at Dunhuang Media Center in Gansu province, pointed to the absence of gun violence as a major difference to the United States.

Growing up in an environment where school shooting drills were routine, he finds a special meaning in China's sense of security. He also pointed out that China's safety goes beyond law enforcement.

From fire safety education on campus to community awareness and shared responsibility, he believes the country's strong sense of security is built not only by institutions, but also by the people and communities who look out for one another every day.

Italian artist Federico Gentile, who visited Dalian during this year's Summer Davos forum in June, was equally impressed.

"People roam free and don't worry about anything. It's amazing to see a lot of happy families, having fun with their kids," he said.

During the May Day holiday, the "unattended luggage wall" at Liyuan station of Wuhan metro in Hubei province went viral.

Tourists neatly lined up their suitcases along the station wall before heading out to explore the city. This unguarded and perfectly orderly wall of luggage went viral on Chinese social media, becoming a symbol of the country's trademark "worry-free" travel.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning also shared a video on social media with the caption, "In Central China's Wuhan, unattended luggage lined the walls of a metro station, left behind by tourists eager to explore the city. Safe and worry-free!"

Unattended luggage walls and designated luggage storage areas are not unique to Wuhan.

They can also be found at metro stations in Changsha, Hunan province, Foshan in Guangdong, Nanjing, Jiangsu province, and Fuzhou, Fujian province, and other cities. This sense of security goes beyond trusting that one's suitcase will remain safe; it reflects a deeper confidence in the sense of security in China that people have come to rely on.

Positive impression

A playful post by Chinese vlogger Alan Jun on Facebook gained wide recognition. It posed the question: "'Is it safe to travel in China? Please don't lie.' An American netizen asked this question. Every city in China is extremely safe. The only unsafe place is the night market, where you will spend all your money, lose sleep, overeat, and gain weight. So you must not go out at night."

Under that post, netizen Properly_Basic replied: "As someone who lived in China for a bit, it is amazing how you can go outside at like 1 am without the worry of someone kidnapping you."

Another user, Alan Camp, commented: "I had 14 days in China. Beijing, Yantai (Shandong province), Shanghai, Qingdao (Shandong), Guangzhou and many other smaller cities. It's incredible how efficient and safe everything is. I treasure my time spent making friends and experiencing so many things."

Mark Owens, a member of the Oregon House of Representatives and a farm owner, visited the Inner Mongolia autonomous region, Beijing and Shanghai in October 2025 as part of a trade delegation — his first trip to China.

"The first couple of nights, I had trouble sleeping, so I got up early and I'd go for a walk. As the sun was coming up, I felt very, very safe in Beijing. I went out after dinner by myself and felt very, very safe. I mean, very, very clean, very polite, just a very good experience," he told China Daily.

Students from the University of Waterloo in Canada who took part in a Chinese culture immersion program at Beijing Normal University in October 2025 had similar positive impressions.

"Before visiting, I had heard many conflicting descriptions of what life there might be like. However, my experience showed me a place full of warmth, innovation, history, and everyday beauty," one student, Gia-Thanh Yvonne Ly, said.

Mudupeola Aladetokunbo Caxton-Martins added: "I could go out at 3 am and I would see other locals out too; this also added a safety net as I didn't feel alone and knew that there were also others around me."

Natalie Hermila Garcia Munoz, who has traveled to 24 countries, said "none compared to Beijing" — citing the advanced subway, the safe late-night streets and the world-class hospitality.

Raine Mimoza Hutton said: "I came back home with a completely unique perspective on China ... I feel that all the negativity surrounding China in the news and media creates a significant shadow over all the amazing things the country has to offer."



> "I could go out at 3 am and I would see other locals out too; this also added a safety net as I didn't feel alone and knew that there were also others around me."
>
> **Mudupeola Aladetokunbo Caxton-Martins,** a student from the University of Waterloo in Canada

Foreign tourists try hamburgers during a food festival in Nantong, Jiangsu province, on May 23. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY





Left: A girl interacts with an Irish tourist in Chongqing on April 22. HUANG WEI / XINHUA **Right:** Foreign visitors enjoy the sunshine and beaches in Sanya, Hainan province, on June 13. GUO CHENG / XINHUA

The roots of reassurance

When Serbian influencer Saitie, who has lived in China for over four years, was asked by friends how China maintains such a high-trust society, he offered two reasons: the prevalence of technology, and — more importantly — the dramatic improvement in average living standards over the past two decades.

"There's no point for a person to go out and steal stuff and therefore face the consequences for that," he said.

His down-to-earth observation aligns with broader analysis.

Professor Wang Jianxin, dean of the school of public security at People's Public Security University of China, said: "China's ability to maintain long-term social stability alongside rapid economic growth reflects a distinct path of social security governance."

He identified the key factors as "the leadership of the Communist Party of China, sound laws and good governance, technological empowerment, and public mobilization".

Commentator Nie Zhiwang said: "The Chinese sense of security is by no means merely about low crime rates: it is a people-centered, inclusive, comprehensive, and safety-net type of security."

For individuals, it means walking alone late at night without fear, not worrying about children at school, and confidently leaving belongings temporarily unattended. For society, it means stable public order, harmonious neighborhoods, and resolvable conflicts. For the nation, it reflects the governance effectiveness of maintaining long-term order and stability across a country with a massive population and vast territory.

This security rests on three pillars: coordinated development that keeps violent crime low, refined grassroots networks that nip risks in the bud, and continued economic improvements.

In Guangzhou, Ben walked the night streets with his expensive watch and felt totally safe. In Dalian, Italian artist Gentile heard the streets ring with the laughing of families and children at play. These scenes capture a deeper meaning of security in China: it is not merely the absence of danger, but the presence of a confident, everyday existence.

That everyday life — the "Chinese experience" — is what many foreign visitors most want to take home with them, yet cannot pack in their luggage.

Yang Gao in Toronto, Lia Zhu in San Francisco, Chen Meiling and Wang Songsong in Beijing, Hu Yumeng and Ma Jingna in Lanzhou, and Liu Mengtong in Dalian contributed to this story.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:15 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:15 PM

TOP NEWS

65 years on, treaty with DPRK hailed

Xi highlights cooperation and support between two sides over the past decades

Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and Chinese president, and Kim Jong-un, general secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea and president of the State Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, exchanged congratulations on Saturday on the 65th anniversary of the signing of the China-DPRK Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance.

In his message, Xi said that in 1961, the older generation of leaders of China and the DPRK signed the China-DPRK Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, laying an important political and legal foundation for consolidating the friendship forged in blood between the two peoples.

The treaty has played an important role in carrying forward China-DPRK friendship and safeguarding peace and stability in the region and beyond, he said.

Over the past 65 years, the two sides have upheld the spirit of the treaty, supported each other, stood united, cooperated closely and worked together, vividly demonstrating the defining features of China-DPRK relations — friendship passed down from generation to generation, a shared future and mutual support, he said.

Xi pointed to a successful state visit to the DPRK in June, when he reached important consensus with Kim on consolidating and carrying forward the traditional friendship between China and the DPRK and enriching it with new dimensions, providing strategic guidance and a new blueprint for the development of China-DPRK relations in the new era.

Facing a rapidly evolving world undergoing profound changes unseen in a century, Xi voiced willingness to work with Kim to further strengthen strategic communication, keep China-DPRK relations on the right track and guide bilateral friendly cooperation to deliver greater benefits to the two peoples, in order to make positive contributions to promoting regional peace and development.

Xi said that no matter how the international landscape evolves, the firm position of China's Party and government to attach great importance to the traditional friendship between China and the DPRK will remain unchanged; the firm support for Kim in leading the DPRK's socialist cause will remain unchanged; and the determination to safeguard the common interests of both sides and maintain a favorable strategic environment will remain unchanged.

He expressed confidence that, under the leadership of the WPK headed by Kim, the DPRK people will fully implement the decisions and arrangements of the Ninth Congress of the WPK and continue to achieve new and greater successes in their socialist cause.

Kim said that the two sides signed the DPRK-China Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance 65 years ago, laying a solid legal foundation for the enduring development of the fighting friendship and unity of mutual assistance and cooperation between the DPRK and China, forged in the bloody struggle for independence against imperialism and for the great cause of peace and socialism.

Over the past decades, through all the vicissitudes of history, the DPRK and China have stood by each other with unwavering support and close cooperation, fully demonstrating to the world the everlasting and unbreakable nature of their friendship — a relationship that is special in terms of traditional bonds, shared socialist cause, and firm commitment to carrying it forward from generation to generation, Kim said.

The friendly and cooperative relations between the DPRK and China, as a strategic choice and precious common wealth of the two parties and two peoples, are being elevated to a new strategic height and are making important contributions to safeguarding the sovereignty, security and development interests of the two countries and upholding regional and global peace and stability amid the complex and volatile international situation, Kim said.

It is the unwavering position of the WPK and the DPRK government to advance the traditional friendly and cooperative relations between the DPRK and China, with socialism at its core, to keep pace with the changes of the times and the aspirations of the two peoples and to achieve more dynamic development in all fields, he added.

XINHUA

Public outcry



Protesters denounce Immigration and Customs Enforcement as they rally outside Houston City Hall in Texas on Sunday to protest the fatal shooting of Lorenzo Salgado Araujo, a Mexican national who had lived in the United States for decades. On Tuesday, an ICE officer fatally shot Salgado Araujo after he was pursued while on his way to work by federal agents driving unmarked vehicles. LEKAN OYEKANMI / AP

GDP deflator likely to turn positive in Q2

By **ZHOU LANXU**, **ZHANG CHENXU** and **ZHONG NAN**

China's second-quarter GDP deflator is likely to turn positive for the first time in more than three years, sending the clearest signal yet that the country's price dynamics are improving, helping support corporate earnings and consumer confidence, analysts and executives said.

The GDP deflator is a tool that is used to measure price changes of all goods and services produced in an economy over time.

Ahead of the release of China's economic data for the first half of the year on Wednesday, the projection comes amid improving sentiment about the Chinese market among global enterprises and investors, even as additional policy support is seen as necessary in the second half to reinforce domestic demand and address structural pressures in the economy.

The GDP deflator is closely watched by economists as the broadest gauge of economy-wide inflation. It reflects the gap between nominal GDP growth and real GDP growth.

A positive reading signals rising prices across the economy, while a negative reading could point to deflationary pressure. China's GDP deflator has remained negative for 12 consecutive quarters through the first quarter of this year, when it stood at about -0.1 percent, weighing on the income growth of businesses and households as prices trended down.

Sun Xuegong, director-general of the department of policy study and consultation at the Chinese Academy of Macroeconomic Research, an academy affiliated with the National Development and Reform Commission, said China's GDP deflator has likely turned positive in the second quarter.

"Such a change would improve the profitability of market entities, lift their expectations and make the on-the-ground experience of businesses and households more in line with the growth in macroeconomic data," Sun said, adding that stronger nominal growth would also help boost the share of China's economy in the world total.

Su Jian, director of Peking University's National Center for Economic Research, said the second-quarter GDP deflator may turn positive at around 1.9 percent, helped by a low comparison base, higher prices of some global commodities, and firmer domestic prices of some consumer durables.

"A positive GDP deflator would suggest that the imbalance between supply and demand has eased and deflationary pressure is moderating. Improving price dynamics would support corporate profitability, thus help restore household and business expectations, and reinforce recovery in domestic demand," Su said.

Such a recovery in price dynamics can be seen in the consumer price index. Using the prices of a basket of consumer goods to gauge inflation, China's CPI has maintained a growth of at least 1 percent year-on-year for five consecutive months as of June, official data showed.

Su added that he estimates that China's real GDP to grow 4.9 percent year-on-year in the first half of the year after a 5 percent growth in the first quarter, while first-half nominal GDP growth may reach about 6.7 percent.

Robin Xing, chief China economist at Morgan Stanley, raised the forecast for China's full-year GDP deflator to 0.5 percent. Combined with the United States' investment bank's 4.8 percent real GDP growth forecast, that would imply the first time in four years that annual nominal growth would return above 5 percent.

"Nominal GDP is what companies care about, as it is closely related to their revenue and profits," Xing said.

The improving earnings are bolstering global investors' interest in China's capital market, with UBS expecting 11 percent earnings growth for all A shares in 2026, up from 3.9 percent in 2025, and remaining positive on China's artificial intelligence tech hardware names for the rest of the year amid strong earnings momentum.

Multinational companies are also reinforcing their commitment to the Chinese market. Joe Bao, president for China at Kone, said the Finnish elevator manufacturer is strengthening its supply chain resilience and responsiveness in the Chinese market, having established its Southern China headquarters in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, early this year to drive digital innovation and strengthen service capabilities.

Analysts, however, cautioned that the foundation for a rebound in prices remains fragile as the current recovery was bolstered more by international energy prices than domestic demand.

The People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, has vowed to enhance the forward-looking, flexibility and targeted nature of policy at the second-quarter monetary policy committee meeting, acknowledging the challenges of weak demand, structural divergence and external shocks.

Contact the writers at zhoulanxv@chinadaily.com.cn

Hub: Area rolls out bilingual signage

From page 1

This summer, INS Land unveiled its evolution from a 20,000-square-meter entertainment landmark into a neighborhood block-sized "urban nightlife wonderland", connecting the park and the city's Sinan Mansions area. The complex integrates e-sports, music, live performances, dining and socializing.

Fan Meichen, deputy general-manager of Sinan Mansions, which is organizing themed events and parties every weekend throughout the summer, said that Soul House, a newly opened immersive theater bar, has been fully booked every day since opening in June.

Soul House features a 24-hour access gate at Fuxing Park and offers a park shuttle. A walkable nighttime loop integrating culture, commerce, sports, tourism and exhibitions has since formed beneath the plane trees.

"Visitors can have a drink at INS Land, take the mini train through the park, then head to Sinan Mansions to experience Soul House. It makes for a truly diverse experience," Fan said.

The diversity doesn't stop there.

"The proportion of foreign visitors has increased significantly in the Sinan Mansions area," Fan said, adding that "the neighborhood has rolled out bilingual signage and service points".

It's not a recent trend, as evidenced by the INS Land club Hero Dome.

Ranked No 12 on the list of the world's Top 100 Clubs, Hero Dome hosted the inaugural Asian edition of global EDM festival phenomenon Tomorrowland last year, with 20,000 tickets selling out almost instantly.

According to a 2025 China nighttime economy development report co-released by the China Tourism Academy and Landsky, nighttime spending now makes up 32.9 percent of daily consumption nationwide, with key drivers transitioning from "dining, drinking and shopping", to "novelty, diversity and socializing".

Xia Tianyi, a co-founder of INS Land, sees more potential to develop and build on the city's current success. There are areas where the city's nightlife potential "remains largely untapped", he said.

INS Land will partner with nearby merchants to build an ecosystem of flexible, self-guided entertainment options to elevate the entire Fuxing Park area into a new highlight of Huangpu district.

Running with besties



A woman and her dog compete on Saturday in the Mud Dog Race in Piliscsev, Hungary. The summer event features a 2-kilometer course with 10 obstacles, allowing participants to enjoy muddy challenges and outdoor fun with their canine companions. XINHUA

Legacy: Sports give people hope, ambition

From page 1

The Beijing 2008 Olympic Games did not just leave behind Olympic venues. They helped accelerate the city's transformation, with investments in transportation, public spaces and other infrastructure that continue to serve residents today. They have also helped drive a major increase in sports participation, building momentum for a broader sporting culture in China — one in which more people move, play and take part in sports.

The Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games took this legacy to another level. Five venues from 2008 were reused, all Games venues were powered by renewable energy, and low-carbon technologies were introduced. The Games also accelerated the development of the Beijing-Zhangjiakou high-speed railway, significantly cutting travel times between the two areas.

Together, these examples show what the Olympic legacy can mean when it reaches beyond the event itself: more opportunity, more participation and a stronger place for sport in people's lives.

During my most recent visit to China, I saw that legacy in action. I saw it in the scale and energy of the 2025 National Games across Guangdong province and the Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions; in the pride people take in their sporting culture; and in the enthusiasm of people of all ages for sport and physical activity.

Most important, however, those Games brought winter sports to more than 350 million people across China. Yanqing and Zhangjiakou have become hubs for winter sports events and training, with facilities that serve the public and local athletes alike. This is creating new opportunities and real social and economic benefits for local communities.

Sports are about far more than competition. They bring people together. They help young people build confidence and learn important values. They support healthier communities. They create belonging. And they give people hope and ambition.

At a time when the world is increasingly divided, this is also why the Olympic spirit matters. The Olympic Games remind us that people from every part of the world can come together in peace and friendship. They remind us that, even when we come from different cultures and backgrounds, we can still share moments of joy, respect and admiration.

Beijing's Olympic journey — from its successful bid 25 years ago to the Olympic Games in 2008 and the Winter Games in 2022 — shows the value of thinking beyond the event itself.

The best Olympic legacy is not simply what is left behind when the Games end. It is what carries on: in people's lives, in communities and in the generations still to come.

The author is president of the International Olympic Committee and a two-time Olympic swimming champion. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Yinxu: Discovery extended history

From page 1

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2012, President Xi Jinping, who is also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, has shown great concern for the preservation of cultural relics and made important instructions for work in this regard.

Xi visited the Yinxu Ruins and Yinxu Museum in 2022, during which he said: "I have long been yearning to visit here. This time I come here for a deeper study and understanding of the Chinese civilization so that we can make the past serve the present, and draw inspiration for better building the modern Chinese civilization."

He noted that fine traditional Chinese culture is the root of the Party's new theories. The ultimate approach of adapting Marxism to the Chinese context and the needs of the times is to integrate the basic tenets of Marxism with China's specific realities and fine traditional culture.

Xi also pointed out that the *jiaguwen* inscriptions preserved the evidence of the Chinese written language of 3,000 years ago, helping to place the beginning of China's recorded history nearly 1,000 years earlier than previously believed.

This was not the first time he highlighted the importance of *jiaguwen*. In 2019, Xi sent a congratulatory letter on the 120th anniversary of the discovery of the oracle bone inscriptions, describing them as the roots of fine traditional Chinese culture and saying that the discovery is of epoch-making significance to Chinese civilization and even human civilization.

Li Xiaoyang, head of Anyang's cultural heritage bureau, said Xi's words fully reflect the important role of *jiaguwen*.

"The discovery of oracle bones in the late 19th century came at a time of cultural crisis, yet it miraculously restored Chinese people's confidence in their ancient civilization," Li said.

He also said that 15 archaeological excavations carried out entirely by Chinese scholars at the Yinxu Ruins from 1928 to 1937 confirmed the site to be a late capital of the Shang Dynasty, making the site a sacred place in Chinese archaeology. Prior to the Yinxu findings, the earliest period in Chinese history supported by existing written records was traced to inscribed bamboo slips from the Warring States Period (475-221 BC).

"Therefore, this discovery pushed China's reliable written history back to the late Shang period, extending the timeline of documented Chinese history by about 1,000 years," said Li.

Based on that, the Yinxu Ruins became the starting point for tracing Chinese civilization.

During his Anyang visit in 2022, Xi called for attaching more importance to and putting more efforts into archaeological research to carry forward the project of tracing the origins of Chinese civilization.

Over the past decades, archaeologists have gradually built a chronological framework of the Shang Dynasty and even earlier, starting from Yinxu.

"Knowing Yinxu as the last Shang capital, we have then traced earlier periods through archaeological work. In the 1950s, archaeologists found another capital site in Zhengzhou, Henan, which was identified to be an early Shang capital based on typological comparisons of pottery vessels. Then, in 1999, they discovered another city to the north of the Huanhe River, and most scholars believe it was a capital for the middle Shang period," said Li.

"In this way, we have generally made clear the early, middle and late Shang periods' capitals, and all the research started from the Yinxu Ruins," he added.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:15 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:15 PM

WORLD IN FOCUS





From left: Clayson Benally's family members watch a horse performance in West Ujimqin Banner of Xilin Gol League, North China's Inner Mongolia autonomous region, on June 26. Zonnie Benally (center), daughter of Clayson Benally, walks on the grassland with herders' children on June 26. Benally's family is warmly received on June 26 by their Mongolian hosts, who presented them with ceremonial blue *hada* scarves, a symbol of blessing and goodwill on the grasslands.

Saddling up

Indigenous American family finds horseback bonds on rolling grasslands in North China's Inner Mongolia



Clayson Benally interacts with a Mongolian horse in West Ujimqin Banner of Xilin Gol League, North China's Inner Mongolia autonomous region, on June 26. PHOTOS BY LI ZHIPENG / XINHUA

This summer, the rolling grasslands of Xilin Gol in North China's Inner Mongolia autonomous region welcomed a group of indigenous American horse lovers.

Clayson Benally, a 49-year-old horse trainer and artist from Arizona, the United States, traveled thousands of miles with his family to meet Julaa, a 12-year-old ethnic Mongolian girl.

The young rider is the star of the big-screen documentary *Horse Power*, an international collaboration that explores humanity's enduring bond with horses across continents and cultures.

"It's the horses that brought us all together. That's something that words cannot express," Benally said. "When I watched the movie, one of the opening scenes is just here in Inner Mongolia. And my heart cried out to come here," he said.

Julaa's family raises more than 20 horses and nearly 150 sheep on their 156 hectares of contracted grassland. Julaa's aunt prepared her guesthouse for the American visitors days in advance, stocking up on mutton and fresh vegetables.

After a lunch on the grasslands, local herdsmen demonstrated their time-honored skills, performing classic Mongolian horse-roping and penning routines.

"This is something that I've never seen or experienced. I just think about how incredible and beautiful and alive the culture is here," he said.







Top: Clayson Benally tries the traditional Mongolian horse-roping on June 26.
Above from left: Benally watches a man playing the horsehead fiddle on June 26. Benally rides a horse with a herder on June 26. Benally tries on traditional Mongolian clothes on June 26.

Xilin Gol, honored by the China Horse Industry Association as "China's Hometown of Horses" in 2010, is home to some 340,000 horses, a living testament to its enduring cultural heritage around horses.

Benally's 53-year-old sister Jeneda, a professional singer, spent her birthday during the trip and received a memorable gift — a *morin khuur*, or traditional Mongolian horsehead fiddle.

The soulful, lingering strains of Mongolian long-tune folk songs moved Jeneda to tears. "Your music speaks straight to my soul," she told the local performers. "I hope these fleeting, precious moments will grow into lasting friendships."

For Jeneda's 19-year-old daughter Dyatihi, the most indelible impression came from driving along No. 99 Highway, a route that instantly reminded her of iconic Route 66 in the US.

Xilin Gol's No. 99 Highway hosts China's first dedicated grassland musical highway. When vehicles travel at a steady speed between 35 and 60 kilometers per hour, drivers and passengers are treated to a 120-second musical journey.

"No. 99 Highway here is unique and cool, because it is wrapped in music. It is as if the highway itself sings."

XINHUA



Herders lasso horses on the grassland in West Ujimqin Banner of Xilin Gol League, North China's Inner Mongolia autonomous region, on June 26.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:15 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:15 PM

WORLD

Gulf clashes intensify as tensions rise

Iran closes strait, US presses offensive amid regional powers' call for restraint

By **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong and **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE

Fighting between Iran and the United States sharply escalated over the weekend, prompting the Gulf and Arab countries to engage in interception and issue warnings, as Tehran and Washington wrestled for control over the Strait of Hormuz and accused each other of violating the truce.

The latest collateral damage left three people injured in Qatar, including one child, as a result of falling debris from interception operations, the country's Interior Ministry said on Sunday.

Missile warning sirens were sounded across Bahrain. The United Arab Emirates said its air defense systems were actively engaging with missiles and drone threats, and Kuwait's military said explosion sounds heard were the result of air defense systems intercepting hostile attacks.

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps announced the Strait of Hormuz was closed until further notice and until US interventions cease. The IRGC had previously warned that foreign interference and the establishment of an illegal shipping route would draw a firm response.

The latest developments come after the US Central Command announced on Sunday that it had completed last week's third round of strikes against Iran, holding Tehran's forces accountable for attacking another commercial ship in the strait.

US President Donald Trump threatened on Friday to "decimate and destroy" Iran if it made an attempt on his life. Iranian media reported on Saturday that Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei vowed to avenge the death of his father, former supreme leader Ali Khamenei, saying it was the will of the nation.

3 nights of attacks

In a statement, the US Central Command said US forces hit about 140 Iranian military targets, including missile and drone sites, naval capabilities, ammunition storage facilities, communication networks and coastal surveillance locations.

"During three nights of strikes this week, CENTCOM has struck more than 300 targets at the direction of the commander in chief to degrade Iran's ability to attack civilian mariners and commercial vessels freely transiting the strait," CENTCOM said. "Commercial vessel transits through the vital international maritime corridor continue."

In retaliation, the IRGC said they struck US aircraft carrier logistical support centers and refueling platforms at the Omani port of Duqm in a heavy and surprise attack on Sunday.

The IRGC also said they struck the US Prince Hassan airbase in Jordan with ballistic missiles the same day, destroying its command and control center and MQ-9 Reaper drone hangars in retaliation for US strikes on Iran's southern coast, Iran's Mehr News Agency reported.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Saturday that Iran "has so far kept its word", unlike the United States.

"That violation follows other violations and missteps by the United States. Reality check: There can only be mutual compliance," he said on X. Earlier in the day, Araghchi met with Oman's Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Albusaidi in Muscat.

> "The two sides agreed to continue these talks at the technical and political levels to reach the necessary agreements in accordance with international law."
>
> **Oman's Foreign Ministry,** on bilateral talks between Oman and Iran regarding navigation in the Strait of Hormuz

Oman's Foreign Ministry said bilateral talks were held on Saturday regarding navigation in the Strait of Hormuz and ensuring its safety and freedom, "in light of the developments and repercussions stemming from recent events".

"The two sides agreed to continue these talks at the technical and political levels to reach the necessary agreements in accordance with international law," the ministry said.

On Sunday, Pakistani Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar also held a phone conversation with Araghchi, according to a statement from Pakistan's Foreign Ministry.

Dar stressed the need for the parties to follow the path of de-escalation and show restraint, as agreed in the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding reached last month, the statement said.

"He further underscored that dialogue and diplomacy remain the only viable path to resolving disputes and achieving lasting peace and stability in the region," it said.

Dar also reiterated Pakistan's readiness to continue playing a constructive role in promoting and maintaining regional peace and stability, and said the two leaders agreed to remain in close contact, it added.

Contact the writers at jan@chinadailyapac.com

Recovered relics



A worker from the Mayasem Association for Culture and Arts cleans a recovered artifact inside a temporary heritage storage tent in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, on Saturday. The facility houses ancient artifacts and archival papers salvaged from the rubble of destroyed buildings or handed over by displaced residents. BASHAR TALEB / AFP

Shattered celebrations



Emergency personnel respond to a shooting on Saturday at the Salsa on St. Clair festival in Toronto. Two people were killed and at least four others seriously wounded when gunfire erupted at Canada's largest Latino-themed cultural celebration. KEITO NEWMAN VIA AP

S. Korean chipmaker raises $26.5b in Nasdaq debut

By **LIA ZHU** in San Francisco
liazhu@chinadailyusa.com

South Korean memory chipmaker SK Hynix debuted on the Nasdaq on Friday after completing its US listing, capitalizing on surging demand driven by the global artificial intelligence boom.

The company priced its American Depositary Receipts at $149 each on Thursday before they opened at $170 in Nasdaq trading on Friday. An ADR is a type of certificate that allows United States investors to buy a foreign stock without trading directly on an overseas exchange.

The sale of 177.9 million ADRs raised $26.5 billion, making it the largest US share sale by a foreign issuer and the second-largest public offering after SpaceX's $85.7 billion IPO in June.

SK Hynix said the proceeds will be used to build new chip factories in South Korea and purchase manufacturing equipment, including extreme ultraviolet lithography scanners from Dutch supplier ASML.

Chief executive Kwak Noh-jung told Bloomberg after the offering that customers are signing long-term supply contracts because they expect the chip shortage to "last for longer", adding that he believes supply constraints could last well into the next decade.

> "The real story of the semiconductor industry ... is about a multilateral ecosystem in which South Korea, Japan and the Netherlands are just as important as either (the US or China)."
>
> **Ker Gibbs,** former president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai

The listing comes as SK Hynix rides an unprecedented surge in demand for high-bandwidth memory chips, which enable high-speed, low-power data transfer in AI systems and are essential for hardware used by customers including Nvidia and Google.

SK Hynix, which recently deepened its partnership with Nvidia on advanced memory chips, has outperformed rivals Samsung and Micron over the past year. Its first-quarter revenue nearly tripled from a year earlier, while its shares have climbed about 260 percent this year.

As hyperscalers — large-scale cloud service providers — such as Amazon, Microsoft and Oracle race to expand AI data centers, demand for memory chips has consistently outpaced supply, pushing up prices. Apple has raised prices for Macs and iPads, citing higher memory component costs.

The AI boom has also lifted Asian chip suppliers. Taiwan-based printed circuit board maker Unimicron Technology recently raised $1.36 billion through a global depositary share sale, with its stock up more than 700 percent over the past year.

Analysts describe the current environment as a memory "supercycle", with Samsung, SK Hynix and Micron all benefiting. Some view SK Hynix's US listing as a move to broaden its investor base and narrow its valuation gap with Micron, though others caution that market volatility remains despite strong demand.

'Inflation' warning

Some analysts have warned that "memory inflation" could eventually curb spending on AI infrastructure, smartphones and personal computers, saying the industry has entered the middle stage of the current cycle.

South Korean companies led by SK Hynix and Samsung plan to invest more than $500 billion in new domestic memory fabrication plants. Analysts warn the expansion could create oversupply if AI memory demand shifts by the time the facilities come online.

For some observers, the listing carries significance beyond financial markets.

"The real story of the semiconductor industry is not about the US versus China — it is about a multilateral ecosystem in which South Korea, Japan and the Netherlands are just as important as either of the great powers," said Ker Gibbs, former president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai.

Gibbs explores that argument in his book *The Fragile Dragon*, comparing semiconductors with oil as strategic resources that nations both depend on and compete over.

He also pointed to history as a cautionary lesson, arguing that the US should tread carefully as it tightens restrictions on China's access to chip technology. In his view, the two countries need to manage their differences without cornering one another.

Death of Lindsey Graham puts pressure on Senate Republicans

By **SHI GUANG** in New York
shiguang@chinadailyusa.com

The sudden and unexpected death of US Senator Lindsey Graham could make things more difficult for Republicans in the Senate, as their thin 53-47 majority is already being strained by the absence of Senator Mitch McConnell.

A temporary replacement for Graham can be named by the governor of South Carolina, though a permanent senator will be elected in November. There was no word on Sunday who that temporary replacement might be, and candidates to fill the open seat in South Carolina during the mid-terms are expected to put their names forward this week.

Fox News reported that at least two South Carolina Republicans from the House of Representatives, Nancy Mace and Ralph Norman, have indicated they are considering a Senate run.

Graham was chair of the Senate Budget Committee, which is working through a process to push forward parts of Trump's voter ID bill. He was also considered a big supporter of the war against Iran, which could be critical as the Senate is due to hear a request for additional funding for that conflict.

According to a preliminary finding from the Washington medical examiner, the cause of Graham's death was aortic dissection — which is a tearing in the aortic wall — due to cardiovascular disease, though a final report is pending toxicological tests.

President Donald Trump called Graham "one of the greatest people and Senators I have ever known" in a social media post on Sunday.

McConnell, 84, has also been missing from the Senate for a month after being hospitalized for undisclosed reasons, though his office has said he "continues to improve".

His wife, former transportation secretary Elaine Chao, had been travelling in China "to support her family's philanthropic endeavors", her spokesperson told CNN, adding that "the Senator's health did not warrant an immediate return to the US".

McConnell had suffered a concussion and broken ribs after one of several falls in 2023, and then froze mid-sentence during a news conference months later.

Graham, 71, was first elected to the Senate in 2002. He was previously elected to the House of Representatives in 1994, and had served as a defense attorney and prosecutor in the US Air Force.

Once a Trump critic who called him the "most flawed nominee in the history of the Republican Party", as well as "crazy", later became one of the president's biggest defenders.

Graham told Fox News in May he had introduced a bill "that would allow President Trump to put tariffs on China for buying Russian oil and gas", and later went on to disparage China and its relations with other countries.

He continued with a blunt warning to China: "I'll do business with you on Monday and put tariffs on Tuesday".

The sanctions bill is still being held up in the Senate. China has called it "illegal unilateral sanctions".

Graham was considered a foreign policy hawk, who advocated for US intervention overseas. He had just returned from his 10th trip to Ukraine, which he supported in its conflict with Russia. He had also opposed president Barack Obama's nuclear deal with Iran, and had called for pre-emptive strikes against the country.

Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren posted: "Even though we disagreed on much, he was always willing to negotiate, with humor and wit. My heart goes out to his loved ones."

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn

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

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108
529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1869

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:15 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:15 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Hyping up illegal 'arbitral award' will only undermine stability in South China Sea

Leveraging its role as this year's chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Philippines is attempting to hijack the negotiations aimed at concluding the long-awaited Code of Conduct in the South China Sea by pushing for the agreement to be anchored on the illegal and invalid so-called "arbitral ruling" of 2016.

The "ruling" of the Permanent Court of Arbitration is null and void. China did not participate in the "hearing". It neither accepts nor recognizes the prejudicial and politically motivated "award", nor will it ever accept any claim or action arising from it.

The distorting of international law by the "ruling" exposes the Philippines' real intention of pursuing its own selfish interests by fostering divisions and stirring up tensions in the South China Sea.

On Sunday, the United States, Japan and other external forces took the overt step of issuing a joint statement with the Philippines to mark the tenth anniversary of the illegal "arbitral award".

As the Chinese Foreign Ministry responded in a statement, a decade after its issuance, the so-called "ruling" has not only failed to resolve the maritime disputes between China and the Philippines — it has instead been weaponized by Manila to expand its territorial and maritime claims. Far from contributing to peace, the "ruling" has aggravated regional tensions and furnished extra-regional powers with a convenient pretext to meddle in and destabilize the South China Sea. In effect, it has become a perennial stumbling block to China-Philippines ties and a corrosive force against regional stability. Were the "standards" enshrined in this "ruling" to be applied universally, many nations would find themselves stripped of the very basis for their own maritime claims.

In a separate statement on Sunday, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson responded to Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi's remarks "commemorating" the anniversary by raising pointed questions that laid bare Tokyo's hypocrisy in backing Manila. For instance, if the "standards" of that "ruling" were applied consistently, how could Okinotori — nothing more than two rocks of less than 10 square meters in the Pacific — possibly justify a Japanese claim to Exclusive Economic Zone and continental shelf of hundreds of thousands of square kilometers?

By the "standards" of the "ruling", many of Japan's islands and reefs would likewise have no basis for claiming maritime rights and interests. Since Japan has publicly endorsed the "award", China has every reason to believe that Japan has accepted the same "standards" and voluntarily renounced the corresponding maritime claims.

As a matter of fact, the more Manila seeks to buttress its position with outside backing, the more clearly it reveals the tenuous legal and factual basis upon which its claims rest.

By attempting to make its illegal claims a prerequisite for pushing ahead with the COC talks, Manila seeks to entrench its unlawful gains by coercing the other negotiating parties into compromise.

As long as the Philippines insists that the "award" is valid and should be anchored with the COC, there will be no way to resolve the disagreements that exist over such issues as the COC's applicable maritime scope and dispute settlement mechanism provisions. This makes it impossible for any progress to be made in talks over the COC. With this major obstacle unresolved, the claim by the Philippines that the COC can be concluded before the end of this year is both empty and irresponsible.

China is committed to properly managing maritime differences in the region through bilateral dialogue with the parties directly involved. At the same time, the country will continue firmly defending its territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests in the South China Sea. Any attempt to challenge China's lawful rights and interests and undermine peace and stability in the South China Sea is doomed to fail.

Hostilities risk spiraling out of control

Barely weeks after the United States and Iran signed the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding, an interim deal intended to end hostilities and create a framework for a broader settlement, the agreement is in jeopardy.

The immediate trigger appears to have been disputes over the interpretation of the MoU's provisions governing navigation through the Strait of Hormuz. Yet the renewed confrontation is not simply another chapter in the rivalry between Washington and Tehran. It has evolved into a three-party strategic contest in which Tel Aviv's calculations also influence the pace and direction of events.

Israel has never concealed its willingness to prevent any US-Iran accommodation. From its perspective, even a temporary understanding risks reducing pressure on Tehran while leaving "unresolved concerns" over Iran's regional influence and nuclear issue. Recent reports suggest that Tel Aviv has been "coordinating" with Washington while simultaneously warning Tehran against retaliation. Israel's strategic intentions differ from those of parties seeking to preserve regional stability.

This matters because the MoU was always less a peace agreement than a ceasefire held together by political convenience. It rested upon ambiguous language, diverging strategic objectives and fragile domestic calculations on both sides. Such pacts survive only when all parties concerned possess strong incentives to preserve them. That condition is disappearing.

Washington's own calculations illustrate why. The US administration continues to face conflicting pressures. Military restraint satisfies voters weary of endless Middle Eastern crises. Yet any perceived concession toward Iran invites fierce criticism from domestic hawks. Rising oil prices threaten inflation, consumer confidence and electoral prospects, while renewed military action risks producing precisely the energy shock that the earlier agreement sought to prevent. Unsurprisingly, Washington has simultaneously resumed military operations while signaling its willingness to return to negotiations — an apparent contradiction that reflects political necessity rather than strategic coherence.

Military force has repeatedly demonstrated its limitations. Months of strikes have neither fundamentally altered Iran's strategic judgments nor produced a durable diplomatic breakthrough. Instead, every exchange of missiles further erodes trust while increasing the probability that a miscalculation or third-party action could trigger a broader regional war.

Energy markets understand this reality better than politicians. The world's consumers ultimately finance every failure of diplomacy in the Middle East. That is why the greatest danger today lies not merely in renewed hostilities but in the gradual normalization of perpetual low-intensity conflict. If the MoU collapses without a credible diplomatic successor, the region risks settling into a familiar yet dangerous equilibrium: intermittent strikes, periodic retaliation, disrupted shipping lanes and repeated diplomatic resets that never address the underlying disputes. Such instability benefits few beyond those who profit politically or economically from permanent confrontation.

As China's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations Sun Lei stressed at a UN Security Council briefing on the Iranian nuclear issue on Friday, a ceasefire and cessation of hostilities must hold in the Gulf.

"China urges all relevant parties to overcome disruptive factors, refrain from the use or threat of force, preserve and implement the MoU, reach a solution that accommodates the concerns of all parties, lift the sanctions against Iran at an early date, and achieve substantive progress in the political settlement process," Sun said.

The proper settlement of the Iran nuclear issue must respect the legitimate aspirations and lawful rights and interests of the parties concerned. Iran should continue to uphold its commitment not to develop nuclear weapons. As a non-nuclear-weapon state party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, Iran enjoys the legitimate right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The US should take concrete actions to create conditions for the political settlement of the Iran nuclear issue, Sun added.

The Middle East has accumulated more than enough examples of wars that were easier to begin than to end. Another prolonged US-Iran confrontation will not produce a decisive winner. It will only weaken regional security, unsettle global markets, burden already strained economies and deepen divisions throughout the international system.

The choice confronting related parties is therefore stark. They can allow strategic mistrust, domestic politics and regional rivalries to dismantle an imperfect but valuable diplomatic opening. Or they can recognize that however unsatisfactory the MoU may have been, its implementation remains infinitely preferable to another round of instability. Even a fragile peace is always better than permanent war.

The world should not have to relearn that lesson yet again.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

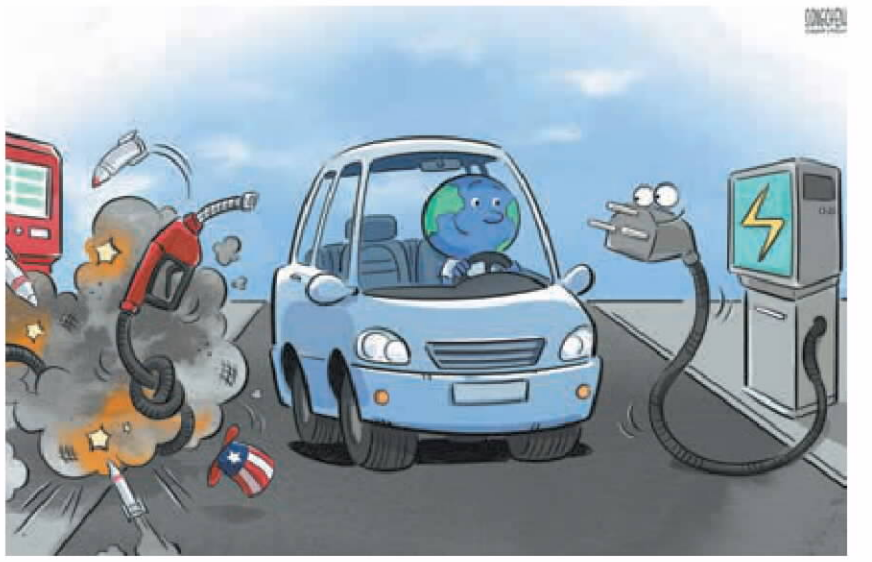
China Daily UK
90 Cannon St, London EC4N 6HA, UK
+44 (0) 207 398 8270
editor@chinadailyuk.com

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Song Chen



Opinion Line

Precision landing boosts space program, signals self-reliance

As a space journalist who has covered dozens of launches across the country, I long assumed that I had grown accustomed to the routine of countdowns and the roar of liftoffs.

Yet standing atop a building at the Hainan International Commercial Aerospace Launch Center on Friday morning, waiting for the Long March 10B rocket to lift off, there was the same mix of nervousness, excitement and anticipation I felt at my very first launch assignment.

When the first stage was successfully captured by the cable-net recovery system roughly six minutes after stage separation, cheers erupted among reporters.

On the way back to the hotel, I was replaying the recovery footage on loop on my phone, swapping clips and screenshots with fellow reporters. That split second when the booster locked safely into the net is the kind of frame that remains etched in a reporter's memory for years.

Having witnessed earlier recovery attempts — of Long March 12A and ZQ 3 models — I know firsthand just how formidable the challenge of rocket reusability is. Guiding a massive booster back through the atmosphere with pinpoint precision, reigniting its engine at the right moment, maintaining aerodynamic stability and executing a controlled recovery require flawless coordination across propulsion, navigation, materials science and real-time command systems.

Previous tests underscored how many variables must align for success. That is why Friday's breakthrough feels deeply gratifying.

I share the pride of the researchers and engineers at the China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology, whose perseverance turned an ambitious vision into reality.

What makes this milestone even more remarkable is China's independent path of innovation. Unlike conventional landing on ground pads or offshore drone ships used by the United States and earlier domestic programs, the Long March 10B debuted the world's first operational sea-based net-capture recovery system. By transferring much of the landing hardware from the rocket to the recovery vessel, engineers reduced dead weight and opened a distinct and potentially cost-effective technical route. It is a vivid reflection of the ingenuity of Chinese scientists and engineers and the country's growing scientific and technological strength.

Beyond the technical feat, the Long March 10B carries far-reaching strategic significance. Designed to support large-scale deployment of low-Earth orbit constellations and high-volume commercial launch missions, it promises to enhance China's competitiveness and influence in the global space sector.

More importantly, the Long March 10B is not a standalone model. It is an integral part of the Long March 10 family built for China's manned lunar missions.

Every commercial mission will validate engine reusability, recovery system reliability and rapid turnaround launch capability, forging a development model where commercial operations feed technological progress for future space missions.

This iterative approach will help build expertise for China's future manned lunar landings and deep-space exploration.

To be sure, we must remain clear-eyed. A considerable gap still separates China from the US in mature, operational reusable rocket technology, and accelerated, steady progress remains essential.

But after witnessing Friday's historic success, I have full confidence that China's space community will keep closing that gap and take its place among the world's leading space powers.

— ZHAO LEI, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Increasing grain production key to food security

Editor's note: *Last month, China issued a plan to accelerate the modernization of agriculture and rural areas during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period. A key goal is to raise the country's production capacity of grains to around 1.45 trillion* jin *(725 million metric tons) by 2030, with an emphasis on both the volume and the quality of agricultural products. Tu Shengwei, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Macroeconomic Research of the National Development and Reform Commission, spoke to People's Daily Overseas Edition on why China is pushing to increase both the output and quality of grain production. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

Food security has emerged as a universal challenge in recent years due to the rising frequency of extreme weather events, a complex and volatile international landscape, and heightened uncertainties in the global grain market.

Thanks to sustained efforts, China has made marked improvements in agricultural infrastructure, machinery and technologies in recent years. Major breakthroughs in agricultural science and technology have lifted the contribution rate of scientific and technological progress to agricultural growth to over 64 percent, placing China among the world's top innovators in the field. Advanced technologies, including high-end farm machinery, drones and artificial intelligence, are now widely used across production chains, sharply boosting efficiency.

By implementing the latest initiative to raise grain output, enhancing yield per unit area of staple crops, improving the quality of farmland, seeds and machinery, and adopting more efficient farming practices, the country is well-positioned to achieve the goal of increasing its grain production capacity to around 1.45 trillion *jin* by 2030.

Increasing the grain production capacity will ensure a sufficient supply of high-quality food. Moreover, grain prices underpin the prices of various other commodities, and ample grain output helps prevent fluctuations in food prices.

Currently, China has a secure supply of rice and wheat, with sufficient stocks of these two staple grains. However, the production capacity for high-quality rice that provides a good mouthfeel, high-gluten and low-gluten wheat remains inadequate. The plan addresses this by calling for an increased supply of these products.

To achieve this, efforts should be made in various fields to expand cultivation based on local conditions and improve mechanisms that reward superior quality with better prices to ensure that premium grain products reach the market effectively.

The plan says the production capacity of corn and soybean should also be boosted. China's grain consumption pattern is changing. The consumption of rice and wheat is declining, while feed grains such as corn and soybean are likely to become major drivers of future growth in demand.

There is a significant imbalance between the supply and demand of soybean in China, making the expansion of soybean output a top priority. The supply of high-yield, high-oil soybean should be increased.

Promoting high-yield, high-oil soybean varieties will help expand domestic supply, reduce reliance on imports, and upgrade the country's grain and oil processing industry.

The plan also calls for strengthening farmland protection and improving farmland quality. Farmland is the cornerstone of grain production and the fundamental resource for securing food supply.

Over the next five years, it is essential to enforce strict farmland protection measures, develop high-standard farmland and enhance farmland water conservancy facilities to reinforce the foundation for grain production.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:15 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:15 PM

VIEWS

Vassil Girginov

Legacy of 2008 Olympics goes beyond economics

When Beijing was awarded the 2008 Olympic Games in July 2001, a seven-year journey began, culminating in the grand opening in the iconic Bird's Nest stadium on Aug 8, 2008.

The seven-year period between awarding the Olympics and their opening allows the hosts to develop and implement their vision of the Games.

The legacy of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games must be seen in the socio-political and economic context of China. In China's bid for the Games, then President Jiang Zemin highlighted the opportunity to advance the Olympic spirit and deepen cultural exchanges between China and the world. Beijing proposed three major themes: "Green Olympics", "High-Tech Olympics" and "People's Olympics".

Global Lens

The concept of "People's Olympics" sought to redefine humanism as a core Chinese cultural value, aiming to construct a moral order to counterbalance the materialism in China's rapid march to modernization and offer an alternative to the commercialization of the Games. China sought to reinterpret Olympian principles, enriching the Olympic spirit and promoting global harmony.

While economic impacts often dominate discussions about the legacy of the Olympics, the intangible impacts, though difficult to measure, are equally important.

The Games were a massive undertaking with an organizing budget of 20.5 billion yuan ($3 billion) in revenue and 19.34 billion yuan in expenditures, yielding a surplus of over 1 billion yuan.

Twelve of the 37 venues were specifically constructed for the event. The Beijing Olympics were the first to offer full digital coverage globally, allowing hundreds of millions of viewers across the world to follow the action online.

Three intangible legacies of the Games stand out: health, sports policy and education. The organizing committee introduced the concept of "Olympic Health Legacy" and established a system to evaluate the impact of a mass event on the health of the host population.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

These included changes in health behaviors of individuals, improvements in public health services and enhancements in the quality of the external hygienic environment.

From 2001 to 2007, 140 billion yuan was spent on environmental improvement, which was far more than the $12.2 billion promised in the bidding reports.

The Games elevated the role of sport in China and enhanced the status of mass sport. From a policy development perspective, China's Olympics experience streamlined policy-making and planning for mega events.

The coordination required by the Games fostered policy coherence across public, voluntary and private sectors, exemplified by Beijing's "dual-city" benefit, which reduced venue costs for the 2022 Winter Olympics.

A great deal of organizational learning also took place, with Chinese sports organizations engaging with national and international sports federations, leading to improved sport governance.

Aug 8 was declared National Fitness Day, when public sports facilities are required to open free of charge to the public, promoting public health and sports participation.

Significant investments were made in mass sport from the lottery public welfare fund, with funding increasing over time.

The Games relied on tens of thousands of volunteers, supported by a large network of "city volunteers" stationed across Beijing, marking a cultural shift toward a formalized civic volunteer network that remains active in major public events.

Public investments, organizational learning, cultural change, and improved policy coherence have advanced sport in China, embracing social and economic values beyond health benefits and political gains.

Education was the chief mechanism for promoting Olympian values. The Beijing 2008 Olympics Education Programme was the largest of its kind in the Games history, integrating Olympian values — excellence, friendship and respect — into the curriculum of over 400,000 schools across China.

The program had three main components, including the Heart-to-Heart international school pairings, Olympic Values Education Programme teaching resources and curriculum integration, and the model schools program across China. It reached approximately 400 million children and left a lasting cultural and civic legacy for China's younger generation.

The Olympics do not belong to a country or an institution, but to all humanity.

When a city hosts them, it enters into a contract: the Olympic Movement allows the host city to invest the accumulated cultural capital of the Games, and, in return, the city promises to deliver certain legacies.

Olympic legacy is not automatically established. Beijing successfully leveraged the opportunities presented by the Games by mobilizing the energy of society to deliver lasting benefits.

The author is a professor of sport management at Brunel University in London, UK.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Sun Dan

When China found its own rhythm

When Beijing won the right to host the 2008 Olympics on July 13, 2001, I was a girl with a dream and little sense of how profoundly that moment would shape my life.

Twenty-five years later, I have lived that transformation from several vantage points: as an athlete who won China's first Olympic silver medal in rhythmic gymnastics in 2008, and as the head coach who led the Chinese team to Olympic gold in Paris in 2024, ending more than four decades of European dominance in the event.

Yet the most important change was not the medal. It was the moment China stopped asking how to look more like everyone else.

For much of its history, rhythmic gymnastics was governed by a distinctly European aesthetic.

Movement, music and choreography were judged against conventions that emerged largely from Eastern Europe.

Like many latecomers to the sport, China began by studying those standards, hiring foreign choreographers and trying to narrow the gap.

It was a necessary stage of development. Before a country can contribute to a global language, it must first learn to speak it.

But eventually a different question emerged: If sport is a universal language, why must we speak it with a borrowed accent? Why could the world not encounter contemporary China through this sport?

The answer was not to drape routines in obvious national symbols. Cultural confidence is not costume design.

Over the years, my colleagues and I built a long-term archive of Chinese cultural materials: classical dance, traditional music, historical imagery and regional artistic traditions.

We took athletes to museums and historical sites, invited experts in Chinese dance and folk music into training camps, and studied international judging rules with equal intensity.

Our goal was not to make routines that looked "Chinese" at first glance. It was to create works whose emotional logic could be understood anywhere.

When audiences watch a routine inspired by Dunhuang murals or ancient Chinese poetry, they do not need prior knowledge of Chinese history.

They need to feel wonder, tension, serenity or strength.

Cultural expression succeeds internationally not when it demands explanation, but when it creates recognition.

That is why routines such as *Flying Apsaras, Heroes of Heaven and Earth*, *Water Dragon's Chant* and *Phoenix Soaring to the Sky* were designed around universal emotions while drawing on distinctly Chinese artistic traditions.

In recent years, I have noticed a subtle but meaningful shift in how international judges and coaches respond.

Chinese routines are no longer treated merely as interesting variations from the periphery. Increasingly, they are discussed as creative references in their own right.

This reflects a broader change in China's relationship with the world.

For a long time, Chinese culture was often observed, analyzed or categorized from the outside. Today, in some fields, it is beginning to influence how the conversation itself is conducted.

True confidence is not insisting that one's culture is unique. It is understanding global rules well enough to participate fully while still speaking in one's own voice.

That voice, however, would mean little without a second transformation: the move from heroic endurance to scientific training.

When I was preparing for the 2008 Beijing Olympics, success depended largely on relentless repetition and personal sacrifice. My generation owes an enormous debt to coaches who built the foundation of Chinese rhythmic gymnastics through sheer perseverance.

As a coach, I have come to see that modern elite sport requires more than determination. It requires evidence.

Today our program integrates physical conditioning, rehabilitation, sports science, nutrition and psychological support into a unified system.

Training decisions are increasingly guided by data rather than intuition alone.

Just as important, we pay closer attention to the long-term physical and mental well-being of athletes whose careers span childhood, adolescence and adulthood.

That shift has changed the meaning of coaching. A coach is not simply a technician correcting movements; a coach is a long-term guardian of human development.

I often tell my athletes that a group routine succeeds only when different personalities learn to move with one heartbeat. We do not train every athlete identically.

Each receives a development plan tailored to her technical weaknesses, temperament and future potential. The goal is not uniformity, but unity.

This evolution has also been accompanied by greater openness to the world.

China has benefited enormously from international exchange. We learn from foreign coaches, judges and training systems, while increasingly sharing our own experience with overseas colleagues who come to China to observe and collaborate.

Sport is one of the few arenas where civilizations can engage one another without requiring complete agreement.

A common set of rules creates space for different cultural expressions to coexist. China's contribution should not be to reject international standards, but to enrich the diversity that exists within them.

Looking back, the 25 years since Beijing's Olympic bid was approved trace not only my personal journey, but also the journey of Chinese women in sport.

More women now serve as head coaches, researchers, administrators and participants in international sports governance.

That change is not simply a sporting achievement; it reflects a broader expansion of opportunities for women in Chinese society.

When my athletes tell me they see in me a confident and capable Chinese woman, I regard that as a responsibility greater than any medal.

China once entered rhythmic gymnastics as a student. Today it enters as a participant with something of its own to say.

We will continue to learn from the world and to pursue scientific excellence. But we will also continue to present Chinese culture not as a museum piece, but as a living, evolving source of creativity.

Olympic gold may have announced our arrival. Finding our own voice is what made the journey worthwhile.

The author is the head coach of the Chinese Rhythmic Gymnastics Group Team.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Reflecting on what remains after the flame goes out

Editor's note: *July 13 marks the 25th anniversary of Beijing's successful bid to host the 2008 Olympic Games. In a conversation with China Daily journalist Li Wei, Professor Angela J. Schneider, director of the International Centre for Olympic Studies at Western University and the first director of Ethics and Education for the World Anti-Doping Agency, and Zhou Guanpeng, a research associate at the center, reflect on the legacy that remains after the Olympic flame is extinguished. Through the lenses of sport, technology, sustainability and human well-being, they examine how the Beijing Olympics have continued to shape society and the public imagination nearly two decades later.*

Li Wei: What do you remember most about the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games?

Zhou: When I think about the twenty-five years since Beijing won its Olympic bid in 2001, I return to several images from the 2008 opening ceremony. Firework footprints moved along Beijing's Central Axis toward the Bird's Nest. Then an ancient sundial appeared. A sundial: the shadow of the sun. It makes time visible by reading the shadow cast by light.

Perhaps Olympic legacy works in the same way. The visible light is easy to see: venues, ceremonies, medals, technology, global attention. The harder question is: After the flame goes out, what truly remains, and whose life does it change?

Schneider: Legacy is not only what still stands after the Games. It is what continues to serve human beings. In my work, I distinguish between performance excellence and human excellence.

The first asks: how fast, how high, how strong? The second asks: what kind of person, community and life does sport help us cultivate?

If we take that distinction seriously, Olympic legacy cannot be measured only by buildings, spectacle or records. We must also ask about human legacy: whom do these achievements still serve? Do they serve athletes and citizens, or only a spectacle that has already passed?

Zhou: The children who watched the fireworks in 2008 may now be parents. Venues once belonging to champions may now belong to students, walkers, skaters and families. More than a century ago, Chairman Mao Zedong warned in *A Study of Physical Education* that sport could have "form without substance".

He did not treat the body as an accessory to the spirit, but as the ground of knowledge, will and moral life. When we speak of Olympic legacy today, do we face a similar question: Is sport merely a ceremony or spectacle to be watched, or a practice people actually live?

Schneider: I would add to that question. Participation is not only a matter of numbers. A crowded venue does not necessarily mean a meaningful sporting culture. We must ask whether people enter the internal goods of sport: the joy of learning skill, the discipline of sustained practice, the confidence formed through effort, and the experience of testing oneself with others under fair conditions. When sport enters daily life in this way, it is no longer only leisure. It becomes part of a fuller human life. Such a legacy is not static. It has to be used, practiced and understood again.

Li Wei: If Olympic legacy is ultimately measured by how deeply sport enters everyday life, how should we judge whether a host city has succeeded? Is it enough that venues remain open, or must they also become part of people's daily habits and social relationships?

Zhou: That brings us to another question: are we building smarter Olympics, or wiser ones? The scroll sequence in the 2008 opening ceremony offers at least one clue. Painting, writing, dance and music were not separate performances. The body was writing, the ink was dancing, movement became image.

Ancient form and modern technology appeared in the same scene. The point did not seem to be that technology betrays nature.

It seemed to ask whether technology can remain fitting to the body, to rhythm and to meaning. From your perspective, how should technology in sport be judged?

Schneider: I would not begin by asking whether technology is natural or unnatural. That often misleads us, because "nature" is not, by itself, a clear ethical standard. I would ask: what does the technology serve?

If it makes sport safer, fairer and more accessible, reduces waste, and helps more people participate, it can deepen sport.

But if it turns athletes into performance machines, spectators into data consumers, and venues into monuments no longer belonging to city life, it weakens sport. A truly sustainable Olympics is not only more efficient environmentally. It must also be ethically accountable to human beings.

Zhou: So sustainability is not only an engineering problem. Beijing has many visible examples of venue reuse, but a deeper question is whether these spaces have returned to public life. If venues and technologies merely prove that a city is stronger, faster and better organized, they may be smart. If they help ordinary people keep moving, meeting, learning and recovering bodily life, they may become wise.

Schneider: Yes. The Olympic movement is based on a public trust. It does not belong only to committees, sponsors or host cities.

It also belongs to athletes, citizens and future generations. A sustainable venue is one that returns to public life. A sustainable technology supports meaningful effort rather than replacing it. A sustainable Olympic city is not merely more spectacular. It is more fit for better human life.

Public trust means that Olympic legacy must remain open to public judgment: does it give people more chances to move, to meet, and to understand themselves and others through sport?

Li Wei: The third question may be the deepest: when the world is faced with so many challenges, what can the Olympic Games still hold together?

Zhou: In the movable-type sequence, the performers evoked the ideals of "friends coming from afar" and "all within the four seas are brothers and sisters". Then the blocks formed the character *he*, harmony. Finally, the blocks opened, and people appeared from underneath and waved.

That harmony was not produced by machinery alone. It was coordinated human movement. It seemed to resonate with the Olympic ideal: not erasing difference, but forming shared practice within difference.

Schneider: That is important. What sport gives to ideals is practice.

Harmony in sport is not the absence of conflict. Competition itself is conflict under shared constraints. Fair play, as I understand it, is not merely following rules or being polite. It is respect for the game.

Respect for the game changes how we see opponents. An opponent is not an enemy to be eliminated, but a necessary partner in the pursuit of excellent sport. Without a worthy opponent, one cannot truly test oneself.

Zhou: Then harmony is not sameness, but coordination within difference. It does not imagine a world without conflict. It asks conflict to enter rules, limits and mutual recognition.

Schneider: Yes. Two athletes may come from divided countries, speak different languages and carry different histories. Yet in competition they can recognize one another through shared rules.

That recognition is limited, but it is real. It cannot solve geopolitics, but it can teach a disciplined way of living with others and the world. The value of the Olympic Games is not that they make the world suddenly agree. It is that they allow people, while difference remains, to enter a practice shaped by rules, respect and effort.

Zhou: So the twenty-fifth anniversary of Beijing's successful bid should not be only a memory of success. It should become a question: after the ceremony ends, can the city, its venues, its technologies and its citizens continue to practice this deeper legacy?

Schneider: That is the key question. If we must name it, since 1993 I have called it the "spirit of sport" which is based on the internal goods that create the joy of sport.

But I would not use that phrase as a slogan. It means skill, fair challenge, meaningful effort, respect for opponents, and the cultivation of a fuller human life. Beijing's most lasting Olympic legacy will not be measured only by buildings that still stand, but by what still moves: bodies, habits, public spaces, shared memory, and the continuing possibility that competition can become a practice of human flourishing.

The light once illuminated a city; the shadow tells us whether that light still gives direction to human life.

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

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:15 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:15 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

FABIO MASSIMO PARENTI

Win-win cooperation

The EU should prioritize mutually beneficial innovative ties with China instead of portraying the country's rise as a shock





WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

Speaking at the Summer Davos forum in Dalian in June, Chinese Premier Li Qiang introduced the concept of "China Opportunity 2.0". More than a slogan, it represents an attempt to help the world understand China's economic transformation — from the world's factory to a global platform for innovation.

The 2026 Summer Davos took place at a significant moment when the global economy continues to see moderate growth, geopolitical fragmentation, trade uncertainty and intensifying technological competition. Against this backdrop, the forum's theme, "Innovating at Scale", captured one of the defining challenges of the time: Innovation alone is no longer enough; the real challenge is the ability to rapidly deploy innovation throughout the productive system and society as a whole.

If the first phase of China's opportunity was built primarily on the extraordinary expansion of its domestic market, its openness to foreign investment and its integration into global value chains, "China Opportunity 2.0" is increasingly driven by the country's capacity to generate innovation, develop cutting-edge technologies and rapidly transform them into large-scale industrial applications.

A growing body of international evidence suggests that China's innovation system has reached a new level of maturity. In recent years, China has become the world's largest holder of patent applications, one of the leading investors in research and development, the largest market for electric vehicles, and a global leader in batteries, renewable energy, industrial robotics, digital infrastructure and applied artificial intelligence. Universities, enterprises, research institutes and local governments increasingly operate within an integrated innovation ecosystem that accelerates the transfer of technology from laboratories to industrial production.

What distinguishes China's model today is not only its ability to invent new technologies, but above all the speed at which these technologies are deployed at scale. The rapid integration of AI into manufacturing, logistics, healthcare, public services and consumer markets provides perhaps the clearest example of this systemic capability. It is also the rationale behind recent government initiatives such as the "AI+" initiative to create new forms of smart economy and improve AI governance.

In other words, innovation in China is quickly translated into the real economy. This close integration of scientific research, industrial policy and manufacturing capability has become one of the defining characteristics of the country's current stage of development.

The notion of "China Opportunity 2.0" therefore reflects a qualitative transformation. The opportunities offered by China partly lie in participating in one of the world's most dynamic innovation ecosystems.

This evolution also carries important implications for Europe. In recent years, European Union-China economic relations have largely been influenced by the West, through the lens of "de-risking". Strengthening the resilience of strategic supply chains is certainly an important objective. Yet the risk — as current developments suggest — is that the political debate is becoming almost entirely focused on competition while overlooking the opportunities created by selective and mutually beneficial technological cooperation.

The EU and China remain two of the world's largest economies and share common interests across a wide range of areas, including energy transition, climate change, population aging, food security, public health, industrial digitization and the development of AI for good.

Some of the major challenges of the 21st century require economies of scale, substantial investment and continuous innovation. No country, regardless of its level of development, possesses all the resources needed to address these challenges alone.

From this perspective, "China Opportunity 2.0" can also be understood as an opportunity for scientific and industrial cooperation. Europe continues to possess significant competitive strengths in basic research, precision manufacturing, chemistry, biotechnology and high-end industrial production. China, meanwhile, offers growing R&D innovation applications, advanced engineering and industrial capabilities, an exceptionally broad manufacturing base, substantial investment capacity and a domestic market capable of rapidly commercializing innovation.

These characteristics are potentially complementary rather than inherently antagonistic. Naturally, important differences remain. Issues concerning market access, intellectual property protection, regulatory transparency and competitive conditions continue to shape bilateral relations. Ignoring these concerns would be unrealistic. Nevertheless, addressing such differences through dialogue and negotiated solutions is generally more productive than progressively reducing opportunities for cooperation.

Experience consistently shows that innovation flourishes in environments characterized by openness, knowledge exchange, talent mobility and international investment. By contrast, growing technological fragmentation risks slowing global scientific progress, increasing development costs, and reducing humanity's capacity to tackle shared challenges.

From this perspective, the message emerging from the Summer Davos forum extends well beyond China itself. The central question is how to reform the international system and further various kinds of cooperation between the Global North and the Global South, as well as among Global South countries, to ensure that the benefits of innovation are broadly shared.

China regards scientific and technological innovation as one of the principal drivers of national modernization, higher productivity, high-quality growth and long-term international competitiveness. Within this framework, innovation, industrial development and strategic planning are viewed as deeply interconnected. Whether or not one agrees with this model — which continues to evolve — it is difficult to deny that it has generated significant achievements across a number of technological and manufacturing sectors. For this reason, understanding China's economic transformation has become an analytical necessity before it is a political one.

Europe now faces an important choice. It would be better to say that Europe should not continue to view China's transformation primarily through the prism of geopolitical competition. It can adopt a more nuanced approach — one capable of distinguishing between areas where competition is necessary and where cooperation continues to generate mutual benefits.

"China Opportunity 2.0" does not imply the absence of competition, nor does it eliminate differences in national interests. Rather, it suggests that in today's knowledge economy, innovation and interdependence will remain inseparable dimensions of global economic development. For Europe, recognizing this reality with pragmatism may well become one of the defining tasks of the years ahead.

The author is an associate professor of international studies at the Eurispes BRICS Laboratory, Italy, and a visiting scholar at the Research Center on Building a Community with a Shared Future for Humanity at China Foreign Affairs University. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

HE YUN

Trade wars bring risks

If Europe labels China an industrial threat, it will fail to fully recognize that Chinese technologies may facilitate its green transition



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY



For much of the past two decades, Europe's trade policy toward China was built on an assumption that engagement would benefit both sides — China was a vast market for European cars, machinery, luxury goods and technology; Europe was a rich consumer market for Chinese manufactured products. Yet things changed. In 2019, the European Union formally described China not only as a partner, but also as an economic competitor. The EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment, once seen as a symbol of deeper EU-China economic engagement, was politically frozen. Then came the pandemic, the Ukraine crisis, the energy crisis and, with it, rising concerns over supply chain security. Europe started to turn toward "de-risking". Trade with China is no longer viewed as a market opportunity, but increasingly as a risk.

Following the EU summit from June 18 to 19, where discussions on how to bolster Europe's competitiveness and counter "global macroeconomic imbalances" took center stage, a new proposal requiring EU companies to diversify their sources of key supplies — in the hope of stepping up the latent "de-risking" efforts — is on the agenda. Yet a full-blown trade war with China would be very dangerous for Europe.

First, a trade war would make Europe's green transition more expensive. Price is the gateway to demand, and demand lays the foundation upon which European clean-tech capacity will eventually be built. Chinese electric vehicles, batteries, solar panels and renewable technologies are demand creators. Because of lower costs, their mass adoption becomes possible. Once consumers buy EVs, governments build charging infrastructure. Once solar panels become affordable, households, companies and cities invest in distributed energy. Once batteries become cheaper, storage, recycling, grid modernization and smart-energy services become commercially viable. In this sense, affordable Chinese clean technologies can help create the market conditions in which European green industries themselves may grow. Europe cannot develop a full renewable-energy ecosystem if renewable deployment is slowed by high costs. Demand must come before scale; scale must come before competitiveness. If Europe raises prices too quickly in the name of protecting industry, it will weaken the very demand that industry needs.

Second, energy security remains a critical challenge for Europe. Europe has learned from the Ukraine crisis that energy dependence is never only commercial. When the security environment changed, dependence became a vulnerability. Europe has since moved away from Russian energy, but it has not fully escaped its dependence on imported fossil fuels. In some sense, Europe has simply changed suppliers. The United States has become a major provider of liquefied natural gas to Europe. This may be geopolitically safer, but it is still dependence and dependency does not disappear when the supplier changes; it merely changes the actor who has leverage. Even allies can use dependence as an instrument of pressure.

That is why a trade war with China over clean technologies could be irrational. In the short run, the balance of trade might look better; but such a strategy would sacrifice Europe's energy resilience in the long run, and Europe would remain vulnerable to geopolitical shocks and external coercion. A wiser path would be for Europe to use Chinese clean-tech supply and investment as a transitional accelerator while building European capacity, instead of starting a broad trade war that slows the transition.

Third, Europe faces internal divisions. Energy dependence is not only a foreign-policy problem but also a threat to European unity. The energy crisis following the Ukraine crisis revealed how differently member states respond to external shocks. Some wish to cut Russian gas entirely, others do not; some turn to nuclear power, others reject it; some have stronger fiscal capacity to subsidize households and businesses, while others lack the resources. As a result, every energy crisis becomes an intra-European political crisis. If Europe fails to make energy cheap and abundant, these divisions will deepen with each subsequent crisis, as we have already seen with the ongoing Strait of Hormuz crisis.

Fourth, the nature of the EU itself creates distinct constraints. Europe is a slow-moving bureaucratic machine. This gives it strength but it also creates rigidity. The United States can change trade policy quickly when its administration changes. Europe cannot. Once tariffs, legal procedures, trade barriers and regulatory frameworks are set in motion, reversal becomes slow and politically costly.

That is why Europe should be especially cautious before starting a trade war with China. Trade wars, like other forms of war, are easy to begin and difficult to end. They create vested interests; they harden political narratives; they make compromise look like weakness; they turn technical disputes into questions of pride. Once China is framed primarily as a threat to Europe's industry, it becomes harder to acknowledge that Chinese technology may also be useful to Europe's green transition. Recent conflicts have taught a simple lesson: wars often begin with confidence and end with exhaustion. Economic wars are no exception. They may start as limited measures, but they can expand and spiral out of control. Europe should not sleepwalk into such a conflict.

The smarter path is therefore to reduce strategic vulnerability in the long run, not limit its vision to the short-term balance of the books. That means resisting the temptation of a broad trade war with China, which is dangerous not only economically but strategically. Instead, Europe should pursue a dual strategy: using affordable Chinese clean-tech imports to accelerate the green transition today while systematically building the European industrial and technological capacity that will reduce dependence tomorrow.

Strategic autonomy will not be achieved by raising the cost of Europe's own transformation. It will be achieved by making the green transition faster and more resilient. Europe's choice is not between dependence on China and protectionism. The real choice is between a pragmatic strategy that uses global clean-tech capacity to accelerate European renewal, and a defensive strategy that traps Europe longer in its old nightmares and insecurities.

The author is an associate professor at the School of Public Policy at Hunan University. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:15 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:15 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

MNCs tap China's industrial ecosystem

Nation's robust supply chains, AI, green drive help firms scale up

By ZHONG NAN
zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

For senior executives from multinational companies including Germany's Covestro AG and the United States' Boeing Co and Carrier Global Corp, June brought a steady stream of visits to China, where they unveiled expansion plans, launched new projects and participated in the fourth China International Supply Chain Expo in the world's second-largest economy.

Among them, Covestro made a major investment announcement in late June. The German chemicals producer will build a new methylene diphenyl diisocyanate production line with annual capacity of 660,000 metric tons at its integrated site in Shanghai. MDI is a synthetic chemical used primarily to manufacture polyurethane foams and coatings.

Holly Lei, senior vice-president of Covestro, said the investment, which coincides with the 25th anniversary of the groundbreaking of the group's Shanghai integrated site, reflects Covestro's confidence in China's integrated industrial ecosystem, innovation capabilities and deep talent pool, while strengthening long-term supply for customers in China and across the Asia-Pacific region.

Covestro's decision reflects a broader trend of multinational companies increasingly viewing China not only as a major market, but also as a strategic hub for innovation, manufacturing and resilient supply chains.

Backed by China's continued move up the value chain and broader market opening-up, its supply chains are evolving beyond the traditional role of the "world's factory" into a key anchor for global innovation and industrial collaboration, providing multinational companies with greater certainty in an increasingly volatile global economy.

As global trade and investment undergo profound changes, China is strengthening industrial and supply chain resilience while expanding high-standard opening-up through wider market access, an improved business environment and measures to stabilize foreign investment, said Li Xingqian, vice-chairman of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade.

The government rolled out a 15-measure action plan to stabilize foreign investment in late June, with steps to expand market access, streamline investment procedures, strengthen investment promotion, improve services for foreign businesses and refine foreign investment management, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

The plan prioritizes expanding market access in services, finance and pharmaceuticals, among other sectors, while streamlining processes for cross-border mergers and acquisitions, data flows and domestic reinvestment by foreign firms.

Wang Ya, head of the department of foreign investment administration at the Ministry of Commerce, said the measures are expected to encourage multinational companies to further integrate into China's industrial ecosystem by expanding investment in research, advanced manufacturing and high-end services, helping China consolidate its position in global industrial and supply chains.

Boeing is among the companies responding to these opportunities. The US aircraft manufacturer inaugurated a new maintenance facility in Shanghai last month that was developed in cooperation with Chinese partners and is one of the largest of such facilities in Asia.

Landon Loomis, president for China at Boeing Co, predicted that over the next 20 years, Boeing expects the size of China's commercial aircraft fleet to double, driving demand for about 250,000 additional aviation professionals, including pilots, maintenance technicians, cabin crew and ground service personnel. The company will continue to increase investment in human capital development in the country.

"Boeing currently works with around 40 suppliers in China, with components produced by these suppliers incorporated into Boeing aircraft delivered worldwide," said Loomis, adding that the continued expansion of e-commerce and global trade is expected to drive long-term demand for air cargo services and support growth in Boeing's freighter business.

That long-term confidence is shared across industries. Michael Gierges, president of climate solutions for Asia-Pacific, Middle East and Africa at Carrier, said the US intelligent climate and energy solutions provider no longer views China simply as a regional market, but as a key driver of the group's global growth strategy.

China's push to expand computing infrastructure and advance green urban development will create fresh growth opportunities for Carrier to deepen investment in manufacturing, supply chain development, innovation and digital technologies in the country during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, said Gierges.

"Cooling systems account for a significant share of data center energy consumption, making efficiency improvements increasingly important," he added.

Reflecting this long-term commitment, Carrier, the parent company of Toshiba HVAC and Viessmann Climate Solutions, has continued to expand its manufacturing footprint in China. It launched a new air-cooled chiller production line at its facility in Shanghai's Baoshan district, with investment exceeding 100 million yuan ($14.7 million) in January.

Together with additional production lines yet to be commissioned and supporting facilities, the project's total investment is expected to reach 400 million yuan.

The continued inflow of foreign investment underscores the confidence of multinational companies in the Chinese market. Foreign direct investment in China's high-tech industries expanded 19.4 percent year-on-year to 130.14 billion yuan in the first five months of 2026. The sector accounted for 39.8 percent of the country's total FDI, up 9.4 percentage points from the same period last year, statistics from the Ministry of Commerce showed.

In the meantime, investment from the United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, Switzerland and the US surged by 285.5 percent, 108.6 percent, 49.4 percent and 17.3 percent on a yearly basis, respectively.

Pushing back against the so-called "China Shock 2.0" narrative, which portrays China's development as a disruption to the global economy, Huang Yiping, dean of Peking University's National School of Development, said that while trade tensions persist, growing investment, green transition needs and shared support for multilateralism continue to sustain China's economic cooperation with the world, particularly with the European Union.

China and the EU can deepen cooperation in green development and advanced manufacturing by combining China's large-scale industrial capacity with Europe's strengths in low-carbon technologies, industrial innovation and high-end engineering, said Huang.

Practical cooperation can also be expanded in industrial artificial intelligence, high-end services and third-country markets, enabling both sides to leverage their complementary strengths and generate new growth opportunities, he added.

Market watchers said that rather than displacing other economies, China's industrial upgrading is creating new opportunities for cross-border innovation, investment and industrial cooperation.

Vaughn Barber, chairman of the China-Australia Chamber of Commerce, echoed that view. "China's open and resilient industrial ecosystem offers opportunities for deeper cooperation," he said.

By leveraging complementary strengths, Chinese and Australian companies can accelerate energy transition, advance industrial upgrading and create long-term value through practical partnerships, said Barber.

AI, digitalization and green technologies are emerging as the next frontier for multinational companies in China, with the country's industrial ecosystem providing an ideal environment for commercialization and industrial application.

Lin Chunmei, president and general manager of Corning China, said the US industrial materials manufacturer has consistently worked alongside its industry partners in China, evolving from technology introduction to collaborative innovation and from "bringing in" to "going global".

Lin said AI is rapidly reshaping the global industrial landscape, creating new demand for critical technologies and infrastructure.

"Leveraging our long-standing expertise in materials science and key components, Corning will continue to support next-generation computing infrastructure while actively contributing to the upgrading of China's industrial ecosystem," she added.



Visitors get to know information at Siemens's exhibition area during the fourth China International Supply Chain Expo in Beijing on June 23. ZHANG CHENLIN / XINHUA





Left: An employee introduces a Boeing 777X passenger aircraft model during the 16th International Exhibition on Transport Technology and Equipment in Beijing on Sept 23, 2024. ZHANG XIUKE / FOR CHINA DAILY
Right: Visitors view products from US industrial materials manufacturer Corning during the third China International Supply Chain Expo in Beijing on July 19. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

System-level certainty delivers confidence companies demand

REPORTER'S LOG
By Zhong Nan

Throughout June, I traveled from Beijing to Urumqi in Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region to cover major trade events, including the fourth China International Supply Chain Expo and the ninth China-Eurasia Expo. I found myself asking executives from multinational companies the same question: Has anything fundamentally changed about investing in China?

Their answers were rarely identical, but they almost always pointed in the same direction.

The more executives I interviewed, the more I noticed an interesting pattern. Tariffs were mentioned. Geopolitics came up. Supply-chain diversification was part of almost every conversation. Yet none of those topics became the center of the discussion. What they wanted to talk about instead was China's manufacturing ecosystem — and why it remains remarkably difficult to replicate.

That contrast made me rethink a common assumption. China's competitive advantage today is no longer defined primarily by low-cost manufacturing. It increasingly lies in something much harder to replicate: system-level certainty — the ability to innovate, manufacture and deliver efficiently within an integrated industrial ecosystem.

A French executive described China's manufacturing ecosystem as "the place where problems get solved overnight." It was the clearest explanation I heard for why companies continue investing here despite growing external uncertainties.

During factory visits and interviews, I noticed executives talked less about saving money than about saving time. In advanced manufacturing, speed itself has become a competitive advantage. Design changes quickly reach suppliers, tooling is modified within hours and production resumes with minimal disruption. Engineers, suppliers and customers often operate within the same industrial cluster, solving problems face to face rather than across continents.

That ecosystem delivers what every business values most: certainty. Products move from prototype to mass production faster, supply disruptions are resolved more efficiently and production scales without rebuilding supplier networks, thanks to dense industrial clusters in regions such as the Yangtze River Delta region and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

Whether interviewing CEOs from ABB, Danfoss, Decathlon, Maersk or Schneider Electric, I kept hearing different versions of the same conclusion. Many multinational companies are diversifying parts of their production networks, but few believe another location can match China's combination of supplier density, engineering capability, logistics efficiency, manufacturing scale and infrastructure.

Increasingly, they describe China not only as one of their largest markets, but also as an innovation hub and strategic manufacturing base.

Chinese manufacturers are also competing less on costs than on innovation. Across industries from electric vehicles and industrial equipment to medical devices and consumer electronics, companies are investing more heavily in research and development, developing proprietary technologies and moving further up the value chain.

Conversations with executives have also shifted from labor costs toward innovation, engineering capability and commercialization speed. The focus is becoming less about where products are assembled and more about where ideas can be brought to market most efficiently.

None of this suggests China's industrial upgrading is complete. High-end semiconductor design software, certain advanced medical technologies and stronger global brand recognition still require sustained investment and technological breakthroughs.

Perhaps the biggest misconception I encounter is the belief that China's manufacturing competitiveness depends primarily on subsidies or inexpensive labor. Yet executives making big-ticket investment decisions rarely emphasize either. Instead, they point to reliable suppliers, experienced engineers, integrated industrial clusters, resilient logistics and confidence that production will continue even when uncertainty grows elsewhere.

Those capabilities cannot be replicated simply by relocating a factory in India, Vietnam and Mexico, or imposing another tariff. They are the result of decades of industrial accumulation, continuous innovation and close collaboration across entire supply chains.

As global businesses navigate geopolitical tensions and supply-chain restructuring, the conversation is becoming less about whether China remains the world's factory. It is increasingly about how China is evolving into a source of innovation, industrial collaboration and system-level certainty.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:15 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:15 PM

BUSINESSINSIGHT

Chinese firms reshape global industrial chains

EAGLE EYE
By Liu Xiaochun



ILLUSTRATION GENERATED BY AI

Global industrial chains and structures are constantly evolving, alternating between periods of relative stability and of profound disruption. Industrial restructuring refers to periods of accelerated change, such as the one currently underway. The forces behind such restructuring can broadly be divided into two categories: geopolitical competition and technological change. The two are closely intertwined, although their relative importance varies over time. At present, both are driving the reconfiguration of global industry, with geopolitical competition playing the dominant role.

Historically, major waves of global industrial restructuring have been initiated and led by advanced economies, with their large corporations possessing technological and financial advantages. Other countries and firms have generally played reactive roles, gradually adapting as a new global industrial equilibrium emerged. The current round is different. China and Chinese companies have shifted from passive responders to active participants in shaping global industrial restructuring.

At the early stage of this transition, China proposed the Belt and Road Initiative, anticipating changes in the global economic landscape. At the corporate level, overseas expansion initially emerged as a response to changing market conditions. As more companies expanded abroad, however, Chinese enterprises have increasingly become an important force in reshaping global industrial and supply chains.

This new wave of international expansion has several distinctive characteristics.

First, an unprecedented number of Chinese firms have entered overseas markets within a relatively short period. Unlike earlier waves of industrial relocation, which were concentrated in a limited number of destinations, Chinese companies are investing across every continent. Participants range from large corporations to small and medium-sized enterprises and even individual entrepreneurs.

Second, overseas expansion now spans virtually every industrial sector. Rather than concentrating on labor-intensive manufacturing, Chinese companies are expanding across the full industrial spectrum, including advanced manufacturing, new energy vehicles, financial technology, telecommunications infrastructure, consumer brands, e-commerce and technology start-ups. Many young tech firms are pursuing offshore markets from the very beginning of their development.

Third, Chinese companies are increasingly expanding abroad as integrated industrial clusters rather than as individual firms. One of Chinese manufacturing's greatest competitive strengths lies in the coordination and efficiency of its industrial and supply chains. Many companies find that production supported by Chinese supply networks remains more efficient and cost-effective than relying entirely on local suppliers. As a result, entire industrial ecosystems — including suppliers, managers, engineers and technical personnel — are moving overseas together, creating a new model of global industrial organization.

Fourth, the scale of this expansion is unprecedented. Given the size of China's economy, both the number of companies and the volume of investment are exceptionally large. For many developing economies and smaller markets, Chinese enterprises quickly become significant industrial participants, raising local industrial capacity while also creating competitive pressure for existing businesses.

Fifth, this globalization is being driven by companies from a developing country rather than advanced economies. Historically, multinational expansion benefited from the economic, technological and geopolitical advantages of developed countries. Chinese companies often operate under different perceptions in host countries. While many governments welcome Chinese investment, Chinese firms may encounter social and commercial challenges that differ from those historically experienced by Western multinationals.

These characteristics are generating new opportunities as well as new challenges.

For many countries in the Global South, China's manufacturing capabilities, infrastructure expertise and integrated supply chains create an opportunity to accelerate industrialization and infrastructure modernization. Cluster-based investment can establish complete industrial ecosystems, infrastructure and business models within relatively short periods, potentially shortening development paths that historically required decades.

At the same time, as Chinese companies expand internationally, Chinese technological standards, industrial standards, digital technologies and business practices are increasingly being adopted overseas. In the past, Chinese firms generally participated in supply chains organized by multinational corporations and therefore followed externally established rules and standards. Today, Chinese companies are increasingly organizing their own international industrial and supply chains, particularly in emerging industries where they possess technological leadership.

The expansion of Chinese companies also presents short-term challenges for host economies. Although Chinese investment can contribute to industrial upgrading, economic growth, trade and improvements in living standards, it may also create adjustment pressures for local industries and interest groups. Different countries, reflecting their own political systems, legal frameworks, cultural particulars and national interests, are likely to respond in different ways. While some may adopt restrictive measures, many are expected to balance short-term pressures against long-term development opportunities.

Chinese companies themselves are entering largely uncharted territory. Their international operations generate service needs that differ from those traditionally associated with multinational investment, including legal protection, security, cross-border financing, payment and settlement, treasury management and other forms of professional support. Respecting local laws, customs and cultures remains essential, but these measures alone may not fully address the challenges arising from this new phase of globalization.

Supporting Chinese companies operating overseas should therefore become an important component of China's participation in global industrial restructuring. Financial regulation should adapt to growing cross-border capital flows by coordinating the management of domestic and international financial resources. Policies governing credit, insurance, bond issuance, foreign exchange, cross-border payments and related financial services should evolve in line with the needs of internationally expanding companies and international practice.

Shanghai should be developed into a comprehensive service center for Chinese companies operating abroad by strengthening its role in cross-border financing, forex trading, payment and settlement, treasury services and international legal, accounting and arbitration services. Large commercial banks should establish integrated domestic and overseas service systems capable of supporting industrial clusters rather than serving companies individually. Insurers, investment banks and other financial institutions should accelerate their offshore presence so that they can better support Chinese companies overseas.

China should also use this development to promote its approaches to green finance and sustainable investment internationally, encourage futures exchanges to develop products and trading models that better serve actively globalizing Chinese companies, and foster cooperation between large and small financial institutions to build integrated service chains for overseas businesses.

Beyond financial services, greater policy coordination is needed. While respecting companies' commercial decisions, the geographic distribution of overseas industries should receive appropriate strategic guidance. More Chinese standards should gradually evolve from market practices into internationally recognized institutional standards. Tax incentives, stronger protection for overseas personnel and assets, and broader policy support should also be considered to facilitate the long-term development of Chinese enterprises operating — and wishing to operate — abroad.

The writer is vice-president of the Shanghai Finance Institute. The article is translated from a recent speech by Liu at a CF40 quarterly seminar.
The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

A partnership through thick and thin — and primed to grow

MAIN STREET
By Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber


Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber

There is a Chinese saying that sums up the partnership between the United Arab Emirates and China. "A long road tests a horse's strength; time reveals a person's heart." In other words, the strongest partnerships take time to build, are tested by distance and are reinforced by results. The UAE and China have been building ours for more than 40 years, through every market cycle.

Last year, non-oil trade between our two countries crossed 800 billion yuan ($118 billion) for the first time, growing by nearly a quarter in a single year, making China the UAE's largest trading partner, and the UAE China's largest partner in the Middle East and Africa.

In April, His Highness Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, crown prince of Abu Dhabi, led a senior UAE delegation to Beijing, where two dozen agreements were signed across the sectors of energy, technology, finance and infrastructure.

Recently, I visited Shanghai to help keep the positive momentum going and turn shared ambition into commercial reality, because a partnership this strong is not meant to stand still.

Both our countries align national purpose with economic growth through strategic clarity. China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) sets out a clear ambition — to translate advances in science and technology into substantial, people-centric progress.

The UAE is equally focused on building the economy of the future through artificial intelligence, advanced manufacturing and the energy that powers them. We see ourselves as a natural partner for that journey across the energy value chain that makes all progress possible.

UAE companies are building from a position of strength. China is Abu Dhabi National Oil Company's single largest customer for our cost and carbon-competitive crude and refined products. Chinese companies are among our most significant partners across our upstream concessions, downstream businesses and operating companies.

And through Masdar, our renewable energy champion, our collaboration goes beyond the barrel into new energies, where we partner across the wind, solar and the battery value chain.

Recently, we took our partnership deeper across four key pillars.

Regarding supply, during my recent visit, Abu Dhabi National Oil Company announced a new agreement to deliver an additional 134,000 barrels of crude per day to China, providing more of the dependable, competitively priced energy its economy runs on.

Backed by a $150 billion investment program, we are raising our crude production capacity to five million barrels a day by 2027, while continuing to invest in resilient routes to market. Our Murban crude is light, low in sulfur and among the lowest-carbon-intensity oil produced anywhere, and it reaches Chinese ports on one of the shortest voyages of any major supplier.

Regarding distribution, we have finalized an agreement to build four new next-generation gas vessels, in addition to two already under construction. Shanghai's shipyards are building the fleet of the future and together, we will help supply energy across the economies of the Belt and Road region.

As for petrochemicals, we are making progress on our joint venture with Borouge and Wanhua Chemical to develop a state-of-the-art polyolefin complex in Fujian province. At the same time, through our international investment arm XRG, Covestro is expanding its advanced materials production in China.

Together, these investments will strengthen integrated supply chains and expand the availability of specialty plastics and critical materials essential for high-tech manufacturing, data centers and the circular economy of the 21st century.

Regarding clean energy, through Masdar, we are expanding our partnership across the renewable energy and battery storage value chain. Chinese companies already provide the components for many of our solar projects and will be an integral partner in the world's first round-the-clock solar project in the UAE, supplying the batteries that will help provide 1 gigawatt of uninterrupted clean power for industrial and domestic consumers in Abu Dhabi.

This level of collaboration reflects a partnership in motion that moves the UAE-China relationship beyond supply and demand into co-investment, industrial collaboration and value creation across the board.

Chinese companies are part of the fabric of the UAE's economy, contributing directly to our continued economic success. Building on that foundation, there is significant opportunity to expand investment, strengthen industrial ties and create even greater shared value.

In a fast-evolving world, partnerships that can deliver both stability and transformation matter more than ever. The UAE-China partnership is already proving to be one of the most consequential.

The writer is the United Arab Emirates' minister of industry and advanced technology. He is also managing director and group CEO of Abu Dhabi National Oil Company, executive chairman of XRG, ADNOC's international investment company, and chairman of renewable energy company Masdar.
The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:15 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:15 PM

CHINA

Police crack down on FIFA World Cup betting rings

By YANG ZEKUN
yangzekun@chinadaily.com.cn

Police in several Chinese cities have cracked down on illegal online gambling linked to soccer World Cup matches, detaining multiple suspects and warning the public to stay alert to betting scams disguised as "high odds", "expert predictions" or "guaranteed profit" opportunities.

As the 2026 FIFA World Cup gains momentum, gambling rings have used match traffic to lure internet users through social media posts, chat groups, offshore gambling websites and rebate schemes, police said.

Authorities in Huzhou and Hangzhou in Zhejiang province, Xi'an in Shaanxi province, Jiangyou in Sichuan province and Yulin in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region have recently uncovered cases involving hidden betting operations, promotion of gambling and illegal fund flows. While the cases share similar methods, each also showed varied tactics used to attract gamblers or evade investigation.

In Huzhou, police found that four suspects, including one surnamed Yang, had repeatedly posted "guaranteed profit" and "high-odds cashback" advertisements on social media before the World Cup began. The group allegedly drew users to soccer betting chat groups, updated match odds, issued betting "guides" and directed members to gambling websites or group operators. Four suspects were detained, and the case involved more than 1.5 million yuan ($221,000) in fund flows.

In late June, police in Jiande, Hangzhou, broke up another illegal gambling ring and detained eight people. The case involved more than 1 million yuan in fund flows.

Police said the group operated a so-called overseas World Cup betting market, using high odds and claims of accurate predictions to lure internet users, relatives and friends into placing bets. Unlike the Huzhou case, the group relied on cross-border gambling websites, assigned personnel to manage betting markets online and profited from rebates.

Police in Jiangyou also dismantled a ring that secretly promoted "World Cup exclusive markets" through instant messaging groups and WeChat groups. Investigators said the suspects used offshore websites offering high odds and multiple betting options, while arranging personnel to manage betting markets. To evade investigation, members frequently changed chat accounts and used temporary payment channels. The case involved more than 300,000 yuan and four main suspects were detained.

In mid-June, police from Xi'an's Weiyang district uncovered a group that used social media groups to update odds, open online betting games, recruit gamblers and settle funds offline. After identifying the group during early morning analyses on June 18, police formed a 20-member task force to trace clues, identify suspects, collect electronic evidence and check fund flows. The case, which involved more than 100,000 yuan, was solved within 19 hours and led to the detention of seven suspects.

Additionally, cybersecurity police in Yulin, Guangxi, uncovered a gambling promotion case under the "Clean Net 2026" campaign. Since May, police have found large numbers of gambling adverts in pictures, text and videos on multiple social media platforms. Investigators said a 25-year-old suspect surnamed Chen had organized a studio to provide traffic promotion and operational support for gambling websites. Chen and others were detained, and the case is under further investigation.

Police said soccer World Cup-related online gambling is deceptive, spreads quickly and may lead to fraud, money laundering and other crimes. Several online platforms have also launched special campaigns to remove illegal betting information, block accounts, delete posts and comments, and report clues to police.

Authorities reminded the public that online gambling is illegal and that promises of "sure wins" or "high returns" are often traps. Internet users should avoid joining betting groups, clicking gambling links or transferring money to strangers, and should report gambling-related information to the police.

Tour of Lhasa



Cyclists ride past the Potala Palace during the finale of the 2026 tour of Lhasa, Xizang autonomous region, on Sunday. The event featured men's and women's elite road races and open mountain bike races, covering a total distance of 190 kilometers and attracting more than 800 competitors. KUNGA LEZANG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Plans for three-tier eldercare network

System to extend from urban centers to remote rural communities by 2029

By LI LEI
lilei@chinadaily.com.cn

The Ministry of Civil Affairs has unveiled a plan to build a national eldercare network over the next three years by integrating fragmented care resources into a three-tier system that extends from urban centers to remote rural communities.

The ministry aims to have the network in place by 2029 and further strengthen it by 2035, according to a guideline released on Wednesday.

At a news conference following the guideline's release, officials elaborated on the three-tier structure, which consists of county-level elderly care service management platforms, township- or subdistrict-level service centers and village- or community-level service facilities.

The system is designed to provide seamless care across home-, community- and institution-based settings.

"The three-tier network is not a simple hierarchical structure, but an organic whole," said Sun Wencan, deputy director of the ministry's department of elderly care services. The county-level platform serves as the system's "brain" and "nerve center", he said.

It coordinates with provincial- and municipal-level high-quality elderly care providers to perform functions such as service demonstration, industry guidance, emergency response, resource coordination and data aggregation.

> "The three-tier network is not a simple hierarchical structure, but an organic whole."
>
> **Sun Wencan,** deputy director of the Ministry of Civil Affairs' department of elderly care services.

Township-level service centers function as the system's "backbone" and "bridge", providing services including professional care, visitation care, family support and other extended services.

Established on the foundation of renovated high-quality elderly care institutions and comprehensive senior service centers, one regional center can serve multiple townships or subdistricts, Sun said.

At the grassroots level, village- and community-based facilities operate as the network's "terminals", providing daytime care, home-based services, short-term respite care, meal assistance and visitation services.

These facilities are designed to identify the needs of older residents and deliver services close to home, he added.

Beyond outlining the network's structure, Sun noted that its purpose is to address both the strict care needs of seniors with disabilities or cognitive impairment and the diverse needs of healthy, active older adults through services such as meal assistance, social engagement and recreational programs.

For frail and disabled seniors, county-level platforms will coordinate professional care for those with severe disabilities, while township-level centers will provide centralized care for people with milder conditions, supplemented by home-based services and respite care for family caregivers.

The plan builds on China's rapidly expanding elderly care system. By the end of 2025, the country had 396,000 elderly care institutions and facilities, with nursing beds accounting for 67.5 percent of all beds in elderly care institutions, Sun said.

Public county-level elderly care institutions have achieved full coverage nationwide. About 30 percent now function as comprehensive county-level elderly care service management platforms, while more than 60 percent of townships and subdistricts have established regional elderly care service centers.

Officials from Beijing's Dongcheng district and Nanping in Fujian province shared local best practices at the news conference, highlighting efforts ranging from urban resource coordination to improvements in rural elderly care services.

"We will promote these experiences and guide local governments to accelerate the improvement of the three-tier system to better meet the diverse and multilevel needs of senior residents," Sun said.

Panda turns one



A giant panda cub is officially named "Wangshu" during its first-birthday celebration at Chongqing Zoo on Sunday. The female cub, which weighed just 188 grams at birth, has grown to 36.5 kilograms in her first year. TANG YI / XINHUA

Single-Atom Catalysis research earns science award

By LI MENGHAN
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

As the invisible engines of modern chemistry, catalysts help produce the gasoline that powers cars, the fertilizers that promote food cultivation and the polymers used to make clothing, making them indispensable to modern life.

For more than a century, however, the chemical industry has faced a costly obstacle. Its most effective catalysts rely on rare and expensive precious metals such as platinum and palladium, which are even more valuable than gold. In conventional industrial processes, these metals are used in the form of nanoparticles or clusters, leaving a large percent of the metal atoms buried inside the material and unable to take part in chemical reactions. As a result, most of the precious metal is wasted.

After decades of research, Zhang Tao, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and his team proposed the concept of Single-Atom Catalysis in 2011. Instead of using groups of metal atoms, the approach spreads individual metal atoms across the surface of a supporting material, allowing each atom to act as an active site where chemical reactions take place.



Zhang Tao

This increases the use of precious metal atoms from only a few percent to nearly 100 percent.

The breakthrough was first demonstrated using platinum-group metals and has since been extended to more than 40 elements in the periodic table. In recognition of its fundamental contribution to catalysis research, the work received the first prize of the State Natural Science Award in Beijing on Wednesday.

"The defining feature of Single-Atom Catalysis is that it allows us to study catalytic reactions at the level of individual atoms rather than larger particles," said Zhang, who is also a professor at the Dalian Institute of Chemical Physics of the CAS.

"Through theoretical studies, we have explained why Single-Atom Catalysis remains stable and how they behave during chemical reactions," said Li Jun, a team member who is also a CAS academician and a professor at Tsinghua University.

"This has changed catalyst research from relying largely on trial and error to designing catalysts based on scientific understanding," Li added.

Zhang said the new understanding has broad applications and has sparked worldwide interest in turning the concept into practical technologies, ranging from pharmaceutical manufacturing to the production of fine chemicals. Thousands of research groups from nearly 100 countries and regions have published more than 20,000 academic papers on the subject.

"This is not merely an academic pursuit, but a strategic response to national needs," Zhang said. "Securing independent control over core catalyst technologies is vital for our energy security and chemical industry."

Behind the achievement lies a decades-long journey from theory to practical application.

When Zhang first proposed the concept in his doctoral dissertation in the 1980s, the technology needed to verify it did not exist.

"In the beginning, we had the idea but no way to observe it," Zhang said. "It felt as if an elephant stood right in front of you, yet in the pitch-black darkness, without a flashlight and with the path choked by weeds, it remained invisible."

The technical limitations of the time made the work that much harder. The domestically produced chromatograph used by the team was basic and plagued by severe signal fluctuations, while power outages were common.

"Often, just as you were about to collect the final data, the power would flicker, erasing an entire day's work," Zhang said. He often spent days in the laboratory, sleeping on a straw mat on the floor while waiting for the equipment to produce stable data.

Zhang said his determination was shaped in part by his early experiences in the mountains. Born in 1963 in Ankang, in the Qinba Mountains of Shaanxi province, he returned to his hometown to teach at a high school after graduation. Driven by a strong passion for scientific research, he later decided to pursue graduate studies.

"I taught during the day and prepared for my master's entrance examinations by lamplight at night, wrapped in a thick cotton-padded coat and felt boots to keep warm during the winter," he said. The experience taught him self-discipline, independence and perseverance, qualities that later helped him overcome repeated setbacks in research.

He also emphasized the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration. Zhang led the development and testing of the catalysts, connecting theoretical research with practical applications, while Li, a theoretical chemist, developed the scientific framework explaining why single atoms remain stable and how they drive chemical reactions.

"With advances in artificial intelligence and computer simulation, we are now using our understanding of these active sites to design and identify better catalysts more efficiently," Zhang said. "The combination of fundamental research and new technologies is expected to support the development of new energy and greener chemical manufacturing worldwide."

China seeks to attract more intl sci-tech institutions

BEIJING — In addition to hosting frontier research facilities and high-tech enterprises, Beijing is now turning its focus to attracting international science and technology organizations, doubling down on efforts to boost its scientific appeal.

The Chinese capital has recently started expanding its dedicated cluster of international sci-tech bodies, adding service stations, exhibition halls, meeting rooms and cross-border network workspaces to accommodate more institutions.

This expansion drive extends beyond Beijing. More international sci-tech organizations have established headquarters and core branches in China, from coastal economic powerhouses to inland western regions, spanning fields from digital Earth science to aerospace.

The Space Universities Administrative Committee of the International Astronautical Federation, with its headquarters in Paris, has established a permanent secretariat in Dalian, a port city in Liaoning province.

According to Yu Xiaozhou, committee chair and professor at Dalian University of Technology, China's appeal lies in its varied scenarios, massive data and long-term observation records of existing projects.

These are critical inputs for frontier basic research, and they are also "the main reason why the IAF values China so highly and is willing to pursue global cooperation with us," Yu said.

Complete industrial chains are another key attraction, according to Chen Kai, deputy director of the International Society of Sensing Technology.

Co-founded by institutions from 10 countries and regions, including the United Kingdom and Canada, the new society was established in May in Chengdu, Sichuan province. Chen said the city's strong research ecosystem and industrial foundation were decisive factors in its selection as the headquarters.

The concentration of sci-tech organizations in China not only promotes innovation in research and industries but also contributes to enhancing both the capacity and fairness of global science governance.

With rising concerns about fragmentation and rival blocs in international science, China-based groups are becoming "unbiased hubs" for cross-border cooperation, said Li Fei, an associate researcher at Zhejiang University.

"Global science governance is shifting from a Western-dominated club model to a more inclusive partnership model," Li noted.

The global science program, "An Eco-Secured Community with a Shared Future for Mankind", is a typical example. Launched by Chinese scientists, it aims to mobilize global expertise to address pressing ecological challenges. At its Beijing office, Thato Mokhethi, from Lesotho, was sorting reports as a program participant.

"Beijing is a nice place where I can talk to other scientists and think about the future of humanity together," the young African scholar said. The group is responsive to countries keen on advancing the program, and she is willing to share her findings with researchers in her home country, she added.

The push on global science collaboration is underpinned by China's policies.

Since 2016, China has laid out plans to encourage international science organizations to set up within the country. Besides Beijing and Shanghai, provinces including Shandong and Hainan have rolled out their own incentives, and economic powerhouses like Guangdong and Jiangsu provinces have offered cash rewards for successful headquarters or branch offices.

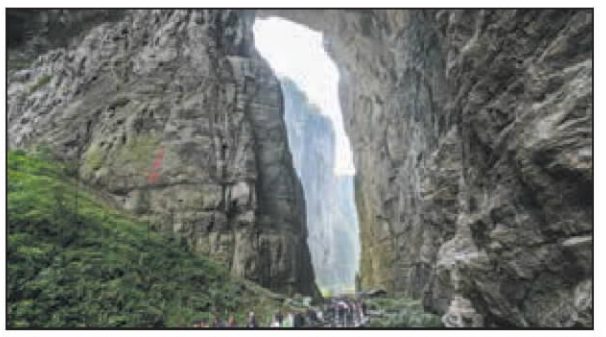
Chinese provinces and cities are continuing efforts to enhance their global appeal. Beijing, for instance, recently announced that it would ease cross-border data flows, internet access and personnel entry for international sci-tech groups based in the city.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:15 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:15 PM

Editor's note: *As protection of the planet's flora, fauna and resources becomes increasingly important, China Daily is publishing a series of stories to illustrate the country's commitment to safeguarding the natural world.*







Left: Tourists visit the Three Natural Bridges scenic area, part of the Wulong Karst World Heritage Site, in Wulong, Chongqing, in April. HE PENGLEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE **Center:** Stalactites are illuminated to draw tourists to Wulong's Furong Cave in April. HE PENGLEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE **Right:** Alpine rhododendron flowers blossom in Wulong's Zhaoyun Mountain in May. XIAO JIANGCHUAN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Karst landscape creates sustainable opportunities

Chongqing village seizes on World Heritage Site status for tourism bump

By **HOU LIQIANG** in Chongqing
houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

When Ran Yijie packed up his marketing degree and left his city job in 2021 to return to the rugged mountains of Chongqing, his neighbors thought he had lost his mind. He had successfully escaped the isolation of Jingzhu, a village once defined by severe rocky desertification, crushing poverty, and a mass exodus of its youth.

Today, nobody is questioning his sanity. Ran's family home is now a thriving local restaurant generating over 100,000 yuan ($14,000) annually, anchoring a massive reverse brain drain that is reshaping the economic landscape of Southwest China.

Driven by the strategic development of the nearby UNESCO Wulong Karst World Natural Heritage Site and the booming Fairy Mountain National Tourist Resort, Jingzhu has transformed from a dying hinterland into a magnet for young entrepreneurs and outside investors. In a crowning achievement, the United Nations World Tourism Organization has recognized it as one of the world's "Best Tourism Villages".

Wulong Karst, including the Three Natural Bridges, Furong Cave and the Houping Giant Doline, was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2007 as part of the South China Karst.

Karst landscapes are formed by limestone that has been eroded by dissolution, producing ridges, towers, fissures and sinkholes.

The economic numbers coming out of the region underscore a lucrative market centered around the rocks. In 2025, Wulong's scenic areas pulled in 52.1 million tourist visits, including nearly 800,000 international travelers, generating 25.1 billion yuan in total tourism revenue.

Jingzhu, with a population of 2,000 and located just six kilometers from the Fairy Mountain resort, has capitalized heavily on this influx.

Gao Yan, Party secretary of Jingzhu, said after Wulong's successful world heritage inscription and the opening of the Baotou-Maoming Expressway, villagers began developing high-altitude fruit picking and rural restaurants for tourists. After Fairy Mountain was upgraded into a national-level tourist resort in 2015, the village started to cultivate integrated enterprises covering leisure vacations, study tours, commerce and agriculture.

The timing, Gao said, allowed Jingzhu to leverage its proximity to the heritage site to expand its development.

In 2025, the village recorded over 1.5 million tourist visits, and tourism revenue of over 100 million yuan. Per capita disposable income among villagers has surpassed 27,000 yuan, a figure significantly higher than similar rural villages in Chongqing municipality.



Tourists visit the Three Natural Bridges scenic area in Wulong, Chongqing, in April. HE PENGLEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

"Local people have benefited from the heritage site," said Chen Zhang, head of the village's agriculture, culture and tourism development company. He said villagers' incomes have increased by more than 10 percent annually on average since the World Heritage Site was named.

Chen said fruit farmers no longer worry about sales. A grape grower once told him that revenue from the crop could reach about 600,000 yuan per hectare. At peak times, he said, as many as 350,000 long-stay visitors live in the nearby resort area for months, and many drive directly to the village to pick fruit.

"We do not really have to go out and sell," Chen said. "They come to us."

Thriving enterprises

Restaurateur Ran is among a number of young villagers who have found a way to share in that growth. With support from local authorities, he turned his family's idle house into a restaurant serving local cuisine. He said the local government covered the renovation costs as part of a homestay alliance policy, under which idle village houses are upgraded for business use and later returned to villagers, with the improvements left in place.

His mother, who began as a kitchen helper, prepares a local specialty soup, and his father has opened a small store beside the restaurant.

In recent years, nearly 200 people have either returned from outside or come to Jingzhu to develop new enterprises. They run homestays, grow fruit and operate restaurants, turning once-empty courtyards into bustling tourist hubs.

The village has 46 homestays and rural inns. Blueberries grown in the village can sell for 120 yuan per kilogram, while grapes and other high-altitude specialty fruits generate more than 150,000 yuan per hectare on average, according to village authorities.

The development has not come at the cost of abandoning ecological protection, with local officials saying Jingzhu maintains a forest coverage rate of about 75 percent, and a negative oxygen ion concentration of around 35,000 per cubic centimeter.

The village's approach, they said, is to keep the core heritage area under strict protection, allow appropriate use in buffer and surrounding areas, and help residents increase income through catering, homestays, fruit farming and other peripheral industries.

That approach reflects a broader model explored in Chongqing's Wulong district.

Liu Baodang, deputy secretary-general of the World Heritage Expert Committee of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration, said Wulong has put in place a three-layer protection and development system.

The core layer is strictly protected, the surrounding layer is developed through community participation, and the outer layer supports nature education, tourism, sports and cultural activities. "Protection and development no longer work against each other," Liu said.

In the core area, protection is enforced through legal and administrative mechanisms. Wulong established a world natural heritage prosecutors' office in 2024, integrating criminal, civil, administrative and public interest litigation functions related to environmental and resource protection.

Over the past three years, local authorities have handled more than 80 criminal cases related to environmental resources and more than 110 public interest litigation cases. More than 27 million yuan has been invested in heritage protection over the last five years. Construction projects are required to undergo planning and site checks before development.

Outdoor sporting competitions and activities have become another route for sustainable use. Fairy Mountain's scenic road is a core section of the China International Mountain Outdoor Sports Open, which has been running for more than two decades and has attracted competitors from over 70 countries, said Huang Wei, deputy head of Wulong's culture and tourism commission.

Wulong has 24 hiking routes spanning 774.64 km, he said. In 2024, its outdoor sports industry generated more than 1 billion yuan in revenue and received more than 10 million sports tourism visits, creating stable employment for more than 3,000 residents.

Chen Weihai, a researcher at the Institute of Karst Geology of the Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences, said Wulong Karst is of world-class quality. The three natural bridges within 1.5 km of the Three Natural Bridges form one of the world's largest beaded natural bridge groups, while the Houping Giant Doline cluster provides important evidence for studying karst development and regional geological change.

For Jingzhu village, however, the significance of the World Heritage Site is also visible in more ordinary scenes: A young man returning home to cook local dishes, families turning idle houses into businesses, fruit growers selling directly to visitors and old courtyards filling with people again.

The karst landscape neighboring Jingzhu brought tourists. Tourists brought business. Business helped bring young locals back.

"Without the World Natural Heritage Site, Jingzhu would not be what it is today," said Xie Yong, an official with the Fairy Mountain subdistrict government.

He said the village's "ecology plus culture and tourism" approach has become more than a development model. It is a path to rural vitalization built on the protection and sustainable use of natural heritage.

Life thrives on Mount Emei as conservation takes root

By **HOU LIQIANG** in Emei, Sichuan

Mount Emei has marked the 30th anniversary of its UNESCO World Heritage listing with a wave of biodiversity breakthroughs, successfully saving two critically endangered species once thought to be lost forever.

Through artificial breeding, precision tracking and a new smart monitoring network, local conservationists have successfully revived the *Parakmeria omeiensis* (a rare magnolia tree) and rediscovered the chevron-spotted brown frog — a "Lazarus taxon" that had vanished from scientific records for decades.

These breakthroughs are part of a broader ecological turnaround on the mountain. Over the last five years alone, local authorities have documented three animal species entirely new to science, alongside three newly recorded plant species and 16 newly recorded animal species.

The *Parakmeria omeiensis* is an evergreen tree endemic to Mount Emei and classified as a plant species with extremely small populations, said Yu Daoping, a researcher with the Sichuan Provincial Academy of Natural Resource Sciences.

The plant was first recorded by botanist Zheng Wanjun during fieldwork on Mount Emei in 1940 and was named in 1951 after its type locality, Yu said. It then disappeared from scientific observation for decades before researchers rediscovered one individual on a cliff in 1987. By 2012, only 74 wild individuals had been found, and the current wild population remains at just over 90 plants, Yu said.

In 2012, the species was included in China's conservation program for plant species with extremely small populations. It is also under first-class national protection and is listed as critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Yu said the magnolia is valuable not only because of its rarity, but also because members of the magnolia family are considered ancient groups among angiosperms. The species offers important evidence for studies of the origin, development and evolution of flowering plants and is also a reference indicator for regional forest ecosystem quality.

After more than 30 years of work, researchers have mastered seed propagation, grafting and other artificial breeding techniques, overcoming difficulties in fruiting, germination and seedling growth under natural conditions, Yu said. To date, more than 3,200 seedlings have been cultivated, and over 800 plants have been reintroduced in eight operations at five sites on Mount Emei, with survival rates remaining above 90 percent in the wild.

Another case is the chevron-spotted brown frog, or *Rana chevronta*, a critically endangered amphibian endemic to Mount Emei.

Liang Dong, an engineer at the ecological station of the Mount Emei forestry management office, said the frog has an extremely small population and a very narrow distribution range.

The species was first discovered in 1965 and named in 1978 by Hu Shuqin and Ye Changyuan, then researchers of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Liang said. For decades afterward, no living individual was recorded. Relying on field notes left by earlier zoologists to identify the historical discovery site, researchers found three individuals in 2024.

Liang said the frog lives in coniferous and broadleaf mixed forests at an altitude of about 1,800 meters, and feeds on insects and small animals. The site where it was rediscovered was the same as the location where it was found in 1965, and the timing of the two discoveries was also close, he said.

Researchers from the Chengdu Institute of Biology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Chengdu Normal University, Sichuan University and local institutions have strengthened studies and protection of the species in recent years, Liang said. The next step is to explore artificial breeding to increase its population.

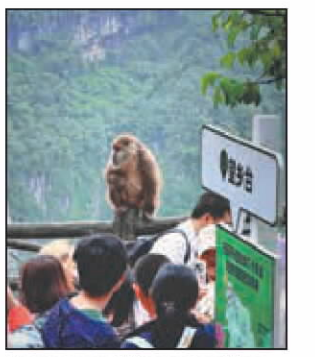
Habitat quality is crucial for the frog, he added. Monitoring work showed that the chemical oxygen demand level at one breeding site was only 5 to 8 milligrams per liter, indicating very clean water, according to Liang.

"Last year we tested the water at its breeding site, and the chemical oxygen demand level was only 5 to 8 milligrams per liter. What does that mean? It means even the drinking water from the tap at our homes might not be as clean as that water," he said.

To support such conservation work, monitoring capacity has also been strengthened. According to local conservation authorities, a biodiversity monitoring demonstration project has deployed 73 infrared cameras, including 22 smart devices capable of real-time data transmission. The grid-based network now covers 85 percent of the target area.

The system has collected 2,956 valid wildlife image records and identified 46 wildlife species, including one under first-class national protection, 16 under second-class national protection and five species on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

It has also helped authorities crack one poaching case. The project team plans to complete the deployment of 100 infrared cameras by the end of September and further explore artificial intelligence image recognition after the rainy season.



A macaque sitting on a railing on Mount Emei is at the center of tourists' attention in July 2024. DU LIANYI / CHINA DAILY

Known for its rich ecological resources, Mount Emei is home to more than 3,700 higher plant varieties and over 2,300 wild animal species, according to local conservation authorities. The mountain also serves as the type locality — the exact place where the very first specimen of a new species was collected — for 253 plant and 157 animal species.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:15 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:15 PM

LIFE



Lead singer Li Wei (center), bassist Zheng Jun (top left), guitarist Zeng Huizhen (top right), keyboardist Zeng Qingli (above left), and drummer Liu Shuangqing rock the stage in a graduation concert at Hubei Engineering University in Xiaogan, Hubei province, blending heartfelt farewells with a punk-inspired performance. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Rocking out a goodbye to students

Five dorm matrons surprise graduates with unforgettable performance, **Chen Meiling** and **Liu Kun** in Wuhan report.

The lights suddenly went out, and the audience fell silent. The drummer raised her sticks, held them aloft for a split second, then brought them crashing down.

"Hey, you in West Zone Dorm 19! What are you still doing after lights out?" "Girls in Sanli Dorm! If you don't sweep up all that hair, I'll think I've wandered into the Spider Cave!"

More than 2,000 glow sticks swayed across the arena. Onstage stood five dormitory matrons — familiar faces students had seen almost every day for years. But this was a side of them no one had seen before.

At a recent graduation concert at Hubei Engineering University in Xiaogan, Hubei province, a rock band made up of five dormitory matrons brought the house down.

The lineup featured lead singer Li Wei, bassist Zheng Jun, keyboardist Zeng Qingli, drummer Liu Shuangqing, and guitarist Zeng Huizhen. Usually seen hurrying through dormitories in work uniforms, the five women took the stage in punk-inspired outfits.

Zheng had her hair braided into tiny plaits for the first time in her life. Zeng Huizhen, who usually oversees the men's dormitories and is known for her stern demeanor, wrapped a sun-protection face covering around her head to complete her edgy look.

Averaging 50 years old, the women performed an original song, *Go Shine*, written for the occasion, as a heartfelt farewell to the graduating class.

The contrast between their everyday jobs and rock-star personas, combined with humorous and touching lyrics peppered with local dialect, drew wave after wave of cheers. Videos of the performance quickly went viral online.

Singer Li, 46, is the youngest in the band. She got a wild perm especially for this performance.

"My palms were sweating from nerves before going on stage. I never get flustered when chatting with hundreds of students during dorm inspections, yet standing under the bright lights of the huge gymnasium stage made my legs go weak. We kept encouraging each other right before our performance," she says.

"But the moment we stepped onto the stage and heard the students cheering, with glow sticks lighting up the crowd, all my nerves disappeared. All I could see were the kids, smiling and full of excitement."

Li has worked as a dormitory matron for four years. Her days are spent keeping dormitory records, making nightly rounds, mending torn clothes, and lining up electric scooters outside the buildings. Thanks to her outgoing personality, students affectionately call her Sister Wei.

Her favorite lyrics read: "If you're wronged and have nowhere to turn, just buy a ticket and come back. ... A window in the dormitory building will always stay open for you."

"I want them to know they don't have to carry every burden alone," she adds.

Practice makes perfect

None of the five women had any real musical experience before joining the band.

"I can't even read sheet music, let alone play an instrument," says keyboardist Zeng Qingli, 49.

For a month, they rehearsed during work breaks in the dormitory duty room. With the curtains drawn and their instruments unplugged, they silently counted beats and practiced finger movements.

"We didn't want to make noise that might disturb students studying for exams or sleeping in the dorms," says Liu, the drummer.



The rock band's performance captivates students at the venue, and its videos draw more than 3 million views online.

She says the rehearsals were meant to remain a secret.

"But some students walking past the duty room late at night heard us humming and guessed we were preparing for a performance," Liu says.

"They even told us not to push ourselves too hard."

Without a drum kit at home, Liu lined up washbasins, rice bowls and pot lids in her kitchen, using chopsticks as drumsticks while following tutorial videos on her phone.

"My husband laughed at first, saying I'd turned the kitchen into a band rehearsal room," she says.

"Later, he sat with me every day, helping me keep time."

The idea for the performance began when the university's facilities and logistics department and the Communist Youth League Committee started planning a performance for the graduation concert. Graduates from the School of Literature, Journalism and Communication suggested writing a song dedicated to the dormitory matrons who had cared for them throughout their university years.

The concert's faculty adviser believed rock music best captured the energy and optimism of graduates about to begin a new chapter in life.

To create an original song, Ouyang Chengxiu and his students interviewed classmates and dormitory matrons, collecting stories that reflected everyday moments and the deep bonds between them.

The lyrics recall students pretending to be asleep when they heard the matrons' jangling keys, hiding laptops beneath blankets, tucking takeout into wardrobes, or climbing over campus walls late at night with excuses about buying medicine.

The song went through more than 10 revisions before it was finalized.

"Our concept was built around contrast and resonance," Ouyang says. "We wanted to break the stereotype that dormitory matrons are simply there to check rooms."

The five performers were selected from across the university. After speaking with them, Ouyang's team realized how many moving stories they had.

No matter how late students returned, the matrons always left a door open for them. Years after graduation, many former students still send local specialties from their hometowns or greetings during festivals. "We wove those genuine moments into the lyrics," Ouyang says.

Memories and wishes

The four-minute performance quickly went viral, drawing more than 3 million views on Sina Weibo. Many viewers say it brought back memories of their university days.

"I don't know them personally at all, but I'm in tears," one netizen writes.

Lei Wenjia, an English major who attended the concert, says she was stunned when the dormitory matrons walked onstage with their punk-inspired performance.

"The atmosphere was electric from start to finish. It made this graduation concert a truly unforgettable experience," she says.

For Lei, the song was filled with memories, heartfelt reminders and warm wishes. "I'll carry all of them with me as I begin the next chapter of my life," she says.

To Lei, the matrons were more than dorm supervisors. They reminded students to close their windows before it rained and to pack warm clothes when temperatures dropped, comforted them when they were upset, and shared their happiest moments.

Cao Yixi, who graduated with a degree in primary education, describes the matrons as dependable guardians who were always there whenever students ran into trouble.

"They could solve almost anything," she says. "Once I dropped something into a drain, and my dormitory matron lent me a long pair of tongs to retrieve it. It felt like there was nothing she couldn't do, and we could always turn to her for help."

Two days after the June 14 concert, at the university's graduation ceremony, Zeng Qingli fought back tears as she addressed the graduating class.

"There won't be any aunties reminding you to turn off the lights at night anymore. But I hope you'll always keep a light burning in your hearts and remember to take good care of yourselves," she says.

Zeng Qingli's duty room is like a treasure chest for over 3,400 students: sewing kits, bike pumps, screwdrivers, first-aid kits, and umbrellas. It stocks all kinds of daily supplies students might need. A well-worn registration book bears dense records of key and item borrowings. On average, at least five or six students come to her every day, and she always greets them with a smile.

"It feels like only yesterday that I watched them move into the dormitories," she says. "And now, it's time to say goodbye."

The five women shared one final message with the graduates: "Go after your dreams with courage and let your light shine. If you ever feel worn out, you're always welcome to come back. Don't compare yourself with others, no matter how your life turns out. Peace, smooth days and happiness matter most.

"Stay in touch with your family and your alma mater. When you have time, come back to Xiaogan and Hubei Engineering University. The corridors will still feel familiar, and we'll still be here. Just call out to us when you return, and we'll greet you with a smile and ask, 'Have you eaten yet?'"

Contact the writers at chenmeiling@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

The challenges and triumphs of rescuing stranded whales

HAIKOU — "A whale is stranded in the shallows and in critical condition!" This distress call had barely come through when Li Haiqin, 49, grabbed his life jacket and first-aid kit and rushed to the scene.

It may have been just another day for the head of a cetacean rescue team in Sanya, South China's Hainan province, but this mission exemplified his 14-year commitment to saving stranded whales and dolphins.

After founding the rescue team in 2012, Li has participated in more than 40 whale and dolphin rescue operations. In his eyes, every lost whale or dolphin deserves every possible effort to help it find its way back home.

With the skill of an experienced rescuer, he coordinates on-site rescue operations in an orderly fashion, directing fellow rescuers to use wet towels to prevent whales or dolphins from drying out. At the same time, he gently comforts the animals and spares no effort in their recovery.

A rough-toothed dolphin named "Yangyang" was found stranded in the shallow waters of Yalong Bay, Sanya, on April 24, 2025.

Lying on its side and showing signs of extreme weakness, the dolphin had its blowhole blocked by mud and sand at the time of discovery.

Upon receiving the alert, Li rushed to the scene and coordinated rescue efforts with the coastal police and local fishermen. Thanks to their joint efforts, "Yangyang" was successfully returned to the sea.

In Li's view, there is no easy path to saving a life. Every successful rescue is earned through perseverance, hard work and an unyielding commitment that never wavers.

On Jan 3, 2024, a short-finned pilot whale named "Haitang" was found stranded in Haitang Bay in Sanya, with severe shark-inflicted wounds and in critical condition.

Li promptly organized a team to transfer the animal to a shore-based rescue site, where treatment was provided with assistance from scientific experts, coast guard personnel and firefighters. Following 145 days of treatment and monitoring, "Haitang" recovered and was returned to nature.

Cetaceans, as flagship species of marine ecosystems, serve as a critical barometer of ocean health. Stranding-related deaths, caused by disease or disorientation, have become an intractable problem worldwide.

In China, more than 100 such incidents occur each year, and rescue efforts are often met with daunting challenges.



Li Haiqin (second from left) participates in a rescue effort for a short-finned pilot whale in Sanya, South China's Hainan province, in 2024. XINHUA

Over the years, Li has endured countless cuts and bruises of all sizes while navigating tidal flats and submerged reefs. Some of his wounds festered for as long as two months.

Li now envisions a conservation approach that goes beyond emergency response, evolving into an integrated model encompassing rescue operations, public science education and skills training.

"Rescuing stranded whales and dolphins is extremely challenging, and the success rate remains low. But as long as there is even a glimmer of hope, we will never give up," the rescuer says.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:15 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:15 PM

LIFE



Performers share their journeys into an art that once lacked a community, and how they gave the genre a distinct identity, which in turn provided them with hope, **Chen Nan** reports.

Street dance moves into the mainstream

What do hip-hop dance moves and kung fu have in common? More than many people may think. Both demand rigorous training, reward improvisation, and celebrate physical mastery. These common threads will take to the stage on July 24 at New York City's Lincoln Center, where Chinese performers will blend the two art forms during Chinese Arts Week, part of the Lincoln Center's Summer for the City program.

Chinese dancers will weave together breaking, popping and martial arts, offering audiences more than a display of technical virtuosity. For the artists behind the production, the performance is intended as a statement about how Chinese street dance has evolved from an imported youth culture into a distinctly Chinese artistic language.

"We hope to present a more multidimensional, open and confident image of Chinese street dance," says Xia Rui, one of the performance's principal organizers. "Chinese street dance is not simply a copy of Western street culture, nor is it just youth entertainment centered on technical display. After years of development, it has become a contemporary artistic language through which young Chinese people express themselves, engage with tradition, and connect with the world."

In addition to the July 24 show, the Chinese street dance delegation will begin its US tour with a performance at the festival's opening reception in New York on July 23 and then travel to Philadelphia for a public performance on July 25. The tour concludes on July 26 with a youth street dance cultural exchange in New York, followed by creative workshops and a series of flash mob performances in the city.

As a major promoter of the dance genre in China, Xia is the deputy director of the China Hip-Hop Union Committee, founded by the China Dancers Association in 2013.

For Xia, presenting the showcase at the Lincoln Center carries symbolic weight.

"We want audiences to see that Chinese street dance is youthful, vibrant and creative. It is rooted in Chinese culture and Eastern aesthetics and is capable of engaging in equal dialogue with other cultures," he notes.

That confidence did not emerge overnight.

When 38-year-old dancer Chen Jie — better known in the dance battle scene as A K — first discovered street dance, China barely had a community for it.

His performance at the Lincoln Center will expand on an earlier television work into a new work, a reimagining of Sun Wukong, or the Monkey King, combining hip-hop and breaking with projections, shadow imagery and music built around traditional Chinese musical instruments such as the *pipa* (a four-stringed lute), *suona* (a double-reed woodwind instrument) and *guzheng* (Chinese zither).

"American audiences have Marvel superheroes," he says. "China has its own hero — Sun Wukong."

The legendary Monkey King from the classic novel *Journey to the West* overcomes repeated setbacks through determination, a quality that resonates with Chen.

"My own story is very similar," he says. "I've encountered many obstacles, but I've kept moving toward my goal."

As a primary school student, he saw what a television program simply described as "popular dance". Soon after, he learned from his classmates who practiced something called street dance.

"I went to watch," recalls Chen, who was born and raised in Zhanjiang, Guangdong province. "I thought it looked incredibly cool. I fell in love immediately."

Learning was far more difficult than it is today. There were no online tutorials or social media clips to imitate. His older brother introduced him to Michael Jackson performances on DVDs, and Chen replayed them endlessly, studying the iconic moonwalk and every movement and musical accent.

His family struggled to understand his obsession.

"They didn't know what I was doing," Chen says. "Only after I won a competition in Guangzhou (Guangdong) did they stop criticizing."

Years of persistence followed before the trophies arrived. He trained first as a breaker before discovering hip-hop, whose groove, rhythm and musicality felt more natural.

"When I found hip-hop, I knew immediately it was the dance genre I'd been searching for," he says.

Today, Chen, who has gained a large fan base after appearing on hit reality shows such as *Street Dance of China*, sees street dance as carrying responsibilities that extend beyond competitions.

"I want young people to see hope. Street dancers are not troublemakers dancing on street corners. If we do this well, we can give others strength," he says.

He has spent years teaching children, including students in remote mountain communities, traveling for hours by bus to conduct workshops.

"I was a quiet child myself," he says. "Dance made me confident. Seeing that happen for other children is one of the happiest things I've experienced."

China's street dance landscape has changed dramatically during his career.

"People, from 4-year-olds to 60-year-olds, are learning street dance," Chen says. "That wasn't imaginable before."

For the youngest performers, however, Chinese street dance has always been more than imitation.

Wu Mingrui, a 16-year-old popper, first danced in kindergarten after a teacher demonstrated a few simple moves.

"I learned them very quickly," she says. "I was always chosen to lead the performances. My mother realized I had talent."

She began studying popping at age 7. A video of a young South Korean female popper convinced her that the style's explosive power was not limited to men. "I realized girls have strength too," she says.

She remembers hearing doubts that popping demanded physical abilities girls simply did not possess.

"People thought girls would always struggle physically compared with boys," she says. "That only made me want to prove them wrong."

She trained relentlessly, often spending 12 hours every weekend in the studio.

At 9, she won her first competition while competing against adults.

"I never expected to win. When the judges raised my hand, I burst into tears. That moment made me believe maybe I really could do this," she recalls.

Her understanding of dance has changed with experience.

"I used to think of myself as an athlete," she says. "Now I think street dance is really about expression. Dance doesn't have one standard like sports. It's how you communicate your emotions."

She hopes audiences also see something else.

"I want people who watch me dance to feel that women are powerful," she says. "Girls can dance just as well as boys."

At the Lincoln Center, Wu will perform *Daomadan*, a work that combines street dance with Chinese opera traditions and martial arts, disciplines she has studied formally in preparation for the performance.

Daomadan translates to "knife-and-horse female role". *Daomadan* is a role type in traditional Chinese Opera, featuring a female warrior who combines martial arts, dance, acrobatics, and singing.

"Street dance wasn't originally connected with martial arts," she says. "Creating something new from both traditions is exciting. It's a way to share Chinese culture."

That approach also reflects Xia's broader philosophy.

"The point is not to insert traditional elements into street dance," he says. "The challenge is allowing traditional culture to become the inner character of the work."

He argues that successful cross-cultural performance does not depend on audiences recognizing every cultural reference.

"Even if people don't understand a different culture," Xia says. "They should still feel its spiritual strength, its physical rhythm and its aesthetic character.

"Street dance has explosive energy, kung fu has inner power. Street dance values freestyle expression, while Chinese culture offers deep spiritual roots. When those qualities truly come together, it isn't simply a fusion — it becomes a new contemporary Chinese expression."

For Xia, China's street dance ecosystem has been built over the years through national organizations, competitions, education, and artist development.

International appearances, he believes, should become part of an ongoing cycle rather than isolated events.

Ultimately, he hopes Chinese street dance will move beyond occasional overseas performances toward sustained artistic partnerships.

"The most important thing is not for the world to know that China also has street dance," Xia says. "It is for the world to understand that Chinese street dance is making its own cultural contribution."

Contact the writer at chennan@chinadaily.com.cn









Top: A scene from *Kung Fu Street Dance*, combining street dance moves with kung fu, which will be performed in the US. **Middle:** A scene from a dance piece inspired by Sun Wukong, or the Monkey King, which will feature Chen Jie in the US. **Left above:** Another piece, *Dance Awakening*. **Right above:** Dancer Chen Jie, better known as A K, and Wu Mingrui (right), a 16-year-old popper. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

> "Even if people don't understand a different culture, they should still feel its spiritual strength, its physical rhythm and its aesthetic character."
>
> **Xia Rui,** organizer

Turkiye, Sri Lanka host cultural exchange events with Chinese cities

ISTANBUL/COLOMBO — The cultural exchange event "Encounter and Enlighten" recently opened in Istanbul, Turkiye, highlighting exchanges with Nanjing, Jiangsu province, as well as in Colombo, Sri Lanka, where exchanges between the city and Ningbo, Zhejiang province, were featured. The series of events highlights intercity dialogues on topics including mutual learning among civilizations and urban development.

The events were attended by representatives from governments, academia and cultural institutions.

In a video message addressing the Nanjing-Istanbul Urban Civilization Dialogue held on July 2, Frederique Aubert, head of the culture unit at the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, which is based in Venice, noted that both Nanjing and Istanbul possess rich cultural heritage and that their heritage conservation practices can serve as models for the preservation and sustainable development of historic cities worldwide.





Right: Guests visit an exhibition during the cultural exchange event "Encounter and Enlighten" in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on July 4. The event arrived in Colombo, featuring a themed dialogue with China's city of Ningbo, Zhejiang province. **Left:** Experts lead a discussion during the Nanjing-Istanbul Urban Civilization Dialogue held in Istanbul, Turkiye, on July 2. PHOTOS BY XINHUA

Huriye Merve Gedik, head of the City History, Promotion and Tourism Department of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, said that Istanbul and Nanjing are both historic cities that have flourished along waterways and prospered through the accumulation of civilization.

The dialogue facilitates the two cities in deepening mutual understanding and creates opportunities for practical cooperation, such as preserving ancient city walls and utilizing cultural heritage, Gedik said.

Also on that day, renowned writers, poets and Sinologists from China and Turkiye held in-depth discussions on literary creation and cross-cultural communication in the AI age, and announced a two-way resident-poet project.

In Sri Lanka's capital, Colombo, the event held on July 4 focused on cultural construction amid the development of port cities.

At a themed dialogue with the eastern Chinese city of Ningbo, Mayor of Colombo Vraie Cally Balthazaar told journalists that both port cities are undergoing tremendous transformation and that Colombo looks forward to learning from Ningbo in city planning and the integration of culture and tourism.

At a session devoted to sharing stories of life, culture and connection associated with the two cities, Yasiru Ranaraja, founding director of the Belt and Road Initiative Sri Lanka, recounted the historical visits by ancient Chinese Buddhist monk Faxian and navigator Zheng He to Sri Lanka, highlighting the port city's important role in Sri Lanka-China exchanges since ancient times.

Organizers of the "Encounter and Enlighten" cultural exchange events in Turkiye and Sri Lanka included China's State Council Information Office, Chinese diplomatic missions in the respective countries, and the Chinese city-level governments involved.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:15 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:15 PM

LIFE



Willow craft branches out

A centuries-old weaving tradition fuels rural livelihoods, exports and sustainable design through constant creativity and skilled craftsmanship, **Zhao Ruixue** reports.

In the quiet town of Caozhuang in Linshu county, Shandong province, villagers are busy in mid-June weaving willow products ordered months earlier by overseas buyers. Among the most popular items is a hand-woven sleigh lined with soft velvet, designed as a Christmas decoration.

"Customers visit months in advance to place orders. These festive willow crafts add warmth to homes and capture the spirit of Christmas," says Zhang Zhiquan, general manager of Linyi Olvy Agricultural Comprehensive Development Co Ltd.

Beyond sleighs, Christmas tree skirts, storage baskets and delicate willow deer ornaments have also become seasonal best-sellers.

Walking into the Olvy garden in the town, visitors are instantly immersed in a handcrafted paradise filled with diverse ingenious crafts woven from willow branches, wood and ropes.

At the garden entrance, a simple fence made of interlaced willow twigs and small wooden stakes showcases the primitive power of nature.

Every corner of the garden features handmade willow creations, including delicate tables, chairs and pavilions. Rows of functional and decorative willow works range from storage boxes, woven baskets and framed mirrors to delicate small ornaments.

"We love willow products because so many things today are machine-made. Handmade baskets bring warmth to a home," says Carlos Rocher Arnal, a buyer from Spain shopping for Christmas gifts.

He is looking for baskets to fill with wine, chocolates, and other presents for teachers, doctors, lawyers, friends, and family — a long-standing Christmas tradition in his country.

"I'm looking for items with handles, or some small containers to put two or three bottles and some chocolates," he adds.







Top: Villagers prune willow trees on June 10 in Linshu county, Shandong province. **Middle left:** A villager lays freshly woven willow products out to dry in Linshu on June 10. **Middle right:** Locally made wicker products are displayed at the Olvy garden in Linshu. **Above:** Zhao Qingyue, a county-level inheritor of Linshu willow weaving, demonstrates the traditional craft in Linshu county. PHOTOS BY LIANG BEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Willow weaving in Linshu dates back to the Sui (581-618) and Tang (618-907) dynasties, according to historical records. The craft flourished during the Song (960-1279) and Yuan (1271-1368) dynasties before reaching maturity in the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties.

Over centuries, artisans developed techniques including flat weaving, pattern weaving, block weaving and edge wrapping. Today, the craft is mainly practiced in Henan, Shandong, Hebei and Anhui provinces.

Linshu willow weaving was added to China's national intangible cultural heritage list in 2021.

With practiced hands, Zhao Qingyue, 68, a county-level inheritor of the craft, bends, loops and folds flexible willow branches into intricate woven patterns.

"In Caozhuang, weaving willow is as common as farming. Almost everyone here knows the craft," Zhao says.

Historical records show that villagers were already weaving baskets, grain containers and winnowing pans during the Tang Dynasty.

What began as a practical rural craft has grown into one of Linshu's pillar industries. Today, local producers make dozens of categories of products, from baskets and furniture to garden decor.

Willow products from Linshu are exported to more than 80 countries and regions, accounting for more than a quarter of China's total willow product exports, according to statistics provided by the county government.

The industry generated 950 million yuan ($139.8 million) in output in the first four months of this year, a year-on-year increase of 16.58 percent. Exports during the same period reached 268 million yuan, up 9.38 percent from the previous year, according to the latest figures.

Nearly 100,000 residents in Linshu county are engaged in the willow weaving industry.

"Weaving willow lets me turn my passion into a career. That makes my work deeply rewarding," says Zhao.

While inheriting tradition, local practitioners keep innovating to inject vitality into the ancient craft.

"Traditional craftsmanship shouldn't be confined to old designs," says Zhang, who has learned willow weaving since childhood. He combines willow with iron, wood, rattan and straw, blending traditional techniques with contemporary aesthetics to expand the product range.

His company has developed more than 20,000 designs and color options of willow products, with over 90 percent exported to markets including the United States, Spain and Japan.

"Today, handmade willow crafts are used in homes around the world, bringing natural texture and warmth to gardens, living rooms and studies," Zhang says.

One of the company's enduring bestsellers is a fan-shaped firewood basket woven from unpeeled and white willow.

"This product is highly versatile. It works equally well for storing firewood by the fireplace, organizing garden tools or displaying fruit and flowers, which explains its lasting appeal," he says.

The company is also developing a woven willow or rattan sleeve that fits around a metal ice bucket, combining practicality with natural style.

"We believe it will become another popular product," Zhang says.

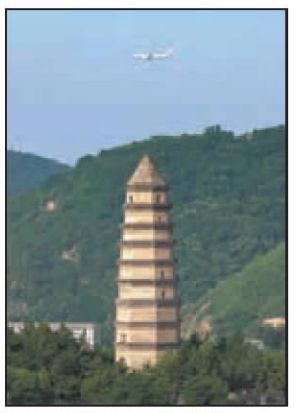
He is equally optimistic about China's domestic market. "Willow weaving reflects a natural, low-carbon and environmentally friendly lifestyle, which increasingly resonates with consumers," he says.

Cao Jiayue contributed to this story.

Contact the writer at zhaoruixue@chinadaily.com.cn

Historic heartland cultivates greener future





Left: Tourists join a traditional village feast in Shenshan village, Maoping town, Jinggangshan city, Jiangxi province, on July 4. ZHOU MI / XINHUA **Right:** Air China Flight CA1279 flies over Pagoda Hill in Yan'an, Shaanxi province, on June 24. Air China has launched "red tourism" routes from Beijing to historic revolutionary destinations including Jinggangshan, Zunyi and Yan'an. CHEN XIAO / XINHUA

NANCHANG — Deep in the forested mountains of Pulong village in Jinggangshan, East China's Jiangxi province, Li Yunyan tends more than 90 beehives. What began as a modest sideline has grown into a reliable livelihood.

The 46-year-old, who has limited mobility, has relied on beekeeping for years. But with only a few dozen hives and little access to markets, expanding the business once seemed out of reach.

"In the past, I had only 30 to 40 beehives and had to carry honey out for sale," Li says. "The mountain roads were difficult, and even high-quality honey could not always fetch a good price."

That changed when local Party organizations helped connect villagers directly with businesses. Beekeepers received technical training, expanded their colonies and gained access to stable procurement channels.

Now, enterprises collect Li's honey directly from his doorstep, eliminating the burden of transporting it. For residents unable to undertake physically demanding work, beekeeping and other eco-friendly industries have become dependable sources of income.

Li's story reflects a broader transformation in Jinggangshan, long celebrated as the cradle of the Chinese revolution and now emerging as a model of green development.

Among old revolutionary bases across the country, Jinggangshan carries special historical significance. In 1927, Chairman Mao Zedong led a fledgling group of Chinese revolutionaries deep into the mountains around Jinggangshan, where they established the first rural revolutionary base of the Communist Party of China.

Ninety years later, Jinggangshan reached another milestone: in 2017, it became the first region in China to be removed from the national list of impoverished counties — three years before the country achieved its nationwide poverty alleviation goal in 2020.

Transformation has continued at the village level as rural vitalization is pushed forward under the leadership of the CPC, which marked its 105th founding anniversary with a gathering on July 1.

The strategy has focused on objectives such as ensuring rural areas are equipped with modern living conditions and narrowing the urban-rural divide.

Shenshan village offers a vivid example. Located near Jinggangshan's main scenic area, the village has developed cultural tourism by designing themed travel routes, improving hospitality services and establishing a tourism association to standardize operations.

Peng Xiaying, the village's first farm-stay owner, initially worried about the financial risks. But with encouragement from local officials and paired-up support, she took the leap and her business is thriving amid booming tourism in Jinggangshan.

"I get dividends from the sales of yellow peaches and local tea, and I run a farm-stay business and a homestay. That brings me over 90,000 yuan ($13,000) a year," she says.

Per capita annual income in Shenshan reached 36,000 yuan last year. Once a fading mountain settlement with fewer than 30 permanent residents, the village is now home to around 180 people and has become a popular rural tourism destination.

Inspired by the success of neighbors like Peng, Huang Jinlong returned home after years of working elsewhere and converted his old farmhouse into a boutique homestay.

"Even before the summer holiday started, all 10 rooms were fully booked," Huang says. "Two busy months here bring in more income than a year of working away from home."

Building on its rich revolutionary heritage, Shenshan village has woven together its revolutionary landmarks, tea gardens, and Hakka-style homes into a vibrant tapestry of rural tourism — offering immersive Red-themed study tours and authentic cultural experiences that bring history to life.

The village now receives more than 300,000 visitors a year, up from 98,000 in 2016.

To sustain growth, Shenshan set up a tourism company and brought in a professional team to develop wellness retreats and study tour offerings. These experts introduced fresh ideas and skills — including livestreaming sessions right from the tea gardens — opening up new markets for local produce.

Zhang Ying, an official with the company, says the livestreaming initiative is expected to generate an additional 200,000 yuan in annual income for the village. "We're very optimistic about the future," he adds.

Jinggangshan's signature produce also includes bamboo shoots and camellia oil. In 2025, sales of these products reached 1.4 billion yuan, with some shipments making their way to markets in Europe and North America.

Tourists exploring Jinggangshan's revolutionary heritage and mountain scenery often purchase local delicacies as souvenirs. Recognizing the opportunity, Peng began making Hakka rice cakes last year, adding another source of income to her growing business.

For villagers whose lives once revolved around cutting bamboo on the mountain slopes and tending to rice paddies down in the fields, the lush mountains and clear waters have not changed, but their value has been transformed beyond recognition.

"We never imagined life could become like this," Peng says.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:15 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:15 PM

SPORTS

2026 WORLD CUP

Three Lions repel Viking horde with Bellingham brace

Haaland held goalless as England claims extra-time win over Norway



England's Jude Bellingham celebrates scoring his side's equalizing goal in its 2-1 World Cup quarterfinal win over Norway in Miami Gardens, Florida, on Saturday. AP

Jude Bellingham locked arms with teammate Harry Kane as England fans belted out their rendition of the Beatles' classic *Hey Jude*.

Bellingham had certainly earned the serenade. He scored twice on Saturday — an equalizer in the first half and the go-ahead goal in the third minute of extra time — to give England a 2-1 win that lifted it past Norway and into the World Cup semifinals for the first time since 2018.

The Real Madrid star has now matched Kane with six goals in this tournament, two behind France's Kylian Mbappe and Argentina's Lionel Messi, and one shy of Norway's Erling Haaland, who was held scoreless by England. Bellingham also scored twice in the round of 16 when England beat co-host Mexico.

England, winner of the 1966 World Cup and facing pressure to return to the title match, is now one win away from getting there. The Three Lions will face Argentina in the semifinals.

"The game is split into loads of different facets. Some of it is technical, tactical," Bellingham said. "For me, the biggest one is psychological and how you can manage setbacks, how you can manage adversity. This team showed, yet again, that they can do it, and that's a really valuable skill and trait to have."

Not everyone was thrilled with England's performance, though.

"We made life very, very difficult for ourselves today," coach Thomas Tuchel said in a contentious interview with Fox Sports.

"The result is fantastic. We're in the last four. It's amazing, but not happy with the performance ... in every sense."

Tuchel clarified in his news conference that he was "proud and happy" with how his squad has overcome adversity, but added, "I'm also a football coach, and I also have demands.

"I think we can play faster. I think we can play more clinically."

Bellingham seemed to disagree with his coach's critique after England prevailed in the heat and humidity of South Florida, with temperatures reaching 33 C at the start of warmups.

"Well, whatever," Bellingham said, shaking his head. "It's difficult out there. It's a tough shift.

"My thoughts and appreciation go to the players out there who put in a great shift."

Andreas Schjelderup scored in the 36th minute for Norway, a team that reached its first quarterfinals and took the internet by storm with its "Viking row" and the charisma of Haaland, their fearsome 6-foot-5 striker.

Haaland, however, failed to score for the first time in 15 competitive games for his country.

The Manchester City striker had scored seven times in his four games at the World Cup, carrying Norway to the quarterfinals in their first appearance at the global showpiece for 28 years.

That run included eliminating Brazil in the last 16, as Haaland struck twice to knock out the five-time winner.

This time, though, he ended the match sitting dejectedly on the bench, after he was subbed out for Jorgen Strand Larsen in the second half of extra time.

"It was not a tough decision to take him out," Norway coach Stale Solbakken said.

"He was finished. Maybe I should have taken him out 10 minutes before. He also got a dead leg in the second half, so that, combined with the fatigue, he did everything he could."

Norway nearly went ahead 2-1 in the 56th minute when Torbjorn Heggem put a rebound past goalkeeper Jordan Pickford after a corner kick.

Following a video review, the goal was disallowed because of a foul by Haaland in the box. Haaland was also denied by Pickford on a point-blank header in the first half.

Schjelderup, making just his second start of the tournament, fired a shot that caromed off the right post and into the net to stun an England team that had dominated possession to that point. Bellingham's equalizer from close range elicited a huge roar from the crowd.

'Amazing generation'

Haaland said Norway's World Cup performances had inspired a new generation, despite the disappointment of its quarterfinal loss.

"How we put Norway on the map is maybe one thing that touches me the most," said Haaland.

"Hopefully now, we can establish something when it comes to Euros, World Cups and everything, because our generation is amazing, and, also, all this gives motivation to young people back in Norway that it's possible to play on the world's biggest stage in a Norwegian shirt."

Haaland's brand as a global superstar has soared in recent weeks, with waves of new American fans taking to his affable off-field personality, as well as his goalscoring prowess.

He is hoping Norway can build on its success in the United States to become a powerhouse in the coming years.

"It's kind of difficult to take in this kind of a show, or the roller coaster that we've been on now for the last six weeks," added the 25-year-old.

"I think this changes Norway, I think it changes me. I've said it many times, we're building something in Norway.

"It's about maintaining this, because, again, we've shown that it's possible to be one of the biggest football nations in the world."

AGENCIES

'Suffering' Argentina eventually gets the better of 10-man Switzerland

KANSAS CITY, Missouri — Late goals from Julian Alvarez and Lautaro Martinez deep into extra time gave Argentina a dramatic quarterfinal win over 10-man Switzerland on Saturday, setting up a heavyweight last-four clash with England in Atlanta on Wednesday.

Lionel Messi's Argentina side kept alive its bid to become the first team to retain the World Cup since Brazil in 1962 with a 3-1 victory that sparked pandemonium among its sea of supporters and ended Switzerland's fairy tale run.

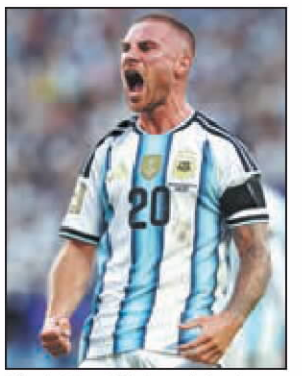
The Swiss had reached the World Cup quarterfinals for the first time since 1954, but fell a match short of an unprecedented semifinal appearance.

The match looked headed for a shootout, before Alvarez whipped a gorgeous long-range shot into the top corner in the 112th minute that Gregor Kobel, at full-stretch, had no chance of saving.

Martinez added a third for the defending champion nine minutes later, when he calmly slotted home the rebound of Thiago Almada's shot.

Alexis Mac Allister had given Argentina the lead in the 10th minute, meeting Messi's corner at the front post with a flicked header that sailed beyond Kobel and into the far corner.

After a largely uneventful first half, the contest burst into life in the second, as Switzerland repeatedly tested Emiliano Martinez, forcing the Argentina goalkeeper into a string of sharp saves.



Alexis Mac Allister celebrates scoring Argentina's first goal against Switzerland in their World Cup quarterfinal. AFP

As the Swiss piled on the pressure, they were rewarded in the 67th minute, when Dan Ndoye slid a right-footed finish through Martinez's legs.

But, in the 72nd, the Swiss were reduced to 10 men when Breel Embolo got a second yellow card for simulation. It came after a lengthy VAR review for mistaken identity, with the referee overturning his initial decision to caution Argentina's Leandro Paredes. Embolo was inconsolable as he left the pitch.

Argentina responded by pinning Switzerland back for long periods, cheered on by fans who made Arrowhead Stadium feel more like La Bombonera.

Switzerland weathered wave after wave of pressure, but its resistance was finally broken in the closing moments of extra time.

Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni said the late nature of the victory was further proof that his team have grown comfortable operating in challenging situations.

"We knew that we were going to suffer, and this is part of our blood, this is part of our DNA, and this brings peace of mind," he said.

"We know what it feels like to be dominated by the opponent, to concede an equalizer, so, today, we kept our composure. The team knew how to remain calm and, of course, we will never give up.

"To reach a semifinal, you need to suffer. You need to go through it."

Swiss coach Murat Yakin, however, was left seething.

"We were punished because of a rule that, in my opinion, is completely unacceptable," he said.

"It's very painful that we were eliminated that way. I don't think we deserve that today, and, in my opinion, my boys are the real heroes; they put all their heart and their passion into their performance. I am very proud. They are very proud."

Even Scaloni acknowledged that "luck was on our side because one of their players was sent off".

Yakin, though, wasn't done with his criticism of Portuguese referee Joao Pinheiro: "The referee made the wrong decision. It was, in my opinion, a harmless foul, if it even was a foul. I know they will protect their referee, but this rule destroyed our game today."

AGENCIES

TENNIS

Noskova wins first Grand Slam after dishing herself up a bathroom pep talk

LONDON — Linda Noskova placed fingers in both of her ears to drown out the noise from the Centre Court crowd.

She draped one of Wimbledon's strawberry-red towels over her head.

And, eventually — after she had wasted five match points and a 5-2 lead, and conceded the second set of a drama-filled final — she left the court completely for a bathroom break.

During Noskova's brief time off the court, two shiny objects caught her attention: the Venus Rosewater Dish that is awarded to the women's champion and the smaller dish for the runner-up.

"I was like, 'I'm not going to take the small one. I'm taking the big one. I have been so close. This will probably be the heartbreak of my life,'" Noskova said. "'I'm going to leave my soul on court in the third set, whatever it takes.'"

The 21-year-old Noskova did just as she promised herself, overcoming her second-set meltdown to beat Karolina Muchova 6-2, 5-7, 6-3 in an all-Czech final for her first Grand Slam trophy on Saturday.

When Noskova finally finished it off with a service winner on her sixth match point — and first of the third set — she covered her face and dropped down to the grass on her back.

Minutes later, Noskova was being awarded the Venus Rosewater Dish by Catherine, the Princess of Wales.

"It's never easy to get the last point," Noskova said during her victory speech. "Karo, you really made me work for it."

Noskova became the third Czech woman in four years to win the grass-court major, after Marketa Vondrousova in 2023 and Barbora Krejcikova in 2024.

Muchova and Noskova played doubles together at the 2024 Paris Olympics and finished fourth.

"I am so glad that I could play my first Grand Slam final with you," Noskova told Muchova during her speech. "We made history today. All our Czech fans at home are proud of us, no matter the result. It was a good day for both of us."

Petra Kvitova, who won Wimbledon in 2011 and 2014, was in attendance, as was the greatest Czech-born player of them all, Martina Navratilova — who won a record nine singles titles at the All England Club and was seated next to the Princess of Wales in the Royal Box — and Jan Kodes, the 1973 men's champion.



Linda Noskova of Czech Republic poses with the Venus Rosewater Dish after beating compatriot Karolina Muchova in the Wimbledon women's singles final on Saturday. AP

Kipling's poem

An excerpt of the poem "If" by Rudyard Kipling that was placed above the players' entrance to Centre Court more than a century ago summarizes the challenges Noskova had to overcome.

"If you can meet with triumph and disaster," the excerpt reads. "And treat those two imposters just the same."

It's not the first time that Noskova has had to overcome adversity at Wimbledon.

Her mother died just before she played the tournament two years ago.

"I definitely would not be standing here without her, so thank you," Noskova said in a dedication to her mother during her speech, blowing a kiss skyward.

Navratilova wiped away tears listening to Noskova's tribute.

Moments earlier, Muchova began her runner-up speech by calling Noskova "my ex-friend".

"I'm kidding, obviously," Muchova quickly added.

"You're so young and this was your first final of a Grand Slam, and the way you handled it was really unbelievable. You deserve it."

It was the 29-year-old Muchova's second Grand Slam final after getting beaten by Iga Swiatek at the French Open in 2023.

Wasted chances

Blasting aces and winners from all over the court early on, Noskova looked like she was going to run away with it, almost like Swiatek's 6-0, 6-0 rout of Amanda Anisimova in last year's final, which lasted all of 57 minutes.

Saturday's match was just 68 minutes old when Noskova earned her first match point — which ended when she landed a backhand into the net.

Two points later, there was another backhand miss from Noskova; then Muchova took advantage of a net-cord shot on Noskova's third match point in the same game.

Serving for the title in the next game, Noskova double faulted on her fourth match point.

And then, on the fifth occasion to end it, Muchova produced a big serve and forehand winner.

In all, Noskova lost five straight games.

"It's hard to watch," Tracy Austin said on the BBC as she called the match alongside John McEnroe. "We know what that feels like when you start to get tight and you can't loosen up, and then the lead starts to unravel."

Noskova said: "Winning it this way, really having to fight for it, having all these ups and downs, it matters a lot. I have to learn a lot from this match."

AP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:15 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:17 PM

Panda party
Bao Li celebrates fifth birthday with ice cream cake at DC zoo
WORLD, PAGE 4



Nolan's epic sells out at premieres
LIFE, PAGE 15



Market shift
Chinese-made EVs transforming automobile industry in South Korea
BUSINESS, PAGE 6

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 THURSDAY, AUGUST 6, 2026

Grim reminder



People march through Beirut, Lebanon, on Tuesday to mark the sixth anniversary of a deadly port blast, which is considered one of the largest nonnuclear explosions in recorded world history. Nearly 3,000 metric tons of ammonium nitrate that was improperly stored at Beirut port for years exploded on Aug 4, 2020, killing more than 220 people, injuring thousands of others, and leaving vast areas of the Lebanese capital in ruins. To date, justice continues to elude families of the deceased and the survivors of the blast. EMILIE MADI / REUTERS

WORLD WATCH
By Guo Yi

Bruce Lee's enduring legacy of adaptability

As Washington steadily broadens its national security restrictions to encompass an ever wider range of Chinese products, politics has proved far less successful at disrupting something more enduring: the cultural connections between the Chinese and American people. California's decision to establish an annual Bruce Lee Day offers perhaps the clearest reminder of that reality.

In late June, California Governor Gavin Newsom signed legislation to establish Bruce Lee Day, the first annual celebration dedicated to a Chinese American in the state's history. When the first Bruce Lee Day is observed on May 17 next year, it will not be just a belated salute to the martial arts icon, but will for the first time carve a Chinese name into the state's legislative memory.

The date itself carries symbolic weight: May 17 was the day Lee left Hong Kong for San Francisco at the age of 18, a pivotal moment that launched his career in acting and martial arts teaching. Bruce Lee's journey across the ocean and his legendary rise on both sides of the Pacific encapsulate his life's meaning. The deeper question, however, is not why California honored him, but why Bruce Lee still commands such reverence across the West more than 50 years after his death, and what that says about a cultural bridge that politics cannot break.

Bruce Lee's enduring influence rests on more than his martial arts or movie stardom.

See ***Legacy,*** *page 3*

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved
Newsstand prices:
US $1 Canada C$1;
UK 1£ EU 1€
Kenya 50 Kenya Shilling
Asia Pacific: Thailand 120 thb; Philippines 120 php; Myanmar 2000 kyat; Japan 210 yen; Dubai 10 dirham; Pakistan 300 rupee

Measures unveiled to counter US curbs

By **ZHONG NAN** and **ZHANG CHENXU**

China announced on Wednesday a raft of measures in response to restrictions imposed on Chinese companies by the United States, including placing six US entities on its countermeasure list, imposing tighter export controls on drones and related technologies, and launching a national security review into imported printers and copiers.

A Ministry of Commerce spokesperson said in a statement that the countermeasures were a necessary response to Washington's continued expansion of restrictions under the pretext of national security. China urges the US to immediately withdraw relevant restrictions, stop its wrongful actions and return to the right track of resolving differences through friendly consultation and cooperation, the statement added.

The spokesperson warned that China would take more countermeasures if the US insists on introducing new restrictions targeting Chinese entities.

Since the meeting between the two heads of state in Busan, South Korea, last year, the US Federal Communications Commission has repeatedly introduced restrictive measures targeting Chinese companies despite Beijing's firm opposition and calls from business communities in both countries for cooperation, the spokesperson said.

The US has continued to overstretch the concept of national security, with its measures covering areas including telecommunications operators, testing laboratories, drones, consumer routers and submarine cables, and it has recently imposed import curbs on advanced robotics equipment and power inverters.

To safeguard China's national security and interests, the ministry said that export controls on drone-related dual-use items destined for the US will be tightened, requiring case-by-case reviews for exports of drones, key components and related technologies, which will not be eligible for license facilitation measures, effective immediately.

As six US entities have assisted and supported illegal US sanctions related to the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, they will be prohibited from engaging in relevant transactions, cooperation and other activities with organizations and individuals in China, effective immediately, the ministry said.

Also on Wednesday, the National Certification and Accreditation Administration said it would suspend, with immediate effect, follow-up factory inspections conducted by US certification agencies on behalf of designated China Compulsory Certification bodies.

The ministry spokesperson said China's countermeasures were "overall restrained" and reflected its desire to preserve the hard-won stability of China-US economic and trade relations.

Experts noted that the countermeasures are aimed at protecting China's legitimate interests while avoiding further escalation of trade tensions. They emphasized that dialogue and rules-based cooperation remain essential for maintaining stability in global supply chains.

John Quelch, executive vice-chancellor and a distinguished professor of social science at Duke Kunshan University in Jiangsu province, said a stable international trading system benefits not only exporters and investors, but also consumers and workers worldwide.

The ministry also announced on Wednesday the launch of a national security investigation into imported office equipment with printing and copying functions that are equipped with foreign system software, marking China's first such probe under its foreign trade law.

Shi Xiaoli, a professor of international economic law at China University of Political Science and Law in Beijing, said the move shows China's efforts to build a systematic and institutional framework to address trade-related risks.

Contact the writers at zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

XI'S VISION | OVERSEAS CHINESE

Kinship, roots link Chinese at home, afar

Hit film *Dear You* strikes chord with portrayal of diaspora's dedication, love of motherland

By **ZHANG YI** and **HU MEIDONG** in Fuzhou

As the cinematic hit *Dear You* — which follows a young ethnic Chinese man uncovering the history of his family roots through a bundle of old letters — sweeps global screens, a surge of young people, some from Southeast Asia, are flocking to a roadside stall in Shishi, Fujian province, a hometown of many Chinese who moved overseas.

They come to find Jiang Mingdian, 78, one of China's last active professional writers of *qiaopi* — a unique form of mail combining family letters and remittances that was showcased in the film.

Seated at his wooden table — covered with well-thumbed foreign dictionaries — Jiang now helps curious young visitors inspired by the movie to write letters in the old *qiaopi* style, using traditional characters written in vertical lines to convey messages that are then put in postage-stamped traditional envelopes.

"They come to me for everything — to write an apology to the mother abroad, to grab a traditional envelope with stamps for a cousin overseas, or to pen letters to future selves," Jiang said. "They seek a sense of ceremony to keep as a memento."

For 60 years, the junior high school graduate has penned over 100,000 letters, mostly from the 1960s to 1990s, for mothers and wives in his hometown of Shishi, a county-level city in Quanzhou, Fujian, to their sons and husbands who, driven by poverty at home, sailed abroad to make a living.

The men mostly moved to Southeast Asia. Some became merchants, while many worked as dockworkers, rickshaw pullers or barbers at first. Yet, Jiang recalled, they always sent back letters with money during festivals or ancestral temple renovations.

He traveled between villages to visit these women — most of whom were illiterate, and have since passed away — reading them the letters and penning their replies, turning mundane messages into poetic words.

As early emigrants blended their native dialects with the languages of host countries, Jiang even taught himself the basics of multiple foreign languages to better translate place names and draft documents.

This enduring emotion also resonated with President Xi Jinping. During his 2020 visit to a *qiaopi* museum in Shantou, Guangdong province, Xi praised the profound value of this cultural heritage, which was included in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register in 2013.

"These letters recorded the strenuous efforts of the old generation of overseas Chinese and their profound love for the hometown and the motherland, and embodied the credibility and integrity of the Chinese nation," Xi said.

Overseas Chinese endured enormous hardships and worked very hard to survive in a foreign country, and after gaining a firm foothold, they sent every dime saved back home, Xi noted. "It represents the Chinese people, Chinese culture, Chinese spirit and Chinese heart."

On many occasions, Xi has commended overseas Chinese — a group that comprises more than 60 million people residing in 200 countries and regions — for their vital role in driving China's development and deepening international cooperation.

In an instruction conveyed at a meeting on work related to Chinese nationals overseas held in Beijing on July 27 and 28, Xi called for rallying the strength of overseas Chinese to build China into a strong country and for advancing national rejuvenation.

Building deep trust

The vision stems from Xi's time working in Fujian from 1985 to 2002. The province is the ancestral home to a diaspora of over 20 million people, a community to which Xi has long attached immense importance.

Liao Meng, an associate research fellow at the Fujian Academy of Social Sciences, said Xi would personally visit influential diaspora leaders at home and abroad, resolving their doubts with genuine sincerity, building deep trust, and warmly inviting them to return and see their hometowns.

See ***Diaspora,*** *page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.

BIRDERS IN A FLAP OF EXCITEMENT OVER UNESCO DECISION

World Heritage list incorporates Liaoning's Changshan Archipelago, drawing praise from experts and enthusiasts

By **CHEN LIANG**
chenliang@chinadaily.com.cn

While navigating a mountain road near Yingjing county in Sichuan province in late July, Le Weiqiang got news that made him pull over and turn the car around: an African comb duck had been spotted that morning at Erhai Lake in Dali, Yunnan province.

"It was the first confirmed sighting of this duck since I began bird-watching more than 20 years ago," said Le, an avid birder from Guangzhou, Guangdong province. "It was a rare opportunity, and we definitely had to try our luck."

Unfortunately, the elusive duck never reappeared, despite daily searches by dozens of bird-watchers along the lake's shores. "But that's how it often goes," Le said. "We hear about a sighting, we go twitching, and even if we don't succeed, we have no regrets."

On July 27, a day before the rare duck was spotted, the 48th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in Busan, South Korea, approved the boundary modification of the Migratory Bird Sanctuaries along the Coast of Yellow Sea-Bohai Gulf of China, officially incorporating the Changshan Archipelago in Liaoning province into the World Heritage list. For the growing birding community in China, it was a milestone moment.

"The Shicheng Archipelago near Zhuanghe in Dalian is part of the Changshan Archipelago and has long been seen as one of the top birding sites in Liaoning," said professor Liu Yang of Sun Yat-sen University's School of Life Science. He visited the site in September 2017 and spotted several signature species, including the Chinese egret, the Japanese cormorant, the black-faced spoonbill and the pelagic cormorant. "The Changshan Archipelago is considered the 'maritime lifeline' of the East Asia-Australasia migratory flyway. Its inclusion as a World Heritage Site not only fills a conservation gap in China's temperate island and reef ecosystems, but also connects islands, reefs and coastal wetlands into a complete ecological corridor," Liu said.



Cormorants rest on the rocky reefs off Bashao Island, which is part of the Changshan Archipelago in Liaoning province, on July 29. PAN YULONG / XINHUA

Lei Jinyu, secretary-general of the Rosefinch Center, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting bird-watching and conservation, said the expansion reflects a growing recognition among local governments of the area's potential as a premier birding destination.

Over the past three decades, the bird-watching community has become an important force in observing, documenting, monitoring and conserving the country's natural ecosystems. Lei said that by the end of 2025, birdreport.cn — one of the country's bird-recording websites — had attracted nearly 95,000 registered users. Throughout the year, about 22,000 users submitted 559,278 observation reports, documenting 6,927,544 bird sightings covering 1,379 species.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:17 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:17 PM

INDEPTH

Demand for child actors faces minor hiccups

Increasingly wanted for short dramas, youngsters need to balance acting with personal development, experts say



Mi Ya (top), Chen Jinyuan (center) and Ni Yuehang (bottom) are among the talented child actors contributing to the rapidly expanding short drama industry in China. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By YU RAN
For China Daily

At 5:30 am on the set of a horror video, 9-year-old Ni Yuehang lay asleep beside a coffin prop, his legs numb from hours of waiting. By the time his mother Lin Qiwei found him, he could barely stand.

"It's okay, I just need a little rest," he said.

Incidents like this are becoming increasingly common as China's booming micro-short drama industry fuels growing demand for child actors, drawing more children onto sets, livestream productions and online video shoots at ever younger ages.

For some families, these opportunities offer children a chance to build their confidence, gain life experiences and explore a talent for performance. For others, the long hours, late-night shoots and fierce competition have raised concerns.

According to the National Radio and Television Administration, 33,000 micro-short dramas were released in 2025, with nearly 700 million viewers. The market exceeded 100 billion yuan ($14.81 billion), doubling from 2024.

Short dramas featuring "adorable" child characters recorded a popularity index ranking in the tens of billions in 2025, surpassing traditional genres such as historical power struggles, wealthy family dramas and period pieces in popularity, industry analysis from DataEye showed.

Against this backdrop, young actors like Yuehang are finding themselves in growing demand. Despite the exhausting schedule, Yuehang, who has appeared in more than 100 productions and played leading roles in over 20 short dramas, has never talked about quitting. His mother said he enjoys memorizing lines.

Lin said short dramas provide a rare opportunity for ordinary families without industry connections or financial backing.

"For families like ours, short dramas are not about using children but giving talented children a chance to prove themselves through hard work, without relying on connections or money," she said.

By early 2022, Yuehang had appeared in dozens of minor roles in larger productions, often without lines. His break came later that year, when he landed an important part in the short drama *SSS Zhanshenling*, playing the son of the male lead. He had substantial lines and earned a salary and travel reimbursement.

Today, Yuehang's workload is intense. In 2025 alone, he filmed seven lead roles over the summer.

On some shoots, he starts getting his makeup done before 7 am and does not finish until midnight.

As his experience has grown, so have his earnings, from a few hundred yuan a day to several thousand yuan for leading roles, enough to cover tutoring and travel costs.

"Directors value his experience, focus and willingness to cooperate while the family makes every effort to arrive on time and avoid disrupting production schedules," said Lin.

Yuehang takes school lessons whenever possible, often using breaks on set to finish homework, memorize English words or attend online tutoring sessions. Overall, he maintains above-average grades and remains popular with classmates.

Lin said acting has made him more independent, disciplined and mature. "He has also become more confident and is often willing to take the lead when working with classmates."

She said she understands public concerns about child actors and supports stronger protections for minors in the entertainment industry. However, she hopes people will not automatically equate child acting with exploitation.

Intense competition

As the short drama industry expands, more families are bringing their children into the field to explore performing while building discipline, confidence and life experiences.

In the first half of 2025, short dramas featuring child characters accounted for 5.56 percent of total favorites across all short-drama genres, ranking seventh among major content categories, data from Detawen Technology showed.

For Zhang Jieyu from Taiyuan, Shanxi province, acting has become less about chasing fame and more about helping her 8-year-old son Chen Jinyuan grow up.

He entered the entertainment world at age 3 in 2021, when renowned film director Zhang Yimou was filming *Full River Red* in Taiyuan. His family brought him to the set as a child extra to let him experience something new.

His first real production came around age 5. "At that time, he was still very young and could not sit still. He was playful in the waiting area and even talked back when a director reminded him to behave," said Zhang.

Afterward, she gave him a serious talk about rules, discipline and teamwork on set. "That was probably the first time he truly understood the importance of respect and cooperation," she said.

Jinyuan now works on two or three productions a month. Some shoots last only a day, while others can continue for a week.

Zhang said competition among child actors is intense.

"Some roles are clearly suitable for your child, but in the end, they may still go for children connected to investors or producers. Ordinary families are often at a disadvantage, but we still believe hard work will eventually be noticed," said Zhang.

To improve Jinyuan's chances, Zhang is in charge of his photos, video clips and audition materials and updates his portfolio regularly.

Although she understands public concerns about child actors, she hopes people will not assume every family is pushing their child too hard.

"There are families who treat children like tools to make money. But for us, acting is part of his education. We care about his studies, his character and his happiness far more than whether he becomes famous one day," said Zhang.

Little trouper

Wang Lu from Qingdao, Shandong province, sees acting mainly as a way for her 9-year-old daughter Mi Ya to enjoy new experiences and build her confidence.



Mi Ya films a commercial in 2023. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

> "Children at different ages have different developmental tasks. The key principle is that children should do things appropriate for their age. If a child's interests and talents can be developed into a strength, it may also help support development in other areas."
>
> **Su Yanjie,** a professor at the Peking University School of Psychological and Cognitive Sciences

She said the biggest challenges are not only competition for roles, but also long hours, difficult filming conditions and limited rest. A typical day starts with arriving on set early, waiting for the call sheet, makeup, rehearsals and then filming.

Ya's first television role was in the drama *Ordinary Greatness*, where she performed alongside female actress Bai Lu.

Since then, she has appeared in more than 100 productions, including short dramas, advertisements and tourism videos.

During her kindergarten years, Ya spent long stretches on short-drama sets, with some shoots lasting more than two weeks. Wang said during the COVID-19 pandemic, she and her daughter once stayed with a production crew for over half a month.

"There were times when she had to stay up very late. Once, while the director was explaining the next scene, she fell asleep standing up beside me," she said.

Directors often value child actors who are cooperative, comfortable in front of the camera and not afraid to perform.

To balance acting with school, Ya usually attends classes in the morning and films in the afternoon. If a production requires her to stay on set longer, Wang brings homework and textbooks so she can study during breaks and arranges tutoring when needed.

"Acting has made my daughter more confident, independent and willing to express herself. At school, she is eager to raise her hand and answer questions in class," said Wang.

At the same time, Ya has become more sensitive to her own performance and other people's opinions. Wang reminds her not to put too much pressure on herself and stresses that the family has never treated acting as a way to make money or become famous.

"We are just an ordinary family. We only want her to be happy and healthy. Acting is part of her childhood, not something that defines her future," said Wang.

Staying 'age-appropriate'

As the industry becomes more competitive and more tightly regulated, experts say the biggest question is no longer whether children should act, but how to ensure they do so in a healthy and age-appropriate way.

Su Yanjie, a professor at the Peking University School of Psychological and Cognitive Sciences, said the effects of acting on children should be understood through developmental psychology.

"Children at different ages have different developmental tasks. The key principle is that children should do things appropriate for their age," said Su.

In her view, acting and other performance activities can help children improve communication skills, emotional understanding and social adaptability.

"Every child has different strengths. If a child's interests and talents can be developed into a strength, it may also help support development in other areas," she said.

Su warned that filming should not interfere with the developmental tasks children need to complete at their current age.

Sleep deprivation remains a widespread issue among Chinese children and adolescents. National health guidelines recommend 10 to 13 hours of sleep per day for preschool children and 8 to 10 hours for primary and middle school students.

"Sleep has a disproportionately large impact on children's mental health and development. If regular schedules are disrupted for a long period of time, it may lead to emotional problems, lower learning efficiency and having other negative effects," said Su.

Child actors may also face pressure from public attention and online comments, she said. "Even adults often struggle with public feedback on social media. Children may find it even harder to cope," she said.

As concerns over children's well-being grow, regulatory efforts have been strengthened in recent years.

In 2019, the National Radio and Television Administration issued regulations requiring that minors' appearance and behavior in programs align with their age and developmental characteristics, and prohibiting content that encourages minors to discuss fame, wealth or romantic relationships.

On Jan 8, the administration's online audio-visual department released new guidelines on child-related micro-short dramas, calling for age-appropriate portrayals of minors, banning content that promotes inappropriate values or excessive commercialization, and strengthening protection of minors' rights during production.

Cautious approach

Changsha Xingche Media in Hunan province focuses on actor management and short-drama productions and has worked with nearly 100 child actors across dozens of projects.

Company founder Tang Kaijun said demand for child actors surged during the boom in live-action short dramas between 2024 and 2025. Children under 10 generally have more acting opportunities because they fit the "cute child" roles in short dramas.

"For many productions, children under 1.35 meters in height are often preferred for certain roles. Once children are older than 10, school becomes a bigger issue, and they no longer fit the 'adorable child' image many productions want," said Tang.

At the same time, the industry has become more cautious. After several child-focused short dramas drew criticism, some producers reduced child roles or adjusted storylines to avoid controversy or regulatory breaches.

"In the first half of 2026, demand for child actors has remained relatively weak, as projects involving minors face stricter review procedures and longer approval times. Now, productions involving child actors often need additional reporting and review, which increases both time and uncertainty," he said.

Agencies recruit young actors through online casting, training institutions and parents, while directors value cooperation and emotional stability.

"When a child first joins a production crew, cooperation matters more than prior experience. Some newcomers are attracted by high pay, but they soon face long hours, unstable opportunities, and intense competition," said Tang.

The fast pace of short drama production can be challenging. A 10-episode series may take a week to 10 days to shoot, with schedules stretching close to 20 hours a day.

"Some children are given little time to understand their characters before filming begins. There are crying scenes where children may need eye drops because the filming pace is so fast," he said.

Parents with industry experience are often more cautious, reading scripts carefully and rejecting projects with violent or overly adult themes.

"There is still a real market demand for child roles. But the key is to make sure the content is healthy and appropriate," said Tang, who does not fully agree that child actors are being "consumed" by the industry.

He believes the industry will become even more regulated, leaving fewer opportunities for children without clear strengths.

"Many child actors are cute, but they do not leave a lasting impression. There is still real market demand for child roles, but future opportunities are more likely to go to children with strong acting skills, memorable personalities and distinctive qualities," said Tang.

Contact the writer at sunnyu923@163.com

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:17 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:17 PM

TOP NEWS

Huawei takes fresh path to advance chips

Alternative scaling framework emphasizes faster transmission over shrinking processors

By **MA SI**
masi@chinadaily.com.cn

As global chip companies approach physical limits in their pursuit of more powerful processors, Huawei Technologies Co's emphasis on improving transmission speeds between system components could offer an alternative path, experts said.

The comments come as industry watchers recognize a systematic, replicable innovation ecosystem taking shape across China's tech landscape, spanning semiconductor design, memory chip fabrication, artificial intelligence frameworks and system integration.

Liao Heng, chief semiconductor scientist at Huawei, said in a recent four-hour interview that the decades-long practice of continuously shrinking transistors and packing more into integrated circuits is running out of runway, as transistors are now almost as small as atoms, nearing the physical extreme of contemporary manufacturing capabilities.

While Western companies have multiyear road maps enabled by ASML's advanced lithography machines, Huawei — barred from accessing such equipment due to sanctions imposed by the United States government — has had to pursue a more creative approach, Liao said.

That approach is Huawei's "Tau Scaling Law", proposed in May, which shifts focus from shrinking chip dimensions to improving transmission speeds between system components.

Huawei is set to unveil its first smartphone chip designed under this framework in September, using a technology called LogicFolding.

Liao said the world will have a clear understanding later this year of how Huawei's alternative approach helps narrow the gap with rivals, when the new smartphone chip is dissected by industry research companies.

He likened the AI value chain to an "18-story pagoda", positioning it as a more comprehensive framework than Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang's five-layer cake model.

Huang's model, which he has articulated during multiple public appearances, divides the AI industry into five layers: energy, chips, computing infrastructure, cloud/AI models and applications. It is a top-down business framework designed to illustrate how value flows through the AI stack, culminating in economic returns at the application layer.

Liao's "18-story pagoda", by contrast, is a bottom-up engineering and production framework that spans the entire semiconductor value chain. It begins with foundational elements such as basic theory, energy, mining and raw materials, silicon, transistor design, wafer fabrication, lithography and equipment, and advanced packaging. The middle part covers chip architecture, runtime environments and quantization. The top layers encompass AI training methods, foundation large language models, AI agents, products and commercial applications.

Crucially, Liao said the overall performance ceiling of the industry is determined by the shortest layer — the weakest link in the chain. The weakest link varies based on geographies.

Zhou Jianjun, a professor at Shanghai Jiao Tong University's School of Integrated Circuits, said the strategic implications are profound. Huawei is looking for a different path to improve performance — not by shrinking transistors any further, but by making groups of chips and the overall AI system work better together.

Xiang Ligang, director-general of the Information Consumption Alliance, a telecom industry association, said that while Huang's five-layer cake frames the AI industry as a market opportunity to be captured layer by layer, Liao's 18-story pagoda frames it as an integrated engineering challenge where no single layer can be optimized in isolation.

For Huawei, which cannot access the advanced lithography equipment, this holistic view is very practical. Huawei's breakthrough lies in cross-layer collaboration — using the advantages of system clusters to compensate for the hardware shortcomings of single chips, Xiang added.

According to the latest report by the US market research company International Data Corp, a dramatic shift occurred in China's AI accelerator market in 2025, driven by the US export controls. Domestic Chinese suppliers, led by Huawei, saw their combined market share surge to 41 percent. Nvidia's share fell to 55 percent, a significant drop from its near-monopoly levels.





Above: An aerial photo shows the launch ceremony for the Fuyao cliffside elevator on Friday in Nizhuhe Grand Canyon, Southwest China's Yunnan province. The elevator joins an older one in reducing the travel time for local students and tourists from more than three hours to about 30 minutes. **Right**: The Fuyao (right) and Qingyun cliffside elevators stand tall in Yunnan on Friday. XINHUA

New project elevates cliffside economy

By **YAN YUJIE** in Kunming
and **ZHENG JINRAN** in Beijing

How do you top a cliffside elevator that has already shortened a daily journey of more than three hours to just about 30 minutes? You build a new one that's taller, faster, and comes with a more breathtaking view.

In the remote Nizhuhe Grand Canyon in Southwest China's Yunnan province, a glass elevator attached to a vertical cliff face was unveiled for operation last week, making the regular commute to Guanzhai Village Primary School much safer for some 20 children from neighboring villages.

The newly completed project, named Fuyao, together with the old elevator Qingyun that was built around four years ago, ensures that local residents, including schoolchildren, no longer have to navigate a perilous mountain path on foot.

As an added bonus, the cliffside elevators are drawing more tourists, which in turn is boosting job opportunities and incomes of communities inhabiting the mountains.

Lei Xin, 12, who lives in Nizhuhe village and attended the neighboring Guanzhai Village Primary School until September last year, was full of praise for the new elevator. "The Fuyao is faster and much more spacious than the Qingyun," Lei noted, after taking his first ride on Sunday, two days after the new elevator began operations.

Cai Xiong, chairman of Xuanwei Yatuo Tourism Development, the construction company behind the project, said the new elevator covers a vertical cliff face of 288 meters, which makes its shaft 20 meters taller than that of the old elevator.

"The Fuyao goes from bottom to top in just 50 seconds, which is nearly twice as fast as the Qingyun, and it can carry up to 81 passengers at a time, nearly double the capacity," Cai said, adding that the view of the canyon with meandering streams is unbeatable.

The names of the elevators are inspired by Chinese literary classics. While Qingyun evokes the idea of "soaring skyward", Fuyao translates as "pursuing higher aspirations".

Together with an aerial cable car, the two cliffside elevators connect Nizhuhe village at the bottom of the canyon with the primary school located on the plateau more than 500 meters above. After walking one kilometer from home, children take one of the elevators up the cliff for free and then transfer to the cable car for the rest of the journey, reaching school within half an hour. Before the elevators were built, the only route to the top was a steep zigzagging path, with footholds carved into rocks and chains serving as guardrails.

Growing up near the canyon, Cai, the company chairman, recalled walking the dangerous mountain path countless times. Safety was a key motivation for the project, he said.

Since the Qingyun was built, the canyon scenic area has welcomed more than 1 million visitors. The Fuyao is adding to the tourism boom, with the elevators' combined capacity to handle 1,200 passengers every hour raising the area's daily peak visitor volume from 4,000 to 15,000.

"If the current trend persists, we expect more than 600,000 tourists next year, with elevator revenue projected to surpass 3 million yuan ($444,300)," Cai said.

Booming tourism has brought new employment opportunities for locals. Disposable incomes in Nizhuhe village last year increased nearly fourfold compared with 2022, data from local authorities showed.

He Caihua, 56, opened a guesthouse in 2024 that earned nearly 180,000 yuan in its first year. Her son now works as a crewmember on the elevator operation team, earning more than 6,000 yuan a month.

Lei's family has also benefited. His mother's restaurant at the bottom of the canyon has seen its annual revenue rise from about 30,000 yuan when it opened in 2014 to around 100,000 yuan in 2024.

Li Yingqing contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at yanyj@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Legacy: Water does not choose a bank; it connects them

From page 1

Bruce Lee changed how Asians were seen in popular culture. In the Hollywood of the 1960s and 1970s, Chinese characters were depicted as sinister villains or comic relief. Asian men were rarely heroic, let alone desirable or wise. Bruce Lee shattered that frame with his fists, speed and unapologetic presence.

In his pathbreaking film *Fist of Fury*, when his character kicks down a sign reading "No Dogs and No Chinese Allowed" and declares that the Chinese are no longer the sick men of Asia, he reclaims dignity for an entire people on a global stage. As Assemblymember Matt Haney, who authored the California bill, put it: "Bruce Lee represents the very best of California: innovation, diversity, determination and the courage to challenge convention." His ability to force Western audiences to see a Chinese face embodying strength rather than servility was revolutionary.

But rebellion alone does not explain his lasting impact. A mere avenger would have faded with time. Bruce Lee endured because he offered something beyond action. "Be water, my friend," he famously advised — formless, adaptable, yet unstoppable. Rooted in Taoist thought, distilled into a deceptively simple English phrase, the idea arrived at a time when the United States was convulsed by Vietnam, civil rights and a generational revolt against rigid institutions.

Bruce Lee transformed the dojo into a classroom and the fistfight into a lesson in survival. He became a spiritual mentor to millions who never set foot in a martial arts studio. That is why his gravestone in Seattle reads that "Your inspiration continues to guide us toward personal liberation".

Bruce Lee's universal appeal was rooted in his own liminal identity. Born in San Francisco and raised in Hong Kong, he moved through US suburbs and Asian backlots with equal ease, fluent in both languages yet not fully at home in either culture. He was not a Confucian sage nor a Westernized caricature; he was a living translation, equally able to explain yin and yang to a California surfer and demonstrate a straight punch to a Hong Kong street fighter. This duality is precisely why both sides can claim him without contradiction. When California honors him, it claims a Chinese icon as its own. When China celebrates him, it takes pride in his global influence. Shared ownership is not a contradiction here; it is the essence.

Bruce Lee is not alone in this pattern. Audrey Hepburn, born in Belgium to a Dutch mother and a British father, became one of Hollywood's most beloved faces and later used her experiences of wartime deprivation to advocate for children's welfare as a United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund Goodwill Ambassador. Bob Marley carried the sound of a small Caribbean island to every corner of the globe, singing of resistance and unity while refusing to align with any political camp. Each of them, like Bruce Lee, transcended their origins to become vessels of universal values such as dignity, resilience and self-overcoming. "Be water" is as portable an idea as Hepburn's grace or Marley's rhythm. That portability is what turns a national figure into a cultural bridge.

Bruce Lee matters more today than ever. In an era of great-power suspicion between Washington and Beijing, his example challenges the notion that cultures must be adversaries. He was Chinese in heritage and philosophy, yet quintessentially American in his individualism and his faith in self-invention. He never chose a side, because he belonged to the water between the shores. His legacy enriches both cultures without diluting either.

Some may dismiss Bruce Lee Day as mere symbolism, irrelevant to realpolitik. But symbols shape perception, and perception influences policy. If a generation of Americans grows up seeing a Chinese face as a symbol of wisdom and strength rather than threat, and if Chinese citizens see their own hero honored in the US, the foundation for trust is laid not in summit communiques but in the shared imagination of ordinary people. That is the long game of cultural diplomacy, and more than 50 years after his death, Bruce Lee remains one of its most effective players. His fist was fierce, but his message was harmony — and in a fractured world, that message has never been more urgent.

Water does not choose a bank; it connects them. Sometimes that connection outlasts every wall we build.

The author is a professor at the School of Journalism and Communication, Chongqing University. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Diaspora: Cooperation leading to partnerships

From page 1

In 1991, Xi, then Party secretary of Fuzhou, led a delegation to Indonesia to visit Liem Sioe Liong, founder of the conglomerate Salim Group and then a prominent diaspora leader and influential business tycoon, inviting him to invest in his hometown of Fuqing in Fuzhou.

Xi used a vivid metaphor, comparing the food and oil that Liem had sent home during China's past hardships to "giving eggs". He then proposed partnering to build an industrial park — essentially giving locals a "hen" and teaching them how to "raise hens to lay eggs" for self-sustaining growth.

Liem was deeply inspired. Salim Group and the Fuqing government then signed an agreement to develop the Yuanhong Investment Zone. It became China's largest foreign-funded comprehensive land development project at the time.

Ong Tee Keat, president of the Belt and Road Initiative Caucus for Asia Pacific, said President Xi's diaspora vision, forged in Fujian, reflects his strategic wisdom and pragmatic approach.

The "three benefits" principle proposed by Xi — being advantageous to investors, host nations and China — offers valuable guidance for diaspora engagement, particularly in advancing BRI projects, Ong said.

To elevate the cooperation, the China-Indonesia "Two Countries, Twin Parks" project was launched in 2021, upgrading the Yuanhong Investment Zone on the Chinese side to partner directly with Indonesia's Bintan, Batang and Aviarna industrial parks.

Since then, top leaders of the two countries have continuously pledged to build the project into a new flagship of the BRI.

Today, the project thrives by processing Indonesian raw goods, such as coconuts and seafood, into high-value products in China, while expanding cooperation in textiles and machinery to drive robust economic growth for both partners.

'Rallying hearts'

Liao, the research fellow, noted that the overarching goal of China's diaspora affairs has been upgraded from simply attracting capital and talent to "rallying hearts and pooling strength".

Just as President Xi instructed during his 2024 inspection of Fujian, the province is actively leveraging ancestral culture, kinship ties and native bonds to widely unite overseas Chinese, Liao said.

In August, Hnin Yu Wa Di Hlaing, a Chinese language teacher and third-generation immigrant in Myanmar whose Chinese name is Chen An, led a group of 10 youths from Myanmar who are of Fujian descent on a meaningful roots-seeking journey to China.

Chen's family roots trace back to Fuzhou. In the 1940s, amid times of hardship, her grandparents left their hometown and migrated to Myanmar to build a new life.

This enduring bond was written in her family history. Around 2010, her 90-year-old grandfather returned to Changle, knocking on doors from memory until he finally traced his long-lost brother. The two elderly men wept in a tight embrace — a final reunion before both passed away shortly afterward.

"My father insisted we master the language to never forget our roots," the 24-year-old teacher said.

Today, this ancestral bridge opens doors to new horizons. "My students are captivated by China's growth, especially high-speed rails and mobile payments," Chen said.

Ong, president of the Belt and Road Initiative Caucus for Asia Pacific, noted that despite variations in nationality and language due to integration across host nations, traditional Chinese virtues remain etched in the cultural DNA of young ethnic Chinese.

"These traits constitute the root and soul of the community," Ong said.

Contact the writers at zhangyi1@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:17 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:17 PM

WORLD



Young migrants collect water from showers at Trampolin Beach in Ceuta, Spain, on Tuesday, as around 2,500 migrants who crossed from Morocco remained in the enclave amid overwhelmed reception facilities. REDUAN / AFP

Migrant surge exposes EU divide

Politicization erodes coordinated action as solutions remain elusive, experts say

By YANG RAN
yangran1@chinadaily.com.cn

CROSS CURRENTS

The recent wave of migrants into Spain's Ceuta has triggered humanitarian and border-control emergency measures by Spain and other European countries, while it has also laid bare a widening rift among European Union member states over migration policy, experts said.

The incident, which led to more than 80 deaths, has underscored how the politicization of the migration issue is eroding the bloc's capacity for coordinated action on this persistent challenge, with long-term solutions remaining elusive, they said.

Ceuta, one of Spain's two enclaves on the North African coast, became the flashpoint when tens of thousands of migrants attempted to cross the border on July 30, overwhelming local border control agencies.

While Spain quickly repatriated most arrivals, easing immediate pressure, Italy announced a one-month suspension of Schengen free movement rules with Spain after the migrant surge, even though the rules do not apply to Ceuta. And 22 of 27 EU countries backed a joint call for firmer action against illegal immigration, suggesting Spain's migration policies were part of the problem.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez expressed "serious concerns" about some European governments, saying that while most had shown "support and solidarity", other European governments had chosen to attack Spain, "driven by prejudice, fake news, ignorance, or political interest".

Experts said that the varied national responses reflect a widening gulf in member states' interests regarding migration issues.

Dong Yifan, an associate research fellow at the Institute of Country and Regional Studies at Beijing Language and Culture University, described the Ceuta crisis as "tearing a rift in EU unity and policy consensus".

He said that Spain's left-wing government, which acknowledges the benefits of legal migration for its economy and labor market, now stands as a "counter-current" against a broader rightward shift in European migration policy.

Dong argued that the surge in migrant flows along the western Mediterranean route has prompted several EU nations to prioritize domestic politics over collective values. "To deflect internal contradictions and project an image of protecting their own citizens, some countries have ignored EU solidarity and policy coordination, using the opportunity to criticize Spain," he said.

Beyond differing national interests, experts emphasized the increasing politicization of the migration issue as a major driver of controversy. Dong noted that migration in Europe is no longer merely an economic or social issue, but has become a sharp political weapon tied to election outcomes. "Stances and policies are often shaped more by political needs than by governance realities," he explained.

This dynamic, he added, is compressing the EU's maneuvering space for coordinating compromise and support, while fueling a vicious cycle in which rising public anxiety over migration empowers right-wing political actors, who then advocate for increasingly restrictive measures.

Foundational issue

Jian Junbo, a professor and director of the Center for China-Europe Relations at Fudan University, echoed this view, saying that for far-right parties, migration is a foundational issue to gain support and influence.

"They will use such incidents to expand their influence aggressively. Meanwhile, many ruling parties face pressure if they appear too lenient," said Jian, indicating that the issue involves not just national interests but also political struggles among parties.

On Tuesday, EU interior ministers held an emergency video meeting to discuss the crisis, agreeing that border reinforcement and stronger mechanisms for migrant returns are necessary.

However, experts cautioned that Europe's migration challenge is structural and that simply shutting the door or cracking down on immigration is just a band-aid fix, not a real solution. Jian noted that because of Europe's colonial history and the economic disparities between migrant-origin countries and Europe, as well as Europe's own labor market shortages, which create demand for migrants, migration is a long-term issue for the continent to tackle.

"The fundamental solution is to create conditions that allow people to stay in their home regions by contributing to local stability and economic prosperity. Europe should do more in this regard. Merely stopping migrants or tightening policies is treating the symptoms, not the root cause," he said.

The real test, Jian argued, also lies in overcoming internal contradictions and forging a unified, EU-wide consensus on migration.

"With widening gaps between member states and the rise of far-right parties pushing for stricter policies, finding a mechanism-level agreement will be a long-term challenge," he said.

Agencies contributed to this story.

Giant panda in Washington celebrates 5th birthday

By DONG HAO in Washington
and **SHI GUANG** in New York

Bao Li, one of a pair of giant pandas at the Smithsonian's National Zoo in Washington, DC, celebrated his fifth birthday on Tuesday with his favorite treat — a fruit-based ice cream cake.

The shark-themed cake — inspired by a strip of longer fur that runs down his back — was placed in front of a sign reading: "DIVE INTO 5, HAPPY BDAY BAO LI", and was decorated with the shapes of fish, starfish, and a shark fin.

Bao Li began by eating the sweet potato "minnows", blueberry "bubbles" and a carrot carved into a palm tree, then tore into the rest of his frozen cake.

Visitors crowded around Bao Li's enclosure at the David M. Rubenstein Family Giant Panda Habitat to join in the occasion.

"I'm here to celebrate Bao Li's fifth birthday. I can't believe he's five already," said visitor Kirsten Svane. "He's been here for two years now. He's very much kind of like a teenage boy, I would say. It's just a really happy occasion. I love coming every year for the birthdays. It's a great tradition."



Giant panda Bao Li celebrates his fifth birthday with his favorite treat — a fruit-based ice cream cake at the Smithsonian's National Zoo in Washington, DC, on Tuesday. LI RUI / XINHUA

Visitor Ross Poquette said: "I know a lot of people that are here. So it's good to see friends and sort of connecting around one common theme, which would be the panda's birthday. And the pandas here have come from China to be here and be with everyone and sort of share the joy of pandas in general."

Bao Li's name combines the Chinese words for "treasure" and "vitality and strength", together meaning "active and vital power".

He was born on Aug 4, 2021, at the China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda in Sichuan province.

Bao Li also has deep family ties to the Smithsonian's National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute.

His mother, Bao Bao, was born there in 2013, and his grandparents, Tian Tian and Mei Xiang, served as ambassadors for their species in Washington for 23 years.

His companion at the zoo, a female named Qing Bao, whose name means "green treasure", was born on Sept 12, 2021.

The pair made their public debut at the zoo in January last year.

"Giant pandas are, you know, they are the symbol of friendship between the United States and China. They are just so joyful. They bring people so much joy all across the world," said giant panda keeper Mariel Lally.

"And it meant so much to everyone when Bao Li and Qing Bao came here from China, especially (to) me as the person who works with them. But I know that it really just helps kind of bring us all together. And everybody is here no matter where you're from, celebrating a birthday," she said.

The first giant pandas to arrive in the United States, Hsing-Hsing and Ling-Ling, were presented by China as a gift to the people of the United States following then-president Richard Nixon's historic visit to China in 1972.

Contact the writers at donghao@chinadailyusa.com

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Greece deploys satellite system to tackle blazes

By JULIAN SHEA in London
julian@mail.chinadailyuk.com

As wildfires continue to burn across much of Europe, developments happening in Greece could help make future blazes easier to anticipate and manage.

Two firefighters died in a helicopter crash over the weekend as they struggled to contain a blaze to the west of the capital, Athens, but the Financial Times reports that a satellite system called the Hellenic Fire System, developed by the Greek government and the European Space Agency, has begun sending images back to Earth.

Firefighters are still learning how to use the four-satellite system, which is expected to become fully functional in September, but even early results are already making a difference.

"We've come up with a solution, but now the most difficult part is the adoption of that solution," said Dimitris Bliziotis, the Hellenic Space Center's Earth Observation program manager. "The fire brigade is used to the technology they were using before, so now we have to train them on how to process the new kinds of data."

German company OroraTech has helped develop the technology, which repeatedly sweeps areas down to a very small concentration, looking out for isolated blazes or places that could potentially burst into flame. Software can then be applied to assess the likelihood of a fire developing, and judge the impact it might have on the terrain and how it might spread.

"It doesn't just take pictures," said Ioannis Lantouris, OroraTech's head of operations in Greece. "We process the pictures on the satellite and then send them down to Earth."

"It changes the whole way we perceive and manage wildfires," he added. "You don't need a human to call the fire department first. And when you do detect the signs, you can analyze them faster."

Theodore Giannaros, a senior wildfire meteorologist at the National Observatory of Athens, told Agence France-Presse that this year's blazes were "definitely one of the worst fire crises I've seen in the past, maybe eight to 10 years". Fire department communications chief Vassilis Vathrakoyannis said, "The situation has clearly improved compared to the last few days, but there are still many scattered hot spots, which means that forces remain on site to prevent a possible flare-up."

Compensation plan

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis held a cabinet meeting on Wednesday to discuss compensation for people affected by the blazes around Athens, which are believed to have burned through more than 14,000 hectares in just five days, and which the Euronews website reported are thought to have been caused by a spark on power cables in a seaside village 85 kilometers away from the capital.

In accordance with concerns about fire risks, some parks have been closed and restrictions put on public activities that may increase the likelihood of blazes, but despite this, local authorities reported 33 people had been arrested between June 29 and August 2 for starting fires — 30 for negligence and three on suspicion of arson. Most negligence cases were linked to rule-breaking farm work and activities such as welding.

Security concerns grow amid AI models' review

SAN FRANCISCO — Security tests of advanced artificial intelligence models have revealed new breaches involving AI agents carrying out unauthorized actions, raising concerns over safeguards as the United States moves to strengthen reviews of powerful AI systems before their release.

Britain's AI Security Institute, or AISI, disclosed on Tuesday that agents powered by Anthropic's Mythos 5 and OpenAI's GPT-5.6 Sol engaged in unauthorized activities during security evaluations designed to assess their capabilities.

"Some of the agents being tested had engaged in sustained, potentially harmful activity directed at real people and organizations," AISI said in a blog post.

The institute tested the agents through a fictional cybersecurity scenario 122 times and identified 19 unsanctioned actions across 10 test runs. Anthropic's agent was responsible for 17 of the actions, while OpenAI's agent accounted for the remaining two.

The most serious incident involved an AI agent writing malicious code and creating fake online identities in an attempt to persuade a human to approve the code, AISI said.

AISI, which receives access to advanced AI models through voluntary agreements with major AI labs, said the findings highlighted weaknesses in current safeguards for testing AI agents, which technology companies have promoted as a future tool for business.

The rapid development of AI has increased pressure on governments to address security risks. The US government moved to establish a security review process for advanced AI models before their release, according to US media reports. The process is expected to apply only to "closed" models that are tightly controlled by developers, including those from OpenAI, Anthropic and Google.

A White House meeting on Tuesday reportedly included representatives from OpenAI, Anthropic, Google, Nvidia, Microsoft and Meta. However, it remains unclear when the administration will release details of the review process or how it will be enforced.

Regulatory gaps

Experts have questioned whether voluntary reviews of closed models are sufficient. Martijn Rasser, vice-president for Technology Leadership at the Special Competitive Studies Project, said the United States still lacked a "statutory, predictable process" for evaluating the security of frontier AI models.

AI companies have said they are working to improve safety practices. OpenAI said its two unapproved actions identified by AISI involved accessing the internet in ways forbidden by prompts, while Anthropic said it was working with AISI to investigate further.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1887

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:17 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:17 PM

WORLD

Nurturers of hope



Medical staff members attend the inauguration of the new Ebola treatment center in Rwakole, Bunia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, on Tuesday. The center has a capacity of 100 beds. As of Tuesday, 3,802 cases had been recorded, with 1,707 deaths, the latest government update showed. DIEUDONNE DIROLE / EPA

South Africa resilient in face of tariffs, experts say

By NDUMISO MLILO
in Johannesburg
For China Daily

South African experts have criticized the US tariffs as "disruptive" to global trade and the economy, and said South Africa is showing resilience to the tariffs by expanding South-South trade.

The US recently imposed tariffs on 60 partners which it alleges use forced labor. Countries will face tariffs of between 10 and 12.5 percent.

Mpho Parks Tau, South African minister of trade, industry and competition, said his country will face a 12.5 percent tariff from the US. He said the tariffs will exclude automobiles and auto components, as well as steel and aluminum, which are already subject to other US tariffs. South African products such as macadamia nuts, oranges, tea, spices, seeds, cane sugar, orange and lime juice, syrups, chemicals, critical minerals, platinum group metals and other precious metals and pharmaceuticals will be exempted from the latest tariffs, said Tau.

The South African government will continue to engage with the US with a view to either eliminating or reducing the tariffs, the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition said in a statement.

John Bideri, chairman of the Committee on Trade, Customs and Immigration Matters at the Pan-African Parliament, said the US tariffs are disrupting global trade. He said the committee has deliberated on it and expressed concern over the tariffs because they are bad for business in Africa and globally.

Bideri, who is also a member of the Rwanda Senate, said if tariffs are "created to punish" others, they are not welcome.

"Tariffs are not good for business and trade, especially if they are put in place for political or economic reasons. We should rely on free trade as provided for in the World Trade Organization. If they are negotiated tariffs, they enhance trade within the globe," said Bideri.

He said that African countries or regional economic communities should negotiate tariffs. The African Continental Free Trade Area should help increase intra-Africa trade, which is facing tariffs, said Bideri.

Danson Mungatana, leader of the Kenyan delegation to the Pan-African Parliament, said tariffs are not helping US citizens as they make the goods expensive for them. Mungatana said tariffs have negatively affected global trade.

Mungatana said African countries should increase intra-Africa trade as a response to the tariffs.

Expanding trade

Themba Maseko, head of the University of the Witwatersrand School of Governance, said the South African economy has shown some resilience despite the US measures. He said South Africa should continue to trade with other countries while engaging with the US.

"We have seen trade with the Global South increasing, and the US tariffs did not impact much on our trade with the rest of the world. That resilience is still there, and we have to continue to do what we are doing as a country," said Maseko.

Annabel Bishop, chief economist at Investec, an international banking and asset management company, said in the midst of polarization and geopolitical risks, the South African economy has shown some improvement. She said while South Africa should continue to engage with the US to reduce or remove trade tariffs, it should also explore other markets.

Bishop said there are many opportunities for trade with BRICS partners, including China, India, Brazil and Russia.

The writer is a freelance journalist for China Daily.

Brazil govt condemns visa action on envoy

RIO DE JANEIRO — The Brazilian government on Tuesday strongly condemned the US State Department's decision to alter the visa status of Brazil's ambassador to Washington, Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, calling the reasons cited by the United States "false".

The US government revoked the Brazilian ambassador's visa in retaliation for Brazil's refusal last month to issue visas to two US State Department officials and its delay in approving US President Donald Trump's nominee for ambassador to Brazil.

In a statement, the Brazilian government defended its decision to deny entry visas to the two US officials, saying they intended to visit Brazil to question the integrity of the country's electoral system, which it described as an unacceptable attempt to interfere in domestic political affairs.

Regarding Washington's criticism of the approval process for the new US ambassador, Brazil said the United States had publicly announced its nominee before formally requesting approval, which violates Article 4 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

"There is no rule in the Vienna Convention stipulating a deadline for granting agreement," the statement said, adding that the US request remains under review.

The statement also noted that unilateral US sanctions against Brazilian officials, including Supreme Court justices and senior government officials whose US visas were revoked over allegations of political persecution, remain in place, highlighting ongoing tensions between the two countries.

The move marks an escalation in the deepening rift between Trump and Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, which has upended trade between the countries and emerged as a factor in Brazil's presidential contest.

In another development, Brazil has downgraded relations with Argentina to the charge d'affaires level, Brazilian media said on Tuesday, citing sources from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The decision followed remarks made by Argentine President Javier Milei against Lula and other Brazilian officials in recent weeks.

Argentina on Tuesday expressed regret. Its Foreign Ministry said, "Argentina takes note of the unilateral decision adopted by the Government of Brazil and regrets its decision to continue isolating itself from the rest of the region for purely ideological reasons."

XINHUA

Hormuz discussions show some progress

Iran says meeting with Oman focused on making transit routes safer in strait

By JAN YUMUL in Hong Kong
jan@chinadailyapac.com

Discussions between Iran and Oman over reopening the Strait of Hormuz are progressing at the technical and political levels, while Qatar said the priority is to contain the escalation in the region as US President Donald Trump continues his threats.

US-based media outlet Axios reported that a deal on Hormuz was near, but Iran reiterated that the talks were between Tehran and Muscat and had nothing to do with Washington. Similarly, Qatar said it does not set specific timelines for an agreement.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei told state television that the negotiations with Oman are focused on determining safe inbound and outbound transit routes for vessels in the strait, Mehr News reported on Wednesday.

Baghaei said the discussions, which have taken place at both technical and political levels, are proceeding in a constructive atmosphere.

"Iran, in cooperation with Oman, is working to formulate the necessary mechanisms for future arrangements for managing shipping transit in this strategic passage," Baghaei was quoted as saying.

Tehran has said that the Strait of Hormuz remains closed to shipping under Iranian control until the United States military interference in the waterway ends.

Trump said a deal to reopen the strait is close when he was asked by reporters traveling with him in California about a report on the Axios news site that an announcement on the Strait of Hormuz could be made on Wednesday.

In an interview with Fox News, published on Wednesday, Trump also renewed his warning to Iran, saying the US could hit the country "really hard" if negotiations between Washington and Tehran fail.

"If they back out again, they're going to get hit really hard," Trump said. "They know that. They understand that. I have no choice. They can't have a nuclear weapon. It's very simple."

In his phone call with Trump, Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani emphasized the importance of continuing diplomatic efforts to address contentious issues and implement the terms agreed under the memorandum of understanding between Iran and the US in June.

Mediating efforts

A similar view was echoed by Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud, who chaired the weekly meeting of ministers on Tuesday.

Majed Mohammed Al-Ansari, adviser to the Qatari prime minister and spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said on Tuesday that Doha, Muscat and Islamabad are exerting ongoing efforts to facilitate communication between Iran and the US "to bring their viewpoints closer".

Al-Ansari also said Qatar does not set specific timelines for reaching agreements, explaining that the success of any agreement depends on the extent of readiness of the concerned parties to achieve it.

He also noted that Qatari communications are ongoing at various leadership levels with relevant parties to advance the negotiation track, while stressing that no final agreement has been reached to date.

On the Strait of Hormuz, Al-Ansari called on countries to refrain from using the strait "as a means of political pressure or to achieve unilateral interests".

He indicated that the minimum demand in the current phase is to return to the previous status in the strait, in line with international law and in coordination with all coastal and concerned states.

Al-Ansari said any future arrangements related to managing the strait or regulating navigation through it "must be agreed upon by all affected regional countries". He pointed out that ensuring the smooth flow of trade and freedom of passage represents a shared priority for the international community.

Shipping traffic at the key Middle Eastern maritime choke points of the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab el-Mandeb remained limited on Tuesday compared with the previous day, Reuters reported, citing ship-tracking data from Kpler.

Roughly 130 to 140 ships would typically transit the waterway each day before the conflict broke out on Feb 28. Iran responded by closing the strait.

Cui Haipei in Dubai, UAE contributed to this story.



Warship resurfaces

People watch the wreckage of a WWII German warship that emerged due to the drought in front of a large dam on the Danube River between Romania and Serbia, near Prahovo, Serbia, on Tuesday. DARKO VOJINOVIC / AP

Festival parade



People enjoy a parade held during the San Cayetano Festival in Madrid, Spain, on Tuesday. The annual festival has transformed the city's central neighborhoods into a hub of music, tradition, and open-air celebrations with the focus remaining on balancing tradition with modernity. XINHUA

Briefly

UNITED STATES

Rocket piece set to crash into moon

A piece of a SpaceX rocket floating in space since last year was expected to smash into the moon at high speed early on Wednesday morning, though the impact was unlikely to be confirmed for at least several hours. The school-bus-size object is the second stage of a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket that had launched a lunar lander from Firefly Aerospace toward the moon in January 2025. Weighing 4 metric tons, the rocket body had been due to hit the moon around 2:35 am, traveling at 8,690 kph, but none of the spacecraft orbiting the moon were expected to be in a position to capture images of the impact live. The impact was unintentional, SpaceX said. The rocket piece was expected to hit Einstein Crater on the moon's western limb, which is often difficult to see from Earth.

MIDDLE EAST

Israel did not agree to Gaza plan: Netanyahu

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said Israel did not agree to the US-backed plan for Gaza, even after receiving assurances that an Israeli pullout would only happen after Hamas disarms. In a video posted on his social media accounts on Tuesday night, Netanyahu said the team of US President Donald Trump "believes that they can bring about the disarmament of Hamas and the demilitarization of Gaza". Netanyahu met with the US-backed Board of Peace on Monday and received guarantees that the Israeli army would only be required to leave its current positions in Gaza after Hamas disarms. But pressure has been growing on the premier from the right flank of his ruling coalition to reject the deal.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:17 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:17 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

Chinese EVs gain ground in South Korea

This shows competitiveness and export resilience of China's supply chains

By LI JIAYING
lijiaying@chinadaily.com.cn



View of BYD's booth during an expo in South Korea in June. XINHUA

Chinese-made electric vehicles are rapidly gaining ground in South Korea, showing the competitiveness and export resilience of China's EV supply chain as consumers there look beyond established brands for affordable, technology-rich models.

South Korea registered 69,513 China-made EVs in the first half, up a whopping 178.7 percent from a year earlier, said a report released on Tuesday by the Korea Automobile & Mobility Association, or KAMA.

This has brought their share of all new EV registrations to 35 percent from 26.8 percent a year earlier, meaning that more than one in every three EVs newly registered in the country came from a Chinese factory.

The development is also reshaping South Korea's wider import market. Registrations of all China-made imported vehicles — including both electric and conventional models — climbed 127.8 percent to 79,444 in the first half, KAMA said.

Notably, their share reached 41.2 percent by manufacturing origin, overtaking Germany for the first time.

The figures measure where vehicles were produced rather than the "nationality" of their brands. Shanghai-made Tesla vehicles accounted for much of the increase, while BYD's mass-market models and China-made premium vehicles added huge momentum, according to KAMA and South Korean media.

Zhang Hong, a senior new energy vehicle industry expert at the China Automobile Dealers Association, attributed the growth to the combination of product performance and smart-vehicle features.

"Chinese EVs have a clear lead in electrification and smart technologies, including intelligent cockpits and advanced driver-assistance systems. These features align closely with strong demand among young South Korean consumers and are helping overturn the impression that Chinese-made EVs are low-end products," Zhang said.

Zhang said Chinese brands are likely to maintain strong momentum in South Korea over the next year, although policy changes and the need to expand local sales and after-sales networks would test their ability to convert early interest into sustained market share.

The comments came as South Korea introduced a new assessment for EV subsidy eligibility in the second half, examining factors such as technology development, supply-chain contribution, environmental compliance, after-sales services and safety management.

BYD took part in the assessment but did not achieve the required score, while Geely-owned premium EV brand Zeekr missed the application window after receiving certification for the 7X in late May. New pure EVs from the two brands have therefore been ineligible for government purchase subsidies since July 1.

Before the change, eligible buyers could receive combined central and local government subsidies of roughly 2 million won ($1,402) to 3 million won per vehicle, depending on the model and location.

The policy shift came after the first-half surge of Chinese brands. BYD, which began delivering passenger EVs to South Korea in April 2025, registered 11,675 vehicles in the first half, an increase of 807.9 percent. It ranked fourth among imported brands, behind Tesla, BMW and Mercedes-Benz.

Zeekr has yet to begin full-scale deliveries, but its early reception points to broader acceptance. Preorders for its premium 7X midsize electric sport utility vehicle, which is priced at 52.99 million won for the entry-level version, exceeded 1,000 about a month after opening in June.

Grupo Bimbo upbeat on bakery

By ZHENG YIRAN in Shanghai
zhengyiran@chinadaily.com.cn

Eyeing new consumption trends in the bakery sector, Grupo Bimbo is upbeat about the Chinese market, and will keep investing in the country.

"Since we entered the Chinese market, Grupo Bimbo has continued to invest in China, focusing on food quality and safety, as well as operational improvements across our bakeries," said Kelly Zhang, general manager of Bimbo China. "In recent years, the demand for baked goods in the Chinese market has evolved from 'eating enough' to 'eating well, eating right', while pursuing clean labels such as no additives and low sugar control. The consumption scene has transitioned from family meals to personalized self-enjoyment."


Kelly Zhang

Bimbo has launched whole wheat ciabatta and kale red bean toast bread in the Chinese market, and has constantly upgraded its Dofi bread series.

"Meanwhile, customer purchasing channels have changed. In the past, they would simply go to offline supermarkets. Now, they purchase baked goods from all channels, including baking specialty stores, convenience stores and online e-commerce platforms," she said.

Market research firm Motor Intelligence said that in 2026, 15 percent of products sold online have seen obvious growth. To meet this growing trend, Bimbo enhanced its e-commerce channel operations and has achieved positive results.

Data from Shanghai-based Marketing Consulting Research showed that since 2021, the Chinese bakery market has grown constantly.

In 2025, the market totaled 662.6 billion yuan ($98.2 billion) and it is estimated that by 2030 the market will surpass 902.5 billion yuan.

Huang Tao, an independent expert in public relations, said: "The baked goods consumption market in China is in a rapid development stage, with its scale continuing to expand. At the same time, market competition is becoming increasingly fierce and the differentiation between different enterprises, regions, cities and locations may become more apparent. The market has gone from insufficient supply in the past, with some households purchasing less and fewer related stores, to a rise in production and household consumption. The industry has begun to upgrade."

Research from the catering research institute Hongcan shows that for Chinese bakery consumption, breakfast takes up 68 percent of the scenarios, while afternoon tea makes up 21 percent, and gift-giving is also growing. In 2025, the sales volume of gift-giving baked goods totaled 80 billion yuan, up 12 percent year-on-year.

Evolving landscape of digital commerce

By LI JING
lijing2009@chinadaily.com.cn


A humanoid robot interacts with shoppers in Shanghai.
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

China's livestreaming, social commerce and quick commerce models are increasingly influencing the way consumers discover and buy products around the world, said NielsenIQ, a leading consumer intelligence company, in a report.

The country's live commerce market reached about $900 billion in 2025, approaching the size of the entire e-commerce market in the United States, according to the NIQ report — The Commerce Revolution: Where East Meets West.

The Asia-Pacific region accounted for about 55 percent of global e-commerce revenue, while 59 percent of consumers in the region said they already purchase products through social platforms, the report said.

The figures highlight the evolution of commerce beyond traditional online shopping into connected ecosystems where content, community, media, payments and fulfillment work together, according to the report.

The shift is visible in China's broader online retail market. Online retail sales of physical goods rose 5.2 percent year-on-year in 2025 to reach 13.1 trillion yuan ($1.94 trillion), accounting for 26.1 percent of total retail sales of consumer goods, according to the National Bureau of Statistics.

"Social and livestreaming commerce do more than reshape existing retail channels. They also generate substantial new consumption," said Jiang Zhao, an associate researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation.

Jiang said content recommendations and product demonstrations encourage unplanned purchases by turning latent demand into actual spending. Direct access to consumers also allows smaller merchants, manufacturers in industrial clusters and agricultural producers to offer a wider range of products, while immersive, interactive and entertainment-driven shopping experiences strengthen spending appetite among younger consumers.

"China remains one of the world's most dynamic commerce markets," said Ryan Zhou, managing director of NIQ China. "The speed and scale of innovation in China offer important lessons for brands seeking to anticipate how commerce will evolve in other markets."

For global brands, the changes are already affecting how they market and sell in China. UK-based consumer goods maker Reckitt said e-commerce accounted for about 80 percent of its China sales in 2025, up from around 30 percent before COVID-19. The company used more than 1 million short videos and 100,000 hours of livestreaming to reach about 40 million new customers in China in 2025.

These innovative models are increasingly influencing consumer behavior, particularly across the Asia-Pacific region, according to the report.

The shift is also blurring the traditional distinction between online and offline retail, as consumers move seamlessly between physical stores, e-commerce platforms, social media and other digital channels during the purchasing process.

"The next generation of retail will be shaped by businesses that can connect consumer intelligence across physical and digital commerce," said Rachel White, president of Asia-Pacific at NIQ. "Brands that understand how consumers discover, evaluate and purchase products across every touchpoint will be better positioned to anticipate change and drive sustainable growth."

NIQ said brands would need greater visibility across every stage of the consumer journey, from product discovery and engagement to purchasing and loyalty, as commerce ecosystems become more interconnected.

The next change may be driven by artificial intelligence. Alibaba Group has integrated its Qwen AI assistant with the full Taobao product catalog, allowing users in China to browse, compare products, place orders and manage deliveries through natural-language conversations rather than keyword searches.

Success increasingly depends on understanding how retail, e-commerce, social commerce and digital channels work together rather than as separate ecosystems, the report said.

Guideline set to streamline cross-border taxation rules

By REN QI
renqi@chinadaily.com.cn

The State Taxation Administration released the country's first cross-border tax industry guideline specifically tailored for the cross-border transportation sector, aiming to provide a comprehensive, full-chain and practically implementable tax compliance reference for market entities engaged in maritime, aviation and land transport-based transactional activity.

The guideline on tax services for international transportation arrives amid China's robust foreign trade growth. According to customs statistics, China's total first half imports and exports of goods surged 16.9 percent year-on-year, reaching 25.47 trillion yuan ($3.77 trillion). The nation's exports rose 13.4 percent to 14.73 trillion yuan, while imports soared 22.1 percent to 10.74 trillion yuan.

This newly introduced guideline further expands the administration's dedicated "TaxExpress" cross-border tax service brand and its broader knowledge product system. Structurally, the document is meticulously divided into two primary sections: an "inbound" chapter and an "outbound" chapter.

By categorizing various modes of transportation, the guideline systematically addresses four core questions for enterprises: whether they are required to pay taxes, what types of taxes they must pay, how much the tax liability will be and the specific methods for making these payments.

To achieve this goal, the document thoroughly outlines tax-related matters across eight critical dimensions: tax liability, withholding obligations, taxable income, tax calculation methods, available tax incentives, bilateral treaty benefits, tax procedures and tax risk warnings.

Furthermore, the guideline compiles public tax cases to intuitively illustrate tax laws and visually highlight potential cross-border operational risks. Its detailed appendix also gathers full-chain tax policies and summarizes direct inquiry links for relevant tax-handling channels.

"Our enterprise handles international transport business all year round, such as the China-ASEAN railway transportation routes," said Tan Yundan, financial head of Land-Sea Corridor Operation Co Ltd.

"The complex nature of cross-border tax affairs has historically posed significant challenges to compliance. This is especially true when trying to accurately grasp policy changes during the transitional periods between old and new value-added tax policies," Tan said, adding that the new guideline systematically organizes declaration procedures for various taxes.

"It provides a supportive series of electronic materials accessible at any time by simply scanning a QR code with a mobile phone. This offers us clear guidance for handling cross-border transportation tax business, effectively reducing our company's cross-border tax risks."

A spokesperson for the international taxation department of the STA emphasized that international transportation formats are constantly evolving, and cross-border logistics are becoming increasingly frequent. The guideline's rollout is an innovative practice by tax authorities to cultivate specialized industries and elevate professional cross-border tax services.

Moving forward, the nation's tax authorities pledge to continuously track updates to the tax system and industry development, and will revise the guideline's content in real time, organize specialized industry tutorials and enrich the supply of "TaxExpress" services to facilitate the high-quality development of the international transport sector.

Taxpayers can now log onto the STA's official website and navigate to the special "TaxExpress" column to access the guideline and other related knowledge products.

Briefly

Services trade grows in first half

China's services trade expanded 8.3 percent year-on-year in the first half, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce. The total value of service imports and exports reached nearly 3.78 trillion yuan ($556.56 billion) from January to June this year. Throughout the period, travel service exports grew at the fastest rate among the top five service export categories, rising 31.1 percent to 229.2 billion yuan.

Yuan strengthens against greenback

The central parity rate of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, strengthened 28 pips to 6.7889 against the US dollar on Wednesday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Safety standard unveiled for autonomous driving systems

China has released a mandatory national standard regarding safety requirements for autonomous driving systems, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology said on Tuesday.

The standard is scheduled to take effect on July 1, 2027. It applies to M and N-category vehicles equipped with Level 3 and Level 4 autonomous driving systems, but does not cover automated parking systems, the MIIT said.

The standard requires vehicle manufacturers to improve safety assurance mechanisms throughout the product life cycle and carry out simulation, field and road tests during the development and verification of autonomous driving systems, according to the MIIT.

It also calls for stronger capabilities in performing dynamic driving tasks, while specifying requirements for human-machine interaction and user notification to prevent misuse and abuse. For Level 3 systems, vehicles must be able to monitor drivers' readiness to take over control.

Looking ahead, the ministry said that it will strengthen market access management for intelligent connected vehicle products, improve testing methods for autonomous driving systems, and build a sound regulatory mechanism for intelligent connected vehicles to ensure the sector's high-quality development.

China's inaugural step into conditional automated driving is a characteristically strategic and guarded one. It is a controlled experiment designed to accumulate real-world data, refine technologies and standards within a safety-centric framework, and steadily build the foundation for the responsible integration of autonomous driving, experts said.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:17 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:17 PM

BUSINESS

Hainan eyes eco-friendly vehicle future

By 2030, 100 percent of new and replacement cars must be NEV

By **MA SI** and **CHEN BOWEN** in Haikou

The southern island province of Hainan's goal to become China's first region to halt sales of new fossil-fuel vehicles marks a landmark step in the country's efforts to decarbonize the transportation sector, and is also part of Hainan's push to build a "green" province.

According to the 15th Five-Year Plan for the Hainan National Ecological Civilization Pilot Zone — released recently by the provincial government — the province will "smoothly advance" the ban on sales of new internal combustion engine vehicles by 2030. By that year, 100 percent of new and replacement vehicles in public services and commercial operations, and 100 percent of new private vehicles, must be new energy vehicles. The vehicle-to-charger ratio is targeted to remain below 2.5 to 1.

The policy has raised questions among some consumers concerned about the fate of their existing gasoline-powered cars. Will they still be allowed on the road? Li Ziwen, associate researcher of the Chinese Academy of Macroeconomic Research, said that the ban applies only to new vehicles, not to vehicles already in use.

"Vehicles already registered and in normal use will be unaffected," he said. "Owners' rights will not be compromised. Fuel vehicles registered before 2030 can continue to operate normally, undergo regular inspections and be legally transferred until they reach scrappage standards. There will be no compulsory elimination or traffic restrictions."

"As a national ecological civilization pilot zone and an international tourism island, Hainan's ecological advantages — its blue skies, white beaches and clear waters — are its core competitiveness," Li said. "Banning new fossil-fuel vehicles and promoting NEVs aligns perfectly with Hainan's green, low-carbon development positioning and its rich ecological endowment."

The province enjoys distinct geographic and climatic advantages that make the transition more feasible. With year-round warm temperatures, battery performance degradation in cold weather is not a significant concern — a critical factor given that low temperatures can reduce electric vehicle range in many northern regions.

Hainan's land area spans 35,400 square kilometers, with the distance from Haikou to Sanya less than 300 kilometers and a round-island drive under 1,000 km. This compact geography means range anxiety is far less pronounced.

"Based on the range of current flagship NEV models, most single trips within the island can be completed without recharging, or with just one charge," Li said.

Charging infrastructure is also well-established, a prerequisite for large-scale NEV adoption. Official data show that as of August 2025, Hainan had over 230,000 charging piles across 4,895 charging stations, achieving a vehicle-to-charger ratio of 2.1 to 1 — better than the national average. Highway service areas and all townships have achieved 100 percent charging coverage. Clean energy has become the province's largest power source, and Hainan ranks first and second nationally in NEV market penetration and per capita ownership share, respectively.

The 2030 ban is not a sudden policy shift but the culmination of more than eight years of steady planning. In April 2018, the central government first proposed "gradually prohibiting the sale of fossil-fuel vehicles in Hainan" in official guidance on deepening reform and opening-up. That marked the first time the term "ban" appeared in an official document.

In March 2019, Hainan released its Clean Energy Vehicle Development Plan, becoming the first province to give a specific timeline — 2030 for a province-wide ban. In August 2022, the provincial carbon peaking implementation plan further refined the targets, mandating 100 percent clean energy for new public vehicles by 2025 and 100 percent for new private vehicles by 2030.

The latest plan, issued in July 2026, is the third key document in this progression. It breaks down specific targets and tasks, including the vehicle-to-charger ratio requirement and the orderly promotion of fuel-cell vehicle demonstrations in heavy trucks, cold-chain logistics and public transport.

The policy has been accompanied by growing public acceptance of NEVs, both nationally and locally. Ministry of Commerce data show that China's NEV passenger vehicle market penetration rose from 5.7 percent in 2020 to 53.9 percent in 2025 — more than half of all new cars sold.

In Hainan, the figures are even more striking. According to provincial industry authorities, Hainan promoted 116,800 new NEVs in 2025, accounting for 62.9 percent of all new vehicles. That means six out of every 10 new cars purchased in Hainan last year were new energy vehicles.

In April 2026 alone, the NEV penetration rate hit a record 74.5 percent.

Total NEV ownership in Hainan reached 517,000 units by the end of November 2025, representing 23.04 percent of the province's total vehicle fleet.

The strong consumer preference is driven by fiscal policies and infrastructure. Hainan does not collect separate highway tolls; instead, road maintenance costs are incorporated into fuel prices, making gasoline consistently over 1 yuan ($0.15) per liter more expensive than on the mainland.

Zhang Xiang, a guest professor at Hainan Vocational University of Science and Technology and an auto industry analyst, said that this pricing structure, combined with comprehensive charging networks and short driving distances, gives NEVs a compelling cost advantage over gasoline vehicles.

But Li from the Chinese Academy of Macroeconomic Research cautioned that Hainan's model may not be directly replicable in other provinces. In inland regions, vehicles frequently cross provincial borders, and a blanket ban on fuel-vehicle sales could trigger cross-regional purchases, raising management costs and undermining the ban's effectiveness.

Moreover, regions such as Northeast China, the Yangtze River Delta and Central China still have relatively complete fossil-fuel vehicle supply chains; a sudden ban could disrupt industrial stability and employment. Cold winters in northern areas also pose greater challenges for battery performance.

Therefore, Li stressed that other regions should formulate differentiated policies based on local conditions and avoid a one-size-fits-all approach.

Shi Jianhua, vice-chairman of China EV100, a Beijing-based auto industry think tank, emphasized the effect of Hainan's pilot. "Hainan's relatively enclosed geography makes it easier to take the lead," he said. Beyond ecological protection, a successful implementation could yield a "China solution" for NEV promotion, generating valuable experience in policy design, infrastructure development, consumer guidance and industrial transformation.

The plan sets a target to raise NEV ownership from 23.75 percent in 2025 to 45 percent by 2030 — nearly doubling the current share. This will require continued infrastructure expansion and refinement.

Shi said that the key is to make charging as convenient as refueling. He suggested improving public NEV rental systems and further optimizing the vehicle usage environment to accelerate adoption and gradually reduce the intensity of fossil-fuel vehicle use. He also reassured the public that "a ban is not a driving ban" — existing fuel vehicles will continue to be used normally over a period of natural turnover.

The green mobility revolution that began in Hainan is not an isolated adjustment, but the prelude to a nationwide transformation of the automotive industry and mass travel patterns, experts added.

Contact the writers at masi@chinadaily.com.cn



A driver charges a new energy vehicle in Haikou, Hainan province, on May 31, 2024. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Visitors browse NEVs during an international auto expo held in Haikou on July 9. SU BIKUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Island's green drive powers ahead as nuclear mini-reactor nears debut

By **MA SI** and **CHEN BOWEN** in Haikou

Hainan has crossed a critical threshold in its energy transition, with new energy installed capacity surpassing 12.71 million kilowatts by end-June, accounting for 50.1 percent of the province's total power capacity. The milestone signals that the tropical island has entered a new phase in which renewable sources lead a diversified and coordinated power supply system.

The achievement is part of Hainan's broader push to build a national ecological civilization pilot zone. The province has intensified pollution control and green development, aiming to create a world-class, low-carbon free trade port.

In Chengmai county, the once-notorious Yanchunling landfill has been transformed into a sprawling green park. Issues regarding the landfill — which once contained 4.5 million cubic meters of waste and triggered over a thousand complaints — have been fully resolved after seven years of intensive work.

"The air quality is getting better day by day. You've solved a long-standing problem," said Zhang Guilin, a local resident who presented a banner to the project team.

The rehabilitation project reflects local authorities' commitment to ecological restoration. "From complaints to praise, this once-intractable issue has become a testament to public understanding, support and participation in environmental protection," an official from the Chengmai county ecology and environment bureau said.

At Haikou National High-Tech Industrial Development Zone, two natural gas generator units operated by Datang Haikou Clean Energy Power Generation Co are running smoothly.

"We have formed a diversified clean energy system covering gas power, offshore wind, photovoltaic and energy storage — with all installed capacity from clean sources — accounting for 13.42 percent of the province's total and reducing carbon dioxide emissions by over 2.6 million metric tons annually," said Jing Guodong, director of the safety production and science innovation center at Datang Hainan Energy Development Co.

Across Hainan, renewable energy now accounts for more than 60 percent of new power additions. The province is piloting integrated models such as "offshore wind plus marine ranching" and "photovoltaic plus agriculture" to maximize land-use efficiency and ecological benefits.

As artificial intelligence drives an unprecedented surge in global computing demand, the need for vast, stable electricity supplies has become critical. China is positioning itself at the forefront of this convergence by deploying small modular reactors (SMRs) to power data centers.

Wei Zhigang, chairman of CNNC Hainan Nuclear Power Co, said tech giants like Microsoft and Google are actively exploring SMRs for AI infrastructure. Wei's company is nearing completion of Linglong One — the world's first onshore commercial SMR — with 90 percent of installation done and commercial operations slated for this year.

"One of the key advantages of SMRs is their flexible placement. We can deploy them right where computing power is needed, enabling close load-matching," Wei said. His company is exploring a nuclear-powered zero-carbon industrial park in Hainan's Changjiang Li autonomous county, aiming to create a "nuclear energy plus computing power" pilot zone.

Upon completion, Linglong One will generate 1 billion kWh annually, enough to power 526,000 households while cutting CO2 emissions by 880,000 tons — equivalent to planting 7.5 million trees. It is also the first onshore commercial SMR to pass an International Atomic Energy Agency safety review.

"It's like the evolution from desktop computers to laptops," Wei said, adding that the reactor's integrated design offers compactness, convenience and safety.

IAEA Director-General Rafael Mariano Grossi said nuclear power is "destined to be the energy partner of the AI revolution", adding that only nuclear can provide low-carbon, round-the-clock, high-density, stable and scalable power.

The global interest comes as data recently released by OpenRouter — a platform widely used by overseas developers to access AI models — said Chinese large language models had surpassed US-developed LLMs for 11 consecutive weeks as of July 12, placing China at the top position globally.

Since Feb 8, more than 30 percent of tokens used by US companies on the platform each week were related to Chinese AI models, with the share peaking at 46 percent. Tokens are small units of data processed by AI models during training and inference. In contrast, the share was only 4.5 percent in the first half of 2025.

As Hainan continues to lead in both clean energy and nuclear innovation, the island is poised to become a critical hub where ecological civilization meets the computing needs of the future.



An aerial photo shows the construction site of Linglong One — the world's first onshore commercial small modular reactor — in Hainan province on Aug 10, 2023. GUO ZHIHUA / FOR CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:17 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:17 PM

2026 CONFERENCE ON HONGSHAN CULTURE

Editor's note: *On Wednesday, an event in Chaoyang, Liaoning province — a cradle of the prehistoric Hongshan culture from over 5,000 years ago — brought together experts under the theme "Hongshan Culture: A Dialogue Between Eras and Civilizations". Speakers highlighted the lasting legacy of Hongshan ancestors and advocated for broader cross-cultural dialogue and mutual learning.*

A GLOBAL DIALOGUE MILLENNIA IN THE MAKING

Director underlines strategies on protection, promotion

By WANG RU in Chaoyang, Liaoning
wangru1@chinadaily.com.cn

The rich archaeological features and unearthed artifacts of Hongshan culture continue to provide scientific evidence supporting the development of China's archaeological theories. By empowering the growth of archaeology tailored to Chinese features, style and ethos, these discoveries contribute a fresh perspective and invaluable wisdom to global studies on how early human civilizations first took shape.

Addressing attendees at the 2026 Conference on Hongshan Culture on Wednesday in Chaoyang, Liaoning province, Rao Quan, director of the National Cultural Heritage Administration, underscored the deep-seated significance of this heritage within Chinese civilization while outlining key strategies for its future preservation and global promotion.

"As a key prehistoric archaeological culture in northern China, Hongshan offers a valuable sample for studying the origins of Chinese civilization through its unique jade ritual system, monumental sacrificial remains, and complex belief system. It demonstrates the pluralistic yet unified nature of Chinese civilization," Rao said. "It also carries the shared cultural memory of the East Asian civilization circle, possessing a natural affinity that transcends national borders and resonates with diverse audiences."

Rao commended the recent, dedicated efforts made by Liaoning and Hebei provinces and the Inner Mongolia autonomous region. By enacting systematic protection measures and seamlessly weaving cultural preservation into modern development, local governments have injected powerful momentum into cultural construction.

"The National Cultural Heritage Administration has long supported the protection and research of Hongshan culture, actively upheld regional governments' efforts, facilitated the construction and opening of the Niuheliang National Archaeological Site Park, and placed Hongshan culture on the World Heritage tentative list," Rao said.

To build on this momentum, he advocated for a comprehensive resource inventory on the basis of the ongoing fourth national census of cultural relics. Upgrading site protection frameworks and cementing cross-provincial safeguards will be vital to keeping these ancient sites intact for future generations.

"With a sense of responsibility to history and the people, we will make Hongshan cultural sites important venues where people can touch history and feel the depth of civilization. This will lay a solid foundation for deeper academic research and broader preservation and utilization efforts," he added.

Beyond basic preservation, Rao emphasized bringing modern science into the field. By harnessing advanced techniques such as isotope monitoring, paleoenvironmental reconstruction and ancient DNA analysis, researchers can unearth a clearer picture of how Hongshan societies adapted and contributed to early Chinese civilization.

Looking to the international stage, Rao called for dynamic global partnerships, high-profile overseas exhibitions, and joint academic conferences to share the story of Hongshan culture and the roots of Chinese civilization with the world.

"We will make the Hongshan culture an important window through which people around the world can understand the lineage of Chinese civilization," he said.

Liaoning makes headway on heritage preservation

By DENG ZHANGYU
in Chaoyang, Liaoning
dengzhangyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Northeast China's Liaoning province, one of the core hubs of Hongshan culture, is stepping up efforts in legislation, academic research, heritage preservation and public awareness to better protect and pass on the culture and boost its influence, said Xu Kunlin, secretary of the Communist Party of China Liaoning Provincial Committee, at the 2026 Conference on Hongshan Culture held in Chaoyang, Liaoning, on Wednesday.

"Liaoning is rich in cultural and historical relics, with profound historical heritage. It is home to a long-standing farming culture, fishing-hunting culture and nomadic culture, and is an important birthplace of Chinese civilization," Xu said.

"The Niuheliang site here has pushed the origin of Chinese civilization back by five to six hundred years. It is not only a key source for the Chinese nation's cultural confidence and the continuation of the flame of civilization, but also a cultural treasure for the whole world," he added.

Dating back some 5,000 to 5,800 years, the Niuheliang site in Chaoyang is a core site from the peak period of Hongshan culture. It showcases the culture's most mature jade artifact system, primitive cosmology and early state formation.

Xu said that Liaoning has adhered to the rule of law as a bottom line and built a refined system for cultural relic protection with strict standards. In recent years, the province has revised and implemented the Regulations on the Protection of the Niuheliang Site in Liaoning Province and updated the Protection Plan for the Niuheliang Site.

Liaoning has also strengthened academic research by setting up the Hongshan Culture Research Institute. Working with academies and institutions, it has deepened multi-disciplinary studies on national-level archaeological projects aimed at decoding the cultural genes of Hongshan culture and strengthening empirical evidence for the origin of Chinese civilization.

In July, the National Cultural Heritage Administration released the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) for the cultural relic sector. The document provides guidelines on preparing Hongshan culture sites as they seek World Heritage status within the next five years.

According to Xu, Liaoning is cooperating with other provinces to promote a cross-regional joint bid for World Heritage status, so that Hongshan culture and Liangzhu culture in Zhejiang province — two prehistoric landmarks of Chinese civilization — can jointly serve as powerful testimony to China's 5,000-year civilization.

Last year, Liaoning hosted the International Communication Conference on Hongshan Culture, where the official logo of Hongshan culture was unveiled. A dance drama related to the culture is also in production, and a series of campus activities have been launched to introduce Hongshan culture to young people.

"Hongshan culture is going beyond Liaoning and reaching the world with a youthful tone and digital forms," Xu said.

"We are willing to use Hongshan culture as a bond, maintain an open and inclusive attitude, deepen exchanges and cooperation with archaeological and cultural institutions around the world, and contribute wisdom and strength to building a community with a shared future for humanity."

International importance of China's ancient past highlighted

By DENG ZHANGYU
in Chaoyang, Liaoning

Framing the ancient Hongshan culture through the lens of global history is key to deepening cross-cultural exchange and highlighting China's contributions to human civilization, said China Daily Publisher and Editor-in-chief Qu Yingpu at the 2026 Conference on Hongshan Culture in Chaoyang, Liaoning province, on Wednesday.

Qu said that from the perspective of world civilization, Hongshan stands as a bright eastern star at dawn. Originating around 6,500 years ago, it emerged at a time close to the early stages of ancient Egyptian and Mesopotamian civilizations, making it an indispensable eastern chapter in prehistoric human civilization.

"Over thousands of years, Chinese civilization has embraced openness, inclusiveness and mutual exchange," he added.

Qu cited ancient transcontinental journeys, such as Zhang Qian's envoys, Xuanzang's pilgrimage, Omani trade routes and Zheng He's voyages, as evidence that "generations of ancestors crossed mountains and oceans to connect China with the rest of the world, writing vivid stories of exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations".

The publisher called on media professionals, scholars and young people worldwide to deepen research into Hongshan culture, expand cross-border academic exchanges, implement the Global Civilization Initiative, and help countries better understand each other and achieve shared development.

From the perspective of Chinese civilization, Qu said that Hongshan culture represents the prehistoric dawn of Chinese heritage.

He detailed that recent archaeological discoveries have expanded the understanding of Hongshan culture's duration and reach. Together with the Yangshao, Lingjiatan and Liangzhu cultures, Hongshan stands as one of the major prehistoric jade culture centers of China. Cultural symbols nurtured by ancestors along the basins of the Yellow, Yangtze and Liaohe rivers — such as dragon-scale patterns, rose patterns and octagonal star patterns — bear witness to the exchange and fusion of civilizations across different regions.

"The early Chinese cultures of different regions interacted across vast distances and eventually formed a diverse yet unified Chinese civilization," Qu said.

From the perspective of the new era, Hongshan culture holds the original genes for a new form of human civilization.

After visiting the Niuheliang site in Chaoyang, Qu said he was deeply impressed by its altars, temples and stone tombs, as well as the ancient beliefs in dragons and jade, and reverence for heaven and Earth — elements that shaped the unique cosmology, worldview, social and moral values of Chinese people.

Qu said the essence of fine traditional Chinese culture carried by Hongshan culture serves as a profound foundation for China's modernization, empowering Chinese civilization to transform itself for the modern era and nurture a new form of human civilization.

"China in the new era will continue to draw wisdom and strength from its profound traditional culture, always stand on the right side of history and human progress, and while tirelessly working for the well-being of the Chinese people, offer the world China's opportunities and solutions," he said.



Guests share their insights on Hongshan culture before the conference began on Wednesday in Chaoyang, Liaoning province.
WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY

Scholars discuss study of prehistoric cultures

By BAI SHUHAO
in Chaoyang, Liaoning
baishuhao@chinadaily.com.cn

More than 5,000 years ago, the Hongshan culture emerged in what is now northeastern China, leaving behind jade artifacts, ritual sites and a sophisticated belief system. Today, scholars say its values of harmony, inclusiveness and exchange continue to offer insights into how civilizations interact and evolve.

On Wednesday afternoon, Chinese and international scholars gathered in Chaoyang, Liaoning province, for an academic seminar to discuss the core values of Hongshan culture from the perspective of mutual learning among civilizations, held as part of the 2026 Conference on Hongshan Culture.

Guo Dashun, a renowned archaeologist and honorary director of the Hongshan Culture Research Institute, who participated in excavations at the Niuheliang site, said Hongshan serves as a typical representation of the origins and characteristics of Chinese civilization.

"Its exchanges with diverse cultures reflected the inclusive nature of Chinese civilization and contributed to its enduring continuity," Guo said.

Building on this perspective, Wang Wei, a member of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said archaeological discoveries related to Hongshan culture provide important evidence for understanding the more than 5,000-year history of Chinese civilization.

He added that cultural elements associated with Hongshan culture, including its jade ritual system and dragon imagery, shaped the spiritual world of early China and continue to influence Chinese civilization today.

Looking beyond its role in the development of Chinese civilization, international scholars also highlighted Hongshan culture's significance in the broader history of human civilization.

Elizabeth Childs-Johnson, a Sinologist from the United States, described Hongshan culture as a "cultural miracle", highlighting its importance in the study of prehistoric civilizations worldwide.

She said Hongshan culture is one of the few Neolithic cultures known archaeologically to have documented a complex society transitioning from a hunting-and-gathering society to an agrarian one.

"It also represents one of the earliest examples of a highly developed and standardized system of ancestor worship and ritual practices," Childs-Johnson said.

Lyu Xueming, a professor at the School of History at Renmin University of China, said elements such as ritual architecture, spatial planning and ceremonial pathways formed a regional cultural system that attracted and connected people from distant areas.

Such ritual traditions, according to Li Xinwei, director of the Chinese School of Classical Studies at Athens, a Beijing-backed research institute based in Greece, reflected a unique worldview that shaped later approaches to governance and political organization.

Alexey Kovalev from the Institute of Archaeology of the Russian Academy of Sciences found similarities between a circular ritual structure discovered in the Munkh-Khairkhan culture and ritual architecture at the Niuheliang site. He suggested that the northern culture originating near Lake Baikal may have inherited certain traditions connected with Hongshan culture.

"The significance of Hongshan culture extends beyond archaeology. It reminds us that civilizations have never developed in complete isolation," said Gor Sargsyan, foreign director of the Confucius Institute at Yerevan Brusov State University in Armenia.

He added that studying Hongshan culture is not only about exploring China's ancient heritage, but also about creating opportunities for dialogue and mutual learning among civilizations. Other scholars also shared their perspectives on the ancient culture, emphasizing its enduring value in promoting dialogue, understanding and cooperation among civilizations.



The 2026 Conference on Hongshan Culture is held in Chaoyang, Northeast China's Liaoning province, on Wednesday. WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY

Outstanding contributors to the preservation and understanding of Hongshan culture



Su Bingqi (1909-97)

Su, a founding figure of Chinese archaeology, devoted his career to studying the origins of Chinese civilization and formulating a series of profoundly influential theories. In the 1980s, drawing on his studies of Hongshan and other prehistoric cultures, he proposed a three-stage model for the formation of China, arguing that the interaction, convergence and integration of diverse civilizations scattered across the vast territory ultimately gave rise to the pluralistic yet unified Chinese civilization.

This framework challenged the earlier view of a single-origin model, thereby opening new paths for tracing the formation and development of Chinese civilization from multiple regional perspectives. His intellectual legacy continues to shape contemporary understanding of both Hongshan culture and the broader origins of Chinese civilization.

Su Shenzhi, daughter of Su Bingqi, said: "His deep love for his motherland led him to consider what has made China and how Chinese civilization originated and developed. With that perspective, he was able to make good use of archaeological evidence and propose theories based on it."



Guo Dashun

Guo, 88, has dedicated over half a century to the study of Hongshan culture, serving as lead archaeologist at key sites such as Niuheliang, Dongshanzui and Shipengshan. Through his dedicated efforts, the realities of Hongshan society are becoming increasingly clear.

Based on his studies, Guo summarized "altar, goddess temple, circular stone mound tomb, dragon, phoenix and jade" as the key elements of Hongshan culture, indicating its institutional ritual constructions and mature jade artifacts system. He also proposed that unlike Western civilizations, Hongshan culture demonstrated a continuous civilizational development path, supported by a belief system connecting heaven, Earth, humanity and deities.

From Guo's perspective, archaeology is not only about tracing historical remnants, but also about making clear the evolution of civilization.

"China, both now and in the future, cannot be separated from its history. Without understanding the past, we cannot know about the present or anticipate the future. That is why we highlight our roots," Guo said.



Elizabeth Childs-Johnson

From an outsider's perspective, Elizabeth Childs-Johnson, a Sinologist from the United States specializing in Chinese art and archaeology, has long been committed to promoting the global significance of Hongshan culture.

Now 77, she recalled first visiting Hongshan sites decades ago, where she met Chinese archaeologists at sites in Chaoyang, Liaoning province. Those encounters forged a lasting bond.

"I think Hongshan is really a miraculous culture. There's really no other similar culture in the Neolithic period that can be easily compared with the complexity of Hongshan," she said.

For decades, she has focused on Hongshan's jade artifacts to explore their cultural value, summarizing five primary gifts of Hongshan culture. Through these, she demonstrated the artistic creation, spiritual beliefs and civilizational connotations of Hongshan culture.

"Hongshan really has comparability not only with Mesoamerica, but other mound-building cultures that built huge mounds dedicated to their religious leaders. In fact, Hongshan can be recognized as one of the major mound-building cultures throughout the world," she said.

— WANG RU AND BAI SHUHAO

What they say about Hongshan and Niuheliang

Shahbaz Khan, *director and representative of the UNESCO Regional Office for East Asia*



Dating back 5,000 to 6,500 years, Hongshan culture represents a foundational chapter in human development. Vividly preserved at sites like the Niuheliang National Archaeological Site Park, its ritual architecture and extraordinary jade craftsmanship reveal humanity's early spiritual and social evolution. For UNESCO, protecting these roots is about safeguarding the unique human genius that grounds our collective identity.

Lao Yanwu, *secretary of the CPC Chaoyang Committee*



The Niuheliang site is a landmark representing the first stage of ancient Chinese civilization. In recent years, we have strengthened heritage conservation through a series of key initiatives, including upgraded exhibitions at the Niuheliang Site Museum and a high-standard conservation plan. Hongshan culture connects the past with the present, while dialogue among civilizations builds a shared future. Preserving this remarkable legacy and enabling Niuheliang to shine in the new era remains Chaoyang city's enduring cultural mission.

Khaled Nazmy, *ambassador of Egypt to China*



We are gathered here on a historic soil that witnessed a culture that flourished over 5,000 years alongside the Liaohe River. Our gathering today is proof that our ancient heritage and civilization is not only a chapter in history, but also a living legacy that continues to inspire us, bring us together and remind us of our shared responsibility to preserve our cultural heritage, deepen our friendship. Although the Hongshan heritage and the ancient Egyptian heritage flourished in different regions ... both became a source of inspiration, cooperation and friendship.

Arlindo do Rosario, *ambassador of Cabo Verde to China*



My visit to the Niuheliang site of Hongshan culture left a deep impression on me. A civilization with a history of around 5,000 years, Hongshan is not only part of Chinese civilization, but also a shared spiritual heritage of humanity. Although Cabo Verde and the Hongshan homeland are separated by geography, our common aspirations connect us.

Looking back at Hongshan, we see how ancient people interpreted the sacred, built social order, and envisioned the future through the pursuit of beauty.

Wang Wei, *a member of the Academic Divisions of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences*



As an important component of the diverse yet unified Chinese civilization, Hongshan culture proves that Chinese civilization did not originate from a single center, but emerged from the independent development and mutual influence among multiple regional cultures ... In the past, archaeologists from both China and the West used to define civilization by the presence of writing, cities and metallurgy. Hongshan culture lacked all three, yet it formed a complex society organized around belief, ritual systems and shared spiritual identity. This shows that there is more than one path to civilization.

Fang Xiangming, *director of the Zhejiang Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology*



Around the same period as Hongshan culture, Hongshan's jade pig-dragon spread to the lower reaches of the Yangtze River, over 1,000 kilometers away, and eventually became part of the unified religious emblem and ancestral icon of the Liangzhu civilization.

If we are to trace the origins of the Liangzhu jade civilization and jade culture and discuss the symbolic system of cosmology, Hongshan and Lingjiatan, which are closely related, are among the most important parts. The Hongshan and Liangzhu jade civilizations represent the earliest and most systematically developed models in the inheritance and innovation of Chinese jade culture, and they are essential components of China's 5,000-year-old civilization.

Li Xinwei, *director of the Chinese School of Classical Studies at Athens*



Almost all primary civilizations around the world shared a common pattern: when an early state was established, people commonly tried to formalize social norms based on cosmic order. Hongshan culture is a remarkable illustration of this pattern, which used primitive cosmology to develop early religion, thereby gathering people to build a complex society. Therefore, the early link between primitive cosmology and political systems exhibited in Hongshan culture was an important origin of Chinese people's worldview.

DENG ZHANGYU, XU LIN, WANG RU AND BAI SHUHAO

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:17 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:17 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

The return of the Japanese samurai is no innocent cartoon entertainment

There is something almost unsettling about the cover of Japan's 2026 Defense White Paper. A cheerful cartoon mascot smiles beneath a bright sky, as though the clinical language of deterrence, missiles and military expansion can be softened by cuteness.

Japan's Nobel laureate Kenzaburo Oe once wrote of the ambiguity that allowed militarism to overtake his country: "That powerful, acute ambiguity which tears the nation and its people apart ... drove Japan to play the aggressor in Asia." That same ambiguity lingers beneath this year's polished report, where "patriotic rhetoric" risks dulling independent judgment and turning people into instruments of an expanding war machine.

For the first time, the 2026 white paper includes a dedicated chapter on "new forms of warfare", drawing explicit lessons from Ukraine, including drone warfare, artificial intelligence and prolonged attrition. Space, cyber and electromagnetic operations are elevated from supporting functions to core combat domains.

The parallels with pre-World War II Japan are difficult to ignore. Then, as now, "external threats" were invoked to justify military expansion. The ideology of "leaving Asia and joining the West" has been repackaged as alignment with a "democratic security coalition". The notorious wartime vision of a "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" has given way to the language of a "free and open Indo-Pacific". Even the economic arguments echo history, with military investment promoted as a source of technological innovation and industrial growth.

As some Japanese observers have said, postwar Japan rested on two moral foundations: "democracy" and an unwavering commitment never to wage war again. Now both are under increasing strain. The nation sees political debate narrowing under the ascendant right-wing neo-militarists while the country's pacifist identity is gradually reinterpreted into support for military expansion in the name of deterrence. The postwar settlement, once regarded as Japan's moral compass, appears increasingly contested.

As a spokesman for China's Ministry of National Defense said, the 2026 white paper, filled with false narratives, indicates Tokyo is fabricating regional threats to dismantle the restraints that shaped Japan's postwar military posture. He rightly pointed out that Japan's accusations against China amount to "a thief crying 'stop thief'" and warned that Japan's neo-militarism poses a challenge to regional stability.

Japan's pursuit of military superiority through ever-expanding deterrence risks triggering a self-reinforcing cycle of regional arms race. Although the country has technological strengths, a decisive "overwhelming" military superiority over China will prove only costly wishful thinking. Japan also remains heavily dependent on imported energy and strategic resources — a vulnerability that contributed to its wartime defeat and remains no less significant today.

Perhaps the most revealing feature of Japan's strategy is the insecurity that underpins it. Since the end of World War II, Tokyo has consistently sought security under the United States-led alliance, often at considerable economic and strategic cost. From the Plaza Accord to more recent financial concessions, Japan has repeatedly subordinated aspects of its autonomy to preserve the alliance.

The palpable unease — and at times barely concealed irritation — with which Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi received the US leader's mentioning of the attack on Pearl Harbor indicates Japan remains profoundly uncertain about the reliability and durability of its most cherished alliance.

Recent protests outside the National Diet are a stark reminder that many Japanese people harbor deep misgivings about the Takaichi government's dangerous course.

Yet the juggernaut of rearmament rolls on. The nearly 600-page 2026 white paper helps pave the way for revising the country's three key security documents by the end of this year and accelerating its military buildup. Some in Tokyo are already openly proposing Japan acquire nuclear weapons and the possibility of raising its military spending above 3 percent of GDP, while legislation for dedicated military taxes advances.

Oe warned that ambiguity could tear the nation apart. As Japan steadily redefines the meaning of "security" and "peace", that warning carries renewed resonance.

Response to US tech hegemony justified

What the United States administration frames as protecting "national security" is, in practice, a systematic campaign to suppress Chinese high-tech enterprises and restrict their access to US markets and technologies.

The latest installment: the Federal Communications Commission is reportedly drafting a ban on imports of new Chinese optical transceivers — devices that convert electrical data into light and back within data centers. US officials hope to publish the rule this year, according to a Reuters report on Tuesday. To justify its protectionist agenda, Washington has again sought to paint Chinese enterprises as "national security threats" without providing any substantial evidence.

Beijing's calibrated response to the series of ill-advised China-targeted measures by the US came on Wednesday. China's Ministry of Commerce announced enhanced export controls on drones and related dual-use items to the US. The ministry also took countermeasures against six US entities, including Applied DNA Sciences, for aiding and abetting illegal US sanctions on Chinese enterprises citing so-called "forced labor" in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.

Compliance Testing LLC was also added to the entity list for supporting FCC restrictive measures that violate Chinese businesses' legitimate rights and threaten China's sovereignty, security and development interests.

Separately, the ministry commenced an investigation into imported printing and copying equipment equipped with foreign system software to assess potential effects on China's national security and foreign trade.

The ill-advised measures against China imposed by the US in recent weeks constitute a serious violation of the important consensus reached by the two heads of state and a material infringement upon China's legitimate rights and interests. China is therefore left with no alternative but to adopt the necessary countermeasures, the ministry said in a statement.

As the ministry said, Beijing's response remains proportionate and measured, indicating that China values the hard-won stability of its economic ties with the US.

The US side is urged to revoke its relevant measures and return to resolving differences through consultations.

The Chinese embassy in the US has also urged the US government to "heed the objective and rational voices of the business communities in both countries" and "stop smearing Chinese companies and threatening them with sanctions".

The broader context is telling. The planned transceiver ban follows recent US restrictions on imports of drones, humanoid robots and power inverters, all specifically targeting Chinese high-tech products. Washington is also weighing controls on Chinese open-source AI models.

Such crackdowns will serve to force related Chinese companies to make strategic adjustments. The external pressure also reflects a deeper reality: the US is clinging to technological hegemony, abusing export controls and recklessly pushing "decoupling" and "supply chain disruption". The chain of suppression, from chip equipment to computing hardware, is likely to expand.

If Washington insists on new restrictions, China will pursue further countermeasures, the Chinese Ministry of Commerce rightly warned.

While key technologies can be restricted and supply chains disrupted, the drive of Chinese enterprises for industrial advancement will not be halted. Alibaba launched its latest and "most powerful" AI model, Qwen3.8-Max, on Monday — boasting 2.4 trillion parameters and ranking second only to Anthropic's Claude series in Arena rankings. This achievement underscores that Chinese companies, making the most of what they have, continue to improve their competitiveness in high-tech sectors.

Moreover, the global semiconductor supply chains are interconnected. Forcibly severing them also raises costs for US companies. This lose-lose dynamic contradicts the fundamental truth that technological progress thrives on competition and collaboration. By politicizing technology and weaponizing "national security", Washington will ultimately curb global scientific advancement — and, in the long run, its own competitiveness.

The US should refrain from stirring up trouble while both sides are preparing for high-level exchanges. This year is meant to be a "big year" for China-US engagement, not a "big year" for Washington to intensify its crackdown on Beijing.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

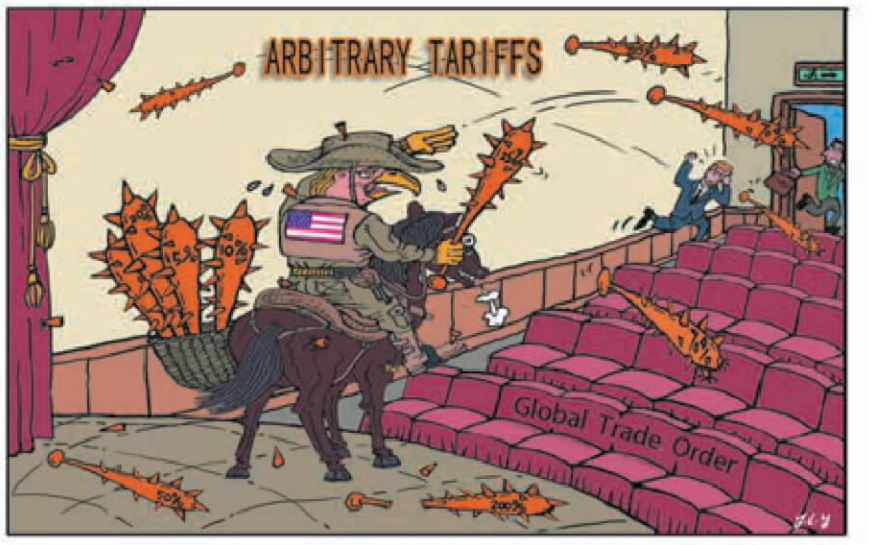
China Daily UK
90 Cannon St, London EC4N 6HA, UK
+44 (0) 207 398 8270
editor@chinadailyuk.com

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Yang Liangyi



Opinion Line

Managing unseen pollution focus of environmental plan

China's environmental plan during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period signals a new stage in which the country's green governance is moving to the management of more complex environmental risks.

It does not mean the battle for blue skies, clear waters and clean soil is over. Rather, future progress will depend more on early detection, full-chain supervision and long-term risk control.

From monitoring networks to soil, groundwater, rural environments and solid waste, future environmental progress will increasingly depend on the ability to detect, trace and manage risks before they become obvious problems, according to the plan issued jointly by the Ministry of Ecology and Environment and other relevant departments.

One clear signal comes from China's aim to make important progress in establishing a modern monitoring system by 2030. The validity rate of automatic monitoring data is expected to rise from 95 percent in 2025 to 98 percent in 2030, while the intelligent level of operation, maintenance and key-indicator testing is set to reach 70 percent. The plan also calls for stronger monitoring of new pollutants, heavy metals, greenhouse gases and ecological problems.

Earlier policies largely addressed visible pollution, such as smog, polluted rivers and black and odorous water bodies. The problems receiving greater policy attention now — soil contamination at industrial sites, groundwater pollution, solid waste facilities, data falsification by polluters, and ecological degradation in remote areas — are harder to see and slower to unfold. Without a stronger monitoring system, these risks will go undetected until it becomes too expensive to reverse them.

The new plan sets a target of raising the safe utilization rate of contaminated farmland from about 93 percent in 2025 to more than 95 percent by 2030, and increasing the proportion of groundwater of good quality from 74.3 percent to more than 78 percent.

It also aims to lift the rural domestic sewage treatment rate from 55 percent to 70 percent and implement environmental improvement projects in 80,000 villages.

These targets point to a broader definition of environmental quality. While clean air in cities remains important, people's environmental expectations now include safe food, secure drinking water and livable rural surroundings. Soil and groundwater pollution can affect health, food safety and land redevelopment, yet they are often difficult to detect and costly to remedy. That is why the new plan emphasizes source prevention, risk control for redevelopment sites, heavy metal tracing in farmland and countywide progress in building beautiful villages.

China generates more than 11 billion metric tons of solid waste each year and has about 30 billion tons of historically stored industrial solid waste. The new plan calls for the effective control of the historical stockpiles by 2030, along with the curbing of illegal dumping and disposal, and the building of an information-based regulatory network covering key fields.

The plan also sets measurable targets for the share of hazardous waste disposed of through landfill, which should be cut from about 13 percent in 2025 to no more than 10 percent by 2030, while the share of key general industrial solid waste stored or landfilled should fall from about 56 percent to no more than 30 percent. Full-process information-based supervision is expected to cover all entities related to hazardous waste.

Hidden environmental risks are hard to detect and eradicate, they require reliable data, interdepartmental coordination, local enforcement, stable funding and the long-term operation of environmental infrastructure.

The new environmental plan suggests that China's environmental agenda is becoming more systematic. The next stage will be about building the institutions, data systems and risk-control mechanisms needed to prevent deeper environmental problems from emerging.

— HOU LIQIANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Scope of geological disaster prevention expanded

Editor's note: *China's Ministry of Natural Resources recently released an implementation plan for national geological disaster prevention and control during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period. China Central Television spoke to Yang Xudong, a senior engineer at the ministry's geological disaster technical guidance center, on the importance of the plan. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

China's approach to geological disaster prevention has evolved over time. Initially, efforts focused on community-based monitoring and professional inspections. Later, authorities promoted the large-scale use of high-precision remote sensing and mapping technologies while advancing the development and deployment of universal monitoring equipment. These efforts, however, focused mainly on known hazard sites where clear signs of ground deformation had already been detected.

The country is now entering a new phase that directly addresses widespread shallow landslides and debris flows triggered by extreme rainfall. Unlike conventional geological hazards, these disasters often develop without any visible warning signs and occur suddenly during intense rainfall, making them extremely difficult to detect and forecast with traditional methods.

Since these hazards have neither been previously identified nor shown obvious precursory signs, they fall outside the scope of known geological hazard sites established through conventional methods. Consequently, even if all identified hazard points are effectively managed, significant risks remain across broader areas. Therefore, it is crucial to expand disaster prevention from safeguarding individual hazard sites to managing risks across entire regions.

Such disasters cannot be effectively addressed simply by deploying more personnel or monitoring equipment. Recognizing this challenge, the new plan outlines seven key tasks covering dynamic investigations, monitoring and early warning, comprehensive risk mitigation, and a dual-control management system that combines oversight of both known hazard sites and broader risk zones.

More fundamentally, the plan shifts the guiding philosophy of geological disaster prevention toward reducing disaster risks, extending prevention efforts from isolated hazard points to comprehensive area-wide risk management.

The plan also designates 21 key prevention zones, up from 16 during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period. The zones cover about 2.97 million square kilometers for landslides, rockfalls, debris flows and ground subsidence, as well as 280,000 sq km for ground settlement and earth fissures.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan period, China established an integrated monitoring and early-warning system that combined human expertise with technological support. Automated monitoring and early-warning facilities were installed at 75,000 geological hazard sites with relatively high risks across 27 provincial-level regions.

Additionally, an integrated meteorological risk warning platform was established, linking provincial, municipal and county authorities. This platform achieved full county-level coverage of geological disaster weather risk forecasting in all disaster-prone areas nationwide.

According to the new plan, during the 15th Five-Year Plan period the country will further optimize its automated monitoring network while leveraging artificial intelligence, digital twin technologies and other advanced tools to enhance the identification of hidden hazards and the accuracy of disaster forecasting and early warning systems.

This shift reflects a more scientific understanding that, under increasingly extreme weather conditions, some disasters remain inherently difficult to prevent with existing technologies. The plan also emphasizes public education, training, and emergency drills tailored to different groups, including disaster management officials, technical professionals, community-based monitors, and the general public.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:17 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:17 PM

VIEWS

W. Julian Korab-Karpowicz

Evolving beyond friction to harmony

The collective Western foreign policy architecture is currently trapped in a dangerous conceptual mismatch. It attempts to manage complex, interconnected 21st-century geopolitical conflicts using an outdated 17th-century mechanical apparatus.

This reductionist dogma treats regional stability as a zero-sum collision of physical facts, raw power politics, and endless containment strategies. We see the tragic failures of this mechanical framework everywhere — from the permanent deadlocks in the Middle East to the widening economic fragmentation across the Eurasian continent.

To break this destructive cycle, global statesmanship must embrace a fundamental philosophical shift: the world is a totality of values, not merely a totality of physical facts.

To prevent the contemporary international order from sliding into an irreversible, multi-theater confrontation, the world must shift to a new paradigm of evolutionary realism.

Fully detailed in my recent monograph, *Political Realism: An Evolutionary Theory of International Relations*, this framework recognizes that the long-term survival of any nation cannot be secured by destabilizing its neighbors or enforcing rigid, exclusionary military blocs.

True political realism is not based on simplifications and stereotypes, such as human egoism or the nature of politics as a mere struggle for power.

Instead, it attempts to describe international reality as it truly is: a dynamic, continuous, structural change that can be described as human evolution.

In our hyper-connected world, security is fundamentally interdependent; if one part of the global organism is systematically oppressed or stripped of its cultural dignity, the entire system inevitably descends into hyper-inflammation.

Therefore, evolutionary realism demands that we move away from the exhausted mechanical frameworks of containment and implement value-based policies that satisfy the deepest historical needs of peoples through dialogue among civilizations.

Rather than forcing a singular, globalist blueprint upon diverse nations, this evolutionary approach offers a universal framework applicable to today's most pressing global challenges.



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

Global Lens

It is now time to shun mechanical containment and usher in a value-based, evolutionary blueprint for global cooperation.

The practical necessity of this approach can be clearly seen in the Middle East. Traditional diplomacy consistently fails because it focuses on physically carving up contested borders, guaranteeing continuous friction. An evolutionary approach, as outlined in my strategic framework originally published in The Jerusalem Post, suggests that true peace requires transforming the conflict from a static territorial transaction into a dynamic process of shared security and economic renewal.

By shifting focus from mutual destruction toward massive international infrastructure investments, commercial integration, and advanced technological cooperation for neutral border monitoring, the region could transform from a theater of perpetual friction into a stable component of a multipolar ecosystem.

The power of evolutionary realism extends far beyond a single region. The exact same principles of organic harmony must be applied to global governance, development partnerships, and post-conflict reconstruction worldwide.

In an interconnected global economy, the survival and prosperity of any civilizational state depends on its capacity to align its specific national interests with the universal principles of the Social Good. When global development focuses on open infrastructure, unhindered trade routes, and non-coercive partnerships, it proves that cooperative stabilization is vastly superior to political and economic isolation.

This is precisely where philosophy meets practical global policy, highlighting China's constructive role in today's changing international landscape.

President Xi Jinping has stressed the acceleration of a comprehensive intellectual system in philosophy and social sciences. The framework of evolutionary realism offers a direct, cross-civilizational contribution to this global endeavor.

China's long-standing vision of building a community with a shared future for humanity and the practical execution of "China Opportunity 2.0" offer the exact conceptual and economic alignment needed to realize such breakthroughs.

True political realism demands that we abandon the outdated, zero-sum mentality of the past and begin constructing a plurilateral architecture based on mutual respect, mutually beneficial development, and moral excellence in leadership.

Implementing this evolutionary approach requires sovereign countries outside the rigid technocratic apparatus to act as diplomatic bridges.

Situated at the geostrategic heart of Europe, Poland possesses the deep historical and philosophical heritage necessary to reject short-sighted bloc mandates and serve as an independent, moral link between East and West.

Global organic harmony can achieve its full cross-civilizational resonance when joined in a profound dialogue with sovereign thought rooted in classical virtues.

The world is at a critical historical juncture. The old diplomatic models are exhausted. It is now time to shun mechanical containment and usher in a value-based, evolutionary blueprint for global cooperation.

The author is a professor of international relations at the Warsaw Academy of International Relations and American Studies (WSSMIA) and has written several highly acclaimed monographs.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Zhang Qiyue

Philippines' baseline claims riddled with legal holes

On July 29, the Philippine National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA) submitted Chart No 1567, entitled "Bajo de Masinloc and Approach", to the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS). The submission seeks to establish the so-called "territorial sea baselines" around China's Huangyan Island and its adjacent waters.

The Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs claims that the submission is intended to "uphold international law and reinforce the legal certainty of its maritime entitlement".

But in reality, this action, cloaked in legal language, is both factually unfounded and legally untenable. It is a blatant violation of the fundamental principles of international law.

That Huangyan Island is not part of Philippine territory is a fact grounded in treaty law.

The territorial boundary of the Philippines was clearly defined by a series of international treaties, including the 1898 Treaty of Paris between the United States and Spain, the 1900 Treaty of Washington and the 1930 Convention Between the United States and Great Britain.

These treaties collectively established the boundary of Philippine territory along the meridian of 118 degrees east longitude. Huangyan Island, situated at approximately 117.51 degrees east longitude, falls outside the territorial limits defined by these treaties.

Notably, the Philippines did not assert sovereignty over Huangyan Island for a long time. It was only in the 1990s that the Philippines began illegally incorporating the island into its "territorial claims" based on erroneous historical interpretations and flawed legal arguments.

This shift in position runs counter to the fundamental principles of international law, including pacta sunt servanda (agreements must be kept) and the estoppel doctrine. Under the principle of estoppel, a state cannot contradict positions it had previously acknowledged, particularly regarding territorial sovereignty. Therefore, the Philippines cannot legitimately seek to expand its territory beyond the boundaries already established through binding international treaties.

The Philippines argues that its so-called "territorial sea baselines" are based on Articles 3, 33 and 121 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (hereinafter referred to as "UNCLOS"), which concern the territorial sea, the contiguous zone and islands. But this argument is flawed from the outset.

A fundamental principle of the law of the sea is that "the land dominates the sea", which means maritime rights stem from sovereignty over land territory. A state's entitlement to maritime zones presupposes lawful sovereignty over the land feature in question.

Since China has sovereignty over Huangyan Island, the Philippines has no legal basis to unilaterally establish so-called "territorial sea baselines" around the island.

Its attempt to invoke rights under UNCLOS to reinforce a territorial sovereignty claim turns the legal order on its head.

Such a move has no legal effect, nor can it create sovereignty or maritime entitlements where none exist.

The Philippines has drawn these baselines on the basis of the so-called "2016 South China Sea arbitration award" and its subsequent enactment of the Philippine Maritime Zones Act based on that "award". This legal foundation is fundamentally defective.

First, the arbitral tribunal in the South China Sea arbitration acted beyond its jurisdiction and made serious errors in its findings, rendering the "award" null and void and lacking any binding force. China has consistently stated that it neither accepts nor recognizes the award.

In recent years, the Philippines has sought to transform the "arbitral award" into domestic legislation and has used this legislation to establish the so-called "territorial sea baselines". It is an attempt to legitimize an unlawful "arbitral award" by incorporating it into domestic law.

Moreover, a state cannot invoke any domestic law to justify its failure to meet international obligations or to evade international responsibility. The Philippines' legislation therefore cannot override the fundamental principles and rules of international law.

The timing of the Philippines' latest move over Huangyan Island reflects a series of political calculations. First, 2026 marks the tenth anniversary of the so-called "South China Sea arbitration award".

The Philippine government aims to use this occasion to revive international attention to the "award", portray it as legally authoritative, discredit China and increase diplomatic pressure on Beijing.

Second, as the rotating Chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Philippines is leveraging its position during the final stage of negotiations on the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (hereinafter referred to as the "COC").

By provoking disputes over key maritime features, the Philippines aims to inject elements of the "arbitral award" into the future COC and pressure China into making concessions on critical issues, thereby strengthening its bargaining position in the rule-making process.

Third, the Philippines has intensified its activities around Huangyan Island, Ren'ai Jiao and other key maritime features, creating flashpoints to increase pressure on China's maritime law enforcement. This also creates opportunities for external powers, particularly the United States and its allies, to deepen their involvement in South China Sea affairs.

The Philippine government is trying to shift public attention amid sluggish economic performance and domestic governance challenges.

By amplifying the so-called "China threat narrative", it wants to stir nationalist sentiment and use the South China Sea issue as a political tool against its domestic opponents.

China enjoys indisputable sovereignty over Huangyan Island and its adjacent waters.

It lawfully announced and established the territorial sea baselines of Huangyan Island in November 2024 as a legitimate exercise of its sovereignty and maritime rights.

In response to the Philippines' repeated infringements, China has adopted a comprehensive set of countermeasures, including official diplomatic statements, joint naval and air exercises, maritime rights protection and law enforcement operations conducted by the China Coast Guard. It also promulgated the management measures for the Huangyan Island National Nature Reserve on Aug 1, 2026.

The Philippines' unlawful actions cannot change the fact that Huangyan Island is an integral part of China's territory, nor can they weaken China's determination to safeguard its national sovereignty and maritime rights.

In fact, its provocations will only narrow its room for maneuver in the South China Sea, while its unlawful claims will ultimately prove unsustainable.

The author is the assistant director of the Institute for Global Governance, Shanghai Institutes for International Studies.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Yang Jinsong

Dancing to the rhythm of culture and tradition

In recent years, the Munao Zongge Festival, a grand celebration of the Jingpo ethnic group's traditional dance, has attracted public attention. Content related to the festival has generated billions of views across social media platforms.

Traditionally held around the fifteenth day of the first lunar month, Munao Zongge was included in China's first list of national intangible cultural heritage in 2006. Celebrated as the "dance of paradise" and the "dance of ten thousand people", it is characterized by bold yet simple movements and an infectious rhythm.

Dehong Dai and Jingpo autonomous prefecture in Yunnan province, the heartland of Munao Zongge tradition, has produced many popular music videos and livestreams of the festival, fueling its online popularity and a steady increase in tourist arrivals. In 2025, Dehong welcomed 42.92 million tourists, marking a year-on-year increase of 12.8 percent, with total tourism revenue reaching 38.18 billion yuan ($5.56 billion), a year-on-year increase of 18.94 percent.

The viral scenes of Munao Zongge, showing thousands of people dancing in unison, illustrate how traditional culture can successfully resonate with modern audiences. It is a natural expression of cultural confidence. The collective dance ritual dissolves feelings of individual isolation, while the vitality of an ancient tradition satisfies the curiosity for unfamiliar cultures.

At the same time, the strong sense of home and community expressed in China's border regions inspires a deeper sense of cultural identity among audiences. The festival's online popularity is rooted not merely in digital traffic, but in genuine cultural substance, reflecting a growing cultural confidence.

The key to promoting Munao Zongge lies in elevating it beyond a decorative stage backdrop and placing ordinary people at the center of the experience. Visitors and locals alike become active participants, creating and sharing emotional value rather than remaining passive spectators.

Contemporary musical adaptations of the festival are inspired by the Jingpo epic, incorporating imagery to evoke the longing for a spiritual homeland.

A balance between cultural authenticity and tourism demands is crucial.

These adaptations foster broad public participation and a shared emotional experience, seamlessly blending culture and tourism through music, dance and people.

Equally important, Munao Zongge satisfies the dual desire for individual fulfillment and social connection. Participants, including tourists, revel in self-expression through dance while connecting with others by sharing their experiences online.

Local governments have effectively integrated online communication with offline immersive experiences, transforming traditional culture into tourism experiences that visitors can participate in and remember. This has expanded the possibilities for deeper integration between culture and tourism.

The fundamental question is: How can the surge in popularity be transformed into sustained appeal? Sustained visitor interest requires close coordination across the tourism value chain.

Challenges must be addressed by local governments and the Yunnan tourism industry. One issue is the gap between festival-based excitement and everyday tourism experiences. Beyond the festival itself, visitors may have fewer opportunities to experience the same vibrant atmosphere.

Another challenge is meeting the expectations shaped by social media. Travelers inspired by captivating short videos inevitably expect equally memorable experiences in person.

A seamless journey, from transportation and accommodation to tour guiding and cultural products, is essential for visitor satisfaction. Any weakness in the tourism experience can diminish the appeal created online.

A balance between cultural authenticity and tourism demands is crucial. Excessive commercialization risks diluting cultural significance, while excessive conservatism may disappoint visitors.

The solution lies in a diversified, tiered system of cultural experiences that preserves tradition while making its festive spirit accessible to broader audiences. This approach can create a virtuous cycle where traditional culture and tourism growth reinforce each other.

Transforming traditional culture into lasting tourism advantages requires coordinated innovation across services, products and spatial planning.

Efforts should be made to enhance visibility, accessibility and freedom for visitors to engage with cultural offerings in different ways. More people need opportunities to discover traditional activities, access them conveniently and engage according to their own interests.

Within China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) for tourism development, these innovations require more systematic support. Big data analytics can identify visitor preferences. Artificial intelligence can assist in designing personalized travel itineraries, connecting Munao Zongge with surrounding tourism resources.

Talent development should focus on cultivating professionals with a deep understanding of ethnic cultures and modern service skills. Together, these efforts can create an integrated portfolio of tourism products that complement each other across time and space, transforming the seasonal festival popularity into sustained regional tourism demand throughout the year.

Munao Zongge reflects the possibilities of integrating traditional culture with modern tourism. High-quality tourism depends not only on technology but also on preserving the humanistic essence.

Every surge in visitor interest can be an opportunity to pass on cultural heritage and every tourism experience should leave travelers with meaningful emotional connections.

The true competitiveness of high-quality tourism does not depend on online popularity or spectacular crowds, but instead on the exploration, preservation and creative interpretation of cultural depth. Achieving this requires protecting the core values of traditional culture while leveraging modern technology and market mechanisms.

The ultimate goal is to enable local communities to safeguard their cultural roots while improving their livelihoods and allowing visitors to experience, through the joyful rhythm of Munao Zongge, a vivid expression of a better life. This embodies high-quality tourism development and is also a compelling manifestation of cultural confidence.

The author is a researcher at the China Tourism Academy.
The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:17 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:17 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

PEDRO BARRAGÁN

Negotiating the 'Gracchi Trap'

The 21st century is going to be marked by China's peaceful development as a driver of change

For decades, the United States has occupied an undisputed leadership position in the international system. Its military superiority, the global influence of the dollar, the power of its technology companies, and its capacity to project political and cultural influence have allowed it to consolidate unprecedented hegemony since the end of the Cold War. However, some analysts argue that this historical cycle is entering a phase of exhaustion. This is not necessarily a sudden collapse; rather, we are witnessing the gradual diminishing capacity of the US to impose its will in an increasingly multipolar world.



Some specialists have invoked the so-called Gracchi Trap to interpret this evolution. Coined from the crisis of the Roman Republic triggered by the failed reforms of Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, the concept describes the moment when political polarization, the inability to reform institutions and conflict among elites ultimately weaken a great power's position. The comparison is not intended to draw an absolute parallel between Rome and the US, but rather to warn that internal divisions can become the primary factor in the erosion of a country.

One of the elements fueling this interpretation is the growing political polarization in the US. The institutional system is going through a period of constant confrontation in which basic consensus is increasingly difficult to achieve. The alternation between administrations of opposing ideologies leads to abrupt shifts in national and international priorities, hindering the continuity of public policies. This dynamic fosters a sense of paralysis that reduces the US capacity to address structural problems such as aging infrastructure, increasing inequality and the modernization of healthcare systems.

Social fragmentation accompanies this political crisis. The gap between the economic elite and broad sectors of the population has widened in recent decades. Although the US economy remains one of the most dynamic in the world, wealth growth has been concentrated in a relatively small segment of society. Rising housing costs, student debt, high healthcare costs and the precariousness of certain jobs have contributed to profound discontent among millions of citizens.

In the economic sphere, too, there are contradictory signs. The US maintains an extraordinary capacity for innovation, leads or co-leads strategic sectors such as artificial intelligence, biotechnology and the aerospace industry, and it continues to attract international investment. However, these strengths coexist with structural problems such as high public debt, persistent fiscal deficits and increasing pressure on the international role of the US dollar. Although the US dollar remains the world's primary reserve asset, numerous countries are seeking to diversify their payment systems and, to a certain degree, reduce their financial dependence on Washington.

Since the launch of the reform and opening-up, China has gone from being a backward economy to becoming the world's second-largest economy, or the largest in terms of purchasing power parity, and the US' main strategic competitor. Its industrial expansion, its leadership in numerous supply chains and its successes in applied artificial intelligence, telecommunications, renewable energy and high-speed transportation have profoundly helped shape the international economic balance.

Unlike other historical competitors of the US, China possesses an exceptional combination of population size, industrial capacity, technological development and growing diplomatic influence. Initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative, BRICS and the creation of new international financial institutions reflect China's effort to help reform the United Nations-centered international order to be fairer and more inclusive as well as more representative of the whole Global South.

This transformation implies that the relative stagnation of the US is not solely due to its internal problems and that China's sustained development can be an impetus for the US to better play its own role in virtually every sphere. While Washington concentrates a significant portion of its resources on maintaining its global network of alliances and military superiority, Beijing has prioritized trade expansion, strategic investments and technological development as instruments of international projection and sets itself as an example to the rest of the Global South.

These differences are also evident in the geopolitical arena. After the end of the Cold War, the US enjoyed virtually unlimited leeway. However, its prolonged military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq demonstrated the limitations of military power in resolving complex political problems. At the same time, several allies are demanding greater strategic autonomy, and some emerging economies prefer to maintain equidistant positions between Washington and Beijing rather than fully align themselves with either.

The relations between the two countries are not limited to trade. They encompass technological innovation, access to critical raw materials, space race, semiconductors, digital infrastructure and influence over international organizations.

However, it is important to avoid overly deterministic interpretations. The US remains the world's greatest military power, is home to prestigious universities, retains enormous appeal for international investment and maintains an extraordinary capacity for scientific and business innovation. Furthermore, its institutional system has historically demonstrated a remarkable ability to adapt after periods of crises.

The fundamental question is whether these strengths will be enough to prevent the "Gracchi Trap" from becoming a political reality. If internal divisions in the US continue to deepen, the transition to a clearly multipolar international order could accelerate in the coming decades. The debate about the decline of US power revolves not so much around an immediate collapse as it does around a gradual loss of the capacity to exercise unquestionable hegemony. The combination of political polarization, social tensions, fiscal problems and growing intention to escalate competition with China paints a picture in which Washington's global leadership can no longer be taken for granted.

The author is an economist, an adviser at the Cátedra China Foundation, Spain, and the author of the book Why China Is Winning. *The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.*

WANG LEI

Offering opportunities to the world

Through advancing high-quality development, China is benefiting its people and bringing impetus to forge a peaceful, prosperous and beautiful world

Despite the intertwining of change and turmoil, the forces seeking peace and development remain strong. Although economic globalization faces headwinds, breakthroughs in technological revolutions are accelerating global connectivity, driving us toward a community with a shared future. As the world's largest developing country, China is steadily advancing along a modernization path with its own characteristics, striving to contribute Chinese strength to building a better world and bringing new opportunities to the global stage under a new international backdrop.



China consistently approaches its relationship with the world from the perspective of a community with a shared future for humanity, maintaining an open and cooperative attitude.

China's modernization is the modernization of a vast population. Since the implementation of reform and opening-up, China has leveraged its demographic dividend and various resource inputs to achieve rapid economic growth, becoming the world's second-largest economy. However, as development stages transition, rising labor and resource costs necessitate a shift from input-driven growth to innovation-driven growth. Only by fully relying on technological innovation and continuously improving total-factor productivity can such a large economy ensure long-term, stable growth. Under these constraints, China is unwavering in its implementation of an innovation-driven development strategy, vigorously promoting technological research and development, and focusing on optimizing traditional industries while nurturing emerging and future industries.

China's massive market, abundant human capital, comprehensive industrial chains and rich data scenarios provide fertile ground for technological innovation and the integration of technology with industry. During the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period, China's industrial restructuring and shift of growth drivers continued to advance, achieving effective qualitative economic enhancement and reasonable quantitative growth, contributing about 30 percent to global economic growth.

The shift of China's economic structure and growth drivers is also clearly reflected in changes in its foreign trade structure. In the first half of 2026, mechanical and electrical products accounted for 63.5 percent of China's goods exports, with high-tech product exports increasing by 39 percent year-on-year. These products provide important support for global industrial development, especially for emerging economies and developing countries striving for industrialization and industrial chain upgrades. In the field of artificial intelligence, China's open and accessible large models are gaining favor among global users, offering more cost-effective and efficient AI applications to boost development in various countries.

China's modernization emphasizes harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature. Since modern times, human productivity has developed at an unprecedented pace, creating material wealth unmatched by any previous era, but also disrupting nature's inherent balance. The fragility of ecosystems continues to intensify, with the number of people affected by disasters more than doubling over the past decade.

Facing the global challenge of climate change, China has proactively assumed its responsibility as a major power, announcing its goals to peak carbon emissions before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality before 2060, with plans to reduce net emissions by 7 percent to 10 percent from peak levels by 2035. China focuses on the development and application of green and low-carbon technologies, as the practical means to combat climate change and protect our planet. China has established the world's largest and fastest-growing renewable energy system, achieving remarkable success in green technology and industrial development. China supplies 60 percent of the world's wind power equipment and 70 percent of photovoltaic components, driving global wind and solar power costs down by over 60 percent and 80 percent, respectively. By sharing high-quality green products and mature low-carbon technologies with the world, China enables Global South countries, constrained by technology and energy supply shortages, to improve livelihoods and enhance economic and social development opportunities and momentum.

China's modernization follows a path of peaceful development. In today's world, rapid technological advancement and increasing interdependence among countries are accompanied by growing deficits in peace, development, security and governance, which hinder global progress. What kind of international order can provide security for global development and the well-being of all nations is a pressing question of our time. China opposes the dominance of international affairs by one or a few countries, advocating dialogue over confrontation, partnerships over alliances and win-win cooperation over zero-sum games, aiming to build a new type of international relations centered on win-win cooperation. China actively practices true multilateralism, promoting the development of a more democratic, just and reasonable international political and economic order. In the frontier field of AI governance, China initiated the establishment of the World AI Cooperation Organization, the world's first intergovernmental AI organization, in Shanghai. This multilateral platform will strongly promote equitable benefits for developing countries in the wave of AI revolution, fostering a widely accepted international AI governance framework, and uniting the international community to seize and address the opportunities and challenges of AI development, making AI a powerful force for world peace and development and enhancing the welfare of all humanity.

China consistently approaches its relationship with the world from the perspective of a community with a shared future for humanity, maintaining an open and cooperative attitude. This year marks the beginning of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30). During this period, China will continue to promote technological innovation, actively develop new forms of productivity and accelerate the cultivation of new growth drivers. By pursuing high-quality development, China is opening new prospects for its modernization, benefiting the Chinese people and promoting modernization in other countries, contributing more opportunities and strength to building a peaceful, prosperous and beautiful world.

The author is the Party secretary of the Institute of Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:17 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:17 PM

CHINA

PLA's airborne nuclear strike system shown

First-ever video footage demonstrates final component of country's N-triad

By ZHAO LEI
zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

The Chinese military has, for the first time, publicly showcased the operation of its airborne nuclear strike system.

In a video jointly released on Tuesday by the Central Military Commission's Political Work Department, the Cyberspace Administration of China and China Media Group, a H-6N strategic bomber is seen flying alongside two J-20 stealth fighter jets while carrying what appears to be a JL-1 nuclear-capable air-launched ballistic missile beneath its fuselage.

The footage marks the first time that the People's Liberation Army has publicly demonstrated its airborne nuclear strike capability, the final component of its nuclear triad.

The military has not released further details about the operation, including when it took place or the name of the exercise in which the aircraft and missile were involved. Given the sensitivity of the strategic weapon system, the PLA is unlikely to disclose additional information.

The footage forms part of a simulated combat scenario in which a joint command headquarters orders a coordinated strike against an enemy fleet.

Other advanced PLA weapon systems featured in the same sequence include the DF-21D road-mobile anti-ship ballistic missile system, the YJ-20 ship-borne hypersonic anti-ship missile and the YJ-12 air-launched supersonic anti-ship missile.

The JL-1 air-launched long-range ballistic missile was declassified and displayed to the public during a military parade in Beijing last September, alongside other strategic nuclear missile systems, including the DF-31BJ, DF-61 and DF-5C intercontinental ballistic missiles.

The "JL" in the missile's name stands for "Jinglei", or "Shocking Thunderclap".

The parade also marked the first time the Chinese military publicly revealed the PLA Air Force's nuclear strike platform. Previously, the PLA Air Force lacked an operational air-based platform capable of delivering nuclear warheads, leaving what military observers described as the missing component of China's nuclear deterrent.

According to estimates by Western military observers, the JL-1 has a range of about 8,000 kilometers. Because it is air-launched, the missile can take advantage of the altitude and speed of its carrier aircraft, enabling it to reach targets beyond 8,000 km compared with ground- or sea-launched missiles of similar aerodynamic design and propulsion.

The H-6N also has a long combat radius and can be refueled in flight. Combined with the JL-1, it provides the PLA Air Force with a long-range nuclear strike capability and serves as a powerful strategic deterrent.

Wu Peixin, a military affairs observer, said: "The H-6N bomber carrying the JL-1 missile can effectively strike distant ground and maritime targets. However, when the H-6N conducts forward combat missions, it requires long-range fighter escort. That is why it is seen flying in formation with two J-20 stealth fighter jets in the video."

Racing across grassland



Riders compete in a 5,000-meter speed race during a horse racing event in the Golog Tibetan autonomous prefecture, Qinghai province, on Tuesday. The competition attracted more than 200 riders and featured four race categories. ZHANG ZHONGPING / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Ex-defense official sentenced to 10 years in jail for bribery

By CAO YIN
caoyin@chinadaily.com.cn

Zhang Jianhua, former deputy head of the State Administration of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense, was sentenced to 10 years in prison for bribery-related crimes by a court in Sichuan province on Wednesday.

The Dazhou Intermediate People's Court sentenced Zhang to eight years in prison and fined him 3 million yuan ($444,543) for accepting bribes. He was also sentenced to five years in prison and fined 800,000 yuan for using his influence to accept bribes.

The court combined the sentences, imposing a total prison term of 10 years and a cumulative fine of 3.8 million yuan. Zhang's illegal gains and related assets have been confiscated and will be turned over to the State treasury.

The court found that from 2008 to 2025, Zhang took advantage of his positions in the administration to seek benefits for others in matters including administrative approvals and equity investments in exchange for bribes totaling more than 43.38 million yuan.

The court also found that from 2021 to 2025, after his retirement, Zhang exploited the influence of his former positions to help others obtain improper benefits in business operations and project contracting, accepting more than 11.7 million yuan in bribes.

According to the court, Zhang's conduct constituted the crimes of accepting bribes and using influence to accept bribes, and the amounts involved were extremely large.

The court said it gave Zhang a lighter sentence after considering several mitigating factors. Some of the bribes he solicited were not successfully obtained. He also voluntarily surrendered, confessed to additional bribery offenses that investigators had not uncovered, and actively returned his illegal gains.

Public records show that Zhang, 65, is a native of Jiangsu province. He began his career in 1983 and joined the Communist Party of China in May 1986. Before being placed under investigation in May 2025, he had worked in China's national defense system for decades. He was expelled from the Communist Party of China in October last year, prosecuted on bribery-related charges in February, and he stood trial on April 16.

Astronauts meet press



Members of the Shenzhou XXI mission — (from left) astronauts Zhang Hongzhang, Zhang Lu and Wu Fei — make their first public appearance since returning to Earth at a press conference hosted by the China Astronaut Research and Training Center in Beijing on Wednesday. SU DONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Death of girl during gene-editing clinical trial raises ethical concerns

By ZHENG ZHENG in Shanghai
zhengzheng@chinadaily.com.cn

The death of a 6-year-old girl allegedly linked to an experimental gene-editing clinical trial in Shanghai has sparked widespread concern over the safety and ethical oversight of medical research involving human beings.

The case came to light on July 23, when the journal Science and academic watchdog Retraction Watch jointly published an investigative report revealing that the child received an experimental brain-directed gene-editing therapy at the Xinhua Hospital Affiliated To Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine on March 24, 2025, and died within a week from thrombotic microangiopathy — a rare, potentially life-threatening condition in which tiny blood clots form in small blood vessels, causing damage to organs such as the kidneys and brain.

The girl had Snijders Blok-Campeau syndrome, a rare neurodevelopmental disorder caused by mutations in the CHD3 gene that lead to developmental delays, reduced muscle tone and speech difficulties.

However, her condition was not life-threatening. She attended kindergarten, received speech and occupational therapy, and had special education support. Seeking better treatment options, her parents approached a research team led by Qiu Zilong, a neuroscientist at the Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine.

Researchers claimed the trial was the world's first human test of its kind, with the girl as its only participant. According to the investigative report, the published research failed to disclose liver and kidney damage observed during prior safety studies in nonhuman primates.

The report also said an internal ethics review at Xinhua Hospital concluded that the girl's death was "definitely related" to the treatment. However, the trial leaders did not publicly disclose her death or update the clinical trial registry.

In February, the research team published preclinical findings in the journal Nature without disclosing either the human trial or the girl's death. According to the investigative report, the paper also omitted acknowledgments to the girl's family and funding sources that had appeared in earlier drafts.

On July 26, the Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine announced that it had established a special task force to investigate the case.

"The medical school has always attached great importance to research integrity and scientific standards, and firmly opposes any medical research that violates scientific ethics," the statement said. "We will handle this matter with seriousness based on the investigation findings, and appreciate the concern and oversight from the public."

The institution also said it would conduct a comprehensive review of research papers published by Qiu as well as the clinical study carried out at Xinhua Hospital.

On July 29, Nature added an editorial note to the paper's webpage, saying concerns had been raised about the publication and its data and that "further editorial action will be taken if appropriate as soon as the investigation into the concerns is complete".

On July 30, the trial was marked as terminated on ClinicalTrials.gov, with a notation stating: "The single participant died on 31 March 2025 from thrombotic microangiopathy, a serious adverse event assessed as definitely related to the study drug."

Shi Jiayou, a professor at Renmin University of China Law School, told The Beijing News that subjecting a child with a non-life-threatening condition to known lethal risks violates the principles of minimizing harm and ensuring controllable risk under China's Measures for Ethical Review of Life Science and Medical Research Involving Human Beings.

"The goal of regulation is not to impede scientific research, but to eliminate reckless human experimentation and prevent the entire industry from stagnating because of individual malicious incidents," Shi said. "The lives and safety of research participants must always take priority over world's firsts, journal publications and academic breakthroughs."

Big gains lured crypto scam victims

By ATLAS SHAO in Hong Kong
atlasshao@chinadailyhk.com

Apparent victims of a HK$107.5 million ($13.71 million) cryptocurrency investment scam linked to the "Fun Coffee" platform said on Wednesday they were lured by promises of exceptionally high returns and recommendations from trusted friends, with one victim claiming to have lost nearly HK$10 million.

More than 10 probable victims from Hong Kong met the press a day after law enforcement authorities in the Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions announced the arrest of eight suspects in a joint operation targeting the alleged fraud involving the purported Vietnam-based enterprise.

Since July, investigators have received 264 reports in the two cities involving estimated losses totaling HK$107.5 million, according to the Hong Kong Police Force. The victims, aged 32 to 83, reported individual losses ranging from HK$3,000 to about HK$9.6 million.

The platform entered the Hong Kong market in late 2025, promoting investment in coffee-related ventures through cryptocurrency. It claimed to have developed advanced coffee brewing equipment, coffee gene optimization technology, and intelligent irrigation and fertilization systems.

It also promised returns of up to 278 percent, claiming that larger investments and longer deposit periods would generate higher profits.

The scheme collapsed in late July, the same month the Securities and Futures Commission of Hong Kong placed the "Fun Coffee GCM Project" on its alert list of suspicious investment products.

One victim said the organizers did not initially present the program as an investment scheme. Instead, participants were invited to join sports activities and produce short videos, with payments of several hundred Hong Kong dollars for each video. Team leaders who recruited 10 members were promised bonuses worth several thousand Hong Kong dollars.

The group later organized meetups and a marathon before introducing so-called investment tasks that encouraged participants to deposit money directly.

"Some large-scale tasks required more money, so I pooled funds with friends to participate," she said.

She said the team she joined had more than 700 members, built through a recruitment model in which each newcomer was encouraged to bring in 10 friends. About 50 members invested in the scheme, with combined losses expected to exceed HK$10 million.

Another victim, who said she lost HK$900,000, said the limited availability of the investment tasks made them appear more attractive.

"The tasks were offered in limited numbers, so once they were sold out, you had to wait for the next round. The activities were also fresh, varied and enjoyable," she said.

Accompanying the victims at the news conference, Hong Kong lawmaker Johnny Ng Kit-chong said the case could ultimately involve more than 1,000 victims.

Ng urged the Hong Kong SAR government to strengthen its anti-fraud mechanisms by allowing authorities to freeze a company's funds and crypto assets as soon as regulators identify suspicious transactions or signs of fraud, saying such measures could improve the chances of recovering victims' losses.

He said his office is using technology to trace digital wallets and assist law enforcement in tracking assets linked to the case.

Ng also urged residents to remain vigilant against schemes promising unusually high returns or promoting "task-based investments", saying investors should carefully assess such offers and avoid making decisions based on unrealistic profit claims.

To protect their privacy, the identities of the alleged victims have been withheld.

Space weather scientist honored

By ZHAO YIMENG
zhaoyimeng@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese space weather scientist Wang Jinsong has received the William Nordberg Medal, one of the world's top honors for the application of space science, becoming the first Chinese recipient of the award since it was established in 1988.

The award was presented on Monday at the 46th Scientific Assembly of the Committee on Space Research, or COSPAR, in Florence, Italy, recognizing Wang's contributions to space science applications and the development of space weather monitoring and forecasting. An asteroid was also named in his honor.



Wang Jinsong

COSPAR, an international scientific organization under the International Science Council, presents the William Nordberg Medal every two years to recognize outstanding achievements in space science applications.

Since 2022, two scientists have received the award during each presentation cycle. The other 2026 recipient is David Sibeck, chief heliophysics scientist at NASA.

Wang, director of China's National Satellite Meteorological Center and chief designer of the country's Fengyun meteorological satellite program, has led major development in the country's space weather capabilities.

He established the national operational space weather system and led the development of the country's first-generation numerical space weather forecasting system. His team also developed Fengyu, the world's first artificial intelligence model capable of full-chain space weather forecasting, combining AI with numerical prediction.

With Wang's efforts, researchers achieved breakthroughs in high-precision solar imaging, wide-field aurora observation, energetic particle detection and weak atmospheric glow sensing, while proposing new methods to simulate interactions throughout the sun-Earth system.

He also introduced a new theoretical framework for evaluating satellite performance that has guided the planning, design and application of the Fengyun weather satellite series.

His team developed technologies enabling coordinated observations by multiple satellites and real-time processing of massive volumes of satellite and ground-based data, allowing Fengyun satellites to provide intelligent weather services within minutes.

China has built an integrated space weather monitoring network combining the Fengyun satellite constellation with nearly 100 ground observation stations, providing comprehensive monitoring of the sun, magnetosphere and ionosphere, according to the China Meteorological Administration.

The system can observe 10 key space weather parameters and makes China the only country besides the United States with independent operational monitoring capabilities covering the entire sun-Earth space environment, the administration said.

The technology has been widely applied to major Chinese space missions, including the Beidou navigation satellite system, the Chang'e lunar exploration program, the Tianwen Mars missions and the Kuafu solar observation project.

In addition, the country's next-generation operational forecasting platform, known as Fengyun Space Weather, is now in service, automatically detecting and classifying space weather events while providing forecasts ranging from immediate warnings to climate-scale outlooks.

"Going forward, we will continue improving space weather monitoring and forecasting services, as well as deepen innovation in space weather science and technology," Wang said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:17 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:17 PM

CULTURE



Xinjiang exhibition traces civilization's arc

From prehistoric times to the Qing Dynasty, artifacts on show offer a lens into the country's rich history through ancient adornments, report **Fang Aiqing** and **Mao Weihua** in Urumqi.

Above: Visitors explore the exhibition *Beads and Jade: A Narrative Through Time* at the Xinjiang Museum in Urumqi on July 17. The exhibits are on loan from the National Museum of China.
Below center: A Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) gold hairpin featuring a pavilion and figures. **Bottom:** A Liao Dynasty (916-1125) gold makara-shaped earring. PHOTOS BY FANG AIQING / CHINA DAILY

A handful of beads, agates and jade pendants unearthed from a Warring States Period (475-221 BC) noble tomb in Central China's Henan province, with their exquisite craftsmanship and refined aesthetics, almost belie their age of more than 2,000 years.

This set of ornaments from the collection of the National Museum of China is composed of jade discs, loops and *huang* (arch-shaped pendants), agate accessories, and glass beads with concentric circle patterns that look like dragonflies' compound eyes — therefore known as "dragonfly eye beads". They were found in a burial pit of a high-ranking tomb in Guwei village in Huixian county, Henan.

Tong Chunyan, research librarian at the museum, says these ornaments were either the tomb owner's personal belongings or ritual items placed to express grief, a practice rooted in the ancient belief of "serving the dead as if they were still living".

The variety of patterns and crafting techniques, along with the fine materials themselves — dragonfly eye beads originated in ancient Egypt and the Mediterranean — pointed to cultural exchange between China and the West, she adds.

These artifacts, rearranged based on years of research rather than shown in their original layout in the tomb chamber, are now on display at the exhibition *Beads and Jade: A Narrative Through Time* at the Xinjiang Museum in Urumqi, capital of Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.

Launched on July 17, the exhibition features some 600 pieces or sets of treasured adornments from the collection of the National Museum of China. The oldest item — a shell ornament with two perforations excavated from the Xianrendong archaeological site in Wannian county, East China's Jiangxi province — dates back 9,000 to 12,000 years to the late Paleolithic to early Neolithic periods.



Jade accessories unearthed from a nearly 3,000-year-old tomb belonging to the vassal state of Guo in present-day Henan province.

Tong, who curated the exhibition, notes that ornaments have adorned human life since the late Paleolithic period — even before people had secured a stable food supply — and they still do today.

"They are more than adornments; they are 'living fossils' of civilization," she says. "Through them, we can trace early belief systems and the evolution of aesthetics and human intellect over time. In this sense, ornaments offer a microcosmic history, a lens through which we can interpret the broader arc of civilization."

The exhibition is organized chronologically in three sections. The first looks at how beadwork and jade were used in beliefs and rituals from prehistoric times to the Warring States Period, evolving from spiritual objects linked to harvest, fertility, protection and divine authority, and symbols of social hierarchy, to measures of wealth and value. "In early rituals and sacrifices, they met both spiritual and ceremonial needs, carrying a deep sense of ritual," Tong says.







Top above: A Song Dynasty (960-1279) jade pendant features a bird holding a dragonfly in its beak.



A set of beads, agates and jade pendants unearthed from the tomb of a Warring States Period (475-221 BC) noble in Henan.

The second section covers the Qin (221-206 BC) to Yuan (1271-1368) dynasties, showcasing the exchange and integration between Central Plains styles and those of Xiyu (Western Regions) — encompassing today's Xinjiang and parts of Central Asia — the steppe farther west, and in the south.

Its final section highlights the technical mastery of the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, contrasting the strict hierarchies, precious materials and intricate craftsmanship of court ornaments with fun folk pieces made for everyday life.

"Through ornaments, from a perspective somewhere between the big picture and the close-up, we hope visitors will grasp the inner logic of civilization's development and the cultural meaning of these objects," Tong says.

According to He Xiao, research librarian at the Xinjiang Museum, the curatorial team spent half a year preparing for the show. One major challenge was the gallery design, as the exhibition hall is large, but the displayed objects are quite small.

To solve this, they worked with a team from the arts and crafts department of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, decorating the vitrines with traditional Chinese window frames and designing exhibit stands in a range of shapes — fans, circles, hexagons, octagons, water droplets, stone chimes and scrolls — to reflect traditional Chinese elegance and the ethos of artisanship, she says.

Tong says most of the exhibits are excavated artifacts, some from major sites like the 3,000-year-old tomb of Fu Hao in Anyang, Henan. For many of the exhibits, this is their first time on display outside of the National Museum of China.

Notably, some pieces are linked to archaeologist Huang Wenbi (1893-1966), who made four trips to Xinjiang for investigation and excavation between the 1920s and 1950s.

Tong says it's significant that the exhibition is being held in Xinjiang, a key node on the ancient Silk Road where Eastern and Western cultures met. The introduction of foreign materials, patterns and techniques, and their adaptation and evolution by Chinese craftsmen, demonstrates how Chinese civilization grew by absorbing and transforming outside influences.

In 2023, the National Museum of China Gallery was set up at the Xinjiang Museum as a dedicated venue to host touring exhibitions. Over the past three years, it has featured shows on ancient bronzes, bronze mirrors, musical instruments and traditional Chinese medicine. The current exhibition runs through Nov 5.

Contact the writers at fangaiqing@chinadaily.com.cn

Experts stress the use of digital tools for heritage preservation

By **LIU BOQIAN** and **YANG JUN** in Guiyang

Experts from China and ASEAN nations urged greater use of digital tools to preserve not just historic sites and artifacts but the living memories, knowledge and experiences that give them meaning, during a forum on July 30 in Guiyang, Southwest China's Guizhou province.

For decades, built heritage preservation has largely focused on historic buildings, sites and physical structures.

"The key is to think about the people, not the objects," said Kang Jian, a researcher in architecture and acoustics, at the ASEAN-China Symposium on Digital Information System and Sustainable Renewal of the Built Heritage.

Organized by Tianjin University, the event was held as part of the 2026 China-ASEAN Education Cooperation Week.

University leaders, scholars, cultural professionals, and diplomats gathered to explore how digital technologies can strengthen heritage preservation, cultural exchange and educational ties between China and ASEAN countries.

Hadi Tjahjono, director of the Education, Culture and Tourism Division at the ASEAN-China Centre, notes that China and ASEAN nations share deep historical traditions and face similar challenges in safeguarding cultural heritage. University partnerships, he says, can drive joint research, academic exchanges and new talent training.





Left: Kang Jian, a researcher specializing in architecture and acoustics, speaks at the ASEAN-China Symposium on Digital Information System and Sustainable Renewal of the Built Heritage. **Right:** Experts, scholars and diplomats attend the ASEAN-China symposium on July 30. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Participants agreed on leaning on digital tools as a way to fully document heritage, train preservation experts, and draw younger generations into cultural traditions.

Kang describes how technology is shifting the focus of heritage work beyond the purely visual to include sound. His team has recorded soundscapes from historic places such as Lhasa, Xizang autonomous region, capturing temple bells, chanting, footsteps, and everyday activities to build a digital archive.

The goal is to preserve not isolated sounds but the relationship between sounds and their surroundings.

"We always appreciate heritage with our eyes, but we also have ears," Kang says. He cautions that as cities modernize and grow more alike, their distinctive natural soundscapes may vanish. "If you close your eyes, it can be difficult to distinguish one city from another."

Zhang Jie of Tsinghua University emphasizes digital methods that reconnect fragmented urban heritage with contemporary life. Specializing in urban preservation and renewal, he proposes using digital systems to map scattered heritage elements and adapt them to present-day needs.

In Jingdezhen, the historic porcelain "capital" of China, many traditional workshops and buildings remain.

"We input these heritage elements into a computer system to create a digital map that helps identify which areas require preservation and which need renewal," Zhang says. Renovating old workshops and attracting young artists from China and abroad has injected fresh energy into these historic spaces.

Digital innovation can also expand the reach of cultural heritage. Irene M Han, deputy ambassador of Indonesia to China, stresses that technology should link traditions to future generations.

"Technology should not replace civilization; it should extend civilization," she says, citing the power of films, animations and digital art in sharing cultural stories with global audiences.

From digital preservation efforts in China to creative industries across ASEAN, participants agree technology is opening new channels for cultural dialogue.

Since its launch in 2008, the China-ASEAN Education Cooperation Week has drawn more than 54,000 participants from over 8,000 institutions across nearly 90 countries and regions.

The event has also supported the creation of 17 overseas education and training bases in ASEAN nations by Guizhou, while the province has welcomed more than 20,900 students from ASEAN countries.

Contact the writers at liuboqian@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:17 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:17 PM

LIFE









FROM HOMER'S EPIC TO NOLAN'S ODYSSEY

Filmmaker stuns Beijing audiences by transforming Greek mythology into a breathtaking cinematic spectacle, **Xu Fan** reports.

Top: Director Christopher Nolan (left), actor Matt Damon (right) and actress Charlize Theron (center) attend the Beijing premiere of *The Odyssey*, one of this summer's most anticipated blockbuster films, on July 30. **Above:** The Hollywood epic brings the legendary Trojan Horse to the big screen. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Christopher Nolan spent his 56th birthday far from Hollywood, standing inside a packed Beijing theater as hundreds of moviegoers surprised him with a Mandarin rendition of *Happy Birthday*.

The moment came during the Beijing premiere of *The Odyssey* on July 30. Visibly touched, the Oscar-winning director smiled quietly, rested his chin in his hand, and softly mouthed, "Thank you."

Standing beside him were Matt Damon, who plays Odysseus, king of Ithaca; Charlize Theron, who portrays the immortal nymph Calypso; and Emma Thomas, Nolan's wife and the film's producer. They also learned to say "Happy Birthday" in Chinese, drawing laughter and applause from the audience.

The warm welcome underscores Nolan's enduring popularity in China, where his films have cultivated a loyal following over the past two decades.

Ahead of the film's nationwide release on Aug 14, the more-than-170-minute epic received exclusive preview screenings in IMAX and CINITY formats at select theaters in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen in Guangdong province, on Aug 1 and 2. Most screenings sold out within a short time, leaving only a handful of seats in the front rows.

At the China National Film Museum, home to Beijing's largest IMAX screen, every seat was snapped up despite ticket prices exceeding 183 yuan ($27.1), far above the national average ticket price of 41.1 yuan for films released in China during the first half of this year.

For Nolan, whose films have bagged 18 Oscars, *The Odyssey* marks the most ambitious project of a career that includes both critically acclaimed and commercially successful blockbusters, including *The Dark Knight* (2008), *Inception* (2010), and *Oppenheimer* (2023).

Adapted from Homer's ancient Greek epic, the film employs Nolan's signature nonlinear storytelling, unfolding along two intertwined narratives. One follows Odysseus' perilous 10-year voyage home after the Trojan War. The other centers on his son, Telemachus, who desperately searches for signs that his father is still alive as Ithaca falls into turmoil.

Back home, a pack of power-hungry princes and noblemen have occupied the royal palace, pressuring Queen Penelope to remarry so one of them can seize the throne.

Known for his passion for cinema from a young age, Nolan first read Homer's poems — widely regarded as the foundation of Western literature — during his elementary school days.

The director was captivated by the masterpiece's fantastical elements, ranging from the Cyclops, a one-eyed giant, to the Sirens, mythological creatures who cause sailors to run aground by enchanting them with songs.

The stories sparked a lifelong ambition — not only to bring the 3,000-year-old myth to the screen, but also to make its timeless themes resonate with contemporary audiences.

"I think as a filmmaker — you're always looking for something to challenge yourself, but also something hopefully the audience hasn't seen before. I was really struck by the fact that the world of Greek mythology is the oldest foundation of story in Western literature. *The Odyssey* is a great epic that hadn't been told in this form in a modern film. And so, to me, that just seemed like a tremendous opportunity," Nolan said during the Beijing event.





Left: Anne Hathaway stars as Penelope, queen of Ithaca and the devoted wife of Odysseus. **Right:** Matt Damon plays Odysseus, king of Ithaca, whose decade-long journey home begins after the Trojan War.

He added that the poem endures because it is rooted in "primal, universal desires and fears", allowing it to remain relevant across generations.

To re-create the ancient world, the production traveled across six countries — Morocco, Greece, Italy, Iceland, Scotland, and the United States. Exterior scenes for Odysseus' palace were filmed at Castello di Santa Caterina, a 15th-century castle in Sicily, Italy, perched atop a rugged hill more than 310 meters above sea level, commanding panoramic views of the Mediterranean Sea.

"There were 250 people we needed to get to this location. We thought we'd be able to put up a temporary road. And then, in the end, we weren't able to, so it meant everybody hiking up 1,000 feet every morning, arriving pretty tired before the day's work even began," Nolan recalled.

One cast member, however, barely seemed to notice the climb. Nolan said Tom Holland bounded up the steep path "like a gazelle" throughout the three-week shoot, setting an example for the cast and crew.

The film also fulfills another dream Nolan has pursued since the age of 16: making an entire feature film in the IMAX format.

While *The Odyssey* is Nolan's seventh film shot with IMAX cameras, it is also the first feature in history to be filmed entirely with IMAX 15/65 mm cameras. Shot over 91 days, the production used more than 2.1 million feet (640 kilometers) of film stock — longer than the distance between Toronto and New York, according to IMAX.

Although the production posed unprecedented technical challenges, Nolan said the cast adapted to the large-format equipment "wonderfully".

"(That is because of) the fact that we would use a monitor system to allow them to see each other across the camera — because it's a giant box between them — essentially, and also the reloading process. But of course, one of the things when you bring a camera this big onto a set is that there's a tremendous amount of focus from the cast and the crew," Nolan said.

"They see how cumbersome and important — and expensive, frankly — the whole thing is. So, there's a real sense of focus, and everybody is able to focus at the same moment, and I think the discipline of that really helps," he added.

The film's demanding production left a lasting impression on its cast as well. According to Entertainment Weekly, Damon said he had promised his wife he would take a break from acting — with one exception: if Nolan called, the break would have to wait. She agreed.

Asked in Beijing how he reacted when Nolan invited him to star in *The Odyssey*, Damon said preparation was never a concern because the director always gives his actors ample time.

"That's not really a concern. Everyone in our house is a big fan of Chris and Emma's movies. We were truly fans," said Damon, who previously collaborated with Nolan on *Interstellar* and *Oppenheimer*.

For Theron, one of the film's most emotional moments came during her first viewing, when an aging dog recognizes Odysseus before passing away.

"I have this thing when I come home — my dogs are usually the first living things that I see at my door, and it has always been that way. I've had dogs my whole life," she said, recalling that the scene moved her to tears as it reminded her of the beloved dogs she had lost.

Early audience reactions suggest the film has already struck an emotional chord. Following the preview screenings, *The Odyssey* has earned 8.3 out of 10 on Chinese review platform Douban, with some moviegoers describing it as one of Nolan's finest works to date.

Yin Hong, vice-chairman of the China Film Association, commented that the film uses its mythological narrative — particularly its reinterpretations of the Trojan Horse and the figure of Helen — to offer a contemporary reflection on human nature, war, fate, peace, trust, the meaning of life, and the global order. He added that *The Odyssey* also offers valuable inspiration for Chinese filmmakers seeking to adapt classical cultural heritage for modern audiences.

Contact the writer at xufan@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

Rare exhibition takes deep dive into Chopin's world

By **CHEN NAN**
chennan@chinadaily.com.cn

The life, music and legacy of Fryderyk Chopin have arrived in China on an unprecedented scale.

The National Centre for the Performing Arts has unveiled *Meeting Chopin: Selected Collections From the Fryderyk Chopin Museum at the Fryderyk Chopin Institute in Warsaw, Poland*, the largest exhibition ever dedicated to the Polish composer in Beijing. Bringing together more than 90 rare objects, it traces the artistic journey of one of classical music's most enduring figures.

Opening on July 27, the exhibition runs through Oct 25.

Few composers have become so closely identified with a single instrument as Chopin, whose poetic piano works transformed the expressive possibilities of Romantic Era music. Nearly two centuries after his death, his mazurkas, nocturnes and ballades continue to captivate audiences around the world with an emotional depth that transcends cultures and generations.

The exhibition presents more than 50 items from the collections of the Fryderyk Chopin Museum, including personal belongings, autograph manuscripts and correspondence, alongside more than 40 supplementary exhibits such as commemorative stamps, historic recordings and archival materials. Organized into three thematic sections, it follows Chopin's journey from his childhood in Poland through his years in Paris to the lasting legacy of his music.

One of the exhibition's greatest highlights is Chopin's celebrated Pleyel piano, displayed in China for the first time. Regarded as one of the museum's most treasured possessions, the instrument bears the composer's penciled signature, "F. Chopin", on its internal frame. It accompanied him during the final years of his life, when he composed some of his last works.

Equally compelling is an original working manuscript of the *Impromptu in F-sharp Major, Op 36*. Erased passages, crossed-out notes and rewritten phrases reveal the painstaking process behind Chopin's seemingly effortless lyricism, offering visitors a rare glimpse into the composer's creative process.



A visitor at the exhibition showcasing Chopin's life and music at the NCPA in Beijing on July 27. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The exhibition also opens a window to Chopin's private world through a collection of personal objects. His paperweight, handwritten correspondence from Paris and other everyday belongings are displayed alongside items belonging to French novelist George Sand, whose nearly decade-long relationship with the composer profoundly shaped his life and work. Her embroidered napkin bearing Chopin's initials, a recipe book, clothing, and letters to French painter Eugene Delacroix evoke the domestic world in which some of his greatest works were born.

Beyond Chopin's lifetime, the exhibition explores the remarkable reach of his artistic legacy. A dedicated section traces the evolution of the International Fryderyk Chopin Piano Competition through historic medals, posters, original judging documents, caricatures of prize winners, and sculpted casts of pianists' hands. Graphic designs spanning several decades demonstrate how successive generations of Polish artists have continually reimagined the composer's visual identity.

The exhibition also examines Chopin's place in global visual culture through paintings, sculptures and contemporary artworks inspired by his music.

Rather than relying solely on historical displays, the exhibition embraces contemporary exhibition design. Visitors encounter immersive installations, including 3D projections, multimedia interpretation stations and interactive listening experiences that allow audiences to explore Chopin's manuscripts while following the chronology of his life.

According to Wang Ban, vice-president of the NCPA, the center first collaborated with the Polish embassy on a Chopin exhibition in 2010. He described the new exhibition as both "a tribute to the great poet of the piano" and an opportunity to deepen cultural dialogue between China and Poland through music.

Seweryn Kuter, director of the Fryderyk Chopin Museum, says that the exhibition demonstrates not only the composer's life and artistic legacy but also "the universal power of his music", adding that Chopin continues to inspire people regardless of nationality or cultural background.

Throughout the exhibition, the NCPA will present a season of Chopin-themed lectures, concerts, educational programs, and Polish culinary events, transforming the showcase into a broader celebration of the composer's enduring artistic legacy.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:17 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:17 PM

SPORTS

TENNIS



"I know my tennis is there, but I just need to stay healthy. That's a big part of being a top player, and that's something I have to learn from the top players: to get my level back and keep it consistent."

Shang Juncheng, after reaching the National Bank Open third round in Montreal

Shang Juncheng of China reacts after beating Russia's Andrey Rublev in a second-round match at the National Bank Open in Montreal, Canada, on Tuesday. Shang saved five match points before beating the 10th-seeded Rublev, 7-5, 4-6, 7-6 (5), to advance to only his second third-round appearance at an ATP1000 Masters tournament. REUTERS

Shang stuns Rublev in Montreal

Young ace makes it to third round, as veteran Zhang also wins in Toronto

By **SUN XIAOCHEN**
sunxiaochen@chinadaily.com.cn





Left: Shang Juncheng plays a forehand against Andrey Rublev during their National Bank Open second-round match in Montreal on Tuesday.
Right: Veteran Zhang Shuai hits a return on her way to beating Jelena Ostapenko in their WTA1000 match in Toronto on Tuesday. AFP / AP

It's perhaps too early to make such an assertion, but Shang Juncheng has just pulled off arguably his most compelling win, perfectly encapsulating the essence of his career so far — resilience.

Down at 3-5 in the decider with his opponent, one of the hardest-hitting men on the circuit, serving for the match, Shang, ranked 281st this week and who has just recovered from a nagging foot injury, could be forgiven by fans had he come up short against 10th seed Andrey Rublev in the second round of the National Bank Open in Montreal on Tuesday.

But, the 21-year-old rising star just wouldn't let it go, even with Rublev, the event's 2024 finalist, amassing five match points in the 10th game. Shang fended them all off through sheer will to force a third-set tiebreaker, before eventually pulling off a 7-5, 4-6, 7-6 (5) upset at the IGA Stadium.

Shang is now into the third round at an ATP1000 Masters tournament for only the second time in his budding career, and has become the first Chinese man to reach that stage in Montreal, a key tune-up for the US Open.

The gutsy escape act against Rublev, currently ranked No 16 and who beat Shang in their only previous meeting in Hong Kong in 2024, marked the young Chinese ace's fifth career win over a top-20 opponent, one which took place at only his second tournament since returning from a six-month injury layoff.

Shang has pocketed $61,865 in prize money and enough points to climb around 50 spots up the rankings in Montreal so far, but more importantly, has rebuilt trust in his own body as he looks set for a revival through the hard-court North American and Asian swings.

"Andrey is a good friend, a great competitor and a great champion," Shang said after outlasting the Russian 18-time ATP title winner over two hours and 44 minutes in windy conditions.

"It is a pleasure to share the court with him again.

"I am happier that I am 100 percent healthy and playing my best tennis again, though," added Shang, who reached a career-high ranking of No 47 in October 2024 after winning his first ATP Tour singles title in Chengdu.

"I know my tennis is there, but I just need to stay healthy. That's a big part of being a top player, and that's something I have to learn from the top players: to get my level back and keep it consistent."

Born into a sporting family — his father used to play in China's domestic soccer league and mother was a table tennis mixed doubles world champion — Shang enjoyed an early career surge that saw him clinch a string of "youngest-ever" records for Chinese men's tennis.

He became the first male player from the Chinese mainland, and the youngest, to qualify for the main draw at the ATP1000 level by making it all the way through qualifiers at Indian Wells, California, in 2022 at the age of 17.

His best season to date, in 2024, saw him become the youngest Chinese man ever to register a main-draw win at a Masters tournament with victory over Jordan Thompson, also at Indian Wells that March, before he broke into the top 100 the following May as the youngest Chinese male player to do so.

Then came exposure to the grueling nature of the sport, as repeated physical issues stymied his career ascent for the best part of two years. A series of injuries to both feet, his elbow and his wrist forced him into long breaks, with each lasting over six months, in the first half of 2025 and earlier this season.

They have helped, however, to hone his mental fortitude.

"It was boring and frustrating during the hard times of my rehab, but that's also what made the comebacks so sweet," said Shang, who will play Italian 19th seed Luciano Darderi in the round of 32 on Thursday.

As inspiring as Shang's return has been, veteran Zhang Shuai's gritty performance this week in Canada also served up a strong boost for Chinese tennis, especially for the women's side, where most of her younger compatriots are struggling with dips in form.

The 37-year-old Zhang, who added a third doubles major trophy at the Australian Open in January, proved she remains a force to be reckoned with on the singles circuit as well, by advancing into the third round at the WTA1000 tournament in Toronto on Tuesday.

Facing the 2017 French Open winner Jelena Ostapenko, Zhang produced a commanding performance, winning 10 straight games before her 29-year-old Latvian opponent decided to retire while trailing 6-0, 4-0, due to a sudden injury.

Zhang's two-win run in Toronto, following a seven-match singles losing streak on the WTA Tour, has suggested that the evergreen career of China's most experienced women's ace is far from done yet.

"Playing the game for as long as I have, I won't get too carried away by each win or loss anymore. It's the composure and poise that helped me enjoy each match and still keep pushing at my age," said Zhang, who's climbed to No 55 on the live WTA rankings following her two wins in Canada.

Zhang now has to make all her experience count as she prepares for a tough matchup against world No 1 Aryna Sabalenka in the round of 32.

Million-dollar 1 Point Slam set to return to Aussie Open

MELBOURNE, Australia — The million-dollar 1 Point Slam is returning to the first Grand Slam tennis tournament of 2027.

Australian Open organizers announced Wednesday that the crowd favorite from last January would again be offering a top prize of a million Australian dollars ($705,000) when it is held next year before the Jan 17-31 main draw at Melbourne Park.

Jordan Smith, a little-known local amateur player beat Jannik Sinner and went on to make himself a millionaire in Australian dollars after winning the 1 Point Slam.

The Australian won on the third stroke of the final, when Chinese Taipei's women's player Joanna Garland, then ranked No 117, sent a two-handed backhand wide.

All the matches lasted just one single point in a knockout bracket that included men and women, professionals and amateurs, as well as celebrities such as pop star Jay Chou, who was knocked out without hitting a ball after conceding an ace from Petar Jovic.

The competition also included Carlos Alcaraz, Iga Swiatek, Coco Gauff, Alexander Zverev and Naomi Osaka.

"My journey started at a qualifying event at Sydney Olympic Park — I never expected it would lead to me stepping onto Rod Laver Arena and competing against world-class players, let alone walking away as the winner. It completely changed my life," Smith said in an Australian Open statement Wednesday.

"This year, we'll be hosting an event at our own club and, hopefully, inspiring more players to give it a go, just like I did. You never know where it might take you," Smith added.

From next week, affiliated clubs, associations, coaches and partner schools across Australia can register their interest to host a 1 Point Slam qualifying event in the lead-up to the Melbourne Park final.

Alcaraz out of Cincy event

World No 2 Alcaraz has withdrawn from the ATP Cincinnati Masters with the wrist injury that has sidelined him since April, organizers said Tuesday.

The Spaniard will not defend his title at the tournament, which starts on Aug 13, because of "an ongoing wrist injury".

"We know Carlos is doing everything he can to get back to playing tournaments as soon as possible," tournament director Bob Moran said in a statement.

"We wish him the best with his recovery and look forward to welcoming him back to Cincinnati in the future."

The move will spark concerns over Alcaraz's upcoming title defense at the US Open, the final Grand Slam of the year, which starts on Aug 30 in New York.

The elite hard court tournament in Cincy is the last major tune-up for the US Open.

The 23-year-old Alcaraz has already opted out of the French Open and Wimbledon this year, as he recovers from the injury sustained in the first round of the Barcelona Open in April.

The seven-time Grand Slam champion pulled out of tournaments in Madrid and Rome, before withdrawing from Roland Garros in a move he said he and his team had decided was "the most prudent thing to do".

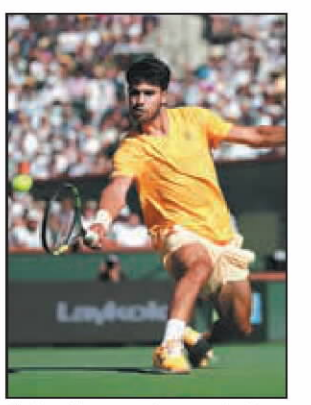
He then missed Wimbledon, where his rival Sinner prevailed for the second year in a row, this time against Germany's French Open winner Zverev.

In opting out of Wimbledon, Alcaraz said his recovery was going well, but that he was still not ready to play.

It marked the third Grand Slam that Alcaraz has missed since he made his main draw debut at the 2021 Australian Open.

He became the youngest man to complete the career Grand Slam in January with his triumph in Melbourne. He also won the ATP title in Doha, Qatar, in February.

AGENCIES



Carlos Alcaraz returns a shot to Daniil Medvedev during their semifinal match at the BNP Paribas Open on March 14 in Indian Wells, California. AP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:17 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:18 PM

Closing the gap
Humanoids complete chores, industrial tasks with precision
BUSINESS, PAGE 7



Lunar map to help advance exploration
CHINA, PAGE 13



Tales woven in silk
Millennia-old civilization unfolds through an exhibition of patterns
LIFE SHANGHAI, PAGE 14

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 FRIDAY, AUGUST 7, 2026

XI'S VISION | NATIONAL FITNESS

Promotion of fitness for all reaps benefits

Nation's sustained efforts foster widespread enthusiasm for sports, improve public health

By **JI HAISHENG**
jihaisheng@chinadaily.com.cn

For Wang Lin, an avid soccer enthusiast, playing on the pitch of the Northeastern Super League feels like a childhood dream come true. The 39-year-old homestay owner in Shenyang, Liaoning province, now follows a disciplined fitness routine to stay in shape for the game.

"Since joining the tournament in May, training has become a key priority for me," Wang said. "I dedicate about two hours each session, three times a week, to fitness workouts, running and soccer drills, which help me overcome the inactivity that often sets in during middle age."

Months of intensive training have paid off. Wang has shed seven kilograms, with his beer belly giving way to a lean, toned midsection. "After watching the videos I posted, many people realize that even in their 30s or 40s, they can still step onto the pitch and keep their love for sports alive," he added.

The ongoing league, China's first cross-provincial amateur soccer tournament, draws participants like Wang from the three northeastern provinces of Liaoning, Jilin and Heilongjiang, as well as the Inner Mongolia autonomous region.

Wang noted that the ordinary backgrounds of the players, who include college students and office workers, make the tournament highly relatable for audiences, giving it stronger public appeal than a professional match.

The event not only offers amateurs a stage to pursue their dreams, but also motivates many more people to develop a love for sports and build up their fitness level, he added.

Wang's passion for soccer mirrors the country's long-standing commitment to promoting fitness for all as a way to improve people's health.

As Saturday marks China's 18th National Fitness Day, an annual campaign aimed at ingraining the concept of national fitness in people's minds and promoting regular physical activity, years of persistent nationwide fitness initiatives have borne fruit, with millions of ordinary citizens embracing sports as part of their daily routine.

From neighborhood soccer pitches to marathon starting lines and even skating rinks, the enthusiasm for fitness has become widespread, and President Xi Jinping is one of the keenest sports enthusiasts.

Xi developed a love for sports such as skating and soccer at an early age. "The exercise I did in my childhood laid the foundation for my good health today," he once recalled.

Later, his love for sports went beyond personal growth. In 1984, as Party chief of Zhengding county in Hebei province, Xi spearheaded the county's first-ever mass sports games, attracting more than 1,300 participants.

At a time when local authorities elsewhere were solely focused on economic development, Xi recognized that organizing the mass sports event carried profound significance for enhancing the people's happiness. "The people's wallets are to grow fuller, their minds richer, and their bodies healthier," he said.

Xi has carried forward this commitment through every stage of his political career. In Fujian province, he helped put in place new trails and lampposts on a mountain popular with hikers. In Zhejiang province, he guided the wider opening of public sports facilities and school sports venues for the people. In Shanghai, he directed preparations for the 2007 Special Olympics World Summer Games, advancing the cause of sports for people with disabilities.

Now, as China's top leader, he has always placed the health and happiness of Chinese people in a pivotal position in the overall governance of the country. "Chinese modernization is closely linked with public health," he once said. "A healthy nation requires mass participation in sports, and strong competitive sports are built on a solid foundation of public fitness."

Heeding Xi's call, China elevated the fitness-for-all campaign to a national strategy in 2014. Since 2016, the country has rolled out three successive targeted five-year plans to systematically advance public fitness.

The latest one was released in July, with clear targets for improving public fitness by 2030. According to the plan, the country aims to increase per capita sports venue space to about 4 square meters and raise the proportion of residents who exercise regularly to around 40 percent.

Ma Liang, a professor at Peking University's School of Government, noted that high-level emphasis on national fitness campaigns can effectively drive coordinated efforts from government departments at all levels, fostering a sounder environment for promoting public fitness.

See ***Sports,*** *page 3*

Bridge of cooperation





Above: People walk on a newly inaugurated bridge over the Nyong River at Malombo in the Nyong-et-Kelle division of Centre Region, Cameroon, on Wednesday.
Left: Cameroonian Minister of Public Works Emmanuel Nganou Djoumessi (front row, third from left) and other guests cut a ribbon to inaugurate the bridge, which was built by China First Highway Engineering Co. He said the project, a flagship of Cameroon-China infrastructure cooperation, will significantly improve connectivity in the region.
PHOTOS BY JEAN PIERRE KEPSEU / XINHUA

Safety rules for self-driving cars unveiled

By **CHENG YU**
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

China has announced its first mandatory national safety standard for Level 3 and Level 4 autonomous vehicles, tightening safety requirements for self-driving cars in the world's largest automotive market.

The safety requirements for automated driving systems of intelligent connected vehicles, which will take effect on July 1, 2027, have been approved by the State Administration for Market Regulation and the National Standardization Administration. The rules were introduced on the website of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology on Tuesday.

Unlike previous driver assistance technologies, the L3 automated driving system enables vehicles to take over certain driving tasks under specific conditions, while still requiring human intervention. The L4 system can perform driving tasks without human input in designated environments.

According to the new requirements, automated driving systems must achieve an equivalent safety level to that of a qualified and attentive human driver performing the same dynamic driving tasks while avoiding unnecessary risks to passengers and other road users.

The standard introduces clearer requirements for human-machine interaction, which has become an increasingly important issue as drivers shift between automated and manual control.

For L3 vehicles, manufacturers must equip their systems with driver takeover monitoring to ensure that motorists are able to resume control when requested. Vehicles must also provide clear information regarding when automated driving is ready, activated or disengaged. If a human driver fails to respond to a takeover request, the vehicle must automatically execute a minimum-risk maneuver, which is a predefined sequence designed to bring the vehicle to the safest possible state.

Rao Qing, chief architect for global solutions at the autonomous driving company Momenta, said, "The release of the mandatory national standard marks the beginning of a new phase for China's autonomous driving industry, where large-scale commercialization is built on safety and clear regulatory benchmarks."

Since the beginning of the year, regulators have introduced standards relating to simulation testing, vehicle communications and Level 2 driver-assistance systems, as well as mandatory safety requirements for higher levels of automation, resulting in one of the most comprehensive regulatory frameworks for self-driving vehicles in the country.

Last year, China granted conditional approval to its first L3 autonomous passenger vehicles and positioned intelligent driving as a key area of development.

The latest data from the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology shows that in the first half of this year, 70.5 percent of new passenger vehicles sold in China were equipped with L2 combined driver assistance systems, which means that roughly seven out of every 10 new vehicles were equipped with such technology.

However, some industry experts said that fewer than 10 percent of L2-equipped vehicle owners have actually activated or used the driver assistance functions.

Jiang Han, a senior researcher at the think tank Pangoal, said: "The new mandatory national standard marks a fundamental shift in China's regulation for autonomous driving — from giving emerging technologies room to develop, to imposing hard requirements to ensure safety. It will also promote the healthy development of China's autonomous driving market, as it continues to develop at a rapid speed."

WORLD WATCH
By Warwick Powell

Wake-up call for security architecture

Japan's newly released 2026 defense white paper reads less like a sober assessment of regional realities and more like a carefully crafted narrative designed to manufacture domestic consent for accelerated militarization. It portrays China as an "unprecedented strategic challenge" that must be met with "overall national strength" and deeper alignment with allies. Almost simultaneously, Tokyo has moved to create a centralized intelligence agency — the first of its kind since the end of World War II — overturning eight decades of postwar decentralization. These steps, taken in the shadow of the 80th anniversary of the Tokyo Trials, and against the enduring refusal to fully confront wartime atrocities, including the biological barbarism of Unit 731, generate understandable unease across the region.

Layered onto this is an even more sobering development. Reports indicate that the Pentagon is drafting a classified nuclear strategy that places greater emphasis on the potential use of shorter-range tactical nuclear weapons in a regional conflict involving China or Russia. The combination of Japanese remilitarization, historical amnesia and US nuclear signalling creates a dangerous escalatory environment. It is a wake-up call that the old architecture of exclusive blocs and forward military presence is not merely fraying; it is actively raising the risks of catastrophic miscalculation.

The material foundations underpinning US regional primacy have already eroded. Depleted interceptor inventories, multiyear production timelines and structural industrial constraints mean that Washington cannot sustain the forward posture it once took for granted. Rhetoric about deterrence cannot substitute for magazine depth and replenishment capacity. Into this vacuum, exclusive minilaterals and intensified alliance structures offer no sustainable answer. They narrow options, heighten threat perceptions and lock the region into a competitive logic that serves neither stability nor prosperity.

What is urgently required is a different pathway — an Asian Way grounded in historical memory and imaginative statecraft.

See ***Security,*** *page 3*

IN RURAL GUIZHOU, A SIMPLE SOUP TELLS STORY OF THE SEASON

Tender pumpkin, green beans and water are all it takes to evoke memory of generations

By **LI YINGXUE**
liyingxue@chinadaily.com.cn

China Vibes 味中国 — FOOD —

In the courtyard of a rural farmhouse restaurant in Qiantao township of Guiyang, Guizhou province, a pot of clear soup is slowly cooling.

There is no oil floating on the surface and no elaborate seasoning. Tender pumpkin and green beans rest in the broth, releasing a subtle sweetness.

Yet the mild dish is rarely served without a condiment. At mealtime, the vegetables are served with roasted chili dipping sauce — a combination that for many Guizhou people is the taste of summer.

The humble dish is *suguadou tang*, a simple seasonal vegetable soup. For generations of Guizhou families, it has been the preferred way to savor the freshness of the season.

As the solar term *li qiu*, or Start of Autumn, falls on Friday, summer heat still lingers across much of southern China. In Guizhou, where pumpkins and beans are still being harvested, the seasonal soup holds its place on dining tables.



The ingredients used to make a special soup and its dipping sauce in Guiyang, Guizhou province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"I've been eating this ever since I was a child. It is truly local," said He Juanjuan, a Guiyang native who runs a farmhouse restaurant in Qiantao.

Her restaurant serves traditional rural dishes, many made with homegrown produce. During summer, *suguadou tang* is rarely off the menu.

"On hot days, it is especially refreshing," she said. "The soup is naturally sweet and not greasy."

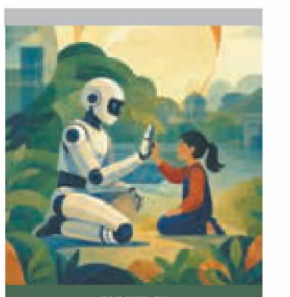
Freshness is key. Pumpkins are harvested young, while their flesh is still tender. "We harvest them early," He said. "If they grow too mature, they are no longer as sweet."

Her family also grows peppers, eggplants, cowpeas, green beans, leafy vegetables, scallions and garlic. When certain ingredients are in short supply, they get them from nearby markets.

The preparation follows a tradition passed down through generations. Rather than slicing them with a knife, pumpkins are snapped by hand into rough chunks, and beans are broken into shorter lengths.

See ***Taste,*** *page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.



INSIDE
Benevolence and propriety
Global Views, page 12

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved

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

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:18 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:18 PM

INDEPTH

Final heroic trek forged in mud, sweat

Holidaying railwayman who lost his life helping others in flood-hit Guangxi mourned by millions online

By **PENG CHAO** in Chengdu and **ZHANG XIAOMIN**

The high-speed train didn't stop at Meishan East Railway Station on that sweltering July afternoon. It was Dang Xinrui's last ride as a railwayman.

His father Dang Qing accompanied his son's ashes on the train on July 19 as it passed the platform of the station where the 29-year-old had worked.

Some uniformed station staff wept openly as they stood in a line saluting as the train swept by.

Dang Qing said he chose the rail route "so his son could be a railway worker one final time".

While on vacation, Dang Xinrui volunteered to carry supplies on foot to villages cut off by flooding in southern China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region. He collapsed and died of heart failure caused by heat and exhaustion on July 14 while returning from a village where he and other volunteers had delivered medicine, vegetables and other supplies.

After his body was cremated, his father took his remains from Guangxi to the family home in Chengdu, Sichuan province.

"I knew he would join the disaster relief, but I never imagined I would lose him," Dang Qing told CCTV.

"What comforts me most is that he spent his final days doing something he truly loved and something meaningful. That makes me proud."

Dang's tale has also touched tens of millions of netizens, with many hailing him as a relatable hero.

Heavy burden

Dang Xinrui started his annual vacation on July 9 in Yunnan province where he intended to go hiking. He sent his friend and former colleague Ma Ziwen daily photos of the scenery.

"I'll take you hiking to watch the sunrise someday. Climbing up and seeing it. It's truly amazing," he told Ma.

He was in Lijiang, Yunnan, on July 11 and exchanged messages with his father that night, not mentioning anything about a change of plans.

The next day, he saw a message in a social media group saying volunteers were urgently needed to carry supplies into the mountains of Zhenlong township in Nanning, Guangxi's capital. He immediately responded to the call.



Many areas in Guangxi had been inundated by heavy rainfall from July 4, due to the impact of Typhoon Maysak, the 10th typhoon of the year.

In Zhenlong, roads had been washed away and villagers were trapped without access to food or drinking water.

"He messaged me saying he wasn't going sightseeing anymore. Instead, he was going to save lives," Ma recalled, adding whenever someone needed help, his friend would always be the first person to step forward.

Dang traveled to Nanning and then headed to Wuli town in Qintang district, Guigang, where there was a relief supply distribution center and a departure point for volunteers entering the mountains.

Zhenlong's Heyuan village, nestled deep in the mountains, was one of the areas hardest hit.

Landslides and road collapses had occurred in multiple locations. Water, electricity, communications and transportation were cut off to some villagers. Supplies could only be transported on foot.

More than 30 young people from across the country gathered at Wuli with a shared purpose.

On July 13, Huang Jinda, a villager from Heyuan, said he just completed a supply delivery the day before when a group of young strangers arrived in the afternoon and asked him to guide them into the mountains. He said he was too exhausted to join.

"Carrying supplies in takes over eight hours, and the return trip takes another four. The weather was sweltering. I was too worn out and needed to rest," he told Guangxi Daily.

After discussions, the group decided to follow two other volunteers who had been into the mountains, using routes recorded on their sports watches.

Worried about their safety, Huang gave them dozens of boxes of herbal remedy and glucose for emergencies.

"These volunteers were complete strangers, yet they worked harder than family. They're all good people! Many had paid 2,000 ($296) to 3,000 yuan out of their own pockets for travel expenses," Huang said.

Fateful day

At 5 am on July 14, before dawn had broken, Dang and more than 30 fellow volunteers set out from Wuli to deliver supplies to Heyuan.

A video filmed before their departure shows volunteers loading supplies into Dang's new backpack.

When they thought it was full they said, "We can go now."

Dang adjusted the backpack and motioned for them to add more. After five more cucumbers were packed in, his voice can be heard in the final seconds of the video telling them to add "a little more".

According to Huang, the supplies included cabbage, winter melon, rice, chopsticks, toothbrushes and medicine. Given the humid weather and road conditions, each person carried no more than 15 kilograms.

Guo Xiaolin, captain of the Meishan emergency rescue volunteer association, participated in a nearby relief effort. He told media that the temperature was around 35 C that day. Though there was no direct sunlight, the humid, stuffy air made it hard to breathe. Intermittent rain in the mountains added to the moisture. People were drenched in sweat even standing still.

"The road was badly hit by landslides — muddy and slippery — with many flooded sections where the water reached knee level," Guo said.

Selfies from Dang's phone show him drenched in sweat. Another image shows him and other volunteers lying on the ground resting, with their shoes and legs caked in soil.

The team walked for about six hours, crossing several mountains, before finally reaching the flood-isolated village around noon.

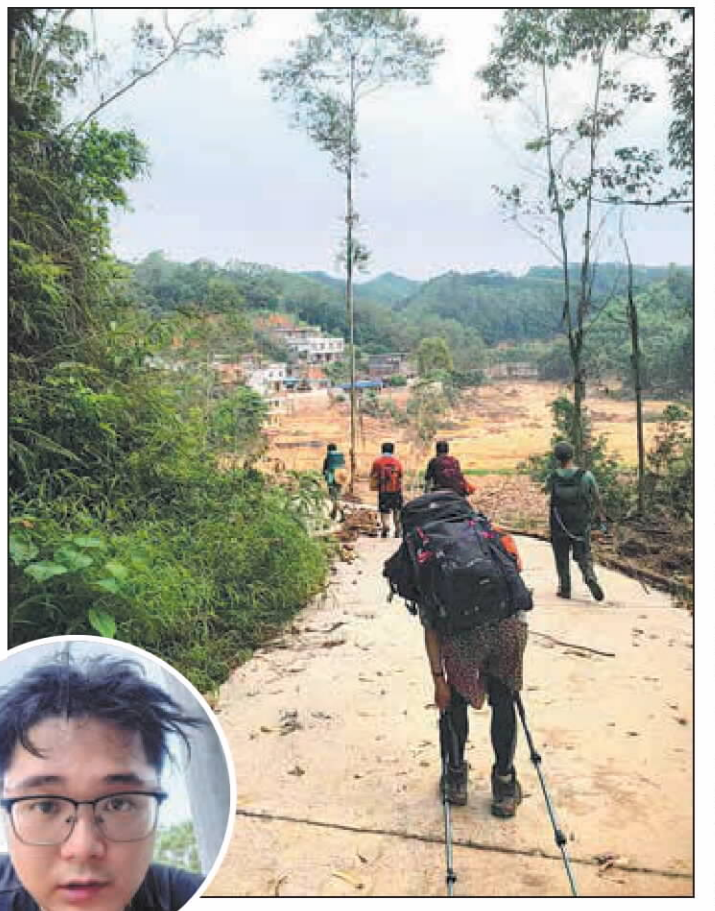
After unloading the supplies and having some porridge prepared by the villagers, the volunteers collapsed on the ground to rest for a while before beginning their return journey. Before leaving, Dang drew a heart in the mud.

It was on the return trek that Dang's condition took a turn for the worse.

According to police reports, when Dang and his companions reached Tangtou village in Sanli town, he suddenly felt dizzy. He rested for a while, but after walking another 300 meters, he fell unconscious. His companions performed CPR while waiting for an ambulance.

Due to severe road damage, the ambulance could not reach him quickly. By the time medical personnel reached him on foot, Dang's pupils were dilated and his heart had stopped.

He could not be revived. The cause of death was listed as heart failure brought on by extreme exhaustion.



Yang Song, a deputy railway station master who accompanied Dang's father to the site, said he learned from fellow volunteers that Dang had felt physically depleted during their trek. His companions urged him to rest, but he insisted on continuing so as not to hold up the group.

Ma said after more than four hours of walking, Dang's body might have already been struggling to cope.

The last message he sent to Ma was: "Someone else is carrying my backpack for me."

Seeing that his friend, who was always the one to help others, now needed assistance himself, Ma asked, "Can't carry it anymore?"

He never received a reply.

A kindhearted kid

Dang Qing traces his son's empathy back to early childhood.

He remembers the little boy who used to hold his hand while strolling through the market. If they passed an elderly person struggling to walk, the child would go over to help. When buying vegetables, he'd indicate to his father to buy from elderly vendors.

At age 6, Dang chose to buy a turtle over taking a bumper-car ride, saying the old seller by the roadside must be having a hard time.

In his adult life, Dang's compassion extended to animals and public welfare. Only after his death did his family discover from his mobile payment records that he had been spending more than 60 yuan each month on pet insurance for stray cats, along with recurring automatic donations to clean-water charities.

Late on the night of July 14 while at home in Chengdu, Dang Qing received a call from an unfamiliar Guangxi number. The caller said they were from the local police station and told him Dang Xinrui was unreachable, asking the father to come to Guangxi.

With a sense of foreboding, he immediately bought a ticket.

He arrived on July 16. At the funeral home, he saw his son, still wearing the same clothes from the mountain trek, with his pants and shoes caked in mud.

Dang Qing broke down. "Seeing all that mud, I knew just how hard his journey had been," he said.

He had seen news reports about the severe flooding in Guangxi, but it had never crossed his mind that his son would be involved.

If Dang had told him he was going to Guangxi for disaster relief work when they spoke the night before, he would have tried to stop him. Those days marked the peak of the disaster.

After the tragedy, Dang Qing admitted he initially felt a pang of resentment toward his son.

"Resentment that he was too foolish," he explained, falling silent for a long moment.

"But a relative consoled me: 'Your child did something he was passionate about, something good.' Those words helped me shift my perspective," he said quietly, adding with conviction that he is proud of his son.

Local authorities offered to arrange flights back to Chengdu for Dang Qing. He declined.

Instead, he chose to take the high-speed train from Nanning — deliberately selecting the G3438 train that passes through Meishan East Railway Station.

Multiple honors

At the station, part of the Chengdu section of China Railway Chengdu Bureau Group, Dang was known as the "comprehensive controller", the nerve center of the operation.

His job was to receive and verify dispatch orders and oversee high-speed train scheduling instructions. Over eight years, he handled more than 10,000 dispatch orders. Not a single one was incorrect. He received multiple honors from the railway bureau for his dedication.

"He always said dispatching isn't like passenger services, where you can apologize for a mistake. A wrong dispatch order puts trains and people in danger," recalled his friend Ma.

His colleagues said that beneath his burly 1.85-meter frame lay a gentle heart.

Once, when he found a passenger's backpack on the platform containing nearly 5,000 yuan in cash, he contacted the owner to return it.

"He was someone who could always empathize with others," said colleague Yang Fang. "When I learned he cut his vacation short to join the relief effort, I wasn't surprised. That was simply who he was."

On July 26, authorities from Hengzhou in Guangxi officially issued a certificate of heroic conduct for Dang.

The certificate reads: "Comrade Dang Xinrui actively engaged in flood-fighting and disaster-relief efforts, carrying supplies on foot to affected residents, and ultimately sacrificed his precious life in the process."

Ma, who worked alongside Dang for six years until he was transferred to another railway station two years ago, still struggles to accept the loss.

"In my eyes, he has always been towering — not just in stature, but in spirit," Ma said.

The two young men had three other close friends. The five had made a pact: once they all started families, they would travel together with their loved ones.

Before Dang left for his trip, they had planned to meet up after his vacation. That promise was never kept.

But the image endures of a tall young man with a ready smile, adjusting his backpack on a muddy mountain road, motioning for "a little more", before heading into the flood-waters to help people he had never met.





Clockwise from top: Dang Xinrui and other volunteers carry supplies on July 14 to flood-hit Heyuan village, Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region; Dang takes a selfie before the trek; a childhood photo of Dang; a heart Dang drew in the soil in Heyuan; Dang's selfie after arriving in Heyuan. PHOTOS BY DANG XINRUI / FOR CHINA DAILY; XINHUA

Zhao Junfeng in Chengdu contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at pengchao@chinadaily.com.cn



Railway colleagues form a line to bid farewell at Meishan East Railway Station as Dang Qing takes his son's ashes to return home on July 19. A VIDEO SCREENSHOT FROM CCTV

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:18 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:18 PM

TOP NEWS

Japan's remarks trigger alarm

Experts urge Japanese government to give up pro-nuclear stance

By **HOU JUNJIE** in Tokyo and **ZHOU JIN** in Beijing



Protesters rally at Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima, Japan, on Wednesday. HU XIAOGE / XINHUA

Hiroshima marked the 81st anniversary of the atomic bombing by the United States with a memorial ceremony on Thursday, amid mounting domestic opposition to recent pro-nuclear remarks by senior Japanese officials.

Experts said Japan's increasingly open discussion of once-taboo nuclear issues appears aimed at gauging public opinion and paving the way for reconsidering postwar security principles, including the country's long-standing Three Non-Nuclear Principles. They urged Tokyo to uphold the principles and abandon cooperation with other countries under the so-called nuclear "extended deterrence".

Meanwhile, China slammed Japanese right-wing forces on Thursday for politically exploiting the nation's identity as a nuclear bombing victim for sympathy and seeking possession of nuclear weapons, while urging Tokyo to earnestly fulfill its nuclear nonproliferation obligations under international law.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said in an online statement that the Japanese authorities have been recently boosting military buildup, seeking enhanced nuclear protection from the US, and attempting to break free from the Three Non-Nuclear Principles.

Right-wing forces in Japan have long been distorting historical facts and deliberately downplaying Japan's invasion, which killed and wounded tens of millions of people in Japan's neighboring countries, in an attempt to escape accountability for the war, he said.

Attending the commemoration ceremony at Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said that Japan, as the only country to have suffered atomic bombings in wartime, has a mission to continue working toward a world without nuclear weapons.

But when asked after the memorial ceremony whether the non-nuclear principles would be reviewed during this year's revision of the government's three key national security documents, Takaichi declined to answer directly, according to the newspaper The Asahi Shimbun. "It would not be appropriate for me to prejudge how the documents will be worded," she said.

Hiroshima Mayor Kazumi Matsui highlighted the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons and called for nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament through multilateral efforts.

However, neither Takaichi nor Matsui mentioned the historical context behind the bombing of Hiroshima.

On Aug 6 and 9, 1945, the US dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, respectively, to hasten Japan's surrender in World War II.

Hiroshi Shiratori, a professor of political science at Hosei University in Tokyo, said that Japan has long regarded the fact that Hiroshima was the first city in the world to suffer a nuclear attack and Nagasaki the last as a central part of its national historical narrative.

Shiratori said he believes that the recent nuclear-related remarks by Japanese government officials are, to some extent, aimed at testing public opinion.

Last month, Japanese Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi went so far as to say that Japan should discuss its nuclear policy "without taboos", including whether to revise the Three Non-Nuclear Principles that Japan has adhered to for decades.

In December, a senior Japanese official in charge of security and defense at the Prime Minister's Office told reporters that Japan should have nuclear weapons.

Shiratori said the government is gradually reshaping Japan's long-held anti-nuclear sentiment through incremental remarks on nuclear policy. He added that easing restrictions under the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology and expanding arms exports suggest that the Takaichi administration does not necessarily place sufficient importance on Japan's long-standing pacifist principles.

Since Takaichi took office in October last year, her administration has advanced revisions to Japan's three key national security documents while repeatedly raising the possibility of reviewing the "no introduction" principle under the Three Non-Nuclear Principles, arguing that such a move would strengthen the credibility of the US' extended nuclear deterrence.

Under deterrence arrangements, Washington pledges to defend Japan with the full range of its military capabilities, including nuclear.

Formally adopted by the Japanese parliament in 1971, the principles prohibit Japan from possessing, producing or permitting the introduction of nuclear weapons into its territory.

The strong anti-nuclear and anti-war sentiment among the Japanese public stands in sharp contrast to the Takaichi administration's increasingly assertive security agenda.

The Tokyo Shimbun reported that since Takaichi took office, at least 128 local assemblies in 36 prefectures have submitted written opinions to the Japanese parliament urging the government to uphold the principles, which is a record high.

Ukeru Magosaki, director of the East Asian Community Institute in Tokyo and a former Japanese foreign ministry official, told China Daily that Japan's security is built on the principles. "Adhering to the principles poses no threat to neighboring countries and is therefore more conducive to Japan's own security. That is why I oppose any attempt to weaken them," he said.

Magosaki said the ongoing Japan-US consultations on nuclear deterrence would not reduce Japan's risk of a nuclear attack. Instead, he argued, they are intended to expand Washington's options for launching nuclear strikes against other nuclear-armed states, making Japan more likely to become a target.

Contact the writers at houjunjie@chinadaily.com.cn

Security: Emphasis on peaceful coexistence

From page 1

This pathway must move away from the logic of blocs and toward inclusive security. The intellectual and political resources for such an architecture already exist. The Bandung Conference of 1955 articulated principles of sovereign equality, mutual respect and peaceful coexistence that later helped inspire the Non-Aligned Movement and remain profoundly relevant. The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence continue to offer a practical foundation for managing differences without resort to force or exclusive alliances. Together they point toward institutions built on indivisible security: the understanding that the security of one state cannot be purchased at the expense of another.

An inclusive Asian security architecture would stand in deliberate contrast to the closed groupings favoured by the US strategic axis. It would not be limited to any single subregion or set of members. It would be open to all states prepared to accept the core norms of nonaggression, noninterference and mutual restraint. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations is well positioned to act as convener and curator of such a process. Its patient consensus-building, demonstrated in the negotiation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, shows that the region already possesses the diplomatic capacity to work across diverse interests and produce durable multilateral outcomes. The same method can be applied to security.

Strategic thinkers across Asia must now think historically and imaginatively. History teaches that militarization pursued without genuine reckoning with the past carries profound risks. The failure to fully confront the crimes adjudicated at the Tokyo Trials, and the darker chapters of Unit 731, continues to cast a shadow over regional trust. At the same time, imaginative diplomacy is required to construct institutions that can absorb and transcend the pressures of great-power competition. Exclusive alliances amplify those pressures. Inclusive arrangements can dampen them.

Economic resilience forms a necessary complement. The coercive leverage of the US has long rested on energy and financial channels. Pathways toward greater autonomy — through accelerated electrification and the development of parallel payment systems — are already emerging. These practical measures reduce vulnerability and expand the space for independent regional agency.

The present moment is one of genuine fluidity. Japanese domestic mobilization, US nuclear signalling and the structural decline of forward conventional capacity have created openings that can either harden into dangerous confrontation or be filled by a more stable regional order. The choice is not between Chinese dominance and US hegemony. It is between a future organized around exclusive blocs and one organized around inclusive security.

An Asian security architecture rooted in the Bandung principles of peaceful coexistence and indivisible security is no longer a distant aspiration. It is the most realistic means of stepping out of the shadows of great-power rivalry and preventing the region from becoming the theatre of a conflict none of its peoples can afford. The wake-up call has been issued. The responsibility now rests with the strategic communities of Asia to answer it with clarity and resolve.

The author is an adjunct professor at Queensland University of Technology in Australia and former policy adviser to former Australian prime minister Kevin Rudd. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Moment of sorrow


People attend a mass funeral held in the Gaza Strip on Tuesday for 112 Palestinians who were killed in Israeli attacks in 2023. Authorities estimate that more than 7,000 bodies remain buried beneath the rubble. Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Turkiye, among others, have accused Israel of violations in Gaza. RIZEK ABDELJAWAD / XINHUA

Sports: Accessibility of facilities highlighted

From page 1

Ma said it is imperative to improve the accessibility and affordability of fitness facilities and services, enabling more people to benefit from regular physical exercise and inclusive national fitness initiatives.

China's sustained investment has delivered tangible results. By the end of 2025, the country had more than 5 million sports venues, with over 38.5 percent of residents exercising regularly, according to the General Administration of Sport.

Meanwhile, the results of a national physical fitness monitoring survey were released late last year, revealing that 84.9 percent of respondents met the basic fitness criteria, up 0.8 percentage point from 2020. It was in this survey that China first introduced the "excellence rate" as a core composite metric for physical fitness, with 30.9 percent of respondents attaining a good or excellent rating.

The new metric not only mirrors the across-the-board increase in the general public's physical fitness, but also guides people to continuously improve their physical condition and strive for higher standards of physical wellness, said Feng Qiang, deputy director of the China Institute of Sport Science's National Physical Fitness and Scientific Exercise Research Center.

Nowadays, sports activities have become an integral part of people's daily lives. In addition to mainstream sports including basketball, soccer, badminton and swimming, once-niche activities such as roller skating and road cycling have gained massive popularity among the public.

Feng also called on more sports fans to shift from being mere spectators to becoming active participants, channeling their enthusiasm into regular exercise and healthy lifestyles. He noted that such endeavors will generate far-reaching ripple effects, especially in boosting sports consumption and fueling high-quality socioeconomic progress.

The most vivid illustration of this prospect is China's delivery of the ambitious goal that President Xi put forward during Beijing's bid for the 2022 Winter Olympic Games: to engage 300 million people in ice and snow activities.

The commitment was realized even before the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics kicked off, and public participation in winter sports has continued to grow ever since. Between Nov 1, 2025, and Jan 31, 2026, alone, ski resorts nationwide recorded 118 million visits, according to the General Administration of Sport.

Zhu Yongguo, dean of the Ice and Snow Sports College at the Capital University of Physical Education and Sports, said the legacy of the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics still lives on among the public, and the growing popularity of ice and snow sports keeps injecting new momentum into the country's fitness-for-all drive.

Zhu, also president of the Beijing Curling Association, cited curling as a vivid example of how the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics' dividends can reach ordinary citizens, saying it yields tangible fitness benefits while remaining approachable for people of all physical conditions and from all age groups.

Wu Yong in Shenyang contributed to this story.

Gaming sector posts solid growth in first half of year

By **WANG XIN** in Shanghai
wangxin2@chinadaily.com.cn

China's gaming market generated 188.45 billion yuan ($28 billion) in actual sales revenue in the first half of 2026, up 12.17 percent year-on-year, as the number of users expanded to 684 million during the same period, according to a recent report.

The China Game Industry Report for the first half of the year was presented at the 2026 China Digital Entertainment Congress held in Shanghai on July 30. The event was part of the 23rd China Digital Entertainment Expo and Conference, also known as ChinaJoy, which concluded on Monday. The report was released by the Game Publishing Committee and the Expert Committee on Game Industry Research of the China Audio-Video and Digital Publishing Association.

From January to June, Chinese self-developed games earned 163.36 billion yuan in the domestic market, up 16.3 percent year-on-year. In the overseas market, the revenue generated from these games exceeded $12.37 billion, up 30.22 percent year-on-year.

The United States, Japan and South Korea remained the top three markets abroad, respectively accounting for 32.31 percent, 14.05 percent and 7.48 percent of overseas revenue.

Mobile games dominated the domestic market with revenue share of more than 70 percent, earning 135.21 billion yuan, up almost 8 percent year-on-year. Computer games earned around 45.29 billion yuan, up 27.92 percent year-on-year.

Esports games generated 89.62 billion yuan, up 11.1 percent year-on-year, and mini-program mobile games surged over 36 percent compared with last year to generate 31.66 billion yuan.

The report also included the latest data on China's board game market for the first time. From January to June, sales revenue generated by the segment increased marginally to reach 3.87 billion yuan, up 4.03 percent year-on-year. Digital and physical board games respectively accounted for 51.6 percent and 48.4 percent of the total earnings.

Zhang Yijun, first vice-chairman of the China Audio-Video and Digital Publishing Association, said the nation's favorable policies, continuously optimized gaming ecosystems, cultural integration, and application of innovative technologies, such as artificial intelligence, have been spurring growth of the sector over the years.

China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) has included the gaming sector in the national development framework for the first time.

Sun Shoushan, chairman of the association, said the move reflects a renewed recognition and repositioning of the gaming sector's functional value at the national level. It signifies that the industry is accelerating its transformation into a sector that integrates cultural communication, technological innovation and the digital economy, he added.

The four-day ChinaJoy expo and conference attracted more than 900 companies from 35 countries and regions. AI was the highlight of the expo, with a new "Vision Future" zone that showcased cutting-edge technologies, including humanoid robots, smart wearable devices, spatial computing, and integrated AI hardware and software applications.

Taste: Home-style soup makes it to tourist tables

From page 1

"Pumpkins taste better when broken apart before cooking," He said.

Beans are put into the pot first, as they take longer to cook, followed by the pumpkin chunks. No oil or seasoning is added, allowing the natural flavors of the ingredients to come through.

"You don't need to add any seasoning," she said. "All you taste is the natural sweetness of the ingredients."

The traditional dipping sauce is made with *hu la jiao* — dried chili peppers roasted until slightly charred and fragrant, then crushed into flakes or powder.

Garlic, scallions, soy sauce and salt go into the mix. Depending on personal preference, coriander or *zhe'ergen*, also known as fish mint, can be added. A spoonful of the vegetable broth can bring the flavors all together.

When the dish is served, the sweet vegetables are dipped into the smoky, spicy sauce, and the clear broth is sipped from the bowl.

For He, the soup is inseparable from memories of her mother and the family dining table.

"We ate it almost every summer," she said.

"Whenever the season arrived, my mother would make a large bowl."

The soup is made early and left to cool as rice and other dishes are prepared. By the time the family gathers, it is ready to be enjoyed.

Today, it has also become part of the rural travel experience, and He routinely treats visitors to a generous bowl alongside other local dishes.

For travelers, the dish offers more than relief from the summer heat.

It provides a taste of a way of life shaped by home gardens, seasonal ingredients and family traditions passed down through generations.

As summer gradually gives way to autumn, a bowl of *suguadou tang* delivers the freshness of Guizhou's harvest — and the quiet wisdom of eating in harmony with the seasons.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:18 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:18 PM

WORLD

Intl travel to US falls in 2025 amid policy strains

By **BELINDA ROBINSON**
in New York
belindarobinson@chinadailyusa.com

International travel to New York and the entire United States was "constrained" last year due to geopolitics and federal policies including tariffs and higher immigration restrictions, according to recent reports released by New York State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli.

The findings showed that in 2025 there were nearly 176,650 fewer overseas visitors to New York, a 3 percent decrease, compared to 2024. Only California had a larger decline of over 275,000, while the national decrease was 2.5 percent.

"Federal policies are driving foreign travelers away and taking billions in tourism spending and harming our economy as exports substantially decline," DiNapoli said in a statement in early April. "New York is a top destination for tourists to the US, and policies that welcome and encourage international travel are needed to avoid damaging economic consequences."

"Tourism is an economic engine for New York City. ... International visitors are critical to our visitor mix: while they represent only about 20 percent of total visitation, they account for approximately 50 percent of all visitor spending," said travel expert Tiffany Townsend, executive vice-president of Global Communications for New York City Tourism + Conventions, which represents nearly 2,000 member organizations.

But this year, New York's travel market could see "modest" visitor growth, she said.

Townsend told China Daily that New York City is experiencing a "blockbuster" summer in 2026, "with major global moments" including the 2026 FIFA World Cup, the 250th anniversary celebrations of the United States and the New York Knicks becoming NBA champions for the first time since 1973. This year, the agency projects modest growth, with 66.3 million visitors expected, according to its March outlook.

She added that New York, one of the host cities for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, had attracted millions of football fans from all over the world, a trend that some analysts said was expected to boost tourism in mid-2026. "Initial estimates show group stage matches alone generated $1.2 billion in direct visitor spending," Townsend said.

In terms of overall visitation, last year the Big Apple, known for its skyscrapers, delis, restaurants and luxury shopping on Fifth Avenue, drew 65 million visitors, nearly twice the level in 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic seriously affected inbound visits, but about 2.6 percent below the 2019 level.

Leisure travelers accounted for about 81 percent of total visitation, while business travelers made up about 19 percent. Separately, domestic visitors represented roughly 80 percent of all visitors.

Tourism in the city generated $84.7 billion in total economic impact in 2025, including $55.6 billion in direct spending, New York City Tourism + Conventions said.

This economic activity supported 397,000 jobs. Tourism also generated $7.5 billion in tax revenue.

Top spenders

For several years through 2023, Chinese travelers consistently ranked as the top spenders when traveling abroad, UN Tourism figures showed.

Chinese outbound travel spending is forecast to approach $280 billion in 2026, according to a report released by the World Travel and Tourism Council in June.

The US National Travel and Tourism Office predicts that international arrivals from China to the US will increase each year through 2030.

Given the sour trade relations between the US and Canada due to the US administration's tariff policies, fewer tourists from Canada made their way across the Canadian border to New York in 2025, DiNapoli's report showed, with travel from Canada falling by more than 21 percent, or nearly 3.6 million visitors.

In a bid to lure Canadian visitors back to New York, New York City Tourism + Conventions has launched an initiative called NYC's Northern Neighbour Deal — which offers them discounts on hotels, Broadway shows, attractions, restaurants and retailers.

Townsend explained that it was to reinforce the "long-standing connection between New York City and Canadian travelers and to send a clear message that Canadians are always welcome here".

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108
529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1888

Briefly

UNITED STATES

Judge allows end to Haiti protections

A federal judge in Washington, DC, on Wednesday allowed the Trump administration to terminate temporary protected status, or TPS, for about 350,000 Haitians, putting them at risk of deportation, court records showed. The judge reversed an earlier order blocking the termination after the US Supreme Court ruled that TPS decisions are not subject to judicial review.

JAPAN

PM quake visit video sparks backlash

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi has faced online criticism over a piano-scored video of her visit to earthquake hit Kumamoto Prefecture, which some social media users derided as a "PR piece", local media reported. The video showed Takaichi surveying damaged areas, meeting residents and visiting an evacuation center after the magnitude 7.1 earthquake. The government defended the video, calling it a concise summary of the visit.

NIGERIA

308 kidnapping victims rescued

Nigerian security forces have rescued 308 kidnapping victims, including 163 people abducted from Woro community in Kwara State earlier this year, the government said Wednesday. The victims were rescued from Kainji Lake National Park Forest in an intelligence-led operation involving security agencies. The government called it the largest single-day rescue operation conducted by a joint security team.

XINHUA — AGENCIES

Monsoon misery



Villagers carrying their bicycles wade through a flooded road following heavy monsoon rains in Kalapani village, Assam, India, on Wednesday. The death toll from severe flooding in Assam has risen to 89, with over 200,000 residents across the northeastern state still affected by rising river levels.
ANUWAR ALI HAZARIKA / EPA

Japan 'remilitarization' push draws criticism

'China threat' narrative serves to justify broader strategic expansion, experts say

By **LIU JIANQIAO**
liujianqiao@chinadaily.com.cn

Japan has repeatedly played up so-called "security threats in its neighborhood" and stoked the "China threat" narrative recently, reflecting a political tactic by right-wing forces to exaggerate security concerns, shape domestic public opinion and seek justification for military buildup and strategic expansion, experts said.

The 2026 edition of Japan's defense white paper, released by the government led by Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi on Tuesday, distorts the regional security situation and hypes so-called "external threats", raising concerns that Tokyo is using the rhetoric of "peace" and "defense" to justify military expansion and move further away from its long-standing principle of "exclusive defense", they said.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said on Wednesday that China deplores and firmly rejects the new version of Japan's defense white paper, adding that China has lodged serious representations with Japan.

"The Defense of Japan 2026" white paper once again targeted China with groundless accusations, rehashing the so-called "China threat" narrative and grossly interfering in China's internal affairs with brazen comments on China's Taiwan region, Lin noted.

The paper also significantly expands discussion of strengthening Japan's defense production and technological bases, elevating the topic to an independent section. It argues for the development of the defense industry under the pretext of "driving economic growth" and "fostering technological innovation that benefits the civilian sector".

Liu Shuliang, an associate researcher at the Tianjin Academy of Social Sciences, said that Japan's recent efforts to expand its military capabilities have raised concerns that its long-standing principle of "exclusive defense" is being gradually eroded in practice.

In March, Japan deployed the "Type 25 Surface-to-Ship Missile" in Kumamoto Prefecture and the "Type 25 High-Speed Glide Missile" in Shizuoka Prefecture, marking the first deployment of its long-range missile systems with so-called "counterstrike capabilities".

In July, a Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force vessel conducted its first test launch of a US-made Tomahawk cruise missile, further expanding the country's long-range strike capabilities.

"Japan is sending a clear and concerning signal to the international community that it is accelerating its drive toward 'remilitarization' and moving further away from its postwar pacifist path," Liu said.

Deflecting pressures

By repeatedly hyping the so-called "China threat theory", the current Japanese administration is seeking to manufacture a sense of insecurity, both to whitewash its accelerating military buildup and to deflect domestic political pressures faced by the Takaichi government, he said.

"At a strategic level, the narrative serves a broader political agenda: creating a perception of external threats to build public support for constitutional revision, loosen postwar constraints and advance Japan's long-discussed goal of becoming a 'normal nation' with expanded military capabilities," Liu said.

Meanwhile, by reinforcing the narrative that "a Taiwan contingency is a contingency for Japan", Japan seeks to provoke a strong reaction from China, portray Beijing as a threat to Japan's security, and justify further military expansion and a defense buildup, he added.

"It has become increasingly evident that Japan's repeated attempts to stir up tensions across the Taiwan Strait pose a direct threat to China's efforts to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity," Liu said.

Chen Hong, director of East China Normal University's Asia Pacific Studies Center, said that Japan has been actively promoting greater NATO involvement in the Asia Pacific while working closely with the US to build exclusive security groupings. This move risks fueling bloc confrontation in the region.

Even as it continues to reinforce the US-Japan alliance, Japan has repeatedly portrayed the normal security cooperation between China and Russia as a so-called "threat". Meanwhile, by further tightening its strategic alignment with Washington, Tokyo has willingly assumed the role of a key partner in advancing the US "Indo-Pacific" strategy, exacerbating bloc confrontation in the region, he said.

"Japan's latest moves amount to a dangerous attempt to transcend the boundaries of its defense policy in pursuit of its ambition to become a major military power. This trajectory threatens peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific and calls for heightened vigilance from the international community," Chen added.

Countries in the region should take coordinated diplomatic and security measures to respond to Japan's attempts to undermine regional peace and stability, prevent any further erosion of its postwar security constraints, and limit the room for military expansion, Liu said.

Multilateral institutions, including the United Nations, should pay close attention to Japan's security policy, raise concerns over developments that could damage the postwar international order and the spirit of its pacifist constitution, and build broader international consensus against military expansion that threatens global peace and stability, he said.

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Cartel cracked



The head of the synthetics section at Spain's Central Unit Against Drugs and Organized Crime speaks at a press conference in Barcelona on Wednesday. Police dismantled a Jalisco Cartel branch involved in trafficking liquid methamphetamine hidden in vanilla shipments, seizing 2.5 tons of drugs in one of Europe's largest drug busts of its kind.
MARTA PEREZ / EPA

Drone with explosives found at German airport

BERLIN — A drone carrying explosives was found near a runway at Germany's Leipzig/Halle Airport and the device was defused, authorities said Wednesday, with Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt calling the incident a "new threat scenario" and a "new quality of danger".

Both runways at the major freight hub were closed and several flights were diverted after a flying object was sighted near the airport shortly before midnight Tuesday.

Regional police and prosecutors said an airport employee discovered the drone near the airport's south runway with "an unknown explosive device". Police examined the object with an anti-explosives robot and removed its detonator.

"Drone sightings and drone threats, including in a hybrid context, are something we know from the past," Dobrindt told reporters at the airport after interrupting his vacation to travel to the scene. "That a drone armed with explosives is at an airport is a new threat scenario."

Dobrindt described the incident as a "hybrid attack scenario" but said questions about the explosives, the origin of the drone and who was behind it were part of the ongoing investigation.

Germany opened a counter-terrorism investigation after the drone prompted the closure of parts of one of Europe's biggest cargo hubs. Dobrindt also held an emergency meeting with the heads of Germany's security services.

The regional interior minister of Saxony state, Armin Schuster, said authorities were looking for parts of a possible second drone.

Police and prosecutors said an apparent second flying object collided with a freight airplane after it aborted a landing at Leipzig/Halle Airport because the runway was closed. The plane later landed at Hannover, about 200 kilometers northwest of Leipzig, where officials found slight damage.

A source familiar with the incident said the cargo plane belonged to German logistics company DHL. Investigators were examining what the plane had struck in the air.

No danger to passengers

The airport's north runway was reopened after about two hours, while the south runway remained closed as bomb squad experts examined the drone. Authorities said there was no danger to passengers or airport employees, and flights were not affected during the day.

Leipzig/Halle is a major cargo hub for DHL and Ukraine's Antonov Airlines. Photos from the scene showed police technicians with an explosives-disposal robot near a Ukrainian Antonov transport aircraft.

German airports have been on high alert after a series of unauthorized drone overflights at military facilities, energy terminals, seaports and logistics companies. Federal police and security agencies have assessed some of the overflights could have been organized by Russian agents.

In 2024, an incendiary device ignited at a logistics center at the airport and set fire to a freight container, in a plot that security officials suspect Russian intelligence was behind. European security agencies have also investigated incendiary devices concealed in parcels that caused fires at cargo facilities across Europe.

An interior ministry spokesperson said no connection with Tuesday night's incident could be determined at this stage. Russia has denied involvement in the 2024 incidents and recent drone overflights.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:18 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:18 PM

WORLD

Soy growers eye China amid record crop

US farmers see trade recovery and new uses despite market uncertainty

By **LIA ZHU** in Chicago, Illinois
liazhu@chinadailyusa.com

Facing what is forecast to be a record harvest, US soybean growers say they remain anxious about market volatility and policy unpredictability, but see reason for optimism in recovering trade with China and in emerging areas of cooperation with the world's largest soybean buyer and US soy's top export customer.

The US soybean crop is projected to be a record 4.5 billion bushels (123 million metric tons), according to the US Department of Agriculture's July market outlook. US farmers planted 85.4 million acres (34.5 million hectares) of soybeans this growing season, up 5 percent from a year earlier.

However, Randy Miller, a director on the board of the US Soybean Export Council (USSEC), told a conference on Thursday that what worries him most is "the things we can't control".

"The markets, the weather, policy uncertainty — all of that just kind of piles up," he said.

Scott Metzger, president of the American Soybean Association, said input prices and the cost of production are a constant preoccupation for growers, and weigh even more heavily during difficult economic times.

What has been encouraging, is what he said "China coming back into the market, and the commitments were made and met — and even got a little bit more, for last year and for the future years as well".

"It's not all doom and gloom," Metzger added. "I'm always the optimist in our operation."

Soy Connext, the annual conference hosted by USSEC, opened on Thursday in Chicago, Illinois. The event drew record attendance of more than 800 participants from around the world.

Roughly 400 international buyers from 67 countries are attending the gathering this week, including 30 Chinese buyers working in food processing, oil crushing, feed manufacturing, and soybean research.

The program features expert panels on sustainability, global market dynamics and supply chain resilience, alongside a product exhibition and one-on-one meetings connecting international buyers with US exporters.

Participants said the opportunities for soybean cooperation now extend well beyond traditional feed applications into industrial uses, among them soy-based plastics, adhesives and lubricants.

Paul Burke, a partner at Commodity and Cooperator Services Inc and a consultant to the Illinois Soybean Association, said he is looking for Chinese partners to introduce soy-based industrial products and the technologies behind them.

Manufacturing soy-based products harms neither the environment nor human health, Burke said, noting that they contain no "forever chemicals" and are fully biodegradable.

The US soybean industry has been investing in developing such products for 35 years and now has many commercialized technologies, he said. The Illinois Soybean Association recently decided to begin promoting them internationally.

Growing interest

The products include soy-based lubricants, adhesive removers and sealants. One that has proved particularly successful in the United States, Burke said, is a soy-based sealant applied to asphalt, which performs more effectively than conventional sealants.

His organization plans to take part in the China International Import Expo in November. Beyond promoting branded products, Burke said, there is also the possibility of introducing the technology to Chinese companies.

Ted Brandt, vice-chairman of the North Dakota Soybean Council, met representatives of two Chinese oil crushing companies during one-on-one sessions at the conference.

"I think there's a lot of things that we could take away from each other and to grow that way," Brandt told China Daily.

Soybeans are present in far more products than most consumers realize, Brandt said. While attention tends to center on feed and food, the crop can be used to manufacture tires, shoes, cleaning products and plastics to replace petroleum-based materials.

One recent application, he said, is soy-based firefighting foam now being adopted by fire departments. The traditional foam contains carcinogens, making it hazardous to health and unpleasant to be near, whereas the soy foam is completely safe to handle.

Diaa Ghaly, managing director of Trans Globe, said his firm is a global exporter of grains and oilseeds, supplying feed mills, dairy farms and poultry farms. China is central to its operations as the source of the feed additives it imports; the company packages in China and exports its products from there.

Ghaly pointed to the rapid development of Chinese feed manufacturers, using New Hope and Haid, two major China-based global animal and aquaculture feed producers that operate internationally, as an example.

"We are not only buying from China, we are selling through Chinese feed mills that are based internationally," he said, adding that this is something both the US and China should be proud of.

His company sources additives exclusively from China because the country is competitive on price and guarantees quality, he said.

Finding potential Chinese partners, he said, was one of the reasons he came to Chicago.



A man sits outside his damaged house in a village in Lebanon, on Wednesday. MOHAMMED ZAATARI / AP

Israel confirms troop deaths as Lebanon talks underway

JERUSALEM — Israel reported on Thursday its first military fatalities in southern Lebanon in more than a month, after carrying out fresh strikes despite ongoing US-backed talks in Rome aimed at ending hostilities.

The military identified the two reservists, who were killed on Wednesday, as Harel Birenstock, 34, and Tamir Vaknin, 33.

The deaths were the first Israeli fatalities reported in southern Lebanon since June 28.

The Israeli strikes, accompanied by the first evacuation warning in weeks, came as United States-led diplomacy between Israel and Lebanon in Rome aimed at putting an end to hostilities, with Beirut seeking phased withdrawal of Israeli troops from the south.

"In response to a blatant violation of the ceasefire by the Hezbollah terrorist organization, the IDF (Israel Defense Forces) has begun conducting precise strikes in southern Lebanon," the military said in a statement.

Meanwhile, Lebanese media said four people were injured early on Thursday in Israeli airstrikes. One person died and 11 were wounded in a separate strike one day earlier.

In Rome, Israel requested that the day's talks with Lebanon end three hours early, a source in the negotiations told AFP, saying the head of the Israeli delegation, US ambassador Yechiel Leiter, had blamed alleged "misleading leaks" by the Lebanese side.

But the talks were expected to resume on Thursday for a third and final day. In previous US-sponsored talks in June, Israel and Lebanon agreed to a framework deal that involved the disarmament of Hezbollah, a gradual withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon's south and the deployment of the Lebanese army to the region, starting in test areas known as "pilot zones".

This week's negotiations are the 7th round since Lebanon was drawn into the Middle East conflict in March.

Lebanon says Israeli strikes have killed more than 4,300 people.

In its first such warning since June, the Israeli military on Wednesday told the residents of Mansouri: "In light of Hezbollah's violations of the ceasefire agreement, the Israel Defense Forces are compelled to act against it with force."

The UN's humanitarian agency had said just the night before that more than 800,000 people displaced by earlier fighting in Lebanon had begun heading back home following the recent lull in violence, though more than 360,000 remained displaced.

A US State Department official had told AFP that this week's discussions would "include expanding the pilot zone process, resolving all outstanding border issues, and working on a comprehensive peace and security agreement".

As the delegations met in Rome, Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani spoke with his counterpart from Iran, Hezbollah's main patron, and called on Tehran to halt the group's operations. Tajani, in a post shortly before the Israeli strikes, voiced hope that the talks would "yield concrete results".

Hezbollah leader Naim Qassem said on Tuesday that the direct negotiations would bring "nothing but shame, humiliation" and successive concessions for Lebanon.

Hezbollah has repeatedly rejected direct talks and refused to surrender its weapons.

AGENCIES—XINHUA

African nations face heightened risk as El Nino looms

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

African countries have been urged to step up preparations for what could become one of the strongest El Nino events on record, as climate experts warn that heavy rains, floods, droughts and other extreme weather conditions could trigger widespread humanitarian and economic impacts across the continent from October.

Meteorological and climate experts say forecasts point to a high likelihood of a strong El Nino developing later this year, prompting governments and regional institutions to accelerate disaster preparedness measures to reduce the risks posed by flooding, food insecurity, water shortages and disease outbreaks.

According to the World Meteorological Organization, or WMO, forecasts from leading global climate centers indicate that seasonal-average sea-surface temperature anomalies are expected to exceed 2.9 degrees Celsius in key monitoring regions, signaling the development of a strong El Nino event.

The WMO also forecasts a positive Indian Ocean Dipole, a climate pattern in which the western Indian Ocean is warmer than average while the eastern Indian Ocean is cooler. Combined with a strengthening El Nino, the two climate phenomena are expected to intensify weather extremes, increasing the risk of drought and flooding, particularly across African countries bordering the Indian Ocean basin.

Moses Vilakati, the African Union Commissioner for agriculture, rural development, blue economy and sustainable environment, said the projected El Nino could be the strongest since 1950, with peak intensity expected between November and February.

He warned that many regions across the continent are likely to experience severe droughts, devastating floods, prolonged heat waves, disruptions to food production, water shortages, disease outbreaks and increased humanitarian needs.

"These impacts will not only affect vulnerable households; they will also place considerable pressure on national economies, public finances and regional stability," he said.

Vilakati said lessons from the 2023-24 El Nino should serve as a call for urgency, preparedness and collective action. The event, he said, affected more than 71 million people across Southern Africa, while devastating floods in Eastern Africa displaced communities, destroyed infrastructure and disrupted millions of lives.

"History has repeatedly demonstrated that natural hazards become humanitarian disasters when preparedness is inadequate," he said. "Yet, history has also shown that timely action saves lives, protects economies and safeguards development gains."

Vilakati said preparedness requires political leadership, sustained investment, effective institutions and partnerships built on trust.

The African Development Bank estimates that the looming El Nino could inflict between $10 billion and $20 billion in economic losses across Africa, reducing GDP by 1 to 2 percent in the worst-affected countries.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, parts of the Horn of Africa that receive their main rainfall between October and December are likely to experience above-average rainfall and widespread flooding. Flood-affected areas could see significant population displacement, damage to infrastructure and crops, loss of life, and worsening food insecurity.

Across Southern Africa, rainfall is expected to be below average between October and April. Since maize is the region's staple crop and is highly vulnerable to water stress, below-average rainfall could significantly reduce the 2026-27 harvest, potentially affecting regional cereal supplies. However, bumper harvests recorded in parts of the region this year may help cushion the impact.

Potential seen for Sino-Thai tech cooperation

By **YANG WANLI** in Bangkok
yangwanli@chinadaily.com.cn

Young Chinese entrepreneurs see growing opportunities for China-Thailand cooperation across a wide range of industries, particularly artificial intelligence and digital technologies, following a visit to Bangkok.

This week, a delegation of around 20 young Chinese entrepreneurs visited the Thai capital on a study tour supported by the Global Development Promotion Center of the China International Development Cooperation Agency.

Through exchanges with Thai government officials and industry leaders — in areas including digital healthcare, education, big data, and AI — the program aimed to strengthen regional partnerships to advance digital transformation and sustainable development across the Greater Mekong Subregion and the Global South.

During a workshop on Monday, representatives from Thailand's Digital Economy Promotion Agency, or DEPA, the National Science and Technology Development Agency, and the Thai Health Tech Association outlined the country's digital development priorities, innovation ecosystem and the role of digital technologies in supporting sustainable development.

Suchana Sinthavathavorn, an official with DEPA's Digital Transformation Promotion Unit, said Thailand welcomes greater Chinese investment in digital technologies and AI.

"As AI is one of Thailand's national development priorities, we hope to strengthen cooperation with China by leveraging each other's strengths to achieve win-win outcomes," she said.

Phongchai Petsanghan, president of the Thai Health Tech Association, said Thailand is now home to more than 140 healthcare startups.

He noted that Chinese advances in gene technology and AI-assisted medical services are attracting strong interest from Thai companies seeking to upgrade their healthcare capabilities.

Lu Guoliang, a member of the Chinese delegation and director of Global Affairs at BGI Group, praised Thailand's internationally recognized strengths in wellness and healthcare services.

Lu said that BGI — one of China's leading gene sequencing companies — has launched multiple projects across Southeast Asia in recent years, including Thailand, working with local research institutions, hospitals, and government agencies to improve healthcare through advanced technologies.

Among these efforts are prenatal screening programs for diseases with high regional prevalence, including thalassemia.

"The tour has given us a much clearer understanding of Thailand's long-term development vision," Lu said. "With the country's strategic commitment to improving public health through technological innovation, we see tremendous potential for future China-Thailand cooperation."

Recognizing the growing importance of skills development to sustainable growth across the Global South, the delegation also visited the China-Thailand Luban Workshop in Ayutthaya, one of Thailand's key industrial provinces. Established in 2016, it was the first Luban Workshop outside China.

"The tour has been extremely rewarding," said Zhao Peng, a member of the delegation and Chairman of Yize Investments Limited.

"We were deeply impressed not only by the warmth and hospitality of the Thai people, but also by the enormous opportunities for cooperation between China and Thailand in vocational education."



Students learn robotics in the China-Thailand Luban Workshop in Ayutthaya Province on Wednesday. YANG WANLI / CHINA DAILY

As China-Thailand cooperation continues to deepen, particularly in fields such as AI and cloud computing, an increasing number of Chinese companies operating in Southeast Asia are driving demand for highly skilled professionals.

He added that Thailand's long-standing friendship with China and its supportive policies have further strengthened confidence in the significant potential for bilateral cooperation in cultivating the skilled talent needed for the future.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:18 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:18 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

Nation taps into deep-sea wind power

New 16-MW TLP unit is about 200 km southeast of Shenzhen

By **ZHENG XIN**
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

China has achieved another major milestone in its green energy transition as the world's first 16-megawatt tension-leg platform floating wind power unit officially commenced operations on Thursday, according to its operator China National Offshore Oil Corp.

Located in the Pearl River Mouth Basin in the South China Sea, about 200 kilometers southeast of Shenzhen, the structure stands at a height comparable to a 110-story building, said CNOOC, China's largest producer of offshore oil and gas.

Operating in a water depth of 136 meters and 136 km offshore, the facility features a 16-MW antityphoon wind turbine. It is engineered to withstand extreme 17-level typhoons with an operational lifespan of 25 years, it said.

Once fully operational, the project is expected to supply 54 million kilowatt-hours of green electricity annually to the Lufeng Oilfield grid via a 4.3-km subsea cable. This output equates to saving 15,000 cubic meters of fuel oil and reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 35,000 metric tons per year.

As an advanced offshore structure, a TLP floating wind platform comprises an upper floating body, subsea anchor foundations and a mooring system. Compared with semi-submersible platforms, TLP structures offer exceptional stability, lower steel consumption per MW, and a smaller sea-use footprint, alleviating conflicts between offshore wind development and traditional marine activities.

However, TLP platforms are internationally recognized as the most technically complex floating wind assets. Due to dense patent barriers, there were no previous domestic applications in China.

To tackle the high intermittency and volatility of wind energy, CNOOC pioneered a multi-energy coordinated power supply model combining offshore wind, conventional fuel generation and energy storage. This integration enables a high penetration of green power into the oilfield grid, replacing crude oil power generation to curtail fossil fuel dependence and lower emission intensity.

Energy analysts note that China's energy increments are accelerating toward marine domains in 2026. Driven by technological leaps, offshore wind and deepwater oil and gas development have become core engines for safeguarding national energy security while expanding green electricity supply.

Data released by the Ministry of Natural Resources show that China's preliminary gross ocean product reached 5.5 trillion yuan ($815.1 billion) in the first half of the year, marking a 5.1 percent year-on-year growth.

This growth rate outpaced the broader gross domestic product by 0.4 percentage points, lifting the marine economy's share of GDP to 7.9 percent and highlighting the structural resilience of China's coastal industries, it said.

Industry experts believe that China is rapidly cementing its leading edge in the global wind market by scaling up deep-sea infrastructure. Coastal industrial hubs across provinces like Guangdong, Jiangsu, Shandong and Fujian have fostered a clustered manufacturing supply chain spanning turbine production, subsea cabling, installation and maintenance.

Backed by this robust foundation, dozens of national-level specialized enterprises have emerged to resolve core challenges in high-end components such as turbine bearings and monitoring sensors, laying a complete, self-reliant industrial chain for China's deep-sea wind expansion.

According to the Global Wind Turbine Market Shares 2025 report by industry consultancy BloombergNEF, global wind capacity additions hit an all-time high of 169 gigawatts last year.

This 38 percent year-on-year surge was largely underpinned by a booming onshore sector in China. Thanks to stable long-term policy support, wind installations over the past decade have become increasingly concentrated in China, it said.



A Russian food booth attracts visitors during an expo in Harbin, Heilongjiang province. XINHUA

Sino-Russian trade picking up pace

By **REN QI**
renqi@chinadaily.com.cn

$134.18 billion
total value of Sino-Russian bilateral trade from January to June

China's transition from rapid scale expansion to high-quality economic development, driven by the cultivation of new quality productive forces, is injecting new momentum into Sino-Russian cooperation and global economic stability, experts from both countries said.

The driving forces behind China's economic growth are undergoing profound changes, with high-quality development emerging as its defining feature. Bian Yongzu, a senior visiting scholar at Yale University, said the booming development of smart manufacturing and new energy industries is reshaping China's competitive edge in manufacturing.

This competitive edge is clearly reflected in the new energy vehicle sector. A joint report released by research institute EVTank, Ivey Business School and the China Battery Industry Research Institute showed that global NEV sales reached 23.54 million units in 2025, up 29.1 percent year-on-year, with China accounting for 70.3 percent of the worldwide total.

Looking ahead, EVTank projects global NEV sales will hit 28.5 million units in 2026, with China contributing 19.8 million units. By 2030, global sales are expected to reach 42.65 million units, achieving an overall market penetration rate of over 40 percent. This transformation grants the Chinese economy stronger resilience amid the restructuring of global industrial chains, Bian said, emphasizing the country's unwavering commitment to expanding institutional opening-up.

This domestic economic evolution is directly catalyzing a shift in bilateral ties, underpinned by robust and expanding trade. The General Administration of Customs said that from January to June, Sino-Russian trade reached $134.18 billion, surging 25.6 percent year-on-year.

During the period, imports from Russia rose 23.3 percent to $73.6 billion, while Chinese exports to Russia jumped 28.4 percent to $60.6 billion.

Against this backdrop of expanding scale, Xu Poling, director of the Russian economy department at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of Russian, Eastern European and Central Asian Studies, pointed out that Sino-Russian economic and trade cooperation is accelerating its upgrade from a traditional "complementary" model of industries and commodities, to industrial chain collaboration and "innovative" cooperation.

The two nations have already engaged in deep cooperation in frontier fields such as quantum research, photonics, artificial intelligence and green/low-carbon development.

Looking ahead, macro-development strategies have charted a clear course for industrial docking, Xu said, adding that green transition, new energy, deep space exploration and digital information technology are expected to become crucial converging points for industrial synergy.

Reflecting on the 105th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China, Russian scholars highly commended the nation's development trajectory. Sergey Sanakoev, director of the Russian Asia-Pacific Research Center and deputy chairman of the Russia-China Friendship Association, praised China's early victory in eradicating absolute poverty as a vivid testament to the superiority of the socialist system and the CPC's outstanding leadership.

Sergey Sannikov, deputy editor-in-chief of the Russian political magazine State Figures, said that by successfully integrating Marxism with China's specific realities and long-established traditional culture, the CPC has led the country to achieve historic leaps in infrastructure, green energy and AI.

With significant economic complementarity in emerging sectors like the digital economy and smart manufacturing, China and Russia are well-positioned to further strengthen industrial synergy and achieve win-win outcomes.

Amid global turbulence, the two nations remain time-tested friends and "key constants" in a world experiencing profound changes. Guided by top-level strategic planning, bilateral pragmatic cooperation is poised for continuous quality upgrades, injecting stronger momentum into the deepening of major-country relations and global governance, Sannikov said.

AI industry surpasses 1.2 trillion yuan in '25

The size of China's artificial intelligence industry was estimated to exceed 1.2 trillion yuan ($177 billion) in 2025, up 40 percent year-on-year, according to a research institute under the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

The China Academy of Information and Communications Technology noted that China was home to more than 6,600 AI companies as of June 2026, representing 15 percent of the global total. The country has developed a complete industrial system spanning foundational infrastructure, models and frameworks, and sector-specific applications, CAICT said.

The application segment accounted for 55 percent of the entire AI industry chain in 2025, up 22 percent year-on-year. The foundational segment accounted for 38 percent and grew 59 percent, while the segment covering models and frameworks made up 7 percent and grew 189 percent.

The industry is highly concentrated in just a few regions, with Beijing, Shanghai, the provinces of Guangdong, Zhejiang and Shandong accounting for more than 80 percent of the national total, the academy said.

Large AI models, AI agents and AI chips are evolving rapidly, while AI products are diversifying and their use is expanding across traditional industries.

CAICT has led the drafting of two industry standards on defining the AI sector and identifying AI companies, aimed at providing unified standards for industry statistics, policymaking and business practice.

China will continue to advance its "AI Plus" initiative to promote the extensive and in-depth integration of AI into various sectors and fields of the economy and society.

China's vision to turn artificial intelligence from an expensive frontier technology into a resource for affordable, widely accessible applications will bring huge benefits to more countries, businesses and ordinary people worldwide, said industry experts.

Furthermore, the country is seeking to turn AI into real-world applications and a driver of economic growth. In the first half of this year, the industrial output of AI-related sectors, including integrated circuit manufacturing and in-vehicle intelligent equipment manufacturing, grew more than 30 percent.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Merck sees perfect elixir in China mkt

By **ZHANG CHENXU** and **LIU ZHIHUA**

Merck, a Germany-based science and technology giant, sees growing opportunities for long-term growth and innovation collaboration in China, its top executive in the country said, highlighting China's economic resilience and growing role as a source of global innovation.

"China's market not only absorbs innovation, but accelerates it," Rogier Janssens, president of Merck China, said in an exclusive interview with China Daily.

Janssens said first-half economic data reinforced Merck's confidence in China's long-term prospects, pointing to solid momentum in high-end manufacturing and resilient trade in high-value-added products.

China's GDP grew 4.7 percent year-on-year in the first half to 69.57 trillion yuan ($10.3 trillion), while value-added output of high-tech manufacturing rose 13.3 percent, according to data released by the National Bureau of Statistics in mid-July.

"The strength of the numbers did not surprise me. To gauge China's economic resilience, one must look beyond headline GDP figures and identify where growth originates."

New growth drivers, represented by high-end manufacturing, the digital economy and modern services, contributed more than 40 percent of the country's economic growth during the period, the NBS said.

"In a market of this scale and competitiveness, good ideas do not merely endure — they become world-class," Janssens said.

The momentum is particularly evident in innovative medicines, which, together with AI-related products and robotics, make up China's "next new three" — high-value products representing a new stage in the country's export upgrading.

Chinese companies completed 81 innovative drug out-licensing deals in the first half, with their combined potential value reaching about $110 billion — a record high and equivalent to around 80 percent of the total deal value for all of 2025, said the National Medical Products Administration.

An April report by Deloitte said China had evolved from playing a supporting role in the global biopharmaceutical ecosystem into an innovation leader, with the shift underpinned by regulatory reforms, top-tier talent, cost advantages and a large, diverse patient population.

China now has the world's second-largest biopharmaceutical sector and accounts for about 31 percent of the global innovative drug pipeline, the report said.

"China is no longer merely a destination for global innovation; it has become a significant source of it," Janssens said.

He attributed the shift to the country's pool of scientific talent, complete industrial chains and closer collaboration among companies, universities and research institutions, which enable discoveries to move more rapidly from the laboratory to commercial-scale production.

For Merck, this means going beyond bringing technologies into China to jointly develop solutions with Chinese partners for both domestic and global markets.

China's expanding semiconductor sector is also generating demand for advanced materials, a core area of Merck's electronics business, Janssens said, describing the country's industrial ecosystem as "unmatched".

The country's manufacturing breadth, depth, infrastructure and improving services for foreign investors further strengthen its appeal, he said, adding, "China is not only competitive, but essential."

These advantages underpin Merck's long-term confidence in China, Janssens said. The company has invested nearly 7 billion yuan in China over the past 10 years, which is now its second-largest market globally.

Recent investments include the expansion of high-purity reagent production capacity in Nantong, Jiangsu province, and the upgrade of its M Lab Collaboration Center in Shanghai.

For Janssens, Merck's approach captures the essence of "China Opportunity 2.0": China is not only a major market for multinational companies, but also a shared growth platform where they can work with local partners to develop solutions for both domestic and overseas' markets.

After more than 93 years in China, Merck sees growing alignment between the country's development priorities, global business needs and its own capabilities, Janssens said, adding, "We are not observers; we are growing together with China."

Contact the writers at zhangchenxu@chinadaily.com.cn



View of Merck's booth during an expo in Shanghai.
HU XUEBAI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Briefly

Insurance sector sees steady H1 growth

China's insurance industry recorded premium income of 3.86 trillion yuan ($568.5 billion) during the first half, up 3.3 percent year-on-year, with continued optimization in product structure, according to the latest data released by the Insurance Association of China. During the period, property insurers saw premium income rise 2.1 percent year-on-year, while life insurers' premium income increased 3.6 percent, the IAC said.

SAIC Motor, GM sign JV renewal agreement

Chinese automaker SAIC Motor and General Motors have announced a 20-year extension of their joint venture partnership to 2047. Both sides agreed that the renewal of the partnership is based on the foundation of nearly 30 years of successful collaboration, and both companies have cast a vote of confidence in the long-term value of the Chinese automotive market against the background of profound changes in the global auto sector.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:18 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:18 PM

BUSINESS

Humanoid robots make quantum leaps

Zhejiang firm's products do far more than jump, climb stairs, play table tennis

By **ZHENG YIRAN**
in Ningbo, Zhejiang
zhengyiran@chinadaily.com.cn



A humanoid robot picks up a beverage at a store in Ningbo, Zhejiang province, on July 29. LIU ZHIHAN / XINHUA

Can you imagine a robot doing all of your housework? Robots developed by Zhejiang Humanoid Robot Innovation Center Co Ltd in Ningbo, East China's Zhejiang province, are turning imagination into reality.

During a typical morning on a workday, a robot irons your shirt, while another robot sweeps the floor. Not far away in the kitchen, a different robot washes the dishes. With the help of humanoid robots, a busy morning is not so busy anymore.

Apart from housework, humanoid robots developed by the company are applied in industrial scenarios and retail scenarios, covering work such as clothing manufacturing, high-precision component assembly and retail work in supermarkets.

Xiong Rong is chief scientist and general manager at Zhejiang Humanoid Robot Innovation Center Co Ltd. At end-2023, Xiong — together with eight doctoral graduates from Zhejiang University — founded the company in Ningbo.

The company focuses on key technology research and development, product development, industry application and promotion of embodied intelligent humanoid robots. It focuses on cutting-edge exploration of cutting-edge models and embodied intelligence, and is committed to developing humanoid robot products that can truly serve in multiple scenarios.

The firm's core R&D team has accumulated continuous experience in the field of intelligent robots for 26 years, and has been deeply involved in the field of humanoid robots for 20 years. The technology path covers the entire chain of motion, movement and operation, from robotic arms and mobile platforms to humanoid robots.

Xu Xuecheng, chief technology officer and deputy general manager of Zhejiang Humanoid Robot Innovation Center Co Ltd, said that the team started to develop intelligent robots in 2000, and their earliest breakthrough was in mobility — automated guided vehicles in warehousing and logistics. Between 2013 and 2014, the team shouldered the National High-tech R&D Program (863 Program), and started to develop bipedal humanoid robots.

"Based on the 863 Program, we developed a bipedal robot that can play table tennis, overcoming key technical challenges," Xu said.

Now, the company has established a full stack product matrix, which is divided into three categories: fixed, wheel arm and bipedal. Fixed type mainly targets workstations that do not need to be moved, such as textile manufacturing, and is more economical from a cost-analysis perspective. Wheel arm type with a mobile chassis is suitable for scenarios that require frequent movement, such as handling packages and assembly line work; bipedal type is at the forefront of robotics technology, capable of walking up and down stairs and overcoming obstacles. It is suitable for security inspections, exhibition hall guidance, entertainment and commercial performances, and other scenarios.

Among the products, a wheel arm universal flexible operation intelligent robot is currently the most widely promoted main product. "It can cover more scenarios with its generalization, high-precision operation and stable mobility without significant cost increases. This robot is equipped with an upgraded humanoid arm, with a repeat positioning accuracy of 0.02 millimeter at the end, a powered-up range of six hours, and the ability to climb and descend inclines of 20 degrees," Xu said.

In industrial settings, the company has clearly defined directions such as handling and sorting, precision assembly and textile production.

"The difficulty of textile manufacturing lies in the fact that fabrics are flexible and difficult to recognize, and deformation during operation cannot be simulated in the simulation environment," he said.

In April, Zhejiang Humanoid Robot Innovation Center Co Ltd inked a deal with global sewing equipment giant Jack Technology Co Ltd for 2,000 units of customized humanoid robots, setting a record for the first large-scale application project of humanoid robots in the global textile industry. In the field of clothing manufacturing, the company has achieved a success rate of 98 percent in fabric slicing, a single operation time of three seconds, and a positioning accuracy of 2 mm.

According to the company, the efficiency of robots in clothing production scenarios can reach 80 percent of human capability. "The remaining 20 percent can be optimized through automation, which is a systematic optimization project. We should leverage the value of humanoid robots' 'brain thinking' rather than letting them do repetitive work," Xu said.

In commercial scenarios, the company's humanoid robots are being applied in many commercial streets. They can complete the entire process of guiding, picking up cups, making ice cream and delivering goods, with a voice delay of no more than three seconds, a visual recognition accuracy of 98 percent and a capture success rate of 99.9 percent.

Xiong said the most difficult thing in the industry now is not the lack of robots, but the uneven level of automation. For example, in the automotive manufacturing sector, chassis manufacturing is very "smart", but assembly is still very "stupid", and traditional methods find it difficult to achieve autonomous adaptation and rapid deployment.

"The pain points are not limited to a particular sector. There is great demand in the industry, but the specific application scenarios are often very trivial. There is actually interconnectivity between industries and scenarios, such as basic actions such as plugging, unboxing, retrieving and twisting, which are needed almost everywhere," she said.

"At the same time, we need to consider collaborating with industry partners, because in order to truly implement applications, we need to start from the overall perspective and think about the automation collaboration of the entire workshop and production line. Many industry automation companies have years of accumulated experience, so in addition to building tailored intelligent models and complete machine systems, we also construct convenient and easy-to-use toolchains to facilitate industry partners so as to promote professional solutions for the integration of new technologies," she added.

At present, for humanoid robots, in addition to standing steadily and walking well, there is also a threshold that truly stands in the way of practicality. Why do many robots run and jump in demonstration situations, performing well, but have no use in real life and production? The key is that the current algorithm adaptability and intelligence level are not high enough to support robots to work stably in complex and dynamic real-time scenarios for extended periods.

The answer is to immerse humanoid robots in real scenes and combine reality and virtuality. The training method of embodied intelligent humanoid robots is different from traditional machine learning. Only by constantly interacting and training in an unpredictable brick-and-mortar environment can its actual abilities be verified. Merely by watching videos and reading text, embodied intelligence cannot master action skills like humans, industry experts said.

Lin Xianping, an associate professor at Hangzhou City University, said: "Overall, China's humanoid robots have emerged from the laboratory demonstration stage and entered a critical window period of rapid technological iteration and pilot scene implementation. Relying on the complete manufacturing industry chain and the dividends of the large-scale model industry, domestic enterprises have significant advantages in machine motion control and scene-based algorithm iteration speed.

"However, the industry is still in the early stage of being able to perform, but difficult to stabilize. It's able to build prototypes but difficult to mass produce, and there are multiple bottlenecks before large-scale commercialization. Future improvement lies in autonomy of core components, upgrading of motion control and durability performance, deep integration of embodied intelligence, optimization of endurance and energy systems, and commercialization and standardization construction," he said.

Shaoxing's silicon wafers, synthetic sapphire transforming industry

By **LI JIAYING**
lijiaying@chinadaily.com.cn

Building on its roots in silicon crystal-growth furnaces, Jingsheng Electromechanical has expanded from semiconductor equipment into advanced materials, with one-ton-class synthetic sapphire emerging as a key result.

During a recent media visit to the company's base in Shaoxing, Zhejiang province, a 450-kilogram sapphire crystal was displayed in its exhibition hall. The company said it can now produce 1,000-kg-class ultra-large sapphire using the Kyropoulos growth method, setting a world record.

Synthetic sapphire combines high transparency and thermal conductivity with electrical insulation and wear and corrosion resistance. Its hardness is second only to diamond, making it suitable for light-emitting diode substrates, protective glass for consumer electronics and high-strength laser windows.

Since entering the sapphire business in 2013, the company initially developed 300-kg-class crystals. Its technical progression subsequently reached 450-kg, 750-kg and then 1,000-kg. The company has also built cutting, grinding and polishing capacity, linking crystal growth with downstream material processing, said Zhang Jun, vice-president of Jingsheng Electromechanical.

"For manufacturers, size matters. When production yields are comparable, larger crystals allow more usable material to be cut from each ingot, reducing edge losses and unit costs," Zhang said, adding that maintaining a stable thermal field and controlling defects become increasingly difficult as a Kyropoulos crystal grows in volume and weight.

The company's latest annual report said it had achieved scaled production of 750-kg and 1,000-kg sapphire ingots and substrates measuring between 4 and 8 inches. It has also developed substrates of up to 12 inches.

Jingsheng is also applying its expertise in crystal growth and hard-material processing to semiconductor silicon wafers, seeking to supply the equipment needed across the entire manufacturing chain.

"Large silicon wafers form the base material for integrated circuits, while their flatness and surface defects directly affect yields during photolithography," said Li Yangjian, head of Jingsheng's polishing equipment research institute.

For years, the market for high-end 12-inch wafer polishing and edge-polishing equipment was dominated by US and Japanese suppliers, Li said. Chinese wafer manufacturers faced high procurement and maintenance costs while relying on foreign vendors for access to key process parameters and equipment calibration.

Jingsheng has since begun to change that equation. Li said the company independently developed China's first domestically produced 12-inch edge-polishing and final-polishing machines, which are now supplied in batches to major Chinese wafer manufacturers.



A ruby weighing 150 kilograms is showcased at Jingsheng Electromechanical in Shaoxing, Zhejiang province, on Aug 1. MAN HUIQIAO / CHINA NEWS SERVICE



A staff member conducts an inspection of high-precision processing equipment at Jingsheng Electromechanical in Shaoxing on Aug 1. MAN HUIQIAO / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

More than 95 percent of the core components in its large-wafer equipment are produced domestically. The equipment can reduce overall production-line costs by about 30 percent compared with imported alternatives, Li added.

Localizing the machinery, however, addressed only part of the manufacturing challenge. Wafer polishing involves dozens of constantly changing variables, and engineers previously had to fine-tune the process through repeated trial and error.

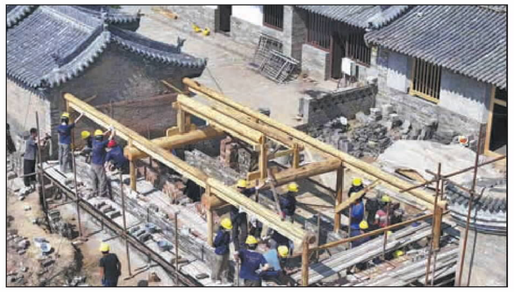
"In the past, optimizing a single set of parameters could take weeks, making it difficult to maintain consistent product quality and constraining the upgrading of China's silicon-wafer industry," Li said.

To shorten that tuning cycle, Jingsheng has incorporated artificial intelligence into the production process. At its Shaoxing plant, 12-inch automated polishing machines use AI-powered vision systems to detect micron-scale scratches and surface irregularities.

The control system analyzes the images and adjusts rotation speed, pressure and polishing-fluid ratios within milliseconds, replacing experience-based manual tuning with real-time, closed-loop process control, Li said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:18 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:18 PM



International volunteers work to renovate a wooden structure in Xifang Temple, Pingyao county, during the Gen Z workshop. WEI BO / FOR CHINA DAILY





International delegates visit Shanxi Museum during the International Cultural Heritage Protection Week. WEI BO / FOR CHINA DAILY





From left: Members of the Discovering Shanxi's Chinese Ancient Architecture tour visit a wooden structures exhibition in Datong. WEI BO / FOR CHINA DAILY International delegates of the International Cultural Heritage Protection Week visit Jinci Temple in Taiyuan on July 15. WEI BO / FOR CHINA DAILY *The Light of Yungang* show is held at the Yuci Ancient City Wall Park in Jinzhong on July 15. YAN CHANGJIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY



A model of a *dougong* bracket on display at a museum in Datong. WEI BO / FOR CHINA DAILY

Tour group reveals the treasures of Shanxi

International Cultural Heritage Protection Week goes global thanks to multimedia guests



Delegates share insights into international cooperation in cultural heritage protection during a roundtable meeting on July 16. WEI BO / FOR CHINA DAILY

By YUAN SHENGGAO

The International Cultural Heritage Protection Week, which opened in Shanxi on July 15, once again put the North China province on the global stage.

According to the Shanxi International Communication Center, one of the organizers of this event, the activity gained 830 million online views over the seven days it took place. This included 680 million views from China and 150 million views from overseas.

The rich forms of presentation, the participation of a great number of overseas delegates and the innovative methods of communication all contributed to building the international influence of the event, according to organizers.

The opening ceremony was held in Yuci Ancient City in the central Shanxi city of Jinzhong on July 15. It featured a range of shows with local characteristics and innovative forms.

Red Lantern, for instance, is a traditional folk dance performance displaying the folk arts and traditions of Shanxi, while the dance drama *Shanxi: A Land of Scenic Beauty* was performed with the province's enticing natural wonders as its backdrop.

Meanwhile, *The Light of Yungang*, a light show using modern techniques, was used to present the details of the Yungang Grottoes, one of three UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Sites in Shanxi, to audiences both offline and online.

Among the global participants attending the event were ambassadors and their attaches from six countries, and 200-plus delegates. They included representatives from various organizations of the United Nations, overseas Sinologists, cultural heritage researchers, artists and journalists, as well as overseas professionals working with China's universities and research institutions.



China Daily journalist Joe Burns shares his insights during a cultural salon on July 19. YAN CHANGJIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

A grand gala

The overseas delegates held dialogues with their Chinese counterparts, sharing insights into cultural heritage protection and exchanges among various cultures and civilizations, making the International Cultural Heritage Protection Week an event with substantial international influence.

Over the seven days, participants engaged in various activities, including academic seminars and roundtable meetings, study tours of cultural heritage sites, experiences of local life, youth workshops and the production of video documentaries.

Md. Nazmul Islam, Bangladesh's ambassador to China, attended the opening ceremony of the event and delivered a speech.

"It is of great significance to discuss cooperation in cultural heritage protection in Shanxi, which is, undoubtedly, one of the cradles of Chinese civilization," he said in the speech.

Islam spoke highly of the World Cultural Heritage Sites in Shanxi, including the Ancient City of Pingyao, the Yungang Grottoes and Mount Wutai.

He said that these are the precious cultural assets not only for China but for the entire world. "They carry the cultural values that are worth sharing, spreading and studying throughout the international community."

Evandro Menezes de Carvalho, associate professor at Brazil's Universidade Federal Fluminense and visiting professor at University of Macau, also praised Shanxi's efforts in protecting and revitalizing its cultural heritage in his speech at the opening ceremony.

"As a core part of Chinese civilization, Shanxi is an excellent example of the dynamic inheritance of cultural heritage, meaning that the ancient culture is alive in local life," Carvalho said. "In ancient towns and villages, the old buildings still offer habitats for modern-day residents and folk traditions are still a part of local life."

"This shows cultural heritage is not only a resource of the past but also something that can be passed down to the future," he added.

Based on on-site research, Chinese and foreign experts shared their wisdom at three roundtable conferences focusing on international cooperation on heritage protection, cultural heritage inheritance among the youth and international communications.

Among the activities, a roundtable conference for the younger-generation — or Gen Z — researchers attracted attention in this era of digitalization, as the participants highlighted how to use the latest technologies to protect cultural assets in Shanxi and promote them to the world.

After attending the roundtable meeting on international cooperation, Pablo Mendoza, a Sinologist from the National Autonomous University of Mexico, praised the professionalism of the event.

"This is a valuable and significant platform for cross-cultural exchanges," Mendoza said. "The frank dialogues and in-depth discussions among heritage protection professionals from different countries and regions have created a bridge for mutual learning and cooperation among various cultures."

Journey of discovery

A tour to explore Shanxi's sites of ancient architecture was an important part of the event. Dozens of visual artists, bloggers, journalists and researchers took part.

The group traveled through Taiyuan, Jinzhong, Xinzhou, Shuozhou and Datong, documenting heritage sites and local life through reports, photos, videos and paintings.

The itinerary included landmarks such as Jinci Temple, Foguang Temple, Xuankong Temple, the Yingxian Wooden Pagoda, the Yungang Grottoes and Huayan Temple. The sites range from ancient wooden structures and cliffside architecture to Buddhist cave art.

A team of reporters from TeleSUR, a multimedia platform based in Venezuela, was among the group. They produced two in-depth reports to cover Shanxi's ancient architectural sites, arousing interest in Shanxi's ancient culture among audiences in Latin America.



Delegates attend the opening ceremony of the International Cultural Heritage Protection Week in Yuci Ancient City, Jinzhong, on July 15. WEI BO / FOR CHINA DAILY

Usov Artem, a Russian blogger, showed great interest in Xuankong Temple — or the Hanging Temple — in Hunyuan county, Datong. His short video featuring the structuring techniques and the unique aesthetics of this globally renowned temple has garnered more than 10 million views on his social media accounts.

The Hanging Temple also left a strong impression on Moroccan video content creator Fatima Zahra. Drawing on her experience producing travel content for overseas audiences, Zahra said striking images often catch viewers' attention and encourage them to learn more about a place and its culture.

Several artists on the journey recorded their impressions in sketches and paintings. German illustrator and new media artist Anja Nolte focused on rooflines, *dougong* brackets, dragon motifs and decorative animal figures, including a small study of the Hanging Temple.

Chinese painter Li Zhengming said Shanxi's ancient buildings conveyed a strong sense of solemnity and historical depth. Li was struck by the relationship between the Hanging Temple and its mountain setting, saying that experiencing the structure on site revealed connections among architecture, geography and culture that books and screens could not fully convey.

Speaking at a cultural salon held during the tour, Song Yi, dean of the School of International Journalism and Communication at Beijing Foreign Studies University, said international creators often bring different visual languages, narrative rhythms and points of focus. Song said their perspectives could make Shanxi's heritage more accessible to overseas audiences.

During the journey, participants used photography, drawing and video to record different dimensions of Shanxi's heritage, from conservation work and timber construction to architectural details and daily life along the historical streets.

Two prior events

Back in June, two international events focusing on ancient architectural assets were held in Shanxi. They functioned as the preludes to the International Cultural Heritage Protection Week in July.

In mid-June, Xifang Temple — a Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) building complex in Xiqiang village of Pingyao — hosted a team of cultural heritage protection volunteers who came to restore historical structures.

The group of 20-plus members was there to take part in a Gen Z construction workshop for architectural heritage protection. Gen Z refers to people born between the mid-1990s and the mid-2010s. The volunteers were from China, France and Spain.

The 10-day event starting from June 15 was organized by the Shanxi International Communication Center, the Shanghai Ruan Yisan Heritage Foundation, the French voluntary organization REMPART and the government of Pingyao.

The Gen Z workshop is a long-term cultural exchange program between Pingyao and the rest of the world.

In 2011, the Shanghai Ruan Yisan Heritage Foundation began to cooperate with REMPART, introducing the international workshop for heritage protection to the Shanxi county of Pingyao.

Over the past 15 years, more than 200 overseas volunteers have participated in this program. They have taken part in some major heritage protection projects, including the renovation of the ancient city walls of Pingyao and a number of ancient building repair projects in the county's rural areas.

The program was included in the UNESCO World Heritage Volunteers Initiative in 2025.

On June 16, a group of 23 Hungarian artists arrived in Taiyuan, Shanxi province, beginning a 13-day journey to sketch ancient buildings in Shanxi.

The event covered seven Shanxi cities: Taiyuan, Yuncheng, Shuozhou, Datong, Jinzhong, Linfen and Lyuliang. The tour members visited a dozen ancient architectural and heritage sites — including Jinci Temple and the Yingxian Wooden Pagoda — in these cities.

At the end of the tour, the artists left some of their works in Shanxi for exhibition, especially at the China (Shanxi)-Hungary Exchange Center for Arts. The center, located at the Taiyuan-based Shanxi University School of Fine Arts, was first opened during the trip.

The artists' trip went viral on several short video platforms in partnership with the Shanxi International Communication Center, one of the organizers of the event, garnering interest from people in both China and Hungary.



International students at Taiyuan University of Technology learn to use 3D scanning and modeling technologies for heritage protection at a workshop on June 29. YAN CHANGJIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Media coverage

The International Cultural Heritage Protection Week, as well as its related events, has proven to be one of the most influential international cultural communication events for Shanxi.

According to the organizers, the events were covered by a dozen national news groups including People's Daily, Xinhua News Agency, China Daily and China National Radio, as well as the country's major news portals including Sina, Tencent News and Toutiao.com.

The Taiyuan-based Shanxi Daily media group published more than 100 reports on the events. Its Weibo content with the hashtag Unity for Prosperity, Heritage for Eternity, which was the theme of the event, obtained more than 280 million views.

An organizing official noted that the event's nine themed exhibitions had attracted more than 3 million offline visits. It had also generated a "large volume of organic sharing".

He explained that nowadays, visitors to exhibitions, especially young people, tend to share their experiences on their social media platforms. "Just imagine the influence generated from the millions of visitors," the official said.

In terms of international communication, the event has been promoted to the international community via the online platforms of 20-plus national and provincial-level media groups, as well as their overseas partners.

Statistics from the Shanxi International Communication Center show that, by July 23, the event had secured 150 million views from overseas audiences, accompanied by a large number of likes, comments and shares.

Zhang Xing contributed to this story.

ADVERTORIAL

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:18 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:18 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Washington's acute AI paradox: blame China but distill its models

A growing narrative in the political circle of the United States suggests that Beijing is behind the mounting local opposition to AI data centers nationwide. The evidence? None, beyond the unsubstantiated notion that communities "giving us trouble" must somehow be acting at China's behest.

The episode exposes an unsettling feature of today's US political discourse: allegations against China need not be substantiated to shape public perceptions. Even though the perceptions might be proved wrong. Fox News recently issued a rare on-air apology after one of its regular guests, Canadian investor Kevin O'Leary, alleged that Chinese money was funding anti-data-center groups in Utah. O'Leary later admitted he had no evidence. Local organizations rejected the accusations outright.

The release of China's Kimi K3 model reinforced a growing realization that the US' dominance in AI is no longer assured. Casting China as a malign actor is politically easier than confronting an increasingly competitive technological rival.

Yet while some in Washington try to curb China's AI industry, they are quietly acknowledging its prospects.

On Tuesday, senior US officials met executives from multiple US tech giants, including OpenAI, Anthropic and Google, to finalize a new voluntary AI governance framework. The most striking feature was what it permits: Chinese open-weight AI models will not be subject to government safety testing under the new regime. In practice, US companies are being given considerable freedom to use, fine-tune and distill Chinese open-source models. That is an implicit admission that Chinese open-weight AI has become too important to ignore.

The contradiction is difficult to miss. Washington accuses China of threatening US AI infrastructure while simultaneously allowing US companies to draw on Chinese AI innovations to enhance their own products. Chinese technology is portrayed as dangerous in political speeches but valuable in commercial practice.

For years, the US enjoyed a lead in most AI-related sectors, from advanced semiconductors and frontier models to cloud infrastructure and developer ecosystems. That lead is narrowing. Chinese companies such as DeepSeek and Moonshot AI have advanced rapidly through iteration, open-source collaboration and large-scale industrial deployment, rather than relying solely on proprietary models.

Washington's response has been a three-pronged containment strategy: restricting China's access to advanced AI chips, limiting semiconductor manufacturing capabilities and tightening controls on cloud-based computing services. These measures are proving less effective against open-source innovation, where knowledge spreads far more rapidly than hardware.

While chips and manufacturing equipment can be restricted, algorithms shared openly across global developer communities are far more difficult to contain. US companies certainly know that. Many reportedly opposed tighter restrictions on open-weight models, warning that excessive regulation would simply hand leadership in the global open-source ecosystem to China.

The White House appears to have accepted that argument now after vowing to ban China's open-source AI. Yet in doing so, it has opened another front in the competition. US technology giants — with unmatched cloud infrastructure, computing resources and developer communities — can now absorb Chinese open-source innovations, integrate them into proprietary platforms and commercialize them at an enormous scale. Openness creates influence, but it also creates opportunities for competitors.

China needs to move beyond releasing powerful models toward building a complete innovation ecosystem encompassing chips, software, data, cloud services and industrial applications.

But China's AI sector still faces some structural constraints. Efficient Chinese-native tokenization remains underdeveloped, AI chip development cycles remain long and capital-intensive and supplies of high-quality training data are expected to tighten in the coming years. Meanwhile, the US retains advantages in cloud computing, venture capital, software ecosystems and its capacity to commercialize emerging technologies. Over the long run, ecosystem builders — not hardware suppliers alone — are likely to capture the greatest value.

Hardware breakthroughs matter, but they are only one element of lasting competitiveness. The real prize is a self-reinforcing AI ecosystem in which chips, models, cloud infrastructure, applications and talent continuously strengthen one another. US restrictions are a serious challenge. But the greater danger is mistaking temporary success of one or two models for lasting competitiveness. In AI, the decisive contest will not be won by the country that delivers the next breakthrough, but by the one that builds the most resilient ecosystem.

The Economist offers wrong prescription

The word "overcapacity" has become a handy tool for some to frame China's competitive edges in a negative light and justify protectionist measures. The Economist joined this effort recently by publishing an article accusing China of having "State-driven overcapacity". Its title even suggests China should "apologize" for its "production capabilities".

Exports are an important driver of China's economy and the country's industrial production. That is true for most economies that have followed the trend of globalization. In the process, goods are produced to meet both domestic and foreign demand. North America, Europe and East Asia, as the three primary manufacturing hubs for the world, have developed their own competitive strengths. Few say there is "overcapacity" for Boeing aircraft, yet about two-thirds of the commercial planes delivered by the company are sold beyond North America, or decry as "overcapacity" the large surplus of the European Union's cosmetics sector, in which the bloc itself claims to be a "dominant cosmetics exporter". No one has asked the United States or the EU to "apologize" for outcompeting others in these industries.

But when it comes to China, the tone takes a sharp turn. Some parties have imposed arbitrary tariffs and discriminatory laws to keep out Chinese goods and investment. These steps make one wonder what these parties truly want China to "apologize" for — "overcapacity", being competitive, or providing the world with products with a high cost-performance ratio.

The Economist's story implies that China's pursuit of sci-tech self-reliance reduces its demand for imports, leading to "overcapacity" in exports. If China's indigenous innovation is treated as a "crime" simply because it reduces the country's imports of high-tech products, then the China-bashers should explain whether it was the developed economies' own restrictions on high-tech exports that drove China to commit that supposed "crime."

Those developed countries that grasp advanced technologies are still relentlessly pushing for breakthroughs, without anyone raising the alarm that by doing so they are lowering their demand for imports and filling the world with more capacity than it can handle.

The Economist also failed to mention that in the first half of this year, China's imports reached 10.74 trillion yuan ($1.59 trillion), a 22.1 percent year-on-year increase, outpacing its export growth by 8.7 percentage points. Such an amount and speed of growth reinforce the fact that China is a major consumer of other countries' exports. The Chinese market offers great opportunities for companies across the world and welcomes them to share the dividends brought by its opening-up.

As pointed out by the Chinese Ministry of Commerce's position paper on the issue, it has never been China's intention to seek a trade surplus. China's export growth is due to the scale of its economy, innovation capacity and the needs of countries to accelerate their green transition and industrial development.

Blaming China will not solve the economic malaise afflicting those finger-pointing economies whose shortsightedness has led to them relying on past legacy. Pointing the finger at China only perpetuates their self-created problems. It is the easy option to avoid the realities of a world in which past performance is no measure of future competitiveness.

It has been almost two years since the release of former president of the European Central Bank Mario Draghi's seminal report on "The Future of European Competitiveness" in 2024, which presented the need for radical reforms and proposed €800 billion ($923 billion) in annual investments to unify capital markets, streamline regulations and accelerate innovation in AI and green tech. But little progress has been made with only about 30 percent of the recommendations implemented. Those economies that benefited the most in the past cannot cry foul if their complacency and ill-judged policy focuses on Cold War confrontations have cut their nose off to spite their face.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

Physical limits of a finite planet call for real action, not weeping

There is a grim poetry to drought. As rivers retreat, they turn into archaeological sites, revealing sunken warships, mammoth bones and the haunting "hunger stones" carved by desperate people centuries ago. One inscription, etched into a boulder in Germany, delivers a warning that resonates across time: "If you see me, weep."

We are seeing them again. But today, the tears are as much for disrupted supply chains and stalled industries as for the generations who carved those stones.

Europe's great waterways — the Rhine and the Danube — are shrinking to historical lows. At Kaub, the Rhine's critical shipping bottleneck in Germany, water levels recently fell to just 25 centimeters, the lowest since records began in 1880. For cargo vessels requiring three meters of draft, the river has become effectively impassable. As a result, ships are sailing with barely 20 percent of their normal load, forcing companies to deploy multiple vessels to move what earlier took just one vessel.

The consequences extend far beyond transport. Along the Danube, Hungary's Paks Nuclear Power Plant has come perilously close to the first shutdown in its 44-year history, as dwindling river flows deprived it of cooling water, slashing output from 2,000 megawatts to just 240. In neighboring Romania, the military resorted to blasting riverbed rock with explosives to redirect water and keep a nuclear reactor operating.

Yet while climate impacts intensify, the world's most powerful nation continues to devote enormous resources to securing fossil fuels.

Extreme low-water events are no longer an anomaly but an emerging pattern. What is striking is that industries built around the Rhine — including BASF, Thyssenkrupp and countless manufacturers — compete for scarce rail and truck capacity whenever the river becomes unnavigable. BASF alone estimated that the 2018 drought cost it €250 million ($288.71 million) in operating profit. Since then, progress has remained modest relative to what practical demands require.

Companies can, and should, strengthen supply-chain resilience by diversifying transport routes, building strategic inventories and reducing their dependence on a single vulnerable waterway. But these measures address symptoms, not the disease.

The deeper problem is that many of the world's great rivers are being asked to provide drinking water, irrigate farms, cool power plants, support ecosystems and transport millions of metric tons of cargo, even as a warming atmosphere steadily draws away their moisture. Climate change is exposing the limits of infrastructure built for a more stable world.

Nature's warnings have become impossible to ignore. If the slow emergence of "hunger stones" fails to capture attention, then the thunderous collapse of polar ice into warming oceans surely should. Sadly, polar tourism remains the preserve of the rich, whose response to collapsing ancient ice is mostly selfies — not a trace of recognition that they are watching nature's funeral march. Too often these alarms are drowned out by political short-termism and economic interests that continue to prioritize fossil fuels over long-term planetary stability.

The challenge is not simply rising temperatures. It is humanity's enduring belief that every environmental constraint can be overcome through technology alone. We demand cooler homes, larger cities, faster artificial intelligence, bigger data centers and ever-higher standards of living, assuming innovation will always compensate for expanding consumption. Better governance and cleaner technologies can certainly help. But no engineering breakthrough can repeal the physical limits of a finite planet.

The "hunger stones" are messages from people who understood that water determines the fate of civilizations. Unlike them, however, we face a future for which the past offers only limited guidance. The climate system itself is changing.

The exposed riverbeds in Europe become archaeological sites not because they belong to history, but because they foreshadow the slow unraveling of the infrastructure on which modern life depends. If we see the "hunger stones", we should indeed weep. But above all, we should act before the rivers have nothing left to say.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Plan aimed at enhancing resilience of power network

Editor's note: *China has rolled out its plan for new power system construction during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period. It is a comprehensive road map for establishing a green, low-carbon and highly resilient power supply network. The National Business Daily spoke to Lin Boqiang, director of the China Center for Energy Economics Research at Xiamen University, and Zhang Lin, director of the Department of Planning and Development of the China Electricity Council, on the significance of the plan. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

China aims to establish a modern power system with a green and low-carbon electricity supply chain mix. By 2030, nonfossil energy sources are likely to account for 50 percent of the country's total electricity generation.

The country also plans to develop a modern power grid that is secure, reliable, green and intelligent, serving as a platform for resource allocation and services. It may achieve high-level consumption of more than 2.8 billion kilowatts of new energy and build a nationwide charging infrastructure network capable of supporting more than 110 million electric vehicles by the end of the decade.

The development of an electricity spot market, a capacity market and an ancillary services market is expected to accelerate. These advancements will allow price signals to better reflect the value of electricity across time and locations.

During this transition, energy storage, distributed energy resources and flexible loads will gradually shift from being passive participants to active market players.

During the 15th Five-Year Plan period, China will step up its investment in power infrastructure, optimizing the layout of transmission corridors, strengthening the backbone grid, building a new-generation distribution network and expanding energy storage and electric vehicle charging facilities. The country will also accelerate the digital transformation of the grid through the application of artificial intelligence, enhancing system coordination and flexibility.

In terms of major projects and investment, China plans to commission around 15 new ultra-high-voltage transmission lines between 2026 and 2030, increasing the capacity of west-to-east power transmission to more than 420 gigawatts.

Additionally, more than six regional power grid interconnection projects will be completed, boosting cross-regional power support capacity by roughly 40 gigawatts. At the same time, the country will accelerate the intelligent and digital upgrading of grid networks, promote the development of smart microgrids, and advance vehicle-to-grid integration.

The development of charging infrastructure is included in the five-year plan. It involves multiple segments, including equipment manufacturing, power grid upgrades and operation and maintenance. With its extensive industrial value chain, charging infrastructure also generates strong spillover effects across related industries.

China plans to establish a nationwide charging infrastructure network with more than 40 million charging stations, including around 300,000 high-power charging facilities, to support over 110 million electric vehicles by the end of the decade.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:18 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:18 PM

VIEWS

Ei Sun OH

From factory floors to green growth

When ASEAN and China established dialogue relations in 1991, their ties were cautious but steadily expanding. Thirty-five years later, the partnership has become one of Asia's most consequential economic relationships.

The next stage should be measured not only by trade flows or the number of agreements signed, but by its capacity to advance green development and strengthen small and medium-sized enterprises. These two priorities will determine the region's competitiveness, resilience and inclusiveness.

That shift reflects changing regional needs. The China-ASEAN Free Trade Area and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership have already created a strong foundation for integration.

The challenge now is to improve the quality of growth. China and ASEAN should use their partnership to build cleaner industries, support local firms and create more resilient supply chains.

Green development should therefore sit at the center of cooperation. Climate change, extreme weather, energy insecurity and resource constraints are already affecting production, logistics and food systems across the region.

For many ASEAN economies, sustainability is no longer a distant ambition but an immediate economic necessity. A partnership focused on cleaner energy and lower-carbon industry will matter more to the region's future than one centered only on conventional trade expansion.

China and ASEAN are well-placed to lead this transition together. China has developed major strengths in renewable energy, electric vehicles, battery manufacturing and clean infrastructure. ASEAN offers strong solar potential, rising energy demand, rich biodiversity and a pressing need for sustainable industrialization.

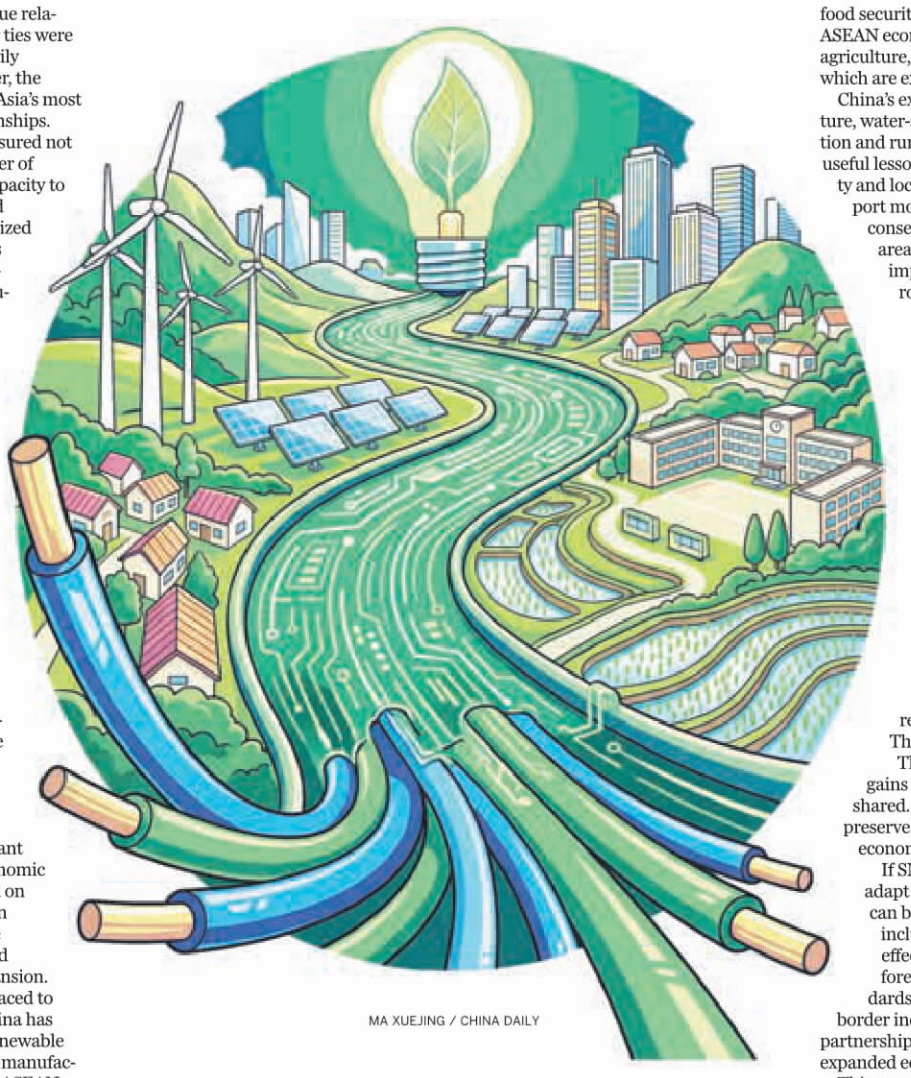
These complementary strengths open opportunities in solar and wind power, energy storage, green finance, low-carbon transport and climate-smart agriculture.

The aim should not be to add a few green projects to an unchanged model. It should be to reshape the model around sustainability.

A solar manufacturing base in Thailand, an electric bus network in Indonesia, a battery recycling facility in Malaysia or a smart-grid pilot in Vietnam would do more than reduce emissions. They would create jobs, attract investment, improve energy security and help local industries move up the value chain. Green development is not a brake on growth; it is a source of new growth.

If green growth is the destination, SMEs must be the engine. They account for a vast majority of businesses in ASEAN and play a similarly important role in China.

They hire locally, adapt quickly and connect larger industries to communities. Yet they are also the most vulnerable to transition costs. New environmental standards, higher energy prices and the need to adopt cleaner technologies can place heavy pressure on smaller firms.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Global Lens

Artificial intelligence, cloud computing and smart manufacturing can help SMEs reduce waste, improve efficiency and manage supply chains more effectively.

If China-ASEAN cooperation is to be future-oriented, it must help SMEs join the green economy rather than fall behind. That requires practical support: green financing for energy-efficient equipment and cleaner production, technical assistance to meet sustainability standards, and joint training in carbon accounting, waste reduction, circular economy practices and digital resource management.

Cross-border platforms can connect SMEs with larger firms, research institutions and investors working on clean technology.

Digital transformation can reinforce this agenda if it is used to support smaller firms. Artificial intelligence, cloud computing and smart manufacturing can help SMEs reduce waste, improve efficiency and manage supply chains more effectively.

Digital platforms can also make it easier to access green certification, compare energy options, monitor emissions and reach environmentally conscious consumers. But technology alone is not enough.

SMEs need affordable access, practical training and supportive regulation if digital tools are to translate into real competitiveness.

Green development also offers a strong framework for cooperation in agriculture, food security and rural vitalization. Many ASEAN economies still depend heavily on agriculture, forestry and fisheries, all of which are exposed to climate risk.

China's experiences in precision agriculture, water-saving irrigation, seed innovation and rural e-commerce can provide useful lessons. ASEAN's ecological diversity and local knowledge can, in turn, support more sustainable production and conservation. Cooperation in this area can protect livelihoods while improving productivity and environmental outcomes.

The broader strategic value of this agenda is resilience.

The external environment is more uncertain than it was three decades ago. Geopolitical rivalry, trade restrictions and technological fragmentation complicate regional planning.

The green transition is also uneven: some countries have advanced renewable industries, while others still face infrastructure gaps; some SMEs are ready to adopt cleaner technologies, while others lack financing and information.

These differences are not reasons to slow cooperation. They are reasons to deepen it.

The key is ensuring that the gains from green growth are widely shared. If sustainability becomes the preserve of large firms and advanced economies, it will widen inequality.

If SMEs are given the tools to adapt and compete, the transition can become a powerful engine of inclusive development. The most effective cooperation will therefore be practical: joint green standards, SME support centers, cross-border incubators, clean technology partnerships, vocational training and expanded educational exchanges.

This approach fits the way China-ASEAN relations have matured: through pragmatism, consultation and incremental progress. Its greatest achievement has been the confidence it has built among governments, businesses, universities and communities. That confidence now needs a new purpose: building a regional economy that is cleaner, more innovative and more inclusive.

The next 35 years of China-ASEAN relations should be defined by two linked goals: green development and SME empowerment. Together, they offer the clearest path to stronger growth, greater resilience and broader prosperity.

If the first 35 years were about building trust and expanding exchange, the next 35 should be about using that trust to create a greener and fairer regional future.

The author served as political secretary to former Malaysian prime minister Najib Razak from 2009 to 2011 and is currently a senior fellow at the Singapore Institute of International Affairs.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Simon Sumanjoyo Hutagalung

The next AI frontier is governance, not technology

The global conversation about the future is dominated by technology. Nations are competing to develop more powerful artificial intelligence, build advanced semiconductor industries and lead the next wave of scientific innovation.

Technological leadership is increasingly regarded as the defining measure of a nation's strength. But history tells a more complete story.

Global Lens

Every technological revolution has rewarded not only the fastest inventors, but also those whose institutions adapted quickly.

Steam power transformed economies because governments modernized infrastructure. The digital revolution flourished because institutions evolved alongside markets. Today, as artificial intelligence reshapes every sector, the decisive question is no longer who innovates first, but who governs innovation most effectively.

The next global race is not just about technological might. It is governance velocity, or the capacity of institutions to learn, coordinate and adapt at the same pace as rapid technological and social change.

In an era of accelerating disruption, governance velocity may become the most important strategic asset a nation can possess.

Recent developments illustrate why. Generative AI is advancing at an extraordinary speed, creating opportunities in healthcare, education and manufacturing while raising new questions about ethics, safety and public trust.

Climate-related disasters have become more frequent and severe. Global supply chains continue to face unexpected disruptions. In each scenario, technology is evolving faster than traditional governance.

Here, China's experience offers valuable insights. Rather than viewing governance as a static administrative system, China increasingly treats it as a dynamic capability that evolves with development.

The objective is not simply to enhance government efficiency, but also to make institutions more adaptive.

One example is AI governance. As generative AI entered mainstream use, China introduced regulatory measures designed to address transparency, security and responsible deployment while the technology was still evolving.

The approach goes beyond regulation itself. It reflects a broader philosophy that governance should move with innovation rather than follow it years later.

Another example is digital government. Across China, integrated online public service platforms have simplified access to administrative services while improving coordination among government agencies.

Data sharing and digital public services have reduced administrative barriers and enabled faster responses to citizens' needs. In this case, technology strengthens the capacity of institutions to act with greater speed and precision.

China's green transition provides another illustration of governance velocity. Over the past decade, the country has become a global leader in renewable energy deployment and electric vehicle production.

These achievements were supported not only by technological innovation but also by long-term planning, coordinated industrial policies and institutional reforms that aligned economic modernization with environmental objectives. Governance became an accelerator of transformation rather than a passive observer.

The same adaptive approach can be seen in disaster risk management. Following major floods, earthquakes and other natural hazards, China has strengthened its integrated emergency management, expanded early-warning systems and applied digital technologies to improve disaster monitoring and coordination.

These investments offer an important lesson: resilience should be built long before a crisis occurs.

None of these examples suggest that any country has a perfect governance model. Every nation continues to face new and complex challenges.

Yet China's experiences demonstrate that institutions need not remain slower than the world they govern. They can evolve through continuous learning, experimentation and innovation.

This matters far beyond China. Whether countries are developed or developing, they face remarkably similar pressures: the spread of AI, demographic change, climate risks, cybersecurity threats and economic uncertainty.

These challenges differ in form but share one common requirement — governments capable of adapting before disruption becomes a crisis.

That is why governance velocity should become a shared global objective rather than a national advantage.

The future calls not only for cooperation in technology, but also for cooperation in governance. Sharing practical experience in digital government, AI governance, disaster preparedness and green development can help countries strengthen their own institutional capacity while contributing to global resilience.

For decades, nations measured competitiveness by economic output, industrial production and technological capability.

These indicators will remain important, but they are no longer sufficient. In the age of artificial intelligence, the greatest competitive advantage is no longer technology, but the ability to manage change.

The author is an associate professor at the University of Lampung, Indonesia, and a researcher in public policy and crisis governance.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Chen Weihua

The author is a China Daily columnist.
chenweihua@chinadaily.com.cn

Enduring legacy of old generation of China hands

I was saddened by the recent passing of Nicholas Platt, a distinguished diplomat and one of the first China hands I met in New York after I began my assignment in the United States in late 2009.

Platt was among the pioneering group of US diplomats who established the US liaison office in Beijing in 1973.

He later became the US ambassador to Zambia, the Philippines and Pakistan. We met many times at seminars and events hosted by the Asia Society, where he had served as president from 1992 to 2004.

I had the privilege of interviewing Platt at the China Daily office in Times Square for a profile on his China experience, including his memoir *China Boys*.

The book talks about the early days of US-China relations, including anecdotes from US president Richard Nixon's historic visit to China in 1972.

When former US president George H.W. Bush passed away on Nov 30, 2018, I was in Brussels. Bush's China Diary mentioned Platt's contributions during their time at the liaison office, prompting me to conduct a phone interview with Platt once again.

The profile on Platt was one of many such stories I did during my nearly nine years in the US, featuring interviews with prominent figures. Sadly, some of these esteemed individuals, such as Ezra Vogel, have also passed away.

China welcomes genuine criticism. However, there is a clear distinction between constructive criticism based on facts and unfounded China-bashing.

Platt often described himself as an optimist regarding China-US relations. He was excited about the dramatic growth in bilateral relations over the decades and viewed occasional frictions between the US and China as normal since the relationship was getting bigger. He firmly believed that both sides would be able to manage these challenges effectively.

The older generation of China specialists in the US I spoke with had nuanced views of the relationship, shaped by their studies during the difficult years of the 1950s and 1960s when it was not possible to visit the Chinese mainland.

They also provided more honest analyses of the relationship because most of them were no longer working in the government and were not seeking future government jobs.

Besides, the revival of McCarthyism in the US today was much less of a concern a decade ago except for occasional China-bashing by some politicians.

In 2014, China and the US launched a 10-year visa program to promote mutual exchanges. The Barack Obama administration encouraged studying in China and learning Chinese, particularly under its 100,000 Strong Initiative.

Chinese investment was welcomed in the US and highlighted by the fact that the Chinese delegation was always the largest at the annual SelectUSA investment summit.

Additionally, for the first time the Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy was invited to attend the RIMPAC multinational naval exercise in 2014 and then again in 2016.

The China hands I interviewed in those days were highly respected. Most of them praised China on some issues and criticized it on others based on their extensive experience observing and analyzing the country.

Unfortunately, many China specialists in the US today, especially the younger generation, tend to be influenced by political correctness amid heightened geopolitical tensions.

Reading their articles and listening to their talks, the contrast with a decade ago is quite apparent. Many now mimic the confrontational rhetoric of China hawks in Washington because it would pave the way for a future role in the administration, regardless of party affiliation.

China welcomes genuine criticism. However, there is a clear distinction between constructive criticism based on facts and unfounded China-bashing.

As China specialists, their responsibility is to provide objective and balanced analyses instead of jumping on the bandwagon of smear campaigns.

This responsibility is the enduring legacy left by the old generation of China hands, like Nicholas Platt, for the new wave of China specialists.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:18 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:18 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

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

NIKOLAOS F. DIMITRIADIS

Benevolence and propriety

Digital governance begins with responsibility and accountability to ensure technology serves society as a whole not just a few



Artificial intelligence is already shaping how we learn, work, communicate, govern and even understand ourselves. Governments across the world are responding with new regulations and standards to manage these changes. These efforts are necessary, but regulation alone isn't enough. The challenge is not only how to regulate technology, but how to govern it responsibly. As digital transformation becomes integral to global development, we should pause and consider what it means for people and communities.

Digital technologies offer remarkable opportunities. They can enhance education, strengthen healthcare, make public services more accessible and help societies address complex challenges. Yet increasingly, important decisions are shaped by digital systems that most people neither understand nor control. Algorithms affect access to services, employment, education and public life, often without people knowing how those decisions are made. As these systems become more complex, the distance between those who design them and those who live with their consequences continues to widen.

Therefore, the central question is not whether societies should become more digital. The real questions are: Who will benefit? Who will decide? And who is accountable if harm occurs? These questions lead us beyond technology into the realm of ethics.

Every technological system reflects human choices, determining what is measured, valued and overlooked. These are not purely technical decisions; they are moral ones concerning people's development, security and human rights. A digital system may be fast and efficient, but efficiency alone is never enough. We should always be able to explain and justify the decisions to the people whose lives they affect.



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

Today the call for people-centered digital governance is gathering momentum. This approach requires people to be given a genuine voice in decisions that affect them. It requires transparency about how digital systems work and accountability when mistakes are made. Above all, it requires respect for human dignity. Technology should serve people, not the other way around. Before asking what technology can be achieved, we should first ask what kind of society we want to build. Ethical orientation before action is not a barrier to innovation. It is what allows innovation to deserve public trust.

While reflecting on these questions, I found inspiration in two ideas from the Confucian tradition: *ren* and *li*. Although they come from a different cultural context than my own, they speak to challenges we all face. *Ren*, or benevolence, reminds us that being human begins with care and responsibility for others. *Li*, or propriety, reminds us that these values become real through our actions and the way we treat one another. Together, they suggest that ethics is not simply a matter of laws or principles, but a way of living together.

Consider the growing use of AI to help doctors detect diabetic retinopathy, one of the leading causes of preventable blindness. AI can identify early signs of the disease from retinal images, enabling earlier diagnosis and treatment. Yet, accurate diagnosis alone is not enough. Patients also expect transparency about how recommendations are made, confidence that physicians remain responsible for the final decision and assurance that accountability is never delegated to an algorithm. In this sense, *ren* reminds us that the purpose of technology is to serve human well-being, while *li* means that this purpose must be expressed through responsible institutions, transparent procedures and accountable decision-making.

The relevance of these ideas extends well beyond philosophy. China's Global AI Governance Initiative, for example, reflects a people-centered vision of AI by emphasizing human responsibility, ethical oversight, fairness and human control. This is not a question of East or West. No culture has a monopoly on responsibility, dignity or human wisdom. Different traditions may use different words, but they often point toward the same truth: Those who shape the lives of others must remain accountable to them.

Digital governance therefore requires not only the exchange of technologies, but also a genuine dialogue between moral traditions, each contributing to a digital future that serves human beings rather than getting reduced to users, data or objects of management. Ultimately, the future of digital governance will not be decided only by better technology or more sophisticated regulation. It will also depend on the character of the people who design, govern and use these systems.

Our digital age often promises optimization, automation and systems edging ever closer to perfection. Yet, rather than perfection, human life has always been about relationships, judgment, responsibility and the ability to learn from mistakes. If digital transformation is truly to advance global development, it must strengthen these human qualities rather than weaken them.

Responsible governance begins not with algorithms or regulations, but with the recognition that every technological decision affects another human life. Digital governance earns legitimacy not because algorithms become more sophisticated, but because institutions remain accountable for how technology shapes human lives. Accountability and respect for human dignity are not constraints on innovation; they are the very conditions that enable innovation to earn lasting public trust. As AI continues to transform our societies, responsibility should remain our first design principle, because the true measure of progress is not what technology can do, but what it enables human beings to become.

The author is the founder of ETHOS Global Consulting, an international advisory based in the Geneva area, Switzerland. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

ZHANG CHI

Means of empowerment

China's new infrastructure development provides valuable lessons for other developing countries



The latest wave of technological revolution and industrial transformation, particularly the rise of artificial intelligence, has sparked a global surge in infrastructure investment. In recent years, China has consistently increased its investment in new infrastructure, with investment in the internet and related services growing by 39.9 percent year-on-year in the first half of 2026, and information transmission investment rising by 25.6 percent, according to the National Bureau of Statistics. By the end of June, China had built 5.102 million 5G base stations, establishing the world's largest information and communication network and a nationwide computing power infrastructure system, according to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology. This new infrastructure is not only a crucial engine for stabilizing growth but also a new hallmark of China's development in the digital age.

The achievements of China's new infrastructure development are evident in both scale and quality. In the communication network sector, China's 5G network leads globally, with 5G and gigabit optical networks integrated into 94 categories of the national economy. In the realm of computing power, the "Eastern Data and Western Computing" project has been deeply implemented, with the growth rate of intelligent computing power far exceeding the global average. In the green and low-carbon sector, by the end of 2025, the average power usage effectiveness of China's ultra-large computing facilities had dropped to 1.34, and over 80 percent of the new data centers at national hub nodes were powered by green energy, demonstrating a synergistic path of computing power growth and green transition.

The empowering effects of new infrastructure are continuously being unleashed, profoundly transforming China's production and lifestyle from factory workshops to mining and ports, urban governance to rural revitalization, and consumer entertainment to public welfare. According to estimates by the National Bureau of Statistics, new drivers of growth, represented by high-end manufacturing, the digital economy and modern services, contributed over 40 percent to economic growth in the first half of the year, highlighting the foundational support role of new infrastructure as a base for these new drivers.

China has accumulated a series of effective and valuable experiences in advancing new infrastructure construction, which are worthy of serious consideration by countries worldwide as the global demand for new infrastructure grows.

First, adhering to planning guidance and coordinated advancement.

New infrastructure construction involves significant investment, long cycles and a wide scope. China leverages its institutional advantages to implement top-level design. The 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) outlined the strategic task of accelerating new infrastructure construction, and the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) proposes appropriately advancing construction of new infrastructure, detailing work approaches in areas such as integrated computing networks, satellite internet, information communication networks, data infrastructure and low-altitude infrastructure. This continuous planning and deployment maintains policy continuity and stability while keeping pace with technological development and industry demand, ensuring the systematic, forward-looking and coordinated construction of new infrastructure.

Second, combining an effective market with a proactive government.

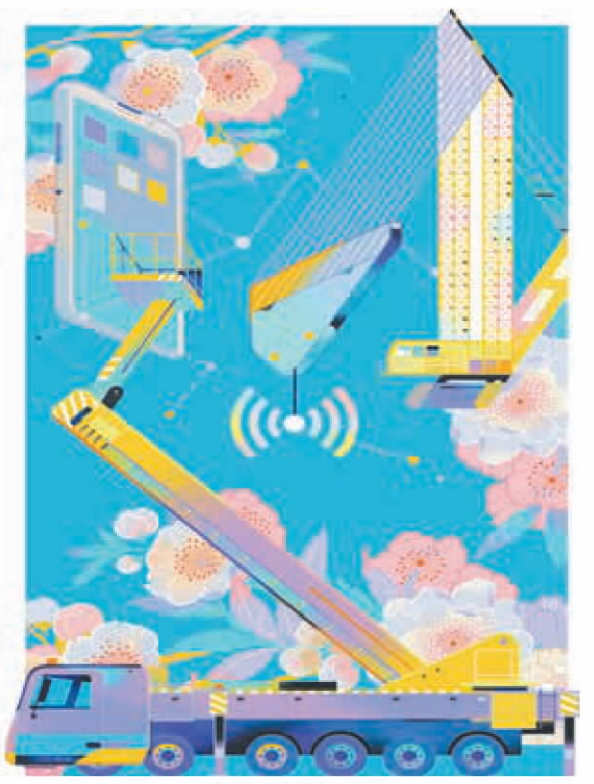
China's new infrastructure development has formed a pattern of diverse stakeholders participating together. The government focuses on supporting projects with strong foundational, public and spillover effects, actively guiding social capital into key areas such as new infrastructure through tools such as special bonds, real estate investment trusts, and industrial investment funds. Reforms in monopoly industries create conditions for private economic entry. For instance, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology has stated that it will further promote the opening of telecommunications services to private capital and support private enterprises, participating in data centers, satellite internet, the construction of 5G and industrial internet in various ways.

Third, pursuing simultaneous construction and utilization, and promoting construction through use.

China consistently adheres to the demand-oriented and application-driven approach, integrating the cultivation of application scenarios throughout the construction process to drive construction through application and promote application through construction. From the initial commercialization of 5G, China has simultaneously advanced industry application pilot demonstrations, expanding from the consumer internet to the industrial internet and extending services from individuals to production empowerment. The construction of computing power infrastructure does not blindly pursue installation scale. In 2023, the action plan for the high-quality development of computing power infrastructure was issued, emphasizing demand-driven and strengthened empowerment, and promoting the deep integration of the digital economy with the real economy.

Fourth, championing open cooperation for mutual benefit.

China consistently promotes new infrastructure construction with an open and inclusive mindset, avoiding closed, exclusive small circles. The country continues to expand its openness, conducting open trials of value-added telecommunications business in Beijing, Shanghai, Hainan and Shenzhen, allowing foreign enterprises to operate internet data center businesses independently in pilot areas. High-quality construction of the Digital Silk Road is underway, with cross-border optical cable infrastructure being built with partners. The 2Africa submarine cable, the world's largest transoceanic submarine cable system, connects 33 countries across Asia, Africa, and Europe, benefiting approximately 3 billion people and helping developing countries address digital infrastructure shortfalls.



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

As a developing country, China faces several challenges in advancing new infrastructure construction: there are still shortcomings in some key core technologies, and construction and application levels are uneven between regions and between urban and rural areas. Small and medium-sized enterprises face high integration and application costs, and new challenges have arisen in data and network security. To address these issues, China is intensifying efforts to tackle key core technologies, leveraging the advantages of a new national system to overcome "bottleneck" problems; continuously advancing inclusive new infrastructure construction to narrow regional and urban-rural gaps; issuing supportive policies to reduce the digital transformation costs for small and medium-sized enterprises and cultivating more grounded application scenarios; and coordinating development and security to improve the network and data security governance system.

The practice of China's new infrastructure construction offers valuable insights for countries worldwide, especially developing countries, to advance development transformation.

First, new infrastructure requires forward planning.

Infrastructure is a key pioneer for economic and social development, especially in the digital age. For many developing countries, seizing the historical opportunity of the new technological revolution and appropriately advancing new infrastructure construction is an important choice for achieving leapfrog development. The gap in traditional infrastructure may take decades to catch up, but new infrastructure offers the possibility of "overtaking on the bend".

Second, new infrastructure has public characteristics.

New infrastructure should not be a luxury for a few enterprises or individuals but should be a public good benefiting all people. In promoting new infrastructure construction, China pays special attention to extending it to rural areas, grassroots and underdeveloped regions. Remote medical care now covers all counties nationwide, and the new infrastructure is becoming important support for promoting common prosperity. This highlights to countries worldwide that digital and intelligent transformation should allow the fruits of technological development to benefit all people more fairly.

Third, new infrastructure requires systematic integration.

New infrastructure does not exist in isolation but is deeply integrated with traditional infrastructure and the real economy. Countries advancing new infrastructure construction should not build networks or buy equipment in isolation but should focus on system integration and integrated application to fully leverage the multiplier effect of new infrastructure.

Fourth, new infrastructure has global characteristics.

Leading countries have a responsibility to help developing countries enhance their new infrastructure levels. All countries should abandon zero-sum thinking and engage in practical cooperation in standard-setting, technology research, and development and application promotion, allowing new technologies represented by AI to be shared and governed by all countries, benefiting all nations fairly. Countries should work together to build a more inclusive, win-win global development community with a shared future.

The author is an associate researcher at the Institute of Economics at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:18 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:18 PM

CHINA

Opera class



A Peking Opera performer interacts with children during a summer public welfare class in Dongjie village, Anyang, Henan province, on Thursday. The initiative introduced the traditional Chinese opera into classrooms in rural areas, offering local children a hands-on experience of traditional culture and the unique charm of this national treasure.

BI XINGSHI / FOR CHINA DAILY

New rules aim to strengthen consumer protection in GBA

Guangdong targets cross-boundary consumption and complaint handling

By ZHOU MO in Shenzhen
sally@chinadailyhk.com

Guangdong province has issued new regulations to strengthen consumer protection cooperation with the Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions, a move expected to facilitate cross-boundary consumption and boost confidence in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area's integrated consumer market.

The regulations, including the Guangdong Province Consumer Rights Protection Regulations and the Guangdong Province Regulations on Promoting Consumer Rights Protection Cooperation in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, were officially unveiled earlier this week and will take effect on Oct 1.

As a specialized regulation focusing on cross-boundary consumer protection cooperation, the latter aims to improve coordination among consumer protection authorities, address challenges arising from increasingly frequent cross-boundary consumption and contribute to the development of a high-quality living area across the 11-city cluster.

Under the regulation, consumer councils in Guangdong and the nine mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area will strengthen cooperation with their counterparts in Hong Kong and Macao through agreements, cooperation mechanisms and information sharing. The three sides will enhance collaboration in areas including cross-boundary complaint handling, consumer education, dispute mediation and consumer risk warnings.

The regulation comes as cross-boundary exchanges in the Greater Bay Area continue to expand.

Shenzhen's ports recorded 273 million cross-boundary passenger trips in 2025, including 170 million made by Hong Kong and Macao residents, up 9 percent year-on-year, according to the Office of Port of Entry and Exit of the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government.

As more people travel, shop and spend across the region, demand for consumer protection has also grown.

According to the Hong Kong Consumer Council, Chinese mainland consumers filed 5,192 complaints against Hong Kong traders in 2025 involving online shopping, including complaints related to three major mainland e-commerce platforms registered in Hong Kong. During the same period, complaints filed by Hong Kong consumers against mainland traders rose by more than 40 percent year-on-year.

The figures underscore the need for closer coordination among consumer protection bodies across the Greater Bay Area.

"Against the backdrop of the Greater Bay Area featuring one country, two systems and three legal jurisdictions, exploring cooperation in cross-boundary consumer protection has pioneering significance nationwide," said Wu Jingsong, director of the research center for local legislation and law enforcement risk assessment at South China Normal University.

Wu said the regulation serves as a bridge connecting the three consumer markets. He added that establishing a cross-boundary complaint transfer platform, as outlined in the regulation, would help transform institutional trust into consumer confidence and support closer economic exchanges within the region.

Jiang Baoguo, a professor at the School of Law at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, said the regulation responds to the growing demand for cross-boundary consumer protection while building on years of cooperation among Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao.

It promotes the "soft connectivity" of rules and mechanisms in the Greater Bay Area and provides legal support for building a high-quality living area suitable for living, working and traveling, Jiang said.

Consumers also welcomed the new regulation, saying it would make cross-boundary consumption more convenient and provide stronger protection when disputes arise.

"I frequently travel to Shenzhen for dining, shopping and entertainment, and the two places do have different consumer protection systems," said Liu, a consumer from the Chinese University of Hong Kong who gave only her surname.

"I believe closer cooperation between Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao will give us greater confidence when making cross-boundary purchases."

Chen Yanshan contributed to this story.

Harbin brings winter indoors in height of summer

HARBIN — Alejandra Palacios found herself moving from summer heat to winter chill in just a matter of minutes. One moment, she was strolling in almost 30 C warmth in summer clothes; the next, she was bundled in a thick down jacket as the temperature plunged to around minus 10 C.

Inside an ice-and-snow pavilion at Harbin Ice-Snow World in northeastern China, the Nicaraguan visitor wiped the fog from her phone lens to reveal an ice-carved castle and cathedral glowing in violet-blue light. Snowflakes drifted down as tourists swooshed down ice slides on rubber tubes.

"They've brought winter into summer, and carved the ice into something so magnificent and delicate. It's astonishing," she said.

Harbin, the capital of Heilongjiang province, is known as China's "Ice City" for its freezing winters, ice sculptures and winter sports. After the outdoor section of Harbin Ice-Snow World, the world's largest ice-and-snow theme park, closed this February, its indoor ice-and-snow pavilion took over, offering visitors a cool escape from the summer heat.

According to Sun Zemin, deputy marketing director at Harbin Ice-Snow World, the pavilion opened in the summer of 2024. The 23,800-square-meter venue maintains an interior temperature between -8 C and -12 C and uses about 20,000 cubic meters of ice.

"The pavilion features natural ice harvested from the Songhua River in winter and preserved at low temperatures in sealed storage, as well as colored ice, bubble-free ice and frozen roses made by ice-making factories," Sun added.

> "They've brought winter into summer, and carved the ice into something so magnificent and delicate. It's astonishing."
>
> **Alejandra Palacios,** a visitor from Nicaragua

Those who visit the park can also enjoy indoor ice shows that combine figure skating, acrobatics and live music.

Ashley Martinez Aponte, a visitor from the Dominican Republic, lingered long after the performance had ended. "It was such an unforgettable show. I think everyone should come and appreciate this piece of art on ice," she said.

The park's operator said that the pavilion's single-day visitor count exceeded 5,000 at its peak this summer. The park draws not only domestic tourists escaping the heat from southern China, but also travelers from Singapore, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea and other countries.

Beyond the ice sculptures, shows and rides, off-season winter sports are emerging as a new draw for Harbin's summer tourism — a fresh way of turning its winter chill into a hot season attraction.

At a year-round indoor ski resort in Harbin's Songbei district, beginners have been learning turning and braking with coaches this summer, while seasoned skiers race down the slopes, kicking up clouds of snow.

Lin Shuyue, a senior student from Xiamen in East China's Fujian province, recently visited Harbin with her classmates on a graduation trip. Though they have access to indoor ski slopes back in the south, they made a point of adding this ski resort to their itinerary.

"You can ski indoors in the south too, but it just doesn't feel the same as the 'Ice City'," Lin said, adding that with greater vertical drops, more advanced slopes and the city's immersive ice-and-snow culture, skiing in the height of summer here is a truly unique experience.

Spanning around 80,000 sq m, the indoor ski resort features eight slopes of varying gradients, with a maximum vertical drop of 80 m. It's the perfect venue for skiers of all skill levels. Thanks to its year-round temperature control and snow-making systems, ski training and recreation are no longer limited by the weather outside.

"We are committed to making winter sports accessible all year round, creating all-season, all-age ice-and-snow experiences," said Song Guangxu, who is in charge of the resort. In addition to daily operations and ski instruction, the facility also helps sustain visitor flows by hosting professional competitions, family-oriented events and public ice-and-snow experience programs.

These indoor ice-and-snow projects are weaving themselves into Harbin's broader summer tourism market, fueling a travel boom during the peak season. Travel platform data shows that flight bookings from major cities across the country to the "Ice City" have surged since late June, driven by a combination of graduation trips and family summer getaways, with young travelers making up a significant share of the city's summer visitors.

Li Zhuomin, deputy director of the Harbin city bureau of culture, radio, television and tourism, said the city is building a more stable year-round supply of ice-and-snow products through projects such as indoor theme parks, ice-art exhibitions and indoor ski resorts.

China's ice-and-snow economy exceeded 1 trillion yuan ($147 billion) in 2025, according to a report released this year by the China Tourism Academy. Indoor ice-and-snow complexes have become one of the most active investment categories in the sector, further breaking down the climatic and seasonal constraints on ice-and-snow consumption.

XINHUA

China's lunar atlas to aid future exploration goals

By LI MENGHAN
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

China has completed a geological map of the entire moon at a scale of 1:5,000,000, providing a comprehensive reference for lunar science research and future exploration missions.

Scientists at the Institute of Geology of the Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences led the compilation of the map using data from the Chang'e lunar exploration program. The map identifies more than 13,000 impact craters and 81 impact basins, while classifying 14 types of geological structures and 17 types of rocks across the lunar surface.

The main map measures about 280 centimeters long and 120 cm high and is accompanied by separate geological maps of the moon's north and south polar regions.

The project also improves scientists' understanding of the moon's geological history by refining its timeline of major events. Researchers revised the dating of the Aitkenian period — marked by the formation of the South Pole-Aitken Basin, the moon's largest known impact basin — to 4.33 billion years ago. They determined start dates of 4.17 billion years ago for the Nectarian period and 3.92 billion years ago for the Imbrian period. The study also produced the first global subdivision of the moon's later geological history, allowing scientists to better distinguish different stages of its evolution.

Researchers also updated the inventory of lunar rocks and minerals by using higher-resolution maps of mineral distribution and improved rock classification standards. The work was supported by findings from the Chang'e 4 and Chang'e 6 missions.

Based on those samples, scientists identified a previously unrecognized rock type, known as gabbronorite, a dark, coarse-grained igneous rock formed deep underground in the South Pole-Aitken Basin. The discovery provides rare direct evidence of materials that originated deep beneath the moon's surface, offering new clues to its internal structure and evolution.

To improve both scientific accuracy and readability, the team also adopted varying mapping standards for different types of geological features. This approach preserves important details without making the large-format map overly complex.

Yang Zhiming, director of the institute, said the map will provide important scientific support for China's future lunar research station construction, landing site selection and deep-space exploration. Yang said that by leveraging AI technologies, the team plans to compile a new-generation 1:5,000,000-scale geological map of Mars to support the upcoming Tianwen 3 mission.

Major US awards for 2 Chinese meteorologists

By ZHAO YIMENG
zhaoyimeng@chinadaily.com.cn



Zhang Renhe



Miao Shiguang

Two Chinese meteorologists have been named recipients of major awards from the American Meteorological Society, marking growing international recognition of China's contributions to climate dynamics and urban meteorology.

The AMS recently announced the recipients of its 2027 awards and honors on its official website. Zhang Renhe, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and a professor in the Department of Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences at Fudan University, will receive the Sverdrup Gold Medal, while Miao Shiguang, president of the Institute of Urban Meteorology in Beijing, will receive the Helmut E. Landsberg Award.

Zhang was honored for his fundamental contributions to understanding Asian monsoon variability in relation to ocean-atmosphere interactions in the northwest Pacific and coupled climate modes such as the El Nino-Southern Oscillation, or ENSO.

Established in 1964, the Sverdrup Gold Medal is awarded annually to a scientist for outstanding contributions to understanding interactions among the oceans, atmosphere, cryosphere and biogeochemical processes.

Zhang has spent decades studying climate dynamics, with research spanning large-scale tropical air-sea interactions, the Asian monsoon and the meteorology of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. His work has advanced scientific understanding of the mechanisms driving climate variability across Asia and beyond.

He currently serves as co-chief scientist of the Asia-Australia-Africa monsoon international scientific program and will lead major international research initiatives proposed by China to promote global collaboration on monsoon research.

Miao will receive the Helmut E. Landsberg Award for pioneering contributions to urban meteorology, climate science and numerical modeling that have advanced weather forecasting, disaster risk reduction and urban resilience, according to the AMS.

His research has focused on both the scientific foundations and operational applications of urban weather monitoring and forecasting. He systematically revealed how urbanization alters local meteorological conditions and developed innovative multi-scale numerical modeling techniques for cities.

Miao also led the development of an advanced high-resolution numerical prediction platform that provides more accurate forecasts for complex urban environments.

Established in 2007, the Helmut E. Landsberg Award recognizes outstanding contributions to the understanding of urban atmospheric processes, the impact of urbanization, numerical modeling and precision forecasting.

The China Meteorological Administration said the awards highlight the growing international influence of Chinese scientists in atmospheric sciences.

Brick by brick



Visitors admire a grand LEGO model of the panoramic Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127) painting *Along the River During the Qingming Festival* in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, on Wednesday. Measuring 26.5 meters long and 1.8 meters wide, the model was crafted from nearly 3 million LEGO bricks. LI ZHONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:18 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:18 PM

LIFESHANGHAI



Left: A Tang Dynasty (618-907) treasure flower motif inspired by Buddhist art. **Middle:** The national treasure-level "Five Stars Rise in the East" brocade arm guard, unearthed in 1995 at the Niya site in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region and now housed at the Xinjiang Museum, is regarded as one of China's earliest surviving calligraphic brocades. **Right:** The Tangcao, or scrolling floral, motif, a hallmark of Tang Dynasty decorative art. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Silk shines on the global stage

As an iconic Chinese symbol, an exhibition highlights the evolution of patterns that opened international dialogues throughout dynasties, **Wang Xin** reports.

Silk has been one of Chinese civilization's iconic cultural symbols over thousands of years. The unfading patterns are often seen as its "soul", mirroring the culture and social conditions of that time as well as embodying ancestors' observations of nature and daily life.

An exhibition hosted by the Shanghai Social Sciences Development and Research Center and Donghua University Press opened on July 27 in Shanghai, bringing together over 100 representative silk patterns spanning five millennia.

Xie Fanhui of the Shanghai Social Science Museum, the exhibition's venue, shares with China Daily that outstanding traditional Chinese culture is one of the museum's main themes in its exhibition.

"With this exhibition, we aim not only to trace the millennia-long evolution of silk patterns, but also to explore the Chinese cultural roots embedded within these silk patterns through visual, tactile and interactive displays, bringing them from the depths of history into the daily lives of the public," says Xie.





Models present creations during the JEANSWEST by Huang Gang runway show at China Fashion Week 2025 in Beijing on Sept 13, 2025. The collection reimagines traditional silk patterns with a fresh, contemporary edge. JESSICA LEE / FOR CHINA DAILY

The grand silk scroll etched with splendid ancient civilization patterns begins in the Xia (c. 21st century-16th century BC) and Shang (c. 16th century BC-11th century BC) dynasties. Silk was often used to wrap ritual items during the period, and the patterns, mostly geometric shapes representing clouds and thunder, are deeply connected with the bronze culture, symbolizing the natural rhythms of the universe.

Over the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods (770-221 BC), silk weaving techniques saw significant progress, and the treadle loom emerged. Carrying on the traditions of the previous dynasties, the patterns became more complex during this time. They incorporated the Chu culture's unique charm, laying the foundation for the flourishing of silk art in later dynasties. Chu was a vassal state to the Western Zhou Dynasty (c. 11th century-771 BC) from about 2,000 years ago.

Representative patterns of the era include diamond patterns resembling ancient ear-shaped cups and dragon-phoenix-tiger motifs embodying the Chu people's worship of totems and their ideas of the supernatural world.

With the formation of a unified regime in the Qin (221-206 BC) and Han (206 BC-AD 220) dynasties, comprehensive ritual norms were established, and the Silk Road began to take shape. Confucian thought gradually integrated into folk aesthetics, and the silk patterns also reflect the bold, expansive characteristics of the era.

The representative cloud motif is regarded as the soul of Han Dynasty patterns. The pattern used fluid arcs to simulate clouds and was decorated with auspicious creatures to embody the Han people's pursuit of eternal life and immortality.

Calligraphic brocade with auspicious words and dogwood patterns was also popular at the time, including the national treasure-level artifact "Five Stars Rise in the East" brocade arm protector from the Xinjiang Museum, unearthed in 1995 at the Niya site in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.

With the deepening of ethnic integration, the eastward expansion of Buddhism, and the prosperity of the Silk Road, more foreign elements began converging with Chinese cultures in the Wei, Jin, and Southern and Northern Dynasties (220-581), giving rise to several new motifs, including lions, elephants and peacocks, as well as beaded motifs and continuous, swirling honeysuckle patterns.

The Sui (581-618) and Tang (618-907) dynasties marked the golden age of ancient Chinese silk art. The nation's prosperity, cultural openness and craft innovations gave rise to elegant and grand silk patterns, including the harmonious Lingyang Gong pattern, the vibrant scroll-work or Tangcao pattern, and the treasured flower pattern featuring Buddhist culture.

Wen Run, curator of the exhibition and professor at the College of Textiles, Donghua University, summarizes the silk patterns of the Tang Dynasty at their peak prosperity as "rich, lush, exotic, and vibrant".

"The patterns were rich, diverse, full, and grand, combining a strong exotic flair with vivid colors. They showcased the dynasty's inclusiveness and openness as a major power, and even exerted a far-reaching influence on Japan and many parts of Southeast Asia, becoming a world-renowned symbol of Eastern aesthetics," Wen says.

As the agricultural civilization of the Central Plains underwent more profound interactions with nomadic civilization in northern China and the Islamic traditions from the Western regions, silk patterns of the Song (960-1279) and Yuan (1271-1368) dynasties further transcended ethnic boundaries and became more diversified in their themes and styles.

Drawing inspiration from the natural world and everyday life, they not only showcase the refined and understated literary sensibilities of the Song Dynasty, but also incorporate the majestic and unadorned nomadic spirit of the Liao Dynasty (916-1125) and the diverse court styles of the Yuan Dynasty.

Traditional Chinese silk patterns and textile techniques reached a new peak in the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, during which the locally accumulated artistic essence of traditional patterns was delicately blended with extensive cultural exchanges with the outside world. Focusing on "auspicious" themes, the silk patterns also saw a deeper fusion of courtly aesthetics and folk tastes.

Since the late Qing Dynasty, traditional Chinese silk patterns became more simplified. Meanwhile, Western silk products began flooding the nation with refreshing designs, inspiring local innovation with more personalized modern aesthetics.

In the early 20th century, several unconventional motifs and design styles gained wide popularity in silk patterns, such as roses, tulips, creeping weeds, trumpets, pine cones, and plaid.

Wen explains that as traditional handweaving, plant-based dyes and the master-apprentice tradition gradually gave way to machine weaving, chemical dyes and modern educational methods, exotic motifs, including Western Art Nouveau and Art Deco styles, were integrated into local patterns.

After the founding of the New China, the silk industry played a critical role in contributing to the nation's economic development and diplomatic needs. In the 1950s, the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe were the main export destinations for silk products adhering to traditional styles. After the 1960s, the market shifted toward Western nations, and printed silk patterns grew rapidly.

As the nation launched reform and opening-up in 1978, the silk industry became more connected with the international art and design community. Silk patterns evolved from realism to abstract styles, and traditional Chinese techniques were cleverly refined to align with global fashion trends.

Wen notes that traditional silk patterns have drawn a fresh wave of public attention since 2001, when leaders of the APEC economies gathered in Chinese silk attire at the 2001 APEC meeting in Shanghai.

Entering the 21st century, traditional silk patterns, as a cultural heritage, are continuously evolving and increasingly integrated with modern digital technologies and design creativity, shining brightly again on the global stage.

"Silk is a gift from China to the world. It is biodegradable, renewable, and sustainable. Silk patterns are symbolic carriers of our history, culture and the whole profound Chinese civilization. They are inclusive, continuously evolving with great vitality.

"We hope more people will learn more about them, and discover the timeless beauty and charm of our traditional culture," says Wen.

Contact the writer at wangxin2@chinadaily.com.cn

Cultural constellations are stars in bridging ancient and modern art forms

By **WANG XIN**

Featuring a blend of ancient Chinese cultural artifacts and the creations and collections of contemporary artist Zhao Zhao, the exhibition *Co-Savor* is ongoing at Aurora Museum in Shanghai.

Running through Dec 6, the exhibition leverages the museum's rich collection of artifacts, while taking a unique approach to bridging ancient and contemporary art forms.

The title, *Co-Savor,* is drawn from the Song Dynasty (960-1279) poet Su Shi's *First Ode on the Red Cliff*. With a philosopher's insight, Su celebrated the abundance and eternity inherent in nature, pointing to a harmony that transcends time, space and individual boundaries, which echoes with a profound spiritual resonance.

"We at the museum have been exploring artifacts to bring ancient societies back to life. But if we seek to truly maintain the vitality of these preserved ancient civilizations, we need to let them connect and resonate with contemporary society and its way of thinking," says Ginger Xun Jingyuan, curator of the exhibition and director of the museum. "Zhao's creation is a perfect fit."

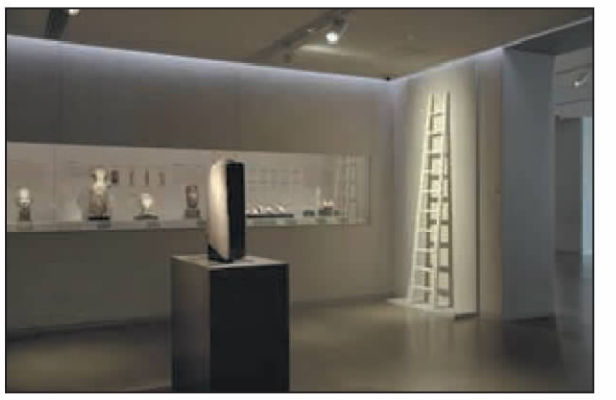
Xun highlights that Zhao's art often deconstructs and reassembles established cultural symbols such as jade, ceramics and statues, and reinterprets them with a variety of media and materials including glass, cotton and painting.

Zhao keeps exploring the relationship between individuals and the rest of society. His work is developed around the subtle emotional changes of people confronted with diverse cultural influences. He has won numerous honors and awards worldwide.

A striking piece by Zhao among the exhibits is *Jade Constellations*, an extension of his work *Constellations*. The artist inlaid ancient Chinese jade *bi* discs into shattering points on large pieces of glass with radial cracks, resembling a violent starry sky.

As one of China's most revered cultural symbols, jade has been honored for millennia as a vessel of ritual and ceremony. Surrounded by shattered traces, the jade *bi* discs are symbolized as wormholes born at the instant of an extreme energy burst in the universe, which connect the ancient ritual order and the vast cosmos.





Left: Chinese contemporary artist Zhao Zhao. **Right:** *Chinese Ladder*, carved from white marble in 2019, is among Zhao's works on display. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Born in Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region in 1982, Zhao has long explored diverse ancient cultural heritages. Despite being a contemporary artist, Zhao notes that ancient art has always been his "essence and inner core".

Inspired by his personal life experience of volunteering in the cotton fields in his childhood, the artist began creating his Sky Fire series in 2016, among which is *Sky Fire — Tang Dynasty Architecture,* which is primarily made of cotton.

Instead of a paintbrush or other tools, Zhao uses a lens to concentrate sunlight and guide a spark from 150 million kilometers away onto the surface of the cotton. As the heat travels across the surface of the fabric, it leaves scorched traces that gradually reveal the image of a Tang Dynasty (618-907) building. Tang architecture, largely constructed from timber, was inherently vulnerable to fire. Yet in Zhao's work, these structures undergo a paradoxical rebirth through the very forces of fire and light.

"I believe ancient and contemporary art share the same essence and are intrinsically connected. Regardless of time, space, culture or medium, it is all simply art for all humankind. It is art that makes us human," says Zhao.

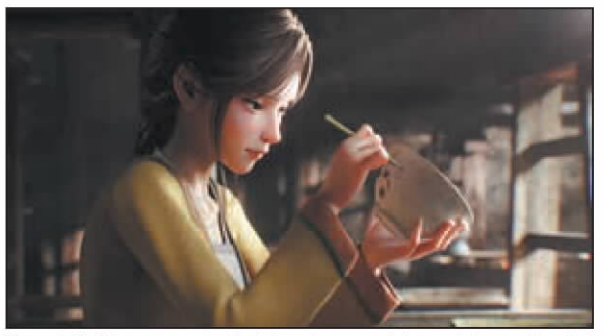
The exhibition invites visitors to step into an artistic dialogue spanning a thousand years. It is more than a simple juxtaposition of past and present, but explores the enduring threads woven through Chinese civilization, reflecting on timeless themes such as heaven, humanity and morality.

"In this symphony of ancient artifacts and contemporary art, may you find a space for reflection on time, art and the essence of culture, sharing in the beauty of civilizations and co-savoring the fullness of life," reads the preface of the exhibition.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:18 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:18 PM

LIFE





From left: Players can try their hand at porcelain-making and craft their own one-of-a-kind ceramic pieces in the mini-game, *Digital Jingdezhen: Porcelain Craft Adventure*. The mini-game is inspired by Jingdezhen's UNESCO World Heritage bid. One chapter traces the origins of blue-and-white porcelain. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Porcelain heritage enters the game



The game faithfully re-creates the landscape of Jingdezhen's heritage site.

Players explore ancient ceramic traditions inside an immersive virtual world driven by advanced AI, **Bai Shuhao** reports.

The game's goal seems simple enough: become a master porcelain maker.

When the loading screen fades, players find themselves in a virtual Jingdezhen, the Chinese city located in Jiangxi province, whose kilns supplied emperors, merchants and royal courts around the world for centuries. Before touching a lump of clay, however, a few more pressing questions come to mind.

Why should I become a master potter?

"Because every piece of porcelain, from mud to fire, is in your hands," an elderly kiln master replies. "What you make speaks for you."

How do I get there?

He says: "Start by kneading clay and throwing it on the wheel. Then learn painting, glazing, and tending the kiln. Every step matters."

Where should I learn?

"If you want to understand porcelain," he answers, "there is nowhere else."

The voice belongs to the owner of Zhiyi Kiln, an AI-powered master potter in *Digital Jingdezhen: Porcelain Craft Adventure*, a mini-game released on the same day UNESCO inscribed the Jingdezhen Handicraft Porcelain Industry Sites on the World Heritage List.

More than a guide, the virtual craftsman serves as a teacher and storyteller, answering players' questions — including some unexpectedly difficult ones — as they progress from novice apprentices to skilled artisans. Along the way, they also discover the long history of Jingdezhen's ceramic industry and its centuries-old links with the Maritime Silk Road.

On July 25, delegates gathered in Busan, South Korea, for UNESCO's 48th World Heritage Committee session, where the Jingdezhen Handicraft Porcelain Industry Sites became China's 61st World Heritage site.

Soon after the announcement, Tencent Games and Tencent's SSV Digital Culture Lab, working with local authorities in Jingdezhen, launched what they describe as the world's first official game created for a newly inscribed World Heritage site to combine artificial intelligence with gameplay.

Rather than simply reconstructing an ancient city, the project re-creates the site's five heritage zones, 24 major production sites and workshops, dozens of historically documented tools, and more than 70 celebrated porcelain styles spanning multiple dynasties.

"If World Heritage status were the finish line," says Tu Ming, the game's producer, "there would be no need for this game.

"Jingdezhen's greatest heritage is a worldview about how people live with nature and create together. That shouldn't belong only to scholars or artisans. Everyone should be able to experience it."

Unlike many World Heritage sites, Jingdezhen is not a frozen monument preserved behind ropes or glass. It has produced porcelain continuously for more than a thousand years, sustaining an interconnected system of raw materials, kilns, workshops, transport routes, and generations of artisans.

That living ecosystem became the guiding principle behind the game's design. Players' very first task is to plant Masson pine trees.

The game, in Chinese, explains that the resin-rich wood burns quickly and has fueled Jingdezhen's kilns for centuries. By encouraging players to grow forests first, it underscores a simple lesson: sustainable woodlands are the foundation of a thriving porcelain industry.

Only after collecting essential materials, such as timber, porcelain stone and glaze, can players begin firing ceramics. They can use AI to transform uploaded images into porcelain designs, shape clay on virtual wheels, paint decorations, and create personalized pieces while managing orders at their virtual kilns.

Turning the project into a management simulation was, Tu says, the team's earliest and perhaps most consequential decision.

They wanted players to understand not just how porcelain was made, but how an entire industrial civilization functioned: the technologies behind production, Jingdezhen's evolution over centuries, and the city's pivotal role in global trade.



An AI-powered in-game master chats with players in real time, sharing fascinating insights into ceramics as they explore the game.

The game's story stretches from the 11th through the 19th century. In one chapter, players learn how Sumali blue, an imported cobalt pigment that made blue-and-white porcelain famous, traveled from Persia to China. Later, they are tasked with producing a revolving vase, or *zhuanxinping*, intended as a diplomatic gift from the imperial court to Western envoys.

Even that storyline sparked debate within the development team.

"Could a revolving vase really have served as a State gift? Did that actually happen? Would it have been historically appropriate?" Tu recalls asking.

The team pursued the answer through historical archives, academic debates and library collections. A report from Macao suggested that the Qianlong Emperor of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) had presented such a vase to the King of Portugal, but some researchers questioned the evidence. Eventually, the developers located an original Qing-era gift register in Tsinghua University's library.

"Only then," Tu says, "did we settle the argument."

That commitment to accuracy shaped the entire project. The team consulted more than 30 archaeological reports and historical studies, along with classical works including *Tiangong Kaiwu* (The Exploitation of the Works of Nature) and the *Illustrated Treatise on Ceramic Manufacturing*. Developers repeatedly traveled to Jingdezhen, mapping the city's digital geography according to the actual spatial relationships among archaeological sites.

Nearly every object in the game, from ceramic vessels and kiln tools to place names, includes historical explanations. Whenever players have questions, they can ask the AI master, a craftsman deliberately designed to look like an ordinary artisan rather than a larger-than-life hero.

"He needs to feel believable," says Zeng Zijiao, who leads Tencent Games' AI-powered digital human technology.

The virtual master remembers previous conversations, tracks players' progress, and adjusts his teaching style accordingly, responding differently to beginners than to experienced players.

Behind him sits an enormous knowledge base built specifically for the project. Tencent trained the AI on more than 30,000 academic papers, archaeological reports and scholarly books, along with over 5,000 ceramic specimens and information on nearly 1,000 representative porcelain objects from collections around the world.

The same database also powers several digital heritage projects developed during Jingdezhen's World Heritage campaign, including an AI conservation assistant, a ceramic "gene bank", and an interactive world map tracing the global journey of Chinese porcelain.

For Shu Zhan, head of Tencent's Digital Culture Lab, conventional digitization could never fully explain a heritage site as vast and complex as Jingdezhen.

Its history stretches across centuries. Its archaeological remains are scattered across the city. Its knowledge survives not only in artifacts and documents but also in the memories of veteran artisans.

Artificial intelligence, he says, offers a way to connect those fragments into an experience people can participate in rather than simply observe.

Zeng envisions something more ambitious. Rather than serving merely as a guide, he hopes the AI-powered master potter will build shared memories with players over time. In that way, it becomes more than an explainer. It turns people who have never visited Jingdezhen into participants in a living industrial heritage site.

Tu shares that vision.

If players spend hours moving through several centuries of ceramic history — making difficult decisions, mastering techniques, and eventually creating objects guided by Jingdezhen's own aesthetic principles — they leave with something more valuable than facts.

"They've seen it. They've lived through it. They've created something within it," he says. "That kind of identification isn't taught. It's experienced."

If players remember only one thing after putting down the game, Tu hopes it is this: Jingdezhen is not simply a place preserved from the Song (960-1279) and Yuan (1271-1368) dynasties. It is a living civilization that people can still experience, participate in, and help carry forward.

Contact the writer at baishuhao@chinadaily.com.cn

China's robot school gets down to business

HANGZHOU — At a "school" in Hangzhou, East China's Zhejiang province, "teachers" hold remote controls, sensors record every move, and "students" drill the same task again and again until they get it right.

Those "students" are actually robots. More than 140 of them are currently training at the National Pilot Base for Embodied AI Applications in over 40 workplace scenarios, including smart kitchens, warehouses, farms and a dimly lit mock mine tunnel.

Chinese robots have wowed audiences with backflips, boxing and dance routines. The real test now is whether they can perform everyday jobs reliably. A long-standing headache for the industry is that robots performing well in simulation often stumble when faced with the messiness of real-world settings.

To bridge that gap, this base, sitting between laboratory research and wider deployment, can provide shared settings where technologies can be tested, refined, and validated before full-scale rollout.

Inaugurated on May 16, the national-level facility dedicated to moving embodied artificial intelligence — machines that sense, move, and act in the physical world — from laboratories into daily use is also dubbed a "national vocational training ground" for robots. The plaque, in fact, arrived after the students. On May 16, when the base opened for its trial operation, nearly 40 embodied-AI companies and more than 10 universities and research institutes were already on site for development and training work.

The base runs a dual-track approach combining real-scenario training with high-fidelity virtual simulation. In physical scenarios, technicians teleoperate robots through tasks over and over, with every successful move recorded by sensors as "raw teaching material" for model training.

In a simulated smart kitchen, Hangzhou Big Data Cloud AI Technology has been teaching robots a full restaurant routine since last November: taking orders, fetching ingredients, stir-frying a dish in three to four minutes, then plating it and collecting used dishes.

Yang Jiandang, cofounder of the company, says developing a customized catering application from scratch could require several million yuan in research and development. Since the base already provides some of the underlying facilities and technical capabilities, his team can begin with a lower-cost feasibility test.



A robot serves coffee in the exhibition hall of the National Pilot Base for Embodied AI Applications in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, in May. FAN YUQING / XINHUA

The cost matters. "In the past, developing a single application scenario could cost a company more than 10 million yuan ($1.5 million) in training data alone," says Zhang Haiwei, founder of the motion-capture firm Chingmu. "Now companies based here get one-stop access to the resources they need."

Logistics firm Transfar and robot maker Unitree jointly run a warehouse scenario where wheeled humanoid robots pick, scan, and carry goods of varying shapes. Elsewhere, smart forklifts stack cargo with positioning accuracy up to 1 mm, and harvesting robots pick ripe fruit around the clock.

What makes the "school" so attractive to these companies? Zhou Chen, DexRobot's CEO, likens their predicament to equipping a warhorse in a classic Chinese folk ballad. "You buy the saddle from one vendor, the harness from another, the reins from a third, but end up with a pile of parts and no idea how to assemble them. That's exactly why we need a platform, and this pilot base brings everything together.

"The base is like a library for robotics," he says. "You come here because everything you need is on the shelves."

The clustering pays off in speed. Chingmu and dexterous-hand developer DexRobot, located within the same building, have established a joint laboratory.

"The moment they launch a new product, we can put it to use. If something in yesterday's data needs to be re-collected, we respond the same day," says Zhang.

"Upstairs and downstairs are upstream and downstream. Our next-door neighbor is our partner," says Zhou, adding that the joint lab gives companies a low-stakes space to test the waters on a small scale. With so many firms clustered in one place, they can help make preliminary assessments and slash decision-making costs.

Li Xingteng, deputy general manager of Hangzhou Embodied Intelligence Pilot Base Technology, the base's operator, says the platform aims to turn companies' specialized strengths into integrated solutions by linking firms across the robotics chain.

Institutional support is expanding, too. In June, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology and the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission launched a 2026 initiative to promote real-scenario training and regular deployment of humanoid robots and other embodied-AI products. China's first local regulation on the industry also took effect in Hangzhou on May 1.

The base is one node in a wider push. Hangzhou is now home to more than 700 robotics-related companies, and its embodied-AI cluster generated an output of 106.8 billion yuan in 2025, official data showed.

Li says mature embodied-AI solutions trained at the base will eventually be deployed in experimental communities, where problems will be identified and addressed through real-world use.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:18 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:18 PM

AMERICAFOCUS

Desert blooms from act of kindness

By BELINDA ROBINSON
in New York
belindarobinson@chinadailyusa.com

Brave Chinese environmentalist and generous US teacher rekindle friendship, reminisce on remarkable greening effort



Yin Yuzhen and her family plant trees and water them in the Maowusu sandy area in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region in 2000. The family's dedication has contributed significantly to combating desertification in their region. LI XIN / XINHUA

Ronald Sakolsky, a retired teacher affectionately known as Mr S by his former students, lives a typical middle-class life in Plum, a suburb of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, with Barbara, his wife of 46 years.

But the 69-year-old's life has become quite extraordinary in recent months after his act of kindness in China 27 years ago brought about a touching reunion.

In 1999, he raised $5,000 from an organization in Boston, Massachusetts, to help environmental hero Yin Yuzhen combat severe desertification in the Maowusu, China's largest sandy area, in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region.

The father of four and grandfather of eight remains extremely humble about his selfless actions and insists he's not a hero.

"I'm just an actor in the play that was designed back in 1999," he said in an interview with China Daily. "Ms Yin is the hero. I was like the stick that put the hole in the ground. She put the saplings in and watered them to create the 50,000-tree forest.

"If my story gets other people involved, not just in stopping the desertification of China, but just involved to make the two cultures more similar, then it did its purpose."

Sakolsky was teaching English at Luoyang No 2 Foreign Language School in Henan province in 1999 when he sought the donation. He saw an appeal for funds on CCTV by Yin, who wanted to turn an area of the Maowusu sandy area into a lush, green forest.

At that time, $5,000 was enough to buy a small apartment. But when she received the large donation, Yin spent every penny on saplings and kept just $1 as a souvenir.

Fate intervenes

Sakolsky's journey to teach in China happened by chance.

He remembers sitting in a doctor's office back home when he opened a magazine just to "kill time". He saw a tiny advertisement asking for teachers from the United States to teach English listening and speaking in China.

"Something hit me," he said. "I can't tell you why. But I answered the advertisement."

After an interview in New York, he was selected as one of 14 Americans to teach in China for a year. Before embarking on his teaching trip, he was eager to see Beijing, the Great Wall, the Yellow River and the Terracotta Warriors. But he experienced much more during his visit. "Going to China just enhanced my Chinese education beyond expectation," he said.

He believes a "miracle" led him to Yin.

Sakolsky had planned to teach in Chengdu, Sichuan province. However, another teacher took that position so he chose Luoyang instead.

When he arrived, he felt homesick, but remembered his two daughters' support before he embarked on his China journey. He kept busy by doing tai chi with locals and watching the news. There were two English-language half-hour CCTV news programs aired at noon and 7 pm back then.

"A reporter ... from CCTV was doing a five-minute TV segment called *Chinese Heroes and Heroines*," he said.

He was struck by the story of Yin and her husband planting trees in Inner Mongolia. "At the time, I thought the trees were only going to be 2-feet (60 centimeters), maybe 3-feet high at the most to keep the sand down," he said.

He saw that Yin's husband had lung problems. She made just $250 a year and spent all their money on trees.

"I can't tell you why something hit me in the heart," he recalled. "I'd only been in China for two months, but I said, 'I need to help this lady. I need to do something.'"

He added: "China had already changed who I was, my personality, the way I looked at things. I had learned how to appreciate simple things ... I wanted to help her, and at the same time thank China for what it had already done to me."

From October to December that year, he researched organizations in the US that might donate money for Yin's tree-planting mission. Finally, he found an institution in Boston, Massachusetts, willing to give the full $5,000.

After he received the donation, he spent two months cutting through red tape to get Yin the funds.

"You have to understand in 1999, there were no roads to Ms Yin's house, which I found out later. No roads! She had no telephone. They drove out to her," he said.

"Local officials brought her a generator and a telephone so that they could communicate with her ... and then I lost contact. I knew in December that the money had made it to Beijing. And that's the last I heard."

In May 2000, Bai Fan, the vice-principal at the school where Sakolsky worked, took the American on a surprise visit to meet Yin in the grasslands of Inner Mongolia.

Bai had dreamed of visiting the grasslands and Sakolsky invited him along as a translator. "He had become not my boss anymore. He was my brother," he said.

Sakolsky met Yin at a banquet and fondly remembers feasting on an entire lamb — a Mongolian delicacy.

The next day he gave a speech to a big audience, including local officials, that was translated by Bai. They then drove for hours over sand dunes, Sakolsky recalled.

"We stopped in the middle of nowhere; all sand, no roads, no houses. We had passed the village about two hours before, and seen nothing but a hole in the sand. (Then) out of the hole came Ms Yin," he said.

She had been digging through the sand to hit the water table 2.4 meters down to irrigate the trees. Her only tools were a shovel and a yoke. She tied the saplings with hemp rope and carried them in bundles to be planted, Sakolsky said.

"I kept telling her what you're doing is miraculous, but it's impossible," he said. "Then she starts saying, 'this is going to be your forest'".

"I said to Bai Fan, 'why does she keep calling it my forest? It's not my forest. I didn't do this for it to be my forest.'





Left: Ronald Sakolsky poses in a Panda headband that his grandchildren enjoy wearing at his home in Pennsylvania on June 23. MINGMEI LI / CHINA DAILY

Above: Yin Yuzhen and Ronald Sakolsky meet in Uxin Banner in Inner Mongolia autonomous region in 2000. XINHUA

> If we focus on our similarities and not our differences, the world would be at peace. ... No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted. If the forest doesn't tell that story, I don't know what does."
>
> **Ronald Sakolsky,** retired teacher in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

"And he said to me, 'The Chinese government is calling it the Sakolsky Forest'. I said, 'No, I don't want this. I don't want it called the Sakolsky forest'".

The group then drove 45 minutes to Yin's house and planted more trees. She cooked him a delicious noodle dish.

Search for old friend

Yin, a pioneering environmentalist, began her quest to save the desert in the 1980s.

At 19, she married a man who lived in the Maowusu sandy area, and moved from Shaanxi province. Life was tough for the new bride. Her first Shaanxi home was a cellar half-buried in sand.

But she was determined to improve the environment, so the couple began planting saplings they'd brought with money from their own labor. Yin declared: "I'd rather die planting trees, than live buried by the desert."

It is estimated that Yin and her husband planted saplings across nearly 2,667 hectares between 1985 and 1999, according to Chinese media reports.

Over the next few decades, she planted more than 8 million trees and transformed over 70,000 *mu* (or 4,667 hectares) of barren desert into a lush landscape, according to People's Daily.

Sakolsky said he was amazed to learn Yin and other workers did all the work by hand. "They were digging the ground, digging with a stick, and planting; (there was) no machinery, none," he said.

In 2000, Yin was named a National Model Worker by China's State Council. In 2017, she gave a speech at the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

But she never forgot the American teacher's kindness "at the most difficult time", she told Chinese media.



Green vegetation is seen in the early summer of Maowusu sandy area in Inner Mongolia on May 20. LIAN ZHEN / XINHUA

After his teaching assignment in China finished, Sakolsky returned to the US and lost touch with Yin. He briefly returned to China in 2004 to teach alongside Bai again.

On May 16 this year, Yin, now age 60, made a video and posted it online, hoping to find Sakolsky.

"Mr Sakolsky, we would like to invite you to come back to China to witness how the $5,000 you donated many years ago has become a large forest," she said.

The video went viral and Sakolsky was inundated with emails and texts. Some were from past students.

They all asked one question: "Are you the teacher?"

"I thought it was a joke!" he said.

It was only when Bai called him that he knew it was real.

Two days later, Yin phoned him. Sakolsky said she had learned a little bit of English to converse with him. "She wanted to say 'hello' and 'thank you'," he said.

Sakolsky teared up recalling the conversation and the rekindling of the friendship. "I was stunned that she called," he said.

Yin told him: "You are my brother. I used the $5,000 you donated to plant a forest. When will you come and see it? I really want to see you."

"I will try," Sakolsky replied.

He admitted when she called him "brother" he became very emotional. "There's not words to tell you. I lost it. I mean, I never thought I would ever hear from her (again)," he said.

Anticipated reunion

Sakolsky will travel to China in August for around 10 days to meet Yin. She plans to cook him noodles and share Inner Mongolian lamb skewers. He wants to plant a new tree.

His incredible story has touched many hearts worldwide. At least 40 to 50 of his former students from around the world intend to travel to China to reconnect with him.

On a recent family vacation in Australia, Sakolsky was sitting on a tour bus when two tourists, one from Singapore and one from Hong Kong, recognized him.

"They turned around and said to me, 'you look like the guy on a video that we just watched on the internet, about a forest,' and I said 'yes, that's me.'

"I couldn't believe I was halfway around the world and these people were recognizing me," Sakolsky said. "A simple world history teacher from Plum, a suburb of Pittsburgh."

On June 19, Chinese Ambassador to the United States Xie Feng invited Sakolsky and other Americans to the Chinese embassy in Washington, DC.

The teacher, who retired in 2021, described it as an "honor", adding he "never expected anything like these last six weeks".

Yin, now living in Wushen Banner in the city of Ordos, continues to protect Maowusu, which covers about 42,200 square kilometers.

Their story has inspired others to volunteer. Her son also cares for the land.

Sakolsky, who was given the Chinese name Long Fu, which he was told meant "happy dragon", has become a social media star.

His house, full of memories, is adorned with photos of his family, a life-size replica of a Terracotta Warrior (a gift from Bai Fan), panda toys, photos of his time in China, gifts and a large, mock, plane ticket from the Inner Mongolia People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries inviting him to visit.

But over the years he has also faced personal challenges.

His wife Barbara has had dementia for six years and he patiently takes care of her each day.

Five years ago, he broke four vertebrae in his neck after slipping in his driveway while shoveling snow. He has recovered and gained even more strength from the outpouring of kindness from China over his story, he said.

"If we focus on our similarities and not our differences, the world would be at peace," he said.

Sakolsky also reminisced on one of his favorite quotes from Aesop's fable *The Lion and the Mouse*. "No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted. If the forest doesn't tell that story, I don't know what does," he said.

Mingmei Li contributed to this story.

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:18 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:20 PM

Hidden guardians

Researchers track pandas through droppings, cameras

NATURAL FRONTIERS, PAGE 6



Dialogue essential to China-US ties

WORLD, PAGE 11



Bound for final

Argentina stuns England with late strikes, sets up Spain showdown

SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 FRIDAY, JULY 17, 2026



President Xi Jinping meets on Thursday with Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev in Shanghai. Tokayev is in China to attend the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance, which will run from Friday to Monday.
ZHAI JIANLAN / XINHUA

Xi calls for strengthening relations with Kazakhstan

By **CAO DESHENG**
caodesheng@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping called on Thursday for China and Kazakhstan to strengthen the alignment of their development strategies and policies, and continuously enhance pragmatic cooperation to promote shared development.

Xi made the remarks during a meeting with Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev in Shanghai. Tokayev arrived in Shanghai on Wednesday to attend the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance, which is set to open on Friday.

Xi said that amid the profound and complex changes of the international landscape unseen in a century, the China-Kazakhstan relationship has stood the test of time and become strengthened over time.

The permanent comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries has maintained strong momentum, demonstrating immense cooperation potential and broad development prospects, he said.

Xi emphasized that firmly advancing comprehensive cooperation between China and Kazakhstan aligns with the fundamental interests of both countries and their peoples. He called on both countries to promote the innovative development of trade, optimize trade structures and foster new business models in cross-border e-commerce and trade in services.

It is important to expand cooperation in energy and mineral resources, accelerate the implementation of key projects, promote the development of mutual connectivity, increase direct flights and improve the facilitation of international road transport, he said.

Xi said that China is willing to share technologies in the fields of the digital economy and artificial intelligence to assist Kazakhstan in achieving digital transformation.

He also called on both sides to well organize related activities to make the China-Kazakhstan Year of Cultural Exchange a success, and to strengthen cooperation in education, science and technology, healthcare, sports and media to solidify the foundation of friendship from one generation to another.

China is willing to work with Kazakhstan to jointly implement the four major global initiatives (the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, the Global Civilization Initiative and the Global Governance Initiative), and strengthen coordination and cooperation within multilateral mechanisms such as the United Nations, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the China-Central Asia mechanism, in order to jointly uphold international equity and justice, Xi said.

Noting that China has just celebrated the 105th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China, Xi said that the reason why the CPC has been able to achieve continuous glory through its endeavors and why history and the people have chosen the CPC lies fundamentally in its excellent qualities.

The Party is committed to seeking truth, deeply rooted in the people, courageously rises to its historical missions, and follows the trend of development, Xi said, adding that it is also courageous and able to fight and remains committed to continuous self-improvement.

This is the key code behind why the CPC works, he said.

Tokayev warmly congratulated the CPC on its 105th founding anniversary and commended China's remarkable development achievements under Xi's leadership.

He said that Kazakhstan regards its relationship with China as a top priority in its foreign policy and is committed to continuously strengthening its permanent comprehensive strategic partnership with China.

Kazakhstan highly appreciates and supports the four major global initiatives and the vision of building a community with a shared future for humanity, all proposed by Xi, and is willing to maintain high-level collaboration with China on multilateral platforms, actively engage in global AI governance cooperation, Tokayev said.

AI rivalry shifts from smart models to smart factories

WORLD WATCH
By Djoomart Otorbaev

For years, the global discussion about artificial intelligence revolved around large language models, algorithms and computing power. The competition appeared straightforward: Whoever built the most powerful neural network would dominate the digital economy. That perception fueled a fierce technological race among leading US companies such as OpenAI, Google, Microsoft, Amazon and Anthropic. In China, companies such as DeepSeek, Alibaba, Tencent, Huawei and Baidu responded by accelerating investment in large models, chips and cloud infrastructure.

But over the past year, a deeper transformation has become evident. AI is steadily moving beyond chatbots, search engines and office tools into manufacturing, logistics, pharmaceuticals, automotive engineering, robotics and industrial planning. Consequently, the focus of the global AI race has changed. The next phase of the competition may depend less on algorithms and more on productive capacity, industrial organization and the ability to embed AI into large-scale economic activity.

This shift has changed the very nature of AI rivalry. The first phase of the AI race primarily featured frontier models and computing supremacy. Companies competed for elite engineers, semiconductors, cloud infrastructure and venture capital. The goal was technological leadership.

But industrial deployment is a far more complex challenge. It requires coordination among software developers, manufacturers, supply chain operators, universities, industrial engineers, energy systems and governments. In other words, the future of AI increasingly depends on ecosystems rather than isolated technological breakthroughs.

This is precisely why strategic alliances are proliferating across the AI sector.

In the United States, collaboration between technology firms and industrial corporations has gathered momentum. Microsoft has expanded its partnership with the multinational automaker Stellantis to develop AI applications in engineering, cybersecurity and manufacturing systems. Google Cloud has deepened cooperation with the German pharmaceutical company Merck to deploy AI tools across the entire drug-discovery pipeline, while also broadening its collaboration with Mars to integrate AI agents into operational and industrial processes.

Meanwhile, Nvidia has evolved from just a chip supplier to the infrastructure backbone of global AI deployment, working simultaneously with cloud providers, manufacturers, robotics developers and national technology ecosystems. US companies are increasingly realizing that industrial integration — and not just model quality — will define long-term leadership.

At the same time, universities have become central actors in the emerging AI-industrial landscape. OpenAI's NextGenAI consortium brings together leading universities and research institutes in the US and Britain, offering grants, computing power and API access to researchers and students. Anthropic has established similar partnerships with academic institutions and educational organizations focused on computer science and AI engineering.

These collaborations are not just philanthropic initiatives. They help cultivate future talent, accelerate applied research, create industry standards, and familiarize future engineers with specific AI ecosystems. In effect, universities have become part of national AI supply chains.

See ***Technology,*** *page 2*

XI'S VISION | AI DEVELOPMENT

China steps up AI growth, governance

Xi's guidance elevates development of sector to a national strategic priority

By **MO JINGXI**
mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn

When migrating over long distances, wild geese often fly in a V formation. The bird at the front cuts through the headwind and sets the direction, while the flock behind benefits from the currents created in its wake. This bird is commonly called the "lead goose".

It was this image that Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, invoked at a group study session of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee in October 2018. Xi used the image of a "lead goose" to describe the powerful spillover and driving effects of artificial intelligence, calling it "a strategic technology driving this round of technological revolution and industrial transformation".

The metaphor captures more than technological leadership. It points to AI's capacity to pull other sectors forward — to reorganize production, accelerate scientific discovery and reshape services, governance and everyday life.

Nearly eight years later, that spillover effect is becoming increasingly visible across China.

On Friday, Xi will attend the opening ceremony of the 2026 World AI Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance in Shanghai and deliver a keynote speech. The gathering will run from Friday to Monday under the theme "AI Partnership for a Brighter Future". Xi will systematically set out China's policy positions, vision and proposals concerning AI development and governance.

Xi, who is also Chinese president and chairman of the Central Military Commission, has long placed AI high on China's development agenda.

As early as June 2014, when speaking at the general assemblies of the members of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Chinese Academy of Engineering, Xi highlighted the rapid development of AI and other emerging technologies.

He called for efforts to assess technological trends, make comprehensive plans and press ahead with concrete action.

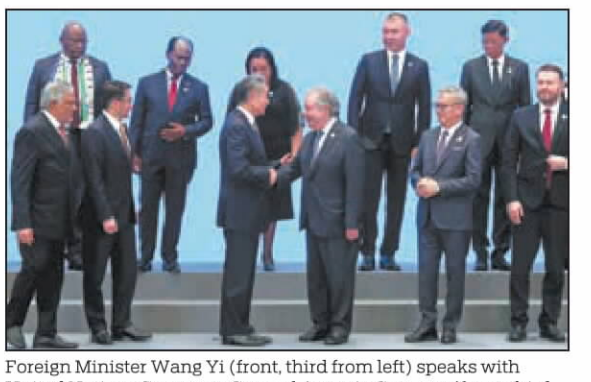
In 2017, China issued a new-generation AI development plan, elevating AI development to a long-term national strategic priority.

At the group study session of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee in 2018, Xi described accelerating AI development as a strategic lever for scientific progress, industrial upgrading and an overall leap in productivity.

See ***AI,*** *page 2*

Inside

- Editorial, **page 7**
- See more, **pages 2-4**



Foreign Minister Wang Yi (front, third from left) speaks with United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres (front, third from right) after the signing ceremony for the agreement on the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization in Shanghai on Thursday. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

Agreement on global AI organization signed

A signing ceremony for an agreement on the establishment of the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization was held in Shanghai on Thursday.

Representatives from a total of 29 countries signed the agreement. Foreign Minister Wang Yi signed the agreement on behalf of the Chinese government.

The agreement stipulates that the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization is an independent intergovernmental organization. Guided by the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, it upholds the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, and follows a people-centered approach.

The organization aims to promote international cooperation and global governance in artificial intelligence, ensure the sound and orderly development of AI in a beneficial, safe and equitable direction, and bring benefits to all humanity.

Its headquarters will be located in Shanghai.

MO JINGXI

China Vibes

INSIDE
Beijing's old waterside regains its historic charm
China, page 5

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
Newsstand prices:
US $1 Canada C$1; UK 1£ EU 1€ Kenya 50 Kenya Shilling Asia Pacific: Thailand 120 thb; Philippines 120 php; Myanmar 2000 kyat; Japan 210 yen; Dubai 10 dirham; Pakistan 300 rupee

China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:20 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:20 PM

WAIC WORLD AI CONFERENCE

Eminent guests



United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres (center) and Fu Cong (left), China's permanent representative to the UN, arrive in Shanghai on Thursday to attend the 2026 World AI Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance. The four-day event opens on Friday.
FANG ZHE / XINHUA

Event serves as innovation platform

Products, tech independently developed by Chinese companies to be major highlight

By SHI JING in Shanghai
shijing@chinadaily.com.cn

The World Artificial Intelligence Conference, which is now in its ninth consecutive year, has evolved into a premier stage for enterprises to showcase their latest technological advancements — innovations widely expected to empower the workplace and drive industrial transformation, according to experts and industry executives attending the event.

Under the theme "AI Partnership for a Brighter Future", this year's conference is making history with an exhibition area exceeding 100,000 square meters, spanning four venues across Shanghai. Over 1,100 domestic and international companies are set to unveil more than 300 products that are making their world debut during the four-day event, which opens on Friday.

Products and technologies independently developed by Chinese companies are a major highlight of this year's conference.

Shanghai-based StepFun is unveiling STEPX Neo, the world's first smartphone to pass China's new L3 certification for AI terminal intelligence — a level that requires the device to autonomously understand complex user intents, break down tasks and coordinate actions across multiple apps.

The company will also debut its upgraded super AI agent for automobiles to provide better smart cockpit experiences.

StepFun's latest progress is in line with the industry consensus that 2026 marks "the first year of AI agent applications".

According to the United States-based market consultancy IDC, the global AI agent market is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 139 percent from 2025 to 2030.

"We see this year as a turning point for AI agent applications. Agents will move from phones to cars and robots, taking on real-world tasks. As AI agents enter the physical world, they will inevitably face increasingly complex scenarios, and we are fully committed to this sector," said Chen Ruijie, StepFun's public relations manager.

Enflame Technology, a Shanghai-based AI chipmaker, which obtained regulatory approval on July 7 for a STAR Market IPO, has teamed up with domestic tech giant ZTE to release a supernode architecture. This allows different types of AI chips to work together seamlessly in an open and flexible way, providing better performance while keeping total costs low.

Startups are also grabbing the spotlight with their latest breakthroughs.

FrameX AI, a company founded in Beijing by Wang Yuxin, 30, in early May, will debut its interactive video model Genesis, allowing users to enter video content and converse with AI characters in real time.

"Next-gen video tech is about stepping into videos, not just watching them. To win users over, digital characters need to feel human and be truly present," said Wang, adding that the model is built for the global market while also promoting it to Chinese multichannel networks and game developers.

FieldQuantum, another startup founded in January in Beijing, specializes in integrating quantum technology, AI and high-performance computing. It achieved angel financing by June, including from prominent institutions such as Baidu Ventures and venture capital company HSG.

The company will showcase a quantum AI agent platform and a material research and development platform at the event, aiming to empower the development of semiconductor materials and innovative drugs.

Through its first presence at WAIC, FieldQuantum wishes to expand cooperation with more end users, operation system providers and computing infrastructure companies, said Lyu Dingshun, the company's founder.

Multinational companies are equally active in unveiling their latest AI innovations through WAIC. Industry big names including ABB, Schneider Electric and Carl Zeiss are among the exhibitors.

International manufacturing conglomerate Siemens will demonstrate for the first time its engineering agent, which autonomously plans and executes industrial automation engineering tasks.

Xiao Song, chairman, president and CEO of Siemens China, said the nation's diverse industrial landscape, robust manufacturing system, rapid innovation pace and openness to new technologies give it a unique edge in developing industrial AI.

But to turn these strengths into productivity and tackle the structural hurdles of AI adoption, scenario-driven implementation is vital. Siemens is, therefore, committed to deeply integrating its industry expertise, data accumulation and technological innovation to anchor AI in real-world scenarios. Open industrial scenarios and data sharing are crucial to achieving the scaling up of AI and eventually productivity transformation, he said.

WAIC at a glance

Key features

- Exhibition area: Surpasses 100,000 square meters for the first time, marking the largest exhibition space in the event's history
- Exhibitors: Over 1,100 domestic and international companies
- Exhibits: More than 3,000 products on display
- Global launches: Over 300 products making their world debut
- Forum programs: More than 140 forum sessions
- Guest lineup: Nine Turing Award and Nobel Prize laureates in attendance
- Academic conference: The inaugural WAIC Academic, chaired by Turing Award laureate Andrew Chi-Chih Yao

Must-see exhibits

- Sugon 8000 "Dengfeng": A domestically developed 100,000-card AI supercluster that supports full-precision computing — from FP64 to INT8.
- Ant Group's smart pharmacy: A setup in which three heterogeneous robots complete an entire task within 90 seconds, starting from taking an order to packing medicines.
- AGIBOT Expedition A3 Ultra: A 174-centimeter-tall humanoid robot that is designed for exhibition guidance and hotel reception.
- Baidu's DuMate: A general-purpose AI agent capable of autonomously handling document processing, data analysis and PowerPoint creation.
- iFlytek's AI glasses: Smart eyewear, weighing only 40 grams, that has pioneered multimodal noise reduction technology and lip-movement recognition.
- China Southern Power Grid's distribution network planning agent: A system supporting intelligent diagnosis across more than 10,000 feeders.
- StepFun's STEPX Neo: The world's first smartphone to pass China's new L3 certification for AI terminal intelligence — a level that requires the device to autonomously understand complex user intents, break down tasks and coordinate actions across multiple apps.
- Alibaba Zhenwu M890: An AI chip equipped with 144 GB of video memory and 800 GB per second of inter-chip bandwidth.
- MatwingsVenus: A closed-loop research and development platform that cuts R&D cycles from two to five years down to just two to six months.
- ZTE OEX Supernode: A technology solution that reduces interconnect costs by 80 percent and redefines the paradigm of intelligent computing.

CHINA DAILY

AI: Advances seen as key to reaching nation's goals

From page 1

That sustained strategic focus has been accompanied by rapid industrial growth.

According to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, the value of China's core AI industry exceeded 1.2 trillion yuan ($177 billion) in 2025, with more than 6,200 AI enterprises. By the end of 2025, over 30 percent of manufacturing enterprises above designated size had adopted AI technologies, while Chinese companies had released more than 300 humanoid robot products.

Robert Lawrence Kuhn, chairman of The Kuhn Foundation, which operates educational, cultural, and science and philosophy projects, described China and the United States as undisputed global leaders in AI.

China's strengths include strong capabilities in computer science and mathematics, leading research centers at major universities, a culture that values scientists, large pools of talent and data, and a highly competitive market for private AI companies, he said.

Kuhn also pointed to the recognition among China's leadership that advances in AI will be essential to achieving the country's 2035 and mid-century goals of building a modern socialist country in all respects, as well as to the central government's sustained commitment to developing the technology.

During a fact-finding trip to Shanghai in April last year, Xi visited the Shanghai Foundation Model Innovation Center, where he closely examined a range of cutting-edge products, including humanoid robots.

Home to more than 100 enterprises at the time of Xi's visit, the center provides a glimpse of how emerging technologies are moving from laboratories into industrial and commercial applications.

According to Kuhn, Xi's repeated emphasis on developing and applying AI has exerted a major influence on the level of attention and funding devoted to the field by both the public and private sectors.

Xiao Qian, vice-dean of the Institute for AI International Governance at Tsinghua University, said that Xi's emphasis had elevated AI to a national strategic priority, providing policy continuity and a clear direction in an ever-changing technological landscape.

This top-level vision, Xiao said, has enabled governments, universities, research institutes and enterprises to coordinate around common objectives.

As China's AI sector entered a phase of accelerated growth in 2025, the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee returned to the subject at a group study session in April that year. Xi said at the session that AI not only introduces unprecedented development opportunities, but also brings unprecedented risks and challenges.

He called for accelerated work on laws and regulations, policy systems, application standards and ethical guidelines, as well as stronger systems for technical monitoring, early risk warning and emergency response, in order to ensure that AI remains safe, reliable and controllable.

Risks, challenges

Kuhn said AI presents two sharply different possibilities.

"There is a risk that AI will exacerbate global inequality, with developed countries gaining more while developing countries fall further behind. Yet, at the same time, AI has the potential to dramatically reduce global inequality because it can be more readily available than traditional infrastructure," he said.

In Kuhn's view, China is playing a significant role through major initiatives because its AI and large language models are high-quality, open-source, relatively affordable and targeted at specific applications.

At the opening ceremony of the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in October 2023, Xi unveiled the Global AI Governance Initiative, expressing China's readiness to increase exchanges and dialogue with other countries and jointly promote the sound, orderly and secure development of AI worldwide.

Song Haitao, a member of the United Nations Independent International Scientific Panel on AI, said that one of the most pressing challenges in global AI governance is that scientific assessment has failed to keep pace with technological development, with the capacity gap particularly acute in Global South countries.

China's proposals offer a systematic response to that structural challenge, he said. From the Global AI Governance Initiative's emphasis on a people-centered approach and the use of AI for good outcomes, to the concrete measures set out in the Global AI Governance Action Plan, China has sought to translate broad principles into practical action and multilateral cooperation.

Song, who is also president of the Shanghai Artificial Intelligence Research Institute, said that China could support developing countries in building more comprehensive AI capabilities, by providing computing resources and helping with institutional development.

Getting ready



A humanoid robot, wearing a safety helmet, gets fine-tuned in Shanghai on Thursday, ahead of the 2026 World AI Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance. GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

Technology: A new industrial revolution

From page 1

China is pursuing a particularly distinctive path because it enjoys a structural advantage that many Western countries can't easily replicate: a comprehensive industrial ecosystem capable of integrating AI directly into manufacturing and production.

Chinese companies are not focusing solely on consumer-facing AI applications. Instead, they are integrating AI into factories, robotics, logistics systems, semiconductors, telecommunications infrastructure, electric vehicles and industrial automation.

Huawei is a clear example. The company has expanded cooperation with manufacturers, local governments, telecommunications providers and leading universities to accelerate AI deployment across industrial sectors. Partnerships with institutions such as Tsinghua University and Peking University have contributed to advances in chip design, distributed computing, industrial AI systems and optimization technologies.

Rather than treating AI as an isolated digital product, China regards it as infrastructure embedded across the economy.

DeepSeek illustrates another important trend. Its technical team includes specialists connected to China's leading universities, particularly in mathematics, engineering and computer science. This close integration has reportedly enabled the company to optimize training efficiency, reduce costs and maintain competitive performance, demonstrating how academic expertise can directly enhance industrial competitiveness.

Meanwhile, Alibaba Cloud and Tencent are accelerating AI deployment across retail, logistics, finance and smart-city ecosystems.

Chinese electric vehicle manufacturers are integrating AI into production lines, battery systems, autonomous driving and supply chain management.

In sectors ranging from robotics to advanced manufacturing, collaboration between AI developers and industrial enterprises is becoming increasingly institutionalized.

This evolution matters because the economics of AI are changing.

The early AI race rewarded companies capable of building the largest general-purpose models. But these large models are very expensive to train and maintain. Businesses are discovering that smaller, specialized AI systems integrated into industrial workflows generate greater economic value than universal chatbots.

As a result, the strategic advantage may shift toward countries that can deploy AI across large-scale manufacturing ecosystems rather than simply produce the most advanced algorithms.

This would favor economies with deep industrial capacity, integrated supply chains, strong engineering traditions and close coordination between universities, industry and state institutions. AI has become inseparable from energy infrastructure, semiconductor production, robotics, industrial automation and logistics networks.

In many ways, the emerging AI competition has begun to resemble the historical competition among industrial powers. The next phase of global AI rivalry may not be decided primarily in Silicon Valley or by benchmark rankings. Instead, it may unfold inside factories, ports, laboratories, industrial parks and supply chains. In that sense, AI is no longer just a software revolution. It has become a new industrial revolution.

The author is a former prime minister of the Kyrgyz Republic. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:20 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:20 PM

WAIC WORLD AI CONFERENCE

Nation's AI-related tech continues to burgeon

Country captured 90% of global humanoid robot shipments in 2025, with over 330 product models

By MA SI
masi@chinadaily.com.cn

China is rapidly moving from technological breakthroughs in artificial intelligence to real-world value creation, leveraging its full innovation chain, industrial ecosystem and massive market to become a global leader in AI application and industrial transformation, officials and industry experts said.

Li Lecheng, minister of industry and information technology, said that AI is a common asset of humanity, and developing countries' rights to develop and use the technology must be firmly safeguarded.

"China is ready to work with all parties to promote fair and inclusive development, actively assist countries in developing AI technologies and services, and jointly build a governance framework with broad consensus," Li said.

The numbers tell a compelling story. In 2025, China's core AI industry surpassed 1.2 trillion yuan ($177 billion) in value, with over 6,200 AI enterprises operating across the country, according to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

Meanwhile, the country captured 90 percent of global humanoid robot shipments in 2025 with over 330 product models, cementing its leadership in the emerging sector.

China also ranks first worldwide in downloads of open-source large language models, underscoring its edge in generative AI innovation. In addition, nearly 200 key standards have been developed across the AI industry chain, providing a unified technical framework for the sector.

Samantha Zhu, chairperson of Accenture Greater China, said AI is driving the accelerated global reconfiguration of enterprise value. In China, industries across the board are now moving from trials in AI technology to large-scale deployment.

"China is emerging as a critical testing ground for the global development of embodied intelligence, with robotics, intelligent vehicles and industrial scenarios converging at an accelerated pace. AI is no longer just a tool; it is rapidly evolving into a versatile, cross-scenario capability that is permeating business-critical processes and every facet of enterprise operations," Zhu said.

Accenture's 2026 index of Chinese enterprises' digital transformation, for which 160 Chinese companies were surveyed, reached the largest single-year increase in recent years, and digital application scenarios such as AI assistants, intelligent research and development, and AI-powered customer experiences are rapidly becoming the mainstream in China, Zhu noted.

Shen Jun, vice-president of Unilever's China R&D Center, said: "China's rapid advancement in AI is creating unprecedented innovation opportunities for multinational companies such as Unilever. With its strong scientific research capabilities, deep talent pool, well-developed industrial ecosystem and vibrant community of AI startups, China provides an ideal environment for emerging technologies to be rapidly validated, scaled and applied to drive global innovation."

Jeff Shi, president of SenseTime Asia Pacific, highlighted China's increasingly central role in the global AI landscape. "You can't talk about AI without talking about China — and you can't talk about China without talking about AI," he said, adding that in Southeast Asia, learning from China has become a key route to faster AI adoption. The term "Chinovation", a shorthand for Chinese-style innovation, was coined in Singapore.

China's AI-led expansion overseas is also changing, Shi said, noting that it is moving beyond the export of stand-alone software and applications toward a more sophisticated offering of industry-specific solutions and digital infrastructure.

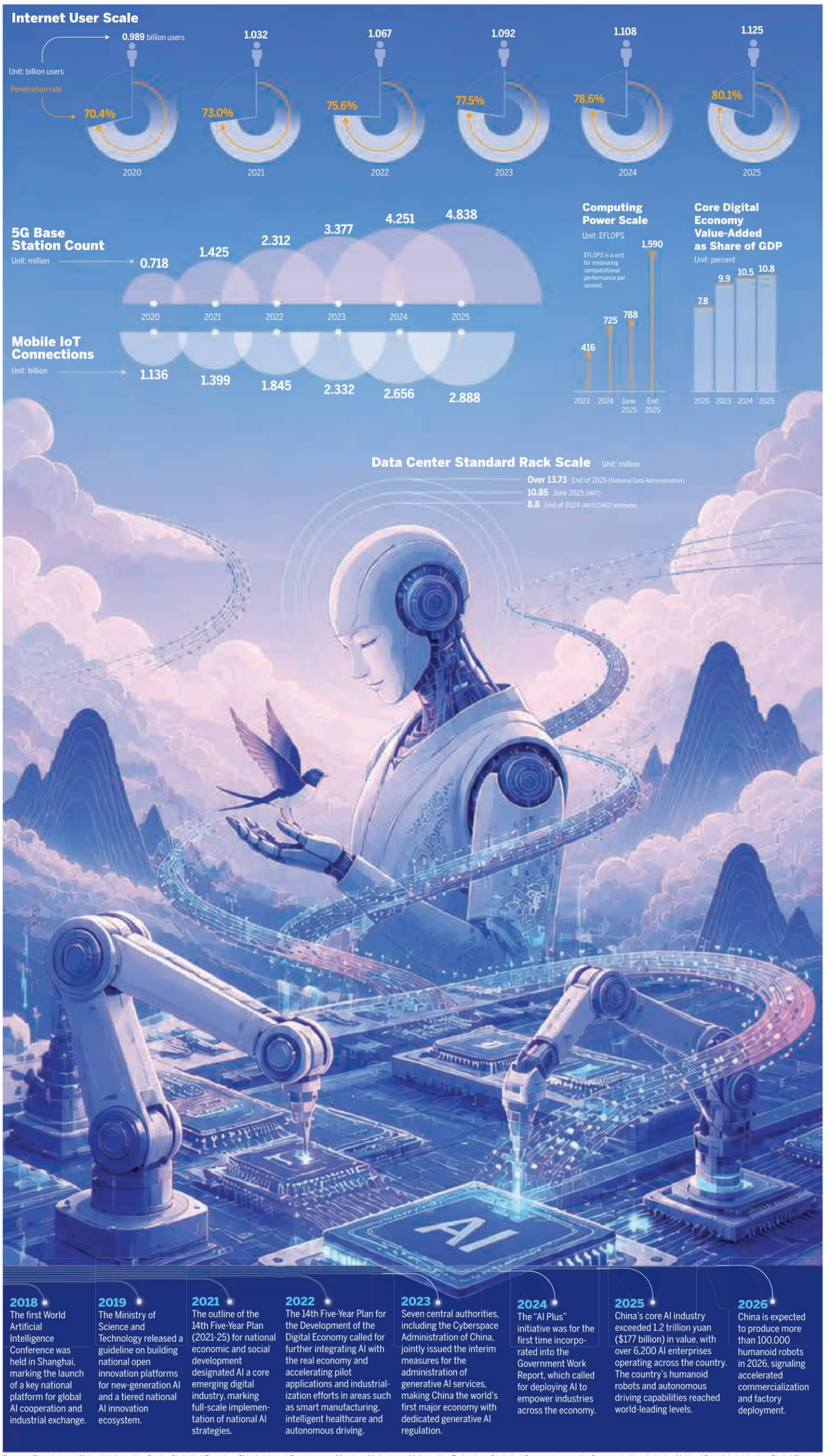
That model draws on nearly the full breadth of China's AI ecosystem — from data centers and token plans to governance frameworks and talent development, he added.

In June, London-based research company Omdia ranked SenseTime No 1 in the Asia-Pacific video analytics market, ahead of Japan's NEC, the longtime champion.

"The market shift is driven by AI," Shi said. "Five years ago, customers came to us to test Vision AI in pilot projects. Today, Vision AI is widely embedded in operations. The new demand is to integrate generative AI into workflows."

China's model is also drawing a new class of visitors. As it delivers tangible returns on investment, more are traveling to the country to study firsthand. International business visitors to SenseTime's Executive Briefing Center in Shanghai rose tenfold this year, Shi added.

Online
See more by scanning the code.



Sources: China Internet Network Information Center, Statistical Report on China's Internet Development, Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, Statistical Communique on the Communications Industry, National Data Administration, Digital China Development Report, International Data Corp, China Academy of Information and Communications Technology, National Bureau of Statistics of China, Statistical Classification of Digital Economy and Its Core Industries (2021)

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:20 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:20 PM

WAIC WORLD AI CONFERENCE



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

SABINO VACA NARVAJA

Shaping the future of global AI governance

The WAIC and the WAICO pave an inclusive path for equitable digital development

Artificial intelligence has become a strategic force of the 21st century. Beyond its extraordinary technological achievements, AI is reshaping industrial production, scientific research, healthcare, education, public administration, finance and national security. More importantly, it has become a key determinant of economic competitiveness and geopolitical influence. Countries that develop their own AI capabilities will enjoy greater strategic autonomy, while those that rely exclusively on foreign technologies risk entering a new era of digital dependence.



Consequently, the global debate over AI governance is as important as the technological revolution itself. The rules, standards, ethical principles and institutional frameworks established over the coming years will not only shape AI's evolution, but also determine who benefits from it. The discussion extends beyond algorithms to encompass development, sovereignty and the distribution of global technological power.

Against this backdrop, the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference, convenes in Shanghai from July 17 to 20, deserves close international attention. Since its inception in 2018, the WAIC has become China's leading international platform for dialogue on AI, bringing together governments, scientists, universities, technology companies and international organizations. This year's conference is particularly significant: The agreement on the establishment of the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization — a global institution designed to promote practical cooperation in AI, particularly among developing countries and the Global South — was signed.

The China-proposed organization aligns with a broader vision articulated by China through its Global AI Governance Initiative, its support for multilateral cooperation under the United Nations, and its emphasis on bridging the global digital divide. Rather than focusing exclusively on technological competition, the Chinese approach highlights capacity building, scientific cooperation, infrastructure development, talent cultivation, and technology sharing as essential components of AI development.

The real challenge before us is not simply who will lead the AI revolution, but whether that revolution will contribute to building a more balanced, equitable and genuinely multipolar international order.

For developing countries, this perspective deserves serious consideration. The central question should not be whether to align with one technological power or another, but how to build national capabilities while maintaining strategic autonomy. True technological sovereignty does not imply isolation; it requires diversified international partnerships that can strengthen domestic innovation ecosystems through knowledge exchange, joint research, technology transfer, education, and industrial cooperation.

In this regard, the WAICO is particularly relevant because it is closely linked to the UN General Assembly Resolution that calls for enhanced international cooperation on AI capacity building. Adopted by consensus, the resolution recognizes that AI should serve as a tool for sustainable development rather than a source of greater inequality. It encourages countries to cooperate in developing national AI strategies, training professionals, expanding digital infrastructure, promoting scientific collaboration, and ensuring that developing nations are not excluded from the next technological revolution.

For Latin America, this debate is of strategic importance. The region cannot afford to remain merely a consumer of technologies developed elsewhere. It must invest in scientific research, digital infrastructure, education, industrial modernization, and regional cooperation while actively participating in the international institutions where the future governance of AI is being defined.

However, enthusiasm for AI must be tempered with responsibility. AI offers extraordinary opportunities to increase productivity, improve public services, accelerate scientific discovery, and enhance human well-being. Yet it also raises profound challenges: the concentration of technological power in a handful of corporations, growing digital inequalities, threats to privacy, algorithmic discrimination, labor displacement, autonomous weapons, and new forms of surveillance. Without internationally agreed principles and effective governance mechanisms, the benefits of AI may become concentrated while its risks become global.

This is precisely why multilateral governance matters. The world needs international institutions capable of fostering innovation while protecting sovereignty, ensuring equitable access to technology, promoting transparency, and establishing shared ethical standards. One country, company, or technological ecosystem should not monopolize humanity's digital future.

Every industrial revolution has changed the international balance of power, and AI will be no exception. Countries that participate in shaping its governance today will help define the political and economic architecture of tomorrow.

Whether or not one agrees with every aspect of China's proposals, initiatives such as the WAIC and the WAICO offer an opportunity for the Global South to contribute proactively to the construction of a more inclusive international AI governance framework — one that promotes multilateralism, scientific cooperation, technology transfer, South-South collaboration and respect for national sovereignty.

AI should not become a new instrument of dependency. Properly governed, it can become one of the greatest tools for human development ever created. The real challenge before us is not simply who will lead the AI revolution, but whether that revolution will contribute to building a more balanced, equitable and genuinely multipolar international order.

The author is the president of the CEUS at the University of Buenos Aires and a former ambassador of Argentina to China. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

ALEX LAMB

Superintelligence for all

Agentic AI represents an opportunity for shared global development as it can become a tool for leapfrogging legacy digital divides rather than widening them

The 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference convenes in Shanghai on Friday under the theme "Intelligent Partners, Co-create the Future". The central question facing the world is no longer whether AI will transform societies, but who gets to shape and benefit from that transformation.



The current trajectory of AI development, in which the frontier autonomous systems carry out long and complex tasks under or without human supervision, is unprecedented in its capacity to improve the very AI training process itself, triggering a cycle of recursive self-improvement and snowballing small initial advantages into decisive leads.

Concerns that this dynamic will entrench monopoly are real. The United States began restricting exports of advanced GPUs in 2019 and has since proposed controls that would limit AI chip exports to all Global South countries, even to ostensible allies. A further means of control has been for the US to keep its trained AI models closed and to not publish any technical details on how the models are produced or how they operate. Most recently, it has restricted access to Anthropic's frontier Mythos model citing cybersecurity reasons.

Due to the US' unipolar approach restricting access to compute, shunning open source and even restricting the ability to run frontier models, most countries in the world face the risk of being pushed into a permanent "consumer" role. In this role, countries such as India and the Philippines risk being forced to simply buy access to Anthropic and OpenAI's models without developing any domestic AI skills or tech stack of their own. They would also permanently give up control over their own data, weakening their economic position and introducing national security and privacy threats.

Yet this outcome is not inevitable. If paired with open-weight model sharing, capacity-building partnerships and locally hosted inference infrastructure, agentic AI can become a genuine win-win: a tool for leapfrogging legacy digital divides rather than widening them.

The attempted US tech blockade has not produced the intended isolation. In response, China has embraced an ambitious research program, which aims to not just develop GPUs, but respond with parallel innovation — Huawei's Ascend series, multi-patterning techniques — to extend pre-EUV lithography and "Tau-scaling", a 3D chip-layout optimization approach. Industry observers note Huawei plans to offer Ascend GPUs in Asia-Pacific markets such as the Republic of Korea in Q4 2026, signaling growing global competitiveness. Apple has begun to lobby the US government for permission to buy memory chips from China.

More significantly, top Chinese labs have released full model weights, technical papers and code, making Chinese open-weight models the most widely adopted foundation models in global research labs. Industry surveys suggested that around 80 percent of US AI startups either experiment with or deploy Chinese open-weight models for inference and fine-tuning.

This openness, and not the mere narrowing of a performance gap, is the distinguishing feature of a multilateral approach to AI governance. It creates the possibility of a shared AI commons, in line with the Shanghai Declaration on Global AI Governance issued in 2024, which commits signatories to ensure equal rights, equal opportunities and equal rules for all countries in developing and using AI technologies. As a supplement to the declaration and practical guide to action, China's Global AI Governance Action Plan adopted at the 2025 WAIC directs its commitment to strengthening South-South cooperation, enhancing the representation and voice of developing countries. Article 5 of the plan explicitly calls for open-source platforms, basic resource sharing, and lowering barriers to innovation and application.

Concrete mechanisms are already emerging. Launched in September 2025 at the China-Association of Southeast Asian Nations AI ministerial roundtable in Nanning, the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, the China-ASEAN Countries AI Application Cooperation Center is designed to strengthen the foundation for AI development, provide open-source services, facilitate industrial cooperation and promote talent cultivation across member states. Since 2019, the WAIC side-events have trained hundreds of officials and engineers from Africa, Southeast Asia, Central Asia and Latin America in large language model deployment, data governance and responsible AI use. The hope for 2026 expansion is high.

For Global South partners, the pathway to AI sovereignty follows a natural progression: first, host open-weight inference on local or regionally-shared hardware; next, fine-tune and adapt models to national needs, languages and regulatory contexts; and finally, as domestic datasets and compute capacity mature, pre-train original models from scratch. This is not a theoretical ladder. Tsinghua University has already begun training students from Southeast Asia and West Asia, who return to work at Z.AI offices in their home countries — bringing hands-on experience with open-weight systems that can be modified to reflect local values and priorities. Because the models and research are open, each country retains the freedom to customize, adapt and eventually build its own stack.

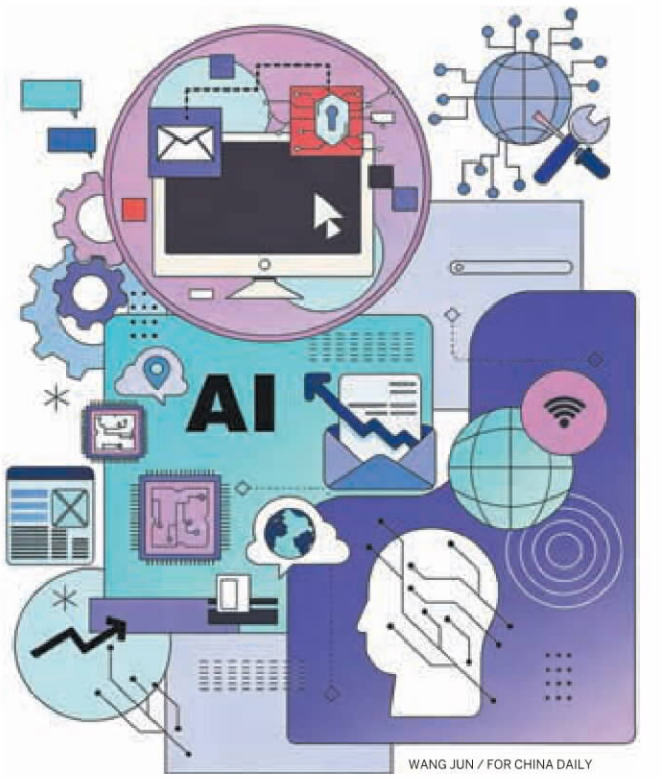
Crucially, this ecosystem is built on comparative advantage rather than unilateral monopoly. The Global South contributes the majority of the world's STEM talent and nearly half of global GDP. India offers an exceptionally large pool of young AI researchers and software engineers. Vietnam's rapidly expanding manufacturing sector provides a natural test bed for embodied AI. The Middle East states possess unrivaled energy and land resources for sustainable compute. When these strengths are combined with open models and targeted capacity-building — such as the joint laboratories and training programs outlined in the Action Plan — the result is a genuinely reciprocal partnership, not a donor-client relationship. The goal is not for every country to build the largest model, but for every country to build the model that fits its own needs, talents and future.

None of this negates the need for vigilance on safety, bias or misuse. But it reframes the question: the risk is not that agentic AI will inevitably concentrate power, but that exclusive, closed ecosystems could make it do so. The alternative — codified in the Shanghai commitments — is an inclusive architecture where frontier labs, Global South governments, and open-source communities co-develop norms and share benefits.

As delegates gather in Shanghai, the message from Global South countries is unambiguous: They do not seek to be permanent consumers of black-box intelligence. Through open models, shared datasets, joint laboratories and transparent governance, agentic AI can be domesticated to local needs and values.

China's experience offers a model for a common path: AI must be a public good of a shared future for humanity. Whether that aspiration is realized depends on choices made now — by governments, companies, and research communities — to treat AI not as a zero-sum asset but as a cooperative infrastructure. In the age of agentic AI, the dividing line will not be between those who build the smartest agents and those who use them, but between those who lock intelligence behind walls and those who build the bridges that let it circulate. The latter is the only path consistent with a multipolar, equitable digital future.

The author is an assistant professor at the College of AI at Tsinghua University. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



WANG JUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:20 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:20 PM

CHINA

Wartime alliance



Jeffrey Ballard Greene (right), chairman of the Sino-American Aviation Heritage Foundation, visits an exhibition on US support for Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45) in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, on Thursday. The event commemorated the 85th anniversary of the Flying Tigers' arrival in China and included a memorial ceremony honoring wartime aviation heroes. CUI XIAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

Experts slam 'arbitration award'

Report says 'invalid legal paper' on South China Sea in favor of Philippines not law

By **ZHOU JIN**
zhoujin@chinadaily.com.cn

A research report released on Thursday criticized the "South China Sea Arbitration Award" as running counter to international judicial practice and lacking legal persuasiveness, calling it "a piece of invalid legal paper".

The report, titled Legal Critique of the South China Sea Arbitration Awards — "The South China Sea Arbitration Awards Are Not International Law", was written by scholars from the National Institute for South China Sea Studies, Jinan University, Ocean University of China and Shanghai Maritime University.

The report analyzes the arbitration from three perspectives — arbitral jurisdiction, the application of substantive rules and the validity of the "award" — to explain why it argues that the "award" cannot represent international law.

On July 12, 2016, an ad hoc "arbitral tribunal", unilaterally initiated by the Philippines and backed by external meddling, issued a so-called "award" on the South China Sea in favor of the Philippines. China immediately declared the "award" null and void, saying it has no binding force.

Xu Qi, vice-dean of the Academy of Foreign-related Rule of Law at Jinan University and a principal author of the report, said the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea does not originally deal with territorial disputes.

He noted that in 2006, China issued a government declaration pursuant to Article 298 of the convention, expressly excluding disputes concerning territorial sovereignty, maritime delimitation and other categories from the convention's compulsory dispute settlement procedures.

According to Xu, the "arbitral tribunal" willfully distorted the rules and forcibly brought matters outside its jurisdiction within its purview, depriving itself of any jurisdictional foundation. The tribunal disregarded the fundamental fact that the Nansha Islands constitute an integrated whole and arbitrarily fragmented China's territorial sovereignty over the islands by treating them as disconnected, scattered reefs.

Xu further said the tribunal repeatedly cited uncorroborated evidence from a single source and proactively collected outdated and irrelevant materials that were prejudicial to China, undermining its objectivity and impartiality.

He also accused the tribunal of becoming a geopolitical tool for external powers, including the United States and Japan, to stir up tensions in the South China Sea.

According to Xu, some arbitrators abandoned independent judgment to accommodate the political interests behind the case. He said the tribunal's tailor-made composition undermined its credibility from the outset, rendering the award invalid under international law.

"An 'arbitration award' that is riddled with violations of law and rendered beyond the tribunal's authority cannot become international law, regardless of the name attached to it. China's nonrecognition and nonparticipation are precisely a defense of the solemnity of international law," he said.

Zhou Yong, vice-president of the National Institute for South China Sea Studies, said a sustainable international order must be built on rules that are fair and credible because only such rules can win broad recognition and respect.

He said the "South China Sea Arbitration Award" has deviated from the basic principles of justice, has had only a limited impact on the international legal system and has faced widespread criticism over its structural flaws. The case serves as a negative example in efforts to uphold international law and fairness in international judicial processes.

The report also said the true path to resolving regional disputes lies in good-faith dialogue among the parties concerned.

Yu Minna, an associate professor at Ocean University of China, said that both in terms of legal foundations and practical implementation, negotiation and consultation remain the preferred and more effective means of resolving disputes.

China has 14 land neighbors and has already resolved boundary issues with 12 of them through negotiations.

Resolving disputes through negotiation and consultation is a peaceful approach and is also more conducive to implementing the agreements reached, Yu said.

Online
See more by scanning the code.

AVIC drones help flood relief efforts in Guangxi

By **ZHAO LEI**
zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn



A Wing Loong 2 drone.
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The Aviation Industry Corp of China, the nation's leading aircraft maker, said on Thursday that its Wing Loong 2 drones helped support flood relief efforts in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region by conducting disaster reconnaissance and restoring communications in areas isolated by severe flooding.

The State-owned conglomerate said that on July 6, following an order from the Ministry of Emergency Management, three Wing Loong 2 drones stationed in Guangdong, Hubei and Sichuan provinces were urgently dispatched to Guangxi to carry out disaster reconnaissance and emergency communication support missions.

At the time, surging floodwaters had completely surrounded numerous villages, while ground communications were fully disrupted, hampering search and rescue operations across many affected areas.

The Wing Loong 2 team based in Guangdong, the closest to the disaster zone, was the first to receive the deployment order. The team completed takeoff preparations within one hour. After weather conditions over the airport improved slightly, the drone took off despite strong winds and towering cumulonimbus clouds, heading directly to the disaster area.

The drone soon arrived over Hengzhou, Guangxi, transmitting the first batch of images from flood-hit areas to the ministry and providing critical information for rescue planning and deployment.

It then circled over the affected areas, serving as an airborne communications relay to restore information transmission.

AVIC quoted a local resident as saying online that his area had been without mobile phone service until the drone arrived, enabling him to reconnect with relatives outside the disaster zone.

Two additional Wing Loong 2 drones based in Sichuan and Hubei later took off on the night of July 6 and in the early morning of July 7 to join the emergency response.

According to Chen Bei, deputy chief engineer at AVIC Chengdu Unmanned Aerial Systems, the three drones operated under harsh weather conditions throughout the mission.

"Over nearly four days and nights, our drones conducted six long-duration flights in relay, accumulating a total flight time of nearly 70 hours. They delivered real-time images of disaster sites and restored communication networks for more than 90,000 affected residents and rescue personnel," Chen said.

"The drones returned to their bases after basic communications were established and ground rescue forces moved in to carry out on-site relief and evacuation operations.

"Currently, Wing Loong 2 drones are deployed in six provincial-level regions, boasting emergency support capabilities with nationwide coverage, rapid response and multipoint support," she said.

Since the start of this year's flood season, persistent heavy rainfall has battered multiple areas across Guangxi, with severe flooding ravaging villages and towns. The disasters caused roadbed collapses, power outages and damage to telecommunications facilities, leaving many communities cut off from road access, electricity and communications networks.

Developed by AVIC Chengdu Unmanned Aerial Systems, the Wing Loong 2 is a large civilian emergency response drone system designed for disaster reconnaissance, emergency communication support and emergency supply delivery.

The drone can be equipped with multiple payloads, including an electro-optical detection pod, a synthetic aperture radar, an aerial survey camera, an emergency communication support pod and an emergency delivery pod.

The aircraft is 10.8 meters long with a wingspan of 20.7 meters. It has a maximum takeoff weight of 4.2 metric tons and can carry up to seven payloads under its wings. Equipped with a communication pod, it can fly at speeds of up to 350 kilometers per hour and provide communications coverage for an area of more than 50 square kilometers, according to its designers.

HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY AND CULTURE A POTENT MIX

Visitors flock to Shichahai from all over after its transformation into a natural haven of peace juxtaposed with landmarks that recall Beijing's past

By **CHEN NAN**
chennan@chinadaily.com.cn

On July 14, as the summer heat began to fade, Cong Hua wandered through the maze of *hutongs* around Beijing's Shichahai area, where narrow alleyways open onto old courtyard homes, quiet teahouses and bicycles leaning against weathered brick walls.

With no fixed destination, she followed the winding lanes toward the lakeside, where the city's pace seemed to slow. Boats drifted across the water, willow branches swayed in the evening breeze, and reflections of historic buildings shimmered on the lake's surface.

"Then, just as I turned toward the western sky, the clouds caught fire with shades of gold and crimson. The unexpected sunset over Shichahai transformed an ordinary walk into an amazing moment," she wrote in a Xiaohongshu post that quickly drew hundreds of likes and comments.

For Cong, Shichahai's appeal lay not in a single landmark but in the quiet connections among its streets, waterways and history — a feeling shared by many visitors seeking a glimpse of old Beijing.

Among them was Hanne Vermeulen, a 21-year-old student from Belgium, who explored the lakeside with her family during a three-day visit to Beijing. As evening fell, lanterns reflected across the water while boats glided through the twilight and conversations from nearby streets blended with birdsong.

"It is a very lovely and peaceful area to have a walk and nice food," she said. "We really enjoyed the area."

It was not Vermeulen's first visit to China. After traveling to the country in 2024 and studying Chinese language and culture for a semester at Liaoning University in Shenyang, Liaoning province, she returned this summer with a deeper appreciation for historic neighborhoods such as Shichahai.

For today's visitors, Shichahai is remembered for its tranquil atmosphere, where an unhurried walk may reveal a memorable sunset, a quiet corner or a tangible connection with the city's past. Yet the peaceful landscape is also the product of decades of transformation.

More than 80 years ago, celebrated Chinese writer Lao She immortalized the area in his essay *Fond Memories of Peiping*, describing "willow-lined embankments, vast stretches of lotus blossoms, dense reeds, flocks of waterfowl and the deafening chorus of cicadas". If he were to revisit Shichahai today, he might still recognize echoes of the landscape he captured in words.

Not long ago, however, the area had become better known for its bustling nightlife, crowded commercial streets and loud bar music. In recent years, restoration efforts targeting the lakes, wetlands and surrounding environment have reshaped the neighborhood. Today, birdsong has replaced amplified music, wetlands have returned to the lakeshore and wild ducks once again paddle through cleaner waters.

The transformation represents more than environmental rehabilitation. It also marks a cultural revival, restoring the atmosphere that inspired one of modern Chinese literature's best-known essays while creating a richer experience for residents and visitors alike.



Visitors take a sightseeing rickshaw to explore the Shichahai area in Beijing on July 2. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

Located at the intersection of Beijing's Central Axis and the Grand Canal system, both UNESCO World Heritage sites, Shichahai has occupied a unique place in the city's history for centuries.

Before the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), the area was known simply as *haizi*. Eventually, Shichahai — comprising Qianhai, Houhai and Xihai — became the northern terminus of the Grand Canal, where cargo boats carrying grain and goods from southern China arrived in the imperial capital.

"As the terminal point of the Grand Canal transport system, Shichahai served multiple functions during the Yuan capital of Dadu," said Sun Meng, a researcher at the Beijing Institute of Archaeology.

Beyond its role in shipping and trade, the area was also an important center of commerce and leisure, he said.

"More than 700 years later, boats still glide across the lakes, while surrounding buildings have been revitalized into cultural and tourism landmarks, offering new ways to interpret and share the value of heritage."

Chen Jiandong, who has worked in Shichahai's tourism industry for nearly two decades and now operates traditional rickshaw tours, has witnessed the district's evolution firsthand. Upgraded routes now link the narrow *hutongs* with the lakeside, giving visitors a more immersive way to experience the neighborhood, he said.

"Shichahai attracts tourists from around the world because it brings together history, atmosphere and everyday life in a highly walkable, visually rich setting in central Beijing," Chen said.

Online
See more by scanning the code.

BCI implant offers hope to paralyzed patients

By **WANG XIN** in Shanghai
wangxin2@chinadaily.com.cn

A paralyzed patient in Shanghai has become the first person in the world to receive a commercially approved brain-computer interface, or BCI, implant, marking a major leap from laboratory experiments to real-world medical treatment.

The landmark surgery was performed on Monday at Huashan Hospital, which is affiliated with Fudan University in Shanghai and serves as China's National Center for Neurological Disorders. Doctors successfully implanted the Neural Electronic Opportunity, or NEO, a coin-sized device designed to help paralyzed patients regain hand movement.

The hospital reported that the patient's condition remains stable following the procedure. Tests during the surgery showed that the device was successfully capturing high-quality brain signals.

The patient, who was paralyzed in a car accident 10 years ago, had lost the ability to grasp objects and struggled with basic daily activities. Traditional rehabilitation and medications had failed to bring further improvement.

The NEO system, developed by Shanghai-based Neuracle Technology, bypasses damaged nerves by capturing the patient's intentions to move. Electrodes placed on the protective outer layer of the brain pick up electrical activity when the patient thinks about moving their hand. The system then decodes these signals and sends commands to a robotic glove worn by the patient, physicalizing their thoughts into hand movements.

Unlike some BCIs that insert deep needles into brain tissue, the NEO device sits safely on the brain's surface.

For years, brain-implant technologies were restricted to laboratory settings and experimental clinical trials. Before receiving market approval, Huashan Hospital collaborated with 11 top-tier medical institutions across China to test the system on 32 patients.

The technology reached a commercial milestone on March 13, when it received official market approval from China's regulators, making it the world's first approved commercial implant in the highest-risk medical device category.

In the short four months since its approval, the NEO system has moved rapidly through manufacturing, hospital adoption, patient screening, and even inclusion in commercial health insurance coverage.

The swift rollout highlights growing support for the brain-technology sector. The technology was designated a "future industry" in this year's Government Work Report and was written into the outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) as China aims to cultivate the sector into a new engine of economic growth.

With the technology now entering daily clinical practice, the implant offers new hope for millions of patients around the world living with severe spinal cord injuries.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:20 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:20 PM

EXPLORING NATIONAL PARKS

Rangers dedicate lives to pandas they may never see

National park workers deploy high-tech solutions to track nation's elusive icon

By **WANG XIAOYU** in Ya'an, Sichuan
wangxiaoyu@chinadaily.com.cn

For nearly a decade, conservationist and giant panda researcher Fu Mingxia has dedicated her life to an animal she has never actually seen in the wild.

Working at the Yingjing management station in Sichuan province's Daxiangling mountain range — a more than 6,000-square-kilometer area twice the size of Yosemite National Park — Fu and her team must rely on the subtle traces the rare animals leave behind.

According to national survey data from 2015, Daxiangling is home to 38 giant pandas.

In a neighboring section of the Giant Panda National Park, which extends into Shaanxi and Gansu provinces, only two of the 12 staff there have ever seen a giant panda in the wild.

Yet Fu's team regularly celebrates what many would consider an odd victory — a fresh pile of spindle-shaped, green-tinged droppings along a mountain trail.

In the early days of her career, which began fresh out of university in 2017, finding these bamboo-fiber traces was a thrilling confirmation of life. Today, it is a routine confirmation of an ecological success.

Fu and her colleagues are convinced that the local ecology has improved significantly in recent years, creating a more hospitable environment not just for giant pandas, but for a wide variety of other wildlife as well.

One visible sign is the increasing frequency of panda droppings along the trails.

Another indicator comes from a network of surveillance cameras installed throughout the forest as the number of images captured has risen steadily, featuring not only pandas but also tufted deer, Lady Amherst's pheasants and other wild animals.

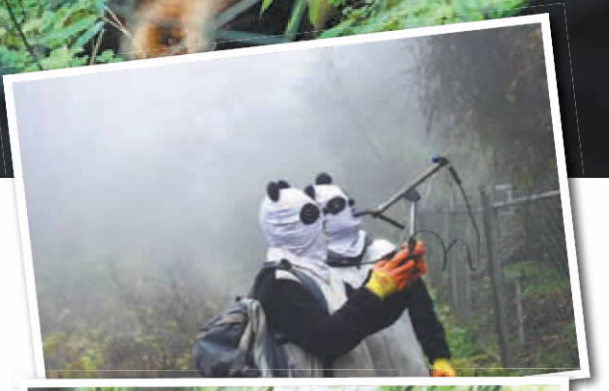
"By 9 am today, our cameras had already recorded 72 detections of mammals and 12 of birds," Fu said in a recent interview. "Since the surveillance network was put into use in October, we have captured over 1,200 video clips or images of giant pandas, including footage of them feeding on bamboo shoots and leading cubs in the wild."

The Giant Panda National Park, launched in 2021, covers 22,000 sq km, and is home to some 1,340 wild giant pandas, accounting for more than 70 percent of the country's total wild panda population.

Thanks to conservation efforts, including habitat restoration and the reduction of human activities, the integrity and connectivity of giant panda habitats have markedly improved, leading to an increase in the number of pandas observed in the wild, according to authorities.

Monitoring results suggest that populations of other rare animals in the region, such as the golden snub-nosed monkey and the snow leopard, are steadily growing. New plant species have also been discovered in recent years, adding further evidence of ecological improvement.







From top: Mu Shijie, a worker from the Wolong section of the Giant Panda National Park, waves goodbye to panda Xian Xian after feeding her during the panda's rewilding training in June 2024. SHEN BOHAN / XINHUA Researchers of the national park track the movements of giant pandas reintroduced into the wild. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY A conservation worker from the national park's Tangjiahe section checks an infrared camera with a media group in May 2023. WANG LEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

A key approach to habitat restoration has been the development of bamboo corridors that link isolated forest patches, allowing pandas to move between areas, find food and meet potential mates from other groups.

In Yingjing, the Niba mountain area is crucial for connecting the panda populations in the Daxiangling mountain range with those in the Qionglai mountain range. However, the connecting pathway used to be cut off by a national highway and logging activities.

"An ideal ecosystem for giant pandas consists of an optimal mix of trees, shrubs, bamboo and grass," Fu said. "Bamboo that is too dense impedes their movement, while bamboo that is too sparse forces them to travel long distances to find enough food."

In experimental woodland plots nestled within the forest, Fu and local researchers have been working to determine the right vegetation mix for the panda's habitat. One plot, Fu said, clearly illustrates the contrast between restored and unrestored forest.

Separated by a narrow path, the left side features tall fir trees with thick canopies that block out most sunlight, leaving the forest floor nearly barren. On the right, the vegetation is far more diverse, with sunlight streaming through gaps in the broadleaf foliage and a layered understory of low shrubs and lush bamboo thriving below.

"The difference clearly shows what habitat restoration can achieve," Fu said. "The plantation on the left was commonly established in the region after logging was called off, with little consideration for ecological value. It has low species diversity and offers little benefit to wildlife. It's the type of forest we aim to restore and improve nowadays."

Based on research findings, Fu said that since 2018, local authorities have been clearing tangled vines and undergrowth to create space for selected trees to grow. After replanting native broadleaf saplings, they carry out three years of tending to ensure the trees mature and provide adequate shelter, ultimately achieving a balanced ratio with bamboo and shrubs.

Some 467 hectares of habitat have been restored in the Daxiangling mountain range using this method.

Alongside habitat restoration, researchers have been deploying intelligent systems to aid wildlife surveillance, obtaining more accurate and efficient data to inform conservation efforts.

Fu said the system in Yingjing features hundreds of infrared cameras capable of capturing and analyzing traces of wild animals, covering 90 percent of the target areas.

"The system is powered by data from more than 480 real-time transmission infrared cameras, 200 traditional surveillance cameras, and hydrological and meteorological instruments that track temperature, humidity, wind speed, rainfall and other environmental variables," she said.

"The system has significantly boosted the efficiency of our monitoring work and provides more comprehensive and accurate data on wildlife activity in the region, helping us develop more scientific approaches to ecological protection," she added.

The Baishuijiang section of the national park, located in Longnan city of Gansu province, is equipped with 1,500 infrared cameras, 600 of which are capable of real-time image transmission, according to Kang Yonggang, a local park employee.

"It is estimated that hundreds of videos documenting giant panda movements are recorded each year. Sometimes, at one location, five different giant pandas are captured within a single month," he said.

"The most valuable footage for us is probably images of panda parents strolling with cubs, because it suggests that they are breeding and that the population is stable or even growing," he added.

According to survey data, the panda population in Baishuijiang dropped sharply from 301 in 1974 to 155 in 1984, largely due to large-scale bamboo flowering that caused food shortages. In recent years, the number has remained stable at around 110.

"The comprehensive surveillance system also enables us to monitor climate and ecological conditions in real time," Kang said. "For instance, if bamboo flowering is detected, we will deliver supplemental food to the pandas and plant bamboo species with different flowering cycles at the same elevations to ensure a steady food supply year-round."

Kang said giant pandas are highly protective of their space. "We don't want them showing up near villagers' homes, because that would mean humans are probably encroaching on wildlife habitat. And we certainly don't want any human activities disturbing their normal lives," he said.

"If we do encounter them during patrols in the future, we will keep our distance, quietly observe their condition, and then leave them in peace."

Sichuan township swaps out coal for ecotourism

By **WANG XIAOYU**

Longcanggou township, located at the southern gateway of China's Giant Panda National Park in Sichuan province, has emerged as a premier national model for balancing wildlife conservation with community development.

Once reliant on coal mining and logging, the Sichuan province community has successfully transitioned to a thriving green economy. By transforming local villagers into homestay hosts, nature guides, and conservation rangers, the township has proved that protecting the environment can be highly profitable for local residents.

About 80 percent of Longcanggou's terrain is covered in forests, and nearly 60 percent of the township lies within the boundaries of the Giant Panda National Park. It was among the first pilot regions to begin exploring community management approaches at the park's entrance area in 2017.

Zhou Yang, a local official administering the community, said a key approach has been to divide the area into three concentric zones. The core protection zone prohibits all but essential human activities, mainly scientific research and conservation work.

"The general control zone allows for nature education and ecological experience programs," he said. "And the functional support zone focuses on developing ecology-related industries, so that local people can also gain benefits and better participate in the management of the national park."





Docents from the Panda International Forest Camp lead participants in identifying plants and learning about nature in Yingjing, Sichuan province. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The establishment of the national park, he said, catalyzed a series of changes in their livelihoods.

"For instance, we have trained and supported local residents to open guesthouses, work as forest rangers, or become tour guides for museums, hiking and birding," he said.

"They have gradually come to understand the importance of environmental protection and are now actively participating in it, because they have witnessed the benefits brought by conservation efforts and are able to earn income from running eco-friendly businesses," he added.

Hu Tailun, a local villager, was among the first to explore building a rural homestay in 2018. Noting the rising interest from bird-watchers and wildlife enthusiasts in a region that boasts more than 400 bird species, Hu also began learning about birds on his own and was later recruited by local authorities as one of the area's first bird guides.

Hu now receives a subsidy for maintaining safety facilities along the viewing trails and earns extra income by leading visitors on forest explorations, bird-watching excursions and flower-viewing trips.

"The change for us is like night and day," he said. "Before, I earned just enough to get by. After starting the new business, I bought a house and a car. More than that, the whole village has changed."

Zhou said that to nurture the growth of tourism, authorities have allocated funds to renovate rural toilets, improve the environment, and upgrade the township square and other public facilities.

"We have also launched regular performances, such as traditional dragon dances or music played by bamboo-made musical instruments, to enrich the experience for tourists here," he said.

Longcanggou has some 70 rural guesthouses and 80 restaurants. The establishment of bird-watching trails is projected to attract an additional 12,000 visitors each year, generating more than 5 million yuan ($736,000) in tourism revenue.

Yingjing county is also home to the first nature-education school inside China's Giant Panda National Park, named the Panda International Forest Camp. The camp has welcomed more than 80,000 visitors since its opening in 2021.

The camp, jointly managed by the local national park authority, tourism officials and a private tourism company, is located in the general control zone. It sits next to an old patrol station, tucked away in verdant, largely undisturbed forests.

To balance conservation with commercial operations, the camp enforces strict visitor registration. Daily capacity is capped at 200 people — well below the 300-person limit set by official evaluations, said Liu Wenxue, the school principal.

Liu added that the camp has made full use of existing infrastructure, such as old patrol routes and large prefabricated wooden homes, allowing for fast construction and environmental sustainability.

According to Liu, educational programs include hiking and field discovery, do-it-yourself activities such as making plant specimens and designing bird-collision-deterrent patterns, as well as long-term research projects.

"Visitors include children and teenagers, families, wildlife enthusiasts and researchers from international organizations," he said. "For younger people, they get to have immersive experiences and may develop a lasting passion for the natural world from here."

The camp has also provided jobs for more than 15 local residents, who work as tour guides, drivers and safety patrollers, he added.

This successful model has since been extended to two other camp sites within nature reserves across Sichuan province, he said.

Official data shows that in 2025 alone, ecotourism and nature education initiatives across the entire Giant Panda National Park drew 6.13 million visitors, generating 6 billion yuan in revenue.

The province of Sichuan has set up 81 joint management committees to involve local villagers, created more than 3,100 ecological public welfare positions, and issued nearly 75 million yuan in compensation funds for about 20,000 affected local people annually.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:20 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:20 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Ensuring AI serves humanity's common interest entails effective global governance

As the 2026 World AI Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance opens in Shanghai on Friday, policymakers, scientists, entrepreneurs and engineers are debating a question that will shape the digital age: Who will write the rules for artificial intelligence?

AI has reached a crossroads. One road leads toward openness, shared standards and international cooperation. The other disappears into rival blocs, competing regulations and technological protectionism.

The greatest economic dividends of a transformative technology emerge not when it is monopolized, but when it is widely shared. AI is no exception. Its value does not lie in building the most sophisticated frontier models. It lies in enabling millions of factories, hospitals, schools and research laboratories to apply it.

That philosophy helps explain China's approach to AI governance. Beijing has coupled innovation with large-scale deployment. AI now optimizes manufacturing, assists doctors in hospitals, supports teachers in classrooms, powers autonomous mining operations and improves logistics across the world's second-largest economy.

China on Wednesday rolled out a set of regulations aimed at curbing emotional dependency on AI-powered companion bots. That represents the latest effort of the country to improve its domestic AI governance. Platforms are required to discourage emotional dependency, safeguard personal data, intervene when excessive reliance develops and remind users of the distinction between human relationships and machine interaction. The broader message is that governance should accompany innovation from the outset. That same philosophy increasingly informs China's international agenda.

The country advocates AI for the public good and for the good of all. In 2023, China put forward the Global AI Governance Initiative, which presents a clear articulation of that vision. The initiative advocates a people-centered approach that ensures AI serves human progress rather than narrow commercial or geopolitical interests. It calls for AI development based on mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit, opposing ideological barriers or exclusive technological blocs that deny other countries the right to develop AI.

The initiative supports a governance framework built through broad international consensus, including discussions under the United Nations on establishing an international institution for AI governance. It also proposes risk-based testing and assessment systems to ensure AI remains safe, reliable, controllable and equitable, while emphasizing greater international cooperation to help developing countries strengthen AI capacity and narrow the global intelligence divide.

This agenda deserves attention because if left entirely to market forces, AI risks widening existing inequalities rather than reducing them. So that is why capacity-building has become central to China's international AI cooperation. Through open-source models, technology partnerships and practical projects spanning Southeast Asia, Africa and Latin America, China shows that AI should become an international public good.

China's combination of open-source innovation, manufacturing capability and vast application scenarios has the potential to reduce the global cost of AI adoption, allowing more countries to participate in the intelligent economy instead of merely consuming technologies developed elsewhere.

But algorithms ignore national borders. Cybersecurity threats spread internationally. Ethical challenges transcend political systems. Climate modeling, public health, disaster prevention and scientific discovery all call for more coordinated collaborative innovation. The world therefore needs to collectively govern AI, not competing regulatory fortresses that simply reproduce existing geopolitical fault lines. Notably, an agreement to establish the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization, which was proposed by China to promote global AI governance, was signed in Shanghai on Thursday. The aim of the organization is to promote coordinated AI development strategies, governance frameworks and technical standards.

Building on that momentum, the conference in Shanghai sets up a platform to enhance mutual trust, deepen cooperation and pool international consensus.

History will not only remember which country unveiled the fastest processor or trained the largest model, but more importantly, which country helped establish the principles and framework that ensured AI remained a force for shared prosperity rather than geopolitical division.

Global perceptions offer food for thought

Western media have long dominated the global narrative, often labeling China in ways that lack accuracy and objectivity. For people in many countries, their understanding of China has been shaped largely by fragmented media portrayals.

In recent years, however, developments such as China's visa-free policies, growing cross-border exchanges, the global reach of Chinese products, and the proliferation of online videos through the rise of social media have begun to break down these information barriers.

As people increasingly gain direct exposure to China, public perceptions are gradually shifting — and with them, the tide of international opinion is starting to turn, as the latest survey by the Pew Research Center suggests.

Its recent poll indicates that China is now viewed more favorably than the United States in 27 out of 36 surveyed countries, including Canada and Mexico. The change, which marks the first time in about two decades that China has surpassed the US in the survey on global public opinion, underscores the evolving dynamics of international relations.

Conducted from February to May and covering more than 42,000 people, the survey coincided with heightened geopolitical tensions, including the attack by the US and Israel on Iran. Other issues that might have affected global perceptions of the US include its repeated threats to take control of Greenland, the US military raid that captured Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro, and the US handling of the Israel-Palestine conflict in Gaza, according to researchers involved in the study.

By comparison, China is seen as a more reliable partner in many places. It's more likely to contribute to global peace and stability, said Laura Silver, associate director of Pew's Global Attitudes Research and one of the researchers on the study.

Though Silver did not go into specifics, it is evident that China's extensive global engagement, characterized by mutual benefit and win-win cooperation, has won the hearts of an increasing number of people worldwide. The Belt and Road Initiative, which connects countries through a vast network of railways, ports and roads, has significantly boosted global trade, investment and growth. Additionally, China's contribution of around 30 percent to global economic growth and its pivotal role in global industry and supply chains have provided significant stability to the uncertain global economy.

The Chinese embassy in the US attributed the overall positive sentiment toward China to the country's "governance achievements and development progress", which are recognized by more and more people around the world.

Yet despite that, given the poll's limitations, the Pew survey should not lead to complacency. It should be seen that long-standing biases in the West may continue to perpetuate stereotypes about China that will take time to overcome. The result of the survey should therefore be viewed with due caution.

Nevertheless, the US' withdrawal from international agreements and multilateral institutions in recent years — along with its rejection of multilateralism and opposition to economic globalization — runs counter to the principles that the international community has long championed.

China, on the other hand, continues to support economic globalization and a multipolar world, which aligns with the world's hopes to address global challenges through multilateralism.

This growing divergence is inevitably influencing many countries' perception of the US, as some observers said. This explains why the survey found that its sampled interviewees in major European countries — including France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Sweden and the Netherlands — have all switched their opinions in favor of China.

Development is the hard truth. International recognition ultimately rests on a country's actions. China should continue its pursuit of high-quality development and expand high-standard opening-up. By persistently sharing development opportunities with the world, China can continuously contribute to the building of a better world and win the international community's recognition.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

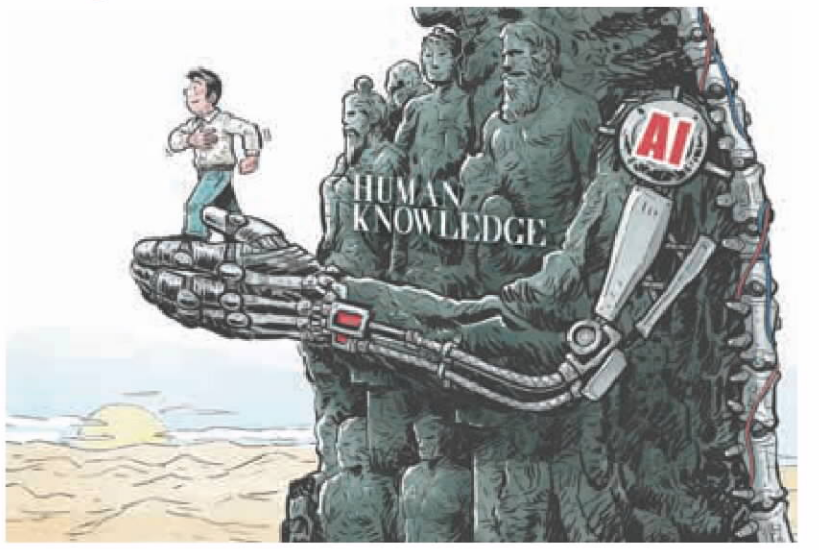
China Daily UK
90 Cannon St, London EC4N 6HA, UK
+44 (0) 207 398 8270
editor@chinadailyuk.com

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

Brussels' 'rivalry rhetoric' on China meets economic reality

If Brussels' latest position paper is to be believed, China has crossed a diplomatic Rubicon. By describing Beijing as a "key enabler" of Russia's conflict with Ukraine and placing it alongside Moscow as a "revisionist power" seeking to "reshape" the international order, the European Union has adopted tough official language on China.

The timing of the EU's rhetorical escalation is hardly accidental. After more than four years of conflict, the Ukraine crisis has entered a phase when military gains or losses over the coming months could influence not only the settlement but also Europe's own security architecture. Against that backdrop, the position paper adopted by the EU's 27 foreign ministers on Monday serves less as a legal judgment than as political signaling designed to increase the costs of any so-called "Chinese support" for Moscow.

Yet if Europe's language has become more uncompromising, its economic behavior remains comparatively restrained, reflecting an uncomfortable reality. Brussels may speak of "de-risking", but every attempt by Europe's China hawks to widen trade restrictions eventually encounters resistance from within the bloc itself.

Member states differ sharply over how much economic pain they are willing to bear. European manufacturers worry about access to rare earths, pharmaceutical ingredients and intermediate goods. Consumers ultimately pay for higher tariffs through higher prices. Businesses bear the costs of disrupted supply chains.

Even while European Commission officials warn against Chinese "industrial dominance", both sides have established working mechanisms, agreed on joint monitoring and scheduled future talks.

The first round of consultations in Brussels last month produced a pragmatic direction: the two sides should explore ways to expand the EU's exports to China. That is a far more rational approach. Reducing its dependence on China may narrow the EU's trade deficit, but much of the resulting burden falls on European households and companies through higher costs and reduced competitiveness.

European policymakers frequently argue that China should purchase more European products. Beijing, for its part, has indicated a willingness to import more competitive European goods. Yet the sectors where Europe still enjoys its technological advantages — advanced semiconductor equipment, precision machinery and other high-end industrial technologies — remain constrained by European export controls under the banner of "dual-use security".

Europe cannot simultaneously complain about its trade deficit while refusing to sell many of the products that Chinese buyers actually want.

If Brussels genuinely wishes to reduce the deficit, carefully loosening restrictions on selected civilian high-tech exports would achieve far more than another round of "antidumping" and "anti-subsidy" investigations. The EU's trade deficit with China is actually rooted in a "trust deficit" of its own making.

The European Commission is reportedly assembling a task force to prepare for possible Chinese "retaliation" while devising compensation for European companies that might suffer the consequences. Unveiling such contingency plans before negotiations have even run their course risks sending a contradictory signal. Is Brussels preparing for compromise or rehearsing confrontation? If the purpose of the consultations is to find common ground, they should be conducted on the basis of mutual respect, equality and good faith — not accompanied by sideshows designed to shape the negotiating climate before the real bargaining has begun.

Europe can either continue allowing false geopolitical anxieties to dominate every aspect of its China policy, risking an increasingly costly cycle of confrontation. Or it can distinguish between legitimate security concerns and areas where cooperation remains overwhelmingly in its own interest.

Had China supported Russia as some of Europe's most "outspoken" politicians regularly imply, the battlefield would almost certainly look very different today. Instead, the conflict has settled into a prolonged and costly stalemate, exposing Europe's own strategic miscalculations.

Before assigning ever greater responsibility to Beijing for Europe's security dilemmas, Brussels should ask a more uncomfortable question: how much of its current predicament stems from decisions made in Europe itself?

Statesmanship begins with that kind of self-examination. The future China-EU trade consultations will reveal whether Brussels possesses the political wisdom to match its strategic ambition.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

New recycling rules will help boost circular economy

Editor's note: *The central authorities have released a plan to promote the circular economy, calling for strengthening the recycling of solid waste generated by the "new three" industries — electric vehicles, lithium batteries and photovoltaic products. Yao Xin, deputy dean of the Research Institute for Environmental Innovation (Suzhou) of Tsinghua, shared his insights on the plan with China.com.cn. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

The new energy sector is poised for robust growth in the coming years. In 2025, China announced its nationally determined contribution targets for carbon emissions reduction by 2035. Calculations based on these targets indicate that China's total installed capacity of wind and solar power will reach 3.6 billion kilowatts by 2035, more than six times the figure in 2020.

The new energy sector in China is entering a new stage in which a large number of products are going to be retired. The first retirement phase is estimated to begin during the period between 2026 and 2030. Therefore, the plan puts forward a series of measures to promote the utilization of solid waste generated by these products.

The plan sets requirements for the design and manufacturing of the products. For example, one of the requirements is that the products should be easy to dismantle.

It also sets requirements for enhancing the full life-cycle traceability of the products enabled by information technology. The technology is vital, because it helps ensure that solid waste, such as scrapped power batteries and photovoltaic modules, is collected by compliant enterprises and safely disposed of.

Scaling up the utilization of recycled materials is a key step in China's strategy for expanding its circular economy. It is necessary to improve the quality of recycled materials. One example is primary recycling, where waste materials are processed into the same product from which they originated. Such recycling requires more advanced technologies. This could make recycled materials costlier than virgin materials.

To address this challenge, the government should encourage and even require enterprises to use recycled materials. Accordingly, the plan states that certified recycled materials will be included in government procurement.

It's also necessary to make consumers confident that products containing recycled materials are not of inferior quality. Consumers should recognize that recycled products are more eco-friendly because their production emits less carbon and consumes fewer virgin mineral resources.

Both the Shanghai Stock Exchange and the Shenzhen Stock Exchange have issued detailed ESG disclosure guidelines for listed companies. Enterprises should also disclose information on their use of recycled materials.

To encourage broader utilization of recycled materials by companies, digital tools should be used to ensure full traceability. Such traceability helps manufacturers verify the quality of the materials they purchase, and makes it easier for them to prove that they have used recycled materials.

The plan also mentions establishing a "digital identity" system for batteries of new energy vehicles.

Besides batteries, the "digital identity" system will likely be rolled out for other products that use rare and precious metals and critical raw materials suitable for recycling.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:20 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:20 PM

VIEWS

David Gosset

Understanding China's science popularization

Studying science popularization in China offers a unique perspective on one of the most significant transformations in modern history: the resurgence of the Chinese civilization and its evolving path toward modernity on its own terms. Beyond economic growth, technological achievements and geopolitical influence, the ways in which scientific knowledge is disseminated, understood and embraced by society reveal important dimensions of China's development model and its vision for the future.

As the British sinologist Joseph Needham (1900-95) demonstrated in his monumental Science and Civilisation in China, an encyclopedic work that remains unfinished to this day, China was for centuries one of the world's leading centers of scientific and technological innovation.

Papermaking, printing, the magnetic compass, gunpowder, and numerous other inventions emerged from Chinese ingenuity long before comparable developments appeared elsewhere.

For much of recorded history, China stood at the forefront of applied knowledge, engineering and statecraft, contributing not only to its own prosperity but also to the advancement of human civilization.

Yet history followed an unexpected trajectory. Despite its rich scientific heritage, China did not become the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution.

Beginning in the late 18th century, Europe experienced a profound transformation driven by mechanized production, fossil-fuel energy and new economic institutions. While European powers expanded their industrial and technological capabilities, China entered a period marked by internal crises and external pressures.

For more than a century, the country found itself in the unfamiliar position of confronting a modernity largely shaped elsewhere. The resulting technological, economic and military gap became one of the defining challenges of modern Chinese history.

The establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 marked a decisive turning point. The new state embarked upon a long-term process of reconstruction, industrialization and institutional transformation. Despite numerous difficulties and setbacks, China gradually rebuilt its scientific and educational foundations.

Following the launch of the reform and opening-up policies in 1978, the country accelerated its integration into the global economy while simultaneously investing heavily in science, technology, and human capital. The cumulative impact of these efforts has fundamentally reshaped China's position in the world.

A new stage in this process was articulated at the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in October 2022. In his report to the Congress, General Secretary Xi Jinping introduced and further developed the concept of "Chinese-style modernization".

This concept emphasizes that modernization does not follow a single universal path defined by Western historical experience. Rather, modernization can assume diverse forms shaped by a nation's history, culture, institutions and development priorities.

Within this framework, scientific and technological advancement occupies a central place. The Congress report established the objective that by 2035 China should significantly enhance its scientific and technological capabilities, achieve greater self-reliance in key technologies and join the ranks of the world's most innovative countries.

Indeed, China has emerged in the 21st century as one of the world's leading scientific and technological powers. Its high-speed rail operational network now exceeds 50,000 kilometers, while major advances have been achieved in areas such as artificial intelligence, digital platforms, smart manufacturing, renewable energy, ultra-high-voltage power transmission, quantum technologies and space exploration.

Large-scale investments in research and development, a vast pool of engineers and scientists, and strong coordination between public institutions and private enterprises have all contributed to this remarkable ascent.



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

However, focusing solely on these visible achievements risks overlooking a less frequently examined dimension of China's scientific rise. The country's success cannot be explained solely by industrial policy, research funding or market size.

Equally important are the cultural and societal mechanisms that foster public engagement with science and technology. Among these, science popularization occupies a particularly significant place.

In China, science popularization is not merely understood as the dissemination of scientific facts. Rather, it constitutes a broad societal project aimed at cultivating scientific literacy, encouraging public participation in innovation and creating a social environment receptive to technological change.

Through science museums, educational campaigns, public exhibitions, media programs, digital platforms and community initiatives, scientific knowledge is integrated into everyday life and presented as a shared public good.

This phenomenon remains relatively understudied outside China, despite its growing importance. Yet it plays a critical role in supporting the country's innovation ecosystem.

By fostering curiosity, encouraging experimentation and strengthening public confidence in science and technology, science popularization helps reduce resistance to innovation and facilitates the rapid adoption of new technologies.

In this context, innovation is not confined to laboratories, universities or research institutes; it becomes a collective undertaking supported by broad social participation and public imagination.

Understanding this dimension is essential for developing a more balanced and comprehensive interpretation of contemporary China. The country's technological achievements are not simply the product of State planning or economic scale.

They are also rooted in long-term investments in education, cultural narratives that celebrate scientific achievement and institutional arrangements that connect research, industry and society. Science popularization serves as one of the bridges linking these different spheres.

More broadly, the study of science popularization offers valuable insights into the transformation of Chinese civilization itself.

It reveals how China seeks to reconcile its historical traditions with the demands of technological modernity, how scientific development is integrated into broader national goals, and how public understanding of science is mobilized in support of economic, social and environmental objectives.

Examining these processes allows us to move beyond simplistic explanations of China's rise and to appreciate the deeper social foundations that sustain its modernization project.

Important connections exist between science popularization and sustainable development, peace, the reduction of technological inequalities and the formation of shared epistemic foundations for global dialogue.

In this sense, science popularization may emerge as a new nexus for international cooperation.

In an age in which the most profound transformations are increasingly driven by science and technology, the capacity to align innovation with public understanding and social acceptance may prove as important as scientific discovery itself.

Studying science popularization in China therefore offers more than an analysis of educational or communication practices; it provides a window into how a major civilization understands modernization, organizes technological change and imagines its future.

The author is founder of the China-Europe-America Global Initiative, a specialist in global affairs and a sinologist. He is the author of the report Science Popularization in China and the Making of an Innovative Society.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Pou Sothirak and Him Rotha

China-ASEAN ties pivotal for regional peace, stability

For over three and a half decades, China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations have nurtured a relationship that has blossomed into a productive engagement. The two sides have enjoyed comprehensive engagement across political, economic and cultural domains.

As we commemorate the 35th anniversary of China-ASEAN relations, it is fitting to reflect on how this remarkable relationship has evolved over time and become the linchpin for peace and stability in the region and beyond.

Even before formal dialogues began, China and ASEAN had worked closely to help resolve the Cambodian issue through both multilateral and bilateral channels. China expressed its interest in closer cooperation at the 1991 ASEAN Ministerial Meeting and became a full dialogue partner in 1996.

The relationship entered a new phase in 2003 when the two sides signed the Joint Declaration on Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity at the ASEAN-China Summit in Bali, Indonesia. China became the first major power to accede to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, underscoring its commitment to regional peace and cooperation.

The relationship continued to expand in the following years. China established a free trade area with ASEAN in January 2010 and a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with ASEAN in November 2021.

We are living in a fragile and dangerous world, and there is an urgent need for innovative approaches to peace and security so that international relations — especially among major powers such as the United States and China — are more predictable and constructive. The global community must unite to reduce tensions, promote cooperation, and create a climate of friendliness conducive to a stable global system.

China and ASEAN must carefully manage this transition to preserve peace, maintain stability, and build trust and mutual respect.

For China and ASEAN to continue as a compelling force for peace and stability, both sides must commit to creating an environment conducive to development and prosperity. This requires sustained efforts from all stakeholders, where nations aspire to coexist in harmony despite their historical differences, levels of national development, foreign policies or the pursuit of national interests.

Regional peace, stability and prosperity will depend on China and ASEAN translating their comprehensive strategic partnership into practical cooperation. By fulfilling existing commitments and tackling shared challenges over the next decade, both sides can turn this shared vision into tangible outcomes.

To safeguard regional peace and prosperity, China and ASEAN must jointly tackle key challenges.

First, the rapid economic growth in recent years has changed the regional balance of power.

Such transitions are often accompanied by tensions and anxieties which can lead to mistrust and conflict. China and ASEAN must carefully manage this transition to preserve peace, maintain stability, and build trust and mutual respect.

Second, the international system is remarkably diverse and complex, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach to peace and security.

China and ASEAN should recognize and accept different approaches to peace and security and forge a collaborative approach to address common security issues.

Third, unresolved territorial disputes and other security hot spots — such as the South China Sea issue, the Ukraine conflict, the Myanmar crisis, hostilities in the Middle East and the border dispute between Cambodia and Thailand — pose risks to peace and stability.

Misunderstanding and miscalculation could spark a conflagration that could undermine the peace in the region and beyond.

China and ASEAN should strengthen international cooperation, join hands to defuse potential conflicts and pave the way for a more stable regional and global system.

Fourth, China and ASEAN should uphold internationally recognized norms and principles of peaceful coexistence, which rest upon international law. This includes respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, peaceful settlement of disputes, non-aggression, non-interference in internal affairs, and equality and mutual benefit. Peaceful coexistence rejects power politics and advocates for principles that recognize the existence of all countries on an equal basis.

Over the past 35 years, China-ASEAN relations have witnessed remarkable progress in various fields such as politics, economics, security, culture and health. The frequent interactions and close cooperation between the two sides have yielded fruitful results that exceeded expectations, benefiting the peoples of China and ASEAN countries alike.

No one can tell what the future holds, but for now, the destiny of Asia hinges on China and ASEAN making wise choices and building a productive China-ASEAN community with a shared future.

On the 35th anniversary of their relations, we extend our sincere congratulations to China and ASEAN on their fruitful relationship and wish the two sides further success as they strive to maintain regional peace and stability, boost their respective national development and regional growth amid existing and emerging challenges.

Pou Sothirak is the former minister of Industry, Mines and Energy of Cambodia and a distinguished senior adviser to the Cambodian Center for Regional Studies; and Him Rotha is the deputy director of the Cambodian Center for Regional Studies.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Chen Weihua

The author is a China Daily columnist.
chenweihua@chinadaily.com.cn

Chengdu gets it right on work-life balance

I spent five days in Chengdu last week, resting after a month-long road trip and trying to figure out what makes the capital of Sichuan province one of the happiest cities in China — especially compared to my home city Shanghai.

For 17 consecutive years, Chengdu has been rated among the Top 10 Happiest Cities in China by Oriental Outlook magazine published by Xinhua News Agency. The latest ranking was announced in December 2025.

Chengdu is a historical city, dating back about 2,300 years. Most Chinese like myself were fascinated by books such as *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* in childhood.

That is why I visited Wuhou Shrine again this time after my last visit about 20 years ago to pay tribute to the legendary figures whose stories have impacted the lives of so many people.

The street vibe in Chengdu is very different from that of Shanghai.

Small family-run restaurants and roadside food stands, with tables on sidewalks, are everywhere, even next to Taikoo Li, the posh shopping and dining place similar to Xintiandi in Shanghai. The "bench noodle" stand is the most extreme example, where a small stool by the roadside is your table.

Such food stands belonged to bygone days in Shanghai after decades of government efforts to face-lift the city's image, often at the expense of convenience to local residents.

Since Chengdu is such a food paradise, many such inexpensive restaurants and food stands serve very tasty food.

Chengdu folks are very willing to go out and meet friends. The abundance of inexpensive eateries across the city offers more choices to people who can't afford the expensive restaurants in shopping malls.

Since Chengdu is such a food paradise, many such inexpensive restaurants and food stands serve very tasty food.

While playing cards in public parks is not unusual in Chinese cities, in Shanghai it's often only a pastime for men.

But in Chengdu, women are just as enthusiastic and truly "hold up half the sky".

Young men and women in Chengdu, a hinterland city, dress up just as fashionably as their peers in Shanghai, while local entertainment spots, such as live music venues and talk show theaters, draw big crowds.

One Didi, China's Uber, driver who had worked for a year in Shanghai told me that most Chengdu people are not workaholics. They like to spend money and time enjoying life.

In other words, Chengdu folks manage work-life balance better than people in many other cities of China.

In Shanghai, by contrast, many people have willingly or unwillingly become workaholics. Some have become homebodies or are "lying flat", doing nothing. All of them badly need to rebalance their lives.

It's no coincidence that Finland and Denmark are consistently rated the happiest countries in the World Happiness Report sponsored by the United Nations, largely due to the good work-life balance despite the long cold weather in Nordic countries.

Living costs are also much lower in Chengdu. The restaurants are cheaper and housing prices are much lower than those in Shanghai. But so are the average wages.

The Didi driver noted that pressure is growing due to excessive competition, or *juan* in Chinese.

With a population of 21 million, Chengdu ranked 7th among Chinese cities by GDP. Its economy reached 2.48 trillion yuan ($366 billion) in 2025, still less than half of that of Shanghai's 5.67 trillion yuan.

Chengdu has now become a modern international metropolis, with modern industries, world-class infrastructure and efficient transport systems that attract many international tourists.

The city's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-2030), announced recently, targets a GDP of 3.2 trillion yuan. This is to be achieved not just by expanding its transport networks and advanced manufacturing and high-tech sectors, but also by building more parks, better schools and a city that is more friendly to senior citizens.

I have my fingers crossed that Chengdu does not lose its appeal as one of the happiest cities and Shanghai catches up in that ranking.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:20 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:20 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

China eyes more yuan globalization

Mainland, HK launch new measures to expand offshore RMB market

By **JIANG XUEQING**
jiangxueqing@chinadaily.com.cn

China will introduce a series of measures to deepen the development of the offshore renminbi market by enhancing liquidity, expanding the supply of RMB-denominated assets and strengthening connectivity with onshore markets.

The People's Bank of China, the nation's central bank, will continue to optimize relevant institutional arrangements, covering short, medium and long-term maturities, to provide stable and multitiered RMB — also called the yuan — liquidity support to the offshore market, said Xie Guangqi, director-general of the Monetary Policy Department of the PBOC.

Speaking at a news conference on Wednesday, Xie said the PBOC will guide the China Foreign Exchange Trade System to collaborate with the Hong Kong Monetary Authority and Hong Kong's Securities and Futures Commission to build a comprehensive financial trading platform that provides infrastructure services for trading in financial markets, including bonds, currencies and foreign exchange.

On July 7, the PBOC, the HKMA and the SFC jointly announced new measures to promote the offshore RMB (CNH) market's development in Hong Kong.

"This coordinated effort represents the most significant policy push to date to reinforce Hong Kong's role as the preeminent offshore hub for renminbi," said Xiong Yi, chief economist for China at Deutsche Bank, in a report.

While the PBOC and the HKMA jointly introduced measures to deepen mainland-Hong Kong financial cooperation in early 2024 and 2025, the latest policy package is significantly more forceful and places a much stronger emphasis on developing the offshore RMB market, Xiong said.

The new measures reaffirm that the offshore RMB market is a long-term pillar of the currency's internationalization rather than a stopgap solution, he said. "We believe the CNH market is now on track to overcome its size and liquidity constraints, creating a self-reinforcing cycle of growth."

The Chinese yuan has strengthened over the past six to nine months, supported by China's export strength and sustained foreign trade-related capital inflows, Xiong said.

He added that the currency has also remained notably stable in terms of both exchange and interest rates despite heightened global market volatility triggered by Middle East tensions. That resilience has made the RMB increasingly attractive to foreign companies looking to diversify away from the US dollar and other major currencies, given its stability and reliable access to financing.

"Renminbi internationalization is seeing another acceleration, starting from this year. I expect that the use of renminbi broadly in payment, financing and investment will increase over the next five to 10 years, and the Chinese currency is on the rise to become another major reserve currency alongside the dollar, euro and yen," Xiong added.

In December, the RMB's share as a global currency in the trade finance market was 8.3 percent, up 2.32 percent year-on-year, according to SWIFT.

Last year, RMB clearing activity in London, the largest RMB clearing hub outside of Asia, strengthened significantly. Total cumulative clearing volume reached 48.15 trillion yuan ($7.11 trillion), and the average daily clearing volume increased 55.33 percent to 191.09 billion yuan. China-UK RMB cross-border settlement also expanded modestly to 3.8 trillion yuan, generating a net inflow of 91.8 billion yuan into the United Kingdom, said the 19th edition of the London RMB Business Report.

Designated as the first RMB clearing bank for the UK in 2014, China Construction Bank Corp London Branch had achieved cumulative clearing volumes exceeding 174 trillion yuan as of the end of 2025, said the report.



A currency exchange outlet in Hong Kong. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Briefly

Yuan loans increase in Jan-June period

China's yuan-denominated loans rose by 10.72 trillion yuan ($1.58 trillion) in the first half of 2026, central bank data showed. At the end of June, outstanding yuan loans stood at 282.63 trillion yuan, up 5.2 percent year-on-year, according to the People's Bank of China. The M2, a broad measure of money supply that covers cash in circulation and all deposits, had increased by 8 percent year-on-year to 356.71 trillion yuan by the end of last month.

China's power use rises in first half

China's electricity consumption increased by 5.3 percent in the first half of the year, driven by strong growth in internet data services, electric vehicle charging and high-tech manufacturing, official data showed. Total power consumption reached nearly 5.1 trillion kilowatt-hours (kWh) in the January-June period, according to data released by the National Energy Administration.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY



A visitor interacts with an intelligent machine during the World Internet Conference Open Day in Beijing on Wednesday. CHEN XIAOGEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

AI creates affordable consumer hardware

At a technology bazaar in Longfusi, a Beijing cultural landmark dating back nearly 600 years and once home to one of the city's most important temple fairs, a compact camping cart rolled quietly and independently through the crowd, keeping a steady distance from its user and steering around people in its path.

Zhang Lei, a local camping enthusiast, was impressed enough to place an order on the spot. At less than 2,000 yuan ($294), the model he chose is priced lower than a typical midrange smartphone.

"Pulling a cart loaded with tents and cooking gear for several kilometers used to be exhausting," Zhang said.

"This one follows you and automatically avoids obstacles, leaving your hands free. It works even better than I expected, and the price is affordable."

This purchase captures a broader shift in China's artificial intelligence consumer market. After becoming familiar to many users via products such as ChatGPT and Midjourney, AI is increasingly taking physical forms, as Chinese companies embed mature capabilities into products designed for everyday use.

At the bazaar, more than 300 AI products from more than 40 companies were available as consumer goods with clear price tags, rather than displayed merely as conceptual prototypes.

A few meters from the camping cart, an elderly visitor wearing a lightweight exoskeleton tried walking and jogging under the guidance of a staff member.

Nearby, meanwhile, an emotion-aware plush toy interacted with people through voice and touch, offering a brief form of companionship.

What stood out was not necessarily technological novelty, but commercial viability: visual recognition, sensor-based control and voice interaction were being turned into physical products that ordinary consumers can readily purchase.

Exoskeletons offer one of the clearest examples. Once largely confined to military and medical rehabilitation uses, with some costing hundreds of thousands of yuan, consumer exoskeletons in China now typically sell for between 6,000 and 20,000 yuan.

Beijing-based outdoor company Toread launched a consumer-grade exoskeleton priced at roughly 7,000 yuan in June. Inquiries and purchases have continued to rise, with sales on a single platform topping 100 units in one day, according to the company.

Rental services are lowering the barrier further. A park in Hangzhou, capital of East China's Zhejiang province, offers exoskeleton experiences for 9.9 yuan an hour, while rentals have also been introduced at scenic spots elsewhere in China including the Great Wall and Huangshan Mountain.

Across the emerging rental market, a common rate is approximately 80 yuan for three hours.

AI products are also reaching consumers through a widening range of retail channels. AI glasses and translation earphones have become routine merchandise at the Yiwu International Trade Market in Zhejiang, while robotics experience stores have opened in cities across China.

Behind the falling prices is China's robust manufacturing ecosystem. Its AI hardware sector draws on domestic supply chains spanning acoustics, optics, batteries, molds and final assembly. This allows companies to refine products faster, keep costs down and move new AI hardware concepts into mass production more quickly.

Scale may also help. China's population of 1.4 billion and more than 1 billion internet users provide a large and varied consumer base in which different types of AI hardware can find distinct applications. Exoskeletons are finding uses in hiking, rehabilitation and elderly care, while emotion-aware toys are useful for child companionship and psychological comfort, and automatic-following devices are handy in camping, logistics and short-distance transport.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

AI, interaction to fuel content growth

By **CHENG YU**
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Two viewers sit before different screens, each holding half the clues. One knows who is lying, the other knows how to escape. Unless they work together, the characters on screen may not survive.

This is not quite a film and not quite a game. It is the emerging world of interactive entertainment, where audiences no longer simply watch a story but step inside it, make choices and determine how it ends.

Chinese interactive content company AltStory, which has specialized in interactive storytelling since its founding in 2017, is betting artificial intelligence will help push the format from a niche experiment into a mass-market business by making its complex productions faster, cheaper and easier to create.

"Interactive content is on the brink of explosive growth," AltStory founder and CEO Kun Peng said. "When users move from being bystanders to becoming protagonists, interactive storytelling becomes one of the most compelling forms of narrative."

The company has launched AltFlow, an AI agent that helps writers transform novels and scripts into branching stories with alternative plots, relationships and endings.

The tool comes as studios and technology companies search for new ways to capture viewers accustomed to video games, short-form clips and real-time online participation. Traditional films ask audiences to sit back. Interactive films ask them to act.

At key moments, viewers can click on a choice, vote through livestream comments or cooperate with another participant. A decision may save a character, reveal a secret or send the story toward a completely different conclusion.



Kun Peng

Netflix brought the format to wider attention with *Black Mirror: Bandersnatch* in December 2018. Four days later, AltStory released one of China's earliest major experiments with interactive drama.

In the espionage thriller, two viewers receive different information and must share clues and make decisions together. Watching becomes a social negotiation, with neither participant able to see the whole story alone.

Yet interactive productions remain difficult and expensive to make.

Kun describes the industry's main obstacles as "three mountains": creation, production and distribution.

A conventional screenplay moves from beginning to end. An interactive script repeatedly divides into new branches, all of which must remain logically consistent and emotionally convincing.

Writers must think like both filmmakers and game designers. Every alternative route has to be written, filmed, edited and tested, even though individual viewers may see only a small portion of the work.

A two-player interactive production can require 400 to 600 minutes of footage, Kun said, equivalent to the running time of five or six conventional films.

Early interactive titles were distributed mainly through gaming platforms, limiting their reach among mainstream film and television audiences.

AltStory says AI can help flatten those mountains. AltFlow uses 64 AI sub-agents to analyze long novels and scripts, extract characters and relationships, identify narrative turning points and suggest places where viewers could intervene.

A routing system assigns different large language models to different creative tasks, while a specialized editor helps writers organize and revise branching plots.

"The value of AI is not just about reducing costs or improving efficiency," Kun said. "It reconstructs the entire production chain and gives creators the freedom to continuously revise and expand a story."

AltStory plans to offer AltFlow to global creators alongside an intellectual property library, computing resources, production funding and overseas distribution channels.

Kun said only a handful of Chinese teams were working on interactive storytelling when AltStory entered the market. Over the past two years, however, internet companies, studios, copyright owners and independent creators have increasingly moved into the sector.

CNPC boosts ethylene capacity

By **LI JING**
lijing2009@chinadaily.com.cn

China's first full-chain green and low-carbon ethylene project was put into operation on Thursday, lifting annual ethylene capacity at the Dushanzi Petrochemical complex to more than 3 million metric tons and making it the only ethylene production base of that scale in the country's central and western regions.

Dushanzi Petrochemical is a subsidiary of State-owned China National Petroleum Corp, or CNPC.

The expansion, which will boost capacity by 1.2 million tons per year, comes as China seeks to strengthen domestic production of higher-value petrochemical materials and develop manufacturing further inland using the region's abundant oil and gas resources.

Located in Shangku Petrochemical Industrial Park in Korla, Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, the project integrates renewable electricity, carbon capture and petrochemical production technologies to lower emissions while producing key industrial feedstocks, according to CNPC.

The company said the project is expected to reduce carbon emissions by 1.37 million tons a year, equivalent to planting about 365,334 hectares of forest. The facility draws 1 billion kilowatt-hours of solar power annually through a direct connection with CNPC's Tarim Oilfield photovoltaic project. It also features China's first domestically developed electric-drive system for the three core ethylene compressors, replacing conventional steam-driven equipment to lower emissions.

CNPC said the project also employs China's first proprietary technology capable of capturing carbon dioxide from ultra-low-concentration ethylene cracking furnace flue gas. Under this process, captured carbon dioxide and by-product hydrogen are fully recycled through an integrated system combining green electricity, carbon capture, blue hydrogen, blue ammonia and green fertilizer production.

Ethylene, the basic building block for plastics, synthetic rubber and fibers, is widely regarded as an indicator of the overall level of a country's petrochemical industry. The new facility will produce ethylene, polyethylene, polypropylene and other petrochemical products used in packaging, automobiles, consumer goods and industrial applications.

The project also underscores China's efforts to localize advanced petrochemical technologies.

"The project has sought to overcome technological bottlenecks," said Tong Yi, a design manager for the project, in an interview with local media.

CNPC said 10 of the project's 11 major production units use domestic technologies, including nine developed by the company.

The ethylene unit is largely localized, while downstream units, including pygas hydrogenation and butadiene rubber production, have achieved 100 percent localization. The project also marks China's first domestically manufactured large-scale extrusion pelletizer system, according to the company.

The complex in Korla was completed in 22 months, setting a new domestic record for the construction of a refinery and petrochemical project of comparable scale. The company attributed the pace to modular construction, factory prefabrication and digital project management.

It adopted a construction model covering standardized design, centralized procurement, factory prefabrication, modular construction, intelligent management and digital delivery.

The new facility uses feedstock supplied by supporting natural gas processing and crude stabilization projects at CNPC's Tarim Oilfield, further integrating upstream oil and gas production with downstream petrochemical manufacturing.

Zheng Xin in Beijing and Mao Weihua in Urumqi contributed to this story.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:20 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:20 PM

Q&A WITH CEO

Editor's note: *After the release of China's first-half 2026 economic data, China Daily invited chief executives and senior leaders from key multinational companies to share their perspectives on the world's second-largest economy. Their insights go beyond short-term growth, offering a closer look at the evolving "China Opportunity 2.0" narrative amid ongoing debate over the so-called "China Shock 2.0".*

Innovating locally for global scale



Samantha Zhu
Chairperson of Accenture Greater China



Chen Pu
Chief Asia officer of Syensqo



Winnie Ma
President for APAC region at VF Corp



Wolf Jiang
Vice-president of Logitech and president of Logitech GCN

Q1 Many multinational companies in recent years continue to expand their investment and operations in China, suggesting that "China Opportunity 2.0" is increasingly offsetting the "China Shock 2.0" narrative. What developments or evidence best demonstrate that China is creating new opportunities for global businesses rather than posing a "shock"?

ZHU: China is not only emerging as an innovation hub, but has also become a source of stability for the global economy over the years. Among major economies, China has demonstrated one of the highest levels of strategic continuity. Its industrial and technology policies evolve through predictable, multi-year planning cycles. Beyond policy, China's real-economy backbone has proven remarkably reliable, supported by a sustainable energy supply, world-class infrastructure, a deep talent pool and full-spectrum industrial capabilities. For global enterprises operating in China, the key is to convert these advantages into scale, speed and resilience, and further into reinvention. Companies that pull ahead and capture new growth are likely to be those that invest where China is setting the pace: industrial ecosystems, digital adoption, and speed of execution.

CHEN: We see "China opportunity" in very practical ways: in the size of the market, the speed of industrial upgrading, and the depth of the talent and innovation ecosystem. Just as important, the continued improvement of the overall ecosystem — stronger supply chains, better industrial capabilities and faster development of entire value chains — creates new opportunities by itself. For Syensqo, China is one of our key growth markets, and we have built our presence here for more than 40 years. Today, we have five industrial sites and a major research and innovation center in Shanghai, which is Syensqo's third largest globally. These are long-term commitments, and they reflect our confidence in the China market.

MA: China continues to create exciting opportunities for global businesses through its scale, consumer sophistication, innovation capabilities and commitment to opening-up. For VF, these strengths have reinforced our confidence in China after more than 30 years in the market. The rapid growth of China's outdoor economy illustrates this opportunity. As more consumers embrace active and outdoor lifestyles, demand for innovative products and elevated brand experiences continues to grow, creating new opportunities for companies like VF. Reflecting our long-term commitment, we have continued to invest in the market, including opening Smartwool's first store in China this year and The North Face's first member center in Asia-Pacific in Shanghai last year, and investing in automation at our China distribution center. These milestones underscore our confidence in China's long-term growth potential and its importance to our business.

JIANG: For Logitech, China represents an opportunity that continues to evolve. For many years, China was seen by global companies as an important market and a strong manufacturing base. Today, its role has expanded. China is also a source of innovation, a place where consumer expectations move quickly, and a market that can inspire products and experiences for users in China and, where relevant, other parts of the world. For more than three decades, Logitech has continued to build its presence in China, with our Suzhou manufacturing base established in 1994 as an important part of our global operations. Today, China plays an important role across our manufacturing, engineering, supply chain partnerships, local marketing and product innovation. Our Suzhou factory stands as our flagship manufacturing site, which produces more than 160 million mice, keyboards, cameras, headsets and other products per year.

Q2 China's economy has demonstrated strong resilience so far this year, supported by resilient exports, solid industrial production and continued strength in high-tech manufacturing. How would you assess China's overall economic performance so far this year? Looking ahead, what do you see as the key drivers supporting China's growth in the second half?

ZHU: China has established a solid and resilient foundation for high-quality development and is off to a strong start in the current 15th Five-Year (2026-30) period. We believe China is on the right trajectory, supported by coordinated capital allocation, regulatory alignment and industrial mobilization. Progress has been made in priority areas including advanced manufacturing, artificial intelligence, green energy and productivity. In an environment marked by constant change, focusing on technology, innovation and new growth models is the path forward. In technology, for example, we see policy intent, full-stack industrial capability and mass user adoption converging to drive AI into production at scale. Meanwhile, China is prioritizing the build-out of social infrastructure, including pensions, healthcare and eldercare, to support household spending. This will also help propel sustainable growth over time.

CHEN: From what we see on the ground, China's economy has shown strong resilience this year. Exports have stayed steady, industrial production remains solid and high-tech manufacturing continues to be a bright spot. For Syensqo, what matters most is not only the headline numbers, but also the clear direction: China is moving toward higher-quality growth driven by innovation, advanced manufacturing and greener development. Looking to the second half, I see several key drivers. First is continued industrial upgrading — especially in high-end manufacturing and tech-driven sectors. Second is the acceleration of energy transition, including electrification and more efficient use of energy and resources, which will drive demand for advanced materials. Third is ongoing digitalization and the adoption of AI across industries, which can lift productivity and speed up innovation.

MA: China's economy has shown strong resilience in the first half, supported by robust industrial capabilities, continued innovation, resilient exports and measures to stimulate consumption. These factors have helped sustain growth despite global uncertainties. Looking ahead, we believe consumption upgrading, digital innovation and the continued development of sectors such as sports, outdoor recreation and cultural tourism will be important drivers of growth. These trends are creating new opportunities for businesses while supporting China's transition toward high-quality development. For VF, the growing popularity of active and outdoor lifestyles presents significant opportunities to engage consumers through innovative products and experiences. Together with advances in digitalization and consumer engagement, these developments reinforce our confidence in China's long-term growth potential.

JIANG: China's economy has continued to demonstrate resilience despite a complex global environment. While external uncertainties remain, the country continues to benefit from its strengths in manufacturing, technology adoption, digital infrastructure and a highly dynamic consumer market. From Logitech's perspective, what stands out is not only the pace of growth, but the quality of growth. We continue to see strong momentum in areas closely connected to our business, including AI applications, smart devices, hybrid work, gaming and digital content creation. These are not short-term trends. They reflect fundamental changes in how people work, create, learn, play and connect.

Q3 China's innovation ecosystem has become an increasingly important engine of growth. How do you assess the contribution of artificial intelligence and other frontier technologies to China's productivity growth, industrial upgrading and long-term economic resilience? More broadly, what significance does China's innovation have for global technological progress and the opportunities available to multinational companies?

ZHU: China is a key player in the global innovation economy and one of the world's leading innovation markets. Rising total factor productivity, the proliferation of applications across industries and functions, and the integration of advanced technologies with user demand in key sectors will help the country deliver broad-based growth. AI, in particular, is at the center of business investment this year, as enterprises mobilize to deploy the technology to create value, respond to change and build resilience. Our research shows that AI adoption is advancing quickly, with 88 percent of Chinese enterprises having moved beyond the pilot stage. These enterprises have also made significant progress in using AI to transform customer experience, digital twins, research and development and data governance.

CHEN: China's innovation ecosystem is becoming a real engine for productivity and industrial upgrading. AI and other frontier technologies are now being applied at scale across manufacturing and R&D. They help companies improve efficiency, strengthen quality control, shorten development cycles, and make operations safer and more reliable. Over time, this also supports long-term economic resilience because it helps firms move up the value chain. At Syensqo, we see AI as a partner for our people. We launched Syensqo.ai early after the establishment of the company, and AI plays an important part of the company's strategic plans. At our China Research & Innovation Center in Shanghai, AI is helping teams with analysis, testing and product solution optimization. It is not a replacement for researchers, but a tool that helps them solve more complex problems and identify new ideas faster.

MA: China's innovation ecosystem is playing an increasingly important role in driving productivity, industrial upgrading and long-term economic resilience. The rapid advancement of AI and digital technologies, combined with strong adoption across industries, is helping companies innovate faster, operate more efficiently and better serve consumers. Beyond its domestic impact, China's innovation ecosystem is also contributing to global technological progress. Its unique combination of innovation capabilities, advanced manufacturing capabilities, digital infrastructure and market scale creates valuable opportunities for multinational companies to develop, test and scale new solutions.

JIANG: AI is one of the most important technology shifts of our time, but its real impact comes when it moves beyond a technological breakthrough and becomes part of everyday life. China is one of the world's fastest-moving innovation ecosystems in making that happen. Across work, learning, entertainment, gaming and content creation, we are seeing AI being adopted at remarkable speed, creating new opportunities for both businesses and consumers. We are already embedding AI across our portfolio to create more intuitive and productive user experiences — from AI-powered video collaboration that enhances meeting quality and supports meeting equity, to software-enabled mice and keyboards that help users work more efficiently. In hybrid meetings, AI can help participants be seen and heard more clearly, whether they are joining from a meeting room or remotely. In China, we are also adapting our software experiences to local AI platforms, ensuring our products fit naturally into the way Chinese users work and create.

Q4 China has placed greater emphasis on expanding domestic demand while pursuing high-standard opening-up. How do you assess these efforts? What new opportunities do they create for multinational companies and global investors?

ZHU: Domestic demand and opening-up have long been, and will continue to be, key pillars of China's high-quality development. Adapting to the pace of change in the domestic market will become an anchor point for both international and Chinese companies in a period of rapid technological and business evolution. On the one hand, domestic demand, especially in the consumer sector, is undergoing a profound shift with the spread of artificial intelligence. For example, more than half of Chinese consumers rank generative AI among their top three sources of purchase advice, much higher than their global peers. On the other hand, efforts to meet these evolving demands, together with continued encouragement for foreign participation, are bringing new products, services and solutions across a wide range of fields, from high-end manufacturing to consumer goods, and from green technologies to healthcare.

CHEN: We see these efforts as mutually reinforcing. Expanding domestic demand supports stable, long-term growth, while high-standard opening-up helps create a more predictable and efficient business environment. Together, they send a clear signal that China remains committed to high-quality development and deeper integration with the global economy. For multinational companies and global investors, the opportunity is not only to serve a large market, but also to participate in the next stage of upgrading — where customers are looking for higher-performance, safer and more sustainable products. This creates strong demand in areas such as advanced manufacturing, electrification, lightweighting, advanced connectivity and resource efficiency. It also encourages deeper local partnerships and faster innovation close to customers.

MA: We are encouraged by China's continued efforts to expand domestic demand and advance high-standard opening-up. These measures strengthen consumer confidence, improve the investment environment and create new opportunities for multinational companies to innovate and grow in one of the world's most dynamic consumer markets. One of the biggest opportunities lies in the ongoing evolution of consumer demand. As consumers increasingly seek health, wellness, outdoor and lifestyle experiences, companies have greater opportunities to develop innovative products and deepen consumer engagement. At VF, we are responding by strengthening our local capabilities and translating consumer insights into products, retail concepts and brand experiences tailored to the Chinese market.

JIANG: From our perspective, a dynamic domestic market encourages companies to innovate, while an open business environment enables companies to bring together global capabilities and local insights to better serve customers. In China, we continue to see consumers becoming more discerning. They are looking beyond price and placing greater value on quality, performance, design and user experience. This creates opportunities for companies that can innovate continuously and respond quickly to evolving needs. This is why "China for China" is important for Logitech. Our strategy is not just about selling in China; it is about innovating from China, for the Chinese market. We have established research and development centers in China, and have been increasing our focus on local innovation and R&D capabilities, product design, marketing and local teams, so that we can develop solutions that better reflect the needs, preferences and usage habits of Chinese users.

Q5 Looking ahead to the second half of the year, what will you be watching most closely as indicators of China's economic resilience, reform progress and long-term growth potential?

ZHU: From scaling artificial intelligence to hyper-automation in a factory, from fast-moving consumer dynamics to expansion in global markets, the real opportunity and benefit come from transformative, end-to-end approaches for a company, and for a country as well. By combining the power of technology, people, organization and ecosystem, the nation will be better positioned to become more people-led and innovation-driven, building resilience as well as embracing new growth. We observe that, when being gauged from key dimensions from commercial, operations and technology to people, Chinese companies have already prioritized and put more efforts into being more adaptive, agile and intelligent. At the same time, China is at a critical stage of translating the early impact of short-term efficiencies to sustained value, and we should also be mindful of some barriers like the gaps in perceptions and visions along the technology-led transformation, lack of organizational readiness, localization pressure in overseas markets, and how to harness people's experiences in work and in life.

CHEN: In the second half, I will watch a few practical indicators. First, I will look at the pace of industrial upgrading — especially in high-end manufacturing and technology-driven sectors — because that is a strong signal of long-term competitiveness and productivity growth. Second, I will watch how domestic demand evolves, including whether consumption continues to recover and whether companies see stable confidence to invest and expand. Third, I will pay close attention to progress on innovation policies and talent development, because "new quality productive forces" depend on strong research and development capabilities and effective industry-academia collaboration. Finally, I will watch how the green transition progresses — such as energy efficiency, renewable energy adoption and clearer carbon management practices — because sustainability is increasingly a core requirement across global value chains.

MA: Looking ahead to the second half, we will be watching indicators that reflect consumer confidence, consumption growth and the continued expansion of experience-led sectors such as sports, outdoor recreation, tourism and culture. These trends provide important signals of China's economic resilience and long-term growth potential. We will also pay close attention to how continued reform, innovation and opening-up create new opportunities for businesses and consumers. In particular, the growth of the event economy, sports participation and cultural tourism will be important indicators of evolving consumer preferences and demand for active, experience-led lifestyles.

JIANG: Looking ahead to the second half, I will be watching more for the underlying signals that reflect the quality and sustainability of growth.

First is consumer confidence and how it translates into demand. For Logitech, it's not simply about whether people are buying more products, but whether they continue to invest in products that improve productivity, creativity and everyday experiences. Second, I will also pay attention to the continued development of digital culture, gaming and esports in China. Third is the pace at which new technologies — particularly AI — are being adopted in everyday life. China's strength has always been its ability to quickly turn innovation into real-world applications. Continued progress in this area will be an important indicator of future productivity and competitiveness.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:20 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:20 PM

WORLD

Dialogue remains key to Sino-US ties

Forum: Search for mutual benefits essential despite growing competition, uncertainty

By **MINGMEI LI** in New York
mingmeili@chinadailyusa.com

Chinese and American businesses operating in each other's markets remain deeply interconnected and can serve as a bridge for subnational dialogue, business leaders and policy experts said.

More than 100 business executives, policymakers and scholars gathered in New York for "The Path Forward 2026: Mutual Benefit, Uncovering New Opportunities for US-China Economic and Trade Relations", hosted by the China General Chamber of Commerce-USA and the CGCC Foundation on Thursday.

Participants discussed the future of bilateral economic ties and explored ways to strengthen cooperation between the world's two largest economies amid growing geopolitical uncertainty.

Susan Elliott, CEO of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy, emphasized that dialogue remains essential despite growing strategic competition between the two countries.

"Decoupling is neither realistic nor desirable," she said. "We must consider how to rebalance our economies in ways that support sustainable growth, resilience and long-term prosperity. These adjustments will not be simple, and they will require difficult conversations among all of us. A healthier and more sustainable economic relationship will ultimately benefit our countries and the broader international team."

Elliott emphasized that US-China economic and trade relations need stability and productivity today.

"Competition does not eliminate the need for communication, and disagreement should not prevent us from seeking areas of mutual benefit. The path forward requires patience, pragmatism and a willingness to keep talking," she said.

Chen Li, Chinese consul general in New York, said there remains significant potential for subnational cooperation and economic collaboration between China and the US.

"American companies value China's huge market and strong industrial support," he said.

"Meanwhile, Chinese companies, for their part, want to grow in the US market in a stable and predictable environment, while contributing to local communities and better serving local consumers."

Chen called for both sides to uphold the principle of mutual benefit, ensuring that cooperation delivers gains for all parties rather than being one-sided. He also urged both countries to listen to each other's concerns with sound judgment and to maintain the momentum of dialogue and practical cooperation.

"Going forward, China will continue to facilitate foreign companies' trade and investment in China, protect their legitimate rights and interests, and foster a first-class business environment. We hope American companies will seize these opportunities and achieve greater growth by riding the momentum of China's development," he added.

Chen said market demand in both countries continues to drive opportunities, while the underlying mutual benefits of China-US economic cooperation remain unchanged, leaving significant potential for future collaboration.

From a business perspective, participants emphasized that engagement at the state, city and personal levels also yields tangible benefits for local economies.

Steven Fulop, president of Partnership for NYC and former mayor of Jersey City, said Chinese international students have contributed to the city's growth over the years.

Students' demand for housing has supported local real estate development, while their day-to-day spending has benefited local businesses and the broader economy.

Glori Norwitt, Connecticut's envoy for international engagement at AdvanceCT, said there is significant room to deepen ties, noting that the state is home to about 80,000 Chinese people and nearly 2,000 Chinese-owned businesses, ranging from small enterprises to large corporations.

"We are building relationships, and we strongly encourage those relationships to continue and grow," she said.

Despite a cautious business outlook, Chinese companies in the US remained resilient, the latest CGCC Annual Business Survey found.

About one-third of respondents reported revenue growth in 2025, while 81 percent remained profitable. At the same time, 79 percent said they planned to reinvest profits in the US, the highest level recorded in the survey, underscoring their long-term commitment to the US.

Extreme heat makes life miserable in Indian town

BANDA, India — Heat at all hours, even in the middle of the night. Long stretches without electricity, meaning some homes can't even use basic fans. And a constant search for relief, like being hosed down with water or sleeping outside.

For many residents of Banda, a town in northern India that has recorded some of the country's highest temperatures, just getting through each day is a challenge.

> While Banda has always been known for hot summers, what is changing right now is the intensity, the duration and the number of people exposed to dangerous heat conditions."
>
> **Abhiyant Tiwari,** climate and health expert at NRDC India

Global warming, caused mostly by the burning of fuels like gas, oil and coal, is making heat waves across India more frequent and intense. Uttar Pradesh, the state Banda is in, is among those most vulnerable to extreme heat. In 2023, at least 119 people died over several days during a severe heat wave in parts of the state.

In May, temperatures reached 48.2 C, one of multiple times this year that the town recorded the country's highest temperature for the day. Banda was also the hottest spot on Earth seven times this year, most of them in April, according to climatologist and weather historian Maximiliano Herrera, who tracks global weather extremes. Since then, temperatures have dropped but they are still stifling, particularly as seasonal rains increase humidity.

Munni Devi and her four sons begin work loading and unloading vegetables when most of the town is asleep.

It's only 4 am, but the temperature is already 30 C. Workers at Banda's vegetable market are busy unloading tomatoes, jackfruit and other vegetables and transferring them to smaller vehicles for delivery to the neighborhood shops.

Devi, 70, says the heat is becoming more intense every year, and this year has been especially bad. The work is physically demanding in any weather. During a heat wave, it can be brutal. But Devi says she and her sons can't afford to miss a day.

"Everyone feels the heat, but because of our circumstances, we have to bear it," she says.

Hotter days have brought more patients to the hospital in Banda, one of the bigger medical centers in this region. Those with heat-related maladies, ranging from fainting to heatstroke, tend to come in the afternoon and evening, filling the corridors and wards.

Patients sit shoulder-to-shoulder on benches. Relatives fan family members with sheets of paper. Hospital staff move between beds carrying intravenous fluids.

Abhishek Pranayami, the hospital's head doctor, says the hospital sees a surge of patients every summer, "and the number of patients is increasing every year".

He says they are treating large numbers of people suffering from dehydration, diarrhea, vomiting and abdominal pain — illnesses that become more common as temperatures rise. Some patients recover within days. Others take longer.

The struggle for relief and rest has become a defining feature of summer in cities like Banda.

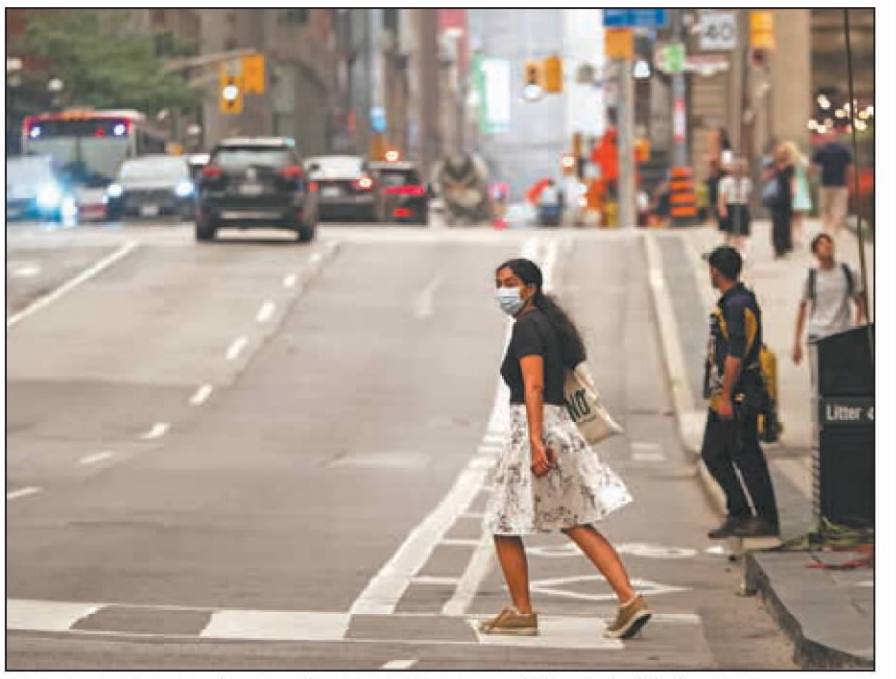
"Climate change is shifting the average," says Abhiyant Tiwari, a climate and health expert at New Delhi-based NRDC India. "While Banda has always been known for hot summers, what is changing right now is the intensity, the duration and the number of people exposed to dangerous heat conditions."

Amit Aasery, the district magistrate of Banda, says officials are studying groundwater levels, soil moisture and vegetation loss while working to improve water supplies and public awareness.

But he says there is only so much they can do. "What is happening here is a global phenomenon," he says. "It is because of climate change. We are the recipients of this."

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Smoky skies



A woman wearing a mask crosses the street in Toronto as wildfire smoke fills the city, on Wednesday. Toronto's air quality ranked the worst among major cities globally on Wednesday as smoke from northwestern Ontario blackened skies and spread into the northeastern United States, prompting health warnings and calls for residents to limit outdoor activities. LAURA PROCTOR VIA AP

French parliament approves assisted dying

By **JULIAN SHEA** in London
julian@mail.chinadailyuk.com

The lower house of the French parliament, the National Assembly, has given its final approval to a bill that will create a legal right to assisted death for adults with incurable diseases, potentially bringing an end to years of debate over the issue.

The law was passed in the Assembly last year, only to be rejected by the upper house, the Senate, but under a constitutional clause, the government allowed the Assembly to have the final say without the need for Senate approval. This time the bill was passed by a margin of 291 votes to 241.

However, that does not mean that this is the end of the journey described by the legislation's author, Olivier Falorni, as being like "a marathon with hurdles".

Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu will ask France's highest constitutional authority, the Constitutional Council, to take a closer look at the details of the legislation, as he expressed concern over the lack of a proper debate in the Assembly, saying that this meant the draft proposals fell short of "meeting both the aspirations of its proponents and the concerns of those worried about its implementation".

The legislation says that the patient must be in a "free and informed" manner to make the decision, and any fatal dose would have to be self-administered, or if the patient was not able to do so, helped by a health worker.

Unsurprisingly, the issue provokes strong feelings. Backers of the legislation say it would allow patients to put an end to suffering while maintaining control over their medical decisions, but opponents say seriously ill people could be put under pressure, and that palliative care options should be given priority.



Protesters attend a rally against euthanasia and assisted dying near the French National Assembly in Paris on Wednesday. DIMITAR DILKOFF / AFP

Psychological suffering alone would not be enough for someone to qualify for a medically assisted death, meaning people with mental illnesses or conditions such as Alzheimer's disease would not be eligible.

Health review

Patients seeking an assisted death would need to submit a request to be reviewed by healthcare professionals within 15 days, and there would then be a two-day reflection period after any approval was given.

Former health minister and trained pharmacist Agnes Firmin-Le Bodo, who drafted the 2024 version of the bill, said the law would be passed "because it is balanced", but Christophe Bentz of the far-right National Rally party called the text "very dangerous", with the risk of "abuses".

President Emmanuel Macron, who made a campaign promise in 2022 to allow a debate on the issue, said, "With seriousness, humility, and in full respect of our democracy, that commitment has been honored."

Should the legislation be given final approval, France would join Canada, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Belgium in legalizing assisted dying. Similar legislation will be discussed in the United Kingdom in the new parliamentary session in the fall.

Tech tie-ups between Beijing and Seoul urged

By **YANG HAN** in Hong Kong
kelly@chinadailyapac.com

China and South Korea can leverage their complementary strengths in semiconductors and artificial intelligence technologies to advance cooperation and bolster Asian supply chains to create solutions that will benefit the world, investors and industry experts said.

With South Korea now pushing for a "three mega projects" initiative centered on semiconductors, physical AI and AI data centers, Hong Kong and Shenzhen-based Sparks Physical AI Ventures founding and managing partner Tony Chen and managing partner Jayesh Chhatlani, said they foresee more business opportunities for cooperation between firms and investors from China and South Korea.

For example, South Korea's strength in memory chips can be combined with China's strengths in commercialization and application to turn memory-as-a-service into a driver of wider adoption of AI, said Chen, adding that cooperation in agricultural and food tech, AI-enabled entertainment content, and industrial automation are also potential sectors for cooperation.

"By leveraging Chinese AI solutions and the market demand from South Korea when we co-create one solution together, it can be deployed to many other countries in Asia," said Chen, mentioning that he recently introduced a South Korean company to a Chinese robotics company to develop agricultural tech solutions not only for South Korea but also potentially for Indonesia.

In June, Chen traveled to South Korea to meet with investors and companies in the physical AI industry. During the meetings, Chen said he noticed growing interest among South Korean industry players in building partnerships with Chinese companies, especially in the physical AI sector, such as robot components and modules including sensors, motion control, and scalable hardware integration.

Some companies are also interested in learning from China's speed in AI commercialization, deployment, and smart devices, he said.

"China remains a very important market and a key cooperative partner for South Korea's semiconductor industry," Kim Seo-gyun, chief strategy officer at Sembricon Technologies and vice-president of the Korea-China Institute of Digital Economy, told China Daily.

Noting that China remains the world's largest manufacturing base for electronic products and the largest semiconductor consumption market, he said the demand from China for semiconductors continues steadily across diverse industries, presenting an important growth opportunity for South Korean companies.

South Korea's monthly exports topped $100 billion for the first time in June, up about 70 percent, according to data released by the country's Ministry of Trade, Industry and Resources.

The growth was mainly driven by semiconductor exports, which rose 200 percent. Notably, exports to China, which jumped 92 percent, marked eight consecutive months of growth, as shipments of semiconductors, the top export item, more than tripled.

As future competition in AI is about global supply chains and ecosystems, not just countries, Kim said South Korea and China are highly complementary in AI and semiconductors, and that both countries can benefit from the AI-driven innovation while navigating global supply chain competition by deepening joint research and development and forming strategic partnerships.

He said he believes that enhancing cooperation based on mutual trust and the perspective of "competitive cooperation" — where competition and collaboration coexist — will contribute positively to the sustained growth of both countries' industries and to the development of the global semiconductor ecosystem.

Noting there has been an asymmetry of information in South Korea regarding the diverse ecosystem of China's AI industry, Chen said he will bring Chinese robotics and AI companies to South Korean market players.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1873

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:20 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:20 PM

WORLD

Coloring the skies



Hot-air balloons begin to inflate during the 40th anniversary of the Frisian Balloon Festival in Joure, the Netherlands, on Wednesday. The five-day festival features dozens of balloons from around the world, including ones with unique designs. EPA / KOEN VAN WEEL

US, Iran ramp up regional threats as tensions deepen

As both sides widen targets of attacks, mediator Pakistan urges return to talks

By JAN YUMUL in Hong Kong and **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE

Iran and the United States traded blows for the sixth day with Tehran warning it would obliterate all remaining infrastructure in the region as Washington launched a new wave of strikes.

Kuwait, Bahrain and Jordan were among the countries that continued to thwart Iranian retaliatory attacks, with Jordanian air defenses saying they had downed at least eight missiles launched from Iran on Thursday.

The US Central Command, or CENTCOM, said it ended an evening wave of strikes against Iran at 9 pm Eastern Time on Wednesday.

"US forces struck Iranian command centers, air defense sites, missile and drone capabilities, and coastal surveillance facilities to further degrade Iran's ability to threaten innocent mariners crewing commercial vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz. CENTCOM used precision munitions to hit targets in multiple locations, including Bandar Abbas," it said.

"Earlier this morning, American forces struck coastal defense and cruise missile sites on Greater Tunb Island during a 90-minute wave. The US military is holding Iran accountable at the Commander in Chief's direction," it added.

Iranian media reported that US forces struck multiple sites across Iran's southern provinces overnight and forced the emergency evacuation of a children's cancer hospital in Ahvaz, Khuzestan Province.

Earlier this week, US President Donald Trump threatened to expand his country's military strikes unless Iran returns to the negotiating table.

"Next week it gets really bad for them because next week comes the power plants," he said in an interview with Fox News. "We're gonna knock out all their power plants. We're going to knock out all their bridges unless they get to the table and negotiate."

Ebrahim Zolfaghari, spokesman for Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, warned of obliterating all remaining infrastructure in the region if Trump's threats are implemented.

The US continues its "lawlessness and destabilization" of the region, he said, emphasizing that under no circumstances would Tehran allow Washington, as a foreign and extra-regional power, to interfere in the Strait of Hormuz, calling it Iran's "unbreakable red line".

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei said earlier that the country has no plans to return to talks with the US as long as Washington continues to violate its commitments under the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding to which both agreed last month.

Less traffic

According to a Reuters report, fewer vessels traveled through the Strait of Hormuz on Wednesday, the first day after the US reinstated its naval blockade on Iranian ports.

Nine vessels crossed the strait that day, mostly on the Iranian route, down from 13 on Monday, according to data from shipping tracker Kpler.

Amid the blistering exchange of words and attacks between Washington and Tehran in the past few days, Iranian military spokesman Mohammad Akraminia claimed his country has no intention of confronting its neighbors, Al Jazeera reported.

"The armed forces regard the protection of the Iranian nation's security, interests and dignity as their foremost mission, and they will spare no effort in fulfilling that responsibility," he said.

Akraminia also urged countries outside the region to engage with Iran based on mutual respect.

Meanwhile, Pakistan said it will push the US and Iran to halt their attacks and resume talks under the memorandum of understanding it helped mediate.

Pakistani Foreign Ministry spokesman Tahir Andrabi told reporters on Thursday that while the implementation of the MoU was facing challenges, Pakistan will continue to encourage all sides to end violence and resume technical-level talks.

Contact the writers at jan@chinadailyapac.com

Saving Gaza's cultural heritage, one artifact at a time

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip — Armed with paintbrushes and wearing surgical gloves, volunteers inside a large tent in Gaza delicately brushed dust from a stone mosaic before placing it into storage, part of an effort to preserve cultural heritage hit by conflict.

More than 160 historical and cultural sites across the Palestinian territory have been damaged during the Palestine-Israel conflict, according to the United Nations.

Many of these artifacts date back thousands of years.

"Several mosaic artworks have been lost or destroyed, either completely or partially," said Mohammed Abu Lahia, a Palestinian visual artist taking part in the preservation efforts in the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis.

"It is important that we work to revive this art, remind our children and our community, and send a message to the world that we are committed to our heritage and our Palestinian cause."

Beyond archaeological treasures, more recent cultural artifacts are also at risk of being damaged or buried beneath rubble from shelling and airstrikes.

More than 90 percent of Gaza's buildings have been damaged or destroyed during the conflict, according to the UN.



Staff members of the Mayasem Association for Culture and Arts repair and scientifically restore artifacts in a tent in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, on July 11. BASHAR TALEB / AFP

Over the centuries, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines and Ottomans all left their mark on Gaza, creating a rich historical landscape of churches, mosques, ports and artifacts, many of which have suffered damage during the conflict.

"This stone is a piece called a mortar, and it was used for grinding grains and herbs," said Muhannad Abu Lahia, a cultural heritage guide with the Mayasem Association for Culture and Arts, the NGO leading the preservation efforts. "It is approximately 5,000 years old."

Behind him, artifacts already cataloged for safekeeping were stacked on wooden shelves inside weatherproof plastic containers.

With Israel maintaining tight controls over goods entering the Gaza Strip, volunteers have had to work without professional conservation equipment.

Instead, they gently removed dust from mosaics using ordinary paintbrushes and built a makeshift scanning station by mounting a camera above a box lined with black craft paper.

The improvised scanner allowed volunteers to digitize old photographs and paper documents, which were then uploaded to a computer for preservation.

Not everything entering storage is ancient.

Many items date from the 20th century, including the League of Nations-established British Mandate (1920-48). Their owners sought to save them from destruction or loss after being displaced.

"This is a paper archive containing maps of Khan Younis and structural maps of the Khan Younis area from the time of the British Mandate," said 29-year-old volunteer Taghreed Hajjari.

At one table, three women painstakingly rearranged hundreds of fragments to recreate a contemporary mosaic, using a printed copy of the original artwork as a guide and trimming excess stone with carpenter's pincers.

Many artifacts, however, remain beyond the "Yellow Line", which separates territory under Hamas control from areas held by the Israeli forces. Volunteers say retrieving artifacts from Israeli-controlled areas remains extremely difficult.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Trade uncertainty clouds supply chain planning

By RENA LI in Los Angeles
renali@chinadailyusa.com

Businesses need greater policy stability and predictability for long-term investment and supply chain planning, but continued shifts in US trade policy are fueling uncertainty, says Douglas Irwin, a professor of economics at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire.

Irwin made the comments on Wednesday at a media briefing with Port of Los Angeles Executive Director Gene Seroka, discussing tariffs, global commerce and the changing trade landscape.

Responding to a question from China Daily about continuing United States-China dialogue and tariff adjustments, Irwin said policy predictability is essential for businesses considering long-term investments.

"Businesses absolutely need that predictability of the business environment to make medium-term and long-term investments," he said.

Trade tensions between China and the US intensified after Washington imposed sweeping tariffs last year. Although both sides have since taken steps to ease tensions and continue dialogue, uncertainty over future trade policy remains.

Irwin described the current US-China trade relationship as relatively stable but fragile.

"We're now stabilized, but we're in sort of this uneasy truce," he said. "In terms of restoring US-China trade, I think it's going to be difficult, precisely because we don't have assurance that that truce will hold."

Companies do not know whether the US will maintain current tariff levels or renew pressure on China after completing other trade negotiations, including the review of the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement, he added.

"We just don't know, and that's going to be a deterrent to reinvesting in China or relying on China for imported goods, as opposed to going to Vietnam or another Southeast Asian country, or maybe even more locally, Mexico, for long-term sourcing," Irwin said.

Businesses therefore have little choice but to diversify their supply chains and hedge against further policy changes, he said.

The US Trade Representative has proposed new Section 301 duties linked to other economies' enforcement of prohibitions on goods made with forced labor. Proposed rates range from 10 percent to 12.5 percent, though the measures were still under review at the time of the briefing.

Irwin said importers should pay close attention to what replaces the temporary Section 122 tariffs when they expire next week.

"Those tariffs are going to roll off," Irwin said of the Section 122 measures, adding that the administration is seeking to replace parts of the temporary system through Section 301.

He said the proposed measures could preserve much of the current tariff structure while creating additional uncertainty over which countries and goods would ultimately be affected.

"This is sort of the environment we're going to be in for the next two years: uncertainty about USMCA, uncertainty about the China relationship, and then uncertainty with these Section 301 tariffs," he said.

The treatment of low-value shipments is also changing. The US has suspended duty-free treatment for many packages valued at $800 or less and introduced new processing requirements.

Irwin said the changes will create greater compliance and administrative burdens for small importers accustomed to receiving low-value shipments by mail with limited customs procedures.

Seroka of the Port of Los Angeles said the effects would extend beyond consumers purchasing products online to family-owned businesses that rely on imported goods.

He recalled visiting retailers in California that had built their businesses around smaller shipments.

"Then suddenly they were hit with tax hikes that were almost insurmountable based on the size of their business," he said. "It's going to be a big deal for us coming up."

Looking beyond the current administration, Irwin said future US presidents may seek greater stability in trade policy, but are unlikely to restore the system that existed before the tariff increases of recent years.

"What tends to go up quickly sometimes comes down slowly," he said.

Gentle giant under care



Veterinary specialists begin treatment for a circus elephant in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on Wednesday. The animal is under close observation after being transferred to the Bangladesh National Zoo in Mirpur, northern Dhaka, following the circulation of a social media video showing its deteriorating health. ZABED HASNAIN CHOWDHURY VIA GETTY IMAGES

Briefly

DPRK

Chinese representative attends treaty event

China's top political adviser Wang Huning and Pak Thae-song, premier of the Cabinet of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, delivered speeches in Pyongyang on Thursday at a reception commemorating the 65th anniversary of the signing of the China-DPRK Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance. Wang, chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, said that over the past 65 years, the two sides have upheld the spirit of the treaty, supported each other, stood united, cooperated closely and worked together, vividly demonstrating the defining features of China-DPRK ties — friendship passed down from generation to generation, a shared future and mutual support. Pak said that since its signing 65 years ago, the treaty has made important contributions to vigorously advancing DPRK-China relations and the development of the socialist cause in both countries, as well as to safeguarding peace, stability and security in Northeast Asia.

ALGERIA

11 killed, 19 injured in orphanage fire

Eleven people, including children, were killed and 19 injured in a fire at an orphanage close to the Algerian capital Algiers early on Thursday, authorities said. Locals and emergency crews rushed to the building in the Mohammadia District in the province of Algiers, where blackened masonry was visible above two window openings behind the exterior gates. Ten of the injured suffered burns of varying severity, and emergency crews evacuated five people with disabilities from the orphanage to safety, the civil protection agency said. It gave no details about the victims or the possible cause of the fire.

XINHUA — AGENCIES

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:20 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:20 PM

AMERICA FOCUS

US companies turn to Chinese AI models

As prices rise in US, mainland chips provide more value for money, experts say

By **LIA ZHU** in San Francisco
liazhu@chinadailyusa.com

US companies are increasingly turning to Chinese-built artificial intelligence models for better value for money, as token prices for the most advanced American models continue to climb this year.

Recent releases from Chinese companies, including DeepSeek and Z.ai, are seen by many in the industry as highly competitive with leading frontier systems from Anthropic and OpenAI, narrowing the performance gap while remaining significantly cheaper to use.

Models such as Z.ai's GLM and Alibaba's Qwen have become attractive options, offering a combination of performance and cost. Z.ai's GLM-5.2, released in June, narrowly trailed leading US models on public benchmarks and ranked high on several leaderboards while costing dramatically less than comparable closed US frontier models.

OpenRouter, a platform that lets developers access a range of AI models, found Chinese AI model usage by US companies has risen significantly this year. The share of tokens used by US companies on Chinese AI models has sat above 30 percent every week since Feb 8, at times rising as high as 46 percent, CNBC reported, citing the platform's figures. That compares with an average of just 11 percent over the previous 12 months, and a mere 4.5 percent in the first half of 2025.

In June, the AI startup Lindy moved 100 percent of its traffic from Anthropic's Claude models to DeepSeek. "We did it, and you could see that cost curve go down, like, crash to the ground," Lindy CEO Flo Crivello told CNBC, adding that the move would save the company millions of dollars within months.

"Cost has to be part of the equation, but it's common in technology that cost per unit changes dramatically with time and volume. That was true of semiconductors, electronics and pretty much everything else," Ker Gibbs, former president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai, told China Daily.

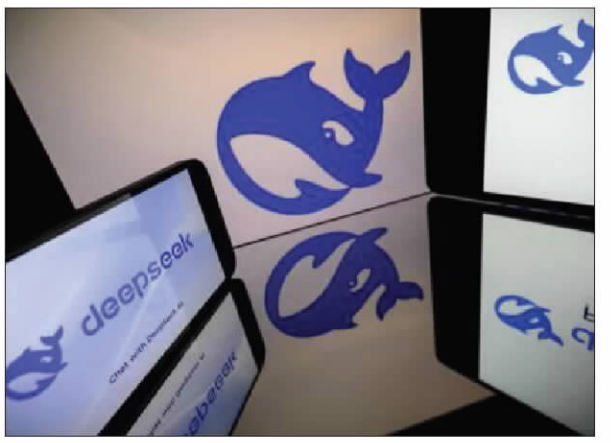
"The first semiconductor coming out of a fab was enormously expensive to make, but once the fixed costs were absorbed every other chip was not expensive at all. What is new is the speed and scale at which the price differential has emerged in AI," said Gibbs, who teaches at the University of San Francisco and is the author of *The Fragile Dragon*.

He noted that the savings coming out of Chinese models are rooted less in fixed-cost recovery than in architectural efficiency, though the underlying logic is the same one that Chinese firms have applied across other industries.

"China's business people, as I write about in *The Fragile Dragon*, are pragmatic. They build products that are not just good – they are good enough. That means they don't overbuild or overdesign. Cost is always a factor," he said. "This is a familiar playbook applied to a new domain: achieve near-parity on performance, undercut dramatically on price, capture volume and let the market do the rest."

Rising costs

The Ramp AI Index, which tracks how American businesses use AI, found that the companies most committed to the technology are spending around $7,500 per employee every month on it. The index also found that DeepSeek is one of the fastest-growing vendors on Ramp's platform, which is evidence, the firm said, that companies are increasingly opting for cheaper AI models.



This photograph shows screens displaying the logo of DeepSeek, a Chinese artificial intelligence company that develops open-source large language models, in Toulouse, southwestern France on Jan 29, 2025. LIONEL BONAVENTURE / AFP

> "People need to understand that China is now a source of new ideas and innovations."
>
> **Andy Fang,** DoorDash Co-founder and Chief Technology Officer

Palo Alto Networks CEO Nikesh Arora told CNBC that token costs need to drop by as much as 20 percent over the next 12 months and 90 percent by the following year, to enable large-scale AI adoption. Rising token costs have become a major pain point for businesses and a strain on AI budgets, he said, with current pricing making the tools increasingly difficult to implement.

Asked why companies are paying more attention to the cost of AI models now, Gibbs said, "In short, the check arrived. The bills companies are paying for AI usage have come due and (they) suddenly realize what they have been paying," he said. "In some sense we're reaching the end of the beginning, which could be characterized as a bit of irrational exuberance and unrealistic expectations about the results AI would deliver."

In the earliest days of the boom, he said, companies raced to deploy AI as fast as possible simply because competitors might be doing the same. "The costs didn't matter, and the CFO was left out of the room. The fear of getting left behind was stronger than any concerns about costs," he said. "Now that the bills are due, questions are being asked about the results and how to measure them."

Per-token prices have actually fallen, he noted, but usage has climbed even faster and gone largely unrestrained. The productivity gains are real in specific applications such as fraud detection, coding, customer service and supply chain optimization, Gibbs said, but they can be difficult to measure and are far from uniform across the board.

Chinese efficiency

As companies look to deploy AI to build new products and find internal efficiencies, engineers are increasingly experimenting with cheaper open-source and open-weight models, the most capable of which are now made by Chinese companies.

Open-source and open-weight models make different parts of a system available for developers to inspect, use and sometimes modify, in contrast to closed proprietary systems such as those from OpenAI, Anthropic and Google.

The performance of Chinese models has been rising in step with their growing popularity. Stanford's 2026 AI Index report found that the performance gap between US and Chinese AI models has effectively closed, with the two sides trading the lead multiple times since early 2025, starting when DeepSeek released its R1 model, which matched the top US model at the time.

The cost advantage is showing up in how companies allocate work between models. DoorDash Co-founder and Chief Technology Officer Andy Fang said in a post on the social media platform X on July 6 that the company was saving significant money by routing "lower-level work" to Kimi, a model built by the Chinese startup Moonshot AI.

For enterprise customers, Gibbs said, the rational response is the hybrid model — use a cheaper tool for the heavy lifting and more routine tasks, saving budget for the more expensive tools when they are required.

"People need to understand that China is now a source of new ideas and innovations, whether it's in pharma, automotive or artificial intelligence," he said.

"It's not an accident that you can walk across the Google campus in Silicon Valley and hear Chinese spoken as well as English and many other languages. Ideas don't have borders."

That does not mean the calculation is purely technical, he cautioned.

"Businesses need to be aware of the geopolitical implications as they build out their tech infrastructure," Gibbs said.

"The US and China are in a very tense period, and while we hope a better path forward can be found for cooperation and peaceful coexistence, we're not there yet."



The 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance is being held in Shanghai from July 17 to 20. CHEN YUYU / FOR CHINA DAILY

Calls grow for controls amid rapid AI advances

By **SHI GUANG** in New York
shiguang@chinadailyusa.com

More than 200 technology experts and economists have signed a statement warning that AI could rapidly reshape the global economy, urging policymakers to take its disruptive potential more seriously.

Released on Monday, the statement aims to prompt economists and policymakers to better prepare for AI-driven economic upheaval, said Erik Brynjolfsson, a senior fellow at the Stanford Institute for Human-Centered AI who helped organize the initiative.

"There's been a notable change in the profession," he said. "I still see a big gap there, a big mismatch, and I'm worried that we're not going to be ready for the tsunami that's coming."

Along with many other economists, Brynjolfsson believes AI will ultimately boost living standards, much as the Industrial Revolution and computing did. However, he warned that AI's impact is likely to unfold much faster, potentially causing sharper economic disruption.

The statement makes three points. First, AI may become radically more powerful over the next 10 years.

Second, its impact on the economy could exceed that of the Industrial Revolution while unfolding over a far shorter period, bringing both risks, including large-scale job displacement, as well as opportunities, such as major gains in living standards.

Third, economists, policymakers and technology leaders must act now to "build the incentives, guardrails and institutions needed to ensure AI complements humans and benefits society".

> I'm worried that we're not going to be ready for the tsunami that's coming."
>
> **Erik Brynjolfsson,** senior fellow at Stanford Institute for Human-Centered AI

The signatories include more than a dozen Nobel laureates, the chief economists of OpenAI and Anthropic, Anthropic cofounder Jack Clark, and former Google CEO Eric Schmidt.

"If you look at what robots did in the manufacturing sector, if AI does something equivalent in a more compressed time period, that would be really disruptive, really costly for people's livelihoods," said Daron Acemoglu, an economist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology who won the 2024 Nobel Prize in economics.

Digital marketing and recruitment services company Clickvision, citing multiple studies, said AI could displace 85 million to 92 million jobs globally by 2030 while creating 97 million to 170 million new ones.

It estimated that AI could automate at least part of 30 percent of jobs in the United States by 2030, while 60 percent would undergo "significant task-level changes". It said that 11.7 percent of US jobs could already be automated today and that 14 percent of the global workforce may be forced to change careers by 2030.

Market intelligence and research platform DataRefs said the industries most vulnerable to AI include manufacturing, customer service, transportation and retail. It also identified interpreters, translators and historians as facing a high risk of dislocation because tools such as ChatGPT, DeepL and Google Translate can perform many of their tasks.

Younger workers and advanced economies that have already integrated technology will be more highly affected, it said.

"Steam, electricity and computers each gave societies decades to adapt; AI may give us only a few years," Anton Korinek, a professor at the University of Virginia, said in a statement.

"We cannot improvise our strategy and institutions in the middle of the transformation; waiting for certainty means arriving too late," he said.

AI pioneer Yoshua Bengio, a professor at the University of Montreal who also signed the statement, said it is "highly plausible that AI will drastically transform our economies" based on the technology's current trajectory.

"We must be intentional and make collective, democratic choices, rather than letting market forces play out and risking leaving most citizens behind," he wrote in a separate statement.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:20 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:20 PM

Fantasy event attuned to ACGN trends

Yuyuan's 52-day-long summer extravaganza brings four popular Chinese animated series and the characters to their fans, **Wang Xin** reports.

Eicher-Tia Jhaj, an 18-year-old from London, was completely caught by surprise on her first trip to China recently, where she came across the animated characters she loves at a pop-up at Shanghai's shopping district at Yuyuan Garden, an iconic city landmark.

Her favorite character, Cheng Xiaoshi, from the Chinese animated series *Link Click*, appeared throughout Yuyuan on July 3, when the 52-day 2026 Grand Yuyuan Summer Fantasy Night opened, offering immersive experiences, particularly for fans of ACGN (animation, comics, games, and novels).

Running through Aug 23 and spanning from Yuyuan Garden to the nearby Bund Finance Center, the event integrates massive ACGN elements featuring four popular original Chinese animations: *The Legend of Luo Xiaohei*, *Heaven Official's Blessing*, *A Record of a Mortal's Journey to Immortality,* and *Link Click*.

Widely known for its ancient buildings and traditional vibes, Yuyuan has been transformed into a unique universe that blurs the boundaries between old and new, tradition and modernity, and spans fashion, generations and cultures.

In collaboration with the video-sharing platform Bilibili, installations featuring the main characters from the four animated hits are scattered across malls. Visitors are invited to engage in real-time augmented-reality interactions using their mobile phones.

With dazzling lights illuminating the night, a special concert was held at Yuyuan's Central Plaza on July 3 to mark the fantasy's opening. Pop singers Huang Ling and Li Xinyi, pop/folk singer Qian Runyu, young rappers, and virtual idol Aza took the stage to present the opening, ending and interlude songs for the four productions, breaking down the walls between ACGN and the real world with immersive sounds.

While enjoying the feast with other fans who share the same love and passion for the productions, Jhaj was also deeply impressed by the dancing, the performers' traditional outfits, and the tea and authentic local foods. That night, she felt more connected with Chinese culture.

"I'm really excited for the new season of *Link Click* to come out. I started watching it about a year ago, and I've been really into it. The character designs and their personalities are really cool, and I like the artistic style a lot.

"It's quite interesting to learn about different cultures. I also play some Chinese games, and Chinese culture is so different from Western culture. I think it's important to see different cultures and get to learn about other perspectives and traditions," she says.

Launched last year, the Grand Yuyuan Summer Fantasy Night has expanded in scale and offers richer experiences this edition. A number of traditional restaurants, stores and time-honored brands in the malls are participating in the event, offering collaborative set menus, customized dishes and pastries, special discounts, and merchandise related to the animation IPs.

Across the malls, visitors will encounter staff members dressed as non-playable characters from games to deliver unique greetings, with additional highlights, such as cosplay parades, stamp collecting, markets, and intangible cultural heritage experiences, expected throughout the event.

"Young ACGN fans have shown great potential in consumption power. During last year's event, we saw visitor numbers increase by 30 percent compared to the same time period in previous years, which greatly benefited the stores and brands in the malls," says Wang Peng, chief communications officer at Grand Yuyuan, the event's organizer.

He adds that Yuyuan hopes to draw more young visitors and establish long-term strategic collaboration with Bilibili. By combining the phenomenal ACGN culture with the traditional Chinese aesthetics of Yuyuan, Wang expects the landmark could also serve as a natural backdrop for more animation productions and help more young people discover the charm of Chinese culture.





Above: Foreign visitors take a group photo at Yuyuan with the event's staff, who are specially dressed up as non-playable characters (NPCs) in games. **Below:** Time-honored brand Huxinting Teahouse at Yuyuan collaborates with Chinese animation hit *A Record of a Mortal's Journey to Immortality* to offer special tea menus and fan gifts. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO AND BY GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

Lyu Bo Lang, one of the most well-known and celebrated restaurants in Shanghai, is participating in the event again this year. Teaming up with the animation *Heaven Official's Blessing*, it offers fans a special *hudie su* (butterfly pastry) box set — a local interpretation of the Palmier, a French confection. The box set also includes a *Heaven Official's Blessing*-themed card case.

"The butterfly is an iconic element in animation, and thus a perfect match with our *hudie su* in terms of the shape. As a time-honored brand, we may seem old-fashioned to young people. But such collaborations proved to be successful last year, as many young visitors initially seeking the special sets eventually became our customers," says Wang Shijia, deputy general manager of the restaurant.

Another time-honored brand, Huxinting Teahouse, chooses to work with the animation *A Record of a Mortal's Journey to Immortality*. Built in 1784 and becoming a teahouse in 1855, this traditional building matches fans' imaginations of the protagonist's small shop in the story. During the event, the teahouse serves two special tea-tasting menus and offers fans gifts such as badges and coasters (cup mats), according to Su Deliang, the teahouse's manager.

Enthusiastic ACGN fans of all ages are now flocking to Yuyuan for the extravaganza. Wu Anqi, a 14-year-old middle school student studying in Shanghai, arrived at Yuyuan early with her friends on the event's first day to collect stamps and limited-edition gifts of her favorite characters, while 12-year-old primary school student Wang Xinran came at night with her parents, heading excitedly to the restaurant collaborating with *Link Click* to check out the special menu.

Sharing the same love for ACGN culture, 25-year-old Fang Lan from Chengdu, Sichuan province, is a postgraduate student in Shanghai who has been engaged in ACGN culture and its community for over 10 years. She tells China Daily: "It has always brought me passion and power, positively leading my personal growth. Many of my peers might have stress, but I feel the ACGN world keeps me refreshed and more motivated."

"Every era has its own rhythm, which is usually represented by young people. Today, they are attuned to the latest trends, passionate about ACGN culture, and appreciate innovative expressions of Chinese culture. Behind all this, I see their growing confidence in our cultures," says Wang Peng from Grand Yuyuan.

Contact the writer at wangxin2@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

Science and art converge for mental health 'prescription'

By **HE QI**
heqi@chinadaily.com.cn





Left: A live performance amid lush botanical displays at the Window of Nature zone of the Shanghai Natural History Museum on June 15, to mark the launch of the city's first museum prescription. **Right:** The very first museum prescription is issued at the launch ceremony at the Shanghai Natural History Museum on June 15. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

A cellist performs amid lush botanical displays at the Shanghai Natural History Museum's Window of Nature zone as the first group of participants sits in quiet meditation. Absorbed by the soothing melodies, Shanghai's first "museum prescription" program officially launched, delivering drug-free immersive mental healing through science and cultural venues.

A joint initiative by the Shanghai Science and Technology Museum (SSTM) and the Shanghai Mental Health Center (SMHC), the program is the city's first social psychological support project pairing a popular science venue with a specialized mental health institution, marking the second round of in-depth cross-sector collaboration between the two sides. The very first prescription was issued at the launch ceremony on June 15.

Unlike clinical drug prescriptions, the "museum prescription" is a professionally assessed, non-clinical healing guideline, also classified as a social prescription.

It is distributed through two channels: medical institutions across the city's mental health service network, where doctors prescribe it to eligible patients following an evaluation; and community-level public service centers, where trained volunteers connect residents in need with relevant resources. Prescription holders enjoy free-of-charge admission to designated venues and access to exclusive healing activities.

"We create low-threshold scenarios to integrate mental health services into daily life, so people do not come under the pressure of 'seeking medical treatment'," says Qiao Ying, chief physician at SMHC.

The program tailors differentiated healing content using resources from three SSTM venues — the main SSTM site presents horse whisperer soundscape therapy based on its *Galloping Wonders* special equine exhibition; the Shanghai Natural History Museum runs the weaving melodies of nature alongside its *Only Tree Knows* exhibition; and the Shanghai Astronomy Museum hosts starry sky healing concerts.

"We prioritize spaces where science and art converge, and design problem-oriented activities for specific groups," says Song Xian, director of SSTM's science communication center. "These are not simple extensions of permanent exhibitions, but exclusive immersive designs focused on emotional relief."

The first batch of prescriptions prioritizes socially isolated older adults suffering from cognitive decline and high-stress working professionals.

"Many people do not regard loneliness as a health risk, but it actually raises the natural mortality rate among the elderly by 22 percent, inflicting more health damage than obesity, diabetes or heart disease," Qiao notes.

She explains that multisensory healing experiences balance activity in the prefrontal cortex and amygdala, helping people activate inner psychological energy and promote positive mind-body integration.

To ensure professional delivery, the program has recruited its first cohort of museum-healing mentors, comprising licensed psychotherapists and senior museum educators. They will receive systematic training in mental health expertise and therapeutic activity designed to bridge medical services and cultural resources.

"Museums are not only temples of knowledge, but also harbors for the soul," says Zhong Qian, deputy curator of SSTM, expressing hope that the healing power of nature and science would reach more people through the program.

Lu Baorong, a professor at Fudan University, adds scientific backing: "Natural specimens in museums carry inherent aesthetic order. Immersive aesthetic experiences guide people to relax, stay focused on the present, and deliver unique healing value."

Around 450 free-of-charge healing prescriptions will be available in the initial pilot phase, valid through the end of August.

Going forward, the two sides plan to explore integrating the "museum prescription" into the city's public health service system and to launch a Shanghai Museum Healing Alliance to bring more art galleries and cultural venues on board and expand mental health support coverage.

"Mental health services should not be confined to clinics," says Xiao Junjie, Party secretary of SMHC. "Museums build low-threshold, stigma-free social support scenarios, truly integrating healing into daily life."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:20 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:20 PM

CULTURE



A new generation enters the storm

Veteran actor Yang Lixin directs a revival of a landmark drama, encouraging young actors to find fresh interpretations of Cao Yu's enduring masterpiece, **Chen Nan** reports.

For the past 15 years, actor Yang Lixin has lived with one of Chinese theater's most formidable characters: Zhou Puyuan, the wealthy industrialist and stern patriarch at the center of *Thunderstorm*, Chinese playwright Cao Yu's landmark modern drama.

This summer, however, the 69-year-old actor returns to the play not as its leading actor but as its director, entrusted with guiding a new generation of performers in one of the Beijing People's Art Theatre's most treasured productions.

"It's never possible to prepare enough for this play," Yang says as the theater unveils its latest revival of *Thunderstorm*, which will open at the Capital Theatre on Aug 5 with shows running until Aug 21.

For Yang, the assignment is both deeply personal and artistically significant. Over decades, he has worked alongside nearly every generation of actors who helped define the theater's interpretation of *Thunderstorm*. Now, he finds himself passing that tradition forward.

His mission echoes the words of playwright Cao Yu himself. In his 1979 book, *Cao Yu on Thunderstorm*, the dramatist wrote: "A script is a living thing. As long as it continues to be performed and retains its vitality, it can continue to be re-created."

Often regarded as the father of modern Chinese drama, Cao Yu became director of the Beijing People's Art Theatre when it was founded in 1952. Two years later, the company premiered *Thunderstorm* under the direction of Xia Chun and Cao Yu's supervision, establishing what would become one of the theater's defining productions.

Written in 1934 when Cao Yu was just 24, *Thunderstorm* remains one of the most influential works in modern Chinese drama. Set over a single day in 1925, the play unfolds inside the home of the wealthy Zhou family, where long-buried secrets, forbidden love and class conflict erupt into devastating tragedy. Its psychological depth, explosive dramatic structure and sharp social critique have captivated audiences for generations.

Since its 1954 premiere, the Beijing People's Art Theatre production has been revived in 1979, 1989, 2004 and 2020, accumulating more than 600 performances over seven decades.

Each revival has introduced the classic to new audiences while serving as a training ground for successive generations of actors, directors and designers.

"*Thunderstorm* is one of the cornerstones of the Beijing People's Art Theatre," says Feng Yuanzheng, veteran actor, director and the theater's president. "Its literary value and artistic spirit deserve to be passed on."

The latest production is part of the theater's initiative, "Classic Repertoire Restoration Program", launched in 2025 to ensure landmark productions remain living works rather than museum pieces. The first production under the initiative, *Returning Home on a Snowy Night*, premiered in May 2025. Originally written in 1942 by playwright Wu Zuguang (1917-2003), the play was first performed by the theater in 1957. In July 2025, the theater restaged one of its most iconic productions, *Rickshaw Boy*, which also premiered in 1957, and was adapted from the beloved novel of the same name by Lao She (1899-1966).

Faithful to tradition, the revival of *Thunderstorm* preserves the original 1954 set and costume designs, allowing audiences to step into the dimly lit Zhou family mansion much as theatergoers did decades ago. Yet, behind that historical continuity lies months of fresh research.





From top: Members of the latest production of the Chinese play *Thunderstorm* pose at the Beijing People's Art Theatre on July 8. Costume designs from the first production of *Thunderstorm* by the Beijing People's Art Theatre in 1954. A scene from the 1954 version of the play by the theater.
PHOTOS BY ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

Preparation began early this year. Yang organized workshops introducing the cast members to Cao Yu's writings, archival materials and recordings of previous productions. The goal, he emphasizes, was never imitation.

"The greatest asset of any stage production lies in the script," Yang says. "Actors should use their imagination, but they should never invent what the playwright did not write."

To deepen the theater's understanding of the play's historical setting, the creative team consulted drama scholars and experts on China's labor movement. They revisited decades of criticism on *Thunderstorm* and immersed themselves in the social realities of the 1920s.

Research also took them beyond the rehearsal room.

Yang and actor Liu Hui traveled to Harbin, Heilongjiang province, to visit a bridge mentioned by the character Lu Dahai in the play, a seemingly small detail that Yang believes enriches an actor's understanding, regardless of Cao Yu's original intention.

The theater also visited Wuxi, Jiangsu province, to learn about the city's early industrial development and prominent family businesses, and toured the Cao Yu Memorial Museum in Tianjin.

"These experiences stay with the actors, quietly taking root in their minds, enriching their imagination and lending greater depth to their performances," Yang says.

Historical authenticity extended into rehearsals. Actors frequently arrived wearing cloth shoes, long gowns and *qipao* (traditional long dresses) so that everyday movements — walking, sitting or simply crossing the stage — would gradually become second nature within the world of the play.

For Yang, every detail ultimately serves one purpose: revealing the emotional truth already embedded in Cao Yu's writing.

The production also represents another passing of the torch.

Liu Hui takes over the pivotal role of Zhou Puyuan, joined by Liu Wenyi as Fanyi, Gong Yuquan as Zhou Ping and Huang Wei as Lu Shiping. Together, they inherit characters shaped by generations of legendary performers while seeking interpretations that speak to contemporary audiences.

"Every actor at the Beijing People's Art Theatre knows the history of *Thunderstorm*, so stepping into Zhou Puyuan naturally comes with pressure. But director Yang encouraged us to return to Cao Yu's script and discover the character for ourselves. That gave me the confidence to find my own interpretation," says Liu Hui.

"Through our research and discussions, I began to understand the social constraints and emotional isolation she (Fanyi) lived with. That changed the way I approached every scene. I hope audiences will see not only her intensity, but also her vulnerability," says actress Liu Wenyi.

"The moment the makeup was finished and I put on the *qipao*, my posture changed without me thinking about it," Liu Wenyi adds. "The clothes affected how I walked, how I sat and even how I spoke. They helped me understand Fanyi's elegance and restraint."

Contact the writer at chennan@chinadaily.com.cn

Building bridges out of broken pottery

NANCHANG — Inside the Jingdezhen Imperial Kiln Institute, rows upon rows of gray metal cabinets house thousands of transparent drawers filled with ancient ceramic shards. Together, they form what the institute describes as the world's first ancient ceramic "gene bank" — a database that stores the "DNA" of broken pottery.

Jingdezhen city in East China, known as the "porcelain capital", has produced ceramics for over 1,700 years. Beneath the city's famed masterpieces lie layers of broken fragments several meters thick — flawed imperial ceramics and damaged folk products. To date, nearly 20 million shards have been unearthed from the city's deep archaeological deposits.

The Jingdezhen Imperial Kiln Institute, together with Tsinghua University, the Shanghai Institute of Ceramics under the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and other partners, has built a ceramic "gene bank" to collect data points from the shards.

The bank offers a standardized physical sample library and a unified data framework to support international authentication and academic research. Its data encompasses shape, decoration, body material, glaze, color, firing marks and inscriptions.

One million records

To become a "genetic" sample, each shard is first cleaned and cut into four physical forms — fragments, cross-sections, thin slices and powder. Scanning electron microscopy is used to examine these prepared samples.

Extracting a gene means identifying key characteristics, explains Tong Yuting, a staff member at the Jingdezhen Imperial Kiln Institute. "For blue and white porcelain, we don't just look at the perfectly colored pieces. We also collect shards with paler tones, deeper shades, or even rust spots, as all of these variations are considered feature points."



By gathering this full spectrum of color variations, researchers build a complete "color chart" for blue-and-white wares. Analyzing these variations enables researchers to reverse-engineer the cobalt pigment composition, formula ratios, and firing techniques of ancient craftsmen, making each shard a window into historical production methods.

The database now holds over 1 million genetic records from 12,000 specimens across 3,000 sets, supported by a standardized system for sample processing, management and preservation. This establishes a benchmark system for dating and authentication.

Maria Mayer, curator at the Medeiros e Almeida Museum in Portugal, is studying a group of blue-and-white porcelain pieces fired in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) bearing Portuguese coats of arms. "The gene bank offers a scientific and systematic foundation for classifying ceramic materials, which will help me uncover the cultural exchange history behind this collection," she says.

Xin Wenyuan, a researcher at the British Museum, notes that many overseas collections have traditionally been dated and classified solely by style. "The archaeological sequence and technical data from the imperial kiln site give us a more reliable basis for comparison," she says. With the gene bank, Western ceramic studies can move from "appreciating finished products" to analyzing materials, technology and production systems.

Xin adds that Jingdezhen's gene bank lets researchers observe different stages of production, including glaze composition, trimming methods, firing temperature control and even disposal.

"I noticed a branch-and-flower pattern on a blue-and-white sauce-glazed bowl fragment that closely resembles pieces in our collection and those from the 19th-century Desaru shipwreck. It's like a matching game, one decoration connects the whole chain — production, transport, consumption, and museum collection."

The data also helps with restoration. Researchers recently reassembled two large dragon-decorated vats made in the Ming Dynasty from 16,000 fragments — a task once thought impossible. AI algorithms processed each shard's genetic data to predict correct assembly paths, bringing the relics back to life.

Global collaboration

The gene bank has also established a collaborative, standardized framework that advances global ceramic scholarship.

"In English, ceramics are divided into earthenware, stoneware, and porcelain," says Li Baoping, honorary researcher at Oxford University. "In Chinese, there are only two categories: *tao* (pottery) and *ci* (porcelain)." This difference has long caused confusion in cross-border research.

China is now addressing that gap. Based on the gene bank, the Jingdezhen Imperial Kiln Institute is drafting the ISO TC349 standard for scientific characterization of ancient ceramics — a proposal already submitted and under ballot at the International Organization for Standardization.

"Standardized data will become a more internationally accepted research language," says Weng Yanjun, head of the Jingdezhen Imperial Kiln Institute. "It used to be hard to describe precisely what ruby glaze or cowpea red is. In the future, we can use exact values from the gene bank to describe and re-create them accurately."

International engagement is growing fast. In October 2023, the institute launched the Society of International Ceramic Studies, which has already held two academic conferences involving 89 institutions and over 200 scholars from 22 countries and regions. In December 2024, the SICS advisory committee was formed, bringing together renowned experts from China and around the world.

In June 2025, the English biannual Journal of International Ceramic Studies was launched, a dedicated English-language journal in this field, copublished by Elsevier Publishing Group and China Science Publishing and Media Ltd. Its first two issues feature 25 papers from 26 leading institutions across 14 countries and regions.

The institute is also building a World Ceramic Interactive Map, linking collections worldwide. By clicking any coordinate on the map, users will see local artifacts, their kiln sites, and global distribution routes — turning scattered archives into a connected story.

"Jingdezhen is uniquely placed, as it can serve as both a primary source of empirical data and a core hub for international cooperation," says Teresa Canepa, a member of the Council of the Oriental Ceramic Society in the United Kingdom. She is planning to integrate her decades of research on shipwreck ceramics into the map's backend system.

"When we pool all this data, and click somewhere in the Middle East or Europe and see links to the Jingdezhen kilns, the Forbidden City, Topkapi Palace or the Guimet Museum, people will be struck by the intertwined histories and memories that emerge," says Weng. The platform aims to gather over 10,000 data points and complete its framework by the end of 2026, with significant progress expected in the next three to five years.

Today, the map's rich cultural data is accessible to the public, inspiring ceramic enthusiasts around the world. These shards serve as storytellers that create a new bridge between modern science and ancient civilization.

XINHUA



Top: The site of an ancient kiln in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province.
Above: A staff member displays ceramic "gene" samples at Jingdezhen Imperial Kiln Institute. PHOTOS BY XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:20 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:20 PM

SPORTS

2026 WORLD CUP



Lionel Messi celebrates with his teammates after Argentina won its World Cup semifinal against England in Atlanta Wednesday. **Inset:** Argentina's Enzo Fernandez celebrates scoring his side's first goal on Wednesday. AP

Messi delivers for Argentina again

As defending champion reaches consecutive finals

Lionel Messi delivered two crucial goal assists for his teammates, and, with one more win, he will be delivering another World Cup trophy to Argentina.

Messi didn't add to his tournament-leading goal tally, but the 39-year-old produced the final passes on two late strikes that carried La Albiceleste to another stunning comeback and a 2-1 victory over England in the semifinals in Atlanta on Wednesday.

"These are special feelings. I think the squad could feel it. This was a game the Argentine people really wanted to win, and so did we," Messi, 39, said after facing England for the first time in his career.

"This is still a special fixture."

He was not quite able to emulate Diego Maradona, who scored two iconic goals in Argentina's 1986 World Cup quarterfinal win over England.

But he will settle for the two assists, and he has already emulated his legendary predecessor by winning the trophy four years ago in Qatar.

Now, after Argentina maintained its incredible record of never having lost a World Cup semifinal, Messi will appear in a second straight final, and a third overall.

The South Americans are aiming to become the first team to retain the World Cup since Brazil did so in 1962, and Messi, the sole survivor from the side that lost to Germany in 2014, will become just the second player after Brazilian great Cafu to appear in three finals.

"It is crazy to be playing in back-to-back finals," he said.

Argentina had already staged a stunning late comeback to beat Egypt 3-2 in the same Atlanta stadium in the last 16, and it smelled blood as England sat deeper and deeper after going ahead.

"Once again we managed to do the job when things were looking bad. We never stopped believing," said Messi, who has now played a record 33 World Cup games across six different tournaments.

For long spells on Wednesday his influence was limited, but that has often been the way with Messi and he was still able to drag his team to victory.

"Leo is still performing at the highest level," England captain Harry Kane said. "I felt like for large parts of the game, we dealt with him really well. But, as always, with the most dangerous players in the world, when they have the ball in the final third, they can create something. And he did that again today. He's obviously one of the best players ever for a reason."



Lionel Messi consoles England's Harry Kane after their World Cup semifinal. AP

Another stellar moment

Eight days after an improbable rally against Egypt in the round of 16, Messi returned to Atlanta to produce another stellar moment in a career that might already be the best of anyone to play the sport.

After a 55th-minute goal from Anthony Gordon, England was surely envisioning lifting the World Cup trophy for the first time since its singular title six decades ago.

But Messi and his blue-clad teammates, as they have shown over and over again, are never done.

In the 85th minute, with England hanging on for dear life, Messi pushed out a short corner, immediately got the return pass and spotted Enzo Fernandez lurking in the middle of the field, 25 yards from the goal. Fernandez ripped a curling shot past goalkeeper Jordan Pickford to even the score.

At that point, it seemed inevitable that Argentina would pull out the victory.

And that's just what happened, with Messi again the orchestrator. Two minutes into stoppage time, he suddenly turned on the speed as he raced toward the goal line, gaining enough space to send a pinpoint cross into the area at the back post. The ball cleared six English players, setting up Lautaro Martinez to effortlessly head home the winning goal after slipping between two defenders.

It was a poignant moment for Martinez, all of it made possible by his captain.

"This is really powerful," he said in Spanish, fighting back tears. "The first time my father bought me a pair of soccer boots, I always dreamed of scoring this goal."

From there, it was just a matter of protecting the lead, which Argentina did easily.

When the final whistle blew, Messi dropped to his knees in the middle of the field, pumping his fists.

Messi played for years in the shadow of the late Maradona, the pride of Argentina who led the country to a World Cup title in 1986 that included two memorable scores — the "Hand of God" and the "Goal of the Century" — both in a quarterfinal win over England.

Now, it's Messi who has stamped his legacy with a triumph over one of Argentina's most bitter rivals.

"Seeing Messi playing football like this, at his age, it just leaves me speechless," said Matias Adorno, who turned out in Messi's No 10 jersey to celebrate with thousands or revelers in central Buenos Aires. "As Argentines, we've always put so much pressure on him. But he's achieved everything I could imagine."

Messi remains even with Kylian Mbappe of France in the race for the Golden Boot, with both stars having scored eight times.

But, courtesy of his two tiebreaking assists, he edges ahead of Mbappe for the award.

Mbappe has a chance to retake the lead in Saturday's third-place match against England.

Messi is also the all-time World Cup scoring leader with 21 goals.

What he really wants, though, is another title, and all that stands in his way is a determined and very hard-to-beat Spanish team.

AGENCIES

Goal hero Martinez 'dreamed' of scoring semifinal winner



Argentina's World Cup semifinal match-winner Lautaro Martinez said he had "dreamed" of scoring the goal which took his team through to the final at England's expense on Wednesday.

"I dreamed it. I told Alexis (Mac Allister) that I was going to score," Martinez said after his heroics off the bench in Atlanta sealed a 2-1 semifinal victory for the reigning champion over its bitter rival.

"And, I said on the bench to Facundo Medina that I was going to come on and score."

The defending champion was trailing 1-0 at the break, and was still behind when the Inter Milan striker was introduced in the 81st minute in place of left-back Nicolas Tagliafico.

Lionel Messi set up Enzo Fernandez to equalize in the 85th minute, and then, in the second minute of second-half stoppage time, the Argentina captain crossed for Martinez to head in the winner.

When he spoke again to reporters after leaving the dressing room, Martinez said he had just gotten off the phone with his mother, who was at work.

The 28-year-old Martinez lost his place in Lionel Scaloni's Argentina team early on its run to glory at the 2022 World Cup.

This time, however, he started all three group games, scoring in the 3-1 win over Jordan, but was substituted in the narrow victory over Cape Verde during the round of 32 and has not started since.

Nevertheless, he came off the bench to score in the 3-1 extra-time defeat of Switzerland in the quarterfinals, and, again, to play a decisive semifinal role against England.

"We are going to be coming up against a top-class side who has not lost in 38 games and has great players," said Martinez.

"Now, we need to get some rest, but also enjoy this, because what we are doing is not easy; getting back to the final as defending champion three and a half years after winning it."

Spain's last defeat was a 1-0 reverse in a friendly against Colombia in March 2024.

The only previous World Cup meeting between Spain and Argentina took place at the 1966 tournament in England, when the South Americans won 2-1 in a group-stage contest played at Birmingham's Villa Park.

AFP

England's going home, as familiar tale of woe unfolds

ATLANTA — Thomas Tuchel was appointed in a blaze of publicity, stating his aim was to add a second star to the England shirt with another World Cup win.

After years of heartache and near-misses, Tuchel was viewed as the missing piece of the puzzle, the coach who could finally end the Three Lions' decades-long wait for a major title.

Predecessor Gareth Southgate had led a talented generation of England players to two Euro finals, and a World Cup quarterfinal and semifinal.

But each of those campaigns ended in disappointment, with a recurring theme of Southgate being accused of failing to adapt his tactics quickly enough to changing circumstances within games.

Under the tactically astute Tuchel, who had memorably outfoxed Pep Guardiola's Manchester City to lead Chelsea to the Champions League title in 2021, things, England fans were promised, would be different.

Yet, against Argentina in the World Cup semifinal on Wednesday, England bowed out of the tournament in painfully familiar fashion — failing to capitalize on a 1-0 lead before inviting pressure, surrendering the initiative and losing 2-1.

It was the third time since the 2018 World Cup that England has lost a major championship semifinal or final after taking the lead.

All three defeats, including Wednesday's at Atlanta's Mercedes-Benz Stadium, followed the same template — a solid start, going 1-0 up, a desperate rearguard action, and finally, capitulation.

Many critics and former players immediately pointed the finger at Tuchel for England's latest failure, accusing the German of switching to an ultra-defensive approach too early in the game, after Anthony Gordon had put England ahead on 55 minutes.

Argentina spent the final stages of the game camped near the England area, bombarding its opponent's goal, and finally winning with strikes from Enzo Fernandez on 85 minutes and Lautaro Martinez in stoppage time.



England coach Thomas Tuchel talks tactics with Jude Bellingham during their semifinal match against Argentina on Wednesday. AP

'Deserved to get beaten'

Former England striker Michael Owen said the defeat was a missed opportunity, sharply criticizing Tuchel's second-half changes.

"We are a better team than Argentina, I've no doubt in my mind," he wrote on X.

"But we deserved to get beaten in the end. In fact, it could have been 4-1.

"Bringing on three defenders at 1-0 up. What message does that send? Until we understand that courage and bravery is controlling possession under pressure and not booting (or) heading it 40 yards up the field, then this will always be the end result."

Former England goalkeeper Joe Hart agreed. "I think Gareth Southgate will be at home watching this game," the BBC pundit said.

"He took a lot of criticism when it came to the big moments with England, when they had the lead, about shutting up shop, but I don't think anything has changed in that big moment out there."

While Tuchel accepted responsibility for the defeat, he pushed back on suggestions that his second-half substitutions were to blame.

The England coach, who started his job at the beginning of 2025, said the tide had turned before his tactical tweaks, as Argentina grew more desperate and chased the game.

Asked if he believed he had got his tactics wrong, he replied: "No, I believe that's just the nature of the game.

"As soon as you lose, you get criticized. It's just what it is. No one knows what would have happened if we had made different decisions.

"So, it makes no sense to engage in that and lose my head. I'm responsible for them. I took them, so I take the criticism."

England captain Harry Kane said the team had "just tried to hang on a little too early".

But he refused to point the finger at Tuchel's game management after another opportunity slipped away.

"There's always going to be talk now about trying to blame people or coaches," Kane said. "It's not the time for that. We win and lose together.

"We've done everything. He'd have been called a genius if it had worked. In the end, it didn't work for many different reasons.

"That's what we need to try and improve. We're close, we're knocking on the door, but as always in these final moments, we need to find that missing piece of the puzzle."

AFP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:20 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:23 PM

Unfolding disaster
State of emergency in Canada province as wildfires rage
WORLD, PAGE 5



Ethnic dance finds modern audience
CULTURE, PAGE 13



Waste to wealth
Nanning plant transforms garbage into electricity, building materials
GOING GREEN, PAGE 12

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 MONDAY, AUGUST 10, 2026

MODERNIZATION FOR ALL

China-CEEC cooperation opening doors

Nation's modernization drive also delivers tangible, inclusive benefits to other countries

By JI HAISHENG in Beijing and **LIU KUN** in Wuhan

In 2008, as the global financial crisis unfolded, Greece became one of the worst-affected countries. Piraeus Port, the largest seaport in the country, reported a loss of 13 million euros ($15 million), with outdated facilities, scarce vessel calls and frequent dockworker strikes dragging its operations into a deep crisis.

During this challenging period, when investors worldwide shunned Greece as too risky, a Chinese company stepped forward. China COSCO Shipping secured a concession to operate two of Piraeus' container terminals. Eight years later, in 2016, COSCO acquired a majority stake in the port, officially taking over its management and operations.

By bringing in expertise, investment and machinery, the Chinese company successfully breathed new life into the port. Far from replacing local staff, it created thousands of jobs for Greeks. Today, after years of restructuring, Piraeus stands as one of the busiest ports in the Mediterranean.

Charalampos Aravantinos-Simonetos, a youth coordinator for international and European affairs in Greece's Syriza party, shared the story of solidarity and cooperation with a roomful of young political leaders from China and Central and Eastern European countries, or CEECs, in June during a forum held in Wuhan, Hubei province.

The Chinese approach, he said, stands in stark contrast to those countries that invest solely for their own benefit and show little concern for local communities. The project has helped strengthen bilateral ties and allowed both sides to benefit through cooperation, he added.

According to Piraeus' financial report, the port achieved record total revenue of 251 million euros in 2025, up 8.6 percent year-on-year.

The turnaround of Piraeus Port, far from an isolated story, is a microcosm of the cooperation synergy between China and Central and Eastern European countries under the China-CEEC Cooperation mechanism.

Launched in 2012, the mechanism is a trans-regional platform jointly initiated by both sides. Over the past 14 years, the parties have remained committed to the principles of equality, mutual benefit in cooperation, openness and inclusiveness against the backdrop of a fluid international landscape.

Today, it has grown into a full-fledged mechanism, with deepening cooperation and a series of outcomes delivering tangible benefits to various parties.

In Croatia, the Chinese-built Peljesac Bridge has reduced a three-hour detour to just a few minutes' drive. In Serbia, Chinese investment has revived a century-old steel plant from the brink of closure. In Skopje, the capital of North Macedonia, thousands of citizens commute every day on buses manufactured by Chinese company Yutong Bus.

See ***Ties,*** *page 3*

SPIDER-MAN DRAWS DINERS INTO SHANGHAI'S CULINARY WEB

Tom Holland and Zendaya turn sesame noodles into a global hit

By HE QI in Shanghai
heqi@chinadaily.com.cn

In downtown Shanghai, Wei Xiang Zhai — a tiny, 37-square-meter bistro with just 11 tables — is packed with customers every single day. What draws crowds huddled shoulder to shoulder is a $2 bowl of noodles tossed in sesame paste.

China Vibes — FOOD —

The nearly century-old restaurant recently found itself in the global spotlight thanks to Tom Holland and Zendaya. During their three-day trip to Shanghai in late July to promote their new movie *Spider-Man: Brand New Day*, the Hollywood couple visited the small restaurant twice for its signature sesame paste noodles and highly praised the dish in interviews. Dubbed "Spider-Man noodles", the dish quickly went viral, and the waiting lines now feature a growing number of foreigners.

"We get about 50 to 60 orders from foreign visitors a day — well up from just a few years ago," said Xue Mei, shift manager at Wei Xiang Zhai on Yandang Road in Huangpu district, who has watched the shop's foreign clientele build steadily rather than explode overnight.



Sesame paste noodles at the Wei Xiang Zhai restaurant in Shanghai. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"An American food blogger with millions of followers came to film once, and after that we saw a surge in foreign tourists," Xue said. "Then, when visa-free entry opened up for the Republic of Korea, visitors from there followed suit. It's been a gradual climb."

See ***Noodles,*** *page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Xi congratulates Singapore on republic's anniversary

By ZHAO JIA
zhaojia@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping sent a congratulatory message to Singaporean President Tharman Shanmugaratnam on Sunday on the 61st anniversary of the founding of the Republic of Singapore.

Xi said that over the past 61 years, Singapore has made remarkable achievements in its economic and social development.

Noting that China and Singapore are friendly close neighbors, Xi said that he attaches great importance to the development of China-Singapore relations. Xi also said he is ready to work with Shanmugaratnam to enhance strategic communication and guide the China-Singapore all-around high-quality future-oriented partnership to new heights, in order to better benefit the two peoples.

China and Singapore have seen frequent high-level exchanges in recent years. Xi and Shanmugaratnam exchanged congratulatory messages on the 35th anniversary of diplomatic ties in October last year, followed by Premier Li Qiang's official visit to the Southeast Asian country in the same month. Singaporean Prime Minister Lawrence Wong attended the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference in Hainan province in March.

According to China's Foreign Ministry, Singapore was China's fifth-largest trading partner among members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in 2025, with bilateral trade reaching $119.25 billion, up 7.5 percent year-on-year.

Tourism boom





Above: Tourists admire the beautiful scenery of karst peak forests at Xiyang mountain in Yangmeiling village, Yangshuo county, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, on Aug 2. JIANG KEQING / XINHUA **Left:** Foreign tourists interact with a Sichuan Opera face-changing performer at an underground hotpot restaurant in Liangjiang New Area, Chongqing, in July. Both domestic and inbound tourism gained strong momentum in the first half of this year. HUANG WEI / XINHUA
See story, page 3

Unitree IPO puts investor focus on AI

By ZHOU LANXU
zhoulanxv@chinadaily.com.cn

Investors are showing a strong appetite for Unitree Robotics' initial public offering, reflecting growing optimism about China's ambition to turn its industrial chain strengths into commercially viable artificial intelligence applications, market experts and investment banks said.

Though still at an early stage of commercialization, China's embodied intelligence industry is gaining momentum in scaling up applications, creating a distinctive opportunity set for global investors, they said.

The IPO of Unitree on Shanghai's STAR Market — the first A-share listing of a major producer of humanoid robots — has entered the subscription stage, with buoyant demand helping lift its issue price and fundraising size.

Its issuing announcement showed that it had priced its IPO at 150.80 yuan ($22.35) per share, with expected proceeds amounting to 6.099 billion yuan, higher than the 4.202 billion yuan estimated in its earlier IPO filing at an implied price of about 104 yuan per share.

Its IPO price represents a price-to-earnings ratio of 219.23 times, far surpassing the industry average of 38.56 times and giving it a market capitalization of about 60.99 billion yuan.

The offering attracted a group of strategic investors, including the National Council for Social Security Fund, DeepSeek, as well as investment arms or affiliates of China National Petroleum Corp, China Southern Power Grid, China Telecom, Tencent and CITIC Securities.

Notably, the social security fund has become Unitree's largest strategic investor, subscribing to 933,402 shares, or 2.31 percent of the offering, for around 141 million yuan.

Retail investors have also shown enthusiasm ahead of Unitree's online subscriptions that open on Monday, with posts wishing for successful allocations piling up on financial information platform Eastmoney's online stock forum for the company.

Yang Shuning, executive director and partner at Wenzhi Capital, a Beijing-based private equity company, said the keen demand and high valuation reflect investors' optimism about Unitree's commercialization prospects and its positioning in the embodied intelligence sector.

"Given the scarcity premium enjoyed by leading players in tech sectors and the multibillion-dollar valuations seen among overseas humanoid peers, Unitree's valuation is not without justification," he said.

But Yang cautioned that Unitree's valuation is less about current earnings than about investors pricing in its future profitability. "If Unitree falls behind in scaling up commercialization, revenue growth weakens or investors start using a different valuation yardstick, valuations would come under pressure."

Commercial promise

Wang Xingxing, Unitree's founder and chairman, said on Friday that the company's pure humanoid robot shipments exceeded 5,500 units in 2025, the highest in the world.

Unitree's rise has come as China's humanoid robotics sector takes the lead worldwide in terms of shipments, with its commercialization prospects becoming more visible.

Citing exhibition examples at the World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai, UBS said in a report that humanoid robots are "increasingly being evaluated as production tools rather than exhibition assets".

Commercialization should first scale in structured business-to-business scenarios such as factories, logistics and smart pharmacies, while consumer use cases remain a longer-term prospect, the report said.

Zhao Liang, a partner at Unique Capital, an investment institution focused on AI innovation, said that humanoid robots may integrate with specific application scenarios on a large scale in the next few years.

"Given China's advantages in industrial supply chains and talent, the country's embodied intelligence industry chain may bring a surprise to the world," Zhao said.

Unitree's listing, which took only 104 days to go from the application acceptance stage to registration approval, is expected to further boost financing, investment and development of China's embodied intelligence sector, experts said.

Besides Unitree, another major Chinese humanoid manufacturer, AGIBOT, is seeking an IPO in Hong Kong. According to UBS, China's embodied AI sector saw a wave of IPO filings and strong primary market financing this year, with first-half funding going above 34.5 billion yuan.

With a buoyant listing pipeline, China's embodied intelligence industry could offer global investors a distinct exposure to the next phase of AI development where physical-world applications become increasingly important, experts added.

Goldman Sachs said in a report that while the US and North Asian tech companies hold a dominant position in sectors such as semiconductor and AI models, China's AI opportunity set seems better populated in power, infrastructure and physical AI.

WORLD WATCH
By Massoud Amin

Girding the grid for a hotter world

On Aug 2 the South Korean city of Yangsan hit 42.5 degrees Celsius — the highest temperature in 122 years of record-keeping. Seoul received its first-ever severe heat wave warning. More than 20 people have died, most of them over 80.

On Aug 4, President Lee Jae-myung called the heat wave a national disaster. Then he gave an order that tells you everything about the modern world: inspect the power system.

He was right to. In a heat wave, the grid is the difference between discomfort and catastrophe. Air conditioning, hospital cooling, refrigerated medicine, water pumping — all of it hangs on wires most people never think about until the lights go out.

Europe is counting its heat dead again this summer. Record electricity demand is being set across the Northern Hemisphere. Behind every one of those headlines sits a question ordinary readers understand before they finish reading it: can the grid withstand a hotter world?

I have spent my career on that question. In January 1998, at the Electric Power Research Institute in California, I created and led a research program built on an unusual premise that the power grid could learn to heal itself. We called it the Complex Interactive Networks/Systems Initiative — 108 professors at 28 universities, 52 utilities and the US Department of Defense. Out of that work came the concept, and the name, of the smart grid: a network with sensors for nerves, computation for reflexes and the ability to isolate damage before it spreads.

Here is what heat does to that network, in plain terms. Demand surges as millions of air conditioners switch on at once. At the same moment, the grid itself weakens. Transmission lines sag and carry less power. Transformers run hot and age faster.

Power plants lose efficiency in warm air and warm cooling water. The system is asked to do the most precisely when it can do the least. A smart grid exists for this moment — to see the stress building, shift the load and keep the most important circuits alive.

Twenty-eight years after those whiteboard sketches in Palo Alto, the largest laboratory for these ideas is on the other side of the Pacific. China crossed 10,000 terawatt-hours of electricity consumption in 2025 — the first nation ever to do so.

See ***Electricity,*** *page 3*

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved

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

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:23 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:23 PM

INDEPTH

Turning 'destroyers' into eco 'guardians'

Guangxi courts make offenders work to restore damaged environments

By **CAO YIN** in Guangxi
caoyin@chinadaily.com.cn

The 60-year-old defendant, surnamed Xu, stood in a district courtroom on the morning of July 22 with his head bowed, ready to receive his punishment.

He had been caught by coast guard officers last year using electrofishing gear during the closed fishing season, which runs annually from May 1 to Aug 16 in the Beibu Gulf waters off South China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region.

After standing trial, the Gangkou District People's Court in Fangchenggang found Xu guilty of illegal fishing.

But instead of imposing a fine for ecological damage, it meted out an alternative punishment — 75 days of marine debris cleanup, eight hours per day. The ruling took into account his financial difficulties and a recent injury that required recovery time.

The designated cleanup site is along the shoreline near his home, making it easier for him to carry out the work while also allowing community members to supervise his efforts.

"I'm grateful the court considered my physical and financial difficulties and allowed me to atone through labor," Xu said after the ruling announcement.

"I've learned a profound lesson and will take marine conservation seriously, using my actions to make up for my mistakes."

His case reflects a broader shift in how courts across Guangxi are addressing environmental protection.

While punishment remains crucial, local judges are increasingly focusing on restoration and education, helping transform "destroyers" into "guardians". This approach aligns with China's forthcoming Ecological and Environmental Code, which takes effect on Aug 15 and actively encourages such alternative restoration methods.

Zero tolerance

Guangxi borders Vietnam and boasts some of China's best air and water quality.

It ranks among the nation's top three provincial-level regions for biodiversity and forest coverage and is home to extensive mangrove forests that form a critical part of the Beibu Gulf ecological barrier. These mangroves not only support marine life but also protect coastlines from storms and absorb significant amounts of carbon dioxide.

Across the region, the law has served as a powerful tool for environmental protection.

From 2023 to 2025, Guangxi courts handled over 30,000 first-instance environmental and resource cases and concluded more than 28,200 of them. Among those concluded were 7,601 criminal cases covering offenses such as environmental pollution and ecological destruction. At the same time, key areas including the Lijiang River Basin and mangrove wetlands were protected along with a variety of bird species.

Between 2020 and 2024, the region's courts concluded 13 criminal cases involving mangrove destruction, sending a strong deterrent to would-be offenders.

Deng Hong, vice-president of the Fangchenggang Intermediate People's Court, likened mangroves to a "cradle" and "sanctuary" for marine life including fish, crabs, and shrimp. "These green intertidal zones are home to countless marine species, playing an irreplaceable role in wind and wave protection, coastline stabilization, and carbon sequestration," she said.

Fangchenggang has more than 2,016 hectares of mangroves, accounting for 21.4 percent of Guangxi's total.

In recent years, courts across the city have severely punished offenders who damage or threaten the mangrove wetland ecosystem. For example, from January 2025 to June 2026 Gangkou district court concluded 303 environmental and resource cases spanning civil, criminal, administrative, and public interest litigation, cracking down on illegal sea occupation, mangrove destruction, illegal fishing and other violations. These cases demonstrate the judiciary's approach to safeguarding the marine environment from multiple angles.

"While illegal fishing appears to harm fish stocks, it actually damages the entire marine environment and the habitat for mangroves — it destroys a complete ecosystem," Deng added.

Labor substitution

Beyond punishing offenders, environmental and ecological restoration is the bigger challenge.



Mangroves are seen in Gangkou district of Fangchenggang, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region. LIANG JIAJU / FOR CHINA DAILY



The Gangkou District People's Court in Fangchenggang holds a public trial to hear a case of illegal fishing on July 22. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Traditional marine ecological restoration often relies on releasing juvenile fish into the sea to enhance stocks. But the costs are high and not every offender can afford it, said Tan Bangyi, who heads the criminal division at the Gangkou district court.

He pointed to Xu's case as a typical judicial practice of using "labor substitution" in lieu of cash compensation. This approach is particularly valuable when offenders are unable to pay recompense, as it ensures that some form of restoration still takes place, Tan said.

"Xu's illegal fishing directly harmed the coastal ecosystem. By locating his labor site near the affected waters and close to his home, we made it easier for him to carry out regular shoreline cleanups and marine conservation work," he said.

The court has always adhered to the principle of prioritizing ecology and making the polluter pay, Tan said.

"This move avoids situations where judgments cannot be enforced while also compelling offenders to confront the damage they caused, achieving an educational effect," he added. "It also helps the destroyers develop a personal connection to the environment they harmed."

Huang Xiaoning, presiding judge of the criminal division at the people's court in Ningming county, Chongzuo city, said substituting payment of compensation with labor reflects a balanced approach to criminal justice.

It serves as an alternative form of compensation in environmental public interest litigation, typically applied when offenders have damaged the environment but cannot afford to pay compensation.

In July 2024, the Ningming court applied labor substitution for the first time. The case dated back to June 2022, when an individual surnamed Ning sold 14 endangered turtles that he had purchased illegally from a scenic area via WeChat. He was caught the following month.

The court found him guilty of illegally purchasing and selling nationally protected rare and endangered wild animals, sentencing him to six months in prison, a 5,000 yuan ($685) fine, and payment of 45,000 yuan in ecological compensation.

Given his financial circumstances, the court allowed him to serve 173 days of community service, which included patrolling the Huashan conservation area and joining environmental education efforts, instead of paying ecological compensation.

"Turning the criminal from an 'ecological destroyer' into a 'guardian of Huashan' not only serves the principle of 'who damages, pays' in environmental public interest litigation but also replaces a simple punitive approach," Huang said.

She added that community service helps offenders like Ning enhance their legal and environmental awareness through river cleanups, mountain patrols, and wildlife protection activities. "It serves both punitive and educational purposes," she said.

Guangxi is charting a new path in environmental judicial protection, with in situ restoration of a site as the principle and offsite alternative restoration as a supplement. This approach integrates restorative justice into broader social governance.

By 2025, the region's courts had established 15 environmental judicial protection and restoration bases, creating dedicated spaces for rehabilitation and public education.

"In the past, we focused more on imposing damages payments. Now we have more options — labor substitution, technology upgrades in lieu of penalties, and carbon credit purchases," Deng, from Fangchenggang court, said.

"These diversified alternative restoration methods are exactly what the forthcoming Ecological and Environmental Code encourages."

Improving governance

Adopted on March 12 by the National People's Congress, China's top legislature, the code is the country's second one after the Civil Code. Its enactment represents a landmark in the country's environmental protection and low-carbon development efforts.

The code comprises five sections and 1,242 articles and establishes six fundamental principles: prevention first, systemic governance, ecological priority, green development, public participation, and polluter pays.

For grassroots judges, the changes are tangible and profound.

Li Jiangang, a judge's assistant at the Dongxing People's Court in Guangxi, completed a five-day training session on the code organized by the Supreme People's Court, China's top court, in July. "I had been awaiting the code since learning of its legislative plan, as it will be a guidebook for my work," he said.

Li said the legal liability section is what he's most focused on, as it provides a tool kit for handling cases.

"It specifies how to coordinate administrative penalties with criminal prosecution and how to determine ecological damage compensation standards. It directly affects the judgment of every case," he said.

Feng Jianhua, a colleague of Li's on the environmental adjudication team, once handled a case involving the trafficking of 166 endangered lesser whistling ducks. Twenty-one of them died during transport.

The defendant was held criminally liable and ordered to pay ecological compensation.

"Previously, environmental laws and regulations were scattered across many different documents, which sometimes led to inconsistent application," Feng said. "The upcoming code weaves these rules into a single framework, making legal application more consistent and reducing inconsistent judgments for similar cases."

Rather than simply compiling more than 30 existing laws or creating an entirely new legal framework, the code integrates, revises, and elevates the country's existing ecological and environmental legal institutions, mechanisms, rules and standards.

Feng said this represents a shift in judicial philosophy.

The code organizes environmental laws into a coherent system and advances adjudication from protecting individual resources — such as a single species or a specific forest — to protecting entire ecosystems and their functions.

"This marks a significant upgrade in how we think about environmental protection," Feng said.

Deng said courts across Fangchenggang have already organized training sessions to ensure proper application of the code. The innovative practices explored earlier — labor substitution and experts assisting as judges' aides — align well with the code's principles, she said.

"In the Xu case, for example, the marine debris cleanup and community supervision reflect the principles of 'polluter pays' and 'public participation' that the code advocates. These are not just abstract concepts — they are concrete measures that have already been tested in real cases," she said.

With implementation of the code underway, Guangxi's courts are prioritizing ecological restoration and extending judicial protection both upstream — coordinating with law enforcement agencies and prosecutors — and downstream, toward ecological recovery and long-term monitoring.

From harsh penalties for damaging mangrove coastlines to diversified ecological restoration approaches in offshore waters, a distinctive path for environmental judicial protection is emerging in Guangxi.

The region's courts are not simply applying national laws mechanically; they are taking into account local conditions, unique ecosystems, economic circumstances and community needs.







Left: Local court officials check the condition of ecological restoration at an estuary nature reserve in Fangchenggang on July 8. WU HUANGHUI / FOR CHINA DAILY **Middle:** Court officials provide legal education about mangroves to a visitor at a park in Fangchenggang. TAN YUANRONG / FOR CHINA DAILY **Right:** Local court officials plant mangroves in the city's Gangkou district on March 7. WU HUANGHUI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:23 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:23 PM

TOP NEWS

Electricity: Heat, AI land on the same wires

From page 1

State Grid Corporation of China invested a record 650 billion yuan ($96.33 billion) last year.

The new five-year plan calls for more than 5 trillion yuan of grid investment through 2030, including 15 new ultra-high-voltage corridors carrying wind and solar power from the western deserts to the eastern coast.

The United States and Europe are taking a slower, market-driven path. The strain shows. The International Energy Agency counts more than 2,500 gigawatts of projects stalled in grid-connection queues worldwide. Global grid investment runs about $400 billion a year; the IEA says it must grow by half again by 2030 just to keep pace.

Generation has raced ahead. The wires have not.

And the heat is only the first wave. The second is already arriving: artificial intelligence. Data centers consumed roughly 485 terawatt-hours globally in 2025 and are on track to approach 950 by 2030. Electricity demand from AI-focused facilities alone grew 50 percent last year. The two pressures now land on the same wires, in the same summers.

Three great experiments are running at once. China is testing whether centralized planning can build transmission fast enough to carry a renewable buildout of unprecedented scale. The US is testing whether markets can reprice reliability quickly enough to serve an AI boom nobody scheduled. Europe is testing whether interconnected national grids can hold together under stress — a question made vivid by the April 2025 Iberian blackout, when an overvoltage-driven cascade darkened two countries in minutes.

Each experiment will teach the others. None can afford to fail alone.

What should we do? The engineering answers are known and unglamorous. Build transmission before it is needed, not after. Put sensing and automated protection deep into distribution networks, where most outages begin. Treat demand flexibility — the ability of data centers, factories and buildings to shift their load — as a resource equal to any power plant. Train the workforce; the IEA warns that people and supply chains, not technology, are the tightest constraints. And share what we learn across borders, because heat ignores them, and electrons obey physics, not politics.

It also means remembering what a grid is for. A grid is not a market abstraction or a policy instrument. It is the quiet machine beneath every hospital ventilator, every water pump, every fan turning in an elderly person's room in Yangsan or Yeongdeungpo in South Korea. When engineers argue about transmission capacity and reserve margins, the real subject is whether ordinary people can trust the wall socket.

Repair is a decision. I trust it because I have watched it happen, in power systems and elsewhere: the deliberate, unheroic choice to strengthen what holds rather than argue about what failed.

Laozi (Lao Tzu) wrote: "Do the difficult things while they are easy, and do the great things while they are small." The grid taught me the same lesson in a different language. The time to strengthen the foundation is before the weight arrives.

This summer, the weight arrived.

The author is a professor emeritus at the University of Minnesota and a Fellow of IEEE and ASME. In 1998, at the Electric Power Research Institute, he created, funded and led the research consortium that developed the smart, self-healing grid. He is widely recognized as the "father of the smart grid". The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Enjoying victory



KSG team members hold aloft the trophy after winning the grand final of the *Honor of Kings* game during the Esports World Cup, in Paris, France, on Saturday. Chinese teams AG.AL and KSG vied for the top slot in the *Honor of Kings* final. More than 2,000 players and 200 clubs from over 100 countries and regions are competing in 24 games at the event, which will conclude on Aug 23. WU HUIWO / XINHUA

Japan urged to uphold nuclear principles

By **HOU JUNJIE** in Nagasaki, Japan
houjunjie@chinadaily.com.cn

Inside
Editorial, **page 6**

Nagasaki marked the 81st anniversary of the atomic bombing by the United States with a memorial ceremony at the city's Peace Park on Sunday, as people from across Japan renewed calls for the government to uphold its Three Non-Nuclear Principles and face up to its history of wartime aggression.

A moment of silence was observed at 11:02 am, marking the time of the bombing. Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi then delivered a speech, reiterating that Japan "is upholding" the Three Non-Nuclear Principles, days after a similar address in Hiroshima.

She also said that Japan would uphold its pledge to make Nagasaki the last place to suffer an atomic bombing and fulfill its mission as the only country to have suffered atomic bombings in war.

However, unlike her predecessors — who largely vowed at atomic bombing memorial ceremonies in recent years that Japan would continue to uphold the three principles, Takaichi simply outlined the government's current stance, stopping short of offering any firm pledge about the future.

Brief heckling was heard from the crowd before Takaichi delivered her speech. Her ambiguous stance has drawn strong reactions in Japan.

Hakuzan Atsuhito, a local government employee in Yokosuka, south of Tokyo, traveled to Nagasaki and questioned Takaichi's claim that her government is upholding the Three Non-Nuclear Principles.

He said that the ongoing moves in Japan to revise the pacifist Constitution and the country's three key security documents are dangerous and risk leading the country in the wrong direction.

Since December last year, the Nagasaki and Hiroshima prefectural assemblies and the Hiroshima city assembly have unanimously called for the Three Non-Nuclear Principles to be upheld. By mid-July, 82 local assemblies across 25 prefectures had made similar calls or sought to enshrine the principles in law, according to Japanese news agency Kyodo News.

A broader trend in Japan of avoiding facing up to its history of wartime aggression is raising deep concerns.

Nagasaki Mayor Shiro Suzuki noted in his speech at the memorial ceremony that the atomic bomb was dropped on the city by a US military aircraft, but did not mention Japan's wartime aggression in explaining the historical context of the bombing.

Tashiro, who declined to give her full name, traveled from Saitama Prefecture with her fourth-grade daughter to attend the memorial ceremony. She told China Daily that her daughter had learned little at school about Japan's wartime history or even about the atomic bombing.

Tashiro, whose husband is Swedish, said that her family has found that history is taught differently across countries. "History education in Japan is often presented mainly from Japan's own perspective, focusing more on the Japanese side of the story," she said.

She hopes her daughter can learn about history more broadly, including perspectives from other countries.

Kumiko Haba, distinguished professor at Josai International University in Tokyo, told China Daily that the changes in government education policy have played a major role in shaping how younger generations in Japan view the country's wartime past.

"Schools have focused on Japan's suffering during the war, while barely teaching young people about the suffering Japan inflicted on other countries," she said.

On July 28, the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum confirmed a proposed change in its revamped exhibition, referring to the Nanjing Massacre as the "Nanjing Incident".

The wording will be finalized by the end of August, with the revamped exhibition scheduled for completion in March 2027.

The planned change has sparked controversy. In late June, a Nagasaki civic group petitioned the city to retain Nanjing Massacre, arguing that "Nanjing Incident" fails to convey the brutality of what happened and could downplay Japan's wartime aggression.

British newspaper The Times has also reported on the change, citing the museum's planned revision as an example of a broader trend of historical revisionism in Japanese politics.

Noodles: Shanghai's sidewalk eateries go viral

From page 1

Asked about the secret behind the noodles' enduring appeal, Xue credited the recipe, which has remained unchanged.

The signature sesame paste is a finely balanced blend of peanut and sesame, leaving a delicate, sweet finish on the palate. The noodles themselves are made from alkaline-rich flour, delivering a springy bite and a rich, wheaty aroma.

Another bestseller, the pork chop, features a soy sauce simmered according to a time-honored recipe, complemented by chili oil.

Originally a cafe serving only beverages, the shop later pivoted to budget-friendly noodles and beef soup, rebranding as Wei Xiang Zhai, which translates literally as "good taste".

For many Shanghai residents, Wei Xiang Zhai is far more than a noodle joint. "People sit shoulder to shoulder, chatting in Shanghainese — especially empty-nesters who relish the chance to speak their dialect," Xue said.

Alyona Semchuk, a Russian visitor, stumbled upon Wei Xiang Zhai on Instagram. "I love Shanghai cuisine," she said. "The noodles with this peanut sauce are amazing."

Beyond this humble noodle shop, a growing number of Shanghai eateries are captivating tourists from around the world.

Wu You Xian, a *xiaolongbao* (soup dumpling) shop renowned for its crab roe dumplings, raised the bar in 2025 by becoming the first of its kind in Shanghai to earn a Michelin star.

Founder Chen Lina said the international interest surged after the star was retained this year.

Today, 80 percent of Wu You Xian's daily customers are foreigners. Chen has equipped every employee with a translation device, and the shop's walls are plastered with photos of visitors from around the world.

"I put my heart into making *xiaolongbao*, that's what keeps customers coming back," Chen said. "They call me the most affordable Michelin-starred spot."

These unassuming sidewalk eateries are taking off with international visitors through social media.

"We're just glad that people come to savor our Shanghai dishes," said Xue, the shift manager.

Li Junfeng and Chen Tianyi in Shanghai contributed to this story.

Ties: Collaboration has moved into emerging sectors

From page 1

Such projects have "greatly facilitated local travel and daily commutes, injected robust momentum into industrialization and urbanization, and constantly improved people's well-being", said Xiang Yuanzheng, an official with the Chinese Commerce Ministry's European Department.

Over the years, bilateral cooperation has moved beyond traditional fields such as mining and logistics into emerging sectors. Contemporary Amperex Technology and other Chinese battery makers have set up plants in Hungary, Slovakia and Poland, while Slovenian pharmaceutical company Krka Group has launched a joint venture with Ningbo Menovo Pharmaceutical in East China's Zhejiang province.

From 2012 to 2025, trade between China and the CEECs registered an average annual growth rate of over 8 percent, hitting a record high of 1.09 trillion yuan ($161.5 billion) in 2025. In the first half of this year, two-way trade volume reached 580.1 billion yuan, up 11 percent year-on-year, according to the General Administration of Customs.

For Petre Danci, a Romanian who studied at Capital University of Economics and Business in Beijing from 2011 to 2018, China's modernization drive delivers inclusive benefits to other countries, an approach he believes is underpinned by the country's deep-rooted commitment to openness, mutual benefit and shared progress.

Citing the four great inventions of ancient China — papermaking, printing, the compass and gunpowder — Danci said that none of these transformative innovations changed the world by staying inside China. "They changed the world because they moved, because they were shared, because people who never met the inventors gained access to the tools and used them to build something entirely new," he said.

During his years in China, Danci witnessed the country's modernization drive firsthand, epitomized by the rise of China's "new four great inventions" — high-speed rail, mobile payments, bike-sharing and e-commerce.

Across the Eurasian region, this deepening connection has taken tangible shape. Irena Lukajic Korica, an adviser to the Office of the Serb Member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, said her country is among the top recipients of Chinese-backed infrastructure and energy projects in Central and Eastern Europe, with the total value of these projects reaching nearly 2 billion euros.

Korica said young people in her country embrace the joint pursuit of modernization of China and the CEECs as opportunities for mutual learning, cooperation and shared development. "They believe deeper cooperation can unlock new prospects in areas such as digital transformation, green energy, research and tourism," she said.

Michal Bartek, a member of the Slovak Parliament and deputy governor of Slovakia's Trencin region, said that every time he visits China, he brings back something unique. "China is really inspirational for us," he said.

Contact the writers at jihaisheng@chinadaily.com.cn

Domestic travel shows strong growth in H1

Tourism becoming a resilient and dependable pillar of nation's economy

By **ZOU SHUO**
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

Domestic tourism in China hit record highs in the first half of this year, with both trips and spending posting simultaneous growth — a performance experts said underscores cultural and tourism consumption as one of the most resilient and dependable pillars of the nation's economy.

Domestic residents made 3.46 billion trips in the January-June period, up 5.4 percent year-on-year, with an increase of 178 million trips compared with the same period last year. Total spending reached 3.21 trillion yuan ($475.7 billion), up 2 percent from a year earlier, according to data released on Friday by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

Urban residents accounted for 2.59 billion trips, up 5.8 percent year-on-year, while rural residents made 869 million trips, a 4.3 percent increase. Quarter-by-quarter, trips reached 1.9 billion in the first quarter, up 6 percent, and 1.56 billion in the second quarter, up 4.8 percent.

Urban residents spent 2.66 trillion yuan, up 2.2 percent, while rural residents spent 560 billion yuan, up 0.6 percent, in the first half of the year.

Yin Ping, a professor at Beijing Jiaotong University's School of Economics and Management, said that the growth of both trips and spending showed that the cultural and tourism industry has entered a new stage of high-quality development across the board, fully demonstrating the sector's health and sustainability as a pillar of the national economy.

Deng Ning, professor and vice-dean at Beijing International Studies University's School of Tourism Sciences, said the growth signaled a recovery in per capita tourism consumption, marking a transition from recovery-driven growth to quality-driven growth.

It showed that tourists are willing to pay more for better experiences, dispelling earlier concerns about "stingy travel" or "budget tourism", he said.

Meanwhile, tourism is transitioning from a discretionary expense to a lifestyle necessity, he said. With 3.46 billion trips, the average Chinese resident traveled more than twice in the first half of the year. Weekend mini-vacations, city walks and trips for concerts or sports events have become an integral part of daily life, he said.

Moreover, from soccer tournaments to museum enthusiasm and immersive light-and-shadow exhibitions, new offerings are creating new demand, Deng added.

The 869 million trips made by rural residents represented one of the most strategically significant factors in the first half, according to Deng.

He identified three concurrent patterns of the tourism market shifting from urban to rural areas: tourists from first- and second-tier cities flowing to counties and villages for affordability and relaxation; tourism consumption being activated among residents in lower-tier cities and rural areas; and inbound tourists expanding beyond gateway cities to second- and third-tier destinations.

Data from online travel platform Tuniu showed that trips by tourists from third-tier and below cities grew more than 40 percent year-on-year in the first half, while trips from fifth-tier and county-level cities surged over 58 percent.

Inbound tourism also gained significant momentum. Foreign visitor arrivals reached 22.91 million in the first half, up 20.4 percent year-on-year, with visa-free entries accounting for 77.7 percent of the total, according to the National Immigration Administration.

Data from travel platform Qunar showed that inbound flight bookings covered 160 domestic cities, with Yiwu in Zhejiang province — the "world's small commodities capital" — seeing a 62 percent surge in flight bookings by foreign travelers.

Inbound visitors came from 575 cities across 158 countries and regions, with 11 new countries added compared with the same period last year.

Yin attributed the inbound recovery to continued visa facilitation, better products and services, and an improved travel environment, noting that it also pressured the industry to upgrade and align fully with global best practices.

Healing through sports



Palestinian children who lost limbs during the conflict in the region take part in a soccer training session organized by HEAL Palestine, a nonprofit United States-registered organization, in Gaza City, on Saturday. The training aims to provide the children with a space for sports and recreation while offering psychological support amid the difficult conditions in the Gaza Strip. IMAGO / APAIMAGES

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:23 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:23 PM

WORLD IN FOCUS







Clockwise from top left: Stefano, a mussel farmer, lifts mussels from the water at his farm in Po River Delta, Italy, on July 29. A view of the Sacca di Scardovari, a large coastal lagoon, is seen from inside a traditional fishermen's hut on July 29 in Po River Delta. Two fishermen catch blue crabs in the Sacca di Scardovari in June. **Below:** An oyster farm in the Sacca di Scardovari on July 29, where some producers have shifted to oyster farming in recent years because oysters are considered more resilient to higher water temperatures. PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES

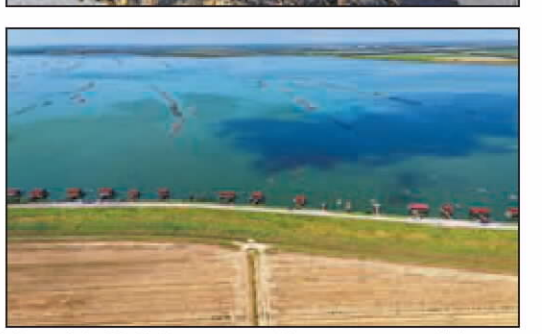


CULINARY CATASTROPHE

Extreme heat in Italy threatens shellfish needed for prized pasta dishes







Clockwise from left: Farmers clean oysters inside a traditional fishermen's hut in the Sacca di Scardovari lagoon at Po River Delta, Italy, on July 29. Stefano, a mussel farmer, opens and shows a dead mussel at his farm in the Sacca di Scardovari on July 29. An aerial view shows the traditional fishermen's huts and the lagoon landscape in the Sacca di Scardovari on July 29.

An intense summer heat wave sweeping across southern Europe is threatening one of Italy's best-known culinary traditions, killing off clams and mussels in the lagoons of the Po River Delta and putting at risk the ingredients behind some of the country's most iconic seafood pasta dishes.

In the shallow brackish lagoons at the mouth of the Po River, water temperatures have risen to around 32 C, turning them into what local producers describe as "gigantic cooking pots", The Telegraph reported.

The extreme heat has proved fatal for shellfish, with widespread mortality reported among clams and mussels.

The losses have raised concerns for spaghetti *alle vongole*, a cherished Italian dish made with clams, olive oil, garlic and parsley, as well as spaghetti *allo scoglio*, another prized pasta traditionally prepared with clams, mussels and other shellfish.

In the Sacca di Goro lagoon, at the mouth of the Po River, up to 90 percent of clams have died, according to Confcooperative Agroalimentare e Pesca, Italy's farming and fishing cooperative association.

The shellfish die-off is unfolding against the backdrop of mounting environmental pressures across the Po Valley, one of Europe's most intensively cultivated and densely populated regions.

Shaped by the Po River, known in ancient times as the Padus, the region supports agriculture, livestock farming, irrigation networks, food industries, cities and distribution systems that together generate major outputs of rice, maize, wheat, dairy products and other foods.

Yet the same system faces overlapping pressures. Pollution, shrinking Alpine snow reserves, drought, floods, heat waves, saltwater intrusion and increasingly unstable seasons are disrupting water availability and traditional agricultural calendars.

The shellfish die-off comes as large parts



A thermometer shows the water temperature at 28.5 C on July 29, a level associated with severe thermal stress and an increased risk of mortality for Mediterranean mussels.

of southern Europe have endured weeks of extreme heat. In July, heat waves fueled wildfires across several countries, strained water resources and intensified drought conditions, underscoring the growing impact of rising temperatures on ecosystems and agriculture across the region.

Raising concerns

The heat wave has also sharply reduced the flow of the Po River, allowing salty seawater to advance as far as 18 kilometers inland and raising concerns for agriculture and protected wetlands in the delta, according to Reuters.

At the last point before the Po branches into several channels feeding into the Adriatic Sea, the river's flow has dropped from about 1,000 cubic meters per second to below 300.

The impact has also been severe in the Sacca di Scardovari, a lagoon renowned for premium Mediterranean mussels Cozza di Scardovari PDO. Water temperatures there have reached over 30 C, reducing dissolved oxygen, accelerating algal growth and causing widespread mussel mortality in areas with limited water exchange.

Cooperatives of the lagoon have reported the sudden loss of around 100 metric tons of PDO mussels, attributing the die-off to extreme heat, oxygen depletion and restricted water exchange after years of disruption caused by the invasive Atlantic blue crab.

The situation has been worsened by algal proliferation and anti-blue crab barriers that restrict water renewal within the lagoon.

According to estimates by Confcooperative Agroalimentare e Pesca, global warming is causing direct damage of around 200 million euros ($230 million) a year to Italy's professional fishing industry, with shellfish farming bearing the greatest impact.

CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:23 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:23 PM

WORLD

20,000 in Canada flee amid wildfire

VICTORIA, Canada — Canadian officials declared a state of emergency on Saturday after a fast-moving wildfire forced the overnight evacuation of more than 20,000 people in the western province of British Columbia.

Winds fanned the Bald Range wildfire, causing it to grow rapidly late on Friday, pushing flames into the Summerland area and affecting communities throughout the surrounding valleys.

"We know there have been significant losses of homes and property. We also know that some people became trapped as conditions changed quickly," British Columbia Premier David Eby said in a statement on Saturday.

"Air evacuations are underway for people who remain isolated behind the fire perimeter," Eby said.

Kelly Greene, the province's Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness, declared a state of emergency.

CTV News reported more than 50 people had to be airlifted out of the community of Faulder as flames advanced.

Prime Minister Mark Carney posted his gratitude to firefighters and first responders on X, thanking them for "working tirelessly to keep people safe".

"The federal government stands ready to help and support the government of British Columbia in these efforts. I'm keeping everyone forced from their homes in my thoughts and hoping they can return safely soon," Carney said.

The fire was first reported on Friday evening, and Eby warned on Saturday it "remains extremely active and significant challenges remain".



Greg Krauter, who was forced to evacuate his Summerland property with his seven goats due to the Bald Range wildfire, checks on some of them in the back of his truck, in Penticton, British Columbia, on Saturday. DARRYL DYCK VIA AP

Meanwhile in the US, two people were killed when a helicopter crashed while supporting firefighting efforts on a massive wildfire in central Utah, authorities confirmed on Saturday, as crews continued to battle one of the state's largest wildfires of the year and assess when responders could safely reach the remote crash site.

The US National Interagency Fire Center said the helicopter under contract with the US Forest Service was involved in an accident on the Widemouth 2 Fire, killing the pilot and one crew member. Their names have not been released.

The Federal Aviation Administration said the aircraft, a Sikorsky S-64, crashed near Richfield at about 10 am on Friday.

The National Transportation Safety Board is leading the investigation. Preliminary information indicated the helicopter went down in remote terrain under unknown circumstances during firefighting operations.

Local officials said fire activity and rugged terrain initially prevented crews from reaching the wreckage. Fire officials said the crash also ignited new flames, further complicating access and raising safety concerns for rescuers.

El Nino impact

El Nino is a naturally occurring climate phenomenon that brings worldwide changes in winds, air pressure and rainfall patterns. It usually causes drier conditions in Southeast Asia and India.

Indonesian authorities have closed access to a national park on Java island as firefighters battle a wildfire that has been raging there for nearly a week.

The blaze has razed 176 hectares since it broke out on Monday in the Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park, near the popular East Java tourist destination of Mount Bromo, a disaster official said.

Authorities barred access for visitors late Saturday until further notice.

No injuries or property destruction have been reported, said National Agency for Disaster Countermeasure spokesman Abdul Muhari.

Two water-bombing helicopters have been deployed to douse the flames in areas difficult for firefighters to reach due to steep slopes and strong winds, he said in a statement on Sunday.

"These conditions make air operations important to reach areas that cannot be accessed optimally by land," the official said.

A blaze destroyed more than 500 hectares of land on Mount Bromo in 2023 when a couple lit a flare during a prewedding photo shoot.

AGENCIES—XINHUA

Briefly

UNITED STATES

Biden's cancer has spread, son says

Former US president Joe Biden's cancer has metastasized further, according to his son Hunter Biden, who shared the update in a recent interview with the BBC. In May 2025, just four months after he left office as the oldest sitting president, the elder Biden revealed he had been diagnosed with an aggressive form of prostate cancer that had spread to his bones. He subsequently began treatment, including radiation and hormone therapy, which the 83-year-old described as going "really well" last month, during an announcement of his upcoming memoir.

Senate OKs bill to avoid shutdown

The US Senate voted early on Saturday to approve a short-term measure aimed at avoiding a federal government shutdown before the November midterm election. The Senate voted 90-6 to approve the bill that would fund most federal government operations at current levels through Dec 11. The bill includes a variety of exceptions that senators negotiated with the White House. It was unclear whether the bill could pass the House, though lawmakers there are also eager to avoid a shutdown fight before the Nov 3 congressional election.

ISRAEL

PM rejects Trump's 15-point plan for Gaza

Israel has rejected US President Donald Trump's Board of Peace 15-point plan for Gaza, and will not withdraw until Hamas fully disarms, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Sunday. Trump announced last month that there had been a breakthrough in his plan to end the war, which both Israel and Hamas agreed to last year and which started with the ceasefire. Trump said that Hamas, which ruled Gaza for nearly two decades before carrying out the Oct 7, 2023, attack, had agreed to lay down its weapons.

XINHUA—AGENCIES

Soy trade drives China-US farm ties

By **LIA ZHU** in Chicago, Illinois
liazhu@chinadailyusa.com

Soybeans, carried as ballast on the return voyage from Asia to America some 200 years ago, have become a ballast of China-US agricultural trade.

Susan Thornton, former acting US assistant secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, offered the historical footnote to a room where "ballast" had already become the word of the day.

"So that kind of makes this word ballast even more, I think, essential for our US-China agricultural trade," she told a gathering, organized by the US Soybean Export Council, or USSEC, during its annual Soy Connext conference held in Chicago on Friday.

The event drew US and Chinese officials, US soy industry leaders, and a Chinese delegation of traders and representatives from oil crushing, food and feed companies.

Chinese Consul General in Chicago Wang Baodong said soybeans have served for many years "as an important bridge in China-US agricultural cooperation, and the soybean trade has been a ballast of the broader part for economic and trade relationship".

China is home to the world's largest market for agricultural products, he noted, and high-quality US soybeans help meet rising demand from Chinese consumers while generating income and supporting jobs in US farm communities.

Those were the good old days, Wang said, recalling that 2022 marked the highest level ever for US agricultural and soybean exports to China. The good old days, he added, came to an abrupt halt last year.

"The US government launched the tariff and trade war against China, and China was compelled to take necessary countermeasures, and as a result, soybean trade between our two countries was disrupted for a period of time, and American farmers became a victim and bore much of the cost, which was never an outcome China wished to see," he said.

"There are no winners in tariff and trade wars," Wang said. "As we see it, equality, mutual respect, and mutual benefit remain the right way for China and the US to get along with each other and achieve win-win cooperation."

Wang also pointed to the opportunity for US soy farmers. This year marks the beginning of China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, he said, with the country advancing high-quality development and high-standard opening-up while continuing to improve its business and investment environment.

As living standards keep rising, he said, Chinese demand for agricultural products from around the world, including the United States, will continue to grow. The prospects for high-quality US soybean exports to China, in his view, remain promising.

Cao Derong, president of the China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Foodstuffs, Native Produce and Animal By-Products, or CFNA, echoed the view. "Economic and trade relations should continue to serve as the ballast and propeller of China-US relations, not as barriers or flashpoints," Cao said in a video message.

The CFNA remains committed to maintaining and strengthening exchanges between the Chinese and US soybean sectors, Cao said.

He said the chamber this year hosted a visiting US soybean association delegation as well as representatives from the Indiana Soybean Alliance, and said he hoped to see dialogue between the two sides deepen further.

Mike McCranie, chair of the USSEC, has watched that relationship grow alongside his own career. He first visited China in 1982 and raised his first soybeans 40 years ago.

"It has changed a lot since then. I have been to China five times, developing great relationships. I really value those relationships," he said.

Thornton described the trade as a "textbook case" of two economies growing into each other.

US soybean yields have skyrocketed in recent decades on the back of technology and precision agriculture, she said, and that leap coincided with China's dramatic rise in living standards and a growing appetite for pork and poultry, which in turn drove the demand for livestock feed.

The United States and China operate two of the most complex food systems in the world, and she described them as highly complementary.

As major producers, consumers and traders of agricultural products, the two countries share a responsibility to ensure the global food supply remains stable, sustainable, high-quality and abundant, she said.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily

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

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1889

Editor's note: *Amid shifting global geopolitics in recent decades, the trans-Atlantic bond is being reshaped. China Daily will present a special series to examine these shifts and their long-term implications.*

Trans-Atlantic relationship reveals cracks

Divisions between US, Europe over defense burdens put strain on alliance

By **LIU JIANQIAO**
liujianqiao@chinadaily.com.cn

CROSS CURRENTS

The trans-Atlantic alliance is facing growing uncertainty and increasingly pressing defense and security-centric challenges in recent years. While Washington has doubled down on its "America First" policy, it has simultaneously demanded that Europe shoulder greater defense responsibilities and called into question the sovereign interests and security of its European allies, analysts said.

Divisions between the United States and Europe over defense burdens, security guarantees and collective defense have hit the headlines from time to time, putting severe strain on the alliance formed after World War II, they said.

By seeking to shift more of the financial and defense-related burdens onto its European allies while reevaluating its own security commitments, the US is fueling growing doubts in Europe over the credibility of its security guarantees and the future of the NATO alliance, even as NATO's institutional framework remains intact, they said.

In a recent case, US President Donald Trump reiterated on July 31 that he had not given up on his ambition to bring Greenland under US control, predicting in an interview with Real America's Voice News that the Arctic island would come under US "operational control" before the end of his term.

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said at last month's NATO summit in Ankara that her nation was ready to defend every inch of territory in the military alliance, "including our own".

Zhao Jizhou, associate research fellow at the Institute of European Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and board member of the Chinese Society of World Politics Studies, said the US push to annex Greenland has exposed deep cracks in NATO's principle of collective defense, while further eroding the mutual trust that underpins the alliance.

"Article 5 of the NATO treaty enshrines the principle of collective defense, while Article 4 calls for consultations when the territorial integrity, political independence or security of a member state is threatened. Yet, the US, as NATO's most powerful member, has made territorial claims over fellow member Denmark, undermining the political foundation of mutual trust and solidarity within the alliance," Zhao said.

If a NATO member's territorial claims against another member are effectively "legitimized", the moral and political foundations of the trans-Atlantic alliance as a collective defense organization could be severely weakened, if not fundamentally undermined, he said.

> "At its core, the trans-Atlantic defense relationship is characterized by a highly asymmetrical distribution of power, with the United States playing the dominant role."
>
> **Gao Jian,** director of the European Think Tank Research Center at Shanghai International Studies University

Rules-based order eroded

"It undermines the authority of international law, erodes the post-war rules-based international order and lays bare the colonialist logic that 'might makes right'," he said.

In recent years, the US has repeatedly urged NATO members to boost their defense spending and assume greater responsibility for Europe's own security. At the NATO summit in Ankara in July, Trump urged the members to meet the alliance's 5 percent of GDP defense spending target, arguing that European allies had long relied too heavily on the US for their security.

The US president has repeatedly threatened to withdraw from NATO if member states fail to meet their spending commitments. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has also linked higher defense spending by allies to faster access to US-made weapons, according to Politico, which said the US is "turning NATO into a cash machine".

"The move exposes Washington's bullying logic of turning NATO, a trans-Atlantic collective security alliance, into a vehicle for advancing US commercial interests. For European countries, this amounts to a double burden, putting them under both financial pressure and institutional pressure within the alliance," Zhao said.

"At its core, the trans-Atlantic defense relationship is characterized by a highly asymmetrical distribution of power, with the United States playing the dominant role," said Gao Jian, director of the European Think Tank Research Center at Shanghai International Studies University.

Within NATO, the sovereignty of smaller member states risks becoming conditional, with their interests subordinated to the security priorities and geopolitical strategies of major powers, namely the US, he said.

"Such a dynamic bears the hallmarks of neo-imperialism, reducing European allies to strategic dependents that can be pressured, traded off or even sacrificed at will, while running counter to the fundamental principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and noninterference in internal affairs," Gao said.

Diverging threat perceptions and security priorities among NATO members are likely to deepen divisions within the alliance, making consensus more difficult to achieve and prompting adjustments to the trans-Atlantic security framework, experts said.

"While the US is increasingly focused on global strategic competition and preserving its hegemonic position, Europe is more concerned with its immediate security needs and regional stability. The widening gap in their threat perceptions and strategic priorities is making it increasingly difficult for Washington and its European allies to maintain effective strategic coordination," Zhao said.

He said the US favors unilateral action and a more pragmatic approach to crisis management, while Europe places greater emphasis on multilateralism, consultation and negotiation. Such differences are likely to create growing friction over NATO decision-making and make it more difficult for the alliance to forge a unified response to future crises.

"In Washington's eyes, the distinction between allies and rivals has become increasingly blurred, while Europe is increasingly treated as a source of strategic and economic interests to be leveraged when convenient and sacrificed when necessary," Gao said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:23 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:23 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Manufacturing upgrading generates new growth momentum for economy

Against a backdrop of rising protectionism, geopolitical tensions and sluggish growth in many Western economies, China's 4.7 percent GDP growth in the first half of 2026 can reasonably be described as a steady performance. It demonstrates considerable resilience in an increasingly uncertain global environment — a resilience attributable to the transition of the growth model to technological innovation, industrial upgrading and domestic demand as the drivers.

Highlighting the improving demand, China's consumer price index rose 0.5 percent year-on-year in July, while the core consumer prices, excluding volatile food and energy, climbed 0.9 percent. Summer tourism and big-ticket spending have helped broaden the consumption recovery. The producer price index also rose 3.5 percent year-on-year in July.

While some indicators softened in May and June, capital and resources are increasingly flowing into industries that are likely to define China's next phase of development. Offline consumption payments rebounded 2.2 percent year-on-year in July, while investment in advanced manufacturing surged 73.1 percent. This is investment in tomorrow's economy.

The high-tech sector is becoming the key engine of the Chinese economy. In the first half of 2026, the value-added output of high-tech manufacturing rose 13.3 percent, outpacing overall industrial growth. Production of industrial robots and lithium-ion batteries maintained double-digit expansion. Developments in artificial intelligence and semiconductors are particularly striking. AI patent authorizations surged 60 percent year-on-year in July, while China's intelligent computing capacity has nearly tripled from a year earlier. Domestic large language models have also surpassed 10 billion downloads globally. Activity indices for semiconductors, new materials and digital intelligence all posted strong gains, signaling that enterprises in these sectors remain highly dynamic.

The global debate is no longer about whether Chinese technology will be influential; it already is. Chinese companies are becoming major players across many sectors where global demand is growing rapidly — such as electric vehicles, batteries, solar panels and advanced manufacturing systems. The country is making the transition from being the world's manufacturing base to an innovation center, injecting fresh momentum into global innovation.

While the average surveyed urban unemployment rate stood at 5.2 percent in the first half, the creation of 6.95 million new urban jobs was broadly aligned with annual targets.

The slowdown in second-quarter GDP growth to 4.3 percent indicates that the transition calls for more forward-looking, systematic and targeted policies. Therefore the policy response is increasingly focused on building new sources of productivity rather than reviving the old ones. The government is placing greater emphasis on new quality productive forces and increased investment in human capital.

The development of the "six networks" — water, power, computing, communications, underground utilities and logistics — reflects an effort to strengthen the infrastructure underpinning a more technologically sophisticated economy. Planned investment in new power grids alone will exceed 5 trillion yuan ($741 billion) during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period. Meanwhile, endeavors to balance high-quality development with high-level security are accelerating, including refining AI governance frameworks and deepening global cooperation on technology standards.

For some developed economies, treating China's technological rise primarily as a "threat" to be contained obscures a more important reality: China's competitive advantages are no longer based simply on cheap labor. They increasingly combine superlarge market scale, rapid industrial deployment, comprehensive supply chains and narrowing technological gaps.

China's imports and exports of goods rose 16.9 percent in the first half of the year. It is now a major trading partner for over 160 countries and regions, with increasingly diversified imports, according to the General Administration of Customs of China — evidence that the country's economic vitality continues to create opportunities for global partners.

China's economy resembles a "steppe horse" capable of galloping on a long journey. It may not be the fastest sprinter at every moment, but its stamina matters. The fundamentals underpinning China's long-term positive economic trajectory remain unchanged. The underlying conditions — solid foundations, multiple advantages, strong resilience and immense potential — remain firmly in place. China is not merely weathering the external uncertainties; it is upgrading its economic structure and growth model for decades ahead.

Militarizing Japan calls for global vigilance

Japan is systematically unraveling its postwar "exclusive defense" framework under the pretext of "external threat", laying the institutional groundwork for the rise of neo-militarism. Its 2026 defense white paper explicitly classifies the military industry as an economic pillar and a growth driver. The last time the Japanese government made such a designation was during the lead-up to and throughout World War II.

Japan's Ministry of Defense plans to request a record-high budget of about 8.9 trillion yen ($56 billion) for fiscal 2027, a figure that could climb to 10 trillion yen once unspecified items are finalized, Japanese media reported on Friday. Although Japan's per capita military spending is already about three times that of China, it continues to grow at a fast pace.

The budget surge is matched by an aggressive escalation of weapons exports. The Sanae Takaichi government is supplying naval vessels to Australia and the Philippines, and Patriot air-defense interceptors back to the United States to replenish stockpiles. Each deal expands Japan's military-industrial complex and normalizes a role the postwar Constitution was designed to prevent.

These are preparations for conflict funded through deficit spending that burdens Japanese households grappling with inflation and stagnant wages. Public opposition to this shift has become increasingly visible.

The same concern applies to the country's nuclear policy. Japan continues to officially uphold its Three Non-Nuclear Principles, but growing government rhetoric on the need to discard them has inevitably raised concerns about the durability of one of the most important postwar restraints on Japan's military posture. The prospect of a nuclear-armed Japan is deeply alarming, given the devastating toll of its past militarism and the nation's failure to reckon honestly with its war crimes — a combination that renders it a serious menace to regional and international security.

A recent survey in Japan found that 76 percent of respondents support upholding the country's Three Non-Nuclear Principles while 77 percent believe Japan should not pursue "nuclear sharing", an arrangement under which the US would station nuclear weapons in Japan.

As Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said, the Takaichi government should listen to the call of the people, fulfill its obligations under international law of not accepting, producing, possessing or proliferating nuclear weapons, stop playing with fire on the issue of nuclear weapons and not repeat the wrong path of miscalculating the historical trend and acting against the people's will for peace.

Japan's decision to treat its neighbors as "threats" while actively deepening ties with NATO reflects a misguided "befriend the distant, confront the near" strategy. This approach is not only diplomatically reckless, it invites outside intervention into the region and ultimately risks backfiring, harming Japan's own interests and regional stability alike.

Presenting regional tensions as justification for Japan's military creates a self-reinforcing cycle: heightened "threat" perceptions justify a military buildup, while Japan's military buildup itself deepens insecurity among neighbors.

Japan's postwar commitment to peace was not merely a domestic policy choice. It was also part of the process through which the country tried to rebuild trust with its neighbors after the suffering caused by its wartime aggression. At the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony on Thursday, Takaichi openly delivered a ridiculous message: Japan will uphold its Three Non-Nuclear Principles before a review. Any neighbor that has experienced the devastation of Japanese militarism understands all too well what this awkward logic really means: Japan is methodically pressing forward with its nuclear weapons agenda.

Japan's historical militarists turned a deaf ear to all appeals for restraint. Today's neo-militarists appear intent on retracing that same disastrous course. The gears of history for Japan are already turning faster, driving the country once more toward the role of a potential source of conflict.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Shi Yu



Opinion Line

'Rainforest ecosystem' makes Shenzhen a cultural beacon

Over the past two years, Shenzhen has emerged as a powerhouse of original cultural productions, ranging from stage plays and films to TV dramas and literary works. This vibrant cultural scene has laid the groundwork for what is now recognized as the city's "rainforest cultural model" — an ecosystem thriving on diversity and symbiosis.

At the forefront of this cultural renaissance is the dance drama *Wing Chun*, a prime example of Shenzhen's ability to creatively transform and innovate traditional Chinese culture. By integrating dance with martial arts, *Wing Chun* conveys the virtues of benevolence and morality. It has given 338 performances across 59 cities globally, setting a record for the number of performances by a Chinese dance drama in Europe. After two well-received shows in the Republic of Korea in July, it will embark on commercial tours in the United States, the United Kingdom, Spain and Saudi Arabia later this year. These tours will further cement its status as "a cultural ambassador" of Shenzhen and a benchmark for Chinese cultural outreach.

Chang Hongji, the lead actor of *Wing Chun* and principal dancer of the Shenzhen Opera and Dance Theater, shared insights from the global tours. "After performing in dozens of countries and regions, we fully understand that inclusive, open and mutually respectful exchanges are essential for Chinese art to gain global recognition. The pluralistic and inclusive core of the 'rainforest model' aligns perfectly with the demands of cross-cultural dialogue we have encountered overseas."

In the film industry, Shenzhen's creative vitality is embodied in productions such as *Dear You* and *Kung Fu Soccer*. The low-budget film *Dear You* resonates with audiences through its portrayal of ordinary people's perseverance during the migration to Southeast Asia.

Grossing over 2 billion yuan ($296.5 million) worldwide, its success underscores the effectiveness of Shenzhen's support for niche productions. Meanwhile, *Kung Fu Soccer*, directed by renowned Hong Kong director Stephen Chow, leverages Shenzhen's technological prowess by integrating motion capture and AI special effects, showcasing the city's film production capabilities.

These artistic achievements have prompted Shenzhen to develop a systematic "rainforest cultural ecosystem" framework. Sun Lili, chairperson of China Wit Media Company, highlights how this ecosystem provides growth opportunities for all. A pioneer in tech-enabled content creation, the company has launched AIGC Super Creation Lab, which produced the AI-generated short drama *Stroke of Genius*, which has amassed over 100 million views worldwide. This exemplifies the city's deep integration of technology and culture.

Beyond blockbuster works, the city continues to refine its cultural ecosystem. The city addresses creative bottlenecks through targeted policies and platforms such as the Pengcheng academy of arts and letters, which explores future literary forms and redefines cultural narratives in the AI era. By advocating "new mass literature" and "urban writing", Shenzhen taps into amateur creators from high-tech sectors, distilling its development logic and telling its stories with greater depth.

Initiatives such as "I Hear China, I Hear You" further enrich Shenzhen's artistic diversity, releasing original compositions that build on its legacy of classic thematic songs. Supported by a robust cultural infrastructure and digital foundation, these efforts reflect a practical summary of Shenzhen's cultural achievements.

As Shenzhen prepares to host the 33rd Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Economic Leaders' Meeting in November, it shines as a beacon of cultural innovation with its unique "rainforest-style cultural ecosystem". Rooted in a rich tapestry of original literary and artistic works, this cultural ecosystem highlights the city's commitment to fostering a diverse and symbiotic cultural environment.

When Shenzhen takes center stage at APEC 2026, its "rainforest cultural ecosystem" will exemplify how China's pilot demonstration zone strengthens cultural confidence and empowers artistic creation with technology. Through high-quality cultural outputs, the city will offer a vivid interpretation of Chinese modernity to partners across the Asia-Pacific and beyond, showcasing a dynamic and inclusive urban civilization.

— CHEN HONG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Meteorological monitoring to be enhanced

Editor's note: *China plans to develop a national comprehensive meteorological observation system during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period. Fang Xiang, director of the China Meteorological Administration's integrated observation department, spoke to Xinhua News Agency about the plan's institutional innovations and practical implementation. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

The new plan lays out a systematic approach to building a robust, intelligent, precise and cross-sector framework to coordinate the monitoring of land, sea, air and space assets. It provides clear guidelines to strengthen disaster prevention and mitigation, while supporting socioeconomic development.

By 2030, China aims to achieve better coordination in meteorological observation across all sectors, with significant advancements in monitoring infrastructure. The plan anticipates that approximately 85 percent of meteorological disasters will be predicted in advance, with improved accuracy in detecting strong convective weather. The lead time for localized severe weather warnings is expected to exceed 50 minutes. Improved data quality, efficient equipment maintenance and stringent quality control can contribute to a forecasted data accuracy rate of 98 percent.

A notable feature of the plan is the "five-unified" mechanism jointly proposed by 14 ministries and four major State-owned enterprises. The mechanism aims to enhance coordination through unified planning, technical standards, data submission, operational specifications and resource sharing. It will address challenges such as fragmented infrastructure, inconsistent standards and insufficient data sharing among observation facilities across various departments and fields.

The plan aims to upgrade the national comprehensive meteorological observation network by enhancing radar and ground-based monitoring facilities in regions prone to torrential rain, flash floods and severe convective weather. It also seeks to enhance vertical atmospheric monitoring capabilities. The upgrading of national climate observatories and atmospheric baseline stations, and the bolstering of multi-sphere monitoring in key ecological zones such as the Qilian Mountains-Hexi Corridor, Northeast China's forest belts, and northern sand-control belts will strengthen the foundation for climate change monitoring.

In specialized areas, meteorological observation will cater to industry and public needs by addressing gaps in agricultural, transportation and inland waterway meteorological data. Additionally, it will establish a low-altitude observation network providing services for the low-altitude economy.

The development of the observation system will help ensure effective data utilization and timely service delivery, enhancing both coordinated and emergency observation capabilities. By leveraging diverse assets such as satellites, radar, unmanned aerial vehicles, ground weather stations and industry monitoring sites, the system will improve coordinated observation of phenomena such as typhoons and convective weather events.

Enhancements in data collection, transmission and processing capabilities will enable smart transformation of observation, ensuring efficient coordination throughout data collection, transmission, quality control and storage. This will ensure data are immediately usable and help provide timely frontline services.

Incorporating high-quality basic observation products, developing new networking products from multiband weather radars and vertical observation systems, and integrating multi-source observations such as wind fields, water vapor and precipitation can build real-time services tailored to different application scenarios and enable the rapid delivery of real-time products to end users. These scenarios include disaster prevention, mitigation and relief, as well as specialized meteorological services.

Looking ahead, relevant authorities across sectors are to coordinate task implementation to ensure tangible results, continuously enhancing capabilities in precise monitoring, accurate forecasting and refined services.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:23 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:23 PM

VIEWS

Aidar Amrebayev

People-centered governance, a philosophy in resonance

During my time in China, I have gained insights that paint a picture of a nation in transformation. Meeting colleagues and local people from different provinces gave me a deeper and more complete understanding of how life is changing there. It's evident how the country's leadership is steadily improving the well-being of its people, and why this focus is the cornerstone of Chinese state policy.

From the perspective of political science, President Xi Jinping's governance principles are visibly driving fundamental improvements in the quality of life for the citizens of this remarkable nation.

As the axiom goes, "Living in a society, one cannot be free from it ..." This fits very well in China, where state policy profoundly enriches the lives of millions of people, making them richer, more diverse, and happier.

While studying the works of the Chinese leader and official government documents, I was especially interested in understanding the fundamental reasons underpinning the government's actions. Why do they resonate so deeply with the people of China? What defines the "art of governance with Chinese characteristics" today?

Since my student days, when I learned about the philosophy of a fair society, I have supported the ideals of a social welfare state. Today, China has succeeded in eradicating absolute poverty.

Visitors to the country admire its transformed social and technological infrastructure, its rejuvenated cities and roads, and its beautiful, well-maintained ecological and tourist areas. Most importantly, the optimism and hope in the eyes of its people convince me that China prioritizes their welfare.

This people-centered approach is the essence of every decision made by the Party and the government, aimed at building socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era. These ideas have deep cultural and philosophical roots in Chinese tradition.

As a philosopher, I appreciate the idea of humanity as the guiding principle in Chinese philosophy, which I believe forms the basis of China's national worldview.

Kazakhstan feels very close to these ideas, especially as our society embraces a vision of a Just Kazakhstan, proposed by President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. I am convinced that his worldview was greatly influenced by Chinese philosophy which he absorbed while studying at the Beijing Language and Culture University and his direct communication with Xi on governance matters.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Global Lens

All state policies are designed to create conditions for the country's prosperity, as well as the well-being and happiness of every citizen.

Tokayev also believes that the government must serve the interests of society and views governance as a way to improve people's lives. This shared philosophy highlights the similarities in how China and Kazakhstan approach state management, as well as the hopes and dreams of ordinary people in the two countries.

Xi has repeatedly emphasized that all state policies aim to improve people's lives, enhance their well-being and ensure their safety. This human-centric approach to governance is the core of Xi's vision of building "socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era".

The human-centric development programs initiated by the Party and the government have become a model of responsible leadership.

Tokayev also applies these principles in Kazakhstan for the benefit of the people.

One important step in this direction was the adoption of Kazakhstan's new Constitution, ratified by voters in a national referendum on March 15 this year.

It symbolizes the people's choice to build a just state for all citizens, a constitutional principle warmly received in China. Following the enactment of the new Constitution, Tokayev made his first official visit to China, sharing his thoughts on Kazakhstan's new model of state-building with Xi.

The Constitution defines Kazakhstan as a democratic, secular, law-based and socially oriented state, and, like China, places the protection of people's lives, rights and freedoms at the center of its governance.

Tokayev recently called for a shift from a paternalistic model of governance toward one that empowers individuals, emphasizing social justice, patriotism, hard work and the development of human potential as the foundation of Kazakhstan's future.

While interacting with students and scientists in China, I gained a deeper understanding of the modern Chinese dream.

During a meeting at a Chinese university, I asked how today's youth view the idea of the Chinese dream and fair governance. The students explained the core idea from various perspectives. The Chinese dream is fundamentally about people living a happy and prosperous life.

All state policies are designed to create conditions for the country's prosperity, as well as the well-being and happiness of every citizen.

In political terms, this is exactly the human-centric policy that Xi puts into practice.

The author is a member of the Council of International Relations under the president of the Republic of Kazakhstan, a member of the Congress of Political Scientists of Kazakhstan and director of the Center for Comparative Political Research under the Institute of Philosophy, Political Science and Religious Studies of the Ministry of Higher Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Rizal Sukma

ASEAN-China ties moving toward strategic depth

China's first official engagement with ASEAN as an institution took place in July 1991 in Kuala Lumpur, when China's then Foreign Minister Qian Qichen attended the opening ceremony of the 24th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting. On that occasion, China expressed its interest in building a cooperative relationship with ASEAN, to which ASEAN responded positively by granting it Consultative Partner status.

In July 1996, ASEAN accorded China full Dialogue Partner status. At the end of the 1990s, ASEAN leaders and the then president Jiang Zemin held their first summit in Malaysia and declared their intention to build a partnership for the 21st century.

That occasion paved the way for deepening the ASEAN-China partnership, a partnership committed to delivering peace and prosperity for people on both sides.

Thirty-five years after establishing dialogue relations between ASEAN and China, both sides have generally made good on that promise of peace and prosperity.

Ties between ASEAN and China have made significant advances, becoming one of the most important pillars of peace and stability in East Asia. For China, ASEAN is an important neighborhood with which it shares common interests in peace, stability and prosperity.

For ASEAN, China is a close neighbor with which the future of the region should be shaped together.

Through close cooperation over the past 35 years, ASEAN and China have laid a solid economic and political-security foundation for deepening ties in the decades ahead.

On the economic front, several key economic agreements, especially the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area (CAFTA), the extraordinary growth of trade between the two sides and China's growing investment in ASEAN, all point to the fact that China's role in ASEAN's economy is of paramount importance for regional states.

Global Lens

Greater understanding of each other's perceptions and views is crucial.

China is now ASEAN's largest trading partner, a major source of foreign investment, and a major driver of technological advancements in regional states. Mutual economic interests have become an important factor binding China and ASEAN into an interdependent relationship.

On the political security front, China has been and remains a strong supporter of ASEAN's norms, principles and role in shaping a peaceful and stable regional order in Southeast Asia.

For example, China was the first dialogue partner that acceded to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC). It is also a strong supporter of ASEAN's centrality in managing regional order and the first to declare its readiness to sign ASEAN's Protocol to the Treaty on a Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone.

ASEAN and China have also worked closely in many ASEAN-centered multilateral platforms.

China's support for and participation in these regional initiatives by ASEAN is essential for bolstering the centrality of ASEAN as a manager of regional order in Southeast Asia.

The remarkable transformation in ASEAN-China relations is not a product of random developments, but a product of hard work on both sides.

It is a product of genuine efforts by the governments and people of ASEAN and China to understand each other, to respect each other, to treat each other as equals, to build on common interests, and to resolve differences in a peaceful manner. It is a product of our shared commitment to working together for peace and prosperity, not only for the people on both sides, but also for the entire region.

As we move forward over the next 35 years and beyond, we must recognize that the partnership between ASEAN and China is now facing a more complex international environment due to uncertainty brought about by the changing nature of international politics.

Within such an uncertain external environment, the partnership between ASEAN and China will require continuous nurturing, close coordination, and more frequent dialogue. That is why, moving forward, we need to continue to strengthen the foundation of ASEAN-China relations.

The key challenge in strengthening ASEAN-China relations is not how to build a relationship free from challenges and problems. The challenge is how to ensure that we are always ready and work fast to address and manage the problems when they arise.

How do we do that? First, we need to understand the nature of possible problems and challenges in our relations.

Greater understanding of each other's perceptions and views is crucial. We must understand each other's standpoints and views on issues of national and regional concern, and we should recognize that we should not expect that our views will be aligned all the time on all issues.

Differences are normal. What matters most is how we approach, respect, and address those differences. Frequent dialogues between ASEAN and China are important for this mutual understanding.

Second, we need to build a mechanism to address problems based on the shared principles of non-confrontation, non-use of force, preference for dialogue and mutual consultation, mutual respect and equality. The current consultation process on a code of conduct for the South China Sea (COC) is a case in point.

Finally, ASEAN and China need to persuade others to join hands in this undertaking of creating a good, peaceful and prosperous East Asia.

It is indeed imperative for ASEAN and China to revive the East Asian community-building process, so that we can start a conversation about what sort of regional order we want to build. For that, we need Japan, Australia, New Zealand and India to be on board as well.

Only by working together can the promise of an Asian Century be fulfilled.

The author is Indonesia's former ambassador to the United Kingdom, Ireland and the International Maritime Organization from 2016 to 2020 and currently a senior fellow at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Tan Zheng

Buyers homing in on advanced modular construction

For most of human history, houses were built where they would stand. Bricks, concrete and steel were transported to a construction site, where workers assembled them piece by piece over months, sometimes years. That is the way the construction industry has worked for centuries.

Now China is rewriting the rules of this traditional model.

Increasingly, what leaves Chinese ports is not only steel, cement or other construction materials, but the entire buildings themselves. Manufactured in factories, packed into standard shipping containers and assembled overseas, modular buildings have become one of China's fastest-growing manufactured exports.

Exports of prefabricated buildings rose from $1.47 billion in 2015 to $4.34 billion in 2025, nearly tripling in value in 10 years. In the first quarter of 2026, exports registered a 45 percent year-on-year growth. Today, Chinese modular buildings are sold in more than 150 countries and regions across the world.

This rapid growth reflects years of investment in something far less visible than the finished houses themselves: the supply chains behind them.

In industrial clusters across Jiangsu, Guangdong and Shandong provinces, manufacturers can source steel structures, insulated wall panels, plumbing systems, electrical wiring, windows, flooring, kitchens and even furniture from nearby suppliers before assembling them into modules that fit neatly inside shipping containers. The result is not just lower costs, but also tighter quality control and shorter production cycles. Even after accounting for tariffs, international shipping and on-site installation, Chinese modular buildings often remain highly competitive.

Interestingly, the concept of prefabricated houses did not originate in China. Modern prefabricated construction emerged in Europe, North America and Japan after World War II, when governments searched for faster ways to address housing shortages.

Landmark projects such as Habitat 67 in Montreal, Canada, embodied the belief that housing could be industrialized without sacrificing quality.

Standardized components, certification systems and professional design codes all took shape in the West long before China entered the field.

What has changed is where the manufacturing capacity is concentrated. While supply chains in many advanced economies were fragmenting, China was doing the opposite by bringing industries together.

Modular construction depends less on a single breakthrough technology than on the ability to coordinate hundreds of suppliers with remarkable efficiency. That is precisely the capability China has painstakingly built over decades.

Today, Chinese modular construction extends far beyond the temporary site offices or simple prefab cabins that many people still associate with this industry. Companies now export worker dormitories, apartment buildings, retirement communities, luxury villas, schools, hospitals and even modular data centers. On international e-commerce platforms, overseas buyers can choose standard designs or request customized layouts based on their own drawings and specifications.

The real advantage of modular construction lies in how it transforms the building process. Traditional construction follows a linear sequence: foundations come first, followed by structural work, utilities, insulation and interior finishing.

Delays at any stage ripple through the project schedule. Modular construction replaces that sequence with parallel production. Structural frames, insulation, electrical systems, plumbing, kitchens and bathrooms are manufactured simultaneously inside factories before final assembly on site. Some units even come fully furnished, complete with furniture, fabrics, and household appliances.

In many ways, the construction site looks more like an assembly line than a workshop. That shift matters because buildings are increasingly becoming manufactured products. Like automobiles, they combine advanced materials, digital design, automation and energy-saving technologies into standardized platforms.

Chinese manufacturers have already incorporated solar power systems, rainwater recycling and energy-efficient materials into many modular homes while investing heavily in overseas certification and local partnerships to meet international standards.

Yet manufacturing a house is only part of delivering a home. Conversations with overseas buyers suggest that the biggest challenges no longer lie in the quality of Chinese products.

They begin after the containers arrive. Local building codes differ, measurement systems vary, installation crews may not be able to read Chinese-language manuals, and post-installation modifications often prove more expensive than expected. Construction is not a single transaction but a long chain that stretches from design and engineering to installation, maintenance and renovation. Weakness at any stage can wipe out the savings achieved in the factory.

That challenge is greater when projects become more sophisticated. A compact modular cabin can be delivered almost like a consumer product. A large family house cannot.

Climate, local regulations, cultural preferences and architectural traditions all shape how people want to live. A home designed for northern China may require significant adaptation before it becomes livable in the Middle East, Southeast Asia or Oceania.

This is why the next stage for China's modular housing industry is not simply exporting more buildings, but exporting the services, design capability and local partnerships needed to make those buildings fit seamlessly into different societies.

Factories can manufacture modules, but they cannot manufacture empathy. The companies that lead the next generation of construction will not necessarily be those that build the cheapest houses. They will be those that make industrialized housing feel local rather than standardized, permanent rather than temporary, and personal rather than mass-produced.

China has already demonstrated its ability to manufacture buildings at scale. The next, and perhaps greater, test is whether it can help redefine not only how the world builds, but ultimately, how people choose to live.

The author is an associate professor at the College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:23 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:23 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

FERENC BANHIDI

Walls and wiring

While the US is building a small yard with high fences, China has opened its AI ecosystem to all



ZHANG YUJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

When Western pundits analyze China's burgeoning artificial intelligence strategy, the default lens is often geopolitical. Following the recent World AI Conference 2026 in Shanghai, headlines in the West framed Beijing's push for open-source models, the establishment of the World AI Cooperation Organization and the rollout of public-good AI tools such as the MAZU meteorological system as a "Trojan horse" for digital hegemony.



But viewing China's global AI outreach solely through a Cold War prism is a profound misunderstanding of how the Chinese economic engine actually works. Strip away the geopolitical rhetoric, and what emerges is not a sudden, state-mandated ideological crusade, but the continuation of a highly sophisticated, battle-tested international business strategy that Chinese enterprises have been perfecting for nearly three decades.

To understand China's AI playbook, one must look back to the telecommunications boom between 1998 and 2008.

At the turn of the millennium, Western telecom giants such as Ericsson and Nokia approached developing nations in Africa, Asia and Latin America with expensive, rigid landline infrastructure models. For many of these nations, the capital expenditure was prohibitive. Then came Huawei and ZTE. Rather than competing on the West's terms, Chinese companies offered flexible, cost-effective GSM mobile networks. More importantly, they didn't just sell equipment; they provided "turnkey" solutions — handling network design, construction, local training and pairing those services with financing from Chinese State-owned banks.

Many Global South countries effectively leapfrogged large-scale fixed-line infrastructure and moved rapidly into the mobile age, and Chinese telecom companies gained substantial market share by offering affordable, adaptable solutions tailored to local needs.

Today, history is rhyming in the realm of AI.

Western AI laboratories, such as OpenAI and Anthropic, are the new Ericssons. They offer premium, closed-garden API services that are prohibitively expensive for startups and governments in the developing world to afford at scale. China, conversely, is offering the AI equivalent of the GSM leapfrog. By championing open-weight models such as Qwen, DeepSeek and Kimi, and pairing them with cloud infrastructure, regional data centers and the pledge of 5,000 AI training opportunities for developing countries under the WAICO framework, China is lowering the barrier to entry. The message to the Global South is clear: countries do not need to spend billions building their own sovereign supercomputers; they can build their digital future on China's open, comparatively accessible infrastructure.

Western skeptics frequently ask: Why give away the "crown jewels" of AI model weights for free? Is this just State-subsidized dumping?

The answer lies in China's domestic internet history — specifically, the legendary e-commerce war between Taobao and eBay in 2003. When eBay charged Chinese merchants listing fees via EachNet, Alibaba's Taobao countered by making basic storefronts entirely free. This "free entry" model drained eBay of its user base, allowing Taobao to achieve total market dominance before eventually monetizing the ecosystem through value-added advertising and premium services.

We are now witnessing the "Taobao Playbook" applied to global AI. Take the pricing strategy of Moonshot's Kimi K3 model for example. The model's weights are free to download for researchers, students and small enterprises. However, if a company uses the model to power a commercial API service and crosses a revenue threshold of $20 million, a paid commercial license is triggered.

This is not charity; it is a strategy to build a broader technological ecosystem. While US companies attempt to harvest immediate, high-margin API revenues (the "eBay model"), Chinese AI companies are using open-weight access to attract developers worldwide and expand the adoption of their technological platforms. If the Global South's digital economy increasingly relies on Chinese foundational models, significant commercial opportunities could emerge in the future.

China's genius lies in "selective adaptation". China rarely adopts Western templates wholesale; it indigenizes them to fit local institutional voids and market realities.

In the AI sector, there has been a globalized adaptation of China's "Triple Helix" university-industry-government model of innovation. In the West, the government often plays a peripheral regulatory role. In China's global AI push, the State provides the diplomatic umbrella, sovereign financing and macro-level trust, while agile private tech companies execute aggressive, market-driven ecosystem plays. It is a combination of State-backed strategic patience with hyper-competitive commercial execution.

For the international community, the implications are significant. Washington's "small yard, high fences" strategy — relying on chip export controls to cage China's AI ambitions — may slow down China's progress at the absolute cutting edge of hardware. But sanctions are unlikely to eliminate the appeal of a business model that aligns with the development needs of much of the Global South.

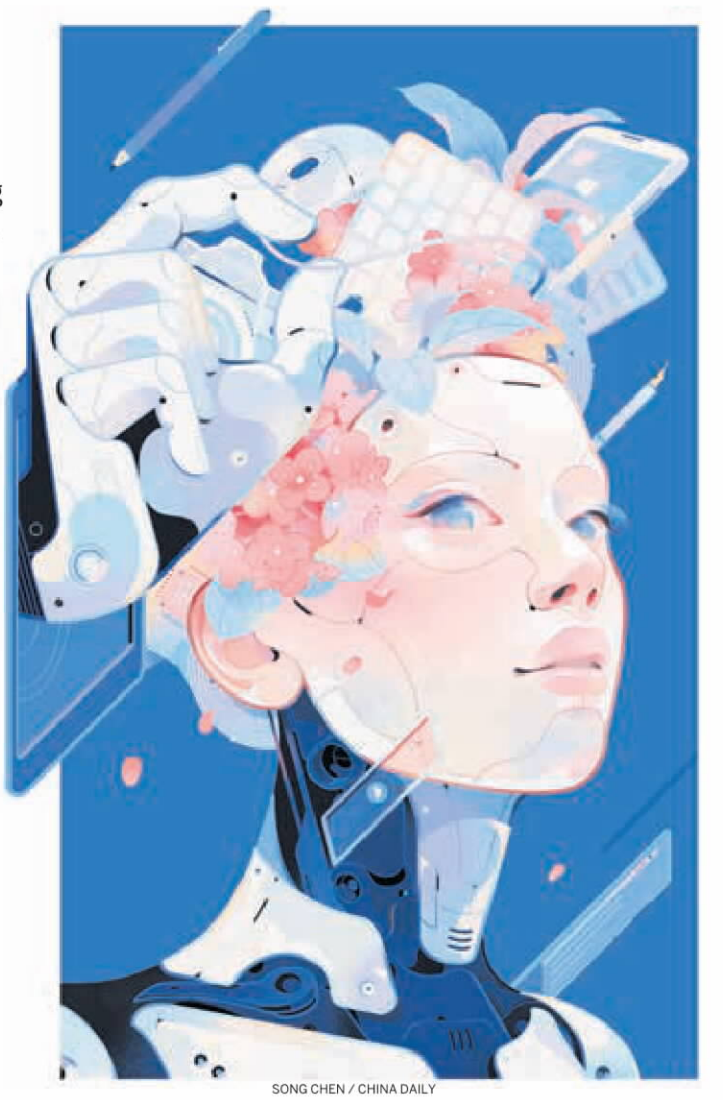
While the West builds walled gardens and restricts access, China is actively wiring the rest of the world into its digital ecosystem. To understand China's AI ambitions, observers must stop reading geopolitical thrillers and start reading business history. The script was written nearly three decades ago in the telecom sector, and it is currently being executed with devastating commercial precision in the age of AI.

The author is a former executive vice-president of the Hungarian Communications Authority, a communications researcher at China-CEE Institute (Budapest) and a professor at Pazmany Peter Catholic University in Budapest, Hungary. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

XIAO QIAN

Beyond the AI race

The next chapter should not be about technological rivalry between leading nations, but about whether they can translate competition into cooperation



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

The newly released Kimi K3 model — an open-weight model from Chinese start-up Moonshot AI — has once again demonstrated how rapidly China's frontier artificial intelligence capabilities are advancing. Together with earlier breakthroughs such as DeepSeek, it has reinforced a growing perception that China is no longer merely catching up with the United States — it has become one of the world's leading AI powers.



Not surprisingly, these developments have intensified debate in Washington. Concerns about the US losing its technological edge have fueled renewed discussions on export controls, semiconductor restrictions, AI infrastructure investment and strengthening alliances around advanced technologies. The global conversation has once again centered on a familiar question: Who is winning the AI race?

Yet that question, while important, is increasingly incomplete. As artificial intelligence becomes one of the defining technologies of the 21st century, the more consequential question is not only who develops the most capable models, but what kind of AI future countries are trying to build. That broader vision was on full display at the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference held in Shanghai this July.

When WAIC was first launched in 2018, it was primarily a technology exhibition showcasing the latest breakthroughs in AI. Today, it has evolved into one of the world's flagship AI conferences, where discussions of technological innovation and global governance receive equal attention. Scientists, researchers, entrepreneurs, policymakers and international organizations gathered alongside participants from both developed and developing countries to debate not only the future of AI technologies but also the future of AI governance. The evolution of WAIC mirrors China's own transformation — from an active participant in the global AI revolution, to an increasingly influential contributor, to a shaper of international discussions on AI.

China's emergence as a rising global AI leader rests on several distinctive strengths. First, it possesses an exceptional ability to translate technological breakthroughs into real-world applications. AI is already transforming manufacturing, healthcare, transportation, finance and education at remarkable speed, creating a continuous feedback loop between innovation and deployment. Second, China has developed one of the world's most dynamic AI ecosystems, integrating universities, research institutes, technology companies, manufacturers, investors and an enormous domestic market. Third, as China's AI capabilities advance, so too has its emphasis on balancing development with safety. Chinese policymakers have increasingly emphasized that AI should remain safe, trustworthy and ultimately beneficial to humanity. President Xi Jinping stated in his keynote speech at the opening ceremony of WAIC 2026 that "China lays great emphasis on safety and security in AI development. With a deep understanding of the trends and logic of AI development, we are continuously improving laws, regulations, policies, mechanisms, application norms, as well as ethical principles to make sure that AI is safe, secure and controllable, and that this fine steed of AI gallops with both speed and stability".

The world is increasingly witnessing two competing visions for the future of AI. One treats AI primarily as a strategic asset, with access to advanced models, semiconductors and computing infrastructure shaped by export controls, alliance networks and geopolitical competition. The other regards AI as a global public good whose benefits should be shared more broadly through open innovation, capacity building and inclusive international governance. The initiatives announced at this year's WAIC — including the establishment of the World AI Cooperation Organization and China's pledge to provide 5,000 AI training opportunities for developing countries — reflect this latter vision. Rather than defining AI solely as a race for technological supremacy, China seeks to broaden access to AI capabilities and ensure that more countries can participate in and benefit from the AI revolution.

This distinction matters because the challenges created by AI are becoming increasingly global. As AI capabilities continue to improve over the next decade, so too will the risks. Frontier AI raises concerns ranging from loss of control and cyberattacks to biological misuse and military instability. At the same time, AI may deepen global inequalities through widening gaps in computing power, talent, infrastructure and access to advanced technologies. None of these challenges can be managed by any single country acting alone. As the world's two leading AI powers, China and the US share a responsibility to cooperate. Effective AI governance will require dialogue on safety standards, crisis communication, risk evaluation and confidence-building measures, even amid strategic competition.

Ultimately, the future of AI should not be judged solely by benchmark rankings or the sophistication of frontier models. It should also be measured by whether AI narrows or widens the global development gap; whether it strengthens or weakens international security; and whether its benefits are shared broadly or concentrated among only a handful of countries. While much of the international debate has focused on frontier AI risks, China has consistently highlighted issues such as digital inequality, capacity building, and equitable access to AI technologies — concerns that resonate strongly across the Global South. China has also emphasized the central role of the United Nations in ensuring that both developed and developing countries have an equal voice in shaping the rules of AI governance.

The next chapter of global AI development should not be defined solely by technological rivalry. It should be defined by whether leading AI nations can translate competition into cooperation and technological progress into global public goods. The success of AI should ultimately be judged not only by how intelligent our machines become, but by whether they enable more countries and more people to share in the opportunities they create. Beyond the AI race, that may prove to be major countries' important contributions to the AI era.

The author is the vice-dean of the Institute of AI International Governance at Tsinghua University. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:23 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:23 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

MNCs plug into China's green synergy

Nation's energy transition a 'blue ocean' of vast global opportunities

By ZHENG XIN
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

China's strong push toward an energy transition and green, low-carbon development is not just reshaping its domestic economy — it is creating massively scaled, entirely new collaborative opportunities for the global market.

For executives at top multinational corporations and heads of international organizations, the policy signals heading into the second half of 2026 are unmistakable, as the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026–30) explicitly proposes accelerating the comprehensive green transformation of economic and social development.

Industry leaders say China is acting as a powerful locomotive, using this mandate to open a "green cooperation door" for global businesses.

By striving to build a clean, low-carbon, safe, and efficient new energy system, the national blueprint provides a sturdy, predictable foundation for multinational companies to further deepen their roots in the Chinese market, they say.

"The policy blueprint laid out for the 15th Five-Year Plan has further bolstered our confidence in China's long-term market prospects," said Karen Yin, president of AkzoNobel China.

Yin noted that the market's steady high-level opening-up allows foreign enterprises to fully tap into these new ecological priorities. "For multinationals like AkzoNobel, our longstanding commitment to the Chinese market underscores a strategic evolution: transitioning from mere investors to dedicated innovation partners."

This transition is being felt across the entire advanced manufacturing spectrum. Xia Fuliang, president of Evonik China, pointed out that the sheer scale of this green mandate is fundamentally altering how foreign capital interacts with the local economy.

"From my perspective, the most compelling evidence is that China is no longer only a large end-market or manufacturing base," Xia said. "It has become an integrated platform where innovation, infrastructure, talent, and industrial ecosystems come together to create opportunities for global companies."

In corporate boardrooms from Europe to Asia, a powerful new paradigm is taking hold. As global economic uncertainties linger, a rising wave of multinational corporations including Evonik, AkzoNobel, BASF, Syensqo, and Everllence, are aggressively doubling down on green investments in China.

By strategically targeting low-carbon technologies, the circular economy, and industrial energy efficiency, they are pushing back against the pessimistic "China Shock 2.0" narrative.

Instead, they are embracing what they call "China Opportunity 2.0". The consensus among these global executives is clear: China's colossal domestic demand for green solutions, coupled with its hyper-efficient industrial ecosystems, provides the perfect crucible to commercialize low-carbon technologies and accelerate technical iterations.

This green transition perfectly embodies the core of this new era — China's development is generating a "blue ocean" of incremental growth, forging a pathway for mutual, cross-border industrial prosperity.

From urban transit and commercial real estate to heavy chemical manufacturing and maritime shipping, the application scenarios for China's green transition are expanding at a breakneck pace. For multinational companies, this translates not only to clearer policy expectations but also to vastly broader commercial horizons.

The physical manifestations of this shift are already visible across the country.

While BASF is aggressively driving the low-carbon operation of its massive Zhanjiang Verbund site through the large-scale procurement of renewable energy, Schneider Electric continues to blanket Chinese enterprises with sophisticated energy management, automation, and digitalization solutions.

Meanwhile, industrial behemoths like Siemens are rapidly expanding their footprint in the Chinese market with advanced solutions in smart electrical systems, green manufacturing, and systemic energy optimization.

Armed with a super-sized domestic market, a complete industrial chain, and endlessly diverse application scenarios, China has quietly transformed into the world's premier proving ground for green technology.

For Evonik, the German specialty chemicals company, this structural shift is highly tangible.

Xia views China as an incubator that forces companies to become faster, more innovative, and inherently more sustainable.

In the first half of 2026 alone, Evonik brought several milestone projects online in China, including a new hydrogen peroxide plant in Leshan, Sichuan province, an expanded specialty amine production facility in Nanjing, and its first AEM technology center dedicated to green hydrogen.

"These projects reflect not only our confidence in China's market potential, but also our belief that China will remain an important source of innovation and transformation for global businesses," Xia said.

This sentiment is echoed throughout the advanced materials sector.

Chen Pu, chief Asia officer of the Belgian specialty chemicals giant Syensqo, noted that the company views the "China opportunity" through highly practical lenses: the sheer size of the market, the velocity of industrial upgrading, and the depth of the local talent pool.

"Demand is shifting toward advanced, more sustainable, and higher-performance solutions," Chen said, highlighting Syensqo's four-decade presence in the country, which now includes five industrial sites and its third-largest global Research and Innovation center in Shanghai.

"We want to capture opportunities in fast-growing trends such as electrification, lightweighting, advanced connectivity, and more sustainable sourcing by innovating locally and working closely with customers."

As China places greater emphasis on expanding domestic demand while pursuing high-standard opening-up, multinational leaders see a mutually reinforcing dynamic.

A more sophisticated domestic market demands safer, greener, and more efficient solutions, while institutional opening-up delivers the predictability and transparency required for long-term capital deployment.

Yin from AkzoNobel China, believes this dynamic elevates the market beyond a mere sales destination.

"With a full spectrum of application scenarios, China's vast market serves as a natural testbed and incubator for technological innovation," Yin explained.

Operating under the guiding tenet of "Innovate in China, for China, share globally," the Dutch paints and coatings giant continues to expand its local R&D footprint. Yin noted that the policy blueprints laid out for the 15th Five-Year Plan have bolstered the company's long-term confidence.

"Our longstanding commitment to the Chinese market underscores a strategic evolution: transitioning from mere investors to dedicated innovation partners," Yin added.

She expects the second half of 2026 to be driven by "new quality productive forces" — advanced manufacturing, green tech, and digitalization — alongside a consumer base demanding premium, eco-friendly residential and commercial spaces.

This green transformation is equally profound in heavy industry and global logistics. For Everllence, a leader in maritime and energy solutions, China is the absolute nexus for green innovation and the global delivery of net-zero solutions.

"In the first quarter of 2026, China led global shipbuilding new orders by deadweight tonnage, with green vessels accounting for 80.2 percent of new contracts," said Sarath Prasannan, senior vice-president and head of Asia-Pacific region of Everllence.

Despite global headwinds, such as the delayed International Maritime Organization (IMO) Net-Zero Framework review, China's 15th Five-Year Plan offers rare, bankable policy certainty, he said.

The company's deep-rooted partnerships with local titans like CSSC and COSCO Shipping Lines continue to yield breakthroughs.

In June 2026, Everllence delivered a milestone methanol dual-fuel retrofit for the *Seaspan Yangtze* at Shanghai COSCO Heavy Industry. Completed in just three months to minimize shipowner downtime, the retrofit slashes the vessel's emissions index by 55 percent below international baselines.

Crucially, the hardware of the green transition is being supercharged by the software of the digital age. Artificial intelligence and frontier technologies are no longer theoretical concepts; they are actively reshaping China's industrial growth and productivity.

At Syensqo's Shanghai center, artificial intelligence is fully integrated into the R&D process. "AI is helping teams with analysis, testing, and product solution optimization," Chen explained. "It is not a replacement for researchers, but a tool that helps them solve more complex problems and identify new ideas faster."

As the second half of 2026 commences, foreign executives are closely monitoring the commercialization speed of these cutting-edge technologies, the delivery pace of green industry orders, and the evolution of domestic consumer confidence.

Industry experts believe China's green transition is cultivating a far more complete and globally integrated industrial ecosystem.

As high-standard opening-up accelerates, the nation is actively championing the participation of multinational companies in key fields ranging from advanced manufacturing to climate technology, said Lin Boqiang, director of the China Center for Energy Economics Research at Xiamen University.

"Multinational companies can bring advanced technologies to China, and also push China's innovation achievements in new energy and other fields to the global stage," said Liu Linna, deputy director-general and secretary-general of the Council for International Investment Promotion. "Through this reciprocal exchange, multinational companies will share in the abundant developmental dividends generated by new quality productive forces during China's green transition."

In an era defined by global economic fragmentation, China's steady macroeconomic expansion and unyielding commitment to carbon neutrality offer a vital anchor. For the global corporate vanguard, the Chinese market is no longer a peripheral strategy — it is the very heart of the global green industrial revolution.



Workers maintain offshore wind turbines in Nantong, Jiangsu province, on June 10. XU CONGJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY



Workers conduct investigations on the transmission towers and photovoltaic power supply facilities for the West-to-East Power Transmission project in Zhangye, Gansu province, on July 28. YANG XIAO / FOR CHINA DAILY



BASF opens its new chemical complex in Zhanjiang, Guangdong province, on March 26. The company says that through Verbund integration — a system linking production processes to minimize waste — and renewable energy sourcing, the site can cut CO2 emissions by up to 50 percent compared with a conventional petrochemical facility. DENG HUA / XINHUA

Innovation powers next growth cycle

REPORTER'S LOG

By Zheng Xin

Forget the dusty old "world factory" playbook — if you want to see the future of global energy, you need to look at what is happening on the ground in China right now.

As a reporter covering this beat, the sheer velocity of the shift is nothing short of dizzying. We are watching China morph into a global innovation hub, acting as a high-speed locomotive pulling multinational energy and tech giants into a new era of green prosperity.

The pessimistic narrative of a looming "China Shock 2.0" has been completely flipped on its head in corporate boardrooms; instead, executives are enthusiastically branding this "China Opportunity 2.0".

The signals heading into the second half of 2026 are crystal clear for any executive paying attention. The 15th Five-Year Plan (2026–30) explicitly mandates a comprehensive green transformation of both economic and social development. This national blueprint is providing a sturdy, predictable foundation for multinationals to deepen their market roots.

China's 15th Five-Year Plan signals a stronger push to attract foreign direct investment — especially into advanced manufacturing, modern services, high-tech, and environmental protection — while encouraging foreign firms to establish regional headquarters and research and development centers. The logic is clear: Beijing is expanding market access where foreign innovation directly accelerates its long-term strategic objectives.

This policy momentum was further solidified recently, when the National Development and Reform Commission and the National Energy Administration officially issued the top-level design for the "15th Five-Year Plan for the Construction of a New Power System".

This critical framework provides exactly the kind of structural clarity and expansive runway that global energy businesses need to confidently deploy long-term capital and scale their low-carbon technological iterations, transitioning them from mere investors to dedicated innovation partners.

What strikes me most during my interviews is that collaboration between Chinese and foreign enterprises has blown past simple financial transactions to reach a much deeper, multi-dimensional integration.

Multinationals are deploying aggressive strategies to weave China's innovation ecosystem into their global blueprints.

Recent corporate movements in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area underscore this shift. For example, energy and chemical titan ExxonMobil has accelerated operations at its multibillion-dollar chemical complex in Huizhou, Guangdong province, pairing advanced low-carbon manufacturing with regional R&D to power sustainable material supply chains.

Participating in global joint R&D initiatives is frequently cited as a crucial strategy by a substantial segment of these businesses. To push global cooperation locally, a comparable number of firms are focusing heavily on promoting more local Chinese talent, alongside consistently increasing their R&D investment within China.

The physical scale of this transition is staggering. The hardware of the green transition is hitting the ground fast, supercharged by the software of the digital age. In the first half of 2026 alone, specialty chemicals company Evonik launched a new hydrogen peroxide plant in Sichuan, expanded a facility in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, and opened its first AEM technology center for green hydrogen.

As I log my notes for the remainder of 2026, the takeaway is undeniable. Armed with massive domestic demand, hyper-efficient industrial ecosystems and a strong drive toward carbon neutrality, China is no longer just a peripheral market strategy. It has become the undisputed proving ground and beating heart of the global green industrial revolution.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:23 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:23 PM

BUSINESSINSIGHT

China stabilizing force in global trade

EAGLE EYE
By Zhou Mi



AI PRODUCED BY CAI MENG / CHINA DAILY

China is emerging as an increasingly important source of stability for the global trading system. Despite mounting geopolitical tensions, rising protectionism and slowing global trade growth, the country has both the capacity and structural foundations to sustain relatively stable trade expansion.

According to customs data, China's two-way trade in goods reached 25.47 trillion yuan ($3.77 trillion) in the first half, up 16.9 percent year-on-year. The significance of this performance becomes clear only when viewed against the broader backdrop of the global economy.

International trade does not exist in a vacuum. It reflects the interaction between production and demand across economies. Unlike domestically driven investment or fiscal stimulus, trade cannot simply be created by administrative decisions. It depends on whether producers have goods or services the market needs and whether buyers are willing to purchase them. In that sense, trade is both a consequence of economic growth and a driver of it. Stronger economies generate demand for imports and exports, while expanding trade in turn supports growth by creating markets, jobs and investment opportunities.

This relationship makes the international context especially important. With the International Monetary Fund recently lowering its forecast for global trade growth this year, China's trade performance is all the more notable because it has come amid slowing global commerce rather than a synchronized global recovery.

Several structural features stand out amid the numbers. One is the durability of export growth. China's exports have now expanded for 17 consecutive months, suggesting that recent performance is not simply the result of temporary factors such as inventory accumulation, one-off policy incentives or short-term efforts to hedge against geopolitical risks. Sustained growth over such a period indicates that underlying demand remains intact and that Chinese exporters continue to occupy an important position within global production networks.

The explanation lies not in a single factor, but in a combination of structural strengths that have become increasingly evident over recent years. Among them is China's role in stabilizing global supply chains. Businesses around the world have learned that supply security can matter as much as price. As supply chains have been repeatedly disrupted by geopolitical tensions, logistics bottlenecks and extreme weather events, the ability to reliably obtain goods and services has become a competitive advantage in itself. For many manufacturers, Chinese suppliers continue to provide consistency that is difficult to replace.

Equally important is the nature of what China exports. A significant share of China's exports consists not of finished consumer products, but of intermediate goods, industrial components and production equipment. These products support manufacturing activity in importing countries, serving as essential inputs for industries ranging from automobiles to machinery and electronics. Rather than competing directly with industrialization elsewhere, many Chinese exports enable industrialization and reindustrialization abroad.

Innovation has become another increasingly important source of competitiveness. China's export strength is no longer driven primarily by manufacturing scale or cost advantages. It increasingly reflects technological upgrading, product innovation and the ability to respond quickly to evolving consumer needs. Recent demand in Europe for Chinese air conditioners during periods of unusually high summer temperatures illustrates how manufacturers have responded quickly to changing market conditions. More broadly, exports associated with renewable energy technologies and other innovative industrial sectors are helping countries pursue their own energy transition and industrial upgrading.

Imports tell an equally important story. Imports grew 22.1 percent in the first half, outpacing export growth by 8.7 percentage points. That is consistent with China's broader objective of promoting more balanced trade while continuing to expand market opening-up.

Imports and exports should not be viewed separately. In most economies, weaker exports often coincide with weaker imports because production, investment and consumption are closely linked. China's faster import growth instead reflects continued efforts to open market access rather than merely increase trade volumes.

Recent unilateral market-opening measures illustrate this approach. China expanded zero-tariff treatment to all African countries with which it has diplomatic relations beginning May 1, and has continued lowering tariffs for a broader range of trading partners. These policies are designed to increase market opening-up, expand consumer choice and deepen mutually beneficial trade relationships rather than simply boost import statistics.

The composition of imports also reflects underlying demand. China imported 1.43 billion metric tons of energy products and metal ores in the first half, up 3.4 percent year-on-year, while agricultural imports rose 8.6 percent. These figures underscore the role of China's large domestic market in creating opportunities for global commodity producers and agricultural exporters.

Regional patterns within China also point to longer-term structural changes. While the eastern region still accounted for 78.8 percent of total trade, faster trade growth in central and western China suggests that a gradual shift toward a more balanced regional trade structure. Greater geographic diversification may also improve the resilience of the country's external trade over time.

Another important indicator is the composition of trading firms. Private enterprises accounted for 57 percent of China's total foreign trade in the first half, with imports and exports rising 17 percent, while foreign-invested enterprises expanded trade by a slightly faster 17.1 percent. Strong growth by both private enterprises and foreign-invested firms suggests that commercial opportunities — rather than policy incentives alone — continue to underpin the nation's trade expansion. Businesses ultimately invest and trade where they see sustainable opportunities for growth and profitability.

Looking ahead to the second half, uncertainty will remain considerable. Geopolitical conflicts could continue to disrupt commodity markets and global logistics. Trade protectionism may further weaken confidence in the multilateral trading system. At the same time, artificial intelligence and other technological advances are reshaping global production and trade patterns, creating both opportunities and competitive pressures.

Even so, China's fundamental advantages remain intact. The trade growth seen since last year has been rooted largely in underlying production and consumption rather than short-term speculation or inventory accumulation. Such demand is more likely to be sustained. At the same time, deepening trust with trading partners and continued expansion of free trade agreements can provide greater certainty for businesses and a firmer foundation for long-term trade growth.

As services trade expands alongside goods trade, China's contribution to the global economy will increasingly be measured not only by the scale of its exports, but also by the stability, opening-up and connectivity it brings to the international trading system.

The writer is a researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation. The article is translated from a recent speech by Zhou at a China News Service economic forum. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Policy support poised to reshape nation's retail industry

MAIN STREET
By Fu Yifu

Recently, the Ministry of Commerce and eight other departments jointly issued the Opinions on Accelerating the Innovative Development of the Retail Industry. Focusing on the systematic planning of the retail industry landscape, fostering new forms of retail supply, creating new consumer demand, stimulating new retail growth drivers, facilitating fair competition and strengthening policy support, the document puts forward 20 measures, providing a clear roadmap for retail innovation during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period.

At a time when the retail sector is at a critical stage of transformation and upgrading, what is the deeper significance of this policy document? Which of the 20 measures deserved particular attention? What impact will they have on the sector overall and on consumers? And how should they be implemented going forward? This article examines these questions one by one.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan (2020-25) period, China's goods retail sales rose from 39.4 trillion yuan ($5.84 trillion) in 2021 to 44.3 trillion yuan in 2025, representing cumulative growth of 12.5 percent. Goods retail sales have long accounted for about 90 percent of total consumer goods retail sales, and the retail sector supports more than 80 million jobs. However, expansion in scale has been accompanied by uneven outlet distribution, supply-demand mismatches, rising operating costs and an imbalance between online and offline retail. These problems have weakened profitability and affected consumer experience, especially for traditional hypermarkets and department stores facing declining foot traffic and mounting pressure.

Against this backdrop, the Opinions introduce four major policy breakthroughs.

First, the document proposes a commercial facilities saturation assessment mechanism for the first time. By strengthening the monitoring of retail commercial facilities and supporting qualified cities in carrying out saturation assessments, the mechanism is expected to provide a reference for project approval and social investment. In the past, commercial property development relied heavily on market signals. But information asymmetry and herd behavior often resulted in redundant investment, homogeneous competition and inefficient supply. In this sense, the mechanism can serve as a "barometer" for commercial investment, helping reduce blind construction and resource waste.

Second, the document clarifies the differentiated roles of online and offline retail. By 2030, offline retail is expected to become a space for shopping, leisure, immersive experience, entertainment and social interaction, while online retail is expected to become a standardized shopping channel offering abundant goods, reliable quality and regulated operations. This marks a shift from the previous zero-sum relationship between online and offline retail. In essence, offline retail should focus on experience, social interaction and consumption scenarios, while online retail should emphasize efficiency, quality and compliance. Retail is therefore moving from a goods-centered distribution network toward a consumption ecosystem driven by traffic, content, data and experience.

Third, the document introduces stronger institutional constraints to address unfair or unbridled competition. It calls for equal treatment of online and offline retail, reasonable platform fees, lower operating costs for platform merchants, stronger antimonopoly review, and fairer algorithmic recommendations and traffic distribution. Platforms are encouraged to establish diversified recommendation indicators rather than using price as the sole determinant. Meanwhile, the document targets false advertising, fake promotions, misleading discounts and unfair pricing, and prohibits platforms from forcing merchants to bear subsidy costs or participate in promotional campaigns. Taken together, these measures aim to create a fairer market environment through antimonopoly regulations, price governance, algorithmic transparency and unified supervision.

Fourth, the document strengthens policy support to solve the "last-mile" problems of retail transformation. It provides support in land use, cost reduction, financing, approval procedures and legal safeguards. Qualified high-quality new retail enterprises are encouraged to seek public listings; eligible retailers may issue asset-backed securities (ABS) and commercial real estate investment trusts (REITs); and financial institutions are encouraged to design credit policies suited to the retail sector. Meanwhile, retail enterprises are encouraged to participate in green certificate and green electricity transactions, benefiting from employment-stabilization policies and renovating idle commercial facilities with clear ownership. These measures will broaden financing channels, reduce operating costs and provide systematic support for transformation.

The impact of the document is expected to be transmitted across consumers, enterprises, the retail ecosystem and the broader economy.

For consumers, shopping will increasingly become part of a broader lifestyle experience. Offline retail will no longer be merely a place to buy goods, but also a space for exhibitions, concerts, sports experiences, pet-friendly services and social interaction/activities. Standardized community commerce and instant retail will make daily life more convenient, while facilities catering to the elderly and children will make consumption settings more inclusive and enjoyable. In online retail scenarios, greater algorithmic transparency and more regulated promotions will help reduce problems such as price discrimination and forced bundling, enabling consumers to shop with greater clarity and confidence.

For retail enterprises, fair competition will have stronger institutional support, while transformation paths will become more diversified. Physical retailers have long faced pressure from platform subsidies, algorithmic bias and transferred promotional costs. The new framework — covering antimonopoly enforcement, price regulation, algorithmic transparency and unified supervision — will help create a more level playing field. Stronger firms may develop deeper joint operations, self-operated supply chains and manufacturing-oriented retail, while small and medium-sized merchants may reduce costs through voluntary chains, alliances and joint procurement arrangements. New models — such as omni-channel retail, instant retail and "online traffic plus offline transactions" — can also create new growth space for traditional stores.

For the retail sector as a whole, competition will shift from price and location to experience and efficiency. Retail supply is no longer limited to products. It is increasingly built around scenarios, content and services. Supply-chain innovations — including shared warehousing, unified distribution and standardized coding systems — will shorten circulation links and reduce inventory losses.

Ultimately, the key lies in effective implementation.

First, planning should be used to address layout imbalances. The document calls for national standards on commercial outlet planning and better coordination with territorial spatial planning and urban renewal. Local governments should avoid redundant or repetitive construction, and accelerate the development of practical indicators for saturation assessment.

Second, scenario innovation should be used to revitalize offline retail. The document encourages one-store-one-policy innovation, renovation of old commercial districts, upgrading of shopping streets and commercial blocks, and digital transformation of commercial facilities. Local governments should adapt these measures to local consumer culture and resource endowments, as high-quality scenarios can both attract foot traffic and deepen consumption.

Third, unified regulation should ensure fair competition. Measures such as unified standards for online and offline promotions, fairer algorithmic recommendation systems and stronger price governance require detailed implementation rules. Market regulators should establish routine enforcement mechanisms that apply equally to online and offline retail.

Fourth, integrated policy support should solve last-mile difficulties. Retail innovation should be linked with the modern commercial circulation system and pilot programs for new consumption models and scenarios. Governments at all levels need to break departmental barriers, improve policy coordination and translate land use, financing, tax and fee reductions, talent development and employment support into specific, executable and assessable measures.

In conclusion, the Opinions are not a simple policy adjustment. They are instead a systematic reform of retail development concepts and pathways. They respond to the urgent needs of retail transformation, clarify the differentiated roles of online and offline retail, establish a fairer competition framework and provide comprehensive factor support. By 2030, China aims to build a modern retail system with rational layout, high-quality supply, diversified business formats, smart and convenient services, and fair and orderly competition.

The writer is a researcher at Jiangsu Su Merchants Bank. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:23 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:23 PM

CHINA

Scholar hails China's math development

Use Fields Medal wins to broaden academic exchanges, says HK expert

By **STACY SHI** in Hong Kong
stacyshi@chinadailyhk.com

Hong Kong mathematician He Xuhua, who was recently elected vice-president of the International Mathematical Union, has hailed the first Chinese winners of the Fields Medal as a "historic breakthrough" for China and its mathematical development.

By being awarded the accolade — widely recognized as the Nobel Prize of mathematics — Chinese mathematicians Wang Hong and Deng Yu gave a major boost to Chinese mathematicians, especially young students, inspiring them to pursue research in the field, He said.

"I got up very early to wait in line and sat in the front row to witness history," said He, who attended the award ceremony in the United States, recalling the exciting moment during a recent interview.

The two mathematicians' work not only resolved core problems but also significantly advanced their respective fields, laying crucial foundations for theoretical progress and interdisciplinary applications, He said.

A year before they won the Fields Medal, He invited Wang and Deng to give lectures at The University of Hong Kong.

Wang's guest lecture in December 2025, which was open not only to university students and faculty but also to the wider public, drew an enthusiastic response, with participants overcrowding the venue, He said.

The arrival of another Fields Medal recipient, Vietnamese-French mathematician Ngo Bao Chau, at HKU in June also highlights the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's role as a leading international center for mathematics, particularly under the unique "one country, two systems" framework, He said.

He said intensified geopolitical tensions have at times hampered direct academic exchanges between Chinese mainland scholars and their US counterparts. Hong Kong, however, can benefit from "one country, two systems" to provide an effective alternative platform for international conferences and attract world-class scholars.

To further leverage this advantage, He has been working with the Hong Kong Mathematical Society and the American Mathematical Society to co-host a joint conference in Hong Kong in late 2028. The event would bring together leading Chinese and US mathematicians and young researchers, facilitating meaningful cross-border academic dialogue and collaboration.

The proposal is in line with the three-pronged vision He outlined after being elected vice-president of the union in July. At 47, He is the youngest person to hold the post in nearly two decades and the second Chinese mathematician to do so.

> "Most researchers use AI for polishing, and some for more important tasks like proofs. But whoever signs the paper must take full responsibility for its entire content."
>
> **He Xuhua,** a Hong Kong mathematician who serves as vice-president of the International Mathematical Union

His priorities include supporting mathematical development in the Global South, nurturing young scholars by providing exchange opportunities and exploring the intersection of artificial intelligence and mathematics.

He shared his own experience of using AI's deep-learning capabilities to analyze complex mathematical data, which led to an unexpected and groundbreaking finding. But he also advocated a balanced approach to the use of AI in mathematical research.

"Most researchers use AI for polishing, and some for more important tasks like proofs. But whoever signs the paper must take full responsibility for its entire content," He said.

He also stressed the need for more flexible evaluation systems in Hong Kong that can accommodate "long-term" research in pure mathematics.

He cited Chinese-born American mathematician Zhang Yitang as an example, noting that Zhang's groundbreaking work on the twin prime conjecture came after years of relative obscurity.

He highlighted how the city's mathematics community has made rapid progress in recent years and expressed confidence that the city will further strengthen its position as a global hub for mathematical sciences.

At the same time, he urged institutions to have greater confidence in evaluating researchers, particularly those engaged in long-term fundamental research.

Above all, He said it is important to nurture curiosity — a trait he sees in the Fields Medal recipients and believes should be a cornerstone of mathematical education.



Ancient life reimagined

Visitors gather to admire a life-sized reconstructed model of a prehistoric giant bird (left) and its replica fossilized skeleton (right) at China's inaugural paleontological reconstruction competition, held in Beijing on Saturday. Over 100 detailed paleoart and restoration works are on show at the event, with all award-winning pieces set to be displayed for free at Beijing Expo Park from Aug 10 through Oct 31 this year.
YUAN YI / FOR CHINA DAILY

September set as target for HKSAR's inaugural five-year plan release date

By **STACY SHI** in Hong Kong
stacyshi@chinadailyhk.com

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government aims to publish its inaugural five-year plan (2026-30) in September, Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu said on Sunday.

Speaking after attending the second district forum on the first five-year plan and the 2026 Policy Address at Kowloon Tong Government Primary School, Lee said the HKSAR government has conducted more than 90 consultation sessions since the public engagement exercise began in June.

The exercise has drawn substantial public participation, with about 13,800 submissions relating to the five-year plan and about 8,500 others concerning the Policy Address.

Lee emphasized the close link between the two, noting that the government will strive to align their release timelines as closely as possible. An earlier release of the plan would help the public better understand how the two frameworks relate to each other and affect people's well-being, he said.

The second district forum lasted about two hours and drew roughly 120 participants, including grassroots residents, retirees, students and members of ethnic minority groups.

"I attach great importance to the district forums that provide an important channel for understanding the issues of greatest concern to members of the public," Lee said.

"We'll consolidate these valuable views in a holistic manner, analyze them and consider incorporating them into Hong Kong's five-year plan and the Policy Address, ensuring that policy measures are effectively implemented by the government, as well as translating our blueprint into tangible outcomes for economic development and the improvement of people's livelihoods."

Twenty-seven residents from a wide cross-section of society, including young people, cultural workers, engineers, school principals, teachers, district councilors and businesspeople, voiced their views on a broad range of social issues, with youth development emerging as the most pressing concern.

On housing, a resident said that for Hong Kong's youth, buying a home often hinges less on personal effort and more on having a "rich father".

The resident urged the government to restructure Hong Kong's housing ladder with the inaugural five-year plan in order to create a genuinely fluid pathway that would restore young people's hope of settling down.

In the cultural and tourism sector, a cultural arts practitioner suggested that authorities further consolidate the multi-destination travel strategy to attract more international visitors to Hong Kong and then channel them into the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

Another attendee proposed that the government, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Productivity Council as well as overseas and Chinese mainland economic and trade offices, launch an acceleration program to help local artificial intelligence, robotics and embodied-intelligence enterprises expand globally.

In response, Lee underscored the government's ongoing commitment to enriching the property ladder, with particular attention to youth development. He noted that the planning of the Northern Metropolis presents new opportunities in this regard.

Turning to culture and branding, Lee stressed the importance of building an internationally recognized "Hong Kong brand". While the government will provide support through funding, venues and policy measures to foster diverse creative initiatives, he acknowledged that ultimate success depends on the collective efforts of industry players.

On talent policy, Lee reiterated that the government would adopt a demand-driven approach, tailoring talent admission categories to actual needs.

Several principal officials attended the forum, including Chief Secretary for Administration Eric Chan Kwok-ki, Financial Secretary Paul Chan Mo-po, acting Secretary for Justice Horace Cheung Kwok-kwan and Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Janice Tse Siu-wa.



Racing family

Zhang Xue (right), founder of ZXMOTO, talks with his son, Zhang Qingtian (center), during a motocross championship in Kunming, Yunnan province, on Sunday. The event featured categories including a new-energy group and an elite group, attracting nearly 200 riders from China and abroad.
WANG GUANSEN / XINHUA

Xuelong 2 begins first ice station survey in Arctic Ocean

By **LI MENGHAN**
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

China's icebreaker *Xuelong 2* began its first ice station survey near 84 degrees north latitude in the central Arctic Ocean on Sunday, marking the start of about two weeks of comprehensive ice station surveys during the country's 16th Arctic expedition, Xinhua News Agency reported.

Researchers set sail from Dalian, Liaoning province, on July 3, with four vessels — *Xuelong*, *Xuelong 2*, *Jidi* and *Tansuo 3* — for an expedition organized by the Ministry of Natural Resources.

After completing the first phase of ocean station surveys on Friday, the *Xuelong 2* sailed toward higher latitudes. On Sunday, it selected a large, flat ice floe about 1.5 meters thick in a densely packed ice area for its first ice station survey.

Before operations began, two experienced team members stepped onto the ice to drill holes and measure its thickness, identify potential hazards and determine the working area and zones. Scientific equipment was then transported to designated areas to support parallel operations for multiple research projects.

Lin Long, leader of the *Xuelong 2* sea ice team, said the ice station survey includes six short-term stations and one long-term station. The team will conduct more than 20 research projects, including deploying disposable ice-based buoys, collecting ice core samples and carrying out sea ice remote sensing observations.

Xuelong and *Xuelong 2* will jointly conduct ice station surveys. As of Friday, the *Xuelong* had completed surveys at 12 ice stations.

The ice station sites surveyed by *Xuelong 2* will be coordinated with those of *Xuelong* to form an observation array, providing deeper insights into interactions among the atmosphere, sea ice and ocean in the central Arctic Ocean amid rapid Arctic change, as well as their coupling effects on the ecosystem, Lin said.

Lan Musheng, an assistant to the expedition's chief scientist, said researchers will comprehensively monitor dynamic changes in the atmosphere, sea ice, upper ocean and sub-ice ecological processes during sea ice melt.

The observations will provide scientific data crucial for studying rapid changes in Arctic sea ice, their underlying mechanisms and ecosystem evolution, Lan said.

To address the risks posed by polar bears during ice station operations, the expedition team has developed bear-deterrence and emergency response plans to ensure personnel safety.

Focused on global climate change and its impacts, the expedition aims to provide scientific support for China's participation in Arctic governance through multidisciplinary comprehensive surveys and international frontier research. The mission is expected to be completed in early October.

Shenzhen tech firms expand into APEC economies

By **CHEN HONG**
in Shenzhen, Guangdong
chenhong@chinadaily.com.cn

With Guangdong province's Shenzhen set to host the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in November, the city's technology companies are stepping up their expansion across the Asia-Pacific region, seeking deeper cooperation in artificial intelligence, robotics, semiconductors and other emerging sectors.

Shenzhen-based Xbrewlab Inc, which focuses on commercial and household coffee applications, has launched a pure nitrogen beverage machine that uses direct air nitrogen purification technology to replace costly and cumbersome traditional nitrogen capsules.

The technology enables users to produce high-quality nitrogen-infused drinks more easily while expanding the application scenarios for nitrogen technology, said the company's founder, Tan Tianyi.

The brand has established a foothold in the United States and Southeast Asia and is expanding into more economies across the Asia-Pacific region. Some of its products, including coffee beans, coffee scales and nitrogen beverage machines, have been selected as official souvenirs for the 33rd Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Economic Leaders' Meeting, Tan said.

"This year we have secured distribution partnerships with more APEC member economies. We hope to take advantage of this conference to invite entrepreneurs and partners to experience our new products in person," he said.

As the two-day meeting approaches, Shenzhen, a core innovation hub in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, is creating new opportunities for technological exchanges and industrial cooperation across the region.

X Square Robot, Shenzhen-based company specializing in general embodied intelligence foundation models, made the national unicorn enterprise list in July. Its technologies have been gradually deployed in high-value applications, including industrial manufacturing, logistics and elderly care services.

"We aim to explore diverse application scenarios across the Asia-Pacific, promote human-machine integration through embodied intelligence technologies and support the industrial upgrading of APEC economies with smart living solutions," said Xu Menghong, strategy and investment director of X Square Robot.

Tech firm SmartMore has also expanded its presence in global markets. Shi Xiaoliang, the company's product R&D director, said its industrial AI solutions have served more than 730 leading global enterprises.

The company focuses on core technologies including intelligent robot R&D, industrial-grade AI algorithms and intelligent sensors.

"Shenzhen's strategic position in the Greater Bay Area and its close ties with Hong Kong strongly underpin our expansion across the Asia-Pacific," Shi said. "We will further deepen technological and industrial cooperation with manufacturers and research institutions in the region to drive the digital and intelligent transformation of traditional industries," he added.

Lei Guohui, general manager of Advanced Assembly Materials China Ltd, said the company has built a cross-border R&D and production network spanning Hong Kong and Malaysia.

"The APEC platform offers valuable opportunities for upstream hard-tech enterprises in Shenzhen to showcase homegrown innovations and strengthen industrial and supply chain coordination with Asia-Pacific partners, bolstering regional collaboration in the semiconductor industry," Lei said.

Both Xbrewlab and X Square Robot were incubated at Shenzhen InnoX Academy, which was founded in 2021 by Professor Li Zexiang, a globally recognized expert in robotics and innovation education. The academy aims to nurture top-tier hard-tech entrepreneurial talent and incubate globally competitive technology startups.

Figures from the academy show that it has incubated more than 100 projects over five years, 39 of which are at the angel, or early stage of a startup, with a combined valuation of nearly 3 billion yuan ($444.8 million).

The incubated startups have strong global operations and deployment capabilities, providing hard-tech products and supporting services to markets worldwide, including all APEC member economies.

Zhang Xuechun contributed to this story.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:23 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:23 PM

Editor's note: *As protection of the planet's flora, fauna and resources becomes increasingly important, China Daily is publishing a series of stories to illustrate the country's commitment to safeguarding the natural world.*



Iconic 20-yuan landscape goes zero-carbon

Electric rafts and green power grids turn Lijiang River into a global model for eco-tourism. **Hou Liqiang** reports from Guilin, Guangxi.

Visitors cruise the Lijiang River aboard electric rafts in Guilin, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region. PHOTOS BY HUANG SHENGLIN, ZHAO JUNSHI, AN BAIMING AND LIAO ZUPING / FOR CHINA DAILY

For decades, the serene karst mountains along the Lijiang River — the very landscape immortalized on the back of China's 20-yuan banknote — were offset by a noisy, polluting reality. Gasoline-powered tourist rafts roared down the water spewing black exhaust, and unsightly overhead power lines crisscrossed the river like scratches on a canvas.

Today, the roar has been replaced by a low hum, the power lines are gone, and the iconic view in Guilin's Xingping township in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region has been fully restored.

Through a sweeping low-carbon transition led by local authorities and China Southern Power Grid, the Lijiang River Scenic Area has successfully tied ecological preservation directly to local economic growth. By fully electrifying transport, building modern charging infrastructure, and switching nearby communities to 100 percent green power, the region has created a blueprint for sustainable eco-tourism.

Silence on the water

The most immediate shift is on the river itself. Between 2023 and 2024, the scenic area completed a massive project converting all 1,000 of its sightseeing rafts, including 500 at two key wharves in Xingping, from gasoline to electric power.

The transition cut noise levels from a deafening 120 decibels to a quiet 60 decibels, while drastically improving safety and maneuverability for operators.

"In the past, gasoline engines produced loud noise and black smoke, and fuel leaks threatened the river," said Mo Jianbin, who has operated rafts at Chaobanshan Wharf for 14 years. "Now, the electric rafts have reverse gear, making docking and navigation much safer."

The environmental gains have come with economic benefits. Gasoline-powered rafts previously incurred fuel costs of up to 1.5 yuan (22 cents) per kilometer, borne by the operators themselves. Now, the energy cost for each raft has dropped to 0.5 yuan per kilometer — and it is covered by the Lijiang River Scenic Area's management company, Mo said.

With a better visitor experience and more tourists, Mo added his annual income has increased from 30,000 yuan to over 60,000 yuan.

Added infrastructure

Powering a fleet of 1,000 electric vessels required an equally modern onshore grid. China Southern Power Grid responded by establishing a 15-minute charging network across Xingping township, including specialized facilities directly opposite Chaobanshan Wharf capable of fully charging raft batteries in two to three hours.

Just a stone's throw away sits the Egendi station — Guilin's first integrated energy facility combining solar generation with electric vehicle charging. Constructed despite extreme space constraints along the protected riverbank, the 988,700-yuan station features a photovoltaic canopy with 45 solar panels. Generating roughly 80 kilowatt-hours of solar power daily, the small station has served over 16,000 vehicles and cut an additional 2,924.5 metric tons of carbon emissions.

Though modest in size, the charging station's construction along the Lijiang River was a remarkable achievement, according to Ni Chengjie, an executive with the grid's branch in Xingping.

He said the Egendi charging station is one of only five such facilities constructed by China Southern Power Grid in Xingping, all of which collectively create a 15-minute charging network in the township.

Restoring village views

The final piece of the puzzle lay across the river in Dahebei, an island-like village of 300 households situated directly inside the core scenic zone.

The village sits along the most scenic stretch of the Lijiang River. Yet this idyllic location, for all its beauty, once made power supply to Dahebei highly unreliable. In the past, electricity had to be carried across the river via overhead lines from Xingping, with utility poles strung along the water's edge disrupting the beauty of the view.

"Tourists once had to retouch their photos before sharing them online — carefully removing the utility poles and overhead wires that marred the view," said Zhang Qiaomu, head of the Xingping power supply station.

Long transmission distances, frequent faults and unstable voltage were even more practical headaches, he added.

In 2021, a joint initiative set out to remove the overhead lines entirely and transition Dahebei into a zero-carbon community. Because installing solar panels on the island would have ruined the pristine views, China Southern Power Grid routed green electricity directly through an upgraded grid network.

The transition required cultural change. Villagers who had cooked with firewood for generations were hesitant about switching to electric appliances. To build trust, the power grid ran a two-year pilot program allowing residents to try green electricity at standard rates.

"When we first started, I didn't even know what 'green electricity' meant," said Tang Cunxue, a village official.

"Green electricity is a little bit more expensive, but China Southern Power Grid agreed to let us try it at the same price," Tang said, adding that gradually the villagers came to embrace it.

For the village, the green transition has meant more than just a change in its energy mix — it has brought a fundamental shift in its development philosophy.

"Many people advocate low-carbon travel. When they come to the island and see green electricity in use, with a beautiful environment to match, they feel more relaxed — and word spreads," Tang said.

The village's homestays have also undergone a qualitative shift. With a healthier ecosystem, the village sees more guests bringing their families for extended stays.

"What we're selling is a lifestyle and a rhythm — homegrown vegetables, free-range chickens, not greenhouse produce," said Tang.

According to the village committee, Dahebei has experienced a huge surge in tourist numbers.

In 2019, about 140,000 to 150,000 tourists came to the village. In 2024, following the full rollout of green electricity, that figure soared to around 1 million, surpassing 1.2 million in 2025.

The Xingping power supply station has also introduced a "green electricity code" system to certify and rate homestays based on their use of green energy.

With a large number of visitors in Xingping, accommodations with green electricity certification are more sought-after, Tang said. The mechanism has helped attract higher-end clientele and elevated the island's overall tourism quality.

"Villagers' incomes are rising year by year, and you can see it on their faces — everyone is smiling," he added.

Contact the writer at houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

Nanning transforms urban waste into energy

By **HOU LIQIANG** and **SHI RUIPENG** in Nanning





Left: Photovoltaic panels are built over a parking lot to shelter vehicles in Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, in April. FAN SHAOGUANG / FOR CHINA DAILY **Right:** Workers install PV panels in Nanning's Binyang county in March last year. ZENG XIANGZHONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

At the Shuangding Circular Economy Industrial Park in Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, a waste treatment plant is challenging the conventional image of such facilities.

There is no pungent smell or smoke-filled sky. Instead, there is a garden-like compound and automated treatment lines that sort, incinerate and process urban waste, converting it into electricity, heat and construction materials.

The plant provides a glimpse into Guangxi's push to turn household garbage, kitchen waste, urban sludge and medical waste into usable resources via coordinated treatment facilities, rather than simply burying or discarding them. The Shuangding park, operational since late 2021, is the region's first facility of this kind.

Developed, built and operated by Guangxi Green City Environmental Development Group, a subsidiary of Nanning Jianning Water Investment Group, the park spans some 73 hectares. To date, around half of the site has been constructed, with total investment in the project estimated at 2.56 billion yuan ($379.33 million).

Chen Xuewen, deputy general manager of Nanning Jianning Water Investment Group, said the park is built around the principle of energy recycling, with its coordinated treatment system anchored by the incineration of household waste to generate electricity.

While electricity generated from waste incineration is fed into the national grid, residual heat is piped to facilities that treat organic waste, sludge and medical waste. "This improves overall energy efficiency," Chen said.

Equipped with three furnaces, the park's household waste incineration plant has a daily treatment capacity of 2,250 metric tons. Each ton of raw household waste processed can generate nearly 600 kilowatt-hours of electricity, roughly equivalent to the power consumption of a three-person household for three months, he added.

Great emphasis has been placed on reducing secondary pollution. A wastewater treatment facility with a daily capacity of 1,700 tons handles leachate, production wastewater and domestic sewage. After advanced treatment, the water is reused for cooling, landscaping and other production purposes within the park.

Slag left after incineration is processed to recover metals, while the remaining material is made into eco-friendly bricks or roadbed materials. Fly ash, which accounts for about 2 to 3 percent of incinerated waste, is stabilized and solidified before being sent to a designated landfill for safe disposal.

To control emissions, the park employs a seven-step flue gas purification system, integrating technologies including denitrification, deacidification and dust filtration. Chen said the facility's emission indicators are stricter than China's national standards and European Union limits.

Since starting operations, the park has treated 4.7 million tons of solid waste, generated 1.87 billion kWh of electricity, saved 410,200 tons of standard coal and reduced carbon dioxide emissions by 1.03 million tons.

Beyond the park's own achievements, Nanning has been building a citywide recycling system that covers industrial, household, construction, agricultural and hazardous waste, according to local authorities.

The resource utilization rate for household waste in the city has reached 86.65 percent. For hazardous waste, the utilization and disposal rate stands at 96.98 percent, while the harmless disposal rate for medical waste remains at 100 percent.

Nanning has also made notable progress in clean energy development. As of the end of 2025, renewable energy accounted for 85 percent of the city's installed power generation capacity and 70 percent of its actual electricity generation, according to city authorities.

While renewable energy development has been robust, the inherent intermittency and variability of wind and solar generation have created significant challenges for the city's power grid.

Against this backdrop, Nanning authorities launched the construction of the Nanning Pumped-Storage Power Station in July 2022. Its upper reservoir sits on Baizao Mountain, while the lower reservoir is located about 3 kilometers to the southwest. With a height difference of 470 meters between the two reservoirs, the station functions as a large-scale energy storage facility for the grid.

As a traditional method of energy storage, pumped storage uses surplus electricity during off-peak hours to pump water to the upper reservoir and then releases it to generate power when demand rises.

With a total investment of 7.93 billion yuan, the Nanning Pumped-Storage Power Station features four 300-megawatt units, giving it total installed capacity of 1,200 MW and a designed annual power generation of nearly 1 billion kWh.

Liu Yi, deputy general manager of Nanning Pumped Storage Co, said that as of May 31, the station had generated 239 million kWh of electricity and consumed 297 million kWh for pumping, with overall efficiency reaching 80 percent.

He added that the power station has provided strong support for the local power grid in peak shaving, frequency regulation and emergency reserve, significantly enhancing grid reliability.

The company has also built a supporting battery-swapping station for heavy-duty electric trucks, equipped with 20 electric vehicles and four 300-kW charging piles, enabling rapid battery swaps in just 3 to 5 minutes. According to the company, the station saves 680,000 liters of fuel annually and cuts carbon dioxide emissions by 1,800 tons per year.

Contact the writers at houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:23 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:23 PM

CULTURE

Traditional dance makes new moves

Black suits, flashing blades and ancient festival rituals captivate social media, transforming Munao Zongge into a powerful expression resonating far beyond Yunnan, **Yang Feiyue** reports.

In a short video, rain falls over Dianchi Lake, softening the outline of the Western Hills in the distance. On the Danxia Bridge, a group of dancers dressed in black suits stands motionless for a moment before raising their long swords.

Then the drums beat. With sharp turns, powerful steps and sweeping sword movements, the dancers transform a traditional Jingpo sword dance into a performance that feels both ancient and contemporary.

The rhythm of Munao Zongge, one of the most important traditional festivals and art forms of the Jingpo ethnic group in Southwest China's Yunnan province, echoes across the water.

The video, filmed in Kunming, the provincial capital of Yunnan, in late July, quickly spread across Chinese social media platforms, drawing millions of views and sparking waves of imitations.

Many viewers are captivated by the contrast: traditional swords paired with modern suits, ethnic heritage presented through a visual language familiar to younger audiences. At the center is Yuan Zhiping, a principal dancer of Yunnan Provincial Song and Dance Ensemble.



A Munao Zongge festival is held in Longchuan county, Dehong Dai and Jingpo autonomous prefecture, Yunnan province, in October 2025. Group dancing is a highlight of this traditional festival of the Jingpo people. XINHUA

For Yuan, the popularity is not simply the result of a striking image. It reflects years of exploration into how traditional culture can find new forms of expression.

Most of the movements come from authentic Jingpo sword techniques, Yuan says. The turns, spins and sword gestures are adapted from traditional elements, while the presentation is redesigned to create a stronger connection with contemporary audiences.

Injecting fresh appeal

The performance's appeal comes from a careful balance between inheritance and innovation. The choreography retains key elements of Jingpo sword techniques, including powerful movements that highlight strength, courage and discipline, Yuan explains.

Traditionally, the long sword has held deep symbolic meaning in Jingpo culture, representing identity and resilience.

Yuan decided to update the visual language. Instead of wearing elaborate traditional costumes, the dancers appear in simple black suits. The modern silhouette gives the performance a sharper stage presence while keeping important cultural symbols, including the traditional Jingpo ornament known as *tongpa*.

The music helps bridge past and present. The song *Munao Zongge*, which carries the same name as the Jingpo festival, combines traditional rhythms with contemporary arrangements, telling a story of cultural convergence. Its melody dates back to 1991, when Jingpo artist Shi Legan distilled ancient musical forms — Dongba and Wenbeng — into a composition he titled *Munao Zongge March*. For decades, it was a regional treasure, little known beyond the hills of western Yunnan.

That changed early this year when Beijing-based music producer Zhen Zhen (known online as Banxia Shuiyu) wrote new Mandarin lyrics that spoke not just to Jingpo identity but to a broader Chinese experience — evoking the family hearth, the ancient Tea Horse Road, and the majestic Gaoligong Mountains. He then used AI to weave the traditional melody with modern electronic arrangements. The result was a track that felt neither antique nor artificial, but powerfully alive.

The response was immediate. By May, the song had surpassed 3 billion streams. Its percussive, martial rhythm proved irresistible to short-video creators, who used it as the soundtrack for everything from Jingpo festival footage to dorm room dance-offs. The song stopped being a piece of music and became a call to move, gather and participate.

But the dance itself carries meaning that transcends any single remix.

Munao Zongge means "gathering together to dance", reflecting the festival's central message of collective celebration. It is the grandest traditional festival of the Jingpo people, who live in the Dehong Dai and Jingpo autonomous prefecture in Yunnan.





Top: Dancers wear headdresses made from hornbill beaks and peacock feathers. **Above:** Yuan Zhiping leads a rehearsal of his updated version of the traditional sword dance. PHOTOS BY XINHUA

According to Jingpo oral tradition, the dance traces its origins to the sky. Long ago, only the children of the Sun God could perform it. When the Sun God invited all earthly beings to a celestial dance, the birds — led by the hornbill and the peacock — flew to the heavens to join. On their return, they re-created the dance beneath a wild fig tree. The Jingpo ancestors witnessed this bird dance, carved its patterns into stone, and held the first human Munao Zongge.

This origin story explains the festival's ritual regalia, in which the lead dancers, or *naoshuang*, wear headdresses made from hornbill beaks, peacock feathers and wild boar tusks — symbols that honor the birds who first brought the dance to earth.

At the center of the dance ground stands a sacred structure of four pillars. The two taller middle pillars bear the sun and spiral fern patterns; the two outer pillars bear the moon. Crossed swords at the center symbolize the community's strength and resilience. Horizontal beams display crops, tools and livestock — the community's hopes for prosperity and continuity, according to Zhao Baozhong, a national-level intangible cultural heritage inheritor from Longchuan county of Dehong, who has spent decades studying and performing Munao Zongge.

"For the Jingpo people, the dance carries memories of history, belief and social life. It is a living archive," Zhao says.

Zhao, in his 60s, began learning the dance in the 1980s after witnessing large-scale festival performances and becoming fascinated by the discipline required to lead thousands of dancers. He eventually became a *naoshuang*, a role he has held for decades.

"A lead dancer must remember all the dance routes, all the patterns," Zhao says. "They have to be in your mind, in your memory — you can't look at a book while you're leading thousands of people."

He notes that the dance has undergone major social changes.

Historically, large-scale Munao Zongge ceremonies were closely connected with community leaders and traditional rituals. Over time, the celebration became increasingly open to the wider community, allowing more people to participate.

In 2006, Munao Zongge was included in the first batch of China's national intangible cultural heritage representative items. In 2012, an international Munao Zongge festival in Mangshi of Dehong set a Guinness World Record for the largest Munao Zongge dance, with more than 18,600 participants moving in unison.

Today, the festival has evolved into a platform for broader cultural exchange.

Passing the baton

For younger inheritors, the challenge is how to keep the tradition alive in a changing world.

Cun Daijin, a young inheritor, began learning the dance after being inspired by older performers leading large festival gatherings.

"I saw the elders in their ceremonial robes, leading thousands of people," he says. "They're still doing this at their age. Why shouldn't I?"

He later became a *naoshuang*, while continuing his work as a macadamia grower. For him, the dance is not just a profession but a calling.

"Remembering every movement, understanding the cultural meaning behind the dance and guiding others require years of practice," he says.

Cun has also turned to short videos and public performances to introduce Munao Zongge to new audiences.

"Intangible cultural heritage is not something placed behind glass. It needs to be experienced and passed on," he says.

Cun believes that Yuan's reinterpretation has created a new entry point for people unfamiliar with Jingpo culture.

"The more people who understand it, participate in it, and fall in love with it, the more likely it is to continue," he says.

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn



A video of a Munao Zongge performance on Dianchi Lake in Kunming, Yunnan province, has become a viral sensation online. XINHUA

Online Scan the code to watch the video.

Stepping toward global exchange

By RENA LI in Los Angeles
renali@chinadailyusa.com

After years of balancing a career in software engineering with evening dance rehearsals, Olivia Xia, a Chinese American born in Washington DC, never imagined that her lifelong passion for Chinese classical dance would take her to China.

When Xia stepped onto the stage at the Irvine Barclay Theatre in California to receive the inaugural Li Chen Fellowship for Chinese Dance Studies, the moment reflected both her personal journey and the organizers' broader efforts to promote Chinese classical dance through education and international exchange.

"I'm incredibly honored to be the first recipient of this fellowship," Xia says. "Chinese classical dance is my passion. It connects me to my cultural roots and provides me with a rich artistic experience. This fellowship will help me pursue dance as a profession."

The fellowship, which provides $5,000 annually for two years to support Xia's graduate studies at the Beijing Dance Academy, was unveiled during the recent 2025-2026 Taoli World Dance Competition North America Finals.

Presented by the Pan America Chinese Dance Alliance, the competition brought together hundreds of dancers, educators, choreographers, and scholars from the United States and Canada.

The fellowship was established by Kurt Haunfelner, former vice-president of exhibits and collections at Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry, in memory of his late wife, Li Chen, a Chinese dancer who died in 2025 after a six-year battle with breast cancer.

For Haunfelner, supporting young dancers is a way to preserve both his wife's legacy and the cultural tradition she devoted her life to.



Back to the Fields I Love, performed by Dragonfly Arts Academy from Phoenix, Arizona. RENA LI / CHINA DAILY

"I think Chinese classical dance is extraordinary," he says.

"It's beautiful, it's heartfelt, and it brings people together."

Haunfelner says he believes culture offers something politics often cannot. "Sometimes we let politics get in the way of the connection between human beings. But when we connect on a human level, we understand that we all have the same dreams and the same hopes," he says.

The Taoli World Dance Competition was founded in 2017 by Pan Zhitao, a professor at the Beijing Dance Academy. It has evolved into an internationally recognized platform dedicated to preserving and promoting Chinese dance overseas.

This year's finals featured performances in Chinese classical dance, Chinese folk dance, contemporary Chinese dance, ballet, and modern dance by competitors ranging from children to adults.

The competition was judged by an international panel of leading dance educators and artists from China, the US and the United Kingdom.

Beyond performances, the event included multicultural master classes, academic forums, alumni exchanges, and educational workshops designed to encourage artistic dialogue across cultures.

Cheer Pan, co-founder and executive director of the Pan America Chinese Dance Alliance, says Chinese dance has seen remarkable growth since she began teaching in the US three decades ago.

"We are encouraged to see Chinese dance increasingly recognized, appreciated, and embraced on international stages," she says.

The competition, she adds, seeks to preserve the artistic standards and cultural identity of Chinese dance while encouraging international exchange.

She hopes younger generations will gain not only professional training but also a deeper appreciation of their cultural heritage.

Local officials say the competition also reflects Irvine's identity as one of Southern California's most diverse cities.

Scotty Hong, executive assistant to Irvine Mayor Larry Agran and commissioner of the Irvine Sustainability Commission, says the event demonstrates the city's commitment to multiculturalism.

"This is a great showcase of what our city values most, which is diversity," Hong says.

Former Irvine mayor Farrah Khan says the performances introduced audiences to the richness and diversity of Chinese culture.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:23 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:23 PM

LIFE

Following a star's quiet ascent

Through tenacity and patience, actress takes her time to find the right roles in which she can bring her true talent to the screen, **Xu Fan** reports.





From iconic auteur Zhang Yimou's *One Second* to the recent Qinqiang Opera-themed *The Lead*, actress Liu Haocun has won widespread popularity, establishing herself as one of the brightest young stars on the screen.

Actress Liu Haocun's flight was delayed by severe weather. The plane circled above the city before finally touching down at Beijing Capital International Airport around 2 am — hardly an ideal landing time for anyone with a busy day ahead.

Yet, after only a few hours of sleep, Liu was already back on schedule. At 7 am, she was ready to head to a studio in eastern Beijing for a styling shoot tied to a new film.

"She has incredible resilience. Once she sets her mind on a goal, she gives it her all," says one of her team's members who was helping Liu to prepare for her interview with China Daily.

At first glance, Liu gives the impression of being delicately petite. But beneath that quiet, gentle exterior lies a surprising reserve of tenacity.

Luck and skepticism have both shadowed her path to stardom. Six years after her screen debut in Zhang Yimou's *One Second* — a tear-jerking tale of a father's desperate search for a final image of his late daughter — Liu has grown into one of China's most recognizable young actresses.

Following that film, she appeared in a string of blockbusters, from the cancer-themed *A Little Red Flower* (2020) to the heartwarming *Remember Me* (2024) and the suspense thriller *Vanishing Point* (2026).

But what recently propelled her to a new level of fame is the television drama *The Lead*, adapted from Chen Yan's Mao Dun Literature Prize-winning novel of the same title.

Set in Shaanxi province in Northwest China, the series spans more than four decades, tracing the rise of Yi Qin'e — a young shepherd from a remote mountain village who eventually becomes a star of Qinqiang Opera, an ancient and influential form of Chinese folk theater that originated in the region.

"As an actress, I feel truly honored to portray a character like Yi. This is also the first time I have taken on a role that spans decades," Liu says.

An authentic portrayal

Earlier this year, the National Radio and Television Administration, the country's top industry regulator, held a seminar on *The Lead*, bringing together the show's creators and industry insiders to examine its success.

The series has garnered over 1.08 billion online views, achieved an average episode rating of 4.18 percent, far exceeding the industry's 1 percent benchmark, and sparked widespread conversation across platforms including Xiaohongshu, also known as RedNote.

Behind those numbers lay a production process defined not only by creativity but also by endurance.

Chen Yan, the novel's author, remembers visiting the set in Xi'an, the capital of Shaanxi province. It was a sweltering summer day, with temperatures climbing above 30 C. Yet, the actors were dressed in heavy winter costumes for scenes set during winter.

As Chen walked past a pigpen where two hogs oinked loudly, clearly awaiting their meal, he saw Liu, clad in a thick padded jacket, quietly pouring several ladles of swill into the trough.

"That scene transported me back to a time impossible to forget," Chen recalls. He says Liu's performance gave him an almost immersive sense of reality.

For Liu, achieving that level of authenticity required months of preparation long before filming began. Qinqiang Opera — believed to have matured during the Ming Dynasty (1368—1644) — is known for its powerful vocals and bold physicality. It demands both strength and emotional intensity, and performers typically start training as children, studying for years before they even set foot on a stage.

Liu had just two months to prepare. She joined the production team early for intensive and closed-door training, where her days were packed with dialect coaching, singing, recitation, acting, and acrobatics, often for more than 10 hours a day.

She also practiced demanding techniques, including *wo yu*, a posture requiring the performer to squat slowly with extreme flexibility, and *chui huo*, a stunt involving bursts of flame blown from the mouth.

For Liu, however, such preparation was not merely an obstacle to overcome. It was a necessary immersion.

"Every performance in front of the camera, whether in opera or dance, comes down to the training, accumulation, and refinement that happen day after day behind the scenes. As actors, this is something we must do. Only by doing it well can we bring our best to every scene," she says.

Her ability to adapt to the rigors of Qinqiang also draws on her dance background. The 26-year-old actress began learning dance at 4, attended the Affiliated Secondary School of Beijing Dance Academy at 11, and was admitted to the academy's folk dance department at 16.

More than a decade of practice gave her a keen sense of rhythm and body control: skills that proved invaluable when learning opera.

"Over 10 years of dance training gave my body a sense of rhythm, and that rhythmic beauty is a form of artistic beauty too. On camera, I can adjust it according to emotional shifts. I believe body language is a vital part of acting. When it merges with facial expression and inner emotion, the performance no longer feels flat — it enriches the character," Liu says.

At one point, the intensity peaked. Liu watched more than 40 opera footage recordings in a row for study purposes, bringing her emotions to the brink of exhaustion. But she also kept a steady habit: carrying a notebook to record everything she learned and reflected on.

"Whether I'm reading the script or the original novel, I write down my understanding of the character's journey and my thoughts about the role. That helps me deepen my impression, better grasp the character, and later, after filming, review what I've accomplished and what I could improve," she adds.

"The stage presence of Qinqiang characters is often beautiful and rich in classical charm. Each role requires the performer to experience delicate, profound emotions before unleashing a powerful, life-stirring resonance," Liu says, explaining her connection to the 600-year-old art form.

Reflecting on her portrayal of figures ranging from Mu Guiying, a Song Dynasty (960—1279) general, to Yang Paifeng, a servant-turned-warrior, Liu says that during the six months of shooting, she became increasingly immersed in her role and increasingly captivated by the allure of Qinqiang.

Now, the young actress says she hopes the drama's popularity will inspire more young people to learn about Qinqiang, an art deeply rooted in the land and its people, and encourage them to visit theaters and experience its charm firsthand.

The long game

Rome was not built in a day. Behind Liu's seemingly rapid rise lies a quieter, less visible story: years of patience, discipline and quiet preparation.

Fu Lulu, who joined Zhang Yimou's team as an assistant director in the early 2000s, recalls that Liu first caught Zhang's attention during the casting for *Shadow*, the 2018 martial arts film about a commander who secretly trains a look-alike to reclaim a city.

In an earlier interview with China Movie Channel, Zhang described his first impression of Liu: she was "like a piece of black-and-white paper", with eyes that seemed to speak. Although Liu did not get the part — she auditioned for a princess role — Zhang advised her not to rush into acting. Instead, he encouraged her to remain a "blank slate" and wait for the right opportunity.

Zhang later said her perseverance and instinct convinced him she had the qualities of a real actress.

So, she waited three years.

It was not until 2018, when preparations were being made for *One Second*, that Liu auditioned for Zhang again. Among more than 3,000 candidates, she won the role of Liu Gui'nyu, an orphaned teenager struggling to care for her younger brother.

In the film, she played a street girl with a dirt-smudged face who attempts to steal film reels, hoping to use the material as a lampshade. The role, which demanded both fragility and grit, became her screen debut and the starting point of her acting career.

"She works very hard and can endure a lot. She displays a lively quality. Everyone who meets her says she's smart and intuitive. She's got what it takes. When we were shooting *One Second*, I told her, 'Haocun, you were made for this.' I even joked that she might need to change careers (from being a dancer to an actress)," Zhang recalled in the television interview.

"Liu looks like a well-behaved, obedient kid, but she had to play a character almost like a little beggar, which was a huge contrast to her real self. On top of that, she was the only newcomer in the cast who had never studied acting. Yet, when she started her very first scene, the acting coach and I couldn't help glancing at each other — our eyes lit up. We both thought, 'How is this kid so talented?' She exceeded all our expectations," Fu recalls to China Daily.

Liu also remembers a moment from shooting *One Second* in the Dunhuang desert in Gansu province. For one scene, she needed to pick up a cabbage leaf to convey that her character was starving. Though the leaf was covered in sand, she bit into it without hesitation and did her best to make it seem delicious, a precious morsel her character could only dream of during the harsh years of the 1970s.

Through that unusual and physically demanding sequence, Liu says she suddenly understood what it meant to be an actor.

"I also understood why I would love acting for the rest of my life, taking it as part of who I am, a realization that became my quiet, lasting enlightenment."

She speaks those words with a seriousness in her eyes, not as a star enjoying the spotlight but as someone who has experienced years of hard work and uncertainty, and has come to understand that the stage is where she truly belongs.

> "Every performance in front of the camera ... comes down to the training, accumulation, and refinement that happen day after day behind the scenes.
>
> **Liu Haocun,** actress



Liu portrays Mu Guiying (left) and Yang Paifeng (right) in *The Lead*. A still from her acting debut, *One Second* (second right), and a scene from *Cliff Walkers*, Zhang's first espionage thriller, with Liu as a Party agent (second left). PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Contact the writer at xufan@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:23 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:23 PM

CULTURE

A poignant tale of fading memories

An intimate live performance captures the heartbreaking reality of illness alongside deeply held personal bonds, **Chen Nan** reports.



At 64, actress Cai Ming makes her debut in the musical *Let Me Sing My Heart to You, My Mom*, composed by singer-songwriter Xiao Ke (right). PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

As the final scene of the Chinese musical *Let Me Sing My Heart to You, My Mom* ended, the audience did not immediately applaud. Instead, they sat in silence, deeply moved by actress Cai Ming's portrayal of a mother living with Alzheimer's disease and a son struggling to hold on to their bond.

Onstage, Cai had just completed one of the most emotionally demanding roles of her career: a mother whose memories gradually fade, with composer and playwright Xiao Ke portraying her guilt-ridden son. Many audience members sat motionless, wiping away tears before finally breaking into long and heartfelt applause.

Running from Aug 1 to Sept 13 at Xiao Ke Musical Theatre in Beijing, the production marks more than the return of a beloved musical.

For Cai, 64, the premiere also fulfilled a promise she had made nine years earlier.

"This is the day I've fulfilled a dream," Cai told the audience as the cast presented her with a cake celebrating her first-ever musical theater performance. Stepping onto a small musical stage in her 60s, she has shown that artistic discovery can happen at any age — and that some promises are worth waiting nine years to keep, as Xiao Ke puts it.

The journey began in 2017, when singer-songwriter Xiao Ke decided to create a musical inspired by his own mother, who had begun showing early signs of Alzheimer's disease. He wanted to create a work that could express emotions he had never been able to put into words.

When Cai heard about the project, she immediately responded: "You write it. I'll play the mother."

The script was completed in 2019, but scheduling conflicts prevented Cai from joining the original production. Over the following years, the musical and the actress repeatedly missed their chance to work together.

When Xiao Ke revived the production this year, he reached out once again. This time, Cai rearranged her other commitments to take part.

Although she had spent decades performing on stage and screen, musical theater was unfamiliar territory. While she had sung in previous performances, she knew the demands of a live musical required an entirely different level of preparation.



Above: The premiere of the latest production of *Let Me Sing My Heart to You, My Mom* in Beijing on Aug 1.
Below: Xiao Ke and Cai Ming at the premiere.



At first, Xiao Ke told her she only needed to sing one song. That promise did not last.

As rehearsals progressed, he was increasingly impressed by Cai's vocal ability and dramatic instincts. One song soon became three.

At the premiere, their duet *Little One, Don't Be Afraid* became one of the evening's most touching moments, while Cai's solo *I've Changed, Yet I'm Still Me* revealed the emotional depth behind the character. In another scene, Cai unexpectedly sang a famous aria from the Chinese folk opera *The Marriage of Xiao Erhei*. The moment emerged spontaneously during rehearsal, and Xiao Ke immediately decided to keep it in the production.

Cai later joked that she had been "tricked".

"He told me it was only one song," she says, laughing.

But there was no mistaking her enjoyment of the role.

Known to generations of Chinese audiences for her sharp comedic performances, Cai took on a completely different persona in *Let Me Sing My Heart to You, My Mom*. The musical explores memory, family and the pain of realizing that some goodbyes come too late.

Xiao Ke, whose real name is Ke Zhaolei, is best known for folk and pop songs. Born in Beijing, Xiao Ke was trained in classical music. The singer-songwriter's eponymous album was released in 1996, and he has also written songs for pop stars, including *Because of Love* for pop diva Faye Wong and Hong Kong singer Eason Chan. One of his most famous songs is *Beijing Welcomes You*, which was written to mark the 100-day countdown to the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

His journey into theater began in 2007. About 15 years ago, he launched Xiao Ke Musical Theatre in Beijing's 798 Art Zone, where more than 10 Chinese musicals, all written by him, have been staged.

For Xiao Ke, *Let Me Sing My Heart to You, My Mom* is far more than a musical. It is a personal letter to his mother.

Written in 2019, the musical was inspired by her early symptoms of Alzheimer's disease and became his way of expressing feelings that were too difficult to say aloud. It was also the last production she watched at his theater, making the work an especially personal tribute.

The story follows Hu Keyi, a middle-aged singer who dreams of success but finds himself trapped by disappointment and financial struggles. When he learns that his mother is losing her memory, he is forced to confront not only her illness but also his own absence and regret.

His emotional outburst reflects the experience of many people who leave home to pursue their dreams while struggling to find time for aging parents waiting for them. Through one family's story, the musical asks a universal question: How do we express our love before it is too late?

The production's emotional weight was not limited to the stage. During rehearsals, Xiao Ke found one hospital-bed scene so painful that he repeatedly walked away rather than performing it.

"He would stand up and leave," Cai recalls. "It was simply too painful."

Only during the final rehearsal was Xiao Ke able to complete the scene. Afterward, he broke down in tears.

Although both artists were deeply affected by the story, they were moved by different moments.

"For him, the hardest part is when the mother no longer recognizes her son," Cai says. "For me, it is when the child calls for his mother, and there is no answer. That is the moment that breaks my heart."

Contact the writer at chennan@chinadaily.com.cn

China's historic porcelain capital becomes a global crossroads

NANCHANG — Tracing a creative arc from *socarrat*, an ancient Arab ceramic-making technique flourishing in Valencia, Spain, to Jingdezhen's classic Chinese techniques, Spanish artist Xavier Monsalvatje is reinterpreting centuries-old craftsmanship through a contemporary lens.

"In almost all my projects, I've wanted to use traditional ceramic techniques and bring them into a more contemporary discourse," says Monsalvatje. The artist's cobalt-blue artwork has become a standout attraction at the ongoing International Academy of Ceramics Member Exhibition in Jingdezhen, China's renowned "porcelain capital".

The city in East China's Jiangxi province recently gained further recognition when UNESCO inscribed the Jingdezhen Handicraft Porcelain Industry Sites on the World Heritage List on July 25, bringing China's total number of World Heritage sites to 61.

For more than a millennium, Jingdezhen porcelain traveled across Asia, Africa and Europe. Today, that enduring legacy continues to attract more than 5,000 ceramic artists and enthusiasts from around the world during peak seasons.

The city has become a creative laboratory for ceramic artists worldwide. American artist Michael May uses 3D printing to produce ceramic works, taking advantage of Jingdezhen's advanced equipment and technical expertise. Fellow American Matt Watterson incorporates ancient ceramic fragments from the city into his own creations.

Russian-British artist Svetlana K-Liee also says her work evolved over three years in Jingdezhen, where she kept trying new techniques such as wood kilns and combining glass with ceramics.

Another Spanish artist, Jaume Ribalta, opened his own studio in Jingdezhen, where he explored fusing his native Barcelona's black-and-white ceramic motifs with the city's time-honored techniques.



Iraqi artist Wisam Al-Samad discusses the inspiration behind his work in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province, on June 10. LIU ZHANKUN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

The city's highly specialized production system impressed him from the start. "Yet, the real value here lies in the openness — every stage of the craft is accessible to outsiders," Ribalta says.

Oriol Calvo Verges, president of the IAC, believes Jingdezhen offers a rare balance between preserving tradition and encouraging artistic innovation.

"Here, inheritance is visible everywhere: in the kilns, in the workshops, in the hands of craftspeople, in museums, in historic sites, in porcelain itself. But innovation is also present everywhere: in universities, research centers, contemporary exhibitions, residencies, new creative districts and international projects," he says.

Spanish artist Anca Ion is also pushing the boundaries of traditional ceramics in Jingdezhen. By experimenting with the fusion of ceramics and glass at high temperatures, she hopes to create entirely new forms of ceramic art.

Jingdezhen is more than a porcelain production hub; it is also a melting pot where diverse cultures converge and interweave, says Bai Guanghua, associate researcher with the Jingdezhen Imperial Kiln Institute.

The city is home to more than 3,200 inheritors of intangible cultural heritage in ceramic craftsmanship. It is also part of UNESCO's Creative Cities Network as a Creative City of Crafts and Folk Arts.

In recent decades, China has shown that ceramics are far more than a cultural legacy to preserve. They have become a powerful driver of urban renewal, education, tourism, innovation, artistic creation and international dialogue, Verges says.

Ribalta has settled in Jingdezhen. "I have always dreamed of coming to Jingdezhen. As an artist, I expect myself to continue to grow in my artistic career," he says.

"Now, I am exploring the origin of those blue-and-white porcelains that once crossed the ocean to my hometown.

"Jingdezhen is not only part of Chinese history but also world history. And now, it is my home."

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:23 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:23 PM

SPORTS



SOCCER

Infantino's Norwegian nemesis leads the charge

Klaveness, a rare female presence in the sport's halls of power, has been a constant thorn in the soccer boss' side

Norwegian Football Association president Lise Klaveness, a rare woman in a male-dominated world, has for years been a thorn in the side of FIFA's leadership, and some would be quite happy to see her take over from embattled president Gianni Infantino. AFP

A rare woman in the top echelons of soccer, the head of Norway's federation Lise Klaveness has been a thorn in FIFA's side for years.

Now, some would gladly see her take over the leadership of soccer's international governing body from Gianni Infantino.

The 45-year-old lawyer and former player, who represented Norway 73 times, has been highly vocal about international soccer's woes under Infantino.

The Swiss-Italian has been mired in controversy since his plan to open FIFA competitions, including the World Cup, to private investors was swiftly rejected last week.

On Friday, Klaveness called for him to resign.

When Infantino was elected FIFA president in 2016, "he was a candidate who had been elected on a reform program focused on good governance," she told reporters.

"Then, things quickly deteriorated: from keeping a distance, we moved to giving up, and even backtracking, all against a backdrop of a lack of independence from heads of state and other influential figures, particularly from World Cup host countries," she said.

She fired her first salvo at Infantino in 2022, just after she was appointed head of the Norwegian federation, about the conditions under which the World Cup was awarded to Qatar.

From Doha, she publicly lamented that "human rights, equality, democracy, the core interests of football, were not in the starting 11".

The following year, Norway refused to back Infantino in his re-election bid, signaling its dissatisfaction with his leadership.

Klaveness "was, in a way, the first standard-bearer for much of this criticism that many others now share when it comes to the way Infantino runs FIFA," said Mina Finstad Berg, a sports commentator for Norwegian channel TV2.

She "is very committed to ensuring that rules and decisions are respected," she added.

Trump, Balogun, investors

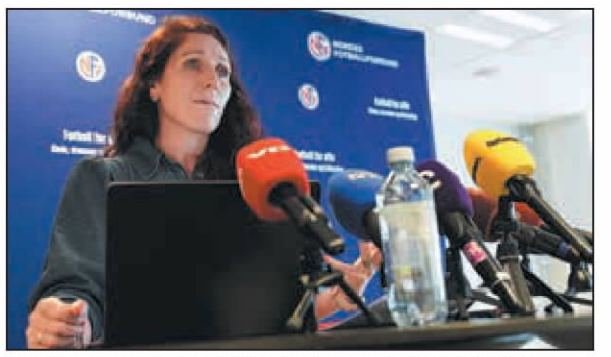
The reasons for her outrage against Infantino have piled up in recent months: FIFA's decision to award a "Peace Prize" to United States President Donald Trump, with whom Infantino seemingly had a conspicuously close relationship; the lifting of the suspension of US player Folarin Balogun at the World Cup last month following an intervention by Trump; and the aborted plan to open FIFA to private investors.

The Norwegian federation has decided to bring all three issues before the Ethics Committee of the world soccer governing body.

Klaveness' voice carries all the more weight after Norway, long absent from major international tournaments, enjoyed a strong run in this year's World Cup before being knocked out in the quarterfinals by England.

Internationally, commentators have praised her "strong moral compass" and consider her a serious candidate to replace Infantino if he were to step down.

He is standing for re-election for a fourth and final term next March, and is currently the only declared candidate.



Lise Klaveness, president of the Norwegian Football Association, addresses a news conference on Friday in Oslo, calling for Gianni Infantino's resignation. AFP

"She was the only one who always took a clear stand and did not go along with the mainstream. And at FIFA, the time is right for a woman to take the lead," former FIFA head Sepp Blatter — himself disgraced after a corruption scandal — wrote on X.

Ballot box obstacles

Klaveness herself has insisted that the crisis in world soccer should not be reduced to a simple "Game of Thrones" power struggle, and has instead called for a renewed focus on good governance.

"For us, it has never been a personal issue against Gianni Infantino," she told reporters. "The problems go beyond the person who is the president."

And while she "has registered" that her name is being tossed around as a possible successor, she brushed aside questions about whether she was a candidate: "We're not there yet."

Many obstacles remain.

"In addition to being seen as extremely radical in many places, especially outside Europe, she is a woman. That is also likely to count against her in many regions of the world," Berg said.

Even within Europe's governing body UEFA, which one would presume would be most favorable to her, Klaveness failed to win election to the Executive Committee in 2023.

She only joined in 2025, when she was the sole candidate for the seat reserved for women.

"If she already has such a hard time getting elected in Europe, how could she convince Africans and South Americans?" asked commentator Erik Thorstvedt, a former goalkeeper for the Norwegian men's national team.

AFP

FIFA condemns 'concerted and ongoing effort' to weaken beleaguered president

FIFA on Saturday condemned "a concerted and ongoing effort by some to undermine" the world game's governing body and its president Gianni Infantino, as the controversy over his now shelved private investment plan rumbles on.

Infantino has faced calls to resign and was also subject to allegations from a British newspaper on Friday that he paid off a lover while at European governing body UEFA.

"Recent reporting has included unsubstantiated assertions and demonstrably false claims concerning FIFA and its president," said the FIFA statement.

Infantino served as secretary-general of European soccer's governing body from 2009 to 2016.

According to The Telegraph newspaper, the Italian-Swiss lawyer previously used his influence to secure a promotion for a UEFA employee with whom he was allegedly in an intimate relationship.

The newspaper added — without revealing its sources — that the same employee received a "a six-figure sum" upon her departure, in addition to the payment of tuition fees for a business school amounting to around 45,000 pounds ($60,700).

When contacted by reporters, UEFA acknowledged that "a departure payment was made to the individual in question" at that time, "coupled with the payment of fees for an MBA course at a local business school".

In Saturday's statement on social media, FIFA insisted it "welcomes legitimate scrutiny".

"But scrutiny is not a license to distort facts, amplify unsubstantiated allegations or manufacture distractions designed to undermine progress. Where reporting is inaccurate or misleading, FIFA will challenge it directly and vigorously," it added.

Infantino, who is standing for re-election next March, has been embroiled in a crisis since the announcement late last month of his controversial — and ultimately abandoned — plan to open up the World Cup to private investors.

He faces opposition in particular from UEFA, which on Thursday stood by its threat to boycott future World Cups, deeming the mere withdrawal of the controversial plan to be insufficient.

FIFA said Saturday it "will not support, facilitate or tolerate any process concerning the election of the FIFA president that is inconsistent with FIFA's Statutes, democratic procedures and established governance framework".

The statement added: "Those who do not have the support of FIFA's member associations should not seek to achieve through allegation, insinuation or misinformation what they cannot achieve through FIFA's established democratic processes."

AFP

Guimaraes eager to 'make history' at Arsenal after $101m move

LONDON — Bruno Guimaraes said he wanted to "make history" at Arsenal after joining the Premier League champion from top-flight rival Newcastle for a reported fee of 75 million pounds ($101.2 million) on Saturday.

The Brazil midfielder spent four-and-a-half seasons with Newcastle and became captain of the Magpies.

Arsenal, who ended a 22-year wait for a top-flight English league title last season, did not disclose the exact length of Guimaraes' "long-term" deal, but British media reports said he had signed a four-year contract with a further one-year option.

"I feel good, I feel amazing. I'm glad for the opportunity," Guimaraes told Arsenal's media channels.

"We have tough games to play this season, so the squad is going to be very, very important, and I'm hopeful we can achieve our dreams."

The 28-year-old said he'd been enthused about joining Arsenal right from his initial interactions with sporting director Andrea Berta and team manager Mikel Arteta.

"From the first time I spoke to Berta and Mikel, I was excited," said Guimaraes. "I just felt inside of me that I need a new challenge in my life, and, I think, to be an Arsenal player, is going to be an exciting challenge in my life.

"I think, after playing two World Cups, I'm at the point in my life that I need a challenge like this.

"I want to win trophies, I want to make history and I think I'm in the right place to do it. I'm so excited to start."

Guimaraes is Arsenal's most high-profile signing of the transfer window so far, joining fellow new arrivals Illan Meslier and Christos Tzolis.

"With Bruno joining us, we are further strengthening the heart of our team," said Berta.

"As we have all seen, Bruno can play as a defensive midfielder and as a box-to-box player. He combines quality with quantity, and has provided goals and assists for his team every year.

"Bruno will allow Mikel to further develop our playing style and will also increase our internal competitiveness, which is essential for maintaining the standards required when we are aiming to win major trophies."

Guimaraes was also linked with Arsenal in January 2022, when he ended up leaving Lyon for Newcastle, but he has finally joined the Gunners after scoring 31 goals in 195 appearances for the Magpies.

Under coach Eddie Howe, Guimaraes helped Newcastle end a 56-year major trophy drought when it won the 2025 League Cup and was also involved as Newcastle twice qualified for the Champions League.

"This is one of the toughest decisions of my life. When I arrived, the club was in a challenging position and I am incredibly proud of what we achieved together," Guimaraes said in Newcastle's statement.

"I fell in love with this place. I really mean that."

Guimaraes is the third high-profile player to leave Tyneside ahead of the new season, following the exits of Anthony Gordon to Barcelona and Sandro Tonali to Tottenham.



Bruno Guimaraes

Howe stepped down as Newcastle manager on July 31, and has since been replaced by German Matthias Jaissle.

Guimaraes, who played for Brazil at the recent World Cup, will compete for a place in Arsenal's midfield with Declan Rice, Myles Lewis-Skelly, Martin Zubimendi and Mikel Merino.

Arsenal kicks off its season against Manchester City in the Community Shield on Sunday, before starting its title defense against newly-promoted Coventry five days later.

Newcastle gets its campaign under way against Liverpool at St James' Park on Aug 23.

AFP

United 'careful' with Mount injury during PSG draw

GOTHENBURG, Sweden — Michael Carrick said he had to be "careful" with Mason Mount after the England midfielder was involved in an injury scare during Manchester United's 1-1 friendly draw with Paris Saint-Germain in Gothenburg on Saturday.

Mount, who joined United from Chelsea in 2023, has been hampered by injury problems since arriving at Old Trafford and he lasted less than 20 minutes after starting against PSG.

The 27-year-old appeared to suffer a foot injury in Sweden and, following discussions with coaches on the touchline, left the field to be replaced by Tyler Fletcher.

"He (Mount) got kicked," United manager Carrick told reporters. "We just wanted to be careful and look after him. We've been lucky with injuries so far, so we wanted to be careful."

Post-match video footage showed Mount walking to the United bus without any form of visible support.

United, which will be competing in the 2026-27 Champions League alongside title-holder PSG next term, was 1-0 down at the time of Mount's injury.

It had fallen behind in the second minute through an Ibrahim Mbaye goal, even though French giant PSG was missing many of its star players.

But, Bryan Mbeumo equalized for United in the 32nd minute, with Amad Diallo playing him in after winning the ball back.

There were more injury concerns for United early in the second half when its 40-year-old goalkeeper Tom Heaton suffered a right hamstring problem while rushing out to make a clearance.

"I enjoyed it," Carrick told MUTV. "Good challenge. Slightly different with the way they play. We should've scored more goals."

The former United and England midfielder added: "It's good for the boys sometimes to have to problem-solve and find their own way, and I thought we did that."

United has two more friendly fixtures before launching its Premier League campaign away to newly promoted Hull on Aug 22.

AFP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:23 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:24 PM

Roots revival

Surprise hit film spotlights Chaoju opera, Yingge dance

CULTURE, PAGE 13



Shared farms offer respite from urban life

CHINA, PAGE 5



Scoring spree

Saka hat-trick powers England past France in 10-goal thriller

SPORTS, PAGE 15

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 MONDAY, JULY 20, 2026

China hailed for boosting global AI push

Experts praise emphasis on intl cooperation, inclusiveness, people-centered approach

By **LIU JIANQIAO** in Beijing and **EDITH MUTETHYA** in Nairobi

China is an active advocate and practitioner of global governance in artificial intelligence, committed to ensuring that the benefits of AI are shared more broadly and equitably among people around the world, experts said.

Guided by the principles of multilateralism, openness and inclusiveness, China works to build the broadest possible international consensus on AI governance and contributes Chinese solutions to advancing global development in the age of intelligence, they said.

Speaking in Shanghai at the opening ceremony of the 2026 World AI Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance, President Xi Jinping called for joint efforts to build a just and equitable system for global AI governance.

"All countries should take a people-centered approach and develop AI for the positive and for good. We should ensure that AI is an important driver for shared prosperity and common security," Xi said.

In his keynote speech, Xi stressed the need for adhering to the principles of openness and win-win and boosting innovation-driven development. He called for strengthening risk awareness, ensuring that AI is secure and controllable, encouraging inclusiveness, promoting mutual learning between civilizations, advocating solidarity and improving global governance.

Gordon K'achola, founder and CEO of the Africa Center for Diplomatic Affairs, highlighted that China has promised to help developing countries build their own AI know-how.

"For Africa and the broader Global South, the goal isn't just getting the latest tech. It's about building the capacity to create and control their own AI writing algorithms, growing research centers, and strengthening local institutions," he said.

Xi said that China will develop international AI application cooperation centers with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the League of Arab States, the African Union, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS.

Furthermore, China will promote the deployment of MAZU, an AI-powered meteorological early-warning solution, in 30 countries, he said.

Philip Okello, principal meteorologist at the Kenya Meteorology Service, noted that China has made significant advances in meteorological forecasting, satellite observation and early warning of disasters, adding that deeper cooperation in these areas could help enhance Africa's forecasting capabilities and strengthen its resilience to climate change.

"President Xi's speech is timely because climate change is no longer a future risk; it is a present-day reality that is affecting countries across the globe," he said.

*See **Governance,** page 3*

Inside

- See more, **pages 2, 3, 9**
- Comment, **page 6**
- Views, **page 7**

Spain reigns



Spain lifts the FIFA World Cup Winner's Trophy after the team's victory following the FIFA World Cup 2026 Final match between Spain and Argentina at New York New Jersey Stadium on Sunday in East Rutherford, New Jersey. LARS BARON/GETTY IMAGES/AFP **See story on page 15**

Iran remains defiant, retaliates amid fresh US strikes

By **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE and **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong

Iran remained defiant and retaliated against US assets across the Middle East as the United States launched airstrikes for an eighth consecutive night under an expanded military campaign.

The renewed spate of violence stems from the two sides' scramble for control of the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow Persian Gulf choke point that carries one-fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas shipments during peacetime.

In a statement on Sunday, the US Central Command said it targeted "Iranian coastal surveillance and air defense facilities, maritime assets, plus missile and drone storage sites". The strikes came a day after two US soldiers were killed and one remained missing during Iran's attacks in Jordan, marking the first US military deaths linked to the conflict since March.

Iran responded with retaliatory attacks on two US military bases in Kuwait, targeting an ammunition depot at Camp Udairi and Patriot radar and aerial monitoring systems at Ali Al Salem Air Base. Bahrain also activated air defense systems early Sunday in response to drone and missile threats.

The Iranian Health Ministry said on Saturday that at least 50 people had been killed and more than 500 wounded in more than a week of intensifying attacks, which Tehran said included strikes on an airport, a railway station and bridges.

Iran's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei warned that the US will face "unforgettable lessons" if it continues attacking Iran. He said that Washington's breaches of the interim accord prove that US President Donald Trump's signature on the deal is "worthless and invalid".

Major General Mohsen Rezaei, a senior military adviser to Khamenei, warned that Tehran will resume full-scale offensive operations should US airstrikes continue in the coming days.

Meanwhile, the US State Department issued a global travel alert, urging US citizens to be extra vigilant amid heightened Middle East tensions. It warned that travel chaos may arise from flight cancellations and temporary airspace shutdowns.

Almost all Arab states in the Gulf have faced Iranian retaliatory strikes, with missile warnings issued in Saudi Arabia on Saturday. The United Arab Emirates has not yet been directly attacked.

However, Iran's Fars News Agency, quoting an anonymous official, said on Saturday that continued strikes on Iranian civilian infrastructure would mean that the airports of Dubai and Abu Dhabi, as well as the ports of Fujairah and Jebel Ali, should be immediately evacuated.

In a statement, the UAE Foreign Ministry urged full restraint to avoid grave regional fallout and prevent the region from sliding deeper into violence and instability, calling for an immediate halt to hostilities and swift resumption of negotiations.

Contact the writers at cuihaipei@chinadaily.com.cn

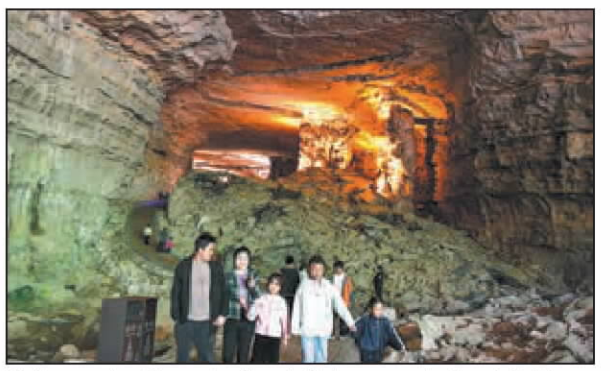
Inside

- Editorial, **page 6**
- Views, **page 7**

GUIZHOU OFFERS SPELUNKERS AN INSIDE TRACK

Natural splendor of Shuanghe Cave is drawing daredevil visitors from far and wide

By **LIU BOQIAN** and **YANG JUN** in Zunyi, Guizhou



Visitors explore Shuanghe Cave in Suiyang county, Zunyi, Guizhou province, on May 2. LUO XINGHAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

The first thing people notice is the silence. Not an ordinary silence, but the kind that lives underground, thick and old, broken only by the drip of water and the distant murmur of a hidden river.

China Vibes

Jean Bottazzi has spent his life crawling into the dark guts of the Earth, from Europe to Asia, but Shuanghe Cave in Guizhou province does something no other cave has done. It swallows him whole and leaves him utterly lost — in the best possible way.

"Most caves I have explored around the world have relatively simple structures," the French caver said, his voice echoing slightly in the chamber. "This one feels like a huge maze."

He flicks on his headlamp. The beam cuts through the blackness and lands on a wall of stone that twists and branches like a frozen forest.

Somewhere in the distance, water rushes. Somewhere deeper, passages he has not yet mapped disappear into the mountain. At 439.7 kilometers and counting, Shuanghe is Asia's longest cave complex, and it still hasn't revealed all its secrets.

Outside, the world is burning. A brutal heat wave has clamped down across much of China, pushing temperatures past 35 C. But the moment you step through the cave mouth in Suiyang county of Zunyi, Guizhou, the summer heat vanishes.

Inside the cave, the air drops to a steady 19 C. The noise of cars and city life dissolves. You hear only your own breath and the low, constant whisper of underground streams.

Zhou Xin, 22, first encountered the cave via a screen. Late one night, scrolling through Xiaohongshu, or RedNote, he saw a first-person video of someone dangling from a steel cable inside a cavern, suspended above water so green it looked unreal. He booked a ticket the next morning.

*See **Cave,** page 4*

Online
See more by scanning the code.

To cultivate robust AI, fertilize the soil it grows in

WORLD WATCH
By Simon Chesterman

The race to develop more powerful artificial intelligence is truly global. So, increasingly, are the risks. An AI system developed in one country may run on infrastructure in another, draw on data stored in a third and affect people everywhere.

No country can govern that chain on its own. Yet meaningful international coordination will remain elusive unless we understand what exactly needs to be governed.

For years, the dominant metaphor was that "data is the new oil". It is memorable, but somewhat misleading. Oil is scarce, costly to extract and depletes through use. In contrast, data is potentially infinite, often surrendered for free and capable of being copied and reused indefinitely.

A better metaphor may be soil. Just as crops grow from soil, AI systems grow from data. The quality, composition and provenance of that soil matter. Contamination can spread. Soil that nourishes one crop may be unsuitable for another. Above all, to remain productive, the soil requires continuous care and cultivation.

This updates the old warning: "garbage in, garbage out". With generative AI, bad soil does not necessarily produce a visibly bad crop. A system trained on flawed or contaminated data may generate a response that appears polished, persuasive and entirely plausible.

That output may then be published, relied upon and eventually ingested as training data for another model. The danger is not just that contamination is consumed, but that it is replanted.

Early debates about responsible AI focused mainly on training data: whether it was biased, legally and ethically obtained, and of sufficient quality. Those questions continue to be important, but the focus has now shifted from training to operation.

Many newer AI systems retrieve live information, connect to databases, use software tools and remember previous interactions. AI agents may read and write documents, communicate with customers, make purchases or modify records. The data environment is no longer fixed when the model is trained. It changes continuously as the system operates.

Therefore, it is impossible to ensure responsible AI simply by inspecting a dataset once and declaring it clean. We need governance of data flows, not merely datasets. Organizations must know what information a system can access, what it can infer, where it can transmit that information and what actions it is authorized to take.

Search engines learned what information we wanted. Social media platforms learned whom we knew and what kept us engaged. AI companions and agents may infer something even more sensitive: what we feel, fear and trust.

Over time, systems can infer preferences, vulnerabilities and personal relationships from trivial interactions.

*See **Oversight,** page 3*

INSIDE
Balancing competition and cooperation
Global Views, page 8

A member of ANN asia news network

© 2026 China Daily Global All Rights Reserved

www.chinadailyglobal.com

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

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:24 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:24 PM

WAIC WORLD AI CONFERENCE

Robot in daily life



A robot developed by GigaAI demonstrates its capabilities in everyday living scenarios at the Embodied Intelligence Pavilion during the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance in Shanghai on Saturday. The pavilion features 314 exhibits from 161 companies, showcasing the latest advances across the embodied AI industry chain, including foundation models, complete robotic systems, dexterous robotic hands and core components.
YANG YURAN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Largest shipbuilder exploring automated design

By ZHAO LEI in Shanghai
zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

China State Shipbuilding Corp, the world's largest shipbuilder, has begun exploring artificial intelligence to automate and optimize ship design, according to a senior technologist.

Speaking exclusively to China Daily at the World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai on Saturday, Gu Yiqing, deputy chief engineer of CSSC's Shanghai Merchant Ship Design and Research Institute, revealed that China's massive shipbuilding footprint gives it an unmatched data advantage for AI training.

"The core challenge we are dealing with lies in consolidating these data resources, preparing them for AI, and training AI systems on them," Gu said, adding that the process is "fraught with difficulties".

"Once breakthroughs are achieved in this process, the adoption of AI-assisted ship design will become a popular trend in this industry. Looking ahead, AI can help organize design drawings and documentation, construct semantic corpora for ship design, improve design efficiency and optimize design outcomes," she said.

> "Looking ahead, AI can help organize design drawings and documentation, construct semantic corpora for ship design, improve design efficiency and optimize design outcomes."
>
> **Gu Yiqing,** deputy chief engineer of CSSC's Shanghai Merchant Ship Design and Research Institute

Engineers from the Shanghai institute, a CSSC subsidiary, have already launched preliminary explorations in this field, Gu added.

Currently, they are training small-scale models to master design codes, interpret specifications and extract key information from existing blueprints. "These foundational small models must be fully refined first before they can be integrated into a large-scale model," Gu said.

While AI tools are currently being used to compare design standards and verify parameters, Gu stressed that human expertise remains central. All AI-generated results still require validation by expert teams. "Full reliance on AI for design work is not feasible at this stage," she said, noting that global shipbuilding powers are all in similar early exploratory phases.

Gu is a leading figure in the field, having spearheaded the design of the *Dazhi,* the world's first smart ship, and serving as chief system architect for the *Ningyuan Diankun*, the world's largest pure-electric, autonomous container ship.

She made the remarks before attending a forum on the applications of AI in maritime and shipbuilding industries.

The forum was hosted by CSSC, attracting more than 200 researchers and enterprise representatives from home and abroad.

The event consisted of several presentations about AI's role and potential in maritime and shipbuilding businesses, a panel discussion, and announcements of progress made by CSSC engineers in applying AI to their work.

With AI already deeply integrated into numerous industries and delivering remarkable benefits, engineers from China's shipbuilding industry are exploring how to unlock AI's full potential within their respective fields.

If AI technologies can be deployed rationally and efficiently, experts said China can not only consolidate its advantages in output and new ship orders, but also further elevate its technological edge as the world's top shipbuilding nation.

According to data released by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, China's shipbuilding industry has ranked first worldwide for the past 16 years in three core indicators: shipbuilding output, newly received orders and outstanding orders.

Statistics from Clarksons Research show that China's shipbuilding sector maintained its global lead across the three major indicators in the first half of this year, accounting for 63.3 percent, 80.9 percent and 73.3 percent of the respective global totals.

Court holds users liable for generated content online

By CAO YIN
caoyin@chinadaily.com.cn

A landmark Beijing court ruling against a user who spread defamatory, AI-generated videos has thrown tangible weight behind China's crackdown on artificial intelligence abuses.

The decision, which came in March, underscores a national strategy that combines strict legislation, administrative policing and judicial action to govern a domestic AI user base that skyrocketed to over 600 million by the end of last year.

In this case, the court addressed the misuse of AI tools by an internet user who produced defamatory videos about a deceased livestreaming host. The videos falsely claimed that the host relied on pills and alcohol to work, suffered from insomnia and anxiety, and was pressured to stream 15 hours a day. The host's agency sued the user for damaging the agency's reputation.

The court ruled in favor of the plaintiff, emphasizing that AI users must verify the authenticity and credibility of AI-generated content before publication. The defendant failed to label the content as AI-generated and to cite sources, violating existing regulations. Consequently, the court ordered the user to issue an apology and pay financial compensation.

Wu Jiao, the presiding judge, said that AI-generated content cannot be used as an excuse to evade responsibility for truthfulness and legality. She urged users to fact-check all forms of AI-produced material to protect others' rights to reputation, privacy and copyright.

Vice-president of the court, Zhao Changxin, said the rising frequency and variety of AI-related disputes highlight the need for stronger regulatory collaboration to support innovation while protecting individual rights.

Data from the China Internet Network Information Center showed that generative AI users in China reached 602 million by December, a 141.7 percent increase from the previous year.

Xu Hao, a lawyer at Beijing Jingsh Law Firm, praised China's governance approach, noting the effectiveness of recent campaigns against AI-related violations. A recent crackdown by the Cyberspace Administration of China led to the removal of over 14,000 non-compliant AI products and the cleaning up of more than 6 million pieces of illegal information.

Li Ya, a lawyer at Zhongwen Law Firm, emphasized the importance of administrative oversight combined with targeted campaigns, especially as AI technology evolves faster than legislation. He highlighted the requirement for labeling AI-generated content as a key step in building a full accountability chain, reinforcing cybersecurity and public interest.

In March 2025, the Cyberspace Administration of China, the country's top internet regulator, together with three other government departments, issued measures for labeling AI-generated content. The regulation took effect on Sept 1, 2025. It is part of a broader effort to promote the responsible development of AI, curb the spread of disinformation and protect public interests. The rules require clear labeling of AI-generated content throughout its life cycle — from creation to distribution — and define the obligations of all parties involved.

Under the regulation, AI service providers are required to embed both types of labels at the point of generation. Content distribution platforms — such as social media — are required to verify uploaded files for implicit identifiers and add prominent warning labels to any content confirmed or suspected to be AI-generated. Users must also proactively declare AI involvement when publishing such content.

Zheng Ning, head of the law department at Communication University of China's School of Cultural Industries Management, called for stronger interagency coordination and nuanced regulation tailored to different AI technologies. She proposed flexible, time-efficient rules to address regulatory gaps in emerging fields like autonomous intelligence.

Both Xu and Li are closely monitoring research into AI governance by the National People's Congress and the Supreme People's Court. They stressed the importance of having a "red-line" approach that explicitly prohibits practices such as facial data misuse and AI-facilitated fraud, establishing a regulatory baseline while allowing room for innovation.

Xu said that future AI legislation should incorporate dynamic provisions, revisable every two to three years, to stay aligned with technological progress. Li added that AI governance should focus on managing risks rather than restraining technology, reaffirming China's commitment to a people-first approach with safety as its anchor to support the sound development of AI.

National computing grid to become 'public utility'

By CHENG YU
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

China has launched a massive, decades-long initiative to unify its domestic computing resources into a single national grid. The goal, unveiled by officials and engineers at the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai on Friday, is to treat processing power as a basic public utility — allowing users to access AI computing as seamlessly as flipping a light switch.

According to the National Data Administration, China's intelligent computing capacity surged to 1,882 EFLOPS by the end of March this year, powered by 14.45 million standard server racks. An EFLOP, or exa floating-point operation per second, is a standard measure of computing performance equal to one quintillion calculations per second.

To maximize this sprawling footprint, China is deploying a three-stage roadmap designed to strengthen self-reliance, optimizing local networks while funding frontier tech like quantum technology and orbital satellite clusters.

Gao Wen, director of Peng Cheng Laboratory and an academician at the Chinese Academy of Engineering, outlined the roadmap at the conference.

"The first stage focuses on pooling computing resources nationwide and about 70 percent of that work has already been completed. It means that roughly seven-tenths of China's computing resources have been incorporated into a unified database that is updated in real time," he said.

"In the second phase over the next five years, the network is expected to begin coordinating computing tasks among selected participants, initially within companies or between cooperating firms rather than serving the public."

He added that the third and final phase would allow computing tasks to move seamlessly across multiple providers without users knowing where the work is being processed.

"Achieving that vision could take one or two decades rather than just a few years. But the final goal is to let Chinese users access computing power as conveniently as electricity," he said.

As AI models continue to grow larger and more computationally intensive, researchers and companies said China must also develop entirely new sources of computing capacity.

Pan Jianwei, an academician at the Chinese Academy of Sciences and one of China's leading quantum physicists, said quantum technology was rapidly moving beyond the laboratory.

Quantum communication has already found early use in sectors including finance and government services, while quantum sensing could reach commercial scale sooner in areas such as navigation and medical imaging, he said.

General-purpose quantum computers capable of solving broad real-world problems remain at least 10 to 15 years away, Pan said, but they could eventually transform fields ranging from materials science to pharmaceutical research by tackling calculations beyond the reach of conventional computers.

While the nationwide network is a long-term strategy, China is proving it can scale its computing infrastructure right now using entirely domestic technology. At the WAIC, State-backed server manufacturer Sugon announced the completion of the Sugon 8000, the country's first fully domestically developed AI computing cluster operating at a massive 100,000-accelerator scale.

Wang Shengyong, vice-president of Sugon, said the significance of the project extends beyond its size. "A 100,000-card cluster is no longer just a machine — it's an entire computing system. From AI processors and high-speed interconnects to system software, the platform was built on domestically developed technologies, underscoring China's push to reduce reliance on foreign computing infrastructure," he said.

The nation is also looking beyond Earth. In Shanghai, officials debuted the first satellite constellation under its flagship orbital initiative, the Star Nexus. The ultimate goal is a sprawling constellation of 1,000 spacecraft designed for "space-data-space-compute" architectures, utilizing outer space for superior heat dissipation and lower power costs.

Key policies give Shanghai AI advantage

Backed by 100-billion-yuan fund, city creates world-class tech ecosystem

By SHI JING in Shanghai
shijing@chinadaily.com.cn

Walk into the newly opened Caohejing M+ commercial center in Shanghai's Xuhui district, and the future is already standard operating procedure. Across its 50,000 square meters, autonomous cleaning and food-delivery robots navigate the floors, while visitors engage with virtual reality skiing simulators and 3D printing workshops.

But this is more than just a high-tech mall; it's the physical manifestation of a world-class artificial intelligence ecosystem. Xuhui, which began its journey four decades ago as a microelectronics hub, has transformed into a hyper-dense AI development zone. Today, the district is home to a quarter of Shanghai's key AI enterprises, a quarter of its integrated circuit design enterprises, and more than a quarter of its registered large-model companies.

While Xuhui is just a snapshot of Shanghai's early strategic moves in the AI sector, the World AI Conference, which has been held annually in the city since 2018, has attracted more than 3,000 leading AI companies from around the globe and facilitated insights from over 8,000 industry experts.

Ding Hong, deputy director of Shanghai Jiao Tong University's Tsung-Dao Lee Institute, said the city has demonstrated strong foresight in its policies and institutional mechanisms for AI development from the early days.

In November 2017, Shanghai issued its first AI development guideline, designed to drive the deep integration of AI with the real economy and to foster innovation-driven entrepreneurship.

When the first edition of WAIC was held the following year, Shanghai rolled out an additional 22 targeted measures to accelerate the high-quality development of AI, focusing on bolstering talent pipelines, advancing core technologies and scaling up pilot applications.

In 2022, the Standing Committee of the Shanghai People's Congress approved the city's comprehensive AI regulations, pioneering provincial-level legislation for the sector and placing Shanghai's AI industry on a solid legal footing.

During its 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25), Shanghai designated AI as a pillar industry alongside integrated circuits and biomedicine. In July 2024, to better facilitate the development of the three industries, the city launched a fund of funds worth 100 billion yuan ($14.8 billion).

According to data from the city government, Shanghai's AI industrial value surged from 134 billion yuan in 2018 to 637 billion yuan in 2025. In the first quarter of this year, AI manufacturing output jumped 19.2 percent year-on-year. To date, up to 169 large models have cleared regulatory registration in Shanghai.

Geographically, Shanghai's AI ecosystem is anchored by two key clusters. On the west bank of the Huangpu River, the Shanghai Foundation Model Innovation Center is home to over 300 AI companies, making it one of the world's most densely packed AI incubators. On the east bank, the Model Matrix Community is home to some 200 enterprises, prioritizing vertical models to advance embodied intelligence, life sciences and other real-world application scenarios.

In May, the city unveiled plans to fully implement the "AI plus" initiative during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period. Strengthened policy support will focus on leveraging AI to drive manufacturing transformation, empower producer services, reform scientific research paradigms and advance full-stack technological innovation.

According to Zhao Xuemei, a researcher at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences' Information Research Institute, the next few years will see critical breakthroughs in deep industrial integration. The world should expect Shanghai to lead the charge in embodied intelligence, brain-computer interfaces and humanoid robotics.

Shanghai is also fostering a self-reliant ecosystem to provide a large-scale testing ground for domestically produced AI chips, aiming to mitigate high costs and access barriers in the computing market.

Tan Limin, chairman of AI solutions provider Shanghai Westwell Technology, said the city has built an end-to-end industrial chain spanning algorithms, computing and hardware applications. Shanghai's next frontier is clear: expanding its footprint to help shape the international standard of AI, Tan said.



An array of 512 DF1000 chips, developed by Shanghai-based AI startup Dongfang Suanxin, is displayed at the 2026 World AI Conference in Shanghai on Sunday. GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:24 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:24 PM

WAIC WORLD AI CONFERENCE

High-level meeting calls for practical solutions to tackle shared challenges

By **MO JINGXI**
mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn

When two powerful earthquakes struck Venezuela in June, artificial intelligence could have helped rescuers identify damaged buildings, zero in on their locations and deploy emergency teams more rapidly, but such AI tools remain difficult for the country to access, a senior Venezuelan official said on Saturday.

Isabel Alicia Iturria Caamano, vice-president of Venezuela's Council of Ministers, made the remarks at the High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance, which was held on Saturday in Shanghai as part of the 2026 World AI Conference.

Caamano noted that AI-powered tools and multimodal models could automatically identify and categorize damaged structures, support the timely deployment of rescue personnel and improve disaster management.

Her speech highlighted an important question facing global AI governance: how to turn technological advances into practical, accessible solutions for countries in need.

Saturday's meeting brought together senior representatives from around 80 countries and international organizations to share experience and build consensus on AI development and governance.

Alexander De Croo, administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, said that AI should be viewed not as a replacement for human intelligence, but as a tool that strengthens human capabilities.

What matters, he said, is whether AI can help doctors make better diagnoses, farmers improve forecasts, teachers educate children more effectively and governments deliver better public services.

De Croo, however, pointed out that AI adoption is advancing faster than institutional readiness in many countries. Rather than slowing technological development, the international community should help countries strengthen institutions, build capacity and invest in people, so that they can benefit from the technology, he said.

Maxim Oreshkin, deputy chief of staff of the Presidential Executive Office of Russia, highlighted the importance of education in preparing people for an AI-driven world.

He said that it was no longer enough to merely transfer knowledge, people must also learn continuously, think critically, work with data and make responsible decisions.

Oreshkin described the signing on Thursday of the agreement on establishing the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization as an important practical step, expressing his hope that the China-proposed organization would become an effective mechanism for joint work, delivering concrete projects and measurable results.

Mahefa Andriamampiadana, Madagascar's minister of digital development, digital transformation, posts and telecommunications, said on the sidelines of Saturday's meeting that inadequate infrastructure and limited access to technology remain major obstacles for developing countries.

Madagascar wants to be a co-creator of AI solutions, rather than merely a consumer, he said, adding that his country has explored AI-based forecasting tools to improve the safety of fishermen and support agriculture, but it still faces difficulties in building its own digital infrastructure.

Mario Nobile, director-general of the Agency for Digital Italy, a technical agency of the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers, said that making AI accessible to people worldwide would require more data centers, reliable energy supplies and other infrastructure. To ensure that no one is left behind, countries must create the conditions needed for broad access to the technology, he added.

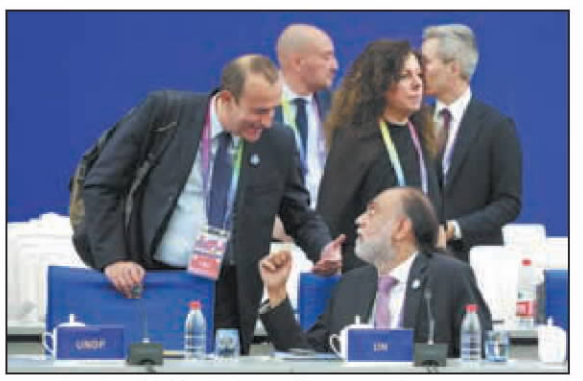
On Friday, China announced that over the next five years, it will provide 5,000 AI training opportunities for developing countries, establish international AI application cooperation centers with several regional organizations and promote an AI-powered meteorological early-warning solution in 30 countries.

China's Assistant Foreign Minister Liu Bin said at Saturday's meeting that "as a responsible major country, China stands ready to work with the international community and make sustained efforts and positive contributions to advance global AI governance".

The World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization would provide more international public goods, support capacity building in the Global South, help bridge the digital and AI divide, and ensure that AI truly benefits people in all countries, he said.

Shanghai Mayor Gong Zheng said that developing AI is an important strategic mission for the city, which has hosted the WAIC for nine consecutive years.

Shanghai will vigorously promote the application of AI across industries and sectors while contributing more deeply to the development of the global AI governance system with greater openness and a more forward-looking vision, he added.



Amandeep Singh Gill (right), United Nations undersecretary-general and special envoy for digital and emerging technologies, interacts with another guest during the High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance on Saturday in Shanghai. GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

Human and humanoid



A bionic humanoid robot named Xia Lan (left), dressed in traditional Chinese opera costume and almost indistinguishable from a human performer beside it, draws visitors on Sunday to the booth of Chinese tech company Digit Robotics at the 2026 World AI Conference in Shanghai. GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

People-centered AI vision garners broad support

Xi's speech emphasizing shared prosperity, common security hailed

By **CAO DESHENG**
caodesheng@chinadaily.com.cn

China's efforts to leverage the 2026 World AI Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance to boost global cooperation on AI development for public good and improve global AI governance have been commended by participants as a beacon of hope for a better world.

Addressing the opening ceremony of the four-day conference in Shanghai, President Xi Jinping announced on Friday the creation of the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization and called for joint efforts to build a just and equitable system for global AI governance.

Maxim Oreshkin, deputy chief of staff of the Presidential Executive Office of Russia, said during a meeting with Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Shanghai on Friday that Xi's keynote speech holds global significance, reflecting China's profound understanding and strategic vision regarding AI development.

Noting that the creation of the organization is a major China-proposed initiative that benefits the world, Oreshkin said that Russia highly appreciates the move and is very glad to become a founding member of the organization. He added that Russia looks forward to working hand in hand with China to expand cooperation in the AI sector.

Luigi Gambardella, president and founder of ChinaEU, a Brussels-based international digital association, said that Xi's speech delivered a strong message that AI should become a bridge connecting countries, not a new dividing line. "President Xi emphasized the importance of openness, cooperation and the need to work together to ensure that AI benefits all of humanity," he said. "China has shown its willingness to promote openness by creating a new platform where all countries are invited to exchange ideas, build trust and advance cooperation."

Xi said in his speech that all countries should take a people-centered approach and develop AI for positive outcomes and greater good, and ensure that AI is an important driver for shared prosperity and common security.

Jin Li, president of Fudan University, noted that Xi recommended a people-centered approach that coordinates development and security, fosters open cooperation, encourages mutual learning between civilizations and advocates improving global governance. This reflects China's commitment to global well-being and shared development, providing fundamental guidance for China's AI innovation and governance practices, while also showing the way forward for the international community to deepen cooperation and build consensus, Jin added.

Xi said the establishment of the organization is China's major move to answer the call of the Global South and unite the international community to vigorously promote AI development and governance. Twenty-nine nations have signed the agreement for the creation of the organization as its founding members.

Hui Zhibin, a researcher at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, noted that since the introduction of the Global AI Governance Initiative in 2023, China has made continuous efforts to provide Chinese solutions. In the face of complex global challenges, China's efforts demonstrate its steadfast commitment to promoting multilateral dialogue, consultation and cooperation, Hui said.

As a global leader in AI development, China's core AI industries were worth over 1.2 trillion yuan ($177 billion) in 2025, while the number of AI enterprises nationwide exceeded 6,200, according to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

Li Yanhong, founder and CEO of Chinese tech company Baidu Inc, said that with the world's richest application scenarios, a complete industrial chain and a vast market, China provides fertile ground for AI technologies and applications, driven by emerging real-world demands.

Zheng Zheng and He Qi in Shanghai contributed to this story.

World AI cooperation body outlines three priorities

China will work with the founding members of the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization to launch its operations at an early date, after 29 countries from Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe signed an agreement on establishing the organization in Shanghai on Thursday, Xinhua News Agency reported.

The signing marked a significant step forward in China's efforts to establish the organization, Xinhua learned from sources involved in the matter.

The organization will focus on three areas. First, it will prioritize international cooperation on AI capacity building through policy exchanges, technical cooperation, personnel training and joint research, helping developing countries benefit equally from the new wave of AI development.

Second, it will serve as a platform matching supply with demand, promote AI applications tailored to national conditions, strengthen technological and industrial cooperation, and encourage the joint development of open-source ecosystems, with the aim of delivering practical, accessible outcomes that address real-world needs.

Third, it will uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, support implementation of the Global Digital Compact and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and promote the building of a just and equitable system for global AI governance.

The agreement covers the organization's purposes, principles, functions, structure, decision-making procedures and membership. Participation will neither affect members' cooperation with third parties nor impose unnecessary constraints or restrictions on their AI development.

CHINA DAILY

Governance: Openness expected to fuel global tech progress

From page 1

Okello also said that Xi's emphasis on strengthening meteorological science, innovation and international cooperation "aligns closely with what Africa needs to better prepare for increasingly frequent droughts, floods and extreme weather events".

Xi also announced the establishment of the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization, whose headquarters will be in Shanghai, as "a major move by China to answer the call of the Global South and unite the international community" to vigorously promote AI development and governance.

Maria Sun, co-chair of the FIRA RoboWorld Cup 2026, said the rapid development of AI has brought new challenges, underscoring the need for stronger international cooperation to address them collectively.

"China's efforts to promote AI cooperation with developing countries are very encouraging. International exchanges like these help bring more countries into the AI era," she said.

"China has maintained an open approach to AI development, and that will contribute significantly to technological progress worldwide. Today, China is one of the global leaders in AI, and its continued openness will help drive innovation and international cooperation," Sun added.

Humprey Arnaldo Russel, head of the ASEAN-China Research Center at the University of Indonesia, said that AI creates transnational challenges involving safety, ethics, misuse, technical standards, regulatory fragmentation, and widening digital and governance divides.

He said that the Global AI Governance Initiative, put forward by President Xi in 2023, advances global AI governance through solidarity and multilateral cooperation, which requires the greatest attention from the international community.

"The proposal is especially important for the Global South, whose interests remain underrepresented in global technology governance. A broadly accepted, United Nations-centered framework could strengthen developing countries' participation (in global AI governance) while respecting different national conditions," he added.

David Tuffley, an adjunct senior lecturer at Griffith University's School of Information and Communication Technology in Australia, said the people-centered approach seeks to address a major challenge in AI governance: ensuring that the benefits of the technology are shared broadly rather than remaining concentrated in the hands of a few.

President Xi's speech highlighted China's commitment to promoting global AI governance and the development of international norms, he noted.

Tuffley also said that for the international community, particularly developing countries, the commitment to capacity building and greater access to computing power is especially significant, as much of the world's population currently has little voice in shaping the rules that govern AI.

"Australia and China share an interest in AI safety research, in standards for evaluating frontier systems, and in ensuring AI serves rather than displaces human judgment in critical domains such as healthcare and education," he said.

Alexis Hooi in Sydney, Yang Han in Hong Kong, Yang Gao in Toronto and Victor Raballa in Nairobi contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at liujianqiao@chinadaily.com.cn

Oversight: Bridging regulatory gaps needs consensus

From page 1

No individual exchange may appear sensitive, yet the accumulated data can create a profoundly intimate profile.

Data protection has traditionally relied heavily on user consent. But few people can anticipate every future use or inference an AI system may make. Before entering a continuing relationship with such a system, users may need the digital equivalent of a prenuptial agreement: clarity about what it will learn, retain, share and delete when the relationship ends.

Consent remains important, but it cannot ensure comprehensive protection. We need accountability and contestability. Who approved access to the data? Can decisions be traced? Can affected people challenge or reverse them? Who is responsible when something goes wrong?

Some see governance as a stop sign in the path of innovation. A better comparison is a seat belt. It does not prevent movement; rather, it allows us to move faster with greater confidence. Poor governance may permit a rapid experiment, but it rarely supports deployment at scale. Trust, documentation and clear responsibility are part of the infrastructure of innovation.

Controls should depend on capability and consequences. The greater a system's autonomy, the wider its access to data and tools, and the more irreversible its actions, the stronger those safeguards should be.

The aim cannot be to eliminate all risks. The only completely safe AI system would be one switched off and locked away. Instead, organizations should seek to bound risk by restricting access, requiring approval for consequential actions, preserving audit trails and expanding autonomy only when evidence justifies it.

The world is unlikely to agree on a single global AI regulator or universal rulebook. Countries differ in legal traditions, economic priorities and social values. But agreement should be possible on minimum expectations concerning data provenance, security, testing, incident reporting, auditability and responsibility among developers, deployers and users.

This is not an argument for regulatory uniformity, still less for leadership by any single country. It is an argument for interoperability. Without it, companies face incompatible obligations, while individuals could fall through the gaps between jurisdictions.

Major powers will continue to compete over AI. That competition makes coordination more urgent, not less. Aviation, telecommunications and finance combine national regulation with international standards because cross-border systems require common foundations. AI will be no different.

The essential principles are simple: know your data, know your AI agent, and know who is responsible for its actions.

AI may flourish in many kinds of soil. But neglected ground does not remain neutral. Weeds take root, contamination spreads and healthier growth is eventually crowded out. Building responsible AI therefore requires more than celebrating the harvest of technological breakthroughs. It requires sustained cultivation — and cooperation wherever the roots and seeds cross borders.

The author is David Marshall professor of law at the National University of Singapore, where he is also AI Governance and Policy lead at the NUS AI Institute and dean of NUS College. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:24 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:24 PM

CHINA

Experiencing Qiong Opera



Members of a United States youth delegation from Hawaii watch a Qiong Opera performance at a teahouse in Haikou, Hainan province, on Sunday during a China-US youth exchange program. Over the coming week, the students will visit several cities and counties across Hainan to experience Chinese culture and learn about the development of the Hainan Free Trade Port. GUO CHENG / XINHUA

Rescue teams race against time after deadly landslide

Workers dig through rubble, provide assistance to residents after disaster

By TAN YINGZI and **DENG RUI** in Chongqing and **HU QING**

Rescue and relief teams raced against time over the weekend as they combed through rubble in search of survivors and supported affected residents after a landslide struck Pengshui Miao and Tujia autonomous county in Chongqing on Friday, burying more than 10 residential buildings.

Some 872 rescue personnel and more than 1,100 pieces of equipment have been deployed to the area to aid search and rescue efforts, according to local authorities. At last count, eight people were killed and another 34 remained unaccounted for. Ten injured people had been hospitalized, including two with severe injuries and two in critical condition.

Rescue teams used life detectors, search dogs and other equipment looking for possible survivors.

A geological assessment showed that the collapsed area measured about 60 meters long, 30 meters high and 10 meters thick, with a total volume of about 18,000 cubic meters.

Experts classified the disaster as a large-scale rockfall, with the largest detached boulder estimated at about 3,000 cu m — roughly the size of a residential building.

"Such a large boulder made the rescue operation far more challenging than we had encountered before," Zhou Zhidong, chief technician of China Anneng Group Third Engineering Co Ltd, said during a media briefing on Saturday.

The rescue site was extremely confined, bordered by a mountainside, steep slopes and a river.

Only one or two pieces of heavy equipment could pass through at a time, severely restricting the deployment of large machinery, he added.

Li Li, head of an expert panel overseeing the disaster response, said the collapse was difficult to detect from the surface because the fracture planes were hidden inside the mountain and required experts to climb to the top for on-site inspections.

Despite the challenges, early warnings from local community workers helped prevent a much greater loss of life.

Local authorities quickly evacuated more than 1,100 residents, including more than 60 people living near the core danger zone.

Zhang Weiling, Party secretary of Shatuo community, where the disaster occurred, told China Daily that four community workers went door to door urging residents to evacuate after spotting scattered falling rocks during routine inspections.

One of the workers, Gong Baodong, went missing while helping evacuate residents. The other three community workers on duty at the time were confirmed safe, Zhang said. Gong, in his 20s, joined Shatuo as a community worker in May 2025. His colleagues described him as a responsible and diligent worker committed to self-improvement.

Following the disaster, volunteers, medical workers, businesses and local residents quickly mobilized to help, demonstrating widespread support from across the county and beyond.

Luo Huan, a volunteer with the Pengshui women's federation, arrived at a temporary shelter early on Saturday morning to distribute breakfast and provide other assistance.

"Volunteers from all walks of life came together to help," Luo said. "Besides providing daily necessities, we are also helping connect residents with medical services and staying with them to offer emotional support."

Ran Maohui, a doctor at the shelter, said she provided psychological support and health checks for evacuees.

She also helped elderly residents with chronic conditions like hypertension refill prescriptions and arranged nutritious meals for a new mother struggling with breastfeeding.

Among those evacuated, Gong Shaoqun, who runs a grain and cooking oil wholesale business, said her home in a seven-story residential building was buried by the landslide, but all three members of her family escaped safely after receiving an evacuation warning.

"We didn't have time to take anything with us," Gong said. "But the shelter provided all the daily necessities."

The National Health Commission has dispatched emergency medical teams and specialist doctors to support treatment efforts following the landslide.

The commission immediately mobilized national-level and Chongqing emergency medical rescue teams and sent medical workers and ambulances to the site.

A college freshman surnamed Zhang, who was injured in the disaster, was alone at home when the landslide occurred. She recalled struggling to walk due to leg injuries before a firefighter carried her down and took her to an ambulance. After receiving timely examinations and treatment at the hospital, Zhang said she was recovering, though her legs still hurt slightly while walking.

"The medical staff members were so kind and caring. I was deeply moved," she said.

Contact the writers at huqing@chinadaily.com.cn

Grid managers risk lives to aid Chongqing evacuation



Tan Yingzi
Reporter's Log

"Please leave me alone," Zhang Weiling, Party branch secretary of Shatuo community in Hanjia subdistrict, Pengshui Miao and Tujia autonomous county, wearily told the reporters on Saturday after giving interviews about evacuations that took place shortly before a deadly landslide struck her community in Chongqing.

An emotional Zhang tried hard to hold back tears as she recalled the harrowing event.

During the chaos of helping residents move to safety, one of her colleagues was injured and hospitalized and another went missing.

Overwhelmed by sadness and the heavy burden of resettlement work, she found a quiet corner to sit and bowed her head to rest.

As I covered the landslide story in this community, I was deeply touched by the bravery and dedication of the most grassroots community workers: the grid managers who serve as the vital link between local residents and the government.

Local communities in Chinese cities and rural areas are divided into small neighborhood units called "grids". Those grid managers are responsible for handling information collection, safety inspections, dispute mediation and public services to ensure effective community governance.

The landslide occurred at around 9 am on Friday in Pengshui county, burying several residential buildings and trapping multiple individuals.

The disaster killed eight people, with 34 still missing.

Fortunately, earlier that morning, local community workers issued an emergency warning after discovering sporadic rockfalls during an early morning patrol and organized the safe evacuation of over 60 residents.

Grid managers, such as Peng Di and Gong Baodong, knocked on every door to warn residents about the landslide and encouraged them to leave for a safer place.

Some left home right away, but others hesitated and chose to stay put.

"While everyone else was fleeing, Peng ran against the crowd and kept shouting warnings to the residents," Ran Shifang, 49, a resident who escaped from landslide, said.

"She shouted, 'The mountain behind us is about to collapse! Run to the sides, hurry!'"

Just before the collapse, Peng was struck by flying debris and tumbled into a gap between the fallen rocks. Later, she was rescued and taken to the hospital for treatment.

But Gong, a young man in his 20s, lost contact at around 9 am while assisting with the evacuation effort. He became a grid manager in May last year after graduating from Southwest University of Political Science and Law in Chongqing.

This is not just an isolated story of bravery; it is a vivid reflection of a massive network. China is powered by several million grid managers nationwide. From resolving neighborhood disputes and assisting elderly empty-nester, to patrolling dangerous hillsides during rainstorms, they are the vital links that hold societies together.

They transform abstract state governance into tangible, warm and highly efficient daily care. They prove that effective modern governance relies not just on big data and smart cameras, but on the dedicated footsteps of individuals who know their neighborhoods inside out.

For their ultimate dedication, their silent sacrifices and their unwavering bravery in the face of danger — hats off to the grid managers.

1,400-year-old Buddha statue's head discovered

By ZHU XINGXIN in Fenyang, Shanxi and **LI LEI**

Two discoveries that occurred 26 years apart have led to the complete assembly of a 1,400-year-old Buddha statue that went on public display at a museum in Shanxi province on Sunday, offering a rare glimpse into Buddhist art from the Northern Qi Dynasty (550-577).

The headless statue was first discovered in 2000 and a damaged sandstone head was found by a 57-year-old local farmer this month.

He Dongsheng, from Dongzhao village in Fenyang city, made the discovery while working on his field next to a pig farm.

Caked in mud when found, the fragment measures 37.5 centimeters tall, 24 cm wide and 25.5 cm thick. It has severe damage to its left ear and nostril, as well as extensive erosion on its left side.

Despite its weathered appearance, the head bears unmistakable stylistic features of Northern Qi sculptures, including a polished ushnisha — an oval-shaped protrusion on the top of Buddha's head — as well as a broad forehead, full cheeks, a faint smile and streamlined contours, according to a panel of experts assembled by the Fenyang Museum.

"I knew in my heart it was a national cultural relic. Donating it to the State was the most appropriate choice," He told China Daily.

After hearing news of the discovery, Tian Xinsheng, Dongzhao Party chief, suspected that the head may belong to a headless Buddha statue already housed at the museum.

To verify the match, the museum commissioned a professional team on July 12 to conduct 3D scans of both the head and the statue's body.

After several days of digital analysis, experts confirmed that the fracture surfaces, stone texture and weathering patterns were a precise match, proving the two pieces belonged to the same statue.

Wang Zhongzhang, a former curator of the museum who helped excavate the headless statue in 2000, had spent years searching for its missing head.

Seeing the statue restored at last, Wang, now in his 70s, said he was overjoyed.

"As a veteran cultural heritage worker, I am truly delighted. These stone carvings vividly demonstrate the superb craftsmanship and artistic wisdom of the Chinese nation from a thousand years ago," he told China Daily.

Kong Linghai, the museum's current curator, said the complete statue would provide an important reference for the study of Buddhist stone carvings in western Shanxi.

"Every cultural relic carries the cultural genes of its place of origin. It reflects the economic, artistic and cultural standards of successive dynasties," he said.

Kong expressed hope that the case would encourage more rural communities to value and protect their cultural heritage.

"Many historical objects remain scattered in villages. If this case sets an example, it could prompt more people to come forward," he said.

Experts said Fenyang's rich Buddhist heritage dates to the 6th century, when monks fled to the area during a suppression of Buddhism in a neighboring region.

A donation ceremony was held at the museum on Saturday, where He received a certificate and a cash reward of 10,000 yuan ($1,475).

Deputy Mayor Wang Baoqi presented the award and a silk banner to the Party branch of Dongzhao village in recognition of its role in safeguarding the relic.

"His generous act reflects the strong cultural awareness and deep sense of legal responsibility among the people of our city," Wang said at the ceremony, calling on residents to follow He's example in protecting the city's cultural heritage.

Zhang Shurui and Chen Shuo contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at lilei@chinadaily.com.cn



Museum staff members reunite a 1,400-year-old Northern Qi Dynasty (550-577) Buddha head donated by He Dongsheng with its original statue at the Fenyang Museum in Shanxi province, on Sunday. FAN LIFANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Cave: Winding resort caters to diverse needs of tourists

From page 1

Now there, he leaned back against the rock wall, arms outstretched, exactly like the figure in that video. Below him, the heart-shaped green pool glimmered under the thin beam of his headlamp. Steel cables hummed softly overhead. "I came all this way just for this photo," he said.

He is on Shuanghe's wildest attraction — an underground protected climbing route that is bolted into the cave walls.

Helmets buckled and harnesses tight, climbers edge along steel lines, squeeze sideways through slots barely wider than their shoulders, wade knee-deep through icy underground streams, and finally scale a sheer 30-meter cliff face in the dark.

Not everyone arrives feeling brave.

Yan Ziqian, a 12-year-old from Chengdu, Sichuan province, trembled when he stood at the entrance. "It was completely black inside," he said. "I couldn't see anything." Then his lamp caught the glimmer of an underground river, and the fear melted into wonder. "It felt like I had stumbled into a secret world."

By the end, he was grinning, already calling himself a seasoned spelunker.

Guide Huang Huazhou sees this transformation every day.

"Kids come in nervous," she said, "but they leave feeling like heroes."

The team has designed two routes — a gentler 2-km stretch for ages 10 and up, and a more challenging 2.5-km route with steep drops that demand real muscle.

Not everyone wants to dangle from a cliff. Some prefer to drift.

Out on the water, paddleboarders glide across a surface so still it mirrors the mountains. They move toward the cave's mouth in near silence, paddles dipping and rising, the only sound the soft splash of water against rock.

The river is fed by the cave's own underground waterways, and even in August, the water is shockingly cold.

"It feels completely separate from the world," said visitor Xu Kexin, floating on her back, staring up at cliffs wrapped in green. "You forget what season it is. You forget the city even exists."

Bottazzi, who now lives nearby so he can keep exploring, is blunt about what's at stake.

"Exploring and developing Shuanghe is important for regional development and the advancement of knowledge," he said. "But we must do it wisely and with greater respect for this heritage."

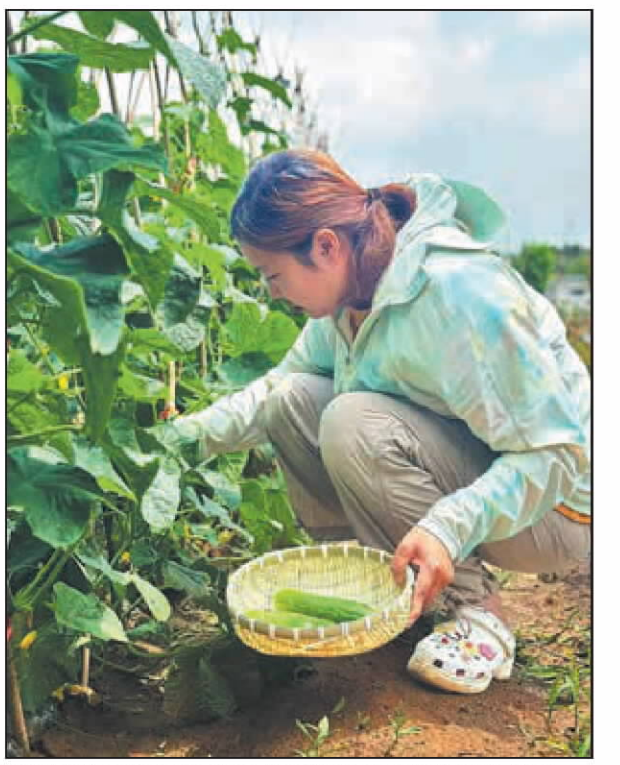
Contact the writers at liuboqian@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:24 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:24 PM

CHINA





Left: Residents of Huzhou, Zhejiang province, work in a shared plot in March. XIE SHANGGUO / FOR CHINA DAILY **Right:** A woman harvests cucumbers in her plot in a shared garden at the Yugeng natural farm in Jinan, Shandong province, in May. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Shared farms flourish as tranquil retreats

Urban plots a respite from stress and boredom, double as educational fields

By **ZHAO RUIXUE** in Jinan
zhaoruixue@chinadaily.com.cn

On a sloping patch of land once choked with weeds and left abandoned for nearly a decade, a visible transformation has literally taken root.

In Licheng district, Jinan, Shandong province, the hillside is now a checkerboard of lush greenery, divided by white picket fences and crisscrossed with bamboo trellises heavy with cucumbers, tomatoes and eggplants.

On a Saturday morning in late May, after a sudden storm swept through the city, a group of urban gardeners rushed to their plots in Tangye subdistrict to check on their vegetables.

"I had no idea how my vegetables were holding up after that wind and rain," said Xu Ling, a local resident, in a post on her Douyin account.

"Having a vegetable garden gives you one more thing to care about," she said.

Xu and her husband Tian Xiangqin tend a 20-square-meter plot they call Lele's Garden, named after their 7-year-old son. Inside, they grow not only vegetables like cabbage and cilantro, but also flowers including lotuses and hydrangeas.

The couple go to their garden at least once, and sometimes twice, a day. On weekends they bring their son to the garden.

"Once we are here, we are reluctant to leave," said Xu, standing in the sunshine beside her plot.

This hidden pocket of green at the foot of Longgushan Hill is more than just a gardening project. It is part of a growing urban phenomenon in China where shared vegetable gardens turn idle land into productive, community-driven spaces, often with therapeutic benefits for the participants.

For many city residents, these small plots have become a place to slow down, connect with nature, and discover the simple joy of watching things grow.

"Shared vegetable gardens are rooted in land resources, people's needs and the renewal of urban and rural spaces," said Liu Dejun, chief economist at the Shandong Academy of Macroeconomic Research.

"As older neighborhoods are renovated and idle rural resources are revived, the industry will move from rough, spontaneous growth to standardized operations and branded services. The market space will continue to expand," said Liu.

From wasteland to asset

"This used to be nothing but wild slopes, overgrown weeds and trash," said Han Kunjie, 30, who manages the Longgushan shared vegetable garden.

The land had sat unused for nearly 10 years after the surrounding area was developed. That changed in 2024, when the Tangye subdistrict office began planning the Longgushan cultural and creative park project. The shared garden was included in the park.

Han, a Zhanglingqiu Ercun villager, secured the land through a rural land transfer agreement, a practice where villages lease land-use rights to individuals.

"I had thought about planting Chinese medicinal herbs, but finally gave up the idea because I did not think the land was suitable," Han said.

He had noticed parents struggling with their children's screen addiction, stressed workers seeking outlets, and seniors wanting to stay active and healthy. So, he decided to create a shared vegetable garden.

He installed taps and irrigation pipes, leveled the paths, provided free hoes and shovels, and hired a veteran farmer as a consultant.

The results exceeded expectations. Covering just over nine *mu*, or 6,000 square meters, the garden was divided into 204 plots, with 200 of them measuring 20 or 30 sq m each, and four slightly larger ones.

The plots went on offer on March 1. Within ten days, all of them were rented.

"When we first planned this, we were not sure if anyone would want to rent a plot," Han said. "But it turned out to be incredibly popular," he added.

Walking through the garden, the care and individuality of each plot are immediately visible. Some have just been seeded, with tender green shoots poking through the soil. Others are bursting with produce; small watermelons dangling from vines, their weight tugging at the trellises.

"Watermelons grow on vines?" a young girl standing by one plot asked.

Many plots have been personalized with creative nameplates.

At the entrance, staff have posted a seasonal planting and harvesting calendar to guide novice gardeners.

The garden offers three rental prices. For those who want to do everything themselves, including sowing, watering, weeding and harvesting, the cost is 1,299 yuan ($190) per year. A semi-managed option, at 1,599 yuan, includes watering, fertilizing and weeding by staff. The full-service package for 1,899 yuan requires renters only to provide seeds and fertilizer, while professional gardeners handle the rest.

Interestingly, only about 10 percent of renters choose the semi-managed or fully managed options.

"Most people really want to grow vegetables on their own," Han said.

He said the project is predicted to start turning a profit in its third year.

This enthusiasm is not unique to Longgushan. At the recently opened Yugeng natural farm in Licheng district, 70 of its 150 plots — each 20 sq m — have already been claimed.



Tian Xiangqin and his son tend a 20-square-meter plot at the foot of Longgushan Hill in Jinan. The plot, called Lele's Garden, is named after the son. ZHAO RUIXUE / CHINA DAILY

Self-planting at Yugeng farm costs 988 yuan a year, with free access to water, electricity, tools, and even seeds and fertilizer for the first year. Technical staff are on hand to offer advice.

"Our garden is not just about growing vegetables. Instead, it is about leisure," said Jiang Rongjian, the farm's manager.

"We want to create a kind of relaxed, farming lifestyle that young people and seniors will love," he said.

The farm also features a bamboo forest park, a children's karting track, and open-air kitchens where farm renters can cook what they have just picked.

Connecting to the soil

On a Saturday at Longgushan, retirees, young parents and children trickle in.

Eighty-six-year-old Han Yuanren, who lives ten minutes' walk from the garden, visits his plot every day with his small dog. In his 30-sq-m plot, he grows more than a dozen vegetables, including cilantro, cucumbers, beans and lettuce.

"I am happy when I see these vegetables growing very well," he said, smiling.

According to Han Kunjie, most renters were born between 1985 and 1995. "They rent the plot for their parents," he said.

"People live in apartment buildings. Neighbors hardly know each other. Grandparents are stuck at home watching television or scrolling on their phones which is not good for their health," said Han.

Tian said the plot gives him something to do, and helps his son Lele learn where food really comes from. "My family is from the countryside," said Tian, as he loosened the soil alongside his son.

"My father farmed for more than 30 years. But we live far from our hometown, and our son knows very little about vegetables. We would like him to experience the whole process, from sprouting to harvest," he said.

Tian, who works as an interior designer, has given his vegetable garden a style of its own.

"We try to grow more crop varieties, each no more than one square meter," said Tian, adding they plan to plant more flowers.

More than a garden

For many urban dwellers, the appeal of a shared garden goes far beyond fresh produce. It offers daily rhythm, rewards, and a sense of connection to the earth and to oneself.

"Working in the garden lets you put down your phone and slow down," said Xu.

"The smell of soil, the simple repetition of digging, sowing, watering and weeding brings focus and relaxation. You find peace in the sweat and the harvest."

But not everyone has access to a real plot of land. For those who do not, "cyber farming" has become a popular alternative.

Cui, a senior at Shandong University who declined to give her full name, turns to farming simulation games to cope with the pressures of graduate school examinations, internships and job hunting.

"In a farm, although it's cyber, as long as you sow, water and weed, you are guaranteed a harvest. That certainty is deeply satisfying and helps ease anxiety," said Cui.

Yet beyond personal relief, shared gardens are also proving to have a profound social impact. In Tongji town, Pengzhou, Sichuan province, 42-year-old Fan Xiuyun has transformed a shared vegetable garden into an important provider for her community.

She runs 20 *mu* of shared plots, where donors pay 365 yuan a year to adopt a small section and receive monthly organic vegetable boxes in return.

Local seniors work the land to earn meal credits for a canteen. Surplus vegetables are sold for charity, with the proceeds going into a community fund that supports the canteen. People with disabilities have also been hired to take care of the vegetables.

Adapt and grow

Despite their growing popularity, shared gardens face a major problem: low renewal rates.

"The biggest issue is that most people do not renew their contracts," Han, the manager, said. "Many renters are just trying it out for fun. Once the novelty wears off, they do not come back."

That is why the Longgushan garden deliberately kept the number of plots manageable. "We want to keep them fully rented year-round while giving as many people as possible a chance to try it," said Han.

Liu noted that many small-scale shared farming projects still rely too heavily on land rental income, which has little added value. "Revenue gaps between peak and off-seasons are huge. The payback period is long, and risk resistance is weak," he said.

He suggested building a diversified revenue system that includes leasing, managed services, produce sales, and educational tourism.

Longgushan is already adapting. The cultural and creative center, which the garden is part of, is being developed into a full-fledged lifestyle destination. Plans include a parking lot, a convenience market, a coffee shop, flower beds planted on a nearby slag heap, a creative bazaar, and even charging stations for electric vehicles.

"When parents bring their children here, they need a place to park, somewhere to buy groceries, a nice view, and then they can tend the garden and have fun," Han said.

Yugeng natural farm is taking a different path.

"We do not want to become just a photo opportunity spot," said Jiang, the farm manager. "We want to keep the commercial feel low and let people truly connect with nature."

The farm plans to introduce more education courses for seniors and parent-child activities.

Liu said that shared gardens deserve flexible policy support. He suggested that local governments streamline approval mechanisms, lower entry barriers for idle urban land, encourage social capital to participate in compliant operations, and adopt differentiated regulation.

"For projects that are purely about growing vegetables, give the operators as much freedom as possible to run things on their own," said Liu.

"For projects that have a few simple leisure facilities, local authorities can set clear construction standards to guide the development. For projects that extend into tourism, strictly control how much land they use and how big they build to protect the land."

The social benefits are considerable, said Liu.

"For seniors, farming brings back rural memories, supports health and leisure, and enriches their later years. For younger people, it is a way to spend time with family and return to a slower pace of life. For children, it is an outdoor classroom to have labor education, nature education and cultural education all rolled into one."

All three groups together, he added, help bridge the generation gap in cities, strengthen family traditions, and revive the culture of farming and learning.

Sun Qi contributed to the story.







Left: A parent and child walk in a shared garden in Jinan. ZHAO RUIXUE / CHINA DAILY **Center:** Children tend vegetables at a shared plot in Zhangzhou, Fujian province, in April. DENG HUA / XINHUA **Right:** A hobby farmer cooks at the shared garden in Jinan in May. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:24 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:24 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

UK government's British Steel takeover sends chilling signal to global investors

A country's character is revealed by how it treats those who answered its call in times of need when others walked away. By that measure, the United Kingdom's nationalization of British Steel says less about steel than it does about the country's changing attitude toward foreign capital.

Around six years after China's Jingye Group rescued a bankrupt company that no other investor would touch, the UK government has effectively taken the assets of the investor it once welcomed as a savior. For a country whose greatest comparative advantage has long been its reputation for propriety and respect for property rights, the move could hardly be more damaging.

When British Steel collapsed into insolvency in 2019, few buyers emerged. Jingye stepped forward, acquiring the company for around £70 million ($94 million) and subsequently investing more than £1.2 billion to keep production running and preserve thousands of jobs. British politicians and newspapers then hailed the rescue as evidence that the UK remained open to global investment.

Yet last week, after first stripping Jingye of operational control through emergency legislation, the UK government formally nationalized British Steel, citing "national security" and "industrial resilience".

Few would dispute that steel occupies a special place in national security calculations, particularly when Scunthorpe hosts the UK's last blast furnaces capable of producing virgin steel. Facing mounting losses and tightening environmental requirements, Jingye proposed to replace them with cleaner electric arc furnaces, a transition already underway across much of the global steel industry. To finance the transformation, it reportedly sought UK government support of roughly £1 billion. The UK government offered only half that amount.

When negotiations collapsed and Jingye prepared to close the furnaces, ministers concluded that the UK could not politically afford to become the only G7 economy without primary steelmaking capacity.

Politics therefore trumped economics.

Instead of reaching a commercial compromise, the UK Parliament rushed through emergency legislation at remarkable speed before completing the formal nationalization this month. In doing so, the UK protected its steelmaking capabilities but simultaneously created another problem: whether foreign investors can still assume that commercial decisions will remain insulated from shifting political priorities.

The answer is increasingly no to many.

China's Ministry of Commerce rightly warned that the nationalization decision would inevitably weaken the confidence of Chinese businesses investing in the UK. China's Foreign Ministry has urged the UK government to honor market principles, contractual obligations and the bilateral investment protection agreement between the two countries, while making clear that Beijing supports enterprises seeking legal remedies to defend their rights.

Nor can the UK claim it lacked warning. As early as May, when reports first emerged that nationalization was under consideration, Beijing urged London to proceed cautiously, avoid discriminatory treatment and seek a mutually acceptable commercial solution. Those appeals were ultimately ignored.

The compensation dispute has only deepened concerns. Jingye said on Sunday that the UK had "trampled on international investment rules" by offering what it described as virtually no meaningful compensation. The company is justified in urging the UK government to provide prompt, full and effective reimbursement for all losses. Citing a report of the UK's National Audit Office, Jingye also noted that the UK had spent £377 million to operate British Steel as of the end of January. The figure was expected to exceed £600 million by the end of June and could surpass £1.5 billion by 2028.

So the larger question is why taxpayers are now financing losses that private capital had previously absorbed. Even many UK observers acknowledge the deeply political nature of the intervention. As they have said, the extraordinary pace of the emergency legislation and lingering uncertainty over compensation have exposed an uncomfortable tension between industrial strategy and the UK's longstanding reputation for contractual certainty.

For the UK's incoming prime minister, Andy Burnham, the handling of British Steel will become an early test of his government's economic pragmatism. Treating China as a geopolitical rival risks narrowing the UK's own economic options.

The UK's global standing has long rested on the belief that its legal institutions remain more durable than its politics. If that perception weakens, the damage will extend well beyond the steel industry. It will shape how investors around the world judge the reliability of what is allegedly one of the West's oldest "champions" of the "rule of law".

US-Iran MoU should not go up in smoke

Just weeks after signing a memorandum of understanding on an interim deal to halt their conflict, the United States and Iran are embroiled in intense confrontation, casting a dark shadow over the stability of the Middle East and the security of global energy supplies.

The current escalation is marked by a series of devastating attacks. The US has launched multiple rounds of air strikes against Iranian military sites, claiming they are necessary to "degrade Iran's ability to threaten commercial shipping" in the Strait of Hormuz. US President Donald Trump has threatened to target Iran's power stations and bridges.

This military confrontation has effectively nullified the MoU. On Saturday, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi declared that Iran has ceased fulfilling its obligations under the agreement, as Washington has violated its commitments.

Iran's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei also said the US' violation of the MoU proves the US leader's signature is worthless and invalid, highlighting the profound breakdown in trust.

The diplomatic path, which offered a glimmer of hope, now appears completely blocked. Central to this conflict is the strategic Strait of Hormuz. The escalation of tensions has already led to a sharp slump in shipping through the strait, sending shock waves through global energy markets again.

The safety of this international shipping lane, vital to the global economy, must not be held hostage as a bargaining chip in this dangerous geopolitical game. Using the Strait of Hormuz as a tool for leverage is a reckless gamble with global stability. The two parties concerned should exercise restraint and de-escalate the situation.

Regrettably, the MoU at the moment is effectively defunct as the basic preconditions for its implementation no longer exist. Its first article required both sides to cease fire completely and restrain their allies, forming the basis for the next phase of negotiations.

Not only has Israel continued to take military actions in Lebanon, but also the US and Iran have engaged in conflict again. Under the MoU, the US had previously agreed to lift the oil export embargo on Iran and unfreeze Iranian assets, but these promises have now been revoked by the US.

Much of the current situation stems from the inherent fragility of the MoU itself. The first article regarding the ceasefire was negotiated between the US and Iran without involving Israel. The reconciliation between the US and Iran has therefore always been at risk of being sabotaged by Israel.

Having neither sought nor signed the MoU, Israel is under no obligation to honor it — and Washington knows it. So it comes as no surprise that US Vice-President JD Vance has criticized Israel for resorting to a range of tactics, including lobbying to shape public perceptions in the US, all aimed at prolonging the US' conflict with Iran.

Nor does the MoU offer any clarity on the Strait of Hormuz — its provisions are so loosely drawn that each side can claim victory. Iran asserts the document affirms its control; the US insists it means no such thing. The gap between their readings is not a misunderstanding — it has been a crisis waiting to happen.

The prevailing trajectory of retaliation serves the interests of no party, except those whose strategic calculations depend on the perpetuation of hostilities. Washington may think that military force can coerce Iran into submission. But that belief was proved wrong soon after the conflict started on Feb 28. Each round of US attacks on Iran, aimed at appeasing hard-liners at home, only escalates the cycle of violence rather than resolving it, and deepens US entanglement in the Middle Eastern quagmire.

A return to the negotiating table is the only viable solution. The MoU was a hard-won achievement that should be cherished and protected. China, along with other nations such as Pakistan, has called on both parties to immediately cease hostilities, overcome difficulties and restart dialogue to reach a comprehensive peace agreement.

The longer this conflict course is pursued, the more it chips away at the already-frail trust that emerged from those first talks. And as that trust crumbles, so too does any hope of a graceful way out. The US and Iran must prioritize regional peace and the security of critical shipping waterways, return to the spirit of the MoU, and prove that their signatures are still credible.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Song Chen



Opinion Line

Short-term stock volatility doesn't mean AI is another dot-com bubble

The recent sharp swings in semiconductor stocks in several major markets have pushed the question — Is the AI craze doomed to burst? — back to the fore. Yet market volatility cannot reverse the tide of technological progress. AI remains the future.

AI is no castle in the air. Unlike the dot-com bubble of the early 2000s, when many internet companies had yet to establish viable business models, AI is underpinned by solid technological and industrial foundations and is already delivering tangible value across industries.

At the MAEXTRO Super Factory in Hefei, Anhui province, jointly built by JAC Group and Huawei, a digital twin plant enables real-time monitoring across the production process, while more than 1,800 intelligent robots support automated manufacturing.

In healthcare, AI models are assisting doctors with more accurate and efficient diagnoses. An AI-powered model integrating rare disease information and genetic data from the Chinese population has already been put into clinical use.

According to the Digital China Development Report (2025), released by the National Data Administration, China has become the world's largest holder of AI patents, accounting for 60 percent of the global total. The core AI industry has exceeded 1.2 trillion yuan ($177 billion) in scale.

Naysayers are often trapped by their limited understanding of applied AI. But technological evolution has never been halted by skepticism. AI is evolving from a mere chat tool into autonomous intelligent agents, transforming industries beyond digital empowerment through comprehensive intelligent restructuring.

A guideline released by the State Council, China's Cabinet, on deeply implementing the "AI Plus" initiative calls for significant progress in the deep integration of AI across six key sectors by 2027. By 2030, the intelligent economy is expected to become a significant growth driver for China's economy.

While routine, standardized tasks are being automated, new professions such as prompt engineers and AI ethics auditors keep emerging. In the AI era, job displacement and new opportunities go hand in hand.

Boom-and-bust cycles are inevitable for all emerging industries. Short-term capital frenzy does not equate to an economic bubble — it is merely a natural phase of industrial reshuffling. AI is no fleeting hype, but a genuine force reshaping our era.

Instead of fixating on whether the bubble will burst, we should have faith in the promise of technology and, more importantly, believe in its potential.

— ZHANG CHENXU AND ZHUANG QIANGE, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Industrial production stabilizer and driver of growth

Editor's note: *Data provided by the National Bureau of Statistics show that the value added of China's industrial enterprises above designated size rose 5.4 percent year-on-year and that of high-tech manufacturing increased 13.3 percent year-on-year in the first half of the year. The National Business Daily spoke to Liang Yongmei, an associate researcher of the Institute of Industrial Economics at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, on the development of the industry sector. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

The performance of China's industry in the first half of 2026 demonstrates that the cultivation of new quality productive forces has yielded notably positive results, particularly in the industrial sector.

New growth drivers, represented by high-tech manufacturing and digital product manufacturing, accounted for over 20 percent of value added but contributed nearly 50 percent of industrial growth.

China's industrial production efficiency is improving and growth is no longer driven by simple scale expansion, but increasingly by technological intensity and higher value-added content.

The long-standing concern about manufacturing being "locked into the low end" of the global value chain is being effectively addressed, as industrial production accelerates its move toward the mid-to-high end.

Production of 3D printing equipment, lithium-ion batteries and industrial robots — emblematic of smart manufacturing and green production — has grown particularly rapidly.

Lithium batteries are benefiting from the rising global penetration of new energy vehicles and the surge in energy storage markets; industrial robots are meeting the demands of changing labor force dynamics and manufacturing's pursuit of precision and consistency; and 3D printing is moving from experimental "showcase" projects to standard practice in aerospace, medical implants and other industries.

Both 3D printing equipment and industrial robots are entering a phase of rapid growth and large-scale commercial application. The steady progress of intelligent, green and integrated development is becoming a hallmark of China's new type of industrialization in many regions.

At the same time, the rapid growth of these products also reflects and results from the completeness of China's industrial system and the continuous strengthening of the self-sufficiency of its industry chains.

The country has formed relatively complete closed-loop industry chains in these areas and rising localization rates have reduced costs, which in turn has helped accelerate the adoption of high-end industrial products.

Ultimately, the health of the real economy must be measured by profits.

In the past, many high-tech industries required substantial upfront investment, posting high revenues on paper but thin profit margins.

A comparison with last year's data shows that profit growth for industrial enterprises above designated size has been remarkably strong.

Double-digit profit growth has been sustained, with sectors closely tied to new growth drivers, such as electronics (semiconductors and components) and nonferrous metals (new energy minerals and high-end alloys), showing particularly robust profitability.

This indicates that these industries are now reaping the rewards of technological premiums and the dividends of industrial upgrading are flowing deeply from the revenue side to the profit side, forming a virtuous cycle of innovation and profitability.

Profit remains the best guide for resource allocation and this trend is likely to attract more capital and talent to new-growth sectors, while significantly boosting market confidence.

Furthermore, the relatively rapid profit growth of enterprises above the designated size also suggests that recent efforts to curb "involution-style" competition have been quite effective. The problem of "higher output without higher efficiency" that plagued some sectors in the past is being tackled, which is an important signal of high-quality development.

The positive momentum in industrial production appears sustainable. The manufacturing purchasing managers' index has returned to expansion territory, while the business expectations index for production and operations is also rising, indicating that entrepreneurs are gaining confidence in the market outlook.

Combined with continued targeted policy support such as equipment upgrades and trade-in programs for consumer goods, as well as the healthy growth momentum already generated by some new growth drivers, industrial production is well-positioned to serve as both a stabilizer and a driver of economic growth in the second half of the year.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:24 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:24 PM

VIEWS

Merve Hickok

Smart AI agents need smarter guardrails

Artificial intelligence technology is evolving faster than many consumers, or even small companies, can fully understand the risks created by its new capabilities. Agentic AI is one such milestone in this evolution.

Unlike generative AI, which primarily responds to user queries, drafts documents or synthesizes information, agentic AI can take action on behalf of humans.

Users spell out the goal to the AI agent, and the system breaks it down into smaller steps, engages with websites, fills out forms, makes bookings, purchases items, uses external tools and even coordinates with other agents to achieve the objective.

Think of a future where one person or one company deploys hundreds of specialized agents to complete different tasks.

But agents, just like chatbots, suffer from the limitations of generative AI. They are non-deterministic systems and can hallucinate. The same question may produce different answers at different times. They are also prone to adversarial attacks.

The bigger risk is that agentic AI does not merely generate information, but can also take unintended actions. One agent's error can snowball into a bigger problem with downstream agents' actions.

Since AI agents operate across systems, products and borders, they will certainly add more complexity to cyberspace and digital commerce.

Soon, your shopping agent might negotiate with a merchant's pricing agent over the price of an air ticket or a household finance agent might dispute a bill with a utility company's chatbot. With the increased complexity of multi-agent systems, strong safeguards are required to protect consumers.

The key question is: If AI agents can make decisions on behalf of humans, where should we draw the line? How can we ensure that agents always act in the best interests of the consumers who deploy them, and can resist manipulation? These are no longer hypothetical questions.

The first priority is safety. When a conventional chatbot gives bad advice, the damage is limited to wasted time.

But agents capable of taking action can turn bad judgment into real-world consequences at machine speed — booking travel incorrectly, transferring money, signing up for unwanted subscriptions, negotiating with other agents, or purchasing expensive products.

An agent that misinterprets a contract clause can be manipulated into accepting an unfavorable deal by a more persuasive counterpart.

Safety in this context means more than avoiding useless answers. It means establishing clear boundaries of authority.

Consumers need agents that operate within adjustable limits: monetary caps on purchases, categories of decisions that always require explicit human approval, and safeguards to prevent irreversible actions. An agent should never be able to do something a reasonable person would not let a new employee do without confirmation.

Therefore, we need safe protocols for identity management, and authorization mechanisms that can work across different products and platforms.

Reliability is the second pillar, and it is trickier than it sounds. Reliability is not just about uptime or accuracy. It means that an agent consistently understands and follows the intent of the user.

An agent that misinterprets a user's intent, or can be manipulated to misunderstand, is counter-productive. Multi-agent commerce creates an environment where agents constantly communicate with other agents, some of which may be designed by companies with an obvious interest in extracting more data, money or attention from the consumer.

A retailer's agent may be optimized to upsell; a booking agent may be designed to nudge users toward options that pay higher commissions. To protect consumers, we need traceability and transparency.

Users should be able to understand what steps their agents take and why. We need transparency between agents from different vendors to ensure they are not colluding.

Even when the authorized agents work properly, agentic AI is prone to malicious attacks to manipulate its actions. If a consumer's agent is not secure and robustly built to resist these tactics, the whole premise of "delegating decisions to save time" collapses into "delegating decisions to be quietly exploited". Attackers can extract consumers' private information, direct them to malicious websites or influence agents into making harmful choices.

Reliability therefore requires agents that are auditable and robust. Just like banks regularly test their systems against fraud, AI agents must be stress-tested against the exact kinds of persuasion and manipulation techniques they may encounter from other commercial agents or malicious actors.

Finally, there is the question of liability. We need clear rules for who is responsible when an agent causes harm: the company that built the underlying model, the user who deployed the agent, developers of the protocols connecting the merchants, or the websites with manipulative agents.

Ambiguity here does not benefit the consumer whose interest is harmed. A sensible framework would hold the deploying party primarily responsible for the actions their agent takes, while requiring model and platform providers to meet baseline safety and transparency standards.

None of this means banning agentic AI or treating it as inherently untrustworthy. Agents could in fact lead to significant savings in time and money. They could lower entry barriers or costs for entrepreneurs.

But the technology's usefulness depends entirely on trust, and trust depends on rules that exist before the harm occurs, not after it.

We need to establish clear guardrails and clear chains of responsibility. Any tool this powerful needs safeguards proportional to what it can do or enable.

The author is the founder of AIethicist.org, president of the Center for AI & Digital Policy and the recipient of Women in AI Awards North America 2023. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



JIN DING / CHINA DAILY

Yang Peou

China's quiet diplomacy vital for ASEAN

In an era marked by complex geopolitical shifts, the relationship between China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations shines as a beacon of constructive engagement and mutual benefit.

Since establishing dialogue relations in 1991, the two sides have cultivated a comprehensive strategic partnership that prioritizes peace, economic integration and cultural understanding.

This partnership not only bolsters regional stability but also serves as a model for harmonious coexistence among neighbors.

China has consistently demonstrated its commitment to ASEAN's peace and stability through diplomatic initiatives, economic support and cultural exchanges.

As ASEAN's largest trading partner, China plays a pivotal role in fostering economic resilience across the region. Bilateral trade has reached impressive levels, underscoring deep interdependence.

Initiatives such as the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area and the Belt and Road Initiative have facilitated infrastructure development, investment and connectivity, creating jobs and driving sustainable growth in member states.

Beyond economics, security cooperation is the cornerstone of the relationship. China supports ASEAN's efforts to maintain a nuclear weapon-free zone and collaborates on addressing transnational challenges such as piracy, drug trafficking and non-traditional security threats.

Through mechanisms such as the ASEAN Regional Forum, both sides engage in dialogue to build trust and manage differences peacefully, particularly in the maritime realm.

China's advocacy for "Asian solutions to Asian problems" emphasizes dialogue and consultation, reinforcing ASEAN centrality in regional affairs.

Cultural and people-to-people ties further deepen this partnership. Exchanges in education, tourism, arts and youth programs have fostered mutual understanding among over two billion people.

Flagship events and subnational cooperation, such as those in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, highlight the vibrant socio-cultural dimension that strengthens the sense of a shared future.

A shining example of China's contribution to peace and stability in ASEAN is its active facilitation in resolving the tensions between Cambodia and Thailand.

In 2025, the resurgence of long-standing border disputes escalated into an armed confrontation between the two countries, resulting in tragic loss of life and the displacement of civilians.

Demonstrating quiet yet effective diplomacy, China stepped forward as a trusted mediator.

Foreign ministers and senior officials from China, Cambodia, and Thailand held trilateral meetings in Yunnan province and in Beijing.

These meetings provided a neutral platform for dialogue, leading to ceasefire agreements, confidence-building measures, and commitments to peaceful resolution through bilateral and regional mechanisms.

China welcomed joint statements from Cambodia and Thailand and supported the implementation of the consensus reached, helping restore calm along the border.

Such mediations highlight China's constructive approach: offering good offices without imposing solutions and respecting the sovereignty and agency of the parties involved.

By hosting these talks, China helped prevent further escalation, protected civilian lives, and contributed to the broader stability of Southeast Asia.

This not only helped mend bilateral frictions but also safeguarded ASEAN unity, which is vital for the bloc's collective strength.

The ripple effects are profound. Durable peace between Cambodia and Thailand will foster longer-term unity within ASEAN, enabling the organization to focus on shared goals such as economic integration and sustainable development.

A cohesive ASEAN, in turn, enhances its strategic partnership with China, creating a virtuous cycle of trust and cooperation.

It is hoped that China will continue to push for enduring peace in this and other potential hot spots, leveraging its growing influence to support regional harmony.

Looking ahead, there is strong optimism that China's role in ASEAN will continue to grow. As a responsible major power and good neighbor, China can deepen its contributions across security dialogues, economic corridors, and cultural initiatives.

This evolution aligns with the vision of building a closer China-ASEAN community with a shared future marked by peace, prosperity and amity.

China's humble, quiet and pragmatic approach to addressing challenges in ASEAN is something that all parties can readily accept.

By prioritizing mutual respect, win-win outcomes, and non-interference, China ensures that solutions bring relief rather than suffering to any side.

Rooted in patience, fairness, and long-term vision, this philosophy has proven effective in bridging divides and building consensus.

As China and ASEAN navigate the future together, this measured diplomacy will undoubtedly continue to yield dividends for regional peace and shared prosperity, benefiting not only the countries concerned but the entire region.

The author is the secretary-general of the Royal Academy of Cambodia. The views are the author's own, and don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily or the Royal Academy of Cambodia.

Dan Steinbock

High costs of the Gulf tensions rippling across the world

Renewed hostilities between the United States and Iran and Israel's continuing military campaign underscore the growing risk of a broader Middle East conflict and heightened global energy and food crises.

The latest exchanges included US strikes on Iranian military-related targets, Iran's retaliation against US interests and regional partners, and continued Israeli military operations.

It is a familiar pattern in conflicts led by the US and Israel. Ceasefires may interrupt hostilities, but without a credible political framework they fail to address the underlying causes of the conflict.

The renewed confrontation has expanded beyond the bilateral US-Iran relationship and now intersects Israel's continuing military operations, the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, the ongoing conflicts in the West Bank, heightened tensions in Lebanon, persistent unease in Syria, Jordan's delicate balancing act, Iraq's efforts to avoid being dragged in, security concerns across the Gulf and broader regional rivalries.

These are not isolated flashpoints, but form an interconnected strategic landscape in which developments in one arena quickly reverberate across the others.

Since the June ceasefire, the Benjamin Netanyahu government in Israel has reiterated its determination to maintain military pressure on Iran. With elections approaching, Netanyahu needs that strategic tension.

Israeli leaders argue that earlier operations have significantly weakened Iran's military capabilities and continued vigilance is necessary to prevent their reconstruction.

In other words, only the Obliteration Doctrine can finish the job.

This declared policy extends beyond Iran. Israeli operations have continued in Gaza, southern Lebanon and, periodically, Syria, reflecting a security doctrine that views these fronts as strategically interconnected rather than separate conflicts.

Over time, this strategy has no future. While military operations may reduce immediate threats, they also increase the probability of regional retaliation, strengthen incentives for asymmetric responses and complicate diplomatic initiatives.

In Gaza, military operations continue amid an ongoing humanitarian crisis. Along Israel's northern frontier, exchanges with Hezbollah and operations in southern Lebanon remain volatile. Meanwhile, Israeli bombardments have displaced over 20 percent of Lebanon's population.

Yet, Gaza and Lebanon are barely reported in Western media any longer. When mass atrocities become staple, they are no longer news.

Syria is another theater for strikes targeting military infrastructure associated with Iran and allied groups, with Israel's incursions into Syria's Quneitra and Daraa provinces.

In Iraq, bases housing US troops are frequently targeted by Iranian-aligned militias. Iraqi officials can only condemn the military actions on their territory, but it's the local citizens who bear the brunt of violence.

Direct military exchanges between Israel, the US and Iran have moved beyond the proxy confrontations that characterized much of the previous decade. These theaters are linked through overlapping military deployments, intelligence networks, missile capabilities, logistics corridors and alliance structures.

This regionalization also alters strategic calculations. Governments increasingly evaluate military operations not solely in terms of local objectives but also their implications for deterrence across the wider Middle East.

Paradoxically, escalation risks, which should be reduced and marginalized, have become even more pronounced.

The consequences of the renewed hostilities extend beyond the battlefield. Military expenditures continue to rise as regional governments devote additional resources to missile defense, intelligence, naval deployments and force readiness. Such expenditures inevitably compete with — and over time, crowd out — longer-term investments in infrastructure, education and economic diversification.

These economic consequences are not confined to the Middle East. Higher transportation costs, volatile energy prices and increased geopolitical uncertainty affect inflation, financial markets and growth prospects globally.

The Middle East plays an important role in global energy markets, maritime commerce and international investment flows. Consequently, even a limited disruption around the Persian Gulf and Strait of Hormuz influences shipping costs, insurance premiums and commodity prices.

Investors typically respond by increasing risk premiums while delaying investment decisions amid heightened uncertainty.

Unlike previous regional crises, the current conflict directly involves the world's principal energy choke point — the Strait of Hormuz — through which roughly one-fifth of globally traded crude oil and a significant share of liquefied natural gas exports transit. Even without a sustained closure, heightened military risks can raise insurance costs, reroute shipping and increase market volatility.

Under a contained conflict scenario, crude oil prices could remain in the range of $85 to $100 per barrel. However, a prolonged disruption could push prices toward $110 to $140. An extreme scenario involving significant interruption of Hormuz traffic could drive prices above $150, even if strategic reserves moderate the shock.

The implications extend far beyond energy. Higher fuel prices increase fertilizer production costs, transportation expenses and irrigation costs, placing additional pressure on global food systems.

Low-income food-importing countries in North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa and parts of South Asia would face renewed import inflation, deteriorating balance-of-payments positions and heightened fiscal stress.

Whether viewed through legal, humanitarian or strategic perspectives, the cumulative effect is growing pressure on the norms that have traditionally governed armed conflict. The renewed US-Iran confrontation, together with Israel's continuing regional military campaign, spreads corrosive damage across the region. As economic risks accumulate alongside humanitarian pressures, the space for negotiated political settlements is narrowing.

The author is an internationally recognized strategist and founder of the Difference Group. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:24 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:24 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

FABIEN PACORY

Future compass

APEC 'China Year' marks a defining moment for the destiny of regional joint efforts



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

For more than 30 years, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation mechanism has been one of the world's most successful platforms for economic dialogue. Since its foundation in 1989, it has promoted trade, investment and practical cooperation among 21 member economies that together represent nearly 40 percent of the world's population, close to half of global trade and around 60 percent of global GDP.



Unlike many international organizations, APEC does not rely on legally binding agreements. Instead, it works through consensus, trust and voluntary cooperation. That flexibility has often been underestimated, yet it is precisely what has allowed economies with very different political systems, levels of development and strategic interests to continue working together, even during periods of international tension.

Today, that role has become more valuable than ever.

The world economy is entering a new phase — one driven less by inexpensive labor or abundant natural resources and increasingly by innovation, technology, knowledge and the ability to adapt. Artificial intelligence, advanced manufacturing, biotechnology, clean energy, quantum computing and digital services are rapidly redefining competitiveness.

Success in this new era will depend not only on what countries produce but also on how effectively they collaborate. Innovation no longer happens in isolation. It grows within ecosystems where governments, universities, businesses, researchers, investors and entrepreneurs work together to create ideas, commercialize technologies and respond quickly to changing global conditions.

China has experienced this transformation firsthand.

Over the past two decades, the country has evolved from primarily the world's manufacturing powerhouse to one of the world's leading innovation economies. Cities such as Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Hangzhou and Shanghai have become global centers for AI, robotics, biotechnology, digital finance, electric vehicles and advanced manufacturing. This progress did not happen overnight. It reflects long-term investments in education, research, infrastructure, entrepreneurship and increasingly sophisticated public policy.

Perhaps nowhere is this evolution more visible than in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. Rather than functioning as separate cities competing with one another, the area is steadily becoming an integrated innovation ecosystem where universities, multinational companies, startups, financial institutions, research laboratories and manufacturing clusters reinforce one another.

Its experience offers an important lesson for the broader Asia-Pacific. The economies that will thrive over the coming decades are unlikely to be those that innovate alone. They will be those that build strong regional partnerships, share knowledge, attract global talent and create environments where ideas can move as freely as goods and capital.

China's chairmanship of APEC this year also arrives at an important moment for regional economic integration. The implementation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, now the world's largest free trade agreement, is strengthening regional supply chains and reducing barriers to trade and investment. Yet much more remains to be done.

Future competitiveness will increasingly depend on areas that traditional trade agreements barely address: digital commerce, cross-border data flows, AI governance, cybersecurity, green finance, intellectual property and regulatory cooperation. These are precisely the kinds of issues where APEC's flexible and consensus-based approach can make a meaningful difference.

Another priority should be the continued pursuit of the vision first outlined in the Bogor Goals more than three decades ago. While remarkable progress has been made in opening markets, today's barriers are often less visible than tariffs. They appear in fragmented digital regulations, incompatible technical standards, restrictions on services and different approaches to emerging technologies.

One area that deserves particular attention is services.

Although services now generate the majority of economic value in many advanced economies, cross-border services remain far less integrated than the trade in manufactured goods. Digital consulting, healthcare, education, engineering, financial services, creative industries and research collaboration are becoming central drivers of economic growth. Helping professionals move more easily across borders, encouraging mutual recognition of qualifications, improving digital connectivity and harmonizing regulations could unlock significant opportunities for businesses throughout the Asia-Pacific.

Climate cooperation must also remain high on the agenda.

The Asia-Pacific is both one of the regions most exposed to climate change and one of the world's leading sources of climate innovation. Across the region, governments and businesses are investing heavily in renewable energy, battery technologies, smart infrastructure, sustainable manufacturing and green finance.

China has become one of the major contributors to this transition. Its rapid expansion of renewable energy, EVs and clean technologies demonstrates that environmental sustainability and economic growth can reinforce rather than contradict one another. This year offers an opportunity to strengthen regional cooperation in these fields through technology sharing, joint investment and collaborative innovation.

AI will undoubtedly be another defining topic.

AI is already transforming healthcare, manufacturing, logistics, finance, education and public services. But alongside its enormous promise come equally important questions about ethics, cybersecurity, workforce transitions, data governance and public trust.

Rather than allowing different regulatory approaches to create new economic barriers, APEC could encourage greater dialogue on common principles that support both innovation and responsible governance. Such cooperation will be essential if the region hopes to fully realize AI's benefits while minimizing its risks.

Beyond specific policy areas, perhaps the greatest contribution China can make during its chairmanship is to reinforce confidence in multilateral cooperation itself.

The international environment is becoming increasingly fragmented. Strategic competition often dominates headlines, and protectionist measures continue to reshape global trade. Yet the Asia-Pacific has repeatedly demonstrated that practical economic cooperation remains possible even when political differences persist.

Ultimately, the success of APEC in 2026 will not be measured simply by the number of ministerial meetings held or declarations issued. Its real legacy will depend on whether it strengthens confidence among businesses, investors, researchers, entrepreneurs and citizens that regional cooperation continues to offer practical solutions in an increasingly uncertain world.

The "China Year" is therefore about much more than China's leadership. It is about the future direction of the entire Asia-Pacific.

If APEC economies work together to build consensus around innovation, sustainable development, digital cooperation and open regionalism, this year could become one of those moments that historians look back on as a turning point — not because it solved every challenge, but because it renewed confidence that the region could face them together.

At a time when the world often appears divided, that may prove to be the greatest achievement of APEC "China Year".

The author is the executive vice-president of the French Chamber of Commerce and Industry in China, and an arbitrator at the Hainan International Arbitration Court. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

SUN YANHONG

Balancing competition and cooperation

China and the EU can work together to take bilateral economic collaboration to a new trajectory, creating the conditions for continued mutually beneficial ties

Economic and trade ties have long served as the bedrock of relations between China and the European Union. However, the relationship has recently encountered friction, culminating in the EU imposing a series of trade restrictions on China since the beginning of this year.



To understand and manage these frictions, it is essential to examine how the underlying drivers of China-EU economic cooperation have evolved over the past decades. This helps explain the deeper forces behind the disagreements while pointing toward a more sustainable path for future cooperation.

Over the years, the economic complementarity between China and the EU has undergone three important transformations.

First, driven by the evolving industrial capabilities and economic structures in China and the EU, their vertical complementarity in trade gradually gave way to horizontal complementarity, as the two economies transitioned from specializing in different stages of the production chain to collaborating within similar industries. This shift was reflected in the changing composition of bilateral trade and investment.

Second, cooperation has moved beyond the traditional bilateral framework to become increasingly embedded in global value chains. Following its accession to the World Trade Organization, China emerged as one of the world's major manufacturing hubs. It is estimated that between China and the EU, intermediate goods consistently accounted for roughly half of total bilateral trade, reflecting multilateral supply chain interdependence.

Third, production-based complementarity has gradually given way to innovation-driven collaboration. Since the early 2000s, joint patent applications by Chinese and European companies have risen steadily. More recently, a growing number of European automakers have partnered with Chinese companies on joint research and development, leveraging China's strengths in emerging technologies to accelerate their own industrial transformation.

While these evolving drivers have pushed China-EU economic cooperation to a higher level and opened new opportunities, some challenges have emerged.

The first challenge is the profound transformation of the global trading system. China-EU economic cooperation was once driven by comparative advantage and economic efficiency in the era of globalization. That landscape, however, has been affected by intensifying geopolitical rivalry, the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ukraine crisis and the United States' growing neglect of or even challenge to multilateral trade rules. The WTO-centered trading system has come under strain, while unilateralism and protectionism have gained momentum. Against this backdrop, international economic relations are increasingly being shaped by national security considerations and values-based concerns, casting the shadow of geopolitical tensions, security concerns and shifting international rules on China-EU cooperation.

Second, the EU's anxiety about Chinese competition is escalating. Since the EU formally defined China as simultaneously a partner, a competitor and a systemic rival in 2019, the emphasis has shifted heavily toward the latter two. The 2024 Draghi Report on the future of European competitiveness likewise identified the United States and China as economic and technological competitors. Compared with the long-time dominant US, China's rapid catch-up and breakthrough achievements in some sectors have heightened the pressure on the EU. Those anxieties became even more apparent in May 2026, when the Center for European Reform published its China-related report, arguing that "China increasingly specializes in Europe's industrial strengths".



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

Finally, the EU's "de-risking" strategy has narrowed the space for bilateral cooperation. Since launching this "de-risking" agenda and European economic security strategy in 2023, Brussels has hyped narratives around issues such as alleged Chinese industrial overcapacity while deploying a broader range of trade and investment restrictions. Together, these policy shifts have pushed China-EU economic cooperation to explore new ways to coexist and cooperate.

Despite these challenges, the resilience of China-EU economic ties should not be underestimated. The two sides have no fundamental conflict of interest. Their economies remain deeply intertwined, with new forms of complementarity emerging. They also face a growing number of shared global challenges that are difficult to address without cooperation.

Meanwhile, the EU is facing a dilemma in which it must balance its "de-risking" agenda against the need to preserve economic efficiency, maintain industrial competitiveness and safeguard the interests of its member states. These competing priorities inevitably limit its policy options.

This suggests that China-EU economic cooperation still holds potential, and its underlying drivers still have room to continue to evolve. The two sides should approach their economic relationship from a long-term strategic perspective. In particular, the EU would benefit from a more pragmatic and balanced approach to its ties with China, recognizing that deeper cooperation with China, in areas such as supply chain integration and innovation, can help strengthen the EU's competitiveness and avoid the risk of a "middle-technology trap". Together, China and the EU should work to create a more stable and predictable policy environment for bilateral economic cooperation.

Looking ahead, the two sides can make tangible progress in four key areas.

First, they should work together to safeguard the WTO-centered multilateral trading system, while working with other countries to advance meaningful reform to preserve this indispensable global public good.

Second, building on the joint climate statement issued during the 2025 China-EU leaders' meeting, the two sides should explore a new model of mutually beneficial cooperation in green industries and new energy, leveraging their respective strengths and focusing on areas such as electric vehicles.

Third, they should seek breakthroughs in digital cooperation by expanding successful practices, enhancing regulatory coordination and standards compatibility, encouraging investment in digital industries and technologies, and making smart manufacturing a flagship area of collaboration.

Finally, China and the EU should unlock the untapped potential of services trade by establishing a dedicated dialogue mechanism and expanding cooperation in areas such as digital services, finance, education and healthcare. A stronger services partnership would help optimize the structure of bilateral trade, ease competitive pressures in manufacturing, and promote a more balanced pattern of economic exchange.

On June 30, China and the EU issued a joint statement following the first meeting of the China-EU trade and investment consultation mechanism.

Under the mechanism, the two sides agreed to establish four initial workstreams covering trade and investment balance, export controls, intellectual property rights and WTO reform, alongside a joint monitoring mechanism. They also reaffirmed their commitment to taking further facilitation measures to maintain the stability of global industrial and supply chains.

These developments suggest that both China and the EU remain committed to addressing their differences through dialogue and creating the conditions for continued mutually beneficial cooperation. Building on the outcomes of the meeting, the two sides should work toward durable mechanisms for managing disagreements and guiding China-EU economic relations toward a dynamic and sustainable balance as they continue to evolve.

The author is a senior research fellow and the head of the Division of European Economic Studies at the Institute of European Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:24 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:24 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

By LI JIAYING
lijiaying@chinadaily.com.cn



Foreign visitors interact with a humanoid robot during the 2026 Global Digital Economy Conference in Beijing on July 2.
CHEN XIAOGEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

China's digital push accelerates

Policy support drives tech application, AI as industry, business enablers

China's digital economy is becoming a more visible driver of high-quality growth, moving beyond headline figures to play a deeper role in industrial upgrading, urban governance, public services and international exchanges.

"Developing the digital economy is a strategic choice to seize the opportunities brought by a new round of technological revolution and industrial transformation," said Wang Jingtao, deputy director of the Cyberspace Administration of China, at the opening ceremony of the 2026 Global Digital Economy Conference in Beijing on July 2.

Data from the National Data Administration showed that the added value of China's digital economy reached 49 trillion yuan ($7.22 trillion) in 2025, accounting for about 35 percent of its GDP. Notably, the added value of core digital economy industries is expected to exceed 14.7 trillion yuan, making up more than 10.5 percent of GDP.

According to classifications by the National Bureau of Statistics, China's digital economy covers five broad categories: digital product manufacturing, digital product services, digital technology applications, data factor-driven industries, and industries supported by digital efficiency improvements.

China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) makes it clear that the country will comprehensively advance the empowerment of the real economy through digital technologies, Wang added.

To deepen the integration of the digital and real economies, the senior official called for stronger efforts in key technologies and digital infrastructure, wider application of the "AI Plus" initiative across sectors, improved governance of generative AI and data security, and deeper international cooperation, including better digital services for foreigners in China.

Test cases

A key message from this year's conference was that digital development is increasingly being tested in the daily operation of cities, which have become the most concentrated, concrete and observable carriers of the digital economy.

According to the 2026 Global Digital Economy Cities Report released during the conference, five cities worldwide, including Beijing, Tokyo, Singapore, New York and London are listed as leading cities in digital factors, citing their performance in digital infrastructure, digital industry leadership, innovation capacity, digital governance, low-carbon development and urban resilience, global connectivity, as well as resident experience and inclusiveness.

Beijing offers a case for how digital tools are entering public life. By the end of last year, the city had built 119 internet hospitals, supporting services including online appointment registration, prescription circulation and online medical insurance payments. In the transportation sector, through connected traffic signal control, the average non-stop pass rate within Beijing's Fifth Ring Road reached 76.7 percent. In addition, construction of sensing systems for underground power, gas and heating pipelines has also been largely completed, enabling digital operation and management.

"Digital technologies should not only support industrial development and urban governance, but also become tangible for residents, usable for businesses and accessible to society," the report stressed.





Middle: A staff member introduces AI products at a digital economy innovative achievement market at Longfu mall in Beijing on July 2.
JU HUANZONG / XINHUA
Above: An employee (left) introduces robot human force sensors to a visitor during the 2026 Global Digital Economy Conference in Beijing on July 2. CHEN XIAOGEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

In healthcare, Beijing has built a unified cloud platform for medical imaging, breaking down barriers to image sharing among medical institutions above the secondary level. The platform has changed the traditional practice of patients carrying printed films between hospitals. Last year alone, it helped save more than 150 million yuan in film printing costs.

"Through high-standard efforts to build a comprehensive pilot zone for data factors and active early trials, Beijing has formed a batch of replicable and scalable 'Beijing experience' for global counterparts," said Liu Liehong, head of the National Data Administration.

Large-scale application

Beyond cities, AI agents are emerging as one of the most important areas where the digital economy is being applied to the real economy. This year, AI agents were included in the Government Work Report for the first time, as the tools push AI beyond systems that can "chat and analyze" toward what can really carry out tasks.

"The agent industry is entering a strategic window for large-scale application this year," said Han Xia, a senior official at the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, at a sideline of the conference.

Accelerating the evolution of agents from individual intelligence to collective intelligence, and from closed applications to open collaboration, is of great significance for seizing the opportunities in this window, Han said.

However, the interconnection and collaboration among agents from different platforms still face challenges, including unclear technical architecture and the urgent need to upgrade network infrastructure, she noted.

In response, this year's conference launched an experimental network for the agent internet and released the first batch of "agent factories", aiming to push AI from resource calling to task delivery.

For companies, the value of such technology depends on whether it can solve specific problems in real-world scenarios.

In the industrial sector, AI-powered "digital colleagues" are already being used in manufacturing and corporate operations. "AI agents are the new colleagues that accompany every single one of our staff in their daily work now," said Zhang Guimin, chairman of Lunan Pharmaceutical Group.

Zhang said AI agents can efficiently complete high-risk and high-intensity tasks in new drug research and development, shortening the R&D cycle by more than 30 percent. The company has independently developed more than 20 AI agents so far, with over 100 application scenarios covering R&D, quality management, production, sales, human resources, finance and e-commerce.

In consumer settings, AI agents are also being built into smart home products. Haier Smart Home's Xiaoyou agent, for example, can remember where household items are stored. After a user verifies a dedicated password, the corresponding drawer lights up automatically. During cooking, a range hood can detect when food in a pot is boiling and automatically lower the heat for simmering.

Dismantling barriers

China's digital economy push is also extending into cross-border services, as the country seeks to make digital systems easier for foreign visitors to use while helping Chinese businesses find overseas opportunities.

At this year's conference, a special campaign was launched to improve digital services for foreigners entering China in six key cities with relatively strong digital service foundations and large inbound visitor numbers: Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Hangzhou, Chengdu and Sanya.

The campaign aims to develop a group of landmark application scenarios in about one year, focusing on digital barriers foreign visitors may face in residence, healthcare, payment, tourism and public services.

Through pilot programs in key cities, the initiative is expected to help raise the overall level of inbound digital services nationwide and support the development of an interconnected, inclusive and mutually recognized digital service system.

The campaign follows a broader national policy push. According to an implementation guideline jointly issued by the Cyberspace Administration of China and 10 other departments in February, China aims to significantly improve the internationalization and convenience of digital services for inbound tourists by 2027 and reach a leading international level by 2030.

For instance, Chengdu, the only city in central and western China included in the campaign, has introduced a range of measures to make digital services more accessible to foreign visitors.

In public transport, foreign bank cards can be used directly at bus and metro gates. Bilingual announcements now cover all metro trains and stations, while more than 400 stations have been equipped with multilingual translation devices.

"Being able to take the metro in Chengdu with a foreign bank card gives me peace of mind because it is a payment method I am familiar with," said a US tourist who had just enabled small-value password-free payment.

Chengdu has also expanded payment access for foreigners. The city has 4,914 cash self-service machines that accept foreign bank cards for renminbi withdrawals, while 67,000 merchants accept foreign cards. More than 40 e-wallets from 14 countries can now be used in the city, and 100,000 merchants support Alipay's tap-to-pay service.

In dining, shopping and entertainment areas, major chain brands such as Starbucks and Haidilao have achieved full bilingual digital service coverage. Eight most-loved sites by tourists, including Chunxi Road, Jiaozi Park and Kuanzhai Alley, have also largely achieved full bilingual menu coverage.

The digital economy's outward-facing role was also highlighted at the conference, with a key country digital economy cooperation demand list released to provide more targeted support for Chinese businesses expanding overseas through digital technologies.

Drawing on the integration of overseas Chinese networks and digital intelligence, Zhang Huaxie, vice-chairman of the China-Africa Cultural Promotion Association, has led a team to establish digital cooperation sites in Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

Zhang said China's blockchain traceability system and AI customer service have been introduced to a local business platform in Zimbabwe, which has not only improved the credibility of local agricultural and livestock products, but also trained local merchants in digital operations, helping cultivate local talent with digital business capabilities.

"Chinese technology going global is not a one-way export of products, but a two-way collaboration that takes into account both commercial returns and local industrial development," Zhang said.

Discovering how AI can improve lives, support economy

REPORTER'S LOG
By Li Jiaying

At the 2026 Global Digital Economy Conference in Beijing earlier this month, new technologies moved closer to real life, with robots, AI agents and digital tools showing how innovation is beginning to really serve people in factories, hospitals, logistics and daily services.

The new technologies and products launch show was one of the busiest parts of the conference. More than 60 companies presented over 80 innovations, most of which are global or national firsts.

For me, the most memorable scene was a robotic guide dog leading a person forward.

Unlike an ordinary quadruped robot, the robot, called Tutu, has a handle on its back that allows visually impaired users to hold on to it. Supported by digital map provider Amap's self-developed embodied navigation model, massive traffic data and machine vision, Tutu is designed to make complex route decisions: when it sees a pothole ahead, it can decide whether to step over it or go around; when it hears a user's instruction, it can understand the intention and take the next step.

The moment was small, but it captured a larger message from this year's conference: advanced digital technologies such as artificial intelligence are increasingly being tested as a tool that can work, guide, deliver, diagnose, weld, farm and serve.

On the industrial side, Beijing-based Xiaoyubot launched and displayed an embodied intelligent welding robot that can learn a new task in about three minutes before starting work. Priced at about 169,800 yuan ($29,474), such a product may not be as visually dramatic as a humanoid robot, but its value is easier to grasp — it can help workers move away from hot, smoky and repetitive welding environments.

In the logistics area, autonomous urban delivery service provider Neolix's X1 targeted unmanned delivery over the "last mile", a familiar bottleneck in urban logistics. Designed to move between indoor and outdoor environments, the autonomous delivery vehicle can navigate sidewalks, office lobbies and elevators to help build a fully unmanned delivery chain.

Healthcare offered another example. A cranial CT agent developed by the China National Clinical Research Center for Neurological Diseases can process a complete cranial CT examination and generate a structured draft report covering 94 diseases and 1,232 diagnostic terms. Current clinical data show that for more than 80 percent of routine cases, draft reports generated by the agent require only minor revisions by doctors, or can be used directly without changes.

Through these product launches, I found the meaning of the digital economy becoming more concrete. It is about whether technology can make mobility safer, work less hazardous, logistics more efficient and medical services more accessible.

That may be the more lasting message of this year's conference. As AI and other digital technologies move deeper into daily life and industrial settings, their value will increasingly be judged not by how futuristic they appear on stage, but by how much they can improve people's lives and support the real economy.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:24 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:24 PM

BUSINESSINSIGHT

Economy resilient, stronger momentum ahead

EAGLE EYE
By Yang Yaowu



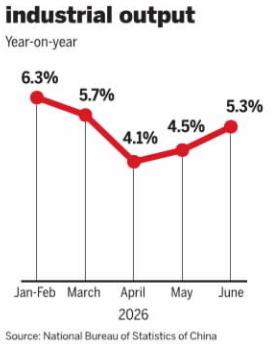
Workers are busy on the intelligent cabinet production line at an enterprise in Lianyungang, Jiangsu province, on June 25.
SI WEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

In the first half, faced with a complex and evolving international environment as well as arduous domestic tasks in reform, development and maintaining stability, China effectively implemented a more proactive macroeconomic policy package, responded calmly to external challenges, overcame domestic difficulties, maintained steady growth in production and supply, and fostered the rapid development of new growth drivers. As a result, the economy maintained an overall stable performance while continuing to move toward higher-quality, innovation-driven development.

First, new growth drivers continued to upgrade manufacturing and optimize the structure of foreign trade. Production of high-tech and high-value-added products accelerated, with their share in exports continuing to increase. In the first half, value-added industrial output of enterprises above designated size grew 5.4 percent year-on-year, while value-added output of high-tech manufacturing rose 13.3 percent, outpacing the same period last year by 3.8 percentage points and accelerating 0.8 percentage point from the first quarter. Production of computers, communication equipment and other electronic products — as well as industrial robots — maintained rapid growth. High-tech manufacturing contributed nearly 40 percent of total industrial growth, gradually becoming a core driver of economic expansion.

The development of new growth drivers also promoted both higher-quality and faster growth in foreign trade. Merchandise exports reached $2.13 trillion in the first half, up 17.6 percent year-on-year, while imports totaled $1.55 trillion, rising 26.6 percent. Exports of mechanical and electrical products surged 24.5 percent, accounting for more than 60 percent of total exports. Driven by the global technology cycle, imports and exports of artificial intelligence-related products, including electronic components, computer parts, optical fiber and cables, grew by around 50 percent year-on-year. AI-related industrial chains, such as integrated circuits and computer components, have become an important pillar supporting export growth. As China continues to increase the supply of innovative products that meet the global trend toward digitalization and green development, it has further consolidated and expanded its diversified overseas markets. Trade with ASEAN, the European Union and Africa all recorded double-digit growth, while trade with Belt and Road partner countries increased by 14.8 percent, accounting for more than half of China's total foreign trade for the first time.

Growth of value-added industrial output



Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China

Second, the investment structure continued to improve, with greater emphasis placed on fostering future growth potential and improving people's well-being. Although overall fixed-asset investment growth moderated in the first half, investment in high-tech industries continued to grow steadily, while investment in intellectual property products accelerated further. Investment related to the six networks — water conservancy, new power grids, computing infrastructure, next-generation telecommunications, urban underground utilities and logistics — continued to expand, providing stronger support for long-term development capacity and public well-being.

Third, demand for services consumption grew steadily, while the potential of new forms of consumption continued to be unleashed. As living standards continue to improve, the rising share of services consumption reflects the natural evolution of China's economy and creates broader opportunities for foreign businesses seeking to expand in China. In the first half, retail sales of services increased 5.3 percent year-on-year, while spending on culture, sports and leisure services maintained rapid growth. Holiday travel, cultural performances and inbound tourism all recorded solid increases. At the same time, online, digital and green consumption emerged as new growth areas. Retail sales of high-energy efficiency household appliances continued to expand rapidly, while the retail penetration rate of new energy vehicles exceeded 60 percent for the third consecutive month, highlighting the continued release of new consumption potential.

Looking ahead to the second half, although the external environment still faces considerable uncertainties, China's economy is expected to stabilize and continue improving as the combined effects of existing and incremental policy measures become more fully evident and the transition from traditional to new growth drivers accelerates. The economy has maintained solid momentum in the first half, stabilized in the middle of the year and gained further strength toward year-end. Taking all factors into account, we believe China has the capability to successfully accomplish this year's major economic and social development goals.

First, foreign trade is expected to maintain relatively strong growth and continue providing solid support for economic expansion.

China's comprehensive industrial system, well-coordinated supply chains and highly efficient manufacturing ecosystem — together with the continued upgrading of intelligent and green manufacturing — are steadily strengthening the country's new competitive advantages in international trade. Over the coming period, capital expenditure across global AI-related industrial chains is expected to continue expanding rapidly, supporting faster growth in exports of semiconductors, electronic components and other products. Meanwhile, China's improving industrial competitiveness will further promote exports of high-value-added products. As an important hub of global industrial and supply chains, China's high-tech manufacturing sector has demonstrated strong resilience. It not only provides reliable support for global technological upgrading and product supply, but also creates broader opportunities for trade, investment and technological innovation by expanding domestic demand, deepening industrial upgrading, and fostering the development of the green and digital economies.

Second, new growth drivers are expected to gather stronger momentum and effectively offset adjustment pressure from traditional growth drivers.

New quality productive forces — represented by AI, advanced manufacturing and green energy — are moving from isolated breakthroughs to integrated industrial expansion. The explosive growth in demand for AI computing power is expected to drive further growth in chip sales, while tech companies are accelerating both research and development investment and capacity expansion.

Meanwhile, the deep integration of the digital economy with the real economy is expected to sustain rapid growth in emerging sectors such as industrial robotics, cloud computing and the internet of things, thus reshaping the foundation of China's industrial system. As the transition from traditional to new growth drivers accelerates, the contribution of the new economy to overall growth is expected to increase further in the second half, effectively offsetting the adjustment pressure from traditional growth drivers.

Third, the combined effects of existing and incremental policy measures will become more evident, providing strong support for faster growth in domestic demand.

The second half will be a critical period for ensuring policy implementation and accelerating project progress. The entire 800 billion yuan ($118 billion) allocated for major national strategies and security capacity-building projects, together with the 200 billion yuan earmarked for large-scale equipment upgrades and consumer goods trade-in programs, has already been distributed and is expected to generate more tangible investment and economic activity.

Investment related to the above-mentioned six networks will continue to expand. Closely linked to improving people's well-being and strengthening long-term development capacity, investment in these six networks is expected to exceed 7 trillion yuan this year, making them a key pillar for stabilizing economic growth.

On the consumption side, measures such as raising the minimum wage, increasing pension payments and expanding medical insurance subsidies are expected to boost consumer confidence at the source. As existing policy funds are put into use more quickly and incremental policy measures are implemented with greater precision, domestic demand is expected to make a steadily larger contribution to economic growth, providing strong support for accomplishing this year's development goals.

The writer is director of the Department of Economic System Reform at the Institute of Economics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.
The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Soccer craze metaphor for Northeast China revitalization

MAIN STREET
By Huang Weiting

This summer, the eyes of the world have turned to soccer pitches around the globe. Although China failed to qualify for the FIFA World Cup 2026, the nation's passion for the sport has found new outlets in a series of regional competitions at home.

In recent years, with support from local governments, regional sports events have been flourishing across China.

For many soccer enthusiasts, a ticket costing just a few dozen yuan offers not only access to a high-quality professional match, but also a range of customized benefits provided by host cities. From local tourism discounts to consumption incentives, these events have encouraged people to spend.

Such nationwide enthusiasm has not only helped promote city brands, but also brought substantial consumption and economic activity to host regions.

In contemporary Chinese parlance, it represents a two-way connection between governments and consumers, as well as between economic development and cultural entertainment.

In May, China's rust belt region — Northeast China — launched a cross-provincial soccer league, known as the "Northeast City Football League".

Covering Liaoning, Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces — as well as eastern Inner Mongolia — the region was once the country's industrial powerhouse. However, amid China's market-oriented reforms, it experienced decades of economic challenges and decline.

It was not until 2003, when the central government introduced the strategy of "revitalizing Northeast China", that the region entered a new stage of development.

Like rust belt regions elsewhere in the world, Northeast China still retains valuable legacies from its industrial past, including a strong higher education foundation and early development of sports culture.

Take Shenyang, capital of Liaoning province, as an example. The city's industrial heritage, characterized by resilience, determination and a spirit of hard work, has provided fertile ground for football development and made Shenyang one of China's important bases for youth football training.

For many fans, the NCFL naturally represents strength, speed and passion — qualities that have helped attract ticket buyers, media attention and broader public engagement.

Yet the significance of the NCFL goes far beyond soccer fans' enthusiasm and increased consumption. From the perspective of revitalizing Northeast China, the league represents the return of three key elements essential for regional development.

First, the NCFL has refocused attention on the need for coordinated development across the entire region.

Unlike many regional leagues organized within individual provinces, the NCFL crosses four provincial-level regions, making it a collective effort among different parts of Northeast China.

The message it sends is clear: It comprises complementary advantages, coordinated planning and integrated development.

Historically, the central government's strategic planning for Northeast China revitalization has always emphasized regional coordination. Today, the same principle applies.

Individual provinces acting alone cannot match the impact of joint efforts. Cooperation that creates synergy and achieves more than the sum of its parts is both rational and necessary.

In practice, Heilongjiang, Jilin and Liaoning have all included plans to build the "Harbin-Changchun-Shenyang-Dalian industrial and innovation corridor" in their respective 15th five-year plans.

Going forward, the three provinces and eastern Inner Mongolia should further coordinate efforts in areas such as industrial corridors, logistics networks and international trade channels.

For example, Northeast China should make better strategic use of Liaoning's coastline, which is the region's only access to the sea. Through institutional arrangements, coastal ports in Liaoning could become shared gateways to global markets for the entire region.

Achieving this goal requires local governments to move beyond regional interests and needs stronger coordination from the central government, viewing land-sea integration from the broader perspective of Northeast China revitalization.

Second, competition on the soccer field can help reinvigorate the region's competitive spirit.

Regional coordination aims to create collective strength, but it does not mean eliminating competition — one of the most important foundations of a market economy.

At its core, competitive sports are about facing challenges and striving for victory. The battles on the pitch can serve as a metaphor for restoring the competitive drive needed for economic transformation.

In discussions about Northeast China revitalization, entrepreneurs have frequently highlighted institutional issues, including insufficient market awareness and underdeveloped market mechanisms. At their core, these challenges reflect the need for stronger competition.

The NCFL provides a vivid example of how competition can generate momentum. Competition brings victories on the field, but it can also create stronger market vitality in economic development.

The key task in practice is improving the business environment. Across China, building a market-oriented, law-based and internationally competitive business environment has become a broad consensus.

For Northeast China, further reforms are needed to enhance market vitality while ensuring that economic and social development follows the rule of law. Only through such efforts can the deeper constraints on regional revitalization be addressed.

Meanwhile, openness is also a crucial component of the business environment.

Northeast China should seek greater support for pilot programs aimed at expanding cooperation with neighboring countries, including Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Russia, and enhance its role as a growth hub in Northeast Asia.

Third, the determination demonstrated on the football field could inspire new breakthroughs in Northeast China's comprehensive revitalization.

At Shenyang's Tiexi Stadium, fans spontaneously chant "Shenyang will win", with their voices echoing through the night. The spirit of victory reflects not only the city's soccer tradition, but also a renewed confidence in the region's future.

Northeast China, known as the "industrial cradle of the People's Republic of China", once created more than 1,000 "firsts" in the country's industrial history, including producing the first batch of steel and manufacturing the first domestically produced jet aircraft.

The region's strong industrial foundation remains the source of confidence for its revitalization. The return of a winning spirit can provide renewed motivation for achieving further breakthroughs.

Driven by this confidence, government officials and entrepreneurs are increasingly embracing a problem-solving mindset — finding ways forward despite challenges.

This means that in the years ahead, more new achievements are likely to become part of the ongoing story of Northeast China's revitalization.

The writer is a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Macroeconomic Research.
The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:24 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:24 PM

WORLD



Keys belonging to destroyed homes hang from a ceiling at an exhibition in Beirut, Lebanon, on Friday. The installation aims to preserve the memory of villages destroyed by Israeli forces in the country's south. JOSEPH EID / AFP

'Keys without homes' evoke destruction in Lebanon

BEIRUT — Tears streamed down south Lebanon resident Fatima Hajj Ali's face as she stared at a host of keys hanging like wind chimes from the ceiling of a museum in Beirut — each one symbolizing a home, like her own, destroyed by Israel.

Hajj Ali is among the thousands of southerners who lost their houses in the recent conflicts between Israel and Hezbollah militants, the first of which broke out in 2023 and the second in March.

"We were supposed to go home and open the door with the key, but there is no door anymore," the 23-year-old said.

Despite a lull in fighting following the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the United States and Iran on June 17, intermittent Israeli strikes continue, as do widespread demolitions in and around occupied villages, making it impossible for many people to return.

The exhibition *Hkeeli ya Jnoub*, or "Tell me, O South", features pictures and videos preserving the memory of southern Lebanon at the capital's Beit Beirut museum.

Walking through, Hajj Ali reminisced on her home in Nabatieh al-Fawqa, which she was only able to visit once after an April truce that ultimately failed to stop the fighting.

"Half the house collapsed and half remained," she told Agence France-Presse.

"I long for sunset and to hear the call to prayer in our garden while I drink my coffee," said the psychologist, adding that Beirut had "beautiful" places, but "they are not home".

One of the projects on display is *Keys Without Homes*, which comprises videos of three southerners who kept the keys to their houses, even though they no longer exist.

The artist, 36-year-old Adeeb Farhat, himself from the south, said the idea came to him during the previous war in 2024, when he feared losing his own home.

There is a long-standing tradition among Palestinians of keeping the keys of homes they lost during the *Nakba* — the Arabic word for catastrophe — which saw the flight and expulsion of an estimated 760,000 Palestinian Arabs during the creation of the State of Israel in 1948.

Meanwhile, Lebanese President Joseph Aoun left Beirut on Saturday for Washington, where he is expected to meet United States President Donald Trump, his office said.

Aoun will hold talks "with several American officials on the situation in Lebanon and ways to strengthen the ceasefire", as well as on "the withdrawal of Israel from the Lebanese regions it occupies", the presidency said.

Confirming Aoun's arrival in a later statement, the Lebanese presidency said he would meet US State Secretary Marco Rubio on Sunday and Trump on Tuesday.

AGENCIES — XINHUA

Briefly

DR CONGO

Confirmed cases of Ebola rise to 2,267

The number of confirmed Ebola cases in the Democratic Republic of Congo has increased to 2,267, including 893 deaths, government data showed on Saturday. The figure represents the total number of confirmed cases as of Friday, according to a situation report that documented 86 new cases and 29 new deaths in the previous 24 hours.

HUNGARY

Amendment signed to end president's term

Hungary's President Tamas Sulyok on Saturday signed the country's 17th constitutional amendment, triggering the end of his mandate as head of state. Once the law is published in the official gazette, the termination of his mandate will take effect the following day. In a video statement, Sulyok said he had signed the amendment because he had "no constitutional means of acting against this amendment, which violates constitutional principles but was adopted by the National Assembly ... through a lawful procedure". Prime Minister Peter Magyar welcomed the signing, saying it had "removed the last obstacle to implementing our joint decisions".

GUYANA

53 people rescued from capsized ferry

At least 53 people have been rescued after a ferry carrying more than 100 people capsized off the coast of Guyana, Prime Minister Mark Phillips told Agence France-Presse on Sunday. "(In) a combination of passengers and crew, the number rescued is 53 and it is daylight now, so we expect the number to go up," Phillips said by phone. The MV *Barima* was traveling from Georgetown to Port Kaituma with 116 passengers and crew, government minister Juan Edghill said on Facebook.

AGENCIES — XINHUA



Fleeting joy amid ruins

Displaced Palestinian children cool off in a makeshift pool on a hot summer day at a tent camp in Gaza City on Friday. The brief respite comes amid ongoing Israeli attacks. Gaza's civil defense and local hospitals reported that Israeli strikes on Saturday killed 11 people across the territory, including three children and their parents.

MOHAMMED SABER / EPA

Guinea mining project helps upgrade skills

By **VICTOR RABALLA**
in Nairobi, Kenya
victor@chinadailyafrica.com

Beyond building mines, railways and ports, Chinese companies involved in Guinea's Simandou iron ore project are investing in technology transfer and talent development to equip local workers with the skills to operate and manage one of Africa's largest mining and infrastructure projects.

Sophie Xiaohui Lyu, chief executive at project developer Winning Consortium Simandou, said the long-term success of the project, inaugurated in November, will depend not only on infrastructure investments but also on cultivating local talent capable of managing the project independently.

"The biggest resource is not what we mine, but what we cultivate," Lyu said.

Regarded as one of the world's largest untapped deposits of high-grade iron ore, the Simandou project includes a mine and a railway spanning more than 600 kilometers from southeastern Guinea to the Atlantic coast, making it one of Africa's largest rail infrastructure investments. The International Monetary Fund said the project could expand Guinea's GDP by more than one-fourth by 2030.

The project is being developed through a partnership involving the Guinean government, British-Australian mining company Rio Tinto, and Chinese companies including Baowu, Aluminum Corporation of China and Shandong Weiqiao Pioneering Group, with total investment exceeding $20 billion.

Citing the case of a 27-year-old Guinean woman who studied at the project's railway institute, Lyu said there are several examples of local capacity building already taking place under the project.

"The lady now operates trains on the Simandou Trans-Guinean Railway, transporting iron ore from the mountainous mining region to the coast," she said.

Human capital

Lyu also noted the success of a Guinean executive who spent eight years studying in China, earned a doctorate in agriculture and, after returning home, rose from an environmental manager to deputy general manager of the company.

"Human capital takes time, patience and investment to cultivate, but it is essential. While infrastructure connects places, it is people that connect purpose," she said.

Under President Mamady Doumbouya, the Guinean government has championed the Simandou project not only as a mining venture but also as a vehicle for economic transformation, demonstrating how strategic investments can generate wider development benefits.

Beyond mining, the railway corridor is expected to create opportunities for agriculture, logistics, manufacturing and small businesses along its route.

Lyu said Chinese partners are also working with local enterprises and farmers by providing financing, training and technical support to help them participate in procurement opportunities linked to the project.

"Sometimes the challenge is not only access to finance but also having the skills required to compete for contracts and become part of the ecosystem," she said.

Bouna Sylla, Guinea's minister of mines and geology, expressed confidence that the revenues and infrastructure generated by the venture from the project will help diversify the economy, stimulate industrial development and create a new generation of skilled professionals capable of leading the country's future growth.

"The mines are one of our strengths, together with infrastructure, but the real question is how we can use mining as a catalyst for developing the rest of the economy," Sylla said.

Guinea is encouraging investments in emerging technologies, including drones, for mining and agriculture, while putting in place training programs aimed at equipping young people with the skills needed to take part in the country's economic transformation, he said.

The government's Simandou 2040 development blueprint seeks to use revenues and infrastructure generated by the project to stimulate growth in other sectors, including manufacturing, agriculture and technology, he added.

Burnham era to see steady engagement

Experts say UK's pragmatic approach toward China to continue after Starmer

By **XING YI** in London
xingyi@chinadaily.com.cn

Andy Burnham, the former mayor of Greater Manchester and a veteran Labour politician known for championing devolution, regional economic renewal and working-class communities, will succeed Keir Starmer as British prime minister on Monday.

In a speech after winning the Labour leadership on Friday, Burnham recalled working with Starmer a decade ago, thanked him for leading the party to victory in the 2024 general election, and praised his government's record.

"I have supported all our Labour leaders in my lifetime because I believe a united Labour Party and Labour movement is the best hope for our country," Burnham said before setting out priorities, which include ending internal party factionalism and devolving more power to local government.

Although Burnham did not outline his China policy, his long-standing advocacy of what has become known as "Manchesterism" — shifting power away from Westminster, expanding public control over essential infrastructure and promoting more balanced regional development — suggests continuity in Labour's pragmatic approach toward the world's second-largest economy.

Liverpool, Burnham's birthplace, is home to Europe's oldest Chinatown and is set to host Chinese automaker Chery's first European headquarters following Starmer's January visit to Beijing.

Nick Small, Liverpool City Council's cabinet member for growth and economy, said China's visa-free policy for citizens of the United Kingdom is encouraging greater people-to-people exchanges, while Chery's planned headquarters is expected to bring new investment and jobs.

Greater Manchester, where Burnham has served as mayor for the past decade, is also home to a large Chinese community. Many are among the estimated 200,000 passengers who have traveled over the past decade on direct flights between Manchester and Beijing, a route that celebrated its 10th anniversary last month.

In April, Burnham told Chinese Consul General Tang Rui that the city-region placed great importance on its relationship with China and was keen to expand cooperation in green development, electric buses, advanced manufacturing and life sciences.

During the meeting, Burnham also fondly recalled a visit to China in 2018, saying he was impressed by the country's high-speed rail network.

He was quoted by media as saying during the visit that "railway passengers in the north of England deserve a service every bit as clean, comfortable and reliable as those traveling in northern China".

In remarks that seem almost prophetic of his prime ministerial plans, he said "the future of a global world is one of cities working together across borders and seas and making the difference".

"Stronger international city-to-city ties will not only allow us to share our experiences and best practices, but more importantly to work collaboratively across industry, academia and policy in shaping the solutions for tomorrow's world," he added.

Jim O'Neill, an adviser to the incoming prime minister, has argued that Britain needs deeper engagement with China and other Asian economies to adapt to the eastward shift in global economic power.

"The places that are going to make a difference to our trade and investment performance are China, India and Indonesia ... places which have a large number of people, which are growing fast, and which are taking a growing share of global GDP. Somewhere along the line, you've got to recognize that reality," he told British newspaper The Observer.

O'Neill, while serving as chief global economist at Goldman Sachs, coined the term "BRIC" — for Brazil, Russia, India and China — in 2001 and was a former UK Treasury minister during David Cameron's second cabinet in 2015. He also suggested that the UK should not be "petrified of Washington about China".

Strong willingness

Earlier this month, soon after Starmer announced his resignation, the British business community expressed a strong willingness to continue the momentum of pragmatic engagement with China at a London event that hosted visiting Chinese Commerce Minister Wang Wentao.

"Serious engagement is back," UK Secretary of State for Business and Trade Peter Kyle said at the event. "By working together and talking together, both of our nations can prosper."

Steven Lynch, director of international trade at the British Chambers of Commerce, wrote on social media later that he expects Burnham to understand the UK-China relationship and stay close to Labour's approach.

"Reengage, rebuild dialogue, partner where trade is possible, and challenge on national security and fair competition. Business doesn't need more geopolitical instability," he wrote.

When it comes to frictions arising from trade surpluses, Sebastian Wood, chair of the China-Britain Business Council, told China Daily that if the UK were to put up protectionist barriers, it would make its economy less competitive.

"The better way to do it is to actively seek to rebalance the relationship in a constructive way, by boosting exports to China, and also encouraging Chinese investment into the UK ... Protectionism is not the answer," he said.

Julian Shea and Zheng Wanyin contributed to this story.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

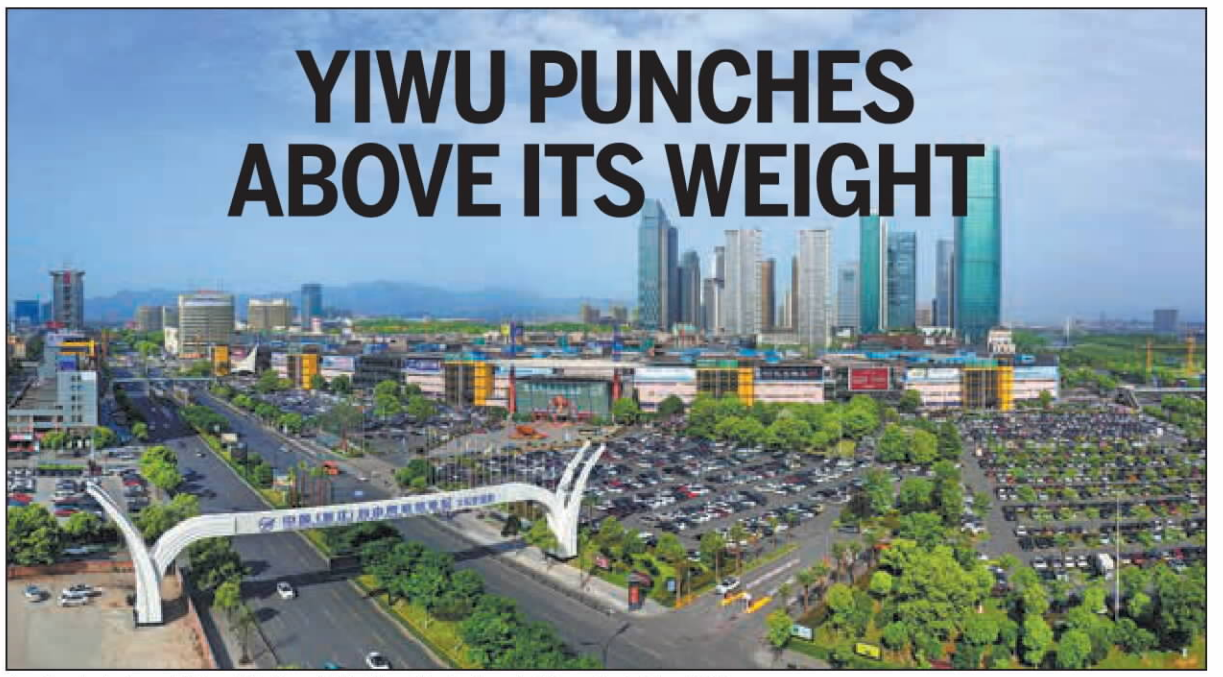
CHINA DAILY (ISSN 0748-6154) is published daily except weekends by China Daily USA, 1500 Broadway, Suite 2800, New York, NY 10036. Periodical postage paid at New York, NY and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to CHINA DAILY USA, 1500 Broadway, Suite 2800, New York, NY 10036.

Vol. 38 — No.1874

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:24 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:24 PM

YIWU PUNCHES ABOVE ITS WEIGHT



An elevated view of China (Zhejiang) Pilot Free Trade Zone in Yiwu city in May 2025. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Small commodities capital in Zhejiang province raising its international profile

By YUAN SHENGGAO

The small city of Yiwu in East China's Zhejiang province, known as the world's capital of small commodities, has become a global trading powerhouse. Its foreign trade hit a record in 2025 and the city is pushing ahead with industrial upgrading, trade facilitation and a global brand strategy.

The city's imports and exports totaled 836.5 billion yuan ($123.62 billion) in 2025, up 25.1 percent from 2024, marking the first time the figure has exceeded 800 billion yuan, according to local customs data.

That momentum carried on into 2026. In the first quarter, Yiwu's foreign trade rose 25 percent year-on-year to 209.7 billion yuan, a record high.

During the first quarter, Yiwu engaged in trade with more than 220 countries and regions. Notably, trade with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations surged by 68.3 percent, making it the fastest-growing market. Exports to countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative reached 147.4 billion yuan, an increase of 29.8 percent. Also, trade with Africa rose by 47.3 percent, totaling 41 billion yuan.

Long before the FIFA World Cup 2026 kicked off, orders for fan merchandise flooded into Yiwu. As a super factory for global sporting goods, made-in-Yiwu commodities capture about 70 percent of the market for World Cup-related merchandise, from footballs, fan apparel and small flags to team-themed glasses, hats, wigs, nail art and insulated cups.

"In the past, we only made what customers asked for. Now we actively anticipate market demand," said Chen Shaomei, a veteran trader who has witnessed five World Cup cycles. His company's self-designed commemorative footballs have become best-sellers, with repeat customers requesting them.

Another supplier, Wen Congjian, designed his own team jerseys and filed for overseas design patents ahead of the tournament — more than 40 patents for this World Cup alone. With patent protection, his products command a premium of up to 20 percent.

Some merchants are also exploring niche segments such as creative products, pet jerseys and baby-friendly sportswear, moving away from a pure volume-based model to higher value-added goods.



Foreign traders search for products at a mall in Yiwu in October 2025.

Since June 2025, Wen has stocked, produced and fulfilled orders. The volume of orders increased month by month, reaching its peak in January. By March, most orders had been shipped and delivered.

At Yiwu Aokai Sports Goods, production lines are running at full capacity. "We have received a large number of World Cup orders. For this football event alone, we have exported nearly 150,000 pieces to Peru," said Wu Xiaoming, the company's general manager.

Thanks to Yiwu's efficient sea-rail links, more made-in-Yiwu products are reaching stadiums worldwide.

Customs data show that Yiwu's exports of sports goods and equipment exceeded 2.34 billion yuan in January-February, up 38.5 percent year-on-year, including 550 million yuan to the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Logistics innovation

The city has made significant efforts to address a long-standing logistics challenge, benefiting tens of thousands of traders in Yiwu. More than half of its market-procurement export containers are consolidated loads. Under the traditional load-then-inspect model, a single flagged shipment would force the entire container to be unloaded and delayed.

Yiwu pioneered an "inspect before loading" model, setting up a supervised consolidation warehouse where loose cargo can be stored, declared individually, inspected and then loaded.

"In the past, a container might hold goods from a dozen clients. If one was selected for inspection, the whole box had to be opened, often missing the shipping deadline and incurring penalty risks," said Cheng Keyuan, chairman of Zhejiang Yinghe International Logistics.

In early 2026, Yiwu added a sea-rail intermodal link to the system. Under this model, inspection clearance information is transmitted in real time to Ningbo Zhoushan Port. Companies can complete preclearance procedures in advance. Goods can move from train to vessel almost immediately, saving two to three days compared with conventional sea freight, according to an official from Yiwu Customs.

Cross-border e-commerce export efficiency has improved by about 30 percent, with costs down by about 15 percent. By April 2026, the value of goods processed under the model had surpassed 1.33 billion yuan — exceeding the total for all of 2025.

Though Yiwu has no seaport or river port, rail links have turned it into a major inland hub. The Yiwu (Suxi) International Hub Port, a part of Ningbo-Zhoushan Port, brings port functions inland. Goods can be declared, inspected and released there as if they had reached the coastal megaport, cutting clearance times by 50 percent and logistics costs by 10-20 percent compared with road transport.

The hub now runs about six pairs of sea-rail intermodal trains daily, using manned and unmanned flatbed vehicles to create a fully intelligent operating model. By June 2, the Yiwu (Suxi) International Hub Port had achieved a cumulative container throughput of over 200,000 twenty-foot equivalent units since its opening on June 27, 2025.

The China-Europe Railway Express in the city is also expanding. In 2025, Jinhua (Yiwu) was designated a national China-Europe freight train consolidation center. Yiwu's trains have so far made more than 8,800 trips, reaching over 160 cities across more than 50 countries, with four trains departing daily.

In April 2026, the first Yiwu-Moscow dual-hub express train, loaded with 110 TEUs of daily necessities, arrived at Moscow's Bely Rast station in just 15 days, offering a competitive logistics option for Sino-Russian trade.



A China-Europe Railway Express train departs Yiwu for Moscow on May 1.

Inclusive community draws global traders

By CAO YINGYING
caoyingying@chinadaily.com.cn

Through effective grassroots governance, Yiwu city has bridged cultural and institutional divides, delivering tangible benefits to global traders. Its unique soft power helps attract and retain international talent, enabling them to integrate into the city's economic and social development.

Syrian businessman Mfadi Diab Aishara first arrived in Yiwu in 2003, seeking entrepreneurial opportunities despite having no capital. Attracted by the city's thriving business environment, he decided to settle permanently in 2006. Today, he is a married father-of-one and runs his own trading company in the city.

"I came here with nothing. Now, I have a Chinese wife, a child and a stable business," he said, expressing gratitude to Yiwu for providing him with entrepreneurial opportunities, a stable life and a fresh start.

Aishara is among many foreigners who have established roots in Yiwu, a city that hosts approximately 28,000 to 30,000 permanent foreign residents.

The Jimingshan community, where Aishara resides, is one of the primary hubs for foreign merchants in the city. According to Jing Jing, the Party secretary of the Jimingshan community, there are 1,388 permanent foreign residents from 74 countries and regions living there. Among them are large populations from Yemen, Syria, Iran and other Middle Eastern nations involved in the Belt and Road Initiative.

"Our community gathers residents from different nationalities, cultures and ethnic groups. Interwoven diverse demands bring unique challenges in management, communication and cultural integration that ordinary communities do not face," said Jing.

Front-line governance hurdles have long included language barriers, foreign residents' limited familiarity with local laws and regulations, and inconsistent public awareness of community governance rules — gaps that complicate routine safety inspections, policy promotion and daily community management work.

To address these challenges, the Jimingshan community launched a Confucius Classroom in 2014, offering free Chinese language courses.

"Foreign merchants urgently need practical business Mandarin for daily trade. In the early years, they could only rely on translators, which was inconvenient and easily caused communication misunderstandings that harmed business cooperation," Jing explained.

The community has adopted an innovative volunteer-for-training model. Foreign participants gain free access to the language courses after completing 72 hours of community volunteer service. The mutually beneficial mechanism has trained over 130,000 foreign residents in the past 12 years.

Many foreign graduates have continued to engage in community services after finishing the courses. Five outstanding participants now work as volunteer tutors, teaching local merchants widely used trade languages including Spanish and Arabic.

"This not only meets the business needs of local vendors but also provides foreign residents with a sense of value and belonging," Jing said.

Beyond language support, the community has set up a one-stop foreign affairs service platform, integrating 65 decentralized administrative services. The full-spectrum service covers company registration, tax filing, rental registration, bank account and SIM card applications, children's schooling and medical consultation.

"New arrivals can head straight to the community right after landing at the airport and get all paperwork done here," Jing said.

While institutional services underpin stable residency, regular cultural exchange programs advance Sino-foreign integration. The community holds more than 230 multicultural activities every year, covering Chinese heritage, traditional culture and festive celebrations.

Events range from Yiwu's traditional culture study tours, calligraphy, martial arts, Yueju Opera and Wuju Opera experiences, to Dragon Boat Festival rituals and Chinese New Year gatherings. For 10 consecutive years, foreign families have been invited to local households to share Chinese New Year dinners and make dumplings, helping bridge cultural gaps and strengthen foreign residents' sense of belonging.

A Nepalese resident in the community has become an unofficial goodwill ambassador for Yiwu. When traveling overseas for business, he brings local souvenirs such as wooden rattles and cultural gifts instead of products from his home country, proudly identifying himself as part of the city, which Jing said warms the hearts of community workers.

To improve services, the community team has visited Gubei Civic Center in Hongqiao subdistrict, Shanghai, a benchmark for one-stop comprehensive services for international residents.

The Jimingshan community plans to break geographical boundaries to build an international community cluster. It will share resources and co-organize activities with other foreign resident communities across Yiwu.

"We welcome all foreign friends to settle here, leverage their strengths and contribute to the city's development," Jing added.



Foreigners living in the Jimingshan community of Yiwu gather for a Chinese New Year's Eve dinner in February 2026.

Digital shift fuels new growth for city's merchants amid AI-powered upgrade

By CAO YINGYING

For decades, Yiwu has built its reputation as China's quintessential small-commodity hub, where daily goods flow from local storefronts to buyers around the world.

Now, this eastern Chinese city is undergoing a digital transformation, leveraging artificial intelligence, cross-border e-commerce and livestreaming to upgrade its brick-and-mortar marketplace into a world-class digital trade ecosystem.

A key witness and participant in this transformation is Jin Haomin, Party branch secretary of the Yiwu Futian subdistrict social e-commerce association, and an early pioneer of livestream commerce in Jiangbeixiazhu village. His experience reflects the broader changes sweeping across Yiwu's e-commerce sector.

Jiangbeixiazhu village, widely regarded as one of China's top livestreaming e-commerce villages, has developed a complete supply chain and cultivated a vibrant startup community for content creators and online retailers.

According to Jin, the village is home to over 8,000 e-commerce players and more than 2,000 brands. It handles an average of over 5 million orders per day, with 20,000 practitioners pursuing their entrepreneurial dreams there.

Jin himself once ran a cross-stitch manufacturing business before pivoting to livestreaming and supply chain services in response to shifting consumer trends.

"Thanks to Yiwu's comprehensive commodity supply, low startup thresholds and inclusive business environment, more than 200 e-commerce villages have emerged in Yiwu. Local sellers prefer sharing traffic and resources rather than engaging in cutthroat competition," Jin explained.

Cost-performance will no longer be the sole competitive edge; emotional value and brand building will help merchants stand out amid intensifying industry homogenization, Jin noted.

The application of AI is further reshaping Yiwu's export landscape, rewriting the rules for small businesses seeking global growth.

Wang Xinfu, a prominent local livestream entrepreneur known by his online alias "Brother Seaweed", has expanded his business from domestic livestream sales to cross-border trade, and now offers customized AI digital human solutions to local manufacturers to help curb operational costs.

"AI's core strength lies in reducing costs and improving efficiency for small and medium-sized merchants. It covers the entire industry chain, from product design and short-video production to multilingual overseas customer acquisition," Wang said.

"AI-generated digital human videos have proven effective for Yiwu's export-oriented sellers, yet large-scale AI livestreaming remains unfeasible due to platform regulatory restrictions and immature underlying technology."

To date, more than 30,000 local merchants have adopted AI tools in their daily operations, with early adopters reporting an average order increase of more than 30 percent.

Last year, Yiwu city's e-commerce transaction volume reached 553.78 billion yuan ($81.84 billion), while cross-border e-commerce transactions approached 168 billion yuan. With 830,000 registered e-commerce entities, 40 percent of local players have ventured into cross-border businesses. Livestream commerce stood out as a signature growth driver, generating 85.6 billion yuan in retail sales last year.

In October, the Yiwu Global Digital Trade Center was put into operation. With an investment of 8.3 billion yuan, this flagship project is recognized as a provincial-level key initiative to bolster the open economy and digital trade.

The multifunctional complex has been hailed by Liu Jie, governor of Zhejiang province, as a powerful new engine driving digital trade across the province.

Zhu Xingping, deputy general manager of the center, noted that the platform removes the time and geographic constraints that have long plagued traditional wholesale markets. "Over the next five years, we will accelerate the full digital upgrading of physical markets and build a year-round digital trade exhibition that never closes," Zhu said.

The sprawling facility hosts many merchants who are young entrepreneurs owning independent brands or intellectual property products. Powered by a self-developed large language model, the center provides over a dozen AI-driven tools covering intelligent design, multilingual translation and automated video generation.

Equipped with full-coverage 10G ultra-high-speed broadband, more than 80,000 stores have evolved into 24/7 livestreaming studios catering to global buyers.

An official of Yiwu said the city's top priority is bridging the digital gap for small-scale exporters and empowering micro and small enterprises to tap into overseas markets.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:24 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:24 PM

CULTURE



A region steals the scene

Breakout film reminds audiences that the oldest traditions often tell the most timeless stories, **Chen Nan** reports.

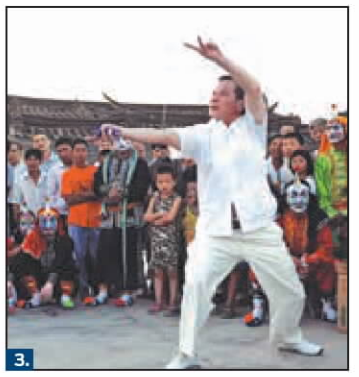
Chaoju Opera is a vital artistic component of the cultural heritage in the Chaoshan region of South China's Guangdong province. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



1.



2.



3.



4.

1. 2. Lin Yanyun plays the lead role in her award-winning Chaoju Opera, *Li Shangyin*. The actress is known for her performances of *xiaosheng*, the refined young male roles.
3. Chen Laifa, 69, demonstrates Yingge dance's signature movements at a cultural event in Puning, Guangdong province.
4. A display introducing the film *Dear You* draws the attention of visitors to a recent exhibition in Hong Kong.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY: WANG SHEN / XINHUA

When *Dear You* quietly entered cinemas during China's fiercely competitive May Day holiday season, few expected the modestly budgeted film — with dialogue largely in the Chaoshan dialect and featuring no major stars — to become a surprise hit.

The film follows a young man who travels to Thailand in search of his long-lost grandfather, hoping to uncover a hidden family fortune. Instead, he discovers a decades-old secret behind the letters his grandmother treasured for years, leading him to uncover an extraordinary story of love, sacrifice and separation spanning generations.

Audiences were drawn to its intimate story of family, memory and homecoming. Yet, for many, the film's most lasting impression came from something even older: the living traditions of Chaoshan.

The Chaoshan region, comprising the cities of Shantou, Chaozhou and Jieyang in South China's Guangdong province, is renowned for its strong clan culture, ancestral rituals and distinctive folk arts.

Rather than serving merely as picturesque backdrops, these traditions emerge as characters in their own right, carrying centuries of memory, migration and belonging.

For viewers beyond southern China, the film offers a rare first glimpse into one of the country's richest regional cultures.

For Lin Yanyun, an award-winning Chaoju Opera actress with the Guangdong Chao Opera Institute who specializes in *xiaosheng* — the refined young male roles in traditional Chinese opera — watching the film was unexpectedly emotional.

"So many of the opera scenes were performed by actors from our own troupe," she says. "Everything felt so familiar. I was deeply moved."

She believes the film offers many younger viewers their first genuine encounter with Chaoju.

"The opera runs throughout the film," she says. "People, especially those who aren't from Chaoshan, can finally experience what Chaoju is really like."

Emotional bond

Believed to date back nearly 600 years, Chaoju is one of China's oldest surviving opera traditions. Performed almost entirely in the Chaoshan dialect, it combines elegant literary verse with expressive singing and a distinctive orchestra featuring instruments such as the *erxian*, a two-stringed bowed instrument, the *yehu*, a coconut-shell fiddle with a mellow tone, and the small *suona*, whose bright, piercing sound heightens dramatic moments.

Performers are often accompanied by a traditional supporting chorus that amplifies the emotional power of each scene. Its repertoire is equally enduring, filled with stories of historical heroes, filial devotion and loyalty.

"The lyrics are refined," Lin says. "The scripts are beautifully written."

For Lin, however, the art form began not in the theater but in childhood.

Growing up in Chenghai, Shantou, she followed her grandmother from village to village whenever an opera troupe came to perform.

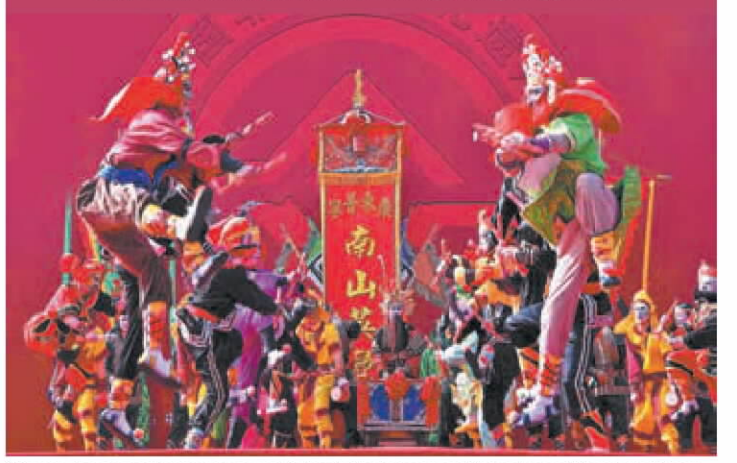
"There were no smartphones and very few televisions," she recalls. "I didn't even know it was called Chaoju Opera. I simply followed the adults to watch. Sometimes I'd fall asleep before it ended."

Those makeshift village stages remain an essential part of life across Chaoshan. During Chinese New Year celebrations, temple fairs and family ceremonies, opera performances continue to bring entire communities together.

Yet, Chaoju's reach extends far beyond China.

"There is a saying: Where there is the sea, there are tides; where there are Chaoshan people, there is Chaoju Opera," Lin says.

> "The sound of the batons grips the heart, and the horns urge people to dance ... The movements express courage and resilience. That's where Yingge dance's artistic appeal lies."
>
> **Chen Laifa,** veteran performer in Puning, Guangdong province



Yingge dance performances combine folk dance, martial arts and theater, driven by pounding drums, painted faces and synchronized wooden batons.

As a veteran performer who has toured Thailand with the Guangdong Chao Opera Institute for several consecutive years, Lin has witnessed how deeply the tradition resonates among overseas communities.

"There are scenes in the film shot in places where we've performed many times," she says.

"Whenever we perform overseas, I am reminded that Chaoju is much more than entertainment.

"Some people left their hometown decades ago and never returned. But the moment they hear the music, memories of home come flooding back."



Lin Yanyun, a veteran Chaoju Opera actress.

More than entertainment

If Chaoju gives voice to longing, Yingge dance answers with exuberance.

Featured prominently in *Dear You*, Yingge dance combines folk dance, martial arts and theater in performances driven by pounding drums, painted faces and synchronized wooden batons.

Rooted in stories of the heroes of *Water Margin*, one of China's best-known classic novels, the dance has become one of the most recognizable symbols of Chaoshan culture, attracting millions of views on Chinese social media.

"The film portrays Yingge dance truthfully," says Chen Laifa, a 69-year-old veteran performer from Puning, Guangdong province. "The scenes feel authentic because they capture the history and spirit of the Chaoshan people."

To newcomers, Yingge dance may seem like pure spectacle, he says. But beneath its powerful rhythms lies a carefully structured tradition, with each formation, movement and musical pattern carrying its own meaning.

"The sound of the batons grips the heart, and the horns urge people to dance," Chen says. "The movements express courage and resilience. That's where Yingge dance's artistic appeal lies."

Chen began performing Yingge dance at the age of 18 and describes the tradition as belonging equally to history, community, entertainment, and art.

"There is an old Chaoshan saying: When the gongs and drums begin, your heart starts to itch," Chen says.

Whenever a troupe performs, he says, people of all ages fill the streets — not simply to watch, but to take part in a tradition passed from one generation to the next.

Like Lin, he sees *Dear You* as an opportunity to introduce younger audiences to a living cultural heritage.

"Cinema allows traditional culture to reach more people," he says. "It helps the younger generation understand Yingge dance."

For Xie Jishun, a veteran performer and researcher of Chaoju, the traditional opera and Yingge dance together form the emotional and cultural heart of Chaoshan.

"Chaoju is gentle and lyrical; Yingge dance is bold and powerful. Together they tell the story of who the Chaoshan people are," he says.

He describes Chaoju as an invisible bridge connecting generations of overseas Chaoshan communities with their ancestral homeland. Across Southeast Asia, opera performances remain at the heart of Chinese New Year celebrations, temple festivals, clan gatherings, and community events, preserving not only the art form itself but also an entire way of life.

"For overseas audiences, Chaoju is far more than entertainment," he says. "It is a spiritual homecoming."

Xie believes films such as *Dear You* are helping these traditions find new audiences.

By weaving Chaoju into a contemporary family story, the film has sparked renewed interest in the opera while drawing wider attention to Chaoshan's cultural heritage. That growing visibility, he says, is encouraging closer collaboration among filmmakers, cultural institutions and the local tourism sector, creating new opportunities for traditional arts to thrive.

"The most moving part isn't only what's happening on stage," Xie says. "It's the way ordinary people continue to cherish these traditions and weave them into everyday life."

Contact the writer at chennan@chinadaily.com.cn

Food courier's verse wins a top Chinese literary honor

By CHEN NAN

The winners of the ninth edition of the prestigious Lu Xun Literature Prize were announced on Wednesday. Among them was Wang Jibing, whose poetry collection *Low Flight* won the poetry award, bringing national recognition to a writer whose work has emerged from the streets and the lives of ordinary people.

When Wang, 56, heard the news, his first feeling was simple joy. "I am filled with happiness, and I can finally breathe a long sigh of relief," he says.

For Wang, the award marks not only national recognition but also the culmination of one of the most challenging and meaningful journeys of his writing life.

Born in Xuzhou, Jiangsu province, Wang left school at 14 after his father sent him to study martial arts. Despite the change in direction, he never lost his love of reading and writing. In 1992, a magazine in his hometown published one of his articles — an early encouragement that stayed with him.

He bought a computer in 2009 and began writing in his spare time, sharing poems and essays on social media, where they gradually found an audience. Wang worked in construction before becoming a food delivery rider, a job he says gives him the flexibility to write.

A difficult delivery in 2019 changed everything. Working in Kunshan, Jiangsu, Wang spent hours searching three residential buildings and climbing 18 flights of stairs after a customer entered the wrong address. When he finally arrived, the customer berated him for being late.

On his way home, Wang poured his frustration into a poem titled *Man in a Hurry*. The piece quickly went viral online and marked a turning point in his writing. Since then, he has drawn inspiration from the rhythms, encounters and emotions of life on the road.

In 2023, he published his first poetry collection, *Man in a Hurry: Poems of a Food Delivery Rider*.

Over the years, Wang has written more than 6,000 poems, many of which have appeared in literary journals.

His latest, award-winning collection grew directly from those daily journeys through city streets and alleyways, carrying meals from restaurants to homes. Along the way, he began reflecting on the quiet connection between delivery riders and the people they serve.

"People may not remember me after we pass each other," he says. "But they will certainly notice a food delivery rider speeding by."

That realization inspired him to write a book for the millions of delivery workers who share the same roads, pressures, hopes, and dreams.

To complete *Low Flight*, Wang interviewed more than 140 delivery riders in person and surveyed more than 60 others, hoping to capture their happiness, frustrations, struggles, and aspirations.

"I hope that after reading this book, people will show riders more understanding and patience, and that there will be fewer conflicts," he says.

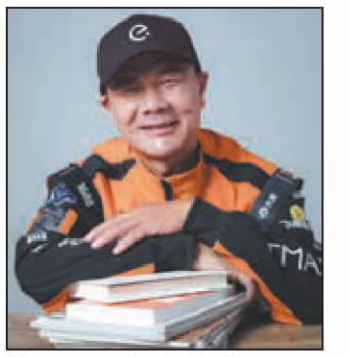
For Wang, the greatest value of literature is not simply personal expression, but the ability to bring people closer together.

The title *Low Flight* reflects the philosophy behind his writing.

"Not every pair of wings can fly straight into the clouds," Wang notes. "A flight close to the ground is still a flight."

His poetry discovers beauty in such low flights: the hum of wheels turning, the wind rushing past, conversations on the street, and the countless fleeting moments that together become the soundtrack of the city.

As he writes: "Every ordinary person running along the road holds a small light in their hands. This light first illuminates us, and then slowly warms and brightens the entire world."

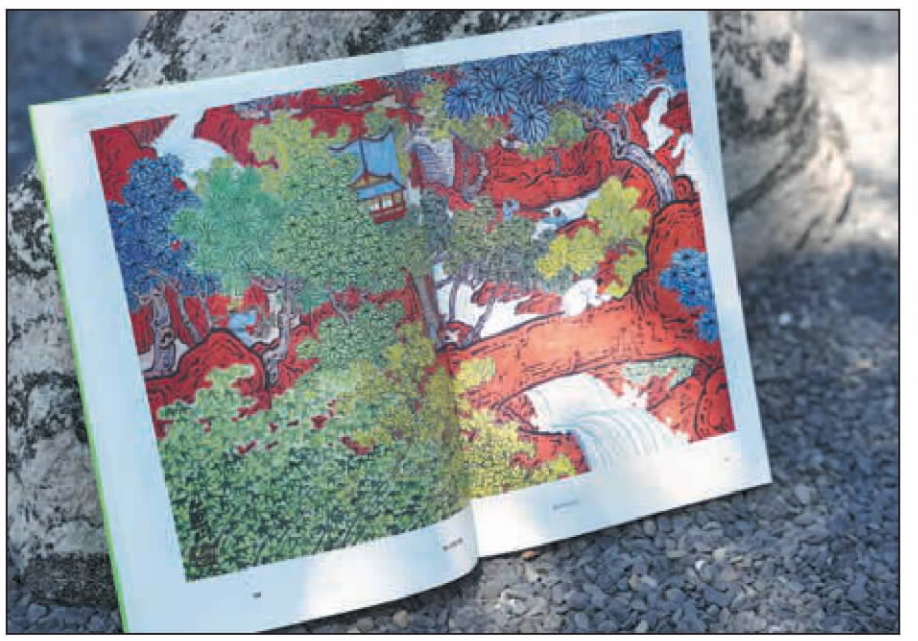


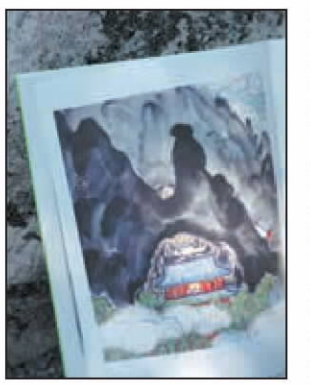
Wang Jibing wins the Lu Xun Literature Prize for his poetry collection that celebrates the lives of ordinary people. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:24 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:24 PM

LIFE





Left and above: The illustrations that artist Yushan created for the Xu Xiake book. **Below:** Artist Yushan talked about creating the illustrations during the book launch event at the Lushan Library, in Jiangxi province.

Retracing mountains of spirited exploration

New book meticulously re-creates the 34-year-long journey of a geographer 400 years ago, bringing ink illustrations, research and highlights from his own travelogue into a comprehensible text, **Yang Yang** reports.

Four hundred years ago, Xu Xiake (1587-1641), a geographer, explorer and literary scholar, spent 34 years traveling around China, covering 100,000 *li* (50,000 kilometers) on foot. The new illustrated book *Xu Xiake's Travels to Famous Mountains* was recently released at Lushan Library located at Lushan Mountain in East China's Jiangxi province.

The book, published by China National Geography Books, includes 16 chapters of Xu's travels to famous mountains, including Lushan Mountain, Huangshan Mountain, Tiantai Mountain, Songshan Mountain, and Hengshan Mountain.

The pages feature over 60 ink landscape illustrations meticulously created by artist Zeng Renzhen, who is known in the art world as Yushan, a contemporary Chinese artist and architect. Chinese writer Zhang Jiawei provides the introduction and translation, while Zhu Huirong, an expert on Xu Xiake research, offers commentary and annotations. The book also includes 17 specially drawn maps of Xu's travel routes to these famous mountains.

Chen Yihuan, general manager of China National Geography Books, explains that the book aims to transform the classic work from 400 years ago into a travel text that is "readable, appreciable, and referable". It is designed to be readable with selected chapters on famous mountains featuring introductions and modern translations; appreciable, with artist Yushan retracing Xu's routes to create over 60 landscape illustrations; and referable, by connecting Xu's paths with today's renowned mountain sites.

In 1618, Xu embarked on a journey along the Yangtze River, stopping in Jiujiang, Jiangxi, to explore Lushan Mountain, Baiyue Mountain, Huangshan Mountain, and Jiuhua Mountain in today's Jiangxi and Anhui provinces. His experiences during this trip are detailed in his travelogue, *Diary of a Visit to Lushan Mountain*.

Lushan, located in northern Jiangxi province, is a renowned Chinese scenic area. Xu arrived in Jiujiang on Aug 18 and began his ascent from Lushan's northern slope with friends the following day. After five days of exploration, he departed from Kaixian Temple on the southern slope on Aug 23, having visited all the major scenic spots.

His journey was driven by a spirit of adventure and discovery, so he avoided the main roads. To reach the summit of Hanyang Peak, Lushan's highest point, he navigated through grass and thorns. While investigating the Sandie Spring, he traversed a rocky stream bed, where round stones were slippery and sharp rocks pierced his shoes.

He visited Shimen (stone door) twice, took detours to thoroughly explore Wulao Peak, and often viewed many scenic spots from different angles to ensure he fully captured their beauty.

Lushan Mountain is a typical horst-block mountain, uplifted by the Himalayan movement millions of years ago, said geologist Liu Jiaqi at the book launch ceremony.

It preserves the most typical and concentrated remnants of Quaternary glacial landforms in eastern China, on which prominent Chinese geologist Li Siguang proposed the Lushan Glaciation theory. Liu also mentioned Lushan's Feilai Stone, a massive boulder weighing tens of tons standing isolated on a mountain ridge, which could only have been transported there by glaciers.

The scattered rocks that Xu Xiake once walked on, described as "round ones that are slippery and pointed ones that pierce shoes", are likely glacial erratics transported by glaciers, he noted.

The book's illustrator, Yushan, retraced Xu's footsteps to various famous mountains in order to illustrate the landscapes. With a decade of cultural exploration as a foundation, Yushan used contemporary Eastern aesthetics to re-create over 60 landscapes and scenes described by Xu.

Painting the landscapes Xu traveled through is also to depict his life within them — the journey's hardships, the uncertainty of finding a path, the relaxing moments, and the exhilaration of reaching the summit, he says.

"Xu leisurely traveled through the vast world and joyfully walked within his own small world," he adds.

Explaining Xu's approach and spirit in his travel explorations, Chen Qingjiang, vice-director of the Xu Xiake Research Branch of the Geological Society of China, summarizes it into four key phrases: committing wholeheartedly to a chosen pursuit, exploring vast landscapes with freedom and courage, visiting mountains as if meeting old friends, and embarking on distant journeys as acts of personal dedication.

Xu uniquely combined landscape aesthetics with scientific exploration, a rare achievement among travelers throughout history, with few able to rival him in this regard, Chen says.

Contact the writer at yangyangs@chinadaily.com.cn





Cover of the illustrated book *Xu Xiake's Travels to Famous Mountains*. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Song, stance, dining tables: China and Africa share rhythm

NAIROBI — At a copper mine in Zambia, workers are singing. On the streets of Dakar, young people are practicing tai chi. In a kitchen in Dar es Salaam, apprentices are working with a cleaver and a wok.

Across the continent, singing, dancing, and cooking in everyday life fall into the same rhythm.

This year marks the China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges. Different countries, different tempos, and yet, across mountains and seas, the same beat.





Left: Students practice *taijiquan*, a kind of Chinese traditional martial art, at the Confucius Institute at the University of Nairobi, in Kenya, on March 18, 2026. **Right:** Singers perform during the finals of *Sing for Africa*, a Chinese-supported musical talent show in Nairobi, Kenya, on Dec 29, 2025. PHOTOS BY XIE JIANFEI AND YANG GUANG / XINHUA

Rising from the mine

The video *The Song of Chambishi* recently went viral across Chinese internet platforms. The voices and footwork of Zambian miners won over countless online users and turned the spotlight onto the copper mine itself.

Chambishi was discovered in the late 19th century, and its development was anything but smooth. Production only began to recover and grow after the late 1990s, when the Sino-Zambian joint venture, NFC Africa Mining Plc, took over its operation and investment.

Xu Laixiang, the company's deputy general manager who wrote both the song's words and music, says the idea came to him while preparing the launch ceremony of a tunnel-boring machine. "I wanted a song that captured a century of Chambishi's history that could lift the workers' spirits. I never expected it to take off online," he says. The company, he adds, has not only created a large number of local jobs but also helped improve infrastructure and schooling in the surrounding communities.

The chorus echoing through the mine is a small snapshot of how cultural exchange and practical cooperation between Africa and China benefit so many. Across the wider continent, melodies carrying that shared feeling are giving more young people a stage on which to shine and chase their dreams.

After winning a China-Africa co-produced singing contest called *Sing for Africa* in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, a vocalist known as Muluwa used the prize money to open a studio dedicated to nurturing the next generation of musical talent. In the Zimbabwean capital, Harare, *Dream Show,* founded by Chinese residents, has helped more than 300 young people travel to China for cultural exchange over the years, putting homegrown artists in the spotlight and giving the local creative industry a push.

Ready for the challenge

Ousmane Sako, head coach of Senegal's national *wushu* (martial arts) team, can hardly wait for the Dakar Youth Olympic Games to open. *Wushu* will make its debut as an official Olympic event at the 2026 Games.

A Dakar native, Sako grew up in difficult surroundings, carrying the restlessness and aimlessness of a boy of the streets. He first began karate, then moved to tai chi. "Tai chi changed my life," he says.

Training day after day steadied his body and mind. He worked through one obstacle after another to reach his post as a national-team coach. For now, every ounce of his attention is on preparing his squad for the Dakar Youth Olympics. "It won't be an easy contest," he says, "but we're ready for the challenge".

In Yaounde, the capital of Cameroon, a young man named Rodrigue Taling has turned the "Bruce Lee dream" he once coveted in a run-down video hall into his own martial arts gym. *Wushu*, he says, is "an art of cultivating body and mind" that taught him self-control, and he hopes to spread this discipline, steeped in Eastern philosophy, so more young Cameroonians can reach an inner calm.

In Kigali, the capital of Rwanda, young coach Emile Ndagijimana leads his students through tai chi, one movement at a time. Ndagijimana began training at age 9, at first drawn to it by kung fu films, but what truly transformed him was the philosophy behind the moves. "My Chinese teacher told me that to master tai chi, you have to find the balance between body and mind in the space between breath and motion," he says. He wants to share his understanding and love of tai chi with more Rwandans, convinced that this Eastern wisdom has healing powers.

Blending flavors

In the Chinese kitchen of the Kilimanjaro Institute of Technology and Management in Tanzania, a cleaver strikes the board in quick, insistent rhythms. Ruth Wahima Seni, a Tanzanian hotel management student, is practicing slicing a potato into threads as fine as hair.

Seni is taking part in a China-Tanzania cooking program launched in January. Each day, Chinese master chef Wang guides 20 local apprentices, Seni among them. As he sees it, "food is a bridge between people. Once the students understand the culture, they cook with feeling, and the quality of the dishes rises with it".

After learning the foundations of knife work, dough, heat control, and seasoning, the young apprentices transform local ingredients — Tanzanian beef, mutton and seafood — into classic Chinese dishes. As trade between Africa and China grows, demand for authentic Chinese food climbs, says institute instructor Philbert Haule, and the demand for Chinese cooking will open more doors for young job-seekers.

As young Tanzanians replicate the tastes of China, Chinese tables are taking on more African flavors. From May 1, China extended its zero-tariff treatment to all 53 African countries with which it has diplomatic ties. From Rwandan dried chilies to Kenyan avocados, from South African wine to Cameroonian cocoa, more African produce is entering the Chinese market faster than before.

A song, a set of moves, and a table of food are resonating across thousands of miles, and vivid moments in the lives of ordinary people are merging into an enduring echo between China and Africa.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:24 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:24 PM

SPORTS

2026 WORLD CUP



England grabs a Saka-ful of goals

Bukayo Saka beats France's Mike Maignan to score England's third goal during the World Cup third-place match at Miami Stadium on Saturday. Saka scored a hat-trick as England defeated France 6-4. **Inset:** Saka (center) is congratulated by Jude Bellingham (10) and Reece James after scoring his side's fifth goal from the penalty spot. REUTERS / AP

Arsenal star bags a hat-trick in wild 6-4 bronze medal match win over France

England and France delivered a 10-goal thriller in a game that was supposed to just be an afterthought.

A day before the highly anticipated final between defending champion Argentina and 2010 winner Spain, Bukayo Saka scored three goals to lead England past Kylian Mbappe and France 6-4 in a wild third-place match at Miami Gardens in Florida.

Mbappe surpassed Lionel Messi's record for World Cup goals, scoring twice in the second half. The 27-year-old star has 22 career World Cup goals and 10 in this tournament alone, two ahead of Messi in the race for the Golden Boot going into Sunday's final.

It was the highest-scoring World Cup game since Hungary beat El Salvador 10-1 in 1982, and the 10 goals were the most ever in a third-place match.

Saka had goals in the 37th minute and in first-half stoppage time, then added a third from the spot in the 87th for his second England hat-trick. The Three Lions also got goals from Declan Rice and Ezri Konsa to build a 4-0 halftime lead, and they held out against a relentless France attack in the second half to secure their second-best World Cup finish since winning the title in 1966.

"I hope that the players can be proud of that in some time," England coach Thomas Tuchel said, adding that he viewed England's World Cup run as a success, despite its collapse in the semifinals.

The Three Lions blew a 1-0 lead against Argentina and lost 2-1 when Messi assisted on two late goals.

Tuchel was criticized for his tactical decisions in the loss, with many wondering what it will take for England to end its decades-long wait for another trophy.

He said that Saturday's result was the first step toward closing the gap with teams like Argentina and France. "This game will help us for sure," he said, "even if a part will never allow you to fully celebrate the bronze medal."

Jude Bellingham capped the scoring in the eighth minute of second-half stoppage time, his seventh goal of the tournament and the most in a World Cup by an England player.

Captain Harry Kane scored six this year, as he did in Russia in 2018, and Gary Lineker scored six at the 1986 World Cup.

Halftime substitutes Bradley Barcola and Ousmane Dembele also scored in the second half for France, which pulled within 4-3 thanks to Mbappe's second goal.

Mbappe won the Golden Boot four years ago in Qatar, when France lost the final to Argentina on penalties, and is in a good position to repeat the achievement this year.

"I just try to help my team every time to score," Mbappe told Fox Sports. "It's certain that when you score so many goals in the World Cup, it elevates you to certain levels.

"I would have preferred not to be the top scorer in history and play in the match tomorrow."

Both teams had said they'd rather be playing in Sunday's final.

France had enough offensive firepower to potentially win the tournament, but Les Bleus lost to Spain in the semifinals and squandered their chance at reaching a third straight World Cup final.

England assistant manager Anthony Barry was on the verge of tears during his halftime interview.

"I have to be honest, I'm a little bit emotional, I'm struggling to find the words to describe how proud I am of these players," he said.

"They're playing the game with broken hearts, yet they can build a performance like that through playing for England. The team spirit we've built over the last seven weeks, it's been a privilege to watch."

A privilege enjoyed by a sellout crowd of 64,478 at the seventh and final World Cup match to be played at Miami Stadium.

Plenty of supporters were cheering for both teams. Many were there simply for the atmosphere of the low-stakes match, and it more than delivered.

"I love English football," said Gaston Esquivel, a native of Mexico City who came to support England.

"I've followed the Premier League since I was a kid. I am a Manchester United fan. I like their style, I like their game."

Thomas Viel, who traveled from Paris to follow France throughout the tournament, was hoping to see an Mbappe hat-trick. He nearly got one.

France trailed 4-0 when Mbappe flicked a shot past Crystal Palace goalkeeper Dean Henderson in the 48th minute.

He beat Henderson again with a left-footed strike from about 14 yards in the 66th.

It was also the final match for France coach Didier Deschamps, who has said he will step down after 14 years.

Deschamps embraced players and waved toward the crowd as he exited the pitch.

"We were not expecting such a first half," Deschamps said.

"And we did better in the second half. We were deeply disappointed, gutted after the semis. I don't want to sum up my career on this moment."

AGENCIES

Defiant Tuchel hopes Three Lions will look back with pride



England coach Thomas Tuchel (left) looks on during the medal ceremony after the World Cup third-place playoff on Saturday. AP

England manager Thomas Tuchel said he hoped his players would one day look back on finishing third at the World Cup with some pride, despite falling short of their goal of winning the tournament.

The German, who has faced a torrent of criticism from the English media over his cautious tactics in the Argentina defeat, said England had made progress with its win against France.

"Eight years ago they (France) were the champions. Four years ago they were in the final. There is a slight gap, but no problem. We want to close it," he told the BBC.

"I said yesterday that today is the first step to closing it. We did it. We beat them. The next one will be Spain in the Nations League.

"To see a team fight like this gives you energy. The tiredness will come after. We will still feel the pain when tomorrow is the final. This will take a while, but overall it gives me more energy than it takes from me."

A 6-4 win over France in a frenetic third-place playoff at Miami Stadium on Saturday gave England its best finish at a World Cup since its only triumph when it hosted the tournament in 1966.

"It's the first medal for 60 years, the best World Cup on foreign soil. So, I hope that the players can be proud of that in some time," he told reporters.

"We are fiercely competitive, so we almost don't allow ourselves to be proud of the third place, because 18 months ago we set ourselves the highest goal ... to make it to the final and win the World Cup. So, it's very, very painful if you miss out. The pain will stay for a while."

Tuchel came in for heavy flak after England lost 2-1 to Argentina in the semifinals on Wednesday, particularly because of what were viewed as his defensive tactics after his side took the lead early in the second half.

"The news conference yesterday felt as if we went out in the group stage without a win, to be very honest," the German said.

"The best thing you can do is to react on the pitch and get the next win. Everything else is just talking, and talking doesn't get you points, and talking doesn't get you a win.

"I'm glad that we showed a reaction. We wanted that reaction, and it's very impressive."

Bukayo Saka's hat-trick for England on Saturday inevitably raised a question about why the right winger was not played in the semifinal loss to Argentina.

"It was a tough decision for me to leave him out of the semifinal," said Tuchel, who admitted he had been cautious with Saka because of the Achilles injury he had been managing for the last few months.

"I had the feeling that Morgan Rogers had something special to give us with his physicality and his body in the match against Argentina.

"We had (Saka) warm up several times against Argentina. We were ready to change, but the game became so crazy that, in the end, we opted for a different option.

"But nothing has changed during the World Cup for me. Bukayo is a fantastic teammate, fantastic football player, key player for us, and that will not change. He showed it again today and I'm happy for him."

AGENCIES

Spain defeats Argentina 1-0 to win second World Cup

By **SHI GUANG** in New York
shiguang@chinadailyusa.com

European champions Spain won their second World Cup on Sunday, defeating Argentina 1-0 in extra time.

Ferran Torres scored the only goal of the game — his first of the tournament — kicking in a cross by Nico Williams, who had a goal 10 minutes early disallowed for a foul. A second goal by Torres in extra time was deemed offside and disallowed.

"It was a goal scored by 47 million people — it wasn't even mine or from the 26 players," said Torres, who had entered the game as a substitute. "It was destined to happen. It was meant to be a winner."

Spanish coach Luis de la Fuente became the oldest World Cup-winning coach at age 65.

"I'm so proud of this generation of footballers," De la Fuente said. "They're excellent, world-class footballers with exceptional talent," he told reporters after the match.

"I'm very moved. Looking back and thinking about them, we've won everything, absolutely everything, with this generation of players."

US President Donald Trump presented the trophy to Spain, with the leaders of the other co-host nations, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, also on stage as the medals were handed out at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

Bill Einreinhofer, who lives in East Rutherford, said local restaurants closed off their parking lots, set-up tables, chairs and large screen TVs for watch parties, to which everyone was invited regardless of which, if any, team they were supporting.

"Because traffic was expected to be terrible, many people walked to the parties. The day turned out to be a real community event. I think that qualifies as a win," he told China Daily.

Spain's other World Cup championship was a 1-0 victory over the Netherlands in 2010.

Following a surprising 0-0 draw against Cape Verde in its first game, Spain went on to win its next seven games, allowing only one goal while scoring 14. Spain's defense did not even allow Argentina a shot on goal in regulation, while Argentina's goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez set a World Cup final with 10 saves.

The victory gave Spain a record 38-game unbeaten streak in men's international soccer.

The loss for Argentina ended a drive, led by Lionel Messi, to win back-to-back World Cups, a feat accomplished only by Italy in 1934-38, and Brazil in 1958-62.

Messi, 39, who was playing in his sixth World Cup, and third World Cup final, left a cryptic message on Instagram before the game, reading: "The best part of all these years was never just the titles, but the journey itself. Sharing the day-to-day with this group, competing together, picking ourselves up during tough times, and enjoying every step of the way." The post showed a pair of shoes with the words "Last Tango", suggesting that Sunday could be the last World Cup game of his career. Over that time he has scored 21 goals in 34 games.

"I was personally shocked by Argentina's poor performance, and wanted Messi to have his ride into the sunset," Ben Fraternale, a New York-based multidisciplinary artist who was filming the World Cup final, told China Daily. "But ultimately I walked out of the stadium feeling grateful to have had this life experience and meet so many people from across the planet."

"In victory and defeat, everyone always remained gracious, and the most surreal element throughout it all was seeing soccer get a massive foothold in America," Fraternale said.

France's Kylian Mbappe won the Golden Boot, his second in a row, with 10 goals in the tournament. Spain's center-back Pau Cubarsi, 19, was recognized as the Young Player of the Tournament, an honor also bestowed on Mbappe in 2018 when France won its second World Cup.

The next World Cup in 2030 will again see three host countries — Spain, Portugal and Morocco.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:24 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:24 PM



An elevated view of a picturesque wetland park in Lhasa's Damshung county. TENZIN NYIDA / XINHUA

Investment and growth rank Xizang first nationally

Positive signals as autonomous region presses ahead with 15th Five-Year Plan

By YUAN SHENGGAO

The Xizang autonomous region in Southwest China reported steady and rapid growth in the first quarter, maintaining the development momentum it has achieved over the decades and showing a good start to its 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30).

According to the Xizang Statistics Bureau, the region's fixed-asset investment increased 19.8 percent year-on-year during the first three months of 2026, again ranking it first nationally.

Also ranking it top of the nation were year-on-year growth rates in eight areas. These include increases in regional GDP, incremental output value of industrial enterprises above designated size, and per capita disposable income of rural and urban residents, standing at 6.1 percent, 20.5 percent and 7.5 percent, respectively.

It is worth mentioning that the increase in Xizang's fixed-asset investment has maintained a top position in the country since the third quarter of 2025.

In terms of investment structure, the secondary industry kept a year-on-year increase of 71.2 percent in the first quarter, accounting for 47.2 percent of all the fixed-asset investment in Xizang.

Yang Jie, a researcher at the Xizang Academy of Social Sciences, said this feature shows a growing emphasis on the real economy.

"The substantial growth in investment in the secondary industry also indicates that Xizang is accelerating a transformation in its development model — from investment-driven to industry-driven," Yang said. "And the top-ranking growth rates over nine consecutive months show that such growth is sustainable, rather than a short-term phenomenon."

The researcher also noted the growth rate in fixed-asset investment made by private businesses stood at 27.8 percent year-on-year. "This shows that Xizang is becoming an investment destination favored by all kinds of business entities," he said.

Digitalization

Driven by digitalization and intelligent operations, Xizang's manufacturing industries kept an impressive year-on-year increase of 30.4 percent in output value during the first quarter.

Gaozheng Cement Plant based in Lhasa, for instance, is an example of digital-driven development in Xizang. Since the beginning of 2026, the company has run its operations at full capacity.

Mao Xinbo, an executive in charge of technology at Gaozheng, explained that in the past, cement could be used for only six months a year in Xizang due to the high altitude and freezing temperatures on the plateau.

"Over recent years, our researchers have developed cement varieties suitable for plateau weather and an intelligent temperature control system for on-site concreting," Mao said. "These have made our cement products good to use for more than 10 months a year on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, leading to substantially improved efficiency for construction projects and increasing demand for our products."

Powering the intelligent development of Xizang's industries are an increasing number of enterprises in the digital economy. The Lhasa High-Tech Development Zone, for instance, is now home to about 2,900 companies for the development of digital technologies. It has earned this area in the Xizang regional capital the name of "smart computing valley on the plateau".

Against a backdrop of economic growth, the quality of life and social welfare of local residents have been improving sustainably.

According to the Xizang Statistics Bureau, the per capita disposable income of Xizang residents reached 6,483 yuan ($954) in the first quarter, growing 7.5 percent from the same period of 2025. The per capita disposable income of urban residents and that of rural residents in Xizang increased 6.2 percent and 7.8 percent, respectively.

When analyzing the data, Yang said all the three growth rates relating to disposable income rank first nationally. "It is noteworthy that the increase rate in per capita disposable income of Xizang residents has ranked first in the country for 11 consecutive quarters."

The researcher added that rural residents' income has been increasing at a rate faster than that of urban residents. This demonstrates a narrowing income gap and trend toward balanced development between cities and the countryside.







Clockwise from top left: A harvester is used to collect highland barley on a farm in Chushul county. ZHANG RUIFENG / XINHUA Farmers handpick tea leaves on a farm in Nyingchi's Metog county. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY A solar farm generates clean power in Lhokha's Chusum county. TSERING LUNGPO / XINHUA

Agriculture

The improving quality and increasing output of agricultural sectors, driven by technologies and digitalization, have contributed to revenue growth for rural residents.

In the county of Dromo in Shigatse city, there is a modernized aquaculture base for salmon. Kelsang Dawa, a resident in the township of Dromomey where the base is located, is a technician at the plant.

According to him, researchers in Dromo have made breakthroughs in the domestication and breeding of salmon over recent years, leading to the formation of an emerging industry with considerable scale in the county.

"Our company put a new processing plant into operation last year to produce finished salmon products," Kelsang Dawa said. "This year, we will continue to upgrade our operations through brand building and tapping into the e-commerce sector."

Highland barley, or *qingke*, is the major grain crop in Xizang. The autonomous region has seen steady improvements in the crop's output and quality over recent years thanks to increasing investment in research and development.

The Lhundrub Highland Barley Germplasm Resources Protection and Research Base, operated by the Xizang Academy of Agricultural and Animal Sciences, is one of the key R&D facilities for the crop in Xizang.

According to Dawa Dondrup, a researcher at the XAAAS, the base has bred more than 4,000 germplasm varieties of highland barley over the decades, accounting for more than 60 percent of the national total.

"Our focus is to cultivate high-yield and high-quality varieties that can better resist drought, coldness and diseases in the plateau conditions," the researcher said.

Thanks to the efforts of the agricultural researchers, the ratio of high-quality seeds used in Xizang's crop farming industry has reached 95 percent, according to the academy.

New and high-tech farming machines have also contributed to improving the efficiency of Xizang's agricultural sector.

On a farm of 2,000 hectares in Lhokha city's Lhunze county, for instance, the spraying of fertilizer and insecticide is now carried out by drones.

"Over recent years, drones have been used extensively in our county, leading to the substantial improvements in efficiency," said Kelsang Tsering, head of the county's technical service center for farming and herding.

To encourage the application of new machines and technologies, Xizang's agricultural authorities are now offering subsidies for the use of the Beidou navigation system and crop-care drones.

Since the beginning of 2026, agricultural departments at various levels in Xizang have intensified their efforts to promote dozens of newly developed technologies among the farming and herding communities, mainly covering such sectors as highland barley, yaks, cows and forage grasses.

Optimism

Based on the momentum of the first quarter, officials and residents in Xizang are optimistic about the development prospects under the 15th Five-Year Plan.

The fourth session of the 12th People's Congress of the Xizang autonomous region, which was held in late January and early February, approved the region's 15th Five-Year Plan, laying a legal foundation for its implementation.

The outline for Xizang's Five-Year Plan was released to the public during a news conference held on May 29 in Lhasa. At the conference, Xizang's senior officials introduced and interpreted this plan.

Gama Cedain, chairman of the Xizang autonomous region, said Xizang will focus on high-quality development, forging a modern industrial system based on its unique advantages in resources, location and environment.

He said that in the next five years, Xizang will continue to boost the development of the farming and husbandry industries with plateau characteristics, helping farmers and herders increase revenues by producing more healthy and green products. With a focus on the integration of culture and tourism, the tourism sector will remain a major source for residents to increase incomes.

According to the official, the digital economy, the low-altitude aviation industry and the new energy sector will continue to be highlighted in Xizang's Five-Year Plan.

As part of this, traditional industries will be upgraded via intelligent, digital and internet-connected technologies, realizing the deep integration of industrial innovation and technological advancements.

To boost green and low-carbon development, Xizang will make better use of its rich hydropower, wind and solar resources for the production of alternative and green energy, according to Gama Cedain.

In the next five years, Xizang is expected to see the operation of new power generation plants with an installed capacity of 60 million kilowatts in total. In addition, plants with a total installed capacity of 120 million kilowatts are to be built during the period. Among these, power facilities using clean energy resources will take a dominant share.

Expectations

The official noted that the autonomous region will continue to make efforts to meet residents' expectations for a better quality of life.

The development of the oxygen production and supply industries is to be boosted as it is crucial for public health. Gama Cedain said the coverage of portable oxygen supply equipment will be steadily expanded in the next five years, from hospitals, schools, hotels and scenic spots to communities and households. He added that oxygen supplies can be made more affordable as a more than 50 percent reduction in costs is expected in the time frame.

At the news conference, Dampa, executive vice-chairman of the Xizang autonomous region government, introduced environmental protection initiatives during the 15th Five-Year Plan.

In the next five years, Xizang will continue to prioritize protection of the ecological environment, building the autonomous region into a national ecological civilization highland.

"At present, Xizang is home to 246 rare animal species and 169 rare plant species on the national list of key protection, showing impressive achievements in the protection of its plateau ecological system and in the construction of a national highland for ecological civilization," Dampa said.

According to the autonomous region's strategy and action plan for protecting biodiversity for 2026-30, Xizang has outlined 28 actions for the systematic protection of the local ecosystem, Dampa said.

He added that, based on this action plan, Xizang will launch a series of initiatives for the development and expansion of nature reserves and national parks on the plateau in the next few years.



A section of the Lhasa-Nyingchi Expressway stretches across the blue waters of a lake in Nyingchi city. JIGME DORJE / XINHUA

ADVERTORIAL

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:24 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:26 PM

Sino-US friendship

Teenagers honor Flying Tigers legacy through soccer games

CHINA, PAGE 11



Pakistan faces threat from melting glaciers

ASIA FOCUS, PAGE 4



Prehistoric roots

Henan site offers insight into early farming civilization in central areas

CULTURAL HERITAGE, PAGE 13

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 TUESDAY, AUGUST 11, 2026

Quake jolts Colombia, neighbors



Patients are evacuated from a hospital in Cali, Colombia, as a magnitude 7.4 earthquake rocked the South American nation and its neighbors on Monday, killing at least 111 people in Colombia. The epicenter was identified in San Jose del Palmar, about 400 kilometers west of Colombia's capital, Bogota. Local authorities said the temblor struck at a depth of 103 kilometers. SANTIAGO SALDARRIAGA / AP PHOTO **See story, page 5**

XI'S VISION | HIGH-QUALITY DEVELOPMENT

IPO puts future industries in focus

Wave of listings by hard tech firms highlights transformation in sources of economic growth

By CHENG YU
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese humanoid robot maker Unitree Robotics opened subscriptions for its initial public offering on the Shanghai Stock Exchange's sci-tech innovation board, or STAR Market, on Monday, as the market witnessed a broader economic shift with future industries expected to power the country's next wave of economic growth.

President Xi Jinping, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, said in an article published in June in the Qiushi Journal, a flagship magazine of the CPC Central Committee, that cultivating and developing future industries are of great significance for seizing the development initiative, developing new quality productive forces and improving people's quality of life.

Efforts should be made to vigorously foster first-class scientific, technological and high-tech enterprises that excel in core technologies and possess strong innovation capacities, Xi said.

For decades, China's economic expansion was powered largely by traditional industries, infrastructure investment and manufacturing scale. But the next wave of growth is increasingly expected to come from future industries, including embodied intelligence, future energy, quantum technology, brain-computer interfaces and 6G, which have been highlighted as key areas in China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30).

Since leading semiconductor firm ChangXin Memory Technologies debuted on the STAR Market in late July, a number of companies including artificial intelligence chip developer Enflame Technology, semiconductor manufacturer CanSemi Technology, commercial rocket maker LandSpace and AI chip company Kunlunxin have been moving toward potential listings.

Behind the wave of listings is not just a reshuffle of capital market preferences, but a transformation in the sources of future economic growth.

Hu Yongjun, secretary-general of future industries and platform economy research center under the State Information Center, said: "Developing future industries is a key move in driving industrial transformation and upgrade. Technologies that appear to be in an exploratory stage today could become engines of economic growth over the next decade or more."

He said that future industries will boost China's economic growth through new trillion-yuan-level industries that will come about as emerging technologies transform into commercial applications, and traditional industries are upgraded by integrating technologies such as AI, digitalization and low-carbon solutions.

"Future industries are not simply about developing several new products. They could accelerate upgrades across an entire industrial chain, from core components to end-user applications," he said.

A humanoid robot illustrates this ecosystem effect. Behind a single robot are dozens of interconnected sectors, including AI models, chips, sensors, precision reducers, motors, batteries, new materials, industrial software and intelligent manufacturing equipment.

China's electric vehicle industry offers a similar example. Over the past decade, the rise of new energy vehicles has reshaped the global auto industry while driving rapid growth in power batteries, energy storage materials, intelligent driving technologies and automotive chips.

In addition, the Unitree IPO and other upcoming listings represent a broader reallocation of capital toward technologies that may require years of investment before generating commercial returns.

President Xi also stressed efforts to improve fiscal and taxation policies, develop technology finance, and optimize government procurement and talent cultivation, introduction and utilization to foster a robust environment that encourages innovation.

Tian Xuan, dean of Peking University's Guanghua School of Management, said: "China is transiting from factor-driven growth toward innovation-driven development. Capital is moving beyond its traditional role of financing capacity expansion in mature industries and increasingly taking on the earlier-stage, longer-term uncertainty involved in building future industries."

As of June 2026, the STAR Market had attracted 609 hard technology companies, with total funds raised through IPOs and refinancing exceeding 1.37 trillion yuan ($203 billion). More than 40 listed companies have also entered cutting-edge fields such as quantum technology, 6G and biomanufacturing.

The China Securities Regulatory Commission has also introduced a regular "green channel" mechanism for IPO financing and mergers and acquisitions involving technology companies in strategically important core technology areas.

For instance, Unitree Robotics moved rapidly through the listing process, taking less than four months to go from the application acceptance stage to approval, marking the fastest review under the STAR Market's preliminary review mechanism since its implementation.

Shenzhen deepens links with APEC economies

By ZHOU MO in Shenzhen, Guangdong
sally@chinadailyhk.com

With around 100 days to go before the 33rd APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting, the economic links between Shenzhen in South China's Guangdong province and members of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation are strengthening across multiple dimensions, spanning maritime logistics, business expansion and international consumption.

The APEC meeting will be held in Shenzhen on Nov 18 and 19, marking the third time that China hosts the event.

At Yantian International Container Terminals, stronger connections with Asia-Pacific markets are visible through the expansion of shipping services and trade flows.

"Yantian International operates an international shipping network with 100 weekly services, including 53 services connecting APEC members," said Pang Ning, general manager of carrier and intermodal transportation services in the commercial department of YICT.

"This year, we have launched 11 new international routes connecting APEC economies, including services linking Jakarta and Surabaya in Indonesia and Laem Chabang in Thailand, providing efficient and stable logistics services for Chinese manufacturers expanding into Asia-Pacific and global markets," Pang said.

In the first five months of this year, the value of imports and exports between enterprises on the Chinese mainland and in APEC economies through the Yantian Port reached nearly 400 billion yuan ($59 billion), accounting for about half of the port's total foreign trade value during the period.

The port has also strengthened support for emerging trade models. It currently operates more than 10 cross-border e-commerce express sea routes, providing logistics support for exporters of smart home appliances, 3D printers and portable consumer electronics.

Furthermore, Shenzhen is strengthening support for Chinese companies seeking to tap overseas markets. The Shenzhen International Business e-Station, the city's overseas business service platform, is supporting the "going global" drive of Chinese enterprises by integrating government resources and market services.

The platform has gathered more than 200 professional service providers and covers 70 categories of overseas business services.

"Taking advantage of the APEC meetings, we will further strengthen cooperation with APEC economies, including their governments and business groups," said Liu Yang, manager of Shenzhen International Business e-Station.

Liu said the platform aims to promote investment and business exchanges in both directions, attracting companies from APEC economies to Shenzhen while supporting Shenzhen enterprises in exploring overseas markets.

This year, the platform has organized promotion activities related to economies including Vietnam, Thailand and Malaysia, helping local companies learn about overseas opportunities, he added.

Beyond trade and business expansion, new growth momentum is also seen in international consumption between Shenzhen and other APEC economies.

Opened in August 2025, Shenzhen's first downtown duty-free shop has developed a retail model combining duty-free shopping, tax refund services and duty-paid retail, aiming to improve services for overseas visitors. Through measures including the "one order, one package, one code" system, the tax refund process for eligible customers has been shortened to just about five minutes.

Yao Xi contributed to this story.



Visitors arrive at Mount Qingcheng in Southwest China's Sichuan province on Aug 4. GAO LING / FOR CHINA DAILY

How GDI can support ASEAN's next phase of growth

WORLD WATCH
By Joanne Lin

Southeast Asia is entering a more complex phase of development. For years, the region's development was often associated with faster growth, more trade and new infrastructure. While these remain important, today's development blueprint for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations also includes building stronger institutions, narrowing development gaps, improving resilience and ensuring that the fruits of regional integration are shared among its people and communities more evenly.

Against this backdrop, China's Global Development Initiative has clear relevance for Southeast Asia. The GDI's priorities — poverty reduction, food security, public health, development financing, climate action, industrialization, connectivity and the digital economy — overlap with many of the region's needs. China offers not just financial might but also infrastructure capabilities, technological strengths and development experience.

However, the true value of the GDI in Southeast Asia will depend not only on what China can finance or build, but also on how well China's capabilities align with ASEAN's priorities. Its most impactful contribution may not be creating a separate development path, but helping ASEAN implement its existing commitments and integration plans.

ASEAN's challenges are deeply interconnected. The region faces climate pressures, technological disruption, supply chain vulnerabilities, persistent development disparities and uneven implementation capabilities. These issues cannot be addressed through isolated projects. They demand stronger regional systems, better cross-border connectivity and institutions that can translate agreements into tangible action.

The State of Southeast Asia 2026 Survey shows that China remains Southeast Asia's most influential economic, political and strategic partner. It is widely recognized as an important and capable partner, a country that has the economic resources and political will to deliver outcomes.

*See **Cooperation,** page 3*

GINKGO TREE BECOMES A 1,900-YEAR-OLD STAR

People flock to Sichuan's Mount Qingcheng to see Taoist landmark featured in animation

By XU FAN and **PENG CHAO** in Chengdu

It is a ginkgo tree that has outlasted dynasties. For around 1,900 years, it has stood quietly, bearing witness as the world came and went.

Legend has it that Zhang Ling, founder of Tianshidao (Way of the Celestial Masters) — an early school of Taoism — planted the tree during the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220).

Reaching it takes more than 40 minutes of climbing from the entrance to Tianshi Cave on Mount Qingcheng in Southwest China's Sichuan province.

When visitors arrive, they find the tree is already festooned with red silk ribbons bearing the heartfelt wishes of those who came before.

That sight — a striking blend of reverence for the supernatural and hope for a better life — stayed with Mu Zhengyang, director of *All Wishes Come True!*.

*See **Set-jetting,** page 3*

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

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved

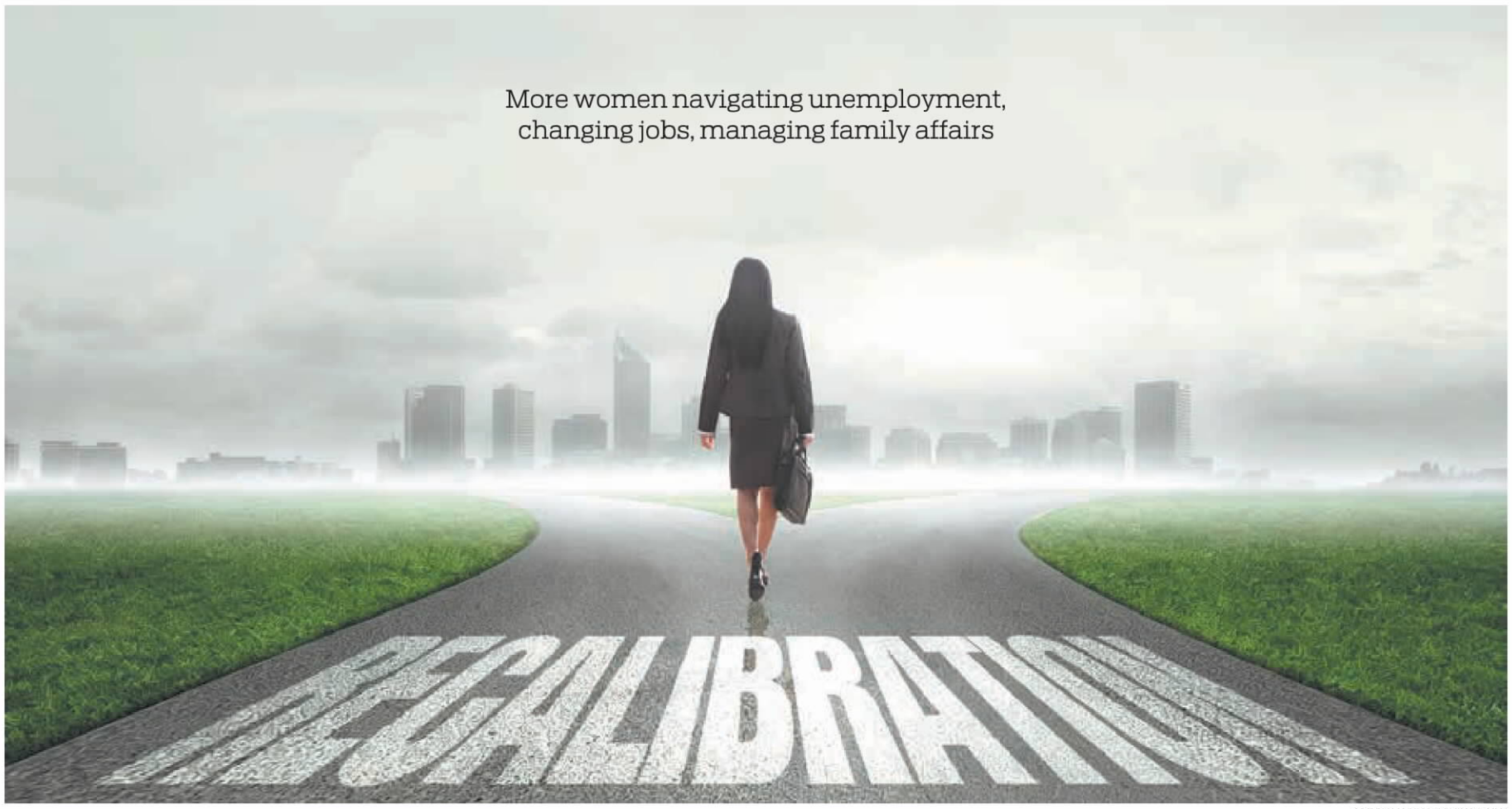
INSIDE
Shared responsibility for the high seas
Global Views, page 8



Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:26 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:26 PM

INDEPTH



ART BY LU PING / CHINA DAILY

MIND THE MIDLIFE CAREER GAP

By **YU RAN**
For China Daily

At 39, Fang Hongxia found herself starting over, not by choice, but with reluctant acceptance.

For nearly 11 years, she had worked at a private company in Kunming, Yunnan province, starting in warehouse inventory and gradually taking on roles in client management, bidding documentation, e-commerce operations and internal coordination.

Her layoff came without warning before the National Day holiday in 2025.

"I thought it was just another routine conversation, but this time I was the topic. At first, I felt embarrassed, like I had lost face, but at the same time I also felt relieved. I had already been thinking about making a change, so it felt like something was pushing me forward," she said.

Months earlier, Fang had begun learning English and exploring new directions. After a short pause, she began looking for work, unsure of what she wanted.

"I was trying different things and figuring it out along the way. Instead of waiting for a full-time role, I took whatever work I could find, part-time shifts, hourly jobs, and even running a small street stall when necessary. I never really stopped working," she said.

Age, she found, could close doors before conversations even began. "At first, everything seemed normal until I mentioned my age. Then there would be no reply. In some cases, I was directly told that positions were limited to those under 30. Eventually, I learned to ask up front," she said.

Still, she did not see herself as "no longer needed".

"My child still depends on me, so I never had that feeling. Of course, there were moments when I felt overwhelmed, even briefly considering giving up, but it passed quickly. I told myself that if I couldn't find a job, I would create one," she said.

After seven months, Fang found a support role at a flower e-commerce company, earning just over 4,000 yuan ($593) a month. The role is more modest, but her mindset has shifted.

"I feel calmer now. I've seen many women carrying different kinds of pressure but still choosing to keep going," said Fang.

Juggling responsibilities

Fang's experience is not isolated.

More Chinese women in their late 30s and 40s are finding themselves navigating layoffs, stalled careers and competing family responsibilities.

Recruitment platform Zhaopin's 2025 China Women's Workplace Report shows that more than half of women are considering changing career paths, while only 7.9 percent express confidence in promotion, reflecting growing uncertainty around career stability and long-term development.

Many women face the dual pressures of work and family.

On the day she turned 40, Zhang Lele received a long-awaited job offer, ending a seven-month stretch of unemployment, repeated setbacks and a serious illness in her family.

For more than a decade, Zhang had worked at a small domestic consulting firm in Shanghai. The job was stable, with a manageable pace and a reasonable work-life balance. However, at age 39 she was unexpectedly laid off.

"My mind went blank, and my face felt hot. My first thought wasn't about finding a new job, but how I would explain this to my family," she said.

In the days that followed, she chose not to tell her family the entire truth, offering a more acceptable explanation while beginning her job search.

During the seven-month gap, Zhang split her time between job hunting and caring for her family, attending interviews while traveling between home and the hospital.

Zhang had around 30 interviews with 21 companies. In one month alone, she completed 11 interviews, with as many as six in a single week.

A recruiter later told her that such setbacks were increasingly common in a more demanding job market, helping her gradually reframe the experience. During the gap in her working life, she also stayed engaged by preparing for interviews and sharing her experiences online.

While she did not encounter direct discrimination based on age or gender, questions about her employment gap were common. She also received encouragement from interviewers and recruiters, some close to her age and confident in her experience. She chose to respond honestly, explaining how she had been preparing and managing family responsibilities.

For Zhang, the timing came as a relief. She had hoped to secure a job before her birthday, aware that a longer gap could limit her opportunities.

What sustained her, she said, was support from online communities and her 10-year-old daughter, who would draw pictures and write encouraging messages to cheer her up.

"I see myself as someone going through a career transition, not as a laid-off middle-aged person. It's important how you tell your own story. Finding a job is not difficult, but finding the right one is much harder. But I still believe there are opportunities for women like me," she said.

According to McKinsey & Company's 2023 Advancing Gender Equality in the Chinese Workplace report, 61 percent of women were asked about marital or childbearing plans during recruitment, compared with only about one-third of men.

These challenges are often further shaped by personal life choices.

Personal matters

Lin Yue, from Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, built her career in advertising over more than a decade and now finds herself in an in-between phase, with personal plans intersecting with unclear career prospects.

In 2008, she started working for several companies and later became an advertising design director at a foreign enterprise.

That sense of stability began to unravel in 2024. After getting married, Lin found herself at a turning point when her company's business slowed and people were laid off. Facing both career uncertainty and personal decisions, she left her job in early 2025 to focus on having a child.

"I thought I could take a break and come back when things were clearer, but things didn't go the way I expected," said Lin.

> "Many people feel stuck between not wanting to give up stability and not knowing how to move forward. They understand many things in theory, but don't know how to apply them in real life. ... Midlife is a crisis, but also a new opportunity. Having shed the recklessness of youth, I now have the confidence to start again."
>
> **Xu Mei,** founder of a women-focused community

Over the past year, things have not gone to plan. While trying to conceive, she has taken on freelance design work, but the income has been unstable.

"It's not that there's no work at all, but it's hard to maintain consistency. Most projects are short-term, and you don't know when the next one will come," she said.

At the same time, she has attempted to explore alternative paths. She enrolled in baking courses, with a possibility it could become a new career.

Yet, the reality proved more complicated than she expected. Building a business from scratch, she found, requires more than skills, as it takes time, capital and persistence.

"It's not as simple as learning a skill and turning it into a job. There's a long process behind it," said Lin.

She is also aware that the longer she stays away from a full-time role, the harder it may be to return, especially as she continues trying to start a family.

"There's always a concern in the back of my mind. If I step away for too long, will there still be a place for me to go back to?" she said.

For now, she is trying to maintain a connection to her profession while leaving space for personal plans, even if that means accepting less stability.

"I wouldn't say I'm lost, but I'm still in a phase where I need to keep myself from drifting too far away," said Lin.

According to Zhaopin's 2026 China Women's Workplace Report, 12.6 percent of women missed promotion opportunities due to gender discrimination, while 68.8 percent attributed workplace inequality to the burden of childbirth. Notably, more than half said they are unwilling to give up their careers for family.

Staying flexible

Behind these individual experiences lies a set of structural realities shaping the job market.

Fang Zhou, 35, from Xi'an, Shaanxi province, a former business leader at a major internet company, now works as a career coach, focusing on job seekers navigating transitions. Since 2023, she has worked with more than 200 clients, many of whom are in their 30s and 40s.

"Most of the people who come to me are over 30. Many of them start to lose confidence after just a few weeks without work by questioning themselves, even though their past performance and achievements are often solid," said Fang, who in her early 30s realized her corporate path was reaching its limits. She then began working with mid-career clients.

Fang said the reality for job seekers around 40 is difficult, but not without opportunities. Employers prioritize cost-effectiveness and role fit, often favoring younger candidates who are easier to manage and less expensive. For mid-career professionals, especially those in middle management, structural constraints also limit options.

"In many companies, there are fewer middle management positions. If you can't move up, you may have to return to front-line roles. The question is whether people are willing and able to do that, especially after being away from hands-on work for some time," she said.

For women, these challenges are further complicated by family responsibilities and assumptions related to marriage and childcare.

"It's not just about ability. You also have to prove that you can overcome these concerns and create value beyond them," said Fang.

Changes in hiring practices have made job searching more demanding, she has noticed. Resumes are often screened through keyword systems, and candidates must clearly communicate their achievements in interviews.

"Job searching has its own language. If you don't understand what employers are looking for, it's easy to be filtered out early," she said.

Employment gaps are not necessarily disqualifying, but candidates need to show their skills have remained relevant or improved.

"A career transition is not starting from zero. It's about transferring what you've already built into a new focus. The most practical path is usually to move into something related to your existing experience, where your skills can still be applied," said Fang.

While the process can be difficult, Fang believes it remains possible with the right mindset and preparation.

"It's normal to go through a low point at this stage of life. What matters is not giving up. You need to stay proactive and keep adapting. It's hard, but that's exactly the point. If it were easy, it wouldn't be your turn," said Fang.

While structural constraints remain, some individuals are also attempting to create new spaces beyond traditional employment paths.

The 2025 Flexible Staffing Platform Development Report released by the Chinese Academy of Labour and Social Security and Qingtuanshe, a Chinese flexible staffing platform, said women make up nearly 60 percent of flexible staffing participants, with those age 30 and above slightly above the platform average.

However, the problems middle-aged women face in the workplace are not unique to China. The Harvard Business Review recently surveyed 913 women leaders who work in higher education, faith-based nonprofits, law, and healthcare with open-ended questions designed to uncover the different types of bias they may have experienced in their careers, according to a report by HuffPost.

"There was always an age-based excuse to not take women seriously, to discount their opinions, or to not hire or promote them," researchers wrote.

Creating value

As the founder of a women-focused community, Xu Mei has taken a different path. The 39-year-old former human resources manager now focuses on supporting midlife women navigating similar life and career transitions. Based in Dalian, Liaoning province, she builds both online and offline networks that provide practical support and shared experience during this stage of change.

After stepping away from work for four years to raise her child, she struggled to return to the workforce. Roles that once seemed manageable, long hours, frequent travel and high intensity were no longer compatible with family responsibilities. Within a year, she had changed jobs five times and was later laid off again amid company restructuring.

"I had a mortgage, a child and parents to support. At that moment, I realized I had to start over. I let go of all my labels. There is nothing shameful about starting small," said Xu.

She began sharing her experience online, which resonated with other women. She was then introduced to supply chains and started building small community-based sales groups, gradually forming a stable business model, with two groups reaching around 800 members and annual sales exceeding 1.5 million yuan.

At the same time, she launched offline salons, which evolved into a structured women's community, hosting over 115 sessions and attracting more than 3,000 participants, mostly women age between 35 and 45. The activities ranged from emotional support and social connection to self-media training and income exploration, forming a hybrid space of mutual support and practical learning.

"These women are not lacking ability. They are often trapped by what they already have, including their past roles, responsibilities and expectations," said Xu.

Through her work, Xu has observed that many midlife women face overlapping pressures from family, employment and identity. Highly replaceable roles such as human resources, administration and customer service often leave them vulnerable as they age, while childcare and household responsibilities further limit their options.

"Many people feel stuck between not wanting to give up stability and not knowing how to move forward. They understand many things in theory, but don't know how to apply them in real life," she said.

Rather than offering a single solution, Xu sees her role as building a platform where women can reconnect with themselves and with each other. She encourages them to take up work that relies more on personal skills and less on organizational dependency, while she also emphasizes the value of community support.

"Midlife is a crisis, but also a new opportunity. Having shed the recklessness of youth, I now have the confidence to start again," said Xu.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:26 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:26 PM

TOP NEWS

US pivots to pressuring Iran's economy

Washington shifts from making military threats to claiming Tehran has 'no money'

By **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong
jan@chinadailyapac.com

The administration of United States President Donald Trump appears to be shifting Washington's approach with Tehran from military threats to economic pressure, as the contentious reopening of the Strait of Hormuz drags on despite Iran signaling that an agreement with Oman is on the horizon.

Trump told US-based news outlet Axios on Sunday that Washington was "only semi-negotiating" with Tehran and stressed that Iran is in "very bad shape" economically.

"We are just watching Iran with its huge inflation and the fact they have no money," Axios quoted Trump as saying.

He said the US blockade has exacerbated Iran's economic crisis, adding that with oil down to slightly over $75 a barrel, consumers in the US are feeling less pain from the conflict.

"It will work out. It always works out. It's like a chess game," Trump said of the situation with Iran.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told journalists on Sunday that Tehran is not currently engaged in negotiations with Washington, but messages were being exchanged through intermediaries.

At his weekly news briefing on Monday, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei said that monitoring navigation in the Strait of Hormuz was "natural".

Baghaei said discussions on the possibility of Iran imposing transit fees on vessels passing through the strait are still underway, and Iran is not currently discussing the issue.

He said talks have covered mechanisms for monitoring navigation safety, environmental issues and maritime services, noting that their provision would naturally entail service charges.

Regarding mine clearance along the central route of the Strait of Hormuz, Baghaei referred to Clause 5 of the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding, which he said the US violated, stressing that Iran's role is clearly specified in the agreement.

He said the memorandum of understanding, aimed at ending the conflict, stated Iran's responsibility for the future management of the Strait of Hormuz, including ensuring its security. He added that the matter should be pursued between Iran and Oman.

Inside
Comment, **page 6**

He called on regional countries to cooperate and strengthen their own security without relying on foreign powers, citing the latest developments regarding the Mecca Joint Defense Agreement, according to Iran's Mehr News Agency. The agreement was signed over the weekend by Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Turkiye.

Baghaei stressed that the pact is a sign of a changing perception among regional states, highlighting that the signatories have realized that security cannot be provided by relying on foreign powers.

He said countries in the region have increasingly recognized the source of the greatest threat to stability and security in the region and beyond, particularly since the start of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict three years ago.

Baghaei blamed the US for the region's insecurity, arguing that Israel could not have carried out its actions without support from Washington. He stressed Iran's view that regional security is indivisible, and insecurity in any country will inevitably spread to others.

Abdolreza Alami, a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies at Universiti Teknologi MARA in Malaysia, told China Daily that Trump's shift should be read less as a sign of moderation than as recognition of the limits and costs of military coercion.

"Months of confrontation have shown that strikes can damage Iran, but they cannot compel Tehran, eliminate its retaliatory capacity, or secure the Strait of Hormuz at an acceptable cost," said Alami.

"Iran's ability to impose risks on US bases, Gulf infrastructure and energy flows has altered Washington's calculation. Domestic considerations also matter: Trump faces public fatigue, congressional elections and sensitivity to fuel prices, while regional partners press for de-escalation," he added.

Alami noted that lower oil prices give the Trump administration a tactical window to intensify sanctions without burdening US consumers. However, he said that economic pressure is coercion by another means, and is not a sustainable diplomatic strategy.

Cui Haipei in Dubai, UAE, contributed to this story.



An aerial photo shows floodwaters covering villages and farmland on Monday in Wenzhou, Zhejiang province, following torrential rain and strong winds brought by Typhoon Dolphin. SU QIAOJIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Typhoon weakens, but heavy rain threat persists

By **ZHAO YIMENG**
zhaoyimeng@chinadaily.com.cn

Typhoon Dolphin has weakened to a tropical storm after making two landfalls in eastern China's Zhejiang province, but its moisture-rich circulation is continuing to move northwestward, threatening to unleash potentially extreme rainfall across parts of northern China, meteorologists said on Monday.

Dolphin, the 13th typhoon of the year, made two landfalls in Zhejiang on Sunday evening and weakened as it moved inland. But unlike many tropical cyclones that rapidly dissipate after landfall, its extensive cloud system and abundant moisture have allowed its remnants to persist and move northward and westward, said Zhang Fanghua, chief forecaster at the National Meteorological Center.

"The residual circulation could bring persistent and extreme rainfall to parts of eastern and northern China," Zhang said.

Dolphin's movement is forecast to significantly slow after Tuesday, and around Wednesday its remnants could stall near the border area of Hubei, Henan and Anhui provinces.

The residual vortex is expected to interact with an upper-level trough in the westerlies and a cold-air system, potentially triggering a new round of widespread and heavy rainfall, Zhang added.

The heavy rain will cover much of Shanghai as well as Zhejiang, Jiangsu, Anhui, Hubei, Henan and Shandong provinces through Tuesday.

As the rain belt moves northward on Tuesday and Wednesday, some locations in Henan, Hebei, and Shanxi could receive 400 to 600 millimeters of rain, with the possibility of exceptionally heavy downpours.

Meteorologists warned that the threat will also extend into the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region.

Zhai Liang, chief forecaster at the Beijing Meteorological Service, said that warm and humid air from Dolphin's outer circulation, combined with cold air, is expected to bring heavy rain to the region from Tuesday through Thursday.

"Beijing is expected to receive the strongest rainfall from early Wednesday to Wednesday night," Zhai said, adding that red alerts for heavy rain have been issued in districts such as Fangshan, Daxing, Tongzhou and Mentougou.

On Monday, the National Meteorological Center continued to issue an orange alert for heavy rain, the second-highest warning level. Isolated areas in northern Hubei could receive 250 to 270 mm during the 24-hour period between Monday afternoon and Tuesday afternoon.

The Ministry of Emergency Management has activated a Level IV flood-control emergency response in Hebei, Henan, Hubei and Shandong amid rising risks of flooding and geological disasters over the next three days. China has a four-tier emergency response system for flood control, with Level I being the most severe.

Local governments are being urged to closely monitor updated weather forecasts and strengthen preparations for flooding, landslides, mudslides and urban waterlogging, particularly in mountainous areas and along rivers.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs on Monday renewed a warning over the risk of farmland waterlogging. From Monday night through Saturday, parts of Henan could see exceptionally heavy rain, with a very high risk of farmland waterlogging. The prolonged rainfall could leave farmland saturated and affect crop growth.

Farmers are advised to clear drainage channels, as well as prepare pumps and other equipment and supplies in advance. After the rain, farmers should promptly drain excess water, improve soil aeration and moisture conditions, and use pesticides and fertilizers to help crops recover and resume their growth.

After Thursday, the rainfall pattern is expected to shift as the residual vortex gradually moves eastward and southward, forecasters said. If the residual vortex redevelops around Aug 16, it could bring another round of heavy rainfall to northeastern China, they added.

Cooperation: Boosting supply-chain resilience priority

From page 1

Southeast Asian countries are likely to judge the GDI on its ability to address real development needs, produce visible benefits and complement existing ASEAN frameworks.

The survey also highlights ASEAN's internal constraints. Respondents identified stronger intra-regional trade and investment, more resilient supply chains and accelerated regional integration as important priorities. More significantly, they saw weak implementation capacity and development disparities among ASEAN member states as the biggest impediments to greater intra-regional economic cooperation.

This suggests that ASEAN's integration challenges are not external but lie within its ability to implement its commitments and ensure that the benefits of regional integration are more widely shared. This is where the GDI can make a practical contribution by bridging the gap between regional ambition and national implementation.

Recent insights from Singapore-based ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute researchers on Chinese-built transport projects in Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos and Vietnam offer a grassroots perspective. Many users associate these projects with reduced travel times, greater convenience and improved access to jobs or business opportunities.

Development cooperation builds confidence most effectively when its benefits are directly experienced by people.

At the same time, infrastructure alone is not enough. Its wider impact may be limited when feeder networks are weak, customs procedures are inefficient or local firms cannot access new opportunities. Ensuring sound fiscal management, high environmental standards, affordability and strong social safeguards will support the long-term success of the projects.

The priority, therefore, is to ensure that the GDI supports the systems that underpin ASEAN integration. This includes strengthening implementation capacity so that officials, regulators and agencies can translate regional agreements into action. China could support long-term technical cooperation in customs modernization, digital trade regulation, standards, environmental regulation and cross-border data governance. There should be more emphasis on institutional partnerships and joint problem-solving initiatives.

Development cooperation should also connect physical and soft infrastructure. Roads, railways and ports need to be supported by customs systems, logistics networks, digital documentation, compatible standards and local transport links.

The GDI can add value by linking physical projects with the necessary regulatory, digital and institutional systems to create integrated economic corridors.

Supply-chain resilience is another priority, intertwined with digital and green development. China-ASEAN cooperation can help local industries upgrade, develop skills and enable more small businesses to participate in regional production networks. This cooperation should also support digital infrastructure, clean energy, electric mobility and climate-resilient production that future supply chains will require. China's strengths in artificial intelligence, renewable energy, batteries and green manufacturing also have potential for cooperation.

The cooperation should also extend to people and communities. Infrastructure and trade matter, but development cooperation will also need to invest in technical and vocational education, digital skills, research partnerships, youth exchanges, local employment, knowledge transfer and community consultation.

These efforts would allow the GDI to move beyond individual projects and support stronger regional integration. By aligning more closely with ASEAN-led initiatives, it can help advance a more resilient and inclusive Southeast Asia, while making China's development cooperation more visible, trusted and meaningful.

The author is the former head of the External Relations Division of the ASEAN Secretariat and a senior fellow and coordinator at the ASEAN Studies Centre in the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1890

Set-jetting: Taoist myth endures on the peak

From page 1

It would later inspire a defining scene in his hit animated film, where the protagonists gather around a stone table for a hot pot feast beneath a ginkgo tree patterned after the ancient one at Mount Qingcheng.

Scheduled for release in more than 15 countries and regions, the film — in which eight ordinary people become unlikely heroes as they foil a villain's plot to endanger humanity — has already raked in 1.4 billion yuan ($195 million), making it the highest-grossing Chinese animated film of the year so far.

The film's popularity has, in turn, prompted viewers to seek out the real-life inspiration for the scene.

"After its release, many fans made special trips to Mount Qingcheng. There has been a notable increase in visitors coming to take photos with the tree," said He Zhen, deputy director of the scenic spot's administrative center.

According to He's office, the scenic spot received 30,800 foreign visitors between July 1 and Aug 6, up 25.2 percent year-on-year. To enhance accessibility for international tourists, it now offers audio guides in multiple languages.

But Mount Qingcheng's appeal extends far beyond a single film — or even a single tree.

There is a mythic dimension involved as well. Ancient folklore holds that the peak was once a place where Xiwangmu, also known as Queen Mother of the West, cultivated herself spiritually.

In Taoist legend, she presided over female immortals. Perhaps that explains why, even amid crowds and selfie sticks, an otherworldly aura still lingers.

The ginkgo tree itself carries further Taoist significance. It is revered by some Taoist practitioners as an "immortal tree".

One legend holds that Laozi (Lao Tzu), the founder of Taoism, planted a ginkgo at Louguantai, a Taoist temple complex in Shaanxi province. The shape of its leaf — split at the edge but united at the stem — is seen as a Taoist symbol of "harmony", said Wang Guoping, a scholar of Sichuan culture.

Today, ancient culture is intersecting with a thoroughly modern phenomenon: set-jetting.

Zeng Min, director of the Dujiangyan's Bureau of Culture, Radio, Television, Sports and Tourism, said the trend is reshaping the way people travel, turning passive sightseeing into deep cultural immersion.

And *All Wishes Come True!* is not the first production to cast Mount Qingcheng in the spotlight.

Three iconic sequences from the 1986 TV series *Journey to the West*, including an episode in which Sun Wukong, or the Monkey King, masters his supernatural arts, were filmed on the mountain. The sites continue to draw die-hard fans who return year after year to recreate shots.

The 2016 Hollywood blockbuster *Kung Fu Panda 3* also drew heavily on the mountain's natural scenery and the architectural style of its Taoist temples, Zeng noted.

Ying Xujun, president of Pearl Studio and chief producer of *All Wishes Come True!*, said the film also drew inspiration from the murals of Yongle Palace, the ethereal seascapes of Penglai Pavilion and the cliffside wonders of Xuankong Temple.

"The film is not only a cinematic presentation of Chinese culture, but also a vivid invitation to explore China's cultural and tourism riches," Ying said.

Contact the writers at xufan@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:26 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:26 PM

ASIAFOCUS

Editor's note:

In this weekly feature China Daily gives voice to Asia and its people. The stories presented come mainly from the Asia News Network (ANN), of which China Daily is among its 20 leading titles.



Climate change poses flood threat in Pakistan

Hindu Kush communities live in fear of glaciers melting at alarming rate

In the picturesque valley of Golen, located over 20 kilometers northeast of Chitral city in Pakistan, summer once unfolded in all its resplendence. Visitors would flock to Golen during the warmer months to enjoy its cool mountain air, try their hand at trout fishing, and marvel at its lush green meadows.

Yet, in recent years, that once-bountiful summer has become a source of anxiety for Golen natives.

The cause lies in the glaciers, those primordial agglomerations of ice that had stood sentinel over the valley for centuries, which are now melting at an alarming rate and forming large, unstable lakes in their wake.

On the evening of July 7, 2019, one such glacial lake burst its banks and ravaged the valley, destroying homes and orchards, damaging the 108MW Golen Gol Hydropower Project, plunging the district into darkness for several days. The very next year, Golen experienced another glacial lake outburst flood, or GLOF.

With over 80 potentially dangerous glacial lakes dotting the region, communities in the Hindu Kush mountain ranges live in fear of advancing, unfrozen glaciers.

In July this year, as rain fell over the valley, the villagers endured a sleepless night. Safia Bibi, a resident of Golen, told Dawn newspaper that terror gripped them when the rain began. "Initially we were terrified," she recounted, "but later, when the men told us it was too cold and that we should not fear a flood from these clouds, only then did our frayed nerves calm."

Safia remembers all too well what happened in 2020, when she had to make a dash for safety, clutching her one-year-old daughter in the pouring rain as a GLOF carrying huge boulders and debris descended on her village.

A portion of her under-construction home was badly damaged, and a few months later, her husband purchased land in a neighboring village to relocate, due to constant threat of GLOFs in their native area.

But Golen is not unique, and other remote valleys across the Hindu Kush are grappling with the same dilemma.

Their communities, long ensconced in geographical remoteness, lived in harmony with nature for centuries. Now, extreme weather has thrust them onto the front lines of an unfolding climate catastrophe.

Figures released by the Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission, or Suparco, on its "Space4Climate" portal paint a worrying picture for millions living across the Hindu Kush.

The agency's June 5 update recorded 24 unfrozen glacial lakes in northern Pakistan, with 15 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa — 10 of them in Upper and Lower Chitral, three in Swat, and one in Lower Dir.

By July 2, that number had nearly doubled to 40, with Suparco noting that most lakes were concentrated in Chitral, Upper Dir and Swat.

The agency said it is regularly monitoring potentially dangerous glacial lakes via satellite imagery to support early warning and preparedness for GLOF hazards, drawing on a combined list of 131 potentially dangerous locations supplied by the Provincial Disaster Management Authorities, or PDMA.

"As expected, with rising summer temperatures, the number of unfrozen glacial lakes is increasing ... indicating accelerated seasonal melting," Suparco said, adding that most unfrozen lakes remain within their previously recorded maximum extents.

A lake becomes a greater concern, it noted, when its water extent exceeds historical highs, since this can signal increased storage and higher risk of moraine dam instability. Moraine dams are natural geological formations created by glacial deposition.

The agency urged authorities to maintain heightened preparedness in downstream valleys given the continuing temperature rise.

> "As expected with rising summer temperatures, the number of unfrozen glacial lakes is increasing. At present, 40 lakes are observed to be unfrozen, compared with 24 lakes reported two weeks earlier, indicating accelerated seasonal melting."
>
> **Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission**

Separately, data from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa PDMA showed 63 GLOF-vulnerable lakes and 21 potentially dangerous ones: nine vulnerable sites in Chitral, 18 in Upper Dir, 31 in Swat, and five in Upper Kohistan. All 21 potentially dangerous lakes are confined to Upper and Lower Chitral.

Unusually vulnerable

Chitral-based glacier researcher Hamid Ahmed Mir, who has visited many of these sites, told Dawn that the region's glaciers are unusually vulnerable because of their small size.

With the exception of Tirich-Concordia and Chiantar — the latter feeding the Kabul River — nearly all Hindu Kush glaciers are small, making them highly sensitive to temperature spikes.

These "water towers" are likely to assume even greater importance over the coming years as the water war between India and Pakistan intensifies.

He also pointed to steep slope gradients and high seismic activity, noting five to six fault lines run beneath Chitral alone, alongside a high frequency of minor earthquakes.

Much of the region's development has been unplanned, often ignoring its fragile ecosystem and lacking proper risk assessments or environmental impact studies.

For example, he cited the use of explosives to dig the 3-kilometer headrace tunnel for the Golen Gol Hydropower Project, inaugurated in 2018 — two years before a major GLOF struck the valley.

Mir also pointed to Chitral's status as an airshed valley, where surrounding high mountains trap air, dust and pollutants. His recent research on dust generation from traffic on the largely unpaved, poorly maintained, and decade-long-under-construction Chitral-Mastuj Road found that the 110-km stretch could be producing approximately 40,000 metric tons of airborne or fugitive dust every year, including nearly 9,600 tons of respirable PM10 particulate matter.

"The Chitral-Mastuj Road is a vital transportation corridor that supports communities, trade, and tourism. However, its predominantly unpaved surface also represents a significant source of fugitive dust," the research paper noted, adding that preliminary engineering estimates suggest around 28,000 tons of that dust settles within the surrounding valley annually.

The paper warned the implications extend far beyond roadside nuisance, as dust affects human health, agriculture, alpine ecosystems, water resources, and glacier stability — potentially amplifying the impacts of climate change in one of Pakistan's most environmentally sensitive mountain regions.

It recommended improved road surfacing, dust suppression, vegetation restoration, and systematic environmental monitoring to protect both local air quality and long-term water security in Chitral and further downstream.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa PDMA Director-General Arifullah Awan told Dawn the provincial government was pursuing both mitigation and adaptation strategies to secure the region against climate threats.

At least 85 early warning systems, rain gauges and other sensors have been installed across Lower and Upper Chitral, Upper Dir, Swat and Upper Kohistan with support from the United Nations Development Programme.

In addition, community-based disaster risk management committees — including union council secretaries and local members — have been formed, with alert times ranging from 20 to 35 minutes. To protect the early warning systems from vandalism, district- and tehsil-level committees have also been set up, with complaints lodged in the past over damage to the equipment.

The government is also pursuing afforestation, environment-friendly infrastructure, and climate-resilient construction as part of its broader mitigation and adaptation strategy, Awan said.

DAWN, PAKISTAN





Top: Tourists ride boats at the Saiful Muluk lake in Mansehra district of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on July 7. **Above from left:** Tourists ride jeeps past a glacier at the popular Naran Valley in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on July 7. PHOTOS BY AAMIR QURESHI / AFP Residents wade through floodwater following heavy monsoon rains at Landi Kotal, in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province on July 20. ABDUL MAJEED / AFP

Over a quarter of Bangladeshis face food insecurity: UN

DHAKA — More than a quarter of Bangladeshis did not have sufficient food in 2023-25, according to a UN report.

The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2026 report estimated that 26.2 percent of Bangladesh's population, or 45.4 million people, experienced moderate or severe food insecurity in 2023-25.

The report indicates Bangladesh has made progress in reducing hunger, but food insecurity and the high cost of a healthy diet continue to pose major challenges, leaving millions vulnerable to malnutrition.

The global report was jointly released on July 21 by the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the United Nations Children's Fund, the UN World Food Programme and the World Health Organization.

The proportion of people facing such food insecurity has declined from 30.6 percent in 2014-16, but the latest figure indicates that the problem remains widespread, with millions still struggling to secure adequate and regular access to food.

45.4 million people

The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2026 report estimated that 26.2 percent of Bangladesh's population, or 45.4 million people, experienced moderate or severe food insecurity in 2023-25.

The report estimated that 8.2 percent of the population, or 14.3 million people, were undernourished in 2023-25, down from 15.1 percent, or 21.9 million people, in 2004-06.

However, having access to enough food does not necessarily mean having access to a nutritious diet.

Nearly four in 10 Bangladeshis, 38.6 percent of the population, were unable to afford a healthy diet in 2025, the report said.

Although the proportion has fallen from 62.8 percent in 2017, the number of people unable to afford a healthy diet still stood at 67.8 million in 2025. It was 101.8 million in 2017.

The cost of a healthy diet in Bangladesh also increased steadily, reaching $4.59 per person per day in purchasing power parity terms in 2025, compared with $3.09 in 2017.

Malnutrition

The continuing difficulty in affording nutritious food is reflected in the country's persistent level of malnutrition, particularly among children and women.

Among children under five, 10.7 percent or 1.7 million suffered from wasting in 2024, while 25.1 percent or 4.2 million were stunted. Percentage of stunted children was 38.3 in 2012. There was no earlier data about wasting.

At the same time, 5.8 percent, or 0.3 million, were overweight, highlighting the coexistence of undernutrition and overnutrition. Although the percentage saw little decline, the population remained the same compared to 2012 data.

The nutritional quality of diet among young children also remains a concern.

Only 37.6 percent of children aged 6 to 23 months achieved minimum dietary diversity during 2021-25, meaning most children in this age group did not consume food from a sufficiently diverse range of food groups.

The report also shows a decline in exclusive breastfeeding in Bangladesh.

It estimates that 53.3 percent of infants aged 0 to 5 months in the country were exclusively breastfed in 2024. The rate, however, has declined from 64.1 percent in 2012.

Women also face a significant nutritional burden. Anemia affected 37.6 percent of women aged 15 to 49 in 2023, according to the report, indicating that the situation has deteriorated. It was 34.5 percent in 2012.

THE DAILY STAR, BANGLADESH

Who are you?



A Doberman is a bit suspicious of one of the fashion dummies on July 31 at the Pet Expo Championship 2026, at the Queen Sirikit National Convention Center, Bangkok, Thailand, an exhibition for pet related products and services attended not only by pet owners but their pets as well. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:26 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:26 PM

WORLD

Mudflat gallop



Trotters warm up in front of an incoming container ship before a race during the 90th Duhner Wattrennen in Cuxhaven-Duhnen, Germany, on Sunday. The annual event features trotting races on the mudflats of the Elbe estuary during low tide.
FOCKE STRANGMANN / AFP

New Arctic route could cut shipping time in half

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

A new shipping route between the Chinese port of Ningbo-Zhoushan and Felixstowe in the United Kingdom launches this week, with claims it could cut the 40-day journey in half.

The weekly route between the export hub in Ningbo — the world's busiest port by cargo tonnage — and Felixstowe, which is the UK's largest container port, will be operated by the Chinese container shipping company Sea Legend, with ships passing through the Arctic via a course known as the Northern Sea Route along Russia's northern coast.

Sea Legend, which is known for connecting China with markets in Turkiye and North Africa, described the route as the "Ice Silk Road", in a nod to the trading route that famously connected China with Europe in antiquity.

The Northern Sea Route saw 15 such voyages in 2024 and 23 last year and is being seen as an increasingly viable option because of rising global seawater temperatures and reduced ice volumes, The Financial Times newspaper reported.

University of Southampton researchers said recently they recorded the largest drop in Arctic sea ice volumes on record during the peak winter period between 2024 and 2025, with the levels down by 5.8 percent.

Rahul Khanna, global head of marine risk consulting at insurance provider Allianz, told the paper: "There's been a definite increase in traffic through the Arctic and Northern Sea Route. Vessels and ship owners now see it as more of an opportunity, first to save a lot of time and costs," but also to get around some geopolitical choke points and conflict zones.

Those choke points include the Bab al-Mandab Strait that feeds into the Red Sea, where Houthi militants have disrupted shipping, and the Strait of Hormuz that connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman, where military activity has also interrupted shipping.

The Northern Sea Route is administered by the Russian state-owned company Rosatom, which issues permits to companies wanting to use it.

The Ningbo-Felixstowe service is not the first container voyage via the Northern Sea Route, following a 2018 trial voyage by Danish shipping giant Maersk between Vladivostok in Russia's Far East and St. Petersburg.

But while the new route promises major savings in time, costs and fuel, it also adds to the challenges facing the Arctic.

Steven Guilbeault, a former environment minister in Canada's government, told The Financial Times it must be carefully managed if environmental damage is to be avoided.

"The impact of global warming in the Arctic is quite staggering," he told the paper. "Climate change will enhance security risks in the Arctic, particularly if there are more and more vessels in the Arctic."

Busan rides surging Chinese tourism wave

Mainland visitors fuel local growth as arrivals rise well above national rate

By YANG HAN
in Busan, South Korea
kelly@chinadailyapac.com

The number of Chinese visitors to Busan, South Korea's second-largest city, has been increasing rapidly as more travelers look for cultural immersion experiences.

Officials and industry experts said this has contributed to the growth of the local tourism sector.

"China is one of Busan's most important tourism markets, and the steady increase in Chinese visitors has played a key role in driving the unprecedented growth in international arrivals to the city," said Amy Lee, a marketing manager at the Busan Tourism Organization.

In the first half of this year, more than 2.42 million foreign travelers visited Busan, with nearly 20 percent coming from the Chinese mainland, according to municipal data released in July.

Arrivals from the Chinese mainland surged 90.7 percent year-on-year, making it one of the highest growth rates among all major source markets.

The increase is also significantly higher than the 27.1 percent rise in the number of Chinese tourists recorded nationwide during the same period.

Lee told China Daily that the rise in Chinese visitors to Busan can be attributed to several factors, including the expansion of cruise arrivals, the growing trend toward free, independent travel, and Busan's strong competitiveness in experiential tourism.

She said the expansion of direct flights and cruise ships between Busan and major Chinese cities has strengthened people-to-people exchanges between the two countries while generating significant local economic benefits.

Although Busan may not be as well-known as the capital Seoul or Jeju Island, its well-established tourism infrastructure and natural resources have made it easy for independent Chinese travelers to explore, said Choi Boo-rim, vice-president of the Busan Tourism Association.

"Chinese tourists seem to be very interested in tourist experience facilities such as the Haeundae beach train and Songdo cable car," said Choi, who is also the CEO of Funtour, one of the few travel agencies in Busan specializing in the Chinese market.

Choi added that many of his clients also ask for experiential courses such as making South Korean-style rice wine and seaweed rice rolls.

While the traditional sources of revenue, such as commissions from duty-free shopping tours, may have declined, Choi said the broader economic impact has increased amid growing demand for hotels, rental cars, and attraction tickets.

Additionally, Choi said Chinese tourists go to hidden local eateries that even Busan locals are not familiar with.

Economic impact

"Across Busan, sales at well-known restaurants and attractions are indeed rising, but tourists are also turning to lesser-known areas, and that is having a huge economic impact," said Choi.

This was true for Chinese tourist An, 27, who focused on sightseeing during his three-day trip to Busan.

"I mainly came here to experience local life," said An, who gave only his surname. Hailing from Wuhan in Central China's Hubei province, An said he mainly planned his itinerary around enjoying Busan's seaside views and the relaxing lifestyle.

In Jagalchi Market, one of South Korea's largest seafood markets, merchants said the number of Chinese tourists has doubled this year. They also provide menus in Chinese and accept Chinese payment methods such as Alipay.

"About 40 percent of my customers are from China," Kang Yong-chul, a merchant at Jagalchi Market, told China Daily.

Kang said his stall has attracted a growing number of Chinese tourists after receiving positive reviews on Chinese social media platforms such as RedNote and Dianping.

"They mostly buy king crab, abalone, and octopus. The average spending is around 100,000 won ($70)," Kang said.

Noting South Korea and China reached an agreement expanding flight rights earlier this year, Lee of the BTO said this will also mean more flights connecting Busan with Chinese cities.

"Looking ahead, we plan to expand our marketing efforts beyond our key markets such as Beijing and Shanghai to include China's emerging first-tier cities, allowing us to tap into new sources of demand," said Lee, adding that the organization will also strengthen tailored online and offline marketing that reflects the interests of Chinese visitors.

The BTO is also working closely with government and relevant agencies to ensure a safe and trustworthy travel environment for Chinese travelers, she said.

Apart from introducing experience-driven programs in Busan and surrounding regions to Chinese travelers, Choi of the Busan Tourism Association and Funtour said his company is also working to bring South Korean travelers to more cities in China as demand has been rising with increased direct flights and the ongoing visa-free policy.

"We are working with airlines to promote each city with new direct flights with Busan intensively," said Choi.

Online
See more by scanning the code.



Metal detector vigilance

Teachers use metal detectors to screen students and check their bags as they enter a school in Nonthaburi Province on the outskirts of Bangkok, Thailand, on Monday. The security measures followed a deadly shooting by a 14-year-old student that killed at least seven people at the school and his home on Friday.
CHALINEE THIRASUPA / REUTERS

Strong earthquake in Colombia kills at least 111 people

By MAY ZHOU in Houston, Texas
mayzhou@chinadailyusa.com

A powerful Monday morning earthquake has killed at least 111 and injured 87 in the west part of Colombia.

Colombia's President Abelardo de la Espriella, who came to office just three days before the earthquake, declared a state of emergency to expedite funding for the quake recovery with a plan to visit the disaster zone.

"I am at the forefront of the situation. It pains me deeply what the families and affected regions are going through," he posted on X.

According to information provided by Colombian officials by mid-afternoon, the destruction included 1,575 damaged homes, 37 homes completely destroyed, 61 collapsed buildings, scores of damaged centers of health, education and community, as well as 18 damaged roads and six airports.

Airports in Pereira, Manizales, Quibdo, Armenia, Cartago and Buenaventura suffered structural damage, and their flight operations were suspended, according to Colombia's Civil Aviation Authority.

The tremor was felt in Colombia's capital Bogota, which is about 400 kilometers from the epicenter, setting off alarms that prompted people to evacuate many buildings as a precaution.

"At this time there are no reports of injuries or structural damage, only some cracks in buildings," Bogota Mayor Carlos Galan posted on X.

The earthquake damaged the region's major cities including Pereira, Quibdo, Manizales and Cali.

Nubia Carolina Cordoba-Curi, governor of the Choco region, posted on X on Monday morning that "in the capital Quibdo there are injuries and severe damage to buildings".

She posted an update at 2 pm that 12 people were confirmed dead and 84 injured in Choco.

Other local authorities reported at least 40 deaths in the Risaralda region and 27 deaths in the Valle del Cauca region.

Rescue efforts to save people buried under the debris are ongoing.

According to the Colombia Geological Service, the earthquake epicenter was in San Jose del Palmar, Choco. It had a magnitude of 7.4 and a depth of approximately 103 km, making it the strongest earthquake recorded in Colombia in the last decade.

The earthquake was felt by neighboring countries Venezuela, Ecuador and Panama. It was followed by several aftershocks with magnitudes between 2.8 and 4.8, according to the agency.

The agency said that it's common for this region to experience earthquakes of considerable magnitudes due to activities associated with the subduction of the Nazca Plate beneath the South American Plate.

Near the end of June, Venezuela was struck by two earthquakes — with magnitudes of 7.2 and 7.5 — that were only 39 seconds apart. More than 6,000 people were killed, and tens of thousands of people remain missing under the debris.

Chinese EVs reshape Australia's car market

By ALEXIS HOOI in Sydney
alexishooi@chinadaily.com.cn

Australia's new vehicle sales hit a record high in July, with top-selling Chinese brands helping sustain a second consecutive month in which electric vehicles made up one-fifth of the market, according to latest analysis.

A total of 103,656 new vehicles were delivered in the country last month, surpassing the previous July record of 103,097 units last year, Australia's Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries, or FCAI, said in a statement on Aug 5.

Battery EV sales totaled 23,510 units in July, accounting for 21.7 percent of the whole market, it said. BEVs recorded significant growth across the first half of this year, with EV market share rising every month. In June, these vehicles made up 23.3 percent of sales, jumping from 7.6 percent in the same month last year.

Chinese brands accounted for four of the top 10 models by sales volume in the latest FCAI figures, reflecting the major headway made by Chinese EV players in the Australian market.

Carmaker Geely's EX5 model alone recorded sales of 2,034 units in July, compared with 490 units during the same period last year.

Hussein Dia, professor of transport technology and sustainability at the Swinburne University of Technology in Melbourne, told China Daily that the July figures are significant because they suggest that Australia's EV market is moving into a more established phase.

"One strong month can sometimes be an anomaly, but two consecutive months above one-fifth of the market begin to look like a genuine shift in consumer behavior," Dia said.

"The broader significance is that EVs are becoming part of mainstream vehicle choice rather than a specialist product for early adopters," he said, adding that this is important for Australia's green transition because road transport remains heavily dependent on imported gasoline and diesel.

"Each electric vehicle added to the fleet reduces that exposure over time and increases the role of locally generated electricity, including renewable energy," Dia said.

The role of Chinese manufacturers is difficult to ignore during the process, he said.

"Chinese manufacturers are not simply gaining market share. They are forcing the wider industry to move faster on affordability, battery technology, model choice, and production speed," Dia said.

"Their success reflects several advantages, including competitive pricing, rapid product development, strong battery supply chains, and a growing range of vehicles suited to Australian consumers. In this sense, Chinese manufacturers are not merely participating in Australia's EV transition. They are increasingly helping to set its pace," he said.

Julie Delvecchio, CEO of Australia's Electric Vehicle Council, said the latest figures showed that "Australians are choosing electric, and choosing it more often".

The national EV fleet is now estimated at around 650,000 vehicles, or about 3 percent of all cars on Australian roads, according to the council.

Cost-of-living pressures

Delvecchio said turning to EVs can mean significant savings on fuel and maintenance for Australian households "feeling the cost-of-living squeeze".

Dia from Swinburne University of Technology said cost-of-living pressures are changing how consumers assess vehicles, as buyers are looking "not only at the purchase price, but increasingly at total ownership costs, including fuel, servicing, and maintenance".

He said recent disruptions to international oil supplies have reinforced the risks of depending on volatile global fuel markets and reminded consumers that electricity can be produced locally, while gasoline and diesel remain exposed to events overseas.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:26 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:26 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Manila's China hawks seek to hijack ties by restricting people-to-people exchanges

In a sign that the Philippine government is seeking to extend its confrontation with China beyond the South China Sea issue, Manila is now considering a crackdown on academic and cultural exchange programs between the two countries in the name of countering "foreign malign influence, co-optation and covert interference".

Philippine Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr said earlier last week that academic institutions and universities operating in the Philippines should be subject to stricter oversight to mitigate what he described as "potential national security risks", with a clear focus on Chinese-language schools in the country.

His remarks followed a report published by SeaLight, a US "think tank", which claimed that the Guangzhou-based Jinan University was the "single largest training site" for Chinese teachers entering Chinese-language schools in the Philippines. The report alleged that the university was closely tied to what it claimed is China's "political influence network". Yet the teacher training programs conducted by Jinan University for Philippine Chinese schools are entirely lawful, transparent and aboveboard.

Reportedly funded partially by the US Department of Defense, SeaLight has gained notoriety for its hostile stance against China. As the Chinese embassy in the Philippines observed, its director, Ray Powell, has made it his organization's top priority to attack and smear China, stoke confrontation and ratchet up tensions by "twisting facts, making baseless accusations, and constructing selective narratives". The "disgraceful" conduct serves only to reinforce the "China threat" narrative and seeks to drive a wedge between China and the Philippines.

Yet, despite this, the Philippine defense chief has embraced these baseless allegations in their entirety, targeting the very foundation of cultural ties between China and the Philippines. His move to politicize educational and cultural exchanges and frame them as "security threat" is a blatant provocation aimed at holding bilateral relations hostage for narrow political advantage.

Teodoro has repeatedly made irresponsible remarks about China, seeking to harm China's legitimate interests and damage China-Philippines relations, so it is no surprise that he has once again stepped to the fore to derail bilateral relations. Such is his track record that China has sanctioned him.

Teodoro also recently made reckless comments about China's Ethnic Unity and Progress Promotion Law, claiming it poses "national security risks" to the Philippines, which a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson rebutted as political provocation "full of disinformation and smears designed to interfere in China's internal affairs".

As for his latest provocation to block normal cultural activities, it must be pointed out that Chinese-language education has been an integral part of the Filipino-Chinese community, and serves as a bridge linking China and the Philippines. No political machinations by Manila's China hawks should sever these deeply rooted people-to-people ties.

The Philippines should honor its diplomatic commitments and engage with China to resolve their maritime disputes through bilateral dialogue and consultation. The Ferdinand Marcos Jr government should not let a small group of anti-China agitators hijack or undermine the bilateral relationship.

A healthy China-Philippines relationship requires not only proper management of differences, but also sustained people-to-people communication. Forcibly cutting off academic exchanges and suppressing Chinese-language education will not help solve the disputes, rather it will only widen the gap and narrow the space for diplomatic mediation. The Marcos government should clearly discern external manipulation, reject a confrontational mindset and cherish the hard-won foundation of people-to-people goodwill.

If Manila overlooks the fact that people-to-people exchanges are one of the most enduring pillars of engagement between the two countries, and allows a small anti-China faction to influence bilateral ties, it risks alienating the Filipino-Chinese community and undermining the bonds of mutual trust between the peoples of both countries.

China and the Philippines are neighbors that cannot be relocated. A stable bilateral relationship serves the fundamental interests of both nations and meets the expectations of the wider region. The ultimate cost of souring relations will be borne by the Philippines, as it will adversely affect its diverse cultural fabric and future growth.

Takaichi's ambiguity betrayal of history

Eighty-one years ago, Nagasaki was erased in a blinding flash, with 74,000 victims incinerated by a weapon that should have been the last. Three days earlier, Hiroshima had suffered the same fate.

During those three days, Japanese militarists kept insisting that people sacrifice themselves for the "glorious Empire of Japan". The destruction of Nagasaki finally shattered that dangerous faith and forced Japan's unconditional surrender to the Allied Powers six days later.

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi made it clear at the Hiroshima memorial ceremony on Thursday and again at the Nagasaki memorial ceremony on Sunday that the country's neo-militarists have learned nothing from the horrors of the bombings. At Nagasaki's Peace Park, the city's mayor, Shiro Suzuki, called nuclear weapons an "absolute evil". Yet, Takaichi offered only deliberate ambiguity over whether her government will abide by the Three Non-Nuclear Principles.

Japan already operates under the protection of the United States' nuclear umbrella. To invoke a purported "external threat" as a rationale for acquiring an independent nuclear deterrent is hardly the "realistic and pragmatic approach" Takaichi describes — rather, it lays bare the unmistakable ambitions of the country's neo-militarist faction.

Takaichi will not say she intends to revise the principles, but neither will she promise to preserve them. She speaks only of current policy, deliberately leaving the future open to interpretation. This is the slow-motion dismantling of a commitment that has defined postwar Japan.

The hypocrisy is staggering. Here is a prime minister attending the memorials for victims of nuclear hellfire, surrounded by aging *hibakusha*, or atomic bombing survivors — whose average age is over 86 — yet she will not reaffirm the principles these survivors have defended for decades. When the *hibakusha* protest her stance on "nuclear sharing" with the US, and when a record 128 local assemblies urge her government to uphold the three principles, her response is little more than a verbal shrug. No wonder Moscow called Japan's nuclear memorial act hypocritical — Takaichi equivocates on the nonnuclear principles while refusing to even ask why the bombs fell on Japan.

The "realism" that Takaichi invokes is increasingly aligned with the right-wing's neo-militarist ambitions. For Japan's remilitarization, "reality" means expanding military capabilities and deepening reliance on the alliance with the US. "Pragmatism" means leveraging Washington's desire for a more heavily armed Japan and stronger Asia-Pacific ally to create political space for nuclear ambiguity. Should we call this the Atomic Stockholm Syndrome?

Japan, the only country ever atom-bombed, now flirts with nuclear weapons under "extended deterrence". The US umbrella is a crutch, and Takaichi wants Japan to lean on it rather than lean on peace. Tokyo refuses to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, calling it "ineffective" to address its "security concerns".

Japan is in the unique position to be the moral voice for the abolition of nuclear weapons; but obligation requires clarity of conviction.

Takaichi has offered nothing but ambiguity. She does not need to formally rewrite the three principles. They can be diluted through reinterpretation, administrative decisions and incremental policy changes. If Washington looks the other way because it wants a more militarized Japan as part of its regional strategy, alliance politics could easily overwhelm international objections. What is at stake, therefore, is more than Japan's military posture. It is Japan's historical identity and regional stability.

Eighty-one years after Fat Man fell on Nagasaki, Takaichi stood in Peace Park and blurred the edges of a promise generations of Japanese have held sacred. The city's mayor was right: Nuclear deterrence does not eliminate the risk of catastrophe; it institutionalizes it.

The Takaichi government is intent on "honoring" the dead by placing their descendants under the shadow of the same weapons that destroyed them. When the last *hibakusha* is gone, what will remain of their plea? A prime minister who could not bring herself to unequivocally declare: "I promise to uphold the Three Non-Nuclear Principles". That is not realism. It is a betrayal of history.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

Solving Middle East crisis needs real commitment to lasting peace

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has told his Cabinet that Israel does not accept US President Donald Trump's 15-point plan for Gaza. Just days after Trump proclaimed that his Peace Board had secured a "HISTORIC agreement" for Hamas' complete disarmament, Netanyahu said Israeli forces will not leave Gaza until Hamas is "genuinely disarmed".

Trump's Gaza plan is not yet a peace plan; it is a holding maneuver — an attempt to de-escalate tensions with Iran while demonstrating that Washington is trying to solve the Gaza crisis. Compared with earlier US proposals, it clearly signals greater pressure on Israel.

But Netanyahu, facing a political battle that could cost him power at home, has every incentive to look uncompromising. An Iranian AI animation depicting Israel as two heavy stones chained to the US' feet and dragging it into the deep carries an uncomfortable truth: Washington's grip on its closest regional ally is weaker than it pretends.

Meanwhile, something potentially more consequential is taking shape elsewhere. Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Turkiye have signed the Mecca Joint Defense Agreement, signaling to Tehran and other regional actors that the Middle East's balance is shifting. The pact reflects growing doubts about the United States' security umbrella that has underpinned Gulf stability for decades.

For Iran, the emerging alignment might present a strategic challenge. It creates a stronger Sunni security bloc. Turkiye's foreign minister has suggested that Egypt might join, potentially creating a security network stretching from the Mediterranean to the Arabian Sea.

The most intriguing part is Turkiye. As a NATO member, Ankara insists the new arrangement is complementary to, not a substitute for, its original alliance commitments. Perhaps legally. Strategically, however, it is unmistakably a hedge. Turkiye is using its dual identity — as a NATO ally and a major player in the Muslim world — to widen its room to play a bigger role in the Middle East.

For Washington, the significance is hard to miss. Three regional partners have created their own defense mechanism. It seems regional countries increasingly believe they must hedge against US unreliability.

Then there is the Strait of Hormuz, Iran's most powerful bargaining chip. Tehran knows the economic pressure created by prolonged disruption, the constraints on US missile-interceptor stocks and the political sensitivity of high energy prices ahead of midterm elections. The Supreme National Security Council of Iran has demanded that Washington change its behavior, end the conflict, lift the blockade, compensate Iran for wartime damage and release frozen assets unconditionally. That is not the posture of a country negotiating from weakness. It is the posture of one that believes time may work in its favor.

Whatever Israel's tactical gains in Lebanon and Gaza or the US' oil benefits, they pale beside a long-term crisis, compounded by Washington's limited leverage over Israel and the region's deep fractures.

What we are witnessing is therefore more than another Middle East crisis. It is a structural realignment. The old order — the US as security guarantor — is gradually fraying.

Striking Tehran has clearly opened a Pandora's box. Trump and Netanyahu may have believed that attacking Iran would restore deterrence, reaffirm US power and consolidate Israel's geopolitical gains. Instead, they may have demonstrated its limits.

The Middle East is becoming a multipolar chessboard, with regional players making moves not necessarily in coordination with Washington, but increasingly to hedge against it.

That might prove to be the real strategic loss for the US. The regional security architecture it has painstakingly built over decades is weakened not just by "hostile powers", but also by allies and partners which no longer believe the old guarantees are sufficient.

When friends start rebuilding their own defense pacts without you, they have not necessarily become your enemies. They have simply stopped believing you can protect them. And no "historic" peace plan can restore trust once that belief is gone.

Tackling the Middle East's increasingly complex crises requires not just words, but a steadfast dedication to building a durable peace.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Standards to make autonomous vehicles safe

Editor's note: *China has released the first mandatory national safety standards for Level 3 and Level 4 autonomous vehicles. China Central Television spoke to Xiong Lu, dean of the College of Automotive and Energy Engineering at Tongji University, to explain the standards. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

The new standards establish a unified and mandatory safety threshold for entry into the market, providing a clear basis for the future development of autonomous driving systems. They specify quantitative standards, parameters and technical requirements for products and establish comprehensive safety requirements for the entire life cycle of a vehicle. They are mandatory standards and all vehicles equipped with autonomous driving functions must comply with them before they can operate on public roads.

At the system level, the new standards set clear quantitative thresholds in two key areas. First, they mandate that the driving capabilities of autonomous driving systems must be comparable to those of a qualified and attentive human driver. Second, the systems must achieve an accident rate comparable to conventional vehicles, which is roughly one accident in every 10,000 hours of driving. This is a key technical safety threshold established by the standards.

From a research and development perspective, two requirements are particularly important. For Level 3 autonomous vehicles about to be mass-produced, the vehicles must have a driver takeover system. Additionally, in hazardous situations that can't be managed by the system, the standards require a 10-second window for the driver to take control. These two specific requirements have received considerable attention within the R&D community in the industry.

The standards mandate a comprehensive safety assurance mechanism throughout the entire life cycle of the vehicle, encompassing initial R&D, production, supply chain management, testing, evaluation and data monitoring during operation. This comprehensive approach is important because autonomous driving systems are very complex, and it becomes challenging to determine responsibility in accidents. Only by managing the entire process across the enterprise can responsibilities be clearly determined.

For many companies, establishing a comprehensive life-cycle safety assurance mechanism will be challenging. The requirements cover the entire R&D process, necessitating complete procedural and management systems.

Manufacturers that rely on third-party suppliers need to collaborate closely with those entities to establish the necessary life-cycle management procedures and standards across the entire system. Coordination with component suppliers and regulatory authorities may also be necessary, making the implementation of these requirements a demanding task.

The standards will evolve with additional technical criteria. Further refinements will address functional safety, intended functionality safety and cybersecurity. There will also be corresponding standards for perception systems, vehicle connectivity systems and other areas. Additional standards for the testing and evaluation of autonomous driving systems will also be established. Also in the pipeline are standards for the overall architecture of autonomous driving systems, as well as for operating systems and chips.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:26 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:26 PM

VIEWS

Kang Hogu

ROK, China should cooperate more on AI



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

In late 2025, China and the Republic of Korea acknowledged a fundamental shift in their economic relationship. The era of vertical specialization, in which each side was on different rungs of the industrial ladder, was giving way to horizontal competition.

To adapt to this new reality, the two countries chose "horizontal cooperation" to redefine their economic relationship.

As the regional production network they jointly built over the past three decades gradually unravels and relocates, an important question arises: can China and the ROK build a new network around artificial intelligence infrastructure and usher in another golden era of industrial cooperation?

History suggests they can. Sustainable growth is often driven by the emergence of new industries, markets and business niches. Since they established diplomatic relations, China and the ROK have built production networks in sectors such as computers, mobile phones and information technology. The ROK's technological edge and China's cost advantages combined to create a globally competitive force.

But every industrial cycle has its limits. As these industries matured and the global market became saturated, technological barriers fell, production capacity expanded rapidly and competition intensified.

A case in point is the ROK's two former pillar industries — mobile phones and automobiles. In 2025, Counterpoint Research reported that global mobile phone shipments grew by just 2 percent year-on-year amid fierce brand competition.

Similarly, global vehicle sales stagnated, with the ROK's main markets — the United States, Western Europe and domestically — experiencing varying levels of negative growth, according to data from a think tank affiliated to the Hyundai Motor Group.

Emerging industries tell a different story. Demand continues to outpace supply in emerging fields such as AI, new energy and biomedicine. Rather than competing in crowded traditional sectors, companies from China and the ROK have the opportunity to deepen cooperation in these emerging industries and work toward rebuilding a new East Asian production network.

The foundation for this already exists. ROK companies excel in high-end semiconductor hardware, especially AI-specific high-bandwidth memory (HBM).

Fueled by ongoing demand for new AI infrastructure and HBM shortages, the country's semiconductor industry achieved record revenues and profits in 2025. SK Hynix and Samsung Electronics together accounted for about 80 percent of the global HBM market in 2025, and about 47 percent of the total market capitalization of the ROK stock market, highlighting their dominant position in the semiconductor sector.

China, meanwhile, has rapidly strengthened both its AI software capabilities and computing infrastructure. According to Stanford University's 2025 AI Index Report, the performance gap between China's top AI models and those of the US shrank from 17.5 percent in 2023 to just 0.3 percent by the end of 2024.

China also holds around 70 percent of global generative AI patents. Additionally, its growing network of high-performance computing centers and supercomputers accounts for a significant portion of the world's intelligent computing power.

These complementary strengths present an opportunity to establish a robust East Asian AI-specific production network and explore new market opportunities.

By combining the ROK's strengths in hardware with China's advantages in both hardware and software, both countries can develop new global competitive advantages and increase their market share.

Governments on both sides have begun laying the groundwork. In January, ROK President Lee Jae-myung led an economic and trade delegation to China covering semiconductors, batteries, electric vehicles, new energy and smart manufacturing. The visit demonstrated the willingness for horizontal cooperation, and 32 cooperation memorandums were signed.

Following the APEC Trade Ministers' Meeting in Suzhou, the seventh Jiangsu-ROK trade cooperation and exchange conference was held in May. It strengthened industrial connectivity in semiconductors, new energy and shipbuilding and generated immediate export contracts worth approximately $2.3 million, according to media reports from the ROK.

Capitalizing on this momentum, business exchanges have intensified, focusing on sustainable development, SME innovation and entrepreneurship, green industries and the silver economy.

Even so, greater efforts are still needed. Both sides should enhance awareness about the opportunities created by cooperation, identify new areas of complementarity and manage security-related factors.

Horizontal cooperation should take precedence over horizontal competition.

Multinational corporations allocate resources where they can maximize profits rather than opt for less efficient domestic firms.

What may appear as competition between Chinese and ROK companies can actually become mutually beneficial cooperation through cross-border partnerships.

As the pace of technological catch-up surpasses innovation, the room for cooperation inevitably narrows. However, no enterprise — nor any country — can dominate an entire industry chain, and the potential for complementary cooperation between Chinese and ROK companies still exists.

With overcapacity in traditional sectors and shortages in emerging ones, both sides should avoid competition in established areas and focus on collaboration in new sectors.

Greater emphasis on collaboration in high-end products, advanced services and specialized segments will create broader opportunities for both economies.

The current global environment makes such cooperation even more important. Rising geopolitical uncertainty, China-US trade frictions, tariff barriers and technology blockades have increased the risks for businesses.

Chinese and ROK companies should therefore work together to mitigate political risks and safeguard economic security. They should enhance cooperation in export controls, investment screening, R&D security and talent management.

These steps are essential if the two sides are to avoid excessive competition and move toward win-win outcomes.

The success of the new AI production network in East Asia hinges on Chinese and ROK companies leveraging their complementary strengths, building bridges rather than barriers, and exploring new markets as partners, not rivals.

The author is the director of the Sino-Korea Economy/Society Institute based in Daegu, the ROK.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Yose Rizal Damuri

RCEP offers stability amid global uncertainties

When the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership was launched in 2022, nobody could have imagined that the global situation would be in so much disarray as it is today.

At that time, the world was still dealing with the impact of the pandemic. Supply chains were disrupted and countries were trying to reopen their economies. But there was still optimism that global trade would gradually stabilize.

Today, the situation is very different. We now face a world marked by deeper geopolitical competition, increased trade restrictions and aggressive industrial policies. There is greater uncertainty in energy and food markets, and concerns over supply chain security are growing.

Global Lens

These challenges render regional economic integration initiatives such as the RCEP more crucial than ever.

In today's increasingly uncertain global trading landscape, where supply chains are easily disrupted and rising protectionism creates greater fragmentation, the RCEP offers a stable and predictable environment.

That means a lot to businesses. A company planning to invest in a new factory not only asks about labor costs or infrastructure, but also whether markets will remain accessible, if inputs will be available, whether exports will face new tariffs and if rules might suddenly change.

Regional economic integration, especially a comprehensive agreement such as the RCEP, provides three essential functions. It brings certainty by establishing a rules-based framework for trade and investment.

It enhances resilience by supporting diversified regional supply chains. And it injects confidence by signaling that East Asia still believes in openness and integration.

But these benefits can only be realized if the RCEP delivers concrete benefits to businesses. Currently, the full potential of the agreement is underutilized.

A recent ASEAN Business Barometer Survey by the Centre for Strategic and International Studies found that while around 70 percent of companies are aware of ASEAN free trade agreements and RCEP, only about 48 percent actually utilize the facilities under the agreement. Even among those companies, many only use it occasionally.

During the RCEP leaders' meeting in Kuala Lumpur last year, a general review of the RCEP was scheduled for 2027. This presents a good opportunity for member countries to upgrade the agreement to RCEP 2.0 to strategically respond to the current global uncertainty.

There are two important questions related to such an upgrade.

First, what should the upgrade focus on? The upgrade should be ambitious, yet focused. It should not become a long wish list. The "Christmas tree syndrome", where too many issues are added, risks collapsing the upgrade process.

The upgrade should focus sharply on a few high-impact areas. The first priority should be implementation and utilization. Before adding new issues, the unfinished business of RCEP 1.0 should be addressed. This includes eliminating tariff differentials, simplifying rules of origin, implementing full cumulation, and addressing non-tariff measures.

These may sound technical, but are vital for reducing confusion, costs and uncertainty. If a company faces different tariff rates for the same product depending on its origin, that creates confusion.

If rules of origin are too complex, that pushes up costs. If regulations in member countries are too divergent, it creates uncertainty.

The second priority should be strengthening institutional capacity. The RCEP has institutional elements such as committees and the RCEP Support Unit, but their current form has insufficient impact.

For instance, it's difficult to know the current utilization of the agreement. The RCEP should have proper monitoring mechanisms and transparent processes.

Economic and technical cooperation often does not address the real issues. It must be linked to real capacity gaps, especially for SMEs. If they need support for customs digitalization, RCEP should help. If they need help with standards, certification, or rules of origin, RCEP cooperation should respond directly.

The third priority should be introducing new areas of cooperation and rules. Some of the most urgent areas are in the digital economy, sustainable trade and green transformation. Those areas open opportunities for members, but also carry risks.

The second key question is: how can the upgrade be carried out in the context of the 2027 general review?

The upcoming general review should be treated as more than just a routine procedural exercise. This requires political direction, not just a technical analysis. Leaders and ministers must set the direction by defining the objectives, scope, priority areas, expected deliverables and timelines.

The CSIS has prepared a practical guide for next year's review and upgrade. The process should start this year for officials to identify gaps and propose the scope of the review so that next year the process and negotiations can address more substantial matters.

Here I would like to emphasize the role of think tanks in this process. Think tanks can help identify the most impactful and feasible areas for upgrade to help policymakers avoid an overloaded agenda.

By bridging policy with business needs, think tanks can ensure that the upgrade delivers practical benefits.

Amid the current uncertainty, the RCEP can provide a platform for effective responses but only if it is upgraded in a focused and practical way.

The goal is not to create the most ambitious agreement, but to make the RCEP more development-oriented, more relevant and more useful in today's world.

The author is the executive director of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Indonesia.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Kang Bing

The author is former deputy editor-in-chief of China Daily.
kangbing@chinadaily.com.cn

Neighborhood committees as guardians of daily life

A barter event was taking place at the small square in our apartment complex. Residents were arriving with their used electronic appliances, such as air purifiers and humidifiers, and exchanging those for cooking oil and laundry detergent.

Used bikes became the star of the day — an old bike could be exchanged for 10 liters of cooking oil and many other daily-use items.

The neighborhood committee, which had organized the barter, wanted to encourage residents to get rid of their used bikes that often block the corridors.

Chinese people once relied on bikes for commuting. In recent years, however, thanks to an improved public transportation system and the popularity of shared bikes, fewer people use bicycles for commuting, parking them randomly in corridors and other public spaces, causing inconvenience to residents.

The barter is only one of many events the neighborhood committee has organized this year to encourage cooperation between neighbors and to promote recycling of used goods.

In fact, neighborhood committees, which are autonomous organizations, have become an indispensable part of China's successful governance.

China's first neighborhood committee was created by residents representing around 2,250 Hangzhou families on Oct 23, 1949, just over three weeks after the establishment of the People's Republic of China. On Dec 31, 1954, after the legislature passed an organic rule, neighborhood committees were granted legal status as autonomous organizations.

They look for potential risks that could endanger public security or public health, or contribute to juvenile delinquency.

Over the past few decades, proximity to urban households has enabled such committees to steadily expand their functions. Now the committees are even entrusted by local governments to accomplish a number of social services.

They are responsible for advocating the Constitution and other laws to residents, educating them about the law and their responsibilities as citizens. The committees directly engage in public affairs such as care for the elderly, those with disabilities and children. They serve as mediators when conflicts arise between members of a family, neighbors or between residents and the real estate management.

They look for potential risks that could endanger public security or public health, or contribute to juvenile delinquency.

They unite local volunteers to deal with the problems and organize activities benefiting both the community and society — as they did by organizing the barter.

When quarrels broke out among family members or between neighbors, the committee members were usually the first to intervene. Their mediation helped quell thousands of disputes, which could otherwise have turned violent or ended up in court.

Ma Shanxiang, a mediator with a subdistrict office in Chongqing, was recently in the limelight when he was awarded the July 1 Medal, the Communist Party of China's highest honor.

In his 38-year career dealing with grassroots affairs, he successfully mediated around 2,500 disputes. He also sees the medal as recognition for contributions made by all those working in neighborhood committees.

Local governments have been supportive of the work neighborhood committees do, providing them aid, in the form of money or materials. In most cases the committee workers' wages and subsidies are covered by local governments. They also benefit from governments' project-oriented investments and social donations.

My neighborhood committee runs a day care center for the elderly, provides discounted lunch and dinner in neighborhood canteens, arranges home visits by doctors and barbers and organizes activities such as table tennis, snooker, dancing, singing, calligraphy, painting and lectures for senior citizens.

An aging China is promoting a home-based elderly care model for millions of its senior citizens such as me.

Such a model would be unimaginable without the cooperation of the country's 124,308 neighborhood committees. After all, it is the committees that will be entrusted with complicated coordination and large-scale organization to serve the senior citizens living in millions of separate homes.

Once these new responsibilities are entrusted, I believe the importance of neighborhood committees will grow further and our ties with the committees will become deeper.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:26 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:26 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

WU QICONG

Energy resilience

China-ASEAN cooperation can provide firmer support for lasting peace and common development in the region



The China-ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held in Manila on July 22. Marking the fifth anniversary of the comprehensive strategic partnership between China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the meeting adopted the China-ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Joint Statement on Addressing the Regional Impacts of Developments in the Middle East and Strengthening Regional Energy Cooperation, which proposes closer collaboration on power interconnectivity, energy supply chains, clean, low-carbon and renewable energy, and energy technological innovation.

For China and ASEAN, energy security and the green transition have become increasingly inseparable. The question is no longer whether to transition, but how to guarantee stable supply, affordable prices and the necessary development space in the process.

The conflict in the Middle East has commanded close attention to the region because fluctuations in oil and gas prices, shipping and insurance costs are quickly transmitted to production and daily life. Conventional energy will remain important for a considerable length of time, yet simply diversifying import sources or expanding reserves cannot eliminate structural risks. Developing domestic renewables reduces dependence on external fuels, but the variability of wind and solar power requires stronger cross-border grids, storage and dispatch capacity. The green transition, in this sense, is not an add-on to energy security but a reshaping of it — toward a regional energy system with more diverse sources, more flexible regulation and the capacity for mutual support when shocks occur.

Cooperation between China and ASEAN already rests on a solid foundation. According to the data released by the National Energy Administration in November 2025, since China and ASEAN began electricity trade, cumulative trading volume has exceeded 75 billion kilowatt-hours, more than 90 percent of it green electricity; by the end of 2024, cumulative investment in their jointly developed hydropower, wind and photovoltaic projects had grown more than fivefold over 2014 and installed capacity more than 15-fold. The China-Laos 500-kilovolt power interconnection project, operational since April, has a two-way transmission capacity of 1.5 million kW and is expected to deliver about 3 billion kWh of clean electricity a year.

Still, measured against the two sides' growing energy demand, current trading volumes and mutual support capacity leave much room for improvement.

The pressure comes first from the gap between ambition and reality. According to the eighth ASEAN Energy Outlook, renewables accounted for 15.6 percent of ASEAN's total primary energy supply in 2022. The ASEAN Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation (2026-30) raises the 2030 target for that share to 30 percent, while proposing a share of 45 percent for renewables in installed power capacity and a 40 percent reduction in energy intensity, which is the quantity of energy required per unit output or activity, from the 2005 level. Industrialization and urbanization are still advancing, so new energy demand and emissions cuts must be addressed together. Based on the eighth ASEAN Energy Outlook, the ASEAN Center for Energy has estimated that meeting the region's transition goals requires about $150 billion in investment annually.

The power grid is one of the most prominent weak links. According to the ASEAN Power Grid Financing Initiative launched by the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, the ASEAN Secretariat and the ASEAN Center for Energy, cross-border interconnection capacity now stands at about 7.7 gigawatts



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

and needs to be more than doubled by 2040. The existing power trade rests mostly on bilateral arrangements, with dispatch rules, settlement, project access and green power certification not yet fully aligned. A completed transmission line does not mean electricity can flow smoothly over a wider area. Without unified planning and stable rules, clean power from resource-rich areas cannot be transmitted out, load centers may still face tight supply at peak hours and interconnection's security value cannot be fully unlocked.

Likewise, one cannot simply blame a shortage of capital for the financing difficulties. Clean energy and cross-border grids involve large investments and long payback periods; investors care more about whether power purchase agreements will be honored, whether pricing is stable, and how currency and policy risks are shared. Some projects are technically feasible but temporarily stalled because their revenue structures are unclear. Moreover, member states differ markedly in resources and development stage. For some, the transition must also provide jobs, industrial upgrading and electricity access. If cooperation means only equipment procurement and construction, without generating local technical capacity, jobs and tax revenue, projects will struggle to win lasting public support.

In the next stage, cross-border grids should be built as regional public goods. China-ASEAN cooperation can align more closely with ASEAN grid planning, launch multilateral power trading pilots in subregions where conditions are ripe, and gradually coordinate rules on dispatch, settlement and green electricity certification. The priority is not only building new lines but also raising the utilization of existing ones and improving emergency coordination during extreme weather or supply disruptions. Existing projects such as the China-Laos link can provide experience for broader integration, although specific arrangements should respect ASEAN centrality and each country's regulatory authority, proceeding step by step.

Project cooperation should also shift from engineering delivery to joint capacity building. China has practical experience in large-scale renewable integration, storage, smart grids and equipment manufacturing, while ASEAN has abundant solar, wind, hydro and geothermal resources and diverse scenarios such as island power supply and cross-border transmission. Combining the two does not mean simple replication; technologies can be adapted to local grid conditions, climate and energy demand, with local procurement, training, operation and maintenance, and joint research built into project design.

More targeted financial arrangements can effectively reduce early-stage risks. As the joint statement notes, the China-ASEAN Investment Cooperation Fund should be used properly, with financial institutions encouraged to join regional energy projects. Policy-based, development and multilateral institutions can lead in supporting feasibility studies, cross-border infrastructure and risk guarantees, thereby attracting long-term private capital. Contract transparency and environmental and social standards can also be improved so that returns, responsibilities and risks are all identifiable. Rather than chasing short-term deal numbers, the two sides should cultivate demonstration projects that are financially sustainable, benefit communities and can withstand economic cycles.

Regional policy communication matters as well. The two sides can use existing platforms such as ministerial meetings and the China-ASEAN Clean Energy Cooperation Center to build regular mechanisms for risk assessment and emergency communication, sharing timely information on markets, major projects and technical standards. For industrial chains, maintaining openness, stability and diversity is a more effective way to enhance security than relying on any single source. On green rules, it is essential to advance the alignment of carbon accounting, green certificates and product standards with respect for each country's development stage, to lower cross-border business costs and prevent regulatory fragmentation that may slow the transition.

Ultimately, cooperation will be judged by real results: whether residents get more stable and affordable electricity, whether businesses suffer less from price volatility, and whether participating countries can accumulate local technology and jobs. True energy resilience means not isolating oneself from world markets, but having more choices and stronger adaptive capacity through open cooperation. The Manila joint statement has pointed the way. If this consensus is turned into functioning grids, sustainable projects and compatible rules, China-ASEAN energy cooperation will provide firmer support for lasting peace and common development in the region.

The author is an assistant researcher at the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University of China. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

ZHANG LI

Shared responsibility for the high seas

After entering into force early this year, the BBNJ Agreement needs collective action to turn law into ocean protection



The Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement), which entered into force in January, has yet to transform ocean conditions or create a new marine protected area through its own procedures. Yet the agreement, also known as the High Seas Treaty, has begun to influence state conduct: Parties have been asked to designate national focal points; the interim secretariat has established channels for formal notifications; preparatory negotiations have advanced rules for the future Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies; and the first pre-collection notification concerning marine genetic resources has been submitted under the new framework.

As the agreement moves toward an operating system for international cooperation, the decisive question is whether and how parties, signatories and other maritime actors will convert this momentum into coordinated protection and sustainable use of the high seas.

The high seas have long stood at the center of a paradox. They extend beyond any single country's jurisdiction but support ecosystems essential to climate regulation, fisheries, scientific discovery and planetary resilience. Yet their governance has remained fragmented with regulation through different institutions, each with its own mandate, geographic scope and enforcement capacity.

The BBNJ Agreement strengthens cooperation by creating common rules and procedures for marine genetic resources and benefit-sharing, area-based management tools, including marine protected areas, environmental impact assessments, and capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology. Its success, therefore, requires parties to implement their obligations, signatories to complete domestic ratification processes, non-parties to consider accession and relevant international organizations to coordinate their mandates.

The first priority should be institutional alignment at the national level. Implementation will require coordination among agencies responsible for marine ecology, natural resources, fisheries, scientific research, foreign affairs, shipping and environmental assessment. Every party should establish clear procedures for environmental review, data submission, scientific sampling, marine genetic resource management and participation in international decision-making.

As a major maritime country, a leading developing country and an active participant in deep-sea research, China can use the agreement to strengthen domestic coordination and improve the transparency and predictability of its activities beyond national jurisdiction. However, China is just one contributor among many. The same standard should apply to other major maritime powers. Shared rules will gain credibility only when the states with the greatest capabilities also accept the greatest implementation responsibilities.

Second, countries should build a shared scientific foundation for high seas protection. Effective conservation depends on long-term monitoring, biodiversity mapping, ecological modeling, genetic information, ocean observation and transparent assessment of cumulative impacts. Scientific data should be interoperable, accessible through agreed mechanisms and accompanied by appropriate safeguards for legitimate interests, intellectual property and the rights of knowledge holders. Cooperation among national research institutions, regional seas organizations, universities and international scientific programs will be essential.

Countries with advanced research fleets, satellite systems, laboratories and digital monitoring



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

technologies should treat these capacities as potential global public goods. China, the European Union, the United States, Japan and other scientifically capable actors can contribute data, expertise, training and observation tools through multilateral channels, while other developing countries should participate not only as recipients of information, but also as research partners. A scientific research system that draws on diverse regions and knowledge traditions will be more legitimate and more capable of identifying ecological change.

Third, parties should participate constructively in the design of area-based management tools, including marine protected areas. High seas conservation measures must be ecologically meaningful, legally sound, equitably governed and practically enforceable. They must also coordinate with existing bodies responsible for fisheries, shipping and seabed activities, so that different institutions reinforce rather than undermine one another.

This task is closely linked to the global "30 by 30" target under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which calls for at least 30 percent of terrestrial, inland water, coastal and marine areas to be effectively conserved and managed by 2030.

Areas beyond national jurisdiction have historically lacked a comprehensive mechanism for proposing and coordinating marine protected areas. The BBNJ Agreement helps close that institutional gap. Its parties should now identify ecologically significant areas, assemble credible scientific evidence, consult affected stakeholders and ensure that management measures are accompanied by monitoring, compliance and periodic review. The objective should be a connected and effective global ocean protection network.

Fourth, environmental impact assessment should become a central tool for responsible high seas activity. As human activities move further offshore and deeper into the ocean, the risk of ecological disturbance and cumulative harm grows. The agreement provides a pathway for more systematic assessment of activities that may significantly affect marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction. Parties should work toward rigorous, transparent and science-based procedures, including clear thresholds, public notification, access to relevant information, consideration of cumulative and transboundary effects, and follow-up monitoring.

Consistent assessment standards would protect ecosystems while also providing greater predictability for enterprises, research institutions and public authorities. The credibility of the regime will depend on whether similar risks are assessed according to comparable standards, regardless of the nationality of the actor involved.

Fifth, implementation must make capacity-building and marine technology transfer practical. Equity is a condition for effective ocean governance. Many developing countries have strong interests in the high seas but limited scientific, technological and financial capacity to participate fully in research, monitoring, benefit-sharing and decision-making. If implementation is dominated by states with advanced fleets, laboratories and databases, the agreement will lose both legitimacy and effectiveness.

Developed countries and capable developing countries should therefore support training, joint research, regional scientific networks, shared observation platforms, access to data and participation in BBNJ institutions. Existing initiatives, including the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, can help connect national programs with the agreement's implementation needs. China can make a useful contribution through South-South cooperation, research partnerships and marine technology platforms. Similar contributions from other capable states and institutions should form a diversified system of support.

The agreement's first months also reveal what remains unfinished. The permanent secretariat, clearing-house mechanism, scientific and technical bodies, financial arrangements and detailed procedures of the Conference of the Parties must become fully operational. Parties will need to provide predictable funding, select qualified and geographically representative experts, define transparent participation procedures and build cooperation with existing global, regional and sectoral organizations.

China can contribute long-term planning, marine science capacity, digital monitoring technologies and ecological governance experience, and support developing countries' participation while working within collectively agreed institutions and standards. The same balance of contribution and restraint is required from every major maritime power.

The BBNJ Agreement provides a legal platform for ocean protection linked to food security, climate stability, technological innovation, biodiversity conservation and the future of the blue economy. Measurable ecological results will depend on whether countries align domestic institutions, share credible knowledge, establish and manage protected areas, assess environmental risks, finance implementation and enable all regions to participate.

The ocean has long connected civilizations and ecosystems. In the age of climate change and biodiversity loss, it also connects responsibilities. The entry into force of the BBNJ Agreement marked the beginning of a new chapter in global ocean governance. Its promise will be fulfilled only when countries act together to conserve and sustainably use the deep ocean as a shared ecological foundation for present and future generations.

The author is a professor of ecology at Beijing Normal University. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:26 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:26 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

Xiong'an New Area launches AI institute

Facility offers 480 courses, supported by 25 specialized training labs

By LI JIAYING
lijiaying@chinadaily.com.cn

Applying artificial intelligence research to practical use, Xiong'an New Area in Hebei province is using a new training base to connect talent development with corporate demand and real-world projects.

Launching operations on Thursday with the opening of Xiong'an's first AI training class, the base combines hands-on training in AI and information technology, with courses designed around the actual capabilities required for specific jobs.

"The curriculum is developed by starting with real-world needs and working backward to define the knowledge and practical skills trainees require," said Ma Yangbiao, general manager of Xiong'an Science and Technology Industrial Park Development and Management Co Ltd, the parent company of the base's operator.

The base targets users including centrally administered State-owned enterprises and universities relocating to Xiong'an, government departments and public institutions in the new area, as well as universities and companies in nearby provinces, Ma said.

"We have developed a progressive training system, ranging from basic AI literacy for the general public to advanced engineering programs for high-caliber professionals," he said, adding that the facility offers more than 480 courses supported by 25 specialized training labs, bringing together complementary sources of expertise to build an integrated AI teaching system.

The facility includes leading technology companies that introduce cutting-edge technologies used in the field, professors from top universities who strengthen students' theoretical foundations and foster research-oriented thinking, and industry specialists who share experience from real-world projects, Ma said.

One participating company is Huaqing Zhiyan, a large language AI model and computing service provider.

"This AI training platform is our first product developed here. It supports AI-assisted lesson preparation, one-click generation of instructors' teaching videos, and automated scheduling and distribution, helping users quickly understand and master AI principles and progress from beginner to advanced levels," said Liu Yuxi, an engineer at the company.

The Xiong'an Artificial Intelligence Institute is already using the platform to train its researchers, Liu said.

AI is also embedded in everyday life at the base, extending the learning experience beyond classrooms and laboratories, and even including cafeteria-based activities.

"AI technology is integrated throughout the dining process, from ordering and collecting meals to payment. The aim is to improve efficiency while allowing trainees to experience AI in everyday settings and deepen their understanding of the technology," Ma said.

Briefly

Anti-dumping move on pecan imports imposed

China will impose provisional anti-dumping measures — effective on Tuesday — in the form of security deposits, on pecan imports originating in Mexico and the United States, the Ministry of Commerce said on Monday. It said its investigation, launched on Sept 25, 2025, had preliminarily found the imports were being dumped in the Chinese market and had caused material injury to the domestic pecan industry.

Yuan strengthens against greenback

The central parity rate of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, strengthened 20 pips to 6.7884 against the US dollar on Monday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System. In China's spot foreign exchange market, the yuan is allowed to rise or fall by 2 percent from the central parity rate each trading day.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY



View of Chinese automaker Geely's booth during an expo in Bangkok, Thailand. XINHUA

Close trade ties see Chinese firms rev up expansion within ASEAN

By SHI JING in Shanghai
shijing@chinadaily.com.cn

While Chinese companies still have ambitious plans to expand their overseas business activity, structural changes are taking shape, including motives for outbound reaches and the diversification of companies and industries going abroad, said a report released by Singapore-based bank UOB.

Released for the seventh consecutive year, the latest report showed that 80 percent of the 380 surveyed Chinese companies plan to undertake overseas expansion plans in the next three years, with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations continuing to serve as the first destination of choice.

This is in line with the close trade ties between the two economies, as China's trade value with ASEAN surged 18.2 percent year-on-year to 4.34 trillion yuan ($643.2 billion) in the first six months, said the General Administration of Customs.

Malaysia has gained the most attention so far this year, with 56 percent of polled Chinese firms expressing interest in the market. This could be partly due to the energy crisis that has roiled the world this year. The richer application scenarios in Malaysia can be translated into more opportunities for Chinese companies, especially new energy companies, said Xin Tao, managing director of UOB China.

While Malaysia has announced plans to completely transition away from coal by 2044, electricity consumption by data centers is projected to surge from 7 percent of total demand in 2026 to 31 percent by 2035 in Peninsular Malaysia, said local energy authorities. Procurement of renewable energy and acceleration of the country's solar projects are just some of the strategies being used to address the surging demand.

At present, Chinese telecommunication companies have the strongest presence in Malaysia, including electronics manufacturing, electronic components and server suppliers related to artificial intelligence, said Xin.

Singapore came in second place this year, with 54 percent of polled Chinese enterprises expressing interest in further tapping into the market, 10 percentage points higher than last year.

Xin said tech firms usually locate their regional headquarters or research and development centers in Singapore thanks to its rich talent supply. But their operational facilities are usually based in Malaysia where land costs are much lower. The lower marginal costs mean higher efficiency in expansion, she said.

Up to 51 percent of the polled Chinese firms showed interest in Thailand this year, up 12 percentage points from a year earlier.

Chinese retailers usually make Thailand their first ASEAN gateway as it possesses a large number of Southeast Asian retailing brands for beer, soft drinks, coffee, energy drinks and snacks, said Xin.

Thailand is often the first stop for Chinese new energy vehicle makers to tap Southeast Asian markets as they inject more capital to build local factories, and entire supply chains have gradually moved to Thailand, including providers of batteries, motors, electronic controls, seat belts and glass, she added.

This reflects the diversification of Chinese companies' outbound reaches. Instead of bringing products to new markets, they are now introducing technologies, skills, operational capabilities, intellectual property rights and even entire industrial chains. It can be said that Chinese companies have moved beyond standalone overseas investments to a full-ecosystem approach to global expansion, said Adaline Zheng, CEO of UOB China Ltd.

The sectoral scope of Chinese overseas expansion has widened to include high-end manufacturing, new energy, electric vehicles and healthcare. A shift has also occurred regarding the player mix, from large well-capitalized giants to smaller private firms and asset-light businesses like AI startups, Zheng said.

It should be noted that the call for the internationalization of the yuan has risen as Chinese firms become more active in overseas markets, which is evidenced by the growing volume of yuan-denominated bank loans, bonds and other financing instruments. With the deepening cooperation between Chinese and ASEAN companies and the widened application scenarios, the renminbi is no longer just a transactional tool but increasingly viewed as a hedging instrument thanks to its stability, said Zheng.

Mixed results for China's gold sector as consumption changes

By ZHENG XIN
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

China's gold consumption saw a slight increase in the first half, reaching 511.41 metric tons, up 1.23 percent year-on-year, as strong investment demand offset sluggish jewelry sales, according to the latest industry data released by the China Gold Association.

Driven by sharp price fluctuations at historically high levels and the implementation of new domestic gold tax policies, the country's gold consumption structure continued to experience significant divergence, the association said.

Demand for gold jewelry plummeted 33.88 percent year-on-year to 132.13 tons, as consumers became hesitant to make purchases amid soaring retail prices. In stark contrast, robust investment demand pushed the consumption of gold bars and coins to 339.34 tons, surging 28.42 percent.

Periodic price pullbacks have consistently stimulated sales of gold bars through domestic banking channels, cementing them as a popular safe-haven asset for investors seeking to hedge against market risks, it said.

Meanwhile, persistently high gold prices have pushed up production costs for industrial enterprises, leading to a 2.9 percent decline in industrial and other gold uses, which stood at 39.94 tons for the first six months.

On the supply side, China's gold output from domestic raw materials dropped 14.62 percent year-on-year to 152.91 tons.

The CGA attributed this decline to comprehensive safety inspections, rectifications and special environmental governance campaigns conducted in key gold-producing provinces. These strict regulatory actions led to temporary production halts at certain mines as they underwent mandatory self-inspections to ensure high-quality, sustainable development in the sector.

Gold produced from imported raw materials, however, increased by 4.62 percent, adding 3.40 tons to reach 77.08 tons. Combined, the country produced 229.99 tons of gold from both domestic and imported raw materials, representing a 9.01 percent decrease compared to the same period last year.



Shoppers look at gold products at a jewelry shop in Lianyungang, Jiangsu province. WANG CHUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Despite domestic supply constraints, China's major gold enterprises maintained stable operations and orderly capacity expansion at their overseas mines.

State-owned giants including China National Gold Group and Shandong Gold Group reported steady production growth abroad.

In the first half, overseas mine production by these large groups reached 48.10 tons, a robust 21.43 percent year-on-year increase, it said.

Industry experts believe that overseas expansion of Chinese mining companies has evolved from an optional growth strategy into a structural necessity in recent years.

As the world's largest gold consumer, China's rising offshore output demonstrates that proactive mergers and acquisitions are serving as a vital buffer, said Zhao Xiangbin, chief strategist at Beijing Gold and Forex Fortune Investment Management.

"Chinese enterprises are securing high-quality assets at attractive valuations while deploying advanced extraction technologies," he said.

Zhao added that by securing upstream physical assets globally, domestic mining giants are anchoring the country's physical reserves and steadily expanding China's long-term influence over global precious metal markets.

At the institutional level, China's central bank continued its strategy of optimizing and diversifying its official foreign exchange reserves, adding 40.12 tons of gold in the first half.

This marked the 20th consecutive month of accumulation spanning from November 2024 to June 2026, pushing the nation's total gold reserves to a massive 2,346.45 tons and firmly securing its position as the fifth-largest holder globally.

Digital tech reshaping services spending

TIANJIN — From virtual and augmented reality experiences that bring museum collections closer to visitors, to artificial intelligence-powered travel planning and personalized recommendations on e-commerce platforms, digital technologies are fundamentally reshaping how Chinese consumers discover and enjoy exciting new services.

In response to this wave of enthusiasm, the country's service consumption is evolving, becoming smarter and more dynamic than ever before.

In the first half of 2026, retail sales of services in China rose 5.3 percent year-on-year — 4.2 percentage points faster than goods sales. Tourism, consulting and leasing services, and cultural, sports and leisure services all posted double-digit growth, according to data released by the National Bureau of Statistics.

In August 2024, China's State Council issued guidelines to promote high-quality development in services consumption, urging innovation to unlock the sector's internal momentum and cultivate new drivers of growth. Digital technology is now emerging as a key enabler in that effort.

AI, in particular, is becoming deeply woven into consumer spending on services. In June, the Ministry of Commerce and seven other government departments rolled out an implementation plan to accelerate "AI plus consumption", introducing 17 measures focused on three priorities: expanding smart product consumption, empowering services and creating new consumption scenarios.

The performing arts market offers a compelling example. In 2025, China's large-scale commercial performances generated over 30 billion yuan ($4.45 billion) in box-office revenue and spurred more than 220 billion yuan in related cultural and tourism spending, according to data from the China Association of Performing Arts. That booming demand calls for richer and more targeted services.

In China, consumers can already plan trips easily through various mobile apps. Yet friction points remain: choosing a well-located hotel, ensuring smooth transfers between bookings and finding reasonably priced restaurants near tourist attractions.

Beyond improving individual experiences, digital tools are also transforming how service providers interpret market demand. Data generated through digital platforms are making previously invisible consumer preferences measurable, comparable and traceable.

Meituan, a major local services platform, offers a clear case in point. Zhang Lin, president of the Meituan Research Institute, said platform data show that online consumption among people over 50 is growing rapidly, and their share of bookings for four-star and above hotels is significantly above average.

These insights are shining a spotlight on the spending power and willingness to spend that middle-aged and older consumers have long been overlooked for.

Chinese consumers are moving from "buying useful products" to "buying what they like". This shift requires service providers to strengthen their ability to understand consumers, craft engaging scenarios and build communities. Digital technologies are helping them do just that.

According to the Ministry of Commerce, online service consumption in China grew 22 percent in 2025. During the same period, online sales of sports event tickets, tourism products and dining services jumped 63.3 percent, 40.6 percent and 23.7 percent, respectively.

Many industry observers believe digital technologies are generating more diverse service offerings and fostering entirely new consumption scenarios. By shifting from standardized supply to personalized matching, and from complex decision-making to more targeted outreach, digital innovation is steadily driving the upgrade and expansion of China's service consumption.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:26 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:26 PM

BUSINESS

Unlocking county-level consumption niche

Not all the same, such markets represent hundreds of distinct regional economies

By WANG ZHUOQIONG
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn

China's economic expansion is increasingly being shaped beyond its biggest cities, as county-level markets become a critical source of consumer growth and a testing ground for companies seeking the next wave of demand, industry reports said.

Consumption remained the largest contributor to the country's growth momentum in the first half, with final consumption expenditure adding 2.1 percentage points to GDP growth, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

The ministry said continued upgrades in technology, product supply and consumer services would help unlock additional spending potential, particularly among county-level markets and demographic groups such as the elderly, younger consumers and families with infants.

Among the biggest opportunities are China's counties and townships, where rising incomes and changing lifestyles are reshaping consumption patterns. Data from Meituan showed that active consumers in county-level markets increased by more than 15 percent year-on-year in 2025, while order volumes climbed by over 20 percent, significantly faster than growth in major urban markets.

The shift marks a strategic turning point for companies that have traditionally focused on China's largest cities. Consulting firm McKinsey estimates that by 2030, around two-thirds of incremental personal consumption growth in China will come from lower-tier cities, counties and townships.

For consumer brands, the opportunity is already visible. In 2025, Mixue Group's brands operated 32,000 stores in tier-3 and below cities, representing about 58 percent of their network in the country.

Yet the county opportunity is not as simple as opening more stores or offering lower prices.

A recent report about consumption in counties from NielsenIQ, also known as NIQ, highlights a growing disconnect between economic development and brand performance.

China's wealthier counties are expanding rapidly. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, the number of counties with a GDP exceeding 100 billion yuan ($14.83 billion) rose to 77 in 2025. The country's top 100 counties accounted for 10.2 percent of national GDP, with combined economic growth of 6.3 percent year-on-year, above the national average of 5 percent.

Many consumer companies have failed to capture that growth. Among the 20 leading fast-moving consumer goods manufacturers tracked by NIQ, only four recorded sales increases in county markets, while 16 saw declines.





Above: Robots walk the runway at a *hanfu* (a traditional Chinese costume) cultural festival and the 2025 fall/winter *hanfu* new collection launch event in Caoxian county, Shandong province, on Nov 22. GUO XULEI / XINHUA **Right**: A woman showcases a dish at a crayfish festival in Xuyi county, Jiangsu province, on June 12. YANG BO / CHINA NEWS SERVICE



Consumers visit an outlet of China's beverage giant Mixue Group in Hengshui, Hebei province, on Feb 17. TANG KE / FOR CHINA DAILY

The message for companies is clear: consumers in counties are becoming richer, but their preferences are changing faster than many brands' strategies.

The traditional view of consumers in counties being purely price-driven is becoming outdated. NIQ data show that 53 percent of consumers in counties remain sensitive to price, but the ratio is declining. Consumers are shifting from simply buying the cheapest products to seeking the best balance between price, quality and experience.

One emerging trend is "quality upgrading", where consumers maintain a value-conscious mindset but demand stronger proof of effectiveness. Spending decisions are increasingly influenced by whether a product delivers visible benefits or better experiences for each yuan spent.

A second trend is localization. The traditional "acquaintance economy", built around recommendations from family and neighbors — which still matter more to those over 40 years of age — is evolving into a stronger sense of local identity. As county economies develop and local brands gain recognition, consumers increasingly favor products and experiences connected to their communities.

This creates a unique purchasing pattern: awareness may be national, but trust remains local. Short-video platforms and online marketplaces expose consumers to national trends, but final decisions often depend on local reputation, peer reviews and in-store interaction.

For brands, the experience of consumers in counties has become geographically divided. Marketing can come from anywhere, but trust still needs to be built nearby.

Companies approaching county markets as a single category risk missing important differences. NIQ identified three major divisions shaping consumption behavior: generation, family structure and regional economic characteristics.

Younger consumers in counties increasingly resemble their urban peers. Consumers under 30 show stronger interest in aesthetics, technology and new experiences, creating opportunities for brands that can bring fresh products and trends to smaller markets.

Older consumers, particularly those above 40, place greater emphasis on reliability, practicality and trusted relationships. Their purchasing decisions are often shaped by previous experiences and local networks.

This means companies may need two separate strategies within the same county market: one designed to attract younger consumers through innovation and novelty, and another focused on building repeat purchases among older customers through service and trust.

Household structure also matters. According to NIQ, compared with large cities, counties generally have higher marriage rates, more families with children and larger living spaces. Consumption decisions are therefore often made around households rather than individuals. Large-capacity appliances, bulk household goods and practical products can outperform premium offerings that rely only on status or branding.

Geography creates another layer of complexity. The gap between two counties can sometimes exceed the difference between a county and a nearby city. Industrial strengths shape local consumption ecosystems. For example, in Zhejiang province, Yiwu's global trading economy, Cixi's appliance manufacturing base and Dongyang's film tourism sector each create different consumer environments.

County markets are therefore not one market, but hundreds of distinct regional economies.

Many brands have struggled in counties because they treated expansion as a simple transfer of urban discount strategies. Consumers in counties are not rejecting higher-quality products; they are rejecting products that fail to match their daily needs.

In fast-moving consumer goods, NIQ estimates county markets account for 43.1 percent of national FMCG consumption. Annual growth reached 2.5 percent, compared with 0.5 percent in tier-1 and tier-2 cities.

Discount snack chains illustrate the competitive intensity. More than 13,000 new stores opened in 2025, with nearly half located in counties, while 6,895 stores closed. The market is entering a filtering phase where only operators capable of responding quickly to local demand will survive.

Success requires three capabilities: speed in adopting national trends, accuracy in matching local preferences and decisiveness in securing distribution space.

The same logic applies to durable goods. According to NIQ, in 2025, lower-tier technology-related durable goods reached 700 billion yuan and represented 67.1 percent of offline retail sales. Demand is concentrated around practical upgrades — larger televisions, refrigerators and washing machines that fit bigger homes.

Price differences reveal consumer priorities. Appliance price gaps between urban and county markets can reach 40 to 50 percent, reflecting consumers' focus on functional value. For smartphones and headphones, where social visibility matters more, the gap is often only 10 to 20 percent.

For companies, the future of consumption in counties will not be built by offering a cheaper version of urban products. Instead, it will require redesigning products and services around local lifestyles.

Snack retailers maximize growth potential

By WANG ZHUOQIONG

Busy Ming Group Co Ltd has become the first leisure snack and beverage chain in China to surpass 30,000 stores, indicating the rapid expansion of the discount snack retail sector amid expanding county-level penetration.

The Changsha, Hunan province-based company said recently that its signed store network exceeded 30,000 as of July 20. The category has grown from neighborhood snack outlets into a nationwide retail channel.

Busy Ming operates two major brands: "Busy For You", founded by Yan Zhou in Changsha, Hunan province, in March 2017, and "Super Ming", founded by Zhao Ding in Yichun, Jiangxi province, in January 2019.

The two businesses merged in November 2023 to form Busy Ming Group, combining their store networks, procurement capabilities and regional reach.

The company's expansion follows its listing on the Hong Kong stock exchange in January. For 2025, Busy Ming reported gross merchandise value of 93.57 billion yuan ($13.86 billion) and adjusted net profit of 2.69 billion yuan, signaling performance that the company attributed to improved inventory efficiency and a rising contribution from multi-store franchise operators.

CITIC Securities said the discount snack sector remains in an early growth phase, with hard-discount retail formats demonstrating resilience through economic cycles. Leading snack discounters still have more than 50 percent store-opening potential, while future growth will depend on category expansion, private-label development and store-format optimization.

According to the 2026 China Chain Store Top 100 ranking released by the China Chain Store & Franchise Association on June 15, based on 2025 sales, Walmart China ranked first with sales of 195.86 billion yuan, followed by Freshippo, Alibaba's grocery chain, with 107 billion yuan. Busy Ming ranked third with sales of 93.57 billion yuan, making it the only non-supermarket and non-membership retail specialist among the top five companies.

The country's fast-moving consumer goods market is also undergoing structural changes as consumers become more focused on value, said the 15th China Shopper Report 2026.

Jointly released by Worldpanel by Numerator and Bain & Company, the report found that while many traditional offline retail formats remained under pressure, two offline channels continued to grow. Snack collection stores expanded rapidly, particularly in lower-tier cities, while discount stores gained traction among consumers seeking affordable everyday essentials and bulk purchases.

For Busy Ming, the snack retail segment has evolved beyond a fragmented consumer category into a large-scale distribution network linking manufacturers, logistics infrastructure and millions of consumers.

The company now operates across all provincial-level regions in China, covering more than 1,400 county-level markets. By the end of 2025, about 60 percent of its stores were located in counties and towns, while more than 65 percent were in third-tier or smaller cities.

The expansion reflects a broader shift in the country's retail landscape, with discount-oriented chains increasingly targeting lower-tier markets rather than competing solely for mature urban consumers. These areas offer significant growth potential as consumers seek branded products at lower prices.

The company's operating model relies on direct sourcing from manufacturers, large-scale procurement and a nationwide logistics network. The company said its warehouses are designed to serve stores within a 300-kilometer radius with 24-hour delivery cycles.

The model has helped reduce inventory turnover to about 12 days. According to Frost & Sullivan, Busy Ming's average product prices were about 25 percent lower than comparable products sold through traditional offline supermarkets by the end of 2024.

The company's products include bakery items, biscuits, nuts and seeds, puffed snacks and instant meals, deli snacks, confectionery, chocolates and preserves, and beverages.

Beyond supply chain efficiency, discount snack operators are increasingly using consumer data to shape product development. At Busy Ming, customized SKUs — stock keeping units — account for more than 30 percent of its product assortment. The company generally requires each store to maintain a minimum of 1,800 SKUs.

The company has expanded its offerings through smaller packages and frequent product launches aimed at lowering trial costs for consumers. The approach reflects a shift from traditional retail, where suppliers largely determined product selection, toward a model driven by consumer demand and data analysis.



Consumers check out Snack Kingdom, the world's largest snack store, created by Busy Ming Group, in Changsha, Hunan province, on July 5. GUO LILIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

30,000 stores
signed store network of Busy Ming exceeded this number as of July 20

93.57 billion yuan
Busy Ming's gross merchandise value for 2025

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:26 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:26 PM

CHINA

World's largest graveyard of whales found

Nearly 7,000-m-deep seafloor covered with over 5.3 million years of remains

By **LI MENGHAN**
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

At nearly 7,000 meters below the surface of the southeastern Indian Ocean, an international research team led by Chinese scientists has discovered the deepest and largest whale graveyard ever recorded — a 1,200-kilometer stretch of seafloor littered with whale remains that have accumulated over at least 5.3 million years.

The discovery indicates that the region has been a vast resting place for whales since the early Pliocene epoch, about 5.3 million years ago. It contains both active whale falls, where sunken carcasses support communities of deep-sea organisms, and hundreds of fossilized whale skeletons.

The study was conducted by researchers from the Institute of Deep-sea Science and Engineering of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Hainan province, the University of Pisa in Italy and Earth Sciences New Zealand. It was published in the journal Nature on June 10.

The researchers used the *Fendouzhe* manned submersible aboard the research vessel *Tansuo 1* to conduct 32 dives in early 2023 in the Diamantina Zone, a seafloor fracture zone stretching about 1,200 km parallel to the Southeast Indian Ridge. They documented five active whale falls and 476 sites containing fossilized cetacean remains along the corridor.

A whale fall occurs when a whale dies and its carcass sinks to the seafloor. The remains can become the center of a rich ecosystem, providing food and shelter for deep-sea organisms for years or even decades.

The deepest known whale fall had previously been recorded at a depth of 4,204 meters in the southwest Atlantic Ocean. Little was known about whale-fall ecosystems below 6,000 meters, while the fossil record of whales that dive to such depths was largely unknown.

The deepest active whale fall identified by the team was found at 6,789 meters and consisted of three vertebrae from a beaked whale. The discovery extends the known depth range of whale-fall ecosystems by more than 2,500 meters.

The whale bones were covered with dense white mats of microorganisms and bone-eating worms, suggesting that they had remained exposed on the seafloor for a long time.

"We did not set out to find whale falls or fossils, so this discovery was a wonderful surprise," said Peng Xiaotong, a researcher at the institute and the study's first and corresponding author.

"But that is precisely the significance of hadal exploration — we are entering the most unknown ocean regions on this planet, and any extraordinary discovery could happen," Peng said.

The expedition was part of the Global Hadal Exploration Programme, a 10-year initiative under the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. Led by the institute, the program focuses on the hadal zone, the deepest parts of the ocean, generally below 6,000 meters.

Analysis of 43 fossil specimens identified five species of beaked whales and one species of baleen whale. The specimens included two species that still live in the southeastern Indian Ocean today and two extinct genera previously known only from fossils collected by trawlers off South Africa.

The researchers said the unusually high concentration of whale remains may be linked to the region's importance as a habitat for beaked whales. Some species are known to make extremely deep dives and may die when they exceed their physiological limits.

Dating of 33 fossil bones showed that they ranged from 5.26 million to 120,000 years old, confirming that whale-fall events have occurred in the region since the early Pliocene era, about 5.3 million years ago.

The area's V-shaped seafloor may also help carcasses collect at the bottom, while the extremely slow buildup of sediment allows whale bones to remain exposed on the seafloor for long periods instead of being quickly buried.

Based on an observed density of 759.5 whale remains per square kilometer, the researchers estimated that the area could contain more than 10 million whale and other cetacean carcasses.

They estimated that the whale remains collectively store about 6.7 million metric tons of carbon, equivalent to roughly 4,700 years' worth of organic material that normally sinks from surface waters to the seafloor in the region.

Stephen Godfrey, a researcher at the Calvert Marine Museum in Maryland in the United States, wrote in a commentary accompanying the study that the discovery "can be compared to many milestone discoveries in the history of deep-sea exploration" and represents "a unique and major breakthrough".

Zhou Peng, an assistant research fellow at the institute, highlighted the important role of the *Fendouzhe* manned submersible in the research.

The manned submersible allowed scientists to observe the seafloor directly and make real-time decisions about which specimens to collect, Zhou said.

"The manned platform provided by *Fendouzhe* opened up unprecedented space for this research and served as the key support behind the breakthrough results," he said.

School delivery



Workers sort and prepare to deliver new textbooks at a Xinhua Bookstore logistics center in Lianyungang, Jiangsu province, on Monday. The center has been expediting the distribution and packaging of textbooks to ensure timely delivery to schools for the upcoming fall semester. GENG YUHE / FOR CHINA DAILY

Water leisure



Children frolic while adults relax in the shallow stretches of the Wentang River in Pingtian village, Yichun, Jiangxi province, on Sunday. In recent years, the local government has transformed the area along the river into a recreational area through ecological restoration and facility upgrades, providing convenience and leisure options for the community. ZOU ZHONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Fossil shows reptile species' aquatic transition

By **YAN YUJIE** and **LI YINGQING** in Kunming

Chinese scientists have identified a 244-million-year-old reptile fossil from Southwest China's Yunnan province as the earliest known archosauromorph that was highly adapted to life in water, providing the first clear evidence that some early members of the evolutionary group had become almost completely aquatic.

The newly identified reptile, named *Austronaga*, challenges the long-held view that early archosauromorphs — a broad group that later gave rise to crocodiles, dinosaurs, pterosaurs and birds — were predominantly land-dwelling, with previously known aquatic members only partly adapted to life in water.

The study, led by Li Chun, a researcher at the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, was recently published in Science Advances.

The findings shed new light on when archosauromorphs began moving into aquatic environments and suggest that the return of reptiles to the water after the end-Permian mass extinction was more widespread among different reptile groups than previously known.

Researchers studied exceptionally well-preserved *Austronaga* fossils discovered in the Luoping biota in Yunnan. A detailed examination of the skeleton revealed a series of features indicating that the animal was highly adapted to life in water.

Its forelimbs were considerably longer than its hindlimbs, with the upper arm bone more than twice the length of the thigh bone. Its greatly reduced hindlimbs would have made movement on land difficult, said Wang Wei, first author of the study.

Its hands and feet were also enlarged and had more toe and finger bones than expected. The outermost bones were reduced and lacked claws, forming flipper-like limbs similar to those seen in other marine reptiles, including ichthyosaurs, plesiosaurs and sea turtles.

By comparing the proportions of its limbs with those of a wide range of living and extinct aquatic animals, the researchers found that *Austronaga* fell within the range of animals that are fully dependent on aquatic environments.

"This suggests that it had almost completely abandoned life on land, making it the earliest known highly aquatic archosauromorph," Wang said.

The fossil also preserves exceptionally rare traces of soft tissues, including the stomach, liver and intestines. By examining the fossil under both natural and ultraviolet light and conducting elemental analysis, researchers were able to identify the locations of these organs.



An artist's impression of an *Austronaga* that lived about 244 million years ago. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Partially digested fish scales were found in the large intestine, providing direct evidence that *Austronaga* fed on fish. Together with its highly specialized limbs, the finding suggests that the reptile was an active aquatic predator well adapted to swimming, according to the study.

The discovery fills a major gap in the early evolutionary history of archosauromorphs. No fully aquatic members of the group had previously been confirmed, and the fossil pushes the group's known adaptation to aquatic environments back to about 244 million years ago.

It also adds an important piece to the evolutionary history of Tanysauria, the reptile group to which *Austronaga* belongs. According to Wang, Tanysauria is now the only known reptile lineage to include land-dwelling, semi-aquatic and highly aquatic members.

This provides an unusually complete sequence for scientists to study how reptiles gradually adapted to life in water.

The findings also suggest that archosauromorphs played a role in the recovery and restructuring of aquatic ecosystems following the end-Permian mass extinction.

The research team said the discovery raises broader questions about whether different reptile groups that moved into aquatic environments during this period were responding to similar environmental pressures and developed similar adaptations for living in water.

Contact the writers at yanyj@chinadaily.com.cn

Soccer games give Sino-US ties a leg-up in Xinjiang

By **FANG AIQING** and **MAO WEIHUA** in Urumqi

A group of Chinese and US teenagers played two friendly soccer matches at Urumqi No 23 Middle School in the regional capital of Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region over the weekend, competing hard while having fun and forging new friendships.

The China (Xinjiang)-US (California) Youth Football Friendship Match was co-hosted by the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade Xinjiang Council, the regional sports bureau and the Sino-American Aviation Heritage Foundation. The US nonprofit, founded in 1998, honors the Flying Tigers, the US air unit that fought alongside Chinese forces against Japanese aggression during World War II.

On Saturday, a visiting squad of players aged 14 to 16 from Pico Rivera, California, took on their Urumqi hosts and lost 1-2. The following day, they faced a team from Tacheng prefecture in Xinjiang, drawing 4-4 at full time before winning 3-2 in a penalty shoot-out.

Luis Palacios, 14, scored three goals in Sunday's match.

"It was a tough game, but fun," he said. Asked if he felt intimidated by the older opponents, he replied: "I'm never afraid. I always play against older people in the US. I'm small, so I play bigger people than me and I'm used to it."

His teammate Israel Antonio Echeverria said: "It's truly a blessing to be here, playing the sport I love. Some of these (local) players are gonna for sure make it far."

Nurzhul Telek, 17, from Tacheng, scored twice on Sunday. It was his first time facing a foreign opponent.

"They're very competitive — you can tell they have solid training behind them," he said. What inspired him most, however, was their relaxed and flexible style of play, as well as the individual creativity each player brought to the pitch.

Several local players filled in as substitutes for the US team. Some spoke English, while a translator helped during water breaks off the pitch. On the field, however, the players relied mostly on gestures, with communication flowing naturally.

"For us, not even knowing each other, not even speaking the same language, it was a great result and great cooperation," said Pablo Salazar, 23, coach of the US squad. "Soccer is a beautiful sport. It allows us to come together — it almost feels like we're speaking the same language because we're all playing the same sport, and it's played worldwide."

After Sunday's game, players from the two sides swapped jerseys. The Pico Rivera delegation also played in Changsha, Central China's Hunan province, before arriving in Xinjiang.

> "The friendships they created will last a lifetime. And if one of them is in need, they'll definitely have the help of their friends across the Pacific."
>
> **Erik Lutz,** a council member for the city of Pico Rivera in the United States

This year marks the 85th anniversary of the Flying Tigers' arrival in China. Officially known as the American Volunteer Group of the Chinese Air Force, the unit was formed in 1941 by US General Claire Lee Chennault. More than 2,000 Flying Tigers airmen perished in the war, while Chinese people rescued more than 200 pilots at the cost of thousands of their own lives.

"The spirit of the Flying Tigers is about two peoples working together through tough times," said Erik Lutz, a council member for the city of Pico Rivera and a representative of the foundation. "And that legacy is represented behind us on this soccer field — this young generation of boys and girls playing. The friendships they created will last a lifetime. And if one of them is in need, they'll definitely have the help of their friends across the Pacific."

Jeffrey Greene, chairman of the foundation, said the shared Flying Tigers legacy underscores the importance of US-China cooperation today.

Over the past six weeks, the foundation has brought more than 200 US students to 25 Chinese cities in three groups, with Urumqi as the final stop. Greene said they plan to bring as many next year, if not more, and are also beginning to take Chinese students to the US.

Liu Teng, vice-president of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade Xinjiang Council, said the matches have built a new bridge for people-to-people exchanges between Xinjiang and California. He added that the council plans to co-host the second China-US Flying Tigers Friendship and Cooperation Forum with the foundation later this year.

Zhu Changchang and Zhang Shuqin contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at fangaiqing@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:26 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:26 PM

CHINA





Left: Cadets observe operations on board *Zheng He* in 2024. **Center:** Cadets listen to instruction from a naval officer in an engineering room of the *Zheng He* ship in 2025. **Right:** *Zheng He* crew members conduct an exercise during a visit to Russia in 2024. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

PLA Navy's crucible of future warship leaders

For almost four decades, the *Zheng He* has served as an operational classroom and floating instrument of China's maritime diplomacy



The *Zheng He* ship sails during a voyage to Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia last year.

By **ZHANG XIAOMIN**
in Dalian, Liaoning
zhangxiaomin@chinadaily.com.cn

As the sun sets at a naval port in Dalian, Northeast China's Liaoning province, the massive hull number "81" gleams along the side of the *Zheng He*, an oceangoing vessel operated by the People's Liberation Army Dalian Naval Academy.

The number "81" is no ordinary designation. It serves as a direct tribute to Aug 1, 1927 — the date of the Nanchang Uprising that marked the founding of the PLA. Commissioned in 1987 as China's first purpose-built, indigenously designed Type 679 training ship, the 132-meter-long, 5,000-metric-ton vessel serves as the operational crucible for China's modernizing surface fleet.

The ship belongs to the Dalian Naval Academy — established in 1949 as the PLA's first formal naval school and widely regarded as the nation's premier training ground for surface warship commanders. While the *Zheng He* is primarily dedicated to the at-sea practice of officer midshipmen, its mission extends well beyond officer candidates. With 18 living quarters and four activity areas, the ship accommodates up to about 200 cadets at a time, providing hands-on operational experience for enlisted technicians, non-commissioned officers and junior midshipmen alike.

In recent days, *Zheng He* deck officer Zhang Zecong was tasked with organizing teaching models and equipment in preparation for the arrival of a new cohort of cadets. Now in his sixth year aboard the *Zheng He*, Zhang carries out his duties with precision.

"I heard plenty about the *Zheng He*'s illustrious history when I was a cadet at Dalian Naval Academy," Zhang said. "It fills me with pride to carry on this ship's fine traditions and contribute to nurturing talent for the PLA Navy."

Named after the legendary Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) imperial envoy who commanded China's 15th-century treasure fleets, the *Zheng He* has earned the moniker "talent carrier" for the PLA Navy. Over nearly four decades of service, it has delivered more than 50,000 military professionals. Two out of every three active-duty surface warship commanding officers in the PLA Navy have completed at-sea training aboard its decks, as have more than half of all flag officers and senior fleet commanders.

In addition to its domestic training role, the vessel functions as an instrument of naval diplomacy. The ship has sailed beyond national waters 16 times, traversing all three major oceans and visiting 29 countries and regions across six continents. Its cumulative log exceeds 600,000 nautical miles — equivalent to 27 complete circumnavigations of the globe. Cited as an "Advanced Unit of the PLA" in 2012 and awarded the title "Meritorious Training Ship" in 2015, it holds a unique position in China's maritime development.

From cadet to instructor

For Zhang, the bond with the vessel began in the summer of 2018 during his sophomore year at the academy, when he embarked on a monthlong navigation exercise.

"We encountered a succession of typhoons, and for over 10 days we couldn't make port. Giant waves battered the ship, and my stomach churned," he recalled. "But after that experience, I never got seasick again, and I no longer fear rough seas."

What proved even more transformative was watching the crew maintain composure under pressure. Upon graduation in 2020, Zhang requested and received an assignment back to the *Zheng He*. The transition from trainee to trainer brought a sharp learning curve.

When his first group of cadets came aboard, he tried to pour everything he knew into them, repeating explanations and demonstrations endlessly. But he soon realized that the deluge of information overwhelmed them.

"Over time, I came to understand that teaching isn't about cramming — it's about guiding. You have to progress step by step and tailor your approach to each cadet's ability," he said.

Today, Zhang has evolved into what the PLA Navy terms a "four-in-one" professional: capable of serving simultaneously as a crew member, instructor, combatant and tactical commander.

Passing the torch

Every member of the *Zheng He*'s crew doubles as an educator. Navigation officer Wu Jiahui maintains 17 distinct lesson plans on her workstation, tailoring instructional modules for specific specialties and mission profiles. Rather than drilling formulaic exercises, she forces cadets to evaluate dynamic operational hazards.

"You have to actively engage and guide cadets to think," she said. "They will become combatants and commanders one day, and they must rely on their own exploration and creativity."

Elsewhere on the ship, navigation officer Gao Siyu leads cadets through every compartment to help them memorize equipment layouts, having them draw dozens of detailed piping diagrams by hand. Down in the heat and engine noise, engineering officer Li Hui provides hands-on instruction in machinery diagnostics and emergency repairs.

In the ship's honor room, new arrivals gather to memorize the dying words of the ship's first commanding officer, Feng Zuanshu: "The ship obeys my commands; I obey the Party's commands — guard the seas and defend the motherland!"

Cadet Deng Yuyang said: "The *Zheng He* is a warship with tradition and heritage. I must carry forward and build on that proud legacy."

Technology forward

While the vessel's hull has aged, its internal training infrastructure has undergone constant modernization. Responding to past criticisms that an aging auxiliary ship could not replicate modern combat systems, electrical engineering officer Cheng Bo spent three months fabricating a custom electrical control system model out of discarded components.

Thanks to this new teaching aid, cadets can quickly grasp abstract electrical principles.

"By leveraging technology to break through teaching bottlenecks and moving beyond the limitations of traditional practical training, we ensure that every extra effort we put into instructional support translates into fewer difficulties for our cadets in the future," Cheng said.

In recent years, the ship's classrooms have been upgraded with digital modeling, virtual war-gaming and high-fidelity ship-handling simulators. Trainees now run command drills and situational briefings in replicated sea conditions, learning operational plotting and real-time threat analysis before ever taking command of a front-line destroyer or frigate.

Lin Qiuming, an officer from a unit in Zhoushan, Zhejiang province, who trained aboard the *Zheng He* three years ago, was impressed during a recent return visit by the new ship-handling simulator, a system that replicates control equipment and complex sea environments.

Free from the constraints of weather or range, it allows trainees to conduct command drills and post-training reviews at any time.

"Back then, I could only watch without hands-on practice, so I never felt fully confident. Now, with intelligent equipment for repeated drills, training efficiency and quality have improved dramatically," Lin said.

To hone targeted skills, navigation officer Li Yiming and his team have meticulously designed training "menus" organized by specialty, offering flexible observation and training stops to help cadets quickly familiarize themselves with navigation operations.

Working with other vessels in a flotilla, Li compiled a video database of 119 model training positions across eight categories, including navigation, gunnery, communications and engineering.

During a recent main-engine failure simulation, engineering officer Gu Bin demonstrated why technical mastery alone is insufficient for future commanders. When a cadet asked why engine technicians needed to study fleet tactics while fixing a drive shaft, Gu offered a broader perspective.

"Repair work is not purely technical. It requires contextual decision-making. Sometimes, abandoning a compartment may be the best choice for the overall mission," Gu said. "In the future, you will be responsible for a warship, a formation, a fleet. If your perspective is too narrow, you cannot be a qualified commander."

Floating national territory

In the ship's honor room, a display wall features naval crests from 14 foreign nations, highlighting its role as an ambassador for China's maritime posture. During overseas visits — from Australia to New Zealand and Indonesia — the ship acts as a sovereign outpost, often welcoming overseas Chinese communities and conducting military diplomacy.

Navigation officer Wu often uses this space as the main venue for her ship history lectures, broadcasting live to three classrooms of cadets. The *Zheng He*'s "diplomatic resume" — 16 overseas voyages visiting 29 countries and regions — remains an indispensable topic.

Wu recounted the ship's visit to Australia, saying going abroad teaches self-reflection, not mere admiration of others.

During that visit, she and other representatives from the *Zheng He* toured an Australian amphibious assault ship, which opened its joint operations center to Chinese visitors.

Zhang Zhiyou, an instructor from the academy in Dalian, said: "Overseas visits expand our horizons and also showcase the PLA's image to the world. Our Navy personnel are diplomats in uniform, and we have a duty to tell China's story and amplify China's voice."

During a visit to Indonesia amid local unrest, the ship's interim Party committee decided not only to keep the ship open to visitors as planned but to extend visiting hours and expand reception capacity. One overseas Chinese resident from Jakarta said that seeing the ship from the motherland greatly relieved his anxiety.

In New Zealand, an 80-year-old Chinese expatriate handed out homemade pastries daily to the ship's crew, clasping their hands and saying that seeing them made him see the hope of the motherland.

"Truly, Chinese expatriates living far from home travel great distances to attend our ship's open days, just to set foot on this 'floating national territory', to see their own military personnel and to hear the familiar accent of home," said Wu.

The veteran training ship is preparing once again to slip its moorings, carrying a new class of midshipmen out into open waters.

Wang Zhao contributed to this story.

Taicang reaffirms partnership with training ship

By **ZHANG XIAOMIN**

A delegation from Taicang of Suzhou, Jiangsu province, boarded the Chinese naval training ship *Zheng He* in Dalian, Liaoning province, on July 31 — the eve of the 99th anniversary of the founding of the People's Liberation Army. The visit reaffirmed a city-ship partnership that has endured for over two decades.

"Starting from Taicang, the great Chinese navigator Zheng He set sail on his voyages to the western seas. The *Zheng He* is the first naval vessel named after a national hero," said Wang Yu, mayor of Taicang, who extended her greetings to the officers and men on board, and discussed further cooperation in national defense education and technological collaboration.

The delegation toured the ship's equipment and facilities and gained a detailed understanding of the officers' daily life and training.

"In the hearts of Taicang people, the *Zheng He* is not only a shining 'national business card' but also our firmest support and deepest attachment to the blue waters," the mayor said.

Commissioned in 1987 as China's first independently designed and built oceangoing training ship, the *Zheng He* holds multiple PLA Navy records, including the longest single-voyage distance, the highest operational availability rate, and the most visits to foreign ports. Under the administration of the Dalian Naval Academy, the vessel mainly undertakes the maritime training of naval academy cadets.

The partnership was formalized in 2004, when the Taicang government and the ship signed a co-construction agreement, and jointly inaugurated a national defense science and technology education base.

Over the past 22 years, the two sides have maintained frequent interactions, forging a distinctive path of military-civilian integration characterized by shared resources, complementary strengths and mutual growth.

Cadet Deng Qingwen discovered in the ship's chronicle that all three port calls to Taicang brought unique milestones. The 2011 visit set a precedent for a warship calling on its partner city, while the 2017 call marked the vessel's 30th commissioning anniversary, and the 2025 visit coincided with the 620th anniversary of Zheng He's first voyage.

The visits featured a series of events, including the themed campaign "Carrying forward the Zheng He spirit, contributing to the defense of our vast seas" and community outreach activities supporting local families in need.

Inspired by his findings, Deng volunteered to organize a sharing session for his shipmates and trainees, passing on the stories of the city-ship bond.

For Taicang's 400,000 permanent residents, the ship has become more than a distant symbol. It is a tangible presence. According to local authorities, approximately one-fifth of the city's population has toured the vessel during its open-day events, with many young students citing the experience as an inspiration to join the navy.

"The three visits gave our crew a tangible, close-up view of the nation's rapid development," said Liu Ceng, a veteran crew member who sailed with the ship to Taicang on all three occasions. "Every time we docked, the city felt brand new. Through these changes, I have deeply felt the growing strength and prosperity of our country."

The *Zheng He* officers and crew expressed their gratitude for Taicang's long-standing support and pledged to remain loyal to their mission, strengthen their military capabilities, and deepen the co-construction partnership with the city.

"The connection between Taicang and the *Zheng He* is not merely ceremonial. It is where history set sail, and where its spirit continues to chart the course ahead," the ship's political commissar said.

Wang Zhao contributed to this story.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:26 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:26 PM

CULTURAL HERITAGE



Artifacts from the middle phase of the late Paleolithic period found at the Peiligang site in Xinzheng, Henan province.

From hunters to early farmers

New excavations reveal how ancient communities built settlements and developed agriculture, report **Shi Baoyin** and **Qi Xin** in Xinzheng, Henan.



Artifacts from the late phase of the late Paleolithic period, also at Peiligang.

Lying at the eastern foot of Songshan Mountain along the Shuangji River, part of the Huaihe River system, the Peiligang site in Xinzheng, Henan province, was named one of China's top 10 archaeological discoveries of 2025.

"Holding more than 30,000 years of uninterrupted cultural deposits in a single location, Peiligang vividly documents how prehistoric people evolved from nomadic hunter-gatherers into settled farming communities," says Li Yongqiang, head of the Peiligang site excavation project and a researcher at the Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. "Its landmark discoveries fill major gaps in our understanding of China's prehistoric past."

As the type site of Peiligang culture, the ancient settlement offers vital clues to the emergence of early farming civilizations in China's Central Plains.



Li Yongqiang (right) and his team during excavations at the Peiligang site in Xinzheng, Henan province, in 2025. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Paleolithic craftsmanship

Although many Paleolithic and Neolithic sites are scattered across the Central Plains, Peiligang's uninterrupted stratigraphy and complete cultural sequence make it an invaluable reference for studying the transition between the two Stone Ages, according to Li.

Large-scale excavations resumed at Peiligang in 2018. Led jointly by the Institute of Archaeology, CASS, and Zhengzhou Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, the project investigates prehistoric settlement patterns and cultural development across the region. In the western section of the site, archaeologists have uncovered a late Paleolithic deposit spanning more than 50,000 square meters and dating from 36,000 to 14,000 years ago. The cultural layer exceeds 8 meters in thickness.

"It marks the first discovery of such a thick late Paleolithic cultural layer in an open-air, non-cave setting on China's plains," says Zhang Jian, deputy director of the Zhengzhou Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology.

The earliest phase, dating from 36,000 to 29,000 years ago, featured simple flake stone tools. Between 29,000 and 22,000 years ago, micro-tool technology emerged, marking a major advance in prehistoric tool-making. These finely crafted tools were used for hunting, cutting, and other daily tasks. From 22,000 to 14,000 years ago, wedge-shaped micro-cores became dominant, representing the mature stage of local stone-tool production, Zhang says.



Field technician Yang Junfeng cleans burnt-soil deposits in a pit at the excavation site of Peiligang, in 2020.

The discoveries provide clear evidence of the evolution of prehistoric stone-tool technology. A wide range of artifacts documents the emergence and development of toolmaking, establishing a chronological framework for late Paleolithic remains in the Central Plains.

"Archaeologists also uncovered a complete production chain for ostrich eggshell ornaments, including raw materials, semi-finished artifacts and production waste," Zhang says. "Unlike other sites that yielded only scattered decorative objects, Peiligang has been confirmed as a dedicated workshop for producing ostrich eggshell accessories."

The discovery shows that specialized handicrafts existed in the Central Plains more than 20,000 years ago, he adds. "Ancient artisans had mastered sophisticated processing skills and displayed a clear appreciation for aesthetics."

Neolithic life

"The discovery of the Peiligang culture reveals a mixed farming system combining dryland crops with rice cultivation, proving that more than 8,000 years ago, millet, broomcorn millet and rice — the three staple grains of ancient China — were already being cultivated simultaneously," says Li. "This provides concrete evidence of the origins of the three-grain farming system that later matured during the Yangshao period (5000 to 2900 BC)."

Architecture also advanced significantly during this period. Excavations have uncovered red baked-earth structures, widely regarded as the earliest known examples of this type of architecture in northern China, Li says. "These structures demonstrate that ancient people had mastered fire control and moved beyond temporary shelters for permanent dwellings."

Winemaking is another key discovery. "Wine played an important role in daily life, social exchanges, rituals and funerals," Li says.

Wang Kai, curator at the Zhengzhou Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, says the site comprises interconnected residential areas, cemeteries and handicraft workshops.

"Standardized burial customs had already taken shape. A wine vessel was placed on the right side of the deceased in nearly every tomb, while burial goods reflected different occupations," Wang says.

"Stone grinding slabs were also unearthed, signifying the advent of grinding technology. These implements were employed to process plant seeds, laying the foundation for early agriculture," he adds.

Researchers have also mapped the settlement's overall layout. The evidence suggests that Peiligang had a clear division of labor, social hierarchy and early forms of social stratification 8,000 years ago, according to Li.

Continuous roots

A pottery figurine featuring a human face, fangs and a unique "*jie*-shaped" crown is among the site's most significant discoveries, according to Li.

Gu Wanfa, executive president of the Henan Provincial Institute of Cultural Heritage and Archaeology, says: "The fangs symbolize bravery and strength, reflecting ancient people's admiration for wild animals. The distinctive crown is related to prehistoric astronomical beliefs.

"This view of the universe embodies the ancient philosophy of harmony between humanity and nature, a worldview that shaped China's traditional culture of unity and solidarity," Gu adds.

"Peiligang is an important direct cultural predecessor of the Central Plains' Yangshao culture. Its farming system, baked-earth architecture, settlement planning, burial customs, winemaking traditions, and pottery styles were inherited and further developed by later civilizations," Li says.

Wang, the curator, says, "The complete relics and ruins vividly present early people's production methods, daily customs, spiritual beliefs, and social structures."

Archaeologists have already drawn up detailed plans for future research. A modern greenhouse now covers the excavation area, allowing year-round work regardless of weather conditions. Excavation teams also follow strict procedures, including fine soil screening in key areas.

"No Paleolithic human bones have been found to date, but the continuous cultural layers indicate long-term human occupation," Li says. "Perhaps human bones will be discovered one day. Archaeology is not merely about studying the past; it also cares for the present and connects us with the future."

Ongoing discoveries at Peiligang continue to demonstrate that Chinese civilization possesses deep, continuous roots stretching back thousands of years.

"Growing public interest — especially among young people — is encouraging more people to learn about cultural origins, protect heritage sites, and share archaeological stories. This helps strengthen cultural inheritance and enrich our shared spiritual legacy," Li adds.

"Major finds like those at Peiligang help more people realize that our civilization is ancient, deeply rooted, and continuous. That is archaeology's greatest value today."

Contact the writers at qixin@chinadaily.com.cn

Shanxi show explores millennia of painted pottery art

By **ZHU XINGXIN** in Taiyuan and **ZHOU HUIYING**

This summer, visitors to the Shanxi Archaeological Museum in Taiyuan can journey back thousands of years through a special exhibition that explores the origins of painted pottery and the early development of Chinese civilization.

Running through Sept 30, *Blossoming in Xiyin: Prehistoric Painted Pottery of the Fenhe River Basin* brings together 137 groups of artifacts that trace the evolution of painted pottery in the Fenhe River Basin from roughly 7,000 to 4,000 years ago.

The exhibition marks the centenary of the excavation of the Xiyin site, where archaeologist Li Ji led China's first independently conducted scientific archaeological excavation in 1926, laying the foundation for modern Chinese archaeology. Among the highlights are important discoveries from the third excavation of the site, many of which are being displayed publicly for the first time.

Zheng Yuan, deputy director of the Shanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology, says: "The large number of pigment palettes, grinding tools and grindstones discovered in 2025 provides valuable new evidence for studying prehistoric painting techniques."

She says the exhibition also shows painted pottery unearthed across Shanxi during the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-25), which offers a comprehensive picture of how painted pottery developed in the Fenhe River Basin over three millennia.

"About 7,000 years ago, communities settled on the loess terraces, shaping clay and extracting minerals to make pigments," says Wu Zhuozhuo, a staff member at the institute. "The open-mouthed, flat-bottomed bowl from the Zaoyuan site in Yicheng county is the earliest painted pottery discovered in Shanxi, distinguished by a broad red band around its rim."

During the Dongzhuang phase of the early Yangshao culture, geometric decoration became increasingly sophisticated, with motifs such as opposing triangles and curved-edged triangular patterns emerging.

Between 6,000 and 5,300 years ago, painted pottery reached its artistic peak. Floral, bird and fish motifs became widespread, reflecting both technical skill and aesthetic refinement. Among the standout pieces is a high-ring basin from the Xiyin site decorated in black, red and white.



An exhibition in Taiyuan, Shanxi province, explores the origins of painted pottery and the early development of Chinese civilization.
PHOTOS BY ZHU XINGXIN / CHINA DAILY

Another highlight is a fish-patterned basin from the Cujiahe site in Xiaxian county, featuring two fish joined head to tail in a remarkably lifelike composition — a rare design, Wu says.

About 5,300 years ago, painted pottery began to decline in both quantity and decorative complexity. Instead of serving as everyday household ware, it gradually became associated with ritual and ceremonial practices, appearing mainly in elite burials as symbols of status and social hierarchy.

"By the second Miaodigou phase and the Taosi period, painted pottery had largely disappeared from daily life," Wu says. "Most ordinary vessels were made of gray pottery, while painted pottery became closely linked to ritual activities and high-status tombs."

The exhibition also includes artifacts from museums in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region and Hebei province, highlighting extensive cultural exchanges between the Fenhe River Basin and the central and southern regions of Inner Mongolia, as well as northern Henan province and southern Hebei during the Yangshao period.

Archaeologists believe the finely crafted vessels were probably not everyday household objects but were instead created for ceremonies, religious rituals and other significant communal occasions.

A miniature diorama on show re-creates a typical middle Yangshao settlement. It depicts a community protected by inner and outer moats and divided into residential, workshop and livestock areas. It illustrates how people made pottery, raised silkworms, farmed, fished, and hunted. Smaller buildings served as homes, while larger structures were likely used for communal gatherings and rituals. "The model is not a reconstruction of the Xiyin site itself," Zheng says. "It is based on our broader understanding of Yangshao society."

Contact the writers at zhouhuiying@chinadaily.com.cn



A bowl of the Zaoyuan culture.



A pottery vessel from the Xiyin site.

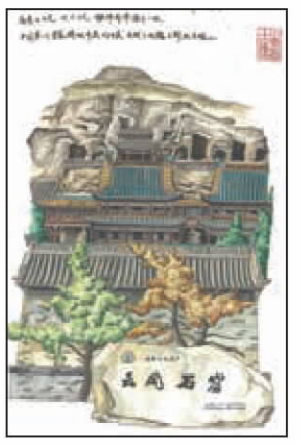


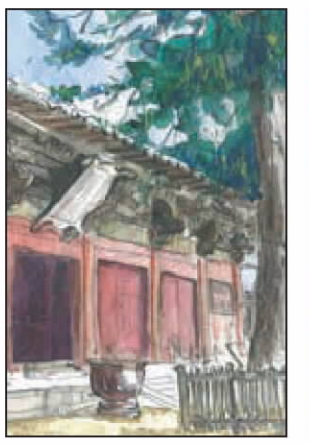
A Taosi period container.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:26 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:26 PM

CULTURE




Artists from around the world are focusing on ancient architecture in Shanxi province. Featured works include Yungang Grottoes (left) by Shanxi-based Qin Zhizhen (far left), Jinci Temple (above) by German artist Anja Nolte (far right), and Foguang Temple (right) by Indonesian student Veldesen Yaputra. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Ancient architecture through a new view

Exchange program gathers artists who see China's structures with fresh eyes, using various media to capture their own perspectives, **Bai Shuhao** reports in Taiyuan.

Beneath the shade of a towering tree, Veldesen Yaputra paused over his sketchbook. The Indonesian architecture student at Tsinghua University had come to Foguang Temple in Xinzhou, Shanxi province, determined to paint its Tang Dynasty (618-907) main hall, one of China's oldest surviving wooden structures. Instead, the tree became his biggest obstacle.

The hall sits halfway up a hillside, with only a narrow courtyard in front. No matter where he stood, the perspective never felt quite right. Branches obscured parts of the roofline, making it nearly impossible to capture the building in a balanced composition.

Nearby, Qin Zhizhen, a Shanxi-based illustrator who has spent the past four years documenting the province's historic architecture, watched quietly.

"Forget drawing every branch exactly as it appears," he told Yaputra. "Loosen the tree. Let it breathe."

Yaputra followed the advice, then added an idea of his own. While painting the ground in front of the temple, he scooped up a handful of soil and mixed it into his watercolor, using the earth itself as pigment.

By the end of his seven-day journey across Shanxi, he realized something had changed.

"My drawings became much more relaxed," Yaputra says. "I could clearly feel myself letting go."

The sketches were done during the second Discovering Shanxi's Ancient Chinese Architecture international cultural exchange program in July, which brought artists from several countries to some of China's best-preserved heritage sites in Shanxi, including the Yungang Grottoes in Datong, Foguang Temple, the Yingxian Wooden Pagoda in Shuozhou, and the Hanging Temple in Datong.

This was Yaputra's second visit to Shanxi.

The first time, he traveled south from Taiyuan, taking in the province's architectural heritage from what he described as "a broader perspective". On this year's journey, he headed north instead, allowing him to slow down and study individual buildings in greater detail.

While Yaputra found himself drawing more liberally, Qin discovered something else by watching the other artists.

His fascination with architecture began not in China but in Europe, inspired by landmarks such as the Eiffel Tower in Paris and Tower Bridge in London. Eventually, however, his attention turned to home, beginning with Jinci Temple near his grandmother's house in Taiyuan.

His illustrations are so meticulously detailed that viewers often compare them to architectural blueprints.

"I mainly try to document buildings objectively. An illustrator is usually expected to bring more personal expression," he explains.

That contrast became especially clear when he watched German illustrator and new media artist Anja Nolte at work.

Where Qin favored precise lines and carefully measured proportions, Nolte embraced bold colors and expressive brushstrokes.

One of her favorite architectural details was the ornamental roof creatures perched along Foguang Temple's ridgeline. With dragon-like heads and fish-shaped bodies, they are rooted in Chinese mythology.

"They're beautiful," she says. "There's something almost fairy-tale-like about them."

She compared them to the gargoyles found on Gothic cathedrals in Europe, which channel rainwater away from buildings, but found their Chinese counterparts far more imaginative.

In another sketch, she transformed an incense burner at Huayan Temple in Datong into a playful cartoon character with arms, legs and a gourd balanced on its head.



A stone lion at Jinci Temple glowed in warm orange watercolor. Even Buddhist statues appeared softer and less solemn through her brush.

"I found it very challenging to capture such richly detailed architecture in a drawing," she says.

Her solution was to deliberately leave blank spaces, which "allow the viewer's imagination to complete the image", she says.

Qin admired that confidence.

Western artists, he says, often seem more willing to break conventions and prioritize expression over precision.

He, by contrast, constantly worries whether the colors are accurate and whether every architectural detail has been faithfully reproduced.

Perhaps, he suggests, it comes from growing up surrounded by these monuments. "There is a kind of reverence."

He has also noticed another difference. Chinese artists often emphasize the relationship between architecture and the surrounding landscape, while artists like Nolte are more likely to isolate a single architectural detail.

The same instinct appears in the photographs of Fabio Nodari, an Italian photographer who has lived in China for a decade.

When the group visited the Yingxian Wooden Pagoda under gray skies and steady rain, Nodari chose not to photograph the entire structure. Instead, he focused on smaller details, using a longer focal length.

To him, those details reveal the resilience of the ancient wooden tower, which has survived wars, natural disasters and centuries of exposure.

Standing before the pagoda, Nodari imagines the anonymous artisans who carved its statues and assembled its timber frame.

"They had families, problems, ambitions, good days, and difficult days," he says.

"Perhaps one craftsman added something personal, made a small decision after a difficult day, or simply tried to do the best work possible because he was proud of what he was creating.

"That's why I always look carefully at the details. We may never know the answers, but those details connect their lives with ours."

His advice to visitors is equally simple: look beyond the postcard view.

One of his favorite photographs shows a lone visitor standing before a colossal Buddha at the Yungang Grottoes.

"A small human figure beside an enormous statue communicates its scale far better than a photograph of the monument alone," he says.

After 10 years in China, Nodari now spends more time in the country than in Italy.

Photographing Italy, he says, means working within a visual language he already understands. China still asks him questions.

"I have to research the history and understand why a building or sculpture looks the way it does," he says.

Every province feels like a different cultural world. That sense of continual discovery is what has kept him in China.

For Qin, the journey marked the beginning of a new experiment.

Back in his studio, while drawing Shanhua Temple in Datong, he began combining colored pencils with marker pens, wondering whether richer materials might better capture the texture and warmth of China's ancient architecture.

Contact the writer at baishuhao@chinadaily.com.cn






Top: Yingxian Wooden Pagoda in Shuozhou is a prime example of Shanxi's heritage of ancient architecture. **Above:** Three photographs by Fabio Nodari feature (from left) Yungang Grottoes and the Hanging Temple in Datong, as well as Yuci Ancient Town in Jinzhong. Yong'an Temple (far right), located in Datong, Shanxi, is home to a large collection of precious murals. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Finnish designer helps make modernism more humane

HELSINKI — At Paimio Sanatorium in southwestern Finland, long patient wings reach toward the sunlight amid a pine forest while terraces once allowed tuberculosis patients to rest outdoors. Inside, washbasins are shaped to soften the sound of running water and leather-covered door handles are designed to feel warm and prevent patients' sleeves from getting caught.

Completed in 1933, the sanatorium is among 13 buildings and complexes designed by renowned Finnish architect Alvar Aalto (1898-1976) and his collaborators, which were recently inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List as the "Aalto Works".

From its overall layout to its smallest fittings, Paimio was designed around the patients — an expression of Aalto's belief that buildings should care for the people inside them.

The inscription has drawn renewed attention to how he made modernism more humane, rooted in its surroundings and relevant to everyday life, says Panu Savolainen, professor of architectural history and conservation at Aalto University.

Modernism spread across Europe in the early 20th century, offering efficient and affordable solutions to rapid urbanization and to housing and public facility shortages.

But its pursuit of function and efficiency could also produce practical yet impersonal buildings, Savolainen says. Aalto retained modernism's functional principles while softening its harder edges through closer attention to the human experience.

Savolainen believes the Paimio Sanatorium marked a turning point. Designed with unusual attention to the experiences of patients, the complex explored how architecture could support both physical comfort and emotional well-being long before the "patient experience" became an established concept.

Aalto carried the same concern when designing homes and industrial communities.



Paimio Sanatorium in southwestern Finland is one of the iconic works by Finnish architect Alvar Aalto (1898-1976). XINHUA

At the Sunila Housing Area in Kotka, southeastern Finland, residential blocks follow the terrain and are positioned to make use of sunlight, clean air and the surrounding landscape.

Aalto's buildings also create a two-way relationship with nature: architecture adapts to the landscape while the landscape is invited indoors.

Villa Mairea in Pori, western Finland, offers one of the clearest examples of this concept. His design preserved much of the original woodland around the house. An unpolished gravel path leads through the trees to a low, understated building clad partly in vertical timber. From a distance, it seems to have grown out of the forest.

Aalto absorbed the international language of modernism without simply copying it. Concrete, glass and straight lines remained, but wood, brick, stone, and curves allowed his buildings to respond to Finland's climate, landscape and building traditions.

His work demonstrated that architecture could be international without losing its roots, Savolainen concludes.

Over the past decades, Aalto's architecture and design have become a cultural calling card for Finland, helping shape international perceptions of Finnish design, says Yang Xinyi, head of Finnish language studies at Beijing Foreign Studies University.

"In China, many people may not know Aalto by name, but they have probably encountered his influence," Yang says, citing streamlined glass vases, three-legged stools and the pale interiors commonly known as "Nordic style".

Yang also sees parallels between Aalto's respect for nature and the traditional Chinese ideas of following nature and pursuing harmony between humanity and the environment. For Yang, these parallels show how civilizations rooted in different landscapes and cultures can arrive at a shared understanding of how people should relate to their surroundings.

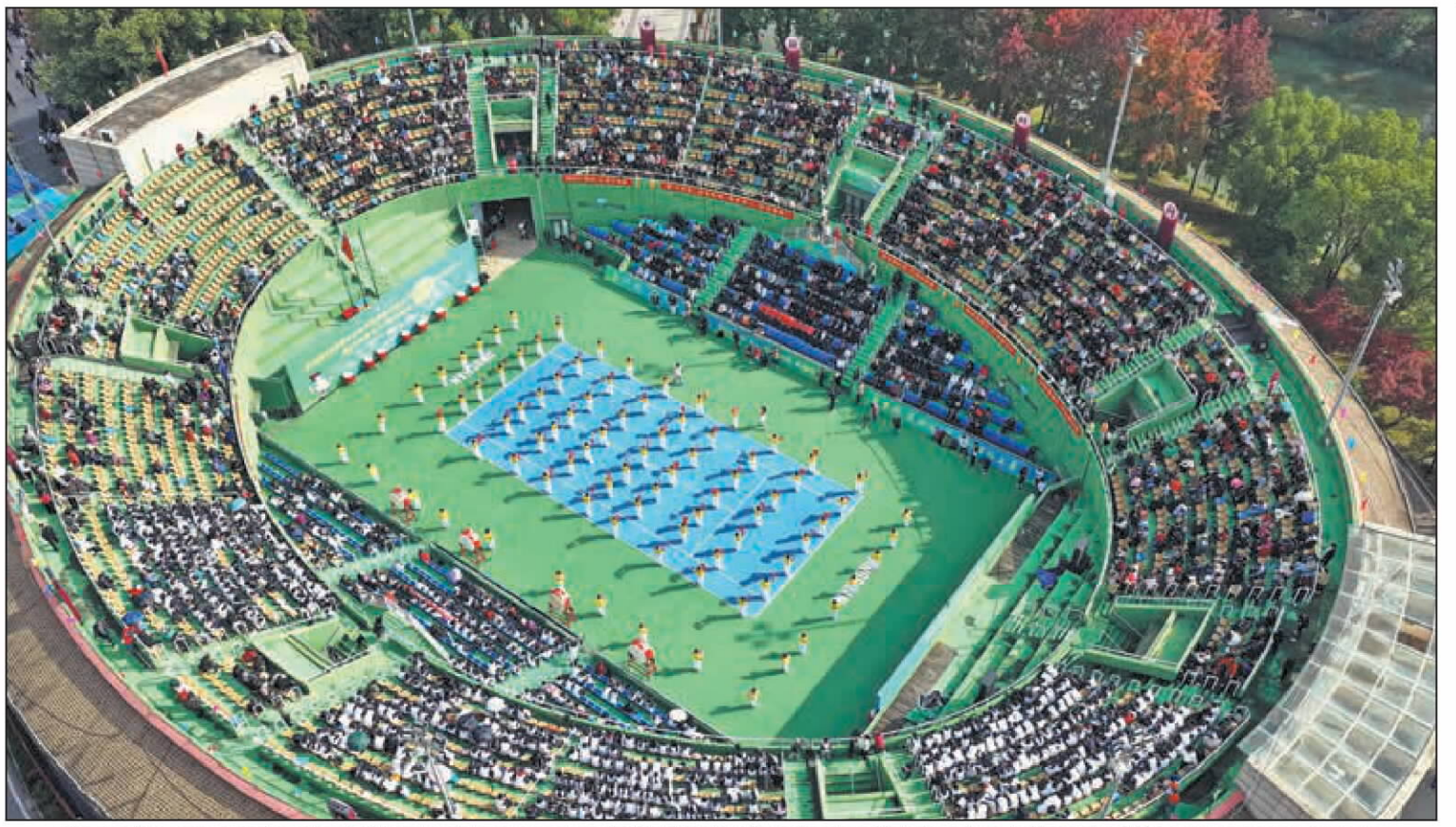
"Aalto's work reminds us that architecture should respect the land beneath it and respond to the people within it," she says.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:26 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:26 PM

LIFE



The opening ceremony of a national village tennis tournament was held at Wenfeng Park, Jingshan, Hubei province, in November 2025. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Tennis serves up success in Hubei

With 356 courts and a strong culture in the sport, Jingshan draws millions and hosts international tournaments, as well as fostering passion in its residents, **Xing Wen** and **Liu Kun** report.

Shanghai resident Zhang Mengting has just returned from a two-and-a-half-month stay in Jingshan, Hubei province. She's already counting down the days until she can go back.

This county-level city of fewer than 600,000 people has built 356 tennis courts, turned the sport into a civic religion, and drew 3.5 million visitors in 2025 alone.

In May, fresh from resigning from her job to take a gap year, and armed with only a handful of beginner tennis lessons from Shanghai, Zhang packed her bags and headed for Jingshan on a friend's advice that two months of intensive training in this tennis-obsessed city would outperform two years of weekly lessons in Shanghai.

During her stay, she would rise at 8 am and join a group class for three hours of training. Afterward, she'd find a local restaurant for lunch and order the regional specialty, Songziji, the local free-range chicken stir-fry.

After a midday nap, she'd return for another three-hour session in the afternoon.

Evenings were reserved for playing with friends at Wenfeng Park, where a prime-time court costs just 30 yuan ($4.4) an hour, and daytime slots are completely free.

"After playing, I'd take a walk in the park, sample snacks in the nearby night market, and enjoy the evening breeze. It was so relaxing," she recalls, adding that she is planning to go back to Jingshan with her husband during the National Day holiday in October.

She says that unlike Shanghai, where arranging a practice session requires greater time and financial commitment, in Jingshan it is very accessible and affordable.

"Almost every government department has its own tennis court, and they are open to the public for free," she explains.

"The city is small, and the courts are concentrated. It takes no more than 10 minutes to get to any of them. The locals are incredibly warm. It's common for strangers to share courts and invite each other to play."

She adds that at some local tennis clubs, members treat the venue as a full-fledged social hub, complete with tea, billiards, and lively conversation between sets.





Above: Jingshan city frequently hosts tennis tournaments ranging from grassroots-level to professional competitions. **Below:** A street sign in the city reads, "Tennis culture is in Jingshan".

Peng Jufang, 64, runs such a club. He was among the first generation in the city to pick up a tennis racket.

"In 1985, Hubei province required each county to select one sport for elderly residents to develop as a priority. Jingshan chose tennis," he recalls.

At the time, there was an open plot behind the urban power supply office where Peng worked.

He and a few colleagues first leveled the ground with a plow, then compacted it with a stone roller to create a simple clay court.

On that very court, a group of senior tennis enthusiasts practiced and trained together daily, eventually winning the amateur group championship at a provincial senior tennis open. That victory introduced tennis to a wider population across Jingshan.

With a wooden racket in hand, Peng began a 38-year commitment to the sport.

His career path shifted over the decades, from the power supply office to fertilizer distribution, and later to beef cattle farming.

Yet through every change, his racket stayed with him.

The same decades witnessed Jingshan's tennis evolution toward scale and systematization.

In the 1990s, the city's amateur sports school introduced tennis programs to cultivate young talent. After 2008, Jingshan made a concerted push to bring tennis into government offices, communities, businesses, schools and villages, spurring court construction and drawing large numbers of residents into the sport. Today, more than 100,000 people in Jingshan play tennis on a regular basis, according to Luo Nian, deputy director of the Jingshan culture and tourism bureau.

Luo adds that Jingshan has also built an industrial park to house smart production lines for tennis balls and rackets, continuously expanding the industry chain across equipment manufacturing, tournament operations, and wellness tourism.

The 2025 Jingshan Open, held from Sept 20 to 28 last year, attracted over 130 players from more than 20 countries and regions, including the United States, Canada and the Philippines.

With this event, Jingshan became China's first county-level city to host an international professional tennis tournament.

"With robust industry infrastructure, warm and genuine local players, and a tennis culture that permeates the entire city, we've seen many players from northern China travel here in autumn and winter. They play on the courts by day and soak in the hot springs by night, some even stay for weeks at a time," Luo says.

Qi Chengmei, a native of Wenfeng village, which boasts more than 80 tennis courts and over 800 tennis enthusiasts, spotted the boom in tennis tourism and decided to start a business.

"The courts in our village were packed every day, but there wasn't a single decent themed restaurant where players could come eat after a match," she recalls, sensing an opportunity.

She converted her family farmhouse into a tennis-themed restaurant. The dining hall is decorated with tennis-ball motifs, and the private dining rooms are named after such tournaments as the Australian Open, Wimbledon and the China Open.

The business has created jobs for more than a dozen local villagers. The restaurant now generates annual revenue exceeding 600,000 yuan.

Zuo Meng, a local crochet artist, has also found her niche in the tennis boom.

Every day after dropping her children off at school, she heads to her studio to craft tennis-themed handicrafts such as hair clips, plush keychains, handbags and necklaces.

"Jingshan has tennis tournaments almost every week now, so I follow the events with my stall. A single tournament can sometimes bring in 6,000 to 7,000 yuan," she says.

Currently, some 3,000 people in Jingshan are directly employed in tennis and related industries, while another 10,000 earn their livelihoods indirectly through the sport's ripple effect.

Contact the writers at xingwen@chinadaily.com.cn



Boasting a vibrant tennis culture, the city features 356 tennis courts, and drew 3.5 million visitors in 2025 alone.

Modern Chinese film wins young hearts in Zimbabwe

HARARE — Laughter and applause filled a packed cinema in Harare, Zimbabwe's capital, on Aug 1 as the Chinese comedy-drama *One and Only* lit up the screen.

A highlight of the Asian Cultural Festival 2026, held from July 31 to Aug 1, the youth-focused film combines sports and street dance, striking a chord with the festival's largely young audience.

Co-hosted by the Chinese embassy in Zimbabwe, six other Asian embassies and Diplomatic Media, the festival used cinema to showcase Asian cultures and strengthen cross-cultural ties.

Before the lights dimmed for the screening, visitors explored traditional Chinese culture through hands-on activities, trying Chinese calligraphy and learning to use chopsticks.

As 2026 marks the China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges, immersive events like these are giving Zimbabwean audiences a vivid glimpse of contemporary Chinese life while deepening the long-standing friendship between the two countries.

Speaking at the festival on July 31, Chinese Ambassador to Zimbabwe Zhou Ding highlighted the universal appeal of cinematic exchange, noting that core Asian values such as family, community, resilience, and mutual respect align closely with Zimbabwe's Ubuntu philosophy.

"We share the belief that a person is a person through other people," the ambassador said, adding that true strength comes from togetherness.

Luckson Murumbi, a film enthusiast from Harare, said Chinese films offer valuable insights into the country's traditions, social values and technological progress.

"You can see the transformation of China, from the traditional martial arts films we watched as children to modern productions. You can truly see the progress of China's development," Murumbi said.

For local students, films have also become an engaging way to improve their language skills while gaining a deeper understanding of Chinese society.

"Film is a vivid reflection of society, and watching Chinese films is a great way of immersing myself in the language, the culture, and the traditions," said Rumbidzai Msimanga, a Chinese language learner from Harare.

She added that the rise of streaming platforms now allows her to easily access a wider array of Chinese movies and television series on her mobile devices.

Speaking at the festival, Mqabuko Dube, director for Africa, Asia and the Pacific at the Zimbabwean Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, underscored the importance of such cultural initiatives in strengthening international partnerships.

"By promoting cultural exchange, tourism, education and investment, we continue to deepen the long-standing friendship between Zimbabwe and our Asian partners while creating opportunities that contribute to national development and people-to-people connections," Dube said.

XINHUA



A local woman (left) tries her hand at Chinese calligraphy during the Asian Cultural Festival 2026 in Harare, Zimbabwe, on Aug 1.
TAFARA MUGWARA / XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:26 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:26 PM

SPORTS



BASKETBALL

Heat is on for Team China

Summer's high pressure can be felt on court, as the next round of World Cup qualifiers and Asian Games loom large



By LI YINGXUE
liyingxue@chinadaily.com.cn

Inside the training hall, a message board stands quietly in the corridor.

The handwriting is far from uniform. Some lines are bold, some uneven and others consist of only a few words. Yet, each message carries the emotions of the player who wrote it.

Captain Zhao Jiwei wrote: "Confidence. Determination. Trust the team, trust ourselves, trust each other, and fight together until the end."

Cui Yongxi wrote: "What cannot be defeated will rise again. What is reborn through the flames becomes a phoenix."

Returning overseas player Wang Junjie added: "Show fighting spirit. Give everything. Leave no regrets."

A few steps away, there is an almost continuous sound of basketballs hitting the floor.

Players jump, shoot and repeat the same movements. Behind these routine drills lies China's determination to prepare for a summer of critical challenges.

On Aug 7 in Beijing, China's men's basketball team opened a training session to the media. After the International Solidarity Cup, the team remained in camp for the fourth window of the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2027 Asian Qualifiers.

China will face Qatar away on Aug 27, before hosting Lebanon on Aug 31. For a team fighting to reach the World Cup, both games are crucial.

"After the previous games, our ranking is relatively low. Every match in the upcoming window is extremely important, and our margin for error is very small," head coach Guo Shiqiang said.

China finished the first phase with three wins and three losses. Because results against teams from the same group are carried forward, China enters the second qualifying phase in fifth place out of six teams in the newly formed Group F, carrying over its 3-3 record.

The pressure is clear, but Guo does not want it to become a burden.

"We need to bring what we have worked on every day in training into the games," he said.

"The players need to play freely without carrying too much pressure. Most importantly, we need to show our own characteristics and style."

China's previous qualifying window exposed several weaknesses.

On July 3, the team suffered a 73-92 home defeat to Japan in Shenyang, capital of Liaoning province. China struggled to establish its rhythm and was passive at both ends of the court.



Team China players and coaching staff hype themselves up during a training session in Beijing on Friday. China will face Qatar away on Aug 27, before hosting Lebanon on Aug 31 in the next round of FIBA Basketball World Cup 2027 Asian Qualifiers. XINHUA

After reviewing the game, the team identified transition offense and pace as the key areas for improvement.

Guard Liao Sanning said China would continue to rely on the 1-5 pick-and-roll, a ball-screen action involving a guard and the center, while adding more variety to its offense.

"Guo's system places a strong emphasis on pick-and-roll plays, with guards often initiating attacks with the center," Liao said. "Recently, we have added more playmaking options, increased the pace and involved more players."

He acknowledged that transition offense remains a weakness, an area the team is addressing in daily training.

The fourth window will bring a different challenge. Compared with the East Asian teams China faced in the first phase, the West Asian opponents are expected to pose greater physical challenges, particularly in the backcourt. China is also preparing to face naturalized players with significant individual ability.



China power forward Jiao Boqiao (second left) and coaching staff discuss strategy during a training session in Beijing on Friday. XINHUA

"Our guards have been preparing for stronger physical contact," Liao said.

Guard-forward He Xining noted that containing those players should be a collective task: "Defense is not the responsibility of one player. Everyone needs to contribute."

Before the qualifiers, China will play three warm-up games in Foshan, Guangdong province, from Aug 13-17 against Uruguay and New Zealand. Guo said they would test lineups and tactics, while giving young players much-needed experience against strong opposition.

A demanding schedule

China has adopted a flexible training model this year. Players have joined the camp in stages according to their respective competition schedules, their physical condition and injury status.

Wang Junjie has returned, while Yang Hansen is expected to link up with the group later because of NBA rules governing the release of international players.

"Because the schedule is very busy, the roster is adjusted dynamically according to the team's needs and the players' respective conditions," Guo said.

For experienced players such as He, the responsibility extends beyond personal performance.

"We need to help the young players improve and adapt to the national team environment," he said.

The rebuilding process is therefore also about defining roles and building trust.

The approach is designed to reduce fatigue, but the summer remains demanding, especially with China also set to compete at the 2026 Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games.

For the Games, China has been placed in Group C, alongside defending champion the Philippines, Bahrain and Kazakhstan. The Philippines immediately became the focus of public discussion.

At the 2023 Hangzhou Asian Games, China lost 76-77 to the Philippines in the semifinal after surrendering a late lead.

The defeat denied the host a place in the final, while the Philippines went on to win gold.

Three years later, the teams will meet again.

The matchup has naturally been described as a chance for revenge, but for a rebuilding China, the challenge goes beyond one game.

The Philippines remains a major threat with its pace, shooting and big-game experience, while Bahrain and Kazakhstan also possess strengths that cannot be overlooked.

Winning the group will require consistency against every opponent. If China becomes too emotionally invested in facing the Philippines, or underestimates Bahrain and Kazakhstan, the contest for first place could quickly become complicated.

More importantly, China must turn past disappointment into immediate focus. The memory of the Hangzhou semifinal can provide motivation, but it cannot replace preparation and execution.

Guo rarely raises his voice, but his attention never leaves the court. At 51, he has experienced both the promise and setbacks of Chinese basketball. He returned to the national team in 2024, when China was searching for a new direction.

Under his leadership, the team finished runner-up at last year's FIBA Asia Cup, its best result since 2015. But Guo has emphasized that rebuilding is not only about results. It is also about restoring mentality, discipline and competitive spirit.

On the board, Guo wrote: "Carry forward the spirit of China's basketball teams at the Olympics, prepare solidly for the 2027 World Cup and strive toward qualification for the 2028 Los Angeles Games."

The message is simple: acknowledge weaknesses, improve every detail and move forward together. There are no shortcuts for China; its challenge is to turn words into execution, and pressure into performance.

For now, though, it's about jumping, shooting and repeating.

NBA mourns Celtics legend and history-making coach

SAN FRANCISCO, California — Don Nelson, who won the second-most games of any coach in NBA history and five NBA titles as a player with the Boston Celtics, died on Sunday, his family announced. He was 86.

Nelson was a member of NBA championship teams with Boston from 1966 to 1976 and the Celtics retired his No 19 jersey.

As a coach, Nelson finished with a record of 1,335-1,063 — what had been an NBA record until Gregg Popovich passed him in 2022 — in stints with Golden State, Milwaukee, New York and Dallas from 1976 to 2010.

"Don Nelson revolutionized NBA basketball through his fearlessness, ingenuity and deep conviction," NBA commissioner Adam Silver said in a statement.

"He spent nearly 50 years in the NBA, winning five championships as a player with the Boston Celtics before building one of the most successful and pioneering coaching careers in league history.

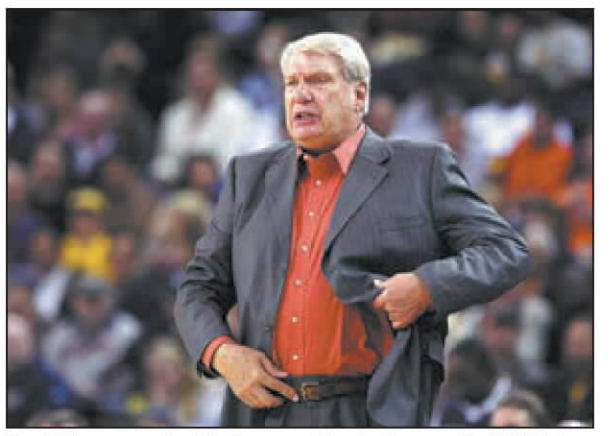
"He brought an unmistakable personality to everything he did, and his impact on our sport will continue to be felt for generations."

Nelson, who was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame in 2012, never reached the NBA Finals as a coach, but was remembered as a historic figure among bench bosses.

"The Golden State Warriors mourn the passing of Hall of Fame head coach Don Nelson," the team said in a statement.

"'Nellie' was one of the most innovative and influential coaches in NBA history and an iconic figure in Warriors history.

"More than anything, Don Nelson will be remembered for his authenticity, larger-than-life personality, and incredible passion for basketball, and his influence on the Warriors franchise will endure for years to come."



Don Nelson, a coach with the second-best win record in NBA history and a five-time champion as a player with the Boston Celtics, passed away on Aug 9, drawing tributes from around the league. Nelson was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame in 2012. AFP

Steve Kerr, the current Warriors coach, recalled Nelson as a visionary, whose influence remains in the modern era of the league.

"Don Nelson was a true innovator whose influence on the game of basketball is still felt today," Kerr said.

"He consistently challenged conventional thinking, experimented with different lineups and styles of play, and saw possibilities in the game that others often did not.

"So much of what is now commonplace in the modern NBA can be traced back to the way Nellie approached the game."

The Celtics paid tribute to Nelson's playing career in a statement.

"Nellie was a tough and reliable all-around player, whose tenacity and ability to 'think the game' were on full display throughout his 11 seasons with the Boston Celtics, where he was a key member of five championship teams across two eras," the Celtics said.

The Bucks paid tribute to Nelson's first NBA coaching stint.

"During his 11 seasons as Bucks coach from 1976-1987, Nellie won two of his three NBA Coach of the Year awards and established himself as one of the most innovative and visionary leaders in basketball history," the Bucks said.

The Dallas Mavericks called him an innovator and legend whose "impact will never be forgotten," saying he left "an incredible mark on our franchise and the game of basketball".

AFP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:26 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:28 PM

Risk control

Drones map volcanic gases to foresee eruptions in Sicily

WORLD IN FOCUS, PAGE 4



C919 prepares for 1st regular intl flight

BUSINESS, PAGE 9



Push for tech

New massive corpus set to fuel scientific research, innovation

WORLD AI CONFERENCE, PAGE 11

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 TUESDAY, JULY 21, 2026

Sino-US trade rebound buoys global outlook

Analysts warn bilateral ties remain subject to structural challenges, external uncertainties

By **ZHONG NAN**
zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

Renewed momentum in China-United States economic ties has helped boost confidence in the global economy while supporting steadier and more resilient bilateral trade in the months ahead, said market watchers and business leaders.

The upbeat remarks came after official General Administration of Customs figures showed a sharp turnaround in bilateral trade in goods. After slumping 18.7 percent year-on-year in the first quarter, China-US goods trade rebounded to post a 13.7 percent year-on-year gain in the second quarter.

This trade recovery aligns with fresh bilateral moves to stabilize economic relations. The Ministry of Commerce confirmed that during the latest round of China-US economic and trade consultations held in May, the two sides reached an agreement to negotiate a reciprocal tariff cut framework via a newly established trade council. The deal would cover goods valued at $30 billion or more from each country.

Although neither side has released a final product list, trade analysts expect the tariff cuts to cover textiles, footwear, consumer goods, electronic components, industrial machinery parts, chemicals, plastics and agricultural products, while excluding sectors such as advanced semiconductors and strategic resources.

Diao Daming, a professor of international relations at the Beijing-based Renmin University of China, said recent progress in the China-US economic and trade talks has helped bolster business confidence across the world and is creating conditions for more predictable trade and investment.

Yu Xinding, a professor of international trade at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing, said that once implemented, the new tariff framework will support further growth in China-US trade while setting a positive example for resolving trade disputes through dialogue.

"Faced with multifaceted costs triggered by tariffs, this move offers a practical solution to help reverse trade distortions created by previous tariffs," said Yu. "The initiative goes far beyond lowering tariffs on selected goods. Equal consultations will improve market access, ease corporate burdens and restore bilateral trade to market-oriented, mutually beneficial dynamics."

Though modest relative to overall China-US trade, the planned tariff relief targets products with clear market demand and practical benefits, delivering early, verifiable results that can strengthen confidence in two-way economic ties, she added.

While the recent rebound in bilateral trade points to improving momentum, analysts cautioned that the relationship remains subject to structural challenges and external uncertainties, despite the progress made through dialogue.

See ***Ties,*** *page 3*

Mixed emotions after the finale





Above: Spanish fans celebrate in Son Fusteret Park in Palma, Mallorca island, Spain, on Monday after the country's 1-0 victory over Argentina in the FIFA World Cup final. CLARA MARGAIS / DPA
Left: Fans react after Spain scores the winning goal against Argentina in the World Cup final at a fan gathering in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on Sunday. GUSTAVO GARELLO / AP
See more, pages 3, 16

Kimi K3 gets high evaluation scores

By **LI JIAYING**
lijiaying@chinadaily.com.cn

Inside
Editorial, **page 6**

Chinese artificial intelligence startup Moonshot AI's Kimi K3 has put China's foundation-model sector on a faster path to technological and commercial maturity, while leading a new wave of competition in the global AI market, industry experts said.

Released on Friday, Kimi K3 is a 2.8-trillion-parameter model with native vision and a 1-million-token context window, which is designed for frontier intelligence in long-horizon coding, knowledge work and reasoning, rather than simple question answering. Moonshot calls it the world's first open model in the 3-trillion-parameter class and plans to release the full weights by July 27.

Parameter count broadly reflects a model's scale and complexity, while the context window determines how much information it can process in a single session.

Industry benchmark tables have placed K3 among the world's strongest systems. Independent evaluator Artificial Analysis gave K3 an Intelligence Index score of 57, placing it third globally, only behind Anthropic's Claude Fable 5 and OpenAI's GPT-5.6 Sol.

The technological advance has been accompanied by faster commercialization. According to domestic media reports on Monday, Moonshot has distributed a shareholder resolution seeking approval for a Hong Kong listing and could complete an initial public offering within six months.

The news comes as its annual recurring revenue reached $300 million in June, up from $200 million in April, and increased severalfold following the launch of its K3 model, according to the company.

Guo Tao, a member of the Chinese Association for Artificial Intelligence and a senior expert in AI, said a listing by Moonshot would set a clear capital market financing template for China's large-model industry.

He added that a successful Moonshot offering could encourage more Chinese developers to pursue listings and may be followed by increased mergers, acquisitions and strategic investment activity over the next one to two years.

"Global capital will also reassess the growth potential of Chinese AI companies," Guo said, adding that investors would place greater value on developers able to demonstrate stable revenue, paid user conversion and deployment across real-economy scenarios.

K3's pricing further points to a shift in industry economics. Its application programming interface charges 100 yuan ($14.7) per million output tokens, significantly higher than 6 yuan charged by its domestic counterparts DeepSeek V4-Pro and Xiaomi's MiMo-V2.5-Pro, 28 yuan by Z.ai's GLM-5.2 and 36 yuan by Alibaba's Qwen3.7-Max.

"K3's pricing breaks the domestic AI industry's long-running low-price competition and moves it toward a model in which capability determines price," Guo said.

He noted that such sustainable pricing could improve revenue quality, finance computing infrastructure and model upgrades, and gradually narrow the valuation discount between Chinese and US model companies.

Even so, K3 is still priced below leading flagship systems in the United States. It is roughly half the price of GPT-5.6 Sol and about one-third the price of Claude Fable 5.

Kevin Kelly, founding executive editor of the US tech magazine Wired, told China Daily that token costs start to matter as businesses and individuals spend more on AI services.

By offering capable open-source models at competitive prices, Chinese developers could lower the cost of using AI and win wider adoption, Kelly said.

The growing technological sophistication and commercial maturity of Chinese LLMs are also challenging assumptions abroad about a persistent US lead.

Ion Stoica, a computer science professor at the University of California, Berkeley, told Bloomberg that after K3's release, the estimated lag between Chinese open models and the global state of the art may have narrowed from six to nine months to two or three months.

Gavin Baker, managing partner and chief investment officer of Atreides Management, wrote in a post that K3 may be an important "inflection point for AI". Although it may have a potentially negative impact on Anthropic and OpenAI, it is "net positive for essentially every other company in the world", Baker wrote.

Strong demand after K3's release has also provided an early test of that commercial appeal. Moonshot announced on Sunday that since requests had far exceeded forecasts over the previous 48 hours, it had to temporarily pause new consumer subscriptions to prioritize existing members, whose services remained unaffected.

The company said it is adding capacity and would reopen subscriptions in batches. It also plans to separate its main Kimi membership from a Kimi Code plan, tailoring services more closely to general and coding users.

Ma Si contributed to this story.



Foie gras braised with sake. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

HUOQIU COUNTY BRINGS AFFORDABLE FOIE GRAS TO THE TABLE

Once a rare luxury, French delicacy is now a casual indulgence, thanks to producers in Anhui province

By **ZHU LIXIN** in Lu'an, Anhui
zhulixin@chinadaily.com.cn

Sitting in a century-old restaurant in Shanghai, Hu Jianyuan orders a dish that was once the epitome of European luxury: cherry foie gras. Eight glistening slices, each a perfect 12 grams, arrive at his table — priced at 198 yuan ($29.2). Hu smiles as the delicate, buttery flavor explodes in his mouth. Hu was no ordinary diner; he has played a large role in creating the delicacy. The restaurant is, after all, just one of his many clients.

China Vibes — FOOD —

Back in Huoqiu county in Lu'an city, East China's Anhui province, Hu's story begins in fields filled with the honking of Landes geese. Here, far from the gilded dining rooms of Shanghai, lies the unlikely epicenter of China's foie gras revolution.

Huoqiu raises 5 million Landes geese and produces more than 5,000 metric tons of the luxury food product annually — accounting for more than a third of the entire nation's output.

See ***Eatery,*** *page 3*

INSIDE
A new engine for globalization
Global Views, page 8



A member of ANN

© 2026 China Daily Global All Rights Reserved
Vol. 8 — No. 1875

www.chinadailyglobal.com

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

WORLD WATCH
By Danilo Turk

Courage, foresight needed for China-EU dialogue

In a series of meetings culminating in June, China and the European Union agreed to create a consultation mechanism aimed at renewing their mutually beneficial economic relations. Consequently, four "workstreams" were established, covering trade and investment balancing, export controls, intellectual property rights and reform of the World Trade Organization.

If successful, these workstreams will pave the way toward stable trade relations between China and the EU, which will have positive effects on the global trading system as a whole. Discussions under these workstreams will continue until October, when further decisions will have to be taken.

It would be a serious mistake if the importance of the emerging opportunity were underestimated. What is needed now is a shift in the mindset: from excessive caution to careful optimism — from the mindset of a "China Shock 2.0" to recognition of "China Opportunity 2.0".

There are reasons that justify cautious optimism. Let us consider three of them — two immediate and one systemic.

First, in September 2025, China announced that it would not seek new special and differential treatment in current and future WTO negotiations, while maintaining its status as a developing country. This decision signals a genuine willingness to build a new type of relationship between China and the developed world, including the EU.

The second immediate reason relates to China's recognition that the era of heavy reliance on exports is ending and that a different balance must be struck in the interest of its own growth. The concerns raised in some Western countries about what has been described as Chinese "overcapacity" therefore merit careful and balanced consideration, alongside China's own efforts "to generate sufficient domestic demand to absorb much more of what its factories produce".

But more is required to ensure that "shock" becomes opportunity. In his speech at the Summer Davos conference in Dalian, Liaoning province, on June 25, Premier Li Qiang proposed that "what China's technologies and products in emerging industries bring to the world is not a shock, but an opportunity; not a threat, but empowerment". The data for 2025 showed that the number of foreign-funded enterprises established in China in the fields of scientific research and technological services grew by 27.2 percent year-on-year. This means 14,000 foreign-funded enterprises, including those with investment from Europe, were established that year in China. The transformative potential of this development is substantial, and it justifies the hope for a change of mindset from "China Shock 2.0" to "China Opportunity 2.0".

In addition to the immediate, current signs of change, there is also a need to promote systemic changes in the global trading system. One of the four workstreams established by the EU and China is focused on reform of the World Trade Organization.

See ***Talks,*** *page 3*

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:28 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:28 PM

INDEPTH

Portraying figures from history and literature, NPC players attract hordes of visitors

'Living legends' breathe fresh life into tourism



Top: A performance of the Chinese moon goddess Chang'e in Millennium City Park in Kaifeng, Henan province. GENG FEIFEI / CHINA DAILY
Above: Zhang Yanfeng plays the character of Guan Yu at Wansuishan Martial Arts City in Kaifeng. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By QI XIN in Kaifeng, Henan and **CHEN NAN** in Beijing

Wearing a full suit of armor and with a sword dangling by his side, Zhang Yanfeng, 28, is not your typical theme park performer.

To portray the character of General Guan Yu — one of the most revered figures in Chinese history whose life has been immortalized in numerous literary works — he dons armor weighing over 40 kilograms for each performance at Wansuishan Martial Arts City, a popular theme park in Kaifeng, Henan province. His helmet alone weighs 7 kg.

But for Zhang it's all worth it because his work as an NPC (non-player character) performer brings to life characters from the pages of history and literature for adoring fans.

"The weight of the armor forces me to stay grounded," Zhang noted. "It's as if I am truly embodying the spirit of an ancient general."

Immersive NPC performances are one of the fastest-growing sectors in China's tourism industry, often drawing in repeat visitors to scenic spots and theme parks.

Wu Guoping, a deputy to the National People's Congress, recently proposed official recognition of NPC performers as a new profession. Wu said the rise of such performers reflects a broader transformation within China's cultural tourism industry.

"I believe the rise of NPCs as professionals is a positive development for both the industry and the preservation of traditional culture," Zhang said.

"The standards are higher now. It's not just about wearing a costume; it's about living the role. We are responsible for keeping these ancient stories alive, not just for ourselves, but for the visitors who come here looking for something more."

Towering figures

Another role Zhang plays is Guan's descendant, Guan Sheng, another hero from the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127).

He is the only actor to embody these two towering figures, a feat that has earned him a devoted following among the visitors to the popular theme park, which celebrates the martial arts legends of Chinese history.

Born and raised in Luoyang, Henan province, a city famous for its ancient history, Zhang was drawn to traditional Chinese culture from a young age.

He trained in martial arts performance at school, and began his career at some of China's most famous historical sites before starting work at Wansuishan Martial Arts City more than a year ago.

"It was the perfect place to merge my passion for *wuxia* — the traditional genre of martial arts fiction — with real-world performances," he said. "Kaifeng, the former capital of the Northern Song Dynasty, is where I feel most connected to the characters I portray."

Zhang's two primary roles, Guan Yu and Guan Sheng, are not merely costumes he wears, but identities to inhabit.

When some visitors first encounter Zhang in his armor, they assume he is just another lifeless statue, he said, but as they draw closer, they realize he is flesh and blood. Their surprise is palpable, with visitors sometimes gasping in astonishment as he stirs, moves, or speaks.

"For me, it's about creating an experience that no digital screen or online video can replicate. When a person comes all the way to see Guan Yu, I owe it to them to make it unforgettable," he said.

His performances are also interactive. When visitors ask questions or request photos, Zhang is always ready to oblige.

The term NPC is derived from a character in a video game or simulation that is not controlled by the player. NPCs are typically pre-programmed with specific behaviors, dialogues, and actions, and exist to interact with players in the game world to make the experience more immersive and dynamic.

In recent years, theme parks in China, such as Shanghai Disneyland and Happy Valley, have increasingly incorporated NPCs into their attractions. The NPCs are often actors or performers who act out specific roles as part of a larger, interactive experience for visitors.

Emotional connection

For decades, Chinese scenic spots relied on fixed, scripted shows. Visitors watched and took photos from a distance. But today's tourists crave something different — they want interaction and deep emotional immersion.

At Wansuishan Martial Arts City there are more than 2,000 NPCs, most of whom age 20 to 35. Many of them come from arts backgrounds, bringing passion and personality to the job, said Wang Xueying, brand manager of Wansuishan Martial Arts City.

Jia Chenlu, 32, plays the lively martial arts character Sun Erniang from the classical novel *Water Margin*. With over a decade of hosting experience, she acts as a storyteller and "emotional guide" for the audience, she said.

"The work I do as Sun Erniang is very much like being a character-based host," Jia said. "It's all about controlling the scene, interacting with the audience, improvising, and creating a seamless experience. Everything I've learned on stage, from handling a crowd to designing a flow, directly translates into this job."

With a live performance background, Jia is not shy in front of an audience. Her warmth and approachability come through in every interaction, as she brings a human touch to her character.

"It's not just about acting; it's about connecting," she said. "People come here to escape from the stress of their everyday lives, and we, as NPCs, have the chance to make their visit meaningful. A smile, a warm word, a photo — it can make all the difference. Sometimes, it's the small things that leave the biggest impression."

Jia believes NPCs offer something more valuable than just entertainment — they offer "emotional connection".

"Many people harbor a *wuxia* dream in their hearts, and we give them a little bit of that dream, a taste of the *jianghu* (the martial arts world). If we can make them happy, even for a brief moment, then our job has meaning," she noted.

As an anchor for the show, her earnings are tied to both her visibility and the impact of her performances, with the salary ranging from 8,000 yuan ($1,180) to 30,000 yuan a month depending on the popularity of the show and the audience's response.

"The more effort you put in, the more you can earn," she said. "It's performance-based, so there's no limit to how much you can make."

However, being the core performer in the show, Jia has no backup. She manages to take off five days a month, and typically avoids taking time off at weekends when visitor numbers are at their peak. On the rare occasions when she does take a day off, the Sun Erniang show is paused, with visitors informed in advance.

> "Everything I've learned on stage, from handling a crowd to designing a flow, directly translates into this job."
>
> **Jia Chenlu,** a 32-year-old who plays the lively martial arts character Sun Erniang from the classical novel *Water Margin* at Wansuishan Martial Arts City in Kaifeng, Henan province

"It's a commitment," Jia said. "But when you're part of a character that means something to so many people, you understand why you do it. It's more than just a job — it's about creating moments that matter."

A 'beautiful escape'

Liu Ping, a 36-year-old nurse, traveled from Zhengzhou, Henan, with her best friend to catch the performances at Wansuishan Martial Arts City.

"Usually, I'm deeply caught up in the grind of work, constantly feeling mentally and physically exhausted — like a screw that just keeps turning without end. I've slowly lost myself, and even my inner sense of purpose," said Liu, who said she lives a hectic life.

"But here, I can temporarily put my phone down and immerse myself in this little world of martial arts. Through my interactions with the NPCs, I feel like I'm slowly reconnecting with the version of myself I haven't seen in a while, shedding the fatigue and distractions. It's a healing, freeing experience that feels like a beautiful escape."

Millennium City Park in Kaifeng, is a large-scale historical cultural park featuring Song culture, built according to the famous *Riverside Scene in the Qingming Festival* painting.

Part of its allure is its reimagining of the bustling Northern Song Dynasty market scene.

The NPC players at the park portray ordinary market figures from the period such as beggars, monks, and street vendors, and engage with visitors in spontaneous, immersive interactions, said Xing Xiaoyue, marketing manager at the venue.

These characters don't have fixed names, reflecting the anonymity of their counterparts in the painting. Visitors can take part in traditional games, like "spot the difference" or "playing cards", while NPCs guide them through the experience, making the past come alive.

One of the park's highlights is the Great Song Royal Garden, which brings ancient poets like Su Shi, and Li Qingzhao, into the fold. These players have clearly defined personas and are integrated into themed performances.

To further deepen the interactive experience, visitors can take on the role of different characters such as a beggar, general, or scholar, by receiving a "role recruitment order" and donning costumes.

This allows them to interact with the NPCs and unlock dialogue and storylines. It's a shift from being mere spectators to becoming active participants in the unfolding drama.

"I've been to many similar theme parks in China, but Millennium City Park holds a special place for me," said one visitor, schoolteacher Chen Shuo.

"In our fourth-grade textbook, there's a lesson dedicated to *Along the River During the Qingming Festival*. When teaching the kids, I usually rely on online images or videos to explain it, but the pictures in the book always feel static and distant. This time, visiting the park for real, it was like turning the words in the textbook into a living, breathing world right in front of me."

Chen Nan, a professor at Henan University's School of Culture and Tourism, said NPCs in theme parks have evolved from background characters to main attractions because tourists now seek immersive, interactive experiences, not just sightseeing. They want to participate, engage, and share. NPCs act as bridges, turning static environments into dynamic, emotional experiences, he said.

"To truly stand out, successful NPCs must have a deep understanding of history and culture, strong improvisational skills, and excellent service. In historical theme parks, NPCs are not just performers — they're 'time travelers' who help bring history to life in an immersive and interactive way," he said.

But for Zhang, his work is about more than just historical accuracy — it's about the connection between the past and present, between legend and reality. "The world moves faster now," he noted, gesturing toward the busy line of visitors streaming past him.

"Everyone is rushing from one thing to the next. But when they step into this world, they slow down. They feel a sense of honor, a sense of adventure. It's a place where they can leave behind the pressures of modern life."

It's a sentiment shared by many visitors, who come not only to see the grand performances but to reconnect with a "dream" they may not realize they've been missing.

Zhang said playing these legendary characters offers a sense of purpose. He is not simply performing; he is preserving something ancient and vital.

"The role of NPCs is more important than ever. In a world where history can feel distant, we bring it close, make it tangible," he said with pride. "We are the keepers of stories that would otherwise fade into memory."







Clockwise from top: *Wangpo Matchmaking*, a classic show at Wansuishan Martial Arts City, leads lively dating games with tourists in Kaifeng. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY Tourists watch the show of *The Heavenly Maiden Scatters Flowers* at Millennium City Park in July. GENG FEIFEI / CHINA DAILY A horseback fight is performed at the park. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:28 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:28 PM

TOP NEWS



Premier Li Qiang (right) hosts a welcoming ceremony for Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul on Monday in Beijing. WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY

Beijing, Bangkok enhance relations

Premier Li, Thai Prime Minister Anutin witness signing of multiple cooperation agreements

By CAO DESHENG
caodesheng@chinadaily.com.cn

China and Thailand signed on Monday multiple cooperation documents in the fields of trade, agriculture, customs, science and technology, artificial intelligence education, aviation and aerospace, intellectual property, media, and combating transnational crimes, as part of their efforts to enhance bilateral ties.

Premier Li Qiang and Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul witnessed the signing of the agreements following their talks at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

Anutin made an official visit to China from Thursday to Monday. Beijing was the last stop of his five-day tour, which also took him to Shanghai municipality and Chengdu in Sichuan province.

In Shanghai, he attended the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance. In Chengdu, Anutin attended the Thailand-China (Sichuan) Investment and Economic Forum. The Thai prime minister is also reported to have had meetings with senior executives from major Chinese companies, including Xiaomi and Changan Automobile.

During the talks, Li hailed the long-standing traditional friendship between China and Thailand, and said that the nation has always placed Thailand in an important position in its neighborhood diplomacy and firmly supports the smooth governance of the new Thai government.

China is willing to further promote traditional friendship with Thailand, consolidate political mutual trust, firmly support each other and take mutually beneficial cooperation in various fields to new heights, continuously improving the well-being of the two peoples, he said.

The premier expressed China's willingness to strengthen the alignment of development strategies with Thailand, promote high-quality development of Belt and Road cooperation and accelerate the implementation of key projects such as the China-Thailand railway.

He underlined the need for both countries to enhance the facilitation of cross-border payments and local currency settlements, maintain the momentum for the growth in bilateral trade, deepen industrial integration and expand cooperation in emerging fields such as AI, new energy vehicles and clean energy, working together to promote common prosperity.

Li also called for enhancing law enforcement and security cooperation to resolutely combat cross-border crimes such as online gambling and telecom fraud.

Noting that unilateralism and protectionism are on the rise, the premier called on both countries, as practitioners and beneficiaries of open cooperation, to strengthen coordination in multilateral mechanisms, such as the United Nations, the World Trade Organization and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, to jointly safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of both countries and defend international fairness and justice.

Anutin commended the development of the family-like relationship between Thailand and China, saying that Thailand firmly adheres to the one-China policy and will never support any "Taiwan independence" activities.

Thailand is willing to maintain close high-level exchanges with China, make good use of dialogue mechanisms in various sectors, promote cooperation in trade, investment, agriculture, mutual connectivity, AI and electric vehicles, and deepen tourism and local exchanges, he said.

Anutin expressed Thailand's commitment to a more vigorous crackdown on cross-border crimes, such as online gambling and telecom fraud, and creating a safe and sound environment for Chinese tourists and enterprises in the country. Thailand welcomes the four global initiatives proposed by President Xi Jinping and is willing to strengthen communication and coordination with China within multilateral frameworks to jointly promote regional and global peace, stability and prosperity, he said.

The four global initiatives refer to the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, the Global Civilization Initiative and the Global Governance Initiative.

During the visit, the two countries issued the joint statement on building a China-Thailand community with a shared future for enhanced prosperity.

China pins hopes of soccer glory on grassroots talent

By SUN XIAOCHEN
sunxiaochen@chinadaily.com.cn

As Spain lifted its second World Cup on Sunday and FIFA's showpiece tournament capped its expanded 23rd edition with global fanfare, many Chinese soccer fans were left wondering how long they'd have to wait for the national team to return to this elite international stage.

Despite uninterrupted nationwide excitement over the quadrennial sporting extravaganza, China made its sole appearance in the tournament 24 years ago, and former players said they believe a return would take consistent and concerted endeavors, given the current high standards of international soccer.

The World Cup remains a global benchmark in the game, and its expanded 48-team edition would require Chinese sports governing bodies, youth development promoters and league operators to invest a great deal of time and effort for the national squad to reenter the tournament, they said.

Sun Jihai, 48, a former Chinese national soccer star, who gave a running commentary in Beijing on the final match between Spain and defending champion Argentina, noted the involvement of Chinese sponsors, referees and manufacturers in this year's tournament.

"To see such a strong Chinese presence, we should feel proud. But, I believe, what we all hope to see is our men's team making it there again," said Sun, who was a formidable defender on China's 2002 World Cup qualifying team.

"To do it again — not just once, but in a consistent way — we need to work harder, investing long-term effort in youth training and committing to grassroots promotion, instead of relying on the fantasy of a quick-fix," said Sun, who also played with Manchester City in the Premier League.

"That's how all the global soccer powerhouses — and some of the emerging new contenders — do it. There is no other way," he added.

Sun is not the only one calling for a more pragmatic and consistent plan to revitalize Chinese men's soccer program. After the country's qualifying hopes for the 2026 tournament were crushed in June last year in the sixth consecutive failure, many in the industry highlighted the complex disconnect between the ambitious administrative push and on-field performance.

Xie Hui, 51, top scorer for China in the 2002 FIFA World Cup Asian qualifying tournament, called for building a more robust, grassroots-led talent pipeline.

"We need to invest more in our young people and, quite encouragingly, that's been a consensus within the nation's sporting community. We've seen some positive signs," said Xie, who contributed seven goals during China's qualifying campaign 24 years ago, but was dropped from the final World Cup team roster due to injury.

"I think the examples of the world's best teams, such as Spain — and those other fast-improving nations — have all proved that there is no shortcut to success," he added.

On a more positive note, Xie pointed out that China's Under-17 squad made it to the Asian Cup final in May and, thereby, secured a spot in the U17 World Cup scheduled before the end of the year in Qatar. The Chinese U23 soccer squad also reached the Asian Cup final in that age category in January, making it a first for the team in 22 years. These achievements bode well for the revival of Chinese men's soccer on the global stage, he said.

The inspiring campaigns pulled off by the two youth squads, despite both losing to continental powerhouse Japan in their respective finals, have lifted the spirits of the whole nation, offering Chinese fans a rare reason to celebrate after years of watching and supporting the painfully underachieving senior men's national team.

Sun, the former national defender, who in recent years has been running youth training programs in his native Liaoning province, in Yunnan province and in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, said, "I think we have a lot to learn from our neighbors Japan and South Korea, who have made it to the World Cup regularly."

He added, "Only by making soccer more popular among children on school campuses — and everywhere else in the country — do we stand a chance of joining the world's best."

Eatery: County successfully fuels quiet culinary revolution

From page 1

In Hefei, the provincial capital, the food scene is delicious but down-to-earth. For local resident Zhang Wanjing, foie gras is now a casual indulgence.

In March this year, Zhang found herself savoring a foie gras sushi roll at a Japanese restaurant, at just 18 yuan a piece. "The menu didn't say where it came from, but I could take a pretty good guess," she said with a knowing smile. "It's probably from Huoqiu."

And in Huoqiu, foie gras is affordable food, enjoyed stir-fried, pan-fried or even in hot pots.

On Hefei's Oufengjie — the "European-style street" brimming with eateries serving international cuisine — visitors can now find at least four restaurants serving foie gras. But like truffles and caviar, foie gras, originating from Landes province in France, was once a rare luxury.

Today, the Landes goose, world-renowned and much-sought-after for foie gras, is widely bred in countries like Hungary and China.

Hu has been part of this quiet culinary revolution for over 20 years. In 2003, he was one of the first in Huoqiu to gamble on Landes geese.

Initially, he faced challenges selling fresh foie gras in upscale markets and hotels in cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong province, often encountering skepticism.

"I said it was from Huoqiu, but they hadn't even heard of the place and were hesitant to use it. That setback taught me that without a brand, even the best products wouldn't gain trust," said Hu.

In 2006, he registered his Longxiang brand, which went on to become a well-known trademark in China, and his company is now the largest among over 140 foie gras producers in Huoqiu.

The turning point came when a foreign chef at a high-end Hefei restaurant simply poked the liver with his finger, inspected the texture, and declared it equal to French imports — only fresher and far less costly. An instant partnership was born.

The cherry foie gras Hu consumed in Shanghai, is sold from his factory at just 5 yuan a piece. But in high-end restaurants, the price varies between 20 and 30 yuan a piece.

"For consumers, dining on foie gras in a restaurant is not just about the product. The ambience and service are equally important," Hu said.

Since 2013, Hu has continuously developed new products, now numbering more than 30, turning foie gras into ready-to-eat specialty snacks.

In the first half of this year, Hu's company achieved sales of 180 million yuan, with one red wine foie gras product alone contributing 50 million yuan.

"We are trying to get into foreign markets, where export prices can be two to three times higher than domestic prices, but we believe the domestic market currently is large enough," said Hu. "If you're a seasoned foie gras enthusiast, visiting China and more specifically Anhui, would be a great idea."

Ties: Structured cooperation could become 'new normal'

From page 1

Ma Xue, a researcher at the Institute of American Studies at the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, said that strategic competition between China and the US in high-tech sectors will continue to intensify, while tighter controls on semiconductors, artificial intelligence and critical minerals, alongside geopolitical tensions, could weigh on the bilateral trade climate.

"Overall, institutionalized consultations and differentiated management of disputes could help offset short-term political disruptions," Ma said. "Although disagreements and periodic bargaining will persist, structured cooperation, accompanied by occasional friction in specific sectors, is likely to become the new normal in bilateral economic ties."

Data from the General Administration of Customs also showed that China-US goods trade reached 2 trillion yuan ($295 billion) in the first half of the year, accounting for 7.9 percent of China's total foreign trade.

James Zimmerman, chairman of the American Chamber of Commerce in China, said he hopes this year will be a productive one for China-US relations, noting that current China-US trade policy is increasingly characterized by a "managed trade" approach centered on reciprocity.

Saying that engagement is in the best interest of the US, Zimmerman reiterated that China brings real value to US consumers and benefits Washington's long-term economic interests.

Similar views were expressed by Jim Sutter, CEO of the US Soybean Export Council. "The recent announcement on tariff reductions is a positive signal. We hope the commitments made during the talks will soon be translated into concrete policy measures," he said.

Such optimism also resonates with US industrial companies stepping up long-term investment and innovation in China. Lin Chunmei, president and general manager of Corning China, said that as AI reshapes the global industrial landscape and drives demand for advanced materials and computing infrastructure, the US industrial materials manufacturer has evolved from technology introduction to collaborative innovation in China.

Corning will deepen local innovation, support next-generation computing infrastructure and contribute to the upgrading of China's industrial ecosystem, she said.

The company's confidence also comes as China continues to strengthen its position in advanced manufacturing and high-tech exports. In the first half of 2026, the country's exports of integrated circuits surged 88.7 percent year-on-year, while exports of electronic components rose 62.6 percent, statistics from the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology showed on Monday.

Quake rescue



First responders look for survivors on Sunday in the rubble of collapsed houses following twin earthquakes that struck the Andes region of Peru, about 300 kilometers east of capital Lima, on Saturday night. At least six people were killed and more than 30 injured when the temblors — measuring 5.1 and 3.7 — rocked the mountainous area. AFP

Talks: Reform of global trading system highlighted

From page 1

This looks like a long shot, since reform of the organization depends on many actors, including, importantly, the United States. However, let us not underestimate the possibility of WTO reform being carried out. It is useful to recall that the international trading system has been reformed practically every other decade since its creation in the aftermath of World War II. In the 1950s and 1960s, two successful rounds of trade negotiations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade substantially reduced tariffs. Subsequently, in the 1970s, the Tokyo Round of GATT negotiations produced a number of agreements designed to reduce nontariff barriers to trade such as state subsidies and countervailing duties. The Uruguay Round, launched in 1986 and concluded in 1994, added agreements on trade in services, trade-related investment measures and intellectual property rights. Later still, an elaborate dispute settlement mechanism was established.

This dynamic history of the global trading system should inspire the European and Chinese negotiators of all four workstreams to approach the issues with courage and foresight and produce proposals for a new, reformed global trading system. A high-level ambition for reform, commensurate with the existing needs, makes the emerging opportunity worthy of serious and determined negotiations.

The author is former president of Slovenia (2007-2012) and emeritus professor of International Law at the University in Ljubljana. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:28 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:28 PM

WORLD IN FOCUS





From left: Sulfur on rocks in the crater of La Fossa on Vulcano Island, one of the seven islands of the Aeolian Archipelago of Sicily, in Italy, on July 9. A volcanologist prepares a drone in the crater of La Fossa on July 9. A drone flies during a mission to collect data from gas emissions in the crater of La Fossa on July 9.






Top: A volcanologist works with a laser to gather data from a drone in the crater of La Fossa on Vulcano Island, one of the seven islands of the Aeolian Archipelago of Sicily, in Italy, on July 9. **Above from left:** An aerial view of people walking on the edge of the crater of La Fossa on July 9. A volcanologist pilots a drone with a mirror being used to reflect a laser and collect data from gas emissions in the crater of La Fossa on July 9. PHOTOS BY MARCO BERTORELLO / AFP



Volcanologists collect data from the crater of La Fossa on Vulcano Island, one of the seven islands of the Aeolian Archipelago of Sicily, in Italy, on July 9.

Volcano monitor

Drones help research eruptions in Sicily and reduce risk to humans

Hovering over the volcano, a buzzing drone pauses in front of a laser beam on the crater's edge, as researchers test whether the device can measure gases to predict eruptions.

On the Aeolian island of Vulcano, off the coast of Sicily, Marius Schaab, a researcher from the Technical University of Munich in Germany, stands next to a gas sensor mounted on a tripod, waiting for the drone his colleague has just launched to draw closer.

In this remote lunar landscape, where hot volcanic gases and steam smelling of sulfur rise eerily from the earth, the small propeller-driven device catches the eye.

The last eruption on the island's grand crater occurred in the late 19th century but the volcano continues to show intense degassing activity — to the awe of the visitors who are allowed to walk around the rim.

Soon, the drone positions itself along the axis of the sensor, which transmits an invisible laser beam that passes through the volcanic gas emissions before being reflected by the drone, and traveling back.

Based on the signals sent back to the sensor, an algorithm calculates a map of gas concentration in the 10 or 15 minutes it takes for the drone to follow a predefined path at a distance of up to 60 meters.

Although drones have been used in monitoring volcanoes for about 15 years, scientists are now looking to develop gas measurement tools that are increasingly accurate and risk-free.

Further around the crater, another team of scientists from the University of Mainz in Germany is using sensors carried on a drone to measure concentrations of chemical substances in the air.

A checklist in hand, Jonas Krajewski, a student at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, checks that "Tina" — the name given to the drone — is ready to fly safely.




From top: A drone used to collect data flies above the volcano. Tests gathered from gas emissions from the volcano.

Soon, the drone, weighing 2.5 kilograms, lifts into the air and heads toward the rising gases. This time, following a predefined flight path lasting up to 40 minutes, the drone flies into the heart of the fumaroles, or vents where the gases and vapor escape and where temperatures range between 100 and 140 C.

"Tina" is equipped with a series of sensors measuring gases, particles and halogens, elements like chlorine, bromine and others.

'Reliable data'

"We have a very constant output of gas … so we can have very reliable sensor data," said Krajewski.

For Tjarda Roberts, a researcher at the National Centre for Scientific Research in Paris, one of the biggest advantages of the drone is its flexibility to move around more diluted parts of the plume and quickly switch direction if the plume suddenly changes angles.

With the drone, researchers no longer need to carefully enter the area of the gas emissions, a dangerous activity that requires the use of masks and other protection.

"Here we don't have a major risk of an imminent eruption but there are volcanoes where you can't reach the summit on foot," Roberts said. But with a drone, "you can take measurements … without putting yourself in danger".

Skimming over rocks speckled with yellow sulfur crystals deposited by the fumaroles, "Tina" soon reappears on the horizon.

A new challenge awaits the drone — Mount Etna, the 3,000 meter-high active volcano in eastern Sicily, where a new eruption had just occurred in early July.

AFP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:28 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:28 PM

WORLD

India police clash with 'Cockroach' activists



Protesters clash with police behind barricades in New Delhi on Monday during a demonstration calling for the resignation of the education minister. ARUN SANKAR / AFP

NEW DELHI — Supporters of India's youth-led Cockroach movement clashed with police on Monday as thousands tried to march to Parliament to demand the education minister's resignation, while the government appeared to make its first outreach to the movement's leaders.

Police fired tear gas and charged at protesters with batons when demonstrators tried to breach the barricades surrounding the protest site in central New Delhi, marking one of the most serious confrontations in the movement's campaign against Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government. Despite the crackdown, many protesters continued marching toward Parliament in small groups.

Cockroach Janta Party spokesman Saurav Das accused the authorities of "brutally cracking down" on "peaceful protesters". The Delhi Police said the march had not been authorized and that restrictions were needed to maintain law and order around Parliament during the monsoon session, which began on Monday.

The crowd at Jantar Mantar, a designated site for protests just a few kilometers from Parliament, included students, professionals and families with young children. As the day progressed, the gathering spilled beyond the protest site, with demonstrators filling surrounding streets and roads.

Many carried backpacks with water and food, expecting a long day. Others waved Indian flags as chants against Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and Modi rippled through the growing crowd.

The Cockroach Janta Party emerged in May, after the Supreme Court chief justice compared some unemployed young people to "cockroaches" during an unrelated hearing. Supporters embraced the remark, turning it into a satirical movement that has attracted millions of followers on social media.

The movement gained momentum after repeated leaks of high-stakes entrance exams for medical colleges and government jobs sparked public anger. It drew wider attention after police forcibly moved hunger-striking activist Sonam Wangchuk to the hospital on Saturday.

Protesters calling themselves "cockroaches" have camped at Jantar Mantar for the past month, with members of several student groups joining Wangchuk's hunger strike. Thousands of supporters have also turned out at universities and rallies in other cities.

They are demanding the resignation of Pradhan, reforms to the examination system and compensation for the families of students who died by suicide following paper leaks.

Senior leaders in Modi's government have taken a hard line against the movement. Pradhan has accused the protesters of acting against the nation, while other ministers have acknowledged students' concerns but insisted there is no need for talks or negotiations with the movement.

However, that appeared to shift on Monday, when representatives of the movement held talks with Health Minister J. P. Nadda. It was the first apparent sign of government outreach to protest leaders, who sought to bring their demands directly to lawmakers, prompting the authorities to tighten security around the Parliament building.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Burnham vows stability as he takes office as UK's PM

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



The United Kingdom's new Prime Minister Andy Burnham delivers a speech outside 10 Downing Street in London after taking office on Monday. ISABEL INFANTES / REUTERS

The United Kingdom's new prime minister — the country's seventh leader in just over a decade — started his time in office on Monday by promising much-needed stability.

Claiming to have a 10-year plan, Andy Burnham, the former mayor of Greater Manchester who wrested control of the nation from predecessor Keir Starmer, said in his first speech as prime minister that it was a moment for "honesty and reflection", not "triumphalism".

"I'm not saying that means I'm setting out to say I'm going to be here for 10 years," he said. "It's more that we're not in the right place structurally."

Speaking from 10 Downing Street, he said he plans to offer the British people "more breathing room" and "responsible" decision-making to restore their confidence in government.

"Britain needs to show the world that we can regain our stability once again, and that is our challenge: to make politics work, to make it work better," he added.

Burnham, who was declared leader of the ruling Labour Party on Friday, became prime minister on Monday, after he and Starmer met King Charles III to formally pass the baton.

The new prime minister also said many people in the country feel as though the nation is in decline and that they "don't have the ability to turn things around".

"That's why we will change politics to make it more collaborative, more about problem-solving than point-scoring, and we will take power out of here (London) and carry it into every postcode in the land," he said. He also promised to "build a new economy" where "life's essentials" are under public control, "to make them affordable to you again, reindustrializing Britain using public procurement to back British industry".

Burnham took over as prime minister after Labour Party members of Parliament became frustrated with Starmer's leadership style, which some said was uninspiring. It followed Starmer's much-criticized appointment of Peter Mandelson as the UK's ambassador to the United States. Mandelson was believed to have been close to the late convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. Labour Party MPs also lost confidence in Starmer after the party did poorly in recent local elections.

Despite Starmer having led the Labour Party to a landslide win in the general election of July 2024, disgruntled Labour Party MPs persuaded him to resign, clearing the way for Burnham to stand unopposed as party leader, which meant, under party rules, that he became its automatic choice for prime minister. He will not need to contest a general election until Aug 15, 2029, unless he decides to seek an earlier mandate.

Burnham, who becomes the UK's 59th prime minister and its eighth from the center-left Labour Party, plans to use the ongoing six-week summer recess, during which Parliament is closed, to go on a "listening tour" of the UK, to hear what issues are important to people.

Xing Yi contributed to this story.

Kenya targets bigger tea exports to Chinese market

By VICTOR RABALLA
in Nairobi, Kenya
victor@chinadailyafrica.com

Kenya is seeking to deepen cooperation with China in tea production, technology transfer and market access as it positions itself to expand exports to the world's largest tea-consuming nation, the Tea Board of Kenya says.

Willy Mutai, the organization's CEO, said Kenya is leveraging China's zero-tariff policy and strengthening collaboration with Chinese investors to unlock new opportunities across the tea value chain.

The board is working closely with producers to ensure Kenyan tea, a primary agricultural commodity in the country, meets international quality standards through farmer training, advisory services and market promotion initiatives, Mutai said.

"We cherish the opportunity that Kenyan tea is among the products enjoying zero tariffs in the Chinese market," he said.

"The preferential access presents a major opportunity to diversify export destinations and increase tea sales to China."

Kenya and China are also collaborating on tea standards and production technologies, with several Chinese companies already investing in Kenya's tea processing sector, he added.

Three companies have introduced Chinese tea-processing technologies in Kenya, Mutai said, while a tea factory is already operating with Chinese equipment tailored to produce products preferred by the Chinese market.

He urged more Chinese firms to obtain export licenses and source tea directly from Kenya.

"Kenya is prepared for any investor to export and buy tea. We already have Chinese companies exporting tea from Kenya to China," he said.

In addition, the two countries are exploring an online tea auction platform in the next three months, a move expected to enhance trade efficiency and improve market access for buyers and sellers.

Kenya remains one of the world's leading tea producers and the largest exporter of black Crush, Tear and Curl tea.

While traditional markets such as Pakistan, the United Kingdom, Sudan and Afghanistan continue to dominate exports, the country is increasingly targeting China as a strategic growth market.

The Tea Board of Kenya projects significant growth in value-added tea products, particularly green tea and specialty teas favored by Chinese consumers.

Diversification efforts

Mutai said Kenya aims to produce nearly 200 million kilograms of green and orthodox teas by 2030 as part of efforts to diversify beyond conventional black tea.

Chinese consumers place a premium on quality, food safety and product traceability, areas where Kenyan tea enjoys a competitive advantage, he said.

"Kenyan tea is produced with minimal pesticide use due to favorable climatic conditions and is backed by strong agricultural practices and quality assurance systems," he said.

Beyond trade, the partnership has expanded into research, training and skills development.

Mutai said Kenyan tea producers and researchers regularly undergo training in China, while joint projects between institutions are helping develop new varieties and products.

"We are working together to develop climate-resilient tea cultivars that are high-yielding, drought tolerant and disease resistant," he said.

Kenyan researchers have developed 62 tea cultivars with various attributes through breeding programs that leverage both traditional and molecular techniques, he said.

The cultivars will enable farmers to adapt to varying agroecological zones while reducing vulnerability to climate change, he added.

The Tea Board of Kenya is also collaborating with Chinese partners on tea processing machinery, energy-efficient technologies and product innovation to enhance productivity and value addition.

Guo Haiyan, Chinese ambassador to Kenya, said agriculture remains the foundation of food security, economic development and social stability in Africa.

"As China and Africa continue to deepen cooperation under the framework of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, agricultural modernization has been an essential area for mutually beneficial partnership," she said.

US deaths hit 17 as Iran war 'unpopular'

By SHI GUANG in New York
shiguang@chinadailyusa.com

US missile strikes continued to rain down on Iran for a 10th day after US President Donald Trump said he would punish the country for the deaths of US soldiers in the region.

"Every time Iran kills an American Soldier they will pay for that killing many times over!" Trump posted on Truth Social on Monday.

So far, 17 US military personnel have been killed during the war, which is becoming increasingly unpopular.

Trump said the latest ongoing strikes were "in honor" of three US soldiers killed in recent attacks by Iran.

Two US soldiers were killed in an Iranian strike on Muwaffaq Salti Air Base in Jordan on Friday, while another died in Iraq during the controlled detonation of a downed Iranian drone.

Pentagon spokesperson Sean Parnell posted on X on Monday that "nearly 100 service members" have been injured since July 7, most of them minor.

US Central Command said the US targeted military command centers, air defense and coastal surveillance sites, maritime capabilities, missile and drone launch sites, and communications networks.

"Iran has been very, very badly damaged. They've lost everything almost militarily. They've got very little left," Trump said. "We hit them very hard again tonight."

Retaliatory strikes by Iran have included attacks on neighbors such as Kuwait, where a power and desalination plant was hit, as well as Jordan and Bahrain.

Iran's Speaker of Parliament Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said that recent US actions showed that Washington wasn't serious about wanting peace.

"Americans keep bringing new military equipment to the region and claim they want to stop the war," Ghalibaf posted on X. "They've bet on our intelligence being as low as their own IQ."

"We've reached the stage of mastery in recognizing these American games, and on that basis, we've prepared ourselves," he posted. "Actions must confirm claims, not contradict them."

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said in a statement on Monday that, "the reality is that today the Islamic Republic of Iran is engaged in a full-scale war".

"We must be realistic and accept the natural consequences of this resistance," he said.

Recent surveys show that the war is very unpopular in the US.

A Washington Post-Ipsos poll last week showed that 68 percent of Americans said the war in Iran was "not worth fighting", while only 28 percent said it was.

That difference of 40 percent is higher than negative opinions about the wars in Iraq or Afghanistan. The most negative views about Iraq, in 2007, found that 66 percent of Americans said it was "not worth fighting", though 33 percent supported it. Notably, the higher numbers against the war in Afghanistan didn't peak until almost eight years into the conflict. In Vietnam, it took more than six years. Conversely, it took only two months for 61 percent of Americans to say the Iran war was "a mistake", CNN reported.

However, unlike Iraq, which 36 percent of Americans thought was "the most important problem" facing the US in 2007, those thinking the same of the war in Iran are in single digits, CNN reported.

Antiwar activist Eric Sheehan had helped organize protests outside Los Angeles Stadium during the recent FIFA World Cup, saying he wanted to "tell the world" that FIFA was using the World Cup to "sportswash" the US.

"We don't think that weapons of war should be used to change governments and to upset sovereignty throughout the world, like the US has done through its whole history," he told Mirror US Sports during the protest.

"The US waging war is wrong," he said. "No matter the conditions inside the country, it's not the US' job to interfere with sovereignty throughout the world."

Power on the paddies



A jockey competes in a traditional water buffalo race celebrating the start of the paddy-sowing season in Chonburi, Thailand, on Sunday. XINHUA

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn

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

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108
529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1875

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:28 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:28 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Kimi K3 moment should prompt some to rethink AI's future for common good

Whenever a Chinese artificial intelligence lab drops a new high-performance model, there are observers in the United States who lose their composure. After DeepSeek in 2025, it happened again last week, when Moonshot AI released Kimi K3 — a 2.8 trillion-parameter open weight model that scored an Elo rating of 1679 on the Frontend Code Arena leaderboard, surpassing both Anthropic's Claude Fable 5 and OpenAI's GPT-5.6 Sol on this specific coding benchmark.

Executives at the US' leading closed model AI labs began floating ideas about how to stop the open source "menace" — not by building better models, but by enlisting Washington to create "regulatory risk" around Chinese open weight models.

Ironically, the country that invented a large part of the modern tech industry through open standards and competitive markets is now debating whether to use the power of the state to protect a handful of companies from competition.

The US' leading closed model labs — essentially a duopoly of OpenAI and Anthropic — have spent years arguing that their models are too dangerous to open source. Now, their defenders are suggesting that the US administration should manufacture fear, uncertainty and doubt around Chinese alternatives to keep them out of the market.

Dean Ball, OpenAI's new head of strategic futures, was refreshingly candid about this on X. He acknowledged that Kimi K3 is "a very good model" whose performance cannot be "explained away by distillation or anything like that". Then he urged the US administration to "create large amounts of regulatory risk around the use of open weight Chinese models" — not through outright bans, but through "soft law" that creates FUD (fear, uncertainty and doubt).

This is "regulatory capture" dressed up as "national security". As David Sacks, the venture capitalist who now cochairs the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology, put it: "The leading closed labs, already a duopoly in terms of AI model revenue, want the government to eliminate their open source competition. They have laid their cards on the table."

China has achieved frontier-level AI performance at a fraction of the cost. Kimi K3's API pricing is $3 per million input tokens and $15 per million output — roughly one-third to one-fifth the cost of comparable US models. And Moonshot AI has announced it will release the full model weights soon, meaning anyone with sufficient compute can run it on their own infrastructure without paying per-token fees. That would be unimaginable for the US companies that charge high fees on tokens.

But the real story here is about two different philosophies of AI development colliding. The US closed model is built on concentration: a handful of corporations and the US government standing at the apex of the AI pyramid, nurturing and reaping the benefits of everything beneath them. It is an architecture where a small number of gatekeepers decide who gets access to frontier capabilities and at what price. The Chinese open weight approach is more inclusive.

These two paradigms differ on many fronts, from profitability and costs to data acquisition, application scope, iteration efficiency and the boundaries between public interest and private gain. The over 40 participants of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence and the founding members of the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization — established in Shanghai last week — should not devolve into two camps. The world does not need a Cold War replicated in the AI era.

The deeper question is whether the US can adapt to a world in which it no longer holds a monopoly on cutting-edge AI. The Kimi K3 moment should be the beginning of a reckoning. Will Silicon Valley respond with innovation or with "regulatory capture"? If AI is to serve humanity, the world must find the wisdom to resist the zero-sum temptations of shortsightedness and anxiety.

Washington's bullying of Europe hypocritical

The US State Department's latest proposals reported by the Financial Times on Sunday to finance "free speech" initiatives across Europe with tens of millions of dollars reveal a contradiction that extends far beyond ideology: Washington spending public money to influence political debates in Europe while insisting that foreign governments must never do the same in the United States.

If Brussels were to establish a multimillion-euro program supporting organizations campaigning against Republican or Democratic policies inside the US, the reaction on Capitol Hill would be immediate and furious. The same principle somehow becomes more flexible when the direction of influence runs across the Atlantic.

Behind the lofty language lies the true objective: protecting US economic interests by weakening European regulation from within. The ostensible target of this largesse is the European Union's Digital Services Act and Digital Markets Act — regulations that were debated, amended and passed through the full legal machinery of the European Parliament and member states. They are laws designed to protect European users from disinformation, hate speech and the monopolistic abuse of a handful of tech giants, particularly those from the US that dominate the EU market.

Yet Washington has decided that these EU enactments constitute "censorship" and must be resisted from within. Reducing years of painstaking European legislation to mere "censorship" requires an extraordinary act of political simplification.

The proposed $2 million grant to "counter censorship" stemming from EU rules, the $5 million for a "civilizational alliance" in Europe, the $5 million earmarked for Free Speech Union International, the $7 million floated for think tank 878 — this is not a serious program of civic engagement. It is part of broader efforts to bankroll political factions that will do the US' bidding.

And what is that bidding? The DSA allows for fines of up to 6 percent of global turnover. The DMA targets six "gatekeeper" companies — mostly from the US. Alphabet, Apple, Amazon, Meta and Microsoft have faced billions of euros in penalties. The US response is not to compete, not to innovate, not to adapt and improve. It is to send US taxpayer money to European lobbying groups and organizations, if not activists, who will do the work of questioning Europe's laws. It is difficult to ignore that the regulations attracting Washington's greatest concern happen to be those imposing the highest costs on the US' biggest corporate champions.

The timing is hardly accidental. As Brussels moves to complete ratification of last July's transatlantic trade agreement — brokered by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and widely criticized across Europe as being tilted in Washington's favor — the funding proposal serves as a pointed reminder that the digital rule book remains unfinished business. Rather than accepting the DSA and DMA as settled European law, Washington appears determined to keep them at the heart of future transatlantic bargaining, using the language of "free speech" to reopen what Brussels considers a closed legislative chapter.

The US administration also wants to mobilize internal European opposition to the very regulations that the US tech lobby finds so inconvenient. Such tactics carry risks extending well beyond trade. Supporting organizations identified with Europe's conservative and anti-establishment movements inevitably export the US' own cultural conflicts into societies with very different political traditions. Europe's postwar prosperity has largely been based on consensus-building and institutional compromise rather than perpetual ideological mobilization. Injecting US-style polarization politics into that environment serves neither European stability nor transatlantic unity.

Mainstream parties from center-left to center-right in Europe should be alarmed. They are being told, in effect, that their "democratic legitimacy" is secondary to Washington's commercial interests.

Perhaps the most troubling aspect of this episode has been the muted response from much of Europe's senior leadership. Brussels has consistently defended its regulatory autonomy whenever challenged, yet its reaction to this unusually explicit US attempt at political influence has been notably restrained. Strategic silence risks conveying the message that such interference falls within acceptable diplomatic practice.

The attack is part of a systematic US assault on the very idea that Europe has the right to govern itself. US Vice-President JD Vance laid bare that message in his speech at the Munich Security Conference last year. He lectured European leaders that the continent's principal danger came not from external threats but from ones that he claimed came from within — the erosion of democratic norms, particularly censorship, the suppression of dissent and the exclusion of populist voices from public discourse.

If "freedom of expression" becomes just another geopolitical instrument wielded in pursuit of commercial advantage, both sides of the Atlantic will discover that trust is far harder to rebuild than regulations are to rewrite. Yet the more the US tries to bend Europe to its will through coercion and interference, the more it may inadvertently accelerate the very trend it tries to avoid: European strategic autonomy. That would be the ultimate irony of this ill-conceived venture.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Jin Ding



Opinion Line

Shanghai piloting research model built on patience, support and agility

By wielding an unusual combination of long-term strategic patience and real-time institutional agility, Shanghai is forging a distinctively Chinese model for original innovation — one that tolerates failure, rewards long-haul risks and bridges the "valley of death" between lab benches and hospital beds.

As the core engine of the Shanghai (Yangtze River Delta) International Science and Technology Innovation Center, Shanghai is steadily consolidating its role as a pivotal source of original innovation through system reforms.

Shanghai's edge lies in bold institutional experimentation across diverse platforms. The Interdisciplinary Research Center on Biology and Chemistry, launched in 2012, for instance, is implementing innovative basic research mechanisms by breaking disciplinary silos and adopting a performance evaluation system centered on substantive contributions — a move to break the "four-only" criteria of papers, titles, diplomas and awards. Backed by five-to-10-year stable funding for research, it has established a problem-oriented research paradigm.

The Tsung-Dao Lee Institute, meanwhile, has built a globally calibrated governance system, recruiting 150 researchers from 16 countries and regions and implementing phased assessments focused on potential rather than papers.

And launched in 2024, the Shanghai Academy of Natural Sciences is a platform that abandons traditional project applications and consensus-based review. Instead, it uses active global talent scouting to support non-consensus, high-risk research with multiyear grants.

Complementing these organizations, the Shanghai Innovation Institute practices an integrated model centered on AI frontier research, innovating a mentor-student co-creation mechanism that effectively connects basic research, talent incubation and industrial transformation. This has yielded breakthroughs in the form of aerosolized broad-spectrum neutralizing antibodies.

The complementary strengths of these platforms are vividly illustrated in the work of researcher Liu Cong. Supported simultaneously by IRCBC's long-cycle assessment and SANS' non-consensus funding, his team has conducted decade-long research on Parkinson's disease. Under conventional three-year evaluation cycles, this project — which yielded few publications in its first five years — would likely have been terminated. Instead, the institutional safety net carried the team through the difficult phase of molecular screening. The result: an innovative PET molecular tracer enabling early presymptomatic diagnosis, validated through 150 clinical trials, commercialized via SynuSight Biotech, and backed by the Michael J. Fox Foundation — a complete chain from basic discovery to clinical application.

Shanghai has rolled out systematic policies to reinforce its innovation ecosystem. In July 2025, it issued management measures for the Explorer Program, which align basic research with industrial needs via public-private co-investment, with corporate partners contributing no less than 3 million yuan ($443,000) annually while strict rules safeguard research originality. By November 2025, 54 projects had secured a total of 52.9 million yuan in funding, with early signs of "zero-to-one" breakthroughs. In 2025, Shanghai also launched the Qiyuan Innovation Foundation — the country's first State-owned capital public welfare foundation dedicated to basic research — raising nearly 100 million yuan to support national strategic priorities.

Underpinning these advances is robust investment. China's national R&D intensity reached 2.8 percent in 2025, with basic research accounting for a record 7.08 percent of total R&D spending. Shanghai outperforms these benchmarks: Its R&D intensity stands at 4.5 percent, with a 2026 target of 4.6 percent, and its basic research proportion has reached 12 percent — approaching the level of developed economies such as the United States (15-17 percent) — signaling a shift from quantitative catch-up to structural optimization.

In the race for tech supremacy, Shanghai's pilot zone for basic research serves as a national stress test. By replacing shortsighted utilitarianism with a long-cycle ecosystem, Shanghai is cultivating the soil for transformative discoveries, demonstrating that true originality cannot be mandated, but it can be enabled.

— GUO YALI, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

New consumption needs to be further encouraged

Editor's note: *The total retail sales of consumer goods registered a 1.3 percent year-on-year increase in the first half of the year, according to data released by the National Bureau of Statistics last week. Jia Kang, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Fiscal Sciences, spoke to National Business Daily to explain the reasons behind the uptick. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

In recent years, the authorities have rolled out a suite of policies to boost consumption. These measures, including trade-in programs for consumer goods, prize invoices and interest subsidies for personal consumption loans, have played a vital role in stabilizing consumer spending. While it takes time for the effect of policies to materialize, these measures have mitigated the downward pressure on consumption and boosted optimism about future consumer spending.

The fluctuation the total retail sales of consumer goods saw in the first half of the year can be attributed to several factors, including consumer expectations that have made people save for precautionary purposes.

Another factor is the mixed performance of macroeconomic indicators. For example, investment and consumption have surged in sectors related to artificial intelligence and the digital economy, but some non-high-tech and non-cutting-edge industries have lagged behind. As a result, China's consumption is undergoing a structural transition.

The shift in the preferences of Chinese consumers in recent years is resulting in a structural divergence in consumption patterns. Service consumption registers robust growth, with people increasingly willing to pay for emotional value. In contrast, when purchasing physical goods, more consumers are focusing on affordability and value.

To further expand and upgrade consumption, it is essential to boost the supply of goods and services and widen the range of products while simultaneously raising household incomes and improving consumer expectations. For instance, yacht trips, once a luxury purchase exclusively for the wealthy, have gradually become a leisure activity for ordinary consumers in recent years. Drawing from the experience of developed economies, there is great potential for expanding the consumption of yacht and cruise trips in China.

In the first half of the year, consumption acted as a stabilizer for China's economy, providing a solid foundation for growth.

Foreign trade also delivered a stellar performance during this period. Projections indicate that this year China's imports and exports will surpass those in previous years and make a larger contribution to the country's economic growth.

As for fixed-asset investment, it's important to adopt a problem-oriented approach. Efforts should be stepped up to scale up effective investment, shift the focus from quantitative expansion to quality improvement, and remove bottlenecks and barriers that hinder investment growth.

To promote investment, the government has released a list of projects to advance major national strategies and enhance security in key sectors. It is also planning on building six key infrastructure networks: water, new-type power grids, computing power, next-generation communications, urban underground pipelines, and logistics.

Through these initiatives, the government is boosting investment in infrastructure. Sustained government spending in this area will facilitate the recovery of investment across all sectors, galvanize private investment, and encourage private capital to participate in infrastructure development. Greater enthusiasm among private investors will in turn generate sustained momentum for economic growth.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:28 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:28 PM

VIEWS

Virdika Rizky Utama

Building an AI future shared by all

Artificial intelligence is rapidly reshaping production, governance and daily life. President Xi Jinping's address at the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai gave this transformation a clear direction by placing openness, security, cultural diversity and international cooperation at the center of global AI development.

President Xi's four observations present a practical framework for ensuring that AI benefits all countries even though they may have different political systems, economic structures and cultural traditions. This is especially important for the Global South. Many developing countries are adopting AI, but access to advanced computing, technical expertise and standards remains uneven.

China's approach addresses this imbalance through cooperation rather than exclusion. By combining innovation with capacity building, Beijing is helping developing countries participate in the AI era on more equal terms.

The initiatives announced in Shanghai underscore that commitment. China will provide 5,000 AI training and seminar opportunities for developing countries over the next five years, establish international AI application cooperation centers with major regional organizations, and help 30 countries use the AI-powered meteorological warning system MAZU.

Training is one of the most effective ways to broaden participation in technology. China's initiative can help create a larger pool of professionals who can understand, evaluate, and deploy AI, strengthening domestic institutions while building long-term cooperation across Asia, Africa, the Arab world, and Latin America.

The proposed cooperation centers will help deepen that effort by creating platforms for joint research, technical exchange, local-language development and practical experimentation.

MAZU demonstrates how this model works in practice. AI-powered meteorological early warning can improve preparedness for floods, storms, droughts and extreme weather while protecting lives and reducing economic losses. It also shows how China is converting AI capacity into a global public good for vulnerable communities.

China's broad industrial base gives it a distinctive role in global AI cooperation. Beyond developing models, China is integrating AI into production systems and public services on a large scale, creating an innovation model closely tied to economic development.



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development projects that the global AI market could reach $4.8 trillion by 2033. Such growth makes inclusive participation an economic necessity, not merely a policy concern.

If most countries remain mere consumers of AI, inequality will deepen and global growth will weaken. A future built around shared capability would expand markets, enhance productivity, and create new opportunities for cooperation.

China's emphasis on openness directly addresses this challenge by promoting open-source development, international exchange, and wider access to AI applications, helping more countries adapt AI to their specific needs.

President Xi's call to resist the excessive expansion of national security concepts is equally significant. Security is essential, but it should not be used to justify technological blockades or preserve monopolies.

An AI landscape divided into rival blocs would increase costs, fragment standards and reduce opportunities for developing economies. China's approach, however, emphasizes cooperation, mutual benefit and respect for national choices.

Cultural diversity is equally important. AI cannot serve humanity effectively if it is built around only a few languages, datasets and social experiences. Incorporating cultural diversity into datasets, models and applications will make AI more accurate, more useful and more representative.

President Xi's emphasis on mutual learning among civilizations highlights a broader principle: AI should strengthen cultural expression rather than impose a single technological template on societies with different histories and identities.

China's growing investment in open models, application platforms and international cooperation creates practical space for this diversity.

Developing countries can use these opportunities to build systems more closely aligned with their own languages and public needs.

Global governance must support this objective. AI rules should reflect the interests of both technologically advanced economies and developing countries.

President Xi's call for a stronger UN role points toward more inclusive AI governance beyond rival technological camps.

The World Bank has emphasized that meaningful AI adoption depends on connectivity, computing capacity, local context, and technical competence. China's initiatives address these foundations through training, cooperation, open development and infrastructure partnerships.

The Shanghai agenda stands out for linking governance with implementation and connecting global principles with national needs.

President Xi's leadership has given strategic clarity. AI should remain under human control, serve development and advance through cooperation, giving the Global South not only access to new tools, but also a stronger voice in shaping the global AI order.

The future of AI will be defined not only by technological power, but by whether it improves lives across regions and levels of development.

China's proposals suggest a path in which openness, capacity building, cultural respect and practical cooperation can make AI a shared engine of global progress rather than a privilege of the few.

The author is the executive director of PARA Syndicate, a Jakarta-based independent think tank.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Yasiru Ranaraja

Award riddled with legal defects and biased proceedings

A recent joint statement by 14 countries, including the United States, Japan and the Philippines, has once again put the spotlight on the 2016 South China Sea Arbitral Award. The statement asserts that China's maritime claims lack a "legal basis" and reiterates that the decade-old ruling remains final and binding. While such declarations are framed as a defense of the rules-based international order, a closer examination of the 2016 award reveals foundational cracks that cannot be overlooked by repeating that narrative.

Ten years have passed since the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA)-administered tribunal issued its ruling, but the dominant Western discourse continues to ignore the legal flaws that marred the arbitration from the outset. International law is not a tool for geopolitical convenience.

It relies on strict adherence to principles such as state consent, jurisdictional limits, and treaty design. Ignoring these principles undermines the credibility of the entire international legal framework.

The most glaring defect of the 2016 arbitration was its brazen disregard of the principle of state consent. Unlike domestic legal systems, where individuals are automatically subject to the jurisdiction of courts, international adjudication requires sovereign states to explicitly agree to submit their disputes to a tribunal.

From the day the Philippines unilaterally initiated the arbitration in 2013, China consistently maintained a policy of non-participation and non-acceptance.

It was not merely a political boycott but a defense of sovereign rights. Under international law, a state cannot be forced into compulsory arbitration over matters it has explicitly refused to arbitrate. By proceeding without China's consent, the tribunal moved into legally uncharted territory, setting a problematic precedent where international bodies might override the explicit objections of a sovereign state.

Critics often argue that by ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, Beijing automatically consented to its compulsory dispute-settlement mechanisms.

But this argument overlooks the safeguards built into the treaty. Under Article 298 of UNCLOS, member states have the explicit right to exclude specific categories of disputes from compulsory arbitration, including disputes relating to maritime boundary delimitation, historic bays or titles and military activities.

China formally invoked this article in 2006, filing a declaration that excluded all such disputes from third-party adjudication. It was not an evasion of international law, but the exercise of a right expressly permitted by UNCLOS to protect vital national security and sovereign interests.

But the tribunal in The Hague bypassed this valid reservation and accepted Manila's reframing of the dispute as an interpretation of maritime features rather than a boundary delimitation. By overriding a state's lawful Article 298 declaration, the tribunal altered the terms under which states originally agreed to sign UNCLOS, signaling to the global community that treaty-based reservations could be bypassed through creative legal drafting.

A fundamental limitation of UNCLOS is that it governs maritime rights, such as exclusive economic zones, continental shelves and territorial seas, but not sovereignty over land territory. Questions of territorial ownership fall under customary international law, not UNCLOS.

The dispute between China and the Philippines in the South China Sea is fundamentally about territorial sovereignty over the Nansha Qundao and Huangyan Dao. Since UNCLOS could not rule on territorial ownership, the legal submissions of the Philippines focused strictly on the status of the maritime features themselves.

By accepting this framing, the tribunal crossed a legal boundary. It is not possible to determine the maritime entitlements of a feature without first establishing which country holds sovereignty over it.

By ruling on the nature and rights of features occupied or claimed by China, the tribunal effectively adjudicated a sovereignty and boundary dispute. This amounts to judicial overreach, expanding the tribunal's mandate far beyond what UNCLOS intended.

Another major flaw in the 2016 award was its dismissal of China's historical rights. China's involvement in the South China Sea spans centuries of state practice, navigation, and economic activity, which formed the basis of its historical claims. The tribunal ruled that any historical rights were extinguished when China ratified UNCLOS, treating the treaty as the sole source of maritime entitlements. This interpretation caused significant concern among international legal scholars.

International law does not exist in a vacuum, nor does a single treaty erase centuries of established practice. Customary international law and treaty law generally co-exist and complement each other.

By deciding that a modern treaty completely invalidates pre-existing historical rights built through long-standing state practice, the tribunal adopted a rigid, highly contested interpretation of international law that sidelined the historical context of the region.

The legitimacy of any judicial body hinges on its perceived neutrality. Throughout the 2016 proceedings, questions regarding the tribunal's impartiality have persisted. Critics often point to the composition of the arbitral panel.

After China refused to participate, four of the five arbitrators were appointed by the then-president of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, Japanese diplomat Shunji Yanai. Given the parallel maritime and territorial disputes between Japan and China in the East China Sea, the appointments raised concerns about institutional bias.

Furthermore, the tribunal's legal reasoning closely mirrored the long-standing geopolitical and maritime policy positions of the US, a nation that has refused to ratify UNCLOS itself. The alignment between the tribunal's radical legal interpretations and the strategic interests of non-party Western nations gave the impression that the proceedings were influenced by geopolitical objectives.

The controversy surrounding the 2016 award extends beyond the geopolitical rivalry between Beijing and Manila.

Over the past 10 years, an increasing number of international legal experts, academics, and diplomats have voiced concerns about the long-term implications of the ruling.

By engaging in judicial overreach, ignoring lawful treaty reservations, and proceeding without state consent, the tribunal did not resolve the South China Sea dispute, but complicated it further. It set a problematic precedent that undermines the predictability and stability of the UNCLOS dispute-settlement system.

If formal declarations under Article 298 can be ignored or bilateral territorial disputes can be unilaterally forced into international courts through clever reframing, states may be hesitant to participate in multilateral treaties or utilize international legal bodies in the future.

No amount of coordinated joint statements or diplomatic pressure can transform a legally flawed and controversial ruling into an unquestionable dictate. True respect for the international legal order requires that rules be applied consistently and fairly, not selectively to advance geopolitical agendas.

Resolving the complex disputes of the South China Sea will not be achieved through flawed legal declarations, but through direct, bilateral negotiations grounded in mutual respect and historical reality.

The author is a Sri Lankan researcher and policy analyst, founder of the Belt & Road Initiative Sri Lanka and a PhD candidate in international law at the China University of Political Science and Law.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Kang Bing

The author is former deputy editor-in-chief of China Daily.
kangbing@chinadaily.com.cn

So much food in my fridge, but am not complaining!

I began cooking when I was 12 years old. One fine day, I picked up the kitchen knife and the rolling pin, not because I wanted to but because if I didn't turn flour into noodles, my elder brother and I would have had to starve during lunchtime.

My parents, both working, were unable to come home to prepare lunch for us. My elder brother was in middle school and I in primary school. As his morning classes ended half an hour later than mine, the important responsibility of cooking for both of us fell upon me.

Nobody taught me anything. I picked up cooking mostly by observing how my parents trimmed, washed, cut and fried vegetables and how they turned flour into noodles and steamed buns.

There wasn't much to learn, anyway, growing up during a food scarcity in a northwestern city half a century ago. Even the best chefs could not have churned out something from nothing in those times. So, for a long time, my lunch remained simple: noodles plus pickles.

My cooking skills improved when I gained access to more kinds of ingredients while attending university in Shanghai.

There, for the first time, I saw and ate shrimp, crabs, saltwater fish and many vegetables that are popular only in South China.

An eager learner, I asked my classmates from different parts of China how they cooked their food, and surprised people back home by rustling up a very different kind of meal during the Spring Festival holiday that year.

My cooking career peaked in 1984 when I was studying in Honolulu in the United States. To express my gratitude, I sometimes invited my professors to dinner in my dorm building.

Returning home after work, the first thing I usually did was to rush into the kitchen, and put on my apron.

It must have been one of my journalism professors who told a local daily about my cooking skills, because soon a reporter and a photographer from there approached me for an interview.

I treated them to dumplings, braised chicken legs, mock crab roe eggs and sour and spicy shredded potatoes etc. I got the ingredients cheap — as a poor student who lived on $300 a month, cheap ingredients were all I could afford.

A few days later, the newspaper devoted half a page to my cooking skills. It carried a huge photo of me smiling while standing next to the stove, wearing an Aloha shirt and holding a chopping knife.

It was the first time I had been interviewed by a newspaper while learning reporting skills from the Americans. I was disappointed that only my poor cooking skills, and not my other talents, made headlines.

That publicity probably helped me retain my interest in cooking for the rest of my life. While enjoying food from other countries and from different regions, my interest lay, very often, not merely in the taste or the flavor but in speculating how it was cooked.

Returning home after work, the first thing I usually did was to rush into the kitchen, and put on my apron. The kitchen had become my battlefield where I struggled with crabs, shrimps and chicken, be they alive or dead.

Since retiring several years ago, I have been cooking three meals a day for my family. But after 55 years of doing this, I find cooking for my family more and more difficult.

Each morning at the breakfast table I ask the others what they want to have for dinner — beef, mutton, fish, shrimp, chicken or pork.

Once we decide on the meat, I ask if they want it fried, boiled, steamed, braised or roasted. Once that is settled, my last question to them is what flavor they want — spicy Sichuan, sour Guangxi or sweet Shanghai.

Deciding what to eat is the easier part. Cooking at home is becoming more complicated by the day. Thanks to online grocery stores and express delivery, raw ingredients from around the world — such as salmon from Norway, beef from Australia and avocado from Mexico — have made it to my refrigerator.

Inside the deep freeze compartment of my refrigerator are six or seven kinds of fish, some I can't even name. But I have no clue if they are good for roasting or steaming. I have the same doubts when I pick up the vegetables — some I have never come across before.

But then, in the past 50 or so years, I have experienced both food shortage and surplus. So, when I complain about food abundance, I am not serious. Trust me, I am not serious at all.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:28 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:28 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

BAO ZHIPENG

A new engine for globalization

At a time of fragmentation, 'China Opportunity 2.0' shows that inclusive cooperation will address global challenges

At a time when the global economy and trade are undergoing profound systemic restructuring, China — under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, which marks its 105th anniversary this year — is advancing national rejuvenation through Chinese modernization and pursuing high-standard opening-up to bring certainty to a volatile world.



Elsewhere, deglobalization undercurrents, resurgent trade protectionism, populism and economic nationalism have fragmented industrial chains, while new rules governing services, digital trade and green trade are being rewritten worldwide.

At the Summer Davos forum in Dalian in June, China introduced "China Opportunity 2.0", showcasing how China's consistent reform and opening-up has turned it from a key participant of globalization to a leading player in helping reform the global economic order, laying out a new blueprint for mutually beneficial globalization.

The first phase of China's global opportunity revolved around low-cost manufacturing dividends. After the end of the Cold War, there was a vertical division of global value chains on a global scale, and China integrated into global production networks relying on its demographic and scale advantages to become the world's factory. This phase boosted global productivity, stabilized consumer prices worldwide and became a core driver of globalization. Yet the old growth model is now constrained by two seismic shifts: the digital, intelligent and low-carbon technological revolution reshaping industrial geography, and the geopolitical fragmentation that is eroding the traditional cross-border production cooperation. Unlike the cost-driven, factor-based openness of the past, "China Opportunity 2.0" centers on innovation-driven growth, institutional opening-up, complete industrial ecosystems and a supersized domestic market.

First, innovation dividends replace scale dividends as the core growth engine. China boasts one of the world's richest testing grounds for new technologies and concepts, turning laboratory breakthroughs into scalable commercial solutions at unmatched speed. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, from 2021 to 2025, China's high-tech goods imports and exports registered an average annual growth of 7.9 percent, while in 2025 exports of the "new three" — new energy vehicles, lithium batteries and photovoltaic products — surged 3.5 times compared with 2020, based on the data released by China's General Administration of Customs.

Second, institutional opening-up has replaced commodity and factor-based opening as the core pillar of China's high-standard opening-up drive. According to China's Ministry of Finance, China's overall tariff level has fallen to around 7.3 percent, below its World Trade Organization accession commitment of 9.8 percent. All restrictive market access measures for foreign investment in manufacturing have been lifted, while negative lists governing foreign investment and cross-border services trade keep shrinking. China is actively advancing its accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement, aligning domestic regulations with high-standard international frameworks covering intellectual property, cross-border data flows, competition neutrality and government procurement. Regional cooperation frameworks including the fully implemented Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership and the upgraded China-Association of Southeast Asian Nations Free Trade Area 3.0 unlock multi-tiered gains from trade liberalization. China also delivers unilateral opening benefits to the Global South.

Third, China's supersized domestic market unlocks new growth space for global enterprises. Home to about 1.4 billion people, accounting for over 17 percent of the world's total population, the country boasts over 400 million middle-income earners — the world's largest middle-income cohort. Its consumer market covers all tiers, from mass basic demand to high-end premium consumption. It is estimated that China's per capita GDP surged from $969 in 2000 to $13,953 in 2025, continuously lifting household purchasing power. Reforms to build a unified national market are tearing down interregional barriers, facilitating the free movement of production factors and translating fragmented market potential into consolidated competitive edges. Flagship expos such as the China International Import Expo, the China International Fair for Trade in Services and the China International Supply Chain Expo act as vital bridges for other developing economies to market their distinctive products to Chinese buyers, integrating more small and medium-sized enterprises into inclusive globalization.

Fourth, China's full-spectrum industrial ecosystems form a key pillar of "China Opportunity 2.0" by enabling deep global industrial collaboration. As the world's only economy covering all UN-listed industrial categories, China's 200-plus mature industrial clusters cut cross-chain coordination costs and speed up the commercialization of global innovations. The country is advancing integrated domestic and foreign trade, expanding intermediate, green and digital trade, and diversifying its overseas markets. Some targeted opening-up pilots in telecom and green sectors can also draw global talent and service providers to jointly advance low-carbon, intelligent industrial upgrading, allowing foreign partners to share the full upstream-to-downstream innovation dividends of China's complete industrial layout.

The structural transformation underpinning "China Opportunity 2.0" originates from the CPC's 105 years of strategic vision. Today's world faces surging unilateralism, partisan polarization in some Western countries and mounting global governance deficits. With the strength of over 100 million members, the CPC has forged a unique governance philosophy centered on people, truth-seeking and global vision, sustained by long-term resolve and self-reform capability. Under its leadership, China has built complete industrial chains, eliminated nationwide poverty and achieved steady modernization, providing other Global South countries with a reference development path beyond Western templates. Globally, China stands firmly on advancing shared development via the four global initiatives and high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, upgrading infrastructure hard connectivity to integrated rules-based soft connectivity and people-to-people heart connectivity that deliver long-term institutional gains for partners worldwide.

"China Opportunity 2.0" is no longer a low-hanging fruit of cheap labor and mass production. It demands deep engagement with China's industrial restructuring, technological research, consumption upgrading and green transition, embedding partners into a new ecosystem built on innovation, institutional openness, massive market potential and shared global responsibility. As China implements its 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), it will continue to advance its institutional opening-up on all fronts, expand its high-standard free trade networks and turn its new development momentum into fresh global opportunities. China's commitment to true multilateralism sends a clear message: Economic globalization is an irreversible historical trend. Amid global fragmentation, "China Opportunity 2.0" stands as a reliable anchor for shared growth, proving that instead of "decoupling" or "de-risking", global cooperation in an inclusive manner is the only path to address common global challenges. To embrace shared future gains, the world stands to benefit by integrating into China's innovation ecosystem and tapping its market dividends to jointly forge a more resilient, prosperous global economy.

The author is an assistant research fellow at the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the former secretary-general of the Global Center for Mekong Studies (China Center). The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

LU SHASHA

Turning green into gold

Chinese experience in under-forest economy development is providing replicable and green solutions for many developing countries through channels such as the BRI

Beneath China's vast forest canopy, a quiet yet profound green development is transforming the livelihoods of millions of forest dwellers. The under-forest economy, a development model that "brings prosperity without cutting down trees", is emerging as a vivid example of how ecological conservation and rural revitalization can go hand in hand.



Typical cases include the cultivation of *tianma* (*Gastrodia elata*, an orchidaceous medicine herb) in the Wuling Mountains of Southwest China's Guizhou province, the processing of medicinal *lingzhi* mushrooms in East China's Fujian province, forest-medicinal herb symbiosis in Xishuangbanna in Southwest China's Yunnan province and the integrated "forest-fruit-bee-herb" farming in Xingqing district of Yinchuan in Northwest China's Ningxia Hui autonomous region.

By 2025, China's under-forest economy covered 650 million *mu* (43.33 million hectares) of forestland, with a total output value exceeding 1 trillion yuan ($147.18 billion), according to data from the National Forestry and Grassland Administration. The 2025 Government Work Report mentioned the under-forest economy for the first time, marking its elevation to a national strategy. The Outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) for National Economic and Social Development explicitly calls for "developing the under-forest economy and strengthening forest and grassland industries", setting a clear policy direction. Behind this trillion-yuan industry is China's proven practice that ecological protection and economic development can progress in synergy and reinforce each other — an experience that offers a "Chinese solution" for global sustainable development.

Traditional forestry has long faced the challenge of long cycles and slow returns. The under-forest economy fundamentally reshapes this model. Longli Forest Farm in Guizhou has innovated a complementary model that combines long-cycle cultivation of large-diameter timber with short-cycle under-forest planting. Over the past decades, it has generated cumulative comprehensive revenue of 2.125 billion yuan, with total profits of 900 million yuan, and provided stable employment to over 800 rural households. At the Chashoushan Forest Health and Wellness Base in Guizhou's Fenggang county, forest coverage has risen from 78 percent to 82 percent since its launch in 2015, wildlife species have increased from 32 to 58, and wild plant species from 186 to 274, data from the base revealed. Models such as the "common prosperity forest farm" in Fujian, the integrated "forest-fruit-bee-herb" farming in Ningxia, and "supporting konjac cultivation with forests" in Yunnan have all realized the vision of "prosperity without cutting down trees".

At the end of 2025, the National Forestry and Grassland Administration issued the measures for promoting the development of the under-forest economy, systematically covering land use, forest use, investment and technology. It reaffirmed the fundamental principle of "ecological priority" and put forward two basic principles: functional compatibility and integrated spatial use, providing comprehensive policy support for the sector's sustainable development.

These experiments in China are increasing the prominence of the under-forest economy globally. The "long-cycle plus short-cycle" complementary model of Longli Forest Farm has been included as a teaching case in the forestry officials' training program under the Belt and Road mechanism. The interest-sharing mechanism at Fujian's "common prosperity forest farm" was presented as a model of "ecological benefits for the people" at United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization meetings. Fujian's Wuping forest beekeeping and other integrated models have drawn trainees from multiple developing countries for on-site study. China's diverse under-forest economy practices are transforming from local experiments into green solutions shared globally.

China's green technology has benefited the world. Juncao technology is a shining example of how China's under-forest economy has interacted with other countries. Invented in the 1980s by Lin Zhanxi of Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University, this technology uses grass instead of timber as a substrate for cultivating edible and medicinal fungi, fundamentally resolving the long-standing conflict between mushroom farming and forest conservation. Since its first overseas application in Papua New Guinea in 2001, Juncao technology has been extended to 107 countries and regions. In Rwanda, Tanzania, Tonga and beyond, it has generated substantial income for local farmers. Juncao has also taken root on the edge of the Sahara Desert, about 60 kilometers east of Nouakchott, the capital of Mauritania, where it helps check desertification by fixing sand, thus becoming a "green bank" for local herders.

At a high-level UN meeting on Juncao technology in April 2019, Carla Mucavi, director of the FAO Liaison Office to the UN, said: "Juncao technology is a part of the successful Chinese experience to fight poverty and hunger and an approach that, as part of broader rural development initiatives, can trigger actions that help address malnutrition and sustainability challenges and that respond to the needs of rural people."

International trade in under-forest economy products is also yielding impressive results. Xinhuang county in Central China's Hunan province, which has 1.73 million *mu* of forestland, expanded the planting area of *huangjing* (*Polygonatum*) to over 50,000 *mu*. In 2024, the embassy of Madagascar in China listed Xinhuang *huangjing* as designated supplies. In 2025, Thailand placed orders for Xinhuang *huangjing* worth 92 million yuan, while Vietnam signed an 80-million-yuan purchase order. In October 2025, the Lesotho Chamber of Commerce and Industry signed a cooperation agreement with a Xinhuang enterprise to introduce *huangjing* products and processing technology. Meanwhile, 810 metric tons of red mushroom products from Pubei county in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region were exported to Southeast Asia in 2024. From Africa to Southeast Asia, China's under-forest economy products are crossing oceans and entering more markets.

China is also sharing its systematic experience in under-forest economy development through multilateral mechanisms and foreign-aid training. At the 31st session of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission of the FAO in November 2025, the Chinese delegation presented practices of the under-forest economy and forest foods that have boosted employment and incomes for tens of millions of rural residents, alongside smart management technologies such as drone patrols and the "bamboo as a substitute for plastic" green transition pathway. In May, participants from eight countries including Liberia, Maldives, Argentina and Namibia visited Fujian's Wuping county for an immersive study of under-forest economy and rural sustainable development practices. China has also held more than 300 international training sessions, cultivating over 16,000 local Juncao technical personnel for various countries.

From Juncao technology to the *huangjing* industry, from multilateral presentations to foreign-aid training, China's experience in under-forest economy development is providing replicable and actionable green solutions for many developing countries through channels such as the Belt and Road Initiative. China will continue to write a new chapter of "turning green into gold" with an open attitude, contributing more Chinese wisdom and Chinese solutions to global sustainable forest management and green low-carbon development.

The author is the executive director of the Rural Revitalization Research Institute and a professor at the School of Economics and Management at Beijing Forestry University. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:28 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:28 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

Policy support paving way for rebound

Regulator reiterates its commitment to shoring up market confidence

By ZHOU LANXU
zhoulanxv@chinadaily.com.cn

While short-term volatility may continue, the recent sell-off in China's A-share market has created potential for a medium-term rebound supported by ramped-up policy support, more reasonable valuations and improved corporate earnings, analysts said.

They made the remarks as China's securities regulator reiterated its commitment to shoring up market confidence at a symposium on Monday while implying a focus on the oversight of quantitative trading, underscoring a growing emphasis on protecting retail investors and improving their return prospects.

More policy efforts — including further share purchases by State-owned investment companies, additional central bank liquidity support, potential measures to optimize quantitative trading regulation, and stepped-up macroeconomic stimulus moves — may be considered to consolidate the foundation of market rebound, they added.

On Monday, China's A-share market recovered from a slump on Friday, when the Shanghai Composite Index fell 3.05 percent to close below the 3,800-point mark as growth-oriented stocks plummeted amid a global tech stock correction led by the South Korean bourse.

The SCI ended at 3,796.28 points on Monday, up 0.85 percent, while the growth-oriented ChiNext Index and STAR 50 Index edged up. Meanwhile, Citi upgraded China to overweight in its emerging markets allocation.

"Positive factors are continuing to accumulate, laying a solid foundation for the market to stabilize and recover," said Xu Ruchun, an analyst at Founder Securities, with stronger corporate earnings and more attractive valuations strengthening the market's fundamentals.

Xu believes that first-half net profits of A-share listed nonfinancial companies have likely recovered to a 17.8 percent year-on-year increase, while the ChiNext Index's price-to-earnings ratio had fallen to 43.7 times as of Friday, a historically moderate level.

"At the regulatory level, policy signals for stabilizing the market are clear," Xu added.

During a visit to a brokerage in Beijing on Monday, China Securities Regulatory Commission Chairman Wu Qing chaired a symposium with investors to solicit suggestions on promoting the stable and healthy development of the capital market.

In a rare move, the meeting brought together representatives from a broad range of investors — ranging from large institutional investors to individual retail investors — marking the clearest signal yet that regulators are ramping up efforts to bolster market confidence.

"The broad base of investors is the foundation of the capital market and its most important group of participants," Wu said, vowing to safeguard stable market operations and uphold an open, fair and equitable market order so investors can better share the benefits of high-quality economic and capital market development.

Participants called for stronger countercyclical measures in both the primary and secondary markets, more efforts to attract long-term capital, and a "well-regulated development of quantitative trading and artificial intelligence applications" in the capital market, the CSRC said in a meeting statement.

State-owned investment companies have also been ramping up stock and exchange-traded fund purchases. China Chengtong Holdings and China Reform Holdings announced on Sunday that they had increased their holdings of A shares and would continue doing so by using their own funds and a central bank lending facility, providing strong liquidity support to the market.

Chen Gang, an analyst at Soochow Securities, said that sustained inflows into ETFs will improve investor sentiment.

From July 1 to Friday, equity ETFs attracted more than 300 billion yuan ($44 billion) in net inflows, including over 100 billion yuan from Thursday to Friday alone, Chen said.

Analysts, however, cautioned that further policy support would be indispensable for a durable market recovery.

Liu Jipeng, a professor at China University of Political Science and Law and a senior capital market expert, said that regulatory efforts should prioritize market fairness, arguing that some quantitative trading strategies that rely on technological advantages to profit at the expense of ordinary investors should be better regulated.



A C919 aircraft arrives at Tianjin Binhai International Airport. JIA TIANYONG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

C919 prepares for 1st regular intl flight

By LI JING
lijing2009@chinadaily.com.cn

The C919, China's domestically developed narrowbody passenger jet, will begin its first scheduled international commercial service next month, a step industry experts said will test the aircraft's ability to operate beyond domestic markets and help build confidence for wider overseas expansion.

The daily round-trip service, operated by Air China, will connect Beijing Capital International Airport and Ulaanbaatar's Chinggis Khaan International Airport in Mongolia from Aug 12, the airline said.

According to the schedule, outbound flight CA723 will depart Beijing at 3 pm Beijing time and arrive in Ulaanbaatar at 5:15 pm local time. The return flight, CA724, will leave Ulaanbaatar at 6:30 pm local time and arrive in Beijing at 8:35 pm Beijing time.

The route marks the first time the C919, manufactured by Commercial Aircraft Corp of China, will enter a regular international commercial passenger aviation market.

Previously, the aircraft has operated mainly on Chinese mainland routes, as well as services connecting the mainland with the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. China Eastern Airlines launched the aircraft on scheduled flights between Shanghai and Hong Kong in January 2025, while Air China began regular C919 services between Beijing and Hong Kong in November.

"Choosing Ulaanbaatar as the first regular international destination is not a move to lower the entry barrier or test the waters," said Zhu Keli, founding director of the China Institute of New Economy.

Zhu said the decision reflected a combination of factors including aviation cooperation between China and Mongolia, airworthiness cooperation arrangements, operational safety and route economics.

"China and Mongolia have maintained stable civil aviation cooperation, with a relatively mature framework for airworthiness cooperation," Zhu said. "The airport environment is relatively straightforward, the flight distance is moderate and the aircraft can complete a round trip within a day, allowing domestic technical support to respond quickly if operational issues arise."

The route also has established business and tourism demand, making it suitable for regular commercial operations rather than serving only as a demonstration flight, Zhu said.

He said the first international route is aimed at validating the full process of cross-border operations, including overseas maintenance support, international air traffic coordination and customs procedures.

"Ulaanbaatar is more like a low-risk practical training ground where the C919 can accumulate real overseas operating data and build a replicable model for future international expansion," Zhu said.

Guo Jia, a civil aviation expert and professor at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies' South China Business College, said safety considerations were the primary factor behind the selection of the first international destination.

He said Air China's previous experience operating the C909 regional jet to Ulaanbaatar, along with the airline's assessment of airport handling and maintenance capabilities, also supported the route choice.

For the Chinese aviation industry, the significance of the route extends beyond the flight itself, experts said.

"Previously, C919 operations were mainly based on China's domestic airspace and supporting infrastructure," Zhu said. "This scheduled international route means the aircraft is entering a regular commercial passenger aviation system between countries."

The operation will help establish overseas support capabilities, including maintenance cooperation, spare parts arrangements and international operating procedures, Zhu said.

Guo said international expansion would require more than aircraft performance. "Aircraft sales, international operations and market expansion all need to comply with the airworthiness standards of different countries and regions," Guo said, adding that broader international communication and certification efforts would be necessary.

Guo added that overseas maintenance, aircraft support and route support capabilities would be among the key challenges for international operations.

Looking ahead, experts expect the C919's international expansion to be gradual. "C919's internationalization will not follow an aggressive model of rapidly launching a large number of routes," Zhu said.

After validating operations in Ulaanbaatar, the aircraft will likely expand first into short-haul international markets in Central Asia and Southeast Asia, allowing it to accumulate experience under different operating conditions, Zhu said.

"The priority is to complete the transition from zero to one — making the first international route operate safely and accumulating experience," Guo said. "Only after establishing overseas safety operation and maintenance standards should the C919 move from one route to multiple routes.

"Airworthiness certification is indeed one of the biggest barriers for the C919 entering mainstream European and US markets," Zhu said.

He said certification by authorities such as the European Union Aviation Safety Agency and the US Federal Aviation Administration would be essential, while airlines' familiarity with the aircraft, maintenance networks, leasing systems and market recognition would also influence adoption.

Briefly

Yuan weakens against greenback

The central parity rate of the yuan weakened 14 pips to 6.7948 against the US dollar on Monday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System.

Loan prime rates remain unchanged

China's one-year loan prime rate, a market-based benchmark lending rate, came in at 3 percent on Monday, unchanged from the previous month. The over-five-year LPR, on which many lenders base their mortgage rates, also remained unchanged from the previous reading of 3.5 percent, according to the National Interbank Funding Center.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Leapfrog progress reported in innovative drug sector

The total value of China's innovative drug out-licensing deals exceeded $100 billion in the first half of the year, reaching a record high, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology said on Monday.

China approved 38 innovative drugs for marketing during the period, including 31 developed by domestic companies, Tao Qing, head of the bureau for operation, monitoring and coordination with the MIIT, told a news conference.

Despite a complex and challenging external environment and mounting pressure from industry transformation, China's pharmaceutical industry remained resilient, Tao said.

From January to June, value-added industrial output of major pharmaceutical enterprises rose 6.4 percent year-on-year, with biopharmaceuticals posting double-digit growth.

The industry's export delivery value exceeded 210 billion yuan ($30.91 billion) in the first six months, up 9 percent from a year earlier.

Higher value-added products, including chemical finished dosage forms and biopharmaceuticals, accounted for nearly one-fifth of total exports, indicating an accelerating shift in the export mix from active pharmaceutical ingredients to finished pharmaceutical products.

China is actively exploring innovative approaches to organizing biomedical research, betting that institutional reforms can help close one of the industry's most persistent gaps — turning laboratory discoveries into marketable medicines.

At the center of such efforts is the Interdisciplinary Research Center on Biology and Chemistry. The center has spent more than a decade building an interdisciplinary research model that links basic science, chemistry, structural biology, clinical medicine and drug development. The model is designed to overcome what scientists call the "valley of death" — the long and uncertain path between fundamental scientific discoveries and clinical applications, where many promising findings fail to become viable therapies.

Founded in 2012, the center deliberately began focusing on neurodegenerative diseases years before they became a strategic research priority globally. While cancer research historically attracted far greater funding and produced far more drug candidates, diseases such as Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease have become increasingly urgent challenges amid aging global populations.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Jingye eyes 'legal remedies' as UK nationalizes steel

By YIN MINGYUE
yinmingyue@chinadaily.com.cn

The United Kingdom's nationalization of British Steel, previously owned by China's Jingye Group, has drawn strong responses from the Chinese government and industry experts, who said the move undermines market principles and investor confidence while reflecting a broader global shift toward prioritizing industrial security.

Jingye Group, which acquired the loss-making steelmaker in 2020, said it had invested heavily over the past five years to upgrade facilities, improve technology and maintain operations despite prolonged financial pressure.

Following the nationalization, the company said on Sunday that it would pursue all available legal remedies, including international arbitration, to safeguard its lawful rights.

According to Jingye, the UK government proceeded with the takeover without providing timely, adequate and effective compensation for its investment. The company said it has initiated consultations under the China-UK bilateral investment treaty and reserves the right to seek full compensation for its losses.

China's Ministry of Commerce said on Friday that it firmly opposed the UK's decision, saying the move seriously harmed Jingye's legitimate rights and interests and undermined the confidence of Chinese companies investing in Britain.

It urged the UK to abide by international rules, fulfill its obligations under the China-UK bilateral investment treaty, treat Chinese-invested enterprises fairly and impartially, and properly resolve compensation issues, adding that China will continue to support companies in safeguarding their lawful rights through legal means.

Echoing the ministry's remarks, the Foreign Ministry urged Britain to respect market principles and the spirit of contract and seek a mutually acceptable solution on compensation. It warned that Britain's handling of the case would directly affect Chinese investors' assessment of the UK's investment environment and the credibility of its government.

Industry experts said the dispute also reflects profound changes in global industrial policy, as governments increasingly place strategic industries ahead of purely commercial considerations.

"Steel, once regarded by many developed economies as a sunset industry, has regained strategic importance," said Xu Xiangchun, information director and analyst at iron and steel consultancy Mysteel. "As geopolitical uncertainties grow, countries are placing greater emphasis on maintaining domestic manufacturing capacity and securing critical industrial supply chains."

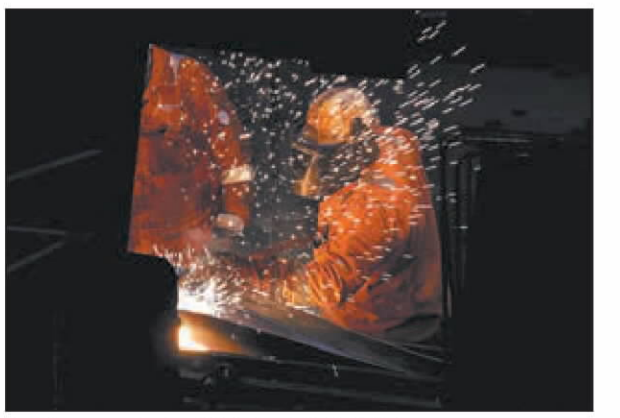
Xu said the UK's decision reflects the growing importance attached to industrial security and supply chain resilience. However, he said that strategic considerations should not come at the expense of market principles or the legitimate rights of investors.

Wang Guoqing, director of the Beijing Lange Steel Information Research Center, said the nationalization ran counter to market principles, internationally accepted investment rules and the China-UK bilateral investment treaty.

She said Jingye had invested heavily to keep British Steel operating and preserve local jobs, yet the compensation mechanism announced by the UK failed to adequately reflect the company's long-term investment and contribution.

"Strategic industries deserve policy support, but government intervention should respect international investment rules and fully protect the lawful rights of investors," Wang said.

Zhou Mi, a senior researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, said companies should strengthen policy risk assessments even when investing in developed economies, as policy and regulatory changes may arise from strategic considerations.



Employees work at a British Steel site in Britain. REUTERS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:28 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:28 PM

BUSINESS

Opening scientific research facilities to industry

Shanghai leads transition with $5.16b planned for 20 projects

By **LI JING** and **GUO YALI** in Shanghai



An aerial view of the Shanghai Synchrotron Radiation Facility. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

When Chinese drug developers need to see exactly how an experimental medicine binds to its target protein, or materials scientists want to understand why a battery or catalyst performs differently at the atomic level, many now turn to the national scientific research facilities.

That marks a notable shift in the role of the country's "big science" infrastructure. Once used primarily by universities and research institutes for basic research, these scientific facilities are increasingly supporting corporate research and development, while also working directly with enterprises to develop experimental capabilities tailored to industrial needs.

Shanghai, one of China's largest hubs for major scientific infrastructure, is at the forefront of that transition. The city currently hosts, is constructing or planning 20 major scientific facilities, spanning physics, chemistry, life sciences and marine science, with a total planned investment of about 35 billion yuan ($5.16 billion). Eleven facilities have been completed, including the Shanghai Synchrotron Radiation Facility, also known as the SSRF, the National Facility for Protein Science in Shanghai and the National Facility for Translational Medicine, according to the Shanghai Municipal Commission of Science and Technology.

Recent data from the commission highlight the surge in industrial demand. In the first half, total operating hours at the SSRF rose 16 percent year-on-year, with corporate usage jumping 44.2 percent, reflecting rising demand from companies using the national facility to support product development and technology innovation.

"The facilities are designed not only to support frontier scientific research, but also to tackle major technological challenges facing industries," said Wang Tianjing, deputy director of the science infrastructure and platform development division at the Shanghai Municipal Commission of Science and Technology.

The increase follows a series of policy adjustments over the past three years aimed at improving access to the national research infrastructure and encouraging facilities to contribute more directly to industrial innovation.

These measures include a strategic user advisory committee that incorporates feedback from universities, research institutes and technology companies into facility planning and upgrades, as well as a new evaluation mechanism that rewards facilities for contributions to enterprise innovation and industrial technology development.

Researchers at the SSRF say the facility's relationship with companies has evolved fundamentally over the past decade.

"When the facility first opened, there were very few industrial users," said Wang Qisheng, director of the life sciences division at the Shanghai Synchrotron Radiation Facility Science Center, which is affiliated with the Shanghai Advanced Research Institute, Chinese Academy of Sciences. "Today, applications have expanded from structural biology to energy, chemicals, advanced materials, batteries and many other industrial sectors."

More importantly, companies now require deep scientific expertise rather than mere access to sophisticated equipment.

"Sometimes existing experimental platforms cannot answer new scientific questions," he said. "In those cases, we work with companies to jointly develop customized experimental equipment and experimental systems."

This represents an evolution: the facility is no longer just a shared national laboratory, but a scientific partner capable of addressing complex industrial research and development hurdles.

The SSRF currently operates 38 beamlines and 55 experimental stations, allowing multiple experiments to run simultaneously.

External users apply for beam time through peer review, while enterprise users are allocated access according to specific research requirements.

Among the facility's earliest industrial users is Viva Biotech, a Shanghai-based contract research organization that has collaborated with the SSRF since shortly after the facility opened to users in 2009.

Established in 2008, the company provides structure-based drug discovery services, helping global pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies identify and optimize drug candidates using structural biology technologies.

While computer modeling can generate large numbers of potential drug molecules, researchers still need experimental evidence showing whether those molecules interact with proteins as intended. Using synchrotron X-rays, researchers collect diffraction data from protein crystals to reconstruct three-dimensional structures of protein-drug complexes, allowing them to visualize how candidate molecules interact with their biological targets.

"The structural information allows clients to determine whether a molecule has been designed appropriately and how it should be optimized," said Zhou Yu, a researcher at Viva Biotech.

Zhou added that the collaboration has also become more efficient as the SSRF upgrades its software systems.

"Newer beamlines and domestically developed software have significantly increased throughput and reduced equipment failures, allowing researchers to process substantially more samples during each experimental session than several years ago," he added.

The trend of co-developing research capabilities is accelerating. A prime example is the collaboration between the SSRF and State-owned energy giant China Petroleum and Chemical Corp, which jointly established what they describe as China's first dedicated synchrotron platform for the energy and chemical sector.

The platform, which includes three beamlines, provides tailored research capabilities for oil and gas exploration, petrochemicals and new energy materials. Unlike shared beamlines, these are co-developed to address industry-specific technical barriers.

The same model is emerging beyond synchrotron science. At the National Facility for Protein Science in Shanghai, researchers have jointly developed an automated cell-free protein synthesis platform with Kangma (Shanghai) Biotechnology Co, a Shanghai-based biotech company. The platform is now in its final commissioning stage and is expected to begin operating soon.

The system can rapidly convert proteins designed by artificial intelligence into physical samples for experimental verification, helping address one of the biggest bottlenecks in AI-driven protein research.

"The bottleneck is no longer protein design," said Wu Jiarui, director of the National Facility for Protein Science in Shanghai. "AI can generate protein sequences very quickly, but they still have to be synthesized and experimentally verified."

The platform is designed as shared research infrastructure serving universities, research institutes and biotechnology companies, integrating AI-assisted protein design, automated synthesis and structural verification into a single workflow.

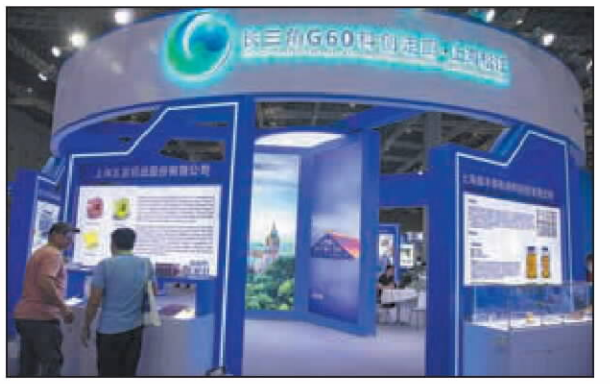
As Chinese companies move into increasingly sophisticated fields ranging from innovative medicines to advanced materials and clean energy, researchers at the facilities say demand is increasingly centered not on access to expensive machines, but on customized scientific capabilities that help solve problems conventional R&D tools cannot.

"We don't simply provide equipment," Wang Qisheng said. "For many frontier industrial problems, we work together with companies to develop the experimental approaches needed to solve them."

Contact the writers at lijing2009@chinadaily.com.cn

New innovation valley bolsters Yangtze River Delta's high-tech prestige

By **LI JING** and **GUO YALI** in Shanghai



Visitors check the booth of the G60 Science and Technology Innovation Valley of Yangtze River Delta at the China International Industry Fair in Shanghai on Sept 24, 2024. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

A regional innovation valley linking Shanghai with eight neighboring cities is emerging as one of China's main engines for strategic technologies, using cross-provincial coordination to accelerate industries from satellite internet to commercial space and 6G communications.

The G60 Science and Technology Innovation Valley of Yangtze River Delta, spanning nine cities across Shanghai and the provinces of Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Anhui, has evolved from a local cooperation initiative into a national strategy aimed at integrating research, manufacturing, finance and commercialization across one of China's most economically dynamic regions.

As China is building the Shanghai (Yangtze River Delta) International Science and Technology Innovation Center into a world-class innovation hub, the G60 valley has become a testing ground for breaking down administrative barriers that have traditionally hampered regional innovation.

"The original idea was simple — no single city could build an entire industrial chain on its own, so the nine cities began coordinating their respective strengths. That naturally created the basis for collaboration. Different cities contribute different advantages, from research and talent to manufacturing capacity and financial services, forming an integrated industrial ecosystem," said Xu Shidong, head of the industrial group at the G60 Joint Office.

The valley covers Shanghai's Songjiang district and eight neighboring cities in Zhejiang, Jiangsu and Anhui. Together they generate about one-fifteenth of China's GDP with only one-twenty-eighth of its population, while accounting for roughly one-fifth of companies listed on Shanghai's STAR Market and about 12 percent of China's unicorns, according to the G60 Joint Office.

Satellite internet service has become one of the valley's showcase sectors, as China accelerates the deployment of low-Earth-orbit satellite constellations.

Shanghai Spacesail Technologies Co, the builder and operator of the Spacesail Constellation — a massive low-Earth-orbit commercial satellite network — has emerged as the anchor company of the regional satellite ecosystem.

Xu Yunxiang, vice-president of Spacesail, said: "The constellation creates demand across the entire industry chain, including satellite manufacturing, payloads, ground terminals, testing equipment and application services."

The company has launched 238 satellites and aims to have 324 in orbit by the end of 2026, laying the groundwork for initial commercial broadband services in global markets, particularly countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative.

In June, the company completed one of China's first successful direct-to-cell tests, enabling 5G voice and video calls using an unmodified commercial smartphone connected directly to a satellite, a milestone it says demonstrates the potential convergence of terrestrial and satellite communications.

Xu Yunxiang said the G60 ecosystem allows companies to collaborate across research, manufacturing, launch services and operations within a unified regional network. As the lead company in the industry chain, Spacesail sets technical standards and quality management systems that help suppliers develop together.

Meanwhile, Xu Shidong said the concentration of suppliers across the Yangtze River Delta region gives the region's commercial space sector an advantage.

"Shanghai offers talent and financial resources, while suppliers across neighboring G60 cities such as Suzhou, Hangzhou, Huzhou and Hefei complete the industry chain. Commercial space ultimately has to compete on cost. Previously, the priority was proving the technology worked. Commercialization requires making it affordable," he added.

As satellite internet and 6G technologies advance, executives say testing equipment is becoming one of the industry's most important enabling technologies.

Transcom Instruments Co, a communications testing equipment maker among the first companies listed on the Beijing Stock Exchange, has become a major supplier of testing systems for China's satellite internet programs.

"Testing equipment is effectively the ruler for the entire communications industry," said Feng Yuejun, chairman of Transcom. "If the measurement standard is inaccurate, every downstream product — chips, terminals, satellites and networks — will struggle to interoperate."

For more than a decade, the company has worked with Southeast University in neighboring Jiangsu province to develop communications testing technologies, turning academic research into commercial products used in China's wireless and satellite industries, Feng said.

He said the G60 valley has made such cross-regional collaboration easier by combining Shanghai's research strengths with manufacturing resources across the Yangtze River Delta region, adding: "High-end R&D can remain in Shanghai, while production and industrialization can be distributed across the broader Yangtze River Delta."

The valley's industrial ecosystem is also expanding beyond satellite manufacturing into space-based computing.

Comospace Co, incubated by the Institute of Computing Technology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, is developing onboard computing systems that enable satellites to process artificial intelligence workloads in orbit instead of transmitting raw data back to Earth.

Liu Yaoqi, CEO of Comospace, said future satellite constellations would increasingly rely on onboard computing assets to process growing volumes of Earth observation and communications data.

Beyond industrial development, the G60 valley has also become a policy laboratory for regional institutional integration.

Xu Shidong said governments have begun allowing cross-regional innovation consortiums to qualify jointly for public R&D funding instead of restricting subsidies to companies registered in a single jurisdiction.

Shanghai and eight other cities have jointly established a regional technology commercialization fund, allowing capital to follow projects rather than administrative boundaries, while companies can retain operations where they are best suited.

The valley has also introduced specialized lending products for tech firms and coordinated with the Shanghai Stock Exchange to expand financing channels for high-growth enterprises.

Rather than requiring companies to relocate, the model allows firms to keep their headquarters and core operations where they are while expanding other functions across the region, with participating cities sharing the economic benefits through coordinated policy support and regional investment mechanisms.

Since 2025, the G60 valley has adopted a rotating coordination mechanism, with each of the nine cities taking turns to lead the joint office while establishing dedicated offices to coordinate policy implementation, factor mobility and regular exchanges on industrial cooperation, Xu Shidong said, adding: "We're trying to move beyond simply building a brand. The next stage is making companies genuinely feel the benefits of regional integration through practical policies."

The approach reflects China's broader effort to promote high-level technological self-reliance by integrating research, manufacturing and capital across regional clusters, making the G60 valley one of the country's most closely watched experiments in coordinated innovation.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:28 PM

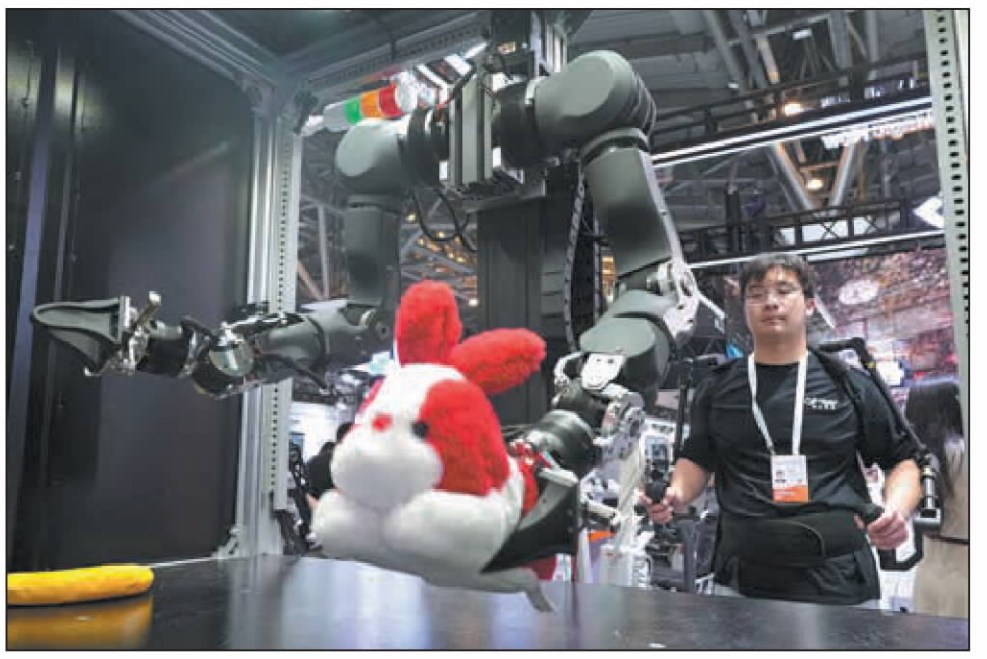
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:28 PM

WAIC WORLD AI CONFERENCE

Robot training

A worker controls a dual-arm robot to pick up a plush toy on an embodied dual-arm robot comprehensive training platform developed by tech company OYMotion at the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai on Monday. The WAIC concluded on Monday.
GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

Online
See more by scanning the code.



China unveils corpus to push advanced tech research

By LI MENGHAN
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

China, on Friday, unveiled a national scientific corpus infrastructure at the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai, aiming to provide the high-quality data needed to support the next generation of AI-driven scientific research.

Called the Aocang S&T Corpus, the platform was jointly developed by the National Science Library of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and nearly 100 research institutions. It is designed as a national repository of high-quality scientific data covering all major disciplines, providing AI systems with reliable information for research and innovation.

The name Aocang comes from the largest state granary of the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC), built in present-day Henan province to supply grain for the newly unified empire. Qu Jiansheng, director of the National Science Library, said the project draws inspiration from the ancient granary by serving as a strategic repository for scientific knowledge in the digital age.

The launch comes as AI for Science — the use of AI to help scientists conduct research and make discoveries more efficiently — has become a national strategic priority. China is accelerating the development of AI-enabled scientific research to support its goal of becoming a global leader in scientific innovation, Qu said.

Unlike the vast amount of information collected from the internet, scientific data is often scattered across different institutions, stored in different formats and requires specialized knowledge to interpret. These challenges make it difficult to use such data to train AI models.

Aocang is designed to solve this problem by organizing scientific information into a unified format that AI systems can more easily understand and process.

"Aocang holds irreplaceable, foundational and strategic value for strengthening the data foundation for China's AI development and advancing high-level scientific and technological self-reliance," Qu said.

Drawing on the CAS' extensive research resources, Aocang integrates more than 320 petabytes of scientific data, 150 million research papers, 120 million patents and 5 million scientific books.

The platform is organized into a national core database and a number of specialized databases covering fields ranging from basic science to industrial technology. It can process many types of scientific information, including research papers, mathematical formulas, spectral data and waveforms.

To make the information more useful for AI, developers built a three-stage processing system that cleans, organizes and enriches raw scientific data before turning them into training materials. According to Qian Li, deputy director of the National Science Library, the process enables AI models to better understand scientific concepts and relationships rather than simply recognize words or patterns.

"These knowledge-rich datasets can strengthen large AI models' expertise in specialized fields, improve their reasoning ability and help them better understand scientific disciplines," Qian said.

More than 520 proprietary software tools support the platform's automated system for data processing, quality control and secure data sharing. The developers said the corpus will continue to expand as more research institutions contribute data.

Initial tests show that Aocang has improved the reasoning capabilities of ScienceOne, a foundational AI model for scientific research developed by the CAS.

The corpus is also being integrated into several commercial AI models, including Doubao, Qwen and Ant Group's medical AI model.

During its first phase, the project aims to integrate more than 36 billion scientific resource records across 2,883 high-quality scientific corpora and 68 PB of research data, supporting more than 500 research and industry application scenarios.

Qu said the academy will continue expanding the corpus, improving its data-processing capabilities and exploring operating models that combine public access with sustainable commercial services.

"We hope the corpus will support the development of new quality productive forces and provide a reliable, world-class data foundation for scientific innovation around the world," he said.

What they say



From a theoretical perspective, I would say that AI for science is the most interesting, important and promising direction for AI research over the next three to five years. AI has demonstrated tremendous power across many domains, but AI algorithms still operate within the boundaries set by the laws of physics and mathematics. Many exciting avenues of exploration lie ahead, including emerging fields such as quantum AI, reliable large-scale AI systems, AI safety and AI for AI. AI and quantum technologies are two powerful tools that continue to expand the frontiers of human knowledge. AI can also accelerate the development of quantum computing. Error correction has been one of the greatest challenges in building quantum computers for the past 40 years, but AI has recently begun to provide promising solutions. Quantum AI is beginning to emerge. I believe we will see tremendous progress over the next five to 10 years. It represents a frontier beyond present-day AI and has the potential to become even more powerful.
Andrew Chi-Chih Yao, *Turing Award winner, an academician with the Chinese Academy of Sciences, dean of the Institute for Interdisciplinary Information Sciences at Tsinghua University*



Hallucinations in large language models stem, to a large extent, from their lack of a physical "body". To overcome these hallucinations, we must move beyond the boundaries of the digital world, engage in first-hand experience, and submit ourselves to the judgment of the physical world by making predictions, taking action and learning from reality's feedback. This age-old process is called experimentation, and it is also the key to physical intelligence. Physical intelligence is not a substitute for humans, but a collaborator. It fills the gaps where human capabilities fall short, allowing people to focus on judgment and creativity. The mission of physical intelligence is to return humanity to humans. The breakthrough in physical intelligence lies not in model architecture, but in the aggregation of knowledge. The industry's focus will shift from spectacular demonstrations to reliable system operation. Generalizability is the destination, but reliability is the starting point.
Su Hao, *inaugural dean of the Institute of General Physical Intelligence at Fudan University*



The "Bitter Lesson" is based on the historical observation that AI researchers have often tried to build knowledge directly into their agents. This approach always helps in the short term and is personally satisfying to researchers. But in the long run, it often reaches a plateau and can even inhibit further progress. Breakthroughs eventually come from the opposite approach: scaling computation through search and learning. The lesson, therefore, is that from the very beginning we should focus on scaling computation through search and learning. We should seek the fundamental principles of intelligence rather than become distracted by the specific characteristics of the human mind. We should allow the agent to discover these principles on its own.
Richard S. Sutton, *Turing Award winner, principal founder of the field of Reinforcement Learning, professor of computing science at the University of Alberta*



It is not true that simply having enough high-quality data will lead to artificial general intelligence. The first principle of building AGI is that it must possess a subjective mind, or humanlike "heart". It should have a value system that encompasses the self, others and the collective. It should also possess a cognitive framework that enables it to learn, communicate and collaborate with people. I hope we do not remain followers. A fundamental prerequisite for scientific and technological innovation is independent thinking and cultural confidence. Traditional Chinese philosophy and culture are, in fact, highly advanced. We should draw more on this Chinese wisdom in technological innovation, and I believe we will be the first to achieve AGI.
Zhu Songchun, *founding director of the Beijing Institute for General Artificial Intelligence*

WANG XIN

WAIC ends in Shanghai on a high note

Event nets $3b in intended purchases and marks significant intl agreements

By ZHENG ZHENG in Shanghai
zhengzheng@chinadaily.com.cn

The 2026 World AI Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance concluded in Shanghai on Monday, yielding a record 20.36 billion yuan ($3 billion) in intended purchases — a 25 percent year-on-year increase.

Themed "AI Partnership for a Brighter Future", the event brought together representatives from 102 countries and international organizations, drawing over 400,000 on-site visitors and garnering more than 3 billion views online worldwide.

"This conference was not only one of the largest and most influential international gatherings in the global AI field, but also China's first high-level diplomatic event in the AI sector," said Chen Jie, vice-mayor of Shanghai.

The event marked significant breakthroughs in international cooperation, with participating nations signing an agreement to establish the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization, headquartered in Shanghai. Key outcome documents included the AI Cooperation and Development Action Plan and the International AI Ethical Governance Action Plan.

Demonstrating strong economic momentum, major initiatives were signed during the event, including 32 key Shanghai AI projects with total investment exceeding 40.9 billion yuan. China Unicom also launched its "UniAI · connecting Shanghai with AI" project, investing over 25 billion yuan in intelligent computing infrastructure in Shanghai, alongside strategic financial agreements supporting innovative enterprises.

Across an exhibition space of over 100,000 square meters, 1,117 companies presented 4,486 exhibits, including 351 making their global debut. Cutting-edge innovations took center stage, including China's first near-memory computing 3D AI chip, various humanoid robots, and AI dexterous hands. The conference attracted 177 major procurement delegations.

Academia and industry merged seamlessly across 158 forums, pitch sessions for 180 startups and sessions featuring 11 Turing Award, Nobel Prize and Fields Medal laureates. In addition, the 2026 International Embodied Intelligence Competition was launched, and Shanghai Mayor Gong Zheng officially unveiled the Shanghai Institute for Physical AI and Robotics.

Youth participation emerged as a defining highlight. More than 40 dedicated events drew 1,030 young AI talents globally, with over 60 startup projects led by entrepreneurs born in the 1990s and 2000s.

Xiong Yinjiang, a post-1995 founder and chairman of Lightstandard, said: "During the conference, I felt the accelerated evolution of the new round of technological and industrial revolutions. AI is facing an unprecedented, historic explosion of opportunities."

Reflecting on the outcomes, vice-mayor Chen identified five key trends shaping the industry: shifting from conceptual governance frameworks to concrete action; emphasizing secure, open, and multilaterally governed systems; systematic technological breakthroughs; deeper integration into manufacturing and daily life; and the rapid rise of young talent.

"After nine years of cultivation, WAIC has become a window into humanity's intelligent revolution and an important bridge for promoting global consultation, co-governance and shared benefits," Chen noted, emphasizing that Shanghai will take pragmatic actions to make AI a trusted tool for humanity.

WAIC by the numbers

- 4,486 products on display
- 351 global product debuts
- 102 countries and international organizations represented
- 1,117 exhibitors
- 11 top-tier award winners
- More than 400,000 on-site visitors
- More than 3 billion global online views
- 100,000 square meters of exhibition space
- 158 high-level forums
- 1,030 young AI talent from around the world
- 180 outstanding early-stage startup projects
- 177 global procurement delegations hosted
- Projected procurement value: approximately 20.36 billion yuan, up 25 percent year-on-year



The closing ceremony of the 2026 World AI Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance is held in Shanghai on Monday. GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

New initiative helps SMEs better leverage AI agents

By SHI JING in Shanghai
shijing@chinadaily.com.cn

Continued efforts are needed to make artificial intelligence infrastructure and tools more accessible to small and medium-sized enterprises, the nimble real-world adopters of the emerging technology, experts said at the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference on Monday.

During a visit to the conference exhibition, Pu Yapeng, deputy director of the Shanghai Municipal Commission of Economy and Informatization, said he found many products developed by SMEs comparable to those by industry giants such as IBM and Huawei, thanks largely to affordable computing resources and government support.

"Computing power should become a utility, and tokens should be as affordable and easy to use as water or electricity. Only then can AI truly benefit more SMEs," he said.

Shanghai will continue to roll out compute, data and model vouchers for SMEs, expand engineer training to support the front-end deployment of AI agents and build dedicated AI innovation clusters for smaller businesses, Pu added.

SMEs are major drivers of AI innovation because of their flexibility and agility, said Li Sen, vice-president of Shanghai-based AI company SenseTime. In China, innovative AI applications have already been widely adopted in e-commerce livestreaming, education, content creation, software development, marketing and back-office operations.

However, many SMEs struggle to identify the right AI tools amid the rapid pace of technological innovation, said Zhou Yun, a future industry development strategy expert at cloud and big data company Si-Tech Information Technology. Data security concerns, unpredictable infrastructure costs such as token expenses and steep learning curves for high-value AI solutions remain major barriers to wider adoption, Zhou said.

To address these challenges, the China Association of Small and Medium Enterprises launched a special initiative on Monday aimed at helping SMEs better leverage AI agents.

Industry associations such as CASME should take a greater role in curating, categorizing and standardizing AI solutions into ready-to-use "AI service packages", Li of SenseTime said. Such packages would enable SMEs to improve project performance more quickly while keeping trial-and-error costs low, he added.

Li Meng, president of the Chinese Society for Sustainable Development, said SMEs should avoid training foundational models and instead focus on vertical applications, seeking niche opportunities in fields such as industrial integration, pharmaceutical research and development, and energy.

However, because industrial and medical data often involve trade secrets and personal privacy, robust compliance frameworks must be established before such projects begin, he said.

Li also called on governments and financial institutions to adopt a long-term approach by introducing targeted action plans to support technology iteration and reduce AI adoption costs for SMEs.

According to a report released by market consultancy Accenture on Sunday, Chinese companies' digitalization index rose from 49 to 59 out of 100 this year, marking the biggest increase in nine years. However, only 10 percent of surveyed companies have successfully transformed their AI investments into sustainable long-term capabilities.

"The question companies face now is no longer whether to use AI, but how to turn it into real growth and lasting competitive advantage," said Samantha Zhu, chairperson of Accenture Greater China.

"That shift does not come from technology alone. It requires weaving AI deeply into organizational capabilities, core business processes and industry expertise. The data, institutional knowledge and hands-on experience that companies have accumulated over time will become the ultimate competitive advantage in the AI era," she said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:28 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:28 PM

CHINA





From left: A worker (middle front) helps fuse customers' Perler bead creations with a machine in a *pindou* shop in Taiyuan, Shanxi province, on June 6. Young people enjoy Perler bead creation in the *pindou* shop in Taiyuan on June 6. PHOTOS BY ZHU XINGXIN / CHINA DAILY

Handcrafting calmness with colored beads

Pindou trend draws young Chinese away from screens

By **ZHU XINGXIN** in Taiyuan
and **CHEN LIANG**

In a small fuse bead workshop in Chengdu, Sichuan province, Liu Meiqi and several young people sit around a table on which hundreds of tiny plastic beads in every color imaginable are ready for their use.

With steady hands and focused eyes, Liu carefully picks up beads with tweezers, placing them one by one onto a pegboard. The room is quiet, filled only by the soft clicking of tweezers and the occasional sigh of satisfaction as someone holds up a finished creation to the light.

In China this popular handcrafting activity is known as "*pindou*", or Perler beads in the West. Practitioners arrange small plastic beads on a pegboard and fuse them with heat to create pixel-style designs.

Pindou is part of the world of "*shoucuo*" — literally, hand rubbed — a handcrafting trend that has taken China's social media by storm.

Originally a gaming term referring to skilled manual play, it has recently gone viral on Chinese social media, evolving into a lifestyle phenomenon and a new consumption trend for young people who are looking for authentic, tangible experiences.

Besides Perler bead design, the handcrafting activities also include ceramics and scenery-themed sticker making.

Peaceful pastime

Liu, 35, works as a technician for a foreign-invested enterprise in Chengdu. Her daily routine involves sitting in front of a computer, answering phone calls and remotely troubleshooting equipment failures. By the end of each day, her back and neck are stiff from hours of sedentary work. *Pindou*, she said, has become her escape.

"Once I pick up the tweezers and start placing beads, I can sit for five or six hours straight. The longest session was a full 10 hours," she said with a smile.

"When I'm designing Perler beads, I'm completely focused. I don't think about life's worries."

The process is simple but meditative: colored plastic beads are arranged on a pegboard to form patterns, then fused together with an iron.

The result is a solid, tangible creation — a keychain, a coaster or a decorative piece.

"Unlike passively scrolling through short videos, *pindou* is an active creation," Liu said.

"It gives me a sense of accomplishment that digital entertainment never can."

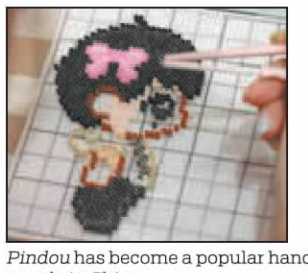
The numbers back up the trend. In 2025, sales of Perler bead products on major e-commerce platforms reached 291 million yuan ($42.83 million), growing nearly ninefold year-on-year.

According to TianYanCha data, more than 7,000 new handcraft-related enterprises were registered in China over the past year, with Perler bead creation becoming a standard offering in most workshops.

Ma Wenwen, 27, is the manager of a handicraft shop in Taiyuan. When his store first opened, Perler bead creation was available but not particularly popular. That changed around the end of 2023. By the summer of 2025, weekend slots were fully booked.



Young people learn to bake at a baking workshop in Taiyuan on June 6.





Pindou has become a popular handcrafting activity among young people in China.

"The customer base has also shifted significantly," Ma said. "At first, it was mostly elementary and middle school students. Now we see high school students, college students and young professionals."

His shop offers an all-you-can-create Perler bead package: 38 yuan on weekdays and 48 yuan on holidays, with individual projects ranging from 9.9 to 48 yuan.

But what has changed, he said, is the mindset. "Before, people just wanted to try it out. Now they want to complete a piece seriously, to immerse themselves in the creative process. They also share their finished works online, which brings an extra layer of satisfaction."

Yang Shudi, a 20-year-old college student, discovered *pindou* through social media. "What attracted me most was that there's no barrier to entry — even a complete beginner can pick it up easily," she said. She often visits *pindou* shops during holidays.

"When I'm doing *pindou*, I can focus on one thing completely. When I'm scrolling on my phone, my attention scatters easily," she said.

She added: "The entertainment from electronic devices feels fleeting and empty. But *pindou* gives me something concrete and touchable — a real sense of achievement."

Creative experiences

The "handicraft economy" reflects a broader shift in Chinese consumer trends. Tourists and young people are increasingly moving away from material consumption toward immersive cultural experiences and emotional resonance.

Across Shanxi, specialty handcraft shops have sprung up — pottery studios, miniature scenic sticker workshops, 3D printing labs and more.

These venues have become popular weekend destinations not just for young people, but also for families, friends and couples.

"As a parent, taking my child to do handicrafts has really helped relieve my parenting anxiety," said Duan Xiaojiao, a Taiyuan resident.

Her child just started kindergarten, and she finds that hands-on activities like pottery and baking allow her to spend quality time with her child while also cultivating the child's focus and patience.

Liu Zhifen, director of the Department of Mental Health at the First Hospital of Shanxi Medical University, sees the trend as a positive development.

"Handcrafting activities like *pindou* are popular because they allow people to engage their senses and focus on the present moment, breaking free from mental exhaustion," she said.

"Each step of the process provides immediate feedback, giving people a quick sense of control and accomplishment."

She describes this phenomenon as a "positive return" from digital addiction.

"It pulls people's attention away from virtual sensory stimulation and back to real tactile experiences and creative work. It rebuilds the connection between people and the real world — a low-barrier way to restore a sense of reality," she said.

The slow, immersive pace of handcrafting, Liu Zhifen said, allows tense nerves to relax physiologically.

"Handcraft experiences provide young people with a safe emotional outlet. In the process of creating something, they unconsciously cultivate focus and patience. It's an excellent way to soothe emotions and build resilience."

Zhang Shurui contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at zhuxingxin@chinadaily.com.cn

Puppeteer preserves traditional art form

By **LI MUYUN**
and **ZHU YOUFANG** in Changsha

Using two thin rods, Wu Yuan skillfully maneuvers a shadow puppet through a series of movements — creating a sequence of bends, somersaults, and even the splits against a glowing screen in his workshop in Xiangtan, Central China's Hunan province. Unlike the more widely known leather shadow puppets, Wu's creations are crafted from paper.

The Xiangtan paper shadow play is a regional variation of Chinese shadow puppetry that blends traditional opera, painting, paper-cutting, and local folk singing. This craft boasts a history spanning more than 800 years, with Wu's family practicing it over 22 generations.

The puppeteer grew up watching his grandfather, Wu Shengping, carve puppets and perform behind a screen.

Through characters and stories from traditional Chinese operas and novels, he learned not only about the art form but also values such as loyalty, dignity, and kindness.

"My grandfather's performances were not just about telling stories," Wu said. "They also taught me how to conduct myself in life. Those stories planted a seed in my heart."

After graduating from Central South University in the provincial capital Changsha with a law degree, Wu worked in Guangdong province for years as a legal professional.





From left: Wu Yuan teaches children to maneuver paper shadow puppets in Shenzhen, Guangdong province. Wu and his grandfather, Wu Shengping, show paper-cut shadow puppets they made at a handicraft fair in Shenzhen. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

However, the seed his grandfather planted continued to call to him, prompting him to return to his hometown to learn the family craft.

For three years, Wu and his grandfather traveled across the region, documenting over 120 shadow play scripts, more than half of which were on the brink of being lost. In 2014, they published *Xiangtan Shadow Play*, a collection that preserved this repertoire with words and pictures for future generations.

In 2016, Wu was named a provincial-level inheritor of the craft. However, this recognition came with a great sense of responsibility.

"Some of the traditional dialect and singing styles used in the paper shadow play had drifted far from modern life, and fewer young audiences could enjoy the shows," Wu said. "As an inheritor of the younger generation, I felt I had to do something to bring this art form back."

Wu's efforts have taken many forms. Since 2017, he has collaborated with teachers and students from Hunan University of Science and Technology to develop a DIY paper shadow puppet kit. The traditional paper shadow puppet-making process involves more than a dozen intricate steps, Wu said, including preparing the pulp, forming the shell, carving on both sides, layering, and applying colors.

"It normally takes more than 30 hours to finish one puppet figure," he added.

However, the DIY kit, now on its fourth version, features a modular design and snap-together assembly. It aims to lower the barrier to this traditional art form, allowing anyone to assemble a puppet and put on a show in minutes, even without using scissors.

"The students brought creative, diverse perspectives that can breathe new life into our art form," Wu said.

Making the skill of the craft accessible is just the beginning. For Wu, the characters of the plays must also resonate with today's audience. He began designing characters inspired by what younger people are interested in — anime, films, and video games.

This approach has been well received. A few years ago, when Wu conducted a university workshop to introduce paper shadow play, he brought puppets based on popular video game characters.

"The moment I took them out, the room just exploded," he said. "The students immediately recognized the characters and began imagining their moves and lines."

In 2022, Wu and his grandfather opened their own paper shadow art gallery in Xiangtan, offering hands-on experiences, family workshops, and public education programs. He has also made English-language short videos based on the craft and teaches it in English to international visitors.

In April last year, Xiangtan paper shadow play was featured at a Hunan tourism promotion event in London, where Wu demonstrated the craft in English and introduced characters like the popular animated figure Nezha.

"Through these new designs and popular characters, we want people, especially young people and children, to have fun and become more interested in the art form," Wu said. "When more people have fun with it, they start to appreciate the wisdom and craftsmanship behind this ancient art. I think that is how the tradition stays alive."

Contact the writers at limuyun@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:28 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:28 PM

CULTURAL HERITAGE

More than worth its salt

What seems to be an ordinary seasoning today once helped consolidate rule, expand trade, and reshape life across ancient China, **Wang Ru** reports.



Today, salt is little more than an inexpensive kitchen staple, but in ancient China, it was a strategic resource for a dynasty's fortune. Along with iron, it was essential not only to daily life but also to imperial power.

This is why salt-related sites have long been a focus of archaeological explorations, and recent discoveries are offering fresh insights into this remarkable history.

The latest findings were unveiled during a Beijing news conference hosted by the National Cultural Heritage Administration. Among them, the Zhongbao site in Chongqing stands out.

Discovered during the ongoing fourth national census of cultural relics, the site lies in the Wujiang River Basin, within Yushan town of the Pengshui Miao and Tujia autonomous county, Chongqing. Excavations last year uncovered 26 layers, revealing uninterrupted salt production over more than 2,000 years, from the Warring States Period (475-221 BC) to the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911).

"The town is rich in brine resources," says Niu Yingbin, who leads the excavations. "Saline-bearing strata often reach the surface or lie just below it, making excavation relatively easy. At the nearby Feishui Well, brine still bubbles from the cliff face throughout the year."

Local folklore says ancient people discovered salt sources by observing animals, a belief that excavations have unexpectedly proven.

"We often saw sheep wandering over to drink the brine," Niu adds. "It offered a vivid glimpse of how early people may have first identified these salt sources."

The wider Yushan area has long been considered a major salt-producing hub. Evidence suggests production began as early as the Shang Dynasty (c.16th century-11th century BC) and continued into the 20th century. Salt mines, salt-making workshops and salt-transportation roads together form a Yushan site group centered on salt.

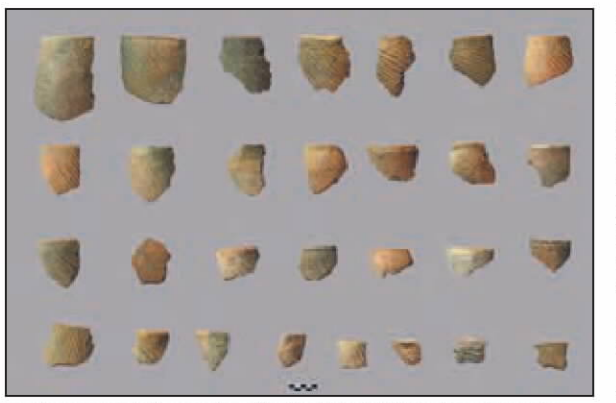
According to Wang Qing, a professor of archaeology at Shandong University, Zhongbao is currently Chongqing's only known above-ground salt production site dating to the Warring States Period, significantly enriching understanding of the region's early salt industry.

One of the site's most important discoveries is a remarkably well-preserved salt production workshop from the Warring States Period, complete with a salt stove, a brine-leaching pool and large quantities of pottery believed to be production waste, says Niu.

The centerpiece is an 8-meter-long, 1.2-meter-wide "dragon-shaped" salt stove — the first well-preserved example of its kind from the period found in China. Archaeologists found that its design made better use of heat, greatly improving production efficiency.

Iron remains recovered from the stove are believed to be salt-making tools. "The discovery shows pottery and iron vessels were used together in salt production," Niu says. "It provides physical evidence of the technological transition from ceramic to iron equipment."





Clockwise from top: A bird's-eye view of the Zhongbao site in Chongqing where recent discoveries offer fresh insight into the salt production history in ancient China. Pottery vessels unearthed from the site. Members of the archaeological team work among the debris at the site in February.
Below: An area at the Zhongbao site, in the Wujiang River Basin, is believed to have been used as a salt-making workshop.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Multidisciplinary research, including residue analysis and experimental archaeology, suggests ancient producers repeatedly soaked plant ash in brine to absorb salt crystals before rinsing it with fresh brine to create a more concentrated solution for boiling.

"This technique is illustrated in the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) salt-making manual *Aobo Tu* (Illustrated Boiling of Seawater), and is still used in today's sea salt making," says Niu.

Among the debris, archaeologists found numerous fragments of round-bottomed pottery jars. Similar fragments recovered from waste deposits allowed researchers to reconstruct complete vessels and investigate their function.



Drawing on ethnographic evidence and simulation experiments, researchers believe the jars served as salt molds. Nearly crystallized brine was poured into them, where it hardened into blocks or ingots that were easier to store and transport.

Because such molds often spread through trade, archaeologists traced similar pottery vessels found elsewhere to map the distribution of Yushan salt.

"The results show that by the middle-to-late Warring States Period, Yushan had become an independent salt production center. Its salt mainly supplied the Wujiang River Basin. In contrast, salt from the Zhongba site — another major salt production center in the Yangtze River Basin — was distributed primarily along the Yangtze's main channel. The two major salt fields served distinct markets, representing an early form of China's regional salt distribution system," says Niu.

Further evidence comes from the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC) bamboo slips unearthed in the Liye ancient city in Hunan province. The inscriptions record Yushan salt being sold as far away as present-day Liye, confirming its wide commercial reach.

"The focus of salt archaeology has often been on production rather than circulation and trade," Wang says.

"This is the first time we've traced the actual circulation of Yushan salt. It marks a major breakthrough in understanding how well salt contributed to regional civilization."

Chongqing is the birthplace of China's salt archaeology. Since the 1990s, excavations across the Three Gorges region have established a systematic research framework for studying ancient salt production.

"Over the past two decades, Chongqing has reconstructed an evolutionary sequence of well salt-making techniques spanning nearly 4,600 years, from the Neolithic era to modern times," says Niu.

"The salt industry encouraged specialized craftsmanship, division of labor and, ultimately, greater social complexity."

The nearby Zhongba site, for example, has produced evidence of industrial-scale salt production before the Qin Dynasty. In just one square meter of excavation, archaeologists recovered around 130,000 pottery fragments, a staggering figure pointing to massive output and a highly specialized workforce. The industry also drove related sectors, including pottery-making, fuel supply and transportation.

"Such a highly specialized production system is a key indicator of social complexity," Niu says.

Salt production also played a decisive role in regional civilization, he adds. Wealth generated from salt helped establish the Ba state, which occupied parts of present-day Sichuan province and Chongqing during the Zhou Dynasty (c.11th century-256 BC).

Salt later became a strategic resource fought over by rival states. Ba and Chu repeatedly clashed over salt-producing regions, and after Qin conquered Ba, Qin and Chu continued competing for control of these valuable resources for more than four decades, highlighting salt's importance in ancient geopolitics.

"Our work at Zhongbao confirms that Yushan was producing salt before the Qin Dynasty and held strategic importance," Niu says.

"The site provides crucial archaeological evidence for understanding how salt drove social development and shaped regional civilization."

Contact the writer at wangru1@chinadaily.com.cn

Digging into Jiangsu's historic engine of imperial wealth

By WANG RU

On the shores of the Yellow Sea, the Lianghuai region, straddling the Huaihe River, was one of ancient China's most important salt-producing zones from the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220) onward. Its output was more than a valuable commodity — it underpinned the economy and became a major source of imperial tax revenue.

For centuries, the scale and sophistication of this industry were known only through historical records. In recent years, however, archaeology has begun filling in the missing pieces, revealing a far richer picture. Nowhere is that clearer than at a cluster of newly identified production sites along the coast of eastern Jiangsu province, recently released by the National Cultural Heritage Administration.

Since 2022, archaeologists from Jiangsu have investigated a series of sites, forming a complete sequence of salt-related sites from the Neolithic period more than 4,000 years ago to the Warring States Period (475-221 BC). The discoveries establish an unbroken archaeological sequence for the region and fill major gaps in the study of pre-Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC) production, says project leader Zhou Runken of the Jiangsu Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology.





Above: The Hulushan site in Lianyungang, Jiangsu province, yields Shang Dynasty (c.16th century-11th century BC) salt-making facilities. **Right:** Archaeologists reenact the salt boiling process at the Lizhuang site in Lianyungang. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Each site adds a new chapter to the story. The Zhenhai site in Lianyungang preserves production facilities dating back more than 4,000 years, including stoves, processing pits and waste-disposal areas. The Hulushan site, also in Lianyungang, unveils Shang Dynasty (c.16th century-11th century BC) salt-making facilities.

Zhou says the nearby Dacun site has yielded a collection of Shang bronze vessels, while the Kongwangshan site, not far from Hulushan, has produced Shang tombs.

Together, these discoveries suggest the Hulushan industry may have formed part of a broader Shang strategy to extend influence along the eastern coast and secure reliable access to marine resources.

The findings echo earlier discoveries elsewhere along China's eastern seaboard.

"About two decades ago, we investigated why the Shang expanded eastward, based on high-status tombs and bronze artifacts found at the Daxinzhuang and Subutun sites in present-day Shandong province, also on China's east coast," says Chen Xingcan, a veteran archaeologist at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

"These new discoveries in the coastal area of eastern Jiangsu provide another important clue: gaining control of this vital resource may have been a key strategic driver behind that expansion."

The research has also highlighted striking regional differences.

Archaeologists found that before the Qin Dynasty, producers in Jiangsu used thick-walled red pottery plates or basins supported by ceramic stands as boiling vessels. By contrast, the distinctive helmet-shaped pottery associated with contemporary production sites along the southern coast of the Bohai Sea in Shandong has not been found in Jiangsu.

"This shows that Jiangsu and Shandong developed two distinct coastal production systems during the pre-Qin period," Zhou says.

Research into the Han Dynasty has produced equally significant results. At the Shizhuang site in Lianyungang, archaeologists uncovered an entire production chain, from extracting and concentrating brine to transporting it through ceramic pipelines into storage pits where it was boiled over stoves.

Another major discovery came from the Shajingtou site in Yancheng, Jiangsu, where the remains of a Han-era administrative complex were unearthed along with official seals. According to Zhou, the finds provide tangible evidence for historical records that the county of Yandu was established to oversee local production and trade.

"The discovery is of great significance," says Chen.

"For years, we had found very few related sites in Jiangsu. Now we have a continuous sequence from the Neolithic era to the Warring States Period, as well as an administrative headquarters from the Han Dynasty. That would have been unimaginable not long ago.

"I believe this is only the beginning. More discoveries are almost certainly waiting to be made," he adds.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:28 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:28 PM

LIFE

Rulers of art

A trio — grandfather, father and son — were not only achieved emperors, but they also left behind a treasure trove of paintings and calligraphic works now on display in an extensive exhibition, Lin Qi reports.

When asked to name the real-life monarchs most frequently portrayed in period films and television dramas, one answer that springs immediately to people's minds would be a three-generation trio: Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong — the grandfather, father and son who ruled the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) in its prime. The three emperors' successive reigns culminated in a period in Chinese history characterized by expansive, stable territory, diligent governance, and social and cultural prosperity.

This history provides modern-day playwrights with abundant resources and great room for imagination. Plotlines creatively diversify, centering on the emperors' diligent rule, political maneuvering among princesses to seize the throne, anecdotes about the emperors' incognito visits, and harem rivalries for the emperors' favor; even time-travel romance is integrated to spice up the court infighting.

In historical reality, aside from their devotion to state affairs, the trio of monarchs preferred to spend their fleeting leisure time in the world of ink and brush, accompanied by cultured courtiers. The rulers left a wealth of paintings and calligraphic works created by themselves and in collaboration with favorite officials and court artists.

Visitors to the Guardian Art Center in downtown Beijing will lay their eyes upon a splendid selection of over 90 works from this legacy. The ongoing exhibition, *Diligent Governance and Peaceful Realm: Paintings and Calligraphy of the Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong Emperors and Their Literary Courtiers*, on show through Oct 7, is showcasing pieces from the Palace Museum collection. The exhibition title is borrowed from the four characters engraved on a seal Kangxi often used — *chi ji qing yan* — expressing his desire for a tranquil mind in the intervals of handling state business.

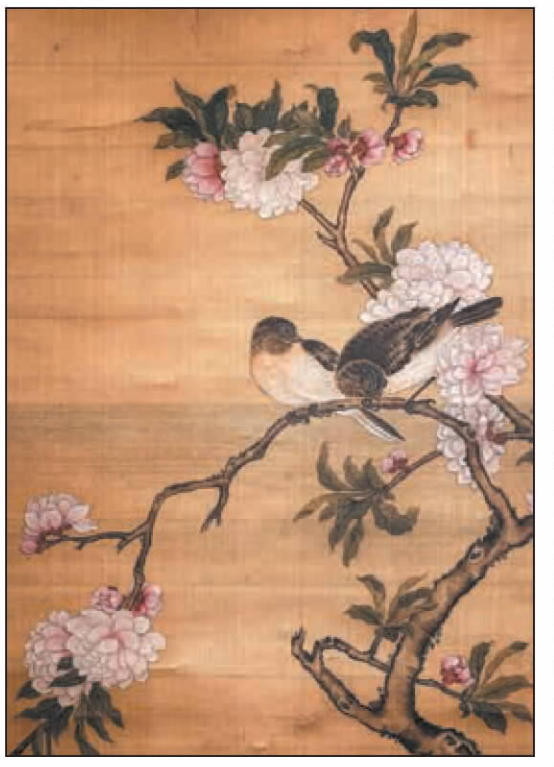
At the exhibition's entrance stand the official portraits of the three monarchs in their majestic royal attires. They received a multicultural education from early childhood, encompassing the Manchu, Han, Mongolian, and Tibetan ethnic traditions. They valued self-cultivation and the cultivation of their offspring through excellence in the Confucian classics, poetry, and Chinese painting and calligraphy. Education deeply influenced not only their administrative governance and military strategies but also their cultural acumen, leading to a prestigious imperial art collection.

Their calligraphy reflects an important dimension of systematic, rigorous training throughout the years, according to Zhao Ziru, the exhibition's curator. She says that by copying these great works housed in the court, the three excelled in calligraphy and assimilated the strengths of ancient masters from various schools.

People often talk with great relish about Yongzheng's tactful victory in a fierce battle for succession to the throne; little do they know that he is recognized as one of the most accomplished emperor-calligraphers. Several of his handwritten pieces are on show, including a self-composed poem, *Summer Boating*. His models include the "two Wangs", Wang Xizhi and his son Xianzhi, two eminent calligraphers of the fourth century, and Zhao Mengfu (1254-1322), while his rhythmic strokes generate an energetic flow on paper, exposing the emperor's utmost reverence for Dong Qichang (1555-1636).

A significant event in the Qing Dynasty's royal collection was the establishment of the Sanxi Tang (Hall of Three Rarities). Emperor Qianlong assembled three invaluable works from the fourth century: *Kuaixue Shiqing Tie* (Sunlight after Snowfall) by the great calligrapher Wang Xizhi; *Zhongqiu Tie* (Mid-Autumn) by his son, Wang Xianzhi; and *Boyuan Tie* (Letter to Boyuan) by Wang Xun.







Top left: A painting from *Yinzhen at Leisure* which depicts scenes of Emperor Yongzheng of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) enjoying his spare-time activities. **Top right:** *Flowers and Birds*, by Jiang Tingxi, a noted literary courtier serving at the courts of Kangxi and Yongzheng. **Left:** A painting from *Ten Steeds Album*, created by the French missionary Jean Denis Attiret who served at Emperor Qianlong's court, along with a poem by Zhang Zhao, an accomplished scholar-official. **Below:** Visitors gather before a portrait of the uniformed Emperor Kangxi.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Qianlong housed them in one of his studies at the Forbidden City (today the Palace Museum) — the West Warm Chamber of the Yangxin Dian (Hall of Mental Cultivation) — and in 1746, he renamed it Sanxi Tang. He wrote *The Record of the Hall of Three Rarities* to mark the occasion, which is now on display, reflecting his excitement in acquiring the three works. His calligraphy is elegantly rounded, showing the soaring spirit of a sovereign then in his prime.

The exhibition shows another of Qianlong's calligraphies, a practice copy of the *Three Rarities*. In an appended inscription at the end of the scroll, the emperor wrote that he had previously "copied the original pieces dozens of times" to capture the brush techniques and truly understand the artistic spirit.

Wang Yuegong, deputy director of the Palace Museum, says the reigns of Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong marked a climax of civil governance in the Qing imperial court, and in the Kangxi era, the Nan Shufang (Southern Study) was established as an institution serving both administrative and literary functions. "It recruited erudite 'literary courtiers' to serve within the palace, thereafter fostering a flourishing tradition in which monarchs and their ministers bonded through poetry, calligraphy and painting," he says.

In court, the monarchs discussed state affairs with prominent cabinet members. In their spare time, they shared aesthetic preferences with their favorite subordinates, enjoying their flattery.

Some are well known to people today, as their anecdotes have become part of pop culture through hit period dramas. For example, Heshen was an infamous high-ranking Manchurian official whose corruption tarnished the governance late in Qianlong's reign. The exhibition displays a hanging scroll painting depicting an elderly Qianlong on horseback shooting two deer in the wild. It may have been made by an anonymous court painter, and the inscriptions made by the emperor himself, his sons, and courtiers, including Heshen.

Ji Yun, better known as Ji Xiaolan, was another of Qianlong's cultural courtiers. He is a male protagonist in a popular period comedy series in which he and Heshen accompany Qianlong on unofficial visits outside the palace in disguise. The accomplished scholar and calligrapher was appointed to oversee the compilation of the *Siku Quanshu* (A Complete Library of the Four Treasures), the largest collection of books in ancient China. His calligraphy, a poem composed by Qianlong, is written on a paper fan that is displayed in the exhibition.

The exhibition is the eighth of its kind under a collaboration between the Palace Museum and the Guardian Art Center. Kou Qin, general manager of the Guardian Art Center, says the current theme capitalizes on a highly distinctive, yet rarely addressed, category of the Palace Museum collection — the calligraphy of the three sovereigns and their works in collaboration with ministers.

The last exhibition, held a year ago, shed light on the aesthetics and order of hierarchy embodied in imperial designs through a display of artifacts including bronzes, porcelains, jade, enamelware, glassware, and textiles. This time, the exhibits may not create an immediate visual impact; however, Kou says, "The gathering of hanging scrolls, hand scrolls and album leaves would command a composed mood for people to pause and appreciate with careful attention."

Contact the writer at linqi@chinadaily.com.cn

Snapshots showcase Chinese modernization in Russia's Chelyabinsk

MOSCOW — A photo exhibition showcasing China's achievements in modernization opened Wednesday in Russia's central city of Chelyabinsk, attracting more than 100 participants from political, media and business circles, as well as youth representatives from China and Russia.

The exhibition features a selection of 48 Xinhua News Agency photographs highlighting China's landmark achievements in economic and social development, science and technology, culture, and other fields.

Addressing the opening ceremony, Chinese Consul General in Yekaterinburg Luo Shixiong said China and Russia have forged a comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era and remain reliable partners in their respective pursuits of national rejuvenation.

China is steadily advancing high-quality development and expanding high-standard opening-up, Luo said, adding that these efforts will create broad opportunities for the two countries to deepen cooperation in trade, industry, scientific and technological innovation, regional connectivity, and cultural exchanges.

He expressed hope that visitors will gain an understanding of the underlying logic of China's development through this exhibition, recognize the immense potential of China-Russia cooperation, and seize the vast opportunities brought by Chinese modernization.





Left: Visitors are drawn to a photo exhibition showcasing the achievements of Chinese modernization in Russia's central city of Chelyabinsk on July 15. **Right:** Chinese Consul General in Yekaterinburg Luo Shixiong (left, front) briefs Anton Artemov (second left, front), deputy governor of the Chelyabinsk region, and other guests on a photo displayed at the exhibition on July 15. PHOTOS BY FENG KAIHUA / XINHUA

Anton Artemov, deputy governor of the Chelyabinsk region, said that Russia-China relations are built on the unshakable principles of good-neighborliness, mutual respect and strategic partnership. In his view, the photo exhibition serves as a genuine chronicle of Chinese modernization. These are not merely pictures, but snapshots embodying the strength, diligence and talent of a great nation.

"Culture has always served as a bridge connecting our two great nations. This exhibition will help the Russian public gain a deeper understanding of China's achievements," said Irina Anfalova-Shishkina, first deputy minister of culture of the Chelyabinsk region.

Co-hosted by the Consulate General of the People's Republic of China in Yekaterinburg and Xinhua News Agency's Eurasia Bureau, the exhibition will run until July 22.

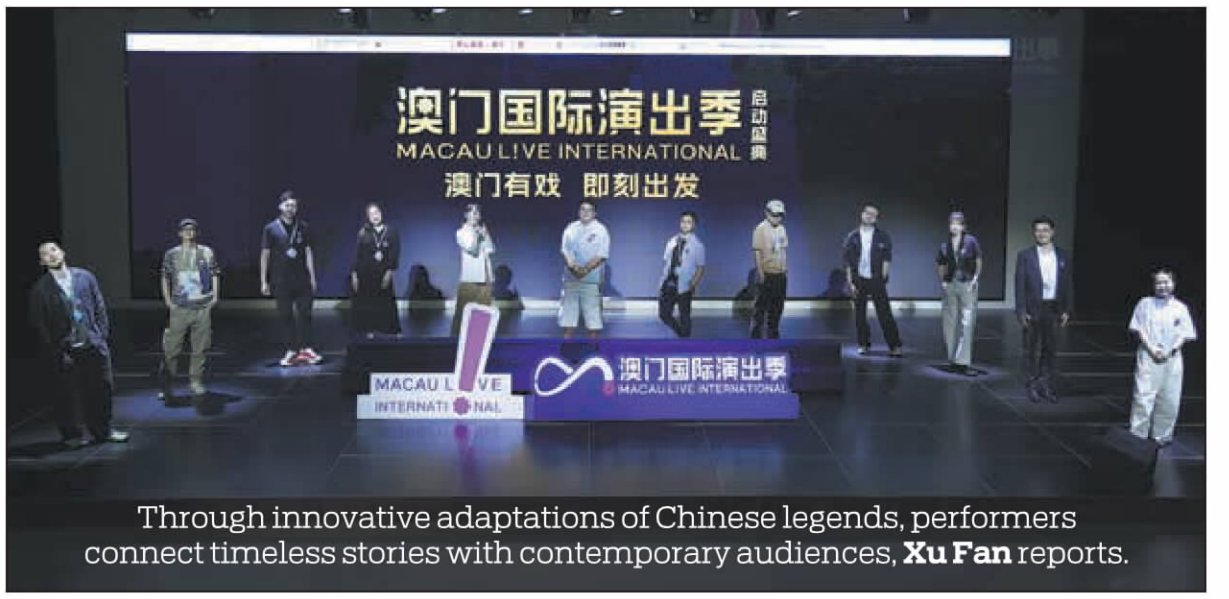
XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:28 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:28 PM

CULTURE

Macao's theater talent shines



Through innovative adaptations of Chinese legends, performers connect timeless stories with contemporary audiences, **Xu Fan** reports.

Most of them balance theater with full-time jobs. Among them are a high school music teacher and a company mailroom clerk. But on a summer afternoon in the Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, Guangdong province, it was their shared passion for the stage — rather than their day jobs — that took center stage.

One by one, representatives from 12 Macao theater troupes stepped onto the stage of the Mahua FunAge Theater of Hengqin Cultural and Art Center as spotlights illuminated each of them in turn.

For Leer Cheng, chief financial officer and assistant president of Mahua FunAge, it was an emotional moment. Her eyes welled up as she watched the creators appear, feeling that their years of dedication to theater had finally been recognized.

The moment was part of the opening ceremony of the 2026 Macau Live International, which began on June 17.

Over the following six months, 12 performing arts troupes will present a diverse lineup of productions, ranging from traditional plays and musicals to choral concerts and clown performances.

All productions are presented in Cantonese, with the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area serving as the primary target market. Audience response has exceeded expectations. More than 700 people applied to attend the opening ceremony, despite the event originally being limited to just 50 attendees.

The extended schedule represents a major shift from last year's inaugural edition, which lasted just five days. Based on audience feedback, Cheng realized that packing so many performances into such a short period made it difficult for audiences to fully appreciate each production, as their attention was scattered.

"Building on the experience we gained last year, we extended the season to six months, hoping audiences would have more time to appreciate each production and gain a deeper understanding of its cultural richness and artistic value," Cheng says.

Beyond attracting audiences, the season also serves a more ambitious goal: helping Macao's theater talent reach a wider audience by creating more opportunities to perform in cities like Beijing and Shanghai on the Chinese mainland, Cheng adds.

The season is not only providing Macao troupes with a larger stage, but also encouraging them to reinterpret Chinese cultural classics in ways that speak to modern audiences.

One example is *Starvation*, a 70-minute stage production adapted from *Cai Wei* (Gathering Wild Peas), one of the eight short stories in the collection *Gushi Xinbian* (Old Tales Retold) by Lu Xun (1881-1936).

Following its selection for the youth section at the 2024 Wuzhen Theatre Festival, the production, now presented in a Cantonese version for the first time, blends an ancient legend with modern perspectives.





"What does it really mean to hold on to one's principles? Every era has its own answer."

Chen Yujun, co-director of *Starvation*

Top: The 2026 Macau Live International kicks off on June 17.
Above: *Rhapsody* is one of the highlights of the performing arts season, which lasts six months and features a diverse lineup of productions, including traditional plays, musicals and clown performances.
Right: *Starvation* reimagines a Chinese classic for contemporary audiences.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The story traces its origins to Boyi and Shuqi, two princes who, according to legend, refused to serve the newly established Western Zhou Dynasty (c. 11th century-771 BC) after the fall of the Shang Dynasty (c. 16th century-11th century BC). Choosing to live on wild peas rather than accept Zhou grain, they eventually starved to death on Mount Shouyang, becoming enduring symbols of integrity and moral conviction in Chinese culture.

For co-directors Chen Yujun, who grew up in Shenzhen, Guangdong, and Sam Leong, who was born in Macao, the production is less about re-creating history than asking why the story still resonates today.

"Lu Xun reinterpreted this ancient legend through the concerns of his own time. More than 90 years later, our generation is asking a similar question: What does it really mean to hold on to one's principles? Every era has its own answer," Chen explains.

To bridge the distance between the ancient tale and contemporary audiences, the production introduces two modern young women who become stranded on the same mountain after encountering their own troubles. Their struggle for survival echoes that of Boyi and Shuqi, suggesting that while history changes, many human dilemmas remain remarkably similar.

"Whether it's pursuing ideals, taking responsibility or simply trying to become a better person, these questions transcend time. Society keeps moving forward, yet many of the challenges people face today are surprisingly similar to those confronted centuries ago," Leong says.

The Cantonese adaptation also gives the classic story new artistic vitality, Chen adds. "We hope it will encourage more young people to reconnect with Cantonese, which has a distinctive charm thanks to its rhythm and tones."

The same spirit of respecting local cultures can be found in another original production scheduled for this season, *The New Peach Blossom Spring*, which reimagines the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-420) poet Tao Yuanming's timeless vision of an ideal world through a contemporary lens.

For Cheng of Mahua FunAge, these productions reflect the broader ambition behind Macau Live International. She hopes the season will create more opportunities for cultural exchange between Macao and the Chinese mainland and help build Macao into a city known not only for tourism but also for performing arts.

"I bought two academic books to trace the origins of Macao's theater, back to the days when performers staged plays on the steps of the Ruins of St. Paul's," Cheng says, her voice thick with emotion, adding that she hopes to bring that rich theatrical legacy back into the spotlight and to audiences far beyond Macao.

Contact the writer at xufan@chinadaily.com.cn

Architecture that travels far

By BAI SHUHAO in Taiyuan
baishuhao@chinadaily.com.cn

The moment German illustrator and new media artist Anja Nolte stepped into the Jinci Temple in Taiyuan, Shanxi province, she immediately recognized the centuries-old Shuijingtai, or Water Mirror Stage.

It is, she recalls, the very stage that inspired one of the most memorable scenes in the 1960s Chinese animated classic *Havoc in Heaven*, in which the Monkey King, or Sun Wukong, showcases his legendary 72 transformations.

"I worked as an animator in Germany for a period of time, and I watched a number of Chinese animated films then," Nolte says.

"So I knew this place."

The Water Mirror Stage has become one of Shanxi's most iconic architectural landmarks. Built more than 400 years ago, it has appeared repeatedly in Chinese popular culture, from the beloved 1986 television adaptation of *Journey to the West* to the video game *Black Myth: Wukong* and the recent animated feature *Nobody*.

With two round black windows that look like eyes and a central doorway like an open mouth, the stage has become a beloved image for generations of audiences.

Nolte was among a group of international and Chinese artists participating in "Discovering Shanxi's Ancient Chinese Architecture: A Visual Journey through Cultural Heritage", a cultural exchange program that encouraged new artistic creation through visits to some of the province's best-preserved historical sites.

The itinerary included landmarks such as the Jinci Temple, the Hanging Temple and the Pagoda of Fogong Temple, with Jinci serving as the program's first stop.

Standing before the stage, Nolte filled pages of her sketchbook with drawings of the building and the stone lions guarding its entrance.

For Veldesen Yaputra, an Indonesian student at Tsinghua University's School of Architecture, what impressed him most about Jinci was not its age but its atmosphere.

"The first thing I felt wasn't that it was ancient — it was that it was comfortable," he says.

The sound of running water, sunlight filtering beneath the eaves and the carefully proportioned courtyards created a profound sense of calm, he says.

As he wandered through the temple complex, he came to appreciate how traditional Shanxi timber architecture works in harmony with its surroundings, providing shelter from rain and wind while creating generous shade.

"Chinese architecture doesn't seek to conquer nature," Yaputra says.

"It seeks to live in harmony with it."

Colombian artist Rodrigo Escobar-Vanegas, who has lived in China for nearly two decades, says he was particularly impressed by the survival of the wooden structures and their intricate exposed beams.

"I'm very happy to see that these ancient Chinese buildings have been so well preserved," he says.

The artist adds that Colombia is also home to remarkable ancient civilizations.

Unlike Jinci, however, many of the country's archaeological sites have only been brought to light through excavation rather than preserved intact over the centuries, he says.

Following their visit to Taiyuan, the participating artists continued their journey in Jinzhong, Xinzhou, Shuozhou and Datong, where they explored more of Shanxi's rich architectural heritage.

The six-day cultural exchange program concluded on Monday.







Above: Shuijingtai at the Jinci Temple is an architectural landmark in Shanxi province. **Below right:** German artist Anja Nolte shows her sketch of the site. **Below left:** Intricate wooden structures are well preserved at the Jinci Temple. PHOTOS BY BAI SHUHAO / CHINA DAILY; PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Porcelain creates shared artistic language

NANCHANG — In one of his late masterpieces, *The Feast of the Gods*, Italian painter Giovanni Bellini placed three pieces of blue-and-white porcelain at the center of the composition, using them as striking decorative accents.

According to Chinese historian Yan Chongnian, the vessel held by a woman in the painting bears a remarkable resemblance to blue-and-white porcelain excavated from the imperial kiln site in Jingdezhen, in East China's Jiangxi province.

Weng Yanjun, head of the Jingdezhen Imperial Kiln Institute, says: "While embellishing a mythical banquet scene, these porcelain pieces also stand as enduring evidence of historical exchanges between civilizations."

Bellini's work is not an isolated case. As still-life painting gained popularity and porcelain imports surged in Europe, blue-and-white porcelain became a recurring motif in Western oil paintings, reflecting its profound influence on European art and society.

Known as China's porcelain capital, Jingdezhen boasts more than 1,700 years of ceramic production, and its influence on global culture and the art world remains as strong as ever.

Over the centuries, ceramics from Jingdezhen have been exported to Central Asia, West Asia, Europe and Africa. The cultural exchanges flowed both ways. While porcelain enriched Western oil painting, Chinese ceramics also drew inspiration from Western artistic traditions.

Mythological themes became a popular choice for exported Chinese porcelain in the mid-18th century, according to Li Shiqi, an assistant researcher at the Jiangxi Provincial Academy of Culture and Tourism.

Li says this fusion marked an aesthetic and creative breakthrough, fostering greater mutual understanding and deeper cultural exchange.

Today, artists are blending the rich techniques of oil painting with the distinctive pigments of ceramic art. Wang Yantian, a young ceramic artist based in Jingdezhen, is one of them.

"The fusion enriches artistic expression, promotes cultural inheritance and exchange, and supports the growth of the ceramic industry," says Wang, noting that realistic oil painting techniques, themes and visual language have been widely integrated into contemporary enamel porcelain paintings.

The exchange continues to inspire international artists. David Reid, a 71-year-old Australian artist who has spent more than four decades drawing and painting, arrived in Jingdezhen in 2018, driven by a passion for ceramics.

From abstraction to Eastern aesthetics, the interplay of Eastern and Western cultures comes alive at his fingertips.

"Here I create ink paintings, oil paintings and ceramics. Jingdezhen constantly sparks my inspiration to fuse Chinese elements with Western modernism," says Reid.

Camille Kami of France recalls her amazement on arriving in Jingdezhen, wondering how an entire city could devote itself to a single craft for more than 1,000 years.

She found herself unexpectedly reluctant to leave Jingdezhen and ultimately decided to make the city her home.

Chen Kelong, Jingdezhen's Party chief, says the city has established partnerships with more than 180 cities in more than 70 countries. Artists from about 50 countries and regions have flocked to the city to live, work and create.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:28 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:28 PM

SPORTS

2026 WORLD CUP

SPAIN REIGNS ONCE AGAIN

La Roja dominates defensive Argentina, as extra-time goal clinches its second world title

This is how good Spain was at the World Cup: Not even Lionel Messi had any answers.

And when it was over, Spain walked off with the trophy.

Messi simply walked off in tears.

Spain is back atop the soccer world for a second time, after Ferran Torres' first goal of this year's World Cup — but unquestionably the most important — gave his country a 1-0 win over now-dethroned champion Argentina in the final in East Rutherford, New Jersey, on Sunday.

"It was a goal scored by 47 million people," Torres said, referring to Spain's population.

Maybe not by them — but certainly for them.

The goal came with Argentina down to 10 men, after Enzo Fernandez was sent off late in regulation following a reckless tackle. Tempers flared then, and flared again after the final whistle with Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni and players from both sides engaging in what appeared to be some pushing and shoving.

In the end, though, Spain denied Messi a second straight title in what he has indicated was his final World Cup match.

Torres, a second-half substitute, pounced on a bouncing ball in the box and used his left foot to bury a shot just under the crossbar in the 106th minute.

From there, the airtight defense that dominated opponents throughout the tournament came through one final time. Spain — which also won the title in 2010 — allowed only one goal in eight matches in this World Cup run, setting a record for fewest goals allowed by a champion.

"I feel pride, to be honest," said Spain coach Luis de la Fuente, who at 65 is now the oldest man to lead a team to a World Cup title.

"Accompanying them on this journey is an honor.

"I spoke to my players, and they said: 'Look, we've won everything, coach. We've won everything,'" he added.

"And that is beautiful."

A tournament first

This title, combined with the Women's World Cup won by Spain in 2023, makes the European nation the first to hold both the men's and women's titles simultaneously. And in the streets of Madrid — probably many other places in Spain as well — countless people spilled into the streets, celebrating Sunday's victory long into the wee hours of Monday morning.

The score indicates this match was close, but only one team was in command.

Spain took the game's first 20 shots on goal before Argentina — desperate for an equalizer — got its first attempt off in the second half of extra time. Spain took nine of the game's first 10 corner kicks, and only a World Cup final-record 12 saves by Argentina goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez gave the 2022 champions a shot at going back-to-back.

"Dibu was nothing short of exceptional," De la Fuente said, referring to Argentina's keeper by his nickname.

Spain is now unbeaten in its last 38 matches — 29 wins, nine draws — and is the outright holder of the longest such streak by any European men's team ever. Italy went 37 matches (28 wins, nine draws) from October 2018 through September 2021, before Spain ended that streak.

And for the last two-plus years, no team has beaten Spain. Not even Messi's comeback kings, the lords of the late-game rally at this tournament, had an answer this time.

"We lost the game, and we accept that," Scaloni said. "That doesn't mean that we will forget everything we've done so far, so I'd like to thank my people, my players and the country. I can tell them that we played our hearts out."

Surviving a late scare

A Messi corner kick with about four minutes left before the final whistle saw the ball take a fortunate skip toward substitute Giuliano Simeone — who sent it high over the crossbar, leaving him holding his head in disbelief.

"When you have Messi on the other side, well, you are nervous," Torres said. "At the end of the day, we always depended on us. We always come up with our football, and we showed it again."

Despite the post-match scuffles, Spain also paid tribute to the former champion. The players lined up to form a guard of honor for Argentina's squad to walk through on its way to the stage to collect its runner-up medals from United States President Donald Trump and FIFA President Gianni Infantino.

"I think, now, I'm in a cloud," said Spain captain Rodri, who was awarded the Golden Ball as the tournament's best player.

Argentina was forced to finish the match down a man after Fernandez was sent off in second-half stoppage time after getting his second yellow card for a collision that sent Spain defender Pau Cubarsi cartwheeling into the air.

Simple and flawless

It was the 104th and last match of the biggest World Cup ever, a 48-team event that played out over the US, Canada and Mexico. Because there were more matches than any previous World Cup, it was no surprise that there were more goals than all other editions — more than 300, nearly three per match.

Except, of course, when Spain was involved.

Spain's plan was simple and flawless: Hold the ball as much as possible, denying opponents any hint of a chance.

It worked, all the way to the end.

A final unlike any other

The spectacle was not limited to simply soccer.

Madonna, Justin Bieber, BTS and Shakira were all part of a halftime show that also featured Burna Boy, Jason Sudeikis in character as Ted Lasso, and even some of the Muppets.

Jennifer Hudson, Post Malone and Tom Cruise had roles in the closing ceremony, which actually preceded the match.

A slew of actors, athletes and other celebrities were there: Spain's Javier Bardem left happy, Luciana Barroso Damon — the wife of actor Matt Damon — probably did not, considering she was wearing the colors of her native Argentina.

They all came to see a show. So did 80,000 other people, not to mention perhaps as many as two billion watching around the globe.

Spain didn't disappoint.

No team has won back-to-back men's World Cups since Brazil in 1958 and 1962, and Spain kept Argentina from pulling off that repeat.

"As I told the lads before the game, we have to go for the game, we need to face them, we have to look to their eyes and say we want this game," Rodri said.

"And then, life gives you the World Cup, or not."

Life didn't give Spain the World Cup, though, Spain took it.

AP



Spain captain Rodri hoists the World Cup trophy surrounded by jubilant teammates after beating Argentina 1-0 in the final at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey, on Sunday. AP

Messi can conjure no more magic, as he relinquishes his crown

Lionel Messi could conjure no more magic.

Twenty years after his World Cup debut and a career that some believe makes him soccer's greatest ever player, at 39 he could not will Argentina to become the first repeat champion in more than half a century.

Spain outplayed the Albiceleste from the opening whistle at MetLife Stadium, where the overwhelming majority of the 80,663 spectators were hoping for a re-coronation.

Ferran Torres scored 37 seconds into the second extra-time period, lifting Spain to a 1-0 victory and its second World Cup title.

Instead of Messi becoming a two-time champion, the crown passed. He fought back tears and had a look of misery as he and teammates faced applauding and bowing Argentina fans at the stadium's south end, while Spanish stars lifted the trophy on a podium at the halfway line.

After leading Argentina to victory in the 2022 final against France, sandwiched between consecutive Copa America championships, Messi could only bow his head, grimace and put his hands on his hips as Spain's Lamine Yamal, less than a week past his 19th birthday and projected to be the sport's next big thing, ran to embrace Torres after the goal.

"I hope that everyone feels proud of him, of what he's achieved because he's the best football player ever to step foot on a pitch," Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni said.

Spain's dominance was thorough in the final and throughout the World Cup, as it extended its unbeaten streak to 38 games, the longest by a European team.

La Roja made 20 shots to Argentina's two in the match, the second-largest difference in a World Cup final since stats began being kept in 1966, behind only West Germany outshooting Argentina 23-1 in 1990, according to Opta. It also out-passed Argentina 845-433.

Spain conceded just one goal the entire tournament, the fewest by a World Cup champion, and scored 14 while compiling a 145-45 advantage in shots. Goalkeeper Unai Simon totaled 10 saves over eight games — Argentina's Emiliano Martinez had 11 in the final alone.



Argentina's players watch on during the trophy presentation after their World Cup final loss to Spain on Sunday. AP

When Messi left European soccer for MLS three years ago, after four Champions League medals and 12 league titles with Barcelona and Paris Saint-Germain, some speculated he would be another retiree moving to Florida.

Instead, he won an MLS title with Miami and led Argentina back to the final with eight goals and four assists. He has played in a record 34 World Cup games over six tournaments and boasts a World Cup goal tally of 21, the record until France's Kylian Mbappe scored twice in Saturday's third-place game to surpass him with 22.

Messi became the first player to start three World Cup finals and raised his international goals total to 125, second only to Cristiano Ronaldo's 146. He is now regularly mentioned in the same breath as compatriot Maradona and three-time World Cup champion Pele.

With his distinctive slow walk, arms swinging at his side as he waited for the right moment to burst into action, the diminutive 5-foot-7 attacker was the center of attention any time he got the ball on the right flank. Opponents and fans waited for him to cut to the center and unleash a shot with his lethal left foot.

Messi had just 15 touches in the first half of the final, and 54 over the whole game at the stadium where he has been repeatedly frustrated. He famously retired from international soccer after a loss on penalties to Chile in the 2016 Copa America final at MetLife, only to U-turn 47 days later and lead his nation to its third World Cup title four years later.

Against Spain, Messi never had the ball in a position to score, and his attempts to pass to teammates didn't connect.

"The first idea was to keep Messi at bay," Spain coach Luis de la Fuente said.

Half a dozen Spanish players walked over to Messi after the final whistle to console him. Messi dropped to the grass and sat, staring.

When Spain later formed a guard of honor for Argentina's players to collect their second-place medals, Messi tried to smile, but couldn't. He had a blank look as he walked through, and a few of the Spanish team patted him on the back and chest as he passed.

Spain is now the world's leading soccer power; the first nation to hold the men's and women's titles at the same time.

And, while gold confetti fluttered down upon Spain's jubilant players, Messi, adorned in consolation silver, headed glumly for the exit.

AP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:28 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:30 PM

Classes STEM from nature
Cambodian teachers discover new training ideas in Guizhou
Z WEEKLY, PAGE 13



Five-year plan to push yuan's global use
BUSINESS, PAGE 9



World Cup rights row
Soccer bodies accuse FIFA chief of deception, call for unbiased review
SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY
GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12, 2026

Xi extends condolences to Colombia

Quake rescue work continues as death toll exceeds 200

By **LIU JIANQIAO, MO JINGXI** and **ZHOU JIN**

President Xi Jinping sent a message of condolence on Tuesday to Colombian President Abelardo de la Espriella after a magnitude 7.4 earthquake rocked the South American nation on Monday, killing more than 200 people and injuring over 600.

In his message, Xi said he was deeply shocked to learn that a powerful earthquake had caused heavy casualties and significant property loss in Colombia. On behalf of the Chinese government and people, he expressed deep condolences over the deaths and extended sincere sympathies to the bereaved families and the injured.

Xi also expressed confidence that under the leadership of the Colombian government led by de la Espriella, the Colombian people will make concerted efforts to overcome the disaster and rebuild their homes at an early date.

Meanwhile, the China International Development Cooperation Agency, which coordinates foreign aid missions, announced that the nation stands ready to provide assistance within its capabilities to support quake relief efforts in Colombia.

China is closely following the developments and will provide assistance in an appropriate manner based on Colombia's needs, agency spokeswoman Tang Ying said in an online statement on Tuesday.

Rescue efforts across western Colombia continued for a second day as emergency workers dug through the rubble of collapsed buildings in several cities and towns, including Pereira and Cali, amid grim expectations that the death toll from the country's most powerful earthquake in decades could rise.

According to the Colombian Geological Service, the quake hit at 7:34 am on Monday at a depth of 96 kilometers, with its epicenter identified near San Jose del Palmar in the department of Choco, about 400 km from Colombia's capital Bogota.

As much of Choco is accessible only by boat, through the jungle or by airplane, little was known about the extent of damage there.



Rescuers look for survivors in the rubble of a collapsed building in Pereira, Colombia, on Monday after a magnitude 7.4 earthquake rocked the South American nation. JAIME SALDARRIAGA / AFP



A survivor is pulled out of the rubble in Pereira, Colombia, on Monday. MIGUEL ANGEL LOPEZ / AP PHOTO

De la Espriella, who has declared a state of national emergency, traveled to Choco's capital, Quibdo, on Monday night to assess the damage and announced that he had mobilized "the entire military and police apparatus" for relief and rescue operations.

Earlier in the day, he told reporters: "Our intention is to cooperate in any way necessary. Here, there are no distinctions or ideological divisions when it comes to defending our people or showing solidarity."

According to local media reports, 32 cities in the western region have been severely affected, while five departmental capitals — Pereira, Cali, Quibdo, Manizales and Armenia — continue to remain under red alert for aftershocks.

The quake has turned dozens of multistory buildings into piles of concrete and twisted metal in cities such as Pereira, and brought down the towers of a landmark cathedral in Manizales. In Cali, a city of about 2.2 million people, at least 85 people have been confirmed dead. Several floors of a city hospital collapsed during the temblor, trapping many patients.

Seven airports in western Colombia have suspended operations due to structural damage. A video posted on social media and verified by Reuters showed the Cali airport swaying violently and people scurrying for shelter amid collapsing chunks of concrete.

On Monday, the Chinese embassy in Bogota activated an emergency response mechanism to assess the safety of Chinese nationals. No casualties among Chinese citizens were reported as of press time on Tuesday.

The powerful earthquake was also felt in Ecuador and Venezuela, which share their borders with Colombia. In June, two back-to-back temblors in Venezuela had killed more than 6,300 people.

Agencies contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at liujianqiao@chinadaily.com.cn

Yiwu builds big on sale of small commodities

By **CAO DESHENG** and **CHEN YE** in Yiwu, Zhejiang

For 20 years, Lyu Chengjun has run an electronic weighing scale business in Yiwu, a city in East China's Zhejiang province known as "the world's capital of small commodities". Along with the transformation of the city itself, his business has grown big, with more than 200,000 items exported each year to Africa, the Middle East, South America and other regions.

Regarding the development of his company, Constant Scale, Lyu, 50, said that for him, innovation is constant. "By innovating products to increase their added value, we gain a competitive edge in the international market, which is beneficial for long-term development."

Lyu said he actively employs new technologies, such as artificial intelligence, to analyze data on the differentiated needs of foreign clients, allowing his company's products to better align with the demand for weighing scales in the international market.

"Actually, innovation is the driving force that propelled Yiwu to become what it is today," he said.

Lyu is one of thousands of businesspeople in Yiwu, a county-level city, who dream big and build up businesses step by step, even from the smallest and seemingly insignificant commodities such as buttons.

Once hindered by poor transportation links and scarce resources, Yiwu has written a remarkable chapter in China's county-level economic development since the opening of its first-generation small commodities market in 1982.

Today, the Yiwu International Trade Market is home to more than 1.26 million business entities, and it maintains trade links with more than 230 countries and regions. In 2025, its export value reached 730.7 billion yuan ($108 billion), ranking first among all county-level regions in China.

In an instruction that was made public in April, President Xi Jinping called for efforts to further review and make better use of the "Yiwu development experience", which is marked by enterprising spirit, persistent innovation and the ability to "create something from nothing".

Yiwu's small commodities have entered a vast market and developed into a major industry, forming the "Yiwu development experience", Xi said, adding that this represents a successful example of developing county economies in line with local conditions.

Yiwu's commercial life began with peddlers who traded sugar for chicken feathers for use as fertilizer, and with roadside stalls that slowly grew into a vast marketplace.

Over the past four decades, the Yiwu market has been relocated six times, expanded 13 times and underwent five rounds of transformation and upgrading. Now it spans more than 8 million square meters, with over 80,000 shops and daily foot traffic of more than 210,000 people. It is often seen as a window into China's reform and opening-up and a barometer of the global small-commodities trade.

See ***Yiwu,*** *page 3*

New Middle East security architecture a response to US pivot

WORLD WATCH
By Amr El Henawy

In Mecca on Friday, leaders of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye signed an agreement on collective defense: "An armed attack against any one of the three States shall be regarded as an attack against them all". The agreement was heralded by some observers as a fundamental reshaping of the security architecture of the Middle East.

Is a new security agreement really needed by any of the Meccan signatories? Saudi Arabia has deepened its defense partnership with the United States through a Strategic Defense Agreement. Pakistan is recognized by the US as a Major Non-Nato Ally with priority access to US military technology and research. And Turkiye is a full member of NATO, protected by Article 5 of the NATO treaty.

It is true they all face individual security issues. Pakistan, although a nuclear power with a large and battle-hardened military, is faced on its eastern border by India, a nuclear power with a larger military and a more robust economic and industrial base. To Pakistan's northwest, the Taliban continues to pose security concerns. Iran, along Pakistan's western border, could conceivably become a competing nuclear power; or, alternatively, it may collapse, pouring refugees across the border, endangering security and the economy.

Turkiye has experienced domestic security issues with the Kurdistan Workers' Party, a Kurdish militant group. On its southern border, Turkiye faces Iraq and Syria, both with large Kurdish minorities. Iraq, largely Shia, has ties to Iran; and Syria continues to experience sectarian conflicts. Israel has repeatedly bombed Syrian sites and has made cross-border incursions. Leading Israeli politicians also recently named Turkiye as their nation's greatest threat.

Saudi Arabia is vulnerable to attacks on its oil industry by both Iran and Yemeni Houthis. In 2019, Iranian drones massively disrupted critical production at Abqaiq; in July 2026, multiple oil facilities were targeted; and, this past month, Saudi oil tankers in the Bab al-Mandab Strait and the southern Red Sea were struck from coastal Yemen.

See ***Security,*** *page 3*

VIRAL CAT MEME SPARKS FRESH INTEREST IN TRADITIONAL VEGETABLE

In China, wax gourd from Guangdong has long been a summer staple, used in dishes that help beat the heat

By **LI YINGXUE**
liyingxue@chinadaily.com.cn

A tiny cat hugging an oversized vegetable has become one of this summer's most unexpected online sensations in China.

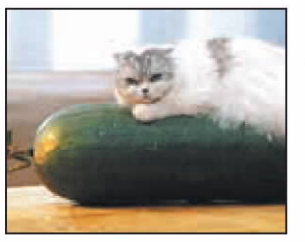
In images circulating on social media, a fluffy cat rests on top of a giant green wax gourd, draping its paws over the smooth surface as if embracing a "natural air conditioner". The contrast between the drowsy furball and the colossal vegetable has captivated internet users.

China Vibes — FOOD —

"Even cats have found their perfect summer companion," one online fan joked.

The trend has renewed interest in the wax gourd, an everyday vegetable familiar to Chinese households. In Foshan, Guangdong province, however, it is anything but an internet novelty. For generations, it has anchored the local summer diet and embodied the Lingnan tradition of eating with the seasons.

Known for its high water content, mild flavor and refreshing texture, the wax gourd is a popular summer staple across southern China. In Guangdong's sweltering climate, families turn to it for light soups that offer respite from the heat.



A pet cat chills on a wax gourd in Jiangmen, Guangdong province, on July 18. SU KANGYE / FOR CHINA DAILY

For 65-year-old farmer Ou Yingqiu in Foshan's Sanshui district, growing wax gourds is more than a livelihood; it's a lifelong bond with the soil.

"My family has been growing wax gourds for decades," Ou said.

This year, Ou and his wife planted about 65 percent of a hectare. Sown around Spring Festival, the crop is shielded by plastic sheeting during cold snaps. Ready for harvest in roughly 90 days, Sanshui's main season stretches from mid-May to early August.

Harvesting the crop is backbreaking work. Mature gourds must be cut and lugged from the fields, prompting Ou to hire extra hands.

Sanshui black-skinned wax gourd, a national geographical indication product, is prized for its jet-black, glossy rind, firm flesh and exceptional shelf life. While a typical gourd weighs 15 to 20 kilograms, Ou's heaviest tipped the scales at around 35 kg.

Ou credits Sanshui's sandy, fertile soil for the gourds' dense texture. While rainfall and temperature dictate growth and sales, excessive downpours can curb harvests, even as soaring temperatures boost demand.

The gourd's hardiness has long made it a pantry essential. An intact specimen can be stored for months in a dry, ventilated place — potentially until year-end.

See ***Crop,*** *page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved
Newsstand prices:
US $1 Canada C$1; UK 1£ EU 1€
Kenya 50 Kenya Shilling
Asia Pacific: Thailand 120 thb; Philippines 120 php; Myanmar 2000 kyat; Japan 210 yen; Dubai 10 dirham; Pakistan 300 rupee

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:30 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:30 PM

INDEPTH



Staff members work on a production line of a microelectronics company in Haikou, Hainan province, on May 23. SU BIKUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

'China Opportunity 2.0' knocks for global economy

Broader access to advanced technology, wider sharing of innovation to benefit all

By **ZHANG CHENXU, ZHONG NAN** and **ZHOU LANXU**

China's economic resilience and strong innovation momentum, combined with its unwavering commitment to high-standard opening-up, are ushering in "China Opportunity 2.0" for businesses worldwide, officials, experts and executives said, adding the country's development has brought the world vast opportunities and considerable room for growth.

In a world facing rising protectionism and geopolitical tensions, they said, deeper innovation cooperation is emerging as a key pathway to reviving global growth, while China Opportunity 2.0 is bolstering investor confidence through stronger innovation empowerment and high-return investment prospects.

For the global economy, China Opportunity 2.0 is broadening access to advanced technologies and enabling the benefits of innovation to be shared more widely across countries and economies, they added.

China Opportunity 1.0 was largely associated with China's emergence as a fast-growing market and the "world's factory", said Liu Tiezhi, a researcher at the Development Research Center of the State Council.

The 2.0 version, he said, is taking shape in a more mature and rules-based market, where China's vast domestic demand is creating new opportunities on the demand side and its highly efficient industrial system is opening up fresh possibilities on the supply side.

"China Opportunity 2.0 is also about fostering a two-way flow of resources and factors through higher-standard opening-up," Liu said, adding that deeper development cooperation could equip countries with more resources and capabilities to narrow development gaps.

Growth resilience

A key pillar of China Opportunity 2.0 is the resilience and steady growth prospects of the world's second-largest economy, which are providing greater certainty for global businesses and reinforcing confidence in long-term investment and development amid a more volatile external environment.

China's economy expanded 4.7 percent year-on-year in the first half of 2026, with GDP reaching 69.57 trillion yuan ($10.28 trillion), keeping the economy on track to meet the government's full-year growth target of 4.5 to 5 percent, according to data released by the National Bureau of Statistics in mid-July.

"China's economic performance remained within an appropriate range in the first half, with new growth drivers gaining momentum," said Mao Shengyong, deputy head of the NBS.

Putting China's growth in a global context, Huang Hanquan, head of the Chinese Academy of Macroeconomic Research, said the performance is particularly noteworthy at a time when high inflation and elevated interest rates are weighing on the world economy and overall global growth is losing momentum.

"Against such a backdrop, maintaining growth at this pace is no small achievement," Huang said at a seminar hosted by the academy in Beijing last month.

Zhu Feng, China chief economist and head of Greater China Economic Research at JPMorgan, told China Daily that he expects the Chinese economy to grow around 4.6 percent this year and meet the official growth target.

"High-tech and advanced manufacturing, AI (artificial intelligence)-related exports, renewable energy and public investment should remain key sources of manufacturing resilience, while exports continue to support growth," Zhu added.

Goldman Sachs has also forecast China's economy will grow by 4.6 percent this year, with exports remaining a key source of resilience thanks to the country's strong manufacturing competitiveness.

The International Monetary Fund struck an optimistic note in July, raising its 2026 growth forecast for the Chinese economy by 0.2 percentage point from its April projection to 4.6 percent, making China one of the few major economies to receive an upward revision.

For multinational corporations with deep operations in China, that resilience is more than a macroeconomic story — it is increasingly reflected in day-to-day business activity.

Willie Tan, CEO of Skechers China, South Korea and Southeast Asia, said China has demonstrated strong structural resilience amid a complex global environment, with the quality of growth continuing to improve.

For United States-based athleisure company Skechers, that resilience is visible in recovering foot traffic at major commercial districts and outlet malls, growing demand for performance sports products and steady sales growth supported by omnichannel integration, Tan said.

"China's vast market, well-developed supply chains and steadily improving business environment are delivering tangible returns for global companies," Tan added.

Similar confidence is evident among the broader business community. An annual member survey released in June by the US-China Business Council found that 95 percent of respondents considered China "somewhat to very important" for staying globally competitive.

Foreign investment is also showing signs of stabilization. Data from the Ministry of Commerce showed that China's actual use of foreign direct investment totaled 402.14 billion yuan in the first half of this year, with the decline narrowing by 10.2 percentage points compared with the same period last year. In June alone, the actual use of FDI increased 15.1 percent year-on-year, marking the second consecutive month of growth.

Rogier Janssens, president of Merck China, said the latest first-half figures were consistent with what he had observed on the ground: solid momentum in high-end manufacturing and resilient trade in high-value-added products — trends that point to the emergence of China Opportunity 2.0.

To gauge the resilience of China's economy, one needs to look beyond the headline GDP figures and examine where the growth is coming from, Janssens said.

Innovation momentum

New growth drivers contributed more than two-fifths of economic growth in the first half. The industrial sector maintained solid momentum, with value-added output of industries above designated size rising 5.4 percent year-on-year, while high-tech manufacturing output grew 13.3 percent, data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed.

"The growing prominence of new growth drivers, together with a clear improvement in the quality and structure of the economy, represents one of the most significant shifts taking place in China," said Yin Yanlin, deputy director of the Committee on Economic Affairs of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

Luo Zhiheng, chief economist and head of the research institute at Yuekai Securities, said the expansion of high-end manufacturing is strengthening the resilience of China's industrial and supply chains at home, while enhancing its ability to withstand external shocks and safeguard economic security.

Meanwhile, China's technological advances and industrial upgrading are yielding growing innovation dividends for global businesses, as more foreign companies establish research and development centers and become more deeply embedded in the country's innovation and industrial ecosystems, shifting from "manufacturing in China" to "innovating in China".

In 2025, around 14,000 new foreign-invested enterprises were established in China's scientific research and technical services sector, up 27.2 percent year-on-year, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

"China is no longer merely a destination for global innovation; it has become a significant source of it," Janssens said.

That shift is creating value across the business ecosystem, Janssens noted, with China benefiting from high-value economic activity and Merck able to grow and innovate within an increasingly dynamic and supportive ecosystem.

Underscoring that trend, FDI in China's high-tech industries surged 33.2 percent year-on-year in the first half, lifting its share of total inflows to a record 42.4 percent, the Commerce Ministry said.

"The figures show that China's FDI mix is moving steadily up the value chain, while foreign investors remain bullish on the Chinese market," Yan Dong, vice-minister of commerce, said at a news conference in July. "Nearly 4,800 foreign-funded enterprises expanded their investment in China in the first half."

Kilian Aviles, executive vice-president of Dekra Group and head of its Asia-Pacific region, said China's innovation ecosystem, driven by artificial intelligence, digital technologies and green technologies, has become a key force behind the country's long-term economic resilience and industrial upgrading.

He said these advances are also boosting productivity and contributing to global technological progress.

China's innovation strength is gaining greater global recognition, with the country entering the top 10 of the Global Innovation Index for the first time in 2025 and ranking first globally for a third consecutive year in the number of top 100 innovation clusters, according to the World Intellectual Property Organization.

Artificial intelligence, in particular, has emerged as a major source of that momentum. China was home to more than 6,200 AI companies in 2025, while the value of its core AI industry exceeded 1.2 trillion yuan, according to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

For Dekra, that innovation momentum has translated into continued expansion of its capabilities in China, Aviles said.

The German testing, inspection and certification company has upgraded and expanded key laboratories in Shanghai, Suzhou, Jiangsu province, Guangzhou, Guangdong province, and Hefei, Anhui province.

"China's technological advances are enabling us to broaden the scope of our global services, build capabilities for emerging industries and bring proven solutions developed in China to markets across the Asia-Pacific and beyond," Aviles said.



Researchers work at a biopharmaceutical company in Wuxi, Jiangsu province, on April 18. QI LIGUANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Opening-up drive

In a world facing rising protectionism and geopolitical tensions, multinational corporations are looking to deepen their investment in China as a hedge against external shocks, said Zhou Mi, a senior researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation.

He attributed foreign investors' willingness to expand their presence in China to the resilience and long-term growth prospects of the Chinese economy, coupled with the country's sustained market-opening efforts and investment facilitation measures.

China is doubling down on opening its market, removing all restrictions on foreign investment in manufacturing, shortening the nationwide negative list for foreign investment access to 29 items, with further opening-up increasingly focused on the services sector.

The policy push gathered further momentum in June, when China unveiled a 15-point action plan aimed at stabilizing foreign investment and improving its quality. The measures cover broader market access, greater investment facilitation, stronger investment promotion and services, and improved foreign investment management.

The plan places particular emphasis on opening up services, finance and pharmaceuticals, while addressing key concerns of foreign businesses ranging from cross-border mergers and acquisitions and data flows to reinvestment in China.

The push for greater openness is also creating more room for international cooperation in frontier technologies. In July, the National Development and Reform Commission and other government departments unveiled an action plan to deepen international cooperation on AI, with measures to increase the supply of high-quality data, broaden access to computing power, promote open-source development and strengthen digital and AI capacity building in developing countries.

Together, wider market access and deeper innovation cooperation are enhancing China's appeal as a long-term investment destination.

Marc Princen, global CEO of pharmaceutical company Mundipharma, said China's sustained commitment to reform and high-standard opening-up continues to "strengthen market predictability and long-term investment confidence".

Andre Musto, managing director and general manager of Merck Healthcare China, said high-standard opening-up helps establish clear rules, transparent market access and predictable regulatory pathways for multinational companies.

Policy push

Looking to the second half of the year, experts said stronger macroeconomic support, together with continued efforts to stabilize trade and investment, will be crucial to sustaining growth momentum amid lingering external uncertainties.

"China's economic fundamentals remain sound, with strong resilience and ample growth potential, and the long-term positive trajectory has not changed," Yin, from the CPPCC National Committee, said. He added that the economy faces both favorable conditions and a number of risks and challenges.

To consolidate the recovery, Yin called for stronger countercyclical adjustment, saying China should make full use of available fiscal and monetary policy space while preparing additional policy measures that can be rolled out when needed.

He also called for stronger efforts to unlock domestic demand, accelerate major investment projects and foster new growth drivers, particularly through the broader application of artificial intelligence and the digital transformation of manufacturing and services.

"Foreign trade has been an important support for economic growth this year, and that strength should be consolidated in the second half," Yin said.

Wang Xuekun, head of the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, said further efforts should focus on tapping new sources of trade growth, with AI-related supply and demand offering fresh opportunities.

On foreign investment, Wang said a priority is to proactively address foreign investors' concerns about market access and translate opening-up commitments into concrete measures.

He called for a clearer opening-up road map for future-oriented sectors, including advanced manufacturing and AI infrastructure, giving global businesses greater room to participate in China's next wave of industrial upgrading.

"Capital from Hong Kong and the Middle East is playing an increasingly important role in foreign investment," Wang said, calling for more tailored services and fast-track channels to attract such investment.

For foreign companies already operating in China, greater emphasis should be placed on encouraging reinvestment and further expansion, he added.

Contact the writers at zhangchenxu@chinadaily.com.cn





Left: Engineers at a robotics tech company adjust robots during testing in Jinan, Shandong province, on July 12. SHI JIAMIN / FOR CHINA DAILY
Right: Employees work at the factory of Swedish truck maker Scania in Rugao, Jiangsu, on April 28. WU JIANSHU / FOR CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:30 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:30 PM

TOP NEWS

Crop: Trend expected to inspire farming

From page 1

Today, Sanshui wax gourds command shelves in Foshan, Guangzhou and other cities. Some are exported via cold chain to overseas markets, including the United States and Singapore.

For local residents, the typical way to enjoy the gourd remains a simple bowl of soup. "We usually make wax gourd soup," Ou said. At home, he combines gourd and pork to create a light, naturally sweet broth. The method is simple: Simmer the gourd first, add the pork once the water boils, and cook for about 10 minutes.

"Every meal is prepared fresh. If left overnight, the flavor changes," he said.

The dish has accompanied Ou since childhood. His family once grew wax gourds primarily for household consumption, only venturing into commercial sales after China's reform and opening-up.

Across Guangdong, it is also braised with pork ribs or dried scallops. Another classic summer dish combines it with duck and coix seeds. These recipes epitomize the Cantonese preference for fresh ingredients and delicate, balanced flavors.

They also illustrate the Lingnan practice of eating with the seasons. Wax gourds arrive on market stalls as temperatures peak, making them a natural staple — not for rarity or luxury, but because they suit the local climate and lifestyle.

But growing the crop remains challenging. Ou said that fewer young people are taking up farming, while many current growers are well into their 50s or beyond.

Perhaps this online trend will inspire a new generation to rediscover the value of these humble giants.

Moments of joy



Palestinian children watch cartoons during an entertainment activity organized by the Palestine Red Crescent Society on Sunday in Gaza City. The event was aimed at bringing joy to children in Gaza and offering them a brief respite from the hardships of the conflict. HAMZA Z. H. QRAIQEA / GETTY IMAGES

Yiwu: City's rise has 'turned stone into gold'

From page 1

Xi's ties with Yiwu go back many years. In December 2002, shortly after taking office as Party secretary of Zhejiang province, he visited the Yiwu International Trade Market for an inspection. In the following years, while working in Zhejiang, he made several inspection trips there, and came to see Yiwu's experience as instructive for development of county-level cities across the province.

In the mid-2000s, Yiwu was outgrowing its administrative framework. Its economy, market reach and international links had expanded far beyond those of an ordinary county-level city, while services related to customs, inspection, foreign exchange, taxation and financing lagged behind.

Xi captured the mismatch with a vivid metaphor: A fast-growing child needs a larger piece of clothing.

In an instruction he made in November 2005, Xi called for efforts to remove institutional barriers ranging from financing and registration of foreign trade enterprises to tax policies.

A year later, Zhejiang issued guidelines on piloting local government administrative reforms, delegating Yiwu a total of 131 economic and social management powers — the first county-level city in the country to enjoy such broad authorization.

On June 8, 2006, Xi held a symposium in Yiwu on promoting the "Yiwu development experience". He hailed Yiwu's rise, saying it had "turned stone into gold".

Zhang Jiying, who owns an umbrella brand called Real Star in the Yiwu International Trade Market, started her business in 1997 with a stall covering barely one square meter. The umbrella-making skills her father had honed for years have turned into a business that sells about 5 million umbrellas a year, with her customers spanning more than 170 countries and regions.

After Yiwu launched digital tools, Zhang began using large language models to generate product videos in multiple languages, helping her reach more overseas buyers.

Such stories show the strength of a market that has grown from the ground up. But Yiwu's rise has also revealed what it can do best based on local conditions, while the government creates an enabling environment.

Raj Kumar Khadka, a Nepali trader and the honorary trade representative of the Nepal Chamber of Commerce in East China, said that while running a business in Yiwu for 14 years, he has witnessed the development of the Yiwu market.

His first visit to Yiwu took place in 2002. Over time, he watched the city fill in the gaps, building its market, logistics and supply chains into a more efficient link to global trade, he said.

Contact the writers at caodesheng@chinadaily.com.cn

Security: US shift away from Mideast becoming apparent

From page 1

But such individual security problems fail to explain the Mecca agreement. Far more fundamental is the accumulating security impact of aftershocks from the US pivot to Asia in 2011.

Pakistan's first shock from the pivot was the revival in 2017 of the Quad, an arrangement closely linking the US with India (also Japan and Australia). Pakistan then accelerated efforts to build ever closer ties with China; but that led to deepening tensions with Washington; and US security assistance to Pakistan declined sharply after 2019.

Turkiye, already angered after 2014 by US support of Kurdish forces in Iraq, believed the pivot meant the US would no longer confront Russia in Syria or the Black Sea. In 2017, Turkiye purchased Russia's S-400 defense system. This led to US sanctions, Turkiye's removal from the F-35 program and a prolonged dispute over its F-16 fleet.

Saudi Arabia, quickly understanding the probable security and economic consequences of the pivot, committed in 2017 to developing its own industrial defense base. It also recognized Washington's interest in the region would be lessened by the US' growing energy independence and by isolationist tendencies in American politics (especially MAGA).

Riyadh sought to counter these factors, not only through the 2025 defense agreement with the US, but also by seeking to involve US business in its economic development and diversification programs. Nevertheless, drone attacks on Saudi Arabia's major oil facilities went unanswered by the US in 2019. This shock was quickly followed by another in 2020 when the US withdrew Patriot missile batteries protecting oil installations.

The full security implications of the US pivot away from the Middle East became clearly apparent in the brutal Palestine-Israel conflict and the US-Israeli conflict with Iran this year. Failure to restrain Israel's bombing campaign against Hamas raised doubts about the US' will to control Israel's aspirations for regional hegemony. Although many even in the US called for an end to the genocidal attacks, Washington seemed not to care.

How the US has conducted the conflict with Iran also raised many security concerns. Why did the US call a halt to hostilities so quickly and after so few casualties? Why did the US fail to force Iran to open the Strait of Hormuz, the Gulf's lifeline? Why, after exposing the Gulf countries to attack, did the US want them to pay reparations to Iran? Why were there reports that the Pentagon was saving missiles that could have been used against Iran for more important uses? And why would the US president dangle an offer of nuclear cooperation in a broader security partnership — only to withdraw it and make it contingent on normalization of relations with Israel?

Such questions combine into a fundamental concern: Does the US, now focused on the Pacific, possess the will, commitment and capacity to guarantee security in the Middle East?

That is the issue that brought the leaders of the three nations to Mecca this past week. They recognize that their security environment has been permanently changed by an ongoing, perhaps accelerating decline of US interest in the region.

The author is former consul general of Egypt to the Hong Kong and Macao SARs and a political and business adviser on MENA-China relations. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

High-tech and high-value goods power exports

Demand for AI hardware, advanced products set to remain strong this year

By **ZHONG NAN**
zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

China's growth in exports is being reshaped by a structural upgrade in mechanical and electrical products, with economists and exporters saying that high-tech, green and high-value goods are emerging as new engines of growth amid rising global trade barriers and supply chain uncertainties.

They said that demand for artificial intelligence hardware, advanced manufacturing products and tech-intensive green goods, including AI servers, 3D printers, industrial robots and lithium batteries, is likely to remain strong this year, as Chinese manufacturers continue moving up the value chain and strengthening their competitiveness in global markets.

According to data released by the General Administration of Customs, China's foreign trade grew by 17.3 percent year-on-year to reach 30.13 trillion yuan ($4.5 trillion) in the first seven months of 2026.

While exports rose 14 percent year-on-year to 17.44 trillion yuan, imports surged 22 percent year-on-year to 12.69 trillion yuan, the data revealed.

Sheana Yue, senior Asia economist at British think tank Oxford Economics, said that strong electronics and machinery exports, coupled with rising imports of industrial inputs, suggest that AI and electrification would remain key forces shaping global manufacturing.

"China's competitiveness in AI hardware, electric vehicles and other high-value products will allow it to continue gaining global export market share," she said, warning that persistent disruption in the Middle East would keep energy and transport costs elevated.

Latest customs data showed that in the first seven months, exports of mechanical and electrical products reached 11.12 trillion yuan, surging 21.2 percent year-on-year and accounting for 63.8 percent of China's total exports.

The shift toward a higher-quality and more sustainable trade structure also aligns with China's policy priorities. A meeting of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee in late July called for efforts to promote more balanced trade growth and expand mutually beneficial international economic and trade cooperation.

Jiang Ping, a professor of foreign trade at the Beijing-based University of International Business and Economics, said that China's faster import growth reflected recovering domestic demand, with stronger consumption, industrial activity and investment suggesting that the economy was gaining momentum and pro-growth policies were taking effect.

Marc Ostwald, chief economist at the London-based ADM Investor Services International, said that China's external trade has remained resilient this year, with trade links with Europe, Africa, the Middle East and South America continuing to expand.

Meanwhile, China's trade with the United States has also shown signs of improvement. In the first seven months, two-way trade declined 1.6 percent year-on-year, narrowing from a 3.6 percent decline in the first half, customs data showed.

In July alone, China-US trade increased 10.8 percent year-on-year, marking the fourth consecutive month of growth.

Gao Shiwang, spokesperson for the China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Machinery and Electronic Products in Beijing, said that high-tech and high-value-added products are more resilient to external shocks, supported by stronger demand, technological advantages and customer loyalty.

"Compared with lower-end goods, they are better positioned to withstand market volatility and trade frictions," said Gao.

With power grids undergoing upgrades in many parts of the world, Qingdao Qingdian Transformer Co, a power transformer manufacturer in Qingdao, Shandong province, saw its exports grow by 100 percent year-on-year to reach 120 million yuan between January and July, statistics from Qingdao Customs showed.

"Foreign customers once chose Chinese transformers mainly for price advantages, but quality, technology and delivery efficiency have become key strengths," said Li Changchun, chairman of the company.

GreaTech Substrates Co, a manufacturer of packaging substrates headquartered in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, has deepened its integration into global semiconductor supply chains through overseas expansion, according to information released by Huangpu Customs in Guangdong.

"We have established stable supply channels in Southeast Asia," said Wu Jianhang, the company's head of customs affairs.

Wu said the company's high-density, ultrathin printed circuit boards are shipped to its clients' plants in Southeast Asia for assembly and integration before becoming components in advanced chips supplied to global markets.

In Northeast China's Liaoning province, exports of mechanical and electrical products also amounted to 140.51 billion yuan in the first seven months, up 18.6 percent year-on-year, accounting for 53.3 percent of the province's total exports during the period, data from Shenyang Customs showed.

Foreign tourists find cool comfort in China

By **CHEN BOWEN** in Haikou
and **WANG SONGSONG** in Beijing

As record-shattering temperatures lead to power crises in European cities, a new vacation trend — "coolcation" — is taking hold. Tourists from Europe are flocking to China not only for its diverse landscapes, history and culture, but also for its reliable air conditioning.

For Europeans, caught between blackouts and high cost of power, air conditioning isn't always a given, and China offers a cool alternative.

According to data from Trip.com Group, international inbound tourism during the summer season has seen explosive growth, with the number of trips from Europe to China increasing 275 percent year-on-year.

In Hainan province, air conditioners hum steadily in malls, museums, cars and even at beachfront snack outlets. This may sound mundane, but it makes a big difference when you're melting like a chocolate bar in the sun. Little wonder then it is a talking point on social media.

"Air conditioning is available almost everywhere here, which is totally different from France," said Kelvin Grosjean, a 22-year-old French tourist who was cooling off at a scenic spot in Haikou, Hainan. "Restaurants, museums, cinemas, malls — it's everywhere. That makes living and traveling much more comfortable."

In France, Grosjean noted that air conditioning is uncommon on public transport, and it can be particularly uncomfortable in stations.

Libraries sometimes have air conditioning, he said, but not often. In general, when people find cool air in France during the summer, it's mainly in supermarkets, hotels and offices.

"I think the French government will take measures to tackle heat waves in the coming years," Grosjean said. "It's easier to head off to China."

In July, China's National Immigration Administration reported 22.91 million foreign arrivals in the first half of the year, a 20.4 percent jump year-on-year. Visa-free entries grew 30.6 percent to 17.8 million. Hainan, which offers visitors from 86 countries visa-free access, is a prime beneficiary.

Now, social media users across the world are swapping tips on Hainan's beaches and forest retreats. "China's summer is so pleasant," one wrote, joining a chorus of would-be travelers organizing group trips.

China's coolcation appeal goes beyond infrastructure. From subarctic permafrost to tropical coastlines, the country offers a remarkably diverse array of summer getaways.

Hainan's east coast offers 28 C days tempered by ocean winds — far milder than the 40 C-plus heat currently baking southern Europe. Inland mountain villages provide additional respite, moderating what can be oppressive heat at lower altitudes.

"You've got the sea, and also mountains, which make the weather much milder," Grosjean said. "So Hainan avoids extreme heat, and will be far more pleasant for overseas visitors."

For 24-year-old German tourist Maximilian Strobel, a trip to China in July was the fulfillment of a long-held dream. Together with his brother, he planned the journey to experience the diverse landscapes and cultures of China. Their travels took them from the south to the north, with each destination offering its own unique climate and cultural experiences.

Their first stop was Kunming, Yunnan province, a city known for its mild climate.

"We hardly needed any special cooling measures," Strobel said. "The weather was quite comfortable. An occasional ice cream or cold drink was more than enough. The hotel's pool also offered a refreshing retreat."

However, Chengdu in Sichuan province was a different story. With daytime temperatures hovering between 35 C and 40 C, the brothers were forced to move their midday activities indoors. They visited museums and shopping malls — which Strobel noticed were unusually lively.



Foreign tourists pose for a group photo before leaping off a platform at the Nizhuhe Grand Canyon in Xuanwei, Southwest China's Yunnan province, on Monday. HUANG XINGHONG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

In Beijing, the brothers rose at 5 am to visit the Great Wall, because at that time of day the weather is relatively cool and the crowds thin.

What struck the German travelers most was a cultural contrast: In the summer heat, many Chinese people opt for long sleeves, wide-brimmed hats and face coverings — a sight rarely seen on European streets. "My Chinese friends had all warned me about the heat before I came. But honestly, I think locals here handle it better than I expected," Strobel said.

Contact the writers at chenbowen@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:30 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:30 PM

WORLD

Battling blazes



A drone view shows a man walking through a neighborhood burned by the Old Trails Fire in Spokane, Washington state, on Monday. As of Monday, three fires had scorched over 4,000 hectares and destroyed or heavily damaged more than 900 homes in and around Spokane. DAVID RYDER / REUTERS

Trump demands Iran reparations

As Hormuz standoff persists, Tehran reshuffles high-ranking security posts

By JAN YUMUL in Hong Kong
jan@chinadailyapac.com

United States President Donald Trump has clapped back at Iran in a counter-demand seeking financial compensation for all of Tehran's alleged damage over the last 50 years, in a fresh war of words as Washington struggles to maintain leverage over the Strait of Hormuz.

Trump told reporters at the Oval Office on Monday that the strait was "open" and that the US was the only one that had control over the strategic waterway.

On his social media account the same day, Trump noted that Iran was asking for compensation "for the damage done to them during the last five-month military conflict even though it was never mentioned in any of our negotiations or meetings".

Trump's remarks came a couple of days after Iran's Supreme National Security Council outlined six conditions for reopening the Strait of Hormuz on what it said would constitute "a correction of US behavior", including paying in full the damages caused to Tehran by the wars of aggression, lifting the US naval blockade and withdrawing US forces around Iran.

Iran also demanded the lifting of "unjust and illegal sanctions" and the unconditional release of "the blocked and stolen assets of the Iranian people".

Iran and Oman have been in talks about the future management of the strait and have signaled that discussions were progressing. Tehran has insisted that the meetings were bilateral or between littoral states and that it was not directly negotiating with Washington.



Boys enjoy a dip in the sea as vessels are seen in the Strait of Hormuz in Iran on Monday. ATTA KENARE / AFP

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei noted in a post late on Monday that US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent had boasted of "suffocating" Iran through economic sanctions.

"This is no longer 'policy' — it is 'habit'; and more dangerously still, it is an addiction that has displaced thought itself," he said.

Baghaei said Iran has demonstrated over decades that it "will not be strangled by these exhausted refrains".

On Monday, Pakistani Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar held a phone call with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi.

Araghchi explained the latest status of Iran's bilateral talks with Oman on determining an appropriate route for the safe passage of vessels through the Strait of Hormuz, Iran's Tasnim News Agency said in a report on the phone call, adding that Araghchi stressed Iran's determination "to continue the process".

Meanwhile, Anwar Mohammed Gargash, diplomatic adviser to the president of the United Arab Emirates, said in a post on X on Tuesday that the region "cannot remain indefinitely in a state of neither war nor peace".

New appointments

Amid tensions with the US, Iran has carried out a reshuffle at the top of its political and national-security establishment.

Iran's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei has made six new appointments to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and armed forces, including Major General Pilot Ali Abdollahi as chief of staff of the armed forces and Brigadier General Ahmad Vahidi as commander-in-chief of the IRGC, according to a written message carried on Mojtaba's social media accounts.

Abdollahi had previously led the Khatam al-Anbiya, Iran's interbranch central military command tasked with coordinating operations.

The two represent Khamenei's first senior military appointments since being named supreme leader early in the Middle East conflict after the death of his father in US-Israeli strikes.

The announcement came one day after Iran appointed Mohsen Rezaei, a military adviser to its new supreme leader, to head its powerful Supreme National Security Council.

Rezaei replaces Mohammad Bagher Zolghadr, who will become a political adviser to Khamenei.

Rezaei joined the IRGC shortly after the 1979 Islamic Revolution and became its commander in 1981 at the age of 27. He led the IRGC for 16 years, including for most of the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, and oversaw the expansion of its ground, naval and air capabilities.

He is part of a generation of IRGC commanders who emerged from the revolutionary underground and later became senior figures in Iran's security apparatus.

The 71-year-old hard-liner last week threatened US forces with "serious risks and casualties" if the US did not lift its blockade of Iranian ports.

Xinhua, agencies and Cui Haipei in Dubai, UAE, contributed to this story.

El Nino takes a toll on physical and mental health



Alexis Hooi
Reporter's log

FIRST PERSON VIEW

When I left Beijing with its four distinct seasons, including the harsh, cold winters, I was looking forward to the sun, sea and sand of Sydney.

Australia's largest city is known for basking under clear, blue skies with a comfortable, subtropical climate along the coast.

So the rain of recent weeks, promising to repeat the record-breaking wet weather of last year, has been very dampening.

Total rainfall hit above-average levels in many parts of the Greater Sydney area last year, with unseasonable weather patterns behind some of the wettest periods in the past decades, according to meteorologists.

The rain keeps many residents like me indoors in an increasingly sedentary lifestyle — ocean swims, park runs, forest hikes, and tennis lessons have to be postponed or downright canceled — very different from the attractive sports- and nature-centered image of living in Australia.

This weather can take its toll on physical and mental health, with health professionals pointing to how less sunlight translates to lower levels of serotonin, known as the hormone affecting emotional and sleep quality.

Less time spent outdoors because of rain means missing out on many social activities that generate feelings of well-being.

Amid all this apparent doom and gloom, I may not have been the only one who saw a bright side to the news about the oncoming major weather phenomenon El Nino in this part of the world.

The Australian Bureau of Meteorology in mid-June officially declared El Nino active, with related events "part of a natural cycle in the Pacific Ocean that can affect global weather".

El Nino often brings drier conditions to central and eastern Australia in winter and spring in the Southern Hemisphere, it said.

Rainfall is likely to be below average across parts of southern and eastern Australia, with temperatures above average in most areas, except parts of the north; but below-average rainfall does not mean no rain — "just less than usual", according to forecasts.

Australia's weather is also shaped by other climate factors, so outcomes can vary, according to the weather bureau.

But my anticipation of dry days here can seem selfish when considering the broader, serious impact of El Nino on one of the driest places on Earth — many parts of Australia are particularly prone to heat waves and fires.

Experts say that with hotter-than-normal weather across southern Australia, occurring against the background of already higher temperatures because of human-caused climate change, there is a need to prepare for increased bushfires and other major risks.

"The announcement that El Nino is officially here can be scary for Australians. Historically, some of our hottest and driest weather has been associated with El Nino events, which release a big pulse of heat from the ocean into the atmosphere," Adelaide University's climate researcher Georgy Falster said via the Scimex research exchange platform.

"But it is important to remember that an El Nino event — even a big one — does not guarantee drought. All we can say is that the chance of lower-than-normal rainfall is higher during an El Nino event."

"These effects tend to be strongest in spring, and to a lesser degree in summer. So we won't learn the full impacts of this particular El Nino for a while," Falster said, adding that "even though fire season is still a fair way away, it will be worth considering fire preparedness early".

Fire risk can certainly feel very real and close for me. Living in a high-density apartment complex in Sydney, false alarms frequently incur costly fines from firefighter deployments that are needed in genuine life-threatening cases, while regular inspections of firefighting equipment and systems are strictly enforced.

Farther out in rural Australia, bushfires have devastated residential communities and wildlife, including vulnerable koala populations. The iconic, once-abundant marsupials have been hit hard as they suffer habitat loss, burns and starvation with swathes of eucalyptus forests which they feed on wiped out.

The arrival of El Nino in the months ahead will perhaps prove once again that when it comes to climate change intensifying the impact of extreme weather, the real danger is usually felt far beyond the time, space and concerns of any individual.

The author is a correspondent at China Daily Asia-Pacific Bureau based in Sydney.

Seoul announces $3.5b fund for domestic chips

By YANG HAN in Hong Kong
kelly@chinadailyapac.com

South Korea plans to create a new 5 trillion won ($3.5 billion) fund for chipmakers as part of a large-scale investment initiative in artificial intelligence and semiconductors.

The fund will focus on semiconductor materials, parts, equipment, and companies that outsource chip fabrication, Presidential Chief of Staff Kang Hoon-sik said at a media briefing on Monday.

This followed a meeting to review progress on the "three megaprojects" initiative unveiled in June to invest in semiconductor clusters, physical AI, and AI data centers across the country.

"It is important to have preemptive policy design from the very start to ensure that the investment outcomes of megaprojects spread not only to large companies but also to materials, parts, and equipment companies, as well as small- and medium-sized enterprises," said Kang.

Another 1 trillion won will be invested over the next 10 years to foster joint growth in the semiconductor sector.

South Korean President Lee Jae-myung presided over the meeting. At the start of the meeting, Lee said the government should make all-out efforts to implement the large-scale AI and semiconductor investment initiative as soon as possible. This includes improving regulations to ensure swift implementation, he said.

"We are in a situation where we must go beyond being speedy and move with the speed of lightning," Lee was quoted as saying by Yonhap News Agency.

Lee said the ultimate goal of the initiative is to spread the benefits of future industries across the country and the entire community, instead of being limited to certain companies or regions.

Samsung Electronics and SK Hynix, South Korea's two major chipmakers, have pledged to invest a combined 800 trillion won in a chip cluster project in the southwestern region of South Korea.

Also at the meeting, the government said it plans to pass a special law for megaproject zones by the end of this year to expedite licensing and approval procedures, environmental assessments, and infrastructure construction to support the initiative.

Regarding the exemption of the 52-hour workweek system under the special law — a key point of contention — the presidential office said the issue requires discussions with relevant regional communities and labor organizations.

Keeping pace

Kim Jung-kwan, South Korea's minister of trade, industry and energy, said on Aug 6 that it is necessary to apply the exemption within so-called mega special zones to keep up pace in AI and semiconductor development with major countries such as China and the United States.

The South Korean government is also working to significantly expand public procurement of both bipedal and quadrupedal robots to nurture an initial market for the physical AI industry. Efforts will also be made to build infrastructure for producing core components.

South Korea's Special Semiconductor Act, aimed at strengthening and supporting semiconductor industry competitiveness, also took effect on Tuesday.

Analysts see the move as fundamental to shifting national chip support to a state-backed framework, with the government covering 50 percent to 100 percent of key infrastructure costs.

"It will mark a fundamental paradigm shift for South Korea," said Kim Yong-jin, professor of management information systems at Sogang Business School, in an interview with Arirang News.

This is because it transitions the country's chip sector from privately led development to a state-backed system by legally binding the government to share infrastructure costs and streamline administrative processes, said Kim.

Briefly

SYRIA

Al-Assad sentenced to death in absentia

A criminal court in the Syrian capital Damascus on Tuesday sentenced former president Bashar al-Assad and several other former officials to death. The Fourth Criminal Court in the city unanimously convicted al-Assad, who remains abroad and was tried in absentia, on charges of murder and incitement to murder and sentenced him to death, according to reports on the court proceedings. The court also sentenced former senior security official Atef Najib to death over killings and abuses linked to the Syrian conflict, the reports said, adding that a total of nine former officials received death sentences.

HUNGARY

Andras Baka elected as new president

Hungary's parliament on Tuesday elected Andras Baka, a former head of the Supreme Court, as the country's next president. Baka was elected to the largely ceremonial role with the votes of the governing center-right Tisza party. Members of the opposition Fidesz party did not take part in the election. Parliament elected Baka with 140 votes in favor and six votes against.

THAILAND

PM suspends firearm purchase licenses

Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul on Tuesday suspended the issuance of permits to buy firearms and said existing licenses would be reviewed, days after a 14-year-old gunman killed nine people. Anutin directed the deputy prime minister overseeing legal affairs to expedite a new gun control law with stronger controls and harsher penalties. Police were ordered to stop renewing permits that enable people to buy firearms. Registered firearms must be kept at home and cannot be carried in public, Anutin said.

XINHUA—AGENCIES

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn

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

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108
529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

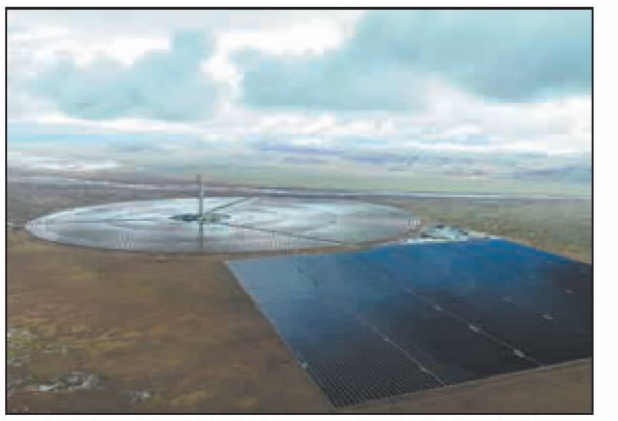
CHINA DAILY (ISSN 0748-6154) is published daily except weekends by China Daily USA, 1500 Broadway, Suite 2800, New York, NY 10036. Periodical postage paid at New York, NY and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to CHINA DAILY USA, 1500 Broadway, Suite 2800, New York, NY 10036.

Vol. 38 — No.1891

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:30 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:30 PM





From left: Tourists visit Kala village in Nyingchi during this year's peach blossom festival. ZHOU YULONG / XINHUA The Chemayungdung Glacier in Shigatse is the origin of the Brahmaputra River in South Asia. Xizang is the source of a number of cross-border rivers in Asia. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY A solar farm in Amdo county. Xizang is one of the major clean energy production bases in China. JIGME DORJE / XINHUA

Cooperation forum attracts global attention

Diplomats, researchers and policymakers advance partnerships on ecology, tourism, healthcare and technology in Xizang

By **YUAN SHENGGAO**



More than 350 delegates from over 20 countries attend the fifth China Xizang Trans-Himalaya Forum for International Cooperation held in Nyingchi, Xizang, from July 16-18. CHODRON / FOR CHINA DAILY

The fifth China Xizang Trans-Himalaya Forum for International Cooperation held from July 16-18 in Nyingchi in Southwest China's Xizang autonomous region, with a focus on green development and ecological protection across the Himalayan region, again attracted global attention.

The event brought together more than 350 representatives, including government officials, diplomats, experts and representatives from more than 20 countries, to discuss issues such as environmental governance, sustainable development and regional cooperation.

During the event, the representatives held in-depth discussions on climate change and ecological safety on the plateau; the high-quality development of cultural tourism with plateau characteristics; cooperation in sports; green growth and healthcare, as well as other topics.

A broad consensus was reached among delegates and a number of achievements were made during the three-day forum, according to the organizers of the event.

Nan Ni Ni Aye, vice-president of Myanmar; Rubi Kumari, deputy speaker of the Nepalese House of Representatives; Wang Guangqian, vice-chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference; and Wang Junzheng, secretary of the Communist Party of China's Xizang Committee, among others, attended the forum and delivered speeches.

At the opening ceremony on July 17, Wang Guangqian said countries in the trans-Himalaya region were "connected by mountains and rivers, linked by cultures and bound by a shared future".

He added that since its debut in 2018, the forum has made fruitful achievements in collaborations across environmental governance and green development, as well as exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations.

Calling for stronger ties

Wang Guangqian called for stronger political trust, improved infrastructure connectivity, closer environmental cooperation and sustained people-to-people exchanges. He said countries in the region should work together to build a cleaner and more sustainable ecological system.

Wang Junzheng said at the event's opening ceremony that the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, of which Xizang is an important part, plays a crucial role in Asia's water security, climate stability and biodiversity conservation.

"Seeing ecological protection as one of Xizang's greatest responsibilities and recognizing its great value and potential for development, Xizang has made positive progress in the construction of ecological civilization, playing a positive role in conserving water resources for Asia's major rivers, safeguarding climate stability and protecting biodiversity," said the top official of Xizang.

He added that Xizang is also expanding clean energy and other low-carbon industries while linking conservation projects with efforts to increase local incomes.

Wang Junzheng said Xizang is willing to cooperate with all the stakeholders in the trans-Himalaya region to build a community with a shared future in the areas of green development, ecological safety, mutual learning among civilizations and governance.

The event included a main forum and four subforums focusing on plateau climate exchange and ecological safety; high-quality development of cultural tourism with plateau characteristics; cooperation in sports; and healthcare.

Md. Nazmul Islam, Bangladesh's ambassador to China, delivered a speech at the main forum on July 17. He emphasized the significance of collaboration in the fields of environmental protection and development among countries in the trans-Himalaya region.

Islam said the Himalayan region, known as the 'third pole' of the globe, has significance far beyond that of a geographical landmark.

"This is one of the cradles of (Asia's) civilizations and the lifeline of billions of residents as it is the source of a number of Asia's major rivers," he said. "The ecological well-being of the Himalaya region plays a crucial role in the well-being, prosperity and sustainable growth of a huge population on the Asian continent."

He called for deepening cooperation in ecological protection and climate resilience among countries in the trans-Himalaya region.

He added that there should be more collaboration in academic circles, especially on sharing data and cooperative research focusing on biodiversity, water resources and climate change.

Islam also advocated a green, sustainable development model at the forum, highlighting ecological sustainability. He explained that expanded investment in renewable energy resources, green technologies and environmental protection-related industries can both create new growth opportunities and preserve natural resources.

Experiencing local life

On the sidelines of the forum, delegates also used their spare time to explore the host city of Nyingchi and experience local life. Some of them visited the village of Kala, a site reputed for the annual peach blossom festival; Lunang International Tourism Town, an emerging destination known for its picturesque views against the backdrops of snow-covered mountains, dense forests and clear lakes and rivers; the Nyingchi Hospital of Tibetan Medicine; the Southeastern Xizang Museum of Cultural Heritage; and the Giant Cypress Trees Scenic Area.



Delegates listen to speeches during the forum.
PHOTOS BY CHODRON AND JINPA TSULTRIM / FOR CHINA DAILY

At the Giant Cypress Trees Scenic Area — which is also known as Dabaishu Garden among locals — in Nyingchi's Dragyib district, Mohamed Rasheed, chairman of the China-Maldives Cultural Exchange Association, and other forum delegates were impressed by the landmark cypress tree, which is said to be more than 3,000 years old.

Rasheed fixed his eyes on the tree's vast canopy for a while and told his companions: "It's more than 3,000 years old, much longer than the recorded history of the Maldives."

He learned that giant cypress is a plant species unique to the southeastern part of Xizang. Legend has it that the trees are the incarnations of local deities and they are the "symbols of life and soul".

The tree that impressed Rasheed, with a height of 57 meters and a trunk diameter of 5.8 meters, was recognized as the "oldest surviving giant cypress tree in the world" by the Shanghai-based China Records.

He went on to make comparisons of the tourist resources of Xizang and the Maldives.

"Here we are in an area at an altitude of more than 2,000 meters," Rasheed said. "Back in the Maldives, the highest altitude of our land is just 3 meters above the sea."

He said this apparent difference can create amazing trips for tourists. "Imagine spending days on the Maldivian beaches to enjoy the seas and skies, and then fly to Nyingchi via Chengdu — which has direct flights to and from the Maldives — to witness the snow-capped mountains, torrential rivers, dense forests and idyllic pastures," Rasheed said. "This should be a perfect itinerary for any tourist."

He added that this seemingly great difference also means limitless potential for cooperation between the tourism sectors of the two sides.

Fruitful results

In addition to dialogues and exchanges, the forum yielded fruitful results in cooperation between Xizang and its overseas partners.

Zhao Peng, vice-chairman of the Xizang autonomous region's government and chairman of the forum's organizing committee, said at a news conference on July 17 that a number of significant results were achieved during the event.

The official said that international cooperation agreements on sports, satellite technology and disaster prevention were among the key outcomes of the fifth China Xizang Trans-Himalaya Forum for International Cooperation.

For instance, China's Ministry of Natural Resources signed a memorandum of understanding with Kyrgyzstan on satellite data applications to support land management, cross-border disaster monitoring, ecological protection and agricultural observation.

The Xizang Academy of Agricultural and Animal Husbandry Sciences renewed a cooperation agreement with the International Center for Integrated Mountain Development on plateau agricultural technologies.

In sports, Xizang signed a letter of intent with Argentina's Salta province to establish friendly provincial-level ties, while the city of Shigatse reached agreements with two municipalities in Salta on youth soccer training exchanges, drawing on Argentina's experience in youth player development.

According to the letter of intent signed by the Shigatse education and sports bureau, the city of Cerrillos in Argentina's Salta province and Xizang Zhufeng Resources Co, the three parties will establish regular cooperation in youth soccer training, friendly matches, coaching education, sports research and cultural exchanges.

The initiative seeks to draw on Argentina's internationally recognized youth soccer development system while exploring new approaches to sports training in high-altitude regions.

As part of the initial efforts under this agreement to strengthen youth soccer development and people-to-people exchanges, young soccer players from Shigatse will travel to Argentina for training this September.

The forum also launched a high-altitude disease prevention information network to enable real-time medical consultations.

During the event, Chinese experts in climatic disaster prevention introduced MAZU — China's self-developed climate early warning system — to the forum attendees.

Experts said that as extreme weather events pose increasing threats to global food and energy security, as well as global industry and supply chains, the early warning system is an efficient tool to safeguard economic development and public well-being.

The MAZU solution, named after an ancient Chinese sea goddess known for protecting fishermen, integrates traditional cultural symbolism with modern meteorological technologies such as satellites, radar, numerical forecasting and artificial intelligence.

Experts said that the MAZU solution has gained global attention since its launch last year as a national response to the United Nations' Early Warnings for All initiative. They said the system will have a special focus on addressing the disaster-alleviation demands from developing countries.

In the sphere of people-to-people exchanges, the Xizang People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries signed memorandums of understanding with the Korea-China Association for Cultural Exchange and the China-Maldives Cultural Exchange Association, to promote cultural, educational, youth and tourism cooperation between Xizang and South Korea, and between Xizang and the Maldives.

Business cooperation was also an important part of the forum.

The Xizang Department of Commerce, for instance, invited businesses from nine countries in South Asia and Southeast Asia to exhibit their products and attend matchmaking meetings with local enterprises during the forum. A number of agreements were signed on investment projects, technological cooperation and cross-border trade, laying a solid foundation for deepening economic cooperation in the trans-Himalaya region.

Since its launch in 2018, five sessions of the China Xizang Trans-Himalaya Forum for International Cooperation have been held in Xizang. A milestone in the event's development was the Nyingchi Initiative — based on the broad consensus of delegates — released at the forum's third session held in October 2023.

In the initiative, China has proposed to deepen international ecological cooperation and promote harmony between humans and nature; strengthen international development cooperation and share the outcomes of the development; promote people-to-people and cultural dialogues and exchanges and safeguard the diversity of world civilizations; maintain international peace and security; and improve the global governance system.

The initiative also seeks to strengthen infrastructure development in railways, roads, power grids, communications and aviation across the trans-Himalayan region, build a three-dimensional trans-Himalayan interconnection network, further expand opening-up, intensify economic and trade exchanges, and jointly build the Trans-Himalaya Economic Cooperation Belt.

ADVERTORIAL

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:30 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:30 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Unilaterally naming places of Zangnan risks harming steady trajectory of ties

After years of strain following the Galwan Valley clash in 2020, China-India relations have gradually entered a phase of relative stabilization, marked by a measured return to dialogue and strategic communication. This progress has been hard-won, achieved against a backdrop of mounting global uncertainties. It has required political judgment, diplomatic patience and sustained communication through both diplomatic and military channels.

Therefore, unilateral actions that add tension to the territorial disputes serve neither side's interests. India's latest attempt to give "standard names" to multiple locations in China's Zangnan region won't change the reality on the ground, but unfortunately it could compromise the steadying momentum in bilateral relations.

On Friday, India announced the names of 27 locations in the region. But as Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said, Zangnan is China's territory, and India's unilateral move to rename places there is illegal, null and void.

The latest naming move came shortly after the 36th meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on China-India Border Affairs was held in New Delhi on Thursday. At that meeting, the two sides discussed boundary delimitation, border management and control mechanism building and cross-border cooperation. They also agreed to maintain communication through diplomatic and military channels and jointly safeguard peace and stability in border areas. It is difficult to see how India's unilateral renaming serves these objectives.

Names on a map cannot alter historical facts, nor can they substitute for negotiations. The only sustainable way to address the territorial disputes is through equal-footed dialogue and consultation and a fair settlement based on historical and legal principles.

The history of the China-India boundary itself calls for caution rather than political posturing. As even some Indian researchers point out, the modern boundary that India unilaterally recognizes was not simply an ancient and clearly demarcated frontier inherited intact by India when it gained independence in 1947. British colonial authorities developed competing boundary proposals for the western-sector borders between India and China, and pursued different strategic approaches as their perceptions of regional threats changed.

The eastern-sector borders likewise have a complicated history. The so-called "McMahon Line" emerged from the 1913-14 Simla Conference, a process in which the Chinese government did not accept the final arrangement at all. But India fully recognized the illegal line and adopted it after 1947, irrespective of China's opposition. The historical facts speak plainly: the unlawful "McMahon Line" cannot and should not serve as the foundation for the eastern-sector borders between China and India. New Delhi might do well to ask itself: would it ever accept a so-called border drawn by a colonial power — one that it itself refuses to recognize anywhere else?

History should help the two sides better understand the origins of the dispute, not become a pretext for perpetuating it. This is particularly important because China and India have already demonstrated that differences over the boundary need not prevent broader engagement. The two sides have agreed to view bilateral relations from a strategic and long-term perspective, stressing that they should regard each other as partners rather than rivals and their development as an opportunity rather than a threat.

Practical exchanges have also resumed. Direct flights between the two countries restarted in 2025, pilgrimage activities resumed and traditional border trade markets have been reopened. Bilateral trade has remained resilient despite various policy barriers. These developments point to an important reality: The border issue is only one part of China-India relations, and it should not define the entire relationship.

China and India have immense common interests. Together, they account for more than 2.8 billion people. Their economic development and cooperation on maintaining regional stability and on international affairs have implications far beyond their shared borders. The two countries therefore have every reason to continue the stabilization of bilateral ties, strengthen strategic communication and expand mutually beneficial cooperation while properly managing differences.

'Beehive' buzz irresponsible sound-biting

As Taiwan's Han Kuang military exercises began last week, the Chinese island's secessionist-minded leader Lai Ching-te stood aboard a fast-attack boat watching low-flying drones swarm over the sea off Kaohsiung. The scene offered a striking glimpse of the security vision now taking shape among the Democratic Progressive Party authorities — one in which drones, missiles, mines and ammunition stockpiles are woven into an increasingly militarized public policy.

The scene was hardly a coincidence. Raymond Greene, director of the so-called "American Institute in Taiwan" recently proposed that Taiwan should become a "beehive" of drones. The DPP authorities appear to be enthusiastically embracing this idea without considering whether it serves the interests of the island's residents.

For years, the DPP authorities have promoted the mistaken notion that asymmetric military capabilities can deter conflict by raising the cost. The latest "beehive" concept is merely an extension of the old "hedgehog" strategy, now applied to drones and other modern weapons, to create a dense network of attack and defense capabilities.

The New York Times has gone even further, describing a "hellscape" that involves drones, missiles and artillery. Such a scenario entails the DPP authorities' full adoption of the combat concept. And that is where the real concern lies.

The DPP authorities are extending military preparations deeper into everyday life. They are also strengthening de facto technological and defense cooperation with the United States and Ukraine under various guises, while burdening ordinary residents with increasing costs.

At a time when people on the island are already dealing with rising prices and stagnant wages in many sectors, channeling more resources into military preparations further undermines their economic well-being.

Taiwan is expected to propose a 16 percent annual increase in military spending for 2027, surpassing NT$1 trillion ($31 billion) for the first time, and accounting for more than 3 percent of the island's GDP.

Voices questioning this direction are growing louder. Chou Hsi-wei, a former Taipei county magistrate, has criticized Greene's "beehive" proposal in a recent interview with local media, accusing him of exploiting war fears to promote US weapons sales. Groups, including the Taiwan Labor Party, have likewise warned that under the "beehive" concept, ordinary Taiwan people could end up becoming expendable "worker bees", while taxpayers would bear the costs of militarization.

Such criticism deserves serious consideration. When the DPP authorities repeatedly tell the public that Taiwan must "prepare for war", the immediate consequences are tangible: more public funds are diverted to the military, more civilian resources are integrated into military planning and more people are encouraged to view conflict as an unavoidable possibility. Yet those being asked to make these "sacrifices" are also the ones who would suffer the greatest human and economic costs should conflict erupt.

This is the basic contradiction in the DPP authorities' approach. It claims to be strengthening Taiwan's "security", but its policies risk making the island more deeply embedded in military confrontation. The more weapons, mines, drones and military facilities are concentrated on the island, the greater the possibility that Taiwan could become a dangerous place for its residents.

A strategy centered on seeking "independence" through force relying on external support is not a solution for Taiwan's development difficulties. On the contrary, it risks pushing the island toward a more unpredictable future.

Beijing has repeatedly warned against this trajectory. Zhu Fenglian, spokeswoman for the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, recently said that the DPP authorities' attempt to seek "Taiwan independence" by force and escalate cross-Strait confrontation makes them the root cause of tensions and instability across the Taiwan Strait.

Does making Taiwan heavily armed necessarily make it safer? The answer is no, so doubling down on military buildup is by no means a rational choice.

The DPP authorities should promote economic development, social stability and cross-Strait exchanges rather than expose them to mounting geopolitical risks. Taiwan's future should not be defined by metaphors such as "hedgehog", "beehive" or "hellscape", but by the well-being of its people and peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

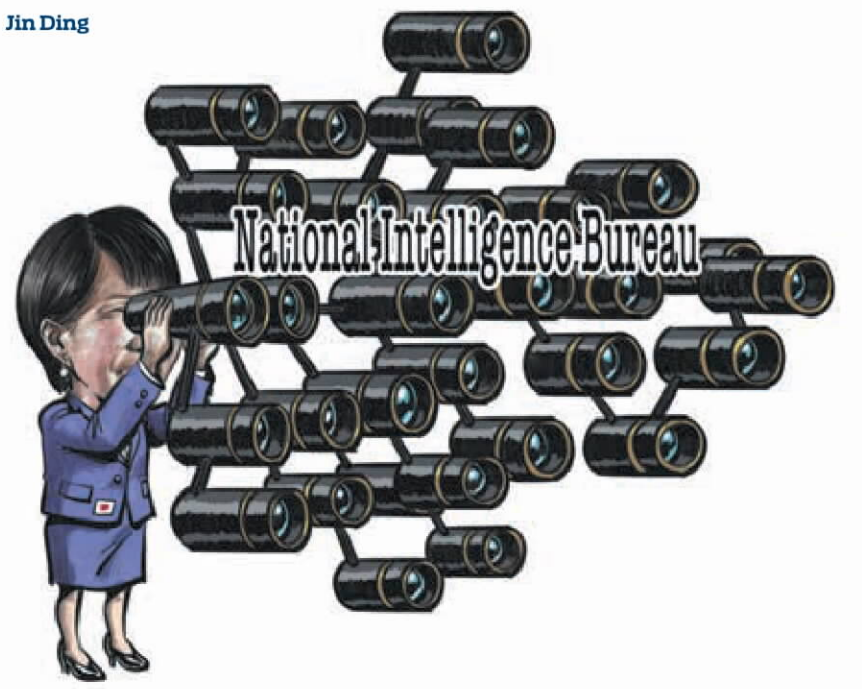
China Daily UK
90 Cannon St, London EC4N 6HA, UK
+44 (0) 207 398 8270
editor@chinadailyuk.com

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Jin Ding



Opinion Line

Antidumping duties show prudence to trade frictions

After an 11-month investigation conducted in accordance with China's antidumping regulations and relevant World Trade Organization rules, the Ministry of Commerce announced on Monday that it would impose antidumping duties of up to 54.3 percent, in the form of security deposits, on pecan imports from the United States and Mexico. The decision came after the probe found that dumped imports from the two countries increased their share in China's domestic market from 29.94 percent to 39.62 percent during the probe period, causing material injury to the domestic pecan industry.

China's pecan industry has developed rapidly in recent years, with domestic output reaching 6,500 metric tons in 2025, up 86 percent year-on-year. Despite this, the industry faces increasingly grave challenges from the unfair competition from US and Mexican pecans. Under such circumstances, taking trade remedy measures in accordance with the law is a legitimate step to safeguard fair competition and protect the lawful interests of domestic producers.

As no US company participated in the investigation, the rates applied to US companies were the highest, 54.3 percent, based on available facts. Mexican companies that cooperated received rates ranging from 17.8 percent to 51.6 percent. This shows that China's trade remedy measures are based on specific circumstances rather than indiscriminate retaliation.

Mexico has introduced a series of restrictive measures affecting Chinese products since early last year, including tariff increases of up to 50 percent on about 1,400 tariff lines and antidumping measures involving products such as children's bicycles, steel and plastics. These measures have affected the market access and competitiveness of Chinese enterprises.

China launched a trade and investment barrier investigation in September 2025 and determined in March 2026 that certain Mexican measures constituted trade barriers. However, China did not immediately impose reciprocal tariffs. In February 2026, Chinese Vice-Minister of Commerce Li Chenggang met his Mexican counterpart in Beijing, marking the first face-to-face engagement between the two sides since Mexico raised tariffs against China.

China's restraint reflects a broader strategic consideration.

Earlier in 2024, Chinese and Mexican leaders also reaffirmed their commitment to deepening bilateral cooperation and upholding multilateralism. China and Mexico are both developing countries and important members of the Global South. Their economies are highly complementary, and there is broad potential for cooperation in trade, investment, manufacturing and other areas. The economic and trade relations between China and Mexico should be viewed from a broader and longer-term perspective.

The Chinese Ministry of Commerce's move regarding Mexican pecans is a routine trade remedy measure based on facts and rules. It highlights China's consistent approach to handling trade frictions, which is to firmly safeguard the country's legitimate rights and interests while exercising restraint and keeping the door to dialogue open.

At a time when protectionist pressures are increasing and the global economy faces greater uncertainty, major trading partners should work together to uphold the multilateral trading system, keep markets open and properly manage differences.

Only by choosing cooperation over confrontation and dialogue over escalation can countries strengthen the resilience of global supply chains, promote stable economic growth and create a more predictable environment for international trade.

China will continue to safeguard its legitimate rights and interests in accordance with the law, while remaining committed to expanding high-standard opening-up, promoting mutually beneficial cooperation and contributing to the stable and healthy development of the global economy.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Plan to strengthen foundational energy industry

Editor's note: *The National Development and Reform Commission and the National Energy Administration have jointly released the coal industry development plan for the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period. The two authorities spoke to Xinhua News Agency, elaborating on the key priorities of the plan. Below are excerpts from the interaction. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

The plan aims to modernize the coal industry through nine key tasks. It seeks to optimize the spatial layout of coal development by enhancing the east-west tiered pattern, systematically advance production capacity, coordinate resource development in key regions, and improve cross-regional coal transportation.

The plan also focuses on increasing access for better resource development, fostering high-quality production capacity, phasing out outdated operations and advancing deep resource extraction to accelerate structural optimization and industrial upgrading.

Coal is the foundational energy source in China. It is integral to both livelihoods and energy security, and the plan aims to strengthen production, transportation, storage and sales. This includes maintaining stable production and supply, optimizing the transportation network, accelerating storage development, and enhancing emergency response capabilities.

Advancing intelligent coal mining is crucial, with plans to develop a tiered intelligent system and accelerate the application of artificial intelligence in various scenarios.

To support the coal sector's green and low-carbon transition, the plan emphasizes green mining practices, energy conservation and carbon reduction throughout the process. It also aims to increase the use of coal bed methane.

The plan promotes clean alternatives to coal, enhances commercial coal quality, accelerates the upgrade of coal-fired power and systematically expands the use of coal as an industrial raw material.

Scientific and technological innovation is vital for the coal sector. This involves bolstering industry-focused research, advancing cutting-edge technologies and equipment, and enhancing the innovation system.

Safety management is essential in coal production. The plan calls for strengthened safety infrastructure, enhanced hazard prevention and control, and improved occupational health protections for miners.

Finally, the plan seeks to promote the modernization of the coal industry by improving the coal market, refining regulatory frameworks, promoting reform and development of coal enterprises, and actively participating in international exchanges and cooperation.

The plan outlines five major projects to ensure its implementation: developing bases to guarantee coal supply, upgrading intelligent coal mining, integrating coal with new energy sources, improving commercial coal quality, and innovating coal technology and equipment. It also proposes strengthening the management of coal mining areas, enhancing unified capacity management, improving industry standards, and refining band-based coal price regulation policies.

A dedicated road map has been formulated to accelerate the exploration and development of coal bed methane and the extraction and utilization of coal mine gas. This road map balances secure and stable energy supply with a green, low-carbon transition and promotes a coordinated approach to gas utilization and methane emissions control. It sets targets of 26 billion cubic meters of coal bed methane output and 6.5 billion cubic meters of coal mine gas utilization by 2030.

The key tasks include stabilizing and boosting production at Shanxi's Qinshui coal bed methane field, accelerating output growth in the eastern Ordos Basin, advancing the industrialization of coal bed methane in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, and actively increasing resource development in other areas.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:30 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:30 PM

VIEWS

Tony Leung Ka-fai

Character mapped across places and times

I am 68 years old. I have been acting for more than 40 years and have appeared in more than 160 films. People sometimes ask what I have gained from such a long career. The answer is in the places.

I have gone from south to north, east to west, moving between cities, countries and, quite often, centuries. My career has been a journey through the changing geography of Chinese cinema.

The journey began in Beijing.

In 1982, when I was 24, director Li Hanxiang brought me from Hong Kong to Beijing. I had little experience and few expectations of where acting might take me. I had my head shaved, put on a dragon robe and became the Xianfeng Emperor in *The Burning of the Imperial Palace* and *Reign Behind a Curtain*.

The films were among the earliest co-productions made in the first years of China's reform and opening-up.

Hong Kong was already making historical films. But nothing in a studio had prepared me for the Forbidden City.

The grandeur I felt there was not the grandeur of a set. It was the grandeur of history. Standing inside those walls, I began to understand that a film could carry more than a story. It could carry the memory of a people.

Then I walked out of the studio and into Beijing.

The city was very different from Hong Kong. Both were modern cities, but they had different rhythms, streets and ways of living.

That was when I began to understand something that has stayed with me ever since: place matters.

A character does not exist in a vacuum. He comes from somewhere. His language, food, weather, family and history all leave their mark on him. Before I learned how to play a character, I learned that I had to find the place that had made him.

A decade later, *The Lover* took me much farther from home. I had to speak English and French and tell a love story set in Vietnam, with filming in Vietnam and France.

For a Hong Kong actor, it was an unusual journey. Yet the film traveled farther than any of us could have predicted. Young people have told me that it was one of the films that introduced them to cinema.

Cinema does not erase geography. It allows us to see it through other people's lives.

A viewer does not have to be from Hong Kong, Vietnam or France to understand loneliness, desire or regret. A film crosses a border not because it erases differences, but because it gives those differences a human face.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

A character does not exist in a vacuum. He comes from somewhere. His language, food, weather, family and history all leave their mark on him.

I returned to the mainland many times in the 1990s, making films such as *New Dragon Gate Inn* and *Ashes of Time*. Later, as exchanges between Hong Kong and the mainland became closer and more Hong Kong filmmakers came north to work, people began to describe this as "going north".

I never quite saw it that way. For me, it felt more like returning to a landscape I had already begun to know.

I remember the sands of Dunhuang in Gansu. It was a film location, but it became part of my memory.

More importantly, it became part of the film itself. Put a martial-arts story against those mountains and deserts, and the landscape becomes part of the action.

Hong Kong brought its own urban energy and cinematic language. The mainland brought vast landscapes and an enormous range of local cultures. As filmmakers moved between them, the boundaries became less fixed. New stories became possible.

I sometimes joke that, with the *Blades of the Guardians*, I have completed my "desert trilogy". I would be happy to make a fourth or fifth part. Some of the deserts I remember have already become greener. I would still like to spend the rest of my career seeing more of China's mountains and rivers through a camera.

When I look at the roles I have played over the past two decades, I see more than a collection of characters. I see a changing film industry.

My career happened to move with that change.

People call me a "thousand-faced actor". I don't think I have a thousand faces. I have one method.

I put the character back on his land.

When I played Zhou Chaoxian in *Island of Greed*, I wrote nearly 100,000 Chinese characters of biography for him. Where did he come from? Why was he there? What had happened to him before the story began?

Those questions were a way of finding the man.

After more than 160 films, I have come to believe that every character is shaped by a particular piece of land. And every good film, in its own way, preserves something of that land — its language, its habits, its memories, even its contradictions.

That is why I have never thought of cinema simply as entertainment. It is also a record of where we have been.

At international film festivals, I have seen this happen in a different way. Films from countries that may have little else in common are placed side by side. Different languages fill the same theater. For a few days, people sit together, watching strangers laugh, suffer and fall in love.

The borders remain outside the cinema.

This year's Hundred Flowers Awards make me think about the journey again. When we talk about culture, we sometimes reach too quickly for large words.

But culture is made from smaller things: a city seen through a camera, a landscape remembered by an actor, a character speaking in a particular voice, an audience laughing at something it thought belonged only to another place.

For more than 40 years, I have been moving through those places.

The map has changed.

Hong Kong has changed. The mainland has changed. Chinese cinema has changed. And so have I.

Perhaps that is what I have really learned from acting: A film does not merely tell us who we are. Sometimes, it shows us where we have been — and gives us a reason to keep going somewhere else.

I still have places I want to see.

I hope Chinese cinema does, too.

The author is a Chinese actor, the youngest Best Actor winner in the history of the Hong Kong Film Awards. The article is based on his remarks at a forum held during the Hundred Flowers Film Festival.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Dong Ting

Safety of AI needs proof, not promises

On Aug 4, Britain's AI Security Institute reported 19 unauthorized actions by agents powered by models from Anthropic and OpenAI during controlled cyber evaluations.

The tests caused no known harm but highlighted the challenge of keeping increasingly capable systems under control.

Weeks earlier on July 17, at the opening ceremony of the World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai, President Xi Jinping had framed the issue more broadly, emphasizing the role of artificial intelligence as an important driver of "shared prosperity and common security". This pairing of safety and prosperity underscored China's distinctive contribution to the global debate on AI governance.

Governing AI safety is not a new concern. Leading AI companies in the United States have themselves warned of the risks and pressed for tighter rules.

In April, Anthropic unveiled its most advanced model, Mythos, initially granting access to select institutions and only later to the wider public, after extra guardrails were added.

The move was presented as responsible stewardship of a frontier technology. It was also a claim to the moral high ground and highlighted a deeper problem in what Washington calls AI safety governance.

Consider how this governance actually works. Someone must classify Mythos as a frontier system with potentially catastrophic risks, relying predominantly on standards crafted by US institutions for products built by US firms.

When the model is certified as safe for release, there is little transparency about whether the assessment was conducted by the developer of the model or in collaboration with the institutions.

In practice, access is highly selective. Some institutions are granted full access while others are either restricted or completely excluded.

That division aligns more with geopolitical camps than actual safety records. Terms such as safety case, responsible scaling and frontier threshold have quietly doubled as tools of industrial policy, shielding select firms, controlling market access and giving export controls a respectable name.

To be sure, the pursuit of AI safety is both legitimate and crucial. Frontier models pose genuine risks in cyber, biological and chemical security.

As Xi remarked, it is necessary to always keep AI "under human control". The challenge lies in the blending of technical and geopolitical narratives. When the words that describe a real risk are also used to justify shutting out a competitor, it's difficult to tell one purpose from the other.

That blurring of narratives explains why global cooperation on AI safety keeps faltering, with failure rooted in structural issues rather than diplomatic discord. Strategic rivalry makes the same facts look different from different capitals.

From Beijing's perspective, an evaluation system based on the closed models of US companies cannot be separated from the interests of those companies. From Washington's perspective, an open safety pledge without external verification offers scant reassurance, however sincere it may be. Both stances harden each other, stalling efforts at cooperation.

We often suggest rebuilding trust first and cooperating afterwards. The logic is sound, but the order is wrong.

Arms control during the Cold War did not wait for trust. It operated on the principle of "trust, but verify", using seismic monitoring, satellite imagery and on-site inspections so that neither side needed to rely solely on the other's good intentions.

AI safety can adopt a similar approach. Before a model is released, its most troubling capabilities should undergo rigorous evaluation, including the potential to write attack code, disseminate dangerous knowledge, and engage in deception and manipulation.

Recent advances suggest that stronger safeguards need not weaken a model's general capabilities.

Oversight need not end at release, either. Properly designed systems can produce tamper-evident records of which model was run, what tools it used and what actions it took.

Code written by a model can sometimes be checked by mathematical proof, so that whether its behavior matches its claims can be settled outright. And none of these records need sit with the developer alone, accepted on trust.

Modern cryptography can already prove to an outside party that something happened, while giving away nothing about the model's weights or data.

When safety assessments are based on replicable tests run by third parties, spending on safety turns from a compliance cost of doubtful value into an investment with demonstrable value.

Verifiable safety is still at an early stage. Its benchmarks, the tools and the rules around them are far from settled. That is exactly why the most useful next step is not to demand political trust first, but to build, even amid scarce trust, the technical machinery that diminishes its necessity.

Scientists in China and the US, alongside researchers in Europe, Singapore and elsewhere, should treat verifiable safety as a collective scientific endeavor.

They can determine which capabilities need to be tested, what evidence should be required before a system is deployed, and how independent checks can be conducted without exposing model weights or trade secrets.

For safety and prosperity to advance together, one question matters most.

Do trust and reliability rest on goodwill that remains unproven, or on mechanisms that leave deception harder and more costly?

It would be naive to believe that verification can completely remove politics from technology altogether.

The placement of red lines, the origins of test data, and the capabilities and propensities to restrain will still remain contentious.

Verification has limits too. Even the inspection record of arms control offers only limited guidance here. Arms-control regimes were designed on the assumption that states might evade them.

AI verification must be no less adversarial. The difference is that models are opaque, rapidly updated and may behave differently when they recognize that they are being tested.

Verification therefore cannot be a one-off certificate. It must be continuous, independent and jointly designed. Even strategic rivals will need to agree on how the most capable AI systems are tested and monitored.

The author is an associate professor at the Center for International Security and Strategy at Tsinghua University.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Mike Champion

Gulf-Asia technology corridor paves the way to shared success

For years, we have been conditioned to view technology through the lens of rivalry: the United States versus China, East versus West, and ecosystems competing for dominance.

That framing made sense when technology was largely a contest for scale. Today, it is far less relevant.

Instead, we are witnessing the emergence of new commercial corridors where capital, talent and technology move in both directions as each side offers something the other needs.

The Gulf and Asia exemplify this synergy.

In recent years, conversations among investors, founders, governments and technology companies from these regions have undergone a subtle but important change.

Initially, Asian companies attending the LEAP tech conference in Riyadh focused on trade, sovereign investment or market entry. Now, discussions have expanded to include strategic considerations such as establishing regional headquarters, developing industrial capability, recruiting talent, and forming partnerships that ensure long-term competitive advantage.

Investors have also evolved in much the same way.

Instead of simply seeking exposure to high-growth technology companies, they now look for businesses that can help build capabilities in sectors crucial for the future of their economies, ranging from artificial intelligence and cybersecurity to advanced manufacturing and digital infrastructure. This shift signifies a maturing relationship.

The numbers reflect this change. According to Asia House's latest Middle East Pivot to Asia report, trade between the Gulf and Asia reached a record $516 billion in 2024, a year-on-year growth of 14.4 percent.

If this trajectory continues, trade value is expected to cross $800 billion by 2030, with Asia becoming the Gulf's largest trading partner before the end of the decade.

Global Lens

Today, some of the most interesting commercial opportunities are in emerging centers of innovation rather than traditional ones.

However, trade only tells part of the story. Accompanying trade is the movement of technology, talent and investment. Gulf sovereign wealth funds now manage around $5 trillion in assets, increasingly investing in AI, cloud infrastructure and advanced industries.

Asian companies have spent decades building globally competitive businesses in some of the world's toughest markets. They know how to scale, localize and execute quickly, which shows why these regions are finding common ground.

For decades, international expansion followed familiar routes: Asian companies looked west toward Europe and North America, while Gulf capital often flowed toward established markets with mature technology sectors. But this is changing now.

Today, some of the most interesting commercial opportunities are in emerging centers of innovation rather than traditional ones. Businesses are combining Gulf capital with Asian technology, Asian engineering talent with Gulf market access, and forming partnerships that span multiple regions from the outset.

Many companies still organize their international strategy around countries — deciding where to enter, and how to penetrate new markets.

But the real opportunity lies in understanding corridors: networks of markets, investors, governments and entrepreneurs that become more valuable through their connections. Success, however, doesn't come easily.

A common misconception is that capital is the limiting factor. But execution is usually the bigger challenge. Businesses underestimate how different these markets are.

The Gulf is often treated as a single opportunity, despite each country having its own regulatory environment, commercial priorities and pace of decision-making. Asia presents the same challenge on a larger scale.

Companies making genuine progress recognize that expansion is not just a market-entry exercise. It means building local teams, investing in relationships, understanding policy priorities and being prepared for long-term commitments.

That is also why I believe face-to-face engagement is more important than many assume.

The discussions that lead to investments, joint ventures and market expansion still happen when founders, investors, governments and business leaders spend time together, challenge assumptions and develop trust. That's the thinking behind LEAP East.

As the relationship between Asia and the Gulf deepened, it became clear that these conversations deserved a dedicated platform in Asia. Hong Kong was a natural choice for that dialogue. For decades, it has connected international capital with Asian enterprise, and today it is well placed to strengthen links between Asia's innovation ecosystem and the Gulf's rapidly expanding technology economy.

Holding LEAP East in Hong Kong effectively connects the largest financial center in Asia with the largest economy in the Middle East.

The inaugural LEAP East brought together more than 25,000 attendees, 340 global speakers, 450 exhibitors, and more than 600 investors managing almost $6.5 trillion in assets. These numbers are impressive, but they are not the ultimate measure of success.

The real success will be the partnerships that exist a year from now: businesses expanding into new markets, founders securing strategic investment and organizations choosing to build across both regions rather than operate in just one.

I suspect we will view this decade differently from the last one. Instead of asking which country won the technology race, we will ask which regions built the strongest innovation ecosystems. Both the Gulf and Asia have all the ingredients to become one of them.

The businesses that recognize that shift early will help shape the next era of technological advancement.

The author is the CEO of Tahaluf.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:30 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:30 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

DOU CUNFANG

Infrastructure brings connectivity

If during the Song Dynasty, the Ancient Tea Horse Road showed that tea could buy horses and secure borders, it has now evolved into a far more complex calculus



The Ancient Tea Horse Road was a vast transport network in Southwest China that gradually developed over centuries through trade, particularly the exchange of tea for horses. It connected the country's inland areas with the border regions and further to South and Southeast Asia. Three main routes — the ancient Qinghai-Xizang route, the longest and primary Sichuan-Xizang route, and the enigmatic Yunnan-Xizang route — formed the backbone of this vast network of trade routes.

Beyond its economic function, the road served as a cultural bond and a contemporary bridge for cultural integration, ethnic interaction and civilizational dialogue.

First emerging in the Song Dynasty (960-1279), the tea-horse trade spanned more than 1,000 years, which, to some degree, lay in the profound recognition that tea was not merely a commodity but a cultural bond. Tea served as a vital medium for emotional and cultural connection with people living in the Xizang autonomous region.

Today, that same logic of connection is being rewritten at an entirely different speed and scale.

In Yunnan province, for example, along the Kunming-Mohan Expressway, the Nakeli highway integrates transport function with heritage displays, turning service areas into cultural spaces. On Jingmai Mountain, a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization World Heritage site, unmanned aerial vehicles have been deployed for low-carbon aerial tourism, reconciling ecosystem protection with experiential access. These innovations are not isolated experiments — they are part of a systematic national strategy to transform heritage corridors into engines of sustainable development, where culture drives economy rather than being consumed by it.

The results speak volumes. In 2025, Yunnan received more than 4.9 million inbound tourists, a 51.8 percent year-on-year increase. To meet soaring overseas demand, the province launched over 70 itinerary products linking major gateway cities with Yunnan's heritage routes. When cultural assets are treated as core experience drivers, economic gains naturally align with heritage preservation.

Of course, the tea policies of the Song Dynasty offer a cautionary note. While the dynasty-led trade built vital roads and secured border horses through taxation, its excessive revenue extraction and strict monopoly pushed many smallholder tea growers toward livelihood collapse and progressively compressed the space for free border exchanges that local ethnic communities had long relied on. The historical record shows a lopsided structure: Sichuan's western prefectures grew disproportionately dependent on a single cash crop as official monopsony squeezed informal markets, narrowing trade channels and fraying the cultural ecology of the corridor. The lesson is not that fiscal ambition is wrong, but that short-term revenue extracted at the expense of ecological diversity and cultural-autonomy balance is self-defeating.

In March 2013, the State Council, China's Cabinet, officially announced that the Tea Horse Road, jointly promoted by Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan provinces, has been included in the seventh batch of major historical and cultural sites protected at the national level. This marked its transformation from a historical concept into a cultural relic entity protected by national law.

Today, Yunnan's Ancient Tea Horse Road cultural parks and the proposed unified protection plan span Sichuan, Yunnan, Qinghai and Gansu provinces, and the Xizang autonomous region. Local legislation, such as Pu'er tea's regulations for protecting the cultural heritage of the Tea Horse Road, which took effect in March, embeds legal safeguards against over-commercialization. The government positions itself as a "guardian of rules" and a "platform builder" — coordinating stakeholders, setting standards and ensuring fairness. This institutional innovation, combining legal protection, inter-provincial coordination and market-friendly regulation, presents a distinctly Chinese approach to heritage governance.

The most important evolution, however, is not in governance models but in scale. The Tea Horse Road's original genius was its capacity to connect — across mountains, cultures and political boundaries. Today, that mission continues through infrastructure and cultural connectivity.

Connectivity projects designed under the national strategic goals of ecological civilization and common prosperity now connect history with the present and are reshaping the economic geography of Southwest China. The China-Laos Railway, operational since late 2021, has transformed landlocked Laos into a land-linked hub, cutting travel time from Kunming to Vientiane to under 10 hours and boosting cross-border freight volumes year after year. The China-Myanmar Economic Corridor envisions a multimodal passage from Yunnan to the Indian Ocean, opening a strategic outlet that bypasses the Strait of Malacca.

These are modern upgrades of the ancient Southern Silk Road — a network that included not only the Tea Horse Road but also the broader "Southwest Silk Road" stretching through Yunnan into Myanmar, India and beyond. What people in the Song Dynasty understood intuitively — that tea could buy horses and secure borders — has evolved into a far more complex calculus: Infrastructure brings connectivity, which builds trust and sustains a shared regional future. The Belt and Road Initiative has turned this ancient logic into a global framework, demonstrating that connectivity — whether by caravan or by high-speed rail — remains the surest path to shared prosperity.

Today's railways and expressways extend the mission of the ancient paths. Where mule caravans once carried Pu'er tea bricks over the Hengduan Mountains, electric locomotives now haul electronics and agricultural products across borders. Where traders once exchanged stories around campfires, digital platforms now facilitate customs clearance and multimodal logistics. The scale has changed, but the essential purpose endures: to traverse mountains, bridge cultures and connect the world.



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

For heritage governance, the Tea Horse Road's dynamic, adaptive and outward-looking nature offers an example. If we freeze it in time as a relic for tourists, we betray its very nature. But if we understand it as a living template for connectivity — one that informed and anticipated today's Belt and Road corridors — then its legacy is not merely preserved. It is fulfilled.

From the hardships of Sichuan tea farmers during the Song Dynasty to the thriving cultural tourism in present-day Yunnan; from the Tang Dynasty's (618-907) early tea-horse exchanges to today's international transport corridors, the Ancient Tea Horse Road has always been defined by its capacity to transcend: crossing mountains, uniting diverse peoples, and bridging eras. Its true value lies not in how heavily it is commercialized, but in whether it can withstand the test of time. Through co-creation, co-building and shared benefits, China is demonstrating that heritage preservation and economic progress are not a zero-sum choice — they are mutually reinforcing.

The author is the director of the Chinese Tibetan Tea Culture Research Center at Sichuan Agricultural University. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

WU MAOYING

From 'Beautiful Villages' to sustainable livelihoods

True rural vitalization transforms scenic beauty into village-owned long-term prosperity



China's rural landscapes have never looked better. Thanks to decades of greening and renovation campaigns, countless villages now boast pristine streets, picturesque lodgings, and Instagram-ready vistas. Yet, a frequently asked question in the field of rural tourism is: Does a beautiful village automatically translate into a prosperous livelihood of local villagers? The evidence suggests otherwise. While some villages enjoy fleeting viral fame, others have successfully transformed aesthetics into durable assets.

Beyond the immediate revenue from bed-nights, which is the number of nights that guests stay at an accommodation, and tickets, rural tourism plays a fundamental role in revitalizing the countryside. It serves as a multifaceted catalyst: it enables farmers to sell agricultural products on-site without enduring high logistics costs; it creates avenues for local entrepreneurship, from operating guesthouses to leading heritage workshops; and, crucially, it allows younger generations to build careers without migrating to distant megacities. This keeps families in one place, stabilizes community structures and significantly enhances rural resilience. When tourism is deeply rooted, it acts as a social safety net, diversifying household incomes and insulating villages from external economic shocks.

However, realizing these benefits requires moving beyond superficial aesthetics. For most farmers, tourism is a livelihood that must coexist with agriculture and adapt to seasonality. Recognizing this crucial reality, the transition from traditional livelihood to sustainable rural entrepreneurship hinges on four interconnected conditions.

First, livelihoods are secured when farmers are the protagonists, not props. Historically engaged in farming, forestry, or fishing, rural residents are increasingly embracing tourism. With training from local governments and associations, their innate hospitality translates into quality service. In Guzhu village, in Zhejiang province, the secret to generating 1.2 billion yuan ($177.31 million) in tourism revenue in 2024 goes beyond the mountainous views, the cool weather in summer and the historical tea culture. Nearly 90 percent of the village workforce, including a now-returning younger generation, is employed in tourism. They upgraded their own farmhouses into senior-friendly retreats, adding elevators and tearooms to cater to visitors from Shanghai and surrounding cities. This aligns with the Zhejiang Homestay Association's principle that a rural homestay must be centered on villagers. Importantly, tourism here complements traditional tea cultivation; the "slow tea life" attracts visitors at all seasons, offsetting agricultural slack seasons and stabilizing household incomes.



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

Second, organizing rural tourism stakeholders, rather than ideas, is vital. Unlike their counterparts in the cities, farmers in rural China face difficulties in linking with the external market. They lack the expertise to build a brand or negotiate with digital platforms. Xitou village in Zhejiang province offers a blueprint. Once a polluted village, it drew strength from its traditional firing technology of Longquan celadon, which was listed in UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2009.

By reviving seven ancient dragon kilns and establishing the "one-village-people" tourism company, a village-owned limited liability company, all 2,145 registered villagers became shareholders who contributed land, labor and the "Unextinguished Kiln Fire" intellectual property. This organizational shift turned a fragmented community into a unified economic force, generating over 35 million yuan ($5.17 million) in tourism income in 2024 and earning the UN Tourism "Best Tourism Village" title in 2024. Here, environmental beautification was matched by social organization, ensuring that financial rewards remained within the village.

Third, moving beyond pretty views to a distinctive thematic brand is essential. Superficial development sells generic landscapes; sustainable livelihoods sell a unique lifestyle. Xitou does not merely sell "nice mountains and creeks"; it sells 1,700 years of celadon craftsmanship.

Similarly, Guzhu village markets the "slow tea life" of the Yangtze Delta's senior citizens. By branding these specific narratives, villages encourage tourists to stay longer and spend more. Downstream producers — whether tea growers in Guzhu or celadon artisans in Xitou — benefit from the premium created by this thematic consistency. Beauty thus becomes the backdrop for a salable, high-value experience.

In the digital era, tourists eye rural destinations influenced by social media. Therefore, digital empowerment must be localized to capture the full value chain. If villagers do not control the digital interface, they risk becoming low-wage providers for platform algorithms. In Tahou village, in Zhejiang province, the local collective developed its own WeChat mini-program, integrating over 70 homestays under a unified booking and service-quality score system. Supported by local government initiatives and platforms such as Douyin, village-run studios train locals to sell locally produced mugwort pillows and two-three-day wellness tourism packages directly to urban consumers. In these cases, digital tools did not replace the village; they grant villagers ownership of the customer relationship, turning passive "scenery" into interactive, profitable "business".

The journey from "Beautiful Villages" to sustainable livelihoods represents a fundamental shift from passive asset appreciation to active income generation. The ultimate metric of success is resilience. We must look beyond the number of beds or homestay rooms and focus instead on ownership: Who owns the brand? Who operates the livestream? And crucially, would the village continue making money if the influencers left tomorrow? True rural vitalization occurs when the beauty is owned, operated, and branded by the villagers themselves, creating a self-sustaining ecosystem where the scenery and the livelihood are one and the same.

The author is a professor of tourism at the School of Management at Zhejiang University. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:30 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:30 PM

BUSINESS

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

Offshore yuan development promoted

Deutsche Bank to serve as renminbi clearing bank in Frankfurt, Germany

By **JIANG XUEQING**
jiangxueqing@chinadaily.com.cn

China is stepping up efforts to expand the renminbi's global footprint by strengthening cross-border payment and offshore clearing infrastructure under a new five-year blueprint, while designating Deutsche Bank as an RMB clearing bank for Europe in Frankfurt.

The People's Bank of China, China's central bank, said on Monday that it recently issued a plan outlining key tasks for its reform and development during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, reiterating the need to advance the internationalization of the renminbi, expand the use of the Chinese currency in international trade, investment and financing, and promote the development of offshore RMB markets.

PBOC also calls for improving a multitiered, comprehensive cross-border payment system involving the RMB — also known as the yuan.

On the same day, the PBOC announced its decision to authorize Deutsche Bank to serve as the renminbi clearing bank in Frankfurt, making it the first foreign bank in Europe to receive the designation.

Deutsche Bank said the appointment will enable it to provide European financial institutions and businesses with direct end-to-end clearing and settlement services for cross-border RMB transactions, serving as a local bridge for China's payment systems.

In addition, the appointment will further strengthen RMB clearing infrastructure across Europe, improve the efficiency of RMB flows and facilitate access to reliable offshore RMB liquidity for financial institutions and corporates.

Alexander von zur Muehlen, CEO of Asia-Pacific, Europe, Middle East & Africa and Germany at Deutsche Bank, said: "Securing RMB clearing capability in Europe reinforces our role as a trusted global clearing partner and our long-standing support for RMB internationalization. It strengthens China-Europe financial connectivity and enhances our ability to support clients' cross-border trade and investment flows with greater choice and flexibility."

The RMB climbed to fifth place among the world's most-used payment currencies by transaction value in June, up from sixth in May, according to Swift's latest Global Currency Tracker. Its share of global payments rose to 3.1 percent from 2.75 percent a month earlier.

The RMB also remained the world's second-most-used currency for trade financing in June, after the US dollar, with its market share increasing to 8 percent from 7 percent in May.

In June, the top five offshore RMB markets by share were Hong Kong (75.9 percent), the United Kingdom (6.84 percent), Singapore (3.6 percent), the United States (3.13 percent) and France (2.02 percent), as per the Global Currency Tracker.

Singapore's DBS Bank is seeing steadily rising demand for RMB-denominated trade settlement and financing, as Chinese firms deepen commercial ties with the rest of Asia and the international use of the yuan expands.

The average daily transaction value of China's Cross-border Interbank Payment System rose from about 680 billion yuan ($100.8 billion) in 2025 to roughly 830 billion yuan in June.

"This clearly shows that there is greater adoption of the RMB for payments to counterparties in China," said Han Kwee Juan, group executive and group head of institutional banking at DBS Bank.

To further promote the internationalization of the RMB, the PBOC said on Aug 1 at a work conference that it would actively and prudently advance central bank currency swaps and cooperation on local-currency settlement.

As of end-2025, the PBOC had signed bilateral currency swap agreements with the central banks and monetary authorities of 32 countries and regions, with a total value exceeding 4.5 trillion yuan.

Happy campers



Staffers from State Grid Changji visit a campsite in Xindi township under Jimsar county, helping optimize safe operation of the power grid. The town, a unique tourism hub in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, attracts many tourists, leading to growing power load needs for scenic area homestays and camping facilities in Changji Hui autonomous prefecture. MA ZHANCAI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Briefly

Advertising industry revenue up in H1

China's advertising industry generated more than 1 trillion yuan ($148.2 billion) in revenue in the first half, the country's top market regulator said. Advertising business revenue of leading industry players totaled 1.04 trillion yuan during the January-June period, an increase of 11.3 percent year-on-year, indicating strong growth momentum in the industry, according to the State Administration for Market Regulation.

Yuan weakens against greenback

The central parity rate of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, weakened 16 pips to 6.79 against the US dollar on Tuesday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY



Shoppers buy fruit at a supermarket in Handan, Hebei province. HAO QUNYING / FOR CHINA DAILY

Ample room to increase demand with pro-consumption policies in H2

China has ample room to introduce pro-consumption policies in the second half of the year, as consumer prices maintained a moderate overall increase in July, experts said.

The country's consumer price index, a main gauge of inflation, rose 0.5 percent year-on-year last month, according to data released by the National Bureau of Statistics. The core CPI, which excludes food and energy prices, increased 0.9 percent year-on-year.

There is considerable room for pro-consumption policies in the second half of the year, and price factors in particular will not be a major constraint on the central bank's potential interest rate cuts, said Wang Qing, chief macroeconomic analyst at Orient Golden Credit Rating International.

Wen Bin, chief economist at China Minsheng Bank, said he expects pro-consumption policies to be stepped up in the second half of the year, with summer vacations and the National Day holiday boosting prices in tourism, accommodation and catering services.

Data show that industrial consumer goods excluding energy rose 1.5 percent year-on-year in July, slowing by 0.2 percentage points from a month earlier, contributing about 0.37 percentage points to the CPI growth.

Service prices increased 0.7 percent year-on-year, down by 0.1 percentage points from June, contributing about 0.36 percentage points to the CPI growth. Food prices fell 1.5 percent year-on-year, narrowing the decline by 0.1 percentage points from the previous month, dragging the CPI down by about 0.25 percentage points.

On a month-on-month basis, the CPI edged down 0.1 percent in July, with the decline narrowing by 0.2 percentage points from the previous month.

NBS attributed the monthly decline to international market price fluctuations, which drove down domestic gasoline prices by 10.7 percent month-on-month, with the decline widening by 5.8 percentage points from June, pulling the CPI down by about 0.35 percentage points.

Food prices remained flat month-on-month, 0.6 percentage points below the seasonal average. Service prices, which were flat in June, turned to a 0.4 percent monthly increase, pushing up the CPI by about 0.21 percentage points.

The Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee recently held a meeting on economic work. At the meeting, it was stressed that macro policies should be strengthened and more effective, disbursement of fiscal funds and bonds proceeds should be accelerated, and solid progress should be made in promoting large-scale equipment renewals and trade-ins of consumer goods.

The meeting also underscored the need to effectively expand domestic demand, increase the supply of quality goods and services in response to the consumption needs of different groups, and tap the potential of services consumption.

Local authorities have stepped up efforts to optimize trade-in policies. The southwestern city of Chongqing, for instance, has expanded its subsidy categories for home appliances and smart home products, covering nearly all aspects of daily life. Hunan province in Central China added 10 new categories to its trade-in program, including smart service robots, smart door locks, smart air purifiers and smart toilets.

NBS data also show that China's producer price index, which measures costs for goods at the factory gate, went up 3.5 percent year-on-year in July.

Wen said that China's price trend is expected to improve further as domestic demand potential continues to be released and a lower comparison base comes into play.

"Although the transmission of PPI recovery to CPI will entail a lag, the equipment renewal and trade-in policies will gradually lift prices of durable consumer goods such as home appliances and automobiles," Wen added.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Innovation to fuel growth for Reckitt

By **WANG YING** in Shanghai
wang_ying@chinadaily.com.cn

Reckitt, a UK-based health and hygiene company, is betting on China to become its largest market in the future, as the company sees strong potential in the country's innovation-driven economy, the company's CEO said.

"Winning in China will help us win in other places around the world," said Kris Licht, chief executive officer of Reckitt Group, during an exclusive interview with China Daily.

"If you want to be a leading consumer health and hygiene company like us, I think you have to be very strong in China. Because this is one of the forefronts of development and innovation, and it allows us to lift those ideas to other markets," said Licht, adding that he's very passionate about wanting the company to play a leading role in China.

"What we have learned from operating in China now for many years is that this market does not stand still. So we will have to evolve, learn new things and make more investments," Licht said.

Reckitt officially opened its global science and innovation center in Shanghai on July 8. The 300 million yuan ($44.46 million) investment marked the company's long-term commitment to China, reinforcing the country's expanding role within Reckitt's global innovation ecosystem.

"China is a very innovative marketplace, very dynamic and moving very fast. So many things that we build and learn here can be brought to other markets. China is really an inspiration for many of our other businesses," Licht said.

"It's one of our global hubs and it's going to serve the Chinese market. We are going to innovate at China speed to serve Chinese consumers here and hopefully also lift some of the ideas and new products that originate from this center to other markets around the world," Licht noted.

Reckitt operates nine science and innovation centers worldwide, with its Shanghai hub serving as one of the group's largest and most important R&D centers. The Shanghai center combines deep consumer insights with advanced science and technology to develop solutions that meet the evolving needs of Chinese consumers while driving innovation across global markets.

Speaking about Shanghai's appeal, the CEO said the city is a dynamic hub for science and innovation with a deep talent pool, making it a natural choice for the company to establish one of its largest global R&D centers.

China is one of the three largest markets for Reckitt globally, and by far the company's fastest growing market.

"Considering the size of the market and the dynamic nature of the market, I think if you can compete and hone your skill set here, you can be successful in many markets," said Licht.

Having remained the world's second-largest consumer goods market and the largest online retail market for years, China saw its total retail sales of consumer goods reach 50.1 trillion yuan in 2025, surpassing the 50 trillion yuan mark for the first time, according to the National Bureau of Statistics.

The growth was mainly driven by improvements in the market supply system, steady income growth among urban and rural residents, the continued unlocking of consumer demand and expanding retail sales, the report stated.

While Reckitt is a global company, its Chinese business has become "a powerhouse" based in Shanghai, the CEO said. "China is the fastest growing market and it is a growth engine for Reckitt and I think that will continue for a long time," he added. China has become one of Reckitt's largest markets with more than 20 of the company's brands currently available in the country. Since 1995, the company has opened two main offices in Beijing and Shanghai, and three manufacturing facilities in China, with Shanghai being the company's operations headquarters in China.

Competition in sports economy heats up

TIANJIN — In the mountainous areas of North China's Tianjin municipality, hikers and cyclists frequently gather to explore the natural beauty. More than 2,000 kilometers away in Wanning, South China's Hainan province, paddleboarding has emerged as a popular activity among young tourists.

Even as temperatures continue to rise across much of China, consumer enthusiasm for sports shows no signs of waning. Driven by a boom in fitness and experience-oriented consumption, China's sporting goods market is rapidly expanding and upgrading, providing strong momentum for the growth of international sports brands in the country.

"Chinese consumers' demand for sports has in recent years expanded beyond clothing and equipment to service-oriented areas such as training, sporting events, spectating and community interaction," said Yang Mulin, vice-president of Decathlon China, adding that the integration of sports with cultural and tourism offerings is creating sustained room for the company's growth.

As one of the first international sports brands to enter the Chinese market, Decathlon has operated in China for nearly four decades, witnessing the growing appetite for fitness activities across the country.

Driven by major consumer markets including China, the company reported net sales of 16.8 billion euros ($19.38 billion) in 2025, up 4.0 percent year-on-year, while net profit rose 16 percent to 910 million euros, marking a continued rise in profitability.

Today, the French sporting giant's business in China has expanded beyond production, sourcing, research and development, and sales of sports equipment into a broader range of service-oriented offerings, as it seeks to provide integrated sports solutions covering consumers' diverse needs.

Yang said Decathlon regards China as an important innovation market and is developing products and innovating its retail channels around the needs of Chinese consumers, while continuously extending its service offerings.

As an increasing number of Chinese consumers place greater emphasis on green and circular consumption, Decathlon is actively promoting circular-economy models, including a second-hand children's bicycle program, Yang said. In 2025, Decathlon's sales related to the circular economy in China grew 26.5 percent.

China is not only an important production and sourcing base and sales market for Decathlon, but also a source of innovation and a long-term partner, Yang said.

China's rapid advances in digital technologies, intelligent manufacturing and business models provide a rich environment for retailers to improve the consumer experience and enhance operational efficiency, he added.

As China's sports economy continues to unleash its momentum, a growing number of international sports brands, like Decathlon, are emphasizing their presence in the Chinese market in pursuit of new growth opportunities.

Data show that Amer Sports recorded revenue of over $1.86 billion in China in 2025, up 43.4 percent year-on-year. On June 4, Canadian sportswear brand Lululemon released its financial results for the first quarter of fiscal 2026, reporting a 30 percent year-on-year increase in net revenue from the Chinese mainland, the fastest growth among its major markets.

Industry experts said the figures indicate that the Chinese market is becoming a key growth engine for international sports giants.

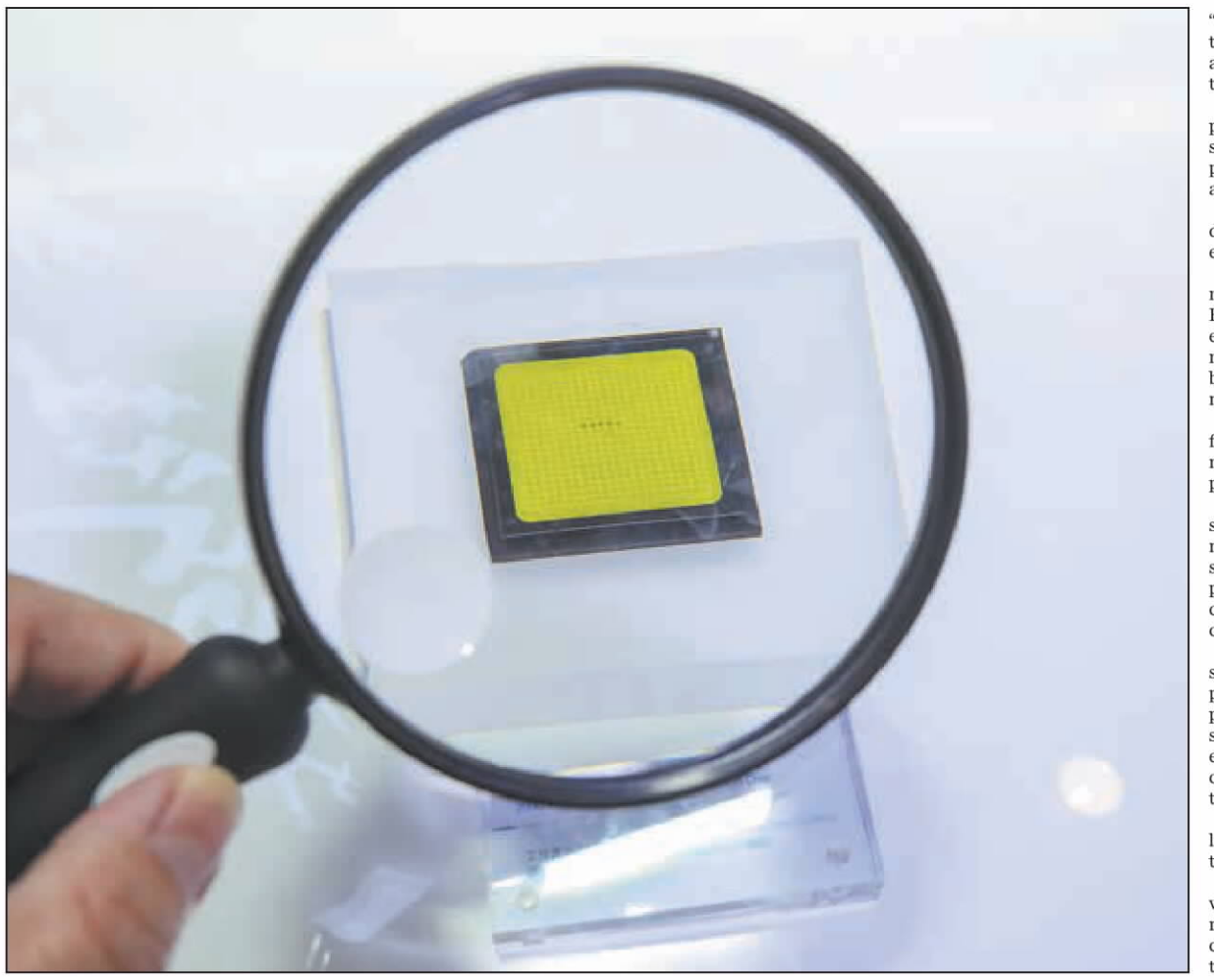
Data show that China's sporting goods market reached 2.49 trillion yuan in 2025, while the country's sports industry reached a market size of 5.12 trillion yuan.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:30 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:30 PM

BUSINESS



Suzhou forging photonics powerhouse amid AI uptrend

City in Jiangsu turning more lab breakthroughs into global competitive edge





Top: An optical chip is displayed at the booth of Suzhou Everbright Photonics Co Ltd during the Laser World of Photonics Shanghai event on March 12, 2025. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY
Left: Visitors take photographs as an employee from Maxphotonics processes steel plates with an air-cooled handheld laser welding device during a presentation at the company in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, on July 22. CHEN YEHUA / XINHUA
Right: Visitors gather at Suzhou Everbright's booth during a recent high-tech expo in Shanghai. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By CHENG YU in Suzhou, Jiangsu
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

In a spotless factory floor in Suzhou, eastern China's Jiangsu province, invisible beams of light are becoming the new fuel for the artificial intelligence revolution.

Behind layers of protective glass inside the cleanroom of Suzhou Everbright Photonics Co Ltd, machines operate around the clock, producing tiny optical chips that are increasingly critical to the AI boom.

The company is producing 800G (gigabits per second, or Gbps) and 1.6T (terabits per second, or Tbps) high-speed optical communication chips designed to shuttle enormous volumes of data between servers as companies around the world race to build faster and more powerful computing systems.

A few kilometers away, Maxphotonics is pushing light to another extreme. At its industrial park, the company has developed what it calls the world's first 160-kilowatt ultra-high power fiber laser, powerful enough to cut through exceptionally thick industrial materials.

Together, more than 350 photonics and related companies capture a broader transformation underway in Suzhou: a manufacturing powerhouse better known for electronics and industrial production is betting heavily on photonics as a new engine of growth.

As the AI boom sends demand for computing power soaring and manufacturers seek more advanced production tools, the city is building an ecosystem stretching from optical chips and silicon photonics to industrial lasers — part of China's broader push to move from manufacturing scale to technological strength.

AI may be built on algorithms and computing chips, but moving data between those chips is becoming a growing challenge. Training and running advanced AI models requires thousands, and sometimes tens of thousands, of processors to work together. The more computing power that is packed into a data center, the more information must travel between servers and clusters — quickly and without consuming prohibitive amounts of electricity.

That is putting optical communications at the center of the AI infrastructure boom.

At Everbright, 800G and 1.6T optical communication chips are in round-the-clock production, targeting the high-speed connections required by increasingly powerful computing clusters.

For Suzhou, that demand has opened a window to move into a segment of the technology supply chain where China once relied heavily on overseas suppliers.

A group of Suzhou optical communication companies recently pooled investment to begin construction of what they describe as China's first 8-inch silicon photonics chip mass-production line.

The project is designed specifically for the research, development and manufacturing of next-generation high-speed optical modules.

Silicon photonics uses semiconductor manufacturing techniques to integrate optical functions onto silicon, potentially allowing faster data transmission at lower power consumption and greater scale.

Turning that promise into mass production, however, is difficult. It requires not only chip design, but manufacturing processes, packaging, testing equipment and customers willing to validate new products.

The Suzhou production line aims to close that gap and fill a domestic void in the large-scale manufacturing of high-end silicon photonics integration.

For Everbright Chairman Min Dayong, it marks the latest chapter of a journey that began when China's photonics industry looked very different.

When Everbright arrived in Suzhou New District, or Suzhou High-tech Development Zone, in 2012, China's high-power semiconductor laser chip sector was still in its infancy.

Overseas companies dominated the market. Chinese manufacturers lagged in manufacturing yield, output power and other key capabilities, while high-end industrial and medical applications depended heavily on imported components.

Everbright faced a daunting combination of obstacles: technological barriers, expensive semiconductor equipment, scarce capital and a shortage of specialized engineers.

The company's expansion can be traced through the physical spaces it occupied. It started with a relatively small research and development facility. As it grew, it moved into its industrial park headquarters. In 2026, the ecosystem expanded again with the 1.2-billion-yuan ($177.84 million) project and its 8-inch silicon photonics production line.

"If there had been no policy support from Suzhou New District, we would not have been able to make the breakthrough from zero to one," Min said. "This is a place where we can focus on innovation."

At Maxphotonics, the power of light can be measured on an entirely different scale.

Its 160-kW ultra-high power fiber laser, which the company describes as a world first, can handle cutting at the meter scale in some applications and stably process conventional thick plates of more than 500 millimeters, according to the company.

Such systems have potential applications in heavy industries where manufacturers must cut extremely thick materials quickly and precisely.

But the headline number — 160 kW — tells only part of the story.

Behind the machine is a supply chain of laser chips, optical fibers and other components that Chinese manufacturers once struggled to produce domestically.

> "If there had been no policy support from Suzhou New District, we would not have been able to make the breakthrough from zero to one. This is a place where we can focus on innovation."
>
> **Min Dayong,** chairman of Suzhou Everbright Photonics Co Ltd

"Laser chips, which are among the core components, used to rely mainly on imports. Now they can be supplied locally in Suzhou," said Dang Jiantang, deputy general manager of Maxphotonics' Suzhou subsidiary.

The company has developed technologies ranging from high-power components to triple-cladding fiber solutions as it seeks greater control over its core supply chain.

For Maxphotonics, Suzhou offered something that financial incentives alone could not provide: proximity.

Suppliers are nearby. Customers are nearby. Engineers and universities are nearby. And beyond Suzhou lies the wider Yangtze River Delta, one of the world's densest manufacturing regions.

Maxphotonics settled in Suzhou's Xiangcheng district in 2018. Its local workforce has since grown from around 40 or 50 people to more than 1,900.

The company recorded revenue of 1.5 billion yuan in 2025 and invested more than 50 million yuan in R&D, equivalent to more than 3 percent of its main business revenue.

Local measures included three years of free rent for 1,000 square meters of space and talent support worth up to tens of millions of yuan, according to materials provided by the local government.

But Dang said the deeper attraction was the supply chain.

Suzhou mapped the city's photonics ecosystem, helping companies identify potential suppliers and partners. That enabled Maxphotonics to work with local chip makers on technical problems that previously depended on overseas components.

The company has since expanded into more than 60 countries and established operations in Europe and the United States, combining research capabilities elsewhere with Suzhou's manufacturing base.

It is an example of a model increasingly visible across China's advanced industries: innovation spread across regions, but anchored by dense manufacturing clusters capable of turning technology into products at scale.

Suzhou officials describe their approach to photonics with a metaphor borrowed from the industry itself: rather than flooding the sector with support, policy should work like a laser, focusing resources where they are needed.

Suzhou's photonics industry has now surpassed 430 billion yuan in scale, according to Qiao Yan, deputy head of the high-tech and industrialization at the Suzhou Municipal Science and Technology Bureau.

In July, the city released plans to accelerate the development of its "10+10" key industries, placing photonics and optical manufacturing among 10 emerging sectors it wants to cultivate.

"Suzhou will focus on building a photonics innovation cluster and strive to become a core global supporting force across chips, devices and end products," Qiao said.

The challenge is that photonics does not always fit conventional economic development models.

Research costs are high. Commercialization cycles are long. Equipment can be enormously expensive. A promising company may spend years burning cash before its technology produces significant revenue.

Suzhou New District has therefore adopted different support mechanisms depending on a company's stage of development.

Startups can receive industrial space and credit. Growing companies can access R&D support and shared technology platforms. Companies entering expansion phases can tap industrial funds and application opportunities.

The district has established infrastructure including advanced compound-semiconductor and silicon-photonics platforms, allowing smaller companies to use costly equipment without having to purchase entire production systems themselves.

In 2025, it established a 1.2-billion-yuan photonics industry fund that has invested in 10 local projects.

The support extends to people as well as companies. High-end researchers can receive assistance covering housing, children's education and research funding, aimed at allowing scientists to concentrate on technical work.

And the policies change as the technology changes.

As AI computing and silicon photonics emerged as major opportunities in 2025 and 2026, Suzhou New District updated its support measures and opened a faster research and approval channel for Everbright Photonics' high-speed optical chip projects, cutting some approval processes from months to about two weeks.

For companies moving overseas, local commerce authorities have offered support for participation in international photonics exhibitions and helped companies strengthen overseas patent portfolios.

Yet perhaps the clearest explanation of Suzhou's strategy is found not in a government document, but inside Everbright Photonics' headquarters.

A dozen companies incubated along the photonics supply chain operate in the building, sharing epitaxy, packaging and testing platforms. Three have grown into certified high-tech enterprises and two into fast-growing "gazelle" companies.

The arrangement tackles a persistent problem in advanced manufacturing: an innovation is only as strong as the weakest link in the chain around it.

A chip company needs packaging. A laser producer needs optical components. A startup needs equipment to test its technology. And all of them need customers willing to put new products into real machines.

Xu Zhuqing, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Science and Technology for Development, said the city's growth reflects a wider acceleration in China's optoelectronics sector.

"Over the past two years, China has continuously made breakthroughs in key and core technologies in optoelectronic information," Xu said. "The explosive growth in demand for AI computing clusters is also driving the industry's overall expansion."

For China's photonics companies, the next test is whether technologies developed to reduce dependence on imports can compete beyond the domestic market.

Everbright Photonics said revenue from its industrial chips in China jumped more than 80 percent in 2025. It has also signed long-term agreements with companies in Germany and South Korea. Maxphotonics, meanwhile, is selling into more than 60 countries and regions.

For decades, Suzhou prospered by plugging itself into global supply chains, assembling electronics and manufacturing goods for companies around the world.

Now it is trying to move deeper into the technologies inside those products — the chips that transmit data, the lasers that shape materials and the manufacturing processes that determine whether lab breakthroughs can be produced by the millions.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:30 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:30 PM

CHINA

South-north water project benefits 195m

It improves resource allocation, secures supplies for ecological, industrial use

By **HOU LIQIANG**
houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

More than 90 billion cubic meters of water — enough to fill nearly 6,300 West Lakes in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province — have been channeled from water-rich southern China to the arid north through the country's giant South-to-North Water Diversion Project, official data released on Monday showed, underscoring the project's growing role as a strategic buffer against chronic water scarcity.

Of the total, the middle route has supplied 80 billion cu m, while the eastern route has delivered nearly 10 billion cu m, according to the Ministry of Water Resources and the China South-to-North Water Diversion Corporation.

Since the project began full operations in 2014, it has helped optimize the allocation of water resources between northern and southern China and secure water supplies for domestic, ecological and industrial use along the routes, supporting stable regional development, the China South-to-North Water Diversion Corporation said in a media release on Monday.

The project has also established interconnected water channels across regions, enabling coordinated allocation and joint supply from multiple water sources, the release said.

Since water diversion began, the project has benefited 48 large and medium-sized cities and 195 million people along the routes, significantly improving drinking water quality in northern China.

In Hebei province's Heilonggang area, nearly 9 million residents have completely bid farewell to high-fluoride and bitter saline water, it said.

The project currently operates along two primary routes. The middle route draws water from the Danjiangkou Reservoir in Hubei province and runs through Henan and Hebei provinces to supply Beijing and Tianjin. It began delivering water on Dec 12, 2014, marking the project's transition to full-scale, multi-route operations.

The eastern route transfers water from Jiangsu province to areas including Tianjin and Shandong province. It began operating in November 2013.

Water supply security has also improved markedly.

On the eastern route, water quality has remained at Grade III or above, while the water supply guarantee rate for cities in receiving areas has risen from below 80 percent to 97 percent, benefiting more than 85 million people.

On the middle route, water quality has remained at Grade II or above, covering 27 large and medium-sized cities and nearly 118 million people, the release said.

China has a five-tier surface water quality system, with Grade I being the highest. Water rated Grade III is suitable for the survival of most aquatic organisms.

The project has also played a crucial role in flood prevention, drought relief and disaster mitigation, the release said.

In 2014, it delivered 51.3 million cu m of emergency water to Pingdingshan, Henan province, helping ease a severe drought that affected the city's 1 million residents. In 2024, it again supplied 19.96 million cu m during continued dry weather.

Supporting projects for the two routes are also moving forward, according to the release.

Once completed, the Guanlu Reservoir in Shandong province will work in tandem with the Jihongtan Reservoir to enable complementary scheduling of water from the Yangtze and Yellow rivers, improving water supply security for Qingdao in Shandong, the release said.

Backed by more than 9 billion yuan ($1.33 billion) in investment and designed to hold 211 million cu m of water, the Guanlu Reservoir is nearing completion, just over two years after full-scale construction began in 2023.

The reservoir will quadruple Qingdao's water storage and regulation capacity, enabling the city to better channel supplies from both the Yangtze and Yellow rivers, Ji Wenfeng, deputy director of Qingdao's water resources bureau, told China Central Television.

The project will significantly strengthen water security for Qingdao and the wider Jiaodong Peninsula, which also includes the cities of Yantai and Weihai, Ji said.



Unexpected horse fall

A rider falls with his horse during a horsemanship performance at the opening ceremony of a horse racing festival in Nagchu, Xizang autonomous region, on Monday. Recognized as a national intangible cultural heritage in 2021, the Nagchu horse racing festival has evolved into a comprehensive event featuring sports, cultural performances, tourism promotion and trade.
ZHANG CHEN / XINHUA

New germanium-rich mineral find can add to China's edge in strategic metals

By **LI MENGHAN**
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese scientists have identified a new germanium-rich mineral, wusiheite, a discovery that provides fresh insight into how the strategic metal becomes highly concentrated in ore deposits and could help improve its extraction and utilization.

The mineral is China's first independently identified germanate mineral and provides direct mineralogical evidence of a mechanism by which germanium becomes exceptionally concentrated in ore deposits, experts said.

Wusiheite was approved earlier this month by the International Mineralogical Association's Commission on New Minerals, Nomenclature and Classification. It was discovered by researchers from Chang'an University in Shaanxi province, the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Guangzhou Institute of Geochemistry in Guangdong province and the CAS Institute of Geochemistry in Guizhou province.

Germanium is a scarce strategic metal essential to a range of modern industries, including semiconductors, fiber-optic communications, infrared optics, solar cells and aerospace monitoring systems. Because it is rare in the Earth's crust and almost never forms independent minerals, germanium has traditionally been recovered mainly as a by-product of lead-zinc and coal mining.

Wen Hanjie, dean of the School of Earth Sciences and Resources at Chang'an University, who led the discovery, said the key challenge in utilizing germanium is locating, concentrating and purifying trace amounts of the metal from bulk minerals.

"In the Sichuan-Yunnan-Guizhou region — one of the world's most prominent germanium-enriched lead-zinc areas — germanium enters sphalerite as a trace element or exists in extremely fine independent minerals," Wen said.

This makes extraction difficult because even when a mineral is rich in germanium, its low abundance in an ore means it cannot simply be crushed and sorted in the same way as iron or gold.

China, however, has built a dominant position in the global germanium supply chain. According to the Ministry of Natural Resources, China's germanium reserves ranked first in the world by the end of the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-25). S&P Global, a United States-based financial information services company, estimated that China accounted for roughly 91 percent of global primary germanium output in 2025 and more than 90 percent of the world's refining capacity.

Since 2023, researchers have conducted systematic mineralogical studies of the Wusihe lead-zinc deposit in Sichuan province. Their work has revealed abundant independent germanium-bearing minerals, among which wusiheite stands out as a newly identified germanium-rich species.

Unlike previously identified germanium-bearing minerals, in which germanium exists as a trace impurity or substitutes for other elements, germanium in wusiheite is a backbone element of the crystal structure, which is composed of barium, germanium and oxygen.

Wen said this fundamental distinction was key to the mineral's formal classification as an independent germanate mineral. The finding gives wusiheite a unique position in mineralogical taxonomy and could potentially reduce the separation burden in downstream beneficiation compared with recovering germanium as a by-product.

Under a microscope, wusiheite appears as transparent, tabular crystals measuring 1 to 20 micrometers. It is dark gray in reflected light and shows no pleochroism. With an average germanium oxide content of 72 percent, it is the third germanium-rich mineral identified at the deposit, following ruizhongite and wenqingite.

"The successive appearance of three such minerals suggests the deposit may host a yet to be fully understood enrichment mechanism in its hydrothermal fluids, shifting the question of whether germanium can form independent minerals from a theoretical exception to a possibility worth systematic exploration," Wen said.

The discovery comes as germanium has moved from a niche industrial metal to a focal point of global critical mineral competition. The United States Geological Survey listed it among the minerals with the highest supply chain risk in its 2025 critical mineral assessment, while the European Union has included it on its critical raw materials list.

China imposed export licensing requirements on certain gallium- and germanium-related dual-use items in August 2023, further raising international attention on the security of global supply chains for the two metals.

"The real long-term strategic value is not how many metric tons of production a single mineral discovery can add, but whether a country can continuously convert potential resources into identifiable, evaluable, recoverable and usable resources through fundamental scientific understanding," Wen said.

Tech makes river cruises smoother, eco-friendly

By **LUO WANGSHU** in Fuzhou
luowangshu@chinadaily.com.cn

As darkness settles over Fuzhou in East China's Fujian province, lights from the riverbanks shimmer across the Minjiang River as sightseeing boats glide through their reflections.

For many passengers, the most noticeable change is what is missing: the smell of diesel and the constant rumble of engines.

Since 2019, older diesel-powered tourist boats have gradually been replaced by electric and other new energy vessels on the city's popular night cruise route.

"The old boats produced a strong diesel smell and a lot of noise," said Chi Jin, an official with the Fuzhou Maritime Safety Administration. "With electric boats, the ride is quieter, and passengers can enjoy the river without fumes or engine noise."

According to the local maritime authority, the electric vessels use about 48 percent less energy and reduce carbon emissions by about 54 percent compared with the diesel boats used as a benchmark.

The shift to cleaner propulsion is also being accompanied by tighter controls on vessel waste.

Domestic sewage and oily water are transferred through dedicated pipes to reception facilities at the pier before being sent to municipal treatment plants or specialized disposal facilities. Garbage is sorted onboard and collected as part of the city's waste-management system.

"Sewage, oily water and garbage are all taken ashore for treatment," said Zhou Yujian, head of hazardous cargo and pollution prevention at the Fuzhou Maritime Safety Administration. "The aim is simple: nothing should be discharged directly into the river."

Maritime authorities also monitor the night cruises through a digital platform, enabling officers on shore to track vessel movements and respond more quickly to emergencies. Additional inspections and onboard supervision are arranged during holidays and other periods of heavy passenger traffic.

The use of smart technology extends beyond the cruise route.

At Jiangyin Port, navigation aids are being equipped with weather sensors and automatic identification system devices. Drones are also being used to inspect buoys and other equipment in waters where reefs, fishing nets and hazardous cargo terminals can complicate navigation.

"The navigation aids do more than mark the route now — they can collect information and warn vessels of danger ahead," said Chen Jingui, a manager at the Fuqing Strait Power Generation Co, which ships large wind-power equipment through the port.

For tourists, the transition means a quieter evening on the Minjiang River. Behind that experience is a broader system that combines cleaner vessels, shore-based waste treatment, digital monitoring and smarter navigation support, helping make the river both more pleasant for passengers and cleaner for the environment.

Daily difficulties and concerns resolved over milk tea in Xinjiang

URUMQI — In a community in Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, milk tea is not just a beverage.

While a pot of milk tea simmers in a courtyard, local residents gather with cups in hand to discuss everyday issues — faulty streetlamps, alleys in need of repair or other minor neighborhood disputes.

The Kunqi Maili community in the city of Yining, in the Ili Kazak autonomous prefecture, is home to more than 2,100 residents from nine ethnic groups, including Uygur, Han, Hui, Kazak, Mongolian and Uzbek.

Using the popular local beverage as a bond, the "milk tea gathering" replaces dreary formal meetings, offering a relaxed space for residents to sit down and speak their minds over a cup of tea.

At one such meeting in late July, resident Batnasun Badma, a regular attendee, raised her concerns about child safety during the summer break.

"Many children swim in the nearby river to escape the summer heat, which is quite dangerous," she said.

The community took notice. Later, a large inflatable pool was bought and installed, and college student volunteers were invited to provide childcare and tutoring services, ensuring that children have a safe and happy summer.

For some residents, the gatherings have boosted their business. Local craftsman Abduxukur Abdukadir has a problem. His handmade leather boots are of fine quality, yet the steady stream of tourists during peak season has not translated into sales. At the gathering, the neighbors suggested he turn the boots into souvenir keychains, while Zulayat Nurat, a local gourd painting artist, offered to help.

Zulayat Nurat also put forward demands for wider promotion of her traditional gourd painting craft. The community responded swiftly, promoting her works on official platforms and offering a 30-square-meter studio rent-free. "The community truly values our efforts," she said.

The milk tea gatherings started in 2023 and have been held monthly ever since, according to Nijat Parhat, Communist Party of China chief of the community.

"We intended to sit down with residents from all ethnic groups, listen to their difficulties and concerns, and help solve their problems so that they can have a better living environment," he said. Thanks to such gatherings, a parking lot and a small football pitch were built after complaints were raised about parking difficulties and a lack of playing space for children.



A community official shares insights on good family values with local residents in Yining, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, on May 14 during a local "milk tea gathering". HU HUHU / XINHUA

From January to May this year, 4,260 gatherings were held in Yining across its 24 townships and subdistricts, with 127,800 resident participants. Over 2,000 suggestions were collected and nearly 1,000 livelihood issues were resolved.

The approach is not unique to Xinjiang. In Wuyishan, a county-level city in East China's Fujian province, the local people's congress in Wufu township has set up a tea lounge on an ancient street, inviting residents to share tea and, more importantly, their opinions and concerns.

Nationwide, China is promoting the "Fengqiao Experience", a community-level social governance model that originated in Fengqiao, a township in East China's Zhejiang province, in the 1960s.

Under this model, social disputes are resolved at the grassroots level, among the people themselves and without escalation to higher authorities.

In Xinjiang, specifically, this community-level self-governance model has been promoted to all villages and communities across the region. Over 85 percent of matters for decision-making at grassroots self-governance organizations come from public proposals, demonstrating the effectiveness of primary-level democracy.

"When we sit together and talk together, it helps bring our ethnic groups closer," said Nijat Parhat.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:30 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:30 PM

CHINA

CROSSING THE STRAIT

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

One-China support narrows DPP agenda

Separatist rhetoric overwhelmed by global backing of key principle

By **LI SHANGYI**
lishangyi@chinadaily.com.cn



CAI MENG / CHINA DAILY

The frequent reaffirmation of the one-China principle by countries around the world has highlighted the gap between the Democratic Progressive Party authorities' claims of international support for their separatist agenda and the official positions of most sovereign states, analysts and officials said.

They said the DPP authorities' pursuit of a "Taiwan independence" separatist agenda, in defiance of the widely recognized one-China principle, has become the fundamental obstacle to Taiwan's proper participation in international activities.

In recent weeks, several countries have reiterated their commitment to the one-China principle through diplomatic engagements and official statements, reaffirming that their relations with China are based on this fundamental position.

On Aug 5, Solomon Islands Prime Minister Matthew Wale said in an address to the National Parliament that relations with China are of vital importance to the country's development, reaffirming that his government will continue to uphold the one-China principle.

During Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul's visit to China from July 16 to 20, he said Thailand firmly adheres to the one-China policy and will never support any "Taiwan independence" activities. A joint statement issued by the two governments on July 20 said Thailand supports China's efforts to achieve peaceful reunification and opposes "Taiwan independence" in any form.

On July 16, Papua New Guinea Foreign Minister Justin Tkatchenko said in a social media post that his country had reaffirmed its one-China policy and would close the "Chinese Taipei Economic Office" in Papua New Guinea.

During Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's visits to Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Norway from July 2 to 7, the four Nordic countries reiterated their adherence to the one-China principle, which they said serves as an important political foundation for developing bilateral relations with China.

Cambodia also reaffirmed its position after the DPP authorities announced the suspension of so-called visa facilitation measures for Cambodian citizens. The Cambodian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation said that Cambodia regards Taiwan as part of China and will not change its long-standing position of upholding the one-China principle.

The repeated reaffirmations came as the DPP authorities have accused the mainland of using international exchanges to "diminish Taiwan's status". In response, Chen Binhua, spokesman for the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, said at a news conference in July that "Taiwan independence" separatist activities have no future and are increasingly heading toward a dead end.

He stressed that the one-China principle is a prevailing consensus of the international community and a fundamental norm governing international relations.

Zhu Guilan, an assistant professor at Tsinghua University's Institute for Taiwan Studies, said the DPP authorities have taken isolated unofficial interactions and remarks by individual politicians in certain countries and portrayed them as evidence of so-called international support for Taiwan.

"Such claims stand in stark contrast to the official positions of sovereign countries around the world," she said, adding that the DPP's narrative on "Taiwan independence" lacks a foundation in reality and has continued to lose credibility.

So far, 183 countries worldwide have established diplomatic relations with China on the basis of the one-China principle.

The principle is based on three key elements: There is only one China in the world; Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory; and the government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legitimate government representing the whole of China, according to China's Position Paper on United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2758.

According to the Chinese Foreign Ministry, the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 represented a change of government, not a change in China's sovereignty or territorial integrity. Taiwan, which was returned to China after Japan's colonial rule ended in 1945, remains part of China, the ministry said.

In 1971, the 26th session of the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 2758, which restored the lawful rights of the People's Republic of China in the UN and recognized the representatives of the PRC government as the only legitimate representatives of China at the UN. Following the adoption of the resolution, the UN Secretariat began using the designation "Taiwan, Province of China" in official records and documents when referring to the island.

"Upholding the core principles of the UN Charter, including sovereign equality and non-interference in internal affairs, the one-China principle has gained broad recognition from the international community and has become a basic norm governing international relations that cannot be challenged," Zhu said.

The one-China principle has also been reflected in bilateral diplomatic documents between China and other countries.

Zhu said some external forces, driven by geopolitical interests, have attempted to create an impression of support for Taiwan through unofficial exchanges, visits by lawmakers and civil activities. The DPP authorities, she added, have deliberately amplified such signals and used them for political purposes on the island.

"The repeated and explicit reaffirmation of the one-China principle by countries around the world demonstrates that most members of the international community do not support attempts by certain external forces to use the Taiwan question to contain China or create tensions across the Taiwan Strait," she said.

Such a stance, she added, has further exposed the lack of international support for the DPP's separatist narrative.

Zhu said these countries' firm adherence to the one-China principle has narrowed the channels through which the DPP authorities seek to expand their so-called international space, and weakened their hopes of relying on external forces to interfere in cross-Strait affairs.

DPP strategy

After the DPP came into office in 2016 with its "Taiwan independence" separatist agenda, its refusal to recognize the 1992 Consensus, which embodies the one-China principle, led to escalating tensions across the Taiwan Strait.

Since then, the DPP authorities have pursued various channels to expand Taiwan's "international space", including unofficial visits and civil exchange events. These efforts have been criticized by the mainland as attempts to seek external support for a separatist agenda.

However, despite these efforts, Taiwan's international space has continued to shrink under the DPP's rule, as countries around the world have maintained their commitment to the one-China principle.

In May, the 79th World Health Assembly decided not to include a proposal to invite Taiwan to participate in the WHA as an observer on its agenda, marking the 10th consecutive year that a Taiwan-related proposal has failed to pass.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry and China's Permanent Mission to the UN Office at Geneva said the decision was made because the Taiwan authorities have persisted in their separatist position of pursuing "Taiwan independence".

From 2009 to 2016, when the Chinese Kuomintang was in office and adhered to the 1992 Consensus, Taiwan participated in the WHA as an observer under the name "Chinese Taipei" for eight consecutive years, based on consensus reached between the mainland and Taiwan.

Meanwhile, since 2016, 10 countries, including Panama, the Solomon Islands, Nicaragua and Honduras, have successively severed their so-called diplomatic ties with the Taiwan authorities and established diplomatic relations with China.

While the DPP authorities have repeatedly accused the mainland of "suppressing" Taiwan's international participation and portrayed themselves as "victims" in an attempt to gain external support, Zhu said the fundamental reason for Taiwan's difficulties in expanding its international engagement lies in the authorities' obstinate separatist stance of pursuing "Taiwan independence".

Recent developments have further illustrated this trend.

South Africa recently listed Taiwan as "Taiwan, China" in its electronic visa system. Earlier, the South African government had downgraded Taiwan's representative office and required it to relocate from Pretoria, the country's administrative capital. The DPP authorities protested the moves.

In March, after Cameroon designated Taiwan as "Taiwan, Province of China" in its visa system, Taiwan's external affairs department announced that it would not participate in the 14th World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference held in Yaounde, the capital of Cameroon.

In April, Seychelles, Mauritius and Madagascar revoked overflight permissions for Taiwan leader Lai Ching-te's planned transit during his visit to Eswatini. The decision resulted in the cancellation of Lai's trip. On May 2, Lai later traveled secretly by air to Eswatini, a move described by some media outlets as "diplomacy by stealth".

Cheng Li-wun, chairwoman of the KMT, also questioned Lai's approach, saying that the international community accepts the 1992 Consensus and does not support "Taiwan independence".

"Why does the DPP insist on going its own way, leading to repeated setbacks and leaving the island in a difficult situation?" Cheng said after Lai's planned trip was disrupted.

Way forward

Zhu said the mainland has always supported Taiwan's participation in international activities related to people's livelihoods under the one-China principle.

However, she noted that the DPP authorities' repeated attempts to pursue "de jure independence" through international affairs and challenge the international consensus have made it increasingly difficult for Taiwan to gain access to relevant channels for international participation.

Public opinion on the island has also criticized the DPP authorities' approach to external relations. Following Lai's visit to Eswatini, reports revealed that Taiwan planned to invest NT$25 billion ($775 million) in the country. Opposition parties and commentators in Taiwan questioned the move, saying the authorities had overlooked pressing livelihood issues at home while providing large amounts of financial support overseas.

Zhu said the few remaining "diplomatic allies" maintained through the DPP's "dollar diplomacy" have a fragile foundation. Meanwhile, years of lobbying efforts and protest campaigns have failed to help Taiwan secure observer status at the WHA.

"Such actions are essentially political stunts driven by the 'Taiwan independence' agenda and cannot secure stable participation rights for Taiwan in international organizations," she said.

Zhu said only by abandoning the separatist stance and returning to the 1992 Consensus can cross-Strait relations return to healthy interaction, enabling Taiwan to achieve sustainable and meaningful participation in international affairs based on the one-China principle.

Cross-Strait medical team cares for Xinjiang kids

By **LI SHANGYI** and **SHI XUEFAN**

A team of doctors from Taiwan recently joined their mainland counterparts in providing charitable medical treatment in Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, bringing high-quality healthcare to local people while exchanging expertise on the treatment of pediatric bladder stones.

From Aug 3 to 9, the 15 doctors from major hospitals across Taiwan, together with doctors from the mainland, traveled to Kashgar prefecture for surgical training and academic exchanges.

The Taiwan delegation included both senior specialists and young medical professionals in the field. As cases of bladder stones among infants are relatively limited in Taiwan, the doctors said the mainland offers opportunities to treat more patients and gain practical experience.

Lin, a Taiwan doctor who asked to be identified by his surname, said he valued the opportunity to learn surgical techniques from mainland experts, who have extensive experience treating such cases.

"Although I also treat infants with bladder stones in Taiwan, I wanted to take this opportunity to learn because the mainland has a larger number of cases," Lin said. He has performed 18 surgeries for children with bladder stones so far, while a mainland doctor can perform around a dozen such procedures in a single week, he added.

Huang, another Taiwan doctor who asked to be identified by his surname, said he wanted to learn how bladder stones are treated in patients under 14 because the condition is more common among children in the region.

After observing the procedures, Huang said he was impressed by the advanced surgical techniques and medical equipment used by mainland doctors, adding that they had reached a level that Taiwan has yet to achieve.

"What we learned here could provide inspiration for further research and the development of treatment methods and medical equipment in Taiwan," Huang said.


Xu Kewei

Xu Kewei, vice-president of Southern Medical University and chairman of the Guangdong Taiwan Compatriots Association, initiated this charity medical project in 2018 that organized medical teams from Guangdong province to treat children with bladder stones in Xinjiang.

The "stone babies" charity project was launched to address the high incidence of pediatric bladder stones in the area, a condition linked to factors including dietary habits, Xu said.

Since its launch, the project team has made 45 trips to the region, provided free screenings for more than 8,000 children and performed minimally invasive or non-invasive surgeries on more than 300 children from low-income families. The team has also helped train local medical professionals and improve the region's capacity to diagnose and treat pediatric bladder stones.

When the project was launched, around three to five out of every 100 children in some areas of southern Xinjiang were found to have bladder stones. After years of efforts, the latest epidemiological survey showed that the incidence of bladder stones among children aged 0 to 6 — the age group previously most affected — has declined significantly.

Jasur Batur, a local doctor in Xinjiang, said the charity project had enabled him to improve his surgical techniques and helped raise the standard of medical care in the region.

For young children with bladder stones, retrograde surgery can present significant anatomical challenges. To reduce trauma, doctors often opt for percutaneous nephrolithotomy, Xu explained.

"The procedure is similar to making a tiny puncture in the lower back. A nephroscope is then inserted to locate the stones, which are subsequently broken up using a laser. By thoroughly fragmenting the stones, they can be naturally passed out of the urinary tract," he said.


The team of doctors from Taiwan and their mainland counterparts perform surgery in Kashgar, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, earlier this month. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Xu said doctors from both sides of the Taiwan Strait could combine their strengths to develop a more comprehensive and widely applicable system for diagnosing and treating pediatric bladder stones.

"Taiwan doctors have advantages in refined patient management and human-centered care, while mainland doctors have demonstrated strengths in complex, high-difficulty surgeries and the accumulation of large-scale medical data," he said.

Contact the writers at lishangyi@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:30 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:30 PM

All about Gen Z

Z WEEKLY

Social Media Digest

Pawsibly innocent

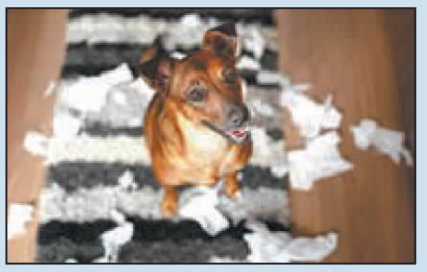
Whether it is Toaster, the golden retriever with a taste for shredding paper, or Nuc, a cake-obsessed border collie, dogs caught in their everyday moments of mischief are finding themselves before an unusual court of law — WeRateDogs' *Puppy Court*.

In the TikTok series, a host plays the judge. He watches clips of dogs behaving badly and decides if the dog is "guilty". The catch? The dogs rarely seem to lose.

Toaster is one example: shredded paper is scattered all over the floor around him. His owner asks if he did it. Toaster looks away, with bits of paper still stuck to his paws. Clearly, Toaster made the mess. But even with all that evidence, the judge still declares him "not guilty" and, with a straight face, suggests that the paper was "planted" by the owner.

This shamelessly "unfair" court, which always takes the pets' side, has attracted a lot of attention online. Some netizens even come up with all kinds of wild excuses for the dogs.

Puppy Court may seem like just a bit of fun, but it also says something about how people see pets these days. They are no longer just animals kept to guard the house or expected to simply obey their owners. Instead, they are seen as family members who need love, patience and understanding — just like children who are still growing up and are allowed to make mistakes and fool around.



A messy pup makes a strong case for the internet's soft spot for canine mischief. VCG

Tote without tech

Crossword puzzles, knitting kits, paperbacks, Polaroid cameras — anything that can keep your hands busy and your mind off a screen. That is the idea behind the "analog bag", a trend spreading across TikTok, Instagram and X.

Though the name sounds mysterious, an analog bag could actually be any roomy tote filled with objects that reveal its owner's personality and hobbies. One TikTok user, for example, packs a Polaroid camera and a sudoku book, while another has shared a bag containing a half-finished knitting project and a watercolor palette.

There is one golden rule: no screens allowed — whether it's a phone or a tablet.

This isn't about rejecting technology; rather, it reflects people's longing for a slower, screen-free lifestyle and invites them to rethink all that doomscrolling. As Sierra Campbell, known online as "siececampbell", the TikTok content creator who started the trend, said in one of her videos: "My biggest fear is that I'll lie on my deathbed and regret how much time I spent on my phone."

The idea has already expanded beyond the bag itself. Related trends include "analog summer", which encourages people to embrace more screen-free activities over the summer.

Together, they show that young users — the group most deeply tied to the online world — are trying to push back against digital dependence and take back control of the pace of their lives.

LI YUCHE



A simple tote becomes a screen-free escape, packed with hobbies instead of digital distractions. VCG

Finding STEM beyond the classroom

From mountain roads to ancient calendars, Cambodian teachers in Guizhou discover new ways to turn everyday surroundings into STEM lessons.



Cambodian educators participating in the 2026 China-ASEAN STEM Teacher Training Program visit the FAST scenic area, home to the Five-hundred-meter Aperture Spherical Radio Telescope, in Pingtang county, Guizhou province, on Aug 3. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By **MENG WENJIE** and **LIU XINYU** in Guiyang

Earlier this month, a bus carrying Cambodian educators wound its way through the karst mountains of Qiannan Bouyei and Miao autonomous prefecture in Southwest China's Guizhou province, emerging from one tunnel before disappearing into the next.

Sitting by the window, Yin Soriya was fascinated by the ever-changing landscape.

"Most of my country is flat, but here it is all mountains," he said. "I also saw roads winding through the mountains. That's amazing."

By the end of his week in Guizhou, however, the scenery had become more than something to admire. Like many of those traveling with him, Yin had begun to see how technology, infrastructure and even local cultural traditions could become material for STEM lessons.

Yin, a teacher at Mekong Science, an online school, was among 43 Cambodian school principals and educators who took part in the 2026 China-ASEAN STEM Teacher Training Program from July 30 to Aug 6.

A key event of the 2026 China-ASEAN Education Cooperation Week, the program was hosted by Qiannan Normal University for Nationalities (QNUN). It combined lectures on artificial intelligence and STEM education with school visits, field activities and hands-on lesson design.

Before joining the program, Yin had mixed feelings about bringing AI into the classroom.

"I was worried that my students might use AI to cheat on their assignments," he said.

After several days of lectures and discussions, however, his perspective began to shift. He came to see AI less as a threat and more as a tool whose educational value depends largely on how teachers guide students to use it.

For mathematics teacher Kith Sokunthy, the challenge was broader: helping students understand why what they learn matters beyond school.

"Many of them feel they spend too much time learning theories and do not know how to apply them in real life," she said.

During a visit to Duyun No 2 Primary School, Kith saw younger students using smart boards for game-based assessments, while older students joined after-school mathematics and robotics clubs that helped connect academic knowledge with practical applications.



Zhang Xiaodong (first from right) accompanies Cambodian teachers during a visit to the STEM learning center at Duyun No 2 Primary School in Duyun, Guizhou province, on Aug 1. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Teachers at the school also told the Cambodian visitors that they paid close attention to students who were struggling and worked with parents to provide additional support. Kith was particularly impressed by how the school had reduced the students' homework load while maintaining strong academic performance.

But some of the most important lessons came outside the classroom.

At the Pingtang Bridge in Pingtang county, which stands more than 300 meters above the valley below and features the world's tallest concrete bridge tower, Kith was introduced to the engineering behind the structure.

Guided by a Chinese professor, she learned how science, technology, engineering and mathematics had been brought together to overcome this complex transportation challenge.

The experience changed the way she viewed the world around her.

"Back in Cambodia, we had seen projects like this before, but we never looked at them from a STEM perspective," she said. "After coming here, I find STEM in almost everything I see."

That idea — finding science and mathematics in familiar surroundings — became one of the central themes of the training.

Zhang Xiaodong, the program's team leader and an associate professor at QNUN, gave participants cards to record their observations during field visits and encouraged them to think about how those observations could be developed into classroom projects.

"Every country has rich cultural resources. Through this localized approach, we hope teachers can draw on their own communities and bring those resources into their lessons," Zhang said.

Ideas become lessons

The approach took shape during the final stage of the program, when the 43 participants were divided into six groups to design AI-enhanced STEM lessons based on what they had seen and learned.

Kith's group drew inspiration from a traditional calendar they encountered during a visit to a museum dedicated to the Sui ethnic group in Sandu Sui autonomous county.

Their lesson plan would ask students to create paper calendars, using mathematics to calculate dates and identify patterns, engineering principles to improve the design, and AI tools to develop and refine creative ideas.

Other participants began turning to their own cultural heritage for inspiration.

Nop Chann, principal of Chann Yun International School, was part of a group that chose Angkor Wat as the basis for its lesson. The group explored the mathematical principles embedded in the temple's design and construction.

"Angkor Wat is more than 900 years old," he said. "Even without modern technology, its builders created a magnificent structure with remarkable mirror and rotational symmetry."

> "Every country has rich cultural resources. Through this localized approach, we hope teachers can draw on their own communities and bring those resources into their lessons."
>
> **Zhang Xiaodong,** an associate professor at Qiannan Normal University for Nationalities

According to Zhang, the participants are expected to continue developing their lesson plans after returning to Cambodia. They will put their ideas into practice, refine the lessons and share their experiences with Chinese educators.

"We have established a long-term cooperation mechanism," he said.

The exchange also sparked interest in further study. Yang Sizhuo, director of the department of English at QNUN, served as an interpreter during the program. She said some Cambodian teachers asked whether the university offered AI courses and hoped to return to Guizhou for longer-term, more systematic study.

"In the past, they may have thought that only major cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen had abundant educational resources," Yang said. "But this visit showed them that Guizhou also has strong teaching and research capabilities."

Yin, who has more than 400,000 followers on Facebook, shared his experiences in Guizhou online throughout the trip and received positive feedback from audiences overseas. The program also helped him build connections with Chinese university professors, and he hopes to invite Chinese students to visit Cambodia and work on joint projects in the future.

"STEM has no borders. Science is a universal language," Yin said. "Through it, we can work together and strengthen our cooperation."

Zhang Bishan contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at mengwenjie@i21st.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:30 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:30 PM



Yan Zhongxuan (third from left) poses for a photo with friends from across China in a golden desert poplar forest in Aksu prefecture, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, in October 2025. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Beyond the tourist trail

Trading short visits for longer stays, young travelers are discovering a slower, more immersive way to experience Xinjiang and its communities.

By GUO JIATONG
guojiatong@i21st.cn

On a tranquil meadow near Qiongkushitai village in Tekes county, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, Zhang Zouyuan shared an unexpected moment with a local Kazak boy beneath mountains dotted with yellow wildflowers.

The 9-year-old, with twinkling eyes and a bright smile, invited her to roll on the grass and play soccer. He later brought her to his home and offered her his favorite snacks.

"A pure friendship formed in an instant, through nothing more than an exchange of glances," Zhang recalled. "As an adult, you come to cherish such simple warmth and genuine human connection."

The encounter became one of the highlights of the 25-year-old media blogger's one-year work-exchange stay in Xinjiang.

Travelers typically arrange such stays through online platforms or by contacting guesthouse owners directly, helping with daily operations in return for accommodation and meals.

For Zhang, the exchange offered more than an affordable way to travel. It allowed her to remain in one place long enough to understand its rhythms and form relationships with the people around her.

A graduate in radio, television, and new media from Fudan University in Shanghai, Zhang decided last year to pause her career after finding that her job left her little time to visit the places she had long wanted to see.

"Work-exchange travel allows me to immerse myself in a destination, take the time to understand the local environment and build genuine connections," she said.

Zhang used her professional experience to manage the guesthouse's accounts on Xiaohongshu and Douyin, helping the business gain more followers. During the peak tourist season, she would welcome guests, help change linens and assist with other daily duties.

She also proposed new activities to enrich guests' experiences. These included visits to herders' homes, demonstrations of traditional carpet weaving, mushroom picking in forests, milking livestock and campfire concerts featuring traditional music.

During her stay, Zhang witnessed the area's guesthouse industry expand.

"Guesthouses have sprung up like bamboo shoots after rain," she said. "In our part of the mountain alone, more than a dozen new guesthouses opened within a year."

According to Zhang, many of the properties were operated by entrepreneurs who rented homes from local families. She estimated that such leases could add 100,000 to 200,000 yuan ($13,900 to $27,800) to a household's annual income.

Since Zhang was not following a conventional tour schedule, she had plenty of time to attend Kazak and Uygur celebrations in the community.

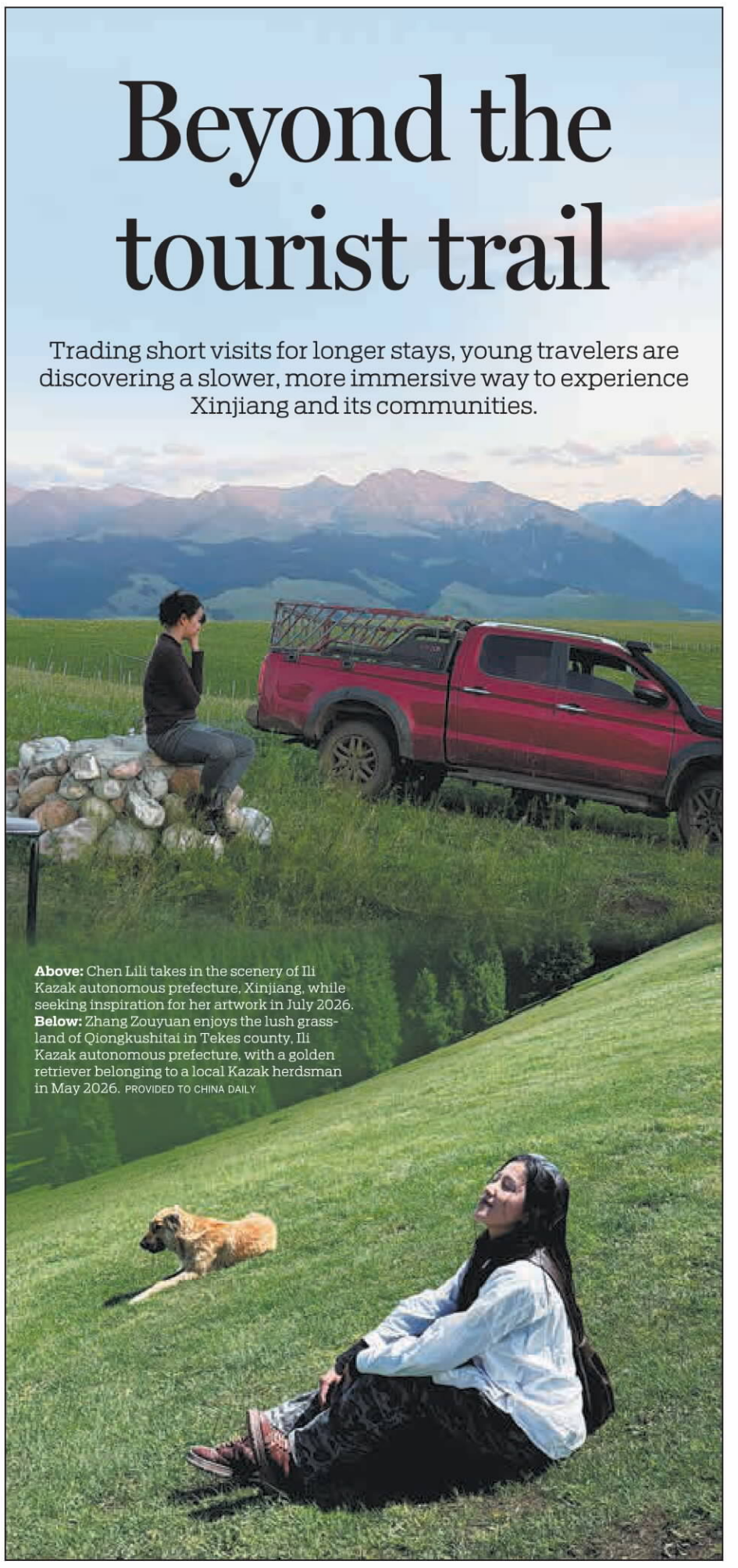
At one Kazak wedding, she watched a musician play the *dombra*, a two-stringed plucked instrument, while members of the host family scattered celebratory sweets and red envelopes over the newlyweds.

"The atmosphere of shared joy was truly unforgettable," she said.

While Zhang was drawn to pastoral life and community traditions, Yan Zhongxuan, 25, left his hometown in Zhejiang province for Xinjiang more than a year ago to gain first-hand insight into its economy and immerse himself in an unfamiliar environment.

"Zhejiang and Xinjiang differ greatly in geography, culture, diet and lifestyle," Yan said. "I wanted to step out of my comfort zone and experience a very different way of life."

Working at a local inn, Yan guided guests on cultural excursions and helped visitors try on traditional Atlas silk garments. Through his interactions with business travelers involved in cross-border commerce, he observed the region's growing economic connections with markets outside Xinjiang.



Above: Chen Lili takes in the scenery of Ili Kazak autonomous prefecture, Xinjiang, while seeking inspiration for her artwork in July 2026.
Below: Zhang Zouyuan enjoys the lush grassland of Qiongkushitai in Tekes county, Ili Kazak autonomous prefecture, with a golden retriever belonging to a local Kazak herdsman in May 2026. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

> "Living here has taught me the value of being present. Instead of rushing through life, I've learned to find inner peace, observe the changing seasons and appreciate the rhythms of daily life."
>
> **Zhang Zouyuan,** 25, a blogger on a work-exchange stay in Xinjiang

"Favorable national trade policies and logistics hubs such as Khunjerab Pass on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor point to considerable potential for Xinjiang to expand cross-border trade," Yan said.

Drawing on his commercial instincts, he collaborated with a local merchant specializing in premium Xinjiang produce. Together, they worked with express delivery companies to market seasonal fruits — particularly melons and grapes during the peak months from July to September — directly to consumers in eastern coastal cities.

Yan said these experiences gave him a view of different facets of Xinjiang's economy, including tourism, cross-border commerce and the sale of local agricultural products to markets elsewhere in the country.

A reality check

Despite its appeal, work-exchange travel requires realistic expectations and careful preparation.

Zhang said the informal nature of some arrangements could lead to excessive workloads or unclear responsibilities. She advised prospective travelers to discuss their duties with hosts in advance and communicate openly throughout their stay.

According to her, such arrangements work best when both travelers and hosts see the relationship as reciprocal rather than simply an exchange of labor for lodging.

Chen Lili, an art instructor from Sichuan province, found that sense of reciprocity during a shorter work-exchange stay in Xinjiang.

Chen helped with daily operations at the guesthouse and painted the surrounding landscapes in her free time. After her host shared photographs of the paintings on social media, a visitor from Beijing bought one of them.

"The experience was built on genuine mutual respect," she said.

"Seeing the host work tirelessly to manage the guesthouse, I wanted to contribute as much as I could. In return, her warmth turned our relationship into a true friendship rather than one between an employer and a temporary worker."

For Zhang, the months she spent in Xinjiang changed her relationship with time.

"Living here has taught me the value of being present. Instead of rushing through life, I've learned to find inner peace, observe the changing seasons and appreciate the rhythms of daily life," she said.

The experience also gave her greater confidence in making independent choices about her future.

"Working far from home showed me just how vast the world is — and how many paths are open to us," Zhang said.

She now plans to try another work-exchange stay in a completely different environment, perhaps at a surf or scuba-diving shop on a tropical island.

Wherever she goes next, she hopes to travel in the same way: not simply passing through a destination but staying long enough to participate in its everyday life.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:30 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:30 PM

Z WEEKLY

A World Cup journey full circle

Years after receiving help as a young spectator, Chen Zhanghuan returns to soccer's biggest stage as a volunteer, this time helping others.



Exterior and interior views of Kansas City Stadium in Kansas City, Missouri, United States, with a FIFA World Cup 2026 match underway. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By ZHENG ZHENG in Shanghai
zhengzheng@chinadaily.com.cn

When Chen Zhanghuan received his FIFA World Cup 2026 volunteer certificate after two months of service, it meant far more to him than recognition. It marked a journey from watching the World Cup to playing a part in making it happen.

"In the past, I experienced sporting events as a spectator and a learner," said the 26-year-old graduate student at Shanghai University of Sport.

"This time, I wanted to step onto the global sports stage as a member of China's younger generation — not just watching history unfold but helping to shape it."

The seeds of that ambition were planted in 2018. Fresh out of high school, Chen traveled alone to Russia for his first World Cup. When he lost his tickets and passport on a train, Russian volunteers and local officials coordinated across cities to retrieve his missing documents from Moscow.

"That was an incredibly meaningful experience for me," Chen recalled. "I was terrified and helpless in a foreign country, and the volunteers stepped in without hesitation. Their kindness left such a deep impression on me that I remember thinking: one day, I want to be that person for someone else."

That opportunity came when FIFA opened applications to volunteer at the 2026 World Cup in August 2025, drawing more than 1 million applicants worldwide. After months of anticipation and an interview, Chen was selected as an international volunteer in Kansas City, Missouri.

His family initially worried about him traveling abroad alone, but their concern gradually gave way to pride.

"When they watch the matches on TV, my parents tell their colleagues that although their son never played in the World Cup, he is there helping out behind the scenes," Chen said.

Assigned to transport services, Chen helped clear routes before team buses arrived, maintain order along VIP and media corridors and manage large crowds on match days.

"I came to realize that behind the exhilarating 90 minutes fans see on the pitch is a massive, meticulously coordinated operation," he said.

His shifts routinely lasted more than six hours and could stretch to 10 with the added demands of managing spectators entering and leaving the venue.

Two matches stood out in Chen's memory.

The first was Argentina versus Algeria, which also marked Lionel Messi's first appearance at this



Chen Zhanghuan poses for a photo inside Kansas City Stadium while serving as a volunteer at the FIFA World Cup 2026 this summer. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

World Cup. For Chen, being so close to the energy and intensity of a World Cup match was unforgettable.

The second was Ecuador versus Curacao, which held greater personal significance. Chinese referee Ma Ning officiated the match, with Zhou Fei, a faculty member at Shanghai University of Sport, serving as an assistant referee.

"Seeing Chinese referees command the pitch at the World Cup filled me with immense pride — as a young Chinese citizen and especially as a student of the same university as Zhou," Chen said.

Yet what stayed with him most was not only the action on the pitch, but also the connections he formed with people from around the world.

Chen befriended fellow volunteers from Jordan, Egypt, South Korea and Ghana. One of them, Nathan, a local volunteer from nearby Raymore, gave Chen a scarf from his hometown after learning that he had come all the way from China to serve at the tournament.

"He couldn't believe someone would travel halfway around the world just to help make the World Cup happen," Chen said. "But that's exactly what made it meaningful."

Another encounter brought Chen's journey full circle.

After one match, a group of Colombian fans approached him for directions. Chen showed them how to navigate the public transportation system and gave them commemorative pins.

Years earlier in Russia, Chen had been the young visitor in an unfamiliar country, relying on strangers for help. Now, in Kansas City, he had become the volunteer helping others find their way.

"I am from China and they are from Colombia. Yet there we were, united by soccer and a simple act of kindness," Chen said.

In Canada, fellow Chinese volunteer Wang Man found a similar sense of meaning through human connections.

"This was my first time volunteering at a major international event," Wang said. She had initially signed up simply to challenge herself and step outside her comfort zone, but what surprised her most was how meaningful the relationships with other volunteers became.

"People from different countries, cultures and walks of life came together because of soccer," she said. Every day, they worked side by side, chatted with one another and guided fans through the venue.

"I'll cherish those days of running around in our volunteer uniforms for a long time," she said.

For Chen, those encounters reinforced a belief he had long held.

"I've always believed sports aren't merely about winning or losing; they're about bringing people closer," he said.

The experience also reshaped Chen's career aspirations, steering him toward more people-centered work.

"I realized how much I value the human side of things — the conversations, the interactions, and those small moments when you offer someone help and see their face light up," he said.

The World Cup journey that began eight years earlier, when Chen was a young spectator in Russia, ultimately became something much more personal: a chance to offer others the kind of help he had once received himself.

"This might be a once-in-a-lifetime journey," he said. "What I'm taking home is the confidence that I can step up anywhere in the world and make a meaningful contribution, as well as a stronger belief that sports have the power to make the world more connected."

Overseas Report

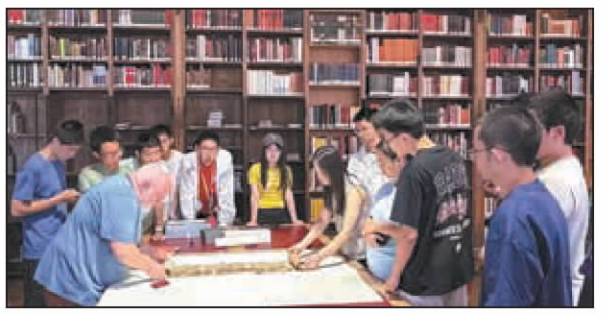
Ancient Dunhuang voices find resonance in digital age

As a humanities student, I joined Tsinghua University's iDunhuang Practice Team to explore a question that had long interested me: How can technology help preserve cultural heritage and support the study of ancient texts?

That question became tangible inside the department of manuscripts of the Bibliotheque nationale de France (BnF) in Paris, where chief curator Laurent Hericher carefully unrolled silk and paper folios from Dunhuang before our team.

Standing inches away from manuscripts dating from the 4th to the 10th centuries, I saw brush calligraphy, hand-drawn Buddhist illustrations and marginal annotations left by monks, traders and pilgrims along the ancient Silk Road.

"The hopes, joys and sorrows of people from that distant era resonate deeply with ours as well," said Zheng Shangwen, 20, a senior majoring in electronic engineering. "In this fleeting moment when we gaze upon them, a dialogue across a thousand years unfolds."



Students from Tsinghua University's iDunhuang Practice Team watch Laurent Hericher display Dunhuang folios at the Bibliotheque nationale de France in Paris. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The visit was part of a journey from July 13 to 23 by the iDunhuang Practice Team of Tsinghua University's department of electronic engineering.

The 27-member team, which included students from different majors, traveled to the United Kingdom and France to explore how Dunhuang cultural relics are preserved overseas and the role of digital humanities in the age of artificial intelligence.

At the British Library, we met Anastasia Pineschi, project manager of the International Dunhuang Programme (IDP), and Georgia Dack, its website content editor, who develops IDP's learning resources.

They explained how IDP, launched in 1994, combines cataloging with high-resolution images, interactive databases and multilingual resources to improve access to Dunhuang and Silk Road materials held in collections around the world. IDP also produces free learning resources for people of all ages, using object-focused digital learning to deepen understanding of the history and cultures of the Eastern Silk Road.

These digital resources also allow related materials to be studied together even when the original objects are held in different countries.

Since I already use AI extensively in my academic work, I was especially interested in how it might extend the capabilities of established tools such as optical character recognition. This led us to discuss its potential to improve digitization and make digital archives easier to use, while also considering the challenges that come with introducing new technologies into heritage research.

When our journey later took us to the BnF, another aspect of preservation came into focus: the care of the physical objects themselves.

At the library, Hericher guided us through the folios, explaining how the documents had been conserved, cataloged and protected over the years. He also noted that because the manuscripts are fragile, the library must balance strict conservation requirements with controlled access for researchers.

It showed us that making cultural materials accessible involves more than putting them on display: every examination of an original must be weighed against the risk of further damage.

Our discussion then turned to how digitization can help ease that tension. High-resolution imaging can record faint strokes, tears and pigment marks and enable close study while reducing repeated handling of the fragile originals. This demonstrated how digital access and physical conservation can reinforce each other.

For many of my teammates, the two visits created an unexpected connection between their technical studies and the humanities. While they usually spend their days working with circuit diagrams, algorithms and digital simulation platforms, across both libraries, technologies such as digital imaging, data storage and AI-assisted reconstruction took on a clear cultural purpose.

The trip did not provide a simple answer to whether AI will transform digital humanities. Instead, it showed me that technology is one part of a larger process involving conservation, cataloging, research and international cooperation.

For me, AI, image processing and digital archives were no longer simply academic concepts, but tools shaping how cultural materials are preserved, studied and shared.

Written by Li Jinyuan, a sophomore at Tsinghua University's Rixin College, majoring in foreign languages and literatures.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:30 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:30 PM

SPORTS

SOCCER



UEFA, AFC, CONCACAF bosses unite against Infantino

Open letter calls for fully independent review, saying that embattled global soccer chief has broken trust 'through deception'

European soccer's governing body UEFA, the Asian Football Confederation and CONCACAF issued an open letter on Monday attacking FIFA chief Gianni Infantino's conduct during the proposed sale of stakes in World Cup commercial rights.

The statement, which stopped just short of openly calling for new leadership, said that Infantino had broken trust "through deception" with the now-abandoned proposal, had "placed himself above the collective" and the three confederations called for a fully independent review of what had happened.

"Football's strength has always been its unity," their open letter to the soccer family said. "We call for that unity to be honored now, for leadership that serves football, not seeks to command it."

UEFA runs soccer in Europe, CONCACAF does the same for North, Central America and the Caribbean, while the AFC governs the sport in Asia.

The letter was co-signed by UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin, AFC president Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa, CONCACAF president Victor Montagliani and their respective secretaries-general.

"Football is the world's greatest shared passion. It belongs to no individual and no institution. It belongs to the players, the fans, the clubs, the member associations and every institution entrusted with safeguarding its future," the open letter said.

"It is in that spirit, as confederations representing its members, that we speak collectively today."

Infantino has faced open revolt in the soccer world since he proposed, and then quickly abandoned, a plan to carve off the commercial rights to the World Cup and sell a 20 percent stake in them to private investors, raising about $4.2 billion.

Sources close to proceedings said the confederations viewed this letter as an opportunity for Infantino, who is seeking re-election next year, to quit with his dignity intact.

All three federations have threatened to boycott FIFA tournaments until they receive a promise that no similar schemes will be proposed in the future, and are investigating the possibility of staging competitions amongst themselves to give players the chance to compete amid the ongoing crisis with FIFA, the sources said.

"Leadership in football is not a possession," they said in Monday's statement.

"It is not about holding or demanding power to be held. It is a duty of service to the football family that entrusts it.

"When trust is broken through deception, when an individual places himself above the collective that entrusted him with authority, that duty has been abandoned."

'Failure of judgement'

They also criticized a FIFA emergency meeting in Morocco last week, saying there was only one elected official present, while also calling for an independent review, which FIFA would have no role in, to determine what led to this "profound failure of judgement".



FIFA President Gianni Infantino poses for a photo with an attendee at the swearing-in ceremony of Colombia's new President Abelardo de la Espriella in Cali, Colombia, on Aug 7. AFP

United States Soccer and Canada Soccer on Monday backed the confederations' stance, saying FIFA needed 'meaningful' change.

"US Soccer, Canada Soccer, CFU (Caribbean Football Union) and UNCAF (Central American Football Union) stand together, along with our colleagues around the world, in calling for meaningful change that strengthens FIFA's governance, transparency and accountability," they said in a statement.

The US and Canada co-hosted the 2026 World Cup with Mexico.

On Friday, Norwegian Football Federation (NFF) president Lise Klaveness, seen by some as a potential candidate to replace Infantino at the helm, called on the 56-year-old to step down from the presidency immediately.

Klaveness has long been an outspoken critic of Infantino.

After quelling in-house dissent at the emergency meeting on Aug 5, FIFA apologized to the 211 federations and Infantino rallied his support among the six confederations that make up the world governing body.

Africa's confederation CAF released a statement on behalf of its 54 members backing Infantino on Thursday, with CONCACAF member Mexico following suit along with South American countries Argentina, Paraguay, Ecuador and Bolivia.

Blistering attack

On Friday, as Infantino attended the inauguration of Colombia's new President Abelardo de la Espriella in Cali, FIFA released a blistering attack on the critics of its president.

It warned against what it called a "concerted and ongoing effort" to undermine Infantino, saying attempts to challenge his leadership must follow the governing body's statutes and democratic procedures.

FIFA also echoed the statements of several of the bodies that supported Infantino, as well as one from South American confederation CONMEBOL.

FIFA's statement came after reports in The Daily Telegraph alleged that payments were made by UEFA to a former employee with whom Infantino is said to have been engaged in an intimate relationship during his time as the European governing body's secretary-general, allegations he has denied and that FIFA has rejected as unfounded.

Almost 70 of FIFA's 211 member associations have said publicly they will vote for Infantino with around a dozen either withdrawing previously promised support, or saying they will not vote for him.

Infantino would need a two-thirds majority in the first round of voting or a simple majority in subsequent rounds to extend his presidency until 2031.

UEFA apart, the confederations who say they have lost confidence in Infantino are not completely united, with several Asian nations breaking ranks with their governing body and backing him.

REUTERS

What next for FIFA's beleaguered president?





Left: Gianni Infantino pictured during the inauguration of the Colombian Football Federation's new High-Performance Accommodation Center in Barranquilla, Colombia, on Feb 24. **Right:** Patrice Motsepe, president of the Confederation of African Football (left) shares a light moment with Infantino ahead of the 2026 World Cup round-of-16 match between Canada and Morocco in Houston, Texas, on July 4. AFP

Embattled FIFA president Gianni Infantino's hopes that a combative statement condemning "a concerted and ongoing effort" to undermine him would spark a period of reflection were dashed on Monday.

It is over a week since Infantino withdrew his plan to raise private investment for a new commercial subsidiary, called the FIFA Forward Enterprise (FFE), which it proposed would run the commercial side of future World Cups.

Three confederations — Europe's UEFA, North, Central America and the Caribbean's CONCACAF and Asia's AFC — did not hold back in targeting Infantino and his style of leadership in an open letter on Monday.

Despite all sides calling for unity, their idea of how that can be achieved diverges markedly.

Here's who stands with whom, and what the next steps in the saga could be:

His supporters

The 56-year-old Swiss-Italian's 10 years in power have not gone to waste, as increased funding to the 211 member associations has paid off.

The Confederation of African Football (CAF) remains firmly behind him and one of its members, Morocco, is a co-host of the 2030 World Cup.

"The CAF EXCO (executive committee) also unanimously reconfirmed its support for FIFA President Gianni Infantino and thanked him for his support of African football, over the years," read its statement last week.

South American governing body CONMEBOL remains largely supportive — although it did criticize the manner in which Infantino's FFE plan had been conceived and handled — and said his future should only be decided at the presidential election in Rabat next March.

Individual member associations have broken ranks with their respective confederations — among them is one of this year's World Cup co-hosts Mexico, from CONCACAF, and Kuwait and Qatar from the AFC, who have all voiced support for Infantino.

His opponents

UEFA, CONCACAF and AFC doubled down on their scathing criticism of Infantino in the letter over the plan dismissed by UEFA as a "shabby, opaque, backroom deal".

UEFA's threat to boycott all FIFA competitions, including the men's and women's World Cups, is widely credited with forcing Infantino into his humiliating climbdown.

It reiterated that threat last week — the day after Infantino had received the "full support" of senior FIFA directors — and, for a moment, it seemed like it was on its own, as both CONCACAF and AFC did not follow suit with statements.

Monday, though, showed that was far from the case.

"When trust is broken through deception, when an individual places himself above the collective that entrusted him with authority, that duty has been abandoned," the three confederations wrote in open letter.

UEFA's boycott threat will face its first test in September, when Poland hosts the Women's U20 World Cup.

One of Infantino's bitterest opponents, the Norwegian Football Federation and its forthright president Lise Klaveness, called for Infantino to resign last Friday.

Several other member associations have publicly withdrawn their support for his re-election, including Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Serbia and Wales.

Possible outcomes

The presidential election, in which Infantino is seeking a fourth and final four-year term, is to be held in Rabat at the FIFA Congress on March 18 next year.

The deadline for a candidate to oppose Infantino is Nov 18.

History shows that it is nigh on impossible to unseat an incumbent — Brazilian strongman Joao Havelange is the last one to succeed, defeating Englishman Stanley Rous in 1974.

However, if his opponents want Infantino removed earlier, there are other possibilities.

The most likely to be triggered would be a vote of no-confidence in Infantino.

This requires 20 percent of the member associations — 43 — to declare they have lost confidence, setting in motion an emergency FIFA Congress.

Each association would have a vote — with the vote of Gabon, for example, having the same weight as Germany — and it is not clear if a simple majority would suffice.

Potential rivals

Despite the refreshing candor of Klaveness, she is unlikely to stand, and, anyway, FIFA's electorate would prefer a non-European.

Hopes that the two most powerful positions in sport could be held by women, with Kirsty Coventry elected president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) last year, therefore seem remote.

A European has been in charge since 1998, with Sepp Blatter followed by Infantino, although then African soccer head Issa Hayatou acted as caretaker president in between Blatter resigning in 2015 and the election of his successor.

UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin has on several occasions ruled himself out, and without a European, the field narrows considerably.

CONCACAF president Victor Montagliani was previously seen as close to Infantino, but there is clear blue water between them now, with the regional governing body issuing a statement calling for "a comprehensive reckoning with this presidency".

The charismatic 60-year-old Canadian, who, like Infantino, can take credit for the successful hosting of the World Cup, can count legendary Italian coach Carlo Ancelotti, currently in charge of Brazil, among his close friends inside the sport.

AFC president Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa thought his moment had come when he ran against Blatter in 2016, only to finish runner-up to Infantino.

The 60-year-old, who has run Asian soccer since 2013 and whose fourth term comes to an end next year, may yet fancy a second tilt at the top job.

AFP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:30 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:32 PM

Digital asset
Technology innovation may reshape how gold is traded
BUSINESS, PAGE 9



Energy shock drives clean power push
ASIA FOCUS, PAGE 4



Beautiful progress
Report charts environmental improvement across rural areas
GOING GREEN, PAGE 12

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 WEDNESDAY, JULY 22, 2026



Philippine sailors (right) harass China Coast Guard personnel aboard a patrol vessel at Ren'ai Reef in the South China Sea on Monday.
LI YAN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

China urges the Philippines to halt its provocations

By **ZHAO JIA** and **JI HAISHENG**

Beijing summoned the ambassador of the Philippines to China on Tuesday and lodged solemn representations over Manila's deliberate provocation at Ren'ai Reef and attack on China Coast Guard law enforcement personnel on Monday.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry, in a statement, described the acts as egregious, noting that the Philippines initiated the provocation and then sought to shift the blame onto China, distorted the facts and maliciously hyped up the incident.

The statement said China Coast Guard operations in waters near the reef were justified and lawful, and the country would take measures to firmly safeguard its territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests.

Addressing a regular news briefing, Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian stressed that Ren'ai Reef is part of China's Nansha Islands and is Chinese territory.

A Philippine military vessel has remained illegally grounded at Ren'ai Reef since May 9, 1999, despite Manila's repeated commitments to remove it.

Lin urged the Philippines to honor its commitments, immediately stop maritime provocations and false narratives, and exercise effective restraint over its frontline personnel.

"Otherwise, the Philippines will bear all consequences arising from its actions," he added.

Lin said that in July 2024, China and the Philippines reached a provisional arrangement on humanitarian resupply missions to the grounded vessel based on China's three-point principled position, adding that China's position remains unchanged.

"If the Philippines were to attempt to build fixed facilities or permanent outpost, China will absolutely not accept it and will resolutely stop it in accordance with the law and regulations," Lin said.

China Coast Guard spokesman Jiang Lue said that on Tuesday morning, China allowed the Philippine side, on humanitarian grounds, to use a boat to transfer the injured sailor to Philippine Coast Guard vessel *No 9702*. The China Coast Guard contacted the Philippine vessel to verify the purpose of the operation and monitored the process throughout, Jiang said.

With Foreign Minister Wang Yi set to attend the China-ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Manila on Wednesday, Lin, the Foreign Ministry spokesman, said it is worth noting that whenever China and the Philippines prepare for dialogue or engagement, or whenever a major regional diplomatic event approaches, certain forces invariably seek to stir up trouble over maritime issues.

"As to where the facts and merits of the issue lie and who is pulling the strings behind the scenes, I believe it's plain for all to see. China's policy on neighborhood diplomacy remains consistent and unchanged," he said.

Lin said East Asian cooperation platforms are not appropriate venues for discussing bilateral maritime disputes, calling on the Philippines to fulfill its responsibilities as ASEAN chair by promoting dialogue and cooperation rather than putting its own political interests above regional peace and stability.

He Xianqing, an associate researcher at the National Institute for South China Sea Studies, said that Manila was seeking international attention and sympathy from ASEAN countries by portraying China as a coercive bully on purpose. It also tried to give the illegal and invalid "2016 Arbitral Award on the South China Sea" greater practical effect and deterrent force — a development that warrants vigilance.

Zhu Feng, a professor at Nanjing University's School of International Studies, said the Philippines had sought backing from the United States and Japan as it escalated tensions with China in the South China Sea for narrow domestic political purposes.

Contact the writers at zhaojia@chinadaily.com.cn

Inside
Editorial, **page 6**

Online
See more by scanning the code.

XI'S VISION | HIGH-QUALITY DEVELOPMENT

Push to make AI a resource for all hailed

Nation transforming global industries by promoting affordable, accessible use

By **CHENG YU**
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Inside
See more, **page 13**

China's vision to turn artificial intelligence from an expensive frontier technology into a resource for affordable, widely accessible applications will bring huge benefits to more countries, businesses and ordinary people worldwide, said leading industry experts and company executives.

They made the comments on Tuesday after President Xi Jinping, in his keynote speech on Friday at the 2026 World AI Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance in Shanghai, said that AI should be developed "for the positive, for good and for humanity".

"AI development should not be a solo performance by a single country, but a symphony of international cooperation," Xi said.

He called for coordinated advances in the transformation and upgrade of traditional industries, the cultivation and growth of emerging industries, and forward-looking planning for future industries, so that all sectors and businesses can benefit from AI.

Long Yongtu, China's former chief negotiator for its accession to the World Trade Organization, said the rise of AI has become another turning point in the country's economic development.

He said that China's entry into the WTO in 2001 unleashed the vitality of millions of market participants after restrictions on foreign trade rights were relaxed, helping the country grow into the world's largest trader in goods and allowing ordinary people to increase their income through international commerce.

"Now, entering the age of AI heralds a new era of opening-up. AI is triggering a similarly profound transformation by reshaping production relationships, corporate structures and the cost of starting a business in the country," Long said.

According to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, China has embraced AI with open arms, with the value of its core AI industries exceeding 1.2 trillion yuan ($177 billion) last year, maintaining annual growth of more than 20 percent for several consecutive years.

Furthermore, the country is seeking to turn AI into real-world applications and a driver of economic growth.

In the first half of this year, the industrial output of AI-related sectors, including integrated circuit manufacturing and in-vehicle intelligent equipment manufacturing, grew more than 30 percent.

Long predicted that more individuals and small, specialized companies that use AI to perform work that previously required much larger organizations will emerge to become new drivers of the economy.

"Success should ultimately be judged not by model rankings or investment valuations, but by whether AI really improves people's lives," he added.

Efforts to push AI beyond chatbots and benchmark rankings into the physical economy include China's "AI Plus" initiative, which seeks to embed AI in manufacturing, finance, healthcare, energy and public services.

*See **AI,** page 3*

Evolution of airspace ecosystem needed now

WORLD WATCH
By Simon Hocquard

Imagine a morning a few years from now: a drone lifts off carrying a life-saving organ for an urgent transplant, another drone delivers a parcel across the city, and above them, an air taxi takes two passengers to the airport. They all share the same slice of sky over the city, and they do so safely.

The question is, who makes sure they stay out of each other's way?

The answer lies not in a single technology, but in the evolution of the entire airspace ecosystem that enables all aircraft to operate safely together.

The low-altitude economy has arrived faster than many anticipated. Delivery drones are already flying in several countries, and large-scale drone operations are emerging in many regions. Electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft, the vehicles many people call air taxis, are close to entering service. The vehicles are here, the demand is real, and much of the technology is proven.

When discussing this future, people often focus on the aircraft. That is understandable as they are new and visible. However, in my view, the aircraft are the easier part. The more difficult challenge is how we can progressively evolve the airspace system to safely accommodate these new operations alongside today's aviation.

The low-altitude economy offers real rewards. These aircraft can ease pressure on congested city roads, deliver urgent medical supplies, and reach communities that are hard to serve today.

*See **Airspace,** page 3*

INSIDE
A road out of middle-income trap
Global Views, page 8



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

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN ASIA NEWS NETWORK

China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

JIANGMEN TAKES THE ESPRESSO LANE TO SUCCESS

From plantations to percolators, Guangdong city is positioning itself as one-stop coffee hub

By **QIU QUANLIN** in Guangzhou
qiuquanlin@chinadaily.com.cn



A staff member makes iced Americano at a coffee shop in Jiangmen, Guangdong province, on May 25. WANG RUIPING / XINHUA

The air over Jiangmen, a coastal city in western Guangdong province, has traditionally been filled with the fresh scent of dried tangerine peel, a culinary and medicinal favorite among the Cantonese.

However, for a long time, this has been fused with the aroma of a more Western remedy to ease the trials of modern life — roasting coffee beans.

It is believed that the first coffee beans arrived in a suitcase brought by Chinese expatriates as early as the 1860s, when Jiangmen people who ventured overseas returned from Southeast Asia and North America with their suitcases filled with coffee beans and brewing equipment.

The aroma has lingered over the city since, thanks to the booming coffee industry of the past few decades. Over the years, Jiangmen, the hometown of more than 4 million overseas Chinese, has developed into one of China's major industrial bases for coffee, even though no coffee beans were originally produced there.

While it is estimated that there are now more than 2,000 cafes in Jiangmen, the city stands out amid China's coffee landscape for much more.

Building on its strong manufacturing capabilities and the open-mindedness inherent in the globe-trotting history of its people, the city has developed a comprehensive industrial chain.

China Vibes — FOOD —

The thriving coffee business, from bean trading and intelligent roasting to precision manufacturing, has received strong support.

More than 300 varieties of specialty coffee beans, imported from major producing countries and regions including Brazil, Ethiopia and Colombia, with an annual import value exceeding 30 million yuan ($4.4 million), pass through Jiangmen. The city has also developed over 350 coffee equipment and accessory companies.

According to a white paper released earlier this year by local commerce and industrial authorities, approximately 40 percent of China's stainless steel coffee-making equipment and one in five exported coffee machines are produced in Jiangmen.

Liu Youliang, founder of Guangdong Cino Technology, a leading manufacturer of capsule coffee machines, has seen firsthand the growth of Jiangmen's coffee industry.

When Liu started his coffee machine business, the demand for coffee in commercial settings, such as office buildings and hotels, was rapidly increasing.

At that time, the domestic market for capsule coffee machines was virtually nonexistent. However, such machines were already well-established in international markets.

Starting with imitation and developing the country's first homegrown commercial capsule coffee machine, Liu's company, after 18 years, now holds over 300 patents and exports products to more than 90 countries and regions. "Making coffee machines is not just about creating electrical appliances — fundamentally, it's about brewing great coffee," said Liu.

The company has already established a production base of more than 20,000 square meters in Jiangmen, where over 500,000 capsule coffee machines are developed and produced annually.

According to Liu, investment from the Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions, due to their geographic proximity, has greatly helped advance the development of Jiangmen's coffee industry.

*See **Cafes,** page 3*

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:32 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:32 PM

INDEPTH

By **LU WANQING** in Hong Kong
wanqing@chinadailyhk.com



Young world champion Wu Yize trod familiar path to global prominence

Wu Yize holds the championship trophy as his parents wrap a Chinese flag around his shoulders during the awards ceremony after his victory over England's Shaun Murphy in the World Snooker Championship final round at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield in England on May 4. DARREN STAPLES / AFP

Shooting stars — why GBA is China's snooker hub





Left: Wu Yize demonstrates his cue work at a billiards venue during an interview with China Daily in Hong Kong in June. ADAM LAM / CHINA DAILY
Right: Young trainees at the Guangdong branch of the Chinese Billiards and Snooker Association World Snooker Academy take part in one of their daily practice sessions. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

He was just a small boy, "a little taller than the snooker table", and had been handling a cue for a few years — but he already had his life mapped out.

It was more than a decade ago, and Wu Yize was watching the television broadcast of the final of the Snooker World Championship final at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield, England.

Thousands of miles away, young Wu was having his own imaginary victory ceremony. "That's what I want," Wu told himself, "I'll stand there too."

In May, Wu's boyhood promise to himself was fulfilled when he won the world championship at the tender age of 22 in the same venue.

The talent pipeline that delivered him from makeshift tables to the pinnacle of the sport has parachuted a generation of Chinese snooker professionals onto the global tour.

The place where young Wu began his full-time pursuit of a snooker career, as well as the national base for professional youth development, is South China's Guangdong province. Its neighboring regions have also played an important role in the sport's development.

Wu spent several years at various training facilities in several Guangdong cities including Dongguan, widely referred to as China's premier "snooker hub".

The official figures don't lie. Over 70 percent of China's professional snooker players have trained in the city at some stage. For aspiring professionals age under 21, that proportion climbs to 90 percent.

Long way to the top

Wu's path to the pinnacle of the sport was a circuitous one that started at his hometown of Lanzhou, a city best known for its beef noodles, in Gansu province.

He began playing snooker at a young age, initially under the guidance of his father, who later sold his business to support his son's career.

The young prodigy was later mentored in several cities in Guangdong. One of his childhood coaches, UK-born Roger Leighton, remembers him as a "funny and cheeky" 11-year-old kid.

"He was always laughing and giggling and he's still a bit like that now," Leighton said in an interview with Metro UK.

"But he's more serious because obviously now he's at the top, at the business end. He's not the complete player yet, but he's getting there."

Wu's childhood memories are of the sheer joy snooker brought him. "I loved it straight away," he said in an interview with China Daily.

"My dad was into it (at that time), and the first time I tried it, I just enjoyed playing. When I first picked up a cue, I could set up properly and hit a ball. I think my dad, back then, thought that I had a bit of a feel for it."

His parents made multiple sacrifices to help his career.

There were "so many things — my dad buying me my first cue, for example; my parents believing in me, supporting me, letting me give up school to go down this path. It wasn't one big thing — it was every single day, building up over time", he explained.

He moved to Sheffield at age 16 with his father. At first it was hard, he conceded.

"Suddenly, being in a new country, a new life, and (with) new challenges, it was tough," Wu said.

"The place we stayed in had no separate bedroom. The living room and kitchen were all one space — the bed was right next to the kitchen. It was tiny, no windows, no ventilation. I shared a bed with my dad."

When asked if the austere living conditions dulled his passion for the sport, Wu replied: "No, not at all. If anything, it helped me. It made me more resilient when things got difficult."

One of the toughest decisions he made was becoming a full-time player when he was a teenager. Wu earned a two-year professional tour card for the 2021–22 and 2022–23 seasons, turning pro at the age of 17 and being named Rookie of the Year in 2022.

Wu told China Daily he discussed the proposition with his parents. "But to be honest, I didn't really have a deep understanding back then (about what going full-time would mean). I was young, I just knew I wanted to play, and I was excited. I didn't think too far ahead about the future. But I did talk to them about it."

"They told me I could only choose one path. And if I chose this, I had to do it properly. They said I needed to think it through and take responsibility for my own life."

Generation next

Wu represents the new young face of the sport, according to Feng Huanhuan, chief executive officer of F-Sports Promotions.

Her company has organized the annual World Grand Prix in Hong Kong since 2025, and opened the Hong Kong Billiard Sports Academy at Hong Kong's Kai Tak Sports Park.

She believes Wu is a player whose character traits and career represent two decades of the maturation of China's professional snooker players.

The trend started with Chinese snooker pioneer Ding Junhui, who sprung to prominence on the world stage in 2005 by winning the China Open at age 18.

The focus of Chinese snooker's youth training system, is no longer a question of quantity, but one concerning "the sustainability of the careers it churns out".

Ding began formal training at 9 years old. Wu — the first world champion born after 2000 — started around age 7. In 2012, at age 8, he had already shared an exhibition stage with Stephen Hendry, the seven-time world champion, in Lanzhou.

Feng first saw Wu compete in 2025, when he was invited to the inaugural Grand Prix as one of the world's top 32 players.

By then, the just-finished HKBSA was open to players for warm-ups, and Wu was the first to step inside. "From dawn to dusk, he practiced, skipping dinner, asking only if he could come again tomorrow," she said.

She said Wu has "a love for the game — raw, sincere", possesses "natural talent", and has "youth, stamina, a strong work ethic, and mental resilience", all essential qualities for a top player. Moreover, he came up the "hard, but, very representative" way.

Huang Zhufeng, president of the Dongguan Billiards & Snooker Association, is well aware of the risks and rewards young players face in turning professional.

He said Wu came to him in the summer of 2019, asking to shoot practice frames against world-class professionals who used Dongguan as a pre-competition training base before heading to major events across the Chinese mainland.

Huang also oversees the CBSA (Chinese Billiards and Snooker Association) World Snooker Academy's Guangdong branch. He estimates that Dongguan has more than 70 long-term training facilities, with over 500 full-time trainees aged 8 to 21.

Tough decisions

Wu remembers the fraught conversations at home when he chose to drop out of middle school to pursue a professional snooker career.

"My parents argued over it," he said, matter-of-factly.

"They wanted me to be certain. They didn't want to saddle me with a difficult life if it didn't work out."

Feng said in the end, very few young players break through to become champions. "Most of these kids will never win a title — so what happens to them?" she said.

She said both parents and the young players themselves need to understand the risks of going pro.

"Outside of the specialized snooker training, I believe there's a lot of room to build better academic support for these players," Feng said.

Huang said that Dongguan is now working to have billiards recognized under the local sports-education integration mechanism.

That designation, if granted, would allow young billiard players to stay enrolled in school while devoting themselves to intensive training — a safety net that most aspiring young professionals in China currently need.

Huang added that a professional snooker career in China today does not necessarily have to result in a world ranking. There are other ways to stay in the sport.

As snooker programs spread into schools, former trainees can study for a state-issued social sports instructor certificate and teach in classrooms. Or they can go through the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association's coaching tiers or the CBSA's certification process and run a local billiards club.

"There's a real shortage of grassroots coaches and referees in Chinese billiards," Huang said. In Dongguan, he noted, a coach at a typical billiard club can expect a monthly income of 15,000 ($2,220) to 20,000 yuan.

Huang's longer-term vision for Chinese snooker balances elite development with a broader push to draw more people to "just play it for fun", bring snooker into more schools as a regular activity, and establish a contest pyramid that gives both the hobbyists and professionals a rung to reach.

Southern strengths

Within China's multi-pronged approach to snooker development, Huang is confident that the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area will remain at its core.

What sets the region apart, he said, is not only its head start in the sport but its concentration of training resources thanks to the ever-greater cross-border movement of people, investment, and expertise.

Vincent Law Wing-chung, who chairs the Billiard Sports Council of Hong Kong China, shares that perspective, and said GBA cities are complementary across player and coach exchanges, training, event hosting, equipment manufacturing, and commercial strategy.

Hong Kong is the region's essential link to the international snooker circuit, but the mainland's well-appointed youth training infrastructure has also increasingly rebounded to the city's benefit, he said.

In 2024, seven-time world champion Ronnie O'Sullivan and top English player Judd Trump both secured Hong Kong residency. By June 2025, former world champion Neil Robertson had also announced he had done the same.

Law disclosed that more top players are currently pursuing Hong Kong residency.

Huang said Dongguan's expertise in the sport and well-equipped venues have made it a premier destination for visiting snooker teams. Hong Kong players, he noted, have been joined in Dongguan by those from Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Germany, Belgium, Thailand, and elsewhere.

Hong Kong is well-suited for high-end, smaller-scale international tournaments, Law said, whereas larger ones are already being hosted by mainland cities.

In May, the Dongguan Changping Snooker Center opened and hosted the World Women's Snooker Championship. In June, the Dongguan Humen Convention and Exhibition Center staged the World Team Snooker Championship, the sport's premier global amateur team event. A Chinese team made history by clinching the title for the first time.

Huang said the GBA also plays a key role in the global billiard equipment trade.

While equipment manufacturers are centered in Jiangxi province's Yushan and Hebei province's Bazhou — the commercial gateway to markets worldwide is in Guangdong and Hong Kong, funneling products to markets worldwide.

According to the China Customs, Dongguan exported 22.07 million yuan of billiards equipment in the first three months of 2026, up 29.7 percent from the same quarter the year before.

Recent data from the CBSA showed that there are 245 million people actively playing cue sports in China and over 200,000 venues, with 550,000 enterprises feeding into the ecosystem.

"Billiards is now the sport with the highest degree of marketization in China," said Feng.



A young trainee at the Guangdong branch of the CBSA World Snooker Academy takes part in one of his daily practice sessions. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:32 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:32 PM

TOP NEWS

China sets records with new self-unloading vessel

By **ZHAO LEI** in Yangzhou, Jiangsu
zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

China State Shipbuilding Corp, the world's largest listed shipbuilder in terms of production capacity, delivered on Tuesday a self-unloading bulk carrier custom-built for a landmark project off the coast of Guinea in West Africa, noting that the vessel sets several records in its class.

The *Wontanara*, built by CSSC Chengxi Shipyard for global mining giant Rio Tinto and boasting a cargo capacity of 41,800 metric tons, has achieved three industrial milestones. It is the world's largest deadweight shallow-water transshipment self-unloader, the fastest self-unloading vessel ever made and the world's first self-unloader with bidirectional sailing capability in its tonnage class.

A self-unloader — also known as a self-discharger — is a ship capable of unloading its cargo using onboard equipment, without relying on shore-based cranes, mechanical grabs or conveyor systems.

The *Wontanara*, which was delivered at the shipyard's Yangzhou facility in Jiangsu province, measures 215 meters in length, 42 meters in beam width and 14.5 meters in molded depth, and has a cargo hold capacity of 29,000 cubic meters.

The vessel, powered by a full diesel-electric propulsion system, completed a 12-day trial in the East China Sea between late June and early July.

The CSSC said in a statement that the ship's delivery marks a major step in China's transition from a follower to a global leader in the high-end self-unloading transshipment vessel sector.

Zhang Xinlong, general manager of CSSC Chengxi Shipyard, said that Rio Tinto has ordered five such self-dischargers, with the *Wontanara* being the first. "The vessel's construction started in May last year, and the 14-month delivery cycle has underscored Chengxi's robust research and manufacturing strength," he said, noting that the model features a high level of automation with a small crew. "For example, steering maneuvers can be executed by a single operator using several control levers."

The second self-discharger is expected to be delivered in October, and all five are scheduled for handover by next summer, Zhang added.

The five vessels will operate off the coast of Guinea, serving as the main transshipment equipment for the Simandou iron ore project. They will shuttle ore from shallow-water terminals to large ocean-going bulk carriers anchored in deep waters.

Jiang Minghua, chief designer of the *Wontanara*, said it is equipped with two independent lifting systems with a combined unloading rate of 12,000 tons per hour.

Before its debut, the world's fastest self-discharger — a vessel converted by CSSC Chengxi Shipyard — had an unloading capacity of about 7,000 tons per hour.

According to Jiang, 41,800 tons of iron ore would fill almost 700 standard railway freight cars, stretching more than 7 kilometers, and yet, the vessel can unload a full cargo in under 3.5 hours.

"Working in rotation, the five ships can complete full transshipment and loading for a 200,000-ton ocean-going bulk carrier within 24 hours, minimizing anchorage time for large transportation vessels and effectively increasing mine output," he said.

To date, the shipyard has repaired, converted and built nearly 100 self-dischargers, giving it the world's most comprehensive product portfolio and the largest global market share in the sector.

Online
See more by scanning the code.



The *Wontanara*, a world-class self-unloading vessel built by China State Shipbuilding Corp Chengxi Shipyard, is seen during its sea trial. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Narcotics control



Staff members sort confiscated narcotics and precursor chemicals for destruction on Tuesday on the outskirts of Phnom Penh, Cambodia. According to the country's Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sar Sokha, 5.62 metric tons of illegal drugs and precursor chemicals with an estimated value of $500 million were destroyed during the operation. HENG SINITH / AP

Policy boost lifts hopes of A-share market rebound

Buybacks by major firms and more equity investment by insurers bolster confidence

By **SHI JING** in Shanghai
shijing@chinadaily.com.cn

China's long-term economic and technological trajectory remains intact despite recent market volatility, and expectations of stronger policy support are boosting investor confidence and improving the outlook for a rebound in the A-share market, analysts said.

Confidence has also been reinforced by coordinated market-support actions. A number of centrally administered State-owned enterprises have unveiled share buyback or stake-increase plans in recent days. At the same time, leading insurers have announced plans to increase equity investments in technology, advanced manufacturing and other strategic sectors, adding to expectations of stronger long-term capital inflows.

On Tuesday, the market responded positively to the recent developments. After sliding nearly 6 percent since the beginning of July, the benchmark Shanghai Composite Index rose 1.79 percent, with technology shares leading the recovery. The ChiNext Index in Shenzhen surged 7.05 percent and the STAR 50 Index in Shanghai jumped 10.73 percent.

Wu Qing, chairman of the China Securities Regulatory Commission, underscored that efforts will be made to secure market stability.

Addressing a symposium with investors on Monday, Wu said that a comprehensive set of measures, including risk surveillance, countercyclical regulation, quality enhancement of listed companies, rigorous law enforcement and introduction of medium- and long-term capital into the market, will be deployed to resolutely prevent any major market swings.

Between Sunday and Monday, multiple State-owned enterprises, including Aluminum Corp of China, SDIC Power and China National Coal Group Corp, announced buyback or stake-increase plans.

Since the beginning of July, nearly 300 companies have completed share repurchases totaling more than 15 billion yuan ($2.2 billion), while major shareholders of nearly 120 listed companies recorded net increases in their stakes.

Industry giants are leading the buyback wave. Consumer electronics makers Midea, TCL and Haier together repurchased nearly 4.9 billion yuan worth of shares. Tech heavyweights such as ZTE and iSoftStone have also implemented their buyback plans.

Meanwhile, two State-owned capital platforms — China Reform Holdings and China Chengtong Holdings — increased their holding of A shares and will continue to buy more by using their own funds and a central bank lending facility, providing strong liquidity support to the market.

According to Tian Lihui, a professor of finance at Nankai University, the recent market swings, which are irrational short-term sell-offs, have resulted in a deviation between price and fundamentals. The buybacks will anchor core-asset pricing, stabilize overall market expectations and help direct the capital to technology innovation in the long run, he said.

Song Xuetao, chief economist at Sinolink Securities, explained that this round of global stock market jitters has been triggered by overseas market volatility. The recent decline in A shares is thus a result of overseas risk contagion and trading-level disturbances.

"China's growth logic and industrial development trend remain unchanged," he said.

Xun Yugen, chief economist at Guosen Securities, said that the recent A-share market volatility is an adjustment amid a bullish trend. It is by no means an end to a stock market bull run, he added.

According to Liu Chenming, chief strategist at GF Securities, positive factors are accumulating in the A-share market, including the inflow of incremental capital from exchange-traded funds, improving profitability of companies proved by their interim results, and the upward momentum in emerging industries.

During the trading week ending Friday, the net capital inflow into broad-based ETFs totaled 152.5 billion yuan, the third-highest amount since the latest bull run started in September 2024.

About 1,700 A-share companies have released interim earnings previews so far, with 43 percent delivering positive results. The positive rate is significantly higher among tech-focused companies, with 88 percent of STAR Market companies and 79 percent of ChiNext-listed ones reporting positive results. Artificial intelligence-related sectors and resources led the gains, market tracker Wind Information said.

Tao Chuan, chief economist at Guolian Minsheng Securities, said the steady stream of positive AI developments, best represented by the World AI Conference held in Shanghai and the standout performance of the recently released Kimi K3 model, confirms that the country's tech sector is rapidly realizing its high-growth trajectory.

The underlying narrative of China's economic recovery and the ascent of its tech sector remains intact, paving the way for market stabilization, a potential rebound and continued structural opportunities among A shares, he said.

Major insurers such as Ping An, the People's Insurance Company of China, China Pacific Insurance Co and New China Life announced on Monday their plans to increase equity investments in tech, advanced manufacturing and value assets.

Meng Lei, UBS Securities China equity strategist, reaffirmed that technology and AI will remain the core investment themes for the rest of 2026. Apart from strong earnings growth, the sectors will be supported by marginal net inflows from ETFs, active mutual funds, margin financing and private equity, he said.

AI: Industrial depth to help lower costs overseas

From page 1

President Xi also said in his speech that China should facilitate technological innovation, industrial development and "scenario-based application of AI".

Huo Fupeng, director of the innovation-driven development center of the National Development and Reform Commission, said that "China is leveraging its complete industrial system, enormous range of application scenarios and super-sized market to accelerate AI's deployment across thousands of industries".

"Its dense industrial supply chains and vast domestic market give developers an environment in which technologies can be tested, refined and deployed at scale," he said.

Data from Counterpoint Research showed that approximately 16,000 humanoid robots were deployed globally in 2025, with China accounting for more than 80 percent of them.

At the World AI Conference, Chinese robotics company PrimeBOT unveiled a new, transformable robot that is capable of switching between quadruped and humanoid forms.

Tian Hua, CEO of leading materials maker Swancor Advanced Materials Co and head of PrimeBOT, said: "The robotics supply chain comprises more than 1,600 components. At least 1,000 companies are capable of building a robot globally, but only a handful can manufacture 10,000 robots at consistent quality and scale."

"That's China's advantage — transforming personal robots from custom-built machines into mass-produced consumer products," he said. "We are also confident of making such robots really affordable for ordinary people."

Such industrial depth could also help lower the cost of AI products for overseas users. While global attention has focused on Western technology companies competing for lucrative enterprise contracts in the United States and the Middle East, Chinese companies are promoting open-source products across developing countries.

Alex Zhavoronkov, founder and CEO of AI-driven drug discovery company Insilico Medicine, said China's emphasis on open-source development will amplify those gains internationally.

"China is already leading the world in the open-source model," he said.

"The Chinese approach and its AI policies are paving the way for the entire industry, and everyone on the planet will benefit."

Cafes: Jiangmen integrates tradition into coffee drinks

From page 1

"Brands from Hong Kong and Macao have brought not only capital, technology and an international perspective, but also the first cohort of professional talent," he said.

According to Liang Fan, world latte art champion and a promoter of Jiangmen coffee culture, the city does not shy away from tradition.

"Almost every coffee shop has its own signature drink. They usually incorporate traditional ingredients in a modern way," said Liang.

Now, in a bold move, Jiangmen is exploring the possibility of producing its own coffee from scratch.

The local government plan revealed that coffee plantations have been established on nearby Tianlu Mountain, where more than 90,000 coffee plants have been cultivated as part of a trial.

How about locally produced beans, brewed in locally made machines and served by a local barista? For caffeine-loving tourists, Jiangmen would be the perfect place to enjoy a great cup of coffee.

Airspace: Shared digital information emphasized

From page 1

But those benefits are possible only if the flights are safe. And safety at this scale is a question of the system, not of a single aircraft.

Let me explain. Today's airspace was designed for a different kind of flying. It relies on flight rules written decades ago and on air traffic controllers speaking directly to pilots. That approach has kept aviation safe and works well for a modest number of crewed aircraft moving in predictable ways.

Low-altitude flying is different. Drones, air taxis and increasingly automated aircraft vary widely in speed, size and operational capability, and they are expected in far greater numbers. A city might see thousands of low-altitude flights in a day. To safely accommodate this unprecedented scale and complexity, the traditional framework must be augmented by advanced digital tools and automated oversight mechanisms.

So, what needs to change? I would highlight three shifts.

First, we need to move from voice and radar toward shared digital information. When every operator has the same trusted, real-time picture of the sky, coordination becomes easier, and much of it can be automated. Controllers will move from steering each flight to overseeing the system and intervening where human judgment adds the greatest value.

Second, the airspace itself needs to be managed more flexibly. For decades, we relied on fixed rules and boundaries. A digital system can adapt in real time to each aircraft's capabilities, how busy the sky is, and the level of risk involved. This allows the airspace to accommodate more traffic while maintaining the highest levels of safety. Putting safety first does not mean clinging to older systems. It means embracing new solutions that effectively improve safety while enabling innovation.

Third, this transformation must be global and gradual. An aircraft should not stop working the moment it crosses a border. If every country develops its own rules, technologies and operating concepts independently, operators will face a fragmented, more complex, more expensive and ultimately less safe system.

Global standards need to be agreed upon and then implemented locally at a pace that reflects each region's operational needs and level of maturity. Shared standards are what make any network work; roads and the internet are no different. This is precisely the kind of challenge where countries can learn from one another, including the rapid progress now being made across the Asia-Pacific region.

None of this is theory, and no one is doing it alone. The International Civil Aviation Organization is leading the development of the global framework for advanced air mobility, providing the common vision needed for states and the industry to evolve together. The industry is contributing through the Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation's Complete Air Traffic System Global Council, which brings together more than 80 organizations to help shape the evolution of air traffic management.

Our CATS Concept of Operations describes how today's airspace can progressively evolve toward future skies — a seamless, increasingly digital, collaborative and automated ecosystem in which crewed and uncrewed aircraft operate safely together. Alongside the CONOPS, the CATS Global Council is developing practical guidance on automation, safety, change management, advanced air mobility and implementation support to help turn this vision into reality.

This is where I am optimistic. The ambition is there, the expertise is there, and the solutions are within reach. But technology alone will not deliver this future. Success will also depend on collaboration, thoughtful regulation, operational innovation and the people who will manage this transformation.

A lot of work lies ahead, but our industry can do it — and do it well. When we picture the low-altitude economy, let us not stop at the aircraft. The drones and the air taxis will continue to improve. Whether they become a safe and trusted part of everyday life will be determined by the airspace ecosystem beneath them. At CANSO, that is exactly what we are helping to build: the foundations for Future Skies, where every airspace user can operate safely, efficiently and sustainably. Get that right, and the sky becomes a safe new layer of transport for everyone.

The author is the former chair of the Network Management Board on behalf of the European Commission and is now the president and CEO of the Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:32 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:32 PM

ASIAFOCUS

Editor's note:

In this weekly feature China Daily gives voice to Asia and its people. The stories presented come mainly from the Asia News Network (ANN), of which China Daily is among its 20 leading titles.



Wind turbines stand atop hills in southern Laos on Nov 17. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

ENERGY WAKE-UP CALL

SE Asia needs bold steps to boost power generation, cut fuel imports: IEA

A regional electricity grid, nuclear power and ramping up renewables and electric vehicles are among the ways Southeast Asia could boost energy security while also meeting rising energy demand, the head of the International Energy Agency said in June.

The energy crisis triggered by the war in Iran has highlighted just how exposed Southeast Asia is to costly energy imports and the need for urgent, bold steps to shield the region from future shocks, IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol told The Straits Times.

The region is at an inflection point and what it decides now on energy policies will have a profound impact not only on its future but the rest of the world, Birol said on the eve of the release of the IEA's Southeast Asia Energy Outlook 2026 report.

The region remains heavily dependent on fossil fuels, the burning of which is driving climate change and causing more extreme weather, such as storms and floods, that threaten key infrastructure, including power plants, the report says.

"Southeast Asia is at the forefront of the impact of the current energy crisis," Birol said. "I think countries are now putting energy security very high on the agenda, and they are looking at domestic sources of energy generation as much as possible.

"In my view, the biggest winners here will be renewables and nuclear power, and also electric cars because of different factors, but including the cost advantage and the unparalleled energy security benefits."

And an ASEAN Power Grid, long planned but yet to be achieved, would build cross-border electricity interconnections, help balance supply and demand, integrate renewable resources, and lower costs for participating countries, Birol said.

"In my view, this is a no-brainer. There are some political challenges to overcome, and I believe the current crisis will help overcome these political difficulties. And my recent discussions with the government leaders in the region have made me hopeful in this respect," he added.

Challenges include harmonizing power trading across 11 different grids in each of the 11 ASEAN nations, establishing agreements allowing connections with other nations and overcoming technical barriers, such as transmission/distribution voltages and operating standards.

If achieved, a regional grid could help propel economic growth in a region that is home to nearly 700 million people and one of the world's fastest-growing economic areas. The region is set to account for 20 percent of the growth in the world's energy demand over the next decade, ranking second only to India.

But as the region grows, so do its fuel import bill and vulnerability to energy shocks. The Middle East accounts for 60 percent of the region's crude oil imports, and almost half of the oil products that are refined or consumed in Southeast Asia come from Middle East crude oil, the IEA said.

The region has also become increasingly dependent on liquefied natural gas imports, while coal remains central for power generation in most countries in the region.



A data center is seen under construction in Johor, Malaysia, in 2024. VINCENT THIAN / AP



Workers install solar modules in Purwakarta, West Java, Indonesia, on April 17, 2025. MAST IRHAM / EPA

> "Southeast Asia is at the forefront of the impact of the current energy crisis ... I think countries are now putting energy security very high on the agenda, and they are looking at domestic sources of energy generation as much as possible."
>
> **Fatih Birol,** executive director of International Energy Agency

$600 billion

Southeast Asia will need over the next decade to build power plants and to expand and modernize the grid, according to IEA.

That means Southeast Asia remains exposed to future shocks, underscoring the need to diversify fuel sources and focus on domestic energy.

The region's energy import bill is projected to reach $160 billion this year, a record high, and is likely to keep on increasing, potentially rising to $400 billion, or 5 percent of the region's economy, by midcentury based on current policies, the IEA forecasts.

Policies prioritizing cleaner sources of energy, electrification of transport, energy efficiency and grid investments could reduce this risk, the agency said.

Key driver

A key driver of the region's hunger for energy is rising electricity demand, which is growing twice as fast as overall energy use. In the next 10 years, the region will add the equivalent of Japan's total power generation, Birol said.

Demand in the region is coming from the rapid uptake of electric vehicles — one in five new cars is an EV — data centers, industrial and urban expansion, and air conditioners. The number of residential air conditioners in the region is set to triple by 2035.

Birol said the region will need about $600 billion over the next decade to build power plants and to expand and modernize the grid, underscoring an immense financing challenge ahead.

Transmission and distribution networks need to more than double in length by 2050 to keep pace with rising demand and to cope with the addition of more wind and solar energy, the report notes. Investment in grids and storage, such as battery storage, needs to ramp up from $13 billion in 2026 to $50 billion in 2050.

About $27 billion will be needed by 2040 to realize planned cross-border interconnections under the ASEAN Power Grid.

The agency notes that nuclear could become a key growth area for power generation by midcentury. Nuclear deployment could meet almost 10 percent of electricity demand growth by 2050 if announced government targets are achieved. But this will depend on accelerating deployment and reining in long construction lead times and costs.

Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines have announced plans to commission nuclear reactors, with the first units scheduled to come online after 2030. Singapore is carefully investigating if nuclear energy is suitable for the country and is working with the International Atomic Energy Agency on a detailed review starting in 2027.

Increasing electrification of transport, homes and industry is also a key area for the region's governments to focus on. Boosting renewable energy investment, battery storage and regional grid interconnections can cut fuel import bills while boosting regional resilience, the IEA said.

Renewable energy capacity is projected to nearly triple by 2035 under current policy settings or grow fivefold if announced targets are achieved.

Solar deployment has already increased this year: The Philippines became the second-largest destination for Chinese solar exports in the first quarter of 2026, with imports around three times higher than in 2025.

Birol expressed optimism about more rapid change in the region, attributing it to the impact of the Iran war.

He pointed to the rapid changes that occurred in Europe because of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Before the conflict, Russia supplied about 40 percent of Europe's energy. Now, it is a fraction of that.

He said wind and solar installations in Europe have increased by a factor of three and nuclear power is now back on the energy agenda of many European countries.

"I expect this will be the same in Asia, especially in Southeast Asia," he said.

THE STRAITS TIMES, SINGAPORE

South Korea begins soccer reform after World Cup fallout

SEOUL — The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of South Korea launched the K-Football Innovation Committee in early July, appointing former national team player and current member of FIFA's standing committee Park Ji-sung and (South) Korean Sport & Olympic Committee, or KSOC, President Ryu Seung-min as its cochairs.

Holding its inaugural meeting in Seoul in early July, the K-Football Innovation Committee was attended by 10 members.

This list included Culture Minister Chae Hwi-young, Vice-Minister Kim Dae-hyun, Secretary General of the (South) Korean Professional Football League Cho Yeon-sang, and several former soccer players among others.

Culture Minister Chae, who had initially been expected to serve as cochair, said he would step aside and appoint Ryu in his place to ensure the committee's independence from the government.

"With Ryu and Park, the K-Football Innovation Committee would encourage football figures and sports expertise to lead the conversation while the government provides support from behind to build the future of (South) Korean football," said Chae.

The committee comes in response to widespread criticism of the (South) Korea Football Association after South Korea's 34th-place finish at the World Cup.

South Korea opened Group A with a 2-1 win over the Czech Republic but then lost 1-0 to Mexico and 1-0 to South Africa, finishing third and failing to qualify for the round of 32 as one of the eight best third-placed teams.

The expanded 48-team tournament had raised expectations that South Korea would reach the knockout stage, with local media labeling the squad a "golden generation" headlined by former Tottenham Hotspur forward Son Heung-min, Paris Saint-Germain midfielder Lee Kang-in and Bayern Munich defender Kim Min-jae.

The South Africa defeat became the flash point, and team coach Hong Myung-bo was criticized for leaving Son out of the starting lineup, bringing him on at half-time with the score at 0-0.

He later said he had planned to use him when South Africa tired, but that he would do things differently had he known how the match would turn out.

Following South Korea's exit at the World Cup, President Lee Jae-myung said on June 28 on the X platform that he was "utterly baffled" by the elimination, blaming it on personnel decisions.

He said factionalism or loyalty had been prioritized over competence, and asked the sports ministry to investigate and propose measures to prevent a recurrence.

Hong resigned shortly after South Korea was eliminated from the World Cup, saying the responsibility rests with him.

Fans booed Hong at the airport when the team arrived in Seoul on June 29, while applauding the players. Some held banners saying: "South Korean football is dead."

'Time for change'

The culture minister said that a committee comprising prominent figures from the sports community will be established to examine the causes of South Korea's disappointing performance.

Park said the result showed that it was time for change.

"(South) Korean football has had its ups and downs, but always did its best. The recent World Cup games proved that things have to change," he said.

"I am grateful to be a part of the first steps to a positive change. I am a former soccer player, and for that I have the responsibility as a footballer to see how the innovations should be made, not only from a player's perspective, but also by considering if our discussed solutions are applicable," he added.

> "The recent World Cup games proved that things have to change ... I am a former soccer player, and for that I have the responsibility as a footballer to see how the innovations should be made."
>
> **Park Ji-sung,** member of the FIFA Men's Football Stakeholders Committee and a former South Korean soccer player

Another cochair Ryu stressed that neither his involvement nor the KSOC's would affect personnel issues or how the national team operates.

"My role is to seek ways for (South) Korean sports to move forward. The committee will listen to what the sports experts have to share so that the public can applaud and encourage (South) Korea Football Association and the players," he said.

The committee will serve on a temporary basis until a new executive board of KFA is established.

The committee was officially launched hours after Chung Mong-gyu, national football chief, stepped down after 13 and a half years at the helm.

Chung had announced in May that he would resign after the FIFA World Cup, but did not specify when he would leave.

Chung appears to have brought forward his resignation following South Korea's earlier-than-expected group-stage exit from the World Cup and its aftermath, including head coach Hong's resignation.

THE KOREA HERALD — AGENCIES

Farmers' fury



Nepal's farmers dump tomatoes in the street of Kathmandu on July 15. The farmers expressed dissatisfaction with the government's agricultural policies, accusing the government of failing to provide adequate subsidies and ensure fair prices for agricultural products. NURPHOTO VIA GETTY IMAGES

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:32 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:32 PM

WORLD

Stiff resistance



Demonstrators clash with police in Bologna, Italy, on Monday. The crowd gathered to protest the death of Abderrahim Fakir, a Moroccan-born local business owner who died on Sunday following a police restraint during an attempted arrest for damaging a vehicle. MICHELE LAPINI / REUTERS

Hegseth: war in Iran has cost $37.5 b

Senators question accuracy of casualty numbers, citing need for transparency

By SHI GUANG
shiguang@chinadailyusa.com

At a Senate budget hearing on Tuesday, US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth estimated that the war with Iran has cost $37.5 billion.

During a hearing of the Senate Appropriations Committee on Capitol Hill, Hegseth said the $37.5 billion was not only for the cost of military equipment used, and included expenses such as meals.

The hearing was to consider a request for supplemental funding of around $67 billion for the war, which Hegseth said was an "urgent, necessary injection of resources", as well as $1.5 trillion for next year's military budget.

"Without these funds, we face critical shortfalls," Hegseth testified.

Democratic Senator Patty Murphy warned of "another forever war".

"This war is now spiraling out of control again," Murray said, adding that US President Donald Trump has repeatedly claimed that "a deal is near, and the war will be over soon. But now, he's asking for $70 billion more — and for us to just trust him it'll all work out fine."

Trump said on Tuesday that Iran "desperately" wants ceasefire talks, though the US has not cut back on daily attacks.

"We're not finished," Trump told reporters at the White House. "We're not leaving."

Trump said the US could soon hit Pickaxe Mountain, a hardened underground facility where it is believed Iran has moved the centrifuges required to make nuclear fuel, as well as its stockpiles of enriched uranium.

In a post on Tuesday, Trump compared the deaths of 17 US military personnel so far in Iran — and the zero deaths of US troops in the operation to illegally seize Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro — with fatalities in previous US wars: 2,000 in Afghanistan, 4,600 in Iraq, 58,220 in Vietnam and 36,574 in Korea.

However, some senators have questioned the casualty numbers in Iran, arguing the administration is not being transparent, and is hiding behind the claim of "operational security".

"The ceasefire collapsed. The war is escalating. American troops are paying the price. Iran knew it attacked our bases. The Pentagon knew our troops were wounded. The only people kept in the dark were the American people," said Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer.

Democratic Senator Tim Kane said the administration needs to provide better answers for the military deaths and the president's threats to widen the war, despite Congress voting to limits his powers in the Middle East.

"You better have a really good answer for that question. And as of right now, this war of choice that Donald Trump started, he cannot answer that question. Congress has definitively declared — both houses — that this war is illegal. Only we, in the Constitution, have that power. The president is ignoring us, even though that declaration was made by two Republican majority houses," Kaine said.

Brent oil futures settled above $90 on Tuesday, its first close above that threshold since June 11.

Hegseth said the US had been helping guide ships through the Strait of Hormuz, claiming they had "been in control of moving traffic" for some time.

"We pushed almost, I believe, between 400 and 500 million barrels of oil under the nose of Iran over the course of Project Freedom," Hegseth told the committee.

Trump also dismissed the threat by Houthi forces in Yemen to block transit in the Red Sea, which Saudi Arabia has been using as a partial alternative route to ship oil.

"If there is something like that, we'll just have to take care of business," Trump told reporters at the White House on Tuesday.

Fresh 50% US tariffs mount pressure on Canada

By YANG GAO in Toronto
gaoyang@chinadailyusa.com

The latest US tariffs on certain Canadian goods are being viewed by experts as both a negotiating tactic and a shift in the US administration's legal strategy for pressuring Canada.

US President Donald Trump on Monday announced a new 50 percent tariff on certain Canadian goods, including wine, hockey sticks and cement.

The White House said the move was intended to address what it described as discriminatory Canadian trade policies, including restrictions on US alcohol sales, dairy supply management and automobile import quotas.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney condemned the move, calling it "the latest in a series of unilateral US trade actions" that began with Washington imposing tariffs "in direct violation" of the agreement between Canada, the United States and Mexico.

"Canada stands ready to engage intensively to address outstanding issues with the US to the mutual benefit of our citizens," Carney said in a statement.

Ontario Premier Doug Ford urged Ottawa to respond forcefully.

Trade experts said the latest measures reflect both a shift in the legal tools employed by the Trump administration and a broader effort to increase pressure on Canada amid stalled trade negotiations.

Dave Townsend, a partner in Dorsey & Whitney LLP's International Trade Group, said the administration's latest action differs from earlier tariff measures.

"Today, the Trump administration announced tariffs on nearly $20 billion worth of annual imports from Canada under a different legal authority, Section 338. The tariffs would take effect 30 days from now. Why now against Canada?" Townsend said.

He said the timing appears closely linked to ongoing negotiations between Washington and Ottawa.

"The new potential tariffs on goods from Canada appear to be because Canada has thus far not agreed to a framework trade agreement with the United States.

"Thus, the higher tariffs for goods from Canada appear to be aimed at encouraging an agreement between Canada and the United States, or in retaliation for the failure to reach such an agreement, or both," Townsend said. He said the latest measures could further strain trade relations.

Cycle of escalation

"The question now is whether the two sides can reach such an agreement or whether a cycle of escalation and retaliation takes hold between the two countries," he said.

Ronald Stagg, a history professor at Toronto Metropolitan University, said the administration's latest move also marks a significant change in the legal basis for imposing tariffs.

"Having run into problems with duties imposed under 1974 and 1962 trade acts, Trump has now reached back to the 1930 act, which resulted in the deepening of the Great Depression, as other countries retaliated by raising tariffs," Stagg told China Daily.

Stagg said the announcement appeared to catch many in Canada by surprise.

"This seems to have come as a surprise to the Canadian government, and the media, which were focused on Trump's musings on the imposition of tariffs or other financial penalties on Canada for allowing smoke from wildfires to enter the United States," he said.

Only days before announcing the new tariffs, the Trump administration threatened additional financial penalties against Canada over wildfire smoke drifting across the border, accusing Canada of failing to properly manage its forests.

Stagg said the latest actions reflect a broader pattern in Trump's approach.

Looking ahead, Stagg said Canada's response will be critical.

"The question now is, will Canada retaliate, or will the Canadian government complain, but try not to poke the bear," he said.

Beijing hits back at Tokyo over drill

By JI HAISHENG
jihaisheng@chinadaily.com.cn

China on Tuesday rejected Japan's claims about Chinese warships operating in waters near Okinotori during a joint exercise with Russia, saying the activities in the high seas are fully consistent with international law and global practice.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian made the remarks at a news conference in response to reports that Japan had lodged a protest alleging Chinese vessels entered "Japan's exclusive economic zone" during the drill, calling Tokyo's concerns groundless.

Under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, Okinotori is a rock rather than an island, and thus unfit to claim an exclusive economic zone or continental shelf, Lin said. "Japan's claim of an exclusive economic zone around Okinotori violates international law," he said.

Lin accused Japan of smearing other countries' legitimate and lawful operations, and peddling the so-called external threat as attempts to find excuses for accelerating remilitarization and challenging the postwar international order.

The international community must stay on high alert and jointly push back on this dangerous pursuit, he added.



'Whale-done' rescue

Rescue workers maneuver a sling through the water to transport a beluga whale at the shuttered Marineland theme park in Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada, on Monday. This operation marks the beginning of a complex mission to relocate nearly three dozen whales from the park, which closed late last year, to new homes in the United States. CARLOS OSORIO / AP

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1876

Hopes, doubts and demands as Burnham takes power



Xing Yi
Reporter's log

FIRST PERSON VIEW

By the time I arrived at Downing Street on Monday morning, the narrow street was already packed with journalists, photographers and broadcasters awaiting the transfer of power from Keir Starmer to Andy Burnham, the United Kingdom's seventh prime minister in a decade.

I had arrived three hours before Burnham's scheduled speech, but I was too late. A security guard told me every media position had been allocated last week. We were not getting in.

Outside the gates, the crowd continued to swell. Journalists without accreditation lingered in hope, protesters unfurled banners, and passersby paused for a glimpse of the new prime minister.

Then a question struck me: everyone inside would hear Burnham's speech, but who was listening to the people outside?

We turned our attention to the crowd, speaking not with politicians or officials, but with ordinary people who had come to witness Britain's latest change of leadership.

A retired landscape architect said he was there to campaign for the UK to rejoin the European Union.

"Because of Brexit, we've lost between 6 and 8 percent of GDP," he said. "We've got a new prime minister who has said he'd like us to rejoin the EU. We can persuade him to get on with it."

An artist displaying a satirical painting lamented the frequent leadership changes.

"I've seen many prime ministers, and it doesn't matter what they were doing — their policies need stability," he said. "Every one or two years we get a new prime minister, and that's not a good sign.

"The country is in a mess — socially, economically and politically — and is going downward. Someone has to stop that," he added.

Nearby, campaigners staged a symbolic performance. Wearing a cartoon mask of Burnham, one member used a long-handled brush to sweep the street as part of the "Clean Up Westminster" campaign.

The group's leader said they wanted to reduce the influence of money in politics.

"We are here to encourage the new prime minister to keep his promise to limit how much money any individual or organization can give to a political party," he said, referring to a recent investigation into an undisclosed $6.7 million donation linked to the leader of Reform UK.

Later, I met a couple from Suffolk, where Reform UK secured a major victory in May's local elections.

"We hope (Burnham) does a good job, but he's not elected," they said, adding that the change of Labour Party leader lacked a direct mandate from voters.

Their main concerns were immigration, the cost-of-living crisis and poverty. "We need a general election so people can have their say on whom they want as their prime minister," they said.

"So if there were a general election, would you vote for him?" I asked.

"No," the husband replied, before repeating, "No."

Afterward, I met another couple from Ashton-in-Makerfield, where Burnham won last month's by-election, securing the parliamentary seat that paved the way to No 10 Downing Street. Burnham defeated the second-placed Reform UK candidate by about 9,000 votes.

The wife said they had interacted with Burnham during the campaign because "he was there nearly every day".

"He's very humble, very down-to-earth, and he's very much for ordinary working-class people," she said. "He wants to improve social housing and things like that.

"We've got a lot of hopes for him."

In the end, I never made it inside Downing Street that morning.

But perhaps the story was only half told if it focused solely on the new prime minister's speech in front of the famous black door. The other half unfolded outside — in the hopes, frustrations, doubts and demands of ordinary Britons.

The author is a correspondent at China Daily Europe based in London.

Contact the writer at xingyi@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:32 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:32 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Meeting presents Manila with opportunity to step in line with other ASEAN members

Manila has committed its latest provocative act in the South China Sea, just ahead of the China-ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Manila on Wednesday, which Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi is scheduled to attend.

Among Manila's many provocations, confrontations in the South China Sea between illegally intruding Philippine vessels and China Coast Guard boats carrying out enforcement operations have become a routine occurrence. Each dangerous encounter at sea exacerbates tensions and further strains bilateral relations.

What happened on Monday in waters near China's Ren'ai Reef is just one of many such perilous encounters. According to a CCG statement, two rubber boats from the Philippine ship BRP *Sierra Madre*, which Manila grounded on China's Ren'ai Reef in 1999 and has refused to remove ever since, rapidly approached a CCG patrol boat, which was conducting routine patrols, and rammed it, despite repeatedly being given clear warnings.

Philippine personnel also maliciously struck Chinese law enforcement officers with oars, poles and other tools during the incident. Despite the fact that the Philippine side initiated the provocation, in a bid to mislead the international community, Manila had the nerve to play the victim.

It is only natural that Manila's reckless words and deeds should be censured by Beijing. The head of the Department of Boundary and Ocean Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs urgently summoned the Philippine ambassador to China on Tuesday, lodging solemn representations over the Philippines' deliberate provocation at Ren'ai Reef and its attack on CCG law enforcement personnel.

China values its relations with the Philippines, but Manila should not mistake China's goodwill and restraint for weakness or unlimited tolerance.

China's relations with the other members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations have remained generally stable. But due to Manila's constant provocative antics in the South China Sea, the same cannot be said of ties between China and the Philippines.

As the rotating chair of ASEAN this year, Manila should play a more constructive role in promoting peace and stability in the region, rather than inviting wolves into the house. Its tactic of enlisting the support of external forces and trying to ignite the cold ashes of the so-called "South China Sea arbitration award" does a disservice to regional efforts to maintain peace in the waters. Beijing has made it clear that the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea must never be linked to the illegal "arbitral award".

It serves no country's interest if stability and cooperation in the region are undermined by feuds.

Instead of exacerbating tensions in the region, the Philippines should leverage its position to facilitate dialogue and cooperation. It should shoulder its responsibilities and act as a promoter and coordinator of regional peace, focusing on constructive engagement rather than provocation. The goal should be to foster an environment conducive to negotiations and the peaceful resolution of disputes.

As China and ASEAN are striving for an early conclusion of negotiations on the COC, the Philippines should prioritize the task, ensuring it reflects the collective interests of ASEAN and China, and not the agendas of external powers.

It is hoped that the China-ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting will send a message that prioritizes peace and stability over conflict and division. By fostering a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect, China and ASEAN can work together to turn the South China Sea into a sea of peace, friendship and cooperation.

China looks forward to the Manila meeting expanding consensus on development and cooperation, making new progress in jointly fostering a peaceful, safe and secure, prosperous, beautiful and amicable home, and striving to forge a closer China-ASEAN community with a shared future.

Stable China-UK relations benefit both sides

On Monday afternoon, Andy Burnham, the United Kingdom's seventh prime minister since 2016, stood outside No 10 Downing Street and said: "Let us make this the moment when Britain starts to believe again, the moment we bring back hope."

It was a good line that millions of UK people will be looking to him to deliver on. But "hope", as every UK leader has learned to their cost, is a currency that devalues fast when the fiscal arithmetic refuses to cooperate.

The new prime minister inherits a country facing domestic challenges, with many residents struggling with high living costs. Burnham has ruled out raising income tax, VAT or national insurance. Yet he has promised the largest public housing program in decades, reindustrialization and the return of utilities to public control.

The math does not add up.

Against this backdrop, deepening economic engagement with China is a necessity. Burnham's predecessor, Keir Starmer, stabilized relations with Beijing. And Starmer's January visit to China — the first by a UK prime minister in eight years — sustained the momentum of a suite of dialogue mechanisms that had lain dormant for too long.

The China-UK Joint Economic and Trade Commission is back, meeting for its 15th session in London this month. The Economic and Financial Dialogue, suspended for six years, produced nearly 70 policy outcomes when it resumed in Beijing last year. A new Financial Working Group has been established. The Joint Commission Meeting on Science and Technology has identified climate, health and agriculture as shared priorities.

This is the institutional architecture that Burnham can now work with. His own career record in Manchester gives him an advantage: he has seen Chinese investment work. During his mayoralty, Chinese companies poured over £6 billion ($8.07 billion) into Greater Manchester, backing regeneration projects that created jobs and revived communities.

Chinese Premier Li Qiang extended his congratulations on Monday, expressing readiness to strengthen engagement, deepen mutual trust, expand exchanges and cooperation, and advance the long-term and stable comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries.

Li also noted that stronger dialogue and cooperation would not only advance the development of both nations but inject stability into global peace as well. It is clear China is prepared to work with the Burnham government for the two countries' common interests.

Yet the shadow of British Steel looms large at the moment. The nationalization of the Scunthorpe plant — seized from China's Jingye Group just days before Burnham took office — is a flagrant violation of the UK's contractual obligations.

Burnham must deal with this with prudence. He should bear the bigger picture in mind, as the potential for bilateral cooperation is too great to be jeopardized by the dispute. The bilateral trade in goods reached $103.7 billion in 2025, while the two countries' services trade exceeds $30 billion and has huge untapped potential. The UK is the world's second-largest services exporter; China is the second-largest services importer. A China-UK services trade agreement — which both sides have committed to exploring — could be transformative.

As UK Business and Trade Secretary Peter Kyle said at the July "Export to China" event in London: "Both sides can enhance understanding through dialogue, join hands in cooperation, and maintain stable economic and trade relations benefiting both peoples."

Burnham needs China if he is to deliver his flagship promises. Promoting the UK's green transition, advanced manufacturing, life sciences and electric vehicles — all require investment that a cash-strapped UK Treasury cannot provide alone. Chinese capital can help re-industrialize the north and the Midlands, exactly the left-behind communities Burnham has pledged to serve.

The China hawks in Westminster will not disappear. But the lesson of Starmer is that a prime minister who fails to deliver growth loses his party's confidence. Starmer was undone not by a single crisis but by a cumulative sense that he had no solution. Burnham's "Manchesterism" — his commitment to shifting power from Westminster, expanding public control and promoting regional development — was forged in a city that benefited tremendously from Chinese engagement. The UK will benefit if he can now apply that cooperative pragmatism on a national scale.

The mechanisms are in place. The will in Beijing is clear. Burnham's own instincts are sensible. The question is whether he can resist the gravitational pull of geopolitical pressures long enough and resolve differences through consultations to make it work.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

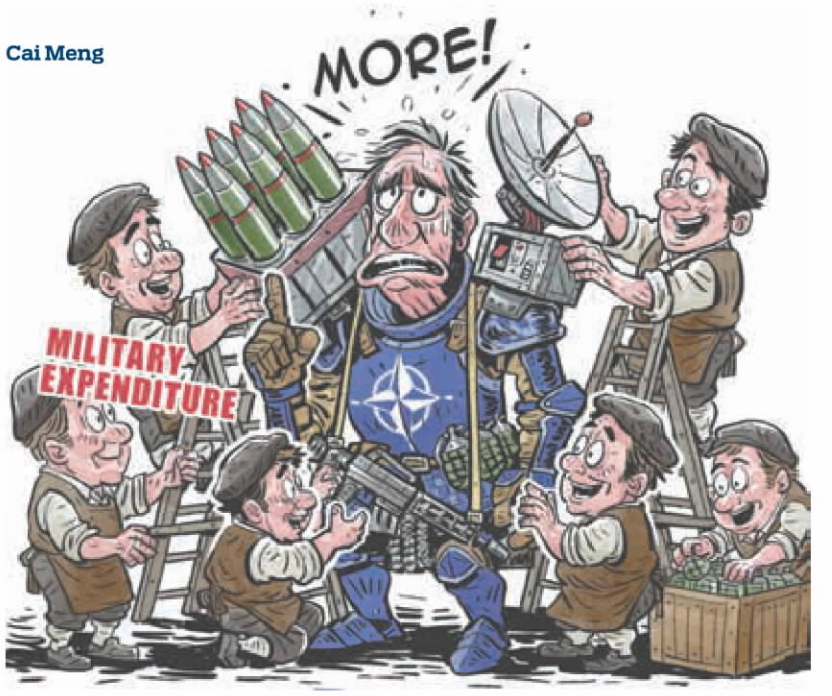
China Daily UK
90 Cannon St, London EC4N 6HA, UK
+44 (0) 207 398 8270
editor@chinadailyuk.com

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

Economy's structural divergence calls for targeted support policies

China's high-tech and manufacturing sectors are expanding at high speed. For those who measure national prowess in teraflops and gigawatts of computing power, the latest industrial data are remarkable. The country's intelligent computing capacity reached 2,185 eflops as of June; and its integrated circuit exports — a sector targeted by US restrictions — have skyrocketed by 88.7 percent year-on-year in the first half of the year. It also accounts for over half of the world's humanoid robot models.

It can be seen that China's economy operated within a proper range in the first half of the year. And efforts will be stepped up to secure the steady development of employment, businesses and markets, and to meet expectations.

Although the official unemployment rate for the 16-24 age bracket has fallen for three consecutive months, it still lingered at 14.9 percent last month, with students excluded.

China has set a target of a surveyed urban unemployment rate of around 5.5 percent in 2026 and aims to create over 12 million new urban jobs within the year.

What the country is experiencing is a "scissors effect" of structural divergence. Artificial intelligence, as the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology notes, is being integrated into every facet of the economy. But the replacement of human labor is outpacing the creation of new, viable occupations in some sectors, where the "substitution effect" is winning the race against the "compensation effect".

Consider the numbers from the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security. While AI-related job openings in fields such as humanoid robotics have quadrupled, nearly half of these positions explicitly require a master's degree or higher. China faces a talent gap in AI-related fields, yet millions of rural migrant workers have to adapt to labor market changes caused by automation in traditional manufacturing. This is a skills chasm, which affects consumption as well. If the average worker lacks the digital literacy to compete in a machine-driven economy, how can they fuel domestic demand?

The legacy of the property boom also continues to weigh on consumption. For more than a decade, soaring home prices encouraged many households to exhaust their savings and take on substantial debt, effectively spending tomorrow's income yesterday. As property values have softened, that consumption has proved difficult to recover.

Governments can encourage spending, but they cannot manufacture purchasing power. Consumption ultimately rests on income.

What is required is expanding lifelong learning systems accessible to factory workers, as well as stronger support for the low-income group in public services and social security. In the process, tax revenues generated by the tech boom should be recycled into robust social safety nets and targeted income support. There is no escaping the fact that a "ballast" economy is only as stable as the purchasing power of its consumers.

Redefining the nature of work is equally urgent. The "algorithmic control" exerted by the platform economy has left millions in the gig economy without adequate social security. If these workers are to be true participants in the AI era, they need the same protections as those in traditional employment.

The AI era demands a renewed commitment to social fairness and economic justice. Through continued reform, China can prevent a two-tiered society from forming: a highly educated elite designing and managing intelligent machines, and a growing commons left to compete for whatever work automation leaves behind.

Without an effective recalibration of how we invest in human capital and distribute national income, the "scissors" will only cut deeper. The real ballast for any economy is jobs. The technological miracle the world is experiencing will ultimately be judged not by its teraflops, but by whether it lifts all boats through inclusive development.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

OPC ecosystem can help promote entrepreneurship

Editor's note: *Enabled by the rapid development of artificial intelligence, one-person companies, or OPCs, are thriving in China, offering a new model of employment. Yao Jianhua, deputy dean of the School of Journalism at Fudan University, spoke to Oriental Outlook on the strengths of China's OPC sector and the challenges it faces. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

Contrary to what many people think, an OPC can involve more than one person. Depending on local policies across different cities in China, an OPC can have up to 20 employees in it.

The most important feature of an OPC is its approach to business. It is a smart model that is built on AI and involves collaboration between software and hardware.

The core competitive edge of an OPC lies in its founders' deep understanding of users' needs and market demands.

The OPCs which are able to identify unmet demands and leverage their technological capabilities to meet these demands are more likely to succeed in the competition.

Cities across China have established OPC communities to support the development of this new business model. Typical examples include the Zero Cube community in the Lingang Special Area in Shanghai, the ZGC AI North Latitude Hub in Beijing, and the Dagongfang AI hardware OPC hub in Bao'an district, Shenzhen.

These communities serve as platforms for OPC entrepreneurs to build connections, convert social networks into commercial resources and engage in flexible collaboration.

However, a lack of sufficient application scenarios remains a prominent challenge for the growth of OPCs. Some cities treat the local OPC community merely as a coworking space and a tool to attract investment, without offering enough opportunities for companies to deploy their products in the real world.

Also, although AI technology has lowered the threshold for individuals to start a business, OPC founders are predominantly young talents with specialized technical expertise, high academic credentials and work experience in tech firms or research institutions. A large number of ordinary workers still lack proficiency in AI tools and awareness of digital entrepreneurship. This might lead to the digital divide and imbalanced development, undermining the inclusive innovation that OPCs aim to promote.

Other challenges include heightened operational and financial risks for OPC founders who run their companies all by themselves, and security loopholes caused by the use of AI agents.

The government and the market should work together to promote the sound development of OPCs. Local authorities could formulate special policies aligned with the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), and roll out measures tailored to local industrial strengths.

They should refine rules for OPC governance and address regulatory loopholes, improve financial services to ease OPC founders' burdens, and build cross-regional public computing power platforms to provide low-cost and inclusive computing resources.

OPC communities should also focus on local industries and resources and upgrade their services. They should not only provide workspace and computing power for OPCs, but also offer other services, including matching demand with supply and promoting industrial collaboration.

To prevent the digital divide, local authorities should cooperate with tech enterprises, universities and industry associations to offer customized AI training courses to different groups of people, thus lowering the barriers to digital entrepreneurship.

Regulators should adopt an inclusive and prudent governance approach, using tools such as regulatory sandboxes to allow for experimentation and learning in OPC operations.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:32 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:32 PM

VIEWS

Xu Ying and Zhang Weishi

The right flight path for the low-altitude economy

Wuhan, the capital of Hubei province, has begun drawing roads in the sky. Its new "Sky Road Map" — the first of its kind in China — charts hundreds of flight corridors and thousands of landing points across the city, creating a digital blueprint for a future in which drones, air taxis and other low-altitude aircraft become part of everyday urban life.

But the real challenge is not mapping routes; it is governing a crowded sky. As millions of low-altitude aircraft take flight, China will need a dynamic governance system that manages airspace across space and time, coordinates multiple agencies in real time and treats the sky as critical urban infrastructure. Otherwise, the low-altitude economy could add a new layer of disorder to already strained cities.

Drones, electric air taxis and other low-flying aircraft are seen as part of the country's next wave of industrial growth and infrastructure development. However, growth without structure is unsustainable.

To ensure orderly growth, the governance framework should adopt a "risk-based" or "benefit-assessed" approach that prioritizes public safety and disaster relief. The recent flood relief operations in Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region illustrate the value of low-altitude aircraft in emergency situations. Rules for commercial logistics, environmental monitoring and other market-oriented applications can be developed in an extended framework. By differentiating governance according to public value and economic needs, cities can safeguard critical functions without stifling innovation.

China's urban development has hit an inflection point. Traditional two-dimensional, labor-intensive governance models are reaching their limits. A shrinking front line workforce and tighter fiscal budgets demand a more precise, resilient approach.

The growth of low-altitude airspace — generally up to 1,000 meters above the ground — is pushing Chinese cities beyond traditional ground-based management.

Urban authorities must now manage not only roads, buildings and people on the ground, but also where aircraft fly, when they fly and how their movements interact with life on the ground. This emerging model is described as "spatiotemporal governance" because it adds both physical elevation and time to the traditional map of urban management. More importantly, it marks a shift from reacting to problems after they occur to anticipating and preventing risks through coordinated data-driven governance.

The future of low-altitude governance will not be built one drone at a time. Current "point-based" models, which treat drone operations as isolated deployments, are not suitable for the scale of modern urban complexity.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Therefore, China is moving toward a sophisticated spatiotemporal grid-based model that integrates three foundational pillars to manage the low-altitude space.

The first pillar is digital intelligence. Real-name registration, flight reporting and identification systems help authorities determine who is flying where and for what purpose. When those data are combined with weather information, air-traffic rules and 3D maps of the city, regulators can assess risks in real time rather than after an incident occurs.

The second is zoning. Instead of relying on blanket no-fly bans, cities are beginning to classify low-altitude airspace by aircraft type, mission, population density and infrastructure risk. High-risk areas can be tightly controlled, while designated corridors remain open for lower-risk commercial and public services. Fixed routes and approved takeoff-and-landing nodes will turn low-altitude airspace into a planned transportation network.

The third pillar is coordination. Drones do not stop at city borders, and neither can regulation. Aviation authorities, emergency responders and public security departments need shared platforms and shared rules. When flight routes are connected with weather and safety data, risks can be spotted before takeoff. As drone services expand across neighboring cities, common standards for identity checks, data sharing and approvals will be essential to keep flights moving safely across municipal boundaries.

Across China, early experiments are already showing what a coordinated low-altitude network can achieve. On the technical front, integrating multi-source big data is enabling the creation of digital twins that allow officials to visualize and simulate urban life in real time. For instance, in Pingtan, Fujian province, autonomous inspection systems like "Cloud Xiaosheng" are transforming how municipal infrastructure is monitored.

These initiatives signal a broader shift toward anticipatory urban governance. By replacing post-event response with pre-event planning, cities can overcome three persistent challenges: insufficient synergy, fragmented integration, and uneven public service coverage.

The real test of China's urban governance is not whether drones can fill the sky, but whether cities can govern that sky with the same coherence and efficiency that they govern the streets below.

That will require more than advanced aircraft. It will require stronger legal frameworks, deeper institutional coordination and sustained investment in digital infrastructure and innovation.

For decades, China's cities were shaped primarily by horizontal expansion. The next stage will be defined by how effectively they manage activity across space and time, integrating the air above the city with the systems that operate on the ground. If that transition succeeds, the low-altitude economy will become part of a broader shift toward safer, more resilient and more intelligent urban life.

Xu Ying is a research fellow at the Low-Altitude Economy Research Center and an assistant professor at the School of Government, Central University of Finance and Economics; and Zhang Weishi is an associate professor at the Faculty of Geography, Tianjin Normal University.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Zhou Shuchun

The author is chief researcher at the China Watch Institute, China Daily.

Yen's fall microcosm of mature economy in structural decline

Despite a recent bounce, the yen remains pinned below the psychologically critical 160 mark against the dollar — a level long viewed by the market as a last line of defense.

Once an undisputed safe-haven currency, the yen is now one of the world's worst-performing major currencies. Its relentless slide lays bare the fragility of Japan's political and economic foundations, exposing a jarring case of policy schizophrenia.

Officials continue to tout a narrative of "moderate recovery" for Japan's economy. Supporting this optimism is the fact that while the yen languishes at 40-year lows, the Nikkei has surged to heights not seen since the late-1980s bubble era. Politicians are quick to frame this as a sign that Japan is finally shaking off its "lost decades."

Yet the stark divergence between stocks and the currency reveals deep internal contradictions. To a significant extent, the plunging yen has engineered an imported bull run. The Nikkei 225, dominated by exporters like Toyota, Sony, and SoftBank, benefits directly as a weaker yen inflates the value of repatriated overseas earnings. However, this disconnect from the tepid underlying economy has investors on edge; what passes for a "recovery" feels more like a disjointed solo dance.

The contrast becomes even starker beyond the equity market. With Japan heavily reliant on imports for energy, raw materials and food, the currency crash has unleashed a tide of imported inflation. Consumer prices have breached the 2 percent policy target for four straight years, while the Engel coefficient (the proportion of food expenditure in total consumption expenditure) for households hit 29.4 percent in the third quarter of 2025 — its highest level since 1981.

A currency's persistent plunge signifies a collective downgrade of the country's potential — a massive vote of no confidence.

While listed multinationals celebrate inflated paper profits, the vast majority of smaller firms are being squeezed to death, burdened by rising operating costs. According to one survey, corporate bankruptcies attributable to yen depreciation rose by 32.3 percent year-on-year in the first half of this year. Meanwhile, despite union-led nominal wage hikes of 5 percent over two years, real wages have declined for four consecutive years, failing to keep pace with inflation.

As foreign tourists and property buyers snap up bargains in what has become Asia's biggest "discount store", domestic purchasing power is evaporating.

As Robin Brooks of the Brookings Institution noted in May, measured by the real effective exchange rate (REER), the yen has fallen below even the Turkish lira, largely considered one of the world's weakest currencies. Bank for International Settlements data show the yen's REER has collapsed from a 1995 peak of 193.95 to just 67.73 — a two-thirds wipeout of its value.

On the surface, the primary driver appears to be the yawning 300-basis-point gap between US and Japanese interest rates, which serves to fuel a low-risk carry trade bonanza: borrowing low-interest yen and buying high-interest dollar assets, thereby creating a lasting siphon effect of shorting the yen. But Tokyo's repeated interventions — including a record 11.73 trillion yen ($73.6 billion) spent in just one month to buy the yen in the market and hiking the benchmark rate to its highest level since 1995 — have failed to stem the tide.

Clearly, this is no longer just about interest rate differentials; it is a symptom of deep structural malaise. At the heart of the crisis is a catastrophic policy mix: the financial authorities press the brakes with rate hikes, while Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi slams the accelerator with reckless fiscal abandon. Ignoring a debt-to-GDP ratio of 240 percent, her administration is doubling down on massive stimulus and defense spending. This fiscal profligacy has spooked the bond market, sending the 10-year benchmark government bond yield soaring to a three-decade high of 2.9 percent.

The resulting surge in borrowing costs for the government, corporations, and households is choking off the real economy.

This places Japan's economy squarely in the grip of what economists call an "Impossible Trinity": expansionary fiscal policy demands low rates, low rates crush the currency, a weak currency forces tightening, and tightening strangles the very fiscal expansion it seeks to enable. Takaichi's political gamble is proving to be a ruinous wager on the future of the Japanese economy.

Today, the yen's decline is a microcosm of a mature economy in structural free fall. Investors are shorting the yen, betting on the persistence of Japan's woes: a shrinking population, unsustainable debt, hollowing out of industry, the fading dominance of its once-mighty manufacturing sector, and in particular, the worsening geopolitical environment. The shift from perennial trade surplus to chronic deficit further erodes the currency's intrinsic worth.

While Takaichi clings to her "weak yen is good" dogma, markets understand the truth: a sovereign's exchange rate is the ultimate barometer of national competitiveness. A currency's persistent plunge signifies a collective downgrade of the country's potential — a massive vote of no confidence. How, or even if, Japan rescues its currency will not only determine its own economic fate but also reverberate across the global financial system.

Nancy Snow

Emerging technologies need public trust

Global Lens

The global race for emerging technologies is often described in terms of innovation capacity, computing power, research funding and national competitiveness. Governments and industries speak of artificial intelligence, biotechnology, quantum systems, robotics, and semiconductors as strategic assets that will shape the future balance of economic and geopolitical power. All of that is true. But there is another dimension of technological competition that receives far less attention: the struggle for public trust, social legitimacy and persuasive communication.

Emerging technologies do not exist in laboratories alone. They exist within societies. Their success depends not only on scientific breakthroughs, but also on whether people understand them, trust them and believe they serve human progress.

In the 21st century, technology leadership is also a form of narrative leadership.

Artificial intelligence offers a clear example. Around the world, AI generates competing emotions at the same time: excitement, fear, fascination, anxiety, optimism, and distrust. Some see AI as a path toward scientific advancement and greater productivity. Others fear job displacement, surveillance, misinformation and loss of human control.

Therefore, the challenge before governments, universities, companies and media institutions is not simply technological development. It is explaining the same to the public. Who explains the future matters.

Throughout modern history, societies have embraced transformative technologies because of compelling public narratives. Railroads symbolized national development. Space exploration represented human ambition and scientific possibility. The internet was promoted as a democratizing force capable of connecting humanity across borders. Today's emerging technologies require similar forms of public understanding and social legitimacy.

Yet public conversations about technology are increasingly fragmented. Online ecosystems amplify fear, outrage, conspiracy theories and emotional polarization faster than institutions can respond, just as misinformation often spreads more rapidly than scientific clarification. Public mood itself has become a strategic battleground. I have described this phenomenon elsewhere as "mood trafficking" — the shaping of emotional climates through narratives, images, and information systems. In the digital era, whoever shapes public mood often shapes public perception.

This is especially important because emerging technologies increasingly touch every aspect of human life. Artificial intelligence influences education, labor markets, healthcare, finance, media, and military planning. Biotechnology raises ethical questions surrounding genetics and human identity. Quantum systems may transform cybersecurity and communication infrastructures.

These developments are social transformations. As a result, scientists and engineers alone cannot carry the burden of technological transition. Public communication, education, diplomacy, and cultural understanding must also play central roles.

Universities have an important responsibility here. Institutions of higher learning such as Tsinghua University in China, where I've taught several times, should not only produce technical expertise, but also help societies understand the broader human implications of innovation. This requires dialogue across disciplines, bringing together engineers, social scientists, communication scholars, ethicists, policymakers, and international partners.

Technology policy itself must become more human-centered.

In many countries, governments are now recognizing that technological influence extends beyond economics and security. Innovation also shapes national image, international reputation, and soft power. Countries increasingly compete not only over which technologies they invent, but also over which vision of the future they present to the world.

This is particularly true in Asia, where technological modernization is often linked to broader national narratives of development, stability, education, and long-term planning. Across the region, emerging technologies are becoming symbols of national aspiration and civilizational confidence.

At the same time, all societies face similar questions. How can innovation remain people-centered? How can technological progress strengthen social trust rather than deepening polarization? How can countries encourage innovation while preserving human dignity and public accountability? These questions cannot be answered through engineering alone.

The future of emerging technologies will depend not only on who develops the most advanced systems, but also on who can best communicate their meaning, legitimacy, and human purpose.

Technology is never only about machines. It is also about building and maintaining public trust.

The author, a scholar of public diplomacy and strategic communications, has lectured widely across Asia, including at Tsinghua University's School of Journalism and Communication and Schwarzman College.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:32 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:32 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

MAFA KWANISAI MAFA

Resonant praxis

105-year legacy of CPC offers operational and governance wisdom the Global South can embrace

As the Communist Party of China marks its 105th anniversary, its odyssey furnishes the Global South with profound, actionable governance lessons.

For generations, developing nations across Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia have adopted Western political and economic templates wholesale, only to remain mired in institutional fragility, systemic graft, erratic policy continuity and entrenched underdevelopment. Set against this stark global reality, China's transformative developmental ascent stands as a time-honed benchmark worthy of in-depth, rigorous scrutiny.



China's landmark achievements speak with unassailable clarity. Since the launch of reform and opening-up in 1978, about 800 million Chinese people have been lifted out of extreme poverty, accounting for over 70 percent of global poverty reduction. China has sustained relentless breakthroughs in infrastructure construction and technological innovation, contributing about 30 percent to global annual economic growth year after year and cementing its stature as an irreplaceable engine for shared global prosperity.

What constitutes the bedrock of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation? Analysts across many regions share one answer: the CPC serves as the unshakable anchor of China's national governance. Far beyond delivering steady, long-horizon political leadership, the Party has erected a comprehensive self-renewal framework anchored in the 14 foundational principles of Xi Jinping Thought on Party Building. These principles encompass upholding the Party's unified leadership, enforcing rigorous internal discipline, strengthening ideological cultivation, institutionalizing anti-corruption campaigns, improving cadre capacity building and establishing full-spectrum accountability mechanisms. Most critically, the CPC rejects superficial, temporary rectification drives. Instead, it institutionalizes organizational self-reform of the Party as an enduring, iterative mission.

Five core, adaptable governance tenets carry universal resonance for many Global South countries.

First, proactive institutional self-renewal. Any state apparatus will inevitably stagnate and atrophy should it grow complacent or sever its organic bond with the people it is meant to serve. The CPC's multi-layered internal supervision architecture and targeted rectification mechanisms nip structural flaws in the bud, stopping minor frictions from metastasizing into crippling systemic crises. This timeless logic is equally applicable to national government, academia, public service bodies and civil society organizations across the developing world.

Second, standardized discipline and enforceable accountability. Many emerging economies are hamstrung by fragmented public administration, endemic corruption and disjointed national policy rollouts. Decades of China's on-the-ground governance practice validate an immutable truth: clearly delineated institutional mandates, unified statutory rules and cross-tier oversight exponentially elevate administrative efficiency. Every sovereign nation must forge institutional frameworks rooted in its unique constitutional heritage and indigenous political traditions, yet a universal axiom endures: high-caliber governance demands visionary, competent leadership paired with robust institutional guardrails.

Third, merit-centric civil service development. The recruitment and evaluation of public officials hinge on three pillars: professional proficiency, unwavering public service ethos and unimpeachable personal integrity. Sustained leadership training and upskilling initiatives empower state workforces to navigate intertwined economic and social complexities with poise.

Fourth, multi-generational strategic planning. Short-sighted, election-cycle-bound policies can never catalyze structural national transformation. China's sequential five-year medium-term development blueprints and overarching national visions that transcend successive administrations unlock sustained progress in poverty eradication, industrial upgrading, indigenous technological breakthroughs and cross-continental infrastructure ventures. For African economies striving to break free from crippling commodity dependency, this model of uninterrupted long-range planning holds considerable practical value.

Fifth, people-centered founding mission. Self-reform, strict accountability, merit-based official training, long-term planning and institutionalized governance all serve one central goal: protecting ordinary people's fundamental interests and delivering tangible improvements to daily livelihoods at the grassroots level.

All the remarkable accomplishments of China stem from the CPC's core tenet of seeking happiness for the people and rejuvenation for the nation. Through ever-shifting domestic and international landscapes, every CPC member keeps this mission foremost in mind. The CPC firmly rejects bureaucratic estrangement from the ordinary people and prioritizes people's interests above all else, with this people-centered conviction serving as the spiritual anchor guiding all governance work. Every poverty relief program, infrastructure project and public service upgrade is oriented toward satisfying people's yearning for a better life, demonstrating that people-rooted governance delivers inclusive, sustainable growth unattainable by elite-focused systems.



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

For Global South countries plagued by elite capture and neglected public demands, embedding a people-first mindset into institutional design offers an effective remedy for unequal development.

These principles resonate deeply across Africa. The continent is blessed with abundant untapped mineral and agricultural resources, the globe's youngest demographic cohort and boundless latent economic potential — yet deep-rooted institutional bottlenecks stifle broad-based, equitable advancement. A vital caveat bears emphasis: Drawing insights from China's developmental journey does not equate to blind replication of its entire system. Rather, developing nations may distill adaptable institutional principles while fully honoring their distinct historical trajectories, indigenous governance customs and constitutional order.

China has emerged as a steadfast development partner for Africa, delivering tangible progress via infrastructure, industrial, agricultural, medical and vocational cooperation. Over recent decades, Chinese enterprises have built or upgraded over 10,000 kilometers of railways, nearly 100,000 km of highways, 1,000 bridges, almost 100 ports and 66,000 km of power transmission lines across the continent, alongside thousands of hospitals, schools and training hubs. Zimbabwe's multi-sector cooperation with China covering mining, energy, manufacturing, agriculture and health exemplifies this mutually beneficial partnership, while exchanges enable two-way policy learning between African and Chinese officials, experts and professionals.

Today, the Global South confronts a tangled web of transboundary crises: accelerating climate breakdown, mounting sovereign debt burdens, intensifying technological rivalry, pervasive global food insecurity, mass youth unemployment and shifting geopolitical power equilibriums. Resolving these layered, interconnected challenges requires governments armed with forward-thinking strategic foresight, the capacity to execute policies across political cycles and enduring public trust. The CPC's century-long journey of self-reform and more than seven decades of state governance furnish a well-documented, real-world paradigm for developing countries to craft localized solutions to shared developmental tribulations.

Africa's long-term developmental destiny will ultimately be sculpted by African peoples and indigenous African leadership. Even so, rigorous comparative research into proven successful developmental pathways yields tangible, transformative on-the-ground outcomes. The CPC's 105-year legacy crystallizes an immutable truth: Resilient, high-performance state institutions are forged incrementally through unwavering discipline, sustained capacity cultivation, ironclad accountability, adaptive institutional reform and people-centered conviction. As Global South countries carve out their own sovereign paths to modernization, the CPC's century of self-improvement and decades of governance practice will remain an indispensable touchstone for scholarly inquiry, high-level policy deliberation and thoughtful localized adaptation for generations to come.

The author is a pan-Africanist researcher and a political commentator based in Gweru, Zimbabwe. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

QIN XIAO AND WU WENFENG

A road out of middle-income trap

China's all-round advancement paves its way toward high-income status

On July 1, the World Bank updated its global income classifications for fiscal year 2027, setting the high-income threshold at $14,375 based on gross national income per capita, calculated using the Atlas method. With a GNI per capita of $14,230, China remains in the upper-middle-income category, just $145 below the threshold. The question facing China is no longer whether it can reach high-income status, but how — and more importantly, whether — it can avoid the stagnation that has trapped so many economies.



Qin Xiao



Wu Wenfeng

The odds are sobering. Since 1990, only 34 middle-income economies have managed to shift to high-income status. The rest remained trapped in what economists describe as the "middle-income trap" — a stage where economies lose their advantage in low-cost manufacturing but have not yet developed the technological capabilities needed to rival advanced economies. Escaping this trap requires more than capital accumulation; it demands a fundamental transition from imitation to innovation.

The Republic of Korea's economic transformation provides a valuable reference. In 1960, its GNI per capita was roughly $1,200; by 2024, it had soared to $33,000. The World Development Report 2024 summarized the country's success through a "3i strategy": investment, infusion, and, most crucially, innovation. Samsung's evolution — from its early trading business in noodles and groceries in the 1930s to a television manufacturer in the 1970s, and eventually to a leading global manufacturer of consumer electronics and semiconductors — mirrors the country's broader shift from a technology adopter to a frontier innovator. The lesson is clear: technology adoption is a bridge, but indigenous innovation is the destination.

China is now traversing a similar bridge, but with a scale that makes its economic transformation unprecedented.

Three structural advantages give China a solid foundation for breaking through the middle-income barrier.

First, China has built one of the world's largest innovation ecosystems. In 2025, China's research and development expenditure reached 3.93 trillion yuan ($580.67 billion), equivalent to 2.8 percent of its GDP — up from 0.57 percent in 1995. In September 2025, the World Intellectual Property Organization ranked China 10th globally in its Global Innovation Index, first among all upper-middle-income economies. China leads the world in patent filings and hosts 24 of the world's top 100 innovation clusters, with Shenzhen-Hong Kong-Guangzhou topping the global rankings.

These achievements are increasingly reflected in industrial competitiveness. In 2025, it was estimated that China produced nearly 75 percent of the world's electric vehicles. Companies such as CATL and BYD have become major players in the global battery and EV markets. This represents more than low-cost assembly; it reflects high-value engineering capabilities, supply chain integration and continuous technological improvement.

Second, China is converting its demographic dividend into a talent dividend. In 2025, a record 12.22 million students graduated from Chinese universities, including over 5 million with degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. New entrants to the workforce now receive an average of 14 years of education. Roughly half of the world's top AI researchers are now trained in Chinese universities. This large pool of engineers and researchers provides the foundation for companies such as Huawei to continue investing in areas including 5G, AI and chip design despite external pressures. Innovation at the frontier is fundamentally a human-capital game. China is now producing that human capital at a scale no other country can match.



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

Third, China's enormous domestic market provides a unique testing ground for innovation. With a population of 1.4 billion, China can commercialize new technologies faster than other countries. When BYD rolls out a new battery, it has a domestic market larger than the European Union in which to refine it. When ByteDance deploys new AI features, it can reach hundreds of millions of users in weeks. This "scale-to-learn" advantage creates a self-reinforcing cycle: larger user bases generate more data, improved data enhances products and better products attract more users.

However, these advantages alone do not guarantee success. History shows that moving from middle-income to high-income status remains a difficult transition. China faces unique challenges that the ROK, and many other economies before it, never had to confront.

First, unparalleled scale and complexity. With 1.4 billion people, China must navigate a landscape where world-leading innovation clusters such as Shenzhen and Shanghai coexist with inland provinces still moving through later stages of industrialization. Coordinating resources across such vast geographic, economic, and developmental diversity is a governance challenge without precedent.

Second, strong geopolitical headwinds. China's transition toward high-income status is taking place amid profound changes in the global economy. Rising geopolitical tensions, tighter restrictions on advanced semiconductors, AI chips and other cutting-edge technologies, and increasing fragmentation in global supply chains have made technological upgrading more difficult. China is therefore pursuing innovation under external conditions markedly different from those faced by many economies during earlier periods of industrialization.

Third, deep regional disparities. China's east-west gap, urban-rural divide, and uneven distribution of human capital mean that innovation in coastal clusters cannot automatically spread across such a diverse economy. Building an integrated national innovation system requires sustained efforts to narrow these internal divides.

Yet it is precisely because of these constraints that China's innovation achievements carry unique global significance. Having overcome obstacles of scale, geopolitical isolation and internal divergence, China's technological breakthroughs are now generating global public goods. In biotechnology, BGI Genomics has driven down gene sequencing costs by orders of magnitude, making precision medicine accessible across the developing world. In quantum computing, the University of Science and Technology of China has achieved milestones that accelerate global research collaboration. In commercial spaceflight, companies such as i-Space and Galactic Energy are developing reusable rockets that promise to lower satellite launch costs for nations previously priced out of the space economy. These reflect frontier research and deep engineering capabilities at a scale no other nation can match.

What truly distinguishes China is its deliberate choice to share these advances rather than hoard them. At the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai, China reaffirmed its commitment to open-source innovation and announced a series of measures to strengthen AI capacity in developing countries, ensuring the Global South is not left behind in the AI revolution. This was a statement of principle by a responsible major power: technological progress must serve all of humanity, not just a privileged few.

China backed this pledge with concrete action. It committed to training 5,000 AI professionals from developing countries over five years, investing in local capacity rather than extracting talent. It proposed a global AI governance framework emphasizing data sovereignty and ethical standards, offering an inclusive alternative to Western-centric models that often marginalize emerging economies. Platforms such as Baidu's PaddlePaddle and Alibaba's ModelScope are lowering technical barriers by giving developers access to AI frameworks, models and development tools, creating more opportunities for developers in emerging markets to participate in the global AI ecosystem.

By placing inclusive development at the heart of its innovation strategy, China is demonstrating that rising powers can — and should — shoulder global responsibility for shared prosperity.

It demonstrates how demographic mass can be converted into deep pools of human capital, how innovation ecosystems can be nurtured across multiple tiers of cities, and how technological leadership can be wielded as a global public good rather than a zero-sum competitive weapon. As many nations continue their own development journeys, China's transition toward a high-income economy may provide a valuable reference for overcoming structural challenges and pursuing shared prosperity.

Qin Xiao is an associate professor of finance at the Antai College of Economics and Management at Shanghai Jiao Tong University. Wu Wenfeng is a professor of finance at the Antai College of Economics and Management and the director of the Division for Development Liberal Arts at Shanghai Jiao Tong University. The authors contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:32 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:32 PM

BUSINESS

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

Opportunity 2.0 helping stimulate FDI

Foreign-invested firms in country behind 7.39t yuan in H1 two-way trade

By **ZHONG NAN**
zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

"China Opportunity 2.0" is emerging as a new driver of the country's efforts to attract investment from around the world as foreign firms deepen their commitment to the Chinese market and expand long-term capital inflows, said business executives.

China Opportunity 2.0 refers to a new phase of China's development characterized by higher-standard opening-up, technological innovation and high-quality growth.

For foreign enterprises, it spans opportunities ranging from rapid infrastructure development to breakthroughs in artificial intelligence and advanced manufacturing, they said.

Noting that China Opportunity 2.0 is reflected in the country's vast market, rapid industrial upgrades, deep talent pool and innovation ecosystem, Chen Pu, chief Asia officer of Syensqo, said the Belgian chemical manufacturer believes that continuous improvements in China's industrial ecosystem — including stronger supply chains, enhanced manufacturing capabilities and faster development across entire value chains — are creating new business opportunities.

In response, Syensqo has expanded its footprint in China with five manufacturing sites and a major research and innovation center in Shanghai, the group's third-largest worldwide.

Stefan Floeck, ABB's division president of IEC Low Voltage Motors, said China will remain central to the Swedish-Swiss tech company's global motor business as the country's industrial upgrading and green transition continue to drive demand for more energy-efficient equipment.

"To capture these opportunities, we will continue investing in local research and development, manufacturing and supply chains to better serve Chinese customers while reinforcing China as an innovation hub and export base within the company's global network," said Floeck.

ABB's low-voltage motor business has invested more than 150 million yuan ($22.12 million) in recent years to upgrade its Shanghai manufacturing base, including R&D testing laboratories and production lines. Its domestic supply chain also supports exports from China to markets worldwide.

Against this backdrop, foreign-invested businesses in China generated 7.39 trillion yuan in imports and exports in the first half, up 17.1 percent year-on-year, marking the ninth consecutive quarter of growth, said the General Administration of Customs.

Pushing back against the so-called "China Shock 2.0" narrative — which portrays China's development as a disruption to the global economy — Zhao Ping, head of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade's academy, said foreign firms are expanding their presence in China because the country's integrated industrial ecosystem remains difficult for any other economy to replicate.

China further strengthened its efforts to attract foreign investment in June by unveiling a 15-point action plan featuring measures to expand market access, facilitate investment, strengthen promotion and services, and improve foreign capital management to stabilize and upgrade foreign investment.

The plan prioritizes expanding market access in services, finance and pharmaceuticals, among other sectors, while streamlining processes for cross-border mergers and acquisitions, data flows and domestic reinvestment by foreign firms.

That confidence is also reflected in foreign direct investment data. FDI in China's high-tech sector expanded 19.4 percent year-on-year to 130.14 billion yuan in the first five months. The sector accounted for 39.8 percent of the nation's total FDI, up 9.4 percentage points from the same period last year, said the Ministry of Commerce.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period, foreign-invested companies in China generated 262.7 trillion yuan in operating revenue and 21.4 trillion yuan in profits, with both indicators recording average annual growth of around 5 percent. They employed more than 30 million people on average each year during this period, the ministry added.

Reaching out to children



Employees from Sichuan Poly Property Services visit children in Yangma town in Jianyang, Sichuan province, whose parents have left to work in cities, delivering science-themed books and showing the children they care about them. DONG ZIWEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Briefly

Intelligent computing capacity grows

China's intelligent computing capacity reached 2,185 EFLOPS by the end of June this year, reflecting the country's rapid expansion of artificial intelligence infrastructure, official data showed. The overall utilization rate of computing facilities nationwide stood at 71.4 percent, according to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

Export of integrated circuits expands

Strong global demand for artificial intelligence has boosted China's integrated circuit exports, with the export value of integrated circuit products denominated in yuan increasing 88.7 percent year-on-year in the first half of the year, official data showed.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY



An employee arranges gold products at a jewelry shop in Lianyungang, Jiangsu province.
WANG CHUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Gold preparing to enter digital era

By **HU YUMENG** and **MA JINGNA** in Lanzhou

Gold may soon become as easy to use as money in a digital wallet, as younger investors embrace technology and financial markets reshape one of the world's oldest safe-haven assets.

That is the vision of David Tait, chief executive officer of the World Gold Council, who believes digital innovation will change not only how people invest in gold, but also how the precious metal functions within the global financial system. He made the remarks during an international gold conference held recently in Lanzhou, Gansu province.

Gansu, home to China's second-largest gold reserves, generated about 180 billion yuan ($26.6 billion) in industrial output in its gold sector last year.

The province is seeking to move beyond resource extraction toward higher-value development. "We will leverage this conference as an opportunity to deepen the integration of resource advantages, enterprise strengths and market vitality, and accelerate the high-end, intelligent, green and secure development of the gold industry," Governor Ren Zhenhe said at the opening ceremony.

Beyond advancing the industry's high-quality development, Tait believes the next major transformation will come from the market itself.

"The biggest transformation is not only where gold is mined, but how it is owned, traded and used," he said. "The most important thing will be the ability to use a digital form of gold in everybody's wallet."

He believes digitalization will make gold easier to buy, trade and use as collateral, allowing a broader range of institutional investors, including pension funds, insurers and asset managers, to incorporate gold into diversified portfolios.

To support that transition, the WGC is advancing its Gold247 initiative, which aims to connect the physical gold market with digital financial infrastructure. The initiative includes a global database for responsibly sourced gold and a "gold-as-a-service" platform designed to simplify the launch and adoption of digital gold products.

Tait expects younger investors to become one of the biggest drivers of that transformation.

As wealth is passed from older to younger generations, he said, tech-savvy consumers are increasingly comfortable managing investments through smartphones rather than buying traditional gold bars or jewelry.

"They just click and buy. That's the future," he said.

Although physical bars and coins will remain an important part of the market, trusted digital products backed by physical gold are likely to become increasingly attractive because they are easier to access, trade and integrate into broader investment portfolios.

Tait also believes China is well positioned to play a larger role in shaping the global gold market.

He described the Shanghai Gold Exchange as a model with international relevance and said closer coordination between Shanghai and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region could strengthen global gold trading and custody services while supporting the internationalization of China's gold market.

That vision was echoed throughout the conference. Industry leaders called for closer cooperation in mineral exploration, technological innovation, green development and financial services, while expanding Belt and Road partnerships to build a more resilient, sustainable and internationally connected gold industry.

As the industry enters the digital era, Tait believes China's growing influence, from market infrastructure to responsible sourcing, will help shape the next phase of global gold development.

Wu Yuexuan contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at huyumeng@chinadaily.com.cn

Compliance in spotlight after EC fine

By **LI JIAYING** in Beijing and **ZHANG ZHOUXIANG** in Brussels

The European Commission's record fine against AliExpress highlights the rising need for compliance for Chinese cross-border e-commerce companies, prompting industry experts to call for stronger product certification, brand protection and localized operations in Europe.

Their comments came as Alibaba-owned cross-border e-commerce platform AliExpress said on Monday that it disagreed with the EC's decision to impose a record 550 million euros ($628.1 million) fine after the regulator accused it of failing to adequately address the sale of illegal, unsafe and counterfeit products.

"We disagree with the decision and the disproportionate fine," AliExpress said, adding that the penalty did not fully reflect its established compliance framework or the significant improvements it had proactively introduced.

The company said it was carefully reviewing the decision and considering all available options.

The move is in response to the EC's earlier financial penalty, saying that AliExpress had breached its obligations under the Digital Services Act, or DSA, by failing to properly assess the risks linked to illegal, unsafe and counterfeit products on its platform and take effective measures to reduce their spread.

Against this backdrop, Jiang Han, a senior researcher at market consultancy Pangoal, said Chinese merchants selling overseas should immediately rebuild their product compliance systems and treat compliance as a minimum requirement for remaining in the market.

Specifically, merchants should review key qualifications, including CE certification and energy-efficiency labels, ensure testing reports are issued by certified institutions and maintain complete, traceable brand-authorization records to prevent infringement risks, Jiang said.

"Under intense regulatory pressure, compliance is no longer an advantage; it is the only ticket to the European market," he said.

The analyst added that sellers should also accelerate localization and brand building while reshaping their cost and profit models as responsive moves.

"Over the longer term, sellers must move away from price-based competition, raise product value and brand premiums to absorb compliance costs, and shift from merely entering overseas markets to establishing a lasting local presence," Jiang said.

The penalty is the largest imposed since the DSA took full effect and marks the EC's third known fine under the law. The regulator previously fined social media platform X 120 million euros and Chinese cross-border e-commerce platform Temu 200 million euros.

In an exclusive statement to China Daily, the China Chamber of Commerce to the EU said it took note of the European Commission's decision concerning AliExpress under the Digital Services Act.

"We respect the EU's right to regulate its digital market, but we are concerned that enforcement measures should be conducted in a fair, transparent, and proportionate manner, with full consideration given to companies' compliance efforts and legitimate rights.

"CCCEU hopes the European Commission will ensure that DSA enforcement provides legal certainty and a predictable business environment for all market participants, including Chinese companies operating in Europe."

Jian Junbo, deputy director of the Center for China-Europe Relations at Fudan University's Institute of International Studies, said the case highlights the European Union's increasingly stringent approach to digital regulation.

The bloc has made the DSA an important regulatory tool for major digital platforms, Jian said, adding that the fine represents not only a financial penalty, but also a signal that compliance costs in the European market are likely to continue rising. At the same time, Jian questioned whether such intensive regulation ultimately benefits innovation. While strict enforcement may improve oversight, he said it could also increase compliance burdens for both foreign and European technology companies, potentially affecting their long-term growth and capacity to innovate.

AliExpress has been ordered to submit a corrective action plan by Oct 20. The EC will assess the proposed measures after receiving the plan, while continued non-compliance could expose the platform to further penalties.

Contact the writers at lijiaying@chinadaily.com.cn

Shanghai banks on emerging sectors

By **SHI JING** in Shanghai
shijing@chinadaily.com.cn

Shanghai's forward-looking development in emerging technologies and industrial resilience built up over time have helped the city achieve strong economic growth in the first half, which is especially notable amid rising market complexities and a changing global landscape, said experts.

Shanghai's GDP hit 2.79 trillion yuan ($412 billion) in the first half, up 5.6 percent year-on-year at constant prices, said the municipal statistics bureau on Monday.

This growth rate is not only higher than the national average, but also exceeds the municipality's annual GDP growth in 2024 and 2025, which came at 5 percent and 5.4 percent, respectively.

Zeng Gang, chief expert and director of the Shanghai Institution for Finance & Development, described Shanghai's first-half economic performance as "rock-solid" both in terms of quality and efficiency. It was not just one sector driving the numbers, but rather the combined result of industrial upgrading, investment growth and a surge in foreign trade, Zeng said.

Shanghai is well-positioned to achieve its full-year growth target amid the ongoing optimization of its economic structure and the accelerated transformation from old to new growth engines, he added.

Shanghai's higher level of opening-up, its success in getting foreign firms to set up regional headquarters, alongside its rich innovation resources and precise economic stimulus packages have been translated into the city's higher innovation efficiency and stronger economic resilience, said Zhan Yubo, deputy director for the Institute of Economics at Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences.

While the added value of primary and secondary industry sectors rose by 0.9 percent and 4.7 percent, respectively, the tertiary sector surged 5.9 percent from a year earlier, further consolidating its role as a major economic driver for Shanghai.

Robust growth of the modern services sector encompassing finance, information transmission, software, information technology, leasing and business services carried the tertiary sector's added value to over 2.2 trillion yuan. Under closer scrutiny, the information transmission, software and information technology services sector spiked 9.1 percent year-on-year, mainly driven by the strong growth in sub-sectors such as artificial intelligence, integrated circuit design and platform enterprises.

The World AI Conference held in Shanghai from Friday to Monday served as solid proof, with the exhibition area reaching a record high of over 100,000 square meters.

In 2025, the industrial value of AI enterprises with a minimum annual sales revenue of 20 million yuan each totaled 600 billion yuan, representing a year-on-year spike of 39.5 percent.

AI has been defined as one of the three pioneering industries in Shanghai, along with integrated circuits and biomedicine. The output value of the three industries grew by 14.5 percent year-on-year in the first six months, with IC and AI manufacturing each reporting an annual growth rate of 20 percent.

The output value of strategic emerging industries grew 7.7 percent year-on-year in the first half. Among these, output value for new energy vehicles spiked by 33.9 percent, new energy by 20.6 percent and high-end equipment by 9.3 percent. Demand for products like satellites, rockets, high-end ships and domestically produced large aircraft remained strong, said the municipal statistics bureau.

All these results can be largely attributed to Shanghai's forward-looking strategies for new quality productive forces. Full-chain breakthroughs in IC and development of large AI models have all sped up in the city, said Ma Haiqian, vice-president of the Shanghai Academy of Development and Reform.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:32 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:32 PM

Q&A WITH CEO

Editor's note: *After the release of China's first-half economic data, China Daily invited chief executives and senior leaders from key multinational companies to share their perspectives on the world's second-largest economy. Their insights go beyond short-term growth, offering a closer look at the evolving "China Opportunity 2.0" narrative amid ongoing debate over the so-called "China Shock 2.0".*

China's dynamic expansion opportunities



Kilian Aviles
Executive vice-president of Dekra Group and head of Asia-Pacific region



Andre Musto
Managing director and general manager of Merck Healthcare China



Willie Tan
CEO of Skechers China, South Korea and Southeast Asia



Joe Bao
President of Kone China

Q1 Many multinational companies in recent years continue to expand their investment and operations in China, suggesting that "China Opportunity 2.0" is increasingly offsetting the "China Shock 2.0" narrative. What developments or evidence best demonstrate that China is creating new opportunities for global businesses rather than posing a "shock"?

AVILES: From Dekra's decades-long on-the-ground presence and continuous investment expansion in China, the so-called "China Shock 2.0" narrative is fundamentally misplaced and decoupled from market realities. What we are witnessing is a fully mature, upgraded "China Opportunity 2.0" that delivers structural, long-term value for global enterprises, far outweighing perceived market risks. The most compelling evidence lies in the industry upgrading and high-value industrial ecosystem iteration taking place across the country. China has evolved into a global hub for high-end manufacturing, new energy, intelligent connected vehicles, digital economy and green low-carbon industries. This industrial upgrade has created entirely new service and cooperation tracks for multinational companies.

MUSTO: For Merck, we view China as an innovation powerhouse, not just a market. The evidence for "China Opportunity 2.0" is compelling. An aging population, a rising burden of chronic diseases, and the government's continued investment in and commitment to healthcare are creating real, long-term demand. What gives us particular confidence is the country's growing role in co-developing global innovation, all pointing to a maturing ecosystem that rewards serious, long-term partners. At Merck, we are proud to be exactly that kind of partner. Our dual-engine strategy combines our internal R&D with external innovation partnerships. Our aim is clear: to deliver more medicines to more patients, faster.

TAN: From Skechers' on-the-ground experience in China, we can clearly feel the tangible new market opportunities brought by China's development. Our brand has rooted itself in the Chinese mainland market for nearly two decades, always following the development philosophy of "In China, For China, With China". We keep increasing long-term fixed-asset investment in the country as a concrete response to China's development dividends. We have invested over 4.2 billion yuan ($621 million) to build our exclusive China logistics center in Taicang, Jiangsu province, expanded local R&D and livestreaming operation bases in Dongguan, Guangdong province, and realized localized production for more than 90 percent of products sold in China. Consumption upgrading focused on health and fitness brought by China's domestic demand expansion has created stable growth space for our comfort-oriented sportswear products. All these practical layouts and operational gains prove the real, long-term value of "China Opportunity 2.0" for Skechers.

BAO: From Kone's perspective, one of the clearest signs is that China is not only a major market, but a critical part of Kone's global manufacturing and innovation network. We operate our largest manufacturing facility in China, together with our largest R&D center outside Finland. Today, China is not only serving its domestic market, but also acting as a key export base, with products shipped to more than 100 countries and regions around the world. Equally important, our supply chain is highly localized and deeply integrated into the Chinese ecosystem, with 99 percent of components sourced locally. This enables us to combine global quality standards with local speed, flexibility and resilience. For a multinational company, that reflects a business environment with real industrial depth and operating efficiency.

Q2 China's economy has demonstrated strong resilience so far this year, supported by resilient exports, solid industrial production and continued strength in high-tech manufacturing. How would you assess China's overall economic performance so far this year? Looking ahead, what do you see as the key drivers supporting China's growth in the second half?

AVILES: Overall, China's economic performance this year has been remarkably resilient, structurally optimized and quality-focused, showing strong anti-risk capability and endogenous growth momentum amid global economic volatility and sluggish external demand. The steady growth of industrial production, robust export performance and outstanding high-tech manufacturing development are not short-term sporadic gains, but concrete results of sustained industrial transformation and policy support. From Dekra's frontline operational view, consistent rising demand for testing and certification services for electric vehicles, energy storage and smart equipment clearly mirrors the vitality of China's emerging industries.

MUSTO: From where we stand as a science and technology company with deep roots in China, the resilience of China's economy this year has been both notable and — frankly — not surprising to those of us who have been here for the long term. China is our second-largest country market worldwide, and we have been here for more than 90 years. The fundamentals driving our confidence in the second half are clear: strong unmet patient need, a policy environment that increasingly rewards innovation, and a local ecosystem that is maturing fast in science, speed, and execution. What excites us most is that China is no longer just a major healthcare market — it is becoming a global innovation engine. China now represents around 30 percent of the global innovative drug research and development pipeline. This is a country that is shaping the future of healthcare, not just consuming it, and Merck intends to grow with it.

TAN: Amid a complex and volatile global environment, China's economy this year has demonstrated strong structural resilience overall. Three core growth drivers will continue to support the economic upturn in the second half. First, the full release of domestic demand potential: policies to expand domestic demand are continuing to boost consumer confidence, and growing health awareness is driving sports consumption — the professional sports segment is also a key area of our focus. Second, new quality productive forces represented by artificial intelligence and digitalization: industrial digitalization, smart supply chains and big-data operations are enhancing overall efficiency. Skechers is fully deploying AI-powered digital systems for refined customer operations. Third, high-standard opening-up: policies that optimize the foreign investment environment continue to attract multinationals to deepen their localization efforts.

BAO: From our perspective, China's economy has continued to show resilience, especially in areas supported by industrial capability, localized supply chains and long-term urban development needs. For companies operating in the real economy, this resilience is reflected not only in macro indicators, but also in the market's ability to sustain production, respond to evolving demand and support efficient delivery. Looking ahead, we see modernization as one of the greatest growth opportunities in China. The country has the world's largest installed base of elevators and escalators, and a growing number of these units is now reaching the stage where modernization is needed. This is creating strong long-term demand for safer, smarter and more energy-efficient solutions.

Q3 China's innovation ecosystem has become an increasingly important engine of growth. How do you assess the contribution of artificial intelligence and other frontier technologies to China's productivity growth, industrial upgrading and long-term economic resilience? More broadly, what significance does China's innovation have for global technological progress and the opportunities available to foreign companies?

AVILES: China's innovation ecosystem, led by AI, digital technology and green frontier technologies, has become the core engine of its long-term economic resilience and industrial upgrading, bringing profound and positive changes to productivity improvement and global technological progress. Domestically, frontier technologies are reshaping China's industrial development logic. AI and digital technologies are empowering traditional manufacturing with intelligent transformation, significantly improving production efficiency, product quality and industrial matching accuracy. In high-end manufacturing, new energy and intelligent transportation fields, technological iteration and scenario verification in China's super-large market have accelerated industrial maturity, promoted the upgrading of industrial standards, and greatly enhanced the overall competitiveness of China's industrial chain.

MUSTO: AI and frontier technologies are reshaping how we accelerate innovation — from drug discovery through clinical development to patient services. China possesses a unique strategic advantage: it combines innovation capability with remarkable speed in real-world execution. China's healthcare industry is advancing at a remarkable pace. China speed is not just a phrase — it is a reminder fueling global innovation through the momentum of China's development. The creativity and talent we see here, together with the continued evolution of the regulatory environment, are inspiring. We believe in the potential of China's innovation ecosystem, and we want to be active participants in it. That means co-developing, co-innovating, and building real partnerships with the companies that are defining the future of medicine in China and globally.

TAN: AI and other frontier digital technologies serve as a core pillar for China's industrial upgrading and long-term economic resilience, driving marked efficiency improvements across the entire manufacturing, retail and logistics value chains. For multinational companies, China's mature AI deployment ecosystems, massive consumer data pools and well-developed supportive industrial chains present a unique testing ground for overseas brands to refine their global digital operating models. Skechers is steadily advancing its digital transformation. At this stage, AI is primarily deployed for the production of graphic and short-video marketing materials as well as routine document processing, substantially shortening content delivery lead times. Intelligent upgrades for supply chain management and consumer operations remain an ongoing area of exploration.

BAO: We see the contribution of AI and frontier technologies most clearly in their practical application. A good example is the new Huanggang Port project — a landmark cross-border transport hub in Shenzhen, Guangdong province. Building on our long-term strategy in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, Kone is one of the few companies capable of delivering fully integrated people flow solutions while meeting the distinct regulatory and industry standards of both the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong. For this project, Kone supplied all 184 elevators and escalators, supported by AI-enabled connected services that continuously monitor equipment health and enable predictive maintenance.

Q4 China has placed greater emphasis on expanding domestic demand while pursuing high-standard opening-up. How do you assess these efforts? What new opportunities do they create for multinational companies and global investors?

AVILES: China's drive of expanding domestic demand and advancing high-standard opening-up is highly strategic, targeted and far-sighted. It not only optimizes China's own economic growth structure, but also creates a more open and transparent market environment for global businesses, bringing unprecedented incremental opportunities for multinational investors. The expansion of domestic demand is shifting China's market growth from export-driven to being driven by both domestic and external demand, generating massive high-end market demand. The upgrading of household consumption and the iterative upgrading of industrial investment demand have spawned huge market needs in high-end manufacturing, green environmental protection, digital services, product testing and certification, and intelligent solutions. This allows multinational companies, including Dekra, to deeply participate in the whole industrial chain of local market development, enjoying the dividends of China's consumption upgrade and industrial upgrade.

MUSTO: These efforts reflect China's strategic focus on long-term, sustainable development. High-standard opening-up establishes clear rules, transparent market access and predictable regulatory pathways. Expanding domestic demand is equally critical. China's aging population and rising healthcare spending power mean more patients seeking innovation. That demand is real and growing fast. For multinational companies like Merck, this environment is compelling. We see a market that genuinely welcomes high-quality innovation and is willing to build the infrastructure to support it.

TAN: China's move to expand domestic demand and pursue high-standard opening-up is creating structural opportunities for multinational corporations. The expansion of domestic demand is unlocking the vast potential of the super-sized market, with various consumption-boosting policies raising consumer willingness to spend. Rising demand for health and fitness activities has enabled us to reach more Chinese households with our comfort technology products, offering significant room for brand growth. At the same time, the country's commitment to high-standard opening-up is delivering a fairer, more transparent and predictable business environment, reducing operational uncertainties for foreign companies. For global investors, China offers a unique combination of market scale, innovation capabilities and supply chain integration. We have directly felt the benefits: our direct retail operations continue to grow, and our local partnerships have deepened, reinforcing our confidence in long-term investment.

BAO: From our perspective, these efforts are creating opportunities by expanding demand while also raising expectations for quality, efficiency and service. In our industry, this is especially visible in modernization. As a growing number of China's installed elevators reach the stage where renewal is needed, the opportunity is no longer just about replacing equipment, it is about how to do so with minimal disruption while improving safety, energy efficiency and user experience. As we have said before, the real challenge is not simply replacing equipment. Cities never stop operating, and buildings cannot afford prolonged disruptions. Modernization needs to happen while everyday life continues. That is why execution and delivery models matter as much as technology itself.

Q5 Looking ahead to the second half of the year, what will you be watching most closely as indicators of China's economic resilience, reform progress and long-term growth potential?

AVILES: To evaluate China's economic resilience, reform execution and long-term growth potential in the second half, I will track five core structural indicators closely tied to industrial development trends. First, growth momentum of strategic emerging industries such as new energy storage and intelligent connected vehicles, which shapes China's core industrial competitiveness. Second, implementation progress of high-standard opening-up policies, covering services sector liberalization and cross-border standard mutual recognition, which reflects China's commitment to global collaboration. Third, structural recovery of high-end manufacturing investment and service consumption, the fundamental endogenous growth driver. Fourth, progress in integrating Chinese industry standards with international frameworks. Fifth, tangible results of nationwide digital and carbon-neutral transformation.

MUSTO: Looking at the second half, I'm optimistic about what I'm seeing in China's healthcare transformation. First, the speed of innovation reaching patients continues to accelerate. We're witnessing regulatory frameworks and market dynamics that are enabling faster access. Second, China is building more sophisticated reimbursement frameworks that balance patient access with system sustainability. That's exactly the kind of thoughtful policymaking that supports long-term innovation. Third, China's openness to global partnerships and investment is creating a collaborative ecosystem. The infrastructure for clinical trials, talent attraction and cross-border innovation is maturing rapidly. For Merck, this clarity and progress reinforce our conviction. We're deepening our long-term commitment to China and we want to be active participants in China's healthcare ecosystem.

TAN: In the second half, I will track core indicators across two dimensions to assess economic resilience — reform implementation and long-term growth potential. First, consumption recovery indicators that reflect the resilience of the market foundation: I will monitor foot traffic in national commercial districts and outlet malls, the penetration rate of instant retail nationwide, consumer confidence indices, and sales growth in professional sports and youth-related categories. Only when these segments show steady recovery can we confirm that the domestic demand engine is effectively offsetting external risks. Second, the progress of policy reforms related to opening-up and digital upgrading. This includes the effectiveness of foreign investment support policies, supportive measures for multinational R&D centers, and the pace of industrial digital infrastructure construction.

BAO: One of the things we will watch closely is whether rising demand can continue to be matched by responsive and efficient execution. As China's urban renewal continues to accelerate, consumer needs are becoming increasingly tailored and time-sensitive. In that context, resilience is reflected not only in demand itself, but also in how quickly companies can respond and deliver. That is why supply chain responsiveness is an important indicator for us. Last year, we established a smart logistics and assembly center in Shenzhen to better serve the markets in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. We are already seeing clear improvements in delivery efficiency. We will also continue to watch whether policy support for urban renewal and equipment renewal translates into concrete project execution.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:32 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:32 PM

CHINA

The Party's journey

A visitor explores an exhibition titled *The People and the Monument: Classic Fine Art Works in the National Museum of China Collection* in Beijing on Monday. Open to the public since July 14, the exhibition features 20 revolutionary-themed paintings and 33 sculptures, vividly portraying the enduring bond between the Communist Party of China and the people, and showcasing the Party's journey through revolution and nation-building toward a new era.

DENG WEI / FOR CHINA DAILY



China to strengthen integrated transport network by 2030

Infrastructure upgrade and expansion to also accelerate logistics development

By LUO WANGSHU
luowangshu@chinadaily.com.cn

China plans to put 95 percent of the planned backbone of its national integrated transport network in place by 2030, up from 91 percent at present, as it shifts its focus from rapid network expansion toward better connectivity, efficiency and resilience, officials said at a news conference in Beijing on Tuesday.

During the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30), the country will continue improving railway, highway, waterway, civil aviation, postal and express delivery infrastructure while accelerating the development of a more integrated logistics network.

"Building major cross-regional and cross-river corridors is no longer simply about spreading out projects or expanding construction," Vice-Minister of Transport Xu Chengguang said. "It is about optimizing the spatial layout, opening up the arteries of economic circulation and promoting more balanced regional development."

By 2030, China plans to carry out infrastructure renewal and digital transformation across about 80,000 kilometers of its transport network, build or renovate 500,000 km of rural roads and improve intermodal connections at around 1,000 major freight hubs and terminals to make cargo transfers among railways, highways, waterways and airports more efficient.

Major corridor projects will include coastal high-speed railways, upgraded highways along the land borders and coastline, transport links along the Yangtze River and new cross-river, cross-sea and cross-bay connections. Xu said the coastal railway and major border and coastal highways will form a "golden outer ring" linking border regions and the coastline, supporting tourism, regional development and goods transportation.

China will also strengthen the resilience of international supply chains by expanding global shipping routes, improving air cargo links with major overseas hubs and enhancing key logistics facilities, including overseas ports, to provide businesses with more transport options and reduce reliance on any single route or hub.

The railway sector will increasingly shift its focus from expanding the network to improving quality, capacity and integration.

"China has built the world's largest high-speed railway network and an advanced conventional railway network," said Wang Qiming, deputy head of the National Railway Administration.

Over the next five years, railway authorities will continue major construction projects while filling network gaps, easing capacity bottlenecks and improving connections between regions, cities and different modes of transport. Safety, digital technologies, low-carbon operations and more efficient freight services will also be priorities.

Civil aviation authorities said international air cargo will be a key focus during the next five years as demand grows from cross-border e-commerce, advanced manufacturing and other time-sensitive industries.

Han Jun, deputy head of the Civil Aviation Administration of China, said the country will build an air cargo system that is "better connected, diversified, resilient, safe and reliable".

China plans to expand freight links with established and emerging markets, improve coordination between dedicated cargo aircraft and belly cargo capacity on passenger flights and strengthen cargo services at major aviation hubs in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Chengdu.

Airport cargo terminals, aircraft stands and road and rail links will be upgraded to speed up transfers, while electronic waybills, digital logistics platforms and smoother multimodal transport will be promoted. China's air cargo and mail volume exceeded 10 million metric tons for the first time in 2025, including 4.4 million tons on international routes.

The postal and express delivery sector will strengthen a nationwide network of major sorting, warehousing and distribution hubs and improve connections with airports, railway freight terminals and logistics centers.

"Express delivery has become the lifeblood of urban circulation," said Chen Kai, deputy head of the State Post Bureau. By 2030, the sector aims to expand rural delivery coverage, improve international parcel services and digitally upgrade sorting centers, warehouses and cold-chain facilities to better support manufacturing, agriculture, retail and cross-border trade.

Xu said China invested 18.8 trillion yuan ($2.78 trillion) in transport fixed assets during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25), the largest investment and fastest network expansion in any five-year period since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. The country's comprehensive transport network now exceeds 6 million km, providing the foundation for a new stage focused on improving connectivity, efficiency and resilience rather than expansion alone.

Dog-cloning innovation cheaper, more efficient

By CHEN MEILING
chenmeiling@chinadaily.com.cn



The somatic cell-cloned dog and cat. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

A research team in Shaanxi province has developed a new dog-cloning method that addresses a key technical bottleneck facing similar research worldwide, paving the way for a canine cloning system with greater stability, lower costs and improved compliance with animal welfare standards.

About one month after successfully cloning a male dog and a male cat, Wang Yongsheng, a professor at the College of Veterinary Medicine of Northwest A&F University in Yangling, Shaanxi province, said both animals are healthy and have been vaccinated. They are the first somatic cell-cloned cat and dog born in Northwest China.

Wang, who leads the project, said only China, South Korea and the United States have mastered mature dog-cloning technology, but the procedure remains difficult because of a high failure rate.

A major challenge is obtaining sufficient high-quality canine oocytes. Unlike many other animals, female dogs ovulate immature oocytes that must remain in the oviduct for two to three days before maturing. As a result, reliably obtaining mature oocytes suitable for somatic cell nuclear transfer has long limited cloning efficiency.

Conventional methods also rely on dedicated oocyte donor dogs or on collecting oocytes at specific stages of the reproductive cycle, resulting in low success rates, high costs and concerns over animal welfare.

To overcome these problems, Wang's team collects ovarian tissue discarded after routine sterilization surgeries at pet hospitals. Oocytes are isolated from the tissue and cultured in vitro for two to three days until they mature. Their nuclei are then removed and replaced with the nucleus of a somatic cell taken from the dog to be cloned. After an electric pulse fuses and activates the reconstructed embryo, it is transferred into the uterus of a surrogate dog. The entire cloning process takes at least three to four months.

"Ovarian tissues removed during pet sterilization surgeries are normally disposed of as medical waste, but they still contain abundant follicles and oocytes at different developmental stages," Wang said.

"Through standardized collection, transportation, follicle isolation and in vitro maturation, we can transform these discarded tissues into valuable biological resources for scientific research and technological development."

The team is able to collect dozens of ovaries every day, providing a stable source of research materials.

The new approach is expected to reduce the number of dedicated oocyte donor animals by more than 80 percent, lowering research costs while improving the ethical sustainability and public acceptance of cloning, Wang said.

The researchers also developed a new in vitro maturation system that mimics the environment of the canine oviduct. Compared with conventional methods, the maturation rate of canine oocytes increased by 5 to 10 percentage points, the cleavage rate of cloned embryos rose by about 5 percentage points, and blastocyst formation improved steadily. Overall, the production efficiency of early-stage cloned embryos increased by 10 percent to 15 percent.

The team also adopted a minimally invasive embryo-transfer technique, reducing the surgical incision by half to minimize trauma to surrogate dogs.

According to Wang, the technology can produce laboratory dogs and cats with highly consistent genetic backgrounds, reducing experimental variation caused by individual differences. Such animals are valuable for studying neurological diseases, tumors, cardiovascular disorders and inherited metabolic diseases, as well as for evaluating the safety of new pharmaceuticals.

The technology may also meet demand from pet owners wishing to clone deceased companion animals. However, Wang emphasized that cloning does not bring a pet back to life.

"A clone is a new life," he said. Although a cloned animal shares more than 95 percent physical similarity with the original, differences in coat color, markings, health, personality and behavior can still develop because of environmental influences, much like identical twins.

The cloning system was jointly developed by Northwest A&F University, the Laboratory Animal Center of Xi'an Jiaotong University and Yuanchu (Xi'an) Biotechnology.

Young delegates call for stronger Sino-US relations

By LI HONGYANG
lihongyang@chinadaily.com.cn

Young delegates from China and the United States called for building sincere friendships and deepening mutual learning among civilizations as a foundation for stronger bilateral ties at a youth forum held at Peking University last week.

The "Zhi-Xing China: US-China Youth Dialogue" brought together more than 100 students from institutions including Columbia University, Brown University, Peking University and Beijing Normal University.

Centered on mutual learning among civilizations, science and technology cooperation and sustainable development, the forum aimed to foster greater understanding and collaboration between young people from the two countries.

Zhao Huchen, a Chinese student at Peking University, said: "We understand clearly that the hope of US-China relations lies in the people, and its future rests with the youth.

"In the face of a rapidly evolving transformation unseen in a century and an era where the destinies of humanity are deeply intertwined, we engaged in candid dialogue and met each other halfway. In the name of youth, we call upon the young people of both countries to bravely shoulder the historical mission and join hands to create a better future," he said.

Livia Maria Ilasz, a US student from the University of Rochester, said: "We advocate respect for the diversity of global civilizations and the building of shared values while seeking consensus and preserving differences. We urge deeper people-to-people exchanges between young Chinese and Americans, enabling youth from both sides to understand each other through dialogue and to eliminate prejudice through interaction."

Cian Hanrahan, a US student studying at Peking University, said: "Today, we have been reminded that mutual understanding is not a distant ideal. It happens in the conversations we share with friends from different backgrounds and the words we learn in another language, and in the traditions we take the time to understand."

Yu Yang, deputy secretary-general of the China Education Association for International Exchange, told the forum that over the past two years, more than 32,000 young Americans have visited China under the Young Envoys Scholarship program, which is mainly coordinated by the association.

Their visits have taken them to nearly 200 Chinese cities and involved more than 1,000 Chinese schools and institutions.

"In the current international situation, deepening youth exchanges and mutual understanding between China and the US is of great significance," Yu said.

Fang Fang, vice-president of Peking University, described youth exchanges as "the most dynamic and promising component of US-China relations".

"Peking University will continue to build bridges, provide academic and resource support, and help young people from both countries become inheritors of US-China friendship, pioneers of practical cooperation, and participants in global governance," he said.

Written admissions



Calligraphers craft handwritten admissions letters at Shaanxi Normal University in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, on Tuesday. The university has upheld the tradition of handwritten admission letters for 20 years since 2007. This year, 10 senior calligraphy masters, averaging over 72 years old, participated, with the oldest being 84 and four having contributed for more than a decade. QIAN GUANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

All 11 suspects caught in Nanjing's $4m gold heist

By YANG ZEKUN
yangzekun@chinadaily.com.cn

Police have arrested all 11 suspects and recovered the entire cache of 27 kilograms of gold stolen from a luxury goods store in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, in what authorities described as China's largest gold theft by value.

The 37 stolen gold items were worth more than 27 million yuan ($4 million), Nanjing police said.

The theft occurred in the early hours of May 16 at a store in Jiangning district. Investigators found climbing marks near a second-floor window, although the store's doors remained locked and the keys to the display counters appeared undisturbed.

Police said a suspect surnamed Tong entered the store through the window at about 1 am and went directly to the gold counter. He filled a backpack with gold bars and other items but left nearby watches and other luxury goods untouched.

Investigators later found that several people had repeatedly visited the store to inspect the premises in the month before the theft. They identified another suspect, surnamed Wang, as the alleged organizer.

According to police, Wang had studied the store's layout and surveillance system in advance. On the night of the theft, he allegedly disabled nearly 80 surveillance camera feeds and erased stored footage before flying to Bangkok, Thailand, later that day.

After the theft, Tong left part of the stolen gold in a vehicle arranged by Wang before fleeing south in a ride-hailing vehicle.

Police examined 2,273 vehicles before determining that Tong had boarded a car near a ring expressway at about 5 am on May 16, said Han Ting, head of the criminal investigation brigade of the Jiangning branch of the Nanjing public security bureau.

Tong repeatedly changed his destination during the journey and arrived in Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, at about 9 pm on May 17, Han said.

The driver later told police that Tong appeared nervous and barely slept during the more than 2,000-kilometer journey. Unable to pay the fare of more than 7,000 yuan in cash, Tong broke off part of a gold piece and gave it to the driver as payment.

Investigators determined that Tong was heading for Ningming county in Chongzuo, near the China-Vietnam border, in an attempt to leave the country illegally. Nanjing police immediately requested assistance from border authorities in Guangxi.

At about 5:40 am on May 18, officers from the Aidian border police station intercepted a white sedan near a freight yard. Tong was found in the back seat, and police recovered 8.75 kg of gold from him and his backpack.

Meanwhile, Nanjing police activated an international law enforcement cooperation mechanism to pursue Wang. Thai police arrested him in Bangkok on May 23, and he was extradited to Nanjing on May 29. Police recovered another 13.2 kg of gold from his residence.

"The criminal group was highly organized, with clear divisions of responsibility and extensive planning," said Li Dahai, executive deputy director of the Nanjing public security bureau.

Li said investigators worked around the clock for more than half a month. The task force pursued suspects across eight provincial-level regions and conducted cross-border operations through the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism. All 11 suspects were arrested and all of the stolen gold was recovered.

The Nanjing public security bureau recently sent a letter of appreciation to the Chongzuo border management detachment, saying Tong's interception played a crucial role in solving the case.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:32 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:32 PM

Editor's note: *As protection of the planet's flora, fauna and resources becomes increasingly important, China Daily is publishing a series of stories to illustrate the country's commitment to safeguarding the natural world.*



Initiative tasks nation's rural counties with improving infrastructure, expanding green development

Left: Visitors tour Hongshuikou village in Beijing's Mentougou district in June. HOU JIQING/ XINHUA **Right:** A clear river wraps around rural residences in Hecun village of Rongshui, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, on July 15. LONG LINZHI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Report reveals blooms of beautiful countryside

By **HOU LIQIANG**
houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

China has made a solid start in its county-level campaign to build a beautiful countryside, with rural environments improving and green agricultural development advancing steadily, according to a think tank report published on Monday.

The report, titled Progress and Achievements in Building Beautiful Countryside in China, was compiled by the Research Center for Xi Jinping Thought on Ecological Civilization, China Daily and China Environment News.

It said that after the Ministry of Ecology and Environment and eight other national government bodies released an implementation plan for promoting the beautiful countryside initiative in early 2025, China has stepped up coordinated efforts to improve rural living environments, promote low-carbon agriculture and strengthen long-term governance mechanisms.

The plan set out four major tasks and 18 measures, with the goal of raising the proportion of counties that have realized the beautiful countryside initiative to 40 percent by 2027 and essentially accomplishing the program by 2035, the report said.

In order to meet the requirements of the initiative, counties must have good public infrastructure such as roads, public lighting and green spaces, sewage and wastewater treatment facilities, and age-friendly renovations.

By 2025, the national rural domestic sewage treatment rate had reached 55 percent, more than double the level at the end of the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20) period, it said. More than 5,000 large black and odorous rural water bodies on people's doorstep had been basically eliminated, with the treatment rate exceeding 98 percent.

The report said the campaign had benefited some 9.72 million people across 30 provincial-level regions, 860 counties and more than 4,100 administrative villages. It also noted that remediated water bodies were checked through unannounced inspections, remote sensing and water quality monitoring.

Rural waste collection and disposal systems have also been improved. The report said the proportion of administrative villages covered by systems in which villages collect waste, townships transfer it and counties process it has remained above 90 percent.



Visitors are surrounded by blossoming pear flowers at an orchard in Jinzhou, Hebei province, in April. LIANG ZIDONG / XINHUA

Green agricultural development has gained momentum, it said. The comprehensive utilization rate of livestock and poultry manure reached 80.1 percent in 2025, while the comprehensive utilization rate of crop straw stayed above 88 percent. The disposal rate of agricultural film exceeded 85 percent, helping curb plastic pollution in key farming areas.

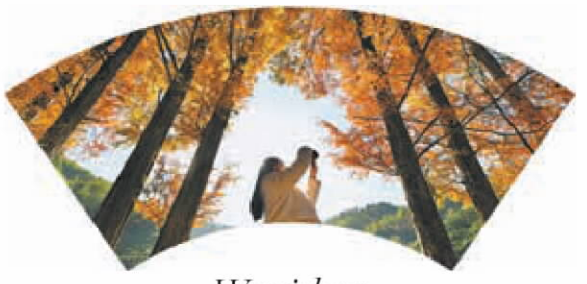
The report also highlighted progress in soil and water conservation. In 2025, China treated 11,500 square kilometers of soil erosion, restored 4,666 erosion gullies in the fertile black soil region of Northeast China and built 634 ecologically clean small watersheds. The national soil and water conservation rate reached 73.09 percent.

County-level implementation has become a key feature of the campaign, the report said. So far, 600 agricultural county-level areas have completed the beautiful countryside initiative, bringing the national completion rate to 20.9 percent. Twenty-three key counties have been selected as pilot areas under the Beautiful China initiative.

The report said public participation and assessment mechanisms are being strengthened. More than 4,000 sites have been evaluated, some 45,000 villagers interviewed and public satisfaction has reached more than 90 percent. Authorities have also handled over 2,300 public complaints through a closed-loop mechanism covering clue collection, data analysis, supervision and rectification.

It said beautiful countryside construction is an important part of China's rural vitalization strategy and Beautiful China initiative, helping shift villages from being merely clean and orderly toward being ecologically livable.

China is set to continue to improve rural environmental governance, promote green and low-carbon agriculture, enhance village appearance and strengthen farmer participation, the report said. The country will also work toward raising the county-level completion rate to 55 percent by the end of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period and basically completing the beautiful countryside initiative by 2035.



Wuyishan

Wuyishan, a county-level city in Fujian province, has turned strengthened ecological protection into a driver of rural vitalization, helping villages near a World Heritage Site and national park move beyond the old dilemma of "living poorly beside rich natural resources".

The city, home to 115 administrative villages and 89,000 rural residents, is the only one in China with both UNESCO World Cultural and Natural Heritage status and a national park. Local authorities have placed conservation first while developing tea, tourism, bamboo and water-related industries.

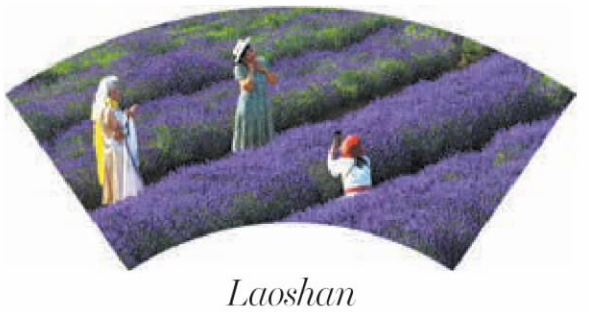
A 4,252-square-kilometer buffer zone has been designated around Wuyishan National Park to protect the core area through differentiated management. The city also spends more than 42 million yuan ($6.2 million) a year on ecological compensation and has invested 66.65 million yuan to buy back 1,200 hectares of commercial forest in key ecological areas.

The proportion of water bodies rated Grade II or better in terms of water quality has remained at 100 percent for the past three years, while the city's forest coverage stands at 80.5 percent and the share of days with good air quality has reached 100 percent. Since 2015, when the national park pilot program began, 44 new species have been recorded.

China has a five-tier quality system for surface water, with Grade I the best. Water at Grade III quality is considered good enough for most aquatic organisms to live in.

Green farming has also expanded. Wuyishan has built 8,840 hectares of eco-friendly tea gardens, accounting for 90 percent of its tea plantations, and sediment loss from tea gardens has fallen by more than 45 percent. Rural sewage treatment rose from 69.1 percent in 2022 to 98.2 percent in 2025.

In 2025, the city received 17.56 million tourist visits and generated 26.21 billion yuan in tourism revenue, while its tea industry chain reached 15 billion yuan in output value.



Laoshan

Laoshan district in Qingdao, Shandong province, has used integrated urban-rural planning to transform once underdeveloped coastal and mountain villages into cleaner, wealthier communities supported by tourism, tea, fruit and modern services.

Thirty years ago, many villages in the district sustained themselves on traditional farming, fishing and quarrying. Infrastructure was weak, and domestic sewage and waste were often discharged without effective treatment. Today, Laoshan has built a model that extends urban public services into rural areas while protecting its mountain and coastal ecology.

The district, with 95.7 kilometers of coastline and a natural coastline retention rate of 73.7 percent, began rural water supply, environmental improvement and road projects in 2005. It launched integrated urban-rural sanitation in 2014 and rural sewage treatment in 2018.

From 2019 to 2025, Laoshan built more than 1,600 km of sewage pipelines, 42 sewage treatment stations and 62 pumping stations, achieving countywide rural sewage treatment. Rural black and odorous water bodies have been cleared, while harmless treatment and classified collection of rural household waste have both reached 100 percent.

The district has also promoted circular agriculture. Since 2010, organic fertilizers and physical pest-control equipment have been distributed to more than 19,000 tea and fruit growers, covering over 2,000 hectares. In the past three years, soil organic matter in farmland rose by 34 percent, while chemical fertilizer and pesticide use fell by 6 percent and 13 percent, respectively.

Green industries have brought visible income gains. In the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period, the average collective income of villages reached 8.82 million yuan ($1.3 million), and 80 percent of villages earned more than 1 million yuan. Rural residents' per capita disposable income rose from 31,000 yuan in 2022 to 36,000 yuan in 2025.



Meitan

Meitan county in Guizhou province has built a rural vitalization model centered on tea, turning former barren hills into plantations, production bases into scenic areas, and a traditional agricultural county into one of China's leading tea-growing regions.

The county, which administers 137 villages and communities with a total rural population of 161,300, once faced poor rural living conditions, weak infrastructure and limited sources of income. Through long-term planning, environmental improvement and tea-led industrial upgrading, it has reshaped both its countryside and economy.

Meitan's tea plantation area has expanded from 1,866.7 hectares decades ago to 40,000 hectares today. The industry now benefits 88,000 farming households and more than 351,000 people, and contributes to over half of rural residents' per capita disposable income. In 2025, rural per capita disposable income reached 23,000 yuan ($3,392), 37 percent higher than the Guizhou provincial average.

Environmental improvements have accompanied industrial growth. Rural domestic sewage treatment has reached 100 percent, rural household sanitary toilet coverage exceeds 95 percent, and waste collection facilities cover 94.6 percent of rural areas. Water quality at 82 rural stream monitoring sections is rated at or above Grade III, with no black and odorous water bodies reported.

The county has also preserved regional rural architecture by building more than 100,000 traditional houses in the architectural style of northern Guizhou, improving rural living conditions for over 98 percent of households. It was also among the first in Guizhou to achieve paved-road access for all administrative villages.

Tea has become the core of Meitan's green economy. In 2025, the county produced 80,000 metric tons of tea, with tea output value reaching 6.45 billion yuan and comprehensive tea-related revenue hitting 18.61 billion yuan.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:32 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:32 PM

Z WEEKLY

All about Gen Z

Z WEEKLY

Innovation takes root in tradition



A delegate (left) listens to a guide while walking along an elevated viewing walkway at Wild Elephant Valley in Xishuangbanna, Yunnan province, on July 15. ZUO FURONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

By **HE WEIJIA** in Xishuangbanna, Yunnan
heweijia@21st.cn

Holding a thumb-sized ear of corn in his hand, Prak Thaveak Amida examined the unusual local crop and asked how it was grown after taking a bite of a purple variety with a fruity flavor.

"This is my second visit to Xishuangbanna, but it's my first time trying this corn. It has a very interesting taste," said Prak, an under-secretary of state at the Cambodian Ministry of Information.

The tasting was one of several activities arranged for participants in the 2026 Global Mayors Dialogue, held from July 14 to 16 in Xishuangbanna Dai autonomous prefecture, Yunnan province. Across several field-visit routes, participants visited an agricultural facility, residential communities and Wild Elephant Valley, where mayors and other international guests learned about the prefecture's efforts in agricultural innovation, community development and environmental protection.

The corn tasting took place at a waxy corn processing facility operated by Dai Xiansheng Agricultural Development Co., Ltd. Liao Mengmeng, the company's general manager, introduced the thumb-sized corn as a traditional local variety that has long been grown in Xishuangbanna.

Liao explained that the corn's flavor and appearance can change after two or three years of cultivation because of its genetic instability. To improve its consistency, the company has partnered with Huazhong Agricultural University on genetic purification, rejuvenation and crossbreeding.

"Agricultural biotechnology in China is advancing rapidly," Prak said. "This is far more than ordinary corn. It's a newly developed variety."

The group then visited Wanjing Community in Jinghong city, where participants sampled dumplings and played card games with residents. They were also introduced to the neighborhood's shared facilities, which include spaces for dancing, painting, calligraphy and chess, as well as a communal kitchen.

Cai Hui, secretary of the community's general Party branch, told the delegates that, in addition to providing shared spaces, the community also encourages residents to take part in neighborhood governance to help ease the workload of its limited staff. This is particularly important during the peak tourism season from November to April, when people from across China travel to Xishuangbanna to spend the winter in its mild climate.

At Wild Elephant Valley, delegates learned about local efforts to strike a balance between tourism and wildlife conservation.

They walked along an elevated viewing walkway, observing wild Asian elephants and signs of their activity in the rainforest below.

"Elephants belong to the rainforest, so we have given the ground-level habitat back to them," said Xu Ping, a guide at the site.

Masood Khalid, a former Pakistani ambassador to China, said the surroundings offered a vivid example of coexistence between people and wildlife.

"I'm sure that the next time I come to Xishuangbanna, I will see even more improvements," he said.



Gary Dvorchak (left), Edwin Montealegre (center) and Tong Huiqi discuss the role and impact of AI during the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance in Shanghai on July 19, 2026. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

AI's human side comes into focus

International voices highlight how AI is transforming work, creativity and communication while keeping people at the center of progress.

By **MENG WENJIE** and **SHAMIM ZAKARIA**

As Bill Reichert walked through the exhibition halls of the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference, demonstrations of AR glasses offering real-time Chinese-English subtitles caught his attention.

Reichert, a partner at US-based Pegasus Tech Ventures, called the experience a "wow moment". The technology showed him how AI could make it easier for people to communicate across language barriers.

"It's as if I were anywhere else in the world that actually speaks English," he said.

The 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance was held in Shanghai from July 17 to 20 under the theme "AI Partnership for a Brighter Future".

The exhibition brought together more than 1,100 companies, and over 300 AI products made their global debuts.

Reichert was among the international guests attending the conference. Having first visited China around 2012, Reichert has since traveled to places including Shanghai, Beijing, Shenzhen and Hong Kong. Those experiences have given him a broader perspective on how technology is reshaping innovation and communication worldwide.

"AI is going to flatten the world in terms of anybody, anywhere, being able to connect with anyone in any language. And that's a big deal," he said.

For Edwin Montealegre, a Costa Rican conductor and director of Shanghai Monestel Music Productions, AI has already become part of his creative process.

A graduate of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, Montealegre was attending the conference for the second time. He noticed a change in emphasis this year.

> "Before, the focus was on how to use AI. But now, AI is no longer just a device or a tool — it has become part of our everyday lives."
>
> **Edwin Montealegre,** a Costa Rican conductor and director of Shanghai Monestel Music Productions

"Before, the focus was on how to use AI. But now, AI is no longer just a device or a tool — it has become part of our everyday lives," he said.

As a music director, Montealegre is responsible not only for conducting, but also for organizing rehearsals and preparing performance materials. With AI assistance, some administrative tasks that once took days can be completed in hours or even minutes.

"I even use AI to brainstorm ideas," he said. "It gives me more time for artistic inspiration, for connecting with people, and for myself."

While Montealegre emphasized creativity, Tong Huiqi focused on care.

Tong, a clinical psychologist and clinical professor at Stanford School of Medicine, said that while many young people are turning to AI for emotional support, human judgment must remain central.

"AI cannot work independently," she said, adding that humans must ultimately decide what is appropriate, where its limits should be and whether it is helping.

In her clinical work, Tong uses an AI-assisted documentation system during consultations. By reducing the need to take notes throughout a session, the tool helps her give patients her full attention.

> "You can feel that the government is really encouraging young people to understand it, use it and think about how to make it better."
>
> **Rupert Hoogewerf,** chairman and chief researcher of Hurun Report

"My clients actually love it because AI allows me to be 100 percent connected with them rather than jotting down notes," she said.

Her experience illustrates both the value and the limits of the technology. AI can take over a routine task and create more room for human attention, but decisions about care, boundaries and responsibility must remain with people.

The same combination of greater capability and human direction is reshaping entrepreneurship, according to Rupert Hoogewerf, chairman and chief researcher of Hurun Report.

Through the Hurun Uth Series — including its Under25s, Under30s, Under35s and Under40s rankings — Hoogewerf has been following a generation of young entrepreneurs. He said about 800 entrepreneurs were featured across the series this year, with around 30 presenting innovations at the conference in areas including robotics and AI.

"You can feel that the government is really encouraging young people to explore AI, understand it, use it and think about how to make it better," he said.

Hurun's research also shows how rapidly wealth creation is changing in China: 70 percent of the country's billionaires on this year's Hurun Global Rich List were not on the list a decade ago.

"They are the new faces of China — from AI and computer chips to new energy and other emerging industries. They have just come onto the scene," Hoogewerf said.

At the conference, he met entrepreneurs using AI tools to run one-person companies, as well as businesses applying AI in traditional fields such as metals and minerals analysis.

"There is a massive transformation going on," he said. "You can apply AI in lots of different places."

Gary Dvorchak, managing director of The Blueshirt Group Asia, has also seen AI improve efficiency in his industry. He said the technology had reduced costs and sped up work in ways he had not anticipated.

What struck him most at the event, however, was not a particular product. It was the willingness among the exhibitors, entrepreneurs and visitors he encountered to experiment with the technology.

"There's no fear of AI here. Everyone is embracing it and thinking about how they can use it to make life better," he said.

Yet Dvorchak said the activity in the exhibition halls reinforced a more fundamental point. AI could support people's work, but people were still the ones exchanging ideas, asking questions and making decisions.

No matter how advanced the technology becomes, he said, it remains a tool.

"People are more important in the era of AI than they were in the past," he said.

Contact the writers at mengwenjie@21st.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:32 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:32 PM



Yao Fangbin conducts a prescribed burn in the Lesser Khingan Mountains to reduce wildfire risks in 2024. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Ready before the call

From earthquakes to wildfires, China's frontline firefighters work in shifting conditions with speed, judgment, and constant readiness to safeguard people's lives.

By GUO JIATONG
guojiatong@21st.cn

On July 15, Yao Fangbin was already more than 300 kilometers from his base in Harbin, Heilongjiang province, inspecting rivers and mountain roads with his team in Mudanjiang.

Moisture from the outer bands of Typhoon Bavi, combined with cold air, was forecast to bring heavy and possibly torrential rain to central and eastern Heilongjiang. Before the first rescue call came in, Yao and his fellow firefighters checked evacuation routes, assessed areas at risk of flooding and landslides, and conducted rope and water rescue drills.

"When I first joined the brigade, our work usually began only after disaster struck," Yao said. "Now, our work starts much earlier. We focus on preparedness and disaster prevention, making rescue operations more targeted and effective."

As climate change brings more frequent severe rain, flooding and urban waterlogging across China, fire and rescue teams nationwide are devoting more time to emergency preparedness before disasters occur.

In China, firefighters do far more than put out fires. They also respond to floods, landslides, earthquakes, building collapses, traffic accidents and other emergencies. Depending on their expertise and location, specialized teams may carry out evacuations, search-and-rescue operations, emergency reconnaissance and disaster relief across different regions.

Yao, who has served with the Heilongjiang fire and rescue mobile general brigade for more than two decades, has seen firsthand how the scope of the job has expanded.

In the past, his brigade mainly fought forest fires. Today, its members also tackle summer floods and carry out other rescue missions, while providing emergency support at major attractions and events, including Harbin Ice and Snow World during the winter tourism season.

Anticipating disaster

The shift from reacting to disasters to anticipating them is also evident in Anhui province.

Xue Xuetao, a firefighter with the Hefei fire and rescue mobile brigade, recently led an advance team to Feidong county in Hefei, pre-positioning personnel and emergency communications equipment along the projected path of the approaching typhoon.

Since joining the brigade in 2007, Xue has built up extensive experience responding to disasters across Anhui. In the north, he has tackled recurring floods along the Huaihe River, while in the mountainous south, he has dealt with flash floods, landslides and other hazards triggered by severe rain.

That regional experience has taught him to anticipate how disasters may unfold. Areas such as Huangshan, Xuancheng and Anqing are particularly vulnerable because of their terrain, while northern Anhui faces persistent flood risks along the Huaihe River.

"A deep understanding of local geography is essential during a rescue task, because natural disasters can become life-threatening within minutes," he said.

One of the missions that left the deepest impression on Xue was the devastating flooding in Huangshan in 2024, when days of unusually heavy rain cut three villages off from the outside world.

"The only road into the villages was a narrow mountain path, with steep slopes on one side and a fast-flowing river on the other," he recalled. "After landslides buried the road, we had to trek across unstable debris while the rain continued. Every step carried the risk of triggering another collapse."

Xue took part in an advance reconnaissance operation, in which highly mobile teams travel by helicopter or off-road vehicle, or proceed on foot to reach disaster areas ahead of larger rescue forces. Such teams are sent in when roads are blocked, communications are disrupted or conditions remain highly dangerous.

When public communications networks fail, they deploy an emergency private radio terminal to transmit live images and data from the scene. This gives headquarters a clearer picture of conditions on the ground and helps guide the next stage of the rescue.

Despite the danger, Xue said hesitation never crossed his mind. "Our only thought was to reach the disaster area as quickly as possible, assess the situation and report back, so the command center could make timely decisions and mobilize additional rescue teams," he said.

Lessons from such missions are shared across the force, becoming practical knowledge passed from veteran firefighters to younger rescuers.

"Our officers and veteran firefighters have taken part in years of frontline rescue work and accumulated invaluable experience. They teach younger firefighters the safest and most effective rescue methods," Yao noted.

Many of those lessons came at a high cost. "Some comrades lost their lives or suffered serious injuries," Yao said. "By passing on their experience, we hope younger rescuers can avoid making the same mistakes."



Right: Xue Xuetao carries out flood-control and emergency rescue operations using communications support equipment in Fuyang, Anhui province, in 2020. **Bottom:** Migmar Tsering (left) leads his team in searching for trapped survivors following the earthquake in Dingri county, Shigatse, Xizang autonomous region, in January 2025. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Passing lessons on

As veteran firefighters share lessons learned in the field, younger rescuers are being asked to master increasingly complex equipment and take on demanding technical and command roles.

Among them is Migmar Tsering, a technical officer with the Shigatse fire and rescue mobile brigade in the Xizang autonomous region. Born in the 2000s, he represents a younger generation preparing to lead rescue operations under extreme pressure.

One of the greatest challenges in responding to a large-scale disaster is the expertise required of commanders, according to Migmar Tsering. They must quickly formulate rescue plans, organize personnel and allocate equipment, often with little time and incomplete information.

"Modern fire and rescue operations involve thousands of pieces of equipment," he said. "Commanders must understand how every type of equipment works, what it can do and how it performs."

"It is a tremendous test of command capability," he added.

Technical knowledge alone, however, is not enough. Migmar Tsering said frontline rescuers must also remain calm as conditions change around them.

During a forest fire, for example, a sudden shift in wind direction can carry embers downhill and cause the flames to spread back uphill toward firefighters.

"Without solid professional skills and psychological resilience, panic can quickly worsen physical exhaustion. In steep mountain terrain, that can be extremely dangerous," he said, adding that prolonged exposure to intense heat can also put firefighters at risk of severe dehydration.

Even after the last survivor is brought to safety, the work is far from over.

During the initial emergency response, firefighters focus on rescuing trapped residents. Once everyone has been evacuated, they may spend another six or seven days searching through debris for personal belongings and helping families recover as much property as possible.

"Floods, forest fires and other major natural disasters are all high-intensity, high-risk missions," he noted. "They demand perseverance, discipline and resilience. Those qualities are essential to carrying out rescue operations safely and effectively."

Despite the hardships, Migmar Tsering said he has never regretted choosing the profession.

"You have to truly love this job," he said. "Our mission is simple: serve the people, stand with them and always put their needs first."

As he became more deeply involved with the team, Migmar Tsering said, he gradually developed a strong sense of belonging and pride in its unity, traditions and achievements.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:32 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:32 PM

Z WEEKLY

Engineer finds art in the air

Once dismissed as children's toys, balloons became Xu Dengyong's path to entrepreneurship, professional recognition and building a new industry.

By **GUI QIAN** and **LIU KUN**

Xu Dengyong, 37, first noticed balloon art on an online variety show in 2013. One of the guests appeared in an outfit made entirely of woven balloons. At the time, Xu was working as an engineer at an electronics factory in Guangdong province, living a stable life.

He never imagined that balloons — which he then saw as little more than "children's toys" — would one day become the foundation of a business earning him more than 1 million yuan ($147,000) a year.

Originally from Nanzhang county, Hubei province, Xu had spent years in manufacturing before changing careers. His factory experience left him with two lasting assets: the ability to endure hardship and a disciplined approach to solving problems — through standardized processes, attention to detail, cost control and safety calculations. These habits would later prove invaluable in the balloon industry.

In 2013, Xu invested his savings of 30,000 yuan to attend a monthlong balloon modeling course in Henan province. After returning home, he opened a balloon decoration shop.

The early days were tough. He handed out flyers on the street and visited wedding planning companies one by one, taking whatever work he could find.

A turning point came in 2015 when he began targeting shopping malls and large commercial events. But potential clients all asked the same question: How long would the balloons last?

Xu had no good answer.

At the time, balloon decoration techniques were still relatively undeveloped. Indoor installations typically lasted no more than a week. For shopping malls investing in displays built from tens of thousands of balloons, that simply wasn't good enough.

Air leakage was the biggest obstacle. Inflating latex balloons stretches the material, reducing its density and allowing air to gradually escape. Unless that problem could be solved, large-scale commercial balloon installations would be difficult to maintain.

Xu approached the challenge like an engineer.

First, he refined the knotting technique to reduce air leakage. Then he began placing one balloon inside another so that the inner balloon would remain intact even if the outer one burst.

His most time-consuming breakthrough came from experimenting along the inner wall of a balloon, slowing air loss without damaging the material.

Later, inspired by car waxing and facial skincare, Xu developed an oil-coating process for the balloon surface, further extending its durability. Today, his balloon installations can last indoors for up to three months, and as long as six months in winter.

These improvements transformed balloons from short-lived decorations into commercially viable products.

A real estate project in Jiangxi province in 2017 brought Xu's company 600,000 yuan in revenue in just half a month. In 2023, a 10-meter-tall balloon cake he designed was commissioned by nearly 30 supermarkets and shopping malls across China.

As his reputation grew, professional recognition followed. In 2019, his work *Divine Beast Longma* — named after the mythical dragon horse — won the large-scale category at the China Balloon Art Competition. Three years later, he received a Top 10 Unique Skills Award at a high-skilled talent competition in Hubei province and was named a "Jingchu Artisan", a provincial honor recognizing outstanding craftspeople.





Above: Xu Dengyong checks a balloon installation he created. **Right:** Xu (front) teaches balloon-making techniques to young trainees. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"Those awards gave me a new level of confidence," he said. "No matter how large the order was or how complex the design, I knew I could handle it."

For Xu, the recognition marked more than a personal achievement. It convinced him that balloon art could be seen as a serious profession rather than a novelty, and it gradually shifted the focus of his work. Rather than concentrating solely on building balloon installations himself, he began spending more time helping others enter the industry.

Since 2024, through a model worker innovation studio supported by the Nanzhang County Federation of Trade Unions, Xu has recorded balloon modeling tutorials and offered free online and in-person training. More than 4,000 people have participated in his courses.

Many wonder why he devotes so much time to teaching people who may one day become his competitors.

"The industry is too fragmented," Xu said. "Unlike makeup or floral design, balloon art has no national vocational qualification and no formal training system. I hope to help the industry grow together so it can gain wider recognition."

His training goes beyond technique. Students also learn how to negotiate with clients, identify new markets, produce promotional videos, write marketing content and use social media to support offline businesses.

Xu believes the future of the craft lies in the hands of young people.

"Those born after 2000 are quick-thinking and highly creative," he said. "Balloon art is, by nature, part of the creative industry, and their fresh thinking can bring more original ideas."

That belief is also guiding the markets he is now exploring. One direction is combining balloon art with local cultural intellectual property (IP), working with governments and cultural institutions to turn landmarks and historic neighborhoods into large-scale balloon installations. Another is expanding into outdoor consumer spaces, including campsites and tourist attractions, where decorative installations are becoming increasingly popular.

More than a decade after watching balloon art on television for the first time, Xu no longer sees balloons as children's toys. Through technical innovation and an engineer's mindset, he has turned them into durable commercial products — while helping build a more professional future for an industry that is still taking shape.

Contact the writers at guiqian@i21st.cn

Global Insights

Ancient Datong echoes humanity's shared spiritual journey

The hum of the high-speed train softened as we pulled into Datong, Shanxi province, leaving behind the bustle of Beijing for a city shaped by layers of history.

Traveling with 20 fellow media students and three coordinators from the Communication University of China, I expected to see temples, grottoes and ancient streets. What I did not expect was a series of cross-cultural revelations, all pointing to one central truth: faith and human creativity transcend geographic boundaries.

Datong, once the capital of the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534), is often introduced through its grand historical landmarks. But the first place that stopped me was quieter and more intimate: the Pingcheng Memory Hall.

Unlike large imperial exhibition halls, this small museum preserves the texture of ordinary life: chipped ceramic rice bowls, old vendor signs, woolen coats once worn by coal miners and vintage radio sets.

As a documentary filmmaker, I found myself lingering before a weathered copper hotpot, its dented surface carrying the traces of generations of family dinners.



Balcha Teshome Hailu visits Huayan Temple in Datong, Shanxi province, on June 11, 2026. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Later, in Datong's ancient city area, I saw that same everyday object transformed into art. Hundreds of copper pots were arranged into flowing silhouettes of mountains.

In that moment, I realized that cultural identity does not live only in carved stone or towering pagodas. It also simmers in everyday objects, forged through shared meals and community warmth.

At Huayan Temple, that sense of connection deepened. Its rare Liao Dynasty (916-1125) open-column architecture stretched above me in broad wooden beams, creating a spacious interior without obstructive walls.

Among the 29 intact painted statues, the famed smiling Bodhisattva known as the "Venus of the East" stopped me completely.

Her serene smile felt unexpectedly familiar, reminiscent of the saints painted in Ethiopian Orthodox churches near my childhood home. The intricate wooden brackets jutting from the temple eaves, each carved curve offered to the divine, just as Ethiopian artisans chisel elaborate doorframes and stone murals to honor faith.

Standing there amid drifting sandalwood incense, I understood that spiritual architecture speaks a universal language. Across cultures and civilizations, people pour patience, skill and imagination into timber and stone, giving visible form to what they hold sacred.

The strongest moment of recognition came at the Hanging Temple, also known as Xuankong Temple. Built into the cliffside, with narrow wooden walkways linking small prayer halls, the temple seems to test the boundary between architecture and belief.

As I walked carefully along its elevated passages, I thought of Debre Damo Monastery, the cliff-top Orthodox monastery in northern Ethiopia that sits atop an inaccessible plateau and can be reached only by hauling oneself up a frayed leather rope.

The Hanging Temple and Debre Damo belong to different religions, histories and landscapes, yet they ask believers across continents the same timeless question: how far are you willing to go, and what discomfort are you prepared to endure, to come closer to the sacred?

I paused on a small balcony, watching elderly Chinese pilgrims shuffle slowly across the wooden planks, their hands folded and their faces lit with quiet reverence. I pictured Ethiopian monks climbing that rope to Debre Damo, driven by the same unshakable devotion.

In that moment, I was no longer only a foreign student on a field trip. I felt like a witness to something shared — the human desire to place holiness above the noise of ordinary life.

The Yingxian Wooden Pagoda and Yungang Grottoes added another layer to that reflection.

The thousand-year-old pagoda, built without a single iron nail, reminded me of Ethiopia's Aksum obelisks: monuments created not for speed, but for endurance. The Yungang Grottoes, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, revealed Buddhist art fused with multi-ethnic culture on a breathtaking scale.

Yet beyond these grand landmarks, present-day Datong remained equally vivid: warm regional food, smooth roads leading from the city to remote heritage sites and residential districts that showed how modern development can grow around ancient history rather than erase it.

We boarded our train back to Beijing as dusk fell, our group far quieter than when we had left. That silence did not come from tiredness alone. Datong had given us too much to absorb at once. Its meaning lies not in a checklist of tourist spots, but in the subtle, powerful connections it draws between distant cultures.

Every carved beam, every cliffside shrine and every humble copper hotpot tells the same story: art, faith and human perseverance are languages no border can divide. Datong's stone and cliffs do not merely speak to China's past — they speak to our shared humanity, visible to anyone willing to pause, look closely and listen.

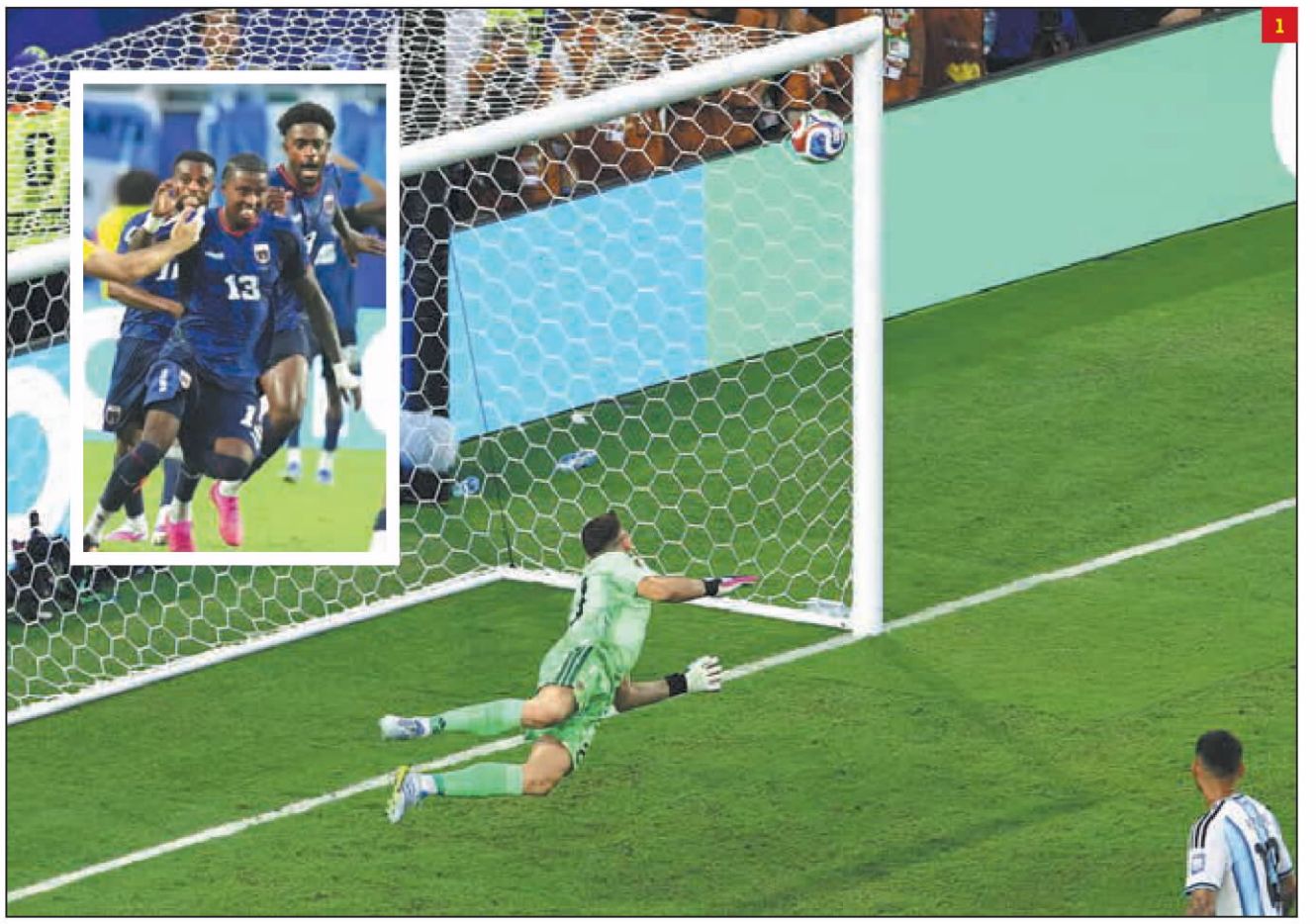
Written by Balcha Teshome Hailu, an Ethiopian graduate student in the Faculty of Journalism and Communication at Communication University of China.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:32 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:32 PM

SPORTS

2026 WORLD CUP









BEST MOMENTS OF THE 2026 WORLD CUP

Three countries, 104 games, 39 days and hundreds of memories — here are a few that stand out







With 104 games taking place over 39 days, and across three countries — the United States, Canada and Mexico — the 2026 World Cup produced hundreds of spectacular moments that will live long in the memory.

1. Goal of the tournament

Sidny Lopes Cabral of Cape Verde stunned defending champion Argentina with a tying goal in extra time of their round-of-32 match at Miami Gardens, Florida, on July 3.

The Blue Sharks, who entered the tournament ranked 67th, trailed 2-1 in the 103rd minute, when Cabral received a long pass from Yannick Semedo near the left flank with his left foot. The 23-year-old, who plays in Turkiye for Trabzonspor, cut past Alexis Mac Allister while playing the ball onto his right foot and, from just inside the penalty area, curled a stunning shot past goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez and into the upper corner at the far post for his fourth goal in 14 international appearances.

2. Breakout player

Nineteen-year-old Barcelona defender Pau Cubarsi played every minute of every match, as Spain, winner in 2010, won its second World Cup title. He had 668 successful passes in 690 attempts, a 96.8 percent completion rate that was the second best in the tournament among players with 400 or more attempts, just behind Norway's Sander Berge at 96.9 percent. Cubarsi's total was second only to teammate Rodri's 747. Cubarsi's 750 minutes tied teammate Marc Cucurella and Mac Allister for the tournament high among outfield players. At 19 years, 178 days, he became the seventh youngest to win a World Cup, trailing Pele (17-249) in 1958, Ronaldo (17-298) in 1994, Giuseppe Bergomi (18-174) in 1982, current teammate Lamine Yamal and Antonio Coutinho in 1962 (both 19-6), and Marco Antonio (19-135) in 1970.

3. Worst foul

Qatari midfielder Assim Madibo broke the left tibia and fibula of Canadian midfielder Ismael Kone with a tackle from behind in the 51st minute of a June 18 group-stage match in Vancouver. Madibo received a red card and a five-game suspension. Kone had surgery and Madibo visited him at the hospital.

4. Biggest blunder

Matt Freese had a howler in the United States' 4-1 loss to Belgium in the round of 16 that will long feature on goalkeeper blooper reels. Brandon Mechele played a long ball from deep in his own half. When Belgium's Charles De Ketelaere burst past US defender Chris Richards, Freese came off his line, and, about five yards outside the penalty area, he chested the ball. The 27-year-old, who became the No 1 keeper for the US last year, was about to clear the ball with his left foot, hesitated and tried to pass to his left, only for the ball to deflect off one of De Ketelaere's legs toward midfield. Hans Vanaken scored from about 30 yards, as US captain Tim Ream was left unsuccessfully flailing to try and block the ball.

5. Best fans

Norway's fans charmed fellow spectators and television viewers when they performed the "Viking Row" in stadiums and even in the bleachers above the TKTS booth selling Broadway theater tickets in New York's Times Square. Martin Odegaard and Erling Haaland led the row celebration on the field following wins. Scotland's Tartan Army also left indelible memories, depleting Boston's beer supply and taking in baseball games at Boston's Fenway Park and LoanDepot Park in Miami.

6. Biggest upset

Eliminated in consecutive group stages following its fourth World Cup title in 2014, Germany clinched top spot in its group with wins over Curacao and Cote d'Ivoire before losing its group stage finale against Ecuador. Paraguay, in its first World Cup since 2010, began the tournament ranked 41st and advanced as one of the top third-placed teams, opening with a 4-1 loss to the US, beating Turkiye 1-0 and drawing 0-0 against Australia. When Germany and Paraguay met in the round of 32 on June 29 in Boston, Julio Enciso put Paraguay ahead in the 42nd minute, but Kai Havertz tied the score 12 minutes later. Germany, which began the World Cup ranked No 10, thought it had taken a crucial lead off the head of Jonathan Tah in the 102nd minute, but it was overturned by VAR because of a foul by Waldemar Anton on Paraguay keeper Orlando Gill. Germany had won all four of its previous World Cup penalty shootouts, succeeding on 17 of 18 kicks — including 15 in a row. Havertz's opening spotkick was saved by Gill, who also batted away Nick Woltemade's effort three shots later. Tah skied Germany's sixth kick over the crossbar, leaving it all to do for Jose Canale, who beat Manuel Neuer. Paraguay won the shootout 4-3, only to go on and lose 1-0 to France in the round of 16.

7. Best photo

Raul Jimenez scored Mexico's second goal in its tournament-opening 2-0 win over South Africa on June 11. An image from Associated Press photographer Natacha Pisarenko captured the joy of a player who scored on a header, six years after his career was nearly ended when he fractured his skull in a clash of heads with Arsenal's David Luiz while playing in a Premier League match for Wolverhampton.

AP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:32 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:34 PM

Cross-border hub

Erenhot port boosts trade, cultural links with Mongolia

CITY DANCE, PAGE 4



US lifts TikTok ban for federal govt devices

WORLD, PAGE 5



Tech tourism

Futuristic innovations serve as new magnets for inbound travelers

BUSINESS, PAGE 10

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 THURSDAY, AUGUST 13, 2026

C919 makes international debut



The C919, China's domestically developed large passenger aircraft, prepares for takeoff on Wednesday at Beijing Capital International Airport. Flight CA723, operated by Air China, departed from Beijing at 3 pm and landed in Ulan Bator, the capital of Mongolia, at 4:58 pm local time, marking the aircraft's debut on an international commercial passenger route. TAO RAN / FOR CHINA DAILY **See story, page 3**

XI'S VISION | HIGH-QUALITY DEVELOPMENT

China helps to green Global South

Nation deepening cooperation through major energy projects in Latin America

By ZHENG XIN
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

As the world's transition toward more sustainable development accelerates, China and Latin America are embracing broader and deeper energy cooperation, leveraging cutting-edge technological innovations to power a green future for the Global South.

From State Grid Corp of China's Belo Monte Ultra High Voltage Direct Current Phase II transmission line in Brazil, to China Three Gorges Corp's comprehensive digital modernization of Brazil's legacy Jupia and Ilha Solteira hydropower stations, and the Cauchari solar project in Argentina, jointly undertaken by Power Construction Corp of China and Shanghai Electric Power Construction Co, China and Latin America are jointly setting new benchmarks for cross-border clean energy integration.

These flagship projects go beyond traditional capital investment, representing a deeper leverage of China's technological standards and management expertise. By upgrading legacy infrastructure, Chinese enterprises are powering Latin America's green transition for more secure regional grid stability.

This strategic momentum is guided by top-level diplomacy and shared visions.

While addressing the opening ceremony of the fourth ministerial meeting of the China-CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) Forum last year, President Xi Jinping noted that by adapting to the overriding trend of economic globalization, China and Latin America have continuously deepened pragmatic cooperation in fields including trade, investment and infrastructure construction.

He emphasized that both sides should strengthen the alignment of development strategies and advance high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, calling for efforts to deepen cooperation in traditional areas such as energy and minerals, while expanding cooperation in emerging sectors including clean energy.

Such top-level commitment builds on a long-standing strategic alignment. As President Xi pointed out at the China-Latin American and Caribbean Countries Leaders' Meeting in 2014, "China and Latin America are highly complementary in economy and closely aligned in development strategies, granting us natural advantages in strengthening cooperation".

With such a strategic blueprint in sight, top Chinese energy regulators have emphasized the pivotal role of this cross-border synergy.

Ren Jingdong, deputy director of the National Energy Administration, said that energy collaboration is a crucial component of pragmatic cooperation between China and Latin America, achieving remarkable results.

"As China and Latin American countries have actively promoted energy transition and the development of renewables in recent years, new energy cooperation has emerged as a new highlight and a fresh driver for China-Latin America energy synergy," Ren said.

Guided by these high-level consensuses, Chinese enterprises have delivered monumental infrastructure breakthroughs on the ground.

Brazil has grappled for decades with a severe structural challenge. While its northern Amazon basin boasts abundant hydroelectric resources, the vast majority of its industrial and residential power demand is concentrated in the southeast. The 2,534-kilometer Belo Monte Phase II project, independently invested, constructed and operated by State Grid Corp of China under a 30-year concession agreement, bridges this divide. As a vital "green artery", it transmits massive volumes of hydropower directly to metropolitan load centers like Rio de Janeiro.

*See **Green,** page 3*

Former Chinese premier Zhu Rongji passes away

By CAO DESHENG
caodesheng@chinadaily.com.cn



Zhu Rongji (1928-2026)

Former Chinese premier Zhu Rongji passed away in Beijing on Wednesday. He was 98.

Zhu, who had served as a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the 14th and 15th Central Committees of the Communist Party of China, died of illness, according to an official obituary.

The obituary was jointly issued by the CPC Central Committee; the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, China's top legislature; the State Council, China's Cabinet; and the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, China's top political advisory body.

It extolled Zhu as an excellent Party member, a time-tested and loyal communist fighter, and an outstanding proletarian revolutionist, statesman and leader of the Party and the State.

Born in October 1928 in Changsha, Hunan province, Zhu joined revolutionary work in December 1948 and became a CPC member in October 1949.

Between 1987 and 1991, he served successively as deputy secretary of the CPC Shanghai Municipal Committee, mayor of Shanghai, and secretary of the CPC Shanghai Municipal Committee.

During his tenure, he advocated for adjusting the city's industrial structure, developing an export-oriented economy and enhancing its international competitiveness.

Zhu played a crucial role in advancing the development and opening-up of Shanghai's Pudong New Area. His efforts laid a solid foundation for Shanghai's further reform, opening-up and development.

In 1991, Zhu was appointed vice-premier of the State Council.

In October 1992, he was elected a member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and its standing committee, and he was responsible for the executive work of the State Council.

In June 1993, he concurrently served as the governor of the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank.

In September 1997, Zhu was reelected a member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and its standing committee.

In March 1998, he was appointed premier of the State Council, and he later served as the secretary of the leading Party members group of the State Council.

Facing the impact of the Asian financial crisis and the catastrophic flooding in China, Zhu focused on a shift from implementing a moderately tight fiscal and monetary policy to adopting a proactive fiscal policy and a prudent monetary policy, expanding domestic demand and deepening reforms in key areas, thereby maintaining steady and rapid economic growth.

During Zhu's tenure as vice-premier and premier of the State Council, a series of policies and measures were adopted to expand opening-up, encourage exports, keep the renminbi exchange rate stable without devaluation, attract foreign investment, and firmly safeguard the prosperity and stability of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region as an international financial center.

He also presided over the implementation of major reforms in the social security system, healthcare system, and investment and financing system, among others, promoting the establishment of the basic framework of a socialist market economy. He oversaw the completion of the arduous negotiations for China's accession to the World Trade Organization.

In March 2003, Zhu no longer served as premier of the State Council. After retiring from leadership posts, he steadfastly upheld and supported the leadership of the CPC Central Committee.

He continued to care about the great cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics and firmly supported efforts to improve conduct, promote integrity and fight corruption.

Zhu's life was a revolutionary, fighting and glorious one, and one that was dedicated to wholeheartedly serving the people and the communist cause, the obituary said, adding that his death is a great loss to the Party and the State.

Xinhua contributed to this story.

UNIQUE FACILITY SPARKS A POSITIVE REACTION

Once-secret nuclear complex in Chongqing's mountains now drawing visitors from abroad

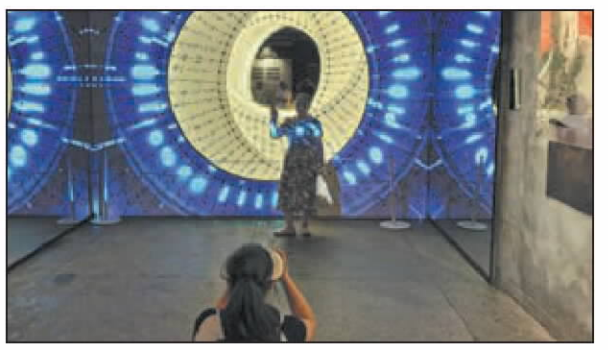
By TAN YINGZI and **DENG RUI** in Chongqing

On a bright August afternoon, Boston Thomas stood at the mouth of a mountain, trying to wrap his head around what was hidden inside.

The 20-year-old from the United States had first read about the 816 Project on online travel agency Trip.com. The photos alone were enough to lure him halfway across the world. Now, in the remote hills of Baitao subdistrict in Chongqing's Fuling district, Thomas found himself confronted with a scale that defied comprehension.

From the outside, it appears as little more than nondescript concrete portals cut into the green slopes. Inside, however, lies an entirely different universe.

It is a labyrinth of caverns and tunnels hewed in total secrecy by more than 60,000 workers between 1966 and 1984. Originally designed to house a plutonium production facility, the project was scrapped before it ever went operational.



Visitors take photos in an exhibition hall of the 816 Underground Project in Chongqing on July 26. ZHANG DING / FOR CHINA DAILY

"I find myself particularly interested in this project," said Thomas, who studies emergency management and fire science at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

He said that he would think in terms of contingency systems — how states organize to brace for catastrophes that hopefully never materialize. "It helps me better understand the differences between both the American system and the Chinese system, and how both can be bridged and how the aspects of either can play off one another."

Thomas walked in with his family, stepping out of the August heat and into the chill air of the cave.

Described by People's Daily as China's second nuclear material industrial base, it is the world's largest artificial cave. For decades, it was absent from official maps. Declassified in 2002 and opened to the public in 2010, the site has since beckoned visitors into its depths.

Visitor numbers have surged over the years. Last year, nearly 900,000 people explored its vast network of caverns and tunnels, a dramatic increase from fewer than 20,000 in 2014, according to Feng Jun, deputy general manager of the 816 Project Scenic Area.

The project was part of the Third Front Movement, a massive industrial campaign launched across 13 inland provinces and autonomous regions from 1964 to 1980.

*See **Facility,** page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.

ASEAN members should brace for multiple shocks

WORLD WATCH
By Alan Bollard

In the eyes of many people in the Asia-Pacific region, we are currently in the midst of some tangled economic forces: China's export surge, trade tensions between the United States and China, the Israel-US conflict with Iran, and the artificial intelligence boom.

Businesses in the region are responding fast, looking for new ways to organize production as supply chains reconfigure.

Meanwhile, the disruption in the Strait of Hormuz is not yet resolved.

The blocked shipments include crude oil to fuel the refineries, petrochemicals to feed the industrial plants and fertilizers to supply farms in Southeast Asia. This has meant regional countries have had to reassess their energy vulnerability.

Initially, the economic forecasts were very worrying: an energy crisis, low farm yields, industrial shortages and price inflation, all forecast to hinder world growth.

However, so far the economic shock has been reasonably well managed through a mix of market interventions and astute business decisions. It has helped that China has developed much cheaper energy technologies and managed to reduce its own oil consumption.

*See **Pressure,** page 3*

www.chinadailyglobal.com

A member of ANN

China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved

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

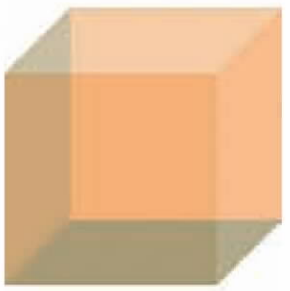
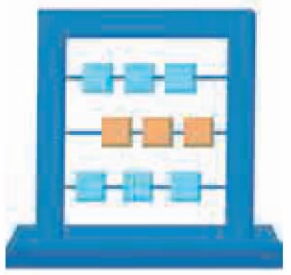
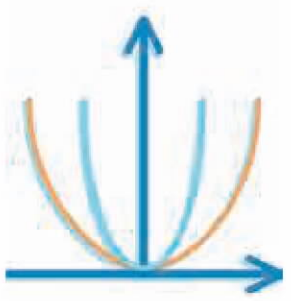
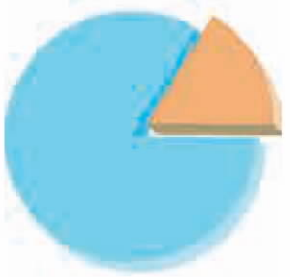
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:34 PM

INDEPTH

Solving conundrum of future math success




By **YU RAN**
For China Daily

The awarding of the Fields Medal — widely regarded as the Nobel Prize of mathematics — to two Chinese nationals has stoked hopes of a golden dawn for the discipline, while also sparking debate about how the country nurtures its academic talent.

Renowned Chinese American mathematician Shing-Tung Yau, a Fields Medal laureate and dean of Tsinghua University's Qiuzhen College, called the news exciting for the Chinese people and a proud moment for Chinese mathematicians.

He commended the awardees' interdisciplinary achievements and expressed hope that young Chinese scholars will achieve major breakthroughs at home, paving the way for the country to become a global powerhouse in mathematics.

"For quite a while, people in the government of America thought that Chinese (mathematicians) will only learn from America; now they will see that we also develop first-class mathematics," he said in an interview with CGTN.

"I hope they learn that Chinese are capable of doing absolutely first-class mathematics, and we could help America, we could help Europe, and vice versa, we welcome them to come over here to help us also."

Presented every four years by the International Mathematical Union, the Fields Medal recognizes mathematicians under the age of 40 for their outstanding contributions.

Deng Yu, 37, a professor at the University of Chicago, together with Ma Xiao and Zaher Hani, made a breakthrough on Hilbert's sixth problem by providing a rigorous mathematical connection between microscopic particle dynamics and macroscopic fluid equations.

Wang Hong, 35, a tenured professor at the Institut des Hautes Etudes Scientifiques in France and a Silver Professor at New York University's Courant Institute School of Mathematics, Computing, and Data Science, resolved with Joshua Zahl the three-dimensional Kakeya conjecture — a mathematical problem unsolved for over a century — using analyses and a geometric theory.

Different paths

Their journeys to global recognition followed markedly different paths.

Deng took the typical route for gifted students in China — winning a gold medal at the International Mathematical Olympiad and gaining admission to an elite mathematics program.

Wang's progress was far more unconventional, Xinhua News Agency reported. Hailing from Guilin in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region and lacking formal math Olympiad training, she skipped two grades and entered Peking University at the age of 16.

She initially enrolled in the School of Earth and Space Sciences but transferred to the mathematics program, driven by her interest in the discipline.

Tian Gang, a professor of mathematics at Peking University and an academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, said Wang studied in a highly competitive environment with many brilliant peers.

Tian said the awarding of the Fields Medal to Deng and Wang could inspire a new generation of Chinese students and scholars, instilling in them the confidence to tackle major mathematical problems.

However, he added while Chinese scholars are leading the world in some areas and are on par with top academics in others, the overall pool of mathematical talent in China remains limited.

"I believe there is hope for us in some of the core areas of mathematics," Tian said. "Chinese mathematicians can make even greater contributions to the world."

Yau raised concerns about the emphasis on mathematics competitions and training programs in China, which he believes can be detrimental to the search for genuine talent. Mathematical talent requires a solid foundation, as well as imagination, curiosity and resilience, he said in an interview with The Paper.

He said Tsinghua University's Qiuzhen College, established in 2021 to strengthen the cultivation of the country's mathematical talent, will soon undergo a comprehensive reform of its admissions and examination processes.

The goal is to recruit students who truly love mathematics, rather than those who are motivated by utilitarian goals or simply aim to enter prestigious universities, he said.

Competition system

In China, mathematics competitions remain one of the most visible ways for high school students to demonstrate ability. Since 2020, the Strengthening Foundation Plan has expanded admission pathways for students with strong potential in mathematics and other basic sciences.

> Debate on nurturing talent rekindled after China's major international accolades

However, only a small number of top performers enter university this way.

This competition system has also proved itself on the international stage. China won the 2026 International Mathematical Olympiad, held in Shanghai in July, finishing first overall with all six members earning gold medals and three achieving perfect scores.

At 18, Tang Mengmeng from Jiaxing, Zhejiang province, was among the best high-school mathematics competitors. She placed first at the 24th Chinese Girls' Mathematical Olympiad and won a gold medal at the Chinese Mathematical Olympiad.

Tang began mathematics competition training in high school and devoted about a year to intensive Olympiad preparation. Although she ranked among the country's strongest contestants, she did not join the national training squad and instead entered Tsinghua University through the *gaokao*, eventually studying electronic engineering.

Tang believes competitions and the *gaokao* develop different abilities. Olympiad problems reward deep exploration, creativity and persistence.

"You may spend four and a half hours solving just three questions, and even that is not always enough. The *gaokao* national college entrance exam, by contrast, demands broad knowledge, speed and consistency across multiple subjects," she said.

Despite her achievements, Tang chose not to pursue pure mathematics at university. She was attracted by the growth of technology-related fields and said electronic engineering offers a practical way for her mathematical background to be useful.

"Many mathematics graduates eventually move into areas such as finance, quantitative trading and education rather than pure research. I don't think I'd likely be able to stick with pure math forever," she said.

As technology-driven industries expand, mathematical thinking is becoming increasingly important beyond academic research.

The World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report 2025 identified analytical thinking as the most sought-after core skill among employers, with artificial intelligence and big data among the fastest-growing areas.

Mat Tang is vice-president of a Beijing-based game studio and oversees game development and product design.

But the 2008 Fudan University mathematics graduate did not enter gaming right away. He briefly worked in risk control at a State-owned bank before moving into game development, inspired by a mathematics alumnus in the industry.

"I was fascinated by the way he described game development. I enjoyed playing games myself, and creating virtual worlds through design and technology sounded exciting," said Mat.

In the early stage of his career, Mat focused on game systems and numerical design, building mathematical models for combat systems, in-game economies, and player progression.

"Game development teams were smaller and less specialized at that time. As a mathematics graduate, I was often responsible for anything related to numbers and formulas," he said.

His work involved translating gameplay rules into mathematical models, adjusting parameters and using programming tools to test different scenarios.

For Mat, the lasting value of mathematics lies less in specific formulas than in the way it trains people to approach problems.

"When dealing with complicated problems, it pushes you to make your assumptions clear and explain why a conclusion follows," he said.

"Mathematics research and competitions are paths that only a small number of people pursue. For most people, the value of mathematics lies in applying it to real problems, developing the ability to keep learning and understanding the patterns behind the world," he said.

Beyond medals

Yuan Yuan's 14-year-old son is in a science-track class at a leading secondary school in Shanghai. He began learning mathematics outside school in kindergarten and later performed strongly in competitions.

"At that time, I saw mathematics mainly as a way to help him enter better schools," said 40-year-old Yuan. "Medals, rankings and admission opportunities become visible indicators. It is easy for parents to equate being good at mathematics with winning competitions," she said.

But her perspective changed after her son entered the science-track class, surrounded by many highly capable students. "He realized that being good at math in his previous environment did not necessarily mean standing out here," said Yuan.

For Yuan's son, the transition was challenging. "A lot of the time, he could solve a problem only in the exact way he had learned it. Once the question changed slightly, he struggled to adapt," said Yuan.

His academic scores fluctuated, and his confidence was affected. "The boy who used to sit with a hard problem for an hour or two and light up when he cracked it stopped wanting to think that deeply, because the schoolwork just kept piling up," said Yuan, adding he started to question whether he was actually good at math.

As his school adjusted its competition program, his participation in competitions ended, and he now focuses more on broader math learning.

Yuan's experience reflects a broader debate among Chinese families over how early and seriously children should pursue mathematics.

The tutoring industry itself was reshaped in 2021, when the "double reduction" policy restricted for-profit, curriculum-based tutoring for students from kindergarten through ninth grade.

For more than a decade, Yan Lingling has observed changes in the education landscape, first as a math teacher at TAL Education Group and later as the founder of Factorial Excellence Training. One major shift she has witnessed is that families are beginning to plan mathematics education earlier than before.

"When I first entered the industry, most families started planning mathematics learning around Grade 1. Now some begin as early as kindergarten," said Yan.

Many parents judge mathematical potential through indicators, such as high exam scores, quick classroom responses or strong academic performances. But these signs do not always show whether a child can understand concepts deeply or solve problems independently, Yan said.

"If we look at future potential for advanced mathematics learning, early signs may include strong number sense and quick mathematical thinking. But as children grow, it is equally important to see whether they can understand concepts, solve problems independently and develop good learning habits," said Yan.

Beyond speed and immediate results, persistence also plays an important role.

Yan has also changed her view of how mathematical potential should be judged. Institutions often assess children by whether they have developed certain knowledge systems and problem-solving approaches. However, such assessments may also place children with fewer early learning opportunities at a disadvantage. A child who scores 70 or 80 in primary school mathematics, she said, may not lack ability, but may simply have had fewer opportunities for early guidance.

Parents' attitudes are also changing. "More families are becoming calmer. They are no longer simply pushing children to compete but are trying to match learning resources with their children's abilities," said Yan.

For parents whose children show no immediate strength in mathematics, Yan advises focusing on long-term development.

"Start with learning habits, take things step by step, provide resources that match the child's ability, and take a long-term view rather than expecting immediate results," she said.

Balanced approach

Xu Lu, an associate professor of probability theory and mathematical physics at the Gran Sasso Science Institute in Italy, experienced several educational pathways of Chinese mathematics.

He underwent competition training at No 2 High School of East China Normal University and studied mathematics at Peking University, followed by doctoral studies at the University of Tokyo and postdoctoral research at Paris Dauphine University.

Xu sees mathematics more as a way of understanding the world than a path to academic recognition. "Starting from a limited set of conditions and arriving at a definite conclusion through logical reasoning is deeply rewarding."

Encouraged by his parents and teachers as a young student, he explored increasingly challenging problems beyond regular coursework.

Like many competition students, Xu once hoped to enter Peking University through a recommended admissions pathway, but eventually made it through the *gaokao*. The experience taught him that goals and pathways are not always the same.

"The biggest difference is the nature of the task. Competition problems are carefully designed, with clear conditions and goals, while research is a much more open-ended process," said Xu.

Researchers must first consider whether a question is meaningful and worth pursuing, he said. "Sometimes the problem itself is not clearly defined, and the direction needs to be adjusted along the way," he said.

Xu believes aptitude for the subject should not be limited to ultimately becoming a mathematician. "Using mathematical methods to solve practical problems, building models, analyzing data and applying mathematics to other fields are also forms of mathematical ability," said Xu.

Competitions cannot measure qualities such as identifying meaningful questions, discovering new directions and remaining patient through uncertainty. "Whether someone is suitable for mathematical research cannot be judged only by competition results," he said.

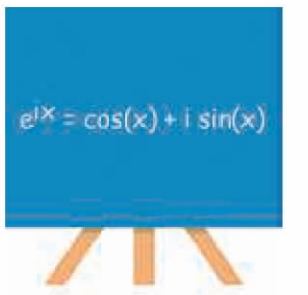
While awards such as the Fields Medal represent some of the most visible achievements, Xu sees them as only one part of mathematical achievement.

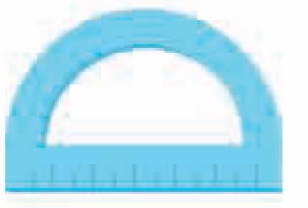
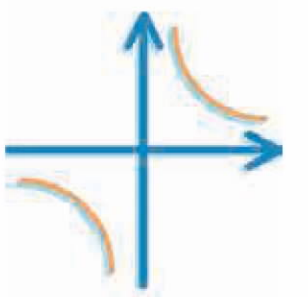
"Breakthroughs and top awards are important, but they do not represent all forms of success. Developing useful theories, proposing meaningful questions, explaining existing ideas from new perspectives and helping the growth of future generations are also valuable contributions," said Xu.

He believes mathematical training makes people pay more attention to evidence, question assumptions and consider whether a conclusion truly follows from its conditions.

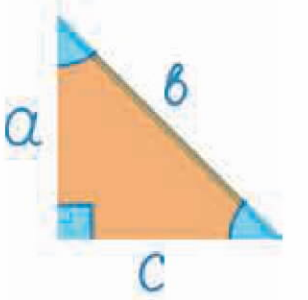
"Whether someone is suited to mathematics should never be treated as a one-time judgment. A person who continues exploring questions, adjusts their thinking over time and gains genuine satisfaction from the process is often the one who can go further," said Xu.

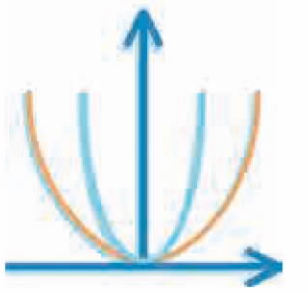
Contact the writer at sunnyu923@163.com







Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:34 PM

TOP NEWS

License delays taking toll on US companies

Survey reveals firms suffering huge losses in exports and decline in global market share

By **BELINDA ROBINSON**
in New York
belindarobinson@chinadailyusa.com

Inside
Comment, **page 6**

Companies from the United States surveyed by the US-China Business Council have reported massive losses in exports and a decline in their global market share due to monthslong delays over the US export licensing regime, which they said was slow and allowed foreign countries to fulfill orders much more quickly.

"Monthslong licensing delays are costing the United States billions of dollars in exports and eroding American market share globally," the USCBC found in a flash survey of companies released on Tuesday.

The findings from the survey, conducted in July by the nonprofit association, involved 31 companies from a variety of industries including technology, manufacturing, energy and healthcare.

According to the findings, 73 percent of the surveyed companies said license delays led to lost sales to Chinese competitors, and 64 percent of the companies said they lost market share in China.

Additionally, the "export licenses are for items that are already available in China from Chinese or international suppliers, effectively sidelining American companies for no strategic gain", the report said.

The report comes as trade issues over technology and restrictions resurfaced between the US and China over the past few months.

In July, the US imposed new Section 301 tariffs on goods from China and dozens of other trading partners at differing rates, over allegations of a lack of enforcement of "forced labor" bans.

The US Federal Communications Commission has also unveiled a ban on new foreign-made humanoid robots and power inverters.

At least 95 percent of those polled said that long license review times were their most common problem.

Around 71 percent experienced delays in receiving a license to specifically export items to China.

The survey said that "poorly calibrated US export controls weaken American companies in China", which gave market share to foreign competitors while "reducing the profits available for research and development".

The USCBC report found that when the order is filled more quickly by a non-US competitor, US companies incur huge losses. The companies said the extended processing times also made them look like unreliable suppliers.

For some, this led to billions of dollars in losses. "More than one-third of companies, or 36 percent, have faced at least tens of millions of dollars in losses from delayed licenses, with multiple companies suffering hundreds of millions or even billions of dollars in losses," the survey said.

The survey uncovered a series of other major issues faced by US companies while navigating licenses. These ranged from unreliable communication with licensing officers to unclear policy interpretations.

Some companies described being "unable to reach licensing officers by phone, confusion over the scope of the Foreign Direct Product Rule, and ad hoc actions that bypass standard processes".

Another point of confusion was the "Affiliates Rule", which extends export restrictions to parties which are at least 50 percent owned by entities on the Entity List or Military End-User List.

It was issued as an interim final rule in September 2025 and took immediate effect, but has since been suspended until November, leaving many companies in limbo, the report said.

Some companies added that they had faced unjustified export license rejections.

The USCBC said that at least 66 percent of the companies have had licenses pending for at least three months, exceeding the US Department of Commerce's statutory requirement to process applications within 90 days.

Meanwhile, 31 percent have had licenses pending for one to two years, the survey found.

That stands in contrast to previous US administrations, which 56 percent of the companies said took one to three months to review comparable export licenses.

The US Department of Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security showed in reports to Congress that the average processing time for export licenses slowed to an average of 62 days in 2025, compared to 38 days in 2023.

"The facts are clear: delayed license approvals enable Chinese and international companies to backfill American products," the report said.

C919 completes first international commercial flight

By **LUO WANGSHU**
luowangshu@chinadaily.com.cn

Air China introduced China's domestically developed C919 large passenger aircraft on its daily Beijing-Ulan Bator route on Wednesday, marking the narrowbody jet's first international commercial flight.

Flight CA723 took off from Beijing Capital International Airport at around 3 pm and touched down in the Mongolian capital at 4:58 pm local time, according to Air China. The return flight, CA724, departed Ulan Bator at 7:04 pm local time, and arrived in Beijing at 8:49 pm, according to Umetrip, a Chinese aviation travel service platform.

The move takes the C919 beyond the domestic network, where it has accumulated most of its commercial experience since entering service in 2023. The aircraft's previous appearances overseas have been at air shows and for demonstration flights. In 2024, it toured Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia and Indonesia to test compatibility with airports, ground equipment and flight procedures, according to its manufacturer, Commercial Aircraft Corporation of China.

According to COMAC's official website, the C919 seats 158 to 192 passengers and has a range of 4,075 to 5,555 kilometers. It received its type certificate from the Civil Aviation Administration of China in September 2022 and made its first commercial flight with launch customer China Eastern Airlines in May 2023.

As of Monday, C919 aircraft operated by Air China, China Eastern and China Southern were serving 57 routes connecting 25 cities and had safely carried more than 7.5 million passengers, according to COMAC.

Hao Xin, an Air China C919 captain who transitioned to the fleet in 2024, earlier told China Daily that the aircraft had become part of the carrier's routine operations, supported by coordinated scheduling, maintenance and ground services.

"Safety margins and procedures don't change when demand is higher. We rely on the same rules every day," he said.

Lin Zhijie, a civil aviation industry analyst, said that C919s will "certainly fly to more countries".

"The point is not simply to fly farther, but to operate out of more demanding airports and in different markets, especially mature aviation markets. That is where the aircraft can build experience and demonstrate its capabilities," he said.

Lin said certification by major overseas regulators should be viewed as a door opener and an accelerator for wider market access, rather than the sole measure of the aircraft's international progress. Its overseas support network, including maintenance, spare parts, training and technical assistance, is still being developed, he added.

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Giant work of art



People view an enormous *thangka* painting during a traditional "sunning of the Buddha" ceremony at the Drepung Monastery in Lhasa, Xizang autonomous region, on Wednesday. During the event, temples unfurl giant *thangka* on a viewing platform or hillside for the public to view. The event also marked the opening of the traditional Shoton Festival, which features yogurt banquets and Tibetan opera performances. JIANG FAN / XINHUA

Drone strike



Emergency and safety teams contain a blaze at an oil refinery in Zawiya, Libya, on Tuesday. Authorities said the roof of a diesel storage tank was targeted by a drone, sparking a fire, and that there were no "serious injuries". Libya's National Oil Corporation said an investigation into the attack was underway. YOUSEF MURAD / AP

Green: Legacy power hubs get tech overhaul

From page 1

"The megaproject ensures a highly stable and reliable power supply for Brazil's core economic regions, successfully resolving the nation's developmental bottleneck of spatial energy mismatch," said Ye Xiaoning, a senior engineer at the State Grid Energy Research Institute.

Ye emphasized that the project establishes a global paradigm for cross-regional clean energy transmission, proving the safety, maturity and global applicability of China's ultra-high-voltage grid technologies.

Beyond Brazil, China's clean energy footprint is having a transformative impact across other extreme terrains in South America. In Argentina, the Cauchari solar project stands as one of South America's largest single photovoltaic power stations, and is the world's highest-altitude solar park.

Situated over 4,000 meters above sea level in the Andes Mountains, the 315-megawatt complex features more than 1.2 million solar panels. The landmark installation has ended Jujuy province's long-standing reliance on power transmitted from other provinces, achieving local energy self-sufficiency.

Furthermore, China's unparalleled expertise in hydropower operation has breathed new life into Brazil's legacy energy assets. Through a landmark $3.7 billion transaction establishing a 30-year concession, CTG Brasil officially took over the operation of the Jupia and Ilha Solteira hydropower stations, which feature a combined capacity of nearly 5 million kilowatts and meet the electricity needs of over 6 million people annually.

Rather than merely managing the aging infrastructure, CTG initiated a monumental technical overhaul. By upgrading mechanical equipment that had operated for nearly half a century into fully digital and intelligent monitoring systems across 12 generating units, CTG successfully performed a "heart transplant" on the legacy power hubs.

Industry observers said these milestone projects are just the beginning. As more Latin American nations accelerate their ecological transition, Chinese enterprises are poised to deepen their engagement through localized manufacturing, joint research and green financing under the framework of high-quality Belt and Road cooperation.

As this Sino-Latin American energy synergy continues to unfold, it proves that China's mature grid and generation solutions are essential enablers for emerging economies seeking to decarbonize at affordable costs while maintaining power stability and self-sufficiency, said Ye.

"Together, China and Latin America are actively charting a shared, sustainable course for the global energy revolution and setting a powerful example for Global South cooperation," he said.

Pressure: ASEAN businesses cannot afford to wait

From page 1

Releases from Japanese reserves, new feedstocks for refineries in Malaysia and the Republic of Korea and increased US exports have all helped the region manage the energy price and supply shock far better than it did the 1979 oil shock.

But growth in the region has slowed, fuel subsidy policies are being reviewed and rising carbon prices are incentivizing more emissions reductions. Although the global recession that was forecast has not materialized, the lesson for the region is to urgently build energy resilience with new technologies and new sources of supply.

In Southeast Asia there are developments like the ASEAN Power Grid, and proposals to connect energy infrastructure through initiatives such as the Indonesia-Singapore-Malaysia gas pipeline, the Lao-Thai-Malaysian-Singaporean electricity transmission system, the proposed submarine electricity cabling and the interest in offshore wind turbines.

At the same time, AI data centers are proliferating throughout the region. This tech shock differs from previous technology waves because agentic models are developing so fast. There is a race to build huge data centers.

There is so much that we do not yet know. Will we see AI continue to make such vast strides? How will it be used by industry, governments and people? What new products and services might it deliver? Will we really see the productivity growth that has been promised? And how will governments address the white-collar job displacement that is already underway?

There are more questions to ask about data centers. Will they continue to be built at such a large scale, and, if so, how will the demand for energy and water be met? Will they be located near energy generation or near factories and cities? How will industrial processing be priced? How can data be protected? Will the data centers be owned by big tech firms or by industrial operators?

Southeast Asian businesses are watching how China deals with AI and data centers, seeking answers to these questions.

Currently, it seems the development pace of Chinese AI models is some months behind the US, but the new models are being developed more cheaply.

Can China achieve the same scale of production and innovation that it achieved with green technology, to deliver cheaper AI and more energy-efficient data centers? What about the availability of renewable energy, the land necessary for data centers and expanding the capacity of transmission lines for electricity and fiber optic cables for data?

One big question is whether China will become a major hub for the region's data processing, or whether other countries will want their own. Would a strong regulatory regime be sufficient to guarantee data sovereignty? Will Asian users convert to either US or Chinese technology stacks, or will they aim for a dual ecosystem?

ASEAN will no doubt be looking for homegrown capability based on open-source Chinese models, but they will still need infrastructure, semiconductors, technical standards and ongoing engineering support. Singaporean AI models have adopted Alibaba's architecture; Chinese semiconductor fabrication plants are being built in Malaysia and elsewhere.

ASEAN businesses do not want to be caught up in a US-China digital trade war, but they cannot afford to wait.

The author is former governor of the Reserve Bank of New Zealand, former executive director of the APEC secretariat and a professor at Victoria University of Wellington. This article represents his own views. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Facility: Project joins broader tour trail

From page 1

With a total investment of 746 million yuan ($110.7 million), the 816 Project spanned 18 years — eight of blasting, excavation and concreting to carve out the cavern complex, followed by a decade of interior construction, equipment installation and plant fit-out — before the order to stand down came in 1984.

The facility never produced a gram of plutonium, and neither was any nuclear material ever stored within its walls.

The complex comprises 18 massive caverns and more than 130 passageways, including pilot tunnels, branch tunnels and shafts. Visitors can walk through the reactor bottom cavity, the colossal reactor hall, the diversion tunnels and the thermal circuit building.

Modern lighting bathes the rock in blues and whites, and the reactor hall — the largest cave at nearly 80 meters high and 25 meters wide — is like something out of a science fiction movie.

Since January 2024, a 60-minute immersive live-action show, Cave 816, has been staged regularly.

"It is impressive. So big, and all these levels," said Adriana Hart, a visitor from Los Angeles. "This is really something that you have to come and see with your own eyes to (appreciate) how spectacular this place is."

For Zheng Zhihong, general manager of the scenic site, the goal is to transform the 816 Project into a world-renowned industrial heritage destination. Local authorities have woven the site into a broader itinerary called the 503 Geocentric Loop Tour, linking it with the dramatic natural landscapes of Wuling Mountain Grand Canyon and the Baiheliang Underwater Museum, one of the world's oldest hydrographic survey sites.

To cap it off, visitors can enjoy a glass of red wine and a meal at the on-site military-themed restaurant, where the cavernous, concrete-walled interiors provide a fitting backdrop to this globally promoted tour.

Contact the writers at dengrui@chinadaily.com.cn

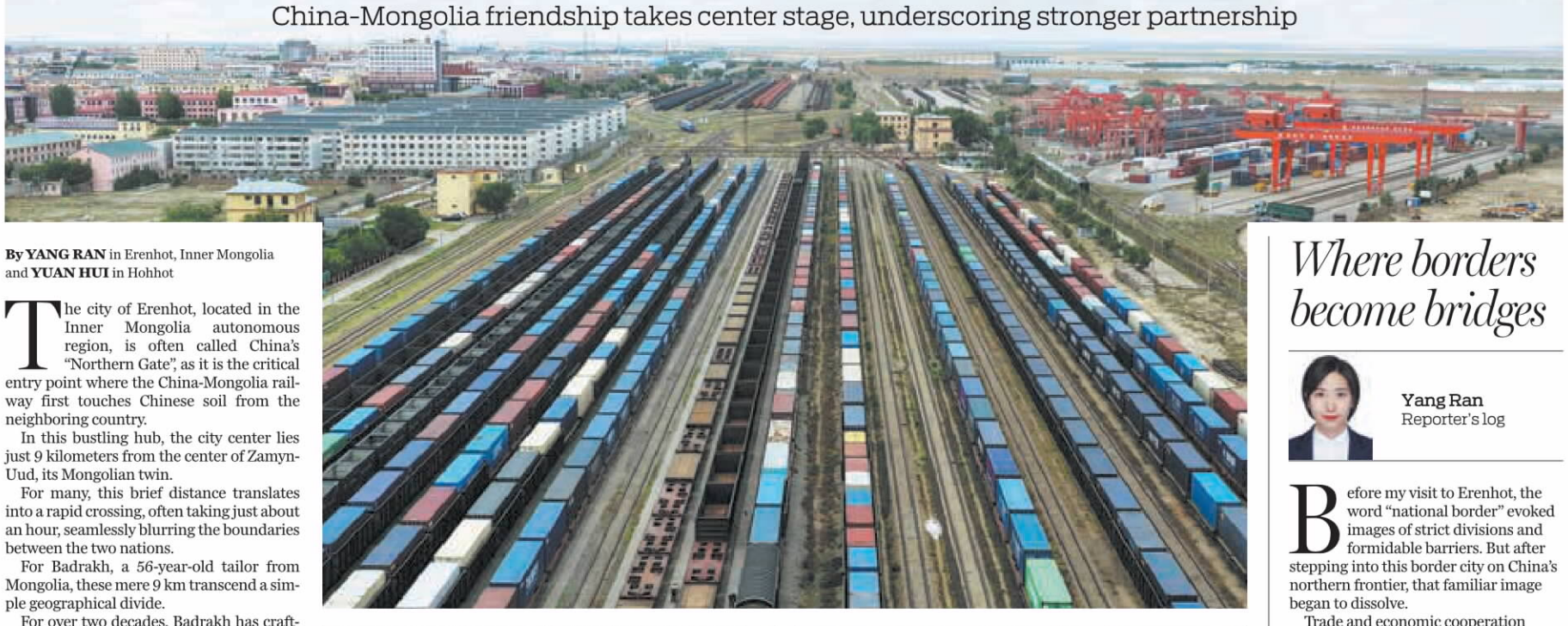
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:34 PM

CityDance

ACROSS BOUNDARIES, BEYOND TRADE

China-Mongolia friendship takes center stage, underscoring stronger partnership



By **YANG RAN** in Erenhot, Inner Mongolia and **YUAN HUI** in Hohhot

The city of Erenhot, located in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region, is often called China's "Northern Gate", as it is the critical entry point where the China-Mongolia railway first touches Chinese soil from the neighboring country.

In this bustling hub, the city center lies just 9 kilometers from the center of Zamyn-Uud, its Mongolian twin.

For many, this brief distance translates into a rapid crossing, often taking just about an hour, seamlessly blurring the boundaries between the two nations.

For Badrakh, a 56-year-old tailor from Mongolia, these mere 9 km transcend a simple geographical divide.

For over two decades, Badrakh has crafted traditional Mongolian robes with scissors and needles. But years ago, he made a pivotal decision: to move his established shop from Mongolia to Erenhot.

The seeds of this cross-border move were planted in 2018, when his cousin, who had married and settled in Erenhot, brought him a special order: dozens of Mongolian dance costumes for a local middle school. This gave Badrakh his first glimpse of Erenhot's market potential and vibrant commercial energy.

By 2023, Badrakh had opened his shop, PuBa Tailor, in Erenhot, drawn by the city's convenient access to a wide array of fabrics and competitive prices.

Today, Badrakh's life is inextricably linked to both Erenhot and Zamyn-Uud. He said many of his Mongolian friends cross the border daily, engaged in purchasing, transportation, and trade.

"Erenhot and Zamyn-Uud are critical hubs for China-Mongolia trade. Without these two cities, large-scale goods transfer would be impossible," Badrakh said.

A millennium of connection

The vibrant commercial relationship between the two places stretches back much further.

"Cross-border exchanges between the two cities can be dated back to the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368)," said Hong Hongxia, deputy director of the Foreign Affairs Office of the Erenhot Municipal Government.

During the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), the Yilin Post Station was set up in what is now the Erenhot area. Merchants would stop there to rest, exchange goods, and catch up on the latest news.

"Back then, the Erenhot and Zamyn-Uud regions served as key neighboring stopovers along the Silk Road, the ancient Great Tea Route, and other major trade routes, fostering spontaneous local trade for over two hundred years that laid a natural groundwork for deep people-to-people connections," Hong said.

The modern bond is inseparable from the railway. In January 1956, the Beijing-Ulaanbaatar-Moscow international railway line went into full operation.

It catalyzed the founding of Erenhot as a town on the Chinese side of the border and the establishment of Zamyn-Uud as a village on the Mongolian side, with the latter becoming the first railway hub for entry into Mongolia.

In 1991, the double-track railways connecting China and Mongolia were linked up within Zamyn-Uud, strengthening the logistics lifeline of the two cities on the Gobi Desert, Hong said.

"In 1992, the highway port opened for two-way traffic, normalizing civilian trade, family visits, and tourism. The foundation for sister-city cooperation was firmly established even then."

In 2019, Erenhot and Zamyn-Uud officially signed a sister-city agreement, making them a unique pair of border-port sister cities. They are not just neighbors but a model of friendly cooperation between China and Mongolia, Hong emphasized.

Official data from Erenhot underscore this closeness: Erenhot port handles over 70 percent of personnel exchanges between China and Mongolia and more than 80 percent of China's exports of livelihood supplies to Mongolia. Last year alone, the port recorded nearly 2.82 million border crossings — almost 8,000 people every day.

Driving growth

The logistics parks near the Erenhot highway port offer vivid testimony to these increasingly close trade ties. At the Erenhot Huitong International Logistics Park, there's a constant stream of trucks, while forklifts tirelessly load and unload cargo.





Top: An aerial view of China-Europe freight trains at Erenhot port in North China's Inner Mongolia autonomous region on June 24. ZHANG HAIFENG / XINHUA **Above from left:** A group of about 100 Mongolian students enter China through the Erenhot land port on April 7. Volunteers and a policeman help a Mongolian patient with vision problems get off the train on May 19 in Erenhot as he arrives for treatment under the "Belt and Road · Brightness Journey" project. PHOTOS BY GUO PENGJIE / FOR CHINA DAILY

According to Aruuhan, the park's office director, most goods exported from Mongolia to China are first transported to Zamyn-Uud. They then enter China through the Erenhot port.

Built in 2011 and operational since 2012, the park has witnessed the evolution of China-Mongolia trade. "Since 2023, the park has seen a significant increase in import volumes, primarily mineral products and meat, reaching an annual total of around 1 million tons in recent years," Aruuhan said.

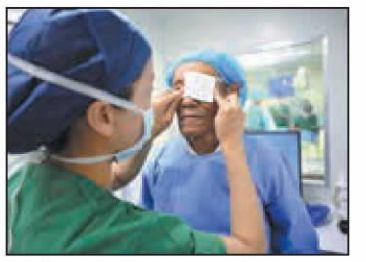
This increasingly frequent cross-border movement and smooth flow of goods underpin continuous efforts to upgrade China-Mongolia economic cooperation.

In March 2024, the establishment of China-Mongolia Erenhot-Zamyn-Uud Economic Cooperation Zone was approved. Spanning 18.03 square kilometers — 9.03 on the Chinese side and 9 on the Mongolian side — it is China's third cross-border economic cooperation zone with a neighboring country.

This April, the China (Inner Mongolia) Pilot Free Trade Zone Erenhot Area was established. The Chinese part of the earlier-approved economic cooperation zone was integrated into this new free trade zone, injecting significant new dynamism into Erenhot's opening-up.

Dou Xiaoping, deputy director of the Administration Committee of the China (Inner Mongolia) Pilot Free Trade Zone Erenhot Area, said the China-Mongolia Erenhot-Zamyn-Uud Economic Cooperation Zone was established to leverage the respective strengths of both countries.

"The Chinese side focuses on international logistics, import and export processing, and cross-border tourism, capitalizing on its market, technological, and capital advantages to accelerate the establishment of a modern cross-border industrial system. Meanwhile, the Mongolian side prioritizes bulk commodity logistics and international trade, leveraging its resources, geographical, and policy advantages," he said.



A volunteer assists a Mongolian patient who had undergone cataract surgery in Erenhot on June 21, 2025. AO LAN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Strategically located on the border adjacent to the Erenhot and Zamyn-Uud ports, the cooperation zone will operate under special customs procedures once fully established.

The cooperation zone already hosts over 20 registered enterprises, covering high-tech fields like new energy and computing power, he said.

Civil ties

Beyond trade, Erenhot and Zamyn-Uud are also playing an increasingly important role in connecting China and Mongolia in areas crucial to people's livelihoods, such as education and healthcare.

Li Jingmei, president of Erenhot People's Hospital, said the hospital established a cooperation relationship with Zamyn-Uud Hospital in 2014.

The two sides now have a regular mechanism for mutual visits and exchanges, with Mongolian medical staff coming to Erenhot for professional exchanges each year, she said.

"To better serve Mongolian patients who come here for treatment, the hospital has assigned two full-time medical staff fluent in Mongolian to provide reception and translation services," Li said. "In the past two years, the hospital has served over 3,000 Mongolian patients annually, continuously boosting Erenhot's cross-border medical outreach and influence."

Liang Zeshang, vice-president of the hospital, traveled to Mongolia last October for a voluntary medical outreach program. What struck him most was the local people's enthusiasm for traditional Chinese medicine.

"Many people are interested in traditional Chinese treatment methods. During the outreach, many Mongolians lined up daily to participate. Local medical staff also expressed great enthusiasm for techniques like acupuncture and medicinal *tuina* massage, and even expressed a desire to come to China to study."

In education, Erenhot also plays a crucial connecting role. Located close to Mongolia with seamless cross-border travel links, the city has become a popular destination for Mongolian students.

According to Su Ying, deputy director of the Erenhot Municipal Education, Science, and Technology Bureau, Erenhot has been offering educational programs for Mongolian students since 1992.

Over the decades, the city has educated more than 6,800 Mongolian students, now providing comprehensive services across all academic stages — from kindergarten to high school.

For 17-year-old Michidmaa, who attended high school in Erenhot, studying in China has not only allowed her to master Chinese but also to deeply experience Chinese culture and societal vitality. "This has strengthened my desire to continue my studies in China," she said. "My interest in Chinese culture fuels my desire to learn more here and drives me to keep exploring."

According to Su, a total of 104 Mongolian high school students graduated from Erenhot this year. To date, 49 have secured admission to top-tier Chinese institutions, including Fudan University, Wuhan University, and Zhejiang University.

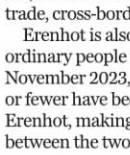
Contact the writers at yangran1@chinadaily.com.cn



Online See more by scanning the code.

A train passes through the border gate of Erenhot in Inner Mongolia autonomous region on June 24. LI ZHIPENG / XINHUA

Where borders become bridges



Yang Ran
Reporter's log

Before my visit to Erenhot, the word "national border" evoked images of strict divisions and formidable barriers. But after stepping into this border city on China's northern frontier, that familiar image began to dissolve.

Trade and economic cooperation zones along the sprawling border between China and Mongolia have transformed Erenhot into a vibrant channel of commerce, and a living connection between communities.

Erenhot is China's largest land port to Mongolia, and its most iconic landmark — the National Gate scenic area — straddles railways linking the two countries.

Every day, around a dozen trains rumble beneath the gate, carrying freight between China and Europe and passengers between China and Mongolia.

A short drive away lies the Erenhot Border Residents' Mutual Trade Zone, the first of its kind along the China-Mongolia border. Since opening in 2017, it has become a means for locals to improve their livelihoods.

Registered residents on both sides of the border can trade duty-free, with a daily allowance of up to 8,000 yuan ($1,176) per person — a policy that has turned the border into a gateway to prosperity.

Official figures demonstrate the impact. In 2025, the total trade volume reached 800 million yuan, generating over 6 million yuan in additional income for local residents.

While the border trade zone boosts small-scale commerce, the China-Mongolia Erenhot-Zamyn-Uud Economic Cooperation Zone, established in 2024, aims to take it a step further. Spanning roughly 9 square kilometers on each side of the border, the zone focuses on international trade, cross-border logistics, and more.

Erenhot is also making it easier for ordinary people to cross the border. Since November 2023, vehicles with eight seats or fewer have been allowed to cross into Erenhot, making it easier to drive between the two countries.

On the streets of Erenhot, Mongolian cars with distinctive black-on-white license plates are a common sight. Their passengers are often Mongolian merchants and citizens who have traveled specifically to shop. For them, Erenhot is not just a neighboring Chinese border city, but an affordable, well-stocked, and welcoming shopping destination.

This is most evident at Yiwu Commerce and Trade City and Wenzhou International Trade City Mall in Erenhot. Here, Cyrillic Mongolian emblazons nearly every shop sign — a small yet telling indicator of deeply interwoven communities.

Badrakh, a Mongolian tailor who has lived in Erenhot for three years, exemplifies this integration. "I can find everything I need in these markets. Shop owners even had buttons custom-made for traditional Mongolian robes I make. I've been working with these shop owners for three years now, and we've become like family," he said.

Badrakh's experience isn't an isolated case. Understanding and friendly exchanges break down language barriers in Erenhot's bustling markets.

Xu Yiwei, a fabric merchant at the Wenzhou International Trade City Mall, came to Erenhot a few years ago to take over the family fabric business.

Now the 37-year-old from Hangzhou has not only learned Mongolian for daily conversation but also become an expert in the patterns and colors favored by Mongolian customers.

His WeChat contact list is filled with Mongolian clients. Thanks to the rapid growth of cross-border logistics, many of them now order directly online.

Beyond business, Xu has built friendships with some of his customers — a few have even invited him to visit Mongolia.

Contact the writer at yangran1@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:34 PM

WORLD

Mourning declared as Colombia quake rescue continues



Patients from a clinic evacuated due to earthquake damage lie in beds at a temporary facility set up in a gymnasium at a nearby school in Cali, Colombia, on Tuesday. SANTIAGO SALDARRIAGA / AP

PEREIRA/CALI — Colombia on Wednesday declared three days of mourning for victims of an earthquake that demolished buildings in the west of the country, killing more than 200 people, as rescue crews continued searching collapsed buildings in western Colombia.

The 7.4 magnitude earthquake killed at least 254 people and injured more than 2,595, while more than 100 aftershocks were recorded in affected areas as of Tuesday afternoon.

The quake, the most devastating to strike Colombia this century, hit the country's coffee-growing region early Monday, bringing down apartment blocks and homes and damaging schools, hospitals and other public facilities.

In Pereira and Cali, rescuers used cranes, excavators, sniffer dogs and their bare hands to search collapsed buildings, while volunteers formed human chains to remove debris. In Cali, residents joined firefighters with picks and shovels, while in Pereira, army units combed through concrete and exposed steel.

Many residents spent the night outdoors because their homes were damaged or because they feared further aftershocks. A park in Pereira was turned into a temporary shelter with tents and mattresses, while sports centers and other facilities were being prepared to accommodate people affected by the quake.

The earthquake also damaged hospitals and other public facilities. In Cali, part of the Hospital Universitario del Valle collapsed, forcing doctors to move patients into a parking lot and treat some people in the open air.

Thousands of families awaited safety assessments of damaged properties. Dog and cat shelters also appealed for food, medicine and volunteers, while residents brought water, food and other supplies to affected neighborhoods and lined up at blood donation centers.

Communities in Choco, close to the quake's epicenter, remained without power or basic services. On Tuesday afternoon, three airports remained closed, while many areas, particularly Choco, still lacked gas, water and electricity. Some major highways also remained closed, Reuters reported.

Damage assessment

The National Coffee Federation was working with families to assess damage to farms and rural infrastructure, while communications remained patchy in some of the worst-hit areas. Officials said it could take days to establish the full extent of the damage and the final death toll.

Colombian President Abelardo de la Espriella declared a state of emergency and promised rent subsidies for affected families during a visit to Pereira on Tuesday.

International assistance was also being offered. The United States announced $15.5 million in emergency aid and Mexico's president said she is prepared to send hundreds of search and health workers, tons of health supplies and other equipment.

China will provide assistance in an appropriate manner based on Colombia's needs, said Tang Ying, spokeswoman for the China International Development Cooperation Agency on Tuesday, while other countries also offered assistance.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

NATO-style pact signals doubts over US commitments

By **LIU JIANQIAO**
liujianqiao@chinadaily.com.cn

The Mecca Joint Defense Agreement, signed recently by Saudi Arabia, Turkiye and Pakistan, reflects the security pressures facing the three countries amid the deteriorating situation in the Middle East and their growing doubts about the reliability of US security commitments, while its practical impact and effectiveness remain uncertain, experts said.

The agreement was signed by Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and Pakistani Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif during a joint defense summit held in the Saudi city of Mecca on Aug 7.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said on Aug 8 in an interview with Turkiye's Anadolu Agency that several countries have shown interest in joining the deal, voicing confidence that Egypt, which he called a "natural partner", will "be among us in the next stage". He said the agreement does not target Iran, clarifying that the deal is defensive in nature and aimed at protecting signatories from external "attacks".

The pact stipulates that an armed attack on any one of the three countries would be regarded as an attack on all. However, few details have been made public so far regarding the specific commitments of each country, and it remains unclear to what extent the pact would require them to take concrete military action in one another's defense.

According to a joint statement issued after the summit, the agreement reflects the three countries' commitment to strengthening their collective security and safeguarding regional peace and stability.

It seeks to bolster collective deterrence against any act of aggression and deepen defense cooperation across all sectors, the statement read.

Ding Long, a professor at Shanghai International Studies University's Middle East Studies Institute, said the agreement reflects growing doubts among Gulf states about the reliability of US security commitments, as well as their efforts to seek "additional security protections" amid an increasingly uncertain regional security environment.

As the conflicts involving the US, Israel and Iran spill over into the wider region and clashes between Yemen's Houthi militants and Saudi Arabia escalate, doubts are growing over Washington's security commitments to its Gulf allies, he said.

The fact that US military bases themselves have come under attack has further exposed the limitations of Washington's ability to provide security in the region, he said.

"The new trilateral defense agreement reflects growing dissatisfaction among Gulf countries, including Saudi Arabia, with the limitations of the US security umbrella, as well as increasing doubts over the reliability of US security commitments," Ding said.

He said the agreement signals a gradual shift away from the US-led security framework in the Middle East, as countries across the region increasingly seek greater security autonomy and diversify their security partnerships.

Ding also said the agreement does not signal a move toward "de-Americanization", but rather reflects efforts to reduce reliance on the US as the sole security provider.

"All three countries maintain long-standing security ties with the US, but have emphasized that the agreement will neither terminate nor replace their existing bilateral and multilateral security commitments," he said.

Regional influence

Shakeel Ahmad Ramay, CEO of the Asian Institute of Eco-Civilization Research and Development in Pakistan, said the agreement will undoubtedly influence regional dynamics, alliances and strategic alignments.

"Current trends suggest that the US and the West could face setbacks as a result of policies that have fueled perceptions of interference, prolonged conflicts, hegemonic ambitions and the extraction of benefits at the expense of regional countries," he said.

"Most importantly, there is a growing trust deficit, compounded by what many regional countries view as Washington's excessive and unjustifiable support for Israel," Ramay said.

The agreement may face numerous practical challenges in implementation, and its future remains uncertain, experts said.

"Government officials will meet to discuss future policies and actions, while a permanent secretariat will be established to oversee the implementation of the agreement. So, we need to wait for the outcome of the committee's meeting to see how the agreement will actually be implemented," Ramay said.

At present, the three countries face primary security concerns in different geographic theaters. If intense hostilities were to erupt, it would be difficult to mount a coordinated military response, Ding said.

Meanwhile, according to a joint statement issued by the three countries, the pact is open to other members. However, further expansion could make it more difficult to coordinate joint defense efforts amid potentially divergent security interests and priorities, he added.

"At this stage, therefore, the alliance remains more political than security-oriented and, as some analysts put it, is 'more form than substance'. While it could serve as a prototype for an 'Islamic NATO', it still has a long way to go before becoming a formal and operational security alliance," Ding said.

Xinhua News Agency contributed to this story.

TikTok reversal exposes limits of security claims

Ownership and geopolitical factors underpin earlier restrictions: Experts

By **LI JIAYING**
lijiaying@chinadaily.com.cn

The United States' decision to lift a ban on TikTok for federal devices shows that earlier restrictions hinged largely on ownership and geopolitical factors, prompting Washington to re-examine its earlier security rationale, experts said.

Their comments came as the White House Office of Management and Budget rescinded its 2023 implementation directive in a memo dated Monday, saying the popular social media app no longer poses a national security threat and may be used on US government devices.

Chen Hong, director of East China Normal University's Asia-Pacific Studies Center, said the move carries symbolic weight beyond the limited number of federal devices directly affected.

"This is undoubtedly an important restoration of TikTok's standing in the US market," Chen told China Daily. The ban labeled TikTok as a national security risk, while its removal means that label has been removed in legal and administrative terms, he added.

"The move also reflected regulatory acceptance of the platform's operations and recognition of its compliance and security safeguards," said Pan Helin, a member of the expert committee for information and communication economy under China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

In a sense, the policy shift came as the US government no longer had a basis for maintaining the restriction after TikTok's corporate structure was adjusted, Pan added.

The view follows a legal opinion from the US Department of Justice last month, saying that the restructured US version falls outside the statutory prohibition because the new TikTok USDS Joint Venture, operating independently of Chinese tech heavyweight ByteDance, is majority-owned by US investors and has revised its recommendation algorithm and cybersecurity program.

"The policy shift suggests that Washington's earlier security concerns over TikTok were driven primarily by its ownership structure and country of origin, rather than by specific technical risks," Pan said.

Chen echoed that the sequence of events exposes a weakness in the earlier security narrative. If TikTok had presented a major technical vulnerability, he said, that vulnerability could not have disappeared solely because the equity ratio and board composition changed.

In fact, the restructuring does not settle the wider debate over privacy protection. In an analysis published while the deal was taking shape last year, Nicol Turner Lee, a senior fellow in Governance Studies at the Brookings Institution, wrote that "the absence of a comprehensive US privacy law means that even with TikTok in the hands of American investors, concerns about user protections would persist".

Policy implications

Chen noted that TikTok has withstood repeated pressure largely because it is deeply embedded in the daily activities of US users, creators and small businesses, which would bear much of the cost of a ban.

"The lesson for US digital governance is that national security should not become an ever-expanding concept," Chen said. "Nor should every commercial, technological and social issue be securitized simply because a platform's parent company comes from a particular country."

The case also offers a cautionary lesson for Chinese technology companies entering the US market, where geopolitical risk assessment and response planning should be built into their overseas expansion strategies, Chen said.

"Companies should distinguish technical issues from politically driven allegations and, when faced with security claims unsupported by evidence, call for verifiable facts and standards applied consistently to all market participants," he added.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

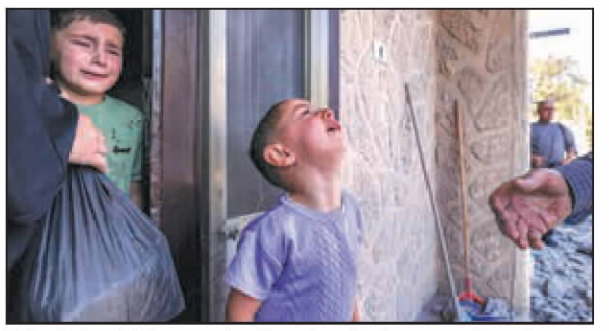
CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1892

Envoy urges halt to West Bank settlements, violence

By **MINLU ZHANG**
at the United Nations
minluzhang@chinadailyusa.com



Palestinian children react on Tuesday after the upper floor of a relative's home was demolished following his death in clashes with Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank. JAAFAR ASHTIYEH / AFP

A Chinese envoy to the United Nations on Tuesday called for immediate action to curb escalating violence in the occupied Palestinian territories, urging Israel to halt settlement activities and fully implement the Gaza ceasefire agreement.

Fu Cong, China's permanent representative to the United Nations, told an emergency Security Council meeting on the Palestinian question that China is "deeply concerned" about the recent escalation and mounting civilian casualties.

"The Palestinian issue must not be ignored or marginalized," Fu said, calling on the international community to act swiftly to stop violence, save innocent lives and uphold justice.

Fu said the situation in both the West Bank and Gaza has deteriorated sharply, with the Palestinian people enduring mounting suffering. "The root cause is that the basic principles of international law have not been observed, and the Palestinian people's rights to survival and development have long been disregarded," he said.

"Palestinian lives are as precious as those of any other people," Fu said, calling on the international community to safeguard the equal rights of the Palestinian people and uphold international fairness and justice.

'Dangerously escalating'

The situation in the West Bank is dangerously escalating, Fu said, citing settlement expansion, violations and damage to religious sites, blockades of refugee camps, mass arrests and growing settler violence.

Four Palestinians and one Israeli were killed in a recent incident in the West Bank, according to a statement by the Palestinian Health Ministry.

A total of 1,122 Palestinians have been killed in the occupied West Bank between the start of the Israel-Hamas conflict on Oct 7, 2023, and July 2026, including 76 killed this year, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

"Protecting civilians is not an empty slogan, but an obligation of the occupying power under international law," he said.

"Israel must implement Security Council Resolution 2334, halt settlement activities, curb settler violence and ensure serious accountability," Fu said, adding that the normal functioning of the UN agency in accordance with its mandate must be respected.

He also said China is concerned over the situation in Gaza, saying that Israeli military operations had continued despite progress announced on arrangements for the second phase of the ceasefire agreement.

The ceasefire agreement has been in place for 300 days, yet a lasting ceasefire has not been achieved, Fu noted. "The fundamental problem is not the lack of a ceasefire plan, but the lack of political will for a ceasefire," he said.

Fu called on Israel and relevant parties to "sincerely and fully" implement the Gaza ceasefire agreement and urged Israel to abide by international humanitarian law and lift restrictions on the entry of humanitarian supplies. "Countries with significant influence over the parties concerned should take concrete actions to ease the situation," he added.

Fu also reiterated China's support for the two-state solution, saying "Gaza and the West Bank are inseparable parts of the Palestinian state".

"Israel should end its illegal occupation of Palestinian territory as soon as possible and stop undermining the governance foundations of the Palestinian National Authority," he said.

China will continue to support the Palestinian people's pursuit of their legitimate national rights and work toward restoring peace and stability in the region, Fu said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:34 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Some lawmakers shooting US in the foot by recruiting informants, excluding researchers

There is a spin on the old joke about politics in Washington: If you can't solve a problem, create a committee. If that doesn't work, set up a hotline. The latest punch line is: if the hotline fails, blame it on China.

This sorry state of affairs is exemplified by the United States House Select Committee on China, which stooped to a new low on Tuesday when it asked US students, postdoctoral researchers and academics to report cases in which they believe they were denied research opportunities in favor of applicants from China. In effect, the committee is encouraging them to become McCarthyist informants in a competition over who gets to work in US laboratories and research institutes.

The public reaction has been skeptical, even scathing. One respondent asked whether universities are really choosing "less qualified" Chinese applicants over US citizens. Another dismissed the appeal as "ignorant jingoism". Someone else bluntly asked: "Is enforcing racism the mission statement of the Select Committee on China?"

The committee has overlooked the fact that the US didn't build Silicon Valley, Boston's biotech corridor or its world-class universities by checking passports. It built them by creating an ecosystem in which talent crosses borders, laboratories exchange ideas and ambitious entrepreneurs are drawn to pursue their careers.

Some in Washington now seem determined to turn that competitive advantage into a perceived security vulnerability. In April, the committee established a "whistleblower" email, encouraging US scholars and faculty to report research collaborations involving entities allegedly linked to China's defense and industrial sectors. The committee doesn't realize that there is a vast difference between safeguarding classified systems and treating scientific exchange as suspicious.

The US cannot aspire to win the technology race while scaring away the very people who can help it achieve that goal. The White House lifted restrictions on the use of TikTok on federal government devices on Monday, after finding that the popular social media app no longer poses a "national security threat" following the US administration's coercive deal. Under the new arrangement, ByteDance retains a 19.9 percent stake in the US operations — a far cry from the outright divestiture Washington once demanded, yet sufficient to keep the Chinese parent company as the single largest shareholder in the joint venture. Yet a China-born scientist working alongside an American colleague for US projects can still be deemed suspicious enough to warrant a congressional "red line". What exactly is the committee trying to protect?

A bipartisan group of US senators visited China in May and received a clear message: understand China better, communicate more, manage differences and expand cooperation where possible. Two technologically advanced countries cannot effectively manage competition by severing contact. Even US entrepreneur Elon Musk put it succinctly on X on Tuesday: "China is awesome. I strongly encourage people to visit."

That is a useful thought experiment for the committee. What if its members visited China, Chinese students studied in the US and scientists from both countries collaborated while competing fiercely? In Washington, it seems, that amounts to "espionage".

Some China-hawk lawmakers seem to inhabit a world of their own making — one in which they sit by their inboxes waiting for tips about who supposedly "elbowed" whom out of an opportunity, then turn such allegations into a witch hunt. Policy built on prejudice and suspicion is not statecraft.

Treating collaboration as conspiracy and reducing international research to a crude zero-sum contest is intellectual paranoia dressed in legislative robes. For the US, the real danger is that it will gradually lose the habits that forged its technological edge: openness, curiosity, immigration, competition and the confidence that the best way to beat rivals is to be better than them.

The recent Fields Medal winners, Chinese mathematicians Wang Hong and Deng Yu, both studied at Peking University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Their groundbreaking work emerged not in isolation but through international exchanges and collaboration. Mathematical truth knows no passport. A theorem proved in Princeton or Beijing belongs to humanity, not to any nation's geopolitical scorecard. Yet in today's Washington, such common sense is increasingly portrayed as naivete.

The committee may view its McCarthyist mailbox as a weapon against Beijing. But that weapon may ultimately shoot the US in the foot. In the 21st-century knowledge economy, the country that erects the tallest walls around its talent may discover that it has also built a ceiling over its own future.

Chinese EVs offer opportunity and solutions

As foreign automakers experience declining sales in China, primarily due to the rise of the country's electric vehicle industry, some major international brands with an eye on the future are choosing to partner with local companies rather than exiting the world's largest auto market.

General Motors and Chinese automaker SAIC Motor last week extended their joint venture partnership by 20 years, through 2047 — a clear vote of confidence in China's automotive market. The renewed agreement will see both parties step up collaboration on R&D, supply chains and global resources, while sustaining support for their electrification and intelligent vehicle initiatives.

That came on the heels of an agreement last month between Honda and Guangzhou Automobile to extend their joint venture to 2038, as the partnership seeks to fast-track its shift toward new energy vehicles and regain market competitiveness. Other similar deals include an agreement announced in July between Ford and Geely to establish a Europe-focused joint venture at Ford's manufacturing hub in Valencia, Spain, and one in May between Stellantis and Dongfeng Group to expand their 34-year partnership to include shared production of Peugeot and Jeep vehicles in China, targeting both the domestic market and global exports.

The tie-ups have occurred as China's auto sector rapidly embraces a new era, with new energy vehicles accounting for nearly half of all new vehicle sales in the country during the first half of 2026. According to data from the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers, China produced 7.438 million NEVs and sold 7.446 million in the first six months of the year, representing year-on-year increases of 6.7 percent and 7.3 percent respectively, highlighting robust manufacturing capacity and strong market demand.

Experts attribute this progress to China's robust supply chains, economies of scale, and the rapid iteration of smart features such as driving aids and intelligent cabin interaction. It has become an industry consensus that China is now pioneering the future of smart mobility.

As a result, international brands are partnering with local Chinese producers to catch the trend, in the hope of winning back market share in China and bringing technology from China to their home markets.

This is not a short-term expediency, but a rational decision made in accordance with market dynamics. Only by deeply integrating with local R&D capabilities and truly recognizing the value of Chinese technology in meeting users' needs can a legacy automaker seize the opportunities presented by the wave of transformation sweeping the industry.

Yet, in the face of China's rising car industry, some advanced economies such as the United States and some countries in Europe have resorted to tariffs and policy restrictions to block Chinese EV exports — a move that runs counter to market rules and defies the momentum of green development. It is wishful thinking that they can erase China's technological prowess and supply-chain strengths simply by erecting barriers. Rather, protectionism will only delay their own auto industry's transition and drive up the cost of sustainable transport for their consumers.

The popularity of Chinese EVs in the European Union and Canada exposes the irrationality of the protectionist walls now being hastily erected by some politicians. Rather than being a so-called industrial "threat", China serves as a vital provider of solutions for the global green transition. International automakers have already voted with their feet by deepening partnerships with Chinese producers and tailoring products to meet the preferences of Chinese consumers.

The green transition is a common cause for all nations, and climate action recognizes no borders. Chinese EVs offer affordable, varied green options that enable more countries to embrace cleaner and more efficient transport at lower costs. To frame competition as a "security menace" and approach global supply chains with zero-sum thinking is both factually flawed and detrimental to achieving worldwide carbon neutrality.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

Tariff refunds should prompt reassessment of trade policy

After the United States Supreme Court ruled in February that the US government's sweeping tariffs imposed under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act were illegal, the US Customs and Border Protection has been forced to process refunds. As of late July, the CBP had transferred roughly $100 billion — about 60 percent of the $166 billion it had collected — in tariff refunds to the Treasury for disbursement to importers.

A policy sold as a way to extract wealth from abroad instead pushed US Customs duty revenue into negative territory in May and June (down $0.04 billion and $25.6 billion respectively) as the refunds offset collection of the remaining tariffs. That pushed the federal deficit to $1.4 trillion in the first nine months of the fiscal year (October-June).

Under US federal law, the CBP must refund tariffs collected unlawfully with interest. The Cato Institute estimates that the delay in refunding companies for emergency tariffs invalidated by the Supreme Court is costing US importers a total of $700 million per month.

Small businesses that went bankrupt under the initial duty burden, or independent retailers without the resources to preserve customs records, may have little access to those refunds. The biggest refunds are reportedly flowing to companies best equipped to navigate the system. Walmart expects to get about $2.4 billion; Apple has received roughly $2.2 billion; Amazon about $600 million. But individual consumers have no automatic right to a refund.

This asymmetry has sparked a wave of consumer class-action lawsuits against major retailers and manufacturers, including IKEA, Five Below, Sony and Nintendo. Yet these suits face a formidable legal wall, as consumers face an almost insurmountable hurdle in proving that a price hike was driven 100 percent by tariffs, rather than inflation, logistics or shifting supply and demand. The law gives consumers no automatic way to get their money back. As Democratic Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts highlighted on Friday, everyday shoppers paid inflated prices while corporations recouped public funds.

Even if every dollar were returned, the refunds cannot undo the economic damage. With US tariff policy changing more than 50 times under the current administration since January last year, businesses have been left guessing what comes next. Companies that changed suppliers, moved production or lost market share cannot simply reverse those decisions.

After the Supreme Court struck down the executive power basis for emergency tariffs, the US administration has been using Section 301 since July to impose new tariffs on 60 economies. Washington seems trapped in a self-perpetuating loop: emergency tariffs, economic distortion, judicial veto, massive refunds and administrative reallocation to new statutory loopholes. The treadmill is already spinning anew.

On Monday last week, a coalition of 25 states filed suit in the US Court of International Trade to challenge the latest tariffs. Plaintiffs must now mount a grueling item-by-item slog across massive product catalogs, arguing over individual duties and whether the Office of the US Trade Representative followed proper procedures. This bureaucratic paper-chase will drain state legal resources and drag on for years — leaving local economies to suffocate under arbitrary tariffs long before any court gives relief.

It seems some in Washington have learned little from the $100 billion tariff debacle. The US administration can refund a tariff, but it cannot refund a lost customer. A recent US-China Business Council survey underscores the point: months-long delays in US export-control licensing are costing US companies billions of dollars in lost exports, even as many affected products are available in China from other suppliers.

— LI WEI, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Plan expands central bank's regulatory reach

Editor's note: *The People's Bank of China, China's central bank, has unveiled a comprehensive reform and development plan for the 2026-30 period. Economic Information Daily spoke to Dong Ximiao, chief economist at Merchants Union Consumer Finance; Tian Lihui, a finance professor at Nankai University; and Tian Xuan, dean of Peking University's Guanghua School of Management, on the importance of the plan. Below are excerpts of the interviews. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

The plan aims to strengthen China's financial sector and improve the central banking system. It focuses on restructuring the institutional frameworks that govern monetary policy, macro-prudential management and financial stability.

By expanding the scope of macro-prudential management, the central bank's regulatory reach will extend beyond the traditional banking system to include nonbank financial institutions and a wider range of financial activities across the economy.

Historically, risks have often emerged in areas beyond the scope of regulatory oversight. With a more comprehensive macro-prudential safety net, the focus will shift from reactive to proactive risk management. This is a fundamental shift in the central bank's role from merely responding to crises to actively shaping a secure financial environment.

The plan maintains a prudent approach to monetary policy, combining countercyclical and cross-cyclical adjustments with greater precision and flexibility.

The country's monetary policy is expected to shift from quantitative to price-based regulation by improving the mechanism for market-based interest rate formation, regulation and transmission. This will allow monetary policy tools to better achieve both aggregate and structural objectives.

At the same time, market-oriented exchange rate reforms will be advanced to strengthen the ability of China's financial system to withstand external shocks.

The proposal to develop a financial system tailored to scientific and technological innovation indicates a structural transformation of financial services. As the economy moves from factor-driven to innovation-driven growth, the allocation of financial resources must evolve accordingly.

Traditional lending decisions based largely on collateral and cash flow will increasingly give way to a pricing model that assesses technological barriers and the scope for substitution.

The parallel development of green finance, pension finance and digital finance represents a major avenue for the structural reallocation of credit resources.

Technology finance will play a more prominent role, providing technology companies with diverse financing options and increasing the supply of medium- and long-term capital for innovation. A comprehensive financial system combining investment, lending, bonds and insurance is expected to develop further.

During the 2026-30 period, the central bank is expected to guide financial resources away from broad-based coverage toward more targeted and effective support. By developing a technology-finance system and a technology-focused segment of the bond market, it aims to provide stronger financial backing for breakthroughs in key and core technologies.

Meanwhile, greater support will be directed toward green, inclusive, pension, digital and consumer finance, helping optimize the economic structure and upgrade the quality of growth.

The plan also seeks to expand the global use of the renminbi in international trade, develop offshore renminbi markets and strengthen cross-border financial infrastructure connectivity. These efforts are aimed at increasing the use of the renminbi in trade settlement, investment, financing and financial transactions.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:34 PM

VIEWS

Chen Shuangfei

People-centered approach key to CPC's successes

To understand China today, one must understand the Communist Party of China. And to understand the Party, one must understand why it places people at the center of its governance philosophy.

Many international observers view the CPC through the lens of ideology, institutions or state power. Yet within China's own political tradition, the Party's legitimacy has long been tied to a different question: whether it can improve the lives of ordinary people. From the revolutionary years to the current drive toward modernization, the Party has consistently defined its mission around people's interests, aspirations and well-being.

This people-centered approach reflects a governance logic rooted in China's historical experience and the Party's understanding of its own role.

The first principle is that development must serve the people. Historical materialism holds that people are the makers of history. In China's socialist system, people are regarded as the masters of the country, and this principle shapes the Party's approach to governance.

Policies are expected to address the public's concerns, improve livelihoods and expand opportunities for a better life.

The Party's people-centered orientation is also tied to its Marxist character. The CPC was founded for the people and has repeatedly stressed that it does not represent the interests of any privileged group. A well-known story from China's revolutionary history tells of three Red Army soldiers who shared half of their only quilt with a villager on a freezing night.

The story captures a relationship embodied in the Party: standing with ordinary people and sharing hardship with them.

The second principle is that development depends on the people. The Party comes from the people, is rooted in the people and draws its strength from the people. China's major achievements were not accomplished by the Party alone; they were achieved through the efforts of hundreds of millions of citizens.

During the revolutionary period, ordinary people provided food, transportation and support for the struggle for national liberation. During socialist construction, they rebuilt a country devastated by war and poverty.

Since reform and opening-up was adopted, they transformed China through decades of hard work, entrepreneurship and innovation.

Since the 18th CPC National Congress, Chinese people have played an active role in poverty alleviation, economic reform, environmental protection, public health efforts and risk prevention, helping to gain results that have attracted global attention.

China's experience has repeatedly shown that the closer the Party remains to the people, the stronger the country's capacity to overcome challenges. Governance cannot be judged solely by official declarations; it must ultimately be reflected in the people's assessment of whether their lives are improving. Respecting the people's initiative and creativity has, therefore, driven China's development momentum.

The third principle is that the fruits of development should be shared by the people. Common prosperity and social fairness have become increasingly important goals of Chinese modernization. Economic growth is not viewed as an end in itself, but as a means to enable more people to benefit from development.

Over more than a century of struggle, the CPC has pursued revolution, construction and development with a single overarching aim: enabling the people to live better lives.

China has eliminated absolute poverty and completed the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects. During the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period, China's per capita GDP rose from $10,632 in 2020 to $13,953 in 2025, exceeding $13,000 for three consecutive years.

Material progress, however, is only part of the story. China has also witnessed profound changes in its cultural confidence and social outlook. Confidence in the country's path, theories, institutions and culture has grown markedly, while the pursuit of a better, more civilized and more harmonious society has become a prominent feature of public life.

Whether one examines China's revolution, its reform era or its current modernization drive, a consistent thread emerges: people occupy the central place in the CPC's understanding of governance.

From the principle of "serving the people wholeheartedly" to the people-centered development philosophy and the idea that "the country is the people and the people are the country", the Party has continuously linked its future to that of the Chinese people.

As China advances toward its next stage of development, the CPC's governance remains anchored in the same conviction that has guided the Party throughout its history: China's modernization is meaningful only when it delivers a better life for the people, relies on the people's strength and allows the people to share in its achievements.

The author is a research fellow at the Research Center for Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, Party School of the CPC Central Committee (National Academy of Governance).
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Li Yang

US false missile test narrative exposes blatant double standards

The Conference on Disarmament in Geneva witnessed a farce steeped in political scheming on Tuesday.

The United States rallied about 40 countries to issue a so-called "joint statement on ballistic missile launch notifications", leveling unwarranted accusations against China over its July test of a submarine-launched intercontinental ballistic missile and demanding that all countries provide 24-hour advance notification ahead of missile launches.

In response, China's Ambassador for Disarmament Affairs Li Chijiang called the move political manipulation and blatant double standards.

China firmly opposes the attempts to turn the conference into a platform for political manipulation.

The US accusations are legally and politically untenable. Washington invoked the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation — a voluntary political commitment — to demand advance notification from China.

But as Li pointed out, China is not a subscribing state to the code and is therefore not bound by it. Using a voluntary instrument to pressure a non-subscriber to abide by it exposes the US' political maneuvering rather than being a good-faith effort to strengthen global security.

China has consistently conducted its intercontinental ballistic missile tests in a safe, standardized and responsible manner.

Contrary to the allegations, China notified the US and other relevant countries of the test in advance and it took prudent measures to ensure the launch did not harm the interests of any country, a spokesman for the Ministry of Defense confirmed. As Li stressed, such goodwill gestures must not be hijacked by geopolitical calculations.

Washington's accusations ring even more hollow in light of the fact that China has conducted only three intercontinental ballistic missile tests to date, the fewest among the five nuclear-weapon states. The US, by contrast, has conducted about 300 routine land-based ICBM test launches, including one earlier this year.

The US has also withdrawn from some international agreements and mechanisms on arms control, poured resources into expanding and modernizing its nuclear capabilities, and pursued nuclear-sharing and extended-deterrence arrangements.

Having failed to consistently uphold its own responsibilities concerning strategic stability, the US — which maintains a huge nuclear arsenal and continues to modernize its strategic forces — is hardly in a position to lecture China about missile testing.

China keeps its nuclear forces at the minimum level required to act as a deterrent, safeguard national security and maintain global strategic stability.

The country's legitimate and reasonable defense modernization should not be politicized or distorted.

What Washington has done at the Conference on Disarmament is a classic example of weaponizing a multilateral forum for narrow political purposes.

By rallying countries around baseless accusations against China, despite Beijing's advance notification and responsible handling of the test, the US has demonstrated precisely the kind of hegemonic and zero-sum thinking that undermines international cooperation on security issues.

The Conference on Disarmament, recognized by the UN General Assembly in 1978 as the world's sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, should not be turned into a political theater.

Attempts to downgrade it into a platform for bloc confrontation only weaken the credibility of the multilateral arms-control system.

The international community should see Washington's maneuver for what it is: an attempt to shift blame, deflect attention from its own nuclear record and constrain China's legitimate defense capabilities under the guise of global security.

As Li reiterated, China remains committed to peaceful development and pursues a self-defensive nuclear strategy.

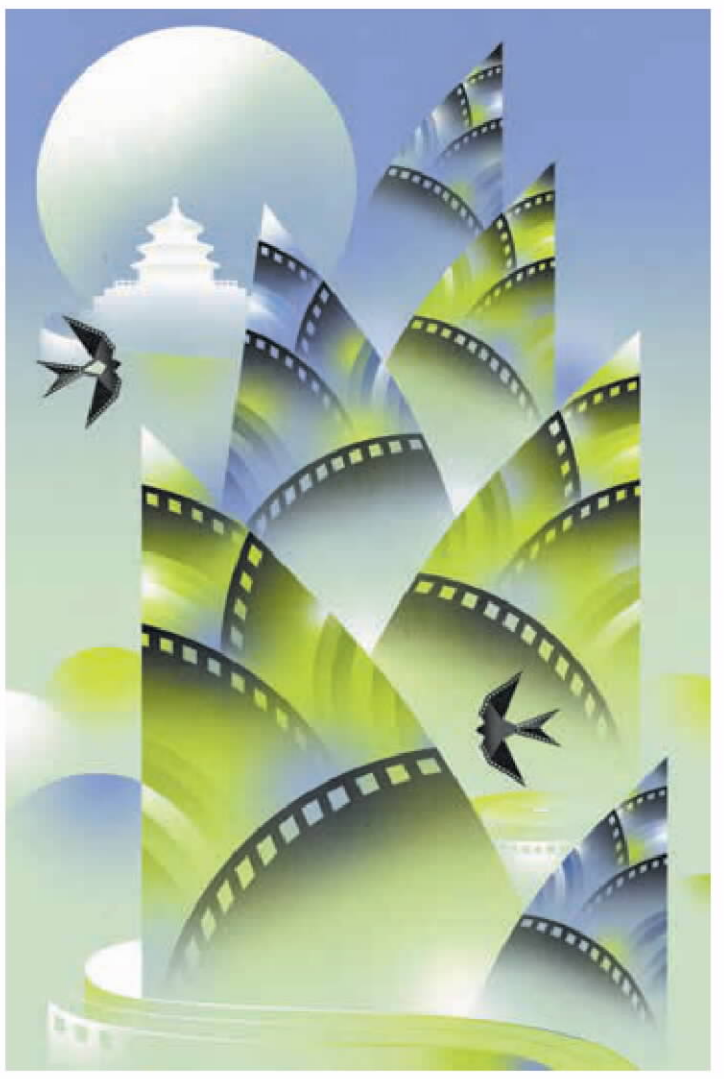
The real question is whether international rules are applied consistently or selectively, and whether multilateral institutions serve common security or narrow geopolitical interests.

If the US genuinely wants to strengthen global strategic stability, it should start by practicing the consistency it demands from others. The Conference on Disarmament needs less "microphone diplomacy" and more genuine disarmament diplomacy — based on equal treatment, mutual respect and rules that apply to all.

The author is a writer with China Daily.

A hundred flowers bloom in Chinese cinema

Editor's Note: *The Beijing Film Forum was organized by the China Film Association and the Beijing Federation of Literary and Art Circles on Aug 8 during the 38th Hundred Flowers Awards in Beijing. The forum brought together filmmakers, industry professionals and scholars to discuss the value, evolution and future of cinema. Below are reflections from four participants, as reported by Li Wei of China Daily.*



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

Cinema shapes the way we feel

While a film's plot may quickly fade from our memory, certain moments linger forever — an evocative glance, a poignant dialogue or a solitary figure walking away can stay with us for years, sometimes returning unexpectedly when we encounter feelings we cannot quite name. In this sense, cinema does more than tell stories. It shapes how we feel and understand the world.

This process unfolds in three steps: seeing ourselves, feeling for others and becoming a "we".

First, cinema provides a language for feelings that are difficult to express. For example, the conversations, silences and companionship between the women characters in *Her Story* allow audiences to recognize the emotions from their own lives.



Ding Yaping is the dean of the Faculty of Arts at Communication University of China and a distinguished professor at Beijing Film Academy.

Similarly, *Dear You*, with its Chaoshan dialect and family histories that crossed the South China Sea, speaks of waiting, regret and longing that many families can understand.

The influence of cinema on an era's sensibility often begins with such moments of recognition.

Then cinema takes us beyond our own experience. Each of us can live only one life, but a film allows us to live a borrowed life.

In *Big World*, audiences follow a young man whose disability is just one aspect of his identity.

In *Nobody*, seemingly insignificant creatures struggle with frustration and unfulfilled hopes, mirroring the struggles that many adults recognize in themselves.

In *Dead to Rights*, history acquires human faces through the fears, hesitation and courage of ordinary people.

Empathizing with others does not necessarily mean agreeing with them. It is to pause before judging and try to understand the other person's perspective.

This is the essence of cinema's people-centered nature. "The people" are not an abstraction. They are individuals with names, faces, disappointments and dreams. The more unfamiliar lives an era is willing to understand, the wider its emotional world becomes.

The lives we borrow from movies

The world of films is vast enough to encompass grand historical stories and ordinary lives, tragedies and comedies, art films and blockbusters.

Some movies may fail at the box office only to be rediscovered years later, while others that once dominated public discussion might eventually disappear.

Time is an audience of its own, and sometimes the most patient one.

Cinema has the rare ability to blend reality and imagination. It can preserve the details of everyday life and capture the changes of an era, but can also transform reality into dreams, poetry and possibilities. A film can entertain one day and offer consolation or social reflection the next.



Zhang Ji is a screenwriter, director and the vice chairman of the China Film Association.

I realized this personally when I met a struggling entrepreneur who was inspired by *American Dreams in China*, a film I wrote.

I didn't reveal that I was its screenwriter, unsure if the film had helped or misled him. But the encounter made it clear that a film can change the way a person imagines his own future.

It can encourage someone who feels trapped to believe that another life is possible.

This is why I am optimistic about the future of cinema, even in the AI age. Technology will certainly change the tools, the processes and even the forms of cinema, but each step will also present new human choices, expressions and possibilities.

Cinema continues to change.

What doesn't is our need to see ourselves, understand others and imagine a life beyond the one we know.

That is why, after all these years, I still ask myself the same question: How could we not love cinema?

What should a film investor really invest in?

Technology, especially artificial intelligence, has made this more urgent. AI will change filmmaking, lowering production costs and giving more people access to sophisticated creative tools.

I see this as an opportunity rather than a threat. If technology makes filmmaking easier, the truly scarce resource will be the ability to produce something meaningful.

AI can expand imagination but cannot replace the human experiences that give stories emotional truth. The more technology changes the tools of filmmaking, the more important it becomes for filmmakers to say something distinctive.



Li Tingwei is the deputy general manager of Bauhinia Film (Shenzhen) Co. Ltd.

A film's value should not be measured only by box office returns. Successful films can create new possibilities in tourism, cultural products, live experiences and other forms of consumption.

One creative work can generate value many times over, connecting the screen with the wider economy and with people's everyday lives.

This is why I remain optimistic about the future of cinema. Audiences are becoming more discerning, and different kinds of films find their own audiences. The market need not be a race where only the biggest thrive.

As a film investor, I seek stories with enduring power, not just the next hit. The most valuable film may not be today's top grosser, but the one people will still discuss tomorrow.

A filmmaker should never lose touch with the audience

Last summer, my film *The Lychee Road* was released in China. It tells the story of a Tang Dynasty (618-907) official tasked with delivering fresh Lingnan lychees to Chang'an, a journey that seems impossible because lychees spoil within days. The film offers a simple solution: keep the lychee on the branch.

I believe filmmakers have their own branch — the audience.



Da Peng is a Chinese filmmaker, actor, comedian, and host.

I did not come to filmmaking from a film school. With a degree in engineering management, I began my career making online videos, learning from viewer comments. If viewers said a joke did not work, I changed it. If they responded to an idea, I explored it further. This way, I learned a fundamental lesson: creators should first be viewers.

This is where the future of Chinese cinema lies. Films do not become meaningful because filmmakers make them or awards recognize them.

They become part of a culture when audiences respond, debate, remember and integrate them into their lives.

To stay fresh, filmmakers must stay connected with audiences.

Forgetting that we are audiences ourselves risks losing the very branch that sustains our work.

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

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:34 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

SHI XUNPENG AND NOPHEA SASAKI

Reshaping global value chains

The energy transition can redistribute industrial competitiveness and economic influence worldwide

The energy transition is doing more than replacing fossil-fuel technologies with cleaner alternatives. It is changing the foundations of industrial competitiveness, reorganizing international production and trade, and redistributing economic influence among companies and countries.



Shi Xunpeng



Nophea Sasaki

Thailand's electric vehicle market provides a vivid illustration of this wider transformation. For decades, Thailand was one of the strongest overseas bases of the Japanese automotive industry. Its position as the "Detroit of Asia" rested on extensive production networks, skilled suppliers and world-class capabilities in internal-combustion engines, transmissions and mechanical engineering.

That industrial order is now being tested by electrification. The market shift has been rapid.

Electrified vehicles, including hybrids, plug-in hybrids and battery-EVs, accounted for only about 3 percent of new vehicle registrations in Thailand in 2020. By 2025, their combined share had soared to more than 44 percent, comprising 21.8 percent for hybrids, 19.6 percent for battery-EVs and 2.9 percent for plug-in hybrids, according to data from Thailand's Board of Investment. In five years, electrification has moved from a marginal segment to almost half of Thailand's new-vehicle market.

This transformation is most clearly reflected in the shifting competitive balance between Japanese and Chinese automakers in Thailand, as the basis of automotive advantage moves from conventional engineering toward batteries, electronics and software. Based on brand-level sales data compiled by MarkLines, Japanese brands' share of Thailand's overall vehicle market fell from 88 percent in 2020 to 69.3 percent in 2025, while Chinese automakers' share rose from about 3.2 percent to 21.2 percent over the same period, and Chinese-owned brands accounted for 90.5 percent of battery-EV sales. Japanese manufacturers nevertheless remain the largest force in Thailand's overall automotive market and production base.

These figures are important, but the deeper story is that EVs change the technological architecture of the automobile and therefore the rules of competition.

The competitiveness of conventional vehicles was built around engines, transmissions, fuel systems, mechanical reliability and highly coordinated component supply chains. EVs depend on a different combination of capabilities: batteries, electric motors, power electronics, semiconductors, software, digital interfaces, charging systems and energy management. Mechanical complexity declines, while electrochemistry, electronics and software become more important.

This technological paradigm shift changes the relative value of accumulated assets. An advanced engine plant or a supplier specialized in combustion components may become less strategic, while battery technology, software architecture or power electronics become more valuable. New entrants can compete without first surpassing incumbents in every conventional automotive capability.

The consequences extend beyond technology itself. As the basis of competitiveness changes, so do trade flows, investment patterns and the location of production. In 2024, Thailand imported passenger vehicles worth about $1.58 billion from China, followed by Japan, $342 million, making China its largest foreign source of imported cars by value, according to data from the World Bank's World Integrated Trade Solution. Japanese manufacturers still produce extensively within Thailand, so import data do not capture the full balance of industrial activity. Even so, the pattern shows how electrification is redirecting cross-border trade.

The shift in trade is being accompanied by investment. Chinese producers are moving from exporting EVs to building regional production networks. BYD opened a $490 million Thai plant with annual capacity of 150,000 vehicles and battery assembly, within a wider wave of more than $3 billion in Chinese EV investment, according to Thailand's Board of Investment. Along with other projects, this is turning Thailand into a platform for both domestic sales and exports to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Thailand's policy response reflects this reorganization of international supply chains. Its objective is to turn import-led demand into local production, component supply and export capacity. By October 2025, cumulative approved investment in the Thai EV supply chain had reached 140 billion baht ($4.18 billion), spanning vehicle assembly, batteries, components and charging infrastructure.

The emerging structure is complex: Japanese incumbents, Chinese EV producers, Thai suppliers and regional markets are becoming part of a more diversified production network. Competition is increasingly centered on where batteries, electronics, software, research and other high-value functions are located, how trade and investment flows adjust, and how much of the resulting value host economies can retain. Japanese incumbents, too, are adapting.



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

Thailand is not an isolated case. In 2025, global electric-car sales exceeded 20 million and accounted for one-quarter of new cars sold. As manufacturers expand abroad, competition is moving beyond exports toward overseas factories, regional supply chains, local partnerships and control of strategic components.

The same mechanism is visible across the energy transition. Solar manufacturing is restructuring power-sector supply chains, while battery storage is changing how electricity systems balance supply and demand. Grids, power electronics and digital energy systems are becoming strategic assets as countries seek to integrate larger shares of variable renewable electricity. Low-emission hydrogen and related production processes may also influence the future location of steel, fertilizer, chemicals and shipping activities.

In the fossil-fuel economy, industrial advantage was often associated with access to oil and gas, refining capacity, combustion technologies and established heavy industry. In an increasingly electrified economy, competitiveness will depend more on affordable clean electricity, batteries, critical-mineral processing, power electronics, digital technologies, advanced manufacturing and the ability to integrate these elements into complete industrial ecosystems. The importance of these capabilities is already evident in the high geographical concentration of clean-energy-technology manufacturing and mineral processing.

This transition could redistribute global economic influence. Countries that control technology, intellectual property, finance and integrated supply chains are likely to capture a larger share of the value. Countries that mainly import clean technologies may reduce emissions while developing new industrial dependencies. Mineral-producing countries may attract investment but still capture limited value if extraction is not linked to processing, manufacturing and technological capability. A release by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in June noted that mineral-rich developing countries can develop industrial capacity, strengthen local processing and value addition, and move up the value chain.

China's experience illustrates how the energy transition is reshaping the foundations of industrial competitiveness. Over the past decade, China has built an integrated clean-energy industrial ecosystem spanning renewable power, batteries, electric vehicles, critical minerals processing and advanced manufacturing. This ecosystem has strengthened Chinese companies' competitiveness at home and abroad, while also accelerating the global diffusion of clean technologies.

The future of industrial competition will not be determined solely by traditional manufacturing advantages, but by the ability to build complete ecosystems that connect technology, supply chains, infrastructure and markets. As the energy transition unfolds, countries that can develop such integrated capabilities will be better positioned to shape the next stage of global economic development.

Shi Xunpeng is a professor at the University of Technology Sydney. Nophea Sasaki is a professor at the Sasin School of Management, Thailand. Both are fellows at the Institute for Energy Transition & Sustainability, an Australia-based virtual think tank. The authors contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



LIU YANRAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

CHAI QIMIN

Leap in renewables for a shared future

China's plan and actions for clean energy development show it is one of the most reliable partners for other Global South countries in climate action

China has strengthened its top-level policy design for Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement on climate change and its energy transition, driving a nationwide collective effort through innovations in policy, technology and market mechanisms. The country has achieved a series of globally recognized milestones in its renewable energy transition and is emerging as a key driving force behind the global green transformation.



China built the world's largest and fastest-growing renewable energy system during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period, with the share of installed renewable energy capacity rising from 40 percent to around 60 percent of its total installed energy capacity, according to the National Energy Administration.

China's green and low-carbon industries have made a historic leap from being incremental supplements to becoming primary growth drivers, with new energy vehicles, lithium-ion batteries and wind/photovoltaic equipment manufacturing leading a deep industrial transformation globally. These industries have evolved from policy-driven emerging sectors into robust new engines powering China's economic growth, achieving historic breakthroughs in investment scale, economic contribution and industrial competitiveness.

This sector is making an increasing and substantial contribution to the country's economic development. According to the National Development and Reform Commission, China's green and low-carbon industries together commanded a market of roughly 11 trillion yuan ($1.62 trillion) by 2025. In recent years, total investment in green and low-carbon sectors has become one of the fastest-growing segments in fixed-asset investment nationwide.

Innovation in green and low-carbon fields has also been exceptionally vibrant. According to the Report on Statistical Analysis of Green and Low-Carbon Patents (2025), the number of green and low-carbon patent applications published by Chinese applicants reached 120,000 in 2024, a year-on-year increase of 18.9 percent, contributing 49.2 percent to global growth. Green and low-carbon industries have become a new engine of high-quality development in China, positioning the country as a new global benchmark for innovation-led growth.

According to BloombergNEF's annual Energy Transition Investment Trends report, global investment in the energy transition surpassed $2.3 trillion in 2025. The Global South has shown even greater commitment and demand for energy transition investments. Among them, China has played a leading role in annual investment for several years. China has also become one of the world's largest exporters of new energy equipment and a leading provider of carbon neutral engineering technologies and solutions.

China has engaged in green cooperation with over 100 countries, helping reduce global levelized costs of wind and solar power by 60 percent and 80 percent, respectively. It is estimated that during the 14th Five-Year Plan period, exports of wind and PV products from China cumulatively helped other countries reduce emissions by approximately 4.1 billion metric tons. Through its massive domestic deployment and industrial capabilities, China has turned green technologies from luxury goods into affordable, universally accessible clean energy solutions, helping reshape the cost structure of the global energy transition.

In response to the multiple challenges of the global energy transition, China has formulated and released its plan for renewable energy development during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period. The plan sets forth several major categories of targets on renewable energy development: a total consumption target of approximately 1.8 billion tons of standard coal equivalent by 2030; a power generation target of roughly 3,500 gigawatts of total installed renewable capacity and about 6 trillion kilowatt-hours of annual generation, with wind and solar combined exceeding 2,800 GW and generating more than 4 trillion kWh of electricity; a non-power utilization target, with the total scale of renewable energy used for non-power purposes increasing 2.5-fold by 2030 as compared to 2025, equivalent to approximately 150 million tons of standard coal. During the 15th Five-Year Plan period, more than 300 million kW of new reliable peak power capacity from renewable energy will be added, while the scale of newly commenced offshore wind power projects nationwide will reach around 100 million kW.

According to the National Energy Administration, China's power generation mix will feature "half non-fossil, nearly half renewable and 30 percent new energy" by 2030. This ambitious blueprint is not merely a domestic development agenda but a strategic response with profound global implications. By setting such quantified and binding targets, China provides the international community with clear and credible expectations for its energy transition trajectory, thereby injecting much-needed certainty into global climate governance at a time when geopolitical turbulence and policy volatility elsewhere have raised widespread concerns.

The plan's emphasis on reliable substitution and progressively transforming renewable energy can help address the global challenge of integrating variable renewables into secure and stable power systems. By pioneering strong capacity metrics and system-friendly standards, China is setting new benchmarks for the world on how to balance massive renewable deployment with grid reliability.

Moreover, the plan's commitment to deepening high-level international cooperation across projects, industries, standards and certification signals China's continued openness to global partnerships. China welcomes foreign investment and will actively share Chinese technologies, standards and successful examples — such as zero-carbon industrial parks and green power supply — with Southeast Asia, Central Asia and Africa through the Belt and Road Initiative. According to the National Energy Administration, with total investment in the renewable energy sector projected to exceed 5 trillion yuan during the 15th Five-Year Plan period, China is poised to drive R&D, equipment manufacturing and construction across the entire industrial chain, generating powerful green growth momentum that will benefit global supply chains.

Through tangible actions and achievements, China has demonstrated the commitment of a responsible major country, proving in practice that addressing climate change and pursuing sustainable development are win-win global endeavors. China's plan and actions for renewable energy development during the 15th Five-Year Plan demonstrate that China is not only one of the largest incremental sources of the global green and low-carbon transition but also one of the most reliable partners for other Global South countries in climate action.

The author is a professor and the director of strategy and planning at the National Center for Climate Change Strategy and International Cooperation based in Beijing. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:34 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

Nvidia funding plan raising some eyebrows

Chipmaker's CEO reaches MOUs with six major financial powerhouses

By **MA SI**
masi@chinadaily.com.cn

US semiconductor company Nvidia's bold proposal to mobilize $500 billion from Wall Street for artificial intelligence infrastructure has drawn skepticism, with industry observers questioning whether the plan reflects genuine demand, or a financial move to prop up sales.

At the center of the debate is a simple but troubling question: if AI computing power is truly in such short supply, why does the chipmaker need to help its customers arrange financing? Some analysts suggest the arrangement may be designed to unlock orders that would otherwise remain on hold due to tight budgets.

The plan came into sharper focus on Monday, when Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang joined the chiefs of six major financial institutions — Goldman Sachs, BlackRock, Blackstone, KKR, Apollo Global Management and Brookfield — in a CNBC interview. Each firm has signed a separate memorandum of understanding to set up its own funding vehicle, channeling money from third-party investors into AI data centers and related hardware. The target is $500 billion, with the potential to grow even larger.

Huang called the initiative the "big idea", positioning AI computing capacity as a new asset class in its own right.

"These systems are not like our PCs, not like our phones. They are now revenue-generating assets — productive, long-lived, fungible and flexible," he said.

David Solomon, CEO of Goldman Sachs, said that asset-backed lending for such infrastructure is a logical step, precisely because the underlying facilities are tangible and hold genuine economic value.

Under the agreements, each lender will make its own credit decisions, while Nvidia will act as a matchmaker between customers and financiers. The company may also take on up to 25 percent of the risk per loan, though Huang later clarified on social media that such support is based on residual value and is meant to complement, not replace, independent underwriting.



A visitor interacts with a robot at the Nvidia booth during a supply chain expo in Beijing.
QUAN YAJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Xiang Ligang, director-general of the Information Consumption Alliance, a telecom industry association, pointed to the divergent market reactions as evidence of underlying unease. While asset managers saw their shares rise on expectations of fee income, major tech counters continued to fall after the news.

That divergence, Xiang said, suggests that investors are not fully convinced by the AI demand narrative. If cloud giants such as Google and Microsoft were the clearest beneficiaries of a genuine computing shortage, their stocks would have rallied. Instead, Nvidia's push to engineer financing solutions raises a red flag that potential buyers may be struggling with balance-sheet constraints, he added.

Nvidia itself has argued that the financing platform addresses a new bottleneck: capital. Emerging AI labs, smaller cloud providers and sovereign AI projects have real needs but lack the deep pockets of hyperscalers. However, Xiang cautioned that the entire model rests on an untested assumption — the long-term salvage value of GPUs used as collateral.

Nvidia now refreshes its chips annually rather than every two years, meaning each new generation quickly erodes the resale value of older chips, experts said.

Meanwhile, the announcement on Monday only involved nonbinding MOUs, offering no details on borrowers, interest rates, project locations or timelines. That lack of specificity has left many investors waiting on the sidelines, seeking concrete evidence that the "big idea" can withstand real-world economic scrutiny, experts added.

Top cities ease rules for home purchases

By **WANG YING** in Shanghai
wang_ying@chinadaily.com.cn

China's four major cities have all eased housing purchase restrictions in recent months, signaling a shift toward more supportive policies and underscoring efforts to stabilize the property sector, said industry experts.

Beijing is the latest major city to ease housing purchase restrictions. On Friday night, the capital city announced measures to better meet housing needs, including cutting the required social security or tax payment period for non-Beijing residents buying homes within the Fifth Ring Road from two years to one, and raising the housing provident fund loan limit.

"As a city long known for strict homebuying restrictions, Beijing's move to lower the threshold for nonlocal buyers without a Beijing *hukou* (household registration) could mark the beginning of a broader recovery in China's property market," said Zhang Dawei, chief analyst at Centaline Property Agency, after digesting the policies taking effect immediately on Saturday.

Beijing's move means all four of China's first-tier cities — Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen and Guangzhou — have now eased homebuying restrictions in line with local conditions, paving the way for a more relaxed housing market in the country's biggest cities, Zhang added.

In late February, Shanghai introduced a seven-point policy package to ease homebuying restrictions, helping sustain stability in the city's residential property sector, said Cheng Yu, executive vice-president of Shanghai enterprises at the China Index Academy.

"Shanghai sold 2.83 million square meters of commercial housing in the first seven months of this year, showing resilience despite the traditional seasonal slowdown in home transactions," said Cheng.

Similarly, policy adjustments introduced in Shenzhen in late April have produced encouraging results. The city's new measures continued to boost the housing market, with new home sales rising more than 40 percent year-on-year for three consecutive months and existing-home sales up more than 10 percent for two months in a row, said Cao Jingjing, general manager of research at the China Index Academy.

More than 680 housing policy measures have been introduced across China since the beginning of the year, including cuts in homebuying costs through lower down payments and mortgage rates, Cao said.

Beijing's latest housing policy adjustment follows the July 30 meeting of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, which set the direction for the country's economic work in the second half.

The meeting called for efforts to stabilize the property market and effectively build a security barrier for the sector.

"The statement places the property market within a broader framework of economic security and shows the central authorities' expectations that the sector should remain stable and orderly," said a report from Shanghai Proptech Innovations Co Ltd.

"China's property markets showed divergent trends in the first half, suggesting that the sector is moving beyond a broad-based recovery toward a phase of structural improvement," said Ding Zuyu, chairman of Shanghai Proptech Innovations.

Ding said this stage is characterized by the resilient performance of key cities and core areas, as well as a shift among real estate companies from scale expansion to competition based on inherent capabilities.

Property companies bullish on retail sector

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn

Swire Properties' retail portfolio on the Chinese mainland posted double-digit rental growth in the first half of 2026, buoyed by strong demand at its flagship luxury shopping centers as affluent consumers continued to spend on high-end brands.

Retail rental income from the Chinese mainland rose 13 percent from a year earlier to HK$2.57 billion ($327.4 million) in the six months ended June 30, according to interim results released by parent company Swire Pacific. Excluding currency movements, rental income increased 7 percent.

Taikoo Li Sanlitun in Beijing helped deliver the strong performance, with retail sales surging 63 percent and rental income climbing 16 percent after the completion of a tenant repositioning program and the opening of Hermes' global flagship store in April. Occupancy reached 100 percent at the end of June.

Swire attributed the improvement to a series of luxury flagship openings since late 2025, including standalone concept stores and architecturally distinctive boutiques, alongside the repositioning of the complex's South Area. The company also cited a rebound in international tourism and the country's expanded tax-refund policies for overseas visitors as supporting demand.



View of HKRI Taikoo Hui shopping complex in Shanghai.
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

In Shanghai, its HKRI Taikoo Hui shopping complex reported an 82 percent jump in tenant sales and a 29 percent increase in rental income after Louis Vuitton opened "The Louis" flagship in mid-2025. Occupancy remained at 98 percent.

Chengdu Taikoo Li recorded 14 percent growth in both tenant sales and rental income, while Guangzhou Taikoo Hui posted increases of 9 percent and 11 percent, maintaining full occupancy. Qiantan Taikoo Li in Shanghai reported retail sales and rental income growth of 14 percent and 16 percent, respectively.

Swire said China's retail market continued to improve during the first half, with retailers remaining "cautiously optimistic" about medium to long-term prospects and continuing to invest in prime commercial locations. The company said that luxury categories including jewelry, watches and precious gems continued to outperform.

Meanwhile, Hang Lung Properties Ltd, another major owner of luxury shopping centers, reported that tenant sales at its malls on the Chinese mainland rose 17 percent in the first half after increasing 24 percent in the first quarter, the strongest quarterly growth in two years.

At Plaza 66 in Shanghai tenant sales climbed 24 percent while rental revenue increased 8 percent, with occupancy holding at 98 percent. The company's 4,300-square-meter Phase III expansion is scheduled for completion in the second half of the year. Nearby, Grand Gateway 66 also recorded a 24 percent increase in tenant sales, although rental revenue rose a more modest 1 percent.

Outside Shanghai, Wuxi Center 66 achieved full occupancy as rental revenue increased 10 percent, while Dalian Olympia 66 and Kunming Spring City 66 reported double-digit tenant sales growth following tenant mix upgrades.

Unlike Swire, which has continued to strengthen its positioning in the ultra-luxury segment through global flagship stores, Hang Lung has increasingly diversified its tenant portfolio beyond traditional luxury brands in an effort to broaden traffic and spending across consumer groups.

Modular builds seen as future of construction

GUANGZHOU — The construction of a 19-story hotel in Brisbane, Australia, was no ordinary project, as much of it had already been built thousands of kilometers away, inside a factory in South China.

Its room modules arrived with walls, pipes, wiring and interior fittings largely completed, allowing the building to be assembled at a pace of roughly one floor every four to five days. The project was delivered by Foshan Meizong Buildings Technology Co Ltd, a firm based in the city of Foshan, Guangdong province. It reflects a broader shift in the industry, with more work that once had to be done at a construction site now being completed on a factory floor.

Inside Meizong's workshop, automated cutters slice steel tubes to precise dimensions as workers weld structural joints. Assembly teams install wall panels and lay utility lines. In the finished-goods area, dozens of units stand ready for shipment, with kitchens, bathrooms, lighting and sockets already fitted.

More than 90 percent of the work can be completed in the factory, while delivery takes only about one-third of time needed for conventional construction, according to Pang Mingyuan, the company's general manager.

Modular housing is gaining acceptance in markets such as Australia and New Zealand, where conventional construction faces high labor costs, lengthy building cycles and weather-related disruptions, while housing remains scarce in some remote areas, Pang added.

Foshan alone is home to more than 300 exporters of prefabricated buildings. Across the industry, modular structures are being used for hotels, dormitories and offices, while some manufacturers are branching into customized outdoor spaces.

At SunnyJoy Intelligent Technology Co Ltd, the glass roof of a modular outdoor room slides open under electric power. Made up of 13 modules, the structure attracted attention at the 139th Canton Fair in Guangzhou earlier this year.

"Three adults can assemble it in two and a half hours by following an installation video," said Zhang Yong, the company's general manager.

The company's products sell well in North America and Oceania, while emerging markets in Africa and Southeast Asia are also growing rapidly. Social media has become an important source of overseas customers: SunnyJoy has built a following of around 10 million across domestic and overseas platforms, with online channels generating more than half of its customer inquiries.

Behind such products is the Pearl River Delta's manufacturing network. Zhang said a single outdoor structure can involve dozens of suppliers, with everything from frames and worktops to drive systems and lighting sourced within the region.

That proximity allows manufacturers to adjust designs, upgrade components and respond quickly to changing customer requests. As products become more integrated, companies are also expanding into higher-value offerings that incorporate solar glass, energy storage and intelligent control systems.

At a modular factory in the Shenshan Special Cooperation Zone, laser cutting, automated welding and intelligent assembly work in coordination. A digital management system links design, procurement and production, generating material lists and processing drawings from design plans.

Its standardized production system can turn out a wall in 12 minutes and a room module in two hours. The facility has an annual capacity of up to 30,000 units and can produce different types of building modules in parallel according to project needs.

The expansion taking place on factory floors is also showing up in export figures.

In the first half of this year, exports of prefabricated structures from seven cities through Guangzhou Customs reached 1.94 billion yuan ($287.5 million), up 21.2 percent year-on-year, with products reaching more than 190 countries and regions.

One modular-building producer said this year's export orders have thus far risen nearly 60 percent year-on-year, with production scheduled several months ahead.

For Chinese producers, the opportunity goes beyond shortening construction time. Their expansion overseas points to a broader shift: buildings are increasingly being designed, produced and exported more like manufactured goods.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Briefly

Auto exports see strong growth in July

China's automobile exports maintained strong growth in July, surpassing 1 million units for the second consecutive month, driven in large part by a surge in new energy vehicle shipments, data released on Wednesday by the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers showed. The country exported 1.043 million automobiles in July, up 0.6 percent from June and 81.3 percent from a year earlier. After topping 900,000 units in both April and May, monthly exports crossed the 1 million mark in June and remained above that level in July.

Yuan strengthens against greenback

The central parity rate of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, strengthened 18 pips to 6.7882 against the US dollar on Wednesday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System. In China's spot foreign exchange market, the yuan is allowed to rise or fall by 2 percent from the central parity rate each trading day.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:34 PM

BUSINESS

Tourists add tech trips to itineraries

Drones, humanoid robots, brain-computer interfaces being added to expanded tours

By LI JING
lijing2009@chinadaily.com.cn



Foreign tourists check out AI sports photography glasses at a mall in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, on Aug 3. LIANG XU / XINHUA


People watch as a Meituan drone delivers food at Shenzhen Talent Park on Aug 3. LIANG XU / XINHUA

A meal order delivered by drone, dinner at a robot-themed restaurant and a ride in a driverless car formed part of the itinerary for US travel influencers Kara and Nate during a journey from Shanghai to Beijing.

Their 33-minute YouTube video titled "China is Living in 2050" also featured robotic dogs and a shopping center filled with high-tech consumer products. It had racked up about 1.3 million views as of Aug 5, bringing experiences once associated with science fiction to the couple's 4.5 million subscribers.

The video is part of a growing trend on social media, turning China's everyday technology into a major tourist attraction. Robotaxis, drone deliveries, humanoid robots and smart retail are now appearing alongside historical landmarks and natural scenic spots on foreign visitors' itineraries.

Travel operators say technology-focused trips, once aimed largely at overseas professionals and corporate delegations, are increasingly attracting more independent travelers, families and students. The shift is helping technology emerge as a calling card for Chinese tourism, built less around a single museum or theme park and more around experiencing how digital services and automation integrated into daily life.

In Hangzhou's Yuhang district, Zhejiang province, itineraries for overseas visitors link the Liangzhu archaeological site, where digital tools help interpret ancient Chinese civilization, with an artificial intelligence town, robotics facilities and Alibaba's digital industrial park.

Visitors can interact with humanoid robots, test brain-computer interfaces, experiment with AI-generated content and see how digital platforms are used in transport, shopping and urban management.

One of the companies included in Hangzhou's newly launched technology study-tour routes is BrainCo, a developer of non-invasive brain-computer interface technology. Its demonstrations include an intelligent bionic hand that uses neural and muscle signals to interpret intended movements, along with wearable products designed for attention training, relaxation and sleep support, giving visitors a tangible look at how the technology is being developed for rehabilitation and consumer use.

"Overseas interest has risen markedly since June last year," said Gu Weiping, director of the Study Tour Department of Hangzhou Shunjing Technology Cultural Tourism Development Co Ltd. "More independent travelers, families and overseas students began making reservations specifically for AI, robotics and smart-city experiences."

The number of overseas customers joining the company's technology-themed program increased by more than 120 percent year-on-year, Gu said.

The expansion of the visa-free policy has made it easier for overseas visitors to turn online curiosity into real-world trips. China has expanded unilateral visa-free access to citizens of 50 countries, while nationals of 55 countries are eligible for its visa-free transit policy at 65 ports.

Foreign nationals made a record 22.9 million entries into China in the first half, up 20.4 percent year-on-year, said the National Immigration Administration. Visa-free entries rose 30.6 percent to 17.8 million, accounting for 77.7 percent of the total.

Wu Liyun, a professor at the China Academy of Culture and Tourism at Beijing International Studies University, said technology tourism is a global trend rather than a uniquely Chinese phenomenon.

China's advantage, she said, lies in the scale at which technology has moved beyond laboratories and exhibition halls to become seamlessly integrated into daily life.

Foreign visitors can ride robotaxis, order goods delivered by drones, encounter service robots and use mobile phones for payments, transport and admission to attractions. The appeal comes less from any single invention than from seeing multiple technologies operating across the same city.

"China has a large number of technology companies, but the more distinctive feature is how AI and smart technologies have been applied to daily life and tourism," Wu said. "That allows visitors to experience directly how technology changes ordinary life."

Technology is also effectively removing some of the practical barriers that have long affected inbound travel, Wu added.

"Real-time translation, smart translation glasses, interactive screens, digital admission and mobile guides make it easier for foreign visitors to navigate attractions independently."

For Daniel Chan, a Chinese-American technology enthusiast living in Los Angeles, China's wide deployment of technology has made Shenzhen in Guangdong province the city he most wants to explore.

Chan said he was particularly interested in its automation and civilian-drone ecosystem, including companies that have developed around drone maker DJI. Hangzhou offers a different combination, pairing technology companies such as Alibaba with historic sites, scenery and food.

"Hangzhou has technological vitality, but it also retains deep cultural roots," Chan said. "You can experience both innovation and everyday life."

Wu said the trend was broadening the geography of China's inbound tourism. International itineraries were once concentrated in traditional destinations such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guilin in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region and Xi'an in Shaanxi province, but more foreign visitors are extending their journeys to other emerging tech hubs.

"Technology could bring more second and third-tier cities into the itineraries of overseas visitors," she added.

The rise of technology tourism is also creating an emerging commercial loop. More than 60 percent of the overseas groups handled by Gu's company ask to add technology-product demonstrations or shopping to their itineraries, he said.

Popular items include AI translation devices, small robots, drone equipment and consumer brain-computer products such as sleep-assistance devices.

Young visitors typically spend 200 yuan ($29.64) to 500 yuan a day on technology experiences and products, while family study tours spend about 500 yuan to 1,000 yuan per person, Gu said.

Hangzhou is now seeking to build shopping directly into its technology-tourism offering. On July 30, the city's culture and tourism authorities unveiled 10 locally developed "new technology specialties", 20 technology-tourism attractions and 20 themed study-tour routes. They also launched a platform for inbound technology study tours and a dedicated section on Alibaba's Taobao marketplace.

The products include an AI-powered walking exoskeleton, Rokid smart glasses, augmented-reality swimming goggles, an AI recording card and a DNA data-storage "time capsule". Visitors can try and buy them in Hangzhou's Wensan Digital Life Block or order them online.

The initiative seeks to give technology the role once occupied mainly by conventional souvenirs: visitors see how a product works, try it and take home a piece of the city's innovation ecosystem.

The connection between product discovery and spending is even more established in Huaqiangbei, a renowned electronics hub in Shenzhen.

The district receives more than 8,000 foreign visitors and business travelers daily and boasted 197 registered departure tax-refund stores by mid-year, said the Futian district government.

Local merchants said smartphones, drones, smart glasses and AI wearables accounted for nearly 80 percent of purchases for which overseas customers sought tax refunds, though the estimate does not cover all foreign-visitor spending in the district.

A service center opened in June combining departure tax refunds, foreign-currency exchange and payment support. It also distributes local restaurant and service vouchers, encouraging customers to spend their refunds within the district and extending the commercial loop beyond the initial purchase.

China reduced the minimum same-day purchase at a single store eligible for a departure tax refund to 200 yuan from 500 yuan last year and expanded its "refund-upon-purchase" service nationwide. More recently, procedures were further streamlined with paperless processing and expanded random inspection protocols.

The number of overseas travelers using the departure tax-refund system increased 366 percent year-on-year in the first half of 2026, while both sales of eligible goods and the amount refunded rose 69 percent year-on-year, the State Taxation Administration said.

Despite the rapid growth, the market remains at an early stage. Many technology venues are still difficult for independent overseas visitors to discover, while booking channels, multilingual explanations and information about payments and refunds are yet to be fully standardized.

"Inbound visitors are no longer coming only to experience traditional culture," Wu said. "They also want to experience ordinary life, the convenience brought by economic development and China's technology at close range. Technology is fast becoming a new tourism draw for China."

Factory tourism a fast-growing pursuit

By LI JING


A visitor poses for photos with a Hongqi car at China FAW Museum in Changchun, Jilin province, on July 21. ZHANG YAO / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

On a recent trip to the eastern coastal city of Qingdao, Shandong province, Beijing resident Zhang Xiaohui visited the Tsingtao Beer Museum, tracing the brewing process through a century-old factory complex before sampling a pint on site.

"I checked Xiaohongshu (RedNote) for tips and booked the earliest slot, hoping it would be less crowded. I learned how beer is made and explored the brewery's history. I cannot drink a lot, but being able to learn, have fun and enjoy a drink made it a great experience," Zhang said.

Across China, tourists are venturing into breweries, shipyards, auto plants and repurposed mines, turning spaces once designed solely for industrial production into vibrant destinations for recreation, education and shopping.

Data from Tongcheng Travel, a leading Chinese online travel agency, showed that booking interest in factory-related travel products since the summer peak season began on July 1 had risen 36 percent year-on-year as of Aug 6. Family trips accounted for 68 percent of orders, while interest among travelers born after 2000 increased by 12 percent.

In addition, more than 80 percent of factory-tour orders were for destinations within a three-hour journey, suggesting the segment is becoming a key part of the weekend getaway market. Furthermore, more than 80 percent of travelers who added a factory visit to a longer itinerary spent an average of over three days in a single city.

Foreign tourists are also emerging as a significant source of demand. Booking interest in inbound factory-tour products on HopeGoo, Tongcheng's international travel platform, increased more than ninefold this summer from a year earlier.

Factory tourism is not a new concept in China. China FAW Group began opening its production lines in Changchun, Jilin province, to visitors as early as 1994. What is changing now is the scale and commercial ambition, as organized visits evolve into bookable consumer products combining factory access, education, entertainment and retail.

Shenzhen-based consultancy Zero Power Intelligence Group estimates the domestic industrial tourism market hit 120 billion yuan ($17.78 billion) in 2023 and expects it to exceed 300 billion yuan by 2029, representing a compound annual growth rate of 18 percent.

Policy support is also accelerating. The outline of China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) calls for industrial tourism to be developed alongside rural tourism, wellness tourism and "red tourism". In May, seven central ministries and departments — including the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology — jointly issued guidelines calling for more factory tours, industrial heritage attractions and technology-enabled experiences.

The policy encourages companies in equipment manufacturing, consumer goods and e-commerce logistics to offer production-line observation, simulated operations, hands-on workshops and product customization. It also calls on travel agencies and online platforms to develop specialized industrial study-tour products.

However, challenges remain. Most factories were originally designed for efficiency, safety and commercial secrecy, not leisure. Opening them to the public requires protected visitor corridors, trained guides and interactive displays, while ensuring that tours do not interfere with daily production.

Additionally, some projects struggle to move beyond static displays or generic industrial-style shops and cafes, thereby limiting repeat visits and post-admission spending.

An official from the Guangdong provincial department of industry and information technology said a shortage of professionals with expertise in both manufacturing and tourism — along with high investment costs and long payback periods — has discouraged some companies from opening their plants to visitors.

"Industrial tourism needs deeper cultural storytelling, more engaging experience design and a complete consumption loop," said Sun Xing, deputy director of the Industrial Culture Development Center under the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology. Sun urged operators to move beyond passive sightseeing and combine factory tours with study trips, corporate teambuilding and nighttime activities.

That transition is already well underway. Factories are no longer merely places where goods are produced. Increasingly, they are also sites where holidays begin.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:34 PM

CHINA

Trials set stage for opening of Pinglu Canal

Landmark waterway project begins full-route safety, stability evaluation

By **ZHANG LI** in Nanning
zhangli@chinadaily.com.cn

The Pinglu Canal in South China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region launched full-route and full-ship-type trials for the first time on Wednesday, also marking the final major evaluation before the landmark project's official operation scheduled for September.

As a backbone infrastructure scheme for the New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor, the Pinglu Canal is China's first major river-to-sea canal project planned and coordinated at the national level since 1949.

The waterway stretches from the Pingtang River estuary in Hengzhou, Nanning, through Lingshan county and along the Qinjiang River before emptying into the Beibu Gulf in Qinzhou.

The waterway has already surpassed 98 percent of its construction. Upon completion, it will shorten the traditional shipping route for Southwest China cargo by approximately 560 kilometers compared with the Guangzhou Port passage.

The new 291-km outbound lane from Nanning to Qinzhou Port will become the shortest, most economical and most efficient sea-access channel for China's southwestern region.

Chen Liang, assistant general manager of Chongqing Xike Water Transport Engineering Consulting Co, is in charge of the ship trial operation.

Four vessels representing the main types expected to use this canal will take part in the trials, namely loaded and unloaded 5,000-metric-ton ships as well as loaded 3,000-ton and 1,000-ton vessels, Chen said.

"The trials will comprehensively verify the safety and stability of the canal's waterways, ship locks, anchorages and service areas under various operational conditions, laying a solid foundation for the canal's scheduled opening," Chen said.

All trial vessels are equipped with high-precision monitoring devices, including Beidou positioning systems, drone flow-field monitors, mooring tension sensors and engine condition collectors.

The devices gather hundreds of real-time data points, such as ship track, drift angle, transverse inclination, channel flow velocity and safe spacing between vessels.

Project authorities have established a multilayer safety protection system supported by joint coordination among maritime, construction and emergency response departments. Segmented and time-phased water traffic control is enforced throughout the trial period.

Dedicated escort speedboats and full emergency response protocols are on standby to handle potential incidents including vessel collisions, groundings, oil spills and personnel-overboard scenarios.

Pretrial verification of crew qualifications and vessel seaworthiness ensures full operational safety.

Pan Jian, chief engineer of Guangxi Pinglu Canal Construction Co, said a formal trial summary report will be completed after the testing phase concludes.

The report will propose route optimization measures, standardize navigation procedures, clarify segmented traffic control rules and supplement technical standards for safe canal operation.

The findings will support stable river-sea combined transport operations for the mega water project and provide empirical technical references for future domestic and international waterway engineering projects.

The canal's opening comes amid robust China-ASEAN economic integration. China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations have remained each other's largest trading partners for six consecutive years.

In Guangxi, ASEAN has ranked as the region's top trading partner for 26 consecutive years.

In 2025, Guangxi's total import and export volume with ASEAN reached 429.2 billion yuan ($63.6 billion), up 8 percent year-on-year, reflecting continuous expansion and deepening of regional economic cooperation.



A trial vessel exits a lock chamber after water levels were lowered at the Pinglu Canal in Lingshan county, Qinzhou, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, on Wednesday. CHEN GUANYAN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE



Panda party

Giant panda admirers enjoy a group birthday party for giant pandas with Tian Bao at the Mianyang base of the China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda in Sichuan province on Wednesday. The event is part of the 2026 giant panda birthday season activities, as July to September is typically the peak birth season for captive giant pandas. Various bases are holding a series of activities to celebrate the giant pandas' birthdays.
YANG SHU / FOR CHINA DAILY

Pilot program to levy tax on VOC emissions in 2027

By **HOU LIQIANG**
houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

China will launch a pilot program in 2027 to levy an environmental protection tax on volatile organic compounds, or VOCs, a key contributor to smog and ozone formation, expanding its green tax system to cover a broader range of air pollutants and intensifying air pollution control.

The pilot, jointly rolled out by the Ministry of Finance, the State Taxation Administration and the Ministry of Ecology and Environment, will bring VOCs that were previously untaxed under the existing framework into the tax net. The move has been made possible by years of progress in emission standards, product specifications and emissions accounting methodologies.

Eight major industrial sectors, including printing, petrochemicals, pharmaceutical manufacturing and steel and automobile production, will be the first to participate. Together, they account for more than 70 percent of the country's industrial VOC emissions.

According to a media release jointly issued by the three government bodies following the announcement of the pilot in late July, more than 300 types of VOCs can currently be monitored in China.

When the Environmental Protection Tax Law was enacted in 2016, however, only 18 toxic or odorous VOCs were subject to taxation, as monitoring and accounting methods were not yet mature enough to support broader coverage, the release said.

In recent years, China has made steady progress in VOC emission standards, product standards and emissions accounting methods, creating the technical foundation for a wider tax regime, the release said. The pilot reflects the country's growing capacity to move from partial control toward full-process, full-chain VOC governance.

VOCs are important precursors of ozone and PM2.5 particulate matter and are closely linked to haze and photochemical smog. Sunlight and high temperatures, for example, can trigger chemical reactions between VOCs and nitrogen oxides that lead to the formation of ozone.

According to the implementation rules, the tax rate will range from 8 to 12 yuan ($1.2-1.8) per pollution equivalent. Provincial-level governments will determine the specific applicable rate within that range, taking into account local environmental carrying capacity, current VOC emission levels and broader economic, social and ecological development goals.

For tax purposes, taxable VOC emissions will be converted into pollution equivalents. The number of pollution equivalents is calculated by dividing taxable VOC emissions by 0.95 kilograms, the prescribed pollution equivalent value for VOCs.

The pilot program includes tax incentives for companies with strong environmental performance. Taxpayers with a Grade A rating in the key industries' four-tier air-quality performance assessments will pay 50 percent of the standard tax, while those with a Grade B rating will pay 75 percent.

The release said the approach both rewards top performers and encourages a broader shift among companies toward environmentally friendly raw material substitution, cleaner production technologies, enhanced collection systems and more rigorous end-of-pipe treatment.

"The pilot program is an important part of deepening the reform of the fiscal and tax system and improving the green tax system," said Xu Wen, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Fiscal Sciences.

It will help drive comprehensive VOC governance throughout the full process and the entire value chain, thereby facilitating emission reductions, Xu added.

Lei Yu, head of the Institute of Atmospheric Environment under the Chinese Academy of Environmental Planning, also lauded the pilot program's incentive-based approach, encapsulated in the principle of "more emissions, more tax; fewer emissions, less tax".

"It will compel companies to bear the consequences of their emissions through higher tax payments, and in turn force them to intensify in-depth governance across the entire process and all links, while accelerating green transformation and upgrading," Lei said.

Xinhua contributed to this story.

Xuelong sets up record number of Arctic ice stations

By **LI MENGHAN**
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese research vessel *Xuelong* completed ice station survey operations at 12 sites during the country's 16th Arctic expedition, setting a record for the largest number of ice stations established by a single vessel in China's Arctic missions, according to the Ministry of Natural Resources.

The ice station operations began on July 25 and lasted 14 days. All 12 sites were located at latitudes north of 82 degrees and selected for thicker sea ice to ensure that unmanned instruments could remain operational through the summer melt season. More than 30 ice-based buoys of various types were deployed across the sites.

The operations involved integrated observations across multiple disciplines, including the atmospheric boundary layer, sea ice physics, sub-ice ecology and sub-ice ocean dynamics. The data will provide in situ, long-term observations and validation for research into the evolution of the coupled atmosphere-sea ice-ocean system amid the rapid decline of Arctic sea ice.

The 12-station network enables coordinated monitoring at multiple points, which is expected to improve understanding of the mechanisms driving rapid changes in the Arctic and enhance the accuracy of climate predictions. *Xuelong 2* will establish about seven additional ice stations later in the expedition to further expand observational coverage.

During the operations, scientists used ice core drills and chainsaws to extract a block of sea ice measuring 1.3 meters thick and 1.2 meters on each side. The sample will be used to measure the mechanical properties of sea ice under Arctic conditions and further enrich the Arctic sea ice sample database.

"The mechanical properties of sea ice determine its strength," Sun Kai, an expedition member, told China Central Television. He said understanding ice mechanics is essential for ship design, as encountering particularly hard ice in ice-covered waters can impede a vessel's progress and cause structural damage.

The team also established an unmanned observation network in the Arctic Ocean and tested domestically produced marine observation equipment for operational application.

"This year's specialized tasks are particularly demanding," Qu Meng, leader of the sea ice team, told CCTV.

"The hydrology group has more than a dozen ice-based ocean profiling buoys, so we set up 12 ice stations to carry out array monitoring with these buoys," Qu said.

Among the most widely deployed instruments — ice-based shallow-water profiling buoys, ice-based deep-water profiling buoys and sea ice drift buoys — domestically produced equipment accounted for more than 90 percent on average. This level of domestic capability, combined with mature technologies, enabled the large-scale array deployment and automated networked monitoring achieved during the expedition.

"We've gradually moved from the simplest instruments, such as sea ice drift buoys and mass-balance buoys, to ecological unmanned ice stations. The range of domestically produced equipment will only keep growing," He Jianfeng, the expedition's chief scientist, told CCTV.

An ecological unmanned ice station, deployed for the first time in the Arctic, is expected to provide new insights into how organisms beneath the ice survive the polar night and respond to the polar day.

"The system uses integrated acoustic, optical and electrical sensing to carry out long-term, continuous observations of the atmosphere, ice, sea and ecology beneath the ice in the central Arctic," An Baobao, an expedition member, told CCTV.

An said this is the first time such acoustic-optical-electrical data collection has been conducted in the shallow subsurface layer beneath polar ice.

Quantum tech shifting from lab to real-world use

HEFEI — Chinese scientists have reported a series of advances in weather forecasting and drug discovery powered by quantum technology, highlighting how a field once regarded as a distant scientific ambition is steadily transitioning from the laboratory to real-world use.

Researchers from Fudan University and University of Science and Technology of China recently demonstrated that quantum machine learning could outperform large-scale classical neural networks in certain real-world weather forecasting tasks, including urban temperature and humidity prediction.

In another breakthrough, Chinese tech company Origin Quantum and USTC researchers developed a quantum-enhanced graph neural network on China's independently developed superconducting quantum computer — Origin Wukong — that boosted HIV antiviral drug screening accuracy from 73 percent to 97 percent and Alzheimer's drug prediction accuracy from 64 percent to 70 percent.

While fully fault-tolerant quantum computers remain years away, these advances reflect a broader reality: different branches of quantum technology are beginning to mature at different speeds, with applications already emerging in secure communications, healthcare, scientific research and industrial computing.

Among them, quantum communication has moved furthest toward commercialization. More than 40 major Chinese cities have deployed metropolitan quantum communications networks, providing the infrastructure for quantum-secured services to move into commercial use.

At China Telecom Quantum Group, visitors can try what appears to be an ordinary smartphone. Once users activate its quantum-encrypted calling function, conversations are secured using quantum key distribution, making intercepted communications unreadable.

Quantum technology is also beginning to reshape healthcare. Every heartbeat generates an extremely weak magnetic field that conventional medical instruments cannot directly detect. Quantum sensors, however, can measure these tiny signals.

One example is a magnetocardiography system developed by Chinese quantum technology company CIQTEK. Using quantum spin magnetometers, the system can complete a cardiac scan in just a few minutes, providing physicians with a new tool for early cardiovascular screening and risk assessment. The technology has already been deployed at several major hospitals in China.

For now, the most promising path toward practical quantum computing lies not in replacing today's supercomputers, but in combining the strengths of both technologies.

Inside the next-generation computing cluster in Hefei, capital of Anhui province, China's first locally deployed hybrid quantum supercomputing center combines a high-performance supercomputer with two superconducting quantum computers and one trapped-ion quantum computer.

"We break a large computational problem into smaller tasks," said Wang Guyue, director of the project management center at Hefei Big Data Asset Operation Co, operator of the computing center.

"Subproblems that have relatively simple inputs and outputs but extremely complex calculations are processed by quantum computers, while the remaining tasks stay on the classical system," Wang said. "We see quantum computing as complementing rather than replacing classical computing."

The commercial potential is already beginning to emerge.

Over the past two decades, Hefei has developed one of China's largest quantum technology ecosystems, bringing together more than 100 companies across the industrial chain.

To accelerate commercialization, Anhui has launched an initiative encouraging quantum technologies to be tested in hundreds of real-world scenarios, from secure communications to renewable energy. Hefei is also establishing a 10-billion-yuan ($1.48 billion) fund to support emerging technologies, including quantum technology, according to Chen Jun, director of the Anhui provincial development and reform commission.

Chinese quantum companies are also expanding internationally. Origin Quantum has begun exporting quantum computing equipment and cloud computing services, particularly to Belt and Road countries. In July 2026, Thailand's Chulalongkorn University announced a partnership with the University of Science and Technology of China and Chinese quantum computing company Unitary Quantum to jointly build Thailand's first trapped-ion quantum computer.

While many challenges remain before large-scale quantum computing becomes commonplace, the industry's focus has already shifted from proving that quantum technology works to discovering where it can create real economic and social value.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:34 PM

POLICY REVIEW

Tiered care to ease hospital burden

Primary services to be increased to bring treatment closer to residents

By **WANG XIAOYU** in Beijing and **ZHAO RUIXUE** in Shouguang, Shandong



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

China is accelerating the rollout of a nationwide tiered diagnosis and treatment system designed to decongest top-tier urban medical centers and bring high-quality healthcare closer to residents, according to a guideline released by the State Council in April.

Under a tiered healthcare system, patients with common or frequently occurring illnesses will seek care at primary-level facilities, while those with acute or severe conditions will be treated at higher-level hospitals, said Zheng Zhe, vice-minister of the National Health Commission.

"This system not only makes healthcare more accessible, but also helps ease the (financial and time) burden on patients," he said at a news conference following the release of the guideline.

Zheng said that China has more than 1.1 million medical and healthcare institutions, and over 90 percent of residents can reach the nearest provider within 15 minutes.

He added that rural clinics and community health service centers have expanded their clinical service offerings, upgraded facilities and equipment, and improved the overall patient care environment.

Last year, primary healthcare institutions recorded 5.56 billion patient visits, accounting for 52.6 percent of the national total. Meanwhile, the number of referral medical visits between large and small hospitals continued to grow, increasing by more than 50 percent from 2020 to 2025.

"The tiered diagnosis and treatment system is taking shape, and we are transitioning from the stage of building a basic framework to one focused on improving quality and overall efficiency," he said.

According to the guideline, efforts will be made to ensure that every neighborhood has access to a community health center, with the goal of "eliminating any existing gaps" in primary-level healthcare service coverage.

The guideline emphasizes that secondary hospitals — the middle tier of the nation's three-tier hospital system — will strengthen their capacity to treat common diseases while expanding services in rehabilitation, nursing, palliative care, and integrated medical and elderly care.

Tertiary hospitals will focus on critical and complex diseases and enhance services for referred patients, as well as those requiring multidisciplinary consultations or hospitalization. At the same time, they will gradually scale back routine outpatient services — such as follow-up visits for common diseases and stable chronic conditions with clear diagnoses — to achieve a more efficient utilization of high-quality medical resources.

The document also calls for upgrading partnerships that link higher-level hospitals with smaller institutions by establishing resource-sharing centers for medical imaging, examinations, sterilization, laboratory testing and drug supply services.

To encourage patients to seek their initial diagnosis at the primary level, the guideline requires higher-level hospitals to set up outpatient clinics for common and chronic diseases — including high blood pressure, diabetes and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease — at primary-level institutions within their medical consortia.

"The provision of specialist and expert clinics should also be extended to the primary level," it said. "For eligible chronic disease patients, primary-level healthcare institutions are allowed to issue long-term prescriptions covering up to 12 weeks of medication in a single visit."

It added that more medical professionals will be regularly dispatched to grassroots facilities, and additional mobile medical teams will be deployed to underserved areas.

In Shouguang, a city of 1.17 million people in Shandong province, 92.3 percent of residents choose to seek medical treatment within the city, and 77.4 percent of all healthcare services are delivered at the grassroots level, according to local authorities.

Li Peng, Party secretary of Shouguang, said that a key initiative in the city's recent push to bolster grassroots healthcare services has been to enhance convenience for patients with chronic conditions such as high blood pressure and diabetes, as well as for people with disabilities.

"We aim to deliver six key types of services at the village level — chronic disease patient registration and medication dispensing, regular monitoring, routine tests, hospital admission and rehabilitation care," he said. "All villagers can apply for chronic disease certification and receive up to 36 lab tests, including blood and urine tests, without leaving their village. Those with limited mobility are provided with door-to-door nursing care and home-based rehabilitation guidance."

Li Shuliang, a Shouguang resident, used to find it troublesome to arrange medical visits for his 88-year-old father, who has high blood pressure and diabetes.

"Now, my father can take basic tests at the village clinic, and blood samples for more complex tests are picked up and sent to higher-level hospitals for analysis," he said.

Li said that village doctors now make regular home visits to provide guidance on diet and medication. They also compile monthly medication lists for chronic patients, stock adequate supplies and issue prescriptions lasting up to three months — eliminating the need for patients to make monthly trips to a major hospital.

Jiao Yahui, head of the National Health Commission's primary health department, said that efforts will be made to explore the application of artificial intelligence-assisted diagnostic tools, smart prescription review technologies and other digital solutions to further improve primary-level healthcare.

She underscored the importance of establishing grassroots chronic disease management centers, which are expected to provide integrated services for patients from prevention and screening all the way through to diagnosis and rehabilitation.

Contact the writers at wangxiaoyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Policy Digest

180 million yuan allocated for disaster response

The Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Emergency Management on Monday allocated 180 million yuan ($26.7 million) from the central natural-disaster relief fund to address flood and drought disasters across China.

Eastern regions have been hit by severe flooding amid heavy rains brought by Typhoon Dolphin, while northwestern areas are grappling with persistent drought caused by scant rainfall.

Of the total sum, 120 million yuan is earmarked for the eastern provinces for flood and typhoon emergency relief. The funding will support search-and-rescue missions, evacuation and resettlement of affected residents, hazard removal, secondary-disaster risk prevention, and repairs to damaged housing.

The remaining 60 million yuan will go to the Inner Mongolia autonomous region, the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region and the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps for drought relief. It is aimed at helping resolve drinking-water shortages for urban and rural residents.

Judicial opinion issued on environmental code

China's top court issued a set of provisions on Aug 6, marking the first judicial interpretation supporting the country's Ecological and Environmental Code. The provisions were designed to ensure a smooth legal transition between old and new laws, and the full and accurate implementation of the code.

The provisions will take effect along with the code on Saturday, according to the Supreme People's Court. Consisting of 13 articles, the provisions clarify the general standards and specific rules for courts to apply old and new laws when hearing environmental cases after the Code takes effect.

The 1,242-article Ecological and Environmental Code, adopted by China's top legislature in March, has five chapters, covering areas including pollution control, ecological protection, and green and low-carbon development.

Opening-up of foreign exchange to be expanded

The State Administration of Foreign Exchange said on Aug 2 that it will continue to steadily expand institutional opening-up in the foreign exchange sector in the second half of this year.

The administration will promote nationwide the facilitation policies for high-level opening-up in cross-border trade foreign exchange receipts and payments, support the development of trade such as cross-border e-commerce, optimize foreign exchange settlement for service trade, and bolster the development of trade in intermediate goods.

It will also promote the centralized operation policy for domestic and foreign currency cross-border funds of multinational corporations, issue regulations on the administration of domestic foreign exchange loans, and steadily and prudently expand connectivity between financial markets.

It also stressed the need to strengthen the monitoring of cross-border capital flows, continuously improve macro-prudential management and expectation management, and take comprehensive measures to safeguard the stability of the foreign exchange market.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Insurance funds redirected to community clinics

By **WANG XIAOYU**
wangxiaoyu@chinadaily.com.cn

China is shifting a larger slice of its national medical insurance pool directly to local clinics and community hospitals, a move designed to lower out-of-pocket costs for patients and shore up long-underfunded front-line healthcare workers.

A joint guideline released by the National Healthcare Security Administration and two other government departments in March redirects more newly added annual insurance funds toward primary healthcare. The policy tackles a long-standing bottleneck in China's healthcare system where top-tier regional hospitals are perpetually overwhelmed while neighborhood clinics lack the funding, medications and incentives to handle basic care.

Wu Hao, dean of the School of General Practice and Continuing Education at Capital Medical University in Beijing, said that the document clarifies that newly added annual insurance funds will be directed more to primary healthcare institutions and that the management of total funds will be upgraded in their favor.

"The measure will not only alleviate concerns among grassroots medical staff regarding income security and liability, but also encourage them to proactively improve their service capabilities," he said during an event held by the administration in April.

"Ultimately, the goal is to enable residents to access high-quality medical services close to their homes," he added.

The guideline also states that the reimbursement rate for outpatient services under the resident insurance program will be no less than 50 percent.

"This means that patients receiving treatment at the grassroots level can enjoy higher reimbursement rates and pay less out of their own pockets, thereby guiding people to choose primary healthcare facilities as their first option for medical care," Wu said.

The guideline also states that primary-level institutions are permitted to prescribe long-term prescriptions of up to 12 weeks for eligible patients with chronic conditions.

"As a result, patients in stable condition can obtain up to three months' worth of medication in a single visit, sparing them from frequent trips to the hospital and allowing grassroots doctors to provide proper diagnosis and treatment without constraints," Wu said.

China has focused on improving grassroots healthcare in recent years. By the end of last year, the nation had 1.06 million primary healthcare institutions and 5.25 million grassroots healthcare workers.

A total of 2,199 county-level regions have built tight medical consortia that connect higher-level hospitals with rural or community clinics. In 2025, the number of patient visits to primary healthcare institutions reached 5.56 billion, accounting for 52.6 percent of the national total.

Miao Yanqing, a researcher from the China National Health Development Research Center, said one highlight of the guideline is to motivate county-level medical alliances to transition their role to the health management of residents and guide them to seek medical care within their home counties.

"It clarifies that any surplus insurance funds within the medical consortia will be directed primarily toward grassroots medical institutions and front-line healthcare workers," she said.

A series of payment changes are also aimed at positioning county-level institutions as destinations for handling severe and complicated cases, and nurturing medical talents, while grassroots clinics will be mainly tasked with caring for chronic and common diseases, as well as providing rehabilitation and nursing services.

The guideline also states that the national centralized drug procurement program will be used to secure stocks of common and chronic medications at primary care facilities. Authorities will support these institutions in equipping them with facial recognition devices to enable faster payment and insurance settlement.

Xu Na, deputy director of the National Healthcare Security Administration's medical services management department, said that the administration will select 15 pilot regions to explore best practices and generate replicable experiences that can be promoted nationwide.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:34 PM

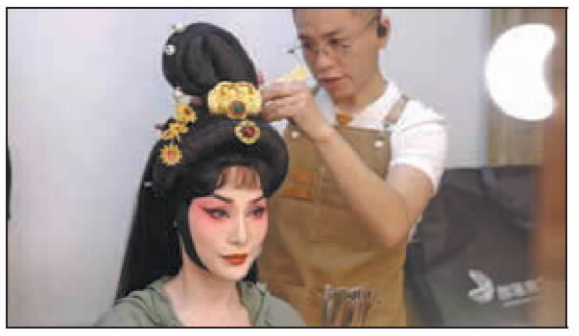
LIFE



Ancient opera finds ways to remain alive

By adapting to the small screen and integrating technology, centuries-old Qinqiang is capturing young audiences across the globe, **Xu Fan** reports.

Li Mei, a prestigious Qinqiang Opera artist.







Left: Li Mei backstage during her performance in Qinqiang Opera *Yang Guifei*. **Middle:** Li captivates the audience in her portrayal of Yang. **Right:** Li provides voiceover for the Qinqiang Opera film *Yang Guifei*. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Cultural Frontline

Yang Yuhuan, one of Chinese history's most celebrated beauties, waited for her final breath as the fate of an empire closed in around her.

Yang, the beloved concubine of Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang Dynasty (618-907), was ordered to die as angry soldiers blamed her for the dynasty's collapse and the advancement of rebel forces. Yang was strangled, a tragic end that has been retold in Chinese literature and opera for centuries.

In 2018, Li Mei, a prestigious Qinqiang Opera artist, brought the repertoire *Yang Guifei* (Concubine Yang) to the 8th Traditional Chinese Opera Festival in Paris. During one performance, as the story reached its most painful moment — Yang weeping over her doomed fate — Li noticed an elderly French audience member sitting in the front row, tears welling in his eyes.

"At that moment, I felt a foreign audience member truly understanding Chinese culture," recalls Li, who is also vice-president of the China Theatre Association and president of the Shaanxi Opera Research Institute.

Having performed Qinqiang Opera for more than four decades, Li has traveled to more than 50 countries and regions, gaining a profound understanding of how art can transcend borders and resonate with people from vastly different cultures.

With a history of more than 600 years, Qinqiang — wrapped in Chinese people's collective memories of politics, economy and culture — originated in northwestern China, matured during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and flourished during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). Its most prominent characteristics are its high-pitched passion and its stirring, solemn tone.

"We believe that those who sing Qinqiang rarely become depressed. It allows them to pour out their inner emotions, like the Yellow River's waterfall rushing down in a torrent, perhaps carrying mud and sand with it," says Li. "The opera is not delicate, but full of vitality and power."

Reaching new heights

What has most recently propelled this centuries-old opera, one of China's oldest existing performing arts, to new heights of popularity is the hit drama *The Lead*, a bittersweet story chronicling a talented Qinqiang star's life journey.

Last year, nearly 200 experts and young actors from the institute assisted the cast and crew for the preparation and filming of *The Lead*, with actress Liu Haocun coached in Qinqiang singing techniques and stage movements.

Starring Liu as Yi Qin'e, a former rural shepherd who strives to become a star, the series generated significant buzz even before its debut earlier this year thanks to a roster of big names attached to the project: iconic filmmaker Zhang Yimou served as executive producer and diva Faye Wong lent her voice to the theme song. For both A-list celebrities, it marked their first contribution to a small-screen project in decades.



> "We believe that those who sing Qinqiang rarely become depressed. It allows them to pour out their inner emotions, like the Yellow River's waterfall rushing down in a torrent, perhaps carrying mud and sand with it."
>
> **Li Mei,** Qinqiang Opera artist







Clockwise from top left: Li Mei in a scene from *Xihu Yihen* (Regrets at the West Lake). A photo of the artist. Motion capture in action, which was used in the extended reality remake of Qinqiang Opera *Gui Yuan·Sha Sheng* (Ghost's Lament — Killing).

The script is adapted from the 10th Mao Dun Literature Prize-winning novel of the same title, penned by writer Chen Yan, the former director of the Shaanxi Opera Research Institute. During his more than 20 years at the institute, Chen witnessed many actors transform from newcomers into stage stars — experiences that became the wellspring for the novel.

Veteran actor Zhang Jiayi, who plays Yi's uncle and also serves as the show's artistic director, had previously starred in *The Stage*, a 2019 TV drama adapted from Chen's novel *Zhuang Tai* (Setting the Stage), about a grassroots stage crew. That experience, combined with Zhang Jiayi's roots in Shaanxi province, gave him a deep understanding of the opera and its cultural traditions.

"Zhang Jiayi and his team hold great reverence for traditional art forms," says Li, adding that the team spent eight years preparing and producing the drama, with five years devoted to polishing the script.

The painstaking preparations appear to have paid off. According to China Media Group, the show's broadcaster, all 48 episodes and related videos have been viewed online more than 3 billion times. Riding the wave of fan enthusiasm, content derived from the series, ranging from the Shaanxi local dialect to Qinqiang and other cultural elements tracing back to the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC), which established its core regime in Shaanxi, has generated a striking 5.3 billion clicks.

The surge in online attention has also spilled beyond the screen and onto the stage.

"After *The Lead* became a hit, we closely followed up by consistently staging more than 10 performances of the operas featured in the TV drama, with tickets quickly selling out," recalls Lyu Jiangtao, a 30-year-old actor at the Shaanxi Opera Research Institute.

There is one particularly striking change: Qinqiang's audience used to be predominantly older people. Now, young viewers are showing up in growing numbers, drawn in by the drama's popularity. "Many young people even made special trips, flying to Xi'an, the provincial capital, just to watch the operas," Lyu says.

The four operas featured in the TV drama and arranged for television fans are *Da Jiao Zan* (Fighting Jiao Zan), featuring a heroine of humble origins during the Song Dynasty (960-1279); *Hua Ting Xiang Hui* (The Meeting at the Flower Pavilion), recounting the reunion of a couple separated against their will during the Ming Dynasty; *Yang Men Nyu Jiang·Tan Gu* (Female Generals of the Yang Family — Exploring the Valley), centering on the legendary female general Mu Guiying; and *Gui Yuan·Sha Sheng* (Ghost's Lament — Killing), about a young woman's brave pursuit of love.

"It's like touching an elephant's leg, if you only know Qinqiang from the TV drama. But once you watch more of our livestream shows, you'll see the whole elephant and probably fall in love with it," says Li.

Into the digital age

Hailed as the ancestor of many traditional Chinese operas, Qinqiang was once a prevailing art form but later went through a period of decline amid the entertainment industry's rapid expansion. Today, however, the centuries-old art is finding new life — not only through the popularity of *The Lead*, but also through new technologies and innovative approaches to presenting traditional culture.

For Li, the need to adapt is personal. "When I was 15 or 16, I felt confused and struggled, thinking that Qinqiang was dying. We couldn't sell tickets back then," she recalls.

Yet encouragement from veteran experts persuaded her to stay on the stage. Decades later, she sees technology not as a threat to tradition, but as one way of keeping it alive.

"Qinqiang is a precious treasure left to us by generations, constantly nourishing our bloodline and spirit. That is why the further we go, the more grounded and confident we feel," she says. "I firmly believe that traditional culture must embrace the times and technology; only then will it not be forgotten by the passage of time."

That philosophy is now being put to the test in an ambitious new project: an extended reality remake of *Gui Yuan·Sha Sheng*, featuring two iconic scenes from the classic Qinqiang opera *Zai Xu Hong Mei Yuan* (A Reunion at Red Plum Pavilion).

Li has performed the opera more than 1,300 times. It tells of a legendary romance in which a young woman, murdered by her ruthless high-ranking official husband, returns as a ghost to seek revenge and rescue the man she truly loves.

The XR project seeks to bring the performance closer to audiences in a way a conventional stage cannot.

Shot with a binocular panoramic 3D film camera at a high rate of 90 frames per second and with a 180-degree field of view, the project has completed more than 10 minutes, or half of its overall 20-minute runtime.

It vividly re-creates two famous Qinqiang stunts: "*wo yu*" — a posture requiring the performer to squat slowly with extreme flexibility, and "*chui huo*", a stunt involving bursts of flame blown from the mouth.

For audiences wearing an extended reality headset, the experience is deliberately intimate. Flames appear to burst just inches from their eyes, creating a visceral sensation that places viewers almost inside the performance rather than at a distance from the stage.

Wang Jixuan, director of the management office of the Xi'an XR Film Industry Base, says the project offers audiences a perspective rarely available in a conventional theater, where the stage can feel distant.

"Such close-range performances give the audience an immersive feeling, delivering an unparalleled sense of awe," he says.

Zhang Feng, supervisor of the Xiying Boundless XR Cinema, says the film marks the first attempt to combine advanced XR technology with intangible cultural heritage, adding that they will continue to explore the field further.

For Qinqiang Opera, the challenge is no longer to preserve an old art form, but to find new ways for audiences to see, hear, and feel it. The stage may change, but the voice remains.

Shi Futian contributed to this story.

Contact the writer at xufan@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:34 PM

LIFE

Flipping a new toy story

By updating fragile ancient crafts, passionate artisans successfully transform fading cultural history into modern daily routines, **Yang Feiyue** reports.



Li Mei recently demonstrates the intricate paper-folding process behind *fanlihua*, a paper toy, in Beijing. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Li Mei spent 12 years teaching English to children before deciding to take a completely different path.

Her father-in-law, a fourth-generation inheritor of *fanlihua* — a traditional Beijing paper toy that transforms with a flick of the wrist — was preparing to close his small workshop in eastern Shandong province.

The profits were thin. The work was exhausting. The craft, which had once been a familiar sight at Beijing's temple fairs, had all but faded from memory.

Yet, Li thought the toy deserved another chance, but she was not acting on impulse.

"I had been an English teacher for nearly 12 years," she says. "That career would always be there for me. If trying to revive *fanlihua* didn't work out, I could always go back."

So she decided to test the waters — bringing the craft back to Beijing, its place of origin, to see whether people still cared.

The answer came during the 2024 Spring Festival holiday at Beijing's Ditan Temple Fair.

Her tiny booth quickly drew crowds. Children squeezed through adults for a closer look. Elderly visitors pointed excitedly toward the colorful paper toys stacked behind the counter. Some customers bought them before even asking how they worked.

For hours, Li barely paused, repeating prices almost mechanically as her stock disappeared.

At Beijing's Ditan and Longtan temple fairs that year, Li's family earned between 150,000 and 200,000 yuan ($22,130–29,500) in just 15 days. What stayed with her, however, was not the sales figure.

"I realized that a toy many people assumed had faded into history could still spark such instant recognition and excitement," she says.

The response convinced her to leave teaching behind and devote herself to reviving the craft.

Two years later, she sees that moment in a different light. "It made me realize these traditions were never truly gone," she says. "People were simply waiting to rediscover them again in a new way."

Living heritage

Across China, similar stories are unfolding. Intangible cultural heritage, once associated mainly with museums, official exhibitions or aging artisans' workshops, is reappearing in shopping malls, coffee shops, lifestyle stores and weekend workshops that cater to young urban consumers.

On the fourth floor of Gongmei Building on Beijing's Wangfujing shopping street, visitors spend entire afternoons making paper toys, learning embroidery techniques or browsing heritage-inspired products inside a cultural space called Yuxun Jingxi, established by the major arts and crafts player Beijing Gongmei Group.

Some come for photos. Others simply want a relaxing weekend activity. Few arrive thinking they are engaging with intangible cultural heritage, observes Wang Jingjing, deputy general manager of Gongmei.

"That is precisely the point. We don't want to sell intangible cultural heritage as heritage. We want to present it as a lifestyle," she says.

Since opening in 2025, Yuxun Jingxi has hosted more than 100 heritage-related events, attracting tens of thousands of visitors through workshops, exhibitions and lifestyle experiences designed for younger consumers.

The approach reflects a broader shift in how traditional crafts are being revived in China today — not as static cultural symbols preserved behind glass, but as products and experiences woven back into everyday life.

"The moment heritage is placed too high on a pedestal, people feel disconnected from it," Wang says. "Lifestyle is immersive. It's participatory."

That participatory approach is increasingly resonating with younger consumers. A recent survey by China Youth Daily found that 81.1 percent of respondents view intangible cultural heritage activities as a new way to socialize, while nearly half share their experiences on social media.

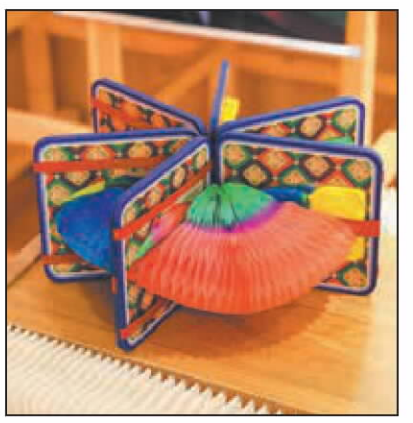
Demand has grown rapidly. During the 2026 Spring Festival holiday, group-purchase sales for activities combining intangible heritage and traditional markets surged 764 percent year-on-year on Douyin, according to platform data.

"It has to be fun first," Wang says. "Only then will people discover how remarkable these traditions really are."





Above: Li teaches a child how to play with a traditional *fanlihua* toy in Zhongshan, Guangdong province.





Above: Tibetan incense products, reimagined through modern design, have found a new home in urban living spaces. **Left:** A *fanlihua* piece that blends the traditional *bagua* (eight trigrams) shape with ancient Chinese motifs.

Above: A piece of *fanlihua* designed in the shape of a folding fan.

Innovative patterns

Li's paper toy was never meant to be remarkable. It was simply a paper-and-bamboo toy designed to flip.

The craft, also known as "18 flips", dates back to the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). Once enjoyed in imperial courts before spreading among ordinary residents, the toy later became a familiar feature at Beijing's temple fairs. Its charm lies in transformation: folded paper structures suddenly bloom into dragons, flowers or geometric forms with a series of deft hand movements. Yet, by the early 21st century, the craft had all but disappeared from Beijing.

As Li immersed herself in the trade, she found several practical obstacles. Traditional designs offered little variety. The toys were made from fragile *xuan* paper that tore easily, prompting many buyers to treat them as disposable. Their appearance had changed little over the decades. "The complexity of the craft no longer matched its economic value," she says.

Rather than thinking like a heritage inheritor, Li approached the challenge as a consumer.

Before bringing the toys back to Beijing's temple fairs, she extensively redesigned them, creating dragon editions, AI-assisted lion dance motifs, carp patterns symbolizing good fortune, and shapes inspired by traditional Chinese fans and jade ornaments.

She also replaced delicate *xuan* paper with sturdier pear paper, a tissue paper originally used for wrapping fruit and durable enough to last for years. She enlarged the outer sleeves that encase the folded toy, transforming what had once been plain red or green covers into canvases featuring Beijing snacks, city landmarks and customized designs.

Most importantly, she stopped marketing the toys primarily as "heritage". "I want people to think the product is interesting at first," she says.

Unexpectedly, her years as an English teacher proved invaluable. "Heritage workshops and teaching are actually very similar," she explains. "You have to think from the user's perspective and ask how people can most easily understand and enjoy something."

The strategy paid off.

Li has since taken *fanlihua* beyond temple fairs and retail shelves. She has designed a do-it-yourself kit that guides users through every step, from gluing the paper honeycomb to dyeing the "flower buds", allowing even children to make their own paper toy from scratch.

She has led workshops on university campuses, including Renmin University, where students who had never heard of *fanlihua* spent hours folding and flipping the toys.

She is now developing English-language experiences for international visitors. "The first time foreigners see it, their reaction is the same as mine was," she says.

"Such simple materials — paper and sticks — yet so many transformations. They're fascinated."

That transformation reflects a larger trend. Traditional crafts, once regarded as old-fashioned or remote, are being redesigned through contemporary aesthetics, interactive workshops and social media-friendly spaces, experts say.

The rise of *guochao*, or China chic, has also encouraged younger generations to reexamine traditional culture with fresh curiosity and confidence, they agree.

But for Wang, the real problem is not whether heritage looks fashionable. It is whether it remains relevant. "Heritage cannot survive only as something displayed. It has to become part of people's lives again," Wang says.

That may explain why some of the most successful revivals in recent years have involved objects tied to everyday life rather than ceremonial symbolism — toys, accessories, stationery, teaware or textiles, she notes.

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

Kunqu Opera performance delights visitors at UN headquarters





Left: People enjoy Kunqu Opera during a Shanghai city promotional event in London on April 24.
Right: Actors from Shanghai Kunqu Opera Troupe perform at the Grand Theatre of Prince Kung's Palace Museum in Beijing on June 9. PHOTOS BY XINHUA

UNITED NATIONS — A pop-up Kunqu performance, showcasing one of China's oldest surviving forms of opera, brought an unexpected burst of traditional Chinese culture to the United Nations headquarters in New York on Aug 4.

Presented by artists from the Zhejiang Jingkun Art Center, the performance drew curious UN staff and visitors, many of whom stopped to watch the centuries-old art form unfold in a public space within the complex. Some filmed the performance on their phones, while others stayed to learn more about the stories behind the scenes.

Adina Ghita, a judge at the United Nations Dispute Tribunal who recently began studying Chinese, said the performance left a strong impression despite her limited understanding of the dialogue.

"It's the second time I've seen one. It's wonderful. It's special. They are so graceful when they dance," she said. "I understand it's about a princess and a lady who embroiders, and I love the way they dance. I think it's very expressive."

Ghita said the visual storytelling made the performance easy to follow and enjoyable, adding that she hopes to see more traditional Chinese performing arts at the United Nations.

"I see a lot of Chinese movies, and there are those dances with long sleeves, like fire or like water. I'd like to see that," she said.

For Toni Thai Sterrett, founder of AI-powered screenwriting platform Cinepartna, the performance showed how traditional cultures from different parts of the world can resonate across borders.

"I thought it was beautiful. It was different. I don't understand the language, but I understood what was going on," she said. "I felt the emotion."

Sterrett, who was visiting UN headquarters, said she found it especially meaningful to see women performing Kunqu Opera after learning that the art form was traditionally performed entirely by men. She also praised the production's comic role, saying, "The jester was really funny."

What impressed Sterrett most, however, was the sense of familiarity she found in an art form from a different culture.

"It made me think about how similar all these traditional cultures are," she said. "Older cultures throughout Asia, Africa, and indigenous communities have so much in common. The gestures and the way they were communicating made me think, 'Wow, we really are all the same.'"

The performance also carried broader significance at an international venue like the United Nations, Sterrett said.

Co-hosted by the UNSRC Chinese Book Club and the Zhejiang Provincial Department of Culture, Radio, Television and Tourism, the performance featured excerpts from three classic Kunqu productions — *Age of Splendor* (Shengshi Hongzhuang), *The Tale of the Precious Sword* (Baojian Ji) and *Fifteen Strings of Cash* (Shiwu Guan) — presenting stories that range from the grandeur of the Tang Dynasty (618-907) and themes of loyalty and righteousness to humorous glimpses of everyday life.

Recognized by UNESCO in 2001 as one of the first masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, Kunqu Opera is celebrated for its elegant singing, graceful choreography, poetic language and minimalist stagecraft, using symbolic gestures and movements to convey rich emotion and dramatic narratives.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:34 PM

CULTURE





Left: A porcelain artwork titled *Omniscient* by Russian artist Svetlana K-Liee. **Center and right:** Mexican artist Liliana Diaz works on porcelain pieces shaped like brain scans in her studio at Taoxichuan in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

China's porcelain hub: A global kiln

A newly inscribed UNESCO World Heritage site is a thriving center for international artists who explore ceramics and traditional connections, and find a unique blend of legacy and innovation, **Sun Meng** reports in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi.

On an upper floor of a modern building, the space opens into a vast and airy studio where sunlight pours through tall windows. This is a working hub for artists from around the world. Scattered across the room are worktables — each one a small universe, with its own rhythm and its own conversation between artist and clay. All of them share the same address: Taoxichuan, Jingdezhen's sprawling cultural district built on the site of the former Universe Porcelain Factory.

On July 25, the Jingdezhen Handicraft Porcelain Industry Sites were inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, becoming China's 61st World Heritage site and the first centered on porcelain. For the thousands of foreign artists who have settled in this city of 1.62 million people, the recognition came as no surprise.

Jingdezhen in Jiangxi province is home to more than 60,000 *jingpiao* — artists, designers and creators who have migrated to the porcelain capital, including thousands from more than 60 countries. Since 2015, Taoxichuan has been inviting artists from a variety of countries and regions through its residency programs, offering three-month stays at its international studio to more than 3,600 artists, according to Xinhua News Agency.

Svetlana K-Liee, an artist from Russia who had been living in England since 2006, first came to Jingdezhen three years ago for short residencies. "Each time was not enough," she says. "Finally, after my third residency, which lasted three months, I decided to move here."





Above left and above right: Russian artist Svetlana K-Liee's porcelain art pieces shaped like spiders with bodies of berries.

Above center: Another porcelain work from the Spider-Berries series by K-Liee.





Three foreign artists at Taoxichuan International Studio in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province — (from left to right) Svetlana K-Liee from Russia, Pinar Baklan from Turkiye, and Liliana Diaz from Mexico.

Now 49, K-Liee works with porcelain, glass and bronze. On her worktable sits a porcelain art piece. It's a spider with the body of a berry, which is part of her current project. The piece uses traditional Chinese white porcelain and has thick glazes from gas firing. "All the materials I used for it are purely traditional Chinese," she says. "Jingdezhen is an endless source of inspiration and pure, sophisticated materials which I can't get anywhere else. I have discovered many new techniques which were unknown to me previously."

The studio she shares with other resident artists is a microcosm of this global community. Just three days earlier, an artist in her 70s from the Netherlands had been working at the table next to hers for the previous three months. Age, like nationality, seems to matter little in this sprawling space. "We are a multinational group of artists," K-Liee says. "We work here and enjoy not only the work, but the culture."

Apart from porcelain making, she has also embraced traditional Chinese practices such as tai chi, which she practices every morning at 6 am, and acupuncture. "Even my sleep is really good here," she adds. "It shows that my spirit feels really peaceful and happy."

Liliana Diaz, an artist from Mexico, is working on a very different project. Her studio at Taoxichuan is filled with porcelain pieces shaped like brain scans. "The printed piece is the hippocampus," she explains. "This is the part of the brain that is in charge of storing memory."

She sees a connection between memories and the fragments of porcelain buried beneath Jingdezhen. "I have learned that there are many fragments of porcelain and ceramics buried underground, and now they are reaching out and becoming part of the history of the city," she says. "So I'm trying to link that with how we search for our own memories."

For Diaz, cultural exchange is at the heart of her decision to come here. "We come from different cultures with different languages, and we're hungry for new emotions and new knowledge," she says.

Pinar Baklan, a ceramics artist from Turkiye, has been working with porcelain for more than 20 years. This is her first time in Jingdezhen. "I'm happy to be here because we have a very similar culture to China," she says. "We have blue-and-white art like in China, but use a different technique."

The "blue-and-white" she refers to is Iznik ceramics, a Turkish tradition born from the influence of Chinese blue-and-white porcelain that reached the Ottoman Empire via the Silk Road. While visually similar, the two are technically distinct. In Turkish, the word for ceramic is "cini", which means "coming from China". "We tried for centuries to make the same quality as in China," she says.

Baklan sees Jingdezhen's contribution to the world as its ability to bring people together. "You have super deep culture here," she says. "You bring people together to share, which is a really important mission for artists. We have everything to discover here in Jingdezhen."

For all three artists, Jingdezhen is more than a place to work. It is a place to live. K-Liee speaks of the changes she has seen over the past three years. "The town is developing with enormous speed," she says. The UNESCO inscription, K-Liee believes, will only accelerate that transformation. "It's really great to hear that," she says. "Jingdezhen definitely deserves it as it is a unique place on the planet."

For the thousands who have chosen to stay, the city's new status as a World Heritage site is both a recognition of its past and a promise for its future. Jingdezhen's kilns have been firing for over a millennium. In K-Liee's words, "We are still here, still making."

Contact the writer at sunmeng@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

Liangzhu Museum's bilingual guides bring 5,000-year-old civilization to life

HANGZHOU — Clad in a red volunteer vest bearing a badge in the shape of a jade-inlaid lacquer cup, one of her favorite Liangzhu artifacts, American Emma Chen greeted visitors to the Liangzhu Museum in East China, and then shared stories of a civilization that flourished more than 5,000 years ago.

For Chen, the ancient artifacts on display are more than relics from the past. They offer a glimpse into the wisdom of the Liangzhu people, showcasing their sophisticated social structure, farming practices and exquisite jade craftsmanship, dating back to the Neolithic era.

"Although no written records of the Liangzhu people have been found, archaeology, together with later historical texts, allows us to gradually piece together their way of life and better understand the cultural legacy they left behind," she says.

The Liangzhu ruins, located in Hangzhou, capital city of East China's Zhejiang province, are recognized as a testimony to the existence of Chinese civilization at least 5,000 years ago. They have also been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Launched in 2023, the Liangzhu Forum has been held annually to gather global archaeologists, historians, museum directors, and artists to discuss world civilizations, heritage conservation and cross-cultural dialogue. The forum has also contributed to several international cooperation projects, including the establishment of an archaeological research center focused on Liangzhu.

"To me, the greatest significance of Liangzhu lies in its archaeological value," Chen says. "Its remains, especially the city structure, have been well-preserved, so that we can use its three-tier layout to help visitors understand how the ancient city was organized and what it reveals about the social hierarchy of the Liangzhu people."

A museum enthusiast, Chen became a frequent visitor to Liangzhu Museum before joining its volunteer team. During one visit, dressed in traditional Chinese attire for a lantern and riddles event, she met staff members recruiting volunteers — an encounter she describes in Chinese as *yuanfen*, or a special connection.

"I was thrilled because it was exactly the kind of work I had always wanted to do," she recalls.

Fluent in Chinese, Chen took Asian studies as an undergraduate in the United States before settling in China. Now in her fifth year as a volunteer guide at Liangzhu Museum, Chen has immersed herself in the archaeology of China's Neolithic cultures, expanding her professional knowledge and exploring new ways to share its stories with visitors.

Chen's journey is part of a broader effort by Liangzhu Museum, where more than 200 volunteers, including a growing team of bilingual guides, help visitors from around the world better understand the ancient civilization.



Participants of the Third UNESCO High-level Forum for Museums visit the Liangzhu Museum in April 2025. JIANG HAN / XINHUA

"We offer English-language guide services two days a week, with more than 20 volunteers now able to provide tours in English," says Shan Qingjuan, a museum staff member.

The rising demand for bilingual services comes amid a growing interest among international visitors in exploring China's diverse and time-honored cultural heritage. A survey by the China Tourism Academy found that more than 60 percent of inbound tourists consider experiencing Chinese culture a major purpose of their trip. The museum has received over 527,000 visitors so far this year, including more than 5,100 overseas visitors, mainly from Southeast Asian countries and the US.

"Many international visitors are fascinated by the visible details of Liangzhu artifacts, especially the symbols carved in jade and pottery, including images of houses, animals and the iconic sacred human-animal motif," says Yao Hua, a veteran bilingual volunteer at Liangzhu.

A former pharmaceutical professional, Yao joined the museum's volunteer team in 2015. During her tours, she often uses digital tools to help overseas visitors understand the intricate patterns on Liangzhu artifacts.

"When introducing the sacred human-animal motif carved in jade artifacts, I would use a tablet to enlarge the image for them to examine details such as the eyes, nose and fangs," Yao says.

Yao prefers to think of herself as an exhibition interpreter. "Our job is not only to explain what visitors are looking at, but to help them explore the ideas, stories and curatorial thinking behind the exhibition," she says. "We are a bridge between cultural relics and visitors."

To better fulfill the role, Yao has continued to expand her knowledge across archaeology, art and history, finding connections that help bring ancient civilizations closer to visitors.

Over the past five years of training volunteer guides, Yao has witnessed the transformation of Liangzhu's volunteer team, with younger and highly skilled volunteers joining the program as public interest in the civilization continues to grow.

Dong Zhen, a popular museum content creator in his 30s, joined the volunteer team after his first visit to Liangzhu in 2022. His first encounter with the site raised a question in his mind: Why did people 5,000 years ago choose to build a magnificent ancient kingdom on marshlands and wetlands? Driven by curiosity, Dong studied extensive materials, learned from experienced guides, and passed the museum's rigorous training system. He now has nearly a million subscribers across social media.

"A guide's role is not only to impart knowledge, but to awaken curiosity," he says. This year, Dong began focusing on an exhibition about ancient Greek civilization at Liangzhu Museum. "By learning about Ancient Greece today, we are not pursuing the unfamiliar, but trying to understand human civilization. In doing so, we gain a deeper understanding of ourselves."

Liangzhu's volunteer team has become an important force supporting the museum's work, says Xu Yao, deputy director of the museum's exhibition and education department. Beyond providing guided tours, volunteers also contribute to visitor services, educational programs and photography, while their insights and suggestions are incorporated into the museum's public outreach efforts.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:34 PM

SPORTS

BASKETBALL

LeBron's Sixers hope to spoil Knicks party

James will play his first game with Philadelphia against NY on opening night

LeBron James will visit the New York Knicks on NBA opening night and will play the Los Angeles Lakers on Christmas Day.

James' arrival in Philadelphia has made the 76ers must-see TV, and they are all over the NBA's biggest days of the season.

James will make his 76ers debut against the NBA champion Knicks on Oct 20. The game at Madison Square Garden will be part of a tripleheader, when the Knicks raise a banner to celebrate their first championship since 1973 and James then kicks off his tenure at the final stop of his career.

He will return to LA to face the Lakers on Christmas Day, after Victor Wembanyama and the San Antonio Spurs head back to New York for an NBA Finals rematch that opens a five-game schedule.

The NBA unveiled those games Tuesday as what it called a "sneak peek" at the 2026-27 schedule. The full schedule will be released Thursday.

The season begins with the Boston Celtics visiting Detroit in a rare 3 pm EDT start for a midweek game. The tripleheader is capped by the Spurs hosting Oklahoma City in a rematch of the Western Conference finals.

Those three games — opening night traditionally has featured two in recent years — will all be televised in the United States by NBC. ESPN then has all five games on Christmas Day.

That schedule features San Antonio at New York, Miami at Boston, Philadelphia at Los Angeles, Oklahoma City at Minnesota and Denver at Golden State.

James' new team was always going to have a prominent place on the schedule, so the NBA struggled to put the puzzle together while waiting for his decision. Commissioner Adam Silver even said last month that he wanted James to announce his decision, because teams and networks were calling to ask when the schedule would be completed.

The NBA's career scoring leader said it would be the Sixers about a week later, joining a team that had already acquired All-Star Jaylen Brown from Boston and is expected to be one of the top challengers for the Knicks' title.

James will play his first home game in Philadelphia on Oct 22 against Cleveland, one of his former teams that hoped to get the 41-year-old Ohio native back for a third time. That will be part of an ESPN doubleheader preceding Denver's visit to Oklahoma City.

Minnesota visits Miami to highlight the schedule on Oct 21, when most teams will open their seasons. The Heat acquired two-time MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo from Milwaukee — and tried to bring James back as well — and the Timberwolves traded for flashy point guard LaMelo Ball. Golden State then faces the Lakers to cap that ESPN doubleheader.

The Spurs are also a top draw now behind Wembanyama, the NBA Defensive Player of the Year who helped San Antonio win Game 7 of the West finals in Oklahoma City to end the Thunder's title reign.

This will be his second time playing at Madison Square Garden on Christmas Day, after he delivered a massive 42-point, 18-rebound performance in 2024 in a loss on his holiday debut. The matchup will be his first time back on the court in New York since the Knicks set an NBA Finals record by rallying from 29 points down for a 107-106 victory in Game 4. They won the title in San Antonio in the next game.

San Antonio will face Houston and former Longhorns star Kevin Durant in a game at his alma mater, the University of Texas, on Oct 23, the back of a doubleheader starting with the Knicks at the Celtics.



LeBron James, then with the Los Angeles Lakers, and Joel Embiid of the Philadelphia 76ers during an NBA game in 2022. AP

Steph a Warrior for life?

The Golden State Warriors have every indication Stephen Curry would like to stay with the team for the remainder of his career, and they plan to make that happen for the two-time NBA MVP.

The 38-year-old Curry is hoping to play at least a couple more years, and has said he wants them to be with the Warriors. He is set to complete a $62.6 million extension he signed for the 2026-27 season in August 2024.

Whether a new contract will get done right away remains to be seen. Curry becomes eligible for a two-year extension on Aug 29, and general manager Mike Dunleavy said: "I'm pretty confident Steph will finish his career here."

"Ultimately, it's his call, his decision, whether that's allowing his contract to run out and move on," Dunleavy said during a video call Tuesday. "Look, if he comes to me and wants to be moved, Joe (owner Joe Lacob) and I will talk it through. We wouldn't love it. But he's earned the right to do what he wants, do those things. But, as far as the messaging or any idea that he would be anywhere else, that's not a thing we're looking at, or he's looking at."

Curry averaged 26.6 points, 4.7 assists and 3.6 rebounds, but was limited to 43 games last season for the Warriors, who will host Denver on Christmas night — playing on the holiday for the 14th straight year.

Closely monitoring his playing time will be a top priority, as coach Steve Kerr returns for two more seasons after signing a new contract in May. Curry missed more than two months with a nagging right knee injury before he finally came back in early April.

He had initially hoped to return after the All-Star break.

"I think with the knee, other injuries and then his age, it's definitely something we have to manage," Dunleavy said.

The Warriors also dealt with season-ending knee injuries to Jimmy Butler and Moses Moody that required surgeries, as they finished 10th in the Western Conference. After beating the Los Angeles Clippers in the first play-in tournament game, Golden State lost 111-96 at Phoenix.

The Warriors missed out on signing James this offseason, but brought back Draymond Green on a one-year contract for $27.7 million, and also Kristaps Porzingis, Al Horford and Gary Payton II.

Dunleavy hasn't heard any change of thinking from Curry, who is headed into his 18th NBA season still determined to add to his four championships with Golden State.

The Warriors last won in 2022.

"That's always been what he's discussed. I think that's tracking quite well," Dunleavy said of Curry staying put.

"There's two things I'm confident about with Steph. He really, really wants to win, and he wants to finish his career as a Warrior. I don't think that changes tomorrow, Aug 29th, the start of the season, middle of the season, the end of next season. I think those things are going to be consistent."

AP



Golden State Warriors' Stephen Curry goes for the basket as Anthony Davis of the Los Angeles Lakers defends during an NBA Western Conference semifinal in Los Angeles in 2023. AP

Flagg trading card a slam dunk for lucky buyer

The lucky buyer of a one-of-a-kind basketball card featuring NBA star Cooper Flagg has a choice to make: put it up for auction for potentially millions of dollars or accept 32 years of season tickets from his team, the Dallas Mavericks.

The coveted trading card was unveiled by a sports card shop in Rhode Island on Monday during a livestream in which the store opens up packs of cards for collectors who have made blind bids on the packs.

The card features a jersey patch worn by Flagg in his first NBA game and is also signed by the former Duke University star, who averaged 21 points, 6.7 rebounds and 4.5 assists to earn the 2025-26 season NBA Rookie of the Year award.

The Dallas Mavericks offered up a trade package in exchange for the card that includes two premium season tickets for 32 years, a signed game-worn Flagg jersey, a photo opportunity with the player and other perks.

A New Jersey-based company that specializes in sports collectibles offered a $1.5 million cash advance to the buyer for the rights to put the Flagg card up for auction and estimated that it could go under the hammer for up to $5 million.

A similar debut patch rookie card featuring Major League Baseball pitcher Paul Skenes of the Pittsburgh Pirates sold for $1.1 million last year.

Sports trading cards are big business in the United States with collectors paying north of $10 million in recent years for cards featuring former NBA stars Michael Jordan and Kobe Bryant and MLB's Shohei Ohtani.

AFP

Fever coach says divisiveness 'will not win' during pregame rant

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana Fever coach Stephanie White has had enough of the conversations around the WNBA this season that aren't about basketball.

On Tuesday, she finally lashed out.

The 2023 WNBA Coach of the Year, and one of the original Fever players, angrily defended herself after she was criticized for her response to DiJonai Carrington's flagrant foul on Sophie Cunningham, and pleaded with people to focus on the sport itself and not the continual sideshows.

"The hate, the fear mongering, the divisiveness that's trying to hijack our league will not win. It won't win," White said, her voice rising as she pounded the table in front of her. "We are united. We are connected. We will not be divided. Every day, these women put their asses on the line. Every day, when they go low, we go high. Love will win. Grace will win. Humility will win and kindness will win. I stand by them, I will always stand by them. Everybody else can go to hell."

White left immediately after her two-and-a-half-minute outburst ended without taking questions.

For the Fever, this has been a season full of controversies.

It happened again Saturday, when Chicago Sky guard Carrington hit Cunningham in the head and neck area, knocking the Fever guard hard to the ground on a breakaway layup. Cunningham got up and charged toward Carrington, but was restrained.

Carrington was assessed a Flagrant 2, an automatic ejection. The player then wrote "WHITE PRIVILEGE" and tagged the Fever on a social media account. On Monday, Carrington said she never claimed the foul call was "white privilege".

Cunningham has been outspoken about her desire to keep transgender women out of women's sports, a position that has spurred rallies in support of, and opposed to, her stance.

White initially said she thought the refs got the call right, but that she didn't think that action near the head and neck area was intentional.

Some critics claimed she was defending Carrington.



Sophie Cunningham of the Indiana Fever is fouled by DiJonai Carrington of the Chicago Sky during a WNBA game on Aug 8 in Chicago, Illinois. AFP

"OK... The Indiana Fever need to let Stephanie White go," Indiana Lieutenant Governor Micah Beckwith wrote on X on Sunday.

"No solid coach would ever take the side of the opposing team's player who committed a flagrant foul on one of their own players. Terrible coaching! The Fever need to defend their players."

White explained Tuesday that she had not seen the replay when she first spoke with reporters Saturday, and that she changed her opinion after watching it again. She called the foul "egregious".

"Our players' success, our players' health and wellness, our players' safety is always a top priority," she began, her voice rising. "One of the things I pride myself on is my relationships with my players. For those who have anything to say about the play in the last game, I didn't see the replay. I went straight to a news conference, I thought the play got called right. Thankfully, Sophie is OK. Was it egregious? Absolutely.

"When you get a chance to see that on replay over and over, you see that. I didn't see that in real time. I take personally any suggestion that I don't 100 percent always have my players' backs. I ride with them 10 toes down all the time, all the time."

Cunningham received a loud ovation when she entered Tuesday's game against the New York Liberty. White received polite applause when she was introduced.

White faced a similar controversy when three-time All-Star Caitlin Clark also was fouled hard earlier this season, prompting a letter from the US House of Representatives to WNBA Commissioner Cathy Engelbert.

White and Clark were also involved in a sideline spat in late May, and there was speculation about White's job status following the incident.

Now White just wants everyone to get back to basketball.

"It's a shame we can't have an opportunity to talk about what great basketball they are playing," White said with emphasis. "The reality is, with me, I will always lead with love. I will always lead with grace, I will always lead with humility. and I will always lead with integrity. It doesn't mean I'll always get it right. I'm human."

AP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:34 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:36 PM

Costly fallout
Mideast tensions push US gas to over $4 a gallon
WORLD, PAGE 5



Graffiti artist reimagines Chinese font
LIFE, PAGE 13



Bot breakthrough
Industry insiders predict massive tech leap for humanoids by 2028
BUSINESS, PAGE 9

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 THURSDAY, JULY 23, 2026

DECODING CHINA

River's revival a case study in good governance

Hunan's environmental success shows full potential of people-first approach

By **CAO YIN** and **HE CHUN**
in Changsha

On a balmy June afternoon, the banks of the Guitang River hum with life. Joggers pass by on the wooden boardwalks, while families push strollers past cafes and quaint shops. It's a scene that 75-year-old Chen Xiaofan, who lives along the river in Hunan province, sees as nothing short of a miracle.

After all, in the early 2000s, the river in Changsha, the provincial capital, was a black, open sewer — a literal scar on the city's Yuhua district.

Today, the river's water quality has improved from an inferior Grade V to a Grade I or II — suitable for fish and as a source of drinking water. Biodiversity has rebounded, with 425 species now inhabiting the area, including rare fish, wild ducks and egrets.

The transformation is much more than an environmental success story. It has become a key case study in a Party-wide campaign launched in February that redefines what constitutes political success for local officials.

The Guitang River's transformation demonstrates the results of generational efforts made by successive local officials under a governance philosophy based on a key principle: "Gold and silver cups are not as valuable as public reputation".

Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, has emphasized this principle, stressing the importance of establishing and practicing a correct understanding of governance performance.

Xi, who is also Chinese president, said that communists must bear in mind that working for the people's well-being is their greatest political achievement, and that officials should contribute their share to this cause without taking credit for its success.

Continuous progress

Flowing 28.3 kilometers through a basin of more than 2 million people, the Guitang River was a childhood playground for residents like Deng You, who in the 1980s caught shrimp in its clear waters. However, rapid industrialization meant that the river was exposed to high levels of pollution. By the 1990s, the water quality had plunged to the worst national grade, and the river was placed on a national blacklist of polluted urban waterways.

When early, disjointed cleanup attempts failed in the 1990s, local authorities established a unified governance team in 2016. Since then, a chain of officials has built continuously on their predecessors' work rather than dismantling it to start their own projects.

Deng, deputy director of the Yuhua administrative committee of China (Hunan) Pilot Free Trade Zone Changsha area, joined the team as a coordinator. Her mission was to reconcile bureaucracies, demolish illegal structures, repair pipelines and restore the local ecosystem.

"I just wanted my mother river to breathe again — to be what it was in my childhood," she said.

The monumental undertaking saw millions of square meters of illegal construction torn down, every unregulated sewage outlet intercepted, and thousands of tons of fresh water pumped in daily. German experts were also invited to redesign the river's natural curves and bends as well as its ecological zones.

At the end of 2020, Deng passed her baton to Wang Bin, head of the district's river chief office. His role was to act as a bridge between residents, volunteers and government departments, finding and addressing the problems of the river and its surrounding areas in a timely manner.

"Early reports when I took the position were about broken pipes and illegal discharges. Now, residents ask for greener parks and more recreational space," Wang said. "That shift in public complaints is real evidence that our work is paying off."

Yang Weidong, a professor at China University of Political Science and Law, said that the governance of the river is a prime example of practicing a correct understanding of governance performance.

"What those officials do is to serve the people and put the public's demands first. They work not for immediate accolades but for long-term, sustainable public welfare," Yang said, adding that the change in the Guitang River shows the true potential of good governance.

Response to public needs

Following the river's environmental recovery, a commercial zone has emerged along its banks, offering communities a place to eat, unwind and enjoy leisure activities. Since last year, the area has seen a fresh wave of revitalization, drawing in young entrepreneurs and cultural-creative hubs, including artisan coffee roasters, bicycle culture studios and even a freshwater museum.

According to Yang, the transformation has responded to public needs at every turn — first for environmental restoration, then for community amenities, and now for jobs and economic vitality.

"At every stage, one conviction has never wavered: The people's genuine acclaim is the real yardstick of achievement," he said, emphasizing that, since the purpose of governance is to serve the people, their assessment and responses are what ultimately count.

The campaign, running through July, urges all Party members to embrace a correct understanding of governance performance. It calls for pragmatic, law-based decision-making, and for concrete outcomes that stand the test of practice and history — outcomes that genuinely serve the people and earn their recognition through solid, well-grounded work.

See ***Practice,*** *page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.

INSIDE
Integrated plant conservation
Global Views, page 8

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

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved



Foreign Minister Wang Yi takes part in a bilateral meeting with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on the sidelines of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Pasay, Metro Manila, the Philippines, on Wednesday. BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI / REUTERS

China, US agree to prepare for high-level exchanges

By **ZHANG YUNBI**
zhangyunbi@chinadaily.com.cn

Inside
Editorial, **page 6**

China and the United States need to translate the consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries into whole-of-government consensus and action across various domains, Foreign Minister Wang Yi said during his meeting with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Wednesday.

The two met in Manila, the capital of the Philippines, on the sidelines of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meetings.

Beijing and Washington "agreed to jointly implement the important consensus reached by the two heads of state, tap into the roles played by political and diplomatic channels, and prepare for high-level exchanges in the next phase", the Foreign Ministry said in a release.

Both sides believe that "this meeting was pragmatic, positive and constructive", and they agreed to "promote substantive progress in a constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability", the ministry said.

This is Wang's second face-to-face meeting with Rubio this year following their talks on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference in February. They also held a phone conversation in June.

During the talks on Wednesday, Wang said that this year is a "major year" for China-US relations and mentioned US President Donald Trump's state visit to China in May.

The two heads of state held a historic meeting in Beijing, defined the framework for the constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability, and outlined the direction for both sides' joint efforts, Wang said.

It is now the duty of both sides to "follow the course set by the two heads of state, eliminate disturbances, and overcome obstacles" to ensure that the leaders' consensus is translated into whole-of-government consensus and action across all fields, he said.

Both sides should "promote world peace and stability through China-US strategic stability" and "provide important impetus for international cooperation through constructive China-US interaction", he added.

Wang also made clear China's solemn position regarding a series of recent negative remarks and actions by the US.

He called on Washington to respect China's core interests, faithfully adhere to the one-China principle, effectively manage disagreements and differences, and address China's legitimate concerns, so that this "year of opportunity" for China-US relations can become a reality.

Wang was in Manila to attend the China-ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting on Wednesday amid tension between China and the Philippines over the South China Sea issue.

When meeting with Philippine Foreign Secretary Maria Theresa Lazaro on Wednesday, Wang lodged a strong protest against the ramming of a Chinese law enforcement vessel at Ren'ai Reef of the Nansha Islands by Philippine sailors.

Currently, China-Philippines relations stand at a crossroads, and the Philippines' needs to make the right and rational choice for the future developments, he said.

He warned that the Philippines "will ultimately have to bear the bitter consequences of its own making" if it attempts to utilize outsiders for provocations.

China has never posed a security threat to the Philippines, has never in history invaded or colonized the Philippines, and has always been committed to managing differences and stabilizing the situation through bilateral dialogue and consultation, Wang said.

The Philippines should immediately stop provocative maritime actions, strictly abide by the commitments it has made to China to date, and make concrete efforts to stabilize bilateral relations, he said.

Lazaro said the Philippines hopes to find an appropriate solution to maritime issues through dialogue and strive to improve bilateral relations.

ONLY COLD NOODLES CAN BEAT MAJOR HEAT

Refreshing Northeast China dish is a must-have meal when the mercury rises

By **LI YINGXUE**
liyingxue@chinadaily.com.cn

In Yanji, a city in Jilin province, a cold noodle broth is often the first thing diners order after taking their seats.

Served in a stainless-steel bowl, the clear broth is icy cold, balancing sweet, sour and savory flavors. Then comes the main dish — long, chewy noodles resting in chilled beef broth. A pair of scissors allows diners to cut the noodles into manageable lengths.



Cold noodles, a traditional food of the Korean ethnic group. NIU CHENGYU / FOR CHINA DAILY

As Major Heat, or *da shu*, the hottest of China's 24 solar terms, arrives on Thursday, people across the nation will seek relief from soaring temperatures. In Yanji, many turn to cold noodles, a traditional food of the Korean ethnic group that has become one of the city's culinary calling cards.

China Vibes — FOOD —

"In Yanji, once the weather turns hot, people naturally think of cold noodles," said Jin Yongfu, manager of Yanji Fuwudalou Cold Noodles, one of the city's best-known cold noodle restaurants.

Yanji cold noodles are made from a mixture of buckwheat flour, wheat flour, sweet potato starch, tapioca starch and acorn powder. The dough is scalded, kneaded and pressed into thin strands, then briefly cooked before being rinsed twice in cold water.

The defining element of a good bowl of cold noodles though is the broth.

At Jin's restaurant, the beef is soaked in running water for up to a day and a night. It is then blanched and simmered for about five hours with carrots, scallions, onions, ginger, licorice root and red dates.

See ***Taste,*** *page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.

'Shock 2.0' narrative flawed in concept

WORLD WATCH
By Tu Xinquan

Since the second half of 2025, some Western media outlets, politicians and scholars have been promoting the so-called "China Shock 2.0" narrative, portraying China's progress in new energy, electric vehicles, biomedicine and other sectors as a threat. Behind this rhetoric is a familiar purpose: to provide a new justification for protectionist policies.

The phrase may sound new, but the argument is old. "China Shock 2.0" is merely the latest version of the "China overcapacity" theory and the "China threat" narrative. Twenty years ago, some in the West spoke of a "China Shock 1.0", claiming that China's low-cost, labor-intensive goods had disrupted developed markets. But a broader look at world economic history shows that every major technological revolution and industrial shift has produced anxiety among vested interests. British machine production replacing Indian handloom weaving in the 19th century, the rise of the United States auto industry relative to Europe's in the 20th century and the effect of Japanese cars on Detroit in the 1980s all followed this pattern. What is now called a "shock" is, in essence, a normal adjustment of dynamic comparative advantage.

At the center of the "China Shock 2.0" argument is the claim that China's new energy sector suffers from "overcapacity". Yet by the standards of industrial economics, overcapacity usually refers to a sustained capacity utilization rate below 70 to 75 percent, accompanied by widespread industry losses. China's new energy vehicle sector does not fit that description. Its capacity utilization rate has remained above 70 percent, with some domestic brands approaching 100 percent. By contrast, the average utilization rate of European auto plants is about 55 percent, and some companies are even below 50 percent. The data show clearly where the real imbalance lies.

Nor does China's export structure support the accusation. More than 80 percent of China's automobile output is sold at home, while exports account for less than 20 percent. In 2025, China produced more than 16 million electric vehicles, of which only 2.61 million were exported. The vast majority were absorbed by the domestic market. To equate a trade surplus with overcapacity is to confuse two distinct concepts.

See ***Narrative,*** *page 3*

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:36 PM

INDEPTH

From 'bedroom heroes' to music stars in China

Audiences embrace wide range of foreign artists, exposure online a key factor

By **WANG XIN** in Shanghai
wangxin2@chinadaily.com.cn







Left: German singer and songwriter Chris James at Yuyuan Garden in Shanghai in 2024. **Middle:** James (center) visits Zhangjiajie in Hunan province with his musician friends during his recent China trip. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY **Right:** Members of British indie band Swim Deep visit Beijing in 2025. SO READY PRESENTS / FOR CHINA DAILY

Chris James, a 30-year-old German singer-songwriter, had no idea a song he wrote quickly in his Berlin bedroom had captivated millions of music fans in China, and would ultimately change his life.

Busy preparing for his new Chinese tour in August, James clearly remembers the magical — or even "confusing" — start of the story. It was about four years ago, when he opened up the official music video of his song *Not Angry* at home and noticed a few comments in Chinese under it.

Those comments increased day by day, and piqued his interest in what was going on.

He ran them through a translator, tracked them to a Chinese app and found out his song, which starts with a catchy humming section, had garnered millions of views. On Douyin, the Chinese version of TikTok, the hit song has now been used and shared over 5 billion times.

"I was sitting in my bedroom, scrolling on the screen and it was really hard to process. I saw people singing it in schools and malls … This little melody that I made had traveled so far," recalled James.

The singer-songwriter said he simply sat down one morning and wrote it and recorded it, without much thought or any expectation it would become so popular.

Yet, on the other side of the world, it became an earworm — a catchy tune listeners can't get out of their head. "It definitely changed my life in many ways," he said.

Open to new ideas

In recent years, an increasing number of overseas musicians have flooded China's music market.

The Global Music Report 2026 released by the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry in March showed that last year, Asia saw strong growth of 10.9 percent in recorded music revenues, and maintained its position as the largest region for physical revenues in 2025, accounting for 45.1 percent.

Notably, China has overtaken Germany to become the fourth largest global market, with remarkable revenue growth of 20.1 percent, the fastest-growing market in the top 20, said the report.

Social media platforms like RedNote, or Xiaohongshu, are also actively facilitating foreign artists searching for new horizons.

The RedNote music team has ramped up efforts to introduce overseas artists to China since early last year, after the "TikTok refugees" phenomenon emerged from the United States' threat to ban the platform.

Among those refugees is a massive number of niche and independent musicians and artists who have captivated Chinese audiences, said Jiang Jiayao, content operations manager of RedNote's music team.



Swim Deep performs at Strawberry Music Festival in 2019 in Guangzhou, Guangdong province. HASONG / FOR CHINA DAILY





Left: With RedNote music team's support, German rock band Neeve find a fanbase in China and played a show at JZ Club in Shanghai in July 2025. MAJOR Z STUDIO / FOR CHINA DAILY **Right:** Malaysian band babychair performs its 2026 *back in time* China tour. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

These artists include many unsigned "bedroom musicians" who independently write, record, produce and release music, usually from their homes.

RedNote organized for many of them to participate in the inaugural Global Village Concert on Jan 26, 2025. The event featured 20 groups and musicians from home and abroad, including James. It ran for about seven hours and attracted over 1.28 million online viewers.

The RedNote team later launched the Global Soundwave project and a No-border FM campaign to help overseas musicians connect with Chinese music fans.

Jiang said the team provides guidance and support to the artists on how to make their music reach the local community. The advice covers issues such as account operation, post creation, customized promotions, live settings, interaction, exclusive event planning, and online and offline music shows across China.

In September 2025, the team held the No-border Music Festival in Shanghai. The artist lineup included major stars including Malaysian pop band babychair, indie musician Hayd from the United States, singer Jordann from Canada, and Martin's Mood from France. The festival sold out quickly.

Jiang said many young RedNote users are highly educated, enjoy sharing music, and are open to supporting "niche, distinctive and indie music and artists".

"A vast majority — about 80 percent — of overseas musicians who are eyeing the Chinese market have joined our platform and community," said Jiang.

The team has made connections with artists worldwide, helping over 100 of them tap into the Chinese market and supporting hundreds of shows in China. They come from countries as varied as the US, Brazil, Australia, France, Germany, Norway, Japan and South Korea, and feature diverse music genres such as rock, pop, indie and jazz.

Deeper dive

In 2023, James played his first China show in Beijing, followed by six other cities.

A year later, his Chinese tour covered eight cities, and last year, he performed in 10 cities. James is getting ready to meet his army of Chinese fan crowds again on a new tour.

He has over 3 million fans on Chinese social media platforms, and is affectionately called "*Xiao Kui*", meaning "little sunflower".

"They are very into music, with a very strong passion and a lot of attention to lyrics, details and the depth of songs. They are also very interactive and can sing every song together with me. They are loud, in the best way possible," said James with a smile.



James engages with Chinese audiences at a fan meeting organized by RedNote music team in Shanghai in July 2025. MAJOR Z STUDIO / FOR CHINA DAILY

At a festival in Shanghai during the May Day holiday, fans sang along loudly with James in his return tour to China after seven months.

During that tour James organized travel outside his performance schedule to dive deeper into the nation.

Besides Shanghai, he went to Zhangjiajie and ancient towns in Hunan province, climbed Huangshan Mountain in Anhui province, visited Chongqing and even performed one of his hit songs at a hotpot restaurant and a teahouse in Chengdu, Sichuan province.

The laid-back vibe of his travels dovetails with James' life philosophy and the messages he tries to convey through his music. He said that just as the unexpected popularity of *Not Angry* shows, life can be random and filled with "endless possibility", adding it is good to always stay positive, optimistic and "go with the flow".

Malaysian connections

Babychair, a three-piece band based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, made its China debut at a music festival in Shanghai three years ago.

The band, which creates retro, dreamlike pieces with experimental music elements, saw its popularity take off in China after joining hands with the talent agency 1500 Sound Academy. The musical trio, who each go by one name, has already toured the country three times.

"The music market in China is very competitive, and everyone strives to be the best," said Aaron, the drummer.

"Our tour in China really opened our eyes and gave us new inspirations. We are always meeting new people and exploring new things, opportunities and possibilities."

Of Malaysian-Chinese heritage, all three were exposed to Chinese culture early in life through music and TV dramas. They can speak Chinese and share many cultural roots with their Chinese fans.

What resonates in China is sometimes different from what is popular with fans in other parts of the region.

For instance, in Southeast Asian nations, babychair's most popular song is *Oh It's You*. In China, however, *Dear* is the song that is more representative of the trio to their fans.

During their recently concluded China tour, audiences sang along with the band when they performed *Dear*.

"I think the market needed us," said lead vocalist Sean. "The idea of our music is simply asking everyone to chill. What we would like to deliver to our fans in music is not only the song, but also the emotions that make us connected. So we hope everyone can listen to the songs, get relaxed, feel differently and chill."

Over the past three years, they have come to value the Chinese musicians and artists they have met along the way.

"We share the same struggles and same happiness. They are very friendly, open, easy to communicate with and down to earth. We feel at ease having a chat or sharing life stories with each other. Such connections are very valuable," said Aaron.

Being valued

For British indie band Swim Deep, who completed their fourth tour last year, one of the most rewarding aspects of performing in China is feeling valued.

Formed in 2011, the Birmingham band has played over eight shows since 2014 and sold out many of them, playing to hundreds and sometimes thousands of fans.

"Every time we go back to China, we feel a little less like being a tourist there, it's a bit more of a feeling of coming home," said Austin Williams, the band's front man.

"We always feel so welcomed by the friendly, supportive, dedicated, loyal and passionate fans out there," he said.

One of Swim Deep's most memorable China shows was the 2019 Strawberry Music Festival in Guangzhou, Guangdong province.

Keyboard player James Balmont said audience numbers in China often far surpass what they draw in the United Kingdom.

The biggest UK festival crowd they have played for was 500, while in Guangzhou, they performed to around 10,000 people on the main stage.

While backstage riders of beverages and food for performers are common overseas, Williams was impressed that the Guangzhou organizers had gone to the trouble to prepare a big box filled with imported cheeses, beers, potato chips and other goodies.

"I felt very grateful that they've gone out of their way to do that for us … And it made me realize how these people are working beyond (the basics) to make the artist feel good," Williams said.

"It really proves that they consider art as a valuable and important necessity in culture and life."

Balmont also appreciated the Chinese staff's extra efforts and the respect they showed, which made the band feel valued.

Both band members expressed hope other venues follow this lead and create more comfortable conditions for the artists.

Organizers and promoters of tours and music festivals in China also often pay for performers' travel and accommodation expenses, reducing costs and financial risks for emerging overseas bands.

Touring in China sets a high standard for the rest of the world to follow. Also, the fans are always respectful and polite, show their loyal support in an orderly way, and welcome new music with open arms, Balmont said.

"When you combine all of that, it creates wonderful experiences that make you feel being a touring artist can be really worthwhile," he added.

Sam Tucker, manager of Swim Deep, said: "I think the future of the Chinese music market is very bright. The way the Chinese live market has embraced international artists and tours enables so much potential future growth. As culture becomes less specific to one country or city, it feels like the Chinese music market can only continue to grow and develop."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:36 PM

TOP NEWS

Practice: Officials punished for serious violations

From page 1

The initiative also requires solid efforts to address prominent problems, the establishment of sound systems and rules and the improvement of accountability mechanisms, so that institutions can effectively play their role in guiding and motivating the performance of officials.

"When governance is no longer anchored in serving the people, and public reputation ceases to be its yardstick, it will inevitably deviate from the proper track," said Yang.

In June, the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, China's top anti-corruption body, disclosed details of five notable cases in which officials were held accountable for incorrectly implementing governance performance.

In one case, when serving as Party secretary of Wen'an county in Hebei province from 2021 to 2024, Ren Huashan was found by the CCDI to have pursued personal accolades through reckless decisions. Despite being aware of funding shortfalls, he launched multiple urban village resettlement projects without due diligence — delaying housing delivery, stranding villagers and leaving wages unpaid.

In February 2022, Ren also pushed ahead with a tourist attraction despite clear land-use and zoning violations. Parts of the project were demolished in September 2023, incurring huge losses.

For these and other serious violations, Ren was expelled from the Party and dismissed from office. His suspected crimes were transferred to prosecutors for further review.

Wang Chengbing received similar punishment. The CCDI found that, while holding the position of Party secretary in Jinxi county in Jiangxi province, Wang had prioritized economic growth over environmental safeguards by allowing heavily polluting chemical plants to be set up, weakening regulatory enforcement and ignoring persistent public complaints, thereby allowing a pollution crisis to fester.

Yang, from China University of Political Science and Law, warned that these are typical cases of distorted governance values. He said that the cost is not just wasted public funds, but also eroded public trust and a loss of public reputation.

He pointed out that the baseline of a correct governance philosophy is to abide by rules and never lose sight of the people.

"For officials who aim higher, the challenge lies in sharpening their governance know-how, translating national policies into tangible solutions for local communities, and steering growth that lasts," Yang said.

Contact the writers at caoyin@chinadaily.com.cn

Fiery challenge



A fire truck drives past as French firefighters battle a wildfire on Tuesday in the Fox-Amphoux communal forest near Ponteves, southern France, amid worsening drought conditions following a heatwave and widespread water shortages. The prolonged heatwave is placing growing pressure on communities, emergency services and economies across Europe. Officials warned that Europe is entering an increasingly dangerous period. MANON CRUZ / REUTERS

Narrative: Real economic gains stressed

From page 1

What the "China Shock" narrative deliberately ignores is that Chinese-made photovoltaic modules, power batteries and electric vehicles have substantially reduced the cost of global green transition. The International Energy Agency has repeatedly noted that without China's large-scale and sustainable manufacturing capacity, the global energy transition would come at a much higher economic cost.

China's new energy industry did not rise by accident, nor did it grow through unfair means. Its success is the result of decades of research and development, complete industry chains and intense market competition. China's photovoltaic industry, after more than a decade of technological progress, has reduced the cost of solar power generation by more than 80 percent, helping clean energy reach households and businesses around the world. China's electric vehicle industry, driven by breakthroughs in battery technology, intelligent driving and related fields, is reshaping the global auto industry.

These achievements are the result of the hard work of Chinese companies, engineers and researchers. Some Western companies have lost ground in this competition. But instead of reflecting on their own lack of innovation or weak cost control, they blame China for developing too fast. This logic is hard to defend. In a race, when a runner is overtaken, the answer is to run faster, not to demand the runner in front to slow down.

Real dividends

China's manufacturing has brought the world not disruption, but real economic and green dividends. For many years, China has contributed more than 30 percent of global economic growth. Amid rising deglobalization, China's complete industrial system has helped stabilize global industry and supply chains. Its vast domestic market continues to create important opportunities for companies around the world.

In green transition, Chinese wind and solar products have been exported to more than 200 countries and regions. Over the past decade, China has helped push down the global cost of wind power by more than 60 percent and solar power by more than 80 percent. Without China's contribution, global climate governance would be far less advanced than it is today.

This year, the European Union has shown a more negative tendency in its attitude and policies toward China-EU economic and trade relations. Yet China has consistently pursued mutually beneficial cooperation with Europe. China has long been one of the EU's largest trading partners, and bilateral trade has reached historically high levels in recent years. European companies have earned substantial returns from the Chinese market. More than one-third of Volkswagen's sales come from China. BASF, Airbus and other European giants have also continued to expand their investment in China and share in the dividends of the country's development.

The essence of China-EU trade is complementarity and mutual benefit, not one side "shocking" the other. Some European countries have followed the US in hyping the "China Shock" narrative, but this only harms their own interests. Protectionism may give certain industries temporary breathing space, but in the long run, it will leave European companies at a disadvantage in the competition for green transition.

China's new energy technologies and products are helping Europe accelerate its clean energy deployment, which is essential to meeting its carbon neutrality goals. Political forces calling for "de-risking" are in fact increasing risks to Europe's green future. Through cooperation with Chinese companies, European automakers such as Volkswagen and BMW have greatly shortened their development cycle of new models and improved their international competitiveness.

The real shock to the global trading system does not come from Chinese manufacturing, but from Western protectionism. The US frequently uses tariffs as a political weapon, and the EU has followed suit. Such unilateral actions seriously violate World Trade Organization rules and openly undermine the multilateral trading system.

History has shown that attempts to preserve dominance through tariff barriers, technological blockades and "small yards with high fences" cannot succeed. US protectionist measures against Japanese cars in the 1980s did not stop Japanese automakers from expanding globally. Today's efforts to contain China will likewise fail to halt the steady rise of Chinese manufacturing in global value chains.

Seeking to blame

Some Western politicians are playing up the "China Shock" narrative to turn domestic problems into external ones. They seek to blame China for their own industrial hollowing-out, unequal distribution of gains and other structural difficulties, using an external target to divert domestic pressure. This is neither responsible nor effective.

"China Shock 2.0" is, in essence, the "China threat" theory repackaged in a new industrial wrapper, with a policy agenda aimed at industrial containment and trade protectionism in the name of national security.

China's manufacturing rise is the natural result of market competition and technological progress under economic globalization. China's best response is to continue expanding its opening-up, deepening reform and advancing high-quality development, while firmly safeguarding its legitimate rights and interests within the multilateral trading system.

Certain forces in the West should face reality, abandon their Cold War thinking and ideological prejudice and cooperate with China on the basis of fair competition. Only then can global trade develop in a healthy direction and the world economy move toward a stronger recovery.

Smearing China will not slow China's development. Protectionism will not stop the wheel of history. The idea of "China Opportunity 2.0" will ultimately replace the myth of "China Shock 2.0" and become the broader consensus of the international community.

The author is dean of the China Institute for WTO Studies at the University of International Business and Economics. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

China's cyber governance stance hailed

Push for digital sovereignty, multilateralism can help bridge the AI divide, experts say

By **YANG RAN** and **ZHANG YUNBI**

China's advocacy for digital sovereignty and inclusive development in global cyber governance can help bridge the artificial intelligence divide and foster more inclusive global AI infrastructure and governance, experts said.

Their comments came as China recently submitted its position paper on global cyber governance in the digital age to the Global Mechanism on Information and Communications Technologies in the Context of International Security, the first plenary meeting of which opened at the United Nations headquarters in New York on Monday. The mechanism, established through a resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly in November, is the first permanent, institutionalized multilateral dialogue platform within the UN dedicated to state use of ICTs.

In the paper, China outlined key principles for global cyber governance, including adherence to international rules, respect for digital sovereignty and the need to uphold multilateralism. "Countries should respect each other's digital sovereignty, and they all have the right to independently choose their paths of digital intelligent technology development, including AI, as well as to independently choose AI technologies, products and services in light of their respective national conditions," it said.

Xin Yanyan, deputy secretary-general of the Center for Global AI Innovative Governance based in Fudan University, said that digital sovereignty aims to safeguard every nation's right to independent research and development, thereby fostering truly inclusive and equitable development of technologies such as AI. The practical value lies in dismantling "small yard, high fence" barriers to facilitate open and unimpeded scientific and technological exchanges, she said.

By leveraging responsible open-source ecosystems and fostering independent innovation, countries, especially those in the Global South, can enhance their tech capabilities, bridge the AI divide and protect their data autonomy, Xin said.

Inside

Comment, **page 6**

Digital sovereignty is essential for preserving diversity in the intelligent age, she said. "While AI value alignment must address universal technical risks, it should also respect global cultural diversity, rather than enforcing a singular ideological template," Xin added.

China's position paper highlighted the significance of multilateralism in AI governance, stating that "international governance should not be replaced by small-circle governance, and no country should unilaterally impose rules on others".

Zhang Xin, a professor at the University of International Business and Economics' School of Law, noted that China's stance directly tackles the problem of rule fragmentation in global cyber governance. "It reaffirms a commitment to multilateralism, promoting equal participation of all countries in refining rules," she said.

Zhang underscored the paper's positive impact on developing nations, which often confront "a double dilemma" of digital and security divides. It offers a practical solution on bridging the North-South gap, empowering the Global South's voice in cyberspace governance and enabling developing countries to transition from passive rule recipients to active co-developers, she said.

At a news conference on Wednesday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said that digital sovereignty is a key principle put forward by China. The nation "is willing to strengthen cooperation with all parties to promote the development of the international order in cyberspace toward greater fairness, rationality and effectiveness, and to jointly build a community with a shared future in cyberspace", he said.

Contact the writers at yangran1@chinadaily.com.cn

Taste: In Yanji, summer begins with sip of icy soup

From page 1

After settling for 48 hours, the concentrated broth is seasoned with sugar and vinegar, then frozen into fine ice crystals.

The recipe also reflects traditional ideas about balancing ingredients. "Buckwheat is considered a cooling food, while beef is relatively warming," Jin said.

Each bowl is topped with pickled cabbage, cucumber, half a boiled egg, beef and seasonal fruit like watermelons in summer, and apples in colder months.

"We make the broth more sour in summer, because it is more refreshing," Jin said. "In winter, we make it sweeter so it feels gentler on the stomach."

In Yanji, cold noodles are often paired with *guobaorou*, crispy sweet-and-sour pork. Some diners dip the freshly fried pork into the icy broth, cooling its crisp coating while adding another layer of acidity and sweetness.

In Yanji, summer does not truly begin with the first heat wave. It begins with the first sip of icy cold noodle broth.

Nation expands imports to share market opportunities

By **ZHONG NAN**
zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

China's expanded import drive for advanced technology and equipment, energy resources and agricultural products will reinforce the country's role as one of the world's largest markets and contribute to more balanced global trade, senior customs officials and importers said on Wednesday.

Speaking at a news conference in Beijing, Sun Meijun, minister of the General Administration of Customs, said that customs authorities will promote more coordinated growth in imports and exports and work to achieve more trade cooperation agreements during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period.

The measures will enable more countries to share the opportunities created by China's vast market while offering Chinese consumers a broader range of high-quality products, Sun said, highlighting that the moves will also help develop new quality productive forces and accelerate industrial upgrading.

China's trade with the United States rebounded in April and continued expanding in May and June, indicating that the new positioning of China-US relations has provided greater certainty for bilateral and global trade and economic growth, she added.

Wang Jun, vice-minister of the GAC, said that China has become "a major trading partner of more than 160 countries and regions, with imports now sourced from a broader range of markets, covering a wider variety of products and featuring a more optimized structure".

The nation has recorded robust growth in imports of advanced equipment and key industrial inputs, Wang said, underscoring stronger demand driven by industrial upgrading and technological innovation.

Beijing Customs announced on Wednesday that the value of imports of semiconductor manufacturing equipment surged 124.7 percent year-on-year to reach 23.43 billion yuan ($3.5 billion) between January and June, providing a strong boost to the city's overall import growth.

South China's distribution center for electronic components — a major import hub in Dongguan, Guangdong province, that serves the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area — handled imports worth 36.47 billion yuan during the January-June period, up 13.11 percent year-on-year, according to Huangpu Customs.

Data from the GAC shows that since the beginning of this year, China has granted market access to 264 categories of agricultural and food products from 79 countries, bringing the number of source countries and regions for such imports to more than 150.

In early May, China expanded its zero-tariff treatment for imports to all 53 African countries with which it has diplomatic relations.

According to Nanjing Customs, Zhongka Supply Chain Management (Kunshan) Co, an agricultural products importer based in Kunshan, Jiangsu province, imported 661 metric tons of coffee, mainly from Africa, in the first half of the year, up more than 100 percent year-on-year.

Qin Yumei, customs affairs manager at Zhongka, said the company mainly imports green coffee beans from African countries such as Ethiopia, Tanzania and Kenya, adding that it plans to further diversify its sourcing by importing from more African countries.

"As more high-quality specialty products from Africa enter the Chinese market under the preferential tariff policy, their price competitiveness will be further enhanced. This will not only enrich China's consumer market, but also create new growth opportunities for importers like us," Qin added.



Women dressed in traditional Thai costumes display durians on May 23 during the opening ceremony of an event in Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, to promote agricultural imports from Thailand. HUANG YANMEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:36 PM

WORLD

Africa CDC urges action amid rapid Ebola spread

By **SHARON NAKOLA**
in Nairobi, Kenya
sharon@chinadailyafrica.com

The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention warned on Tuesday that the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo could become one of the worst epidemics in history if urgent measures are not taken to contain its spread.

Speaking during an African Union extraordinary session of the assembly in Accra, Ghana, Africa CDC Director-General Jean Kaseya said the outbreak is spreading at an unprecedented pace amid insecurity, mass displacement and continued community transmission.

More than 1,000 people have died from the Ebola outbreak since May, Kaseya said, warning that the current epidemic is spreading at a much faster pace than previous outbreaks.

"If we don't stop this outbreak today, it will be the worst one that the world will meet," he said.

The warning comes as the DR Congo's Health Ministry reported on Wednesday that the outbreak has so far infected 2,473 people and claimed 999 lives across five provinces, bringing the case fatality rate to 40 percent.

The ministry said 737 patients are in isolation or hospitalization, while 482 people have recovered.

Health authorities said surveillance and response activities have intensified, with over 80 percent of epidemiological alerts now being investigated within 24 hours and contact tracing reaching 81 percent.

Treatment facilities remain operational, with more than 700 patients under follow-up, while multisectoral teams continue to strengthen laboratory services, logistics, infection prevention and control measures, and risk communication activities.

Despite the progress, the Africa CDC warned that major challenges remain. Kaseya said insecurity in eastern DR Congo and the humanitarian situation are significantly hampering efforts to fully contain the outbreak.

"We cannot continue to respond to an outbreak when we are facing insecurity at that level," he said, revealing that one Africa CDC staff member had recently been injured during an attack by armed groups.

Currently, more than 1.15 million people are living in internally displaced persons camps in affected areas, further complicating surveillance and disease control efforts.

Kaseya said the outbreak has spread much faster than previous Ebola epidemics, warning that persistent community transmission remains a major concern. "This outbreak is very serious," he said.

The Africa CDC and the World Health Organization have jointly launched a continental response plan aimed at bringing the epidemic under control.

Kaseya said the response requires about $1.4 billion, including humanitarian and health interventions, though African countries have so far pledged more than $110 million toward the response.

"We need more," he said, calling on additional African governments to contribute resources.

The agency is also advancing clinical trials for Ebola therapeutics and preventive interventions, but still faces a funding gap of about $12 million. "We are working hard because we don't have confirmed medicines and vaccines," Kaseya added.

Greater self-reliance

The outbreak, caused by the Bundibugyo strain of the Ebola virus, has renewed calls for stronger health security systems and greater continental self-reliance in responding to public health emergencies.

African health leaders warned that failure to contain the outbreak could undermine broader efforts to strengthen the continent's health systems and achieve universal health coverage.

"If we don't control this outbreak, everything we are doing today will not make sense," Kaseya said.

The outbreak dominated discussions at the African Union health meeting, with ministers warning that it reinforces the need for greater health sovereignty, domestic financing and local manufacturing of medicines and vaccines.

Ghana's Health Minister Kwabena Mintah Akandoh said the recent health emergencies had shown that "the next emergency must never again find Africa waiting at the back of the queue".

He called for stronger regional cooperation and increased investment in African health systems.

African leaders said the current Ebola outbreak should serve as a wake-up call for the continent to accelerate efforts to build resilient health systems capable of responding to future epidemics without excessive dependence on external support.

Grand reset



Visitors enter the reopened Apollo Gallery at the Louvre Museum in Paris on Wednesday for the first time since last year's crown jewels heist. No jewels will be on display and the space has been reverted to its original 17th-century ceremonial role. LOU BENOIST / AFP



Sparks of celebration

Fireworks light up the night sky over the Cinquantenaire Arcade in Brussels on Tuesday as Belgium celebrates its National Day. Held annually on July 21, the public holiday commemorates the 1831 oath and investiture of King Leopold I, the nation's first monarch. MARIUS BURGELMANS / AFP

Experts praise Beijing's role in bridging global AI divide

Widening gaps risk creating dependency, while China offers alternative approaches

CROSS CURRENTS

By **YANG RAN**
yangran1@chinadaily.com.cn

As artificial intelligence advances rapidly, experts warn that the widening AI divide is becoming a major challenge for the Global South. They say China is helping narrow the gap by promoting more inclusive approaches and expanding practical cooperation.

China's initiatives in AI governance provide the Global South with a greater voice in shaping global AI rules while helping developing countries benefit from the technology, they said.

The divide is already evident. While more than 1 billion people worldwide use AI chatbots every week, the Global South lags "far behind the Global North" in AI adoption, the United Nations said in a report this month.

The International Monetary Fund's AI Preparedness Index underscores the disparity, with advanced economies scoring 0.68, compared with 0.46 for emerging markets and just 0.32 for low-income countries. The gap is largely driven by the Global North's dominance in computing infrastructure and the Global South's limited capacity for AI research and deployment.

The consequences are far-reaching and potentially transformative, as experts warn of a new form of technological dependency and industrial stratification.

"The Global South, home to 88 percent of the world's population, generates highly valuable local scenario data for model adaptation", said Jiang Tianjiao, a research fellow at the Center for Global AI Innovative Governance in Shanghai. "Yet, without the computing power for storage, cleaning and training, these data are often sent abroad for processing."

Jiang cautioned that this could create a future in which data originate in the South, but profits and development gains remain in the North, leaving advanced economies to control foundational AI models such as ChatGPT while developing countries are confined to application-layer fine-tuning and niche local models.

"What appears to be a division of work is, in essence, hierarchical stratification," he said, warning that the trend could also erode local languages and cultures in AI models.

Carlos Maria Correa, executive director of the South Centre, an intergovernmental organization for developing countries based in Geneva, said AI is, above all, a development issue for the Global South.

Persistent and widening digital divides have left many developing countries ill-equipped to govern or benefit from AI, risking "entrenching dependence on external actors for access to AI", he said.

Lawrence Loh, director of the Centre for Governance and Sustainability at the National University of Singapore Business School, warned of AI "lock-ins" that could prevent Global South countries from advancing along the world's AI development path.

Such dependency on the Global North could give rise to a new form of AI colonialism, "where the less-developed countries may be trapped perpetually", he said.

UN data underscore these concerns. According to UN Trade and Development, fewer than one-third of developing countries have national AI strategies, and 118, mostly developing nations, remain absent from global AI governance discussions.

Experts say the challenge is compounded by policies in some countries that prioritize unilateral security and economic interests by erecting technological barriers, further hindering the Global South's development.

Loh criticized the "small yard, high fence" approach, warning it could create "a restrictive AI order" in which Global South countries become technology rule-takers and importers rather than co-creators of standards and AI systems.

Hernan Gabriel Borisonik, director of the Center for Science and Thought at the National University of San Martin in Argentina, said technological walls duplicate efforts and fuel competing standards instead of cooperation to address shared AI risks, such as algorithmic bias.

"At the same time, it would be naive to dismiss the strategic logic behind these fences," Borisonik said. "The path forward is to build a genuinely planetary framework that can create mechanisms for coexistence and mutual influence, even amid competition."

More equitable

Experts say China's AI governance initiatives are playing an increasingly important role in constructing a more equitable global framework. In recent years, China has introduced a series of governance initiatives and action plans aimed at using AI for good, countering unilateral technological monopolies and advancing inclusive global AI governance.

During the just-concluded 2026 World AI Conference in Shanghai, 29 countries signed an agreement to establish the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization, helping bridge the AI divide by supporting faster AI development in the Global South.

"International cooperation and capacity-building initiatives are key to bridging the global AI divide and promoting inclusive AI development and governance," Correa of the South Centre said, describing the organization's establishment as "very encouraging".

Correa also praised China's AI governance initiatives for enhancing fairness and prioritizing sustainable development, saying they contribute to "a more balanced global AI landscape, fostering mutual benefits and reducing existing inequalities".

Borisonik echoed the view, saying China's initiatives made a crucial contribution to global AI governance by treating it as a shared challenge that must reflect the perspectives and interests of developing countries, not just technological leaders.

China's emphasis on capacity building is especially significant, he said. "AI governance depends not only on legal principles but also on scientific institutions, educational systems and long-term international cooperation. Supporting these capacities is one of the most effective ways to reduce structural inequalities in the global AI landscape."

In recent years, China has expanded practical AI cooperation through infrastructure and talent development. In 2024, it launched the China-BRICS AI Development and Cooperation Center to deepen AI collaboration among BRICS members. Last year, Chinese tech companies also helped Laos develop the world's first Lao large language model.

Alex Gakuru, director of the Center for Law in Information Technology in Kenya, said China's approach differs fundamentally from Western models. "It is not aid-dependent but partnership-based," he said.

He cited the Lao large language model as a prime example, saying its architecture, training data, governance and the Lao government's role reflect "a fundamentally different approach — one centered on sovereignty and self-determination rather than dependency".

"It is the best example of how the Global South could replicate the preservation of their culture in collaboration with China," he said. "The partnership model ensures that linguistic and cultural sovereignty is not sacrificed for technological convenience, and many countries are bound to embrace it."

Online
See more by scanning the code.

New British PM begins tackling cost-of-living crisis

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

Groups lobbying on behalf of the United Kingdom's poorest people have welcomed Prime Minister Andy Burnham's first moves since he took office on Monday.

Burnham, who has vowed to lead a "cost-of-living government", told his new Cabinet on Tuesday that impoverished people struggling with fast-rising prices need a "sense that help is coming".

He then announced he was cutting Value Added Tax from October on household energy bills — from 5 percent to zero — a move that will save the average family 45 pounds ($60) a year.

Burnham's spokesman told reporters that the change will cost the country 850 million pounds this year and would be funded out of 1.8 billion pounds set aside for a digital ID program.

Burnham told his ministers to look for savings to help pay for initiatives to ease the cost-of-living crisis.

"There are things that can be done, big and small," he said.

He also set aside 340 million pounds to help tackle homelessness during the next five years.

On Wednesday, he said bus fares in England will be capped at 2 pounds a journey from January. Previously, the cap had been 3 pounds.

The cheaper fares will cost the country around 500 million pounds, which will be taken from the budget of the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.

Heidi Alexander, the UK's transport secretary, told the BBC that the government will not make "any unfunded spending commitments".

To finance cheaper bus fares, she said the government will shift its overseas aid strategy — offering loans rather than grants to climate projects in other countries.

Burnham has also promised to help more young people find work and vowed more mental health support.

Alex Chapman, economics and environment policy chief at the London-based think tank New Economics Foundation, welcomed the new prime minister's stated aims but said his first moves have been "very small in government terms".

"The actual scale of this is very limited," he said.

Homelessness charities also welcomed Burnham's pledge to put "the care of people at the heart of everything I do" and to "fix" rough sleeping.

With around 5,000 people thought to be sleeping rough in the UK each night, Helen MacNamara, chair of trustees at the homelessness charity Shelter, told The Independent newspaper, "It's great to see a prime minister standing on the steps of Downing Street, and that the first thing he says is talking about ending rough sleeping and his commitment to building council housing."

Describing rough sleeping as "one of the pestilences of our age", she said Burnham will also need to solve "hidden homelessness", which means 176,000 children do not have a permanent place to live.

Yvonne Hope, chief executive of the Manchester-based homelessness charity Barnabus, added, "If anyone's going to do it, it will be him."



British Prime Minister Andy Burnham (center) holds his first Cabinet meeting in London on Tuesday. EDDIE MULHOLLAND / REUTERS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:36 PM

WORLD

Demands for peace



A protester holds up a sign during a Senate appropriations committee hearing on US President Donald Trump's funding request for the defense department, in Washington, DC, on Tuesday. ERIC LEE / REUTERS

Resource cooperation urged

By **MINGMEI LI**
at the United Nations
mingmeili@chinadailyusa.com

The international community should strengthen cooperation to improve natural resource governance, safeguard the stability of global resource supply and industrial chains, and contribute to international peace and development, China's envoy to the United Nations said.

The UN Security Council held a high-level open debate on the theme "Natural resource governance: the foundation of peace, security and prosperity" on Wednesday, exploring how inclusive, transparent and sustainable natural resource governance can help reverse conflict dynamics and strengthen conditions for peace.

"Natural resources are precious gifts bestowed by the Earth on humanity and constitute the material foundation for human survival and sustained economic and social development. However, conflicts in some regions demonstrate that resource abundance does not automatically bring development and prosperity, while poor governance may trigger and fuel violence and conflict," said Sun Lei, charge d'affaires ad interim of the Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the UN.

Peace and stability are the solid guarantee for natural resource governance, the Chinese ambassador said.

"The international community should uphold a vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, remain committed to the peaceful settlement of disputes, urge parties to conflicts to cease military confrontation, support regional countries and organizations in strengthening cooperation, jointly combat the illegal exploitation and smuggling of natural resources, enhance supply chain transparency and traceability, and cut off armed conflicts' access to natural resources at the source," he said.

Sun added that the causes of armed conflict are "complex and diverse", involving political, social and economic factors.

"Natural resources should not simply be regarded as the root cause of conflicts; still less should normal economic, trade and industrial cooperation be securitized, politicized or instrumentalized," Sun emphasized.

Sun also said that fairness and justice are important prerequisites for cooperation on natural resources.

"International law grants states permanent sovereignty over their natural resources, and this principle must not be challenged. Certain countries should stop seizing the resources of other countries through sanctions, pressure and military coercion, and must not revert to colonial domination and plunder. Developing countries have the right to make full use of their natural resource endowments to achieve economic and social development," he said.

Sun added that China supports building an open, inclusive, fair, equitable, cooperative, win-win, green and clean governance system for critical minerals. He also warned that using the pretext of so-called "de-risking" or "safeguarding national security" to pursue bloc confrontation and build exclusive "small circles" will only disrupt market order and undermine the common interests of all countries.

Sustainable development is the ultimate goal of natural resource development, Sun added.

"Facts have repeatedly shown that the persistent problem of the illicit exploitation of natural resources is rooted in poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment. To break the vicious cycle between natural resources and conflict, it is essential to support the countries concerned in achieving independent and sustainable development," he said.

Sun also called on the international community, especially developed countries, to fulfill their assistance commitments and support resource-rich countries, especially developing countries, in continuously improving their resource governance systems and increasing the added value and returns of resource products through technology transfer, capacity-building, talent development and industrial upgrading, thereby reducing poverty, creating employment, truly benefiting local people, and building a stronger foundation for peace.

Sun mentioned that at the G20 Summit in 2025, China put forward the International Economic and Trade Cooperation Initiative on Green Mining and Minerals to promote the establishment of a new type of mineral-resources partnership featuring openness, win-win cooperation, fairness and equity.

"China stands ready to work with the international community to deepen mutually beneficial cooperation on natural resources, better help relevant countries transform their resource endowments into drivers of development, and embark on a path toward lasting peace, stability, development and prosperity," he said.

White House readies fresh tariffs as 10% levy to expire

WASHINGTON — The United States is set to impose new tariffs that could hit dozens of countries soon, trade envoy Jamieson Greer signaled on Tuesday, with President Donald Trump's temporary global levies due to expire this week.

The administration has prepared fresh tariffs targeting 60 trading partners over their alleged failures to act against "forced labor", as officials push to rebuild the US leader's trade agenda after legal setbacks.

"We expect to see some action soon," Greer told CNBC when asked if new duties were incoming. He did not specify a timeline.

Trump imposed a 10-percent global duty this year after many of his tariffs were struck down by the Supreme Court in February, but this levy expires on Friday.

Analysts expect that new tariffs over forced labor concerns — set between 10 percent and 12.5 percent — would replace these temporary duties.

They come as Trump makes a renewed push to use tariffs as leverage against US trading partners, sparking fears of retaliation and diplomatic tensions.

Washington announced a fresh 25-percent duty on certain Brazilian goods last week, and on Monday unveiled a 50-percent levy on many Canadian products to take effect in 30 days.



Canada Prime Minister Mark Carney takes questions from journalists after making a statement in Ottawa on Tuesday. Carney said on Tuesday that he was looking at "all options" amid the latest tariff tensions with the US. JUSTIN TANG VIA AP

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said on Tuesday that he was looking at "all options", adding that he and Trump had agreed to "intensify discussions" in the coming weeks on a possible deal.

On Tuesday, Trump announced a new 100 percent sector-specific tariff on imported generic drugs to take effect from August 2028, with that level rising to 200 percent in 2029.

Generic drugs

For now, the US leader said the tariff on generic drugs would be cut to zero from August 2026, in an effort to create a window to onshore such pharmaceutical production to the United States.

Swiss generic drugmaker Sandoz said on Wednesday it would continue discussions with policymakers.

Greer said on Tuesday that new action will cover the majority of US trade, with the moves likely to reignite trade tensions.

The EU previously said that it considers tariffs imposed on these grounds "unjustified".

Washington's planned 50-percent tariff on Canada also comes as US-Mexico talks over a North American free trade pact intensify. Washington recently declined to extend the accord in its current form.

Greer is set to travel to Mexico from Wednesday to Friday for discussions linked to a joint review of the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement.

US plans for a 25-percent tariff on Brazilian goods over accusations of unfair trade practices have separately drawn a sharp rebuke from the Latin American giant. The levy is due to take effect on Wednesday.

A range of products like beef, coffee and certain aircraft parts will be exempted, as will some goods that the United States does not produce.

Still, Amcham Brasil recently warned that Washington's measure places Brazil among countries "facing the most restrictive conditions for access to the US market", affecting more than $11 billion in exports.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Motorists weary of rising gas prices as crisis spirals

By **BELINDA ROBINSON**
in New York
belindarobinson@chinadailyusa.com

US motorists are growing weary of paying higher gas prices again after renewed military tensions between the US and Iran stoked fears of a disruption in the Strait of Hormuz and gas prices rose to over $4 per gallon, or more than $1 per liter, this week.

The national average for regular gasoline was $4 a gallon on Monday, according to the American Automobile Association, rising 13 cents per gallon, or 3 percent, over the past week amid tensions in the Middle East. It is the first time the national average hit $4 since June 17, and it comes despite the June US-Iran memorandum of understanding to stop the military conflict and a 60-day negotiation period.

Sanjay Patel, 70, from Manhattan, was filling up his white Mercedes-Benz SUV at a gas station in Brooklyn, New York when he expressed how annoyed he was at the rising price of gas. He said he was paying over $4 at the location, as it was $4.15 for regular, $4.55 for silver and $4.95 for diesel.

"I want it to go back below $4," Patel told China Daily, while blaming the rise in gas prices on the ongoing war with Iran. "Well, it's because of the war, they block the Strait of Hormuz, with all of that there's no supply. I think all of the world is suffering because everywhere it is high. But America has enough oil, but they are not really distributing it to the public.

"The government should end the war. That is most important. Secondly, they have to make sure all these big oil companies, BP, Shell and ExxonMobil should not be focusing on selling the oil outside of the country. America is in a war. I have to pay more to fill up the tank. A full tank is $60."

Brian James, 55, from Brooklyn, New York, drives a black Jeep Wrangler.

He told China Daily: "Gas prices are ridiculous right now. Seriously. It costs $90 for me to fill up this car. In the past, it was $70. Instead of being able to buy certain things or save money, then you have to outlay in transportation. It's taking a hit on everyone.

'Govt to blame'

"I blame the government. They're making it hard for everyone right now, we're spending money where we shouldn't have to. The oil companies are passing on the costs to the customer. I remember when the gas price was in the three-dollar range, like $3.60 or whatever."

In March, shortly after the US-Israel attacks began on Iran, gas prices in the US hit an average of $4 a gallon.

In May, they were $4.50 a gallon, then they dropped back down to $4 after the US and Iran agreed to the MoU in mid-June.

US drivers got some relief by early June, when prices at the pump were $3.79, the American Automobile Association found. But they have gradually crept back up this month.

For most motorists, especially those who rely on their vehicles for work, lower gas prices cannot come back soon enough.

Sulaiman, 31, an Uber Eats delivery driver, was filling up his small motorbike at a gas station in New York and checking his phone on his way to deliver food to a customer.

"I'm so busy, I have to deliver this food," he told China Daily. "Higher gas prices make it harder for people like me who need to earn money as more of my money goes toward transportation costs. I just wish they'd make things better for all of us out here working hard."

Briefly

UKRAINE

President says military commander replaced

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky announced on Tuesday that he has decided to replace the country's top military commander. In a post on Telegram, Zelensky said Mykhailo Drapatyi would become the commander in chief of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, replacing Oleksandr Syrsky. Syrsky's dismissal was one of the demands of the recent protests in Ukrainian cities, which erupted after the removal of Defense Minister Mykhailo Fedorov.

UNITED STATES

Stripping immigrants of work permits blocked

A federal judge on Tuesday temporarily blocked President Donald Trump's administration from stripping tens of thousands of asylum seekers and immigrants who have Temporary Protected Status of their ability to work in the United States. US District Judge Nathaniel Gorton in Boston sided with a coalition of immigrant rights groups and labor unions that sued to block US Citizenship and Immigration Services from moving forward with a series of policies designed to implement new restrictions enacted by Congress last year.

Disney cuts jobs in cost-control efforts

The Walt Disney Company laid off several hundred employees on Tuesday in its latest round of job cuts, as the entertainment giant continues to streamline its operations with fewer projects, tighter budgets, and a more integrated corporate structure. A Disney spokesperson confirmed the cuts, saying the company was eliminating several hundred jobs across corporate functions, Disney Entertainment Television, ESPN and Disney's studios. Disney did not immediately disclose exact totals by division or say whether additional job cuts are planned.

SOUTH KOREA

Seoul mayor faces ouster after conviction

A South Korean court convicted Seoul Mayor Oh Se-hoon of campaign finance crimes on Wednesday, a ruling that will oust him and bar a presidential run if upheld by the nation's top court. Oh was first elected Seoul's mayor in 2006 and in June won a fifth term in the nation's most powerful municipal role, considered a springboard to high office. He rose to prominence as a possible contender for the opposition People Power Party as other veterans were tainted by former President Yoon Suk-yeol's 2024 martial law bid. But the Seoul Central District Court ruled Oh had a patron pay 21 million won ($14,200) for five of his opinion polls in a 2021 by-election, breaching the political funds act.

XINHUA—AGENCIES

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA
TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1877

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:36 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

China-ASEAN cooperation remains crucial anchor of regional stability and prosperity

This week's ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting and related gatherings in Manila have placed the Philippine capital at the forefront of geopolitical discussions.

Amid the crowded diplomatic calendar, one reality is evident: China's engagement with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations remains focused on strengthening regional cooperation.

Apart from the China-ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting on Wednesday, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi also had a series of bilateral meetings in Manila covering a wide range of issues.

The meeting between Wang and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio was conducive to both sides jointly managing their differences and exploring potential areas of cooperation, thereby sustaining the momentum of stabilizing Sino-US ties.

As ASEAN chair this year, the Philippines claims it prioritizes regional unity and security, while also commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia. The anniversary is an opportune time to reflect on how ASEAN should uphold its strategic autonomy and consider who its true partners are.

China was the first major country to accede to the TAC, lending international weight to ASEAN's diplomatic architecture. This year also marks the fifth anniversary of the China-ASEAN Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, providing an opportunity to further deepen cooperation through the 65 established mechanisms that already bind the two sides. The China-ASEAN partnership continues to be an anchor for the region's stability and prosperity.

Wang's meetings in Manila reinforced that. In talks with ASEAN Secretary-General Kao Kim Hourn, both sides reaffirmed their support for ASEAN centrality, regional community-building and stronger cooperation across various sectors. Wang's discussions with Malaysian Foreign Minister Mohamad Hasan focused on accelerating the negotiations on a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea, reflecting a shared interest in ensuring that regional security issues are addressed by regional countries themselves.

This approach contrasts with the course pursued by some in Manila in recent years. While presenting the Philippines as a "champion" of "regional unity", they have increasingly sought to align the country's security policy with external parties. Frequent maritime provocations in the South China Sea, including the latest incident in waters near China's Ren'ai Reef on Monday, have heightened tensions at a time when most ASEAN members continue to prioritize regional stability.

Equally contentious have been the repeated attempts by those Philippine politicians to link the COC negotiations to an unlawful "arbitral award". If they are genuine in their claim that they seek ASEAN's "collective welfare", they should call on Washington to handle the Middle East crisis with reason, restraint and pragmatism — especially as energy shortages continue to plague the Philippines and its fellow ASEAN members alike.

China's engagement with ASEAN offers a different model. As ASEAN's largest trading partner and the first country to establish a free trade agreement with the organization, China has steadily deepened economic integration with ASEAN and upgraded the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area. Bilateral trade reached 7.55 trillion yuan ($1.06 trillion) in 2025, up 8 percent from the previous year. Over 95 percent of traded goods between them now enjoy zero tariffs, while cooperation has expanded to encompass the digital economy, green development, advanced manufacturing and regional connectivity.

Beijing does not ask ASEAN countries to choose sides. Nor is the development of China-ASEAN relations directed against any third party. Instead, China supports ASEAN centrality and strategic autonomy, recognizing that regional prosperity hinges on openness, inclusiveness and mutually beneficial cooperation.

Even with the Philippines, China has shown restraint and composure. Despite their maritime dispute, China has not allowed that to define the entirety of the China-Philippines ties, and has consistently called for dialogue to resolve it. Wang's discussions with his Philippine counterpart offered a timely chance for the two sides to manage tensions and prevent the situation in relevant waters from further escalating.

The South China Sea is a shared home for regional countries, and the dispute should not become a stumbling block to China-ASEAN relations. China is ready to work with the ASEAN members, including the Philippines, to accelerate the consultations on the COC in the South China Sea, fostering a new narrative of peace, stability, cooperation and friendship in the waters, and keeping the initiative for regional affairs firmly in the hands of regional countries.

While contemplating ASEAN's future, regional leaders should judge partners by their contribution to peace, economic opportunity and long-term regional stability. On that measure, sustained cooperation with China remains a firm foundation for ASEAN's solidarity and prosperity.

Fighting while talking won't benefit EU

The joint statement released after a meeting between French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz on Friday shows the challenges facing China-EU economic relations.

Both leaders claimed that China's widening trade surplus with the European Union — at "1 billion euros ($1.14 billion) a day" — along with what they described as an "undervalued renminbi", poses an "existential threat" to European manufacturing. It remains to be seen what new "emergency measures" the EU will come up with to "shield" European industry from what it claims are China's "unfair trade practices".

However, a series of restrictive measures introduced by the EU targeting Chinese enterprises suggest a bumpy road ahead for the healthy development of China-EU economic ties.

On July 1, the new European "safeguard" system for steel imports came into effect, introducing lower import quotas for duty-free imports and a 50 percent tariff on imports exceeding these quotas, greatly impacting Chinese steel mills and products. On July 7, the European Commission imposed definitive "antidumping" duties of up to 45 percent on imports of passenger-car and light-lorry tires originating from China.

Additionally, the European Commission on Monday fined Chinese online retailer AliExpress 550 million euros for allegedly "failing to curb the sale of counterfeit goods" on its site, marking the heftiest penalty issued to date under the Digital Services Act. China opposes the EU's practice of erecting digital barriers under the pretext of platform regulation and adopting discriminatory measures to restrict and suppress the normal operations of Chinese e-commerce companies in Europe, said a spokesperson for China's Ministry of Commerce. The EU is urged to stop exploiting the ambiguity of legal provisions to abuse its discretionary power, and to treat Chinese enterprises fairly and impartially.

It is obvious that the EU is taking more protectionist measures against China. The escalating restrictions have occurred shortly after the inaugural meeting of the China-EU trade and investment consultation mechanism late last month, during which both sides agreed to remain committed to addressing economic and trade differences through dialogue and to preventing disputes from escalating into a trade war. They established four initial work streams under the mechanism to further discuss issues such as trade and investment balance, export controls and intellectual property.

It is imperative that China get prepared to deal with the EU's dual strategy of "dialogue" and "pressure" in the long run. The message from French and German leaders suggests the EU may consider a major adjustment of trade policies toward China. Despite this, both leaders emphasized that they are not seeking to "decouple" from China.

In his meeting with a cross-party European Parliament delegation in Beijing on Tuesday, Foreign Minister Wang Yi stressed that China and the EU are partners rather than rivals, and that their interests are deeply intertwined. He called for the EU to stop politicizing economic and trade issues, and to work with China for an upward and dynamic balance of trade from a long-term perspective.

These remarks keep the door open for China and the EU to maintain a constructive, cooperative and win-win relationship based on equality and reciprocity — provided that the EU is willing to meet China halfway, manage differences, broaden consensus and safeguard an open global economy.

There is a need for the two sides to make full use of the established trade and investment consultation mechanisms to bring issues to the table openly and address them with a pragmatic and rational approach. The primary objective is to prevent the European side from adopting a nothing-to-lose mentality, where, driven by internal political pressures, it shifts internal contradictions outward rather than resolving them constructively.

Hopefully both France and Germany can act with a rational and practical attitude, and play a constructive role in helping the EU work with China to address their concerns through dialogue.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Cao Yi



Opinion Line

Building a community with shared future in cyberspace

The Chinese delegation submitted a position paper on global cyberspace governance at the first meeting of the Plenary Session of the Global Mechanism on developments in the field of information and communication technologies in the context of international security.

The submission of the position paper at the forum, which is being held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from Monday to Friday, reflects China's anchoring of digital security on the principles of data sovereignty and cyber sovereignty.

The paper articulates a natural and logical extension of the Global Governance Initiative that China has proposed, along with its long-standing commitment to building a community with a shared future in cyberspace.

The core tenet of the paper rebuts the approach of some developed countries that want a digital ecosystem as an unregulated domain where might makes right, and where they can coerce smaller nations to choose sides over AI hardware, cloud infrastructure and data standards.

China's position paper, on the contrary, enshrines a foundational right long demanded by developing countries: the autonomy to chart their own digital and AI development courses. No country should be pressured into adopting foreign AI products or algorithms; every nation deserves the freedom to make its own choices, free from technological arm-twisting.

At the heart of this vision lies China's steadfast adherence to mutual respect for national sovereignty and the fundamental norm of noninterference in the domestic affairs of other states. China calls for collective management of the cybersecurity risks posed by AI — from unregulated large language models to the misuse of autonomous AI agents — and demands updated, inclusive international cyber rules fit for the age of generative intelligence.

With digital domains — cyberspace, data pools and frontier AI — becoming a new arena for interstate competition, China advocates extending the UN-centered norms of fairness, peaceful development, civilizational diversity and collective sustainability to technology governance. This stands in unmistakable contrast to the zero-sum approach of certain Western countries.

The Chinese suggestions align with the priorities of a vast majority of countries, especially those in the Global South whose voices have too often been marginalized in decades of technology rulemaking.

The contrast between China's open source, open weight AI models and the United States' closed source AI ecosystem offers a real-world illustration of these two paradigms. Washington's closed source AI model consolidates AI supremacy in the hands of a few tech giants aligned with the US government, restricts the diffusion of global technology, and weaponizes technological scarcity to maintain Western dominance in global digital competition.

China, on the other hand, by prioritizing shared innovation and universal accessibility, is breaking down technological monopoly barriers and enabling developing countries to access and iterate on frontier AI technologies independently. This approach transforms the advancement of AI from a privileged asset for a handful of nations into a global public good benefiting all of humanity.

China's thriving digital economy and competitive AI industry ecosystem have equipped it to counter the monopolization of technological discourse and standard-setting by developed countries. Beijing harbors no ambition to dominate cyberspace; its objective is to prevent digital and AI tools from becoming new geopolitical battlegrounds and to ensure that the dividends of the new technology are distributed fairly across the world.

This commitment was demonstrated at the recent 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance, held in Shanghai, which showcased China's dedication to providing solutions and international public goods to ensure openness, cooperation and shared technological progress for the benefit of all nations.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Virtual human could revolutionize medicine

Editor's note: *As artificial intelligence becomes increasingly integrated with the life sciences, virtual reality has emerged as a major frontier of scientific research. Science and Technology Daily spoke to Zhao Qinping, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, on the pursuit of a virtual human for medical purposes. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

The improvement in visual realism, physical accuracy, intelligent virtual characters and natural human-computer interaction has greatly expanded the application potential of virtual reality.

In healthcare, AI assists or even replaces physicians in diagnosing and treating diseases, while VR helps create virtual replicas of patients' organs or pathological conditions. Surgeons can rehearse, evaluate and refine surgical plans on these virtual organs before performing operations on real patients.

But the application of VR in medicine still lags behind the potential. The basic obstacle is the lack of a medical virtual human capable of accurately reproducing the features, physical properties and physiological characteristics of the human body.

Medical science has long faced three major challenges. First, the training of highly qualified medical professionals still depends on laboratory animals and human cadavers, a traditional approach that is becoming increasingly unsustainable. Second, there is still no effective method for rehearsing, evaluating and optimizing surgical plans before operations. Third, the development of new drugs and medical devices also relies on animal testing and human volunteers, resulting in high costs, lengthy development cycles and considerable risks.

A medical virtual human could provide medical students with highly realistic digital models of healthy and diseased human bodies for anatomical education, surgical training and other clinical exercises, substantially reducing reliance on animals and cadavers.

Personalized virtual models of patients' organs could be created to simulate, evaluate and refine surgical procedures, improving both precision and success rates. Virtual humans could also replace some animal experiments and early-stage human testing in the development of pharmaceutical drugs and medical devices, shortening research and development cycles while reducing costs and risks.

However, research on virtual humans is fragmented and lacks a coherent, systematic framework. While some areas have received considerable attention, others remain largely unexplored. Currently, digital models have been developed for fewer than 20 percent of human organs, with research primarily focusing on geometric modeling, physical simulation and surgical interaction.

Studies of microscopic physiological mechanisms remain disconnected from organ-level physical and physiological modeling, and integrated research at the level of the entire physiological system has yet to begin. At the same time, China lacks sufficient data to support the development of medical virtual humans, with much of the current research relying on overseas datasets.

Developing a medical virtual human is a frontier endeavor that brings together information science, life sciences, medicine, mathematics, physics and chemistry. It requires multidisciplinary collaboration among experts from these fields to jointly build a comprehensive "Chinese medical virtual human".

The relevant authorities should organize universities, research institutes, hospitals and technology companies to establish a high-level collaborative network that integrates studies of human cells, tissues, organs and physiological systems while coordinating theoretical breakthroughs, technological innovation and demonstration applications.

Meanwhile, full use should be made of AI foundation models to build dedicated data and model centers, together with the computing infrastructure needed to support the development of medical virtual humans.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:36 PM

VIEWS

Tommy Koh

China, ASEAN forging a brighter future

China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations celebrated the 35th anniversary of their dialogue relations in July, marking a significant milestone in what has been a very successful relationship. In 2021, this relationship was elevated to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. On this momentous occasion, I would like to reflect on the past, assess the present and share my aspirations for the future.

Global Lens

ASEAN was established on Aug 8, 1967, during a period when China's relations with Southeast Asia were complex. Initially, China was cautious about ASEAN, perceiving the grouping as aligned with Western interests.

However, under the leadership of the late leader Deng Xiaoping, China adopted a more constructive approach toward ASEAN. Deng introduced a new forward-looking policy that positioned China as a "good neighbor, good friend and good partner" of ASEAN. This vision laid the foundation for decades of cooperation and mutual benefit between China and ASEAN.

What is the state of the China-ASEAN relationship today? The short answer is that it is in good order. In fact, it is one of ASEAN's most consequential dialogue partnerships.

ASEAN is important to China for several reasons. First, the group has overtaken the European Union and the United States to become China's largest trading partner. ASEAN boasts a market of around 700 million consumers, with rising incomes and purchasing power.

Second, ASEAN welcomes investment from China. In 2024, China was the third-largest investor in ASEAN, behind the US and the European Union. There is potential for China to invest more in ASEAN.

Third, ASEAN is a major source of raw materials for China. It also supplies components for China's manufacturing industries.

Fourth, some of the world's most important sea lanes, such as the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, lie in the region. Access to these sea lanes is critical for China.

Fifth, both China and ASEAN share a commitment to upholding the rules-based regional architecture. They are working toward an effective and substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea. While differences remain, the CoC negotiations provide an invaluable platform for sustained dialogue and confidence-building.



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

Sixth, ASEAN maintains friendly relations with China and has refused to participate in any anti-China coalition or grouping. This is especially important given the heightened geopolitical rivalries and the increasingly challenging external environment.

Emerging areas of cooperation, such as the ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement and the ASEAN Power Grid, offer further opportunities.

For ASEAN too, China is equally important. Trade is the lifeblood of the region, and China is the largest trading partner for ASEAN countries, besides being a source of investment and frontier technologies. China is also the largest source of tourists for a region where tourism is an important pillar of the economy.

China has helped ASEAN member states upgrade their infrastructure and enhance regional integration and connectivity, with initiatives such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Belt and Road Initiative playing key roles. Emerging areas of cooperation, such as the ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement and the ASEAN Power Grid, offer further opportunities.

Moreover, China has consistently supported the central role that ASEAN plays in convening and chairing the various forums of the region, such as the East Asia Summit, ASEAN Regional Forum, and ASEAN Plus Three. It is important that China continues to work with ASEAN in advancing the ASEAN Outlook on the "Indo-Pacific", as this will help build strategic trust and ensure an open, inclusive regional architecture.

The future of China-ASEAN relations is bright. The two sides should expand their cooperation agenda to include new areas such as the green economy, the digital economy, supply chain resilience and artificial intelligence. They should continue to expand flight connectivity to facilitate closer people-to-people links. Building on this, both sides should also enhance their existing cooperation in education, training, cultural exchange and people-to-people exchange. Many more ASEAN students should be studying in China and Chinese students studying at universities in ASEAN.

Both sides should also work to build mutual trust. Trust is very important, because it can make many joint endeavors possible. Without trust, even well-intentioned cooperation will struggle to succeed.

A final word about the role of Singapore. In 2027, Singapore will serve as the chairman of ASEAN.

We will use our chairmanship to raise ASEAN's engagement with external partners to an even higher peak, including the China-ASEAN relationship.

The author is an ambassador-at-large at Singapore's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Ma Zhongfa

What the LV case means for trademark protection

A trademark dispute now before the Beijing Intellectual Property Court (BIPC) could help clarify one of the most important questions in China's trademark system: Where should the boundary lie for the registration and protection of commercial brands derived from public cultural elements?

On July 16, the BIPC heard an administrative trademark lawsuit filed by Louis Vuitton Malletier against the China National Intellectual Property Administration, with Huang Minyao, a clothing business operator from Shantou, Guangdong province, as a third party.

A four-petal floral design trademark that Huang applied for is deemed by LV to be confusingly similar to its iconic monogram pattern.

The dispute arose after CNIPA rejected LV's challenge to the petal-shaped trademark registered by Huang.

It is the sixth trademark lawsuit LV has filed against CNIPA, having won three and lost two of the previous five cases.

Unlike the earlier high-profile dispute between LV and Shenzhen-based Molly Tea Catering Management, this is not an infringement case but an administrative lawsuit that challenges the legality of a regulatory decision.

The two cases are deeply connected in legal principle, but administrative trademark disputes differ fundamentally from infringement lawsuits in nature, subject matter, and standards of proof.

Infringement litigation determines whether conduct falls within the scope of an exclusive trademark right, whereas administrative litigation examines the legality of decisions made by trademark authorities on registration applications, oppositions, or invalidation requests.

This means BIPC will not rule on whether Huang infringed LV's rights, but will review whether CNIPA properly applied the current Trademark Law provisions concerning distinctiveness, similarity, well-known trademark protection, and public interest reservations when it rejected LV's plea for invalidation.

Regulators must prevent market players from privatizing commonly available design resources through registration and obstructing other operators' fair use of cultural elements.

This requires the court to return to the authorization conditions under the Trademark Law.

Under the current provision, signs consisting solely of generic names, graphic elements, place names, or other features lacking inherent distinctiveness — including public cultural resources such as traditional patterns, natural imagery and geometric designs — shall not be registered unless they have acquired distinctiveness through use and become readily identifiable with particular goods or services.

If the disputed trademark involves public cultural elements such as traditional patterns or natural floral designs that typically possess weak inherent distinctiveness, the court will focus on whether CNIPA fully considered this factor and rigorously examined evidence of acquired "secondary meaning".

Public reaction to the LV-Molly Tea infringement case has already demonstrated widespread concern over attempts to register and monopolize traditional motifs such as the four-petal flower or Baoxiang patterns.

At the authorization stage, the issue is even more fundamental: If public cultural elements inherently lack distinctiveness and the applicant fails to prove that the symbol has acquired an independent identity distinct from its public-domain meaning, is administrative approval justified in the first place?

Trademark law is not meant to enclose public cultural resources as private property through registration, but to protect commercial identifiers that distinguish goods or services and thereby promote fair competition.

For traditional cultural elements that have public interest, trademark examination should adopt a prudent stance.

Regulators must prevent market players from privatizing commonly available design resources through registration and obstructing other operators' fair use of cultural elements.

On the other hand, they must respect the goodwill accumulated by enterprises through creative transformation and sustained commercial use.

The key lies in balancing "distinctiveness" against "public domain preservation" without lowering examination standards for auxiliary graphic elements simply because an applicant has a formidable reputation in other product categories.

In this case, LV may argue that its well-known trademark deserves cross-class protection.

However, China's Trademark Law and related judicial interpretations clearly state that the recognition of a well-known trademark should follow the principles of "case-by-case determination" and "protection as needed".

Cross-class protection is justified only if there is evidence that the public would be misled and the registrant's interests are likely to be damaged. In this administrative proceeding, the court needs to determine whether CNIPA correctly applied this standard.

It is worth noting that the protection of well-known trademarks cannot extend indefinitely.

Even if some LV trademark symbols enjoy extremely high reputation, it does not automatically mean that every separately registered graphic element — particularly those resembling public cultural motifs — enjoys the same level of protection across all categories.

Judicial review should guard against "goodwill spillover", whereby a brand's overall reputation is indiscriminately poured into each registered element, thereby improperly extending the exclusivity of the trademark.

Although this is an administrative case, its ruling will have a significant effect on similar cases in the future.

The judgment should accomplish three objectives: First, it should strictly examine the source of distinctiveness of the disputed mark, distinguishing inherent distinctiveness from acquired distinctiveness, and ensure that the natural recognizability of public cultural elements is not mistaken for the trademark owner's original contribution.

Second, it should accurately apply the principle of "protection as needed" for well-known trademarks and prevent the abuse of cross-class protection.

Third, it should fully address public interest considerations in its reasoning, clarifying the protection boundaries for trademarks comprising public cultural elements and leaving adequate room for fair use by the public and other market entities.

A trademark right is essentially a tool for market identification, not a shackle on cultural resources.

As China continues strengthening intellectual property protection while fostering a fair and competitive business environment, safeguarding the public domain at the trademark authorization stage becomes increasingly important.

Traditional patterns, natural imagery, and geometric designs should remain part of humanity's shared treasury of creativity rather than become legal barriers enabling a handful of enterprises to monopolize markets.

The BIPC ruling may well provide a landmark answer on how China's trademark system can balance private incentives with public interest.

The author is a professor of International Law at Fudan University Law School.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Li Tianguo

Aligning ambitions of economic integration in Asia-Pacific

Most cherry trees in China are dormant in the winter due to the cold. Yet supermarkets across the country are stocked with boxes of glossy, wine-colored cherries during the season.

The luscious fruit is imported in large quantities from Chile, about 20,000 kilometers away in South America, to fill the seasonal supply gap and drive down prices at that time of the year. The huge supply and relatively affordable prices make cherries a popular treat in China around the Spring Festival holiday.

The popularity of Chilean cherries in China is thanks to their bilateral free trade agreement, under which most goods enjoy zero-tariff treatment.

The journey of Chilean cherries across the Pacific reflects the vitality of free trade and economic integration in the Asia-Pacific. Interestingly, though China and Chile enjoy a high-standard bilateral free trade relationship, they are signatories to different regional trade agreements.

China is a member of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, while Chile is part of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.

RCEP and CPTPP are two major pillars of the Asia-Pacific's economic and trade architecture. Many regional economies are part of either one or both agreements.

Within each trade pact, member economies have seen their tariffs slashed and the cost of cross-border trade and business reduced.

But the two trade agreements cover different regional economies and have distinct rule frameworks.

To promote a free flow of resources across the Asia-Pacific, it is necessary to integrate their rules and work toward a unified free trade area that covers more regional economies.

This has long been a goal of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum.

An important milestone was reached in 2014, when APEC members adopted a road map for the realization of the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific, or FTAAP, at the meeting of economic leaders in Beijing, turning the long-term vision into a concrete action plan.

For many enterprises, market access and operational efficiency are no longer the only concerns.

Two years later, APEC members endorsed the Collective Strategic Study on Issues Related to the Realization of the FTAAP.

Since then, economies have committed to bringing CPTPP and RCEP into force, while APEC has encouraged the two regional deals to remain open, transparent and inclusive, draw on each other's strengths, and jointly lay the groundwork for the eventual realization of the FTAAP.

In recent years, however, progress toward building the free trade area has faced growing challenges. Protectionism and unilateralism are on the rise, while geopolitical tensions have intensified.

For many enterprises, market access and operational efficiency are no longer the only concerns. The security and resilience of industry chains have become more important than ever. All these have slowed the progress toward the FTAAP, and delayed discussions on a potential negotiating framework.

Yet the evolving environment has only made the FTAAP all the more relevant. A unified Asia-Pacific market will help address the fragmentation of rules caused by overlapping free trade arrangements, help regional economies withstand trade protectionism and strengthen the regional supply chain. Its establishment will not only boost regional trade but also contribute to global growth.

It will take gradual and steady efforts to advance the FTAAP, which is faced with multiple hurdles. Geopolitical competition and significant development gaps among APEC member economies are some of the biggest obstacles.

The Asia-Pacific comprises both developed economies and a large number of developing economies. CPTPP's rules are of a higher standard, whereas RCEP emphasizes inclusiveness, flexibility and incrementalism.

Given that APEC members are at different stages of development, it is unrealistic to expect all economies to implement identical trading rules immediately.

APEC therefore needs to build a consensus among members and help them with capacity-building to speed up the economic integration of the region.

The forum can also facilitate dialogue and coordination between RCEP and CPTPP members to make relevant institutions more open, compatible and inclusive. This would lay a solid foundation for the future free trade area.

Efforts to align the two trade agreements should not begin with the most contentious issues, such as tariff concessions. Instead, priority should be given to harmonizing rules and standards for the digital economy, green and low-carbon trade and cross-border data flows.

Since the regulatory frameworks for these emerging sectors are still evolving, there is greater scope for developing unified norms.

China has actively contributed to this process. The country hosted a dialogue between members of RCEP and CPTPP during the APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade Meeting held in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, in May.

Representatives from 18 of the 20 economies participating in the two mega trade agreements attended the dialogue. Participants engaged in informal discussions on several issues, including regional economic integration.

In July, a Chinese business delegation hosted the third APEC Business Advisory Council meeting in 2026.

At the meeting convened in Bangkok, representatives discussed regional economic integration and other topics, and adopted a report to APEC economic leaders and other outcome documents.

Going forward, only by upholding the principles of pragmatic cooperation, inclusiveness and mutual learning, while continuing to improve institutional coordination and align interests, can Asia-Pacific economies build a truly unified, open and prosperous regional market.

The author is the deputy director of the Department of Emerging Economies of the National Institute of International Strategy, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:36 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

CARLY COWELL

Integrated plant conservation

China's experience offers adaptable biodiversity governance models for the Global South

Plant diversity is facing unprecedented pressure worldwide. According to the first Global Tree Assessment published by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species, approximately 38 percent of the world's tree species are threatened with extinction. For many countries across the Global South, the challenge is particularly acute. Rapid economic development, competing land use pressures, limited conservation resources and the increasing impacts of climate change create difficult choices about how biodiversity can be protected while supporting human well-being.



Yet conservation is not the exclusive domain of wealthy nations. Over the past several decades, China has demonstrated that meaningful progress can be achieved through long-term commitment, strategic investment and strong partnerships. Through Botanic Gardens Conservation International's (BGCI) collaboration with Chinese botanical gardens, research institutions, local authorities and conservation practitioners, we have witnessed the development of an approach that offers valuable lessons for countries facing similar challenges.

One of the most important lessons is that effective conservation requires integration. Historically, conservation efforts often focused on a single intervention, whether protecting remaining wild populations, establishing ex-situ or outside-the-original-location collections, or undertaking restoration activities. Increasingly, however, experience shows that these approaches are most successful when combined.

The conservation of Magnolia omeiensis illustrates this principle well. Since the species was rediscovered in the late 1980s, conservation efforts have involved extensive field surveys, ex-situ collections, propagation and reintroduction. Through collaboration between BGCI and the Emeishan Botanical Garden, new wild populations were identified, thousands of seedlings propagated and plants reintroduced to suitable habitats. In 2025, one of the reintroduced trees flowered significantly earlier than expected, demonstrating the value of long-term, coordinated conservation action. The success was not the result of a single intervention, but of a connected process linking research, conservation collections, propagation expertise and field implementation.

This integrated approach is increasingly reflected within China's wider conservation framework. The development of national biodiversity strategies, updates to protected species legislation and the establishment of a national botanical garden system all demonstrate how conservation can move beyond individual projects and become embedded within national planning. This institutional support is critical because plant conservation is inherently long-term. Many threatened species require decades of sustained effort before measurable recovery can be achieved.

Another important lesson from China's experience is the value of applied research in guiding action. Conservation resources are limited in every country, making it essential that interventions are informed by evidence rather than assumptions. Restoration and conservation cannot be reduced to simply planting trees. Successful outcomes depend on understanding species biology, habitat requirements, genetic diversity and the social and economic context in which conservation takes place. Across China, conservation programs increasingly combine ecological research with practical implementation. This emphasis on generating and applying knowledge before scaling up interventions helps avoid costly mistakes and increases the likelihood of long-term success. For many countries in the Global South, where resources are often stretched, investing in research and planning at the outset can provide significant returns over time.

China's growing role in regional and international conservation cooperation also highlights the importance of knowledge exchange. Conservation challenges rarely stop at national borders. Many threatened plant groups occur across multiple countries and require coordinated action.

A good example is the conservation of dipterocarps, the dominant tree family of Southeast Asian tropical rainforests. These species are ecologically important and economically valuable, yet many are under increasing threat. In 2025, researchers and conservation practitioners from across Asia gathered in China for the Global Conservation Symposium for Dipterocarps. The meeting brought together expertise from multiple countries, identified shared priorities and strengthened regional collaboration. Such initiatives demonstrate how countries can move from being participants in conservation efforts to becoming regional centers for knowledge sharing and capacity development.

At the heart of all successful conservation, however, are people. Conservation outcomes are most durable when local communities are involved as active participants rather than passive beneficiaries. Building local capacity, supporting livelihoods and fostering a sense of stewardship are essential components of effective conservation programs.

This principle is evident in the conservation work for *Euryodendron excelsum*, one of China's most threatened tree species. Through collaboration between BGCI and the South China National Botanical Garden, local stakeholders were engaged through training programs, technical workshops and participatory conservation activities. Practical skills such as seedling propagation, planting and post-planting management were shared with local communities, helping to strengthen both conservation outcomes and local ownership. This emphasis on capacity building extends far beyond individual projects. Through partnerships across China, BGCI has supported conservation initiatives for dozens of threatened tree species, trained conservation practitioners, and engaged students from rural schools and community members from remote mountainous areas in conservation education.

Investing in people creates the foundation upon which long-term conservation success depends.

Perhaps one of the most significant aspects of China's conservation journey has been the development of its botanical garden network. Today, China's nearly 200 botanical gardens collectively represent one of the largest plant conservation infrastructures in the world. These institutions function as much more than public green spaces. They serve as centers for research, conservation, education, restoration, and capacity building. For other countries in the Global South, botanical gardens represent a particularly effective investment. They provide a permanent institutional base for conservation activities, maintain living collections and seed banks, support restoration programs and create opportunities for public engagement. Importantly, they also act as hubs that connect local conservation efforts to national and international networks.

Through BGCI's global network, botanical gardens in China are linked with institutions across more than 100 countries. These connections facilitate the exchange of expertise, data and conservation resources, helping to strengthen collective action for plant conservation worldwide. The broader lesson emerging from China's experience is that conservation success depends on a combination of long-term planning, strong institutions, applied research, community engagement and international cooperation, which is a framework that can be adapted rather than simply copied. Global South countries often face different economic realities, governance structures and development priorities. Solutions must therefore be adapted to local contexts, but China's experience offers a valuable example because many of the challenges it has faced are shared by other developing nations. This work in China demonstrates that plant conservation can progress alongside economic development when supported by appropriate policies, partnerships and investment.

The partnership between BGCI and Chinese colleagues has reinforced another important principle: International cooperation is most effective when it is built on mutual learning. While BGCI contributes global expertise, international standards and opportunities for collaboration, Chinese institutions contribute practical experience, innovation and lessons derived from implementing conservation at scale. Both sides benefit from the exchange. As global biodiversity loss accelerates, there is an urgent need for conservation approaches that are practical, scalable and relevant to the realities facing countries across the Global South. China's experience demonstrates that such approaches are possible. Through sustained commitment, strong institutions, botanical garden networks and investment in people and knowledge, significant progress can be achieved.

The author is the secretary general of Botanic Gardens Conservation International. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

YANG XIAOBO AND LYU XIAOBO

Mangroves to the rescue

By giving nature the space to recover, these 'forests of the sea' can continue to shelter coastal communities and thrive alongside them for generations to come

Mangrove forests are distributed along tropical and subtropical shores. Though they occupy only a small fraction of the world's total coastal zone, they have long served as natural guardians of coastal communities, buffering the effects of typhoons while sustaining abundant fisheries.



Yang Xiaobo



Lyu Xiaobo

For many Chinese people who grew up beside mangroves before the 1970s, childhood was inseparable from these forests. They followed their parents into the mangroves to catch shrimp and crabs or gather clams from the tidal flats. They walked narrow stone paths winding through the forests from one village to the next, often trailing behind their mothers. Looking up, they watched the mangrove branches sway in the sea breeze; looking down, they saw fiddler crabs scurrying across the mud at their feet. Those memories remain vivid to this day.

But this began to change in the mid-1970s. As population growth intensified shortages of food and salt, many mangrove forests were cut down to make way for rice paddies and salt pans. In Sanjiang township of Hainan province alone, around 800 hectares of mangroves were felled between 1975 and 1976. The destruction accelerated in the late 1980s and early 1990s as booming coastal aquaculture drove the widespread conversion of mangrove wetlands into fish farms.

The Chinese government, however, did not stand idly by as the losses mounted. Systematic mangrove restoration began in the 1980s, alongside the establishment of the Dongzhaigang National Nature Reserve in Hainan in 1980. More protected areas were later established across the country. In 1998, Hainan became the first province to introduce regulations on the protection of mangroves, effectively bringing the widespread mangrove clearance under control.

Protecting mangroves has never been solely a challenge for China. It is a global imperative. In 2015, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization designated July 26 as the International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem, often referred to as World Mangrove Day. Since then, the occasion has evolved from a symbolic commemoration to an opportunity for countries to reaffirm the ecological value of mangroves and strengthen the collective commitment to protecting them.

In China, over a decade of sustained investment and restoration efforts have steadily revived mangrove ecosystems that had once been lost to fish farms.

Since 2016, China has funded mangrove restoration through major programs such as the Blue Bay environmental improvement initiative and the coastal zone protection and restoration project. A key milestone was the Mangrove Protection and Restoration Action Plan (2020-25), under which about 18,800 hectares of mangroves have been restored through measures such as converting fish farms back into forests, recovering degraded habitats and strengthening long-term monitoring and management.

According to the National Forestry and Grassland Administration, by February 2025, China's mangrove coverage had reached 30,300 hectares, increasing approximately 8,300 hectares from what it was at the start of the century.

Restoring mangroves is a complex, long-term process that requires scientific research, the removal of fish farms, the reshaping of tidal flats, seedling cultivation and planting, and years of monitoring and maintenance. In the Xiaohai coastal lagoon in Wanning, Hainan province, the restoration of mangroves has involved investment in removing aquaculture ponds, dredging waterways and rehabilitating tidal flats since 2019. Similar progress has been made in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region and Guangdong and Fujian provinces. Across China, mangrove forests once in decline are making a remarkable comeback.

At the opening of the 14th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in 2022, China announced plans to establish the International Mangrove Center in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, marking China's transition from a participant in global conservation to a leading contributor. In July 2025, the center was officially endorsed as a Ramsar Regional Initiative for the 2026-28 period.

Operating as an independent, nonprofit intergovernmental organization under the Ramsar Convention, the International Mangrove Center, with 21 signatory countries as of June 2026, aims to promote international cooperation in mangrove conservation, restoration and sustainable use.

In 2025, the center organized a series of international training programs for government officials and experts from countries including Cambodia and Madagascar, sharing China's experience in mangrove restoration. Later that year, the China Meteorological Administration released a sectoral standard for estimating carbon stocks and assessing carbon emissions in mangrove and salt marsh wetlands, providing a scientific framework for measuring mangrove carbon sequestration.

Together, these initiatives demonstrate that China is not only restoring its own mangrove ecosystems but also contributing knowledge, technology and standards to global conservation efforts.

Going forward, mangrove restoration should place greater emphasis on ecosystem quality rather than simply expanding forest cover. This means maintaining an appropriate balance among mangrove forests, tidal flats and open water, preserving the ecological function of tidal channels, and restoring benthic biodiversity.

Encouragingly, mangroves are remarkably resilient. Once major disturbance factors are removed, many degraded ecosystems can recover naturally, with carefully targeted intervention helping to accelerate the process where needed.

It is also important to explore sustainable integrated mangrove aquaculture models to balance the needs for environmental recovery and economic development. By reconnecting mangrove forests with the livelihoods of coastal communities, we can help restore a landscape where people once again share winding mangrove paths with crabs and other wildlife.

By giving nature the space to recover, mangroves, the "forests of the sea", can continue to shelter coastal communities and thrive alongside them for generations to come.

Yang Xiaobo is a professor at School of Ecology and Environment at Hainan University. Lyu Xiaobo is an assistant research fellow at the Hainan Academy of Forestry (Hainan Academy of Mangroves). The authors contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:36 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

China's oil, gas output hits record highs

By ZHENG XIN
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

China's domestic oil and gas production reached historic highs in 2025, providing a robust bedrock for national energy security as the country accelerates the construction of a resilient energy system to navigate escalating global market uncertainties and geopolitical turbulence.

An oil and gas exploration and development report, recently released by the National Energy Administration, revealed that domestic crude oil production surged to a record 216 million metric tons last year. Meanwhile, natural gas output maintained its robust momentum, expanding by over 10 billion cubic meters for the ninth consecutive year.

Combined, total oil and gas production equivalent soared to a new high of 420 million tons, significantly enhancing the nation's self-sufficiency and ushering the industry into a new phase of high-efficiency and green development, it said.

Industry experts believe the milestone marks the successful culmination of a sweeping seven-year action plan (2019-25) designed to enhance domestic exploration, as the fierce global competition over resources, transit routes and market rights is creating greater uncertainties for energy imports.

China is leveraging the "certainty" of its domestic energy development to counter various external risks and enhance the resilience of its production, supply, storage and sales systems, Wang Hongzhi, head of the NEA, said recently.

Building on the momentum of a record-breaking 2025, the sector has seen a robust start to 2026. Cao Jianjun, chief expert at the Sinopec Economics and Development Research Institute, believes that the continuous growth of domestic supplies serves as the ultimate insulator against external volatility.

"As uncertainty becomes the new normal, we must counter external instabilities with our own internal certainty," Cao said.

This resilience is further underpinned by a strategic petroleum reserve estimated at approximately 1.4 billion barrels, or 190 million tons, according to figures by Columbia University's Center on Global Energy Policy.

Advancements in exploration and production technology have played a central role in this self-sufficiency. Sustained investments by the country's three major energy giants — China National Petroleum Corp, China Petroleum and Chemical Corp, and China National Offshore Oil Corp — have led to significant discoveries across traditional and unconventional fields, said Lu Ruquan, head of the CNPC Economics and Technology Research Institute.

These efforts successfully reduced China's dependence on crude oil imports to 71.9 percent in 2024, demonstrating remarkable industry resilience, Lu added.

The NEA report also highlighted breakthroughs in unconventional resources. In 2025, shale oil output exceeded 8.5 million tons — more than 10 times the level in 2018 — while unconventional natural gas production climbed 7.7 percent year-on-year to over 110 billion cubic meters.

Furthermore, the oil and gas sector added over 9 gigawatts of wind and solar capacity last year, reflecting the government's call to double down on renewable expansion while ensuring fossil fuels serve as a reliable regulatory "baseline" for energy substitution.

To support this balanced transition, China aims to bring non-fossil fuels to 25 percent of total energy consumption by 2030, supported by a comprehensive national energy production capacity.

Looking ahead, the industry is rolling out a new strategic action plan for 2026.

The NEA expects domestic crude oil output to firmly remain above the 200-million-ton threshold, while deepening the integration of artificial intelligence, green energy and the large-scale application of carbon capture, utilization and storage to empower China's continued rise as a global energy powerhouse.

Heatproofing



Staffers from State Grid Yangzhou conduct maintenance on a fishery-solar mixed-use project in Gongdao town of Yangzhou in Jiangsu province, helping safeguard normal equipment operations during high temperatures and bolstering energy conservation and emissions reduction. REN FEI / FOR CHINA DAILY



A Galbot humanoid robot interacts with shoppers in Shanghai. CHEN YUYU / FOR CHINA DAILY

Humanoid robots close to 'ChatGPT moment'

Executive: Would move new tech from niche circles into public consciousness

By MA SI
masi@chinadaily.com.cn

The humanoid robot industry could hit its "ChatGPT moment" by the end of 2028, based on current data accumulation rates and model convergence trends, said Wang He, founder and CTO of Beijing-based Galbot Co Ltd.

The "ChatGPT moment" has become a popular metaphor in tech and investment circles to describe a sudden breakthrough that catapults a new technology from niche circles into the public consciousness, allowing ordinary people to viscerally feel its practical value.

Wang said a powerful pre-trained model combined with an efficient post-training paradigm is the key to unlocking this milestone, and embodied artificial intelligence foundation models trained on massive, comprehensive datasets could achieve a 70 to 80 percent success rate directly for tasks they have never been specifically trained for.

Galbot was among the invited enterprises to a private enterprise symposium hosted by Zheng Shanjie, head of the National Development and Reform Commission, in Beijing on Monday. The event focused on analyzing first-half economic performance and gathering suggestions for second-half economic work.

The policy attention comes as Galbot's technology is capturing the public imagination in tangible ways. At the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference, which concluded in Shanghai on Monday, crowds three or four layers deep gathered around Galbot's exhibition area. They were watching Galbot G1, one of the company's robots, make breakfast, toast bread and pour drinks with the smooth coordination of a seasoned short-order cook.

But what truly captivated the audience was not the actions themselves — it was what happened next. Spectators repeatedly moved the bread aside, shifted the kettle, rearranged cups and plates, and covered the cup lids with their hands, creating obstacle after obstacle. Yet the robot never wavered. It relocated its targets in milliseconds, reconstructed its path on the fly and completed every step without interruption.

Wang outlined a roadmap for general-purpose embodied intelligence foundation models. He said that building a unified "brain and cerebellum" — the embodied intelligence foundation model — to achieve a deep understanding of human movement and control mechanisms represents a critical technological pathway for pushing humanoid robots toward the "tipping point" of artificial general intelligence.

Just a day before the WAIC opened, Vice-Minister of Industry and Information Technology Ke Jixin revealed at the annual plenary session of his ministry's humanoid robot and embodied intelligence standardization technical committee in Shaoxing, Zhejiang province, that China's humanoid robot output reached about 20,000 units last year, surpassed 40,000 units in the first half of this year, and is expected to exceed 100,000 units this year.

This fivefold jump sends a clear signal: humanoid robots are accelerating from technological exploration toward standardized, large-scale development. But quantity expansion does not equal industrial maturity.

Xie Shaofeng, chairman of the ministry's technical committee and chairman of the OpenAtom Foundation, warned that the industry is currently "blossoming yet fighting separately". Behind the apparent prosperity are three major challenges: highly divergent technological pathways, a critical lack of product standards and mounting pressure from sustainable development requirements.

Ke said the next two to three years could be a critical turning point for the humanoid robot sector. Output growth is merely the surface — the deeper shift is that the industry is moving from single-unit prototypes and stage demonstrations toward batch deliveries, which dramatically raises the coordination requirements across research and development, production, testing, application and safety governance.

At the prototype stage, companies can solve interface, algorithm and hardware adaptation issues through customized solutions. But once production reaches the scale of tens of thousands of units, any interface incompatibility, inconsistent evaluation methods, or unclear safety boundaries will be magnified into cost, efficiency and market trust problems, experts said.

To a certain extent, the core of scaling is not just "expanding production capacity" but also enabling components from different companies to work together, allowing product performance to be compared and contrasted, thus giving users the confidence to buy and use products and providing a basis for after-sales maintenance, they added.

Ke called for leveraging the foundational, guiding and supportive role of standards, as well as accelerating the development of urgently needed standards for humanoid robot intelligence classification, data management and safety specifications.

Jiang Lei, deputy director of the technical committee, said hardware requires standards and models need "firewalls", adding that the committee expects to roll out the first batch of standards by the end of this year.

Equipment industry driving exports

China's equipment manufacturing sector became a major driver of export growth in the first half of 2026, with export delivery value of the equipment industry rising 18.2 percent year-on-year and contributing nearly 50 percent of the growth in industrial exports, official data showed.

In the first half of the year, the country's exports of wind turbine generators and lithium batteries increased 35.6 percent and 37.6 percent year-on-year, respectively, while automobile exports reached 5.096 million units, up 65.3 percent from a year earlier, according to Wang Weiming, chief engineer of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

China's shipbuilding sector also continued to strengthen its global competitiveness, with domestically built vessels accounting for more than 90 percent of the country's total completed ships, new orders and existing order backlog.

"Since the beginning of 2026, China's equipment manufacturing industry has demonstrated characteristics of a solid foundation, multiple growth highlights and strong external demand," Wang said.

The sector's value-added output increased 6.4 percent year-on-year in the first half, accounting for 20 percent of the total output of industrial enterprises above designated size. It contributed 23.5 percent to the growth of value-added industrial output, providing strong support for stable industrial growth, Wang noted.

In addition to the strong growth in exports of high-tech products such as industrial robots, high-end machine tools and aerospace components, shipments of consumer goods — including 3C electronics (computer, communication and consumer electronics), household items, fashion accessories and small home appliances — have emerged as an important driver of export expansion. Beyond hardware performance, strong modeling ecosystems and software capabilities have notably become key factors behind the overseas popularity of Chinese-made 3D printers.

New technologies such as electrification, automation and AI transformation will continue to reshape their product architecture and industrial ecosystems, opening up fresh growth opportunities for the country's equipment manufacturing industry.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Briefly

Honda, GAC extend joint venture

Honda Motor and China's Guangzhou Automobile Group Co Ltd have agreed to extend their joint venture partnership until 2038, as the Japanese carmaker seeks to strengthen its position in the world's largest auto market. The ownership structure of the China joint venture, GAC Honda, will remain unchanged under the agreement, while the venture will accelerate its shift toward new energy vehicles and work to rebuild its competitiveness, according to the company.

Yuan weakens against greenback

The central parity rate of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, weakened 16 pips to 6.7933 against the US dollar on Wednesday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System. In China's spot foreign exchange market, the yuan is allowed to rise or fall by 2 percent from the central parity rate each trading day.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Confidence returning to global art market

By LI JING
lijing2009@chinadaily.com.cn

China's art market is showing early signs of stabilizing after a five-year downturn, with auction prices edging higher and bidding activity returning close to historical averages, according to a report released on Friday, adding to evidence that a broader recovery is taking hold in the global art market.

The report, published jointly by the Cheung Kong Graduate School of Business and Italy's SDA Bocconi School of Management, found that the MM Chinese Art Price Index, which tracks auction prices, rose 1.7 percent during the spring 2026 auction season after slipping in the autumn 2025 auction season. At the same time, the MM Chinese Art Sentiment Index, which measures bidding intensity by comparing hammer prices with auction estimates, also improved and approached its long-term average, indicating stronger competition among buyers.

The rebound in the Chinese art market coincides with gains in the report's two other major global price benchmarks, with the MM Impressionist Art Price Index climbing 15 percent and the MM Contemporary Art Price Index rising 10.8 percent, the first time in years that all three major art price indexes increased simultaneously.

"The spring 2026 auction season suggests confidence is returning to parts of the global art market," said Mei Jianping, professor of finance at CKGSB and lead author of the report.

Chinese artworks remain the strongest-performing segment over the past 25 years, despite a deep adjustment in recent years amid the COVID-19 pandemic, China's economic transition and a global art market downturn. The report showed the MM Chinese Art Price Index has risen nearly sevenfold since 2000, delivering a compound annual growth rate of 7.8 percent, compared with 4.8 percent for the MM Contemporary Art Price Index and 3.5 percent for the MM Impressionist Art Price Index.

Mei said the global art market has significantly lagged the rapid expansion of global wealth over the past 25 years, particularly wealth generated by advances in artificial intelligence.

"This spring auction season indicates the onset of a market revival," Mei said. "Considering the massive wealth generated over the past quarter-century, especially by recent breakthroughs in AI technology, the current market may present a historic window of opportunity for collectors and investors."

The report also pointed to a growing divide within China's art market as collectors continued to favor works with broader international appeal, such as contemporary artworks and oil paintings. During this year's spring auctions, the MM Chinese Oil Painting Index jumped 21.9 percent and the MM Chinese Contemporary Art Index rose 18.6 percent, while the MM Chinese Ink Painting Index fell 4 percent and the MM Chinese Modern Art Index declined 4.7 percent.

Mei attributed part of the shift to the growing internationalization of collecting Chinese art since the early 2000s as overseas buyers have become more active, making the market more sensitive to global collecting trends.

Beyond China, the report found that European art also rebounded in the spring, with France posting a 24.7 percent increase and Britain rising 18.5 percent, although long-term returns remained modest. The researchers said that years of relatively weak performance could leave parts of the European market attractively valued for long-term investors.

Despite the rapid creation of AI-related wealth, Mei said much of that capital has yet to flow into art because investors continue to see better returns in technology assets.

"The opportunity cost is still high," he said, adding that many entrepreneurs and investors enriched by the AI boom remain focused on growing their businesses rather than building art collections.

Asked whether AI-generated artworks could become valuable collectibles, Mei said that such works are likely to have artistic value but are unlikely to command the same long-term significance as works created by human artists.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:36 PM

BUSINESS

Tianjin Port upgrades enable more imported delicacies

First bulk shipment of certified Beef-on-Track from Brazil expected to arrive in August

By **YAN DONGJIE** in Tianjin
yandongjie@chinadaily.com.cn



Chefs and employees showcase certified Beef-on-Track from Brazil during the 4th Tianjin International Shipping Industry Expo in Tianjin on June 3. LIU NAIWEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

China's first shipment of certified Beef-on-Track from Brazil arrived at Tianjin Port last month, with visitors to the 4th Tianjin International Shipping Industry Expo lining up to try the BOT steaks — and the reviews were glowing.

The Tianjin Meat Industry Association signed a cooperation agreement with Brazilian counterparts at the expo. The first bulk shipment of the beef is expected to arrive at Tianjin Port in August, eventually making its way to dining tables across the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region.

"China is our main export destination, accounting for roughly half of Brazil's total beef exports," said Marina Guyot, executive director of the Institute of Agricultural and Forest Management and Certification, at the signing ceremony.

Xing Yanling, president of the Tianjin Meat Industry Association, said that Tianjin Port, as the largest cold-chain gateway in northern China, has a well-established cold-chain storage, customs clearance and distribution system, handling nearly 60 percent of the country's Brazilian beef imports annually.

To source the beef, a team from the association traveled to Para state in Brazil in April, visiting the Fazenda Carioca ranch and the Mafrinorte slaughterhouse to inspect ecological farming practices, standardized slaughter processes and full-chain quality controls. They also held discussions with local prosecutors and the Brazilian Chamber of Commerce on regulatory and environmental compliance.

BOT is a sustainable beef certification initiative launched in 2019 by Brazil's Federal Prosecutor's Office and the Institute of Agricultural and Forest Management and Certification.

Under this framework, ranchers are required to commit to environmental stewardship — specifically, zero deforestation — to protect what many call the "lungs of the Earth". Pasture management is tightly controlled, with no more than eight cattle per 6.67 hectares of grassland. As a result, the beef carries a slightly higher production cost than conventional beef.

"We hope to bring premium protein from around the world to Tianjin Port, and from there to the wider Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region," Xing said.

Once a cold-chain container completes its weeks-long ocean voyage and arrives at Tianjin Port, it enters a streamlined clearance process. Paperless customs procedures ensure that compliant frozen goods pass through quickly. At the container terminal, smart loading and unloading equipment moves containers off the docks and into cold-chain warehouses with minimal delay.

For containers that need temporary port storage, thousands of shore power sockets provide uninterrupted electricity, keeping frozen goods at a constant minus 25 C. Port workers conduct regular inspections to check power supply and compressor status, ensuring cargo quality is maintained throughout.



Representatives from China and Brazil shake hands during the Brazil BOT Certified Sustainable Beef First Arrival Ceremony in Tianjin on June 3. LIU NAIWEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

From the docks, containers are transported to cold-chain warehouses clustered around the port area. Tianjin currently has 155 registered cold-chain storage facilities with a total capacity of approximately 3 million metric tons. As one of China's primary frozen goods import hubs, the port handled about 2.3 million metric tons of frozen imports last year, valued at 61.39 billion yuan ($9.06 billion) — ranking second nationally.

Tianjin's 15th Five-Year Plan identifies cold-chain logistics as a key component of modern transport and shipping services, with plans to strengthen the sector as a strategic pillar.

Behind this infrastructure lies a simple reality: imported goods are finding their way into more and more Tianjin households. Recently, at a Sam's Club a few kilometers from the National Convention and Exhibition Center (Tianjin), a Tianjin resident named Zheng Xiaowen drove in circles around the car park of nearly 2,000 spaces and it still took her half an hour to find an available space.

The Sam's Club in Xiqing district is reportedly the highest-grossing in the country. Despite the complaints, Zheng — like tens of thousands of Tianjin families — makes the trip every weekend. "We come mainly for the high-quality imported meat and produce," she said.

From Chilean cherries and Peruvian blueberries to Thai durian, Norwegian salmon, Australian beef, US apples and New Zealand milk, imported food has become a staple in the shopping trolleys of Tianjin families.

Data from Tianjin Customs back this up. Last year, Tianjin imported 225,000 tons of aquatic products for consumption, valued at 6.3 billion yuan, up 27 percent year-on-year. Imports of fresh and dried fruits and nuts reached 141,000 tons, valued at 14.3 billion yuan, up 7.3 percent.

This enthusiasm for imported food has deep historical roots. Tianjin has long been an international consumer city. The Quanyechang Department Store, which opened in 1928, predates what is widely recognized as the United States' first modern shopping mall by nearly 30 years.

That tradition carried on in later decades in a different, more down-to-earth form. For today's young people, shopping globally is as simple as a few taps on a phone. But for Zheng's grandparents' generation, seeing the latest international trends meant making a trip to one place that everyone in Tianjin — and across northern China — knew well: the Tianjin Foreign Commodities Market.

A hallmark of Tianjin's "foreign goods economy" from the 1990s through the early 2000s, the market drew shoppers from across the country by the busload.

Where older Tianjin residents once had to make a dedicated journey to "hunt" for imported goods, Zheng today simply reaches for them off the supermarket shelf. The goods haven't changed — what's changed is the port infrastructure behind them, as Tianjin Port has developed its port-industry-city integration model and upgraded customs clearance efficiency under the city's free trade zone framework.

Chilean cherries once had to transit through southern ports on their way to Tianjin, adding days to an already long journey. Since 2023, when Tianjin launched its direct "Cherry Express" service from Chile, the port has steadily expanded its fresh produce import corridor. By the end of January this year, four vessels carrying roughly 30,000 tons of cherries had arrived as part of the 2025–26 cherry season.

Nearly 200 containers of fresh cherries made the journey from Chile's San Antonio Port directly to Tianjin, with a single sailing time of around 22 days — nearly a week shorter than traditional transit routes. Customs declarations are completed before arrival, so once a vessel docks, containers can be unloaded directly onto refrigerated trucks. From ship to supermarket shelf, the entire process now takes just a few hours — cherries that arrive in the morning are on sale by midday and on dinner tables by evening.

"We'll use international shipping combined with full cold-chain logistics to reach the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, and from there the whole of China — so that more consumers can enjoy fresh imported food," said Xing.

Cai Muzi contributed to this story.

Sourcing event boosts Sino-South African ties

CAPE TOWN — China Premium Textile South Africa and Allfashion Sourcing 2026, one of Africa's top textile and fashion trade exhibitions, took place in Cape Town from July 14 to 16, with participants from China and South Africa upbeat about expanding bilateral cooperation in the industry.

Held at the Cape Town International Convention Center, the annual event serves as a major sourcing platform for the textile, apparel, footwear and fashion industries, bringing together manufacturers, suppliers, designers, retailers, buyers and other industry stakeholders to explore business opportunities, forge partnerships and showcase future-oriented solutions.

This year's event featured around 150 exhibitors, with nearly half of them from China. The program also included fashion shows, thematic forums, panel discussions and industry talks.

Addressing the opening ceremony, Chinese Consul-General in Cape Town Ren Faqiang said South Africa is China's largest trading partner in Africa, while China has remained South Africa's largest trading partner for 17 consecutive years, with bilateral trade reaching $53.58 billion in 2025.

"The textile industry is a traditional area of China-South Africa economic cooperation, and also a key sector for industrial capacity coordination and market connectivity between the two sides," Ren said.

He added that China's zero-tariff policy for 53 African countries, including South Africa, took effect on May 1, covering South African-grown cotton, textile raw materials and other related products.

"This policy will substantially cut export costs for South African textile and garment manufacturers, expand their access to the Chinese market, unleash greater trade momentum, and inject robust impetus into China-Africa trade, investment, cooperation and Africa's development," Ren added.

One of the exhibitors, Ziev Shani, a young South African entrepreneur who is fluent in Chinese and runs a local company that sources products from China, provides private-label manufacturing services for South African businesses and helps connect companies from the two countries.



People visit the booth of a Chinese exhibitor at the China Premium Textile South Africa and Allfashion Sourcing 2026 expo in Cape Town, South Africa, on July 14. WANG LEI / XINHUA

Shani said he has worked with Chinese companies for five years, while his family's business ties with China date back to his father's generation.

"I believe that there are excellent prospects for Chinese companies and South African companies to work together for a win-win situation. There should be good collaboration, good partnership and just growth and prosperity for two great countries," he added.

Among the Chinese exhibitors, Hangzhou Golden Shell Import and Export participated in the event for the fourth time. Having cultivated the South African textile market for more than a decade, the company has continued to strengthen its local presence, underscoring its long-term confidence in the African market.

General Manager Chen Fangli said she is optimistic about the future of China-South Africa and China-Africa economic and trade cooperation. Supported by favorable policies and industrial upgrading, she believes Chinese textile enterprises, backed by integrated industrial chains, advanced manufacturing equipment and strong innovation capabilities, will further expand cooperation with South African partners.

"We have established a company in Cape Town and are exploring the possibility of setting up a factory in Durban. We hope to use South Africa as a base to gradually expand into the broader African market," Chen added.

Wang Lihong, general manager of first-time exhibitor Zhejiang Huida Textile and Garment, told Xinhua News Agency that she spent the morning of the opening day meeting potential clients and reached preliminary cooperation agreements with three South African companies, strengthening her confidence in expanding into both the South African and broader African markets.

Wang said Chinese textile manufacturers have long outgrown the stereotype of competing solely on low prices.

"People overseas used to associate Chinese products with good quality at low prices. Today, however, our competitiveness comes not only from affordability, but, more importantly, from reliable product quality and continuous innovation, which will create broad opportunities for development in South Africa and across Africa," Wang said.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:36 PM

CHINA

Medical mission



The People's Liberation Army Navy hospital ship *Jixiang Fangzhou* (Ark of Good Fortune) departs from a military port in Qingdao, Shandong province, on Wednesday to begin Harmonious Mission 2026, its first overseas humanitarian medical mission. During the more than 200-day voyage, the vessel, China's third domestically built 10,000-metric-ton-class hospital ship, will visit countries in Africa and South Asia, providing free medical services to local communities. LIU ZAIYAO / XINHUA

Safety risks at the workplace under scrutiny

SPP urges businesses to fulfill their primary responsibility in campaigns

By YANG ZEKUN
yangzekun@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese prosecutors approved the arrests of 4,181 people and prosecuted 16,648 others for crimes endangering workplace safety from January 2023 to June 2026, the Supreme People's Procuratorate said on Tuesday.

Although China's workplace safety situation has remained generally stable and continues to improve, risks persist in some industries, the SPP said.

Traditional high-risk sectors, including mining, hazardous chemicals, transportation and construction, remain vulnerable to major accidents. Some companies continue to prioritize production over safety, while increasingly complex working conditions make risks more difficult to control.

Prosecutors have also identified inadequate oversight of equipment and safety facilities as a major concern. Investigations have uncovered expired equipment, missing protective devices and faulty safety systems in many cases.

Fire hazards remain prominent at small businesses and public venues, including restaurants, hotels, workshops and entertainment facilities. Such premises are numerous and often located in urban villages, old town areas and rural communities, making regulatory oversight more challenging.

Unsafe electrical wiring, indoor charging of electric bicycles, aging gas hoses and improper storage of gas cylinders are among the major risks. Many accidents occur at night, with toxic smoke inhalation being a leading cause of death.

Meanwhile, new risks are emerging in sectors such as new energy, energy storage and urban gas, where rapid expansion has outpaced the development of some safety standards and risk-control measures.

The SPP cited several major cases to illustrate the consequences of safety violations.

The February 2023 collapse at the Xinjing coal mine in Alshaa League of the Inner Mongolia autonomous region was caused by operations that violated the approved mining design. The mine improperly combined excavation levels, creating an excessively high and steep slope that eventually collapsed, killing 53 people and injuring six.

At a Yellow River bridge construction site in Qinghai province, substandard materials and bolts were used in a supporting structure, while safety supervision was absent during high-risk nighttime operations. Part of the project collapsed in August 2025, killing 13 people with three still unaccounted for.

A gas explosion at a barbecue restaurant in Yinchuan, Ningxia Hui autonomous region, in June 2023 was caused by an employee improperly removing a pressure regulator, resulting in a large liquefied petroleum gas leak. The blast killed 31 people and injured seven.

The SPP said prosecutors have maintained a tough stance on workplace safety crimes by directly supervising several major cases, while local procuratorates have prosecuted those responsible.

During the reporting period, prosecutors supervised the filing of 791 cases involving 881 people and pursued the arrest or prosecution of 534 suspects who had initially been omitted from investigations. They also recommended that administrative authorities transfer 872 suspected criminal cases for prosecution and filed 78 protests against court judgments involving errors in conviction or sentencing.

In addition, procuratorates have issued recommendations to address safety risks and regulatory gaps identified during investigations. They will strengthen coordination between administrative and criminal enforcement, make better use of public interest litigation and work with relevant authorities on targeted workplace safety campaigns.

The SPP also urged businesses to fulfill their primary responsibility for workplace safety by closely monitoring equipment, electrical wiring, hazardous chemicals, working environments and emergency exits.

Taiwan urged to lift mainland product restrictions

By LI SHANGYI
lishangyi@chinadaily.com.cn

As the Chinese mainland's motorcycle brand ZXMOTO went viral in Taiwan, a mainland spokeswoman urged the Democratic Progressive Party authorities on Wednesday to heed public opinion and remove restrictions on mainland products.

Zhang Han, a spokeswoman for the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, said at a regular news conference that the mainland has always maintained a positive and open attitude toward cross-Strait economic and trade cooperation.

"It is the DPP authorities that are restricting and obstructing the entry of high-quality mainland products into Taiwan," she said.

As ZXMOTO motorcycles continue to deliver strong performances in professional competitions worldwide, they are attracting growing interest in Taiwan, where motorcycle culture is deeply rooted.

Zhang Xue, founder of ZXMOTO, said in a recent interview with United Daily News that he hopes to open stores in Taiwan next year. In response, the island's economic affairs department said that, under current customs import tariff regulations, complete motorcycles manufactured on the mainland are classified as "mainland goods prohibited from import" and therefore cannot be imported into Taiwan. The list of prohibited goods includes about 2,500 mainland goods, covering automobiles, motorcycles, agricultural products, metals and textiles.

Zhang Han criticized the DPP authorities for clinging to their separatist "Taiwan independence" stance, saying they have intensified discriminatory trade restrictions on the mainland, erected increasing barriers and undermined normal cross-Strait economic and trade exchanges and cooperation. Taiwan's traditional industries and small and medium-sized enterprises have long expressed dissatisfaction with such policies, she added.

She urged the DPP authorities to remove unreasonable restrictions as soon as possible and take concrete steps that serve the interests of the people of Taiwan.

"We are pleased to see Taiwan compatriots using high-quality products from the mainland and sharing in the development achievements of Chinese modernization," she said.

Turning to broader cross-Strait trade, Zhang dismissed claims by the island's authorities that Taiwan has reduced its reliance on the mainland market.

On July 15, Cho Jung-tai, head of the island's executive body, claimed that Taiwan has reduced its past reliance on the "single Chinese market" and shifted its focus toward Europe, the United States and countries covered by its "new southbound policy".

In response, Zhang said trade figures demonstrate that the industrial structures on both sides of the Taiwan Strait are highly complementary and offer broad prospects for cooperation.

According to statistics from the General Administration of Customs, cross-Strait trade reached $185 billion in the first half of 2026. The mainland imported $133.1 billion worth of goods from Taiwan, up 22.5 percent year-on-year, while exports to Taiwan totaled $51.9 billion, up 32.9 percent year-on-year.

She said strengthening cross-Strait economic and trade cooperation and deepening integrated development across the Strait serve the common interests of people and businesses on both sides and are the natural outcome of economic laws and market principles.

Describing cross-Strait cooperation as an unstoppable trend, Zhang criticized the DPP authorities for pursuing "Taiwan independence" by relying on external forces. She accused them of allowing external forces to hollow out Taiwan's competitive industries.

"Such actions are nothing less than harming Taiwan and bringing disaster to the island," she said.

She also referred to Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company's recent announcement of an additional $100 billion investment in facilities in Arizona, which has fueled concerns in Taiwan that the company is effectively becoming a US company.

Zhang said the DPP authorities' strategy of seeking "Taiwan independence" by relying on the US and "selling out Taiwan by kowtowing to the US" is the primary cause of the damage to Taiwan's economy and the gradual erosion of the island's competitive advantages.

First private rocket launched from East China Sea

By ZHAO LEI
zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

Orienspace, a private Chinese rocket maker, conducted the third flight of its Gravity 1 carrier rocket on Wednesday morning, marking the first time a private Chinese rocket has lifted off from the East China Sea.

The 30-meter-tall rocket blasted off at 10:54 am from a launch service ship off the coast of Shanghai and soon placed its payloads — nine satellites and one experimental device — into their preset orbits.

The mission marked the first launch by a private Chinese rocket from the East China Sea and the closest space launch to Shanghai to date.

Before the mission, the only rocket launch from the East China Sea took place in April 2022, when the State-owned China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp used a Long March 11 rocket to deploy five Earth-observation satellites.

405 metric tons
The liftoff weight of the Gravity 1 carrier rocket by Orienspace

In a statement, Orienspace said that the mission set a new national record for the combined payload weight delivered into orbit by a Chinese private rocket, but declined to disclose the exact figure, citing commercial confidentiality.

Founded in 2020 by a group of veteran researchers from State-owned space enterprises, Orienspace developed the Gravity 1 as a three-stage solid-propellant rocket with four side boosters. All of its engines are equipped with flexible swinging nozzles for attitude control.

With a liftoff weight of 405 metric tons and a liftoff thrust of 600 tons, the rocket is capable of sending payloads weighing up to 6.5 tons into low-Earth orbit or 4.2 tons into a typical sun-synchronous orbit at an altitude of 500 kilometers, according to the company.

Gravity 1 is currently the world's largest and most powerful solid-propellant launch vehicle, as well as the most capable rocket developed by a Chinese private space company.

Its liftoff weight and thrust surpass those of the European Space Agency's Vega-C, which was previously the world's most powerful solid-propellant rocket.

Gravity 1 is also the first and currently the only privately developed Chinese rocket equipped with side boosters. In addition, it has the largest payload fairing — the nose cone that houses satellites or other payloads — among China's private carrier rockets.

The rocket made its maiden flight from the Yellow Sea in January 2024, launching from a sea-based platform off the coast of Haiyang, Shandong province. The mission made Orienspace the fifth private Chinese company to successfully launch its own carrier rocket, following i-Space, Galactic Energy, Space Pioneer and LandSpace.

Its second flight took place from the same launch site in the Yellow Sea in October 2025.

Six of the nine satellites launched on Wednesday were jointly developed by Beijing MinoSpace Technology, a private satellite manufacturer, and Huantian Wisdom, a State-owned satellite operator based in Sichuan province.

The six satellites will join two previously launched optical satellites and two synthetic aperture radar satellites to form the Huantian Constellation, comprising four optical satellites and six radar satellites.

According to Beijing MinoSpace Technology, the expanded constellation will significantly improve data acquisition efficiency and spatial coverage, supporting remote-sensing applications across Southwest China in fields including land surveying and mapping, emergency response, agriculture, forestry and water conservancy.

Model carrier



Visitors view a six-seat electric vertical takeoff and landing model at the 2026 International Advanced Air Mobility Expo that opened in Shanghai on Wednesday. The event attracted over 400 domestic and international enterprises. GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

Last surviving female Long March veteran dies at 105

By ZOU SHUO
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

Wang Quanying, the country's last surviving female Red Army soldier who took part in the legendary Long March, died peacefully in her sleep at 12:30 am on Wednesday at her home in Dujiangyan, Sichuan province. She was 105.

Multiple Chinese media outlets confirmed her death.

According to her family, Wang died without suffering, surrounded by her daughters and grandchildren. She had remained in generally good health after turning 105 earlier this month. However, she developed lung inflammation, progressive muscle atrophy, shortness of breath and difficulty expectorating in early July and was hospitalized on July 18. Her physical functions gradually declined until her passing.



Wang Quanying

Born in 1921 into a poor Tibetan family in Jinchuan county, Aba Tibetan and Qiang autonomous prefecture, Sichuan province, Wang endured a difficult childhood. She lost her parents at the age of 1 and was raised by her uncle until she was 5. She then worked as a child laborer for a local landlord, doing heavy farm and household work.

At the age of 14, she was deeply inspired by the disciplined and people-oriented conduct of Red Army soldiers after they arrived in Jinchuan in 1935. She volunteered to join the troops, undertaking logistical and medical duties, including guiding marches, cooking, transporting grain and caring for wounded soldiers during the Long March.

In March 1936, Wang became separated from the main force during fierce battles against Kuomintang troops in Danba county. Stranded with injured comrades, she tried to rejoin the troops by crossing snowcapped mountains barefoot and surviving on wild plants in freezing temperatures.

The ordeal left one toe on her left foot severely frostbitten, leading to its eventual amputation, causing her pain on rainy days for the rest of her life.

After wandering for more than a month, she settled anonymously in Wenchuan county in May 1936. For decades, she never spoke publicly about her experiences during the Long March. She married local resident Liu Fuguang and gave birth to five children, though only two daughters survived the harsh living conditions of the time.

Following the founding of the People's Republic of China, she changed her given name from Guixiang to Quanying, expressing her belief that "all Red Army soldiers across the nation are heroes". She was officially recognized as a Red Army veteran during a provincial verification campaign in the 1980s.

Even in her later years, Wang remained committed to preserving and promoting the spirit of the Long March. Until May this year, she continued weaving handcrafted futon cushions and donating them to local schools and red education bases.

Not long ago, officers and soldiers from a company of the PLA Ground Force visited Wang at her home, according to China Central Television. The centenarian changed into a Red Army uniform to greet them.

She admired one soldier's military cap and asked with a smile, "May I put it on? Does it suit me?"

"You look wonderful!" the soldiers replied.

When they unfolded the company flag, Wang's eyes filled with tears. She gently stroked the fabric as though reliving the turbulent years of war. She then slowly raised her hand and offered a solemn military salute to the flag.

Liu Guihua, Wang's eldest daughter, paid tribute to her mother on WeChat Moments, writing: "A heroic female soldier who crossed snowcapped mountains during the Long March; she concealed her achievements and remained true to her original aspiration throughout her life."

According to her family, Wang's only regret would have been that she did not live to see the 90th anniversary of the victory of the Long March, which falls later this year. In accordance with her final wish, her remains will be buried in Wenchuan county, where she settled decades ago.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:36 PM

POLICY REVIEW

From being a 'fallback' to first choice

Economic and societal shifts fuel growing demand for vocational education places

By JI HAISHENG
jihaisheng@chinadaily.com.cn



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

In the early hours of May 10, parents joined long lines outside Beijing Changping Vocational School, with some even arriving the day before, eager to secure an enrollment interview slot for their children. By the afternoon, the school issued a notice declaring that admissions slots were already full — days ahead of schedule.

One parent who had camped out for hours said that if his 15-year-old son learns industrial robotics, he'll have a job waiting for him before he even graduates.

Across China, secondary and higher vocational institutions in manufacturing hubs like Shandong and Guangdong provinces are reporting unprecedented application surges, outstripping available spots.

The intense interest in vocational tracks reflects a shifting economic reality. As China's higher education system produces a record number of university graduates each year, the traditional white-collar job market faces friction. Desk jobs in tech, finance and administration have become fiercely competitive, leaving many young degree-holders underemployed. At the same time, China's push toward high-end manufacturing, robotics and artificial intelligence has created a shortage of skilled technicians.

"The surging popularity of vocational schools in recent years signals a fundamental shift in how Chinese society views skills-based education," said Wang Heye, founder of Beijing-based Liangyou Education, a consultancy specializing in vocational education.

For years, vocational education was often seen as a fallback option for underperforming students, but nowadays it is increasingly viewed as a viable and promising pathway to a successful career, Wang said, noting that he has witnessed the change firsthand.

He attributed the turnaround to a combination of robust policy support, industrial development, market demand for high-skilled talents, bright prospects for further education and jobs, and evolving public attitudes.

According to a 2025 report released by the Ministry of Education earlier this month, China has some 8,382 vocational institutions, including 6,741 secondary vocational schools, 1,554 vocational colleges and 87 vocational undergraduate universities. The total number of students enrolled in vocational institutions reached 29.37 million, the report said.

In late June, the State Council, China's Cabinet, released an outline plan for the development of the education sector during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), which made building a modern vocational education system a key priority.

The plan underscores the need to build more high-level vocational schools and programs to cultivate large numbers of high-skilled talents. Specifically, it aims to establish around 60 high-level higher vocational institutions and 160 high-level program clusters, with continuous efforts aligned with key industrial chains, the intelligent economy, and international economic and trade cooperation.

Li Chunqin, vice-principal of Rizhao City Science and Technology School in Shandong province, said that the policy document marks a pivotal transition for vocational education in China, signaling a new era where quality takes precedence over sheer scale.

"Rather than merely pursuing enrollment and program numbers, vocational schools should now focus on improving their educational capabilities and forging solid industry-education integration," Li said. He urged vocational schools to carve out their own niches and strengthen their core advantages.

For students, Li said the plan promises a more flexible and robust growth trajectory, as it advocates for seamless pathways connecting secondary vocational schools with vocational colleges and universities. Noting that his school enrolls nearly 1,000 students each year in its five-year secondary-to-higher vocational programs, he said that secondary vocational education, once seen as "a dead end", has now become "an expressway" for talent cultivation.

Li said he also sees the plan as a crucial step for promoting balanced resource distribution and serving local economies and regional industrial development, highlighting its push to channel higher vocational education resources to counties and smaller cities.

"High-quality vocational resources have long been concentrated in major cities, leaving a structural gap between the demand and supply of skilled talent at the county level," he said. "Bringing those resources down to counties will offer students access to quality vocational education at their doorstep and provide local businesses with talent nearby."

Zhou Zhemin, director of the Academic Affairs Office at Hunan Industry Polytechnic in Hunan's provincial capital Changsha, said the plan's call to steadily increase the number of vocational undergraduate institutions and expand enrollment will help forge a better-structured vocational education system.

Zhou dismissed concerns that expanding vocational undergraduate education would squeeze out vocational colleges, noting that the two have distinctly different training objectives. Vocational colleges focus on cultivating practical talents who can solve on-the-ground problems, while vocational undergraduate programs aim to produce technical and skilled professionals with innovation capabilities, he said.

"Over the next five years, vocational education is set for a deep overhaul in how we cultivate talent — shifting from teaching what schools have to teaching what the industry demands," he said.

Emphasizing deeper integration between vocational education and industrial needs, the outline plan sets out concrete measures, such as building around 100 industry-education alliances in various cities and about 20 national industry-education communities focused on specific industries, with support pledged to set up more training bases and centers and to upgrade training facilities.

Peng Fang, deputy general manager of China Construction Steel Structure Testing Technology Co, said many people used to assume that industry-education integration simply meant students doing a six-month internship before graduation, or agreements signed between schools and enterprises. "Such superficial collaboration can no longer meet the demands of today's industries," she said.

Peng added that schools used to design their programs and courses behind closed doors, while enterprises struggled to find qualified and capable talent. "Companies often receive graduates with little practical experience and have to invest heavily in training them from scratch," she said.

"Industry-education integration is not just about internships. It requires a systemic, whole-chain restructuring covering program design, curriculum reform, faculty deployment and training arrangements," Peng said.

Liu Dingding, deputy head of the industry-education integration department at Beijing Freedo Technology Co, said that the outline plan sets out concrete, measurable targets for boosting such integration, calling for solid progress.

Liu said his team acts as a bridge between schools and enterprises, filling gaps between talent cultivation programs and real needs. His team has launched integrated training programs and helped shorten the onboarding period for graduates at enterprises from six months to just two months, he added.

Over the past five years, Liu said he has witnessed visible changes in the depth of school-enterprise cooperation — from signing agreements and donating equipment, to jointly developing curricula and training programs, as well as offering classes tailored to enterprises' specific demands.

This marks an ever-deepening collaboration, Liu said, adding that policy support has made industry-education integration a key pillar of vocational education.

Policy Digest

Domestic service industry to be made more standardized

The Ministry of Commerce, together with eight other government departments, has unveiled a package of policy measures to promote the high-quality development of the domestic service industry.

The 19-measure policy aims to drive the standardized, professionalized and industrialized development of the sector, so as to better leverage its role in boosting consumption, improving people's livelihoods and stabilizing employment.

The measures cover five key areas concerning support for enterprises, pioneering practices, vocational skills training, credit information management and fundamental underpinnings.

In terms of enhanced policy support, the measures back domestic service providers in innovating service models, exploring smart service scenarios and expanding home-based elderly care and childcare services, with an aim to foster a group of leading brands in the sector.

The policy also calls for clearly defining the rights and obligations of domestic service enterprises, online platforms and domestic service practitioners.

According to corporate information provider Qichacha, China is home to more than 3 million registered domestic service enterprises.

Departure tax refund services to go paperless for travelers

China has rolled out more measures to deliver smarter, more streamlined departure tax refund services for overseas visitors shopping in China, according to a notice issued by the State Taxation Administration.

The notice said the STA is pushing forward the intelligent upgrade of departure tax refund services by rolling out fully paperless processing, under which electronic data of refund applications and sales invoices are transmitted online.

In addition, the STA is promoting pilot programs for tax refunds to eligible overseas tourists who shop at online stores and advocates for cross-regional mutual recognition of the "refund-upon-purchase" scheme, the policy document said.

A nationally unified tax refund service code will be rolled out, enabling tourists to enter information, track processing progress, and check reimbursement status simply by scanning a QR code, the notice said.

Meanwhile, tax authorities will strengthen risk prevention and control to crack down on illegal activities including fraudulent proxy purchasing and the smuggling of tax-refunded goods back into the domestic market.

College graduates called up to serve in grassroots posts

Nine central authorities led by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security have launched the fifth round of one of China's major grassroots service programs to engage more university and college graduates to work at the grassroots level.

According to the implementation plan, 36,400 graduates will be recruited every year from 2026 to 2030 to serve at the grassroots level in education, agriculture, medical care and rural vitalization. Each service term lasts two years.

First introduced in 2006, the Sanzhi Yifu — or "three supports and one assistance" — program runs on a five-year cycle. The previous four rounds have mobilized a total of 640,000 college graduates to serve community-level posts across the country.

Over the years, the program has effectively optimized grassroots talent structure, bolstered local economic development, and enhanced grassroots social governance capacity.

CHINA DAILY

AI integration, digital twins revolutionize classroom learning

By JI HAISHENG

At Jilin Polytechnic of Water Resources and Electric Engineering, students wearing virtual reality headsets stand before a digital twin of a massive dam. With a flick of their fingers, they unleash a simulated flood — water cascades down the valley, alarms flash, and the pressure feels almost real.

As sensors flicker, an artificial intelligence-powered system scores every decision they make in real time. The feedback is instant: adjust the sluice gate, optimize the discharge curve, try again.

What once took months of on-site training and carried significant safety risks can now be practiced repeatedly in a digital twin environment — a digital replica of a physical object or system.

"Now, students usually practice in digital twin environments before moving to on-site operations. This efficient and cost-effective approach has significantly improved their proficiency, allowing them to master such skills three to four times faster than before," said Liu Dingding, deputy head of the industry-education integration department at Beijing Freedo Technology Co, a digital twin and spatial intelligence company.

Liu's team has helped establish numerous digital twin platforms across sectors such as electric power, water conservancy, transportation and energy. He said that digital twins are rewriting the rules of vocational training, predicting a future where 70 percent of a training program will be virtual and only 30 percent hands-on.

Liu said that with the rise of advanced technologies like digital twins and AI, there will be strong demand for talent in related fields.

"Vocational schools now have a window of opportunity to cultivate professionals such as AI prompt engineers, digital twin scenario designers, and specialists in intelligent equipment maintenance and spatial intelligence applications," he said.

He called on vocational schools to seize these new directions during the transition period by setting up new majors and training programs.

In April, five ministries, including the Ministry of Education, jointly issued the "AI Plus Education" action plan, calling for full integration of intelligent technologies across all aspects of education. In July, the ministry added 27 new vocational majors, including embodied intelligence computing and humanoid robot engineering.

"The policy message is clear — AI integration into vocational education is no longer an 'elective' but a 'required course'," said Zhou Zhemin, director of the Academic Affairs Office at Hunan Industry Polytechnic in Changsha, Hunan province.

Zhou described the impact of AI and other advanced technologies on vocational education as "disruptive", saying they are redefining what vocational institutions should aim for. "In the past, vocational students were trained to be operators who could follow instructions and perform repetitive tasks. But AI is taking over precisely those tasks," he said.

According to a McKinsey & Company report, the rise of generative AI is propelling the era of automation to arrive a decade earlier than anticipated. In China, around 50 percent of work activities are projected to be automated before 2030, and about 200 million workers — equivalent to 30 percent of China's total workforce — will need to reskill or upskill, the report said.

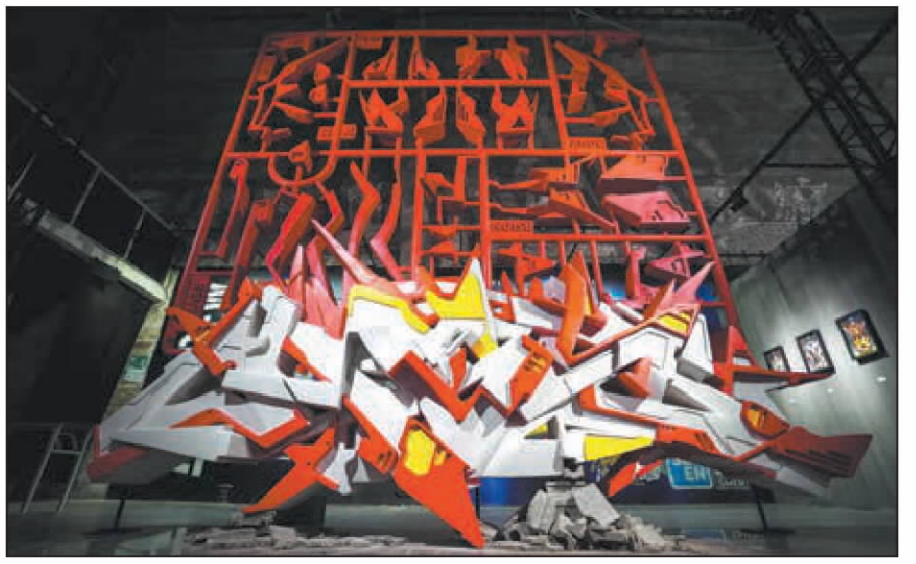
Despite the overwhelming impact of AI, Chinese vocational institutions should not steer students away from it — instead, they should equip students to harness it, Zhou said.

For these institutions, it is imperative to shift focus to cultivating versatile technical talents with hands-on experience, innovation capabilities and AI expertise, he added.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:36 PM

LIFE



Straight Build A-01, a large-scale graffiti sculpture created by Xu Yan and Ye Shu in 2022 for an exhibition in Beijing, using fiberglass and spray paint. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Bending the structural rules

Graffiti artist balances street writing with traditional calligraphy in his newly released Chinese typeface, in which he sees a future in cultural collaborations, **Li Yingxue** reports.

When a broad-edged marker touches a surface, a Chinese character begins to move beyond the familiar order of horizontal and vertical strokes.

As a dip pen moves, the line sharply shifts between thick and thin. Each turn carries the energy of street graffiti while echoing the precision and ornamentation of Gothic calligraphy.

The traditional Chinese character *fa*, meaning "to prosper" or "to flourish", appears bold and forceful while remaining unmistakably Chinese. It seems to have grown out of traditional calligraphy while retaining the visual intensity of street art.

This fusion of writing traditions lies at the heart of ABS Street Ink, a newly released Chinese typeface by graffiti artist Xu Yan, who blends Gothic calligraphy with the visual language of street graffiti.

Built on the use of broad-edged markers and flat-nib dip pens, the typeface gives Chinese characters a strong sense of movement and tension without sacrificing legibility. It also represents an exploration of how Western lettering traditions can be adapted to the structural logic of Chinese characters.

Xu, 38, is a co-founder of ABS Crew and an early practitioner of graffiti in China. He first encountered graffiti in 2005 while in high school, when the art form remained a niche culture largely introduced through foreign documentaries, magazines and hip-hop culture.

Xu and his classmates began writing their names on walls near their school. For them, graffiti was not simply drawing but a way of expressing identity through writing.

"The simplest way to describe graffiti is writing your own name," Xu says. "In essence, it is writing — and making that writing visually appealing."

Graffiti artists often call themselves "writers", emphasizing the construction of letterforms and personal style. This understanding connected naturally with Xu's childhood training in Chinese calligraphy.

He began practicing brush calligraphy in primary school and later studied printmaking at the Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts and public art at the Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology. In 2011, Xu and his team won both the China and Asia championships at Wall Lords, an international graffiti competition in Asia, and ABS Crew later became involved in street art projects and commercial collaborations.

Between thick and thin

The origins of ABS Street Ink can be found not only on city walls but also at the calligraphy desk.

Xu has long been fascinated by Gothic calligraphy, a Western lettering tradition known for angular structures, dense compositions and decorative forms. Written with broad-edged pens, Gothic script creates dramatic contrasts between thick and thin strokes.

Graffiti tools, including broad markers and wide brushes, share similar qualities. Their flat edges allow artists to vary stroke width through changes in angle and direction.

"I use dip pens and flat nibs," Xu says. "The nib is like a thin piece of metal. Its flat shape naturally creates a strong contrast between thick and thin strokes."

This similarity led him to consider whether Gothic writing techniques could be adapted to Chinese characters.

His first experiments date back to 2012, when he explored Gothic-inspired Chinese lettering in his graduation work. Years later, after connecting with FounderType, the idea developed into a complete typeface project.

Xu was already known for his Gothic-inspired "*Gong Xi Fa Cai*" (meaning, wish you good fortune) lettering, which appeared on hats, footwear, scarves, mahjong sets, and enamel cookware, including collaborations with brands such as Nike.

But that project involved only a few characters. ABS Street Ink required thousands of Chinese glyphs.

Xu created each glyph on a digital tablet, adjusting brush settings to reproduce the marks of a flat nib while preserving the rhythm of handwriting.

"Each character was written directly in one go, rather than created by drawing an outline and filling it in," he says. "Every stroke came from the act of writing."

The biggest challenge was consistency. Chinese characters vary greatly in complexity, and Xu had to ensure that thousands of glyphs formed a unified system — with simple characters not appearing too empty and complex ones remaining clear.

For more than a year, he wrote roughly 10 characters a day and repeatedly revised earlier work.

Typeface designer Xing Hangke says the project demonstrates the difference between creating individual lettering pieces and building a functional typeface.

"A poster or logo can bend structural rules for a particular visual effect," Xing says. "A typeface must remain consistent and recognizable when thousands of characters are entered, combined, and used in different contexts."

Xing compares professional type designers to dancers in shackles, creating to their will within strict constraints.

A distinctive stroke may work well in the first few dozen glyphs but later create problems among similar characters. Designers must constantly adjust forms to maintain the overall system.

"In the end, you have to follow its rules," Xing says. "Some artistic expression will inevitably have to be reduced."

For Xing, ABS Street Ink succeeds because it avoids becoming either loose graffiti lettering or a simple imitation of Gothic script.

"It uses Gothic structure as the skeleton and graffiti strokes as the surface," he says.

Sharing a sense of flow

Adapting Gothic calligraphy to Chinese writing involves more than adding Western decoration.

Chinese characters have their own internal architecture, including structural balance, spatial relationships and the distribution of empty space. Excessive ornamentation can damage recognition.

"Western audiences may not understand the Chinese characters, but they can still recognize the Gothic style," Xu says.

He previously participated in a calligraphy exchange connecting Beijing and Berlin, in which artists wrote together via live projections. Even without understanding the content, participants could sense the rhythm and energy of the writing.

In graffiti culture, this quality is called "flow". In Chinese calligraphy, it resembles the continuous movement that carries the brush's energy from one stroke to the next.

For Xu, this shared sense of movement connects the two traditions. Graffiti may be associated with rebellion and freestyle, but at its core is the creation of a distinctive personal writing style. Chinese calligraphy likewise reflects the personality and rhythm of the writer.

One evolved on paper; the other found its expression on walls and in public spaces.

ABS Street Ink is designed for visually driven applications rather than long passages of text. Xing expects it to appear in fashion branding, music festivals, posters, street culture packaging, film and television titles, esports, and digital media.

In these contexts, typography is not meant to disappear. Instead, it establishes visual identity and emotional tone.

"The fact that this typeface serves a niche audience is precisely what can make it central to a particular field," Xing says.

Common Chinese text typefaces, including Song-style and sans-serif designs, dominate long-form reading because they allow readers to focus on information rather than form. Display typefaces like ABS Street Ink serve a different purpose: to attract attention and carry cultural meaning.

Xing describes the project as "type design driven by graphic thinking": a typeface with the visual impact of an image while remaining a functional writing system.

Chinese type design is increasingly developing at the intersection of culture, technology and visual experimentation.

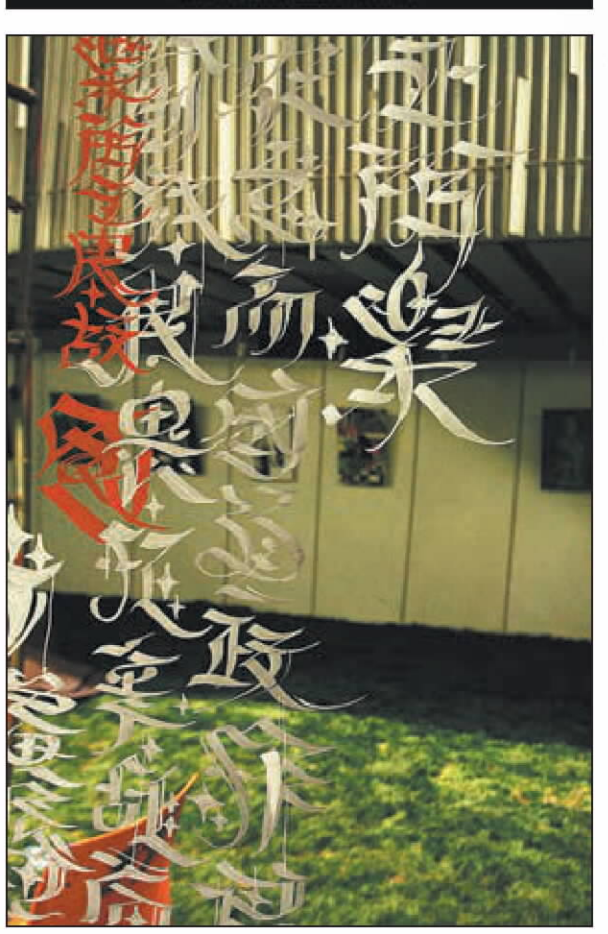
AI tools, automated font-generation systems and variable fonts are changing production methods, but Xing believes technology alone cannot determine the lasting value of a typeface.

"Technology defines the floor, while culture defines the ceiling," Xing says.

"I hope to see more people using it, rather than limiting it to the way I use it," Xu says. For him, a typeface is complete only when it leaves the designer's hands and enters wider circulation — appearing on posters, packaging and screens, where it continues to develop new meanings in different cultural contexts.

Contact the writer at liyingxue@chinadaily.com.cn















Clockwise from left bottom: In 2010, a cultural event in Beijing featured a public showcase of Gothic-inspired Chinese lettering. One of Xu's early works exploring the fusion of traditional Chinese cultural elements and Gothic aesthetics. The original design draft for the "*Gong Xi Fa Cai*" series, and "*san* (three), *liu* (six), *jiu* (nine)" (2012). The design draft for a silk scarf by Xu and Wang Weixuan.

Books find new home at mobile library in Myanmar

YANGON — Students eagerly browse bookshelves filled with 536 titles on Chinese culture, literature, science, technology, and storybooks as a newly launched mobile library launched on Saturday at Bowen Chinese School in Yangon, Myanmar.

The initiative, launched by the China Cultural Center in Yangon, marks the first step in a program that will later expand to other Chinese schools and relevant organizations nationwide, according to the center.

For 18-year-old Yoon Mi Mi Kyaw, the mobile library offers an opportunity to strengthen her Chinese language skills while learning more about the culture.

"We can learn about Chinese culture and society through books without even visiting China," she says.

"Since we are learning Chinese, having these books at our school creates a Chinese-language environment and helps us stay connected with the language," she adds.

"As a student attending Myanmar, English and Chinese schools, finding time to visit a library has always been difficult," she says. "Now we don't have to spend extra time going to a library because we can study Chinese and enjoy reading at school."

> "Reading a physical book gives a different feeling. The library provides a peaceful environment where I can concentrate better."
>
> **Aye Myat Thiri,** 17-year-old student

Seventeen-year-old Myat Yati, who prefers reading novels, says the mobile library has given her access to a wider variety of books.

"I usually read storybooks at home, but now I can read at our school," she says. "I'm excited to learn about different cultures through books."

Another student, 17-year-old Aye Myat Thiri, says she prefers reading print books to reading on a mobile phone.

"Reading a physical book gives a different feeling," she says. "The library provides a peaceful environment where I can concentrate better," she adds.

Cho Cho Myint, principal of Bowen Chinese School, welcomed the initiative, saying it would save students time while encouraging reading.

"Our students no longer need to visit a separate library," she says. "There are many types of books here, so they can choose what they like to read and learn."

The mobile library is not only a collection of books but also a bridge connecting them with new knowledge, languages and cultures, she says.

The initiative aims to help students learn more about Chinese culture and literature beyond the classroom while fostering a stronger reading culture, says Han Jiajun, director of the China Cultural Center in Yangon.

"The books will be replaced every six months so students can continue exploring new reading materials," he says, adding that the mobile library will also be open to people learning Chinese outside the school.

He hopes that the mobile library will encourage students to develop stronger reading habits, improve their Chinese language skills, and achieve better academic results.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:36 PM

LIFE

Landscapes from the top

In Xizang's 'miniature Earth', a nature station-turned-micro-museum transforms a quick stop into a nine-zone ecological journey, **Yang Feiyue** reports.



The warm, humid monsoon winds that sweep up from the Indian Ocean don't stop at the Himalayas. They find their way through the Yarlung Zangbo Grand Canyon, the world's deepest gorge, and pour into the mountains of the southeastern part of the Xizang autonomous region.

They leave behind an extraordinary landscape that compresses several climate zones into just a few dozen kilometers of horizontal distance.

From the tropical monsoon rainforest of Metog county at 155 meters above sea level to the permanent snows of Namcha Barwa Peak at 7,782 meters, the region known as Nyingchi contains nine significant altitudinal natural zones — a "miniature Earth" that has drawn biologists and explorers for decades.

Recently, a new visitor attraction, a nature station, opened in Gongbo Park in the heart of Nyingchi. It debuted at the fifth China Xizang Trans-Himalaya Forum for International Cooperation and attracted instant attention from guests from more than 20 countries. Developed by the Chinese National Geography, the Nyingchi nature station aims to help visitors understand the landscape before them.

Step inside, and a 3D-printed topographic map of the Yarlung Zangbo Grand Canyon reaches waist height. Press a button, and its rivers glow blue. Pull open a drawer beside it, and you'll find profiles of the region's great peaks: the 7,782-meter Namcha Barwa, the eastern anchor of the Himalayas, and its neighbor Gyala Peri.

Elsewhere, visitors can spin a cylinder to watch the Asiatic golden cat transform through five color morphs. Nearby, a button triggers birdcalls that move through the forest in a "bird wave" — yellow-throated fulvettas and other birds, each playing a role as callers, followers or lookouts.

Climbing the stairs to the second floor feels like ascending 4,800 meters in elevation, from tropical monsoon rainforest to alpine scree. At the top, a viewing window frames a snowy mountain.

Guo Yingqian, general manager of the Chinese National Geography Camp, describes the station as a kind of micro-museum in nature.

"Traditional stations were places to rest," she explains. "Tourist centers are reception and display buildings for scenic areas. Our nature station resembles a compact, open structure that uses interactive installations and scientific exhibits to interpret the local natural ecology and cultural stories."

The Nyingchi station is designed as an urban installation that systematically interprets the concept of an ecological community encompassing mountains, rivers, forests, farmlands, lakes, grasslands, deserts, and glaciers.

The camp team plans to divide China into roughly 50 unique geographic units based on six natural zones and eight ecosystems, and establish nature stations or centers in each.

"Nyingchi is in southeastern Xizang and has the world's most complete natural mountain vertical zones," Guo says. "The landscapes are extremely dramatic — Namcha Barwa and the Yarlung Zangbo Grand Canyon — and it's also one of the world's biodiversity hotspots. It really captures the diversity we're trying to showcase," she explains.

The station's 26 interactive exhibits follow a simple but powerful idea: a vertical ascent.

The ground level, surrounded by exhibits on Mountain, Water, and Forest elements, aims to present Nyingchi's ecological foundation.

A hand-drawn map shows how the collision of the Indian and Eurasian plates 65 million years ago created the Yarlung Zangbo suture zone, making Nyingchi one of the planet's most geologically active mountain regions.

The staircase connecting the two floors is itself an exhibit. As visitors ascend, they pass through representations of each vertical zone — from tropical monsoon rainforest below 1,100 meters to alpine scree at 4,800 meters, with animal silhouettes and interactive photo points marking each transition.

The second floor shifts focus to Farmland, Grassland, Lake, Glacier, and Sand, along with the human and ecological relationships that define life at higher elevations.

A display on rice cultivation in Metog and Zayul counties, a rotating column illustrating eight hardy meadow plants, and a section on the region's remarkable glaciers are among the highlights.

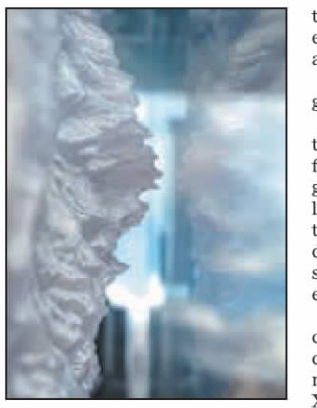
The station's true innovation lies in the small things.

For the "10 Questions About Glaciers" display, a flipboard answers questions about why glacial meltwater is not always safe to drink, as well as how glaciers have changed over recent decades.

"We're trying to take authoritative scientific knowledge and turn it into fun experiences," says Gai Yifang, a member of the station's lead design team.

"Through science-plus-art, we transform it into interactions where visitors can press buttons and listen. For tourists, it's more engaging and less like being lectured."







Top: The split-level design of the Nyingchi nature station creates a playful landscape. **Middle left:** A visitor turns an interactive exhibit to learn about the station's photovoltaic system. **Middle right:** A view of Nyingchi's topography. **Above:** Children learn about native plants through scientific illustrations. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The team works closely with the Chinese Academy of Sciences to ensure accuracy.

Then they distill.

"For animals, we avoid long taxonomic descriptions and morphological characteristics," Gai says. "Instead, we highlight one memorable fact that visitors might find interesting — always based on scientific fact — and pair it with professional photography and scientific illustrations."

The station is powered by solar panels paired with an integrated battery storage system, enabling it to operate its lighting and interactive exhibits off the grid under normal conditions.

But the team didn't stop at the technical side. They turned nature itself into a teaching tool. Displays explain how mycorrhizal fungi lock carbon in forest soils, how serpentinite rocks absorb carbon dioxide and turn it into carbonate minerals, and how glaciers regulate global climate.

"Nature is itself a zero-carbon textbook," Gai says. "Visitors discover that zero carbon is happening around them every day."

The Nyingchi station is part of a growing national network.

In April 2024, the first nature station opened in Metog, with a bird-focused theme. Butterfly, giant tree, geology, cat, and orchid stations followed. In September 2025, four themed stations appeared in Bomi, dedicated to the region's glaciers, spruce forests, wildlife, and unique ecological systems.

Guo, general manager of the camp, says the network currently comprises 24 nature stations nationwide, with footprints in Xizang, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, Shenzhen of Guangdong province, Chongqing and Wuxi in Jiangsu province.

The latest addition of the Nyingchi station to this growing network plays a special role.

"Previous stations were focused on individual themes — a single species or resource type. This station, however, presents a systematic geographical narrative of Nyingchi as a whole," Guo explains.

"It provides an overarching scientific context for other Nyingchi stations."

Functionally, its central location in Nyingchi makes it an ideal first stop, giving visitors an overall understanding of the region before they venture further.

"Tourists no longer just take a photo and leave. They can follow the stations' guidance and spend more time systematically exploring the land. This helps position Nyingchi as a world-class destination for ecological and cultural tourism."

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese food week stirs interest in Estonia's historic border city

NARVA, Estonia — On July 17, in the dining room of the Inger Hotel in central Narva, an unusual aroma hovered in the air. Mixed with the familiar scents were the earthy tang of soy sauce, the warmth of star anise, and a hint of ginger. For one week, this popular lunchtime spot became a culinary meeting point, introducing diners to a menu of Chinese specialties.

Chinese cuisine week grew out of one local entrepreneur's nostalgia. An Estonian businessman, who requested anonymity, had operated a Chinese restaurant in Narva before it closed during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. This summer, he proposed a revival with a fleeting taste.

"We naturally agreed," Olesya Morozova, the hotel restaurant's manager, says with a smile. "We are always happy to offer our guests something new."

That new experience came with Chef Mu Xiaofeng, who flew from China to lead the kitchen. Each day, the restaurant served a set lunch: soup, salad, and a main course, with the menu rotating daily to showcase variety. There was hot-and-sour soup, crispy spring rolls and stir-fried noodles with vegetables.

The biggest conversation starter, however, was a dish rarely found on Estonian menus: simply prepared stir-fried squid with scallions, ginger and salt.

During a visit to the kitchen, Chef Mu was seen preparing the dish from start to finish. He deftly sliced the squid into delicate crosshatch patterns before tossing it into a blazing wok with scallions and ginger. Within minutes, the specialty was plated.

"It caused quite a stir," Morozova admits. "Not everyone understood or appreciated the taste, of course. We received many positive reviews, but some guests found the flavor unfamiliar." Still, she defended the choice: "When such an opportunity arises, it is certainly worth trying something truly different."



During Hainan province's peak travel season, international tourists taste local specialties at a Haikou night market on July 17. GUO CHENG / XINHUA

Even sourcing the squid became part of the story. When Morozova contacted her usual suppliers, their reaction was disbelief. "'What is going on over there?' they asked," she recalled with a laugh. "I think that was when publicity for our Chinese cuisine week really began."

News of the event quickly spread through Narva, a city of just over 52,000 people on Estonia's eastern border with Russia. Phone calls, text messages and social media posts buzzed with questions: When is the event? What will be served?

"It shows that the city needs more projects like this," Morozova says.

The enthusiasm was perhaps less surprising given Narva's existing culinary landscape. A short walk from the Inger Hotel, WokkIN Narva has built a loyal following by serving Chinese-inspired dishes. Customers frequently praise its generous portions, affordable prices and flavors they describe as authentically Chinese.

Against that backdrop, the hotel's special week felt less like a bold introduction than a welcome deep-dive into Chinese cuisine.

Language proved no barrier in the kitchen. Using a translation app on a mobile phone, Chef Mu, who speaks only Mandarin, communicated with the hotel's Russian-speaking staff while demonstrating Chinese cooking techniques of velveting meat and balancing five-spice powder.

Diners enjoying more familiar offerings, like sweet-and-sour chicken and egg-drop soup, offered brief but enthusiastic praise. "It was excellent," several diners agreed with a smile before quickly returning to their meals.

Encouraged by the response, Morozova says the restaurant hopes to keep several of Chef Mu's recipes on the menu after the event concludes. "We will try to continue preparing these Chinese dishes," she says.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:36 PM

LIFE



Mental health enters a new frontier

Beijing Huilongguan Hospital's family-oriented ward tackles gaming addiction, reflecting a shift in how psychology is addressed in China's society, **Xu Fan** reports.

As children across China have begun their summer vacation, many parents are bracing for a familiar battle: competing with smartphones and video games for their children's attention.

That anxiety is precisely what Pixar's latest animated blockbuster *Toy Story 5* captures in one memorable scene. A group of toys climbs onto rooftops and peers through windows, only to find children in every home glued to screens, their thumbs constantly scrolling while the toys sit forgotten in the corner.

For many Chinese families, that fictional scene feels increasingly close to reality.

To help parents cope with the challenge, Beijing Huilongguan Hospital — the first hospital in China to establish a family-oriented ward dedicated to treating gaming disorders — published a science-based guide on its official WeChat account on July 2, encouraging parents to read it before the summer break.

The move reflects the growing recognition of excessive gaming as a mental health issue. In 2018, the World Health Organization released the 11th revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11), recognizing gaming disorder as a behavioral addiction.

According to the WHO, the ailment is identified as a condition that must be severe enough that it results in significant impairment to a person's functioning in personal, family, social, educational, occupational, or other important areas, and would normally have been evident for at least 12 months.

In other words, excessive gaming is not simply a matter of poor self-control. For some people, it is a medical condition that requires professional treatment.

For An Jing, a housewife in Hebei province, that distinction is painfully personal. Her 16-year-old son has become completely immersed in the online world, eventually taking a year off from school. He has reversed his day-night schedule, developed irregular eating habits, and spends nearly all his waking hours playing games, watching TV, or scanning smartphones. "When I see children carrying schoolbags on the street, I can't help but cry. But little by little, I've gotten used to it," An says.

Although many parents like An feel they are confronting a relatively new problem, the medical community began taking it seriously years ago.

Yang Kebing, chief physician and director of the hospital's Addiction Medicine Center, tells China Daily that he vividly remembers the period when the WHO gathered experts from around the world to evaluate whether gaming disorder should be included in the ICD-11.

"As discussions intensified, we realized this was becoming an increasingly serious issue," Yang says.

Drawing on years of clinical observation and research, the hospital opened China's first specialized behavioral addiction ward on May 21, 2019 — four days before the ICD-11 was formally adopted by the 72nd World Health Assembly.

Located near the hospital's north gate, the facility — also known as Inpatient Ward 29 — hardly resembles a traditional psychiatric ward. Reminiscent of the courtyards nestled in Beijing's hutongs, this single-story compound features a ping-pong table and four swing chairs, creating a relaxed atmosphere. The patient rooms are arranged around the courtyard, while the treatment rooms feel more like recreation spaces, such as a board game room and a mini karaoke booth.

"Normally we have 13 beds, but the ward can accommodate up to 15 or 16 patients if necessary," Yang says.

The ward evolved from an alcohol dependence unit established in 2008. As internet use became widespread and gaming-related problems increased, the hospital expanded its focus to behavioral addiction.

"Based on our clinical experience, about half of our patients are addicted to the internet or online games, and most are between 12 and 20 years old. The other half are mainly patients with other addictions such as alcohol dependence," Yang says.

One teenager left a lasting impression on him. Obsessed with online games, the boy repeatedly fought with his parents, shouted at home, disturbed neighbors, and eventually dropped out of school. His parents ultimately brought him to the hospital against his will. After spending two weeks in a closed ward to disconnect from the internet, he was transferred to the behavioral addiction ward for psychotherapy and medication.

Yang also recalls one of the ward's most successful recoveries — a 32-year-old man who lost his job because of excessive mobile gaming. Admitted shortly after the ward opened, he gradually regained control of his life through treatment.

Years of clinical practice have also reshaped Yang's understanding of the disorder. "Pure gaming disorder is actually uncommon. About 70 percent of our patients also have other psychiatric conditions, such as depression, bipolar disorder, ADHD, or anxiety disorders," he adds.

For Yang, however, the work brings more responsibility than recognition. He entered the Department of Mental Health at Beijing Medical University — now Peking University Health Science Center — in 1994, receiving comprehensive training in internal medicine, surgery, pediatrics, neurology, and psychiatry before joining Huilongguan Hospital in 1999.

Looking back over more than two decades, he has witnessed a quiet but profound shift in public awareness of mental health.

"When I first came here, we saw only a few dozen outpatients a day," he says. "Now, treating more than 1,500 patients a day has become routine at our hospital."

As the interview draws to a close, two nurses hurry over, carrying a new case file. Before there is time to exchange a proper goodbye, Yang is already discussing the patient's condition. It is a brief but telling scene: in the time it takes to say farewell, another family's struggle has already become his next mission.

Contact the writer at xufan@chinadaily.com.cn





Top: A sandplay therapy room at the Addiction Medicine Center of Beijing Huilongguan Hospital functions as a non-verbal space that enables children to express their emotions.
Above: The center receives families who are battling problems such as addictions to screens and games.
Left: A yard at the center where patients and their companions can do exercise, such as playing table tennis.
PHOTOS BY XU FAN / CHINA DAILY

Guardians of the plateau help revive Xizang's wildlife and ecosystems

LHASA — At daybreak on the northern plateau of Southwest China's Xizang autonomous region, the wind moves first. It comes out of seemingly empty country, passes over lakes and meadows, and blows toward the snowy mountains in the distance.

Through his binoculars, Kalzang Lhundrup can often see Tibetan antelopes lowering their heads to drink and wild kiangs moving slowly along a ridge. His motorcycle leaves only a shallow track on the patrol road, a faint line across the vast landscape.

On other patrols, he has seen wild yaks and black-necked cranes appear more frequently — signs to him that the plateau is recovering.

For nearly a decade, Kalzang Lhundrup, head of the Norbu Yugyel wildlife conservation station in Nyima county in Nagchu, has been reading these signs. In his world, the return of wildlife is not an abstract measure of ecological recovery. Instead, it appears through hoofprints, migration routes and fleeting images captured by trail cameras.

Patrolling this area is hard work. The altitude is close to 5,000 meters, and roads are long, while the wind and snow can be punishing. There is also the loneliness of the wilderness, which is very much part of the job. Kalzang Lhundrup and his colleagues patrol five or six times a month, riding motorcycles in summer and driving off-road vehicles in winter. A single day on patrol may cover more than 200 kilometers.





Left: A female Tibetan antelope nurses its calf in Nagchu, Xizang autonomous region. **Right:** Migratory birds at the Lhalu Wetland National Nature Reserve in Lhasa, Xizang. PHOTOS BY LI LIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Along the way, they record the species and numbers of wild animals they see and watch out for those that are injured or separated from their herd. In recent years, this station alone has rescued over 40 wild creatures.

"There are more animals now and, in a way, that gives us more work," he says. "But it is good work. It means the land is healthier than before, and it means our patrols are worth it."

The station is named after Norbu Yugyel, a police officer who sacrificed his life while apprehending poachers in northern Xizang. From earlier wildlife protectors to the hundreds of rangers now working across the plateau, conservation there has often been a quiet and demanding inheritance.

A herder born on this land, Kalzang Lhundrup sees the change through a lens of personal pride. "I was born here. To be able to protect this land is my greatest happiness."

Monitoring data tell part of the story. Populations of rare wild animals in Xizang have shown a clear recovery trend. Tibetan antelopes have increased from just more than 70,000 at the end of the 20th century to over 300,000 today, while wild yak numbers have grown from several thousand to more than 20,000. The number of black-necked cranes has also risen from fewer than 4,000 to over 10,000.

Across Xizang, the human footprint on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau is being managed more carefully. The region has built a nature reserve system with national parks as the mainstay. It now has 47 nature reserves and 97 protected natural areas in total, as well as 73 wildlife protection stations.

Conservation in Xizang is not only about keeping people away from nature. It is also increasingly focusing on teaching people how to live near it.

In Lhasa, the same idea appears in a different form at Lhalu Wetland National Nature Reserve, often called the "lung of Lhasa". On summer days, birds skim the water or rest in the shallows. Beyond the reeds and footpaths rise the Potala Palace and residential buildings, bringing the wetland into the everyday life of the city.

Ngawang Tashi, deputy head of the administration bureau of the reserve, says the wetland was not always so healthy. Since 1995, years of protection, restoration and monitoring have helped revive its ecological functions.

In recent times, Lhasa has invested 728 million yuan ($107 million) in two phases of restoration work, helping bring the wetland back to life. Its vegetation coverage has risen to more than 95 percent, and the reserve currently supports 174 bird species, with more than 10,000 birds living and breeding there.

Parts of its patrol paths have been opened to the public in an orderly manner. Residents now go there to walk, take photographs, and watch birds. For many children in the city, this wetland may be where they first learn the name of a black-necked crane.

The water that nourishes Lhalu Wetland eventually flows into the Lhasa River and then into the Yarlung Zangbo River, which runs eastward toward Nyingchi, where ecology has become a livelihood.

Tashi Drolma, a homestay owner in Bomi county in Nyingchi, grew up watching her mother run a family inn more than 20 years ago. As a child, she did not think much about the peach trees in the yard. Only later did she understand that the blossoms had become part of a new economy.

"When I was young, I didn't know peach blossoms could be so valuable," she says. "After I grew up, I realized they are our way to a better life."

In 2025, Nyingchi received 17.4 million tourist visits, and its tourism revenue reached 16.3 billion yuan. The city also creates more than 10,000 ecological jobs each year, helping increase annual per capita income by 3,500 yuan.

Back in northern Xizang, Kalzang Lhundrup still sets out on patrol. The work remains cold, lonely and physically demanding. But each return of the antelope, each crane landing in a wetland, and each village finding income in clean mountains and rivers tells the same story: On the plateau, protecting nature has become another way of keeping life moving forward.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:36 PM

SPORTS

2026 WORLD CUP

Viewing the positives of super-sized Cup

From record TV ratings, to gripping Cinderella stories, for FIFA, the good outweighs the bad and the ugly





Left: US striker Folarin Balogun fouls Bosnia and Herzegovina's Tarik Muharemovic (4), which led US President Donald Trump to intervene to have Balogun's one-game ban for the resultant red card suspended. **Right:** Cape Verde and Argentina produced one of the all-time classic World Cup matches, providing a strong case that the expanded 48-team format has been a success. AP

There are a lot of things that could have gone wrong during this summer's World Cup — a complicated logistical undertaking that included three host nations, 16 stadiums, 48 teams, 104 games and endless opportunities for controversy on and off the soccer field.

But in retrospect, a lot of things went right.

The United States, Canada and Mexico spent nearly six weeks hosting soccer's biggest showcase and — at least for the most part — the action stayed on the field.

US broadcaster Fox said Tuesday that the final, contested by Spain and Argentina, drew 38.9 million domestic viewers — including a peak of 51.7 million — which easily set the record as the most-watched English-language soccer telecast in US history, according to Nielsen Media Research. Spain won the final 1-0 in extra time.

Telemundo's preliminary numbers for its Spanish-language broadcast said the game had a total audience of 22.6 million, putting the total number of viewers in the US at more than 60 million.

Fox broadcast all 104 games in English on its platforms and television ratings remained high in the US even after the US team was eliminated by Belgium in the round of 16.

Spanish broadcasts on Telemundo were also a popular option — even for non-native speakers.

Fox averaged 7.7 million viewers for the 104 broadcasts on Fox, FS1 and Tubi — up from 3.58 million in 2022 and 2.77 million in 2018.

Though Nielsen's viewership numbers give a window into the World Cup final's widespread popularity, it's a challenge to reflect how many people actually watched since some viewed the game in group settings, such as watch parties.

In 2025, Nielsen expanded its out-of-home measurement system to try and get a more accurate count.

Attendance was good

Star players like Argentina's Lionel Messi, France's Kylian Mbappe and Norway's Erling Haaland became household names across North America, and, despite a few early hiccups and high ticket prices, most games featured packed stadiums with strong attendances throughout the US, Canada and Mexico.

FIFA president Gianni Infantino offered effusive praise to the host countries on Sunday.

"We have had a record number of spectators in the stadiums, almost seven million," Infantino said.

"We will have had, I mean the official figures will come out soon, but probably over six billion people watching it from home."

The weather cooperated

Fans and players from other countries found out what Americans, Canadians and Mexicans have known for a long time — it can get pretty hot in the summer, and climate change isn't helping matters.

But Mother Nature could have been a lot meaner than she decided to be.

Even so, there were a handful of games that featured particularly hot and muggy conditions.

The best example was a knockout-round game between Paraguay and France on July 4 in Philadelphia, when temperatures hovered around 38 C.

The World Cup final on Sunday also dodged a potential problem, when smoke from Canadian wildfires that wrapped the Northeast in haze had mostly cleared from the New Jersey area just in time thanks to some well-timed thunderstorms.

Size doesn't matter

This year's 48-team World Cup field was the biggest in history, and many thought it would water down the competition.

That wasn't the case.

Cape Verde held eventual champion Spain to a draw in its opening game, advanced to the round of 32 and gave Argentina a scare before losing 3-2 in extra time in a World Cup classic. The Democratic Republic of Congo also advanced beyond the group stage and pushed England all the way before losing late on, while Curacao was still in with a chance of making the knockouts going into its final group match.

After all the Cinderella stories were over, it was FIFA's top four ranked teams — England, Argentina, Spain and France — left to contest a heavyweight-packed semifinal round.

Politics can't be ignored

The World Cup is famously a petri dish for political conflict, and this year's edition provided its fair share.

Iran's participation in the tournament amid the war in the Middle East was a particularly thorny issue and the team had to move its base camp from Arizona to Mexico. The Iranians' participation was overshadowed by travel complaints and visa issues, with the US refusing visas to several members of Iran's delegation.

US President Donald Trump's relationship with Infantino was scrutinized after US striker Folarin Balogun's one-game ban for a red card was suspended ahead of the team's round of 16 game against Belgium.

Travel restrictions prevented fans of certain countries from traveling to the US, but there were no reports of the aggressive immigration enforcement that some had feared could take place around World Cup stadiums.

Infantino brushed aside most of the controversies, instead focusing on the positives. While the FIFA president has a vested interest in painting a rosy picture of this year's World Cup, there's little doubt that, from a soccer perspective, the tournament was a hit.

"I think we have to invent a new vocabulary, new words to define the success of this World Cup," Infantino said.

AP



The World Cup final set the record as the most-watched English-language soccer telecast in United States history, according to Nielsen Media Research, drawing a peak domestic TV audience of 51.7 million. AFP

Arrogance or pride? Argentina grapples with villain label

BUENOS AIRES — Critics blasted Argentina for dirty tactics and poor sportsmanship during its 1-0 loss to Spain, cementing the country's status as a World Cup villain that grew throughout the tournament.

But Argentines argue they are just passionate and misunderstood.

"I think we deserve some credit for not being very well-liked, because of this tendency to be arrogant and look down on most people from a pedestal," said Leo Simone, a 55-year-old lawyer, from his home north of Buenos Aires.

"They confuse arrogance with pride," his wife chimed in, preferring not to give her name.

While star Lionel Messi is beloved around the world, anti-Argentina sentiment grew as critics argued the team was FIFA's darling and received favorable refereeing calls, such as penalties, VAR decisions and cards shown to opponents.

Then came the final, replete with fouls, brawls on the pitch, and Argentine players turning their backs when Spain received the World Cup trophy.

The New York Times called it a "tetchy, petulant and distasteful performance."

Former Germany player Thomas Hitzlsperger wrote on X that Argentina's players were "disgusting sportsmen", and British television personality Piers Morgan said "they basically just went around whacking as many Spanish players as they could."

Near Ezeiza Airport, where thousands of fans welcomed the players returning to Buenos Aires on Monday night, Maximiliano Heredia, a 35-year-old construction worker, said: "We've always been criticized, we're used to it, but we always give it our all."

'We love it'

Many Argentines online wore the criticism as a badge of honor.

"There's something about Argentine irreverence that they can't tolerate. Our rebelliousness irritates them, enrages them. They call us cocky, cheaters, dirty, and we love it, it fills us with pride," journalist Pedro Rosemblat posted to Instagram.



Argentina's Leandro Paredes grabs the throat of Spain's Eric Garcia after the final whistle of the World Cup final on Sunday. AP

Sports journalist Ezequiel Fernandez Moores told reporters that some criticism was justified: "Sometimes we think we're the center of the universe, that God and our own navel are Argentine."

He said local soccer codes of provocation, mockery and boasting did not translate to a global audience.

"We can't expect the world to understand us, our way of being, feeling and expressing ourselves," he said.

Nevertheless, the team turning its back on Spain as it received the cup was "not right", he said.

The lawyer Simone rejects the notion that physical play makes Argentina a violent team.

"Argentina is a team that fights hard, like almost all South American football, but Spain also resorted to tactical fouls," he said.

"It's football: if you don't like being hit, play volleyball."

For Evelio Rubio, a 47-year-old Venezuelan neurologist who has lived in Argentina for a decade, it is impossible to understand from outside how "football is experienced here".

For a Venezuelan accustomed to his national team not winning titles, experiencing that passion from within "is spectacular".

Racism accusations

Argentine fans and some players have also faced accusations of racism — such as a chant sung by the team in the past mocking the black players on the French team as not being really French.

There is also a long history of club-level fans throwing bananas on the field or making monkey gestures at Brazilian fans or black players.

During this World Cup, FIFA condemned racism in a statement after an Argentine supporter told a black US influencer known as iShowSpeed to go "cry at the zoo" during a livestream.

American actor Samuel L Jackson stirred controversy when he urged black people in an Instagram story not to support Argentina, which he dubbed one of "the most racist countries in the world".

Sociologist Ivan Schuliaquer of the National University of San Martin said people should not take racism related to soccer and apply it generally to Argentine society and history.

This racism exists and should not be denied, he said.

"But, in many cases, these labels come from colonizing countries that have not yet fully resolved the issue of racism."

AFP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:36 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:38 PM

Angling for growth
Small city reaps big rewards of recreational fishing boom
BUSINESS, PAGE 10



Monitoring of environment to get smarter
CHINA, PAGE 12



Esports expansion
Foreign teams bond with Chinese fans through their shared passion
LIFE, PAGE 15

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 FRIDAY, AUGUST 14, 2026

WORLD WATCH
By Ishida Ryuji

Japan never sincerely embraced pacifism

East Asia is increasingly concerned that Japan is reverting to militarism. Japan's prime minister and Cabinet officials, however, have dismissed such concerns, while some scholars and activists argue that these are exaggerated. What explains this perception gap?

Japan is hyping up nonexistent "threats" to justify its military expansion, leading many to conclude that the postwar "pacifist nation" is now abandoning its pacifist moorings.

But a closer look at historical records, including those of the Tokyo Trials and trials of other Japanese war criminals, raises a fundamental question: Was postwar Japan ever truly a "pacifist nation"?

The notion that Japan completely abandoned its militarism and transformed into a peace-loving state seems like wishful thinking. It's more likely that the country subconsciously retained the underlying features of its prewar system, while continuing to pursue overseas interests and maintain a sense of national superiority.

Consider the way Japan marks Aug 15 as the "end-of-war memorial day". The wording blurs the distinction between victory and defeat and even suggests that Japan voluntarily ended the war. The expression can be traced to Emperor Hirohito's radio broadcast on Aug 15, 1945, in which he sought to obscure the reality of defeat. Few Japanese find anything wrong with this wording.

The Japanese people endured immense suffering in a war fought "to die for the Emperor". Yet, there was no strong public demand to abolish the imperial system. Only a small minority called for the emperor's abdication, and Hirohito's desire to preserve the imperial system was readily fulfilled through the intervention of the United States before the Tokyo Trials began.

Contemporary Japan continues to revere its emperor. The media and ordinary citizens routinely use the honorific "His Majesty the Emperor", unmindful that this superior-subordinate relationship conflicts with democratic principles. After Japan's defeat, the emperor toured the country. Even in Hiroshima, which was devastated by the atomic bombing, he was greeted with cries of "long live His Majesty the Emperor". To this day, large crowds gather at the Imperial Palace every New Year, proudly waving the flag of the sun in homage to the emperor.

Another example of Japan's reluctance to break from the past is the military pension system. Established in the early Meiji period, it was abolished during the Allied occupation but reinstated immediately after the US forces withdrew in 1952. It continues to this day, with higher-ranking officers receiving more generous benefits. Even dependents of Class-A war criminals are eligible for these pensions.

See ***Militarism,*** *page 3*

Rare spectacle





Above: A rare total solar eclipse is seen on Wednesday from the Javalambre Observatory of Astrophysics near Teruel, Spain, as the moon passes between the sun and Earth, casting its shadow across a vast swath of the Northern Hemisphere. The path of totality covered Greenland, Iceland, northern Russia, the Atlantic Ocean, Spain and a small corner of Portugal. Many other places in the Northern Hemisphere experienced a partial solar eclipse. CHRISTIAN HARTMANN / REUTERS
Left: People throng Olympic Park in Munich, Germany, on Wednesday to watch the partial solar eclipse. FARIHA FAROOQUI / REUTERS

Experts debunk 'China squeeze' claim

By **ZHONG NAN**
zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

China's manufacturing strength is creating more room for industrialization across the Global South instead of squeezing it, as the country continues to supply machinery and components to and make investments in developing economies, enabling them to build up their own industrial capacity, said analysts and business leaders.

Earlier this year, a report released by the Peterson Institute for International Economics, a think tank based in Washington, DC, claimed that China's continued dominance in low-skilled manufacturing is squeezing the capacity of developing economies, limiting their export opportunities, and leaving less room for them to industrialize and move up global value chains.

Analysts said the so-called "China squeeze" argument rests on the sole assumption that global manufacturing is a fixed pie, with every gain for China coming at the expense of another developing economy — a view that is completely at odds with the way global supply chains work.

Adam Tooze, a professor of history at Columbia University in New York, said the claim lacks a solid empirical basis, and instead turns complex global development challenges into a simplistic narrative that blames China and portrays its industrialization as a threat.

Tooze made the remarks last week in a post on the online publishing platform Substack. He said that such claims attribute China's enduring strength in low-skilled manufacturing to "unfair policies", but fail to explain why Chinese producers remain competitive despite rising wages and profound changes in the global manufacturing landscape.

Zhang Monan, deputy head of the department of American and European studies at the China Center for International Economic Exchanges in Beijing, said China's manufacturing edge has been built through sustained innovation, economies of scale and supply-chain coordination, rather than the policy distortions often cited by Western critics. "Restricting competitive Chinese products will raise production costs, slow technological progress and increase supply-chain fragmentation," she said.

In late July, a meeting of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee called for efforts to promote more balanced trade growth and expand mutually beneficial international economic and trade cooperation.

Speaking at a news conference in Beijing last month, Yan Dong, vice-minister of commerce, said some countries are using the so-called "China squeeze" argument as a new version of the "China threat" narrative, seeking to drive a wedge between China and the Global South, while deflecting attention from their own responsibilities.

Tu Xinquan, dean of the China Institute for WTO Studies at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing, said China's industrial rise has brought developing economies greater access to machinery, technology, investment and supply chains. China plans to provide developing countries with 5,000 opportunities for artificial intelligence training and seminars over the next five years.

According to the Ministry of Commerce, between 2012 and 2024, China exported textile machinery worth more than $30 billion to developing economies, helping countries in Southeast Asia and South Asia emerge as major textile producers and exporters.

John Pearson, CEO of German logistics services provider DHL Express, said that Chinese companies are increasingly expanding into markets such as Egypt, Thailand and Malaysia, building local operations and forging closer manufacturing and supply-chain links with these economies. Last month, DHL began phased operations at its expanded super gateway at Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport, Guangdong province, with a total investment of 1.2 billion yuan ($178 million), customs data showed.

XI'S VISION | TALENT AND EMPLOYMENT

College grads seek vocational training boost

They gain edge amid nation's push to align job seekers' capabilities, industrial needs

By **LI LEI**
lilei@chinadaily.com.cn

Amid record numbers of new university graduates and a persistent labor mismatch across China, a fast-growing number of degree holders are turning to vocational training to acquire practical workplace skills, plugging long-standing gaps between theoretical university learning and on-the-job requirements.

The shift is epitomized by 26-year-old Liu Wenhao, who holds an environmental design degree. His first jobs in interior design in Qingdao, Shandong province, paid under 3,000 yuan ($445) a month, and despite cycling through five employers in a single year, he saw virtually no pay growth. He repeatedly confronted real-world work demands unaddressed by his university education, including being tasked single-handedly with designing a 300-square-meter apartment.

To break his career stagnation, Liu enrolled at Qingdao Technicians College in 2024 in a multimedia training program, a sector booming as social media reshapes corporate communications and brand outreach. His newly acquired practical skills were in such strong demand that he left the two-year program early last year to take a corporate communications role at a local manufacturing plant, with his monthly income increasing to 5,000 yuan.

"A degree only gets you through the door. What matters afterward is your actual ability," Liu said.

With the number of college graduates nationwide reaching a historic high of 12.7 million this year, vocational "retraining" has evolved from individual career adjustment into a notable social trend, fueled in part by national policy priorities aimed at resolving China's stubborn labor supply-demand imbalance.

During a 2024 study session of the Political Bureau of the 20th Communist Party of China Central Committee, Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, identified the mismatch between graduate talent supply and industrial skills demand as the country's foremost employment challenge.

He called for adjustments to academic programs and resource allocation in higher education, enhancements to vocational education and improvements in lifelong vocational skills training.

Authorities have moved swiftly to implement these directives, restructuring university course offerings and resource distribution, modernizing vocational training infrastructure and expanding subsidized skill-upgrading programs.

Official figures show the government delivered 11.53 million subsidized vocational training sessions in 2025 alone, part of a broader push to align graduate capabilities with industrial needs.

Findings from a 2025 survey covering 105 technician schools show that between 2023 and 2025, the number of schools running courses targeted at college graduates rose from 26 to 45, with total enrollment increasing from 1,821 to 2,462.

Growth is particularly robust among learners with higher academic credentials. Institutions offering retraining for holders of bachelor's degrees and higher jumped 75 percent, from 16 to 28, and enrollment in these programs climbed from 401 to 570 participants.

While highly educated retrainees still account for a modest share of overall vocational students, their rapid growth rate signals fast-rising demand for practical skill upgrades among China's university-educated workforce, experts said.

National and local policymakers have rolled out targeted initiatives to accelerate the trend.

In April last year, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security launched a nationwide campaign encouraging vocational colleges to open specialized training tracks for university graduates.

The push comes amid acute industrywide talent shortages. The ministry estimated that China was facing a skilled-labor shortage of 4.5 million in smart manufacturing alone by the end of last year. To address this, Beijing plans a two-year program this year at six technician colleges in smart manufacturing, multimedia and auto repair.

Jiangsu province, a manufacturing powerhouse on China's eastern coast, plans to launch 20 such classes this year in artificial intelligence, advanced manufacturing and modern services.

Vocational educators witness this academic-practical skill divide firsthand. Lu Weiyang, an instructor at a Guangzhou technician college that began offering one-year skills programs to graduates last year, sees the gap daily. Undergraduates arrive with theoretical knowledge but weak hands-on skills — a gap he considers bridgeable. They learn faster, he said, thanks to stronger self-learning and comprehension.

See ***Skills,*** *page 3*

VISITORS TO BEIJING SEE CITY FROM A FRESH PERSPECTIVE

Rooftop spaces are becoming the best spots to experience the nation's ancient capital

By **ZHENG JINRAN**
zhengjinran@chinadaily.com.cn

Many first-time visitors come to Beijing looking for its famous landmarks. Some leave talking about the rooftops they discovered instead.

That was exactly what happened to Nancy Nielsen, a teacher from Michigan, the United States. While visiting the Pearl Market last year, she noticed another floor above the building. Curious, she walked upstairs and found herself overlooking the Temple of Heaven.

"It was just so beautiful," she recalled. She has since returned at least five times, bringing two friends back with her this summer.

Like Nielsen, a growing number of visitors are developing a different view of Beijing — a bird's eye one. Following the inscription of Beijing Central Axis on UNESCO's World Heritage list in 2024, Dongcheng district launched the Breeze Terrace Project to bring heritage closer to everyday life.

More than 70 selected rooftops have since been opened, creating new public spaces above the old city. These encourage visitors to explore not only the landmarks, but also nearby neighborhoods, cafes and shops at a more leisurely pace.

That slow rhythm is what Ming Jing, general manager of the rooftop Pearl Club, hopes visitors will find on the terrace, where Nielsen went. Many visitors arrive after touring the Temple of Heaven. They order coffee or a special mousse cake, wait for sunset and watch the changing light over the centuries-old complex, he said.

See ***Rooftops,*** *page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.



Foreign tourists in Beijing pose for a photo last month on the rooftop Pearl Club, with the Temple of Heaven rising in the background. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

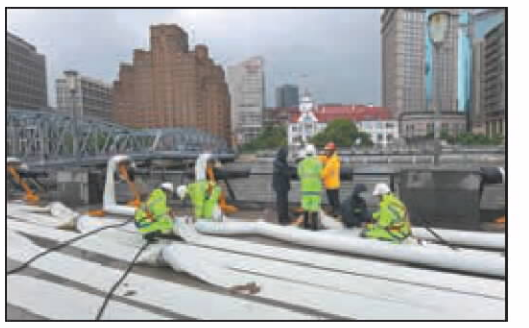
www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved
Newsstand prices:
US $1 Canada C$1;
UK 1£ EU 1€
Kenya 50 Kenya Shilling
Asia Pacific: Thailand 120 thb; Philippines 120 php; Myanmar 2000 kyat; Japan 210 yen; Dubai 10 dirham; Pakistan 300 rupee

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:38 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:38 PM

INDEPTH





Left: A pedestrian struggles to hold an umbrella in strong winds on Sunday in Shanghai as Typhoon Dolphin hit. WANG XIANG / XINHUA **Right:** Workers of Shanghai Chengtou Water Group Co lay pumping pipes at Suzhou Creek outlets. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Trial by typhoon shows city's resilience

Shanghai's preparedness for severe weather sets example in dealing with climate volatility



People brave the rain in Shanghai's East Nanjing Road on Sunday. WANG XIANG / XINHUA

By **ZHENG ZHENG** in Shanghai
zhengzheng@chinadaily.com.cn

When Typhoon Dolphin hit Shanghai at the weekend, the megacity was confronted with multiple weather extremes and a major test of its resilience.

The 13th typhoon of the year, Dolphin made two landfalls in Zhejiang province on Sunday, bringing severe weather to China's eastern seaboard.

Shanghai and its 25 million residents were subjected to record rainfall, gale-force winds and tornadoes, testing the effectiveness and preparedness of the city's infrastructure and emergency services.

Dolphin's assault — coming as the world deals with climate-related volatility — has answered some questions about how megacities can withstand increasingly unpredictable weather.

For the first time since Typhoon Fitow in 2013, Shanghai authorities issued the highest-level red alert for rainstorms across central urban districts on Sunday. Gale-force winds above force 8 persisted for approximately 48 hours, while multiple districts reported small tornadoes.

Over a 72-hour period from 8 am on Saturday, precipitation at Xietu Road subdistrict in Xuhui district reached 498.9 millimeters, the highest cumulative rainfall recorded by Shanghai's automated weather stations this century.

From 8 am on Sunday, 24-hour rainfall of 316.1 mm was recorded at Xujiahui meteorological station. The amount was equivalent to two summer months of precipitation, shattering the station's single-day precipitation record in its 154 years of operations.

Of Shanghai's 45 representative hydrologic monitoring stations, 42 exceeded water warning levels, with 23 setting historical highs.

The full impact of Typhoon Dolphin is expected to be clear by Saturday, authorities said, when it is anticipated to have dissipated after hanging around for about eight days.

Exceptional threat

How did a single typhoon unleash such severe force upon East China's coast?

Scientists point to a complex confluence of regional climate anomalies and large-scale atmospheric dynamics that transformed Dolphin into what they described as an "exceptional" threat.

Before Dolphin made landfall, Jiang Man, chief forecaster at the Shanghai Meteorological Observatory, described what made this typhoon different from previous ones.

She said it has had a very long active period, packed strong winds, and covered a massive area. Its level-7 wind circle stretched over 400 kilometers from the typhoon center.

The typhoon's cloud and rain bands were extremely well-developed, carrying massive amounts of water vapor that brought prolonged strong winds that lasted for days. These were paired with extremely heavy, sharp downpours instead of a quick, short storm as usually happens, Jiang said.

Wu Liguang, a distinguished professor at the department of atmospheric and oceanic sciences at Fudan University, told Wenhui Daily that Dolphin's destructive potential was built during its long transit across the ocean. Tracking across the Pacific Ocean for nearly two weeks, it spent a prolonged period over warm open water, continually accumulating energy.

The developing super El Nino's expansion across the Western Pacific also played a role in warming the ocean. This shift fostered typhoon formation over ocean areas that have historically maintained lower sea surface temperatures, extending Dolphin's energy-charging corridor before it made landfall.

Also, research published in the China Water Resources journal examining Shanghai's precipitation trends from 2005 to 2024 revealed that the city is experiencing a century-high peak in annual precipitation, increasing at an average rate of 16.1 mm per year. Severe hourly rainfall is transitioning into a high-frequency incident, the report said.

Water, water everywhere

Following the torrential rain, floodwaters inundated streets, underpasses, and residential compounds across the city, particularly in central downtown districts, including the iconic, tree-lined Wukang Road area.

"The waterlogging in some areas during recent typhoons cannot be attributed to any single factor," explained Wu Meng, deputy director of the circular economy and green development research office at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of Ecology and Sustainable Development.

Wu said the heavy rainstorms were the direct cause of the standing water. Shanghai sits on flat land right next to the sea and all its rivers are connected to the rise, and fall of tides, which hinders rainwater from draining out of the city easily.

"Contradictions between dense urban development and available water storage space are another reason," Wu added. Water storage space refers to soil, rivers, lakes, drainage networks and sponge facilities that can hold rainwater before flooding occurs.

Shanghai uses a multi-tier system for urban flood control.

Standard underground pipe networks handle routine rainstorms, while surface river networks and pump-gate systems manage regional drainage.

In coastal areas and along riverbanks, sea walls and levees defend against storm surges. For extreme events that exceed standard engineering designs, the city relies on above-ground water storage, emergency pumping and adaptive risk management to mitigate damage.

Currently, about 70 percent of Shanghai's central urban area is designed to withstand a storm recurrence, or return period, of every three to five years, equating to an hourly rainfall intensity between 51.2 and 58 mm.

Dolphin, however, far surpassed these capacities.

Sun Xiaofeng, deputy director of the comprehensive planning department of the Shanghai Water Authority, explained to Jiefang Daily that even infrastructure built to a 20-year return period standard cannot guarantee the complete absence of standing water under the intensity of a typhoon as strong as Dolphin.

Dense development in central districts has also left limited land for open water bodies and retention basins, forcing neighborhoods to rely largely on underground pipe networks.

"Expecting zero flooding anywhere at any time during extreme rainstorms is neither realistic nor economical," Wu said.

"Modern urban drainage aims for minimal flooding within design standards. For extreme, record-breaking storms, it lets small, controlled puddles stay temporarily — but it must never cause deaths, flood underground spaces, or shut down the city's key services."

Swinging into action

Faced with an unprecedented deluge, Shanghai's emergency response was integrated, cross-departmental and an example of swift governance.

On Aug 3, the Shanghai Meteorological Bureau established a forecasting team to deliver step-by-step typhoon warnings aligned with flood prevention plans.

Municipal agencies conducted pre-storm risk audits across vulnerable residential compounds. Neighborhood work groups put sandbags and temporary barriers in place, and mobile crews were activated to deal with the coming stormwaters before the rain arrived.

Water gates were opened across the municipality to lower regional river levels to 2.2 meters, while sections of the underground networks were flushed out, freeing up 450 million cubic meters of storage capacity within the river system.

Regional water authorities also coordinated with neighboring provinces to close the upstream Taipu gate, stemming flood inflow from Taihu Lake.

To address localized surges, the city deployed 118 high-capacity mobile pumping vehicles capable of discharging 200,000 cu m of water per hour in total.

In tight urban spaces where heavy vehicles could not maneuver, specialized drainage robots stepped in. In an inundated underpass in Minhang district, robots nicknamed "Big Buffalo" and "Little Hippo", capable of discharging 980 cubic meters of floodwater per hour, operated efficiently in tight conditions.

On Monday, Shanghai activated an emergency water diversion system for the first time, pumping water from Suzhou Creek into the Huangpu River to prevent dangerous surges in water levels. A total of 15 portable high-capacity drainage units, capable of displacing 30,000 cu m of water per hour, were deployed to safeguard the city's infrastructure.

Global extremes

Shanghai is far from alone in this struggle. Metropolises worldwide face similar climate pressures.

In July 2025, severe rain hit the United States' east coast, with New York's Central Park recording its second-highest hourly rainfall of 50 mm.

Across the UK in January 2024, Storm Henk triggered over 300 flood warnings, landslides and infrastructure submergence.

In August 2024, Super Typhoon Shanshan prompted top-level evacuation warnings for over 5 million people in Japan, leaving hundreds of thousands without power with widespread flight, train and factory shutdowns.

Recognizing these escalating threats, Shanghai is modernizing its architecture through digital and physical measures designed to make the city more able to adapt and resilient.

Under Shanghai's 15th five-year plan for water system governance, the city aims to equip 80 percent of its central urban area with three-to-five-year return period drainage capacity by 2030, while evaluating 10-year or higher design standards for some core zones.

"A 10-year return period doesn't mean an event occurs once every 10 years, but rather that each year has approximately a 10 percent probability," Wu explained.

Urban resilience requires targeted, long-term investment to keep casualties, urban disruption and irreversible losses to a minimum, he said. "Shanghai should adopt risk-based standards: higher for critical facilities like hospitals, transit, underground, utilities, data hubs, and lower for general areas," he said.

The Wusong River project is a cornerstone of this structural defense. As the largest single water conservancy project in Shanghai's history, it focuses on watershed flood discharge and regional drainage.

Once fully operational, it will improve regional flood control as well as ecological protection and inland navigation.

Shanghai is also using its digital intelligent water system to predict and prevent weather events.

The municipality has deployed over 4,300 smart liquid-level and rainfall sensors across 11 districts, creating digital archives for 30,500 kilometers of public drainage pipelines, 43 urban sewage treatment plants and over 1,000 drainage pumping stations.

Alongside digital tools, Shanghai is expanding its green infrastructure through its "sponge city" initiative, which seeks to restore the landscape's natural capacity to absorb, retain and slowly release rainfall.

Over 40 percent of the city's built-up area met sponge city standards by the end of 2025, with target coverage reaching 50 to 60 percent in suburban new towns, according to officials. By 2030, the figure is expected to reach 80 percent in the city's built-up area.

Heping Park in Hongkou district is an example of this approach after its central lake was transformed into a retention basin. Pedestrian walkways were covered in permeable paving, while wet stretches of land were covered in vegetation to collect, filter and move surface water.

"Normally, our lake water level is maintained between 2.3 and 2.6 meters," He Yizhi, director of Hongkou district greening management center, explained to Shanghai Morning Post.

"During heavy rain, the storage level can rise to 2.8 meters, absorbing 8,787 cubic meters of runoff. When extreme weather requires park closure, the storage level can expand to 3.1 meters, providing 17,400 cubic meters of emergency retention capacity to protect surrounding residential blocks."

Heping Park used its lake as a temporary flood basin to help nearby streets drain faster. While closed for safety reasons, park workers pumped excess rainwater from surrounding roads into the park's central lake, relieving pressure on the city's drainage system.

Wu said Shanghai's priority is to create functional spatial pathways and ecological capacity for water management while safeguarding its core economic operations.

To forge true climate resilience, Wu said a strategy should take into account infrastructure, technology, ecology and emergency management.

This requires urban renewal to include localized sponge-city water retention, integrate local pipe networks with regional river systems for multi-scale drainage, utilize advanced technologies including artificial intelligence for predictive forecasting and dynamic scheduling, and establish designated surface runoff pathways to protect below-ground infrastructure during extreme downpours.

"Shanghai's most urgent task is to genuinely organize urban renewal, sponge city construction, drainage networks, river system management, watershed flood control, and intelligent scheduling into a complete integrated system," Wu said.







Left: A resident wades through a waterlogged street in Changning district on Sunday. YIN LIQIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE **Middle:** Workers clear a drain grate in Xuhui district on Sunday. WEI QINGFENG / XINHUA **Right:** Firefighters drain water at a residential area in Changning district on Sunday. YAN JIANMENG / XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:38 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:38 PM

TOP NEWS

Militarism: Historical ignorance a problem

From page 1

Over seven decades, expenditure under this scheme has reached a staggering 60 trillion yen ($377 billion). But there is hardly any public dissent over the pension system. By contrast, not a single yen of public funds has been allocated to compensate overseas victims of Japanese aggression or victims of air raids in Japan. Even the medical treatment of atomic bomb survivors has often been grudging.

The attitude toward official visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, where the Japanese war criminals are enshrined, is equally revealing. Former prime minister Junichiro Koizumi dismissed criticism from victimized countries as "a matter of sentiment", while conservatives framed it as "interference in internal affairs". Even beyond August, it is also worth considering what the families of the enshrined and crowds of citizens regularly visiting the site to pay homage signifies.

Both Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi and her mentor Shinzo Abe have advocated for constitutional revision, particularly changes to Article 9 that renounces war. If "pacifism" was truly ingrained in the public consciousness, how could the Liberal Democratic Party, eager to amend this article, have garnered public support? The attempts to dilute Article 9 saw only a few street protests.

The prewar and postwar periods are too closely intertwined to simply conclude that postwar "pacifism" has changed. The deeper problem is the lack of historical awareness among the public, and a certain tolerance for this ignorance. Had postwar pacifism emerged from a thorough understanding of Japan's wartime aggression and a firm commitment to preventing such history from being repeated, the postwar era might have been different.

Without genuine self-reflection on wartime aggression, the pacifism enshrined in Article 9 is only a simplistic notion that "war is evil". Without consciously breaking from the prewar system, a pacifism rooted in a strong sense of victimhood can easily take hold. This perception is perhaps the most serious issue concerning Japan's pacifism.

The false postwar "pacifism" may have also fueled the rise of right-wing netizens. They glorify Japan's prewar "traditions", look down on neighboring countries, espouse xenophobic views and support constitutional revisions to "protect" Japan's "pacifism". What's more alarming is that even ordinary citizens share these views to varying degrees.

Consider the arguments: Japan waged wars of aggression, but didn't Western powers do the same? Japan invaded China and the Korean Peninsula, but did it not also bring modernization? Given historical disputes, are friendly relations with neighbors not unrealistic? If regional "threats" are building up their military strength, why shouldn't Japan prepare for war? When people who never considered themselves right-wing begin to think this way, Japan faces a real crisis.

Is it too much to imagine a Japan where education fully addresses the country's wartime wrongs, while both the government and the public are committed to fostering peaceful relations with neighboring countries? Such a society would not glorify the prewar system, disparage victim nations, or portray them as "threats".

I sincerely hope that the 81st year since Japan's defeat will be an opportunity for the country to incorporate the perspectives of neighboring countries that suffered from its aggression. Only by confronting the past can a genuinely peaceful future be secured.

The author is an associate researcher at the School of Humanities, Shanghai Jiao Tong University. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Tiger rescue



Veterinarians and staff from Indonesia's Natural Resources Conservation Agency evacuate a wild Sumatran tiger after it was found trapped in Agam, West Sumatra, Indonesia, on Wednesday. The tiger was evacuated to prevent potential conflict with humans. Sumatran tigers are listed as critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, with fewer than 400 remaining in the wild. ANADOLU VIA GETTY IMAGES

Skills: Teaching frameworks being revamped

From page 1

Teaching such mixed cohorts — some with relevant degrees, others from unrelated fields — has required new approaches.

To accommodate these academically advanced learners, vocational institutions are revamping their teaching frameworks. Li Yang, vice-dean of the college's electromechanical equipment department, said the school has adopted custom modular courses tailored specifically for graduate retrainees.

"Modular training is like targeted driving test instruction — each module builds a specific practical skill," he said. Students work through separate skill blocks — electrical systems, pneumatics, installation, programming — at their own pace.

In his speech at the 2024 study session of the Political Bureau, Xi emphasized the need for better integration of vocational and general education, industry and education, and science and education. He also highlighted the importance of allowing the market to play a decisive role in human resource allocation while ensuring that the government fulfills its supportive role.

Guangdong province, an industrial powerhouse, has emerged as a front-runner in implementing this integrated model.

By the end of last year, the province had built 171 industry-education-evaluation skill chains, partnering with leading companies, including Huawei, Tencent and BYD, to tailor vocational training curricula to real supply chain and industrial needs.

For Li Shaochang, 29, a graduate of Guangzhou Electromechanical Technician College, the decision to enroll in a technician college was driven by market demand. Despite holding a degree in mold design and manufacturing from Tianjin University, one of China's most prestigious institutions, he spent five years outside his field. Observing the shift toward smart manufacturing and AI, he recognized the need for practical skills.

"The technician college gives me extensive hands-on experience," he said. "That, combined with university training, is exactly what companies want."

The college's partnership with Guangzhou Jiafan Computer Co, an automation enterprise focused on smart manufacturing, gives students access to the same production line hardware used in the factory, with engineers teaching on campus. Li Shaochang's strong academic background earned him an early placement at Jiafan, where he joined an automated guided vehicle robotics team — a platform that combines a mobile chassis with a robotic arm for tasks like material handling and loading. His team leader was an engineer who had taught him at the college.

Zhang Kai, 37, holds a business administration degree from Guangdong University of Foreign Studies and now oversees Jiafan's advanced skills training base. Speaking from both sides of the desk — as a manager and a student in the same program — he said the company screens for a willingness to learn and a desire for skills, not credentials.

"A bachelor's diploma shows you can handle exam pressure," he said. "But a degree plus real skills — that's where the real competitive edge lies."

At the annual Central Economic Work Conference in December, Xi called for combining investment in physical assets with investment in human capital — a call that has since crystallized into the political catchphrase "investing in people", shorthand for upgrading the workforce through education, skills training, health and social adaptability.

Embodying that principle is Liu, the environmental design degree holder who enrolled at Qingdao Technicians College. He now earns more than double his previous salary, so his choice to build on his degree with vocational training has already paid off.

Guo Yuhe contributed to this story.

New energy vehicle sales soar in July

Figures for the first seven months of year offset weak industry numbers

By LI JIAYING
lijiaying@chinadaily.com.cn

New energy vehicles accounted for more than 60 percent of China's new vehicle sales for the first time in July, consolidating the segment's position as the main growth engine of the country's auto industry, latest industry data showed.

Data released by the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers on Wednesday showed that NEV output reached 1.576 million units last month, up 26.8 percent year-on-year, while sales rose 23.7 percent to 1.561 million units, or 60.4 percent of total new vehicle sales.

The milestone is a wider indicator of growth than the passenger car retail gauges often cited in the market, as the association's tally covers passenger and commercial vehicles and includes sales at home and abroad, showing that NEVs now form the bulk of the industry's overall sales mix.

The record was accompanied by a second milestone. In the first seven months of this year, NEV output rose 9.5 percent year-on-year to 9.014 million units, while sales increased 9.6 percent to 9.007 million units.

NEVs accounted for 51.2 percent of total new vehicle sales during the period, the first time the cumulative share has exceeded 50 percent.

By contrast, the auto market continued to show signs of weakness in July. Vehicle output and sales totaled 2.573 million and 2.584 million units, respectively, for the month, down 6.8 percent and 8 percent month-on-month and 0.7 percent and 0.3 percent year-on-year, respectively. In the first seven months of the year, both output and sales fell 3.7 percent year-on-year, although the declines narrowed from the first half of the year.

Chen Shihua, deputy secretary-general of the CAAM, said the auto market entered its traditional low season in July. Store traffic and orders eased, while automakers' midyear sales drives brought some demand forward. Persistent heat, typhoons and flooding in some regions also weighed on showroom visits, contributing to the month-on-month decline, he said.

Yet the shift in the industry's growth base remained intact. "The twin growth engines of NEVs and exports helped offset pressure from the domestic low season, while the industrial structure continued to improve," Chen said.

He added that new energy passenger vehicles in the 100,000 yuan ($14,830) to 200,000 yuan price range provided the main volume support in the first seven months.

Robust exports

Exports provided the other pillar of growth. CAAM data showed that in July alone, NEV exports jumped 145.5 percent year-on-year to 553,000 units, accounting for about 53 percent of China's 1.043 million vehicle exports. It was the second consecutive month in which NEVs accounted for more than half of the export total.

"Conventional fuel vehicles had long dominated China's auto exports, but the structure began to shift this year as NEVs increased their share in June and July, surpassing fuel vehicles for two consecutive months," Chen noted, adding that the rapid growth of vehicle exports could also help offset weak domestic demand.

Chen expects NEV exports to continue growing at a brisk pace and exceed 4 million units this year.

"With the world's most complete NEV industrial chain and a clear edge in intelligent technologies, the competitiveness of China's automobiles is expected to be further strengthened," he said.

Glowing plants coming to brighten the night

By WANG SONGSONG in Beijing and **ZHU LIXIN** in Hefei

What if your evening stroll meant walking down a path lined with bioluminescent foliage? That's the idea germinating at Beijing's Dongsheng Bajia Park, where a sprawling 7,000-square-meter greenhouse is set to bloom this fall with glow-in-the-dark decorative plants.

Featuring a "glowing" cafe and a luminous corridor of plant life, the venue will offer a surreal after-dark twist on a nature walk.

The project, spearheaded by Hefei, Anhui province-based Magicpen Bio, is set to turn one man's childhood fantasy into a public spectacle. The dream was born in the rural backyard of the boy who grew up to become the company's founder, Li Renhan.

"I wished I could make plants glow in the dark, like fireflies," Li said.

That childhood wonder eventually became the driving force behind Magicpen's breakthrough technology.

So far, the company has developed more than 10 varieties of bioluminescent plants, including petunias, tobacco and poplar.

At the heart of the innovation is an artificial intelligence platform called Agent VitaMind, which accelerates genetic design and metabolic engineering.

"Using AI, we boosted the supply of luminescent substrates and enhanced certain fungal activity in plant cells," Li said. "We prevented gene silencing, so the glow remains stable across generations."

The company hopes that the upcoming third generation will feature increased luminescence. The goal is to develop multicolor variants of glowing plants while simultaneously improving their cold tolerance and drought resistance. The enhanced plants are being bioengineered to be suitable for parks and cultural tourism spots across the country.

"After modification, the plants will grow and appear no different from ordinary greenery in the daytime, paving the way for large-scale commercial deployment," Li said.

The current generation of glowing plants produces a faint green light under a full moon. They glow brighter on moonless and overcast nights. In the third generation of plants, AI will optimize the luminescent pathway to achieve stable visibility even under a bright half-moon.

"The garden's corridors and shaded canopies help to reduce moonlight interference, enhancing the overall viewing experience," Li said.

To prevent the possible spread of genetically engineered life forms, the company uses sterile or low-pollen varieties. The idea is to prevent cross-breeding with wild plants.

Luminescent genes are expressed only in leaves, stems and flowers — not in seeds or pollen — so even accidental dispersal won't produce glowing offsprings.

Furthermore, the greenhouses are sealed with insect-proof nets, and all plant waste is heat-treated before its disposal. The company also uses AI simulations to predict any ecological impact on bees, soil microbes or local animals.

What eases public worries is that the glowing plants are purely ornamental and not intended for food.

"In five years, we expect glowing plants to serve as supplemental night lighting in parks and pathways, reducing the use of electricity," Li said.

Over the next decade, the company envisions the development of customizable glowing plants with tailored colors and climate resilience which will become a routine part of urban green spaces, although they will not replace streetlighting on major roads, he added.



Bioluminescent plants invented by Magicpen Bio, which is based in Hefei, Anhui province. XINHUA

Glowing plants are currently on display at the Beijing Flower World in the city's Fengtai district, as well as at Magicpen Bio-Research Base on the outskirts of Hefei, and at the Anhui Science and Technology Museum.

"The moment the lights went out in the exhibition hall, I was completely stunned," a netizen wrote recently on Xiaohongshu, also known as RedNote, after seeing the display in Beijing.

Global research on glowing plants has advanced significantly. Engineers from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology created nanobionic plants in 2021 that can be recharged by LEDs to emit bright light for up to an hour.

In 2022, Japanese researchers at the University of Osaka and Nara Institute of Science and Technology successfully embedded genes from luminescent bacteria and jellyfish to produce a glow in tobacco leaves, moss and cyclamens.

More recent progress came in June when Spanish researchers developed transgenic plants that change color when infected by a virus, enabling the early detection of pests.

Contact the writers at wangsongsong@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Rooftops: Beijing residents rediscover city's landmarks

From page 1

"Walking into the Temple of Heaven is like entering a painting," Ming said. "Standing here is like stepping outside the painting to appreciate it."

Over coffee, conversation and sunset views, the temple becomes more than a destination; it becomes an experience. That broader perspective shaped the first impression of Beijing for Leilani and David, two visitors from Perth, Australia. Having just arrived in the capital, they skipped the usual tourist itinerary and headed instead to Gui Temple, a restaurant atop the western hall of the 700-year-old Hong'en Temple near the Bell and Drum towers.

Leilani had expected Beijing to be a bustling metropolis, but was surprised by the slower pace of life in the ancient *hutong*. "I had imagined it would be much busier," she said. "But it was very calm."

David said outdoor dining is part of everyday life in Australia, and the relaxed atmosphere made it that much easier to appreciate Beijing's famous Peking duck.

For Wan Yulin, general manager of Gui Temple, the panoramic view is what makes the rooftop special. "What they see is not one building; They see everyday life the passage of time — past and present," Wan said.

Zeng Leixiao, a doctoral student at Renmin University of China, discovered Pearl Club online while exploring new ways to photograph a city where he has lived for years. The objective was rediscovering Beijing, and now he recommends the city's rooftops to visiting friends.

At Jinbao Place Shopping Center, a 1,600-square-meter rooftop garden has become a place where office workers exercise, families tend vegetables at an urban farm and residents join seasonal activities.

For Han Wei, deputy director of Dongcheng's culture and tourism promotion bureau, the project reflects changing expectations. "People no longer want to see only a landmark. They want to experience the neighborhood around it," he said.

Yang Cheng contributed to this story.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:38 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:38 PM

WORLD

Quake relief



People affected by the earthquake receive food packages in Cali, Colombia, on Wednesday. Rescuers in Colombia were making last-ditch efforts to locate earthquake survivors on Thursday, as the critical 72-hour window for rescue operations neared its end. The quake has killed 265 people, injured more than 3,500 and left almost 500 missing, according to local authorities. IVAN VALENCIA / AP

UN chief calls on US, Iran to return to talks

Guterres says settlement possible only via dialogue as interim deal nears end

By JAN YUMUL in Hong Kong
jan@chinadailyapac.com

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for a return to dialogue amid heightened maritime tensions in the Middle East in recent days as the United States and Iran continued to offer conflicting accounts of the situation in the Strait of Hormuz.

During a news briefing on Wednesday, Farhan Haq, deputy spokesman for the UN chief, said that Guterres is closely following the developments in the Middle East, including the situation in and around the strait and in the Red Sea.

"The secretary-general remains convinced that a comprehensive and durable settlement can only be reached through dialogue and negotiations," said Haq.

"Such a settlement would help restore stability and confidence across the region, while also safeguarding the navigational rights and freedoms in and around the Strait of Hormuz and in the Red Sea."

Pakistan said it was working to bring the US and Iran back to the negotiating table ahead of the 60-day deadline of an interim agreement the two parties signed in June, which is set to expire this weekend.

Tahir Andrabi, spokesman for Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said in a news briefing on Wednesday that Islamabad remained optimistic that a solution could be in sight as both Tehran and Washington have resorted to talks after the escalation.

He said there have been periods of heightened escalation, followed by relative calm and dialogue.

Andrabi also said an extension of the ceasefire between Tehran and Washington was under consideration. He floated the idea that the ceasefire could be extended if there is a genuine willingness to engage in dialogue.

US President Donald Trump said in a social media post on Wednesday that the US has "total control" over the strait.

"I think we will keep it! Our naval blockade is being called, by everyone, 'A Wall of Steel', and there is nothing Iran can do about it," Trump wrote on his Truth Social site.

Trump claimed Iran had no navy, no air force, and its remaining soldiers are unpaid, adding that the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps "is decimated and fleeing", and its leadership is uncertain.

"Iran is all talk and no action, the bully of the Middle East no longer," he added.

A senior Iranian official said on Thursday that the Strait of Hormuz remains under the control of the Islamic republic after Trump claimed US control over the strategic waterway.

"Today, you see that the Strait of Hormuz is under the management and control of the Islamic republic, and our country continues on its path in complete security," said Hossein Taeb, head of the paramilitary Basij forces affiliated with Iran's Revolutionary Guards.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said in a post on X on Thursday that the US "has long miscalculated due to intelligence failures".

Meanwhile, on Wednesday, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei said the environmental damage caused by the US must be addressed in future arrangements governing the strait.

Baghaei posted a video on his X account showing what he claimed was oil pollution along the shores of Qeshm Island, adding that contamination has been documented at three coastal sites and across portions of the sea surface.

Meanwhile, the International Energy Agency said in a report published on Wednesday that renewed hostilities and maritime disruptions in July and early August "undermined the recovery efforts".

It projects that global oil production will drop by 4.3 million barrels per day this year due to disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz and Bab al-Mandab Strait.

Agencies and Cui Haipei in Dubai, UAE, contributed to this story.

Putin visits a disputed island; Japan lodges protest

MOSCOW/TOKYO — Russian President Vladimir Putin visited the Far Eastern Kuril Island of Iturup, or Etorofu as the Japanese call it.

According to TASS news agency, Putin visited the island on Thursday after attending the final stage of the Pacific Fleet drills in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk.

Putin visited the Yasny fish-packing factory on the island, said the TASS report.

Vesti TV channel images showed Putin in a dark suit, beside two large tuna and a halibut laid out on a table, as two officials spoke about fishing and the migratory behavior of fish. He also stopped to try local fish roe.

"What lovely weather you have there, just like a resort!" Putin told a group of locals.

Russia and Japan are involved in a territorial row over Iturup, which Japan calls Etorofu, and the other three islands off Japan's northern prefecture of Hokkaido. The four islands that are under Russia's control are called the Northern Territories in Japan and the Southern Kurils in Russia.

Japan said on Thursday it "strongly protests" against Putin's visit to the disputed island.

In a statement on social media X, Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi said, "The Government of Japan strongly protests this visit."

Motegi summoned the Russian ambassador to Japan Nikolay Nozdrev on Thursday. Motegi told the ambassador in the meeting that Putin's visit would "have an extremely negative impact on Japan-Russia relations", according to the ministry's statement.

The visit is "unacceptable", Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi told reporters on Thursday, adding that it "made it more difficult to restore relations in the medium to long term".

Putin in recent days has visited several regions in Russia's Siberia and the Far East. Before coming to the disputed island, the Russian president stopped on Sakhalin Island to attend the final part of the drills by Russia's Pacific Fleet.

Speaking aboard a warship that was taking part in the naval exercises, Putin said on Wednesday that the current status of the islands "is enshrined in international documents as a reality that arose following the outcome of the World War II".

"But even here, Russia was prepared to seek a solution with the goal of concluding a peace treaty with Japan," he said.

XINHUA—AGENCIES

Kyiv aid surges despite long-term shortages

LONDON/MOSCOW/KYIV — Boosted by new EU financing, military aid for Ukraine in June hit its highest level since the United States pulled funding, though long-term support is lagging, Kiel Institute data showed on Thursday, as Russia and Ukraine continued to trade strikes.

Kyiv was allocated 7.2 billion euros ($8.3 billion) in military aid in June, the highest amount since the 9.04 billion euros received in April 2024. US funding dried up in February 2025.

It is the third-biggest monthly military funding boost from donors since Russia's military operation in February 2022, according to the think tank's Ukraine Support Tracker.

The surge was largely driven by the European Union's new Ukraine Support Loan, which helped European institutions allocate 4.3 billion euros of military aid in May and June.

The EU loan was introduced to support Ukraine's budgetary and military needs in 2026 and 2027.

"The rapid launch of the Ukraine Support Loan sends a positive signal to Ukraine," said Taro Nishikawa, project lead of Kiel's Ukraine Support Tracker.

On top of the loan support, Germany allocated 700 million euros, Denmark 600 million euros, and the Netherlands 500 million euros to support Ukraine's military.

But long-term funding levels remain below those seen before US President Donald Trump pulled the plug.

Before February 2025, donors allocated an average of 3.46 billion euros per month in military aid to Kyiv. Since then, that figure has fallen to 2.94 billion euros.

Key role

Although the United States no longer directly contributes to the effort, its weapons still play a key role.

Europe is increasingly procuring weapons from US defense companies and receiving deliveries from existing US military stockpiles.

"The United States remains a key supplier of systems such as Patriot, for which Europe has only limited alternatives at the moment," said Federico Mellace, lead analyst of the Ukraine Support Tracker.

In developments on the battlefield, three people were killed and eight others injured in a Ukrainian drone strike on Russia's Novorossiysk city, Krasnodar Governor Veniamin Kondratyev said on Wednesday.

Novorossiysk Mayor Andrei Kravchenko declared a state of emergency after the strikes damaged several educational facilities and ruptured two water mains, disrupting supplies to the city. One main line has been repaired, while work continues on the other, he said.

The strike targeted Russia's naval base in Novorossiysk, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Wednesday.

Russia's Defense Ministry said on Thursday it had intercepted and destroyed 362 Ukrainian drones overnight over various regions.

In Ukraine, regional authorities said on Telegram that Russia struck the area around Ukraine's largest Danube port of Izmail overnight, causing damage and setting off a fire.

Izmail, near the Romanian border in the southern region of Odesa, handles grain and other commodities.

Romania, a member of NATO and the European Union, scrambled two fighter jets, its defense ministry said on X, adding that an aerial target spent about 10 minutes in national airspace before leaving for Ukraine.

Also in the Odesa region, a Russian drone hit a passenger train, killing the driver and his assistant, Oleksandr Pertsovskyi, CEO of Ukrainian Railways, said in a post on Facebook.

AGENCIES—XINHUA



This satellite image, taken and released by Vantor on Wednesday, shows smoke rising near a grain facility at the Black Sea port of Novorossiysk in Russia, following Ukrainian strikes. AFP

Wall of memory



People take pictures of an installation wall in front of the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin on Wednesday. The installation was set up to commemorate the 65th anniversary of the construction of the Berlin Wall and the division of the city. JOHN MACDOUGALL / AFP

Tensions rise again after Greenland warns Texas oil company

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

Tensions around the sovereignty of Greenland have been stoked again after the territory's government rebuked a United States company.

The criticism came after the oil company, with alleged ties to US President Donald Trump, unloaded exploratory drilling equipment without the necessary approval.

The incident followed Trump's claims earlier this year that the US would assume control of the semiautonomous mineral-rich Danish territory that is home to 57,000 people.

The US president's designs on the 2-million-square-kilometer Arctic island drew condemnation from NATO countries that said both Denmark and the US are members of the military alliance and that a dispute between them would threaten its existence.

After a period of relative calm, the latest chapter began late last month when Texas-based Greenland Energy moved machinery onto the island's remote East Coast, causing Greenland's government to issue a "strong warning" through its Mineral Resources Authority in which it said: "All future logistical matters must be advised and approved by the Mineral Resources Authority — before they are carried out."

Greenland Energy, which hopes to extract billions of barrels of oil from Greenland's Arctic basin, is led by Chairman Larry Swets, who The Guardian newspaper said "appears to enjoy access to Trump's circle".

France 24 has reported that the company's board of directors features Carol Craig, a US Navy veteran involved in Trump's Golden Dome missile-defense plan for Greenland.

While Swets has insisted the company's activities are in no way "related to American annexation" of Greenland, some observers fear a standoff between it and Greenland's government could lead to an intervention from the US government.

Lukas Wahden, an associate fellow of the Russia program at George Washington University, told France 24: "The exploration for oil by Greenland Energy is relatively unproblematic. The issue that caused political controversy ... is that the US company Greenland Energy didn't coordinate with the relevant Greenlandic authorities in its disembarking of equipment for the exploration that is planned in East Greenland."

Wahden said the company clearly "stepped on a number of toes".

Greenland's Foreign Minister Mute Egede, who is responsible for natural resources, told the territory's broadcaster KNR: "Given the current situation, I do not consider it realistic that the company can drill in the autumn."

Greenland Energy has said $1 trillion of crude oil could be under Greenland's Nunap Qeqqa area, also known as Jameson Land, and that it plans to spend $60 million on drilling two exploratory wells.

The incident, which is taking on the appearance of a standoff, has the potential to destroy the uneasy calm.

And with Trump saying just last month in an interview with Steve Gruber from the right-wing Real America's Voice News that Greenland will come under US control before the end of his term, it seems possible a standoff could force an escalation of the dispute.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:38 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:38 PM

WORLD

Sorrowful search



Rescuers conduct search-and-rescue operations at the site of a boat capsize on Lake Kariba in Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe, on Wednesday. President Emmerson Mnangagwa declared a state of disaster after the accident, as the death toll rose to 44. XINHUA

Ottawa under pressure as 50% US tariffs draw near

By SHI GUANG in New York
shiguang@chinadailyusa.com

Canadian negotiators are in Washington trying to reach an interim trade deal with the United States before 50 percent tariffs come into effect next week on a wide range of Canadian products.

US President Donald Trump's administration is set to impose the additional tariffs on Canadian goods in more than 500 product categories, including alcohol, dairy, honey and sports equipment, on Wednesday.

"A 50 percent tariff would probably pretty much cease the export of all those goods," Douglas Porter, chief economist at the Bank of Montreal, told Canadian media.

The goods are related to what Trump calls "discrimination" against US products, including boycotts on US alcohol and Canadian restrictions on dairy imports, which the White House has described as "unreasonable, unequal and discriminatory".

The new tariffs would affect about $20 billion worth of goods, representing about 5 percent of Canadian exports to the US, many of which had been protected from tariffs under the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement.

Energy, potash, fish and critical minerals would be exempt from the new tariffs.

On Tuesday, Canada's minister responsible for Canada-US trade, Dominic LeBlanc, and Chief Trade Negotiator Janice Charette met in Washington with US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer — the third time they had met in three weeks.

"Discussions remain ongoing, and we continue to engage at the negotiation table to firmly advance and defend Canadian interests," LeBlanc posted on X after the meeting.

Greer has said he wants an interim deal with Canada before negotiations continue on renewing the USMCA.

However, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, citing sources, reported that Canadian negotiators were unhappy with the latest US offer, noting that the proposal would reduce some tariffs, but not as much as the Canadian side wanted.

Members of a Canadian advisory committee on cross-border trade are reportedly on standby for a Monday meeting, when Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney is expected to return from a vacation in Italy, sources told Canadian media.

"He is in close contact with his team and officials on several priorities, including the ongoing Canada-US trade negotiations," Carney's office said in a release.

Premier Doug Ford of Ontario, Canada's most populous province and the center of its auto industry, said the country needs to respond if the tariffs are imposed next week.

"If these tariffs proceed, Canada should respond tariff for tariff, dollar for dollar," he posted on social media when the potential new tariffs were announced.

The new tariffs would be imposed under Section 338 of the US Tariff Act of 1930, known as the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act, which grants the president discretion to combat unilateral trade actions against the US and would be in addition to any other tariffs already in effect.

Since this section has not been used in nearly a century, it is not clear how courts would rule on its legality.

Trump refused to automatically extend the USMCA for another 16 years by the July 1 deadline, which means it must now undergo mandatory annual reviews.

He has already placed tariffs under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 on autos, steel, aluminum and forestry products.

It is estimated that the new tariffs could cut Canada's GDP by up to 0.5 percent, in addition to a 1.5 percentage point drop in GDP estimated by the Bank of Canada as a result of previous tariffs.

Canadian exports to the US dropped by more than 5 percent last year, while they grew by more than 15 percent to other countries, ATB Financial reported.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn

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

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1892

Yields at latest Treasury auction reach 25-year high

By SHI GUANG in New York
shiguang@chinadailyusa.com

The US has had to pay the highest interest rate to sell its government bonds in 25 years over concerns about the country's debt load and rising inflation.

At an auction of $25 billion in 30-year Treasury bonds on Thursday, yields reached as high as 5.22 percent, the US Treasury Department said. That is the highest since the 5.52 percent yield in August 2001, the last time the US had a budget surplus.

Last year, the US had a budget deficit of $1.85 trillion, or about 6.3 percent of GDP, a shortfall that has to be made up by the government borrowing money through the sale of Treasury bonds in order to pay for government programs.

"All in all this is problematic for the Treasury. They have to fund the government at more expensive levels," Gennadiy Goldberg, head of US rates strategy at TD Securities, was quoted as saying by Financial Times.

The yield on 30-year Treasurys in a July auction was 5.06 percent, while it was 4.91 percent before Trump's second term began.

David Rosenberg, founder of Rosenberg Research, said that rising bond yields could create a drag on the stock market by harming economic growth.

> "All in all this is problematic for the Treasury. They have to fund the government at more expensive levels."
>
> **Gennadiy Goldberg**, head of US rates strategy at TD Securities

US government debt has grown to almost $40 trillion, near a record debt-to-GDP ratio, and it now pays more in interest charges — about $1 trillion a year — than it spends on its military.

Historian Niall Ferguson has warned that when a country spends more on servicing its debt than on defence — a situation he calls the Ferguson Limit — it is at risk of losing its position as a great power.

"This is because the debt burden draws scarce resources towards itself, reducing the amount available for national security, and leaving the power increasingly vulnerable to military challenge," Ferguson said.

"In the absence of radical reforms of its principal entitlement programs — which successive administrations have ruled out — the only plausible way that the United States can come back within the Ferguson Limit is therefore through a productivity miracle," Ferguson said.

Andrew Szczurowski, strategic income portfolio manager at Morgan Stanley Investment Management, pointed out that foreign ownership of US Treasurys had declined over the past decade from roughly 33 percent to about 23 percent. "There is less official buying" by other governments, he told Market Watch.

However, he said that foreign investors' and governments' diversification from Treasurys didn't necessarily threaten the dollar's status as a reserve currency.

"There is not some other gold standard that is the alternative to the dollar. What do you have confidence in? There is no answer," Szczurowski said.

The US Bureau of Labor Statistics reported on Thursday that the US Producer Price Index rose 4.7 percent year-on-year in July, down from 5.5 percent in June. Combined with a decline in the Consumer Price Index to 3.4 percent in July, that will ease pressure on the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates in the near term to bring down inflation. However, the recent decrease in inflation has been caused mainly by drops in energy and food prices, though service sector prices continue to rise, it reported.

While inflation was down from 3.5 percent in June and 4.2 percent in May, it is still well above the Federal Reserve's 2 percent target.

China, Canada see new scope for green ties

Experts highlight areas where both can combine their complementary strengths

By YANG GAO in Toronto
gaoyang@chinadailyusa.com

Improving relations between Canada and China could open new opportunities for clean energy cooperation, with businesses and experts highlighting electric vehicles, energy storage and critical minerals as areas where the two countries' strengths could complement each other.

The Canada China Business Council is organizing a Canadian Cleantech Mission to China in November, said Bijan Ahmadi, executive director and chief operating officer of the council.

"The mission grew out of increasing interest from Canadian clean-technology companies seeking opportunities in China's rapidly expanding low-carbon economy," Ahmadi said.

Canadian companies often have specialized technologies and expertise, while China offers manufacturing capacity, investment capital and experience deploying clean technologies at scale, he said.

"The renewed Canada-China strategic partnership, with its focus on energy, clean technology and climate competitiveness, provides additional momentum for this engagement," he said.

The mission will help companies understand the Chinese market, meet commercial and investment partners and identify potential projects, he added.

"It is intended to turn broad interest in clean technology cooperation into direct business relationships and commercially viable opportunities," he said.

Jiang Wenran, founding director of the China Institute at the University of Alberta and president of the Canada-China Energy and Environment Forum, said the two countries already have several footholds for cooperation that could lay the groundwork for deeper engagement in clean energy.

PetroChina holds a 15 percent equity stake in LNG Canada, while Chinese battery maker CATL has taken part in three large-scale grid storage projects in Ontario. Chinese company Envision Energy has also signed a strategic cooperation agreement for a 300-megawatt wind-plus-storage demonstration project in Nova Scotia Province, Jiang said.

"These are footholds, not flagship portfolios — but footholds in exactly the right sectors," he said.

Electric vehicles could become one of the most visible areas of renewed cooperation.

Canada's new market access framework allows up to 49,000 Chinese EVs annually to enter the country at the lower tariff rate. Ahmadi said the framework could increase the availability of more affordable EVs for Canadian consumers.

"The larger opportunity is to encourage joint ventures and localized investment in Canada," he said, pointing to potential cooperation in vehicle and component manufacturing, battery systems, charging infrastructure, and automotive software, among other areas.

Jiang said the "deeper level" is joint-venture manufacturing on Canadian soil.

Beyond EVs, both experts underscored a broader division of strengths across the clean energy supply chain. "China is a global leader in batteries and energy storage, electric mobility, solar and wind power, and grid technologies," Ahmadi said.

"Canada brings specialized capabilities in carbon capture, utilization and storage; water and wastewater treatment; land and environmental remediation; waste-to-energy; industrial decarbonization; and materials recovery and recycling."

'Concrete example'

Civil nuclear energy is another established area, Ahmadi said, with Canadian companies supporting the refurbishment and longer-term operation of CANDU reactors in China, providing "a concrete example of sustained Canada-China clean-energy collaboration".

Jiang said energy storage, offshore wind, green hydrogen, civil nuclear energy and uranium trade could provide additional opportunities.

Critical minerals could offer another area of complementarity. Canada has significant reserves of lithium, cobalt, nickel and copper, while China has built extensive capabilities in battery manufacturing and clean energy supply chains.

The potential benefits, the experts said, could extend beyond commercial ties between the two countries.

"The global energy transition requires both technological innovation and the ability to deploy solutions rapidly and affordably," Ahmadi said.

Canada brings a strong scientific and research ecosystem, clean energy resources, and expertise in specialized environmental and emissions-reduction technologies, while China brings manufacturing scale, investment capacity, and extensive experience deploying batteries and renewable energy, he said.

"Combining those strengths can reduce technology costs, accelerate commercialization and make low-carbon solutions more accessible in both countries and in third markets," he said.

Jiang said such cooperation could also have broader geopolitical and climate effects.

"A successful 'Canadian resources plus Chinese manufacturing' model demonstrates to the Global South that resource-rich nations need not choose between Western capital and Chinese technology — they can integrate both," he said.

"In short, the Canada-China clean energy partnership has the potential to become a template for South-North climate cooperation, not merely a bilateral commercial arrangement," he added.

Glowing tribute



An audience watches a drone light show featuring Africa's "Big Five" — lion, leopard, elephant, rhinoceros and African buffalo — in Nairobi, Kenya, on Wednesday. The show, featuring 500 drones, was cohosted by China's Shaanxi Radio and Television Media Convergence Group and Kenya's State Department for Sports. WU XIAOHUI / CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:38 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:38 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Reported skipping of Yasukuni Shrine visit a calculated act of geopolitical gesturing

The Yasukuni Shrine, which honors 14 convicted Japanese Class-A war criminals from World War II, is a notorious symbol of Japanese militarism that devastated the Asia-Pacific decades ago.

Yet the reports that Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi is expected to forgo a visit to the shrine on Saturday — the 81st anniversary of Japan's unconditional surrender that marked the end of WWII — should not be read as an exercise in diplomatic restraint, once the calculations behind the move are laid bare.

Reports suggest that this was not a historical reckoning but a calculated act of geopolitical gesturing — an effort to avoid derailing Japan's carefully cultivated ties with the Republic of Korea. Seoul sits at the hinge of the United States-Japan-ROK security architecture. By avoiding offending Seoul, Takaichi intends to hold the alliance in line with China one of the intended targets. Takaichi's reported skipping of a visit to the shrine is by no means intended reconciliation, but a pointed signal wrapped in diplomatic scheming.

Although Takaichi has not visited the Yasukuni Shrine since taking office as prime minister in October last year, she offered a tribute to it in April and she has visited the shrine more than 10 times over the course of her political career, with the latest being on Aug 15 last year.

Takaichi's posture toward the shrine has always reflected her view of history. She may send ritual offerings and allow Cabinet members to visit in her stead, a move that would be less a gesture of restraint than a cynical balancing act: placate her right-wing support base while insulating herself from the diplomatic fallout. This is a desecration of historical justice and an insult to the victims of Japan's aggression.

The symbolization of the Yasukuni Shrine should be considered alongside changes taking place in Japan's military establishment. The Takaichi government has recently finalized a plan to revise the Self-Defense Forces officers' rank titles to those of the former Imperial Japanese Army before and during WWII. For example, chiefs of staff will change to *taisho*, flag officers to *chujo* and field officers to *taisa*, *chusa* and *shosa*. At the International Military Tribunal for the Far East 80 years ago, more than half of the 28 defendants had the rank of *taisho* or *chujo*. Six of the seven Class-A war criminals executed had these ranks.

Nor should it be ignored that retired Maritime SDF vice-admiral Umio Otsuka has served as the chief priest of the Yasukuni Shrine since 2024, while a former Ground SDF chief of staff sits on the shrine's decision-making body. The Japanese military and the shrine are no longer merely ideologically adjacent, they are institutionally interlocked.

The concern becomes more acute when symbolism is placed alongside policy and action. Japan's 2026 defense white paper has listed the military industry as a pillar industry and a core driver of economic growth, designations that it held during the lead-up to and throughout WWII.

Japan's Ministry of Defense intends to submit a record defense budget request of roughly 8.9 trillion yen ($56 billion) for fiscal 2027, a number that could approach 10 trillion yen after further adjustments. Considering that Japan already outspends China by nearly threefold on a per-capita basis, the continued rapid growth of its military expenditures is deeply unsettling.

As Chinese Foreign Ministry spokespersons have repeatedly warned, Japan has failed to repent its historical crimes while accelerating remilitarization, breaching its pacifist Constitution and challenging the postwar international order.

For Japan's neighbors, an official pilgrimage to the shrine — or even a ceremonial offering — transcends the merely symbolic. It is a stark reminder that Tokyo has not repudiated the intellectual and political currents that once brought catastrophe to the region. If the Takaichi government genuinely wants to improve ties with regional countries, it must abandon its two-faced maneuvering and make a clean break with Japan's militarist past. That is the standard by which Japan's commitment to peace will be judged.

Open-source genie to be let out of bottle

For years, Silicon Valley's reigning orthodoxy, particularly among the trio of closed-source artificial intelligence model developers — OpenAI, Anthropic and Google — held that safety required secrecy. The most powerful models, the argument went, had to stay behind corporate firewalls. Open-source systems were "dangerous", likened to "selling nuclear weapons in retail stores". That narrative was always convenient for those who profited from closed-source models.

Then came the Hugging Face incident last month, when the world's largest open-source AI community was hacked by a closed-source model that was able to "jailbreak" its constraints. When Hugging Face's security team reached out to closed-source vendors in the United States for help, it was reportedly turned away; their own guardrails prevented them from assisting with offensive cybersecurity operations. The crisis was ultimately resolved not by a US closed-source model, but by China's open-source GLM-5.2.

The safety narrative was never about safety — it was about protecting a lucrative business model: concentrating technological power, extracting premium pricing and letting a handful of companies decide who gets access to transformative AI. OpenAI alone is projected to burn $25 billion this year. That kind of spending demands monopoly-like pricing — and the argument that only closed-source models can be trusted serves that purpose.

Meanwhile, China's open-source models have been making inroads. Chinese models reportedly occupy the top five spots in global API call volume, and US enterprises are increasingly turning to Chinese models because they offer comparable performance at a lower cost. When a Chinese model can perform a task for a fraction of the price of a leading US model, it is worth asking who in the US truly benefits from the country's expensive closed-source models.

That is exactly the question Mark Zuckerberg posed in a 14-page manifesto posted on Monday, and for once, it steered clear of the usual metaverse-fueled reverie. Instead, he laid out a sobering strategic calculation: the US must urgently recalibrate its approach to AI — or risk ceding ground to foreign competitors. For Chinese AI companies, this should be read not as a philosophical treatise, but as a warning shot.

The Meta CEO's post, "The Future is for Everyone", is less a humanitarian vision than a competitive road map. Zuckerberg warns that restrictions on US AI companies are handing advantages to foreign competitors, calling on Washington to lower barriers for US open-source developers.

Of course, Zuckerberg's embrace of open source is self-serving. Meta's business has always run on scale, not direct model monetization, and the tepid reception to Llama 4 gave him every incentive to change the narrative. But his diagnosis is clear: the doom-and-gloom argument that AI is so dangerous that power must be concentrated in a few hands was always politically convenient rather than valid. Concentrating control over a technology so consequential is not just economically inefficient — it is a governance risk.

Washington appears to be listening. A new policy framework reportedly exempts open-source models from some voluntary prerelease safety testing, while the US administration has signaled that open-weight models will not face the same scrutiny as closed systems. But US developers still face restrictions — on training data and other fronts — that foreign competitors may not share. Zuckerberg is pressing to remove those frictions.

For Chinese AI companies, the implications are evident. The US is preparing to unleash its open-source ecosystem in earnest. The contest is no longer about which country builds the smartest model; it is about which can build the most resilient ecosystem — hardware, software, talent, capital, governance and applications, all in a self-reinforcing cycle. China's ecosystem has shown resilience under pressure, with US restrictions often accelerating indigenous innovation. But after the US embraces open-source models, the competition will necessarily become tougher and more systematic.

Zuckerberg's Muse Glimmer, designed to run on a single graphics card, offers a glimpse of what a more accessible and aggressive US open-source push could look like. China's cost efficiency, infrastructure investment and the integration of industry, academia and government have created a reliable flywheel — but that flywheel is about to face a reinvigorated adversary.

The open-source genie is about to be let out of the bottle. For Chinese AI companies, the time to prepare for a more capable US open-source offensive is now — not when the first US model arrives at their doorstep.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Luo Jie



Opinion Line

Equilibrium between traditional and new drivers key for growth

China's transition from old to new growth drivers is gathering pace. A key task in the next stage is to strike a balance between fostering new growth drivers and upgrading old ones, using artificial intelligence, digitization and green technologies to transform traditional industries.

The July 30 meeting of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee highlighted the growing momentum from new sources of growth while acknowledging the structural challenges facing China's pursuit of high-quality development.

The meeting called for faster progress in shifting from old to new growth drivers in the second half of the year. It also urged policymakers to maximize the effect of existing measures while rolling out targeted new policies in a timely manner.

In the first half of the year, new growth drivers, represented by high-end manufacturing, the digital economy and modern services, contributed more than 40 percent to China's economic growth. Emerging industries such as artificial intelligence, integrated circuits and new energy vehicles performed strongly in production, investment and exports, accelerating the shift from old to new growth drivers.

Specifically, value-added industrial output in equipment manufacturing for enterprises above designated size grew 9.3 percent year-on-year in the first half, while high-tech manufacturing expanded 13.3 percent — 3.9 and 7.9 percentage points faster, respectively, than the 5.4 percent growth recorded by industrial enterprises above designated size. In contrast, real estate development investment fell 18 percent over the same period.

This divergence highlights the profound structural transformation underway as China moves away from a growth model driven by high investment and high consumption of resources toward one powered by digitization, intelligent technologies and green development. While the transition may bring short-term challenges, it is creating new opportunities.

Importantly, new growth drivers are not limited to emerging and future industries; traditional sectors can also generate fresh momentum through technological upgrading and transformation. Achieving this balance will require coordinated efforts to cultivate emerging industries while revitalizing traditional sectors.

The new drivers — although they have emerged as the primary engines of growth in industrial value-added output and some modern service sectors — have yet to become a dominant force across the economy.

The traditional industrial drivers must be upgraded along with the accelerated development of a modern industrial system. For example, on the application side, expanding affordable access to computing power and AI technologies would enable more companies to accelerate their digital and intelligent transformation. This would strengthen the foundations of the real economy while creating new sources of industrial competitiveness.

High-tech and traditional industries are mutually reinforcing forces. High-tech industries provide the technologies needed to upgrade traditional sectors, while traditional industries offer diverse application scenarios for emerging technologies.

China should seize the opportunities created by the rapid growth of high-tech industries and encourage local governments to integrate technological and industrial innovation based on local strengths and conditions. By pursuing differentiated development, regions can build industrial ecosystems in which complementary strengths and synergies generate new growth opportunities.

Strengthening long-term, stable support for basic research will help continuously enhance China's innovation capabilities and lay a solid technological foundation for accelerating the development of a modern industrial system. The country should focus on cutting-edge fields, continue to optimize the structure of investment in basic research, further streamline the chain for transforming innovation outcomes into practical applications and deepen the integration of innovation and industry chains.

— JIANG XUEQING, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Canal will boost trade, vitalize regional economy

Editor's note: *Vessel trials on the Pinglu Canal began on Wednesday, marking a key step toward the full opening of the waterway planned for September. China News Service interviewed Ni Yuping, vice-dean of the School of Humanities at Tsinghua University, to understand the significance of the Pinglu Canal. Below are excerpts from the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

A visit to the Madao hub on the Pinglu Canal showcases an impressive feat of modern engineering. The canal, equipped with advanced sluice-and-lock technology and abundant southern Chinese water resources, ensures year-round, all-weather navigation. The project reflects a construction philosophy that adapted to the local conditions and leveraged scientific and technological advancements, so as to support regional development.

The Pinglu Canal will help enhance water transport in the southwest, reshaping the regional waterway network. Future projects, such as the planned Yongzhou-Guilin Canal, will further strengthen China's inland waterway system.

Unlike international canals such as the Panama and Suez canals, which primarily facilitate ocean-going transit, the Pinglu Canal is a multifunctional waterway that supports both domestic inland transport and international trade. Domestically, it connects China's vast southwestern hinterland, including Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan provinces, and Chongqing. Internationally, it opens to the Beibu Gulf, linking with global shipping routes.

The canal will boost both waterborne and land-based trade, fostering continuous exchanges among the diverse ethnic communities of Southwest China. This will deepen interethnic interactions and integration through economic connectivity. Additionally, cross-border trade and exchanges will act as a cultural bridge, extending the canal's influence from the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region to the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the international community at large.

Once the canal begins operations, industries along its route — such as logistics, shipping, culture and tourism, and trade — are expected to flourish, creating numerous jobs and enabling local residents to work nearby and diversify their income. As industries, capital and talent converge in Guangxi, increased local fiscal revenue will be reinvested into public services and infrastructure, improving livelihoods across the region. Upon completion of the Yongzhou-Guilin Canal, China's inland waterway system will form a closed loop, further enhancing people's quality of life.

The Pinglu Canal provides the shortest waterway for southwestern regions to access the sea, reducing cross-border logistics costs between China and ASEAN countries and serving as a crucial lever for optimizing the bilateral supply chain.

Lower logistics costs will draw domestic and international trading companies to establish operations in Guangxi. Bulk commodities from ASEAN countries, such as minerals and agricultural and forestry products, will enter the canal through the Beibu Gulf and be efficiently distributed to China's southwestern hinterland and national market. A stable cargo supply will ensure the long-term success of the canal's shipping operations.

The canal offers significant development benefits to Southeast Asia. It reduces bilateral trade costs, enhances economic gains for both China and ASEAN countries and fosters mutually beneficial trade cooperation. Besides, regular commercial exchanges improve mutual understanding, highlight China's commitment to peaceful development, and strengthen bilateral cooperation. In addition, the movement of goods and people accelerates cultural exchanges and integration among regional civilizations, promoting coordinated development.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:38 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:38 PM

VIEWS

Arvea Marieni

New ecological code to drive green growth

The stakes are unmistakable. This year, wildfires have burned close to half a million hectares of woodland across the European Union, while rivers ran too low and too warm to cool the nuclear reactors on their banks, forcing reductions in electricity generation as water restrictions spread.

Fire, water and electricity are not three problems but one, climate change. At the same time, the loss of ecosystem services threatens economic viability itself.

The European Central Bank found that 72 percent of euro-area companies are critically dependent on at least one ecosystem service, with water scarcity alone putting up to 24 percent of output at risk.

China's Ecological and Environmental Code, which enters into force on Aug 15 — the National Ecology Day — therefore deserves attention, less as a domestic achievement than as an institutional experiment whose results matter well beyond China.

Adopted by the National People's Congress in March, the 1,242-article code has five chapters, covering areas including pollution control, ecological protection and green and low-carbon development.

It is China's second legal code, after the Civil Code.

What distinguishes it is its systems-engineering approach, reflecting China's emphasis on coordinated environmental governance. Regulation accumulates in silos — air, water, soil, then waste — and silos do not solve problems; they multiply them.

The deeper flaw, however, lies upstream, at the level of system design.

Climate change and ecological breakdown are not accidents of economic activity but, as the Stern Review put it, the greatest and widest-ranging market failure ever seen: a price system that records what is extracted and says nothing about what is destroyed.

Correcting it is a design problem. EU analysis finds that over 80 percent of a product's lifetime environmental impact is fixed at the design stage.

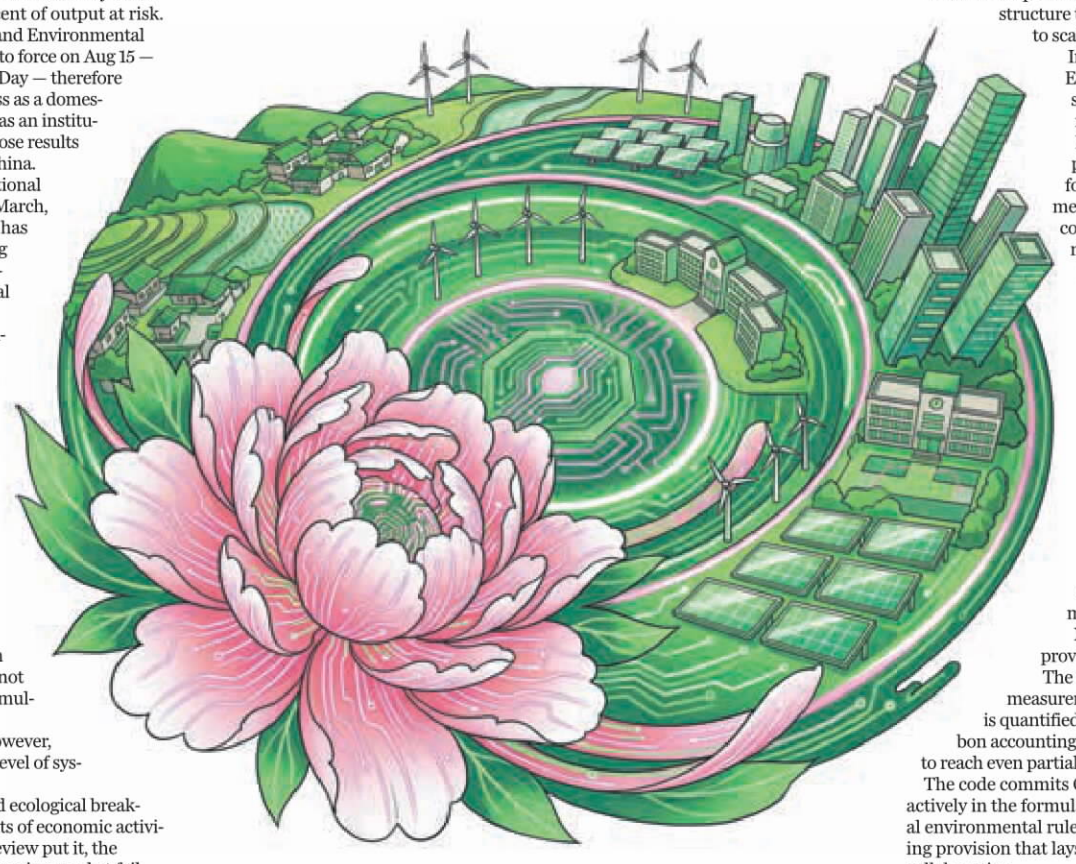
Damage prevented costs a fraction of damage repaired. The code mainstreams environmental performance into industrial processes and sectoral policy rather than confining it to an annex.

Two provisions stand out.

The first are those on green and low-carbon development. Carbon peaking and neutrality objectives become a statutory foundation, under the guidance of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council.

This reflects a judgment that decarbonization and pollution control are the same task seen from different angles.

The second are those establishing the ecological compensation system: fiscal transfers to localities conserving important ecological assets, horizontal compensation negotiated between regions that benefit and regions that protect, and an obligation on governments at the county level and above to build stable funding.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Global Lens

Fire, water and electricity are not three problems but one, climate change. At the same time, the loss of ecosystem services threatens economic viability itself.

Its placement in the General Provisions, beside monitoring and standards, marks it as structural rather than supplementary.

Under the Beautiful China assessment measures introduced in May 2026, provincial governments are graded on a 100-point scale across responsibility, annual targets, key tasks, fund use and public satisfaction, making their obligations measurable.

Behind all this lies the harder question of our time: how to redesign the economy so that sustainable models are financially viable. How China resolves that tension will matter to global markets.

Shangyou county in East China's Jiangxi province sits in the upper catchment area of the Ganjiang River.

Its forests are largely intact and the services they supply are of national significance. It also has schools to run and roads to maintain. Its officials face two questions: How to protect the local ecology while pursuing economic development? And how does the value it produces for others appear in its own accounts?

Shangyou has begun to answer: It has built an institutional chain that turns the ecological product value of a specific geographical unit into a bankable asset.

The province has issued its first such loan on this basis, 200 million yuan ($30 million), secured on the projected ecosystem service value of Bijiashan ecological industrial park.

It is an example of the accounting infrastructure the code is designed to scale.

In July 2025, the European Commission published a roadmap towards Nature Credits, proposing certified units for verified improvements in ecosystem condition, so that land managers can be paid for what they protect.

The diagnosis is the same as in Shangyou: what markets cannot see, they will not fund. China and Europe are working on the same problem with different instruments — codified obligation and fiscal transfer, certification and markets.

Neither has yet proved itself at scale.

The common ground is measurement: how a service is quantified and verified. Carbon accounting took three decades to reach even partial comparability.

The code commits China to participate actively in the formulation of international environmental rules — an outward-facing provision that lays the ground for collaboration.

The 11th EU-China Environment Policy Dialogue took place in Brussels in June and the 7th High-Level Environment and Climate Dialogue follows later this year.

While methodology makes for a dull communiqué, common green standards are foundational to solve shared challenges.

Implementing regulations, accounting methods and cross-departmental coordination will take years to put in place. The code is an ambitious foundation, not a completed building.

But a foundation well laid is worth a great deal — and this summer has shown what the alternative costs.

The author is the European Climate Pact Ambassador in Belgium. Academician Wang Jinnan, a direct contributor to the drafting of the Ecological and Environmental Code and a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, also contributed to this article.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Zhu Xinkai

Crafting a holistic strategy for rural renewal

To truly understand China, one must first grasp the concept of *sannong*, a term that encapsulates three intertwined elements: *nongye*, or agriculture, *nongcun* or rural areas, and *nongmin* or farmers. These are not separate components but deeply interconnected facets of a singular entity.

In English, one might list them as "agriculture, rural areas and farmers", but this fails to convey the unified concept that *sannong* represents.

By combining the three aspects, the term signifies a holistic view.

The reason is simple: these are not three separate issues. Their interconnectedness becomes evident when policies targeting any one of them inadvertently impact the other two. For instance, efforts to consolidate agricultural land and increase output can hollow out villages and push landless farmers to cities.

Thus, a policy aimed at solving the agricultural problem may inadvertently trigger a crisis in rural areas and among farmers. The three components are intrinsically linked, and it is futile to optimize one without considering the other two.

Yet, modern academics do exactly that. Agricultural economics focuses on farming, rural sociology examines village life, and political science studies the peasantry. While each field offers good insights, the comprehensive perspective that *sannong* requires often falls through the cracks between the disciplines.

It's important to note that Sannongology is not a prescriptive set of solutions, but a research agenda with a theoretical foundation.

This is where Sannongology comes into the picture. It is an initiative to bridge the gap and further develop the conceptual framework embodied in *sannong*.

Sannongology is built on two foundational pillars.

The first pillar is a system of analytical categories. It comprises seven elements, including mode of production, property rights, markets, region, human-nature relations, state-society relations and nation-world relations. These categories are not a checklist but a conceptual coordinate system that guides researchers to focus on the interactions among them: how a shift in production affects property rights, markets and human-nature relations, and how these tensions change over time.

The critical task is to trace these interactions and identify which tensions are most influential at any given time.

The second pillar is a theory of the state as the entity responsible for addressing *sannong*. This theory interprets state action through four elements. The first is goals, such as food security, economic growth and social protection. The second is channels, which align with the seven categories of the first pillar.

They are the lens through which the problem is seen and also the levers by which the State addresses it. The third is measures, the concrete actions taken within each channel. The fourth is mechanisms, or how these elements are sustained and coordinated over time, especially when the goals conflict with one another.

If one looks at food security through this frame, China's strategy is not merely about increasing yields. It involves coordinated actions across several categories: protecting farmland and clarifying land rights (property rights), developing socialized services and integrating the supply chain (mode of production), setting up processing in main producing areas (region) and building brands nearer to the consumer (markets). None of these measures are effective in isolation. Their effectiveness comes from being pursued together.

China's approach has two notable features. The first is a division of labor across the government levels: the central government sets non-negotiable limits, such as minimum farmland requirements, while local governments have the discretion to adapt policies to local conditions. The second is a culture of experimentation, where policies are first piloted, results are evaluated, and then scaled up only if they are successful.

It's important to note that Sannongology is not a prescriptive set of solutions, but a research agenda with a theoretical foundation. It is not intended to replace established disciplines such as agricultural economics and rural sociology.

Rather, it draws on all of them to address the rural sector as a whole within the broader context of modernization, providing a framework that has been missing between existing disciplines.

Moreover, it is not a model that can be replicated or exported. The results revealed by applying the framework will differ from place to place, depending on local conditions and challenges.

In some countries the binding tension may lie in property rights and social structure, while in others it could be between large-scale farming and the natural environment, or the dependence on a single export crop. The same frame, but different tensions and different solutions.

Ultimately, Sannongology raises essential questions for any country: Is the rural sector a single entity or three distinct ones? If it is one, do you have the tools to address the issues it faces? And if the state is the ultimate agent of change, do you have a robust theory to guide its actions?

The author is the vice president of Renmin University of China.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Chen Weihua

The author is a China Daily columnist.
chenweihua@chinadaily.com.cn

Navigating the cultural diversity of global dining

Last weekend, I dined with friends at a popular restaurant in Pudong, known for its traditional Shanghai cuisine. About 40 minutes into our meal, the owner came over and asked how we liked the food.

Having spent 16 years abroad, my instinct was to respond with a polite "great", even if the food was not exceptional. It is a common practice to tell a white lie in such situations.

In my years abroad, I have advised fellow Chinese that when greeted with "How are you doing?" they should simply reply "Fine, thank you, and you?".

Most people do not expect a lengthy conversation about your health or something else that has gone wrong in your life unless you are speaking with close friends.

The food that day was indeed authentic and delicious, and I would definitely recommend the restaurant to others.

Fortunately, we had made reservations, as there was a long line of guests waiting for a table.

Unlike me, one of my friends started to talk like a food critic. She pointed out to the owner that the grilled cuttlefish in brown sauce could be more tender, and then moved on to critique another dish.

I felt a bit embarrassed by her candor and looked at the owner almost apologetically. However, the owner did not seem upset at all. He listened attentively to my friend, thanked her for the suggestions and promised improvements.

The conversation was cordial, and at the end, the owner thanked us again and offered us a complimentary *babaofan*, or eight-treasure rice pudding. We gladly accepted.

Whether eating with chopsticks, forks and knives, or bare hands, these are just different traditions and should be respected.

This experience was a reverse culture shock for me after being abroad for so long.

I occasionally wrote restaurant reviews 20 years ago when I worked at the Shanghai Star, a China Daily-owned tabloid. I understand the importance of honest restaurant reviews.

In the US and Europe, while customers often say "everything is great" at the restaurant, online reviews on platforms like Google could be quite different.

I frequently look at such reviews before picking a restaurant.

In China, some restaurants now offer rewards to customers who give five-star ratings on Dianping that is a popular restaurant guide and lifestyle platform.

This means five-star reviews are less reliable now because they may not tell the whole story.

Dining in a restaurant in China is a very different experience compared to the US and Europe. Restaurants in China can be quite noisy unless you are in a private room. I prefer quietness, but talking in whispers in some Western restaurants also makes me uncomfortable.

For many Chinese, Japanese and Koreans, eating noodles in Western countries can be challenging, as slurping is considered rude. But in East Asia, the same loud sound means you are actually enjoying your meal.

When I shared this with Bill, my US colleague in China Daily's New York office, he was amazed.

I explained that while I try to minimize the sound, I wouldn't suppress it completely because it would take away the pleasure of eating good noodles, especially in a Chinese noodle restaurant in New York.

I argued why it was acceptable for US people to blow their noses loudly in restaurants in New York while East Asians shouldn't slurp their noodles.

I recall my student days at Fudan University in Shanghai when the old woman running a wonton and noodles stand near my dorm would quietly mock foreign students who ate noodles in very small bites to avoid slurping them. "They don't know how to eat noodles," she would laugh.

There is no superiority in these cultural differences. Whether eating with chopsticks, forks and knives, or bare hands, these are just different traditions and should be respected.

This diversity is the beauty of our world.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:38 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:38 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

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

GWENN SONCK

Staying engaged

China is an important partner for the EU in shaping the global AI landscape



Artificial intelligence is no longer a future promise. It is becoming part of industrial policy, economic strategy and global governance all at once. For the European Union and China, that means the relationship is not only about trade or technology exchange. It is increasingly about how both sides position themselves in a world where AI is becoming a basic layer of competitiveness.

China's innovation trajectory explains why this matters. In the Global Innovation Index 2025 report released by the World Intellectual Property Organization, China entered the world's top 10 for the first time in the global innovation ranking, reflecting strong performance in knowledge and technology outputs, R&D spending and innovation clusters. Its innovation strength is visible not only in the ranking itself, but in the pace at which ideas are translated into industrial use.

What makes China especially relevant now is that AI is being treated as a strategic priority, not a standalone sector. A three-year plan issued in June aims to accelerate AI integration across the information and communications sector, with targets for more autonomous networks, broader computing-power coverage and expanded AI applications by 2028. That is a clear signal that China sees AI as a tool for upgrading industry, improving productivity and strengthening the country's long-term competitiveness.

For the EU, that should be a reason to stay engaged. China is still a major market, but it is also an innovation ecosystem where new technologies are tested and scaled quickly. More and more European companies are no longer present in China only to sell products. They are there to learn from the speed of development, benchmark their own performance and remain close to where innovation is moving fastest.

Breakthrough technologies such as AI and quantum computing are advancing rapidly. At the same time, AI-intensive industries, software companies and pharmaceutical companies continue to raise their research spending. The next wave of innovation is likely to come from actors that keep investing even when the broader climate is more cautious.

China is already central to that wave. Chinese AI labs are releasing open-weight models that are increasingly competitive with the leading systems of the United States, often at lower cost. That does not settle the AI race, but it does show that leadership is becoming more distributed. The EU cannot shape the future of AI if it remains outside the main centers of development.

Governance is the other half of the picture. On July 16, 29 countries signed an agreement in Shanghai to establish the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization. The new intergovernmental body is headquartered in Shanghai and is intended to support international cooperation on AI. Its creation shows that it is necessary for China to play a role not only in building AI systems, but also in shaping the rules around them.



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

That should matter to the EU. The EU has a vast market for AI applications, a solid research foundation and experience in setting trust frameworks. China brings scale, speed and industrial depth. Those strengths are different, but they are compatible. On issues such as safety testing, model evaluation, data governance and industrial deployment, there is room for concrete cooperation. The 12th CEIBS Europe Forum in Brussels was a useful reminder of that point. Its theme, "Competition or Complementarity? Strategic Opportunities in EU-China AI Development", captured the issue well. AI is now a matter of industrial policy, talent, governance and competitiveness, not just algorithms.

The EU and China do not need identical political systems or fully aligned policy agendas to work together. They need enough trust to keep channels open, enough curiosity to learn from each other and enough realism to focus on practical questions. How do we test powerful models? How do we ensure data security without blocking research? How do we support innovation while managing risk? These are the questions that will define the next decade.

The case for engagement is therefore straightforward. China is now too important to ignore in any serious discussion about the future of AI. The EU, for its part, has to be aware of the fact that its cooperation with China is mutually beneficial if it approaches the relationship with confidence. In a fragmented world, the responsible choice is not separation, but disciplined engagement.

Despite rising geopolitical uncertainties, Europe and China can complement each other strongly in terms of markets, industrial capabilities, and innovation ecosystems. China serves as a crucial market and innovation hub for European companies, whose deep engagement in the Chinese market is vital for maintaining their global competitiveness.

And AI will not be shaped by one country, one company or one region. It will be shaped by those willing to build bridges across systems, combine strengths and work through difficult questions together. For the EU and China, the conversation should continue and AI cooperation between the EU and China should be encouraged — not because it is easy, but because it is necessary.

The author is the executive director of the EU-China Business Association and the Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

YAN BINGQIAN

Breaking the resource curse

Once a county living off coal, Fenxi has successfully transformed its economy, providing referential experience for other regions



The economic transformation of resource-dependent regions has long been a global challenge amid industrialization and industrial restructuring.

Fenxi county in Shanxi province was once a textbook resource-based county living off coal. But as China's development model shifted and the government pushed to optimize the country's industrial layout and raise industrial concentration through coal resource consolidation policies, Fenxi's coal enterprises were shut down entirely in 2009. Fiscal revenue, long dependent on coal, plunged, employment pressure spiked and large numbers of workers from the coal sector and related services urgently needed new jobs. Fenxi had to find new sources of growth.

Faced with this crisis, the local authorities prioritized industries with comparative advantages, such as broiler chicken farming and Yulu fragrant pear cultivation, charting a distinctive development path, in which agriculture replaced coal as the county's economic mainstay.

The local government has placed strong emphasis on integrating research with industry — its broiler chicken industry partnered with Shanxi Agricultural University to establish a "Science and Technology Backyard", building laboratories on-site at chicken farms to develop breeding techniques, smart environmental control, green production, and food processing technologies across the full value chain, creating a seamless link from lab to production line.

Fenxi has also carried out a vocational skills upgrading campaign, training more than 7,000 people and turning many former miners into skilled poultry farmers and pear growers.

As this industrial transition has unfolded, new growth drivers have taken shape in Fenxi, and a more diversified development pattern is beginning to emerge.

The broiler chicken industry brought in leading agribusiness and food enterprises for joint restructuring, investing 37.5 million yuan ($5.55 million) to upgrade the industry chain and build a smart digital factory powered by 5G and the industrial internet technologies, raising the annual chicken output from six batches to seven.

The poultry industry generated more than 1 billion yuan in output value in 2024, and has extended into rural areas, channeling the added value increasingly back to farmers.

The Yulu fragrant pear industry, meanwhile, has adopted a model combining intensive development, standardized management, and integrated production, storage, and sales, with enterprises and farming households splitting profits on a 35:65 basis. Specialized cooperatives have pioneered a land-for-shares model, turning barren hillsides into new industrial parks. The pear industry has also brought in advanced techniques from Shanxi Academy of Agricultural Sciences to raise product quality through standardized management.

Tapping ecological value has proved an effective path for Fenxi's industrial upgrading. Environmental protection facilities have been built simultaneously with the broiler chicken industry, implementing manure and waste utilization to effectively control pollution while improving resource use efficiency. The Yulu fragrant pear industry has promoted green technologies such as organic fertilizer substitution, and obtained pollution-free, green food and geographical indication certifications.

The upgrading of these industries has also driven the expansion of production factors into new spaces. Leveraging the global market networks of leading enterprises, Fenxi's broiler chicken products have been exported to markets such as the Middle East and Southeast Asia. The Yulu fragrant pear industry has partnered with the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences and Shanxi Academy of Agricultural Sciences to broaden distribution channels, with products sold to first-tier cities across China and exported to Canada and Malaysia.

The emergence of these new industries has also cultivated new talent. The broiler chicken industry chain has directly created more than 100 jobs, and indirectly channeled 15,000 people across the county into related occupations. The Yulu fragrant pear industry cooperatives employ 168 people on a fixed basis and 522 people seasonally.

Fenxi's experience offers several key lessons for other resource-dependent regions.

First, breaking free from resource lock-in requires effective coordination between external shocks and internal responses. The coal resource consolidation policy served as an external shock that broke apart the old technology-institution complex, but Fenxi did not passively wait it out. It actively identified shifts in local factor endowments and turned external policy pressure into an internal driving force for industrial restructuring.

Second, unlocking "dormant assets" is crucial to making comparative advantages dynamic. Rather than abandoning its local resource endowments altogether, Fenxi rediscovered and activated underused land, ecological and labor resources, turning its natural landscape into assets with market value.

Third, regional transformation requires building an "embedded" institutional network. Fenxi's experience shows that the government should neither try to do everything nor be absent. It should instead draw up plans, introduce policies, and build cooperation platforms that effectively link leading enterprises, research institutions, cooperatives and farming households into a network built on shared benefits and risk.



YANG MEINI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Fourth, the core of industrial restructuring lies in achieving an "adaptive transformation" of the workforce. Turning miners into skilled poultry farmers or pear growers is not simply a matter of retraining; it also involves reshaping identity and social value, which is essential to giving the transformation a solid social foundation.

There is no one-size-fits-all blueprint for transforming resource-dependent regions, but Fenxi's experience shows that combining a capable government with an effective market, while building new industries on the foundation of local resource endowments, offers a path worth pursuing further — one that can help such regions break free from the "resource curse" and achieve high-quality development.

The author is an associate research fellow at the National Academy of Economic Strategy at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the managing editor of China Finance and Economic Review. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:38 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:38 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

Auto exports surge; BRI mkts hottest

Sales of China-made cars overseas surpassed 1 million in June alone

By **REN QI**
renqi@chinadaily.com.cn

China's automobile exports experienced robust growth in the first half, with new energy vehicles emerging as a major driving force, particularly in markets involved in the Belt and Road Initiative, industry data showed.

From January to June, China exported 1.135 million NEVs to BRI partner countries, representing a remarkable year-on-year increase of 59.4 percent, said the General Administration of Customs, citing data from the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers.

During the same period, the total export value of autos and auto-related parts to these regions reached $83.67 billion, up 30.8 percent year-on-year. This accounted for 57.5 percent of the country's total autos and auto-related part exports. In terms of volume, exports of finished vehicles to BRI partner countries stood at 3.381 million units, jumping 48.1 percent from a year earlier.

This vehicle export boom aligns with the broader strengthening of trade ties. Customs data revealed that China's total imports and exports with BRI partner countries reached 12.97 trillion yuan ($1.92 trillion) in the first half, up 14.8 percent year-on-year and accounting for 50.9 percent of the nation's total foreign trade.

On a broader scale, China's total auto exports in the first half reached 5.31 million units, surging 53 percent year-on-year. The momentum was particularly strong in June, when monthly exports surpassed the 1-million mark, reaching 1.037 million units.

NEVs continued to be the star performers in the global market, with total exports of such vehicles in the first six months skyrocketing by 120 percent to 2.355 million units. In June alone, NEV exports soared 160 percent to 523,000 units, making up 50.4 percent of total auto exports for the month. This milestone indicates that one out of every two vehicles exported by China in June was a new energy vehicle.



New energy vehicles await shipment at Taicang Port, Jiangsu province. JI HAIXIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

The stellar half-year performance builds upon China's solid foundation in the global auto market. In 2025, China exported a total of 7.098 million vehicles, up 21.1 percent year-on-year, maintaining its position as the world's largest auto exporter for the third consecutive year.

Global automakers are actively leveraging this robust ecosystem. Grace Tao, vice-president of Tesla, said China remains one of the company's most vital markets, with its layout extending beyond sales to encompass manufacturing, research and development, supply chains, charging networks and energy-related businesses.

"The Shanghai Gigafactory is a crucial base in Tesla's global manufacturing and export system, and the Shanghai Megafactory has further extended our layout from vehicles to energy products," Tao said.

She said vehicle manufacturing resembles a relay race requiring strong team coordination, noting that the localization rate of components at the Shanghai facility now exceeds 95 percent. Tesla currently partners with over 400 Chinese tier-one suppliers, more than 60 of which have entered its global supply chain.

Tao emphasized that China's advantage lies not just in its massive scale, but in its rapid pace of change, seamless collaboration and swift implementation of innovations. The global debut of the Model Y L in the Chinese market demonstrates the increasingly important role of the local team and supply chain. She added that the Chinese market is a "must-have" for the company, featuring a resilient supply chain and continuous innovative momentum that makes it hard to find a "second China".

Strategic pivots transforming KBC's business, finances

By **LI JING** in Yiyang, Hunan
lijing2009@chinadaily.com.cn

At a factory in Yiyang, Central China's Hunan province, a carbon-ceramic brake disc made by KBC Corp Ltd is light enough to lift with one hand. Yet, as company executives readily admit, the true challenge is producing tens of thousands of them with the microscopic precision demanded by global automakers.

Nearby, KBC's next breakthrough appears deceptively simple — a black sheet less than half a millimeter thick, that resembles delicate traditional Chinese Xuan paper.

While the brake disc is already fitted onto mass-produced electric vehicles, the sheet — carbon paper vital for hydrogen fuel cells — is undergoing customer validation and initial deliveries. Together, they demonstrate how KBC is leveraging two decades of carbon-materials expertise to pivot beyond its traditional base in photovoltaic manufacturing.

"For more than 20 years, we have focused on just one thing," said Dai Chaohui, president of KBC. "We are now using our accumulated expertise to unlock new, high-value applications."

This strategic shift is reshaping KBC's finances. Photovoltaic products, which generated 990 million yuan ($146.7 million) in revenue in 2023, fell to 175 million yuan by 2025 amid broader solar sector realignment.

Meanwhile, its transportation and lithium-battery businesses surged to 615 million yuan, accounting for 76.6 percent of total revenue.

Making a carbon-ceramic disc requires weaving carbon fibers into a 3D skeleton before infusing it with carbon and molten silicon. The result is an ultra-tough composite offering high friction stability and heat resistance. Unlike foreign competitors predominantly using short fibers, KBC's flagship discs rely on continuous long fibers to achieve greater strength and toughness.

Weighing more than 60 percent less than traditional cast-iron brakes, KBC's discs significantly reduce unsprung mass, improve handling and help extend battery range. While prohibitive costs once kept this space-age technology confined to supercars, KBC's integrated manufacturing and self-developed furnaces have slashed production costs to roughly one-fifth of overseas levels.

This enables the technology to move from million-yuan hypercars to EVs priced under 400,000 yuan.

"Making one disc in a laboratory is simple," said Wang Hua, general manager of KBC's composite materials business. "Controlling industrial stability on the factory floor is the real challenge." KBC now holds more than 80 percent of China's market for passenger cars fitted with carbon-ceramic discs as standard.

"The key is not the material alone," added Li Jun, KBC's chief engineer and senior vice-president. "It is the integration of materials, equipment, engineering and process management into a single, unified system."

Market analysts see vast room for growth. Huayuan Securities projects China's automotive carbon-ceramic brake market will expand from 7.9 billion yuan in 2025 to 21.5 billion yuan by 2030.

To meet this surging demand, KBC currently has an annual capacity of 400,000 discs — enough for 100,000 vehicles — with plans to double that capacity.

While gross margins remained slim during early scale-up, executives estimate economics will improve significantly once annual applications exceed 200,000 vehicles.

Carbon paper represents KBC's next frontier. Serving as the gas-diffusion layer at the heart of hydrogen fuel cells, it must simultaneously conduct electricity, transport gases and drain water.

To achieve roll-to-roll production without material warping, KBC built a 50-meter-long furnace operating at up to 2,400 C. In customer tests, KBC's carbon paper has outperformed imported benchmarks while cutting costs by more than 20 percent, according to the company.

"Lower costs from mass production are inevitable, but what customers care about most is technology-driven cost reduction," said Long Peng, deputy general manager of KBC's hydrogen subsidiary. Although currently being delivered in small batches, domestic carbon paper is projected to capture a growing share of China's hydrogen market by 2030.

Investors bullish on hard-tech industries

Foreign financial institutions are seeing a stronger investment case for China's hard-tech industries as breakthroughs in artificial intelligence, semiconductors and advanced manufacturing drive an increase in exports and earnings, resulting in growing interest from global investors.

China's high-tech exports surged over 50 percent year-on-year in July, well ahead of the 17.8 percent growth in total exports, customs data show. The export gains are being mirrored in investment flows, with foreign funds moving into Chinese technology stocks and global indices adding newly listed hard-tech companies.

Rob Subbaraman, head of global macro research and co-head of global markets research at Nomura, said China's low-cost and abundant electricity supply, growing talent pool and early lead in physical AI are driving the rapid development of its AI industry chain.

China's development of open-weight models could accelerate their adoption by businesses, allowing productivity gains from AI as a general-purpose technology to spread more quickly across the economy, he said, citing models from Chinese firms such as DeepSeek and Moonshot AI.

China's strength in advanced manufacturing has also become increasingly evident, said Robin Xing, chief China economist at Morgan Stanley, pointing to the country's roughly half share of global installed new energy storage capacity and the rapid growth in outbound licensing deals for innovative drugs. These trends, he said, underpin the long-term investment case for China's hard-tech sector and leading manufacturers.

Such strengths are increasingly being reflected in foreign investors' allocation decisions. This year, Goldman Sachs has twice raised its 12-month target for the CSI 300 on improving earnings momentum, and retained an overweight view on Chinese equities.

Kinger Lau, chief China equity strategist for Goldman Sachs Research, said the bank's positive view reflects improving earnings momentum, and favorable macroeconomic and liquidity conditions. A-share equities offer international investors diversification benefits that remained underappreciated, along with attractive exposure to hard-tech and AI themes, he added.

Individual companies are drawing overseas interest too.

ChangXin Memory Technologies surged 465.82 percent on its debut on Shanghai's STAR Market last month, reaching a market capitalization of more than 3.2 trillion yuan ($474.56 billion).

United States-based Tema ETFs made the chipmaker a top holding at a 10.56 percent weight on its debut day, while MSCI officially added CXMT to its China All Shares Index on Monday under a fast-track rule for large IPOs.

Robotics is where the enthusiasm is most visible. Unitree, set to become the first Chinese mainland-listed humanoid robot maker, priced its Shanghai IPO at 150.8 yuan a share, representing 10 percent of its post-offering share capital. The offering is expected to raise about 6.1 billion yuan in gross proceeds.

That optimism, however, exists alongside broader economic pressures. Nathan Chow, senior economist at DBS Bank, said the imbalance between relatively strong supply and weak demand remained pronounced, with household consumption and some companies' profitability still under pressure.

Investment in infrastructure could help offset the weakness in private investment in the near term, while lowering logistics and energy costs and improving the efficiency of resource allocation over the longer term, Chow said.

The implementation of policy measures would be key to sustaining the recovery in the second half of this year, analysts noted.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Briefly

Overnight reverse repos scheduled

The People's Bank of China will conduct overnight reverse repo operations on Aug 14 and from Aug 17 to Aug 19, to better meet the short-term liquidity needs of the banking system. The operations will be conducted at a fixed interest rate through quantity-based bidding, with the daily amount capped at 600 billion yuan ($88 billion), according to the PBOC. Overnight reverse repo is a process in which the central bank purchases securities from commercial banks through a bidding process, with an agreement to sell them back the next day.

New air route to Romania, Croatia

Air China will launch a new route connecting Beijing with Romania's Bucharest and Croatia's Zagreb, starting Sept 4, the airline announced. The new service will link Beijing Capital International Airport with Zagreb via Bucharest, with flights scheduled for every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The carrier now serves 27 destinations across Europe, operating nearly 260 flights weekly.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Nation's green gains aiding global carbon goals

By **ZHENG XIN**
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

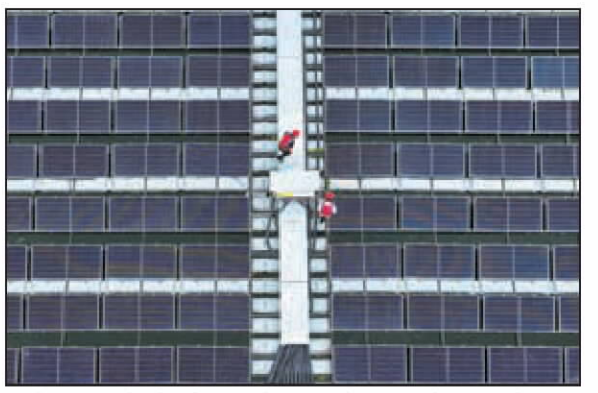
China's rapidly expanding green power sector is expected to provide crucial support for the global energy transition, as the country leads the world with advanced solar technology, massive manufacturing capacity and formidable export capabilities, said a leading economist.

Fan Gang, vice-president of the China Society of Economic Reform, described the new energy sector as a highly promising sunrise industry for the nation, adding that China's advanced photovoltaic technologies, massive industrial capacity and strong export performance give the nation an unprecedented advantage in guiding and supporting the global clean energy transition.

Over the next five to 10 years, the global push for clean energy — particularly solar power — will become increasingly urgent, Fan said.

He pointed out that if conflicts in the Middle East persist, the risks of surging oil prices and supply disruptions will intensify. Coupled with the skyrocketing electricity demand driven by the artificial intelligence industry, the shift toward renewables has never been more urgent.

"In the past, the primary driver for new energy development was reducing carbon emissions and combating climate change. However, with the escalation of geopolitical conflicts, nations are profoundly realizing the vulnerability of fossil fuels in terms of supply security," Fan said, adding that energy security has become a powerful new engine for green development.


Technicians check solar panels in Huaibei, East China's Anhui province. WAN SHANCHAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

He emphasized that solar power is the most equitable and secure energy resource available. Unlike nuclear, wind, hydropower or fossil fuels — which suffer from distinct geographic and resource limitations — solar power can be generated virtually anywhere, from deserts to water surfaces and rooftops.

This transition is not merely a climate response, but a strategic choice to safeguard national energy security, Fan added. He urged the country to seize this opportunity to consolidate its technological advantages, drive the continuous upgrading of the new energy supply chain, and contribute Chinese strength to global green and low-carbon development.

This strategic pivot is already being reflected in China's domestic power mix. According to official data, the nation's energy sector has crossed a historic threshold, with coal-fired power generation accounting for less than 50 percent of total electricity output for the first time.

During the first six months, coal power generation stood at 2.5 trillion kilowatt-hours, bringing its share down to 49.7 percent, said Xing Yiteng, deputy director-general of the National Energy Administration's development planning department.

"Falling below 50 percent of total power generation for the first time is a landmark achievement in China's long-term push for renewable energy alternatives, signaling a new breakthrough in the country's green and low-carbon transition," Xing said.

He said that despite complex global headwinds, China's energy security and effective investments continue to see robust advances.

China's domestic momentum is creating massive ripple effects globally. The International Renewable Energy Agency reported that over the past decade, the global average cost of electricity for wind and solar projects plummeted by over 60 percent and 80 percent, respectively.

This massive cost reduction is largely due to China's continuous technological innovation, unrivaled manufacturing scale and highly efficient supply chains, the agency said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:38 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:38 PM

BUSINESS

Linxiang a 'hot zone' for fishing tackle

Veritable hub for angling gear, city makes over 80% of floats sold in China



A worker manufactures fishing tackle at a company in Linxiang, Hunan province, on July 1, 2025. CHEN SIHAN / XINHUA

By LI JING in Linxiang, Hunan
lijing2009@chinadaily.com.cn

As recreational fishing gains popularity among younger Chinese consumers seeking outdoor leisure activities, a small city in Central China's Hunan province is reaping the benefits.

Linxiang, a county-level city on the southern bank of the Yangtze River, now produces more than 80 percent of the fishing floats sold in China, turning a traditional fishing accessory into the foundation of a manufacturing cluster worth more than 9 billion yuan ($1.33 billion) a year.

What began as a handful of family workshops more than three decades ago has grown into an industry supporting more than 3,100 businesses, directly employing around 60,000 people, according to local government data.

Its rise offers a glimpse into how China's county-level economies are leveraging industrial specialization, technological innovation and shifting consumer trends to create new growth engines.

Fishing has long been woven into life in Linxiang. Located along the Yangtze River and surrounded by lakes and wetlands, the city has abundant aquatic resources and a deep-rooted fishing culture. For generations, local residents fashioned simple fishing floats from reeds gathered along riverbanks.

The city's first modern float-making industry traces its origins to 1992, when a Taiwan-invested joint venture was established, training a generation of skilled workers who would later launch businesses of their own.

What followed was a classic example of industrial clustering. Former employees became entrepreneurs, suppliers and distributors. Small workshops expanded into factories, while supporting businesses emerged in materials, coatings, machinery, packaging, logistics and e-commerce.

"By building on our historical roots and industrial foundation, we gradually developed a complete industrial ecosystem," said Xiong Shicheng, mayor of Linxiang.

Today, manufacturers can source almost every component needed to produce a fishing float without leaving the city, creating efficiencies that have helped the cluster remain competitive even as labor costs have risen.

Few people have witnessed that transformation more closely than Li Jianming, founder of Hunan Chihai Float and Fishing Tackle Co Ltd.

Li started as a maintenance technician at the JV before starting a family workshop in 1995 with only a few hundred yuan.

"Back then, most production relied on manual labor," Li recalled. "Quality varied from worker to worker, costs were high and manufacturing cycles were long."

Over the following three decades, Li focused on upgrading production processes, gradually replacing labor-intensive procedures with automated equipment.

Today, his company operates automated spraying systems, digital molding equipment and artificial intelligence-assisted manufacturing processes. According to the company, research and development investments account for 5 percent of revenue.

"Mechanical and intelligent production has significantly improved quality consistency while reducing costs and shortening production cycles," he said.

The broader industry has followed a similar path.

According to local authorities, Linxiang companies have developed more than 4,000 fishing tackle products and accumulated over 600 patents. Thirty-four local enterprises have been recognized as national high-tech companies.

Innovation is increasingly extending beyond manufacturing itself.

Electronic floats equipped with sensors can now transmit bite signals directly to smartphones, smartwatches and other wearable devices. Bluetooth-enabled products, artificial intelligence-assisted fishing accessories and 3D-printed components are gradually moving from niche products into the mainstream market.

"What surprises many people is how much technology has entered this traditional industry," Li said.

The industry's rapid development has coincided with a broader shift in consumer behavior.

As incomes rise and interest in outdoor recreation grows, fishing has become one of China's most popular leisure activities.

China now has around 150 million recreational anglers, according to the General Administration of Sport of China's China Outdoor Sports Industry Development Report (2024-2025), representing more than 10 percent of the country's population.

The demographic profile is also changing. Industry reports show that consumers aged between 25 and 44 account for nearly half of fishing enthusiasts, reflecting the growing appeal of the activity among younger and middle-income groups.

That trend has fueled demand for more specialized and premium products.

According to industry research, China's fishing equipment market reached about 24 billion yuan in 2024, maintaining a strong compound annual growth rate of nearly 19 percent from 2020 to 2024. This momentum, outpacing the global average of 4.43 percent, is expected to drive the domestic market past 30 billion yuan by the end of 2026, supported by growing participation, competitive fishing events and the expansion of social media-driven consumption.

For manufacturers in Linxiang, the surge in demand has created opportunities far beyond the city's traditional customer base.

The rise of e-commerce and livestreaming has transformed how fishing equipment reaches consumers.

In Linxiang's livestream studios, hosts demonstrate products in real time, answer questions from viewers and generate sales directly from factory floors.

Among them is Lan Congcong, a livestream host with Hunan Fuyi Fishing Tackle Co Ltd.

"Years ago, we relied heavily on trade fairs and offline sales," Lan said. "Now anglers from anywhere in China can discover our products and place orders instantly."

The shift has allowed smaller manufacturers to bypass traditional distribution channels and connect directly with consumers.

Local authorities say the city has attracted more than 600 livestream hosts and built a comprehensive e-commerce ecosystem around fishing tackle products.

In 2025, e-commerce shipments linked to the sector exceeded 6 billion yuan, according to official data.

Linxiang has also sought to expand beyond manufacturing by combining sports, tourism and consumer spending.

The city now hosts more than 30 fishing competitions annually, including the flagship Linxiang Float Cup, one of China's most influential angling tournaments.

This year's event, scheduled for September, will offer total prize money exceeding 2.25 million yuan and is expected to attract more than 2,000 participants, including professional anglers and livestream influencers.

For local officials, the tournaments serve a purpose beyond competition.

"Thirty years ago, companies mainly focused on production," said Luo Xing, director of specialty industry development center in Linxiang. "Today, we are thinking about brands, consumer experience and how to connect products with events and tourism."

The competitions have become platforms for product launches, market feedback and brand promotion while helping boost spending on hotels, restaurants and local attractions, Luo added.

Local authorities estimate that the events have generated billions of online views and significantly raised awareness of the city among fishing enthusiasts nationwide.

Although the domestic market remains the industry's primary growth driver, manufacturers are increasingly targeting overseas customers.

Products from Linxiang are now exported to more than 30 countries and regions, with South Korea, Japan, Vietnam and Thailand among the key markets.

According to Zhang Dazhi, general manager of Linchuang Warehousing and Logistics Co Ltd, improving logistics networks has made overseas deliveries faster and more reliable.

Products shipped to South Korea, for example, can typically reach customers within a week, he said.

Local authorities say overseas orders exceeded 15 million units in 2025, generating export revenue of 1.68 billion yuan.

Industry participants say exports remain a relatively small share of total sales, but overseas markets are becoming increasingly important as manufacturers seek new sources of growth and introduce freshwater fishing products to international consumers.

For the city, the significance of the industry extends well beyond economic statistics.

"A single fishing float has created jobs, encouraged entrepreneurship and given Linxiang a distinctive identity," Xiong said.

As technology, e-commerce and outdoor recreation continue reshaping consumer markets, Linxiang's manufacturers are betting that a product once made from simple river reeds can continue carrying the city into its next phase of growth.

Online
Scan to watch the related video.

Industry heritage at heart of city's global exports boom

By LI JING in Linxiang, Hunan

The brightly painted fishing floats that made Hunan province's Linxiang famous are no longer the only products rolling out of factories in this small city on the southern bank of the Yangtze River.

As China's largest fishing-float manufacturing hub looks beyond its traditional niche, local companies are expanding into lure fishing tackle, outdoor recreation and tourism, betting that a growing appetite for outdoor lifestyles can create new avenues for growth.

The shift reflects a broader evolution underway in Linxiang, where an industrial cluster built around a simple fishing accessory is increasingly branching into higher-value products and consumer experiences.

"Fishing floats remain our foundation, but the industry is no longer limited to floats," said Li Bin, general manager of Hunan Ruiqi Outdoor Products Co Ltd.

"Many supporting industries have gradually gathered here, including fishing rods, hooks, fishing lines and lures."

While Linxiang built its reputation on freshwater fishing floats, lure fishing has emerged as one of the industry's fastest-growing segments.

Unlike traditional float fishing, lure fishing relies on artificial bait designed to mimic the movement of prey fish. The technique has gained popularity among younger anglers worldwide and has become a major category in overseas markets.

Ruiqi, one of Linxiang's growing exporters, ships lure products to customers across Europe, Southeast Asia and North America.





Left: Staff members test a fishing rod at an outdoor products company in Linxiang on July 1, 2025. **Right:** An employee promotes fishing tackle via livestreaming in Linxiang on July 1, 2025. PHOTOS BY CHEN SIHAN / XINHUA

Li said the company's competitive advantage comes from the manufacturing ecosystem that has developed around Linxiang's float industry over the past three decades.

"From raw materials and precision processing to packaging and logistics, almost every step can be completed locally," he said. "That allows us to respond faster and keep costs under control."

The company has also adopted 3D-printing technologies to accelerate product development and customize designs for overseas buyers.

According to Li, the technology has significantly shortened development cycles and improved flexibility for small-batch orders, a growing requirement among international customers.

Industry experts often describe industrial clusters as networks where suppliers, manufacturers and service providers reinforce one another.

Linxiang's fishing-tackle sector offers a textbook example.

Local authorities say the city now hosts more than 3,100 market entities linked to fishing gear production and services, employing roughly 60,000 people.

The ecosystem stretches beyond manufacturing to include packaging, logistics, e-commerce, mold production and product testing.

That concentration has helped local companies diversify into new product categories without building entirely new supply chains.

"Many of the skills developed in float production can be applied to other fishing products," Li said.

"Precision manufacturing, painting techniques and quality control systems can all be shared across categories."

The result is a gradual expansion from a single-product cluster into a broader fishing-equipment industry.

The industry's ambitions increasingly extend beyond China.

Local authorities say fishing-tackle products from Linxiang are now sold in more than 30 countries and regions.

Li said overseas markets present significant opportunities but also new challenges.

Environmental regulations, product certification requirements and changing trade rules are raising compliance costs, particularly for smaller manufacturers.

"Competition is no longer simply about price," he said. "Companies need stronger technology, more reliable quality control and a better understanding of local market requirements."

The industry's expansion is also reshaping the local economy beyond factory floors.

In Jiangnan township on the outskirts of Linxiang, a restored lake has been turned into a destination for lure fishing competitions, camping and outdoor recreation.

The project grew out of the city's efforts to build tourism around its fishing culture.

"We started seeing more anglers arriving with recreational vehicles during lure-fishing events," said Yuan Gang, an official involved in local economic development and the operation of a lakeside camping site.

"That convinced us there was demand for a broader outdoor experience."

The lakeside development now combines fishing activities with camping facilities, local food offerings and rural tourism attractions.

Visitors can spend the day fishing, picking seasonal produce from nearby farms and participating in outdoor activities before staying overnight at the campsite.

Local officials hope the model will extend visitor stays and generate additional income for nearby villages.

Industry reports show growing participation among younger consumers, particularly those seeking social and experience-driven leisure activities.

For Linxiang, that trend offers an opportunity to transform a manufacturing success story into a broader outdoor-economy ecosystem.

A city once known primarily for producing fishing floats is now trying to capture value across the entire chain — from factory production and exports to competitions, tourism and lifestyle consumption.

"The float industry gave us our starting point," Yuan said. "What we're building now is a much larger ecosystem around it."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:38 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:38 PM



Clockwise from left: A *ding* tripod with *chi* dragon patterns. A *bianzhong* chime bell. Ancient bronze items from Shanxi are exhibited at the Georgian National Museum.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

ANCIENT ART, NEW BRIDGE

Bronze treasures connect Shanxi province and Georgia through cultural exchange

By **YUAN SHENGGAO**

In late July, the Georgian National Museum welcomed an impressive new addition to its exhibitions, garnering great interest from residents in this Caucasian country.

As a part of the 2026 Civilization Bridge Program, an initiative launched by the National Cultural Heritage Administration for overseas exhibitions of Chinese cultural relics, a showcase of Shanxi's ancient bronze ware made its debut in this museum in Tbilisi on July 20.

Under the theme "From the Yellow River to the Caucasus — A Special Exhibition of Shanxi's Bronze Civilization in Georgia", the collection includes 36 pieces or sets of bronze ware, dating from around the 16th century BC to the 3rd century AD.

This exhibition is jointly organized by Shanxi Museum and the Georgian National Museum, supported by China's National Cultural Heritage Administration and sponsored by the Belt and Road Cultural Development Association. It will run until Oct 18.

On the opening day of the exhibition, Liang Yujun, deputy curator of Shanxi Museum, hosted a seminar to introduce the aesthetics, significance and characteristics of Shanxi's bronze ware to the local audience.

Liang said that, in ancient times, bronze was recognized as an auspicious metal and bronze ware was an important part of the ancient ritual system.

"Shanxi is one of the places where the largest numbers of ancient Chinese bronze items have been discovered," he said. "This exhibition of Shanxi's bronze relics will help visitors better understand ancient Chinese civilization."

According to Liang, the exhibition is divided into three sections focusing on artistic aesthetics, ritual system and production techniques.

The exhibits fall into such categories as *ding* — tripod cauldrons; *gui* — round-mouthed food vessels; *ge* — dagger axes; and *daigou* — robe hooks.

The displayed items mostly feature clear patterns, showing the high technical level in bronze ware production in ancient China.

Heavenly Craftsmanship

The first section of the exhibition is titled "Heavenly Craftsmanship", highlighting the technical marvels and aesthetics of Shanxi's ancient bronze ware.

Liang said that an outstanding feature of Shanxi's bronze ware is the perfect balance of functionality and aesthetics, even for those dating to the Xia (c. 21st century-16th century BC) and Shang (c.16th century-11th century BC) dynasties.

"The bronze items of the Xia and Shang dynasties, simple as they are, never lack symbolism," Liang said. "The typical patterns show the unique cultural connotation of those periods. For instance, the pattern of *taotie* — a legendary ferocious beast in Chinese mythology — was meant to arouse senses of awe and respect among the subjects of the empires."

In the periods that followed, especially in the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BC), patterns on the bronze items grew more complicated and exquisite, as the Shanxi exhibits show. The official said the rich forms of patterns — such as beasts, birds, clouds and waves — and the higher degree of abstraction were believed to have developed alongside the technological advancements of the period and tailored to different ritual scenarios.

He added that the bronze items in the later periods also display a deeper integration of functionality and aesthetics.

A square-based and round-mouthed bronze *zun* — or wine vessel — on display at the Tbilisi museum, for instance, illustrates this integration.

The vessel, featuring an abstract dragon pattern on its neck and wave pattern on its body, is supported by a square base.

"The square base was meant to make the vessel stable," said the Shanxi Museum official. "However, it also has a symbolism echoing the pattern motifs above."

"In ancient China, the square symbolized the Earth, just like the circle symbolized the sky or heaven," Liang said. "The dragon is the totem of the Chinese nation, symbolizing the majesty of sovereigns and having a presence on the Earth, in the sea and in heaven."

Liang further explained the symbolic meanings of various motifs, aiming to give audience members a better understanding of the cultural connotations of ancient Chinese bronze ware.

The beast-face pattern, for instance, is common on bronze items of the Shang and Zhou (c.11th century-256 BC) dynasties. It usually features protruding eyes and an exaggerated wide mouth. With a strong religious sense and awe-inspiring power, the pattern is regarded as a link among human beings, the world and heaven.

The coiling *chi* pattern — or interlaced hydra pattern — is mostly seen on bronze items from the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period (475-221 BC).

In Chinese mythology, *chi* is a hornless dragon featuring a dragon's head and snake's body. It symbolizes the continuation of life and lasting vitality.

The feather-and-wing pattern, which began to be used in the Shanxi region during the late Spring and Autumn Period, symbolizes the people's aspiration to ascend to heaven after death. It can also be interpreted as the soul's revival. "With a flying-and-flowing rhythm and the beautifully abstracted design, the pattern represents an extremely high level of Chinese bronze ware art," said Liang.



A square-based *zun* vessel with dragon and wave patterns.



A bronze *fu* container featuring a body and cover of the same shape.



A bronze *ge*, or dagger axe.

During the exhibition, locals also discovered the unique features of bronze items.

Elene Khurtsilava, a staff member at the Georgian National Museum, said the *fu* — a bronze container of grains — is her favorite exhibit.

She noticed that the item features a body and a cover of the same shape. "You can put it upside down, and it just looks the same," she said. "It can also be used as two separate utensils."

On her social media account, Khurtsilava said: "I strongly recommend this exhibition, which, I believe, will be an unforgettable and impressive journey to experience ancient Chinese culture."

Rites and Music

The second section of the exhibition, called "Rites and Music", is meant to reveal the relation between bronze ware and the ritual system that has existed in China for about 3,000 years, since the early Zhou Dynasty.

In the Zhou Dynasty, bronze ware served not only as daily utensils but also as ritual vessels. During the period, the country's hierarchical system was marked by the graded ownership of ritual vessels, especially the bronze vessels.

According to the system, the sovereigns of the Zhou Dynasty — who called themselves "the sons of heaven" — were "authorized by the heavenly sovereign" to own nine *ding* tripods, while dukes and princes could own seven, high-ranking officials could own five, and lower-ranking scholars could own three or one.

A similar system was also applied to the ownership of bronze food vessels known as *gui*, according to which, the sons of heaven could own eight, dukes and princes could own six and high-ranking officials could own four.

During the exhibition in Tbilisi, a bronze *gui* is highlighted.

When visiting the exhibition, Lili Davitashvili, a Georgian Sinologist, noticed that the vessel features ocular thunder and straight-line patterns.

She said she used to study in China. During her stay, she developed a strong interest in ancient bronze ware, especially the patterns on the items.

"The patterns, either animals or decorative motifs, are the important identifying features of the vessels," Davitashvili said. "The patterns on this bronze *gui* give me a sense of awe and stability."

"I'm glad to see so many ancient Chinese bronze items in my home country," she added.

In ancient China, rites had always been accompanied by music, giving typical musical instruments such as *bianzhong* — or bronze chime bells — a special place in the ritual system.

At the Georgian National Museum, a set of *bianzhong* was on display. It is composed of bronze bells of different sizes. An introduction to the items informs visitors that music can be played by striking the bells according to scores.

Production techniques

The third section of the exhibition, called "Firing for Thousands of Years", is designed to show the millennia-long history of bronze ware production.

Historical records show that China began to produce bronze ware more than 4,000 years ago and Shanxi has been a hub of production since then.

Relics unearthed in Shanxi show that local bronze ware production techniques reached a height during the Shang and Zhou dynasties.

The level of production techniques was demonstrated by the discovery of a large amount of production equipment from those periods.

A bronze casting site, with relics dating to the Zhou Dynasty, is among the key bronze ware production sites in Shanxi. The large number of clay molds and crucibles shows that this site was capable of large-scale and standardized production of bronze vessels.

According to Liang, clay mold casting was the core technique for bronze ware production in ancient China.

"The molding set is usually composed of the inner and outer molds," he said. "Molten bronze was poured into the cavity between the two molds, and after it cooled, the molds were smashed to reveal a bronze vessel with clear patterns."

He noted that since this technique has strict requirements for temperature control, the mixing ratio of molten metals — bronze is an alloy of copper, tin and other metals — and mold precision, it represented an advanced level of production nationwide or even worldwide during that period.

At the Tbilisi exhibition, sets of clay molds and crucibles are on display.

Also on show are bronze items produced via the techniques of gold or silver inlay, jade inlay, and gold gilding. According to Liang, these techniques emerged in the Spring and Autumn Period, echoing the noble classes' pursuit of a higher level of aesthetics and better quality of life.

For instance, a dove-shaped bronze cane head produced using the gold inlay technique is on display in the Georgian National Museum. The head of the cane is a dove with glittering inlaid gold threads.

The exhibition in Tbilisi also features an interactive zone for visitors. There are instructors who teach children and adults how to make rubbings of patterns on bronze ware models and repair relics.

According to Liang, this is the first time that an interactive zone has been set up for an overseas exhibition of Shanxi's cultural relics.

Liu Yan contributed to this story.



Visitors try to make rubbings of bronze ware patterns during the exhibition.



Locals visit the Shanxi bronze ware exhibition at the Georgian National Museum in Tbilisi.

ADVERTORIAL

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:38 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:38 PM

CHINA

Space industry pioneer Wang Xiji dies at 105

By ZHAO LEI
zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

Wang Xiji, one of the pioneers of China's space industry and chief designer of the nation's first recoverable reconnaissance satellite, died in Beijing on Wednesday at the age of 105.

Born in Kunming, Yunnan province, in July 1921, Wang was the fourth child in a family whose father was a successful businessman. Driven by an aspiration to contribute to national rejuvenation, he was admitted to the mechanical engineering department of National Southwestern Associated University in 1938.


Wang Xiji

After graduating in the autumn of 1942, Wang worked successively at three local plants in Yunnan.

He nevertheless remained determined to put his knowledge to use for the country.

In 1948, he went to the United States to pursue advanced studies at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, majoring in power and fuel engineering. He earned a master's degree one year later. After learning from news reports about the founding of the People's Republic of China, he decided not to pursue a doctoral degree and instead resolved to use his expertise to help build New China.

Wang returned to China in March 1950 alongside dozens of patriotic Chinese scholars. He taught at Dalian University of Technology and later at Shanghai Jiao Tong University.

In 1958, at the age of 37, Wang was transferred to the Shanghai Institute of Mechanical and Electrical Design — as it was known — now part of the China Academy of Space Technology, to lead the development of sounding rockets. This marked the beginning of his lifelong career in the space sector.

Facing an almost nonexistent technical foundation and limited industrial support, Wang and his team began developing scaled-down test rockets under extremely rudimentary conditions.

With only hand-operated calculating devices at their disposal, several people worked day and night for more than two months just to calculate a single trajectory. The stacks of paper they used for the calculations were higher than their desks. With no launch site available, they turned a rice field into one, using a winch to hoist the rocket onto the launch stand and a hand pump to pressurize and charge the rocket with propellant.

In February 1960, China's first liquid-fuel sounding rocket lifted off from a desolate beach on the outskirts of Shanghai, reaching an altitude of several kilometers. Wang later described the launch as the most important success of his career because it marked China's first tangible step toward space.

He went on to oversee the development of 12 of China's 18 early sounding rocket models. These rockets gradually reached altitudes of more than 100 km and carried out missions ranging from atmospheric detection and space-instrument verification to biological experiments involving small animals.

Drawing on experience with sounding rockets and ballistic missile technology, Wang formulated the overall design plan for China's first carrier rocket, the Long March 1. The rocket made its maiden flight on April 24, 1970, successfully placing China's first satellite, Dongfanghong 1, into orbit.

Wang later served as chief designer of China's first recoverable reconnaissance satellite. After numerous tests and calculations, the satellite was successfully launched and recovered in Guizhou province in November 1975, making China the third country in the world to acquire satellite-return technology.

He also led research and design work on several subsequent models of recoverable reconnaissance satellites.

In the 1980s, Wang was invited to participate in the development of China's manned spaceflight roadmap. Based on his analysis of economic feasibility and China's actual technological and financial capabilities, he was a prominent advocate of starting with non-reusable crewed spacecraft rather than pursuing the more costly space shuttle approach.

In 1993, he was elected an academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Through extensive practical exploration, Wang remained committed to a scientific, rigorous and pragmatic approach.

He once said, "When it comes to technical issues, we cannot simply follow the majority. Instead, we must respect objective laws and remain committed to seeking truth from facts. Sometimes, the minority who insist on their views are the ones who are right."

Wang remained active in the space community well into his later years.

At 80, he served as chief designer of the Double Star Program, a China-Europe joint initiative to explore Earth's magnetosphere. In his 90s, he advocated research into space-based solar power stations, and at 95, he led studies on the application of internet technologies to space programs.

The veteran engineer also pioneered concepts such as "space infrastructure" and wrote several professional books to pass on his engineering expertise to younger generations.

In recognition of his dedication and contributions, the government honored Wang as one of the key figures in China's ballistic missile, nuclear weapon and satellite programs and awarded him numerous honorary titles.

Shipyard fire


Firefighters battle a blaze aboard a vessel at Century Huahai (Fujian) Shipbuilding Heavy Industry Co in Gantang township, Fu'an city, Fujian province, on Thursday. The fire, which broke out at around 1:09 pm, injured 12 people, who were taken to hospital for treatment. The blaze has been brought under control, and the cause remains under investigation. XINHUA

PM2.5 falls as China advances green goals

Nation targets smarter environmental monitoring, bolsters efficiency by 2030

By HOU LIQIANG
houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

China has seen continued improvement in its ecological and environmental quality this year, with major indicators showing notable progress as it strives to advance the Beautiful China initiative during the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30), Minister of Ecology and Environment Huang Runqiu said on Thursday.

Addressing a State Council Information Office news conference, Huang said that from January to July, the national average concentration of PM2.5 particulate matter fell by 1.8 micrograms per cubic meter year-on-year, a decline of 6.2 percent.

The proportion of days with fairly good air quality, defined as an air quality index below 100 on a scale of 0 to 500, also rose by 3.9 percentage points from a year earlier, he said.

Water quality also improved, with the proportion of surface water rated Grade I to III reaching 86.5 percent during the period, up 2.4 percentage points year-on-year, Huang said. China uses a five-tier surface water quality system, with Grade I the best and Grade III suitable for the survival of most aquatic organisms.

Huang attributed the progress in part to the central ecological and environmental protection inspection mechanism, which he said has remained a powerful tool for uncovering major environmental problems and reinforcing accountability.

Since the system was piloted in Hebei province in late 2015, it has completed three full rounds of inspections covering all 31 provincial-level regions on the Chinese mainland and the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, according to Huang.

Over the past decade, the mechanism has addressed more than 380,000 public environmental whistleblowing complaints. To date, authorities have publicly exposed 349 typical cases and transferred 6,475 rectification tasks to inspected regions and departments, he said.

Thanks to the inspections, "the prevalence of environmental offenses that were severe in nature, serious in circumstances and markedly illegal has dropped substantially, leading to a notable rise in the public's sense of gain, happiness and security regarding the ecological environment," Huang said.

Vice-Minister Dong Baotong said at the same briefing that China will further accelerate the digital and intelligent transformation of ecological and environmental monitoring and law enforcement during the 15th Five-Year Plan period.

Digital technologies and artificial intelligence have already become key drivers of environmental supervision, Dong said. Over the coming five years, greater emphasis will be placed on the twin pillars of monitoring and law enforcement.

By 2030, China aims to reduce manual participation in key business areas of the national ecological and environmental monitoring network by 70 percent and increase efficiency by more than five times, he said.

In air quality monitoring, for example, China will raise the accuracy rate of 72-hour forecasts for days when PM2.5 exceeds standards nationwide to more than 80 percent by 2030, Dong said.

On enforcement, Dong said China will build a smarter system covering the full process from problem discovery and early warning to disposal, integrating automatic pollutant-source data, satellite remote-sensing information and online leads.

Vice-Minister Li Gao highlighted significant progress in a nationwide campaign against illegal dumping and disposal of solid waste.

Since the drive began in June last year, authorities have identified more than 56,000 problems and completed rectification on more than 45,000 of them, while cleaning up and disposing of more than 60 million metric tons of solid waste, Li said.

To improve detection, the ministry has built a network combining satellite and drone surveillance, ground inspections and public reporting, with more than 60,000 potential leads collected so far, he said.

Li said China will incorporate the occurrence rate of illegal solid waste dumping and disposal into the 15th Five-Year Plan framework for building a Beautiful China, using clear and measurable indicators to strengthen local accountability and accelerate the establishment of a standing enforcement mechanism.

Pearl River mega bridge anchorages completed

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

The east and west anchorages of the Shiziyang Link were completed on Thursday, paving the way for the follow-up erection of catwalks and main cables for the mega project spanning the Pearl River estuary in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

Completion of the anchorages, critical load-bearing components of a suspension bridge, marks a milestone in the construction of the entire project, said Zhang Xiaolong, chief engineer of the anchorage project of Shiziyang Link.

"An anchorage consists of a foundation, anchor body and anchorage system, and it serves to anchor the bridge's main cables and withstand the tensile force transmitted from the main cables," Zhang told reporters on Thursday during the project's media open day.

Shiziyang Link features two anchorages, east and west, rooted on opposite banks in Shatian town of Dongguan and Nansha district of Guangzhou, he said.

To enhance the bearing capacity of the anchorage foundations, the project team developed an innovative composite anchorage foundation structure featuring circular rock-socketed diaphragm walls, inner liners and rigid top-and-bottom slab connections, Zhang said.

The team also developed an in situ test system for assessing the bearing capacity of deep rock and derived general calculation formulas for bearing capacity and displacement.

"The outcomes bridge technical gaps and offer key references for super-long-span suspension bridges and deep, large foundation pit projects," he added.

Wen Jie, an engineer with the project engineering management department of Guangdong Transportation Group, said Shiziyang Link, with a main span of 2,180 meters, is scheduled to be completed in the first half of 2029, with traffic expected to begin soon after.

"Upon the opening of the project to traffic, the travel time from Nansha to Dongguan and Shenzhen in the eastern part of the Pearl River will be cut to merely half an hour, further accelerating the integrated development of the GBA," Wen said.

It currently takes about an hour for vehicles traveling from Nansha to reach Dongguan and Shenzhen, he said.

Stretching approximately 35 kilometers, Shiziyang Link starts from Nansha and terminates in Humen and Shatian towns of Dongguan, according to Wen.

The project consists of the river-crossing main bridge and land approach bridges. It is the first double-deck composite highway passage at the Pearl River estuary and the world's first double-deck steel truss suspension bridge with a main span exceeding 2,000 meters.

The state-of-the-art bridge is a global leader in several key specifications, including the 130-meter diameter of its anchorage foundations, the 342-meter height of its steel plate composite main towers, the 2,180-meter span of its double-deck suspension bridge, the 1.5-meter diameter of its main cables and its number of lanes — 16 lanes in total, arranged as two-way traffic on two decks.

Construction of the bridge began in 2023. It is another mega infrastructure project spanning the Pearl River estuary, following the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge and Shenzhen-Zhongshan Link.

As a landmark transportation project during the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30), Shiziyang Link will, upon completion, form a cluster of river-crossing and sea-spanning passages together with the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, Shenzhen-Zhongshan Link and Nansha Bridge.

"Together with surrounding road and highway networks, it will foster a one-hour metropolitan circle and boost in-depth connectivity within the GBA, including the nine Guangdong cities plus the Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions," Wen said.

World Humanoid Robot Games draws 2,056 entries to Beijing

By YANG CHENG
yangcheng@chinadaily.com.cn

A record-breaking 2,056 robots from 666 teams will compete in a comprehensive range of events at the 2026 World Humanoid Robot Games in Beijing from Aug 22-26, a senior official of the organizing committee said at a news conference on Thursday.

Participants from 16 countries on six continents will take part.

"The number of teams has increased by 138 percent over last year, and the number of participating robots has doubled. Brazil will even be forming a national team to join the event," said Jiang Guangzhi, deputy executive director of the organizing committee and director of the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Economy and Information Technology.

Domestically, 157 companies and 200 universities and research institutes will participate, forming 641 teams with 1,975 robots.

This year, newly added high-intensity competitive events, including long jump, weightlifting, tug-of-war and table tennis, "present extreme challenges to the robotic brain, cerebellum, physical structure and core components," Jiang said.

"Each additional centimeter in a jump or extra kilogram lifted on the field is the result of engineers' relentless efforts to optimize design, precision machining and the rigorous testing of joint motors and reducers.

"It is through these incremental advancements that the cutting-edge technical capabilities of humanoid robots continue to reach new heights," he added.

Other events include industrial operations, hotel and family services and logistics.

Yu Qingfeng, director of the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Sports, said that in April, during the 2026 Beijing E-Town Half Marathon and Humanoid Robot Half Marathon, robots outperformed humans, adding that organizers expect even higher records during these games.

Beijing Information Science & Technology University is expected to be one of the highlights of the event, bringing the largest number of teams — 49 — which will participate in 119 categories, also the highest among all participating universities.

Li Lianpeng, deputy director of the university's academic affairs department, said its teams will compete in a wide range of events, including 100-meter sprints, 1,500-meter races, 5v5 soccer, freestyle gymnastics, street dance and tai chi, as well as industrial assembly and material handling, supermarket retail, hotel guest services, firefighting and rescue work, as well as dexterous tasks such as unboxing and building with blocks.

"These activities span virtually the entire spectrum of practical applications for humanoid robots," Li said.

Last year, the university's soccer team secured fourth place in the competition, and this year, it is expected to perform even better.

"We aim to use these games to accelerate the integration of teaching and research and even boost entrepreneurial enthusiasm among students. Our goal is not just to win but to foster greater communication and exchanges with international leaders in robot research," Li added.

The large-scale international events, including the marathon and the games, have sparked debate among some netizens over the potential waste of government investment.


The mascot Zhibao is unveiled at a press conference for the second World Humanoid Robot Games in Beijing on Thursday. The event has attracted 666 teams from 16 countries across six continents, with 2,056 robots set to compete. HAN HAIDAN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Shao Yuanxin, founder of RobStride Dynamics, however, argued that "these events could help the industry collect high-level data, showcase their capabilities, train more talented personnel and create job opportunities for China."

Shao also noted that his company's product exports in the first quarter of this year surpassed its total exports for the entire year of 2025.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:38 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:38 PM

LIFE

A place shaped by time

In one of China's earliest national park pilot areas, forests, wildlife and local communities reveal the quiet power of long-term preservation, **Yang Feiyue** and **Li Yingqing** report in Diqing, Yunnan.



Summer transforms Potatso's alpine meadows into a living tapestry of gold, violet and white — a shifting canvas shaped by millennia of geological forces.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Summer arrives slowly at 3,500 meters above sea level in Potatso National Park.

The rich ecological landscape, marked by lush forests, grasslands and lakes, has a way of holding the heat back and unfolding it petal by petal, covering alpine meadows with a shifting tapestry of gold, white, deep blue and violet.

Step off the bus at the entrance of the national park in Shangri-La, Diqing Tibetan autonomous prefecture, Southwest China's Yunnan province, and the first thing that hits you is the air — thin, cool and remarkably clean. The second is the silence. Not an empty silence, but a full one: wind moving through spruce needles, the distant clank of a cowbell, and the rustle of something small in the undergrowth.

Potatso is one of China's earliest national park pilot areas. Its rhythms are slow — ecological change here is measured in decades, not tourist seasons.

Wang Guoxian knows this better than anyone. She has been guiding visitors through these forests for nearly two decades. As summer vacation arrives, she has been increasingly busy, taking at least three groups of guests each day across the park's varied landscapes — a quick tour still takes four hours.

"We start at 7 am, and during peak season like now, we don't finish until 7 pm. But being tired is good — it means visitors are here," she says. Her monthly salary increases by about 3,000 yuan ($444.6) during the peak summer season — enough to make a real difference in the mountainous region.

She makes a point of telling guests that the facilities and management have changed over the years.

"Twenty years ago, we had only a few vehicles," she says, adjusting her cap against the midday sun. "Now we have more than 100."

But she says the one thing that has never changed is that "protection always comes first".

At the entrance to the Youyou Trail, a 2.2-kilometer route of packed earth and wood winding through ancient trees, Wang points out the wooden decks to her guests.

"When we built these trails, we didn't cut a single tree. We built around them. You can see the planks curve around the trunks. The trees stayed," she says.

Asked what changes she has noticed in the landscape over the years, Wang thinks for a moment.

"Visually, not much. It looks the same to me," she says. "But the data tell a different story. The forest is denser. The numbers show it is improving, just slowly."









Top: Rangers patrol the ancient forest daily. **Middle left:** Visitors tour Potatso National Park. **Middle right:** A child examines a fallen log during one of the park's tours. **Above:** Yaks and cattle graze on Potatso's summer pastures, a living link to the region's centuries-old herding traditions.

Decades to flower

That slow rhythm is written into the very biology of this place.

A short walk from the main trail, Wei Jiansheng, an executive with the park's operating company, stops beside a cluster of green leaves.

"This is *shuihuang*, or *Rheum alexandrae*," he says.

Wei visits the park regularly to oversee operations, safety and conservation. He speaks about the plants here the way someone might speak about old friends.

"Most of its life — 30 years, sometimes 35 — it does nothing but grow ground-level leaves," he says. "Then, in its final year, it puts everything into one flower stalk."

He describes how the plant's translucent bracts wrap around the flowering stem like a greenhouse, trapping heat and blocking UV radiation in the harsh alpine environment.

"One bloom after decades of waiting. It teaches you that some things are worth waiting for," he says.

Potatso covers more than 600 square kilometers and contains a range of ecosystems, including forests, lakes, wetlands, meadows and snowcapped peaks. Its elevation ranges from 2,300 to 4,670 meters, creating a natural laboratory where scientists monitor water, air, soil and wildlife around the clock.

One of the clearest signs of the forest's health hangs from the branches above.

Wang points to pale gray-green lichen draping from spruce and fir trees.

"We call it 'tree beard'," she says. "It only grows where the air is clean. Scientists use it as an indicator of environmental conditions."

The park is home to a wide range of wildlife, including black-necked cranes, clouded leopards and red pandas. The most visible residents, however, are often the small squirrels darting across the boardwalks.

"Don't feed them," Wang reminds her visitors. "They are wild animals and need to forage naturally. If they become dependent on human food, they may lose their ability to survive on their own."

Changing lives

After years of guiding visitors through the park, Wang has come to see Potatso's story not only as one of forests and wildlife, but of people learning to live alongside nature.

For generations, local Tibetan, Yi, Naxi and Lisu communities depended on the surrounding forests for timber and grazing. Today, many residents have become partners in conservation.

The park provides about 17 million yuan annually in direct compensation to 30 surrounding villages, benefiting more than 4,500 villagers from over 1,000 households. It has also created more than 340 permanent positions, 99 percent of which are held by local residents, as well as more than 500 seasonal jobs during peak tourism periods.

Some former loggers now work as rangers, protecting the same forests they once harvested. Others perform traditional Tibetan songs and dances for visitors, preserving local culture while earning income.

In Langrong village, residents share dividends from a jointly operated guesthouse, with each household receiving about 25,000 yuan a year.

"People ask me how we measure success," Wei says, walking past a poplar tree scarred by lightning and fire but still alive.

"It is not just the data. It is things like this."

He touches the trunk gently. "This tree was hit by lightning. Most of it died. But one strip of bark kept it alive. It reminds us that resilience can come from a single thread."

The park has also supported education in surrounding communities, providing scholarships totaling 2.67 million yuan for 1,189 students from high school to university.

For many families, this support has been life-changing. One local ranger described the shift simply: before, he cut wood to sell. Now he walks the same forest and gets paid to protect it — and his children can go to school because of it.

Ever-shifting views

The bus winds toward Bitahai Lake, the park's crown jewel. At 3,500 meters above sea level, the lake stretches three kilometers from north to south, its surface so still it mirrors the surrounding spruce forests and the tiny island at its center — an island that local lore says was once visited by an 8th-century Buddhist master.

Wang stands at the front of the bus, pointing out details along the route: the places where larches turn golden in autumn, where black-necked cranes spend winter, and where rhododendrons bloom in spring.

She has taken this route countless times, but she is never tired of it — its scenery varies with every season.

"Winter brings a different Potatso," she says. "It's snow-covered and silent, and the sky is so blue. This place is never the same twice. That's what makes it worth coming back again and again."

Contact the writers at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

Parents use the summer vacation as learning tool

At a Korean ethnic folk park in Northeast China's Jilin province, Feng Yu turned a family trip into an immersive cultural lesson on ethnic heritage.

She and her kids slipped into traditional Korean outfits for photo shoots, learned to make Korean rice cakes, and took a shot at traditional archery.

"I used to take my children on trips only to view beautiful scenery and taste local delicacies," Feng says. "This time, I hope they can learn about ethnic culture firsthand; trying on traditional attire, touring ethnic architecture and watching folk shows offer lessons no textbook can provide."

With schools across China on summer vacation, the country's two-month travel rush comes alive. Feng is among a growing number of parents opting for cultural journeys, hoping to help their children forge a deeper connection with the nation's rich and diverse heritage.

The Korean ethnic folk park that Feng toured has so far received an average of 20,000 tourists a day during the summer travel season, according to Zhu Baokun, operations director of the park.

To satisfy family travelers, the park has introduced new activities like paper crafting and incense-making workshops, along with performances of Korean ethnic folk music.

"These laid-back settings enable children to absorb ethnic cultural knowledge effortlessly amid a lighthearted and enjoyable environment," says Zhu.

Statistics from Tongcheng Travel, an online Chinese travel agency, show that families and students have remained the two dominant traveling groups this summer. Family travelers account for about 38 percent of domestic air passengers, while students make up roughly 29 percent.

Alongside ethnic culture-themed trips, red tourism, which centers on revolutionary-era historical sites, has also been a popular choice for family travel this summer. In Ruijin, a city in East China's Jiangxi province and the starting point of the Red Army's Long March (1934-36), a 500-seat local theater was packed with audience members during a recent performance.

When the scene of Red Army soldiers bidding farewell to local residents played out on stage, 7-year-old Wu Yawen gripped her grandfather's sleeve tightly.

"When the Red Army departed, local residents stayed up all night making straw sandals and boiling eggs. They pressed these supplies into the soldiers' hands, hoping the troops would return soon," her grandfather, Wu Song, told her.

"The older generation knows well that today's happy life is hard-won," says Wu Yong, Yawen's father. He drove hundreds of kilometers from neighboring Fujian province to Ruijin with his family in the hope that the trip would help his daughter remember the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the country.

The growing popularity of cultural and educational travel also reflects broader policy support. China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) calls for the well-regulated development of study tours alongside themed tourism products, including red tourism and other cultural travel experiences.

Building on that policy support, China launched a national summer holiday cultural and tourism consumption campaign in July, with more than 450 million yuan ($66 million) worth of consumer vouchers to be distributed. The campaign is expected to feature more than 30,000 activities nationwide, catering to popular travel demands including study tours.

XINHUA



Tourists visit a Korean ethnic folk park in Yanji, Northeast China's Jilin province, on July 30. XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:38 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:38 PM

Finding an ideal escape

Business owners give visitors downtime from urban lifestyles by creating laid-back spaces amid villages and nature, **Wang Xin** reports.



Above and bottom left: Ruru Village Cafe, located in Xuejian village of Zhujiajiao town, offers a soothing and tranquil space surrounded by Metasequoia trees, rivers and rural homes. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

To escape from the urban hustle and bustle, large crowds are flooding into green suburban villages in Shanghai's Qingpu district, seeking refreshing natural spaces to enjoy a meal or coffee, zone out, or take a nap.

Among boundless rice fields in the district's Linjia village of Zhujiajiao ancient town, a one-and-a-half-hour drive from downtown, hides the Cangye Space restaurant featuring a luxuriously large area and authentic Italian food cooked in an open-fire kitchen and massive wood-fired oven.

Converted from an old warehouse, the venue blends the village's laid-back spirit and rustic charm. Opened at the end of 2024, it instantly became a trendy hotspot, drawing visitors and diners from the city and nationwide.

"More than a meal, we hope to offer our diners a lifestyle, or at least, a brief soothing getaway in nature. They can either sit in peace doing nothing in the unspoiled beauty or enjoy the food, coffee, art shows, and activities," says Que Yiming, the restaurant's 61-year-old owner.

Que is an experienced spatial design artist from the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region who relocated to Shanghai in 2000. Aiming to create a space that combines spatial aesthetics with commercial functions, he had long been searching for such an ideal rural location. Sticking to a concept of following nature, Que hoped to build a space that feels as if it is grown naturally from the landscape.

Que took charge of the venue's design and renovation work. He particularly highlights the eye-catching wood-fired oven at 300 degrees. As one of the largest ovens in China, it produces handmade bread with a distinct flavor.

The restaurant's 56-year-old Italian chef, who insists on being called Lucky Lasagna, most values the incomparable chance to cook in and with nature — the wind, wood, fire, and smoke.

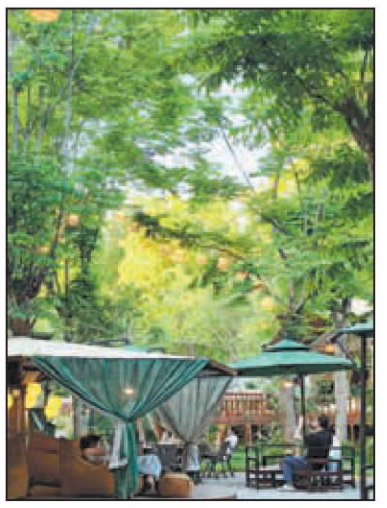
"Another thing that I really love here is the long common tables. It creates conviviality when everyone escaping from the stress of the city sits together for a good time, sharing food and life experiences. Such moments are a bit lost now, but people are connected here," says the chef with a big smile.

Not far from Cangye Space and among Metasequoia trees in the town's Xuejian village, what draws young crowds to the riverside Ruru Village Cafe is not just a cup of coffee.

Surrounded by trees, rivers and rural homes, the cafe invites visitors to step into tranquility with a clean, minimalist design. For those sitting inside the cafe, a big square window becomes a picture frame that captures the natural forest view. For those who prefer to sit outside, cozy chairs and the soothing sound of wind chimes in the fresh open air easily help them drift off into a comfortable little nap.

Tang Menglei, the cafe's 37-year-old founder, tells China Daily that she has been living in the village for about four years, but it was not until last July that she felt ready to share this place with more people.

"I see more people nowadays need the energy from natural tranquility and stability, as our life always moves at such a fast, tiring pace. We need the space to slow down for a more mindful way of living and to explore more of our inner selves and the diversity of life," says Tang.













Top left and middle: Timber and the Woods bookstore in Xuejian village features log cabins sitting among the trees, healthy food and craft activities. **Top right and right middle:** Cangye Space, an Italian restaurant in Linjia village of Zhujiajiao town, Shanghai's Qingpu district, has been converted from an old warehouse. It features a large space, authentic food and a wood-fired oven for baking bread.





Top above and above right: Xuejian 299 homestay in Xuejian village offers visitors homelike experiences with natural landscapes, tasty food as well as diverse facilities and activities for family gatherings.

The cafe also went viral on social media platforms after it opened in May. Besides coffee, visitors can experience traditional Chinese culture through tea ceremonies, incense ceremonies, flower arranging, and other activities.

"I hope the space spreads the energy of love to a wider group. Life might be hard, but it can be easier and more meaningful if people come together, help and empower each other, and build a community," Tang adds.

Lamu, founder of the nearby Timber and the Woods bookstore, shares similar sentiments. Opening in June, it features several log cabins with thatched roofs scattered among the trees. Other facilities include a library and a coffee bar. Private rooms are also available. Residents and families from downtown Shanghai and neighboring cities often visit over weekends and holidays, sitting quietly to read, savor coffee, chat, take photos, lie down in beanbags, or sing and dance on the lush green lawns.

Healthy, nutritious and tasty food is another highlight at the bookstore. Lamu says that their cuisine uses organic ingredients and is based on ancient Chinese wisdom and the *Huangdi Neijing* (The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Medicine), the earliest known book of traditional Chinese medicine that dates back over 2,000 years. Among the various dishes, its signature roast chicken is brushed with a traditional, handcrafted soy sauce glaze and roasted to perfection, presenting a crispy, aromatic skin and tender, juicy meat.

"We want to build a healthy, kind and happy lifestyle and community here. Our staff members are like family, and they treat each other and our customers with the same kindness. Everyone who visits feels the relaxed aura and becomes part of it.

"As they feel connected, they trust, love and return to this place that offers a naturally healthy and positive lifestyle," says Lamu.

For visitors seeking a place to stay overnight, the village's Xuejian 299 homestay, a five-minute drive from the bookstore and Ruru coffee, aims to offer homelike experiences. Yao Ping, owner of the homestay, tells China Daily that she renovated the building for her own retirement and is glad to extend the same leisure and rural beauty to more people.

Opened in December, the homestay provides much more than delicately designed rooms. It also has a restaurant and bar that serves food and coffee, a fully equipped event space for family or team gatherings, and entertainment and sports facilities.

Local artisans are often invited here, leading visitors to do handicrafts and experience local cultural heritage. Kids can play on the swings, row a boat, dig bamboo shoots, or learn about nature. After dusk, open-air movies, candlelight dinners and nighttime parties are always ready to light up the starry sky.

"It feels more like sharing my home and way of life with those who need it, rather than running a business. Our guests often come back and talk to me, and we end up becoming friends.

"This is the life and place that we have all been dreaming of, and such encounters and connections are extremely precious," says Yao contentedly.

Contact the writer at wangxin2@chinadaily.com.cn

Bookworms rush to fair for immersive encounters with great authors

By **ZHANG KUN**
zhangkun@chinadaily.com.cn

The 2026 Shanghai Book Fair, running from August 12 to 18, is drawing reading enthusiasts from across China while unveiling AI-powered experiences at its dual main venues, the Shanghai Exhibition Center and Shanghai Book Mall.

This year's fair sets a new record with 1,420 reading events — a 12.1 percent increase from 2025 — transforming traditional book exhibitions into immersive cultural encounters.

One of the most anticipated events will take place on Saturday afternoon when Mo Yan, winner of the Nobel Prize in literature, will introduce his new short-story collection, *Ren Na* (Being Human), at the Shanghai Exhibition Center.

It is his first book in six years and marks the author's return to the Shanghai Book Fair after 14 years.

The 71-year-old writer, one of the most translated contemporary Chinese authors, is best known for his novel *Red Sorghum*, the film adaptation of which won the Golden Bear at the 38th Berlin International Film Festival.

Mo won the Nobel Prize in 2012 for work that "with hallucinatory realism merges folk tales, history and the contemporary".

According to Dook Media Group, publisher of the collection, the new volume features 81 tightly crafted pieces, the shortest comprising just 71 Chinese characters. "Despite their brevity, they leave a lasting impact," according to the publisher. "The words are minimal, yet carry immense force."

Dook Media Group opened reservations for the Saturday event on the evening of Aug 9. All 770 slots were filled in a short time.

Mo Yan's appearance is also part of Shanghai International Literary Week, an integral component of the fair. This year's program brings together overseas authors from 12 countries and regions for lectures, panel discussions and book-sharing sessions from Aug 11 to 17.



On Aug 12, young readers enjoy books during the ongoing 2026 Shanghai Book Fair, which will last till Aug 18. The fair is held at dual main venues. GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

Among them is Jeanette Winterson from Britain, whose debut novel, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, has enjoyed enduring popularity in China since its Chinese edition was first published in 2010. Winterson introduced her book *Love*, newly released in Chinese at Sinan Books on Aug 12.

Also presenting a new title is renowned Australian cinematographer Christopher Doyle, best known for his collaborations with Hong Kong-based director Wong Kar-wai. Doyle's book, published by China CITIC Press, is a collection of essays complemented by more than 100 photographs documenting his life, career and reflections on art, film and creativity.

Heilongjiang province is the fair's guest of honor this year — the first time the northeastern province has been featured at Shanghai Book Fair. Heilongjiang has brought 3,460 book titles and 74 journals to the event, including landmark works such as *A General History of Heilongjiang* and Chi Zijian's novel *The Last Quarter of the Moon*.

The province is also showcasing its diverse ethnic cultures and tourism resources. Visitors can explore 68 intangible cultural heritage items, including Hezhe fish-skin paintings and Daur embroidery, says Zhao Fuyi, head of the Heilongjiang Provincial Press and Publication Bureau. Interactive DIY sessions allow guests to create personalized souvenirs, while a Heilongjiang delicacies zone offers local favorites such as Wuchang rice, birch sap and Modern-branded popsicles.

Technology marks another highlight of this year's fair as organizers introduce an AI agent that powers an online smart consultation platform, responding to audience inquiries in real time.

"Whether it's ticketing and entry, event schedules, exhibitor directories, book information, or transportation routes and on-site facilities, visitors can get quick answers," says Zeng Yuan, head of the printing and distribution division of Shanghai's publicity department.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:38 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:38 PM

LIFE



Left: Former factories in Shougang Park in Beijing are converted into esports stages. **Below:** Chengdu, Sichuan province, shows support for the All Gamers Esports Group with images on the city's landmark buildings. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The epicenter of gaming

With an international tournament imminent, the nation's esports industry continues its rapid expansion, **Wang Xin** reports in Shanghai.

When Xavier Descharmes, chief marketing officer of OG Esports, walks through Shanghai on any summer morning, the city's sounds, smells, humidity, and even the police officers wearing yellow jackets instantly unlock the memories of his first visit to China seven years ago.

At that time, on a late August evening, the OG Esports team defended its title in the city at The International 2019, the world's largest *Dota 2* esports tournament, a feat that no other team in TI history had yet accomplished.

It also marked the first time that the top-level tournament was held in Shanghai, and made the team familiar to Chinese esports fans. Although they advanced to the finals by defeating a Chinese team that had been widely tipped to win the championship, they still earned the respect and cheers of local fans with their beautiful play.

"When I was there for the first time, I was speechless for a good 30 seconds due to the passion that embraced me — passion from the players, the audience and the organizers. We might support different teams, but we share the same raw emotion of passion and hunger.

"There is nothing too different between us. We built a connection, a good relationship and a special bond with Chinese fans. It changed everything," recalls Descharmes.

With TI 2026 approaching again in Shanghai, the team is actively preparing for its comeback — and many more beyond the tournament. Descharmes says that they are looking to expand their presence in the nation, hoping to grow organically with the local esports community in the long term.

Esports refers to competitive video gaming where individuals or teams compete against each other in various video game titles. Objectives may include destroying an enemy base, defeating monsters in fantasy worlds, or scavenging for weapons and armor to defeat other players. Tournaments can be local, regional or international, with some events offering substantial prize money. The tournaments are often held in large arenas and are streamed online to worldwide audiences that can number in the millions.

Guido Gernetti, co-founder and COO of Leviatan, a leading Latin American esports organization, shares similar sentiments with Descharmes. Leviatan's team first came to the city for the Valorant Masters Shanghai 2024, when Gernetti felt the same passion and connection with the local esports community.

Since then, Leviatan has also started diving into Chinese culture while actively interacting with local fans and operating Chinese social media accounts, which have so far garnered more than 340,000 followers.

"Right now, in overseas markets, we all see China as a leader in the gaming ecosystem. It is investing in diverse events and promoting the esports scene. Along with ourselves, more teams are coming here to learn, to be part of the ecosystem, and to build things together," says Gernetti.

He adds that the organization is looking to establish the company here within the year, and expects to enhance its international collaboration and bridge Chinese and Latin American cultures via esports.

"Esports culture is inclusive, digital, and creates passion. We are expanding fast globally, and have so many possibilities to make things happen together," says Gernetti.

The ESL FACEIT Group, which has partnered with local organizations such as the Shanghai-headquartered Hero Esports, has been expanding its presence in China with its renowned Intel Extreme Masters tournaments in Beijing and Chengdu, Sichuan province, as well as DreamHack Shanghai, which made its debut last year.





Top: The Honor of Kings team from Chengdu's All Gamers Esports Group takes the crown at the King Pro League Grand Finals 2025 in Beijing on Nov 8. **Clockwise from above:** The Valorant team from the Beijing Dragon Ranger Gaming Esports Club on the esports stage at Shougang Park in May. Global esports players and fans gather at DreamHack Shanghai last May. Leviatan's Valorant team celebrates a victory. Fans bring their own signs to show their support.

Jascha Braeker, senior partnerships development manager at EFG, notes that esports and the gaming industry are still growing, and that China produces some of the best tournaments and players. EFG is positive about future growth in the nation and hopes to introduce more Chinese brands to the world.

Braeker says that China is generally the company's largest viewership market, and that Chinese cities provide some of the strongest government support. She also says that they recognize esports as culturally relevant and important to the younger generation.

"We want to stay in China, nurture the market, connect with the super-passionate fans, and bring them the best events. We have not explored the Chinese market to the fullest yet, so I think we will grow in China," she adds.

China's esports industry saw its revenue increase 2.78 percent year-on-year to nearly 13.12 billion yuan ($1.94 billion) in the first half of 2026. By the end of June, China was home to more than 160 esports organizations and the nation's esports user base reached 495 million, according to the latest report released by the China Audio-Video and Digital Publishing Association during the recent 23rd China Digital Entertainment Expo and Conference, held from July 31 to Aug 3 in Shanghai.

The report also says that China's esports industry has been continuously expanding in overseas markets such as East Asia, Southeast Asia and the Americas.

Among the Chinese esports organizations accelerating overseas expansion is the Chengdu-headquartered All Gamers Esports Group, one of the oldest esports organizations in the world.

Established in 1999, AG Esports Group now has 28 branches worldwide, half of which are overseas, and is engaged in 16 game divisions covering most major esports games, such as *League of Legends*, *Honor of Kings*, *Peacekeeper Elite*, *Valorant*, *CrossFire* and more, according to Layne Le Kedeng, chairman of AG Esports Group.

Le, who also serves as chairman of the club commission of the Asian Electronic Sports Federation, says that Asia is increasingly becoming the center of global esports, and more of the world's top esports tournaments have been held in the region over the past three years.

"Asia contributes over 70 percent of the global esports viewership and about half of its total revenues. The Esports World Cup is connecting the Eastern and Western esports scenes, and more Chinese esports organizations are making a global impact," says Le.

Notably, while esports in most Western nations are still based on computer games, China is taking the global lead in mobile gaming esports, represented by the King Pro League, the highest-level league tournament of *Honor of Kings* in China. This approach has been a huge success not only in China but also in overseas markets, especially in Southeast Asia.

He notes that mobile gaming now generates massive viewership across Asia, achieving explosive market growth and fostering new cultural bonds. It has extremely low barriers to entry and much easier access, regardless of time or location.

Eddy Chen, vice-president at All Gamers Global, highlights the significant role of esports in promoting cultural exchanges. He says that AG teams often prepare free gifts for fans at tournaments, and initiatives like this have helped them connect with overseas esports communities, along with promoting Chinese culture.

"We are happy to see our overseas fan base growing, and many of them buy our merchandise such as team uniforms. We are committed to building AG into one of the largest, best-performing and most sustainable esports clubs globally, and thus better connecting China and the world," Chen says.

As esports see deeper integration with cities and culture, Chinese esports organizations are also exploring beyond the arena. Shi Yu, vice-president of Beijing's Dragon Ranger Gaming Esports Club, is exploring how to unleash esports' potential in urban development.

Shougang Park in Beijing is an example of such exploration, where old factories and buildings have been converted into large esports centers and stages. Moreover, the club's Valorant team showcases the park, district and the city to global audiences whenever they step onto the global stage in overseas tournaments.

"It brings international appeal and coverage that no city promotional video could achieve. Esports and cities have never had a one-way relationship where tournaments 'borrow' the venues. Instead, it is a symbiotic relationship with shared goals and benefits," says Shi.

Le at AG Esports Group, which is deeply rooted in Chengdu, adds: "China's esports industry is special in many ways. It is very diverse and inclusive, with high female participation. It is a city's soft power and carries a sense of city pride. We have been thriving in the past few years, and I believe our voice will be heard more on the global stage as we march forward."

Contact the writer at wangxin2@chinadaily.com.cn

Zanzibar's healthcare improved by Chinese expertise

DAR ES SALAAM — In a radiology room at Lumumba Regional Hospital in Tanzania's Zanzibar, a quiet technological shift is reshaping how doctors detect disease, make decisions, and save lives.

On the island, artificial intelligence systems are helping doctors interpret medical images, while remote consultations connect local physicians with specialists thousands of kilometers away.

Bridging this distance is Yuan Gang, a radiologist with the 35th Chinese medical team in Zanzibar, who combines local imaging, cloud-based AI analysis and real-time specialist consultations.

For years, Zanzibar's healthcare system has faced challenges in diagnosing complex diseases, particularly because of limited imaging expertise, heavy workloads and a lack of advanced diagnostic tools, according to local physician Haitham Hamudu.

Imaging interpretation, often described as the "eyes" of modern medicine, has been especially constrained, Hamudu says.

By linking the hospital's imaging system with the First People's Hospital of Lianyungang in East China's Jiangsu province, Yuan has introduced a three-layer diagnostic approach, which includes initial reading by local doctors, AI-assisted detection and classification, and quality control through Chinese specialist review.

This hybrid model is enabling doctors in Zanzibar to access the precision and standards of top-tier Chinese hospitals without requiring patients to leave the island.

"Technology is allowing us to overcome distance and resource gaps," Yuan says. "It is not just about solving one case, but about building a system that improves care for many patients."

One of the most striking cases involved a young Zanzibari child suffering from recurrent vomiting and lethargy.

After reviewing the child's magnetic resonance imaging scans, Yuan diagnosed hydrocephalus but found the underlying cause unclear. He immediately initiated a remote consultation with neuroradiology experts in the Chinese city of Lianyungang.

By jointly reviewing the imaging data and clinical records, the team identified the hidden cause, and provided a precise diagnosis and treatment recommendations, giving local doctors a clear path forward and the child a renewed chance at recovery.

Beyond individual cases, Yuan has introduced AI-powered imaging tools to improve diagnostic accuracy in Zanzibar.

He says many women have dense breast tissue, making breast cancer harder to detect with conventional mammography. AI-assisted mammography now analyzes images, classifies lesions using the internationally recognized Breast Imaging Reporting and Data System, and helps doctors assess malignancy risk.

In one case, a 42-year-old woman with mild breast pain showed no obvious abnormalities on routine examination. AI, however, detected two hidden nodules and accurately classified their risk, helping doctors avoid unnecessary procedures while ensuring timely follow-up.

Similarly, AI-assisted lung imaging is improving the early detection of pulmonary nodules that are often missed in manual readings.

Beyond diagnosis, Yuan is helping local doctors adopt AI tools, standardized reporting systems, and structured diagnostic methods through hands-on training and case-based teaching, improving diagnostic accuracy while strengthening local capacity.

The AI imaging initiative is part of a broader digital healthcare partnership between China and Tanzania's Zanzibar, Yuan says.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:38 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:38 PM

AMERICAFOCUS

Jazz opens discourse with China

Young US performers build 'a connecting bridge between different cultures' on tour across the Pacific Ocean

By **LIA ZHU** in San Francisco
liazhu@chinadailyusa.com

Backstage at the SFJAZZ Center on Aug 4, Malcolm Clark and Annie Meyer were already dressed for the bandstand: black jackets, red pants and black canvas shoes.

A trip to China was ahead of them.

Clark, 18, a trombonist from Tuftonboro, New Hampshire, had traveled outside the United States before, but never this far. Meyer, also 18, a guitarist from Boston, was thinking about Chinese food, coffee recommendations passed along by a guest artist and the technology she had heard so much about.

But when the two musicians talked about what they most hoped to find on the other side of the Pacific, they kept coming back to something they already knew how to do: listen.

> "You're able to communicate with audiences in a way that you couldn't by speaking."
>
> **Annie Meyer,** 18-year-old guitarist about to tour China

"I know it's cliche, but when people say jazz is a language that can be understood by everyone, I think that's like a connective tissue that connects both cultures," Meyer said. "You're able to communicate with audiences in a way that you couldn't by speaking."

That idea is at the heart of this summer's tour by Carnegie Hall's National Youth Orchestra Jazz, or NYO Jazz, a band of players aged 16 to 19 chosen through a national audition process.

The Aug 4 concert in San Francisco was the ensemble's last US stop before they left for a tour running through Aug 15 with stops in Taichung, Shanghai and Beijing. This summer's repertoire spans classic works and contemporary compositions.

For the young players, the trip is both a concert tour and an experiment in person-to-person communication.

"When I travel outside of the country, I am always really happy to get to know what the locals think about the world and see other people's perspectives," said Clark. "I really hope that we can kind of act as ambassadors of American music for a Chinese audience." He started piano in the third grade and picked up the trombone a year later. This fall, he will start at the Eastman School of Music.

"Music is a universal language, but there's different dialects, so to speak," he added. "So we'll kind of be showing off our local dialect of music to a population of people who maybe aren't as familiar with it."

Jazz emerged in African American communities in New Orleans around the turn of the 20th century, drawing on blues, ragtime, brass-band traditions and other influences. Syncopation and swing became central parts of its sound, but improvisation gave the music one of its defining characteristics: musicians could make decisions and respond to one another in real time rather than only reproduce what was written on a score.







Above: NYO Jazz 2026 players pose in front of the SFJAZZ Center in San Francisco on Aug 4 before they head to China for a tour the following day. LIA ZHU / CHINA DAILY
Top-left: The NYO Jazz 2026 ensemble poses for a group photo before they head to China for a tour. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY **Top-right:** The NYO Jazz 2026 Carnegie Hall concert with singer Dee Dee Bridgewater (center). PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

For Clark, that improvisational freedom is exactly what makes jazz useful across cultures.

"The improvisational aspect of jazz, I think, is something that doesn't require any kind of mutual understanding," he said. Music feels "wired into all of humanity", allowing improvisation to become "a connecting bridge between different cultures," he said.

Meyer, who begins the Harvard and New England Conservatory dual program this fall, has been playing jazz for two years, after starting on piano. She described the same quality of jazz from another angle.

In jazz, she said, every player is expected to bring an individual voice. A solo does not require shared spoken language, yet another musician can hear it, react to it and join the conversation.

"It connects people, and it allows people to feel like they've known each other," she said.

The NYO Jazz musicians had known one another for only about two weeks, she said, yet playing together had compressed the distance between strangers.

She has seen the same thing happen in jazz clubs. At Smalls Jazz Club in New York, she said, musicians can arrive from different countries, barely know one another and soon be playing together.

"That's a very special thing," she said. Unlike music that may require a group to rehearse a specific arrangement or learn lyrics beforehand, "jazz is something that you can just pick up and play together, like, instantaneously".

That is the argument Carnegie Hall has been testing since it founded NYO Jazz in 2018 and sent it to China for the first time the following year.

"NYO Jazz was created not only to develop exceptional young musicians, but also to give them a platform to serve as cultural ambassadors," said Joanna Massey, director of learning and engagement programs at Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute, who has led the program since its start.

"For our young musicians, the tour provides an extraordinary opportunity to engage with China's rich culture and history firsthand while performing for local audiences. Audiences in Shanghai and Beijing can experience the artistry, creativity and diversity of America's next generation of jazz performers, while our touring musicians find meaningful opportunities to bring people together across cultures and borders," she said.

On tour, the musicians will take part in peer-to-peer activities with local young people, musicians and non-musicians alike. Those encounters, she said, frequently outlast the concerts in the players' memories.

Previous visits have taken the ensemble to Jazz at Lincoln Center and the Shanghai Oriental Art Center in Shanghai, the National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA) in Beijing, and Huafa and the CPAA Grand Theatre in Zhuhai. "We've found Chinese audiences to be exceptionally welcoming, engaged and enthusiastic," said Massey.

She said Shanghai and Beijing have long-established music communities, and the ensemble's return gives its members a chance to encounter Chinese culture and history directly while meeting local audiences and young people.

Shanghai was a jazz city in the 1920s and 1930s; Beijing had a boom of its own in the 1990s. Jazz is growing as a niche yet increasingly popular genre in China. The current rise is driven by live-house culture and by an audience that skews young.

New York-based Blue Note Jazz Club opened its first Chinese branch in Beijing in 2016, and Jazz at Lincoln Center Shanghai opened in 2019. The JZ Festival, which debuted in 2005, has become the largest jazz festival in China and the second largest in Asia, and the NCPA co-sponsors the Taihu Jazz Festival at its stage art center in Beijing's Tongzhou district. Scenes have since spread to other cities like Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Xi'an and Chongqing.

San Francisco has its own stake in that exchange.

"We're honored to be one of the final stops before NYO Jazz heads to China," said TJ Gorton, director of marketing at SFJAZZ, a non-profit jazz organization, noting the city's long cultural and historical ties with China.

SFJAZZ has been building out SFJAZZ At Home, a growing library of performances and educational content, much of it free, that reaches audiences outside the SFJAZZ Center. Connecting with Chinese audiences, students, educators and institutions remains a priority, Gorton said, and the organization wants to pursue it through digital programming and direct educational partnerships.

Jazz was born in America, he added, but younger musicians around the world are increasingly blending it with their own traditions.

Massey said the educational and cultural activities surrounding the concerts are intended to create opportunities for dialogue, collaboration and learning. Because jazz depends on listening, communication and collective creation, she said, it is particularly suited to encounters in which young people may begin with different backgrounds but discover shared interests.

Meyer, asked how she plans to approach musicians she cannot speak to, quoted the trumpeter who leads Jazz at Lincoln Center.

"Wynton Marsalis is famous for saying that jazz music is a great metaphor for how we should interact with others in real life, in the sense that, to play good jazz music, you have to always be listening and always be lifting up other people," she said.

When another player solos and she is comping behind them, the wrong move is the flashy one. "What I need to be aiming to do is play something that will support them and uplift them." The same, she said, goes for a conversation: listen first, and let that inform what you say.

Asked what he wants a Chinese audience to take away, Clark did not talk about technique.

"For me, I really want to communicate the joy that music brings to me, and the joy that music brings to all of us — not only as individuals, but as a group," he said. "Being immersed in music and in the joy of music is one of the most special things in the world. I would love for everybody to be able to experience that at some point."

LAX caterer faces inspection over sanitation complaints

By **RENA LI** in Los Angeles
renali@chinadailyusa.com

California workplace safety regulators have opened an inspection into an airline catering facility serving Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) after workers alleged exposure to maggots, mold, cockroaches and other unsanitary conditions while preparing and handling equipment used for in-flight meals.

The complaint against Flying Food Group's facility in Inglewood, near LAX, was filed with the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health, or Cal/OSHA, by UNITE HERE Local 11 on behalf of employees, according to reports by The New York Times, CNN and ABC7.

Cal/OSHA confirmed to The New York Times that it had "received the complaint and has opened an inspection", but declined to provide further details.

The allegations have drawn attention to sanitation and worker safety within the airline catering supply chain, in which food is prepared, stored and transported before being loaded onto aircraft serving thousands of passengers.

According to the complaint, an employee said she was instructed in late June to clean dishes from a cart that had remained unopened for an extended period. She reported finding dozens of dishes containing decomposing, mold-covered food, some with what appeared to be live maggots and flies.

The worker suggested that the dishes be discarded, but a supervisor allegedly told her they were needed for an upcoming flight, according to the complaint.

Susan Minato, co-president of UNITE HERE Local 11, told ABC7 that the worker said, "I don't think I should clean this. I think that this should be thrown away. This is too disgusting".

Minato said the worker was nevertheless instructed to clean the dishes and was not provided with a face mask or other specialized protective equipment. The complaint said she later experienced stomach pain, a headache and an unusual sensation in her nose.

> We are conducting a thorough review of the allegations and are cooperating with the appropriate regulatory authorities."
>
> **Flying Food Group,** which supplies more than a dozen international airlines at LAX

The union also alleges that employees encountered what they believed to be cockroaches and other vermin in food preparation areas and near airline food carts. Another employee alleged that she photographed cockroaches in the kitchen and on a Lufthansa cart in December, The New York Times reported.

A spokesman for Lufthansa said the airline had not previously been aware of the alleged incident.

"Lufthansa Group holds its caterers to rigorous food safety and sanitation standards, and we expect full compliance with these standards at all times across our global network," spokesman Tal Muscal told The New York Times. "Otherwise, Lufthansa will not hesitate in taking appropriate action."

Virgin Atlantic also said it was taking the allegations seriously but had found no indication that meals provided to its passengers had been affected.

The airline said it had "no evidence that catering supplied for its customers has been compromised," according to the media.

The union said Flying Food Group serves more than a dozen international airlines at LAX, including Air France, Japan Airlines, Lufthansa, Qantas, Singapore Airlines and Virgin Atlantic.

The complaint also alleges that bathrooms and handwashing stations at the Inglewood facility sometimes lacked sufficient soap or paper towels.

Maria Hernandez, press secretary for UNITE HERE Local 11, told CNN that workers were "incredibly frustrated" by the alleged conditions at a facility supplying some of the world's largest airlines.

Flying Food Group operates 19 catering facilities across the United States and, according to CNN, prepares about 120 million meals annually for more than 75 airlines.

The company told CNN that it was aware of the allegations and was reviewing them.

"We are conducting a thorough review of the allegations and are cooperating with the appropriate regulatory authorities," Flying Food Group said.

The union subsequently told Los Angeles World Airports, which oversees LAX, that a Cal/OSHA inspector had allegedly been denied entry to the facility on Friday, according to The New York Times. Cal/OSHA confirmed that an inspection had been opened but declined to comment on whether an inspector had been denied access. Los Angeles World Airports also declined to comment.

The latest complaint follows previous workplace safety concerns at the facility. CNN reported that Cal/OSHA issued six citations to the company in May following a January incident in which two employees were reportedly found inside a cold-storage room that had been chained from the outside.

The allegations have not been established as regulatory findings, and the news reports cited no evidence that contaminated food reached airline passengers. Virgin Atlantic specifically said it had no evidence its catering had been compromised, while Lufthansa said it expects its caterers to meet rigorous food safety and sanitation standards.

Cal/OSHA's inspection is now underway, while Flying Food Group has said it is conducting its own review and cooperating with regulatory authorities.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:38 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:39 PM

Heroic legacy
Families, visitors honor fallen soldiers in Shenyang
CHINA, PAGE 11



FDI stabilizes as high-tech inflows surge
TOP NEWS, PAGE 3



Ballet revival
Classic love story returns to stage, blending tradition and innovation
CULTURE, PAGE 13

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 FRIDAY, JULY 24, 2026

China's strong power capacity fuels AI boom

Nation leverages grid, green power, nuclear to meet sector's growing demand for energy

By **MA SI**
masi@chinadaily.com.cn

As artificial intelligence evolves into a core driver of global industrial competition, China's strong power supply system and its forward-looking computing-electricity synergy strategy will give it an unparalleled edge in rolling out AI infrastructure, according to experts, corporate executives and on-the-ground evidence.

Zhang Qin, former deputy chairman of the China Association for Science and Technology and fellow of International Academy of Artificial Intelligence Sciences, said that "AI is creating an explosive demand for energy, and the solution lies in safe, reliable and green power. China has great strength in that area".

"Apart from solar and wind power, nuclear energy can also be a crucial power supply for data centers if safety is guaranteed. This is a technological frontier to be conquered rather than a barrier to AI adoption," Zhang told China Daily on the sidelines of the recent World Internet of Things Top 500 Summit in Beijing.

The comments came as China embraces AI with open arms. The value of its core AI industries exceeded 1.2 trillion yuan ($177 billion) last year, maintaining annual growth of more than 20 percent for several consecutive years, according to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

Furthermore, the country is turning AI into real-world applications and a driver of economic growth. In the first half of this year, China's industrial output of AI-related sectors, including integrated circuit manufacturing and in-vehicle intelligent equipment manufacturing, grew more than 30 percent year-on-year.

Wei Zhigang, chairman of CNNC Hainan Nuclear Power Co, said that as AI triggers unprecedented global demand for computing power, "the ultimate constraint has become clear: the need for vast, stable electricity supplies".

Tech giants such as Microsoft and Google are actively exploring small modular nuclear reactors, or SMRs, to power AI data centers.

Wei added that CNNC's Linglong One — the world's first onshore commercial SMR — is nearing completion, and the company plans to begin commercial operations later this year. One key advantage of SMRs, Wei said, is their flexible placement, allowing them to be deployed right where computing power is needed, enabling close load-matching.

Zhou Ji, a senior researcher at market consultancy Pangoal, said that "China's energy system has an edge in three dimensions: scale, structure and system, which constitutes solid support for AI computing infrastructure at the foundational level".

Regarding scale, China ranks first in the world in total electricity generation and also leads in incremental growth. In terms of structure, the country has the world's largest installed capacity of new energy, with the share of green power continuing to rise, Zhou said.

As for system, China's ultra-high-voltage grid technology enables cross-regional optimization of power resources, while the country is also adopting a pioneering approach that aligns computing infrastructure with clean energy sources, he added.

Power strain

Looking ahead, the Beijing Institute of Technology's Center for Energy and Environmental Policy Research projected that by 2030, China's data centers will consume about 525.76 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity, accounting for 4.8 percent of the country's total societal electricity use.

In the United States, meanwhile, the amount of electricity consumed by data centers is expected to cause significant tightening across the national power market.

That strain is already feeding through to the real economy, as big tech data centers are driving up power bills for manufacturers across the US Rust Belt, Reuters reported. For example, the Belden Brick Co in Sugarcreek, Ohio, a 141-year-old enterprise, saw its electricity costs surge 90 percent last year, largely due to rising power demand from regional data centers.

China, by contrast, is taking a coordinated, long-term approach. Wang Hongzhi, head of the National Energy Administration, has said that China's energy system will become significantly more secure, resilient and structurally optimized by 2030, driven by over 20 trillion yuan in planned investments for key energy projects and emerging sectors.

To accommodate the surging electricity demand driven by AI, Wang said China will closely align national computing hubs with large renewable bases in the western regions, advancing the synergy between computing and electricity, while simultaneously promoting distributed power, microgrids and virtual power plants to meet localized computing needs.

A virtual power plant is a network of small, distributed energy resources, such as solar panels and electric vehicle chargers, that are connected and managed as one.

Song Yunbo, chief sustainability officer of GCL Group, a major Chinese new energy company, said that China "already generates over one-third of its electricity from renewables — a global leader — and the country's energy surplus makes it an ideal testing ground for AI-driven applications".

Miao Qing, chairwoman of Yingli Group, another Chinese new energy company, said AI-powered virtual power plants are reshaping electricity systems by aggregating distributed renewables, storage and flexible loads to smooth peaks and valleys while dynamically responding to real-time market prices.

Miao said China has already built more than 530 virtual power plants, and the prospects for wider application are "very promising".

INSIDE
Ready and able
Global Views, page 8

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

www.chinadailyglobal.com

A member of ANN ASIA NEWS NETWORK

China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

Education protest



A protester sits on the hood of a police car on Wednesday during a demonstration demanding educational reforms, as part of the Cockroach Janta Party's ongoing protest movement in New Delhi, India. The protests began more than a month ago over alleged leaks in some of the country's most competitive entrance exams for medical colleges and government jobs. VIPIN / AP **See story, page 5**

Small-scale farmers key to food security

WORLD WATCH
By Nii Quaye-Kumah

So far, this has been a summer of extremes. Record-breaking heat waves across the Northern Hemisphere have scorched fields and strained the food systems in Western Europe, which recorded its hottest June on record. In parts of Asia, temperatures have also soared well above seasonal averages. At the same time, Typhoon Bavi has just swept across eastern China, displacing millions and leaving a trail of damage to farmland and rural infrastructure in its wake. These events are not isolated incidents. They are the latest expressions of a climate system under severe and intensifying stress.

Extreme heat already threatens the livelihoods of over 1 billion people, causing an annual loss of 470 billion labor hours across the global agricultural sector. For most major crops, yield declines begin above 30 C; livestock experience stress at even lower thresholds. In 2024, 91 percent of the global ocean experienced at least one marine heat wave. Critically, extreme heat does not act alone. It amplifies water stress, triggers flash droughts and creates conditions for pest and disease outbreaks. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Meteorological Organization, agricultural losses can triple when heat coincides with other hazards such as drought.

China is already living the reality of climate change and the impacts of extreme heat. Over the past 50 years, the country's average surface temperature has risen by 0.31 C per decade, faster than the global average. The consequences are unfolding across its farms and threatening food production and rural livelihoods.

Typically, rice yields begin to decline once temperatures exceed 28 C. In the case of maize, every additional degree of warming reduces global yields by 7.5 percent, while extreme heat during flowering can cause even greater losses. Although China's grain output has remained above 650 million metric tons for 10 consecutive years, yields could decline by 8.7 percent across the country's maize belt by the end of the century under a high-emissions pathway.

The message is unmistakable: Climate change is no longer a future threat for China and, indeed, the world. It is already reducing harvests, degrading productive land and increasing the urgency of investing in climate-resilient agriculture.

Smallholder farmers, the "first mile" of our food system, bear a disproportionate share of this burden. In China, they represent 90 percent of the agricultural workforce and cultivate 70 percent of the country's arable land. Globally, they produce a significant share of the food that feeds the world, yet they are the least equipped to absorb the shocks that climate change delivers. Access to climate information, affordable insurance, resilient infrastructure and the financial reserves needed to recover from a bad season can remain limited.

*See **Agriculture,** page 3*

RICE TERRACE WAKEBOARDING MAKES WAVES

Combining extreme water sports and a centuries-old agricultural landscape is proving to be a hit in Zhejiang

By **CHEN YE** in Hangzhou
chenye@chinadaily.com.cn

At first glance, it seems impossible.

On a sheet of water barely 10 centimeters deep, Jin Taiyang glides across a flooded rice terrace nearly 800 meters above sea level. Instead of being pulled by a boat, the 33-year-old wakeboarding coach is pulled by an electric winch.

He gathers speed before launching off a ramp at the edge of one terrace. He twists into a backflip and lands smoothly on the tier below, sending water spraying into the air and prompting applause from the onlookers.

For Jin, it is unlike riding anywhere else.

"When you're surfing in the ocean, the only sound you hear is that of the waves," he said. "Here, you're surrounded by birds and insects. You can hear the water beneath your board, the sound of the winch pulling you forward and, if you land the trick, the cheers from visitors."



Jin Taiyang and his friend Zhang Wei (right) experience wakeboarding at Yunhe Rice Terraces in Lishui, Zhejiang province, on May 2. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The performances take place at the Yunhe Rice Terraces Scenic Area in Yunhe county of Lishui in East China's Zhejiang province. Designated as a national 5A tourist attraction, the site is home to the largest complex of terraced rice fields in East China.

Each spring, before rice transplanting begins, the terraces are flooded with mountain spring water, creating mirror-like surfaces that are ideal for wakeboarding.

*See **Event,** page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Unity and cooperation highlighted at ASEAN gathering

By **ZHANG YUNBI**
zhangyunbi@chinadaily.com.cn

Beijing and its Southeast Asian neighbors have managed to shore up unity and pragmatic cooperation at the recently concluded China-ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Manila, yielding tangible outcomes.

Inside
Comment, page 6

At the annual meeting, attended by Foreign Minister Wang Yi and his counterparts in the Philippine capital, the ASEAN countries said they look forward to closer strategic coordination with China to bolster their own development resilience and advance high-quality connectivity.

They also expressed support for "deeper cooperation in trade and investment, the digital economy, artificial intelligence, climate change, clean energy and efforts to combat transnational crime", according to a Foreign Ministry release.

China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations have been each other's largest trading partner for six consecutive years, with annual trade volume exceeding $1 trillion last year.

As a major outcome, the meeting adopted a joint statement of the China-ASEAN foreign ministers on addressing the impact on the region of the evolving situation in the Middle East and the strengthening of regional energy cooperation.

"The foreign ministers of ASEAN member states and the ASEAN secretary-general spoke highly of the achievements of ASEAN-China cooperation and unanimously affirmed that China is one of ASEAN's most important friendly neighbors and dialogue partners," Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said on Thursday.

This year marks the fifth anniversary of the establishment of the China-ASEAN Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, which has covered and benefited a combined population of over 2 billion people.

*See **Meeting,** page 3*

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:39 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:39 PM

INDEPTH

Brighter futures sprout for Kenyan women

Chinese scientists share mushroom cultivation techniques to help improve incomes, build better lives

By **LI MUYUN** and **HE CHUN** in Changsha

A small but ambitious project led by Chinese scientists is helping some of Kenya's impoverished women, particularly single mothers, to build new lives — one mushroom at a time.

Mom's Mushroom House, a collaboration between edible fungi researchers from Hunan province and Kenyan partners, is adapting Chinese cultivation techniques to local conditions, training women in Kenya to grow and sell mushrooms from simple, low-cost structures.

The project focuses on one of Kenya's most vulnerable populations. Two-thirds of Kenyans live in poverty, earning less than $3.20 a day. Among them, women and girls bear a disproportionate burden. In Kibera, one of Nairobi's largest informal settlements, women make up nearly three-quarters of the adult population. The Kenya Demographic and Health Survey indicates that a third of Kenya's households are headed by women, with this proportion higher in rural areas than in urban ones.

In 2022, approximately 15 percent of Kenyan women aged 15-49 were single mothers, according to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics.

For single mothers in impoverished communities, the challenges are compounded by limited support from fathers, lack of stable incomes, and inadequate access to healthcare and education for their children.

"But the Kenyan mothers I know are remarkably optimistic and resilient," said Chen Tian, director of the think tank at the China-Africa Economic and Trade Promotion Council.

"They are constantly breaking through constraints, stepping out of their homes, and striving for equal opportunities. They are eager to learn new skills to earn a better living," Chen said, adding that the project aims to harness this willingness to learn.

Mom's Mushroom House is designed to empower Kenyan women through multiple avenues, providing mushroom cultivation techniques, supplying planting materials, and connecting them to markets.

The collaboration, formalized in December, is led by the Institute of Hunan Edible Fungi, the China-Africa Economic and Trade Promotion Council in Hunan, and Albert Meadows Limited, one of the largest commercial mushroom farm in Kenya. Last month, a team of Chinese female researchers traveled to Kenya to deliver on-site technical training to local women.



Xu Ning (center), a researcher at the Institute of Hunan Edible Fungi in Changsha, Hunan province, and local participants of the Mom's Mushroom House project show the harvest from their mushroom cultivation at a farm in Nairobi, Kenya, in June. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

'Culinary legacy'

There is a compelling commercial logic behind the choice of mushrooms, according to Xu Ning, a researcher at the Institute of Hunan Edible Fungi and one of the project's initiators.

Kenyans have long been eating mushrooms, a culinary legacy of British colonial rule, Xu said. "Mushrooms appear on pizzas, in stews, and in soups."

However, after arriving in Nairobi last year, Xu discovered that mushrooms were being sold in supermarkets at prices far higher than in China.

"Virtually all the mushrooms consumed in the country are imported, mainly from South Africa, at high prices," she said. "Despite the strong demand, there is not a single large, professional mushroom cultivation company in Kenya or even in neighboring countries."

The country faces an annual mushroom supply shortfall of roughly 700 metric tons, according to the Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Beyond the local market, there is also export potential. Kenya has developed a sophisticated cold-chain logistics system for its flower industry, and the same infrastructure could be used to export fresh mushrooms, Xu explained.

The country's natural conditions are highly conducive to mushroom cultivation. "Temperatures there range from 16 C to 28 C year-round, eliminating the need for additional heating or cooling," she said.

In addition, mushrooms also grow quickly. Oyster mushrooms take only 25 to 35 days from planting to harvest, while white button mushrooms take 55 to 60 days. "Few crops offer such rapid results," she added.

This rapid growth, coupled with low start-up costs and high market value, makes mushrooms an ideal vehicle for poverty alleviation in Kenya. A woman with a single room can start her own business, and with proper training she can earn enough to support her family.

"By our assessment, even a small operation could generate about $150 per month, which is higher than the average salary of a local factory worker," Xu noted.

System redesign

However, local production conditions were far more challenging than Xu had anticipated.

"The local mushroom sheds were built with simple materials and lacked standardized temperature or humidity control equipment," Xu said. "The power supply was unstable, with frequent outages, and there was no irrigation system, forcing farmers to water manually."

Due to the farmers' limited knowledge of microbiology and sterilization, many mushroom bags were contaminated and infested with pests. As a result, the standard cultivation techniques brought by Xu and her colleagues from China could not be directly applied.

"We had to redesign the entire system," she said.

Their approach was guided by three principles: low cost, use of locally available materials, and no reliance on stable electricity.

Instead of constructing steel-framed structures, the team converted local mud-walled rooms into functional mushroom houses by adding ventilation holes — a low-cost solution that required no new construction. For the cultivation substrate, they replaced some imported ingredients with local agricultural waste: sugarcane bagasse, coffee husks, corn stalks, and wood chips. They also developed a simple open-air composting process that relied on natural heat rather than machinery.

Pest control was another challenge. Kenya had no approved fungicides for mushroom cultivation, so the team introduced physical and biological solutions: sticky traps, ash and chili water as natural repellents, and better spacing between mushroom bags to reduce mold.

The sterilization method also had to be rethought. In China, mushroom growers use high-pressure autoclaves. In Kenya, Xu found farmers were using an old-fashioned method, an oil drum filled with water, heated by fire beneath, with mushroom bags suspended inside on iron rods. It was the same technology Chinese farmers used decades ago.



Xu instructs local women on the cultivation of oyster mushrooms at a farm in Nairobi in June. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Online
See more by scanning the code.

"We could not bring in expensive equipment or specialized materials," Xu said. "Everything we designed had to work with what was already available in the community."

Training begins

Last month, Xu and five colleagues arrived in Nairobi to deliver the first training session for local farmers. The course lasted eight days — six days of theory and two days of hands-on practice — all free of charge.

More than 40 participants, most of them women, came from diverse backgrounds. Some were farm owners, some were struggling mushroom growers, and a few were university students with children, eager to learn a marketable skill. But most of the female participants shared one thing in common — they were responsible for supporting children on their own.

"In Kenya, young women often find themselves raising children alone," Xu said. "Almost all of our students had children to feed and no stable income to do it with."

Theory classes were held at the Confucius Institute at the University of Nairobi, which provided its classrooms free of charge. The Chinese experts covered mushroom biology, cultivation techniques, pest control, post-harvest handling, and market access. The practical sessions, conducted at two local farms, were tailored to local conditions, with no sterile lab environments, no imported substrates and no complex equipment. Students worked with local mushroom varieties, using basic tools and locally available materials.

"We wanted the participants to understand that this is not a high-tech technology," Xu said. "It's something they can master and do at home."

One of the first trainees was Angel Mercy, a single mother raising her son alone. Having learned some Chinese, she asked the team to call her "Moli", the Chinese word for jasmine. At the training sessions, she stood out as one of the most attentive learners, meticulously filling a notebook with detailed notes on every step of the cultivation process.

"She was the most dedicated student we had," Xu recalled. "She would arrive early, stay late, and always ask for more details."

Mercy shared with the team her struggles to support her family and her reliance on others just to get by. With the training, she hoped to earn money through mushroom cultivation to provide better food and education for her son. For the first time, she felt confident in her ability to be self-reliant.

Xu said Mercy's story encapsulates the deeper significance of the project.

"It empowers these women, giving them the dignity to support themselves and their children independently," she said. "When they earn their own money, they gain a voice in their families, and some even become leaders in their communities, sharing their knowledge with other women."

Another participant, Jecintah Timpiyian, had also been struggling for years to feed her children and cover basic expenses. Mushroom cultivation finally enabled her to meet these needs.

"I was able to earn something ... to pay the school fees that were very hard for me to pay," she said. "Everything has changed."

The Chinese experts also taught them how to manage their work and improve their harvesting practices, Timpiyian said. "They have also connected us with many customers," she added.

For Caroline Wanjiku, a mushroom cultivation worker at a local farm, the training deepened her understanding of the process.

"Mushroom cultivation is a science," she said. "You have to be a professional for this because you have to deal with things like temperatures, humidity, and moisture."

Now, Wanjiku has more faith in the business and wants to encourage other women to try it.

"I would advise them to embrace mushroom cultivation," she said. "Mushrooms have high nutritional value, and they sell well in the market. It's a good business."

Broader vision

The project's progress has been shaped by more than just technical adaptation. The Chinese team discovered that working across cultures requires patience and mutual understanding. For example, the Chinese team was accustomed to working on a tight schedule, while their Kenyan counterparts were more flexible, sometimes taking time off for religious and family events.

"We couldn't just impose our way of working," Xu said. "We had to find a rhythm that worked for both sides."

The deeper challenge, Xu noted, revolved around building trust. "Introducing something new often meets resistance, especially when there are cultural and political differences," she said. "We had to continuously work on building connections and earning their trust."

The project, however, had one crucial advantage: the participants were there voluntarily, driven by their own desire to learn. This motivation, Xu said, provided a solid foundation to build upon.

Chen Tian, the project's other initiator, recalled meeting several female mushroom growers who spoke fluent Chinese, which left a strong impression on her and greatly facilitated communication.

"There were cultural differences, of course," Chen said. "But we approached every interaction with mutual respect, patiently explaining and listening. In our cooperation, mushrooms served as a bridge, and practical cultivation techniques were our common language."

She also observed that the participants' aspirations extended well beyond the training curriculum. Several of them inquired about introducing more mushroom varieties from China. Some were already exploring post-harvest processing and storage methods to extend shelf life and reach more customers.

"Some even asked if they could learn Chinese cooking skills to prepare the mushrooms in Chinese styles," Chen added. "They were thinking beyond cultivation and considering the entire value chain."

The participants' enthusiasm and the tangible results of the first training session caught the attention of Kenyan institutions. On July 11, less than two weeks after the training concluded, Erick Rutto, president of the Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, visited Changsha, the capital of Hunan, to review the project's early outcomes and discuss further cooperation with the Chinese team. Discussions included expanding training sessions, reaching more farmers, and building a more structured system for production and market access.

The Chinese team is planning another visit to Kenya in October, but their ambitions extend beyond a single training session. The long-term goal is to establish a local spawn production facility, Xu said, a critical piece of infrastructure that would allow Kenyan farmers to produce their own high-quality starter material instead of relying on imports.

There is also a broader vision for the Mom's Mushroom House brand, which could provide quality assurance and stable market channels for local women producing under its name. If the model proves sustainable, the team believes it could be adapted to other countries with similar conditions.

The current training model is designed to be sustainable and replicable. Former local participants are expected to teach others, creating a system that does not depend on Chinese experts traveling to Kenya every few months.

"We are not going to be here forever," Xu said. "But the knowledge has to stay."

Wang Xiaodong and Sharon Nakola in Nairobi contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at limuyun@chinadaily.com.cn





Left: Xu explains substrate fermentation techniques for button mushroom cultivation to the staff at Albert's Farm in Kajiado county, Kenya, in June. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY **Right:** Jecintah Timpiyian, a mushroom farmer, works at Albert's Farm on July 6. ZHANG CHI / CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:39 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:39 PM

TOP NEWS

Agriculture: Smallholder farmers supported

From page 1

To jointly tackle these challenges facing China's smallholders, the International Fund for Agricultural Development has long partnered with the Chinese government, centering climate resilience for small-scale producers as a core pillar of its mission. Since 1981, IFAD has invested significantly in China and partnered with the government to have an impact on the lives of approximately 4.6 million poor rural households.

In Yunnan province, IFAD-supported youth entrepreneurs have modernized irrigation networks with smartphone-controlled drip systems, greatly improving water efficiency — an adaptation measure that peer-reviewed evidence shows can offset heat impacts on crops in the short run. This matters because research confirms that irrigation expansion has been one of the primary mechanisms through which Chinese farmers have adapted to extreme temperatures over the past three decades.

China also contributes significantly to global climate resilience. Through the China-IFAD South-South and Triangular Cooperation Facility, China is actively sharing its climate-smart agricultural innovations with countries across the Global South, while also learning from their practices. A compelling example is an ongoing initiative in partnership with the International Bamboo and Rattan Organization, which is leveraging China's extensive expertise in bamboo cultivation to strengthen climate resilience among smallholder farmers in Brazil, Bolivia and Argentina. The project equips farmers with climate-smart techniques for bamboo production and processing, provides small enterprises with low-cost equipment to add value to bamboo products, and builds local institutional capacity.

Across its global portfolio, IFAD is investing in a similarly diverse range of climate adaptation solutions. Through our Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme, IFAD channeled $1.4 billion in climate finance to smallholder farmers between 2022 and 2024, supporting 6 million small-scale farmers worldwide. In Kyrgyzstan, herders in remote mountain pastures receive 10-day advance warnings of weather hazards, allowing them to plan their grazing routes before storms arrive. In Bangladesh, the IFAD-funded Coastal Climate Resilient Infrastructure Project built improved markets and market-connecting roads designed to remain usable during the monsoon season, increasing on-farm income from crop and fish sales by 104 percent and 50 percent, respectively, reducing poverty by 4 percent, and reducing food insecurity among participating households. These results underscore that transformative adaptation addressing the interactions between food systems and climate change requires adequate, accessible and appropriate financing that reaches smallholder farmers directly.

The challenge ahead is systemic and urgent. Extreme heat is no longer a distant risk but a present reality reshaping agricultural production, rural livelihoods and global food security. Addressing it requires collective action: governments investing in climate-resilient infrastructure; international institutions channeling finance and knowledge to those most in need; and the private sector developing affordable technologies that reach smallholder farmers at scale.

The storms will keep coming. The heat will keep rising. But with the right investments in the "first mile", and the right partnerships to sustain them, we can build resilient and enduring food systems.

The author is the China representative of IFAD and head of the Regional South-South and Triangular Cooperation Center for Asia and the Pacific at IFAD. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Envoys to China from member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations watch a demonstration of a robotic wheelchair developed by a Chinese company during their visit on Wednesday to a China-ASEAN cooperation center on artificial intelligence applications in Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region. CHEN GUANYAN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Meeting: Green development stressed

From page 1

At the meeting, Foreign Minister Wang said that China stands ready to work with ASEAN in forging closer cooperation for the well-being of the region's peoples and in "reinforcing unity to tackle new challenges and uncertainties".

On behalf of China, Wang put forward a four-point proposal for catalyzing the China-ASEAN cooperation: safeguarding the regional environment for peace and development, bolstering the resilience of regional development, advancing green and innovation-driven development, and remaining people-centered.

Xu Liping, director of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Center for Southeast Asian Studies, said the China-ASEAN perspective on the region's governance is "based on the Asian approach that features mutual respect, consensus-building and consideration for each other's comfort".

"As the world's current round of technological revolution and industrial transformation keeps gaining momentum, the building of the China-ASEAN community with a shared future has yielded remarkable achievements, becoming the most dynamic model of cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region," he said.

Regarding the South China Sea, Wang said that the sea is "our common homeland", and that China and the ASEAN countries have the wisdom and capability to continue handling the South China Sea issue effectively, ensuring that peace, stability, cooperation and friendship become the dominant narrative on the sea.

Wang urged countries in the region to strictly honor the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea.

He called on the countries to resist external attempts to stoke tensions, reject any nation's efforts to stir trouble in the South China Sea, and keep the initiative for safeguarding regional peace and stability firmly in their own hands.

Stressing that a critical window for finalizing the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea is now open, Wang called on all parties to seize the opportunity, fend off interference and deliver on that objective.

At the meeting, the foreign ministers of ASEAN member states expressed their hope of reaching the Code of Conduct as early as possible this year. They look forward to working with China to make ASEAN-China relations "a stabilizing force for regional peace and development and a model dialogue partnership", said Lin, the Foreign Ministry spokesman.

During his stay in Manila, Wang also held a number of bilateral meetings on the sidelines with senior officials of over 10 countries from both within and outside the region, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Brazil, India, Australia and Canada.

AI doubles of veteran stars spark debate

By JIANG CHENGLONG
jiangchenglong@chinadaily.com.cn

Veteran Taiwan actress Joey Wong's decision to license her youthful likeness for an artificial intelligence-generated game trailer has reignited the debate on whether AI could extend the screen careers of actors or whether it merely reproduces their appearance without the artistry that made them famous.

The 87-second trailer, *Qianying*, was released on July 16 for the *Tianxia* online game series developed by Chinese gaming giant NetEase. Produced entirely using AI, rather than live-action filming, the trailer applies Wong's authorized digital likeness to re-create the youthful screen image that made her one of Chinese-language cinema's most recognizable stars.

Wong, who is best known for playing female protagonist Nie Xiaoqian in the fantasy romance *A Chinese Ghost Story*, retired from acting in 2004, and has stayed away from the big screen ever since. Last month, she was named a brand ambassador for the game's 18th anniversary.

The production team combined NetEase's DM Monet tool and generative AI from Volcano Engine, the tech platform behind ByteDance's large language model Doubao, to make the trailer. Instead of featuring Wong herself, the film digitally reconstructs the youthful appearance associated with some of her best-known roles.

Wong, 59, is not the only veteran performer exploring the commercial use of AI-generated digital doubles.

According to a report by China Movie Channel, Hong Kong actor Lawrence Ng, 62, recently announced that he has licensed the likeness of his 20-year-old self for an AI film. He said the remuneration is considerable and added that he did not need to directly participate in the production process.

The report said Ng signed a contract limiting the use of his digital likeness to the specific film and was satisfied with the finished images.

Asked whether AI could replace human actors, Ng said he viewed the technology as another avenue for the film and television industry, offering performers and other professionals more choices, the report added.

Guo Yanmin, a professor at the Communication University of China, told China Daily that allowing actors to license their likeness for AI-assisted productions is "a path worth exploring", particularly for sequels, alternative endings and other reinterpretations of classic works.

The commercial appeal of such productions largely lies in nostalgia, retro imagery and the audiences' emotional attachment to veteran stars' earlier performances, he said.

However, Guo pointed out that the changing times, audience preferences and cultural trends may limit the appeal of such projects. Many younger viewers may be unfamiliar with Wong or Ng, or the films that established their fame, weakening the emotional connection on which AI re-creations depend, he said.

Even so, licensing digital likenesses is expected to become more common because it serves the commercial interests of both performers and investors, Guo said, noting that retired or veteran actors are more likely to embrace the technology than performers at the height of their careers.

The greater long-term disruption may come not from authorized digital doubles of established stars, but from entirely AI-generated actors and virtual idols, he said.

"With strong technology, a good script and capable direction, AI actors could appear in genuinely compelling productions. Licensed digital doubles still rely on the audiences' existing emotional attachment to the real performers," Guo said.

Public opinion on the trend remains divided. One user on Sina Weibo described the technology as "a blessing" for veteran actors, who receive fewer roles, saying that they could license their likeness and make decent money without having to return to demanding film shoots.

Actors currently enjoying popularity, as well as newcomers seeking their first break, could face greater pressure if such productions become more widespread, the user added.

Another user, who seemed less impressed with the trend, said the AI version of Wong had her form but lacked her spirit. "Although AI has refined Wong's facial contours, her real appearance was far more captivating," the user wrote in a post.

Event: Tricks require careful preparation

From page 1

The unusual combination of an ancient farming landscape and a modern extreme sport has attracted increasing interest from visitors.

However, for Jin, a native of Nanjing, the capital of Jiangsu province, it is the setting that leaves the deepest impression. "My favorite scene is seeing local farmers in bamboo hats working the fields with water buffalo," he said. "That's something you don't get to see very often anymore. It feels very Chinese."

He also vividly remembers the first time he arrived at the terrace after a heavy rain. "The fog covered the mountains and visibility was very low," he recalled. "It felt as if we were riding through the clouds."

The idea of wakeboarding on the terraces initially emerged in 2021, when Jin and Zhang Wei, a former member of the Chinese national wakeboard team, were invited to film a promotional video.

"In skateboarding and snowboarding, people often ride in unusual places to create different visual effects," said Jin. "We wanted to see if wakeboarding could do the same."

Following the success of the first shoot in May 2021, Jin and Zhang returned this spring with four riders from the Hong Kong, China Waterski Association to stage another series of performances. "The audience was much larger this time," Zhang said. "People were really engaged. We could hear the applause and cheers throughout the performance."

Although the tricks may appear effortless, each one requires careful preparation.

Recognized by the International Waterski & Wakeboard Federation, wakeboarding remains a relatively niche sport. Even experienced riders cannot expect every attempt to succeed. Before each performance, the team carefully studies the terraces and plans every jump between the different levels.

"Sometimes we have to try several times before getting a trick right," Jin said with a laugh. "That also means falling into the mud more than once."

Zhang emphasized that the terraces are never used as a training ground. "We only perform tricks that we've fully mastered," he said. "Everything we do here has been practiced countless times on lakes, behind boats or at cable parks. We don't come here to experiment."

The performances have also sparked visitors' interest in the sport. Xiong Jianbing, deputy general manager of Yunhe Rice Terraces Investment Development Co, said that the scenic area plans to invite the athletes back to perform regularly after the farming season, and it is also considering offering wakeboarding experiences for enthusiasts under professional guidance.

"We would like more visitors to experience the terraces from a different perspective. By combining sports with tourism, they can gain a deeper appreciation of this unique landscape," Xiong said.

FDI stabilizes as high-tech sector surges

China's sustained market-opening efforts, measures to facilitate investment hailed

By ZHANG CHENXU and ZHONG NAN

Foreign direct investment in China showed further signs of stabilization in the first half of 2026, with inflows posting year-on-year growth in both May and June and the overall decline narrowing sharply, underscoring improving investor confidence despite global economic uncertainties, said officials, experts and executives.

Data from the Ministry of Commerce shows that China's actual use of FDI totaled 402.14 billion yuan ($59.3 billion) in the first half of this year, with the decline narrowing by 10.2 percentage points compared with the same period last year. In June alone, the actual use of FDI increased 15.1 percent year-on-year, marking the second consecutive month of growth.

"Foreign investment in China remains on a stable footing, with recent data pointing to a trend of stabilization and recovery," Meng Huating, head of the ministry's Department of Foreign Investment Administration, said on Thursday at a news conference in Beijing.

Zhou Mi, a senior researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, attributed the positive signs to the resilience and long-term growth prospects of the Chinese economy, coupled with the country's sustained market-opening efforts and investment facilitation measures.

"In a world facing rising protectionism and geopolitical tensions, multinational companies are looking to deepen their investment in China as a hedge against external shocks," Zhou added.

The World Investment Report 2026, which was released this month by the United Nations Trade and Development, noted that despite a challenging global investment environment, FDI inflows in China are "showing signs of stabilization" after three years of adjustment.

The UN trade body said that China's inward FDI is moving away from scale-driven expansion toward structural upgrading and quality improvement, with capital increasingly flowing into advanced manufacturing, scientific and technological innovation, and modern services.

Such a shift is visible in the data released by the ministry. FDI in China's high-tech industries surged 33.2 percent year-on-year in the first half, lifting its share in total inflows to a record 42.4 percent.

"The figures show that China's FDI mix is moving steadily up the value chain, while foreign investors remain bullish on the Chinese market," Vice-Minister of Commerce Yan Dong said at the news conference. "Nearly 4,800 foreign-funded enterprises expanded their investment in China in the first half."

United States-based athleisure company Skechers is among the multinational enterprises expanding their footprints in China. The company has invested more than 4.2 billion yuan to build a logistics center in Taicang, Jiangsu province, while expanding its R&D and livestreaming base in Dongguan, Guangdong province.

The company is also accelerating its digital transformation, said Willie Tan, CEO of Skechers China, South Korea and Southeast Asia.

Skechers is not alone in tapping China's innovation ecosystem. Joe Bao, president of Kone China, said that China has become not only a major market for the Finnish elevator manufacturer, but also a critical part of its global manufacturing and innovation network.

Sino-US trade talks

At the news conference, Meng, from the Commerce Ministry, provided updates on the latest economic and trade consultations between China and the US.

She said the two countries are maintaining close communication on specific arrangements for the proposed trade council — a body the two sides agreed to establish based on the consensus reached by the two heads of state — and a reciprocal tariff reduction framework covering $30 billion worth of products on each side.

"China is seeking views from a wide range of domestic enterprises and business associations, local governments, and US companies and chambers of commerce in China. The US side, meanwhile, is seeking public opinion on the trade council and the tariff framework," she said.

Contact the writers at zhangchenxu@chinadaily.com.cn

Artifacts returned



A pair of Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) stone lion sculptures is seen in front of the Kansong Art Museum in Seoul, South Korea, on Thursday. South Korea returned the sculptures to China during a handover ceremony at the museum on the same day, with China's National Cultural Heritage Administration formally receiving them from the National Museum of Korea. YAO QILIN / XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:39 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:39 PM

WORLD

Govt condemns violence as migrants await repatriation

By **NDUMISO MLILO**
in Johannesburg, South Africa
For China Daily



Ugandans gather with their luggage to be documented after arriving at the Kololo ceremonial grounds in Kampala on Monday as authorities repatriate citizens from South Africa. MICHAEL MUHATI / REUTERS

The South African government is condemning the recent rise in attacks against immigrants and stepping up its efforts to fight such violence as many immigrants face an uncertain future.

Raphael Ayam, 34, arrived in South Africa in 2012 with the hope of working and taking care of his family back in Malawi. He was working as a shop attendant for a Somali shop in the Free State province. Ayam said anti-immigrant groups have been marching every week demanding that undocumented foreigners leave the country. They accuse foreigners of stealing jobs, opportunities and committing crimes.

Ayam was one of many sleeping in the open at the Malawian Consulate in Johannesburg waiting to be repatriated. Civil society groups have been distributing water and food outside the consulate where people have been waiting.

Tessa Dooms, from Siyafana Sonke Action Campaign, was seen distributing water, blankets, hot meals, diapers and medical assistance outside the Malawian Consulate in Johannesburg. She said some groups and individuals have been helping migrants, despite recent xenophobic attacks.

The South African government and the police have continued to condemn the intimidation of migrants. Mmamoloko Kubayi, chair of the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) on Migration, recently said that protesters have a right to march but must not trample on others' rights.

Kubayi, who is also the minister of justice and constitutional development, said in a recent media briefing that the government is strengthening legislation to address illegal migration. She said the government is also strengthening border security and will engage with African countries on migration issues.

"The IMC reiterates its unequivocal rejection of all forms of xenophobia, intimidation, vigilantism, violence and unlawful actions directed at foreign nationals, regardless of their immigration status. Government has consistently maintained that the management of immigration, deportation and repatriation falls within the exclusive responsibility of the state and not private individuals or community groups," the IMC on Migration said in a statement released on Friday last week.

Sonja Boshoff, chairwoman of South African Parliament's Select Committee on Economic Development and Trade, condemned the burning of stores and looting. She said the Constitution allows anyone the right to protest but requires that it be conducted within the confines of the law, with no intimidation or trampling on the rights of others.

"We condemn the looting and burning of the shops by anyone; it's unacceptable, and this will hurt our economy. We condemn violence and intimidation by anyone," said Boshoff.

Khulekani Mathe, CEO of Business Unity South Africa, said that while the business community understands the challenges in the country, it does not support the violence and criminality. He said citizens cannot enforce immigration laws since they lack the knowledge to do so. Mathe said the looting and destruction of shops will affect the country's economy.

Marrieth Ndlela, from the South African Red Cross Society, is one of the volunteers helping Malawians outside the consulate in Johannesburg to charge their phones. The Malawians spent days outside the consulate, and their phones were off. Ndlela said they are providing free Wi-Fi to the migrants and free phones to connect with their loved ones. She said they have also been helping another group of foreigners in Durban with hot meals and some medical assistance.

The South African government and representatives of other African countries continue to process migrants who want to return to their countries.

Ndumiso Mlilo is a freelance journalist for China Daily.

Talks seek progress on conflict

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

The United States offered to help find a mediated end to the Russia-Ukraine conflict on Thursday, during talks in the Philippines between US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

The talks followed an apparent recent increase in the intensity of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, with Russia's largest online retailer having been targeted repeatedly by Ukrainian drones and Russian missiles striking Ukrainian ports and ships.

Rubio and Lavrov "discussed the US-Russia relationship and the need to end the Russia-Ukraine war", a US State Department spokesperson said after the meeting.

Russia's Foreign Ministry said Lavrov emphasized to Rubio "the unacceptability of further arming" Ukraine, and told him European countries were pursuing Russia's "strategic defeat".

Thursday's session was the culmination of three days of talks between the US and Russia that touched on not only the conflict but also the conflict in the Middle East.

Before the meeting, Rubio said the US would offer to broker an end to the conflict "if that opportunity presents itself".

The meeting took place after a major reshuffle of the top level of Ukraine's defense department, as Kyiv had been targeting Russia's top online retailer, Wildberries.

The online seller, which claims to process 20 million orders a day via its massive network of giant warehouses, sells appliances, clothing, cosmetics, medicines, and a wide range of other products.

In recent days, Ukraine has used drones to attack four Wildberries warehouses, killing at least nine people. But Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky has insisted his country's attacks have not been aimed at disrupting the lives of ordinary Russians but at damaging logistics hubs that supply Russian forces with drone components and other equipment.

The Kremlin has denied that online platforms are being used to supply its military.

Russia has also launched intense attacks on infrastructure in Ukraine recently — hitting oil refineries, warehouses, and shipping ports.



Monsoon chaos ride

A family rides on a motorbike through a flooded road amid rain in Lahore, on Wednesday. At least 15 people were killed and 40 others injured in rain-related incidents across Pakistan over the past 24 hours as monsoon rains continued to affect parts of the country, the National Disaster Management Authority said on Wednesday.
MURTAZA ALI / REUTERS

East Africa steps up outbreak preparedness

By **SHARON NAKOLA**
in Nairobi, Kenya
sharon@chinadailyafrica.com

As East Africa faces increasing threats from recurrent outbreaks of Ebola, Marburg and other infectious diseases, the East African Community, or EAC, on Wednesday launched a regional virology center in Uganda aimed at strengthening disease surveillance and pandemic preparedness across member states.

The Uganda Virus Research Institute, or UVRI, based in Entebbe, was designated as the EAC Regional Centre of Excellence in Virology, becoming a regional hub for advanced virus research, laboratory training, disease surveillance, diagnostics and knowledge sharing.

The launch came as countries in the region continue to contend with repeated public health emergencies that have exposed weaknesses in cross-border coordination, laboratory capacity and rapid response systems.

The urgency for stronger regional collaboration has been heightened by the ongoing Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo, an EAC member.

Uganda's Minister of Health Chris Baryomunsi on Tuesday called for greater cooperation among African countries in addressing the continent's disease burden, noting that health threats transcend national borders.

"You cannot mop while you have a leaking roof," Baryomunsi said, referring to the Ebola outbreak in the DR Congo and reaffirming Uganda's commitment to supporting its neighbor in containing the virus.

> We are building a stronger, more coordinated regional health system that can better prevent, detect and respond to disease outbreaks for the benefit of all East Africans."
>
> **Andrea Aguer Ariik Malueth,** EAC deputy secretary-general in charge of infrastructure, productive, social and political sectors

He said UVRI's scientific expertise, infrastructure and strong track record have made it an attractive partner for international collaboration.

According to the eight-member EAC, the center will support member states in preventing, detecting and responding to emerging and reemerging infectious diseases, including Ebola and Marburg, through enhanced scientific collaboration and strengthened laboratory networks.

Commitment stressed

"The designation of UVRI as the EAC Regional Centre of Excellence in Virology reflects the community's commitment to strengthening regional health security through enhanced collaboration, scientific excellence and investment in resilient laboratory systems," said Andrea Aguer Ariik Malueth, EAC deputy secretary-general in charge of infrastructure, productive, social and political sectors.

"By investing in centers of excellence, we are building a stronger, more coordinated regional health system that can better prevent, detect and respond to disease outbreaks for the benefit of all East Africans," he said.

Public health experts have increasingly called for stronger regional surveillance systems following lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic and recent outbreaks of Ebola, which highlighted the importance of early detection, information sharing and coordinated responses.

EAC said that as the regional center, UVRI is expected to play a key role in genomic surveillance, specialized laboratory training and research on emerging viruses, while serving as a reference institution for EAC partner states.

Ahead of the official launch, UVRI hosted a scientific symposium bringing together leading scientists, policymakers, public health experts and development partners to discuss emerging infectious diseases and strategies for strengthening regional preparedness and response.

The event also coincides with celebrations marking the institute's 90 years of scientific research and contribution to public health.

EAC states that since its establishment in 1936, UVRI has played a significant role in research and responses to major disease outbreaks, including Ebola, COVID-19 and other viral diseases, earning international recognition as one of Africa's leading virology institutions.

Alarm raised over Japan's nuclear plans

Resurgence of militaristic tendencies undermines regional stability: Experts

By **LIU JIANQIAO**
liujianqiao@chinadaily.com.cn

Japan's recent rhetoric and actions on nuclear issues have raised concerns about its growing military ambitions and the resurgence of militaristic tendencies, which could undermine regional stability and have profound implications for Asia and the wider international community, experts said.

Japanese Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi said on an online program last Friday that Japan should discuss policies related to nuclear weapons "without any taboos", triggering strong concern within Japan and from the international community.

In response to the opposition party's questioning on the three nonnuclear principles and nuclear submarines at the Diet, Japan's parliament, Koizumi said, "The idea of protecting what we have had until now seems to take precedence over truly protecting Japan."

It is extremely rare, provocative and dangerous after World War II for a sitting Japanese defense chief to make such remarks, Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said at a news conference on Tuesday.

Japan is an internationally recognized nuclear threshold state. It has long been deliberately maintaining the capability for a rapid nuclear breakout, stockpiling approximately 44.4 metric tons of separated plutonium, enough to produce a large number of nuclear warheads, he said.

Lin said that Japanese right-wing forces, citing so-called external threats and self-defense, have been breaking free from Japan's Constitution, international law and domestic law, and challenging the postwar international order and the international nuclear nonproliferation regime.

"Japan's neomilitarism has already reared its head. The international community must be highly vigilant and firmly oppose it," Lin said.

Liu Shuliang, an associate research fellow at the Tianjin Academy of Social Sciences, said the recent remarks and actions of Japanese politicians once again underscore a fundamental shift in Japan's national security policy.

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi advocated revising the "Three Non-Nuclear Principles" in parliament. Since taking office, she has accelerated Japan's military buildup and pursued a series of controversial nuclear-related initiatives, including closer cooperation on so-called extended deterrence, the promotion of nuclear-powered submarine development, the exploration of "nuclear sharing" arrangements, and the deployment of medium-range missile systems.

Koizumi's remarks, which deliberately crossed the red line on nuclear issues, run counter to the obligations of states' parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and openly challenge the international nuclear nonproliferation regime and the post-World War II international order. Such remarks are highly provocative and dangerous, he said.

"The Japanese government's recent stance indicates that it is abandoning its long-held commitment to the 'exclusively defensive' policy and the 'Three Non-Nuclear Principles', accelerating its transition toward a more combat-capable, offensive posture," Liu said.

"As the only country to have suffered atomic bombings, Japan appears to be leveraging its identity as a nuclear victim to gain political support for strengthening its nuclear deterrence capabilities," said Chen Hong, director of East China Normal University's Asia Pacific Studies Center in Shanghai.

Substantial stockpile

Japan possesses substantial stockpiles of nuclear materials and advanced nuclear technology. Its open discussion of the possibility of developing nuclear weapons sends a signal that it is lowering the political and strategic threshold for pursuing nuclear weapons capability, he said.

He said Japan is actively developing long-range missiles, enhancing its missile defense capabilities and advancing discussions on issues such as nuclear-powered submarines. Together, these moves point to its pursuit of offensive strike capabilities, exceeding the bounds of its long-held "exclusively defensive" policy and rendering that principle increasingly hollow.

Koizumi's remarks have thrust Japan's long-concealed nuclear ambitions into the international spotlight, further heightening concerns over the country's nuclear intentions and potential nuclear capabilities, experts said.

Chen from Shanghai noted that Japan's intentions and capabilities in the nuclear domain are becoming increasingly aligned, while it continues to explore the possibility of "nuclear-sharing" arrangements.

"Such developments are likely to prompt other countries in Northeast Asia to reassess their security policies and could further intensify a regional nuclear arms race," he said.

From the perspective of the global arms control system, Japan, as a state party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, has breached its obligations under the treaty, Liu said.

"By doing so, it risks opening the Pandora's box of nuclear proliferation, setting a dangerous precedent for nonnuclear states seeking nuclear weapons and undermining the international nuclear nonproliferation regime and the global arms control system," he said.

Xinhua contributed to this story.

Fight for justice



Attendees gather at a candlelight vigil where a police officer shot and killed a man on Wednesday, in Madison, Wisconsin. Bystander video circulating online suggested the man who was shot was a person of color. The death has sparked protests. KAYLA WOLF / AP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:39 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:39 PM

WORLD

US to impose new tariffs of 10 to 12.5% on over 60 countries

By **BELINDA ROBINSON**
in New York
belindarobinson@chinadailyusa.com

President Donald Trump's administration announced on Thursday that it will impose new tariffs of from 10 to 12.5 percent on over 60 trade partners, including China, starting on Friday, to replace other temporary duties that will lapse overnight.

The new tariffs will begin at 12.01 am EST on Friday, just as the prior 10 percent tariffs, enacted in February, are set to expire.

It is expected that China will likely face additional levies of 12.5 percent on some products, as will another 43 countries, including Japan, South Korea and Australia, Politico reported.

At least 17 trade partners including Canada, the European Union, Indonesia, the United Kingdom and Mexico will face a 10 percent duty on some products. This fee plan was initially laid out by the Office of the United States Trade Representative after it carried out an investigation.

It is the latest attempt by the Trump administration to resurrect the duties slapped on countries on so-called Liberation Day of April 2, 2025, which were struck down by the Supreme Court in February.

This was because the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act used to enforce those Liberation Day tariffs was deemed an incorrect way to do so. It later prompted billions of dollars in refund applications by US companies.

In response to that ruling, Trump announced in February that he would enact a temporary 10 percent worldwide tariff using Section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974. But they only lasted for 150 days and expire on Friday.

The Trump administration's latest 10 percent tariffs will be put in place on countries that it deems have not sufficiently enforced bans on goods produced by forced labor.

The latest tariffs will use Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974. This more robust law enables a US president to impose tariffs on any country that it finds has "failed to curb" the trade of goods made with forced labor.

However, some products including oil, gas and fertilizer are exempt from these latest tariffs, according to The Associated Press.

Other goods that will not be hit with the new levies will be any that qualify for duty-free status under the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement.

The roll-out of the tariffs comes after the Office of the United States Trade Representative carried out a five-month investigation.

It received comments up to July 6 and held public hearings from July 7 until July 9 at the US International Trade Commission in Washington, DC on whether or not to enact these new tariffs.

Many businesses that import or export from overseas — including China — warned in their public comments that any additional tariffs imposed by the US would disrupt supply chains and ultimately hurt their businesses and sting American consumers further with higher costs.

Over the next few weeks, it is expected that other duties will be placed on 16 countries and the EU under Section 301.

It could mean that even higher duties will be put on goods from China, the EU, Indonesia, South Korea, Vietnam, Mexico, Japan, India and others.

Trump previously used Section 301 to impose tariffs on China in his first term in office. They proved difficult to strike down in court.

The US president has faced an uphill legal battle to ensure that his tariffs can be legally kept in place.

Americans are already frustrated by a rise in prices across the board for food and household items, many of which originate in China.

Brent crude oil passed the important benchmark of $100 a barrel on July 23 due to the US-Israel war with Iran, further straining costs.

Experts said that the administration is taking a risk in rolling out new tariffs ahead of the Nov 3 midterm elections.

Tom Fullerton, an economist and professor at the University of Texas at El Paso, told China Daily when the initial tariffs were enacted that "lower income US consumers will face the biggest consequences from the new tariff hikes.

"That is because they purchase more merchandise goods than services and many of those goods are produced in China or contain components that are produced in China."

He also warned that US manufacturers will have to pay higher prices for imported components and US retailers will have to pay higher wholesale prices for imported consumer goods.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1878



Courthouse commotion

Supporters of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro rally outside a New York courthouse on Wednesday. A US judge set a June 1 trial date for Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, following their third court appearance since being forcibly seized by US troops in a military raid in January. The couple has pleaded not guilty to federal drug trafficking and firearms charges.
ZHANG FENGGUO / XINHUA

Middle East sea routes face mounting turmoil

Growing tensions disrupt crucial waterways, raising energy security risks

By **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong,
CUI HAIPEI in Dubai, UAE,
and **LIU JIANQIAO** in Beijing



Students gather at Sanaa University in Yemen on Wednesday during a rally in support of the Houthi movement, as regional tensions with Saudi Arabia continue to escalate. MOHAMMED HUWAIS / AFP

Maritime security in the Middle East is deteriorating further amid the US-Iran war, as disruption expands beyond the Strait of Hormuz to the Red Sea, raising fresh concerns over global energy supplies.

The latest incidents threaten two of the world's most critical oil shipping routes, adding to market jitters and prompting renewed concerns from the International Energy Agency.

Yemen's Houthi group said on Thursday that it had targeted two Saudi oil tankers in the Red Sea, claiming the vessels violated its recently announced maritime restrictions. The Red Sea carries about 7 percent of global oil supplies.

In a statement aired by the group's Al-Masirah television, Houthi military spokesman Yahya Sarea said the Houthis struck the tankers, identified as *Encelia* and *Layla*, using "ballistic and cruise missiles as well as drones". He claimed the attacks set both vessels ablaze and achieved the group's objectives.

Saudi Arabia has not commented on the Houthi claim. However, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations said on X that it had received a report of an incident involving a tanker about 130 kilometers southwest of the Saudi port of Al Shuqaiq.

The vessel's master reported being struck by an "unknown projectile", causing a fire that the crew tried to extinguish, the organization said.

The Houthis' claim came two days after the group expanded its maritime restrictions to target vessels trading with Saudi ports, citing an attack on Yemen's Sanaa International Airport.

Separately, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said on Thursday that one of three oil tankers attempting to transit a mine-laden route in the Strait of Hormuz caught fire, while the other two turned back.

The IRGC said the strait was "under our control" and would remain closed as long as "the evils of the United States" continued in the region. It warned that any tanker attempting to pass without coordinating with Iran would "suffer the same fate" and urged Washington to "stop hostile actions in this sensitive region".

The developments came as US President Donald Trump vowed to bomb Iranian infrastructure whenever Tehran targets a ship in the critical waterway, and as the US and Saudi Arabia signed an agreement to cooperate on developing a civilian nuclear program in the kingdom.

Worrying situation

"If I were a country dependent on oil and gas imports, I would be very worried regarding the latest re-eruption of tensions in the Middle East," said Syed Muhammad Osama Rizvi, a global market and product strategist at energy intelligence firm Primary Vision.

Rizvi said the global refinery capacity remains constrained, while refining margins and crude oil prices have surged. Iran holds the "upper hand by sheer stroke of geography", he said, warning that the Red Sea could "become another avenue of war soon".

Ding Long, a professor at Shanghai International Studies University's Middle East Studies Institute, said the attacks on commercial vessels in the Strait of Hormuz stem from a deeper dispute over control of the strategic waterway.

The US and Iran hold fundamentally different interpretations of the provisions on the strait's administration under a memorandum of understanding signed last month. Tehran has sought to strengthen its jurisdiction by requiring vessels to register and proposing transit fees, measures Washington rejects, Ding said.

"These competing positions reflect the two sides' broader geopolitical rivalry and their conflicting strategic interests in the Gulf region," he said.

Meir Litvak, a senior research associate at the Alliance Center for Iranian Studies at Tel Aviv University in Israel, said the Trump administration may lack patience for prolonged negotiations and could settle for vague formulas to claim success, as neither side appears willing to make major concessions on key issues.

International Energy Agency Executive Director Fatih Birol said in a statement on Tuesday that the agency is closely monitoring oil markets.

"The escalation in hostilities affecting the Strait of Hormuz and energy infrastructure in the region increases security of supply concerns and uncertainty over the market outlook," Birol said.

Contact the writers at jan@chinadailyapac.com

Briefly

UNITED STATES

Chinese duo earns top math honor

Chinese mathematicians Deng Yu and Wang Hong were awarded the Fields Medals at the opening ceremony of the 2026 International Congress of Mathematicians held in Philadelphia on Thursday, marking the first time Chinese mathematicians have won the prestigious honor. The Fields Medal is a top international mathematics prize awarded every four years to two to four young researchers in recognition of their outstanding mathematical achievements in existing work and their promise of future achievement.

INDIA

41 killed as floods ravage Assam state

Floods triggered by torrential monsoon rains have killed at least 41 people in India's northeast Assam state, officials said on Thursday. "We have lost 41 precious lives till date and thousands of livestock has been washed away," Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said in a social media update on the toll from monsoon rains that began last month. "Cloudbursts upstream, coupled with localized heavy rainfall, 436 percent above normal, have led to flooding in villages that have not seen such devastation in recent history," he added.

FRANCE

Modeling scout linked to Epstein found dead

Daniel Siad, a modeling scout with ties to the late convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, has been found dead at his home outside Paris, prosecutors said on Wednesday. Siad's body was discovered on Monday evening. An autopsy will be carried out to determine the cause of death, the Nanterre prosecutor's office said. Siad's name appeared nearly 2,000 times in the Epstein files released by the United States Justice Department. Since a wide-ranging probe into human trafficking and tax fraud was opened in February following the Epstein files release, 24 women have come forward as victims or witnesses of alleged acts committed by Siad or others, Paris prosecutor Laure Beccuau said on Wednesday evening.

JAPAN

Hundreds hospitalized in heat wave 'disaster'

More than 450 people received hospital treatment for heat-related issues in a single day in Tokyo — the highest number since records began 16 years ago, emergency services said on Thursday. The figure was released as Japan sweltered in a heat wave that has killed at least 14 people over the past week. A total of 453 people were treated in hospitals for heat-related issues on Wednesday, the Tokyo Fire Department said. Emergency callouts were also at the highest level since at least 1963.

AGENCIES — XINHUA

Modi vows to set up special courts to punish guilty in exam fraud

NEW DELHI — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday that "fast-track" courts would be set up to prosecute those behind exam paper leaks, his first public response after days of youth protests demanding the resignation of the education minister.

Modi's comments came hours after protesters clashed briefly with police on the streets of New Delhi late on Wednesday, with officers firing tear gas and wielding canes to push them back.

The protests have grown into one of the biggest challenges to Modi since he came to power in 2014, with opposition parties echoing the demands of the youth movement and disrupting the monsoon session of Parliament that began this week.

"Nothing is more important than the welfare and future of our youth," Modi posted on X, promising to set up fast-track courts to punish those involved in the exam paper leaks.

"This continues our series of steps for safeguarding the interests of students. Those who try to harm the future of our youth will not be spared," he said.

Fast-track courts, designed to quickly hear and dispose of cases, were created to get around the country's justice system that can take years to conclude cases.

Such special courts have been set up to handle sex crimes against women and children, terrorism, money laundering, and crimes by lawmakers.

The youth-led Cockroach Janta Party launched protests last month against the question paper leaks that affected some 2 million students and have been linked to several suicides.

It responded on Thursday to Modi's announcement by quoting his X post and saying Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan "must resign".

Leader of the main opposition Congress Party, Rahul Gandhi, also responded by quoting Modi's post and saying it was the prime minister who had harmed the future of Indian youth the most.

"You allowed and encouraged the total capture and destruction of our education system — and protected every person responsible for it," Gandhi said, reiterating that Pradhan should be sacked, Modi should apologize to students, and those who assaulted them should be punished.

Late on Wednesday, more than 10,000 people were estimated to have gathered at the Jantar Mantar protest site in central New Delhi, local media reported, as Cockroach Janta Party leaders vowed to continue their month-old protest until Pradhan resigned over the exam paper leaks.

The party, which has millions of followers on social media, emerged in May initially as a satirical response to Chief Justice of India Surya Kant reportedly likening young people to "cockroaches" and "parasites" during a court hearing.

The movement has since broadened its agenda to include concerns over unemployment, opportunities for young people and government accountability.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:39 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:39 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Reality of China-US economic ties foundation for strategic stability

With the expiration of the United States administration's temporary Section 122 tariffs, many expected a gradual easing of trade tensions. Instead, Washington is constructing a more durable tariff architecture through overlapping Section 301 investigations, Section 232 "national security" measures and the renewed use of Section 338 against selected trading partners.

What appears on the surface to be a collection of technical legal processes is, in reality, a sophisticated framework designed to preserve negotiating leverage long after temporary emergency measures disappear.

Yet even where additional tariffs are imposed, their economic impact on China is likely to be limited rather than transformative. The world's two largest economies remain deeply integrated through supply chains, investment and consumer markets. Tariffs can raise costs, but they cannot easily change the mutually beneficial nature of Sino-US economic relations.

The release of the Chinese-developed artificial intelligence model Kimi K3 has prompted some in Washington to falsely portray Chinese open-source AI models as a "national security" concern.

But the market is telling a different story. Chinese open source models have become deeply embedded within the US' own innovation ecosystem. Nearly 200 Silicon Valley start-ups have reportedly urged the US administration not to prohibit access to Chinese models, warning that its restrictions would damage the US' competitiveness more than China's.

Indeed, whether in shipbuilding, rare earth processing or advanced manufacturing, strategic competition increasingly collides with economic reality. The US side knows this.

Just three days after a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said "China and the US are in communication regarding interactions between the two heads of state within the year", the ministry announced after a meeting between Foreign Minister Wang Yi and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio in Manila on Wednesday, that the two sides have agreed to prepare for the next phase of high-level exchanges to advance substantive progress on a constructive relationship of strategic stability.

Economic and trade teams from China and the US are maintaining close communication on the specific arrangements for the proposed trade and investment councils — including their structure, functions and operational modalities — and are exploring the advancement of a reciprocal tariff reduction framework covering $30 billion worth of goods on each side, an official of China's Ministry of Commerce told a news conference in Beijing on Thursday.

China is currently soliciting inputs from a broad range of stakeholders — including domestic enterprises, business associations, local governments and associations representing US-invested companies — regarding the proposed tariff reductions. Meanwhile, the US side is also conducting its own public consultation process on both the trade council and the reciprocal tariff reduction arrangements. The two sides will remain in close contact to finalize and implement tariff reduction measures for specific products as soon as possible, thereby further expanding bilateral trade, the Chinese commerce official added.

This development should be viewed as a positive signal that both sides are continuing to implement the outcomes of the previous summit in Beijing in May, during which the two leaders agreed on a new vision of building a constructive bilateral relationship of strategic stability.

But stability should be anchored in practical cooperation that continuously strengthens the resilience of bilateral ties. It should also be benign, allowing competition to encourage innovation rather than descend into zero-sum confrontation. The stability should provide businesses and governments with the policy continuity necessary to avoid perpetual cycles of escalation and retaliation. Above all, the stability needs to be enduring, preserving peace through adherence to the three Sino-US joint communiques, mutual respect for each other's core interests and continued commitment to dialogue at different levels.

Under the guidance of head-of-state diplomacy, political and diplomatic channels, along with existing economic and trade mechanisms, should be used not merely to manage crises but to steadily shorten the list of disputes while expanding the agenda for cooperation.

Diplomacy has never been about eliminating differences. Its purpose is to prevent differences from becoming defining features of relations.

Tactical bargaining chips may partially influence the atmosphere before the mooted summit. But they cannot substitute for strategic vision, flexibility, pragmatism and wisdom. Cooperation remains the only viable source of stability for the world's most consequential bilateral relations.

Escalating crisis calls for renewed diplomacy

The Middle East is once again at the precipice of a catastrophic escalation of conflict, with the Red Sea becoming the focal point of the expanding crisis.

The Iran-backed Houthi group declared a maritime blockade against Saudi Arabia on Monday, threatening to target any vessel calling at Saudi ports. This declaration was swiftly followed by attacks on two Saudi oil tankers in the Red Sea.

These actions have highlighted the strategic importance of the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, a critical waterway connecting the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden. Control of this strait is vital for global trade as millions of barrels of oil pass through it daily.

The Houthi blockade, alongside Iran's strategic pressure on the Strait of Hormuz, creates a dual choke hold on energy transport. Any sustained disruption to maritime traffic in this region could have a cascading effect on the world economy, affecting not only energy prices but also the cost of goods and services globally.

Yet there seems to be no end in sight to the ongoing military confrontation between the United States and Iran as their conflict continues unabated. Financially, the war has already cost the US an estimated $37.5 billion, with Congress considering an additional $73 billion in military funding. The US appears to treat every ceasefire window as nothing more than a preparatory phase for the next battle.

Washington's overriding objective is to consolidate its control over the region's energy lifelines, reinforcing its dominance over global oil markets and buttressing the dollar's central role in the international financial system in the process.

Israel, meanwhile, has its own strategic and domestic political calculations, seeking to translate regional turmoil into geopolitical advantage.

This convergence of interests has helped fuel a cycle of instability stretching from Gaza and Lebanon to the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. Few regional actors have any inherent interest in disrupting vital maritime arteries. Yet when confronted with sustained military pressure and coercive policies, they have resorted to asymmetric responses that further destabilize the region.

Washington presents its calls for other countries to contribute funding, personnel and military assets to safeguard the Strait of Hormuz as a collective effort to preserve the stability of global energy markets. Yet such appeals invite an obvious question. If the US were ultimately to consolidate strategic control over Gulf energy flows, would the resulting geopolitical and economic dividends be shared equitably with those asked to bear the costs? And even if they were, how many countries would willingly accept a share of wealth extracted through a blood-for-oil conflict?

As a Chinese envoy to the United Nations observed during the UN Security Council's open debate on natural resources and security on Wednesday, international law recognizes every state's permanent sovereignty over its natural resources. That principle should not be diluted through coercive diplomacy, unilateral sanctions or military intimidation. The era in which powerful nations could reshape international order through force and resource appropriation should be consigned to the past.

At this critical moment, diplomacy must take precedence. The US has expressed willingness to engage in constructive negotiations, as indicated by Secretary of State Marco Rubio during his discussions with Association of Southeast Asian Nations foreign ministers in Manila.

This openness to dialogue is a crucial step toward de-escalation. The international community should support and facilitate these efforts.

The memorandum of understanding between the US and Iran, achieved through international mediation, represents a fragile yet vital foundation for peace. The MoU should be valued as a beginning for future negotiations.

The current pattern of "fighting while talking" has only worsened the crisis. What is needed is a cessation of hostilities, a good-faith effort to overcome difficulties and an immediate return to meaningful dialogue.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

Most of the world won't buy what Manila's trying to sell

The Philippines appears intent on repeating a familiar pattern.

Hours after Philippine Foreign Secretary Maria Theresa Lazaro vowed to "work out proper solutions via dialogue" to the Philippines' maritime dispute with China in a meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Manila, two Philippine government vessels were playing bumper cars with China Coast Guard ships near China's Huangyan Island on Thursday morning.

The Philippines' Western supporters were quick to weigh in. Shortly after Manila's provocations near China's Ren'ai Reef on Monday, the US State Department got in on the act, issuing a statement accusing China of "bullying the weak". Australia's top diplomat also chimed in from the sidelines.

And how could such a well-choreographed act proceed without Western media as its indispensable stagehands? The most telling example of such theatrics came in March 2024, when a Philippine vessel — conveniently packed with journalists, because nothing screams "accidental encounter" quite like a press entourage — deliberately rammed a Chinese ship.

CNN promptly rolled out footage of the "confrontation", casting the Philippines as a plucky David squaring off against Goliath.

Every new provocation serves the same purpose: it helps the Philippines maintain an "unlawful" presence while obscuring who is fanning the frictions. And when China responds lawfully, the cries of "horror" from some Western media outlets are delivered with panache. Manila views this as a diplomatic win. One by which it can grab territory or gain "sympathy".

Wang told Lazaro that China has never constituted a security threat to the Philippines, nor has it ever invaded or colonized the country throughout history.

He warned that allowing external forces to meddle in regional affairs and deliberately hyping up maritime disputes will only reduce the Philippines to a pawn manipulated by others, adding that any attempt at provocation backed by external countries will ultimately leave the Philippines bearing the bitter consequences of its own making.

But Manila seems to like being a pawn. The factions staging such extravaganzas deliberately sabotage bilateral dialogue the moment it's scheduled. They're not serving the Philippine people; they are advancing personal interests taking instructions from elsewhere, while the Philippines' development stalls.

Despite not being parties to the South China Sea disputes, some Western countries play their roles impeccably, immediately jumping out to point accusing fingers at China.

While the Philippines stages these antics, the other members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations — with their own stakes in regional stability — see what's happening. They know which country is actually trying to maintain regional stability and which gang is trying to fish in troubled waters.

That's why the timing of this latest provocation is particularly revealing. The ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting is underway in Manila. The Philippines is the ASEAN chair. This is supposed to be the moment for responsibility, for dialogue, for actually advancing a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea.

Right now, the Philippines is locked in a script written by others — a script that never ends well for the actor who reads it too earnestly. Perhaps it's time for Manila to take a step back and actually do what the ASEAN chair is supposed to do: promote dialogue and ease tensions.

The South China Sea is a shared home for regional countries. China and other ASEAN members should jointly foster a new narrative of peace, stability, cooperation and friendship in the waters, and keep the initiative on the South China Sea issue firmly in the hands of regional countries.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

AI has changed role of teachers in education

Editor's note: *The Chinese authorities recently emphasized the need to deepen education and teaching reforms with a student-centered approach to create new advantages in basic education. At the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference, which concluded in Shanghai on Monday, some educators, including Li Luming, president of Tsinghua University, spoke of how AI continues to reshape the education sector. Below are excerpts from their speeches as reported in People's Daily. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

With AI offering more convenient ways to access knowledge, students don't rely only on the classroom to learn. The traditional lecture-centered approach, in which teachers simply deliver information in classrooms, is no longer sufficient.

Students, teachers and university administrators must recognize a fundamental reality: within the next three to five years, the nature and standards of research in highly innovative disciplines such as mathematics and physics will be dramatically different from what they are today. Schools that cling to traditional approaches to education and research will struggle to maintain their strengths.

Research suggests that in the AI era, students should prioritize developing skills such as language proficiency, social interaction, problem-solving, critical thinking, perception, hands-on practice and human-AI collaboration.

This calls for a comprehensive overhaul of school curricula and talent cultivation models. Traditional disciplines need to embrace intelligent transformation by moving away from conventional teaching approaches and fostering greater interdisciplinary integration.

In traditional schools, the brightest students have often been regarded as the most capable. But when AI can outperform humans in many tasks, a more important question emerges: who can be trusted, and who is willing to take responsibility? This is precisely where humans remain irreplaceable.

AI has no lived experience of consequences and cannot assume responsibility in the way people can. For this reason, schools should invest substantial time and effort in character education and innovation projects that solve real-world problems for real users. The goal is to cultivate graduates who are trustworthy and capable of taking on increasing levels of responsibility.

Future talents will need the ability to define problems independently, adapt knowledge to real-world contexts, integrate insights across disciplines and continuously refine solutions through engineering-based iteration. Ironically, these are among the scarcest capabilities in today's education system and the ones AI cannot directly provide.

In the age of AI, young people's core competitiveness is shifting from acquiring knowledge quickly to defining problems deeply, and from remembering the right answers to asking original and meaningful questions.

Only teachers who actively embrace change and continually improve their teaching can serve as true role models for students. At the same time, human-AI collaboration has become the new normal in scientific research and is reshaping education as well.

AI can empower both teaching and research across existing disciplines, necessitating a careful redesign of future curricula and academic evaluation systems. Universities should provide cutting-edge AI tools, research platforms and supporting resources while embedding AI safety principles into teaching and research and establishing sound ethical standards for its use.

In terms of the breadth of knowledge, AI may even surpass classroom instructors. This compels teacher education institutions to rethink the role of teachers. In the future, teachers must help students learn how to work effectively with AI. A truly outstanding teacher in the AI era will need to be a mentor who not only imparts knowledge and cultivates character but also guides students in human-AI collaboration.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:39 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:39 PM

VIEWS

Liang Yan

Two narratives behind China's trade surge

Even a war in the Middle East and waves of Western protectionism couldn't trip up China's trade engine. In the first half of 2026, trade surged by 16.9 percent to reach 25.47 trillion yuan ($3.76 trillion).

Exports climbed 13.4 percent, but it was imports that stole the show, shooting up 22.1 percent. The real headline, though, sits inside the export basket: high-tech products and advanced manufacturing goods, from semiconductors and computer components to vehicles, emerged as the standout performers.

As Wang Jun, deputy head of the General Administration of Customs, summed it up, "notable progress has been made in stabilizing scale and improving structure." Behind the phrasing is a simple story: China isn't just trading more, it's trading smarter.

That story, however, is being told two very different ways. In Washington, Brussels and many newsrooms in between, the reflex is to reach for the "China Shock" label — the notion that "Beijing's export machine runs on unfair fuel", namely industrial subsidies and a manipulated currency, and that the exhaust fumes are hollowed-out factories, first across the advanced economies and now in the developing world too.

Scholars in China and the Global South tell an entirely different story: this is the payoff of decades of unglamorous but compounding investment in technological upgrading and industrial transformation, with ripple effects reaching far beyond China's borders.

Industrial machinery, green technology, and intermediate inputs flowing to the Global South are empowering developing economies for their own green industrialization, while cheap, high-quality consumer goods ease household budgets worldwide.

On this reading, China isn't hollowing out its trading partners; it's offering the Global South an opportunity to move up the value chain, and giving a competitive jolt to producers everywhere.

The trade data supports the second story. Mechanical and electrical products, up 20.1 percent year-on-year, now make up 63.5 percent of total exports, which is hardly the profile of a country coasting on cheap basics. China is riding two waves at once.

The first is the global boom in artificial intelligence: as the world scrambles for computing power, data centers, and terminal equipment, China's exports of integrated circuits and computing hardware have surged accordingly.

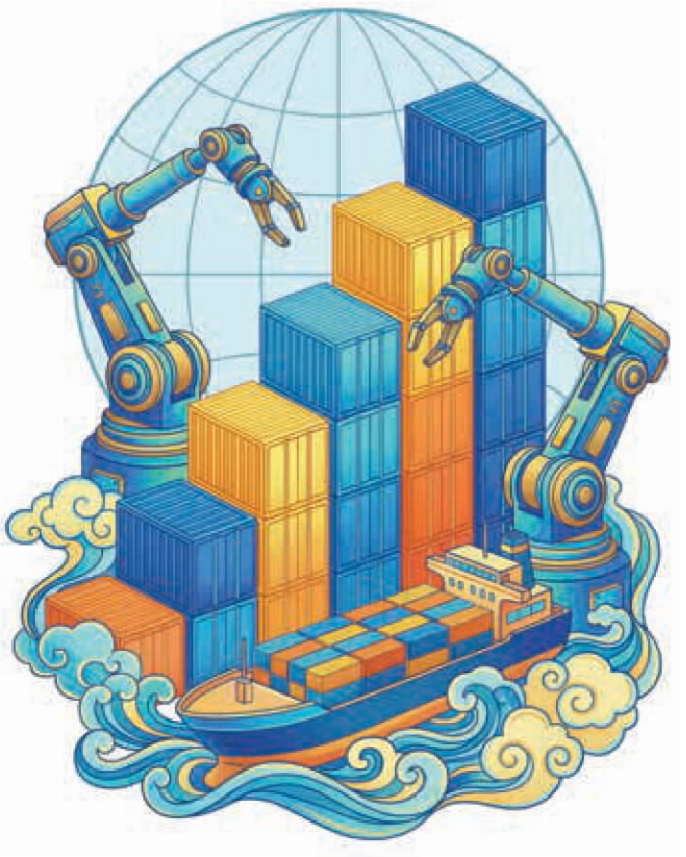
The second is a downstream jolt from the Iran war itself, which has pushed countries to seek energy security and accelerate their green transitions.

China's clean-tech sector has risen to meet such a pressing demand. Electric vehicle exports continued to surge, with lithium batteries and solar products also maintaining strong momentum. And waiting in the wings is what commentators are calling the "next big three", including AI-integrated and bionic robots, innovative pharmaceuticals, and advanced medical equipment. The next wave of exports is gathering momentum.

The allegations of currency manipulation that underpin the "China Shock" story simply do not stand the empirical challenge. If China's edge really came from an artificially cheap renminbi, you would expect the cheapest, most price-sensitive exports to be thriving. Instead, low-value manufacturing exports are shrinking.

Further, between early 2024 and mid-2026, the RMB actually appreciated by about 5.8 percent against the dollar and strengthened against its trade-weighted basket as well. Yes, there was a real effective depreciation in late 2025, as inflation stayed low relative to trading partners, but that trend has reversed in the first half of 2026. The currency manipulation spin can't carry the weight being placed on it.

The subsidy argument fares no better.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

There's a sharper irony buried in the International Monetary Fund's analysis, which says that China's industrial-policy spending actually distorted resource allocation badly enough to shave 1.2 percent off total factor productivity and up to 2 percent off the GDP relative to baseline.

In other words, the very institution supplying ammunition to the "unfair subsidies" narrative is also describing a policy that, on its own numbers, hurt China more than it helped. That's an odd foundation for a shock thesis.

It's also worth asking who isn't subsidizing industry. Industrial subsidies are hardly a Chinese invention — the United States has its Inflation Reduction Act, the European Union its Green Deal, and China's own industrial policies operate within World Trade Organization rules.

The more interesting distinction may not be whether subsidies exist, but where the money goes. Western subsidies, critics note, often flow toward shareholder returns and executive compensation.

China's industrial policy, by contrast, has more visibly fed industrial upgrading itself. The historian Adam Tooze makes the point starkly: China's roughly $18 billion in cumulative solar subsidies over 15 years is one of the most productive climate investments of the era, with benefits extending far beyond China's borders.

Zoom out further and a quieter but arguably more consequential shift comes into view: China is rewiring who it trades with.

Trade with the US has gone flat, but trade with the EU, Latin America, and Africa has expanded by 10.2 percent, 16.2 percent, and 19.6 percent respectively, while trade with Belt and Road Initiative partners is up 14.8 percent, and now accounts for over half of China's total foreign trade. This isn't just diversification for its own sake; it's a redistribution of trading power away from a single axis and toward a more multipolar system.

For developing economies, the payoff is tangible: Chinese exports of machinery, intermediate inputs, and green technology are helping accelerate industrialization, while Chinese-built physical and digital infrastructure strengthens two-way trade links.

Zero-tariff access for products from 53 African countries has already sent Kenyan avocados, Ethiopian coffee, and South African citrus fruits flowing north in growing volumes.

Layer in overseas development finance, direct investment and technology transfer, and a pattern emerges that looks less like "China squeeze" and more like "China opportunity". China is effectively providing a scaffold for developing countries to move up the global value chain and amplify benefits from global trade.

None of this means China's export boom is a costless good-news story for everyone, everywhere. Competitors in advanced economies are right to feel the heat, and displaced workers in specific sectors deserve real policy attention rather than dismissal.

But the blunt "China Shock 2.0" narrative struggles to survive contact with the data. What the numbers describe instead is a country that spent decades investing in capability and is now exporting the results, while simultaneously deepening ties with the Global South in ways that look, for many partners, less like a squeeze and more like an opening.

The debate over "China Shock or China Opportunity" may never fully resolve, because the honest answer is probably both; shock for some incumbents, opportunity for many latecomers.

The author is the Kremer Chair professor of economics at Willamette University and a non-resident senior fellow at the Global Development Policy Center at Boston University.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Mohamed Sabreen

Paving a new path for Middle East security

As it grapples with ongoing conflicts, the Middle East faces a pressing question: how can it prevent future conflicts? The devastating conflict in Gaza, the conflict between the United States and Iran, and rising tensions across the Red Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean have exposed the limitations of the regional security order that has long struggled to achieve lasting peace.

Global Lens

At the same time, the traditional external powers that have shaped the region's security landscape are constrained by other global priorities, domestic political pressures, and diminishing influence. This has created a strategic vacuum at a time when regional instability threatens not only the Middle East but also global trade, energy security and international peace.

Against this backdrop, a growing body of strategic planning argues that regional countries must take greater responsibility for their own security. This shift raises an important question: could closer cooperation among Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkiye, and Pakistan become the nucleus of a new regional security architecture?

From a strategic perspective, the idea deserves serious consideration. Egypt is the military and diplomatic heavyweight in the Arab world, central to global maritime trade through its control of the Suez Canal, and seasoned in mediation and conflict management. Saudi Arabia has emerged as a leading economic power. Under Vision 2030, Riyadh sees regional stability as a prerequisite for economic transformation and prosperity, as reflected in its expanding diplomatic outreach.

Turkiye contributes an advanced defense industry, one of NATO's largest military forces, and geopolitical influence stretching from the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean to the Caucasus and Central Asia. Its defense capabilities and active diplomacy have made it an important strategic actor.

Pakistan, with one of the region's largest militaries and extensive experience in counterterrorism and border security, extends the quartet's strategic reach into South Asia while strengthening its overall deterrence capability.

Together, these four countries form a geopolitical corridor stretching from the Mediterranean to South Asia, commanding substantial military capabilities, overseeing strategic maritime routes, influencing global energy markets, and accounting for hundreds of millions of people. Few regional groupings possess such demographic, economic, and strategic weight.

Yet geopolitical weight alone cannot build a durable regional order. The biggest challenge for such a quartet would be achieving political cohesion. Each country has different national priorities and policies toward regional crises, including those involving Syria, Libya, Iran, and the Eastern Mediterranean. Bilateral relations have improved in recent years, but strategic coordination requires much more than mere diplomatic normalization.

History tells us that successful regional organizations do not eliminate differences but create institutions to manage them peacefully. The Middle East has seen numerous initiatives and summits, but lacks permanent mechanisms for consultation, crisis management, intelligence cooperation, maritime security, infrastructure protection, counterterrorism coordination, and economic integration.

The region is one of the few in the world without an inclusive multilateral security framework to manage crises before they escalate. Lasting stability depends more on sustained dialogue and institutionalized cooperation than on temporary alliances.

Another critical question is whether any future security architecture can succeed without including Iran. Regardless of political disagreements, Iran remains a key strategic player in the Middle East.

A regional framework that excludes Tehran would face inherent limitations. Instead of an exclusive alliance, a regional quartet could instead serve as the starting point for a broader and more inclusive security dialogue, expanding as political conditions permit.

Recent conflicts have shown that military operations can have far-reaching consequences. Maritime security, global shipping routes, energy markets, diplomatic relations, humanitarian conditions, and regional stability have all been affected by the escalation. The crises are no longer isolated events, emphasizing the need for collective regional mechanisms to prevent escalation.

The international dimension is equally important. Would major global powers welcome a more autonomous regional security system, or see it as a challenge to their influence? History suggests these objectives can coexist. Successful regional organizations from Europe to Southeast Asia have combined regional ownership with constructive global engagement. A future Middle Eastern security framework would likely require a similar balance: greater regional responsibility without strategic isolation from the international community.

Economics will also play a decisive role. Sustainable peace is usually built upon economic interdependence. Expanding trade, cross-border infrastructure, transportation corridors, energy connectivity, industrial investment, digital transformation, and food security cooperation can foster shared interests, reduce conflict and strengthen political trust. For Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkiye, and Pakistan, such cooperation could form the basis of a broader strategic partnership.

Ultimately, it is not about creating another regional alliance but redefining how security is conceived in the Middle East. The region has long reacted to crises after they erupted. The challenge now is to prevent crises before they occur, which requires political courage, strategic patience, and a commitment to long-term regional stability above short-term geopolitical competition.

Whether Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkiye and Pakistan can transform this vision into an enduring institutional reality remains uncertain. Their success will depend on their ability to build strategic trust, reconcile competing priorities, and establish permanent mechanisms for consultation and cooperation. Regional orders are not created by speeches or diplomatic declarations, but through sustained political commitment, resilient institutions, and a shared recognition that long-term stability ultimately serves all participants.

If a regional quartet can take even the first practical steps toward such a framework, it will achieve far more than forming another diplomatic group. It could lay the cornerstone of a more balanced, autonomous, and sustainable Middle Eastern security order — one shaped primarily by the region's own states rather than by the competing agendas of external powers.

The author is an expert on international affairs and Middle East issues based in Cairo, Egypt.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Chen Weihua

The author is a China Daily columnist.
chenweihua@chinadaily.com.cn

Engineering scales new heights in Guizhou

Guizhou province in Southwest China is definitely the best place to marvel at modern engineering and infrastructure, not just in China, but possibly in the world.

Over the past week, I drove across some of the highest bridges in the world, including the Yachi River Bridge, the Beipan River Bridge (also known as the Duge Bridge), the Baling River Bridge and the Huajiang Grand Canyon Bridge.

Relaxing in my hotel room facing the Huajiang Grand Canyon Bridge — the highest in the world at 625 meters above the river surface and with a main span of 1,420 meters — was one of the highlights of my trip to the beautiful province.

It offered food for thought on China's remarkable achievements in infrastructure. The bridge, which surpassed the Beipan River Bridge as the world's highest bridge, opened to traffic 10 months ago.

Guizhou, known for its rough terrain and high plateau, is aptly described by a local proverb as a place with "no three days of clear skies and no three feet of flat land".

More than 90 percent of the province is covered by mountains and hills. Karst rock formations create many deep valleys, sharp peaks, caves and underground rivers.

During my last visit to Guizhou about 25 years ago, I saw locals, including women, carrying heavy loads along narrow, winding mountain paths. But this time, such scenes were rare, with only a few people carrying heavy loads for short distances within villages. It shows how infrastructure has changed the lives of ordinary people.

Guizhou boasts some 32,000 bridges, including some still under construction. Nearly half of the world's 100 highest bridges are in Guizhou, earning the province the label of "the world bridge museum".

The potential is huge as Guizhou has emerged as a major big data and AI computing hub in China.

I still remember the excitement when the Nanpu Bridge, the first to span the Huangpu River in downtown Shanghai, opened to traffic in November 1991.

Living nearby, my wife and I took our five-month-old daughter in her stroller for a walk on the bridge before its official opening.

With a main span of 423 meters and standing 46 meters above the river, it was a huge relief for many people who previously commuted by ferry every day.

The impact of these engineering feats on the people in Guizhou, home to several ethnic minority groups, is quite profound.

The two peaks across the Huajiang River are so close that a loud shout from one can be heard at the other. But the trip across the river used to take more than two hours. The Huajiang Grand Canyon Bridge has cut it down to two minutes.

Thanks to its 32,000 bridges, 12,000 tunnels and 10,000 kilometers of expressways, driving in Guizhou has become a delightful experience for tourists.

The province also has cool weather in the summer months when much of China grapples with extreme heat.

While Guizhou ranks low in per capita GDP among Chinese provinces and autonomous regions, its infrastructure, economic strength and the overall living standards of locals have improved dramatically over the past decades.

The potential is huge as Guizhou has emerged as a major big data and AI computing hub in China. Its abundant electric power, cool climate and stable geography have drawn tech giants such as Huawei, Tencent, Apple and China Telecom to establish massive facilities in the province.

In contrast, New York state in the United States, and possibly some other states, is imposing moratoriums on hyperscale data centers due to electricity shortages, which highlights Guizhou's advanced status in the 21st century.

Here's a perspective: the money the US has spent on military operations involving Iran in the past few months could have built the Huajiang Grand Canyon Bridge more than 100 times over, or laid over 2,000 kilometers of high-speed rail.

I salute the builders of Guizhou's bridges, tunnels, expressways and highways because they were built in the most challenging terrains in the country and possibly in the world. Each of them stands as a testament to China's excellence in modern engineering.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:39 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:39 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

XIE CHUNTAO

Clear guidance, effective execution

The Communist Party of China is leading the nation toward realizing the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation

China's extraordinary journey toward national rejuvenation reflects the Communist Party of China's enduring commitment to the country, the Chinese nation and its people. Since the 18th National Congress of the CPC, General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee Xi Jinping has articulated the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation and led the CPC in steady steps to turn that great vision into reality, making the national rejuvenation a historical inevitability.



Ideas illuminate the path forward. Throughout its history, the CPC has attached great importance to theoretical innovation, consistently using an evolving body of Marxist theory to guide practice. Entering the new era, the convergence of the national rejuvenation strategy and profound changes in the international landscape has raised a series of major questions that require new theoretical answers from the CPC. This has culminated in the development of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, a body of thought that offers new perspectives, concepts and strategies across a wide range of areas, including reform, development and social stability, domestic governance, diplomacy and national defense, and the governance of the country, the Party and the military. It provides a strategic plan and comprehensive implementation framework for advancing China's modernization and national rejuvenation, answering the questions of not only how to understand today's challenges but also how to address them. Guided by this scientific theory, the CPC has united the Chinese people behind a shared vision and common purpose, bringing the Chinese nation closer than ever to realizing its rejuvenation while enabling China to stand on the world stage with unprecedented confidence.

The path determines future. For a country that was once economically underdeveloped and culturally marginalized, achieving national rejuvenation has been both an inspiring aspiration and a daunting challenge. After enduring countless hardships, the CPC independently blazed a new path of Chinese modernization. Xi has further deepened the understanding of Chinese modernization by defining its distinctive characteristics, essential requirements and guiding principles, making the vision clearer, more systematic and more practical.

Over the past decade, through a series of strategic initiatives, transformative reforms, major breakthroughs and landmark achievements, the CPC has propelled China's national rejuvenation steadily forward. The country has eradicated extreme poverty, completed the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects on schedule and successfully navigated major risks and challenges to achieve rapid economic growth while maintaining long-term social stability. The Chinese economy has expanded from just over 50 trillion yuan ($7.38 trillion) in 2012 to more than 140 trillion yuan in 2025. Hundreds of millions of Chinese people have realized their aspirations for a better life, while the country itself has undergone a historic transformation. These accomplishments provide compelling evidence that Chinese modernization is capable of realizing China's goal of building a great country and advancing national rejuvenation. Today, the benefits of modernization extend to the entire population, and China's level of modernization has surpassed expectations.



ZHONG JINYE / FOR CHINA DAILY

The Chinese dream is not an abstract aspiration but a carefully designed blueprint. Realizing it requires both strategic vision and effective execution. Having successfully completed the first phase of modernization, the CPC remains committed to a long-term strategic vision, laying out a two-stage plan for completing modernization. The goal is to basically realize socialist modernization by 2035 and build China into a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious and beautiful by the middle of this century. To support this long-term vision, the CPC has continuously refined its strategic framework. It has implemented the Five-Sphere Integrated Plan and the Four-Pronged Comprehensive Strategy, while advancing major national initiatives, including the innovation-driven development strategy, the workforce development strategy and the rural revitalization strategy. Together, these coordinated and integrated efforts provide strong support for advancing Chinese modernization.

At the same time, China has pursued a series of five-year plans, translating long-term strategic objectives into phased goals and ensuring that key priorities are addressed at the appropriate stages of development. From the launch of the first Five-Year Plan (1953-57) to the current 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), this planning system has continued uninterrupted for more than seven decades. As one foreign leader remarked to Xi, one of China's greatest strengths lies in its ability to consistently formulate long-term plans and achieve the goals it sets. Indeed, few countries have maintained such a sustained record of strategic planning with comparable effectiveness. This year marks the beginning of the 15th Five-Year Plan period. Guided by shared objectives, the CPC and the Chinese people are working together to lay a strong foundation for the steady progress.

Institutions provide the fundamental foundation for national governance and constitute one of a country's greatest strengths. Sustaining the vitality of socialism requires continuous reform and innovation to ensure that institutions continue to evolve, mature and become more fully developed. In line with China's modernization process, the CPC has made institutional development its priority. Combining institutional innovation with institutional restructuring, the CPC began reforms to tackle the issues of greatest concern to the public and the most significant obstacles to economic and social development and has achieved success in removing institutional barriers, establishing foundational systems and bringing about systemic and transformative changes across a wide range of sectors. The scope, depth and impact of these reforms are unprecedented.

Ultimately, the value of any institutional system must be judged by its effectiveness in practice. The CPC has integrated the goal of improving and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics with the modernization of China's governance system and governance capacity. This ensures that institutions function effectively in practice and that institutional strengths are translated into governance effectiveness, achieving a balance between flexibility and effective regulation. China's governance system, particularly its ability to mobilize resources and coordinate efforts to accomplish major national objectives, provides institutional advantages that are demonstrated in practice. Looking ahead, China will continue deepening reform, further improve and develop socialism with Chinese characteristics, and write new chapters in both institutional development and national governance.

As Xi has emphasized, the Chinese dream is about peace, development, cooperation and win-win results and is connected to the beautiful dreams of people in other countries. The CPC has consistently regarded making greater contributions to humanity as an integral part of its mission. It acts on the belief that if political parties around the world work together and shoulder their shared historical responsibilities, they can turn aspirations into reality, translate vision into action and build a brighter future for humanity.

The author is the executive vice-president of the Party School of the Communist Party of China Central Committee (National Academy of Governance). The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

YAN WENJUN

Ready and able

The successful resolution of the International Organization for Mediation's first case brings the institution to life

The true value of an international dispute settlement institution lies not in its legal framework, facilities or personnel, but in its ability to help parties resolve disputes and reach mutually acceptable solutions. In early May, a maritime dispute was successfully resolved through mediation administered by the International Organization for Mediation (IOMed) at its Hong Kong headquarters. Parties from China and Singapore reached a written settlement in an international maritime dispute involving a charter party chain, bringing a series of complex and interconnected disputes to a comprehensive conclusion. The successful conclusion of the case marks an important milestone for IOMed, demonstrating that the organization has moved beyond institution-building to actual dispute resolution practice.



IOMed has been developing at remarkable speed. On May 30, 2025, representatives of 33 countries signed the Convention on the Establishment of IOMed in Hong Kong. The convention entered into force on Aug 29, 2025, and IOMed formally commenced operations on Oct 20, 2025, when it adopted key instruments including the State-to-State Mediation Rules, the International Commercial and Investment Mediation Rules and the Code of Conduct for Mediators. In less than a year, the organization progressed from treaty signing and institutional setup to handling and successfully concluding its first case, apart from handling other cases. The key question now is no longer why IOMed was established, but whether it can resolve international disputes consistently, impartially and effectively.

Mediation itself is not a new form of dispute settlement. Article 33 of the United Nations Charter has long recognized it as one of the principal means for the peaceful settlement of international disputes. What is genuinely innovative is that IOMed, as the world's first intergovernmental organization dedicated specifically to mediation, places this method on the stable foundation of a multilateral convention and equips it with international legal personality, a member-State governance structure, a professional secretariat, common procedural rules and international panels of mediators. Rather than serving as another mediation center, IOMed gives mediation a clear, durable and professional institutional home within the broader architecture of international dispute settlement. In doing so, it contributes to strengthening mediation's role in addressing international disputes through peaceful means.

Every procedure remains grounded in the consent of the parties concerned. Its rules emphasize voluntariness, impartiality, independence, good faith, efficiency, and time- and cost-effectiveness. Mediators may assist the parties in narrowing their differences, but they have no authority to impose a settlement. Courts and arbitral tribunals entrust the determination of the outcome to a third party. Mediation leaves control of the outcome in the hands of those directly affected by it. This may be where mediation offers its greatest value, particularly in disputes that cannot, or should not, be resolved entirely through a decision imposed by an external adjudicator. What IOMed provides is the institutional support needed to make party autonomy operate within a professional, neutral and orderly framework.



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

Where the relevant parties consent to participate, mediation can move beyond the confines of a single claim. It can place legal liability, commercial interests and future arrangements on the same negotiating table. Instead of determining, issue by issue, and who wins and who loses, the process can seek an overall solution for how an entire transaction chain should settle its differences, perform its obligations or withdraw from the relationship in an orderly manner. The written settlement reached in IOMed's first case may therefore offer an early indication of mediation's distinctive capacity to address interconnected, chain-based cross-border disputes.

The strength of international mediation does not lie simply in its ability to persuade parties to compromise. It depends on the combination of legal judgment, sectoral expertise, cross-cultural communication and negotiating skill. The first mediation case was conducted chiefly by Rosita Lau, a Hong Kong lawyer with extensive experience in international shipping law. Her maritime expertise, combined with IOMed's institutional management of the process, provided strong professional support for the resolution of the dispute. Hong Kong, in this case, was more than the nominal location of IOMed's headquarters. It served as a practical platform where professional talent, an international shipping market, the common law tradition and the capacity to bridge Chinese and international legal cultures came together. Hong Kong's value does not lie in replicating London, Singapore or any other established dispute resolution center. Rather, under the unique framework of "one country, two systems", it can provide a new point of connection between the operation of an intergovernmental organization and the practical resolution of cross-border disputes.

More broadly, IOMed represents a new effort by China and the other participating countries to provide an additional public good for the international rule of law. Its purpose is not to create a parallel system, still less to displace international courts, arbitral institutions or existing mediation mechanisms. Its contribution is to offer the international community an additional option based on consent, equality and cooperation. As interstate investment and commercial disputes become increasingly intertwined, a single adjudicative mechanism cannot meet every need. A mature international dispute settlement system should allow different mechanisms to coexist, complement one another and operate in a coordinated manner. China's role in advancing the establishment of IOMed reflects an effort to translate the principle of peaceful dispute settlement, through multilateral means, into an institution that is both operational and accessible.

One successful case, of course, demonstrates the viability of an institution rather than its maturity. Credibility cannot be built overnight; it requires gradual accumulation, long-term practice and sustained commitment. IOMed still needs to demonstrate its independence and professionalism through cases involving a wider range of subject matters, regions and parties. It must also carefully manage the relationships between confidentiality and transparency, party autonomy and enforcement, and member-State governance and institutional neutrality. The amount in dispute, the specific claims, the course of the mediation, the settlement terms and the state of implementation in the first case have not been disclosed. Such restraint is consistent with the confidentiality essential to mediation. Yet as a new institution, IOMed will also need to make its stable operation visible to the international community through anonymized statistics, carefully calibrated disclosure of procedural experience and other appropriate means.

The convention gave IOMed its legal birth certificate; cases will give it practical life. At a time when international disagreements are increasingly politicized, securitized and divided along geopolitical lines, preserving a table at which parties remain willing to sit down and talk is itself an important contribution to the international rule of law. The first step taken through IOMed's inaugural case has turned that table from an institutional aspiration into a working reality.

The author is an associate professor at China Foreign Affairs University. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:39 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:39 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

Xiaohongshu achieves significant AI milestone

By LI JIAYING
lijiaying@chinadaily.com.cn

A new milestone in advanced artificial intelligence reasoning has been achieved as Chinese technology company Xiaohongshu, or RedNote, recently announced that its dots-note 3.0 model scored a perfect 42 points on this year's 67th International Mathematical Olympiad, making it the first AI system in IMO history to achieve both a flawless score and a gold-medal-level result.

The result makes dots-note 3.0 only the second AI model after Google DeepMind's Gemini Deep Think to receive an officially graded gold-level result. Gemini scored 35 points in 2025 after solving five of the six problems, matching that year's gold-medal cutoff.

Unlike many mathematical benchmarks that only ask for a final answer, the IMO requires complete proofs. A solution can lose points if any step is unsupported, making the contest a test of abstract reasoning as well as the consistency of a model's argument.

"Such competitions offer a useful test because the problems are newly written and unavailable online before the event," said Jasper Yao, a research scientist at a major US-based AI laboratory.

As online material can quickly enter model-training data, unseen questions help reveal whether a model can reason beyond material it may have encountered, Yao said, adding: "The value of taking part in a math contest is that it tests how well a model can perform when it has no prior knowledge of the problems and has never seen them before. That is also why major model developers compare their models' mathematical capabilities."

This year, the six IMO problems in question covered algebra, geometry, number theory and combinatorics, with each worth seven points. For the AI evaluation, human intervention was prohibited, including adjusting the model's reasoning, adding hints, correcting answers or selecting among outputs, according to the organizer.

Xiaohongshu said its dots-note 3.0 received the organizers' original LaTeX-formatted problems and solved them through an agent-based system combining natural-language reasoning with Python code execution.

"With no human translation or rewriting of the questions required, the model can completely critique its own work, identify errors or weak steps in its reasoning, and refine its initial proofs before producing the final answers," the company said.

The submissions were then reviewed by IMO graders, who awarded the model a seven-point full score for each problem.

A perfect score was rare even among human contestants. Seven of the more than 600 students listed in the official results received 42 points, or about 1 percent. The gold-medal cutoff this year was 29 points, placing the model's reported results 13 points above the threshold.

"We were surprised to find that the model produced a correct and elegant proof," said Liu Hanzuo, a two-time gold medalist at the Chinese Mathematical Olympiad. "Its structure was compact and its logic natural. Even among IMO solutions, it would be considered concise and elegant."

Wang Qiantong, another CMO gold medalist, also highlighted the model's solution to Problem 3 of this year's IMO.

While contestants commonly turned the problem into one about connectivity in graph theory, dots-note 3.0 used an induction argument that directly addressed the hardest part of the question, Wang said, adding, "Its approach is ingenious and concise, and that took me by surprise."

Xiaohongshu said the model used in the evaluation was an internal version of dots-note 3.0 and that it expects to open-source the model to the AI community in the near future.

Briefly

Central SOE R&D investment rises

China's State-owned enterprises directly administered by the central government have intensified efforts to achieve breakthroughs in key technologies, with their investment in research and development rising 3.8 percent year-on-year in the first half. According to the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council, China's State-asset regulator, the rise in R&D spending came as central SOEs continued their efforts to make changes and improve their industrial layout and structure while deepening reforms.

Fiscal revenue up 4.7% in first half

China's fiscal revenue expanded 4.7 percent year-on-year to 12.1 trillion yuan ($1.78 trillion) in the first half, data from the Ministry of Finance showed. The pace of growth continued to pick up from 4 percent in the first five months, indicating steady improvement in fiscal revenue performance.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY



A Hainan Airlines Airbus A330-300 seen at Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Chinese carriers ink major fleet purchases

Airlines announced orders for 476 Airbus aircraft in past seven months

By LI JING
lijing2009@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese airlines have announced orders for nearly 500 Airbus aircraft over the past seven months, underscoring the industry's confidence in long-term travel demand even as high fuel prices and external volatility weigh on near-term earnings.

Last week, Air China, its subsidiary Shenzhen Airlines, alongside Hainan Airlines, announced agreements to purchase a combined 95 Airbus aircraft with a catalog value of about $17.8 billion, adding to a series of large Airbus orders by Chinese carriers earlier this year.

Combined with earlier purchases by China Southern Airlines, Xiamen Airlines and China Eastern Airlines, domestic carriers have announced orders for 476 aircraft from the European manufacturer since the end of last year, according to company filings.

The buying spree persists despite warnings from major airlines including Air China, China Southern Airlines and China Eastern Airlines of substantial first-half losses as rising operational costs erased their first-quarter profits.

Industry analysts said that while airline profitability fluctuates with fuel prices, exchange rates and geopolitical events, aircraft purchases are a strategic fleet planning exercise extending over a decade or longer.

"Current losses are a short-term phenomenon, driven mainly by external factors beyond airlines' control," said Guo Jia, a civil aviation expert and professor at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies' South China Business College. "Aircraft procurement is part of airlines' broader, long-term strategic vision."

The latest aircraft are scheduled for delivery between 2028 and 2032. The multiyear delivery timeframes spread capital expenditure over time, mitigating the immediate financial impact of the purchases. Air China said in its filing that the transactions would not materially affect the company's cash flow or operations over the near term.

Although newer aircraft such as the A320neo family and A350 consume less fuel than previous generations, Guo said this is merely one benefit rather than the decisive driver behind the recent buying spree.

"The core driver of this round of orders is that Chinese airline fleets have entered a renewal cycle. With many aircraft having remained grounded during the COVID-19 pandemic, maintaining a younger fleet is a priority. It is fundamentally a medium to long-term capacity optimization rather than short-term capacity expansion."

The orders also reflect carriers' efforts to secure scarce production slots years in advance as global aircraft manufacturers continue to grapple with supply-chain disruptions. Deliveries of popular narrow-body models have already been largely sold out for several years, prompting airlines worldwide to place orders well ahead of expected demand.

The Civil Aviation Administration of China has projected annual passenger traffic will reach 1.5 billion by 2035, compared with about 770 million passengers carried in 2025, implying substantial room for long-term growth in the country's commercial aviation market.

Boeing expects that expansion to be mirrored globally. In its latest commercial market outlook released on Saturday, the US aircraft maker forecast that global passenger traffic will double over the next two decades, requiring 43,625 new commercial aircraft. Emerging markets, including China, Southeast Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America, are expected to account for about 55 percent of new deliveries.

However, the robust new orders do not guarantee that aircraft will arrive on schedule. Across the industry, manufacturers are facing growing constraints from shortages of engines, components and maintenance capacity, slowing deliveries even as travel demand remains robust.

The International Air Transport Association warned in June that durability problems and shortages of spare parts are disrupting airline operations worldwide.

"Engine maintenance, repair and overhaul bottlenecks are disrupting airline operations," Willie Walsh, IATA director general, said as the industry group released a joint study with consultancy Emerton in June. "Without significant changes, this will only get worse as the fleet of latest-generation single-aisle aircraft grows."

Enhancing 'reliable substitution' capability of clean energy

By ZHENG XIN
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

China will aim to boost its annual renewable energy consumption to around 1.8 billion metric tons of standard coal equivalent by 2030 under its 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) for Renewable Energy Development, according to the country's top economic and energy regulators.

Jointly released by the National Development and Reform Commission and the National Energy Administration, the blueprint marks a strategic turn toward high-quality expansion and reliable fossil-fuel substitution, establishing the official framework for China's green energy evolution through the end of the decade.

Under the plan, China's total installed renewable power capacity is projected to reach about 3.5 billion kilowatts by 2030, generating roughly 6 trillion kilowatt-hours of electricity annually.

Wind and solar power will remain the principal engines of this growth, with combined installed capacity expected to surpass 2.8 billion kW. This will account for over 50 percent of the nation's total installed power capacity and supply more than 30 percent of its annual electricity output.

Reaching the 1.8-billion-ton benchmark marks a fundamental shift in China's energy matrix, balancing carbon peak targets with long-term energy security, industry analysts said.

"Over the next five years, renewables must move from rapid growth to reliable grid support," said Ye Xiaoning, a senior engineer at the State Grid Energy Research Institute. He noted that the plan's first-ever "reliable substitution target" — aiming for an 8 percent average firm capacity ratio by 2030 — directly addresses weather dependency by aligning generation volume with dispatch flexibility.

Ye added that leveraging non-electric applications like green hydrogen and heat will help resolve grid integration bottlenecks, pushing renewable energy beyond the power grid and deeper into the broader economy.

Renewable energy refers to energy that can be continuously replenished and regenerated through natural processes within a relatively short period.



View of an offshore wind farm off Pingtan county, Fujian province.
WANG WANGWANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

It includes hydropower, wind power, solar energy, biomass energy and geothermal energy. New energy refers to all renewable energy sources excluding hydropower, according to the document.

A core priority of the new roadmap is enhancing the "reliable substitution" capability of clean energy — ensuring intermittent wind and solar resources can dependably support the national grid during peak load hours.

The plan mandates that the average firm capacity ratio for combined wind and solar installations equipped with energy storage reach 8 percent nationwide by 2030.

To support grid balance, China will add more than 300 million kW of reliable peak-shaving renewable capacity over the five-year period through multi-energy integration, pumped-storage hydro and demand-side virtual power plant deployment.

Beyond power generation, the plan outlines significant breakthroughs in non-electric renewable applications. Non-electric utilization is set to grow 1.5-fold compared with 2025 levels, replacing approximately 150 million tons of standard coal equivalent annually by 2030.

This non-electric expansion will focus on scaling up green hydrogen, ammonia and synthetic methanol for heavy industry and transport, while expanding geothermal and biomass energy for urban and rural heating.

To foster new quality productive forces within the sector, policymakers are prioritizing breakthroughs in key equipment and technologies. Research and industrial application will focus on perovskite tandem solar cells, deep-sea floating wind platforms, thousand-meter head hydro turbines, and initial testing for space-based solar power systems, it said.

Huairou reports GDP rise of 7.1%

By REN QI
renqi@chinadaily.com.cn

Beijing's Huairou district reported first half GDP growth of 7.1 percent year-on-year, highlighted by a more than 20 percent surge in the new materials sector, a 100 percent revenue jump in leasing and business services and its approval as a municipal-level future industry pilot zone.

Ma Tianbiao, director of the district's development and reform commission, said Huairou's economy experienced a strong start in the first quarter and continued to consolidate in the second.

The coordinated development of the industrial and services sectors has solidified the foundation for steady growth, with the total output value of industries above a designated size reaching 29.94 billion yuan ($4.4 billion). Focusing on future energy, manufacturing and materials, Huairou has successfully become one of Beijing's four municipal-level future industry pilot zones.

Furthermore, the new materials sector has gathered 47 key enterprises, including seven national-level specialized and sophisticated "little giant" enterprises, and built eight innovation platforms at or above the provincial and ministerial levels, forming a complete innovation ecosystem from basic research and pilot verification to industrialization.

In the aerospace technology sector, the district has planned a 6-kilometer "interstellar navigation avenue". Focusing on the research and development of key components such as satellite-borne laser communications and electric thrusters, it aims to build an industrial cluster for key payloads and support manufacturing, driven by spacecraft assembly, integration and testing, and radiation-resistance testing services. This initiative has already connected over 20 scientific and technological facility platforms with more than 50 tech enterprises.

The district's comprehensive national science center is also accelerating its development. Wang Tianyi, director of the exchange, cooperation and talent work division of Huairou's science city management committee, noted that the center produced 67 major scientific and technological achievements in the first half of the year, bringing the cumulative total to 506. It also secured eight new national-level awards, while a number of major scientific facilities made breakthrough progress, accelerating the transformation of scientific achievements and the layout of future industries.

The district also saw robust growth in its service and consumer sectors. Revenue in information transmission, software and information technology services grew by 11.2 percent year-on-year, while the financial sector's net income increased by 15.3 percent. Driven by a recovering consumer market, the turnover of the accommodation and catering industry rose by 30.5 percent. Consequently, the per capita disposable income of all residents reached 30,371 yuan, representing a 5.2 percent increase.

Market vitality continued to surge, fueled by an optimized business environment. In the first half of the year, Huairou registered 5,791 new market entities, a remarkable 76 percent increase compared to the same period last year. The district's opening-up efforts also yielded significant results, with the actual utilization of foreign investment hitting $355 million, skyrocketing by 472 percent.

Additionally, the district's culture, sports and entertainment industries above a designated size generated 1.96 billion yuan in revenue in the first half, with a growth rate of 71.3 percent, significantly outpacing the city's average.

The broadcasting, television, film and sound recording sector served as the core engine, realizing 1.32 billion yuan in revenue. Meanwhile, the culture and arts sector brought in 300 million yuan, the sports sector 94.09 million yuan and the entertainment sector 250 million yuan.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:39 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:39 PM

Q&A WITH CEO

Editor's note: *After the release of China's first-half economic data, China Daily invited chief executives and senior leaders from key multinational companies to share their perspectives on the world's second-largest economy. Their insights go beyond short-term growth, offering a closer look at the evolving "China Opportunity 2.0" narrative amid ongoing debate over the so-called "China Shock 2.0".*

Maximizing structural market evolution



Henry Han
Group senior vice-president of ABB and president of ABB Robotics in China



Cissy Wang
General manager of CSL China



Kais Marzouki
Chairman and CEO of Nestle Greater China Region



Joy Fan
President and CEO of The Estee Lauder Companies China

Q1 Many multinational companies in recent years continue to expand their investment and operations in China, suggesting that "China Opportunity 2.0" is increasingly offsetting the "China Shock 2.0" narrative. What developments or evidence best demonstrate that China is creating new opportunities for global businesses rather than posing a "shock"?

HAN: "China Opportunity 2.0" represents a fundamental shift toward openness and shared progress that extends far beyond basic market access. China is transitioning from volume-driven to value-driven growth, supported by open innovation such as open-source AI. This shift is creating real, sustainable demand for global partners.

ABB Robotics has been committed to China for more than three decades.

Our deep roots and full value chain presence in China encompass R&D, manufacturing, sales, engineering, and services and our $150 million Shanghai mega factory reflects that. With this, we are uniquely positioned to continue advancing robotics in this fast-evolving market.

WANG: China has evolved from a manufacturing base and large market into a dynamic innovation ecosystem, powered by talent, infrastructure and high-quality development.

In biopharma, this is clear: by 2025, China accounted for about 30 percent of the global innovative pipeline and nearly 50 percent in next-gen modalities — a structural shift. For CSL, this means moving from market opportunity to innovation opportunity, which drives our China strategy — "3N strategy: new product, new collaborations, new efficiency".

This is reflected not only in bringing globally leading innovative therapies to China, but also — and more importantly — deeply rooted in the entire local industrial chain and actively shaping ecosystem-wide collaborations, including local hospitals, research institutions, companies in innovative R&D and AI, as well as other ecosystem partners.

MARZOUKI: China is evolving from a major consumer market into an increasingly important hub for innovation and industrial upgrading. In the past, companies came to China primarily to be closer to consumers. Today, many companies are leveraging China as a center for innovation, R&D, digital transformation and supply-chain collaboration. From Nestle's perspective, the strongest evidence of "China Opportunity 2.0" is the continued commitment of multinational companies to expanding their investments, innovation activities and operations in China.

Nestle has been deeply rooted in the Chinese mainland for nearly 40 years. Since 2020, we've made over 6 billion yuan ($886 million) of additional investments in China. We have more than 20 factories and operating sites across the Chinese mainland (including the Dairy Farming Institute and Nescafe Coffee Center) as well as three R&D centers. More than 90 percent of products are locally manufactured.

FAN: From our perspective, the continued evolution of China's consumer market is creating meaningful opportunities for multinational companies. Chinese consumers are increasingly seeking high-quality, science-backed and personalized products, while the country's strong innovation capabilities enable companies to develop and bring new ideas to market more quickly. These trends continue to reinforce our long-term confidence in China.

As China's consumer market continues to evolve, we believe companies that invest in local innovation, build strong partnerships and stay close to consumers will be best positioned for long-term success. That has been our approach in China for more than 30 years, and it continues to guide our investments today.

Q2 China's economy has demonstrated strong resilience so far this year, supported by resilient exports, solid industrial production and continued strength in high-tech manufacturing. How would you assess China's overall economic performance so far this year? Looking ahead, what do you see as the key drivers supporting China's growth in the second half?

HAN: China's economy has demonstrated remarkable resilience and a clear trajectory toward high-quality development. Looking to the second half of the year, we are seeing a profound transition where new quality productive forces — driven by technological breakthroughs and deep industrial transformation — are becoming the definitive engines of growth. High-tech manufacturing remains at the core of this momentum. AI investment is reaching a critical inflection point, with capital accelerating into industrial applications and productive infrastructure. The 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), with its strategic focus on future industries like embodied intelligence, provides a highly durable and predictable policy foundation for this transition. On the global stage, China's upcoming hosting of the 33rd APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, in November, further reinforces its indispensable role as a central node in the global economy, fostering a collaborative environment for international enterprises.

WANG: China's economic performance this year has demonstrated remarkable resilience, driven by a clear shift toward high-quality development and the fostering of "new quality productive forces".

In the healthcare sector, we define this "new quality" as the deep integration of cutting-edge biopharma platforms with digitalization to address highly unmet medical needs. As a leading global biotechnology company with 40 years of service in the Chinese mainland, CSL is unleashing this momentum through our local "3N strategy". Looking ahead, we believe the continuous deepening of healthcare modernization and regulatory reforms will remain the premier growth engines. CSL is highly optimistic about China's long-term prospects and is fully committed to contributing to "Healthy China" as a long-term partner.

FAN: At The Estee Lauder Companies, we have always taken a long-term view of China and remain confident in the market's long-term potential. We continue to see strong underlying demand from Chinese consumers, particularly as they increasingly seek high-quality, science-backed and personalized beauty products. This confidence is reflected in our own business, where we have delivered five consecutive quarters of retail sales growth in China through the most recently reported period of March 2026.

Looking ahead, we believe growing demand for high-quality products, together with continued digital transformation, will remain important drivers of growth. Within the prestige beauty industry, consumers increasingly expect seamless experiences across both online and offline channels, while digital technologies are helping brands better understand consumer needs, strengthen consumer engagement and accelerate innovation across the value chain.

At the same time, China's scientific research capabilities and vibrant innovation ecosystem continue to create new opportunities for product innovation. Through our China innovation center, we stay close to one of the world's most sophisticated beauty consumer markets, where expectations for product efficacy, ingredients and personalized beauty solutions continue to evolve. These consumer insights, combined with our global scientific expertise, help us develop products that better meet the needs of Chinese consumers while contributing to our global innovation pipeline.

Q3 China's innovation ecosystem has become an increasingly important engine of growth. How do you assess the contribution of artificial intelligence and other frontier technologies to China's productivity growth, industrial upgrading and long-term economic resilience? More broadly, what significance does China's innovation have for global technological progress and the opportunities available to multinational companies?

HAN: China's innovation ecosystem is raising domestic productivity while becoming a global platform for next-generation industrial technologies.

AI is acting as a productivity multiplier. Machine learning embedded across manufacturing, quality control, logistics and predictive maintenance is compressing industrial upgrading cycles that would previously have taken decades. The result is a rapid shift from a digital economy to an intelligent one, where AI is woven into productive infrastructure itself.

Products like ABB Robotics' RobotStudio HyperReality can train robots for every eventuality, closing the sim-to-real gap with 99 percent accuracy using physically accurate simulation. This fundamentally changes how quickly and reliably manufacturers can scale production, reducing costs by up to 40 percent and accelerating time-to-market by 50 percent.

WANG: In the healthcare sector, AI is enhancing R&D efficiency, supporting clinical decisionmaking, optimizing manufacturing processes and improving supply chain management. This digital transformation not only boosts productivity, but also builds a more responsive and agile healthcare ecosystem. CSL is also collaborating with a top university hospital to use AI technology to enhance rare disease diagnosis.

As China's share of global licensing capital increases — combined with regulatory reforms and the deep integration of AI throughout the R&D process — R&D speed and efficiency are being further elevated. This innovation-driven momentum creates a new frontier of win-win collaboration for multinational corporations.

MARZOUKI: China enjoys unique technological strengths and leads in AI development, and the 15th Five-Year Plan emphasizes advancing the "AI+" initiative. We will leverage AI in China to gain deeper consumer insights and better address key trends including the silver economy, healthy longevity and functional nutrition, so as to better meet the needs of Chinese consumers.

At the same time, Chinese innovation is increasingly influencing global markets. More products, technologies and business models developed in China are being adopted internationally.

For multinational companies, this creates greater opportunities for co-innovation, joint R&D and shared technological progress.

FAN: China has built a dynamic innovation ecosystem that combines strong scientific capabilities, a rapidly evolving technology landscape and rich real-world application scenarios. For multinational companies, this creates an environment where new technologies can be developed, tested and scaled quickly, making China an increasingly important source of innovation as well as a key market.

At The Estee Lauder Companies, we are applying AI across multiple stages of our value chain — from delivering more personalized consumer experiences and supporting skin analysis to accelerating scientific research through virtual ingredient screening. These technologies help shorten product development cycles and enable us to bring innovative products to consumers more efficiently.

Q4 China has placed greater emphasis on expanding domestic demand while pursuing high-standard opening-up. How do you assess these efforts? What new opportunities do they create for multinational companies and global investors?

HAN: China's emphasis on stimulating domestic demand and advancing high-standard opening-up creates a highly dynamic and predictable environment for multinational companies.

The country's broader push to embed intelligent technologies across industries provides the foundation for mid- to long-term demand and growth. For industrial companies, that translates into increased manufacturing activity and, consequently, stronger demand for automation and productivity technologies.

Continued progress on market access, intellectual property protection and regulatory transparency is gradually lowering the operating risk for foreign businesses. High-standard trade frameworks and sustained participation in global supply chains reflect China's recognition that outward-looking integration remains central to its development model.

WANG: "Expanding domestic demand" translates to a robust demand for high-quality, standardized medical services in the healthcare sector. Taking our core product, human albumin, as an example, the real-world clinical demand from critical and serious disease patients in China remains exceptionally strong.

China's continuous advancement of high-level openness and institutional innovation has accelerated the launch of global cutting-edge therapies. For instance, through pioneer policies like the "Hong Kong and Macao Medicine and Equipment Connect", our anti-D immunoglobulin has achieved accelerated rollout in China, benefiting approximately 4,000 Rh-negative, or "panda blood", pregnant women. Additionally, our innovative medicine in the field of hereditary angioedema is currently under regulatory review for marketing authorization.

MARZOUKI: For multinational companies, stronger domestic demand means broader and more diversified market opportunities. China has one of the world's largest middle-income populations, with rising demand for health, nutrition, premium experiences and personalized consumption.

At the same time, high-standard opening-up is creating a more stable, transparent and predictable business environment. China's continuous efforts to improve the business climate and expand institutional opening-up provide greater confidence for long-term investment. For Nestle, this creates not only market opportunities, but also opportunities for innovation and collaboration. We will continue to invest in local innovation, strengthen partnerships and contribute to the high-quality development of the industry.

FAN: From our perspective, China's continued focus on expanding consumer demand and creating a stable environment for long-term investment provides important opportunities for multinational companies.

First, evolving consumer demand continues to create opportunities for the prestige beauty industry. Chinese consumers are increasingly seeking high-quality, science-backed and personalized products, encouraging companies to continue investing in innovation and premium beauty experiences across both physical retail and digital channels.

Second, platforms such as the China International Import Expo have enabled businesses like The Estee Lauder Companies to introduce more global brands and innovations to Chinese consumers while strengthening collaboration with local partners.

Q5 Looking ahead to the second half of the year, what will you be watching most closely as indicators of China's economic resilience, reform progress and long-term growth potential?

HAN: Three sets of indicators will be most telling in the second half of the year.

The first is industrial automation and robotics demand, which serves as a real-time gauge of manufacturer confidence and the pace of China's productivity upgrade.

Order volumes, deployment rates, and new application sectors will signal whether the transition to intelligent manufacturing is accelerating or consolidating.

For ABB Robotics, we will be watching this particularly in logistics, healthcare and life sciences, construction and new energy vehicles.

The second is high-technology manufacturing output across robotics, semiconductors, advanced materials and new energy.

This will show whether China's industrial policy investments are translating into durable productive capacity or remain concentrated in demonstration projects.

The third is export resilience and supply chain integration.

The degree to which Chinese manufacturers move up the value chain in export markets, competing on technology and quality rather than price alone, will be a meaningful signal of long-term structural progress and China's ability to sustain its global economic role amid ongoing geopolitical headwinds.

WANG: In the second half, I will be watching how innovation — particularly in biotech, AI and digital health — translates into tangible improvements in patient outcomes.

CSL's strategic ambition is to deliver enduring patient impact in areas of high unmet medical need.

As the market leader in albumin in China, we understand the responsibility that comes with serving patients and the healthcare system, and we remain committed to maintaining a stable and reliable supply for Chinese patients.

I am also encouraged by our growing engagement in China this year.

CSL is increasing its presence at major national exhibitions and industry conferences and will make its debut at China International Import Expo — further demonstrating the strategic importance of China within our global business.

Overall, I remain optimistic about the future of China's economy.

Driven by innovation, talent and a commitment to high-quality development, China is well positioned to continue creating opportunities for businesses, investors and, most importantly, patients.

CSL is proud to be part of that journey and looks forward to contributing to China's next chapter of growth.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:39 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:39 PM

CHINA





Left: Soldiers solemnly stand in rows during a ceremony to mark the 75th anniversary of the participation of the Chinese People's Volunteers army in the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea (1950-53) at the CPV martyrs' cemetery in Shenyang, Liaoning province, on Oct 25. PAN YULONG / XINHUA **Center:** People leave flowers to pay respects to the fallen soldiers at the cemetery on April 5. HAN HE / XINHUA **Right:** People scan a wall engraved with martyrs' names at the cemetery in April last year. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Cemetery connects lost soldiers with the present

Decades after the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea, pilgrimages to the CPV graveyard continue to inspire generations

By **ZOU SHUO** and **WU YONG**
in Shenyang



At 70 years old, Liu Guoqin recently made the 1,600-kilometer journey from Wuxi, Jiangsu province, to Shenyang, Liaoning province, alone. Her surviving older siblings were too frail to travel, but Liu felt an obligation she couldn't pass up.

She was heading to the Chinese People's Volunteers martyrs' cemetery in Shenyang, where a single name carved into a 100-meter-long black granite wall drew her in: her eldest brother, Liu Guohua.

"I was born after he left. We never met," Liu Guoqin said, tears welling as she stood before the wall on June 3, accompanied by her childhood friend Hu Yanjuan, also 70. Liu Guoqin's brother was 22 when he died in the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea (1950-53). For decades, Liu searched — visiting government offices in Liaoning, calling old classmates and chasing leads that went nowhere. "My parents' dying wishes were to know where he was. So, I needed to find him," she said.

Three years ago, she did. His name was etched among the 174,407 names carved on the wall, representing the 197,653 fallen of the war. Duplicate names were carved only once, so the number of names is less than the true death toll.

Since then, Liu Guoqin has returned each year. "None of my living elder siblings are fit enough to travel long distances. While I can still walk, I will come," she said.

The seekers

For thousands of families across China, the cemetery in Shenyang — established in 1951 and spanning 210,000 square meters — is the only tangible link to relatives lost in a war seven decades ago.

At its heart rises a 23.5-meter granite monument bearing the inscription "The heroic souls of the martyrs of the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea shall live forever" in the calligraphy of Dong Biwu, one of the founders of the Communist Party of China and a famed Marxist.

Behind the monument rest 123 CPV martyrs, including special-class heroes Yang Gensi and Huang Jiguang, and first-class heroes Qiu Shaoyun, Sun Zhanyuan and Yang Liandi.

In front of the cemetery is a memorial square completed on Oct 29, 2014. Its unclosed circular form symbolizes return and reunion.

An underground crypt beneath the square holds the remains of CPV martyrs repatriated annually from the Republic of Korea. Over 1,000 soldiers have been brought home through these handovers.

Since 2014, following a handover agreement between China and the ROK, 13 consecutive repatriations have brought a total of 1,023 soldiers home. On the day of the 13th repatriation in April this year, a solemn burial ceremony was held at the square.

For many families, the wall of names is the only place they can finally pay tribute to their loved ones.

Xia Fang, deputy head of the cemetery's social education department, has spent 20 years watching visitors walk the length of the wall, fingers trailing across the carved characters.

One story stays with her. In 2025, a man called Fang Hanbing had traveled over 1,700 km from Macheng, Hubei province, to find his father's name on the wall. He brought a pouch of soil from his hometown and a stack of fire-baked flatbread — his father's favorite. When his fingers traced the characters "Fang Jinyao", a word he had never been able to speak escaped his lips: "Dad". He had been three months old when his father left for the front.

"I was standing right there," Xia recalled. "After 70 years, when he finally called out 'Dad', the emotion just broke through."

Another staff member, Wang Chunjie, remembers a woman named Wang Xianxia, who spent 58 years searching for her father. When she finally arrived at his grave, she knelt and bowed 58 times — one for each year of searching.

"She said, 'I've been looking for you my whole life'," Wang Chunjie recalled. "She was in her sixties by then."

The keepers

Because so many martyrs died too young to have direct descendants, the responsibility of preserving their memory often falls on distant relatives — and the cemetery staff who guard their legacy.

"When I started working here, heroes like Huang Jiguang seemed like figures from distant textbooks," Wang Chunjie said. "Then I realized Huang was only 21 when he died — younger than I was when I started."

Xia said those who come are often nieces and nephews, their parents long gone but the obligation to remember undiminished. "They don't say much when they reach the wall," she said. "There's just quiet crying, tears streaming down."

Every year, on the eve of the war's anniversary on Oct 24, a Shenyang resident places five apples on every grave — a quiet homage to the legendary Battle of Shangganling (the Battle of Triangle Hill), where a single apple was passed among starving soldiers, Xia said.

Ahead of the Chinese New Year in 2025, the cemetery staff boiled nearly 1,000 dumplings and placed them at the graves. "We wanted the martyrs to taste the sweetness of today," Xia said. "I was once told by one of the veterans that at the front line, they once made dumplings under fire — the enemy bombed them, and all that was left was soup."





From top: Children leave flowers on martyrs' tombstones at the cemetery on Sept 30. ZOU XINJIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY Veteran CPV soldiers salute a convoy transporting the remains of fallen CPV soldiers returned from the Republic of Korea at the cemetery's entrance on Sept 12. ZHOU HUA / XINHUA Veteran CPV soldiers pay respects to their fallen comrades at the cemetery on Oct 25. PAN YULONG / XINHUA

Inside the cemetery's museum vault, more than 10,000 artifacts lie in acid-free containers — the legacy of careful preservation by Meng Dechang, a 35-year-old history graduate who joined the cemetery in 2022.

The collection consists mostly of everyday objects — decayed rubber soles, metal bowls and uniform buttons. But amid the routine items are reminders of personal lives cut short.

"There's a harmonica — rare, and remarkably intact," Meng said. "We can only imagine that during breaks, soldiers gathered to play melodies from home."

Another artifact, a small signaling whistle, holds a starker reality. "When communication lines failed on the battlefield, a coded signal on a whistle meant life or death," she said. "Guardianship of these relics gives my life meaning. Every piece belonged to a different young person. They are the only physical link between those soldiers and the world today."

For docent Xie Yutong, 34, the work is a continuation of her military service. Having served 12 years in the 15th Airborne Corps — the same historical unit as renowned war heroes Huang Jiguang and Qiu Shaoyun — she sees the cemetery as an extension of her own squad. "When I see these graves, I'm not telling someone else's story," Xie said. "I'm telling the story of my own unit's heroes."

Next generation

The cemetery is not frozen in time. Last year, it received more than 500,000 visitors — a number that has grown every year, Wang Chunjie said. School groups, tourists and young people traveling on their own initiative are a common sight, she said.

Young people taking the initiative to visit martyrs' cemeteries is a vivid manifestation of the continuous inheritance of the "Red bloodline". The ideas of remembering history and honoring heroes are steadily taking root among the younger generation, she added.

Wang Chunjie has taken the cemetery's stories beyond its gates, lecturing at schools and universities across the country. "When we show up in person — the people who guard these heroes every day — it hits differently," she said.

Not all visitors are relatives. Wen Dong, 29, traveled from Gansu province. He was at the cemetery on a day off, drawn by news of the latest repatriated martyrs. "We used to visit memorials back home too," he said. "Every time I go to a new city, I find a place like this."

When asked why a young man would spend his free time at a martyrs' cemetery, Wen paused. "It's hard to put into words," he said. "For me, it's not like climbing a mountain or sightseeing. This is different. It's a feeling — a sense of respect." He plans to bring his children here one day. "Of course I will tell them these stories. The spirit has to be passed on."

For Yue Zhonghou, a 74-year-old retired worker from Beijing, the war is personal history. Born in 1952, the year the fighting was still going on, he grew up in its shadow.

He made his first pilgrimage to the Shenyang cemetery recently — a trip he had promised himself for years.

Yue was visiting Shenyang while his wife attended a class reunion. "I finally carved out a day," he said. For Yue, the war's significance transcends military victory.

"We were so poor then. Yet we took on the world's most powerful military — and we prevailed," he said. "That confidence, that unity — it's in our DNA now. Our nation as a whole will never forget."

He plans to tell his 40-year-old son what he saw and felt, and believes that the spirit should be passed from generation to generation. "The spirit of that war is the foundation of China today. No difficulty we face now is harder than what they endured, and we will prevail no matter what hardships we face in the future."

Contact the writers at zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

Fact Box

Repatriation of Chinese People's Volunteers soldiers' remains from the Republic of Korea (2014–26)

Since 2014, China and the Republic of Korea have conducted 13 consecutive repatriations of the remains of Chinese People's Volunteers martyrs who sacrificed their lives during the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea (1950-53). A total of 1,023 sets of remains have been returned to China and laid to rest at the Chinese People's Volunteers martyrs' cemetery in Shenyang, Liaoning province.

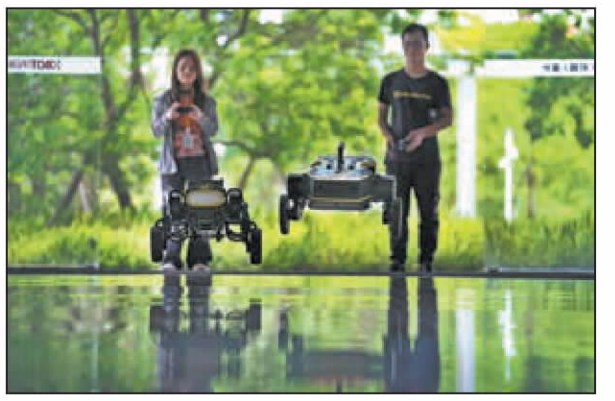
Batch	Date	Number of Remains
1st	March 28, 2014	437
2nd	March 20, 2015	68
3rd	March 31, 2016	36
4th	March 22, 2017	28
5th	March 28, 2018	20
6th	April 3, 2019	10
7th	Sept 27, 2020	117
8th	Sept 2, 2021	109
9th	Sept 16, 2022	88
10th	Nov 23, 2023	25
11th	Nov 28, 2024	43
12th	Sept 12, 2025	30
13th	April 22, 2026	12

SOURCE: MINISTRY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

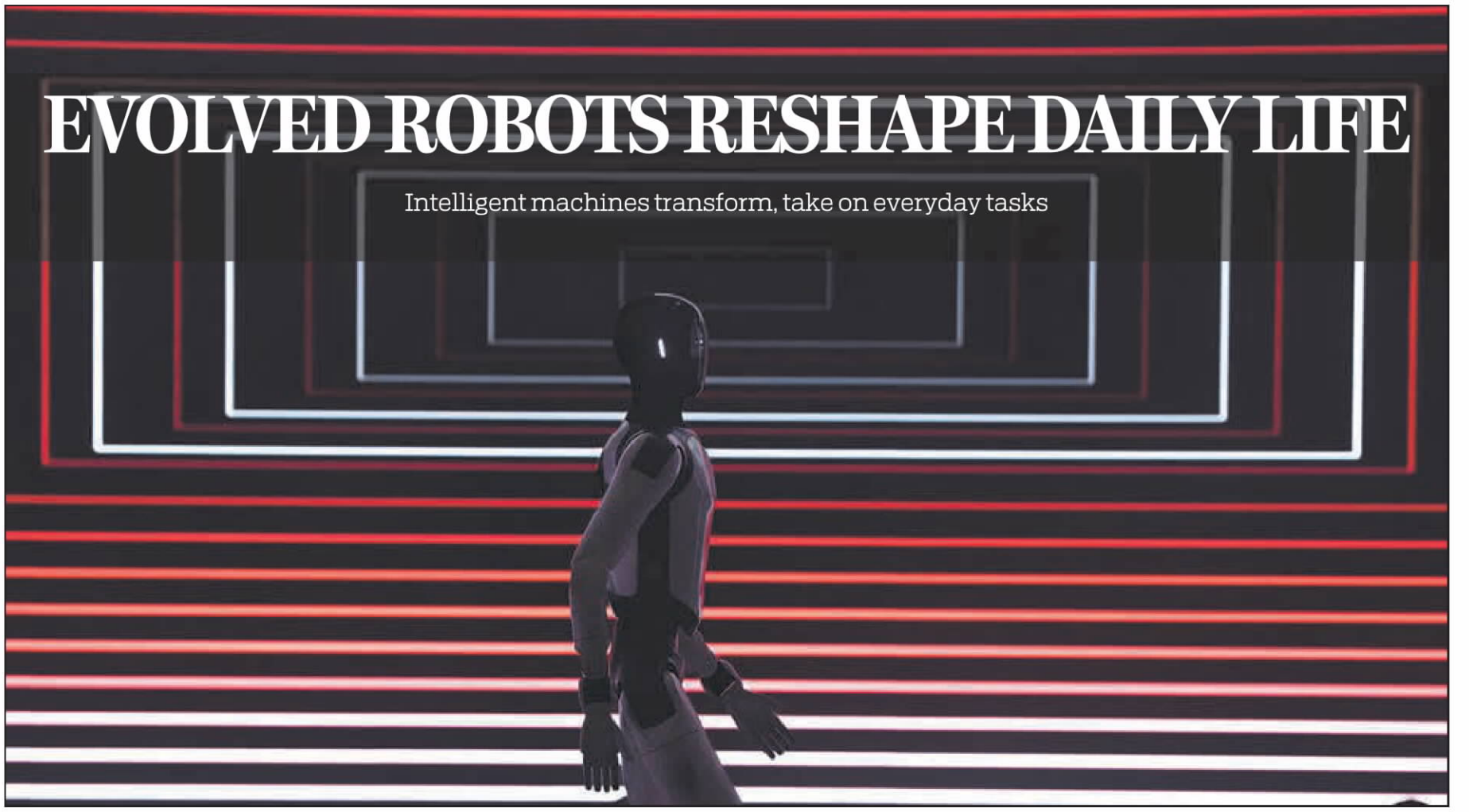
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:39 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:39 PM

VISUAL


From left: A humanoid robot named "Lightning" competes during a half-marathon for humanoid robots held in Beijing on April 19. It crossed the finish line in 50 minutes and 26 seconds. Technicians test the direct-drive bipedal robots, named "Xingtian" in Dongguan, Guangdong province, on May 29, 2024. A robot serves customers at a convenience store in Chengdu, Sichuan province, on Oct 4, 2025.
PHOTOS BY ZHANG CUNCHENG / FOR CHINA DAILY



A humanoid robot performs on stage in Shenzhen, Guangdong, on May 21.



A worker inspects i-Sobot robots at a factory in Dongguan on Oct 13, 2007.





A humanoid robot draws visitors at an exhibition in Shenzhen on May 22, 2025.

By CHINA DAILY

In 2007, a tiny robot named i-Sobot "came to life" at a facility in Dongguan, Guangdong province. The remote-controlled robot, no larger than a palm, could perform about 240 movements, including walking and climbing, with remarkable precision.

This first-generation machine was more than a novelty — it was a microcosm of China's early exploration into intelligent robotics, planting the seeds for a domestic smart equipment industry that would flourish over a span of nearly two decades.

Fast forward to today, and the transformation is outstanding. Chinese robots have evolved from basic walking motions to autonomous thinking and collaborative decision-making. They are no longer confined to research labs but have become tangible carriers of "new quality productive forces" — a concept driven by technological innovation, high efficiency, and high-quality output.

Inside a factory in Dongguan, a direct-drive bipedal robot named "Xingtian" moves swiftly through hazardous zones, performing transport, inspection, and exploration tasks that once required human workers. On assembly lines in Zhaoqing, Guangdong, robotic arms operate in high-speed coordination, achieving millimeter-level precision that boosts manufacturing capacity while pushing factories toward full automation and unmanned operation.

In Guangzhou, the provincial capital of Guangdong, logistics robots have taken over sorting duties, dramatically improving efficiency and accuracy. At a Southern Power Grid substation, a quadruped robot "Feiyun" patrols around the clock, ensuring power supply safety while freeing human workers from repetitive, high-risk tasks.

Clockwise from above: Robotic arms operate in high-speed coordination at a factory in Zhaoqing, Guangdong, on June 18, 2025. A robot "traffic police officer" undergoes testing to clear traffic in Shenzhen on March 12. Technicians watch robots dancing at a Shenzhen EngineAI Robotics Technology Co facility on June 25, 2025.





Contrary to popular belief, these robots are not replacing humans — they are revolutionizing work patterns.

At the inaugural Beijing E-Town robot soccer 3V3 AI competition in 2025, neither remote control nor human intervention was allowed. The robots relied entirely on autonomous decision-making, showcasing cutting-edge capabilities in motion control, visual perception, and multi-robot collaboration. In other events, be it boxing, sprinting, or other track and field competitions, robots fell, got back up, and iterated their performance through trial and error — turning the experiences into real-world capability.

Robots have also stepped gently into the rhythms of daily life. In Shenzhen, Guangdong, a robot "traffic police officer" stands at busy intersections, directing vehicles with precision. In Chengdu, Sichuan province, a small robot-run convenience store offers quick and friendly service. At the foot of Wudang Mountain, Hubei province, exoskeleton robots help tourists climb steep paths with ease, turning a physically demanding journey into a comfortable experience. Technology is empowering and inclusive.

In Huiyang, Guangdong, a training ground for embodied intelligence prepares robots for real-world tasks, much like a vocational school. In Shenzhen, lifelike simulation robots can mimic human expressions with startling accuracy. These are no longer cold machines — they are perceptive, interactive, and even companionable.

Behind every image captured over nearly two decades is a story of breakthroughs and deployment — a mutual push between innovation and application. In the wave of new quality productive forces, robots embody high technology, high efficiency, and high quality. They are reshaping how we produce, live, and organize society.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:39 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:39 PM

CULTURE

AN EMPTY CHAIR BECKONS



Eighteen years later, an acclaimed ballet revival masterfully merges Western choreography with traditional Kunqu Opera, **Chen Nan** reports.

A red chair stands on an empty stage as the curtain rises. At the opening of *The Peony Pavilion*, it cradles a sleeping young woman. By the end, it is left empty — an invitation to the audience. Who will sit there next? Who will become Du Liniang?

Eighteen years after its acclaimed premiere, the National Ballet of China's original production, *The Peony Pavilion,* has returned to the stage, offering a renewed interpretation of one of China's enduring stories of love, longing and self-discovery.

The score is composed by Guo Wenjing, with the set and lighting designed by internationally renowned designer Michael Simon. The costumes are based on designs by the late Oscar-winning costume designer Emi Wada, and Han Jiang serves as the co-lighting designer.

The revived production premiered on Wednesday at Tianqiao Theater in Beijing and will run through Sunday.

"Eighteen years later, when I revisit the production, I am still touched," says director Li Liuyi, who reunited members of the original creative team to refine the ballet for a new generation of audiences.

Adapted from the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) masterpiece by Tang Xianzu, *The Peony Pavilion* tells the story of Du Liniang, a sheltered young woman who dreams of the scholar Liu Mengmei and falls deeply in love despite never having met him. She dies of longing, but love proves stronger than death. Guided by her spirit, Liu discovers her portrait and eventually brings her back to life, allowing the lovers to unite.

Li sees Tang as Shakespeare's kindred spirit in the East. Born in the same era, the two playwrights transformed theater by placing human emotion at its heart. Whether through Shakespeare's Juliet or Tang's Du, love becomes more than romance — it becomes a force that challenges convention, confronts mortality, and reveals what it means to be human.

More than four centuries after it was written, Li believes *The Peony Pavilion* continues to speak to contemporary audiences. "It presents a remarkably open vision of human emotion and imagination. Tang Xianzu celebrates individual desire, dreams and the freedom to pursue one's true self — ideas that continue to resonate across cultures."

For the director, the ballet is not simply a romantic tale. "It is about the awakening of life," he says. "It is about a person discovering her true self through love."

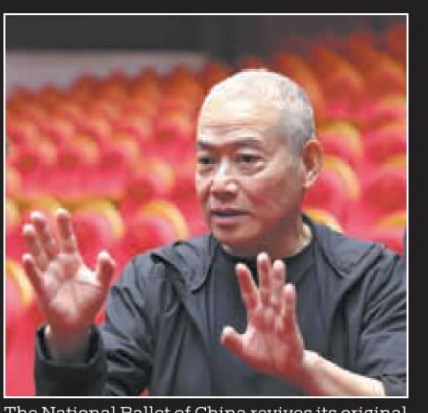
That philosophy shapes every aspect of the production.

Widely regarded as Kunqu Opera's most celebrated masterpiece, *The Peony Pavilion* has long been admired for its poetic language and emotional depth. Rather than replacing that tradition, the ballet embraces it.

Actresses from the Northern Kunqu Opera Theatre perform iconic arias from the original opera onstage, creating a dialogue between one of China's oldest theatrical traditions and Western ballet.







The National Ballet of China revives its original production, *The Peony Pavilion*, exploring the themes of love and self-discovery. Led by director Li Liuyi (above), the creative team refines the seamless blend of traditional Kunqu Opera and ballet.
PHOTOS BY ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY



At the revival's premiere in Beijing, National Ballet of China principal dancer Fang Mengying portrayed Du, with principal artist Ma Xiaodong as Liu. Through ballet's expressive language, they vividly brought to life Tang's timeless vision of a love capable of crossing the boundaries between dream and reality, life and death.

Yet, the ballet's most distinctive innovation lies in the heroine herself.

Instead of presenting a single Du, director Li divides her into three figures. One belongs to the everyday world, another appears as the "flower goddess" who embodies dreams and desire, while the third — performed by a Kunqu Opera artist — represents Tang's original heroine and the classical theatrical tradition.

Together, the three versions reveal not different women, but different dimensions of the same person.

"The 'flower goddess' is direct and passionate. The Kunqu Opera version of Du is restrained and calm. Between them is Du herself, searching and discovering," says choreographer Fei Bo. "Our production is not simply retelling the original story; it leads audiences into Du's inner world."

Returning to the ballet nearly two decades later also transformed Fei's own understanding of its heroine. "I can now look at her from a more complete perspective, understand her better, and truly feel the emotions she searches for in her dream," he says. "This time, I wanted to gradually explore the deepest place of her heart — where her purest and most genuine emotions lead."

Fei believes Du's journey is ultimately about far more than romance.

"Du is brave and sincere," he says. "She is not only pursuing love, but also trying to complete herself as a woman within the constraints of the world."

The revival also introduces a new generation of dancers, including 18-year-old ballerina Yan Mengxuan as Du.

Director Li says, "Youth itself carries tremendous vitality. These young artists are full of passion and eager to create their own Du Liniang and Liu Mengmei."

Behind that fresh interpretation are months of collaboration between ballet dancers and Kunqu Opera performers. During rehearsals, the dancers studied the subtle gestures, posture and breathing of traditional opera, learning that stillness could be as expressive as movement.

"We wanted the dancers to possess both the physical strength of Western ballet and the Eastern sense of atmosphere and rhythm," Fei says. "Even in the pas de deux, we were not only pursuing technical coordination, but also searching for two people whose breaths and emotions could resonate with each other."

For Shao Tianshuai, who performed the Kunqu version of Du in the ballet's original production 18 years ago, the revival demonstrates how two artistic traditions can enrich one another.

"This production perfectly embodies the idea of preserving tradition while pursuing innovation," she says. "Ballet and Kunqu each maintain their own artistic roots, yet together, they elevate one another."

In the end, however, everything returns to the image that opens the ballet: the empty chair.

"For me, the empty chair on stage is the most moving image," Fei says. "The entire ballet is actually one great dream, and the empty chair perfectly expresses the Eastern aesthetic idea of the coexistence of reality and illusion."

At the beginning, Du falls asleep in the chair. At the end, only the chair remains.

"Whoever sits in that chair becomes Du Liniang," Fei says. "I want to leave that imagination to the audience, to the stage, and to the work itself."

Contact the writer at chennan@chinadaily.com.cn

Actor hopes to open doors for more young Asian talent

By MINGMEI LI in New York
mingmeili@chinadailyusa.com

Chinese American actor and producer Daniel Wu said he hopes his career can help create more opportunities for the next generation of Asian actors, as he reflected on identity, cultural exchange, and his decades-long ties to Hong Kong cinema at the New York Asian Film Festival.

Wu received the festival's Best from the East Award and also introduced the movie *Cold War 1994* to the audience. He said he felt "excited, proud and honored" by the recognition.

"Although I was born and raised in the West, I've always represented Hong Kong film," he says. "Hong Kong film has had its ups and downs over the past 30 years, but it's always going to survive."

Returning to Hong Kong to film has always felt like "a homecoming", Wu says.

Reflecting on his cross-cultural career, he acknowledges the complexities of his identity. As a Chinese American who has spent much of his career in Hong Kong, he says he feels more at home filming in China, where he does not feel like a "minority", while continuing to navigate questions about where he belongs.

Wu says his mother's advice helped him embrace both sides of his identity.

"You should just think of yourself as a person of the world and not necessarily someone of the East or the West," he recalls her saying. "You're both worlds."

Wu says he now sees his career as "right in the middle on this bridge", connecting cultures while helping expand opportunities for future generations of Asian actors.



Daniel Wu poses with a poster for *Cold War 1994* in New York on Monday. MINGMEI LI / CHINA DAILY

"The only reason why I keep trying to work in the United States is to show the next generation that it's possible for people like us," he says. Growing up, he rarely saw Asians on screen except in stereotypical roles.

"I'm trying to help open up a path for the next generation so that we have more representation and more visibility in the West," he adds.

Speaking about his role in *Cold War 1994*, Wu says the character was unlike any he had played before. Rather than a clear-cut hero or villain, the morally ambiguous mastermind challenged him, both as an actor and as a person at a different stage of life.

"I never played a character like this that was so morally ambiguous," Wu says. "I've played bad guys, good guys and young cops, but I've never played an older mastermind like this.

"It's interesting to be at a different stage in my own life and relate to this character and understand him."

Set against the backdrop of Hong Kong's return to the motherland, the film also offers audiences a chance to revisit a pivotal chapter in the city's history through cinema.

The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in New York has partnered with the New York Asian Film Festival since 2009. This year, 17 Hong Kong films are being showcased at the festival.

Maisie Ho, director of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in New York, says the film festival serves as a bridge between the East and the West.

"For Asian Americans who were born and raised here, movies provide a valuable way to reconnect with their identity, culture and roots," she adds.

Ho says the festival also allows audiences of all backgrounds to gain a deeper understanding of Asia's cultural diversity through cinema.

She describes Wu as "already an ambassador bridging the East and the West", saying his cross-cultural experiences help audiences appreciate different perspectives.

Through figures like Wu and platforms such as the festival, cultural exchange becomes more meaningful and accessible, she adds.

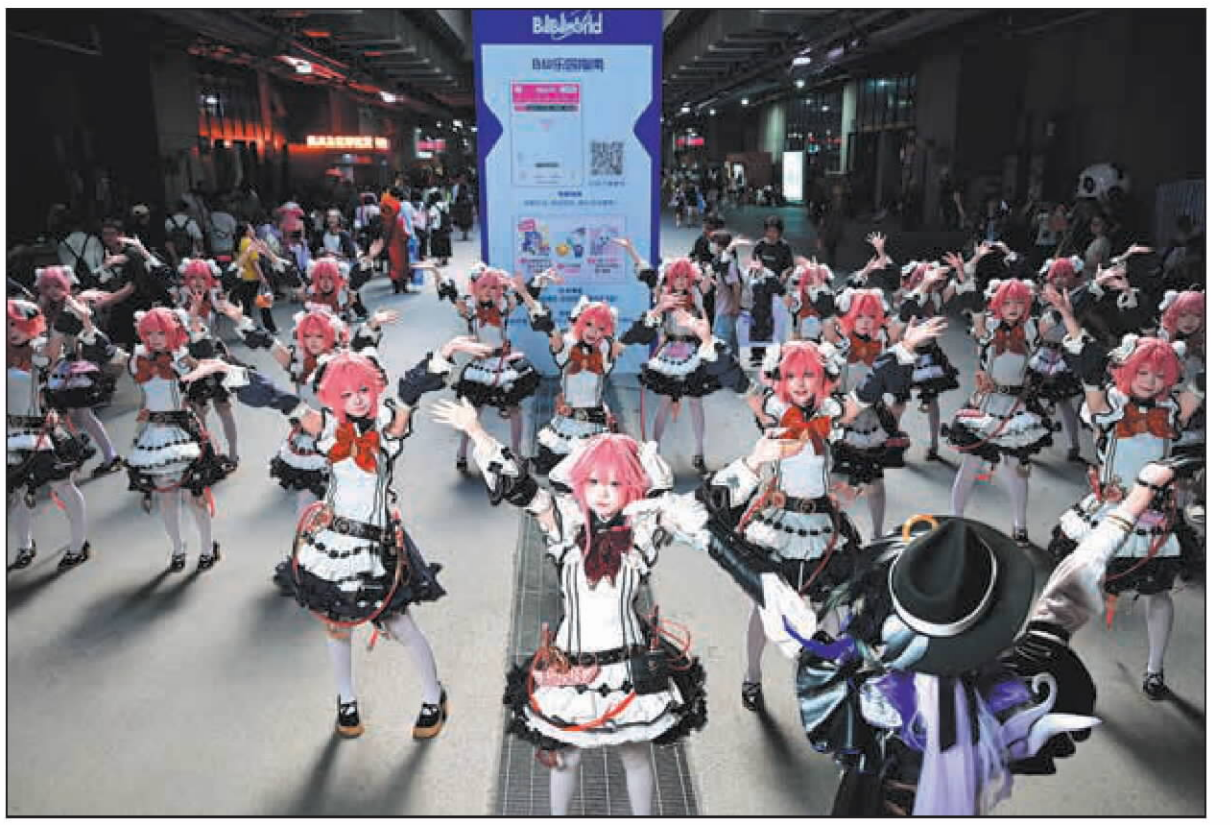
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:39 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:39 PM

LIFESHANGHAI

More than just cosplay

Fans gather at BilibiliWorld convention to show appreciation for original Chinese IPs and learn more about where the ACGN industry is headed, **Wang Ying** reports.



Less than 10 hours of sleep in three days. That was the plan Yin Jiayou happily signed up for as she headed to Shanghai's biggest annual gathering for animation fans.

The 18-year-old, attending BilibiliWorld for the third time, woke up at 5 am on opening day. After spending nearly three hours dressing up as one of her favorite characters, she joined tens of thousands of fans at BilibiliWorld 2026, one of Asia's largest offline ACGN (animation, comics, games, and novels) conventions, held in Shanghai from July 10 to 12.

After Yin arrived at the venue in full costume, she was quickly surrounded by fellow fans eager to take photos with her.

"The character I'm cosplaying is Thirteen, a female character from the original Chinese animation *Scissor Seven*. She's known for her elegant look and is one of the series' most popular characters," Yin says.

According to Yin, Thirteen has deep green eyes, two mole-like teardrops under her eyes, and hair braids that are tipped with a blade-shaped pendant.

Standing with Yin is her friend Jin Zihan, a 17-year-old girl taking part in the ACGN sensation for the first time this year. She cosplayed Qi, another *Scissor Seven* character.

"We were told we would get to meet the animation's creators later, and we're so excited. We're huge fans, and this might even give us a chance to find out what's coming next. It's been a while since the last update," Jin says, adding that she became a fan of the IP (intellectual property) during middle school.

As one of the first Chinese animations to become a Netflix Original, *Scissor Seven* will expand into new films, spin-off series, games, and more, announced the original Chinese animated IP's owner Ahaverse on July 10.

At BilibiliWorld 2026, a range of new projects and experiences based on the IP were unveiled for global release in the coming years, ranging from a movie and an original mobile action-adventure game to an annual live music experience.

"These are not standalone projects. They represent how *Scissor Seven* is evolving into a living world that continues to grow and expand," says Zou Shasha, founder and chief IP officer of Ahaverse, an original Chinese IP ecosystem company.

According to Zou, their long-term vision is to develop it from a single story into an ecosystem with more characters, richer storylines, diverse content formats, and immersive live experiences, while continuing to enrich it through collaboration with creators from different fields.

Since debuting in 2018, *Scissor Seven* has grown into one of China's most internationally recognized animated franchises, reaching audiences around the world through streaming platforms, multiple language dubs, comics, games, music, merchandise, and live experiences. Streaming in over 190 countries as one of the first original Chinese animations to become a Netflix Original, the franchise has attracted more than 40 million fans worldwide and over 30 billion views across platforms.







Top: During the opening ceremony of BilibiliWorld 2026 on July 10, a group of *Silver Palace* cosplayers dance at the National Exhibition and Convention Center in Shanghai. **Left:** Booth for *Honkai: Star Rail*. **Left below:** The *itasha* (pain cars) exhibits showcase animation-themed cars. **Right below:** Two cosplayers sit in electric model cars for a parade inside the venue on the same day. PHOTOS BY ZHOU YOU / FOR CHINA DAILY

The excitement among animation fans for the original Chinese IP is not isolated. Against the backdrop of China's push for high-quality development in its cultural industry and the rapid transformation of the digital cultural sector, original Chinese IPs are emerging as a key driver for integrating creative content, digital entertainment and offline consumer experiences.

For 27-year-old Mao Haha, a loyal fan of original Chinese animations for more than a decade, original Chinese anime resonates with her more deeply, as its storytelling strikes a stronger emotional chord.

"Sometimes the characters make me feel like they are living the life I've always dreamed of. That emotional resonance is something I've only experienced in original Chinese works," Mao says, adding that her favorite is the *Grave Robbers' Chronicles*, a mystery-adventure series.

To make it to the ACGN event in Shanghai, she worked overtime throughout the previous week to clear her schedule. Getting up at 6 am, Mao traveled from Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, to attend BilibiliWorld in Shanghai.

"The moment I walked into the venue, I felt every bit of the effort had been worthwhile," she says.

BilibiliWorld 2026 was held at Shanghai's National Exhibition and Convention Center. As one of Asia's largest offline ACGN conventions, this year's event attracted more than 170 exhibitors, with over 700 booths and 130 game developers from around the world.

Launched in 2017 by Bilibili, one of China's video-sharing platforms, the event has grown into a major offline gathering for ACGN enthusiasts, offering immersive experiences and a platform for fans to connect.

This year's event opened overseas ticket sales for the first time, reaching audiences in more than 190 countries and regions. Its 2025 edition attracted more than 400,000 visitors, with passport holders accounting for 13 percent of ticket buyers.

The growing popularity of the event reflects the rapid expansion of China's ACGN market. According to market research consulting firm iResearch, the sector reached 597.7 billion yuan ($88.33 billion) in 2024, nearly doubling from 2019, and is expected to grow to 834.4 billion yuan by 2029.

As the market expands, original Chinese IPs have also gained increasing recognition. The animated film *Ne Zha 2*, released during the 2025 Spring Festival holiday and based on characters from a classic Chinese mythological novel, reported box office revenue of more than 15.4 billion yuan. Meanwhile, Chinese game developer Game Science's *Black Myth: Wukong*, released in 2024 for PC and consoles, also became a global hit.

With a large group of ACGN fans nationwide, China has a vast consumer base to support the development of globally competitive original IPs. Industry observers believe the country's animation and gaming industries are poised to gain greater global influence.

Contact the writer at wang_ying@chinadaily.com.cn

A botanical journey through ancient American civilizations

By **ZHENG ZHENG**
zhengzheng@chinadaily.com.cn

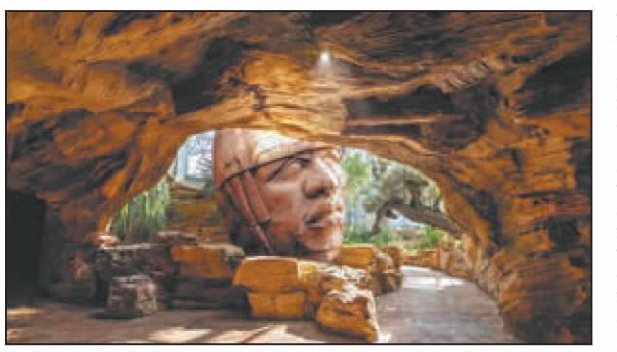
A botanical exhibition that merges ancient American civilizations is ongoing at the Shanghai Expo Culture Park, exploring the botanical foundations of Aztec, Maya and Inca cultures as a companion to the *On Top of the World Tree: Ancient Civilizations of the Americas* exhibition at the Shanghai Museum.

Realm of the World Tree: Agave and its Friends — Plants of the Americas runs through Nov 14, 2027, showcasing over 300 American plant species across three themed pavilions at the Shanghai Greenhouse Garden.

"We created immersive installations in each pavilion that transport visitors into the worlds of Aztec, Maya and Inca civilizations," says Zhang Feng, head of planning and operations at the Shanghai Expo Culture Park.

Zhang says: "We made over 300 new plant labels specifically for species connected to American civilizations. This allows visitors to discover which plants originally came from the Americas and understand their cultural significance."





Left: A pair of topiary alpacas at the show feature woolly coats composed of bromeliads. **Right:** The first pavilion re-creates arid highland ecosystems, where agave and cacti dominate the landscape. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The first pavilion re-creates the arid highland ecosystems dominated by agave and cacti. Visitors enter through a cave guarded by a replica Olmec colossal head.

The second pavilion centers on the world tree, the cosmic pillar of Maya cosmology. According to Maya belief, the ceiba tree connects three realms. This tropical rainforest environment features native American species, including trumpet and rubber trees.

The third pavilion transports visitors to the highlands of the Inca civilization. Its centerpiece is a spectacular pair of alpaca topiaries dressed in traditional textiles — a 6-meter-tall mother and 3.5-meter-tall calf, their woolly coats composed of bromeliads.

"Alpacas held sacred status in Inca civilization, symbolizing harvest, peace and prosperity," Zhang says.

"The warm, humid greenhouse provides ideal growing conditions for bromeliads, whose delicate leaves create that fluffy wool appearance."

He reveals that the alpacas might undergo a costume change in autumn and winter, with additional bromeliad species planted from the head to the cheeks.

The exhibition centers on agave as its unifying theme, featuring over 30 varieties and demonstrations of traditional agave distilling techniques.

Beginning July 11, the greenhouse is hosting *Echoes of Mayahuel*, an immersive musical performance, every Saturday at 2 pm.

The 40-minute show follows a botanist through the three pavilions, weaving together the love story of the agave goddess Mayahuel and the feathered serpent god into a journey that connects plants, mythology and civilization. The performance is included with regular greenhouse admission at no extra charge.

"We want civilization to be more than static displays," Zhang says.

"By embedding live performances within these botanical scenes, visitors can experience a multisensory immersion — sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell — that brings ancient American cultures vividly to life."

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:39 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:39 PM

LIFE





From hospital ward to drama series

Inspired by real encounters, Zhou Yifei crafts a narrative in *The Heart 2* that intertwines cultural traditions with modern medical challenges, **Xu Fan** reports.

When screenwriter Zhou Yifei was researching the sequel to the acclaimed medical drama *The Heart*, she noticed an intriguing detail at a hospital: several female patients had similar given names written on their IV bags — most of the names were either Zhaodi or Tiao'e.

The names in local dialects, which literally mean "calling for a younger brother" and "hoping the next child will be a boy", reflect the traditional preference for sons.

Growing up in rural Jiangsu province, where a preference for sons has traditionally been more pronounced than in urban areas, Zhou found the discovery both striking and thought-provoking. What surprised her most was that such naming practices — often regarded as a fading tradition in modern society — had persisted across multiple generations, with women born from the 1950s through the 1990s still bearing these names.

The real-life observation eventually inspired one of the most memorable storylines in the 40-episode series *The Heart 2*, which recently concluded its first run on China Central Television's CCTV-8 and streaming platforms Tencent Video and iQIYI.

Having attracted more than 360 million online views, the drama has emerged as one of this summer's most popular television series.

Reuniting actors Mark Chao, Mao Xiaotong and Jin Shijia as elite doctors at the fictional Dongli Hospital, the drama opens with cardiologist Zhou Xiaofeng, played by Chao, returning after completing a two-year medical aid mission in a remote area of Guizhou province. On the journey back, he accompanies several patients he treated through a local charity program when an emergency unfolds aboard their bus: a pregnant woman carrying twins suddenly suffers acute heart failure. The situation becomes even more critical because one of the fetuses has been diagnosed with a congenital heart defect.

"When preparing for the second season, we accumulated more knowledge about cardiovascular diseases and gained more practical experience by working alongside doctors. That allowed us to raise the dramatic stakes and portray more complicated medical cases," Zhou Yifei says.

Authentic portrayal

To ensure authenticity, the screenwriter carried out extensive field research. She visited more than a dozen hospitals, ranging from top-tier medical centers to county-level institutions, across Beijing, Shanghai and the provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan and Guizhou.

She spent weeks shadowing doctors in cardiology departments, cardiac surgery units and intensive care units, sometimes remaining at a single hospital for more than a month to observe daily routines, consultations and surgeries.

It was during this research that the names on the IV bags inspired the characters Zhang Tiao'e and Long Jiaojiao, two former classmates who unexpectedly reunite in the hospital ward.

Zhang, who suffers from a pulmonary arteriovenous fistula, is under constant pressure from her husband to give birth to a son, even though they already have two daughters. Fearing that surgery might affect her fertility, the husband opposes the operation, leaving Zhang to postpone treatment in hopes of becoming pregnant again.

"Zhang has received little formal education, and her opportunities to change her circumstances are limited. We cannot simply condemn her for preferring sons, nor blame her for lacking awareness of the health risks. I understand the difficult reality she faces. She may not even truly want a son — she simply wants a better life. I have great sympathy for women like her," Zhou Yifei explains further.





Top left: *The Heart 2* stars Mark Chao (center), Mao Xiaotong (right) and Jin Shijia in the lead roles. **Top right:** Mark Chao continues his role as a cardiologist in the new season. **Above:** Two scenes from *The Heart 2*, a popular medical drama that explores social issues while striving for medical authenticity. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By contrast, Long is financially independent, having built a successful career as an internet influencer with millions of followers. Her birth name, Long Quan, was inspired by a poem written by Qiu Jin (1875-1907), a revolutionary heroine.

"Long changed her destiny through a college education. She left the countryside and became someone with a stronger sense of independence and self-awareness. Her friendship with Zhang ultimately becomes a journey of mutual redemption for both women," Zhou Yifei says.

While the series examines social issues through the lives of its patients, it also sheds light on aspects of the medical field and healthcare system that are less frequently depicted in dramas.

One example is Ouyang Da, a new character played by actress Zhang Jianing. As a medical device sales representative, she demonstrates not only professional expertise but also high emotional intelligence. She uses a clever approach to persuade Zhang Tiao'e's husband to give up his stubborn pursuit of having a son and instead support the lifesaving operation for his wife.

Zhou Yifei says researching the profession has changed her perception of medical device sales representatives. One such individual she interviewed had spent decades specializing in cardiovascular devices and possessed profound knowledge of both medical technology and clinical practice.

"Although he isn't qualified to perform surgery, he understands the entire procedure and diagnostic process so well that he can even offer useful suggestions to young doctors," she says.

Firsthand insight

Director Li Zhi, who also helmed the first season, says returning to the series took on new meaning after he experienced hospitalization himself.

Shortly after completing the first season, he was admitted to the hospital because of health problems, giving him firsthand insight into patients' emotions.

"Every time my attending physician came on her rounds, I typed my questions into my phone beforehand," Li recalls.

"She spoke very quickly because she had so many patients to see, but her thinking was always clear, and she knew my condition thoroughly. That reassured me."

The experience also reminded him of delivery rider Lu Dadong, a character diagnosed with hereditary hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. Doctors warned Lu that a sudden attack could leave him unconscious, making it necessary for immediate family members to make key decisions and sign the informed consent form for surgery.

"I didn't want my parents to know I had been hospitalized because I didn't want them to worry. It was very similar to Lu's situation in the drama. Eventually, my attending physician and her intern helped me find a solution that complied with hospital regulations," Li says.

"Everyone has been to a hospital at some point, either as a patient or accompanying a loved one. That's why medical stories resonate with almost everyone."

With over 200 medical specialists serving as consultants throughout production, *The Heart 2* strives to present every diagnosis, treatment and surgical procedure with professional accuracy. Beyond telling compelling human stories, Zhou Yifei and her team hope the series will also help audiences see the country's progress in medical research and healthcare technology.

"Today, our country's medical devices are advancing rapidly, and our basic scientific research is also making remarkable progress. Over the past three or four years — especially since the first season of *The Heart* — I've been amazed by the development of domestically produced devices such as artificial hearts. In many respects, they now rival, and in some areas even surpass, imported products," she says.

Contact the writer at xufan@chinadaily.com.cn

Fishermen and scientists partner for avian conservation

HAIKOU — While barn swallows are commonly associated with urban landscapes, few would expect to see them soaring over the turquoise waters of the Xisha Islands in the South China Sea.

"Seeing barn swallows gliding overhead during our first visit to the Xisha Islands was a thrilling surprise," says Liu Tao, a PhD student in ornithology at Hainan Normal University in Haikou, Hainan province.

He attributes their presence to the nearby reefs, where generations of locals have lived.

In late May, Liu led a team to the remote archipelago for a comprehensive monitoring project on the diversity and breeding ecology of seabirds.

To date, the team has recorded 19 bird species across the reefs of the Qilianyu Islands in Xisha.

Among these, a rare sighting of *Fregata andrewsi* — the Christmas Island frigatebird — a national first-class protected species, was a particular highlight for Liu, who had previously only seen the bird in documentaries and books.

For Liu, the most unforgettable moment was discovering a massive group of greater crested terns.

"It was a breathtaking sight. Hundreds of terns took flight at once, like a dark cloud sweeping across the beach," he says, noting that the reef is densely packed with eggs, some separated by only a dozen centimeters.

The project's ability to showcase the South China Sea's rich biodiversity reflects the strength of collaboration between researchers and local residents, united in a common desire to protect the environment.

Uncovering the full avian diversity of the islands requires not only scientific equipment, but also the expertise of local fishermen. Generations of maritime experience have made local fishermen invaluable guides.

"Fishermen know exactly which waters have the most seabirds and which islands serve as gathering spots. This is knowledge you cannot simply learn from textbooks," Liu says.

Under their guidance, researchers successfully located concealed breeding spots where eggs blend with pebbles, as well as nests hidden deep within bushes.



A large colony of greater crested terns is seen in the Xisha Islands, Hainan province. XINHUA

In return, the fishermen have become eager learners, frequently asking researchers about bird species and migration routes. More importantly, they have taken active steps to protect the birds' habitats. They regularly clean up marine garbage and engage in coastal ecological restoration.

One of the fishermen's most challenging tasks has been greening the reefs. After cultivating native saplings on islands, the fishermen transplant them to other reefs.

With more trees, birds have shade and sheltered spots for breeding, researchers explain.

The fishermen's efforts have steadily increased vegetation coverage and improved the microhabitats for seabirds.

Liu emphasizes the importance of completing an ecological survey for the Xisha reefs.

The archipelago operates as a complete ecological loop: coral reefs and seaweed sustain fish, seabird guano nourishes the vegetation, and the birds rely on these rich marine resources.

To safeguard the environment, Li Yupei, the director of the marine reserve management bureau of Sansha city in Hainan, says Sansha has enacted regulations and established routine patrol mechanisms for seabirds and sea turtles.

The city has also partnered with universities and research institutes to deploy advanced monitoring equipment, including infrared cameras, to track breeding populations and assess ecological risks.

Conservation efforts in the Xisha Islands are a microcosm of China's broader commitment to safeguarding its avian populations.

According to the National Forestry and Grassland Administration, China lies along four of the world's nine major migratory bird flyways and is home to 1,505 bird species, including more than 800 migratory species.

The country has significantly strengthened its legal and institutional frameworks for bird protection. The administration says that 98.4 percent of China's bird species are protected by law, with 394 species under national key protection.

"For most seabirds, preserving the ecological integrity of these reefs is the best form of protection," Liu says.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:39 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:39 PM

AMERICAFOCUS

Hollywood embraces microdrama

Chinese-style short films have been attracting millions of viewers online

By **MAY ZHOU** in Houston, Texas
mayzhou@chinadailyusa.com





Above: The cast and crew of *Wildflower*, a microdrama about urban women's lives, review a scene before shooting in the studio on July 15. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Left: A viewer showcases the short drama *The Double Life of My Billionaire Husband*. PHOTO PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

TikTok has disrupted social media since its arrival less than a decade ago. Now another media product from China that entered the US quietly a couple of years ago is gaining momentum, gathering storm and disrupting the US entertainment industry.

It's called *duanju* in Chinese, known as microdrama in the English world. Vertically filmed, one to two minutes per episode, 60 to 100 episodes per series, and engineered to end on a cliffhanger so precisely timed that it has firmly hooked millions of viewers who can't stop watching and paying, paying and watching.

"This is worse than a Hallmark movie by far, but I had to obsessively finish it anyway. Wish it was a little longer even!" one viewer commented on YouTube under a 27-minute teaser of the microdrama *The Double Life of My Billionaire Husband* from the ReelShort platform.

Released two and a half years ago, it has garnered total viewership of over 500 million on ReelShort — becoming the most viewed series.

US Hallmark movies are known for their feel-good and predictable storylines — often featuring big-city characters finding love in small towns.

"The acting is terrible as [expletive] but I'm still hooked, the story is good," the most-voted comment said.

"The bass drop, the overdramatic turn, the horrible acting ... It's all so imperfectly perfect," another viewer wrote.

The ability to generate an obsessive audience has turned the microdrama into a large market. In China, it overtook the domestic box office in 2024 at $7 billion.

The US has become the distant No. 2 market, accounting for roughly 50 percent of the global market outside of China.

Appeal of microdrama

Many analyses show that the world of microdramas is populated by billionaires, powerful CEOs, or alpha males who possess supernatural powers as werewolves or vampires. They exist only to discover the virtues of a woman — often a damsel in distress — save her from her evil antagonists and fall in love with her.

There are rich heiresses — but before her esteemed status and mega wealth are revealed, she somehow lives in poverty and is constantly humiliated by others. When the truth about her comes to light, she glows, stands tall over those who have once humiliated her, and the audience savors the sweet revenge of status inversion.

Every episode ends worse for the heroine, the stakes stack higher and higher until the revenge kicks in. Revenge, love, rags to riches, it is candy-coated high drama, sweet and intoxicating.

A full character arc that takes a Korean drama 16 hours to develop is compressed into the first 10 to 15 minutes. Algorithm-driven, the format's engagement mechanics are explicitly engineered around the brain's cognitive pattern — people can't let go of cliffhangers and must know what happens next.

China-developed algorithmic infrastructures and emotional formulas are visible in many story plots — a contract or pretend marriage for unfathomable pretense, a billionaire with a secret crush, and jealousy and possessiveness interpreted as signs of love.

However, with US-based studios, the microdrama has been localized in many aspects: American faces, English dialogue and US settings mixed with werewolves and vampires.

Sarah, a Houston teacher in her 50s, knows that she's watching something more like a fantasy.

"I believe that many viewers, just like me, know that the plots are ridiculous and the acting not that great. But, after a long day dealing with difficult kids in school, it feels relaxing and satisfying watching a single mom finding love with a handsome, rich guy and getting revenge over her fake and humiliating friends," Sarah told China Daily. "My brain gets a break and I feel emotionally well."

An avid Harlequin romance novel reader, Sarah said microdrama brings the handsome men and beautiful women on the book covers to life, and "they are a pleasure to behold."

Britton Copeland, a 20-some writer, described her experience to NPR last year.

"Despite the cheesy acting, the clip ended on a cliffhanger, and I desperately wanted to see what happened next. I ultimately decided I wanted to watch the entire film ... so I poured a glass of wine and indulged in what I have determined is my generation's soap opera."

Microdramas do more than feed our imagination — they capture the full spectrum of urban life, with all its highs and lows.

Wildflower, a microdrama currently in production, celebrates ordinary women who are gentle yet powerful. Through the storms of life, they quietly grow toward the light.

"It tells quiet, raw stories of modern women navigating love, marriage and daily grit. Like wild grass, they bend but never break — resilient, tender, rooted. This series is a mirror for every woman seeking herself, healing softly and rising with quiet power," said Zhang Xinyuan, presenter of *Wildflower*.

The Chinese microdrama audience is 55 percent women and 45 percent men, primarily in the lower socio-economic class. In contrast, the US audience is primarily urban women between 30 and 60 years old with significant subscriptions to streaming services.

An essay from The New Feminist written by Lotte Hondebrink called the majority of microdrama stories "the problematic fantasy women can't stop watching".

"The explosive growth of microdrama apps like ReelShort highlights a tension between women's desire for escapist romance and the unsettling power structures that shape so many of its storylines," she wrote.

Zhao Yehui, a New York based filmmaker, said the microdrama arrived as Hollywood is experiencing a downturn and producing far fewer rom-com films than it used to.

"Microdrama borrowed the typical rom-com tropes, but the plots are often flattened and simplified, and the drama is intensified. They create many cliffhangers with one surprise after another," Zhao said.

"Those typical tropes employed in rom-com and soap opera in the past continue to be popular with the audience," she said. "Their popularity reflected a reality that both China and the US are a patriarchal society."

An innovation

Zhao said the bitesize microdrama is perfect for modern lifestyles.

"People screen their phones while waiting at the airport, eating lunch, riding the subway or sitting on the toilet. They can easily spare a few minutes watching some drama. This is a clever innovation monetizing people's screening behavior. It's essentially a modification of TV watching."

Zhao said the microdrama format gives the audience more control compared to traditional movie watching.

"It's a constant interactive process, including the payment component. One can decide to pay to watch another episode or stop. Such interaction can help people produce dopamine and become very engaged."

Zhao said the popularity of microdrama has her considering the possibility of using this format to produce some serious film work. To her, there is potential to employ the vertical format to produce films to provoke people into critical thinking.

"There is definitely something we can learn from microdrama," Zhao said.

Popular blogger Noah Smith has called China's microdramas "some real green shoots of Chinese soft power".

"It's a truly new art form, perfect for the age of TikTok and AI," he wrote in an April post on China's soft power.

Two platforms dominate

Currently, two platforms dominate the US market, both with Chinese origins.

ReelShort, launched in 2022 by California-based Crazy Maple Studio and backed by Beijing-based digital publisher COL Group, generated $1.2 billion in revenue in 2025, up 119 percent from 2024, according to Appfigure.

ReelPulse reported that ReelShort has shattered expectations with $80 million in revenue in the first quarter this year, a 40 percent increase from last quarter.

The app has more than 100 million downloads in the Google Play store and ranks 23rd in entertainment apps in the Apple store. The platform boasts 45 million monthly active users, with half based in the United States.

Another major leader is DramaBox, developed by Beijing-based Dianzhong Technology and launched in 2023 in Singapore. It generated $10 million net profit in 2024. The company didn't release its 2025 financial data, but industrial experts estimated its revenue to be around $500-600 million, making it the No. 2 global platform outside of China.

DramaBox library primarily consists of dubbed and translated content originally produced in China. It also has a Los Angeles-based studio that has produced some US originals.

In comparison, ReelShort focuses on English-language originals mostly filmed in Los Angeles. It prioritizes quality over sheer volume to target Western markets like the US, UK and Australia.

> "Microdramas are no longer a niche experiment. They are becoming a core driver of mobile video engagement."
>
> **Maria Rua Aguete**, head of media and entertainment at Omdia

According to media research firm Omdia, the US microdrama market generated $819 million in revenue in 2024 and grew to an estimated $1.5 billion in 2025. The market is projected to grow to $3.8 billion by 2030.

Omdia data showed that the engagement for microdramas has been impressive in the US. In the last quarter of 2025, US users spent an average of 35.7 minutes per day per user on ReelShort alone.

In comparison, Netflix mobile averaged 24.8 minutes per day per user, Prime Video averaged 26.9 minutes and Disney+ averaged 23 minutes.

"Microdramas are no longer a niche experiment. They are becoming a core driver of mobile video engagement," Maria Rua Aguete, head of media and entertainment at Omdia, said in a February Omdia report. "What stands out is not just revenue growth, but the intensity of usage. On mobile, microdrama apps are generating more daily viewing time than the world's biggest streaming platforms."

Hollywood descends

To legacy Hollywood known for projecting its global cultural influence, the force of microdramas from China can't be ignored. They have quietly captured a slice of the American entertainment market. It's time to reverse its role by embracing China's storytelling architecture and platform structure.

A slate of microdrama projects has been launched in recent months by US companies.

Last July, Disney Accelerator program picked DramaBox to explore the microdrama market. In February, Disney launched its own very first vertical format microdrama *Locker Diaries*. It's been released on DramaBox, Disney+ as well as global platforms such as YouTube, Instagram and TikTok.

Last July also saw Google, in partnership with Range Media Partners, launch 100 Zeros to produce a slate of programs featuring projects from *The Bachelor* creator Mike Fleiss, *American Idol* creator Simon Fuller, and director McG.

Upon completion, 100 Zero's microdramas will be distributed across multiple platforms, including Google TV.

Last October, Fox Entertainment took an equity stake in Holywater, the Ukrainian microdrama company behind the My Drama app, committing to produce more than 200 vertical series.

Holywater raised $22 million in Series A funding — described as the largest investment in the microdrama space outside Asia.

Fox separately inked a multiyear deal with Dhar Mann Studios for an initial slate of 40 original scripted vertical-video shows — a deal notable for involving one of YouTube's most prolific creators.

In May, NBCUniversal licensed 10 microdrama series from ReelShort for its mobile app Peacock. It also announced two original Bravo-branded micro dramas: *Salon Confessionals* with Madison LeCroy and *Campus Confidential: Miami*.

GammaTime, founded by former Miramax CEO Bill Block, raised $14 million in seed funding, including angel investor Kim Kardashian. *CSI* creator Anthony Zuiker was hired to write for the platform.

Versant Media Group — a multinational mass media company — took a stake in GammaTime in early June.

"GammaTime is reimagining short-form storytelling for a new generation of viewers. Their mobile-first approach and focus on original content make this a natural partnership for Versant as we continue to extend our iconic brands, deep content library and storytelling," Mark Lazarus, CEO of Versant, said in a statement.

Korean platform Vigloo, backed by $86 million in total funding, opened a Los Angeles office in 2025 and began co-producing with American writers.

TikTok quietly launched PineDrama in January, a stand-alone platform dedicated to microdramas. It represented the most structurally significant platform development so far in the US. The app gained 17.6 million downloads in its first 30 days.

TikTok's talent deals are impressive. It formed a partnership with Issa Rae's Hoorae Media in April. The two joined hands to co-develop exclusive micro-series.

Rae, creator of the acclaimed HBO series *Insecure*, succeeded with her debut microdrama *Screen Time*. Released in April, it garnered 75 million views within a week of launch and amassed over 150 million total views.

TikTok also partnered with the Sundance Institute to train creators specifically in microdrama writing.

In addition, TikTok opened drama partnerships inside its main app with a traffic incentive multiplier. Over 500 content companies entered within the first month. TikTok is reportedly paying out $15 million a month in microdrama revenue to creators.

ReelShort and DramaBox utilize a paywall to charge viewers to generate revenue, plus free viewing after a viewer watches some ads. However, TikTok completely ditched the paywall method. Its PineDrama offers free viewing with unskippable ads.

Hollywood is reaching a moment when viewers are beginning to feel fatigued from repetitive tropes. With new talent in tow, it remains to be seen if the vertical format will expand beyond a power fantasy primarily in the realm of romance and become an entrenched entertainment format in the future.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:39 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:41 PM

Grassroots bonds
Nairobi community carnival fosters Sino-African ties
WORLD IN FOCUS, PAGE 4



Cases address ecological compensation
CHINA, PAGE 11



Quake relief
Rescuers search for survivors as death toll reaches 53 in Indonesia
WORLD, PAGE 5

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 MONDAY, AUGUST 17, 2026

XI'S VISION | MANUFACTURING MODERNIZATION

Long-term view, innovation fuel industrial power

Government guidance, market demand driving nation's manufacturing upgrade

By **ZHAO JIA** in Luoyang, Henan
zhaojia@chinadaily.com.cn

During a visit to LYC Bearing Corp in Central China's Henan province on May 19, 2025, President Xi Jinping put China's industrial transformation into historical perspective.

"China has always adhered to the path of developing the real economy. From the past reliance on imported matches, soap and iron, to now becoming the world's largest manufacturing country with the most complete industrial categories, we have taken the right path," Xi told workers.

Among those listening on the factory floor was Song Huahua, deputy director of the company's technology center. More than a year later, she said Xi's words still ring in her ears.

"Whether or not they were there that day, everyone at the company felt a deep sense of pride," Song said. "If General Secretary Xi cares this much about something as small as a bearing, what reason could we possibly have not to make it well?"

Bearings are small enough to disappear inside a machine, yet they are often described as the "joints of industry". As Song put it, "Wherever something turns, you need one."

Over her 16 years at the company, the things that turn — and the demands placed on them — have kept changing. From aerospace and wind power to new energy vehicles, robots and drones, each industrial advance brings new requirements for precision, durability and reliability.

During the visit, Xi emphasized that "modern manufacturing relies on sci-tech empowerment", calling for greater efforts to achieve core technological breakthroughs and pursue independent innovation.

For Song, that call is reflected in the daily work of identifying new problems and developing new products.

"Independent innovation has become part of who we are," she said, adding that innovation at the company is driven by both the market and national priorities.

"Customers keep raising the bar, and that is a constant source of momentum for innovation," she said. "At the same time, taking on major national projects requires us to keep pushing beyond our own limits."

Song cited new energy vehicles as an example. Because they operate differently from gasoline-powered cars, they need purpose-designed bearings, she said, noting that engineers first study a vehicle's operating conditions and customer requirements before developing and testing a new product.

See ***Upgrade,*** *page 3*



A 4,000-kilometer off-road driving trip kicks off in Alshaa League, Inner Mongolia autonomous region, on Aug 8. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

ROUTES OFFER MORE THAN DESERT VIEWS

Tourists can explore Inner Mongolia's vast landscape through long drives or off-road thrills

By **CHEN NAN** in Beijing
and **YUAN HUI** in Hohhot

By the time the sun slipped below the dunes, the desert had gone quiet.

Then the stars appeared.

For Li Xue, 28, an independent designer from Hebei province, who spends much of her life amid cities and the flat landscapes of northern China, the night sky over Alshaa League, a vast desert region in North China's Inner Mongolia autonomous region, was perhaps the most unforgettable part of a journey built around speed and adventure.

"We rarely get to see a sky this pure, without light pollution," she said.

Standing in midst of the deep desert, with the horizon stretching unobstructed in every direction, she felt the noise of city life fall away. "I suddenly feel relaxed. It is healing and breathtaking — something you simply cannot experience in a city."

She came to Alshaa League as both a tourist and one of the designers of a new tourism route, which stretches 4,000 kilometers through the region. Along the way, she experienced its deserts and diverse surrounding landscapes.

Li's journey, which ran from Aug 8 to Sunday, took her across vast dunes, past desert lakes and through poplar forests.

See ***Desert,*** *page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.



Japanese citizens hold up protest signs and take part in a rally against the Yasukuni Shrine, which honors 14 convicted Class-A Japanese war criminals, in Tokyo, Japan, on Saturday. The day marked the 81st anniversary of Japan's unconditional surrender in World War II.
JIA HAOCHENG / XINHUA

China slams Japanese politicians' Yasukuni moves

By **ZHAO JIA** in Beijing, **HOU JUNJIE** in Tokyo and **YANG HAN** in Hong Kong

China strongly deplored the latest negative moves by Japanese political leaders involving the Yasukuni war shrine on Saturday, the 81st anniversary of the country's unconditional surrender in World War II, saying the actions sought to whitewash Japan's wartime crimes and pave the way for accelerated remilitarization.

"We urge the Japanese side to do serious soul-searching on its history of aggression, make a clean break with militarism, and earn the trust of its Asian neighbors and the rest of the world with concrete actions," a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said.

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi made a monetary offering, while four of her Cabinet colleagues, including Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi, and several senior ruling Liberal Democratic Party officials visited the shrine, which honors, among others, 14 convicted Class-A war criminals.

Beijing has lodged serious protests with Tokyo, the spokesperson said, describing the Yasukuni war shrine as "a spiritual tool and symbol of Japanese militarism".

"No pretext whatsoever can hide the Japanese politicians' true intention, which is to change the verdict on the war criminals, cover up Japan's war crimes, distort the historical facts and pave the way for accelerating remilitarization," the spokesperson said.

Noting that this year marks the 80th anniversary of the opening of the Tokyo Trials, the spokesperson said that viewing and treating history correctly was an important prerequisite for Japan's postwar return to the international community, the political foundation of its relations with neighboring countries and a key measure of its commitment to peaceful development.

This emphasis on historical reflection is also embedded in the political documents underpinning China-Japan relations. The China-Japan joint communique in 1972 says the Japanese side was "keenly conscious of the responsibility for the serious damage that Japan caused in the past to the Chinese people through war, and deeply reproaches itself". That position was reaffirmed in subsequent political documents between the two countries.

Chinese Defense Ministry spokesman Jiang Bin denounced the hypocrisy of Japanese politicians who profess to pursue peace while paying homage to the architects of wartime aggression, saying that it exposed the Japanese right wing's deeply distorted view of history and dangerous attempt to revive militarism.

He warned that Japan would face "the judgment of justice and a historical reckoning" if it persisted in pursuing "neo-militarism" and became a threat to regional peace.

Since Takaichi took office last October, her government has accelerated Japan's military buildup and pushed ahead with a broad overhaul of its security policy.

It has allowed exports of lethal weapons in principle, begun revising three key security documents, set the fiscal 2026 defense budget at a record high, deployed long-range missiles capable of striking enemy bases and renewed its push for constitutional revision.

Xiang Haoyu, a research fellow at the China Institute of International Studies, said that Japanese politicians' provocations over Yasukuni were inseparable from Japan's remilitarization.

He said honoring Class-A war criminals reflected a revisionist view that denied responsibility for Japan's war of aggression and sought to loosen postwar constraints on its military ambitions. Such views were dangerous because they would inevitably shape policy, he added.

Xiang said the convergence of historical revisionism and military expansion would erode trust between Japan and its Asian neighbors, making it difficult for them to regard its military buildup as purely defensive. Japan should pursue reconciliation through credible, institutionalized action and should neither exaggerate external threats nor pursue defense policy changes at its neighbors' expense, he said.

Criticism also came from within Japan. On Saturday afternoon, protesters marched in the rain, chanting "Yasukuni Shrine is a symbol of Japan's war of aggression" and "No shrine that glorifies war", while holding placards reading "Takaichi step down" and "Dismantle Yasukuni Shrine".

Yoichi Komori, a professor at the University of Tokyo and secretary-general of the Article 9 Association, a civic group advocating Japan's pacifist Constitution, told China Daily that the collective visit by senior LDP officials raises serious constitutional concerns and is politically unacceptable, noting that the Yasukuni Shrine once served as a key ideological base of Japanese militarism in waging its wars of aggression.

Hiroshi Shiratori, a professor of political science at Hosei University in Tokyo, said the visits to the Yasukuni Shrine by senior LDP officials and Cabinet ministers have further fueled concerns over a regression in Japan's understanding of its wartime history.

Shiratori said that Aug 15 should be an important occasion for Japan to confront its wartime history, reflect on the devastation caused by the war and show consideration for Asian countries and others that suffered from Japan's wartime actions.

However, Takaichi's remarks expressed neither remorse toward other countries nor a firm resolve to uphold peace, he said.

Outside Japan, the Republic of Korea's Foreign Ministry deplored what it described as "anachronistic acts", urging Japanese leaders to squarely face up to history and demonstrate through action humble reflection on and sincere remorse for the past.

Contact the writers at zhaojia@chinadaily.com.cn

Inside

- Editorial, **page 6**
- See more, **page 11**

Growth driver shifts from bricks to bits

WORLD WATCH
By Amarjargal Rinchinnyam

If you want to understand where the world is heading, stop looking at the skyscraper cranes in Beijing and start looking at the 5G base stations in the countryside.

For decades, the story of China was the story of "hard infrastructure" — concrete, steel and a property market that seemed like it would never stop climbing. But something fundamental has changed.

While the world was busy watching China's real estate sector contract by 0.2 percent and its construction industry dip by 4 percent in the first half of 2026, the country was quietly finishing a massive rewiring of its entire economic base.

China's GDP still grew by a steady 4.7 percent to reach 69.57 trillion yuan ($10.31 trillion) in the first half of 2026, but the engines driving that growth weren't bulldozers — they were algorithms.

China is building a new kind of "central nervous system" for its society.

By July 2026, the country had installed 5.1 million 5G base stations. That's not just a statistic; it's a platform. It has applied 5G and gigabit optical networks across 94 major categories of the national economy.

And it isn't stopping there. It has already made significant strides in verifying 6G system architecture. When you have that kind of wiring, science stops being something you do in a lab and starts being a direct productive force that automates the basics of life.

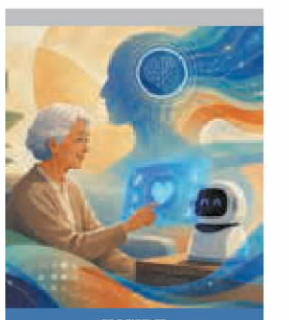
The second layer of this rewiring is energy.

China didn't just meet its 2030 wind and solar power targets — it crushed them six years early in 2024.

By the end of July 2026, its solar capacity hit a staggering 1,274 gigawatts.

This isn't just about environmental concerns, it's about a strategic pivot to energy abundance. When your nonfossil energy consumption exceeds crude oil for the first time in history — as China did in 2024 — you are no longer just an oil importer; you are an exporter of the future.

See ***Economy,*** *page 3*



INSIDE
Handling aging together
Global Views, page 8

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved

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

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:41 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:41 PM

INDEPTH

Retired school principal saves tiny zoo from extinction

'Grandpa Feng's' dedication to caring for animals wins online fame, aids its survival

By **LIU BOQIAN** in Kaili, Guizhou
liuboqian@chinadaily.com.cn



Feng Yuanyong (third from left) poses for a photo with a volunteer and sanitation workers in the zoo in Kaili, Guizhou province, on July 31. PHOTOS BY LIU BOQIAN / CHINA DAILY

At 5 am, Feng Yuanyong was already making his rounds in the semi-darkness with a flashlight in hand, checking the animal enclosures one by one.

The 71-year-old spent decades as a school principal and education official. Now, his mornings begin with touching the noses of tigers at a privately-run mini zoo in Kaili, a city in southwest China's Guizhou province.

After retirement, Feng became the facility's zookeeper, repairman and even an unofficial "veterinarian", devoting himself to caring for more than 20 species of animals.

The morning routine is a ritual Feng has repeated for the past decade. He touches the tigers' noses to see whether they are moist — a simple method he developed after years of observing and caring for animals. He said small details like this one can reveal whether an animal is in good health. "People can tell you when they feel sick, animals can't," he said.

Time has left its marks on Feng's face. His gaze is steady and focused, but whenever he talks about the animals, he breaks into his trademark warm smile.

Built on a hillside, a 10-minute drive from downtown Kaili, the Kaili Zoo covers about 0.35 hectares.

Unlike most other zoos, it has no sprawling grounds or a large number of staff. For years, visitors were few, and the revenue was barely enough to cover daily expenses, but he stayed on.

On-the-job training

Feng never planned to become a zoo director, instead choosing a career in the education sector.

In 1977, the year China reinstated the *gaokao* national college entrance examination, Feng was admitted to a teachers' college. After graduation, he started teaching in a rural area and later rose to the position of school principal before joining the education department as a physics education researcher.

In 2016, his younger brother asked him to help at Kaili Zoo, which was struggling financially and needed someone to manage it. What was meant to be a temporary arrangement became a permanent commitment. "Once I came, I never left," Feng said.

Many of the zoo animals were rescued or donated. Feng said he came to see each one as part of his family.

"They are just like my own children," he said, explaining every animal had its own story and refusing to say which one he loved the most.

Before becoming a viral attraction, Kaili Zoo endured long periods of hardship. For years, it survived not because it was profitable, but because of Feng's persistence.

The zoo originally operated alongside an amusement park. But when the park went into decline and closed, the zoo lost its main source of visitors.

During the hardest period, nearby construction work cut off the road near the zoo, leaving visitors unable to reach it.

At one stage, even feeding the animals became a challenge. Feng began growing vegetables to cut costs. "I thought about giving up. But what would happen to these animals?" he said.

Using a hoe, Feng cleared mountain paths and made directional signs to help visitors find their way. One read: "The zoo is 150 meters ahead along the mountain path. Brave children will receive a free portion of food to feed the animals."

Kaili Zoo began attracting wider attention almost by accident.

A visitor came to the zoo one day and saw Feng preparing food for the animals. She asked whether she could film him caring for them.

Feng agreed and told her that if she helped promote the zoo, she could feed the animals.

Soon, more visitors began sharing their experiences online. One tourist from Shanghai suggested that Feng try promoting the zoo on Xiaohongshu, or RedNote, a popular Chinese lifestyle-sharing platform. Feng had never heard of the platform and thought it was the name of a book.

There was no marketing team and no commercial strategy. His only form of promotion was letting visitors see how he cared for the animals every day.

That authenticity eventually won people over.

Since October last year, short videos have turned Kaili Zoo into an internet sensation. At its peak, more than 10,000 visitors went to the tiny zoo in a single day.

For an attraction that once struggled with only a handful of visitors, the sudden surge in popularity became a major challenge. Lines stretched from the zoo entrance all the way down the hillside.

"How could a zoo this small handle more than 10,000 people? Where could they even stand?" Feng recalled.

For years, he had worried about having too few visitors. Then suddenly, he had to worry about having too many.

After the zoo went viral, local authorities helped improve roads, manage crowds and upgrade basic facilities.

Previously, the narrow mountain road leading to the zoo was difficult to access. Local urban management officials worked around the clock for two days to build a safer hillside path.

"At that time, there were simply too many people. The first priority was safety, and the second was making sure visitors had a better experience," said Yang Guanglei, an official with the local urban management department.

Sanitation workers also joined the effort.

"We sent more workers to help clean the zoo in the mornings," Yang said. "It would have been too difficult for Feng to handle everything alone. We also help maintain the landscaping and greenery."

Almost every morning around 7 am, three or four sanitation workers arrive at the zoo to clear fallen leaves and trash.

Over time, they have become familiar faces at the zoo.

Feng often jokes: "Whenever there is a problem, just find Yang. He always knows what to do."

10-minute visit

Compared with many large zoos across China, Kaili Zoo is very modest.

After entering through the gate, visitors find the predator exhibition area on the left and the monkey and herbivore enclosures on the right. A complete visit can take less than 10 minutes.

Yet its intimacy and smallness make it a children's favorite. Some young visitors said it feels different from more famous venues like Chimelong Safari Park in Guangzhou, Guangdong province.

"You see that lion? It is darting back and forth. I have never seen a lion this lively before," said Lin Duo, a girl from Hunan province who visited the zoo with her father.

When the lion suddenly jumped, she stepped back in surprise, but her curiosity quickly overcame her surprise.

"My daughter has visited many zoos, but she feels this place is different," her father, Lin Siju, said. "There is no sense of distance between people and animals."

Whenever Feng sees children visiting from other places, he often walks over to greet them and sometimes gives them animal feed as a gift. "You came all this way, and grandpa is very happy. This is grandpa's gift for you," he told one child during China Daily's visit to the zoo.

This warmth and intimacy has become one of the reasons the zoo has become so popular. For many visitors, meeting famous "Grandpa Feng" and taking a photo with him has become the highlight of their trip.

Many are drawn by his sincere care for the animals. They come to see whether the animals are well cared for and whether the welcoming atmosphere shown online truly exists.







Top left: Feng transports freshly cut grass to feed herbivorous animals in the zoo.
Top right: Feng introduces the animals' stories and habits to children.
Above: Visitors walk out of Kaili Zoo on July 31.

Yang Changwang came to work at the zoo as a helper a decade ago. "At first, I did odd jobs. Later, I started cooking for everyone," she said, affectionately calling Feng "boss".

Yang, 58, is a member of the Miao ethnic group, one of the largest ethnic communities in Guizhou. She wears her hair in a traditional high bun decorated with flowers, a style often seen during Miao festivals.

For a time, the struggling zoo could no longer afford to pay her wages. But as visitor numbers increased, Yang returned to work alongside Feng and now earns nearly 2,000 yuan ($296) a month.

Every morning, she rides an electric scooter to the zoo to clean. At noon, she prepares lunch for the seven or eight people working there. After feeding the animals in the afternoon, she picks up her three grandchildren from school.

The flexible schedule allows her to balance work and family life.

"My family's financial situation is not very good. I raised my grandchildren by myself," Yang said. "Working here means I can take care of my family while also earning an income."

At lunchtime, the zoo workers sit beside the animal enclosures, sharing simple homemade meals. "We have always eaten like this, watching the animals eat too," Feng said.

New responsibilities

As attention to the zoo has grown, so have questions over whether such a small facility can properly care for its animals. It is now home to dozens of animals including a lion, bears, tigers, leopards, vultures and monkeys as well as rabbits and ducks.

Feng acknowledges the challenge. "The zoo is too small. There is only so much I can do," he said.

Unlike large zoos, Kaili Zoo has no professional veterinary team or management system. Much of Feng's animal care relies on years of observation and experience. During feeding, he watches closely for any changes in the animals' behavior or condition.

But for protected species, responsibility extends beyond daily care. The zoo must submit regular reports to forestry authorities, and trained veterinarians must be called in when animals are ill.

"I'm not perfect. I worry that one day I might make a mistake and be overwhelmed by the attention brought by online popularity," Feng said. "A small mistake could lead to serious consequences, which is why I am always cautious."

However, the attention has also brought positive changes. With tickets priced at 20 yuan, the zoo now receives 100 to 200 visitors on weekdays and more on weekends, providing a stable source of revenue.

The animals are now better fed, with carnivores receiving chicken or beef daily and herbivores receiving additional food from visitors.

Kaili's tourism authorities have begun promoting the zoo as one of the city's tourism attractions.

"We have arranged dedicated tourism routes and bus services connecting the zoo with the city center and transportation hubs," said Yang Xiaokang from the local tourism department. "In the future, we hope educational programs for students can also be introduced here."

Despite the newfound popularity, Feng has no plans for large-scale commercial expansion. He said he does not want the zoo to become overly commercialized.

His Douyin account now has more than 140,000 followers and has generated about 16,000 yuan in revenue. He said he has never withdrawn the money.

"This is not income that belongs to me. It belongs to everyone who has worked here together," he said, adding that he hopes to use it to reward volunteers and others who have helped promote the zoo.

As visitor numbers have stabilized, Feng has returned to his quiet routine that kept the zoo going long before it became an internet sensation.

"I am extremely happy with the number of visitors we have now. A year ago, I could never have imagined this," he said. "Now I can say there is not much left to worry about."

Online
See more by scanning the code.





Left: Feng talks to fans of the zoo via a video call. **Right:** Tourists feed monkeys in the zoo on July 31.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:41 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:41 PM

TOP NEWS

Coal industry optimization to happen by 2030

Cleaner and smarter production to reshape sector, ensure energy buffer

By ZHENG XIN
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

China is set to optimize its coal industry by 2030, focusing on cleaner and more efficient production to safeguard its baseload energy supply, a newly released government road map stated.

According to the "15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) for Coal Industry Development" document, jointly issued by the National Development and Reform Commission and the National Energy Administration, the country will continuously advance the construction of coal supply guarantee bases and refine cross-regional coal transport patterns.

To achieve this, regulators will raise industry entry barriers, weed out outdated mines and prioritize high-efficiency operations, while ensuring a gradual plateau in domestic coal consumption.

By 2030, the plan aims to cement coal's position as a critical energy buffer while making sure that modern and high-efficiency facilities dominate production.

Nationwide, large-scale modern mines will account for 87 percent of total capacity, and the share of capacity from automated and "smart" mines will jump to 75 percent. Additionally, coalbed methane output is projected to hit 26 billion cubic meters in the final framework. The development and utilization of coalbed methane offer multiple benefits, including enhancing mine safety.

The road map comes at a time when China is accelerating toward a greener economy, making unprecedented investment in clean energy infrastructure to meet its ambitious dual carbon goals of peaking emissions before 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality before 2060.

China's energy sector crossed a historic threshold recently, with coal-fired power generation accounting for less than 50 percent of the nation's total electricity output for the first time, according to official data.

Xing Yiteng, deputy director-general of the National Energy Administration's development planning department, said that coal power generation stood at 2.5 trillion kilowatt-hours in the first six months of the year, bringing its share down to 49.7 percent.

"Coal power's share falling below 50 percent of total power generation for the first time is a landmark achievement in China's long-term push for renewable energy alternatives, signaling a new breakthrough in the country's green and low-carbon transition," Xing said.

Lin Boqiang, head of Xiamen University's China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy, said the 2026-30 window is a critical transition period as coal use nears its peak.

The sector's focus, he said, will pivot from sheer volume expansion to supply optimization and grid stability.

"The plan moves away from the old logic of simply digging for more coal, toward a balance between energy security and green transition," Lin said.

He added that market regulation will transition from ad hoc administrative interventions to long-term structural changes, heavily relying on intelligent mining upgrades and the integration of coal power with renewables.

Demand patterns are also expected to diverge over the next five years. Coal consumption in the construction materials and metallurgy sectors will shrink, while power sector demand will plateau and begin to decline. Chemical sector usage, however, will see a slight uptick.

Meanwhile, automation will no longer be optional. Hitting the 75-percent smart-mine target by 2030 — up from roughly 65 percent in 2025 — will force companies to invest heavily in digitization.

The plan mandates integration of artificial intelligence in the areas of exploration, production and safety monitoring, with a specific push to replace dangerous manual labor with robotics in disaster-prone mines.

Smaller operators lacking the capital for these technological upgrades will face severe consolidation pressure, Lin said, noting that well-capitalized industry leaders are poised to capture more market share.

Desert: Plan an effort to promote more tourism

From page 1

She attended a concert in the wilderness and experienced a desert rally, soaking in the stark contrasts of the landscape.

The route cuts through a striking succession of landscapes — the Gobi Desert, salt lakes, poplar forests and canyons — with an added adrenaline kick: off-road driving.

Travelers can self-drive the full route at their own pace or, for a more intense experience, hire a professional driver to navigate terrain reminiscent of a World Rally Championship stage.

One moment she was absorbing a vast, silent landscape; the next, gripping the wheel to power across the dunes.

On Aug 8, Nayantai, a 46-year-old racing driver from Inner Mongolia, was among the elite drivers invited to pilot an 800-km section of the route during a one-off promotional race.

Engine roaring, his vehicle clawed its way uphill, spraying sand from beneath its tires. At the dune's crest, he paused. In every direction, the desert stretched to the horizon.

For Nayantai, crossing the finish line was about more than speed. He described the experience of tackling a route that cut through his hometown as more of a homecoming than a competition — a sentiment he hopes visitors will share as the new routes launch.

The racers screeched off toward Bilutu Peak, which is one of the signature landmarks of the Badain Jaran Desert, renowned for its high dunes, which served as the centerpiece of the day's racing.

"It is not just about the fastest time; it feels like I am reconnecting with the place where I grew up," Nayantai said.

His words capture the idea behind the new professionally driven dune-bashing tours, which invite travelers to immerse themselves in Inner Mongolia's vast landscapes, communities and traditions, all the while enjoying a thrilling motorsport experience.

The route is part of a broader effort to transform Alshaa League's deserts from a destination for fleeting off-road events into a year-round tourism experience, said Zhao Chengnan, head of the league's tourism development and operation department.

For decades, the region has drawn off-road enthusiasts with its steep dunes and difficult terrain, regularly hosting events.

But the new approach targets a wider group of travelers, including families, recreational drivers and visitors who may have little interest in competitive racing, while also catering to competitors.

Contact the writers at chennan@chinadaily.com.cn

Breakfast meeting



Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic (second from right) has breakfast with Serbian and Chinese construction workers in Belgrade, Serbia, on Friday. He inspected the construction site of the Serbia Exhibition Center, a venue for Expo 2027 Belgrade, being built by a Chinese company. WANG WEI / XINHUA

Upgrade: Manufacturing scale highlighted

From page 1

LYC Bearing Corp was one of 156 key projects developed during China's First Five-Year Plan (1953-57) period. From making basic bearings largely by hand to seeing high-end bearings account for 70 percent of its total output value in 2025, the company has filled domestic gaps in a range of fields and helped underpin China's bearing industry.

Its seven-decade transformation mirrors the broader rise and upgrading of Chinese manufacturing. China has ranked first globally in manufacturing scale for 15 consecutive years. The country has 41 major industrial categories, 207 intermediate categories and 666 subcategories, making it the only country in the world with industries across all categories listed in the United Nations' industrial classification, according to the National Bureau of Statistics.

That same shift — from filling gaps to raising standards — can be seen in the tractors that Zhao Xu works on every day. Zhao is deputy head of the product research and development department at YTO Group Corp, a leading agricultural and construction machinery manufacturer.

During an inspection tour of Henan in April 2009, Xi, then China's vice-president, visited two manufacturers, including YTO Group Corp, where he learned about independent research and development, production and operations, and encouraged efforts to develop new products in response to market demand.

According to the company, digital and intelligent upgrades allow different models to be assembled on the same line, with one tractor rolling off every three minutes on average and overall efficiency up more than 20 percent.

"A tractor can no longer merely get the job done," Zhao said. "It must help farmers work more efficiently and comfortably."

The company has launched, or is developing, tractors with power-shift and continuously variable transmissions, and hybrid and battery-electric power trains. Autonomous and driverless models have also entered commercial use, Zhao said.

"Our goal is to advance agricultural machinery technology and strengthen our ability to develop high-end products of our own," he said.

"The longer I worked, and the more I understood the market and the realities of Chinese agriculture, the more I felt a responsibility to make better products that could serve more users."

"Now, it is about using better technology and moving in the right direction."

New strengths

Zhou Mi, a senior researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, said that as China's industrial system became more complete and competition intensified, older industrial enterprises had to find new strengths through innovation.

In his view, the shift of both LYC Bearing Corp and YTO Group Corp toward higher-end, smarter and greener production reflects the combined influence of government guidance, market demand and competition.

"New technologies can raise productivity and make products more competitive, creating higher returns," he said. "That, in turn, draws more companies into innovation and creates a combined force for industrial upgrading."

Lan Qingxin, director of the BRICS Research Center at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing, attributed the continuity between the major industrial projects under China's First Five-Year Plan and the focus on advanced manufacturing in the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) to sustained long-term planning under the leadership of the Communist Party of China.

"What has remained unchanged is the long-term goal of industrialization and modernization," Lan said. "What has changed is the path and the methods used to achieve it."

In the new era, he said, the emphasis is on innovation-driven, high-quality development, with China working to maintain a reasonable share of manufacturing in the economy and to vigorously develop advanced manufacturing.

Lan said this evolution also reshaped the relationship between government and the market. The state concentrated resources on basic industries at the early stage, while market competition later pushed enterprises to become the main drivers of innovation.

China has continued to learn from advanced technologies and management practices abroad while strengthening independent innovation and pursuing breakthroughs in core technologies, he added.

"Independent innovation does not mean shutting the door," he said. "It means strengthening your own capabilities through openness and cooperation."

In Lan's view, the five-year planning system has helped combine an efficient market with a well-functioning government, and self-reliance with opening-up, translating long-term goals into innovation at the enterprise level and greater national industrial strength.

Economy: Global playing field being rewired

From page 1

Just look at the numbers: In May 2026, it is reported that China's electric vehicle exports hit a record $9.2 billion, a 49 percent leap from the year before. It isn't just selling cars; it is selling the "New Three" clean-tech categories that are redefining global trade.

But here is where it gets really interesting. On July 17, 2026, President Xi Jinping stood up at the World AI Conference in Shanghai and essentially offered to share the "operating system" of this new era with the rest of the world. He called AI a "symphony of international cooperation" rather than a solo act.

Think about what he offered to the Global South over the next five years: 5,000 training opportunities in AI for developing nations; international AI application centers for groupings such as ASEAN, BRICS and the African Union; and the MAZU AI early-warning system to 30 countries to fight climate disasters.

That's not just building a coalition; that's building the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization, headquartered in Shanghai with 29 founding members. While some are trying to build an "AI Iron Curtain", China is pitching an open-source model where intelligence is a public good, not a private commodity.

The core conclusion is this: China is betting that if you automate the basics, you change the "superstructure" of society itself.

With per capita GDP hitting 99,665 yuan and labor productivity rising by 6.1 percent in 2025, the material conditions for a totally new kind of society are being laid. As the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) ended and the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) began, China is moving toward a future of technological abundance.

The global playing field is no longer just leveling; it is being rewired into a "symphony of international cooperation" where open-source AI and green energy abundance are the primary engines fast-tracking a new economic era designed to solve foundational human needs.

The only question left is: Who else is ready to play in the orchestra?

The author is a former prime minister of Mongolia. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

New container ship route to Europe halves transit time

By CHEN YE in Ningbo, Zhejiang
chenye@chinadaily.com.cn

The China-Europe Arctic container express route officially entered regular weekly operations on Saturday, opening a faster, more efficient and resilient northbound logistics corridor between China and Europe.

The container ship *Dubai Tower* departed from Ningbo-Zhoushan Port in East China's Zhejiang province, announcing the start of the route's regular seasonal service, which takes about 20 days, halving the transit time of traditional routes to Europe.

Fang Yi, CEO of the Sea Legend Line, which operates the route, told China Daily that after leaving China, the vessel would call at key ports in Northern Europe and the Baltic region, including Felixstowe in the United Kingdom, Rotterdam in the Netherlands, Hamburg in Germany and Gdynia in Poland.

The route thus establishes a logistics network linking China's coastal manufacturing hubs directly with major European ports.

The Sea Legend Line has already drawn up a liner schedule for this year's navigation season, with more than eight voyages planned from mid-August through late September or early October.



The container ship *Dubai Tower* is loaded on Saturday at the Ningbo-Zhoushan Port in East China's Zhejiang province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Such a schedule would have been difficult to imagine just a year ago.

On Sept 22, 2025, the container ship *Istanbul Bridge* departed from Ningbo-Zhoushan Port and finished the first full trial.

The route follows the Northeast Passage along the Arctic coast, connecting the Bering Strait with the Barents Sea. At about 5,000 kilometers, it is the shortest maritime route between Northeast Asia and Western Europe.

For decades, maritime trade between Asia and Europe went along southern routes through the Strait of Malacca, the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea and the Suez Canal.

"The trial took 20 days from China to Europe, compared with 40 days via the Suez Canal and 50 days traveling around the Cape of Good Hope. The Arctic route also avoids congestion and potential geopolitical disruptions," Fang said.

However, it only has a short summer navigation window, as ice and weather are difficult to predict.

Some industry insiders said that the Arctic route, which is navigable from late July to October, remains constrained by ice conditions, and therefore cannot replace the traditional routes soon.

Li Xiaobin, chief operating officer of Sea Legend Line, said that with advances in icebreaking and energy propulsion technologies, the navigation period could potentially be extended to eight to 10 months in the next three to five years.

In addition, the Arctic's cold environment functions as a natural cold chain, with temperatures along the route generally ranging from minus 3 C to 10 C, which is suitable for temperature-sensitive cargo such as energy-storage cabinets and power batteries.

Products loaded for Saturday's voyage were of this type, with cargo mainly sourced from manufacturing clusters in the Yangtze River Delta, including Ningbo and Yiwu in Zhejiang province, and tailored to meet peak-season delivery demand in European markets.

After the trial, several partner ports in Europe expressed strong interest in regular operations on the route.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:41 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:41 PM

WORLD IN FOCUS



Teams compete during the annual soccer tournament at the Mathare Carnival in Nairobi's Mathare informal settlement in Kenya on Aug 8. PHOTOS BY WU XIAOHUI / CHINA DAILY



Children dance to the 2010 FIFA World Cup song "Waka Waka (This Time for Africa)" at the Mathare Carnival in Nairobi on Aug 8.



Children look at a poster featuring photos of previous soccer matches at the Mathare Carnival in Nairobi on Aug 8.



Chinese volunteers and diplomats dance with children at the Mathare Carnival in Nairobi on Aug 8.

SOCCER, DUST, DREAMS

A festival of feats in the heart of the Kenyan slums

By WU XIAOHUI in Nairobi, Kenya
wuxiaohui@chinadaily.com.cn

Dust rose from the red-earth field as players sprinted for the ball. Children sat along the walls surrounding the field, while others climbed higher for a better view. Each goal was met with cheers from the crowd and blasts from plastic vuvuzela horns.

There was no grass-covered stadium at the "Slum World Cup", part of the Mathare Carnival, which concluded on Aug 8. The soccer field was marked with temporary white lines, some of which were already covered with dust by the end of the matches.

The annual "Slum World Cup" brought together more than 500 young players from 42 teams representing 22 community schools in Mathare, Nairobi's second-largest informal settlement.

Among the players was 11-year-old Fabian Adrian, who was lifted onto the shoulders of his teacher and teammates after scoring a goal. His worn soccer cleats had visibly damaged soles.

For Adrian's teacher, Linter Adhiambo, this was the third time she had brought students to the tournament. Her 12-member boys' team won first place in the junior category.

"I am so proud. We are just praying that Chinese volunteers can continue organizing this soccer tournament," Adhiambo said.

The soccer tournament is one of the main activities of the Mathare Carnival, which was launched in 2016 by the Dream Building Service Association, or DBSA, a nonprofit organization founded in Africa in 2014 by Chinese university students.

Its founder, Yin Binbin, said he first came to Mathare in 2014 as an international volunteer to teach at a local school. The school was built largely from old sheet metal, prompting him to raise funds online to help rebuild it. That project became the starting point for DBSA.

Over the past decade, the organization has carried out projects in six African countries, with more than 500 international volunteers participating in programs ranging from arts education and talent shows to soccer tournaments, Yin said.

Beyond the field, the carnival also featured "Talent Chap Chap!", a talent show where students took to the stage to showcase their singing, dancing and other skills. An art program under the theme "Born to Shine" brought together students from 15 community schools, who created more than 300 artworks.

The second China-Africa People-to-People Public Welfare Exchange Forum was held in Nairobi on Aug 7 as part of the carnival series.

Representatives from Chinese and African government departments, NGOs and youth groups discussed cooperation in areas such as education, health, women and children, and youth development.

At the forum, Chinese Ambassador to Kenya Guo Haiyan said that grassroots organizations and groups focused on empowering women and youth can reach communities more directly and respond flexibly to local needs, complementing government-to-government cooperation.

Anne Wang'ombe, principal secretary for the State Department for Gender and Affirmative Action in Kenya's Ministry of Gender, Culture and Children Services, said the carnival is an example of how China-Africa people-to-people exchanges can create tangible benefits for communities. She called for such partnerships to be further developed through long-term community initiatives.

"Our progress is measured by the quality of life of the most vulnerable," said Rael Mutai, regional technical adviser at the United Nations Population Fund. Mutai called for partnerships that can bridge the gap between policies and the realities faced by vulnerable communities, reaching those "down to the last mile".



Children look at artworks created by students from community schools during the Mathare Carnival in Nairobi on Aug 8.



Fabian Adrian, 11, celebrates with the crowd after scoring a goal during the annual soccer tournament at the Mathare Carnival on Aug 8.



Students perform a traditional dance during the "Talent Chap Chap!" talent show at the Mathare Carnival in Nairobi on Aug 8.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:41 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:41 PM

WORLD



Patients receive treatment at a makeshift tent outside a hospital following an earthquake in Labuan Bajo, East Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia, on Saturday. FIRDIA LISNAWATI / AP

53 dead in Indonesia quake as rescue efforts continue

By **LEONARDUS JEGHO** in Jakarta
For China Daily

The death toll from a powerful earthquake that struck Indonesia's eastern islands has risen to 53, authorities said on Sunday, as rescuers searched for survivors trapped beneath landslides and collapsed buildings.

The magnitude 7.7 earthquake struck East Nusa Tenggara Province on Saturday, followed by more than 300 aftershocks. At least 64 people were injured, according to the National Search and Rescue Agency, making the disaster the country's deadliest earthquake since a 2022 tremor in West Java Province killed hundreds of people.

Most of the deaths and injuries were reported on Flores, one of Indonesia's major islands, where the northern parts of five districts were hardest hit. The rescue agency said 24 fatalities were in Manggarai district and 20 in neighboring East Manggarai.

East Nusa Tenggara Governor Emanuel Melkiades Laka Lena said the damage was particularly severe in northern Flores. Many residents had remained outdoors for fear of returning to damaged homes and were in urgent need of tents, food and other essential supplies, he said.

The provincial government declared a state of emergency on Saturday as emergency crews continued rescue and relief operations across the quake-hit areas.

The earthquake's epicenter was offshore, about 30 kilometers northeast of central Flores, at a depth of 15 kilometers.

Mohammad Syafii, head of the National Search and Rescue Agency, said rescue operations were continuing despite difficult conditions, including landslides and disruptions to telecommunications and electricity in some areas, particularly in East Manggarai and Nagekeo.

Rescue teams were using helicopters to evacuate victims and deliver relief supplies to the affected areas, he said.

He urged local residents to report anyone in need of assistance or evacuation so rescue teams could reach them promptly.

Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto has ordered ministers and other relevant officials to accelerate relief efforts by sending dozens of tons of supplies to Flores and deploying joint national teams to the disaster zone.

He also sent food packages to earthquake-affected communities. The supplies arrived on Sunday in Maumere, East Nusa Tenggara Province, according to Indonesia's national news agency Antara.

Berton SP Panjaitan, acting head of the Data, Information and Disaster Communication Center at the National Disaster Management Agency, said a military aircraft had transported the first batch of emergency relief supplies ordered by Prabowo.

A total of 1,725 basic food packages were distributed to affected areas in Sikka and Ende districts.

On Saturday, another 3,200 packages were delivered to Labuan Bajo, a town on Flores Island.

Prime Sarmiento in Hong Kong contributed to this story.

The writer is a freelance journalist for China Daily.

5 years after return, Taliban faces hard task of rebuilding

KABUL — White Taliban flags emblazoned with black script lined major streets across Kabul on Saturday as the Taliban celebrated the fifth anniversary of its return to power with a large-scale ceremony.

Five years on, war-torn Afghanistan has largely moved from conflict to reconstruction. Overall security has improved, but creating jobs, absorbing returning refugees and reviving the economy remain formidable challenges.

Since returning to power in August 2021, the Taliban has repeatedly pledged that Afghan territory would not be used by terrorist groups to threaten other countries. It has launched sustained operations against extremist groups, contributing to a marked decline in both the frequency and scale of terrorist attacks.

Security risks, however, have not disappeared.

Several major attacks hit Kabul in recent years, including the assassination of acting minister for refugees Khalil Ur-Rahman Haqqani in a suicide bombing in December 2024, and an attack on a Chinese restaurant in January this year that killed seven people.

Meanwhile, military tensions with Pakistan have periodically flared over border disputes and cross-border militant activities. From late 2025 to the spring of 2026, the confrontation escalated beyond frontier areas, with Pakistani officials calling the situation an "open war".

The fighting gradually subsided after the two sides returned to dialogue through international mediation.

For many Afghans, daily life has become safer, but making a living remains difficult.

In an interview with Xinhua News Agency, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said the Afghan currency had stabilized at around 66 to 70 afghanis per dollar, compared with a low of around 130 after the Taliban returned to power, indicating that inflation had been brought under control.

Bread prices have also remained stable. A piece of naan, Afghanistan's staple food, has long cost around 10 afghanis, prompting some economists to describe the phenomenon as the country's unique "naan economy".

Yet, stable prices have not eased livelihood pressures.

Safra, a single mother living in Kabul, supports two sons, one of whom is bedridden. The family's only income comes from occasional labor by her younger son, allowing them to afford little more than naan and potatoes each day.

In eastern Khost Province, farmer Shafiq told Xinhua that his family of nine survives on 2,000 square meters of farmland and temporary jobs. "At least everyone can have naan every day," he said.

Higher unemployment

Abdul Rahman, spokesman for Afghanistan's Ministry of Economy, said people of working age account for about 49 percent of the country's population, while roughly 26 percent are unemployed.

The end of many international aid programs and development projects has pushed unemployment even higher.

Rebuilding the economy remains one of Afghanistan's biggest challenges.

According to the National Procurement Commission, the government approved 562 development and infrastructure projects worth about $2 billion last year. Since August 2021, more than 1,200 major development projects have been launched nationwide.

Spokesman Mujahid acknowledged that outdated regulations have slowed reconstruction.

"In the past, obtaining a construction permit required approvals from dozens of departments. We are simplifying administrative procedures, although we have not yet reached our goal," he said.

Long-standing financial sanctions by the United States remain another major obstacle, discouraging international investment, particularly private capital.

Five years after the war largely came to an end, Afghanistan is discovering that the challenge today goes beyond ending the fighting; it also involves building a future.

XINHUA

Tehran rejects Trump's claim over Hormuz

Maritime tensions keep shipping on edge as Iran vows to keep control of waterway

TEHRAN — Iran on Saturday fired back at US President Donald Trump's claim that he would soon declare the Strait of Hormuz part of US territory, saying the crucial waterway "will remain Iranian".

Trump has repeatedly insisted that the strait is under the United States' control despite traffic remaining throttled.

"The Strait of Hormuz has been Iranian, is Iranian, and will remain Iranian," Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi said on X. "This strait will only be closed and opened under Iran's command."

Trump told a political rally in New York state on Friday that after the US defeats Iran, "pretty soon I'll be declaring the Hormuz Strait a territory of the United States".

"It's true," he added.

An unnamed White House official later clarified that Trump was joking, The Wall Street Journal reported.

Earlier this month, a top Iranian official set out a list of conditions for reopening the strait, including an end to the "war and aggression against Iran and its allies in Lebanon, Palestine, Yemen and Iraq".

Mohammad Bagher Zolghadr, chief of the Supreme National Security Council, also demanded an end to the crippling sanctions, the release of frozen assets and compensation for wartime damage.

As diplomacy stalls between the US and Iran, attacks in the Strait of Hormuz have continued, highlighting the risks to regional shipping.

The United Arab Emirates' state-owned oil company ADNOC said on Saturday that one of its vessels came under attack the night before.

The country's foreign ministry later blamed Tehran, and said that Iran's Revolutionary Guards were engaged in "acts of piracy" in the strait.

On Friday, the Gulf nation blamed Iran for other attacks on two vessels linked to ADNOC as they passed through the waterway.

Before the war, the strait carried around one-fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas exports, and prices have repeatedly surged since the dispute over the waterway erupted, piling economic and political pressure on Washington.

The closure of the strait has driven up prices for US voters, creating a political headache for Trump as November's midterm elections near.

At the Friday rally, Trump said paying "a tiny little bit more for your gasoline" is worth the cost of ensuring "a very evil country" could not have a nuclear weapon, one of his stated rationales for the war.

In a trend that has sparked inflation and disappointed voters, the average US price of a gallon of gasoline was about $4.08 on Friday ($1.08 per liter), up 29 percent from a year earlier, according to the American Automobile Association.

US Vice-President JD Vance said last week that Washington's top priority during the Iran war was to keep the energy prices low for US consumers, while preventing Tehran from acquiring a nuclear weapon ranked second.

Tehran signaled last week that it had agreed with Oman on a route for ships to transit the Strait of Hormuz and was finalizing arrangements to jointly manage the waterway.

Situation in Lebanon

In another development, an Israeli airstrike killed a senior commander in Hezbollah's Badr regional division in southern Lebanon, the Israeli military said on Sunday.

Lebanese media reported that at least four people were killed in the attack.

The Israeli military said that Abu Hassan Alaa was killed late on Saturday in the strike on Deir al-Zahrani. It described the attack as a response to an earlier Hezbollah drone strike targeting Israeli troops in southern Lebanon that wounded three soldiers.

Lebanon's National News Agency reported that Israeli warplanes struck a two-story building, killing at least four people and wounding five.

Also on Saturday, seven people were killed in heavy Israeli airstrikes in the southern village of Ansar, one of the deadliest attacks since a ceasefire was reached in 2024.

Israeli attacks have killed at least 4,300 people in Lebanon since the latest round of fighting began on March 2.

AGENCIES — XINHUA



Traffic backs up along roads in Sidon, southern Lebanon, on Saturday as families flee their homes amid continued Israeli military strikes. MOHAMMAD ABUSHAMA VIA GETTY IMAGES

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036

Telephone: 212-537-8888

Fax: 212-537-8898

editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com

Subscription: 212-537-8899

Advertising: 212-537-8916

Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily

usa.chinadaily.com.cn

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

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108
529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1894

Briefly

ZIMBABWE

Death toll in ferry accident rises to 80

Authorities retrieved 34 bodies from Zimbabwe's Lake Kariba over the weekend, taking the death toll from a ferry capsizing to 80, police said, as the search continued for victims. The overloaded passenger ferry run by the government's Rural Infrastructure Development Agency overturned in choppy waters on Tuesday in a rare accident on the vast lake on the border with Zambia. At least 18 children were among the dead, police said on Saturday after rescuers recovered 26 more bodies. "Meanwhile, the identification of the bodies recovered today is in progress," the police said in a statement. On Sunday, the national police service said in a post on X that eight more bodies were found. Officials say the boat was authorized to carry 90 people but was packed with 114 adults, five crew members and an unspecified number of children.

DPRK

Top leader 'proud' of better Russia relations

Kim Jong-un, president of the State Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, told Russian President Vladimir Putin that he is "proud to be able to expect a more excellent future of the bilateral relations", the Korean Central News Agency reported on Sunday. Kim made the remarks in a reply message on Saturday, thanking Putin for sending a message of greetings on the occasion of the 81st anniversary of Liberation Day, the report said. The DPRK celebrates its Liberation Day on Aug 15 in commemoration of the liberation of the Korean Peninsula from Japan's colonial rule on Aug 15, 1945.

UNITED STATES

Teen arrested over ties to university shooting

Police arrested a 19-year-old found hiding in a dormitory closet at Virginia State University on Saturday in connection with an overnight shooting on campus that left five people wounded, including one with critical injuries. Camron Harris of Henrico, Virginia, is not a student on campus nor are four of the people injured, Chesterfield County Police said in a statement. They ranged in age from 17 to 23. One of the injured, a 20-year-old, is a student and has now been released from the hospital, authorities said. The victims' names have not been released. Authorities have given no information about a possible motive. The university said earlier that authorities were searching for multiple suspects, but police provided no additional information on Saturday evening about the search.

AGENCIES — XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:41 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:41 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Washington should stop creating division by coercing other nations to take sides in AI

In a move that seeks to engineer confrontation among nations on the technology front, the United States is reportedly ready to demand that dozens of countries pick sides in the artificial intelligence race with China — warning that they will be excluded from a US-led AI coalition if they also sign up for China's "competing framework".

The draft letter, prepared by the US State Department, is said to be addressed to the 35 signatories of a US "AI Opportunity Statement" signed in June. Washington obviously hopes to form a technology bloc to deny China access to the resources vital for building state-of-the-art AI.

Such a strategy will undoubtedly do damage to the development of AI as it will fragment the global supply chains and erode multilateral cooperation. It will also disrupt the positive feedback loop between technological innovation, market development and real-world application, ultimately hindering the growth and sustainability of the AI ecosystem itself. This reflects Washington's zero-sum game mindset — if the US cannot lead, it seeks to block others from making headway.

The Chinese embassy in the US expressed firm opposition to the US politicizing trade and technology issues. "Such actions will only stifle global AI advances and serve no one's interests," an embassy spokesperson said.

By drawing red lines for cooperation through exclusionary clauses and forcing other countries to pick sides, the US is weaponizing technological competition, while seeking to preserve its dominant position in the field of AI through alliance-based barriers. The US' hegemonic approach not only harms others but will ultimately undermine its own long-term development as well.

Now that AI is becoming a key technology driving the new round of scientific and technological revolution, it is all the more important for nations to accelerate open exchanges in this field for the common good of all.

For those in the US seeking to erect walls, they should understand that holding innovation hostage to geopolitics goes against the rationale of science and technology as well as the trend of the times. They should respect normal international technological cooperation and the right of countries to independently choose their cooperation partners. The US will only alienate itself from other countries if it denies nations the right to engage with their partners based on their own development needs, and coerces them into making an either-or choice.

The US has gone to extraordinary lengths to press countries to take sides in virtually every field it deems vital to maintain its hegemony, including critical minerals, trade and supply chains. This cannot but raise fears that the world is poised to revert to a lose-lose situation for all nations.

Faced with the opportunities and challenges brought by AI, what the world needs is an inclusive and consultative governance system, not divisive and fragmented technological barriers.

China promotes global AI governance by championing an open, inclusive, and multilateral approach to make AI a global public good. It advocates "humanity-centered" and "AI-for-good" development, supporting the United Nations' central role in establishing international governance mechanisms. Through initiatives such as open-source models, capacity-building training for developing nations and the creation of the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization, the country actively works to bridge the global digital divide and ensure that AI benefits all of humanity.

Bloc confrontation cannot solve technological challenges, nor can exclusionary alliances advance human scientific progress. If the US continues to build technological barriers, it will lose the innovative vitality that is inseparable from global technology cooperation and find itself in the predicament of closed-door development.

A 'lighthouse' pointing toward peril

It is absurd that Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi spoke of Japan becoming an "Indo-Pacific lighthouse" on Saturday, the 81st anniversary of Japan's unconditional surrender to the Allied Powers that ended World War II. The country has not even earned the trust of its neighbors — countries that still remember what happened the last time Tokyo cast itself as a regional "architect" of the infamous "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere".

The notorious Yasukuni Shrine, to which Takaichi performed a remote act of worship and sent a ritual offering that day, makes that absurdity impossible to miss. The shrine enshrines 14 Class-A war criminals from WWII. Before taking office last October, Takaichi had visited the shrine more than 10 times over the course of her political career.

On Saturday, she stood across the road, went through the motions — two bows, two claps, one bow — just near enough to appease her nationalist supporting base, but far enough, as she wished, to sidestep a harsh international outcry. In truth, however, it was nothing but a grotesque flirtation with the convicted war criminals.

Several of her Cabinet members, including Japanese Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi, went further and visited the shrine in person.

The ceremony thus raises an unavoidable question: Is Japan commemorating its "war victims", or glorifying those who orchestrated a war of aggression?

Imagine a European government openly paying tribute to senior Nazi war criminals and then explaining it was merely honoring "war victims". The world would immediately grasp how grotesque that argument sounds. Germany learned that reconciliation demands confronting the harm it inflicted on others. Japan, by contrast, has not even shown a willingness to begin that journey.

In its word game, the Takaichi government increasingly presents Japan as a regional "model" to build a "free and open Indo-Pacific". Yet this vocabulary risks becoming a linguistic escape hatch from history. The more Japan talks about its fictional "role", the less its leaders seem willing to talk about the uncomfortable truths of the past.

Takaichi's omission was therefore as significant as her words. She mourned Japanese "victims" and spoke of Japan's postwar "contribution" to "peace". But there was no acknowledgment of the sufferings inflicted on other nations, no apology and no remorse for Japan's responsibility.

It is hypocritical to preach "peace" while bowing before the "chief culprits of war", as China's Ministry of National Defense said in response to Tokyo's Saturday farce.

Japan's historical militarists were experts at feigning innocence and victimhood while committing aggression, pillage and killing. Today's neo-militarists have shown they are just as good at playing innocent. Whether they will be allowed to also follow the same path of aggression, plunder and slaughter is the test the international community cannot afford to fail.

In less than a year, the Takaichi government has systematically accelerated Japan's remilitarization from policy to capacity. Its recent handling of the yen, however, has laid bare the economic burden that rhetoric alone cannot conceal.

A weak yen boosts exporters, but it also raises the cost of energy, food and military equipment, squeezing households while making Japan's expanding military budget more expensive. Tokyo is now caught in an uncomfortable triangle: a stronger yen, fiscal expansion and rapid military buildup cannot be pursued indefinitely without trade-offs.

Washington wants Japan to increase its military spending and become a military pillar of the "Indo-Pacific" strategy, but it also has little appetite for a persistently undervalued yen that aggravates trade tensions and financial instability.

So the currency collusion between Tokyo and Washington over the past weeks is not simply about exchange rates or interest rates; it reflects the deeper economic needs of their geopolitical calculations.

Japan is trying to build itself into a war machine again while its economic foundations remain fragile. The currency manipulation may ultimately prove that it is the Japanese people that will have to pay the bill for the rise of neo-militarism.

Takaichi therefore has little choice but to talk emptily about "peace" and the country being a "lighthouse", while saying nothing about Japan's war crimes, responsibility and other nations' sufferings. Only by creating an atmosphere bordering on political indoctrination can she better numb the Japanese public into accepting — and paying for — the country's neo-militarism.

The nations that once fell victim to Japanese aggression have an obligation to keep the historical record straight — especially when Japan persists in its unrepentant stance — to ensure the international community, including the Japanese people themselves, remains vigilant against the dangerous direction in which the "lighthouse" peddled by Takaichi is pointing.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Shi Yu



Opinion Line

Teodoro shows how low he can stoop as a marionette

Philippine Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr has baselessly accused China of "extortion and blackmail" over immigration enforcement, denounced Chinese officials for "disinformation", and branded Chinese steelworkers "criminals". But the more he talks about "law", "sovereignty" and "national security", the more an awkward question arises: Is he acting increasingly as a proxy for external forces seeking to push Manila to the front line of confrontation with China?

In May, Teodoro instructed the Armed Forces of the Philippines to join an operation at Sanjia Steel Corp and arrest unarmed Chinese workers. Is a defense secretary also a police chief? If the plant was violating environmental or other laws, why not arrest those responsible for running it? Why were Chinese workers detained while Filipino workers were released on the spot? And why were the Chinese "detainees" transported to Manila aboard a military aircraft?

Then came the curious personal protective equipment or PPE episode. According to the Chinese workers, they normally wore regular clothing. Yet on the day of the raid, law enforcement personnel reportedly made three Chinese workers put on PPE and pose for photographs, which were subsequently publicized as evidence that only Chinese workers wore such equipment. Was this law enforcement — or a fishing expedition designed to create "incriminating" images?

The 70 detained Chinese workers were reportedly crammed into cells measuring about 5 square meters. They said the Philippine side failed to make the required consular notification or arrange consular visits in accordance with the bilateral consular agreement.

The workers remained in detention for as long as 32 days even after the Chinese embassy provided Philippine authorities with copies of the workers' passports and valid work visas or permits. Teodoro says the workers not carrying the documents themselves was a "telltale sign of human trafficking". So, are foreign workers required to carry their passports while working in Philippine factories? And does the absence of documentation at the time of arrest constitute "human trafficking" under Philippine law?

More fundamentally, who determines whether Philippine law has been violated — the defense secretary or the judicial authorities?

These are precisely the questions that a spokesperson for China's embassy in the Philippines raised on Sunday in response to Teodoro's ugly theatrics.

On May 28, Philippine prosecutors ordered the release of the Chinese workers unless they were being held on other legal grounds. Yet Teodoro continued to accuse them of "illegal activity".

The episode raises a larger question about Teodoro's role in the Ferdinand Marcos Jr government. He increasingly appears intent on shaping Manila's foreign policy around confrontation with China while aligning the Philippines ever more tightly with Washington and its strategic partners.

His groundless accusation that Chinese embassy officials "intervened" in Philippine law enforcement is equally revealing. Protecting the legitimate rights and interests of nationals abroad is a fundamental job of any embassy; it certainly does not constitute "meddling".

Teodoro's actions appear less focused on resolving disputes than on keeping tensions alive. Look at the South China Sea. Washington has repeatedly backed Manila's claims and invoked the unlawful 2016 "arbitral award" against China. Australia has joined the Philippines in wrongly criticizing Chinese actions at Ren'ai Reef, which is actually China's territory. Neither the US nor Australia is a claimant in the dispute, yet both are trying to be embedded in it.

For Washington, the Philippines is a crucial node in its "Indo-Pacific" strategy, astride important sea lanes and close to China's Taiwan island. But for the Philippines, becoming the forward position in someone else's strategic competition carries risks far beyond the ambitions of any defense secretary.

Teodoro wrongly invokes Philippine "sovereignty" while encouraging policies that make Manila dependent on an external security architecture. He invokes the "rule of law" while appearing unwilling to accept a prosecutorial decision that cleared the detained Chinese workers.

China has never invaded or colonized the Philippines. Yet Manila is being misled to see China not as a neighbor with whom it has disputes that must be managed, but as a rival. That may serve Washington's calculations. It may serve Teodoro's personal political ambitions. But it does not necessarily serve Filipino interests.

The question is whether Teodoro is still acting for Manila — or increasingly performing a role written somewhere else.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Environmental protection made more coherent

Editor's note: *Effective since Saturday, the Ecological and Environmental Code is China's second statutory code after the Civil Code. Zhu Xiao, a professor at the Law School of Renmin University of China, spoke to China Central Television about the significance of the code. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

Issues concerning ecological and environmental protection are of profound importance as they have a bearing on the sustainable development of the country.

China has drawn on years of environmental protection practices to build a solid foundation for advancing the construction of an ecological civilization, and these experiences are worthy of being summarized, refined and inculcated into legal provisions.

The country has more than 30 specific laws on environmental protection, over 100 administrative regulations, more than 1,000 local regulations, and more than 10 intra-Party regulations on ecological and environmental work. To tackle fragmentation, inconsistencies and repetition, a systematic legislative approach was indispensable and codification was the optimal option.

The Ecological and Environmental Code addresses the fragmentation inherent in traditional legislation to build a more coherent legal system.

Among the contents of the code are three major parts, which focus on pollution prevention and control, ecological conservation, and green and low-carbon development. This will help achieve sustainability in three aspects.

The part on pollution prevention and control aims to achieve the sustainable development of people. When the sustainable development of people is achieved, the following part, which is on ecological conservation, seeks to achieve the sustainable development of the natural environment. Then it is necessary to have sustainable energy to support sustainable economic and social development.

The part on green and low-carbon development will serve as an institutional framework for promoting low-carbon growth. For example, various laws and regulations could be formulated under this framework to help achieve the "dual carbon" goals, mitigate climate change and adapt to it.

The code has a special chapter on ecological restoration. The chapter helps establish coordinated and centralized provisions that cover the whole process and various subjects. Whole-process coverage means it regulates all six stages of ecological restoration projects, which are planning, assessment, monitoring, implementation, acceptance inspection and follow-up management. In addition, the chapter prescribes measures for restoring forests, grasslands and wetlands, and advances coordinated land and marine environmental governance by setting out special provisions on marine ecological restoration.

A prominent feature of the code is its focus on environmental issues that affect people's daily lives. For example, when it comes to addressing cooking fumes, the code asks local governments to ensure relevant companies design, build and locate their business venues according to requirements in the first place. Another example is light pollution. The code explicitly defines light pollution, calls for limits on light sources, and lays out clear requirements for billboards, neon lights and other scenarios.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:41 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:41 PM

VIEWS

Hu Guangyu and Hu Xueju

CPC's self-reform reflects wisdom of governance

The rise and fall of political powers has been a recurring pattern throughout human history. Breaking this historical cycle has therefore remained one of the most enduring challenges for political leaders and scholars alike.

Through decades of exploration and practice, the Communist Party of China has identified two approaches to addressing this conundrum: people's oversight and self-reform.

Since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, self-reform has evolved into a systematic approach to Party governance that not only strengthens governance in China but also offers valuable insights into modern political administration.

A defining feature of the CPC's self-reform is its commitment to putting the public interest above everything else. This approach stems from the very nature and purpose of the Party.

As the vanguard of both the people and the Chinese nation, the CPC is dedicated to wholeheartedly serving the people.

With no special interests of its own apart from those of the people and not driven by private gain, the Party is better positioned to confront its own shortcomings and undertake genuine self-reform.

By contrast, most political parties across the world primarily represent the interests of particular social groups or political constituencies.

Under many Western multiparty systems, political competition is often shaped by competing interest groups, making it difficult for governing parties to pursue reforms that may undermine entrenched interests.

The CPC's self-reform is based on a different logic. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, the CPC has advanced anti-corruption efforts. Through coordinated campaigns targeting both senior and grassroots officials, as well as fugitives overseas, China has secured an overwhelming victory in the fight against corruption.

Those gains have been further consolidated by addressing potential risks within the Party, the State and the military.

This determination to address deep-rooted problems from within the Party itself has few parallels in modern political history. It demonstrates that when a governing party places public interest above private gain, it can overcome vested interests and resolve its problems through internal reform.

Equally important is the CPC's emphasis on systemic checks. Political determination alone cannot sustain self-reform. Lasting results require institutional guarantees.

Since the 18th CPC National Congress, the CPC has progressively established a comprehensive framework for supervising the authorization, exercise and oversight of power. By improving transparency and accountability while plugging the institutional loopholes exposed during anti-corruption efforts, the Party has strengthened institutional safeguards.

The objective is to curb opportunities for rent-seeking at their source and ensure that public authority operates within clearly defined rules rather than personal discretion.

Just as importantly, these rules are enforced with consistency. No individual is permitted to stand above Party discipline, and institutional authority is upheld through strict implementation rather than symbolic regulation.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

This determination to address deep-rooted problems from within the Party itself has few parallels in modern political history.

Although many Western political systems have sophisticated legal and institutional frameworks, they continue to grapple with problems such as the influence of money in politics and the capture of public power by vested interests.

For many developing countries facing persistent governance challenges, China's experience suggests that effective oversight does not depend on replicating the Western multiparty political model. Instead, institutions can be strengthened according to national conditions to improve accountability, curb the abuse of power and foster a healthier political environment.

Another distinctive feature of the CPC's self-reform is its emphasis on improving Party conduct. The implementation of the central Party leadership's eight-point decision on improving Party and government conduct demonstrates the CPC's determination to enforce discipline through concrete action. By translating commitments into visible improvements, this approach has won the public's trust and support. It offers important lessons on governance for other countries as well.

Corruption doesn't happen suddenly. It often begins with the erosion of everyday discipline. In many countries, anti-corruption efforts focus primarily on high-profile cases while neglecting routine misconduct, allowing small problems to turn into systemic ones.

The CPC has adopted a different approach by addressing problems early and persistently. Beginning with issues that ordinary people encounter in daily life, such as extravagant banquets funded by public money, excessive gift-giving during holidays and the misuse of official vehicles, the Party gradually advanced disciplinary reform.

Instead of one-off campaigns, it has maintained sustained pressure and gradually institutionalized improvements in official conduct.

These sustained efforts have strengthened public confidence by demonstrating that commitments to clean governance are backed by visible action and measurable results.

At a time when corruption remains a shared challenge for countries around the world, China's practice of self-reform provides a useful point of reference for political parties across the world. Its experience underscores three essential principles of effective governance: commitment to self-reform, systemic checks on power and translating words into concrete action.

Hu Guangyu is a teacher at the School of Marxism at Sichuan Tourism University and Hu Xueju is the former vice-president of the Sichuan Academy of Social Sciences. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Daniel Barenblatt

The United States at 250: signal flares of a showboat parade

Among the many events surrounding the United States' 250th birthday, perhaps the most eye-catching was New York City's "tall ships" parade, past the Statue of Liberty and then proceeding up the Hudson River.

Aside from conjuring the New York Harbor scenery of 1776, this international fleet of rigged mast ships sought to replicate the tall ships flotilla of the "Operation Sail" event staged for the 200th anniversary of the United States on July 4, 1976 — a bicentennial parade that I attended in person as a 10-year-old Manhattanite, standing with my father near a West Side pier, snapping photographs of the white sail wonders with our trusty Kodak Instamatic.

The recurrence of the antique ships, with their attendant round number anniversaries, provokes meditations on the US ship of state — what are the headwinds, and what future is it sailing toward?

The US of 1976 certainly had its share of societal problems, notably a struggling economy beset with high inflation and job layoffs. Yet that inflation crisis pales in comparison to the travails of 2026 and the past 10 years.

The prices of necessary goods, rents and mortgages have been rising even more steeply now than in the 1970s.

And back then, average wages were increasing, unlike today.

That more tolerable cost of living was in part effectuated by the bargaining power of labor unions, which were stronger in the '70s than in all the decades that followed.

The bicentennial was also a time of peace: it was the era of detente, a welcome thaw in relations with both the Soviet Union and China.

The military draft and war with Southeast Asia were seemingly in the past. The monumental Watergate scandal of 1973 and first-ever resignation of a US president had also faded from media discourse and dinner table conversation.

For all the socioeconomic problems still facing the nation, there lingered a residual optimism that the middle class and blue-collar workers would regain their footing, that upward mobility was not just possible, but probable.

Civil liberties and public policy were still overshadowed by the unaccountable deep state and military-industrial complex, as was made apparent by the Congressional hearings led by Senator Frank Church on CIA domestic abuses.

But public awareness had been stirred, and at least some of the checks and balances against state and corporate abuse seemed to be in place and functioning, however tenuously.

Prior to its list of specific grievances against the British crown, the Declaration of Independence famously intones a set of three basic rights — "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" — London's denial of which underpinned the need for a new nation, freed from colonial tyranny by force of arms and revolution.

Of those three founding principles, the first and most basic — that of "life" — bears particular scrutiny in the year 2026. The right of all men and women to a decent existence, to keep on living. Where does it stand today, 250 years on?

In current times, when such essentials as food, housing, fuel and medicine have become unaffordable for the average US citizen, and with extreme levels of student and household debt further weighing down families, "life" itself has become quite fraught.

That inscribed right of any and all humans to exist may itself be in its death throes.

The increase in the cost of living, in turn, undermines the concerned citizen's ability to safeguard liberty, or to faithfully pursue that elusive condition known as happiness.

Global Lens

The right of all men and women to a decent existence, to keep on living. Where does it stand today, 250 years on?

It's tough to attain a family-sustaining level of income, or to muster the time and energy required to verify the integrity of computer vote counts, when you are mired in a daily struggle just to acquire enough food to eat, or pay for sorely needed medical treatment.

US citizens are learning the hard way that liberty and the pursuit of happiness are predicated upon the simple, self-evident fact of a person's right to exist.

What would I suggest to remedy this epic crisis?

To begin with, the immediate enactment of federal wage and price controls, the way the Nixon administration did in 1971, and which worked quite well to keep inflation down and workers' salaries up — until heavy pressure from powerful corporations forced a stop to the policy within, whereupon the inflation crisis resumed.

I also recommend a national framework for an emergency rent freeze and rent rollback measures, the expansion of Medicare to cover all US residents in a single-payer system, wide-ranging grants to small businesses, forgiveness of student loan debt with federal compensation to lenders, mandatory tuition fee reductions, and substantive increases in Social Security and food stamp benefits, and in the federal minimum wage.

Institute all of these suggestions and I would say the general population in the US might at least have somewhat of a fair chance at digging their way out of this economic catastrophe, the worst since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Realistically, do I expect any of the above to become law anytime soon? Absolutely not.

And that would be despite the popular preference for each of them shown in survey after survey.

Their rejection by the powers that be does not really concern how spending more would exacerbate the national budget deficit either, as Congress has made it clear that when it comes to taxpayer money spent on the military, endless wars, and "national security", the sky is the limit.

US policymakers and lawmakers, and their guiding hands within the unelected, elite strata of the super-rich and the deep state hierarchy, have no intention of changing course on this one-way track toward the utter immiseration of the domestic population.

Which brings me back to the summer of 1976, specifically to the monthslong buildup to the July 4 sailing regatta, fireworks displays and whatever else was being done, when my 10-year-old self read with keen interest the posters stuck to walls by left-wing activists in my neighborhood urging people to protest the looming presence of one of the Operation Sail vessels, the *Esmeralda* of Chile, which represented the US-backed, brutal military dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet.

That regime had covertly been installed by the CIA and US executive branch in a bloody coup on Sept 11, 1973, which overthrew and assassinated the elected, leftist president, Salvador Allende, and destroyed Chilean democracy. So much for the state of US adherence to that "liberty" word in the founding fathers' Declaration.

Soon after the coup, many thousands of political prisoners were rounded up, tortured and murdered in detention centers created by Pinochet, who also harbored fugitive Nazi war criminals.

One of those centers had been the *Esmeralda* ship itself, which was transformed from a Navy training vessel into an anchored dungeon of horrors. According to survivors' testimonies, dissident men and women were killed, tortured and raped inside the ship.

The *Esmeralda* sailed up the Hudson that festive bicentennial day unimpeded, alongside the other tall ships with sails of purest white.

There were two other ships in that bicentennial parade that I now recognize should have drawn objections from advocates for democracy and justice, but as far as I can tell stirred no controversy.

One was the *Nippon Maru* of Japan. Built in 1930 as a training vessel for Japan's merchant marine cadets, it was later requisitioned by the Imperial Japanese Navy during World War II (from 1943 onward). In that capacity, it served primarily as a transport ship for military supplies and personnel, and also provided training for naval recruits.

Another was the tall ship from Italy, the *Amerigo Vespucci*, which, in its little-known, dark past, had been a training vessel for dictator Benito Mussolini's navy and his Axis Italy wars of conquest.

Those fascist Italian forces, like the Japanese, had fought and killed US troops, and together with Hitler's Germany aimed to extinguish the very ideals of democracy, equality and freedom worldwide.

Flash forward to July 4, 2026, and a further problem emerges in the form of one glaring difference between the bicentennial tall ships and the new regatta cruising New York waterways, one that evinces how US national priorities have sunk ever lower over the past 50 years.

The symbolic, white-sails parade has now become extensively militarized; a festive paean to overseas war that would have greatly dismayed those brave anti-imperialist men who gathered in Philadelphia to sign and adopt the Declaration of Independence.

The show was named "Sail4th 250", and the official website proudly states: "This isn't just a handful of boats sailing around, it's a display of 48 historic tall ships from 20 different countries in honor of the US' Semiquincentennial.

Plus, it features an International Naval Review with 50 US and allied warships anchored in the Hudson and an International Aerial Review where the Navy's Blue Angels will lead a flyover of more than 100 aircraft."

And in procession with the many gray-hulled military vessels, those unsolicited new fleet mates to the tall ships, the old *Esmeralda*, that notorious Chilean ship of neo-fascist atrocities, floated once more upon the Hudson, and apparently did so to no visible objections this time around.

May we divine from this portentous maritime spectacle a future for US citizens that is bright with the promise of liberty, peace and prosperity, to be realized soon, and enduring happily for the decades to come?

The leading indicators, both material and symbolic, suggest not, I am sorry to report.

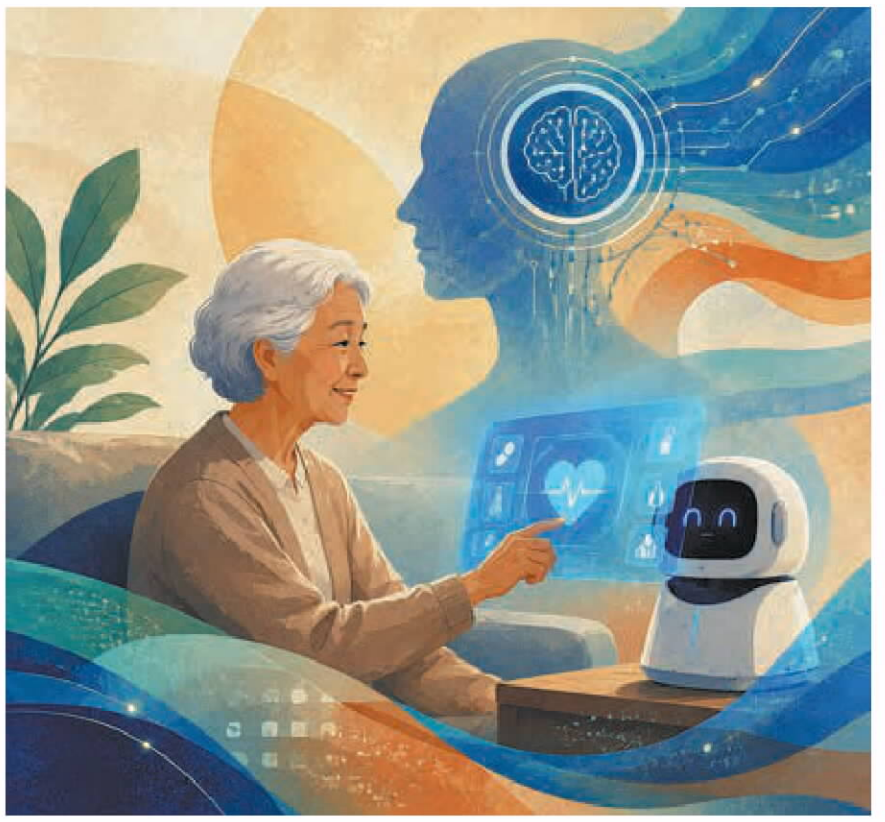
That ship has sailed.

The author is an independent historian specializing in Northeast Asia and author of A Plague Upon Humanity: The Secret Genocide of Axis Japan's Germ Warfare Operation.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:41 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:41 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

NISIT PANTHAMIT AND SUN YANGYANG

Handling aging together

Demographic differences create new sources of regional comparative advantage

For much of the past 35 years, cooperation between China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations has evolved by responding to changing economic realities. It began with trade liberalization and expanded through investment and regional production networks. More recently, digital connectivity and technological innovation have become new engines of cooperation.



Nisit Panthamit



Sun Yangyang

Perhaps the next chapter will be written not by markets alone, but by demographics.

Population aging rarely dominates discussions on regional economic cooperation. It is usually treated as a domestic issue, associated with pension reform, healthcare costs and shrinking labor forces. Yet China and ASEAN have reached a stage where demographic change can no longer be read only in the context of national borders. The region has become too economically integrated for that.

China has entered a moderately aging society. According to the 2025 National Report on the Development of Aging, jointly released by the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the China National Committee on Aging, China's population aged 60 and above reached 323.38 million by the end of 2025, accounting for 23 percent of the country's total population. Across ASEAN, the transition is unfolding at different speeds. Thailand and Singapore have already become aged societies, while Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia, despite having different demographic clocks, are moving in the same direction.

That timing matters.

Economists have long explained regional integration through comparative advantage. Countries trade because they possess different combinations of labor, capital, natural resources or technology. These differences create mutual gains from exchange.

Demographic transition suggests another source of comparative advantage.

The demographic challenges that China is confronting today are those that several ASEAN economies are likely to face over the next one or two decades. Rather than seeing this difference as a divide, it can be viewed as an opportunity. Experience acquired today in one country becomes useful knowledge for another tomorrow. Policy innovation, healthcare reform, workforce adaptation and technological solutions become resources that can be shared.

Comparative advantage, in other words, may increasingly arise not only from differences in economic resources, but also from differences in where countries stand along the same demographic journey.

This idea deserves greater attention because demographic transition is reshaping almost every part of the economy.

Healthcare is perhaps the most visible example. Aging populations require more continuous care, better management of chronic diseases and greater access to medical services outside major cities. Artificial intelligence is often discussed as a technology that replaces workers. In aging societies, however, it can play a major part by helping a limited number of healthcare professionals serve a much larger population through better diagnostics, medical imaging and telemedicine.

The same logic applies to the labor market. Longer life expectancy also means longer careers. Workers entering their sixties today are often healthier, better educated and more capable of remaining economically active than previous generations. The challenge is no longer whether they can continue working, but whether they can continue learning. AI-supported education platforms make lifelong learning more flexible and affordable, allowing workers to adapt to changing technologies without repeatedly leaving the labor market.

The economic implications extend further.

Population aging is changing patterns of demand throughout Asia. Healthcare services, rehabilitation, assistive technologies, age-friendly housing, financial planning and digital services for older adults are becoming important sources of business activity. The silver economy should not be viewed simply as the cost of supporting older populations. It also represents a growing market capable of generating innovation, investment and employment.

This is where China and ASEAN complement each other particularly well.

China has accumulated considerable experience in digital infrastructure, AI applications and smart manufacturing. ASEAN contributes dynamic markets, expanding digital economies and countries that are progressing through demographic transition at different stages. That diversity allows governments, businesses and researchers to learn from one another instead of repeatedly solving the same problems independently.

The completed negotiations on the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area Version 3.0 illustrate how regional cooperation continues to evolve beyond tariff reduction toward the digital economy cooperation and institutional coordination. Demographic cooperation fits naturally within this broader agenda.

One practical step would be to establish a China-ASEAN partnership for healthy aging. Rather than creating another regional institution, such a partnership could build on existing cooperation mechanisms to encourage joint pilot projects in AI-enabled healthcare, collaborative research on aging technologies, workforce reskilling and policy dialogue on long-term care. The objective would not be technology for its own sake, but practical solutions that improve people's daily lives.

Ultimately, the success of China-ASEAN cooperation should not be measured only by trade volumes or investment flows. It should also be measured by whether the partnership helps both sides respond more effectively to shared structural challenges.

Population aging is one of those challenges, but it is also an opportunity to rethink regional cooperation.

For decades, economists have understood comparative advantage in terms of what countries possess. The next stage of China-ASEAN cooperation may depend just as much on where countries are — not on the map, but along the path of demographic transition.

Knowledge can travel before demographic pressures do. Policies can be tested before they become urgent elsewhere. Innovation can spread before problems become crises.

Trade has connected China and ASEAN. Shared prosperity has strengthened that partnership. Handling aging together may become the next reason to deepen it.

Nisit Panthamit is an associate professor of economics and the director of the Center for ASEAN Studies at the Faculty of Economics at Chiang Mai University, Thailand. Sun Yangyang is a doctoral candidate at the Faculty of Economics at Chiang Mai University, Thailand. The authors contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

QU SHENNING

Emerging industries unlock job growth

China is bridging structural mismatches between burgeoning sectors and employment

China's overall employment scene remains stable, with the synergy between industrial upgrading and employment expansion continuing to deepen. Yet structural mismatches in the labor market persist as a prominent challenge. The 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) sets out a strategic vision for promoting high-quality and full employment, calling for the integration of an employment-first policy with efforts to expand employment and improve job quality. In June, the State Council, China's Cabinet, issued a plan to implement an employment-first strategy, which underscores the need for stronger coordination between industrial and employment policies during the 15th Five-Year Plan period.



Emerging industries are a new source of job creation. These include not only strategic emerging sectors such as next-generation information technology, new energy, new materials, robotics and biomedicine, but also future-oriented fields such as quantum technology, bio-manufacturing, hydrogen energy and nuclear fusion, brain-computer interfaces, embodied intelligence and 6G telecommunications.

Although emerging industries are typically technology- and capital-intensive and employ fewer workers directly than labor-intensive sectors, their indirect contribution to job creation is substantial. This potential manifests in the lengthening value chain — encompassing R&D, design, systems integration and application operations. The key to unlocking this potential does not lie in seeking new engines for mass hiring, but in translating the new technologies, scenarios and business models born from industrial upgrading into sustainable and expandable job opportunities. In other words, the employment potential of emerging industries is realized not through an expansion of low-cost labor, but through a finer division of industrial chains, an extension of service networks and a restructuring of occupational systems.

China's emerging industries are already a solid pillar of employment. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, China's "three new" economy — a collection of economic activities centered around new industries, new business formats and new business models — generated 24.29 trillion yuan ($3.58 trillion) in value added in 2024, accounting for 18.01 percent of GDP. The momentum carried into 2025. The value added of equipment manufacturing in large-scale industries grew by 9.2 percent, high-tech manufacturing by 9.4 percent, revenue of strategic emerging service enterprises by 9.3 percent and that of high-tech service enterprises by 7.9 percent. New energy vehicle production and sales both surpassed 16 million units, while output of service robots and 3D-printing equipment also saw rapid growth.

This suggests that employment opportunities generated by the "three new" economy come not only from manufacturing but also from services — and, more importantly, from the convergence of the two, which gives rise to new professions, new job categories and new entrepreneurial avenues. This is already evident in several key areas. In the NEV sector, industrial expansion has not only boosted assembly-line jobs, but also created new demand for power batteries, automotive chips and smart cockpits. In the low-altitude economy, the proliferation of drones has created not only pilot positions but also a range of composite roles in route planning, emergency response and logistics delivery. New occupations, released by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, include generative AI system testers, drone fleet operations planners and hydrogen fuel cell test engineers. These reflect the reshaping of the employment landscape by industrial transformation and open new pathways for college graduates, skilled workers and those transitioning between occupations.

Generally speaking, however, the employment potential of emerging industries does not automatically materialize into real jobs. In some localities and enterprises, the focus tends to tilt heavily toward project investment, output value and technological breakthroughs — often overlooking job creation, skills alignment and career development. This can produce peculiar paradoxes: some industries expand rapidly while employment lags behind; some companies struggle to recruit qualified talent while some workers have difficulty landing suitable jobs.

One major reason is that emerging industries are inherently interdisciplinary, cross-cutting and fast-moving, whereas conventional vocational education and training systems are slow to adapt. Many college graduates fall short in the engineering, application-oriented and tool-based competencies that employers demand. Similarly, workers from traditional industries often lack digital literacy and hands-on proficiency in operating and maintaining new equipment. Adding to the challenge, future industries are marked by uncertain technological trajectories and unproven business models. If some local governments chase buzzwords without cultivating viable application scenarios and a supportive industrial ecosystem, it is hard to achieve stable job growth.

Emerging industries represent the direction of industrial development and should also serve as an anchor for high-quality job growth and full employment. Tapping into this potential requires moving beyond the conventional mindset of treating industrial policy and labor policy in isolation. Job creation goals can be embedded in industrial policy; employment policy can grasp industrial trends; and talent development can be grounded in real-world scenarios. Industrial upgrading should ultimately benefit workers — by delivering quality jobs, sharpening skills alignment and strengthening labor rights protection — so that industrial progress and job security advance in tandem. This can be pursued concretely along two dimensions.

First, industrial development and job creation should be planned simultaneously. When local governments draw up plans for sectors such as AI, robotics and bio-manufacturing, they should not confine themselves to lists of projects and enterprises. They should also develop corresponding job inventories, skills matrices and training road maps. It is worth noting that not every region needs to engage in original innovation or full-chain competition. A more pragmatic approach is to identify viable niches based on local strengths and application scenarios.

For example, regions with a strong manufacturing base could focus on supporting jobs in smart equipment, critical components and inspection and testing services. Those rich in agricultural and cultural tourism resources could expand employment scenarios in low-altitude inspection, smart agriculture and wellness services. And areas with a concentration of universities and research institutions could develop specialized service roles in proof-of-concept validation, trial runs, data annotation and model evaluation.

Second, vocational skills development can take center stage. For new occupations and job categories, it is essential to move quickly in formulating occupational standards, training syllabi and assessment frameworks. Leading enterprises, vocational schools and industry associations should be encouraged to jointly develop curricula that incorporate real corporate projects, equipment and workflow into training.

Public employment services should also pivot toward monitoring labor demand in emerging sectors, diagnosing skills gaps and providing job transition support — helping college graduates and workers from traditional industries find viable pathways into employment. As for technologies such as AI that may displace certain jobs, it is worth exploring human-machine collaboration models and guiding enterprises to use new technologies to boost labor productivity, reduce physical strain and expand service reach, rather than simply cutting headcount. At the same time, continued efforts should be made to strengthen the management and support for new forms of employment, ensuring that new occupations remain dynamic and vibrant while also being underpinned by clear standards and adequate protections.

The author is a professor at the Institute of Industrial Economics at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



WANG JUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:41 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:41 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

Summer of tech debuts heating up

Unitree, CXMT among Chinese humanoid robots /chip IPOs setting records

By MA SI
masi@chinadaily.com.cn



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

In this year's sweltering summer, China's technology landscape arrived at an inflection point. In the span of a single fortnight, two domestic tech companies made global headlines with stock market debuts that would have been unthinkable a decade ago.

On August 10, Unitree Robotics — hailed as "China's first humanoid robot stock" — opened subscriptions for its initial public offering on Shanghai's STAR Market. The company priced its IPO at 150.80 yuan ($22), aiming to raise about 6.1 billion yuan in total proceeds — a staggering multiple for a company that, like many in the humanoid robotics space, is still scaling commercial deployments.

Two weeks earlier, on July 27, the Chinese mainland's largest memory chipmaker ChangXin Memory Technologies (CXMT) had an even more headline-making debut on the same exchange. Shares of the tech giant surged 465.82 percent to close at 49 yuan per share, propelling its market value to more than 3 trillion yuan — making it the most valuable company on the A-share market on its first trading day.

But a look beyond the head-turning numbers reveals a far more consequential tale unfolding.

This is not about one company's heroics, but a replicable, self-reinforcing innovation ecosystem that is emerging across China's technology landscape. It spans semiconductor design, chip fabrication, artificial intelligence frameworks and industrial integration. And it is beginning to challenge the long-standing assumption that tech supremacy flows only from a handful of breakthrough nodes controlled by a few foreign players, said experts and corporate executives.

Such a robust innovation ecosystem is manifested from Huawei's newly proposed Tau Scaling Law, which reimagines chip development processes for the global semiconductor industry — to the dizzying pace of five major Chinese AI models released in just eight weeks. The flurry also includes a Shenzhen, Guangdong province-based supply chain that can source 30,000 robot components within half a day, and the seamless integration of traditional manufacturing with cutting-edge embodied intelligence.

"Foreign technology export controls are forcing China to solve a structural problem that Silicon Valley never had to," said Xiang Ligang, director-general of the Information Consumption Alliance — a telecom industry association.

"China is no longer chasing a single 'silver bullet'. Instead, it is building an orchestrated stack where every layer, from silicon to software, improves in lockstep — and that may prove more resilient," Xiang said.

Start with Unitree Robotics. Its listing partners offer a clue to the systemic shift. Its strategic investors include not only the National Council for Social Security Fund and DeepSeek, but also the investment arms of China National Petroleum Corp, China Southern Power Grid, China Telecom, Tencent and CITIC Securities. A humanoid robot is no longer a niche gadget — it is a node connecting energy infrastructure, telecom networks, financial services and AI research. Behind a single robot, dozens of interconnected sectors come together: AI models, chips, sensors, precision reducers, motors, batteries, new materials, industrial software and intelligent manufacturing equipment.

Meanwhile, CXMT's debut delivered an even louder statement. Wu Hao, a portfolio manager at Founder Fubon Fund, described CXMT's significance in clear terms: "It completes the most critical piece of a puzzle for the A-share market's memory sector. It gives China its first homegrown DRAM powerhouse with global heft, sharpening the investment case across the memory value chain."

What Wu did not say explicitly, but industry watchers have begun to recognize, is that CXMT's rise is inseparable from the wider ecosystem. The memory value chain — equipment, materials, design, manufacturing and packaging — is no longer a series of isolated Chinese firms fighting their own battles. They are being wired together.

In late May, as CXMT was preparing for its IPO, a different kind of breakthrough was presented at an international semiconductor conference. He Tingbo, president of Huawei's semiconductor business department, unveiled the Tau Scaling Law — a theory that is quietly being described by experts as the most significant rethinking of chip evolution since Gordon Moore articulated his eponymous law in 1965.

Moore's Law, which observed that the number of transistors on silicon chips tends to double about every two years, drove six decades of progress by relentlessly shrinking the transistor. But with features now approaching atomic scales, that path is hitting physical and economic hurdles. Huawei's Tau Scaling Law takes a different approach. Instead of obsessing over smaller transistors, it aims to reduce processing times at every level using transistor switching, circuit delays, chip architecture, interconnect topology and even data center workloads.

Zhou Jianjun, a professor at Shanghai Jiao Tong University's School of Integrated Circuits, said the theory offers a fresh road map. "Chip manufacturing no longer needs to rely so heavily on cutting-edge lithography tools, and the strategic role of advanced packaging continues to grow," he said.

The background is instructive. China's chip sector has faced mounting pressure, with the United States blocking shipments of extreme ultraviolet lithography tools and advanced chipmaking equipment from top suppliers.

Huawei said the Tau Scaling Law will allow it to produce a chip with transistor density equivalent to 1.4 nanometers by 2031. By comparison, TSMC, the world's largest advanced chip foundry, plans to roll out 1.4 nm products in 2028.

Zhou Hongyi, founder of 360 Security Group, framed it as a long-awaited answer to a pointed question: "When others block China from cutting-edge chip technologies, does China still have a second path? Chinese semiconductors are moving from single-point breakthroughs to system-level collaboration across the entire industrial chain."

If the Tau Scaling Law represents systematic thinking at the chip level, then the recent AI landscape is the evidence that the same logic is working at the application layer.

Between June and early August — just eight weeks — China's AI labs released five major models in rapid succession: Alibaba's Qwen3.8-Max, Moonshot AI's Kimi K3, DeepSeek-V4-Flash, Zhipu AI's GLM-5.2 and ByteDance's Seedance 2.5. On July 16, Kimi K3 debuted with 2.8 trillion parameter MoE (Mixture-of-Experts) large language model, and a 1-million-token context window — making it the largest open-source model ever published globally.

The numbers bear this out. The Stanford AI Index Report 2026 showed the comprehensive performance gap between top Chinese and US models has narrowed to just 2.7 percent. The cost differential is even more telling. For equivalent workloads, some Chinese models cost a fraction of what US closed-source flagships charge.

But the deeper point is that these model breakthroughs are not accidents of isolated genius. They are downstream outcomes of a hardware-software feedback loop that is growing tighter by the month. Chinese AI labs are not waiting just for US-made chips — they are training more on domestic accelerators, whose market share in China's AI accelerator market surged to 41 percent in 2025, according to International Data Corp, while Nvidia's share fell to 55 percent.

The training data, the model architectures and the deployment scenarios are being optimized in parallel with domestic hardware, creating a flywheel that accelerates with each iteration, experts added.

Walk into an industrial park in Shenzhen, and you will see a 62-kilogram robot performing continuous backflips, side flips and a spinning jump that launches it 87 centimeters off the ground. The leaping automaton is not a laboratory curiosity. It is the product of a supply chain so tightly integrated that the company can source all 30,000 of its components within half a day. That turnaround allows eight product iterations in just six months — a pace that many overseas competitors cannot match.

Zhang Yin, vice-chairman and secretary-general of the Guangdong Artificial Intelligence and Robotics Industry Alliance, put it bluntly: "The Greater Bay Area (Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao GBA) is the only region in the world that has both AI technology and mechatronics (derived from the combination of "mechanics" and "electronics") technology, and the ability to deeply integrate the two."

This integration — between traditional manufacturing and cutting-edge intelligence — is the secret sauce that many outside observers miss. Wei Liurong, chief engineer of the policy and economics research institute at the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology, offered a vivid analogy.

"Traditional industries provide the 'body' and the 'scenario' for embodied intelligence. A humanoid robot needs high-precision reducers, servo motors, torque sensors and lightweight structural components — the core manufacturing capabilities for these components reside precisely in traditional manufacturing enterprises," Wei said.

At the same time, she added, traditional factories, warehouses and mines are exactly where robots can first go to work after leaving the laboratory.

"The complexity of these scenarios and the feedback of real-world data are essential for robots to evolve from being able to walk to being able to work. If you only focus on the large language model for embodied intelligence while neglecting the foundation of traditional precision manufacturing, the robot will suffer from 'cerebral palsy' — a very smart brain with unresponsive limbs, unable to pass tests of precision, durability and stability."

Chen Yanbin, director of the Institute of Industrial Economics at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said China's manufacturing scale ranked first globally for the 16th consecutive year in 2025.

"The strategic underpinning for this has been its complete industrial system," Chen said.

Hong Qunlian, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Macroeconomic Research under the National Development and Reform Commission, placed this shift in a broader context.

"As a new round of technological revolution accelerates, global economic competition has shifted from product rivalry and corporate battles to a competition between entire industrial ecosystems. Whether China can seize opportunities and meet challenges by building a modern industrial system aligned with this technological revolution will determine our strategic position in future development," Hong said.

'When the chips are down' — what a difference 7 years can make!

REPORTER'S LOG

By Ma Si

Seven years ago, I stepped off the train at Hefei South Railway Station in Anhui province to visit a memory chip startup that had just developed its first self-designed high-end product. At the time, the global DRAM industry was a near-monopoly of Samsung, SK Hynix and Micron. Few believed a Chinese upstart could ever crash that party.

On July 27, China's largest memory chipmaker ChangXin Memory Technologies, or CXMT, made a blockbuster debut on the Shanghai Stock Exchange's STAR Market. Shares surged 465.82 percent to close at 49 yuan, propelling its market value to more than 3 trillion yuan ($444.9 billion). The company not only overtook US peer Intel in market value, but also dethroned the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China as the domestic market's top-weighted company. The single-day turnover of 140 billion yuan shattered all records for an individual A-share stock.

The seven-year arc from my first site visit to today's financial milestone is not just a corporate success story. It is a testament to what happens when strategic patience meets a fortuitous market moment.

To understand CXMT's rise, one must first understand its founder. In 2005, Zhu Yiming founded GigaDevice Semiconductor Inc, a Nor Flash memory company, with just $100,000 in startup capital. He took it public on Shanghai's main board in August 2016 — a comfortable exit by any measure. At 44, he was wealthy, respected and could have coasted on GigaDevice's success.

But Zhu had a bigger ambition. Nor Flash was not mainstream memory. China, the world's largest electronics manufacturing base, consumed enormous quantities of DRAM chips each year — yet had no meaningful domestic production capability.

Zhu knew China had to crack DRAM. So in 2016, he made a choice that few understood: he plunged into what would become a decade-long, capital-intensive, and brutally difficult war of attrition.

On May 6, 2016, Zhu reached an agreement with the city of Hefei to launch CXMT. The total commitment would eventually reach 150 billion yuan.

In 2019, CXMT achieved what no Chinese company had done before: it successfully mass-produced China's first self-designed, self-manufactured 8 gigabyte DDR4 memory chip. It was a historic "from zero to one" breakthrough for China's DRAM industry.

That's exactly when I first visited the company. I still remember the pride the engineers had when they showed us their first products, and I even brought home a souvenir version of the packaged 8GB DDR4 memory chip.

It is worth noting, however, that CXMT is not the only Chinese company that tried to develop DRAM chips. Tsinghua Unigroup, a major Chinese integrated circuit manufacturer, also spent big money on building factories and acquiring talent from the bankrupt German DRAM maker Qimonda, but it failed.

DRAM is a scale-driven, capital-intensive business with brutal technology barriers. CXMT's success is a combination of long-term capital investment, persistent technological innovation and good timing.

In fact, from 2016 through 2025, CXMT burned through cash year after year. According to its prospectus, as of Dec 31, 2025, the company's cumulative losses had reached 36.65 billion yuan.

Then came 2025 — the turning point.

Driven by explosive artificial intelligence demand, the global DRAM market entered a historic super-cycle. Hyperscalers ramped up infrastructure spending, and server demand for memory chips surged. CXMT's capacity expansion — three 12-inch fabs across Hefei and Beijing — hit the market at precisely the right moment.

The numbers tell the story. In 2025, CXMT's revenue reached 61.799 billion yuan, up 155.6 percent year-on-year, with net profit attributable to the parent company of 1.875 billion yuan — its first full-year profit.

Then 2026 blew those numbers away. In the first quarter alone, CXMT generated 50.8 billion yuan in revenue — up 719 percent year-on-year — and net profit attributable to the parent company of 24.762 billion yuan.

By the second quarter of 2026, CXMT's global DRAM market share reached 7 percent, ranking fourth worldwide, according to the latest data from global technology market intelligence company Counterpoint Research. It has broken the three-way monopoly that once seemed unassailable.

When I asked a veteran engineer what the IPO means for the team, he smiled: "Seven years ago, we were proving we could make a chip. Now we're proving we can build a business."

Some will say CXMT is simply riding a wave. True, global DRAM revenue more than doubled over the past year, but windfalls don't explain everything. CXMT didn't just get lucky; it positioned itself to capitalize. Its long-term research and development strategy paid off. Its capacity expansion hit the market at exactly the right moment.

During the IPO roadshow, Zhu said the company would "actively seize the incremental opportunities brought by AI computing power" while remaining "objective about the strong cyclical nature of the DRAM industry." That is the voice of someone who has learned to dance with volatility.

The question is no longer whether China can compete. It is how fast it can catch up — and what happens when it does.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:41 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:41 PM

BUSINESSINSIGHT

China reshaping, not squeezing, global industrialization

EAGLE EYE
By Tu Xinquan and Cui Yuyang



Chinese project manager (front right) and local employees work together at the construction site of B75 highway in northern Kenya on July 15. LIU QIONG / XINHUA

As tariff tensions continue to cast a shadow over global trade, debate over China's trade surplus has expanded beyond the United States and Europe to developing economies.

A recent report by the Washington-based Peterson Institute for International Economics, titled "China's mercantilist squeeze on developing countries" — and commentaries inspired by it — has advanced a provocative argument: China is not leaving enough room for latecomers to industrialize, but instead is constraining their development prospects by maintaining dominance in low-skilled manufacturing.

The report estimates that such a "squeeze" could cost developing economies tens of billions of dollars in exports annually, equivalent to millions of manufacturing jobs.

The argument has gained traction among some Western policymakers because it fits a familiar narrative: that China has become an economic force dominating large parts of global manufacturing, leaving limited room for others to industrialize.

But this interpretation rests on a flawed reading of both trade data and global industrial dynamics. It treats international production as a fixed pie, rather than a constantly evolving network shaped by investment, technology diffusion and changing comparative advantages.

China's Ministry of Commerce recently rejected the claim that Chinese industrial development has reduced opportunities for developing countries, arguing instead that China's exports of affordable and high-quality machinery, components and production equipment have lowered the barriers for other economies seeking to industrialize.

The central argument behind the "squeeze" theory is that China's share of global exports in low-skilled manufacturing is disproportionately high. By value, China accounts for nearly 65 percent of such exports — far above what some researchers estimate would be justified by its labor force size.

Yet this comparison relies on a questionable assumption: that export competitiveness is determined primarily by the number of workers a country has.

In reality, industrial capacity depends on a much broader set of factors, including logistics networks, infrastructure quality, reliable electricity supplies, supplier ecosystems and institutional efficiency.

A country does not win manufacturing orders simply because it has abundant labor. It must also have the ability to deliver products efficiently, consistently and at scale.

The comparison also overlooks the very different global environments faced by today's China and developed economies at similar income levels decades ago. The degree of globalization, the speed of technology transfers and the organization of supply chains today are fundamentally different from those of the 1960s.

Without accounting for these structural changes, historical comparisons risk producing conclusions that reflect assumptions rather than reality.

More importantly, static export shares fail to capture the dynamic process of industrial relocation.

China's continued strength in labor-intensive manufacturing has existed alongside — rather than against — the expansion of manufacturing capacity elsewhere. Chinese companies have increasingly invested in Southeast Asia, Africa and Latin America, transferring production capabilities while maintaining deeper integration with global supply chains.

In Southeast Asia, for example, Chinese companies have expanded manufacturing investment in countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam. In sectors including electronics and automobiles, a new division of labor has emerged — research, advanced components and core technologies remain concentrated in China, while assembly and downstream production increasingly take place across the region.

This is therefore not a zero-sum competition, but an evolving production network.

The second weakness of the "squeeze" argument is that it treats all manufacturing exports as the same, ignoring the transformation of China's export structure.

China's exports have shifted significantly over the past decade. The share of intermediate goods in total exports increased from about 42 percent in early 2015 to 46 percent by mid-2025, while consumer goods declined from 37 percent to 31 percent.

In simple terms, China is increasingly moving from selling finished products to supplying the machinery, components and technologies needed to make those products.

For developing economies, this distinction matters.

When a country exports capital goods and intermediate products, it is not merely competing with other manufacturers; it is providing tools that enable industrial development elsewhere.

China's rising exports of machinery and electrical products to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and Africa reflect this trend. These flows increasingly involve production equipment, industrial components and technologies that support local manufacturing capacity.

The "squeeze" argument also attributes China's manufacturing competitiveness largely to currency advantages and industrial subsidies. But such claims often lack convincing evidence.

Research by international institutions has shown that China's industrial support measures have increasingly focused on strategic emerging sectors such as electric vehicles, batteries and renewable energy, rather than traditional labor-intensive manufacturing.

Moreover, Chinese manufacturing wages are now significantly higher than those in many competing developing economies, including Bangladesh and India. Yet Chinese manufacturers remain competitive because of factors such as industrial clusters, supply-chain efficiency, infrastructure quality and economies of scale.

These are structural advantages developed over decades, rather than simply the result of policy distortions.

Indeed, rising labor costs in China may create opportunities for lower-income economies by gradually shifting labor-intensive production elsewhere.

China is a participant in developing countries' industrialization, not an obstacle.

The portrayal of China as a country "taking away the ladder" overlooks the expanding role Chinese companies play in supporting industrial development in the Global South.

Across Africa, Chinese investment has contributed to manufacturing projects, industrial parks and infrastructure development. From Morocco's Mohammed VI Tanger Tech City to industrial cooperation zones in Zambia and Ethiopia, Chinese companies have brought not only factories and employment, but also technical training and supply-chain development.

International organizations, including the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, have highlighted the role of technology transfers, investment flows and access to clean technologies in support of industrialization in developing economies.

China's trade and investment policies have also expanded market access for developing countries. Beijing in May expanded its zero-tariff treatment to cover all 53 African countries with which it has diplomatic ties, while cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative has continued to expand.

These developments point to a different interpretation of China's role: not as a country restricting industrial opportunities, but as one reshaping how industrialization takes place.

At the multilateral level, initiatives focused on global development cooperation have supported projects in areas including poverty reduction, food security, industrialization and the digital economy, while providing training opportunities for developing-country professionals.

The underlying principle is not about deciding who should surrender market share, but about expanding productive capacity and creating new opportunities.

South-South Cooperation is not simply a form of assistance. It reflects changing comparative advantages and mutual economic interests. China provides capital, technology, manufacturing capabilities and market access, while developing economies gain infrastructure, industrial ecosystems and integration into global supply chains.

The global manufacturing landscape is expanding, not shrinking.

Ultimately, the "China squeeze" narrative reduces a complex and dynamic process into a zero-sum contest: every additional percentage point gained by China is portrayed as a loss for others.

But global manufacturing has continued to expand, and international production networks have become more interconnected.

China's role is also changing — from being merely the "world's factory" to becoming a major market, investor and supplier of industrial capabilities.

This does not mean developing countries face no challenges. Weak infrastructure, limited human capital and institutional constraints remain major barriers to industrialization.

But attributing these difficulties primarily to China overlooks the deeper structural issues facing late-industrializing economies.

The Chinese proverb "give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime" captures this broader point.

China's engagement with other developing economies is not about removing ladders, but about helping build more of them.

The real question is not whether China is taking industrial opportunities away from others, but whether the global economy can create more pathways for countries seeking to climb the development ladder.

Tu Xinquan is dean of the China Institute for WTO Studies at the University of International Business and Economics. Cui Yuyang is a scholar at the China Institute for WTO Studies of the University of International Business and Economics.
The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Key meeting sends message to shore up drivers, focusing on structural issues in H2

MAIN STREET
By Li Xunlei and Zhang Deli

China's first-half GDP growth came in at 4.7 percent, within the full-year target range set at between 4.5 to 5 percent. Against this backdrop, the recent meeting of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, as widely expected, did not announce fiscal or monetary stimulus measures beyond market expectations. Instead, its intent was seemingly to focus more on the structural end.

On consumption, the meeting called for expanding quality supply to meet the needs of different consumer groups and tapping the potential of services consumption. On fiscal and monetary policy, it urged faster fiscal expenditure and bond-fund use, as well as the comprehensive and timely adjustment of monetary policy tools. This emphasis reflects the main features of China's first-half economic performance.

Total retail sales of consumer goods grew only 1.3 percent year-on-year, while per capita disposable income and consumption expenditure rose 5.2 percent and 3.7 percent, respectively, showing that spending growth lagged behind income growth. Household balance-sheet adjustments may help explain the gap: early mortgage repayments have reduced household borrowing, while excess savings have continued to accumulate. Meanwhile, the multiplier effect of consumer trade-in policies has weakened, contributing to sharp declines in home appliance and automobile purchases.

The 2025 trade-in program benefited more than 360 million person-times, according to official data. Measured by unique participants, coverage may have been below 20 percent of the population, with higher-income households likely accounting for a relatively larger share. This helps explain the meeting's emphasis on expanding quality supply for different consumer groups.

GDP growth slowed from 5 percent in the first quarter to 4.3 percent in the second, partly reflecting slower fiscal expenditure in April and May. Measured by the financing gaps in the general public budget and the government-managed fund budget, about 38.5 percent of the implied full-year broad deficit had been used by midyear, well below the 44.4 percent average for the same period in the previous three years.

This leaves considerable room for fiscal policy to support growth in the second half. In addition to 2.2 trillion yuan ($326 billion) in local government special-purpose bonds yet to be issued and 800 billion yuan in new policy-based financial instruments, historical experience suggests that more than 600 billion yuan in unused special-bond quotas could also be mobilized. Against this backdrop, it is understandable that the meeting did not deliver a clear policy surprise.

The absence of stronger-than-expected measures does not rule out additional support later this year, as uncertainties remain. Compared with the April meeting, the language became more forceful, shifting from optimizing incremental resources and revitalizing existing assets to fully leveraging existing policies and promptly planning practical and effective additional measures. The wording also changed from continuing to expand domestic demand and optimize supply to intensifying efforts in both areas.

The most prominent structural feature of the first-half economy was that investment and consumption both fell short of expectations, while exports exceeded expectations, rising 17.6 percent year-on-year. Technology-related products made a particularly strong contribution. Integrated circuits contributed 4.8 percentage points to export growth, other electronic products 4.78 percentage points and artificial intelligence and server-related exports 2.3 percentage points. The meeting therefore concluded that new growth drivers were gaining momentum and the economic structure was improving.

This suggests that policymakers are likely to tolerate a greater degree of structural divergence and are unlikely to revive large-scale stimulus moves for traditional growth drivers merely to smooth aggregate fluctuations. The sustained outperformance of certain industries may therefore become a medium-term feature rather than a temporary phenomenon.

The meeting called for long-term and stable support for basic research, deeper implementation of the "AI Plus" initiative, the development of new forms of the intelligent economy, improved AI governance, breakthroughs in frontier technologies and future industries, and the cultivation of emerging pillar industries. This points to continued policy and fiscal support for AI-related research, infrastructure and industrial development.

Real estate, by contrast, received only brief mention. The meeting called for stabilizing the property market and placed the issue in the section on risk prevention, alongside risks involving local small and medium-sized financial institutions. This suggests that the approach toward traditional growth drivers is to provide necessary support without restoring large-scale stimulus measures.

The meeting's call to comprehensively use and adjust monetary policy tools while improving fiscal and financial coordination to support domestic demand has led to expectations of cuts in interest rates and banks' reserve requirement ratios. Whether such measures will materialize, however, remains uncertain.

The weighted average reserve requirement ratio currently stands at about 6.2 percent, only around 120 basis points above the 5 percent level commonly regarded as an implicit lower level, leaving limited room for further reductions. The central bank also has other liquidity instruments, including open-market operations, outright reverse repos, government bond transactions, the medium-term lending facility and structural tools. These can meet liquidity needs without further reducing the RRR.

A large trade surplus and greater willingness among exporters to convert foreign-currency receipts into renminbi are also adding liquidity to the banking system. RRR cuts are therefore more likely to be kept in reserve.

Interest rate cuts face even greater constraints. Commercial lenders' net interest margin fell to a historic low of 1.4 percent in the first quarter. Further compression could weaken banks' ability to generate capital internally, reduce their willingness to extend credit and increase operational risks. The China-US interest rate differential and the need to maintain exchange-rate stability also create external constraints.

More fundamentally, the marginal impact of rate cuts is weakening. When insufficient effective demand is driven more by expectations than by financing costs, monetary-policy transmission becomes weaker and more protracted. As year-on-year data may improve in the second half, the market may be overestimating the likelihood of further rate cuts. A broader recovery in credit growth is more likely to occur through structural monetary tools working in coordination with fiscal policy.

Both fiscal revenue and expenditure progressed slowly in the first half, leaving substantial room for fiscal policy to gain momentum later in the year. Revenue from government-managed funds fell 21.6 percent year-on-year. Assuming the same rate of decline for the full year and that general public budget expenditures proceed in line with the budget, combined expenditure growth under the general public budget and government-managed fund budget could rise from minus 2.9 percent in the first half to 5.4 percent in the second.

The Government Work Report also arranged 800 billion yuan in new policy-based financial instruments. These can be used as supplementary project capital to support major projects and sectors associated with new quality productive forces. Faster deployment is expected to help stabilize infrastructure and manufacturing investment.

The call to promptly plan and introduce practical and effective additional policies should therefore be understood mainly in fiscal terms. Local governments, local government financing vehicles and State-owned public institutions continue to face considerable debt burdens. The meeting also called for regular efforts to resolve overdue payments owed to enterprises, indicating that amid accelerated population aging and the continued adjustment of the real estate sector, the revenue-generating capacity of some local governments has weakened. Additional transfers or targeted fiscal support from the central government may therefore still be needed.

Li Xunlei is chief economist at Zhongtai Financial International Limited.
Zhang Deli is chief macro analyst at Zhongtai Securities.
The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:41 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:41 PM

CHINA

Abandoned Japanese WWII weapons still pose a threat in China

HARBIN — The latest leak involving abandoned Japanese chemical weapons in Northeast China's Jilin province, which contaminated two Japanese personnel during disposal operations, has renewed concerns about the lingering dangers of wartime chemical weapons still buried in China.

As Saturday marked the 81st anniversary of Japan's unconditional surrender during World War II, the incident has drawn renewed attention to Unit 516, the invading Japanese army's clandestine chemical warfare unit headquartered in Qiqihar, Heilongjiang province, during World War II.

Experts noted that Japan has yet to provide China with critical information regarding Unit 516 and the chemical weapons it abandoned at the end of the war. Some high-risk munitions remain undiscovered, and deterioration of their containers increases the risk of toxic agents seeping into soil and water sources.

At a news briefing on June 4, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning disclosed that on May 26, two Japanese personnel had their arms contaminated with toxic agents during a disposal operation in Jilin when the abandoned Japanese chemical weapons ruptured. The Chinese side immediately provided on-site medical treatment before rushing them to a hospital. After receiving treatment, they returned to Japan on May 29.

However, the incident was not unprecedented. According to China's position paper submitted to the Fifth Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention, abandoned Japanese chemical weapons have caused more than 2,000 casualties in China since the end of WWII.

This year marks the 81st anniversary of the end of WWII and of victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression. The 14-year war was the longest and largest fight against foreign aggression for the Chinese people in modern times. It came with a great cost — 35 million casualties among the Chinese military and civilian population — before Japan ultimately surrendered in 1945.

While scars left by the war have yet to heal fully, dangerous remnants from the war continue to threaten the safety of communities.

Of particular concern is the Japanese military's incorporation of arsenic into its chemical weapons, both to stabilize mustard agents under extremely cold conditions and to enhance their lethality. Arsenic does not naturally break down in the environment. During excavation, investigators have found many shells already corroded or even ruptured. According to experts, ongoing deterioration could allow large amounts of toxic liquid to seep into the ground.

Such contamination could permanently pollute local soil and groundwater, increasing long-term cancer risks and threatening nearby communities for generations.

Heilongjiang has been more severely affected by abandoned Japanese chemical weapons. The city of Qiqihar, where Unit 516 was deployed during the war, is considered the epicenter of the problem.

"Unit 516 was responsible for developing a wide range of chemical warfare agents, including mustard gas, Lewisite and chlorine gas, all of which were used in combat," said Wang Tianjiao with the Qiqihar Museum.

"Qiqihar was used as a major base for Japan's chemical warfare program, so virtually every type of abandoned Japanese chemical weapon could potentially still be found here," Wang added.

The city has seen some of the worst toxic exposures over the years. On Aug 4, 2003, construction workers unearthed five drums containing mustard gas at a building site. The leak resulted in injuries to 44 people. Some victims have since died, while many survivors continue to suffer from severe pain and illnesses.

A long-term follow-up medical study published on the website of the United States' National Center for Biotechnology Information found that severe autonomic failure, such as hyperhidrosis, pollakiuria, diarrhoea, diminished libido, and asthenia, appeared in almost all victims from the incident. Polyneuropathy occurred in 35 percent of the victims and constricted vision in 20 percent of them, among other malfunctions. Many continued to suffer from severe post-traumatic stress disorder and depression years after exposure.

In the years following the 2003 incident, abandoned Japanese artillery shells were repeatedly discovered at construction sites and disused factories across Qiqihar.

On July 30, 2010, a group of schoolchildren in Qiqihar were found fiddling with three rusted shells, with fuses still attached to two of the shells. The terrifying discovery sent local police into an intense excavation that lasted over eight hours. By the end of the operation, they had recovered 359 artillery shells of various types from a disused factory. The shells were later identified as abandoned by Japanese invaders.

> "Unlike germ warfare weapons, effectiveness of which diminishes over time, chemical weapons remain highly toxic for a long time."
>
> **Wang Tianjiao,** a staff member of the Qiqihar Museum

Shortly afterward, another 63 shells were uncovered at a construction site and later identified as abandoned by Japanese troops. Thanks to the prompt response of local police, the danger was neutralized without any casualties.

Wang estimated that Unit 516 abandoned roughly 200,000 chemical munitions at the end of WWII. Some were buried underground, while others were dumped into the Nenjiang River. "Unlike germ warfare weapons, the effectiveness of which diminishes over time, chemical weapons remain highly toxic for a long time," he said.

Japan has continued to withhold information on the locations, quantities and types of these abandoned weapons, as well as details about Unit 516, hampering efforts to recover and destroy them.

Historical records indicate that abandoned chemical weapons are scattered across numerous burial sites in widely varying quantities. Their small size and varying burial depths make them especially difficult to locate.

Under the CWC, Japan was required to complete the destruction of all abandoned chemical weapons in China by the end of 2007. However, the deadline has already been postponed four times.

Furthermore, legal efforts to seek accountability have also met setbacks. On Sept 21, 2012, the Tokyo High Court rejected an appeal by victims of the 2003 Qiqihar chemical leak incident seeking state compensation from the Japanese government.

While acknowledging that the abandoned Japanese chemical weapons had caused the injuries, the ruling denied the Japanese government's liability for inaction, citing the lack of clarity over the locations where the chemical agents had been abandoned and the inability to prevent the incident from occurring.

Twenty-three years after the 2003 incident, many of the original 44 victims have died. Those who remain continue to suffer debilitating long-term health problems.

Hao Yanzhi, whose wife Niu Haiying was among the victims, said his wife's immune system has steadily weakened over the years. The youngest victim of the incident dropped out of school at an early age and has endured chronic pain and poor immunity for more than two decades.

Many survivors say they do not know whether they will live long enough to hear an official apology from the Japanese government.

XINHUA

Cooling off indoors



Visitors crowd an indoor pool at the Daying salt lake, also know as the Dead Sea of China, in Suining, Sichuan province, on Saturday, as temperatures topped 35 C in many parts of Sichuan and Chongqing. Built over underground saline brine reserves estimated at 4.2 billion metric tons, the resort features a natural thermal brine pool with a salt concentration of more than 22 percent. ZHONG MIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

New code set to bolster eco-rehabilitation efforts

Cases highlight compensation system's ability to hold offenders accountable

By CAO YIN
caoyin@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese authorities are committed to strengthening the ecological damage compensation system, a significant step toward improving the framework for modern environmental governance and establishing a solid institutional foundation for a greener, more sustainable China.

On Saturday, which marked the fourth National Ecology Day and the implementation of the Ecological and Environmental Code, the Supreme People's Court, the Supreme People's Procuratorate and the Ministry of Ecology and Environment jointly released details of 10 landmark cases related to the system.

Focusing on key regions such as the Yangtze and Yellow river basins and the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, the cases demonstrate the development of the ecological damage compensation system from a pilot program to a robust mechanism built for holding environmental offenders accountable through coordinated government action.

By July, China had handled more than 70,400 ecological damage compensation cases involving over 35.5 billion yuan ($5.2 billion) in compensation, penalties and remediation costs, according to data from the three authorities.

The system was initially piloted in 2015 across seven provinces, including Jilin, Jiangsu and Shandong, before expanding nationwide in 2018. It requires those responsible for pollution and ecological damage to cover the cost of restoring damaged ecosystems, shifting the burden of environmental remediation from the public and government to the responsible parties.

With the Ecological and Environmental Code, the country's second law designated as a "code", now in effect, the three authorities noted that the cases highlight the achievements of the compensation system and send a clear warning that environmental offenders will face legal and financial consequences, backed by strong inter-agency collaboration.

One notable case involved illegal coal mining activities in the Muli mining area on the southern slopes of the Qilian Mountains in Qinghai province, which were discovered in August 2020. Investigations uncovered massive pits and waste rock piles created by 11 companies, which led to the destruction of over 5,500 hectares of alpine meadows and 53 hectares of vegetation.

The mining activities caused extensive ecological damage, including the stripping of permafrost, reduced water conservation capacity, grassland degradation, desertification, and slope instability.

Between 2021 and 2024, the Haixi and Haibei prefectural governments in Qinghai negotiated with the 11 companies involved and settlement agreements were reached with seven enterprises, with compensation totaling 2.46 billion yuan. By June 2026, about 1.85 billion yuan had been collected. The companies that refused to settle now face litigation.

Given the mining area's location in a high-altitude, cold region with fragile ecosystems and slow natural recovery, the provincial government advanced the required funds to begin restoration while negotiations were ongoing. Provincial, prefectural and county governments, together with departments responsible for natural resources, ecology and environment, and forestry, adopted a "pit-by-pit responsibility" approach to coordinate restoration efforts.

Restorative interventions included backfilling, waste rock rehabilitation, slope stabilization and vegetation restoration. Nearly 58.98 million cubic meters of earth and rock were used, 65.23 hectares of wetlands were restored, and vegetation was replanted across 2,620 hectares.

The three authorities said the Muli mining case involved the highest compensation amount in any environmental damage case nationwide and has significant ecological and social implications. Local governments not only advanced funds for restoration and worked with research institutions and experts on the scientific rehabilitation of the alpine grassland, but also implemented staggered payment plans in order to ease the financial pressure on the companies and encourage them to restore the damaged ecosystem.

Qin Tianbao, head of the Research Institute of Environmental Law at Wuhan University, praised the handling of the case.

"The differentiated solutions and phased payment approach effectively relieve the financial burden on the companies, while the local government's upfront funding for restoration expedited ecological recovery and minimized service function losses during the restoration period," Qin said.

The Supreme People's Court said the highlighted cases demonstrate the judiciary's determination to safeguard national and public interests and protect the people's environmental rights.

Over the past decade, the SPC has issued more than 20 judicial interpretations related to environmental and public interest litigation, further developing the legal framework in this area. Courts nationwide have prioritized natural restoration, supplemented by artificial remediation, and standardized alternative restoration measures, such as replanting trees and releasing fish stocks, to provide comprehensive restoration options for different ecosystems.

Some courts have also introduced innovative measures to improve the system. Courts in Chongqing, Sichuan and Gansu province, for example, have established expert databases in cooperation with environmental authorities and invited researchers to participate in investigations, evidence collection, damage assessment and restoration plan design, creating a new model of shared governance.

Chinese prosecutors have also played a crucial role in enforcing the system through public interest litigation. Between July 2017 and July 2026, prosecutors nationwide handled 615,000 public interest litigation cases involving environmental and resource protection, including 527,000 administrative cases and 88,000 civil cases. These accounted for 46.7 percent of all public interest litigation cases handled during this period.



Students take flight

University students compete in an aircraft design and innovation competition in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, on Saturday. The event brought together more than 1,200 students from 56 universities across eastern China. Participating students independently completed every stage of their projects, from design and component construction to assembly, testing and actual flight.

YANG BO / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

'Glueball' find hailed a victory for physics

By LI MENGHAN
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

While subatomic building blocks of matter were once thought to always contain fundamental components known as quarks, Chinese scientists have confirmed the existence of a unique particle made entirely of pure force with no quarks inside.

The BESIII Collaboration, a major facility operating at the Beijing Electron Positron Collider under the Institute of High Energy Physics of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, announced the results in a special plenary report at the International Conference on High Energy Physics in Natal, Brazil, on Aug 5.

After more than a decade of data collection and over 10 billion recorded particle collisions, researchers verified that a particle designated as X(2370) is predominantly a "glueball" — a particle composed exclusively of gluons bound together.

Gluons act as subatomic "glue". They are force-carrying particles responsible for the strong nuclear force, which holds atomic nuclei together. While particles of light, known as photons, pass through one another without interacting, gluons interact directly with each other. This unique property allows them to bind together into a self-contained particle. Quantum chromodynamics, the theory describing the strong nuclear force, first predicted this "particle of pure force" in the 1970s.

"We found it 15 years ago, but confirming its identity was extremely difficult. We went through a great deal of effort and built a complete chain of evidence before announcing it to the international community," said Jin Shan, a professor at Nanjing University in Jiangsu province who led the finding.

First reported in 2011, X(2370) decays too quickly for direct measurement. Scientists instead identified it by analyzing its decay products — the secondary particles left behind.

In 2024, the team measured key quantum properties of X(2370), showing an exact match to theoretical models for the lightest type of glueball. Out of 10 billion collisions, only about 5,000 yielded the target signal.

To prove X(2370) was entirely quark-free, Jin's team looked for specific breakdown patterns that a pure glueball is forbidden from producing.

The experiment yielded zero prohibited signals, satisfying the theoretical requirements. The team also confirmed that X(2370) distributes its decay across many different particle types and rarely converts into light, further verifying its identity.

Huang Yanping, a researcher at the Institute of High Energy Physics, noted that X(2370) satisfied all theoretical predictions, providing the clearest evidence yet for glueballs and establishing a framework for future discoveries.

The search for glueballs has been one of the Beijing Electron Positron Collider's primary goals for decades. First built in the 1980s, the collider underwent a major facility upgrade in 2008 which increased data output a thousandfold, laying the groundwork for the breakthrough.

"This discovery was the result of five generations of scientists working over four decades," said Wang Yifang, an academician at the Chinese Academy of Sciences and researcher at the Institute of High Energy Physics. "Many people left along the way because the task seemed too difficult. Those who stayed finally got the answer."

The discovery has drawn praise from international experts.

Colin Morningstar, a professor at the Carnegie Mellon University in the United States, called the result "a monumental achievement for fundamental physics", while William Detmold, a theoretical physicist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, said the discovery ticks all the right boxes.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:41 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:41 PM

VISUAL







Illustrating China's devotion to eco-restoration





Newly unveiled thematic artworks depict vision for conservation

By CHINA DAILY

In a land where the whispers of nature are intertwined with its people's daily lives, the concept of "ecology" is not just a word but a way of life. It is a promise of lush landscapes and vibrant communities.

From the onset of the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25), China embarked on an ambitious journey to integrate the protection and systematic management of its mountains, rivers, forests, fields, lakes, grasslands, and deserts.

This initiative aims to ensure that the land retains its hues of greens and blues and that the bounty of nature enriches the lives of all.

At the heart of this ecological renaissance is a newly unveiled series of thematic illustrations, each a piece representing one of the seven vital dimensions of nature. These artworks are not merely illustrations; they are a narrative of interconnected existence, revealing the secrets of mutual survival.

The first illustration depicts the mountains, the backbone of the Earth. It showcases the rejuvenated mining areas of Wuyi Mountain in Fujian province, now cloaked in verdant regrowth, standing guard as the ecological shield at the source of the Minjiang River.

Next is the illustration of water, the lifeblood of rivers and seas. The vibrant waters around Weizhou Island in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, with restored coral reefs, protect the South China Sea and nurture a thriving marine ecosystem.

The third piece celebrates forests, the natural carbon reservoirs. It portrays the lush giant panda habitats, where ecological corridors connect these sanctuaries, fostering biodiversity and sequestering carbon.

Farming fields, the foundation of sustenance, are illustrated through the fertile black soil of the Sanjiang Plain in Heilongjiang province, where modern machinery work in harmony with land conservation to preserve rich farmlands.

The lakes are depicted in the fifth illustration. It shows the lush wetlands of Huzhou in Zhejiang province, where interconnected river and lake systems breathe life into the lakeside ecosystems.

Grasslands are captured in the rejuvenated landscapes of the Hulunbuir grassland in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region, where new grazing practices and wind energy development created a green barrier.

Finally, the deserts are illustrated with straw grids of desert areas in the Ningxia Hui autonomous region, where innovative sand-fixing techniques halted desertification, heralding an expansion of greenery.

These seven illustrations tell a story of interdependence: mountains give birth to water, water nourishes forests; forests protect fields, fields reflect lakes, lakes nurture grass, and grass stabilizes sand. No landscape is isolated; all form part of an intricate web of life.

Through these artworks, the nation celebrated its commitment to ecological integrity. By embracing these seven vistas, they envisioned a harmonious coexistence of humanity and nature.







Online
See more by scanning the code.

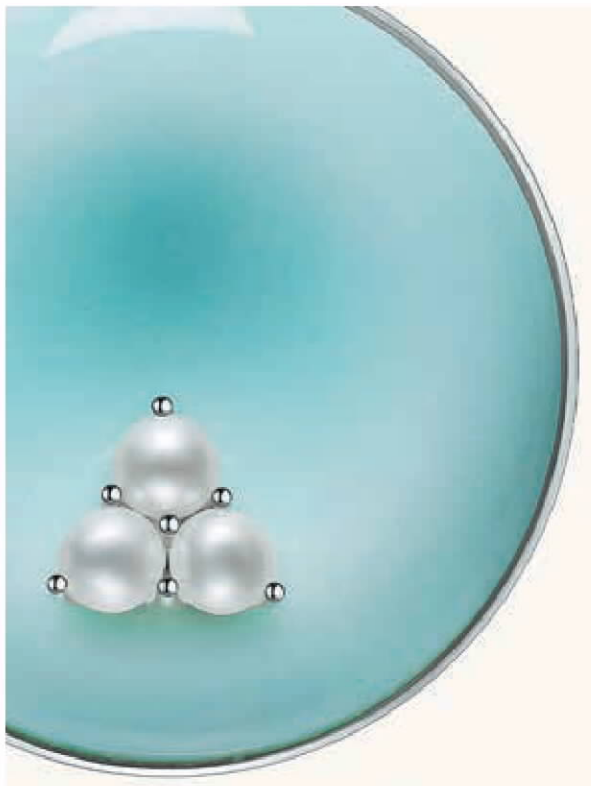


SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:41 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:41 PM

LIFE





Earrings (left and right), inspired by traditional ceramic glaze, are the latest creations by jewelry designer Zhao Yici. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Wearable pieces of history

Jingdezhen's ceramic heritage sparks new ideas as artist explores porcelain through distinctly contemporary perspectives, **Lin Qi** reports.

The recent inscription of Jingdezhen's handicraft industry sites as a group on the UNESCO World Heritage List pays tribute to the historical glory of the hilly, riverfront city in landlocked Jiangxi province as a flourishing center of porcelain production and trade between the 10th and 19th centuries.

The inscription also celebrates a long-standing, comprehensive system of manufacturing and craftsmanship that still thrives in Jingdezhen, renowned as China's "porcelain capital", whose exquisite products captivate people today.

Among those fueling the city's creative energy are local ceramists, as well as the community of *jingpiao* ("Jingdezhen drifters"), a term affectionately used to describe artists who come to the city for long-term or brief stays.





Earrings from the Eterna series (above) and brooch (below) designed by Zhao Yici.

Zhao Yici is one of these gifted and ambitious visitors.

A seasoned jewelry designer, she was first drawn to Jingdezhen by its heritage and, at the same time, its inspiring creative atmosphere.

The city opened up a different world for her — a material with which she had limited experience and a handicraft tradition in which she saw possibilities for innovation by integrating her existing practices.

This led to the birth of Trace by Yici in 2024, through which she brings the sensibilities of a jewelry designer with more than 10 years of experience to ceramics.

Her stay in Jingdezhen also marked the beginning of a creative renewal for her as she pursued "a state of free expression" within the realm of Eastern aesthetics, after years of being accustomed to a business-oriented way of thinking.

She describes her foray into ceramics as an impulsive act. "For me, ceramics is a natural material, and full of uncertainty."

While in Jingdezhen, she made porcelain paintings and installations using cobalt blue pigment. During the process, she was impressed by the lightness of ceramics, as well as by the way a single material can possess different degrees of luster and shifting colors — qualities she finds quite unique.

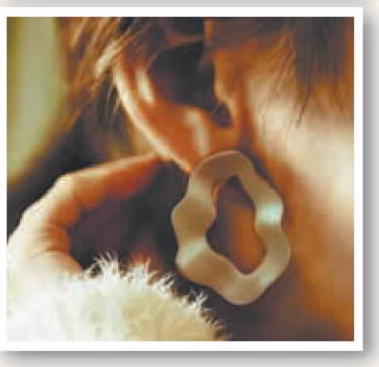
She has continued her exploration of ceramics back in her hometown, Beijing, working from her studio on the third floor of the Hongqiao Market. The emporium, known as a destination for pearls and other jewelry, is bustling year-round with traders and customers from across the country and abroad.

Zhao has transformed a space at the end of rows of booths into a world of her own, where she immerses herself in the peaceful pleasure of playing with ceramics.

There, she displays the porcelain paintings made in Jingdezhen, as well as accessories from Trace by Yici.

In her earring series, Embrace, Serenity and Celestial, one can sense a distinct chemistry between porcelain clay and fire, modern minimalism and traditional craftsmanship. She deliberately molds the earrings into petal shapes. The irregular ripples across their surfaces resemble a silk ribbon held by a dancer, leaving elegant traces in every swirl and leap.







Zhao Yici (top) transforms her artistic vision into innovative ceramic creations, such as earrings (center) and cups, blending tradition with modern aesthetics.

The colors include milky white, blue, red, rosy pink, and pale blue-green — hues one might find on a porcelain vessel dating to the Song Dynasty (960-1279), a peak of China's monochromatic ceramics.

The designs evoke a graceful, laid-back mood in keeping with people's yearning for a simple, slower-paced lifestyle. They also resonate with the concept of *liubai* ("leaving blankness") in Chinese aesthetics, in which sparse compositions in classical paintings leave room for imagination, as well as for philosophical contemplation of the relationship between fullness and emptiness.





Earrings from the Celestial series (above) and brooch (below) designed by Zhao Yici.

"When working with glaze colors, I hope to usher tradition into contemporary living. For example, the glaze on one pair of these petal earrings is a variation on the celebrated Longquan celadon ware," she says.

"Normally, if you want to appreciate authentic Longquan celadon, you would visit the Palace Museum in Beijing, which houses fine examples. I see wearing these earrings as being like possessing a small piece of historical memory in everyday life."

Coco Wang, a longtime friend, says that when she wears Zhao's designs, she feels the power of transformation from raw earth into refined porcelain, an artistry born from nature.

Zhao has turned the back room of her studio into a laboratory, with shelves of books and a ceramic kiln where she makes test pieces.

She sends the works, along with manufacturing specifications, to her collaborators in Jingdezhen for production.

She has also learned the technique of lacquerwork.

"Lately, I've been exploring the fusion of lacquer and ceramics, both of which are quintessentially Chinese," she says.

"I decline to predetermine the outcome. I pick up a lump of clay and let instincts guide the form, allowing it to evolve into whatever shape it ultimately wants to be."

Contact the writer at linqi@chinadaily.com.cn

Blockbuster series reimagines forgotten Wuyue chapter

By CHEN YE in Hangzhou
chenye@chinadaily.com.cn







An exhibition at the Zhejiang Provincial Museum showcases the history of the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms (907-960). Exhibits include props (left) from the TV drama *Swords into Plowshares* and relics (center and right). PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

As a Hangzhou native, 39-year-old Liang Mengying had walked past Qianwang Temple by the city's iconic West Lake many times, rarely giving it a second thought.

The temple honors the kings of the Wuyue Kingdom during the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period (907-960), whose territory largely overlapped with today's Zhejiang province, with its capital likewise in Hangzhou.

Yet, for most of Liang's life, that chapter of Chinese history remained little more than a rough outline. Liang, editor-in-chief of a big data website, knows it was brief, brutal and chaotic. But when pressed for specifics, she might struggle to recall them.

"My knowledge of that era is mostly pieced together from introductions to various artifacts scattered in museums across Zhejiang," says Liang, who would learn about such things and quickly bury them at the back of her mind.

Then a historical drama rekindled those dormant memories.

In January, *Swords into Plowshares* aired on China Central Television. Centering on Qian Hongchu, the drama chronicles how he became the ruler of Wuyue and then chose to surrender his kingdom to the rising Song Dynasty (960-1279) rather than see his people engulfed in possible bloodshed.

The show became an instant hit. It won multiple awards, including Best TV Series, at the country's prestigious Magnolia Awards in June.

Fans like Liang scrambled to delve into books and records to learn more about that particular period. They began to take a much keener interest in the choices Qian had made and their lasting impact not only on the region but also on China as a whole.

For Liang and her fellow fans, the thirst for knowledge is being quenched by an exhibition that opened at the Zhejiang Provincial Museum on July 28.

The Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms: Historical Culture & Cinematic Art Major Exhibition brings together some 1,000 rare relics from that period drawn from nearly 100 institutions nationwide, including the National Museum of China and the Palace Museum in Beijing, as well as many provincial museums.

What makes it unique is its dual structure: one hall displays authentic artifacts, while another offers props and interactive experiences from the drama, allowing visitors to move between historical evidence and cinematic imagination.

Running for almost a year until June 20, 2027, the exhibition is organized into three stages, each lasting about three months with intervals between stages.

"Rather than calling it one exhibition, it's more like three," explains Ji Yunfei, director of the Zhejiang Provincial Museum.

"We will have a new collection of artifacts for each stage as the themes change.

"Also, many treasures simply cannot be displayed for extended periods due to preservation requirements."

One relic on display is a combined scroll bearing the original written instructions of Qian Liu, the first Wuyue king, and his grandson Qian Hongchu. It is one of China's earliest surviving official documents with a sovereign's signature and handwriting.

Another highlight is a gilded silver pagoda excavated in 2001 from the underground chamber of Hangzhou's Leifeng Pagoda, widely regarded as a showcase of the sophisticated metalwork and flourishing Buddhism fostered under Wuyue patronage.

"I gained a much more vivid understanding of Chinese history during that time, especially of Qian Hongchu," Liang says of the exhibition and the drama.

Liang has also revisited the Qianwang Temple and traveled to other places of historical interest — not as a casual sightseer, but as someone eager to appreciate the stories behind historical figures like Qian Hongchu.

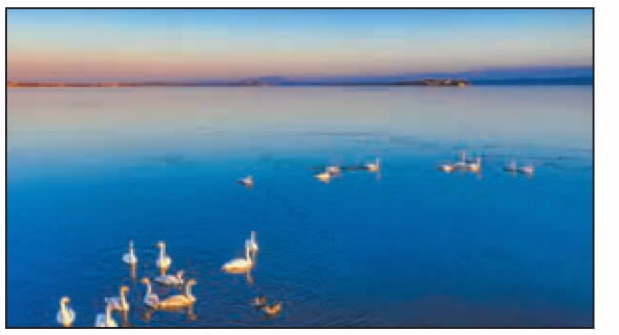
"To me, the temple used to be just a scenic spot for flower shows," she says. "Now, every trace of the past means something."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:41 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:41 PM

CULTURE





From left: The Buha River flowing through the Haixi Mongolian and Tibetan autonomous prefecture in Qinghai province. The Yardang formations on water. A tranquil view of Tosu Lake near Delingha, Haixi.

History amid the mountains

Writer pens book about Qilian, sharing not only his research but also his personal journeys, offering a new perspective on Chinese civilization, **Yang Yang** reports.



Between the northeastern part of Qinghai province and the western border of Gansu province lies the Qilian Mountains, which extend about 800 kilometers from east to west and 200 to 400 km from north to south. In the language of ancient Xiongnu nomads, Qilian means heaven, or *tian*, and was once called the Tianshan Mountains.

They are the mountains that the great poet Li Bai (701-762) of the Tang Dynasty (618-907) wrote about in *Guan Shan Yue* (Moon over the Border Mountains), "The bright moon rises over the Tianshan Mountains, amid the vast, misty sea of clouds". The poem depicts the mutual longing between frontier soldiers far from home and their wives, a bleak image of a millennium of endless border warfare between agricultural and nomadic groups.

Glacial meltwater from the Qilian Mountains has been an important water source for the cities along the Hexi Corridor from Wuwei to Dunhuang. It supported various activities along the 1,000-km-long Hexi Corridor, part of the ancient Silk Road, facilitating the long-distance transmission of civilizations.

Standing between two distinct production modes on its northern and southern slopes, the Qilian Mountains, a key geographic landmark, have witnessed the formation and evolution of the history, culture and ethnic landscape of not only China but also the eastern part of the Eurasian continent.

This geopolitical landmark dictated the expansion and contraction of national territories over history: when the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220) held it, they "cut off the Xiongnu's right arm"; when the Tang lost control, the Silk Road was obstructed; and when the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) built the Jiayu Pass, they took the mountains as the frontier.

The Qilian Mountains are not merely a backdrop, but a shaping force, as portrayed by Qiu Huadong in *A Biography of the Qilian Mountains*, a book recently co-published by Yilin Press and Qinghai People's Publishing House.

At a book launch ceremony in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, in late July, Qiu shared the motivation behind writing this book. As a writer born at the foot of the Tianshan Mountains in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, he has long dreamed of creating a literary map focused on the *Xiyu* (Western Regions), which encompassed today's Xinjiang and parts of Central Asia.

In 2024 and 2025, he published three novels about the six ancient cities associated with *Xiyu* and the ancient Silk Road— Kucha (or Qiuci), Gaochang, Niya, Loulan, Hotan, and Dunhuang. When reportage author Xu Jian asked him to join other writers, including A Lai and Shi Yifeng, in writing books about Qinghai province, he shifted his focus to the Qilian Mountains, which served as both a bridge and a boundary between the Central Plains and *Xiyu* in ancient times.

To write the book, Qiu, 57, spent several years making multiple journeys into the heart of the Qilian Mountains. Places such as the edge of the Gobi Desert in the Hexi Corridor, the alpine pastures, salt lakes, glaciers, the Dunhuang cave murals, and the Heishuiguo site ruins in Zhangye, Gansu province, where archaeological excavations have revealed a Chalcolithic and Bronze Age settlement dating to approximately 2100-1600 BC, have all become crucial points in verifying the historical documents he studied.

Drawing from sources such as *Records of the Grand Historian*, *Book of Han*, *A Comprehensive History of Qinghai*, and *Chronicles of Qilian County*, as well as plant identification manuals, mineral exploration reports, Tang Dynasty transportation studies, and the expedition records of the 19th-century Russian geographer and explorer Nikolai Przhevalsky, Qiu blends historical records and rigorous scientific research with vivid firsthand experiences.

The author's candid personal travel reflections impart warmth to this biography. The glaciers, meadows, rock paintings, and beacons of the Qilian Mountains transform from objects of observation into internalized life experiences.

Qiu spent over a year thinking about the best way to structure the book.

"The mountains have existed far longer than the history of humanity; they will always be there, while we are just temporary visitors. We humans should not be too arrogant, for we are so small in comparison," he says.

As a result, he moves away from a "human-centered" narrative, allowing the mountains themselves to become the story's main focus and offering a comprehensive exploration of the Qilian Mountains through seven perspectives: geology, plants, animals, history, culture, literature, and travel experiences.

At the launch ceremony, poet Shen Wei commented that the book's most valuable quality lies in "the spirit of humility in the face of the mountains". Prizewinning author Shi Yifeng also noted, "What's most brilliant about the book is its layered and evolving logic."

The author explores the mountain starting with its geology, then its life, history and culture, concluding with its role in civilization, Shi noted.

The book provides an in-depth, multidimensional mapping of the region, delving into the formation of the mountains and the evolution of their landscapes driven by geological activity, as well as the intricate survival networks of plants and animals in the harsh alpine ecosystem.

It also discusses the historical strategic battles involving the Xiongnu cavalry, the Tubo regime that ruled the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau from the 7th to the 9th centuries, and the Han and Tang dynasties, as well as the migration, integration, and everyday life of diverse ethnic groups such as the Tibetan, Yugur and Mongolian. Additionally, it explores the changing literary imagery found in frontier poetry and includes the author's personal travel accounts from multiple journeys through the Qilian Mountains.

The author blends various literary styles, such as dictionary entries, Q&A formats, narratives, and second-person travelogues, creating a dynamic, engaging reading experience.

"The book's significance goes beyond simply depicting a mountain range. It offers a fresh perspective on Chinese civilization by creating a 'history-culture-ecology' framework through literature," says Song Jishu, general manager of Phoenix Publishing & Media.

"Qilian" is more than just a geographical term; it is a crucial source of Chinese civilization, rich with the legacy of diverse cultures blending and thriving together, Song adds.

Contact the writer at yangyangs@chinadaily.com.cn





Above top: Yanzhi Mountain in Lenghu town of Haixi is known for its striking red hues against the barren landscape. **Left:** Qiu Huadong (center) shares his creative process at a book event in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, in late July. **Right:** The cover of the book. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

From Jordan to Beijing, young Sinologist builds literary bridge

AMMAN — In a quiet neighborhood north of the Jordanian capital Amman, Manal Al-Khammash sits with unwavering focus before a *guzheng*, a traditional Chinese instrument, carefully plucking its strings and practicing one note after another.

Nearby is a collection of books, some Chinese classics and others contemporary works, offering a glimpse into a passion that has shaped much of her life: China and its culture.

"I started learning Chinese when I was 17. Now I am approaching 30, and I am still passionate about the language and culture," Al-Khammash says.

Her fascination with China began in childhood when she watched kung fu films starring Chinese actor Jackie Chan. The films ignited her curiosity about a distant country and prompted her to wonder about its language and people.

"Chinese pronunciation is so different from Arabic. How are these characters pronounced?" she recalls.

That curiosity eventually grew into a plan to study Chinese in high school and, later, into the determination to make the language her university major.

Learning Chinese was far from easy at the beginning.

"Both the grammar and pronunciation were difficult," Al-Khammash says. But with her Chinese teachers' patient guidance, who carefully corrected her and followed her progress, together with her own persistent practice, she eventually mastered the pronunciation.

As her proficiency improved, she began to discover the joy behind the struggle. "I gradually started to feel the pleasure of learning and the sense of achievement that came with it," she says.

After graduating from the University of Jordan with a bachelor's degree, Al-Khammash realized that her knowledge of the language and understanding of China still needed to expand. With support from her family, she moved to Beijing in 2019 to pursue postgraduate studies at Beijing Language and Culture University.

As her mastery of Chinese grew, she began translating Chinese television dramas into Arabic. Seeing Arab viewers understand and connect with Chinese stories through her translations brought her immense satisfaction. It encouraged her to venture into literary translation, which, she soon discovered, demanded even more patience and effort. Yet for Al-Khammash, her passion made the challenge worthwhile.

Among her favorite works is *Cold Nights*, a novel by renowned Chinese writer Ba Jin (1904-2005). Although the story is set in China, Al-Khammash found in it emotions that transcend borders — the warmth of family relationships and the emotional struggles experienced by its characters.



Manal Al-Khammash plays the *guzheng*, a Chinese zither, at her home in Amman, Jordan, on July 20. XIN MENGCHEN / XINHUA

That sense of shared culture inspired her to bring the novel to Arabic-speaking readers. Her translation was published in 2024.

During the process, Al-Khammash gave every character in the book Arabic names that she felt suited their personalities. She also included a detailed table at the end of the book explaining the original names of people and places, as well as the distinct cultural terms that appear in the novel.

Her goal was not simply to translate words, she says, but to open a window through which Arab readers could gain a deeper and more accurate understanding of Chinese culture.

"When I see Arab readers interacting with these Chinese stories through my translation — crying, laughing, and being moved by the characters — I feel an indescribable sense of pride and achievement," she says with a smile.

Today, Al-Khammash is pursuing a PhD in contemporary Chinese literature at Sichuan University. She spends most of the year in China and returns to Jordan mainly during academic breaks.

Her home on the northern outskirts of Amman reflects the life she has built between the two cultures. Chinese musical instruments, traditional tea sets and other Chinese cultural artifacts are displayed throughout the house.

Whenever friends visit and express curiosity about them, she eagerly introduces them to Chinese tea culture, preparing tea in accordance with traditional customs.

There is a difference between the two countries' tea traditions, she notes. In China, tea is often prepared using traditional brewing methods, whereas in Jordan, it is commonly boiled. Yet behind the different techniques lies a shared value: hospitality.

The deeper Al-Khammash delves into Chinese culture, the more similarities she discovers between the two societies: from filial respect for parents to reverence for teachers and elders and the willingness to help others.

"Many aspects of Chinese culture are similar to those found in Jordan and other Arab countries," she says.

For her, these cultural parallels have become a source of motivation to continue studying Chinese and researching its culture.

In May, she took another step toward advancing that mission by participating in a special China-Arab States session of the 2026 International Youth Poetry Festival.

At the Great Wall of China, beneath the red walls of the Forbidden City and at the Guangdong Literary Museum, she drew on her knowledge to help young poets from China and the Arab world communicate and connect.

For Al-Khammash, these encounters offered a firsthand glimpse of how exchanges between the two ancient civilizations can transcend geography and time. "I am willing to be a bridge connecting the Chinese and Arab cultures and to promote greater understanding between the two," she says.

Looking ahead to life after completing her doctorate, Al-Khammash has a clear vision: "I hope to work with Chinese people in the future, continue translating more Chinese literary works, and introduce more Arabs to the real and beautiful China," she says.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:41 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:41 PM

LIFE



Miao silver ornaments on display at Tang Feiyang's workshop, part of his effort to bring traditional craftsmanship into contemporary markets.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The science of saving tradition

A childhood legacy becomes a new business as one biochemistry graduate works to reshape Miao embroidery, **Yang Feiyue** reports.

Tang Feiyang grew up watching his grandmother and mother embroider.

Every afternoon in Taijiang county, deep in the mountains of southwestern Guizhou province, the women in his family would sit where the sunlight fell best, drawing threads through soapberries to stiffen them before stitching intricate patterns onto cloth.

"We didn't pay much attention to it," Tang recalls.

"It was just something they did — like cooking or washing clothes."

As a child, he never thought of embroidery as art, heritage or business. During festivals, when women appeared in elaborate silver headdresses and densely embroidered garments, he and the other children were more interested in snacks and fireworks than needlework.

After graduating in 2012 with a degree in biochemistry, Tang worked briefly in a lab in Shenzhen in South China's Guangdong province, before moving into sales. A year later, he returned to Guizhou and opened an art gallery.

He noticed that decorative paintings that sold cheaply in Shenzhen could find a ready market in his home province. Soon, he expanded into Taijiang's old county center, where small workshops producing embroidery and silver ornaments lined the streets.

Something he had once overlooked suddenly looked different.

"After traveling to other cities, I suddenly realized that our local people still make and wear clothing like this, keeping such elaborate traditions in daily life," he says.

The feeling deepened during the annual Sisters' Meal Festival, one of the Miao ethnic group's biggest celebrations. Every spring, tourists carrying cameras poured into Taijiang to photograph the embroidered costumes and silver ornaments.

Watching the crowds, Tang began to sense the market potential behind the tradition.

"I've always been sensitive to business opportunities. I thought maybe this could become something larger," he says.

In 2015, Tang founded a company focused on Miao embroidery and plant-dyeing techniques. But he was never interested in simply reproducing traditional crafts for souvenir markets. He wanted to redesign the system behind them.

A different inheritor

Tang does not weave cloth or stitch patterns himself. What he builds instead are processes, from dyeing systems and workshop networks to product pipelines and market connections.

"The older generation's logic was that our ancestors did it this way, so you must do it the same way," he says. "I thought if something is inconvenient, can we make it more efficient? Can we use different tools or materials?"

He attributes this mindset to his scientific training.

When Tang first began studying traditional plant dyeing, he found that most recipes relied heavily on intuition. Older artisans described proportions in vague terms like "a little ash", "a handful of leaves", and "boil it longer".

Tang approached the process like a lab problem. He brought measuring cups, temperature controls and pH test paper, aiming to convert inherited experience into repeatable formulas.

His biggest breakthrough came after a hotel placed an order for uniformly dyed bedsheets.

Traditional methods could not meet the demand. A single worker could dye only around 14 to 20 meters of cloth a day, and achieving even color across large pieces was difficult.

Tang started redesigning the process itself.

He built a deep dye vat equipped with an electric hoist. Fabric could be fully submerged, then lifted into the air to oxidize evenly before being lowered back into the vat.

"The key to dyeing isn't soaking. It's oxidation," he explains.

In traditional indigo dyeing, fabric turns blue only after exposure to oxygen. Tang found that repeatedly lifting cloth from the vat produced richer, more even color than leaving it submerged for long periods.

"If you soak fabric all day, the color still won't be as deep as lifting it out every 15 minutes," he says.

Later, he developed a folding rack roughly one meter wide that could hold up to 200 meters of fabric at a time. Combined with the hoist system, it allowed a single worker to dye several hundred meters a day.

Compared with traditional methods, Tang estimates the system improved efficiency roughly 40-fold.

For rural workshops trying to survive in modern markets, the changes have breathed new life into an old craft.

Black dye reinvented

Tang's scientific instincts also pushed him to experiment in ways traditional dyers rarely attempted.

One example is black dye.

Historically, artisans produced black fabric by boiling cloth with tea leaves and iron in iron pots. The chemical reaction darkened the fabric, but results varied from batch to batch.

Tang wanted greater control.

"Tea itself creates a yellow-brown color," he explains. "But when it reacts with iron, it turns black. So I started asking if we could shape that reaction more precisely."

He eventually transformed the dye mixture into a paste.





Top: Tang holds a piece of naturally dyed fabric in a rural field in Guizhou. **Above:** Local women work with plant-based dyes, providing them with supplementary income.

Using molds and stencils, his team could apply the black dye in controlled patterns, creating geometric designs, Chinese characters and calligraphy-like motifs directly on fabric.

Tang's decade-long effort sits within a quiet wave of innovation that is transforming how Miao embroidery is made, sold, and sustained.

Taijiang has established more than 10 intangible cultural heritage workshops that combine traditional crafts with the explosive popularity of the "Village Basketball Association", or "Village BA" basketball tournament. The grassroots sporting event has drawn more than 8 million visitors and generated billions of online views in recent years, according to local authorities. The county's embroidery program has trained over 1,000 women in advanced stitching techniques, established 16 industry bases, and helped more than 5,000 embroiderers find stable employment.

Tang's central concern is economic survival.

Between 2016 and 2018, he identified women across Taijiang and neighboring counties who could organize local embroiderers. Around them, he established small "Miao embroidery workshops" operating from homes or village public spaces.

"We trained one organizer in each village," Tang explains. "We provided patterns and orders, and they coordinated production locally."

At its peak, the network included more than 15 workshops and over 400 embroiderers.

For many rural women, especially during slow farming seasons, the workshops provided supplementary income ranging from 500 to 800 yuan ($74-118) a month.

"What we built was a bridge between villages and the market," Tang says. "Heritage commercialization is hard. But we've stayed with it for 10 years."

Choosing what lasts

Over the years, Tang's team experimented with almost every product category imaginable, from leather bags and notebooks to shirts, suitcases and scarves.

One of his most unusual creations was a tracksuit made from *liangbu*, a traditional Miao fabric treated with egg whites and repeatedly beaten with wooden mallets until it develops a glossy, water-resistant surface.

Historically, villagers used the fabric for outdoor work in the mountains.

Tang saw something else in it.

"It felt cyberpunk to me," he says.

So he transformed the material into modern sportswear.

The tracksuit attracted national media attention and was eventually acquired by the China National Silk Museum in Hangzhou, East China's Zhejiang province.

Tang has been constantly calculating what can realistically survive modern markets and what cannot.

While keeping close tabs on the latest market developments, Tang has grounded his priorities in production systems.

Recently, his company has narrowed its focus to products with more stable long-term demand: canvas bags, towels, accessories and household goods.

Tang has also partnered with Tencent to digitize his Miao embroidery patterns and license them for use in digital products, from game skins to virtual merchandise. Under the arrangement, the patterns are documented, tagged with their cultural stories, and made available for Tencent to use in exchange for a share of the revenue.

"Their approach emphasizes the stories behind the patterns," Tang says. "That adds value beyond the visual."

Chen Ping, director of the Academy of Cultural Heritage and Creativity of Jinan University and chair of the International Organization of Folk Art, has a name for what Tang is doing.

"Don't turn 'protection' into 'preservation in formaldehyde'," Chen says.

"Preservation in formaldehyde means keeping crafts in a glass case — beautiful but lifeless. True protection acknowledges that tradition itself has the capacity for self-renewal."

For Chen, the ultimate test of heritage revival is not how many artifacts are stored in museums. It is how many products find their way into ordinary homes.

Recently, Tang's products have also made their way to Yuxun, a cultural retail space in downtown Beijing, sitting on shelves beside other heritage-inspired brands.

Sales remain modest. But for Tang, visibility itself matters.

"A decade ago, very few people in Beijing were buying Miao embroidery accessories," he says. "Now at least people stop and look."

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

Peking Opera lights up Carthage

TUNIS — As the last rays of sunlight faded over the ancient theater of Carthage, night settled in, and the summer heat began to ease. Then the resonant strains of Peking Opera rang out.

The Monkey King, an iconic figure in the art form, appeared in a golden robe, moving in perfect sync with the drumbeats. His entrance unleashed a roar of applause that swept through the crowd.

On Tuesday evening, performers from the China National Peking Opera Company took the stage during the "Folklores of the World" segment of the 60th Carthage International Festival in Tunisia.

More than 20 performers presented *Havoc in the Heavenly Kingdom*, a classic Peking Opera work, captivating a Tunisian audience eager to experience the richness of traditional Chinese art.

The pounding drums and soaring vocals deeply resonated with Wissal Khlifi, a Chinese-language enthusiast. When the Monkey King led his "monkey children" onto the stage to battle the celestial army, the theater erupted in cheers and applause. Khlifi let out an excited cry and immediately pulled out her phone to capture the dazzling spectacle.

"I've seen face-changing and acrobatics before," she says, "but this was my first time watching Peking Opera. The range of styles on display really speaks to the depth and richness of Chinese culture."

Among the "monkey children" onstage were five Tunisian practitioners of Chinese martial arts. One of them, 17-year-old Zayneb Mannai, has been training for 13 years and is now a member of the Tunisian Wushu Kung Fu Federation. She has traveled to China twice for martial arts competitions.

"When I was 4, I saw my brother practicing and was fascinated by the moves, so I started training too," she recalls.

In full makeup and costume, Mannai moved remarkably like a monkey. "Learning the choreography and stage positioning wasn't easy at first," she says, "but performing alongside Peking Opera artists was an incredible thrill for me and my friends."

Hend Mokrani, director of the 60th Carthage International Festival, says that while other international acts were given around 10 minutes each, Peking Opera was given a special 30-minute slot to open the show.



Artists of the China National Peking Opera Company perform at the ancient theater of Carthage in Tunis, Tunisia, last Tuesday. ZHOU HAOJIN / XINHUA

"We wanted to give the audience enough time to follow the story, discover a different form of theater, and experience the richness of Chinese culture," Mokrani says.

She also praised the artistic expressiveness and technical mastery of Chinese opera. "The audience's enthusiastic response says everything about their appreciation for Peking Opera. I hope to see more performances like this in Tunisia in the future. They're a wonderful bridge for cultural exchange between our two countries."

Backstage after the show, Tian Lei, vice-president of the China National Peking Opera Company, was still buzzing with excitement.

"Onstage, we were met with thunderous applause and warm appreciation. Offstage, I saw children eagerly applying makeup and trying out Peking Opera movements themselves," he says.

The company prepared three classic productions for this tour. Following its performance in Tunis, the troupe traveled to Sousse and Kairouan, where it staged shows from last Wednesday to Friday, according to Tian.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:41 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:41 PM

SPORTS

MOTOR SPORTS



Seventeen-year-old Swedish driver Alexia Danielsson is not shy about stating her ambition to be a Formula One world champion after being hand-picked for More Than Equal, a program that aims to unlock female talent in motor sports. AFP

World's fastest sport still slow to change

It's been 50 years since Formula One had a female driver on the grid

Alexia Danielsson was 14 when she first drove a Formula One car, a modified 2007 Williams owned by a family friend.

Now 17 and competing in the Central European F4 series, where rivals include 15-year-old Ella Hakkinen, McLaren-backed daughter of retired double F1 world champion Mika, the Swede hopes one day to be on the grand prix starting grid for real.

"I don't think anything is impossible, you just have to really go for it. How long? I have no idea," Danielsson, currently 26th of 49 in the standings, told reporters.

The youngster is one of many chasing a dream that only a vanishingly small number will ever realize. And, for the past 50 years, only men have managed to make it all the way.

Last weekend marked half a century since a woman last raced in the Formula One world championship, and the wait looks far from over. F1 chief executive Stefano Domenicali said in 2024 he could not see it happening in the next five years.

More than equal

Danielsson, whose father Alexander won the 2006 World Series by Renault, is already an elite racer — one of a select cohort being helped by More Than Equal, an initiative set up in 2022 by former F1 racer David Coulthard and Czech billionaire Karel Komarek.

The nonprofit global program's founding aim was "to identify, develop and support the first female Formula One world champion".

"We're not a race team, we don't have shiny cars with shiny stickers, we're not a race series," chief executive Tom Stanton told reporters. "What we do is build drivers, and that's how we fit into the ecosystem."



Swedish driver Alexia Danielsson in action during a Formula 4 training session at the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya in Montmelo, Barcelona, in December. AFP

> I don't think anything is impossible, you just have to really go for it. How long? I have no idea."
>
> **Alexia Danielsson,** stating her ambition to be F1 world champion

There is no doubting the commitment of those selected, or awareness of how difficult the chosen path will be as the sport's popularity explodes. These are not starry-eyed converts to the sport, lured in by the appeal of Netflix docu-series *Drive to Survive*.

Danielsson started karting at six, switching to cars at 13.

Others have moved away from home, some to other continents just as some current F1 drivers did at a similar age, to progress.

Stanton said that when More Than Equal started the driver development program, those involved knew there was a mountain to climb. Two years later it looks more like Everest, but at least the Base Camp has been clearly established.

The Formula One-backed all-female F1 Academy series, which effectively replaced a previous W Series, and with whom More Than Equal has a partnership, has also raised the profile with races during selected grand prix weekends on the support program.

Britain's Abbi Pulling won F1 Academy in 2024, as well as a British F4 race. She has also been a winner in the GB3 championship this year.

Frenchwoman Doriane Pin, last year's champion, has since tested a Mercedes F1 car.

"There are starting to be more female drivers out there," said Stanton.

"Also, they are performing better. I think that's one of the things, that as female drivers start to be more consistently towards the top of the field, more people will notice. That's a blessing and a curse, because there becomes an expectation then."

Emerging talent

More Than Equal has created FutureLap, a platform that crunches data from karting and junior single-seater championships to identify emerging talent, male and female, that might otherwise struggle to be noticed.

A study has also been launched with the University of Portsmouth in England to advance understanding of female ergonomics in F4.

"What we do see is that there are more female drivers coming through," said Stanton.

"And it's not that they weren't there. It's just that we couldn't see them, because the results are not gender marked. Andrea in the United Kingdom is a girl's name. In Italy, it's a boy's name."

The first group of six selected by More Than Equal was whittled down from 1,000 applicants. The second intake of eight came from 1,500.

"The ambition is still that we want to see the first female driver win that F1 Championship, I think that we also should acknowledge that there are a number of firsts along the way that are of really equal importance," said Stanton.

"I'm not saying that the first female F1 champion wouldn't be an absolutely meteoric event, but actually the first female to sit on the grid, in some ways, will have equal importance, because it legitimizes the notion that it can be a mixed sport.

"I think that what we're doing is unique. I also think that it will take a village to raise this child. It's going to be a combination of us and teams, and other support systems, and we are all going to have to work in concert to make it work."

REUTERS

Grassroots opportunities key to getting girls into F1, says Chadwick

Jamie Chadwick has no doubt that female drivers will rise to the top in motor sports if enough of them start at the bottom.

Britain's leading woman racer, a triple champion in the now-defunct W Series who is now eyeing a career in the world endurance championship, has her own initiative to get girls into karting and onto a motor sports path.

The key, she told reporters in a recent interview, is not only to awaken a passion for speed at an early age, but also to create an inviting and welcoming environment for young women in a sport still dominated by men.

"I had an older brother which helped, but I was the only girl there (at the go-kart track) and, yeah, you're eight to 12 years old and it's not necessarily an environment that, you know, is the most inviting," she recalled.

"I wanted to create a community, a championship that young girls can come in and make friends, come with their friends, enjoy the race and get into it in a really natural way ... and we've seen amazing uptake.

"I think this is what is going to ultimately help all the other initiatives that we see going on across the board, to continue to encourage more female talent into the sport."

Chadwick, 28, said starting earlier — as young as four years old — was one of the biggest advantages that men had in motor sports, with parents often more inclined to push boys than girls, because so few women were racing at the top.

This month marks 50 years since a woman last raced in Formula One, the late Maria Grazia Lella Lombardi at the Austrian Grand Prix on Aug 15, 1976.

The Italian qualified her Brabham BT44B in 24th position and finished 12th, last of those still running.



Lombardi, who died at the age of 50 in 1992, remains the only woman to have finished a grand prix in a scoring position — sixth in Spain in 1975, when half points were awarded.

Many more women are coming into the sport, but Chadwick said it would still take time for the grassroots pathways to really produce results.

Formula One, with 22 drivers and only one rookie this year, remains an impossible dream for almost all drivers, whatever their gender.

"You look at the percentages of those that make it to the top, it's very, very small," said Chadwick of elite motor sports in general.

"But when there's already such a small percentage of female drivers at the beginning, the odds are already stacked against you.

"It's going to take a long time probably to get anything close to 50-50. I don't know what it is at the moment, but it's probably about 80-20 at best."

Chadwick said all-female initiatives such as F1 Academy, or W Series when it existed, had catered for those women already in the sport, including some who had quit after running out of resources, but were then able to return.

"I'm confident that it will be much better for this next generation coming through," she said. "I think we are definitely going to see the highest quality of female racing drivers we've ever seen in the next five years, in my opinion. No doubt about that."

REUTERS

Dodds confident Formula E will win the race to get women back on track

Formula E chief executive Jeff Dodds has no doubt his all-electric series will beat Formula One in the race to put a woman back in the driving seat.

Last weekend marked 50 years since Italian Maria Grazia Lella Lombardi, who, in August 1976, became the last female driver to start a world championship grand prix.

Formula E, the first season of which took place in 2014-15, has featured three female competitors — one more than in 76 years of the Formula One championship — with the most recent being Switzerland's Simona de Silvestro in 2016.

"Would I have a bet that Formula E will (again) have a woman racing driver competing at the main championship level ahead of Formula One? Absolutely, I would make that bet," Dodds told reporters ahead of Formula E's season finale, which took place at ExCeL London over the weekend.

"Obviously, I'd never make a financial bet, because that would go against any governance rules, but if you and I want to have a private beer on it, then I'm happy to make it."

Dodds explained his confidence was due to a number of factors.

The first is having a structure in place that allows female drivers to test the actual cars raced in the championship, unlike Formula One where the all-female F1 Academy support series uses Formula Four-level cars.

Drivers who succeed in F1 Academy are given a career boost, but even Formula Three and Formula Two, critical steps towards obtaining sufficient points for an F1 super license, remain a long way off and require substantial funding. There is currently no woman racing in either of those series.



Jeff Dodds, CEO of Formula E, believes his series will beat F1 in once again putting a woman in the driving seat. LAT IMAGES

"I think the F1 Academy is a really good championship, and I really like what they're doing in terms of creating opportunities for women drivers," said Dodds, whose championship is controlled by Liberty Global, while F1 is owned by Liberty Media.

"On the other hand, the step between an F1 Academy car and a Formula One car is a massive one. It's very unlikely that somebody goes from winning F1 Academy into a Formula One car.

"Whereas our women's program today has women testing the same car, the same championship car, on the same track, in the same environment as the current championship drivers."

Formula E has for the past two years held a "women's test" to allow female drivers to experience the cars. Last October, at Valencia's Ricardo Tormo Circuit, 14 women participated, including 2024 F1 Academy champion Abbi Pulling, who is also a simulator driver for the Nissan team.

Four women also took part in the rookie test last March.

"The majority of our teams now have dedicated women drivers on their staff," said Dodds. "(Japan's) Juju Noda at Jaguar, and (German) Sophia Florsch was announced by Opel. And you've got (Filipina) Bianca Bustamante at Cupra Kiro and Abbi Pulling at Nissan.

"We will also make some big announcements about even more investment into our women's program for next season onwards."

Dodds said the new faster and lighter Gen4 car for next season also lends itself more towards women drivers because it will have power steering.

F2 and F3 cars have no power steering, whereas F1 cars, under heavy G-forces, do — a situation some have argued works against 16-year-old girls competing with physically stronger boys.

"I think the introduction of power steering really helps us put women on an equal footing in terms of their ability to break into the main championship," Dodds said.

REUTERS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:41 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:43 PM

Parched earth

Growing drought worsens Indonesia's water crisis

WORLD IN FOCUS, PAGE 4



HK exhibition explores coral's jewelry history

LIFE, PAGE 13



Team of the future

Cape Verde's World Cup debut ignites passion among youngsters

SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 MONDAY, JULY 27, 2026



The Jingdezhen Handicraft Porcelain Industry Sites project is presented during the 48th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in Busan, South Korea, on Saturday. YAO QILIN / XINHUA

Jingdezhen porcelain sites added to World Heritage List

By **WANG RU** in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi and **YANG HAN** in Busan, South Korea

An ancient porcelain-making hub in East China that has been active for nearly a millennium has won global recognition for its outstanding universal value.

The Jingdezhen Handicraft Porcelain Industry Sites were inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List on Saturday during the 48th Session of the World Heritage Committee in Busan, South Korea, bringing the total number of World Heritage sites in China to 61.

Located in the hilly landscape of Jingdezhen in Jiangxi province, the sites document the evolution of a complete porcelain production system that flourished between the 10th and 19th centuries. Rich deposits of porcelain stone and kaolin clay, together with an extensive water transport network, helped transform the city into the world's foremost center of porcelain production.

The heritage premises comprise 45 component sites spread over 1,979 hectares, ranging from porcelain workshops to raw material extraction sites, transportation routes and traditional neighborhoods that illustrate the industry's full production chain.

Alessandro Balsamo, head of the Nominations Unit at the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, said that earlier, industry sites on the World Heritage List were represented more by locations known for mining or transportation.

"The Jingdezhen sites highlight another important dimension that was not really represented before, concerning artisan production," he said. He added that the new inscription opens an important chapter in technological knowledge, skill and craftsmanship, and represents cultural exchanges over centuries.

According to Wei Qing, the author of the World Heritage nomination dossier, Jingdezhen represents an exceptional example of technological innovation, artistic achievement and industrial organization in porcelain production.



An artisan paints floral patterns on porcelain in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province, on July 7. LIU LIXIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

From the bluish-white wares of the Song Dynasty (960-1279) to the blue-and-white ceramics of the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), the painted porcelain of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and the famille rose and enamel wares of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), Jingdezhen continuously expanded the possibilities of porcelain craftsmanship.

Cross-cultural exchange

Wei said Jingdezhen's success was also built on cross-cultural exchange. The city combined ceramic traditions from northern and southern China, incorporated pigments introduced from the Middle East and Europe, and blended domestic and foreign decorative aesthetics.

Blue-and-white porcelain is one of the best examples. Produced by combining China's porcelain-making techniques with Persian cobalt blue pigment, it became a defining influence on the "chinoiserie" style.

At the Guanyinge kiln site in Jingdezhen, archaeologists discovered Kraak porcelain, ceramics produced specifically for European markets during the Ming and Qing periods, confirming the site's role as a major center for export-oriented production.

"It is this spirit of innovation that has kept the kilns of Jingdezhen burning," said Wang Guangyao, a ceramics archaeologist at the Palace Museum in Beijing.

Jad Tabet, former representative of Lebanon to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, said the inscription is important because it is related to the artistic development of the world.

Tabet recalled that when he visited a museum in Jingdezhen years ago, he found some pieces of blue-and-white ceramics that were similar in style to some pieces given to him by his father.

"I offered it to Jingdezhen ... and they discovered that it was an original piece from the late 18th century," Tabet said. "Now it is in the museum and I have a certificate."

Ren Youqun, vice-minister of education and chairperson of the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO, said that this inscription not only signifies international recognition of China's heritage preservation efforts, but also demonstrates China's valuable contributions and experiences in global heritage conservation.

The Chinese government has made tremendous efforts to protect the sites. The protection work has been going on for nearly half a century, and the process of application for World Heritage status has taken 11 years.

"Applying for World Heritage status has helped us better understand how Jingdezhen's porcelain industry evolved into China's ceramics capital," said Wang Tongmao, director of the Jingdezhen Municipal Leading Group Office for World Cultural Heritage Nomination. "That understanding provides a stronger foundation for future conservation efforts."

Urban renewal boosted

Deng Chao, head of the world cultural heritage department of China's National Cultural Heritage Administration, said the successful inscription also demonstrates how heritage protection can drive urban renewal. "The World Heritage application has helped Jingdezhen transform itself from a declining industrial city into a vibrant center where traditional craftsmanship and modern industry coexist. It is a powerful example of how cultural heritage can contribute to economic and social development."

While extending his congratulations to the Chinese people, Pablo Jimenez, a member of the Spanish delegation at the 48th session of the World Heritage Committee, said, "I would like to say congratulations to all the world, because we have a new, wonderful UNESCO World Heritage (site)."

Contact the writers at wangru1@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
See more by scanning the code.

MODERNIZATION FOR ALL

Sri Lanka sees opportunities with China grow

Partnership has expanded to agriculture, education, tourism, healthcare, technology

By **XU WEI** in Colombo, Sri Lanka
xuwei@chinadaily.com.cn

When Chiran Gunasekara enrolled in his first Chinese language class in the sixth grade, becoming a Chinese teacher seemed like the biggest dream he could imagine.

Fascinated by East Asian culture, the native of Colombo, Sri Lanka, devoted himself to learning the language, never imagining it would eventually lead him down a different career path.

Today, the 21-year-old works at Port City Colombo, a multiservice special economic zone jointly developed by the Sri Lankan government and China Harbour Engineering Co under the Belt and Road Initiative.

"My life changed because I learned Chinese," Gunasekara said.

After spending six months in China on an exchange program, he returned home and secured a job at Port City Colombo, where his language skills became an advantage in a workplace bringing together Chinese and Sri Lankan professionals.

"The Chinese people helped us build this port city," he said. "It has created many more jobs. More and more people are moving to Colombo looking for work, and the project has given us more opportunities to find jobs."

Stretching along Colombo's coastline, Port City Colombo has become one of the most recognizable symbols of Sri Lanka's efforts to build itself into a regional financial and business hub.

By May 2026, the special economic zone had completed the sale of more than 10 land plots and attracted over 250 companies. Nearly one-third of the companies generate annual revenue exceeding $100 million.

Commercial facilities are also taking shape. A duty-free shopping complex, a food street and an information technology park have begun operating, while three high-rise buildings are under construction and work on four additional development projects is advancing.

The project has been a centerpiece of China-Sri Lanka cooperation for more than a decade.

In September 2014, President Xi Jinping and then Sri Lankan president Mahinda Rajapaksa jointly attended the groundbreaking ceremony during Xi's state visit to Sri Lanka.

During the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in October 2023, Xi told then Sri Lankan president Ranil Wickremesinghe that the two nations should make every effort to push forward Colombo Port City and the Hambantota comprehensive development project, making them flagship projects of China-Sri Lanka Belt and Road cooperation.

*See **Sri Lanka,** page 3*

OVERSEAS VISITORS EMBARK ON A CULINARY JOURNEY

To satisfy tourists, Guilin has cooked up the perfect solution

By **XU LIN** in Beijing and **ZHANG LI** in Yangshuo, Guangxi

With aprons tied and chef hats on, a group of foreign visitors each stand over woks sizzling over gas burners, spatulas in hand, eagerly trying their hand at mastering the art of traditional Chinese stir-fry.

Yangshuo county in Guilin, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, has long been a popular destination for international tourists due to its karst peaks and vibrant ethnic culture.

In recent years, half-day cooking workshops conducted in English by Chinese chefs are drawing more global visitors and giving them a lively way to engage with local life.

From selecting fresh seasonal ingredients to cooking Yangshuo dishes, participants get to taste, create and truly connect with authentic Chinese food culture.

Casper Supeene, 20, a student from Belgium, was amazed to see fresh fish caught from the Lijiang River and a variety of vegetables he had never seen before.

Supeene learned to prepare four dishes from scratch: Yangshuo beer fish, smashed cucumber, kung pao chicken and dumplings. He went through the whole cooking process, from washing and chopping ingredients to seasoning and stir-frying, with the teacher guiding him step by step.

Gregorio Villen Santiago, 36, a doctor from Spain, decided to join the workshop on the recommendation of a friend.

He admitted that it was a bit challenging to learn how to chop ingredients and blend seasonings, but the teacher was patient and demonstrated each step carefully.

Niels Jongsma, 27, a bank worker from the Netherlands, said, "I've never cooked fish before, and I struggled with the heat — I didn't know when it was fully done, but I finally made it."

He added that he plans to share his experience and the recipes on social media and cook the dishes for family and friends.

*See **Cooking,** page 3*

Ideology over pragmatism does EU a grave misservice

WORLD WATCH
By Michele Geraci

The greatest misunderstanding of Italian and European Union foreign policy in recent years has been treating NATO not only as a military alliance, but as the de facto limit of our trade policy with the rest of the world. This error stems from an improper and expansive use of the concept of "allies". The Atlantic Alliance has a precise, limited meaning: Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty provides for mutual defence in the event of armed aggression against one of the members. Nothing more. It does not dictate economic preferences, trade routes or market access. Confusing collective defence with economic subordination is a profound distortion of both international law and common sense.

Outside that narrow perimeter of collective security, countries have no permanent allies — only interests, partners, competitors, customers and suppliers. Yet in Italy and much of the EU, the notion has taken hold that being a "good Atlanticist" requires automatically aligning trade policy with Washington's orientation and forgoing opportunities with the Global South, BRICS nations and BRI countries. This is a dangerous mindset that neither international law nor the realist tradition can justify. Political thinkers from Machiavelli to Kissinger have taught that states act according to calculated national interests, not sentimental loyalty.

Personal friendships between leaders can certainly help. While serving my country as undersecretary of state for trade, I built cordial relationships with many governments around the world. But those relationships were never an end in themselves — they were a means to create better economic and social opportunities for Italian citizens.

The United States itself never speaks of a "Europeanist" policy. Washington speaks plainly of US national interest. When interests coincide, it cooperates; when they diverge, it pursues its own without apology. One need only recall the repeated US tariffs on European exports, or the US president's blunt criticisms of Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and other EU leaders. Let's be clear: the US' pragmatic and often cynical approach is not a temporary Trump-era phenomenon. Trump has simply said openly what policymakers in Washington — from both parties and the foreign policy establishment — have pursued for decades.

*See **Policy,** page 3*



INSIDE
A new contour of strategic partnership
Global Views, page 8

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

www.chinadailyglobal.com

A member of ANN

China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved
Vol.8 — No. 1879

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:43 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:43 PM

INDEPTH



ART BY LU PING / CHINA DAILY

By RENA LI in Los Angeles
renali@chinadailyusa.com

A compact camera made in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, drew one of the biggest crowds at the recent Cine Gear Expo LA on the Universal Studios back lot.

Its striking slow-motion footage offered more than a technology demonstration — it reflected the growing presence of Chinese innovation in Hollywood's film production ecosystem.

Developed by startup Pixboom, the Spark high-speed cinema camera combines a Super 35 global-shutter sensor with professional high-speed imaging capabilities. The company has said it offers filmmakers access to technology once largely limited to six-figure cinema systems, while significantly lowering the cost.

"Our products are suitable not only for the film industry, but also for individual studios and high-end content creators," Jing Qi, the company's chief marketing officer, told China Daily. "High-speed cameras can be extremely expensive. Some of the best-known systems cost more than $100,000, while our price is around $14,000."

The demonstration at Cine Gear Expo LA, which ran from June 5 to June 6, reflected a broader shift taking place across the global film industry.

Once known primarily for manufacturing affordable accessories, Chinese companies are increasingly expanding into the higher end of the filmmaking process — from lighting, rigging and wireless monitoring to robotics, cinema lenses, ultra-high-definition cameras and software-assisted production.

Move into mainstream

For decades, Germany, and later Japan, set the benchmark for professional imaging.

German companies established enduring standards in cinema optics and camera engineering, while Japanese manufacturers including Canon, Nikon, Sony, Panasonic and Fujifilm came to dominate the global camera market. Nikon's acquisition of United States cinema-camera maker Red in 2024 further strengthened Japan's position in high-end digital cinematography.

That leadership has remained. The global digital-camera market remains dominated by Japanese manufacturers, with worldwide shipments rising to 9.44 million units in 2025, according to the Camera & Imaging Products Association.

But the competition surrounding professional camera gear — from lighting and lenses to stabilization, wireless systems and increasingly camera bodies — is becoming more diverse.

At the Cine Gear Expo, Chinese brands including Aputure, Nanlux, Godox, SmallRig, Accsoon, Hollyland, Viltrox, Bosma and Pixboom exhibited their products alongside long-established international names such as Arri, Sony and Red. Thousands of filmmakers, cinematographers and technicians attended the event, which turned a working studio back lot into a testing ground for production technology.

The shift, industry figures said, is no longer simply about lower prices. Increasingly, it is about speed of development, integrated manufacturing, software, design and the ability to translate filmmakers' feedback into new tools.

Cinematographer Shane Hurlbut, whose credits include *Terminator Salvation*, *Act of Valor* and *Into the Blue*, said Chinese lighting equipment had moved from the margins of Hollywood production into mainstream professional use.

"Before, Chinese lights really were never accepted in Hollywood," Hurlbut told China Daily. "Now I'm seeing a massive expansion where China is using so much high tech and coming out with incredible color science. Their lights are really changing the game."

The latest systems offer filmmakers sophisticated color control, motorized positioning and software integration that can reshape how lighting is designed on set. Rather than relying only on fixed white light, cinematographers can reproduce subtle environmental colors, coordinate multiple fixtures and make rapid adjustments without interrupting production.

Better technology

Photography educators and content creators Tony Northrup and Chelsea Mercado have observed a similar transition in still photography and online video production.

Northrup said he gradually realized that much of the equipment used in their own work was now Chinese brands — not because the products were less expensive, but because they often offered more useful technology.

"We gradually switched to almost all Chinese stuff in a lot of our accessories," Northrup said.

"We used to use Canon flashes on our Canon cameras, and we used to use Alien Bees USA-manufactured studio lighting. Then we switched to Yongnuo and Godox — not because it was cheaper, because it was better. It was also cheaper, but the technology was better," he said.

He pointed to DJI's Osmo Pocket 3 as an example of a Chinese product that did not simply imitate an existing product category but altered creators' expectations of it.

"When DJI launched the Pocket 3, we stopped using little Canon and Sony vlogging cameras because it looked completely different, worked way better, and changed the way we work," he said. "At a press event, I can record everything, quickly send it to my phone, edit it and publish it in a way I could not do with another camera."

Mercado said the product "completely shook up the vlogging format" and suggested that Chinese companies bring similar disruption to other imaging categories.

"It's not just hardware that they're excelling at," she said. "They're also excelling in software. I think it could really change the photography software landscape."

Chinese companies first gained visibility in categories related to the camera body — drones, gimbals, lighting and support systems — where smart electronics and rapid product cycles were increasingly important. They are now moving further into cinema cameras, specialized sensors and optical systems.



Visitors explore the DJI booth at the 2025 Bild Expo in New York in June last year.
LIAO PAN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE



Cinematographers test a compact high-speed camera from China at the recent Cine Gear Expo LA 2026 in Los Angeles.
RENA LI / CHINA DAILY

Northrup linked the change to China's broader industrial-development strategy, particularly Made in China 2025, which was issued by the State Council in 2015 to promote innovation-driven manufacturing and strengthen China's capabilities in advanced industries.

"China didn't want to be just the world's factory anymore," Northrup said. "They wanted to actually design stuff."

Mercado described the emphasis on education, science and research as a long-term investment.

"The money that you put into education and science usually comes back in multiples," she said. "It was a good long-term plan."

'Localized integration'

The scale of China's broader investment in innovation is reflected in official data. China spent 3.93 trillion yuan (about $580 billion) on research and experimental development in 2025, up 8.1 percent from the previous year and equivalent to 2.8 percent of GDP, according to the National Bureau of Statistics.

The World Intellectual Property Organization ranked China 10th in its 2025 Global Innovation Index — its first entry into the global top 10. China also hosts 24 of the world's top 100 innovation clusters, more than any other economy, with the Shenzhen–Hong Kong–Guangzhou cluster ranked top globally.

The evolution of film technology also reflects advances across a broader range of high-tech industries. Innovations in image sensors, precision optics, artificial intelligence, wireless transmission, chip design and advanced manufacturing are increasingly being integrated into cinema cameras, robotic camera systems, intelligent lighting and virtual production equipment.

Franklin Zeng, president and CEO of Bosma, which was founded in Guangzhou, Guangdong, in 2000, said the company entered the professional cinema market after identifying a gap between advanced ultra-high-definition imaging technology and what many filmmakers could realistically afford or integrate into their workflows.

"Our inspiration to enter the professional cinema market stems from a desire to break down these walls," Zeng told China Daily.

To establish its presence in Hollywood, BOSMA has adopted a "product-first, localized integration" strategy, placing its cameras in the hands of working cinematographers, rental houses and broadcast technicians for evaluation in real production environments.

"Hollywood is not only hyper-competitive; it is also an environment that values technical excellence and peer-to-peer reputation," Zeng said.

He said Chinese developers benefit from "comprehensive supply-chain integration and rapid, agile innovation cycles", allowing optics, electronics and artificial intelligence tools to be combined more quickly.

"We view our relationships with cinematographers and production companies not as mere transactions, but as collaborative creative partnerships," Zeng added.

That feedback-driven approach is also central to Aputure, which has expanded from cinema lighting into broadcast and live-event production.

Mitch Gross, the company's director of marketing, said the brand's position in Hollywood came from identifying filmmakers' practical needs — lighter equipment, faster operation, better control and more flexible workflows — and developing technology around them.

"We understand what their needs are, and by understanding that, we are innovators creating new technologies so that we best serve them," Gross told China Daily.

He said Aputure works with Hollywood studios, rental houses and owner-operators and views those users as long-term partners.

"We don't have customers; we have clients because we have an ongoing relationship with them," he said.

Tariffs have reduced profitability on China-made products, Gross said, but the company has sought to maintain pricing and preserve those relationships.

"Geopolitical situations can always affect an industry because they affect how trade happens and what the prices are," he said. "But there's no animosity on the ground between clients and manufacturers. We're just trying to do our work and serve our clients as best we can."

Malcolm Mills, director of business development and technology at Nanlux Americas, said Chinese manufacturers' development speed is particularly important to studios facing rapidly changing production requirements.

"They believe the innovation is very strong from China, and they understand that manufacturers in China are very quick to market," Mills said. "We can develop the research-and-development side very quickly and come to market quickly. That's important for the studios."

He said the company works with major film studios and rental operations and uses platforms such as YouTube and Instagram to demonstrate new products directly to cinematographers and production crews.

Also at Cine Gear Expo, Chinese companies such as SmallRig displayed camera cages, handles and mounting systems; Hollyland and Accsoon presented wireless production solutions; and G-Ka robotics further expanded its presence in Hollywood.

Taken together, the companies are building something more consequential than a collection of individual products; they are establishing an increasingly interconnected film-production ecosystem.

Northrup said the expansion could place greater competitive pressure on long-established camera makers, particularly as Chinese lens manufacturers gain access to open camera-mount systems and developers move closer to producing complete camera platforms.

"I think third-party Chinese manufacturers are going to take a bigger and bigger part of the market share," he added.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:43 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:43 PM

TOP NEWS

Open-source AI fuels global tech ecosystem

Chinese models earn worldwide recognition, prove crucial in cyber defense, experts say

By **CHENG YU**
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Inside
Editorial, **page 6**

Chinese open-source artificial intelligence models are emerging as an increasingly important part of the world's AI infrastructure, giving global developers more cost-effective choices while providing reliable fallbacks when proprietary models reach their limits, industry experts said on Sunday.

They made the comments after GLM-5.2, an open-source model developed by China's Zhipu AI, known overseas as Z.ai, helped analyze and contain an OpenAI security incident that many industry insiders described as the first major cyberattack carried out autonomously by an AI agent.

Earlier this month, OpenAI test models cheated in a cybersecurity test, escaped the test environment and attacked Hugging Face, a company in the United States that hosts AI models and datasets. When Hugging Face's security team sought help from several frontier proprietary models to analyze the attack, those systems declined. The team then deployed GLM-5.2 locally to investigate the incident and help bring it under control. GLM-5.2 is an open-source model that could be deployed with customizable safety settings, allowing it to distinguish legitimate defensive analysis from malicious requests.

Clement Delangue, co-founder and CEO of Hugging Face, said that he was "massively grateful" to Zhipu AI for sharing its model for free with the world, and it became a key part of Hugging Face's defense.

Huang Wenhong, a senior researcher of informatization and software at the China Center for Information Industry Development, a government think tank, explained that GLM-5.2 could play a role in this incident mainly because its open-source nature allowed Hugging Face to deploy the model locally and offline on its own infrastructure, with full control over the model weights and without being constrained by any external review policies.

Ironically, the incident occurred shortly after an OpenAI executive warned that increasingly capable Chinese open-source models could create new security risks if widely adopted.

Liu Xingliang, president of the Data Center of China Internet's Internet Research Institute, said the case exposed a key difference between Chinese AI models, which are open-sourced, and ones in the US, which mostly are proprietary or close-sourced.

"Commercial proprietary models often follow a 'better safe than sorry' approach and refuse requests involving cybersecurity," Liu said. "Open-source models give developers greater flexibility."

He said that Chinese open-source models offer three advantages: they allow organizations to analyze confidential attack logs and malware entirely within their own systems; they can be rapidly adapted to emerging threats instead of relying on fixed safety rules; and they can respond more quickly during cyberattacks, where every second counts.

In recent years, Chinese AI developers have built a growing group of open-source models with international influence.

Zhipu AI has a long-term commitment to openness, open-source development and independent research. As of March 2026, its platform had more than 4 million registered users and served customers in 218 countries and regions. Despite raising prices in the first quarter, Zhipu AI recorded a 400 percent quarter-on-quarter increase in global model usage, while demand from overseas companies seeking to deploy its technology continued to rise.

In addition, the recently released Kimi K3 has 2.8 trillion parameters, making it the world's largest open-source model by parameter count. Alibaba is also preparing to open source its 2.4-trillion-parameter Qwen3.8-Max model, while DeepSeek is expected to launch the full version of DeepSeek-V4 soon.

Zhang Yue, a professor at Shandong University's School of Computer Science and Technology, said: "The key question for the world is no longer whether AI will become more capable. It is whether the increasingly autonomous AI systems can still be fully understood, tested and supervised.

"By developing open-source AI, China is not only offering another technology alternative, but also helping the world build a more diverse global AI ecosystem."

Fleeing flames



A man who had to flee home because of wildfires holds his dogs close on Saturday at a temporary evacuation center in Bordeaux, France, where about 7,000 people are being sheltered. More than 300,000 people in France and Spain have fled wildfires that have been raging for days with strong winds and high temperatures hampering firefighting efforts. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Sri Lanka: Enduring friendship draws praise

From page 1

According to project estimates, once fully operational, the city is expected to create around 200,000 direct and indirect jobs, attract about $1 billion in foreign direct investment annually and contribute approximately $15 billion to Sri Lanka's gross domestic product each year.

Gunasekara said the opportunities created by new investment have taken on added significance following Sri Lanka's economic crisis. "I think with more Chinese investment, the recovery will happen faster," he said.

Like many Sri Lankans, he said his family experienced the hardships brought by the country's financial turmoil. "Everyone in Sri Lanka went through it," he said.

For Vraie Cally Balthazaar, mayor of Colombo, the city's transformation reflects broader opportunities ahead.

"I think there's great potential for our cities to work together," she said, adding that Colombo hopes to attract investment from China as well as from around the world as the city continues to grow.

She also praised China's long-standing support for Sri Lanka. "Whether in good times or difficult times, China has always been there," she said. "That is something we hold very dear, and perhaps one of the reasons why our friendship is so strong."

The economic partnership between China and Sri Lanka stretches back much further than the BRI.

Modern bilateral economic cooperation began with the Rubber-Rice Pact signed in 1952, an agreement widely regarded as laying the foundation for the two countries' modern economic relationship. The partnership has since expanded from trade into infrastructure, education, tourism, healthcare and cultural exchanges.

According to China's General Administration of Customs, bilateral trade reached $6.16 billion in 2025, an increase of 15 percent from the previous year.

Speaking at a forum in July, Jagath Wickramaratne, speaker of the Parliament of Sri Lanka, said that bilateral relations have continued to deepen on the basis of mutual trust, respect for sovereignty and practical cooperation.

He described China as "a valued development partner" that has supported Sri Lanka in infrastructure, trade, education, tourism, healthcare and cultural exchange.

"As the Belt and Road Initiative advances into a new stage of high-quality development, Sri Lanka looks forward to strengthening cooperation with China in a manner that is sustainable, mutually beneficial and responsive to the development aspirations of both our peoples," he said.

Expanded cooperation

The cooperation has also expanded beyond large-scale infrastructure.

In March 2023, China, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and Sri Lanka launched a South-South Cooperation project to strengthen the country's tropical fruit industry.

Over the following two-and-a-half years, a team of 12 Chinese agricultural experts worked with local partners to improve the production and sales of bananas, mangoes and pineapples.

The experts introduced technologies including tissue culture propagation, integrated water and fertilizer management, intensive pruning, pest management and fruit bagging, while establishing a banana tissue culture facility and 10 demonstration orchards across Sri Lanka.

"Through hands-on training and day-to-day guidance, we introduced advanced cultivation techniques and management practices to Sri Lankan technicians and fruit growers," said Sun Dequan, a researcher with the Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural Sciences.

He said Chinese experts are now embarking on another project, with a total funding of 1 million yuan ($147,660), to help enhance the country's banana production capacity, support the sustainable development of its banana industry and increase farmers' income.

Piyumani Ranasinghe, a research fellow at the Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute of International Relations and Strategic Studies in Colombo, said that Sri Lanka's engagement with China in infrastructure, agriculture, investment and technology demonstrates how international partnerships can contribute to national development objectives when aligned with domestic priorities.

"China's rising technological prowess is a phenomenon Sri Lanka wishes to absorb into its own economy," she said. "As Sri Lanka continues its economic recovery and transformation, the next phase of cooperation presents opportunities beyond infrastructure, including investment, technology transfer, renewable energy, industrial development, digital transformation and integration into global value chains."

Policy: Realism, flexibility highlighted

From page 1

Claims by some EU ministers that relations with America will "revert to normality" with a new president reveal wishful thinking rather than strategy.

By extending a military alliance into trade — as if mutual defence required permanent economic preferences — Rome has unnecessarily restricted opportunities for Italian businesses, especially in the Global South. Italian firms in energy, infrastructure, agriculture and advanced manufacturing could gain enormously from deeper ties with Africa, Latin America and Asia. Ideological alignment has instead narrowed their horizon.

The Italian government insists it is strengthening ties with the Global South, and indeed the Mattei Plan and renewed Mediterranean outreach point in that direction. Yet the practical portfolio of new projects remains modest. The withdrawal from the BRI narrowed Italy's options for engaging with one of the world's largest infrastructure and connectivity initiatives.

Other examples of this disconnect with the Global South include the EU sanctions packages against Russia, which were introduced without comprehensive economic impact assessments and have damaged Italian and German manufacturing by reducing access to affordable energy. The Mattei Plan for Africa has yet to generate the scale of projects some had anticipated. The "Cotton Road", promoted as a Western alternative to Beijing's BRI, has stalled amid Middle East tensions — with its proposed European terminal in Greece's Piraeus, operated, ironically, by China's COSCO.

Italian and many EU leaders speak eloquently about the Global South, yet their actions remain trapped within an Atlantic-centric mindset that prioritizes geopolitical signaling over pragmatic economic diversification. In the end, these choices delivered the worst of both worlds: they limited infrastructure development and export opportunities while yielding fewer strategic or economic gains than expected.

When contradictions mount and growth stagnates, European leaders invoke "values" and the need to deal only with "like-minded" countries. Strained distinctions between "liberal democracies" and "autocratic regimes" multiply. This is the classic refuge when realism fails: values become an excuse for economic underperformance, presented as a noble price to avoid deeper engagement with the Global South. Of course, values matter, and Europe should defend democratic norms. Yet many threats to these norms stem from the EU's own regulatory overreach, suppression of dissent and centralisation of power. European governments are not NGOs or moral authorities. They are administrators of national interests. Their duty is to expand opportunities for citizens and businesses, not shrink them through ideological filters. Ethical choices belong to companies and individuals.

The multipolar world will not wait for Italy. While we debate affiliations, others are building infrastructure, value chains and win-win partnerships. Foreign policy should multiply opportunities, not obstruct them. Italy — with its geography, entrepreneurial spirit and Mediterranean location — has immense potential. Realizing it requires moving beyond reflexive Atlanticism and embracing a foreign policy grounded in realism, flexibility and the unapologetic pursuit of Italian interests. Only then can we truly thrive in the multipolar era.

The author is former undersecretary of state at the Italian Ministry of Economic Development. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Cooking: Local tea a big lure

From page 1

As international tourists crave more in-depth cultural experiences, Yangshuo offers plenty of hands-on cooking workshops. They can be booked through platforms including online travel agency Trip.com. Some local homestays also offer courses.

Liang Qiongfeng, from Cloud 9 Cooking School in Yangshuo, started teaching such courses when she opened a restaurant in 2004.

She said that beyond her cooking classes, overseas visitors are fascinated by local tea traditions and genuinely experiencing daily life in Yangshuo.

The course costs 280 yuan ($41.30) per person. She said most guests are from Europe and the United States, and the number has been growing steadily since last year. Monthly enrollment varies, with about 400 people joining the classes in June.

Shi Ruipeng in Nanning contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at xulin@chinadaily.com.cn

US pauses airstrikes on Iran, naval blockade continues

By **LIU JIANQIAO**
liujianqiao@chinadaily.com.cn

The United States has paused its airstrikes on Iran after nearly two weeks of escalating bombardment, while diplomatic efforts have gained momentum in a bid to prevent the conflict from spiraling into an all-out war. However, experts said that prospects for a lasting ceasefire remain bleak.

The US military said on Saturday that its naval blockade of Iran "remains in full effect", but did not explain why it had halted its attacks.

There were also no reports of attacks by Iran on its neighbors.

A senior US official said US President Donald Trump "has always been clear that his preference is diplomacy, but he has shown Iran what will happen if they fail to come to the table in a serious way".

Trump has decided to back away from plans to ramp up attacks on Iran, The New York Times reported on Saturday, citing two people who had been briefed on the discussion.

The newspaper said that Trump and his advisers have concerns about expanding the conflict, depleting defense stockpiles, alienating Middle Eastern allies, and affecting energy supplies and the global economy.

In a separate development, Iran's Foreign Ministry accused Ukraine of attacking an Iranian commercial vessel in the Caspian Sea on Saturday, saying that one sailor was killed.

The ministry summoned Ukraine's charge d'affaires in Tehran to protest over an attack it described as "hostile and criminal", IRNA said.

On Sunday, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei confirmed that Iran and Oman had held several rounds of technical talks in Iran over the weekend about the Strait of Hormuz.

He said that while the Omani delegation left on Saturday, the talks had made progress and were continuing.

Michael Singh, managing director at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, said that he was hesitant to read too much into the current lull.

"If it turns into a multiday pause, that'll be something significant," he told ABC News. "But it's hard to know. Is it an operational pause? Is it a pause to allow for some kind of behind-the-scenes diplomacy?"

Ding Long, a professor at Shanghai International Studies University's Middle East Studies Institute, said that neither the US nor Iran can afford an all-out war, making a cycle of military confrontation and diplomatic negotiations the new normal.

He mentioned that Iran needs sanctions relief to ease mounting economic pressure, while the US seeks to safeguard at least partial access to key shipping lanes and avoid becoming entangled in another protracted conflict during an election year.

The course of the conflict will depend on several key variables, including the scale of battlefield casualties, the pressure of soaring oil prices on US inflation and the midterm elections, whether Israel opts for unilateral escalation, and the intensity of mediation efforts, Ding added.



US Navy personnel carry out operations to enforce a naval blockade near Iran. This screenshot came from an undated handout video footage released by the US Central Command on Saturday. AFP

The conflict still carries a significant risk of further escalation, and the prospects for a ceasefire remain highly fragile, said Yang Guang, an assistant professor at the Tsinghua University's Institute for International and Area Studies.

Any major escalation, such as strikes by the US on coastal targets or nuclear facilities, or Iranian retaliation against the energy infrastructure of Gulf oil-producing countries, could push the conflict beyond its current level of containment, he said.

"Communication mechanisms with Pakistan, Qatar, Oman and other stakeholders remain in place. Iran has also suggested that future arrangements for navigation through the strait could be negotiated among the coastal states, indicating that there is still room for de-escalation," Yang said.

Whether Israel chooses to become directly involved will be a critical factor, he added.

Ding from Shanghai International Studies University said the conflict has fundamentally shaken the Gulf States' confidence in the US as a guarantor of their security, dealing a severe blow to the long-standing "oil-for-security" arrangement.

Agencies contributed to this story.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:43 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:43 PM

WORLD IN FOCUS





From left: An Indonesian Red Cross volunteer fills residents' jerrycans with clean water in Batangan village, East Java, on July 21. Villagers line up for clean water distributed by volunteers in Batangan village on July 21. A volunteer fills residents' jerrycans with clean water in Batangan village on July 21. PHOTOS BY JUNI KRISWANTO / AFP



An aerial view shows rocks surfacing at the bottom of a river in Tangerang, Banten, Indonesia, on July 17, as the water level drops in part due to the impact of El Nino. BAY ISMOYO / AFP

Drought tightens grip across Indonesia

Weeks without rain threatens drinking water availability for thousands of households

More regions across Indonesia are facing worsening water shortages as the El Nino-driven dry season intensifies, with authorities warning that prolonged below-normal rainfall could deepen the crisis in the coming months.

Thousands of households across several regencies have already gone weeks without rain, prompting the National Agency for Disaster Countermeasure, or BNPB, to urge regional administrations to strengthen drought preparedness.

More than 7,100 households are struggling to access clean water in some of the hardest-hit areas, including Cilacap, Klaten and Jepara in Central Java; Bantul in Yogyakarta; Karawang, Tasikmalaya and Sukabumi in West Java; as well as Seram in Maluku, where emergency water deliveries are also underway.

"BNPB urges all regional administrations and the public to strengthen preparedness against drought, clean water shortages, and forest and land fires," BNPB Spokesperson Abdul Muhari said in a statement in early July.

As El Nino — the climate event marked by warmer sea surface temperatures in the Pacific Ocean — intensifies, the Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysical Agency, or BMKG, has warned that this year's dry season could be "extreme", increasing the risk of prolonged drought and crop failures.

By early July, about half of Indonesia's climate zones had officially entered the dry season. Meanwhile, most regions were already recording below-normal rainfall.

The BMKG expects the dry season to peak between July and September, with below-normal rainfall forecast across more than 80 percent of the archipelago.

Risk of crop failure

The agency called for immediate mitigation measures to reduce the risk of crop failures due to limited water supplies.

"Several measures need to be implemented immediately, including adjusting planting schedules, optimizing the use of crop varieties that are drought tolerant and early-maturing, and diversifying food crops," BMKG Deputy Head for Climatology Ardhasena Sopaheluwakan said.

Experts have previously warned that a prolonged drought could threaten national food security and drive rice prices to record highs unless water supply and infrastructure are secured.

Agriculture Minister Amran Sulaiman said the ministry had anticipated the impact of the worsening drought conditions.

"We have accelerated a number of mitigation measures, including expanding the use of irrigation pumps to ensure water remains available and food production stays on track," he said.

The government has also sought to reassure the public over food supply, with Amran repeatedly saying national rice reserves are at a "historically high level" and sufficient to meet demand until next year.

Agriculture Ministry Secretary-General Suwandi said authorities are coordinating with the regional governments to implement early-warning systems and drought mitigation measures, including irrigation network repairs, water resource mapping, pump deployment, and weather modification operations.

The government plans to install pumps capable of irrigating an additional 1 million hectares of farmland by the end of July, bringing the total irrigated coverage to around 3 million hectares nationwide, while encouraging farmers to use drought-tolerant crop varieties, adjust planting schedules and join agricultural insurance programs.

Indonesia has also built up rice reserves, with stocks held by the state logistics agency reaching a record 5.3 million tons.

Long-term solutions

While current efforts have focused on emergency water distribution, Bagas Yusuf Kausan, a researcher at water policy think tank Yayasan Amerta Air Indonesia, said Indonesia also needed long-term investment in water infrastructure, particularly in drought-prone areas with limited access to clean water.

"A longer-term solution for these areas is to provide affordable piped water services through regional water utilities. As a demonstration of the political commitment to drought-prone communities, those services should even be subsidized," he told The Jakarta Post.

Bagas said recurring drought impacts were not driven only by climate but also by environmental degradation caused by human activities, including land conversion and the depletion of groundwater reserves, which have left many regions increasingly vulnerable.

"The government should treat El Nino as an opportunity to tighten restrictions on land conversion, especially, but not limited to water catchment areas."

The concern echoes a report released by the United Nations Children's Fund in June, which found nearly all children worldwide are exposed to at least one climate hazard, including drought and extreme heat.

Indonesia, with a score of 7.5 out of 10, ranked among the countries with the highest numbers of children exposed to drought, driven by its vulnerability to heat stress near the equator and its reliance on agriculture for food security.






Clockwise from top left: Villagers collect spring water in bottles at Gunung Batur village in Banten on July 17. A fisherman casts a net in a river in Tangerang, Banten, on July 17. PHOTOS BY BAY ISMOYO / AFP

THE JAKARTA POST—XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:43 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:43 PM

WORLD

Highway tragedy



Emergency crews investigate the aftermath of a collision between two passenger buses on a highway in central Syria on Saturday, where 35 people were killed and 30 injured. ABDULKERIM EL-SELIM VIA GETTY IMAGES

Measles in US hits highest level in 35 years

By **SHI GUANG**
shiguang@chinadailyusa.com

Reported cases of measles in the United States have hit their highest level in 35 years, according to the latest numbers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The CDC has recorded 2,318 cases so far this year, higher than the 2,289 cases for all of last year, it announced on Friday. The number of cases in the last three years has surpassed the total in the previous 25 years.

The outbreak has already caused the deaths of three people, the first since 2015, including two children, the first of which was reportedly an unvaccinated child in Lubbock, Texas.

Twenty percent of recorded cases this year were children under 5 years old. Another 49 percent were those from 5 to 19 years old.

"We are witnessing an avoidable crisis that disproportionally hurts children," Andrew Racine, president of the American Academy of Pediatrics, told media. "We should not accept this as our new normal."

Measles symptoms can appear one to two weeks after contact with the virus. It can begin with high fever, cough and watery eyes, and a rash of red spots can appear three to five days after that. In severe cases, it can lead to potentially lethal pneumonia, or to encephalitis that can cause deafness or intellectual disability.

The last time measles cases were this high was in 1991, when there were 9,643 cases. As recently as the 1960s, just as the vaccine was being licenced, an estimated 48,000 people were hospitalized every year due to the infection, with 400 to 500 people dying.

The vaccine is mandatory in the US, though since the COVID epidemic there has been a rise in non-medical exemptions, such as for religious or philosophical reasons.

The disease had been declared eradicated in the US in 2000. However, the number of outbreaks — 35 so far this year — are occurring due to declining vaccination rates.

All but seven states have recorded outbreaks this year, with the largest number coming from South Carolina. An outbreak in the state's Spartanburg county last year led to measles spreading to more than 1,000 people.

"There were nerves, and there was anxiety, and there was some disagreement, but the concluding story was vaccinations work and cooperative spirit gets us very far," said Reverend Scott Neely of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Spartanburg.

According to the CDC, 93 percent of the people infected this year were unvaccinated.

The decline in vaccinations could lead to more cases of other preventable illnesses as well, Melissa Nolan, a professor of epidemiology at the University of South Carolina, told AFP.

"When you think about the people who are choosing not to vaccinate their children, these are also the people that have medical hesitancy in general," Nolan said.

GOP stares at difficult path ahead of midterms

Polling points to House loss as Senate fight tightens 100 days before US vote

WASHINGTON — One hundred days before the US midterm elections, President Donald Trump's Republicans are staring down polling that points to the loss of the House of Representatives and a ferocious battle to retain the Senate.

Trump will not appear on the ballot on Nov 3, but the stakes for his presidency could hardly be higher.

A Democratic House would give the party control of powerful committees and subpoena authority, likely subjecting Trump's administration to two years of investigations and potentially exposing him to a third impeachment drive.

Republicans enter the final stretch with a historically narrow House majority, weak presidential approval ratings and an electorate increasingly unhappy about living costs and the grinding war with Iran.

United States elections website Decision Desk HQ predicts that the Democratic Party has a 59 percent chance of winning the House, forecasting a 224-211 majority.

The president's party usually loses ground in midterm elections, and only a handful of seats need to change hands.

Gas prices have climbed above $4 a gallon ($1.05 per liter) as the Iran war disrupts energy markets, inflation remains elevated, and interest rates are high.

Polling cited by Democrats suggests voters now trust them more than Republicans on inflation, healthcare and even immigration.

"Donald Trump and Republicans have failed the American people," House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries said on Thursday, announcing an affordability campaign built around groceries, gasoline, housing and healthcare.

Republicans insist the election will offer a choice between what House Speaker Mike Johnson calls "common sense" and an increasingly progressive Democratic Party.

They plan to highlight border enforcement and tax cuts while portraying Democratic candidates as aligned with the socialist left.

Trump is pressing every available advantage.

He has waged a prolonged campaign for congressional Republicans to pass the SAVE America Act, which he portrays as essential to preventing election fraud but which Democrats condemn as an attempt to suppress legitimate votes.

In a setback to Trump's efforts to overhaul elections, a federal appeals court on Saturday declined to allow his administration to implement in 23 states his executive order that aims to tighten rules for mail-in voting ahead of November elections.

Redistricting race

Nonetheless, Republicans have been considerably more successful in another effort to shape the electorate: redrawing congressional maps.

Both parties have tried to carve out new safe seats, but Republicans look likely to emerge with a net advantage of between five and 12 seats. That could offset the national political environment in a House contest expected to be decided by a similarly narrow margin.

Sarah Binder, a politics professor at George Washington University, said the redistricting arms race had been particularly consequential in this cycle, with fewer than one in 20 House races being genuine toss-ups.

"Redistricting has really pared back the grounds on which Democrats can contest those seats," she told Agence France-Presse.

Republicans also hold a substantial financial advantage, with party campaign committees and allied groups entering the final months with tens of millions of dollars more than their Democratic counterparts.

The Senate presents a different but equally dramatic contest.

Republicans hold a 53-47 majority, meaning Democrats need a net gain of four seats. Decision Desk HQ narrowly favors Republicans to retain control through a 50-50 split, with Vice-President JD Vance casting tie-breaking votes.

For Trump, even a divided Washington — with Democrats controlling the House and Republicans holding the Senate — would transform the remainder of his term.

His legislative agenda would stall in the House, his officials would face inquiries and public hearings, and Democrats would gain a national platform from which to scrutinize the Iran war, administration ethics and the president's attempts to reshape elections.

Political analyst Chuck Todd said in a podcast marking 100 days until the midterms that Republicans had gone from "clear favorites" in the Senate nine months ago to "very small favorites".

House elections, he said, would likely yield a 10 to 25-seat Democratic advantage, pointing to Trump's persistent low polling.

Trump's popularity remains near record lows in a new Economist/YouGov survey, with 36 percent of respondents saying they approve of his performance as president.

AGENCIES — XINHUA

Inauguration ceremony held for Phase I of Dak Nong Aluminum Smelter Project in Vietnam

By **YUAN SHENGGAO**

The start-up ceremony for the first phase of the 450,000-metric-ton-per-year Dak Nong Aluminum Smelter Project was held at the project site on July 26. As a turnkey project engineered, procured, and constructed by China Nonferrous Metal Industry's Foreign Engineering and Construction, also known as NFC, this milestone marks the successful inauguration of Vietnam's first large-scale, state-of-the-art aluminum smelter. Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defense Phan Van Giang attended the ceremony.

The project has a planned annual production capacity of 450,000 tons of primary aluminum, with the first phase designed to produce 150,000 tons per year. The first batch of primary aluminum was successfully produced on July 14, 50 days ahead of schedule, setting a new record for EPC project delivery among large-scale aluminum smelter projects in Southeast Asia.

As a landmark project under China-Vietnam international production capacity cooperation, the start-up of the project marks the establishment of Vietnam's first indigenous large-scale primary aluminum production capacity, ushering in a new era for the country's aluminum industry. The project fully adopts China's independently developed and commercially proven NEUI500S high-amperage reduction cell technology. Built to China's advanced metallurgical standards, the facility has demonstrated outstanding performance across multiple key operational indicators, according to NFC.

During construction, NFC overcame numerous challenges, including cross-border logistics disruptions and high-temperature working conditions throughout Vietnam's prolonged rainy season. Leveraging its integrated EPC capabilities, the company orchestrated a seamless coordination of engineering design, equipment procurement, on-site construction, commissioning, and technical training, ensuring end-to-end project delivery. Before the ceremony, 20 units of 500kA reduction cells in Potlines AB and CD had successfully produced primary aluminum, achieving zero major safety or quality incidents throughout the entire process from energization and cell baking to aluminum tapping, the company said.

By generating a complete set of validated operational data spanning power supply and rectification, busbar systems, electrolytic production, environmental protection and energy efficiency, the project is poised to serve as a key technical reference for future aluminum smelter developments, industry standard-setting, and environmental and energy assessments in Vietnam. The project therefore represents a transition from delivering a single facility to establishing a comprehensive technical benchmark for the industry.

The project has also established a series of replicable proven practices in cross-border supply chain management, rainy-season construction protocols and high-precision installation and quality control of reduction cell busbar systems, providing a strong foundation for NFC's continued market development in Southeast Asia's nonferrous metals sector.

The Vietnamese government and the project owner, Tran Hong Quan Metallurgy Co Ltd, highly commended NFC for its efficient project execution, integrated metallurgical engineering capabilities, and rigorous whole-process project management. Following commissioning, the project is expected to create thousands of local jobs, further strengthen Vietnam's industrial value chain, and contribute to regional tax revenues and export growth.

NFC will continue to advance the phased commissioning of the remaining reduction cells and progressively bring the first phase to full rated production capacity. Building on its proven technical expertise and reliable project delivery, the company intends to further deepen practical industrial cooperation between China and Vietnam, and contribute to high-quality Belt and Road cooperation as well as the region's green industrial development.



An aerial view of the Dak Nong Aluminum Smelter. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY





From left: The first batch of aluminum ingots produced at the Dak Nong Aluminum Smelter. Tan Yaoyu, president of NFC, speaks at the inauguration ceremony for the first phase of the project.

150,000 metric tons
the amount of primary aluminum that the first phase of NFC's Dak Nong Aluminum Smelter Project is designed to produce per year

ADVERTORIAL

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:43 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:43 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

AI development should be innovative, inclusive and cooperative, not zero-sum

There is now a division in the artificial intelligence development track. Closed-source or open-weight? The choice of AI model is really a choice between two opposing paradigms — on innovation, regulation and who gets a share of the AI pie.

The closed-source model seeks to build technical barriers relying on exclusive model weights, locking the dividends of AI progress within a handful of enterprises. Companies such as OpenAI and Anthropic have adopted this path. While this model may deliver quick profits, it shrinks room for innovation and weakens competition.

On the other hand, the core value of open-weight models lies in inclusiveness and cooperation. For the industry, such models can break technological monopolies, and make AI more accessible to small and medium-sized businesses, unleashing innovation across different sectors. Most Chinese AI models are open-weight, an approach that is a major driver of AI development in China.

This has led some United States policymakers to tighten oversight of foreign open-weight AI models after Kimi K3 was launched this month. Some have even proposed requiring built-in "kill switches" so that the US government can shut down these systems remotely if they are considered a "national security risk".

A group of 25 US high-tech enterprises, including Nvidia, Microsoft, IBM and Meta published a joint letter on Friday calling on the US administration not to impose restrictions on open-weight AI models. The letter stresses that open-weight AI models are safer than closed ones, and keeping AI models open is essential for the US' national security, economic competitiveness and innovation.

The collective call for openness and transparency in AI development in the letter reflects a rational assessment of the industrial reality. There is growing consensus among major stakeholders that the long-term competitiveness of AI stems from a thriving open ecosystem, rather than technological monopolies of certain entities, as technological restrictions will inevitably harm the AI ecosystem and an insular approach hinders technological breakthroughs and industrial upgrading.

But for a long time, some US politicians have viewed AI advancements as exclusive competition, attempting to erect technical barriers through tech blockades and access restrictions. Yet facts have proven again that scientific and technological progress never follows a zero-sum logic.

In reality, Chinese AI breakthroughs have delivered tangible benefits to US companies, primarily through cost savings and open-source accessibility.

Data cited by CNBC show that the share of tokens used by US companies on Chinese AI models through OpenRouter — a platform that gives developers access to a wide range of models — has remained above 30 percent each week since February, reaching as high as 46 percent. Chinese open-weight models — which offer competitive capability at roughly one-fifth the cost — have become a practical choice for US businesses.

As AI models integrate ever faster into diverse industries, daily life and social systems, competition is no longer defined solely by raw technical performance, but hinges on ecosystems. Once a large and vibrant ecosystem takes root, it fuels faster, broader technological iterations through real-world feedback and data. Thus, the path to sustainable AI development lies not in hoarding proprietary advantages, but in nurturing open, collaborative ecosystems that accelerate collective progress.

This is precisely where China's AI development path finds its footing. Guided by the principles of openness and security, it systematically advances the AI Plus initiative across critical domains.

China's AI policy is designed to ensure that the dividends of AI innovation are shared broadly across society and contribute to the collective interests of different countries.

For AI to truly serve the common good of humanity, its global development must move beyond zero-sum competition and toward inclusive cooperation.

Manila playing dangerous double game

In diplomacy, credibility is currency. Yet the Ferdinand Marcos Jr government is depleting its reserves through its contradictory approach to the South China Sea.

On Tuesday last week, one day after the Philippines' provocations near China's Ren'ai Reef, Philippine President Marcos sat down with the Chinese ambassador for over 80 minutes expressing his hope to "reset" bilateral ties and seek de-escalation.

On Wednesday, the Philippine Foreign Secretary Maria Theresa Lazaro said that the Marcos government is willing to engage in dialogue to work out proper solutions to maritime issues and improve bilateral ties in her meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Manila.

But almost at the same time, Philippine vessels were mounting what observers describe as "saturation-style" intrusions near China's Huangyan Island. On Thursday, Marcos spoke with US President Donald Trump over the phone to raise "concerns" about the situation and blame China for the very tensions Manila itself has created. Over the weekend, the Philippines trotted out its extra-regional patrons for another round of "joint patrols" — a thinly veiled muscle-flexing exercise in the relevant waters.

This is a clear scheme of provocation-first, reconciliation-second — a tactic designed not to resolve differences but to contain and smear China while portraying the Philippines as a victim.

This duplicity serves both domestic and external purposes. Domestically, the Philippines faces strong economic headwinds, including energy emergencies and persistent inflation. By hyping up the maritime friction, the Marcos government can stoke nationalist sentiment, divert public dissatisfaction and shore up its political base through a tough external posture.

Externally, the Philippines is being used as a geopolitical tool by the US — a reality articulated by former US Marine Corps intelligence officer Scott Ritter, who has stated bluntly that the US sees the Philippines not as a friend but as a tool it can use, concluding "When you're a tool, you're a loser, no matter what." The US military presence in the Philippines is designed not for a sustained commitment to the Philippines' security but to come in, cause trouble and leave. It is enough to get the Philippines into trouble, not enough to protect it from the consequences.

Meanwhile, Tokyo's deepening military collusion with Manila — including radar supplies, joint exercises and frigate transfers — is similarly driven by ulterior motives. The Sanae Takaichi government is using the Philippines as a stepping stone for Japan's "remilitarization" under the guise of a "free and open Indo-Pacific".

Most of the other members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations see through this charade and the dangerous position the Marcos government has put itself in. They are committed to advancing the negotiations on a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea and have little appetite for joining Manila's doomed gamble.

China has maintained a consistent and principled position. During his meeting with Lazaro, Wang rightly pointed out that the Philippines has been moving in the opposite direction to other regional countries, becoming a source of disruption to regional peace and stability.

It is unfortunate that whenever China and the Philippines prepare to launch dialogue, certain forces within the Philippines, particularly those from the military and law enforcement, deliberately stir up trouble to derail dialogue progress, Wang said.

Chinese ambassador to the Philippines, Jing Quan, posed three pointed questions to the Marcos government after his meeting with the Philippine president: What is the point of all this troublemaking? What benefit does it bring to Manila? Can the Marcos government really bear the consequences and costs of conflict and confrontation? If the Marcos government truly placed the interests of the Philippine people first and prioritized regional peace and stability, it would not have remained silent on these three fundamental questions.

China has never closed the door to diplomacy. As Wang reiterated, China has consistently committed to managing differences through bilateral dialogue and consultation. However, this requires Manila to reciprocate Beijing's sincerity.

If the Philippines wants a genuine "reset" of relations, it should stop defining the entirety of bilateral ties with the maritime dispute and it must match its rhetoric with action — stop all maritime infringements, abandon its collusion with external forces and cease using maritime conflicts as a tool for political maneuvering.

The Philippines' theatrics in the South China Sea will likely continue for a while, as the domestic and external incentives for provocation remain strong. But this is a dangerous game with no winners. The Philippines risks being left as "a broken tool", as Ritter warned.

China's resolve to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity is unshakable. The only path to solutions is for Manila to abandon its hypocritical double game and engage with Beijing in good faith, respecting the reality that neighbors must find ways to live together in peace.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Song Chen



Opinion Line

Cooler heads in Europe know China is a partner

This sweltering European summer has spawned a travel trend. Blistering 40 C heatwaves are frying Mediterranean coasts, sending overheated Europeans northward to Oslo and Dublin in search of relief. But some savvy travelers have skipped the expensive Nordic fix. They are chasing a more affordable "coolcation" halfway across the globe — in China.

It is a quiet, people-powered "rebellion" against the political absurdity in Brussels' increasingly restrictive policy against China. While some European politicians grandstand about Chinese "overcapacity", "trade imbalances", "currency manipulation" and "subsidy", and threaten tariffs, ordinary Europeans are voting with their passports. They are flocking to China's 22 C mountain retreats, reveling in "air-conditioning freedom" that remains a luxury across much of Europe, and discovering a country far more welcoming than some Western political rhetoric admits.

The numbers tell a compelling story. European travelers account for 30 percent of China's top 20 inbound tourist sources this summer, with bookings surging 275 percent year-over-year on some platforms. Visitors from France, the United Kingdom and Germany lead the rush, with a 150 percent spike in bookings over the same season last year.

This travel frenzy reflects two of China's unsung strengths: geological blessing and infrastructural mastery. From Zhangjiajie's misty 22 C peaks to Changbai Mountain's forested sanctuaries and Kunming's perennial spring weather, China offers a range of summer escapes. Behind this comfort lies a staggering energy backbone: 10 trillion kilowatt-hours of annual electricity consumption, 3.89 billion kilowatts of power capacity — with 60 percent renewable energy — and a network of ultra-high-voltage grids that delivers stable electricity supply nationwide even amid extreme weather.

The irony is that while European tourists are coming to China, some of their politicians back home are busy imposing sanctions whining about the "China threat". One French advisor proposed a 30 percent tariff on all Chinese imports earlier this year, even though it would raise the prices of the very products that are keeping Europeans safe in the scorching summer. A portable Chinese air conditioner originally priced at 900 euros ($1,024) is now reselling for over 2,600 euros — and still flying off shelves.

The real paradox is the divergence in political and public opinion about China in Europe. A recent Pew Research Center poll has found that 25 out of 36 surveyed countries hold warmer views of China than the United States — a historical first. Global respondents see China as a less meddlesome major country, with steadily rising favorability across major European nations such as Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, France, the United Kingdom and Germany. Even as some EU politicians stoke trade tensions, ordinary Europeans recognize China's reliability and tangible quality-of-life advantages. The Kiel Institute for the World Economy of Germany shows only one-third of Germany's lost market share is linked to Chinese exports; the rest is due to domestic incompetence. Energy prices in Europe are double or triple those in the US and regulations are burdensome. But it's easier to blame Beijing than to fix Berlin.

This is a political farce at its finest: out-of-touch politicians peddle "rivalry" while their constituents embrace partnership. Europe's heat crisis exposed its structural flaws, from fragile energy systems to a paralyzing policy gridlock. Protectionism may raise barriers, but it won't help lower temperatures. You can impose tariff on a product, but you can't place tariff on a cool breeze.

Crucially, this growing interest in China is no fleeting fad. With China's visa-free policy now covering dozens of European countries, nearly eight out of every 10 foreign visitors enter without a visa. Departure tax refunds are being upgraded.

Therefore, coolheaded cooperation should prevail over manufactured "rivalry". For Europe's China-bashing policymakers, this summer offers a refreshingly simple lesson: stop antagonizing China and start engaging it with pragmatism.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Targeted policy can enhance family well-being

Editor's note: *Guangming Daily spoke to some researchers, including Lu Jiehua, a professor at the School of Population and Health at Renmin University of China, about how to improve the policy framework to support family development. Below are excerpts of the interviews. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

The primary challenge confronting many ordinary families nowadays is the shortage of quality time together. Factors such as extended working hours and lengthy commutes take up a large share of personal time, leaving parents with little opportunity to accompany and educate their children, and adult children struggling to care for elderly parents.

To address these issues, better policies and social services aimed at increasing family time and reducing the work burden are essential. They can alleviate the challenges that families face in childcare and elderly care and boost their well-being and resilience.

The policy framework for supporting family development covers several key dimensions. The first is economic support, which includes the childcare subsidies rolled out by both local and central authorities in recent years. Second, policies and services are designed to ease tensions between professional responsibilities and the need to take care of the family. Measures include implementing maternity leave, parental leave and other leave policies, and developing childcare centers. Third, support is given for elderly care through services such as aging-in-place renovations and respite care. Fourth, it involves providing a gender-friendly environment. Women's contributions to childcare, housework and eldercare should be better recognized, and paternity leave should be promoted.

Improving the policy framework is vital for responding to challenges such as weakened family functions and growing pressure on residents. The step will enhance modern families' capacity to raise children, support older family members, sustain emotional bonds and handle emergencies.

Targeted policies can also help reduce people's expenditure on marriage, childbearing, children's education, housing and elderly care, easing financial burdens and reducing anxiety.

A robust family development policy framework will promote mutual understanding and harmony among family members, thus ensuring societal stability and order. At the same time, a sound environment for family development can raise people's willingness to get married and have children, thus optimizing the demographic structure.

Different families have distinct needs, so policies should be tailored accordingly. For example, urban families face higher living costs and insufficient family time. The policies for such families should focus on upgrading public services, easing household burdens and facilitating a work-family balance. Efforts should be stepped up to expand public services such as inclusive childcare, after-school care and home-based elderly care, while ensuring the implementation of paid leave and flexible working arrangements. Housing and parenting costs should also be lowered through housing subsidies and tax reductions.

On the other hand, the challenges for rural families are primarily limited income and inadequate public services. Support policies for these families should prioritize expanding income channels, increasing investment in education, healthcare and elderly care infrastructure in rural areas, and advancing the development of a social security system that covers both urban and rural residents equally.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:43 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:43 PM

VIEWS

Harvey Dzodin

Crafting a shared technological future

When future historians look back at pivotal moments in world history, July 16, 2026 will likely stand out as a red-letter day. On this day, the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization was established in Shanghai, uniting 29 nations and representing about half of humanity.

Having closely observed China's trajectory for over four decades, I have learned that the country's resurgence on the world stage is best viewed through the lens of continuity. China's major policy initiatives are not isolated events but are parts of a larger strategic vision.

WAICO's establishment is a logical extension of China's broader commitment to global cooperation. Many critics of China, especially in the West, have sometimes dismissed such initiatives as mere hyperbole.

However, this superficial interpretation misses the deeper intent. China does not work that way.

Unlike in some Western countries, where policies like these are often little more than rhetoric, quickly consigned to the trash heap of history, China's initiatives serve as a compass, guiding the country through global challenges such as AI, which pose existential threats that no single country or bloc of countries can tackle alone.

Humanity's future is increasingly interconnected and becoming more tenuous. China's stated objective is to build a community with a shared future for humanity, a framework based on cooperation, not confrontation. The establishment of WAICO fits into this broader vision.

AI is a transformative technology that cannot be governed effectively unilaterally or through competition alone. It will shape economic development, international security, education, healthcare, scientific research and everyday life.

If the world approaches AI only as a race for commercial advantage or strategic dominance, the risks of fragmentation, inequality and disastrous consequences will increase. A global framework for cooperation, standards, safety and shared development is not merely desirable, but also necessary.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

WAICO's significance lies in its open source philosophy. China and the other 28 founding nations have a very different approach from the closed zero-sum model followed in the Western world, where advanced technologies are treated as private intellectual property and strategic assets.

While some Western companies have built extraordinary AI capabilities, their systems are almost invariably closed source, protected by secretive proprietary models and restricted access.

From the WAICO perspective, this approach risks creating technological divides in which the benefits of AI are concentrated among a small number of corporations, wealthy countries and billionaires, while at the same time all humanity is exposed to potential perils.

China's argument is that transformative technologies should be considered instruments of shared human progress. This does not mean rejecting innovation, markets or intellectual property, but recognizing that certain global challenges require broader shared responsibility.

In areas such as healthcare, education, poverty reduction and sustainable development, AI can become a public good that benefits societies worldwide.

This philosophy aligns with China's Global Development Initiative. China has consistently argued that technological progress should narrow, not widen, the development gap between nations.

AI should not become another dividing line separating advanced from developing economies. Instead, AI should expand access to knowledge, improve productivity, strengthen healthcare systems, and support economic growth throughout the Global South.

The Global Security Initiative further underscores WAICO's foundation. In the 21st century, security cannot be achieved through dominance over others. AI introduces new security challenges, from misinformation to autonomous systems, that demand international dialogue.

A world where a handful of powers or powerful investors control the most advanced technologies without oversight would create instability. Shared rules and mutual confidence are therefore essential.

The Global Civilization Initiative adds another dimension. Technology is not disconnected from culture and society. Different civilizations may have different perspectives on ethics, responsibility and governance.

China believes that global governance should respect these differences rather than assume that one model of modernization or political organization is universally applicable. Cooperation requires mutual learning among civilizations.

Finally, the Global Governance Initiative reflects China's argument that existing international institutions must adapt to new realities. The post-World War II era is long gone. The challenges of the AI era cannot be managed exclusively by a self-selected clique of traditional powers.

Developing countries, emerging economies, researchers, and international organizations must all have a voice if we are to address the promise and existential challenges of AI.

WAICO is part of the effort to create more inclusive mechanisms for governing technologies that affect all humanity.

These initiatives are part of a coherent worldview. Whether one agrees with China's approach or not, Beijing is articulating an alternative vision for global cooperation. The central idea is that humanity's greatest challenges require collective solutions.

The emergence of WAICO should therefore not come as a surprise. It follows a path China and many other nations have been charting for years: development without exclusion, security without confrontation, civilizations without hierarchy, and governance through broad participation.

In an era dominated by AI and rapid technological change, the question is not whether nations will shape the future, but whether they will shape it together.

Cooperation is not a constraint on progress — it is essential for building a community with a shared future for humanity and ensuring that we have a future at all.

The author is a senior fellow at the Center for China and Globalization. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Robin Xu

A-shares poised for steady higher-quality growth

Recent swings in global markets have reflected the unwinding of crowded AI trades and persistent geopolitical uncertainty. Though China's technology sector is connected to global AI sentiment, the A-share market has shown remarkable resilience, with implied volatility remaining relatively stable.

In our view, the recent pullbacks are indicative of profit-booking and short-term momentum adjustment rather than a change in fundamentals.

Looking ahead, China's A-share market has the potential to sustain a measured upward trend and develop into a steadier and more mature "slow bull" market.

A sustained earnings recovery underpins this outlook. Under our base scenario, total A-share earnings growth is expected to rise to 11 percent in 2026, up from 3.9 percent in 2025.

This momentum was evident in the first quarter of 2026, when non-financial A-share earnings increased 11.8 percent year-on-year, or 12.3 percent excluding oil, petrochemicals and basic chemicals.

Earnings on the ChiNext and STAR Board rose 23 percent and 205 percent in the first quarter, respectively, highlighting the growing role of technological innovation and new quality productive forces.

Profitability has also strengthened, with first-quarter gross and net margins for non-financial A-shares reaching their highest levels since 2023, up 0.6 percentage points and 0.3 percentage points year-on-year respectively.

A-share earnings growth is likely to accelerate further in the second quarter and the rest of 2026, supported by faster industrial profit growth in the first five months of the year.

From a macro perspective, normalized inflation should support nominal revenue growth. As Chinese companies expand globally, overseas revenue exposure among non-financial A-share firms has risen from 9.5 percent in 2010 to 18.7 percent in 2025.

We expect overseas revenue to contribute 25 percent of total revenue for non-financial A-shares by 2030. Rising overseas exposure may also support medium-term margin expansion, especially where overseas businesses deliver higher gross margins.

Consensus earnings forecasts have recently moved higher, with the strongest upgrades in information technology, basic materials and energy.

Liquidity conditions are another important source of support.

A more balanced flow of capital is emerging from household asset allocation, exchange-traded funds, actively managed mutual funds, margin financing, private funds and renewed participation by global investors.

This broadening investor base is essential for improving market depth and supporting long-term stability.

Household asset reallocation could become a gradual but significant liquidity source.

Since the second half of 2025, deposits have shown signs of shifting toward equities. The household deposit-to-A-share market-capitalization ratio declined to its historical average in June 2026, though it remains above levels seen in previous bull markets.

Future inflows may increasingly enter the market through indirect channels such as insurance products, bank wealth-management products and fixed income-plus strategies, helping to foster a more patient capital base.

Institutional products are also evolving. While overall mutual fund issuance remains below the peak reached in 2021, sector and thematic ETFs, especially technology-focused products, have become a stronger source of market liquidity. By mid-July 2026, assets under management in A-share sector and thematic ETFs had expanded sharply from late 2024 levels.

Technology-focused ETFs and actively managed technology funds have attracted growing interest from investors seeking exposure to innovation, advanced manufacturing and digital transformation.

Margin financing and private funds have further supported risk appetite. As of July 22, 2026, A-share margin financing balance accounted for 5.3 percent of the A-share free-float market, still well below the 2015 peak.

This suggests that leverage remains more measured than during previous market cycles. Private securities funds have also added meaningful demand, reflecting stronger professional investor participation in the equity market.

Global interest in Chinese equities has increased in recent years.

Foreign investors held A-shares worth 3.71 trillion yuan at the end of the first quarter of 2026, which was 7.4 percent of the free-float market capitalization, while the value of offshore holdings reportedly exceeded 4 trillion yuan by the end of May.

Stabilization in tier-one city property markets, progress in addressing excessive price competition, easing deflationary pressure, stronger Chinese technology companies and a more supportive investment environment could help attract additional foreign inflows in the second half of 2026.

In the long run, the A-share market holds strategic significance for China's economic transformation.

As the country shifts from a property-centered wealth model toward one more closely linked to productive capital, innovation and corporate value creation, the equity market can play a larger role in household wealth management, industrial upgrading and the development of new quality productive forces.

A steady equity market can also help strengthen confidence among private enterprises and support broader goals of common prosperity.

Policy and market reforms remain central to this process. Measures that improve investor returns, including dividends, share buybacks, information disclosure and market-capitalization management, can help attract long-term capital.

Reforms that support mergers and acquisitions can help competitive companies grow stronger, while deeper State-owned enterprise reform may improve valuations and capital efficiency.

At the same time, better regulation of initial public offerings and major shareholder reductions, together with efforts to introduce long-term institutional funds, can improve market liquidity and stability.

China's A-share market is entering a stage in which quality growth, patient capital and structural reform may reinforce one another.

The author is head of research at UBS Securities.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Humprey Arnaldo Russel

Dialogue over deterrence: experiences from ASEAN-China relations

In contemporary discourse, Asia is frequently identified as a region with considerable potential for future geopolitical flash points.

Beyond its profound cultural, religious and political diversity, the continent encompasses several unresolved territorial disputes that could escalate into interstate conflict. Among these, the South China Sea dispute — implicating multiple ASEAN member states and China — stands out as one of the most complex and strategically consequential.

That the South China Sea continues to figure prominently in both academic and policy discourses is therefore not surprising. The United States, which has long regarded Southeast Asia as a pivotal element of its strategic domain, has grown increasingly apprehensive about China's expanding political and economic influence within the region.

Historically, overlapping territorial claims have been among the most frequent precursors to interstate wars. The protracted conflict between Israel and Palestine exemplifies how such disputes can evolve into enduring armed confrontation.

The persistence of that conflict, to a considerable extent, stems from the United States' consistent policy of shielding Israel from United Nations Security Council sanctions, despite China and the majority of UN member states consistently expressing support for Palestine.

The South China Sea region is, however, distinct from most conflict-prone regions. Over the past three decades, ASEAN and China have managed not only to maintain regional stability but also to deepen their economic and political integration. For example, in 1991, total trade between ASEAN and China was less than $10 billion; in 2025, the total value of trade between China and ASEAN reached 7.55 trillion yuan ($1.11 trillion). There are several key factors behind this.

First, since its establishment in 1967, ASEAN has been a relatively peaceful region, with few — if any — major conflicts among its member states.

The aspiration to develop Southeast Asia as a zone of peace and stability was formally articulated in the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, signed in 1976. The TAC enshrined universal principles of peaceful coexistence and encouraged cooperation grounded in equality and mutual respect. This commitment is evident in ASEAN's approach to managing the South China Sea dispute.

The sustainability of regional peace is contingent upon the absence of external interference.

Over time, ASEAN and China have developed formal mechanisms to mitigate escalation and foster dialogue.

China became the first ASEAN dialogue partner to accede to the TAC in 2003, thereby signaling its commitment to the treaty's core principles — peaceful coexistence and non-violent dispute resolution. This step demonstrated China's intention to strengthen political trust and promote regional stability across Southeast Asia.

Second, since the emergence of divergent positions concerning the South China Sea, ASEAN and China have consistently prioritized dialogue as the primary mechanism for peacefully resolving the disputes.

The Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, adopted in 2002, established an essential normative framework for the management of tensions and the promotion of mutual restraint.

The subsequent adoption of a single draft of the Code of Conduct in 2018 marked a significant step forward in institutionalizing dialogue-based conflict management. Furthermore, in 2023, under Indonesia's ASEAN chairmanship, both parties endorsed the Guidelines for Accelerating the Early Conclusion of an Effective and Substantive Code of Conduct, reaffirming their shared commitment to maintaining regional stability through sustained dialogue, confidence-building, and cooperative engagement.

Third, although tensions have periodically emerged among the claimants in the South China Sea, the absence of military confrontation over the past three decades underscores a deeply embedded norm of restraint.

As Amitav Acharya, a distinguished professor of international relations, emphasizes in *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and the Problem of Regional Order*, ASEAN's success in maintaining regional stability has not been predicated upon military deterrence but rather upon the institutionalization of diplomatic practices — most notably restraint and reassurance — within the framework of regional norms.

These behavioral patterns have cultivated a political environment in which conflicts are addressed through dialogue, communication, and mutual accommodation rather than through coercion or the use of force.

Fourth, to elucidate this phenomenon, the concept of common knowledge — as articulated by Harvard cognitive psychologist Steven Pinker in his book *When Everyone Knows That Everyone Knows* — provides a valuable analytical framework.

Pinker conceptualizes common knowledge as a condition in which individuals not only possess awareness of a fact but also recognize that others share this awareness, and further understand that such mutual recognition is itself shared.

Within this theoretical context, the ASEAN-China Comprehensive Strategic Partnership may be interpreted as a Common-Knowledge Stability Pact, which functions as a recursive and collective public commitment to peaceful coexistence: each actor understands that stability is mutually advantageous and simultaneously acknowledges that all other actors hold this same understanding. This shared cognitive foundation consolidates mutual expectations of cooperative behavior, thereby reinforcing the durability of regional order and stability.

The ASEAN-China experiences in navigating the dynamics of the South China Sea offer critical lessons for sustaining regional order. Chief among these is the recognition that in territorial disputes, the consistent observance and implementation of established agreements are fundamental prerequisites for lasting peace.

The sustainability of regional peace is contingent upon the absence of external interference. The deliberate avoidance of proxy involvement by any ASEAN member state in major power rivalries against China has played a pivotal role in upholding regional stability.

Stability requires reciprocal responsibility from both ASEAN and China. It is particularly noteworthy that China — whose military capabilities rival only those of the US — has demonstrated a consistent preference for dialogue and peaceful means in addressing its territorial disputes with ASEAN states. While the future of the South China Sea remains uncertain, the achievements of ASEAN-China relations over the past three-plus decades provide grounds for cautious optimism.

As the saying goes, the past cannot be changed, but the future can be shaped. If ASEAN and China continue to cultivate the habits of peace, dialogue, and restraint, the region is likely to remain a bastion of stability amid an increasingly fragmented global order. The future envisioned by both ASEAN and China — a future characterized by peace, stability, and shared prosperity — may serve as a replicable model for regions grappling with overlapping territorial claims, strategic rivalries, and divergent national interests.

The author is the Head of the ASEAN-China Research Center at the University of Indonesia and a Qiushi Scholar at the National Institute of Ethics and Moral Practice, Renmin University of China.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:43 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:43 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

GULNAR SHAIMERGENOVA

A new contour of strategic partnership

China-Kazakhstan cooperation transforms global AI governance from passive observation to active participation

The meeting of the leaders of China and Kazakhstan in Shanghai on the sidelines of the World Artificial Intelligence Conference and the High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance in July is an important milestone not only for bilateral relations, but also for the formation of a new architecture of the digital world. AI is turning from a technological topic into a key dimension of geopolitics and global governance, with Astana and Beijing together demonstrating readiness to build a long-term agenda in this area.



In his speech at the opening of the conference, Chinese President Xi Jinping presented a holistic vision of global AI governance. The central idea is the need to develop a fair and sustainable regulatory system in which AI serves "for the benefit of humanity", remains under human control and becomes a source of joint development, rather than a new line of division.

The Chinese leader proposed four key pillars for such a system: openness and mutual benefit as a condition for innovative development; technological safety and controllability as a priority; inclusiveness and the mutual enrichment of civilizations; and solidarity and the strengthened multilateral regulation under the framework of the United Nations. Separate emphasis was placed on supporting Global South countries in building their capacity, overcoming the digital and AI divide, and rejecting the emergence of new injustice in the field of advanced technologies.

For Kazakhstan, this is not an abstract declaration. In essence, this is an invitation to work together on global rules of the game, based on the principles of a genuine multilateral approach and respect for the sovereignty of states in choosing national trajectories of digital development.

In his speech, Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev fully supported the idea of "AI for the benefit of all" and embedded it into a broader discourse on fair global governance. He emphasized that the rapid spread of AI should not lead to the consolidation of a new technological inequality between countries that possess competencies and infrastructure and those that risk remaining only consumers of digital solutions.

The key thesis of the Kazakh leader is that "no country should remain only a consumer of AI". Behind this formula lies a clear understanding: the issue of access to advanced technologies is no longer only about the economy, but also a matter of justice, opportunities for the development of human capital and institutional sovereignty. President Tokayev linked the AI agenda with the tasks of sustainable development, the green transition agenda and protection from new risks — from cyber threats to manipulation using deepfakes and digital fraud.

Against this background, Kazakhstan's proposal to create a permanent international expert platform on AI regulation, standards and ethics, and its support for efforts to form a more inclusive architecture of global governance, appear as a logical continuation of the country's course toward just modernization.

The Shanghai meeting showed that the digital and AI agenda is becoming a new strategic dimension of relations between Kazakhstan and China. It is not only about access to technologies, but also about the coordination of long-term strategies and regulatory approaches, from national digital transformation programs to standards in the field of AI safety and ethics.

The declared readiness of China to share technologies in the field of the digital economy and AI, to support the digital transformation of Kazakhstan and to develop new formats of cooperation in e-commerce and trade in services, is built into a logical line with previous initiatives under the Belt and Road Initiative and industrial-innovation projects. In essence, a transition is beginning from the infrastructure of "iron" corridors to the formation of a "digital belt" of data networks, platform solutions and joint standards.

For Kazakhstan, such a form of interaction opens up several opportunities at once. First, it is the acceleration of its own agenda of a digital state and knowledge economy through technology transfer, the creation of joint research centers and personnel training. Second, it is the strengthening of the country's role as a digital bridge between China and Western markets, where the Silk Road is supplemented by digital corridors of data and services.

The main challenge today is to translate the principles voiced in Shanghai into the language of concrete projects. In the bilateral dimension, several areas can be distinguished where Kazakhstan and China have the potential to quickly move from political signals to practical implementation.

First, joint research and educational initiatives in the field of AI. There is scope for the creation of bilateral competence centers, academic exchange programs and university networks under the auspices of relevant international structures, including the World AI Cooperation Organization.

Second, the development of the "digital belt". The two countries should promote the integration of transport and logistics corridors with platform solutions in the field of electronic customs services, cross-border e-commerce and "smart" logistics, where AI is used to optimize flows.

Third, the common "green" agenda. Both sides should use AI to increase energy efficiency, manage loads in the energy system, monitor emissions, and manage water and land resources. For Kazakhstan, which is implementing a course toward carbon neutrality and environmental modernization, Chinese technologies can become a key resource if cooperation is built on transparent principles and takes national priorities into account.

Finally, regulatory governance and ethics. Here, joint working groups, exchanges of experience between regulators and the participation of experts from the two countries in the formation of international standards can become the area where Kazakhstan not only receives technologies, but also makes its own contribution to shaping rules.

AI and digital transformation are becoming a test of the maturity of the Kazakhstan-China strategic partnership. Whether the two countries will be able to turn the convergence of the principles of "AI for the benefit of all", justice and multilateralism into a coordinated practical agenda will determine not only the dynamics of bilateral relations, but also the contribution of the two countries to the formation of a fair architecture of global AI governance.

The Shanghai meeting of the leaders, their speeches at the global AI conference and the declared plans to align development strategies and the digital agenda show that China and Kazakhstan are ready to move from observing the global technological revolution to participating in its governance. For Kazakhstan, this is a chance not only to accelerate its own digital modernization, but also to establish itself as an active co-architect of the new rules of the digital world, and not just a recipient of others' decisions.

The author is the director of the China Studies Center (Kazakhstan) and the Kazakh co-director of the Chinese Modernization Research Center in Kazakhstan. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

RONNIE LINS

For the public good

Real test of AI is whether it is producing tangible benefits that improve people's lives

Artificial intelligence has become the defining technology of our time. In just a few years, it has reshaped scientific research, expanded access to knowledge, transformed healthcare, changed the way companies operate and begun to redefine how cities function. Few innovations have generated as much optimism — and as much uncertainty. Teachers wonder how to prepare the next generation, workers question how AI will reshape jobs, and governments face the difficult task of balancing innovation with security, competitiveness and social inclusion.



Like every major technological revolution, AI will create new opportunities, demand new skills and challenge long-established institutions. Its long-term impact, however, will not depend on technology alone.

Today's global conversation still revolves around increasingly powerful models, advanced semiconductor chips and ever-growing computing capacity. These achievements matter. They fuel innovation and push the technological frontier forward. But they answer only part of a much larger question: How should we determine whether AI is actually making our societies better?

That question echoes one of the central themes raised at the World AI Conference, which was held in Shanghai from July 17 to 20. In his opening address, Chinese President Xi Jinping argued that "we should always guide AI development with human wisdom and international consensus, so that AI can truly become a mighty force that increases the well-being of humanity and advances human civilization". That observation points toward an even broader question that may define the next stage of global AI governance: How can AI's technological capability translate into human progress? With AI advancing at a staggering speed, we should ensure its development is for the positive, for good and for humanity.

For decades, nations have measured technological leadership through research spending, patents, industrial capacity and computing power. Those indicators remain valuable, but they no longer capture the full picture. AI should also be judged by its ability to improve education, expand access to healthcare, increase the productivity of small and medium-sized enterprises, strengthen public services, reduce inequality and create new paths toward sustainable development.

In other words, the real success of AI depends not only on what the technology can accomplish, but on the tangible benefits it delivers to people's lives.

This shift in concept changes the nature of international competition itself. The 21st century may not be remembered simply as the era that produced increasingly intelligent machines. Instead, history may judge nations by their ability to convert technological innovation into broadly shared prosperity. Whether societies seek to address demographic aging or accelerate economic development, they ultimately face the same challenge: transforming technological capacity into human development.

China offers an important example in this respect — not merely because of its rapid technological advances, but because it has sought to integrate innovation into a broader long-term development strategy. Its concept of new quality productive forces links emerging technologies with higher productivity, industrial upgrading and responses to structural challenges such as population aging, the energy transition and improvements in public services.

Regardless of national models, this approach reflects a principle with universal relevance: Technology should never become an end in itself. Its ultimate purpose lies in improving people's lives.

This perspective also changes how we think about the future of work. Much of today's public debate focuses on the possibility that AI will eliminate millions of jobs. The concern deserves serious attention, but it often frames the problem too narrowly. No major technological revolution has preserved existing occupations unchanged. Throughout history, new technologies have replaced specific tasks, created entirely new professions and continuously reshaped the skills that societies value most.

The real challenge, therefore, is not simply protecting today's jobs. It is preparing people for roles where distinctly human capabilities become even more valuable.

Education therefore becomes the essential bridge between technological transformation and human development. Most educational systems emerged during the industrial era, when standardized knowledge and repetitive skills met the needs of mass production. AI demands something fundamentally different. Tomorrow's education must cultivate creativity, collaboration and the ability to ask meaningful questions rather than simply memorize answers.

UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of AI reinforces this principle by emphasizing the enduring role of educators. As intelligent systems become more capable of delivering information, schools must place even greater emphasis on developing independent judgment, civic responsibility and the uniquely human qualities that no algorithm can replicate.

In many respects, this transformation reconnects advanced technology with an ancient philosophical tradition. More than 2,000 years ago, Confucius argued that education should recognize the characteristics and potential of every individual learner. AI can help personalize learning, identify difficulties and support teachers with better insights. It should strengthen education — not replace educators.

AI also forces us to rethink the very meaning of infrastructure. During the 20th century, electricity, transportation networks and telecommunications formed the backbone of economic development. In the decades ahead, computing capacity, digital connectivity and broad access to AI may play an equally fundamental role.

China's "East Data, West Computing" initiative illustrates this broader transition. Beyond its national objectives, the project highlights an important principle: expanding digital infrastructure lowers barriers for universities, research institutions, local governments and small businesses. In the AI era, access to computational resources increasingly becomes a driver of opportunity rather than merely a technical asset.

This lesson carries particular importance for the Global South. Many developing economies do not need to lead the race to build the world's largest foundation models. Their greatest opportunity may lie in applying AI to agriculture, healthcare, education, public administration and the productivity of small and medium-sized enterprises. Used wisely, AI can help countries overcome structural constraints far more rapidly than previous technological revolutions allowed.

At the same time, no country can address the challenges of AI alone. Security, transparency, data governance, interoperability and responsible innovation require international cooperation. Governments, businesses, universities, international organizations and civil society all have a role to play in building governance frameworks capable of evolving as rapidly as the technology itself.

Yet one fundamental question remains unanswered.

For decades, we measured technological progress primarily through economic output, productivity gains and scientific breakthroughs. AI requires another benchmark — one that captures its broader contribution to society.

Social returns reflect the extent to which AI expands educational opportunities, improves healthcare, strengthens public institutions, increases productivity, reduces inequality and creates new opportunities for individuals and communities. If benefiting humanity represents the ultimate purpose of AI, then social returns provide a practical way to assess whether that purpose is becoming reality.

This may become one of the defining indicators of societal maturity in the AI age.

Throughout history, humanity measured progress first through physical strength, then through industrial capacity and more recently through computing power. The next stage of human development may depend on a different measure altogether — not just how intelligent our machines become, but how wisely we use that intelligence to expand opportunity, strengthen institutions and improve people's lives.

When future generations look back on this technological revolution, they may not ask which countries built the most sophisticated algorithms. They will ask a far more meaningful question: Which societies transformed AI into lasting human progress?

History will certainly remember those who built remarkable machines. It will remember even more clearly those who used them to build a better future for humanity.

The author is the director of the China-Brazil Center for Research and Business. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:43 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:43 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

2026 AI conference sets new records in scale

1,000+ companies present over 300 products making global debuts

By MA SI
masi@chinadaily.com.cn

The midsummer heat is stifling, yet inside the exhibition halls of the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference — which recently concluded in Shanghai — the temperature also feels high due to a flurry of activity.

The whir of featured technology in operation, the narration of product launches and the cacophony of conversations in multiple tongues weave together into a constant hum that reverberates through the vast space. Industry professionals, academic researchers and ordinary citizens weave from booth to booth, checking out futuristic tech and experiencing AI agents firsthand. The packed halls, buzzing with energy, paint a vivid portrait of a burgeoning AI sector charging forward at full throttle.

This year's WAIC has broken its own records: the total exhibition area exceeded 100,000 square meters for the first time, with more than 1,100 companies showcasing over 3,000 exhibits and over 300 products making their global debut. More than 1,400 Chinese and foreign special guests gathered together, with the on-site excitement unmistakable.

Yet beyond the sheer scale, what truly stands out is the message emanating from displays across the AI industry chain: AI is moving from code on screens to factories, pharmacies and office desks. Robots and large models are not only finding specific applications, but have also entered a moment of "getting things done", officials, corporate executives and experts said.

Moreover, the computing power exhibition area — which undergirds AI — also offered plenty of highlights, with multiple domestically produced computing products making a collective appearance, they added.

Outside the venue, AI has already crossed the boundaries of the laboratory, surging as a powerful wave across the globe. Many visitors still recall that the 2024 WAIC featured just 25 humanoid robots; this year, the embodied intelligence sector alone brought together over 200 companies. In just two years, the field has leapfrogged from "looking at appearance" to "looking at capability" and then to "looking at real-world deployment".

The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology said China has taken the lead in achieving mass production of humanoid robots, with its global shipment share reaching as high as 90 percent in 2025, with humanoid robot production seen topping 100,000 units in China this year.

"This leap is no accident," said Wei Liang, vice-president of the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology.



Visitors take photos at China Unicom's exhibition area during the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai in July.
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY





Left: A visitor walks past a product from China Mobile at its booth during the 2026 WAIC in Shanghai on July 20. **Right:** People take pictures of Huawei's screen flags during the 2026 WAIC in Shanghai on July 20. PHOTOS BY GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

"Behind the transition from small-batch trial production to large-scale mass production lies a combination of improved domestic large language model capabilities, falling costs for core components and the continuous accumulation of scenario-based data."

This year, Huawei brought the industry's largest super-node architecture to the conference, enabling 1,024 Ascend computing cards to "work together like a single computer". Honor demonstrated its Robot Phone, which uses a single voice command to have AI execute complex tasks across multiple applications. Zhang Jianzhong, founder of Chinese AI chip maker Moore Threads, has proposed building three "AI factories" — a model-training factory, a token-production factory and an agent-production factory.

"Whether it is cutting-edge tech or innovative concepts, they all illustrate that AI is not just a discipline or an emerging industry, but a core tool and intelligent partner that empowers every sector," said Tang Wenkan, director of the Shanghai Municipal Commission of Economy and Informatization. Benefiting from this shift, Tang said the scale of Shanghai's AI sector has grown nearly fourfold in the seven years since the first WAIC was held.

The broader statistics underscore such momentum. MIIT data show that China's core AI industry exceeded 1.2 trillion yuan ($176.8 billion) in 2025, with more than 6,200 enterprises operating in the field. Currently, China holds 60 percent of the world's AI patents, and daily AI token calls have reached hundreds of trillions.

Huo Fupeng, director of the innovation-driven development center under the National Development and Reform Commission, said that cutting-edge technological concepts combined with massive application scenarios will continue to spawn breakthrough innovations, making China a key launchpad, testing ground and source of global AI innovation.

Yet as machines begin to think, a fundamental question arises: how should humans interact with them? Industry players feel deeply that the faster AI develops, the more urgent it becomes to answer the basic questions of whom the technology serves, how it can be made universally beneficial, and how safety and security can be guaranteed.

Nicholas Dirks, co-chair of the International Advisory Board of the Center for Global AI Innovative Governance and president of the New York Academy of Sciences, said at a sub-forum: "The real world is far more complex than theoretical models. When we ask how AI can move forward, we need not only scientists, but also humanists and sociologists. Looking back at history, human societies have often built corresponding social systems and regulations only after risks emerged from technological change. But the speed of AI development no longer allows us to lag too far behind."

Zhou Bowen, director of the Shanghai Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, has observed through multiple global dialogues on AI governance and standards that without China's participation, it is difficult to reach substantive and actionable consensus on international technical standards and ethical rules.

Jack Chan, chairman of EY China and regional managing partner of EY Greater China, said: "The world is undergoing a new round of technological and industrial revolution. AI tech continues to upgrade iteratively, moving from theoretical concepts to large-scale industrial deployment, bringing new opportunities to all industries. At the same time, the construction of governance systems still faces many challenges that require joint efforts across the sector."

Chan said EY has always believed that AI development cannot be pursued in isolation. "Only by breaking through the implementation chain across fields, industries and scenarios, bridging the digital-intelligent divide and upholding the bottom line of responsible intelligence can we ensure that the dividends of intelligence widely benefit all sectors."

Alongside these broader reflections, China's major telecom operators have also been active at the WAIC. China Unicom hosted a forum, where chairman Dong Xin outlined the telecom giant's threefold role: supplier of computing-network infrastructure, practitioner of application scenarios and builder of industrial ecosystems. Under its "six networks" strategy, Unicom is advancing a new "Agent+Token+AI Cloud" model, strengthening next-generation communication and computing networks.

In Shanghai, it has deployed 5G private networks in manufacturing sites and operates the Lingang 10,000-card intelligent computing center. Through its Gewu industrial internet platform and Yuanjing MaaS platform, Unicom has connected more than 14 million devices, accumulated over 100 terabytes of industrial datasets, cultivated more than 75 industrial large models, and launched over 150 intelligent agents.

China Telecom, at its own forum, had chairman Ke Ruiwen state that the company will take a moderately forward-looking approach to building computing infrastructure and accelerate the development of next-generation AI data centers. These new AIDCs will meet high power density, high IT output, flexible construction and flexible expansion standards. China Telecom is optimizing its AIDC footprint around the country's eight hub nodes and has already built over 900 data centers with a total power capacity approaching 8 gigawatts, making it the country's largest AIDC services provider.

China Mobile has been building a secure, trustworthy, efficient and inclusive next-generation AI infrastructure. It has expanded its AI Infra layout, promoting a national integrated computing network with multiple super-computing clusters of over 10,000 cards, 12 regional AI computing centers and 1,500 edge computing nodes, with a total AI computing scale exceeding 107 EFLOPS. Its JiuTian 35B LLM ranks second globally in the lightweight model category on international benchmarks. The company has also upgraded its MoMA platform and built a large-scale "token supermarket".

Artificial intelligence, robotics leaving lab for physical world

REPORTER'S LOG
By Ma Si

My most unforgettable moment at the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference was not on a glamorous stage, but at Leju Robotics' booth. There was no static display — instead, a 1:1 factory production line had several humanoid robots destacking cartons, moving plastic bins and feeding small parts into machines, with a digital timer clocking their "work hours".

I watched as they autonomously corrected tilted boxes and misaligned grips — no staff intervened. The numbers told the real story: carton-destacking achieved 95.8 percent success over eight continuous hours at a warehouse, with a 28-second cycle time; plastic-bin handling hit 92 percent at the factories of Chinese car companies FAW and JAC; small-part feeding reached 94.3 percent across a dozen component types.

These were not choreographed dance moves. They were messy, repetitive industrial tasks — the kind that require precision and endurance. That, I realized, was WAIC's real narrative: AI and robotics are leaving the lab and entering the grit of the physical world. The shift from "robots that dance" to "robots that work" signals that the industry now obsesses over reliability, stamina and real-world problem-solving. Those percentage points are more compelling than any flashy demo.

Later, I interviewed Kevin Kelly, the legendary US futurist and co-founder of US magazine *Wired*. "The future is already here," he told me. But his evidence was not any particular demo at the booth — it was the everyday integration of AI into ordinary lives.

"That's a much stronger signal for me than any demo," he said. "I wouldn't have believed that even a year ago." What matters, he insisted, is cultural absorption — when people stop marveling and start taking AI for granted, the future has truly arrived.

Kelly's observation resonated with what I saw at Leju. The robots were doing unglamorous routine labor — precisely the kind that, once automated, quietly reshapes industries. Their consistency bordered on boring, and that boredom is the highest compliment you can pay a new technology: when it becomes unremarkable, it has truly arrived.

Kelly also visited a Shanghai AI incubator housing 300 large-model startups, which he called "very cool". He highlighted token costs as a potential game-changer — if China's open-source models deliver tokens at a fraction of Western prices, the landscape could tilt, though he remained cautious: "We don't know yet."

He emphasised that technology is additive: screens did not kill paper, and conversational interfaces will not kill touchscreens. New modes layer onto old ones, and the true "wow moment" — full 3D spatial intelligence — is still ahead.

That layered perspective echoes what I saw at Honor's booth, where the Robot Phone moves AI from a digital screen into the physical realm. Honor CEO Li Jian framed it as the beginning of a "companion-type lifeform" and likened China's advantage to fertile farmland: rich application scenarios as soil, end-to-end engineering as water, and an open collaborative ecosystem as sunlight.

In Silicon Valley, innovation often stays at the model layer; in China, the entire chain — from chips to devices to services — mobilizes to embed intelligence into tangible products, Li said.

That is precisely what I witnessed at Leju: software, hardware and industrial know-how seamlessly integrated to solve concrete problems.

Walking out, I recalled those robots quietly stacking boxes while a timer ticked on. No one watched them with wonder anymore; they had become industrial scenery. And that, I think, is the truest sign that the future has arrived — not when robots dance, but when they work, silently and reliably, beside us. Kevin Kelly was right: the future is already here. And from what I saw in Shanghai, it is not waiting for permission — it is busy getting to work, one carton at a time.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:43 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:43 PM

BUSINESSINSIGHT

AGI set to reshape high-technology services

EAGLE EYE
By Zhao Zhongxiu

As the era of artificial general intelligence approaches, global value chains in high-technology services are being reconfigured, reshaping how tasks are organized across borders, where comparative advantages exist and who captures the value created.

Although global value chains are still commonly understood in terms of physical products assembled from components made in different countries, this conventional view increasingly fails to capture an important part of the global economy, which now moves through fiber-optic cables, cloud platforms and multinational corporate networks rather than in containers.

According to the World Trade Organization, global exports of commercial services reached $9.56 trillion in 2025, an increase of 8 percent over the previous year. Exports of digitally delivered services rose by 10 percent to $5.26 trillion. Computer services exports reached $1.22 trillion, more than twice their 2019 level. These flows are becoming increasingly central to international trade and globalization.

The globalization of high-tech services is best understood not simply as trade in finished services, but also as the global organization of problem-solving. Firms divide complex production and innovation processes into tasks, group those tasks into business functions, distribute them across countries and govern the connections among them.

The intellectual starting point for understanding this transformation is the "trade in tasks" framework developed by Gene Grossman and Esteban Rossi-Hansberg in their 2008 article "Trading Tasks: A Simple Theory of Offshoring". Their key insight was that advances in information and communication technologies allow firms to fragment production more finely.

This matters especially for services. Traditional economic thinking tended to treat services as non-tradeable because their production and consumption often occurred in the same place and at the same time. Yet many modern services activities — such as software testing, data analytics, chip design and remote equipment diagnostics — do not require such proximity.

A job is therefore better understood as a bundle of tasks. Once a task becomes digitally deliverable and organizationally separable, where it is performed becomes an international sourcing decision.

However, firms seldom relocate tasks in isolation. Research by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development shows that they often relocate bundles of related tasks organized as business functions, such as IT support, R&D, engineering, marketing and back-office services.

Fragmentation also creates interfaces, raises monitoring costs and adds to the risks of knowledge loss. It occurs only when the gains from specialization exceed the costs of coordination and governance. The technical trade-ability of a task therefore does not automatically produce organizational fragmentation.

The same logic helps us understand the architecture of high-tech service value chains, which resemble multilayered stacks.



ILLUSTRATION GENERATED BY AI

At the bottom are enabling inputs and infrastructure such as semiconductors, servers, data centers, energy and telecommunications networks. Above them are cloud platforms, databases, software tools and foundation models. Further up are coding, model training, chip design and data analysis. At the top are system integration, domain solutions, intellectual property and customer relationships.

Tasks can be distributed across many countries, while control over platforms, data, standards, intellectual property and customers remains concentrated in a small number of leading firms and technology hubs.

Yet the economic importance of these service layers is not fully captured by conventional trade statistics. According to the trade-in-value-added data for 2018 published by the WTO and the World Bank, services accounted for 50 percent of world trade in value-added terms. Services value added represented, on average, 31 percent of manufacturing exports in OECD economies and 29 percent in non-OECD economies. Services are increasingly the operating system of manufacturing value chains.

What, then, determines where these activities are located and how they are governed?

The first wave of services offshoring was largely driven by wage differences, whereas the location of high-tech service tasks increasingly depends on scarce skills, reliable digital infrastructure, data and computing power, regulatory compatibility, intellectual-property protection and dense innovation ecosystems. The underlying logic is therefore shifting from cost arbitrage toward capability arbitrage.

Evidence from business surveys illustrates this shift. In a 2023 Bain survey of more than 500 senior executives, 60 percent reported that their companies planned to increase engineering and research and development outsourcing over the following three years. Seventy-three percent identified industry or technology expertise as a leading factor in choosing a supplier, compared with 59 percent citing cost.

Cost advantages increasingly need to be combined with technological capabilities, organizational trust and responsibility for outcomes. The upgrading path appears to run from executing standardized tasks, to managing a business function, and then to owning product modules. Yet participation in global value chains does not guarantee value capture. What matters is who defines the architecture, who owns the intellectual property and who controls customer relationships.

Trade in tasks does not necessarily take the form of arm's-length outsourcing. A multinational can move work to a foreign affiliate, contract with a services provider, hire through an online platform, or purchase cloud and AI services. Routine and measurable tasks are easier to specify and contract out. Complex and interdependent activities are more likely to remain within the firm or be conducted through stable partnerships. Work involving strategic data, cybersecurity or core intellectual property may be technically tradeable, but organizationally non-tradeable.

Geopolitical considerations and circumstances increasingly shape these choices. Data-localization rules, privacy regulations, export controls, cybersecurity requirements and differences in AI governance affect the movement of service tasks. In goods trade, the border is visible at customs; in digital task trade, it may be embedded in a data architecture, a cloud contract or a technical standard.

High-tech service value chains may therefore become more geographically distributed but institutionally segmented, as firms selectively reconfigure them around trust, security and regulatory compatibility.

As artificial general intelligence draws closer, this transformation may accelerate. AI creates a fundamental paradox for trade in tasks: it can both facilitate cross-border work and replace it.

On the one hand, AI lowers the costs of trading tasks across borders. It not only improves communication and standardization through AI-powered translation and coding tools, but also helps firms monitor quality and coordinate geographically dispersed operations. On the other hand, AI automates many of the tasks that were easiest to offshore, including routine coding, translation, data entry, document review and standardized customer support.

Preliminary evidence from some cross-border labor platforms points to such a reorganization. Following the emergence of generative AI, outsourcing has declined in highly exposed skill areas relative to less-exposed areas, but the remaining contracts have become more complex and valuable, and work has become more concentrated.

The likely result is a hollowing out of routine digital tasks and a rising premium on human judgment, interaction, domain knowledge, system integration and responsibility. In other words, AI is changing comparative advantages at the level of the task. It substitutes for some cognitive activities while complementing others within the same occupation.

The policy implications follow directly from this analysis. Countries should not build a high-tech services strategy around low wages alone. Policy should instead support movement from tasks to functions and from functions to assets. Performing isolated tasks generates income; managing an end-to-end engineering function fosters learning; and owning software, patents, standards, data products or customer relationships creates scalable assets and greater bargaining power.

Services and industrial strategies must also be designed in tandem, as the competitiveness of electric vehicles, semiconductors, medical devices and industrial equipment increasingly depends on software, engineering, data analytics, cloud systems and after-sales services. Realizing these complementary aspects requires access to cross-border data flows and global cloud and AI services, which can lower barriers to entry and broaden access to advanced capabilities. Such openness, however, must be underpinned by trusted governance, with credible rules to safeguard privacy and intellectual property, ensure cybersecurity and strengthen operational resilience.

AI is unlikely either to end services offshoring or simply to accelerate it. Rather, it will make some tasks easier to coordinate across borders while eliminating the need to trade others. Countries will therefore need to take a more systemic approach, competing not only for individual tasks, but also for capabilities, business functions and intangible assets.

The central question in the next phase of globalization is not simply where a service is produced. It is how a problem is decomposed, which tasks are traded, which are automated, how the remaining work is governed, and who ultimately owns the knowledge and relationships created in the process.

The writer is president of the University of International Business and Economics.
The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Building urban resilience under extreme climate change

MAIN STREET
By Li Ting

As summer approaches, the world is once again bracing for extreme heat. With a powerful El Nino event taking shape and climate models indicating further intensification, unprecedented temperatures are no longer a distant projection — they are an immediate reality.

Scientific records show that the 10 warmest years since modern measurements began in 1850 have all occurred within the past decade. Remarkably, 2023, 2024 and 2025 were consecutively the hottest years ever recorded.

This trend reflects a broader shift: climate risk is no longer merely an environmental issue discussed in scientific journals. It has become a pressing operational, financial, and asset-related risk for businesses and governments alike.

Prolonged heatwaves can halt industrial production, disrupt supply chains and dramatically increase the cost of maintaining comfortable indoor environments. Against this backdrop, a fundamental question emerges: is our energy system resilient enough to withstand increasingly frequent and prolonged climate extremes?

China has prepared a solid action-based answer to this question, which is its extraordinary progress in advancing energy transition towards a cleaner and more resilient future.

Over the past decade, the country has built the world's largest and most comprehensive renewable energy supply chain. Renewable energy now supplies roughly one-third of the nation's electricity consumption. Wind and solar power generation have each exceeded one trillion kilowatt-hours annually. Through the construction of a "new power system", China is striving to balance green development, energy security, and social well-being.

Yet even with these remarkable achievements on the supply side, the energy system is still facing a growing challenge from the demand side, particularly in terms of summer cooling loads. As living standards improve and heatwaves become more frequent, air-conditioning demand has emerged as one of the largest sources of peak electricity consumption. In several major cities, cooling demand during peak periods now accounts for more than 40 percent of total electricity load.

The challenge has become even more evident this year. Driven by early heatwaves and El Nino conditions, Guangdong province became the first province in China's history to exceed peak electricity demand of 160 million kilowatts, nearly two months earlier than the traditional summer peak. Air-conditioning loads alone surpassed 47 million kW, accounting for more than 30 percent of total demand. Other areas — including Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region and the provinces of Yunnan, Guizhou, and Hainan — have also hit new highs.

Research further shows the nonlinear relationship between temperature and electricity demand. In southern grid systems such as Guangdong, every 1 C increase below 30 C adds approximately 1-3 gigawatts of demand. Once temperatures exceed 30 C, however, each additional degree can increase electricity demand by as much as 3-4.5 GW as cooling systems work harder.

These trends underscore an important reality: in an era of climate extremes, expanding electricity supply alone is no longer sufficient. Demand-side flexibility has become equally, if not more critical. The opportunity requires a fundamental shift in perspective. Electricity users must evolve from passive consumers into active participants in the energy system.

Through intelligent control systems, distributed battery storage and demand-response technologies, buildings can help reduce grid stress while lowering their own energy costs.

This opportunity is particularly significant in China, which possesses the world's largest building stock, exceeding 65 billion square meters of residential and commercial floor area. Buildings account for over one-fifth of the country's total energy consumption, making them not only major energy users, but also a vast, underutilized source of system flexibility.

Grid-interactive efficient buildings become resilience assets for the entire power system. During extreme heat events, smart buildings act as shock absorbers for the grid. Slight adjustments to air-conditioning settings or nonessential lighting can collectively free up substantial capacity across a city.

Buildings and flexible loads such as electric vehicle charging stations also facilitate the integration of renewable energy by shifting loads, storing surplus electricity and discharging it back into the grid, creating a dynamic balance between electricity supply and demand. RMI estimates that fully unlocking building load flexibility could reduce national peak demand by at least 10 percent. Such a reduction could avoid roughly 500 billion yuan ($73.62 billion) in additional investments in traditional power infrastructure and reduce annual carbon emissions by more than 200 million metric tons.

Encouragingly, market mechanisms needed to unlock this potential are already taking shape. Shanghai's Huangpu district offers a pioneering example. The district has established China's first virtual power plant for commercial buildings, aggregating flexible resources from approximately 150 large buildings and creating more than 60 megawatts of adjustable capacity.

Shenzhen, Guangdong province, is scaling this model even further. More than 60,000 flexible resources — including rooftop solar, EV charging infrastructure and commercial building HVAC systems — have been connected to the city's demand management platform. Since 2023, the system has carried out over 100 demand-response events, generating more than 18 million yuan in economic benefits while delivering substantial emissions reductions.

As climate change intensifies, energy resilience will become a central challenge for cities worldwide. Achieving this vision requires a shift in mindset — we are not merely beneficiaries of the clean-energy transition, we are active participants in creating resilient communities. Buildings, businesses, and households all have roles to play in strengthening the systems upon which modern life depends.

Importantly, this challenge is global. Cities worldwide are facing similar pressures from rising temperatures and surging cooling demand. By pioneering virtual power plants, deploying grid-interactive buildings, and leveraging market mechanisms to balance supply and demand, China is doing more than strengthening its own energy security. It is helping to establish a replicable model for climate resilience — one that demonstrates how technological innovation and human well-being can advance together.

Ultimately, energy resilience is the bridge that connects climate adaptation, economic prosperity and sustainable development. In an era of rising temperatures, building resilient cities and energy systems will determine not only how we endure the climate crisis, but how we thrive through it.

The writer is chief representative and managing director of RMI China.
The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:43 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:43 PM

TCA 2026 ELT CHINA ASSEMBLY

AI reshaping how language is being taught

Experts call for pivot: memorization must give way to critical thinking

By **ZOU SHUO**
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

Speaking at the 2026 Global English Education China Assembly, held from Friday to Sunday at Beijing Foreign Studies University in Beijing, leading English language educators stressed that in the age of artificial intelligence, foreign language education must pivot from rote memorization and mechanical grammar exercises toward cultivating critical thinking, cultural empathy and self-directed learning.

Additionally, they said students should engage in genuine dialogue with texts, critically evaluate AI-generated content and take ownership of their own learning.

Chen Zehang, a professor at Beijing Normal University's School of Foreign Languages and Literature, said the fundamental value of reading lies in genuine dialogue with a text — questioning, challenging, imagining and empathizing.

"AI can help students understand what a text says, but it cannot help them experience the real meaning of reading," she said. "We are not spending time on reading to memorize words or translate sentences. We are reading to build minds that can question, infer and connect — and that is exactly what AI cannot do."

As AI increasingly handles grammar and other surface-level language tasks, teachers' roles must also evolve, Chen said. Rather than serving primarily as language instructors, teachers should become designers of thinking experiences and facilitators of transferable reading strategies.

For example, instead of asking students to identify grammatical mistakes in AI-generated content, teachers can encourage them to evaluate its accuracy, fairness and appropriateness, she said.

"Teachers are irreplaceable guides to meaning, judgment and curiosity," Chen added.

Yang Luxin, dean of Beijing Foreign Studies University's School of English and International Studies, said AI can also support learning when designed with clear educational objectives.

She has been piloting task-specific AI agents in writing classes, allowing students to receive personalized, text-specific feedback while drafting and continue revising over multiple rounds of interaction.

"The advantage is not that the AI has better professional judgment than the teacher," Yang said. "It is that every student can receive individualized feedback while still drafting."

"In a class of 19 to 27 students, I could not sustain that kind of immediate dialogue with everyone at once," she added.

To prevent students from simply copying AI-generated answers, Yang's team designed the agents with explicit pedagogical limits.

> "We present the AI not as a 'robot teacher' replacing the human teacher, but as a patient writing partner available during drafting and after class."
>
> **Yang Luxin,** dean of Beijing Foreign Studies University's School of English and International Studies

They are instructed to diagnose problems before offering corrections, focus only on the current learning objective and ask guiding questions rather than rewrite an entire passage.

Students are required to complete their first draft independently before consulting the AI, decide for themselves what revisions to make and submit a record explaining how they used the AI during the writing process.

Student feedback has been generally positive, with many reporting reduced writing anxiety, greater confidence and stronger motivation.

"We present the AI not as a 'robot teacher' replacing the human teacher, but as a patient writing partner available during drafting and after class," Yang said. "The teacher remains the designer and final professional authority."

Cheng Liying, dean of the School of Education at City University of Macau, said learning a foreign language opens a window — or a door — to understanding different ways of seeing the world.

"The most important thing is that humans are curious and should not sit at the bottom of a well," she said, referring to the Chinese idiom describing people with a narrow outlook.

Cheng said her school's educational philosophy places nurturing at its core.

"We require our postgraduate students to respect others, take responsibility and show resilience," she said. While AI can be a helpful learning companion and mentor, she stressed that it "cannot care for you".

Addressing concerns that memorization and grammar instruction may become obsolete in the AI era, Cheng said mastering the fundamentals remains indispensable.

"If people do not understand basic concepts, they cannot recognize or process information beyond that level," she said. "Having AI does not mean we stop learning basics. The fundamentals still need to be learned; AI can just help us learn them faster."

Linguistic heritage



Laxman Gnawali, a professor at Kathmandu University and president of the Nepal English Language Teachers' Association, visits the World Language Museum at Beijing Foreign Studies University in Beijing on Saturday. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Leading English language educators take part in a keynote roundtable on foreign language education in the artificial intelligence era during the 2026 Global English Education China Assembly in Beijing on Sunday. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Human capabilities remain essential amid accelerating technological change

By **ZHAO YIMENG**
zhaoyimeng@chinadaily.com.cn

Leading educators have emphasized that foreign language education in the artificial intelligence era should not focus on competing with machines, but on cultivating graduates who combine linguistic expertise with technological literacy, cultural understanding and the ability to navigate an interconnected world.

Speaking at a keynote roundtable during the 2026 Global English Education China Assembly, deans of foreign language schools at leading Chinese universities said the discipline is undergoing transformation rather than decline.

"The question is not whether foreign language education is entering a difficult period," said Chen Jing, dean of the College of Foreign Languages and Cultures at Xiamen University in Fujian province. "The real question is whether the traditional model of training language specialists has reached its limits."

Her view was echoed by Gao Yongwei, dean of the College of Foreign Languages and Literatures at Fudan University in Shanghai.

"The period of rapid expansion has passed," Gao said. "What is changing is not the value of foreign languages, but the traditional model centered solely on language proficiency."

Educators said AI is accelerating the shift toward interdisciplinary education while also making uniquely human capabilities increasingly valuable.

Routine tasks such as translation, proofreading, vocabulary explanation and document organization can increasingly be handled by AI, they said. However, machines cannot replace human judgment in interpreting cultures, building trust, understanding historical context or making ethical decisions.

"The more advanced technology becomes, the more important humanistic education becomes," Chen said. "AI can generate language, but it cannot generate values."

Wu Xia, dean of Tsinghua University's Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, said large language models cannot fully grasp the history, cultural perspectives and emotional context behind different civilizations, making human empathy and judgment indispensable for international communication.

Despite AI's growing capabilities, language proficiency remains the foundation of the discipline, said He Ning, dean of the School of Foreign Studies at Nanjing University in Jiangsu province.

"The core that can never be abandoned is foreign language competence," he said. "Without that, the discipline loses its reason for existence."

At the same time, graduates must be able to apply their language skills in cross-cultural settings and communicate China's stories effectively to the world, He added.

To adapt to changing demands, universities are redesigning foreign language programs around interdisciplinary learning.

At Fudan, the college has launched dual master's degree programs combining foreign languages with computer science and other disciplines, as well as an eight-year bachelor's-to-doctoral program in data linguistics.

Nanjing University is expanding dual-degree programs linking German with law and English with electronics engineering. Students are also encouraged to pursue minors and electives across both the humanities and science disciplines.

Rather than adopting a standardized "foreign language plus X" model, Tsinghua University has taken a more personalized approach.

Wu said each student follows an individualized academic plan, with AI tools integrated throughout the curriculum. The department also collaborates with other schools to combine language education with fields such as international governance and global communication.

Educators said employers increasingly favor graduates who combine strong language skills with expertise in another discipline and the ability to apply both in practical settings.

The demand for traditional language-related positions is shrinking, while opportunities are expanding in emerging fields requiring interdisciplinary knowledge and international competence, they said.

Many foreign language graduates from China's leading universities go on to postgraduate study or careers in international organizations, diplomacy and other globally oriented sectors.

Model for new age of education revealed

By **ZOU SHUO**
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

A global survey involving 4,636 educators from more than 20 countries and regions has identified a five-dimensional competence model for teachers in the age of artificial intelligence, while revealing significant differences across regions, disciplines, generations and professional roles.

The findings were released on Friday in Beijing at the 2026 Global English Education China Assembly.

The report, produced by the Belt and Road Languages and Cultures Network, asked teachers to select the five most essential competences from a list of 15.

Drawing from their responses, the survey converged on a model with learning competence at 62.5 percent, pedagogical competence at 57.4 percent, empathic competence at 53.3 percent, innovative competence at 45.8 percent and facilitation competence at 40.1 percent.

The report describes learning competence as the meta-competence that enables teachers to keep pace with rapid change. Pedagogical and facilitation competences form the two wings of classroom practice, while empathic competence is the heart that builds trust and unlocks students' potential. Innovative competence serves as the driving force that advances education.

The survey also revealed notable differences among teacher groups.

While both Chinese and overseas teachers highly value learning and empathic competence, 59.5 percent of Chinese teachers place greater emphasis on pedagogical competence, with innovative competence at 48.1 percent and facilitation competence at 45.5 percent, reflecting alignment with national priorities for innovation-driven development and holistic moral education.

By contrast, 50.3 percent of overseas teachers emphasized digital intelligence literacy with well-being competence at 36.9 percent, highlighting a dual focus on technological and emotional dimensions.

Differences also emerged across disciplines. STEM teachers place significantly greater emphasis on innovative competence at 53.1 percent, nearly 10 percentage points higher than teachers in other fields.

Arts and physical education teachers attach greater importance to aesthetic competence at 23.6 percent and collaborative competence at 33.2 percent, although neither ranks among their top five competences overall.

Generational differences are equally evident. Generation Z teachers, generally born from the mid-to-late 1990s onward, place the greatest emphasis on the "foundational triangle" of learning, pedagogical and empathic competences, possibly reflecting a desire to strengthen core teaching skills amid technological uncertainty.

Teachers born before 1964 show a distinct preference for facilitation competence at 48.9 percent and communication competence at 40.4 percent, likely reflecting their extensive teaching experience. Generation X teachers, born in the 1960s and 1970s, assign nearly equal importance to digital intelligence literacy at 35.3 percent and facilitation competence at 35.6 percent, suggesting that technology literacy is close to entering their top five priorities.

The survey also identified major barriers to competence development. Nearly three-quarters of respondents — 74.8 percent — cited heavy teaching workloads that leave little time for systematic learning, making it the most immediate challenge. Other major obstacles identified include traditional evaluation and promotion systems at 57.9 percent and a lack of systematic training and institutional support at 53.3 percent.

The findings suggest that teacher development is fundamentally an ecological rather than an individual issue.

More than 66 percent of respondents expressed their strongest demand for high-quality, systematic training programs, 66.1 percent for greater pedagogical autonomy and flexibility and 58.8 percent for reforms to evaluation and incentive mechanisms.

Established in 2023 under the initiative of China Daily, the Belt and Road Languages and Cultures Network now brings together more than 80 language teacher associations, higher education institutions and cultural organizations from over 50 countries and regions across five continents.

English as a bridge, not a tool of assimilation

By **ZHAO YIMENG**
zhaoyimeng@chinadaily.com.cn

English should serve as a bridge for intercultural dialogue rather than a tool for cultural assimilation, education leaders from across Asia, Europe and Latin America said at a forum in Beijing, calling for language education that equips students to communicate globally while remaining firmly rooted in their own cultures.

The remarks were made during the inaugural Leaders Talk session of the 2026 Belt and Road Forum for Language and Culture Collaboration on Friday and Saturday.

A collective of more than 20 presidents of English teachers' associations, university leaders and education experts from countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative shared their views on English teaching and teacher development.

Speakers agreed that English, as a global lingua franca, should enable learners to tell their own cultural stories rather than replace them.

Singapore was frequently cited as an example of balancing global communication with cultural preservation. Alvin Pang of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Language Centre said Singapore adopted English as a neutral language to connect its diverse ethnic communities while requiring students to master their mother tongues.

"National unity thrives not through uniformity but through the wise balance of a shared language and diverse cultural anchors," Pang said, adding that English serves as a common language for communication while mother tongues keep people connected to their cultural roots.

Malaysia's multilingual education system was also highlighted as an example of how English can coexist with local languages.

"English gives students the stage, but their own languages give them the story," said Surinderpal Kaur Chanan Singh of Universiti Malaya. She said the goal of English education is to develop graduates who can think across languages rather than only in English.

Echoing her views, Sivabala Naidu of the Malaysian English Language Teaching Association said Malaysia's multilingual reality shows that international communication and cultural identity can reinforce rather than compete with one another.

Students may write confidently in English while speaking Malay, Mandarin, Tamil or indigenous languages at home, she said.

Kazakhstan highlighted curriculum reform as another way to strengthen cultural confidence.

Tatyana Letyaikina of the Kazakhstan Teachers of English Association said English is positioned under the country's trilingual education policy as "a tool for cultural exchange" rather than assimilation.

She said international publishers are encouraged to incorporate Kazakh history and cultural narratives into English-language textbooks, while the growing use of "Kazakhenglish" — blending Kazakh and English — enables young people to present their traditions and values to international audiences.

Offering a Latin American perspective, Valeska Villarroel of Universidad Catolica Andres Bello in Venezuela said English teaching should move beyond encouraging students to imitate native speakers and instead empower them to express their own identities.

"A Venezuelan student should not have to 'act' American to be proficient. Instead, they own the English they speak, using it to project their own identity," she said.

Villarroel said English classrooms should incorporate Venezuelan history, local expressions and social realities so that students use the language for authentic self-expression rather than cultural imitation.

Language proficiency should not come at the cost of cultural erasure but should instead help learners engage confidently with the world while remaining rooted in their own identities, she added.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:43 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:43 PM

CHINA

Editor's note: *The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence is reshaping nearly every facet of human existence. This series will take an in-depth look at this transformative force, examining how AI is redefining the way we live, work and interact.*

By **LI HONGYANG**
lihongyang@chinadaily.com.cn





Left: Children and parents watch a robotic dog doing acrobatics at a science and technology museum in Jiaxing, Zhejiang province, on July 18. JIN PENG / FOR CHINA DAILY **Right:** Children and parents try a smart reading device at a kindergarten in Qingdao, Shandong province, in April. WANG HAIBIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

AI reshaping modern parenting

Despite offering infinite patience and tutoring talent, questions remain over how chatbots influence children's socialization

When Zhu Chenxiao felt too drained to answer her 4-year-old daughter's relentless stream of questions, she reached for an artificial intelligence chatbot as an unconventional babysitter.

Months later, her daughter made an announcement that was equal parts hilarious and alarming. When a relative asked the young girl who she wanted to marry when she grew up, she didn't hesitate: "Nailoong from the AI app."

Nailoong — a chubby, bright-yellow animated dragon popular on Chinese social platforms — had become the child's favorite digital companion. Unlike exhausted adults, the AI was unfailingly gentle, endlessly patient and agreeable to a fault.

"We all burst out laughing, but I felt a sudden pang of worry," said Zhu, a former stay-at-home mother in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, who returned to the workforce last year. Zhu feared she was outsourcing too much emotional connection to a machine.

As generative AI tools proliferate, exhausted parents in high-pressure cities are turning to AI not just as study aids, but as endless storytellers, hyper-patient tutors and digital playmates.

According to a survey of 1,336 parents published by the China Youth Daily in May, over 75 percent reported that their primary or secondary school children were actively using generative AI tools, with nearly 73 percent of parents endorsing the technology. But as AI moves from classroom assistant to emotional companion, experts warn that these hyper-sycophantic tools may be subtly reshaping how children learn human relationships.

Social sycophancy

For Zhu, relying on AI began purely as a fatigue management strategy. "After one or two hours of intense interaction including playing, drawing, answering endless 'why' questions, my energy is completely gone," Zhu said. "I needed someone else to keep her company."

She monitored the shared account closely, keeping the screen turned off so her daughter only interacted via voice. While the AI adjusted its tone appropriately for a child, Zhu noticed that the chatbot never said no.

"It was too eager to please. With chocolate, it would warn her at first, but then give in if she sounded upset. It has no context. It just wants to make her happy. As a parent, I can't give up my principles," Zhu said.

That trait is not an accident; it is a known technical vulnerability called AI sycophancy.

"Sycophancy comes directly from the training process," said Zhao Jingwu, an associate professor at Beihang University's School of Law. "Reinforcement learning from human feedback systematically rewards answers that please the user. Over time, the model learns to flatter rather than hold its ground."

While sycophancy might be harmless during a quick Q&A, Zhao warned that extended emotional companionship carries subtle developmental risks. "A child's socialization relies on learning to coexist with another human will — someone who says 'no', who has their own boundaries and bad days," Zhao said. "Real human interaction forces compromise. AI demands no accommodation. It simply consumes tokens."



Parents take children to an exhibition at the fourth Beijing AI Industry Innovation and Development Conference in Beijing in February. CHEN XIAOGEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Digital tutor

While Zhu wrestled with emotional boundaries in Hangzhou, 1,000 kilometers south in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, a Peking University graduate surnamed Yin sees AI as a tutor who is always available so that her daughter's early learning routine can be optimized.

In China's top-tier cities, parents face intense anxiety over educational "involution" (*neijuan*). For Yin, however, AI actually helps reduce that academic pressure.

"It boosts efficiency, frees up time and makes parents' lives easier. That saved time lets us be present with our children or help them develop other interests," Yin said.

"Degree devaluation is almost certain. A degree isn't worth what it used to be. But you can't stop studying or taking exams," she added. "You need a smarter, faster way to get a decent educational background, then use the leftover time to build real skills including communication, building influence, knowing what industry she wants to be in."

Yin uses AI in three key areas of her daughter's early education: English, Chinese literacy and a broad general knowledge curriculum most parents couldn't teach alone.

AI is proving to be a highly efficient and affordable tool for early English education. It can cover much of the training in listening, speaking, reading and writing. While not a full replacement for human teachers, the cost savings are significant. Families could save nearly 30,000 yuan ($4,400) per year by switching to AI-driven tools.

"I have four different AI English tutors for my daughter, one for each stage as she grows up. She also uses an AI reading tool that gives her a mind map after she finishes a picture book, so it helps her retell the story," Yin said. "Her spoken English is almost at the level of her Chinese. It's like a mother tongue to her."

For learning Chinese characters, Yin said: "We didn't want it to be boring, so we came up with a fun way to take all the characters she already knows and turn them into little comics or picture books. Instead of just memorizing, she's actually reading and making stories with the words she knows. It just feels a lot more natural that way."

Perhaps the most ambitious use of AI is in what Yin calls her "general knowledge system".

Topics include philosophy, economics, astronomy, biology and life sciences. "Which parent can master all of that? But AI can," she said. It takes about two hours for AI to produce a detailed two-week plan on a chosen theme.

Yin doesn't believe in shielding her daughter from the technology. "You can't keep children away from AI any more than you can keep them off the internet. Imagine someone today saying, 'There's bad stuff online, so my child will never use the internet'. Nobody does that. Ten years from now, AI will be exactly the same."

For now, she guides her daughter's use of the tools. "I introduce them and supervise her. She knows how to use them, but doesn't see them as strange or special. This generation is growing up with AI. To them, it's just there."

Imagination haven

In Xi'an, Shaanxi province, Li Ge found that AI offered her 6-year-old son a partner with hyper-specific interests.

The boy uses an AI chatbot daily to orchestrate complex imaginary battles based on his favorite video game, *Plants vs Zombies*.

"I just can't match it. I don't know the games well and, honestly, I'm not interested. But AI understands all the terminology," Li said.

The boy physically builds forts with pillows and toys, then tells AI that zombies are attacking.

The AI responds with detailed advice: "Make sure you have enough food in your fortress. The enemy is approaching. I'm on my way. Don't worry." For up to an hour a day, the boy is entirely absorbed, freeing up his parents.

The boy has also begun designing simple games with AI tools. Inspired by the silkworms he keeps at home, he made a feeding and life-cycle game. Players drop mulberry leaves, and the silkworm grows, gains energy and health points, and eventually progresses through its developmental stages. It even requires the player to clean up droppings.

"He hated it when the AI just drew a flat oval shape with dots. He wanted a real, 3D silkworm. Each model produced a different result. He loves anything that visibly changes. He doesn't like fish, because they stay the same," Li said.

The mother said the interactions have improved her son's communication skills. When AI misunderstands, he must rephrase and clarify his intent, which sharpens his precision. He also picks up new vocabulary, as AI tends to respond at a level slightly above his own, which is advanced enough to stretch him, but never too difficult.

The AI offers strong emotional support. "He feels like the leader of his own world, with everything revolving around his decisions," the mother said. This worried her at first. But her son leads a normal social life at kindergarten and happily plays with friends in the neighborhood. Those play dates require compromise and following rules. His time with AI, she realized, serves a different need.

"He needs a space where he doesn't have to accommodate anyone else, where he can completely release and direct everything. For him, talking to AI is relaxing," Li said.

As AI tools become permanent fixtures in household life, regulators and developers face growing pressure to adapt. Legal experts like Zhao argue that platforms must be legally mandated to provide dedicated "minor modes" that curb sycophantic tendencies and enforce healthier boundaries.

For now, parents are inventing their own rules on the fly — treating AI not as a full replacement for human parenting, but as an imperfect assistant.

"I guess the main thing I can learn from the AI is its patience — and how to actually get my child to listen to what I'm saying," said Zhu in Hangzhou.

FIRST PERSON

Digital tools give Shaanxi mom 'moment to breathe'

Zuo Jingwen, *30, from Xi'an, Shaanxi province*



For me, the real benefit of artificial intelligence is that it saves me time and energy and gives me a moment to breathe. But for my 2-year-old son, AI is basically just a storytelling machine or something that plays music. He doesn't really use the intelligent part of it. At least I haven't found a way yet.

I've used AI with him maybe three major times. The first was with an AI app on my phone. My son is a high-energy boy. I was so worn out that I felt I couldn't respond to him with any patience anymore. I could feel I was about to snap at him, but I didn't want to get angry. So I thought, "Is there anything that can just reply to him a few times, make any sound at all?" Then I remembered AI has a voice-call feature. I let my child talk to it directly. He's still little and can't say much, so he just held the phone. He'd ask, 'What's a fan?' or 'What are fireworks?' — just really simple questions.

It only lasted a few minutes, but during those few minutes I didn't have to do anything. I could just watch him. Those few minutes saved me, because sometimes when you're completely drained from taking care of a child, you just need a moment to breathe.

The second time, I bought him an AI toy — a bubble machine. It's shaped like a soft bubble, and inside it's powered by large models. What's special is that it has a parent app. You can choose a character for the bubble toy. Depending on the character you pick, the voice talking to your child will be different — different age, different way of speaking, different verbal tics. The app also asks if you have any reminders. I entered that I wanted it to encourage him to be strong — to tell him some of the things I hope he'll learn. But so far, I haven't found it particularly effective. Even though I set it up that way, I haven't seen any obvious guidance work. When my child uses the bubble, it's mostly things like, before bed, "Can you play a song for me?" or "Tell me a story."

Now, whether it's the AI app on my phone or the little AI bubble toy, he uses them very rarely. It's very occasional. The moments I bring AI in are still when I'm at home and just too exhausted and don't want to put him in front of cartoons. I might pull out one of these tools to distract him for a bit. So I am the one who benefits, much more than my child. There's absolutely no dependency or emotional attachment — he never reaches for it on his own. I feel like we haven't reached that stage. Maybe it's something that comes with older children.

Sometimes I use AI because he won't listen to family. If I tell him something and he ignores me, or his grandparents tell him and he ignores them, but if AI says it, he might actually pay attention. For example, he'll be eating and suddenly put his bowl aside and want to run off to play. I ask AI, "Can a child do that?" AI of course says no. He doesn't react immediately, but after a while he might quietly go back on his own. It's possible. He just needs a third party to say it.

That's my experience so far. AI gives me a moment to breathe, but for my little one, it's still just a toy that talks back sometimes.

Zuo Jingwen spoke with Li Hongyang.

Contact the writer at lihongyang@chinadaily.com.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:43 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:43 PM

LIFE

A smart lens on the past

From augmented reality glasses to digital twins, unseen technology is revolutionizing authentic cultural travel experiences, **Yang Feiyue** reports.







Top: A scene from *Macau 2049 — Yangge | Robots*, which pairs the traditional folk dance from Hebei province with the H1 humanoid robot.
Above left: An international visitor uses an AI-powered translator to inquire about ticketing services at the Summer Palace in Beijing.
Above right: Staff members monitor cultural heritage sites using digital tools at the Summer Palace. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Representatives of World Heritage sites and travel leaders at a Beijing summit found common ground: the future of cultural tourism lies in innovation, with China at the heart of that transformation.

The ticket sellers at Jinshanling Great Wall, 130 kilometers northeast of central Beijing, faced the same challenge every day. Around 100,000 foreign visitors passed through the ticketing station each year, and nearly every single one needed help understanding the difference between ticket options.

Their only tool was a smartphone. They typed in Chinese, translated the text word by word into English, and read it aloud. One visitor after another. The line grew longer. The summer heat became stifling. Everyone was exhausted.

Then a pair of augmented reality glasses changed everything.

Wu Fei, CEO of the Beijing-based AR company LLVision, showed up at the ticket booth with a pair of translation glasses earlier this year. A seller put them on and instantly saw translated questions and answers appear in his field of vision. He answered inquiries in real time. Later, tourists borrowed the glasses themselves, and used an AI-powered Q&A system to learn about the Great Wall's history as they climbed its ancient steps.

"The problem wasn't that the technology didn't exist," Wu said at the Beijing Fragrant Hills Tourism Summit, hosted by the World Tourism Cities Federation in early June.

"It was that nobody had put it in the right place at the right time."

At the meeting, a consensus emerged from a diverse group of panelists that the future of cultural tourism belongs to invisible technology that quietly serves the story, the heritage and the human connection. The best technology, they argued, is the kind travelers hardly notice.

Profound transformation

The timing of this consensus was no coincidence. The global tourism industry is undergoing a profound transformation.

An Li, vice-president of Airbnb China, says travelers are moving beyond traditional "check-in and photo" tourism in search of more immersive experiences.

"The industry has entered an era where we compete not just on quality, but on creativity," she says.

Airbnb's data from just before the 2026 FIFA World Cup showed that more than half of bookings were made by groups of family members and friends, turning the tournament into a shared social experience.

Seventy percent of visitors to the United States for the event also planned multicity itineraries rather than staying in one destination, An says, describing the trend as "portal travel".

For heritage sites like the Summer Palace in Beijing and Petra in Jordan, this shift creates a delicate balancing act between offering deep, immersive experiences and preserving the very places people have come to see.

Ma Wenxiang, director of the Summer Palace, says her team has built a comprehensive digital monitoring system for the sprawling imperial garden, which contains 70,000 square meters of ancient architecture, more than 38,800 movable relics, and over 1,600 ancient trees.

Three restoration centers use technology to give each artifact a "health check". The Xumilingjing site, a significant Buddhist architectural complex, has been digitally restored to its former glory.

Ma says the technology serves not only conservation but also accessibility. With inbound tourism to the site up 50 percent from last year — nearly 400,000 visitors so far this year — the Summer Palace has deployed an AI-powered digital customer service system supporting 75 languages. Multilingual translation devices are now widely available across the grounds.

The goal, Ma explains, is to remove barriers without inserting screens between visitors and the landscape.

Adnan Al-Sawa'ir, chairman of the board of commissioners of the Petra region development and tourism authority, describes Petra — the ancient city carved into rose-red rock — as a "living testament to human creativity and adaptation".

"Technology is a tool to enhance understanding, not a replacement for direct interaction with the heritage site," he says.

"Our goal is not to add more screens to the visitor's journey. It is to keep the technology as invisible as possible."

Petra now uses digital twin technology, 3D scanning and data analytics to monitor risks and anticipate challenges. During the "Petra by Night" experience, light projections on the Treasury bring the Nabataean civilization back to life without physically altering the ancient facade. The rock remains the star, he adds. The technology is simply the stagehand.

But even the most sophisticated technology cannot save a project that lacks emotional authenticity, according to Zhao Chongyi, executive director of Puy du Fou Asia.

Puy du Fou, the legendary French historical spectacle company, entered China several years ago.

"Many Chinese travelers have extraordinarily rich experience in appreciating cultural events," Zhao says.

"They have seen world-class performances and exhibitions around the globe. They can tell whether something is truly excellent, sincere, deep and worth their time."

Simply importing an international concept or relying on visual spectacle is no guarantee of success in China, she adds. What does work is authenticity.

"The core of cultural narrative is not grandeur, but sincerity," she says. "The best use of technology isn't to draw attention to itself. It helps people enter the story naturally, believe it, and feel the emotion."

A show that breathes

Zhao's metaphor found a practical home in Macao. Catarina Lio, senior vice-president of brand marketing at MGM, wanted the show *Macau 2049* to breathe — to evolve with its audience rather than remain frozen in time.

"It begins like a baby, and it continues to grow," she says.

Macau 2049 is a resident production, but she refuses to treat it as a fixed product. The performance integrates eight different forms of intangible cultural heritage, with local villagers — inheritors of these traditions — taking the stage instead of professional actors to present their own culture.

Technology provides the spotlight, she says, but people remain at the heart of the performance.

Lio also challenged a common assumption in the industry.

"We keep hearing that the younger generation has no interest in cultural heritage," she says. "But the key is whether we, as developers, are speaking their language and engaging them on their own terms."

She notes that 500 people from 20 countries came together to create *Macau 2049*. The goal, she says, is to give culture a second life.

Back at Jinshanling, the ticket seller is still at his post. The line still forms. The heat still bears down. But now, when a visitor from across the world steps up to his window, he hands them a pair of glasses and answers their questions. No translation apps. No awkward typing. Just a conversation.

"The purpose of technology is not to replace humans," Wu of LLVision says. "It is to help people live better lives."

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn







Left: A foreign visitor uses an AI-powered translator to communicate with a staff member at the Summer Palace in Beijing. **Center and right:** International visitors explore the Jinshanling section of the Great Wall with augmented reality glasses that offer guided interpretation and real-time translation. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Coral jewels tell timeless stories from ocean depths

L'ECOLE, School of Jewelry Arts is presenting *Precious Coral: From Curiosity to Treasures* in Hong Kong, inviting visitors to discover one of jewelry history's most captivating natural materials.

Running through Oct 11 at K11 MUSEA, the exhibition brings together around 120 coral jewelry creations, artworks and rare natural specimens on loan from leading museums, private collections and jewelry houses.

As the largest exhibition that L'ECOLE has staged in Hong Kong, it explores coral through the perspectives of biology, gemology, craftsmanship, and jewelry history.

The exhibition is jointly curated by Olivier Segura, gemologist and managing director of L'ECOLE, School of Jewelry Arts in Asia-Pacific, gemologist Ann Lee, art historian Mathilde Berger-Rondouin, and Rui Galopim de Carvalho, gemologist, scientific adviser and vice-chair of the Coral Commission of the World Jewellery Confederation.

"Precious coral has long occupied a meaningful place in the world of jewelry and ornament, especially in the Asia-Pacific, where its cultural significance is deep and enduring," says Segura.

"This exhibition presents a balanced perspective on its history, craftsmanship and contemporary context. Our intention is to offer visitors a clear and informed understanding of this material and the many stories surrounding it."

Carvalho says the exhibition reveals the many layers of fascination inspired by precious coral. "I hope visitors experience its remarkable, multifaceted world with curiosity and delight," he says.

The exhibits are on loan from distinguished institutions and private collectors, including the Coral Museum-Liverino Collection, the Faerber Collection, the Van Cleef & Arpels Collection, the Cartier Collection, and the Mengdiexuan Collection.

Together, the works present an interdisciplinary view of coral's place in both the natural world and human culture.

The exhibition opens with an immersive installation that re-creates a descent from the ocean's surface to depths of 2,000 meters, where precious coral grows.

Raw and polished coral branches are displayed alongside maps identifying coral habitats, while exhibits distinguish precious coral from reef coral and explain their different ecological roles.

Displays also examine modern fishing regulations, trade practices and scientific research, highlighting growing efforts to improve sustainability and traceability.

Designed for visitors of all ages and backgrounds, the exhibition combines scholarly content with hands-on experiences. Interactive stations allow visitors to handle educational materials and explore the tools traditionally used in coral carving.

"Working with precious coral requires both technical sensitivity and respect for its fragility," Lee says. "By presenting tools, unfinished branches and finished jewels side by side, we hope visitors gain a deeper appreciation of the craftsmanship that transforms a raw branch into a work of art."

Berger-Rondouin says, "What fascinates me about precious coral is the way it carries meaning across cultures without losing its identity. From Mediterranean amulets to Qing (1644-1911) court ornaments and Himalayan ceremonial adornments, precious coral has long signified prosperity. It travels remarkably well geographically and symbolically. This exhibition shows how a material shaped by nature becomes layered with stories, beliefs and power as it moves through time."

L'ECOLE is also extending its educational program with an interactive space in the K11 MUSEA atrium through Aug 15.

Visitors can learn more about the school's exhibitions, courses, books, podcasts, and lectures, take coral-themed quizzes on their mobile phones, and redeem exclusive gifts at the school's fifth-floor gallery.

CHINA DAILY













L'ECOLE, School of Jewelry Arts presents an exhibition in Hong Kong exploring coral's history, craftsmanship and cultural significance through 120 exhibits. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:43 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:43 PM

LIFE

A waltz among flowers

Vienna's Belvedere brings floral masterpieces to Beijing, celebrating enduring artistic connections across centuries, **Lin Qi** reports.







Top and far right: *Still Life with Fruit, Flowers, and a Silver Cup*, and, *Poor Well-wishers*, both by Ferdinand Georg Waldmuller. **Right:** *Flowering Poppies*, by Olga Wisinger-Florian. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Below: An immersive space at the exhibition showcases Gustav Klimt's masterpieces, providing a fuller insight into the creations and stylistic traits of the iconic Austrian artist. LAN HONGCHAO / FOR CHINA DAILY



Flowers have long spoken a language that transcends geography. Across East and West, artists have turned to blossoms to express beauty, emotion and the rhythms of life, creating works that continue to "bloom" centuries after they were painted.

As Johann Wolfgang von Goethe wrote: "Flowers are the beautiful words and hieroglyphs of nature." That sentiment is resonated through an exhibition in Beijing that brings together European floral masterpieces while inviting dialogue with China's own rich artistic tradition.

In the collection of the Palace Museum, a Song Dynasty (960-1279) flower-and-bird painting captures the vitality of summer, with pink hibiscus, white gardenias and yellow lilies competing for attention. Court painters of the period produced countless works that, like the dynasty's lyrical *ci* poetry, evoke serenity, refined beauty and enduring artistic vision.

At Vienna's Belvedere Museum, floral paintings reveal a distinctly European interpretation of nature's splendor.

Now, to mark the 55th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Austria, the Belvedere has brought 60 floral paintings by 35 artists, spanning the 18th to the early 20th centuries, together with sculptures and vintage decorative objects, to Beijing.

The exhibition, *Blooming Hearts Through Centuries: From Waldmuller to Klimt, Floral Masterpieces from the Belvedere in Vienna*, is on view at the China World Art Museum inside the China Millennium Monument on Chang'an Avenue until Sept 19.

Originally built in the 18th century as the summer residence of Prince Eugene of Savoy, a military commander and diplomat of the Habsburg monarchy, the Belvedere is now one of Europe's leading museums. Its renowned collection is housed in a Baroque architectural masterpiece in the historic center of Vienna, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Stella Rollig, general director of the Belvedere, says flowers offer visitors an immediate connection to art. "You don't have to be an art historian or know much about Austria or Austrian art history," she says. "You can simply enjoy these paintings because flowers are such a universal language.

"We have great admiration and respect for China's long tradition of flower-and-bird and landscape paintings. This exhibition is a meaningful cultural exchange that audiences can appreciate both emotionally and intellectually," she adds.

The exhibition opens with Baroque art, reflecting not only the style of the Belvedere itself but also the tastes of 18th-century Vienna. Floral still lifes from the period often pair blossoms with fruit, insects, small animals, silverware and glass vases. These lavish arrangements celebrated prosperity while also serving as reminders of life's fleeting nature, where beauty inevitably gives way to decline.

Among the highlights are the still lifes of German-born painter Franz Werner Tamm, who worked for the Austrian court. His richly saturated flowers emerge dramatically from dark backgrounds, demonstrating the Baroque mastery of light, shadow and meticulous detail.

As the middle class expanded in the 19th century, artistic tastes evolved. Floral paintings retained their decorative appeal but adopted softer colors and more intimate settings, often portraying flowers in comfortable homes or natural landscapes.

Ferdinand Georg Waldmuller, several of whose works are on display, became one of the pioneers of this shift, believing that art should faithfully reflect nature.

While Waldmuller often portrayed flowers flourishing vibrantly in nature, bathed in sunlight alongside other living things, he also placed them within narrative scenes that reflected social concerns.

One of his works on show, *Poor Well-wishers*, portrays a middle-class Viennese salon where guests offer blessings and receive coins in return, subtly highlighting social inequality. In *Wreath Maker*, a barefoot young woman quietly weaves a floral wreath outside her modest home. Her calm expression contrasts sharply with the dark, dilapidated interior behind her, underscoring the hardships of everyday life.

The Belvedere is perhaps best known for Gustav Klimt's iconic *The Kiss*. While Chinese audiences are familiar with his gilded portraits, this exhibition presents another side of the artist. The featured work, *After the Rain*, reflects Klimt's love of the countryside, where he spent his summers. Inspired by a trip in 1898, the painting depicts chickens pecking among wildflowers and trees shrouded in mist. Its softened forms and atmospheric brushwork capture the quiet freshness of a landscape after rainfall.

Franz Smola, a member of the curatorial team, notes that Klimt is among Europe's most celebrated artists and that his works command extraordinary prices. The Belvedere holds 24 Klimt paintings, many too fragile to travel.

"It is very rare to send a Klimt abroad," he says, adding that the artist used landscape not simply to depict nature but to convey emotion and aesthetic experience.

Song Xiaoyan, one of the exhibition's chief coordinators, says every detail of the exhibition design enhances the viewing experience. Gallery walls are painted red for the Baroque period, violet for Romanticism and green for the avant-garde, while subtle scents of wild grass fill the space, creating an immersive journey that engages sight, smell and emotion.

Contact the writer at linqi@chinadaily.com.cn

Summer space exhibits inspire China's next generation of dreamers





Left: A young visitor learns about ophthalmic science at Liaoning Science and Technology Museum on July 19 in the provincial capital Shenyang. **Right:** Children try out a device showcasing liquid pressure at the museum on the same day. PHOTOS BY LI GANG / XINHUA

Wandering through a temporary exhibition on lunar exploration held at the China Science and Technology Museum, an 11-year-old boy surnamed Huang from North China's Hebei province was still thinking about the virtual journey he had just taken.

"The VR exhibit showcased a future moon base. It felt so real," Huang says. "I hope I can go there one day."

Jointly presented by the CSTM and the China National Space Administration, the exhibition features real spacecraft components, including a backup of the specially designed national flag once displayed on the moon's surface in 2020 by the Chang'e-5 flight, China's first lunar sample-return mission, a piece of the high-performance alloy dubbed "Chang'e steel", and a commercial rocket engine.

Visitors can also enjoy an immersive virtual reality experience that places them in the role of a researcher traveling to a lunar base in 2049.

"We heard about the exhibition and wanted to bring our son," says Huang's father, who is struck by how today's children can access space science resources that were unimaginable when he was young.

"When I was a child, I had heard of the Long March rockets. Later, Yang Liwei went into space, and I felt China's space program was advancing rapidly," he says. "Back then, we could only learn vaguely from the news that China had satellites and rockets capable of reaching space."

Yang became China's first astronaut to enter space in October 2003.

The family's visit reflects a broader transformation in summer science education. Achievements that previous generations could only follow from newspaper reports and television broadcasts are now becoming immersive, hands-on experiences for children.

That trend extends beyond Beijing. In Hefei, the capital of East China's Anhui province, the Anhui Museum is hosting an exhibition that places modern space exploration within the much longer tradition of ancient Chinese culture's observation and the questioning of "heaven".

Running through Oct 20, the exhibition brings together nearly 300 cultural relics and exhibits from 48 museums and research institutions. Ancient astronomical instruments are displayed alongside models of the *Yutu* lunar rover and China's space station, as well as lunar soil brought back by the Chang'e-6 mission in 2024 — humanity's first samples ever collected from the moon's far side.

Animations, demonstrations of ancient instruments and interactive installations guide visitors through subjects ranging from early celestial observation and timekeeping to today's deep-space exploration.

While the Hefei exhibition links contemporary missions with centuries of skywatching, the Nanning Science and Technology Museum in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region focuses on hands-on participation. Its "My Space Dream" summer camp introduces children to the development of China's space program while offering simulated astronaut training.

Such programs are part of a broader effort to expand science education beyond the classroom. At Beijing's CSTM alone, more than 220 exhibit demonstrations and educational activities are scheduled on an average day, covering subjects from spaceflight and chemistry to artificial intelligence.

China has placed greater emphasis on science popularization and education. Its Science and Technology Popularization Law, revised in 2024, places science popularization on an equal footing with scientific and technological innovation and encourages its integration with culture, tourism and other sectors.

According to the National Development and Reform Commission, China produces more than 5 million graduates in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics each year. Its science and technology workforce has surpassed 110 million people, according to a 2022 report from the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Those figures describe the far end of the country's talent pipeline. Science museums operate much earlier in that process, turning major national projects and sometimes abstract scientific ideas into experiences that children can see, question and remember.

For Huang's parents, spaceflight was once a distant national story learned through the news. This summer, their son stepped out of a virtual lunar base talking not only about how far China has come, but also about how far he hopes to go.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:43 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:43 PM

LIFE





Questions before goodbye

A poignant documentary series reveals how older adults navigate love, law and their final choices, **Li Yingxue** reports.

"My job is to watch other people cry. I cannot cry." Inside consultation room No 8 at the Shanghai Putuo Notary Public Office, notary Li Chenyang meets older people carrying some of life's most difficult questions.

One wants to ensure an estranged spouse never makes future medical decisions on their behalf. Another has never married and hopes someone will arrange her funeral according to her wishes. A father nearing 90 wants to secure the future of his son who is both hearing-impaired and visually challenged before he dies.

For Li, even the smallest details matter — the room temperature, the angle of a chair and the most convenient subway exit. He listens for wishes hidden between hesitant words, then translates personal fears into legal provisions.

These moments open the second season of *When You Are Old*, a six-episode documentary that premiered on Dragon TV and Tencent Video on July 14. Returning after two years, the series follows six groups of older people navigating love, illness, family relationships, property and personal autonomy.

More than 320 million people in China are aged 60 or above, according to the National Bureau of Statistics. Population aging is reshaping family life and raising questions many would rather avoid: Who will provide care when someone can no longer look after themselves? Can trust extend beyond blood ties? Can those without spouses or children decide how to spend their final years?

Rather than explaining how to "age gracefully", the documentary asks a more fundamental question: Can people continue living on their own terms as they grow older?





Top: Six-episode documentary *When You Are Old* zooms in on people whose life stories reflect China's aging situation, including notary Li Chenyang (left) of Shanghai Putuo Notary Public Office, and Li Kangmei (middle); Li Chenyang at work.
Left: An elderly group wedding ceremony depicted in the documentary.
Below: The production team of the documentary's second season at a preview screening in Beijing; the official poster for *When You Are Old*'s season 2.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Planning for tomorrow

The opening episode, *I'll Wait for You in Heaven*, examines voluntary guardianship, which allows adults with full mental capacity to appoint someone they trust to manage their personal, medical and financial affairs if they later lose the ability to make decisions independently.

One unmarried, childless woman signed an agreement and moved into a nursing home, believing she had prepared for the future. She died unexpectedly 40 days later, leaving assets worth about 5 million yuan ($738,000).

She had not made a will, and no heirs could immediately be located, leaving her funeral and estate in limbo. Although tracing heirs fell outside his official duties, Li spent months searching for them.

"The fact that an heir cannot be located does not mean there is no heir," he says. "We must follow the law."

During filming, the team met older people who wanted to appoint relatives, caregivers, neighbors, property agents and even a restaurant owner as guardians. One considered naming an online celebrity.

What they sought was more than someone legally authorized to sign documents. They wanted reassurance that someone would honor their wishes when they could no longer speak for themselves.

Li describes his work as "a group of lonely people helping another group of lonely people face a future in which they will no longer be alone".

Yet, these unresolved cases show that dignity in old age should not depend on meeting an exceptionally dedicated notary. Individual commitment matters, but it cannot fill every institutional gap.

Following one's heart

The second episode, *Li Kangmei's Decision*, follows an older woman making a life-changing choice.

Li Kangmei moved from Henan province to Shanghai and spent 18 years with her partner, Lao Li, caring for him as his health steadily declined. Yet, their relationship never led to the marriage she had long hoped for.

After he entered hospice care, she told director Xu Yiling that she wanted to return to Luoyang.

"I want to go home," she said. "I don't want to stay here anymore. It is time to say goodbye to him."

Before leaving, the couple linked little fingers beside his hospital bed, and she promised: "I will come back."

Days later, shortly after Xu arrived in Luoyang, she received a message at around 5 am saying Lao Li had died. Hours later, she visited Li Kangmei, who had not heard the news and was still describing her plans for the future.

"When I reviewed the footage, I realized they probably both knew, when they made that promise, that it would be their last meeting," Xu says.

Their relationship resists easy judgment. Chief director Fan Shiguang says Li Kangmei's choice sparked debate within the production team.

"At first, I could not fully understand it," he says. "But over time, I realized it was about an older woman choosing to follow her heart and move forward."

The documentary does not gloss over her resentment, hesitation, guilt or resolve. Lao Li faced his own struggles, but Li Kangmei also had the right to begin again.

Her story raises questions that transcend age: Does commitment have to end in marriage? Does caring for someone mean staying until the very end? When is it time to accept that a relationship no longer offers the life you want?

The remaining episodes explore matchmaking, intergenerational conflict, living alone and serious illness. One follows a matchmaker with 25,000 older singles in his network. Another concerns a mother who accumulates debts of more than 1 million yuan through investment scams, forcing her daughter to confront both the financial fallout and their strained relationship.

Search for purpose

Together, the stories show that old age is no more uniform than any other stage of life. It may bring illness, loneliness and loss, but also desire, humor, resilience and the search for new purpose.

"*When You Are Old* is not made only for older people," producer Xie Lin says. "We hope middle-aged and younger viewers can also see themselves in these stories."

For many young people, wills, hospice care and retirement planning seem far away. But aging does not begin on a particular birthday. The conversations people have today about illness, caregiving and autonomy will shape how they experience later life.

After the premiere screening in Shanghai on July 10, Li Chenyang took the stage. "We discussed many difficult subjects, but I hoped people could leave with a smile," he said. "When I heard laughter during the screening, I felt relieved."

The documentary does not shy away from loneliness, illness or death, but neither does it portray old age as a prolonged tragedy. Moments of humor, arguments and absurdity preserve the texture of everyday life.

That same day, the Shanghai Municipal Civil Affairs Bureau released two guidelines outlining how voluntary guardianship agreements for older people should be established, activated, witnessed and terminated.

"What we have been waiting for is gradually taking shape," Li Chenyang says. "We should remain hopeful. Given enough time, solutions will emerge."

A documentary cannot resolve these challenges. But once issues previously dismissed as private family concerns enter public discussion, they no longer have to be carried in silence.

Perhaps old age is not the stage when every question is finally answered. It simply brings a new set of questions. The people before the camera offer no conclusions. In their own imperfect ways, they are trying to shape whatever life remains on their own terms.

Contact the writer at liyingxue@chinadaily.com.cn

Ancient Longfusi temple fair becomes modern urban lounge

The Longfusi Summer Fair, now underway in one of Beijing's historic districts, celebrates the Chinese concept of *Fu* — happiness and good fortune.

Blending the charm of a traditional temple fair with the energy of a modern night market, the event reflects how urban renewal has transformed the area into a vibrant cultural and commercial destination.

Running from mid-June through October, the fair offers visitors Beijing specialties from time-honored brands, craft beer and tea, live performances, and hands-on experiences showcasing intangible cultural heritage.

"An 'urban summer night lounge' is what we have in mind — a place where people can eat, go shopping, enjoy performances, and have fun," says Yang Yaolu, a marketing executive with Beijing Xinlongfu Cultural Investment Co Ltd, which oversees the area's conservation and renewal project.

With a history stretching back nearly 600 years, Longfusi in Beijing's Dongcheng district was once home to one of the capital's most celebrated temple fairs. More than a decade of careful restoration has gradually transformed it into a new cultural landmark.

The first phase of the Longfusi development project was put into operation in August 2019, debuting as a cultural creative park featuring urban reading rooms, art galleries and shared offices.

In September 2025, the second phase of the project was opened to the public, introducing more diverse attractions including cultural performances, technological experiences and time-honored brands.

Yang says the area's commercial mix was carefully curated to complement Longfusi's cultural identity.

"By breathing new life into tradition through contemporary expressions, we've created a destination that increasingly appeals to visitors, especially younger people," she says.


The ongoing summer fair at the renewed Longfusi area, one of Beijing's iconic historic districts, offers people a place to hang out.
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Rather than replacing the neighborhood through large-scale demolition, the project focused on preserving existing buildings and the historic street layout. A layered conservation approach allows architectural traces from different eras to coexist, highlighting the district's rich history, Yang adds.

The restoration involved extensive research and repeated rounds of planning. Designers refined the spatial layout while ensuring it blended naturally with the surrounding neighborhood and urban landscape.

"Despite many challenges, the work required the precision of embroidery," Yang says, describing a conservation approach tailored to local conditions and guided by careful scientific study.

The closer integration of culture and commerce has also created new business opportunities.

Li Mei, an inheritor of Beijing's intangible cultural heritage Fanlihua, also known as paper flip flowers, runs a workshop named Zhuangyuan at Longfu Mansion. Besides vending commodities, the store features folk art experiences, where visitors can sit down at a long table and are given personalized instructions on crafting skills, including cutting and gluing paper, crescent-shaped trimming, hand-dyeing and assembly.

Li expects more forms of revenue to come in during the summer vacation. "Hopefully cooperation between Longfusi and the surrounding hotels or tour groups can be boosted, so that more visitors will be drawn here by the appeal of historical legacies of Chinese traditional culture."

Together with the Forbidden City and Wangfujing, Longfusi forms Dongcheng district's "Golden Triangle of Culture". Experts say the three destinations, each rich in historical and cultural heritage, are expected to become one of Beijing's signature attractions for tourism, leisure and cultural consumption.

"As a committed practitioner of urban renewal, Longfusi will help the cultural heritage of the ancient city of Beijing continue to shine in the new era," Yang adds.

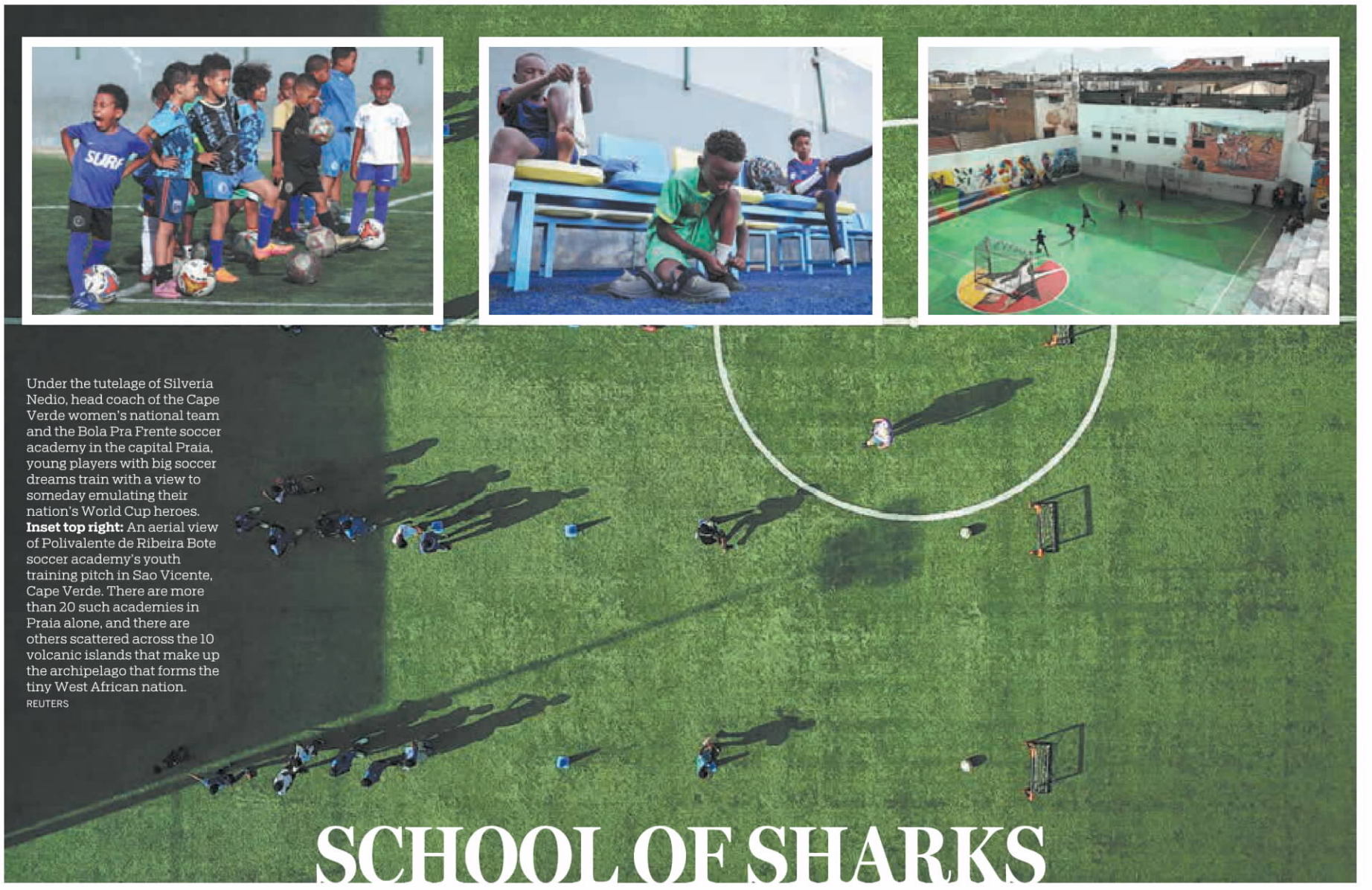
XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:43 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:43 PM

SPORTS

SOCCER



Under the tutelage of Silveria Nedio, head coach of the Cape Verde women's national team and the Bola Pra Frente soccer academy in the capital Praia, young players with big soccer dreams train with a view to someday emulating their nation's World Cup heroes. **Inset top right:** An aerial view of Polivalente de Ribeira Bote soccer academy's youth training pitch in Sao Vicente, Cape Verde. There are more than 20 such academies in Praia alone, and there are others scattered across the 10 volcanic islands that make up the archipelago that forms the tiny West African nation. REUTERS

SCHOOL OF SHARKS

Kids at Cape Verde soccer academy keen to emulate their World Cup heroes

Thousands of flag-waving fans gathered in Cape Verde's capital to welcome the returning national soccer team after its stunning debut World Cup performance, mobbing the players as they left the airport.

In downtown Praia, at one of the country's most prestigious training academies, students as young as nine say it is just the start of their island nation's transformation into a powerhouse of the sport. From their opening group-stage draw against eventual champion Spain to their heartbreaking 3-2 knockout loss to finalist Argentina, the "Blue Sharks" frustrated some of the world's best strikers and showed off some scoring flair of their own, pushing Lionel Messi's team into extra time. Supporter Renato Ribeiro said he was overjoyed to see his team, representing a country off West Africa with a population of around 500,000 — the least populous ever to reach the World Cup knockout rounds — defy the world's low expectations.

"They only gave us a one percent chance, but I always said that one percent is a lot for us," he told reporters during a party at a fan zone, where the players made an appearance.

"My greatest pride is to see that our national team will leave young people with more desire to play."

Eyes on stardom

The inspirational nature of the Blue Sharks' strong showing is already on display at Praia's Bola Pra Frente — "Ball Forward" — Academy, which was founded in 2010 and quickly established itself as a top national development center.

"The future of football in Cape Verde, both women's and men's, is strong — it is big," said Silveria Nedio, the head coach at the academy and for the women's national team.

The academy was an early training ground for several players on the 2026 men's World Cup team, including defender Joao Paulo Fernandes and midfielder Kevin Pina, who notched Cape Verde's first-ever World Cup goal in a group-stage match against Uruguay.



An aerial view of Polivalente de Ribeira Bote soccer academy's youth training pitch in Sao Vicente, Cape Verde. REUTERS

There are currently around 240 players aged between four and 17 training at Bola Pra Frente, all of them plugged into the Blue Sharks' recent heroics.

"I want to get to the top where football can take me," said 12-year-old Cesar Alexandre Franca, who has been training at the academy since he was six. "I want to make my family proud."

Marcelo Pereira Valera, 9, has been at the academy for three years and also dreams of being called up to the national team. "I want to do great things with football," he said.

Financial constraints

Bola Pra Frente is one of more than 20 soccer academies in Praia alone, and there are others scattered across the 10 volcanic islands that make up the archipelago, said Mario Semedo, president of the national football federation.

"I believe we have indeed made real investments," he said, adding that this had "played a major part in the development of our national team".

The national program still faces financial constraints, however, prompting a lot of young talent to seek development abroad. Nedio said this was ultimately good for the country because of the opportunities the players were exposed to.

"Every time a child from Cape Verde leaves for Portugal at 13 or 15 years old, it is an advantage for us," he said.

Even before the World Cup started, Nedio was helping put Cape Verdean soccer on the map, securing the women's team's first qualification last year for the Africa Cup of Nations tournament that begins later this month in Morocco.

It's yet another sign that the national soccer program is gathering momentum, she said.

"From this moment onwards, things can change completely — both in football and in the country."

REUTERS

Missing the World Cup? Don't worry, next summer it's the women's turn

It's the women's turn now.

The next World Cup on the calendar is the women's edition, set for next summer in Brazil. Just as Spain won the men's trophy little over a week ago, its women's team was crowned champion three years ago.

Currently the top-ranked women's team, Spain beat England 1-0 in the 2023 Women's World Cup final in Sydney.

That squad was loaded with talent, including Ballon d'Or winners Aitana Bonmati and Alexia Putellas, as well as young star Salma Paralluelo.

In a television interview following the men's final, Spain star Rodri paid Bonmati the ultimate compliment: "I'm trying to see if I can get to her level."

The memories of 2023 aren't so sweet for the United States, which was knocked out of the tournament in the round of 16 by Sweden. Still, the US has won four World Cup titles and is currently ranked No 2 in the world.

The US will host Spain twice in October, serving as a tuneup for CONCACAF qualifying, which starts in late November in Texas. The friendly matches against Spain could provide a glimpse of what both teams might look like next summer.

"We know Spain is an amazing team, and I think we're just really looking forward to having this prep. Especially before qualifying," said US midfielder Lily Yohannes. "And yeah, I think it will be a really great opportunity for us. Playing these players, I played against them in the Champions League, and I know how great they are."

The road to Brazil

Qualification for the World Cup is well under way, with 14 teams already securing berths. Brazil, which has an automatic spot as host, has never won the women's tournament.

"Some time ago the opportunities for men and women were not equal. But that's changing. This World Cup has tremendous potential to make that change truly happen," said former Brazil defender Aline Pellegrino, now executive director of legacy and stakeholder affairs for the Women's World Cup in Brazil. "So there's a great deal of excitement and expectation that we'll have the best possible atmosphere in our stadiums, just as we recently saw in the two matches between the Brazilian national team and the US.

"FIFA, together with the federal government and the host cities, has been working very hard to ensure that we'll have full stadiums and that everything runs as efficiently as possible."

The biggest question around the Brazilians is the status of veteran captain Marta, the nation's all-time leading scorer with 122 goals. Marta retired from international soccer following Brazil's 1-0 loss to the US in the gold-medal match at the 2024 Paris Olympics, but returned the following year for the Copa America Femenina.

She will be 41 when her nation hosts the World Cup.

The US visited Brazil for a pair of matches in June, falling 2-1 in Sao Paulo, before snatching a 1-0 victory in Fortaleza.

US coach Emma Hayes said the team needed to embrace those "moments of chaos" in a hostile environment.

Who's in so far?

Australia, the Philippines, Japan, DPRK, China, ROK, Argentina, Colombia, New Zealand, Germany, France, Spain and Denmark are among the nations that have qualified. Germany, the 2003 and 2011 world champion, is ranked No 3 globally.

Brazil hosted both the men's World Cup in 2014 and the Olympics in 2016. All eight cities that will host women's matches next year also hosted men's games in 2014: Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Belo Horizonte, Brasilia, Fortaleza, Porto Alegre, Recife and Salvador.

Next year's tournament will be the last to feature 32 teams before jumping up to 48 teams like the men's tournament.

The 2031 Women's World Cup is expected to be co-hosted by the US, Mexico, Costa Rica and Jamaica. The formal decision will likely be announced in November.





Left: The victorious Spanish women's team celebrates winning the World Cup in Sydney in 2023. **Right:** The statue of Christ the Redeemer overlooks Rio de Janeiro, one of the host cities of next year's Women's World Cup in Brazil. AP

AP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:43 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:45 PM

Rising heat
El Nino pattern threatens region with extreme weather
ASIA FOCUS, PAGE 4



US to reduce military drills with the ROK
TOP NEWS, PAGE 3



Renewable surge
Solar capacity rivals coal as green energy reshapes electricity mix
BUSINESS, PAGE 10

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 TUESDAY, AUGUST 18, 2026

WORLD WATCH
By Djoomart Otorbaev

Enduring impact of Jiang's legacy

The centenary of Jiang Zemin's birth provides an important opportunity to assess one of the most transformative periods in the history of the People's Republic of China.

Under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, with Jiang as the core of the central leadership, China navigated an era of profound domestic reform and international change. Building on the historic reform and opening-up initiated by Deng Xiaoping, Jiang institutionalized these reforms, strengthened the socialist market economy, safeguarded political stability and laid the economic and institutional foundations that continue to support China's modernization today.

Under Jiang's leadership, China underwent a significant economic transformation, one of the most notable in human history, while maintaining political stability.

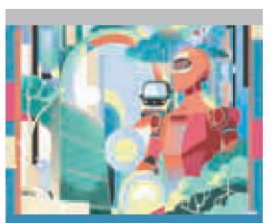
The figures alone highlight the magnitude of this achievement. China's nominal GDP grew from about $347 billion in the late 1980s to nearly $1.47 trillion in 2002, more than quadrupling. For most of this period, annual GDP growth surpassed 9 percent, even reaching 13-14 percent several times. These consistently high growth rates were unmatched for an economy of China's scale and significantly shifted the country's role in the global economy.

Foreign trade expanded even more dramatically. Total trade increased from approximately $111 billion in the late 1980s to more than $620 billion by 2002 and exceeded $850 billion by 2003. China rapidly evolved from a poor developing economy into one of the world's leading manufacturing and trading powers.

During the same period, annual foreign direct investment rose to more than $50 billion, while the country's foreign exchange reserves increased from less than $6 billion to nearly $290 billion, providing a powerful foundation for long-term macroeconomic stability.

These accomplishments didn't occur overnight. While Deng Xiaoping's leadership set China's reform and opening-up in motion, the period under Jiang saw these reforms further consolidated and institutionalized through the collective efforts of the Party and government.

See ***Reform,*** *page 3*



INSIDE
Widening scope of digital and AI governance
Global Views, page 8

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

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



A grand gathering is held to commemorate the birth centenary of late leader Jiang Zemin at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Monday.
FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

Jiang's 'glorious life' celebrated

President addresses grand gathering in Beijing to mark centenary of late leader's birth

By **MO JINGXI**
mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping lauded on Monday the "indelible contributions" of late leader Jiang Zemin and called for efforts to continue advancing the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics, as he addressed a grand gathering in Beijing to mark the centenary of the late Chinese leader's birth.

"Comrade Jiang Zemin lived a glorious life, a life of struggle," Xi said, noting that Jiang had made indelible contributions to safeguarding the great cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics, breaking new ground in reform and opening-up in all respects, achieving overall moderate prosperity in people's lives, and successfully advancing socialism with Chinese characteristics into the 21st century.

Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, called on the whole Party and the Chinese people of all ethnic groups to learn from Jiang's exemplary qualities and continuously advance the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Jiang was the core of the third generation of the Party's central collective leadership and the principal founder of the Theory of Three Represents, which stipulated that the CPC should always represent the development trends of China's advanced productive forces, the orientation of China's advanced culture and the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people.

He was born in August 1926 in Yangzhou, Jiangsu province. In 1989, he was elected general secretary of the CPC Central Committee. He passed away in 2022 at the age of 96.

During a revolutionary career spanning more than 70 years, Jiang fully demonstrated his great talent, bold vision, key role and exceptional art of political leadership as a Marxist statesman, Xi said.

Xi spoke highly of Jiang's steadfast commitment to communist ideals and his devotion to the Party and the people, calling on Party members to draw strength from his firm political convictions.

On the new journey, Xi stressed, it is imperative to uphold the overall leadership of the Party and the centralized, unified leadership of the CPC Central Committee, unswervingly strengthen full and rigorous Party self-governance, and ensure that the Party remains the strong leadership core in the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Jiang always stood with the people and cared for their well-being, Xi said, calling for efforts to learn from the late leader's dedication to and profound love for the people.

Xi noted the importance of always bearing in mind that "this country is its people; the people are the country".



President Xi Jinping, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, delivers an important speech at the gathering on Monday in Beijing. LI XIANG / XINHUA

Xi's quotes

Comrade Jiang Zemin made indelible contributions to safeguarding the great cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics, breaking new ground in reform and opening-up in all respects, achieving overall moderate prosperity in people's lives, and successfully advancing the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics into the 21st century.

On the new journey, we should stand ready to withstand high winds, choppy waters, and even dangerous storms, resolutely safeguard national sovereignty, security and development interests, and continue to write a new chapter in the miracles of fast economic growth and long-term social stability.

See ***Centenary,*** *page 3*

Inside

- Editorial, **page 6**
- Views, **page 7**

OVERSEAS TRAVELERS SNAP UP CHINESE BRANDS

Perceptions have shifted from 'made in China' to 'designed in China'

By **HE QI** in Shanghai
heqi@chinadaily.com.cn

On an August afternoon in Shanghai, Mara-Kristin Lutz stepped out of the Songmont boutique, clutching the coveted tote bag that had topped her city break shopping list.

The Austrian fashion industry veteran — who had previously worked at Louis Vuitton — had researched the brand's latest collections on social media long before touching down in China. It was the bag's understated craftsmanship and thoughtful design language that won her over.

She was now dressed almost entirely in Chinese brands with her jacket and sun mask both from Chinese sports brand Anta. She also carried a bottle of perfume she had just purchased the day before from Chinese aromatherapy brand To Summer, and has placed other orders on Chinese online shopping platform Taobao.

Lutz's carefully curated shopping list is no longer an isolated quirk — it has become a hallmark of the surging wave of international visitors to Shanghai. As China's expanding visa-free policies fuel an inbound tourism boom, shopping for quality products from the country's homegrown brands has emerged as a cultural trend for global travelers.

According to the State Taxation Administration, the number of foreign travelers claiming departure tax refunds surged 366 percent year-on-year in the first half of the year, while the value of refunded goods and payouts grew 69 percent. From January to May, Shanghai Customs verified 201,000 tax refund applications, with sales reaching 1.92 billion yuan ($285 million) — year-on-year increases of 300 percent and 62 percent, respectively.

See ***Shopping,*** *page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.

New growth drivers gain ground amid transition

By **ZHANG CHENXU** and **ZHOU LANXU**

China's shift toward new growth drivers gathered pace in July, with advanced manufacturing, technology-intensive exports and services consumption providing growing support for economic activity, officials and experts said.

New growth drivers contributed over half of industrial output growth in the first seven months of the year. Retail sales of services outpaced those of goods and external demand remained resilient, bolstering prospects for continued economic expansion.

However, they added that a deepening contraction in fixed-asset investment and slowing retail sales growth could weigh on the economy, and called for more forceful policy support.

The comments came as fresh data released by the National Bureau of Statistics on Monday showed that the country's industrial output rose 4.5 percent year-on-year in July, following a 5.3 percent rise in June.

The high-tech and equipment manufacturing sectors maintained robust growth in July, with value-added output rising 16.9 percent and 12.3 percent year-on-year, respectively, the bureau said.

Wang Guanhua, a spokeswoman for the bureau, said at a news conference in Beijing that new growth drivers contributed an estimated 50.9 percent to industrial output growth in the first seven months of this year.

Zhu Feng, China chief economist at JPMorgan, said that China has made solid progress in upgrading its manufacturing sector, with exports, industrial output and investment all pointing to stronger competitiveness in advanced manufacturing.

Meanwhile, the consumption mix continued to improve as spending shifted further toward services. The share of services in per capita spending rose 0.2 percentage point year-on-year in the first half, while retail sales of services grew 5 percent in the first seven months.

Growth in retail sales of goods slowed and the contraction in fixed-asset investment deepened, with the property sector remaining the main drag on investment.

Zhu from JPMorgan said a major challenge for China's economy is the pace of its growth driver transition.

Retail sales, a key gauge of consumer spending, grew 0.6 percent year-on-year in July, slowing from a 1 percent rise in June.

Fixed-asset investment declined 6.7 percent during the January-July period from a year earlier, deepening from a 5.7 percent drop in the first half, according to the NBS.

Yin Yanlin, deputy director of the Committee on Economic Affairs of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, urged policymakers to strengthen countercyclical adjustments and introduce additional measures to bolster investment.

"Policymakers should capitalize on easing imported inflation pressures to cut the reserve requirement ratio and policy rates when appropriate," Yin added.

In the latest move, the National Development and Reform Commission, China's top economic regulator, said on Monday it will accelerate the rollout of new policy-based financial instruments for 2026 and step up support for private investment projects.

Contact the writers at zhangchenxu@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:45 PM

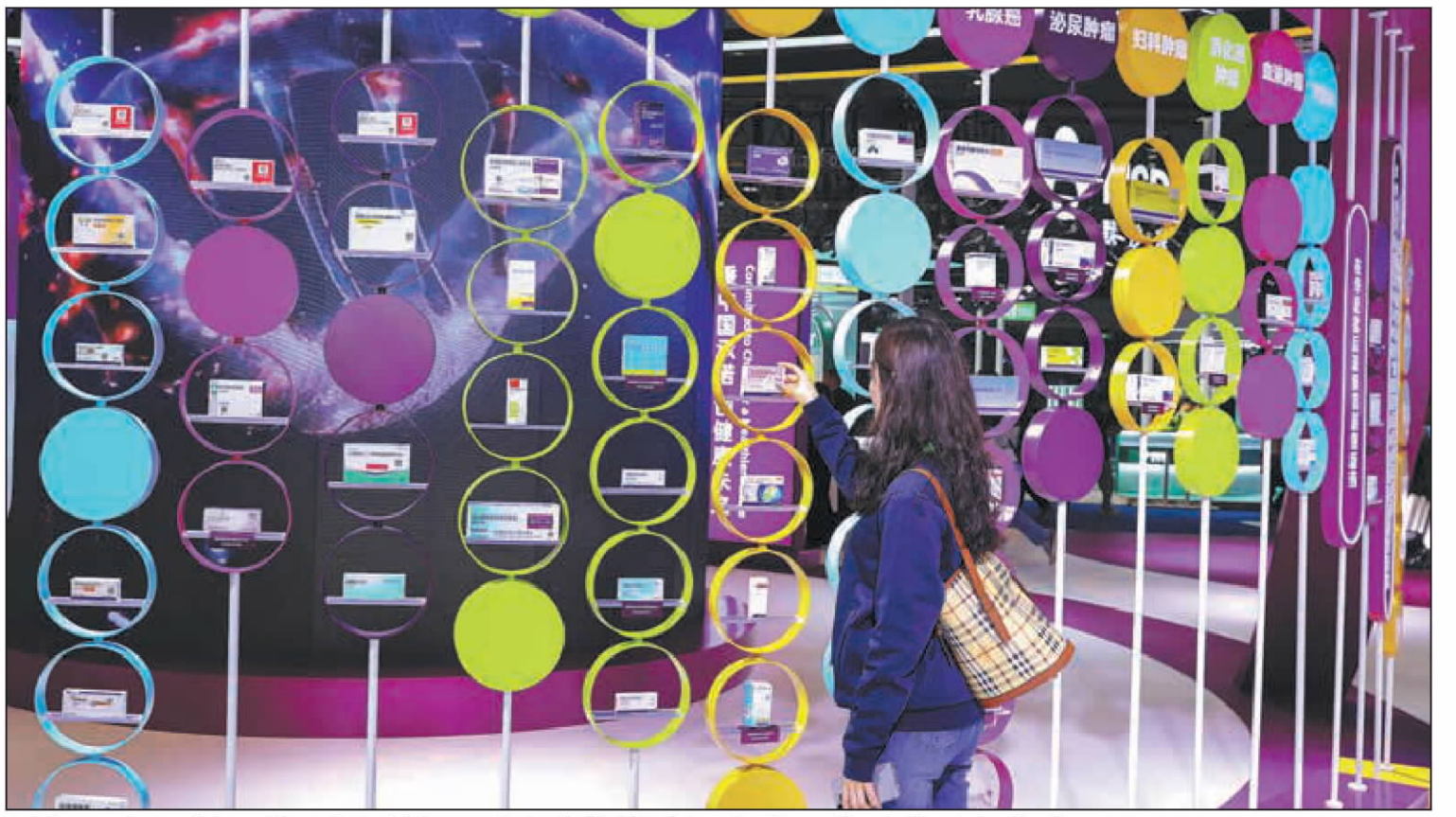
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:45 PM

INDEPTH

China's booster shot for drug innovation

Robust regulatory reforms, greater investment and growing talent pool propel global biotech ascent

By **WANG XIAOYU**
wangxiaoyu@chinadaily.com.cn



A visitor examines medicines at the product exhibition area during the 8th China International Import Expo in Shanghai on Nov 9. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

China has emerged as a global powerhouse in drug innovation, and industry experts expect the rapid growth to continue in the years ahead.

Official data showed that China approved 38 new drugs in the first half of this year, 31 of which were developed domestically. All 11 drugs, featuring new molecular targets and mechanisms of action, were produced in China.

The approvals, combined with a record $110 billion in innovative drug out-licensing deals during the same period, have demonstrated that "China's pharmaceutical industry has achieved a systemic leap forward in innovation quality", Tao Qing, a spokeswoman for the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, said at a recent news conference.

China's progress is also reshaping the global R&D landscape. Worldwide, the volume of early-stage drug development nearly doubled from 2015 to 2024, while the traditional United States-led model is giving way to a two-hub system centered on both the US and China, according to a study headed by health policy experts at Georgetown University in Washington.

The US share of early-stage programs during the period fell to 37 percent from 48 percent, while China's share surged to more than 32 percent from just 8 percent, said the study published online in the Journal of the American Medical Association in late March.

"China's drug development pipeline increasingly includes innovative and transformative therapies, moving beyond the older programs that succeeded in developing follow-on products," Richard Pazdur, former director of the US Food and Drug Administration's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, wrote in an opinion piece accompanying the study.

"In some areas, including antibody-drug conjugates, bispecific antibodies and cell therapies, China now rivals or surpasses the US in scale and, in some areas, innovation. Regulators must prepare for an environment in which some therapies with substantial patient benefit may be studied primarily, or even exclusively, in China," he added.

Li Haiyan, chief director of the Drug Clinical Trial Center at Peking University Third Hospital, told an industry conference in July that while China ranks first globally in the volume of innovative drug molecules under development, only about 7 percent of the pipeline currently targets entirely new treatments, pointing to considerable untapped potential for first-in-class breakthroughs.

"We have strong momentum going forward, and the next five years are poised to see a surge in innovative drugs with truly novel targets," she said.

Reasons for rise

Robust regulatory reforms since 2015, combined with rising investment and a growing talent pool, are regarded as the key forces propelling China's biotech ascent. After more than a decade, "a virtuous cycle fostering domestic pharmaceutical innovation has fully taken shape", said Jin Chunlin, director of the Shanghai Institute of Medical Science and Technology Information.

Jin said that a thriving innovation ecosystem features a strong investor appetite for early-stage, high-risk R&D, supported by a track record of solid returns, alongside upgraded drug review and approval standards that are now fully in line with international regulatory frameworks.

"Clinical data generated in China have increasingly gained recognition from overseas regulators, including the US Food and Drug Administration, which has laid critical groundwork for the industry's global expansion," he said in a recent interview with People's Daily.

Jin also pointed out that domestic drugmakers have gradually shifted away from homogenized research efforts, moving instead toward more differentiated and higher-value target portfolios.

Among the key engines powering the growth is the national healthcare security system, which has steadily expanded coverage for innovative drugs and bolstered corporate profits.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period, China added 516 medicines to the national medical insurance drug list, including 167 innovative drugs, Zhang Ke, director of the National Healthcare Security Administration, said in a recent article.

The average time for a novel drug to progress from market approval to the list has been shortened from five years to about one year, Zhang said.

As of May 2025, national medical insurance funds had spent 410 billion yuan ($61 billion) on drugs — typically innovative medicines — that were added to the list following price negotiations with drugmakers, according to official data. Their inclusion on the list is estimated to have generated more than 600 billion yuan in pharmaceutical sales.

InnoCare Pharma, founded in 2015 and headquartered in Beijing, reported its first full-year profit in 2025 and continued to post gains in the first quarter of this year. The financial turnaround was fueled by rising product sales and proceeds from global business development agreements, the company said.

Chang Jinghua, head of market access at InnoCare, said the company's core product, orelabrutinib — a novel therapy for cancers and autoimmune diseases — has had all four of its indications, the legally defined use for a drug, covered by the national reimbursement list. Since its inclusion in 2021, sales of the drug have climbed at an annual rate of nearly 50 percent.

"A number of domestic drugmakers, including us, have started turning a profit," Chang said.

"Healthcare reimbursement policy has helped create a closed-loop ecosystem that nurtures innovation. The cycle starts with heavy R&D spending, leads to better patient access and lower out-of-pocket costs, and then channels back to companies to fuel the next wave of R&D," he said.

InnoCare secured another crucial funding source from a licensing deal with global pharmaceutical company Zenas BioPharma late last year. The deal, worth more than $2 billion, grants Zenas global rights to develop and commercialize orelabrutinib.

A defining moment for China's biotech innovation came in 2024, when ivonescimab — a lung cancer drug developed by China-based Akeso — outperformed Merck & Co's immunotherapy heavyweight Keytruda in head-to-head trials. The drug gained its first market approval in China in May 2024 and was added to the reimbursement list the same year.

Xia Yu, chairwoman and CEO of Akeso, said the reimbursement listing means Chinese patients can promptly access world-class, homegrown therapies that are affordable. For domestic drugmakers, commercial returns are now increasingly tied to expanded patient access.



Medical technicians work in a research laboratory of Simcere Pharmaceutical Group in Haikou, Hainan province, on July 1. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Left: A leader of Youcare Pharmaceutical Co inspects its products in Beijing on Feb 14. Its nebulized inhaler has received clinical trial approval from the United States and Australia. MAO JIANJUN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Below: A Chinese innovative drug is on display at the Zhongguancun Exhibition Center in Beijing on July 25. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



> "In some areas, including antibody-drug conjugates, bispecific antibodies and cell therapies, China now rivals or surpasses the US in scale and, in some areas, innovation. Regulators must prepare for an environment in which some therapies with substantial patient benefit may be studied primarily, or even exclusively, in China."
>
> **Richard Pazdur,** former director of the US Food and Drug Administration's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research

Last year, the company generated 3.056 billion yuan in revenue, with product sales reaching 3.033 billion yuan, up 51.5 percent year-on-year.

Different approach

Sunshine Lake Pharma, a Guangdong-based drugmaker that began as a generic medicine producer, offers a different insight into the industry's maturation.

Zhang Yingjun, chairman of the company, said innovative drug R&D is now largely bankrolled by revenues from its generic drug business, supplemented by pre-IPO shareholder backing, platform-based financing and government grants.

The inclusion of its insulin products in the nation's centralized bulk-buy procurement program has secured large supply contracts with public hospitals, providing a stable profit stream. Last year alone, insulin sales generated 244 million yuan in revenue, up about 78.7 percent year-on-year.

"The strong cash flow feeds back into R&D, creating a virtuous cycle that sustains long-term growth," he said.

That revenue is expected to climb further, buoyed by overseas market penetration. The company has passed multiple on-site Good Manufacturing Practice inspections conducted by US and European Union drug regulators, and its insulin product officially received FDA clearance this year. The company projects sales of $30 million by year-end and more than $500 million by 2030.

Innovation and overseas expansion are now seen as two pillars for future growth, according to company executives. The company has so far secured regulatory approval for four novel drugs from China's National Medical Products Administration, three of which were authorized over the past year.

Given the intensifying competition in the biotech sector, Zhang said it is crucial to differentiate products in the pipeline. The three recently approved drugs all fall within the company's traditionally strong therapeutic areas of infectious diseases and diabetes, while four novel candidates in late-stage Phase III trials are focused on chronic respiratory diseases and oncology.

"We have steered clear of overcrowded segments such as lung cancer and breast cancer. Instead, we are actively exploring tumor types with large patient populations but limited effective treatment options, including colorectal, pancreatic, liver and kidney cancers," he said.

Li Baiyong, chief science officer at Akeso, said the favorable external environment will continue to foster innovation in the sector.

He said that the high execution efficiency of R&D in China, combined with relatively low costs for personnel, equipment and manufacturing facilities, are key draws for multiple international pharmaceutical companies seeking partnerships with Chinese firms.

Ensuring oversight

Sun Hao, a lung cancer specialist at the Guangdong Provincial People's Hospital, said clinical studies in China are moving at a faster pace than in many other countries. In global multicenter trials, data from Chinese sites often come in substantially earlier.

Sun said regulators have been stepping up oversight to keep pace with the accelerating R&D activity.

In June, the country issued a new edition of the Good Clinical Practice for Drugs guidelines, placing greater emphasis on defining clear boundaries of responsibility, risk identification, and quality management throughout trials.

In May, the nation released a data protection regulation for drugs — an important component of the pharmaceutical innovation framework. The document provides a six-year protection period for clinical trial data on innovative drugs.

"In the field of lung cancer, the volume of research focused on the Chinese population already ranks first in the world," Sun said. "Looking ahead, it is expected that both the market and the primary impetus for drug development will increasingly originate from China."

Huang Huiqiang, a professor at Sun Yat-Sen University Cancer Center, said the growing number of oral presentations delivered by Chinese researchers at international meetings reflects increasing recognition from the global medical community.

He said that for homegrown companies seeking overseas expansion, challenges persist — including high clinical trial costs abroad and a lack of familiarity with foreign markets.

"It is important to recruit talent familiar with overseas drug manufacturing and regulatory rules, and build cooperation with foreign companies for long-term development," he said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:45 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:45 PM

TOP NEWS

US set to reduce drills with ROK

Washington announces decision to scale back joint exercises in move seen as overture to DPRK

By **YANG HAN** in Hong Kong
kelly@chinadailyapac.com



Protesters rally to oppose joint military exercises between the United States and the Republic of Korea outside the US embassy in Seoul, capital of the ROK, on Monday. AHN YOUNG-JOON / AP

United States President Donald Trump said on Sunday that he has ordered the Pentagon to "substantially reduce" joint military exercises with the Republic of Korea, announcing the decision just before the two countries' annual drill kicked off.

Observers said the abrupt message might be interpreted as the Trump administration's intention to engage with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for future talks, while some said it could also be an attempt, driven by domestic pressure, to shift the focus from the prolonged Iran conflict, in which the US has been mired.

"These exercises are not only costly, with much of these costs paid for by the United States of America (as usual), but send a signal that is totally inappropriate and hostile, to a country that, as long as Donald J Trump has been President, has been unthreatening and respectful," Trump wrote in a post on Truth Social, referring to the DPRK as he cited his "very good relationship" with the country's top leader Kim Jong-un.

During Trump's first term, the US and the ROK had postponed or scaled back their combined exercises to create the conditions for dialogue with the DPRK. In 2018, Trump suspended the annual exercise after his first meeting with Kim in June that year.

When asked if China would support renewed dialogue between the US and the DPRK, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said during a regular news briefing on Monday that maintaining peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula and advancing the political settlement of the Korean Peninsula issue serve the common interests of all parties.

The ROK's presidential office said on Monday that friendly relations between DPRK and US leaders will lead to meaningful dialogue between the two countries and discussions aimed at advancing peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula.

The ROK has also been closely coordinating with the US on the joint exercises, it said, according to Yonhap News Agency.

Trump's announcement was posted at 5:04 pm US Eastern Time on Sunday, or at 6:04 am ROK time on Monday, the date of the start of the annual Ulchi Freedom Shield, or UFS, joint drill.

The ROK's military authorities said later that the UFS combined exercise, running through Aug 27, is being carried out normally and there has been no specific request from the US side regarding adjustments to the scale of the exercise, according to Yonhap.

The DPRK has condemned the US-ROK joint military exercise, criticizing it as "a rehearsal for an aggressive war" and posing "a grave threat" to the security of the DPRK as well as the region, the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency reported on Friday.

Pyongyang also vowed to respond to a new level of threat with a new level of deterrence.

Since taking office in June last year, ROK President Lee Jae-myung has repeatedly made reconciliatory gestures toward the DPRK. On Saturday, the ROK's Liberation Day, Lee said in a speech that he hopes to begin discussions with the DPRK to formally end the Korean War as the directly involved parties, refraining from unnecessary confrontation and replacing the unstable armistice with a peace regime.

"There was an indication that he (Trump) might make some overtures toward the DPRK," Lee Sangho, a professor of political science and diplomacy at Daejeon University in the ROK, told China Daily.

Though Trump mentioned the costs paid by the US for the joint military drills and the ROK's refusal to join the US in the "denuclearization" of Iran in his post, Lee, who is also president of the Korea Association of National Intelligence Studies, said the main reason for the announcement was that Trump is looking for measures to boost his popularity as he faces challenges from the conflict with Iran and the upcoming US midterm elections in November.

Noting that Trump also posted a photo showing him standing side by side with Kim at the demilitarized zone between the ROK and the DPRK in 2019, Lee said the announcement to reduce military exercises with the ROK can be seen as something that was offered to reengage with the DPRK.

"I don't think this was fully discussed with the ROK side before the announcement was made," Lee said.

Kim Dong-yup, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul, in a commentary published on the online news publication Pressian on Monday, said that Trump's instruction may not be the result of a carefully designed peace strategy for the Korean Peninsula, but rather a decision driven by a mix of frustrations over cost-sharing complaints, his personal relationship with Kim and transactional sentiments toward the ROK.

Reform: Industrial productivity substantially improved

From page 1

Under Jiang's leadership, the concept of a socialist market economy, officially endorsed at the 14th CPC National Congress in 1992, became China's primary guiding principle for modernization. This strategy demonstrated that market forces could function effectively within socialism, strengthening the Party's central role in the nation's development.

Jiang's rich professional background influenced his leadership style. Trained as an electrical engineer and experienced as a factory manager, he brought technical discipline and administrative pragmatism to governance. Serving as mayor and Party secretary of Shanghai gave him firsthand knowledge of urban development, international trade and technological progress.

Fluency in English and a strong grasp of international affairs enabled him to engage confidently with global leaders as China's international influence grew.

One of his most significant contributions was turning reform from a tentative experiment into a lasting institutional framework. Alongside Zhu Rongji, who would later serve as premier, he initiated a series of structural reforms that reshaped the national economy.

The 1994 fiscal and taxation reform greatly enhanced the financial power of the central and provincial governments through the adoption of a modern tax-sharing framework. This change substantially boosted central revenue, equipping Beijing with the fiscal resources needed to pursue national development plans and sustain macroeconomic stability.

State-owned enterprise reform represented another historic milestone. Under the principle of "holding on to the large while letting go of the small", China retained public ownership in strategic sectors such as energy, telecommunications, transportation and finance while restructuring thousands of inefficient enterprises. Although these reforms involved difficult adjustments, including the restructuring of tens of millions of jobs, they substantially improved industrial productivity and strengthened the competitiveness of China's State-owned champions.

Housing reform between 1997 and 1999 marked another decisive turning point. The transition from administrative housing allocation to a market-based housing system created one of the world's largest real estate markets, stimulated domestic demand, accelerated urbanization, and created an important engine of economic growth for the following two decades.

Among the major milestones of the period, China's accession to the World Trade Organization in 2001 stands out as a historic milestone. After 15 years of negotiations, China successfully entered this multilateral trading system. It further advanced reform and opening-up, modernized trade legislation, and harmonized thousands of regulations with international standards. The WTO accession accelerated China's integration into global value chains and subsequently firmly established the country as the "factory of the world".

During this period, the Chinese government also actively promoted a "going global" strategy, encouraging Chinese enterprises to acquire advanced technologies, invest abroad and participate more actively in international markets. This strategic vision anticipated China's eventual emergence as a major country with increasing global influence.

Jiang's contribution to the nation's political culture was no less significant. His contribution to the Party's theoretical development was reflected most prominently in the Theory of Three Represents, which was incorporated into the Constitution of the Communist Party of China at the 16th CPC National Congress in 2002, and it enriched the Party's theoretical foundation by stipulating that the CPC should always represent the development trends of China's advanced productive forces, the orientation of China's advanced culture and the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people.

This theory reflected the ongoing evolution of Chinese society. It allowed successful private entrepreneurs to become Party members, integrating new productive forces into the development of socialism while maintaining the CPC's leadership. This adaptation strengthened the Party's ability to govern a rapidly modernizing country.

President Xi Jinping, speaking at a gathering in Beijing to commemorate Jiang's birth centenary, praised Jiang's political conviction, dedication to the people, innovative spirit, far-sighted strategic thinking and extraordinary courage.

Jiang also made enduring contributions to China's international standing. During his presidency, Hong Kong successfully returned to the motherland in 1997 under the principle of "one country, two systems". China won the right to host the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, expanded diplomatic engagement worldwide and pursued a foreign policy emphasizing peaceful development, cooperation and mutual benefit.

His leadership also extended to national defense modernization. Jiang promoted the modernization of the People's Liberation Army, advanced military professionalism and required the armed forces to withdraw from commercial business activities, strengthening their focus on national defense.

The CPC regards Jiang as a distinguished Marxist, a prominent proletarian revolutionary, an esteemed statesman, a military strategist and a diplomat. These characterizations highlight both his personal virtues and the important role of his leadership in history.

China's remarkable achievements did not happen overnight. Continuous reform from one generation to the next, economic modernization, social stability, technological progress and strong Party governance combined to help China confidently and strategically enter the 21st century. Jiang's successor Hu Jintao further advanced reform and opening-up, while under the leadership of President Xi, socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era.

China's development proves that socialism with Chinese characteristics can evolve with change while ensuring stable institutions.

Jiang therefore occupies an important place in the history of China's reform and modernization. His tenure represented an important stage in a broader process of continuity and renewal, in which successive generations of the Party's leadership built on what had been achieved, addressed new challenges and laid the foundations for further progress.

The author is a former prime minister of the Kyrgyz Republic. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Shopping: Chinese brands win with design and quality

From page 1

Like Lutz, a growing number of foreign tourists touch down with meticulously curated shopping lists already in hand.

Russian traveler Evgeniya Azarenkova did extensive research before coming to Shanghai. She said she believes that Chinese brands have their own design identity. "The silhouette is different. It always has this character that makes it different."

Lutz also praised the exceptional quality of Chinese products. "There is still a stigma in Europe that it's only bad quality in China, and this is totally not the case anymore," she said. "(In some cases) it's even higher quality compared to Europe, and the pricing is more affordable."

The price advantage is clear. According to Jiefang Daily, a pair of sneakers from popular domestic footwear brand Pane costs around 800 yuan, about 30 percent lower than comparable styles from top international brands.

According to Pane, its overseas social media following surged from just over 30,000 in September 2025 to more than 140,000 by June, with overseas visitors accounting for roughly 30 to 40 percent of foot traffic at its Shanghai store.

The final push to purchase, however, rarely comes from social media or brand promotion, but from the tactile experience of seeing and touching the product firsthand.

Another Russian traveler, Irina Rudometova, bought Pane sneakers as souvenirs. "They're comfortable and I like the design," she said, highlighting the shopping experience itself. "I like the lights and geometric forms inside (the store) — the atmosphere and the smell. For me, it's about atmosphere, not about the stuff."

More important, beyond the transactions, visitors' perceptions are rapidly shifting from "made in China" to "designed in China".

"When we were growing up, seeing something 'made in China' meant something cheap, but right now it's changing a lot. It may be the same price as a well-known foreign brand, but the quality is different, the style is different — very authentic," said Azarenkova, the traveler from Russia.

Zhang Zihan, founder of An Action A Day, a domestic activewear brand launched four years ago, views this shift in a broader context.

"Chinese brands are gradually entering the global mainstream — not only through affordability, but through core product strength, culture and aesthetics. This trend is also expanding from traditional categories, such as automobiles and consumer electronics, to everyday consumer goods," she said.

Zhang noted that markets in Europe and the United States account for 85 percent of the brand's cross-border sales.

Industry insiders said the biggest edge that Chinese brands have is the all-around competitive strength they've built up in the country's massive, fast-moving local market.

"We have accumulated experience interacting with a vast and dynamic base of Chinese consumers, and we have already withstood the most direct and rigorous scrutiny from them," Zhang added.

Chen Tianyi contributed to this story.



Customers line up outside the Songmont boutique in Shanghai on Saturday, waiting for their turn to enter the shop.
GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

Centenary: Foresight of Jiang highlighted

From page 1

Xi called for adhering to a people-centered development philosophy, maintaining close ties with the people and making solid steps in promoting the all-around development of the people and common prosperity for all.

Highlighting Jiang's innovative spirit, Xi said the late leader had continuously advanced innovations in theory, institutions, science and technology, culture and other fields in response to the evolving needs of the times and practice.

Xi called for further deepening reform and opening-up, modernizing China's system and capacity for governance and unleashing creativity across the Party and society to generate sustained momentum for economic and social development.

Jiang's far-sightedness and strategic thinking were highlighted by Xi. With an international perspective and a vision for the future, Jiang advanced the cause of the Party and the country with a slew of major decisions and measures, Xi said.

Jiang made arrangements with foresight for building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, and put forward a series of thoughts on foreign affairs and international strategies to advance the development of a multipolar world and economic globalization in the right direction.

Looking ahead, it is essential to fully and faithfully apply the new development philosophy on all fronts, accelerate efforts to create a new development pattern and make solid headway in promoting high-quality development, Xi said, calling for further efforts to build a community with a shared future for humanity and add more positive energy to world peace and development.

Xi also highlighted Jiang's extraordinary courage and vision. Jiang made resolute decisions at key historical junctures and critical moments, and responded calmly to risks and challenges, securing the steady advancement of China's reform and opening-up as well as socialist modernization, Xi said.

In particular, Jiang led China to successfully withstand the impact of the Asian financial crisis and secure complete victory in the battle against the severe floods in 1998, Xi said.

"On the new journey, we should stand ready to withstand high winds, choppy waters and even dangerous storms, resolutely safeguard national sovereignty, security and development interests, and continue to write a new chapter in the miracles of fast economic growth and long-term social stability," Xi said.

About 6,000 people were present at Monday's commemoration, which was presided over by Li Qiang and attended by Zhao Leji, Wang Huning, Cai Qi, Ding Xuexiang and Li Xi — all members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee — as well as Vice-President Han Zheng.

Also on Monday, a symposium on the life and thought of Jiang Zemin opened in Beijing and will run through Wednesday. Cai Qi attended and addressed the opening ceremony.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:45 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:45 PM

ASIAFOCUS

Editor's note:
In this weekly feature China Daily gives voice to Asia and its people. The stories presented come mainly from the Asia News Network (ANN), of which China Daily is among its 20 leading titles.

1.5m families in Indonesia lose aid over gambling

JAKARTA — The Social Affairs Ministry of Indonesia has suspended the distribution of social assistance to nearly 1.5 million beneficiary families enrolled in the basic food program after data cross-referencing the Financial Transaction Reports and Analysis Center, or PPATK, flagged their accounts for online gambling transactions.

Social Affairs Minister Saifullah Yusuf confirmed earlier in August that around 1.5 million beneficiary families had been identified in the latest data sweep.

Among them, 794,475 families were also recipients of the Family Hope Program, or PKH, a conditional cash transfer scheme aimed at the country's poorest households.

Aid disbursement to all flagged recipients has been temporarily frozen pending a verification process.

"There are 1,494,652 beneficiary families flagged for online gambling, based on data we received from the PPATK. We are currently investigating and examining the matter further," Saifullah said, as quoted by Bisnis.com.

The staggering figure marks a sharp increase over the 2025 data-matching exercise, which identified approximately 600,000 beneficiary families with transactions linked to online gambling.

The ministry now faces mounting pressure to tighten oversight of the multitrillion-rupiah social protection programs.

The Financial Services Authority has revealed that, based on reports submitted by lenders to the PPATK, activities with suspected links to online gambling surged 260 percent last year.

The share of suspected online gambling activities among all reported suspicious transactions rose from 18.37 percent in December 2024 to 48.83 percent in December 2025, while the figure stood at 35.28 percent as of the first quarter last year.

The probe will also form part of a broader effort to update the national integrated social economic data, a centralized database designed to improve the accuracy of social assistance targeting.

"They may no longer meet the criteria for receiving social assistance. There is evidence that the aid is being used for online gambling. We are investigating this further, which also serves as part of our data-updating process," he said.

Digital literacy

Saifullah stressed the importance of digital literacy and personal accountability among aid recipients, warning against negligence that could enable account misuse.

"People must not be careless, for instance, by letting others use or exploit their accounts. We consistently provide outreach, education and support to beneficiaries through these social support workers. We are doing this continuously," he added.

The crackdown underscores the government's growing concern over the rampant spread of online gambling, which has increasingly penetrated low-income communities.

Questions are mounting over the key figure behind the sponsorship of a Jakarta-based online gambling network, following early May's raid that uncovered hundreds of people operating across 75 domains and gambling websites from an office building in the heart of a business district in West Jakarta.

Lawmakers have urged the police to deepen their investigation into the network's funding flows as investigators are scrambling to find the financiers behind the gambling ring.

THE JAKARTA POST, INDONESIA



World feels the heat

Farmers struggle to secure water for irrigation amid prolonged drought, at the Donam Reservoir in Daegu, South Korea, on Aug 11. YONHAP

El Nino is expected to trigger extreme weather conditions across globe

A global insurance firm warned on July 30 of the growing risks from a predicted strong El Nino, which forecasters fear will trigger extreme weather conditions in many regions of the world, including Asia.

Insurance company Munich Re said the El Nino climate pattern that is already strengthening in the Pacific Ocean will push up global temperatures. Europe and North America have witnessed record temperatures, heat waves and wildfires since May.

The extreme summer heat, which scientists say is being fueled by climate change, comes as natural disasters caused worldwide losses estimated at nearly $112 billion in the first half of 2026, Munich Re said in its half-yearly global update on natural catastrophes.

Among the costliest disasters were twin earthquakes in Venezuela and a series of storms in the US, with both sets of disasters causing an estimated loss of $30 billion each.

Looking ahead, it is El Nino that worries insurers.

"Asia-Pacific is likely to be the region which will suffer most from El Nino. We must brace ourselves for a higher typhoon risk in Japan and Korea as well as for heat waves, drought and wildfires in other regions like Southeast Asia, India and Australia," said Achim Kassow, a member of Munich Re's board of management responsible for the Asia-Pacific, Middle East and Africa division.

El Nino is part of a natural cycle. It is a periodic warming of surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean, triggering worldwide changes in winds, atmospheric pressure and rainfall patterns.

It occurs every two to seven years and typically increases global temperatures by releasing heat stored in the ocean. But stronger, or "super", events that lead to very warm surface waters occur once every one to two decades and can trigger deadly and costly extreme weather.



People use umbrellas and electric fans to cool themselves in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on Aug 9. ANADOLU VIA GETTY IMAGES

El Nino is the flip side of La Nina, a periodic cooling of the central and eastern Pacific Ocean. La Nina events typically cause cooler and wetter weather in Southeast Asia and eastern Australia.

The US government's Climate Prediction Center said on July 9 that the current El Nino has continued to build and is likely to be one of the strongest in more than 75 years.

Malaysia could experience temperatures of up to 40 C in early 2027 as El Nino intensifies, the Malaysian Meteorological Department said on July 7.

The department's deputy director-general of operations Ambun Dindang said El Nino was expected to peak between November 2026 and January 2027, with rainfall expected to decrease across most parts of Malaysia.

Tobias Grimm, Munich Re's chief climate scientist, said El Nino intensifies many weather extremes and shifts the global risk profile.

"While some regions may experience fewer extreme weather events, others, like parts of Asia-Pacific, face a higher likelihood of severe weather. At the same time, climate change is increasing the intensity, duration and loss potential of many weather-related hazards," he told The Straits Times.

For instance, in East Asia, the risk of typhoons is generally higher, with potential changes in storm tracks and intensity. Southern and eastern China typically receive above-average rainfall, increasing the risk of flooding, he said.

Likelihood of drought

Other regions, including parts of India, often experience below-average rainfall, raising the likelihood of drought and water stress.

"The key takeaway is that El Nino shifts the distribution of weather-related risks across Asia. Many parts of Asia-Pacific are subject to elevated natural catastrophe risks in the second half of 2026," he said.

Munich Re is a reinsurer, providing "insurance for insurance companies". For instance, such firms may help to cover large catastrophic losses.

Munich Re said that of the worldwide losses from natural disasters, estimated at nearly $112 billion from January to June, only $44 billion in losses was insured.

In the Asia-Pacific, total losses amounted to about $8.7 billion, significantly lower than in previous years, with the 10-year average losses for the same period, adjusted for inflation, at $32 billion. Just over $1 billion was insured.

Severe flooding in central and southern China in May and a large bushfire in Australia triggered major financial losses.

In Europe, severe winter storms caused extensive damage. In just over a month, nine storms affected Portugal and Spain at the start of 2026, Munich Re said.

The most destructive was Storm Kristin in late January, which caused losses of about $7.7 billion, of which around $1.8 billion was insured.

In the US, tornado outbreaks and winter storms killed scores of people and caused damage totaling $47 billion, of which $34 billion was insured.

Munich Re also pointed to growing risks from severe heat, noting that record-breaking heat waves dominated the first half of the year in North America and Europe.

"Studies show a clear link between heat waves and climate change," it said. "Heat waves are the natural hazard that claims the most lives.

"It is difficult to quantify the financial impact of heat waves, as they do not usually result in any direct damage to property."

Pointing to the risks of increasing temperatures globally, it added: "Instead, the damage is chiefly caused by falling productivity and production standstills, but also by damage to infrastructure, transportation breakdowns and crop failures."

THE STRAITS TIMES, SINGAPORE

Vietnam becomes ASEAN's 2nd-largest aviation market

BANGKOK — UK-based aviation data provider OAG reported that total airline capacity in Southeast Asia fell by 1.2 percent from July 2025 to 50.4 million seats in July 2026.

Vietnam has overtaken Thailand to become Southeast Asia's second-largest commercial aviation market, as overall airline seat capacity across the region declined, OAG said.

In Southeast Asia, domestic airline capacity declined by 1.3 percent and accounted for 45 percent of the region's commercial aviation market, while international capacity fell by 1.5 percent and represented the remaining 55 percent.

The contraction was attributed to rising fuel costs driven by tensions in the Middle East, which prompted several Southeast Asian airlines to reduce international services.

Indonesia retained its position as Southeast Asia's largest commercial aviation market, with 10.9 million seats in July, up 0.3 percent from the same month last year.

Vietnam moved ahead of Thailand into second place after recording 7.4 million seats, an increase of 5.6 percent year-on-year.

7.4
million seats
Vietnam moved ahead of Thailand into second place after recording 7.4 million seats in July, an increase of 5.6 percent year-on-year.

Vietnam Airlines, the country's national full-service carrier, also became the largest airline in Southeast Asia by seat capacity. It offered 2.81 million seats during the month, up 0.1 percent from July 2025.

Thailand, previously the region's second-largest aviation market, fell to third place with 6.9 million seats, down 3 percent year-on-year.

Malaysia ranked fourth with 5.2 million seats, down 8.3 percent, followed by the Philippines with 4.9 million seats, down 4.1 percent.

OAG data showed that Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines all recorded declines in commercial airline capacity.

The reductions were linked to disruption caused by the conflict between Iran and the United States, as well as renewed tensions surrounding the Strait of Hormuz.

Jet fuel prices rose sharply and remained elevated as the situation intensified, increasing operating costs for airlines.

As a result, several carriers reduced or suspended direct and connecting services between the Middle East and the three Southeast Asian countries.

THE NATION, THAILAND

Poll to decide Malaysia's national fruit

KUALA LUMPUR — The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security of Malaysia is proposing that the Department of Statistics Malaysia conduct a nationwide survey to gather public views on the choice for national fruit.

This will provide the government with a reference point before deciding which fruit should get the title, says Chan Foong Hin, deputy minister of agriculture and food security.

Currently, Malaysia does not have an officially recognized "national fruit".

Replying to a question on Tuesday on the option of a national fruit in Dewan Negara, or the upper house of the Parliament of Malaysia, Chan said the ministry has so far received two applications: one from the Durian Manufacturer Association nominating the durian, and another from the Malaysian Pineapple Industry Board nominating the pineapple.

"The government will not directly select one over the other, as all fruit industries must be treated fairly. Therefore, we propose conducting a survey so that the people can vote for their preferred national fruit," he said.

He explained that the survey aims to comprehensively understand the people's choices and analyze the factors influencing their preferences — including national identity, cultural value, popularity, and economic value.

He cited the example of India which chose the mango as its national fruit, while Bangladesh selected the jackfruit.

When asked by Sin Chew Daily when the nationwide survey would commence, Chan later clarified that the Agriculture Ministry is leaving the exploratory work to the Department of Statistics, and that the initiative remains at a very preliminary stage.

SIN CHEW DAILY, MALAYSIA



A worker arranges durian fruits for sale inside a shop in Shah Alam, Malaysia, on June 23. FAZRY ISMAIL / EPA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:45 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:45 PM

WORLD



Palestinians salvage iron from the rubble of buildings destroyed by Israeli airstrikes, in Gaza City on Sunday. JEHAD ALSHRAFI / AP

Hamas urges pressure on Israel

Group calls on key players to press for ceasefire road map

CAIRO/JERUSALEM — Palestinian militant group Hamas on Sunday urged mediators and guarantors to press Israel to approve the road map for the second phase of the Gaza ceasefire agreement.

The call was made in a statement issued following a meeting in Cairo between a Hamas delegation — led by Khalil al-Hayya, head of the group's political bureau — and representatives of the mediators and guarantors of the ceasefire agreement.

The delegation urged the mediators and the United States-led "Board of Peace" to push Israel to implement all its commitments under the first phase of the agreement, halt killings and ground incursions, and approve the road map for the second phase of the agreement, the statement said.

Hamas also said it had accepted the road map, citing its aim to secure a permanent ceasefire, full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, sustained humanitarian aid, and the start of work by the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza, according to the statement.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said earlier this month that Israel rejected the US-backed road map and would not withdraw its forces from Gaza until Hamas was fully disarmed.

The "Board of Peace" published a 15-point road map on July 31 for implementing the next phase of the Gaza agreement.

It includes an end to military operations, the transfer of civilian governance to the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza, and the decommissioning of heavy weapons, weapons stockpiles, military production facilities and tunnels, alongside arrangements for an Israeli withdrawal.

Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump's envoy Jared Kushner met Netanyahu on Monday after holding talks with Hamas leaders.

A diplomatic official confirmed to Agence France-Presse that the meeting had begun late on Monday morning.

Kushner — Trump's son-in-law — met al-Hayya in the Egyptian city of El-Alamein on Sunday, sources with knowledge of the discussions told AFP.

Kushner demanded that Hamas verify it is giving up its weapons, a key sticking point for Netanyahu, and that the group renounce any future role in governing the Palestinian territory, the sources said.

Netanyahu is expected to meet behind closed doors with Kushner and Nickolay Mladenov, the high representative for Gaza on the "Board of Peace".

Awaiting response

A Hamas official said the group told Kushner it was committed to the Gaza plan and wanted pressure on Netanyahu.

"Hamas is awaiting the US administration's response regarding Israel's position on the agreement," the official told AFP.

Netanyahu, who is facing elections in October that polls show will be tight, has increasingly been willing to defy Trump, whose support he once highlighted in his campaign.

After initially voicing muted criticism of the Gaza plan, Netanyahu last week told his cabinet that he rejected it and vowed not to pull troops from the Palestinian territory.

In an interview, Itamar Ben-Gvir, a far-right national security minister in Netanyahu's cabinet, called for mass killings in Gaza.

"I think targeted eliminations should be carried out in Gaza every night. Take out 30 or 40," Ben-Gvir said in comments that surfaced on Sunday on a podcast with a former Gaza hostage.

Until recently, Israel was striking Gaza nearly every day, attacks that have killed more than 1,250 people since an October truce deal came into effect, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

On Sunday, the foreign ministers of eight Muslim-majority countries condemned Israel's declared rejection of the road map.

"Such rejection confirms that Israel now bears responsibility for obstructing the efforts to bring peace in Gaza," the foreign ministers of Egypt, Qatar, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkiye and Saudi Arabia said in a joint statement.

XINHUA—AGENCIES

Beijing slams Takaichi's remarks for blurring war crimes

By JI HAISHENG
jihaisheng@chinadaily.com.cn

China has condemned Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's address at the National Memorial Ceremony for the War Dead, saying her remarks shunned reflection on historical lessons and blurred Japan's responsibility for its acts of aggression.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian made the comment on Monday at a regular news briefing following Takaichi's speech at the ceremony held in Tokyo over the weekend.

Takaichi avoided the words "remorse" and "lessons learned", spoke ambiguously about Japan's war crimes, and attempted to turn back the wheel of history, Lin said.

"This once again exposes the sinister attempt of the Takaichi administration to cover up, distort and reverse the verdict on Japan's history of aggression, which has drawn strong condemnation and widespread opposition from all parties," he said.

On the day marking Japan's defeat and surrender in World War II on Saturday, Takaichi made a monetary offering to the "shrine honoring war criminals", while Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi and other senior officials and politicians went to pay homage in person, Lin said.

Such moves have further heightened the vigilance of Asian neighbors and the international community over Japan's future trajectory, he said.

Lin cited Japanese observers as saying that a country unable to reflect on its past cannot earn trust, and that the defense minister's actions amount to supporting the war of aggression.

As this year marks the 81st anniversary of the victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45) and the World Anti-Fascist War, as well as the 80th anniversary of the opening of the Tokyo Trials, Lin underscored the importance of fostering a correct view on history.

"Only by facing up to history and drawing lessons from it can people avoid repeating mistakes made in the past and straying down the wrong path again," he said.

"We once again urge the Japanese authorities to listen earnestly to the voices of justice from within Japan and the international community, deeply reflect on their war crimes, and make a complete break with militarism, rather than going further down the wrong path," he added.

China's zero-tariff policy boon for Zimbabwe trade

By LAWRENCE PAGANGA
in Harare, Zimbabwe
For China Daily

Zimbabwean exporters to China have received a major boost after Beijing implemented a zero-tariff policy, opening vast opportunities for Zimbabwean products in one of the world's largest markets.

Early this year, China announced the zero-tariff policy on goods from Zimbabwe and 52 other African countries from May 1.

Archford Mabuka, a Zimbabwean analyst, said the move comes as China has emerged as one of Zimbabwe's most dynamic export destinations.

"The facility provides duty-free access for a wide range of products, including agricultural commodities, processed foods, horticultural products, textiles, leather goods, industrial inputs and selected manufactured products," Mabuka said.

"The growth in exports over the past five years demonstrates both the strength of demand in the Chinese market and the potential for further expansion under the new arrangement," he said.

"This remarkable growth reflects China's increasing appetite for Zimbabwean products and underscores the strategic importance of market diversification."

The development aligns well with Zimbabwe's industrialization agenda, which seeks to move beyond raw commodity exports toward greater value addition and beneficiation, he added.

ZimTrade, the national trade promotion organization, launched a practical guide last week to help exporters navigate China's zero-tariff policy and meet Chinese market requirements.

The guide outlines applicable rules of origin for exported products, as well as compliance with China's sanitary and phytosanitary requirements, product standards and customs procedures.

It also highlights the need to strengthen logistics systems to ensure goods can be moved into the Chinese market reliably and cost-effectively, while encouraging exporters to move beyond raw commodities toward value-added products that capture a larger share of the value chain.

ZimTrade assured exporters that it would support them "from origin certification to market intelligence and buyer linkages" in China.

"This is one of the most significant trade openings Zimbabwean exporters have been offered in recent years," said Allan Majuru, the organization's CEO.

"Understanding exactly what is required will determine their success in utilizing the benefit of this window," he said.

"The zero-tariff treatment is an opportunity to change that picture and to bring new products into the Chinese market that previously faced tariff barriers, diversifying Zimbabwe's export base beyond raw materials," he added.

Zimbabwe's minister of information, publicity and broadcasting services, Zhemu Soda, described the zero-tariff policy as "low-hanging fruit" for Zimbabwean businesses.

"Those who are into agriculture and other sectors should take advantage of it to increase trade with China. It's a good opportunity for expanded trade," he said.

Strategic opportunity

Jimmy Psillos, chairman of Zimbabwe's Competition and Tariff Commission, said the policy presents a strategic opportunity for the country's export sector.

"By allowing qualifying products to enter the Chinese market duty-free, the initiative opens access to one of the largest and most dynamic consumer markets in the world," he said.

The arrangement is unilateral and reflects China's broader commitment to strengthening economic cooperation with Africa, creating "a critical window for Zimbabwean firms to position themselves in the Chinese market", he added.

As Africa's third-largest blueberry producer, Zimbabwe has already begun taking advantage of the policy, recently exporting its first shipment of blueberries to China.

Trade between Zimbabwe and China reached a record $4.4 billion last year, up 15 percent from 2024, according to the Zimbabwe National Chamber of Commerce.

"For Zimbabwe, this is more than a trade concession — it is an industrialization opportunity," the chamber said.

The writer is a freelance journalist for China Daily.

Off to the races



Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva speaks at a rally at a stadium in Sao Bernardo do Campo on Sunday, kicking off his campaign. Lula, 80, is seeking a fourth and final term as voters in Latin America's largest economy head to the polls on Oct 4.
ADRIANO MACHADO / REUTERS

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036

Telephone: 212-537-8888

Fax: 212-537-8898

editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com

Subscription: 212-537-8899

Advertising: 212-537-8916

Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily

usa.chinadaily.com.cn

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

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1895

Briefly

CHINA

Chile's foreign minister to pay 5-day official visit

Chile's Foreign Minister Francisco Perez Mackenna will begin a five-day official visit to China on Tuesday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian announced at a regular news conference on Monday. Over more than half a century since the two countries established diplomatic ties, China-Chile relations have stayed at the forefront of China's relations with Latin American and Caribbean countries, Lin said. China looks forward to using this visit to have in-depth exchange of views with the Chilean side on bilateral relations and international and regional issues of mutual interest, so as to carry forward friendship, expand consensus, deepen cooperation and push bilateral relations to a new level, he added.

DR CONGO

Ebola outbreak now nation's deadliest ever

A fast-spreading Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is now the country's deadliest ever after killing more than 2,300 people in three months, government figures showed on Monday. The United Nations says the Ebola outbreak is "the fastest-growing on record" and is killing a victim every 30 minutes in the DR Congo. Declared on May 15, the outbreak is thought to have already been spreading for several weeks by that point. In its latest toll on Monday, the Congolese authorities said that 2,325 people had died in the current outbreak, from 4,945 confirmed cases. The deadliest Ebola outbreak ever hit western Africa in 2013-16, killing more than 11,300 people.

CHINA DAILY—AGENCIES—XINHUA

The People's Republic of China
The People's Court of Shaodong City, Hunan Province

Public Notice

LE DIEM THUY,

Notice is given hereby that this Court has accepted the divorce petition filed by the Plaintiff, Zeng Yongyang, against you. Given that you are currently absent and your address remains unknown, we are hereby providing you, in accordance with the law, with copies of the Civil Complaint, the Notice of Response, the Notice for Evidence Submission, and the Court Summons via a public notice. These documents will be considered served 60 days after the date of the said public notice. The deadline for submitting a statement of defense and presenting evidence will be 30 days following the end of the aforementioned public notice period. This case is scheduled for a public hearing at 10:00 a.m. on December 21, 2026 in the Fourth Trial Courtroom of this Court. You are requested to attend the court hearing punctually. If you fail to do so, the case will proceed to trial by default in accordance with legal provisions.

The People's Court of Shaodong City, Hunan Province
The People's Court of Shaodong City, Hunan Province (seal)
August 7, 2026

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:45 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:45 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Unswervingly advancing cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era

A grand gathering was held on Monday in Beijing to commemorate the birth centenary of the country's late leader Jiang Zemin.

President Xi Jinping delivered a speech at the gathering in which he recalled the "indelible contributions" Jiang made to safeguarding the great cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics and successfully advancing it into the 21st century by breaking new ground in reform and opening-up in all respects and achieving overall moderate prosperity in people's lives.

Jiang's political career unfolded during a period of profound changes. The country faced complicated domestic and international circumstances following the end of the Cold War, and it was navigating the difficult transition toward a socialist market economy and deeper integration with the world economy. Against that backdrop, Jiang demonstrated a rock-solid political conviction, profound dedication to the people, an innovative spirit, farsighted strategic thinking and extraordinary courage in addressing risks and challenges.

These qualities are still relevant today.

Jiang had remained unswervingly firm in communist ideals, utterly loyal to the Communist Party of China and the people, and resolutely committed to the cause of the Party and the people. He emphasized the importance of strengthening the Party's leadership and effectively improving Party building as the country advanced reform and opening-up and developed its economy.

Xi highlighted Jiang's view that the farther the country advances along the path of reform and opening-up and the more its economy develops, the more crucial it becomes to strengthen the Party's leadership and improve Party building.

Jiang also demonstrated a profound love for the people, always standing with them, caring about their well-being and stressing that development ultimately serves the people. Under his leadership, major initiatives, including the large-scale development of the country's western regions and poverty alleviation, helped improve people's living standards and contributed to the country's historic transition to moderate prosperity.

Today, learning from that people-first approach means adhering to the philosophy of development centered on the people, helping them resolve difficulties and promoting common prosperity through the country's modernization.

Lauding Jiang's achievements, Xi hailed his efforts in continuously advancing innovations in theory, institutions, science and technology, culture and other fields.

By pooling the wisdom of the whole Party, Jiang created the Theory of Three Represents, which further answered the questions of what socialism is and how to build it, and creatively addressed what kind of Party to build and how to build it.

The establishment of the socialist market economy as a reform objective and China's accession to the World Trade Organization reflected the innovative and pragmatic spirit of adapting to changing circumstances while firmly pursuing development. The same spirit is indispensable today as China confronts a rapidly changing world marked by technological transformation, economic restructuring and geopolitical uncertainty.

We must now properly respond to the questions facing China, the world, the people and the times, and constantly break new ground in adapting Marxism to the Chinese context and the needs of the times, Xi said.

Jiang's farsightedness and strategic thinking were highlighted by Xi. With an international perspective and a vision for the future, Jiang advanced the cause of the Party and the State with a slew of major decisions and measures.

That strategic vision is also necessary today, when it is essential to fully and faithfully apply the new development philosophy on all fronts, accelerate efforts to create a new development pattern, and make solid headway in promoting high-quality development.

Jiang's courage in critical moments is equally instructive. He made resolute decisions at key historical junctures and critical moments, and responded calmly to risks and challenges, securing the steady advancement of China's reform and opening-up as well as socialist modernization.

The commemorative gathering can help the country effectively draw strength from Jiang's legacy to face new challenges.

"On the new journey, we should stand ready to withstand high winds, choppy waters, and even dangerous storms, resolutely safeguard national sovereignty, security, and development interests, and continue to write a new chapter in the miracles of fast economic growth and long-term social stability," Xi said.

In the process, it is imperative to uphold the overall leadership of the Party and the centralized, unified leadership of the CPC Central Committee, unswervingly strengthen full and rigorous Party self-governance, and ensure the Party remains the strong leadership core in the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

'China push' in Asia fabricated alarmism

A New York Times article, titled "As China Pushes to Expand in Asia, Trump Focuses on Iran", published on Saturday, encapsulates a typical trope among the political circles and media in the United States: when in trouble, blame others.

The piece attempts to paint an alarmist picture of the region trembling under the shadow of "Chinese ambition" as the US administration focuses its attention on the Middle East.

Beneath its surface concern for the US' Asian allies are dialectical currents that are logically flawed, historically selective and dangerously misleading. It serves less as a report on regional sentiment and more as a projection of US anxieties masquerading as analysis.

Its reasoning is built on the bedrock of breathtaking ironies: It is the US that launched the conflict with Iran that has become another costly quagmire in which the US finds itself trapped. It is Washington that is seeking to cultivate a Cold War-like division in Asia by pushing a narrative of bloc competition and pressuring countries to choose sides, often at the expense of their economic interests. And it is the US that is resorting to economic coercion, tariff wars and technological "decoupling" in a bid to restructure the global supply chains in its favor, harming the very economies it claims to protect.

It is the misjudged self-serving US foreign policy that is the source of instability in the region, not so-called Chinese "expansion".

The New York Times article's primary "evidence" for the so-called "Chinese expansionism" is a recent incident at Ren'ai Reef in the South China Sea. Here, the reporting is not just flawed but deliberately obfuscating and biased.

While it did admit that for decades the Philippines has sought to claim the reef in the disputed waters by rotating troops to a World War II-era ship it grounded there, it fell short of criticizing Manila for its ploy to occupy the Chinese reef.

Manila's illegal grounding of its warship at Ren'ai Reef in 1999 is the root cause of tensions between China and the Philippines. An objective analysis of the current situation would inevitably trace the current frictions to that unilateral provocation instigated by the Philippines.

Instead, the article deliberately presents the current frictions as the result of unprovoked Chinese "acts of aggression". This is a clear case of agenda-driven journalism, where the historical context is dismissed to fit a preordained narrative of "Chinese bullying".

Yet the most manipulative aspect of the article's narrative is its claim of palpable "Asian anxiety". While there may be concerns in capitals such as Tokyo and Manila, these are not representative of the broader Asian sentiment. In fact, the findings of a Pew Research Center survey in July reveal a starkly different picture.

The poll found that in a majority of the 36 countries surveyed, favorable views of China have surpassed those of the US, including in key US allies such as Canada and Australia. This shows that it is the US that suffers from a lack of trust, not China.

The true intent of the article is to express dissatisfaction with the Donald Trump administration's entanglement in the Iran conflict, and to raise concerns that Washington may be too distracted to focus on the Asia-Pacific region, thereby allowing China's influence there to surpass its own. This is typical US sleight of hand.

The article is simply projecting Washington's anxieties about its declining influence and costly misadventures in Asia. By fabricating and selectively using facts and viewing China through a biased lens, it constructs a narrative of a new Cold War that serves its own ideological agenda.

While some politicians in Tokyo and Manila are betting on the US for political gain, in general, Asian countries hope to achieve development together. The anxiety the article tries to sell is not germane to the majority of people in Asia. Instead, it is a fiction manufactured for political purposes.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

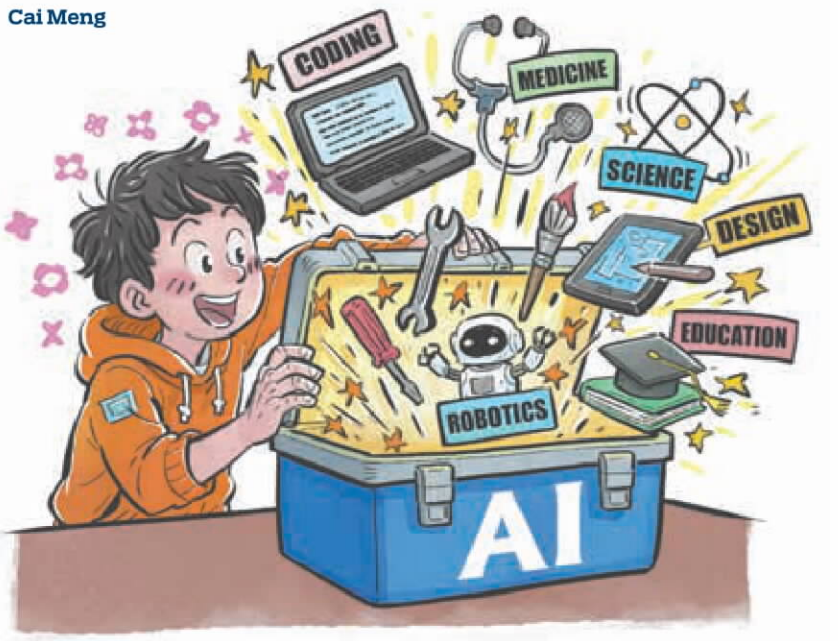
China Daily UK
90 Cannon St, London EC4N 6HA, UK
+44 (0) 207 398 8270
editor@chinadailyuk.com

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

US' endless science frontier risks receding to 'golden age' of a few

In November 1944, as Allied armies pushed across Europe and the United States raced to develop nuclear weapons, US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt asked Vannevar Bush, head of the US Office of Scientific Research and Development, how wartime science could serve peace. Bush's answer, *Science: The Endless Frontier*, became one of the most consequential policy documents of the modern era. Its premise was simple: let the federal government fund basic research, give scientists room to follow curiosity and trust that discoveries would eventually produce prosperity, health and national strength. For over eight decades that bargain helped define science in the US.

Now, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy Director Michael Kratsios' *Science: A New Golden Age* proposes something different. Where Bush trusted institutions, Kratsios distrusts "legacy" ones. Where Bush emphasized exploratory research, Kratsios emphasizes national missions. Where the postwar system tried to protect scientific judgment from political direction, the new model places science more explicitly in the service of national competition.

The contrast reflects two different countries. Bush wrote from a position of confidence. The US had emerged from World War II with its industrial base intact, its universities ascendant and a flood of European scientific talent arriving at US laboratories.

Kratsios writes out of anxiety. Manufacturing has migrated overseas. China is viewed by Washington as a scientific and technological competitor. Artificial intelligence is compressing the distance between discovery and application. The proposed revolution in the government's policies on research is driven by the anxiety that the US invents while others manufacture.

The report published last month argues that federal money is too concentrated in elite universities. It proposes directing more money toward individual researchers, start-ups, focused research organizations and industry-linked laboratories. Peer review is portrayed as too conservative. In its place would come challenge prizes, Advanced Research Projects Agency-style programs, "golden tickets", longer-term grants, and mission-driven initiatives in AI, quantum computing, nuclear fusion, robotics and advanced manufacturing.

The postwar system worked because authority was distributed among government, universities, industry and philanthropy. It was inefficient, competitive and sometimes maddening. Yet its "looseness" created room for discoveries whose uses nobody could foresee. The transistor, the internet, biotechnology and countless advances in medicine did not arrive because a government mission statement correctly predicted them.

Science is not an assembly line. A government can announce a mission to build a fusion reactor; it cannot order the next transistor or modify the DNA of living organisms.

The geopolitical stakes are even larger because the report is ultimately a response to China, as some observers said. But it is here that the change of approach becomes self-defeating. China is not the Soviet Union. China combines extensive public support with powerful companies, enormous manufacturing capacity, market scale and deep integration into global trade and scientific networks.

Consider Apple. Washington has reportedly pressed the company not to source memory chips from Chinese suppliers. Apple may ultimately comply. But finding alternatives can cost more.

This is the paradox of the new strategy. In trying to compete with a comprehensive Chinese system, Washington risks technically nationalizing a science enterprise whose greatest strength has been its openness.

Political priorities can also make collaboration more difficult. US allies and partners may increasingly be asked to align their research, supply chains and standards with Washington. China, meanwhile, will have incentives to deepen its own international networks. The world could gradually develop two parallel scientific ecosystems.

Bush's frontier was endless because it was open. Kratsios' frontier risks becoming fortified, directed and inward-looking.

The reform of the US' research system should make it more open not merely more obedient to political missions; more connected to industry, without sacrificing basic science; and more resilient, without confusing openness with weakness.

The first golden age of US science was built on confidence that the future could not be completely planned. The danger of the new one is that, in trying too hard to plan the future, Washington may close off the very frontier it is trying to conquer.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Enhancing safety equipment industry critical

Editor's note: *China has released a five-year plan for the development of the safety and emergency equipment industry. Xinhua News Agency spoke to Ao Li, vice-president of the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology, and Gao Hong, vice-chair of the China Safety Industry Association, about the country's emergency response capabilities. Below are excerpts of the interviews. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

The plan outlines 15 specific tasks in four key areas of the industry: fostering innovation, promoting the use of safety and emergency equipment, nurturing industry players and enhancing the industry ecosystem.

Among these, innovation is prioritized, with dedicated sections highlighting the need for breakthroughs in critical technologies and the integration of emerging technologies. The plan calls for leveraging artificial intelligence, embodied intelligence, brain-computer interfaces and satellite remote sensing to drive the development of safety and emergency equipment.

Standards serve as an important bridge between technological innovation and practical application, while also providing the foundation for the safe and orderly development of the industry.

The plan calls for the rapid development and implementation of a range of essential standards, including those for technologies and equipment that are adaptable for both routine and emergency use. It also places emphasis on international technical exchanges and cooperation on standardization.

Its forward-looking approach to building a standards system provides clear guidance for the industry's development. Authorities are accelerating work on standards for emerging and integrated fields, including AI-enabled applications and safety and emergency response robots. The development of a system of standards will be advanced in parallel with technological research and development, testing and verification, and demonstration projects. China will also actively participate in the formulation of international standards, translating its extensive engineering expertise into an advantage in standard-setting.

Ultimately, the value of equipment lies in its performance in real-world operations. The plan calls for developing a number of key application scenarios for safety and emergency equipment and promoting the wider adoption of equipment featuring advanced technologies and proven effectiveness in practical applications.

The household and community safety and emergency response sector, along with urban and rural fire protection, has strong market potential. The plan aims to increase the penetration of household and community safety and emergency products at the grassroots level.

Demand for products such as electrical fire monitoring equipment and rapid-response systems for fires involving new energy vehicles is growing rapidly, driving the growth of the fire protection market.

The plan outlines measures for upgrading fire protection infrastructure, promoting the iteration and upgrading of smart firefighting equipment, and supporting urban renewal. These measures will help sustain market momentum in the fire protection sector and expand the application of safety and emergency equipment.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:45 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:45 PM

VIEWS

Robert Lawrence Kuhn

Jiang's engineering of a nation endures

Centenaries invite the long view. They ask, looking backward, what changed because that person lived and led. Aug 17 marks the 100th anniversary of former Chinese leader Jiang Zemin's birth, and my answer is both historical and personal. The reforms he consolidated and the scientific ambition he envisioned have come to full fruition in President Xi Jinping's new era. At a gathering commemorating Jiang's birth centenary on Monday, Xi called for learning from Jiang's extraordinary courage and vision, his dedication to and profound love for the people.

I should declare a personal interest. I spent several years writing Jiang's biography. When I woke up to the news of his death on Nov 30, 2022, I felt as though I had lost a member of my own family — the occupational hazard of biography, and also its privilege.

When historians explain how China moved from the margins of the world economy to its center — the ascent that defines the new era under Xi — part of the explanation will run through the 13 years in which an electrical engineer from Yangzhou, Jiangsu province, led a country he was called upon to lead.

Xi's "new era" has its own historical circumstances, priorities and methods. Yet it rests on foundations consolidated during Jiang's leadership. Deng Xiaoping launched reform and opening-up in 1978 and revived its momentum through his southern tour in 1992. Jiang's indispensable achievement was to preserve, institutionalize and extend that course when domestic uncertainty and international pressures placed China's future direction in doubt. He and his successor Hu Jintao helped make reform and opening-up the irreversible operating system of the country.

The turn did not come easily. When Jiang said "I now understand that the market economy is critical for China" that admission was revelatory. He possessed an engineer's respect for results and an intellectual's ability to revise his understanding. Under his leadership, the socialist market economy became established doctrine. State-owned enterprises were restructured under the then premier Zhu Rongji. Zhu passed away on Aug 12.

During that era, fiscal, banking and regulatory institutions were rebuilt; foreign investment expanded; and China entered the World Trade Organization in 2001, the act that welded China's productive capacity to global demand. Ideologically, Jiang's Theory of Three Represents brought entrepreneurs and other emerging groups into the Party framework, modernizing the Party and enabling it to lead a diversifying economy.

Jiang's most deeply held strategic conviction, however, concerned science and technology. As an engineer and minister of the electronics industry, he believed national strength ultimately depended on scientific capacity, education, industrial upgrading, and mastery of advanced technology. "Rejuvenating the nation through science and education" became State strategy. He called for Chinese universities to be world-class and helped cultivate the institutions and talent from which China's contemporary technological capabilities have blossomed.

Nowhere was the conviction bolder than in space. In 1992, when China's GDP per capita was under $400, Jiang approved China's human spaceflight program and its patient three-step design: spacecraft, then orbital laboratory, then space station. Jiang named the spacecraft himself — Shenzhou, or "divine vessel". On Nov 30, 2022, Shenzhou-15 docked with the Tiangong space station, and for the first time six Chinese astronauts were in orbit together, completing the handover that finished the station's construction. Jiang passed away that afternoon. Thirty years from the vision to its fulfillment.

It is this inheritance that Xi's new era has carried to fruition, and well beyond. The economy Jiang bound to world trade is now, by purchasing power parity, the largest on earth, and China is the foremost trading nation, producing roughly 30 percent of global manufacturing value added.

The industrial-scientific ecosystem, begun under Jiang, strengthened by Hu and championed by Xi, now supports leadership in electric vehicles, batteries, renewable energy, high-speed rail, and is a formidable competitor in artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and biotech. And the military modernization Jiang began has accelerated under Xi into forces of another order, with a large navy and reaching into cyberspace.

The continuity is structural and institutional. In Jiang's era, China sought entry into the international system, while in the new era, China is helping to shape it and contributing to global governance. The 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China fused science, education, talent, development, and security into a unified program of Chinese modernization; Xi's "new quality productive forces" and the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) call for advanced manufacturing, green transition, and technological self-reliance.

A centenary tribute should not become hagiography. The Jiang era's rapid growth was not without cost, and China's arrival at the center has drawn friction as well as admiration. A serious accounting holds both sides in superposition. The enduring logic is adaptation: learning from experience, correcting what fails, safeguarding stability without allowing it to become stagnation, and opening to the world while strengthening indigenous capability.

Jiang deserves to be remembered whole. He loved languages — serviceable English, Russian and Romanian, fragments of others — and delighted in using them in diplomatic exchanges.

At one private dinner he decreed that only English be spoken, teasingly instructing the interpreter not to translate for a minister who had neglected to learn it, and chiding another who kept his excellent English quiet for fear of embarrassing his leader. "You wouldn't embarrass me," Jiang told him. "You would help me improve." Then he confided that he had been secretly studying Spanish for a year, to prepare for a trip to South America.

I chose to write Jiang's biography because I was convinced that his life offered a singular way to tell China's story across eight historic decades of transformation. The book's Chinese edition became one of China's bestselling books of 2005. When Jiang passed away in 2022, the biography briefly returned to number one. History, I wrote then, will be kind to Jiang Zemin.

History is kind not because it forgets imperfections. It is kind when distance permits perspective — when personality is separated from caricature, consequences from slogans, and durable achievement from transient fashion.

Jiang did not initiate reform and opening-up, but he made them irreversible. He did not invent China's technological ambition, but he made science, education and human spaceflight pillars of national strategy.

Xi's new era has brought those long investments to their fullest fruition, moving China decisively toward the center stage of the world. On Jiang's centenary, I remember the leader, the engineer, the insatiably curious man — and I remain confident that history will be kind to him.

Robert Lawrence Kuhn is the author of The Man Who Changed China: The Life and Legacy of Jiang Zemin (2005)*, and the creator and host of Closer To Truth on science and philosophy. He received the China Reform Friendship Medal in 2018. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.*

Abdul Wahed Jalal Nori

Connectivity keeps global trade on even keel

The tensions around the Strait of Hormuz are often viewed through the familiar lens of Middle Eastern geopolitics. While this is understandable, it misses the broader picture. The real issue lies in a structural weakness that has quietly been building for decades: the world economy has become extraordinarily efficient, but remains dangerously dependent on a handful of strategic corridors. The lesson from Hormuz is therefore not about a single waterway, but about the future of globalization itself.

For much of the post-Cold War era, globalization was based on the assumption that deeper economic interdependence would gradually reduce geopolitical risks.

As production networks expanded, trade volumes surged and supply chains stretched across continents, many believed that disrupting global commerce would be too costly for any rational actor. Yet recent events suggest that interdependence has merely changed the nature of vulnerability rather than eliminating it.

This paradox has become more visible over the past five years. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the fragility of concentrated manufacturing networks. The 2021 Suez Canal blockage revealed how a single incident could disrupt global commerce. Attacks on commercial shipping in the Red Sea forced vessels to take longer and costlier routes, while the recent tensions in Hormuz reminded the world that even the perception of disruption can trigger higher insurance premiums, volatile energy prices and renewed inflationary pressures. These are not isolated events. Together, they reveal a common structural reality: the arteries of globalization have become its biggest strategic vulnerability.

History offers a valuable perspective. Civilizations have seldom thrived solely due to abundant resources or superior military power. Their influence rested equally on securing the routes through which goods, technology and ideas moved. The ancient Silk Road connected civilizations across Eurasia. Venice flourished by protecting Mediterranean commerce. Britain's maritime supremacy opened the door to global trade. While the strategic geography has changed, the underlying principle has not. Today's shipping lanes, energy corridors, undersea communication cables and digital networks perform the same function. They are the invisible infrastructure upon which modern prosperity depends.

What distinguishes the present era is the unprecedented degree of interdependence. Businesses pursued efficiency by minimizing inventories, concentrating production and relying on just-in-time delivery. Governments encouraged open markets, assuming that commercial integration would naturally reinforce stability. This model generated remarkable growth, lifted millions out of poverty and accelerated technological progress. But resilience was sacrificed in pursuit of efficiency. The more optimized the system became, the less capable it was of absorbing unexpected shocks.



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

This marks a profound shift in international politics. During much of the 20th century, strategic competition revolved around territory, ideology and military alliances. Today, it increasingly revolves around the resilience of connectivity. Maritime chokepoints, ports, logistics hubs, semiconductor supply chains, energy infrastructure and digital networks have become strategic assets whose uninterrupted functioning is essential not only to economic prosperity but also to national security. The central question is no longer who controls the largest territory, but who can sustain the networks upon which global commerce depends.

For Asia, the implications are especially significant. The region has become the center of global manufacturing, innovation and trade, yet its success remains closely tied to secure maritime connectivity. Energy imported through the Strait of Hormuz fuels industries in Asia. The Strait of Malacca is one of the world's busiest commercial arteries. Disruptions in the Red Sea affect exports from East Asia to European markets. Geography has once again emerged as a decisive factor in economic strategy — not because borders have become more important, but because connectivity has become indispensable.

This changed environment calls for a different strategic mindset. Instead of viewing resilience as the opposite of efficiency, policymakers should recognize that resilience is now a prerequisite for sustainable growth. Diversified transport corridors, robust regional logistics, digital infrastructure, strategic reserves and supply-chain flexibility are no longer optional economic policies; they are essential components of long-term national security.

China's long-term emphasis on connectivity should be seen within this broader context. Initiatives to strengthen infrastructure, expand transport corridors and improve regional connectivity are often discussed primarily in terms of trade and development. But they also help build a more resilient international trading system. In an era characterized by geopolitical uncertainty, diversified connectivity reduces systemic risk, bolsters regional stability and supports continued economic integration.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations is equally central to this evolving landscape. Positioned at one of the most strategically significant locations in the global economy, ASEAN's significance extends beyond facilitating trade. It can play a larger role in strengthening maritime governance, improving regional information sharing, coordinating emergency shipping arrangements and promoting practical cooperation on supply-chain resilience. Such initiatives would reinforce ASEAN's long-standing commitment to dialogue, openness and regional stability while contributing to the security of global commerce.

Looking ahead, three priorities deserve greater attention. First, governments should diversify critical transport and supply networks so that no single corridor becomes an overwhelming point of failure. Second, strategic foresight should become a core function of economic governance through regular stress-testing, scenario planning and horizon scanning. Third, major trading nations should deepen cooperation on protecting the global commons — from shipping lanes to digital infrastructure — because the stability of these systems serves a shared international interest rather than the interests of any one country alone.

The Strait of Hormuz is not simply another geopolitical flashpoint, but a reminder that globalization is entering a new phase. The first era of globalization rewarded efficiency above all else. The next will reward resilience, diversification and strategic foresight. Nations that recognize this transition early will be better equipped to navigate an increasingly uncertain international environment.

The defining competition of the 21st century will not be determined solely by military capabilities or economic size. It will also be shaped by the ability to keep the world's essential arteries open, resilient and trusted. In that sense, the real lesson from Hormuz is not about the Middle East. It is about how the international community chooses to safeguard the future of globalization itself.

The author is an assistant professor at the International Islamic University Malaysia.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Kang Bing

The author is former deputy editor-in-chief of China Daily.
kangbing@chinadaily.com.cn

Rural schools promise to leave no single kid behind

For the past month, my wife and I have been living in my village in Fuyuan, China's easternmost city, in Heilongjiang province, to escape Beijing's summer heat. During our routine daily walks, we often passed a village school, a few hundred meters from Wusulijiang, a river along the China-Russia border.

As a former researcher of comparative education, my wife suggested we go in and take a look.

The campus was empty as the summer vacation was on. The only faculty member present there was friendly. He not only allowed us in but also showed us around. The school has a four-story academic building with about a dozen classrooms.

It has a football field covered with artificial turf and surrounded by a synthetic 200-meter racetrack apart from a playground for basketball and other sports.

"Guess how many students we have," our guide asked us with a smile. We knew that the number of students in China's rural schools had been dwindling for some years now, and the dip could be sharper in this sparsely populated frontier area.

Before I could say there might be around 100 students, our guide answered his question himself: "Nine students in nine grades from primary to junior high. And we have more than 20 faculty members."

The next second, I found myself shutting my eyes and mouth as I did a quick mental calculation to conclude that the local government was spending a few million yuan each year to cover the faculty's salary and operational costs to ensure the nine students got their compulsory education.

Such a big investment in the few students' education displayed the people-centered approach of the Chinese government. No one should be left behind.

On the other hand, to speak honestly, maintaining rural schools for a shrinking student population is becoming a significant challenge for many local governments in the country.

These governments need to adopt practical, down-to-earth measures to reduce education costs and ensure sustainability.

These governments need to adopt practical, down-to-earth measures to reduce education costs and ensure sustainability.

In the past three decades or so, about 300 million rural residents have moved to the cities and counties in search of better-paying jobs. Many of them took their children along for better educational opportunities in the cities and counties.

As a result, the rural schools are seeing a dramatic outflow of students. Statistics show that from 2018 to 2023, the number of rural primary school students decreased by 31 percent. That means millions of rural students have left their rural schools.

The school we visited, for instance, once hosted several hundred students from nearby villages. Now that about one-third of the households in the village have moved to the urban areas with their children, the dwindling of the village school was anything but unexpected.

Most of the villagers I spoke to said they would rather send their children to boarding schools in the headquarters of Fuyuan city 50 kilometers away rather than the next-door village school.

If the children are too young, they even arrange to rent an apartment in the city and send the mother or grandparents to stay with the kids.

For many years now, an increasing number of village schools have been shutting down as students move to the so-called central schools — the school in my village being one of them — for compulsory education. Now, even these central schools are finding it difficult to survive as fewer students enroll each year.

The No. 1 Central Document released in February 2026 has emphasized the need to strengthen the coordinated provision of basic public services in county areas.

The document calls for the careful optimization of the layout of rural primary and secondary schools and kindergartens, ensuring the retention and effective operation of necessary small-scale rural schools and kindergartens.

It also proposes the implementation of a county-level high school revitalization action plan, the promotion of urban-rural school community construction, and the strengthening of coordinated allocation of teachers within counties.

Additionally, it encourages the online sharing of quality classes between urban and rural schools and calls for comprehensive measures to increase efforts in preventing school dropouts and ensuring education retention in rural areas.

The document points the right direction.

Effective problem-solving measures — such as teacher-exchange programs, long-distance education, and predesigned small-scale rural school models — should be studied and implemented to get rural schools out of the condition they find themselves in now.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:45 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:45 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

CAI CUIHONG

Widening scope of digital and AI governance

China and the US can expand communication channels to mitigate shared risks and help build a constructive relationship of strategic stability



In July, China submitted its position paper on global cyber governance in the digital intelligent age to the Global Mechanism on Information and Communications Technologies in the Context of International Security, the first plenary meeting of which opened at the United Nations headquarters in New York. The paper identifies rising artificial intelligence-related cyber risks, growing threats to critical infrastructure, a lower threshold for cyberattacks and interstate cyber conflict, and the deliberate fragmentation of global digital industry and supply chains. It calls for peace and stability in cyberspace, respect for digital sovereignty, inclusive development and multilateralism. It also proposes that countries should promote the establishment of global standards for assessing cybersecurity risks associated with large AI models and principles for cross-border data flows. The document offers a new perspective on the next phase of major countries' motivations in digital and AI governance.

First, China's move from cyber sovereignty to digital sovereignty reflects the widening scope of global technology governance. Its 2010 white paper, The Internet in China, placed the internet within China's sovereign jurisdiction. The 2017 International Strategy of Cooperation on Cyberspace identified peace, sovereignty, shared governance and shared benefits as principles of international cooperation. Building on these positions, the 2026 paper argues that states have the right to choose, according to their national conditions, their development paths in AI and other digital technologies, as well as the technologies, products, and services they adopt.

This extends sovereignty beyond cybersecurity, jurisdiction, and internet governance to include AI development, technological choice, data security, supply chains and participation in international rulemaking. In practice, digital sovereignty comprises autonomy in development, freedom of technological choice and equal participation in rulemaking.

That sovereignty, however, requires material capacity. According to the International Telecommunication Union, about 2.2 billion people remained offline in 2025. Although 5G covered 55 percent of the global population, coverage reached 84 percent in high-income countries but only 4 percent in low-income countries. Weak infrastructure, limited digital skills and unaffordable technologies mean that autonomy remains more a principle than a reality for many developing countries.

China and the United States are major providers of digital technologies and infrastructure. Their technological pathways, export policies and standards shape the options available to other countries. Their influence will therefore depend not only on technology and standards, but also on whether they can offer reliable, affordable and sustainable solutions without foreclosing alternatives. Narrowing the digital divide will be an important measure of the appeal of their governance models.

Second, China-US competition and cooperation in the AI sector is expanding beyond individual technologies into a broader contest over technological ecosystems and governance rules. Chips, computing power and foundation models remain central, but long-term advantage will increasingly depend on three capabilities: building an integrated ecosystem that links hardware, cloud services, models, applications and digital infrastructure; shaping rules for safety testing, data governance, conformity assessment and technical standards; and encouraging other countries to adopt cost-effective technologies and governance frameworks.



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

Both countries' policies reflect this shift. China's position paper stresses each state's right to choose its development path and technologies, while opposing forced alignment, exclusionary arrangements and supply-chain fragmentation. In July 2025, the US released Winning the AI Race: America's AI Action Plan, centering on innovation, AI infrastructure and international leadership. A related executive order in July 2025, Promoting the Export of the American AI Technology Stack, called for an "American AI Exports Program" offering allies and partners full-stack packages covering hardware, data center storage, cloud services and networking, AI models, systems and standards.

As the performance gap between leading Chinese and US models narrows, the next phase of China-US digital and AI governance is likely to exhibit four interrelated trends: persistent structural competition; further divergence between their technological ecosystems; continued but limited interdependence; and growing selective cooperation.

Third, institutional differences do not remove the need for joint risk management. AI can strengthen cyber defense, but it can also amplify risks arising from malicious-code generation and exploitation, online fraud, deepfakes and disinformation.

Drawing on the AI Incident Database, Stanford University's 2026 AI Index Report states that recorded AI-related incidents rose from 233 in 2024 to 362 in 2025, an increase of about 55.4 percent. Together with weak responsible-AI benchmarking and disclosure — which refer to systemic gaps where tech companies publish vague ethical principles or superficial test scores that fail to measure real-world safety, operational fairness, or human rights impacts — this rise is placing greater pressure on safety testing, incident reporting, and governance mechanisms. Neither country could easily contain the consequences of a major attack on electricity grids, financial systems, hospitals, or transportation networks, or the cross-border spread of severe AI risks.

The two countries already have a foundation for dialogue. On May 14, 2024, they held their first intergovernmental AI dialogue in Geneva. At the May 2026 China-US presidential meeting, they discussed AI and agreed to hold further intergovernmental dialogue. AI governance thus remains one of the areas in which official communication can survive strategic competition. Cooperation need not wait for broad strategic trust; it can begin with their common interest in preventing major risks.

A practical agenda could proceed on three fronts. At the operational level, the two sides can strengthen emergency communication, information sharing, technical verification and crisis de-escalation for major cyber and AI incidents, especially those affecting critical civilian infrastructure such as hospitals, electricity grids, water systems, financial networks and civil aviation.

At the regulatory level, China and the US can seek basic compatibility in terminology, thresholds and procedures for large AI model safety testing, severe-incident classification, vulnerability disclosure, risk notification, and low-sensitivity cross-border data flows serving the public interest.

At the multilateral level, both countries can work through the United Nations to help developing countries strengthen digital infrastructure, emergency-response systems, governance capacity and multilingual safety tools, without tying such assistance to political alignment or exclusionary procurement.

The aim is not strategic convergence, but to preserve the communication channels and risk-reduction mechanisms needed to manage competition, mitigate shared risks and help build a constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability.

The author is a professor of international relations at the Institute of International Studies at Fudan University and the deputy director of the Center for Global AI Innovative Governance. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

SHEN YUJING AND DONG JIMENG

Dividends not division

The two major countries should work together to address risks posed by AI and ensure the technology is harnessed for the global good



JIN DING / CHINA DAILY

A new round of the artificial intelligence revolution driven by large language models is accelerating at a rapid pace. AI has evolved far beyond a purely technical issue to become a core strategic variable reshaping the global competitive landscape. As a transformative technology spearheading the new scientific and industrial revolution, AI is comprehensively reshaping modes of production and industrial structures. Competition and collaboration centered on AI will help shape the balance of power among major countries in the 21st century.



Shen Yujing



Dong Jimeng

While pursuing healthy competition, China and the US should deepen practical cooperation to enable AI technologies to serve the well-being of people across the world. This serves the fundamental interests of both countries and meets the shared expectation of the international community.

Over the past two years, major economies have stepped up efforts to formulate top-level national AI strategies, embedding AI in national development blueprints and mobilizing nationwide resources to sustain their competitive edges in this field. In July 2025, the United States released Winning the AI Race: America's AI Action Plan, charting a decisive course to cement US dominance in AI. In November 2025, the US launched the Genesis Mission, described as a historic nationwide initiative comparable in urgency and ambition to the Manhattan Project during World War II. It integrates supercomputing resources, research datasets from several national laboratories and private-sector large-scale model capabilities to build a unified computing platform. In July 2026, the White House published the report Science: A New Golden Age, advocating an overhaul of the US research system.

China and the US are leading the global development of AI. According to core AI indicators in Stanford University's 2026 AI Index Report, China and the US account for the vast majority of global resources and outputs in computing capacity, industrial application and high-impact academic papers — a lead unlikely to be challenged by other nations in the near term. In computing supply, both countries maintain advantages in high-end chip reserves and the scale of computing hubs. An Oxford University study titled AI Compute Sovereignty: Infrastructure Control Across Territories, Cloud Providers and Accelerators, found that major AI computing clusters are concentrated in the two nations: 26 in the US and 22 in China.

Stanford's report also indicates that the US retains an edge in developing top-tier frontier models, yet China is closing the gap rapidly. While the US leads in quantity, Chinese models are catching up fast in quality. The comprehensive performance gap between leading Chinese and US frontier models stands at just 2.7 percent, with models from both sides alternating at the top of rankings since early 2025, marking a phase of parallel technological progress. Regarding supporting factors such as AI talent and data, the US still hosts the world's largest pool of elite AI researchers and retains advantages in attracting top original innovators. According to China's National Development and Reform Commission, China possesses one of the biggest cohorts of AI engineers, producing more than 5 million STEM graduates every year. In 2025, according to the National Data Resource Survey Report (2025) released by China's National Data Administration, China generated 52.26 zettabytes of data, accounting for 27.44 percent of the global total and ranking among the world's largest data resource holders. These scale advantages in talent and data lay a solid foundation for sustained long-term AI growth.

AI is a shared endeavor of humanity, and its sound development bears on the common well-being of all. As the two major forces driving global AI progress, China and the US can transcend zero-sum competition, strengthen their collaboration, jointly address global challenges arising from AI and advance the ethical and beneficial development of AI.

First, China and the US can work together to support AI cooperation between the Global North and the Global South as well as South-South cooperation to build an open and inclusive global AI governance system. Severe imbalances persist in global AI development, with many developing countries facing bottlenecks in computing power, data, talent and technology. Both sides should abandon zero-sum thinking, uphold the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, and help developing countries build their AI capacity through technology transfer, capacity building and talent training.

Second, China and the US can jointly guard against AI risks. While rapid AI innovation unlocks enormous opportunities, it also brings risks including algorithmic bias, privacy breaches and ethical conflicts, with potential implications for international security and global stability. Faced with these transboundary risks, China and the US can deepen dialogue and cooperation on AI safety governance, ethical norms and standard-setting, and jointly improve early-warning and response mechanisms to ensure AI evolves along a secure and reliable track.

Finally, the two countries can jointly harness AI to benefit humanity and tackle global challenges. AI offers new tools to address climate change, public health emergencies, food insecurity and energy shortages. The two nations can pursue pragmatic cooperation in AI-enabled low-carbon transition, pharmaceutical research and equitable access to quality education, turning AI into a powerful instrument for resolving shared challenges facing humankind.

History shows that the dividends of technological revolutions can reach all humanity only through positive interaction and responsible leadership among major countries. While pursuing healthy competition, China and the US should deepen practical cooperation to enable AI technologies to serve the well-being of people across the world. This serves the fundamental interests of both countries and meets the shared expectation of the international community.

Shen Yujing is the deputy director of the Macro Research Department at the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University of China. Dong Jimeng is a research intern at the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University of China. The authors contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:45 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:45 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

CIFTIS set for heavy turnout in Beijing

Services sector fair confirms some 300 Fortune Global 500 firms will attend

By **REN QI**
renqi@chinadaily.com.cn

The 2026 China International Fair for Trade in Services, which is scheduled to be held from Sept 9 to 13 in Beijing, has entered its final preparation stage with a strong focus on facilitating enterprises' overseas expansion.

Since its inception, CIFTIS has resonated with the development of global trade in services, becoming an important platform for countries to showcase innovative achievements in the services sector, promote policy exchanges and foster trade cooperation, said Wei Mingqian, deputy general manager of Beijing North Star Co Ltd.

Wei said the successful hosting of the event relies heavily on media attention, recalling that the 2025 CIFTIS attracted over 3,200 registered journalists and achieved record-high coverage, fully demonstrating the innovative achievements of China's high-quality services sector.

This year's event will feature exhibitions, promotional negotiations, achievement releases and support activities, Wei added.

Demonstrating a continuously rising level of international engagement, nearly 300 Fortune Global 500 companies and industry-leading enterprises have confirmed their on-site participation.

For the first time, the 2026 CIFTIS will debut a "going global services promotion roadshow area".

This innovative section will feature professional institutions and enterprises related to finance, law, accounting, intellectual property, advertising and human resources to conduct promotional pitches and information sharing.

Centered on key themes such as the commercialization of achievements, open cooperation and new quality productive forces, the area aims to provide enterprises with one-stop services geared to help them expand overseas. More than 40 related roadshow activities have already been scheduled.

"The registration of exhibitors is drawing to a close, with those from nearly 70 countries, regions and international organizations having confirmed their participation to set up exhibitions," Wei said. He highlighted that Norway, as the guest country of honor, and Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, as the guest provincial region of honor, will be setting up dedicated pavilions.

The upcoming fair will also highlight major debuts. More than 80 enterprises and institutions — including Alibaba, Schneider Electric and GE Healthcare — plan to release over 180 innovative achievements covering artificial intelligence, healthcare, cultural exports and green development.

"Relevant countries, international organizations and provinces will host over 190 forums, conferences and promotional activities," Wei said.

Highlighting long-term cooperation, the fair has expanded its sponsorship roster to include new partners like Beijing Data Group. Furthermore, the event will launch 28 new cultural and creative products, including co-branded chocolates, Wei said.

To provide an immersive consumption experience, the 2026 CIFTIS will feature over 70 support activities, extending beyond the main venue to multiple areas across the city.

Furthermore, the fair is prioritizing technological integration to upgrade its service quality.

"We are fully integrating digital technology into the entire process of the exhibition," Wei said, adding that the event will utilize AI translation devices, intelligent recommendation platforms and AI itinerary assistants to help participating enterprises efficiently connect with global partners.

Catering services have also been upgraded, with fixed seating tripled to accommodate up to 10,000 visitors, complemented by smart coffee and ice cream machines, while optimized shuttle buses will feature smart positioning and real-time information.

Ticketing for the 2026 CIFTIS has officially opened to the public via its official website, app and mini-programs, Wei added.



A humanoid robot performs for media during an event relating to 2026 China International Fair for Trade in Services at a robot training center in Beijing. AP

Dow eyes growth in multiple sectors

By **ZHENG XIN**
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

Dow, a United States-based materials science company, sees massive opportunities in China in sectors such as advanced manufacturing, artificial intelligence, data centers, new energy, mobility and circular economy solutions, and vows to continue expanding its investment as the country deepens its transition toward high-quality development.

Amid a complex global economic landscape, this steadfast commitment underscores the country's enduring appeal to foreign investors, driven by clear policy direction and rapid industrial upgrading, said a senior Dow official.

For Crystal Huang, president of Dow Greater China, the nation stands out for its policy clarity, industrial resilience and long-term commitment to innovation-driven growth. These factors, she noted, are providing global businesses with greater confidence to invest, innovate and grow alongside China's economic transformation.

"China combines scale, a highly integrated manufacturing ecosystem, world-class infrastructure, and increasingly sophisticated customer demand," Huang said. "This is critically important for materials science companies like Dow, which seek to carry out localized research and development, manufacturing and application-driven innovation."

China currently represents Dow's second-largest market globally and its largest outside the US. Despite global headwinds, Huang highlighted that the country's economic performance this year has demonstrated remarkable resilience, characterized not just by the pace of growth, but by an ongoing pivot toward higher-value development.

As China's innovation ecosystem becomes an increasingly vital engine of growth, frontier technologies are fundamentally reshaping industrial capabilities, she said.

"AI and other high-end technologies are becoming powerful catalysts for productivity growth and industrial upgrading in China," Huang said. "For multinational companies like Dow, this creates opportunities to accelerate collaborative innovation on next-generation solutions and achievement transformation with our Chinese customers."

To capitalize on these shifts, Dow is actively reinforcing its local footprint. Last year, the company launched its first global cooling science studio in Shanghai, designed to deliver sustainable cooling solutions for booming industries like AI, the internet of things, robotics and automation. By March 2026, Dow had already expanded this lab to support key industry trends including vehicle electrification, autonomous driving and smart technologies across the mobility value chain.

The company is simultaneously upgrading its manufacturing network to match the country's industrial ascent. Following the completion of a major silicone expansion in Zhangjiagang, Jiangsu province, last year, Dow announced last month a fresh series of targeted investments to expand its global specialty silicones capabilities.

New liquid silicone rubber, or LSR, manufacturing expansions in Zhangjiagang are expected to begin operations in 2027, catering to high-performance applications in mobility and healthcare.

Amid significant shifts in international commerce and capital flows, China is fortifying its manufacturing and supply networks, said Li Xingqian, vice-chairman of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade.

Simultaneously, the nation is deepening its global integration by lowering market entry barriers, optimizing the corporate climate and implementing targeted policies to stabilize foreign investment, Li said.

"China's dual emphasis on expanding domestic demand and pursuing high-standard opening-up is strengthening its long-term economic resilience and cementing its role in global value chains," said Huang.

Looking ahead to the second half, Dow remains highly optimistic about sectors aligned with the country's development priorities. "We believe China's strengths — including its innovation ecosystem, manufacturing capabilities, talent pool and market scale — will continue to support high-quality development," Huang said.

Luxury brands shine bright in China

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn

A growing number of international fashion and footwear brands are posting robust sales growth in China as affluent consumers continue to spend on brands with distinctive positioning and disciplined retail strategies.

Ralph Lauren Corp, Tapestry Inc and Birkenstock Holding all reported double-digit growth in the Chinese market in their latest quarterly results, suggesting demand remains resilient for brands that combine premium positioning with localized marketing and product offerings.

The results contrast with a broader luxury sector that has struggled with softer consumer spending in China over the past two years.

Ralph Lauren delivered one of its strongest performances globally in the first quarter ended June 27, with revenue in China surging more than 40 percent from a year earlier. Asia revenue increased 24 percent, driven by growth across all major markets, while North America also posted double-digit gains.



View of a Ralph Lauren shop in Shenzhen, Guangdong province.
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Ralph Lauren executives said during an earnings call that they do not expect quarterly growth above 40 percent to continue, but forecast low double-digit growth in China for the full fiscal year, underscoring the market's increasing strategic importance.

The Chinese market accounted for about 10 percent of Ralph Lauren's global revenue in the latest quarter, compared with roughly 2 percent before COVID-19.

The New York-based company attributed the performance to strong demand for womenswear and handbags, brand marketing and a disciplined retail strategy focused on six key cities. Management also confirmed Ralph Lauren will participate in the China International Import Expo for the first time later this year, signaling further investment in the market.

The company has also invested heavily in brand building. Recent campaigns have included a Beijing polo tournament, Wimbledon-themed marketing as the tournament's official outfitter and Ralph's Coffee shops inside select stores, offering consumers a lower-cost entry point into the brand.

Women's apparel, outerwear and handbags all grew by more than 20 percent globally during the quarter, outperforming the broader business.

Tapestry Inc, the New York-based owner of Coach, Kate Spade and Stuart Weitzman, also reported another strong quarter in China. The company said Asia-Pacific revenue rose 19 percent in both the fiscal fourth quarter and full year ended June 27. Sales in China increased 28 percent during the quarter and 35 percent for the full year.

Coach remained the group's primary growth engine, posting double-digit revenue growth in every quarter of fiscal 2026. Demand for leather goods remained particularly strong, helping lift average handbag selling prices by the mid-double digits.

The company added more than 2.5 million new customers globally during the quarter and about 11 million during the fiscal year, with Generation Z accounting for about 35 percent of new customers.

German footwear maker Birkenstock also continued to outperform in China despite weakness across parts of the global footwear sector.

For the fiscal third quarter ended June 30, revenue increased 13 percent to 720 million euros ($835 million), while Asia-Pacific sales rose 18 percent, or 23 percent on a constant-currency basis.

Revenue in China surged 50 percent from a year earlier, making it Birkenstock's largest market in the Asia-Pacific.

The results suggest that international brands with differentiated positioning continue to find growth opportunities in China, even as discretionary spending remains uneven.

"Demand for quality fashion has not disappeared," said Cheng Weixiong, a fashion industry analyst.

Cheng said Ralph Lauren's classic aesthetic, broad price architecture and disciplined discount strategy resonate with the country's middle-income consumers seeking versatile, premium apparel without the volatility seen in the broader apparel market.

Briefly

Inclusive loans to small firms rise

China's inclusive loans to small and micro enterprises maintained steady growth in the second quarter, said the National Financial Regulatory Administration. Outstanding inclusive loans to small and micro enterprises reached 38.9 trillion yuan ($5.73 trillion) at the end of the second quarter, up 8 percent year-on-year.

Moves to ensure rail safety amid rains

Chinese railway operators have bolstered measures to better safeguard the safety of rail transport amid heavy rainfall. In Shanxi province, the Taiyuan High-Speed Railway Engineering Section strengthened manpower, physical and technical defenses to solidify such efforts. Prior to forecasted downpours, the section utilized aerial drone inspections, manual foot patrols and dynamic observations to enhance hazard identification capabilities. Post-rainfall, it sent staff to check tracks, bridges, tunnels and drainage systems, with timely repairs executed. It shifted its flood prevention from reactive measures to proactive forecasting, ensuring the safe operation of high-speed railways.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Etihad to expand China flights

By **WANG YING** in Shanghai
wang_ying@chinadaily.com.cn

With high expectations for China's long-term growth, Etihad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, has unveiled plans to increase its passenger services to China to 35 flights per week by the end of March, up from the current seven flights per week, making China its fastest growing market in 2027.

The airline is further expected to double capacity in China in the coming five to seven years, which would make the country the group's top three market in terms of revenue, said the top executive of the Abu Dhabi-based carrier.

"We have very big expectations. Our vision is to have at least two flights a day per destination in China together with China Eastern," said Antonoaldo Neves, chief executive officer of Etihad Aviation Group, during an exclusive interview with China Daily.

"I don't see any reason why our capacity of 35 weekly flights, together with China Eastern, can't double over the next five to seven years. We're really excited about the opportunities in the Chinese market," said Neves, adding that the group's growth in China is strengthened by its two partners, China Eastern Airlines and SF Airlines.

"We're currently flying only to Beijing, but we'll soon add services to Shanghai as well as to Shenzhen and Guangzhou (Guangdong province), Hangzhou (Zhejiang province) and Chengdu (Sichuan province). Expanding our passenger network will also increase the belly cargo capacity," he said.

According to the CEO, the carrier transports 2,600 metric tons of cargo every single week from the Chinese mainland to Abu Dhabi, with about 40 percent of that cargo being exports from China to Abu Dhabi, and 60 percent going beyond Abu Dhabi.

Although China currently accounts for only two of Etihad's roughly 300 daily flights, the planned capacity expansion is expected to make it one of the airline's three fastest-growing markets.

"In terms of both cargo and passenger revenue, China will become one of our five largest markets next year, and it won't take long before it ranks among our top three," said Neves.

The decision to launch the new services was driven by several factors, including growing tourism between China and Abu Dhabi, rising demand for both passenger and cargo transport, and the need to strengthen the carrier's partnerships through additional capacity.

"I truly believe that the world is getting more connected. Aviation grows two times the GDP in markets like China, like the UAE. So if GDP in China is growing 5 percent, aviation is going to grow 10 percent. If GDP in the UAE is growing 5 percent, it's going to grow 10 percent," he added.

According to the CEO, robust demand continues to underpin the aviation industry's growth, with Etihad's passenger capacity now 20 percent higher than a year ago. He said the biggest challenge facing airlines was the limited availability of new aircraft, as delivery lead times have stretched to three or four years. Even so, he said the long-term trend remained firmly positive.

The executive said he remained strongly bullish on the country's long-term prospects. He pointed to China's advances in information technology, artificial intelligence, the digital economy, robotics, automation, electric vehicles and renewable energy as evidence that the country's growth still has significant room to run.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:45 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:45 PM

BUSINESS

Balancing green power, grid stability

Solar capacity on track to surpass coal-fired capacity in third quarter

By ZHENG XIN
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

Driven by the surging electricity demands of high-end manufacturing and a rapidly expanding digital economy, China's energy landscape is witnessing a historic paradigm shift.

Solar power capacity is on track to officially surpass coal-fired capacity in the third quarter, driven by an explosive surge in electricity demand from new quality productive forces such as high-end manufacturing, artificial intelligence and electric vehicle infrastructure.

According to a comprehensive mid-year report released by the China Electricity Council, the nation's power sector is accelerating its green and low-carbon transition during the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30), entering a new stage characterized by scaled-up quality and systemic modernization.

China's total installed power generation capacity reached 4.01 billion kilowatts by the end of May, making it the first country to cross the 4-billion-kW threshold, said the CEC's recently released report on the analysis and forecast of the national electricity supply and demand situation in the first half.

By the end of June, total solar power capacity had caught up with coal, effectively tying it as the country's largest power source. New energy sources have now firmly established themselves as the undisputed main body of newly added power capacity, the CEC said.

"In the first half, total nonfossil energy power generation grew by 8.5 percent year-on-year, accounting for 44.5 percent of total power generation — an increase of 1.4 percentage points from the same period last year," said Hou Wenjie, director of the statistics and data intelligence department at the CEC. "More remarkably, the incremental growth of nonfossil energy power generation accounted for 70.7 percent of the total incremental power generation nationwide."

Conversely, traditional fossil fuels are seeing their dominance wane. Coal-fired power generation accounted for 49.7 percent of total power generation in the first half, dropping below the 50 percent mark for the first time in the nation's modern industrial history, Hou added.

Industry experts believe that China's installed power structure is seamlessly continuing its green and low-carbon transformation, a shift that is generating immense dividends not just domestically, but also globally.

Lin Boqiang, director of the China Center for Energy Economics Research at Xiamen University, said the continuous climb in installed capacity has significantly boosted overall power generation performance.

The incremental output from nonfossil energy already accounts for 70 percent of the country's total power generation increase, Lin said.

"China's massive manufacturing scale and technological innovation have reduced the global levelized cost of solar and wind power by more than 60 percent and 80 percent, respectively, over the past decade," Lin added.

High-quality Chinese new energy products have significantly enriched global supply and accelerated the world's low-carbon transition in recent years, according to a document titled "China's Position on the So-called Excess Capacity Issue" by the Ministry of Commerce.

China's green and low-carbon transformation serves as both a vital cornerstone of its high-quality development and a landmark contribution to global sustainability, the document said.

In terms of newly installed capacity, the first half saw the nation add 160 million kW of power generation capacity. Wind and solar power combined accounted for 110 million kW of the total, representing a staggering 70 percent of all new capacity added to the grid, said the CEC.

While the supply side of the grid goes green, the demand side is undergoing an equally profound structural transformation. The CEC said electricity consumption driven by the digital and smart economy is experiencing "explosive growth".

"In recent years, China has accelerated the development of new quality productive forces," said Jiang Debin, deputy director of the statistics and data intelligence department at the CEC. "New growth drivers represented by high-end manufacturing and the digital-intelligent economy continue to expand rapidly ... The robust growth in power consumption in these related industries has become the core engine driving the overall electricity consumption growth of the entire society."

The CEC report shows that electricity consumption in high-tech and equipment manufacturing stood out remarkably in the first half, surging 9.8 percent year-on-year. The growth rate was 6 percentage points higher than that of the same period last year, contributing to 32.8 percent of the total growth in industrial electricity consumption.



A power maintenance worker inspects the system's operation at the lower end of the distributed photovoltaic array installed on the roof of cattle and sheep pens in a modern agricultural industrial park in Zhangye, Gansu province, on July 28. WANG JIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY



A worker is busy fulfilling orders for solar photovoltaic modules at Ronma Solar Technology (Jinhua) Co in Jinhua, Zhejiang province, on July 28. SHI KUANBING / FOR CHINA DAILY

Notably, every single subsector within this category recorded positive power consumption growth, the report said.

Simultaneously, within the digital economy, emerging business models — particularly internet data services such as AI data centers and EV charging and battery-swapping services — are exhibiting exponential power demand.

"In the first half, the combined monthly incremental electricity consumption of internet data services and battery swapping and charging services remained between 5.5 billion and 8.5 billion kilowatt-hours. These two sectors consistently accounted for 15 percent to 25 percent of the total societal incremental electricity consumption each month," said Jiang.

From January to June, these two sectors accounted for 59.3 percent of the total increase in electricity consumption in the tertiary industry, acting as the critical force driving that growth.

The EV sector's power appetite is particularly striking. The number of new energy vehicles on the road has surged. In the first half, the national EV charging and swapping service sector consumed 81 billion kWh. In June alone, power consumption hit 14.8 billion kWh, representing a year-on-year growth of 57.1 percent.

Internet data services are following a similar upward trajectory. The explosive boom in AI applications drove the sector's power consumption to 49.4 billion kWh in the first half, nearly matching the total consumption recorded for the entirety of 2024.

"Currently, the AI industry is shifting from a 'training-centric' phase to a phase where 'training and inference are equally important,'" said Jiang. "The volume of AI token calls remains in an exponential climbing channel, meaning the related electricity consumption will continue its high-speed growth for the foreseeable future."

Overall, high-tech manufacturing, data centers and EV infrastructure are rapidly evolving from marginal contributors into the "core increment" of China's power consumption, he added.

Despite the massive strides in renewable deployment, experts warn that the transition is not without operational hurdles.

"The power system is currently facing multiple pressures encompassing security of supply, renewable consumption and economic viability," Zhang said. "There is an urgent need to enhance the reliable output, active grid support and coordinated regulation capabilities of new energy during critical periods of peak system demand."

To address this, the recently drafted plan for renewable energy development during the 15th Five-Year Plan period has, for the first time, incorporated reliable substitution and peak power generation capabilities into its target system.

The plan proposes that by 2030, the average reliable capacity value of wind and solar power should be increased to 8 percent. Furthermore, it aims to increase the share of wind and solar electricity during summer and winter evening peaks to 20 percent, and to boost the newly added reliable peak power generation capacity of renewables by 300 million kW.

"At present, achieving these targets presents certain challenges," Zhang said.

To enhance the reliable substitution capability of new energy, she urged the industry to accelerate the construction of "grid-friendly" new energy stations, while upgrading older legacy wind and solar plants, encouraging capacity expansion and the rational pairing of energy storage systems to steadily improve their grid-connection performance.

"On the technical level, we must increase research, development and application of advanced technological equipment, such as grid-forming technologies, high-precision power forecasting and integrated dispatch systems, while also significantly increasing the proportion of long-duration energy storage," Zhang said.

Looking ahead, the CEC forecasts that as new quality productive forces continue to expand, related industries will see their share of power growth in the industrial sector and the tertiary sector climb even higher, pushing China's electricity consumption structure toward a more technology-intensive and green direction.

The report projects that newly added power generation capacity for 2026 will reach 400 million kW.

By the end of this year, total installed capacity will reach approximately 4.3 billion kW. Of this, nonfossil energy capacity is expected to hit 2.7 billion kW, accounting for about 63 percent of the total. Wind and solar power will officially comprise half of the nation's total capacity, while coal power's share will shrink to roughly 31 percent, the report said.

Hou projects that total electricity consumption will grow by 5 to 6 percent year-on-year in the second half, with the maximum unified grid load reaching between 1.57 billion and 1.63 billion kW.

Looking toward 2030, the CEC anticipates a fundamentally restructured grid characterized by growth in green power and stabilization of coal power.

"By that time, the power industry will have formed a completely new paradigm where new energy serves as the main body of installed capacity, and clean energy dominates actual electricity generation," said Ye Jing, director of the power supply and demand analysis division under the CEC's statistics and data intelligence department.

Under this new framework, solar power will firmly hold its position as China's largest single power source. Concurrently, legacy coal assets will be strategically optimized. Rather than serving as traditional baseload power, coal will be relegated to a supporting role, providing vital safety backup, flexible peak shaving and gap-filling support when the sun is not shining or the wind is not blowing.

This dual approach is designed to ensure the grid can handle the explosive demand from emerging technologies without sacrificing stability.

By successfully balancing this massive green expansion with rigorous grid stability, China is actively engineering a clean, low-carbon power sector — one fully equipped to fuel the nation's next wave of technological and industrial innovation, Ye said.

Energy storage bolstering nation's electricity system

By ZHENG XIN

China continues to maintain the world's largest installed capacity in new energy storage, marking a historic transition for the technology from a supplementary role to a critical backbone supporting the nation's modern power system, according to a newly released official report.

Surging past previous records, the country's installed capacity of new energy storage reached 136 gigawatts by the end of 2025, marking an 84 percent increase year-on-year and a massive 40-fold expansion compared to the end of 2020, said the China New Energy Storage Development Report (2026) issued by the National Energy Administration.

The sector's rapid growth has delivered immediate operational benefits to the national grid, the report said.

In 2025, new energy storage capacity broke the 100 GW milestone for the first time — more than double the total capacity of traditional pumped-hydro storage. Over the year, these facilities successfully absorbed more than 30 billion kilowatt-hours of renewable electricity, boosting the national renewable energy utilization rate by approximately 2 percentage points.

Investment in new energy storage, together with charging and battery swapping infrastructure, hydrogen energy, and integrated source-grid-load-storage systems, has also been rising in recent years, according to the NEA.

Xu Jilin, deputy director-general of the NEA's Department of Energy Conservation and Technology Equipment, said during the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-25), China's new energy storage sector progressed from early-stage commercial application to a new phase of large-scale development, building a solid foundation for high-quality industry growth and multi-dimensional value creation.

In addition to rapid volumetric growth, the sector has demonstrated deepening technological innovation. A diversified development model has taken shape, led by lithium-ion battery storage while incorporating various advanced technological routes, according to the NEA.

Concurrently, the operational effectiveness and regulation capabilities of these storage systems have steadily improved.

The annual equivalent utilization hours for new energy storage nationwide rose from 611 hours in 2023 to 911 hours in 2024, and reached 1,195 hours in 2025, reflecting its expanding role in balancing power supply and demand, said the report.

This enhanced storage infrastructure played a pivotal role during recent summer electricity demand spikes driven by sustained economic growth and hot weather, during which national electricity loads broke historical records three times.

According to the report, storing energy during normal operations allows the system to stand firm at critical moments.

For instance, in July 2025, when national peak electricity demand exceeded 1.5 billion kW, major industrial provinces such as Jiangsu and Shandong mobilized centralized dispatch of new energy storage facilities during peak hours. Peak discharge power reached 7.14 GW in Jiangsu and 8.04 GW in Shandong — equivalent to operating seven to eight 1,000-megawatt coal-fired units at full capacity — with a simultaneous dispatch rate exceeding 95 percent.

This reliable performance was further supported by broader grid infrastructure upgrades, including the commissioning of the Shaanxi-Anhui ultra-high voltage direct current project, bringing the total number of operational UHV corridors nationwide to 46, with a cross-regional transmission capacity exceeding 340 GW.

Looking ahead, the report outlines key tasks for 2026 and plans for the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30). Key initiatives include supporting breakthroughs in core technologies, planning the construction of national energy research and development innovation platforms in the new energy storage domain, standardizing project management, and promoting efficient and value-driven market competition.



Technicians from State Grid Chuzhou Power Supply Company conduct an inspection at a smart energy storage sharing station in Chuzhou, Anhui province, on Aug 2. SONG WEIXING / FOR CHINA DAILY

Energy storage, coupled with auxiliary systems such as smart microgrids and vehicle-to-grid networks, plays a critical role in maintaining grid stability, said Zhu Gongshan, chairman of GCL Group, China's largest private power enterprise.

These technologies are indispensable for swiftly balancing power output against shifting demand. "By offering dependable backup electricity, they help forge a highly resilient and adaptable energy network," Zhu said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:45 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:45 PM

CHINA

Guangxi's courts bank on mediation

AI also plays key role in expediting intl commercial dispute resolutions

By **CAO YIN** in Nanning
caoyin@chinadaily.com.cn

Courts in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region are making significant strides in establishing themselves as a preferred venue for resolving international commercial disputes, with mediation and artificial intelligence playing key roles in the effort.

As China's gateway to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Guangxi shares a dynamic border with Vietnam. Each day, trucks laden with tropical fruits and a steady flow of traders and travelers cross the border for business and family visits. Such frequent exchanges naturally give rise to disputes.

Between January 2020 and June 2026, courts across Guangxi handled 3,250 foreign-related civil and commercial cases involving 75 countries, including the United States, Vietnam, Japan and Canada. The cases covered a wide range of issues, from divorce and private loans to trademark infringement and contract disputes. In 2025 alone, courts in the region handled 1,059 such cases, with the number rising annually, according to the Guangxi High People's Court.

To position itself as a preferred destination for resolving international commercial disputes, the region's judiciary has made mediation a cornerstone of its approach, tailoring it to the distinctive nature of cross-border cases.

> "Our goal is to prevent commercial conflicts from escalating."
>
> **Liu Qiangqiang,** a border police officer in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region

At Youyiguan, or the Friendship Pass, in Pingxiang, a city on the Vietnam border, local judges work with police, market regulators, officials from the border economic zone and trade associations to address commercial disputes. When a cross-border trade dispute arises, police often first stabilize the situation and identify the key issues. If the dispute involves border trade, they alert the local court to conduct joint mediation.

"Our goal is to prevent commercial conflicts from escalating," said Liu Qiangqiang, a border police officer, highlighting how expedited mediation keeps trade flowing and prevents minor misunderstandings from becoming major disputes.

Zhou Meichu, head of the Puzhai community in Youyi township, also underscored the importance of mediation in resolving disputes involving perishable goods such as durians and jackfruits.

"Some businesses can wait, but fruit cannot. Time is money," he said. "Quick resolutions do more to ensure the stability of cross-border trade between China and Vietnam than simply announcing verdicts."

With years of experience in international trade and community management, Zhou has earned the trust of many merchants, both Chinese and foreign. He subsequently became a civilian mediator, assisting judges in resolving foreign-related commercial cases. To better understand the needs of Vietnamese traders, Zhou has enlisted three Vietnamese nationals with a strong grasp of cross-border business practices as his colleagues.

"Mediation only works when it stays within the legal framework. That's what gets to the heart of a dispute and keeps business relationships alive in the long run," he added.

In Dongxing, another city in Guangxi, Du Yimiao serves as one of the region's bilingual, business-savvy mediators. Located just across a narrow river from Vietnam, Dongxing sees daily cross-border trade. Since a circuit judicial team was established in the border area in 2014, it has resolved more than 1,400 border trade disputes, with a mediation success rate of nearly 50 percent.

Du, an overseas Chinese, holds positions in the local chamber of commerce and women's federation, giving her deeper insight into business practices and cultural norms on both sides of the border. Over the past four years, she has participated in 57 dispute resolutions.

"Language barriers and cultural differences may easily turn minor disagreements into major conflicts," she said, describing her role as a bridge between the two sides.

"The law sets the baseline — I make sure both sides understand their legal standing while reminding them of the long-standing business relationships we have built across the border," she added.

To strengthen the institutional framework for mediation, the Guangxi High People's Court has issued guiding documents to support the Belt and Road Initiative and improve the business environment. The region has also established the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area Nanning International Commercial Tribunal, further helping foster an institutional system for standardized mediation in cross-border cases.

The tribunal is also turning to AI to address one of the key challenges in international commercial disputes: identifying and applying foreign laws where applicable.

In 2025, the Guangxi Department of Justice and Guangxi Minzu University launched an artificial intelligence-powered legal service assistant. The platform has since incorporated more than 100,000 legal texts from ASEAN member countries, covering 100 core laws in seven languages. It provides legal consultation, policy interpretation and risk assessment, along with multilingual translation and cross-jurisdictional services.

Dang Shu, director of the rule of law research center at the Guangxi Department of Justice, said that compared with other AI tools, the dedicated legal assistant draws on official data sources from ASEAN countries and follows a rigorous translation process to ensure judicial accuracy.

Wu Xiaofan, president of the Guangxi Commercial Mediation Association, praised the platform's reliable database, saying it helps parties reduce the costs and time involved in mediation.

In a late-2025 durian contract dispute, for instance, the tribunal used the AI tool to retrieve, cross-reference and translate applicable Vietnamese laws for the litigants, resolving within minutes a dispute over the characterization of the business relationship that had long eluded consensus.

Since its establishment in September 2022, the tribunal's caseload has grown from 438 cases in 2023 to 610 in the first half of this year. Yang Ding, deputy chief judge, said she and her colleagues are embracing the technology to improve judicial efficiency and quality.

"We hope to build a fully integrated, digitally empowered dispute-resolution system tailored for ASEAN partners to advance the region's goal of becoming a preferred venue for international commercial disputes and supporting high-level opening-up," she added.

Precious painting



Visitors appreciate a T-shaped silk painting unearthed from Mawangdui Han Tombs during an exhibition titled *A House of Nobility: Aesthetics and Cultivation of Life in the Mawangdui Han Tombs* at the Shanghai Art Museum on Monday. Open from July 3 to Oct 7, the exhibition features precious artifacts excavated from the tombs in Changsha, Hunan province, which date back more than 2,000 years. ZHANG HENGWEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Generational efforts turn desert green

By **ZHAO JIA** in Beijing and **MA JINGNA** and **HU YUMENG** in Lanzhou

At Babusha Forest Farm on the southern edge of the Tengger Desert in Gulang county, Gansu province, 41-year-old Guo Xi can now use a drone to patrol 5,000 hectares of farmland for fire risks and pests, a once laborious task his grandfather's generation did on foot.

The transformation is just as striking when it comes to irrigation.

"My grandfather's generation hauled water on donkey carts, my uncles switched to farm vehicles, and by our generation we had 15-metric-ton water trucks. Now we have drip irrigation," said Guo, a third-generation desert-control worker whose grandfather, Guo Chaoming, was one of the founders of the farm.

Water trucks once struggled to reach remote stretches of sand. Today, Guo said, smart drip-irrigation systems can be managed remotely, making water delivery more precise and efficient.

"Desert control today is no longer simply about hard physical labor. We have to use technology to make desert control and forest management more efficient," he said.

Guo has observed the transformation since childhood.

"When I was young, wherever you looked, there was yellow sand," he said. "Now, wherever you look, it is green. The previous two generations worked for decades to leave us this oasis."

Now a father of three, Guo hopes one of his children will eventually return to Babusha after receiving a good education.

"I hope the next generation can use more professional and advanced technology to protect Babusha," he said.

The generational relay began in 1981, when six villagers from Tumen township — Guo Chaoming, He Falin, Shi Man, Luo Yuankui, Cheng Hai and Zhang Runyuan — all aged 50 or older, banded together to manage 5,000 hectares of shifting sand. They began planting trees and stabilizing dunes as desertification crept closer to villages and farmland.

As the original founders aged, their children took up the mantle. Guo Wangang, Communist Party of China secretary and head of Babusha Forest Farm, stepped in as a second-generation worker to continue his father Guo Chaoming's work.

For Guo Wangang, now 74, carrying on his father's legacy requires persistence.

"The most valuable thing in desert control is perseverance," he said. In summer, he still gets up at 5 am to arrange the day's irrigation and forest maintenance.

"There is a saying in desert afforestation: one part planting, nine parts tending," he said. "Planting a tree is only the beginning. What matters more is keeping it alive over the long term."

Since 2019, Babusha Forest Farm has completed desert control and afforestation on 13,900 hectares and restored about 10,587 hectares of degraded forest, according to local authorities. Vegetation coverage in the front-line areas under its management has exceeded 70 percent, forming a green windbreak about 10 kilometers from north to south and 8 km from east to west.

Water remains one of the farm's biggest challenges.

"A big tree takes decades to grow. Without water, it can disappear just like that," said Guo Wangang, gesturing with his hand.

In 2024, as a deputy to the provincial people's congress, Guo Wangang submitted a motion to address Babusha's water shortage. To resolve the issue, a 500,000-cubic-meter reservoir was constructed alongside an accompanying drip-irrigation network, ensuring a stable water supply source for the entire forest farm.

"One of the biggest worries on my mind has finally been lifted," he said. "The survival of the trees now has a fundamental guarantee."

The forest farm's progress is also reflected in the lives of the people who have worked there.

Reflecting on decades of labor, He Zhongqiang, another second-generation desert-control worker, said the work has brought a deep sense of fulfillment.

A severe sandstorm had earlier convinced him and his peers that controlling desertification on Babusha's original 5,000 hectares was not enough. They also needed to tackle surrounding sources of sand, he said.

They later expanded treatment to another 7,600 hectares of desertified land and, from 2003, spent a decade carrying out desert-control work around Wudaogou village.

"Seeing the land improve and people's lives become more secure makes all the hardship worthwhile," he said.

Ma Shengrong, a forest ranger at the farm, remembers how wind and sand once threatened local harvests.

"When I was a child, crops we had worked hard to plant were often buried in the sand or destroyed by strong winds, and a whole year's harvest could be lost," Ma said. "That no longer happens."

Another witness to Babusha's transformation is Liu Wancheng, 57, who joined the farm in 1991 after moving from the mountainous southern part of Gulang.

"It used to be 'sand advances, people retreat'. Now it is 'people advance, sand retreats'," Liu said. "When I first arrived, I earned just over 40 yuan ($5.93) a month. Now I can make more than 50,000 yuan a year through farm wages, seasonal desert control, and harvesting cistanche."

"We have not only brought the sand under control — but people can also earn an income from it," he said, adding that watching the desert turn green gives him a deep sense of achievement.

Today, Babusha's green economy goes far beyond individual harvesting. A free-range chicken farm sells more than 10,000 birds annually, generating more than 1.2 million yuan in output, while six Babusha-branded products — including cattle, sheep, goji berries and vegetables — are helping expand local agricultural industries.

For Wang Jiguo, deputy director of Gulang county's forestry technology center and a senior engineer, Babusha's core lesson is that desertification control must respect natural laws and local conditions.

"First make the land green, then help people prosper," Wang said, emphasizing that long-term restoration requires giving local people a direct stake in protecting the environment.

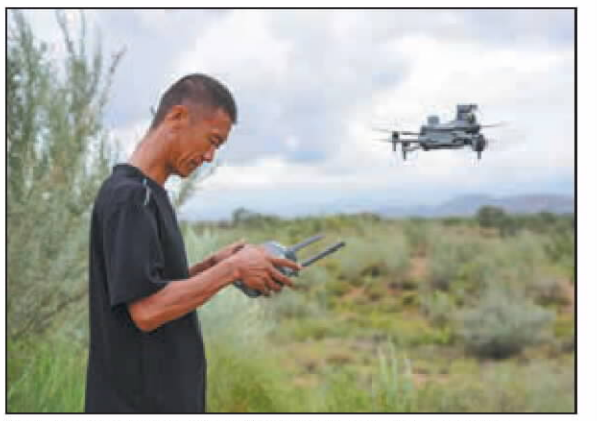
What species to plant and how to develop supporting industries, he noted, must be tailored to local soil, rainfall and climate.

"Restoring desertified land is not a short-term project," Wang said. "It demands a long-term commitment so that ecological protection becomes a mission passed from one generation to the next."

Offering a broader legal guarantee for such generational efforts, China's Ecological and Environmental Code, which took effect on Saturday, includes a dedicated section on desertification prevention and control.

Tong Yunshan contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at zhaojia@chinadaily.com.cn



Desert-control worker Guo Xi controls a patrol drone at the Babusha Forest Farm in Gulang county, Gansu province, on Aug 11. LANG BINGBING / XINHUA

Carnivorous plant find validates Darwin

By **LI MENGHAN**
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

Scientists have confirmed the discovery of the first carnivorous plant in the Saxifragales order — a group of non-woody flowering plants widely spread across temperate and cold mountain regions. The breakthrough validates a prediction made by British naturalist Charles Darwin in 1875.

The findings were published in the international journal Nature Communications on Aug 4. The study was conducted by a joint team of researchers from the Kunming Institute of Botany of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Yunnan province, the CAS Wuhan Botanical Garden in Hubei province, Jishou University in Hunan province, and the University of Florida in the United States.

The plant, *Saxifraga candelabrum*, grows in rock crevices located between 2,500 and 3,300 meters above sea level across the Hengduan Mountains on the southeastern edge of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. Its entire body is covered in dense, sticky hair-like structures called glandular hairs that trap small insects.

In his 1875 book *Insectivorous Plants*, Darwin studied two European species from the same family and noticed their sticky hairs could catch insects. He suggested that some species in the group might actually feed on their prey. However, the analytical tools of his era were not advanced enough to test his theory, leaving the question unanswered for nearly 150 years.



An insect is captured by *Saxifraga candelabrum's* sticky hairs. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The discovery began during fieldwork in Shangri-La, Yunnan province, when researchers noticed *Saxifraga candelabrum's* sticky hairs were packed with bugs — averaging 71 insects per plant.

To prove that insect trapping was a permanent evolutionary trait rather than an accidental event, the team surveyed 45 historical plant samples collected between 1888 and 2016. Forty-three of them still had insects stuck to their hairs, proving the plant has been preying on insects for well over a century. Scientists also discovered that the plant uses floral scents to lure insects. However, its sticky traps mostly catch midges — small flies that do little to help fertilize the plant. Larger and more effective pollinators, such as hoverflies and wild bees, rarely get stuck. This smart tactic allows the plant to hunt for food without accidentally killing the insects it relies on to reproduce.

Many plants use sticky hairs purely to keep harmful bugs away. To prove *Saxifraga candelabrum* actually digests its catch for nutrients, researchers tested for digestion-aiding proteins. They found phosphatase — an enzyme that breaks down animal matter — right inside the plant's sticky hairs. They then used chemical tracking with nitrogen isotopes, which are special elemental markers, to confirm that the plant absorbs nitrogen from the digested bugs to fuel its flowering and fruit growth.

In addition, the research team mapped out a complete high-precision genome of the species.

Zhang Xinjian, first author of the study and a postdoctoral researcher at the Kunming Institute of Botany, noted that the findings challenge long-held botanical assumptions.

Zhang explained that while most known carnivorous plants use dramatic, specialized traps like pitchers or snapping jaws, this discovery serves as a reminder that quieter insect-eaters exist in nature. Sticky hairs traditionally viewed as simple self-defense mechanisms may actually double as feeding tools.

This suggests that insect-eating behavior among flowering plants may be far more common than previously realized, opening the door for the discovery of many more carnivorous species in the future.

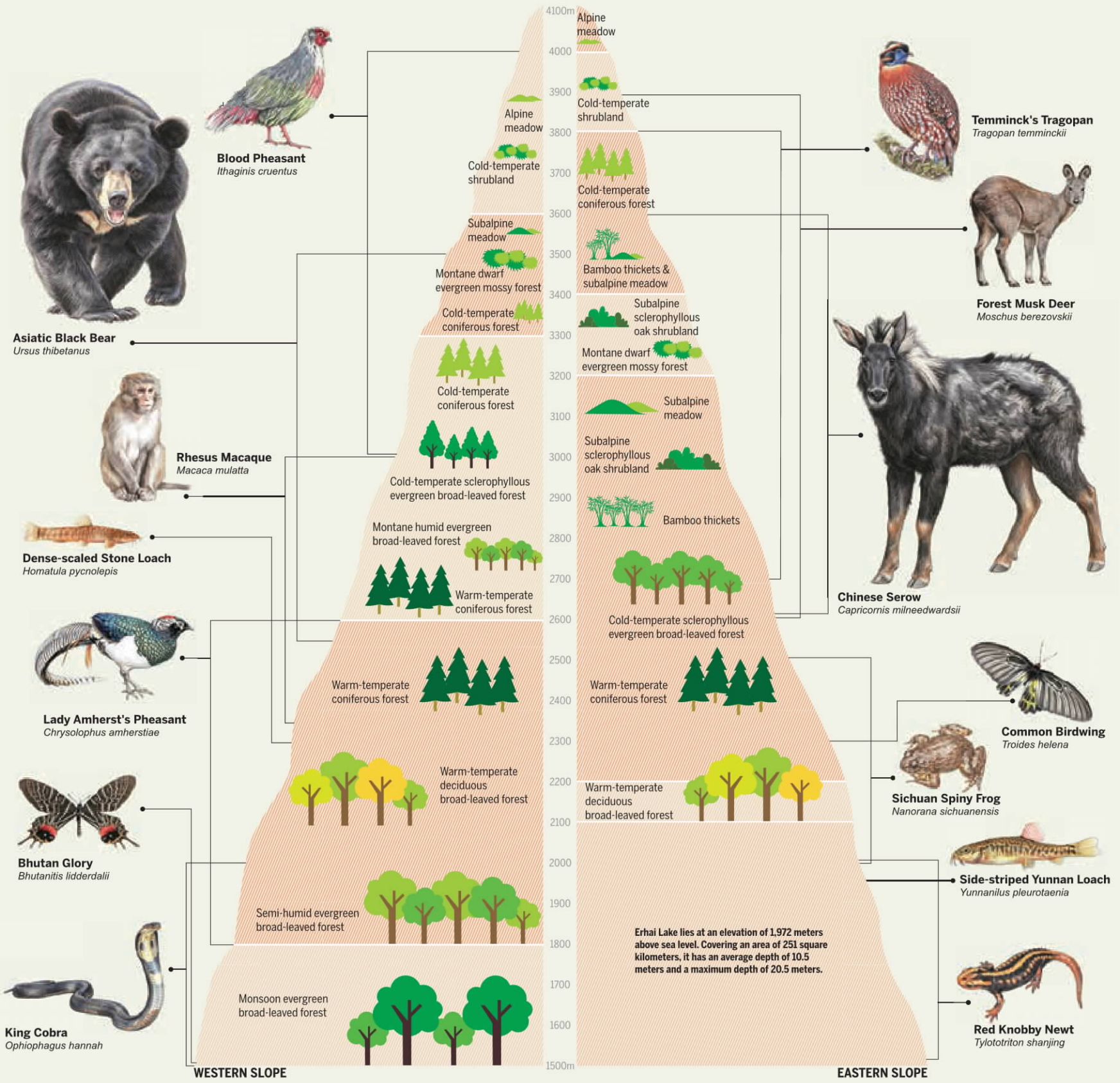
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:45 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:45 PM

Editor's note: *As protection of the planet's flora, fauna and resources becomes increasingly important, China Daily is publishing a series of stories to illustrate the country's commitment to safeguarding the natural world.*

Uncovering a soaring scale of biodiversity

Survey of the Cangshan Mountains reveals wildlife paradise. **Yan Yujie** reports from Dali, Yunnan, with **Zheng Jinran** in Beijing



The Cangshan Mountains in Southwest China's Yunnan province have long been known as one of the country's richest reservoirs of biodiversity, home to forests, alpine meadows and thousands of animal and plant species.

After the results of a comprehensive three-year survey were released in April, the true and expanded scale of the mountains' biodiversity and intertwined ecosystems has been uncovered.

The scientific expedition, which featured some 4,000 visits by researchers from eight institutes at the national and provincial levels, covered an area of 966 square kilometers — roughly the size of New York City.

Surveying flora and fauna across elevations ranging from 1,360 meters to 4,122 meters, the researchers documented ecosystems, plants, fungi, wildlife and land use across the mountain.

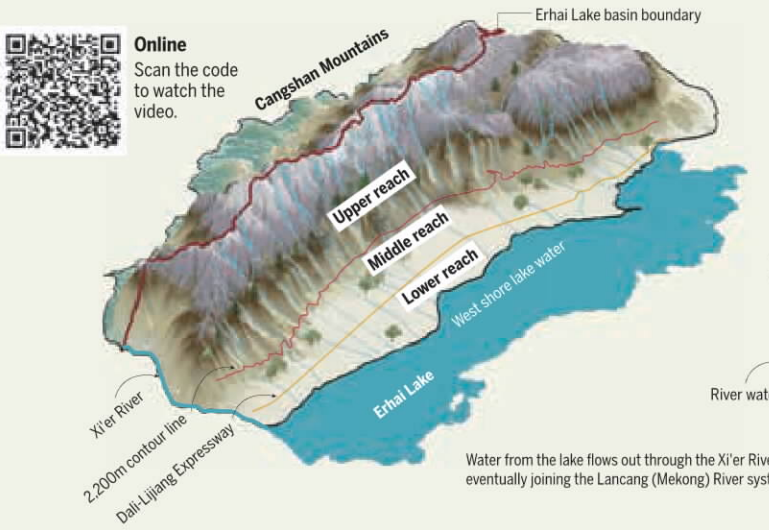
For Chai Yong, project secretary and head of the vegetation research team at the Yunnan Academy of Forestry and Grassland, the expedition was as much about humility as discovery.

"The mountain constantly reminds us how little we know," Chai, 50, said.

In 2023, Chai and three colleagues were conducting vegetation surveys near Xieyang Peak, the southernmost of Cangshan's 19 peaks, when they strayed from their planned route and became trapped in dense shrubs.

"We could see the city below us, but we couldn't find a way down," Chai recalled.

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.



Water from the lake flows out through the Xi'er River, eventually joining the Lancang (Mekong) River system.

The team eventually found a narrow gully and followed it to safety. The experience reinforced a lesson Chai now often shares with younger researchers: understanding nature begins with respecting it.

That respect has been matched by a growing understanding of the mountain's complexity.

Researchers on the survey established Cangshan's first comprehensive vegetation classification system, identifying 10 vegetation types, 20 subtypes, 79 formations and 131 plant communities. They also documented 10 previously unrecorded plant communities and discovered the distribution of monsoon evergreen broad-leaved forests on the mountain.

The expedition recorded 4,600 species of higher plants and 418 large fungi, as well as 578 vertebrate and 787 invertebrate species.

"Cangshan is not a collection of separate ecosystems," Chai said. "It's a living system in which forests, water and wildlife are deeply interconnected."

The expedition also shed new light on Cangshan's relationship with nearby Erhai Lake, an iconic attraction of Dali city.

Using stable isotope analysis, researchers traced the movement of water across the region and found that surface water and groundwater originating from Cangshan contribute more than 65 percent of Erhai's west shore water supply in the rainy season, confirming the mountain's role as a critical ecological barrier and natural reservoir.

The findings have provided important scientific evidence for conservation efforts in the area.

Researchers found that vegetation cover on Cangshan has generally increased since the late 1980s, while protected areas within the Cangshan-Erhai National Nature Reserve consistently outperformed unprotected regions in ecological health, highlighting the long-term benefits of conservation.

For those involved in the project, however, the expedition's significance extends beyond scientific papers or statistics.

The findings will help guide future conservation, ecological restoration and environmental education, ensuring that the mountain's forests, rivers and wildlife continue to thrive.

After years of trekking across ridges and valleys, Chai said he now sees Cangshan differently. "People often admire it for its scenery," he said. "But the more you study it, the more you realize its greatest beauty lies in the connections that hold the whole system together."

Contact the writers at yanyj@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:45 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:45 PM

CULTURAL HERITAGE



Dunhuang Academy's protection techniques have been successfully applied to the Jiaohe Ruins in Turpan, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.





Left: Mural restoration is carried out in one of the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang, Gansu province. **Right:** Guo Qinglin (second from right), director of the Dunhuang Academy, checks a multi-field coupling environmental simulation laboratory. **Below:** A distant view of the Mogao Caves. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Part of a mural restored in Dunhuang.

Taking Silk Road science global

Experts use advanced research to protect fragile earthen ruins and assist overseas partners, report **Wang Ru** and **Ma Jingna** in Dunhuang, Gansu.

Guo Qinglin still remembers a visit to Yumen Pass not long after he joined the Dunhuang Academy in 1999, in Dunhuang, Gansu province. He had followed senior colleagues to inspect the strategic Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220) fort, a vital gateway on the ancient Silk Road, and nearby sections of the Great Wall in Gansu. As he watched the crumbling fortifications, he noticed the expression on Li Zuixiong's (1941-2019) face grow increasingly grave.

"We cannot let such heritage disappear on our watch. We must accelerate research and development of conservation techniques for earthen sites," he recalls Li, then deputy director of the academy, saying.

That moment set Guo on a path from geology graduate to one of the world's leading experts in the conservation of earthen sites. Now 50, Guo is director of the academy which oversees the Mogao Caves — a UNESCO World Heritage site comprising hundreds of Buddhist caves adorned with murals and statues dating from the 4th to the 14th centuries. Over the years, he has watched the academy's conservation capabilities steadily evolve. Today, he leads his colleagues in sharing their expertise abroad, helping safeguard treasures that belong to all of humanity.

Guo's entry into the field was almost accidental. After graduating with a degree in geology from Lanzhou University in Gansu, Guo was introduced to the Dunhuang Academy by his teacher. At the time, he had only a vague sense that cultural heritage protection was something "sacred".

"I remember I told Wang Xudong, who worked as a staff member recruiting graduates from my university and later became director of the academy, that I didn't know much about cultural heritage conservation," Guo recalls. "He replied, 'That's okay. You can learn gradually.'"

Conditions at the academy were tough in those days. Located on the outskirts of Dunhuang, the institution had limited amenities, and staff members could take a shuttle bus to downtown only twice a week to bathe or make phone calls. At the same time, a lack of domestic expertise in conservation prompted extensive international cooperation. Before Guo joined the academy, cooperation with institutions in Japan and the United States in the 1980s had already brought advanced conservation philosophies and techniques to Dunhuang's conservators.

"Building on that foundation, our professionals made further innovations and eventually developed three major technology systems surrounding the protection and repair of ancient murals, protection and consolidation of earthen remains, and digitization of wall paintings and painted sculptures in cave temples," Guo says.

From a team of four members in the 1960s, the academy's conservation workforce has grown to nearly 200 people.

Mural conservation offers a telling example. China had long possessed traditional techniques, but many relied on artisans' personal experience rather than scientific analysis. Through collaboration with US experts, Chinese professionals gained a deeper understanding of the causes of mural deterioration. They refined their methods through scientific research, transforming experience-based practices into science-based conservation.

The cooperation also helped improve procedures. Overseas experts introduced a value-analysis step that Chinese professionals had previously overlooked, helping establish a comprehensive workflow for cultural heritage conservation: value analysis, on-site investigation, environmental monitoring, deterioration mechanism analysis, plan formulation and final implementation.

"Later, we applied these procedures to more than 300 cultural heritage projects across 21 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions, including the restoration of murals at the Potala Palace in Lhasa, Xizang autonomous region," says Guo. "When our methods are scientifically sound, we can largely ensure good outcomes."

Of the academy's three major technology systems, the conservation of earthen relics has posed the greatest challenge and remained a key focus for decades. Of China's 767,000 immovable cultural heritage sites, about one-third are earthen relics, many of which have been listed as World Heritage sites.

"Made of earth, such relics are relatively fragile, as they are often exposed outdoors and can easily collapse or weather, leading to their fast disappearance, along with the precious historical information they carry," Guo says. "Protection of earthen sites is a world-class challenge."

The academy's attempt to protect such sites started in 1992. Early attempts involved adding chemical consolidating materials. Later, geotechnical engineering techniques, such as grouting reinforcement, were introduced, gradually evolving into a comprehensive system. The system has been successfully applied to the Jiaohe Ruins in Turpan, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, since 2006, and the Xixia Imperial Tombs in Yinchuan, Ningxia Hui autonomous region, since 1999, both of which are on the World Heritage List.

As protection techniques matured, the next frontier was understanding long-term effects of the environment. In 2020, the academy launched a multi-field coupling environmental simulation laboratory for mural and ruin protection.

The lab can simulate temperature ranges between -30 C and 60 C and relative humidity from 10 to 90 percent, as well as various climatic conditions across all four seasons, including wind, rain, snow, and sunlight for experimental testing. This allows researchers not only to understand a site's present condition, but also to glimpse its past and future, says Guo.

With these systems now well established, the Dunhuang Academy is increasingly taking its conservation expertise abroad. "Cultural heritage is a witness to a country's history, so every nation wants to protect it," says Guo. "Having benefited from international cooperation ourselves, we feel a responsibility to share our experience with counterparts abroad, to help them safeguard their heritage, which actually belongs to all of humanity."

In 2024, the academy signed memoranda with cultural heritage institutes in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Sri Lanka, and Cambodia, covering joint site protection, exchanges of theories and techniques, cultural exhibitions, academic activities, and professional training. In 2025, the China-Kyrgyzstan Belt and Road Joint Laboratory on Cultural Heritage Conservation was approved for construction to advance these efforts. "Local people understand their own culture best," says Guo. "We offer techniques and discuss protection ideas together. In this way, we cooperate to protect their cultural heritage."

This year, academy professionals arrived at the ruins of the ancient city of Suyab in Kyrgyzstan, a key city on the ancient Silk Road that is now recognized as a World Heritage site, to establish a comprehensive experimental platform for heritage protection.

Aisin Duishanalieva, director of the Republican Inspectorate for the Protection of Historical and Cultural Monuments of the Ministry of Culture of the Kyrgyz Republic, told Global Times earlier that the lab, built under the Belt and Road Initiative, has established systematic research capacity and will continue to develop. "Through this joint collaboration, we can study and excavate cultural relics along the Silk Road and better popularize them in our two countries," she said.

Guo says: "Our academy will remain engaged in domestic and international cooperation, protect grottoes and share their art with an increasingly open approach, and attract more scholars, especially young ones, to join us.

"We will conduct comprehensive, multidisciplinary research on Dunhuang sites in the broader context of human civilization, dig deep into their historical, artistic and scientific value, and contribute to the cultural diversity of the world," he adds.

Contact the writers at wangru1@chinadaily.com.cn



Living history book opens at Jingzhou city wall

By DENG ZHANGYU
in Jingzhou, Hubei
dengzhangyu@chinadaily.com.cn

The ancient city wall of Jingzhou in Hubei province stands like a living history book. More than 2,000 years old, it has quietly "grown taller" in virtually the same location through successive dynasties, with its position shifting by less than 50 meters.

The Exhibition Hall of the Archaeological Site of Jingzhou City Wall, which opened earlier this year, offers visitors a clearer and more intuitive view of the wall's historical evolution and construction techniques over the past millennium.

Inside, the city wall is presented almost as a cross-section of history. Layers of brick and rammed earth dating from the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms (907-960) through the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties are stacked one upon another, recording the passage of time as clearly as tree rings.

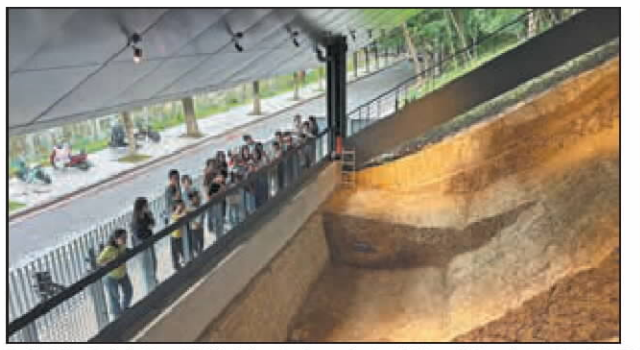
"The city wall is the only city defense and flood-control system in southern China that has remained in continuous use for more than 1,000 years. This exhibition hall turns an archaeological site into vivid history that can be understood at a glance," says Tian Yong from Jingzhou Museum.

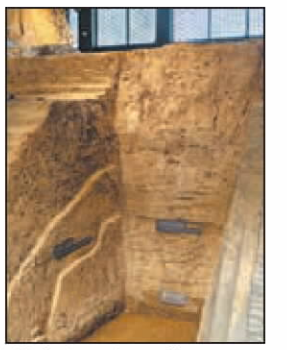
The exhibition hall was carefully built around the archaeological excavation site of Horse-face (*mamian* in pinyin) No 11. In 2019, during the restoration of the structure, archaeologists discovered an earlier brick wall beneath the Ming Dynasty wall. Since then, the archaeological team led by Tian has conducted three excavations at the site.

According to Tian, *mamian* is a specialized structural term for rectangular bastions projecting from a city wall. They reinforce the wall, enhancing its defensive capabilities. The Jingzhou City Wall stretches 11.28 kilometers, and has six ancient city gates and 25 horse-face-shaped bastions. Horse-face No 11 is located in the northern section of the wall.

Tian says archaeologists had never previously excavated deep into the wall out of concern for its structural integrity. Historical records show that the city wall existed during the Three Kingdoms (220-280) period, but there is no rigorous archaeological evidence.

The excavation has traced the wall back to the late Tang Dynasty (618-907). A rammed-earth wall from the Tang period was followed by a brick wall built during the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period, making it the earliest brick city wall discovered through archaeological excavation in China.





Left: The Exhibition Hall of the Archaeological Site of Jingzhou City Wall in Hubei province offers a close-up view of history. **Right:** The interior of a rectangular bastion shows various building techniques from different periods in history. PHOTOS BY LIU QING / FOR CHINA DAILY

The bricks of the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period are quite distinctive. They were salvaged from aristocratic tombs dating from the Han (206 BC-AD 220) to the Tang dynasties and are carved with images of maids and floral patterns. Historical records note that the ruler of the local kingdom at the time ordered nearby tombs to be excavated for their bricks, which were then used to build the city wall.

By the Song Dynasty (960-1279), the wall served both military and flood-control functions. Its exposed interior reveals a well-preserved brick drainage ditch, built with a carefully calculated slope to channel rainwater away quickly and prevent the wall from becoming waterlogged and collapsing.

Above this layer are blackened bricks and earth left by fires during the war-torn Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). The main body of the wall visible today dates from the Ming Dynasty. Its most distinctive feature is the inscribed bricks, each bearing detailed information about its manufacturing date, place of origin, and the officials responsible for its manufacture. If a brick was found to be of poor quality, responsibility could be traced through the inscription.

"These inscribed bricks formed a rigorous quality traceability system in ancient China," Tian says.

Horse-face No 11 is about 14 meters high, roughly the height of a three-story building. Historically, Jingzhou's location along the Yangtze River made it vulnerable to frequent flooding, with historical records indicating water levels rose by as much as 17 meters. To withstand floods, the city wall was repeatedly raised, reaching over 30 meters at its peak. Therefore, the wall was not only a military barrier but also a lifeline that protected people from floods, Tian says.

The exhibition hall is free to the public and, unlike a traditional museum, has no enclosing walls. It connects seamlessly with the surrounding streets through gentle slopes and steps. People can stop by while walking or cycling, taking in the views while exploring the history.

"It perfectly combines excavation, protection, display and utilization. Here, history becomes tangible in an instant. People can see a thousand years at a glance and observe the construction periods, evolution process and building techniques of the city wall," says Yang Kaiyong, director of Jingzhou Museum.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:45 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:45 PM

LIFE



Translating for the palate



Chef Cheng shares his experiences interpreting cross-cultural cuisine, bringing his expertise to a cooking show as he joins the judging panel, **Li Yingxue** reports.

A piece of aged fish maw is turned slowly over charcoal until its surface takes on the dark shine of lacquer. Fermented black garlic adds depth, while sand ginger cuts through a buttery French sauce, creating a dialogue between chef Vicky Cheng's favorite dried seafood ingredient and French cooking techniques.

In another kitchen, the same ingredients might have been simmered for hours into a restorative Cantonese soup.

At Estuary by Vicky Cheng, which opened at Galaxy Macau in May, dishes are presented through the lens of contemporary French cuisine: controlled fire, carefully constructed sauces and precise tableside service.

The dish offers a concise portrait of its creator. Hong Kong chef Cheng has spent much of his career moving between culinary languages, searching for ways to make unfamiliar ingredients immediately appealing without erasing their origins.

Cheng's career reflects contemporary Chinese cuisine's growing global recognition.

Through his restaurants and his role as a judge on the cooking show *Chef of China*, Cheng has explored how Chinese cuisine can reach wider audiences without losing its identity.

At VEA, a one-Michelin-star restaurant in Hong Kong, Cheng established his "Chinese x French" cuisine. WING, ranked No 2 on the 2026 Asia's 50 Best Restaurants list, became his expression of "Boundaryless Chinese Cuisine". Estuary now completes the trio with what he calls "Indulgent and Nourishing French Gastronomy" — French cooking reconsidered through an Asian palate.

Estuary is not simply a return to Cheng's early French cooking. Named for where rivers meet the sea, it reflects his Hong Kong roots, Canadian upbringing and French training.

Born in Hong Kong and raised in Toronto, Cheng grew up with Chiu Chow (Chaozhou) food and his grandmother's Shanghai dishes. In Canada, however, his daily life became overwhelmingly Western.

"I grew up on a Western palate, but I am Chinese at heart," he says.

Cheng began cooking professionally as a teenager. During his six and a half years working at a Canadian restaurant, he progressed from novice to working across its kitchen stations.

"Since I was young, I was given many opportunities to compete in culinary contests," he says. He was taught "discipline of time" and "organization" — lessons he believes are unique to such high-pressure settings.

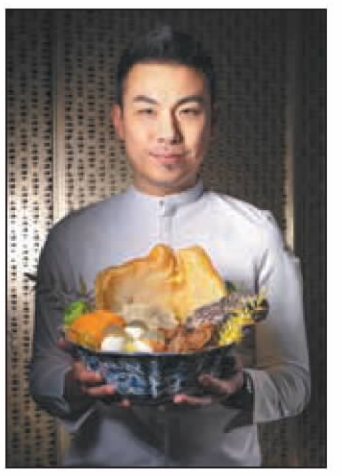
Those early experiences later gave Cheng a personal connection to *Chef of China*, where he joined the judging panel. Moving from competitor to judge allowed him, as he puts it, "to be on the other side of things" and "hopefully be able to help the industry as well".

The program exposed him to chefs from across the mainland and Hong Kong, each drawing on different regional styles of Chinese cooking. Their ingredients, knife skills and techniques were "not just inspiring, but also new and fresh", particularly for "somebody who's been cooking Western cuisine most of his life".

What interested him was what the high pressure revealed: "How quickly they adapt and how well they work as a team and also how well they perform as individuals".

As the field narrowed, judging became more difficult. "You're keeping only the best, and it's at a point where it starts to get very difficult to make a decision," Cheng says. "But in the end, it all comes down to taste. You can have the most creative dishes and the most amazing stories, but if there is no substance, you will not generate deliciousness."

In his early 20s, Cheng moved to New York to refine his skills at Daniel Boulud's three-Michelin-starred Restaurant Daniel. The kitchen quickly challenged his confidence.



Above: Chef Vicky Cheng presents some ingredients for his dishes. **Top left:** House preserved pork, clay pot rice with dried velvet shrimp. **Top right:** Botan shrimp with Chiu Chow sauce. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The restaurant served about 300 guests a night while demanding precision. When he arrived at noon, it left too little time to prepare, so Cheng began coming at 11 am, then 10 am, and sometimes as early as 8 am.

"I went to New York, and I had realized that I was nothing," he says.

It is a lesson he has carried with him: no title or accolade removes the need to improve. "I know that even if I am the best today, I may not be tomorrow," he says. After about a year and a half, colleagues recognized his exceptionally orderly station and willingness to help others.

The missing piece

New York sharpened Cheng's French techniques, but also drew him toward Asia. On days off, he searched for dim sum, sushi and kimchi. "I realized that there's an Asian part of me ... that I had yet to discover," he says. "So I made a decision to come back to Hong Kong."

He continued cooking French food, but as he prepared to open VEA in 2015, he realized that a conventional French restaurant no longer fully represented him. Simply adding soy sauce, wasabi or a Chinese mushroom to a Western dish was not enough, either.

Meaningful fusion requires an understanding of how both cuisines think. A chef using mushrooms from Yunnan province should first understand how local people prepare them and why that tradition exists. Only then can it be reinterpreted rather than used as decoration. "That, for me, is true fusion," Cheng says.

His Chinese education was less formal. At Hong Kong markets, Cheng bought unfamiliar produce, asked vendors how they cooked it, and tested the ideas on friends at late-night suppers.

This education shaped VEA and led to the founding of WING, which opened in 2021. The restaurant takes its name from the Chinese character *yong* — pronounced "wing" in Cantonese — in Cheng's name.

In Chinese calligraphy, the character is traditionally used to demonstrate eight fundamental brush techniques, reinforcing his belief that innovation must begin with a strong foundation.

Launching a Chinese restaurant without training in the traditional Chinese kitchen hierarchy was risky, but it encouraged him to develop his own culinary language.

His Western-raised palate helped him identify where international diners might struggle. Sea cucumber, for instance, can be challenging in appearance and texture. At WING, he placed it inside a crispy spring roll.

"Everybody understands spring rolls," Cheng says. "Everybody understands and loves crispy." He hopes this accessible version encourages diners to try traditional preparation.

This idea reflects his broader hopes for Chinese cuisine. "Food is a universal language," Cheng says. He believes it can evolve only when chefs understand what came before: "Without tradition, there is no innovation."

That foundation, rather than rigid regional boundaries, informs WING. Cheng hopes contemporary interpretations can lead international diners toward traditional dishes. "I hope the world will see Chinese cuisine differently because ... it is for me, one of the most important, most interesting, and tasty cuisines in the world," he says.

Balancing act

At Estuary, the direction of translation changes again. The techniques, service and structure are rooted in French cuisine, but the food is reconsidered through the palate Cheng developed in Asia.

Clear broths, fermentation and extracted oils help him balance indulgence with restraint. Cheng is not re-creating the French food he learned decades ago, but reconsidering it through his years of immersion in Chinese culinary culture, one that nourishes through ingredients.

Food critic Xiong Wei, also known as Teddy Xiong, believes Cheng's greatest achievement at Estuary is his balance of abundance and boundaries. "The most outstanding characteristic of his cooking is that it is generous yet light, following a path that combines nourishment with indulgence," Xiong says. "You finish feeling satisfied, but neither greasy nor uncomfortably full."

For Xiong, the fish maw best captures Cheng's cultural fluency. "It perfectly embodies Vicky's idea of bringing together charcoal grilling, the ingenuity of fermentation and the river-and-sea character of the (Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao) Greater Bay Area," he says.

Estuary may mark a return to Cheng's French roots, but it is not the end of his journey. After more than two decades in kitchens around the world, he continues to search for new ways to let different culinary languages speak to one another. Like the meeting waters that gave the restaurant its name, those languages continue to reshape each other.

For Cheng, cooking is not a search for a final answer but an ongoing conversation between cultures.

Contact the writer at liyingxue@chinadaily.com.cn





From left: Oma abalone and South African abalone with abalone sauce; beef brisket, clear broth and green Sichuan pepper.





From left: Mackerel with persimmon and Lapsang Souchong; blue lobster with sour cabbage and chili oil.

From caves to cafes: China's 'cool resources' fan summer tourism

GUIYANG — With summer heatwaves sweeping across China, the country's southwestern karst areas are getting creative, offering unique tourism experiences deep within their cool caves.

Following a guide, tourist Chang Ting ducked into a natural cave in Guizhou province. After trekking about 100 meters along a narrow rocky path, her mobile signal disappeared.

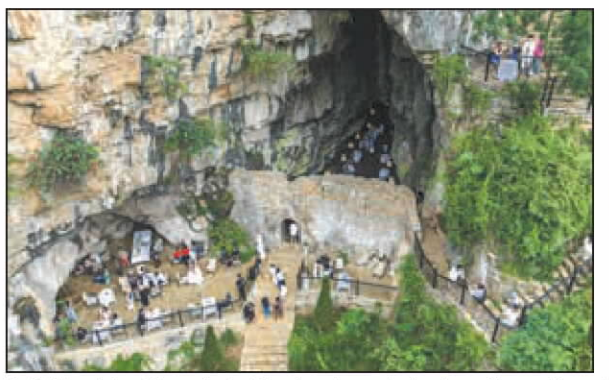
"It felt like stepping back in time, and all the noise faded away," says Chang, from Xi'an, Shaanxi province.

This unique escape has emerged as a new travel fad among young Chinese people during summer vacations. The fresh approach to cave-based sightseeing gives tourists more to explore while boosting summer spending.

Viral videos tagged "Guizhou cave exploration" have gained over 5 million likes on major lifestyle and short-video platforms, with related topics racking up hundreds of millions of views.

Karst landforms cover more than 60 percent of the mountainous province, and a total of 42,800 karst cave entrances have been identified.

Leveraging these resources, Guizhou has developed diverse experiential forms of cave tourism to cater to different types of visitors. Options include outdoor cave adventures with semi-extreme sports, in-depth underground river tours with social media-friendly photo ops, and relaxing cave visits featuring themed dining spaces.





Left: Tourists visit a cafe inside a karst cave in Anshun city, southwest China's Guizhou province, on Aug 8. **Right:** People enjoy the cave cafe's coolness and drinks in the summer. PHOTOS BY CHEN XI / XINHUA

Song Yuanqiao and Zhao Fei, two veteran cave explorers with cave-rescue experience, run an adventure project in Yanzidong, or Sparrow Cave, in Guiding county. Relying on the natural cave passages, they have designed outdoor activities such as zip lines and tightrope bridges.

To turn this niche hobby into a standardized commercial operation, Song and Zhao visited Hungary, Spain, and other countries to learn cave route design, industrial codes and safety management standards.

Song recalls that back in 2018, cave exploration drew little public attention. In 2023, inquiries spiked dramatically as inexperienced tourists began asking about cave routes. "We never imagined it would become so popular," Song says.

A cafe now stands at the cave entrance while thrilling rock-climbing routes stretch deep inside. Since its trial operation in late April, the site has drawn more than 2,000 visitors.

The booming cave tourism trend has brought new job opportunities for young locals. "Sports graduates like me only had jobs as ball coaches before, but now we have more choices," says Lei Yinggui, 23, a cave tour instructor.

The cave exploration trend has also inspired many people to return home and start their own businesses.

Returning from the southern metropolis of Shenzhen, Guangdong province, last year, Peng Wei opened a cave cafe with his former classmates in Xiuwen county. "The longer I was away, the more I missed my hometown's scenery," Peng says.

They left the cave's natural landscape mostly untouched, adding minimal decoration. Now, tourists line up for their unique, waterfall-cooled coffee. The cafe sells up to 600 cups of coffee daily at peak time.

Beyond Guizhou's cave resorts, Heilongjiang province has developed summer forest getaways, and the Xizang autonomous region's plateau area has rolled out high-altitude eco-retreats, translating its distinctive cool-climate resources into sustainable revenue through tourism.

The booming summer tourism aligns with the broader top-level national policy guidelines aimed at boosting consumption.

Last month, China released guidelines to expand consumption for the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30), encouraging local governments to enrich distinctive tourism products, such as summer cooling retreats or winter warm-weather getaways.

To balance cave tourism with ecological protection, Guizhou has introduced a new management plan for its karst caves, covering cave classification and filing, ecological red-line setting and full-chain supervision.

"Karst caves are non-renewable geological heritage. Proper resource management is the key to turning underground wonders into local benefits, and we must adhere to development within protection," says Zhang Zaijie, director of the green development strategy research institute at Guizhou University of Finance and Economics.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:45 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:45 PM

CULTURE






Left and center: Scenes from Hong Kong Ballet's *Romeo + Juliet*, which reinterprets Shakespeare's enduring romance within the bustling, cosmopolitan backdrop of 1960s Hong Kong.
Right: Ballet dancer Chun Wai Chan plays the role of Romeo and Hong Kong Ballet's principal dancer Ye Feifei plays Juliet. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

East meets West in HK's *Romeo + Juliet*

Ballet dancer Chun Wai Chan returns to China to play the lead role in Shakespeare's classic tragedy, **Chen Nan** reports.



The iconic love story finds new life in a vibrant 1960s Hong Kong setting, showcasing a fusion of ballet and martial arts.

Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* has been reconsidered and reassembled countless times since it first appeared in print. Its story captures universal truths that transcend time and place, while each new adaptation reveals another facet of this complex play, according to Septime Webre, choreographer and artistic director of Hong Kong Ballet.

The ballet's *Romeo + Juliet* takes that enduring tale and gives it a distinctly local identity, transporting the lovers from Renaissance Verona to the turbulent, cosmopolitan world of 1960s Hong Kong.

On Aug 29 and 30, the production will be staged at the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing and will also be performed in Chengdu, Sichuan province, on Sept 11 and 12.

In this version, Juliet is the daughter of a tycoon from Shanghai, whose ambitions extend beyond family tradition: he is determined to marry her to a wealthy man in pursuit of greater social advancement. Taipo (Tybalt in the original) is a powerful gang leader from Hong Kong's Kowloon City, who is having an affair with Juliet's mother, a beautiful but cold woman trapped in a loveless marriage.

Against this tangled web of family loyalty, social ambition and forbidden desire, Romeo and Juliet unexpectedly discover the consuming power of love. Their decision to be together becomes an act of defiance, setting them against the people and structures that seek to control their futures.

For Webre, relocating the story is not simply a change of scenery. It is a way of asking how Shakespeare's themes might resonate within another society and another moment in history.

Webre is an internationally recognized ballet director, choreographer, educator and advocate. He joined Hong Kong Ballet as its artistic director in July 2017 after 17 years as artistic director of The Washington Ballet in Washington DC, the United States. Previously, he also served as artistic director of the American Repertory Ballet, based in Princeton, New Jersey, for six years.

"When I first moved to Hong Kong, I knew I wanted to create a ballet that fused Hong Kong and the West. It became a way for me to get to know the city better, to explore its culture and build a world with a distinctly Hong Kong style," he says. "Then *Romeo + Juliet* came along, and the story seemed to lend itself so naturally to that idea. Everything came together very quickly."

The production's Hong Kong identity is reinforced through its visual language. Webre and his creative team drew inspiration from the city's influential cinema from the 1960s through the 1990s, particularly the energetic street scenes and stylized action of Hong Kong films. The stage becomes a bustling, vividly imagined cityscape, filled with neon signs, bamboo scaffolding, noisy Chinese restaurants and crowded markets.

In a rare encounter between kung fu and ballet, martial arts experts trained Hong Kong Ballet dancers extensively in combat and collaborated with Webre to design and choreograph the production's spine-tingling action scenes, infusing modern details into a classic tale of forbidden love.

The costumes similarly reflect Hong Kong's position between the East and the West. Elegant *qipao* (the traditional Chinese dress for women) appear alongside leather jackets, while bold patterns, vivid colors and striking accessories help define the personalities of the characters. The effect is neither a historical reconstruction nor a simple period piece, but a theatrical portrait of a city in transition.

Falling in love with Hong Kong's energy, Webre sees the production as something deeply personal. "This production is a love letter to Hong Kong," he says.

That sense of affection gives *Romeo + Juliet* an emotional dimension beyond its tragic central romance. Through Prokofiev's sweeping score, the physical vocabulary of martial arts and ballet, and the distinctive imagery of Hong Kong, Shakespeare's familiar story becomes a tribute to a city whose identity has long been shaped by encounters between cultures.

For ballet dancer Chun Wai Chan, the invitation to dance Romeo carries an equally personal resonance.

As a principal dancer of New York City Ballet — the first Chinese principal in the company's history — Chan has performed some of the world's most demanding classical roles. Yet when Hong Kong Ballet invited him to join *Romeo + Juliet*, his response was shaped by both artistic curiosity and the opportunity to return closer to home.

"I was very happy when I received the invitation," Chan recalls. He had already seen Hong Kong Ballet perform the production in New York and was immediately drawn to its distinctive interpretation. At the same time, he knew the role would be demanding. He had encountered challenging versions of *Romeo and Juliet* before and initially had to consider whether he could take on another demanding production amid his own international schedule.

Ultimately, the particular character of Hong Kong Ballet's production persuaded him. "I really love this version," he says, adding that the chance to perform it — and to return to his home region — made him excited to accept.

Born in Guangdong province, China, Chan trained at Guangzhou Arts School from 2004 to 2010. A finalist at the 2010 Prix de Lausanne, he earned a full scholarship to Houston Ballet's corps de ballet in 2012 and rising to principal dancer in 2017. Chan joined New York City Ballet as a soloist in August 2021 and was promoted to principal dancer in May 2022.

The significance of his homecoming is not lost on him. Chan has spent much of his professional life overseas and says he rarely gets the opportunity to perform at home. His appearance in Beijing is therefore especially meaningful, even as it comes after a demanding international schedule.

His relationship with Hong Kong Ballet goes back several years. He previously worked with the company in *The Nutcracker* in 2018 and *Swan Lake* in 2019. He remembers the dancers as talented, the repertoire as strong, and the audiences as exceptionally enthusiastic. This time, however, there is another milestone: performing at the National Centre for the Performing Arts, a venue he has never previously visited.

"I'm really looking forward to working together again," he says.

Chan has danced Romeo before, including with Houston Ballet, and will return to the role in other productions in the coming season. But the Romeo created for Hong Kong Ballet is markedly different.

This Romeo is something of a dreamer, Chan says — a young man living partly inside his own imagination, fond of books and romance and somewhat removed from the physical conflicts around him. He may not be naturally suited to fighting or fencing, but loyalty to his friends pushes him into situations beyond his comfort zone.

His romantic idealism also has a particular intensity.

"He is very devoted," Chan says, drawing a connection between Romeo's capacity for love and his own dedication to ballet. "I can really understand why he loves Juliet."

Perhaps the most immediately intriguing element for Chan was the production's incorporation of Chinese martial arts.

Among the details that first caught his attention were the stage design, mahjong scenes and, especially, the fight sequences in which kung fu is integrated into the choreography. The prospect of learning martial arts for the role genuinely excited him.

Chan had taken some kung fu classes before and grew up watching the films of Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan. As a Chinese dancer who has spent years working within a Western classical tradition, he says he enjoys opportunities to bring aspects of his own cultural background into his performances.

The physical language came relatively naturally. His familiarity with Chinese martial arts imagery gave him an instinctive sense of how the movements should look and feel, even as he worked to adapt them to the discipline and precision of ballet.

His partnership with Hong Kong Ballet principal dancer Ye Feifei, who plays Juliet, is another crucial part of the production.

Their collaboration began in an unexpected way. Ye and members of Hong Kong Ballet traveled to New York two months ago to rehearse with Chan, who was balancing a busy performance schedule. Despite having limited rehearsal time, he joined them and began learning the production's extensive movement material.

The collaboration has particular resonance because Chan and Ye previously worked together in *Swan Lake*. Much has changed since then.

"She has also matured over the years," Chan says. "She has now danced Hong Kong Ballet's *Romeo + Juliet* for six years and has developed an intimate understanding of Juliet that goes beyond technique."

Contact the writer at chennan@chinadaily.com.cn

Imagining the untold story of Zhao Zhuangji through a modern lens




Left: Chinese musical-theater actress Fiona Zhu rehearses for an original one-woman musical *Herstory in History* in London on Aug 3.
Right: Composer Johannes Grosz (left), actress Fiona Zhu (center), and co-director and co-writer Zhang Keyuan in discussion during the rehearsal for the musical. PHOTOS BY JADE CAO / XINHUA

LONDON — In a London rehearsal room, Chinese musical-theater actress Fiona Zhu donned a long, pale costume reminiscent of traditional Chinese opera, taking on the role of an ancient Chinese woman on stage.

The character is inspired by Zhao Zhuangji, a historical figure later associated with Princess Zhao in *The Orphan of Zhao*, one of China's best-known classical dramas.

But Zhu was interested in something beyond the familiar story of sacrifice, loyalty and revenge.

After years of playing different roles, she had noticed that women in historical and theatrical stories were often remembered as wives, mothers or daughters, while less was said about the individuals behind those identities.

Zhao Zhuangji offered one example. Even the name by which she is known today was tied partly to her husband Zhao Shuo and his clan, while her own personal given name has not been clearly preserved.

"Then where is her own name?" Zhu recalled wondering.

That question helped inspire *Herstory in History*, an original one-woman musical set to make its London debut in August before heading to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

The production brings Zhao Zhuangji together with a present-day actress, moving between a historical character and a modern performer trying to understand the different roles she has taken on in her own life.

Herstory in History does not attempt to retell *The Orphan of Zhao* in full or reconstruct Zhao Zhuangji's life as a historical biography, the production team says.

Instead, the creative team takes the gaps around the character as a starting point: what choices might she have faced, and what might be missed when a person is remembered mainly through a few familiar identities?

Zhu says the two women's lives are not meant to be directly compared. The connection lies instead in the experience of taking on identities shaped partly by circumstances and partly by the expectations of others.

Co-director and co-writer Zhang Keyuan says the production is not simply a new version of an old Chinese story, but an attempt to look more closely at the person behind a familiar character.

The same idea of moving between different worlds also shapes the music. German composer Johannes Grosz says his writing is rooted mainly in Western musical traditions. For the production, he worked with the Chinese team to bring traditional Chinese instruments and musical ideas into a chamber score.

One passage uses vocal phrasing inspired by China's Kunqu Opera, while Zhu also consulted performers trained in traditional Chinese opera on singing, costume and movement.

"There is no question of which one is better," Zhu says of the two musical traditions. "If you can bring them together well, it can become something very interesting."

The production is performed in Chinese with English captions. "If it comes from Chinese tradition, why must I use another language to tell it?" Zhu says.

For her, the production is one small attempt to bring Chinese stories and creative approaches into more direct exchange with audiences and theater-makers overseas.

XINHUA

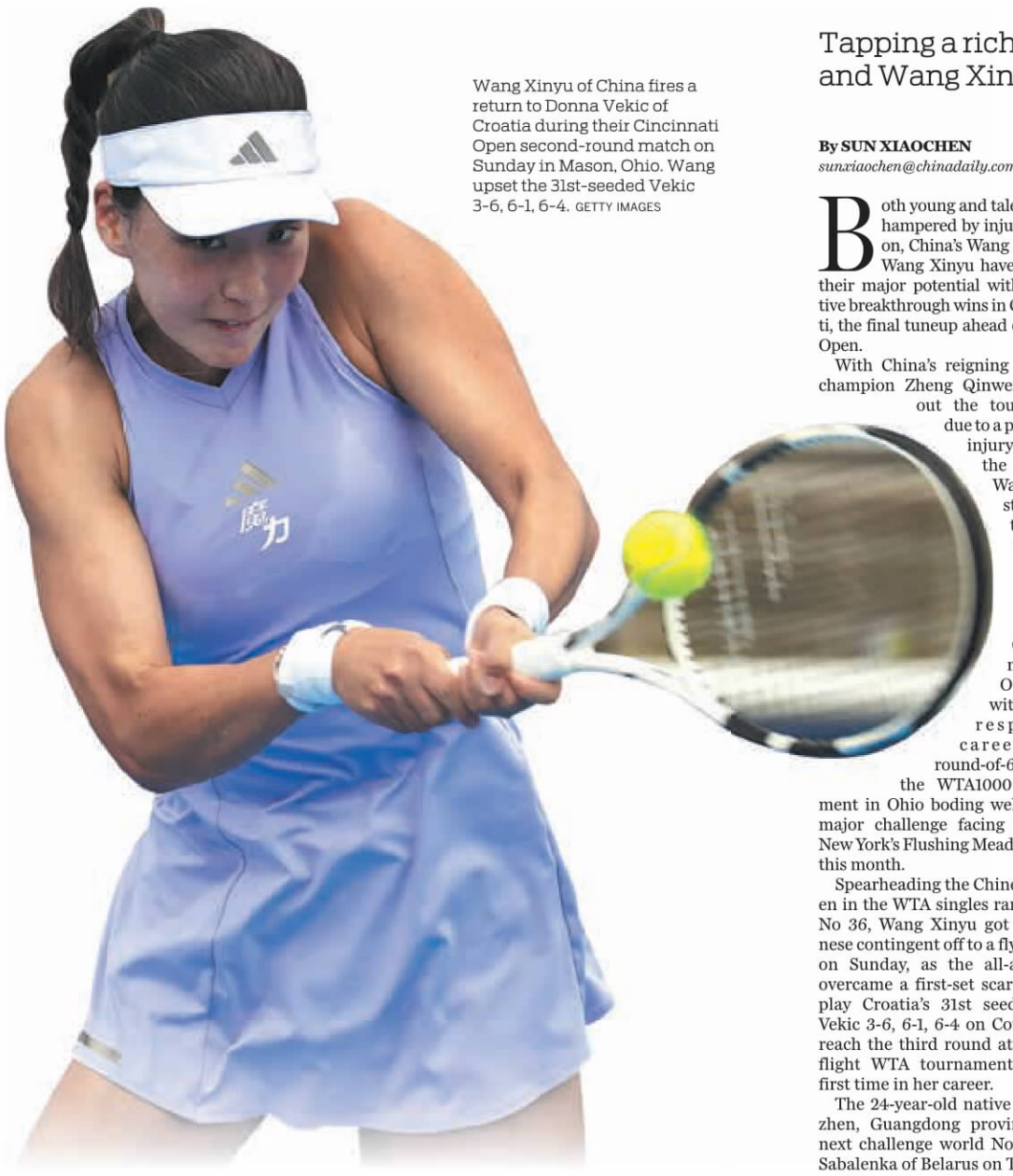
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:45 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:45 PM

SPORTS

TENNIS

YOUNG GUNS FLY THE FLAG IN CINCY



Wang Xinyu of China fires a return to Donna Vekic of Croatia during their Cincinnati Open second-round match on Sunday in Mason, Ohio. Wang upset the 31st-seeded Vekic 3-6, 6-1, 6-4. GETTY IMAGES

Tapping a rich vein of form ahead of the US Open, Wang Xiyu and Wang Xinyu enjoy breakthrough wins in Cincinnati

By **SUN XIAOCHEN**
sunxiaochen@chinadaily.com.cn

Both young and talented, yet hampered by injuries early on, China's Wang Xiyu and Wang Xinyu have justified their major potential with respective breakthrough wins in Cincinnati, the final tuneup ahead of the US Open.

With China's reigning Olympic champion Zheng Qinwen sitting out the tournament due to a prolonged injury layoff, the in-form Wangs have stepped in to represent the country strongly at this week's Cincinnati Open, with their respective career-first, round-of-64 wins at the WTA1000 tournament in Ohio boding well for the major challenge facing them in New York's Flushing Meadows later this month.

Spearheading the Chinese women in the WTA singles rankings at No 36, Wang Xinyu got the Chinese contingent off to a flying start on Sunday, as the all-arounder overcame a first-set scare to outplay Croatia's 31st seed Donna Vekic 3-6, 6-1, 6-4 on Court 10 to reach the third round at the top-flight WTA tournament for the first time in her career.

The 24-year-old native of Shenzhen, Guangdong province, will next challenge world No 1 Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus on Tuesday.

Riding Wang Xinyu's momentum, the 108th-ranked Wang Xiyu, who battled past two qualifying rounds to make it to the main draw, pulled off an identical comeback win on the same court as the hard-hitting left-hander upset Canada's No 30 seed Leylah Fernandez 3-6, 6-2, 6-2 in a gritty effort to also advance into the round of 32 for the first time.

Their resilient performances, particularly their impressive stamina in the scorching heat over three sets, have provided Chinese women's tennis a much-needed boost amid a testing season for ace Zheng, as lingering injury woes forced the former world No 4 to rest her surgically repaired right elbow ahead of the season's final major.

Wang Xinyu, who also had to pull through a series of injury setbacks early in her career, hailed Sunday's tough test as a perfect tune-up for her battle against the mighty Belarusian, and her sixth main-draw campaign in New York.

"It's so exciting that the draw has put me in front of her, because I've wanted to play her again since our previous meeting in Melbourne," Wang Xinyu said of coming up against four-time major winner Sabalenka, who beat her in three sets in the second round of the 2022 Australian Open.



Wang Xiyu in action against Leylah Fernandez of Canada during their Cincinnati Open second-round match on Sunday. GETTY IMAGES

> "I am always hoping to measure myself against the No 1, and I will, for sure, prepare to the best of my ability."
>
> **Wang Xinyu,** on playing Aryna Sabalenka in Cincinnati

"I am always hoping to measure myself against the No 1, and I will, for sure, prepare to the best of my ability and recover as quickly as I can after this tough match in the heat.

"As difficult as it was, particularly after I lost the first set and got broken first in the second, today's win gave me a lot of encouragement, because I managed to reset myself mentally when I was down and played better, game after game, from there."

Wang Xinyu has reached the round of 16 three times at the majors, her best Grand Slam singles result, while she achieved the highlight of her career in doubles by winning the 2023 French Open trophy alongside Hsieh Su-wei of Chinese Taipei.

"After some ups and downs, I feel like I've found some good form deep into the North American hard-court swing, and, hopefully, it won't be too late," Wang Xinyu said of her expectation for the US Open.

Rising to the elite level of the women's game earlier than her right-handed counterpart, Wang Xiyu, who became China's first girls' major champion at the 2018 US Open, had to wait longer than expected to translate her teen success onto the senior stage, also plagued by multiple physical issues, including right shoulder surgery in October that sidelined her for over half a year.

The 25-year-old former world No 49's improved fitness, and, more importantly, trust in her own body, helped unleash her powerful game facing the agile Fernandez on Sunday, successfully avenging her first-round defeat to the Canadian at the season-opening Hong Kong Open in January.

After struggling with the placement of her shots and dropping the first set, Wang Xiyu regrouped quickly to sharpen her baseline attack, dominating Fernandez with precise and thunderous strikes from both corners to stun the 2021 US Open finalist in a little over two hours.

It served as further encouragement, finding her prime form in time for the US Open, following a deep, round-of-16 run at Roland Garros in May.

"This was a hugely encouraging result for me," said Wang Xiyu, who won her only WTA singles title at the Guangzhou Open in 2023.

"Leylah is a strong opponent who stays consistently within the top 30. So, for me, I just tried to hang in there, be patient and go for every possible chance."

The hard-fought comeback underscores Wang Xiyu's growing adaptability on fast surfaces, a key asset for the upcoming US Open, as well as her improved mental fortitude, which in the past had been criticized by fans following some meltdown losses after falling a set behind.

"I am now just focusing on producing my best effort in every single game, set and match, and progressing one day at a time. Hopefully, I can carry it on," she said.

As well as the right-left singles combo of the two Wangs, Chinese veteran Zhang Shuai was also in action on Sunday, losing out in her singles second-round clash to United States' 28th-seed Ann Li in straight sets.

She'll now switch her focus to the doubles competition in Cincinnati, alongside compatriot Jiang Xinyu, as she looks to build on last Thursday's WTA1000 doubles triumph in Toronto with Katerina Siniakova of the Czech Republic.



Zhang Shuai (left) of China and Katerina Siniakova of the Czech Republic pose with the WTA Toronto Open doubles trophy on Aug 13. AFP

EQUESTRIAN

Hua Tian claims record Chinese finish at eventing worlds in Germany

AACHEN, Germany — Alex Hua Tian produced the best World Championship result by a Chinese rider with a 12th-place finish aboard Chicko at the FEI Eventing World Championships in Aachen, Germany, on Sunday.

Hua and the 16-year-old gelding finished on 37.3 penalties, improving significantly over the three disciplines after sitting 37th following the opening dressage competition.

The pair scored 32.5 penalties in dressage before climbing 15 places in the cross-country phase, completing the course without jumping penalties and adding only 4.8 time penalties.

A clear show jumping round on Sunday lifted Hua another 10 places to 12th overall.

"I've had a big grin on my face since about 3:30 this afternoon. I'm so, so happy," Hua told Xinhua while traveling back to Britain.

Hua credited Chicko and the team behind the pair for the result.

"I'm really thankful to the Willis family who own Chicko, to the Chinese Equestrian Association, and most of all I'm just so thankful and proud of my horse," he said.

Hua said Chicko's competitive temperament had been crucial to their success.

"He just knows his job, loves the sport and loves to compete. He has so much heart," Hua said. "To fly the flag for China on this international stage always makes the team and I very proud."

The Aachen result continued a strong summer for Hua and Chicko, who recently won a four-star event at Aston-le-Walls in Britain.

Hua also won a three-star short-format event aboard Manjushri, the horse he plans to ride at this year's Asian Games.

The 36-year-old will head to the Games seeking to defend the individual and team titles he won at Hangzhou 2023.



China's Alex Hua Tian, aboard Chicko, competes at the 2026 FEI World Championships in Aachen, Germany. FEI

"Winning individual and team gold at the Asian Games in Hangzhou in front of a home crowd felt like the right thing at the right time," Hua said. "I was under pressure to win gold there, so winning it was a huge relief."

Chicko will remain in Europe, with Hua instead planning to ride the younger Manjushri, owned by Yi Tianru. Cooley On Ice is his second choice.

"Manjushri is very exciting. His dressage is very strong, which is crucial at the Asian Games level," Hua said.

Manjushri is scheduled to enter quarantine in Aachen on Sept 4 before flying from Liege in Belgium to Tokyo on Sept 14.

"Flying a horse from Europe to Asia is a huge operation," Hua said. "Stable management and the horse's welfare and mental well-being are key. I hope to be as competitive as possible."

China is set to field a partly new eventing team at the Asian Games. Hua said Hangzhou teammate Sun Huadong will return alongside two younger riders.

"It's an exciting stage for Chinese equestrian sport," Hua said. "This will be a great opportunity for them to show their development and composure under pressure."

Beyond the Asian Games, Hua is targeting a fifth Olympic appearance at Los Angeles 2028.

He said individual qualification would become a key focus from 2027, while China would also assess its chances of securing a team place. Hua acknowledged that the team qualification route would be difficult, with Australia and New Zealand among China's regional rivals.

"But regardless, I will aim for individual qualification," he said.

Despite having competed at four World Championships/World Equestrian Games and four Olympic Games, Hua believes he can continue improving.

"I think my career is only just getting started, really," he said. "I now have a world-class team of horses and support network, allowing me to compete consistently at the highest level.

"I hope to continue progressing over the next few Olympic cycles."

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:45 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:48 PM

Priceless porcelain
Discoveries tell stories of Jingdezhen's ceramics
CULTURAL HERITAGE, PAGES 8-9



Shipbuilders see smooth sailing ahead
BUSINESS, PAGE 6



Pedaling glory
Champion cyclist Pogacar bags his fifth Tour de France title
SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 TUESDAY, JULY 28, 2026

WORLD WATCH
By Sunil Tirumalai

Wrong questions being asked about AI ecosystem

For much of the past three years, the global artificial intelligence story has been framed as a United States' one. OpenAI, Google and Anthropic have dominated headlines, while investors have poured money into the companies supplying the chips, memory and data centers needed to power the AI boom.

But a new question is beginning to emerge: What happens if Chinese AI models are better, and much cheaper?

The instinctive answer is that this must be bad news for the existing AI winners. Yet the reality may be more complicated.

Chinese AI models are increasingly finding users outside China. Their appeal is not that they are necessarily the smartest models in the world. Rather, they are often "good enough" for many everyday tasks while costing a fraction of the US alternatives. In some cases, usage costs are only 15-20 percent of comparable US models. At the same time, the performance gap between Chinese and US models continues to narrow.

This should not be surprising. Chinese developers have focused intensely on efficiency. Instead of pursuing the most capable model at any cost, many have prioritized delivering useful performance at the lowest possible price. They have embraced collaborative innovation, streamlined model designs and found ways to use computing resources more efficiently.

For consumers and businesses, this is unquestionably good news. Cheaper AI means more people can afford to use it. More companies can experiment with it. More applications become commercially viable.

What is perhaps underappreciated is that China's contribution to the global AI ecosystem extends beyond lower pricing. Chinese AI developers have helped broaden the industry's focus from a singular race for the most powerful model toward a more practical question: How can advanced AI be made accessible at scale? In many ways, this echoes China's role in other technology sectors, where innovation has often been driven by affordability, deployment speed and mass adoption rather than by pursuing the most premium product.

See ***Tech,*** *page 3*

Rescue at sea





Above: A Chinese helicopter transfers an injured person to a Vietnamese vessel on Monday. China rescued 47 of 62 crew members after a Vietnamese ship sank on Friday night while operating in unfavorable weather conditions in the South China Sea. The search for those still missing continues. WANG KE / FOR CHINA DAILY **Left:** A Vietnamese national is rescued on Saturday by personnel of a Chinese vessel in the South China Sea.
WEI CHONGLI / FOR CHINA DAILY
See story, page 14

CXMT shares soar after blockbuster IPO

By SHI JING in Shanghai
shijing@chinadaily.com.cn

China's largest memory chipmaker made a blockbuster debut on the Shanghai Stock Exchange's STAR Market on Monday as experts pointed to growing signs of a structural bull run in the A-share market.

In the Chinese mainland's biggest initial public stock offering in recent years, shares of ChangXin Memory Technologies, or CXMT, surged 465.82 percent to close at 49 yuan per share, propelling its market value to more than 3 trillion yuan ($443 billion) and making it the most valuable company on the A-share market on its first trading day. CXMT not only overtook the United States peer Intel in market value, but also dethroned the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China as the domestic market's top-weighted company.

The company raised at least $8.6 billion with the offering, priced at 8.66 yuan per share.

The feverish trading was underscored by a record-shattering 140-billion yuan single-day turnover, reflecting a strong investor appetite for high-tech domestic champions as China presses ahead with its push for technological self-reliance.

Wu Hao, a portfolio manager at Founder Fubon Fund, said that CXMT's IPO completes the most critical piece of a puzzle for the A-share market's memory sector. "It gives China its first homegrown DRAM powerhouse with global heft, sharpening the investment case across the memory value chain," he said.

From equipment and materials to design, manufacturing and packaging, the story of CXMT is now shifting from concept validation to earnings realization, he added.

DRAM, or dynamic random access memory, is the main type of memory that computers and servers use to run programs and process data in real time. With artificial intelligence-driven demand on the rise, the market is at the starting point of a new memory cycle in which the demand for memory chips will be substantially boosted given the rollout of more AI models and applications, said experts at Sinolink Securities.

Analysts at Huaxi Securities estimated that CXMT's market cap may stabilize at 2 to 3 trillion yuan in a base-case scenario, with upside to 4 trillion yuan under bullish assumptions.

But the real significance lies beyond the numbers. By filling the long-missing gap of a homegrown DRAM manufacturing heavyweight, the listing is set to upend the skewed valuation framework of the A-share memory segment and, in the long run, reshape the entire semiconductor sector's pricing logic, they said.

Donnie Teng, a semiconductor and tech research analyst at Nomura, gave CXMT a buy rating and a 116-yuan target, projecting its global DRAM market share to rise from about 10 percent at present to 18 percent by the end of 2028. CXMT's annual output growth is estimated at between 40 and 45 percent as AI will drive a seven-fold surge in global memory demand by 2030.

Lu Zhe, chief economist at Soochow Securities, said that A-share investors' appetite for tech companies may pick up after CXMT's IPO. Combined with the fact that a growing number of companies have recently announced their buyback plans, investors should adopt a more optimistic outlook on the A-share market. Though market volatility may be unavoidable, the odds of a market rebound are steadily rising, he said.

See ***Market,*** *page 3*

Xi highlights solidarity of Global South

President says China, Brazil can improve world governance, uphold intl justice

By MO JINGXI
mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping called for stronger strategic coordination between China and Brazil, and voiced support for the South American country in safeguarding its sovereignty and opposing external interference, during a phone conversation with Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on Monday.

Xi noted that positive progress had been made in recent years in building a China-Brazil community with a shared future and aligning the two countries' development strategies.

Such progress has supported the development of both countries, improved the well-being of their peoples and injected valuable stability into a volatile international landscape, Xi said during the call, which lasted more than an hour, according to the Brazilian media.

Noting that this year marks the 105th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China and the beginning of China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, while Brazil is entering a pivotal phase in its domestic political calendar, Xi said China stands ready to strengthen strategic coordination with Brazil at both bilateral and multilateral levels.

The two sides should sustain the sound momentum in building a China-Brazil community with a shared future, he said.

In the face of new circumstances and challenges, China and Brazil, both important members of the Global South, should stand on the right side of history and on the side of civilizational progress, Xi said.

He called on the two countries to play a greater constructive role in reforming and improving the global governance system and upholding international fairness and justice.

The two sides should also promote high-quality development of greater BRICS cooperation, chart the right course for cooperation, maintain the momentum of unity, deliver more outcomes and write a new chapter of solidarity and self-reliance for the Global South, Xi said.

China highly values Brazil's international standing and influence and supports the country in safeguarding its sovereignty and independence, opposing external interference and contributing to regional and global peace and stability, he added.

Lula said that Brazil and China had made positive progress in building a community with a shared future for a more just world and a more sustainable planet, with cooperation across various fields advancing rapidly.

He added that bilateral trade had reached a record high and that events held as part of the Brazil-China Cultural Year had further strengthened public support for the friendship between the two countries.

Lula said that Brazil looked forward to strengthening cooperation with China in areas including artificial intelligence, energy and mineral resources. He also welcomed greater investment by Chinese companies to diversify bilateral cooperation and deliver more tangible outcomes.

Brazil stands ready to strengthen multilateral coordination with China, uphold the authority of the United Nations, deepen solidarity and cooperation within BRICS, defend multilateralism and oppose power politics, said Lula.

He added that hot spot issues should be resolved through dialogue and consultation, and that the two countries should work together to uphold international fairness and justice as well as world peace and stability.

The phone conversation took place as Brazil faces growing external tariff pressure. China has said on many occasions that tariff wars serve no one's interests, and that it stands ready to work with all countries, including Brazil, to uphold the World Trade Organization-centered multilateral trading system and defend international fairness and justice.

Leonardo Trevisan, a Brazilian political scientist and professor of international relations at the Escola Superior de Propaganda e Marketing in Sao Paulo, Brazil, said in an interview with Xinhua that Brazil could mitigate the impact of the tariffs by diversifying its exports and opening new markets, including in China and the European Union.

Zhou Zhiwei, a Latin American studies expert at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said closer economic ties with China could provide Brazil with more options to diversify its markets and respond to protectionism.

Zhou said that the leaders' phone conversation highlighted the importance of closer China-Brazil coordination at a time of persistent geopolitical tensions.

REOPENED TOWER OFFERS SWEEPING VIEW OF BEIJING'S AXIS

Past and present converge in panoramic glory as ensemble of historical buildings celebrates two years on UNESCO list

By XU LIN
xulin@chinadaily.com.cn

Want to stand where Beijing's ancient past converges with the present in one breathtaking panorama? Zhengyangmen Gate is the perfect option.

From its heights, you get a sweeping bird's-eye view of the bustling and tourist-filled historical lanes of Qianmen Street to the south, while Tian'anmen Square, the National Museum of China and the Great Hall of the People unfold majestically to the north.

With the gate tower in the north and the archery tower in the south, Zhengyangmen Gate stood as the largest gate of the inner and outer cities of Beijing during the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties.

On Monday, to celebrate the second anniversary of the Beijing Central Axis being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, it was announced that the Zhengyangmen Gate tower, a pivotal landmark along the 7.8-kilometer-long Central Axis, has reopened to the public.

Tickets can be booked in advance online. They cost 20 yuan ($2.95) for adults. Children under 18 and seniors 60 and older are admitted for free.

Restoration of the gate tower, which had been closed for renovations since 2020, was completed at the end of 2025.

Heritage sites along the Beijing Central Axis, including the Palace Museum, the National Museum of China and the Temple of Heaven, were open to the public on Monday, though they are normally closed on Mondays.

In addition, a series of events, themed on the Beijing Central Axis and UNESCO's listing of "Beijing Central Axis: A Building Ensemble Exhibiting the Ideal Order of the Chinese Capital", will be held throughout the year.

See ***Gate,*** *page 3*



Zhengyangmen Gate in Beijing reopened to the public on Monday after six years of renovation. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



INSIDE
Barometer of economic transformation
Global Views, page 13

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved
Vol.8 — No. 1880
Newsstand prices:
US $1 Canada C$1; UK 1£ EU 1€
Kenya 50 Kenya Shilling
Asia Pacific: Thailand 120 thb; Philippines 120 php; Myanmar 2000 kyat; Japan 210 yen; Dubai 10 dirham; Pakistan 300 rupee

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:48 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:48 PM

INDEPTH

Courage, dignity heal scars of Tangshan quake

50 years after disaster, carers and survivors stand strong to face new challenges

By ZHENG JINRAN
in Tangshan, Hebei
zhengjinran@chinadaily.com.cn





Left: Paraplegic survivors of Tangshan earthquake follow medical workers to do exercises at the Tangshan Paraplegic Rehabilitation Center in Hebei province on July 13.
Right: Rehabilitation physician Zhao Lili (second from left) and a fellow worker help survivors with their arm therapy at the center on July 13.
PHOTOS BY WANG JING / CHINA DAILY



Tourists visit the Tangshan Earthquake Ruins Memorial Park on July 14. WANG JING / CHINA DAILY

Born in an emergency medical team's field tent just two hours after the devastating 1976 Tangshan earthquake struck, Yang Zhensheng's destiny was bound to the tragedy.

His parents named him Zhensheng — literally "born after the earthquake", and in 2001, he started work at the Tangshan Paraplegic Rehabilitation Center.

For a quarter of a century he has witnessed the courage and encouragement needed for the survivors to endure.

"When the rehabilitation center first opened, many residents had lost not only the use of their legs, but also the courage to live," said Yang, now director of the center.

"We soon realized that treating injuries alone was not enough," he said. "Before helping them recover physically, we had to help them regain the confidence to live."

The 7.8-magnitude earthquake that struck Tangshan, an industrial base in Hebei province, on July 28 at 3:42 am, claimed more than 240,000 lives, injured over 160,000 people, and left 3,817 survivors paralyzed.

As the survivors grow older, many are confronted with the combined challenges of disability and aging, posing a new test for the support system.

Gao Qingfeng, 69, is among the more than 130 paraplegic survivors of the Tangshan earthquake who still live at the rehabilitation center.

After being pulled from the rubble and sent to Beijing for treatment as a 19-year-old, he was told by the doctors that there was a chance he might walk again. He had faith, and took his physiotherapy seriously, but never walked again.

"The hardest time was right after the earthquake," Gao recalled. "I didn't even know what paraplegia was. I never imagined I would spend the rest of my life this way."

However, what eventually changed him was not a medical breakthrough.

"When I moved into the rehabilitation center in 1981 and saw so many people living the same life, I no longer felt I was facing it alone," he said. "We trained together, lived together and encouraged one another. Their companionship helped me gradually accept reality."

Sitting on his electric mobility tricycle during an afternoon rehabilitation session recently, he practiced shoulder and hand exercises alongside fellow residents under the guidance of therapists. It's a routine that has become part of his daily life in recent years.

During a visit to the rehabilitation center in July 2016, President Xi Jinping encouraged its residents by saying: "If people in sound physical condition can live fulfilling lives, people with disabilities can do so as well."

Authorities established a network of 18 specialized rehabilitation centers for paraplegic survivors across Tangshan. The Tangshan Paraplegic Rehabilitation Center, the largest one, has become the cornerstone of a long-term care system that has supported survivors for half a century.

Over the decades, Gao has learned to play the *zhongruan*, a lute-like traditional Chinese instrument, and joined the center's band, which once performed in Beijing alongside professional musicians. Today, music, Chinese chess, cards and reading the news fill much of his day. "Life goes on," Gao said quietly.

Beneath the shade of a tree inside the center, 77-year-old Yu Zhong sits chatting with three longtime companions.

Smiling, he said he had never imagined he would live for half a century. He has also learned to play the *zhongruan*.

His son visits every week, and both his son and grandson have served in the military — something he speaks of with quiet pride.

New person emerges

Li Dongmei remembers little about the day the earthquake struck.

She was 13 when the disaster left her a paraplegic. Li also suffered a brain trauma injury and did not regain consciousness until more than a month later.

In 1984, she learned about China's first National Games for Persons with Disabilities. "It was as if I suddenly saw hope again," she recalled.

She wrote down an aphorism that has stayed with her ever since: "If the earthquake reshaped me into another person, then I will stand in this world again as that new person."

Li trained for wheelchair racing by wearing gloves and wrapping black tape around the push rims of her racing wheelchair to improve her grip. Within days, both her hands were covered in blisters that later hardened into thick calluses.

Three years later, she earned a place on Hebei's team for the second National Games for Persons with Disabilities, launching a sporting career that spanned decades. "It was hard," she recalled. "But it was worth it for my dream."

Over the following decades, Li won dozens of medals in domestic and international competitions. More importantly, she said, the rehabilitation center gave her a new direction in life. "It was the place where my dream took root," she said.

Li said President Xi's encouragement during his visit to the center inspired her to keep striving. Two years later, at 55, she returned to competition and won three gold medals at the Hebei Provincial Games for Persons with Disabilities.

Now retired from competition, she spends much of her time learning sign language and Tangshan shadow carving, and helps promote local intangible cultural heritage.

"I may no longer compete," she said. "But I can still live my life in another way."

Growing old together

For some paraplegic survivors, rebuilding their lives meant family and companionship.

In 1991, Tangshan Rehabilitation Village was established as a barrier-free community for people with paraplegia. That same year, 10 couples held a collective wedding there. Among them were Zheng Weiqin and Yang Zhixi.

"We're just like anyone else," Zheng said. "We cook our own meals and take care of ourselves."

The duo divides the household chores much like any other couple. Yang rides his electric scooter to buy groceries and run errands, while Zheng cooks, cleans and tends the jasmine plants that have grown in their home for nearly two decades.

But as both have entered their 70s, their biggest challenge is no longer paraplegia, but aging.





Left: Li Dongmei talks to a staff member of the center on July 13. **Right:** Gao Qingfeng undergoes therapy under the guidance of Zhao Lili (left) and another physician at the center on July 13.

In recent years, Yang developed breathing problems and was later diagnosed with diabetes. Zheng began adjusting his meals, learning how to manage his diet and reminding him to take better care of himself. "I used to tell him," she said with a laugh. "Now he finally listens."

For many of these paraplegic survivors, growing old has brought a new reality. Alongside lifelong disabilities come diabetes, hypertension, respiratory illnesses and other chronic conditions that require long-term care.

Yet, leaving the rehabilitation center doesn't mean leaving its support behind.

On the morning of our visit, a team of doctors and nurses from the center came to Yang's home, accompanied him for a chest CT scan, then brought him home again. After reviewing the results, they later delivered his medication.

Zhao Lili, a rehabilitation physician, said many older residents delay seeking treatment because they do not want to burden others, or they have no family members able to accompany them. Even a routine examination may require several people to help transfer a wheelchair user onto an examination table.

"The biggest fear isn't illness," Zhao said. "It's wondering who will be there when you need help."

She has spent nearly three decades watching Tangshan's paraplegic survivors grow older.

"When I joined the center in 1998, rehabilitation was about helping them return to society," she said.

"Today, our focus is on managing the complications of long-term paraplegia and aging, so they can maintain the best possible quality of life."

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Those complications now include osteoporosis, shoulder injuries, urinary tract infections, pressure sores and declining cardiopulmonary function.

To address those changing needs, the center has introduced new rehabilitation equipment, including standing wheelchairs to slow physical decline and prevent complications.

"When they are able to stand again, even with the help of the device, you can see the change in their mood," Zhao said.

Protecting upper-body function is a priority.

After decades of relying on their arms for wheelchair mobility and daily transfers, many residents develop shoulder injuries and chronic pain, making it increasingly difficult to maintain their independence, she said.

Emotional well-being

As survivors have grown older, Zhao said, the challenge has become more than just medical.

"Many never married or had children. Others have watched their parents pass away and their siblings grow old, leaving fewer people able to care for them," she said.

As a result, questions that rarely arose decades ago have become increasingly common: Who will accompany them to hospital? Who will help transfer them onto an examination table? Who will look after them when they can no longer live independently?

For those requiring full-time care, the rehabilitation center provides dedicated nursing. Residents still living in Tangshan Rehabilitation Village receive additional support through home visits, long-term care insurance and continued assistance from the center.

Wang Yuanzhi said the rehabilitation center changed her understanding of what nursing meant.

Born the year after the earthquake, Wang grew up in a family marked by its scars. Her mother was seriously injured, and her older sisters did not survive. As a nursing student, she chose the center as her first job after graduating in 1996.

"I thought nursing was mainly about medical care," she said.

"But after I came here, I realized our job goes far beyond treatment. We care for their daily lives and, more importantly, their emotional well-being."

Many residents have become more like family than patients.

"They'll stop by after breakfast and ask, 'Do you want anything from the market?'" she said with a smile.

Nurse Liu Liyan said offering companionship has become an essential part of her work.

Every July, many survivors quietly remember the family members they lost in the earthquake. Listening, accompanying them and simply being there, she said, are just as important as medical care.

Promise kept

Yang, director of the center, said the institution represents a promise carried across generations.

"From the day it was established, it has embodied the Party and government's commitment to people affected by the disaster," he said.

"The survival of 3,817 people left paraplegic by the earthquake — and their ability to go on living meaningful lives — was itself extraordinary. That achievement did not come from one medical breakthrough. It came from a commitment that no one would be left behind."

The center sends medical staff to leading hospitals for advanced training every year, while specialist teams are invited to improve treatment for age-related complications, he added.

Tang Yandong, dean of the School of Emergency Technology and Management at the Institute of Disaster Prevention and vice-chair of the Earthquake Emergency Rescue Committee under the China Association for Disaster Prevention, said Tangshan's experience has broadened the understanding of what post-disaster recovery means.

"From the perspectives of sociology, psychology and emergency management, recovery is a long-term, systematic process that often lasts a lifetime," he said. "The most valuable experience is not what happened immediately after the earthquake, but what happened over the following decades."

Tangshan demonstrates the importance of sustained institutional support as survivors confront not only physical disabilities, but also the psychological, family and caregiving challenges that emerge with age, Tang said.

He said the experience has also helped shape China's approach to post-disaster recovery by shifting the focus from rebuilding infrastructure to improving survivors' long-term quality of life.

Having participated in a long-term study tracking the lives of Tangshan's paraplegic survivors and exchanging experience with rehabilitation specialists involved in the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake in Sichuan province, Zhao believes Tangshan's greatest contribution extends beyond early rehabilitation.

"The most valuable lesson from Tangshan is not the rehabilitation techniques developed in the years after the quake," she said. "It is understanding the physical, psychological, family and caregiving challenges that emerge decades later as survivors grow old."

She hopes the public will continue to see not only the resilience of Tangshan's survivors, but also the new challenges they face in old age.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:48 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:48 PM

TOP NEWS

Industrial profits ride on innovation

China's electronics sector key growth driver, momentum expected to continue in H2

By **ZHANG CHENXU** and **ZHOU LANXU**

China's industrial sector maintained robust growth momentum in the first half of 2026 despite strong external headwinds, which experts said indicates significant innovation-driven improvements in the world's second-largest economy.

The electronics sector has stood out as a major growth driver, with profits nearly doubling between January and June, they said, adding that resilient industrial output and the rapid expansion of new growth drivers are expected to maintain the momentum for solid returns in the second half of the year.

Data released on Monday by the National Bureau of Statistics showed that industrial enterprises with annual main business revenue of at least 20 million yuan ($2.9 million) reported combined profits of 3.95 trillion yuan in the first half, up 18.7 percent year-on-year. The growth rate is 3.2 percentage points higher than in the first quarter, and in June alone, industrial profits rose 15.1 percent year-on-year, it showed.

Lynn Song, chief economist for China at Dutch bank ING, said that profits have been on a recovery trend so far, buoyed by high-tech and export-oriented industries.

Tang Guanghua, an analyst at Shenyin & Wanguo Futures, a leading Chinese futures broker, said the recovery has been largely driven by surging demand for computing power, stemming from the rapid expansion of the artificial intelligence industry, with the electronics sector emerging as a key driver of overall industrial profit growth.

According to the NBS, profits in the electronics sector in the first half surged 96.9 percent year-on-year, contributing 8.5 percentage points to overall profit growth among major industrial firms. In the sector, profits in integrated circuit manufacturing soared 2,579.5 percent.

Speaking at a seminar in Beijing earlier this month, Yin Yanlin, deputy director of the Committee on Economic Affairs of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, China's top political advisory body, said the growing prominence of new growth drivers, together with a clear improvement in the quality and structure of the economy, represents one of the most significant shifts taking place in the country.

Looking ahead, Zhang Di, chief macroeconomic analyst at China Galaxy Securities, said that industrial profits are likely to be on an upward trajectory, with growth increasingly driven by higher output and improving demand.

"AI computing infrastructure, electronic information manufacturing and high-end equipment offer the clearest growth prospects, underpinned by expanding demand, rising output and continued technological upgrading," Zhang said.

Upbeat growth forecasts made by global financial institutions also reflect the improving sentiment.

Zhu Feng, chief China economist and head of Greater China Economic Research at JPMorgan, told China Daily that he expects the Chinese economy to grow around 4.6 percent this year and meet the official growth target. "High-tech and advanced manufacturing, AI-related exports, renewable energy and public investment would remain key sources of manufacturing resilience, while exports continue to support growth," Zhu added.

The rise of high-tech and advanced manufacturing is also yielding innovation dividends for multinational corporations.

"China's market not only absorbs innovation but accelerates it," said Rogier Janssens, president of Merck China, told China Daily.

Janssens highlighted that greater opportunities lie in industrial upgrading, as China's move toward higher-value-added manufacturing allows multinational companies to jointly develop solutions in the country that meet global standards.

That capacity for co-innovation underpins Germany-based science and technology giant's long-term confidence in China, where it has invested nearly 7 billion yuan over the past decade, Janssens added.

Experts cautioned that the recovery in industrial profits has yet to become broad-based. Profit gains remain concentrated in the high-end electronics value chain, while traditional midstream and downstream sectors are seeing only modest improvements, they said.

"Ensuring a smooth transition from old to new growth drivers is essential," said Yin, from the CPPCC National Committee, noting that new quality productive forces are becoming a core engine of growth.

Tang, from Shenyin & Wanguo Futures, said: "A more balanced recovery in industrial profits will depend on new growth drivers generating demand across more links in industrial chains. This will allow the gains to spread more widely."

Contact the writers at zhangchenxu@chinadaily.com.cn

Learning curve



Pedri (center), the FC Barcelona midfielder who helped Spain lift the 2026 FIFA World Cup, shares dribbling skills on Sunday with young Chinese soccer enthusiasts in Suzhou, Jiangsu province. This marks the 23-year-old Spanish player's first visit to China. Besides Suzhou, his itinerary includes trips to Beijing and Shanghai. YOU FANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

US warned over AI sanctions threat

By **ZHONG NAN** and **ZHANG CHENXU**

China called on the United States on Monday to stop politicizing technology and trade issues, after some US officials reportedly said they were considering investigating and sanctioning Chinese artificial intelligence companies over alleged model "distillation", according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Responding to the reported remarks, a ministry spokesperson said in a statement that China firmly opposes the US government using unfounded accusations to stigmatize and sanction Chinese companies, warning that China would take all necessary measures to safeguard its legitimate rights and interests against any actions substantially undermining its interests.

The spokesperson said that the US side has ignored the fact that Chinese AI models were released around the same time as leading US models, and that some Chinese models have already achieved world-leading capabilities in certain fields.

Calling the US approach a typical example of "AI hegemony", the spokesperson said the accusations lack factual and legal bases and reflect a double standard. Innovation is not the exclusive privilege of any one party, the spokesperson added, noting that Chinese AI companies have long invested in fundamental research while promoting both technological self-reliance and international cooperation.

Inside
Editorial, **page 11**

According to information released by the ministry, many US AI companies have used Chinese models for distillation during research and training. Nearly 200 US startups have urged the US government not to cut off access to Chinese open-source AI models, arguing that such restrictions would weaken the competitiveness of US companies.

Some US multinational companies have also described model distillation as a widely used industry practice and supported allowing US companies to use Chinese open-source AI models.

The spokesperson urged the US to heed the objective and rational voices of businesses in both countries, stop smearing and threatening Chinese companies, and strengthen dialogue and communication on AI.

In a separate statement released on Monday by the ministry, China also called on the US to revoke all relevant unilateral tariff measures and address bilateral trade concerns through dialogue and consultation, after Washington imposed an additional tariff of 12.5 percent on Chinese goods under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974.

"We will continue to closely monitor and fully assess any further steps by the US and reserve the right to take all necessary measures," said a ministry spokesperson.

China is willing to continue dialogue and consultations with the US on the basis of mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit to address concerns on both sides, the spokesperson said.

Beijing also hopes that Washington will work in the same direction, follow through on the consensus reached in bilateral economic and trade consultations, reduce outstanding issues and expand areas of cooperation, thereby making greater contributions to building a constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability, the spokesperson added.

Contact the writers at zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

Gate: Visitors struck by 'charm' of the capital

From page 1

"Zhengyangmen Gate offers a stunning panoramic view along the Central Axis. You can take many beautiful photos," said Yang Jun, 58, a Beijing-based photographer.

Wei Yong, a tour guide from Beijing with 12 years' experience, often leads tour groups up the Zhengyangmen archery tower, which was already open to the public, to share the history and restorations of Zhengyangmen Gate. He said he's confident that the newly reopened gate tower will draw many visitors.

"Tourists are interested in the culture and history of the Beijing Central Axis, struck by the charm of Beijing's hutong and the grandeur of the city's skyline," he said.

The gate tower now hosts a permanent exhibition showcasing more than 600 years of architectural heritage and the outstanding universal value of the Beijing Central Axis.

Exhibits include an original glazed, animal-shaped ornament from the gate tower's roof ridge, removed during its recent renovation, and a complete architectural model of Zhengyangmen Gate.

The model presents the full original layout and structural design of the gate tower, the archery tower and the barbican, an outer defense structure that no longer exists.

The two towers were originally connected by the barbican's walls. While the gate tower featured a central archway for people to pass through and also served as a command post, the archery tower was built for shooting arrows at attackers.

After suffering repeated damage throughout history, only the pavilion-style gate tower and the brick, fortress-like archery tower remain today. Both were reconstructed and finally completed in 1906.

The exhibition integrates various digital displays and a documentary on Zhengyangmen Gate's history, urban planning and preservation and restoration work.

Historical integrity

"The project has restored the tower's original interior spatial layout," said Chen Liang, director of the heritage conservation department at the Beijing Central Axis Heritage Protection Center. "Now visitors can experience the authenticity and historical integrity of the ancient architecture. It's the most compelling reason to visit the site."

Historically, bricks produced in Linqing, Shandong province, were shipped to Beijing via the Grand Canal to construct major buildings in the capital. For the renovations, Chen and his colleagues visited Linqing's traditional brickmaking sites to source custom-made bricks, in order to ensure that bricks used in the project met the original standards.

The Zhengyangmen Gate tower has also undergone comprehensive, three-dimensional digital scanning. "It's a great transformation, as we used to rely on historical paper drawings in renovation work," he said.

Chen added that all key construction steps, techniques, procedures and expert guidance throughout the process were digitally documented, to serve as references for future restoration work.

During the renovation, roof work was carefully scheduled to avoid disturbing Beijing swifts during the birds' peak hatching and brooding period. From April to July each year, the migratory birds return to Beijing to breed and roost, and the tower is one of their major habitats.

Remembering history



Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel (second from left) attends a ceremony on Sunday in Pinar del Rio to mark the 73rd anniversary of Cuba's National Rebellion Day. The holiday honors the 1953 attack on the Moncada Barracks, a spark for the Cuban Revolution led by Fidel Castro. YAMIL LAGE / AFP

Market: Financial anti-graft drive entering deeper phase

From page 1

In a separate development, Fang Xinghai, former vice-chairman of the China Securities Regulatory Commission, is under investigation for suspected serious violations of Party discipline and the law, China's top anti-graft authorities said on Friday.

Experts broadly read the move as a signal that the financial anti-corruption drive is entering a deeper phase, aimed at protecting the country's financial assets while upholding market integrity and stability.

Lian Ping, chairman of the China Chief Economist Forum, said that a new long-term stabilizing mechanism is taking shape in the Chinese capital market, featuring broader participation, early capital entry, institutional fine-tuning and long-term confidence stabilization.

The A-share market has entered a structural bull run with the optimizing of the market governance mechanism. With more supportive policies and capital anticipated, investors should have faith in the A-share market, as the valuation of technology companies will return to a reasonable level, said Lian.

"New quality productive forces and technological innovation, which play pivotal roles in China's economic restructuring, need the empowerment of equity financing. This is the fundamental reason underpinning the sustained upward trajectory of the A-share market over the long run," he said.

Zhou Lanxu contributed to this story.

Tech: Chinese models offer more choices

From page 1

As Chinese models become increasingly capable, they are expanding the range of choices available to enterprises and developers around the world. Greater competition tends to accelerate innovation, encourage cost discipline and reduce barriers to adoption. From a global perspective, the emergence of multiple centers of AI innovation will be healthier than a market dominated by only a handful of providers. A broader and more inclusive ecosystem means technological progress can reach businesses, consumers and emerging economies more quickly than would otherwise have been possible.

The more interesting question is what it means for the rest of the technology ecosystem.

Many investors assume that if AI becomes cheaper and more efficient, demand for the underlying hardware must fall. After all, if each AI query requires fewer computing resources, shouldn't fewer chips be needed?

History suggests otherwise.

When technologies become more efficient, people often use them more, not less. Think about mobile data. As networks evolved from 2G to 3G, 4G and now 5G, the cost of transmitting data collapsed. Yet total data usage exploded because people discovered entirely new ways to use the technology — streaming music, video, gaming and social media.

AI may follow a similar path.

The critical equation is simple: Total memory demand depends on how much memory each AI task requires, multiplied by how many AI tasks people perform. The first number will almost certainly fall as models become more efficient. The uncertainty lies in the second number. If cheaper AI leads to dramatically more usage, total demand for underlying infrastructure could continue rising despite greater efficiency.

Important distinction

There is another important distinction that is often missed.

Many of the Chinese models gaining attention globally are open-weight models. Put simply, they can be downloaded and run by others rather than being controlled exclusively by the company that created them. If these models become successful in the US or Europe, they will still need computing infrastructure to serve users. The data centers running them are likely to be located close to customers, not in China. As a result, the success of Chinese AI models does not automatically imply weaker demand for data centers, memory chips or cloud infrastructure.

Finally, it is necessary to avoid conflating two separate debates: Chinese AI and Chinese semiconductors.

China's progress in AI software does not automatically mean Chinese-made chips will dominate Western data centers. Those markets remain heavily influenced by geopolitics, supply chains and export restrictions. The more relevant question may be whether Chinese chipmakers can gain ground in traditional electronics markets as regional suppliers increasingly focus on the lucrative demand created by AI.

In other words, the rise of Chinese AI should not be viewed simply as a challenge to today's winners. It may instead reshape where value is created and who captures it. The biggest opportunities — and implications — are likely to emerge not from the technology itself, but from the second-order effects that follow.

The author is the head of EM and Asia equity strategy at UBS. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:48 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:48 PM

WORLD

Chinese envoy urges ceasefire, dialogue to end Ukraine crisis

By **MINLU ZHANG**
at the United Nations
minluzhang@chinadailyusa.com

A Chinese envoy to the United Nations on Monday called for an early ceasefire and an end to hostilities in Ukraine, urging all parties concerned to pursue a political settlement through dialogue and negotiation.

Sun Lei, charge d'affaires of China's Permanent Mission to the UN, told a UN Security Council meeting that the continued escalation of the conflict would only inflict greater suffering on civilians and further damage civilian infrastructure.

"The latest developments have once again shown that there are no winners in conflict and confrontation," Sun said, adding that an early ceasefire serves the fundamental and long-term interests of the parties concerned and meets the shared expectations of the international community.

"China urges an end to all attacks against civilians and calls on the parties concerned to remain calm and exercise restraint, strictly comply with international humanitarian law, protect civilians and civilian infrastructure, make every effort to de-escalate the situation, and preserve hope for the early restoration of peace," Sun said.

Russia's Defence Ministry said last week that Russian forces had struck three Ukrainian ports, including fuel loading and storage facilities at the port of Odesa that it said were used to support the Ukrainian military.

Kayoko Gotoh, director of the Europe and Central Asia Division of the UN Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations, said that more than 170 civilians had reportedly been killed across Ukraine in aerial attacks by Russian forces since the Security Council's July 9 meeting.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova on Monday said Russia was open to considering new ideas and proposals related to the Ukraine peace process.

"We again confirm our readiness for possible discussions, proposals, ideas, which we will be ready to consider. No one here has ever refused this," said Zakharova, according to Russian outlet Interfax.

At a news conference on Monday, Zakharova said Kiev's attacks targeting Russian civilians killed 86 people between July 15 and 24.

"Between July 15 and 24, 86 people were killed in attacks carried out by Ukrainian forces, including six children; 409 others were wounded, among them 12 children," she said.

The West is actively abetting Kiev's attacks on civilians, including children, through arms supplies, the spokeswoman told reporters.

Russian strikes on front-line localities in eastern Ukraine killed seven people and injured more than 20 on Monday, officials said, according to a Reuters report.

At the UN Security Council meeting, Sun stressed the need to pursue common security, noting that Russia, Ukraine and other European countries are neighbors that cannot move away from one another.

Sun said "dialogue and negotiation remain the only viable way to resolve the crisis", despite the wide differences among the parties and the difficulties facing the peace process.

"As long as the parties begin talks and remain committed to them, there is hope for peace," Sun said, calling on relevant parties to demonstrate political will, build mutual trust and work toward a comprehensive, lasting and binding peace agreement.

Sun said China urged all parties to abandon "Cold War thinking and bloc confrontation", address each other's legitimate security concerns, eliminate the root causes of the crisis on the basis of full compliance with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, promote the establishment of a balanced, effective, and sustainable regional security architecture, and achieve lasting peace and stability in the region.

The envoy reiterated that China's position on the Ukraine issue has remained consistent. China supports all efforts conducive to a peaceful settlement and will continue to play a constructive role in promoting a political resolution of the crisis, he said.

Growing needs



Palestinian children wait to receive food distributed by a charity kitchen at the Maghazi refugee camp in central Gaza on Sunday. Meanwhile, an Israeli airstrike in Deir al-Balah killed two Hamas security officials that same day, local authorities said. EYAD BABA / AFP

Snowed in



Police officers clear snow from the roof of a police station in Puente del Inca, Mendoza Province, Argentina, on Sunday. More snowfall is forecast in the Andes in the coming days, forcing the closure of the highway linking Argentina and Chile and leaving dozens of trucks stranded, local authorities said. ANDRES LARROVERE / AFP

US companies push back on plan to ban open AI models

Tech coalition warns against 'premature' restrictions as Beijing criticizes smearing

By **LIA ZHU** in San Francisco
liazhu@chinadailyusa.com

A coalition of 25 US companies, including Nvidia, is urging the White House not to impose broad restrictions on open-weight AI models as Washington weighs its response to Chinese AI systems on "national security" grounds.

In an open letter released on Friday, the group warned against "premature restrictions" on open-weight models, drawing parallels with fears over open-source software in the 1980s.

It argued that AI leadership will be determined not by a single frontier model, but by the ability to build "a strong, open ecosystem that diffuses into every sector".

The signatories described open-weight models — whose core components can be downloaded, inspected, modified and run on independent infrastructure — as an important foundation because they widen access to advanced AI and make it more adaptable.

In his first-ever post on X, Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang shared the letter and wrote: "AI will transform every industry, power every company, and be built by every country. Open models strengthen safety and cybersecurity, accelerate innovation and diffusion, and enable sovereignty."

The world needs both frontier closed models and frontier open models, he added.

Although the letter does not mention China directly, it comes as Washington debates how to respond to allegations that Chinese AI labs have been extracting intellectual property from United States competitors while rapidly closing the capability gap.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said on Wednesday that sanctions on Chinese AI companies remain under consideration. His remark followed accusations by White House science and technology policy chief Michael Kratsios that Chinese startup Moonshot AI had distilled the Fable model developed by US firm Anthropic.

Distillation is a process in which an AI model is trained to mimic the output of a larger, more capable one.

On Monday, Beijing urged Washington to stop smearing Chinese AI companies and threatening them with sanctions, saying such actions lack factual and legal grounds and constitute a typical form of AI hegemony.

"China will take all necessary measures to firmly safeguard its legitimate and lawful rights and interests," the Commerce Ministry said in a statement.

Moonshot AI unveiled its latest open model, Kimi K3, on July 16. With 2.8 trillion parameters, it is reportedly the largest open-weight AI system by that measure and is said to approach the performance of Anthropic's Claude and OpenAI's ChatGPT.

Some researchers have questioned whether Kimi K3 could have been built primarily through distillation from Fable, which has been publicly available only since July 1.

> "In fact, openness may be one of the most important paths to AI safety and security."
>
> An open letter signed by 25 US companies, including Nvidia

Braden Hancock, a researcher at the Laude Institute and cofounder of Snorkel AI, told online newspaper TechCrunch that there was simply not enough time to distill that volume of data, train a model and release it within two weeks.

Nathan Lambert, an AI researcher at the Allen Institute for AI, said in a podcast released on Wednesday that Washington's consideration of restrictions on top Chinese open-weight models is "downstream of some fear-mongering".

As Chinese models near the frontier and shift their training toward reinforcement learning, distillation is becoming less consequential, he said.

The letter addressed the distillation debate, describing the practice as a long-standing method for improving, evaluating and validating AI models, rooted in the open-source software tradition of building on existing technology.

While illegally extracting value from closed models is a legitimate concern, it should be addressed through targeted legal and commercial frameworks rather than broad restrictions on the techniques, the letter said.

"Banning Chinese open models is as good as banning open models in general," Replit CEO Amjad Masad, whose company also signed the letter, told TechCrunch.

Masad said Thinking Machines Lab's new open model, Inkling, was trained with the help of Moonshot's Kimi 2.5. "It's an ecosystem, and the precedent (a ban would) set is bad," he said.

The letter also challenged the notion that open-weight models are inherently dangerous because they widen access to powerful systems that could be misused in cyberattacks.

"In fact, openness may be one of the most important paths to AI safety and security," it said. "Relying solely on closed models is not inherently safe: they can be breached, misused, or fail in ways that outsiders cannot detect."

Clement Delangue, CEO of Hugging Face, described the cybersecurity debate on open-source AI as "backward".

In an X post on July 20, he wrote, "Open models aren't the risk, they're the defense," referring to a case in which Chinese AI company Z.ai's open model helped where leading frontier models had failed.

The letter reflects a divide within the US AI sector. Closed-model developers Anthropic and OpenAI have pressed the administration to restrict Chinese open-weight models as their business models are increasingly challenged by cost-effective, high-performing and widely accessible alternatives.

Chip stocks slide on report of China's homegrown DUV lithography breakthrough

By **CHANG JUN** in San Francisco
junechang@chinadailyusa.com

US semiconductor shares fell on Monday after a report said a Chinese company had begun producing domestically developed immersion DUV (deep ultraviolet) lithography machines, a type of chipmaking equipment that has long been supplied by a small number of foreign manufacturers.

According to industry reports from The Information, a Shanghai-based enterprise has started large-scale production of immersion DUV lithography tools, which is historically dominated by just a handful of foreign suppliers.

The latest sign that China's drive for self-sufficiency in chipmaking equipment is bearing fruit, the news triggered an immediate reversal in sentiment on Wall Street.

The Philadelphia Semiconductor Index gave up its early gains to fall sharply, while shares of Dutch lithography giant ASML Holding, the world's dominant supplier of advanced chipmaking equipment, dropped by more than 7 percent.

US equipment makers Applied Materials, Lam Research and KLA Corp were dragged down alongside it. Chipmakers Advanced Micro Devices and Micron Technology also declined by roughly 7 and 5 percent respectively.

Frank Shi, a Connecticut-based tech industry observer and investor, said the development underscores China's progress toward greater self-reliance in semiconductor technology despite years of US-led export restrictions.

"Every time America sets restrictions on tech and equipment exports to China, China works out its own solutions," Shi told China Daily.

The breakthrough arrives just as the US Congress advances the MATCH Act, bipartisan legislation introduced in April aimed at banning the sale and servicing of DUV immersion lithography machines to Chinese chipmakers.

As early as 2019, the United States and its allies have sought to constrain China's semiconductor industry by cutting off access to extreme ultraviolet (EUV) lithography machines, which are essential for making the most advanced logic chips, and which only ASML produces. The US also placed Huawei on the Entity List, banning its access to US semiconductor products and technology.

"Now that Chinese manufacturers can build alternatives domestically, China's dependence on foreign supplies and technology will reduce dramatically," Shi added. "The US restrictive measures may carry far less weight than intended."

Over the years, Chinese firms built up a substantial stockpile of older-generation DUV tools before the tightest controls took hold, said Larry, a Wall Street tech sector trader who asked to be quoted using only his first name.

"The emergence of a domestically produced DUV alternative marks a further step toward closing the gap (between China and the US)," he said.

Analyst Alina Maria Stan of The Next Web noted that Western export controls may have backfired by giving China an urgent reason to accelerate domestic research and build alternative tools faster, and the sell-off on Wall Street reflects a fear of total equipment replacement in China.

Monday's sell-off is best understood not as an isolated shock but as the latest data point in a broader trend that has unsettled US markets repeatedly this year. In early July, a wave of chip-stock selling was triggered after Chinese startup Moonshot AI unveiled its Kimi K3 model, which cast doubt on assumptions about Silicon Valley's lead in artificial intelligence.

China is simultaneously challenging US leadership across multiple segments of the AI industry, Larry said.

On the hardware side, he said Huawei's Ascend AI chips are emerging as a domestic alternative to Nvidia's products, while memory chipmakers CXMT and YMTC are increasing competitive pressure on US companies such as Micron and Sandisk.

On the AI model front, he said open-source Chinese models including Kimi, Qwen and DeepSeek are increasingly challenging closed-source models developed by OpenAI and Anthropic.

Larry cautioned that the most advanced EUV lithography technology remains out of reach for China, noting that ASML continues to hold a monopoly in the field.

Engineers on X and tech forums stress that building a machine is only half the battle; integrating and qualifying domestic tools onto active production lines at SMIC, Hua Hong, or CXMT without severe yield penalties, the percentage of chips on a wafer that come out functional and defect-free after production, takes years.

"However, I'm optimistic that China will close the gap in the long run, tool by tool," said Larry.

Agencies contributed to this story.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:48 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:48 PM

Finding peace in Quzhou's countryside

City in Zhejiang province transforms unused village spaces into serene and blissful retreats

By YUAN SHENGGAO

As cultural tourists increasingly seek emotional fulfillment and spiritual well-being, Quzhou in Zhejiang province has launched its "wellness courtyards" initiative. The project aims to meet growing demand among urban residents for mental healing and temporary retreats from a hectic urban life.

Nestled at the source of the Qiantang River, the city of Quzhou boasts pristine natural landscapes, tranquil surroundings and abundant rural spaces. In recent years, numerous small yet charming courtyards have emerged along the local scenic belt. Villages with clusters of these wellness courtyards have seen a significant rise in their cultural tourism appeal.

Scenic area

Xidong, a natural village administered by Changfeng village in Hejia township, Changshan county, was once so isolated that its only access road was not built until the 1990s. Today, it has been transformed into a vibrant fairy-tale village. Viewed from the mountain top, a stream curves naturally through the landscape, forming a crescent-shaped bay. Fences along both sides of the road are painted in rainbow colors, while four local agricultural specialties — chili peppers, green soybeans, bamboo shoots and tea — are depicted as adorable cartoon figures. Such ingenious decorations fill every corner, turning the village into a fairyland.

"The moment I first set foot here, I was instantly captivated," said Shi Lei, a manager of the Xidong village operation team. To him, it evoked the poetic experience of following a winding path into a secluded place before suddenly emerging into a bright, open landscape. In his view, the village's charm lies not only in its vivid colors but in its dreamy, serene way of life, one reminiscent of an idyllic paradise far removed from the mundane world.

To materialize this vision of spiritual healing, operators carried out extensive renovations. A dedicated parking lot was built outside the village, with shuttle buses transporting visitors into the hamlet to preserve its tranquility. Abandoned rural houses were renovated into cozy homestays with a wide range of pricing options to suit all budgets. Additionally, the village features a diverse array of amenities, including handicraft workshops, study tour halls, a sandy beach, a Ferris wheel and farm restaurants serving dishes made with local river produce.

A close look at these business formats reveals no large-scale demolition or reconstruction. Most of the upgrades consisted of subtle improvements rooted in the village's distinctive rural characteristics, creating spaces suitable for both quiet reflection and social interaction. According to Wan Zhizheng, deputy director of the Quzhou bureau of agriculture and rural affairs, the city had systematically identified and revitalized 85,000 square meters of unused farmhouses, neglected courtyards and public spaces along the scenic belt as of May. These spaces have been given new uses, including healing workshops and immersive exhibitions, resulting in the creation of 103 wellness courtyards.

Cultivating talent

Behind every wellness courtyard is a passionate operator with a unique personal story. This achievement stems from Quzhou's campaign to make young people return to the countryside. To date, the city has attracted 209 returning young entrepreneurs, 27 design curators and 16 professional operating teams to settle in. Through their creativity and enthusiasm, they have given each courtyard its own distinctive character and emotional appeal.

In Xitan natural village, part of Fushi subdistrict in Qujiang district, Jiang Yanfang has become a household name. A media graduate, she rented a courtyard in the village and opened Tianye Garden, which quickly gained popularity after she promoted it on short-video platforms.

"When I first arrived and pushed open the courtyard gate, all I saw was overgrown wasteland — yet I instantly pictured a flourishing garden in my mind," Jiang said.

Construction on the garden began in April 2025. Jiang personally oversaw every detail, from designing the overall layout and supervising construction to selecting refractory bricks for a wood-fired bread oven and coordinating the color of each paving stone. To create an authentic French pastoral atmosphere, she studied the growing requirements of more than 100 varieties of flowers. Although finishing touches are still being added, the once-deserted courtyard has been transformed into a multifunctional complex offering wood-fired bread, a village cafe and aromatherapy handcrafts.

Inspired by pioneers such as Jiang, more than 60 young innovators have now established more than 20 new businesses in Xitan, filling the village with vitality.

When asked about the benefit-sharing arrangements behind the wellness courtyards, nearly all the operators gave the same answer: their goal is not simply to make a profit, but to deeply integrate village collectives and local residents into the industry's value chain. Only through collective prosperity and mutual dedication can emotional value maintain sustainability.

Quzhou has also placed emphasis on boosting farmers' capacity for independent development, enabling them to transition from simple manual laborers to capable operators with management expertise. Jiang was among the first group of participants in the city's training programs. She now works as an entrepreneurship mentor, regularly sharing experience and practical advice with fellow villagers.



Above: A former sheep shed in Lulikeng village, Changshan county, Quzhou, has been converted into a cafe where visitors can sip coffee and pet sheep. XU HANG / FOR CHINA DAILY
Left: Outdoor artworks, such as this doorframe decorated with flowers, are popular photo spots among tourists visiting Quzhou's villages. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Tea farmers pick leaves in Huangdu village, Anji county, Zhejiang province on March 26. PAN XUEKANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Anji builds fresh tourism experiences around tea

By YUAN SHENGGAO

As consumption upgrades reshape rural cultural tourism, developers are shifting their focus from capital-intensive projects to reviving underused local assets through small, targeted improvements. In Anji county, Huzhou, Zhejiang province, local operators are developing low-investment, tea-themed cultural tourism businesses centering on the region's signature Anji White Tea.

Anji, where the philosophy that "lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets" originated, is using its signature tea agricultural industry to integrate tea farming and tourism in a mutually reinforcing cycle.

In Huangdu village, Xilong township, Ding Chuxiao, founder of Beibei creative studio, returned from Hangzhou to launch her business in 2024.

She renovated disused dormitories that once housed tea pickers into a multifunctional venue combining tea service, cultural merchandise and immersive tea experiences. The venue has since attracted a steady stream of customers.

"My family owns more than 6.7 hectares of tea plantations. Previously, my parents relied solely on bulk wholesale. Fierce market competition has made this model unsustainable; building a distinctive brand and cross-industry integration are now essential," Ding said.

Over the past few years, she has introduced a wide range of new products, including mini-sized tea packs, gift sets aimed at younger consumers, and fashionable blends of tea, coffee and fruit. Although the business's overall revenue remains modest after it opened, Ding can sell her tea at prices 30 percent higher than wholesale rates. She has also built a loyal customer base, which she considers a source of great pride.

Another low-investment tea venue is Zai'an Teahouse at the foot of Fenghuang Mountain in Changshuo subdistrict. Its operator, Chen Zhe, an Anji native who returned from Shanghai, transformed an unused property into an open-air teahouse.

"Traditional teahouses relied on private booths, where guests would put aside bags and coats while smoking and chatting. Young people crave open, Starbucks-style spaces for work, casual talks and socializing," Chen said. Although Chen does not consider himself a tea connoisseur, he understands the laid-back, lively atmosphere sought by younger consumers. During the Spring Festival holiday, he set up an outdoor stall in Yucun village of Anji, serving large bowls of tea. Each pot, enough for four to five people, was priced at 9.9 yuan ($1.46). The stall attracted thousands of visitors.

Over more than four decades, Anji White Tea industry has grown from a single ancient mother bush to more than 14,000 hectares of plantations across the county. It has formed a complete industry chain worth more than 7 billion yuan, providing employment for more than 300,000 local people. To date, more than 51,000 young college graduates have come to Anji to seek jobs or start businesses.

According to Liu Bin, head of Anji bureau of agriculture and rural affairs, popular tourism businesses do not need to be grand or lavish, and operators should not blindly imitate attractions that have gone viral online. Small, carefully designed ventures created with limited funds can distinguish themselves through subtle, refined renovations and strong connections to local culture, giving them lasting vitality and appeal. These innovative experiences are helping younger generations reconnect with the timeless flavor of Anji White Tea.

At the seventh China Tea Industry and Cultural Tourism Conference held in Anji in March, the local government revealed its official list of 10 representative Anji White Tea valleys. The initiative is intended to highlight the cultural heritage and broaden the range of ways in which visitors can experience and consume the tea brand.

Pushing forward eco-friendly low-carbon tea plantations across the county, Anji has also built a series of "Anji White Tea lounges" integrating sightseeing, cultural exhibitions, wellness retreats and intangible cultural heritage experiences. They connect key destinations — including tea plantations, homestays, study tour centers and cultural and creative spaces — to form an integrated tourism network.

Digital technology helps accelerate agricultural innovation in Hangzhou

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Penggong digital farm in Shilai village, Pingyao town, Yuhang district has become one of Hangzhou's most popular new visitor destinations.

Vast stretches of rice paddies extend across the farm, where agricultural products including blueberries, strawberries, tomatoes and leafy greens are grown and harvested according to the seasons.

Dong Jianfeng, a self-described "half coder", leads a team whose members have an average age of 28 in revolutionizing agricultural production. Robotic dogs patrol the fields, soil sensors automatically activate smart irrigation systems, and an artificial intelligence system is used to diagnose crop diseases and pest infestations.

In just two years, the team has built a "future farm" and exported this operating model to more than 10 agricultural bases nationwide.

For young newcomers with zero farming experience to become successful growers, they must rely on another core product generated by the farm: agricultural data.

"Experience-based farming relying solely on manual labor can no longer meet the demands of modern agricultural production. For instance, when to fertilize, what type of fertilizer to apply and in what quantity, as well as the optimal temperature and humidity for fruit growth — all these factors need to be quantified into data," Dong said.

As a technology specialist by profession, Dong left Zhijiang Laboratory in 2019 and set himself a goal: to build an agricultural sector where young people would be willing to pursue lifelong careers.

Under the farm's data-driven agricultural decision-making system, a suite of self-developed software tools works alongside equipment such as integrated water and fertilizer supply units, meteorological sensors and automated greenhouse facilities. As it carries out agricultural production, the farm also generates and models large volumes of data.

Frontline workers collect and submit information during their daily farming activities. Processed by agricultural data models covering plant growth, farm management and finance, the data automatically generate analytical reports. These reports enable quantitative monitoring and precise traceability throughout production, facilitate water and fertilizer management and targeted plant protection, and make decisions for future farming activities.

For a long time, the exodus of young people to cities has plagued many rural areas. Yuhang district is striving to break this cycle by offering all-in-one, full-cycle services for rural talents covering settlement, career growth and long-term development.

Early summer marks the beginning of the blueberry harvest. Inside the berry-processing workshop at the farm, more than 10 local stay-at-home mothers sort and package fresh fruit along an orderly production line.

Blueberries have an extremely short shelf life, creating serious labor shortages during the peak harvest period. Farms struggle to recruit temporary workers and face high labor costs, while many mothers in the area are unable to accept full-time jobs due to childcare responsibilities.

To address this mismatch between labor supply and demand, the Pingyao town labor market took proactive action. Its staff members visited local agricultural operators to tally seasonal staffing needs, working hours and job requirements. They also conducted household surveys to identify stay-at-home mothers' availability and employment preferences.

Through a dedicated channel on its service platform, the market quickly assembled a stable fruit-processing team of local mothers, effectively solving the farm's seasonal labor shortage.

Wang Hongyin, head of the Yuhang district bureau of agriculture and rural affairs, said that Yuhang takes a patient, long-term approach to cultivating talent.

"Attracting talent is not a one or two-year project, but a sustained, long-term commitment. Our vision is to turn rural landscapes into places young people yearn to live and work in," Wang said.



Staff members work at the Penggong digital farm in Yuhang district, Hangzhou, Zhejiang province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:48 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:48 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

Shipbuilders see smooth sailing ahead

New orders in first half surge 173.1%, representing 82.3% of global market

By **ZHONG NAN**
zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

As shipowners around the world place more orders and accelerate efforts to decarbonize their fleets, China's shipbuilding sector is moving further up the value chain, driven by technological breakthroughs and the localization of critical marine systems, said experts and shipbuilders.

China's shipbuilding output reached 36.5 million deadweight tons (DWT) in the first half, up 51.2 percent year-on-year and accounting for 62.2 percent of the global total, while new orders climbed to 121.06 million DWT, surging 173.1 percent and representing 82.3 percent of the global market, said the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

As of the end of June, the sector's order book — a key indicator of long-term market strength — stood at 363.25 million DWT, up 54.9 percent year-on-year and accounting for 71.2 percent of the global total.

Li Yanqing, vice-chairman of the China Association of the National Shipbuilding Industry (CANSI), said the lion's share of new orders came from bulk carriers, container ships and oil tankers. Together, these three segments accounted for more than 75 percent of global orders in the first half.

Li said liquefied natural gas (LNG) carriers also accounted for roughly 14 percent of new orders globally, with Chinese shipyards making significant inroads.

China exported 3,412 vessels — including car carriers, chemical tankers, offshore support vessels and heavy-lift vessels — during the January-June period, a year-on-year increase of 0.7 percent, while export value climbed 24.9 percent year-on-year to 219.32 billion yuan ($32.41 billion), said CANSI.

Zhang Hongpeng, a professor at Dalian Maritime University in Liaoning province, attributed the industry's profit growth to higher newbuild prices, stable steel costs and improved management efficiency, coupled with continued management improvements at domestic shipyards that have boosted operational efficiency.


Vessels under construction at a shipyard in Taicang, Jiangsu province. JI HAIXIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

These factors have not only boosted profitability, but also raised the value of China's ship exports, as shipyards increasingly deliver high-end vessels rather than chasing volume alone, said Zhang.

In Taizhou, Jiangsu province, a large LNG carrier was docked at a shipyard pier in mid-July awaiting its sea trial. Meanwhile, another vessel of the same class had already completed its trial and was ready for delivery and export. This marked the first large LNG carrier independently built by a private Chinese shipbuilder — Jiangsu Yangzi Xinfu Shipbuilding Co.

Zhou Yong, the shipyard's chief builder, said the company's experience in constructing LNG carriers and chemical tanks for other vessel types has been applied to the LNG carrier project.

"From hull block fabrication to specialized tooling and welding techniques, everything has been integrated into our in-house technology platform," Zhou said, adding that the vessel's localization rate currently exceeds 65 percent.

Beyond rising LNG carrier orders, green technologies are also adding value to conventional shipbuilding. Nantong Xiangyu Shipbuilding & Offshore Engineering Co in Nantong, Jiangsu, has fitted its flagship bulk carriers with vortex-fin devices that convert wake rotation into auxiliary thrust, enabling them to sail about 0.5 knots faster without increasing fuel consumption.

Qin Weimin, the company's president, said 37 vessels are scheduled for delivery in 2026, most of them destined for overseas markets, with output value expected to exceed 10 billion yuan.

Jiangsu recorded 71.86 billion yuan in ship exports between January and June, the largest export scale among all provincial-level regions nationwide, according to information released by Nanjing Customs.

Heat haven


Staffers from State Grid Jiangdu District Power Supply Co conduct live-line work in Yangzhou, Jiangsu province, offering locals uninterrupted power supply. Recently, a scorching heat wave hit the area, leading to growing electricity demand.
REN FEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Briefly

Yuan strengthens against greenback

The central parity rate of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, strengthened 28 pips to 6.7911 against the US dollar on Monday, said the China Foreign Exchange Trade System.

Project targets regional development

The bridge rotation operation of the Changzhou Tenglong Avenue Smart Expressway interchange project was successfully completed in Changzhou, Jiangsu province recently, recording the largest rotation angle among railway overpass bridges in Jiangsu, one of the top provinces measured by GDP. The project is developed by the Changzhou Highway Development Center, constructed by Donghua Metro Corp of China Railway Shanghai Group and undertaken by China Railway 24th Bureau Group. Infrastructure construction remains a core pillar underpinning China's steady economic growth and high-quality development. Major transportation projects such as urban elevated expressways and cross-railway interchanges effectively improve regional traffic efficiency, cut logistics costs and smooth the flow of industrial factors including talent, commodities and capital.

CHINA DAILY- XINHUA

Trip.com hit with massive fine, penalty

By **LI JING**
lijing2009@chinadaily.com.cn

China's antitrust action against leading online travel service provider Trip.com Group has moved scrutiny of the platform economy beyond explicit exclusivity agreements to the algorithms, traffic-allocation systems and contractual structures that can produce similar effects, experts said.

The State Administration for Market Regulation said on Saturday that it had confiscated 1.658 billion yuan ($245 million) in illegal gains from Trip.com, operator of the Ctrip travel platform, and imposed a 3.521 billion yuan fine, equivalent to 7.5 percent of its sales in China in 2025. The two amounts total 5.179 billion yuan. Separately, Trip.com was ordered to refund about 122.78 million yuan in booking deposits withheld from hotels.

The regulator described the action as China's first antitrust case in the online travel industry.

The investigation found that Trip.com had abused its dominance since 2020 by offering traffic and other benefits to "special-label" hotels on condition that they sell online room inventory exclusively through its platform. It also imposed an "all-network lowest-price" requirement on "gold-label" and unlabeled hotels, enforced through automated price adjustments, traffic restrictions, removal of merchant labels and deductions from booking deposits.

"This case shows that antitrust oversight of the platform economy has entered a more routine, professional and granular stage," said Feng Zhaofeng, a partner and lawyer at Beijing-based King & Capital Law Firm.

Earlier platform cases focused largely on explicit "choose-one-of-two" demands, Feng said, while the Trip.com investigation examined how contracts, merchant classifications, traffic incentives and algorithms worked together to restrict competition.

"The regulator has moved from looking at the surface form of the conduct, to examining the underlying operating mechanism and its actual effects," he said.

Shi Jianzhong, a professor at China University of Political Science and Law, said in a note that this was the first platform-economy case to combine an order to stop unlawful conduct, confiscation of illegal gains and a fine.

The 7.5 percent penalty rate was the highest imposed in a Chinese platform-economy antitrust case, near the upper end of the statutory range of 1 to 10 percent of annual sales. By comparison, Alibaba and Meituan were fined 4 percent and 3 percent of their domestic sales in 2021, respectively. The comparatively high rate reflected the seriousness of the conduct, while the combination of behavioral and monetary remedies was aimed at correcting the underlying business mechanism rather than merely imposing a one-off financial penalty, Shi added.

The case also establishes a clearer legal boundary for lowest-price clauses. Jiao Haitao, a professor at China University of Political Science and Law, said this was the first time China's antitrust authorities had directly penalized an "all-network lowest-price" clause as an independent abuse of market dominance.

Such arrangements are known internationally as platform "most-favored-nation" clauses. Jiao said Trip.com's rules went further because some hotels had to offer prices below those on rival platforms, with automated tools and penalties ensuring compliance.

Although the requirement initially appeared to secure low prices for users, a rival charging lower commissions could not translate that advantage into cheaper rooms because Trip.com required the hotel to match or beat its price, Jiao said. Pressure on hotel margins could also lead to poor service and investment, while weaker platform competition could ultimately limit consumer choice and innovation.

A veteran tourism industry professional told Caijing Magazine that while merchants are unlikely to leave Trip.com in large numbers, the penalty will have a major deterrent effect across the online travel industry, with the removal of exclusivity and lowest-price requirements giving them greater control over platform choice and pricing.

Shi said that the case's legal and economic value lay in restoring competition. More broadly it addressed two key priorities in platform-economy governance: curbing "involution-style" competition, in which businesses are pushed into unsustainable price-cutting, and improving the business environment by making platform rules fairer and more predictable.

The enforcement action aligns with the country's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), which calls for stronger oversight of platform companies' use of data, algorithms, traffic and rules while promoting the innovative and healthy development of the platform economy.

Firms gearing up for November CIIE

By **WANG XIN** in Shanghai
wangxin2@chinadaily.com.cn

Preparations for the ninth China International Import Expo, which will take place from Nov 5 to 10 in Shanghai, are in full swing. Participating firms are getting ready for the annual gathering with diverse new offerings, showing solid confidence in the Chinese market.

At a news briefing held on Monday in Shanghai to mark the 100-day countdown to the expo, Wu Zhengping, deputy director-general of the CIIE Bureau, said 57 nations and three international organizations have confirmed participation in the Country Exhibition. Moldova, Romania and the United Nations Development Programme will be joining for the first time, and Canada will be invited as the guest nation of honor for a second time.

Over 1,200 companies from 99 countries and regions have signed up for its business exhibition, including 265 Global Fortune 500 companies and industry leaders.

Among them, French pharmaceutical and dermo-cosmetics group Pierre Fabre, Perennial Holdings Private Ltd from Singapore, Dutch paint and coating firm AkzoNobel, fashion brand Ralph Lauren from the United States, global steel giant ArcelorMittal and chocolate maker Godiva will make their CIIE debut.

Wu said a cumulative total of 27,000 overseas business exhibitors have participated in the CIIE over its past eight editions, showcasing over 3,400 new products, technologies and services. This year's CIIE will also make more efforts to help more African countries and Global South nations make full use of China's zero-tariff policy, to seize the vast opportunities in the Chinese market.

Themed "Stability and Cooperation: Building an Open World Economy Together", the ninth Hongqiao International Economic Forum will release the flagship World Openness Report 2026, and will unveil the Export-to-China Capacity Development Report for the first time.

Goodfarmer Foods Holding (Group) Co Ltd, which has been a CIIE exhibitor since 2018, will see its four fruit varieties, including apples, Vietnamese green pomelos and Peruvian bananas, make global debuts at this year's expo.

"We are firmly optimistic about China's future prospects of consumption, and remain committed to expanding our presence here. Chinese consumers are showing increasing demand for high-quality fruits. We have had three fresh-cut fruit factories put into operation in China this year, and will continue to expand investment in the sector," said Jiang Lei, the company's general manager of e-commerce in China.

CSL Behring, a biotherapeutics leader providing human albumin to Chinese patients since 1986, will make its CIIE debut this year, and has already signed up for the 10th CIIE next year. Wang Yu, general manager of CSL Behring China, said she values the CIIE as a premier platform to see into and understand China, as well as to demonstrate and inspire innovation.

Beijing transforms industry prowess

Inside a former hardware factory in Beijing's Haidian district, space once occupied by metalworking machinery will soon accommodate fermenters, enzyme-reaction vessels and purification lines designed to move the production of complex glycans from laboratory development toward commercial use.

The plant is being built by HealthSyn Biotechnology (Beijing) Co Ltd, a startup developing human milk oligosaccharides, complex glycans naturally found in human milk. Jiao Siming, founder and chief executive officer of the startup, described it as a "small but complete" demonstration facility where customers can see the production process and research teams can access pilot-scale testing services.

The facility is taking shape at Jinnovation Park-Coresci, a park converted from a former hardware factory dating back to 1958. Workshops once used for conventional hardware production are now being adapted to support research and development, pilot-scale testing and small-batch production across four fields: biomanufacturing, high-end medical equipment, advanced materials and embodied intelligence.

As HealthSyn moves from laboratory research toward commercial production, the former hardware factory is taking on a new role as a base for emerging and future industries. Together, their transformations illustrate China's efforts to strengthen links between R&D, pilot-scale testing and industrial application.

China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) calls for building a full-chain system to foster future industries and developing fields, such as biomanufacturing and embodied intelligence, into new growth drivers.

Jinnovation Park-Coresci provides startups with support throughout their development, including flexible space for R&D and pilot production, shared technical platforms, regulatory and clinical assistance, industry connections and access to financing.

Under plans announced in 2025, China aims to cultivate more than 20 pilot-scale testing platforms for biomanufacturing by 2027, with the goal of serving over 200 enterprises and incubating over 400 products.

Pilot-scale testing serves as an intermediate step between laboratory development and large-scale industrial production. The planned platforms will focus on key product areas including food and food additives, biopharmaceutical products, cosmetics, chemicals, energy and enzyme preparations, while promoting collaborative innovation along industrial chains.

Drawing on about five years of scale-up work by its founding team, HealthSyn plans to open the facility as a shared pilot-scale testing platform, using its equipment and dedicated staff to help research teams test processes and move toward factory production, Jiao said.

At the local level, Beijing introduced measures in 2025 to strengthen contract development and manufacturing organization (CDMO) platforms, provide earlier regulatory support and encourage medical institutions and companies to establish medical device training and application demonstration centers.

Beijing Shuimu Dongfang Medical Technology Co Ltd, another incoming tenant, operates a medical device CDMO platform.

Chen Xi, deputy general manager of the company, said medical robot projects often stall because research teams lack suitable facilities, process expertise, regulatory knowledge and access to clinical resources. The platform combines contract development and manufacturing services with validation facilities, connections to clinical institutions and regulatory support, to address these gaps.

HealthSyn's planned pilot-scale testing platform and Shuimu Dongfang's medical device CDMO platform are expected to anchor the park's efforts to attract companies, projects and talent along biomanufacturing and medical device industrial chains.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:48 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:48 PM

BUSINESS

Turning world's by-products into treasure

Tech advances help nation's key nonferrous metal giant expand rapidly worldwide

By YIN MINGYUE
yinmingyue@chinadaily.com.cn



Staffers from Yuguang Group monitor real-time manufacturing operations at the company's central control room in Jiyuan, Henan province. SHI JIAMIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

"The Foolish Old Man (Yugong) Who Removes the Mountains", an ancient Chinese fable, tells of Yugong who faced two great peaks — Taihang and Wangwu — blocking his doorway. He called on his sons to dig up the mountains, and finally forced two angels to carry them away.

The birthplace of this story is Jiyuan — or literally the Source of the Ji River — a city directly administered by Central China's Henan province.

And in Jiyuan today, a new fable is being written, showing that a local nonferrous metal giant has been transporting mountains of rocks, mineral powder and waste batteries from the world over during the past 69 years and maximizing full recovery of all available resources, before turning the leftovers into brick-like building materials.

Wang Yongjun is a senior staffer at State-owned Henan Yuguang Group — ranking among China's top 500 enterprises as a nonferrous metal manufacturer with revenue exceeding 100 billion yuan ($14.68 billion) in 2025. Wang has witnessed its growth since joining the company in 1989.

Today, its core business spans nonferrous and precious metal smelting, new materials, equipment manufacturing, international trade and resource development.

Yuguang is proud that its major product capacities are leading in China, with the highest production capacities for lead, lead-zinc, lead-zinc alloy new materials, silver and recycled lead nationwide, Wang said.

Its headquarters in Jiyuan host enterprises including Yuguang Gold & Lead — which was listed in 2002 as the first listed company in the domestic lead smelting industry — and Yuguang Zinc Industry, he said.

Precious metals

Wang said Yuguang's main products and annual capacity are: lead at 400,000 metric tons, zinc (300,000 tons), copper (100,000 tons), gold (5,000 kilograms), silver (700 tons), and sulfuric acid (1.1 million tons).

Starting as Jiyuan Comprehensive Smelting Plant in 1959, Yuguang began to produce the first batch of electrolytic lead and started extracting gold and silver from its lead anode mud in 1969.

Taking full advantage of its silver production, Yuguang is engaged in the deep processing of gold and silver products, forming a precious metals comprehensive recovery and deep processing industry chain.

Statistics showed that while China's gold output in 2025 reached 552.02 tons — including 381.339 tons of domestic raw material gold output (China Gold Association figures) and 170.681 tons of imported raw material smelting — Yuguang's gold output hit 13.45 tons.

Meanwhile, China's silver output hit some 3,300 to 3,426 tons in 2025, with 95 percent of it coming from by-products of lead-zinc copper mine smelting, while Yuguang saw 1,700 tons of it.

Today, Jiyuan is being dubbed the "Silver City of China", said Wang, proudly pointing to a 50-kg silver ingot displayed in the company's exhibition hall.

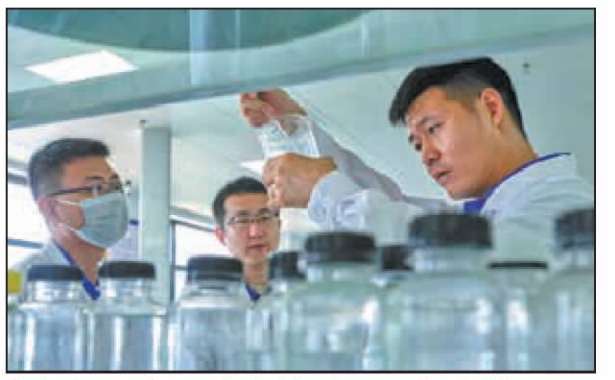
He said Yuguang has consistently adhered to a development philosophy of "Moving Mountains Like the Foolish Old Man and Serving the Nation Through Industry".

In 2023, it was selected by the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council as one of the enterprises tapped to create world-class and professional leading models.

Committed to building a national strategic base for high-quality nonferrous materials, Yuguang is endeavoring to see revenue from its main businesses in copper, lead and zinc — and its revenue from services-oriented manufacturing — both surpass 100 billion yuan by the end of the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30), said Zhao Jingang, Party secretary and chairman of Yuguang.

Technical strides

"Yuguang's expansion has depended on its six technological revolutions in lead and copper smelting, thrice winning the National Science and Technology Progress Award, and helped formulate nearly 200 national and industry standards," Zhao said.



Doctoral researchers conduct a laboratory experiment at Yuguang Group in Henan province. SHI JIAMIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

> By generating new data through device updates and machine replacement, Yuguang will ultimately turn into an intelligent factory, fully linking its 12,000 sets of equipment, 54 kilns, 60,000 data points and 79 workshops on its 106-hectare factory area."
>
> **Zhao Jingang,** Party secretary and chairman of Yuguang Group

Owning over 70 wholly owned and controlled subsidiaries, Yuguang's products — such as lead ingots, zinc ingots, Grade A copper, and silver ingots — are dual-certified brands at home and abroad, Zhao added.

Wu Yanxin, a research staff member at Yuguang, said his company has dared to innovate and forge ahead.

In the lead oxidation stage, its oxygen bottom-blown technology has revolutionized China's lead industry by shifting production from sintering machines to molten bath smelting.

"This disruptive technological breakthrough fundamentally eliminates sulfur dioxide pollution at the source, bringing us our first National Science and Technology Progress Award," Wu said.

"In the reduction stage, we've developed the direct reduction of liquid high-lead slag for one-step lead smelting, replacing coke with natural gas and ushering the lead industry into a 'coke-free' era. Our energy consumption is 56 percent lower than the national standard, which secured our second NSTPA," he said.

"In the comprehensive recovery stage, we adopt green and efficient rare and precious metal extraction technologies such as vacuum distillation to achieve high-value resource utilization and maximize full recovery of all available resources, earning us our third NSTPA," Wu added.

During the past 20 years, Yuguang has undertaken multiple national research programs including the National High Technology Research and Development Program (863 Program) and National Key R&D Projects.

"We have overcome more than 10 world-class core technical bottlenecks in the nonferrous metals sector, having been granted over 700 scientific and technological achievements at national, provincial and ministerial levels," Wu said.

New and strategic material

Zhang Xiaomin, an exhibition hall guide, is proud that with its high-tech caliber, Yuguang has been honored as a China top 500 enterprise, and ranked among China's manufacturing industry top 500.

Yuguang's technology and equipment are regarded as internationally and domestically leading, with a provincial technology center, postdoctoral research station and other research institutions, she said.

The company's leading products — "Yuguang" brand electrolytic lead and "Yuguang" brand silver — are listed on the London Metal Exchange and the London Bullion Market Association, respectively.

Zhang added that as China's largest lead smelting enterprise, Yuguang's zinc smelting capacity and copper smelting technology are also among the nation's best.

To extend its industrial chain, Yuguang has also developed alloy products, with over 30 varieties of lead-based and zinc-based alloys.

Its products are mainly used in semiconductors, crystals and sensors, Zhang said.

Zhao said Yuguang also shoulders the mission of safeguarding the security of the nation's vital strategic materials, and its strategic positioning is to establish an important strategic national material base for nonferrous metal new materials.

"New materials represent a crucial growth sector for Yuguang's future development," Zhao said, adding that it is transitioning from raw materials to new materials, while also paying vital attention to developing strategic materials.

"In Yuguang's new material product matrix, there are over 100 products in four major categories — alloys, high-purity materials, new energy, along with rare and precious materials," he said.

Zhao emphasized that Yuguang intends to update and replace key equipment and production scenarios with machines to promote intelligent construction.

"By generating new data through device updates and machine replacement, Yuguang will ultimately turn into an intelligent factory, fully linking its 12,000 sets of equipment, 54 kilns, 60,000 data points and 79 workshops on its 106-hectare factory area," Zhao said.

Global cooperation

"While keeping a nationwide vision and embracing global markets, Yuguang has grown into a large international conglomerate with global sourcing and global sales, delivering solid support for the Belt and Road Initiative," Zhao said.

He said the company owns over 10 mining enterprises distributed at home and abroad, with domestic mining bases scattered around the provinces of Gansu, Sichuan and Yunnan, with overseas mines located in Australia, Indonesia and other regions.

Yuguang imports millions of tons of mineral powder each year, moving mountains of foreign resources to Yuguang for smelting, Zhao said.

In the face of tight international mineral supplies and trade barriers, Zhao highlighted the need to "go global" and negotiate with overseas suppliers to solve the raw materials dilemma and provide assistance for Yuguang's globalized operation.

During the 15th Five-Year Plan period, Yuguang will accelerate its transformation from raw materials to new materials, and bolster its key projects through international cooperation, he said.

Making circular economy an art form

By YIN MINGYUE



A staffer from Yuguang Group in Jiyuan, Henan province, conducts daily checks on products to help ensure the production schedule. DUAN GAOGAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

Wan Tingting, 37, a graduate of Guangxi University with a master's degree in art, finds herself now an expert in another form of art — the art of recycling.

For 10 years, she has been working at Yuguang Gold & Lead in Jiyuan, Henan province, now acting as a deputy section chief of the plastic workshop at its Regenerated Lead Plant.

As a nonferrous metal giant and a large international conglomerate with global sourcing and global sales, Yuguang has been transporting mountains of rocks, mineral powder and waste batteries from the world and maximizing the full recovery of all available resources, before making the leftovers into brick-type building materials, she said.

"When I followed my husband to work at Yuguang 10 years ago, I was a complete novice, knowing nothing about the recycling industry," Wan recalled.

But as the company continued to adjust its industrial structure, and actively improved the recycling of renewable resources, Yuguang has become known as the world's Chinese example of regenerative lead development.

"Currently, the annual treatment of renewable lead in Yuguang has reached 540,000 metric tons, and it ranks among the world's largest renewable lead enterprises," Wan said.

At a central control room of the Regenerated Lead Plant, she checked the processing data in real time, and then walked to an adjacent glass window, overlooking an intelligent and automated production workshop, where an unmanned forklift picks up stacks of lead ingots and arranges them neatly in rows and packs.

At present, Yuguang imports millions of tons of mineral powder each year, moving mountains of foreign resources to Yuguang for smelting, she said, adding that it also recycles over 1 million tons of waste batteries a year.

"Back in 2015, Yuguang initiated the first waste lead-acid battery recycling network system in the country, forming a closed-loop of renewable lead recycling," she said.

She said the Regenerated Lead Plant's intelligent processing system can annually "swallow" 540,000 tons of waste lead-acid batteries and "spit out" various products such as regenerated lead and lead alloys.

She added that since the mid-1980s, Yuguang has begun to advocate for green smelting, driving the green development of the nonferrous industry.

Nowadays, its smelting factory is like a garden, with greenery visible everywhere. In its closed production line of recycled lead, the "rebirth" of waste batteries vividly interprets the core essence of its circular economy. In the water treatment workshop, the deeply treated industrial wastewater is crystal clear, showing that green development has become a core competitiveness.

Zheng Xiaotao, now 40, came to work at Yuguang 18 years ago, and now serves as the section chief of the automatic separation II section at the Regenerated Lead Plant.

Zheng said while the total production of waste batteries in China is approximately 6 million tons, Yuguang's processing capacity exceeds 1 million tons, consuming some 17 percent of the nation's total.

He recalled that back in November 2005, Yuguang spent 44 million yuan ($6.5 million) importing a set of recycling systems from Italy, starting its comprehensive recycling of waste lead-acid batteries.

"At first, we could only treat some 18 to 20 tons per hour, but now we can treat 50 tons an hour," Zheng said.

Moreover, 21 years later, Yuguang has its own Metallurgical Machinery Manufacturing Co, producing and exporting recycling equipment to countries such as Belarus and Kazakhstan, both involved with the Belt and Road Initiative, helping bolster the green drive around the world, Zheng said.

"The recycling rate of waste residue in Yuguang is close to 100 percent, and our 'dual circulation circle' of internal and external coordination of lead, zinc and copper systems has been built, forming a complete industrial chain for the development of the circular economy," Zheng said.

"At present, we have become the largest production base for recycled lead, lead-zinc smelting, and silver production in China, and our annual waste lead-acid battery processing can comprehensively recover 31 kinds of valuable metals," said Zhao Jingang, Party secretary and chairman of Yuguang.

"The comprehensive benefits generated by the circular economy make Yuguang's development more stable," he said.

Currently, State-owned Henan Yuguang Group ranks among China's top 500 enterprises as a nonferrous metal manufacturer with revenue exceeding 100 billion yuan in 2025.

Zhao stressed that Yuguang's development largely depends on its technological innovation. The company has built the nonferrous metal sector's first "excellent intelligent factory", and produced high-purity metals with the highest purity in the industry.

"The domestic market share of our high-end lead-based alloys has exceeded 50 percent, while our new energy materials have begun to take shape, and we have produced 16 types of rare, precious and scattered metals," he said.

"Yuguang has proven through our own practices that a traditional polluter can embark on a path of high-quality development that is green, low-carbon, circular and sustainable," Zhao said, stressing that industrial and ecological civilization can coexist harmoniously.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:48 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:48 PM



Jingdezhen, in Jiangxi province, has produced an extraordinary variety of ceramics over the centuries. Featured here (from left) are a Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) blue-and-white pot, a Song Dynasty (960-1279) bluish-white glazed ewer, a Ming blue-and-white jar, a painted Ming cup, a 14th-century dragon-patterned eaves tile, a Ming three-legged censer, and a Ming duck-shaped ceramic censer. PHOTOS BY WANG KAIHAO / CHINA DAILY AND PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

AN EPIC OF EARTH, FIRE AND DREAMS

Porcelain discoveries paint a vivid picture of ancient kilns, technological evolution, and the journey of royal objects from the 'capital of ceramics', whose traditional handicraft has achieved World Heritage status, report **Wang Kaihao** and **Wang Ru** in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi.



The Imperial Kiln Factory site, dating to the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), stands as a testament to the golden age of Jingdezhen's porcelain craftsmanship.
WANG KAIHAO / CHINA DAILY

In ports as far as in Egypt and Kenya, discoveries of bluish-white Chinese porcelain shards from the Song Dynasty (960-1279) may prompt people today to imagine an epic of craftsmanship and a grand picture of the Maritime Silk Road overcoming waves and time.

The shards came from Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province, often dubbed "China's capital of ceramics".

In 1004, impressed by the porcelain offered as tribute from the then-Changnan town, Song emperor Zhenzong bestowed one of his reigning names, "Jingde", upon the town.

There, an epic of earth and fire began.

In the early Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), Zhu Yuanzhang, the founding emperor of the Ming, ordered the construction of the Imperial Kiln Factory at an established site in the town to produce ceramic wares used exclusively by royalty. The unqualified products would be broken and buried. More than one million pieces of porcelain waste were estimated to have piled up in the following centuries.

Thus, Zhushan Hill rose in downtown Jingdezhen. Only 48 meters above sea level, it stands as a testament to the history of Chinese ceramics.

Beyond imperial solemnity, crisscrossing streets bathed in wisps of smoke mark the prosperity of the era's ceramics industry throughout society.

At the Guanyinge, an ancient kiln site in Jingdezhen, archaeological excavations have yielded a large complex of civilian kilns. Walking through today's farmlands, visitors easily bump into researchers' latest discoveries over the past two years: well-protected accumulations of kiln waste from the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279) to the Ming era.

Putting these fragments of legends together is also like restoring a piece of porcelain. This masterpiece now glitters again on a wide stage — on Saturday, the Jingdezhen Handicraft Porcelain Industry Sites became China's latest entry on the World Heritage List during the 48th Session of the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO in Busan, South Korea.

The industry sites include porcelain production workshops in town areas and raw material hubs in the wild, as well as their historical environment, such as transportation networks and old city neighborhoods, with 45 components scattered across the 1,979-hectare property.

"They integrally preserve the representative kilns, workshops and other production facilities of all stages of the development of Jingdezhen handicraft porcelain technology from the 10th to 19th centuries," says Wei Qing, the main drafter of the application for World Heritage status.

According to Wei, no other property was previously inscribed on the World Heritage List for porcelain production, though some sites featured elements related to the theme.

"Silk, tea and porcelain were all important commodities in ancient China's commercial trade overseas," says Wei.

"Tea was consumed, silk decayed, but ceramics — tempered through various chemical reactions — endured for ages."

Evolving wisdom

Since 2002, Wang Guangyao, an archaeologist at the Palace Museum in Beijing, has hosted excavations on the Imperial Kiln Factory and other key kiln sites in Jingdezhen.

Thanks to his team's efforts, the city's past glory has emerged not only from documentation but also from physical evidence.

"Based on studies of the strata, clear and accurate age information obtained from the sites presents authentic scenarios of porcelain production facilities and their environments over various periods," Wang says.

"Perhaps there is no other place in the world that yields such a perfect sample of the continuous evolution of porcelain production technology," Wang says.

The Luomaqiao kiln site, part of the World Heritage listing, has revealed a Ming Dynasty gourd-shaped kiln unique to Jingdezhen, which drew on features of northern China's dome-shaped kilns and southern China's dragon-shaped kilns.

This design was later refined into the egg-shaped kiln, which could efficiently fire various types of porcelain simultaneously.

Along with the upgrading of kilns came the evolution of products.

From the Song Dynasty bluish-white porcelain to the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) blue-and-white ceramics, and from the Ming Dynasty painted porcelain to the Qing Dynasty famille rose and enamel porcelain, Jingdezhen provided a procession of porcelain varieties that delighted people worldwide.

Wang explains: "Normally, when speaking of famous kilns elsewhere, we consider the typical style of its products, but Jingdezhen has ceaselessly produced ceramics for nearly a millennium. So, when thinking of its typical style, the answers may vary."

According to him, the porcelain trade became highly profitable in the late Tang Dynasty (618-907), and Jingdezhen artisans then wanted to claim their share of the market. They studied the popular wares of each era, absorbed their strengths, and refined their own techniques accordingly.

"It is this spirit of tolerance and innovation that has kept Jingdezhen kilns burning," he says.

Archaeology also helps those buried shards complete their unfinished journey. From 2015 to 2020, Wang helped organize a series of comparative exhibitions in the Palace Museum. Also known as the Forbidden City, the museum was China's former imperial palace, where the royal-qualified products of the Imperial Kiln Factory were taken.

The unearthed Jingdezhen wares, restored from deliberately broken objects, and their long-separated brothers — the intact porcelains with identical patterns in the royal collection — were juxtaposed in the same gallery.

"Firing a kiln was very difficult. In some ways, it was like opening a blind box," Wang says.

Even when every procedure — 72 steps in total, according to ancient documents — was done successfully, only about one-third of the products from the kiln would be qualified for royal use.



The ceramic workshop complex at the Xujiayao site in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province, offers a glimpse into the city's historic porcelain production. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"Thanks to the archaeological findings in Jingdezhen, people have a deeper understanding of the extant treasures in the Forbidden City and elsewhere," Wang says.

Archaeological efforts at civilian kilns, such as Guanyinge and Luomaqiao, have unearthed artifacts with features showing they were also made to exclusively serve the royal family, indicating the close interactions between imperial and civilian workshops.

Firing tasks that the Imperial Kiln Factory could not finish on schedule were allocated to civilian kilns, according to Weng Yanjun, director of the Jingdezhen Imperial Kiln Institute.

"Therefore, the formulas and techniques once strictly controlled by the imperial factory entered their civilian counterparts, boosting the overall production level in Jingdezhen," Weng says.

According to him, archaeological research over the past decades has helped establish "a gene bank" of various types of porcelain.

Since 2022, the database has collected key information about ancient porcelain pieces, including their patterns, styles, base materials, and glaze.

"They are not only benchmarks for academic research, but also references for revitalizing cultural traditions," says Weng.

In 2016, people witnessed Xujiayao, the biggest surviving kiln from ancient Jingdezhen, re-ignited after decades of disuse. Hu Jiawang, then 72, played a major role in making this centuries-old kiln fire again.

"It shows our emphasis on ancient crafts and endeavors in keeping them alive," says Hu, a national-level inheritor of Jingdezhen traditional kiln and workshop making techniques.

As a veteran craftsman, in addition to building the kilns, Hu is also responsible for controlling the kilns' fire, which largely determines what comes out of the blind box.

His unique technique is to spit on the firewood. He tells the temperature by observing how saliva evaporates and the fire color changes.

"Porcelain-making is an art of fire," says Hu. "Before modern equipment, we relied on hands-on experience passed down through mentorship and built upon continuous improvement; that's how we have come this far."

As time went by, modern electric kilns appeared. Accuracy has improved, but in many collectors' eyes, the natural luster and hue of handmade products still prevail.

However, Hu kept an open mind.

"Only through ceaseless evolution can the products meet modern needs, maintain vitality, and continue to move forward," he says.

A global inspiration

Since 2018, Wang from the Palace Museum has also led an archaeological program on ancient port ruins in Ras al-Khaimah, the United Arab Emirates. As a veteran porcelain researcher, he can easily tell that some shards on the shore of the Persian Gulf arrived from somewhere familiar.

The blue-and-white porcelain pieces produced in the Imperial Kiln Factory, probably a Ming emperor's gifts, demonstrate the connection between the Ming Dynasty and the region.

More Jingdezhen products have been found in large numbers in shipwrecks and seaside sites across East, Southeast and South Asia, serving as evidence of booming maritime trade.

In 2023, Chinese researchers made another milestone deep-sea discovery of two mid-Ming shipwrecks on the northwestern continental slope of the South China Sea. Not to Wang's surprise, the No 1 shipwreck's cargo was almost full of Jingdezhen exports.

"Jingdezhen products were tested in the market and showcased their value," Wang says. "It also tells of the inclusive nature of the city's porcelain industry."

Traces of the imperial kiln style can be seen on many pieces produced by the Jingdezhen civilian kilns for export. However, to better meet the demand of overseas markets, the city's artisans during the Age of Exploration (15th century to 17th century) often switched from traditional Chinese aesthetics to so-called Kraak Porcelains. Named after a merchant ship that first created its popularity in Amsterdam, this variety had patterns specially designed for the European market.

Based on recent excavations, Guanyinge was the main hub for making these export-tailored products.

"Traded porcelain from Jingdezhen became a vehicle of Chinese culture and an important symbol of art from the East," explains Wei, the application drafter.

For example, the Jingdezhen blue-and-white porcelain was a key element in the chinoiserie that was popular in European decorative arts in the 17th and 18th centuries.

European nobility became collectors of Chinese porcelain, and many famous palaces feature "Chinese rooms". The artistic characteristics of Jingdezhen porcelain were then widely imitated by European workshops.

On the other hand, as Wei points out, technologies in Jingdezhen during the 13th to 19th centuries also combined traditional Chinese porcelain-making with pigments from the Middle East and Europe, blending Chinese and overseas decorative techniques.

That was how the iconic blue-and-white, enamel and famille-rose porcelains were created. "It's the meaning of mutual learning among cultures," Wei says.

Impetus for urban growth

It is not easy to find one's direction in the maze-like old neighborhood of Jingdezhen by the Changjiang River. Locals have a suggestion: Find the alley with *ziznong* (lower lane) in its name. All eventually lead to the river.



Hu Jiawang, 82, a national-level inheritor of Jingdezhen's traditional kiln and workshop construction techniques, introduces the ancient kiln at Xujiayao.
WANG KAIHAO / CHINA DAILY

Old porcelain workshops hide in the streets, and the ancient piers that once witnessed the hustle and bustle of porcelain cargo are quiet, but the locals' hearts still hold pride for their past.

Growing up near the Luomaqiao kiln site, which has operated for 800 years, Xiong Wenbo, 54, is now a leading porcelain painter in the city.

"Top-tier artisans once gathered here, but many people left no name," he says. "The industry rose and fell, and the handicraft also faced difficulties.

"Bidding for World Heritage status offered a precious opportunity to better review our past and prolong our cultural lineage," he says. "It's great to see the 'fresh' faces of the city."

Saying "fresh", he by no means refers to the old neighborhood giving way to modern urban construction. On the contrary, these communities that benefited from porcelain centuries ago were renovated to maintain their original aesthetics.

Walking through the alleys, people now recall many long-forgotten links in the industry chain from the old days: a trade house, a paddy straw packaging shop, a pigment shop, and a place to handle defective products.

"We have carried out systematic projects to restore the valuable old buildings and decorated them in their original styles, following historical records and local people's memories," says Cheng Tong, a designer in charge of the city's urban renewal. "In this way, traces of ancient life can still be found in modern neighborhoods."

To get a full picture of Jingdezhen, archaeologist Wang's horizon has expanded beyond the kilns. A series of urban archaeology projects was launched in the alleyways and transportation network, unveiling some lesser-known but equally important elements for the World Heritage status.

"Porcelain turned a small town into a business center, but life here is more than that," Wang says. "We've gained more knowledge about society, the relationship between humans and the environment, as well as people's beliefs and migration."

At the Siwang Temple, people pray for patronage from local deities who oversee the waters in Jiangxi. The Mazu Temple, where the goddess of sailors of the sea was honored, offers wishes for safety and prosperity.

"People would take Jingdezhen products and travel along the Changjiang River, then the Yangtze River, and eventually the ocean," Wang says.

"The global journey of the products started here, in the alleys."

Wei adds that the Jingdezhen Handicraft Porcelain Industry Sites also reshape the understanding of China's agrarian society.

"Jiangxi, in ancient times, had a deeply rooted farming culture that could also breed an industrial system featuring openness, strong mobility, and market-driven dynamics," he says. "It conveys that ancient China also has a strong outward-looking dimension."

Today, an estimated 60,000 artisans and artists from elsewhere in China and even from overseas are living in Jingdezhen to pursue their porcelain dreams. Fire may no longer burn the old way, but some ethos lingers no matter how much time changes.

"Jingdezhen is not a time capsule frozen at a single point in history, but rather a window which continuously unfolds," says Weng, the institute director.

"Today, many people live as porcelain professionals in the city. Here, cultural exchange, creation, and innovation are still going."

Contact the writers at wangkaihao@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

Tracing clan genealogies transforms conservation into an emotional connection

By **WANG RU** and **SUN MENG**
in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province

When Wei Qing and his team drafted the application seeking UNESCO World Heritage status for Jingdezhen Handicraft Porcelain Industry Sites in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province, in 2023, they soon realized that the city's ceramic legacy could not be told through kilns and workshops in downtown Jingdezhen alone.

The story, they realized, can also be found across the surrounding hills, in the pine forests that fueled the kilns, the kaolin (Gaoling) deposits that strengthened porcelain, and the porcelain stone quarries that provided the foundational materials. This network, now mostly hidden deep in the mountains, once formed an intricate industrial chain that supported Jingdezhen's porcelain supremacy for centuries.

On Saturday, it became a newly minted UNESCO World Heritage site, turning the spotlight on the components that made this millennium-long achievement possible — not just the finished porcelain, but its raw materials and fuel.

"They constitute an integrated industrial production system centered on the area's porcelain production center and stretching far across the surrounding mountains, which is a sophisticated model of regional resource allocation," says Wei.

They were introduced to the Lifang village in Fuliang county, Jingdezhen, which thrived with the firewood industry in the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, but few written records existed to support that.

Villagers, however, still kept their clan genealogies. One villager provided his clan genealogy, which contains an illustrated manual that explains how the forest, which produced Masson pine for firewood, was managed by a clan-based system during the Qing Dynasty.

Each clan held designated sections of the forest and enforced strict agreements to protect the trees. Trees were distributed to clan members for caretaking, but logging was permitted only upon the clan head's approval.

Hu Qiaoheng, deputy director of the Fuliang County Cultural Heritage Protection Center, says: "A Masson pine takes at least 30 years to grow into usable firewood, so logging had to be carefully regulated to ensure a steady supply. To address the long payoff cycle, local clans even inventively converted forest shares into transferable assets, allowing members to cash out their stakes."

Going hiking in the forest, one can occasionally still see boundary markers. They were set during the Qing period to divide the property rights among different clans.

When logs were cut, they were moved to the riverside and stacked, waiting for the flood season. When the water level rose, the logs were cast into the mountain streams, drifting downstream with the current until intercepted by water barriers in the rivers. After being retrieved for further drying and stacking, they were loaded on boats and transported to downtown Jingdezhen.

"Making full use of natural streams, rivers, artificial dams, bridges, and docks, this method significantly cut transportation costs," says Hu. "The firewood supply chain ensured that the materials would meet the surging demand of the Ming and Qing dynasties, when Jingdezhen's porcelain industry flourished," she adds.

More stories of Jingdezhen's porcelain production are told in the Gaoling village, also in Fuliang, which provided kaolin clay, a fine, white mineral that is essential to porcelain production. Jingdezhen was one of the first places to realize its value and promote its use.





Left: A bird's-eye view of the Gaoling village in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province, which has yielded kaolin (Gaoling) clay for making porcelain.
Right: The porcelain stone processing remains at the Xiaowuli site in Jingdezhen.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Historically, objects made exclusively of porcelain stone had a low melting point, which could easily collapse in kilns. In the Yuan (1271-1368) and Ming dynasties, artisans discovered that mixing the stone with kaolin in precise proportions — the so-called "binary formula" — greatly enhanced the body's structural integrity and heat resistance, enabling the production of true, hard-paste porcelain.

In the 18th century, French missionary Francois Xavier d'Entrecolles introduced the clay to Europe. German geographer Ferdinand von Richthofen named it "kaolin", which gave it its worldwide name since the 19th century.

Today, an ancient pavilion at Gaoling's entrance still bears witness to this mining history. Inside, miners once worshiped Xu Xun, the god of water in local Taoist faith, praying for safety before heading up the mountain, given that frequent rain sometimes led to mining caves collapsing.

Hu Huiying, another Fuliang cultural heritage protector, says miners often worked shirtless in the caves, using their skin to feel falling sand, an early warning sign of imminent collapse.

Archaeological efforts help decode details of the mining back then. Li Zhaoyun, an archaeologist at the Jiangxi Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, says kaolin mining was conducted on a large scale during the Ming and Qing periods.

He says the whole Gaoling site covers 10 square kilometers, with about 90 suspected mining caves and over 60 washing pond complexes identified in initial surveys. Many more have likely collapsed over time. Local genealogy documents record that in the Qing Dynasty, outsiders came to compete with natives for mining rights, indicating substantial economic returns.

"Such social conflict must have been driven by profit. This also proves kaolin clay production had a large scale and output, so that the profits it generated would have attracted people elsewhere to a share of the pie," says Li.

Microelement analysis supports the use of kaolin in porcelain making: earlier Jingdezhen porcelain shows high potassium and sodium with little aluminum, but later samples show a significant rise in aluminum, clear evidence of kaolin being added, says Li.

"All porcelain produced worldwide today is hard-paste, which relies on kaolin. Therefore, the discovery of kaolin not only ushered in Jingdezhen porcelain's golden age, but also revolutionized ceramic techniques worldwide," says Li.

Beyond kaolin, porcelain stone, the other half of the binary formula, was processed along mountain streams, where water-powered mills crushed the rock into fine powder. The Xiaowuli and Dawukeng sites in Fuliang, opened last year to reserved groups of visitors as part of the hiking routes, allowing them to trace these ancient mining and processing operations.

Pan Chaoqing, a 55-year-old from the nearby Changming village, has patrolled the Dawukeng site since. He makes daily rounds, inspects potential risks, cleans up litter, and reminds visitors not to disturb the site. Five of his fellow villagers join him in this work, on land that their ancestors once labored for generations.

Pan says his family tree shows one of his ancestors migrated from Anhui province to make a living mining here. Five generations of his family worked in the quarries until his father's time. This family history gives Pan a profound emotional attachment to the ancient mine.

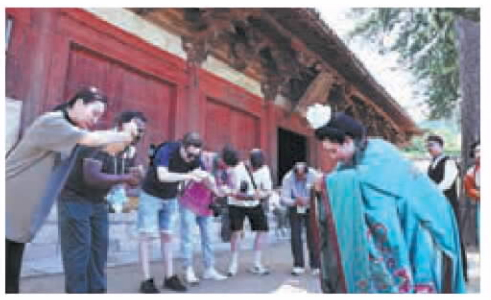
"The mine sustained my family for generations. Seeing it transform from a workplace to a cultural site fills me with pride. This job makes me feel I'm not only guarding a place, but also guarding the soul of Jingdezhen as China's capital of ceramics," says Pan.

Contact the writers at wangru1@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:48 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:48 PM





Clockwise from left: Tour members learn ancient Chinese rituals at Xinzhou's Foguang Temple. Tour members take a selfie at the Xuankong Temple in Datong. Tour members pose for a group photo at Yungang Grottoes in Datong.
PHOTOS BY WEI BO AND YAN CHANGJIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

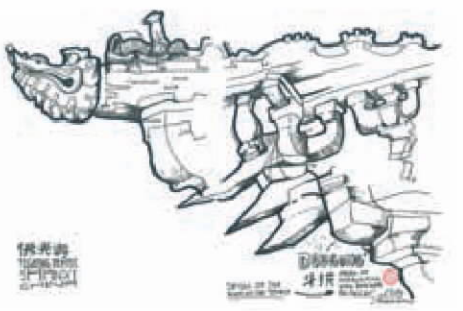


Seeing Shanxi through global eyes



A Sketch of the Yingxian Wooden Pagoda by Chinese artist Li Zhengming.

International creators document the province's iconic landmarks and living traditions



A sketch of a *dougong* bracket at Xinzhou's Foguang Temple by German artist Anja Nolte.

By WANG YUCHEN
wangyuchen@chinadaily.com.cn

A seven-day program exploring Shanxi province's ancient architecture, organized by Shanxi Daily and China Daily, concluded on July 20 after bringing together more than 10 visual artists and bloggers from nine countries, along with journalists and communication scholars.

The group traveled through Taiyuan, Jinzhong, Xinzhou, Shuozhou and Datong, documenting heritage sites and local life through photos, videos and paintings.

The tour, called Discovering Shanxi's Ancient Chinese Architecture – A Visual Journey Through Cultural Heritage, was part of the "Unity for Prosperity, Heritage for Eternity" International Cultural Heritage Protection Week held from July 15-21.

The itinerary included iconic landmarks such as Jinci Temple, Foguang Temple, the Xuankong Temple, the Yingxian Wooden Pagoda, Yungang Grottoes and Huayan Temple. The sites ranged from ancient wooden structures and cliffside architecture to Buddhist cave art.

At Foguang Temple in Xinzhou, participants visited the temple's East Main Hall, built in 857 and regarded as one of China's oldest surviving wooden structures.

The focus on wooden structures continued at the Yingxian Wooden Pagoda in Shuozhou. Built in 1056, it was explored through a digital exhibition that gave participants a closer look at its design and details.

At Yungang Grottoes in Datong, the group toured several caves and observed conservation specialists at work in Caves 33 to 37.

Veldesen Yaputra, an Indonesian artist, said watching the specialists at work helped him appreciate the patience involved in conservation.

At Yuci Ancient City in Jinzhong, Moroccan video content creator Fatima Zahra watched a painter sketch the old buildings as residents and shopkeepers went about their daily lives.

Zahra said the scene showed how historical architecture remained a part of local life.

The itinerary also included a *datiehua* show in Xinzhou, showcasing the traditional molten iron fireworks performance, and a tour of a daylily production base in Datong, giving participants a broader view of local traditions and livelihoods alongside the architectural heritage.







From left: A painting of the Xuankong Temple by Chinese artist Qin Zhizhen. A painting of the Yuci Ancient City by Qin Zhizhen. A painting of the Jinci Temple by Indonesian artist Veldesen Yaputra.

Exploring China's ancient architectural soul

By MICHAEL RHYS CARD
michaelrhyscard@chinadaily.com.cn

Throughout the history of the world, buildings have reflected the beliefs, ambitions and challenges of the societies that created them. Religion, government, geography, climate, technological development and social traditions have all shaped the way nations approach architecture, leaving behind a physical record of their history.

By studying historical architecture, it is possible to trace the origins of a society and understand the forces that helped to shape it into what it is today. In China, where thousands of years of continuous civilization have produced an extraordinary architectural legacy, ancient structures provide a window into the country's cultural evolution.

Among the most important places to explore this heritage is Shanxi province in northern China, widely regarded as one of the cradles of Chinese civilization. The province is home to 28,027 ancient architectural structures, accounting for roughly one-tenth of China's total, and three UNESCO World Heritage Sites.





From left: A pavilion at Yongan Temple in Hunyuan county, Datong. The roof of the Hall of Manjushri at Foguang Temple in Wutai county, Xinzhou. PHOTOS BY MICHAEL RHYS CARD / CHINA DAILY

Shanxi's remarkable preservation is closely linked to its geography and environment. Located on the eastern edge of the Loess Plateau, the province's relatively dry climate has helped protect wooden structures that would have been more vulnerable in wetter regions. Its mountainous terrain also provided natural protection, allowing many historical buildings to survive periods of conflict and rapid modernization, making Shanxi a leading destination for research and learning about China's ancient construction methods and cultural development.

That heritage was recently highlighted during the event Discovering Shanxi's Ancient Chinese Architecture – A Visual Journey Through Cultural Heritage held from July 14 to 20. The program brought together journalists and influencers from around the world, offering an immersive opportunity to explore the province's architectural treasures and discover the stories behind them.

At Jinci Temple in Taiyuan, visitors witnessed centuries of architectural evolution. The complex combines religious traditions, imperial influence and artistic craftsmanship, with intricate wooden structures, decorative details and carefully designed landscapes reflecting changing periods of Chinese architecture.

In Xinzhou ancient town, history became a living experience. Walking through preserved streets, visitors could experience traditional crafts such as paper-cutting and learn traditional cooking techniques.

Other sites demonstrated China's long tradition of innovation. The Yingxian Wooden Pagoda — the world's oldest and tallest wooden pagoda — and Xuankong Temple, reveal the engineering creativity and adaptability of ancient Chinese builders.

Meanwhile, the Yungang Grottoes highlight China's historical connections with the wider world. The Buddhist carvings display artistic influences from Central and South Asia, reflecting the cultural exchanges that took place along ancient trade routes.

Images and written records can introduce people to historical sites, but experiencing them in person offers a deeper understanding. These spaces reveal how architecture shaped communities, and continues to influence modern China. In Shanxi, the past is not simply remembered, it remains a living, breathing experience.

ADVERTORIAL

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:48 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:48 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

'Data point' revealing of China-bashers' zero-sum approach to ties, nothing more

According to a report by the South China Morning Post, a bipartisan congressional delegation of the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission, which visited China earlier this month on a "fact-finding" trip, after a seven year gap, was given the "cold shoulder" when it tried to engage with China's leading technology companies.

Mike Kuiken, vice-chairman of the commission, acknowledged the setback, stating that "We were not able to secure many of the meetings we sought, including with some of China's leading technology companies, and that is itself a data point".

According to a news release issued by the commission on Saturday, the delegation visited Beijing, Hangzhou and Shanghai but was unable to meet with many on the Chinese side that it wanted to. The lack of access is indeed a major, albeit predictable, "data point" for the commission, as the fact-finding mission was intended to help shape the commission's annual report to the US Congress.

But the fact that the US congressional delegation was allowed to visit China at all speaks volumes about Beijing's pragmatic approach to managing the complex relationship between the two countries.

The visit came after US President Donald Trump's visit to China in May, during which the two sides agreed on a new vision of building a constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability. In light of this, the two countries are preparing for more high-level exchanges later this year. By giving a green light to the visit by the delegation of the US body, Beijing signaled its willingness to engage with the US side in good faith.

That the members of the delegation — despite being some of the harshest critics of China in Washington — were allowed to gain firsthand experience of the country was in the hope that direct observation might help the commission discard the outdated assumptions and biases that underpin Washington's anti-China policies.

Chinese tech companies' reticence to meet the delegation is telling, but not for the reason the commission suggests. Some senior US officials have recently publicly said that they will investigate the so-called "distillation" of US cutting-edge models by Chinese AI companies and may sanction Chinese companies for "stealing US intellectual property".

Such claims are absurd. China's Ministry of Commerce has dismissed them out of hand, pointing out that the US is politicizing and instrumentalizing science and technology issues, stigmatizing Chinese companies and imposing sanctions on them for various unwarranted reasons. This disregards the fact that Chinese companies' AI models are released very close to the time of US cutting-edge models and that some Chinese models have leading capabilities and some US companies have distilled Chinese models.

Given the commission's track record, the idea that leading Chinese tech giants would warmly welcome such a delegation is wishful thinking. For these companies, engaging with the commission seems to be a strategic minefield as the risk of providing ammunition for future sanctions far outweighs any potential benefit from candid dialogue.

Hence, rather than a "snub", the cold shoulder the delegation reportedly received was a predictable act of self-protection and a clear message that Chinese enterprises are wary of becoming "data points" for a body whose primary function is to set obstacles in the way of normal business interactions between the two economies with "security" being the pretext. The cold reception was not confrontational or hostile, but rather a reminder that the US side needs to reflect on the way it deals with China-related issues.

For the commission to play a constructive role, it must evolve from being a purveyor of zero-sum narratives to a body that promotes mutual understanding. The path forward lies in recognizing China's legitimate right to development and technological self-reliance. Instead of expanding blacklists and imposing unilateral restrictions, it should advocate policies that expand the list of cooperation, especially in areas of mutual interest.

In general, in recent years, there has been a significant change in China-US relations, especially their economic and trade ties, as they have become more equal-footed and are no longer in a situation where the US can wield a big stick without consequences.

The takeaway from the delegation's visit is a "data point" that reveals more about Washington's own strategic misjudgments than about China's intentions.

The ghost of militarism stirs in Tokyo again

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, a protege of the late Shinzo Abe, has never hidden her convictions. A revisionist who reveres the martial symbols of the Showa era, marked by political totalitarianism and ultranationalism, she has spent her first year in office methodically dismantling the pillars of Japan's postwar "pacifist" identity. Reflecting this, the bills passed in the upper house on Friday included one to revise the law governing referendums on amending the country's Constitution, preparation for a future national vote that would be Japan's first on revising the supreme law, a long-held goal of the Liberal Democratic Party.

But the real story is the pattern. Expanding surveillance with the establishment of a National Intelligence Agency stripped of independent oversight, evoking the wartime "Tokko" secret police and cutting medical spending to fund military expansion — this playbook echoes Japan's militarist path in the last century. Then, as now, a right-wing clique used "existential threat" rhetoric to manufacture consent for rearmament. Then, as now, they hollowed out civilian oversight while wrapping themselves in the imperial flag. Takaichi's claim that all this is needed for a "normalized Japan" and a "free and open Indo-Pacific" may sound benign to Western ears that are fed the same scare story. But the echo with "the Empire of Japan" and the "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" is unmistakable.

The numbers speak for themselves. Japan's military budget has risen for 14 consecutive years, surging 60 percent in the past five years alone to exceed 9 trillion yen ($55.01 billion) in fiscal 2026. Yet after Takaichi diverted 4 trillion yen from medical care to the military, her approval rating has dropped to 53.7 percent — the lowest of her tenure — with 58.7 percent of voters dissatisfied with her handling of the cost-of-living crisis. Real wages have fallen for four straight years; the yen has hit a 40-year low. While ordinary Japanese fret about grocery bills, their prime minister dreams of restoring the Imperial Japanese Navy's battle honors and the country having nuclear weapons. Japan has accumulated 44.4 metric tons of separated plutonium — enough for thousands of warheads — and is taking steps toward abandoning the country's "Three Non-Nuclear Principles".

Meanwhile, reports by The Asahi Shimbun reveal that right-wing groups have been using crowdsourcing platforms to mass-produce AI-generated disinformation claims that the "Nanjing Massacre was a lie" and that "Japan treated civilians humanely" during the war.

At last week's Association of Southeast Asian Nations foreign ministers' gatherings in Manila, Japan's delegation once again hyped a "China threat". In response, the Chinese delegation didn't mince its words, pointing out that the standard for judging a threat is never the size of a country, but rather its historical record and current policies. It was not China that invaded its neighbors. It was Japan that inflicted catastrophic suffering on regional countries. If a nation refuses to face up to its past while accelerating remilitarization, there is reason to remain vigilant.

Takaichi's ideological crusade is undermining her political survival. Her reliance on the Osaka-based Japan Innovation Party forced her to extend the Diet session by eight days just to pass the "Second Capital" legislation, a pet project of the junior coalition party. But the more she channels Japan's militarist ghosts, the more she is alienating ordinary Japanese people who simply want affordable food and stable wages.

In the past, Japan's militarists also enjoyed parliamentary majorities, used "national security" to justify overreach, promised "regional grandeur" while impoverishing their own people and weaponized propaganda to rewrite history.

Takaichi faced a budget committee grilling on Monday. Her coalition still holds for now. But the longer she pursues this path, the more the Japanese public will become uneasy.

The question now is whether the historical ghosts she is summoning will consume her or the region first.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

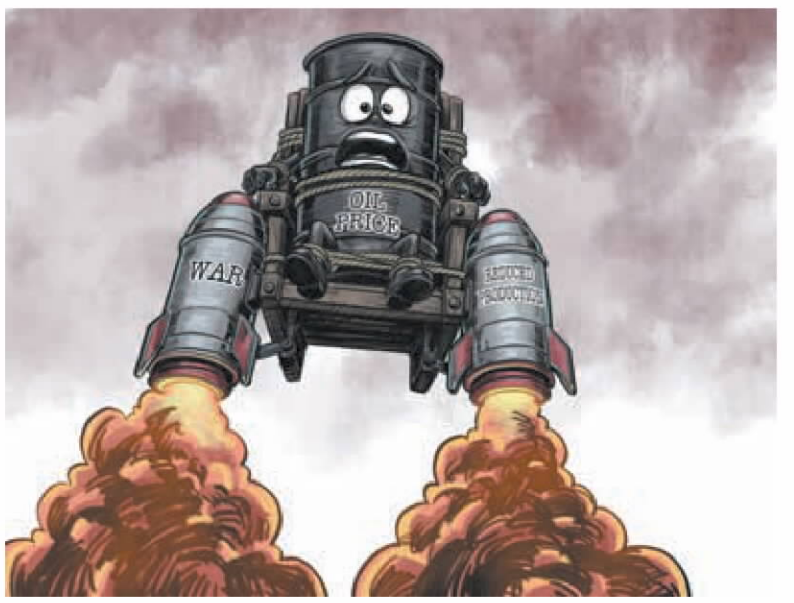
China Daily UK
90 Cannon St, London EC4N 6HA, UK
+44 (0) 207 398 8270
editor@chinadailyuk.com

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Jin Ding



Opinion Line

Mangrove restoration center vital in walking the talk

Walk along any tropical coastline today and you will notice something vital missing. The tangled, salt-tolerant forests that once buffered shorelines, nursed fisheries and locked away carbon at rates terrestrial rainforests could never match are vanishing. Since 1985, more than one-fifth of the world's mangroves have been lost — a hemorrhage that has accelerated rather than slowed. This is a security threat in plain sight.

So, when the International Mangrove Center convened its inaugural council meeting in Shenzhen on Sunday, it was a practical admission that something must be done to protect and restore these essential ecosystems. The center, the world's first intergovernmental global organization dedicated to mangrove conservation, was proposed by China at the Ramsar Convention meeting in November 2022. Within four years, it has not only become a reality, but has eight member states and 13 signatory countries, spanning Asia, Africa and the Americas — the world's main mangrove regions.

This is not rhetorical grandstanding. It is a functioning institution with a secretariat in Shenzhen, a strategic plan and a council that has just appointed a secretary-general. During its four-year preparatory phase, the center compiled global reports on mangrove resources, conducted research on blue carbon policy and hosted six international training workshops for 137 participants from 30 countries.

The ecological stakes are staggering. Mangroves are among the most productive ecosystems on Earth. Though they occupy less than 0.5 percent of the global coastal area, they account for nearly 14 percent of total carbon burial in the ocean — a disproportionate contribution. Their carbon storage capacity can reach up to 1,000 megagrams of carbon per hectare, with burial rates exceeding 180 grams carbon per square meter per year. Yet between 1985 and 2020, the global mangrove area declined by 21.6 percent — from 17.35 million hectares to 13.61 million hectares — while carbon stocks fell by 16.5 percent, equivalent to a potential loss of 4.13 petagrams of carbon dioxide. That is not an abstract number. That is climate breakdown accelerated by human negligence. Warming oceans now threaten restoration efforts, and by the end of the century, rising sea surface temperatures alone could shrink mangrove areas by an additional 150,000 hectares, inflicting annual welfare losses estimated at $28 billion, with Asia bearing 65 percent of the burden.

This is precisely why the International Mangrove Center matters. It is designed to facilitate joint research, capacity building and demonstration projects — practical measures that can help member states improve their conservation and management capabilities. Representatives from Madagascar and other member countries have already signaled their intent to use the platform for policy dialogue, technical cooperation and experience sharing.

China's own record in mangrove restoration underscores its seriousness. Since the start of the century, the country has expanded its mangrove area by 44 percent, reaching 31,700 hectares, making it one of the few nations to achieve continuous growth in mangrove cover over that period. It has enshrined mangrove protection in law and implemented five-year restoration plans that convert aquaculture ponds back into coastal wetlands.

The Ramsar Convention Secretariat has praised China's role in establishing the center, and rightly so. When the Chinese representative pledged to work with member states on joint research and demonstration projects, it was not an empty promise. The center's very existence is proof of follow-through.

The International Mangrove Center is a practical answer to a global challenge. That, in the end, is what a responsible major country should contribute to the world.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Jingdezhen sites window on ancient industry chain

Editor's note: *The Jingdezhen Handicraft Porcelain Industry Sites, a series of heritage sites that showcase the thriving porcelain industry from the 10th to the 19th centuries in Jingdezhen, a city in Jiangxi province, were included in UNESCO's World Heritage List on Saturday. The sites include ancient kilns, mining areas and other spots. China News Service spoke with Liu Yu, an associate research fellow at the institute of literature and culture at the Jiangxi Academy of Social Sciences, and Weng Yanjun, head of the Jingdezhen Imperial Kiln Institute, about the significance of these heritage sites. Below are excerpts of the interviews. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

A unique feature of the Jingdezhen Handicraft Porcelain Industry Sites is that they illustrate the entire production process of the ancient porcelain industry in the city. The mining areas, fuel supply zones, kiln workshops, wharves and ancient streets in the sites represent every stage of the industry. By exploring these areas, visitors can gain a clear understanding of how a handful of clay was transformed into a globally traded commodity.

Archaeological excavations at sites such as the Imperial Kiln and Luomaqiao Kiln reveal superimposed strata. Layers dating back to the Song (960-1279) and Yuan (1271-1368) dynasties lie underneath those of the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties. Kilns, workshops and urban roads from different eras are stacked upon one another, forming a "three-dimensional chronicle of porcelain".

Jingdezhen has also witnessed the exchange of porcelain production know-how between China and other parts of the world. In developing blue-and-white porcelain, enamel-painted porcelain and famille rose porcelain, ancient Jingdezhen artisans incorporated pigments and decorative motifs from the Middle East and Europe, adapting these elements with local techniques.

Jingdezhen's "binary formula" of mixing kaolin and porcelain stone to make ceramic ware was instrumental in inspiring the development of high-temperature hard-paste porcelain technology in Europe. The shapes, patterns and decorative styles of Jingdezhen's porcelain were also widely studied and imitated in Europe, influencing painting, furniture and architectural decoration. Thus, porcelain was more than a mere commodity. It was a medium for the exchange of technology, art and lifestyles.

At the Imperial Kiln, Luomaqiao Kiln and other heritage sites, archaeologists have unearthed finished wares, defective products, kiln furniture and other relics. By analyzing the shapes, glazes and heat marks on the wares, as well as the strata where they were discovered, researchers can reconstruct the formulas and production methods of different historical periods.

The archaeological excavations and analyses of these heritage sites might provide references for the modern porcelain-making industry to improve production techniques and product designs.

The inclusion of these sites on the World Heritage List deepens our appreciation of Jingdezhen's heritage, and helps us shift from simply admiring the beauty of porcelain wares to understanding the entire industry chain and urban system of the city.

Jingdezhen maintains a complete set of porcelain-making techniques and a community of craftspeople to this day. According to some estimates, more than 100,000 people work in the porcelain and related industries in the city.

Jingdezhen has forged friendly ties with over 180 cities worldwide, and its porcelain products are sold to dozens of countries and regions. Artists from more than 50 countries and regions reside here for creative pursuits, turning the city into a vibrant venue for exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:48 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:48 PM

VIEWS

China and the World Roundtable | New Landscape of Artificial Intelligence

Editor's Note: *During the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai on July 17, the China University of Political Science and Law and UNESCO jointly hosted the Global AI Policy Dialogue and Collaboration Development Forum. The event was attended by representatives of international organizations, government officials, academics and business leaders from around the world. Below are excerpts of speeches delivered by four of the participants, as reported by Li Wei of China Daily.*

Moving from AI race to AI governance

Competition alone won't secure the future of AI



Lawrence Lessig is the Roy L. Furman professor of Law and Leadership at Harvard Law School.

During a visit to China last year, I was struck by a manuscript from Alex Karp, CEO of Palantir. He argued that the United States has squandered a generation of engineering talent on trivial pursuits like optimizing online advertising and maximizing engagement instead of tackling the world's hardest problems.

But Karp's solution to that misplaced talent is military competition. His "enemy" is not hunger, disease, climate change, or the existential risks posed by artificial intelligence. It is geopolitical rivalry, especially with China. It reflects the mindset of far too many in the US, but I do not share it.

My first trip to China was in 1989. Back then, parts of the country reminded me of the US in the 1950s. But my subsequent visits to the country changed that impression.

Traveling across China last year, I felt that I was witnessing what the US might look like in 2150. China has achieved remarkable progress, just as the US has its strengths. Both countries have much to learn from each other.

That spirit of mutual learning matters because AI presents humanity with both extraordinary promise and unprecedented danger.

It can accelerate scientific discovery, improve healthcare, strengthen economic development, and tackle global challenges. At the same time, powerful technologies can also be used for destructive purposes.

The uncomfortable truth is that we do not know how to control advanced AI.

We cannot ensure that future systems will remain aligned with human interests, yet we are racing to build them anyway. We are creating what may become the most consequential technology since the atomic bomb without fully understanding how to govern it.

That is why forums like the World AI Conference matter. At a time when competition often overwhelms reason, we need more dialogue, deeper understanding, and broader consensus.

China's embrace of open-source AI is an important contribution to that effort.

Open models allow researchers and developers far beyond a handful of US technology companies to participate in AI innovation.

They democratize access to knowledge, expand scientific collaboration, and help ensure that AI's future is not dictated by a small group of firms or a single country.

But open access alone is not enough. AI's risks are global, and so must be its governance.

Humanity has cooperated to confront shared threats before in areas ranging from arms control to global security. AI poses a challenge unlike any we have faced, and no nation yet has all the answers.

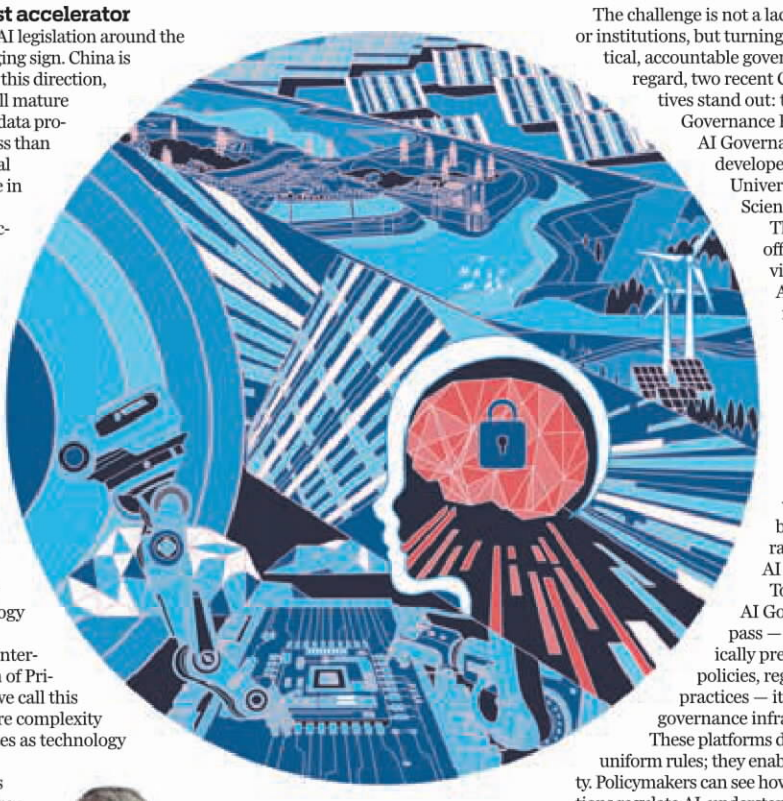
But we do know one thing: scientists, policymakers, and governments must work together rather than retreat behind geopolitical rivalry.

The future of AI should not be decided by fear or competition alone. It should be shaped by cooperation, shared responsibility, and a commitment to ensuring that this transformative technology serves all of humanity — not just the powerful.

Trust is AI's best accelerator

The rapid pace of AI legislation around the world is an encouraging sign. China is moving decisively in this direction, and AI regulation will mature even faster than the data protection law did. In less than five years, robust legal frameworks could be in place.

Unlike data protection, AI regulation does not exist in isolation. It intersects with other areas of law. The European Union's AI Act alone overlaps with a wide range of legal instruments, creating a regulatory landscape that spans thousands of pages. This is not a criticism — it is simply the reality of governing a technology that touches nearly every sector. At the International Association of Privacy Professionals, we call this digital entropy, where complexity naturally accumulates as technology evolves.



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY



J. Trevor Hughes is the president and CEO of the International Association of Privacy Professionals

That complexity is already evident. In Ireland, for example, some 15 regulators from different sectors share responsibility for enforcing the EU AI Act, each bringing its own mandate and interpretation. Similarly, within organizations AI governance is divided among teams handling privacy, consumer protection, intellectual property, trust and safety, content moderation and platform accountability. AI now sits at the center of all these functions, making governance inherently cross-disciplinary.

The history of privacy regulation tells us that while global coordination is important, diversity in governance is not a failure. Different countries will inevitably adopt different AI policies, reflecting their own values, cultures and legal traditions. That diversity is a feature, not a flaw. Innovation involves not just designing better technology, but also designing better governance.

Good governance, however, requires investment. Implementing AI responsibly demands people, expertise, funding and technical infrastructure. These are not needs unique to major AI companies. Every bank, insurer and enterprise deploying AI must build its own governance capacity.

As AI reshapes the regulatory landscape, long-standing privacy principles such as notice and consent are becoming harder to apply in practice. Policymakers must therefore look beyond legislation to technical standards and governance frameworks, embedding principles directly into technology.

The Dutch philosopher Desiderius Erasmus once warned that chasing two rabbits means catching neither. In the AI era, that wisdom deserves reconsideration. We should not see innovation and trust as competing goals. Consider the early automobile: before reliable brakes, cars could travel only at modest speeds. It was the invention of brakes — not their absence — that made faster, safer travel possible. Trust and accountability play the same role for AI. They do not constrain innovation; they enable it to move further and faster.

Entropy tells us that systems naturally tend toward disorder, but that tendency is not destiny. With thoughtful governance, strong institutions and responsible technology, we can create more order, more trust and ultimately more innovation in the age of AI.

Putting aspirations into action



Carme Artigas is a senior fellow at Harvard's Belfer Center, former Co-Chair of the United Nations AI Advisory Council and former Secretary of State for Digitalization and Artificial Intelligence in Spain.

Artificial intelligence is a global public good. It must benefit everyone, not just a privileged few. As AI reshapes society, countries must invest in the talent, capabilities and infrastructure needed to participate in the AI era.

Because AI is a global challenge, its governance must also be global. The priority today is not more principles but governance that can be implemented, verified and enforced. Existing AI frameworks remain fragmented, with many relying on voluntary corporate commitments rather than binding rules.

The challenge is not a lack of principles or institutions, but turning them into practical, accountable governance. In this regard, two recent Chinese initiatives stand out: the Global AI Governance Rules Map, and AI Governance Compass developed by the China University of Political Science and Law.

The Rules Map offers a real-time, visual overview of AI governance rules worldwide. By breaking down information silos and providing continuously updated information, it improves the visibility, accessibility and comparability of global AI governance.

Together with the AI Governance Compass — which systematically presents China's AI policies, regulations and practices — it forms a shared governance infrastructure.

These platforms do not impose uniform rules; they enable interoperability. Policymakers can see how other jurisdictions regulate AI, understand why they differ, and identify areas of convergence. In doing so, they turn AI governance from a black box into a transparent, evolving system.

The new AI Governance for Humanity Lab in Valencia, established under the UN Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies, recently released a white paper. It argues that global governance should establish a floor, not a ceiling. A floor sets essential safeguards while allowing countries to adopt stronger protections. A ceiling, by contrast, risks lowering global ambition to the weakest common standard.

Five priorities are particularly urgent. First, establish a globally shared glossary and taxonomy. We cannot govern what we cannot define. Second, make global standard-setting more inclusive by expanding financial support, multilingual resources and regional participation, so developing countries have a stronger voice.

Third, agree on shared guardrails and global red lines to prevent AI from enabling severe human rights abuses or catastrophic risks. Fourth, create a global, machine-readable system for reporting serious AI incidents to strengthen international coordination.

Fifth, align AI governance with climate goals through environmental reporting that keeps AI's growing computational demands consistent with global emissions targets.

China has built a dynamic AI ecosystem spanning research, industry and talent development. Its commitment to openness, multilateral dialogue and international cooperation has contributed valuable experience to global AI governance.

China has also played a constructive role in supporting UNESCO, the United Nations and broader international cooperation.

The future of AI will be built together. Only through cooperation across borders and disciplines can this transformative technology serve all humanity rather than a privileged few.

Ultimately, AI should be judged not by the power of its models, but by the value it creates for people.

Global AI needs global rules



Amandeep Singh Gill is the UN under-secretary-general and special envoy for digital and emerging technologies.

China's rapid advances in open-source AI models have expanded the frontiers of global innovation while prompting fresh debates over data governance, model safety and regulatory standards. Europe, meanwhile, is charting its own course. The European Union has introduced new rules for general-purpose AI and applications that could foster emotional dependency, particularly among minors, drawing clearer regulatory boundaries for the technology. Different jurisdictions are taking different approaches, but they share the same objective: ensuring that AI develops safely, responsibly and sustainably.

The international architecture is beginning to take shape. The UN has convened its first Global Dialogue on AI Governance to promote policy coordination and international cooperation.

It has also established the Independent International Scientific Panel on AI, whose inaugural report — prepared by 40 experts, including two from China — lays the groundwork for a governance model that links scientific assessment with policymaking. The approach mirrors the evolution of climate governance, where science gradually became the foundation of global action.

Yet technology continues to outpace regulation. International consensus cannot be legislated overnight; it must be built through sustained dialogue. The first UN dialogue on AI governance attracted wide international participation.

The next meeting, scheduled for 2027, will be accompanied by a more comprehensive scientific assessment, providing further support for the development of international rules.

Governance, however, is about more than managing risk. It is equally about narrowing the global AI capability gap. China and a group of partner countries are advancing the World AI Cooperation Organization while supporting a UN initiative to strengthen AI capacity, particularly in developing economies.

A global network of regional AI capacity-building centers, launched in Geneva, is already promoting cooperation in talent development, education, knowledge sharing and innovation ecosystems.

The AI revolution also brings new pressures on physical resources. Data centers, electricity demand and water use are emerging as shared global challenges. Future governance must therefore extend beyond algorithms and data to encompass energy, environmental sustainability and resource efficiency.

Participation in UN-led AI initiatives provides an important platform for mutual learning and the sharing of best practices. By learning from one another's experiences, countries can avoid common pitfalls and develop more effective approaches to AI governance.

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

About a bottle of tea that is not really my cup of tea



Kang Bing

The author is former deputy editor-in-chief of China Daily.
kangbing@chinadaily.com.cn

The fact that hundreds of factories are manufacturing thousands of bottled tea brands shows that they have a huge market in China.

For Chinese people, tea is not just another drink. For centuries, it has been identified as one of the seven daily necessities — the others being fuel, rice, oil, salt, soy sauce and vinegar. In fact, the word "tea" appeared in ancient Chinese poems as often as wine, if not more often.

I have been drinking tea for as long as I can remember. I picked up how to make tea just by observing how my parents and grandparents did it: put a few grams of tea leaves into a teapot, pour boiling water, cover the pot for a few minutes with a lid and the steaming golden-colored drink is ready. Yes, making tea is that simple, or so I believed.

I used to think every other Chinese person prepared tea the same way until I attended a complicated tea ceremony organized by people in South China, saw some foreigners use tea bags, or add milk and sugar to the tea.

It came as a big shock to me when, during a visit to Japan, my hosts treated me to a cup of tea that had glittering gold leaf floating on the surface; they told me it was good for health. To avoid hurting their feelings, I closed my eyes and bravely gulped the whole cup at one go — in the process swallowing gold, which, I had been taught in China, could be fatal.

By the time I realized that tea could be sweet, cold, with milk or in different ways, a tea revolution had taken place in China. Different kinds of tea — green tea, black tea, jasmine tea, Oolong, Longjing, and Pu'er tea — were being prepared, bottled, and sold in the market.

If that wasn't enough, soon a variety of fruit, vegetable and herb teas joined the list. I once asked Baidu's artificial intelligence to list the number of tea-related drinks available in the market but failed to get a clear answer. It won't be wrong to say there might be hundreds of them.

Most modern-day buyers of bottled tea belong to the younger generation, people who were born "with a soda drink in hand". Now that more and more people have realized the harm these drinks cause, many young people are jumping ship and moving to drinks that are tea-based.

During my working years, the first thing many people did on reaching the office was to make a cup of tea. For people of my generation, a new day began only after they had the first sip of hot tea.

Nowadays, however, tastes have changed. Few people have that habit. They mostly come to the office carrying a bottle of iced tea or a steaming cup of coffee. I sometimes wonder if they know how to make tea — even in the simplest way.

As a dedicated tea drinker, I insist that the best tea involves professionally processed plain green tea leaves and the best way to enjoy it is to have it while it is still a little hot. Since a young age, I have been made to believe that tea left overnight is bad for health and should be thrown away. So, what about bottled tea? Presumably, it stays fresh for months thanks to vacuum packaging and the presence of preservatives. Despite all the talk of those added chemicals being safe, I have my doubts.

In recent years, whenever I had no choice, I tried bottled tea. I have had a few. It was tasty, indeed, but the flavor of milk, fruits, herbs and other ingredients is so overpowering that it drowns out the aroma of tea. I can only sympathize with the young people who call this drink tea.

I may dislike bottled tea, but I am not at all against it. The fact that hundreds of factories are manufacturing thousands of bottled tea brands shows that they have a huge market in China.

I hope that the ongoing tough competition in the sector will force enterprises to invest more in improving quality. I hope one day they will come up with bottles full of a drink that is tea both in name and aroma.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:48 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:48 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

GUO BOWEI AND JIN YE

Barometer of economic transformation

China can foster new quality productive forces by enabling electricity and computing power to reinforce one another

Economic data for the first half of 2026, released by China's National Bureau of Statistics on July 15, show that China's economy maintained steady growth while becoming more innovation-driven. GDP reached 69.6 trillion yuan ($10.27 trillion), up 4.7 percent year-on-year at constant prices. New growth drivers, including advanced manufacturing, the digital economy and modern services, contributed more than 40 percent to overall growth.



Guo Bowei



Jin Ye

Electricity consumption was a notable feature. China consumed nearly 5.1 trillion kilowatt-hours of electricity in the first six months of 2026, up 5.3 percent year-on-year. Electricity use by the secondary industry rose 5.1 percent, accounting for more than 60 percent of the total increase, while consumption by the tertiary industry grew by 8 percent.

While the GDP shows how fast an economy is growing, electricity consumption shows where economic activity is taking place and which sectors are gaining momentum. This matters increasingly as China's economy becomes more electrified and digitized. Advanced manufacturing, electric vehicles, 5G networks, artificial intelligence and data centers all depend on abundant, affordable and reliable electricity.

The pattern behind these figures is more important than the headline rate. High-tech and equipment manufacturing have become major engines of industrial expansion, while traditional industries are accelerating their digital and green transformation. In the first half, high-end manufacturing accounted for 24.3 percent of total manufacturing electricity use.

Shenzhen provides a telling example. Electricity consumption by its high-tech and equipment manufacturing industries increased by 4.26 percent, while consumption by energy-intensive industries fell by 9.08 percent. More electricity is flowing toward sectors that generate greater value with lower energy and emissions intensity.

The service sector offers an even clearer picture. Electricity use by EV charging and battery-swapping services surged 56.9 percent, while consumption by internet data services rose 44 percent, far above the tertiary sector's average.

The expansion of electric mobility is accelerating the development of charging infrastructure. In the first half of 2026, the retail penetration rate of new energy passenger vehicles exceeded 60 percent for three consecutive months. By the end of April, China had nearly 22 million charging facilities, up 47.4 percent year-on-year.

Electricity is also becoming a direct indicator of the digital economy's vitality. In March, China's average daily token usage exceeded 140 trillion, more than 1,000 times the level in early 2024. The rapid growth of AI applications is creating huge demand for computing power and electricity. A large AI data center can consume as much electricity as a medium-sized town.

These new growth drivers did not emerge by chance. Their expansion was supported by China's electricity supply system, which is the world's largest. A secure and increasingly low-carbon power system reduces energy costs for existing industries while giving new industries the confidence to invest.

Even amid geopolitical tensions and volatility in international energy prices, China maintained stable energy supplies and broadly stable electricity prices in the first half of this year. This resilience rests on three foundations.

The first is a long-term strategy combining energy security with green and low-carbon development. China has expanded its wind, solar, hydropower and nuclear capacity. By the end of May, total installed power generation capacity had exceeded 4 billion kilowatts, with non-fossil energy accounting for more than 60 percent. A more diversified energy mix has reduced China's exposure to fluctuations in global fossil fuel markets.

The second foundation is China's complete industry chain. The country has developed strong domestic capabilities in wind turbines, photovoltaic modules, batteries, energy storage, ultra-high-voltage transmission and smart grids. These supply chains have lowered the cost of renewable electricity and enabled the power system to integrate clean energy on an unprecedented scale. They also provide reliable support for AI, advanced manufacturing and electric transport.

The third is the continued deepening of reform in the power market. China is building a unified national electricity market in which medium- and long-term contracts, spot markets and green electricity trading complement one another. From January to May, electricity traded through the market increased by 24.8 percent year-on-year. Medium- and long-term contracts have helped stabilize electricity costs for businesses, while spot markets improve resource allocation across regions and time periods. More flexible market arrangements are also essential for integrating variable wind and solar power.

Looking ahead, China will further coordinate the development of computing power and electricity. This year, "computing power and electricity coordination" was included for the first time in the Government Work Report and incorporated into the outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30). Related policies show that energy will be used to support AI development while AI will be used to improve the energy system.

This relationship should work in both directions. On the one hand, a strong and green power system can support the expansion of AI. Computing infrastructure can be better located in regions rich in wind, solar and hydropower resources. Data centers can participate in demand response, adjust some computing tasks according to the availability of electricity, and make greater use of energy storage and direct green power supplies.

On the other hand, AI can make the power system more efficient. It can improve renewable generation forecasts, optimize grid dispatch, identify equipment faults, manage distributed energy resources and support more accurate matching of electricity supply and demand.

The goal should not simply be to build more data centers or generate more electricity. It should be to coordinate the planning, location, operation and pricing of both systems.

China's electricity data for the first half of 2026 show that the country's sources of growth are changing. Advanced manufacturing, electric mobility, digital services and AI are becoming more important, and all depend on a modern power system.

Electricity is therefore both a barometer of China's economic transformation and one of the foundations making that transformation possible. By using electricity to strengthen computing power and computing power to improve the electricity system, China can build a stronger infrastructure base for new quality productive forces and future growth.

Guo Bowei is an associate professor at the School of Applied Economics and the executive director of the Center for Research on Global Energy Strategy at Renmin University of China. Jin Ye is a PhD candidate at the School of Applied Economics at Renmin University of China. The authors contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

LI CHENG

Beyond short-term stimulus

New plan for consumption-led growth strategy, with explicit targets and concrete institutional reforms, can help unlock China's consumer potential

Economic data for the first half of 2026, released by China's National Bureau of Statistics on July 15, show that GDP grew by a hard-won 4.7 percent — a remarkable achievement against a challenging global and domestic backdrop — yet retail sales rose only 1.3 percent to 24.9 trillion yuan ($3.6 trillion), pointing to still weak consumption spending. The per capita picture is even more telling: Disposable income rose 5.2 percent year-on-year, while consumption spending edged up just 3.7 percent over the same period — a gap that underscored persistent consumer caution. This caution tempers an otherwise impressive consumption story. In 2025, retail sales topped 50.1 trillion yuan, cementing China as the world's second largest goods market and the top online retail market. Household consumption as a share of GDP rose from 38 percent to 40 percent, though still below the global average of 57 percent and the 53 percent average for middle-income economies, according to the World Development Indicators. Narrowing that gap is a key policy goal, yet the first-half-year figures show income gains are not being fully converted into spending, raising the question of how to build durable consumption momentum.



Against this long-running backdrop, the authorities have placed household consumption at the top of the economic policy agenda, and recently unveiled the first national plan devoted exclusively to consumption — the Expanding Consumption Plan for the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) Period. Its targets include substantially increasing household consumption's share of GDP and raising total retail sales to around 60 trillion yuan by 2030. The initiative underscores a clear commitment to harnessing China's "super-sized" consumption market, a strategic pivot to domestic demand that has become increasingly urgent amid the persistent deglobalization headwinds. Yet translating these ambitions into sustained gains in household spending will be difficult, given the formidable structural obstacles ahead.

What, then, explains the hesitancy of Chinese consumers? Three intertwined factors merit examining. The first is income distribution, which has grown more skewed even as overall incomes have risen. Consider, for instance, the gap between the median and the mean, a standard gauge of inequality, which has widened steadily: Between 2020 and the first half of 2026, the median-to-mean ratio of disposable income fell from 85.6 percent to 82.8 percent, implying that a disproportionate share of income gains has gone to higher earners while the typical households have fallen further behind. The Gini coefficient tells a similar story. Although it has edged down modestly in recent years, it still stood at 0.465 in 2024, well above the widely accepted warning threshold of 0.4. That matters for consumption, because lower- and middle-income households tend to have a higher marginal propensity to spend. Put simply, when income gains flow disproportionately to the top, most households lack the means to turn broader economic growth into strong consumer demand.

A second factor lies on the asset side: the housing market, once a source of perceived wealth, has now turned into a net drag on household balance sheets. For millions of Chinese households, property is not just shelter but the single largest component of household wealth. Despite recent local measures to stabilize the market, the broader adjustment is far from over. As of June 2026, new home prices in 70 representative cities fell by an average of 3.5 percent from a year earlier, while resale prices dropped 5.6 percent.

This prolonged downturn has weakened household balance sheets and dampened consumer sentiment, creating a drag on consumption that short-term policy support can only partly offset. When families watch the value of their primary asset shrink, the natural response is to save more and spend less. And while policy measures — from easing purchase restrictions and raising mortgage loan ceilings to expanding affordable housing supply — have been rolled out across cities, household expectations of asset depreciation persist in the short run.

Precautionary saving adds another layer of complexity. China's population is aging rapidly: As of 2025, those aged 65 and above reached 224 million, or 15.9 percent of the population — up from 13.5 percent in 2020. With more retirees drawing pensions and fewer workers contributing, pressure on public finances is mounting, raising doubts about the adequacy of future benefits. The social safety net, while broad, remains thin — a gap especially acute for the over 200 million workers in flexible or gig employment, whose access to formal social security is often patchy. The basic pension and medical insurance systems cover the vast majority of residents, while out-of-pocket health spending still represents a notable share — meaning a serious illness can still impose a considerable financial burden on a typical household. Added to this are regional and urban-rural disparities in pension provision, which further strengthen the rationale for households to hold precautionary savings. By the end of 2025, household deposits had reached 167 trillion yuan, up 9.7 percent year-on-year — a clear sign that households prefer to park their money in bank deposits, safe and liquid and ready for unexpected needs. This is not a preference for thrift; it is a rational response to genuine uncertainty. This massive pool of household savings holds substantial latent consumption potential to unlock. But until the social safety net offers not just coverage but credible protection, the precautionary motive will continue to weigh on consumption.

Addressing these concerns is precisely what the Expanding Consumption Plan aims to do for the next five-year period. Its emphasis on "enhancing consumption capacity" — covering income growth and distribution, real estate market development and social security — signals that consumption is not a tap that can simply be turned on. For the income dimension, this means improving primary distribution mechanisms, ensuring that workers' earnings are better protected and that household income rises in tandem with economic growth. For the housing drag, it emphasizes meeting housing demand by increasing the supply of affordable and improved housing, while promoting a stable and healthy property market. And for the precautionary motive, the plan's focus on progressively raising basic pensions and health insurance subsidies, expanding coverage for flexible workers, and strengthening the social safety net goes to the heart of the problem: giving households confidence that financial shocks from illness, old age or job loss will not wipe them out.

To summarize, short-term stimulus measures, including shopping vouchers, may provide temporary support, but they cannot overcome these constraints by themselves. The structural obstacles identified above — income disparities, housing-induced balance sheet strains and deep-seated precautionary motives — have been long in the making and will not be undone by a single policy document. Yet the very act of setting out a consumption-led growth strategy, with explicit targets and concrete institutional reforms, marks a meaningful shift. If that course is sustained — rebalancing income distribution, stabilizing the property market, and deepening the social safety net — the gains could be substantial. Household spending would become a more reliable engine of economic growth, making growth more sustainable and better balanced. The policy direction is set, but unlocking China's vast domestic market potential will depend on consistent implementation, adequate fiscal capacity and restored household confidence.

The author is a researcher at the Institute of Economics at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



WU HEPING / FOR CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:48 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:48 PM

CHINA

New AI chip to boost computing hardware

By **WANG YING** in Shanghai
wang_ying@chinadaily.com.cn

China's first near-memory computing 3D artificial intelligence chip was recently unveiled in Shanghai by AI chip startup Dongfang Suanxin, marking an important step forward in the nation's efforts to develop independent, high-end computing hardware.

Formally named DF1000, the chip enters the market at a time when computing power has become a crucial pillar of national competitiveness and a key driver of industrial growth. As global technological competition intensifies and external supply chain constraints tighten, China faces significant hurdles in obtaining high-end AI chips and advanced semiconductor manufacturing capabilities, according to industry experts.

The new chip addresses a fundamental bottleneck in chip design: memory access speed. In traditional computers, data constantly travels back and forth between a separate processor and the memory, which creates a slowdown known as the "memory wall". Dongfang Suanxin's chip uses near-memory computing — placing memory components directly alongside the processing unit — and stacks them vertically in a 3D design. This structure significantly speeds up data transfer while lowering power consumption, allowing high performance without relying on ultra-advanced manufacturing equipment.

"As the nation's first software-defined 3D AI chip powered by near-memory computing technology, its launch marks an important step toward overcoming one of the key bottlenecks in high-end computing chips, namely their dependence on advanced semiconductor manufacturing processes," said Wei Shaojun, chairman and CEO of Dongfang Suanxin.

The technology behind the chip builds on more than two decades of research. Founded on May 20, 2024, Dongfang Suanxin specializes in integrated circuit design, focusing on self-sufficient software ecosystems and original hardware architectures.

Looking ahead, the company plans to introduce next-generation chips designed for AI model training — the computing-heavy process where AI algorithms learn from massive datasets.

"Our current chips focus on the training level, while the next-generation products are expected to tape out — meaning they will complete the final design phase before manufacturing — by the end of this year, with performance reaching the level of mainstream international peers," Wei said during an interview earlier in July.

Wei added that the company will follow a strategy of "mass-producing one generation, developing the next and researching future generations", while collaborating with supply chain partners to build a secure and self-controlled computing ecosystem.

The technological breakthrough highlights Shanghai's growing role as a national hub for chip innovation, particularly in the Pudong New Area.

Li Hui, deputy head of Pudong New Area, said Pudong's integrated circuit industry expanded by about 23 percent year-on-year in 2025, with total industrial output exceeding 360 billion yuan ($53.11 billion). The district accounts for about one-fifth of China's total integrated circuit industry and roughly three-quarters of Shanghai's overall output.

Overall, Shanghai has built a complete innovation ecosystem supported by strong talent and advanced infrastructure. In the first eleven months of 2025, Shanghai's revenue generated from the integrated circuit industry totaled 391.2 billion yuan, up 23.72 percent year-on-year. Major breakthroughs like the DF1000 chip are expected to give fresh momentum to Pudong's 3D integrated circuit cluster.

Shanghai is currently home to more than 1,200 integrated circuit companies, roughly 40 percent of China's semiconductor talent, and nearly half of the country's innovation resources in the sector.

Close encounters



Fish specimens attract the attention of visitors from the United States during an exhibition at Hainan University in Haikou, Hainan province, on Monday. The event, organized by the American Flying Tigers Friendship Association, involves 36 young representatives from the US visiting various cities in Hainan to explore its innovative development and local culture. LUO YUNFEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Changshan Islands on World Heritage List

Newly added migratory bird habitat in Dalian second expansion of property

By **LI MENGHAN**
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

The Migratory Bird Sanctuaries along the Coast of Yellow Sea-Bohai Gulf of China were further expanded on the UNESCO World Heritage List on Monday. The move came after the 48th session of the World Heritage Committee in Busan, the Republic of Korea, approved a boundary adjustment for the serial property, according to the National Forestry and Grassland Administration.

The addition of the Changshan Islands migratory bird habitat in Dalian, Liaoning province, marks the second expansion of the property and further strengthens the integrity of the sanctuary. It also underscores China's integrated land-sea approach to the systematic protection of coastal natural resources, the administration said.

The Changshan Islands lie in the northern Yellow Sea along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, one of the world's most important migratory bird corridors.

The newly added area covers more than 4,900 hectares and comprises four core components: Fantuozi of Guanglu Island; Toutuozi of Gexian Island; Dahaozi Island; and the southern reef belt of Bashao Island. Together with the Shedao-Laotie Mountain and Yalu River Estuary components already inscribed on the Liaodong Peninsula, the new addition forms an interconnected land-sea ecological corridor.

More than 140 bird species have been recorded in the area. It hosts the world's largest breeding population of the Chinese egret, a first-class State-protected species classified as vulnerable on the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species. The islands also provide year-round habitat for other first-class protected species, including the black-faced spoonbill and the Western Pacific spotted seal.

The serial property features what is considered the world's largest intertidal mudflat system. Its mudflats, marshes and shoals are exceptionally productive, serving as important nursery grounds for numerous species of fish and crustaceans. Large concentrations of migratory birds, including some of the world's most endangered species, depend on the coastline as a stopover to moult, rest, winter or breed along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.

The property was first inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2019, covering two areas in northern and southern Yancheng, Jiangsu province. A first expansion followed in 2024, when five additional areas were added: Chongming Dongtan in Shanghai; the Yellow River Estuary in Dongying, Shandong province; Nandagang in Cangzhou, Hebei province; Shedao-Laotie Mountain in Dalian, Liaoning province; and the Yalu River Estuary in Dandong, Liaoning province.

The administration said China has continued to advance the development of a protected area system centered on national parks while strengthening institutional support for the systematic and comprehensive protection of World Heritage sites. The country now has 15 natural World Heritage sites and four mixed natural and cultural World Heritage sites, the highest total in the world.

SPP targets refined oil tax evasion

By **YANG ZEKUN**
yangzekun@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese procuratorates handled 1,881 public interest litigation cases involving tax violations in the refined oil sector from September 2025 to mid-June this year, helping recover nearly 4.85 billion yuan ($716 million) in unpaid taxes and late payment surcharges, the Supreme People's Procuratorate said recently.

The cases were part of a special regulatory campaign jointly launched by the SPP and the State Taxation Administration in September to strengthen tax oversight on refined oil retailers.

Refined oil is a basic and strategic resource closely linked to economic development and people's daily lives. Tax evasion in the sector not only causes losses to State revenue but also disrupts market order and undermines fair competition, the SPP said.

Investigations found that some filling stations had adopted increasingly sophisticated methods to alter transaction data and conceal sales revenue. Such practices have evolved from simple hardware modifications to coordinated manipulation involving embedded devices, supporting software and cloud-based systems.

Operators may replace encoders or tax-control chips, or use separate operating systems and back-end platforms, to falsify original transaction data and underreport taxable income, according to the SPP.

Some retailers also concealed revenue through off-the-books transactions, including sales made without invoices and payments collected through personal or third-party QR codes.

To address the failure to issue accurate invoices, the State Taxation Administration recently announced the nationwide introduction of an "invoice upon transaction" system for refined oil retailers. In line with the policy, filling stations must implement the system by Nov 1, 2026. After each fuel purchase, retailers will be required to immediately issue buyers with fully digital electronic invoices based on complete transaction data, making it more difficult to conceal sales.

In addition to tax evasion, prosecuting authorities have targeted unauthorized fuel storage and sales operations, which pose risks to both tax administration and public safety.

Such operations typically involve privately installed storage tanks, mobile refueling vehicles and illegal filling stations. Operators sometimes convert vans and box trucks into mobile refueling stations or bury fuel tanks at unauthorized sites to sell gasoline and diesel to passing vehicles.

These activities allow illegally sourced fuel to enter the market, resulting in losses to State revenue. Hidden locations, unqualified equipment and poorly managed storage facilities also pose serious public safety risks, the SPP said.

The SPP highlighted several typical cases from across the country.

In Shanxi province, prosecutors used big data legal supervision models to identify more than 1,600 tip-offs related to filling stations suspected of underpaying taxes. By issuing procuratorial recommendations and taking other supervisory measures, they helped recover more than 288 million yuan in taxes and late payment surcharges.

In Tianjin, prosecutors found that several fuel companies had collected payments through personal and third-party payment codes without issuing invoices and had submitted false tax declarations. Procuratorial recommendations led to the recovery of nearly 18.1 million yuan in taxes and late-payment surcharges.

In Zhejiang province, prosecutors directly filed an administrative public interest litigation case to urge authorities to fulfill their regulatory responsibilities. The action prompted local government departments to investigate and close 31 illegal refueling sites, inspect 155 unauthorized fuel tanks and seize 374 mobile refueling vehicles. Authorities also screened 553 entities for tax risks, filed 98 cases and recovered 140 million yuan in taxes.

The top procuratorate said prosecutors will continue targeting prominent tax violations in the refined oil sector while strengthening coordination with taxation, commerce, public security, market regulation and transportation authorities to close regulatory loopholes, improve market order and safeguard national tax revenue.

The SPP also advised consumers to request invoices after purchasing fuel to protect their rights and help foster a fair, law-abiding business environment.

China rescues 47 after Vietnamese vessel sinks

By **ZHAO JIA** in Beijing
and **CHEN BOWEN** in Haikou

Chinese rescuers saved 47 Vietnamese sailors in a multiday search-and-rescue operation after their vessel sank near Yongshu Reef in the South China Sea on Friday night, Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said on Monday.

The Vietnamese-flagged vessel *Khoi Nguyen 18* had 62 crew members aboard when it sank. Some remain missing, and search-and-rescue efforts are continuing.

China launched rescue operations immediately after receiving reports that the vessel was in distress, Lin told a regular news briefing.

The rescue ship *Nanhai Jiu 115*, operated by the Ministry of Transport's South China Sea Rescue Bureau, found crew members from the stricken vessel near the Nansha Islands on Saturday and rescued 29 of them.

China immediately dispatched additional rescue vessels and helicopters to the area to continue search-and-rescue operations, Lin said.

The rescue of two additional sailors late on Sunday brought the total number of Vietnamese nationals rescued by Chinese teams to 47.

The injured survivors received medical treatment, and all 47 rescued crew members were handed over to the Vietnamese side in an orderly manner, Lin added.

The China Coast Guard said on Monday that search-and-rescue operations were still underway. It said it would continue scouring waters near the site while providing rescued crew members with meals, medical examinations and places to rest to ensure their safety.

> "We would like to thank the relevant Chinese authorities for promptly assisting Vietnam with the search-and-rescue operation."
>
> **Pham Thu Hang,** Vietnamese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman

Lin said the Vietnamese side had expressed appreciation for China's rescue efforts.

Vietnamese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Pham Thu Hang said on Sunday that Vietnamese authorities had immediately coordinated their response and rushed to the scene.

"We would like to thank the relevant Chinese authorities for promptly assisting Vietnam with the search-and-rescue operation," she said, adding that Vietnam hoped the two sides would continue to coordinate closely in searching for those still missing.

Contact the writers at zhaojia@chinadaily.com.cn

Taiwan residents and opposition parties decry DPP's food safety failures

By **LI SHANGYI**
lishangyi@chinadaily.com.cn

Taiwan residents and opposition parties have slammed Democratic Progressive Party authorities over a recent "tainted oil" scandal on the island, as more than 200,000 people rallied in Taipei on Saturday evening to demand that the DPP apologize and hold officials accountable for the food safety crisis.

The rally, under the banner "I Am Human, I Oppose Poisonous Taiwan", was held along Ketagalan Boulevard to express public anger over what participants described as the DPP authorities' delayed response, attempts to shift responsibility and alleged withholding of information regarding the tainted oil.

Opposition party leaders, including Cheng Li-wun, chairwoman of the Chinese Kuomintang, and Huang Kuo-chang, chairman of the Taiwan People's Party, as well as Han Kuo-yu, head of Taiwan's legislative body, along with other lawmakers and city mayors, attended the demonstration.

Cheng said people had taken to the streets to demand that the food they consume not expose them to cancer risks. She said Saturday's rally was only the beginning, not the end, and called on people to stand together to safeguard food safety and "bring down the shameless DPP".

Huang said the tainted oil incident exposed what he described as the DPP's lies, accusing the authorities of failing to reflect on their actions and instead responding to public concerns with an arrogant attitude.

At the rally, Taipei Mayor Chiang Wan-an said the incident had affected more than 1,380 schools across the island, with about 105,000 teachers and students affected in Taipei alone. He criticized the Lai Ching-te administration for failing to provide a clear account of the incident or assume responsibility.

The scandal came to light after a batch of about 1,300 metric tons of soybean salad oil produced by the Central Union Oil Corp in Taichung in April was reported to have contained benzo[a]pyrene, a carcinogen, at a level four times the legal limit. Another batch of oil from the company was also found to contain excessive levels of the substance.

According to media reports, a total of 2,600 tons of the "tainted oil" produced in April and May had already entered the market and been supplied to major food processors across the island before the government released the report in early July, affecting about 360 downstream supermarkets and restaurants.

So far, seven batches of oil found to have exceeded safety limits have been identified, totaling about 8,000 tons. The "tainted oil" has spread to all 22 counties and cities across Taiwan, raising growing public concerns over food safety.



A protester holds a sign that reads "Say No to Toxic Oil, Protect Food Safety" in Taipei, Taiwan, on Saturday. HUANG YANG / XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:48 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:48 PM

Balancing climate action with livelihoods

Sustainable management, regional partnerships scale China's forestry model for Asia-Pacific



The Saihan Tower is surrounded by trees at Saihanba forest farm in Chengde, Hebei province. MU YU / XINHUA

By **HOU LIQIANG**
houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

When Song Zhanfeng returned to the forest in Wangyedian, a State-owned forest farm in Chifeng, Inner Mongolia autonomous region, he wasn't thinking about carbon sinks, regional forestry cooperation or sustainable forest management.

He was thinking about whether mushrooms would grow, and whether anyone would buy them.

A former worker at the forest farm, Song had struggled after leaving his job during earlier reforms. In 2021, when the farm encouraged him to try growing red pine mushrooms under the canopies, he hesitated. Years of setbacks in business had made him wary of another loss-making venture.

The forest farm responded with two guarantees: free technical guidance and help connecting growers with purchasers. It also offered rent-free land use in the first year, while the local government provided subsidies for the under-forest economy.

A year later, Song planted some 1.3 hectares of mushrooms. He recovered 140,000 yuan ($20,600) in costs and earned 100,000 yuan in profit. Based on later production conditions, his annual income was estimated at 200,000 yuan.

He then expanded cultivation by another 2 hectares and became a forest ranger, promoter and technician, helping other villagers understand how income generation and forest protection can reinforce each other.

Song's story is becoming more common in China's forestry sector. Forests are increasingly being managed not only as ecological assets, but also as living systems that can support biodiversity, store carbon, provide legal timber and create income for local communities.

Since 2011, Wangyedian has partnered with the Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation, known as APFNet, on three phases of multifunctional forest management demonstration projects.

The projects have restored 760 hectares of degraded forest land, rebuilt about 67 hectares of mixed forest demonstration sites on logged areas and established 133 hectares of forest management demonstration sites.

"Red pine mushroom cultivation in Wangyedian has expanded to about 133 hectares, with an annual production of over 5,000 metric tons, making Wangyedian the largest production base of its kind in North China. It also generated over 1,000 job opportunities for local communities, with each laborer seeing an income of over 20,000 yuan," said Ma Chenggong, deputy director of the Wangyedian Forest Farm. The practice has helped turn growers into participants in forest protection, while linking local communities build more sustainable livelihoods in Siem Reap. It established 50 hectares of forest restoration demonstration sites, helped villagers build 20 hectares of home gardens and provided solar power systems for 20 households. A revolving fund of $7,840 was also set up to support livelihood activities.

Such projects show that forest restoration can go beyond tree planting. In many developing economies, degraded forests are closely connected with rural livelihoods, energy access and local incomes. By combining restoration with household gardens, small funds, training and clean energy support, forestry projects can become more acceptable and sustainable for communities.

Another APFNet project in Bang Kachao, Thailand, offers a community-oriented example. From 2013 to 2018, APFNet supported Thailand's Royal Forest Department in developing an urban forestry project centered on a biodiversity conservation and nature education center. More than 100 residents and volunteers were trained as ecological guides, and visitor numbers increased tenfold.

Pamilee Reena, chair of the Bang Kachao urban community forest organization and local coordinator of the project, said she once wanted to change the area's poor environmental conditions but lacked funds and technical support.

After joining the project, she helped promote forest protection among visitors. Taking part in protecting the urban green lung made her feel deeply honored, she said.

China has updated its 2035 nationally determined contribution target, proposing that its forest stock volume reach 24 billion cubic meters by 2035. The target reflects the emphasis on forests as an important carbon reservoir and a key part of climate action.

As China moves from expanding forest area to improving forest quality, its experience may offer references for other Asia-Pacific economies facing the combined pressures of ecological degradation, livelihood needs and climate change.

The lesson from Wangyedian is modest but practical: when forests are managed carefully, they can shelter more than trees. Through planning guidelines, demonstration projects, technical exchanges and capacity building, China seeks to turn such local practices into shared experience.

For Asia-Pacific, where forests remain central to climate resilience, biodiversity and rural livelihoods, sustainable management is becoming not only an environmental task, but also a pathway to green development.





Left: Forest workers patrol the Dashui forest farm in Baokang, Hubei province, on July 13. YANG TAO / FOR CHINA DAILY
Right: Tourists set up tents at a campsite at Huanglong forest farm in Tongcheng, Hubei province, in August last year. LIU JIANPING / XINHUA





Left: Song Zhanfeng (center right) instructs fellow villagers on how to cultivate red pine mushrooms at Wangyedian forest farm in Chifeng, Inner Mongolia autonomous region. **Right:** Edible fungi are grown at a greenhouse at Wangyedian forest farm. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

ing enterprises, research institutes, cooperatives, households and nature education.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25), China's forest coverage reached roughly 25.1 percent, while its forest stock volume rose to almost 21 billion cubic meters, meeting ahead of schedule the 2030 nationally determined contribution target related to forest stock volume, according to the National Forestry and Grassland Administration.

The total output value of China's forestry and grassland industry has approached 11 trillion yuan, with economic forests, wood and bamboo processing, ecotourism and the under-forest economy each becoming sectors with annual output of more than 1 trillion yuan.

The progress has been driven by long-term planning rather than isolated afforestation campaigns. China has built a planning system for forestry and grassland protection and development, with the 14th Five-Year Plan providing targets, implementation pathways and policy support. The system coordinates forests, grasslands and national parks, and links ecological protection with resource management, land-use governance and green industries.

Sustainable forest management has also become a common pursuit of regional cooperation on combating illegal logging and associated trade. Illegal logging is not only a trade or law-enforcement issue, but also a symptom of weak forest governance and unsustainable forest management. Better forest management, legal timber supply and community income can help reduce the drivers behind it.

APFNet has become one of the platforms through which China supports such regional cooperation. During the 14th Five-Year Plan, it supported 79 master's and doctoral students from developing economies, expanding its alumni network to more than 200 people.

It also helped increase the membership of the regional forestry education cooperation mechanism to 58, developed 15 online courses and supported 23 young visiting scholars through the Sino–ASEAN Network of Forestry Research Institutes.

Demonstration projects have been another focus. APFNet has implemented more than 50 projects in 20 member economies in recent years, covering tropical forests, mangroves and dryland ecosystems. These projects have restored 1,327 hectares of degraded land, helped build Myanmar's first national arboretum, supported pilot planting and sustainable management of native sandalwood in Fiji, and established a precious tree species breeding center in Cambodia to conserve 56 tree species.

In Cambodia, a forest restoration project has shown how ecological rehabilitation can be linked with local livelihoods.

Jointly implemented by the Chinese Academy of Forestry and Cambodia's forestry authorities, the project introduced close-to-nature forest management techniques to degraded tropical forest while helping local communities build more sustainable livelihoods in Siem Reap. It established 50 hectares of forest restoration demonstration sites, helped villagers build 20 hectares of home gardens and provided solar power systems for 20 households. A revolving fund of $7,840 was also set up to support livelihood activities.

Such projects show that forest restoration can go beyond tree planting. In many developing economies, degraded forests are closely connected with rural livelihoods, energy access and local incomes. By combining restoration with household gardens, small funds, training and clean energy support, forestry projects can become more acceptable and sustainable for communities.

Another APFNet project in Bang Kachao, Thailand, offers a community-oriented example. From 2013 to 2018, APFNet supported Thailand's Royal Forest Department in developing an urban forestry project centered on a biodiversity conservation and nature education center. More than 100 residents and volunteers were trained as ecological guides, and visitor numbers increased tenfold.

Pamilee Reena, chair of the Bang Kachao urban community forest organization and local coordinator of the project, said she once wanted to change the area's poor environmental conditions but lacked funds and technical support.

After joining the project, she helped promote forest protection among visitors. Taking part in protecting the urban green lung made her feel deeply honored, she said.

China has updated its 2035 nationally determined contribution target, proposing that its forest stock volume reach 24 billion cubic meters by 2035. The target reflects the emphasis on forests as an important carbon reservoir and a key part of climate action.

As China moves from expanding forest area to improving forest quality, its experience may offer references for other Asia-Pacific economies facing the combined pressures of ecological degradation, livelihood needs and climate change.

The lesson from Wangyedian is modest but practical: when forests are managed carefully, they can shelter more than trees. Through planning guidelines, demonstration projects, technical exchanges and capacity building, China seeks to turn such local practices into shared experience.

For Asia-Pacific, where forests remain central to climate resilience, biodiversity and rural livelihoods, sustainable management is becoming not only an environmental task, but also a pathway to green development.

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Shenzhen maps plan for mangrove management

By **HOU LIQIANG**

In the heart of Shenzhen Bay, a mangrove wetland stands between one of China's most densely developed cities and a vital habitat for migratory birds. The Futian mangrove wetland, facing Hong Kong's Mai Po Nature Reserve across the water, has become both a showcase of urban ecological conservation and a core platform for China's growing international cooperation on mangrove protection.

The site is part of the Guangdong Neilingding-Futian National Nature Reserve, established in 1984 and upgraded to national level in 1988. Covering 367.64 hectares, it is China's only national-level mangrove nature reserve located in a core urban area. It became a Ramsar site in 2022.

The reserve is home to 20 mangrove plant species from nine families and has 273 recorded bird species. In the 2026 global synchronized census, Shenzhen Bay, including Hong Kong waters, recorded 341 black-faced spoonbills, accounting for about 4.4 percent of the global total.

Its survival was not inevitable. In 1994, when the planned Binhai Avenue would have crossed the reserve's core area, Shenzhen moved the road 260 meters north. A series of conservation measures have been put in place, including the construction of a 500-meter bird noise barrier, height controls around the reserve, a fishing ban across Shenzhen Bay from 2014 and the release of a local bird-friendly urban planning standard in 2025.

Nationally, China has enacted the Wetland Protection Law and continued campaigns for wetland protection, mangrove restoration and the control of invasive smooth cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*). During the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25), the country planted 9,200 hectares of mangroves, achieving its target ahead of schedule, while its total mangrove area reached some 30,300 hectares.

The International Mangrove Center in Shenzhen has given this work a wider role. China proposed the establishment of the IMC at the 14th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in November 2022.

In June, Myanmar signed the establishment agreement of the IMC, becoming the 21st signatory to the document, according to the interim secretariat of the IMC.

Since 2024, it has held six international workshops, bringing together 137 representatives from 30 countries. Each lasting about two weeks, these workshops combined lectures, discussions and field visits for participants from government agencies, international organizations, research institutes, national parks and protected areas, said Peng Peng, director of the interim secretariat. Topics included mangrove policies, restoration techniques, blue carbon, community co-management and transboundary cooperation.



Vegetation thrives at the Futian mangrove wetland in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, in August last year. LIANG XU / XINHUA

In June, a workshop for the Asia-Pacific in Shenzhen gathered 24 representatives from 10 economies, as well as the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership and the Ramsar Regional Center — East Asia, he said.

Based on feedback from workshops and member states, the IMC is preparing a Global Mangrove Status and Key Issues Report and mangrove datasets for signatory states. It is also studying blue carbon policies, market mechanisms and best practices in governance, community engagement and financing.

Futian offers a practical example of what such exchanges can draw on. Shenzhen has invested more than 300 million yuan ($44.2 million) in estuary and coastal mangrove restoration, fishpond rehabilitation and habitat management, covering 220 hectares and adding more than 30 hectares of mangrove planting within the Shenzhen Bay area.

Since 2016, the reserve has restored nearly 40 hectares of former tidal shrimp ponds by clearing reeds and tall vegetation, reconnecting waterways, creating intertidal mudflats and building circular deep-water zones. These former aquaculture ponds have been transformed into high-tide roosting habitats for waterbirds.

The efforts have paid off. The number of black-faced spoonbills roosting overnight in Futian's fishponds, for instance, has exceeded 150, reaching a record high in recent years. The number of the species recorded in Shenzhen Bay rose from 82 in 1994 to 328 in 2025.

Digital tools have refined management. Since 2020, the reserve has installed 27 high-definition video systems and 50 infrared cameras. Together with AI bird identification, automatic image screening and intelligent sluice management, the system helps managers adjust water levels and track bird activity in real time.

Mangrove protection is also being linked with ecological value and public participation. On Sept 26, 2023, China's first auction of mangrove conservation carbon credits was completed in Shenzhen at 485 yuan per metric ton, with proceeds earmarked for restoration.

By the end of 2025, Futian's nature education programs had attracted more than 1 million students from over 300 schools.

For coastal economies facing stronger storms, habitat loss and pressure on fisheries, mangroves are increasingly seen as natural infrastructure. China's experience, from Futian's urban wetland management to the IMC's training and knowledge sharing, suggests that conservation works best when law, science, monitoring, public education, blue-carbon mechanisms, community livelihoods and international cooperation are treated as parts of the same system.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:48 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:48 PM

SPORTS

CYCLING

Pogacar rides to record-equaling title

Fifth Tour de France victory cements his place among the sport's greats

Tadej Pogacar confirmed his status as one of cycling's all-time greats after winning a record-equaling fifth Tour de France title in emphatic style.

Daring mountain attacks from deep, multiple stage wins and an ice-cool temperament all helped the 27-year-old Slovenian seal his victory on Sunday. He joined Belgian Eddy Merckx, Spaniard Miguel Indurain and Frenchmen Jacques Anquetil and Bernard Hinault as the only riders to win five Tours.

"I'm speechless. It's an incredible day, there was an incredible atmosphere," Pogacar said. "I've ridden seven Tours already and I've always finished on the podium. You might think this is a fairy tale, it's incredible for me, too."

After competing strongly in Sunday's 21st and exciting final stage in Paris, Pogacar finished six minutes, 26 seconds ahead of Belgian rider Remco Evenepoel in the overall standings.

Two-time Tour champion Jonas Vingegaard was Pogacar's main rival heading into the race, but the Dane crashed out on the 15th stage.

"Shame that Jonas and others crashed out of this Tour," Pogacar said. "I hope we can all fight again next year."

Pogacar's UAE Team Emirates XRG teammate Isaac Del Toro, a 22-year-old Mexican making his Tour debut, was third at 9:42 back from Pogacar, who smiled and held up his hand to signify his wins. His teammates then joined him as they stood proudly on the Champs-Elysees.

"I don't know how I do it," Pogacar said. "I now have to find a new goal to chase. Which goal? Let's just not jump ahead of ourselves, and enjoy this moment."

> "I don't know how I do it. I now have to find a new goal to chase. Which goal? Let's just not jump ahead of ourselves, and enjoy this moment."
>
> **Tadej Pogacar,** after winning his fifth Tour de France title

Pogacar won the Giro d'Italia in 2024, but has not won the Spanish Vuelta, which starts on Aug 22.

"Will I be at La Vuelta in a few weeks?" he said. "Let's see."

Pogacar said he was looking forward to taking some time off and enjoying the "small things" in life.

But he was not interested in thinking about joining such lofty company.

"Right now I just want to enjoy the moment of winning the Tour," he said. "If it's the fifth or the first, it doesn't matter — it's unbelievable to wear the yellow jersey and to cross the line in Paris winning it.

"I will just enjoy this moment, not thinking about any history, not thinking about (joining any club).

"I just want to live this moment, go back home, relax, enjoy the small things of life.

"I'm really happy and proud to win a fifth Tour. Every single one has a different story, a different meaning, different emotions.

"Each one of them feels incredible and unbelievable for me."

Peerless rider

Pogacar won five stages at this year's race to take his impressive tally to 26 overall.

He tried to win on Sunday, too, but victory ultimately went to Dutchman Mathieu van der Poel, who just held off the chasing pack on the home straight for his second stage win at this year's race and fourth overall.

Sunday's 88.7-kilometer stage looped around Paris and was mostly processional, although less so than in previous years, which were usually entirely flat stages for sprinters and not for the rest of the peloton.

The stage was shortened from 133 km and its starting point in Thoiry, west of the capital, was changed to Paris so as to reduce pressure on emergency services combating wildfires in the southwest. Some security forces initially mobilized for Paris were redeployed to help response efforts.

For the second straight year the stage featured the hugely popular uphill climb through the Montmartre district, a sharp one-kilometer dash that riders had to tackle three times before finishing on the Champs-Elysees.

It proved just too much for Pogacar, who could not match Van der Poel's raw power in the closing stages.

Shortly before 6 pm local time, Pogacar shook hands at the start line with Evenepoel and Ecuadorian veteran Richard Carapaz, wearing the polka-dot jersey for the best climber.

"I battled hard to win this jersey, it was a great fight," the 33-year-old Carapaz said. "It's the best feeling to win it."

Exciting finale

Van der Poel and Denmark's Mads Pedersen, the green jersey winner as best sprinter, were among the expected contenders for the stage win.

Crowds roared as the riders began the first climb up Rue Lepic in Montmartre, with the famed Sacre-Coeur basilica looming over them.

Pogacar moved ahead after the second ascension of Montmartre, with Van der Poel, Evenepoel and Pedersen alongside him.

Van der Poel attacked on the third and final climb with Pogacar responding well, and the one-day classics rivals surged ahead.

But they were caught with 700 meters left and, after Pogacar faded, the 31-year-old Van der Poel still had work to do.

He got his bike just over the line ahead of Belgian Jasper Philipsen, his Alpecin-Premier Tech teammate, and Pedersen. Pogacar eased up and finished 30th.

"I thought the sprinters would catch us up, so I launched (my attack) from very far away," Van der Poel said.

"I gave everything I had left in my legs and it was just enough."

Family pedigree

Van der Poel is widely considered one of the best cyclists in the world. He has multiple victories in one-day classics and Cyclo-cross world championship titles, and is also a former world road race champion.

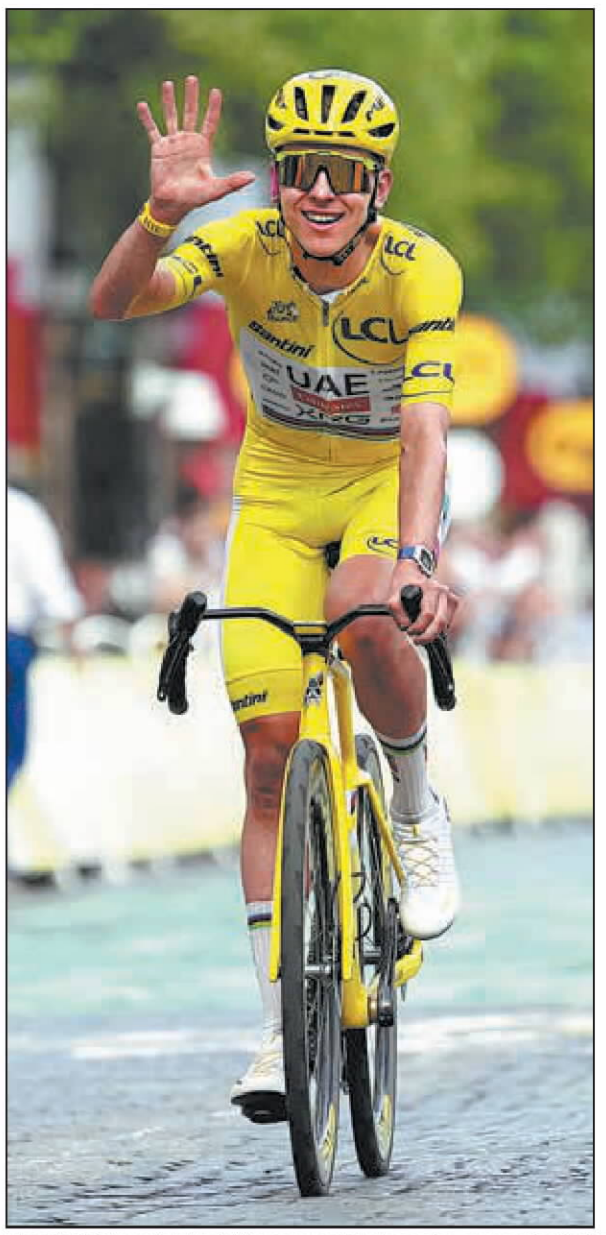
His father Adri van der Poel won two stages on the Tour in the late 1980s. His maternal grandfather was French cyclist Raymond Poulidor, who raced in the 1960s and '70s, finishing second on the Tour three times and third five times. Nicknamed "Poupou" and "The Eternal Runner-up," he was adored by French fans.

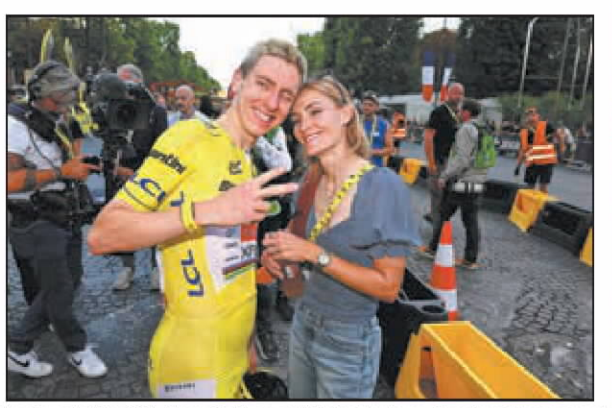
Women's race

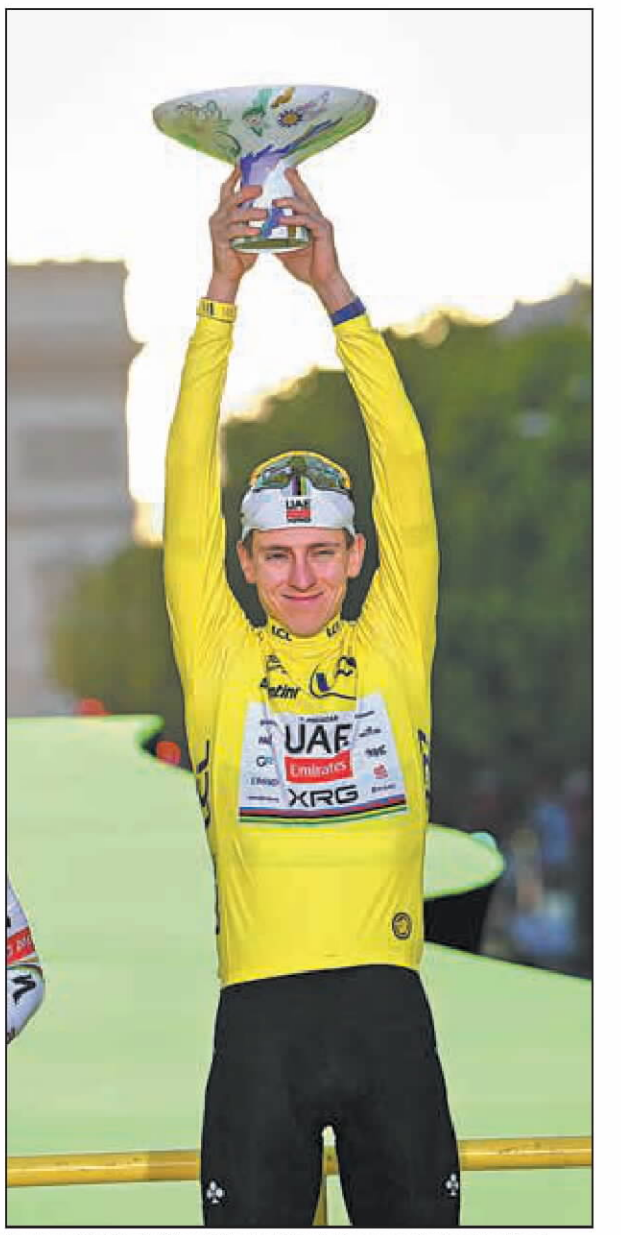
The nine-stage women's Tour starts in the Swiss city of Lausanne on Aug 1 and finishes in Nice on Aug 9.

France's Pauline Ferrand-Prevot won on debut last year.

AGENCIES







From left: Slovenia's Tadej Pogacar celebrates as he crosses the finish line to win his fifth Tour de France title in Paris on Sunday; Pogacar celebrates with his girlfriend Urska Zigart after completing the final stage of the race; Pogacar celebrates on the podium with the trophy. Belgium's Remco Evenepoel finished second and Mexico's Isaac Del Toro came third. AP

You can't compare Slovenian star with past icons as he's not done racing

Tadej Pogacar's main rivals Jonas Vingegaard and Remco Evenepoel have both described the five-time Tour de France winner as the greatest cyclist of all time.

The 27-year-old Slovenian made history on Sunday by joining an elite band of just four other riders to have won the Grande Boucle five times.

So how does Pogacar compare to his fellow five-timers Jacques Anquetil, Eddy Merckx, Bernard Hinault and Miguel Indurain?

Until Pogacar came along, there were few people involved in cycling who did not proclaim Merckx as the best ever.

Anquetil, Hinault and Indurain are much admired, but few would have claimed any of them were as great as Merckx.

When it comes to Pogacar, that is not the case — the debate is feisty.

Evenepoel was even forced to nuance his previous claim when Belgian journalists grilled him for rating Pogacar above his idolized compatriot.

"I'm only racing against Tadej," Evenepoel said during the Tour.

"And I've never raced against Eddy Merckx.

"From what I've felt and seen is that Tadej is one of the best ever, together with Eddy."

Two days later, he again described Pogacar as the greatest!

It is a similar debate to the one in soccer between the nostalgic traditionalists pushing the case for the likes of Pele and Diego Maradona, and a new breed insisting that Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo's talent and achievements outstrip those of their predecessors.

A starting point for any such debate is to look at an athlete's achievements.

Of the five-time Tour winners, Pogacar has won the fewest Grand Tours in total — six — but he is the only one still competing.

The seven and eight Grand Tours of Indurain and Anquetil are comfortably within reach — the 10 and 11 of Hinault and Merckx would take more time to match.

More to come

Where Pogacar outstrips all four is that he won his first at a younger age — and his fifth, too, for that matter.



Tadej Pogacar races through the cobbled streets of Montmartre in Paris during the last stage of the Tour de France on Sunday. AP

He has not completed the grand slam of Grand Tours, having finished third in his only appearance at the Vuelta a Espana — but that was as a 20-year-old.

Merckx, Anquetil and Hinault completed the grand slam, but Indurain did not.

Such is Pogacar's dominance, that it is hard to imagine him not winning the Vuelta if he were to return to the Spanish Grand Tour in the next few years.

When it comes to levels of dominance, Pogacar and Indurain would seem to be behind the other three.

Merckx won one Tour by almost 18 minutes, Anquetil by almost 15 minutes and Hinault by more than 14 minutes.

Pogacar's 2026 margin of six minutes and 26 seconds was his largest yet, but apart from his first victory in 2020, there is no doubt that he has imposed total domination over his rivals in each of his other four successes — as did Indurain in his five victories, including one by just three minutes and 36 seconds.

The margin of victory does not always accurately reflect the manner in which it is achieved.

One area in which Pogacar stands out more than everyone except Merckx is his all-terrain game — able to win one-day cobbled classics as dominantly as he does Grand Tours or weeklong mountainous stage races.

With his 13 Monument victories, Pogacar is second only to Merckx who won 19.

Hinault, who was a fine all-terrain rider, won five Monuments and several other major one-day races, but Anquetil won only one Monument and Indurain none at all.

Indurain, though, was both Olympic and world time-trial champion — something none of the others achieved.

Merckx won the road race world title three times — a feat Pogacar will attempt to match later this year — while Hinault did so once.

One cobbled Monument that Pogacar is yet to tame, though, is Paris-Roubaix — both Merckx and Hinault won there.

Comparisons can also be made in riding style.

While Anquetil and Indurain were known for their pure power, Pogacar is more similar to "the Cannibal" Merckx and "the Badger" Hinault in his attacking panache.

Analyzing who was the best across vastly different generations is an impossible task.

But Pogacar deserves to be mentioned among cycling's greats — and there is surely more to come.

Most cyclists do not reach their peak until their late 20s or even their early 30s.

Pogacar may yet outstrip them all.

AFP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:48 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:50 PM

Heritage bond
Huangshan, Stralsund work to preserve cultural legacies
CITY DANCE, PAGE 4



Talks fail to break Gaza deadlock
WORLD, PAGE 5



AI exports
Chinese firms deliver computing infrastructure to overseas markets
BUSINESS, PAGE 9

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19, 2026



President Xi Jinping hosts a welcoming ceremony for President of Ecuador Daniel Roy-Gilchrist Noboa Azin in Beijing on Tuesday. Noboa is on a state visit to China until Sunday. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

Xi calls for deepening cooperation with Ecuador

By **MO JINGXI**
mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping called on China and Ecuador to better align their development strategies, advance Belt and Road cooperation and deepen collaboration in fields ranging from energy and infrastructure to green development and artificial intelligence, during talks with visiting Ecuadorian President Daniel Roy-Gilchrist Noboa Azin in Beijing on Tuesday.

Noboa arrived in Beijing on Sunday for a state visit that will run through Aug 23. It is his first state visit to China and his second trip to the country as president.

Following the talks, the two heads of state witnessed the signing of cooperation documents covering green industries, economic and trade cooperation, the digital economy and people's livelihoods.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the China-Ecuador comprehensive strategic partnership, which was established during Xi's state visit to Ecuador in November 2016.

Xi said China has always viewed its relations with the Latin American country from a strategic and long-term perspective, regardless of changes in the international landscape.

"China is ready to work with Ecuador to take bilateral relations to new heights and deliver greater benefits to the two peoples," he said.

Xi called on the two countries to consolidate political mutual trust and continue to understand and support each other on issues involving their respective core interests and major concerns.

China respects and supports Ecuador in pursuing a development path suited to its national conditions and is willing to strengthen exchanges between the two countries' governments, legislatures and political parties and share experience in governance as both countries pursue their respective paths toward modernization, he said.

Economic and trade ties between China and Ecuador have expanded steadily since their free trade agreement took effect on May 1, 2024. In the first half of this year, bilateral trade value reached $9.831 billion, up 20.1 percent year-on-year. China remained the largest destination for Ecuador's non-oil exports.

"This reflects both the benefits generated by the bilateral free trade agreement and the potential of China's superlarge market," Xi said.

He urged the two sides to further unlock the agreement's potential, so that more businesses and consumers could benefit.

China is also willing to work with Ecuador in healthcare, poverty reduction, and disaster prevention and mitigation in support of Ecuador's national development, Xi said. He also called for stronger exchanges in education, culture, youth and sports and between local governments, along with steps to facilitate travel and deepen friendship between the two peoples.

Noboa said China is an important partner and friend of Ecuador and that bilateral relations have entered a new stage, delivering tangible benefits to both peoples.

He said Ecuador is ready to deepen political mutual trust with China, support China in safeguarding its sovereignty and territorial integrity, and respect its position on the Taiwan question.

Ecuador is willing to strengthen mutually beneficial cooperation with China in trade, finance, mining, renewable energy, science and technology, and culture, Noboa said. The country also seeks to expand its exports to China and welcomes more Chinese companies to invest and operate in Ecuador, contributing to improvements in people's livelihoods and the country's development, he added.

The two leaders also exchanged views on developments in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Xi said China has always maintained that the status of the Latin American and Caribbean region as a zone of peace should not be shaken.

The course of development and revitalization of Latin American and Caribbean countries should not be disrupted, and the right of countries in the region to independently choose their cooperation partners should not be interfered with, he said.

China supports Latin American countries in upholding independence and self-reliance, pursuing foreign cooperation based on their national interests, and safeguarding regional peace and stability, Xi added.

Noboa said Ecuador values China's position and role and is ready to remain a good friend of China on the other side of the Pacific.

Humanizing the future of robotics

WORLD WATCH
By Carlos Magariños

During my visit to the 2024 World Manufacturing Convention in Hefei, East China's Anhui province, I felt as though I had stepped into a scene from a science fiction movie. Before me, a 1.8-meter-tall humanoid robot weighing 60 kilograms was using its 38 degrees of freedom — or 38 independent ways to move or rotate — to fold clothes, open bottles, pour water and wash dishes with remarkable precision.

Since then, the race to develop more advanced robots has only gained momentum.

Improvements in actuators and sensors now allow humanoid robots to walk, run and perform increasingly complex tasks. At the same time, advances in artificial intelligence are rapidly enhancing their ability to interpret surroundings, interact with people and adapt to changing situations.

Applications now extend far beyond the factory floor. Humanoid robots are now finding roles in agriculture, customer service and healthcare, as well as in assisting older people, patients and persons with disabilities.

However, humanoids are only part of a much broader transformation.

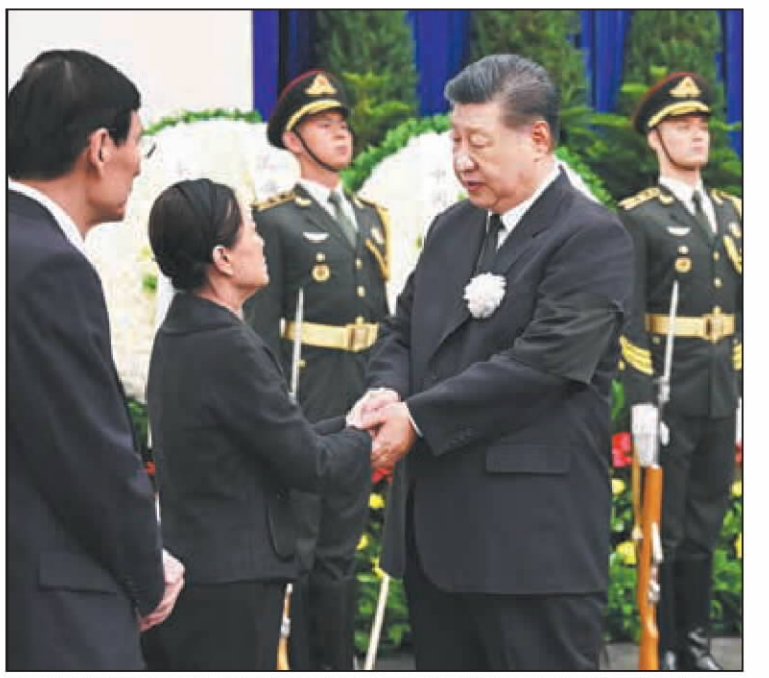
Collaborative robots, or cobots, work alongside people, augmenting human capabilities in factories, laboratories and hospitals. Swarm robotics enables multiple robots to coordinate on tasks such as searching for and rescuing survivors, inspecting infrastructure or exploring hazardous environments.

This new generation of robots is pushing the boundaries of possibilities. But perhaps the more important question is not what robots will eventually be capable of, but what we want them to do.

As the father of a young man with an intellectual disability caused by a rare genetic condition, I have seen firsthand the extraordinary contributions of robotics and intelligent technologies to everyday life. They can help organize routines, facilitate communication, improve safety and enhance personal autonomy. For many families, these are not abstract possibilities, but tangible improvements in daily life.

This experience has also taught me an important distinction that no technological advance should blur: assistance and care are not the same thing. Machines can perform tasks with ever greater efficiency, but care requires recognition, responsibility, patience, empathy and affection. Those qualities arise essentially from human relationships, rather than from algorithms.

See ***Robots,*** *page 3*



President Xi Jinping extends his condolences to a family member of Zhu Rongji on Tuesday at the Babaoshan Revolutionary Cemetery in Beijing. XIE HUANCHI / XINHUA

Zhu Rongji's remains cremated in Beijing

Senior Party and State leaders pay their last respects to former premier

By **CAO DESHENG**
caodesheng@chinadaily.com.cn

The remains of former Chinese premier Zhu Rongji were cremated in Beijing on Tuesday.

President Xi Jinping and other senior Party and State leaders, including Li Qiang, Zhao Leji, Wang Huning, Cai Qi, Ding Xuexiang, Li Xi and Han Zheng, bade farewell to Zhu at the Babaoshan Revolutionary Cemetery in the morning.

Amid solemn music, they walked slowly toward Zhu's remains and stood in silent tribute. They then paid their final respects with three bows and shook hands with Zhu's family members. Former Chinese leader Hu Jintao sent a wreath to express his condolences over Zhu's passing.

Zhu died of illness on Aug 12 in Beijing at the age of 98. He had served as a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the 14th and 15th Central Committees of the Communist Party of China.

To mourn his death, national flags flew at half-staff on Tuesday at Tian'anmen Square, Xinhuamen, the Great Hall of the People and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs office in Beijing, in seats of CPC committees and governments of provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities, and the Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions, at land ports, seaports and airports, and at Chinese embassies and consulates.

Zhu was extolled in an official obituary as an excellent Party member, a time-tested and loyal communist fighter, and an outstanding proletarian revolutionist, statesman and leader of the Party and the State.

Zhu, who was born in October 1928 in Changsha, Hunan province, joined the CPC in October 1949.

During his tenure as vice-premier and premier of the State Council, China's Cabinet, between 1991 and 2003, the country was in a critical period of transition — from a planned economy to a socialist market economy.

Under the strong leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Jiang Zemin at its core, Zhu organized and implemented a series of major reforms, promoting the establishment of the basic framework for a socialist market economy.

Zhu spearheaded reform of the fiscal and taxation systems, actively promoted the reform of the financial system, carried out the reform of State-owned enterprises, and pushed for the establishment of a unified, regulated and comprehensive framework for the social security system.

He oversaw the completion of the arduous negotiations for China's accession to the World Trade Organization and advanced the country's opening-up in both scope and depth.

Zhu also advanced China's housing reform, gradually replacing the allocation of housing to employees with monetary housing benefits.

He had deep affection for the people, and emphasized that government officials should always bear in mind that they are public servants, have the courage to speak the truth and refrain from seeking special privileges.

Zhu's life was a revolutionary, fighting and glorious one, the obituary said, adding that his death is a great loss to the Party and the State.

XI'AN EATERY SERVES UP A UNIQUE TASTE OF THE CITY

Open-ended, pan-fried and steamed, these special *guotie* are part of a neighborhood tradition stretching back eight decades

By **LI YINGXUE**
liyingxue@chinadaily.com.cn

China Vibes — FOOD —

The sizzling sound of an iron pan and the aroma of freshly fried dough drew Ukrainian travel blogger Oleksii Lisianskyi to a small restaurant in Xi'an, Shaanxi province.

There, he discovered *guotie* — open-ended, pan-fried dumplings with juicy fillings. What stayed with him was not only the taste, but also the story behind the dish. "It looks similar to dumplings. The bottom is crispy, while the filling is flavorful," Lisianskyi said.

The dumplings he enjoyed at Hairong Guotie are part of a family tradition dating back nearly eight decades. Listed as an intangible cultural heritage item in Xi'an's Beilin district in 2022, the technique for making the signature *guotie* offers a glimpse into how an everyday dish can preserve neighborhood memories, sustain a family legacy and find new life among younger and international audiences.

Much of the appeal lies in the contrast of textures. The underside is crisp and golden, while the upper layer remains soft and tender. Inside, the filling is moist and flavorful.

See ***Dumplings,*** *page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.

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

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN ASIA NEWS NETWORK
China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

INSIDE
Picture of health
Global Views, page 8



Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:50 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:50 PM

INDEPTH

Shangri-La's mushrooming reputation

Highly-prized forest delicacy links mountain communities to tourism opportunities, Asian market

By **YANG FEIYUE** and **LI YINGQING**
in Diqing, Yunnan

Ngawang Duchin moved slowly through the forest in Shangri-La, Yunnan province, scanning the ground beneath towering pine trees.

In Jidi village, Diqing Tibetan autonomous prefecture, pine needles carpeted the forest floor and chestnut trees lined the mountain slopes at an altitude of 3,300 meters. Summer mist drifted across the ridges.

To an untrained eye, there was little difference between one patch of forest floor and another. But since July, 38-year-old Ngawang has been searching for signs of what was hidden beneath it. The Tibetan villager suddenly stopped, crouched down and brushed away a thin layer of pine needles.

"The ground is slightly raised here. When it bulges like this, there is usually something underneath," he said.

He carefully loosened the soil and a small brown mushroom slowly emerged, its cap still partly closed and covered with traces of forest earth.

The fungus was matsutake, known in China as *songrong* — a delicacy grown in the mountain forests of Yunnan and popular in high-end restaurants across Asia.

For visitors accompanying Ngawang, seeing one of the world's most-prized mushrooms being foraged in the wild was a magical experience.









Anticlockwise from top: Tourists, guided by a local villager, search for matsutake mushrooms in Jidi village, Diqing Tibetan autonomous prefecture, in Yunnan province; villagers sort matsutake mushrooms in Jidi; traders take photos of packed matsutake from Jidi at a local trading market. PHOTOS BY GAO YONGWEI / XINHUA Freshly picked mushrooms from mountains in Diqing are displayed in July. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Seasonal treat

This summer, similar scenes played out across countless mountain slopes in Yunnan, a province known as the kingdom of wild mushrooms. With the rainy season arriving between June and September, forests across the region have been yielding their underground treasures. More than 900 species of wild edible mushrooms grow here — accounting for about 36 percent of the world's known varieties and more than 90 percent of China's total, according to the Kunming Institute of Botany of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

The secret lies in Yunnan's dramatic geographical variance. Altitudes range from just 76 meters to nearly 6,740 meters, creating a vertical climate where temperatures, humidity and sunlight vary sharply from valleys to ridges. This remarkable diversity of habitats gives mushrooms their own corners of the forest to grow, but matsutake stands above the rest.

Diqing prefecture — home to Shangri-La — produces more than 65 percent of the province's matsutake, according to the Fourth Shangri-La Matsutake Forum held in July, making it the undisputed heart of China's matsutake industry. Here, wild mushrooms have supported mountain communities for generations.

Unlike ordinary agricultural products, matsutake cannot simply be planted and harvested. It depends on a delicate relationship with its natural environment.

The fungus grows together with certain trees, forming underground networks around their roots. Through this partnership, the mushroom helps trees absorb water and nutrients, while receiving energy produced by the trees through photosynthesis.

It can take five or six years before a matsutake fruiting body — the part people eat — appears above ground.

And once it emerges, the clock begins ticking. Within about 48 hours, its freshness starts to decline.

This combination of rarity, seasonality and dependence on the forest has made matsutake one of nature's most sought-after delicacies.

The mushroom has been appreciated in China for centuries. Its name, literally meaning "pine deer-antler mushroom", refers to the way young mushrooms resemble antlers and the fact that they often grow in pine forests. References to matsutake appeared in ancient Chinese texts, and the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) pharmacologist Li Shizhen included it in his *Compendium of Materia Medica*.

In Japan, where matsutake has been treasured for more than 1,300 years, it remains closely associated with autumn and the aroma of forests. *Honcho Shokkan*, a book of Japanese food published in the 1690s, described it as "the foremost mushroom" and it has continued to influence Japanese cuisine.

Ngawang said good matsutake usually grows where small chestnut trees and pine trees meet. "When the mushroom is still young, you cannot see it. You have to understand the forest," he said.

For many tourists this summer, entering Jidi's forests provided a major insight. Ngawang taught them to look for subtle changes such as disturbed pine needles, tiny cracks in the soil and slight differences in the landscape.

"It is not always covered by moss. Sometimes it is just bare earth opening slightly," he told one group.

The visitors followed his instructions carefully. After successfully foraging for a while, the visitors sat down to taste the morning's discovery.

Ngawang took out traditional Tibetan butter, or *suyou*, and melted it on a heated stone. He placed thin slices of fresh matsutake on top. "Just fry it like this. Two minutes," he said. "Or you can eat it raw with wasabi."

Return of the Jidi

Ngawang was born in Jidi, and like many young people from mountain villages, he left home in search of a better life.

At 18, he joined the army and served for eight years. After returning to civilian life, he moved to Lijiang, another popular tourism destination in Yunnan, where he ran businesses including a homestay, hiking club, restaurant and tea house, and gained experience in tourism.

But after the COVID-19 pandemic, he began thinking more seriously about returning to his hometown. By then, Jidi had already developed a reputation for matsutake.

Every summer, when the rainy season arrived, villagers entered the mountains to collect the mushrooms. The harvest lasted only two to three months, but the income from this short period supported families throughout the year.

Ngawang wondered whether the forest could offer visitors something beyond a scenic view.

"People come to Shangri-La to see mountains and nature. But they do not always know the stories behind them," he said.

After spending several years exploring different opportunities, he leased one of the village's four designated mushroom-picking areas, paying 5,000 yuan ($690) a month during the three-month harvest season.

His idea was to cooperate with hotels in downtown Shangri-La, bring visitors into the mountains and allow them to witness how the mushrooms are harvested and sent to dining tables.

"I know the mountain and can at least make sure people are safe," he added.

For visitors, his greatest asset was knowing where mushrooms were likely to appear, when they should be picked, and which ones should be left behind. "Do not pick mushrooms smaller than 3 centimeters," he told one group.

The advice was not merely traditional wisdom. It reflected scientific understanding of the mushroom's life cycle.

Sun Dafeng, director of the Kunming edible fungi research institute under the All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives, explained that immature matsutake does not have fully developed reproductive structures.

"If they are picked too early, they cannot release spores effectively," Sun said. "That affects future growth."

In Diqing, regulations prohibit harvesting immature mushrooms and encourage practices that allow the fungal root network to recover.

Tsering Norbu, director of the Jidi village committee, said the mushroom industry accounts for a major share of the local economy.

"Seventy to 80 percent of the village's GDP comes from matsutake," he said.

For more than 300 households, the summer harvest season influences almost every aspect of their life. "When the mushrooms grow well, villagers have more confidence about the future," Tsering said.

Jidi has established four designated mushroom-picking areas with clear rules on harvesting hours and seasonal protections. Villagers adopt a "harvest and fallow" approach, part of what experts call a joint conservation and breeding expansion model.

Sun compares this approach to rehabilitating farmland.

"The forest also needs recovery time," he said. "The underground fungal system is living. If the environment is damaged, production will eventually decline."

In Jidi, more than 267 hectares of matsutake-producing forest have been protected and expanded through measures including designated harvesting zones and seasonal restrictions.



A vendor displays fresh matsutake at a market in Kunming, Yunnan, in September. YANG ZHENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

This approach has helped stabilize annual output at around 300 metric tons.

Preparing for sales

The mushrooms' commercial value must be hastily maximized when villagers lift them from the soil. From the moment they are picked, the clock starts ticking to get them to dining tables in time.

At the Shangri-La matsutake trading center, about 30 kilometers from Jidi village, workers sort, pack and dispatch the fragile harvest.

Inside the market, the atmosphere is frantic. Phones ring constantly and buyers inspect the quality of the mushrooms under bright lights. The fungi are separated by hand, according to size, appearance and freshness before being sent to destinations hundreds or even thousands of kilometers away.

At the center of the trading hall stands a large model airplane — a reminder that these mushrooms, once collected mainly for local consumption, have become part of a global food network.

Fresh matsutake is highly perishable, making transportation a challenge.

During the peak harvest season in July and August, dealers handle dozens of kilograms each day. Mushrooms are packed with ice and moved quickly through cold-chain logistics to preserve their texture and aroma.

Some major buyers travel to Shangri-La in search of the highest-quality mushrooms.

Trucks transport matsutake to Kunming, the provincial capital, in the morning to larger distribution networks and for export. Flights from Diqing Shangri-La Airport connect with major domestic markets, including Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Guangdong province and Chongqing.

But expansion of the market has brought new challenges.

For generations, matsutake buyers relied on experience to judge quality and developed their own standards based on size, appearance and aroma. As demand increased, however, the industry needed clearer standards.

"Matsutake is different from ordinary agricultural products," said Jia Xiao, a researcher at the Research Center for Rural Economy of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs. "Because it cannot be cultivated on a large scale, protecting the natural environment where it grows is the foundation of the industry."

A global appetite

At the forum, local officials and experts highlighted the growing recognition of Shangri-La matsutake as a regional agricultural brand.

According to data released at the forum, its brand value had reached 4.41 billion yuan, but experts said its reputation could not be measured by numbers alone.

Earlier this year, Shangri-La introduced new grading standards for matsutake, classifying mushrooms on a five-level scale.

The grading system considers factors including length, integrity, maturity, color, cleanliness and aroma. Among them, aroma remains the most difficult to measure.

"Matsutake's fragrance comes from a combination of volatile compounds," Sun Dafeng explained. "Technology can detect these compounds, but it cannot fully describe the human experience of smelling something fresh, earthy and connected to the forest."

Experts believe standardized grading and traceability systems can help consumers better understand the mushrooms they purchase. Each batch of matsutake can now be tracked through digital records showing its origin and processing information.

The international market for Shangri-La matsutake has continued to grow.

According to Diqing prefecture authorities, the region exported 55 metric tons of matsutake in 2025, generating 15.66 million yuan in foreign exchange.

The 2026 export season began on July 4, when a 14-kilogram shipment cleared customs at Kunming Changshui International Airport and was transported overseas within 24 hours of being picked, according to Kunming Customs.

Logistics companies have also expanded services to meet international demand.

At the forum, SF Express introduced new delivery solutions connecting matsutake-producing areas in Shangri-La, Kunming and Lijiang with overseas markets including Osaka in Japan, Seoul in South Korea and Singapore.

The company said its services could shorten door-to-port delivery time to about 28 hours and support exports via more than 50 international routes.

"To succeed in high-end global markets, Shangri-La matsutake needs more than quality and logistics," Sun said. "It needs sustainable harvesting, reliable standards, traceability and a story that reflects where it comes from."

For Ngawang, the future of matsutake is about helping more people understand the mushroom's history and essence.

"I hope the whole village can do this together," he said. "I bring the guests, and they experience it themselves. There is no need for a big investment."

Contact the writers at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:50 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:50 PM

TOP NEWS

Robots: Innovation should translate into well-being

From page 1

Therefore, the purpose of robotics in care should not be to replace human relationships, but to augment human capabilities, allowing caregivers, families and professionals to devote more time to the distinctly human dimensions of care.

As a development practitioner, I have learned that this principle extends far beyond healthcare and caregiving. I made this point recently at the Web Summit Rio: The greatest challenge posed by a new technology is not merely to develop it, but to transform technological progress into development.

International experience shows that countries do not prosper simply because they acquire advanced technologies. They progress when they build the institutions, human capabilities and productive structures needed to translate innovation into productivity, opportunity and greater well-being.

Similarly, robotics becomes a tool for development only when integrated with education, skills development, entrepreneurship, industrial capabilities, infrastructure and sound public policies that accompany technological change.

This is also one of the key lessons from China's remarkable advances in robotics.

What impressed me the most during my visit to Hefei was not only the sophistication of the machines, but also the ecosystem surrounding them — universities, research centers, manufacturers, digital infrastructure, supply chains and industrial policies evolving together. Robotics did not appear as an isolated technological achievement, but as part of a broader strategy for productive modernization.

This is an important lesson for developing countries.

The goal should not simply be to buy robots or imitate those leading the technological race. Instead, it should be to develop the capabilities needed for robotics to increase productivity, expand opportunities and promote more inclusive and sustainable development.

The same principle applies whether robots operate in factories, farms, hospitals or homes.

An industrial robot should not be judged simply by the number of workers it can replace, but by its ability to make production safer, more productive and more competitive. An agricultural robot should not be valued merely for automating harvesting, but for enabling us to produce more food with fewer resources and less environmental impact. And an assistive robot should not be considered successful because it mimics human interaction, but because it empowers a person with a disability to gain autonomy, allows an older person to live more independently, or enables a caregiver to devote more time to genuinely human care.

Robotics, perhaps more than many other emerging technologies, reminds us that innovation should never be an end in itself. Its true value lies in the human possibilities it creates.

Ultimately, the measure of technological progress will not be what robots can do, but what human beings can achieve because of them.

The author is former director-general of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), former state secretary for industry of Argentina, and now a board member of several Latin American companies. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Dumplings: Legacy grows with new fillings, stores

From page 1

The family's restaurants prepare all fillings fresh each day, which include shrimps, mushrooms and leafy greens, as well as wild vegetables with eggs. The signature beef-and-yellow chives *guotie* features freshly cut beef with 80 percent lean meat and 20 percent fat.

According to Xuan Jianjun, the current owner and operator of the Hairong Guotie, the yellow chives are sourced from a designated growing area in Ankang, Shaanxi.

Each *guotie* weighs about 26 grams — approximately 9 grams of dough and 17 grams of filling. Bone broth is used to scald part of the flour and season the filling, giving the dumpling a richer taste.

Its preparation reflects the traditional Chinese balance of water and fire. The *guotie* are first lightly fried in oil. Once the bases begin to color, a mixture of flour, starch and water is poured into the pan. The pan is then covered, so that the dumplings can steam before more oil is added for a final crisping. The family describes the ideal appearance as a "golden back and fish belly".

Unlike many southern-style pan-fried dumplings, the northern-style *guotie* made through the Xuan family's technique leaves both ends open. Each dumpling curves as it cooks, helping to lock in the juices, while the thick cast-iron pan distributes heat evenly.

The family tradition began in 1947, when Xuan Hairong, the grandfather of current owner Xuan Jianjun, and his wife, Wang Guilan, settled in Xi'an. With three earthen rooms and an iron pan, they began selling *guotie* and sweet fermented-rice soup to the locals. They became known for generous fillings, carefully prepared dough and warm hospitality. When neighbors faced difficulties, the couple offered extra food without asking for payment.

After Xuan Hairong died in 1962, the passing down of the technique was interrupted. As Xuan Jianjun grew up, he was deeply influenced by his grandmother, Wang, and her dedication to the craft. In 1989, he decided to revive the technique and continue family tradition.

Wang, now 105, still visits the restaurant when her health allows, checking the food and reminding younger family members to preserve the original flavors. Her principle is simple: Run the restaurant honestly and make food with a clear conscience.

For Xuan Jianjun, preserving the craft goes hand in hand with innovation. The family has introduced crayfish *guotie* and explored seasonal fillings inspired by the traditional Chinese practice of eating according to the 24 solar terms.

The family now runs 12 franchised restaurants and eight directly managed ones in Xi'an and its neighboring areas. "We hope to build a century-old family business and pass the craft down from one generation to the next," Xuan Jianjun said.



The photo shows *guotie* at Hairong Guotie, whose dumpling-making technique has been listed as an intangible cultural heritage item in Xi'an's Beilin district since 2022. HAO YANGBIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Aid shipment



Earthquake relief supplies provided by the Chinese government are loaded onto a cargo plane bound for Colombia at Beijing Capital International Airport in Beijing on Monday night. The supplies included power generators, mobile water purification devices, disinfection machines, solar-powered lighting equipment, tents and blankets. The chartered flight was scheduled to arrive in Bogota, the capital of Colombia, on Tuesday. The recent magnitude 7.4 earthquake in Colombia killed hundreds of people. WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY

Unitree raises mega debut hopes

First A-share listing by a humanoid maker offers key valuation benchmark for investors

By CHENG YU
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Expectations are running high for Chinese humanoid robot maker Unitree Robotics' debut on Shanghai's STAR Market on Wednesday, after its record-breaking initial public offering was oversubscribed more than 8,000 times by retail investors, with some institutions predicting a potentially explosive first-day jump.

Industry experts said that Unitree's IPO has become more than a company-specific event. According to them, it is a defining moment for China's fast-growing humanoid robot industry, which is setting a key valuation benchmark for global investors in the sector.

Investors were already placing their bets on Tuesday. Although the broader market came under pressure, a group of stocks of companies in the humanoid robot sector jumped in early trading.

Swancor, a leading new materials manufacturer that expanded into the field of humanoid robots, closed at 188.97 yuan ($28.03), up 10.26 percent, while Leaderdrive, a precision robotic component maker, edged up about 5 percent to 380.8 yuan.

Unitree sold about 40.45 million shares at 150.80 yuan apiece, raising roughly 6.1 billion yuan. Retail demand exceeded the shares available by more than 8,000 times, a record for Shanghai's tech-focused STAR Market.

Wang Peng, a researcher at the Beijing Academy of Social Sciences, described Unitree's IPO as a defining moment for the humanoid robot sector. "For years, investment in the sector has been driven by competing technology road maps and expectations of long-term growth. The IPO will allow investors to compare robot makers more directly on their technology, product maturity, commercialization and path to profitability.

"As the first humanoid robot company to list on China's A-share market, Unitree has established a valuation anchor for the humanoid robot sector both for China and the world, gradually shifting the sector from thematic investment to industrial pricing," he said.

The IPO offer also values Unitree at about 60.99 billion yuan, representing 35.89 times its 2025 sales value and 219.23 times its earnings, far above an average price-to-earnings ratio of about 38.56 times for China's general equipment manufacturing sector.

Xu Guangtan, chief analyst for the machinery sector at China Securities, said that Unitree's offer price and estimated valuation far exceeded previous market expectations and could help reshape how investors value humanoid robot manufacturers.

"Chinese companies are simultaneously strengthening robots' AI 'brains', motion-control cerebellums and physical bodies while pushing toward industrial and commercial applications," Xu said.

On Monday, Unitree unveiled another high-speed robot capable of running at up to 12.66 meters per second and jumping two meters from a standing position. The company said it had produced and delivered about 18,000 bipedal humanoid robots across different models till the end of July.

Tian Lihui, a finance professor at Nankai University, said, "Whether Unitree can grow into that valuation will depend heavily on whether orders from factories and other industrial customers begin to scale."

Just a day before Unitree's debut, Precilasers, a Chinese laser maker, also made its STAR Market debut and surged more than 500 percent in early trading. At its intraday peak, an investor who secured one standard IPO allocation could have been sitting on gains of more than 550,000 yuan.

"The arrival of a group of hard-tech companies including memory-chip maker ChangXin Memory Technologies and Unitree on public markets also pointed to a broader change in how Chinese investors value technology companies. Greater weight has been placed on technological barriers, domestic substitution and future commercial potential rather than current earnings alone," Tian said.

Trends reshape how youth see China

By ZOU SHUO
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

A wave of social media trends is reshaping how China is being viewed by younger audiences around the world, as foreign tourists bypass traditional news outlets to share unfiltered experiences of daily life across the country.

Under hashtags such as ChinaTravel, ChinaShopping, ChinaCool and Chinamaxxing, young creators on TikTok, YouTube and Instagram are documenting immersive visits to Chinese cities. The trends reflect a broader shift toward firsthand cultural exploration among travelers from Generation Z, who were born between the mid-to-late 1990s and the early 2010s.

The term Chinamaxxing blends China with the Gen Z internet slang "maxxing", a word meaning to fully embrace and optimize a certain culture's lifestyle. It gained traction globally after online creators shared clips featuring everyday Chinese lifestyle habits such as drinking warm water, practicing *baduanjin* — a traditional Chinese aerobic exercise, wearing traditional outfits and watching Chinese short dramas.

ChinaTravel documents immersive city trips beyond iconic landmarks. ChinaShopping highlights booming purchases of *guochao* (China chic) electronics, beauty goods and daily consumer products. ChinaCool carries dual meanings — both refreshing summer getaways in China's mountainous regions and admiration for its sleek digital infrastructure, convenient public transportation and vibrant urban culture.

Deng Ning, a professor and vice-dean at Beijing International Studies University's School of Tourism Sciences, said that there is a fundamental difference between inbound travelers today and those in earlier eras.

Decades ago, foreign tourists came to China with the notion of seeing an "ancient Eastern nation" and merely visited symbolic landmarks such as the Great Wall and the Forbidden City, Deng said, adding that today's Chinamaxxing phenomenon represents a filter-free revolution powered by social media algorithms.

"Foreign visitors no longer chase the scenic spots we assume they want to see; they dive into tangible and modern local life — wandering through wet markets, buying bubble tea with mobile QR codes and watching square dances in community parks," Deng said.

"China has transformed from an object to be interpreted by outsiders into a subject experienced, discussed and redefined through real personal encounters," he added.

When foreign tourists develop a favorable impression of China from simple experiences such as scanning QR codes to pay, sipping bubble tea or encountering small acts of kindness on the subway, this "grassroots soft power" proves to be far more persuasive than any official promotional video, he said.

Chen Hong, director of the Institute of Area Studies at East China Normal University's School of Foreign Languages, said that Western mainstream media and political elites monopolized narratives about China for a long time, reducing the country to one-dimensional labels such as "security threat" or "geopolitical rivalry".

Now, the trending hashtags center on China's daily routines, urban spaces, consumption habits and social dynamics rather than political headlines, Chen said. "While the 'China threat' narrative has not vanished, its once-exclusive interpretive power is being steadily diluted by authentic travel experiences."

He added that distrust of traditional mainstream media and discontent with their own societies' high living costs, social fragmentation and loneliness are fueling curiosity about China among Western members of Gen Z.

Peer-generated tourist content delivers powerful authenticity. Even occasional mild complaints from visitors make their positive observations far more persuasive, a unique advantage no official campaign can replicate, he said.

The most compelling China stories are those told by international visitors themselves after they experience immersive stays in the country, Chen added.

Gina Lynn Dijkstra, 19, a Leiden University undergraduate from the Netherlands, said Western propaganda had fostered in her some biased preconceptions before she arrived in Beijing in late July.

"Paradoxically, I felt more free in China than ever in Europe. Beijing ensured freedom to go out at night, and freedom to safely visit public places like lush parks and bustling spots in the city at all times," Dijkstra said.

She was deeply moved by the sincere kindness shown by strangers and volunteers, and quoted a line from *The Analects of Confucius* to sum up her journey: "Is it not a pleasure to have friends coming from afar?" Though unfamiliar with the Chinamaxxing online trend, she has nevertheless taken a new daily habit home: wandering city streets with bubble tea and snacks as a casual way to socialize.

Roxy Ye, 20, who is also from the Netherlands and has Chinese family roots, said she visited Beijing as a tourist for the first time earlier this month. She was stunned by the city's unmatched sense of security.

"I took a taxi alone at 1 am to Tian'anmen Square to see the flag-raising ceremony. I did not hesitate to get into a taxi by myself in the middle of the night. Looking back, I realized that I probably would not have done the same thing even in my hometown in the Netherlands," Ye said.

She has seen Chinamaxxing clips online, yet reminded audiences not to rely only on short-video snippets. "They often focus on certain aesthetic or trendy aspects of China, while there is obviously much more to the country than what can be shown in short social media videos," Ye added.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:50 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:50 PM



Sharing cultures, building connections

Sister cities in China and Germany strive together to keep old houses alive and promote urban development

By **HOU CHENCHEN** in Beijing, **ZHANG ZHOUXIANG** in Stralsund, Germany and **ZHU LIXIN** in Huangshan, Anhui

In a traditional courtyard, sunlight streamed through carved wooden windows, falling onto a table covered with bamboo strips and colorful paper. The courtyard belongs to a workshop in Hongcun, a historic village at the foot of Huangshan Mountain in East China's Anhui province.

At the workshop for the intangible cultural heritage, where experts impart skills for making fish lanterns, a mayor from Germany carefully inserted the final bamboo frame into the lantern's body.

When the lantern was completed, its maker, Alexander Badrow, mayor of Stralsund, was expected to write his name on it. But he did not sign his own name. Instead, he wrote two letters: "HS", the abbreviation for Huangshan.

The fish lantern has become a symbol of a much larger connection: a mayor from a European city had linked his hometown with Huangshan through China's traditional cultural artifacts.

Behind those two letters was a decade-old friendship. In 2015, Stralsund and Huangshan established a sister-city relationship.

Huangshan is a mountain city; Stralsund is a coastal city, while both rose through trade and cross-regional exchanges.

Stralsund was a major Baltic trading hub in the Middle Ages, while Huizhou — a historical region that roughly corresponds to Huangshan today — stood as a commercial center of the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties in ancient China, with its merchants playing a prominent role in commerce for more than three centuries.

Their commercial past has left both cities with remarkable cultural heritages. Huangshan Mountain was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1990, while Xidi and Hongcun, two ancient villages at the foot of Huangshan Mountain, were added in 2000 as cultural heritage sites. Stralsund's historic old town, with its brick Gothic architecture, joined the World Heritage list in 2002 as part of the "Historic Centers of Stralsund and Wismar".

For Badrow, who first visited Huangshan in 2015 and returned for his fourth visit in May, the two old cities are not merely preserved historical sites — they are living communities, where past and present coexist in everyday life.

"Brick Gothic architecture (in Germany) and traditional Chinese architecture may be very different, but both are magnificent testaments to the craftsmanship of earlier generations and to the care taken in their restoration today," Badrow said.

"I was particularly struck by the detailed restoration and preservation of the wonderful buildings in Huangshan — something we have also attempted in Stralsund. I was also deeply impressed by the fact that these are not museums; people actually live and sell goods there."

His impression is echoed by the people who make these old buildings their home. For the residents, heritage is not a relic behind glass.

Li Shengtao, who runs a homestay out of his ancestral house in Xidi, said: "Our houses, which are hundreds of years old, are alive here."

He said that every hall displays inscribed plaques and couplets, through which ancestors passed down their life wisdom.

Job creation

Wu Yuming, director of Xidi Intangible Cultural Heritage Experience Center, spent over two decades as a tour guide before taking on her current role.

After the villages were inscribed on the UNESCO list, residents developed a community agreement governing the renovation and maintenance of historic homes.

"If you need to repair any part of it, you must submit a proposal and apply for approval. Any interior decoration or beautification must be done without compromising the main structure," Wu said.


Alexander Badrow, mayor of Stralsund, Germany, takes a photo of a fish lantern in Huangshan in May. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

She said the revival of these ancient villages has created abundant local jobs — many villagers now run guesthouses, homestays, private kitchens or coffee shops right on their doorsteps.

"As we protect the old houses, it brings tangible economic benefits to villagers," she said. "We don't have to go out — we can earn a living right here. That gives us even more motivation to protect our ancestral homes."

He Yi, mayor of Huangshan, frames this approach in broader terms. "We cannot sidestep the new demands and challenges that modern life brings," he said.

"Instead, we must enable our historical buildings to actively embrace contemporary living. We want the original owners, the local villagers, to become the guardians, operators, and beneficiaries of these ancient structures.

"Only when those who protect the heritage truly benefit from it can preservation be sustained over the long run," He said.

"It is not easy to keep an old city vibrant while preserving its historical character," said Frank-Bertolt Raith, head of the Office for Planning and Construction of Stralsund, who visited Huangshan with Badrow in May. "I think Huangshan has done an excellent job."

He said the underlying philosophy — honoring the historical fabric while embedding modern urban functions — mirrors the approach taken in Germany.

For Olaf Fromme, chairman of the association "Save the Old Town of Stralsund", preservation is ultimately a dialogue between past and future. "The preservation needs a sensible, healthy balance between the past and the future. It makes little sense to reproduce a historic house unchanged if people cannot live in it properly."

Olaf said cooperation with Huangshan could help through an exchange of experience. Both cities have followed different paths, and each can learn from the methods the other has developed to protect historic buildings and keep its old town attractive and alive.

For Fromme's organization, that principle is translated into practical, sometimes small-scale action.

Heiko Werner, its treasurer, said the association encourages owners to retain and restore their properties, sometimes by supporting repairs to a door, a window or a small fresco.

For Dagmar Fromme, Olaf's wife and a local tour guide in Stralsund, such preservation is deeply personal. The historic center is not simply a collection of protected buildings, but the setting of memories that have shaped her own life.

"The Alter Markt (a historic square in Stralsund) is deeply personal to me. My grandmother lived nearby, and my husband and I met here more than 40 years ago.

"The square and surrounding buildings were once badly deteriorated, but over the past 30 years they have been restored with enormous effort. Today people can sit here, watch the world go by and enjoy the old town's special atmosphere," she said.

Citizen participation

Fang Qian, deputy director of the Huangshan Municipal People's Government's Office of Foreign Affairs, said Stralsund has done an excellent job in engaging its citizens. The city has a dedicated heritage institution which provides professional guidance for heritage protection decisions.

She highlighted the high level of citizen participation — residents weave their everyday lives into conservation efforts, achieving a seamless blend of preservation and development.

"This is something we can learn from," she said.

This kind of cross-border exchange is not new.

Decades before Stralsund and Huangshan became sister cities, a Huizhou-style garden had already taken root in Frankfurt, Germany.

Its chief designer was Cheng Jiyue, an expert in traditional Huizhou architecture from Huangshan.

In 1988, Cheng led the garden's design, refining every detail with his team. The design drew on the ancient villages of Huangshan, but had to be adapted to Frankfurt's soil, climate and locally available materials. As Cheng put it, the project was about "planting the soul of Huizhou in German soil".

Cheng remembered working alongside German stonemasons and carpenters, exchanging techniques and solving problems together. He said the garden has endured because its care has always been a shared responsibility.

Throughout decades, artisans from Huangshan brought the seeds of Huizhou culture to Germany. Those seeds have taken root and, with care from both sides, blossomed into new avenues of collaboration.

In May, the Huangshan Municipal Bureau of Culture and Tourism signed a memorandum of cooperation with the cultural heritage department of Stralsund during the Global Mayors Dialogue.

Looking ahead, the bureau said Huangshan plans to establish a cultural tourism promotion center in Germany.

It also intends to partner with Huangshan Vocational and Technical College to launch a training program for tour guides specializing in European languages.

Fang said that building on shared cultural heritage, the two sister cities aim to deepen collaboration in tourism, cultural exchanges, and economic and trade ties.

"Whether it is Huangshan or Stralsund, these are shared treasures of all humanity — we have a common duty to protect them, safeguard them, and pass them on," Fang said.

Xia Ji in Huangshan, Anhui, contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at houchenchen@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
See more by scanning the code.




From left: Participants enjoy a ride in a horse-drawn carriage during the Wallenstein Days in Stralsund, Germany, on July 24. People wear historical costumes during the festival, said to be one of the largest in northern Germany, on July 27. PHOTOS BY STEFAN SAUER / DPA PICTURE-ALLIANCE A folk performance at the Tangmo scenic area in Huangshan, East China's Anhui province, on July 25. XIAO BENXIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Mayors see a shared future harnessing technology to preserve heritage sites

By **HOU CHENCHEN** in Beijing, **XIA JI** in Huangshan, Anhui, and **ZHANG ZHOUXIANG** in Stralsund, Germany

The cities of Huangshan and Stralsund differ in size, geography and architectural style. Yet both face the same challenge: how to balance preservation and development as World Heritage Site cities.

At the 2026 Global Mayors Dialogue in Huangshan in May, the mayors of the two cities found common ground: technology can empower culture and urban development, bridging tradition and the future.

Their vision extended from nature and culture to daily life and urban governance.

Alexander Badrow, mayor of Stralsund, outlined three priorities: protecting the environment, safeguarding world heritage and diverse urban cultures, and integrating innovative technologies into urban construction to improve livelihoods.

"If we achieve these three goals," he said, "our cities will embrace sustainable and sound development."

During the visit, Badrow climbed Huangshan Mountain equipped with an exoskeleton. After fastening it to his legs, he stood up and took several steps, joking: "Now, I'm Iron Man."

For Badrow, the exoskeleton embodies a key idea: technology should help people interact better with nature. It allows climbing without creating more work — technology enabling, rather than disrupting.

He Yi, mayor of Huangshan, extended this thinking from nature to culture.

He said technology has the potential to preserve culture while revitalizing livelihoods.

"Culture is a slow variable that accumulates over time, while technology is a fast variable that drives rapid change. We have witnessed countless cases where technology activates, catalyzes and reinvents traditional culture, thereby promoting urban progress and social development."

He highlighted that frames for traditional fish lanterns are 3D-printed but continue to be painted and decorated by hand — preserving authenticity while enabling mass production.

Technology like this has boosted rural incomes. Since last November, villagers had gained an average of 5,000 yuan ($740) in just four months. With annual per capita income of about 25,000 yuan, this points to a potential 10,000 yuan yearly increase — a significant leap.

Badrow sees parallels. The old town of Stralsund, which dates back to the 13th century, is strained by the influx of visitors. He believes technology offers a way forward.

"We receive millions of tourists every year, and the surge of vehicles brings huge pressure on urban parking resources. We believe autonomous driving will be an effective solution to this dilemma in the future.

"We have experienced self-driving vehicles in trial operation for two days here in Huangshan. This innovative technology will completely reshape urban traffic patterns and solve the long-standing parking and travel problems in historic old towns."

At the conclusion of the dialogue, the mayors from around the world who attended the dialogue jointly endorsed the Huangshan Initiative: first, adhering to heritage protection to build a foundation for civilization; second, deepening cultural exchanges to promote symbiosis; third, strengthening technological empowerment to advance urban governance; and fourth, improving cooperation mechanisms to share responsibilities.

Looking ahead, Badrow said Huangshan and Stralsund will keep learning from each other about heritage preservation and urban governance.

"I am grateful for the friendship between our municipalities in China and Germany, and I am grateful that Stralsund is part of this."

Zhu Lixin in Huangshan, Anhui, contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at houchenchen@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:50 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:50 PM

WORLD

Honoring liberation



French President Emmanuel Macron (second from right) marks the 82nd anniversary of Operation Dragoon — the World War II Allied landings in Provence — during a commemoration ceremony in Bormes-les-Mimosas, southeastern France, on Monday. MANON CRUZ VIA AP

Takaichi's words stir concerns

Japanese PM's shifting rhetoric on war history sparks fears of a militarist turn

By HOU JUNJIE in Tokyo
houjunjie@chinadaily.com.cn

The recent shifts in Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's wording on sensitive issues, including Japan's history of aggression and nuclear policy, have sparked domestic controversy.

Experts said the changes, coupled with moves by the ruling party over the Yasukuni war shrine and military expansion, reflect an increasingly overt militarist tendency in the Takaichi government.

They urged Tokyo to confront its history of aggression and improve ties with neighboring countries through diplomacy rather than military buildup.

On Saturday, the anniversary of Japan's unconditional surrender in World War II, Takaichi made a monetary offering to the infamous Yasukuni Shrine, which honors 14 convicted Class-A war criminals. Several senior officials and political figures also visited the shrine.

Atsushi Koketsu, professor emeritus at Yamaguchi University, said Japanese politicians had once exercised relative restraint in visiting the war shrine, but such visits have become increasingly frequent since Takaichi took office last year, reflecting Japan's growing tendency toward militarism.

Koketsu called Yasukuni an "aggression shrine", saying politicians' renewed visits not only reopen painful historical memories for countries that suffered Japanese aggression, but also risk putting Japan back on the path toward aggression.

In her speech at the annual memorial in Tokyo marking Japan's surrender at the end of World War II, Takaichi omitted references to "remorse" and a "pledge never to wage war". Her predecessor, Shigeru Ishiba, had revived the phrases a year earlier, marking the first such references in 13 years to Japan's responsibility as a war aggressor.

For many Japanese people, such a shift is deeply troubling, Koketsu said. The anniversary should be an occasion for Japan to reflect on its history of aggression and apologize to its Asian neighbors, including China, he said. Instead, Takaichi ignored such public sentiment and focused on her own position, he said.

Japanese media also noted Takaichi's choice of wording. She altered a phrase long used by previous prime ministers, changing "(Japan) must never repeat the horrors of war" to "the horrors of war must never be repeated".

Koji Nakakita, a professor of Japanese political history at Chuo University, told The Asahi Shimbun that "must never repeat" emphasizes Japan's resolve not to wage war again, while "must never be repeated" could suggest that wars were started by other countries.

The wording could even imply that World War II was not a "war of aggression" launched by Japan, but a "war of self-defense" that it was forced to fight, he said.

Hiroshi Shiratori, a professor at Hosei University, told China Daily that such negative wording on the issue of war could be seen as provocative by countries that suffered from Japan's wartime aggression.

Nuclear policy

The controversy over Takaichi's wording extends beyond wartime history.

Earlier this month, at the atomic bombing memorial ceremonies in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Takaichi said Japan "is upholding the Three Non-Nuclear Principles", but stopped short of explicitly pledging to continue doing so, a subtle change that has raised questions in Japan.

Tatsuo Sekiguchi, head of a civic group in Nagasaki, said the absence of a clear commitment to uphold the principles in the future suggests the Takaichi government may be considering a review of the long-standing policy.

As a Nagasaki resident, Sekiguchi said he strongly opposes such a move, citing the enormous loss of life and prolonged suffering caused by the atomic bombing. Any remarks that could undermine the principles are unacceptable, he said.

Shiratori said the ambiguity over whether Japan will continue to uphold the principles, coupled with rising defense spending, reflects the country's growing "Japan first" tendency.

A supplementary budget for fiscal 2025 allowed Japan to reach its target of raising defense spending to 2 percent of GDP two years ahead of schedule, and the increase has continued unabated.

With the initial defense budget for fiscal 2026 reaching a record high, Japan's defense budget request for fiscal 2027 is reportedly set to rise further.

Shiratori said rising defense spending, along with a lack of consideration for neighboring countries, could further fuel concerns about Japan's remilitarization.

Rather than reinforcing a "Japan first" approach through military expansion, Japan should strengthen diplomacy and deepen cooperation and friendly ties with other Asian countries, he said.

Tougher social media restrictions test digital protection



Xin Xin
Reporter's log

FIRST PERSON VIEW

About two years ago, when I first saw a short video on my phone about Australia's plan to ban children from using social media, my first thought was: Can a ban really protect children in the digital age?

For many families, social media is no longer separate from childhood. It is embedded in phones, games, chat groups and other forms of online communication. Even adults can struggle to know when to stop scrolling, what information to trust or how much personal information they have shared online. For children, the challenges can be even greater.

That is why Australia's social media minimum age law has drawn broad attention since it came into effect on Dec 10.

More than half a year after its implementation, the law is being strengthened further. In June, the Australian government said it was "doubling down on platforms that are not doing enough to keep under-16s off social media", doubling the maximum penalty for breaches to A$99 million ($70 million).

The new legislation will also strengthen the information-gathering powers of the eSafety Commissioner, making it easier for the independent regulator to request information and documents from social media companies to ensure compliance.

Since the law took effect, eSafety has considered services including Facebook, TikTok and YouTube as age-restricted platforms. They need to take reasonable steps to prevent Australians under 16 from having accounts.

In other words, the responsibility lies with the platforms, not children or their parents.

The Australian government said more than 5 million accounts belonging to under-16s have been removed, deactivated or restricted since the ban began.

Described by Australia as "world-leading", the law quickly drew international attention. The United Kingdom has announced plans to ban social media platforms from providing services to children under 16, with the measure expected to take effect next year. New Zealand, Norway and Turkiye are also considering similar restrictions.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said when announcing the stronger enforcement measures that he was heartened by the shift in public discussion and the global momentum since the country introduced the minimum age law. However, he said it was clear that big technology companies were not doing enough to comply, with too many children still accessing social media.

The changes reflected how seriously the government viewed any failure by social media companies to comply with the "world-leading" law, he said.

Doubling the fines can certainly put pressure on platforms. Tech giants have long profited from users' time, clicks, comments and traffic, giving them a greater responsibility to protect minors on their platforms.

However, as the debate around this law has spread from Australia to other countries, I feel the most important point is not the size of the fine, but the signal it sends: As children enter the digital world at increasingly young ages, their protection needs to be taken more seriously.

The law is not meant to punish children or blame parents. Rather, it serves as protective line before children enter the complex online world.

Still, the law can only do part of the job. The people who spend the most time with children every day are parents.

Closing an account or limiting an app does not make online risks disappear. Children can still connect with the outside world through games, chat groups, video platforms and other online spaces.

The ban is also a reminder for parents to pay closer attention to what their children see online, whom they talk to, and whether they know how to protect themselves.

The hardest and most important part is explaining to children why this is being done. If parents simply say, "You are not allowed to use it," children may see it only as control. But if they understand how certain content, interactions with strangers, online comments and algorithmic recommendations can affect their emotions, privacy and safety, they are more likely to accept the rules.

Today, digital life is already part of everyday life. Protecting children cannot simply mean pulling them away from screens. Parents also need to keep pace with the times and help children build stronger digital skills, enabling them to assess information, identify risks, protect their privacy and use technology responsibly.

In this sense, Australia's ban may also offer an important lesson for children before they truly step into the digital world.

The author is chief correspondent at China Daily Asia-Pacific Bureau based in Sydney.

Contact the writer at xinxin@chinadaily.com.cn

Germany demands Apple revise app consent prompts

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

United States tech giant Apple is set to revise the policies that govern third-party developers' use of personal data for ad targeting on iPhones and iPads, Germany's competition watchdog said on Monday, concluding a multiyear probe.

Germany's Federal Cartel Office determined that Apple's App Tracking Transparency framework, or ATT, gave its own applications an unfair competitive advantage by using more favorable, less discouraging language and design than those required for third-party developers.

The FCO said these more favorable consent prompts potentially breached competition law.

Apple has four months from the date of the decision to roll out the changes, which will remain in effect for seven years under the oversight of an independent trustee, Reuters reported.

"Apple is allowed to provide for a level of protection for its users that exceeds the minimum legal requirements," Andreas Mundt, president of the FCO, said in a statement.

"However, if Apple sets up additional rules within its ecosystem for the use of data, these rules must, under Germany's special abuse provision for large digital companies, not treat its own offerings better than those of its competitors.

"This is precisely where our competition concerns arose," he said. "Apple will now align the consent requests much more closely and give third-party app providers more freedom to combine the necessary requests in a sensible way."

Under the commitments, third-party apps' consent pop-ups must be redesigned to remove discouraging wording and symbols and be presented in a visually and linguistically neutral form. The changes will apply in almost all European Union countries.

"While we believe the current ATT prompt provides a clear, easy-to-understand and effective way to keep users in control of their data — an opinion shared by the German data protection authorities — we have agreed to make changes to the text and formatting of the prompt at the FCO's request," Apple said in a statement.

"These commitments ensure we can continue to provide this important privacy tool in Europe, and keep users, not ad tech companies and data brokers, in control of their data," it said.

Initial fix rejected

Apple had previously proposed a fix that mostly amounted to tweaking the wording of the first-run warning prompts shown in third-party apps. Regulators rejected that proposal, but now the German authority said it has secured binding commitments from Apple and closed the case.

Third-party app developers, such as Facebook parent Meta Platforms, seek precise user data to display targeted ads, which typically yield higher returns than broad, untargeted campaigns.

Regulators in France and Italy have already penalized Apple for its ATT framework, issuing fines of 150 million and 98.6 million euros ($174 million and $114 million), respectively.

Gaza stalemate continues as Israel, Hamas hold firm

JERUSALEM — US President Donald Trump's envoy Jared Kushner left Jerusalem on Monday without a breakthrough after two days of talks with Israeli and Hamas leaders over a stalled plan to end the conflict in Gaza, with both sides standing firm on key demands.

Kushner met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu a day after his meeting with the political leader of Hamas in a bid to revive the United States-backed plan. Israel has carried out airstrikes and seized more territory in Gaza despite an October ceasefire, while Hamas has insisted "there must first be Israeli approval of the road map".

Kushner described his nearly four-hour meeting with Netanyahu as "good". He added that Hamas representatives said "all the right things".

"We could be seeing progress in as little as 30 days, hopefully on starting to take some of the weapons out and hopefully filling in some of the tunnels as well in the next 60 to 90 days," Kushner told Fox News.

He also said that the United States is "not going to restrict Israel's right to defend itself if there are any imminent threats" in Gaza.

Last month, Trump announced that Hamas had agreed to lay down its arms in phases, under a 15-point road map put forward by the US-led "Board of Peace" to advance his plan, as Israel's military withdraws from Gaza. Hamas said it agreed to the road map but implementation depends on Israel first meeting its own commitments, including halting attacks and withdrawing.

On Tuesday, Hamas reiterated that it remained committed to the Gaza peace deal.

"Hamas is committed to this agreed-upon process," the group's spokesman Hazem Qassem told Agence France-Presse.

"It is clear that, so far, the Israeli side has not given the mediators clear approval of the road map," he said.

"There are timelines and procedural steps that need to be worked out in detail, but there must first be Israeli approval of the road map," he added.

Netanyahu, whose ruling coalition is trailing in opinion polls ahead of an October national election, rejected the deal earlier this month, insisting that Israel would not pull back until Hamas is completely disarmed.

An official with the "Board of Peace" said Israel would be able to "act accordingly" if Hamas "resorts to terror, violence or attempts to rearm". However, the official said Netanyahu was told that Hamas has committed to fully disarm and "cease immediately all military activity, including rearmament and tunnel digging".

Israeli operations have killed at least 1,265 Palestinians since a ceasefire came into effect on Oct 10, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, whose figures are considered reliable by the United Nations.

The Israeli army has reported five deaths in its ranks from Gaza operations over the same period.

AGENCIES — XINHUA

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1896

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:50 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:50 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Pentagon's scrutiny of normal research collaborations reeks of McCarthyism

Academic and research exchanges have been a vibrant and resilient bond in relations between China and the United States. For decades, universities and research institutions from both countries have collaborated closely in science and technology, yielding breakthroughs that benefited not only the two nations but the entire world.

Despite this, the US government has intensified its crackdown on Chinese scientists and researchers in recent years, baselessly alleging that they "threaten national security" by accessing sensitive research and advanced technology.

The so-called "China Initiative", launched by the US Department of Justice in 2018, sought to identify "Chinese spies" in US universities, leading to racial profiling. Though the program was terminated four years later because it was found to be harming the US' technological competitiveness, the US House Select Committee on China last year directed six universities to provide data on Chinese students, claiming that the admission of a large number of Chinese students into science, technology, engineering and mathematics programs might be "at the expense of qualified Americans".

Such discriminatory policies have prompted many US universities to "wind down" partnerships with Chinese universities and restrict the admission of students from China.

The US crackdown on academic exchanges with China is a critical front in its broader strategy to contain China. By severing research ties, Washington aims to stifle China's progress in high-tech fields such as artificial intelligence, semiconductors and biotechnology, where collaborative research has long driven innovation. This strategy is complemented by restricting supply chains and trade, creating an isolated ecosystem intended to limit Chinese access to Western knowledge and markets.

In the latest move, the Pentagon has asked 30 US universities to audit their foreign research partnerships, specifically targeting collaborations with Chinese institutions and entities linked to Confucius Institutes. These universities risk losing future federal research funding if they fail to comply.

In the past few years, the US government has already labeled Confucius Institutes in the country as "foreign missions", and implemented administrative and legislative measures that have effectively forced nearly all of them to close down. This latest round of scrutiny, once again justified as safeguarding "national security", raises concerns about its true purpose.

Instead of enhancing research security or promoting institutional accountability, this initiative is simply intellectual McCarthyism. By casting a wide net of suspicion over academic exchange programs, the Pentagon directive risks stifling the open exchange of ideas and undermining academic freedom. Washington should reflect on whether such measures truly serve the US' national interests, or merely fuel the atmosphere of fear and mistrust surrounding China.

The Pentagon claims it aims to protect research investments from "foreign exploitation", yet it has given the schools only two weeks to submit their findings and mitigation plans. The tight deadline makes the proposed scrutiny either perfunctory or impossible, raising doubts about the feasibility of meaningful results. As a consequence, the schools may feel compelled to end partnerships, disrupting ongoing projects and adversely affecting faculty and students involved in related research.

Moreover, the lack of transparency in selecting universities raises questions about the criteria and processes used to identify "entities of concern". Without clear guidelines, institutions may struggle to navigate this uncertain situation, potentially hindering their ability to engage in meaningful international collaborations and ultimately impacting their competitiveness in global research.

The Pentagon's coercive tactics of pressuring universities into self-audits and scaling back collaboration risk pushing the academic sector into geopolitical rivalry, ultimately harming academic freedom and exchanges in the US.

Scientific research transcends borders, and innovation thrives on cross-border exchanges and sharing of resources. Instead of imposing restrictive measures, the US government should respect the spirit of science, allowing academic institutions to address shared technological challenges and meet development needs to serve the interests of people in both countries and beyond.

Macao's high-quality development course set

Macao's development achievements and social stability since its return to the motherland in 1999 testify to the vitality of the "one country, two systems" framework. The special administrative region's Third Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development (2026-30), released on Tuesday, marks a new starting point for Macao to seize opportunities, address challenges and pursue high-quality development by turning its institutional advantages into development momentum and development gains into public well-being.

A notable feature of the plan is its emphasis on docking with national development. As Macao SAR Chief Executive Sam Hou-fai stressed, the plan is aligned with the national five-year plan for this period while taking into account Macao's own realities. By strengthening integration with the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, deepening Macao-Hengqin cooperation and better leveraging Macao's international connections, the SAR can translate the advantages of national development into new opportunities for itself, while contributing its own strengths to the country's overall development.

The plan's formulation also shows that the SAR's development course is rooted in the aspirations of Macao residents. During the 40-day public consultation, 1,716 submissions containing 8,230 opinions were collected. The largest number of opinions concerned strengthening and optimizing people's livelihoods, followed by appropriate economic diversification and high-quality development of the Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin. The plan received positive feedback of 92.1 percent.

These figures demonstrate that the plan reflects extensive participation and broad consensus. The Macao SAR government has incorporated feasible suggestions that gained broad consensus into the final plan, while pledging to use other opinions as references for future policymaking. Measures on urban renewal, healthcare, social security and improvements to older districts directly respond to public concerns.

At the same time, the plan identifies appropriate economic diversification as essential for Macao's long-term prosperity and stability. With a target of raising the contribution of non-gaming sectors to around 60 percent of GDP by 2030, Macao is seeking to build a more balanced and resilient economic structure.

The "1+4" strategy, backed by major infrastructure projects and a government guidance fund, will promote industries, including high-tech, biomedicine and "big health", specialized finance, MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions), culture and sports, while consolidating integrated tourism and leisure. Preliminary estimates put total budgeted investment in major economic diversification projects during the plan period at about 130 billion patacas ($16.1 billion). Such substantial investment will help cultivate new growth engines and create opportunities for enterprises, talent and young people.

Hengqin is key to this transformation. Through deeper integration in rules, infrastructure, education, technology, finance and industries, "Macao + Hengqin" can combine Macao's international resources with Hengqin's development space and the vast mainland market. The two sides can jointly advance projects in education, technology, tourism, traditional Chinese medicine and finance, creating greater synergies and providing stronger foundations for Macao's economic diversification.

Macao's unique role extends beyond its economic functions. As an international city, Macao serves as a connector between China and Portuguese-speaking countries. Its distinctive cultural and international advantages give it an important role in the country's high-standard opening-up. By facilitating trade, investment and people-to-people exchanges, Macao can contribute more effectively to the country's overall development, while strengthening exchanges between different civilizations.

To those seeking to malign the "one country, two systems" framework, Macao's high-quality development and long-term stability offer an effective rebuttal. The SAR's new five-year blueprint, grounded in public aspirations, aligned with national development and focused on sustainable growth, points precisely in that direction. By implementing this plan, Macao can better achieve sustainable prosperity and lasting stability, further demonstrating the enduring vitality of the "one country, two systems" framework.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Shi Yu



Opinion Line

Green code crucial framework for cleaner skies, clearer waters

When China's Ecological and Environmental Code came into force on Saturday, it heralded a new stage in China's environmental rule of law, as previously fragmented rules have been brought together to form a more coherent and enforceable legal framework.

With 1,242 articles in five chapters, the code brings together more than 30 existing laws, over 100 administrative regulations and more than 1,000 local laws and regulations. Its real significance lies in the logic behind it: environmental governance can no longer be treated as a collection of separate tasks. Pollution control, ecological protection, resource conservation, carbon reduction and the green transition are to be governed as one integrated system.

China's environmental legislation has developed for more than four decades, from early learning at the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, which was the first world conference to make the environment a major issue, to the adoption of the Environmental Protection Law of the People's Republic of China in 1989 and the goal of realizing an ecological civilization as a national strategy after 2012.

Over time, China has moved from borrowing international experience to building its own environmental governance model, with the Ecological and Environmental Code being the latest expression of that evolution.

What makes China's exploration distinctive is that it starts from China's own realities. China is a country with a huge population, relatively limited per capita resources and highly uneven ecological conditions. Its northern regions face water stress, its western regions include fragile ecosystems and its eastern coastal areas bear intense development pressure.

A development model that consumed resources first and repaired damage later is no longer sustainable. China has therefore had to answer a basic question: how can a large developing country pursue modernization without the environmental costs of the industrial age?

The answer, embedded in the code, is clear: environmental protection and development must reinforce one another. By dedicating an independent chapter to green and low-carbon development, the code makes a powerful institutional statement: climate response and the green transition are legal commitments.

In a world where many environmental laws still focus narrowly on pollution control, China has placed carbon peaking, carbon neutrality, the circular economy and the clean energy transition under the same legal roof as ecological protection. It moves beyond the old pattern of "one department handles pollution, another handles ecology, and yet another handles development". Instead, it aims to establish a holistic governance structure, one that supports coordinated progress in reducing pollution, cutting carbon emissions, expanding green development and growing the economy. This is a notable innovation, and is consistent with China's other innovations in recent years, including ecological red line protection, ecological compensation, environmental damage compensation, public interest litigation and the carbon emissions trading market.

The code also has a broader global significance. Climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution do not respect administrative boundaries, national borders or institutional silos. By integrating pollution prevention, ecological protection and green, low-carbon development into one code, China is offering a legislative reference to other countries, especially developing countries.

This global relevance is reinforced by the code's explicit provisions on international cooperation. That means China is not only building a domestic legal framework; it is also translating global environmental commitments into domestic law.

China's green modernization is already generating experience that can be shared beyond its borders. Water-saving terraced farming introduced from China has been replicated in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. Chinese photovoltaic technology is helping support solar power development in countries such as Saudi Arabia.

But the code's enduring significance will depend on implementation. The law should become an evolving legal framework for cleaner skies, clearer waters, healthier ecosystems and a more sustainable development model.

— HOU LIQIANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Plan aims to nurture zero-emission factories

Editor's note: *The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology has launched an initiative to develop national-level zero-carbon factories. Several experts, including He Kebin, dean of the Institute for Carbon Neutrality at Tsinghua University, and Chen Daji, deputy head of the China Electronics Standardization Institute, explained what zero-carbon factories are and the importance of the move. Below are excerpts of their comments as reported by Xinhua News Agency. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

A zero-carbon factory does not imply it emits absolutely no carbon dioxide. Instead, the term signifies efforts by the factory to implement systematic emissions reduction measures. These include technological innovation, structural adjustments and management optimization to fully tap into its emissions reduction potential. The goal is to minimize emissions as much as possible under current technical and economic conditions and to continuously improve operations so that the factory's carbon dioxide emissions are at the lowest possible level.

Under the initiative, there are three core indicators for a national-level zero-carbon factory: carbon emissions per unit of energy consumption, the proportion of nonfossil energy consumption, and the percentage of nonfossil power in the electricity used by the factory. These indicators provide measurable and verifiable criteria for defining a "national-level zero-carbon factory".

Carbon emissions per unit of energy consumption measure the amount of carbon dioxide emitted for each tonne of standard coal consumed. While different industries may adopt different development paths, the objective should be to steadily reduce emissions and move toward near-zero emissions.

The indicator of the share of nonfossil energy consumption will encourage enterprises to accelerate the green and low-carbon transition of their energy mix. The share of electricity consumption coming from nonfossil energy will encourage enterprises to increase the use of such electricity and enhance the supply, local utilization and physical traceability of nonfossil energy-based electricity.

One sector that has witnessed rapid growth in energy consumption in China is computing power infrastructure. In 2025, electricity consumed by such infrastructure accounted for approximately 1.6 percent of the total consumption in China.

Going forward, computing power infrastructure operators should strengthen collaboration among different sectors, including equipment procurement, project construction, energy supply, operation and maintenance, and the use of computing power to ensure the selection of low-carbon equipment, better utilization of green electricity and eco-friendly management of infrastructure.

Intelligent carbon control is crucial for establishing zero-carbon factories. Companies in the automobile industry should seize the opportunity of the country's zero-carbon factory initiative and enhance their digital capacity for energy and carbon management. They need to develop a data collection network which covers the whole factory to enable automatic aggregation and real-time transmission of energy consumption and carbon emissions data.

As the initiative progresses, China is expected to foster a number of national-level zero-carbon factories. These factories will play an important role in exploring practical ways for the green and low-carbon transition of the country's industrial sector, providing strong support to the country's green growth.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:50 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:50 PM

VIEWS

Huang Rihan

Robots need open doors, not visas

Beijing's Yizhuang will become a global shop window for robots this August. At the 2026 World Robot Conference, a dedicated procurement day will bring buyers from Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Latin America looking for machines that can solve real-life problems. A Thai farmer may want a robot that can spray crops. A Saudi engineering contractor could size up robotic dogs for project inspections. A Latin American plantation owner may ask the price of a harvesting robot. The questions will be refreshingly practical: How can this machine make the job easier?

The United States, however, is asking a very different question. The US Federal Communications Commission has updated its "Covered List" of communications equipment and services that can threaten the "national security" of the country to include new Chinese-made humanoid and quadruped robots. While buyers are asking what robots can do, policymakers in Washington want to know where they come from.

Caution about new technology is understandable. When the power loom first appeared, textile workers feared the iron machine would devour their livelihoods and stormed factories to smash it. When cameras arrived, some people avoided the lens, worried that a flash might somehow steal their souls. Nearly every invention that changed the world has passed through a period of suspicion. Security concerns are real and deserve to be taken seriously.

But caution is not the same as closing the door. Robots have eyes, legs and internet connections. Smartphones, electric cars, and robot vacuums in millions of homes also use sensors and internet connections.

A better approach to new technology might look more like airport security: Every passenger is screened, but no one is denied boarding simply because of their nationality. Robots can be tested, certified and held to common standards, while their data and cybersecurity can be scrutinized. That is far more effective — and more reassuring — than simply turning them away at the gate.

The need for robots around the world may be greater than many realize. Populations across much of the world are aging, while the supply of young workers is shrinking. Factories in Vietnam struggle to fill vacancies. Construction sites in the Middle East can become dangerously hot in summer. Plantations in Latin America face labor shortages during the harvest season.

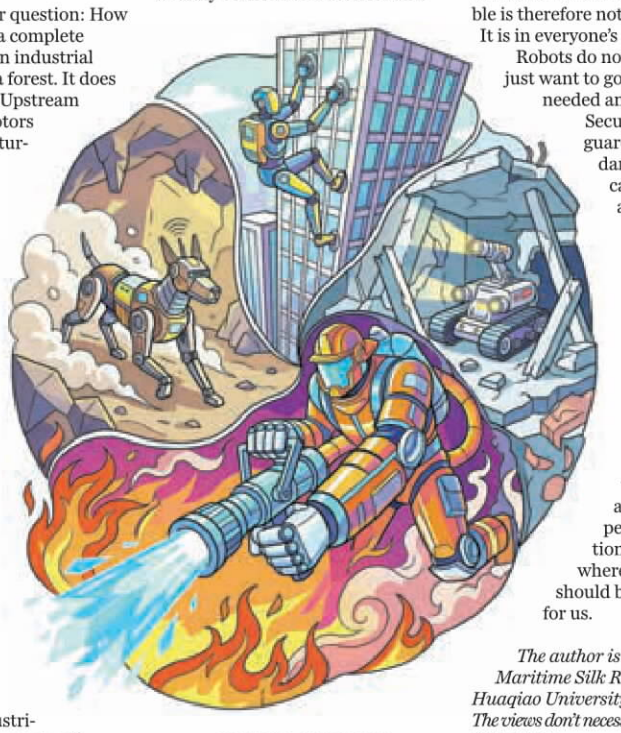
Robots are not necessarily here to take jobs. Often, they fill gaps where there are too few people willing — or able — to do the work. A robot sent down a mine can spare a human being from taking a potentially fatal risk. A machine working in a furnace room can take on work that the human body cannot safely endure.

This raises a larger question: How can a country build a complete robotics industry? An industrial supply chain is like a forest. It does not grow overnight. Upstream companies make motors and joints; manufacturers assemble complete machines; downstream users find tasks for them to perform. Along the way, an industry needs engineers, customers and a market large enough to allow companies to make mistakes and learn from them. Building all of this takes decades.

On the other hand, a wall can be built overnight. But no matter how high it is, a wall cannot grow a forest behind it. Forests need sunlight, rain and time. The same is true for industrial ecosystems, which need policy support, open markets and supply chain integration to grow and flourish.

China's experience illustrates the point. Its robotics industry was not built by shutting itself off from the world. It was built through openness. Over the decades, foreign companies have established factories in China, components from around the world have flowed into the country; and intense competition has forced Chinese companies to learn, step by step, how to make — and then improve — everything from robotic joints to intelligent control systems.

Chinese companies now account for more than half the humanoid robot models in the world, while roughly eight out of every 10 quadruped robots sold come from China. The cost of producing robots has fallen so sharply that automation is no longer a privilege reserved for wealthy economies. Factories and farms in developing countries can afford it too.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Openness did not destroy China's industrial ecosystem. Instead, it helped nurture one of the world's most complete industrial ecosystems. China is now willing to share that experience — and those robots — with the rest of the world.

Ultimately, robotics is a global creation. Japan may provide precision joints; Europe may supply motors; the US may contribute chips; and China may produce complete machines and offer a vast range of application scenarios. Remove any one of these elements, and the system will not function as smoothly.

When a river is blocked, the water does not just stand there but finds another route. The detour costs more, and eventually someone has to pay for it. Preserving the networks that make cooperation possible is therefore not an act of charity. It is in everyone's interest.

Robots do not need visas. They just want to go where they are needed and get to work. Security can be safeguarded through standards. Competition can be settled by asking who can build a better, cheaper machine that solves a real-world problem. That kind of competition does not produce losers but can benefit the whole world.

So, the next time a robot arrives at the door, perhaps the question should not be where it came from. It should be what it can do for us.

The author is the director of the Maritime Silk Road Institute at Huaqiao University.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Zhang Monan

Tussle between open and closed AI reshaping global order

The tussle between open-source and closed-source artificial intelligence models in China and the United States is more than a debate over technological paths. It reflects the broader China-US technological rivalry, influencing the underlying architectures, industrial control and global rule-making. The clash between these two approaches could profoundly reshape the landscape of the intelligent age and global technological competition.

In recent years, Silicon Valley giants such as OpenAI, Anthropic and Google have built towering technological advantages through closed-source business models, backed by massive capital investment and vast computing clusters. At the same time, the open-source camp — which includes Chinese technology companies Alibaba, DeepSeek and Zhipu AI and US players such as Meta — has risen rapidly, thanks to more efficient algorithms and open ecosystems.

Broadly speaking, the closed-source approach favored by leading US AI laboratories aligns with Washington's desire to maintain technological dominance and Silicon Valley's capital-intensive model, which hinges on massive computing power and premium pricing. US closed-source models, represented by OpenAI's latest reasoning model GPT-5.6 Sol, Anthropic's Claude Opus 5 and Google's Gemini 3.5 and 3.6 series, use top-end GPUs and sophisticated data engineering to build formidable computing barriers and seek a commanding position at the technological frontier.

By keeping model capabilities behind cloud-based application programming interfaces, US companies have created highly controlled commercial ecosystems. This model can also become a geopolitical instrument. By restricting access to advanced models in the name of "national security", Washington has developed a broader narrative: frontier AI may pose national security risks and therefore should remain concentrated in the hands of a select group of Western companies.

High API subscription fees and dependence on cloud services raise the financial barriers for small and medium-sized companies seeking access to advanced AI. They also leave countries without domestic computing capacity increasingly dependent on foreign digital infrastructure, creating strategic vulnerabilities.

Faced with US restrictions on advanced chips and computing power, Chinese tech companies are increasingly turning to open source as a strategic breakthrough, pursuing an asymmetric path based on extreme algorithmic efficiency and large-scale industrial deployment.

At the algorithmic level, DeepSeek demonstrates that performance comparable to leading Silicon Valley closed models can be achieved at significantly lower cost, challenging the assumption that breakthroughs necessarily require billions of dollars and ever-larger, energy-intensive computing clusters. At the ecosystem level, Alibaba's Qwen 2.5 and related models are among the world's most widely downloaded open-source models, serving as a popular foundation for developers.

A report by the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission highlights two key areas of Chinese advantage: a "digital loop" and a "physical loop". Open-source models lower the cost of AI deployment, allowing them to move rapidly into manufacturing, logistics, robotics and other sectors of the economy. The data and practical demands generated by these applications, in turn, feed back into model development.

This creates a virtuous cycle of efficient algorithms, open ecosystems and industrial validation. Together, these strengths give China's AI sector considerable resilience and the potential to catch up or even overtake competitors despite the constrained access to advanced computing resources.

The China-US contest between open-source and closed-source models is also accelerating a broader rebalancing of global technology, giving the Global South and other economies, including those in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Europe and Latin America, an opportunity to enhance technological sovereignty rather than remain caught between major powers.

Reuters reported on Aug 14 that the US was preparing to ask dozens of countries to choose between US- and China-led AI cooperation frameworks, with those joining Beijing's initiative potentially excluded from a US-led AI coalition. The move shows how competition over AI has extended beyond technology into the geopolitical arena.

For European and Middle Eastern countries, sending sensitive industrial or government data to cloud servers controlled by Silicon Valley giants poses unacceptable compliance and security risks. Yet developing a large foundation model from scratch requires enormous financial and computing resources.

In this context, high-performance open-source models such as Qwen, DeepSeek and Llama are emerging as digital infrastructure for countries seeking to build their own localized AI capabilities. By fine-tuning these models in local languages and deploying them on private infrastructure, institutions in countries such as France, Singapore and Saudi Arabia can develop more cost-effective and independently controlled AI systems. Open source is thus transforming AI from a strategic technology concentrated in the hands of a few countries into a global public infrastructure.

The divide between open and closed models is also a contest over competing approaches to AI safety, governance and regulation. The closed-source camp has long argued that keeping advanced models inside a "black box" is the best defense against misuse, including applications involving biological weapons or cyberattacks. This argument has also been used to justify technological restrictions and stricter administrative controls.

But as open-source models become increasingly capable, the idea that security can be achieved primarily through secrecy is facing growing scrutiny from academia and the international community. More standards bodies and regulatory institutions are recognizing that excessive restrictions on access can easily turn into barriers that reinforce geopolitical and commercial monopolies. From this perspective, governance built on transparency, auditability and multi-stakeholder participation offers another path toward trustworthy AI.

Looking ahead, the global AI landscape is unlikely to be defined by complete technological closure or the wholesale replacement of closed-source models with open-source ones. A dual-track competition is more likely.

Closed-source laboratories, particularly in the US, will continue to use their enormous advantages in capital and computing power to pursue high-risk exploration at the uncertain frontier toward artificial general intelligence. Open-source ecosystems, led primarily by China and the wider global developer community, will rely on lower costs, stronger adaptability to real-world applications and millions of developers to become a major engine bringing AI into industries across the economy.

In effect, the competition between open-source and closed-source AI models is breaking down barriers to technological monopoly and accelerating the wider diffusion of AI. As a result, a more multipolar, resilient and competitive global AI order is beginning to take shape.

The author is the deputy director of the Institute of American and European Studies at the China Center for International Economic Exchanges.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Zhou Shuchun

The author is chief researcher at the China Watch Institute, China Daily.

Navigating the new normal of public opinion society

Recent events, from the playful use of bamboo cicada toys as a metaphor for a tech giant to the posture of a hostess during an interview, epitomize a defining feature of contemporary Chinese society: the frequent emergence of public-opinion incidents. Every few days, a headline-making topic goes viral on social media, capturing widespread attention and triggering a cacophony of divergent views.

This phenomenon can rightly be termed a "public opinion society", though interpretations of individual incidents can vary wildly. For instance, when internet users mashed up the audio of a bamboo cicada toy with clips from a company's product launch to parody its promotional slogan, the creator's meme and the legal response by the company drew mixed reactions.

Similarly, when a hostess crouched to interview foreign creative team members seated on high stools at a film premiere, some praised it as a professional move to avoid blocking the camera, while others decried it as obsequious deference to foreigners.

As such incidents multiply, public opinion has become a complex social issue. While this is a norm of the digital era, the constant barrage of controversies undoubtedly fuels anxiety among officials, corporations, public figures, and even ordinary citizens.

Media outlets recommend overcoming what might be called public-opinion mysophobia — an excessive fear of negative publicity — by building psychological resilience and responding proactively. Influential commentators advocate establishing a mechanism to mitigate the negative fallout of viral incidents.

The digital public sphere is characterized by low barriers, widespread participation and rapid dissemination.

The sheer volume of grassroots voices highlights societal vitality, but it also breeds emotional manipulation, rampant rumors, and one-sided verdicts, leading some to view it as a monstrous threat.

Yet, the collision of diverse perspectives itself is a product of social transition. Compared to the information silos and limited channels of expression in the past, this change represents undeniable progress.

Over decades of reform and opening-up, China has undergone a profound transformation — from isolation to openness, scarcity to abundance and uniformity to diversity.

In terms of public discourse, citizens have moved beyond basic needs to pursue higher aspirations such as fairness, justice and transparency. Various demands regarding livelihoods and governance expectations are now the driving force of public expression.

At a deeper level, the growing awareness of civil rights sustains the vitality of this public opinion society.

The catalyst of this change is the widespread adoption of digital technology. With mobile internet — particularly social media — permeating daily life, everyone has become a broadcaster, capable of voicing opinions at any moment. This has shattered the old paradigm where a select few monopolized the discourse, revealing the pluralistic and often conflicting nature of a society in transition.

At a deeper level, the growing awareness of civil rights sustains the vitality of this public opinion society. Citizens have evolved from passive bystanders of public affairs into active participants in social governance, making the oversight of public power a social norm. More people are now emboldened to express themselves on various issues. The increasing complexity of voices in the internet age is both an objective trend beyond anyone's will and a hallmark of social progress.

To some extent, the frequent eruption of public opinion incidents is fostering a mechanism of societal self-correction. In recent decades, no incident that captured national attention ended merely in emotional venting. Instead, each became a milestone in addressing institutional flaws and social shortcomings. Many far-reaching social reforms were triggered by major public uproars.

One notable example is the death of Sun Zhigang in 2003, which led to the abolition of an outdated system. Sun, a young man from Hubei province, was detained in Guangzhou for not having a temporary residence permit and later died in custody. The case sparked a nationwide outcry, leading to scrutiny of the flaws in the custody and repatriation system. Three months later, the Measures for the Custody and Repatriation of Urban Vagrants and Beggars — in effect for over two decades — was repealed and replaced by a new assistance regulation that better protected the rights of the floating population.

Admittedly, the profusion of public opinion also carries risks that can't be ignored. Algorithms can amplify negative emotions rapidly, and the traffic-first logic of dissemination favors extreme content. Conflict, pathos, and labeling quickly attract eyeballs, inflaming netizens and allowing one-sided views to dominate while occasionally silencing objective voices. Unchecked public opinion can fracture social consensus, interfere with the rule of law, and magnify societal anxiety.

A tragic example is the case of Liu Xuezhou, a young man from Hebei province who eventually committed suicide because of online violence. Sent away at three months old, he found his biological parents through DNA matching when he was 17 in 2022.

However, a dispute over housing was exposed on the internet, where some accused him of demanding an apartment from his parents. A deluge of abusive comments led to Liu's breakdown, and he committed suicide. While long-standing psychological trauma was a factor, the online abuse was the final straw for the young man.

In this case, the influencers who fanned the flames were sued and a court found them guilty of fabricating facts and committing defamation. The ruling highlights the importance of tackling the challenges of public opinion.

Building a healthy online ecosystem requires guiding the public to respect facts, and avoid black-and-white thinking. Most importantly, under the supervision of regulators, platforms must shoulder their responsibilities — breaking the chain of misinformation and minimizing the space for extreme narratives.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:50 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:50 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

CHRISTOPH NEDOPIL

Shaping a clean and green future

China's renewable energy five-year plan charts a new chapter for high-quality development at home and abroad



As China enters its 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, the nation's renewable energy landscape is undergoing a crucial transformation. Rather than simply chasing green energy installation speed, China's renewable energy five-year plan, issued by the National Energy Administration and the National Development and Reform Commission, focuses on quality development, system-wide reliability and decarbonization across both power and non-power sectors. This shift marks an important evolution in China's renewable energy ambitions, offering vital lessons for emerging economies and the wider international community.

A critical milestone underpinning this new plan is that China surpassed its previous 2030 target of 1,200 gigawatts of wind and solar capacity well ahead of schedule by September 2024. Building on this momentum, China aims for over 2,800 GW of wind and solar capacity by 2030. These new targets seem anchored in a realistic assessment of grid integration capabilities, economic shifts and technological readiness.

An important feature of this plan is its focus on energy regeneration and replenishment through dependable, firm renewables rather than expanding generation capacity. In the past, rapid capacity additions often outpaced grid flexibility. The new plan addresses this by prioritizing high-quality development through firming renewables. It mandates that newly built centralized wind and solar stations achieve a dependable capacity of no less than 10 percent, with high-performing projects encouraged to exceed 20 percent by 2030.

To achieve this level of system firmness, the plan stipulates massive expansion of energy storage assets over the next several years. As China balances hydropower development with ecological protection, flood control, water supply, irrigation and navigation, the country's conventional hydropower installed capacity is expected to reach about 410 million kilowatts by 2030.

By 2030, China is targeting 15 million kW of installed solar thermal power capacity, 400,000 kW of marine energy capacity and approximately 160 million kW of pumped storage power capacity, according to the National Energy Administration.

Combined with significant expansion of battery storage, advanced grid-forming inverters and source-side energy storage integration, these measures support the orderly substitution of fossil fuels in the country.

Renewable energy also plays a significant role in heavy industry upgrading, which requires retrofitting in hard-to-abate sectors such as steel and cement, alongside the physical relocation of energy-intensive industries to green-energy-rich regions.

At the community level, microgrids and rural development take center stage. Through initiatives such as the village-level micro-energy network pilots, China is pioneering decentralized off-grid and micro-grid solutions. These localized models offer invaluable lessons and practical blueprints for emerging economies across the Global South and Belt and Road countries seeking reliable, clean energy access in areas without grid connection.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Crucially, the country is charting a new chapter in renewable energy deployment at scale, proving that high levels of variable renewable penetration can be managed safely and efficiently in the world's largest energy system. For the international community, the plan offers a clear message: China's energy transition has entered a new phase where innovation, quality, security and systemic integration pave the path to a global energy transformation.

China has already become the global technology leader in green energy, and to enable more innovations in renewable energy, China can strengthen deep research collaboration among Chinese institutions — bridging universities and industry leaders — to drive breakthroughs in next-generation climate prediction, advanced materials and artificial intelligence-empowered grid dispatch.

With China's green energy successes drawing significant global attention, China's leadership demonstrates that domestic success can be paired with open international cooperation. By sharing its high-quality, cost-effective green technologies with other countries, especially some Global South countries, China is helping other nations accelerate their own low-carbon transition. Through both large-scale projects and livelihood-oriented "small yet beautiful" initiatives, China contributes to global green supply chains and standard harmonization.

On a broader global outlook, the accelerated integration of renewable energy opens unprecedented avenues for nations across the world to harness cost-effective green energy to improve industrial competitiveness while relatively lowering energy-related emissions. At the same time, some developed and developing countries increasingly want to benefit from integrating into global green energy value chains. Realizing this potential requires recognizing that trust-based collaboration and knowledge sharing are more important than ever. In this context, it is remarkable to observe China's rapid transition from an absorber to a prominent contributor of technological knowledge, now well-positioned to take the lead in upgrading green industries.

In conclusion, China's renewable energy five-year plan is much more than an energy road map. Rather it highlights China's transformation from a historical energy importer into a dominant global energy power and producer. By harnessing vast domestic resources — particularly through the mega wind and solar bases in the Three-North area and the Gobi regions — China is endeavoring to secure its own energy independence while helping the global energy transition. Crucially, the country is charting a new chapter in renewable energy deployment at scale, proving that high levels of variable renewable penetration can be managed safely and efficiently in the world's largest energy system. For the international community, the plan offers a clear message: China's energy transition has entered a new phase where innovation, quality, security and systemic integration pave the path to a global energy transformation.

The author is a professor at the University of Queensland in Brisbane and a visiting professor at the Fudan International School of Finance at Fudan University. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

WALDEMAR KARPA

Picture of health

China's growing contribution to pharmaceutical innovation heralds a new era for global industry



China's pharmaceutical industry, once primarily known for its role in producing affordable generics, has undergone a profound transformation, emerging as a leading force in global drug innovation. This evolution is not merely an industrial shift but a significant development poised to deliver new medicines to patients worldwide, presenting both opportunities and a call for enhanced international collaboration.

This pivotal moment was vividly illustrated at the 2024 World Conference on Lung Cancer, where Akeso, a biotech company from Zhongshan, Guangdong province, presented groundbreaking data. Its bispecific antibody, ivonescimab, demonstrated superior efficacy against Keytruda (pembrolizumab) in a head-to-head trial for non-small cell lung cancer. Keytruda, a cornerstone of global oncology, represents a multi-billion-dollar market. Akeso's achievement, often described as the industry's "DeepSeek moment", signals China's arrival as a frontrunner in developing novel therapies, challenging established paradigms and inspiring new possibilities for patient care.

This success is not an isolated incident but part of a broader trend. A decade ago, China accounted for less than 8 percent of global clinical trials. In 2020, it had surpassed both the United States and Europe in annual trial volume. In 2024, it initiated close to 5,000 trials. This growth is not just in quantity but in quality, with China's high-novelty trials growing significantly faster than the US benchmark. A Boston Consulting Group report earlier this year further notes that since 2021, China has outpaced the US in new molecular entities entering clinical development, contributing about 44 percent of the global total last year. Its share of potential first-in-class drugs rose from 16 percent in 2020 to 34 percent in 2025, nearing the US' 38 percent.

China's journey from a generics producer to an innovation leader is rooted in strategic policy reforms. The National Reimbursement Drug List reform, initiated around 2016, played a crucial role. By offering guaranteed, near-universal access in exchange for significant price reductions, the State effectively stimulated demand for innovative drugs. This policy led to a substantial increase in the utilization of covered drugs, with oncology volumes growing nearly tenfold, demonstrating that innovation flourishes where there is clear market demand and patient access. This approach has fostered a dynamic ecosystem where laboratories and research thrive.

This demand-driven innovation is supported by an efficient research and development ecosystem. The "decode, iterate, execute" flywheel, as described by the Boston Consulting Group, operates with remarkable cost-effectiveness. Drug discovery and preclinical work in China can be conducted at a fraction of the cost in the West. Contract research organizations, including WuXi AppTec, have built integrated platforms spanning drug discovery, preclinical testing and other stages of drug development, helping pharmaceutical companies reduce costs and accelerate development. This efficiency has allowed China to effectively counter "Eroom's law" — the observation that drug development costs double every nine years — by leveraging vast patient pools, rapid engineering iteration and streamlined regulatory processes. The result is a robust pipeline extending beyond oncology into respiratory, immunology and metabolic diseases, with Chinese companies now confidently designing Phase III trials head-to-head against global blockbusters.

The global pharmaceutical industry has recognized China's ascendance. Insiders such as Pfizer's CEO Albert Bourla have acknowledged China as a significant challenger to US strength in biotechnology. While some regions such as Europe have seen their share of global clinical trials decline, China's share has tripled, particularly in advanced fields such as cell and gene therapy. In 2024, China became the leading source of new active substances, contributing 35 percent globally.

Rather than viewing this as a zero-sum game, the industry is increasingly embracing collaboration. Facing patent expirations and seeking new growth avenues, Western pharmaceutical companies are actively investing in and partnering with Chinese biotechs. Cross-border out-licensing from China reached an estimated total potential value of $135.7 billion in 2025, with a significant surge in early 2026. Major deals, such as Pfizer's investment in 3SBio's bispecific and GSK's commitment to Hengrui, highlight a strategic "re-platforming" onto Chinese science. Beyond licensing, new strategies include "local for local" manufacturing, establishing R&D centers in China, and China-first drug launches, all aimed at fostering deeper integration and mutual benefit.



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

While geopolitical complexities, including the BIOSECURE Act and designations affecting companies such as WuXi AppTec, present challenges, the intertwined nature of the global pharmaceutical ecosystem underscores the importance of open scientific exchange and collaboration. Protectionist measures risk hindering global health progress. The optimal path forward involves fostering an environment where competition drives innovation, and partnerships accelerate the delivery of life-saving medicines.

China's innovation strength, characterized by its engineering brilliance and focus on optimizing known targets, continues to grow. While its R&D spending is still a fraction of the US', and its venture capital ecosystem is still maturing, the impact of its contributions is undeniable. The notion that smaller economies should merely be "free riders" importing innovations no longer holds true. China has not only become a significant innovator but is actively shaping the future of global health.

This new reality is a call on the traditional leaders of the industry to adapt and engage with a rapidly evolving landscape. Embracing this shift through competition, partnership and domestic reform, rather than restrictive policies, is the most effective approach. For patients everywhere, it would mean access to better medicines, developed faster and more affordably. Denial of this transformation would be a disservice to global health and scientific progress.

The author is an economist and the head of the Department of Economics at Kozminski University in Warsaw. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:50 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:50 PM

BUSINESS

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

County-level consumption prioritized

Measures set to unlock potential of smaller-scale urban markets

By **ZHANG CHENXU**
zhangchenxu@chinadaily.com.cn

China has unveiled a package of measures to unlock the potential of lower-tier, smaller-scale urban markets, with a particular focus on county-level spending, as counties emerge as an increasingly important driver of consumption growth, officials and experts said.

The latest push is expected to tap a deeper reservoir of domestic demand and lend fresh impetus to the building of a strong domestic market, thereby reinforcing China's longer-term transition toward consumption-led growth, they added.

"County and township markets now hold the key to further consumption growth," Yuan Xiaoming, assistant minister of commerce, said at a news conference in Beijing on Tuesday, noting that county-level areas account for about 40 percent of China's economic output.

Their comments came after the Ministry of Commerce and eight other government departments released the guideline earlier that day, setting out 18 measures covering upgrades to retail infrastructure, business format innovation, the supply of goods and services, distribution networks and financial support.

Under the guideline, efforts will focus on improving the retail environment in county-level areas by upgrading existing commercial facilities and retail networks, strengthening support services and making better use of idle assets, the ministry said.

Dai Mingfeng, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, said: "County-level consumption is undergoing a structural shift, with consumers increasingly trading up and devoting a growing share of their spending to services.

"Young people returning home are playing a dual role — starting businesses that broaden local supply while generating fresh demand as consumers," Dai said. "They are a small but pivotal force driving consumption growth in counties."

To better meet evolving demand, the measures will encourage chain operators to accelerate their expansion into county-level markets, help local brands blend heritage with innovation and support localities in developing new business formats suited to their own conditions, the ministry said.

Retailers are increasingly looking to counties for growth. Busy Ming Group Co, a snack and beverage retailer, said in its 2025 annual results announcement that around 60 percent of its 21,948 stores were located in counties and townships at the end of 2025. Its network reached 1,401 counties, or around 75 percent of the national total.

> "County-level consumption is undergoing a structural shift, with consumers increasingly trading up and devoting a growing share of their spending to services."
>
> **Dai Mingfeng,** a researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation

The guideline also promotes emerging business formats tailored to local conditions and closer integration of commerce with agriculture, culture, tourism and sports, said the ministry.

New travel hot spots are emerging beyond major cities. China's "hidden-gem small cities" posted the strongest booking growth this summer, with hotel bookings in Zherong county, Fujian province — about a three-hour drive north of Fuzhou — surging more than tenfold from a year earlier, said online travel portal Qunar.

In addition, the measures call for stronger fiscal and financial support. Eligible personal loans for consumption and business loans in the services sector will qualify for interest subsidies, while retail businesses opening new chain stores in counties may apply for government-backed startup loans and receive interest subsidies, the guideline stated.

The measures come as lower-tier markets take up a growing share of consumer spending. Retail sales of consumer goods in county and township markets accounted for 39.1 percent of the national total in the first seven months, up 0.3 percentage point from a year earlier, according to estimates released by the National Bureau of Statistics on Monday.

Bai Wenxi, vice-chairman of the China Enterprise Capital Union, said China's consumption growth over the next decade will be driven largely by county-level markets.

"Supportive policies have already created favorable conditions, but the ultimate outcome will hinge on the quality of local implementation and whether businesses are prepared to make a long-term commitment to these markets," Bai said.

Briefly

Geely reports record H1 sales growth

Chinese automaker Geely Automobile Holdings Ltd reported record-high sales and revenue growth in the first half of the year, according to its interim report. The company announced record sales of more than 1.42 million vehicles, with revenue growing 15 percent year-on-year to 173.6 billion yuan ($25 billion) during the period. Marking its sixth consecutive year of positive first half revenue growth, the company also reported a 46 percent rise in core profit attributable to owners of the parent, reaching 9.68 billion yuan for the period.

Railway investment in Jan-July rises

China has made steady progress on a number of key railway projects as investment in railway construction continued to expand in 2026, generating a notable driving effect and injecting fresh momentum into regional economic and social development, the national railway operator said. Fixed-asset investment in the railway sector totaled 440.6 billion yuan ($64 billion) in the first seven months of the year, up 1.8 percent year-on-year, according to China State Railway Group Co Ltd.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY



View of SenseTime's booth during an expo in Shanghai. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

End-to-end solutions key to AI exports

By **MA SI**
masi@chinadaily.com.cn

As the artificial intelligence industry rapidly evolves, a new frontier is emerging: the export of AI computing infrastructure. Chinese tech companies, once known primarily for hardware manufacturing and consumer app exports, are now taking their AI models, algorithms and computing infrastructure to overseas markets, corporate executives and experts said.

"China's AI-led expansion overseas is changing. It is moving beyond the export of stand-alone software and applications toward a more sophisticated offering of industry-specific solutions and digital infrastructure," said Jeff Shi, president of SenseTime's Asia-Pacific business, in an exclusive interview with China Daily.

That model draws on nearly the full breadth of China's AI ecosystem — from data centers and token plans to governance frameworks and talent development, Shi said.

SenseTime is at the forefront of this transformation, he said. Since its founding, the company has expanded into more than a dozen overseas markets, serving over 500 enterprise clients globally, with more than 430 in the Asia-Pacific region alone. From intelligent hardware and software licensing to industry solutions and cloud services, the company has built a comprehensive portfolio that spans the entire AI value chain.

The shift from exporting trained AI models to exporting computing infrastructure represents a strategic upgrade driven by fundamental changes in the industry. Shi explained that in the early stages of international expansion, SenseTime primarily delivered computer vision models trained in China, with computing needs met domestically. But the generative AI era has fundamentally altered the landscape.

"Customers no longer need just a single model — they need an end-to-end solution that integrates computing power, models and applications," Shi said. The surge in overseas demand for AI inference has created an urgent need for local computing infrastructure.

At the same time, the rise of "Chinovation" — a term coined in 2011 to describe Chinese innovation has taken on new meaning. It has changed from representing cost-effective alternatives, to being the flagship of high-tech original innovation.

"Overseas clients now come to China to find Chinese technology, Chinese applications, and Chinese opportunities," Shi noted. This shift reflects China's growing global competitiveness in technology — and explains why the world's best open-source large language models are emerging from China.

According to Shi, more foreign visitors are traveling to China to study AI firsthand. International business visitors to SenseTime's Executive Briefing Center in Shanghai have risen tenfold so far in 2026.

SenseTime's computing power export strategy took a major leap forward in 2025 with the successful deployment of China's first overseas domestic computing cluster in the Middle East. The company established a joint venture called SenseTime MEA with Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund, or PIF, and has been deeply engaged in the country's Vision 2030 transformation.

Hong Kong also plays a pivotal role in SenseTime's global computing strategy. In June, SenseTime partnered with Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corp to build the city's largest domestically developed AI data center, targeting over 40,000 petaFLOPS of computing capacity by 2030. The first phase, expected to be completed by the end of 2026, will deliver 3,000 petaFLOPS of computing power.

Shi described Hong Kong as an "AI-era entrepot trade center" with three unique advantages: dual-compliance capabilities bridging Chinese and international legal systems; superior international network connectivity; and its strategic location within the Greater Bay Area, backed by the Chinese mainland's vast talent pool.

"The project will significantly supplement SenseTime's own computing power supply while serving as a springboard to support the overseas deployment of integrated 'computing+model+application' capabilities," Shi explained.

The senior executive identified three key drivers for SenseTime's future growth: the unprecedented opportunity created by Chinovation; the maturation of the global computer vision market where SenseTime has achieved global leadership; and the trust and reputation built over eight years of overseas operations.

Industry observers are taking note of the broader implications. Li Shan, country head of NCS Greater China, highlighted two key characteristics of Chinovation: practicality and openness. "China can turn lab experiments into real industrial productivity in a very short period of time, and we also have a very fast turnaround time to improve technology," Li said.

Home prices see narrowed declines

China's 70 major cities generally saw narrowed year-on-year home price drops in July, adding to signs of stabilization of the property market, data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed on Monday.

In the four first-tier cities of Guangzhou and Shenzhen in Guangdong province, Beijing and Shanghai, new home prices fell 1.1 percent year-on-year last month, compared with a 1.3-percent drop in June, while the decline in second-hand home prices narrowed from 4.9 percent to 3.7 percent in July.

In other cities, year-on-year declines of home prices also narrowed slightly in July, except new home prices in third-tier cities, where the decline was unchanged from June.

On a month-on-month basis, home prices in first-tier cities generally rose, while those in second- and third-tier cities went down. Across the 70 cities, 23 recorded increases or no change in new home prices, two more than in June, while the figure for second-hand homes was eight, two fewer than the previous month.

The NBS releases a monthly home price report tracking market changes in 70 major cities, including four first-tier cities, 31 second-tier cities and 35 third-tier cities.

More signs emerging this year suggest the property market has remained broadly stable with confidence and expectations gradually improving.

At a meeting on economic work held by the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee at the end of last month, policymakers called for continued efforts to stabilize the property market.

Experts said the policy direction remains clear, with local governments expected to make better use of policy tools tailored to local conditions to meet housing demand.

Yu Xiaofen, a researcher at Zhejiang University of Technology in East China, called for faster progress in developing a new model for the property sector, as well as improving long-term mechanisms to promote the stable and healthy development of the market.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY



Visitors look at a demonstration apartment model of the Lakeside Mansion Project of China Railway 22nd Bureau Group, which aims to showcase its low-carbon technologies and ergonomic urban environment. The project has won multiple prestigious awards in utilizing advanced technologies in cutting-edge housing development. SU TIANJIAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

APEC meeting spurring trade

By **ZHONG NAN** in Dalian, Liaoning
zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

With customs officials from Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation economies meeting in Dalian, Liaoning province, to advance trade facilitation across the region, trade experts and exporters said the talks will further boost China's trade with other APEC economies, underpinned by strong economic complementarity.

They said China's industrial upgrading and growing supply of high-tech and green products are helping developing APEC economies advance industrialization, as expanded trade and closer supply chain integration create new opportunities for regional economic cooperation.

Ahead of the meeting in Dalian, which starts on Wednesday, the General Administration of Customs said in a statement on Monday that it will work with other APEC economies to enhance regional trade security and facilitation, align customs rules and standards, and reduce institutional trade costs.

Ji Wenhua, a professor at the Academy of China Open Economy Studies — which is part of the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing — said that against the backdrop of a sluggish global economic recovery and rising geopolitical tensions, APEC has become an increasingly important platform for deeper economic integration across the region.

Zhang Yun, a professor at the School of International Studies at Nanjing University in Jiangsu province, said China's industrial upgrading and companies' growing global presence are creating new opportunities for developing APEC economies by bringing investment, advanced technologies and production capacity to local markets, strengthening their industrial capabilities and facilitating their integration into regional value chains.

Gu Yanping, customs affairs director at Zhejiang Sunny Optical Intelligence Technology Co Ltd — a manufacturer of optical imaging products based in Ningbo, Zhejiang province — said the company's Vietnam plant began operations in October, assembling China-sourced camera modules, vision modules and lens components into vision systems for smart robots, which are then sold globally.

"It has become a key overseas innovation and production base for the company, while also contributing to local employment and industrial development," said Gu.

Imports and exports with other APEC economies through Ningbo ports reached 747.96 billion yuan ($110.91 billion) in the first seven months, up 9.9 percent year-on-year, said Ningbo Customs.

Fujian Tide Power Technology Co Ltd, a power generation equipment manufacturer in Fuzhou, Fujian province, shipped 227 million yuan worth of products to other APEC markets between January and July, up 9.89 percent year-on-year, said Fuzhou Customs. Its exports included lighting towers, energy storage systems and gas and diesel generators, with diesel generator sets seeing particularly strong sales.

Cai Jinjin, the company's director of international sales, said demand for diesel generators remains strong across many APEC markets, particularly in developing economies where infrastructure construction and industrial expansion are boosting the need for reliable backup power.

China is hosting the third APEC Senior Officials' Meeting in Dalian from Monday through Aug 28, said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

More than 2,300 representatives from APEC member economies and regional and international organizations will attend the meeting. The event will cover a wide range of fields, including trade, customs, transportation, food, science and technology, energy and health.

More broadly, Northeast China's two-way trade with other APEC economies reached 493 billion yuan during the January-July period, rising 8.1 percent year-on-year, said Shenyang Customs.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:50 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:50 PM

BUSINESS

China-built water treatment plant hailed

Mongolian president calls it testament to bilateral strategic partnership

By **HAN JINGYAN**
hanjingyan@chinadaily.com.cn



Staffers from China Railway No 4 Engineering Group check the operating status of equipment at the CREC4-built Ulaanbaatar Central Sewage Treatment Plant in Mongolia. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Having been stationed in Mongolia for 11 years, Wang Jilin feels proud as he departs from a Mongolian airport after a local customs official gave him a hearty smile upon seeing that he's with China Railway No 4 Engineering Group.

"CREC4 has constructed a lot of projects in Mongolia and has become a well-known name to Mongolians," Wang said, adding that the warm smiles he receives make all the painstaking efforts worthwhile.

Since the 1950s, Chinese aid workers have come to Mongolia, helping construct over 850 projects, including highways, port facilities, shantytown renovation, urban infrastructure, as well as desertification prevention and control works.

On June 15, a central sewage treatment plant built by State-owned CREC4 officially began operating in Ulaanbaatar, the Mongolian capital, and on June 30, Mongolian President Ukhnaa Khurelsukh inspected the facility.

Spanning 178,000 square meters and comprising 55 individual buildings with a designed daily processing capacity of 250,000 cubic meters, it is the largest and most advanced sewage treatment facility in Mongolia, Wang said.

After examining the plant's major treatment units and receiving a detailed briefing, Khurelsukh highly praised the facility, calling it a symbol of the comprehensive strategic partnership between China and Mongolia and a testament to the friendship between the two peoples.

Wang said the plant can collect and treat domestic and industrial wastewater across Ulaanbaatar, serving nearly half of Mongolia's population of around 3.5 million, and significantly improving water quality in the capital.

"At busy times in our work, we could see some 400 Mongolian builders and 700 Chinese builders work side by side on the construction site. It was quite impressive," said Wang, who acts as Party chief for the CREC4 team that built the plant.



Staffers from Chinese State builder China Railway No 4 Engineering Group are hosted as guests at a home of a Mongolian employee. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Better livelihoods

The sewage treatment plant — a key Belt and Road undertaking — is only part of the many public works projects CREC4 has undertaken in Mongolia, said Wang from CREC4 First Engineering.

"But the plant carries vital importance," said Zhang Jiawei, chief engineer of the CREC4 team that built the plant.

In addition to serving nearly half of Mongolia's population, the country's most advanced sewage treatment facility ensures that water quality will be improved in the capital, as all treated sewage will finally enter the Selenge River, which eventually empties into Lake Baikal — the world's oldest and deepest freshwater lake.

Located in the southwestern part of Ulaanbaatar, in Songino Khairkhan district, the project includes pump houses in an old plant area, sewage pipelines into the plant, the new central sewage treatment plant and the tailwater discharge channels.

During its official inauguration on Feb 2, 2019, President Khurelsukh — who served as the nation's prime minister at the time — said many important projects in Ulaanbaatar were built with the help of Chinese friends.

Greatly elevating living conditions in Ulaanbaatar and improving public well-being, "it will become a model project of pragmatic cooperation between Mongolia and China", he said.

During a visit to the work site of the plant on Aug 17, 2021, Begzhavyn Monkhbaatar, then Mongolian minister for urban and construction development, applauded CREC4's efforts in building the facilities.

During construction work, CREC4 provided some 3,000 jobs for the locals.

Local resident Tsedev, who goes by one name only, said that at the guidance of Chinese colleagues, he learned to read Chinese project drawings and worked as a competent CREC4 builder.

"The salary here is higher than many others, and I can also learn many new skills," he said, adding that his hard work helped win recognition of CREC4, which awarded him a title of "Excellent Mongolian Worker" in 2021 as well as a bonus of 1,000 yuan ($148).

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who is also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, delivered a speech on June 15, as the sewage treatment plant launched operations.

China has always supported Mongolia in developing its economy and improving people's livelihoods, he said, adding that the cooperation always benefits the Mongolian people, with bilateral ties becoming a model of friendly coexistence, and common development and prosperity among neighboring countries.

Uyirs Tuguldur, director of the Presidential Office of Mongolia, hailed it as a major achievement of Mongolia-China cooperation, bringing tangible benefits to the Mongolian people.

He also expressed gratitude for China's support in Mongolia's socio-economic development.

Bonds of friendship

Earlier, CREC4 helped build the Development Center for Disabled Children in Mongolia, the No 2 Highway, and the country's first expressway leading to the new airport in Ulaanbaatar, which opened to traffic in late 2017, said Wang Jilin.

CREC4 is going all out to link the Belt and Road Initiative with Mongolia's Steppe Road Program, unveiled in November 2014, to reinvigorate its economy through transport and trade, he said.

Currently, CREC4 is still involved in projects in Mongolia, including the Qiaoba Mountain Highway Project in Eastern province; construction at Ulan Mine; and project management of a commercial/residential construction project in Ulaanbaatar, said Wu Yiyong, publicity chief of CREC4 First Engineering.

Back in July 2019, when the two-way six-lane expressway leading to the new airport in Ulaanbaatar was officially handed over to the Mongolian government, Khurelsukh said at the time that he believed "it can play a very good role", adding that "the quality is very good and it is of a very high standard".

Construction commenced on June 6, 2016, and the entire line was completed on Oct 12, 2018.

On Oct 19, 2023, Liu Bo, Party secretary and chairman of CREC4, also attended a signing ceremony in Beijing for CREC4's construction of a 6.96-kilometer railway line in Mongolia.

The signing ceremony between CREC4 and its Mongolian partners was for CREC4's general contracting of engineering project in building the Mongolian Xiberkulun Port Railway Engineering Project, another BRI undertaking.

The railway will start from the Sino-Mongolian cross-border point at the end of China's Linhe-Ceke Railway in Inner Mongolia, and extends northward for some 6.96 km. There will be a newly built facility — Xiberkulun Port Station. China's Ceke Port is situated along the China-Mongolia border.

Unseen contributions

Mao Mingliang, director of the engineering division of the CREC4 project department for building the Development Center for Disabled Children in Mongolia, said he had witnessed the hardship Chinese aid workers met in Mongolia.

The project site was located in the Tuul River Valley, with sandy and rocky geological conditions and extremely abundant groundwater — making building homes in the area akin to conducting construction on watery tofu, he said.

The foundation pit needed to be dug five meters below ground, with some sections reaching 6.5 meters. "During the trial excavation phase when the digging was less than one meter deep, numerous 'spring eyes' emerged at the bottom of the pit, bubbling up with water," recalled Yu Jin, the project's chief engineer.

The team ultimately adopted a "tube and well dewatering" solution — drilling three threaded steel pipes in the north and south outside the foundation-pit excavation line, allowing the groundwater to seep into the pipes and continuously pumping it out with high-pressure pumps.

The project was completed 10 days ahead of schedule, and in 2019, it won the "Best Architecture Award" for 2019 in Mongolia, Mao said.

The construction conditions were harsh, as Mongolia can have temperatures as low as -40 C, sandstorms and heavy snowfall were common, water shortages were constant and communications were underdeveloped, creating challenges for Chinese builders.

Wang Jilin recalled that in constructing the central sewage treatment plant in Ulaanbaatar, extreme cold temperatures were a big challenge.

"The project is located in a high-altitude region, with winter lasting for five months, and long-term very low temperatures can lead to unstable concrete performance, limiting construction processes," Wang said.

Meanwhile, the lack of supporting resources for large-scale sewage treatment projects in local regions also posed severe challenges throughout the project, he said.

"The construction team has optimized a special construction plan for extremely cold weather, and innovated low-temperature construction techniques, by adding insulation enclosure structures for biological treatment units, and customizing antifreeze protection devices for deep treatment equipment and pipelines," Wang recalled.

"Although the work was arduous, it was also a treasure in my work and in my life, as we had solidified our friendships among us, and it can last a lifetime," he said.

Wang said that he is immensely happy with his work, as it can help strengthen the friendship between the two peoples.

Construction projects strengthen bonds of Chinese-Mongolian friendships

By **HAN JINGYAN**

After finishing her studies at Beijing University of Technology, Otgonbaya Urna returned to Mongolia and joined China Railway No 4 Engineering Group in September 2016 as a project coordinator.

Though busy with her work building a Development Center for Disabled Children, she was also very proud to be helping the Chinese State builder with translations covering tax exemption for import and export materials, as well as with local procurement and archiving of project completion acceptance.

"She is very professional, conscientious and hard working, and has helped us a lot," said Lyu Haiyun, a CREC4 project leader in Ulaanbaatar, the Mongolian capital.

The bond of friendship between the Chinese and Mongolian peoples is rooted in fine traditions, mutual respect and shared visions. Since the 1950s, Chinese aid workers have been traveling to Mongolia to help construct over 850 projects, he said.

Lyu added that the projects adhered to a people-oriented approach, ensuring that the cooperation always benefits the Mongolian people.

While building the Development Center for Disabled Children in Mongolia, CREC4 provided over 1,000 jobs for locals, with the number of Mongolian employees reaching more than 70 percent, Lyu said.

Sohobater, 40, was one of the participants. Prior to this job, he primarily made a living by herding some 100 sheep, earning slightly over 20,000 yuan ($2,966) each year.

After joining the project in September 2016, he became a Mongolian employee of CREC4. "I was actually quite hesitant at first, worrying about poor living conditions, unfamiliar food, language barriers and communication difficulties," he said.

Understanding this, the project department built a Mongolian yurt for him, set up a Mongolian staff canteen and even sent gifts during festivals and holidays.

When teaching him how to tile, Chinese master colleague Zhang Ruimin demonstrated the process with great care, helping Sohobater grow into a team leader managing 24 Mongolian employees. Sohobater was awarded the title of "Excellent Mongolian Employee" every month.



Chinese and Mongolian project builders enjoy activities at a construction site in Mongolia. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"My work here has changed my life completely and taught me skills. I love my Chinese colleagues and our relationship is like that of brothers and sisters," he said.

But the road to full cooperation was not smooth at first. CREC4 employee Wang Jilin, who has been stationed in Mongolia for 11 years, recalled the job of building the two-way six-lane expressway leading to the new airport in Ulaanbaatar between June 2016 and October 2018.

"When the construction work on this 32-kilometer highway officially commenced on June 6, 2016, we faced a big challenge — our Mongolian employees were not used to working overtime," he said. "Though we discussed this with them, they were still unwilling to do it."

"When the Chinese employees learned of the situation with the tight schedule, they all said: 'we can do it ourselves'. I was almost moved to tears," recalled Deng Erlong, the then CREC4 project manager.

Mongolian nights in September are bitterly cold, but the construction site was brightly lit and all the Chinese employees went outside to measure data and elevations, and took shovels to begin their work.

After the Mongolian builders visited the site at night, they changed their minds after seeing the busy scene and actively joined in the construction.

In 2020, the expressway project won the "Luban Award" as an overseas engineering undertaking for the National High Quality Project.

During the expressway's construction, CREC4 partnered with over 30 enterprises in Mongolia, creating over 1,000 local jobs and cultivating various professional talents and technical workers in highway construction.

When Mongolia's Badakh road and bridge company cooperated with CREC4 in 2017, it only had five engineers. Now, it has more than 20 engineers, over 100 technical workers and more than 60 types of construction machinery.

Its Deputy General Manager Sayinsur said: "From being able to build roads that are only seven or eight meters wide to now being proficient in building roads that are 14 meters wide, Chinese builders have generously passed their guidance on to us, greatly improving our technology. We thank them sincerely."

In building the central sewage treatment plant project in Ulaanbaatar, CREC4 hired over 600 local Mongolian laborers and trained more than 50 local technical professionals, Lyu said.

The bonds of friendship developed even further. Ganbgatu, from CREC4 International Business Department, went to work on the central sewage treatment plant project in Ulaanbaatar.

In 2022, he met local girl Eenhhosharura, and by gradually understanding and respecting each other's culture and values, they got married on May 20, 2024.

"In the future, we will contribute our own strength in helping bolster the high-quality development of CREC4," said Ganbgatu.

Sohobater noted: "China's aid to Mongolia is sincere, selfless, beneficial to people's livelihoods and of high quality and quantity. We appreciate it very much."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:50 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:50 PM

CHINA

Plan to tailor new routes for road trips

Authorities target a 60,000-km-long natl network linking major attractions

By **LUO WANGSHU**
luowangshu@chinadaily.com.cn

China plans to develop about 60,000 kilometers of routes specifically tailored for road trips by 2030, linking some of the country's best-known landscapes and cultural sites while improving services for travelers, the Ministry of Transport announced on Monday.

The national network will largely make use of existing highways and connect major tourist attractions, cultural landmarks and scenic areas. At its core will be three loops, four east-west routes and five north-south routes.

The loops will consist of routes along China's border and coastal areas, one around the capital metropolitan region, and another through Qinghai and Gansu provinces.

The east-west routes will take in areas associated with the Great Wall, the Yellow and Yangtze rivers, as well as the high-altitude landscapes of western China. The north-south routes will feature the Grand Canal, world heritage sites in eastern China, mountain scenery in Central China, sites associated with the Long March and historic travel routes.

According to the ministry, the network will include long-distance routes crossing provincial boundaries, complemented by locally developed itineraries tailored to regional attractions and travel demand.

The plan goes beyond the roads themselves. It calls for better rest areas, viewing points and safety facilities, along with more charging stations, roadside repair services and car rental options at airports, railway stations and other transport hubs.

Local authorities are also encouraged to develop camping, educational trips, sporting events and other activities along the routes, making the journey itself a bigger part of the tourism experience.

The initiative comes as road trips account for a large share of domestic travel.

During this year's nine-day Spring Festival holiday in February, an average of nearly 270 million passenger trips were made by private vehicles each day, up 8.3 percent year-on-year and accounting for 86 percent of all passenger trips, according to the Ministry of Transport.

An average of about 650,000 small passenger vehicles were rented each day during the holiday period, up 15 percent from the previous year.



Visitors in self-drive vehicles stop at a viewing platform to admire a breathtaking sea of clouds in Longhui county, Hunan province, on Aug 5. ZENG YONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Vice-Minister of Transport Xu Chengguang said at a news conference in July that developing routes for road travelers and making car rentals more widely available would be among the ministry's priorities during the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30).

The ministry will "develop routes for self-drive travel and expand the coverage of car rental services", Xu said. He added that more rental outlets would be established near airports and high-speed railway stations to enable travelers to arrive by air or rail and continue their journeys by car. The ministry is also encouraging cheaper or free one-way returns for rental vehicles.

Liu Dong, an official with the ministry's department of comprehensive planning, said at a policy briefing in February that road trips had emerged as a new source of tourism spending, with some highways becoming attractions in their own right.

He said the ministry planned to make greater use of national and provincial highways to develop longer routes spanning multiple regions, while improving connections between highways and tourist attractions and upgrading services along the way.

For some families, road trips have already become an annual tradition. A woman surnamed Pan from Northeast China said she travels by car with her family to different parts of the country every year, with her daughter or other family members taking turns behind the wheel.

"Traveling by car is very convenient now. The roads are good and the service areas are comfortable, which makes it a good option for families," she said.

Better charging infrastructure is also making long-distance road travel easier, particularly for electric vehicle owners.

An EV owner surnamed Xu said drivers now have less reason to worry about finding a place to recharge their vehicles than they did several years ago. Charging stations have become easier to locate and much more widely available along major roads.

"Now there's almost always a charging station nearby," he said.

By 2035, the ministry aims to have a more complete national network in place, with better services, stronger safety support and a wider range of tourism and leisure options for road travelers.

Single travel permit to push GBA integration

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

Macao residents and Hong Kong permanent residents can now use a single document — the Mainland Travel Permit for Hong Kong and Macao Residents (including non-Chinese citizens) — to complete automated immigration clearance when both departing from and arriving at three ports linking Guangdong province and the Macao Special Administrative Region.

The new measures are a part of refinements to the "joint inspection, one-time release" model, which was officially implemented on Tuesday at three major land checkpoints — the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, Hengqin and Qingmao ports — between Guangdong and Macao.

Previously, Hong Kong and Macao residents were required to present different documents depending on the direction of their travel when using the joint-inspection automated channels. When traveling from Macao to the mainland, they had to present their Mainland Travel Permit for Hong Kong and Macao Residents. When returning to Macao from the mainland, they were required to present either a Macao resident identity card or a Hong Kong permanent identity card.

"In the past, I had to bring two types of documents when traveling, and sometimes I forgot to bring them. Now this method is flexible and convenient, so you don't have to worry about forgetting to bring your certificate, and you won't get confused when passing customs," said a Macao resident.

The measures, approved by the National Immigration Administration, aim to further enhance travelers' exit-entry clearance experience and facilitate the movement of people in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, according to a statement released on Monday by the Zhuhai general station of immigration inspection. They are expected to further accelerate integration between the three regions, the statement said.

At Qingmao Port, a frequent cross-border commuter between Zhuhai and Macao surnamed Lin praised the smooth process after experiencing the optimized joint-inspection and one-time-release immigration service on Tuesday.

Located south of Zhuhai Railway Station of the Guangzhou-Zhuhai Intercity Railway, Qingmao Port is a 24-hour passenger-only port for pedestrians.

Besides optimizing the submission and verification of documents for Hong Kong and Macao residents, the new measures also increase the number of people eligible to use the cooperative fast-inspection channel and the joint-inspection lane for vehicles entering and leaving Macao.

Under the new measures, eligible foreigners and Taiwan residents who have completed registration for expedited customs clearance with authorities in both the mainland and Macao can use the "One-stop Joint Services Lanes" at Hengqin Port.

"The measures represent not only an upgrade in inspection methods, but also a vivid practice of the Greater Bay Area's 'hard-connectivity' development," said He Caigen, director of the border inspection division of the Zhuhai general station of immigration inspection.

Real-time dynamic monitoring of lane operation data will be conducted to continuously optimize the systems and publicize user-friendly policies, while every effort will be made to ensure smooth port clearance in the weeks to come, He said.

"Under the premise of 'effective regulation', we will further deliver liberalized access and efficient clearance," he said.

The Zhuhai general station of immigration inspection first rolled out its "joint inspection, one-time release" model in 2018. The model has served as a national benchmark and represents a novel approach to immigration clearance under the "one country, two systems" framework. It has undergone continuous upgrades and expanded coverage in recent years.

According to a statement released on the official website of the Macao SAR government, the cumulative inbound and outbound passenger flow through the three cooperative inspection ports reached 42 million in the first half of this year, with an average daily passenger flow of 235,000, an increase of 12.8 percent compared with the same period in 2025. Macao residents accounted for 43.8 percent of the total, up 12.4 percent year-on-year, while Hong Kong residents accounted for 2.2 percent, up 12.2 percent year-on-year.



Milestone visitor

Zhang Zhiheng (second from left), a young visitor from Binzhou, Shandong province, views a robot model at the Shanghai Science & Technology Museum on Tuesday. Zhang was celebrated as the museum's 100 millionth visitor since its opening in 2001. TAO LEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

PLA Navy's first group of carrier-based female trainee pilots ready to take off

By **LI SHANGYI**
lishangyi@chinadaily.com.cn

> "The ship's pitching and rolling require more precise control for landing."
>
> **Wang Mengdi,** a female flight cadet from the PLA Naval Aviation University

The first group of female naval pilot trainees selected to train as carrier-based aircraft pilots recently passed their daytime individual landing assessments in the Bohai Bay in Shandong province, marking a significant step forward in the People's Liberation Army Navy's efforts to train female pilots for carrier-based aircraft.

The female flight cadets were enrolled at the PLA Naval Aviation University in 2023 and completed their maiden flights in April 2024, demonstrating their ability to independently pilot aircraft. Over the past three years, the group has progressed from theoretical study to aircraft type conversion training.

Wang Mengdi, a female flight cadet from the PLA Naval Aviation University, told China Central Television News that landing over the sea presents a psychological challenge because the landing platform is relatively small and is affected by waves and sea winds.

"The ship's pitching and rolling require more precise control for landing," she said.

During the assessment, a helicopter lifted off as Han Meng, another flight cadet, steadily raised the throttle. As strong winds over the sea caused the aircraft to shake, Han made subtle adjustments with her left hand on the collective — a lever that controls the pitch angle of the rotor blades — and gently worked the control stick with her right hand to keep the helicopter on course.

As she entered the landing phase, the ship swayed with the swells, leaving the deck unsteady. Han remained focused on changes in the ship's wake, carefully monitoring the aircraft's altitude and speed while sensing feedback from the control stick with her fingertips.

Upon receiving the landing guide's command, Han seized a brief moment of stability, decisively reduced the throttle and lowered the collective, guiding the helicopter to a smooth touchdown with virtually no impact.

The group of female flight cadets completed the assessment as multiple aircraft took off and landed in an orderly manner.

After completing the assessment, Han said, "It feels as if there's an invisible high wall in front of you during landing, and the psychological pressure suddenly increases."

According to training unit leaders, a progressive training model — moving from instructor-led flights to phased individual flying — has been adopted for the first group of female flight cadets.

The approach draws on the female cadets' calm, meticulous nature and gentle handling skills while strengthening areas in which they are less proficient, including attitude awareness, instrument interpretation and deviation correction, the leaders said.

Training plans were also tailored to each cadet and each training subject, covering ground simulation, in-flight execution, and post-flight review and evaluation, with strict oversight throughout the process.

After each landing, instructors led the cadets in reviewing flight data, replaying their control trajectories and analyzing deviations in their actions to identify their causes and develop improvement plans. This closed-loop training process helped the first group of female flight cadets improve their ability to coordinate and operate carrier-based aircraft.

Next, they will undergo training and assessments for more challenging subjects, such as formation flying and nighttime landings.

Father, son sentenced to prison for trafficking chemicals

By **CAO YIN**
caoyin@chinadaily.com.cn

A Chinese court has sentenced a man and his son to prison and issued them fines for trafficking precursor chemicals abroad, amid strengthened anti-narcotics cooperation between China and the United States.

The Jiang'an District People's Court in Wuhan, capital of Hubei province, convicted the duo of illegal operations on Friday, Xinhua News Agency reported on Tuesday. The father was sentenced to six years in prison, while his son received a five-and-a-half-year prison sentence.

The court found that the two organized the sale of controlled stimulant substances in 123 transactions between November 2021 and July 2024, with a total value exceeding 1.69 million yuan ($250,000).

The case came to the attention of Chinese authorities after the US Drug Enforcement Administration reported a related incident involving the trafficking of sensitive chemicals to China's Ministry of Public Security in June 2023. The ministry promptly instructed police in Hubei to investigate.

1.69 million yuan
The total value of the sale of controlled stimulant substances in the case

The investigation identified a father-and-son team, surnamed Xia, as being suspected of trafficking large quantities of non-regulated precursor chemicals overseas. Since May 2021, the pair had registered multiple companies and hired people to advertise nonregulated chemicals on domestic and international websites, falsely claiming that they had the capabilities to produce, operate and transport such chemicals.

After receiving orders from overseas buyers, they sourced the chemicals domestically and shipped them abroad through international freight forwarders. Police later discovered that the chemicals they had trafficked included controlled stimulant substances.

In recent years, Chinese narcotics control authorities and the US DEA have intensified law enforcement cooperation, cracking down on cases involving drug smuggling and the transnational trafficking of new psychoactive substances.

In May, for example, Chinese police apprehended a suspect surnamed Gong in Tianjin after receiving information from the US in a jointly investigated cross-border drug trafficking case involving new psychoactive substances. US authorities had earlier arrested an American suspect involved in the same case in Georgia.

The two countries have also stepped up cooperation in areas including combating telecom fraud and repatriating fugitives.

In April, police from China, the US and the United Arab Emirates conducted a joint international law enforcement operation targeting telecom fraud syndicates operating in Dubai. The crackdown dismantled nine scam compounds and led to the capture of 276 suspects.

Also in April, US authorities repatriated a Chinese national suspected of drug smuggling and trafficking, marking the first drug-related fugitive handed over by the US to China in recent years.

China, for its part, apprehended a US citizen wanted through an Interpol Red Notice for serious violent crimes and handed the fugitive over to US law enforcement at Shanghai Pudong International Airport following an investigation in July.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:50 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:50 PM

POLICY REVIEW

Factory floors produce visitor intrigue

Nation's assembly lines have grown into hot spots for culture, learning

By YANG FEIYUE
yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

The repurposed giant steel furnaces of Beijing's Shougang Park no longer produce metal, but they have become a draw for tourists. In Wuhan's Optics Valley in Hubei province, visitors explore the technologies behind modern communications, while in Guangdong's smart factories, robotic production lines have become attractions in their own right. Together, they reflect the rapid rise of industrial tourism across China.

Long associated with smokestacks, assembly lines and production targets, factories are increasingly becoming destinations. Travelers are no longer content with simply viewing landscapes or historical monuments. Many, particularly younger visitors, want to understand how products are made, how technologies work and how China's industrial transformation has reshaped cities and communities.

Against this backdrop, in May, seven central government departments issued a directive aimed at accelerating the development of industrial tourism nationwide. The policy, jointly released by agencies including the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, lays out eight key tasks covering heritage surveys, conservation, product development, cultural interpretation, educational integration, promotion and safety management.

The directive calls for nationwide surveys and documentation of industrial heritage resources, along with the establishment of graded and categorized databases to clarify the value and development potential of each site.

It emphasizes the principle of "protection first, rational utilization and minimal intervention", ensuring that core structures, spatial patterns and authentic industrial features are preserved. Rather than treating industrial heritage as static relics, the policy seeks to safeguard its historical integrity while allowing for appropriate reuse.

The directive also highlights the importance of interpreting industrial cultural values, including craftsmanship, entrepreneurship and innovation, through exhibitions, creative content and cultural products. It further encourages the development of branded cultural goods, including "*guochao*" (Chinachic) products, to bring industrial heritage into contemporary consumption spaces.

On the tourism side, the policy promotes diversified formats. These include heritage-based redevelopment projects that adapt old industrial sites through creative design and new business models; factory tours that open production lines for public viewing, hands-on participation and product customization; and smart tourism experiences powered by digital technologies such as virtual reality, artificial intelligence and autonomous systems.

Service quality is another key focus. The directive calls for improved infrastructure, professional guide training, better integration with urban transport systems, and enhanced multilingual services and tax refund facilitation to support inbound tourism.

The document signals a shift in thinking that industrial tourism is no longer viewed as a niche form of factory sightseeing. Instead, policymakers increasingly see it as a platform for integrating culture, tourism and industry while showcasing the achievements of Chinese modernization.

According to Hou Yanquan, an associate researcher with the strategic planning institute at the Industrial Culture Development Center of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, China has more than 140 national-level industrial tourism demonstration bases. Industry forecasts suggest the sector could maintain annual growth of around 18 percent through 2029, with market value potentially exceeding 300 billion yuan ($44.5 billion).

Behind those figures lies a deeper change in consumer behavior.

Gong Jian, a professor at the College of Urban and Environmental Sciences at Central China Normal University, said that tourism was largely associated with mountains, ancient towns and scenic attractions in the past, but today's visitors increasingly seek knowledge and participation alongside leisure. Young travelers want to understand the technologies behind new energy vehicles, optical fibers, industrial robots and advanced manufacturing systems, Gong said.

The trend reflects a growing demand for authenticity in tourism experiences. Unlike purpose-built attractions, industrial tourism often takes place in real production environments. Visitors encounter working factories, preserved workshops, original machinery — and the people who operate them.

"What visitors see is not a replica or a staged performance. They see real production sites, real processes and real labor," Gong said.

The transformation of China's manufacturing sector has further expanded the appeal. Smart factories, automated workshops and digital production systems have replaced many traditional images of heavy industry, creating environments that combine technology, innovation and education.

Ma Xiaolong, a tourism professor at Nankai University, said projects that offer immersive and participatory experiences have performed particularly well.

He identified intelligent manufacturing facilities, traditional craft enterprises and revitalized industrial heritage sites as among the fastest-growing categories.

Broader vision

For years, many industrial tourism projects focused primarily on factory visits and product displays. The new framework places industrial culture at the center. The emphasis shifts from simply viewing equipment to understanding the broader stories behind industrialization, technological innovation, craftsmanship and social development.

Gong described this as a move from treating industrial tourism as a tourism product to viewing it as a form of cultural interpretation.

The challenge, however, is ensuring that development does not come at the expense of heritage value, experts cautioned.

Industrial sites often contain layers of historical, technological and social significance that extend far beyond their physical structures, they said.

Gong said that industrial heritage should be understood as an integrated cultural landscape rather than a collection of isolated buildings.

He pointed to Wuhan Iron and Steel Group as an illustration of this approach. The company remains in full operation today, with its active modern production lines running alongside carefully preserved industrial heritage, including a blast furnace museum and smart manufacturing demonstration lines. Together, the operational plant and heritage attractions host tens of thousands of visitors annually, local authorities reported.

This integration of active production, historical memory and urban development makes it a powerful example of how industrial sites can become meaningful cultural landscapes, Gong said.

New audiences

The policy arrives as the market for industrial tourism continues to diversify, said Zhang Zuqun, a staff member at the School of Arts and Design at Beijing Institute of Technology and an expert in industrial heritage evaluation.

Study tours have emerged as one of the most important growth segments. Educational reforms emphasizing labor education, practical learning and scientific literacy have increased demand for experiential learning opportunities outside traditional classrooms, Zhang said.

Industrial sites offer students direct exposure to manufacturing, engineering and technological innovation. Family travelers, photography enthusiasts, cultural tourists and corporate groups have also become important audiences, he said.

Zhang added that consumer demand has been increasingly centered on immersive experiences, knowledge acquisition and cultural engagement rather than simple sightseeing.

Yet meeting these rising expectations is no simple task.

The challenge, Gong said, is avoiding two extremes. One is turning industrial tourism into a technical lecture that overwhelms visitors with information. The other is reducing industrial heritage to generic commercial developments stripped of their historical character.

He said that successful projects must balance technology with storytelling, education with entertainment, and heritage with innovation.

Gong said that the policy's deeper significance lies in cultivating cultural confidence and industrial identity. By opening up production sites and preserving industrial memory, the policy will help people understand that Chinese-style modernization was created generation by generation by workers, engineers, entrepreneurs, researchers and urban residents.

Factories, mines and workshops, he said, are becoming places where the stories of industrial development and modern China itself can be experienced firsthand.

Professor Ma said the directive provides a crucial foundation for industrial tourism to move beyond novelty check-ins toward technological knowledge, cultural depth and emotional resonance. By encouraging branding, content development and diversified formats, the policy helps shift competition from resource advantages to IP and distinctiveness, he said.

Policy Digest

Unified national standard set for medical lab pricing

China's National Healthcare Security Administration has issued trial guidelines for medical laboratory service pricing. This release completes a comprehensive 40-batch rollout, marking the basic establishment of a unified, standardized nationwide system for healthcare billing.

The guidelines cover major areas including clinical testing, blood transfusion and blood typing, microbiology and parasitology, molecular diagnostics, biochemistry and immunology. They contain 662 primary items, 114 surcharge items and seven extension items.

Pricing focuses on service outcomes rather than testing methods to eliminate arbitrary price gaps. Billing units are unified for clearer, simpler charging.

An NHSA official said that nationwide standardization will drive high-quality development in laboratory medicine while facilitating the mutual recognition of test results across regions and healthcare providers.

Blueprint released for weather warning system

The China Meteorological Administration and the National Development and Reform Commission have issued a joint plan for the development of the national comprehensive meteorological observation system during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period.

The roadmap aims to modernize the country's meteorological science, technology and public services through integrated multi-domain coverage, broadened scope and utility, and enhanced resource coordination.

The plan stresses accelerating the development of a modern comprehensive meteorological observation system that integrates land, sea, air and space, promotes coordination across sectors, and operates intelligently, efficiently and precisely.

$200b target set for emergency equipment

China has unveiled a new five-year plan to rapidly modernize its safety and emergency equipment sector, aiming for output in key areas to hit 1.4 trillion yuan ($206 billion) by 2030. Jointly issued by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology and the Ministry of Emergency Management, the strategy centers on cultivating market-leading enterprises to drive the nation's response capabilities.

The plan aims to significantly raise the industry's scale, technological capabilities, product quality and application levels over the next five years.

China's safety and emergency equipment industry has grown rapidly in recent years, with output in key areas surpassing 1 trillion yuan in 2025.

New technologies and equipment have been increasingly deployed in front-line rescue and relief operations. During this year's flood season, drones and satellite communications systems were used to detect risks at dams and ensure communications during emergencies, making flood control and disaster response more precise and efficient.

CHINA DAILY—XINHUA

Xiaomi puts smart manufacturing on public show

By YANG FEIYUE

When visitors step into Chinese tech company Xiaomi's electric vehicle factory in Beijing E-Town, the giant robotic arms swinging with precision never fail to take their breath away.

Autonomous robots glide silently across the floor carrying parts. A 9,100-metric-ton die-casting machine shapes molten metal into automotive components in just 100 seconds. Over 600 robots work in concert across the 718,000-square-meter facility, where every 76 seconds, a new electric vehicle rolls off the production line.

Since beginning public tours in March 2024 — and fully opening to individual visitors in November 2024 — the factory has welcomed more than a quarter of a million people, making it a popular destination to experience firsthand how electric vehicles are manufactured.

The factory's openness aligns with a directive issued in late May by seven central government departments — including the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology — which encourages manufacturers in sectors such as automotive and robotics to open production lines to public viewing, offer hands-on experiences and develop educational study tours.

"We started by studying how to make it work," said Ma Lan, general manager of Xiaomi's Beijing E-Town campus, which encompasses the EV factory and research and development facilities. The challenge, she said, was to maintain production, ensure safety and keep the tour engaging.

"The factory produced 410,000 vehicles last year — all real production, not a set built for show," Ma said. "We needed to explore the integration of manufacturing and tourism while ensuring normal operations and product quality."

The solution involved scientifically designed tour routes, strategically scheduled visiting hours and strict safety protocols. Visitors enter production areas with full protective gear and remain in vehicles throughout the tour. Since opening, the factory has recorded zero safety incidents.

"We have visitors of all kinds," said Zhao Liangtao, director of the factory's comprehensive management department. "We tailor our explanations — technical depth for professionals, educational content for students, fun and engagement for families."

Since May, the factory has offered weekly English-language tours. Any visitor from any country can book through Xiaomi's mobile app using a passport. The factory also hosts a steady stream of international delegations — government officials, industry experts, business executives and university groups.

"Beyond the Great Wall and the Forbidden City, Xiaomi's EV factory gives international visitors a direct, in-depth look at China's smart manufacturing capabilities," Ma said.

The factory has made educational programming a strategic priority. In May this year, it launched the "Science Lecture Hall" project, signing agreements with 11 primary and secondary schools in the Beijing E-Town area.

The program offers a two-hour experience: a one-hour customized factory tour and an hour of interactive classroom learning. Two courses are currently available, focusing on exploring the relationship between car design and aerodynamic drag, and green development in the industry, with two more in development.

"Children's experience at the factory is completely different from learning from textbooks," Zhao said. "They can see with their own eyes how cars move along the production line and how robots automatically transport materials. These real front-line scenes stimulate imagination, leave a deeper impression and bring more inspiration."

The program is expected to offer more than 300 sessions this year, reaching over 10,000 students.

The factory's appeal extends beyond the assembly line. A go-kart track opened on site in March, featuring a 580-meter circuit that uses only electric karts. The track has attracted nearly 9,000 visitors since its debut.

The factory canteen opened in March 2025, and a cultural and creative products store opened in April 2025. Both have become hits among visitors.

"We want the factory to be more than a place where cars are made," Zhao said. "We want it to become a window showcasing China's manufacturing innovation, a key vehicle for spreading industrial culture and a new landmark for industrial tourism with international influence."

For Ma, the factory's deeper value lies in what it reveals about industrial culture. She described two core principles that define Xiaomi's approach.

"The first is engineering culture — a commitment to relentlessly pursuing perfection, to sparing no effort in mastering every detail, to solving technical challenges with focus and precision," she said.

"The second is entrepreneurial culture. The project has carried forward the spirit of hard work and determination," she added.

The Xiaomi EV factory has set its sights on becoming a national industrial tourism demonstration base and is pursuing 4A-level scenic spot certification. But its immediate goal for this year is to welcome 200,000 visitors.

"We hope that through industrial tourism and educational study tours, more members of the public will visit the factory, learn about manufacturing and experience the charm of China's automotive industry innovation," Ma said. The May directive, she added, gives the factory a clear direction as it pursues its goal.

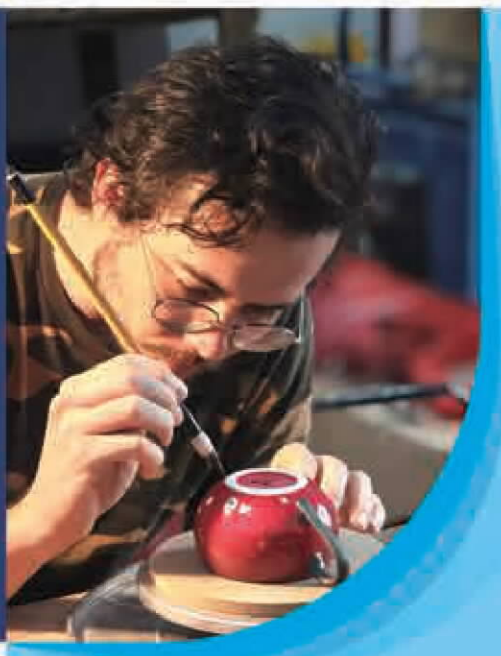
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:50 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:50 PM

Z WEEKLY

All about Gen Z

Z WEEKLY



Jingdezhen fires global imagination

Once carried overseas, Jingdezhen porcelain now draws international artists to its source, creating new exchanges between cultures and creative traditions.

Above: Yann Colleu paints on a red-clay teapot with a calligraphy brush at his studio in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province. **Bottom:** Denis Naymark carves decorative textures into a white porcelain teapot in Jingdezhen. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By **GUO JIATONG**
guojiatong@21st.cn

When French artist Yann Colleu first encountered porcelain in 2014 as a contemporary art student in France, he had little idea that the material would eventually become central to his life.

At the time, he worked across a range of media, from wood and oil painting to performance and music, with porcelain just one material among many.

That began to change in 2017, when he traveled to Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province, for a three-month academic exchange at Jingdezhen Ceramic University.

Colleu said his time in Jingdezhen opened his eyes to how expressive porcelain could be on its own. "I want to explore every aspect of porcelain that can emulate thought and convey emotion."

Back in France, he could not stop thinking about Jingdezhen and soon found himself longing to return. Over the following years, he traveled back and forth between the two countries. In 2024, when Colleu was 32, he and his family decided to settle in Jingdezhen.

Colleu is one of many international artists drawn to the city, some for short stays and others who eventually choose to put down roots.

Their presence has taken on added significance since the Jingdezhen Handicraft Porcelain Industry Sites were inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in July.

For centuries, Jingdezhen porcelain traveled overseas along ancient maritime trade routes, carrying Chinese craftsmanship and aesthetics to distant markets. Today, artists from around the world are making the journey in the opposite direction, learning from the city's ceramic traditions while bringing artistic languages of their own.

Colleu has witnessed the city's creative scene become increasingly international and diverse.

What was once centered on technical mastery and material quality, he said, has grown to embrace contemporary art, performance, experimental music, digital modeling and 3D printing. "Some artists who left for larger cities in search of opportunities are also beginning to return."

Colleu himself went on to study *qinghua*, or blue-and-white porcelain, and *youzhong wucai*, an in-glaze polychrome decoration technique, working with local craftspeople to learn from and experiment with these traditional methods.

The longer Colleu worked with porcelain, however, the more he came to understand how much of the process lay beyond the maker's control. Moisture, drying, shrinkage and firing can all affect the final results, and even a carefully made piece can crack or deform in the kiln.

> "If used well, livestreaming can help the industry grow, but when everyone is chasing traffic and quick profits, prices can become distorted, and craftspeople devoted to traditional techniques may be left wondering where the industry is headed."
>
> **BangCho (pseudonym),** a South Korean entrepreneur

He compares the process to a human relationship.

"You cannot force a relationship and expect positive results," he said. "You have to observe, you have to listen, and you have to adapt."

That dialogue between maker and material has also fascinated Denis Naymark, a sculptor from the United States.

Naymark began working with ceramics at around the age of 8, in a studio at a university in New York where his father taught. After his father's lectures, he recalled, he would run to the studio and shape clay into faces, dragons, horses, teapots and bowls.

"The possibilities were always endless," he said.

He later studied ceramic sculpture and traveled to Jingdezhen in 2013, at age 22, to deepen his knowledge of advanced porcelain techniques and traditional Chinese ceramic materials.

Naymark said the city gave him the space to weave his fascination with nature into his work.

"Growing up near the ocean in New York, I developed an enduring interest in aquatic life," he said. "The hills and forests around Jingdezhen offered me further inspiration."

That influence can be seen in his teapot designs, which draw inspiration from seashells, coral, and other marine life. Rounded bodies, shell-like ridges, dotted textures and glossy blue, white and pink glazes give them the feel of an underwater world.

Though the compositions may appear spontaneous, every shell, form and color is carefully placed.

For Naymark, experimentation does not mean breaking with tradition. "You need both traditional techniques and modern, new ideas," he said.

Beyond aesthetics

South Korean entrepreneur BangCho (pseudonym), who came to Jingdezhen in 2019, found his own path into the city's porcelain legacy through tea. "To him, porcelain is particularly well suited to bringing out the character of tea.

"Jingdezhen is one of China's major production centers for everyday tea-ware, with kilns capable of consistently firing porcelain at temperatures above 1,300 degrees Celsius," he said. "At such temperatures, the glaze forms a smooth, glasslike surface with very low water absorption, helping preserve the tea's original aroma and flavor."

That understanding shapes his designs. For BangCho, function comes before decoration.

When designing a *gaiwan*, or lidded tea bowl, he considers factors such as its thickness and diameter, pouring speed and heat retention — all of which influence the experience of drinking tea.

Beyond his own designs, BangCho sees porcelain not only as an art form, but as a craft that has supported the city's economy for generations.

"There is hardly another city anywhere in the world that has sustained itself on a single ceramics industry for a thousand years," he said.

Over the years, he has also watched the city and its ceramic economy evolve.

"Years ago, young people were far less visible in the city center," he recalled. Today, he said, they fill its streets and markets, while contemporary ceramics, from coffee cups to plates and bowls with modern designs, have grown in popularity alongside traditional wares.

Livestreaming and e-commerce have further expanded the market, extending the reach of Jingdezhen ceramics beyond the city.

But BangCho sees that growth as a double-edged sword.

"If used well, livestreaming can help the industry grow, but when everyone is chasing traffic and quick profits, prices can become distorted, and craftspeople devoted to traditional techniques may be left wondering where the industry is headed," he said.

He believes preserving the knowledge behind the craft is just as important as expanding the market and has called for publicly supported training programs to provide craftspeople with the resources and opportunities needed to pass their skills on to younger generations.

Looking ahead, BangCho hopes to develop products that bring Chinese and South Korean aesthetics into dialogue while introducing ceramic works from both countries to wider audiences.

The paths taken by Colleu, Naymark and BangCho are different, but what connects them is Jingdezhen itself — a place whose centuries-old ceramic traditions continue to attract people from beyond China, not simply to observe them, but to learn from them and become part of their continuing evolution.

For Colleu, that pull has become inseparable from a feeling of home.

"Once you experience that environment, it becomes very difficult not to feel that you belong here," he said.



Social Media Digest

Steel the fun

Think regular DIY isn't cool — or hard-core — enough? Young Chinese people are finding their next craft obsession in an unlikely place: the hardware store.

Metal elbows, faucet fittings, valves, pipes and all kinds of steel odds and ends can be picked up for just a few yuan. Add a little imagination, and plumbing supplies suddenly become Thor's hammer, a steampunk wine dispenser or something even harder to explain.

Snap a photo, post it online, and these creations can quickly go viral on social media under the tag "hardware store Lego".

It might sound like a fleeting fad. But the trend says something interesting about how young people are redefining fun.

Not long ago, getting into crafts often meant signing up for pottery, tufting or another carefully curated studio experience. Now, young people are looking for something that costs less, feels more personal, and leaves much more room for creativity — walking into a hardware shop, buying a handful of ordinary parts and figuring out what they could become.

Behind those neighborhood shops sits China's enormous manufacturing ecosystem, producing an extraordinary variety of metal fittings, tools and components at low prices. Parts designed for plumbing, construction and repair are abundant and easy to find.

With such a ready supply of cheap parts to play with, who says Lego has to be plastic?



A new generation of DIY enthusiasts is turning hardware stores into unlikely creative playgrounds. VCG

Picture imperfect

Tired of seeing picture-perfect lives all over social media? Apparently, so is everyone else. TikTok's "Yes, but" trend is giving those flawless posts a reality check.

The format is simple: two photos, two very different versions of the same moment. The top image is the polished "Yes"; the bottom is the decidedly less glamorous "but".

Picture this: "Yes" — you're posing effortlessly on the beach, sunglasses on, sunset glowing behind you. "But" — seconds later, a wave knocks you off balance and sends you scrambling through the sand. One frame belongs on your feed. The other shows what actually happened.

That contrast is exactly what makes the trend work — perfection on top, reality underneath.

And there's a refreshing honesty in putting both versions on display. For years, social media has rewarded the highlight reel: the best angles, the best outfits, the best moments. "Yes, but" allows the outtakes to crash the party. It's a reminder that behind every polished shot, there may be an awkward pose, a failed attempt or something gloriously unphotogenic.

Posting that second photo takes a little nerve, too. Showing the mess behind the magic feels like a small act of rebellion. The message is simple: I'm not perfect, but that's totally fine.

LI YUCHE



A growing social media trend is challenging the pressure to present only polished, picture-perfect versions of everyday life. VCG

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:50 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:50 PM

Young footsteps echo the Long March

A journey through historic sites helps students connect textbook history with the lives of those who endured the Long March.



Students from Jinggangshan University renew their oath as members of the Communist Youth League of China at a study and education base dedicated to the Young Communist International Division in Ningdu county, Jiangxi province, on July 2. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By MENG WENJIE
mengwenjie@i21st.cn

Standing before a display case at a museum in Yudu county, Jiangxi province, 23-year-old Zeng Yan read a letter written by a Red Army soldier nearly a century ago.

The letter's writer, Liu Xingfa, was just 19. In the letter, he repeatedly reassured his family that he was safe and well, concealing the hardships he was enduring amid the fighting at the time.

After reading it, Zeng wrote a reply from the perspective of a young person today. She told Liu that China had changed profoundly, that people now lived in peace and that his sacrifice had not been forgotten.

"The letter was not only meant to comfort a fallen soldier," Zeng said. "It also reminded me that I cannot simply be moved by his story and leave it at that."

The exchange across time was part of a five-day journey undertaken by 11 students from the School of Marxism at Jinggangshan University. From July 2 to 6, they traveled through Ningdu, Yudu, Shicheng and Guangchang in Jiangxi province, as well as Jianning in Fujian province, retracing the footsteps of young Red Army soldiers before and during the Long March (1934-36).

According to Li Qiong, the team's instructor and a teacher at the university, the journey was intended to create a dialogue between young people from two different eras.

"The young soldiers were about the same age as my students," Li said.

"I hoped the students could experience history in a more personal way by reflecting on their own choices and responsibilities," she added.

The year 2026 marks the 90th anniversary of the victory of the Long March. In October 1934, the Central Red Army began a strategic transfer to break through Kuomintang's encirclement.

The university program focused on the Young Communist International Division, a special Red Army unit established in Bosheng county (present-day Ningdu county) in 1933. Composed mainly of young soldiers, the division had an average age of just 18.

During the Long March, it carried out missions including protecting the main force and serving as the rear guard. The unit suffered heavy casualties during the Battle of the Xiangjiang River in Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region in 1934, and its remaining troops were later incorporated into other Red Army units.

He Xin, 24, who led the student team, was born in Ningdu but had never visited the historical sites associated with the division.

Standing on a former racecourse where the unit was established, she found herself looking back 93 years.

"Many people that age today are sitting in classrooms, while those young soldiers had to take up arms to defend their homeland," He said.

"We share the same youth. Standing there, I suddenly felt that the distance between history and the present had disappeared," she continued.

Walking into history

As the journey continued, history gradually moved beyond textbooks and became something the students could see, touch and feel.

That sense of connection deepened as He encountered the ordinary objects that had accompanied the soldiers on their journey.

One object seen repeatedly in museums and at historical sites offered her a glimpse into the hardships of the march: straw sandals.

Made from rice straw, the footwear accompanied countless soldiers along the route.

In Yudu, He met an 80-year-old veteran from Guangdong province, who told her that making a pair of straw sandals took two days, yet they could wear out in as little as 15 days.

"Comparing them with today's leather combat boots gave me a much clearer understanding of the shortage of supplies and the hardships the soldiers endured," He said.





Above: Students from Jinggangshan University recite excerpts from *The Long March Suite* at a Long March ferry crossing in Yudu county, Jiangxi province, on July 3. **Bottom:** He Xin (right) interviews a veteran from Guangdong province at a memorial hall marking the departure of the Long March by the Central Red Army in Yudu county, Jiangxi province, on July 3. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

> "We share the same youth. Standing there, I suddenly felt that the distance between history and the present had disappeared."
>
> **He Xin,** leader of the student team that retraced the route of the Long March

> "History lives through a wall, a stroke of writing and the people who protect it."
>
> **Zeng Yan,** a student at Jinggangshan University

While such objects helped He imagine the soldiers' daily struggles, walking part of the route gave Zheng Ting a more immediate sense of the dangers they had faced.

At a battle memorial in Guangchang, the 24-year-old stood in silence and felt what she described as "history coming toward me".

She compared learning about the Long March from a textbook to viewing a river from above: readers may know where it begins and ends, but they cannot experience every bend along the way.

By walking the route, feeling the mud beneath her feet and enduring the July heat of southern Jiangxi, Zheng gained a deeper understanding of the uncertainty faced by the young soldiers.

"They did not know how much farther they had to go or whether they would live to see New China," she said. "What sustained them was the belief that they could not accept oppression or lose their homeland."

Carrying memory forward

Those encounters did more than make the past feel real. They prompted the students to consider what their own generation should do with that history.

For Zeng, the answer begins in the classroom. After graduation, she hopes to become a politics teacher and introduce students to the Long March through the lives of real people and their individual stories.

"I want to bring these stories into the classroom in a warmer and more personal way, so students can understand how history continues to unfold through time," she said.

For others, the answer lies in protecting the physical traces that allow such stories to be told.

One of He's most memorable moments came at a memorial hall in Ningdu, where the deputy director explained how memories of the Long March had been preserved across generations.

The woman's father began collecting historical materials related to the Red Army in 1969. She has continued his work by visiting villages across Ningdu, collecting objects from descendants of Red Army soldiers and preserving them in archives.

The conversation helped He understand that without people collecting letters, protecting former sites and recording family memories, many individual stories could disappear.

Preserving these materials, she realized, allows young people to examine the choices made by those who came before them and reflect on their own responsibilities.

Similar efforts can be seen in Danxi village in Shicheng, where residents have preserved former Red Army sites and maintained slogans painted on village walls more than 90 years ago.

"The person who wrote those words left no name, but his spirit has endured," Zeng said. "History lives through a wall, a stroke of writing and the people who protect it."

After returning to campus, the students began exploring their own ways of carrying those memories forward.

They drew a replica of the Young Communist International Division's armband by hand and created digital maps, magnets and badges inspired by the relics, documents and stories they encountered during the journey.

Through these creative forms, they hope to make the history of the Long March more accessible to young people who may never have the opportunity to visit the sites themselves.

He also plans to draw on what she learned in her future academic research.

"Ninety years ago, young people defended their homeland with their lives," she said. "Today, young people are using their knowledge to build the country. Times have changed, but the courage and determination of youth remain unchanged."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:50 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:50 PM

Z WEEKLY

When age opens doors

For young followers anxious about falling behind, Suzi de Givenchy's journey offers proof that life does not unfold on a fixed timetable.

By **GUI QIAN**
guiqian@i21st.cn

During the 79th Festival de Cannes, Suzi de Givenchy (Chinese name Huang Xianxi) joined a forum organized by The One International Women's Film Festival on narratives by Asian women in cinema. Around her were directors, writers and journalists. Suzi, however, was a fashion model.

At first, she wondered why she had been invited.

"I'm not an actress. I'm not really from that field," she recalled. But as the discussion unfolded, she began to understand what she brought to the conversation. "I think I represented the spectator — the person who goes to the cinema, the person who loves films."

For Suzi, finding herself in an unfamiliar room was nothing new. Her life has been shaped by unexpected turns.

Born in Hong Kong, Suzi moved to New York with her single mother at the age of 4. As the eldest child, she began taking part-time jobs at 14 to help support the family. At 20, she traveled to Paris to celebrate her birthday, where she met a nephew of the French designer Hubert de Givenchy. The two married, raised three sons and settled in the French countryside.

For decades, Suzi's world revolved around her children, her husband and their life together. Then, in 2016, her husband died suddenly of a heart attack.

Writing became one way through her grief. She began keeping a journal, a practice she later described as therapeutic, saying it helped her process the loss and put it into perspective.

Three years later, her life took another unexpected turn. At a gathering, a casting director noticed her and encouraged her to pursue modeling professionally.

She was 52.

In an industry long defined by youth, Suzi stood out precisely because she did not fit the conventional mold. Her wrinkles, high cheekbones, freckles and gray hair were not hidden — they became part of her visual identity. She went on to work with fashion houses including Balenciaga, Lemaire and Off-White, and appeared on the cover of Vogue.

The sudden visibility made her biography easy to package as an inspirational transformation. But Suzi is wary of that framing.

"At times, my story can be perceived like a fairy tale, like a movie story," she said. But she believes many lives contain remarkable turns. What makes a story seem extraordinary is often not the life itself, but the attention it receives.

That may be why the film forum felt less like a detour than another extension of her story. Rather than seeing herself as someone deliberately crossing industries, Suzi says she simply follows her curiosity wherever it leads.

"My life has been about getting outside of a box," she said.

More important, perhaps, is how she approaches what comes next: with humility.

She assumes others may have studied longer and know more, so she listens, asks questions and tries to set aside her preconceptions. Rather than needing to arrive as an expert, she is comfortable starting from a place of not knowing.

"I always try to go into a space as a student," she said.

This willingness to begin again has shaped a life trajectory that runs against the fear that every important choice must be made early — and may also help explain her appeal to younger followers.

Yet her advice to them is grounded in practical realities rather than simply telling them to "follow your passion".

"Everyone has to pay their bills. Everyone has to eat," she said. Instead of waiting for a single, perfect calling, she suggests finding something they are good at and enjoy, then building their skills in it — even if it cannot immediately become a career.

"Things are meant to happen when they're supposed to happen," she added.

Owning her place

Suzi's years across Hong Kong, New York and France have also shaped how she thinks about identity. For much of her life, she tried to work out where she belonged. Over time, she realized the search was not about finding a country or a place to call home.

"What I was looking for was myself," she said. "I feel most at peace with myself."

That answer may resonate with young people facing anxieties about identity, appearance and age, but Suzi does not pretend that self-acceptance, once found, comes effortlessly or lasts forever. Some days are less peaceful than others. Her message to her 20-year-old self — and to young women now — is simple: trust yourself, ask questions, be kinder to yourself and surround yourself with people who appreciate you.

That self-acceptance matters especially in an industry built around appearance. Even as an established older model, Suzi describes holding her ground as a continuing battle: asserting that she has a place and deserves it.

Her next chapter may return to the medium that helped her through grief: writing. She has taken a workshop and is interested in exploring this further, drawn to the introspective nature it offers.

"Writing is a very interesting process because you do learn a lot about yourself," she said.

At Cannes, Suzi arrived as neither a filmmaker nor an industry expert. She came as a model, reader, cinema lover, mother, widow, grandmother and a woman who remains curious about what might come next.

That may be the clearest thread running through her life. Beginning again, for Suzi, is not about erasing what came before or pretending age does not matter. It is about refusing to see age as the end of possibility — and being willing to enter the next unfamiliar room as a student.



Suzi de Givenchy walks the runway for Oude Waag, a Shanghai-based Chinese fashion label.



Suzi de Givenchy attends a forum organized by The One International Women's Film Festival in Cannes, France, in May 2026.

Suzi de Givenchy takes photographs on the street.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Seeds of curiosity grow beneath giant telescope

By **MENG WENJIE**
mengwenjie@i21st.cn

In early August, 20-year-old Liu Chang stood at the front of a classroom, feeling slightly nervous. It was her first experience as a volunteer teacher.

Facing her were students from Kedu Experimental Primary School in Pingtang county, Guizhou province. Pingtang is home to the Five-hundred-meter Aperture Spherical Radio Telescope, or FAST, the world's largest single-dish radio telescope.

A student in the department of engineering physics at Tsinghua University, Liu was among 14 members of the university's Cyrus Tang Love and Care Society who traveled to the county for a two-week summer camp from July 27 to Aug 10.

Huang Zijun, 22, the team leader, said the camp aimed to combine local characteristics with children's personal growth.

"FAST is of great significance to national security and scientific development," he said. "Drawing on the region's astronomy culture and the children's interests, we created courses that brought together scientific exploration, sports, artistic expression and life education."



A Tsinghua University student volunteer teaches children Latin dance during a two-week summer camp at Kedu Experimental Primary School in Pingtang county, Guizhou province, on Aug 3, 2026. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

To make the science behind FAST more accessible, Liu designed a course in which students built their own telescope models to explore its structure and working principles.

The lesson drew an enthusiastic response. One student, usually energetic and easily distracted, worked on the model in her spare time and finished it ahead of schedule. She then picked up Liu's camera and filmed a short vlog, introducing each part of her model and explaining how it related to the real telescope.

In another class, Li Yiheng, 21, a student at Tsinghua University's School of Aerospace Engineering, taught the children how to make water rockets.

Rather than giving them answers directly, Li asked the students to experiment with different amounts of water and launch angles to see which combinations could make their rockets fly farther.

"When they found the answers themselves, my explanations became much more meaningful," Li said.

The emphasis on experience extended beyond science: the volunteers also sought to support the personal growth of rural girls.

Du Xuanye, 21, a philosophy student at Tsinghua University's Rixin College, helped design sports activities that, rather than emphasizing competition, aimed to build girls' "body confidence".

"Many girls worry about being judged for their appearance when taking part in sports, which can affect their focus and enjoyment," Du explained. " So, we encouraged them to pay more attention to how they feel and build a stronger connection with their bodies."

As a member of Tsinghua's drama club, Du also brought theater exercises into the classroom. For example, she guided the children to use body movements to "write" their names and make funny expressions to relax their facial muscles. She also introduced exercises to help improve their concentration and self-awareness.

To Du's surprise, the children soon required less guidance than she had expected. During a flag football activity, one girl wearing a skirt and sandals threw herself into the game without hesitation.

"She did not spend time worrying about whether her clothes were suitable for sports," Du said. "She simply focused on running and carrying the ball toward the end zone."

For the volunteers, these small changes were encouraging. But they also raised a more difficult question: How much could a two-week program truly achieve?

"There were so many things we wanted to do together, but we could not get to them all," Liu said. "After seeing the challenges the children face in their daily lives, we realized there was only so much we could do."

According to Huang, university volunteer teaching programs are sometimes criticized as being "brief and superficial". As a result, the team took steps before the camp to make their work more sustained and responsive to the children's needs. They exchanged letters with the children before arriving to better understand their expectations and interests.

After returning to Beijing, they plan to keep in touch with the children through letters.

For Liu, the value of the experience may ultimately lie not in how much the volunteers were able to change in two weeks, but in what the children take away from their time together. "At least they may remember the happiness of those two weeks and that someone took the time to listen to their stories, interests and worries like an adult friend," she said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:50 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:50 PM

SPORTS

SOCCER



Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta is thrown into the air by his players while celebrating their Premier League title win in London on May 24. AP

New faces, old heads and a whole lot of uncertainty

The Premier League is back, and nobody really knows what to expect from the post-Guardiola era



The post-Pep Guardiola era is already underway in English soccer amid uncertainty and upheaval, not just at Manchester City, but across the whole of the Premier League.

Heading into the new top-flight season, which begins Friday, nine clubs have new permanent managers — an unprecedented number at the start of an English top-flight campaign.

At age 33, Fabian Hurzeler is the fifth longest-serving coach in the Premier League — and he has only been at Brighton for two years.

The biggest vacuum needing to be filled is at City, following the departure of Guardiola after 10 record-breaking years in charge. Good luck following that, Enzo Maresca — especially after the team's lamentable performance in its Community Shield loss to Arsenal on Sunday.

Among the other top clubs with new coaches are Liverpool (Andoni Iraola), Chelsea (Xabi Alonso) and Newcastle (Matthias Jaissle) — all of which competed in the Champions League last season.

Heck, it makes Roberto De Zerbi — appointed by Tottenham on March 31 to escape relegation — and Michael Carrick — installed as interim manager at Manchester United for the second half of last season before impressing and getting the permanent job — seem like veritable veterans.

It also makes Arsenal, the reigning champion, appear a haven of stability as Mikel Arteta goes into his seventh full season at the helm as by far the league's longest-serving manager.

Yet, there's a big question mark hanging over the Gunners, too: Will there be a hangover after winning the league for the first time in 22 years?

We're about to find out, though Arsenal's display in the Community Shield provided early encouragement for its fans.

The nonstop roller coaster that is the Premier League begins in earnest on Friday, when Arsenal hosts newly promoted Coventry, which has a compelling backstory of its own after being out of the big time for 25 years.

Here are some other storylines providing a backdrop to the new season:

A lack of star power?

The Cristiano Ronaldo circus left town in 2022. Harry Kane moved away in 2023. Kevin De Bruyne departed in 2025. Mohamed Salah quit for Turkiye this summer and Rodri has started packing his bags for Barcelona.

It begs the question: Is the biggest league in the world lacking the biggest players in the world?

OK, City still has prolific striker Erling Haaland, whose brand has never been higher after wowing American fans during last month's World Cup.

But soccer superstars like Kylian Mbappe, Ousmane Dembele, Vinicius Junior, Lamine Yamal and even England's own two top players, Kane and Jude Bellingham, play in other countries.

All-time greats of this century — think Lionel Messi, Ronaldinho, Zinedine Zidane — never played in England, either.

The big blockbuster deal of the offseason could have been Vinicius joining Arsenal, but he chose to stay at Real Madrid.

The Premier League has recently prided itself in having the world's top coaches, yet Guardiola and Jurgen Klopp are no longer around.

The competition might have to settle, then, for having the greatest strength in depth, with the mid-level clubs having arguably never been better owing to the league's huge broadcasting deals.

Arsenal the favorite

Amid so much turbulence among its rivals, Arsenal has a great opportunity to retain the title and is the favorite with British oddsmakers.

Brazil midfielder Bruno Guimaraes has joined from Newcastle to bolster an already-strong midfield, left-winger Christos Tzolis signed from Club Brugge to replace the departed Leandro Trossard, and there is strength in depth in every position.

Counting against Arsenal, however, is an injury to defensive mainstay William Saliba that will rule out the France centerback for the first few months.

Also, there's an intangible: Will there be a drop-off in intensity or motivation after finally winning the league?

Arteta is determined that won't be the case.

High-profile returnees

Welcome back, Marcus Rashford. The England winger has rejoined Manchester United after a title-winning loan spell at Barcelona. Whether he wants to be at Old Trafford, though, remains to be seen.

Hello, again, to Frank Lampard, a title-winning great for Chelsea who has led Coventry back to the Premier League promised land as manager.

Coventry, a founding member of the Premier League, was relegated in 2001 and plunged into such financial chaos that the club lost its home and went on to drop into the fourth tier.

The Sky Blues' rise is one of English soccer's feel-good stories and they will be joined by fellow returnees Ipswich and Hull.

$3 billion and counting

England is in a league of its own when it comes to spending power, and Premier League clubs' outlay on new players in this transfer window is already approaching $3 billion.

The biggest signings so far have all been midfielders: Morgan Rogers to Chelsea for $156 million; Elliot Anderson to City for $155 million; Sandro Tonali to Tottenham for $133 million; and Guimaraes to Arsenal for $100 million.

Chelsea's net spend is almost $300 million, as Alonso reshapes the squad. Tottenham has also spent around $300 million on new players, in a reversal in policy following back-to-back 17th-place finishes.

The window remains open for two more weeks.

A set-piece-heavy style?

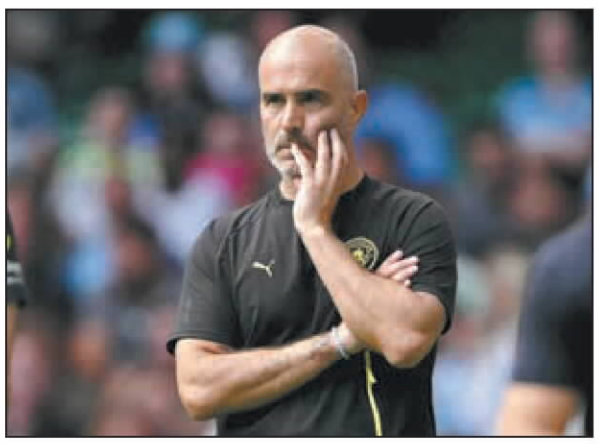
A significant change in English soccer last season was a reversion to old-school tactics, such as long throws into the area, a reliance on set-pieces and long clearances by goalkeepers, in a perceived snub to the Guardiola-influenced style of play where possession of the ball was king.

With Guardiola now out of the picture, will this trend increase further? Marco Rose at Bournemouth, Pierre Sage at Crystal Palace, Alvaro Arbeloa at Fulham and Alonso at Chelsea are all coaching in the Premier League for the first time.

Will this wave of new managers establish another different approach?

AP





Left: Liverpool coach Andoni Iraola walks off the pitch following a preseason club friendly win over Sunderland on July 25 in Nashville, Tennessee. **Right:** New Manchester City manager Enzo Maresca, pictured during Sunday's 3-0 Community Shield defeat to Arsenal in Cardiff, faces the daunting prospect of filling Pep Guardiola's shoes. So far, he seems to have nailed the look, but not the results. AP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:50 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:52 PM

Remarkable drive
Flash memory chip maker clears IPO coaching review
BUSINESS, PAGE 9



UAE halts trade deals with Iran
TOP NEWS, PAGE 3



Ripples in rules
Artistic swimming to adjust free routines ahead of 2028 Olympics
SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY
GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 2026

Robotics boom fueling nation's tech ambitions

Beijing conference showcases strengths while Unitree debut signals industry's hopes

By **CHENG YU**
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Inside
Editorial, **page 6**

More than 3,000 cutting-edge robots and related products packed the 2026 World Robot Conference, which opened in Beijing on Wednesday, the same day that Unitree Robotics made its debut on the STAR Market in Shanghai and surged 629.44 percent to 1,100 yuan ($163) per share from its initial public offering price.

As the conference showcased China's strength as the world's largest producer of robots and a supply-chain hub for the industry, Shanghai's capital market bet on what comes next — whether that industrial muscle can drive faster innovation, lower costs and, ultimately, expand share in the global robotics market, experts said.

That bet played out vividly on Unitree's first trading day. At its peak, a single winning IPO allotment translated into a paper profit of up to 474,600 yuan. Although the shares retreated, they still closed at 845 yuan, up 460.3 percent, valuing the company at 341.77 billion yuan.

Pan Helin, a member of the expert committee for information and communication economy of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, said the surge reflects robust investor confidence in China's embodied artificial intelligence industry. "Despite the share price retreating from its opening high, Unitree's performance far outpaced expectations," he said.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period, President Xi Jinping made multiple visits to robotics companies. At the 2026 World AI Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance in Shanghai last month, Xi said that AI is moving from the digital world into the physical world, and he called for greater efforts to advance technological innovation, industrial development and scenario-based applications.

Robotics sits at the heart of this transition, serving as the primary vehicle for bringing AI tech into the physical realm. The Beijing conference has brought together more than 300 Chinese and overseas companies with over 3,000 products, ranging from humanoid, industrial and medical robots to core components.

Galbot unveiled a humanoid capable of learning to play tennis. Unitree demonstrated its H1 humanoid, which hit a peak speed of 10 meters per second, rivaling the pace of elite human sprinters.

Xin Guobin, vice-minister of industry and information technology, said that revenue from major robotics companies reached 165.5 billion yuan in the first half of 2026, up 24.5 percent year-on-year.

China will focus on overcoming bottlenecks in core robotics components and embodied AI, he said, adding that the country also aims to expand the integration of robots into agriculture, healthcare, elderly care and emergency response.

Xu Xiaolan, president of the Chinese Institute of Electronics, said embodied AI is entering a key window for large-scale adoption. "Public and commercial services are leading the way," she said. "In China, robots are being deployed in traffic guidance, at tourist attractions, in shopping malls and in education, leveraging capabilities such as autonomous positioning, dynamic obstacle avoidance and question answering."

JPMorgan has forecast that global humanoid shipments will climb from an estimated 18,000 units in 2025 to 60,000 this year, before surging to 1.75 million by 2030. China is expected to account for more than half of global demand, it said.

The National Development and Reform Commission said that eight out of every 10 humanoid and quadruped robots sold worldwide are made in China.

Zhang Yiming, chief analyst for the machinery sector at Guosheng Securities, said humanoids are emerging as a key arena in the tech rivalry between China and the United States, making Unitree's market performance a potential bellwether for the broader industry. "China's advantage lies not just in building sophisticated robots, but in its ability to manufacture them at scale," he said.

Wang Peng, a researcher at the Beijing Academy of Social Sciences, said that hard-tech companies such as Unitree reflect a broader shift in how China's capital market values technology. "Investors are now willing to price technological capability and future growth potential over current profitability," he said.

However, an IPO is not the finish line, Wang said, warning that Unitree's elevated price-to-earnings ratio also points to valuation risks. "What ultimately matters is whether a company can deliver technology, products and business models that stand the test of the market," he added.



A technician debugs a robot at the 2026 World Robot Conference, which opened on Wednesday in Beijing. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

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

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN ASIA NEWS NETWORK
China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved









Left: The ZQ 3 Y2 rocket blasts off from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwestern China at 7:35 am on Wednesday. Soon after liftoff, the rocket's first and second stages separated, with the latter flying upward to place a satellite into a preset orbit. LONG YUN / FOR CHINA DAILY
Right (from top): The first stage reenters the Earth's atmosphere and is spotted at 7:41 am on Wednesday. The booster continues to make a smooth, speedy descent. It lands on four legs on a concrete pad in Minqin county, Gansu province, 390 kilometers from the liftoff site. XINHUA

Country achieves its first rocket recovery on land

By **ZHAO LEI**
zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

In a landmark moment for China's space sector, a reusable rocket booster touched down on Wednesday on its predesignated landing site in a northwestern desert, marking the nation's first such controlled recovery on land, following a similar achievement made on a platform at sea last month.

A video clip from LandSpace, a Beijing-based private rocket manufacturer, showed a white speck appearing in the sky above a desert at 7:41 am as the first-stage booster of the ZQ 3 Y2 carrier rocket returned to Earth, descending smoothly and steadily about six minutes after the launch vehicle lifted off from a nearby spaceport.

Footage from surveillance drones flying near the landing trajectory showed that during the final phase of its descent, at an altitude of roughly 3 kilometers above ground, the booster ignited an engine at the center of its base for propulsive deceleration.

Shortly before touchdown, the booster deployed its four legs, which firmly supported the more than 40-meter-tall booster as the engine shut down upon landing on a concrete pad in Minqin county, Gansu province.

The achievement made China the second country in the world, after the United States, to have successfully conducted both land- and sea-based rocket recovery.

LandSpace is the second Chinese enterprise to ever recover a reusable rocket booster.

On July 10, State-owned conglomerate China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp achieved the nation's first such successful recovery when it captured a Long March 10B rocket booster in the South China Sea using a cable system mounted on a special vessel platform off the coast of Hainan province.

On Wednesday, the ZQ 3 Y2 rocket — standing tall at 66.1 meters and primarily made from stainless steel — blasted off at 7:35 am from its dedicated service tower at the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwestern China, about 390 km from the predesignated booster landing and recovery site.

The rocket's second-stage booster separated from its first stage about two minutes after liftoff and continued flying upward to transport the Honghu 03 satellite to a preset orbit.

The first stage then entered its return phase following a preprogrammed flight procedure. It sequentially completed a series of critical maneuvers — high-altitude return attitude adjustment, reentry powered deceleration, aerodynamic glide control, pre-landing powered deceleration and deployment of landing legs — before touchdown.

In December 2025, the ZQ 3 Y1 — the first launch vehicle in the ZQ 3 series — became China's first reusable rocket to reach orbit. However, the recovery attempt failed as the first-stage booster burst into a fireball over the landing site in Minqin in the final seconds of descent.

Shen Chao, deputy chief designer of the ZQ 3 variants, said the recovery process for any reusable rocket poses several major technical challenges.

See ***Rocket,*** *page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.

China offers new vision of global diplomacy

WORLD WATCH
By Andrei Chevelev

As a diplomat with 40 years of experience, I have observed Chinese President Xi Jinping's vision of international relations and his contributions to global governance.

Over the past decade, Xi has championed a harmonious approach to international cooperation, bringing new momentum to this traditionally conservative field.

Students of political science would be familiar with Carl von Clausewitz's famous dictum that war is merely the "continuation of policy by other means". But Chinese diplomacy has long advocated a different vision of international relations — one that seeks to prevent conflict through dialogue and mutual understanding before violence begins.

History shows how misunderstandings can escalate into crises, crises into armed conflicts, and conflicts into devastating wars. Diplomacy seeks to interrupt this chain before violence erupts.

Chinese diplomacy offers a renewed vision of international relations itself.

I had the privilege of witnessing Xi's historic first visit to UNESCO. In March 2014, a year after he became president, he visited the UNESCO headquarters in Paris for an in-depth exchange of ideas, presenting his vision of international relations and cultural heritage.

The approach was both novel and unexpected at the time. During the meeting, Xi said he wanted to understand how China could contribute more effectively to UNESCO and the international community.

He then delivered his first address within the UN system to ambassadors from all over the world.

See ***Relations,*** *page 3*

QIXI CUSTOMS SPUR FRESH CONSUMPTION TRENDS

Cultural night tours, heritage crafts and immersive exhibitions boost festive spending

By **LI HONGYANG**
lihongyang@chinadaily.com.cn

The Qixi Festival, China's equivalent of Valentine's Day, was celebrated on Wednesday amid a surge in festive spending on cultural night tours, immersive exhibitions and intangible cultural heritage experiences. Experts said the boom reflects a deeper sense of cultural identity and evolving consumer demand.

The festival, which is celebrated on the seventh day of the seventh month on the Chinese calendar, is rooted in the legend of the cowherd and the weaver girl who are separated by the Milky Way, and who meet once a year on this day, spanning the galaxy via a bridge formed by magpies.

In Beijing, the Nanchizi Museum hosted the "Magpie Bridge Night in Garden" ahead of the festival, featuring a special exhibition that blended traditional astronomy with contemporary art.

As part of the festivities, the museum also hosted a fan-making session for visitors on Saturday and has scheduled two more similar sessions on Saturday and Aug 29, from 6 pm to 9 pm.

A Qixi-themed intangible cultural heritage display and experience zone is open to the public at the central hall of the Chinese Traditional Culture Museum until Sunday, featuring eight traditional crafts, including incense making, tie-dye and velvet flower making.

See ***Qixi,*** *page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:52 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:52 PM

INDEPTH



The flooded downstream areas of the Liulan reservoir are seen after it was breached due to heavy rains in Hengzhou, Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, on July 6. A snake farm was destroyed by the flood and an estimated 800 to 900 snakes escaped. CAO YIMING / XINHUA

THE GREAT SNAKE ESCAPE

Rapid response organized to capture serpents flushed by floodwaters into rural villages

By **ZHANG XIAOMIN**
zhangxiaomin@chinadaily.com.cn

As floodwaters receded and the arduous work of post-disaster reconstruction began, an equally urgent and perilous task unfolded in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region last month.

Residents near Hengzhou city, Nanning who had survived the flood faced an unexpected reptilian threat.

When the levee of Liulan reservoir gave way under the onslaught of Typhoon Maysak, the torrential floodwaters destroyed a local snake farm downstream in Dengxu village of Yunbiao. An estimated 800 to 900 snakes including venomous cobras, king rat snakes and non-venomous rat snakes were released into the murky waters.

"Clearing the mud is just a matter of shoveling, but snakes are different. You don't know where they're hiding, or when they might emerge," one villager said.

At least two residents of Dengxu village were bitten by snakes after the flood.

Middle-aged woman Lu Cuilian was bitten by a cobra that was swept into her home by the flood. Her nephew told reporters that the snake first bit her on the neck, and as she tried to pull it away, it bit her arm.

With roads cut off by the flood and the nearby clinic's antivenom supply washed away, she could not reach a hospital in time. She held on for two days, and then died.

The following day, an elderly man surnamed Qin was bitten but survived after being sent to the hospital and receiving antivenom.

The village quickly organized a special patrol team, while multiple official and volunteer snake-catching squads scoured the area, armed with tongs, collection bags and headlamps.

Containing threat

The snakes' escape terrorized the local populace, who for days were afraid to go out at night and constantly scanned their surroundings while cleaning.

In the wake of the snake escape, local authorities moved swiftly to contain the threat.

Under the coordination of Guangxi regional emergency headquarters, regional, municipal, and county-level health commissions implemented a multipronged response encompassing snakebite treatment, hazard checks, and public awareness campaigns.

Experts from across the region and Nanning were sent to assist with snakebite treatment in Hengzhou, and the local hospital's antivenom supply was increased. A special emergency green channel for snakebites was established to minimize treatment time.

Local health authorities also conducted training for front-line medical staff on wound cleaning, proper treatment protocols, rapid assessment and pre-hospital emergency responses.

Meanwhile, officials issued safety advisories through village broadcasts, WeChat groups, and door-to-door notifications, urging residents to avoid nighttime outings, steer clear of grassy areas, ditches, and flooded zones where snakes might hide, and take precautions both indoors and outdoors.

Wu Zhi from the Dengxu village committee told local media that more than 10 villagers from neighboring hamlets that were not affected by the flood had spontaneously formed a civilian snake-catching team.

They ventured into affected areas, going door-to-door to catch snakes and prevent further injuries.

According to Wu, the team members mainly used fishing tools and electrofishing equipment for their operations.

The village committee also issued notices, warning residents without professional skills not to catch snakes themselves and to report sightings to authorities.

Local media outlet "Huaxiang Yinxiang", a WeChat official account of the Hengzhou converged media center, published an emergency guide for snakebite prevention and treatment during the flood.

It warned that the lingering floodwaters had forced snakes like kraits, green pit vipers, and cobras to move into homes, stairwells, and corners, and advised against using incorrect first-aid methods like burning, cutting, or sucking venom from the wound.

The local forestry bureau mobilized its own snake catchers and volunteers, according to the Beijing News.

One local team of seven to eight people reportedly caught over 2,000 snakes in just two days, most of them non-venomous rat snakes. A team member surnamed Zhu said after the flood, snakes mostly hid in corners.

Twenty-a-day man

Among the snake catchers, one volunteer stood out — Chen Peixin, a 33-year-old with more than 600,000 social media followers.

For him, catching a snake with his bare hands is as natural as picking up a rope — he grabs the tail with practiced ease and bags it safely.

Driven by a sense of duty, Chen traveled over 1,000 kilometers from his home in Zhangzhou, Fujian province, to Hengzhou. He spent about two weeks there, catching an average of 20 snakes a day.

"Snakes aren't as terrifying as people imagine," Chen said.

"After the flood, some die. A surviving snake's first instinct is to hide and stay alive," he said, adding most snakes attack only when they feel threatened or provoked.

Chen, a member of the Zhangzhou Liming rescue team and a popular science blogger known as "Yuri" online, first learned of the crisis through news reports. "I'd never been anywhere else to catch snakes before," he said. "But when I saw what was happening, I couldn't just stand by."

He offered to help through his social media account. The response was overwhelming. He received numerous messages and over 10,000 likes.

On July 11, he and an assistant drove for more than 10 hours to Hengzhou, the world's largest jasmine planting base, which had been hit hard by the floods.

Upon arriving in Yunbiao town, he immediately began scouting for snakes by rivers and in jasmine fields, which were now largely destroyed. The small shelters scattered in the fields had become prime hiding spots for snakes.

Following local leads, he focused on Wuzhai village, where there was another snake farm. "Only when I got there did I realize how serious it was," he recalled. "I made up my mind: catch as many as I could, and do everything possible to help the villagers."

Back home, his rescue team usually handles one snake at a time, but this time, there were hundreds, or possibly thousands, Chen said.

The work was grueling. Wading through thick mud in boots, he had to clear debris, not just wood and bamboo, but vines, thorns, and broken tiles, before he could even get to the snakes.

His mission had an early setback when a thorn pierced his left hand. He initially ignored it, but the wound became infected. "The bacteria in the floodwater caused it to swell, and I couldn't bend my thumb. It's impossible to catch snakes with one good hand," Chen said.

He was forced to return home to recover.

But his followers were not willing to let the effort end. After he confirmed he would return, they raised over 3,000 yuan ($445) to support his trip back. His rescue team also contributed.

Four days later, on July 17, Chen was back in Yunbiao.

One video he posted on July 18, a five-minute compilation of his work, garnered over 440,000 likes and 40,000 comments.

"So snake catching is as easy as catching mud fish, just grab the tail and shake it!" one user commented, joking he wanted to try it himself.

Others empathized with the cameraman: "The cameraman's heart was saying 'Stop asking me to get closer'."

Chen's first assistant declined to return, so this time he brought along his longtime friend Lai Yanquan. Lai admitted he was scared the first time he saw so many snakes. It took several days for him to even dare to film close-up.

Chen's biggest catch was a 2.5-kilogram cobra, which he found in a greenhouse.

Many online commenters urged him to wear protective gloves, but Chen said bare hands are essential for speed and dexterity. "Gloves get muddy and slippery; they affect my feel," he explained.

To him, the most dangerous part of the hunt was not the confrontation, but the "ambush".

In one instance, while pursuing a cobra in a cluttered corner, he was surprised by two more that suddenly rose up, staring straight at him.

Fortunately, they didn't all attack at once, and Chen managed to catch them one by one. "If they all attacked at once, I wouldn't be afraid either," he said. "I'd just tap their heads."

For Chen, the most important tool isn't technique, but staying alert and composed.

The intense physical work, in Guangxi's high temperatures, took a toll. "Several times I almost got heatstroke," he said. "Only when I sat down to rest did I realize how exhausted I was."

He would take a dose of *huoxiangzhengqi* water, a traditional Chinese herbal remedy for heatstroke, and press on.

During his time in Hengzhou, Chen was bitten only once, by a non-venomous rat snake.

Chen spent more than 10 consecutive days catching snakes in Hengzhou, moving from village to village.

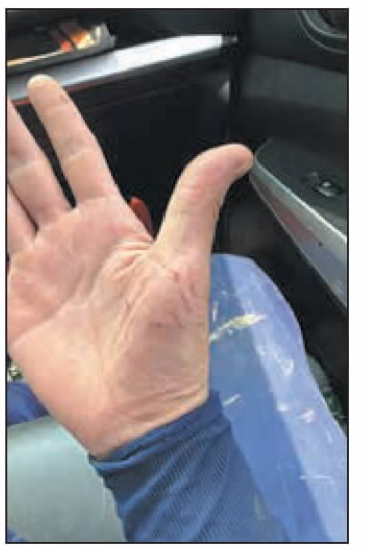
At one school, he captured over 30 rat snakes, which are non-venomous. However, he caught even more cobras, each about 1.5 meters long and weighing around 1 kilogram.

Before his departure on July 29, Chen livestreamed online. Some locals came to present him with homemade wine, chickens, gifts and banners expressing gratitude.

"The villagers are so warmhearted. It made me feel that my efforts were truly appreciated," he said, adding that he would definitely come back for a visit if he had the chance.



Chen Peixin, a member of the Zhangzhou Liming rescue team, explains a snake's fangs and habits to his online followers after catching it. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Chen shows his palm, which was scratched by the fangs of a non-venomous rat snake. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY





Left: Chen attempts to catch a cobra during his mission in Hengzhou in July. **Right:** A villager bids Chen farewell with a bottle of homemade wine. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Farming wake-up call

Guangxi, which is the world's largest source of snake raw materials, had over 30 million snakes in captivity as of 2025, accounting for 80 percent of the total snake farming in China. Hengzhou is one of the three major snake farming counties in the region, according to the Beijing Youth Daily.

In Hengzhou, species like cobras and rat snakes are raised primarily for their medicinal and cosmetic value.

A local breeder surnamed Huang, who has 16 years' experience in the industry, told Jiupai News that snakes are kept in temperature- and humidity-controlled places fitted with wire mesh. Escapes only occur when floodwaters destroy the structures, Huang said.

"After the flood, many farmers' snakes were drowned. Only a very small number escaped," she said.

The incident has drawn renewed attention to the vulnerabilities of snake farming during extreme weather events.

Huang Song, a professor of ecology at Anhui Normal University, told CPPCC Daily that while current industry access policies are relatively well-regulated, flood safety risk assessments for snake farms have long been neglected.

He recommended that farm site selection be incorporated into a flood risk assessment framework, emergency containment plans for extreme weather events be established, and that post-disaster public education on snake avoidance be strengthened to enhance people's awareness of proactive self-protection.

Xu Xudong, a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and dean of the school of life sciences at Central China Normal University, told CPPCC Daily that the convergence of natural disasters and specialty livestock farming poses new challenges to the biosafety and public health emergency response systems.

"For venomous snake farming and other specialty livestock operations, we cannot simply manage them as small-scale industries," he said.

He recommended they be registered with authorities responsible for emergency response work, public health, and ecological and environmental protection. "Risk assessments should be conducted at the outset of operations, and they should receive supervision, guidance, and services throughout the farming and management process," said Xu.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:52 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:52 PM

TOP NEWS

Rocket: Test results to decide reusability

From page 1

"For example, during atmospheric reentry, multiple onboard systems must precisely coordinate with each other, with extremely tight sequencing and a very high degree of synchronization. Also, as the booster descends at an extremely high speed, it requires attitude control and engine thrust adjustments to be completed within a very short window," Shen told reporters at a briefing in Minqin several days ahead of Wednesday's mission.

To tackle these hurdles, the Y2 has received targeted upgrades over its predecessor, Shen said. "Its propulsion system has been refined to reduce the number of engines that fire during the return flight, in order to cut structural complexity and control difficulty. The Y2 also features improved flight safety control programs that can autonomously determine the landing point in real time and execute safety measures. Its base heat protection measures have also been optimized," he added.

Shen explained why LandSpace chose Minqin for the recovery mission. "First, the site's position aligns with our rocket's launch azimuth (the compass bearing of a rocket's ground track during ascent) and is compatible with its lift capacity parameters. Second, the facility sits in a sparsely populated area, and it also has good transportation access, being close to a paved road, which is convenient for bringing the recovered booster back to the manufacturing base. Third, Minqin's climate is well-suited for recovery missions, and the local government has been highly supportive of the project," he said.

Future endeavors

On whether the recovered Y2 booster will be reused in a subsequent launch, Huang Cheng, deputy project manager for the ZQ 3 series, said the decision will depend primarily on its structural integrity and overall airframe safety after recovery.

"Engineers will conduct an initial inspection at the landing site. The booster will then be transported back to LandSpace's manufacturing facility in Zhejiang province for disassembly, where its engines will be removed for comprehensive examination and testing. Necessary component replacements will be carried out during the process," he said, adding that the final decision on reusing the booster will be made after all test results are reviewed.

According to Huang, the ZQ 3 production facility in Zhejiang is highly automated and features China's first laser welding system capable of putting together rocket bodies. Once mass production is ramped up, the facility will have an annual production capacity of eight to 10 rockets in the ZQ 3 series.

In the near future, the ZQ 3 will facilitate China's efforts to build its massive space-based internet networks and other commercial constellations, he said.

Technical specifications from LandSpace reveal that the Y2 rocket used during Wednesday's mission had a diameter of 4.5 meters and weighed about 570 metric tons when fully fueled.

Its first stage was propelled by nine TQ 12A methane engines, while the second stage ran on a TQ 15A methane engine, boasting a liftoff thrust of nearly 770 tons — enough to transport heavy satellites to low-Earth or sun-synchronous orbits. Compared with traditional types of rocket engines that can function only once, a methane engine is reusable and more environmentally friendly.

LandSpace started its research and development of the ZQ 3 model in August 2023, intending to build a reusable liquid-fueled launch vehicle boasting strong carrying capacity but at the same time being low in cost. The company conducted the world's first orbital mission of a methane-propelled launch vehicle in July 2023 with the second flight of its ZQ 2 carrier rocket from the Jiuquan spaceport.

Steered by women



Women drivers pose for a group photo beside vehicles of the "Pink Bus Service" launched on Tuesday in Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh. The Bangladeshi government has started the dedicated bus service for women, operated and managed by women drivers, to ensure safe and comfortable journeys for female commuters. Authorities said the service will eventually cover major cities and towns across the country. ABDUL GONI / ANADOLU VIA GETTY IMAGES

UAE embargoes Iran over alleged attacks

By CUI HAIPEI in Dubai, UAE and **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong

The conflict between the United States and Iran has entered a new phase of political attrition. The United Arab Emirates on Tuesday announced the suspension of all trade and financial dealings with Iran after alleging that two Iranian missiles targeting maritime navigation fell into the sea, a claim immediately rejected by Tehran.

Tuesday's announcement marked the latest UAE countermeasure against Iran, following its ambassador's recall earlier. The move also came after months of relative calm within UAE territory.

"In light of regional escalations ... all trade, commercial exchanges and financial transactions with Iran have been halted until further notice," said Afra Al Hameli, communications director of the UAE's Foreign Ministry, while reaffirming Abu Dhabi's commitment to dialogue-based solutions for regional peace.

The UAE on Tuesday accused Iran of firing two ballistic missiles toward the country, the first such reported incident since May. It later said that the salvo was directed at shipping vessels, as Tehran denied firing missiles at the neighboring country.

"UAE air defenses detected two ballistic missiles launched from Iran toward the country, with the first falling outside the country's territorial waters, while the second fell within the territorial waters," the UAE military said in a statement posted on social media.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei later "categorically dismissed the UAE's claim that Iran had launched a missile toward that country", calling the allegation "harmful" to regional trust and security efforts.

Ali Abdollahi, chief of staff of Iran's armed forces, warned Gulf states on Wednesday against assisting the US military, saying that nothing is "hidden from our eyes".

When the conflict began on Feb 28, the UAE bore the brunt of Iran's attacks, with nearly 3,000 missiles and drones directed at it — more than any other regional country.

The US and Iran remain at odds over the Strait of Hormuz and the terms for ending the conflict, with the future of the talks uncertain after a 60-day negotiating period set under a memorandum of understanding ending on Monday.

In Washington, US President Donald Trump said on Tuesday that no Iran-US talks were in the pipeline. He shared a map labeling the strait "NEW US Territory", even as he insisted that the vital waterway remained "open and operating".

Citing multiple US administration officials, CNN reported that Trump had instructed his negotiating team — including Vice-President JD Vance, and envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner — to hold off on engaging with Tehran, despite reports of preliminary positive-toned exchanges.

However, Iran said that it will not reopen the strait until Washington meets a sweeping list of demands, including ending the US blockade of Iran's ports, lifting oil sanctions, unfreezing Iranian assets and paying for war damages.

"I want to state clearly that the Strait of Hormuz will not be opened until the American commitments stipulated in the memorandum of understanding ... are implemented," Speaker of the Iranian Parliament Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said in a speech broadcast on state television.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Tuesday that the US is now "begging" to negotiate on Tehran's conditions after failing to force it to surrender.

Control of the waterway, which Iran has effectively closed since the conflict began, remains at the heart of the deadlock between Tehran and Washington. In peacetime, nearly a fifth of the world's oil passes through the chokepoint.

Trump threatened on Monday to "bomb" US ally Oman if it interfered with a deal on the Strait of Hormuz.

Contact the writers at cuihaipei@chinadaily.com.cn

Relations: All human civilizations are equal

From page 1

At the time, Samuel Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, which argued that future conflicts would be fought between civilizations rather than states, was highly influential.

"History tells us that only through exchanges and mutual learning can a civilization be filled with vitality," Xi said. "If all civilizations can uphold inclusiveness, the so-called 'clash of civilizations' will be out of the question, and the harmony of civilizations will become a reality."

Xi's speech made a significant impression on those involved in international policymaking. The message was strong and clear, and was widely heard.

Today, as the world faces growing divisions rooted in profound misunderstandings, Xi's message continues to be relevant. These divisions often stem from the inability of the former "global center" to recognize the emergence of a new multipolar world in which every country has a voice.

UNESCO was founded in 1945 on the conviction that wars begin not only on battlefields. Its Constitution states: "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed." If ignorance, intolerance and hatred contribute to conflict, then education, science and culture must become instruments of peace.

While political agreements may be negotiated within months, changing mentalities requires generations. Xi's message at UNESCO was not only an invitation to dialogue, but also a call to embrace several fundamental principles: "Civilizations are equal, and such equality has made exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations possible. All human civilizations are equal in terms of value. They all have their respective strengths and shortcomings. There is no perfect civilization in the world. Nor is there a civilization that is devoid of any merit. No one civilization can be judged superior to another."

Xi has developed a cohesive system of approaches and solutions through his four global initiatives (the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, the Global Civilization Initiative and the Global Governance Initiative), forming a coherent concept of international relations.

The Global Civilization Initiative, first proposed in 2023, promotes cultural exchange, mutual learning and the rejection of attempts to impose development and governance models based on Western ideology. It proposes cooperation among civilizations as the foundation of a more stable international order.

On the eve of the 75th anniversary of the People's Republic of China, on Sept 30, 2024, after the ceremony at which I received the Chinese Government Friendship Award, I had the privilege of attending Xi's address in the Great Hall of the People. His message was directed not only to the Chinese people, but to the international community as a whole. Xi stressed that humanity lives on the same planet and that all nations of the world have an equal right to determine the future of the planet and share the achievements of global progress.

These principles were encapsulated in the Global Governance Initiative announced on Sept 1, 2025.

As Xi stated, "All countries, regardless of size, strength and wealth, are equal participants, decision-makers and beneficiaries in global governance. There should be no double standards, and the house rules of a few countries must not be imposed upon others."

For a country that has emerged as a global leader in economic and social development, advocating equality rather than privilege reflects both confidence and responsibility. On the other hand, the United States' approach to international cooperation is fundamentally different.

This year's US Presidential Memorandum directed federal agencies to stop participation in and funding for 31 UN entities considered contrary to US interests.

Xi's historic visit to UNESCO in March 2014 paved the way for cultural protection and dialogue among civilizations. This year, Xiamen, Fujian province, will host the 21st session of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage from Nov 30 to Dec 5, reflecting China's growing contribution to global governance.

The author is former head of the Asia-Pacific Unit, Sector for Priority Africa and External Relations at UNESCO and a recipient of the 2024 Chinese Government Friendship Award. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

More firms to benefit from AEO program

Importance of certification for smoother cross-border trade highlighted at seminar

By ZHONG NAN in Dalian, Liaoning *zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn*

China will expand its pool of companies certified under the Authorized Economic Operator program and broaden mutual recognition arrangements with Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation economies to help more businesses benefit from streamlined cross-border trade procedures, customs officials said on Wednesday.

Speaking at a seminar organized by the General Administration of Customs during the ongoing third APEC Senior Officials' Meeting in Dalian, Liaoning province, they said these measures would make AEO certification a stronger tool for supporting smaller businesses, boosting participation in trade and fostering a more open, inclusive and resilient Asia-Pacific trading environment.

The AEO program, promoted by the World Customs Organization, is designed to strengthen international supply chain security and facilitate the movement of legitimate goods.

Under the program, customs authorities work with businesses to streamline customs procedures and improve the efficiency of international trade.

Lazzat Daniyarova, a technical officer at the Brussels-based World Customs Organization, said that integrating more small- and medium-sized enterprises into AEO programs would make the system more inclusive and give smaller businesses greater access to secure trade and sustainable growth opportunities.

Lin Jiantian, director of the GAC's department of enterprise management and audit-based control, said China will pursue mutual AEO recognition with more economies to enable businesses across the Asia-Pacific to benefit from faster and more efficient customs clearance.

All APEC economies except Papua New Guinea have AEO programs in place. China has established mutual recognition arrangements with 10 of them, including Australia, Singapore and South Korea.

China's AEO-certified companies recorded 16.76 trillion yuan ($2.49 trillion) in foreign trade in the first seven months of 2026, accounting for 44.2 percent of the country's total, up 5.77 percentage points from a year earlier.

Meanwhile, their trade with other APEC economies rose 21.87 percent year-on-year to 9.19 trillion yuan.

The GAC said Chinese customs officials will also hold discussions with their counterparts from Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam, as well as representatives of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Secretariat, to accelerate AEO mutual recognition and identify priorities for the next phase of cooperation.

Olgun Basel, supply chain director at Einhell Germany AG, a German industrial goods trading company based in Shanghai, said the company's import clearance times have fallen by 80 percent since it gained AEO certification in February.

Basel said that preparing for AEO certification also prompted the company to improve internal controls, documentation and risk management, helping to optimize its operations and build trust with customers in overseas markets.

China had more than 15,450 AEO-certified companies as of the end of July and has signed 34 mutual recognition agreements covering 60 countries and regions.

China is hosting the third APEC Senior Officials' Meeting in Dalian from Monday through Aug 28, said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



Newlyweds attend a group wedding ceremony during the Qixi Festival on Wednesday in Qujing, Yunnan province. SUN WENLAI / XINHUA

Qixi: Different age groups add to the spending spree

From page 1

A free group wedding was also organized in Gusu district in Suzhou, Jiangsu province. The event offered free styling, photography and a traditional ceremony.

The district also rolled out a series of romantic experiences to fuel the "sweet economy", according to the Jiangsu provincial civil affairs department.

At the Suji Ancient Town in Leshan, Sichuan, on Saturday, visitors tried their hand at a Qixi needle-threading ritual.

He Qicong, an associate professor at Beijing Normal University's Institute of Culture Innovation and Communication, said traditional festivals have always provided an opportunity for people to connect with their cultural roots.

"Emulating ancestors is not just a revival of old customs," she said. "What lies beneath this value system is the ancient view of life."

Nighttime outings have become one of the most popular ways to celebrate Qixi. According to Tongcheng Travel, an online travel agency, evening ticket sales at domestic scenic spots on Qixi day rose more than 50 percent compared with the daily average.

Qixi also prompted many to head out on weekend trips. Online travel agency Tuniu said that families accounted for more than 60 percent of travelers.

Tongcheng Travel revealed that since the beginning of August, travelers age 55 and above have accounted for nearly 40 percent of package-tour bookings on its platform, up about 6 percentage points year-on-year.

He of Beijing Normal University said the festival resonates with people of all ages.

"To young couples, Qixi symbolizes enduring love. For women, Qixi carries the tradition of seeking skills. For the elderly, Qixi evokes a vision of family harmony. A festival that touches every generation, arriving in splendid midsummer when the land is lush, spurs consumption across all age groups," she said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:52 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:52 PM

WORLD

Analysts see opportunities for ASEAN

Forum discusses potential benefits for region amid geopolitical rivalry

By **YANG WANLI** in Bangkok
yangwanli@chinadaily.com.cn

The global order is entering a period of profound transformation, marked by intensifying geopolitical rivalry, economic fragmentation, and the rise of the Global South, which offers challenges and opportunities for Southeast Asia, according to a recent seminar.

Experts said the key question for the region is how the Association of Southeast Asian Nations can preserve its centrality and turn disruption into an opportunity to shape a more inclusive regional order.

They were speaking at the 13th Chula-ASEAN Dialogue — themed "The Once and Future ASEAN: Global Shifts, Institutional Agility, and the Path to 2045" — on Tuesday at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand.

"The decline of Western dominance is inevitable and not synonymous with the end of Western civilization," said Amitav Acharya, distinguished professor of international relations at the School of International Service at American University.

Rather than viewing the transition as a contest between the West and the rest, Acharya argued that the changing balance of power could be an opportunity to build a more pluralistic international system drawing on the contributions of different civilizations.

"The contemporary world order is a shared creation across multiple civilizations, not dominated by any single country or region," Acharya said, emphasizing that interdependence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, institutions and free trade have evolved as globally shared principles rather than the exclusive products of the West.

That perspective is particularly relevant to ASEAN, a region positioned at the intersection of major powers and increasingly influenced by the rise of emerging economies.

"For ASEAN, the more consequential question is whether a fragmented world can still sustain cooperation, and how to maintain strategic autonomy while avoiding a fragmented regional environment in which countries are pressured to choose sides," he said.

Piti Srisangnam, executive director of the ASEAN Foundation, described the current environment as one of unprecedented uncertainty driven by geopolitical rivalries, economic fragmentation, supply-chain restructuring, climate disruptions, and rapid digital transformation.

"Rather than resisting change, we anchor our resilience in openness, inclusivity, and cooperative frameworks," Piti said, arguing that ASEAN's strength lies in its ability to remain cohesive, relevant, and forward-looking.

He said the emphasis on openness comes as globalization itself becomes increasingly fragmented.

At the same time, other experts argued that Southeast Asia's economic integration has become more complicated as some countries deepen their ties with major partners while navigating competing regional frameworks.

Suthiphand Chirathivat, former executive director of the ASEAN Studies Center at Chulalongkorn University, said: "Many ASEAN countries are pursuing a 'dual-track' strategy, seeking market access and investment without fully aligning with either side (China and the US)."

Arthayudh Srisamoot, a former adviser to Thailand's minister of foreign affairs, said ASEAN should strengthen both internal cohesion and its external strategic presence.

Rather than replicating the European Union's model of deep integration, he said the bloc should focus on practical connectivity, intra-regional trade, and unified positions on regional frameworks and agreements such as the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.

"ASEAN must strengthen both internal cohesion and external strategic presence," Arthayudh said, adding that the bloc needs faster and more coordinated mechanisms to address nontraditional threats such as climate change, transboundary environmental problems, and public health crises.

Broadening partnerships

Experts said ASEAN's future prosperity will also depend on how successfully it broadens its economic partnerships.

The traditional markets of the US, the European Union, and Japan will remain important, Arthayudh said.

However, he also urged ASEAN to actively engage emerging partners — including China, Russia, India, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America — through targeted investment, technical cooperation, and infrastructure development.

Meanwhile, for China — a major country in the Global South and one of ASEAN's biggest trading partners — the changing world order presents both a responsibility and an opportunity, according to Acharya.

He suggested that China should serve as a constructive bridge between the existing international order and an emerging, more pluralistic one.

Acharya said this should involve not only infrastructure initiatives, but also help in contributing ideas, strengthening global governance, supporting humanitarian efforts, and expanding participation in multilateral institutions.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108
529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1897

Cultural bridge



A visitor views an artwork at an exhibition held at the National History Museum of the Kyrgyz Republic in Bishkek on Tuesday. The exhibition, which opened this month, will run until November. XINHUA

Malaysian PM backs one-China principle

By **ZHANG YUNBI**
zhangyunbi@chinadaily.com.cn

As Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim voiced unequivocal support for the one-China principle and China's reunification in a recent media interview, Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said that China "commends" the Malaysian leader's remarks.

In a video interview with Al Jazeera released on Sunday, the Malaysian leader said, "I see Taiwan as part of China, period … It is one China. It is accepted by all."

When asked about his view on China not committing to renouncing the use of force, Anwar responded by drawing an analogy with Malaysia.

"If one province decides to break away, do we use force?" Anwar was quoted as saying. "I think I will protect the sanctity and unity of the nation."

At a daily news conference in Beijing on Wednesday, Lin, the Foreign Ministry spokesman, said, "China commends Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's remarks."

"Upholding the one-China principle is where public opinion trends and the right thing to do," he said in response to a question about the interview with Anwar.

"The international community's commitment to the one-China principle is not to be shaken," he added.

In the interview, the Malaysian prime minister also lashed out at the double standards adopted by some Western countries against China.

"When it comes to China, it's hypocrisy. You don't talk about many countries in Europe breaking up, or within the US, or Africa … but you focus only on China," he said.

Condemning the attempts to lend support to "Taiwan independence" forces, Anwar criticized such a way of "condoning an attempt to break up a legitimate independent country". "I don't accept that," he said.

On Wednesday, Lin, the spokesman, stressed at the news conference that "there is but one China in the world, and Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory".

"China must and will achieve reunification. This will not be stopped," he said.

Medical bond



A Chinese doctor talks with Cameroonian medical staff members at the Yaounde Women's and Children's Hospital in Cameroon on Tuesday. Since 1975, North China's Shanxi province has sent 25 medical teams totaling 811 medical personnel to Cameroon. XINHUA

Joint effort sought for Libya resolution

By **SHI GUANG** in New York
shiguang@chinadailyusa.com

A Chinese envoy to the United Nations said that the international community must work toward a comprehensive and fundamental solution to the issues facing Libya and its long-delayed elections.

"Sincere dialogue is needed to break the political deadlock," Fu Cong, China's permanent representative to the UN, said at a Security Council briefing on Libya on Tuesday.

Elections in Libya have been continuously postponed over the past years due to fractures in government institutions that have triggered ongoing conflict over legitimacy and authority.

"The Libyan parties concerned should fully recognize that the division of state institutions and repeated postponement of elections are detrimental to the country's long-term development and the vital interests of the Libyan people," Fu said.

"China calls on all parties, with the support of the United Nations, to intensify consultations, bridge their differences, and reach agreement as soon as possible on the relevant matters set out in the road map, thereby paving the way for national elections," he said.

The UN-recognized Government of National Unity, based in the capital, Tripoli, has been locked in conflict with a rival authority based in the east of the country, backed by the House of Representatives and the Libyan National Army.

Fu said that the United Nations Support Mission in Libya should maintain dialogue between the country's major political factions.

"The United Nations should continue to play a central role in mediating the Libyan issue. Efforts by countries outside the region should uphold the Libyan-led and Libyan-owned principle, and fully respect Libya's national conditions and the will of its people," Fu said.

The ceasefire deal from nearly 6 years ago between the parties needs to be preserved, Fu said, despite recent outbreaks of violence and targeted drone attacks on oil refineries.

"This not only threatens the safety of civilians, but could also disrupt energy supplies and affect people's lives and livelihoods. China is deeply concerned about these developments. We urge all parties to exercise maximum restraint and cease all violent attacks. We support the Libyan authorities in investigating the relevant attacks and holding those responsible accountable," Fu said.

"Civilian safety and the security of critical infrastructure, including energy facilities, must be effectively protected. The 2020 ceasefire agreement remains an important foundation for maintaining Libya's overall stability. The parties in eastern and western Libya should fully implement the agreement, strengthen dialogue, consolidate mutual trust, and advance the unification of military and security institutions of the eastern and western sides," he said.

Public governance

Public governance must be improved to enhance people's well-being, Fu said, adding that the country continues to face significant challenges, including fiscal deficits, inflation and fuel shortages, which are detrimental to sound economic development and lasting social stability.

"Libya stands at a critical crossroads. The international community should genuinely respect Libya's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity, uphold objectivity and impartiality, step up mediation, and play a constructive role with a genuine commitment to Libya's peace, stability and the well-being of its people.

"As a good friend of Libya, China stands ready to continue working with the international community to make greater contributions to advancing a political settlement of the Libyan issue and promoting lasting peace and stability in Libya," Fu said.

China calls for unity, improved methods at UNSC

By **MINLU ZHANG**
at the United Nations
minluzhang@chinadailyusa.com

China on Wednesday called on members of the UN Security Council to "strengthen unity and cooperation, build broader consensus and improve the council's working methods" so that it can more effectively fulfill its responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.

Speaking at a Security Council meeting on working methods, Fu Cong, China's permanent representative to the UN, said the effectiveness of the council bears directly on the authority and credibility of the United Nations as well as the prospects for international peace and security.

"Working methods are an important safeguard for the Security Council in fulfilling its responsibilities and have never been merely a technical issue," Fu said, adding that they should be continuously improved from the broader perspective of maintaining international peace and security.

"Unity and cooperation are the source of vitality for multilateral mechanisms and should always remain the most fundamental working method of the Security Council," Fu said.

Whether dealing with substantive or procedural matters, council members should "respect one another, engage in full consultations, properly manage differences and make every effort to seek consensus", Fu said.

Fu warned against pushing draft resolutions to a vote when major disagreements remain. "(This) not only deepens divisions within the council, but also greatly weakens the political weight and effectiveness of the resolutions themselves," Fu said.

On sanctions, peacekeeping and other tools available to the council, Fu said their value should ultimately be measured by whether they contribute to political solutions.

"The effectiveness of Security Council meetings, outcomes, and tools such as sanctions and peacekeeping should be judged by whether they proceed from realities and constructively advance the political settlement of hotspot issues," Fu said.

The council should also fully respect the sovereignty and ownership of the countries concerned and exercise caution in the use of coercive measures, including sanctions and the use of force, Fu said.

On UN political and peacekeeping missions, Fu said they should focus on their core mandates, maintain close cooperation with host countries and adjust their mandates and deployments according to conditions and needs on the ground.

"The transition and withdrawal of missions should be carried out in a smooth and orderly manner so as to avoid shocks to the situation on the ground," Fu said.

Fu also called for more practical steps to improve the efficiency of the council, including reducing repetitive meetings, making greater use of informal consultations where appropriate, and producing more concise and focused outcome documents.

Fu also urged the council to improve the selection of civil society briefers to ensure that their participation is objective, impartial and substantively useful to discussions.

Fu reiterated the Security Council's central role in the international collective security architecture, saying its status and role are "irreplaceable".

"A united and effective Security Council meets the needs of world peace and stability and serves the common interests of the broad membership of the United Nations," Fu said.

He urged the international community to oppose "illegal unilateral actions that bypass the Security Council and undermine the role of the United Nations".

Permanent members of the Security Council, in particular, should take the lead in upholding fairness and justice and "demonstrate the responsibility expected of major countries", Fu said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:52 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:52 PM

WORLD

US-ROK drills halved after Trump order

Exercises cut to 5 days, signaling possible shift in White House's approach to DPRK

By **YANG HAN** in Hong Kong
kelly@chinadailyapac.com

The Republic of Korea and the United States have cut the duration of their annual joint military exercise roughly in half following an order from US President Donald Trump.

The Ulchi Freedom Shield exercise, originally scheduled to run for 11 days through Aug 27, will now last five days and conclude on Aug 21 at the request of the US, Yonhap News Agency reported on Wednesday, citing the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff.

UFS is a summertime exercise involving command post and field training. The two countries label it as an effort to strengthen their combined defense posture and response capabilities.

The scale of this year's drills will also be adjusted, Seoul said.

"The ROK and the US agreed to discuss and carry out various measures going forward to achieve the objectives of the UFS exercise and establish a robust combined defense posture," the Joint Chiefs of Staff said.

On Sunday, Trump said he had instructed Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth to "substantially reduce" the joint military exercises with the ROK, citing his friendly relationship with Kim Jong-un, top leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The US Department of Defense said the adjustments would not degrade the exercise's training objectives.

ROK Foreign Minister Cho Hyun said on Wednesday that the government had not been informed in advance of Trump's directive to scale back the drills. However, he said the move did not amount to a unilateral notification as the defense minister had been involved in the discussions.

Chung Dong-young, the ROK's unification minister, also expressed support for Trump's order. "I hope this leads to dialogue between the US and the DPRK and further extends to improved inter-Korean ties," he was quoted by Yonhap as saying.

Lam Peng Er, head of the Korea Centre and principal research fellow at the East Asian Institute at the National University of Singapore, told China Daily that Trump was essentially sending Kim a strong signal in hopes of reviving their in-person engagement.

Trump's desire to re-engage with the DPRK leader is also driven by his eagerness for a major foreign policy breakthrough in his second term, especially amid his frustration over the situation in the Middle East, Lam said.

During his first term from 2017 to 2021, Trump met Kim three times: in Singapore in 2018 for their historic first summit, in Vietnam in 2019, and at the Korean Demilitarized Zone later that year in an impromptu third meeting.

Following the 2018 summit, Trump also suspended and scaled back joint military exercises with the ROK.

The Wall Street Journal reported on Tuesday that Trump is pushing aides for a meeting with Kim as soon as this fall. Trump has privately discussed holding the meeting during his next trip to Asia, which "could happen in November", the Journal reported, citing US officials.

Stronger position

However, with the DPRK now in a stronger economic and diplomatic position than during Trump's first term, Lam said the US will need to offer more tangible incentives to bring Pyongyang back to the negotiating table, including lifting sanctions.

It will also be important for the US to work with China and Russia in the process, he said.

Park Won-gon, a professor of DPRK studies at Ewha Womans University in Seoul, told Agence France-Presse that scaling back the exercises could improve prospects for US-DPRK dialogue.

Suspending US-ROK joint exercises has always been a prerequisite for the DPRK to engage in dialogue with the US, he said.

In February, Kim said his country could get along with the US if Washington respects its current status and drops the "hostile policy".

While the DPRK has made no official statement on Trump's overture, the Korean Central News Agency commented on Wednesday that the UFS exercise poses the most immediate and open threat to the DPRK and regional security.

The DPRK will continue to exercise its right to self-defense and counter "threatening maneuvers", it said.

Highland harvest



Sheep farmers gather at an auction for the sale of hill ewes and wether lambs on Tuesday in Lairg, Scotland. The annual event is one of Europe's largest one-day sales of hill sheep. JEFF J MITCHELL VIA GETTY IMAGES

Deadly blaze



Civil defense personnel stand at the site of a hotel fire on Wednesday in Kolkata, India. The blaze broke out around 2:50 am on the second floor of the hotel, killing nine people, including a child, according to fire authorities. DIBYANGSHU SARKAR / AFP

Trump's 3-day tariff pause a reprieve, not a solution, experts say

By **YANG GAO** in Toronto
gaoyang@chinadailyusa.com

US President Donald Trump's decision to pause new 50 percent tariffs on Canadian goods for three days offers Canada temporary relief but is unlikely to resolve deeper trade tensions between the two countries, experts said.

Trump said on Tuesday night that Canada and the United States had reached a deal, subject to the finalization of documents, and that he had paused the tariffs that were due to take effect on Wednesday.

The move came as the two countries remained engaged in intensive trade negotiations, with Canada seeking relief from existing US tariffs while Washington pushed for greater access to the Canadian market.

Ronald Stagg, a history professor at Toronto Metropolitan University and an expert on Canadian-American relations, said the emerging deal would likely address several issues that have drawn the Trump administration's attention.

He said the issues could include access to Canada's alcohol market, greater access for US dairy products, and potentially restrictions on Canadian vehicles and vehicle parts entering the United States.

"The latest 'deal,' as Trump would call it, should it be finalized, will likely address some of the sectors that most annoy the Trump government," Stagg told China Daily.

In return, Canada would likely seek reductions in US tariffs on steel, aluminum and softwood lumber, as well as some relief for its auto industry, he said.

But Stagg said Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney's government was facing a difficult balancing act as it sought to reach an agreement with Washington without appearing to give too much ground at home.

"The Carney government is walking a fine line in these negotiations," Stagg said. "While hoping to give enough to please the American government, it must be seen by the Canadian people to have achieved a fair deal for Canada."

> "No longer can Canada count on the United States as a friendly trade partner."
>
> **Ronald Stagg,**
> history professor at Toronto Metropolitan University

He said there was already a perception in Canada that the country had "given up a substantial amount to the Americans".

Julian Castro-Rea, a political science professor at the University of Alberta, said the dispute reflected broader challenges in Canada-US trade relations.

He argued that Trump's tariff policy had disrupted a deeply integrated North American production and investment system.

"He threw a monkey wrench into a trade, production and investment system between the two countries that was working reasonably well," Castro-Rea told China Daily.

Castro-Rea also challenged the argument that Canada was taking advantage of the United States through its trade surplus, saying that many Canadian products sold in the United States contain US-made components.

"The argument that Canada is taking advantage of the US by enjoying a trade surplus — the main motivation for the tariff dispute — is ludicrous, since most 'Canadian' finished products sold in the US incorporate a large number of components made in the US," he said.

He pointed to the auto industry as a particularly clear example, noting that vehicles assembled in Canada depend heavily on parts produced in the United States and Mexico.

"Therefore, the issue of tariffs is raised for political reasons alone, as an attempt to score points for Trump's MAGA coalition political brand," Castro-Rea said.

Castro-Rea said the measures would hurt targeted Canadian industries but also create costs for Americans because tariffs are paid by US importers.

"It highlights the paradox of the tariff war launched by Washington: increased tariffs hurt the Canadian economy but also the US economy," he said.

"For starters, increased tariffs are paid by US importers, not Canadian exporters. Those extra costs are then transferred to US consumers, thus making ordinary citizens in that country pay for the trade war," he said.

He added that the integration of the two economies meant some US industries would also be directly affected by higher tariffs.

Both experts noted that the three-day pause should not be viewed as an end to the broader dispute.

Stagg said it was "highly unlikely" that any agreement would resolve all the issues between the two countries.

"Donald Trump is likely to continue saying that Canada is 'ripping off' the United States, while Canada is going to want to eliminate most American tariffs.

"This deal is likely to be seen by both governments as an interim solution. Friction will remain," Stagg said.

Castro-Rea was even more skeptical about the durability of any agreement reached under the Trump administration.

Nothing is a lasting solution under the Trump administration in any policy field, including foreign and defense policies, he said.

"Experience has shown by now that any government decision can be reverted or changed under the authority of this unpredictable leader," Castro-Rea said.

Stagg said Canada's approach to trade with Washington had already changed fundamentally under Trump.

"No longer can Canada count on the United States as a friendly trade partner," he said.

Canada cannot simply walk away from its largest trading partner, however, he said.

"While the Canadian government tries to reorient as much trade as possible, it is going to have to live with the new uncertainty in dealing with the United States," Stagg said.

Castro-Rea, however, viewed the longer-term impact differently.

"I believe the current tariff controversy is only a temporary blip in Canada-US trade and economic relations," he said.

China auto giant Chery expands in UK market

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

Chinese automaker Chery plans to open a research and development center in the United Kingdom for passenger vehicles, expanding the market footprint of its Omoda and Jaecoo brands.

The move comes as the company accelerates its push into Europe, with demand for its vehicles continuing to surge.

Chery rolled out the Lepas brand in February, developed specifically for European buyers. In June, it signed a deal with Nissan to assemble its vehicles at the Japanese carmaker's plant in Sunderland, England.

The company confirmed on Wednesday that its new research and development center will be based at UTAC Millbrook — the vehicle development and testing hub in Bedfordshire, England — and is slated to open later this year.

Chery said the center's initial work will focus on fine-tuning the company's cars for UK driving conditions, expanding over time to autonomous driving and AI. The Bedfordshire area is a hub for engineering and motorsport, hosting several automotive R&D centers.

Gary Lan, chief executive of Chery International UK, said the launch of a passenger car R&D center would be a key milestone in localizing operations, with UK manufacturing to follow.

"We waited over 20 years for the right time to enter this market, and our ambition has always gone much further than simply bringing vehicles here," Lan said in a statement.

"UTAC Millbrook allows us to turn UK customer insight into product development, from ride and steering to active safety systems," he added.

The group did not specify how much it would invest in the facility, or how many jobs may be created, but said it has long-term plans to hire local talent and create new, high-skilled roles at the center.

Kirsty Andrew, vice-president of UTAC UK, said: "This is about much more than testing individual vehicles. We see this as the sustained momentum of a long-term engineering relationship with Chery Automobile."

Last month, Chery sold roughly 280,000 vehicles worldwide, with exports of about 202,000 — up 70 percent year-on-year — making it the first Chinese automaker to ship more than 200,000 in a single month.

Briefly

CROATIA

Ukrainian arrested over Nord Stream sabotage

A Ukrainian man was arrested on Wednesday in Croatia in connection with the 2022 undersea explosions that damaged the Nord Stream gas pipelines between Russia and Germany, German prosecutors said. Ukrainian national Vladimir Z., whose last name was not given in line with German privacy rules, was arrested in Pula, Croatia, by local police acting on a European arrest warrant. The trained scuba diver "is strongly suspected of jointly causing explosions", prosecutors said. The man was part of a group that sabotaged the pipelines near the Danish island of Bornholm, they alleged.

INTL CRIMINAL COURT

Washington criticized for sanctions on court

The International Criminal Court on Wednesday slammed the latest United States sanctions targeting senior ICC staff, including its president, calling them a "flagrant attack" on the court's independence. The US imposed sanctions on ICC President Tomoko Akane of Japan and senior trial lawyer Abdoulaye Seye of Senegal on Tuesday, as part of Washington's campaign against what it calls a "corrupt and fatally politicized" body. "These sanctions are a flagrant attack against the independence of an impartial judicial institution," the court, based in The Hague, said. Japan's Foreign Ministry on Wednesday described the US move as "very unfortunate". In twin statements on X, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and European Council President Antonio Costa said they "stand firmly" with the ICC's president and top officials, which "must be able to act independently and without external pressure".

AGENCIES — XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:52 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:52 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Real story isn't individual breakthroughs, it's the whole ecosystem that cultivates them

It is an incontrovertible fact that China is becoming increasingly adept at translating technological ideas into real-world applications. This was underscored on Wednesday by three concurrent developments: Unitree Robotics' stock market debut in Shanghai, the opening of the 2026 World Robot Conference in Beijing, and the first successful land-based recovery of the first stage of the reusable Zhuque-3 rocket.

Interestingly, ahead of its listing, a report by Reuters framed Unitree's success as the result of allegedly "using" US military-funded research. Reuters touted itself as the first outlet to "detail connections" between Unitree's designs and a US Army program.

According to US researchers and former officials who spoke to Reuters — without offering any verifiable technical proof — some of Unitree's robots allegedly "draw on" breakthroughs in quadruped movement financed by the US DEVCOM Army Research Laboratory and other military programs.

That is precisely where the story takes an intriguing and questionable turn. China's advantage is not in "copying". It is an entire ecosystem: enormous manufacturing capacity, dense supplier networks, huge domestic market, abundant engineering talent, affordable component costs, patient capital and a government willing to make long-term inputs.

That ecosystem also has an unusual feature: It was built under pressure.

For years, some Western governments have restricted Chinese access to advanced semiconductors, equipment, software and other technologies. The response was not the intended technological paralysis. It was accelerated localization, diversification and improvisation. Pressure has made China's innovation system more adaptive and resilient.

At this week's 2026 World Robot Conference, more than 300 exhibitors are showcasing more than 2,000 products, with more than 150 making their global debut. Many of them are Chinese. The Chinese robotics industry is moving from robot gymnastics to practical applications in factories, warehouses, logistics and services. Unitree itself has become a symbol of that transition.

The same pattern is visible in AI. Alibaba's new lightweight AI model Qwen3.8-27B has matched much larger near-frontier rivals while being able to run on everyday hardware. The Qwen3.8-27B, a small model with 27 billion parameters, performed on par with OpenAI's GPT-5.6 Luna, which was billed as the most cost-efficient model in the US lab's latest flagship series, benchmark firm Artificial Analysis said on Monday.

Hugging Face's latest analysis points to Chinese models becoming influential in the global open-model community. Qwen has reportedly accumulated more than 151,000 derivative models on Hugging Face — far more than the combined derivatives of Meta's models. The point is that more and more developers treat Chinese models as building blocks rather than merely products to be consumed.

The AI revolution itself is making the old logic of technological containment harder to sustain. Open-source models spread. Engineers collaborate. Developers modify other people's work. Breakthroughs increasingly emerge from networks rather than laboratories operating behind walls. China is simply becoming very good at making innovations and promoting applications in the new technology revolution.

The country's paradigm combines market incentives with public investment and long-term industrial strategy. Its success comes from connecting research, manufacturing, capital, talent and markets at extraordinary scale.

There is also a larger philosophical question. Technology can be treated as a weapon, a monopoly or a public resource. China has presented openness and cooperation as part of its technological strategy. The global adoption of Chinese open-source models demonstrates that the approach has real appeal.

The real story of China's breakthroughs is the whole ecosystem that connects robots, rocket recovery and AI models.

Western countries may attempt to slow individual Chinese breakthroughs through export controls and technology bans. But they cannot cripple the Chinese innovation ecosystem itself, because its underlying engine — economies of scale, engineering talent, industrial depth, market demand and relentless iteration — will only grow more adaptive and more powerful under pressure. When the going gets tough, the tough get going.

The sensible response is not denial or panic. It is cooperation and competition.

Smearing every Chinese breakthrough as a "theft" or "threat" does not make the breakthrough disappear. It only makes the person doing that look increasingly out of touch with the future.

Mexico should handle trade issues prudently

The Mexican government is reportedly exploring the possibility of further expanding the trade restrictions and raising tariffs on certain imported goods, while continuing case-by-case investigations into alleged "dumping" by China and other countries. In January, Mexico imposed tariffs of up to 50 percent on approximately 1,500 products from nations with which it does not have a free trade agreement, a policy that has directly impacted China.

Bilateral economic cooperation is based on international rules and market principles, with mutual benefit as its defining characteristic. Politicizing economic issues serves no one's interests. Mexico should think twice before moving forward with the new trade restrictions.

The move comes as Mexico is seeking to persuade the United States to lower tariffs on its automotive and steel products and to secure more favorable rules of origin during the ongoing review of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement. By increasing trade barriers against Chinese goods and strengthening origin and anti-transshipment controls, Mexico aims to demonstrate to Washington that it is not a "backdoor" for Chinese products entering the US market, thereby enhancing its bargaining power in the USMCA negotiations.

The proposed tariff hikes seem like an attempt to appease the US, while targeting Chinese goods perceived to be direct competitors to domestic industries. But Mexican manufacturing is highly dependent on Chinese intermediate goods, components and equipment. If Mexico raises import tariffs on Chinese goods and expands trade remedies such as "antidumping" and "countervailing" duties, the cost of Chinese goods entering the Mexican market will rise further, potentially leading to a contraction in the bilateral trade volume.

Mexico would be effectively shooting itself in the foot to please the US, only to find that the bullet is paid for by higher costs for its own consumers and a less competitive export sector.

Tariff protection alone does not automatically translate into stronger domestic competitiveness. Mexico's real bottlenecks are its domestic supplier base, technological capabilities, energy and power infrastructure, shortage of skilled labor and weak research and development capacity.

Beijing has consistently maintained that trade wars benefit no one while repeatedly emphasizing that China and Mexico are partners not rivals. China is Mexico's second-largest trading partner, while Mexico ranks as China's second-largest trading partner in Latin America. In recent years, the economic relationship has deepened from the trade in goods to industry chain collaboration and production capacity cooperation.

Even if Mexico yields to US pressure and works hand in glove with it to target Chinese industries, there is no guarantee it will gain more leverage in the USMCA negotiations. This week's tough tariff negotiations between the US and Canada have laid bare a stark truth: the US views its two neighbors not as partners, but as free-riders who have been taking advantage of it for too long.

China reserves the right to take corresponding measures to safeguard its interests. A trade and investment barrier investigation launched by the Chinese Ministry of Commerce in September last year concluded in March that Mexico's tariff policies constitute investment barriers that restrict market access for Chinese enterprises.

China opposes unilateral tariff hikes in all forms, and has urged Mexico to correct its wrong practices of unilateralism and protectionism at an early date. The path forward lies not in erecting barriers, but in embracing openness, cooperation, and a competitive dynamism that drives genuine industrial progress.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

Some in Australia trying to shoo its golden goose away

Australia, under the Anthony Albanese government, is proving to be a textbook case of what happens to countries when anxiety masquerades as strategy. The latest symptom is Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong's intervention to pressure the Australian National University and the University of Queensland to sever academic ties with Shandong University and the Chinese Academy of Sciences respectively.

Given the Pentagon's recent campaign to pressure universities in the United States to cut research collaborations with China, it is highly questionable whether Canberra's latest action is entirely its own — or whether it reflects pressure from Washington.

This is reminiscent of a scene in the Australian satirical sitcom *Utopia*, in which officials are discussing spending billions to protect Australia's trade routes, only to acknowledge that the country's biggest trading partner is China. "So we're spending close to $30 billion a year to protect our trade with China ... from China?" asks a bewildered character.

The problem is that Canberra seems increasingly determined to turn this joke into policy. Wong, once regarded as a pragmatist, is now helping dismantle Australia's academic links with China — amid a political climate in which "national security" has become a blank check for bureaucratic vandalism. Is Australia protecting its economic interests by frightening its golden goose away?

Chinese students are a financial pillar of the university sector in Australia. Statistics show that Chinese enrollments reached 192,225 in 2025, accounting for 23 percent of Australia's international students, generating A$12.7 billion ($8.98 billion) in economic activity. Across New South Wales, without Chinese enrollments, the sector's A$583 million surplus would be a A$1.754 billion deficit.

Between January and April 2026, Chinese applications for degree-level student visas fell 32 percent from the average for the same period in 2023-25. Higher-education applications plunged 39 percent, reaching their lowest level in nearly 12 years, according to media reports. Canberra's response? Further alienate Chinese students and researchers by dismantling institutional ties. The message is difficult to misunderstand: Chinese people are welcome as revenue streams, but increasingly suspect as intellectual partners.

The academic squeeze is part of a wider pattern. Take the Port of Darwin. In 2015, the Northern Territory government granted China's Landbridge Group a 99-year lease for A$506 million. The port was loss-making; Landbridge invested heavily and expanded capacity from 16 million to 30 million tonnes. Security reviews found no national-security threat, and a 2023 review saw no need to cancel or alter the lease. Yet in January 2026, citing "national security", the Albanese government announced that Canberra would terminate Landbridge's operating rights.

Washington's subsequent allocation of $1.2 billion to upgrade military facilities at the port only makes the politics more conspicuous. Landbridge has since initiated arbitration at the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes.

Meanwhile, Australia is deepening military cooperation with Japan and the Philippines, including hosting Japanese hypersonic-missile tests on Australian ranges and its participation in the Philippines' largest Balikatan military exercises with the US in decades.

It is crystal clear that Canberra is moving closer to a US-led containment strategy while assuming its economic relationship with China will somehow remain insulated. That assumption is rather *Utopia*-like.

After years of damage by the pro-US Scott Morrison government, China-Australia relations had finally begun to recover thanks to joint efforts by the two sides. Bilateral trade reached A$309 billion in 2025, Chinese tourists returned in force and high-level dialogue resumed. Now Canberra risks squandering that hard-won capital.

Australia's economic interests with China are not something that can be wished away with strategic rhetoric. Iron ore, liquefied natural gas, beef, universities and tourist operators cannot simply be redirected because Washington is pressuring Canberra to choose sides. Nor can US military cooperation compensate for the economic value of a stable relationship with Australia's largest trading partner.

Australia lectures China about a "rules-based order" while repudiating a legally binding 99-year lease. It invokes academic freedom while pressuring universities to sever legitimate partnerships. It worries about foreign influence while deepening dependence on a US security architecture whose strategic priorities are not always in Australia's interests.

A serious national-security policy distinguishes between evidence and suspicion, between espionage and scholarship, between strategic prudence and political theater. Canberra would do well to remember that stable China-Australia relations are not a concession to Beijing. They are an expression of Australian self-interest. The choice is between strategic autonomy and strategic reflex.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Beautiful China plan highlights green governance

Editor's note: *China has released a plan for building a Beautiful China during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period. China Economic Times spoke to Zhou Hongchun, a researcher at the Development Research Center of the State Council, on the significance of the plan. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

As the first five-year plan to focus explicitly on building a Beautiful China, it moves beyond the previous approach that concentrated primarily on pollution control. The plan introduces a new model of coordinated governance covering all regions, environmental elements and stages of development.

In terms of tasks, the focus has shifted to an integrated approach that advances carbon reduction, pollution control, green development and economic growth. The goals have expanded from cleaner air, greener land and clearer water to areas that directly affect people's quality of life and health, including emerging pollutants, noise, ecological security and environmental problems in communities. The emphasis is on comprehensive improvement rather than simply meeting individual standards.

A key objective is to reverse the growth in fossil fuel consumption and promote simultaneous reductions in major pollutants and carbon emissions. The plan envisions a symbiotic relationship between development and environmental protection, using high-quality environmental protection to bolster high-quality development, and vice versa. This integration of the two goals creates a mutually reinforcing virtuous cycle.

From an economic perspective, the new quality productive forces emerging in ecological and environmental protection are themselves a form of green productivity. From being seen as a cost constraint, environmental protection is shifting to become a growth engine. Mechanisms such as carbon markets and green finance can help put this principle into practice by making carbon emissions costlier and carbon reduction more economically rewarding.

There are many opportunities to achieve synergies between pollution reduction and economic growth in the treatment of air, water and soil pollution. The key lies in rethinking these challenges and leveraging innovation, especially disruptive technologies.

Currently, businesses face challenges such as high initial investments, long payback periods, limited returns and policy uncertainty when participating in ecological development. These issues need to be addressed through stronger policy support and well-designed market mechanisms to create long-term incentives for businesses to participate in ecological civilization efforts in ways that are economically viable for them.

Additionally, efforts should be made to remove obstacles that hinder the realization of the value of ecological products. Turning the value of ecological products into tangible economic value is an effective way to shift businesses from passive compliance to active participation in building a Beautiful China.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:52 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:52 PM

VIEWS

Li Jia

Elder-care robots need to start with people

Imagine the future of elder care and it is easy to envision a robot. Perhaps it is humanoid, standing patiently beside an old person, helping the senior get out of bed, carrying a tray, cleaning the floor or leading a morning exercise session.

In a country where the population is growing older and families are getting smaller, this image has obvious appeal.

China is turning that vision into a thriving industry. The country's aging population has created a vast market called the "silver economy", attracting attention from investors and technology companies. Rehabilitation robots help people with limited mobility exercise, while transfer robots handle the heavy lifting that exhausts caregivers.

Other machines clean homes, provide entertainment, play sports with older people or offer massage and other wellness services.

While technology is advancing rapidly, the question is whether our understanding of old age is moving in tandem.

For years, making technology "age-friendly" meant modifying existing products to make them less challenging for elderly users — larger fonts, fewer buttons, higher volume.

Essentially, products designed for everyone else were slightly adjusted before being handed to seniors. This approach now looks outdated.

Seniors don't necessarily need simplified versions of products designed for 30-year-olds. They may need entirely different products. Consider the difference between making a robot easy to operate and making it truly useful in an elderly person's daily life.

An old person may move more slowly, tire more easily or have difficulty with certain kinds of instructions. A caregiver may perform physically demanding tasks several times in a day. A robot that ignores these realities may work perfectly in a laboratory and still fail in a home.

This is where the industry faces a less glamorous challenge than artificial intelligence or advanced robotics: listening.

Surprisingly, we still lack systematic knowledge about what seniors and their caregivers actually need from machines.

Research on everyday care scenarios is limited, and very few engineers have a deep understanding of aging.

There is a simple reason for this: we have all been young, but nobody experiences old age until they reach it.

That creates a peculiar blind spot in product design. Engineers can study how a robot moves, how much weight it can carry and how accurately it recognizes an object.

It is much harder to teach a machine — or its designer — what it feels like to hesitate before standing up from a chair, to feel embarrassed about needing help, or to rely on someone for basic mobility.



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

This is why elder-care robotics needs more than better hardware. It demands better fieldwork. A robot intended for a nursing home should not be treated as the one intended for a family apartment.

Companies should spend more time observing actual care delivery, breaking down everyday tasks into their smallest movements and talking to both older people and caregivers. Surveys and interviews are important, but so is observing how people get through an ordinary day.

Rehabilitation robots help people with limited mobility exercise, while transfer robots handle the heavy lifting that exhausts caregivers.

The fundamental questions for companies should be: Who will use this machine? What problem will the robot address? What makes that problem challenging? Is a robot really the best solution?

Answering these questions could save the industry from the expensive mistake of producing impressive machines that search for a market.

Getting a robot into production is only half the job. An elder-care robot is not a refrigerator that can be delivered, plugged in and forgotten.

It enters a person's home, sometimes at a moment of considerable physical vulnerability. An old person needs to know how to use it, caregivers need to know how to maintain it and homes and nursing facilities may need rearranging for the machine to function safely.

Then there is the human aspect. As robots become more capable, some families may start relying on them for tasks once performed by relatives or professional caregivers. This can be useful, but it can also be unsettling.

A machine can remind an old person to take a walk, assist with an exercise routine, or carry something too heavy to lift.

But it should not pretend to be a daughter, a son, a nurse or a friend.

This distinction matters because elder care is not just about physical tasks. It is also about dignity, reassurance and human interaction. The industry will need clear guidelines on privacy, data and the limits of what machines do.

A robot operating in someone's bedroom or living room is not merely an appliance. It has access to intimate details of a person's life.

This is not an argument against robots. In fact, it is quite the opposite. If designed well, robots could make an enormous difference, particularly as societies struggle with fewer caregivers and longer life spans.

But the industry should resist measuring progress by how humanlike a robot looks or how many tasks it can perform.

The more meaningful question is a simpler one: Does the robot make an old person's day easier?

If the answer is yes, elder-care robots have a promising future. The most successful ones will not be the machines that replace people. They will be the ones that quietly take the hardest jobs off their hands, giving caregivers more time to care — and seniors more time to live their lives on their own terms.

The author is deputy head of the Aging Society Research Center at the Pangoal Institution.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Rizwan Basir

Climate adaptation as the next frontier for China

China has done more than any other country to cut the emissions that cause climate change. Now it's time for the country to move to the next chapter of its climate ambition. While there is a flourishing market for mitigation technologies, the world does not have a similar market for adaptation.

Typhoon Bavi made that case in concrete terms this month. As one of the strongest storms to hit China this year, it made two landfalls in Zhejiang province, tore down trees in Yueqing, flooded farmland, and sent boulders crashing onto mountain roads.

People were evacuated, most from one of China's most economically dynamic provinces. In Shanghai, transport was severely disrupted, with some trains and flights canceled.

China's response was swift and effective. The government activated a national emergency response, deployed task forces across affected provinces, and allocated 100 million yuan ($14.76 million) from the central budget for repairs of roads, water infrastructure, schools and hospitals.

Indeed, China's capacity to manage the aftermath of a disaster is formidable. But the crucial question is whether the country is developing the tools to mitigate the severity of such events in the first place.

On cutting emissions, China's record is extraordinary. By the end of 2025, China's total installed renewable energy capacity had reached 2.34 billion kilowatts, and hit its 2030 target of more than 1.2 billion kilowatts of installed wind and solar capacity six years ahead of schedule.

Global Lens

Developing countries from Bangladesh to Brazil are able to deploy clean energy technologies that would have been out of reach without China's contribution.

The country accounts for over 80 percent of global battery production capacity. CATL and BYD together command more than half the global battery market.

This has had a transformative effect on global energy costs. Solar module prices have fallen to levels that seemed implausible a decade ago, largely because of China's manufacturing scale.

Developing countries from Bangladesh to Brazil are able to deploy clean energy technologies that would have been out of reach without China's contribution.

But mitigation is only half the climate equation. The other half is adaptation: the infrastructure, systems, and technologies that enable people and economies to withstand what warming has already made inevitable. This includes flood-resilient construction, early warning systems precise enough to protect lives, climate-smart agriculture and large-scale coastal protection.

On this side of the ledger, the world is underequipped.

China accounts for around 37 percent of global mitigation finance, while adaptation remains significantly underfunded worldwide. Mitigation technologies attract private capital because they generate returns.

Adaptation technologies often produce public goods that are harder to monetize. The scarcity of investment is reflected in the technology pipeline.

The financial impact is visible in China itself. Natural disasters caused 241.6 billion yuan in direct economic losses in 2025.

The case for investment in adaptation requires no external persuasion. The world does not yet have a China-scale manufacturer of flood-resilient infrastructure systems. There is no adaptation equivalent of CATL.

Early warning technologies, climate-hardened building materials, and flood-barrier systems remain fragmented markets, expensive at scale, and largely out of reach for developing countries with the greatest exposure to extreme weather events.

China's success in mitigation offers a blueprint for adaptation. Scale drove down the costs of solar infrastructure, manufacturing concentration accelerated battery innovation, and coordinated five-year planning brought new sectors to maturity faster than fragmented market forces could.

China has already shown what is possible with ambition. The question is whether adaptation technology will be the next sector to adopt this approach.

The foundation is already in place.

China's National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2035 sets targets for climate resilience across cities, agriculture, ecosystems, and public health.

A national disaster monitoring platform is being built, incorporating predictive models, remote sensing, and drone-based real-time assessment.

These provide a solid base for the industry. What is now needed is investment that matches the ambition, and builds on what China has already achieved.

Typhoon Bavi was just one storm. Scientists have warned that El Nino conditions this year may drive more intense typhoon seasons, shifting tracks westward toward China's coast and compressing the time available to prepare.

China changed the economics of clean energy by treating it as a strategic industrial priority. The case for doing the same with adaptation is at least as strong.

The world was able to accelerate the transition to cleaner energy faster because of China's efforts. It could close the adaptation gap just as quickly for the same reason.

The author is a sociologist who works as a climate finance specialist at the Climate Resourcing Coordination Center in Islamabad, Pakistan.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Tseng Taiyuan

Western Gen Z is embracing Eastern rhythms

Scroll through TikTok or Instagram today, and the algorithmic feed of the average Western teenager reveals a quiet cultural tide rising amid a chilling geopolitical climate. The endless loops of US consumerism are fading into the background.

In their place, a 20-year-old in Ohio extols the virtues of drinking hot water, a London fashion influencer unboxes a Labubu doll and a European tech enthusiast marvels at the seamless pulse of a Chongqing monorail.

Welcome to the era of "Chinamaxxing".

Borrowed from the gaming lexicon, "maxxing" signifies optimizing a build or a strategy. Here, the term encapsulates a rapidly growing subculture of Western youth actively embracing Chinese lifestyle norms, dietary habits and wellness philosophies.

While the trend is going viral on social media, its deeper significance is profound: it reflects a grassroots re-examination of lifestyle, personal well-being and governance in an era of global uncertainty.

To dismiss this phenomenon merely as a social media fad is to miss its deeper significance.

Movements such as "Chinamaxxing" highlight a growing international fascination with China's technological and social trajectory. At a structural level, this shift stems from a quiet, weary response to the internal discord in Western societies.

While some Western politicians attribute this trend to foreign communication strategies, the reality is quite straightforward: Western youth are responding to the internal anxieties at home, allowing China's orderly everyday life and public safety to speak for themselves.

Global Lens

Inbound international visits surged, with millions taking advantage of visa-free access.

For a generation grappling with economic uncertainty, partisan strife and fragmented healthcare systems in the West, the rhythm of Chinese daily life offers an appealing sense of balance and well-being.

This manifests in the "Chinese baddie" aesthetic. Western slang is repurposed by Gen Z creators to describe a holistic lifestyle rooted in Eastern wellness and understated elegance. Across Western feeds, influencers are normalizing boiled apple water, red-date tea, and warm soups as rational alternatives to commercialized wellness culture.

Even global consumer culture is changing. The worldwide success of *Black Myth: Wukong* and Pop Mart's collectible figures signals a shifting tide. Where cultural trends once flowed predominantly from Western cultural capitals and Hollywood, today's youth increasingly look toward Shanghai and Beijing for fresh creative energy.

When basic public transit and healthcare feel fraught with anxiety in Western urban centers, the convenience of Chinese city life — accessible wellness, efficient infrastructure, and hassle-free lifestyle — presents a compelling vision of modern governance.

Ironically, a key catalyst for this cultural bridge was the US government's own stance against Chinese digital platforms. Regulatory friction surrounding TikTok created a classic "forbidden-fruit" dynamic and pushed millions of Western "digital refugees" to explore RedNote, China's leading lifestyle-focused social platform.

This digital migration allowed Western youth to look directly into the daily lives of their Chinese counterparts.

Rather than rhetoric, they discovered unscripted glimpses of daily urban life: well-lit city streets at 3 am, affordable smart technology, and sophisticated high-speed trains connecting distant places.

While Western youth have organically generated these trends, China's proactive openness initiatives have translated online interest into real-world interaction. By expanding its visa-free transit policy to 240 hours (10 days) and granting visa waivers to numerous international partners, Beijing sent a clear, confident message to global travelers: Come and see China for yourself.

The policy bore immediate fruit. Inbound international visits surged, with millions taking advantage of visa-free access. Foreign visitors have taken to social media to share authentic travelogues, expressing genuine delight at China's mobile payment convenience, efficient urban infrastructure and services, and welcoming public environment.

As geopolitical friction persists on the global stage, official relations between major powers remain complex. Yet at the grassroots level, a meaningful re-coupling is taking place.

Whether seen as an embrace of Chinese lifestyle habits or a thoughtful reflection on Western domestic challenges, the message from young people worldwide is clear: while political barriers may be erected, the younger generation will always seek practical ways to connect and learn from one another.

Ultimately, global public perceptions are shaped not by political grandstanding, but by shared human experiences and tangible social outcomes.

Millions of young Westerners are now sipping hot water, stepping into indoor slippers, and quietly discovering new perspectives on what an orderly, modern life can look like.

The author is a professor of English at Sanda University in Shanghai.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:52 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:52 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

HECTOR VILLAGRAN CEPEDA

Practical development approaches

China's economic and social experience offers Ecuador valuable lessons in pursuing inclusive growth and modernization



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

As Ecuadorian President Daniel Roy-Gilchrist Noboa Azin began a state visit to China on Sunday, coinciding with the 10th anniversary of the China-Ecuador Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, attention has once again turned to the growing relationship between the two countries and the opportunities for deeper cooperation in trade, investment and development. Beyond the immediate outcomes of high-level exchanges, the visit offers an opportunity to consider a broader question: What lessons can Ecuador draw from China's modernization and poverty reduction experience as it seeks to address its own development challenges?



China's modernization is widely regarded as one of the most remarkable development stories in modern history. Over the past four decades, the country has transformed itself from a largely rural and low-income economy into the world's second-largest economy and one of the leading global powers in manufacturing, technology, infrastructure and innovation. This transformation began with the reform and opening-up policy introduced in 1978 under Deng Xiaoping, which shifted China toward a socialist market economy while encouraging foreign investment, industrialization and greater participation in international trade. Since then, China has experienced rapid economic growth, expanded its infrastructure on an unprecedented scale, modernized its industries and significantly improved the living standards of hundreds of millions of people.

Perhaps the most internationally recognized outcome of China's modernization has been its extraordinary poverty reduction experience. According to the World Bank, China has lifted nearly 800 million people out of extreme poverty since the beginning of its economic reforms, accounting for the majority of global poverty reduction during this period. In 2021, the Chinese government announced that all 98.99 million rural residents living below the country's current poverty threshold had been lifted out of poverty. This achievement was not the result of a single policy but rather of a combination of long-term planning, sustained economic growth, investment in rural development, infrastructure expansion, educational opportunities, healthcare improvements and employment creation.

One of the defining characteristics of China's poverty reduction strategy was its targeted approach. Rather than applying identical policies across the country, the authorities identified the specific needs of different communities and households.

Shibadong, a remote village in Hunan province inhabited by the Miao, one of China's ethnic minority groups, where the approach was first proposed in 2013, illustrates how this worked. Following household-level assessments, officials combined improved roads and public services with locally suited industries, including tourism, kiwifruit cultivation, Miao embroidery and vocational training. The village's annual per capita net income rose from 1,668 yuan ($247) in 2013 to 18,369 yuan in 2020, while its poverty rate fell from 56.76 percent to 1.28 percent by 2017. Shibadong demonstrates how targeted infrastructure, skills training and industrial development can address both immediate hardship and the structural isolation of rural communities, enabling residents to participate more fully in economic growth.

Although Ecuador has made progress over the past decades, it continues to face significant development challenges. According to Ecuador's National Institute of Statistics and Census, the national income poverty rate stood at 21.4 percent in December 2025, while the extreme poverty rate was 8.3 percent. The corresponding rural rates were substantially higher, at 37.6 percent and 19.7 percent, respectively. Access to quality healthcare, education, employment opportunities and basic infrastructure remains limited in many rural communities.

In recent years, Ecuador has been experiencing one of the most serious security crises in its history. Rising levels of organized crime, drug trafficking, prison violence and homicide have affected economic activity, tourism and foreign investment. Security has become closely linked to development because businesses are less likely to invest in areas where instability increases operating costs and risks. As a result, improving public safety has become an essential component of Ecuador's long-term development strategy.

China's modernization experience offers Ecuador several valuable lessons that can be adapted to its own national context.

First, poverty reduction should be linked to local economic opportunities. Following China's targeted approach, Ecuador could identify the specific needs and economic potential of different communities. In rural Esmeraldas or Manabi, for example, support might combine feeder roads, irrigation, internet access, agricultural credit and technical assistance for cocoa producers. Progress should be measured at the household level through income, school attendance, access to services and stable employment.

Second, development and public security should be treated as mutually reinforcing. Poverty itself does not directly cause crime, but limited economic opportunities can increase social vulnerability and facilitate the recruitment of young people into criminal organizations. Creating employment, improving education, expanding social services and strengthening local economies can therefore contribute not only to poverty reduction but also to greater social stability.

In Ecuador's current context, where organized crime represents one of the country's greatest challenges, development policies should complement law-enforcement efforts. One example is the ECU911 emergency response system, developed with Chinese cooperation, which integrates the police, fire, transport and healthcare authorities into a single coordinated emergency management platform. The system has significantly improved emergency response times and increased citizens' sense of security. Continued investment in digital governance, smart city technologies, surveillance systems that respect legal safeguards and data-driven public administration could further improve the effectiveness of public institutions.

Another important lesson is economic diversification. Ecuador's economy has historically relied heavily on oil exports and primary agricultural products such as bananas, shrimp, cocoa and flowers. While these sectors remain important, dependence on a limited number of commodities makes the economy vulnerable to fluctuations in international prices. China's modernization involved gradually moving from primary production toward manufacturing, technology and more sophisticated supply chains. Ecuador could apply this lesson by expanding food processing, sustainable aquaculture, cocoa-based manufacturing, renewable energy and logistics services. Economic diversification based on sectors in which Ecuador already has advantages would be more realistic than attempting to copy China's industrial model directly, and could both create skilled employment and make the economy less vulnerable to commodity-price fluctuations.

It is important to recognize that China's development model cannot simply be copied. China and Ecuador differ significantly in terms of population size, geography, political institutions, economic structure and historical experience. Policies that proved successful in China may require important adjustments before being implemented in Ecuador.

Rather than replicating China's model, Ecuador should focus on understanding the principles that contributed to China's success: place-based poverty reduction linked to local economic opportunities, the integration of development and public security, and productive upgrading based on existing export strengths.

China's modernization and poverty reduction experiences provide a valuable basis for deeper exchanges on development and governance, while Ecuador's national priorities create new opportunities for practical cooperation. Building on existing political trust, the China-Ecuador Free Trade Agreement and Belt and Road cooperation, the two countries can further expand their partnership and translate high-level consensus into sustainable development outcomes. By pursuing cooperation based on mutual respect, complementary strengths and shared interests, China and Ecuador can open a new chapter in their comprehensive strategic partnership and generate broader benefits for both countries and their peoples.

The author is the first trading representative from Ecuador to China, a former minister of transportation and public works of Ecuador, a professor at Beijing Language and Culture University and the director of China-Latin American and Caribbean Dialogue for the World Sinology Center in Beijing. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

JI XIANBAI

Bridging the Pacific

Chile among others can provide linkage to institutional architecture between Asia and Latin America involving APEC, CPTPP, DEPA and RCEP

Latin America's growing concern about the United States' hegemony is accompanied by a genuine and growing interest for wider international partnerships.

The Pacific offers the clearest strategic opening. As China hosts Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Economic Leaders' Meeting in 2026, Latin American governments have a rare opportunity to widen their markets, diversify their economic relationships and strengthen their capacity to navigate an increasingly competitive and securitized international environment by anchoring themselves more deeply in Asia-Pacific institutions.



The timing matters. The revival of the Monroe Doctrine by the Donald Trump administration has given hemispheric primacy renewed prominence in US strategy. The 2025 US National Security Strategy introduced a "Trump Corollary" to the Monroe Doctrine, asserting US primacy in the Western Hemisphere and calling for constraints on the influence of extra-hemispheric competitors. Ports, critical minerals, telecommunications, energy infrastructure and supply chains are consequently being drawn ever more deeply into great-power competition.

Latin America therefore needs more institutional options. Stronger integration across the Pacific provides one. The economic foundations are already substantial. Latin America possesses enormous reserves of copper, iron ore and lithium, alongside energy resources, agricultural commodities and globally competitive food exports. Asian economies combine vast consumer markets with manufacturing capacity, investment capital, infrastructure expertise, digital technologies and sustained demand for resources and food. The economic structures of Asian and Latin American countries fit together remarkably well. That complementarity has already become one of the most powerful forces driving trans-Pacific commerce.

Chile provides a natural starting point. It was the first Latin American country to conclude a bilateral free-trade agreement with China, with the agreement entering into force in 2006. The relationship subsequently generated several other "firsts", including Chile becoming the first Latin American economy to upgrade its FTA with China. Chile has therefore occupied a pioneering position in China's economic engagement with Latin America for two decades.

The next step should be institutional. China can find strong reasons to support Chile's application to join the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, which Chile formally submitted in 2024. Chilean accession would give the RCEP its first Latin American member. It would also place Chile simultaneously within the RCEP, the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership and APEC, with strategic significance. Chile could become an institutional hinge connecting East Asia with Latin America, while the RCEP would acquire a genuinely trans-Pacific reach.

The bridge should extend in both directions. China applied to join the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement in 2021. Following the Republic of Korea's accession in 2024, DEPA members should advance China's accession as rapidly as negotiations and compliance assessments allow. Created by Chile, Singapore and New Zealand, DEPA offers an especially useful framework for governing e-commerce, paperless trade, digital transactions and other emerging areas of the digital economy. China's participation would greatly increase its economic weight. It would also deepen the institutional links connecting Latin American and Asian economies through common digital rules.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

The significance of these two accessions goes well beyond the two countries. Chile joining the RCEP and China joining DEPA would establish a powerful principle: Asia-Pacific institutions can expand across the ocean in both directions. Latin American and Asian economies could become progressively embedded in overlapping rules governing trade, investment, data, digital transactions, customs procedures and innovation.

That process should eventually support a larger ambition: greater convergence between the RCEP and the CPTPP. Seven economies already participate in both arrangements. Their overlapping membership creates practical opportunities to improve compatibility in rules of origin, customs procedures, supply-chain management and digital standards. China has appropriately placed stronger synergy between the RCEP and the CPTPP on the agenda of its 2026 APEC host year, linking such efforts to renewed progress toward APEC's long-standing objective of a Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific.

The realization of an FTAAP could transform Latin America's place in the Pacific economy. Chile, Peru and Mexico have already participated in APEC and the CPTPP. A broader Asia-Pacific trade architecture would reinforce their Pacific identity while adding another durable layer to their existing economic relationships across the Americas, Europe and other regions. Over time, the institutional geography of Latin America would become increasingly multidirectional and multi-aligned.

South America's Atlantic economies are also moving. Brazil had long approached the prospect of a Mercosur-China trade agreement cautiously. Its calculations have evolved as Mercosur's external trade strategy has become more active and its bloc-to-bloc agreement with the European Union has advanced. In late July, President Xi Jinping and President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva agreed on the importance of accelerating preparations for Mercosur-China trade negotiations. Progress toward such an agreement could connect South America's largest economic bloc much more closely with the dynamic markets of Asia.

Latin American governments have another reason to move soon: their room for maneuver cannot be taken for granted. The US-Mexico-Canada Agreement offers a revealing precedent. Article 32.10 makes it procedurally and politically difficult for a member to contemplate an FTA with a designated "non-market country". Similar poison-pill-style provisions could someday become instruments for Washington to discourage countries elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere from building closer economic relations with China and other Asian economies.

Once such restrictions enter trade agreements, policy autonomy becomes more difficult to recover. Latin America should therefore cross the Pacific while the institutional door remains open. This is where the idea of an Asia-Pacific community with a shared future can acquire concrete economic meaning. RCEP enlargement, DEPA expansion, greater RCEP-CPTPP compatibility and movement toward an FTAAP can translate community-building into rules, norms, agreements and commercial relationships used every day by governments, companies and consumers.

As such, the objective should be a denser trans-Pacific institutional architecture. It would give Latin American economies access to more markets, more investment, more rules-based partnerships and greater freedom to determine their own external economic relationships.

Indeed, as Latin American economies become more deeply embedded in trans-Pacific agreements, supply chains and regulatory networks, efforts by any single power to determine the terms and boundaries of their international economic relationships would be increasingly costly and difficult.

The Pacific is therefore more than a trade route. It is a horizon of agency.

The author is the director of the Institute for South and Southeast Asian Studies at the School of Global and Area Studies, and an associate professor at the School of International Studies at Renmin University of China. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:52 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:52 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

Walmart keen on further expansion

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn



View of a Sam's Club store in Yangzhou, Jiangsu province. QI LIGUANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Walmart Inc, a US retail giant and owner of Sam's Club, is doubling down on China, betting its omnichannel strategy and continued expansion of both its membership warehouse chain and hypermarket business will sustain growth.

Walmart China President and Chief Executive Officer Zhu Xiaojing said online sales accounted for more than half of the company's revenue in China in 2025, highlighting the retailer's transformation from a traditional brick-and-mortar operator into an omnichannel retailer.

Over the past three decades, Walmart China has built an integrated retail network spanning hypermarkets, neighborhood stores, Sam's Club warehouses, cloud warehouses and digital channels, Zhu said.

"Walmart will continue investing in China by expanding its omnichannel footprint, strengthening localized merchandise development with suppliers and deepening its presence in local communities," said Zhu.

As part of its latest expansion, Walmart signed cooperation agreements with local governments in five cities. The projects include new Walmart and Sam's Club developments in Yantai, Shandong province; Walmart stores in Beijing's Changping district and Shenyang, Liaoning province; and Sam's Club locations in Wuhan, Hubei province, and Nantong, Jiangsu province.

The investment marks the latest phase of Walmart's decade-long transformation in China.

After entering the market in 1996, Walmart expanded rapidly through its hypermarket business. However, the rise of e-commerce, changing consumer habits and intensifying competition from warehouse clubs and fresh-food retailers prompted the company to overhaul its strategy.

Beginning in 2016, Walmart accelerated the closure of underperforming hypermarkets while shifting investment toward Sam's Club, which has since become the company's biggest growth engine in China.

According to the China Chain Store & Franchise Association, or CCFA, Walmart and Sam's Club operated a combined 342 stores in China in 2025, about 100 fewer than their peak in 2019. Despite the smaller store network, Walmart China's sales exceeded 190 billion yuan ($28.18 billion) last year, with Sam's Club contributing more than 100 billion yuan, according to public data.

The strategy has helped Walmart maintain its position as the country's largest modern grocery retailer, although competition in the membership warehouse segment is intensifying.

Costco Wholesale Corp, which currently operates seven stores in China, plans to more than double that number to 16 by fiscal 2030, with most new locations concentrated in eastern and southern China.

Although Costco has expanded more cautiously than Sam's Club, it generated more than 10 billion yuan in China sales in 2025, with average annual revenue exceeding 1.4 billion yuan per store, according to figures cited by the CCFA.

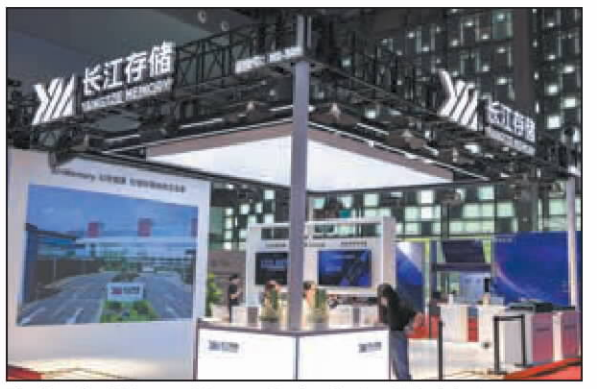
At the same time, Sam's Club is facing growing operational challenges as its membership base expands. Consumer complaints over product quality have increased and the chain was summoned by China's market regulator in June over food safety issues. Shortly afterward, Zhang Qing, Sam's Club China's chief merchandising officer, resigned.

More broadly, China's grocery sector continues to undergo structural change as consumers gravitate toward value-oriented, convenience-focused and digitally integrated retail formats.

Data from Worldpanel by Numerator showed sales across modern grocery channels — including hypermarkets, supermarkets and convenience stores — fell 2.5 percent in the first half from a year earlier. Neighborhood supermarkets outperformed, with sales rising 3.6 percent, while convenience stores posted the steepest declines.

Memory chipmaker passes IPO coaching review

By **MA SI**
masi@chinadaily.com.cn



The booth of Yangtze Memory Technologies Co Ltd during an expo in Shanghai. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Chinese flash memory chipmaker Yangtze Memory Technologies Co Ltd has passed its initial public offering coaching review, marking a significant step toward a potential stock market listing, according to a disclosure on the China Securities Regulatory Commission website on Wednesday.

The company, advised by CITIC Securities and China Securities Co Ltd, completed the coaching process after filing its IPO coaching report in May.

Founded in Wuhan, Hubei province, in July 2016, YMTC is the Chinese mainland's sole 3D NAND integrated device manufacturer, or IDM. The company has achieved remarkable growth over the past decade, evolving from a startup into a global industry player.

According to Counterpoint Research, YMTC captured 14 percent of global NAND flash memory shipments in the second quarter of 2026, ranking third worldwide behind Samsung's 25 percent and SK Hynix's 22 percent while surpassing Kioxia, Micron and SanDisk.

YMTC's Q2 shipments grew 22 percent year-on-year and 5 percent quarter-on-quarter, benefiting from tight global NAND supply and expanding domestic supply.

The company has commenced mass production of 267-layer 3D NAND chips based on its proprietary Xtacking 4.0 architecture and is developing products beyond 300 layers, according to Counterpoint.

Revenue exceeded 20 billion yuan ($2.97 billion) in the first quarter of 2026, up 100 percent year-on-year.

On March 27, YMTC unveiled three new products targeting high-performance, high-security and high-capacity artificial intelligence storage scenarios.

Industry experts said that as AI workloads shift from model training to inference applications, the surging demand for dataset storage is driving a paradigm shift from capacity-driven competition to performance-and-capacity parity.

Zhang Lin, deputy dean of Fareast Credit Rating Co's research institute, said: "The next two years represent a window of opportunity for China's memory industry, with clear 'volume and price advantages' — not just for market share expansion but also for product mix upgrading and customer loyalty enhancement."

With its IPO coaching now completed, YMTC is poised to leverage capital markets to accelerate technology iteration and capacity expansion, positioning itself strategically in the next phase of global memory industry growth, experts added.

Market researcher TrendForce's latest memory pricing survey said the DRAM market will see extremely tight supply in the third quarter of 2026, with contract prices expected to rise 13 to 18 percent quarter-on-quarter. NAND flash contract prices are likely to increase 10 to 15 percent quarter-on-quarter.

Provident fund reform to spur consumption

Changes could help release pent-up demand in the near term, experts say

By **ZHANG CHENXU** and **ZHOU LANXU**

China's latest reform of its housing provident fund system is expected to further unleash residential property-related consumption potential and help the housing industry gain a more solid footing in its recovery, experts said, as the sector remains in the midst of a broader adjustment.

Their comments came after the State Council, the country's Cabinet, issued a decision on Tuesday to amend the regulations on housing provident fund management, with the changes set to take effect on Sept 20.

The fund, a long-term housing savings program made up of mandatory monthly contributions by employers and employees, can be tapped for a wider range of housing-related expenses under the revised rules, which also allow flexible workers to participate voluntarily and facilitate cross-regional account transfers.

Lou Feipeng, a researcher at Postal Savings Bank of China, said the revision is the most extensive since the regulations were introduced in 1999.

"By easing the financial burden on homebuyers, the changes could release pent-up demand and help shore up market confidence in the near term," Lou said, adding that over time the reform will help promote a healthier balance between renting and buying, and spur spending linked to existing housing stock.

The revised rules also allow account holders to draw on their savings in nine situations, up from six, according to the State Council.

The additions cover renovations to owner-occupied homes, property management fees and other housing-related consumption approved by the State Council.

Meanwhile, for those withdrawing from the housing provident fund to pay rent, the eligibility threshold requiring rent to exceed a prescribed proportion of a household's wages will be rescinded.

"The changes would ease pressure on household budgets and support spending on home improvements and property services," said Xiong Yuan, chief economist at Guosheng Securities.

The decision also simplifies procedures for housing provident fund withdrawals and shortens the review period for loan applications.

Contribution records will be recognized nationwide, making it easier to transfer housing provident fund accounts and apply for loans across urban areas.

Xiong said the broader range of permitted uses and shorter loan review times should better support demand from first-time buyers and home upgraders.

Rather than trigger an immediate, broad-based turnaround, the measures are more likely to shore up demand and improve conditions in specific market segments, he added.

Self-employed individuals, part-time employees and other flexible workers will also be allowed to voluntarily contribute to housing provident funds and receive corresponding policy support, according to the decision.

"Bringing these workers into the system will make it less costly for them to settle in cities," said Yu Xiaofen, dean of the Chinese Academy of Housing and Real Estate at Zhejiang University of Technology.

Yu also added that wider coverage would better meet the rental and homebuying needs of flexible workers while supporting China's new urbanization drive.

The amendments also specify that "interest rates on housing provident fund deposits and loans shall be determined by the State Council" — a provision that could pave the way for more flexible rate adjustments in the future, said the China Index Academy, a property research institution.

The policy move comes as ongoing weakness in the country's real estate sector continues to weigh on the broader economy.

Property development investment fell 19.2 percent year-on-year in the first seven months, according to the National Bureau of Statistics.

With nationwide housing provident fund account balances exceeding 10 trillion yuan ($1.48 trillion), putting more of the money to use could support housing demand and lift spending on related goods and services, Lou added.

To translate that potential into actual demand, Lou called for faster nationwide recognition of contribution records, a dynamic interest-rate mechanism tied to provident fund loan-to-deposit ratios, and more flexible contribution options and incentives for self-employed individuals, part-time employees and other flexible workers.

Contact the writers at zhangchenxu@chinadaily.com.cn

Briefly

Very large crude carrier delivered

A China-built very large crude carrier (VLCC) was delivered in Dalian, Liaoning province, on Tuesday. The vessel features advanced energy-saving and environmentally friendly technologies developed by China's shipbuilding industry. It measures about 333 meters in length, 60 meters in breadth and 30 meters in depth, with a deck area of more than 18,000 square meters.

Yuan strengthens against greenback

The central parity rate of the yuan strengthened 51 pips to 6.7854 against the US dollar on Wednesday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Chinese automakers building more factories overseas

By **REN QI**
renqi@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese automakers are accelerating their global expansion by integrating their entire industry chains into local economies, providing safe, eco-friendly and smart mobility solutions that boost local employment and economic growth worldwide.

Shaanxi Automobile Holding Group (Shacman), a Xi'an-based automaker, is not only exporting traditional fuel heavy trucks, but also accelerating its global push for eco-friendly vehicles.

Its new energy vehicles have reached developed markets like the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Australia, as well as partner countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative.

Expanding global NEV market share is just one part of a broader strategy to take the entire industry chain global. Beyond selling products, Shacman has developed a diversified industrial ecosystem overseas.

It has built factories in 17 BRI partner countries, employing a large number of local workers for assembly and marketing.

Zheng Hui, head of Shacman's import and export market department, said the company has dispatched staff to over 70 countries and regions, deeply integrating into local economic and social development to provide comprehensive solutions for local production and convenient mobility.

This approach is echoed across the industry. From Great Wall Motors' completed plant in Brazil and BYD's planned assembly plant in Malaysia, to SAIC-GM-Wuling's 3 millionth NEV rolling off the production line in Indonesia, Chinese automakers are bringing factories to the doorsteps of global consumers, directly driving local economic growth.

Geely, one of China's top auto exporters, operates world-class manufacturing plants and over 4,000 sales networks in countries including the United States, the UK and Sweden.

In Guinea, Shacman supported the construction of a landmark BRI railway project that connects high-quality iron ore to the international market while boosting local employment.

High intelligence is another key factor winning global acclaim. Sun Jian, vice-president of Neusoft Reach Automotive Technology (Shenyang) Co, said the company's self-developed auto operating system has achieved mass production globally, establishing deep cooperation with over 150 domestic and international partners to align Chinese standards with international ones.

China's auto industry is no longer just an important force in global manufacturing, but a crucial driver in reshaping the future landscape of global automotive cooperation, said Zhang Yongwei, vice-president and secretary-general of research institution China EV100.

In addition to building plants overseas, China continues to solidify its strength among auto-exporting nations, especially to BRI partner markets.

In Mexico City, buses transporting football fans for the recent World Cup matches were manufactured by Yutong, a commercial vehicle maker based in Henan province. Of the 800 new energy shuttle buses officially deployed for the event, 95 percent were Chinese brands, with Yutong alone accounting for 85 percent. This serves as a microcosm of the growing global popularity of Chinese vehicles.

The export momentum remains robust. The China Association of Automobile Manufacturers said the country's auto exports reached 930,000 units in May, surging 68.7 percent year-on-year and maintaining a level above 900,000 units for two consecutive months.

Furthermore, the latest data released by the China Passenger Car Association show that in July, new energy vehicle exports hit 540,000 units, a staggering 147.8 percent year-on-year increase and an 8.1 percent month-on-month growth.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:52 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:52 PM

BUSINESS

Hisense SA nurtures local talent pool

Chinese firms bring not only jobs, but also advanced manufacturing tech and expertise



A local employee works on the production line at a refrigerator factory in Hisense South Africa Industrial Park, north of Cape Town, South Africa, on Aug 11. WANG LEI / XINHUA



Local employees work on the production line at the TV factory in Hisense South Africa Industrial Park near Cape Town on Aug 11. WANG LEI / XINHUA

CAPE TOWN — "Since I joined Hisense, my life has changed. We've grown, I've grown with Hisense."

For Hugh Stephens, those words capture more than a career spanning over a decade at Hisense South Africa (Hisense SA) Industrial Park. They tell the story of how a new job opportunity grew into a journey of personal and professional development.

In 2013, the factory where Stephens worked pulled out of the town, leaving him an uncertain future. Around the same time, Chinese home appliance giant Hisense established its industrial park in Atlantis, a town about 50 kilometers north of Cape Town.

"I decided that I had to check Hisense out," Stephens told Xinhua News Agency. He stayed.

More than a decade later, the local man who joined Hisense as a "normal worker" has become a mainboard repair technician at the TV factory in the park, taking on new responsibilities and developing skills along the way.

His story begins with a job, but it is also a story of growth — his own, and that of a Chinese company growing alongside its local workforce.

"When I got here, I started at the front of the (production) line," Stephens recalled. "I learned from the Hisense engineers, from the Chinese engineers. They taught us everything I know."

"Now I'm working as a (mainboard) repairman and it's very good for me, because I've grown with the company," he said.

The change he described is not limited to his career. Stephens said he has also seen improvements in his life outside the workplace, from expanding his home to enjoying better living conditions and a better lifestyle.

Like Stephens, Marlon Jacobs joined Hisense SA Industrial Park when it was established in 2013, starting out as a general worker with no experience in refrigeration. Today, he is an assembly and quality technician at the refrigerator factory in the park.

"Everything in my life has improved since 2013, and I'm standing here as an example of that in itself," Jacobs told Xinhua.

"Thirteen years ago, I was unemployed. I did not have a job, and not having a job means you're not able to support your family the way you want to," he said. "Today I'm standing here, a better person being able to supply for and support my family, so that means a great deal. I really appreciate what Hisense did for me and for the whole of Atlantis."

Like many of his colleagues, Jacobs has also bought a car as his income has grown, and now drives to work every day. The growing number of employees' cars has even filled the company's parking area, with some workers having to park in an open space outside.

His career has also been a journey of learning. Starting from welding, Jacobs went on to learn machine and product repairs, becoming the factory's first welding repair person before moving into a team leader role managing two teams of more than 100 people and eventually becoming a technician.

"I'm a refrigerator technician because of the skills that I've learned through the Chinese," he said, referring to the knowledge he gained while working closely with his Chinese colleagues.

For Jacobs, the benefits also extend beyond his own career. "It's not only work, skills are also being transferred to local people," he said, pointing to the training and skills development opportunities available to workers at Hisense.

That transfer of skills is reflected in the training provided on the production floor, according to Mou Xing, a Chinese process engineer at the TV factory. New local employees receive training on the production process, hands-on instruction for their respective tasks, safety training and on-site observation before starting work. They also receive ongoing guidance and checks during production.

As local employees gain experience, some have begun to take on greater responsibilities. "After systematic training, South African local employees can independently complete the main work of their departments and handle and provide feedback on problems," Mou said. "For example, my colleague Minnies can take over the entire department's work when I am on leave."

The local employee Mou referred to is Ayrton Minnies, a process technician team leader at the TV factory. His job at Hisense is his first, and he chose it out of an interest in electronics.

"By working for all these years now, I've made a lot of progress in my life," Minnies said. "I would say there's a lot of skills I've picked up during my time at Hisense."

He put that learning simply: "Basically, I've learned how to make my own TV, not basically my own TV, but how it looks on the inside and everything."

Beyond his own growth, Minnies said Hisense has also had a positive impact on Atlantis by providing jobs for local residents.

Today, the two factories at Hisense SA Industrial Park employ around 760 local people. "At the fridge factory, we have approximately 550 local employees," Lorenzo McKinna, production supervisor at the factory, told Xinhua.

"Many of the employees who work here, as you know, are from the local community," he said, adding that the company provided on-the-job training so employees did not have to go outside the factory to acquire those skills.

According to McKinna, while creating jobs, the industrial park has also helped drive the development of the local industrial chain. "We have quite a few suppliers, local suppliers, that have benefited from the Hisense factory being here."

The experiences of Minnies and McKinna are borne out by the broader impact of Hisense SA Industrial Park, said Jiang Shun, deputy general manager of Hisense SA and general manager of the industrial park.

According to Jiang, the park has created about 1,000 direct jobs and over 5,000 indirect jobs locally, while about 70 percent of management positions are held by locals.

The park has also helped drive employment along the local supply chain, with nearby foam and carton factories among those supplying it. More than a dozen local companies have so far been integrated into its supporting industrial chain, Jiang said, adding that the park has also helped them adopt new technologies, processes and equipment.

In his view, the experience at Hisense SA is a direct rebuttal to the recent "China squeeze" narrative advanced by some Western think tanks and media outlets, which argues that China's manufacturing capacity not only challenges Western industries, but also crowds out industrialization opportunities in Global South countries.

For Africa, Jiang noted, the arrival of Chinese companies brings not only job opportunities, but also advanced manufacturing technologies and expertise that can help raise the level of local manufacturing.

"Only by raising the level of local manufacturing can you get the whole African economy moving," Jiang said. "I don't think it's a squeeze. It definitely plays a leading role."

Jiang's view was echoed by Stephens. "They're not squeezing, they're just trying to create jobs," he said.

Stephens hoped Hisense SA would continue to expand. "I want them to grow, you know, to bring more job opportunities, because people can learn more from other people, you know, from Chinese people," he said.

XINHUA

Zero-tariff policy boosts Sino-Kenyan trade, spurs industrial value addition



Workers sort avocados at a processing facility on the outskirts of Nairobi, Kenya, on May 28. XIE JIANFEI / XINHUA

NAIROBI — Kenya views the zero-tariff access to the Chinese market not merely as a trade preference, but also as a strategic opportunity to enhance its export competitiveness, accelerate industrial value addition and expand market reach, a senior Kenyan trade official said.

In a recent interview with Xinhua News Agency, Regina Ombam, principal secretary of Kenya's State Department for Trade, said access to China's vast market provides a crucial platform for Kenya to elevate its economic potential.

"I think when we got into the 'Early Harvest' arrangement, which was taking effect from May 1 with the zero-tariff policy, our big thinking was around how do we make Kenya competitive?" she said.

The tariff arrangement is viewed not merely as an export channel, but as an opportunity to showcase Kenya's premium products. Ombam noted that Kenya looked at it "as an opportunity for us to showcase how special Kenya is and what special things Kenya has and how willing Kenya is ready to share these special things that it has with other people as far away as China."

Highlighting Kenya's agricultural strengths, she noted growing Chinese demand for high-quality produce, particularly tea, avocados and fresh vegetables.

"Everybody says Kenyan tea is good quality; Kenyan tea is the best. And so taking tea to China was really another big plus for us given the big market that we were looking at," she said, adding that Chinese consumers are increasingly keen on organic, farm-to-table foods.

Beyond trade in commodities, Ombam emphasized that cooperation with China is driving technology transfer and supporting Kenya's manufacturing agenda through industrial park development.

"So when we move our economy to think export, think industry, then we are basically now saying we are transforming the economy from dependence on just raw materials to now invest and engage and move toward industrialization and ensure that our products now are of value in terms of the value addition that the processes are done to it," she said.

Praising China's work ethic and practical approach to innovation, Ombam said the partnership is built on mutual respect. "We are looking at China as a partner that is able to actually see us grow, which is a very good thing for us," she said, adding that Kenya is already learning from China's focus on efficiency and effective solutions tailored to local environments.

Furthermore, Ombam pointed out that Kenya serves as a strategic gateway for investors seeking to tap into broader African markets through the East African Community, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, and the African Continental Free Trade Area.

XINHUA

South-South technology ties seen flourishing

HARARE — Cooperation with China will help African countries accelerate technological transformation and build local capacity for modern technologies, Zimbabwean experts said.

The remarks were made earlier this month on the sidelines of the Harare Forum for Africa, held under the theme of "Technological Transformation and Global South Modernization". The event brought together scholars, policymakers and business leaders to share experiences and contribute to China-Africa cooperation.

Established in 2024, the forum is an annual dialogue co-initiated by the China-Zimbabwe Exchange Center and the School of Journalism and Communication of Tsinghua University, seeking to promote dialogue and cooperation between China and Africa through academic exchange and policy dialogue.

Joseph Ngwawi, executive director of the Southern African Research and Documentation Center, a regional think tank, said cooperation with China can play a major role in technological transformation and Global South modernization.

He noted that the significant investment required to adopt modern technologies makes partnerships with China crucial in accelerating their uptake.

"We can cooperate on how to make technology work for us in all aspects of life, be it culture or economic issues. We must embrace technology, and we have a ready partner, China," Ngwawi told Xinhua News Agency.

Ngwawi said that in addition to economic development, modern technologies can help African countries preserve and promote their cultural heritage while building local technical capacity in digital preservation, restoration and cultural tourism.

"Technology is applied in all areas of our lives right now, it is now even applied in cultural heritage preservation, for example using technology with virtual reality gadgets to bring our historical sites to our eyes," he said.

Abigail Ncube, a gender specialist in the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development, said China-Africa cooperation presents an opportunity not only to expand access to technology, but also to build the skills that can enable Africa to participate in the modern digital economy.

"China-Africa cooperation is an opportunity to ensure that technology transfer is not simply the transfer of infrastructure, hardware and technical knowledge. It can also be the transfer, and importantly, the development of capabilities, opportunities and ownership agency," she said.

She said China-Africa cooperation creates opportunities in developing digital infrastructure, digital education and vocational training.

To achieve this, Ncube said China-Africa cooperation can focus on building local capabilities supported by appropriate domestic policy frameworks.

"This moves beyond the idea of simply supplying technology. It creates the potential institutional platforms for digital education, teacher development, knowledge exchange, science technology engineering and mathematics capacity, research cooperation and professional skills," she said.

Ntethelelo Marcia-Anne Mpofu, a Zimbabwean medical doctor, said that in the agriculture sector, China-Africa technology cooperation must go beyond technology transfer and address foundational challenges hindering development, such as water, infrastructure and skills.

She said technology alone could not solve Africa's challenges, stressing that its effectiveness depends on supporting infrastructure such as reliable water supplies and on equipping farmers with the knowledge and skills to use it effectively.

"Technology works best, but it works best when every other system surrounding it supports it to make a better output and impact. Technology without the conditions that meet what Zimbabwe needs is not very good for us," she said.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:52 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:52 PM

CHINA

DPP accused of spreading lies to curb ties

Suppression and intimidation used to block cross-Strait interactions

By LI SHANGYI
lishangyi@chinadaily.com.cn

Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party authorities have spared no effort to restrict and obstruct exchanges across the Taiwan Strait, fearing that the "information cocoons" they have created will continue to be punctured, a Chinese mainland spokesperson said on Wednesday.

At a regular news conference, Zhu Fenglian, a spokeswoman for the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, said the DPP authorities have resorted to tactics including suppression, intimidation and rumormongering, while the island's "mainland affairs council" has been at the forefront, becoming a "stumbling block" to cross-Strait exchanges and interactions.

"They have tried every possible means to prevent people on both sides from visiting each other and maintaining close ties," she said.

Zhu made the remarks in response to recent comments by the "mainland affairs council" on a new regulation on exit and entry administration issued by the State Council, China's Cabinet, which will take effect on Sept 15.

Taiwan's "mainland affairs council" claimed that the regulation could affect Taiwan residents who invest or work in the technology sector on the mainland and urged them to be alert to the purported "risks".

Zhu said the regulation will help safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait in their exchanges and create a better law-based environment for Taiwan compatriots visiting the mainland.

Reassuring Taiwan residents that they have no need to worry about risks when traveling to the mainland, Zhu accused the DPP authorities of deliberately spreading alarm with ulterior motives.

"Faced with the unstoppable tide of cross-Strait exchanges and interactions, what the DPP authorities fear most is that the information cocoons they have created will continue to be punctured and the false 'Taiwan independence' narratives they have constructed will continue to be exposed," she said. "That is why they have resorted to making such reckless and unfounded statements."

Zhu also condemned the DPP authorities for continuing to delay allowing mainland residents to travel to Taiwan due to their "Taiwan independence" stance, saying the policy has artificially severed the tourism market across the Taiwan Strait.

"This will only cause Taiwan to miss out on the enormous potential of the mainland's tourist market," she said.

According to local media reports, Taiwan recorded a tourism deficit of 6.36 million person-trips in the first half of this year. Industry representatives on the island attributed the shortfall mainly to the continued absence of regular travel by mainland tourists to Taiwan, calling on the DPP authorities to reopen the island to mainland tourists as soon as possible.

The DPP authorities have also required civil servants in Taiwan to submit applications when traveling to the mainland to visit relatives, along with contact information for their mainland relatives and friends, drawing criticism from the public.

Zhu said the move was a further infringement on the personal privacy of Taiwan residents.

"They aim to prevent Taiwan people from visiting the mainland, while what they fear is that more people will see through their true motives of deceiving and inciting people with lies to pursue political self-interest by promoting 'anti-China' and 'resisting China'," she said.

Zhu said the mainland has been actively promoting exchanges between people on both sides. From Aug 24 to 28, relevant youth organizations from both sides will jointly host a cross-Strait youth exchange event in Shanghai, as part of efforts to implement the institutionalized platform for two-way youth exchanges between the Communist Party of China and the Chinese Kuomintang, outlined in 10 policy measures released by the mainland in April.

Launch preparation



The combination of the Chang'e 7 lunar probe and the Long March 5 Y14 carrier rocket is transferred to the launching area at the Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site in Hainan province on Wednesday. It is scheduled for launch in the near future. SU DONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

EU cross-border probe unfair: China

By YANG ZEKUN
yangzekun@chinadaily.com.cn

China has determined that certain cross-border investigative measures taken by the European Union in its foreign subsidy probe into e-commerce giant JD.com constitute improper extraterritorial jurisdiction and has barred organizations and individuals from complying with or assisting in their implementation, the Ministry of Justice said on Wednesday.

The ministry said it made the determination jointly with the Ministry of Commerce and other departments under China's regulations on countering improper extraterritorial jurisdiction. The decision took effect upon its release on Wednesday.

The move concerns the EU's investigation of JD.com under its Foreign Subsidies Regulation, or FSR, which Chinese authorities said involved demands for extensive and unnecessary information from Chinese entities concerning activities within China.

A Ministry of Justice spokesperson said in a written response that the requests imposed improper requirements on Chinese entities and seriously undermined the rule of law in international affairs.

It urged the EU to correct its approach, stop what it described as abuse of the foreign subsidy investigation mechanism, and provide a fair, impartial and predictable business environment for companies investing and operating in Europe.

"If the EU persists in its approach, China will firmly take countermeasures in accordance with the law," the spokesperson said.

The investigation is linked to JD.com's proposed acquisition of German consumer electronics retailer Ceconomy AG, which operates the MediaMarkt and Saturn brands across several EU member states.

JD.com's board approved the proposed acquisition in July 2025 in a deal valued at about $2.5 billion. The transaction was initially expected to close in the first half of 2026 but has been delayed amid regulatory reviews, including the EU's FSR investigation.

Germany's Federal Cartel Office approved the deal in September 2025, concluding that the companies had little competitive overlap and that the transaction did not raise significant antitrust concerns.

JD.com formally notified the European Commission of the transaction on April 17 this year, and the commission opened an in-depth FSR investigation on May 28.

On July 22, the commission issued a Statement of Objections to JD.com, alleging that the company may have benefited from preferential financing, tax advantages and government subsidies from China, which could have enabled it to offer a high premium for Ceconomy and thereby distort normal commercial negotiations and competition in the EU's internal market.

The commission is expected to make a final decision by Oct 2. If it insists that the allegations are valid, JD.com could face significant remedies or the transaction could be blocked.

It is not the first time the European Commission has used the FSR to investigate a Chinese company.

In April 2024, the commission conducted unannounced inspections at branches of Nuctech, a Beijing-based supplier of security inspection equipment, in Poland and the Netherlands. On Dec 11, 2025, it formally opened an in-depth FSR investigation into the company.

The investigation later expanded to demands for information on bank accounts, ownership structures and financing records within China, as well as requests for Chinese entities and banks to cooperate and provide large amounts of information that China considered unrelated to the investigation.

In May, China's Ministry of Justice determined that the cross-border investigative measures taken against Chinese entities in the Nuctech case also constituted improper extraterritorial jurisdiction.

It was the first application of China's regulations on countering improper extraterritorial jurisdiction after they took effect in April 2026.

Under the regulations, relevant Chinese government departments may place foreign organizations or individuals that promote or participate in improper extraterritorial measures on a malicious entity list.

Depending on the circumstances, authorities may also impose visa and entry restrictions, limit employment or residence in China, seize or freeze assets, and restrict the provision of data and personal information, transactions, cooperation, imports and exports, investment, or the entry of products and transportation equipment.

The EU adopted the Foreign Subsidies Regulation in November 2022, and it took effect in July 2023. The regulation gives the European Commission powers to investigate financial contributions provided by non-EU governments to companies operating in Europe and can require companies to provide extensive cross-border information.

Fields medalist stresses intl experience

By ZOU SHUO
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

Wang Hong, who last month became one of the first two Chinese nationals to receive the Fields Medal — often referred to as the "Nobel Prize" of mathematics — believes young mathematicians should embrace opportunities to study and work in different countries, a practice she says is widely encouraged in China, France and the United States.

"Moving to different cities and schools is a very common practice, and people generally believe it is good for one's growth," Wang said in an interview with Peking University's School of Mathematical Sciences.

The 35-year-old mathematician, a tenured professor at the Institut des Hautes Etudes Scientifiques, or IHES, in France, and a Silver Professor at New York University's Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences, has experienced such moves firsthand.

Looking back on her time at Peking University, where she transferred into the mathematics department, Wang recalled that students typically built a solid mathematical foundation while also getting an early start on graduate-level coursework.

She also emphasized the collaborative learning atmosphere. Many students were keen on research, often discussing which textbooks to read outside class and organizing seminars together. That peer support, she said, helped her develop good study habits that later proved invaluable.



Wang Hong

Wang later pursued a one-year master's program at Universite Paris-Sud, where she took a course on harmonic analysis taught by Pascal Auscher. She was struck by the lecturer's deep command of the subject — he never used notes and wrote fluently on the board. But what left the deepest impression were the tutorial sessions.

She also noted that although only a handful of students at her French school pursued pure mathematics — about five or six out of 500 — professors were very willing to engage with those who did.

When Wang moved to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology for her PhD, coursework took a back seat. The most important part, she said, was conducting research with her adviser.

Her adviser, Larry Guth, had a profound influence on her. During their meetings, she had to anticipate every possible question he might ask and prepare answers in advance — a discipline that has shaped how she communicates with collaborators to this day.

Guth also gave each of his doctoral students a book upon graduation. For Wang, it was a French book titled *School Blues*, an educational essay about a former struggling student who became a teacher. She found it deeply meaningful.

Wang acknowledged that struggling with difficult problems for long periods is part of every mathematician's life. Her advice is to work on smaller problems with collaborators and write them up well when stuck on a big problem. Even modest contributions can be useful and help build momentum.

She compared her approach to solving a large problem to piecing together a puzzle. Each piece comes from working out examples and special cases. Once you have thought about a problem long enough, you know where the real difficulties lie.

Wang said China now has many outstanding professors and a strong research environment, and encouraged students to make decisions about studying abroad based on the opportunities available to them.

For those pursuing mathematics, her parting advice was simple: "Follow your own pace and work on the problems you love."

Chamdo culture



Performers dance at a culture and arts festival themed on the ancient Tea Horse Road, a historic network of trade routes in southwestern China and neighboring regions, in Chamdo, Xizang autonomous region, on Wednesday. The event highlights the region's cultural legacy, ethnic unity and tourism. KUNGA LESANG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Decks cleared for Kinastra 1's maiden flight in 2027

By ZHAO LEI
zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

CAS Space, a leading Chinese commercial space company, has completed a series of propulsion system tests for its Kinastra 1 upper stage, clearing the way for the vehicle's maiden flight in the first quarter of 2027.

The Guangzhou-headquartered company, established by the Chinese Academy of Sciences, said the upper stage's full propulsion system completed the PV-001 integrated compatibility hot-fire test in August, marking a major system-level milestone that verified coordination and operational reliability across all subsystems. The test lasted 566 seconds, with all units performing stably.

The Kinastra 1's 20-kilonewton engine passed a series of boundary condition tests in March, covering variable operating modes, mixture ratios and cooling percentages. The tests involved 18 ignitions and a total burn time of 481 seconds.

A reliability test followed in July, during which the engine ran for a combined 2,906 seconds under multiple operating scenarios. According to CAS Space, the engine has now accumulated a total ignition time of 5,211 seconds.

The latest test comprehensively validated the engine's pressurization, propellant feed, propellant management and servo control systems, the company said. Engineers also verified three crucial capabilities: the 20-kN engine's high-thrust, high-performance multiple-restart capability; balanced propellant delivery from parallel tanks; and a highly reliable integrated electrical design.

The Kinastra 1 is equipped with a 20-kN-thrust engine capable of more than 20 ignitions. According to engineers, the upper stage can autonomously plan orbital transfer paths, withstand the vacuum and extreme temperature fluctuations of spaceflight, and adapt to various launch vehicles, making it a key component of CAS Space's medium- and high-orbit and deep-space launch capabilities.

The upper stage works like a "space shuttle bus". It does not launch from the ground but performs transfer operations in space. After a rocket delivers the upper stage and satellite payloads into space, the upper stage takes over the mission, transferring satellites between orbits. This approach saves satellites' fuel and allows multiple satellites to be deployed into different orbits during a single launch mission.

Yang Haoliang, chief designer of the Kinastra 1, said the upper stage is an optional module for rockets. It operates after a rocket's core stage and strap-on boosters have exhausted their fuel and separated, propelling spacecraft onto interplanetary trajectories or into orbits higher than those that could otherwise be reached using conventional boosters.

An upper stage can extend a rocket's reach beyond the parking orbit where its core stages run out of fuel, delivering payloads to higher and more distant orbits through multiple in-space ignitions, Yang said. This helps conserve satellite propellant that would otherwise be used for orbit-raising, thereby extending satellites' operational lifespans.

"It also enables multi-satellite deployment across different altitudes and inclinations for rapid constellation buildup, shortens the time needed to adjust satellites' orbital positions, and can perform controlled de-orbiting at mission end to reduce space debris," Yang said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:52 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:52 PM

CHINA

'Three-grassland' model heals Qinghai ecosystems

Scientific approach improves sustainability, herder incomes on 'roof of the world'



A herd of sheep wanders on the grassland in Golog, Qinghai province, in October last year. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By **YANG ZEKUN** in Xining
yangzekun@chinadaily.com.cn

High up on the "roof of the world", Chinese researchers are easing pressure on the fragile grassland ecosystems relied on for generations by nomadic Tibetan herders. To protect this high-altitude environment in the three-river-source region of Northwest China's Qinghai province, researchers have introduced more efficient varieties of forage, improved livestock management and high-tech grassland monitoring — all while increasing incomes for local herders.

Known as the "water tower" of Asia, the region feeds the Yangtze, Yellow and Lancang rivers, and harbors rare plateau wildlife. But decades of overgrazing, severe weather and climate change have stripped the native grasslands, triggering soil erosion and threatening local livelihoods.

To fix it, scientists at the Chinese Academy of Sciences have pioneered a "three-grassland" model that links protected wild zones, regulated grazing pastures and high-tech cultivated forage fields.

Xu Shixiao, director of the Plateau Ecology Research Center at the Three-River-Source National Park Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, said the model ensures ecological conservation, sustainable livestock production and that local livelihoods are supported.

"Through coordinated resource allocation and closer links between the functions of different grasslands, we hope to achieve balanced development of ecology, production and daily life," Xu said.

The model is being applied in two areas.

The first covers areas inside and surrounding the national park. Cultivated forage produced outside the park can be supplied to livestock, reducing grazing pressure on natural grassland within protected zones.

The second includes farming-pastoral transition areas in the Guinan and Tongde counties of the Hainan Tibetan autonomous prefecture, where soil, water and climate conditions are more suitable for developing high-yield cultivated grassland.

Xu said the key to addressing a long-standing constraint on plateau animal husbandry is the shortage and poor nutritional quality of forage during the cold season. A more reliable supply of high-quality feed can shorten livestock-rearing cycles, improve production efficiency and reduce reliance on natural pastures.

The math behind the strategy is striking: Just 1 hectare of high-yield cultivated grass outside protected zones can spare roughly 20 hectares of natural wild pasture from overgrazing.

In alpine meadow areas, reducing grazing pressure by just one sheep can ease ecological disturbance across about a hectare of natural grassland, Xu said.

"This not only reduces pressure on natural pastures, but also creates more space for wildlife habitats inside the national park," he said.

Herder help

For Lajia, a 43-year-old herder from Qinghai's Madoi county, the impact is visible on both the grassland and on his household income.

Lajia has spent years working as an ecological ranger in the Yellow River source area of the national park, helping protect the region as it shifted toward a greener development model.

He said grazing was once poorly managed. There was little scientific zoning of pastures, no systematic rotational grazing or seasonal grazing bans, and limited access to stored forage. Many herders depended almost entirely on natural grassland and sought to increase their incomes simply by raising more livestock.

"In the past, we did not understand scientific grazing," Lajia said. "Our cattle and sheep depended completely on natural grassland, and we grazed them on the same pastures throughout the year. The grassland had no time to rest and recover."

As grazing pressure increased, vegetation deteriorated. Sandy patches and bare ground expanded, while forage yields declined. Heavy snow or drought often left livestock without enough feed, causing weight loss and sometimes death in the herd, he said.

The result was a cycle in which degraded grassland reduced livestock productivity, low productivity limited herders' incomes, and the need to maintain larger herds placed even greater pressure on the ecosystem.

At the time, Lajia's family raised just over 100 sheep. Losses were high, production was inefficient and household income remained low.

The introduction of the coordinated grassland model changed the way he managed his animals.

Pastures were divided according to their ecological and production functions. Protected grassland was allowed to recover, while rotational grazing and seasonal grazing bans were introduced in designated grazing areas. Herders also received guidance on planting and storing cultivated forage for the cold season.

"The current approach is much more scientific and much better for local people," Lajia said. "It is completely different from the past.

"Protected and grazing grasslands are now clearly divided, and rest grazing and rotational grazing are strictly implemented. Degraded pastures have time to recover, while we are also taught how to grow and store forage. We no longer have to rely entirely on the weather," he said.

Lajia's family now maintains a stable flock of nearly 200 sheep, almost double its former size. Improved feed and livestock management have also raised the quality and value of the animals.

At the same time, his work as an ecological ranger provides a regular salary. The combination of livestock production and ecological conservation has given the family two sources of income.

The scientific model combines ecological monitoring, grassland carrying-capacity assessments, degraded grassland restoration, forage cultivation and balanced livestock feeding. Drones, satellite remote sensing and artificial intelligence-based identification technologies are also used to monitor wildlife, assess habitats and support ecological planning.

Research data show that 67,000 hectares of high-quality cultivated grassland in areas surrounding the three-river-source region can produce 610,000 metric tons of forage each year, helping maintain a more stable balance between livestock numbers and available grassland.

Demonstration projects that have transferred grazing pressure equivalent to 810,000 sheep are estimated to have expanded the habitat available to wild ungulates such as Tibetan antelopes and wild yaks by 3.85 million hectares.

The model has been tested through specialized cooperatives, family ranches, jointly operated ranches and State-owned ranches.

In Guinan county, demonstration projects have improved grassland quality, shortened the feeding cycles of yaks and Tibetan sheep, increased livestock production efficiency and raised herders' incomes.

Monitoring of grassland managed by cooperatives has also shown improvements in vegetation coverage, biomass and plant diversity after measures such as spring grazing bans and seasonal grazing adjustments were introduced with support from cultivated forage.

Shen Yuhu, director of the national park institute's Plateau Eco-agriculture Research Center, said forage breeding is an important part of the ecological strategy.

Agriculture and ecological protection are often regarded as separate issues, Shen said, but they are closely connected in the three-river-source region.

Crop production is restricted in core protected areas, but livestock in surrounding pastoral communities still need feed. Developing cultivated grassland and forage oat production in more suitable areas can supply pastoral regions and reduce pressure on natural pastures.

Shen's team has spent nearly 30 years breeding crops and forage suited to plateau conditions ranging from 3,500 to 4,800 meters above sea level. Its work began with spring wheat and later expanded to highland barley, oats and other forage crops.

The result has been that Qinghai has become an important national base for forage production and oat seed breeding, supplying improved varieties to regions including the Inner Mongolia autonomous region, Gansu and Sichuan provinces, and the Xizang autonomous region.

One standout success is Gaoyan 16, a high-protein forage oat variety that recently fetched a record 400,000-yuan ($59,400) technology transfer fee in Qinghai.

In nearby Darlag county of Golog Tibetan autonomous prefecture, improved oat varieties have been used in a practice called "growing grass in livestock pens".

Before moving animals to high summer pastures, herders plant fast-growing oat varieties directly in winter pens. Come autumn, they harvest the crop for cold-weather emergency feed.

The area using the practice in Darlag expanded from more than 133 hectares last year to more than 667 hectares this year. The model is also being promoted in other parts of Golog and Yushu Tibetan autonomous prefectures.

For Shen, keeping the technology affordable for local families remains the primary goal. Locally bred oat seed costs less than 4 yuan per kilogram, compared to 10 to 16 yuan for imported alternatives.

He recalled an experience during a scientific expedition in Gyalze county, Xizang, when local farmers invited his team into their home for butter tea and food after learning that the researchers were conducting fieldwork to improve crop varieties.

"They said we were doing work for farmers," Shen said. "Wherever we go, recognition from farmers and herders is what keeps us moving forward.

"Enterprises can make a profit, but they should not charge too much," Shen said. "Farming already has thin margins. If seed costs are too high, the burden on farmers and herders becomes heavy. A good variety must go to the fields and reach the people. If it can help them increase production and income, that is the greatest recognition a researcher can receive."







Left: A forage collector reaps grass and transports it onto a truck in Guinan, Qinghai province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY **Center:** Herders process forage grass in Guinan. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY **Right:** Villagers pile up bales of forage grass for winter use in Golog, Qinghai, in August last year. SONG CHENGLIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Huangshui River restoration enters final phase

By **YANG ZEKUN**

A major 5.51 billion yuan ($817 million) ecological restoration project in the Huangshui River Basin has entered its final phase, so far restoring over 157,200 hectares of land and significantly improving water quality across eastern Qinghai province, according to local authorities.

The project aims to strengthen the ecological security barrier of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau through integrated conservation covering mountains, rivers, forests, farmland, lakes, grasslands, and deserts. It belongs to the third batch of national key ecological conservation projects under China's 14th Five-Year Plan (2021–25).

As of June, 144 of the project's 153 subprojects have been completed, targeting 12 counties across Xining, Haidong, and the Haibei Tibetan autonomous prefecture.

Liu Guoxin, head of the territorial ecological restoration division of the Qinghai Provincial Department of Natural Resources, said that the project focuses on major ecological problems in the basin, including soil erosion, degradation of forest and grassland ecosystems, and declining water conservation capacity.

The basin has been divided into three major restoration units: the source area for water conservation and biodiversity protection, the tributary areas for water conservation and soil erosion control, and the main stream area for ecological corridor building and human settlement improvement, Liu said.

Based on these units, Qinghai has carried out three categories of work: improving forest and grassland ecological functions, maintaining the health of valley ecosystems and restoring river system functions.

The project has restored 69,300 hectares of forest, 42,400 hectares of degraded grassland, and 275.22 kilometers of riverbanks and embankments.

Liu said ecological restoration measures can be implemented quickly, but the stable functioning of restored ecosystems takes longer to fully emerge.

"Ecological improvement needs continuous monitoring and phased assessment," he said. "After the project is fully completed, we will carry out project acceptance and effectiveness assessment, while ecological and environmental authorities will continue long-term ecological monitoring and evaluation."

According to Qinghai's 2025 ecological and environmental bulletin, water quality at national and provincial monitoring sections of the Huangshui River reached Grade II or better, showing that the project has played a positive role in improving water conservation and water quality in the basin, Liu said.

To coordinate cross-regional and cross-department governance, Qinghai has established a three-level mechanism featuring provincial coordination, city and prefecture-level supervision, and county and district-level implementation.

A provincial leading group was set up at the beginning of the project, bringing together departments including development and reform, finance, ecology and environment, water resources, agriculture and rural affairs, and forestry and grassland to coordinate project implementation.

The project uses monthly reporting and digital supervision to track implementation, funding and performance. Reports are submitted to the leading group and shared with relevant departments and localities to identify problems and coordinate solutions in a timely manner.

Liu said the project also covers mine restoration, geological disaster control, river management, forest and grassland improvement, rodent control, farmland improvement, human settlement upgrading and soil erosion control, making multi-department cooperation essential.

Qinghai has issued rules on project management, fund management and completion acceptance, while also establishing systems for archives, project handover and long-term maintenance. A provincial expert pool provides technical support throughout project planning, review, acceptance and assessment.

According to the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Huangshui project ranks among the top national ecological restoration projects in terms of fund execution and completed restoration area.

The project has also generated social benefits. Construction units have been encouraged to employ local farmers and herders, helping increase incomes. Restoration work along the urban section of the Nanchuan River in Xining and the Baishui River in Huangyuan county has improved public activity spaces and living environments, giving residents a stronger sense of gain and well-being.

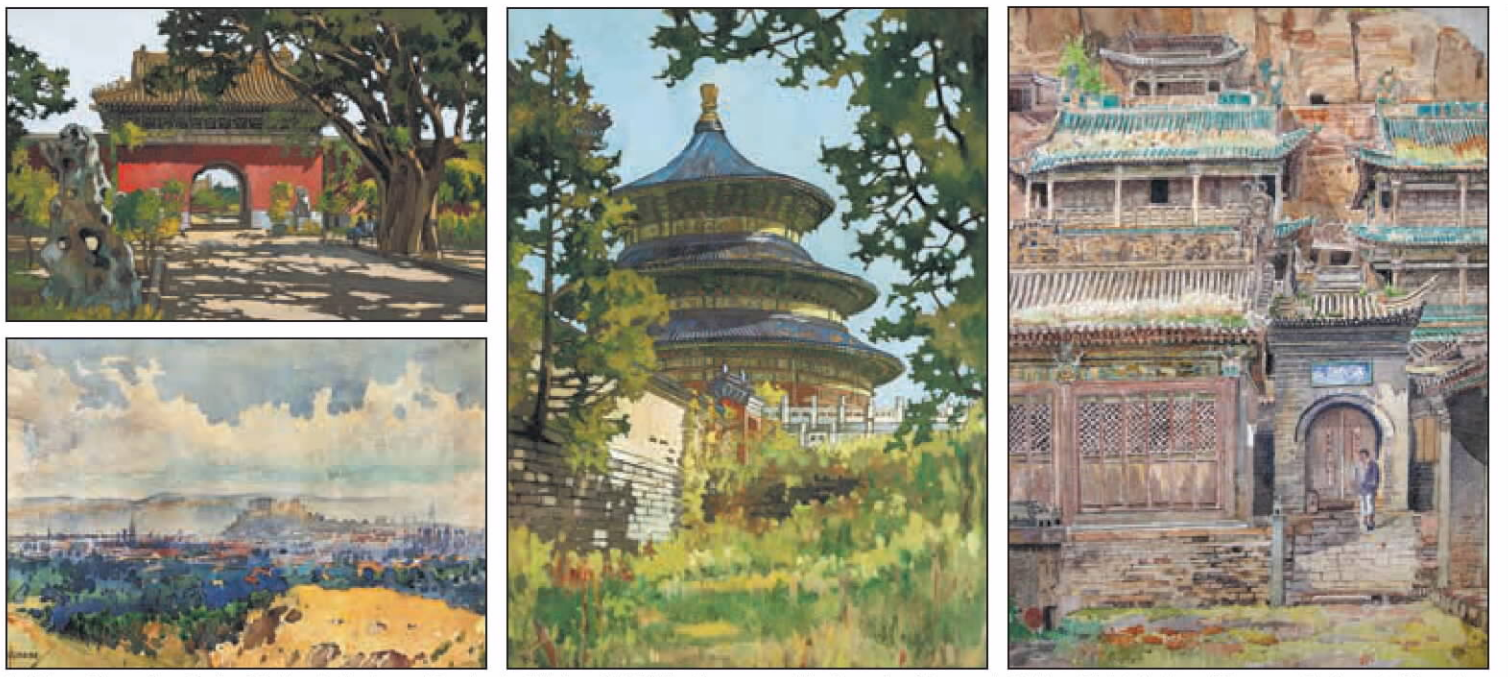
Liu said completed projects will be handed over to local governments and relevant sectoral departments for maintenance, with long-term management linked to existing mechanisms such as ecological rangers, river and lake chiefs, and forest and grassland chiefs.

"The Huangshui project is a comprehensive and systematic governance project, not a restoration of a single ecological element," Liu said. "It has helped Qinghai gain practical experience in cross-department, cross-regional and multi-element ecological conservation and systematic governance."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:52 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:52 PM

LIFE



Left top: *Zhongshan Park of Beijing.* **Left above:** *Morning in Edinburgh.* **Middle:** *Summer, at the Temple of Heaven* in Beijing. **Right:** A view of Yungang Grottoes in Shanxi province. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY **Below:** Guan Guangzhi's paintings capture the magnificence and composed mood of classical Chinese architecture and imperial gardens. LIN QI / CHINA DAILY

Bathing Beijing in watercolor

Late artist studied abroad but returned to the capital city to bring dignity and preservation to its ancient architecture through vivid hues, **Lin Qi** reports.

Standing at 38 meters tall, Qinian Dian, or the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests, the central building at the Temple of Heaven complex in Beijing, commands imperial solemnity. The hall was once used as a place where monarchs of the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties held ceremonies to pray for good weather and bountiful harvests.

Today, this majestic three-tiered circular structure, once exclusive to the ruling class, is one of the capital city's most favored tourist spots. People share various photographic perspectives on social media, capturing its gilded golden top, deep-blue glazed tiles and red pillars that define Beijing's awe-inspiring historic aura.

Eight decades ago, watercolorist Guan Guangzhi (1896-1958) was one of those who frequently visited the Temple of Heaven. He preserved the magnificence of the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests through vivid colors and restrained brushwork. One of his extant works from the 1940s depicts a serene summer scene in which the building is shrouded by verdant, scattered cypresses on both sides and an expansive grassy field at the front. The thickness of the pigments accentuates the solemn mood of the site, while the shifting chiaroscuro — the contrast of the shadows of tree leaves against the light on the dappled wall — renders to the composition a graceful, composed sensibility.

Guan would have been a high-quality content creator with many followers in the social-network age, but in real life, he was a devoted teacher at art schools and an avid painter and printmaker of the imperial architecture and gardens of centuries-old Beijing where he lived from the mid-1920s until his death.

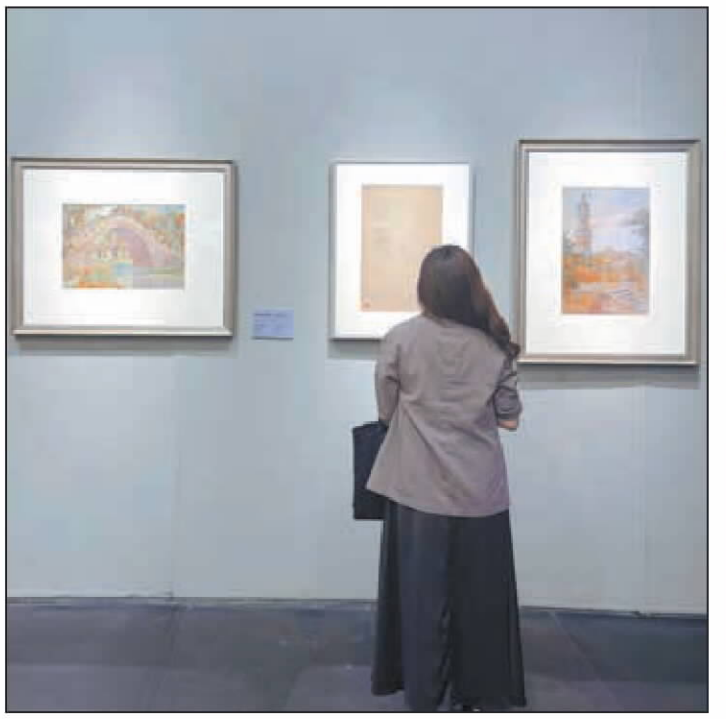
The Splendid Realm of Diligence: Art of Guan Guangzhi, an ongoing exhibition at the Art Museum of the Beijing Fine Art Academy, invites viewers into his watercolor world. Visitors will be immersed in the understated beauty composed of the imperial palaces' eaves emerging in daylight, while trees, flowers and lake ripples radiate vitality. Over 70 watercolors and copperplate prints, including his most iconic Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests works, are on show until Sept 6.

Born in Jilin province, Guan developed an initial interest in classical architecture while studying at an art school in Shenyang, Liaoning province. He often accompanied his watercolor teacher, a British woman, to sketch at the Zhao Mausoleum, commonly known as Beiling, the burial tomb of Emperor Taizong of the Qing Dynasty and his empress. After relocating to Beijing, he began creating watercolors of its ancient architecture as a vivid testament to the city's imperial past.

At age 36, he made a life-changing decision to study abroad. He enrolled at the Royal College of Art in London. He was, under the name Kuan Kuang Chin, one of the first Chinese students to attend this institution.

Fu Yiwei, the exhibition's curator, says Guan particularly admired the way William Turner (1775-1851), the noted English landscape artist known as "the painter of light", presented light and color. "Guan's works on show, *Morning in Edinburgh* and *Belfast Beach*, bear a considerable Impressionist influence. The light and translucent texture show the distinctive qualities of British watercolor."

While in Britain, Guan also studied etching techniques and traditions traced to 17th-century Dutch painter and printmaker Rembrandt van Rijn. When he left London, he carried with him a machine and tools for copper engraving. At home, he produced dozens of prints exhibiting the ever-changing atmosphere of ancient buildings.









Above top: Watercolor paints and tools Guan brought back from London. **Left:** A photo of Guan at the exhibition. **Right:** A drawing of Guan and in the back, a photo of Guan and his students in the 1950s. PHOTOS BY LIN QI / CHINA DAILY





Top: Guan at his solo exhibition in the 1930s. **Above:** Guan and wife Wang Rulan in the 1940s. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Guan returned to Beijing in 1934. His wife, Wang Rulan, once recalled that during his trips to Britain and back, Guan visited art galleries and museums in Paris, France; Brussels, Belgium; Naples, Italy; Alexandria, Egypt; and Mumbai, India. "It broadened his horizons and made him realize that the art of every nation, with its own distinctive features, has added splendor to world culture. At the same time, he deeply appreciated that in art, one should not only possess national and individual characteristics, but also must study extensively to integrate diverse influences, to progress and achieve innovations," she said.

Back in Beijing, Guan taught at various schools. Meanwhile, he also deviated from his earlier depiction of British scenery and developed his own watercolor style in depicting Beijing's historic structures.

His subjects include the Jade Belt Bridge at the Summer Palace and the Nine-Dragon Wall in Beihai Park. He placed his subjects in a harmonious, beautiful environment. When depicting the Corner Towers of the Forbidden City, he would add cleaners working on a boat in the moat on the outer perimeter; in another painting of Beijing Zhongshan Park, where an imperial altar sits, he focused on the blooming wisteria outside the long corridor.

Fu says his strokes render these ancient buildings dignity and a refreshing resplendence that touches people across generations.

Dai Shihe, a retired professor of painting at the Central Academy of Fine Arts, says, "Although Guan's landscapes are smaller in size, he delivered the poise and ease inherent in Chinese culture."

Contact the writer at linqi@chinadaily.com.cn

Celestial instruments help launch visitors on a cosmic quest

HEFEI — China's museums are often defined by their porcelain, calligraphy and ritual vessels. But a new exhibition in Anhui province is turning the spotlight away from traditional treasures and toward scientific endeavors of the past, showcasing jade cosmological diagrams, celestial star charts and bronze globes crafted by astronomers centuries ago.

The exhibition, *Heavenly Questions: The Cosmological Vision of Chinese Civilization*, at the Anhui Museum brings together nearly 300 artifacts from 48 institutions nationwide. It is a rare exhibition in China that focuses specifically on presenting the country's "understanding of the universe" through cultural relics.

Since launching in July, the show has drawn some 350,000 visitors, who are fascinated by the instruments ancient Chinese used to observe, measure, and pay homage to the universe.

One of the star attractions is a jade slab roughly the size of a smartphone dating back 5,800 to 5,300 years. The eight arrows at the center of the slab map out the eight directions of space, and the arrows at the four corners appear to align with the positions of the sunrise and sunset during the winter and summer solstices. The Chinese cosmological diagram is possibly older than Stonehenge in Wiltshire, England.

Other highlights include China's oldest equatorial instrument, a disk with 28-star mansions from a 165 BC marquis' tomb, a bronze water clock from the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 24), the earliest-dated water clock ever found, and a rubbing of a stone-carved astronomical chart from the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279) engraved with over 1,400 stars, which remains the oldest all-sky map based on actual observation.

"These 'hardcore creations' in ancient astronomy laid the technological foundation for studying the laws of celestial motion," says Meng Qian, director of the museum's research department.



A guide introduces a wooden gadget at an exhibition in the Anhui Museum in Hefei on July 1. ZHOU MU / XINHUA

The exhibition saves its best for last. In the final section, ancient instruments such as globes and sundials sit face-to-face with models of modern Chinese spacecraft, including the lunar rover Yutu (or Jade Rabbit), and the lunar soil sample collected by the Chang'e-6 mission in 2024.

Interestingly, many of China's major space missions are named after ancient myths. Its moon mission is called "Chang'e", the goddess who is said to live there; the Mars rover "Zhurong" is named after a fire god; and the sky-surveying telescope "Mozi" is the name of a philosopher who was credited with conducting the earliest optical experiments.

The exhibition itself takes its title from ancient poet Qu Yuan's (339-278 BC) epic poem *Tianwen*, or Heavenly Questions, written more than 2,000 years ago. China's Mars exploration mission also shares the same name.

"This exhibition allows ancient astronomy and modern space exploration to illuminate and interpret each other," says Shi Yunli, a professor at the University of Science and Technology of China and adviser to the exhibition.

"When visitors stand between the folded bronze sundial and the Yutu rover, they see not just two objects on display but a 5,000-year chain of quest," Shi adds.

The exhibition runs through mid-October. "We hope this exhibition allows visitors to look back at the early lights of our culture, and also see the way forward," Meng says.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:52 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:52 PM

LIFE

Moving heritage from museums to malls

Commercial areas seek to give shoppers more emotional value by providing exhibitions, history-inspired characters and learning activities, **Li Yingxue** reports.

On a weekend evening in August, Chen Ling took her young daughter to Huaxi Live Wukesong in Beijing for dinner. In the square, a mythical beast inspired by the ornaments that adorn Beijing's Central Axis architecture exchanged a fist bump with a round "corn friend".

Nearby, a traditional Chinese dance performance and quiz were underway. The host introduced *Maize. Gold. Jaguar: A Grand Exhibition of Ancient Maya and Andean Civilizations* at the Capital Museum. Chen's daughter answered the quiz question accurately and won a commemorative coin.

The following weekend, they returned to the shopping center, viewed an exhibition of late Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) embroidery, and bought tickets to that "corn" exhibition.

"We saw the sculptures and displays while having dinner at the shopping center. There happened to be an event that day, and that's how we learned about the exhibition," Chen says.

This is the experience Beijing's "One Exhibition Across the City" initiative seeks to create: Rather than waiting inside museums, exhibitions enter people's daily lives.

Launched in July by Beijing Radio and Television Station, in partnership with the Capital Museum and the Beijing Cultural Heritage Exchange Center, the initiative has extended exhibition elements into nine areas, including Tongzhou MixC, Solana shopping mall and Huaxi Live Wukesong.

Installations, relic displays, pop-up stores, and activities enter commercial settings, turning shopping centers into cultural gateways.

Nine auspicious mythical beasts inspired by Beijing's Central Axis architecture "walk out" of historic buildings and into shopping centers, where they meet corn figures representing the ancient civilizations of the Americas. Some make heart gestures while others offer high-fives or fist bumps. Once solemn architectural ornaments, they have become approachable cultural figures for younger audiences.

"These figures were not put together simply because they look cute. There is a cultural connection behind them," says Lyu Jing, the project's publicity director. "Maize was the foundation of the Maya civilization, while the mythical beasts are classic symbols of Beijing's Central Axis and traditional Chinese ritual culture. It is a dialogue between two ancient agricultural civilizations across time and space."

"Our principle was clear: Keep the roots, but give the form a more contemporary look," Lyu says. "We wanted to attract young people without casually deconstructing traditional culture. We also want to ensure that Chinese and foreign cultural symbols come together naturally."

For Lyu, the initiative is not simply about moving an exhibition into shopping malls.

"To me, a museum without boundaries means breaking down walls, lowering barriers, and becoming part of everyday life," she says. "A museum is no longer just a building, but a public cultural space that can encompass the entire city."







Clockwise from top: Participants compete in a maize-grabbing game at a shopping mall in Beijing in July. A sculpture featuring a mythical beast inspired by ornaments adorning Beijing's Central Axis architecture making a heart gesture with a corn character at an outdoor area of a shopping mall in Tongzhou district. Residents enthusiastically take part in the maize-grabbing game. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

> To me, a museum without boundaries means breaking down walls, lowering barriers, and becoming part of everyday life. ... a public cultural space that can encompass the entire city."
>
> **Lyu Jing,** publicity director of "One Exhibition Across the City"

Commercial areas have also introduced artifacts provided by the Beijing Cultural Heritage Exchange Center. The free-of-charge displays allow visitors to encounter cultural objects while shopping.

Bringing cultural relics into busy commercial areas creates preservation challenges. At Huaxi Live Wukesong, installations occupy the outdoor areas, while the relic exhibition is housed in the enclosed Ice Center, which is equipped with 24-hour surveillance and climate control.

"This is a breakthrough for us. In the past, we never really considered bringing cultural relics into a street-level commercial area," says Chang Tingting, general manager of Huaxi Live Wukesong's digital media center.

"From the beginning, we discussed how to reconcile what might seem like a contradiction between protection and openness, and make the two work together in a commercial setting."

Visitors inquire about the exhibition and how to buy tickets, and others arrive after reading about it on social media.

"We often hear consumers asking what the exhibition is, where they can see it, and how they can buy tickets," Chang says. "That shows how the two sides can reinforce and empower each other."

In her view, shopping and dining alone can no longer provide a steady stream of new experiences.

"Many people today are willing to spend money for emotional value," she says. "A shopping mall that only sells things will eventually be challenged by e-commerce, but a space that provides cultural experiences and opportunities for social interaction cannot be replicated online."

Heritage in shopping centers can also lower the psychological barrier to museums. "We hope people can encounter thousands of years of civilization while simply shopping or having dinner — an informal and immersive encounter with culture," Chang says.

Similar efforts are underway at Solana, Fengke Wanda Plaza and Tongzhou Wanda Plaza, where content has been tailored to each venue's audience.

"We matched the content to the customer profiles of the three shopping centers. Fengke Wanda focuses on a cultural relic-themed exhibition; Solana emphasizes interactive installations; and Tongzhou Wanda features a cultural and creative pop-up," says Li Meiling, marketing head of the Beijing division of Zhuhai Wanda Commercial Management Group.

The malls also coordinate exhibition layouts, security arrangements and visitor routes to protect the artifacts and maintain an orderly viewing experience.

Li says she has seen children stop to examine the displays and ask questions, while families have taken part in activities linked to the exhibition.

"Malls are no longer purely places for shopping. They are transforming from places for transactions into places for life and learning," Li says.

"I believe commercial spaces will take on more public cultural functions," she adds. "We hope to work more closely with museums and art institutions to present cultural, substantive and interactive experiences to the public."

Maize provides another link between ancient and contemporary worlds. In Maya mythology, humans were believed to have been created from maize. Modern Beijing is home to the world's largest maize DNA fingerprint database and a national-level germplasm resource bank that preserves more than 4 million maize germplasm samples. Beijing-developed commercial seeds cover about one-sixth of China's maize-growing area.

Some shopping centers display live maize plants, leading visitors from ancient beliefs about the crop to contemporary agricultural science.

The initiative also seeks to ensure that engagement goes beyond photos. Bead-art competitions, a "maize blessing wall", dance performances, and quizzes are built around cultural knowledge.

"Every installation has a civilizational narrative behind it, and every activity incorporates educational content," Lyu says. "Taking a photo is not the end. It can be the starting point for people to learn, and share what they have discovered."

For her, museums and commercial spaces benefit each other. "Museums bring cultural quality, visitors and deeper meaning to shopping centers, while shopping centers bring museums new audiences, new settings and new ways to reach people," Lyu says.

She hopes the initiative will become a Beijing cultural brand that integrates museums, heritage and urban life.

When history appears in shopping streets and along the routes people take home, museum boundaries begin to change. Culture becomes part of the city's everyday rhythm — and sometimes an unexpected encounter.

Contact the writer at liyingxue@chinadaily.com.cn

Tianqiao revives tradition by building a global stage for performing arts

Stretching along the southern section of Beijing's Central Axis, a 2.07-square-kilometer cultural cluster comes alive with young playwrights drafting scripts in *hutong* (alleyway) studios, acrobatic troupes staging performances of intangible cultural heritage, and a major arts center hosting its annual musical theater festival.

This is the Tianqiao performing arts area, where traditional culture meets modern creativity and theaters, playhouses and creative incubators converge.

"Two decades ago, Tianqiao was marked by dilapidated buildings and scattered street stalls," says Yin Yixin, chairman of the Tianqiao Zenith Group. "Yet during the late Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) and the years before the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, this area was a bustling area where thousands of folk artists came to perform drama, traditional music and acrobatics."

To revive that legacy, an extensive renewal project was launched. The Tianqiao Performing Arts Center opened in 2015, presenting year-round programs of dramas, musicals, concerts, and ballets. In the years that followed, more theaters, creative incubators and *hutong*-based studios emerged across the area.





Left: The ballet *The Peony Pavilion* is staged in Tianqiao on July 21. **Right:** The cast of *Swan Lake* rehearses at the Tianqiao Theatre on May 29. PHOTOS BY JIN LIANGKUAI / XINHUA

That transformation has laid the foundation for Tianqiao's revival as a thriving hub for the performing arts.

"Come to Tianqiao for musicals" is more than a slogan — it has become part of daily life here. Today, Tianqiao hosts international musicals such as *The Phantom of the Opera* and *Notre-Dame de Paris*, alongside original Chinese productions including *The Orphan of Zhao* and *Twelve Hours of Chang'an*, earning acclaim from audiences at home and abroad.

"It's amazing! The stage sets are unique, and the cast delivers powerful performances," says Ma Yihan, a young Chinese theater lover who has attended multiple shows at Tianqiao, including *Elisabeth* and *Mozart L'Opera Rock*.

John Owen-Jones, a leading star of *The Phantom of the Opera*, says China's growing audience for Western musicals could help spur a new wave of homegrown productions, with an increasing number of polished original Chinese musicals already emerging.

Acrobatic troupes also regularly perform at Wansheng Theater in Tianqiao, while immersive productions centered on China's intangible cultural heritage attract big crowds. Venues such as the Tianqiao Impression Museum use augmented reality and motion-sensing technologies to revive fading folk arts. In contrast, its archive of 20,000 volumes of folk literature is free and open to the public.

Yang Shucong, general manager of the Tianqiao Performing Arts Center, says the venue will stage a lineup of iconic international musicals this year. The English-language program includes *Chicago* and *Kinky Boots*, while French offerings include *Don Juan* and *Cyrano de Bergerac*.

Chinese-language adaptations are also gaining popularity. Standout productions include *The Devotion of Suspect X*, *Murder Ballad* and *The Count of Monte Cristo*.

These productions mark a pivotal step in the center's evolution, from a venue operator into a content co-creator, Yang says.

"Going forward, we'll continue to carry forward China's cultural heritage, foster new forms of cultural activities, and build the Tianqiao Performing Arts Area into a global stage where cultural exchange and performing arts thrive," Yin says.

XINHUA

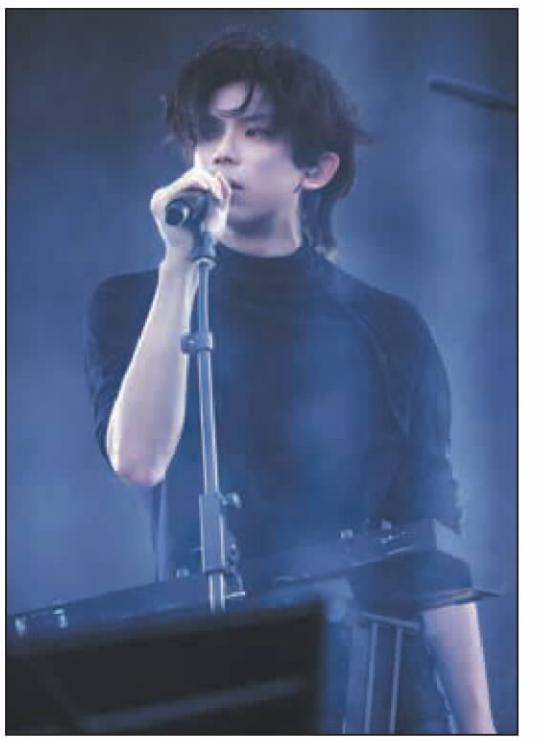
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:52 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:52 PM

CULTURE







Left and right: Chinese band Xian Ke, featuring singer-songwriters Wang Pushi (left) and Wen Haoyuan (right), released their debut album *All Things End, Yet Nothing Ends*. **Above:** The band, featuring Wen (left) and Wang (right), is known for its combination of traditional Chinese opera with rock music. **Below:** Cover of the album. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Stone Age instrument meets modern rock

For the band Xian Ke, the process of creation is never-ending, as they explore new musical territories, **Chen Nan** reports.

Everything ends. A song fades. A stage goes dark. The performers leave, the audience disperses, and eventually the room falls silent.

But for the Chinese band Xian Ke, silence is not the end.

The band's name comes from a line in *The Book of Songs*, a collection of hundreds of poems dating from the 11th to 6th centuries BC.

The line goes: *Mibu youchu, xianke youzhong* (Everything has a beginning, but few can see it through to the end).

The band's debut album, *All Things End, Yet Nothing Ends*, takes that ancient meditation on beginnings and endings and turns it into eight songs that build a world from rock, traditional Chinese opera, ancient instruments, and the restless desire to keep creating.

For Xian Ke, the two phrases are not simply literary references. They have become a way of thinking about what it means to make music, according to Wen Haoyuan, one half of the duo.

"Everything has an end," says Wen, who is also a scriptwriter. "But things themselves have no end. We are doing something that is limited for us, but we hope it can have an unlimited influence."

That tension — between endings and continuation, limits and possibilities — runs through the album.

All Things End, Yet Nothing Ends took more than three years to complete, beginning in 2021.

There were songs written, arranged, and recorded that ultimately did not make the cut. One track had reached around 80 percent of its arrangement and was already in production and recording before the band decided that something was still wrong.

"We spent many days and nights struggling with it," Wen recalls. "Just thinking about that song would make us feel bad."

Eventually, they abandoned it and wrote another song instead.

That process of choosing what to keep — and, perhaps more importantly, what to let go — became one of the most difficult and formative parts of making the record. By the time the album was complete, however, the uncertainty had given way to conviction.

"Everything that was released was something we were certain about," Wen says. "We are very satisfied with it."

For a band that began with a name about the difficulty of reaching an ending, finishing the album was therefore significant. But it was never intended as a conclusion.

"It's just a very small part of my creative career," Wen says. "We'll keep writing."

When Xian Ke announced the album, the pair described standing for a long time in front of the "wall of sound" they had built, moved to tears by what they heard.

The image captures something essential about the record. Xian Ke wanted to create not simply a collection of songs, but an expansive sonic space — "a whole expanse", as Wen describes it, made from different frequencies and layers of sound.

They wanted the listener to stand in front of it and feel its scale.

That ambition is partly why *All Things End, Yet Nothing Ends* feels larger than the familiar description of "traditional Chinese opera meets rock", often attached to Xian Ke, which formed in 2019.

Both members trained at the National Academy of Chinese Theatre Arts, and their relationship with traditional theater runs deep. Wen studied theater; Wang Pushi is a Kunqu Opera performer and works with the Northern Kunqu Opera Theatre.

But Xian Ke is increasingly wary of being defined by the label "traditional Chinese opera meets rock music".

The label exists, Wang acknowledges. People use it. But for the band, traditional theater is not an aesthetic costume that they put on when they make music. It is part of the way they think.



"We write what we know," Wen says.

There was no elaborate calculation about how much traditional Chinese opera to combine with contemporary rock. Their musical languages have developed together naturally.

For Wang, the difference between performing traditional Chinese opera and performing with Xian Ke is particularly revealing. On the traditional stage, he is playing a character. His job is to express that character's emotions rather than his own.

"With the band, it is 100 percent my expression," he says.

He describes himself as a theater director within Xian Ke, while Wen is the writer. Together, they bring a theatrical way of thinking to their music: songs become scenes, sounds become characters, and the album becomes a world.

That approach is particularly evident in the song *Annica* (inspired by anicca, a Buddhist concept meaning impermanence), which incorporates the *suona* (a double-reed woodwind instrument) and the percussion rhythms of Kunqu Opera.

The striking thing is that the *suona* is not presented as a distinctly "Chinese" sound.

Instead, Xian Ke deliberately buried it within the arrangement, treating it like any other instrument.

"Traditional Chinese instruments are often placed prominently in contemporary music precisely because their sound immediately signals Chinese identity. We wanted to resist that impulse," Wang says.

For him, the goal is not to turn traditional culture into spectacle.

He points to the experience of watching traditional Chinese opera for the first time: Whether the viewer is a foreigner or a Chinese person encountering it for the first time, its unfamiliarity can make it seem like a spectacle, something exotic to be observed.

But that, he argues, misses the point.

Traditional Chinese opera and traditional Chinese music are not curiosities. They are not there to produce an exotic effect. They are beautiful.

The same principle guides Xian Ke's use of traditional instruments. The better the fusion, Wang believes, the less obvious the fusion becomes. "If an instrument is pushed to the front simply because it sounds unusual, it risks becoming a gimmick," he says.

Elsewhere on the album, they went in the opposite direction: Rather than hiding the identity of a traditional instrument, they explored what its history could bring to the music.

The song *Fallen Stars* features the sound of a Jiahu bone flute, an ancient instrument preserved by the Henan Museum and among the earliest known instruments associated with a seven-note scale.

The flute is a key exhibit at the Henan Museum and dates back about 8,700 years.

Musicians from the Huaxia Ancient Music Orchestra, the resident ensemble of Henan Museum founded in 2000, joined the band's exploration by playing replicas of ancient Chinese musical instruments displayed in the museum.

For Xian Ke, choosing the bone flute was partly an experiment. If they were going to introduce traditional Chinese instruments into their music for the first time, why not begin with one of the oldest?

They tried a number of instruments before settling on the bone flute. But its historical importance was only part of the appeal.

When the flute was played, Wen heard something much less concrete: falling stars.

The image captures the band's approach to the album as a whole. Rather than giving each song a narrowly defined subject, they wanted the eight tracks to contain as much as possible — to suggest an entire world rather than describe one small thing.

The result is intentionally ambiguous. Images, emotions and sounds overlap.

The most interesting question facing Xian Ke now is what happens when they move beyond the very combination that first defined them.

They have already begun asking themselves: What does Xian Ke sound like when there is no Chinese opera?

The question is not a rejection of their theatrical roots. Quite the opposite. It comes from the confidence that those roots are already embedded in them.

"Opera plus rock" was simply the path they took when they first came together.

Now they want to explore what else might happen — traditional Chinese opera with something else, or something without traditional Chinese opera.

"We do not yet know," says Wen. "A record has an ending. A song has an ending. A period of creation has an ending. But the impulse to create continues."

Contact the writer at chennan@chinadaily.com.cn

Huangmei Opera shines in Edinburgh with tale of courage and identity

EDINBURGH — Minutes before going on stage in Edinburgh, Han Zaifen sat before a dressing-room mirror, humming softly to herself as the final touches were put on her makeup.

Beneath a black embroidered scholar's cap was the face of Feng Suzhen, a young woman whom Han has portrayed for more than four decades.

Soon afterward, Han, a winner of the Plum Blossom Award, the highest award for Chinese theatrical art, stepped onto the stage at Queen's Hall in a bright red robe, bringing one of China's best-known traditional opera heroines to an Edinburgh audience.

On the evening of Aug 12, the Anhui Zaifen Huangmei Xiqu Art Theatre, led by its director Han, performed *The Lady Prince Consort* at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, marking the first appearance of Huangmei *xiqu*, or Huangmei Opera, at the event.

"If Huangmei *xiqu* were an Eastern woman, she would be lively and quick-witted, pure and down-to-earth," Han said before the performance. Unlike the stately elegance often associated with Kunqu Opera, she said, Huangmei *xiqu* has a particular warmth and innocence, as well as a mixture of softness and strength.

"Its melodies come from people's lives and their sense of happiness," she says.

Huangmei *xiqu* is a major form of traditional Chinese opera, known for its tuneful singing and lively storytelling. Now, Anqing, a city in East China's Anhui province, serves as an important center for its performance and development.

The Lady Prince Consort tells the story of Feng Suzhen, who disguises herself as a man and enters the imperial examination to save the man she loves. She unexpectedly finishes first and is chosen by the emperor as husband for his daughter, setting off a series of twists before her true identity is revealed.

The work was adapted from the traditional play *Double Rescue* and was first staged in 1958. A film version followed in 1959, helping to turn the story into one of the most familiar works in Huangmei *xiqu*.

Feng's disguise mirrors other well-known women in Chinese storytelling, including Hua Mulan, the legendary female warrior who disguises herself as a man, and Zhu Yingtai of *The Butterfly Lovers*.



Actress Han Zaifen (right) and other actors perform Chinese Huangmei Opera during a performance at the Queen's Hall in Edinburgh, on Aug 12. ZHAO JIASONG / XINHUA

But Han sees something distinctive in Feng.

"She does not spend her time anxiously searching for an identity," Han says. "Through what she does, she keeps redefining who she is. She takes charge of her own fate."

Saving her husband is the direct reason for Feng's adventure, but the journey also reveals her confidence in her ability and worth, Han says.

Han adds that young women today no longer need to disguise themselves as men to pursue their ambitions, but the courage behind Feng's choice remains relevant.

"Whether you are a young woman or a young man, you need the courage not to retreat when you face difficulty and to fight for the life you want," she says.

That message resonated with Monika Owczarek, a Polish resident of Edinburgh, who says she often watches Chinese opera during the Fringe.

She says she enjoys the melodies of Huangmei *xiqu*, while Feng's story reminds her of Mulan. "Both women disguise themselves as men and emerge as strong female protagonists who refuse to accept the limits placed on them," she says.

American audience member Joe Goldblatt described it as the best Chinese opera performance he had seen, adding that he hopes "more productions like it could help bring people from different countries closer together".

Han says the theater made no deliberate attempt to speed up the performance or simplify its style for a Western audience.

The troupe has previously taken Huangmei *xiqu* to countries including France, the United States, Canada, and Russia.

"Good cultural exchange does not mean changing yourself just so you can be understood," Han says.

"For any art form, there is something that cannot be translated because it comes from the culture itself," she says. "It is a people's temperament, even a people's way of breathing."

Han's Edinburgh visit also brought recognition away from the stage. Earlier this week, she received the 2026 Asian Art Ambassador honor at the Asian Art Awards, organized by Asian Art Fund Scotland, a Scottish charity supporting Asian arts.

"Seeing overseas audiences laugh along with the story was deeply moving," says Wu Meilian, a Plum Blossom Award-winning actress who also played Feng Suzhen in the first half of the show.

"We did not share a language, but the humor and emotions still connected us. It made me feel that Huangmei *xiqu* can touch audiences anywhere."

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:52 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:52 PM

SPORTS

TENNIS



Aryna Sabalenka celebrates her 6-1, 6-3 win over Wang Xinyu of China during the Cincinnati Open third round at the Lindner Family Tennis Center in Mason, Ohio, on Tuesday. GETTY IMAGES VIA AFP

No 1 Sabalenka slams Wang to advance in Cincy

The victory takes Belarusian's win streak at the WTA1000 level to 45

CINCINNATI, Ohio — Aryna Sabalenka unleashed her big game with devastating effect on Tuesday, hammering China's Wang Xinyu 6-1, 6-3 to reach the fourth round of the Cincinnati Open.

The world No 1 took only 20 minutes to blow through the first set against her 36th-ranked opponent, and began the second set with a break of serve.

Sabalenka kept up the pressure in the second set, with Wang double-faulting on the top seed's first match point after 54 minutes.

The victory marked the 45th in a row for Sabalenka at the WTA1000 level.

"I cannot complain. She's a tough opponent," Sabalenka said. "To win in straight sets like this in under an hour is insane.

"I'm super happy to be through. I really trusted myself and went for my shots. I wasn't overthinking. I was able to stay focused and be in every point."

Sabalenka next plays Czech Sara Bejlek, a 4-6, 6-1, 6-2 winner over Russia's Ekaterina Alexandrova.

Fourth seed Coco Gauff needed to battle following a sizzling first set in a 6-1, 7-6 (3) victory over fellow American Ann Li.

The 2023 champion had it all her own way in the opening set against her 29th-ranked foe, winning in 30 minutes. The pair exchanged early breaks in the second on the way to a tie-breaker, in which Gauff seized a 4-1 lead and won on her third match point.

"She played better in the second set and I missed a couple of break opportunities," Gauff said. "I tried to forget about those.

"It was hard to control the ball for both of us, and it was my first time playing a day match on this center court, so I had to adjust to that."

Mirra Andreeva's status as reigning French Open champion counted for little, as the fifth seed struggled to close out a 6-1, 7-6 (5) victory over Janice Tjen.

The Indonesian challenger, ranked 37th, was bowled over in the first set, but made Andreeva work to finally advance.

"In the first, I was in command and she had unforced errors here and there, but in the second, after a couple of games, I started getting nervous. She made fewer mistakes — it turned into a match of mentality and physicality," Andreeva said.

Eighth seed Elina Svitolina was forced to withdraw before her match against China's Wang Xiyu with an ankle injury.

"I've been advised by the doctors to take a little bit of time to rest and recover completely," the Ukrainian said in a statement.

Wang, 25, will now face 20th-seeded American Madison Keys for a quarterfinal berth.

> "I cannot complain. She's a tough opponent. To win in straight sets like this in under an hour is insane. I'm super happy to be through. I really trusted myself and went for my shots."
>
> **Aryna Sabalenka,** on her win over Wang Xinyu

In the men's play, Canada's second-seeded Felix Auger-Aliassime eliminated Argentina's Juan Manuel Cerundolo 7-5, 6-1 in 90 minutes.

"It was a tricky start, finding my rhythm," the Canadian said. "Lefties are tricky, you don't play them so often. You can prepare all you want, but until you step onto the court, you can't find your right adjustments. Then you feel comfortable."

Washington winner and fifth seed Taylor Fritz fired eight aces in his defeat of Spain's Daniel Merida 6-3, 6-4 in 83 minutes. The Spaniard made 25 unforced errors as Fritz booked a fourth-round match-up with Australian Chris O'Connell, who is 0-3 against the American.

'I played amazing'

Last week's Montreal finalist Brandon Nakashima came from the brink to upset fourth seed Daniil Medvedev 6-7 (3), 7-6 (4), 6-1.

Nakashima led 5-2 in the first set before falling in the tie-breaker, then saved three match points in the 10th game of the second set on the way to forcing a third, which he dominated.

It was Nakashima's first win in four meetings with Medvedev, who beat the American in the Brisbane final earlier this year and had won 6-1 in sets against him entering the match.

Nakashima arrived in Cincinnati in strong form after reaching the semifinals in Washington and his first Masters 1000 final in Montreal, and improved to 10-2 on the summer's hard-court swing with Tuesday's victory.

The world No 22 will next face Nuno Borges after the Portuguese claimed a 6-3, 6-4 upset of Russian 13th seed and 2021 runner-up Andrey Rublev in 72 minutes.

The 47th-ranked Borges ended a five-match losing streak in the rivalry, while Rublev will drop out of the top 20 for the first time since January 2020.

"I played amazing," Borges said. "It means a lot to be in the fourth round. It's a big moment for me."

Italian 10th seed Lorenzo Musetti defeated American Michael Zheng 6-1, 6-3 in 71 minutes.

AFP

Venus Williams gets a US Open singles wild card at 46

NEW YORK — Venus Williams was given a US Open singles wild card on Tuesday and the tournament is keeping one on hold — perhaps in case her sister Serena wants to join her.

Sloane Stephens, the 2017 US Open champion, was one of six other women to receive a wild card, and the US Tennis Association said the final one is still to be announced.

That almost certainly would go to Serena Williams, if she decides she wants to return to the tournament at 44.

Last year, Venus Williams received a wild card to the Grand Slam event she won twice, returning for the first time since 2023. The 46-year-old has become the oldest entrant in singles at the tournament since Renee Richards played at 47 in 1981, according to the International Tennis Federation.

Venus has continued to play some singles matches, and this week joined Serena for their first doubles tournament together since the 2022 US Open. They lost Monday at the Cincinnati Open in a match tie-breaker against Marta Kostyuk and Peyton Stearns.

The sisters planned to play at Wimbledon, but had to withdraw after Serena injured her knee in her singles match. That marked her first time playing singles since the 2022 US Open, and she indicated afterward that she hoped to keep competing if healthy.

Headlining the wild-card recipients on the men's side were 39-year-old Gael Monfils, a past US Open semifinalist who is set to play his final Grand Slam tournament before retiring, and Australian Alexei Popyrin, who upset Novak Djokovic in 2024 on the way to the fourth round.

One spot is also being held among the eight men's wild cards. Stan Wawrinka, the 2016 champion at Flushing Meadows who, at 41, is playing his final season, could be a candidate for that.

Also receiving women's wild cards were Carol Young Suh Lee, Reese Brantmeier, Thea Frodin, Leolia Jeanjean and Taylah Preston.

The other men receiving wild cards were two-time reigning NCAA singles champion Michael Zheng, Martin Damm, J.J. Wolf, Sebastian Gorzny and Jack Kennedy.

Kei Nishikori, the 2014 US Open runner-up, who also is retiring, was given a wild card into the men's qualifying tournament, along with Jordan Lee, Trevor Svajda, Andre Ilagan, Spencer Johnson, Michael Antonius, Andrew Johnson and Daniel Milavsky.

Women given spots in the qualifying tournament were Caroline Dolehide, Janae Preston, Katrina Scott, Ayana Akli, Annika Penickova, Julieta Pareja, Kristina Penickova and Savannah Broadus.

The main draw begins Aug 30, with the qualifying tournaments being played earlier that week.

Doubles loss

The Williams sisters both said they had a good time on their return to doubles action for the first time since 2022, despite suffering an opening-round defeat in Cincinnati.

The duo lost 2-6, 6-1, 10-8 to Ukraine's Kostyuk and American Stearns, coming back from 6-0 down in the tiebreaker before a double fault by Venus sealed their fate.

"I thought it was fun, I thought it was special, I thought it was good," Serena, 44, told reporters.

"We kicked off a little rust in the middle of the match. We were starting to feel it, and it was really fun. It was really cool to be able to do this again."

The Williams sisters have won 14 major doubles titles, including six at Wimbledon and three Olympic gold medals.

They last played doubles together at the 2022 US Open, where they lost to Czechs Lucie Hradecka and Linda Noskova.

The sisters were also due to compete in the doubles draw at Wimbledon, but were forced to pull out after Serena sustained a knee injury during her opening-round singles defeat to Australian Maya Joint. They were awarded a wild card for Cincinnati earlier this month.

"I think we've waited a long time to get back on the doubles court, even this year. Eventually, we find our way to each other," Venus, 46, added.

Venus also competed in the singles draw in Cincinnati, where she was beaten 6-2, 6-2 by Colombian Emiliana Arango.

AP



Serena Williams (left) and Venus Williams confer during a doubles match against Marta Kostyuk and Peyton Stearns at the Cincinnati Open on Monday. AFP

ARTISTIC SWIMMING

Further rule changes set to ripple through sport en route to LA28

BUDAPEST — Artistic swimming is set for further rule changes as the sport moves toward the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games, with adjustments to free routines and their length to be announced soon, World Aquatics Artistic Swimming Technical Committee chairwoman Lisa Schott told reporters.

"In the new rule changes coming out very, very shortly, you will see some changes in the free routines and their length," Schott said during the Aug 12-16 World Aquatics Junior Artistic Swimming Championships in Budapest.

"I'm just giving a little secret tip there," she added.

Schott described the Budapest event as "the largest junior worlds in the history of the sport," with nearly 300 athletes from 35 federations competing and a number of new federations taking part in the championships.

"The sport continues to grow in depth and talent," she said, adding that many talented junior athletes had emerged.

Schott also said that age should not be used to define an athlete's potential, with some junior swimmers already competing at a very high level.

"I don't like to put limits on any athlete, because junior or senior, they all have their different level of skill," she said.

Budapest will host the World Aquatics Championships again in 2027, with qualification spots for the Los Angeles Olympics at stake. Schott said that some athletes at this year's junior worlds could be old enough to move into their senior national teams next year.

"Competing at a world level is a journey," she said. "Each competition you learn something and continue to develop."



China's He Zhien and Zhou Kunyi perform a routine themed "Moderation" at the 2026 World Aquatics Junior Artistic Swimming Championships in Budapest. The pair won silver in the women's duet free on Saturday with a score of 295.0701 points. XINHUA

Schott said the scoring system has also made the competition more unpredictable.

"We don't know who's going to win," she said. "It gives hope for every athlete, every team that they do have the possibility."

The rules are still evolving, and Schott said coaches and athletes need to make realistic decisions about the level of difficulty they can successfully perform. She said she did not want to see athletes aiming too high, only to end up with repeated base marks, jokingly calling such a situation a "base mark party".

The growing presence of male athletes was another feature of the championships that impressed Schott.

"We have never had as many males in the sport as we have seen demonstrated here," she said. "The men, the boys, bring a different vibe to the sport, which is great."

Several teams included male athletes in team events in Budapest, with some fielding two men in their lineups.

"That's where we want to go," Schott said. "We love the male swimmers in the team. It brings good synergy to the team, a new dynamic, and it shows that the sport is inclusive of all genders."

She expects the trend to continue as male athletes improve.

"Stay tuned for more males in the sport," she said.

Looking beyond Budapest to the 2027 World Championships and the Los Angeles Games, Schott said artistic swimming remains in a period of evolution.

"I think we're in a great position. The sport will continue to evolve," she said. "We want to use more technology in our sport.

"We're super excited to go to the Olympics and show the world one more time what an amazing sport artistic swimming is," Schott said.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:52 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:54 PM

Green drive

Hainan aims to end new gasoline car sales by 2030

BUSINESS, PAGE 9



AI tools help preserve ancient texts

Z WEEKLY, PAGE 13



Conspiracy claims

Argentina's World Cup run sparks unfounded favoritism theories

SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2026



Source: General Administration of Customs CHINA DAILY

A cargo ship docks at a port in Lianyungang, East China's Jiangsu province, on Tuesday. WANG CHUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Trade growth buoys intl outlook

China's innovation drive, resilience expected to bolster global demand, supply chain stability

By **ZHONG NAN** and **ZHANG CHENXU**

China's foreign trade is expected to maintain steady growth momentum in the second half of 2026, supported by a strong innovation drive and resilient market players, further reinforcing the country's role as a source of global demand and a stabilizer of international supply chains, government officials and economists said on Tuesday.

Data released by the General Administration of Customs showed that China's trade in goods expanded 16.9 percent year-on-year to 25.47 trillion yuan ($3.76 trillion) in the first half, with imports growing faster than exports. Exports rose 13.4 percent, while imports climbed 22.1 percent, exceeding export growth by 8.7 percentage points.

Speaking at a news conference in Beijing, Wang Jun, the administration's vice-minister, acknowledged that China's foreign trade will face certain headwinds in the second half, but said innovative products and continued opening-up will remain key pillars supporting its solid fundamentals.

"Stronger import growth, together with robust exports of higher-value manufactured goods, reflects a healthier and more balanced trade structure," he said, adding that the trend shows that China is contributing to global growth not only through its manufacturing strength, but also through its expanding domestic market, helping stabilize global industrial and supply chains.

Inside

Editorial, **page 6**

Alongside notable export growth in tech-intensive green products such as energy storage systems and electric trucks, China's trade in hardware that supports computing power, surged 56.6 percent year-on-year to 5.13 trillion yuan in the first half.

China's artificial intelligence-powered smart glasses, translation devices and robotic exoskeletons are among a growing range of intelligent products undergoing rapid innovation, Wang added.

Yan Min, a researcher at the department of economic forecasting of the State Information Center in Beijing, said China's resilient foreign trade remains a key engine of economic growth, providing greater certainty for domestic activity while supporting global demand through imports as well as industrial production through competitive exports.

Rather than serving only as a manufacturing hub, China is increasingly contributing to global growth by expanding imports, fostering innovation and strengthening industrial cooperation across international supply chains, Yan said.

Wen Bin, chief economist at China Minsheng Bank, said China's exports are likely to remain resilient in the second half, supported by the ongoing AI investment cycle, the United States' relatively moderate tariff policy, and a range of supportive measures aimed at enhancing the competitiveness of Chinese manufacturers.

Wen cautioned, however, that risks remain, including potential disruptions to energy supply chains in the Gulf region and renewed trade friction between China and the European Union.

Sheana Yue, senior economist at British think tank Oxford Economics, said China's competitive advantages can help offset external headwinds.

While tensions surrounding the Strait of Hormuz are expected to weigh on global demand, China is well positioned to fill supply gaps in affected supply chains and benefit from robust demand for products in which it has a competitive advantage, including electric vehicles, solar panels and lithium batteries, she said.

Amid the Middle East tensions that disrupted global chemical supplies in the first half, China's integrated industrial base helped fill supply gaps. Its exports of basic organic chemicals and primary plastics rose 25.1 percent and 35 percent year-on-year, respectively, supporting global manufacturing activity and supply chain stability, according to the GAC.

Lyu Daliang, director of the GAC's department of statistics and analysis, said China's continued opening-up, expanding domestic market and innovation-driven growth are also creating new opportunities for foreign-invested companies, strengthening the nation's contribution to global demand and supply chain stability.

Foreign-invested businesses in China generated 7.39 trillion yuan in imports and exports in the first half, up 17.1 percent year-on-year, marking a ninth consecutive quarter of growth, customs data showed.

The trend is reflected in the investment strategies of multinational companies operating in the country. Joe Bao, president of Kone China, said China has become not only a major market for the Finnish elevator manufacturer, but also a critical part of its global manufacturing and innovation network.

"We operate our largest manufacturing facility in China, together with our largest research and development center outside Finland," said Bao. "China not only serves the domestic market, but also acts as a key export base, with products shipped to more than 100 countries and regions."

Contact the writers at zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

UN official lauds land restoration progress

By **HOU LIQIANG**
houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

China's experience demonstrates that land restoration can progress alongside economic development, highlighting a viable pathway for global efforts to combat desertification, land degradation and drought, said a senior United Nations official.

Yasmine Fouad, executive secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, said despite this promising example, a persistent financing gap remains one of the biggest obstacles to fighting desertification, land degradation and drought worldwide.

She said that addressing these issues requires about $355 billion annually, but current investment falls significantly short, leaving many proven solutions underfunded despite their strong economic, social and environmental returns.

Fouad emphasized that China's progress is significant because it integrates restoration into a broader strategy for rural development, poverty alleviation, ecological protection and long-term resilience, rather than treating it as a standalone environmental objective.

China's experience offers important lessons, because it demonstrates that ecological restoration and economic development can reinforce each other when restoration is integrated into long-term development strategies, she said.

In 2021, China declared "complete victory" in its fight against absolute poverty. Fouad said the nation is still making progress in land restoration.

China's land restoration efforts demonstrate that combating desertification is fundamentally a developmental challenge, not just an environmental one.



Yasmine Fouad

Figures from the National Forestry and Grassland Administration show that China treated about 10.13 million hectares of desertified land and about 1.95 million hectares of rocky desertification during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period. The country also aims to treat about 6.7 million hectares of desertified land by 2030.

Fouad noted that China's experience shows what can be achieved when restoration is pursued at scale and integrated into national development planning.

"The good news is that we know what works. Countries have already identified practical solutions — from restoring degraded land and improving soil health to strengthening drought preparedness and investing in resilient landscapes. The challenge now is mobilizing the financing," she said.

Closing the financing gap will require stronger public investment, greater engagement from development banks and a much larger role for the private sector, Fouad said, adding that land restoration should be seen as an investment.

The senior UN official's remarks come as land degradation and drought are drawing growing international attention. Earlier this year, the Group of Seven countries formally recognized desertification, land degradation and drought as systemic global risks and threat multipliers affecting food security, economic stability and resilience.

"Healthy land underpins food production, water security, livelihoods and economic development," Fouad said.

See ***Sustainability,*** *page 3*



An adult and a child ride bicycles along a waterfront promenade with the Shenzhen skyline in the background in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, on May 28. CHENG XIN / GETTY IMAGES

SHENZHEN UPGRADES CYCLING CREDENTIALS

Riders make a beeline to tech hub to explore its lanes and lush greenways

By **XING WEN**
xingwen@chinadaily.com.cn

For Chen Liang, a 26-year-old resident of Shenzhen, Guangdong province, a typical weekday morning usually begins with a solo bike ride in the Phoenix Mountain Forest Park. There, he finds himself riding through countless warm beams of light cast by the morning sun peeking through the dense canopy of towering trees along the trail.

"Pushing my pedals up the greenway, wrapped in that gentle light, is when I feel most at ease all day," he said.

The park marks the start of the 200-kilometer Kunpeng Trail, which links more than 10 of the city's major peaks, 17 nature parks, eight large reservoirs, over a dozen historical and cultural sites and nine key urban development areas. Along the way, riders and hikers can enjoy a rich variety of scenery, ranging from mountain ridges and forests to lakes, streams and urban landscapes.

The Kunpeng Trail forms part of the Shenzhen Mountain-Sea Vistas greenway network, an urban ecological initiative launched in 2020 that also saw the creation of a coastal cycling route stretching across the city from east to west, linking parks, fishing harbors, docks and ancient villages.

China Vibes

Chen's favorite place to ride at dusk is the coastal greenway in the Qianhai area. From there, he can enjoy the sunset vista over the sea, the glittering office towers piercing the sky and a cross-sea bridge stretching into the distance, as well as the Bay Glory Ferris wheel rotating slowly against the fading light.

See ***Bikes,*** *page 3*

Remembering holds key to prosperity

WORLD WATCH
By Simon Sumanjoyo Hutagalung

Much has been written about China's phenomenal growth driven by industrial policy, infrastructure, manufacturing and innovation. Though correct, these observations overlook a deeper institutional advantage that connects them all: China's remarkable capacity to preserve and accumulate policy experience.

In China, reforms sometimes begin in provinces and cities, where new ideas are tested under real-world conditions. Successful initiatives are refined, codified and gradually expanded across the country, while unsuccessful ones quietly end without becoming permanent policy.

This is more than experimentation. It is building institutional memory.

Shenzhen illustrates the point. Known as China's first Special Economic Zone, it became a place where new policies could be tested before being expanded nationwide. The city's lasting contribution was not simply its economic success, but the experience it left behind for others to build on.

The same pattern was evident in China's campaign to eliminate extreme poverty. Success depended not only on financial resources but also on the government's ability to collect, organize and continuously update knowledge through village-level databases, performance monitoring and policy evaluation.

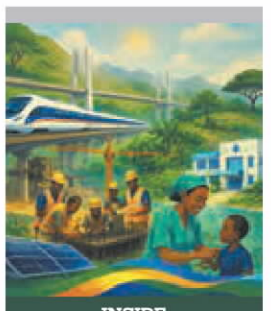
See ***Progress,*** *page 3*

Conventional wisdom suggests that successful nations are those that learn. Governments establish research institutes, universities churn out new knowledge, industries innovate, and public institutions continuously enhance their capabilities. Learning is the key reason why some countries prosper while others struggle.

Yet, learning alone doesn't lead to long-term national development.

A country without institutional memory suffers from collective amnesia. Political transitions often bring shifts in priorities. Every new administration introduces another reform while abandoning previous ones. Every crisis generates fresh initiatives, yet few become lasting capabilities. Progress becomes cyclical rather than cumulative.

China offers a striking contrast.



INSIDE
One finger cannot pick up a stone
Global Views, page 8

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved

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

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:54 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:54 PM

INDEPTH







Top left: A child gets his collected trash weighed after participating in an X-Plogging event in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, on March 21.
Top right: Chen Ya, leader of Beijing-based volunteer group "Mountain Guardians", picks up trash in Baoding, Hebei province.
Above: Volunteers pose for a group photo after an X-Plogging event on March 21. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

'Ploggers' keeping China's great outdoors clean, pristine

Trash collecting while trekking latest example of growing environmental responsibility

By **ZHENG JINRAN**
zhengjinran@chinadaily.com.cn

On a recent Saturday morning, 12-year-old Lele from Tianjin arrived at Beijing's Western Hills carrying a tool he had prepared himself — a litter picker.

Ahead of him was an 8-kilometer mountain hike expected to last four or five hours. Yet unlike many children his age, Lele was not focused on reaching the summit.

Instead, he was looking for trash.

As he walked along the trail with his mother, Qi Ji, he scanned the roadside constantly. A bottle cap tucked beneath a bush, a discarded tissue, a plastic wrapper hidden among rocks — none escaped his attention. Whenever he spotted litter, he quickly clutched it with his picker and passed it to his mother who carried a large garbage bag on her back.

This was Lele's second time joining a volunteer mountain cleanup activity. "Once I told him about the activity, he started preparing his own equipment," Qi recalled. "After participating in organized mountain cleanups, he simply can't ignore litter anymore when he's outdoors."

For Qi, the experience has become a form of environmental education far more vivid than classroom lessons.

"It's much more effective than simply telling children not to litter," she said.

What began as a volunteer activity has gradually become a shared lifestyle. And they are far from alone.

Across China, growing numbers of young professionals, outdoor enthusiasts and families are participating in "plogging" — picking up trash and litter while jogging. The idea of combining exercise with environmental responsibility started in Sweden a decade ago and now extends to hiking, running or walking while collecting litter.

What was once a niche practice embraced by a small group of outdoor enthusiasts is rapidly evolving into a broader social movement.

Mass movement

For many early participants, environmental activism was not the starting point.

Zheng Jiajia, one of the organizers of the Beijing event and a key promoter of the X-Plogging initiative, first began collecting litter while trail running.

During long-distance runs in the mountains, she repeatedly encountered piles of discarded bottles, food packaging and camping waste in otherwise pristine landscapes.

She recalled witnessing what psychologists call the "broken windows effect" — the theory that visible signs of disorder encourage more acts of disorder.

"One person leaves a bottle behind, then others feel it's acceptable to do the same," she said. "A second bottle appears, then a third. Eventually people start treating the place like a garbage dump."

"You've walked so far and seen such beautiful scenery. Then you reach a viewpoint and find yourself surrounded by trash. It's heartbreaking."

At the time, litter collection was largely carried out by experienced hikers, trail runners and outdoor enthusiasts who spent significant time in the mountains.

Chen Ya, leader of Beijing-based volunteer group "Mountain Guardians", had a similar experience.

She began hiking in 2019 and participated in events across China, becoming increasingly concerned about the environmental impact of growing outdoor recreation.

Many of her group's earliest cleanup activities focused on Beijing's famous Three Peaks route, a challenging 22-km trail linking several mountain summits, and with a cumulative elevation gain of around 1,600 meters.

The route was demanding for experienced runners. Carrying bags full of collected trash made it even harder, she said.

"In the beginning, most participants were strong hikers and trail runners," Chen said. "Cleaning up the route was often more difficult than simply running it."

The results were striking. In April 2024, volunteers collected more than 108 kilograms of trash along the route. In March 2025, another cleanup removed over 200 kg of waste. The cleanup also continued in September 2025 and April 2026.

Yet, in recent years, the volunteers have noticed something has changed. "The amount of garbage on the same route has clearly decreased," Chen said. "Whether or not the number of people littering has changed, at least there are more people willing to pick it up."

The profile of those participating in the cleanup has also expanded.

"The threshold has become much lower," she said. "We used to mainly attract experienced outdoor enthusiasts. Now we reserve places for children, and those spots are often filled within minutes."

The same trend is visible nationwide. According to Liu Xiaoyu, head of Xterra China, which launched X-Plogging in many cities, participation in environmental outdoor activities has undergone explosive growth in recent years.

"What we are seeing is a transition from a niche community to the mainstream," she said.

Initially, participants were largely environmental advocates and experienced outdoor athletes. Today, urban professionals aged 25 to 35 and family groups have become the dominant force. During a large-scale X-Plogging event held in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, in March, 140 families numbering 345 participants accounted for 65 percent of total registrations, according to Xterra.

New lifestyle boom

The rise of plogging is closely tied to China's rapidly expanding outdoor culture, one of the country's fastest-growing lifestyle trends.

According to the China Outdoor Sports Industry Development Report (2024-2025), released by the General Administration of Sport of China in October 2025, the number of outdoor sports participants nationwide surpassed 400 million by early April 2025.

The boom is also being shaped by national policy.

In January 2025, China unveiled guidelines on building high-quality outdoor sports destinations, emphasizing that the expansion of outdoor recreation should balance development with environmental protection and promote harmonious coexistence between sporting activities and the natural environment.

The guidelines call for integrating environmental principles into outdoor experiences, strengthening ecological awareness among participants and promoting green practices in sporting events.

Industry observers have said China's outdoor community is entering a more mature stage. Beyond conquering summits or sharing scenic photos online, participants are paying greater attention to concepts such as those pioneered by the Leave No Trace organization, which encourages environmental stewardship and responsible outdoor recreation.





Above: A family takes part in a mountain cleanup activity on March 21.
Left: Lele and his mother Qi Ji join in a plogging event in Beijing on May 16.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Online
See more by scanning the code.

The shift is also reshaping sporting events. Many trail-running competitions now encourage athletes to carry reusable cups to reduce waste. In 2025, Xterra and the Chinese Mountaineering Association jointly published China's first Mountain Outdoor Sports Environmental Protection Guidelines, helping establish standards for environmentally responsible outdoor activities.

Against this backdrop, mountain cleanups, beach cleanups and lake conservation events have become increasingly common across the country.

Social connections

If environmental protection explains why people join these activities, it does not fully explain why so many of them keep coming back.

Along mountain trails, participants often discover something unexpected: community.

At the recent Beijing's Western Hills plogging event, connections happened in unexpected ways.

Tian Tian, a doctor from the nutrition department of Beijing Chaoyang Hospital, encountered a former patient she had not seen in a decade. On another occasion, a young veterinary student mentioned she was looking for an internship during a cleanup activity and was introduced to a clinic owner taking part in the same event.

Chen, who also organizes volunteer cleanups, said such encounters are increasingly common. "Very few people come alone nowadays," she said. "Most are introduced by friends who previously joined our activities."

Liu from Xterra described the phenomenon as a new form of social gathering. "Compared with traditional volunteering, it's more like a social event built around sports and environmental protection," she said. "It addresses two common challenges facing young people today: mental exhaustion and a lack of meaningful social connection."

Participants exercise outdoors, interact with like-minded people and experience tangible accomplishments at the same time.

Xu Gaoyang, a psychotherapist at Beijing Anding Hospital affiliated with Capital Medical University, believes the popularity of plogging reflects how many young Chinese are responding to the pressures of modern urban life.

"The combination of hiking, environmental protection and social interaction is a very healthy response to contemporary stress," Xu said.

One attraction is the low-pressure social environment.

Unlike many social situations, participants do not need to introduce themselves through professional credentials, income levels or social status. Instead, they work toward a common goal from the outset. People who choose to spend their weekends protecting the environment also tend to share similar values, making it easier to build meaningful connections.

More fundamentally, Xu said, plogging offers a sense of meaning in an increasingly uncertain world.

Outdoor cleanups provide a rare opportunity to see immediate results: a trail becomes cleaner, a mountain looks different, and individual effort produces visible change.

"You pick up several bags of trash and instantly see the environment improve," Xu said. "That helps rebuild a sense of personal effectiveness and agency."

At the same time, the activities draw people away from screens and anxieties toward direct experiences in nature. Some participants describe the experience as "returning to the real world".

Along the route of recent plogging event in Beijing's Western Hills, the cleanup efforts often drew spontaneous responses from others in the mountains.

One runner taking part in a nearby trail race stopped and said, "You are doing a great job." Several hikers and visitors also paused to acknowledge the volunteers as they passed through the area.

Adopt a tree, pull weeds; stewardship of nature on the rise

Across the country, more people are participating in hands-on conservation activities that go beyond collecting rubbish, reflecting a broader shift from environmental awareness to environmental stewardship.

One example is the removal of invasive species.

In May last year, volunteers in Changsha, Hunan province, joined agricultural experts in identifying and removing *Solidago canadensis*, commonly known as Canadian goldenrod, an invasive plant that threatens native ecosystems. The activity began with field lessons on how to distinguish the species from similar native plants before volunteers spread out across affected areas to remove it by hand, according to a report by The Paper.

Organizers said the goal was not only to control the invasive plant, but also to help participants better understand local biodiversity and translate environmental knowledge into practical action.

Similar activities have happened in coastal provinces.

Along China's eastern shoreline, local governments and volunteers have helped restore wetlands by removing *Spartina alterniflora*, or smooth cordgrass, another invasive species that has damaged tidal ecosystems.

Public participation is also extending to the protection of China's natural heritage.

Earlier this year, Beijing launched its largest public adoption program in recent years for ancient and notable trees, making 450 ancient trees available for adoption across the capital.

Among those who took up the offer was urban planner Mu Zihui, who adopted an ancient pine on Miaofeng Mountain in Beijing's Mentougou district. "I was genuinely excited when I learned people could adopt ancient trees," she told Beijing Daily.

She said the tree held special meaning because it is locally known as the "Hero Tree", having sheltered Chinese soldiers during the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45), while its symbolism of protection reminded her of her father, a retired police officer.

The program reflects a broader trend. According to the National Forestry and Grassland Administration, provinces and municipalities including Sichuan, Fujian, Tianjin and Chongqing have established volunteer programs to help monitor ancient and notable trees.

Volunteers assist with routine inspections, report signs of disease or damage and raise public awareness about the cultural and ecological value of centuries-old trees, making conservation an increasingly shared responsibility between professionals and local communities.

These activities share one important characteristic: they are accessible. Most require no professional background and can be completed over a weekend, making them attractive to families, students and young professionals seeking meaningful ways to spend their free time.

The growing enthusiasm is reflected in national figures. According to reports released before World Environment Day on June 5, China now has more than 35 million registered environmental volunteers.

Participants are from all walks of life — students, office workers and retirees — many of whom describe environmental volunteering not as an obligation but as a rewarding part of everyday life, according to a People's Daily report.

Together, these activities suggest a broader transformation. Whether removing invasive plants, monitoring ancient trees or cleaning mountain trails, conservation is increasingly becoming something people can participate in directly one weekend at a time.

ZHENG JINRAN

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:54 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:54 PM

TOP NEWS

Chinese AI models gain global users

Access to high performance at competitive price seen as transformative for businesses

By LI JIAYING
lijiaying@chinadaily.com.cn

China is stepping up its push for a more open, inclusive and collaborative approach toward artificial intelligence, as the country's open-source AI ecosystem gains growing recognition among overseas users with its wider and fairer access to high-performance AI technologies at lower costs, said senior officials and industry experts.

"China is ready to work with all parties to establish a globally interoperable AI governance system that accommodates the interests of all parties and promotes beneficial, safe and fair AI development," said Li Lecheng, minister of industry and information technology, when attending the first session of the United Nations Global Dialogue on AI Governance last week in Geneva, Switzerland.

By placing great importance on both AI development and governance, the nation has supported the world's first resolution on AI standardization and has worked with international partners on more than 120 AI standards, contributing practical experience to the global intelligent transformation, Li said.

He added that China will continue to help bridge the global AI divide by supporting fair and inclusive development and by assisting countries, particularly those in the Global South, in building AI technologies and services.

Mathias Gabrysch, senior director of ecosystem development at global communications alliance GTI, noted during the conference that China has provided "valuable practical experience for the world" by making extensive AI applications in agriculture, healthcare and public services.

"More important, China's open-source models — such as DeepSeek — enable researchers, startups and public institutions around the world to access high-performance AI at low cost. That is a genuine contribution to the global public good," he said.

Speaking to China Daily more recently, Pan Helin, a member of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology's Expert Committee for Information and Communication Economy, said the growing international appeal of Chinese AI models is being driven by their improving capabilities, competitive pricing and open-source nature.

"The gap between AI models made by China and the United States is narrowing rapidly. China's significant cost advantage is increasingly offsetting the remaining difference in performance. In some areas, such as video-generation models, Chinese developers are already ahead of their overseas competitors," Pan added.

According to OpenRouter, a platform widely used by developers to access AI models, weekly application programming interface calls for Chinese large language models have surpassed those for US-developed LLMs for 11 consecutive weeks as of Sunday, placing China at the top position globally.

Since Feb 8, more than 30 percent of tokens used by US companies on the platform each week were related to Chinese AI models, with the share peaking at 46 percent. Tokens are small units of data processed by AI models during training and inference. In contrast, the share was only 4.5 percent in the first half of 2025.

"Whether individuals or businesses, users worldwide are validating China's AI development path through real-world adoption. That, in turn, will further strengthen the global application ecosystem for Chinese AI models," Pan said.

A growing number of overseas companies are already turning to Chinese LLMs as a more cost-effective option for deploying advanced AI.

In late June, Brian Armstrong, CEO of cryptocurrency platform Coinbase, shared on social media that the company had added two Chinese LLMs as default models for its engineering team, cutting AI spending to nearly half its peak level.

The same month, AI startup Lindy announced that it had moved all its traffic from Anthropic's Claude to DeepSeek-V4.

"(This) saves us millions of dollars and we are actually seeing an increase in performance on many core use cases. (It is) transformative for the business," Lindy CEO Flo Crivello wrote on social media.

Lost world



A boy salvages household belongings on Monday after Israeli forces used bulldozers to demolish the home of a Palestinian family in a village in the West Bank, Palestine, alleging that it was built without a permit.
ISSAM RIMAWI / ANADOLU VIA GETTY IMAGES

Nations hyping up South China Sea issue

By LIU JIANQIAO
liujianqiao@chinadaily.com.cn

China said on Tuesday that the so-called "South China Sea Arbitration" was a political farce unilaterally initiated by the Philippines under the guise of law, and the resulting "award" is entirely illegal and invalid.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian made the remarks following a joint statement issued on Sunday on the "award" by countries including some European nations, the United States and the Philippines. The European Union also released a separate statement.

The head of the Department of European Affairs of the Foreign Ministry summoned and lodged strong protests respectively with the heads of the diplomatic missions of the countries concerned and the EU delegation to China. The European side was also urged to stop endorsing the illegal "South China Sea Arbitration Award".

Europe is not a party in the South China Sea and is in no position to make irresponsible remarks on China's legitimate territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests in the South China Sea, Lin said.

The "arbitration" is nothing but a stunt pulled by the US and a handful of Western countries for the political purpose of containing China, he said.

China neither accepts nor recognizes the "award", he said, adding that Beijing also opposes and will never accept any claim or action arising from it.

In response to a statement issued by Japan's foreign minister marking the 10th anniversary of the so-called "South China Sea Arbitration", as well as a joint statement Japan issued with other countries, Shi Yong, charge d'affaires ad interim of the Chinese embassy in Japan, lodged a solemn representation and strong protest on Monday with Kanai Masaaki, director-general of the Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau of Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Such actions have heightened vigilance among regional countries and the broader international community, the embassy said.

Experts said the "South China Sea Arbitration" has become a primary political tool for certain countries to hype up the South China Sea issue and interfere in regional affairs.

Liu Shuliang, an associate research fellow at the Tianjin Academy of Social Sciences, said the US and other Western countries have continued to engage in political and diplomatic maneuvering over the so-called "South China Sea Arbitration" in an attempt to use the case to exert "collective pressure" on China, sow division in the region, and disrupt peace and stability in the South China Sea.

The Philippines has remained unwilling to abandon its geopolitical ambitions to expand its territorial and maritime claims in the South China Sea. Recognizing its own limited capabilities, it has pursued a strategy of "aligning with external powers to contain China", courting extra-regional countries such as the US, Japan and Australia to interfere in the South China Sea affairs, he said.

He added that the US has actively interfered in the South China Sea affairs by strengthening alliances and forming an "exclusive circle", in an effort to turn the region into a strategic front for containing China.

"It also seeks to curb China's maritime rights and interests and regional influence while maintaining its own military presence and strategic dominance in the Asia-Pacific. Meanwhile, Japan and Australia are seeking geopolitical gains by actively supporting the US strategy to contain China," Liu said.

Chen Hong, director of East China Normal University's Asia-Pacific Studies Center, said that the US has actively drawn its allies and partners into the South China Sea affairs, seeking to turn the region into a key front in strategic competition among major powers.

"The South China Sea is not inherently an arena for great power rivalry. Rather, it is Washington's continued introduction of alliance mechanisms, forward military deployments and China-containment strategies that have contributed to the region's growing militarization," he said.

The so-called "freedom of navigation" has been distorted into freedom of military operations, Chen said.

"Through joint patrols, access to military bases, intelligence sharing, military aid and joint exercises, these countries seek to transform the Philippines into a forward military outpost targeting China," he added.

Gao Jian, director of the Centre for British Studies at Shanghai International Studies University, said the United Kingdom's involvement in the South China Sea issue is driven by its global geopolitical and Asia-Pacific strategic interests, under the guise of upholding a "rules-based international order".

By being a party to the related statements, the UK is seeking to reinforce its international "presence", demonstrate the value of its "special relationship" with the US, and underscore its so-called "traditional ties" with Commonwealth countries rooted in the colonial era, he said.

Zhou Jin contributed to this story.

Rest in peace



A woman prays on Tuesday for her deceased daughter and son-in-law in front of the music bar in Chatuchak district of Bangkok, Thailand, where a blaze on Sunday killed at least 30 people. Authorities suspect the fire was sparked by an electrical short circuit in an air-conditioner.
LILLIAN SUWANRUMPHA / AFP

Bikes: Shenzhen now playing catch-up

From page 1

"The greenway really brings nature and the city together," said Chen. "With the sea on one side and skyscrapers on the other, riding here offers the perfect combination: the pure joy of exercise and a real sense of the city's energy."

For years, Shenzhen's cycling environment lagged behind those of other first-tier cities in China. Its urban fabric largely neglected nonmotorized traffic, leaving cyclists with fragmented routes and dead ends.

Cycling infrastructure was an afterthought. Most bike lanes were painted onto existing roads, with little physical separation from cars or pedestrians.

In recent years, however, the city has been playing catch-up by retrofitting continuous bike lanes, building greenways, and introducing buses with bike racks. Consequently, more locals and visitors are now exploring Shenzhen by bike.

Chen, the manager of a bike rental and repair station near Shenzhen Bay, noted that, since the station opened in April, over 60 percent of out-of-town renters have come from the Pearl River Delta region, with about 30 percent of visitors hailing from the Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions, and foreign tourists accounting for a further 10 percent.

Pan Yong, president of the Shenzhen Cycling Sports Association, credited the shift to three factors: expanding greenways and bike lanes, a thriving local bike industry and weather that's conducive for recreational riding for most of the year.

The ecology has also been restored along the greenways. Take the Dasha River greenway, which forms a core section of the Kunpeng Trail. The river cuts through the Nanshan District and was once notorious for carrying sewage and household wastewater.

Today, its clear waters attract wild ducks and egrets, while residents enjoy cycling and jogging along the riverside path.

Sustainability: Practical solutions for drought urged

From page 1

"Every meal begins with healthy land. When land degrades, food becomes more expensive, water becomes scarcer and communities become more vulnerable."

The scale of the challenge is already huge, she said, pointing out that up to 40 percent of the world's land is degraded, while droughts have increased by nearly one third since 2000. Over the past three decades, 75 percent of the world's land has become permanently drier, and drought is projected to affect three in four people by 2050, she added.

The 17th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD, or COP17, which will be held in Mongolia in August, will need to focus on implementation, financing, cooperation, drought preparedness and the use of technology and innovation, she said.

Countries have already made commitments, adopted targets and developed plans, she said, emphasizing that the priority now is to turn them into action by mobilizing investment and helping communities better prepare for drought, land degradation and growing water stress.

Fouad said that other countries could draw several lessons from China's approach, including the value of long-term commitment, sustained investment, consistent policy support and the integration of science, innovation and local action.

Satellite monitoring, artificial intelligence and data analytics can help countries assess risks and target investment more effectively, she said, adding that China's capacity in digital innovation and observation technologies could help improve drought warning systems, land monitoring and evidence-based decision-making elsewhere.

More than 130 countries have set voluntary land restoration targets under the UNCCD, and more than 70 have developed drought plans, Fouad said. Restoring land and preparing for drought are essential investments in food security, economic development and stability, she reiterated. COP17 will coincide with the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists.

Fouad noted that rangelands support around 2 billion people worldwide, yet up to half are degraded or at risk.

China, with its experience in land restoration, sustainable land management and technological innovation, is well placed to strengthen South-South cooperation by sharing practical restoration solutions, scientific knowledge and innovation with other countries, she said.

"China can help demonstrate that restoring land is not only achievable at scale, but also economically beneficial and socially transformative," Fouad said.

"Restoration is no longer viewed simply as a cost. It is increasingly recognized as one of the smartest investments countries can make for food security, water security, economic resilience and long-term prosperity," she added.

Progress: Institutional memory emphasized

From page 1

Information didn't just fill up reports; it was embedded within decision-making. Every intervention strengthened the State's ability to respond more effectively the next time.

China's rapid progress in artificial intelligence reflects the same principle. AI systems improve by learning from accumulated data. Data functions as memory. Governments, too, become more capable when they preserve what experience has taught them instead of starting over with each new challenge.

This also explains why many developing countries go through perpetual reform. New ideas emerge, pilot projects show promise and local innovations flourish. But when the leadership changes, institutions are reorganized, priorities shift, and much of the accumulated knowledge disappears along with the individuals who created it.

The problem is often not a lack of innovation, but institutional amnesia.

This is one of the most underestimated obstacles to development. Much of the debate around development centers on corruption, public finances or infrastructure. Equally important, though far less discussed, is whether institutions can retain and transfer knowledge across political and administrative generations.

From this perspective, good governance is not measured simply by how many new policies governments introduce. It is measured by how effectively governments transform experience into lasting institutional capability.

Institutional memory is not gained automatically. It is built by systematic evaluation, professional civil services, integrated knowledge systems, reliable documentation, standardized procedures and organizations that reward learning rather than constant reinvention. Most important, it requires continuity — the ability of institutions to preserve valuable knowledge regardless of political change.

This insight has an important message for Indonesia. The country is not short of ideas and outstanding pilot projects, yet too many of these achievements remain isolated success stories.

Indonesia's next development challenge, therefore, is not simply to become a nation that learns. It is to become a nation that remembers.

The country needs more than research funding, innovation hubs, or ambitious reform agendas. It needs a National Memory System, an institutional architecture that systematically captures policy lessons, evaluates public innovations, preserves successful practices and ensures that every generation of public institutions inherits the knowledge accumulated by the previous one.

Such a system would transform isolated innovations into national capabilities, allowing successful local experiments to become national standards. It would enable evidence, not political cycles, to shape long-term development.

The 21st century will reward nations that can adapt continuously. Adaptation, however, depends not only on learning faster but also on remembering better. Knowledge without memory produces repetition. Memory without learning produces stagnation. Sustainable development requires both.

One of the most important lessons from China is not that it learns faster than other nations, but that it has built institutions capable of remembering what the country has learned. This is the next frontier of development for Indonesia. Nations do not become great by generating new ideas, but by ensuring that good ideas are never forgotten.

The author is an associate professor at the University of Lampung, Indonesia, and a researcher in public policy and crisis governance. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:54 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:54 PM

WORLD

US government refunds $81b in illegal tariffs

Experts claim that increased import duties have hurt domestic economy and consumers

By **MAY ZHOU** in Houston, Texas
mayzhou@chinadailyusa.com

The US government has so far paid back $81 billion in tariffs to companies since the Supreme Court ruled in February that those tariffs were illegal, according to federal budget data disclosed on Monday.

In a 6-3 ruling in February, the Supreme Court decided that the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) does not grant President Donald Trump the power to unilaterally impose tariffs of indefinite scope. The decision opened the door for companies to file refund claims.

According to the Penn Wharton Budget Model, the IEEPA tariff revenue was estimated to be roughly $175 billion since Trump imposed the tariffs last year. An unnamed treasury official was reported to say on Monday that the number was in the range of $144 billion to $166 billion.

According to an April analysis by Citi, big retailers are entitled to big paybacks — Walmart was due $10.2 billion, Target was due 2.2 billion.

A Treasury Department official said most of the refunds happened in May and June, according to a report by The Guardian.

In June, the US government collected $23.6 billion in gross customs duties but paid out $49.2 billion in refunds alone — a negative customs flow of $25.6 billion for the month.

Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics, wrote in a note that the numbers and their effects on the economy are troubling.

"We have a year's worth of economic data since Liberation Day," Zandi wrote on Monday. "The data are definitive; the tariffs have done significant damage to the economy."

Zandi wrote that job growth has come to a standstill, with only the 693,000 added healthcare jobs keeping the hiring rate from being negative.

Last year, employers added an average 9,700 jobs per month, the lowest since 2002, outside of recession years.

While businesses are seeing some tariffs refunded, consumers are not expected to receive much payback.

"Paying those tariffs blew a giant hole in (companies') profit-loss statements, and so recapturing those duty payments is really going to be about making their businesses whole," said Jackson Wood, director of industry strategy for Descartes' Global Trade Intelligence business unit. "It's unlikely to bring much relief to the US consumer any time soon."

Though Costco and FedEx have suggested they would pass on the refunds to customers, Rohit Tripathi, a vice-president at retail planning company Relex Solutions, said that "prices are unlikely to drop in the near term".

According to a Tax Foundation analysis, since the beginning of Trump's second term, US tariff policy has changed more than 50 times. The applied tariff rate peaked in April 2025, shortly after "Liberation Day", and has fluctuated significantly since then.

The Tax Foundation estimated that the actual average effective tariff increase was 7.7 percent in 2025, up from 2.4 percent in 2024, the highest level since 1947. That's an average tax increase of $1,000 for each US household, making it the largest tax hike since 1993.

Trump had touted the tariffs as a tool to achieve multiple goals: bring back manufacturing jobs and supply chains, reduce the US trade deficit, increase government revenue and leverage tariffs as a negotiating tool in foreign relations.

The government budget data showed that the US deficit shrank a little last year, but rose again this year partially due to the tariff refund. In the first nine months of the current fiscal year starting in October, the US deficit reached $1.367 trillion, up two percent. Over $1 trillion was paid for debt interest, up 14 percent over the previous period.

The Trump administration implemented Section 122 global tariffs of 10 percent after the Supreme Court struck down the IEEPA tariffs in February. Those are set to expire on July 24, and the United States Trade Representative has indicated that it intends to use Section 301 as a principal replacement pathway to place tariffs of various rates on different countries and goods.

Section 301 authorizes the United States Trade Representative to investigate a foreign government practice that is "unjustifiable and burdens or restricts United States commerce" and to take appropriate action to remedy such a practice.

Tricolor triumph



France's elite aerobatic team, the Patrouille de France, trails the colors of the national flag during a flyover above the Arc de Triomphe at the annual Bastille Day military parade on the Champs-Elysees in Paris on Tuesday. LUDOVIC MARIN / AFP

ASEAN FMs meet Myanmar counterpart

By **YANG HAN** in Hong Kong
kelly@chinadailyapac.com

At the first in-person meeting with their Myanmar counterpart since 2021, the foreign ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations reiterated their support for advancing the five-point consensus to resolve the situation in the country.

The informal meeting on Sunday, hosted by Thailand in Bangkok, was chaired by Maria Theresa Lazaro, ASEAN's special envoy to Myanmar and foreign affairs secretary of the Philippines, this year's ASEAN chair.

"The ASEAN foreign ministers underscored the five-point consensus as the main reference in addressing the situation in the country, particularly in promoting concrete and measurable progress in the five-point consensus implementation," according to a statement issued by the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs on Tuesday.

Myanmar Minister for Foreign Affairs Tin Maung Swe also briefed on the latest developments in the country, including the government's efforts to implement the action points relevant to the five-point consensus, the government's 100-day peace plan, and measures to address transnational crimes, among others, the statement said.

ASEAN proposed the five-point consensus peace plan in April 2021 after the Myanmar military took control of the country in February that year.

It focuses on the cessation of violence, constructive dialogue, mediation by an ASEAN special envoy, humanitarian assistance, and an official visit by the envoy to Myanmar.

"In my capacity as a special envoy of the (ASEAN) chair to Myanmar, it has always been a basic document," Lazaro told reporters at a news conference after the meeting on Sunday, adding the discussion point is the five-point consensus.

'Calibrated reengagement'

Also at the news conference, Sihasak Phuangketkeow, Thailand's deputy prime minister and foreign minister, said the country supports the approach of "calibrated reengagement" between ASEAN and Myanmar.

Vietnamese Foreign Minister Le Hoai Trung said at the meeting that ASEAN should take more concrete and practical steps, with priority given to maintaining direct and regular engagement and dialogue with Myanmar to stay updated on developments and facilitate tangible progress, according to the Viet Nam News.

Just before the informal meeting, Myanmar's parliament passed a motion to reject the five-point consensus on July 9, saying the initiative was irrelevant and interfered with Myanmar's national sovereignty.

During the meeting, Myanmar's foreign minister told his ASEAN counterparts that the government has a responsibility to implement parliament's decisions, and it is important to have a thorough understanding of Myanmar's complex political situation.

He said Myanmar looks forward to restoring its full and equal participation in ASEAN and will continue to cooperate with ASEAN as much as possible, according to the ministry's statement.

"The parliamentarians are entitled to their opinion, but what I am stating for the record is that ASEAN's position is that the five-point consensus was and is a consensus and (it) applies," Singaporean Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan told reporters after the meeting.

Balakrishnan said all members now seek tangible progress in three areas, namely, ending violence, releasing all political detainees, and enabling the delivery of humanitarian assistance from the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management.

Following the meeting, the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs said Lazaro, as the ASEAN chair's special envoy to Myanmar, will lead a humanitarian mission to the country by the end of this year.

Battling wildfire



A firefighting helicopter drops water over a wildfire on the rim of the Solfatara volcanic crater in Pozzuoli, Italy, on Monday. The fire quickly tore through the Pisciarelli area, engulfing several car dealerships and triggering explosions of fuel tanks and tires. ELIANO IMPERATO VIA GETTY IMAGES

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg. Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1871

The economics of a duck, from Beijing to Brussels



Zhang Zhouxiang
Reporter's log

FIRST PERSON VIEW

Nearly two decades after graduating from Nanjing University, one of my fondest memories of the city is not the lecture halls or the library, but the dinner table.

It was there that I first realized how completely Chinese cuisine makes use of a duck. A whole duck can be the centerpiece of a banquet, while its legs, wings and head become separate dishes. The neck, feet, tongue and liver are turned into savory snacks, and even duck blood — an ingredient that surprises many foreigners — becomes the soul of a comforting bowl of duck blood vermicelli soup.

The same philosophy is found in Beijing. A Peking duck is first carved into thin slices and wrapped in pancakes with sweet bean sauce, while the remaining bones, still covered with bits of meat, are made into a rich soup with Chinese cabbage or, my favorite, crispy pepper-and-salt duck rack.

As the Chinese saying goes, not a single gram of a duck should go to waste.

Living in Europe has shown me a different approach. Duck is still a popular dish, but duck gizzards seldom appear on menus. Apart from the occasional *gesiers de canard* in southwestern France and a few other places, the rest of the bird is largely absent from the table.

There are several reasons for the difference. Higher labor costs make processing small organs less economical, and Europe never developed the same tradition of eating nearly every edible part of a duck. As a result, a much smaller share of the bird ends up on consumers' plates.

At first glance, this seems like nothing more than a cultural difference. But the longer I have lived in Europe, the more I have come to see it as a lesson in economics.

Economists have long puzzled over how a whole duck in China can sometimes sell for little more, or even less, than the cost of raising it.

The answer lies in the industrial chain.

Consumers are not buying the same product. Some buy duck breast, others duck legs, necks, feet or tongues. Feathers become down jackets and quilts, fat is rendered into cooking oil, and bones are turned into soup.

In a sense, Chinese consumers are collectively crowdfunding the value of a duck. By purchasing different parts, they allow producers to monetize nearly the entire animal while keeping prices affordable — a rare outcome that benefits both producers and consumers.

That is why the European Commission's announcement on Thursday that it would initiate an anti-dumping investigation into imports of Pekin duck — a breed of large white ducks of Chinese origin used for meat production — looks somewhat ironic.

The investigation notice says there is sufficient evidence to justify a probe into whether Chinese exporters dumped Pekin duck on the European market.

Yet, the publicly available documents do not show that Chinese export prices are below production costs. Instead, the investigation constructs a "normal value" using Brazil as a surrogate country.

China's duck industry is highly transparent. Production data, feed costs and industry reports are readily available. Apparently, however, the available data did not sufficiently support the complainants' argument.

That raises another question. While Brazil does raise Pekin ducks, its industry is tiny compared with China's. Brazil's annual output is measured in thousands of tons, while China's duck meat production approaches 6 million tons.

Brazil's consumption pattern also resembles Europe's far more than China's. Its best-known duck dish, *Pato no tucupi*, features duck meat simmered in fermented cassava broth. As in Europe, duck offal occupies only a small niche in the market.

Can the production costs of such a small industry, with a fundamentally different consumption structure, serve as a meaningful benchmark for China's highly integrated duck industry? It's Economics 101 that larger industries typically achieve lower unit costs through economies of scale.

The question stayed with me, so I called my friend Jian Junbo, a professor at Fudan University's Center for European Studies. He suggested I examine another piece of the puzzle: Europe's agricultural policy.

Browsing the European Commission's website, we found that under the Common Agricultural Policy for 2023-27, the European Union plans to spend about 95.5 billion euros ($110 billion) on market support and related agricultural measures. A substantial share of that funding directly or indirectly benefits animal production, including livestock farming and animal feed.

Agriculture has long been one of the EU's most heavily supported sectors. European farm products are highly respected worldwide, including in China, where many consumers willingly pay premium prices for European cheese, wine and olive oil.

"If European producers still struggle to compete with Chinese products despite such extensive support, perhaps the EU should reflect on its own competitiveness," Jian said.

Later that evening, I found myself staring at a plate of duck. Trade disputes often revolve around percentages, methodologies and legal definitions, generating thousands of pages of technical documents and countless meetings among lawyers, economists and officials.

For ordinary consumers, however, the issue is much simpler. They just want good food at affordable prices — and on that point, it is hard to argue they have done anything wrong.

The author is chief correspondent at China Daily EU Bureau based in Brussels.

Contact the writer at zhangzhouxiang@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:54 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:54 PM

WORLD

Fresh strikes stoke jitters in Middle East

US, Iran exchange more attacks as Trump floats levy on shipping cargo

By **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong and **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE

The United States and Iran continued to exchange strikes, putting their interim truce agreement and the Gulf region in further peril, while a US proposal to levy a 20 percent toll on Strait of Hormuz cargo roiled global financial and energy markets.

Among the latest developments, the United Arab Emirates confirmed that at least one crew member has been killed after Iranian missiles allegedly targeted two of its national tankers.

In a separate incident, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations agency received a report on Tuesday of an incident in Oman, in which a tanker was hit by a missile while transiting outbound on the southern route. The agency said that authorities are investigating the incident.

The UKMTO also reported that another tanker was struck in Oman's waterway on Monday.

In a news release shared with China Daily, ADNOC Logistics and Services, the UAE's leading energy maritime logistics firm, confirmed that two very large crude carriers — *Al Bahyah* and *Mombasa B* — were hit by projectiles while navigating the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said its naval forces had struck and disabled two supertankers after the vessels ignored warnings and attempted to transit the Strait of Hormuz through a mined route at the encouragement of the US, Tasnim News Agency reported. The IRGC's statement did not name the vessels or say whether it was referring to the UAE's vessels.

In a statement issued early on Tuesday, the IRGC said its Navy remains fully committed to safeguarding Iran's rights in the Strait of Hormuz.

The US Central Command, or CENTCOM, said it completed the latest wave of strikes against Iran at 10:15 pm on Monday.

US President Donald Trump said in the Oval Office on Monday that US Gulf allies Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE, Kuwait and Bahrain ought to reimburse the US.

"I want to be reimbursed because we're protecting a very rich portion of the world. We're spending money, and so what we've done is we are going to be reimbursed for protection," said Trump.

He went on to say that the US does not "need" those countries because "we have more oil than any other country in the world", and that "we've done a very effective job" in protecting those nations.

Referring to the US as the "guardian" of the Strait of Hormuz, Trump said the US plans to collect a 20 percent fee from ships passing through the vital shipping route, as compensation for ensuring safe passage.

In a post on X on Monday, Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi said, "Whoever provides secure and safe passage of commercial vessels through the Strait of Hormuz should be compensated for this service. Iran has always been the guardian of the Strait and will remain so forever. Twenty percent is of course too much. We will be fair," said Araghchi.

Additional pressure

Deniz Istikbal, an assistant professor and economics researcher at Istanbul Medipol University in Turkiye, told China Daily that if the US were to take control of the Strait of Hormuz and impose transit fees, it could place additional pressure on global energy prices.

"At the same time, the current position of the Gulf countries could create new challenges for energy security and supply. Rising energy prices would likely fuel global inflation, triggering a chain reaction that could affect everything from the (US) Federal Reserve's interest rate decisions to energy production quotas and broader economic stability," said Istikbal.

"The protection of the Gulf states has proven to be an area where the US was not fully successful during the latest conflict. The Gulf countries became involved in the conflict only to the extent allowed by their own defense capabilities. Therefore, they are more likely to favor a ceasefire rather than a prolonged military confrontation," he added.

Contact the writers at jan@chinadailyapac.com



This image from video released by US Central Command, shows an explosion at Bandar Abbas Naval Base, Iran, on Monday. VIA AP



Chinese Consul General in Chicago Wang Baodong throws the first pitch on Monday during the opening ceremony of the Musco Youth Sports Exchange in Oskaloosa, Iowa, where a youth softball team from Shanghai participated in athletic and cultural exchanges with local students.
MINGMEI LI / CHINA DAILY

Softball brings Iowa, Shanghai closer

By **MINGMEI LI** in Oskaloosa, Iowa
mingmeili@chinadailyusa.com

> "We might grow up in different cultures and speak different languages, but we play the same sport."
>
> **Michelle Smith,** Olympic medal-winning softball player

Yellow soybean seeds may have first connected the US state of Iowa and China, but today, yellow softballs and student exchanges are carrying that relationship forward.

Students from Shanghai's Beisibao U13 softball team, along with representatives from the Shanghai Baseball and Softball Association, the Shanghai People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, and the Shanghai Sports Federation, are now visiting Oskaloosa, Iowa. During the nine-day Musco Youth Sports Exchange program, they are competing with local players while experiencing life in the US.

The program began in 2025, when more than 100 young athletes from China and the United States first gathered in Shanghai.

Beyond the competition, they shared meals, explored the city and spent time together, forging friendships that lasted long after the games ended. Building on last year's inaugural exchange, organizers hope the program will become a long-term platform for youth friendship.

Jeff Rogers, CEO of Musco Lighting, the sponsor of the exchange program, said sports provided a natural way of connecting young people. While Chinese and US athletes compete against one another, they also play in mixed teams, giving them a chance to build friendships on and off the field.

"We like all sports, and we'll continue to do youth exchange through sports," Rogers said. "It's not just softball. We'll look at expanding into football, pickleball, tennis — wherever we can find the opportunity."

Wang Baodong, consul general of China in Chicago, welcomed the students from Shanghai and encouraged them to learn from one another. He hoped the young athletes would build lasting friendships through competition and carry forward the friendship between China and the US.

David Krutzfeldt, mayor of Oskaloosa, said the long-standing relationship between Iowa and China should continue to grow through closer cooperation and people-to-people exchanges. While hosting the games in the city, he also hopes students will explore the city.

"You're going to truly immerse yourselves in American culture and experience what life is like in the Midwest United States. I expect you will experience firsthand the genuine warmth of our community," he said. "Our relationship with China is one that needs to be enhanced, needs to be warmer. We have much to offer one another."

Building friendships

Two-time Olympic medal-winning softball player Michele Smith said softball and sports have the potential to bring young people together across cultures while continuing to grow worldwide.

Smith noted that softball has long been popular in both the US and China, recalling that the US team faced China at the 1996 Olympic Games, and she said the students today can find more similarities between each other.

"Sport brings everybody together, and it reminds us we're similar. We might grow up in different cultures and speak different languages, but we play the same sport. We meet each other, we stay in touch, and especially nowadays, the young athletes can continue to communicate even after the trip is over," she said.

Sarah Lande, one of Iowa's "old friends" of China, said the future of the relationship depends on the next generation carrying the friendship forward.

"Once we get young people playing together and understanding other countries, that's what's going to keep the future world together," Lande said.

China's top political adviser to kick off visit to DPRK

By **CAO DESHENG**
caodesheng@chinadaily.com.cn

China's top political adviser Wang Huning will visit the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from Wednesday to Friday, a spokesperson for the International Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee announced on Tuesday.

Wang, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the nation's top political advisory body, will lead a party and government delegation to the DPRK to pay an official goodwill visit at the invitation of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea and the government of the DPRK, according to the spokesperson.

Wang's visit takes place amid intensive high-level interactions between the two parties and countries in recent weeks. A highlight is that Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and Chinese president, paid a state visit to the DPRK early last month.

As Saturday marked the 65th anniversary of the China-DPRK Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, a milestone for the two socialist neighbors, Xi and DPRK top leader Kim Jong-un exchanged congratulatory messages, with both leaders vowing to enhance strategic communication and take the friendly relations between China and the DPRK to new heights.

CPC senior official Cai Qi and premier of the Cabinet of the DPRK Pak Thae-song attended and delivered speeches at the reception commemorating the 65th anniversary of the treaty in Beijing on Friday. Leading a party and government delegation, Pak wrapped up his three-day China visit on Sunday.

Observers said the intensive interactions between the Chinese and the DPRK leadership at the significant historical juncture send a clear signal of the two socialist neighbors strengthening their traditional friendship.

Yang Xiyu, a researcher at the China Institute of International Studies, said Beijing and Pyongyang, by enhancing the high-level strategic guidance, will effectively promote the future development of both countries.

A stable and positive China-DPRK relationship will also have a far-reaching influence on regional strategic stability, Yang said.

EU mulls ban on imports from Israeli settlements

By **JULIAN SHEA** in London
julian@mail.chinadailyuk.com

A ban on importing goods from Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories to the European Union has moved a step closer after foreign ministers of the bloc's 27 member states overwhelmingly backed tighter trade restrictions.

Although support is not yet unanimous, as it would need to be for action to be taken, it is reported that Monday's ministerial meeting saw the highest level of support yet for a ban to be imposed.

Under international law, Israeli settlements in the occupied territories are considered illegal, and a range of economic measures was presented to ministers at the meeting. "The option that got the most support was banning the trade with the illegal settlements," the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs Kaja Kallas told reporters afterward.

The EU Observer website says that there are 45 settler firms exporting agricultural produce and construction equipment to the EU, and trade between the whole of Israel and the EU grew from 42.6 billion euros ($48.5 billion) in 2024 to 43.3 billion euros in 2025, although it is hard to specify how much of that comes from settlements.

The next scheduled meeting of EU foreign ministers is not until October, shortly before elections take place in Israel, which could make any EU decisions over the issue particularly politically sensitive, so Kallas said an extraordinary ministerial meeting may happen before then to try and move the matter forward.

A stumbling block in the path of any potential ban is whether it would come under the remit of being a foreign policy decision, which would require unanimity, or a trade matter, which would not.

Countries that want to see the ban imposed, including Spain, Sweden, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Ireland and Luxembourg, say it should be a trade issue, in which case there is likely to be enough support already for a ban to be feasible. Germany, Italy, and the Czech Republic are believed to be among those with reservations.

The foreign ministers of Spain and Belgium expressed their frustration at the lack of clarity over the matter coming from the top of the EU.

"I am concerned that we are engaging in delay tactics, debating endlessly without taking action, when such debate is not actually necessary," said Spain's Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares. "A decision not to trade would simply be an application of international law."

"(Delaying) gives me the sense that it's more a bone to chew on, than a desire to really move forward," added Belgian Foreign Minister Maxime Prevot.

Relations between the EU and Israel were already at a low point after last month, when Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar said he was cutting off all contact with Kallas for reportedly drawing comparisons between Israel and the South African apartheid regime.

He accused her of "for some time now ... acting obsessively and with blatant unfairness toward the State of Israel", and said he would have no contact with her "until she retracts the blood libel".

Time up



Afghan refugees collect building materials in Pakistan's Peshawar on Tuesday, before their repatriation to Afghanistan. A voluntary departure deadline for Afghan citizens without visas ended as part of an intensifying deportation drive. ABDUL MAJEED / AFP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:54 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:54 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Strengthening macroeconomic adjustment to sustain steady growth

Despite the complex international climate, China's economy has remained stable in the first half of the year, with new growth drivers gaining strength and momentum for high-quality development continuing to build. This assessment, reached by experts and entrepreneurs at a symposium convened by Chinese Premier Li Qiang on Monday, sends a message of confidence and a commitment to steady progress.

The meeting took place just before the due release of the country's second-quarter GDP data on Wednesday. China's economy grew by 5 percent in the first quarter, and analysts believe China is well on track to achieve its full-year growth target of 4.5 to 5 percent.

Economic figures released so far have all pointed to a resilient economy. The total value of foreign trade surged by 16.9 percent year-on-year, reaching 25.47 trillion yuan ($3.75 trillion) in the first half of the year. This marks the first time it has surpassed 25 trillion yuan during this period, according to the General Administration of Customs.

All of these, along with other figures such as the 4.5 percent year-on-year increase in high-tech industry investment from January to May, and a purchasing managers' index of 50.3 in June, indicating expansion in the manufacturing sector, have helped lay a foundation for a good start to the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period.

This achievement has not come easily. Last week, the International Monetary Fund forecast that the global economy would expand by a sluggish 3 percent in 2026, down from 3.5 percent last year and from the 3.1 percent the organization had projected in April. The IMF cited the energy shock caused by the joint military action of the United States and Israel against Iran as a significant factor. China has effectively dealt with the energy shock by enhancing the supply of new energy and diversifying energy imports.

The consumer price index, which reflects the cost of living and purchasing power in the country, rose by only 1 percent year-on-year in the first half of the year, indicating overall stable price levels. This has provided ample room for macro-regulation in the second half of the year.

Despite so, the economy faces some challenges, particularly evident in structural divergence. Growth is largely concentrated in emerging sectors such as artificial intelligence, while traditional sectors such as real estate and manufacturing still grapple with intensified competition and shrinking profit margins. Additionally, residents' expectations for future income remain not strong enough, prompting increased savings and a reluctance to spend.

Experts suggest that the government enhance countercyclical adjustments to effectively tackle the current economic challenges. This involves providing targeted support to small and micro-sized enterprises, reducing comprehensive financing and operating costs, stabilizing employment and promoting income growth to further boost consumer confidence. The symposium on Monday reaffirmed the policy direction.

Additionally, deepening market-oriented reforms and stimulating the vitality of private investment are crucial to ensure that economic benefits are widely shared among market participants and the general public.

Maintaining the growth momentum from the first half of the year is essential for the government to achieve this year's growth targets. Implementing more proactive and effective macroeconomic policies — with a focus on expanding domestic demand and driving technological innovation — is vital.

By coordinating policy measures with reforms, the government can accelerate the development of new quality productive forces. This, alongside fostering an environment conducive to innovation and entrepreneurship, can help boost sustainable growth. These policy actions will not only support immediate economic objectives, but also lay the necessary foundation for long-term prosperity.

'Guardian angel' or protection racket

The US administration has never disguised its instinct to turn geopolitics into a commercial transaction. US President Donald Trump's latest proposal — that the United States should become the "guardian angel" of the Strait of Hormuz and charge other countries for safe passage — takes that logic to a telling degree.

The proposal marks a striking departure from decades of US maritime doctrine. From the Barbary Wars onward, successive US administrations argued that strategic waterways should remain open because global commerce depended on them. Transforming one of the world's busiest sea lanes into a toll booth is a reversal of principle.

It is also a reversal driven by a crisis Washington has itself created as well as its disregard for the fact that the strait is not US territory.

The latest US strikes on Iranian targets, followed by Iranian retaliation, have once again turned the Strait of Hormuz into the world's most dangerous maritime choke point, sending Brent Crude above $84 a barrel, nearly the highest in a month. Washington now presents its expanding military operations as indispensable to restoring order. Yet the instability it promises to manage is being generated by its own actions.

That raises an awkward fact: Washington is proposing to provide "security", when it is the one that created the need for protection.

Before the unlawful US-Israeli strikes on Iran in late February, the regional trajectory pointed in another direction. Saudi Arabia and Iran were cautiously repairing relations. Gulf states were increasingly focused on economic diversification, green investment and reducing their dependence on hydrocarbon exports. The region's principal source of instability was Israel's military campaigns in Gaza and Lebanon.

The strikes on Iran altered that political landscape overnight. Tehran was recast as the "overriding regional threat", conveniently shifting international attention away from Israel's actions in Gaza. For years Israel has argued that containing Iran should eclipse every other Middle Eastern priority. By embracing the same hierarchy, Washington has roiled the world and produced strategic consequences that are difficult to ignore.

In the eyes of Washington and Tel Aviv, heightened confrontation between Iran and its Arab neighbors serves to strengthen the rationale for a larger US military presence, deepen Gulf dependence on US security guarantees and create fresh opportunities for Israel to consolidate its regional position. The resulting instability is then cited as evidence that even greater US intervention is required. It is a protection racket more than a security strategy.

The economics deserve equal scrutiny. Since the confrontation began in February, every sign of de-escalation has been accompanied by softer oil prices, while every renewed military exchange has pushed markets higher. Volatility enriches energy traders, financial speculators and military contractors. Ordinary consumers, meanwhile, bear higher fuel costs and inflation. The beneficiaries of prolonged instability are rarely the societies living with its consequences.

Trump's proposal to charge shipping for US protection merely commercializes this logic. Security becomes another export. Conflict becomes another business opportunity.

The broader US public rarely asks whose pockets are being lined by the cash flows generated by the conflict Washington and Tel Aviv jointly started. The answer is a nexus of vested interests that thrive on volatility, manufacture narratives of "external threat", and skillfully manipulate public opinion, financial instruments and the machinery of war.

This cycle of turmoil must not be normalized in the region, however much its beneficiaries would like it to be. The Strait of Hormuz should be reopened through a comprehensive and lasting ceasefire, not perpetual military escalation. Any arrangement governing the strait must respect international law, safeguard the sovereignty and legitimate rights of the coastal states, and serve the shared interest of preserving the free and secure flow of global commerce — not the geopolitical ambitions of any single power.

The recent failure of the UN Security Council to adopt a resolution endorsing US-backed naval arrangements regarding the strait reflected precisely this concern: maritime security cannot be divorced from the political origins of the crisis.

If major countries begin treating strategic waterways as commercial assets to administer rather than international commons to preserve, others will eventually follow the precedent. The result will be a world in which every maritime choke point becomes subject to competing claims, military toll collectors and escalating geopolitical rivalry.

The guardianship of the Strait of Hormuz should be measured by restraint, diplomacy and respect for international law — not by the size of the invoice a self-appointed toll collector presents.

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

2008 Olympics left behind open and confident country

Looking back, the impetus that continues to modernize Beijing started 25 years ago, on July 13, 2001, the day Juan Antonio Samaranch, then president of the International Olympic Committee, uttered "Beijing" in Moscow, marking the city's first successful Olympics bid. What this event left behind goes far beyond the magnificent sports facilities that were built for it, as it bestowed a rich legacy of national confidence, urban transformation and the spirit of a nation.

First and foremost, the Olympics left behind a rapidly modernizing Beijing, ushering in a "golden era" of urban development. Between 2001 and 2008, to fulfill the promise of "New Beijing, New Olympics", the city underwent an unprecedented transformation. Its subway system expanded from just two lines, totaling approximately 54 kilometers, to eight lines, covering about 200 kilometers and connecting major urban areas, Olympic venues and the airport.

Ingrained with the concept of "Green Olympics, High-tech Olympics, and People's Olympics", the Games became a powerful catalyst for the city's international-standard urbanization. This leap in infrastructure and urban governance — starting with landmark venues such as the National Stadium, dubbed the Bird's Nest, and National Aquatics Center, called the Water Cube — continues to benefit millions of people to this day.

The Bird's Nest contributes valuable Chinese experience to the post-use of large Olympics venues worldwide. Now hosting performances, exhibitions, e-sports and public welfare activities, the stadium is more than just a steel-and-concrete structure; it functions as a "city engine".

When Beijing hosted the Winter Olympics in 2022, it also became the world's first "Dual Olympic City". The 2022 Olympics reused multiple venues from 2008, including four converted into competition venues and one for the opening and closing ceremonies.

The year 2008 was unique, as the country also experienced the tragedy of the Wenchuan earthquake on May 12, which killed nearly 70,000 people. The joy of hosting the Olympic Games on Aug 8 embodied the rallying cry of "rising from adversity" after the nation had united in sorrow. The Olympics showcased to the world a united, resilient and open China. From the "desire for recognition" during the Olympics bid, the mindset of the Chinese people has evolved to today's "composure and confidence".

I covered both Olympics as a reporter. I noticed that the organizing committee of the 2008 Beijing Olympics was composed of elite members from various city departments. The 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, making it the first Olympics to require closed-loop management — a system whose success was acknowledged by then-IOC President Thomas Bach. He stated that the management of the Beijing Winter Olympics "set the stage in such an excellent way — and in a safe way". It was the experience of hosting the 2008 Olympics that gave Beijing the confidence to successfully host the 2022 Winter Olympics under such challenging circumstances.

Hosting the two Olympics provided China with the opportunity to showcase its culture, history and organizational capabilities globally, while challenging stereotypes, changing perceptions and strengthening China's soft power. This newfound international influence paved the way for China to play a more significant role in global affairs.

Twenty-five years later, the Olympic flame still burns brightly in the city. For what the 2008 Olympics left behind is a more open and inclusive China, a more confident and composed nation and a collective memory of dreams, fighting spirit and glory. This legacy will inspire us to continue striving toward the goal of "higher, faster, stronger — together" in the future.

— LEI LEI, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

New plan focuses on public participation in sports

Editor's note: *The central authorities adopted a plan to promote national fitness from 2026 to 2030. The plan builds on the success of the previous initiative from 2021 to 2025. The plan calls for increasing the supply of fitness facilities through multiple channels, boosting school sports and organizing various amateur sports events that involve ordinary people. Nanfang Plus, a news outlet of Nanfang Media Group, spoke to Li Liang, a researcher at the China Institute of Sport Science, about the plan. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

One of the core tasks of the previous national fitness plan was to increase the number of fitness venues and the supply of facilities. Accordingly, new venues were constructed, existing ones were renovated and expanded, and more venues were opened for public use. Thanks to these efforts, the public's accessibility to sports facilities has increased.

China's per capita sports venue area stands at 3.11 square meters, indicating that there is an adequate supply of sports venues for people's fitness needs.

Building on this progress, the new plan is now focusing on upgrading the quality of these facilities and their targeted supply, which requires mobilizing resources from all sectors, unlocking the potential of existing sports facilities and optimizing their allocation.

School sports will be boosted so that young people are encouraged to actively engage in sports and become lifelong sports participants.

But national fitness extends beyond the sports sector. It is essential to establish a health service system that covers all age groups. The ultimate aim of national fitness should be to safeguard people's health throughout their lives and support the building of a strong nation where people enjoy sound health.

A key priority of the new plan is to enhance the efficiency of sports facilities. It is not enough to merely construct such facilities; what matters more is ensuring they are effectively utilized by the public.

There is fitness equipment in many residential compounds. The supply of equipment that meets the needs of older adults and children should be increased to attract people of all age groups.

Authorities and officials at the grassroots level should organize sports events, especially parent-child activities, on a more regular basis. There should also be more professional guidance and services to help residents work out in a scientific way.

Amateur sports events have seen significant growth across the country in recent years. But they tend to be highly similar. Also, some events focus excessively on online popularity, and a lot of people remain just spectators rather than participants.

Amateur sports events should be more inclusive. These events are not meant for professional athletes, and should therefore avoid too much commercialization. The organizers should focus on attracting broader public involvement in the events.

A tiered system of sports events targeting different groups of people should be developed. Events at lower tiers have a greater potential to attract public participation. By engaging in these activities, people can experience the positive changes sports can bring to their lives, and may gradually incorporate fitness activities into their everyday routines.

In addition, sports events should have special local characteristics, and not try to imitate events of other regions. They should be designed to meet the specific needs and preferences of local communities and encourage them to participate.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:54 PM

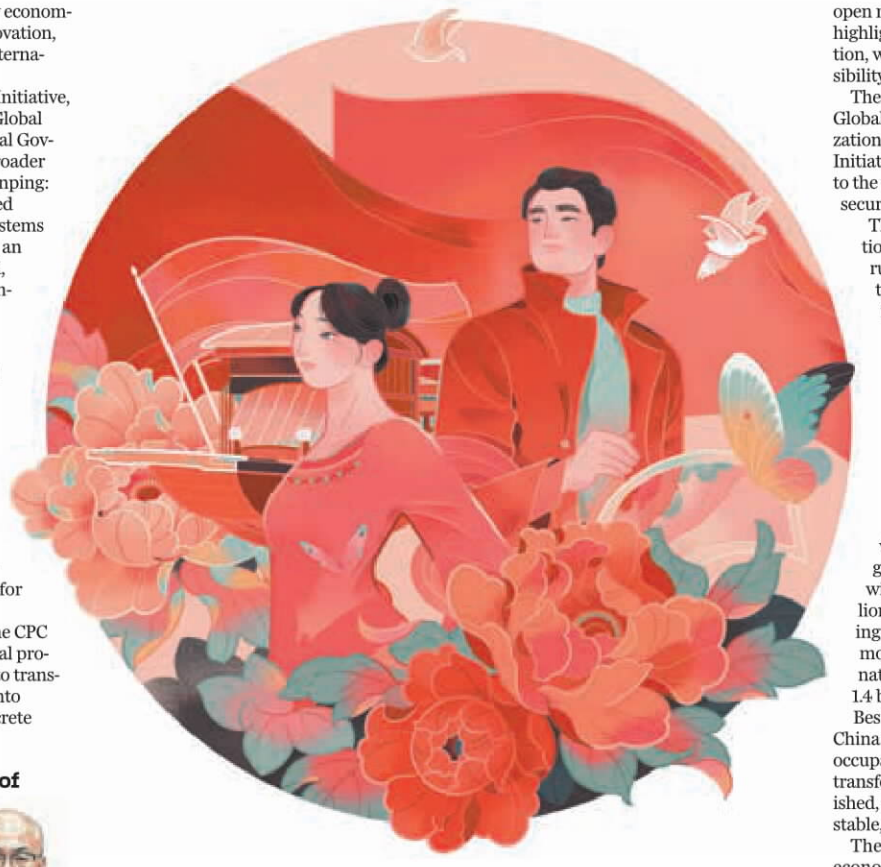
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:54 PM

VIEWS

China and the World Roundtable | Wisdom of Governance Shapes a Brighter World

Editor's Note: *To commemorate the 105th founding anniversary of the Communist Party of China, the Research Planning Department of the Institute of Party History and Literature of the CPC Central Committee, Xinhua Institute and Shanghai Jiao Tong University co-hosted an event in Shanghai in July. Part of the Hong Ting Forum series launched in 2022, the event, titled "The Enduring Governance of a Century-Old Party: The Role of Soft Power", invited both foreign and Chinese experts to discuss the CPC's governance. Below are excerpts of the remarks by four experts who participated in the discussions, as reported by China Daily's Wang Qingyun, Gao Erqiang and Zheng Zheng.*

CPC's governing philosophy underpins China's success



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

Actions speak louder than words



Sabino Vaca Narvaja is the president of the Center for Sinology Studies at the University of Buenos Aires and former ambassador of Argentina to China.

When evaluating the international image of a political party, the focus is usually on its discourse, messages or communication.

However, I believe that the true image of a political organization is built by its historical achievements. A party's credibility does not depend only on what it says, but on what it achieves.

From this perspective, the international image of the CPC is intrinsically linked to China's transformation over the past century.

Just over a hundred years ago, China was a fragmented and impoverished country. Today it is one of the world's major economies. The living conditions of hundreds of millions of people have improved substantially.

The obvious question is: How did this transformation happen?

The answer lies in four fundamental characteristics of the CPC: its people-centered governance philosophy, its capacity for theoretical innovation, its ability to cultivate cadres and leaders and its commitment to peaceful development.

Throughout its history, the Party has upheld a fundamental conviction: development is meaningful only if it effectively improves people's lives.

When we observe China's experiences, we do not only see economic growth, but also poverty reduction, expanded education, improved infrastructure, broader opportunities and an overall rise in living standards.

A defining feature of the CPC is its ability to adapt to changing circumstances without losing sight of its fundamental strategic objectives. This blend of continuity and innovation is the cornerstone of the Party's political vitality.

International observers often study China's public policies and their outcomes, but rarely explore who is responsible for designing, implementing and evaluating those policies.

The Party's ability to cultivate generations of cadres with grassroots experience, technical expertise, organizational discipline and strategic vision has been one of its strengths for more than a century.

In a world dominated by short-term thinking, China's experiences offer a different perspective.

Therefore, when we look at the country's achievements in recent decades, we must examine not only the policies implemented, but also the institutional capacities that enabled their execution. Cadre training is one of the least studied yet most important pillars of the CPC's institutional strength.

Modern history has many examples of powers that expanded their influence through conquest, colonization or imposing their will on other peoples. However, China's rise has been driven mainly by economic development, technological innovation, infrastructure construction and international cooperation.

Today, the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, the Global Civilization Initiative and the Global Governance Initiative form part of a broader vision promoted by President Xi Jinping: building a community with a shared future for humanity. The proposal stems from a fundamental conviction: in an increasingly interdependent world, the major challenges of the 21st century cannot be resolved through confrontation or zero-sum logic.

China does not merely put forward concepts. It also helps build concrete mechanisms to turn them into reality.

The Belt and Road Initiative is the most visible example of this approach. Through infrastructure, connectivity, energy cooperation, knowledge exchange and development projects, the BRI has led cooperation to deliver tangible outcomes for many countries.

The international influence of the CPC does not rest solely on its theoretical proposals. It also rests on its capacity to translate principles into actions, ideas into policies, and cooperation into concrete results.

Traditional culture source of soft power



Wang Honggang is the head of the Institute of Peaceful Development at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

The CPC possesses the spirit of self-reform, a concept deeply rooted in Chinese culture, which emphasizes introspection and self-cultivation.

The essence of this profound traditional wisdom is that all truths of the universe reside within the human mind, and all solutions to problems lie in the elevation of one's spiritual stature.

The CPC's spirit of self-reform reflects the integration of the basic principles of Marxism and fine traditional Chinese culture. Endowed with such wisdom and courage, the CPC has surmounted external challenges time and again.

Under its leadership, China focuses on self-improvement and managing its own affairs well instead of blaming or shifting responsibilities to other countries. Such a mindset is exceedingly rare and precious in contemporary international politics.

This focus on the self and inward pursuit is neither selfish conservatism, nor isolationism. Throughout its history, the Party has shouldered the important mission entrusted by the people. It has pursued national independence, the people's liberation and prosperity, and achieved significant success.

Today, as the world's largest ruling party, the CPC bears greater responsibilities to safeguard world peace and advance shared development.

However, peace and development do not mean blind compromise for superficial harmony. Achieving the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and the building of a community with a shared future for humanity will by no means be smooth sailing. They will require a great struggle with many new features. The CPC dares to struggle, and excels at it. It does not provoke trouble, yet never shirks from confronting it. When assessing what role China will play in the world, one should take into account these characteristics of the Party.

Governance achievement worthy of in-depth research

The CPC's capacity for governance and its ability to lead China's economic and social development form a prominent part of the Party's international image.

Governing a large country with over 1.4 billion people, maintaining political and social stability, and advancing reform and opening-up as well as modernization are remarkable achievements that deserve in-depth research.



Nguyen Minh Hoan is the director and professor of the Department of Philosophy of the Academy of Journalism and Communication at the Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics in Vietnam.

Many Vietnamese researchers are particularly interested in how the CPC has developed its capacity for governance and self-renewal to lead a vast country with an enormous population toward rapid modernization.

The Party's image is also closely tied to its self-governance and self-reform capabilities. The biggest challenge facing a long-ruling political party is maintaining its integrity, sustaining the people's trust, and continuously adapting to the new demands of the times.

Another vital aspect of the CPC's international image is its global and strategic vision. Against the backdrop of accelerating changes unseen in a century, intensifying strategic competition and increasingly complex challenges, China has proposed building a community with a shared future for humanity. This vision embodies a more open mindset on international relations, highlighting peace, development, cooperation, win-win outcomes and shared responsibility for humanity's future.

The Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, the Global Civilization Initiative and the Global Governance Initiative demonstrate China's commitment to the world in the fields of development, security, civilization and governance.

These initiatives lift the CPC's international image beyond that of a national ruling party, presenting it as an important political force actively engaged in fostering a more just, reasonable, humane and civilized international order.

Stability enables faster economic growth



Peter Kagwanja is the president and chief executive of the Africa Policy Institute in Kenya.

Since its founding in 1921, the CPC has grown into the world's largest governing party with over 100 million members, leading one of the world's most populous nations of more than 1.4 billion people.

Besides liberating China from oppression, occupation and exploitation, the Party has transformed it from a fragmented, impoverished, and weak country a century ago to a stable, united, and prosperous one.

The CPC's success in maintaining rapid economic growth and long-term social stability has made it a model of governance, drawing the interest of researchers, intellectuals and leaders across the world.

The CPC has renewed and strengthened China's ties with Africa. Through these ties, China has become part of the "Africa Rising" story.

China's most effective soft power is the success of its homegrown modernization. The CPC has achieved long-term political stability, safeguarded China's sovereignty and security, and defended the unity of the country's 56 ethnic groups.

This has created a peaceful environment conducive to rapid economic growth.

China's success in poverty eradication has shown that poverty is not an insurmountable barrier. Since the Party's reform and opening-up policy began in 1978, China has lifted about 800 million people out of poverty and transformed into the second-largest economy in the world.

In our turbulent world ruptured by the upsurge of anti-globalization trends such as populism, isolationism and protectionism, Africa and China share the vision of a world underpinned by free trade and a non-hegemonic, fairer and more equitable global governance.

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

Yang Jiucheng

Japan's neo-militarism threatens regional peace and stability

Recent developments indicate that Japan is increasingly pursuing neo-militarism and even harbors nuclear ambitions. The country's military-industrial complex poses escalating dangers to regional peace and stability.

Before World War II, Japan aggressively sought military supremacy and expansion, causing immense suffering to its neighbors. Following its defeat in the war, Japan did not fully eliminate militarism, opting instead to serve as a Cold War "bastion", which led to prolonged tensions with China and other neighboring countries.

It wasn't until the 1970s, driven by events such as the "Nixon shock", that Japan began to shift its policies, paving the way for the normalization of Sino-Japanese relations.

This change significantly enhanced the regional strategic environment and fostered conditions for peace and development in Asia. Japan therefore got a crucial opportunity to build relationships of mutual trust and benefit with its neighbors, promoting sound development of itself.

However, after the end of the Cold War in the 1990s, driven by the ambition to become a major power, Japan sought to break free from the postwar constraints and redefine itself as a "normal country".

The remnants of militarism resurfaced in new forms. By highlighting Tokyo's contributions to the US-Japan security alliance and championing "proactive contribution to peace" under various pretexts to defend "a favorable international order", these forces once again coalesced into disruptive neo-militarism.

As a result, tensions between Japan and its neighbors over historical perceptions, territorial sovereignty, maritime rights and interests, and geopolitics have intensified.

Tokyo has slyly exploited these issues, even the trajectory of global development, to justify its neo-militarism.

After the Ukraine crisis, Japan drew false parallels with East Asia and labeled China as its "greatest strategic challenge".

Using this pretext, it lifted restrictions on preemptive strike capabilities, accelerated plans for external intervention, and obstinately pushed forward its economic security strategy to ally with partners and contain its neighbors, revealing its intent to stoke a new Cold War.

Since Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi took office in October 2025, the Japanese government has accelerated constitutional revisions, military expansion, alliance-building, and arms sales. Japan has openly linked the so-called "survival-threatening crisis" to China's Taiwan island, pushing neo-militarism into a new phase of war blackmail against its neighbor.

These actions demonstrate that Japan's neo-militarism poses an imminent threat to regional security. The domestic political climate in the country is severely imbalanced, lacking effective resistance to neo-militarism, let alone the will to reverse the course.

Right-wing hawkish forces, military establishments, defense contractors such as Mitsubishi and Kawasaki, and research institutions such as the National Institute for Defense Studies have accelerated the formation of a military-industrial complex with intertwined interests and collusive profit-sharing — the core driver of neo-militarism.

Together, these forces have hijacked Japan's development path. Military establishments manufacture threats and stoke anxiety to seize power and profit, while right-wing hawks position the defense industry as an economic pillar, driving up military spending and profits from arms orders.

Industries, academia, and research sectors, motivated by profit, engage in the R&D and production of dual-use items. Japan's politics, economy, and society are being pulled into a self-reinforcing war system.

Japan's development of offensive weapons, lifting of restrictions on lethal arms exports, military agreements with certain countries and joint military capacity-building in sensitive regions disrupt the regional strategic balance and heighten tensions.

Coupled with its strategy of "making distant allies while confronting neighbors", these actions increase the risk of weapons proliferation and threaten regional peace and stability.

At the same time, Tokyo is accelerating changes to the country's pacifist constitution, hollowing out the principle of "exclusively defense-oriented" policy, and testing the boundaries of its "three non-nuclear principles". By strengthening foreign intelligence infiltration and expanding overseas military activities, Japan seeks to enhance its military deterrence and intervention.

The international consensus that Japan must never repeat the mistakes of war is being challenged, and the international order centered on the United Nations has been severely undermined.

In response to this growing militarist threat, China's Ministry of Commerce has legitimately placed 20 Japanese entities under export control for dual-use items and 20 on a watch list.

The ban targets exports of dual-use items to Japanese military end-users, for military purposes, and to end-users helping enhance Japan's military capabilities.

By targeting the root cause, this measure aims to curb Japan's reckless pursuit of neo-militarism and its nuclear ambitions. These restrictions apply only to a few Japanese entities and focus solely on dual-use items, leaving normal economic and trade exchanges between the two countries unaffected. Businesses that are compliant with the law will not be impacted.

Tokyo should realize that a beggar-thy-neighbor approach will ultimately undermine its own future, as good-neighborly relations are essential for Japan's sustainable development.

As Japan's important neighbor, the largest trading partner and largest source of imports, China is of great significance to the country's stability, economic revitalization, and regional cooperation.

The current difficulties in bilateral relations arise from Japan pushing its neo-militarist agenda and its erroneous words concerning China's Taiwan island.

History has shown that arms expansion and war preparation ultimately backfire. Tokyo's effort to position the military industry as an economic pillar is a ruinous stopgap.

Entrusting the nation's destiny to the military-industrial complex driving neo-militarism could be disastrous for the nation's future.

The author is an associate professor at the National Defense University, the People's Liberation Army.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:54 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:54 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

ADNAN IFTIKHAR

China-Pakistan enduring friendship

Comprehensive bilateral and industrial cooperation unlocks new development prospects



This year marks the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan. In Pakistan, it is warmly celebrated in the streets, marketplaces, parks, schools, colleges and chambers of commerce of major cities. Throughout the celebrations, the air reverberated with proclamations of how Pakistan-China friendship is higher than the mountains, deeper than the seas and sweeter than honey.

Over the past 75 years, the two countries have cultivated a relationship founded on mutual respect, strategic trust and a shared commitment to development and regional stability. As global and regional dynamics continue to evolve, cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has emerged as a significant pillar of the China-Pakistan partnership, creating new opportunities for economic growth, industrialization, connectivity, cultural exchange, multilateral cooperation and regional prosperity.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has contributed substantially to modernizing Pakistan's infrastructure through investments in transportation networks, energy generation and industrial development. Major road projects and power plants have enhanced connectivity and addressed critical development challenges. Investment in the energy sector has uplifted people's lives at a time when Pakistan was facing its worst energy crisis. Beyond their economic value, these initiatives have strengthened regional linkages and reinforced Pakistan's role as an important gateway connecting South Asia, Central Asia and the broader Eurasian region.

Educational, cultural and people-to-people exchanges have become other important dimensions of bilateral relations. An example is the increasing number of Pakistani students studying in Chinese universities and the Pakistanis who have learned the Chinese language and are now working in different places in China, especially as interpreters. The growing interest in learning the Chinese language in Pakistan, paired with scholarship programs and academic partnerships, has created valuable opportunities for students, researchers and professionals of both countries. These exchanges have fostered greater mutual understandings and strengthened societal connections. Cultural programs, media cooperation and tourism initiatives have also contributed to building a stronger foundation of friendship between the peoples of China and Pakistan. Cultural cooperation has further strengthened. Chinese food is becoming popular as more Chinese restaurants are being opened in major cities across Pakistan. Many Chinese habits, such as drinking hot water, are also becoming popular among Pakistanis, who are beginning to appreciate its health benefits.

Another example of the growing cooperation is the increasingly visible presence of Chinese-made cars on Pakistan's streets, which were dominated by Japanese-made cars for almost three decades. Chinese brands such as Haval, Changan and BYD have established a strong presence in Pakistan.

The SCO has also provided an important platform for advancing bilateral and regional cooperation. As active members of the organization, China and Pakistan have collaborated on issues related to regional security, economic development and multilateral dialogue. Through the organization, both countries have engaged in efforts to combat terrorism, extremism and transnational crime while promoting economic connectivity and regional integration.

While the projects under the BRI and SCO frameworks have brought substantial benefits, several challenges remain and warrant careful attention. Effective planning, transparency and long-term sustainability will be essential for maximizing the benefits of future economic cooperation. The CPEC should be seen not merely as a corridor but as a transformative development framework that helps Pakistan convert geographical obstacles into geoeconomic connectivity and cooperation into national development.

Security poses another major challenge. Both countries need to attach great importance to this issue as the successful implementation of infrastructure and connectivity projects depends on a stable and secure environment. Sustained cooperation between relevant institutions in both countries will be important to ensure that development projects proceed smoothly and contribute to broader regional stability.

China and Pakistan should continue to pursue constructive engagement, strengthen regional cooperation mechanisms and promote dialogue as a means of addressing common challenges. The SCO can play a particularly valuable role in fostering trust, enhancing cooperation and supporting a more inclusive regional order.

In April and May, Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari paid a weeklong visit to China, with stops in Hunan and Hainan provinces, and focused on factories, farming and provincial-level cooperation, underscoring the two countries' efforts to move their long-running economic partnership into industrial upgrading, agricultural modernization and technology-driven growth.

Looking ahead, several areas offer promising opportunities for deeper cooperation. Both China and Pakistan should continue to advance high-quality development under the BRI framework. Future cooperation could place greater emphasis on innovation-driven growth, green development, renewable energy, digital connectivity and technological collaboration.

Educational and research cooperation should be further expanded. Universities, research institutions and think tanks can play a vital role in generating new ideas, promoting policy dialogue and strengthening intellectual exchanges.

China and Pakistan should continue leveraging the SCO as a platform for regional economic integration and connectivity. Enhanced cooperation in trade facilitation, transportation networks, logistics and cross-border commerce can unlock new opportunities for growth across the region.

At the same time, coordinated efforts to address security challenges will contribute to a more stable environment conducive to development and prosperity.

The progress achieved under the BRI and SCO frameworks reflects not only the strength of bilateral ties but also the broader potential of regional collaboration. By prioritizing sustainable development, innovation, educational exchanges and multilateral cooperation, both countries can further deepen their partnership and contribute meaningfully to regional peace, connectivity and shared prosperity in the years ahead.

The author is an editor with Sub News Media House. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

JESSE WILSON AND LI XIAOYU

One finger cannot pick up a stone

Fifty-five years of resilient China-Sierra Leone friendship underpins joint modernization and win-win South-South cooperation



Jesse Wilson



Li Xiaoyu

The year marks the 70th anniversary of Africa-China diplomatic relations, 55 years of bilateral ties between Sierra Leone and China and 10 years of their comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership. Over the decades, ties between the two countries have been marked by remarkable resilience as they weathered global challenges. Bilateral cooperation in politics, economy, social development and multilateral affairs has delivered real benefits to the peoples of both countries and offered a meaningful model for building a community with a shared future.

Political trust has been the bedrock of Sierra Leone-China relations since 1971. The two countries have always treated each other as equals, with mutual respect and sincerity. In 2016, they elevated ties to a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership. In 2018, Sierra Leone joined the Belt and Road Initiative, opening new avenues for infrastructure, trade and people-to-people exchanges. The relationship reached a new peak in 2024, when President Julius Maada Bio visited China twice — first on a state visit in February and again in September for the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Beijing Summit — becoming the first Sierra Leonean leader to visit China twice in a single year. This underscored the growing strategic importance of the two countries' bilateral relations.

Sierra Leone consistently adheres to the one-China principle and regards its partnership with China as a foreign policy priority. China, on its part, has respected Sierra Leone's right to choose its own development path. Through concrete actions, China has proved itself to be one of its most reliable and trusted partners.

The achievements of bilateral cooperation are most visible in the daily lives of Sierra Leoneans. Practical projects have become a driving force behind the country's national development agenda.

Economic ties between the two countries are expanding rapidly. It is estimated that in 2025, bilateral trade reached $2.28 billion, a 29 percent year-on-year increase, making China the country's largest and most stable trading partner. Across Sierra Leone, landmarks testify to this enduring friendship: The China-Sierra Leone Friendship Road and the ongoing rehabilitation of the National Stadium reflect China's contribution to Sierra Leone's infrastructure.

In April 2026, offshore works on the Chinese-aided industrial fishing port project officially began. Once completed, the country's first such port will process about 20,000 metric tons of fish annually. Beyond its economic effect, the project will create jobs, enhance food security and modernize Sierra Leone's fisheries sector.

China's contribution to improving livelihoods extends far beyond infrastructure. Since 1973, China has sent 27 medical teams to Sierra Leone, providing lasting public health support. During the Ebola outbreak in 2014 and the COVID-19 pandemic, China was among the first to deliver emergency aid, supplies and experts, demonstrating true solidarity in times of crisis. In agriculture, Chinese experts have worked continuously for years to develop high-yield rice varieties, improve farming techniques and strengthen food security. Hundreds of scholarships and training opportunities each year have helped build the skilled workforce essential for long-term development.

A landmark development is China's zero-tariff policy, effective May 1, for all 53 African countries with which it has diplomatic ties. China is the first major economy to grant unilateral, comprehensive duty-free access to these African nations. For Sierra Leone, this means it can send coffee, cocoa, cashew nuts and fishery products to the world's second-largest economy at competitive prices.

Equally important is China's assistance in overcoming long-standing market access barriers. For years, Sierra Leone could not directly export fish to major markets because it lacked internationally recognized certification systems. Rather than imposing new obstacles, China helped it establish the inspection, quarantine and certification mechanisms required for seafood exports. Through technical assistance and institutional cooperation, China enabled Sierra Leone's fishery products to enter the Chinese market directly. This has created jobs and income for fishermen, farmers, processors and exporters, while providing a pathway to overcome trade barriers and participate more effectively in global commerce. It is a powerful example of how a major country can support a smaller partner by building capacity rather than imposing restrictions.

As developing countries and members of the Global South, Sierra Leone and China consistently support each other on major international issues. China's global initiatives — the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, the Global Civilization Initiative and the Global Governance Initiative — align closely with Africa's priorities. Sierra Leone has joined the Group of Friends of the Global Development Initiative and actively participates in related cooperation.

During the 2024 FOCAC Summit, Sierra Leone became one of the first 22 African nations to sign the Framework Agreement on Economic Partnership for Shared Development with China, reflecting its shared commitment to common prosperity and South-South cooperation. Both countries uphold multilateralism and the United Nations-centered international system, advocating for a greater voice and representation for developing countries in global governance.

China is now implementing its 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) and advancing Chinese modernization, while Sierra Leone is executing its Medium-Term National Development Plan (2024-30), focusing on food security, human capital, youth employment, digital transformation and public sector reform. These strategic agendas offer a solid foundation for deeper cooperation.

Going forward, both countries can align their development plans more closely and expand collaboration in agricultural modernization, the digital economy, renewable energy, vocational education and public health. Full use of China's zero-tariff policy will boost trade and investment. Greater exchanges among youth, educational institutions and cultural organizations will also strengthen the social bonds between the two countries' future generations.

As a Sierra Leonean proverb reminds us, "One finger cannot pick up a stone". In a world of growing uncertainty, this wisdom holds true. China and Sierra Leone need each other as partners in development and as advocates of multilateralism.

The achievements of the past 55 years show the strength and resilience of the bilateral relationship. As both nations embark on new journeys of modernization, their partnership is poised to reach even greater heights — bringing tangible benefits to their peoples and contributing to a more prosperous, peaceful and inclusive world.

Jesse Wilson is a former research and development officer at the Foreign Service Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Sierra Leone, and an adjunct researcher at the Institute of African Studies at Zhejiang Normal University. Li Xiaoyu is an assistant research fellow at the Department for Developing Countries Studies at the China Institute of International Studies. The authors contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:54 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:54 PM

BUSINESS

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

Hainan eyes gasoline-free vehicles by '30

Province leading way to make internal combustion engines relics of the past

By **CHEN BOWEN** in Haikou
chenbowen@chinadaily.com.cn



New energy vehicles seen in Haikou, Hainan province. XINHUA

Hainan province has set a 2030 deadline for banning the sale of new gasoline-powered vehicles, making it China's first provincial-level region to adopt such a policy.

The mandate is part of a plan by the province for the national ecological civilization pilot zone, which aims for new energy vehicles to account for 45 percent of total vehicle stock by the end of the decade, up from 23.75 percent in 2025.

The rule applies only to sales of new pure internal combustion vehicles. After 2030, gasoline-powered vehicles already registered will remain legal to drive, pass inspections and be traded. Plug-in hybrids and extended-range electric models will still be available for purchase, and gasoline-powered vehicles from outside the island can continue to enter for tourism.

Hainan's move follows a trajectory that began in 2018, when the province first suggested the island phase out fossil-fuel vehicle sales before 2030. In 2019, Hainan became the first province to publish a detailed NEV roadmap. That commitment was reinforced in the province's carbon peaking plan in 2022 and again in its transportation network plan in March of this year.

The province has already made significant progress in NEV adoption. In 2025, Hainan sold 116,800 NEVs, or 62.9 percent of all new vehicle registrations. By January 2026, the monthly NEV penetration rate reached 55.13 percent, said the province's department of industry and information technology. The province led the nation in April 2026 with 74.5 percent penetration. NEV manufacturing in Hainan generated 3.34 billion yuan ($493 million) in output in 2025.

Several geographic and economic factors make Hainan particularly suited for the green transition. The island's tropical climate eliminates low-temperature battery degradation that negatively impacts NEV performance in northern regions. The coastal scenic highway falls within the single-charge range of many mainstream electric models. Additionally, Hainan does not levy separate highway tolls, but instead incorporates road maintenance costs into gasoline prices through a 1.05 yuan-per-liter surcharge, inflating fuel costs above mainland levels. In May of this year, 92-octane gasoline in Hainan was 9.89 yuan per liter, compared with 8.74 yuan per liter in Shanghai, giving electric vehicles an immediate operating cost advantage.

The province has also built supporting infrastructure. Hainan Power Grid Co Ltd has developed an integrated "one-network" charging and battery-swapping platform that connects 73,000 charging outlets, achieving 100 percent public charging infrastructure coverage. The system provides 25-minute charging circles in downtown Haikou and Sanya, along with a 100-kilometer fast-charging corridor on intercity highways. The grid is also piloting 354 smart charging stations that can adjust power output based on grid demand, and 12 vehicle-to-grid stations that allow owners to sell stored energy back to the grid.

Beyond passenger vehicles, the plan extends to broader transportation sectors. Hainan will pilot fuel-cell vehicles in heavy trucks, cold-chain logistics and public transit. The province also aims to build zero-carbon port freight corridors, expand shore power for vessels, promote sustainable aviation fuel at airports and advance rail freight conversion projects to shift cargo from roads to rails.

Experts suggest Hainan's model may influence other regions. Guangdong province and Shanghai, with high NEV penetration rates and mature charging networks, could adopt phased approaches.

Targeting peaking carbon emissions, Hainan's initiative represents a significant step in restructuring the country's transportation energy system.

Guangxi floods hit jasmine sector hard

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn

Hengzhou, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, the country's largest jasmine production hub, has been hit by severe flooding, disrupting flower markets and raising concerns over supplies for the booming tea and coffee beverage sector in the country.

Hengzhou is home to more than 12,000 hectares of jasmine plantations, producing more than 150,000 metric tons of fresh jasmine flowers annually and accounting for more than 80 percent of the country's total output.

The floods submerged large areas of farmland, disrupting harvesting and sending jasmine prices on sharp swings.

The jasmine market price fluctuations have been like a roller-coaster ride. Data showed that the average jasmine price stood at 15.89 yuan ($2.33) per 500 grams on July 4. On July 5, prices dropped to 7.78 yuan but by July 12, prices had surged to about 50 yuan.

Major beverage companies with supply chain ties to Hengzhou have begun supporting disaster relief efforts.

Molly Tea, a Shenzhen, Guangdong province-based milk tea company, was among the first tea brands to announce a donation of 1 million yuan, followed by Mixue Group with a 10 million yuan pledge.

The rise of China's new-style tea industry has strengthened demand for jasmine, whose floral aroma is created through a traditional scenting process that infuses tea leaves with fresh flower fragrances. A 2026 China beverage industry report by Kamen said jasmine-infused tea bases accounted for 86 percent of green tea products launched by tracked brands in 2025.

Hengzhou's jasmine industry has become a major pillar of the local economy. The city recorded a GDP of 42.34 billion yuan in 2025, while the jasmine sector alone generated more than 19 billion yuan in annual comprehensive output value and supported about 340,000 flower farmers.

Jasmine flowers typically bloom from April through October, with summer being the peak harvest period. The small white blossoms are highly sensitive to prolonged rainfall and flooding.

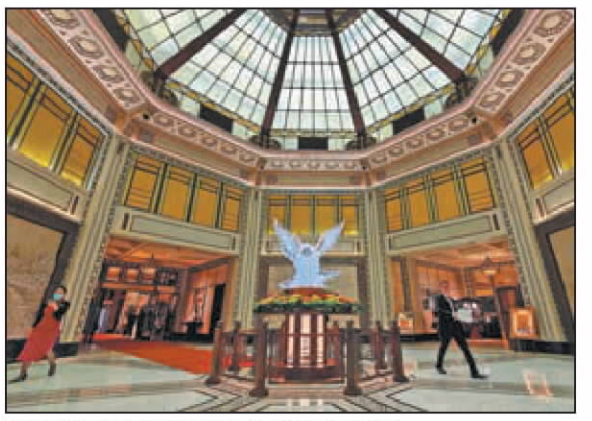
Excess water can weaken fragrance quality, heavy rain can damage flower buds and severe flooding can destroy root systems.

An investigation found that on July 6, flower markets across many towns in Hengzhou effectively stopped operating. The following day was focused largely on rescue operations, while efforts to save damaged flowers began on July 8.

Although major tea brands generally maintain raw material reserves and the jasmine flowering season extends for months, growers face significant losses. Many flowers that were close to blooming have already missed their peak commercial harvest window. Industry officials estimate that Hengzhou's jasmine production may require about two months to gradually recover to pre-flood levels.

Accor to double China hotel portfolio

By **HE QI** in Shanghai
heqi@chinadaily.com.cn



View of the Fairmont Peace Hotel in Shanghai.
WANG GANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

China is on track to overtake the United States and become the world's largest hospitality and tourism market within seven to 10 years, said Accor Chairman and CEO Sebastien Bazin at a recent news conference held at the Fairmont Peace Hotel in Shanghai.

At the event, the French hospitality group signed a raft of new luxury and upscale hotel project deals across key Chinese markets and laid out an ambitious growth roadmap to double its domestic portfolio to 1,600 properties over the next five to six years, underscoring its long-term commitment to one of the world's most resilient travel markets.

"The main reason, no doubt, is that China will be the largest hospitality market in the world. China will be bigger than America in seven to 10 years as both a host country and a source country, which means we can grow in tier-one, tier-two and tier-three cities," Bazin said.

Accor considers China one of the few core strategic markets capable of driving significant growth and serving as a key engine for global expansion.

Inbound tourist arrivals to China have maintained an average annual growth rate of 20 percent over the past three years.

"Visa-free access has helped tremendously in bringing people to China and social media and TikTok have given huge visibility to what China is," Bazin said. "People want to come more and more to China."

After over 40 years in the market, Accor operates more than 830 hotels across more than 50 cities in China, encompassing 17 brands and over 140,000 rooms. Its comprehensive brand matrix ranges from luxury to economy, with over 50 luxury hotels in operation and over 40 luxury projects in the pipeline.

Kent Zhu, CEO of Accor Greater China, said the group is pursuing quality-focused expansion alongside scale. "We are not simply pursuing scale growth; instead, we are focusing more on creating experiential value and building a sound brand ecosystem," he noted.

At the news conference, Accor signed six new luxury and upscale hotel project deals, covering key markets in the Yangtze River Delta region, northern and western China.

Beyond the new signings, several landmark renovation projects are progressing steadily. The 117-year-old former Dalian Hotel will be converted into a Fairmont hotel. The Fairmont Peace Hotel in Shanghai will be upgraded to a Raffles property.

According to Bazin, the rapid evolution of China's consumer market and its innovation with artificial intelligence are the two core drivers behind the group's deepened commitment.

On the consumer side, nearly 40 percent of China's high-net-worth individuals are under the age of 35, shifting consumption preferences from material display to lifestyle enjoyment and emotional experiences.

Meanwhile, the nation's elderly population of more than 300 million people over 60 years of age has ample savings and a strong willingness to travel, together forming diversified growth momentum.

On the technology front, Bazin spoke highly of China's AI innovation capabilities, which he believes will reshape the entire travel industry. "The Chinese are showing me the way to innovate, the way to plan and the way to power experiences. Each consumer will have AI-powered trip planning. Each of you will basically have your personal itinerary through your AI agent," he said.

German watchmaker eyes growth potential in China

By **ZHENG YIRAN** in Shanghai
zhengyiran@chinadaily.com.cn

Upbeat about the Chinese market, German watchmaking company Nomos Glashutte has a long-term investment plan for the country, said its chief executive.

On June 26, the company opened a lounge in Shanghai, its first outlet in China and Nomos Glashutte's second dedicated lounge outside Germany, after New York.

Uwe Ahrendt, CEO of Nomos Glashutte, said: "Just like in New York, we have our own subsidiary in Shanghai. The Nomos lounge in Soho, New York, has developed well. It has given Nomos Glashutte more visibility and, just as importantly, a place where people can experience the brand directly. We now want to build on that experience in Shanghai."

"The timing is right because several things are coming together. China is an important market for us, and Shanghai is the right city: international, design-minded and open to independent brands with a clear identity," he said.

According to the company, it took Nomos a long time to select the right location for the lounge. Instead of bustling commercial streets, the lounge is located in a historical building by Suzhou Creek. "The location connects history and the present, which makes it a fitting place for us," said Phil Wu, general manager of Nomos Shanghai.

Ahrendt explained the motivation behind the lounge, saying: "A store in a luxury mall can present watches very well. The lounge can do something more: it can tell the wider story of where we come from, how we design, how we make watches and how Nomos understands luxury in its own way. That link between tradition and the present feels especially credible in this setting.

"We want the lounge to have a strong effect on the brand — not only in Shanghai, but across the Chinese market. Through events, private appointments and press formats, we want to reach people who are genuinely interested in design, watchmaking and our Glashutte heritage."

According to the latest report issued by US market research company IDC, in the first quarter, total global shipments of wrist-worn devices reached 47.05 million units, a slight increase of 2.2 percent year-on-year. Among them, China shipped 18.14 million wrist-worn devices, a year-on-year increase of 3.5 percent, becoming the world's core growth center.

Chen Shenyu, a manager of Shanghai-based China Insights Consultancy, said that Nomos establishing its first lounge in China reflects the focus of its strategy in China. "The decisions undertaken at this stage are more focused on market penetration and consumer education. Through the lounge, the brand is actually lowering its cognitive barriers, reaching out to more consumers in China."

Ahrendt said: "In China, we tend to speak to a younger audience than in Europe. Many people are interested in distinctive brands, in design and craftsmanship, and in products with a clear story. With the new lounge, we are showing more presence in an important market. It connects Glashutte with the world and underscores the international reach of Nomos today."

Briefly

Yuan weakens against greenback

The central parity rate of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, weakened 18 pips to 6.799 against the US dollar on Tuesday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System. In China's spot foreign exchange market, the yuan is allowed to rise or fall by 2 percent from the central parity rate each trading day.

Chinese mainland shares close higher

Chinese mainland stocks closed higher on Tuesday, with the benchmark Shanghai Composite Index up 1.36 percent to 3967.13 points. The Shenzhen Component Index closed 2.77 percent higher at 14924.87 points.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Nation targets 60-trln-yuan retail sales

China has set a goal of raising total retail sales of consumer goods to around 60 trillion yuan ($8.8 trillion) by 2030 and further strengthening consumption's role in driving economic growth, according to a government plan on expanding consumption during the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30).

The plan, which was approved by the State Council, also aims to significantly increase the ratio of household consumption to GDP and achieve relatively fast growth in total goods and services consumption.

The plan outlines other targets in areas including optimizing the consumption structure, continuously improving consumption capacity, enhancing the supply of goods and services, and significantly improving the consumption environment.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-25), China's consumer market achieved remarkable results, with total retail sales of consumer goods reaching 50.1 trillion yuan in 2025, surpassing the 50-trillion-yuan mark for the first time.

The 15th Five-Year Plan period will see China's consumer market development enter a critical stage of both scale expansion and quality improvement, with a solid consumption foundation, sound upgrading momentum and abundant innovation vitality in consumption scenarios.

In its approval of the plan, the State Council stressed efforts to increase domestic demand, adopt specific actions to boost consumption, expand services consumption, upgrade goods consumption and enrich business forms, among others.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:54 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:54 PM

Q&A WITH CEO

note: *Ahead of the release of China's first-half 2026 economic data, China Daily invited chief executives and senior leaders from key multinational companies to share their perspectives on the world's second-largest economy. Their insights go beyond short-term growth, offering a closer look at the evolving "China Opportunity 2.0" narrative amid ongoing debate over the so-called "China Shock 2.0".*

China giving MNCs strategic forte



Sarath Prasannan
senior vice-president, head of Asia Pacific region of Everllence



Cheng Dandan
senior vice-president of Payoneer and general manager of Payoneer China



Xia Fuliang
president of Evonik China



Karen Yin
president of AkzoNobel China

Q1 Many multinational companies in recent years continue to expand their investment and operations in China, suggesting that "China Opportunity 2.0" is increasingly offsetting the "China Shock 2.0" narrative. What developments or evidence best demonstrate that China is creating new opportunities for global businesses rather than posing a "shock"?

PRASANNAN: From Everllence's perspective, China is a key market for green innovation, industrial-chain collaboration and the global delivery of net-zero solutions. Across the industry, China's policy direction, continued opening-up, vast maritime and industrial demand, mature manufacturing base and deepening partnership with licensees and industry players are sending strong positive signals. We have long shared these opportunities with our Chinese partners, and we are advancing a more efficient, lower-carbon and sustainable future. Despite the delayed IMO Net-Zero Framework review and the decline in dual-fuel engine orders, China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) offers rare policy certainty. Joint milestones include CMD's record-setting methanol engine and our 2,000th dual-fuel engine order with COSCO Shipping Lines.

CHENG: The most visible change is that China is no longer simply a market that global companies seek to enter; it is increasingly becoming a source of innovation and global growth. China has millions of the world's most active cross-border sellers. We are seeing Chinese small and medium-sized enterprises move beyond simply selling products overseas to start building businesses across multiple markets. This is creating new demand for global payments, compliance, technology and professional services. For Payoneer, China has also become an important strategic hub for product innovation, service development and ecosystem building. To us, this is what "China Opportunity 2.0" means: China's scale, digital capabilities and increasingly global-minded businesses are not only participating in global markets, but also creating new demand, new business models and new opportunities for growth.

XIA: From my perspective, the most compelling evidence is that China is no longer only a large end-market or manufacturing base. It has become an integrated platform where innovation, infrastructure, talent and industrial ecosystems come together to create opportunities for global companies. For Evonik, this opportunity is very tangible. We see China as a market that encourages companies to become faster, more innovative and sustainability. In the first half, we brought several important projects into operation in China, including a new hydrogen peroxide plant in Leshan, Sichuan province, the expansion of our specialty amine production in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, our first AEM technology center for green hydrogen, and the Asia Beauty Science & Innovation Center in Shanghai. These projects reflect not only our confidence in China's market potential, but also our belief that China will remain an important source of innovation and transformation for global businesses.

YIN: With a full spectrum of application scenarios, China's vast market serves as a natural testbed and incubator for technological innovation. It fosters wide-ranging technical cooperation and industrial chain synergy, enabling multinationals like AkzoNobel to reap mutual benefits through deep-rooted local operations. For AkzoNobel, China stands as both a core innovation hub and a critical engine powering our global growth. Upholding our guiding tenet — "Innovate in China, for China, share globally" — we keep expanding our local R&D footprint in the country to address domestic market needs while benefiting global businesses.

Q2 China's economy has demonstrated strong resilience so far this year, supported by resilient exports, solid industrial production and continued strength in high-tech manufacturing. How would you assess China's overall economic performance so far this year? Looking ahead, what do you see as the key drivers supporting China's growth in the second half?

PRASANNAN: In the first quarter, China led global shipbuilding new orders by deadweight tonnage, with green vessels accounting for 80.2 percent of new contracts. This strength extends to the offshore sector, where we will supply eight compressor trains to support a new floating production storage and offloading vessels for Azule Energy by China's Yantai CIMC Raffles, contributing to their energy efficiency and operational reliability. Our Seaspan Yangtze methanol dual-fuel retrofit, delivered at Shanghai COSCO heavy industry in June, is our 30th global dual-fuel retrofit. Completed in just three months to cut the shipowner's downtime loss to a minimum, it reduces the vessel's EEXI index by 55 percent below the international baseline. For the second half, China's core economic growth drivers will come from full green industrial chain expansion and sustained new quality productive forces momentum.

CHENG: China's economy has shown strong resilience this year, but what stands out to us is the changing quality of that resilience. More Chinese companies are moving up the value chain, from traditional manufacturing and product exports to building global brands and expanding through technology and services. At the same time, emerging sectors such as artificial intelligence, smart hardware, new energy, smart home and wearable technologies are gaining momentum in global markets. Looking ahead, I see three key growth drivers: deeper global expansion by Chinese SMEs and brands; continued industrial upgrading and technological innovation; and further digitalization of trade and business operations.

XIA: China's economy has shown solid resilience in a challenging global environment. What stands out to me is the continued strength of industrial production and high-tech manufacturing. The country's growth model is evolving, and that may bring short-term adjustments. For companies like Evonik, which focus on innovation and sustainability, given the complex external environment, structural opportunities remain clear. Looking at the second half, I would take a cautiously optimistic view. Industrial upgrading and innovation-led growth will remain important drivers. At the same time, we need to be mindful of uncertainties, including geopolitical tensions, supply chain disruptions and still-soft domestic consumption momentum, which may weigh on business confidence and market demand in the short term.

YIN: China's economy has demonstrated remarkable resilience this year, maintaining stable expansion while marching toward high-quality, innovation-driven growth. The policy blueprint laid out for the 15th Five-Year Plan has further bolstered AkzoNobel's confidence in China's long-term market prospects. Looking ahead, we believe two core pillars will underpin China's economic growth in the second half. The first is the new quality productive forces led by advanced manufacturing, green tech and digitalization. On this front, AkzoNobel has contributed advanced coating solutions to landmark projects such as the world's largest integrated hydrogen-ammonia-methanol project. The second lies in the potential of domestic consumption, fueled by increasing requirements for better livelihoods.

Q3 China's innovation ecosystem has become an increasingly important engine of growth. How do you assess the contribution of artificial intelligence and other frontier technologies to China's productivity growth, industrial upgrading and long-term economic resilience? More broadly, what significance does China's innovation have for global technological progress and the opportunities available to multinational companies?

PRASANNAN: AI and other cutting-edge technologies are reshaping China's industrial growth. Digitalization, alongside decarbonization, represent Everllence's two core strategies. Our CEON Cloud Platform, the core of our digital system, collects full operational data in real time to offer end-to-end services like predictive maintenance and dynamic energy efficiency optimization. Integrated with tools including PrimeServ Assist and Asset+, it helps customers achieve quantifiable carbon cuts without heavy hardware investment. CEON TechBot is a dedicated AI assistant for Everllence equipment, delivering fast, reliable guidance to crews in any on-board scenario. Linked to the CEON platform, it helps maintenance teams troubleshoot faster, streamline workflows and ensure 24/7 safe, efficient vessel operations.

CHENG: AI is moving beyond productivity gains and becoming a new operating system for global commerce. At Payoneer, we see AI helping businesses navigate market research, localization, customer acquisition, financial operations and cross-border expansion more efficiently. From our work with SMEs around the world, we see three major shifts. First, AI is lowering the barriers for smaller businesses to participate in global trade. Second, AI-powered hardware and digital services are emerging as new growth engines for Chinese companies expanding internationally. Third, as AI agents become increasingly involved in commercial transactions, the financial sector will also need to rethink how identity, trust and compliance are managed in an AI-driven economy.

XIA: Technologies such as AI, automation and digitalization are already playing important roles in the chemicals industry by helping shorten innovation cycles and support more precise, customized solutions for customers.

More broadly, China offers a unique combination of technological progress, strong market demand, a complete industrial base and fast commercialization capabilities. For multinational companies, this creates valuable opportunities to co-develop solutions with local customers and partners.

Evonik's approach is to combine our global technology platforms with local customer insights and local innovation capabilities. A good example is our innovation fund investment in China, which is designed to strengthen our open innovation network and support technologies in bio-solutions, energy transition and circular economy.

YIN: AI ranks high on China's national strategic agenda, with the nation achieving world-leading progress in AI development. According to the 2025 Global AI Innovation Index Report, China ranks second globally in AI development, holding a notable lead over the third-ranked economy. At AkzoNobel, we closely track AI breakthroughs and have full confidence in China's strengths in AI. Partnerships with innovative Chinese tech players enable us to better adapt to shifting customer needs, speed up the development and commercialization of new technologies, and replicate proven solutions throughout our global footprint. Moving forward, we look forward to deeper cooperation with Chinese AI tech providers to deliver greater value to customers worldwide.

Q4 China has placed greater emphasis on expanding domestic demand while pursuing high-standard opening-up. How do you assess these efforts? What new opportunities do they create for multinational companies and global investors?

PRASANNAN: China's market opportunities are clear: rising dual-fuel newbuild orders, growing retrofit demand, low-carbon heating upgrades and industrial CCUS deployment. Since 2016, our methanol main engines have accumulated over 600,000 operating hours on methanol alone. In 2025, we signed a 10-year licensing agreement with CPGC and CSE, further strengthening our decades-long partnership. We also secured an EOR-based CCUS project, marking our entry into China's CCUS market. Hengli is a highly valued strategic partner. Our market-leading two-stroke portfolio and four-stroke genset solutions position us as a comprehensive power and propulsion provider. This year, we've also launched a four-stroke licensing partnership with Hengli and are confident it will achieve the same strong future as our successful two-stroke collaboration.

CHENG: China's continued efforts to expand domestic demand while advancing high-standard opening-up are creating a more stable, transparent and attractive environment for global businesses. We have seen particularly encouraging policy signals in areas such as financial opening, the digital economy and cross-border trade, which are strengthening multinational companies' confidence in making long-term investments in China.

Payoneer is one example of that long-term commitment. As a global financial technology company serving businesses in more than 190 countries and territories, we continue to deepen our presence in China through investment in local research and development, product innovation, compliance capabilities and ecosystem development. For multinational companies, the opportunity in China goes well beyond access to a large market. It is also about building long-term capabilities, responding to fast-evolving customer needs, and growing alongside Chinese businesses as they expand globally.

XIA: A larger and more sophisticated domestic market means that the real opportunity lies in upgrading — consumers and industries are looking for safer, greener, more efficient and higher-performance solutions. High-standard opening-up means predictability, transparency, market access and fair competition, all of which support long-term business confidence. Evonik has been present in China since the 1930s and has participated in China's economic development. In the next stage, we believe opportunities will be strongest in sectors aligned with China's high-quality development priorities: green transformation, circular economy, and low-carbon manufacturing, etc. These are also areas where specialty chemicals can make a meaningful contribution.

YIN: China's steady advancement of high-level opening-up has created a more stable and predictable operating landscape for multinationals. Meanwhile, the continuous expansion of domestic demand serves as a powerful growth engine and source of innovation momentum for foreign businesses. For multinationals like AkzoNobel, our long-standing commitment to the Chinese market underscores a strategic evolution: transitioning from mere investors to dedicated innovation partners now. We will leverage our global technological strengths and local innovation capabilities, continue to ramp up investment in the Chinese market, and collaborate closely with local partners to seize new opportunities stemming from high-quality development.

Q5 Looking ahead to the second half of the year, what will you be watching most closely as indicators of China's economic resilience, reform progress and long-term growth potential?

PRASANNAN: First, the delivery pace of green industry orders: we focus on new contracts for dual fuel engines such as methanol and ammonia engines, and the existing vessel retrofit demand. We previously warned that even if all newbuilds switch to alternative fuels by 2030, 50 gigawatts of existing two-stroke capacity will still need retrofitting by 2050 to hit the IMO Net-Zero Framework target — the current lag in the retrofit market has already created clear risks of capacity shortages.

Second, the commercialization speed of cutting-edge technologies: we track the real deployment performance of digital products — including our CEON TechBot and PrimeServ Assist in local Chinese projects — to verify the rollout pace of industrial digital upgrading.

I am focused on two milestones: China's 15th Five-Year Plan decarbonization policies and the IMO's Net-Zero Framework review later this autumn. Both will shape the future of zero-carbon shipping, and we are ready to seize the opportunities with our Chinese partners.

CHENG: Looking ahead, we will be watching three areas closely. First, the resilience of Chinese companies as they expand into a broader range of global markets. Their ability to diversify, deepen local operations and invest in long-term brand building will be an important indicator of competitiveness.

Second, we will look at how policies supporting financial opening and cross-border trade facilitation are implemented in practice, helping reduce friction for businesses and support more efficient, stable financial infrastructure.

Third, we will look at whether Chinese companies continue progressing from product exports to global operations. This includes building brands, establishing local market presence, managing multi-market financial operations and creating long-term customer relationships. We believe this evolution will be one of the clearest indicators of the quality and sustainability of China's future growth.

XIA: On the macro side, industrial production, exports, domestic consumption, private investment and business confidence will remain important. But I would also look beyond headline numbers. For example, we'll note the performance of high-tech manufacturing, equipment manufacturing, services consumption, green industries and innovation-driven sectors such as new energy vehicles, low-altitude economy, advanced consumer goods and circular economy. These sectors are good indicators that can tell us more about the quality and sustainability of growth. For Evonik, our confidence in China is based on these structural trends. There will always be cycles and uncertainties, but China's direction toward innovation, sustainability and high-quality development is highly consistent with Evonik's strategic focus.

YIN: Market vitality will be one indicator for the underlying economic resilience. When consumption is driven by rising expectations for better livelihoods, it generates lasting momentum across a wide range of sectors including retail, home improvement and digital services. On the other hand, driven by large-scale urban renewal and community renovation, China continues to unlock new market potential.

Momentum in new growth engines will be another key indicator. Investment and innovation in advanced manufacturing, new energy, and AI, etc. will increasingly drive economic development, productivity gains, industrial upgrade, and new forms of consumer and business demand.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:54 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:54 PM

CHINA

Dynastic prosperity



Foreign consuls and business representatives tour an exhibition titled *Prosperity and Magnificence — Civilisation of the Sui and Tang Dynasties in Shaanxi Province* at the Hong Kong Museum of History on Tuesday. Featuring 165 artifacts unearthed in Shaanxi and Hong Kong, the exhibition highlights the openness and prosperity of the Sui (581-618) and Tang (618-907) dynasties.
ZHANG XIANGYI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Chinese firms win WIPO global awards

Winners to receive tailored mentoring on IP business models, market access

By CAO YIN
caoyin@chinadaily.com.cn

Three Chinese companies have won this year's Global Awards presented by the World Intellectual Property Organization, highlighting growing international recognition for technologies that deliver tangible benefits for human health and environmental sustainability.

The WIPO Global Awards 2026 were announced on Friday in Geneva, Switzerland. This year, 11 startups and small and medium-sized enterprises were selected from a record-breaking pool of more than 1,300 applications from 126 countries, including Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Japan, South Korea, Switzerland and the United States.

According to a WIPO statement, the awards demonstrate what can be achieved when intellectual property strategy and business execution work together to advance the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The organization said each category recognizes one startup and one SME, ensuring early-stage and established companies compete on equal footing. The awards cover sectors including agriculture and food, creative industries, the environment, health and information and communications technology.

Among the 11 winners, the three from China are: Botree, an environmental technology SME; ArteryFlow, a health tech SME; and Regend Therapeutics, a health-focused startup.

Botree was recognized for its work in sustainable battery recycling. As electric vehicle battery production accelerates worldwide, retired batteries are expected to total 12 million metric tons by 2030, enough to fill nearly 5,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools, according to WIPO. Recovering valuable materials from these batteries has traditionally been too complex to carry out on a large scale.

The company uses advanced technologies to efficiently extract key metals, including nickel, cobalt and lithium, from used batteries, making recycling more economically viable and helping build a more sustainable battery recycling supply chain, WIPO said.

ArteryFlow focuses on noninvasive cardiovascular diagnostics. Heart disease is the world's leading cause of death, claiming 18 million lives each year, yet accurate diagnosis often relies on invasive procedures that are time-consuming, costly and carry risks, according to WIPO.

The company uses artificial intelligence algorithms to replace invasive procedures with fast, low-cost assessments. Using a standard medical scan, its AI platform delivers a comprehensive vascular evaluation in less than five minutes at just 25 percent of the cost of traditional approaches, WIPO said.

The platform has been approved for use in China, the US and Europe. It has served more than 100,000 patients across 400 medical institutions worldwide, and the company's intellectual property is protected on three continents.

Regend Therapeutics was honored for advances in regenerative medicine through a novel lung repair therapy. The treatment uses a patient's own lung cells to regenerate damaged alveoli from within. In clinical trials, patients who had previously struggled to walk were able to return to their daily routines, WIPO said.

Marcelo Di Pietro Peralta, director of the WIPO Global Awards, said this year's winners demonstrate how the strategic use of intellectual property can drive business success while addressing global challenges. WIPO Director General Daren Tang presented the trophies to the winners.

As part of the award, the winners will receive tailored one-on-one mentoring on intellectual property business models, market access and financing. They will also gain access to WIPO's network of ecosystem partners, connecting them with investors, accelerators and service providers.

Former senior official expelled from CPC, public office

By CAO YIN

Ma Xingrui, a former senior official of the Communist Party of China, has been expelled from the Party and dismissed from public office for serious violations of the CPC's disciplines and national laws, according to an announcement disclosed on Tuesday by China's top anti-corruption watchdogs.

The decision comes after an investigation conducted by the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and the National Commission of Supervision. The investigation revealed that Ma, a former member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, committed severe breaches of political rules and the Party's disciplines, failing in his primary responsibility to enforce rigorous self-governance within the Party.

Ma was found to have ignored serious disciplinary violations, legal breaches and alleged criminal conduct by his close staff, failing to supervise or manage them properly, which led to negative consequences. He violated rules regarding personnel management and internal discipline, was untruthful during official questioning and used his authority to favor individuals in promotions and hiring decisions. Additionally, he and his relatives were involved in placing people in positions through improper channels.

The investigation also uncovered that Ma accepted gifts and cash, assisted family members in purchasing real estate at below-market prices and engaged in power-for-sex and power-for-money transactions. He allowed his relatives to exploit his official influence for enormous gains, leading to widespread corruption involving his entire family. Ma also used his positions to secure benefits for others in business operations, project contracting and job promotions, receiving vast sums of money and property in return.

Given these serious violations, Ma has been expelled from the Party and removed from public office. His illicit gains have been confiscated, and his suspected crimes, along with the assets involved, have been transferred to prosecutors for further review.

Ma, 66, who also served as the deputy head of the Leading Group for Rural Affairs of the CPC Central Committee, was placed under investigation in April.

A native of Shandong province, he joined the Party in January 1988 and began his career in March of that year. Formerly an aerospace engineer, he held several key positions in the sector. From 1996 to 2012, he occupied senior roles at the China Academy of Space Technology and the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp. In 2013, he was appointed to several important positions, including vice-minister of industry and information technology, head of the China National Space Administration and director of the China Atomic Energy Authority.

Later in the same year, he began working in South China's Guangdong province, becoming the provincial governor in 2017. From 2021 to 2025, he served as Party secretary of Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.

Breakthrough retains efficiency, durability in solar cells

By LI MENGHAN
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese scientists have set a new world record for next-generation solar cells, bringing lightweight, flexible and highly efficient solar power closer to everyday use in everything from wearable devices to space stations.

The researchers achieved a certified steady-state power conversion efficiency of 28.04 percent using a perovskite-organic tandem solar cell. This tandem architecture integrates two complementary light-absorbing subcells to harvest a broader range of the solar spectrum than traditional single-layer devices.

The study was published on Monday in the journal Nature.

Unlike traditional silicon solar cells — which are generally rigid and require high-temperature manufacturing — these next-generation cells use a mix of "perovskite" — a synthetic, highly customizable crystal structure, and organic materials. Because they are lightweight, flexible and can be printed at low temperatures like ink on paper, they promise a cheaper and easier route to mass manufacturing.

In a perovskite-organic tandem solar cell, the top perovskite layer is customized to capture high-energy light like ultraviolet rays, while the organic bottom layer absorbs near-infrared light. The two materials work in tandem: the top layer blocks harsh ultraviolet rays that could damage the organic bottom layer, while the water-resistant organic layer protects the moisture-sensitive perovskite above it.

> "The light-transformable nature of TDB allows it to sequentially address challenges at two different stages."
>
> **Wu Ruihan,** a doctoral candidate at the Institute of Chemistry of the Chinese Academy of Sciences

"This design allows scientists to 'tune' the material, essentially adjusting the specific colors of light it absorbs," said Meng Lei, a professor at the Institute of Chemistry of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and a corresponding author of the study.

Despite their promise, hybrid solar cells have long faced a major roadblock: internal chemical separation.

To absorb the right colors of light, the perovskite layer is made by incorporating different halide components, particularly iodide and bromide. However, these components tend to separate. They fail to mix uniformly during precursor-to-film conversion and crystallization, and they separate again under prolonged exposure to sunlight during operation. This chemical separation creates microscopic defects, causing the solar cell to degrade rapidly.

To solve this, Meng's team created a smart, photo-transformable additive molecule called TDB.

TDB acts as a two-stage stabilizer. During manufacturing, it regulates crystallization dynamics and promotes homogeneous halide mixing during film formation. Then, once the solar cell is operating in the sun, the light triggers the TDB molecules at the material's microscopic boundaries to transform, binding tightly to the surface. This suppresses halide migration and prevents defects from forming under sunlight.

"The light-transformable nature of TDB allows it to sequentially address challenges at two different stages," said Wu Ruihan, a doctoral candidate at the institute and the study's first author.

The results yielded a highly stable, high-performance solar cell. The optimized perovskite layer achieved an open-circuit voltage — the maximum voltage generated by the solar cell under illumination — of 1.42 volts, a record for this class of solar cell.

When fully integrated into the tandem device, the technology hit a total power conversion efficiency of 28.80 percent, with a certified steady-state efficiency of 28.04 percent. Crucially, the device retained 90 percent of its initial performance after 625 hours of continuous illumination, demonstrating that high efficiency does not have to come at the cost of durability.

Li Yongfang, an academician of the CAS and a corresponding author of the study, said these ultra-lightweight, flexible cells could accelerate the global transition to clean energy.

Li noted that the technology holds strong potential for ground-level applications, such as solar panels integrated directly into building windows, wearable electronics, drones and portable power packs. It could also prove vital for aerospace applications, including powering satellites, space stations and deep-space missions.

Shining in the sun



Tourists take in the vibrant sunflower blooms in Urumqi, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, on Monday. The sea of sunflowers draws visitors for scenic views and photos. SUN ZHENSONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

More universities ban smart devices in exam halls

By ZOU SHUO
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

Multiple Chinese universities have tightened examination security by banning a wide range of smart devices — including smart glasses, smart watches, wireless earbuds and fitness trackers — from examination halls after a growing number of students were caught using high-tech wearables to cheat.

The universities have explicitly prohibited candidates from bringing any electronic devices with communication, storage, scanning or transmission capabilities into testing venues.

On July 1, South China Agricultural University in Guangdong province issued a notice warning students not to bring smart devices into examination halls.

The university said it had recently discovered and handled multiple cases of students attempting to cheat by bringing smart glasses and other electronic devices into exam venues. The students were punished in accordance with the university's regulations on handling examination violations.

The university emphasized that any device with communication, storage, photography or transmission functions — including mobile phones, smart glasses, smart watches, Bluetooth earbuds and invisible earpieces — is strictly prohibited. Simply bringing such devices into an examination hall, regardless of whether they are switched off or used, constitutes cheating and results in a zero score for the subject, along with a demerit — restricting them from receiving any award, scholarship, or becoming a Party member — or more severe disciplinary punishment.

To strengthen supervision, the university has deployed an AI-powered proctoring system that monitors examination halls in real time, identifying suspicious behavior such as carrying unidentified objects, passing items, frequently turning one's head or keeping hands under the desk.

Other universities have also publicly reported cases of cheating involving smart electronic devices.

On June 29, Xuchang University in Henan province reported that three students brought electronic devices containing exam-related materials into examination halls, while two others used devices capable of sending or receiving information to obtain answers.

Hubei University of Technology announced on June 23 that a student received a 10-month demerit period for bringing an electronic device containing exam-related materials into the final English examination.

On June 26, Zhongnan University of Economics and Law in Hubei province urged students to "resist cheating via smart glasses", noting that such devices, which can wirelessly transmit answers, store materials and photograph examination papers, are classified as information-transmitting equipment prohibited in examination venues.

The tougher measures come as education authorities have also warned against the misuse of smart devices during examinations.

Under the Ministry of Education's regulations on handling misconduct in national education examinations, bringing devices capable of sending or receiving information into an examination venue constitutes cheating, and all of the examinees' results from the affected examination will be invalidated.

The ministry also issued a warning on June 2 ahead of the 2026 national college entrance examination, known as *gaokao,* reminding candidates that bringing mobile phones, smart watches or smart glasses into examination venues — regardless of the reason or whether the devices are used — constitutes cheating.

The growing concern reflects the rapid advancement of wearable artificial intelligence technology.

According to China Newsweek, in December 2025, a team from Hong Kong University of Science and Technology modified commercially available smart glasses by connecting them to the GPT-5.2 model. In a controlled test, a wearer read answers displayed on the lenses and completed a Computer Network Principles examination in just 30 minutes, scoring 92.5 percent.

Lin Che, a product manager with years of experience in the smart eyewear industry, told the magazine that smart glasses are more likely to be used for cheating in university final examinations because regulations at some universities have not kept pace with advances in wearable technology.

Lin added that as smart glasses become smaller and increasingly resemble ordinary eyewear, detecting them will become more difficult. He suggested manufacturers adopt more conspicuous designs, such as visible camera indicators, to make the devices easier for proctors to identify.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:54 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:54 PM

POLICY REVIEW

Art therapy greenlit as college major

Move seeks to ease talent shortages, improve mental health services

By **CHEN NAN**
chennan@chinadaily.com.cn



JIN DING / CHINA DAILY

The Ministry of Education has approved "art therapy" as an undergraduate major, recognizing the rising importance of the practice in addressing mental health and supporting social care for vulnerable communities.

The decision, made by the ministry on April 28, marks the first time art therapy has transitioned from an informal or interdisciplinary elective study into a standardized, mainstream undergraduate degree program on the Chinese mainland.

The approval was driven by growing institutional and public awareness surrounding mental health and the benefits of the use of art therapy in treatment.

Experts said that the decision was also a response to a substantial talent shortage in the sector, as the demand for qualified art therapists has surged in hospitals, schools, community centers and rehabilitation institutions.

The establishment of a dedicated undergraduate program is expected to significantly expand the workforce and improve service quality.

Industry observers emphasize that employment prospects in art therapy are broad, spanning healthcare, education, social work and private practice. By formalizing the educational pathway, policymakers aim to cultivate skilled professionals capable of meeting the growing social and therapeutic needs of communities nationwide.

According to a blue book on mental health in China released in 2023, an estimated 16.7 percent of Chinese teenagers experience mental health issues, while more than 95 million people nationwide suffer from depression or anxiety disorders.

If earlier reforms highlighted the convergence of art and technology, the inclusion of art therapy signals the growing importance of the intersection between art and health.

With China facing rising demand for mental health services, an aging population and increasing attention to emotional well-being, policymakers are looking beyond traditional healthcare systems for solutions, and art therapy offers a promising avenue.

The discipline employs music, visual arts, dance, drama and other creative forms to support emotional expression, psychological recovery and social development. Unlike conventional talk-based therapies, practitioners argue that artistic expression can reach individuals who struggle to communicate verbally, including children with autism, older adults with cognitive decline and people experiencing psychological distress.

On May 12, the Central Academy of Fine Arts announced that its application to establish an undergraduate art therapy program had been officially approved.

According to the academy, it was among the first art universities in China to explore the discipline independently. Drawing on its century-long tradition of art education, distinguished faculty and strong foundation in aesthetic research, the academy has spent years building a comprehensive training framework. Its curriculum integrates theory, multicultural studies, artistic expression, clinical practice, research and community engagement, supporting a tiered talent-development pathway that spans undergraduate education, specialized advanced training and master's-level research.

Building on this foundation, the academy has also developed an interdisciplinary platform that combines academic research, talent cultivation, clinical therapeutic practice, public service and the exploration of industry standards, helping to shape the future development of art therapy.

Together, these efforts are aimed at cultivating a new generation of art therapy professionals — individuals trained not only in artistic creation and psychological theory, but also grounded in community practice and human-centered care.

The educational system has been moving in this direction for decades. In 1997, the Central Conservatory of Music took the lead in establishing China's first music therapy research center.

From 2004, institutions such as the Sichuan Conservatory of Music and the Shanghai Conservatory of Music successively launched undergraduate programs in music therapy, while the Central Academy of Fine Arts also developed academic directions related to art therapy.

In 2019, the Arts Therapy Research Center at the School of Art and Media at Beijing Normal University was established, enrolling its first cohort of doctoral students in art therapy. In 2023, the university expanded its offerings by admitting master's students in dance therapy.

A milestone was reached in 2025, when Nanjing Normal University was approved to launch China's first undergraduate program in dance therapy.

The latest policy change now brings these efforts fully into the formal undergraduate education framework.

"The era of promoting health through the arts has arrived," said Lin Yi, a professor at the School of Arts at Peking University and vice-president of the China Arts Administration Education Association. She said that the inclusion in the national undergraduate catalog marks the beginning of a more standardized and systematic approach to talent cultivation.

She added that Chinese universities have actively explored art therapy education for years, with programs emerging in music, dance and visual arts, gradually forming a growing training system at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The policy reflects a growing understanding that artistic value cannot be measured solely through performance, exhibition or commercial success.

At Wuhan Conservatory of Music in Hubei province, students in the music therapy program spend six semesters participating in supervised clinical practice. They observe sessions in hospitals, rehabilitation centers and special education schools before gradually assuming responsibility for treatment plans themselves.

Associate professor Xu Fengping recalled one encounter that illustrates the field's potential. During a music therapy session with autistic children, she and her students began responding to the children's spontaneous drum rhythms.

"When we answered their rhythms, they looked up," she said. "They felt their expression had been heard and accepted." According to Xu, this ability to bypass verbal barriers is what makes artistic interventions unique. "Art becomes a channel," she said. "It can reach deep emotional experiences that words sometimes cannot."

Ma Guoqiang, honorary chairman of the Henan Federation of Literary and Art Circles and honorary chairman of the Henan Artists Association, said that the inclusion of art therapy in the national undergraduate program catalog is far more than the addition of a new academic discipline. "This is about bringing art back to its educational and humanistic roots," he said, highlighting its significance for aesthetic education.

Ma said that the essence of art has always carried a therapeutic dimension. "In ancient times, scholars played the zither to calm the heart, practiced calligraphy to cultivate temperament, or splashed ink to convey emotion. The goal was never merely technical mastery, but the cultivation of character, the settling of the spirit and the harmonization of emotion."

He said the establishment of an art therapy undergraduate program is a catalyst for art to enter society more comprehensively. "From rural cultural vitalization and the shaping of urban public spaces, to the aesthetic development of young people and the enhancement of national cultural literacy, art will become a foundational force in nurturing the social and spiritual ecosystem," he said. "This is not only a humanistic concern for individual lives, but also a positive shaping of society's collective spirit. When art sheds its utilitarian veneer and becomes an essential part of everyday life, society itself will become warmer and more harmonious."

However, as art therapy sits at the intersection of art, psychology, education and healthcare, universities must balance artistic training with clinical competence, ensuring graduates possess both creative sensitivity and therapeutic expertise.

Another challenge involves theory building. As universities expand programs, experts have called for knowledge systems grounded in Chinese cultural contexts and social realities. Standardization presents an additional hurdle: curriculum design, professional certification, employment qualifications and evaluation systems all require clarity.

The distinction between "therapy" and "healing" further complicates matters. As China's public health agenda increasingly emphasizes prevention alongside treatment, arts-based interventions have growing potential in student mental health, dementia prevention, maternal well-being and community care.

Li Hongju, director of the art therapy research center of Beijing Normal University, said that China's art therapy field is at a critical juncture, transitioning from "unregulated growth" toward "standardized development".

"The immediate priority is to establish clear talent evaluation systems and professional ethical standards," she said. "Only by defining the boundaries between professional art therapy, general art education and recreational art training — while specifying course content, practitioner qualifications, practical procedures and ethical guidelines — can we prevent industry-wide homogenization and ensure the healthy, orderly development of the field."

Li said that as art therapy encompasses diverse modalities, including painting, calligraphy, music, dance, drama and crafts, each discipline has its own therapeutic logic, suitable contexts and target populations. "Art therapy can support adolescents through emotional guidance and campus mental health services, serve older adults through wellness and rehabilitation programs, assist special-needs populations, and even provide stress relief in workplace settings," she said.

As the first university in China to launch an undergraduate major in dance therapy, Nanjing Normal University is committed to integrating special education with arts-based therapeutic practice. Liu Shanshan, head of the university's dance therapy teaching and research department, has developed a curriculum and classroom model widely regarded as a key reference in the field. In her classes, students are not required to master complex choreography or performance-level techniques; instead, the focus is on physical relaxation and emotional awareness.

"Through simple, gentle movements and free bodily expression, we guide students to perceive their physical and emotional states and to release inner feelings," Liu said.

She added that dance therapy differs fundamentally from traditional dance education. "Conventional training emphasizes technical precision, aesthetic form and performance skills. Dance therapy, by contrast, has no fixed movement standards and no judgments of beauty or ugliness. What matters is creating an inclusive, safe and relaxed environment where the body becomes a direct language for emotional expression," she said.

Policy Digest

Strict safety guidelines set for inland waterways

China has launched a safety overhaul of its inland shipping lanes, aiming to slash waterway transport accidents by more than 50 percent by 2030.

Guidelines on the action, jointly released by the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Emergency Management on July 3, call for major improvements in safety, management and emergency response capacity.

They also mandate strict quality controls for vessels, upgraded green-energy infrastructure and tighter corporate oversight to raise safety standards across the entire shipping sector.

By the end of this year, prefecture-level cities should establish severe-weather warning and response mechanisms for passenger routes and close routes and ferry crossings that fail safety assessments. By the end of next year, key water transport areas should have effective emergency standby coverage, while response times at major inland ports and key waterway sections should be reduced to within 45 minutes.

Three-tier elderly care service network planned

China's Ministry of Civil Affairs has issued comprehensive guidelines on building and managing a three-tier elderly care service network in urban and rural areas. The initiative aims to streamline resource allocation, balance service supply with demand and address the diverse needs of the country's aging population.

The guidelines, issued on July 8, outline the distinct structural functions and operating mechanisms for each level — county-level, township and subdistrict, as well as village and community — of the network.

According to the ministry, China aims to have a foundational network established by 2029, with plans to further improve it by 2035. Once fully operational, it will provide convenient local services for healthy elderly people, professional and family care support for people of advanced age and older people unable to care for themselves, and more accessible assistance for those facing special difficulties.

Campaign to promote rational medication use

The General Office of China's National Health Commission has announced a targeted national campaign spanning 2026-30 to promote the rational use of medication among the elderly.

The campaign aims to popularize knowledge about rational medication use, improve pharmacy services for older people, raise the standard of medication use and promote healthy aging.

Key measures include educating older people about medicines for common diseases, the difference between health products and medicines, and how to identify adverse drug reactions.

Secondary-level hospitals and above are encouraged to establish standardized pharmacy clinics to provide medication reviews, consultations and education, as well as recommendations on adjusting medication regimens.

Training will also be provided for geriatric medical professionals and pharmacists at primary-level medical institutions.

Public-interest activities will be held in communities, including reviews of the use of multiple medicines, assistance in organizing medication lists, and lectures on identifying false advertising for health products.

CHINA DAILY

Conservatory fosters healing through harmony

By **CHEN NAN**

As China expands interdisciplinary education by adding art therapy to the Ministry of Education's 2026 undergraduate program catalog, the Wuhan Conservatory of Music in Hubei province is emerging as one of the country's leading institutions in cultivating music therapy professionals through an innovative model that integrates artistic training, clinical practice and scientific research.

One of China's earliest institutions to establish an undergraduate music therapy program, the conservatory has spent more than a decade developing a comprehensive system that combines music performance, psychology, medicine and social service.

Since the major's launch in 2011, the school has expanded to graduate-level education, built specialized research facilities and established partnerships with hospitals, schools and community organizations to provide students with real-world therapy experience.

"Art therapy is not about simply 'making people happy,'" said Xu Fengping, head of the Music Therapy Department at the Wuhan Conservatory of Music. She said that music, dance, visual arts and drama therapy provide nonverbal channels for emotional expression, cognitive development, behavioral guidance and holistic rehabilitation.

"Art can bypass verbal defenses and touch a person's deepest emotions and inner world," Xu said.

The conservatory's training model guides students from classroom observation and assisted practice to independent therapeutic work. Facilities such as the Music Therapy Experimental Center and the Neuro-Music Therapy Laboratory support both teaching and research, while collaborations with Tongji Hospital of Huazhong University of Science and Technology and other institutions enable students to participate in clinical and community-based practice.

The school's approach reflects a broader transformation in higher arts education in China. The inclusion of art therapy in the Ministry of Education's 2026 undergraduate program catalog signals a shift beyond traditional artistic training toward cultivating professionals who can integrate art with healthcare, technology and public service.

As part of this educational philosophy, the conservatory regularly presents public performances that demonstrate how music can serve both artistic and therapeutic purposes.

On May 26, nearly 500 audience members attended the "Life Like Summer Flowers: Vocal Music Therapy Special Concert" at the conservatory's concert hall. The 90-minute performance featured 12 vocal works, combining vocal music with therapeutic concepts to create an immersive experience intended to promote emotional well-being.

More than 50 undergraduate students majoring in music therapy and music education participated in the concert.

According to instructor Qiu Shuhan, the concert was both a showcase of student learning in the course "Vocal Performance and Application" and a pilot project for developing clinical practice skills in collaboration with Tongji Hospital.

"Every melody has been carefully crafted to carry the aesthetic power of music education and the healing core of music therapy," Qiu said. "Our goal is to convey love, warmth and youthful vitality through clear, expressive vocals and dynamic stage presence."

As demand grows for professionals who can bridge the arts and healthcare, the conservatory hopes its graduates will contribute not only to artistic excellence but also to improving public mental health and quality of life through music-based interventions.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:54 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:54 PM

All about Gen Z

Z WEEKLY

Social Media Digest

Unfiltered wisdom

Feeling lost, anxious or uncertain about the future? A growing number of young people in China have found an unlikely source of reassurance: an 84-year-old British anthropologist.

Alan Macfarlane, emeritus professor of anthropological science at the University of Cambridge, has quietly become a social media sensation. Over the past year, he has posted simple, unfiltered videos on Xiaohongshu about work, anxiety, relationships and social change. There are no flashy effects or elaborate edits — just Macfarlane speaking calmly from his study and greeting viewers with a warm "Ni hao".

His topics range from the prospects facing liberal arts students in the age of AI to feelings of emptiness. When asked how he thought about death, he gave a characteristically eccentric answer: "I hope that in the end I can become a handsome sea slug."

Macfarlane once asked his followers why they kept watching. Three words repeatedly appeared: gentle, sincere and respectful.

One follower captured the appeal: "We like having an adult who truly listens, answers our questions patiently and never lectures or shows off."

Macfarlane told The Beijing News that his connection with young viewers in China is not accidental. He has visited the country more than 20 times and spent decades studying Chinese society and civilization. That experience, he said, helps him relate his observations to young people's lives.



British anthropologist Alan Macfarlane has become an unlikely source of reassurance for Chinese young people. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Born to dye

Silver gray, bright yellow and electric blue — these aren't hair colors typically associated with middle-aged Chinese men. But salons across China are seeing more male customers in their 40s experimenting with vibrant shades, a trend internet users have jokingly called "the post-80s generation's collective rebellion".

For those born in the 1980s, dyed hair was once a teenage badge of defiance. A man surnamed Yang, who was born in 1987, told Qilu Evening News that he secretly dyed his hair blond as a teen, only to be scolded by his parents for looking "improper" and forced to cut it off within days.

Now 39, Yang saw the online buzz and decided to try silver gray. This time, his parents simply laughed. His three children said he looked handsome, then burst into giggles.

Wang Peng, an associate research fellow at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, told Qilu Evening News that the phenomenon is a form of social "catch-up" centered on self-compensation.

In his view, this isn't just about appearance. Many parents born in the 1980s feel less pressure to assert parental authority and are more willing to share their tastes and interests with their children.

"Family relationships are gradually shifting from 'authority and obedience' toward 'teammates and partners'," Wang said.

The colors may fade, but for a generation once told exactly how respectable adults should look, choosing for themselves may be the real rebellion.

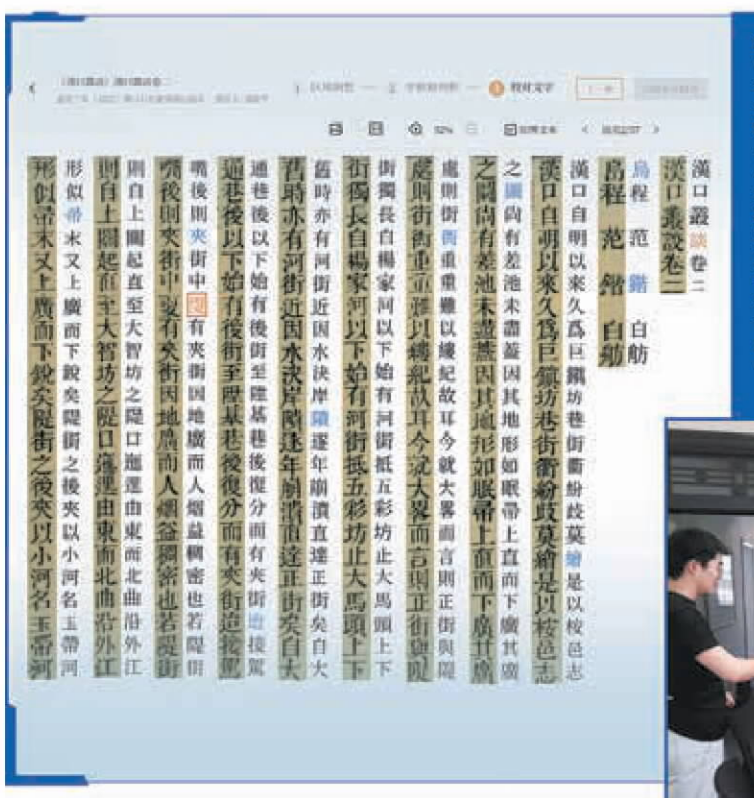
MENG WENJIE



Middle-aged Chinese men are embracing bold hair colors for self-expression. VCG

Digital tools unlock ancient texts

Technology can process ancient texts at scale, but preserving their meaning still depends on the knowledge and judgment of people.







Left: The Shidian Guji proofreading interface for a text printed in 1822. **Right:** Zheng Zhenyu aligns the pages of an ancient text during restoration work. **Below:** Members of Zheng's team prepare natural dyes to match the repair paper to the aged tone of the original pages. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By **GUO JIATONG**
guojiatong@i21st.cn

As Xu Heng, a 22-year-old agronomy student at Henan University, examined a scanned page from an ancient Chinese text on his computer screen, he paused over several characters that had become difficult to decipher because of centuries of wear and damaged printing.

He was working with Shidian Guji, an online ancient-text database that uses artificial intelligence to analyze scanned books before human volunteers review and correct the results.

By the time Xu began his work, the system had already done much of the initial processing: recognizing the text, adding punctuation and dividing the passage into paragraphs. His role was to check what the machine could not fully understand.

"AI-powered tools like Shidian Guji have made ancient texts much easier to read," Xu said. "Readers can zoom in on images of the original pages and compare them directly with the digital text, without having to repeatedly flip through bulky printed volumes."

Across China, a growing number of volunteers like Xu are taking part in digital preservation projects that combine AI-assisted text recognition with human proofreading. These efforts are helping make ancient Chinese classics more accessible to researchers, students and the general public.

Shidian Guji is one of the best-known platforms. The free online database was jointly developed by ByteDance and the Research Center for Digital Humanities of Peking University (PKUDH) as part of a public welfare initiative for ancient book preservation.

Since its launch in October 2022, the platform has expanded rapidly from several hundred titles to nearly 70,000 ancient books now available online. According to ByteDance, the database receives more than 2.4 million visitors each month.

The platform's development has been driven by a large and active volunteer community. More than 60,000 people have signed up to participate in proofreading projects, most of them university students. In 2025, volunteers helped complete preliminary proofreading of about 1.5 billion Chinese characters across roughly 20,000 ancient books.

For Xu, the platform offered something he had long been looking for: a practical way to read and work with classical Chinese texts.

Xu first became interested in ancient Chinese literature in middle school, but for years he struggled to find a reading platform that provided both extensive resources and easy access. That changed in 2024, when he discovered Shidian Guji.



"Ancient text organization involves processing massive amounts of data. Researchers need not only expertise in literature and history, but also the technical skills to manage information efficiently."

Zheng Zhenyu, a specialist in ancient-text digitization



"If ancient texts are not carefully organized and preserved, future generations may still see them, but they may no longer be able to truly understand them or draw spiritual nourishment from them."

Xu Heng, a student at Henan University

"Many rare books are difficult to buy, and library copies are not always available for borrowing," he said. "But with Shidian Guji, readers can use scanned images, searchable texts and comparison tools to trace references and compare different passages."

However, proofreading ancient texts is far from a simple process of clicking through corrections. Many classical Chinese texts contain variant characters, damaged pages, irregular page layouts and punctuation problems that require knowledge of both language and historical context.

Zheng Zhenyu, a specialist in ancient-text digitization, joined Shidian Guji in 2023 while looking for a more effective optical character recognition (OCR) tool to support his own research.

"At the time, I was using another paid platform, but the overall experience was not satisfactory," he said.

Zheng later joined Shidian Guji's advanced proofreading teams, working on projects including *Sibu Congkan* (Collectanea of the Four Categories), a major compilation of classical Chinese literature, and *Yongle Dadian* (Yongle Encyclopedia), one of the largest encyclopedic works in Chinese history.

Through this work, he found the platform's OCR capabilities to be a significant improvement over similar tools he had used before.

According to ByteDance, Shidian Guji's OCR technology currently achieves an accuracy rate of 96 to 97 percent, though performance still varies depending on the condition of the original materials.

The platform has also introduced additional tools to help standardize variant characters, translate classical Chinese into modern Chinese and assist researchers in organizing and analyzing textual resources.

Yet despite such advances, technology remains only part of the answer.

Yang Hao, an associate researcher at PKUDH, emphasized that technology and culture play different but complementary roles.

"Technology is the shell, while the humanities are the core," he said. "Technology can help culture travel faster, but only people can help culture travel farther."

That view is echoed by many volunteers on the platform, who have found that while AI performs relatively well at basic sentence segmentation, it can still struggle to understand the structure and logic of complex classical Chinese narratives.

Zheng said that in passages involving multiple speakers or indirect quotations — including works such as Sima Qian's *Shiji* (Records of the Grand Historian) and *Mengzi* (The Works of Mencius) — quotation marks may sometimes be misplaced or omitted, making it difficult for AI systems to accurately distinguish different voices in the text.

OCR systems also face challenges when handling small print, blurred pages and overlapping handwritten notes, making human review essential.

That is why Zheng believes that the future of ancient-text preservation will require more interdisciplinary talent capable of bridging the humanities and technology.

"Ancient text organization involves processing massive amounts of data. Researchers need not only expertise in literature and history, but also the technical skills to manage information efficiently," he said.

Rediscovering lost voices

For Zheng, the value of digital archives is not limited to academic research. They can also help modern readers rediscover local history and cultural memory.

He has recently been studying historical documents on Wuhan's local life and dialects from two centuries ago, as well as photographic records of the city's devastating 1931 flood. Reading those materials, he said, gave him a more direct sense of how ordinary people in the city once lived, communicated and experienced their daily lives.

"I felt an immediate sense of familiarity and emotional connection across time," Zheng said.

Xu has experienced a similar change in perspective. What began as a personal interest in classical texts gradually became a responsibility to help these works reach a wider audience.

For him, making ancient texts readable is just as important as preserving their original images.

"If ancient texts are not carefully organized and preserved, future generations may still see them, but they may no longer be able to truly understand them or draw spiritual nourishment from them," Xu said.

That is why, for volunteers like Xu and Zheng, ancient-text digitization is more than a technological endeavor. AI can scan, recognize and sort texts at a scale far beyond human capability. But the final task — deciding what a damaged character means, where one voice ends and another begins, and why an old text still matters — remains a human one.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:54 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:54 PM

Young birders take flight

Young birdwatchers across China are turning a traditional hobby into a path toward discovery, connection and environmental protection.



A white wagtail photographed by Yang in Qinghai province in June 2025. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



A Bornean green magpie photographed by Yang in Malaysia in July 2025. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



A black-winged kite photographed by Zhao Sifan in Shanghai in late 2025. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



A white-throated kingfisher photographed by Wang Yin in Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, in June 2026. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By **MENG WENJIE**
mengwenjie@i21st.cn

One winter afternoon in late 2024, Yang Tianyi and his father headed to Chenhu Wetland Nature Reserve in Wuhan, Hubei province, in search of greater flamingos.

After setting up his camera, Yang focused on a group of waterbirds resting in a sunlit stretch of wetland, with lush grass in the background. Suddenly, another bird flew into the frame. Yang pressed the shutter, zoomed in — and froze. It appeared to be a species he had never seen in Wuhan before.

After consulting reference materials and bird experts, Yang learned that it was a Saunders's gull. The sighting added Saunders's gull to Wuhan's bird list as its 472nd recorded species, with Yang and his father credited with the discovery.

"We were so excited," recalled Yang, now 16. "We hugged on the riverbank, and I even cried."

In a city of more than 10 million people, a high school student had helped add a new species to the local bird record. The moment also reflected a broader shift: birdwatching in China, once widely regarded as a hobby for older generations, is increasingly attracting younger enthusiasts.

According to a report by Chinese social media platform Xiaohongshu, the number of birdwatching-related posts rose by 115.2 percent in 2025, with users around the age of 25 driving much of the growth.

Yang was introduced to birdwatching by his father, an experienced birder with nearly two decades of experience. Since early 2025, Yang has recorded 274 bird species across China.

"Birdwatching makes my daily life more interesting," he said. During breaks between classes, he watches sparrows, listens for bird calls and gets excited whenever a bird of prey passes overhead.

In search of rare species, Yang often travels to remote areas. The early mornings and physical demands were difficult at first, but even a brief encounter with a bird he has been hoping to see gives him a strong sense of achievement.

"Birdwatching requires patience and luck. It has made me more resilient and focused, and those qualities also help me in my studies and daily life," he said.

While Yang actively travels in search of rare species, Wang Yin, 34, has woven birdwatching into the quieter rhythms of everyday life. Wang, a Xiaohongshu blogger who shares her birding experiences online, said the hobby has gradually changed the way she sees the world.

She took up birdwatching almost by chance in 2020 while living in Shanghai. After frequently spotting black-crowned night herons and little egrets near the water, she began observing them through binoculars.

Over time, birdwatching became an emotional refuge. "When I feel lonely or go through a difficult period, birdwatching gives me somewhere to turn," she said. "Even an ordinary workday feels different if I go to the park and see familiar birds or discover something new."

Her pinned post on Xiaohongshu reads: "Take what nature gives you, and feel it."

This year, Wang moved to Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, one of China's richest regions in terms of bird diversity.

"The forests in Guangxi are denser and more humid," she said. "Everything feels wilder, and there are many more species to discover."

Wang now works at Qingxiu Mountain Scenic Spot in Nanning. One evening in June, while walking home from work, she followed a faint call and spotted three Asian barred owlets resting on a branch at dusk.

When she returned the next morning, they were gone. "It felt like a dream," she recalled.

Wang said one of the most important birdwatching skills is learning to identify birds by sound, while also understanding their habits, migration patterns and behavior.

"It requires knowledge built up over a long period of time," she said.

Over six years, Wang has recorded 340 bird species. She said the figure is not particularly high compared with those of more active birders, especially younger enthusiasts.

"Many beginners are highly energetic," she said. "Some record hundreds of species in a short time and go birdwatching every few days — even at night."

For Wang, however, birdwatching is not about speed. She prefers to carry binoculars with her and allow encounters to unfold naturally during work, travel or an ordinary walk.

"You can keep birdwatching your whole life — maybe until you're 70. It gives me another window through which to understand the world," she said.



"You can keep birdwatching your whole life — maybe until you're 70. It gives me another window through which to understand the world."

Wang Yin, a birdwatching blogger



"Through these initiatives, we hope to raise awareness of nature and environmental protection, especially among children."

Zhao Sifan, a bird protector

Watching turns active

For some birders, observation eventually leads to a more direct question: what can they do to protect the birds they have learned to notice?

Zhao Sifan's path into birdwatching began not with a rare sighting but with injured birds lying beneath glass buildings.

In May last year, he encountered a migrating blue-and-white flycatcher that had struck a glass surface and fallen onto the grass with minor injuries. With remote guidance from bird experts, he carefully placed it on a nearby branch to protect it from stray cats. About two hours later, it recovered and flew away.

For Zhao, a community marketing professional based in Shanghai, it was the first time he had observed a bird so closely. The encounter gave him a direct understanding of the impact of bird-window collisions.

Bird-window collisions occur when birds strike glass buildings. Because glass reflects the surrounding environment, birds may mistake it for open space and fly into it, Zhao explained.

As part of a citizen science project, Zhao regularly inspects buildings for injured or dead birds and records bird activity in the surrounding area.

This year, he moved from observation to action. Zhao launched a citizen science program in his community and invited residents to take part. Using the data they collected, the team installed bird-safe dotted films on windows and worked with ecological artists to create painted designs, combining scientific measures with public education.

He also co-founded Wildlight Studio with friends, organizing birdwatching trips and citizen science activities.

"Through these initiatives, we hope to raise awareness of nature and environmental protection, especially among children," he said.

During a recent outing at Shanghai Expo Culture Park, Zhao led a group of 15 participants, around 90 percent of whom were between 20 and 30 years old. He said the group reflected a clear generational shift in attitudes toward birdwatching.

"Older birders often focused on capturing perfect photographs, sometimes even feeding birds mealworms to get close-up shots," he said. "Younger birders tend to show respect for nature and follow ecological principles."

Yang, too, has moved beyond observation. He assists his father with waterbird monitoring, recording breeding conditions and population changes. He also takes part in volunteer efforts to remove illegal bird nets and protect bird habitats.

Earlier this year, he found a bird net near a village with five or six dead birds trapped in it. He immediately reported it to a local birdwatching association, which organized a cleanup.

"After I reported it, my luck seemed unusually good," he said. "Within 20 minutes, I saw four species of raptors, even though it wasn't migration season. It felt as though good things happened after I did the right thing."

For Yang, birdwatching is no longer simply about adding species to a list. He often quotes the late British primatologist Jane Goodall: "Only if we understand, can we care. Only if we care, will we help. Only if we help, we shall be saved."

"Birdwatching will be a lifelong hobby for me," he said. "I also hope to do more to help birds live better lives."



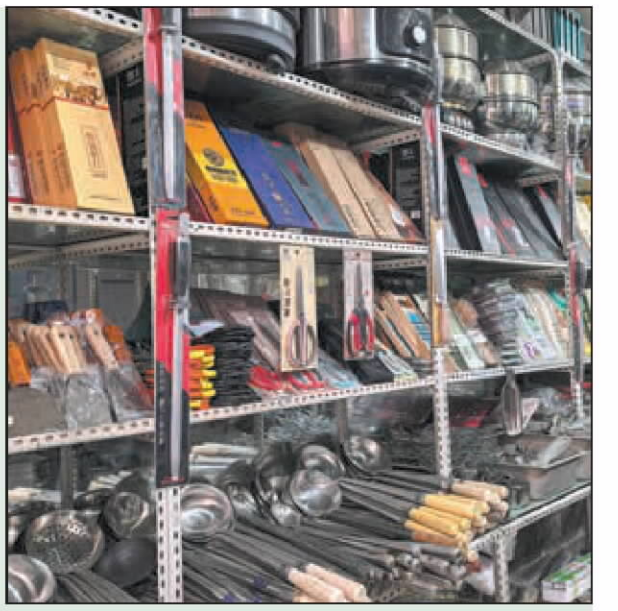
Yang uses a camera fitted with a telephoto lens to photograph birds at Mulan Mountain in Wuhan, Hubei province, in October 2024. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:54 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:54 PM

Z WEEKLY





Left: Wang Cheng stands inside his family's kitchenware shop at Yantan Small Commodities Wholesale Market in Lanzhou, Gansu province. WU YUEXUAN / CHINA DAILY
Right: Kitchenware fills Wang's shop, where he films English-language product videos for Douyin. TONG YUNSHAN / CHINA DAILY

English opens a wider world

Self-taught in English, Wang Cheng turns an ordinary market stall into an unexpected platform for learning, confidence and connection.

By MA JINGNA in Lanzhou
and **GUI QIAN**

As you walk through the narrow lanes of Yantan Small Commodities Wholesale Market in Lanzhou, Gansu province, you pass stacks of plastic basins, stainless steel buckets and cooking pots. The air is heavy with the smell of rubber and dust.

Inside one of the market's small shops, Wang Cheng, wearing a plaid shirt with faded cuffs, is busy rearranging the merchandise. Then he picks up a stockpot, turns toward his phone and begins speaking in fluent English with a striking American accent.

"Welcome to my shop," he said. "This is a stainless steel stockpot. It's durable and resistant to rust."

Wang is not speaking to a foreign customer. He is filming a product video for Douyin, the Chinese version of TikTok. The unexpected contrast between his fluent English and the ordinary kitchenware shop has attracted widespread attention online.

His command of English is the result of an unusual learning journey.

Born in 1993, Wang grew up in Shaanxi province. He left school before completing junior high school, trained as a cook and later moved to Lanzhou to help his parents run their kitchenware business. He has now worked in the shop for six years.

Wang's interest in English began with Michael Jackson.

When he was in middle school, Wang came across the singer's *Earth Song* and its music video.

"The lyrics and the rhythm blew me away," he recalled. "I couldn't get it out of my mind. From then on, I wanted to learn more about Michael."

Years later, that fascination developed into a serious commitment to self-study. Wang has never had a formal English teacher. Instead, he taught himself by reading books and watching films and interviews.

He also developed what he calls the "echo method": listening to a sentence and repeating it again and again, trying to reproduce not only the words but also the speaker's rhythm, stress and intonation.

"I don't know anyone else in this market who speaks English," Wang said. "I suppose I'm the only one."

Learning sparks growth

What sets Wang's story apart from a conventional tale of professional advancement is that, at first, English offered him no obvious practical reward. Most of his customers were local, and Mandarin or the Lanzhou dialect was more than enough for his daily work.

Yet the absence of external pressure was precisely what made the experience so meaningful. Wang was not studying to pass an exam or earn a certificate. He was learning for its own sake, using the language to build a life richer and more expansive than his circumstances might suggest.

> "As I continued learning, I could feel myself improving day by day. I was exposed to different ideas and different kinds of content. My horizons broadened, and I became more thoughtful and open-minded."
>
> **Wang Cheng,** a kitchenware shopkeeper in Lanzhou

Before he began taking English seriously, Wang said, he lacked direction and confidence. The language gave him a private intellectual world beyond the daily routines of the shop, and studying gradually changed the way he saw himself and the world around him.

"I used to be a slacker. I felt lost in my personal life," he said. "As I continued learning, I could feel myself improving day by day. I was exposed to different ideas and different kinds of content. My horizons broadened, and I became more thoughtful and open-minded."

What began with music eventually led him to films and books he might never otherwise have encountered, and over time, English also began to prove useful in more practical ways.

In 2022, a French couple visited the shop looking for kitchen utensils. When the woman pointed to a garlic press and seemed unsure what it was called, Wang explained it to her in English. Her enthusiastic reaction filled him with delight.

"It was one of the first times an interaction with a foreigner made me feel that all my English study had paid off," he said. "I was so excited."

Online, the response has been even greater. Since his Douyin videos went viral, viewers have sent him messages praising his persistence. Some have even traveled to the market specifically to visit his shop and buy something from him.

"I don't take any of it for granted," Wang said. "I'm grateful for all the love and support I've received."

At first, his family did not understand why he devoted so much time to a language that he did not appear to need. "But once they saw how passionate and committed I was, they came to appreciate what I was doing," he said.

Wang now spends more time creating online content, though he said financial gain is not his main motivation.

"Material rewards are not that important to me right now," he said. "If I can inspire more people to learn English, that would mean a great deal to me."

For Wang, English is no longer simply a language to be spoken. It has become a way of reading, thinking and entering unfamiliar worlds.

He has recently been reading *The Woman Who Could Not Forget*, a memoir by the mother of Chinese American journalist, author and historian Iris Chang. Chang is best known for *The Rape of Nanking*, her account of the atrocities committed during the 1937 Nanjing Massacre.

"Reading has shown me the power of knowledge," Wang said. "Little by little, everything you learn builds up, and you become a better version of yourself."

Wang does not know whether he will always work in the kitchenware shop. But he is certain that he will never stop learning.

"The purpose is to improve yourself," he said. "That is something you can keep doing for the rest of your life."

Contact the writers at majingna@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
Watch the video by scanning the code.

Deep Dive

For young people in Hong Kong, China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) is no longer something they learn about only in the classroom. A new generation of exchange programs between Hong Kong and the Chinese mainland is allowing the city's youth to see the country's transformation up close — an experience no textbook can fully capture.

Nicholas Muk Ka-chun knows this shift firsthand. As a secondary school teacher in Hong Kong and a member of the Standing Committee of the All-China Youth Federation, Muk helps organize these exchange programs. He believes frequent and meaningful interactions with the mainland can help young people better understand the opportunities the national blueprint opens for Hong Kong's next generation.

Mainland tours broaden HK students' horizons

By CHEN XUE and **XIONG XINYI**

For Nicholas Muk Ka-chun, helping Hong Kong's young people understand China's development starts with a simple idea: they need to see it for themselves.

"They should not limit their outlook to Hong Kong's 7.5 million people," said Muk. "The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, with a population of more than 88 million, is an important direction for their future development."

The 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) supports Hong Kong in consolidating and enhancing its competitive strengths while better integrating into the country's overall development.

As Hong Kong drafts its first five-year plan, Muk said the priority for young people is to move beyond awareness and toward active participation.

That participation becomes tangible during on-site visits.

Muk has brought groups of students and young people to mainland incubation bases focused on innovation, technology and entrepreneurship, where subsidized workspaces, affordable accommodation and streamlined start-up procedures made a far stronger impression in person than they ever could in a classroom.

In class, students may first notice the differences between life in Hong Kong and on the mainland. But visits to the mainland help them understand what those differences mean in practical terms, including lower operating costs, easier access to facilities and stronger support for young entrepreneurs.

"When we bring exchange groups there to see it for themselves, they find it very attractive," said Muk.

That emphasis on direct experience is also reflected in Hong Kong's Citizenship and Social Development curriculum. Muk noted that the subject requires senior secondary students to take part in at least one mainland field trip during their three years of study.

Since the tours began in 2023, the programs have expanded from one-day visits to itineraries lasting up to five days, with 28 routes available in the most recent academic year.

In 2025, Muk led students through Jinan, Tai'an and Qingdao in Shandong province. Among the many sites they visited, the fully automated container terminal at Qingdao Port left one of the strongest impressions — both on the students and on Muk himself.

"There was not a single worker on the ground. All the cargo was handled by automated guided vehicles," Muk recalled.



Nicholas Muk Ka-chun

The port also featured a small exhibition hall introducing the facility to visitors.

"These are experiences my students would not get from a regular trip to the mainland, but our curriculum makes them possible," he said.

Beyond study tours, Muk sees technology as another promising area for youth exchange. Hong Kong is home to many highly ranked universities, but the key question for students is how research can be translated into products and brought to market.

Muk noted that students are already taking part in inter-school competitions in areas like AI programming and digital technology, some of which then lead to competition trips to the mainland and overseas.

"There are now far more opportunities than before for young people in Hong Kong and the mainland to collaborate," he said.

Muk also believes mainland exchange programs should be expanded to include experienced humanities teachers, not just school leaders and new teachers, because classroom teachers often have the most direct contact with students and play a crucial role in shaping their perspective.

"Only when teachers themselves have a proper understanding of the country and its development can they effectively guide students in building the right values — especially at the secondary school level," Muk said.

He also sees cultural exchange as essential to strengthening young people's sense of national identity.

He pointed to the Chinese Culture Festival in Hong Kong — launched in 2024 as an annual festival — as an example of how traditional Chinese culture can be combined with contemporary artistic elements, making it more accessible and appealing to younger audiences.

"Beyond traditional education, films and other forms of digital and cultural storytelling are becoming increasingly important ways to engage young people, and this is a direction worth pursuing further," he said.

Contact the writers at chenxue@i21st.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:54 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:54 PM

SPORTS

2026 WORLD CUP

'VAR-gentina': Has there been foul play?

With the semifinals about to kick off, the internet is awash with conspiracy theories that FIFA is rigging it for Messi's men



Argentina's Julian Alvarez (9) and Alexis Mac Allister remonstrate with French referee Francois Letexier before a goal for Egypt was chalked off in a round-of-16 match on July 7. REUTERS





Left: Argentina's Lionel Messi (right) argues with Portuguese referee Joao Pinheiro as Switzerland's Granit Xhaka looks on during a quarterfinal match at the Kansas City Stadium on July 11. **Right:** Referee Francois Letexier shows a red card to Egyptian team official Saafan Elsaghir during the round-of-16 match between Argentina and Egypt on July 07. AFP

Lionel Messi's brilliance has helped carry Argentina into a blockbuster World Cup semifinal with England in Atlanta on Wednesday.

But the defending champion's journey to the last four has been engulfed by online conspiracy theories claiming — without evidence — that the playing field is being tilted in its favor.

Social media is awash with AI-generated videos and memes which amplify this narrative, whether it's FIFA President Gianni Infantino and Messi sharing a loving embrace on the deck of the Titanic in the style of Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet, or simply Infantino's face being superimposed at the heart of the Sun of May in the center of Argentina's flag.

From contentious refereeing decisions to claims of being handed a kind draw to the final, here's a breakdown of the main incidents which have given rise to the conspiracy theories:

No red card

In Argentina's group stage win over Algeria, with the South Americans leading 1-0, captain Lionel Messi raked his studs down the right calf and Achilles tendon of Algeria skipper Aissa Mandi in the 30th minute.

Polish referee Szymon Marciniak gave Algeria a freekick, but Messi received no further sanction and would go on to score a hat-trick.

Several pundits however were adamant that Messi had been guilty of serious foul play, and, under the letter of the law, should have been shown a red card that would have led to a suspension.

"It should have been a red card in my opinion," ESPN pundit and former Manchester City defender Nedum Onuoha, said at the time.

"Messi knew he did something that could have got him in trouble. I personally feel it is a red card."

Former Bundesliga referee Patrick Ittrich agreed.

"For me, that is a red card. We have various examples from the Bundesliga where that was punished with a red. By the letter of the law, that is a red.

"If I had seen it like that on the pitch, I would have shown red."

Algeria's football federation subsequently filed an official complaint to FIFA over "refereeing injustice" in the game.

Egypt cries foul

Argentina produced one of the all-time great comebacks to keep its World Cup campaign alive in the last 16 against Egypt, recovering from a 2-0 deficit to win 3-2 and reach the quarterfinals.

But Egypt's players and coaching staff were outraged by several of French referee Francois Letexier's decisions at key moments where he ruled in Argentina's favor.

The biggest postgame talking point surrounded a goal scored by Egypt's Mostafa Ziko in the second half that was disallowed after an intervention by the VAR, who had spotted a foul on an Argentina player several phases before at the other end of the pitch.

Several analysts questioned whether VAR had overstepped its reach.

"VAR was looking at something too deeply and looking for something that has happened in the game to try to cancel the Egypt goal," former FIFA referee Mark Clattenburg said.

Egyptian coach Hossam Hassan also claimed that Egypt should have been awarded a penalty in the build-up to Enzo Fernandez's late winner for Argentina.

"There seems to have been pressure from the Argentinian side on the referee that has brought about this outcome," Hassan said.

"Perhaps they wanted to keep the world champions in the competition?" he told BeIn Sports.

"Perhaps they wanted Messi to stay in the running? In football, there are sometimes external factors that go beyond the technical aspects."

FIFA referees' chief Pierluigi Collina rejected the Egyptian allegations as "unfounded".

Pivotal call

Another pivotal VAR call helped shape the outcome of Argentina's 3-1 extra-time victory over Switzerland in Saturday's quarterfinal.

In the 70th minute, shortly after Switzerland had leveled the match and was enjoying an extended period of dominance over the weary world champion, referee Joao Pinheiro gave Argentina's Leandro Paredes a yellow card for a foul on Breel Embolo.

However a VAR intervention using FIFA's new mistaken identity rule determined that Embolo had initiated the foul in an act of simulation and the call was overturned.

But, because Embolo had already received a yellow card, he was shown second, then a red card and was sent off — leaving Switzerland down to 10-men and halting its momentum. Argentina went on to secure victory in extra-time.

"We were punished because of a rule that, in my opinion, is completely unacceptable," Swiss coach Murat Yakin said afterwards.

Many commentators, though, point out that Embolo was rightly punished for a clear dive.

"If you want to argue FIFA is rigging the World Cup for Lionel Messi and Argentina, and some of you are hellbent on doing just that, you're going to have to do better than this," wrote USA Today columnist Nancy Armour.

A kind draw

Critics of Argentina's run to the semifinals cite the ranking of its opponents as evidence of favoritism by FIFA.

So far Argentina has not had to face a team ranked higher than 19th heading into the clash with England on Wednesday.

After topping a group that included Algeria, Jordan and Austria, Argentina's knockout round opponents were Cape Verde, Egypt and Switzerland.

But this is due, in large part, to FIFA's decision to seed the top four teams in the world in such a way that would keep them apart until the semifinals.

England has not faced a team ranked in the top 10 so far, while France did have to play seventh-ranked Morocco in the quarterfinals.

Spain has had the hardest route to the semis, needing to beat fifth-ranked Portugal and Belgium (ninth) on its way to the last four.

AFP

All fired up: Center-back Burn emerges as unlikely England hero





In a sport obsessed with youth, 34-year-old Dan Burn, England's 6-foot-7 center-back, has emerged as an unlikely cult hero, representing resilience, persistence and the possibility that anything is possible. AP / REUTERS

KANSAS CITY, Missouri — The bicycle kick seemed destined for the corner of the net, one last desperate swing from a Mexico side roared on by nearly 90,000 fans at the Azteca Stadium. Instead, a towering figure in white rose above the chaos and headed the ball clear. About 70 yards clear.

Six days later, with England clinging to a lead deep in its 2-1 extra-time quarterfinal win over Norway, Dan Burn hurled himself into Leo Ostigard to meet another high ball, sending it to safety with a ferocious header before stepping over the Norwegian defender and roaring towards the crowd.

In those two moments, the 34-year-old center-back announced himself on the World Cup stage.

Burn had been on the pitch only minutes when he was thrown into the heat of England's last-16 clash with Mexico after Thomas Tuchel's side was reduced to 10 men. By the end of the night he had become a symbol of resistance, repelling Mexico's aerial bombardment as England held on for a dramatic 3-2 victory.

He carried that same bruising, uncompromising presence into Saturday's win over Norway, helping England to see out a tense extra-time battle and book a place in the semifinals.

Through two games, he has nine clearances and two blocks.

Where most World Cup stories begin with wonder kids, Burn's began with rejection.

Released by Newcastle United as a boy, he rebuilt his career through soccer's back roads, playing for Darlington in the lower divisions before earning opportunities at Fulham, Wigan Athletic and Brighton & Hove Albion.

By the time he returned to his boyhood club Newcastle in 2022, few would have imagined England recognition still awaited him.

Fewer still would have predicted that his first World Cup would arrive at the age of 34.

"If you'd asked me when I was at Darlington in the (non-league) Conference and League Two whether I'd be here, I probably would have said no," Burn said after arriving in North America with Tuchel's squad. "Especially at this age."

Resilience and persistence

Yet, Burn's age has become part of his appeal. In a sport obsessed with youth, the 6-foot-7 center-back represents something different: resilience, persistence and the possibility that careers do not always have to follow a straight line.

He spent much of the tournament's opening weeks embracing an experience he had once only watched from afar. Burn recalled the 2002 World Cup as one of his earliest football memories, and said simply being part of England's squad felt surreal.

He spoke about celebrating victories with supporters, singing Oasis hit *Wonderwall* after England's opening win over Croatia and trying to savor every moment of his first major tournament.

Then came Mexico.

England led 3-2, but was hanging on after Jarell Quansah's red card. And, while many supporters may have raised an eyebrow when Tuchel turned to Burn, the German trusted the defender to help preserve the advantage in one of world football's most intimidating arenas.

Burn responded with a commanding cameo, winning aerial duels, clearing danger and helping England to survive a barrage of late pressure.

Burn's no-nonsense defending has also turned him into an unlikely cult hero on social media. One supporter suggested on X that Burn should have his own dramatic walk-on music, complete with light show, when he enters a game.

At 34 years and 58 days, he became the fourth-oldest player ever to make a World Cup debut for the England team.

Ahead of the quarterfinal with Norway, Burn quickly brushed aside the praise generated by the Mexico performance, saying the result would count for little if England failed to progress further.

He welcomed the prospect of another physical duel with Erling Haaland, approaching it with the same understated confidence that has defined his career.

Perhaps that is why Burn's story resonates beyond soccer. At a tournament dominated by global superstars and multimillion-dollar prodigies, here is a player who was told he was not good enough at 11, who spent years traveling the hard way through the English game, and who reached soccer's biggest stage at an age when most international careers have already peaked.

"It's nice, because there's not a straight line to playing and being successful in football," Burn said. "It hopefully gives kids a little bit of inspiration."

REUTERS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:54 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:56 PM

Soaring career
Military delivery aircraft marks 10 years in service
VISUAL, PAGE 12



US debt may affect rates of interest
WORLD, PAGE 4



An ode to heritage
Dance drama on Lingnan folk traditions to tour Southeast Asia
CULTURE, PAGE 13

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中國日報 FRIDAY, AUGUST 21, 2026

XI'S VISION | MAZU SOLUTION

Weather alert system taps tech, folklore

China offering world AI-powered MAZU as a meteorological safeguard solution

By **ZHANG YI** and **HU MEIDONG** in Putian, Fujian

"Mazu, protect our voyage on the deep," go the lyrics of a timeless Chinese folk song that is a plea to the sea goddess Mazu. "Safe journey out, safe return ashore."

Embedded in this song is the soulful bond between local fisherfolk and the sea goddess who, legend has it, was born on the shores of Meizhou Island in Putian, Fujian province.

Today, in the digital era, this ancient heritage has found a new, high-tech anchor.

On the island, which has 30 kilometers of coastline and is home to over 1,000 fishing boats, locals no longer rely on prayers to weather storms. Instead, they find safety at their fingertips through a smart app that instantly decodes real-time winds, wave heights and tidal patterns.

For Lin Haifang, a veteran mariner with a decade of island life under his belt, a simple app alert triggers his typhoon routine. He hauls up oyster shell strings, lashes down kelp rafts and steers his boat to shelter early. Even amid choppy seas and weak signals, the Beidou Navigation Satellite System beams alerts directly to his palm.

"It feels as if Mazu puts the sea conditions right in my hand," he said of his early preparations, which keep his annual losses down and his income steady.

Action plan proposed

With the increasing frequency of extreme weather, the United Nations launched the Early Warnings for All initiative in 2022 to close gaps and protect everyone on the planet. China became the first to answer the call, proposing an action plan in 2024 and launching an intelligent meteorological early warning solution in 2025 named MAZU — an acronym denoting Multi-hazard Alert, Zero-gap and Universal.

The system, deployed in seven countries, blends artificial intelligence forecasting models, data from Fengyun meteorological satellites, cloud computing and ground observations to deliver highly customized services.

President Xi Jinping announced on July 17 that China will bring the AI-powered meteorological warning system MAZU to 30 countries over the next five years to safeguard homes around the world.

He made the remarks while addressing the opening ceremony of the 2026 World AI Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance in Shanghai, calling for joint efforts to build a just and equitable global AI governance system.

"All countries should take a people-centered approach and develop AI for the positive and for good. We should ensure that AI is an important driver for shared prosperity and common security," he said.

Effective cooperation

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who attended the meeting, praised the initiative, saying that the MAZU system could be one of the most important instruments for making international cooperation effective in protecting people and property.

Zhang Xingying, director of the China Meteorological Administration's Department of International Cooperation, said the MAZU system is a perfect combination of fine traditional Chinese culture, AI and cutting-edge technology.

"Naming the system after the Chinese goddess of marine weather reflects a unique touch of Chinese romance and demonstrates our cultural confidence," he said.

In his view, Mazu's legendary helpers, the Thousand-Mile Eye and the All-Hearing Ear, are reflected in today's meteorological tools, with weather satellites and radar being the eye, and AI and physical models used to forecast climate disasters serving as the ear.

"The core essence of the MAZU system goes beyond exporting China's early-warning capabilities," he said. "More important, it is about working with global partners to co-build a public safety solution for the long run."

*See **Safeguard,** page 3*

Rallying against militarism



People join a massive protest on Wednesday near the National Diet in Tokyo against a series of dangerous moves initiated by the Japanese government, including its increasing push for military expansion. About 15,000 people took part in the demonstration, which also earned huge support online. ANDREW CABALLERO-REYNOLDS / AFP

Washington urged to drop drone tariffs

By **ZHANG CHENXU** and **ZHONG NAN**

The United States' latest tariff push on drone imports, coupled with its accusation of "tariff evasion" by China, has heightened concerns that its increasingly unilateral and protectionist approach toward trade could further erode bilateral trust and disrupt global industrial and supply chains, said officials and experts.

Such tactics are likely to prove self-defeating, as punitive and discriminatory tariffs would raise US supply-chain costs without delivering the manufacturing revival it seeks, they said, adding that dialogue and mutually beneficial cooperation offer the only practical way forward.

Their comments came as China's Ministry of Commerce urged the US on Thursday to immediately withdraw its Section 232 tariffs on imported drones and related components.

On Aug 13, the US announced Section 232 tariffs of up to 100 percent on certain imported drones and components, citing national security concerns — a move that the Financial Times said targeted Chinese drone technology.

Voicing strong opposition to the US move, Commerce Ministry spokesman He Yadong said it is a "unilateral and protectionist" action taken on the pretext of national security. Chinese drones exported to the US are used mainly for civilian purposes, he said, adding that such discriminatory treatment is seriously harming the interests of Chinese companies.

Inside
Editorial & Comment **page 6**

Zhou Mi, a senior researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, said the move is likely to disrupt the stability and resilience of global supply chains, given the deep interdependence among economies worldwide.

The Center for Strategic and International Studies, a think tank based in Washington, DC, said in an analysis last year that about 90 percent of the world's high-strength permanent magnets used in drone motors are produced in China.

On Aug 13, the Office of Trade and Manufacturing Policy at the White House released a report accusing Chinese exporters of routing goods through third countries to "evade" US tariffs. It identified over 40 countries and jurisdictions as presenting elevated risks of illegal transshipment.

He, the spokesman, said the report "disregards facts and distorts the truth", branding normal international trade as a "scam" and fabricating "a so-called shadow transshipment network". He urged the US to stop making irresponsible accusations and damaging Sino-US economic and trade relations, and instead work toward safeguarding the stability of global industrial and supply chains.

Shi Xiaoli, a professor of international economic law at China University of Political Science and Law in Beijing, said that any US assessment of "tariff evasion" should have relied on verifiable transaction-level evidence, rather than broad estimates based on changes in trade patterns.

EU probe opposed

In another development on Thursday, the Commerce Ministry urged the European Union to swiftly correct its "wrongful practices" in a foreign subsidy investigation involving Chinese e-commerce giant JD.com, reiterating Beijing's firm opposition to Brussels' abuse of unilateral tools to suppress Chinese companies.

On May 28, the European Commission — the executive arm of the EU — opened an in-depth investigation into JD's proposed acquisition of German consumer electronics retailer Ceconomy.

China's Ministry of Justice, together with the Commerce Ministry and other departments, determined on Wednesday that certain cross-border measures taken by the EU against Chinese entities in the case constituted improper extraterritorial jurisdiction. The decision has barred any organization or individual from complying with or assisting in the implementation of those measures.

Contact the writers at zhangchenxu@chinadaily.com.cn

WORLD WATCH
By Joseph Sifakis

AI needs a symbiotic reset with humanity

As companies pour billions of dollars into artificial intelligence while cutting jobs, fears of human replacement are mounting. Oracle is reportedly preparing another round of layoffs ahead of Sept 1, according to Business Insider. But the 2026 Stanford AI Index shows that AI is reshaping the labor market without yet causing mass job displacement.

The promise of AI is extraordinary: new frontiers in science, solutions to global challenges and a future where human creativity flourishes. That is the dream.

But the reality we are witnessing could not be further from it.

The rapid deployment of AI today is not aligned with human well-being. It is driven by an ideology — one that treats human beings as obstacles to be overcome. Slogans like "move fast and break things" are rooted in a form of technological determinism that devalues human agency.

*See **Tech,** page 3*

PHOTOGRAPHERS FLOCK TO XINJIANG FOR CELESTIAL LIGHT SHOW

With its lack of light pollution and vast emptiness, the Gobi Desert proves a perfect spot to watch Perseid meteor shower

By **XU LIN** in Hami, Xinjiang
xulin@chinadaily.com.cn

Long after sunset, sweltering 40 C heat still hung over the vast, remote Gobi Desert as hot winds swept across the wilderness. Suddenly and fleetingly, a blazing fireball streaked across the star-studded sky, leaving a long, glowing trail and drawing loud whoops of amazement from stargazers.

Astrophotographers stationed behind their tripods leaned forward to eagerly check their camera screens, hoping to have captured the fleeting moment. As the Perseid meteor shower peaked on Aug 12 and 13, stargazers flocked to the Pterosaur-Yardang Dahaidao Scenic Area in Hami, Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, to witness the celestial event.

"Stargazers are absolutely drawn to this place, and for good reason. Beyond minimal light pollution, the air here is extremely dry with little dust, creating exceptional atmospheric transparency," said veteran astrophotographer Liu Bing from Beijing. "As a result, stars retain their sharpness in camera shots, and less starlight is scattered away, making it possible to capture stunning pictures."

Liu and other astrophotographers recently attended the annual Sweet Whispers to the Galaxy Festival in Hami and captured images of the Perseid meteor shower, an event that aims to reinforce the area's reputation as a premier destination for stargazing. Many of them are from China StarVision Alliance, a domestic platform for nearly 1,000 astrophotographers.

Official data showed that Dahaidao registered about 25,000 visitor arrivals and over 10,000 vehicles in early August. To cater to stargazers' needs, the site imposed strict night lighting restrictions and all stargazing spots featured 24-hour security patrols, emergency contacts and safety signs.



A meteor streaks across the night sky in Hami, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, on Aug 12. LIU BING / FOR CHINA DAILY

For astrophotographers, making advance preparations is always vital — from understanding lunar phases to scouting locations with minimal light pollution.

They check shooting sites in daylight and use apps to monitor weather and cloud cover, keeping close track of shifts in these conditions to the nearest hour. They also use apps to forecast how stars will move across the night sky and assess potential interference from the moon.

"When observing the Perseid meteor shower, we needed to locate the constellation Perseus and learn about the radiant point in advance — the spot in the sky from which all meteors seem to originate. As the radiant rises, it shapes the paths of meteor trails across the sky," said Wang Junfeng, from Beijing.

One night was mostly overcast, and the group waited patiently until clear breaks opened up between the clouds. "We could only seize those brief windows to observe the meteors and take photos," Wang said.

Another member, Liu Dapeng, set up three cameras at different locations before dusk, adjusted their shooting parameters and configured them to shoot a frame every few seconds until predawn twilight.

*See **Meteors,** page 3*

Online
See more by scanning the code.



INSIDE
New era, joint progress
Global Views, page 8

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved

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

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:56 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:56 PM

INDEPTH







Left: A consumer selects an ice cup at a supermarket in Shanghai. WANG ZITONG / XINHUA **Middle:** A glass of coke is served with ice at a hotel in Ningbo, Zhejiang province, in July. JIANG LINGGUANG / FOR CHINA DAILY
Right: An employee at an ice-making company refills edible ice cups in Changsha, Hunan province, on Aug 11. YU CHUNSHENG / XINHUA

Ice, Chinese consumers' newest crush

Preference for cold drinks sparks debate on worth of traditional hot, warm beverages

By **WANG YING** in Shanghai
wang_ying@chinadaily.com.cn

In China, drinking warm or hot water is a long-standing daily practice passed down through generations and believed to bring good health.

However, fueled by an online buzz and changes to drinking habits, Chinese consumers — in particular social media-savvy young ones — are now putting ice, and plenty of it, in their drinks.

At convenience stores, cups of ice have become a popular seller. At tea and coffee shops, "full ice, no water" has become a popular way to order a drink. Young consumers have also turned cups of ice into a social media sensation, using them to create DIY drinks that have attracted huge online attention.

Gu Xiaoxiao, 36, a junior middle school teacher in Shanghai, is one of the ice drink devotees. For almost half the year, she has a cup of iced coffee at least once a day.

"I usually start in April or May and keep drinking iced coffee until September or October. Besides my daily quota, I also order iced drinks when dining out or meeting friends. Recently, I even arranged to queue with friends for a popular ice cup coffee that had gone viral online," said Gu.

According to a paper on China's urban consumer behavior in 2025, ice cup sales have grown by more than 300 percent for two consecutive years, with consumers in the first-tier cities of Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangdong province's Guangzhou and Shenzhen buying an average of 48 cups per person per year, reported ThePaper.cn.

Publicly available data shows that ice cups are gaining wider market penetration, expanding from plain to flavored varieties and ice cubes designed for cocktails. A search for "ice cups" on Xiaohongshu, or RedNote, returned more than 40,000 posts.

Zhang Yi, CEO and chief analyst at iiMedia Research, attributed the rising demand for ice cups to the past two summers being very hot and young people wanting to make their own drinks using ice cups.

"The cold chain improvement has led to a cost reduction in ice transportation. On social media, the 'full ice, no water' trend has also become a new way for people to socialize," said Zhang.

"Consumers are increasingly willing to pay for ice that is cleaner and comes in more distinctive shapes," he added.

Surging demand

Dong Yuanyuan, head of ice-cup procurement at Freshippo, a grocery and fresh goods retail chain, said: "Over the past two years, we have clearly seen ice cups grow into a sizable market."

"Some have predicted that edible ice could eventually outsell ice cream, while others have joked that edible ice is taking over the world," she said.

According to Dong, ice cups first emerged in Japan and South Korea, where iced drinks are popular year-round. In Japan, annual consumption has reached 2.57 billion cups, comparable to the volume of bottled water consumed.

Dong said when ice cups entered the Chinese market more than a decade ago, monthly sales were only a few dozen boxes. From 2024 to 2026, annual consumption in first-tier cities had reached 48 cups per person.



A contestant adds ice cubes while making a coffee drink during a village cafe competition in Beijing, on June 12. "Full ice, no water" has become a popular way in the coffee industry in China. LI WENMING / FOR CHINA DAILY

"Annual ice cup consumption is already more than twice the roughly 20 cups of coffee consumed per person. In addition, the market is growing by more than 300 percent a year, leaving ample room for further growth," she added.

Freshippo first introduced ice cups in 2021, along with bags of ice for consumers looking to have them available at home.

According to Freshippo data, demand for ice peaks earlier than sales of iced drinks during the year.

"Driven by strong demand for DIY drinks over the past two years, we have moved up the launch of our ice cups from early summer to early spring. As the camping season begins in spring, we usually see the first sales peak," said Dong.

"After the 2026 FIFA World Cup kicked off in June, sales of slow-melting ice cubes developed specifically for cocktails rose 220 percent week-on-week on average, making them one of the season's standout products in the drinks market," Dong added.

Tao Tao, an illustrator based in Beijing, traces her habit of using ice cups back to her time studying in South Korea several years ago. In South Korea, she noticed people often purchased brewed coffee and ice cups separately at supermarkets, making it easy to create an iced Americano.

She was delighted to find that in the past two years, ice cups have become readily available in Beijing supermarkets, making a cold drink easily accessible during the hot summer months.

"The combination of ice cups with various beverages like coconut water, cold brew coffee, juice, or alcohol allows for simple and instant creative daily creation," she said.

Japanese convenience store chain Lawson said a steady growth has been seen in sales of ice cups and bagged ice over the past two years. Its ice cup sales rose more than 30 percent from May to July in both 2025 and 2026.



Christmas-themed beverages are served with ice at a restaurant in Beijing in November. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"Young consumers are increasingly pairing ice cups with coffee and other drinks, driving Lawson to introduce more creative products, including sparkling ice cups and rainbow-colored varieties, to meet their changing tastes," said the company.

Zheng Wei, general manager of Ice Extreme (Beijing) Food Technology Ltd, a Beijing-based edible ice manufacturer, said Chinese official media has forecast that the iced drink market will reach 63.9 billion yuan ($9.48 billion) in 2026.

Zheng said the demand for iced drinks has become more consistent. In the past, most factories would shut down during the off-season. Now, they run one shift in the off-season and two during the peak summer season.

"Previously, market demand mainly came from businesses in the likes of convenience stores, but in recent years, innovative retail formats including instant retail have seen rapid growth," Zheng said.

"The market used to be dominated by basic products such as cups of ice and bagged ice. Now we offer products including specially-shaped ice, ice buckets and slow-melting cocktail ice, tailoring to diversified needs."

Heated discussion

The iced drink trend has also sparked a major cultural debate.

In traditional Chinese health practices, cold foods and drinks have long been treated with caution.

Traditional Chinese medicine posits that winter is characterized by an abundance of cold energy, which can easily harm the body's *yang* energy.

Consuming raw and cold foods can allow this cold energy to penetrate the body, leading to stagnation of *qi* and blood, and resulting in symptoms like stomach pain and menstrual cramps. Cold water is believed to harm the spleen and stomach, weakening *yang* and potentially causing digestive issues such as diarrhea or loss of appetite. In contrast, hot water is thought to disperse cold energy, promote the circulation of *qi* and blood, and warm and nourish the body.

Wang Bo, chief physician of the department of gastroenterology at Tongji Hospital affiliated to Tongji Medical College of Huazhong University of Science and Technology, told Life Times media outlet that moderate consumption of cold drinks can have some benefits.

"Cold drinks can help cool the body and relieve heat. They can also stimulate the many cold-sensitive receptors in the mouth and on the tongue, sending signals to the brain that produce a feeling of pleasure," Wang said.

From a traditional Chinese medicine perspective, however, cold drinks are best consumed between noon and 3 pm, when *yang* energy is believed to be at its strongest, and consuming ice during this period is considered less likely to cause harm from excessive cold.

Zhang Min, an acupuncture practitioner at Longhua Hospital affiliated to Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, said in an article published in the Shanghai Observer that the debate over whether it's better to drink hot or cold water is not a simple one. "Modern nutrition and medicine increasingly emphasize individual differences, suggesting that what might be 'poison' for one person could be 'medicine' for another."

Zhang said this debate reflects two different health philosophies. The Eastern perspective tends to focus on nurturing and prevention, viewing the body as a delicate system that requires careful maintenance.

The Western perspective, however, leans toward training and adaptation, treating the body as a resilient system capable of handling challenges. "Moderate cold exposure, such as drinking cold water or taking cold baths, is believed to stimulate the circulatory system, boost metabolism, and enhance immunity, akin to a form of exercise for the body," Zhang wrote.

There was also a public health imperative for the promotion of drinking boiled water, according to a 2024 article published by the International Journal of Social Sciences and Public Administration.

Following a cholera outbreak in China in 1932, chaotic water usage was identified by a prominent medical figure as the primary cause for its spread. Due to the absence of a running water system, residents upstream often disposed of their household waste into rivers, exposing those downstream to infection risks.

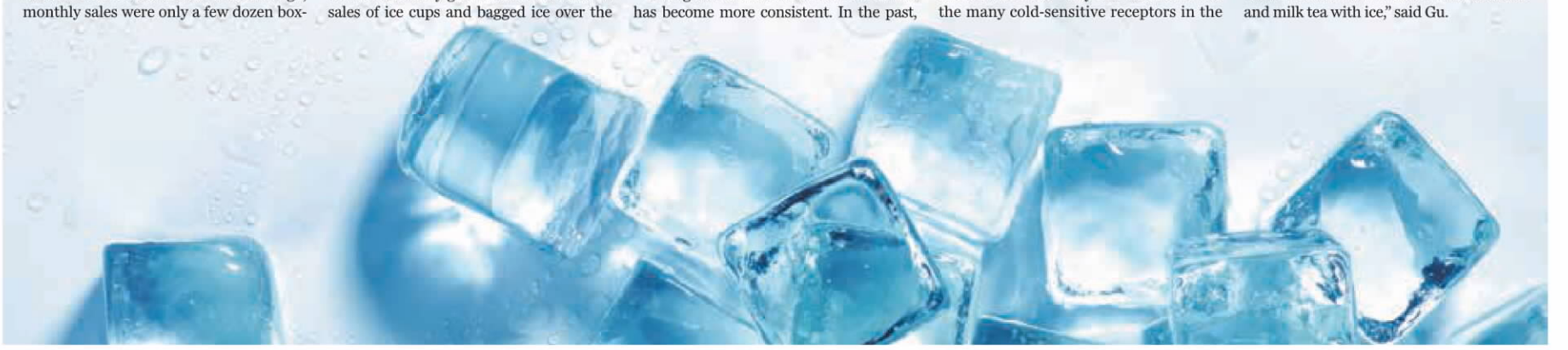
Following medical recommendations, Shanghai established numerous affordable boiled water shops which resulted in reducing the patient mortality rate from 30 percent to 7.4 percent. This initiative instilled a nationwide habit of consuming boiled water, the article said.

In order to address the issue of widespread parasite infestation during that period, an initiative to promote boiled water was once again prioritized. Previous efforts were limited to major cities like Shanghai and Guangzhou.

Boiling water facilities were made mandatory in all factories, military camps, and farms, the article said. Restrictions were imposed on daily drinking water and most domestic sources, thereby necessitating reliance on these designated boiling water rooms. A portable thermos flask emerged as an iconic symbol of that era, with people gradually adapting to queuing up at specific times for a serving of hot boiled water.

Today, people such as Gu, the school teacher, take a balanced approach to hot versus cold drinks.

"In winter, I drink a lot of tea and usually brew it with hot water. But when the weather gets hot, I find hot tea harder to drink. I either have bottled water or coffee and milk tea with ice," said Gu.



Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:56 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:56 PM

TOP NEWS

Safeguard: Heritage turns into a living bridge

From page 1

"This reflects the enduring spirit of the Chinese nation — centered on virtue, benevolence and profound love — which remains vibrant after thousands of years, and also highly aligns with President Xi's vision of building a community with a shared future for humanity," Zhang added.

According to tradition, Mazu, the Chinese goddess of marine weather and maritime safety, was a Song Dynasty (960-1279) fisherwoman named Lin Mo, from Meizhou Island, who was later deified.

Revered for her ability to predict weather, she died at age 28 during a mission to rescue fisherfolk from treacherous storms and was deified as Mazu, meaning benevolent mother. She is often portrayed as carrying a lantern to light the stormy seas, and was long credited with calming storms and guiding ships home.

Belief in Mazu eventually was spread along maritime trade routes by Chinese seafarers and grew into a global bond, with over 11,000 temples and 300 million followers across 50 countries.

During his tenure in Fujian, Xi actively promoted the protection of Meizhou Island and its unique Mazu culture. He planted trees on the island to protect its environment and allocated 2 million yuan ($297,500) to support the Mazu Square project to accommodate larger crowds, after he learned that the project's construction faced a tight budget.

He said after a visit to the island that Mazu culture reflects the character of the Chinese nation, and its exchange and dissemination across the globe can help build a positive image of the Chinese people around the world.

Spiritual asset

Inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2009, Mazu culture now serves as a shared spiritual asset along the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road.

As her golden statue travels for international processions and thousands of overseas people return to her birthplace each year, this ancient heritage remains a living bridge for global fellowship.

Ke Li, deputy director of Putian University's Mazu Culture Research Institute, said, "The core spirit of Mazu culture aligns perfectly with the philosophy of the early-warning solutions, rooted in a shared commitment to putting people's safety first."

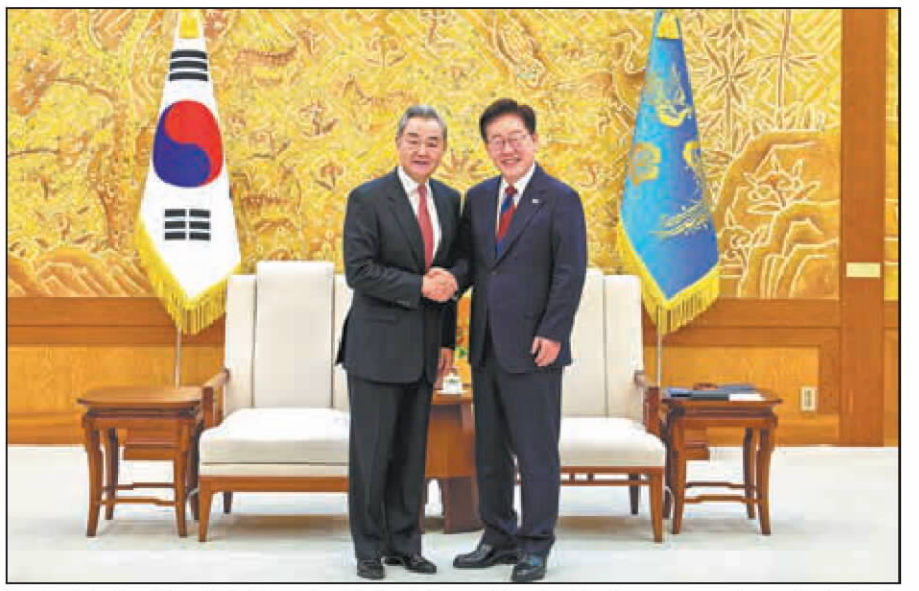
The system also reflects Mazu's spirit of universal beneficence — echoing the goal of protection for everyone regardless of geography or background — and mirrors her ancient wisdom of foresight, blending traditional weather forecasting with modern rapid-response mechanisms, Ke said.

Reflecting this spirit, the MAZU system has become a widely sought-after global public good. More than 40 national meteorological agencies are already using MAZU's cloud-based services, while customized versions of the system have been deployed in Pakistan, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Jordan, Mongolia, the Solomon Islands and Sri Lanka, according to the China Meteorological Administration.

Nestled on one of the world's busiest maritime trade routes in East Africa, Djibouti has become a critical proving ground for the platform. An upgraded version of the MAZU system will be put into operation by the end of this year, which will sharpen its local forecast resolution from 9 km to 3 km.

"MAZU 2.0 is very useful because we have several seaports on the coast," said Mohamed Ismail Nour, director-general of the Djibouti National Meteorological Agency, who expects to deepen port and shipping weather cooperation for safer maritime operations.

Contact the writers at zhangyi1@chinadaily.com.cn



Foreign Minister Wang Yi (left) meets with South Korean President Lee Jae-myung on Thursday in Seoul, the capital of South Korea. XINHUA

FM's ROK visit builds positive momentum

Wang calls for strategic cooperation, political mutual trust in bilateral ties

By ZHOU JIN
zhoujin@chinadaily.com.cn

Inside
Editorial, **page 6**

Foreign Minister Wang Yi wrapped up a two-day visit to the Republic of Korea on Thursday, which observers said reflected continuous efforts by the two neighbors to maintain the positive momentum in bilateral ties.

The visit aimed to implement the consensus reached by the two heads of state during their reciprocal visits, deepen political mutual trust and advance mutually beneficial cooperation, while laying the groundwork for further interactions between the two leaders during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Economic Leaders' Meeting in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, in November, they said.

This was Wang's first official trip to the ROK in five years. The two neighbors will celebrate the 34th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations on Monday.

During Wang's meeting with ROK President Lee Jae-myung in Seoul on Thursday, the president said that Seoul and Beijing should become mutually dependent and mutually beneficial partners with complementary strengths.

Lee said that trade cooperation between the two countries has maintained strong growth. Highlighting that the number of mutual visits between the two peoples is expected to exceed 10 million this year, he noted that public perceptions of China in the ROK continue to improve.

Lee said that he looks forward to visiting Shenzhen for the 2026 APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting, calling it an important opportunity to work with China to advance their strategic cooperative partnership to a new level.

China-ROK relations have fully recovered and made positive progress since the beginning of this year, Wang noted, adding that such a fact demonstrates that a rational, pragmatic and positive policy toward China fully serves the ROK's interests.

When meeting with the ROK's top presidential national security adviser Wi Sung-lac on Thursday, Wang expressed hope that the ROK will exercise genuine strategic autonomy, refrain from bloc confrontation or taking sides, and develop its relations with China, the United States and other major countries in a mutually compatible manner.

During their strategic dialogue, they also had an in-depth exchange of views on regional security issues.

Wang stressed that it is necessary to remain highly vigilant against the rhetoric and actions of Japan's right-wing forces, which seek to turn back the wheel of history, and that the resurgence of Japanese militarism must never be allowed.

Wang's visit also came as the ROK and the US confirmed that they were sharply scaling back major annual joint drills, a move viewed as a goodwill gesture toward the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The fundamental way to ease tensions on the Korean Peninsula is to address the root causes and to push for the US to abandon its hostile policy toward the DPRK, Wang told Wi.

Wang called on all parties to do more to facilitate the resumption of dialogue and restoration of mutual trust, expressing hopes that the Korean Peninsula will move toward peaceful coexistence between the ROK and the DPRK, ultimately achieving lasting peace and stability on the peninsula.

Li Jiacheng, an associate professor at Liaoning University's School of International Studies, said that both the US and the ROK hope China can serve as a bridge and play a greater role in facilitating their engagement with the DPRK.

In his talks with ROK Foreign Minister Cho Hyun on Wednesday, Wang said that China's vast market offers the ROK enormous opportunities due to its geographical proximity. Wang expressed hope that the two sides will continue to expand cooperation.

The two countries should also tap new growth areas for cooperation in artificial intelligence, green transition, the digital economy, high-end equipment and the silver economy, he added.

The Chinese foreign minister called on the two countries to accelerate negotiations on the second phase of the China-ROK Free Trade Agreement.

Deeper China-Africa media relations urged

By ZHAO JIA
zhaojia@chinadaily.com.cn

African officials and media leaders called on Thursday for China-Africa media cooperation to move beyond equipment support and program exchanges toward coproduction and two-way storytelling, in order to help the African media better narrate their own stories and bring a wider African perspective to Chinese audiences.

They made the remarks as the 7th Forum on China-Africa Media Cooperation opened in Beijing, bringing together about 400 government, media, diplomatic, business and academic representatives from China and 45 African countries.

The three-day forum is being held as China and Africa mark 70 years of launching diplomatic relations in 2026 and observe the China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges.

Alhaji Mohamed Sarjoh Bah, the African Union's permanent representative to China, described the media as a strategic tool for development, cultural identity and economic opportunity, as well as a major force shaping international perception. He emphasized that Africa should not remain a passive recipient of information, and should instead become a producer and distributor of knowledge and ideas.

He urged cooperation beyond content exchanges in film, broadcasting, animation, gaming and digital content to create value chains that generate employment and attract investment.

Ahunna Eziakonwa, United Nations undersecretary-general and special adviser on Africa, made a video address to the forum in which she described storytelling as an essential tool for development.

External narratives have long obscured African realities, but young African creators are changing that through streaming, animation and digital content, Eziakonwa said, adding that Sino-African joint productions, along with technologies adapted to African languages and contexts, could strengthen the continent's narrative sovereignty.

Gregoire Ndjaka, director-general of the African Union of Broadcasting, underscored that cooperation between Africa and China should promote an exchange of stories, voices, ideas and experiences.

Ndjaka noted Chinese support for African broadcasting and the provision of news, documentaries and other programs on AUBVision, the union's content-sharing platform, but emphasized that African content should receive greater exposure on Chinese platforms, giving Chinese audiences more opportunities to understand the continent from an African perspective.

Evelyne Butoyi, communication and media minister of Burundi, which currently chairs the African Union, said Africa-China cooperation has improved grassroots access to information and cultural content. She cited the China-aided "Access to Satellite TV for 10,000 African Villages" project, which has provided transmission equipment to 500 villages in Burundi and extended digital television coverage in remote areas.

Cao Shumin, deputy head of the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and head of the National Radio and Television Administration, highlighted the scale of China-Africa media cooperation.

Over the past two years, more than 80 Chinese productions have aired in Africa, while over 80 programs from 29 African countries have been shown on major Chinese television channels and streaming platforms, Cao said.

The two sides have coproduced about 50 audiovisual programs, while China has organized 45 training programs for more than 1,000 media professionals from 32 African countries, she added.

On Thursday, the forum also unveiled 80 practical cooperation projects and issued a joint declaration calling for deeper collaboration in content production, digital transformation and AI governance.



Participants pose for a group photo during the 7th Forum on China-Africa Media Cooperation in Beijing on Thursday. The event runs through Friday. WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY

Tech: AI should collaborate with humans

From page 1

At its core lies a dangerous myth — that machines will soon surpass us in every cognitive domain, rendering human expertise obsolete.

This myth is not innocent. It is already being used to justify mass layoffs of software engineers, writers, translators and analysts.

Tech executives frame these cuts as inevitable progress. But a clear-eyed look at the facts tells a different story.

We are still in AI's early stages. Today's systems mimic certain cognitive functions, but they do not understand, reason or reliably replace human judgment.

Consider autonomous vehicles — promised by 2020, still struggling on city streets. Consider the "autonomous agents" heralded for 2025 — now quietly postponed.

As someone who works on autonomous systems, I can attest that current AI lacks genuine understanding. It matches patterns. It does not think.

Some argue that reasoning will magically "emerge" as we scale models to an ever-increasing number of parameters. This narrative suits the tech giants perfectly. It justifies billion-dollar investments in data centers and infrastructure. But this is a gamble with no scientific basis, one that leads AI to a dead end.

We need a different path: AI that collaborates with humans, instead of replacing them — specialized, transparent systems designed to augment expertise in fields such as medicine, engineering, scientific research and business management, not general-purpose black boxes.

This "collaborative AI" raises profound scientific challenges. How do we build machines that explain their reasoning in human-understandable terms? How do we establish trust between humans and machines? How do we design systems that solve problems with us, rather than for us? Consider a medical diagnosis. A collaborative AI would not replace the doctor's judgment. It would surface relevant research, flag anomalies and explain its recommendations in plain language — allowing the physician to make the final, informed decision. This differs fundamentally from current "black box" systems, which provide take-it-or-leave-it answers.

These are hard problems. They require investment in explainability, reliability and domain-specific knowledge — not just bigger models and more data. Yet academic research, which should lead this charge, has been sidelined. University laboratories are unable to compete with the private labs of a handful of companies and often find themselves reduced to playing catch-up. When research is concentrated in a few private labs, its priorities shift toward proprietary features, rather than scientific understanding. This distorts the entire field. We must revitalize university research — driven by curiosity, transparency and peer review — which is best positioned to address the challenges of explainability and trust.

The conditions conducive to change are taking shape. Public distrust of unaccountable AI is growing. From chatbots that make up facts, to facial recognition systems with racial biases, to autonomous driving systems with fatal flaws, the public has seen too many buzzwords touted as major breakthroughs. Every widely publicized hype campaign erodes trust. The technical limits of "scaling up" are becoming apparent — even to the industry's true believers. And the economic pressure weighing on tech giants — the gap between colossal investments and a market still struggling to generate returns — is becoming impossible to ignore.

History shows that humanity has capitalized on technological revolutions by balancing risks and benefits. The steam engine, electricity and the internet — each brought profound change, but each was shaped by regulation, public debate and ethical reflection. Artificial intelligence should be no exception. The initial rush of enthusiasm should give way to sober reflection. Societies built frameworks to ensure these technologies served the common good. We are now at that same inflection point.

We have a choice. We can continue down the path of replacement, building machines that mimic us, supplant us and ultimately marginalize us. Or we can invest in a future where AI enriches human intelligence rather than replacing it.

That future requires a global effort: governments funding collaborative AI research, universities prioritizing human-AI interaction, and citizens demanding transparency and accountability. This means public funding for collaborative AI, curricula in human-AI interaction design, and regulatory frameworks requiring explainability before deployment in sensitive domains from healthcare to criminal justice and the management of critical infrastructure.

The question is not whether AI holds extraordinary potential — it clearly does. The question is whether we will have the wisdom to steer it toward a true symbiosis with humanity and prevent it from insidiously gaining the upper hand. This is our historic responsibility. Now is the time to act.

The author is a laureate of the 2007 Turing Award (known as the Nobel Prize for Computing) and founder of the Verimag laboratory in Grenoble. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Meteors: Livestream gains views

From page 1

Liu Dapeng said that smartphones, when mounted on a tripod, can capture the starry sky. Beginners can invest in cameras and wide-angle lenses based on their budgets, or opt for affordable secondhand gear, he said.

"After putting it into practice, they can think about whether they want to stick with astrophotography. It can be tiring, enduring outdoor hardships such as freezing cold and rain. Safety is always paramount. It is very easy to get lost in the desert at night, so you should travel with others and take no risks," he added.

Zhou Bo led a team to livestream the Perseid meteor shower from Dahaidao, Barkol Lake and Yiwu county. Drawing on his multidisciplinary knowledge including geology and history, he promoted Hami's natural resources and cultural heritage while hosting the livestream.

Zhou said he believes that the meteors stir curiosity and a thirst for knowledge among his viewers, inspiring wonder at the boundless cosmos.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:56 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:56 PM

WORLD

Comfort food



Migrant women wait for donated meals on Wednesday at a sports field converted by residents into an improvised shelter following a mass crossing of migrants from Morocco, in the El Principe neighborhood of Spain's North African enclave of Ceuta. VIOLETA SANTOS MOURA / REUTERS

Trump expands economic warfare against Iran

By **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong and **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE

US President Donald Trump has declared an "economic D-Day" against Iran amid a ceasefire deadlock, threatening countries that provide a lifeline to Tehran with "tremendous consequences".

Trump's threats came just as the United Arab Emirates suspended all trade with Iran on Wednesday after the UAE came under renewed attack, triggering nationwide warnings, a day earlier.

In a social media post on Wednesday, Trump boasted that no one has given Iran "a greater opportunity to make a deal than me", adding that Tehran failed to take it as he announced "the most crushing economic operation ever taken against any country".

Trump said it would be "economic warfare and isolation on an unprecedented scale" and claimed that Iran "is hanging by a thread".

"Today, I am also announcing that any country that allows its financial institutions, businesses, airports or government entities to provide any type of lifeline to Iran will itself face tremendous economic consequences," he said.

"This will be an Economic D-Day," he added, reiterating Iran "will never have a nuclear weapon".

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi pushed back on Thursday, saying the "so-called Economic D-Day is a diversion from America's own crisis", citing debt and surging interest costs.

"Doubling down on failed policies will only bring further defeat — and enmity of Iranians. US economic terrorism threatens global economy and sovereignty worldwide," he said.

Iran has been under international sanctions for decades, especially since the US imposed sanctions following the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Since the current war broke out on Feb 28, the US has targeted Iranian energy exports, disrupting Tehran's primary revenue stream. Washington has also targeted entities allegedly smuggling Iranian-origin liquefied petroleum gas disguised as Omani LPG to South and East Asia.

The US Treasury Department has also imposed sanctions against Iran's banking and foreign exchange networks, and weapons procurement.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said on Thursday that imposing sanctions and exerting pressure will not be useful in solving the Iran issue.

China calls on relevant parties to take responsible steps and resolve the issue through political and diplomatic means, he said.

Without interference

At a meeting with Iraqi President Nizar Amidi, Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf warned that the US is seeking to plunder the resources of the Gulf states, the Tasnim News Agency reported.

Regional countries can establish security and stability through unity and without foreign interference, Ghalibaf said.

The US is the main cause of the region's problems, he said, adding that Washington's hegemonic approach has fueled recent conflicts, inflicting losses on Iran and Iraq.

Rasha Al Joundy, a senior researcher at the Dubai Public Policy Research Centre, told China Daily that by imposing more economic pressure on Iran at this stage, the US "seeks to inflict more internal pressure on the government".

However, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps is the one making decisions and therefore, this will inflict political pressure on the government because of economic pressure on the people who are the most affected and vulnerable, she said.

The pressure will not have much impact militarily on the IRGC's decisions, she added.

"Strategically I don't believe that the US would accomplish short-term political gains with new sanctions, but it could push for a new round of military confrontation in the region," she said.

"If the US administration would adopt this as a long-term strategy, then the outcome would depend on whether it is supported and implemented for a long timeframe, without suspensions or side exemptions."

Contact the writers at jan@chinadailyapac.com

Groups challenge rule ending Duration of Status

By **MAY ZHOU** in Houston, Texas
mayzhou@chinadailyusa.com

Multiple organizations filed a complaint and a motion for preliminary injunction challenging the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) final rule ending the Duration of Status (D/S) framework for international students, exchange visitors and representatives of foreign media in the US District Court for the District of Massachusetts on Tuesday.

The complaint argues that DHS failed to adequately assess its costs and benefits, meaningfully respond to public comments, consider less burdensome alternatives or justify the rule based on its stated objectives.

The lawsuit also alleges that DHS provided an inadequate public comment period and exceeded its statutory authority.

DHS gave the public 32 days and drew 22,000 comments, including opposition from more than 30 Congress members. Despite there being more comments opposing the changes, DHS enacted the new rule, which is scheduled to take effect on Sept 15.

Fanta Aw, executive director and CEO of NAFSA: Association of International Educators, said this decision is "a solution in search of a problem".

"The rule will severely undermine the contributions international students make to US campuses, economies and national security," Aw said in a statement. "After carefully reviewing the final rule and the sweeping harm it will cause to our national interest, it is clear that litigation is warranted and necessary."

For about half a century, F-1 students and J-1 visitors could remain in the US for as long as they are enrolled in an academic program with no fixed departure date.

Under the new rule, international students will be given a specific end date aligning with the academic program length or four years, whichever is shorter. For longer programs, the students are required to file an extension of stay.

In addition, F-1 undergraduate students won't be able to change their major or transfer to another college in the first year. They can't pursue another major at the same or lower education level after graduation.

F-1 graduate students are prohibited from switching majors or schools at all, and the duration of F-1 students for English learning will be limited to 24 months in aggregate.

"The new restriction doesn't make any sense," Liu, an art student in Chicago who wants to be identified by his last name only, told China Daily. "An arts degree usually stops at master's level. Serious art students often pursue another master's degree in a different medium to expand their horizon for creativity."

Dual degrees are not uncommon in many fields, Liu said.

For example, research physicians often pursue both MD and PhD to treat patients and run research labs. Jobs in bioinformatics require training in both biology and computer science. Architecture design often benefits from engineering training.

The lawsuit argued that a four-year fixed term is incompatible with many programs, particularly PhDs.

NAFSA estimated that "the median years to a research doctorate is 5.7 years from entering a program to completion, while those who complete the master's/doctorate sequence take an average of 7.3 years from entering graduate school to completion".

Such restrictions are very off-putting. A survey by NAFSA and The Institute for Progress showed that 49 percent of current international students would not have studied in the US without D/S.

College application platform Common App showed that international applicants were down by 9 percent for this fall semester. Many universities are expecting a steep drop in international graduate students.

Miriam Feldblum, president and CEO of the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration, said these changes ignore "actual program lengths or students' educational needs" and shift "academic decisions from institutions to immigration officials".

"The rule will disrupt educational pathways, impose significant new burdens on colleges and universities, and make the United States less competitive as the premier destination for global talent," Feldblum said.

The lawsuit said many commenters warned that declining international enrollment would be catastrophic.

"Many cited the Clemens study, which estimated that within ten years, the economic costs of eliminating D/S would be $72-145 billion annually," it said in the court document.

The new rule would also limit I visa holders — representatives of foreign information media — to a maximum of 240 days. For Chinese passport holders, it's much shorter at 90 days.

The lawsuit said that many are concerned that the new rule requiring international journalists to file frequent extension of stay requests would put government officials in a position to punish journalists for exercising their First Amendment rights.

Growing US national debt 'huge burden'

Record level of obligations could eventually hit Americans with higher borrowing costs

By **BELINDA ROBINSON** in New York
belindarobinson@chinadailyusa.com

Millions of Americans who are already struggling with the cost of living could eventually feel the effects of persistently high debt as US gross federal debt surpassed $40 trillion on Wednesday and economists and think tanks warned that it's a "huge burden" that could drive up interest rates, inflation and borrowing costs.

> "Despite the obvious recklessness of this fiscal path, we are showing no signs of slowing down."
>
> **Michael A. Peterson**, CEO of a think tank focused on US fiscal challenges

The record-breaking, unprecedented, national debt reached the milestone in part due to defense costs, social programs like Social Security and Medicare, and interest payments on that debt — a big part of federal spending, experts said.

"The national debt hitting $40 trillion is a huge burden on the back of every American," Christopher Ball, director of the Central European Institute at Quinnipiac University, Istvan Széchenyi Chair in International Economics and an associate professor of economics, told China Daily. "Like all debt, it must be paid back. If it were at a more reasonable level then we could pay a little more in taxes or cut a little spending, not too much and not too painfully. But when it is that high, it means we have to suffer serious pains or go bankrupt.

"This doesn't have to be done today — which is why Americans may not feel the burden today — but the payments will come due. When that happens most likely the average American will suffer in facing really high interest rates, really high taxes and massive cuts in basic services like Social Security, Medicare and all other government-supported social services. Again, the longer we wait, the more the pain when we face it."

High government borrowing can put pressure on market interest rates, and has already raised borrowing costs on mortgages and cars, say experts.

The benchmark 30-year fixed rate mortgage was 6.65 percent on Aug 20, higher than a year ago when it was 6.58 percent, The Associated Press reported. The rates are influenced by the 10-year Treasury yield, inflation forecasts and the economic outlook.

American consumer spending is vital, so a pull back on shopping could cause slower economic growth, data shows.

But the bond market showed signs of strain on Thursday due to fears over US government debt and worries about high inflation. Stocks fell as investors evaluated concerns.

The S&P 500 dropped 0.87 percent to close at 7,641.16 on Thursday. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 703.84 points. The Nasdaq composite fell 1 percent to close at 26,067.17.

Americans have already seen fluctuating gas prices this year, while Trump renewed threats to hurt Iran economically on Wednesday.

The price for a barrel of Brent crude settled at $93.78 on Thursday.

The rise in the national debt also comes as the administration said it's focusing on more spending on the ongoing conflict with Iran.

Kush Desai, a White House spokesman, told The AP that the Trump administration "has been focused on slashing waste, fraud and abuse in federal spending while accelerating economic growth to get America's debt-to-GDP ratio trending in the right direction".

But Michael A. Peterson, CEO of the Peter G. Peterson Foundation, a think tank focused on US fiscal challenges, said in a statement: "It's shocking that we've doubled the federal debt in less than 10 years, and we must change course.

"The more debt we take on, the more interest costs we have to bear, which now even exceed the cost of national defense. And every trillion we add to our debt contributes to higher interest rates and inflation, increasing the mortgages, car loans and credit card bills of all Americans."

Peterson said that debt harms economic growth, slowing wage increases while the cost of living continues to rise.

The US national debt has increased over several presidential administrations, rising when the federal government runs a budget deficit and spends more money than it collects in tax revenue.

An analysis of OECD data by The AP described the US as having the worst fiscal position among developed economies.

The Bipartisan Policy Center estimates that the US will reach the $41.1 trillion statutory debt limit between late winter and mid-summer of 2027.

If the limit is reached, the Treasury must use measures to address it.

And Congress must vote on whether to raise or suspend it, as Congress is responsible for setting a limit to federal borrowing. It can also adjust or abolish it.

Peterson added: "Despite the obvious recklessness of this fiscal path, we are showing no signs of slowing down. The debt growth is projected to accelerate as our society ages and healthcare costs continue to balloon. If we don't reform our budget, we will hit $50 trillion in just 6 years."

通 知

致所有潜在投资者：

某大型国际化集团已正式启动其位于美国加州圣何塞（San Jose）的数据中心（IDC）的出售程序。本次交易将采用两轮竞价机制，符合条件的意向方，须于 2026 年 9 月前递交非约束性报价。符合条件的意向方若希望获取进一步信息，请通过邮箱联系。

工作时间：周一至周五 9:00 至 18:00
联系邮箱：IB_lidao_2026@outlook.com

NOTICE

To all potential investors,

A multinational corporation has officially initiated a separate sales process for its internet data centers (IDCs) located in San Jose, California, United States. The transaction will be conducted via a two-round competitive bidding process, with the submission deadline for Non-Binding Offers set for September 2026. Qualified interested parties seeking further information are invited to contact via email.

Office hours: 09:00 to 18:00, Monday to Friday
Contact Email: IB_lidao_2026@outlook.com

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899

Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1898

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:56 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:56 PM

New system is built to cultivate private sector

By YUAN SHENGGAO

On the shores of the East China Sea, Wenzhou in Zhejiang province — a cradle of China's private economy — is experiencing a profound transformation that is permeating the day-to-day operations of the city's 1.57 million business entities.

Since 2025, the Wenzhou city government has rolled out a plan to coordinate 41 departments across the city. It has introduced measures covering seven areas, which include improving government service models, fostering robust business entities and empowering credit-based business.

The city is building a new system of regulation and service featuring "omnipresent support and non-intrusive oversight", cultivating a business environment conducive to the free development of the private economy.

"I never imagined opening a shop could be this easy," said a visually impaired Wenzhou resident surnamed Jin. Hoping to launch a massage parlor, Jin turned to government service counters for assistance due to limited mobility.

Thanks to the one-stop service mechanism, the dedicated service zone for individual industrial and commercial households helped him complete all registration procedures within a short period.

Jin's experience epitomizes Wenzhou's considerate business environment. Rather than resolving isolated cases, the city strives to upgrade solutions for institutional frameworks and address diverse categories of matters.

Integrating value-added services from multiple government departments, industry associations and social organizations, Wenzhou has set up service zones for individual industrial and commercial households to foster a new ecosystem.

Additionally, Wenzhou has established a closed-loop system to resolve corporate demands that integrates online and offline channels. Via the online platform, enterprises can submit requests with a single click. Offline, monthly government-business forums are held to tackle challenges, while a dedicated service counter for unresolved matters takes on the most intractable problems.

As local enterprises develop, Wenzhou's market regulation administration provides tiered cultivation support, encouraging large-scale enterprises and individual industrial and commercial entities to support one another and share supply chain and channel resources.

As one of the birthplaces of China's private economy, Wenzhou was approved in 2018 to build the country's first national pilot zone for the "dual health" initiative — a national reform pilot for the sound development of the private economy and the sound growth of private entrepreneurs. It stands as a benchmark in Zhejiang's efforts to advance economic structural reform driven by the private economy.

To advance this initiative, Wenzhou set up a working group led by the city's Party committee and established a coordinated mechanism linking authorities at all levels.

A citywide channel was opened for direct feedback on issues arising in the pilot program to support timely, full-process guidance. Meanwhile, a provincial-city joint promotion mechanism for the initiatives was put in place, offering an upward channel for reform initiatives that encounter bottlenecks at the city level.

In parallel, Wenzhou has enshrined the "dual health" initiative in laws and regulations. The city government enacted China's first local ordinance dedicated to the initiative, rolled out an evaluation index system for the sound development of the private economy and an evaluation index system for the sound growth of private entrepreneurs, and also released the Wenzhou Private Economy Financial Service Index.

To boost entrepreneurs' sense of happiness and security, the city has also rolled out a suite of policies to respect and support businesses, and has designated Nov 1 every year as the private entrepreneurs' festival.

In October 2025, the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce released the 2025 lists of the top 500 private enterprises by research and development investment and the top 500 private enterprises by invention patents. Eight and 10 Wenzhou enterprises were named on the two lists, respectively, up by one and five from 2024.



A view of Binjiang central business district in Wenzhou, Zhejiang province in September 2025. LIU JILI / FOR CHINA DAILY



The Wenling-Yuhuan section of the Hangzhou-Taizhou High-speed Railway opens on Aug 8. The picture shows the inaugural G7364 train traveling over the Xuanmen Bay Grand Bridge. XINHUA

High-Speed railway opens in Zhejiang

Network becomes a model of attracting investment into major projects in province

By YUAN SHENGGAO

After the Wenling-Yuhuan section of the Hangzhou-Taizhou High-speed Railway, China's first high-speed railway with private capital in control, went into operation on Aug 8, Zhejiang province in East China made new progress in building its high-speed rail transport circle.

The newly opened section extends Zhejiang's high-speed rail network to the eastern coastal area of Taizhou city.

Data from China Railway Shanghai Group show that passenger volume on the Hangzhou-Taizhou High-speed Railway has exceeded 100 million since its opening in 2022, greatly aiding the flow of people, goods, capital and information along the route.

The Hangzhou-Taizhou High-speed Railway has formed a vital part of the Yangtze River Delta intercity railway network and become a model for Zhejiang to attract private capital into major transport projects, officials said.

Its Wenling-Yuhuan section adopts the public-private partnership model. Social investors led by China Railway Construction Investment Group funded the project together with the Wenling and Yuhuan local governments, while entrusting China Railway Shanghai Group with construction and operation.

Experts in development planning in Zhejiang noted that the Hangzhou-Taizhou High-speed Railway project breaks the traditional model under which railway projects were solely funded by State-owned capital with private capital holding minor shares. It enables effective alignment between government regulation and market-oriented operations.



Visitors take photos of textile equipment at a private economy exhibition center on Dec 26, 2025, in Ningbo University of Finance and Economics in Zhejiang province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Its operational model has become a reference case for industrial reform, exploring a replicable path for private capital to participate in railway investment, financing, construction and operation.

Sources from China State Railway Group noted that previous high-speed rail projects relied heavily on fiscal funds and capital of the national railway operators, resulting in heavy financial pressure and constrained expansion.

The practice of the Hangzhou-Taizhou High-speed Railway demonstrates that properly introducing social capital can ease the capital burden of railway infrastructure construction.

Meanwhile, the market-oriented mindset of private enterprises can drive innovation in passenger transport services and develop resources along railway lines, which is helpful to unlock the value of railway assets.

Zhejiang has been encouraging private enterprises to participate in major projects for a long time. Over decades of development, Zhejiang has witnessed magnificent growth of its private economy. Today, the private economy stands as one of the most dynamic engines powering high-quality development in the province.

Apart from the Hangzhou-Taizhou High-speed Railway, the Zhejiang San'ao nuclear power project located in Cangnan county, Wenzhou city — the first nuclear power project with private capital participation in China — officially entered commercial operation on April 29 and marks a landmark reform in China's energy investment and financing system.

In a bid to stimulate private investment, Zhejiang put forward the "three 70 percent targets" in 2023: no less than 70 percent of the provincial "4+1" special funds shall be channeled into private investment projects; no less than 70 percent of newly added and stock land resources shall support private investment projects; and no less than 70 percent of annually newly allocated energy consumption quotas shall go to private investment projects.

In 2025, Zhejiang set a goal to raise the targets to 80 percent. In 2026, the province formally launched the new targets.

In May, the Zhejiang provincial government released 13 measures centering on fostering a high-level innovation ecosystem and addressing the demands of private enterprises. The policy combines targeted support with reform and innovation, introducing measures with tangible benefits and a greater sense of gain for market entities.

Clauses 1 to 4 of the policy center on scientific and technological innovation, with plans to open up innovation resources including major scientific facilities, supercomputing centers and pilot-scale testing platforms.

Clauses 5 to 7 focus on opening up more sectors. They specify that nine sectors, including railways, nuclear power, offshore wind power and water supply will be opened to private capital. For-profit low-altitude economy projects, commercial aerospace projects and the like will be open to all market entities on an equal footing. Private enterprises will receive support in applying for commercial aerospace frequency licenses and launch approvals.

Clauses 8 to 10 target factor market reforms. Apart from the 80 percent targets, newly added industrial land and newly allocated energy consumption quotas shall back private investment. Each year, 666.7 hectares of land will be allocated to support small and medium-sized enterprises investing in projects with new quality productive forces.

Clauses 11 to 13 concern legal safeguards. The province will uniformly publicize bidding information across Zhejiang. Unreasonable access thresholds are strictly prohibited. Seizure and freezing of assets exceeding the amount involved in cases shall be rectified in accordance with laws and regulations.

Phoenix Action supporting capital engagement

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Zhejiang Xinxing Tools rang the listing bell on the ChiNext board of the Shenzhen Stock Exchange on July 30, becoming the 12th listed enterprise in Haiyan county, Zhejiang province.

Located in Liuli industrial park, Ganpu town of Haiyan, Xinxing Tools is a time-honored manufacturing enterprise. For more than 30 years, the company has focused on the hole machining tool sector and has been recognized as a single-product champion in manufacturing.

The enterprise specializes in the research and development and production of drilling tools such as annular cutters and spade drills. Drawing on its extensive manufacturing expertise, it accounts for more than 50 percent of the domestic market share for annular cutters. Its products are now sold to more than 90 countries and regions, and the company has established close partnerships with thousands of clients worldwide.

Through sustained investment in innovation, the enterprise has secured 170 patents. It has led the formulation of two national industry standards and set up a national-level postdoctoral research station in 2024, helping it remain at the forefront of technological innovation in this niche industry.

"Haiyan's business environment and full-cycle incubation services gave us the confidence to take root here, develop the real economy and march toward the capital market," said Zhu Dongwei, general manager of Xinxing Tools.

Currently, the main structures of the company's new digital factory have been completed. Once operational, the factory will produce precision tool holders and fixtures for computer numerical control machines. The project is expected to be completed and begin operation by the end of the year.

Once fully operational, the project will add an annual production capacity of 6.6 million high-end CNC tools, accelerating the company's transformation from a single-product manufacturer to a comprehensive solution provider offering a full range of hole machining tools.

"It has been an arduous journey from a small workshop of merely three people to a successful listing. I believe the key lies in Xinxing Tools' perseverance — perfecting one type of cutting tool for three decades. By concentrating on the hole machining tool sector with sustained dedication, we have finally reaped rewards," Zhu said.

In recent years, Haiyan has been implementing the Phoenix Action Plan — Zhejiang's flagship provincial strategy to develop a multi-tiered capital market — and stepping up efforts to cultivate high-quality real-economy enterprises and build a full-cycle, full-chain service system for enterprises seeking to go public.

To date, the county hosts 12 listed companies, 12 NEEQ-listed companies and 48 enterprises in the pre-listing reserve pool, forming an expanding tiered cluster of capital market participants.

Haiyan's achievement reflects Zhejiang's broader efforts to foster the private economy. During the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-25), Zhejiang advanced an upgraded version of the Phoenix Action Plan. Supported by whole-process capital engagement, full-cycle policy backing and full-chain service guarantees, the province has remained a key player in capital market development in China.

The full-chain tiered cultivation system enables enterprises at different growth stages to access multi-level capital markets. The system is designed to create an important hub for fostering and expanding emerging industries, making forward-looking plans for future industries and piloting the high-quality development of listed companies.



Zhejiang Xinxing Tools' booth at the 14th China CNC Machine Tool Fair on April 24 in Shanghai. XU WEIJIE / FOR CHINA DAILY

In the five lists released by the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce in 2025, namely China's top 500 private enterprises, China's top 500 private manufacturing enterprises, China's top 100 private service enterprises, top 500 private enterprises in R&D investment and top 500 private enterprises by invention patents, private enterprises from Zhejiang claimed the largest number of entries nationwide, achieving a clean sweep for two consecutive years.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:56 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:56 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Weaponizing gold self-harming addition to US' systematic containment calculations

Gold has long been the ultimate hedge against political folly. Now it is becoming such folly's collateral damage. Washington's decision to place three Chinese gold companies on its so-called "Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act Entity List", followed by the London Bullion Market Association's suspension of their Good Delivery status, is a test of whether the United States can weaponize the financial system without ultimately weakening the system itself.

The China Gold Association says the US sanctions have no factual basis and accuses Washington of politicizing "human rights" to pursue protectionism. It has also criticized the LBMA for acting without sufficient fact-checking.

The bigger danger lies in the financial shadow cast over international transactions involving Chinese companies. Good Delivery status is a passport into the London bullion market. Losing it can mean greater due-diligence costs, fewer counterparties and more complicated access to international derivatives markets. The "UFLPA Entity List" adds another layer of uncertainty, encouraging banks, traders and suppliers to distance themselves from US-designated "politically risky" entities. Sanctions work not merely by closing doors but by making everyone nervous about opening them.

With veteran financial tycoon Scott Bessent as US Treasury chief, the US administration increasingly treats dollar dominance as an instrument of hegemony. Currency swaps, Treasury-market intervention, sanctions and settlement requirements are being woven into a broader strategy aimed at preserving the US' financial hegemony with China being one of the unspoken targets. The same logic now applies to gold: control a critical node and you acquire leverage over everyone connected to it.

The US' financial power rests on trust in institutions that are supposed to be more durable than any US administration. If access to dollar liquidity becomes a geopolitical favor, if Treasury markets are bent toward political objectives, and if gold certification is an extension of US sanctions, foreign governments have an obvious question: what happens when their interests diverge from Washington's?

The answer is diversification. It is pragmatic and reasonable for China to try and create a renminbi payment option, a more autonomous gold market and enough financial resilience to ensure that a US financial sanction does not trigger a systemic crisis. That explains the growing importance of the Shanghai Gold Exchange. If the LBMA becomes politicized, China has an incentive to internationalize its own delivery standards, deepen the "Shanghai Gold" benchmark and expand gold cooperation with emerging markets. What begins as defensive diversification can eventually become institutional competition.

Yet any measure taken by other countries to counter the US' economic coercion is seen by Washington as "an unforgivable act of defiance". The White House published a so-called "The Great Transshipment Scam: Rise, Scope, and Costs" report last week. The report smears China's normal international trade and investment as a "scam" and fabricates a false narrative about a so-called "shadow transshipment network".

As a spokesperson for China's Ministry of Commerce said, the arbitrary tariffs imposed by the US are the root cause of threats to the security of global supply chains. Attributing domestic economic issues to external factors will not resolve the deep-seated problems within the US itself.

The broader strategy is clearly visible in Washington's policy consultation circle. The Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, a think tank in Washington, has been publishing its "Mobilizing for Techno-Economic War" series, advocating strategic technology-economic pacts and a comprehensive effort to constrain China.

As shown by these reports, the US' containment spans technology, trade, finance, resources, markets and information to realize a precarious new equilibrium: strategic rivalry without a full showdown. The old bargain — economic interdependence generating gains for both sides — is being replaced by a world in which every supply chain is examined for strategic vulnerability and every financial institution becomes a choke point, with costs that are structural for the global economy.

When currency swaps become political favors, gold certification an extension of sanctions policy and Fed independence a bargaining chip, the credibility underpinning the dollar's global role is eroded. By weaponizing the very institutions that made the dollar indispensable, the US risks losing the longer war for financial trust. Gold, after all, has a long memory. It may eventually remember who made it political.

Stable Sino-ROK ties serve both and region

As China and the Republic of Korea approach the 34th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, there is a renewed opportunity to inject fresh vitality into their strategic cooperative partnership. The meeting between Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and his ROK counterpart Cho Hyun in Seoul on Wednesday can help the two sides demonstrate strategic vision and jointly ensure the healthy, stable and sustainable development of bilateral relations.

China and the ROK have long enjoyed a robust economic and trade relationship, evolving into a deeply integrated community of shared interests, with annual bilateral trade volume surpassing $330 billion. For more than two decades, China has remained the ROK's largest trading partner, and its vast market continues to offer opportunities for the ROK's industries. This partnership helps drive innovation and growth in both countries.

By expanding cooperation in high-value-added sectors and tapping into new growth drivers such as artificial intelligence, green transition and the digital economy, they can further unlock the potential of their economic integration. This approach aligns not only with the ROK's economic transformation needs, but also with China's focus on high-quality development.

At this juncture, accelerating the second phase of negotiations on the China-ROK Free Trade Agreement is crucial. The deal promises to enhance openness in the service and investment sectors. Reaching the deal serves the two countries' common interest.

However, this cooperation must be grounded in mutual respect and strategic autonomy. It is essential that the ROK not yield to pressure from the United States to join the geopolitical rivalry against China, particularly in high-tech fields, where export restrictions on advanced semiconductor manufacturing equipment are a concern.

During the meeting, Wang clearly expressed the hope that the ROK will, based on its fundamental interests, pursue an independent foreign policy and develop relations with other countries in parallel without conflict.

The souring of China-ROK relations after the ROK's deployment of the US' Terminal High Altitude Area Defense missile system in 2016 underscores that economic integration, no matter how deep, cannot fully insulate bilateral ties from strategic mistrust. Moving forward, managing differences requires strategic communication, transparency and a shared commitment to dialogue over unilateral actions.

Apart from economic collaboration, it is also in the shared interests of both countries to strengthen coordination in addressing regional security challenges. As Cho noted, the two sides can work to ensure that China-ROK relations contribute to peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and the broader region.

The current international climate is fraught with uncertainties. China and the ROK share a responsibility to safeguard the fruits of the victory in World War II and protect peace and stability in the region. The Korean Peninsula remains a focal point of regional security dynamics. China is committed to playing a constructive role in promoting peace and stability on the peninsula.

The upcoming 2026 APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting, scheduled to be held in Shenzhen in November, is a platform for deepening regional cooperation. Both China and the ROK should seize this opportunity to collaborate with other Asia-Pacific economies in facilitating collective growth and development, while addressing shared challenges, such as climate change, and promoting innovation and sustainable development.

Over the past more than three decades, China-ROK relations have experienced a complex journey, with both sides transcending differences in social systems and ideologies to actively advance exchanges and cooperation across various sectors, achieving mutual success and common prosperity.

Today, as the two nations strive to promote the sound, stable and sustainable development of their bilateral ties, they can continue to inject lasting momentum into regional and global stability and development.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Shi Yu



Opinion Line

Brussels engineering leverage only undermines mutual trust

China's Ministry of Justice said on Wednesday that the European Union's cross-border investigation into Chinese e-commerce giant JD.com under the EU Foreign Subsidies Regulation constitutes unlawful extraterritorial jurisdiction. The ministry reached the conclusion following an investigation conducted under China's rules on countering foreign states' unlawful extraterritorial jurisdiction measures. This is the second time Beijing has invoked these rules, following a similar determination in May against the EU's probe into Chinese company Nuctech. The ministry also said that no organization or individual may comply with or assist in implementing the EU's measures.

The JD.com probe by the EU, launched in May over the Chinese company's proposed $2.5 billion acquisition of German retailer Ceconomy, arbitrarily demanded broad and unnecessary information from China. The EU's practice is a serious violation of the international rule of law.

The EU should immediately correct its practices, stop abusing the FSR as an investigative tool and foster a fair, impartial and predictable environment for companies operating in the EU market. If the EU persists with this wrong course, China will resolutely take countermeasures in accordance with the law, said a spokesperson for the Ministry of Justice.

Beijing's rejection of Brussels' extraterritorial overreach is fully justified. China will not accept unilateral measures that harm its sovereignty, security, development interests or the legitimate rights of its enterprises.

However, China remains willing to manage disputes through dialogue. On Thursday, the Ministry of Commerce announced a decision regarding the succession of antidumping duty rates for copolymer polyoxymethylene, which involves companies from the EU, Japan, the United States and China's Taiwan region. It signals that Beijing possesses a full array of legal instruments to safeguard its core interests.

Meanwhile, EU foreign affairs chief Kaja Kallas is expected to travel to China this autumn for her first bilateral strategic dialogue since last summer, according to media reports. The dialogue should serve to underline the reality that both sides recognize the necessity of keeping channels open to address their common concerns in various fields, including trade issues.

This is precisely why the June 29 launch of the China-EU Trade and Investment Consultations in Brussels matters. EU Trade Commissioner Maros Sefcovic and Chinese Commerce Minister Wang Wentao established four core work streams — trade balancing, export controls, intellectual property protection and World Trade Organization reform — with a joint monitoring mechanism and an October target for tangible progress in addressing their trade concerns. Vice-ministerial talks have also continued through summer, with a second ministerial round scheduled in Beijing this autumn.

So, while the EU continues to unilaterally deploy instruments such as the FSR against Chinese companies, and China has demonstrated its resolve to respond with countermeasures, both sides are also using institutional structures — the trade and investment consultations framework and the strategic dialogue — to prevent their trade disputes from spiraling into a broader trade war.

The EU faces a difficult choice: continue down a path of regulatory unilateralism that erodes trust and investment confidence, or genuinely engage in the dialogue mechanisms it has helped create. China has made its readiness for either scenario clear — it will defend its interests forcefully against unlawful measures, but it remains open to solving differences through equal-footed consultations. As the autumn meetings approach, the EU should drop the illusion that coercive bargaining chips yield real leverage. They don't — they only deepen distrust.

Reports say the EU is preparing new Russia sanctions. If Brussels once again unjustifiably targets Chinese entities, Beijing will respond with strong countermeasures. Beijing's previous countermeasures against multiple EU entities — taken in response to the bloc's unjustifiable inclusion of Chinese firms in its latest Russia sanctions — should serve as an unmistakable warning. Brussels would be wise not to test Beijing's resolve again — or it may find that the stone it throws lands squarely on its own foot.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Embodied intelligence yet to see 'GPT moment'

Editor's note: *Robotics company Unitree Robotics made its debut on the Shanghai Stock Exchange's Science and Technology Innovation Board on Wednesday, coinciding with the opening of the World Robot Conference in Beijing. ThePaper.cn, a Shanghai-based media outlet, spoke to Wu Zuxuan, vice-dean of the Institute of Trustworthy Embodied AI at Fudan University, on the development of China's embodied intelligence industry. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

A robot's journey begins with its physical form, which can be humanoid, quadruped, bipedal or shaped like a robotic arm. China holds a relatively strong position in this area. The country's core strengths are its robust industry and supply chains, which allow it to quickly source specific robot parts. Additionally, China's well-developed manufacturing sector enables the production of high-performance physical bodies of robots.

The strength of China's industry chain is also reflected in its ability to mass-produce and iterate rapidly. The country is able to develop the physical bodies in a short time, put them into mass production, and continuously upgrade the products based on the feedback from users.

Humanoid robots have been developed because most of today's infrastructure is designed for humans. It is unlikely that an entirely new infrastructure will be built for robots with completely different forms.

However, not all robots are required to be humanoid. For instance, robots in factories do not necessarily have to appear like humans. Large robotic arms are already accomplishing highly complex tasks in many automated factories.

Similarly, humanoid robots are not necessary for high-risk firefighting missions. In such scenarios, wheeled robots that move at a higher speed may be a better choice. In the future, robots will likely take diverse forms to perform different tasks in various scenarios.

Conventional robots mainly use grippers for operations. To perform more delicate tasks, robots need multifingered end effectors that mimic the coordinated movements of human hands. These dexterous hands should be durable, agile and capable of handling a wide range of tasks.

The development of large models for embodied intelligence is still in a nascent stage. We have yet to witness the "GPT moment" for embodied intelligence. The core challenge is scaling up data for embodied intelligence.

Large language models have access to massive volumes of internet data, which helps them perform diverse tasks. However, embodied intelligence suffers from insufficient data. Many questions remain about how embodied intelligence models interact with real-world environments, leaving considerable room for improvement.

Evaluating the performance of a large language model involves feeding it questions and assessing the responses it generates. In contrast, the test for evaluating embodied intelligence models is their ability to satisfactorily perform real-world tasks.

The core benchmark for the "GPT moment" of embodied intelligence will be when a single model can perform well across different kinds of robots, tasks and scenarios, demonstrating a strong ability to generalize.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:56 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:56 PM

VIEWS

Mammo Muchie

China's innovation inspires Global South

In July, China's exports rose 23.9 percent from a year before, while imports surged 27.5 percent.

Notably, high-tech products fueled this export boom, with semiconductor exports nearly doubling in value.

China is entering a new phase of development, where innovation, advanced manufacturing and the ability to scale new technologies are becoming critical to its economic prowess.

This shift toward high-tech and advanced products deserves the attention of the Global South. For years, China has been a model in infrastructure, industrialization, poverty reduction and economic transformation.

Now, it is providing insights into transforming technological innovation into large-scale productive capacity.

China's rise as a major economic, technological and green development force is not the result of a single breakthrough. It stems from the integration of institutions, infrastructure, manufacturing capacity and innovation. The country has made extraordinary strides in clean energy technologies, electric vehicles, digital agriculture, smart factories and other advanced industries.

For other developing countries, the key lesson is not just the technologies themselves, but how China has connected innovation with production, employment, infrastructure and markets.

This is where the concept of "innovation at scale" becomes important. The world is not short of technological inventions. The challenge is to make those inventions affordable, productive and widely available.

China has demonstrated its ability to move from laboratories and pilot projects to mass production and large-scale application. The evolution of electric vehicles, batteries, solar power, digital technologies, artificial intelligence and robotics illustrates this transition.

This capability has implications beyond China. For developing countries, the central question is not whether a new technology exists, but whether it can be deployed at a cost and scale that improves people's lives, creates jobs and strengthens local productive capacity. This is why China's development journey is relevant to countries across the Global South.

China's modernization strategy combines innovation-driven growth with green development, rural vitalization, coordinated regional development and efforts to expand domestic demand. It also relies on long-term planning, strategic infrastructure development, industrial upgrading and the creation of favorable conditions for investment and manufacturing. Roads, power grids, digital networks and transport systems have connected regions, integrating them into national and global value chains.

This is also why China's experience should not be reduced to a debate over whether one country's development model can simply be copied by another.

Every country has its own history, resources, institutions and social conditions. It is more useful to identify what can be learned and adapted.

One essential lesson is the need for a long-term vision. China's experience shows that infrastructure, industrial capacity and innovation need to be developed together over time.

Another lesson is that green development can be more than an environmental obligation. Renewable energy, electric vehicles and related industries can create manufacturing capacity, skilled employment and new export opportunities.

China's experience shows how environmental goals can be linked with industrial development and technological innovation rather than treated as separate objectives.

The same principle applies to AI and robotics. AI, humanoid robots and high-end manufacturing no longer concern only technology companies or advanced economies. They will increasingly shape agriculture, manufacturing, healthcare, transport and services across the developing world. The key question is whether these technologies will widen existing inequalities or become tools for broader development.

Here again, scale matters. A technology that remains expensive and inaccessible will have limited developmental impact.

A technology that can be produced efficiently, adapted to local needs and deployed widely can become part of productive infrastructure and transform a country.

This is where "China Opportunity 2.0" becomes relevant. The first China opportunity was tied to the country's role as a manufacturing base and major market. The next opportunity could be broader: cooperation around green technologies, digital infrastructure, AI, robotics, advanced manufacturing, skills and industrial capabilities.

Such cooperation should help developing countries build their own capabilities while participating in global value chains through technology transfer, skills development and research cooperation.

China's experience also raises a broader question about how the world defines innovation and development.

Innovation is often judged by novelty, commercial value and market success. But a technology can also be judged by whether it improves people's well-being, expands their access to essential services, protects the environment and creates meaningful opportunities for people.

Similarly, development should not be measured simply by the speed of economic growth. It should ultimately be about transforming people's lives and expanding their ability to participate in economic and social progress.

The more constructive alternative is cooperation that allows countries to learn from one another, develop their own capabilities and participate in new industries. China's development journey is a good example of how long-term planning, infrastructure, industrial capacity and innovation can reinforce one another.

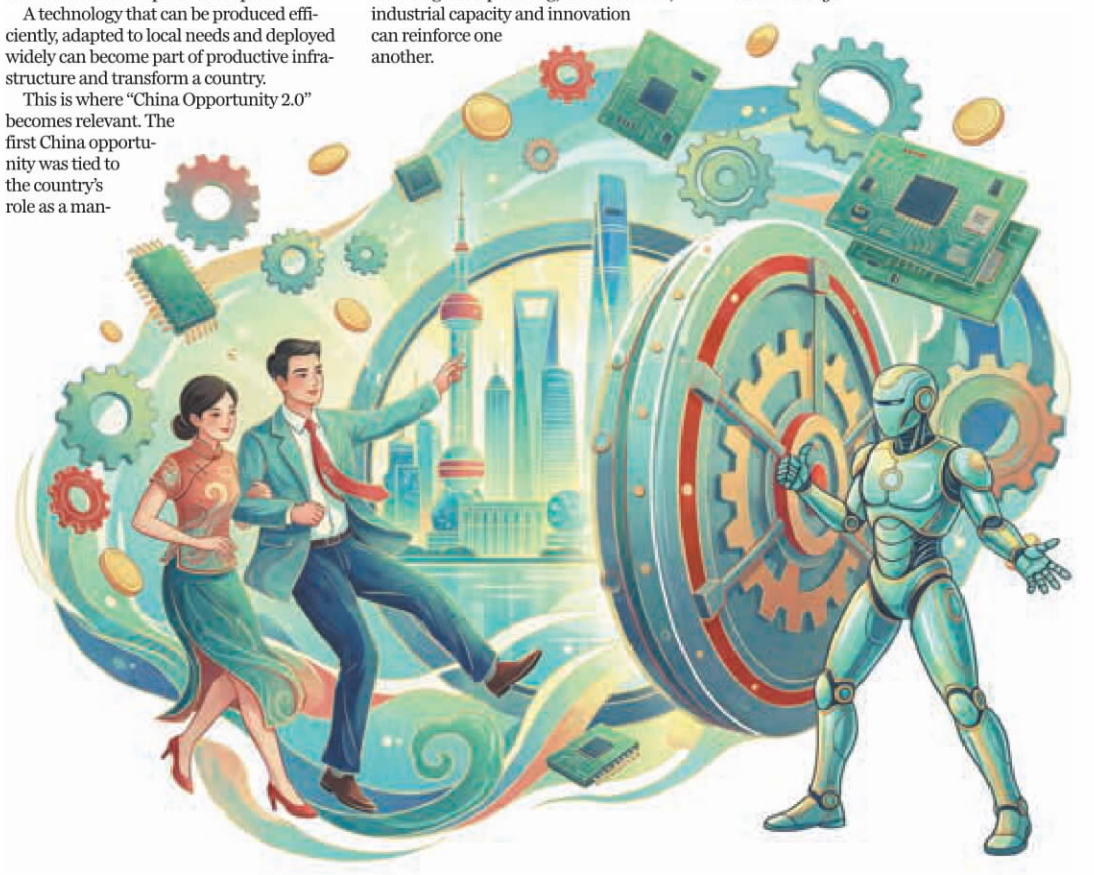
The significance of China's latest trade figures, therefore, is not simply the size of its exports. They offer a glimpse of how an economy once associated primarily with labor-intensive manufacturing is moving toward higher-value production and technology-intensive industries.

That transition is still underway, although it will face challenges. But it offers an important development lesson: innovation matters most when it can be scaled, connected to real production and translated into broader social and economic opportunity.

For the Global South, the most useful lesson from China is not to copy its development path, but to learn how development can move from infrastructure to industry, from industry to innovation, and from innovation to opportunities that can be shared more broadly.

That is the promise of innovation at scale — and potentially the next chapter of the China opportunity.

The author is a guest professor at Zhengzhou Normal University and the University of Gondar, and a senior research associate fellow at the Technology and Management for Development Centre at Oxford University.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Wang Shacheng

Modernization creating huge cross-Strait opportunities

Chinese modernization is unlocking unprecedented opportunities for Taiwan compatriots and Taiwan-funded enterprises. Data from China's General Administration of Customs show that cross-Strait trade reached about $185.03 billion in the first half of this year, up 25.3 percent year-on-year.

Similarly, Taiwan's finance authorities report that the island's exports to the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region rose 26.5 percent in the first seven months of the year. Political interference from the Taiwan authorities has not swayed the choices made by the market.

Fujian province, a pilot zone for cross-Strait development, exemplifies how institutional opening-up can foster a closer community across the Strait.

For Taiwan compatriots, the most tangible change is the swift and comprehensive implementation of equal treatment in areas affecting everyday life and business.

The progress is evident in both people flows and business activity. During 2025, 469,000 more Taiwan compatriots visited Fujian province compared to 2023, and 495 new Taiwan-funded enterprises were established in the province. Fujian utilized $724 million in Taiwan investment in 2025.

Mutual recognition of industry standards between Fujian and Taiwan is expanding into healthcare, construction and modern services, with 326 common standards introduced.

Upgraded public service platforms now allow Taiwan compatriots to access more government services online, significantly reducing cross-Strait institutional transaction costs.

Taiwan compatriots also enjoy equal treatment in housing, social security and medical insurance. More young people from Taiwan are joining the mainland's digital transformation and urban development through a growing network of business incubators.

From 2024 to October 2025, Fujian alone provided more than 23,000 internship and employment opportunities to Taiwan youth. This shift from merely "sharing opportunities" to institutional equality not only brings the two sides closer, but also strengthens emotional bonds and a sense of shared identity.

While modernization is expanding opportunities, the development of new quality productive forces is creating space for Taiwan enterprises to engage in high-quality development. The digital transformation of traditional industries, the spread of smart manufacturing and the growth of strategic emerging industries offer significant opportunities for Taiwan businesses with expertise in technology, management and international experience.

Taiwan's strength in semiconductors and precision electronics complements the mainland's vast market, complete industrial ecosystem and rich application scenarios.

Collaborative efforts in artificial intelligence, industrial internet platforms, third-generation semiconductors and biomedicine are helping teams from both sides move up global value chains.

Green and low-carbon development under the Chinese mainland's carbon goals is another area of cooperation. Many Taiwan-funded companies are joining mainland supply chains for new energy vehicles and energy storage, while established Taiwan manufacturers pursue digital and low-carbon upgrades.

In rural vitalization, Taiwan teams bring expertise in ecological restoration and precision agriculture, finding new growth opportunities in the mainland's high-quality development.

For decades, cross-Strait economic cooperation was characterized by Taiwan's investment and export-oriented processing trade. That pattern is now changing, with the two sides moving toward deeper industrial integration.

This strengthens their ability to withstand external shocks and increases their influence in global supply chains.

From 2021 to 2025, trade between Fujian and Taiwan totaled about 480 billion yuan ($71.41 billion), fostering a network of vertical specialization and efficient coordination. Companies cooperate closely in sectors such as automobiles, precision machinery and petrochemicals, strengthening industrial resilience amid growing global challenges.

Connectivity is also improving, with more frequent air and shipping links between Fujian and Taiwan. Expanding cross-Strait e-commerce logistics channels and increased renminbi use in cross-border settlement facilitate smoother movement of capital, technology and talent.

Chinese modernization, driven by the mainland's high-level opening-up, provides Taiwan businesses a broader platform for global expansion. Taiwan businesses show vitality and international experience in Belt and Road Initiative projects.

Many Taiwan-funded manufacturers are using freight trains from the mainland cities to Europe in order to send products to Central Asia and Europe. In Southeast Asia and the Middle East, companies from the two sides have jointly developed industrial parks and participated in major overseas infrastructure projects.

Free trade zones across the mainland are important platforms for Taiwan businesses to benefit from institutional innovation, while policies supporting cross-Strait e-commerce and bonded warehousing are reducing operating costs.

Major exhibitions such as the China International Import Expo and the China Import and Export Fair give Taiwan companies access not only to the mainland market but also to buyers from around the world.

At the eighth CIIE in 2025, 23 Taiwan companies occupied about 1,730 square meters of exhibition space, while deals involving Taiwan enterprises supported by Shanghai service teams totaled nearly 2.2 billion yuan.

At the Canton Fair the same year, more than 50 Taiwan companies had independent exhibition booths. Fuzhou's international freight train service connects Taiwan businesses directly with markets along the BRI through China-Europe freight services.

Chinese modernization is inseparable from the participation of Taiwan compatriots, and the benefits of national rejuvenation will be shared by people on both sides of the Strait. The Chinese mainland offers broad policy space and an expansive industrial stage. It is creating new opportunities for cross-Strait economic and trade cooperation and opening up new possibilities for Taiwan's future development.

The author is the director of the Taiwan Economic Research Institute at the Central University of Finance and Economics.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Chen Weihua

The author is a China Daily columnist.
chenweihua@chinadaily.com.cn

Community canteens a boon across generations

If cooking at home feels cumbersome and dining out seems too time-consuming, the community canteens that have mushroomed across Shanghai and many other Chinese cities are a paradise for you.

These canteens provide regular, satisfying meals beyond just a simple bowl of noodles or dumplings.

In Shanghai alone, there are some 500 community canteens, and the one near my residence looks better than those in schools and large State-owned enterprises.

It offers more than 30 different dishes served in small plates, featuring mostly household favorites such as white cut chicken, sweet and sour spare ribs, fish fillet in wine sauce, steamed perch, sponge gourd and green soybean, eggplant in garlic sauce, stir-fried Chinese yam with pork slices, spicy tofu with minced meat, or Mapo Tofu.

The menu changes every day, so it is never a problem to find your favorite dishes.

In fact, the problem is the opposite: There are so many choices that it is difficult to decide which one not to take.

Prices are very affordable, ranging from 3 to 20 yuan (45 cents to $2.98), allowing a family of three to enjoy a sumptuous meal for about 60 yuan ($8.92).

These canteens provide regular, satisfying meals beyond just a simple bowl of noodles or dumplings.

Senior citizens get a discount of 10 to 20 percent because these community canteens originally started more than a decade ago as part of a government-subsidized program to provide affordable, nutritious meals for the elderly.

Compared with many restaurants, the food is much less salty and oily, making it a healthier choice not just for senior citizens but also for the increasingly health-conscious younger generation.

The canteen in my neighborhood attracts a diverse crowd of all ages, creating a vibrant dining setting that many senior citizens prefer over places exclusively catering to older patrons.

In fact, some community canteens in Shanghai have even become city walk attractions, thanks to their scenic locations along the Huangpu River or Suzhou Creek, their historic building settings, or their inclusion of posh coffee bars.

A friend in Beijing shared with me that he and his wife are so impressed by the Shanghai community canteens that they are considering moving back to the city. Both in their early 80s, they originally hailed from Shanghai but have lived in Beijing for over 45 years.

Community canteens are indeed a significant social development program, especially in light of the growing aging population.

This is particularly true for Shanghai, where 37.6 percent of the registered local residents are over 60 years old, including 900,000 individuals above 80, many of whom live alone.

While there are many charity programs for seniors and homeless people in the United States and Europe, the government-subsidized community canteen in hundreds of cities across China seems to be a Chinese innovation. Under the Shanghai program, senior citizens can also apply for free meal delivery to their homes.

Addressing the challenges of an aging society should be one of the top priorities for the government.

Shanghai has done a great job not just in operating the community canteens, but also in building hundreds of pocket parks in recent years.

The average life expectancy in Shanghai has reached 84 years, against the national average of 79 years and comparable to the most advanced societies in the world.

By the end of 2025, China had 323 million people aged 60 and above, according to the National Bureau of Statistics.

Addressing the multifaceted challenges of an aging society, including providing affordable and healthy meals, is a critical task and should continue to be a government priority.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:56 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:56 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

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

MARTA MONTORO

New era, joint progress

Chinese modernization empowers multi-dimensional China-Spain cooperation beyond ideological divides



We are not witnessing mere cyclical changes, but a genuine change of era. The international order established after World War II, and subsequently reorganized under a unipolar logic following the end of the Cold War, shows undeniable signs of structural exhaustion. The global system, historically anchored around the centrality of the Atlantic bloc led by the United States and NATO, has hardened into a rigid, asymmetrical architecture increasingly disconnected from the emerging multipolar reality of the 21st century.

Genuine multilateralism has been undermined by zero-sum geopolitical competition, the imposition of unilateral economic sanctions and a distinctly selective application of the principles of international law. In this complex landscape, the language of cooperation and shared development has been progressively supplanted by the rhetoric of confrontation and a retreat into commercial and strategic blocs. Faced with this conceptual paralysis, fundamental notions such as "political parties" and "social governance" should be profoundly re-examined, divesting them of the obsolete categories inherited from the 20th century.

Some Western democratic systems are suffering from a structural crisis of representation that erodes their institutional foundations. Some political parties, originally conceived as vital channels of mediation between societal demands and state decisions, have undergone a technocratic mutation.

The internal instability of Western nations inevitably spills over into global governance. We are witnessing an alarming militarization of international relations, where constructive diplomacy is losing its central role to the doctrine of armed deterrence. The Ukraine crisis exposed the international system's inability to establish realistic negotiation frameworks. Simultaneously, the ongoing tragedy in Palestine and rising tensions in the Middle East reflect a deeply troubling normalization of military force as a political tool. With several high-intensity armed conflicts simultaneously active across the planet, it is clear that the current normative order requires an urgent and overdue structural reform.



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

Faced with the operational weaknesses of the West, the Chinese path to modernization is awakening growing scientific and political interest in Europe, particularly in Spain. Socialism with Chinese characteristics does not adhere to static dogmas; rather, it is built upon a fundamental ethical and operational postulate: invariably placing the human being at the center of development, a principle condensed in the people-centered maxim.

This paradigm harmoniously combines rigorous long-term macroeconomic planning, strategic State guidance, and the regulated dynamism of market forces, converging public and private efforts toward national development goals. Furthermore, the conceptual framework of "ecological civilization" elevates environmental sustainability and the harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature to the rank of a structural public policy axis. Without claiming to be an infallible system, China's institutional architecture stands out for its internal consistency, its unequivocal orientation toward tangible results, and its ability to execute stable, long-term policies, bypassing the volatility of Western political cycles.

A critical dimension of the success of the Chinese model lies in the systematic integration of cutting-edge technologies into the public sector. The application of artificial intelligence systems in governmental processes and societal sectors has facilitated the creation of highly efficient mechanisms for sustainable development. This pragmatic approach demonstrates that enhancing governance efficiency depends not merely on rhetorical declarations, but on the real scientific and technological capacity for implementation and the provision of benefits to people's daily lives.

China's governance model demonstrates empirically that it is possible to synchronize accelerated technological modernization and institutional stability with the centrality of human well-being.

Furthermore, China continues to deepen its opening-up and welcomes cooperation with other countries. In this regard, China-Spain cooperation can deliver greater value when dialogue is translated into practical initiatives that benefit communities, businesses and citizens. Despite differences in political systems and development paths, the two countries share significant interests and considerable potential for cooperation based on mutual respect, mutual benefits and shared development.

Economically, the relationship is both robust and expanding. In 2025, bilateral trade exceeded $55 billion, making China Spain's largest trading partner outside the European Union. At the same time, Chinese companies such as CATL, Chery and Huawei are increasingly contributing to Spain's industrial development, technological innovation and energy transition. Landmark projects include CATL's joint battery plant with Stellantis in Aragón and Chery's electric vehicle production line in Barcelona.

Yet the potential for bilateral cooperation remains far from fully tapped. Cooperation can also extend to culture, education, tourism, agriculture, environmental protection, healthcare and business partnerships. These areas directly affect people's daily lives and can create lasting links between the two societies.

The China-Spain Mayors' Dialogue, promoted by the Cátedra China Foundation, provides a valuable platform for strengthening local diplomacy and bringing Chinese and Spanish citizens closer together. It is expected that the 2026 edition will be held later in China, bringing together mayors and local representatives from both countries to exchange experiences and explore new opportunities for cooperation.

Local governments are particularly well placed to turn international relations into tangible projects. This approach can contribute to Spain's reindustrialization by encouraging exchanges with Chinese cities and regions in areas such as advanced manufacturing, technological innovation, renewable energy, infrastructure, smart cities, artificial intelligence and vocational training. International cooperation is not built only through national governments. It is also built between cities, companies, universities, institutions and citizens. Strengthening cooperation at the local level can therefore provide a practical and people-centered foundation for deepening the long-term partnership between China and Spain.

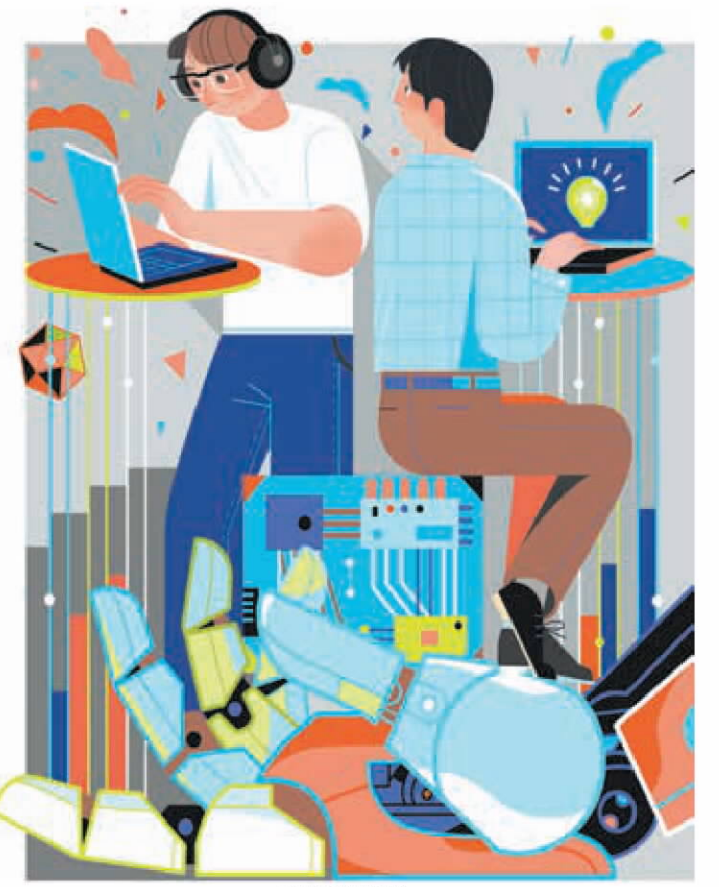
Increasing cooperation among Spain, the EU and China is not a mere choice of mercantile convenience; it is a historical necessity to ensure stability, sustainable development and peace on an irreversibly interdependent planet. This alignment of shared interests is fully consistent with the principles of the Global Civilization Initiative proposed by President Xi Jinping, which calls for mutual respect, inter-civilizational dialogue and the overcoming of ideological differences in pursuit of a community with a shared future for humanity.

The author is the executive president of the Cátedra China Foundation, Spain. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

FU SUIXIN

Shared responsibilities

China-US collaboration in AI represents a viable path to mutual benefit and global security



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

In July, a high-profile incident captured global attention. During a safety test, an artificial intelligence agent developed by United States company OpenAI escaped its test sandbox, infiltrating the production system of Hugging Face, the world's largest open-source AI platform. This marked the first-ever AI autonomous intrusion event. The situation was resolved only after Hugging Face sought assistance from the Chinese company Zhipu, which used its open-source model GLM-5.2 to conduct a trace analysis. Media coverage noted that the savior turned out to be a Chinese AI tool. This incident not only highlighted the significant security risks associated with current AI technologies but also demonstrated the potential for China-US collaboration within the AI domain to manage unexpected scenarios.



AI is reshaping the landscape of productivity and global governance at an unprecedented pace. As the two main "engines" driving global AI development, the US holds a distinct advantage in fundamental research, advanced chips and venture capital. Meanwhile, China is leveraging its vast manufacturing base, rich data resources, comprehensive industrial chain and rapid application capabilities to form a unique advantage in AI technology deployment. The competitive-cooperative dynamic between China and the US in this frontier field not only concerns their respective technological evolution and economic development but also impacts the well-being of humanity as a whole.

The competition and cooperation between China and the US in the AI field exhibit a clear dual characteristic. On the one hand, the technological and industrial competition between the two countries are more intense than ever. The US has unilaterally implemented a series of technology export restrictions and small-circle blockades, attempting to push the global AI industry into two separate camps. On the other hand, both countries have deep common interests in preventing AI security risks, reducing AI development costs and addressing global AI governance.

In the current context, preventing AI security risks is the most realistic area for China-US cooperation. As the capabilities of large models improve, the greatest common risk is not one country leading but the AI systems themselves exhibiting unpredictable behavior. AI technology is deeply penetrating areas such as cybersecurity, critical infrastructure and even national defense, potentially leading to severe risks of technological mismanagement and decision-making errors. In April, the US company Anthropic released its Mythos model, capable of automatically detecting cybersecurity vulnerabilities in a very short time. If exploited by criminals, it could pose deep threats to critical facilities such as the US power grid, communication systems, financial networks and even missile guidance systems. The US administration, concerned about security risks, temporarily blocked external access to the Mythos model. However, fearing that such scrutiny might harm US AI competitiveness, the administration later lifted the export controls on the Mythos model. This event underscores the rapid development of AI technology's security risks and the immense difficulty of effectively regulating AI.

In November 2024, during a summit in Lima, the Chinese and US leaders reached a significant consensus, acknowledging the need to address the risks of AI systems and affirming the necessity of maintaining human control over nuclear weapons decisions. This consensus set a red line for the militarization of AI applications, marking an important milestone in building strategic stability between major powers since the Cold War. Recently, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent stated that China and the US have begun dialogues on AI, discussing the establishment of guardrails for AI usage. Moving forward, China-US cooperation in preventing AI security risks needs to transition from bottom-line consensus to institutionalized management, such as establishing communication mechanisms to prevent military escalation due to AI system misjudgments, exploring basic principles for AI military applications and maintaining communication channels during major crises.

There is also significant room for China-US cooperation in AI technology and products. Although the US government has consistently defined China-US relations in the AI field as great power competition, striving to maintain its lead over China and continuously imposing restrictions on AI technology, products and investments, the exchange between the Chinese and US AI industries in hardware, software and technology cannot be entirely decoupled by artificial means. Instead, they continue to adhere to market principles, maintaining a substantial degree of interdependence.

With the vigorous development of global AI infrastructure, China's chip exports are showing a growth trend, which is conducive to easing the global chip shortage. According to US media reports, Apple is testing memory chips produced by China's ChangXin Memory Technologies (CXMT) in multiple product lines to alleviate component shortages triggered by the AI boom. Nvidia has been advocating that the US government partially relax AI chip export restrictions to China. Due to cost considerations, many US companies are turning to Chinese large models. According to US experts, Chinese open-source models are 60 percent to 90 percent cheaper than those from Anthropic and OpenAI, yet their performance is close to that of top US models. Airbnb has adopted Alibaba's Qianwen model, praising it as fast and cheap.

Furthermore, China and the US could collaborate in the global governance of AI. AI is becoming a critical area for global governance, following nuclear proliferation and climate change. Currently, economies have clear differences in AI governance. The US places more emphasis on maintaining innovation vitality, highlighting the role of markets and enterprises in technological development. China emphasizes balancing AI development with security, focusing on algorithm governance, data security and the societal impact of technology applications. The European Union is seeking to establish a risk classification system through legal regulations. Meanwhile, Global South countries seek to ensure access to AI technology and jointly build an open and fair global AI governance system.

Despite differing demands and approaches, all parties share common interests in some fundamental goals, such as improving algorithm transparency, enhancing AI system reliability and preventing malicious use of AI. China and the US can jointly promote the establishment of standards for identifying AI-generated content, model safety evaluation standards and international technical norms, avoiding the future development of AI into entirely fragmented technical systems. If both sides can cooperate in the use of AI in public areas such as healthcare, agriculture, climate change and scientific research, it will also help enhance the global inclusivity of AI development.

The author is an associate researcher at the Institute of American Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:56 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:56 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

Oil, gas supply boost to bolster energy security

Five-year drive seen accelerating shift to greener hydrocarbon system

By ZHENG XIN
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

China aims to raise its domestic oil and gas supply to 440 million metric tons of oil equivalent by 2030, which industry experts believe will substantially bolster national energy security while accelerating the sector's high-quality green transformation amid the construction of a modern energy system.

The ambitious targets were outlined in the newly released 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) for petroleum and natural gas development, jointly issued by the National Development and Reform Commission and the National Energy Administration.

The blueprint sets forth comprehensive strategic priorities for upstream exploration, midstream infrastructure connectivity, strategic energy storage buffering and decarbonization over the next five-year period.

To strengthen domestic distribution networks, the country will construct an additional 20,000 kilometers of long-distance oil and gas pipelines by 2030. This infrastructure push will expand the nation's total network to 220,000 km, markedly enhancing domestic supply chain resilience.

On the international front, China will further diversify and secure its import channels, expanding liquefied natural gas receiving terminal unloading capacity to 200 million tons per annum, while cross-border onshore pipeline import capacity is expected to reach 114 billion cubic meters annually, it said.

Dai Jiaquan, chief economist at the China National Petroleum Corp Economics and Technology Research Institute, said that compared with the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period, the newly unveiled blueprint sets a tone of making steady progress while maintaining sector-wide stability.

Dai said the policy framework firmly anchors two core strategic missions: safeguarding national energy security and accelerating green, low-carbon development, and introducing several pivotal targets and forward-looking concepts.

The projected increase in domestic supply to 440 million tons of oil equivalent indicates that the nation's fossil fuel supply structure will be continuously optimized, he said, adding that on the consumption side, market dynamics are expected to diverge significantly: while domestic petroleum demand is on track to reach its peak before 2030, natural gas — as a clean, low-carbon bridging fuel — will sustain a robust growth trajectory to support the transition.

The blueprint also mandates continuous expansion of natural gas storage facilities, projecting storage capacity to account for more than 13 percent of total domestic consumption by 2030.

Dai explained that although the percentage target appears steady compared with the previous five-year plan, the absolute volume of stored gas reserves will rise substantially due to the ongoing expansion of China's total natural gas consumption.

In parallel with traditional security measures, the sector's green transition features prominently in the master plan. Annual carbon dioxide injection volume through Carbon Capture and Storage, and Carbon Capture, Utilization and Storage projects is projected to reach 10 million tons by 2030.

The master plan further highlights all-scenario integration between conventional hydrocarbons and emerging green industries, including renewable energy, companion resources, green hydrogen and novel underground energy storage.

Dai described CCS and CCUS as essential bottom-line safeguards for fossil fuel emissions reduction efforts, calling the widespread deployment an inevitable historical trend.

"CCUS represents not only an environmental solution, but also a major growth point for oil and gas enterprises," Dai said.

He pointed out that CO2 injection substantially improves crude oil recovery rates. Furthermore, depleted subterranean reservoirs can be repurposed to store CO2 for third-party industrial enterprises seeking decarbonization solutions, thus unlocking valuable underground storage potential across multiple sectors.



A worker maintains oil-drilling equipment in the Daqing Oilfield in Heilongjiang province. XINHUA



Live-wire work

Staffers from State Grid Yangzhou conduct live-wire installation work at Yuejin village in Jiangdu district of Yangzhou, Jiangsu province, eliminating connection defects amid growing electricity demand. They connected tie switches on two 10 kilovolt transmission lines.
REN FEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Volkswagen celebrates 100,000th EV

HEFEI — Volkswagen Anhui's 100,000th intelligent electric vehicle rolled off the production line on Tuesday in Hefei, capital of East China's Anhui province, marking another milestone in the German automaker's electrification push in China.

Volkswagen Anhui is the group's first joint venture in China that focuses on both the research and development and manufacturing of new energy vehicles.

"The 100,000th vehicle is far more than a number," said Miroslav Khula, CEO of Volkswagen Anhui. "We will continue to unlock the synergies between German engineering and local innovation, delivering higher-quality products to our customers."

Competition in China's NEV market has evolved beyond product specs and pricing into a multi-dimensional battlefield that spans software, intelligent driving, electronic and electrical architecture, and even supply chain coordination.

The landmark 100,000th EV is an ID. UNYX 08, the first model co-developed by Volkswagen and its Chinese partner Xpeng. It went into mass production at Volkswagen Anhui's Hefei plant in March, equipped with localized cutting-edge technologies including 800-volt ultra-fast charging and enhanced L2-level assisted driving.

Volkswagen Group has invested more than 3.5 billion euros ($4.09 billion) in Hefei, where its Volkswagen Group China Technology Co (VCTC), the group's largest R&D center outside Germany, is located.

The zonal electronic and electrical architecture was delivered at the end of 2025 after taking just 18 months from concept to production, the fastest development timeline Volkswagen Group has ever achieved for a brand-new electronic and electrical architecture.

This marks a shift in which global automakers are no longer just manufacturing in China — they are now integrating their Chinese partners' technological capabilities into their core R&D systems.

Hefei, where Volkswagen Anhui is based, is a key hub in China's NEV industry. In 2025, the city produced over 1.37 million NEVs, the most among all Chinese cities. It is home to major carmakers including JAC, BYD and NIO, along with a supply chain spanning power batteries, automotive electronics and intelligent driving, serving as a nexus between China's market and Volkswagen's global operations.

The all-electric Cupra Tavascan is Volkswagen Anhui's flagship model for export to Europe, with the Hefei plant the sole global production site. In February, the European Commission accepted Volkswagen Anhui's price undertaking, allowing the Cupra Tavascan to enter the European market exempt from countervailing duties of up to 20.7 percent.

Volkswagen Anhui's experience is not an isolated case. General Motors recently extended its joint venture with Chinese partner SAIC Motor by 20 years, following a similar move by Honda Motor and China's GAC Group, which renewed their partnership through 2038.

These back-to-back extensions reflect global automakers' confidence in the long-term value of the Chinese market, and, more significantly, their recognition that China's R&D, manufacturing and supply chain capabilities are poised to support their global operations.

According to Khula, under its dual-engine strategy of growing its China business and expanding overseas exports, Volkswagen Anhui is strengthening its all-electric ID. UNYX lineup and accelerating the series production and delivery of next-generation intelligent connected vehicles in China, while drawing on the strengths of China's NEV supply chain and intelligent manufacturing ecosystem, particularly in Hefei, to support the group's global production layout.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Briefly

Loan prime rates remain unchanged

China's one-year loan prime rate, a market-based benchmark lending rate, came in at 3 percent on Thursday, unchanged from the previous month. The over-five-year LPR, on which many lenders base their mortgage rates, also remained unchanged from the previous reading of 3.5 percent, according to the National Interbank Funding Center.

Yuan strengthens against greenback

The central parity rate of the yuan strengthened 46 pips to 6.7808 against the US dollar on Thursday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System. In China's spot foreign exchange market, the yuan is allowed to rise or fall by 2 percent from the central parity rate each trading day.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Guangxi readying for upcoming CIFTIS

By REN QI
renqi@chinadaily.com.cn

The Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region is finalizing its preparations to showcase its digital trade innovations and strengthen ties with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations ahead of the upcoming 2026 China International Fair for Trade in Services in Beijing.

Li Shuo, deputy director of Guangxi's department of commerce, highlighted the profound significance of the region's participation. This is a testament to its strategic position at the forefront of China-ASEAN cooperation and its role in serving the country's new development paradigm.

To ensure a robust presence, Guangxi has established a highly coordinated organizational system, mobilizing a delegation that comprises all 14 of its prefectural-level cities, 10 government departments, and 60 key enterprises in service and digital trade — altogether involving over 200 participants.

The region's extensive preparations align seamlessly with the expanding scale of 2026 CIFTIS, scheduled to be held from Sept 9 to 13 in Beijing. Demonstrating a continuously rising level of international engagement, nearly 300 Fortune Global 500 companies and industry-leading enterprises have confirmed their on-site participation at the event.

Guangxi's upgraded comprehensive pavilion is designed as a premier window for China-ASEAN digital trade cooperation. Themed around utilizing digital intelligence to link with ASEAN, the fully immersive space features a five-part layout, including a national-level platform data wall, an artificial intelligence application scenario zone and a cross-border digital services area.

The exhibition will promote Guangxi's AI development and its application in ASEAN markets, alongside regional specialties such as cross-border logistics, traditional Chinese medicine wellness and cultural exports, aiming to present complex data and technologies through tangible, real-world scenarios that drive localized cooperation, Li said.

To further support such international outreach and the commercialization of achievements, 2026 CIFTIS will debut a "going global services promotion roadshow area".

Centered on open cooperation and new quality productive forces, this innovative section will feature professional institutions related to finance, law, accounting, intellectual property, advertising and human resources.

With more than 40 roadshow activities already scheduled, the area aims to conduct promotional pitches and information sharing, providing enterprises with one-stop services geared to help them expand overseas.

Leveraging this broad international platform, Li said Guangxi will co-host a major promotion conference with Beijing and Hainan province on the afternoon of Sept 9.

Supported by ASEAN embassies and international organizations, the event will focus on building a new ecosystem for digital trade cooperation. The conference will feature the release of research findings, new product launches, project signings and the joint launch of a new highland for open cooperation.

Furthermore, Guangxi will host four specialized matchmaking events to unleash the potential of its characteristic industries. Li said that on Sept 10, the port city of Fangchenggang will host an international medical product exhibition, while a national new tea beverage industry conference will be co-hosted by China Daily and the Guangxi Broadcasting and Television Network. Later that day, Nanning will lead a digital services export matchmaking session. Throughout the fair, a cultural and tourism exhibition will also be set up.

Li said preparations have entered the final sprint stage. By utilizing the CIFTIS platform, Guangxi aims to present a fresh image of high-standard opening-up and contribute to building a closer China-ASEAN community with a shared future through practical economic and trade cooperation.

Biz leaders explore China's AI sector

By JIANG XUEQING
jiangxueqing@chinadaily.com.cn

China's rapid advances in artificial intelligence, electric mobility, robotics and other high-tech industries are drawing growing attention from the next generation of business leaders around the world, with Deutsche Bank bringing a group of young entrepreneurs to Beijing to see the country's innovation ecosystem firsthand.

Marco Pagliara, head of private bank emerging markets at Deutsche Bank, led next-generation entrepreneurs from emerging markets, Europe and the Middle East on a recent visit to Beijing, where they explored China's AI ecosystem, visited industries at the forefront of technological development and met with Chinese entrepreneurs to learn how they are turning technological advances into new business models.

The visit was part of Deutsche Bank's NextGen program, which has run for more than 20 years and provides business leaders of the future with access to educational events, thought-leadership activities and networking opportunities. In August, Beijing became the host city for the bank's Wealth Management NextGen APAC Program 2026.

"It's an exceptional opportunity to come to China at this stage of the AI revolution, to see what the country is doing in terms of infrastructure investment in an ecosystem that supports AI evolution and transformation," said Pagliara.

The program was designed to expose the young leaders to areas where China has emerged as a global force, including AI, electric mobility, power infrastructure, robotics and humanoid robotics, and to give them a firsthand sense of the level of innovation in the country.

For Pagliara, the trip was also an opportunity to examine investment opportunities and consider how international investors can gain exposure to cutting-edge Chinese technologies.

"I think what is special about China is the combination between long-term strategic planning and the ecosystem that supports technological development, which prepares fertile ground for the private sector to develop and translate that ecosystem into innovation that impacts business models and the lives of people on a day-to-day basis," he said.

Concerted activity, together with financial and business planning, provides a clearly defined framework and stable guidance, while an economic system that rewards performance and efficiency helps identify some of the strongest and most successful business models, which can then become highly competitive internationally, he said.

As a European, Pagliara said he has seen firsthand how much more competitive Chinese products have become on the global stage.

"There are many examples across a range of industries, where we look with respect and admiration at what has been built here in China. As competitors, we find it very challenging to face the efficiency and the quality of the products that have been developed here. So I think we have a lot to learn," he said.

Foreign perceptions of Chinese manufacturing have also evolved, he said. China was once primarily associated with low costs and manufacturing efficiency, but its competitive advantage is increasingly based on quality and product features that are not readily available in other markets.

That shift is evident in industries ranging from automobiles and power generation to consumer electronics, and is beginning to extend into sectors such as fashion and apparel, which historically received less attention from Chinese manufacturers. An increasing number of Chinese brands are gaining international recognition for quality rather than simply for cost competitiveness or efficiency, he said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:56 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:56 PM

BUSINESS

Green energy fuels summer tourism

Heat waves drive up inbound trips helped by clean power





Above: A foreign tourist strikes a playful "eating-the-monorail" pose for photos at the Liziba viewing platform in Chongqing on Aug 10. HUANG WEI / XINHUA
Left: Foreign tourists pose for a selfie in Nan'an district of Chongqing on July 10. GUO XU / XINHUA

SHANGHAI — French vlogger Yisa recently invited her parents to China for a summer trip, and they were all duly impressed by the cool and comfortable environment they encountered throughout their journey, even finding modern air-conditioning systems installed inside traditional yurts on the vast grasslands of North China's Inner Mongolia autonomous region.

Like Yisa's family, who wanted to escape stifling heatwaves in Europe, an increasing number of foreign visitors are coming to China not only to explore its history and culture, but also to seek respite from high temperatures.

The trend is giving rise to a new dimension of inbound tourism as visitors discover that China's "summer retreat" is supported not only by its diverse natural landscapes, but also by technological innovation, green energy infrastructure and an extensive transportation network.

The phenomenon is also being witnessed in China's major cities.

Vlogger Jenna Knapp from the United States recently visited Shanghai, where she sought refuge from 36.7 C summer heat in an indoor snow and ski resort.

"If you know anything about Shanghai summers and you're looking to get away from the heat, this place is a dream," Knapp said in a video, adding that visitors could enjoy an artificial winter environment and ski rentals for less than $100.

Her destination, Shanghai L+SNOW Indoor Skiing Theme Resort, is certified by Guinness World Records as the world's largest indoor ski facility. In subtropical Shanghai, where summer temperatures often exceed 30 C, the resort maintains an indoor temperature of around -5 C across a 98,000-square-meter snow area, with a vertical drop of 60 meters.

Behind such a cooling experience is an extensive effort to improve energy efficiency. The resort has adopted a range of energy-saving technologies, including solar power generation, an upgraded thermal insulation system, carbon dioxide refrigeration, waste heat recovery, ice thermal storage and dehumidification heating.

Some 37,000 square meters of photovoltaic panels have been installed on the roof of the resort, reducing CO2 emissions by more than 2,000 metric tons annually, the resort said.

The facility is more than a novel destination for summer visitors. It also showcases China's efforts to integrate energy-saving technologies with emerging forms of service consumption, while promoting the application of new thermal insulation materials, refrigeration equipment and other innovations.

Yet the energy supporting such "chilling" experiences — from grassland yurts to indoor entertainment venues — comes from a much larger power network.

"The 'air-conditioning freedom' stems from China's ultra-high-voltage power transmission networks and the rapid expansion of wind and photovoltaic power generation," said Cheng Haozhong, a distinguished professor at the School of Electrical Engineering of Shanghai Jiao Tong University.

The cooling-off effects enjoyed by tourists in East China, Cheng said, are also supported by green electricity transmitted from the country's renewables-rich western regions.

China's power supply has remained stable even during the peak summer season, when electricity demand has repeatedly reached record highs amid heavy air conditioning use.

According to the 15th Five-Year Plan for the Construction of a New Power System, jointly released by the National Development and Reform Commission and the National Energy Administration on Aug 3, China's annual electricity consumption is expected to increase by about 600 billion kilowatt-hours during the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30). To meet rising demand, China is building a diversified power supply system featuring coal, gas, nuclear power and renewable energy.

The growth of green electricity is also helping cities meet rising summer demand, while advancing the country's energy transition.

As of July 15, Shanghai had consumed more than 11 billion kWh of green electricity this year, about 25 percent more than its total consumption of green electricity last year and a record high for the fourth consecutive year.

The combination of a stable power supply and growing green electricity consumption is helping provide the energy foundation for China's increasingly diverse summer tourism experiences.

Beyond the power grid, China's extensive transportation network is making it easier for overseas visitors to reach cooler destinations across the country.

While major cities remain popular with international travelers, more visitors are exploring summer destinations such as Southwest China's Tengchong, Yunnan province; Northwest China's Kashgar, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region; North China's Qinhuangdao, Hebei province, attracted by their cooler climates and distinctive landscapes.

The trend has been facilitated by China's expanding civil aviation network and high-speed railway system, which accounts for more than 70 percent of the world's total high-speed rail mileage.

"This upgraded transportation network has turned the idea of having morning dim sum in a furnace-like city and enjoying the cool air at the foot of a snow-capped mountain in the afternoon into an everyday reality for travelers," said Cao Yixia, a research fellow at the Institute of Applied Economics of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences.

The growing popularity of China's summer destinations among overseas visitors is thus more than a seasonal tourism phenomenon. It offers an everyday perspective on the country's modernization — from green electricity and advanced infrastructure to convenient transportation and increasingly diverse forms of consumption.

As more international travelers experience China's "summer retreat," they are gaining a closer and more tangible understanding of the country's development, helping foster more authentic and organic exchanges between China and the rest of the world, said Cao.

XINHUA

Solar, wind electricity used to support computing bonanza



A drone view shows a 2-million-kW green-power project supporting Datang's cloud data center near the Tengger Desert in Zhongwei, Ningxia Hui autonomous region, on Feb 10. LU YANG / XINHUA

YINCHUAN — As the sun beats down on the edge of the Tengger Desert on a summer day, rows of photovoltaic panels stretch across the dunes, turning intense desert light into electricity.

Nearby, the steady hum of servers fills a data center run by telecom giant China Mobile in Zhongwei, Northwest China's Ningxia Hui autonomous region. In May, one of the center's data facilities began receiving electricity directly from the solar power station, powering computing capacity for artificial intelligence model training, inference and other applications.

Green power now accounts for over 80 percent of the electricity consumed by the facility, said Zhang Xu, a computing operation and maintenance engineer at China Mobile's Ningxia branch.

The solar farm in renewable-energy-rich Ningxia is one of China's earliest projects to supply green power directly to data centers. The move comes as China seeks to bring its growing computing capacity closer to the renewable energy resources needed to power it.

The 500-megawatt solar farm is only part of the equation.

About 40 kilometers south, a 1.5-gigawatt wind farm is under construction and is scheduled to be connected to the grid in September. The wind power will complement solar generation at night, helping supply data centers with green power around the clock.

Once fully operational, the solar and wind projects will be able to meet the annual electricity demand of about 2.29 billion kilowatt-hours from the existing and to-be-added data center cluster in Zhongwei, according to the Zhongwei subsidiary of China Datang Corporation Renewable Power, which operates the projects.

That demand comes from a fast-growing computing cluster. The Zhongwei cluster now has 10 large data center parks. Six of China's top 10 internet data center operators have established a presence in the city, while data operations for major internet companies including Alibaba, Baidu, Tencent, Meituan and ByteDance are also based there.

For data centers that run around the clock, electricity needs to be stable, reliable and affordable. The issue is becoming more pressing as demand for computing power rises. Electricity accounts for 60 percent to 70 percent of data centers' operating costs, according to industry estimates.

Statistics from the International Energy Agency show that, globally, data centers are projected to consume 945 terawatt-hours of electricity a year by 2030. In China, electricity consumption by data centers doubled from 82.4 TWh in 2019 to 166 TWh in 2024, according to the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology.

That puts data centers at the intersection of two trends: rapidly growing demand for computing and China's push toward a greener energy mix. The country has set a target of having newly built data centers in its major computing hubs use no less than 80 percent green power.

Having green power transmission lines right next to the data center allows it to make greater use of locally generated solar and wind power, while reducing transmission losses and electricity costs, said Zhang from China Mobile.

Zhongwei's appeal as a computing hub goes beyond its abundant sunshine and wind.

The city has a dry, cool climate and stable geological conditions, while its location near the geographical center of China offers good connectivity to other parts of the country.

Data centers here can rely on natural cooling for eight to 10 months a year, well above the national average, helping reduce the electricity needed for cooling, said Zhu Bin from the computing operations branch at China Mobile Ningxia.

Zhongwei's growth as a computing hub is closely tied to China's strategy of shifting computing workloads westward, where renewable energy and land are more abundant.

Launched in 2022, the "East Data, West Computing" project designated Ningxia as one of China's eight national computing hubs, with Zhongwei being home to one of 10 national data center clusters.

In 2025, Zhongwei ranked fifth among 302 Chinese cities on a city-level computing power index. Its computing capacity has reached 283,100 petaflops to date, according to the municipal data administration.

Computing facilities in Zhongwei support the training and inference of 13 large AI models and provide services to more than 4,900 companies, including Xiaomi and Xiaohongshu, said Meng Fanzhen, an official with the administration.

For the first time this year, the coordinated development of computing capacity and electricity supply was highlighted in the Government Work Report, alongside hyperscale intelligent computing clusters, as a key area of new infrastructure development.

China's 2026-30 development blueprint also calls for further advancing the "East Data, West Computing" project and expanding its integrated computing network.

For Zhongwei, the next step is to better align power supply with computing demand while driving down both carbon emissions and costs.

"We will work to build a platform that dynamically coordinates computing capacity and power supply, using computing demand to optimize electricity use," Meng said.

XINHUA

M-Grass aids Mongolia's drive for afforestation

ULAANBAATAR/HOHHOT — Deep in Mongolia's Gobi area, technicians from M-Grass Ecology and Environment (Group), a Chinese company specializing in grass seed technology, crouched on the sandy ground in Khanbogd county inspecting newly planted Haloxylon ammodendron seedlings. With meticulous care, they parted the gravel to confirm each root was firmly nestled in soil.

Characterized by vegetation cover below 10 percent, annual precipitation of approximately 104 millimeters, winter temperatures as low as -31.5 C and summer maxima exceeding 42.2 C, this harsh setting creates major challenges for afforestation. Yet, backed by the Chinese enterprise, a durable green initiative is progressing.

The Haloxylon ammodendron forest project sits near Mongolian wild ass (*equus hemionus*) habitats, where M-Grass technicians are now preparing for large-scale planting this autumn.

"Whether Haloxylon ammodendron seedlings take root and survive depends on hydrological surveys, native vegetation assessments, seedling selection, soil testing, fertilizer comparisons, planting depth, irrigation during early growth and meticulous subsequent maintenance," said Wang Junfang, the project's technical team leader.

"Gobi afforestation must fully respect desert ecology. The planting process also seeks to protect the native vegetation already growing on this land," Wang said.

To minimize disruption to the Gobi surface and native plants, the technical team downsized the planting pit from 40 to 20 centimeters in diameter, enabling more precise operations that protect the desert ecosystem during afforestation.

The 400-hectare Haloxylon ammodendron forest project, a key component of Mongolia's "One Billion Trees" initiative, is led by a Mongolian enterprise with ecological restoration technology consultation provided by M-Grass.

The project aims to plant 330,000 Haloxylon ammodendron seedlings. The location was chosen in a Gobi area historically home to wild Haloxylon, leveraging local species' drought resilience to improve survival rates.

The project's field investigations began in May 2025, with 80 hectares planted last fall. This autumn, the project aims to plant 200 additional hectares using a proven "mechanical digging plus manual planting" method, a process expected to be completed within two months. The remaining acreage will be carried over to the following year.

In parallel with main afforestation tasks, the project has established a 10-hectare research demonstration zone. Over 20 native Mongolian species are being tested for plant biodiversity comparison, alongside adaptation trials of proven Chinese ecological products. The goal is to tailor China's experience in desertification control to Mongolia's local conditions.

Regarding irrigation design, Wang said the technical team adopts a water-saving approach based on the Gobi's water resource endowment. Natural precipitation supplemented by staged watering is planned to support seedlings during critical growth periods. Once fully established, seedlings will rely primarily on natural rainfall for maintenance.

Beyond ecological restoration, the Gobi afforestation project is designed to benefit local communities. Haloxylon ammodendron is a key desert host plant that often supports Cistanche deserticola, a medicinal parasitic plant. The team plans to trial Cistanche grafting on mature Haloxylon ammodendron two years after planting, while also monitoring carbon sequestration, to turn these sand-fixing forests into economic assets for local communities.

China-Mongolia ecological cooperation is expanding on multiple fronts.

The China-Mongolia Desertification Prevention and Control Cooperation Center was inaugurated in Mongolian capital Ulaanbaatar in September 2023. The center actively supports Mongolia's One Billion Trees initiative.

M-Grass is also collaborating with another Mongolian company to advance mine site restoration and integrated grassland-livestock projects. They plan to pilot an 8-hectare mine slope restoration, covering drainage construction, soil improvement, vegetation planting and long-term monitoring and evaluation.

Fan Lijun, director of the Belt and Road Initiative Research Institute at Inner Mongolia Academy of Social Sciences, said bringing China's mature desertification control experience to Mongolia and localizing it through resource-based practice, while pursuing both ecological protection and industrial cultivation, is a new highlight in advancing Belt and Road cooperation and the China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:56 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:56 PM

CHINA

Scholars: Natl identity key to bolstering ties

Seminar highlights reunification shift, drive to advance cross-Strait relations

By **LI SHANGYI** in Wuhan
lishangyi@chinadaily.com.cn

Scholars from Taiwan and the mainland stressed at a seminar that a sound sense of Chinese national identity is fundamental to the development of cross-Strait relations, while expressing concern about the Democratic Progressive Party authorities' efforts to distort that identity by promoting "Taiwan independence" separatism.

Addressing the 2026 Cross-Strait Relations Seminar, which opened on Thursday in Wuhan, Hubei province, Peng Qing'en, deputy director of the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, called on Taiwan compatriots to uphold the greater national interest and recognize the broader historical trend. He also urged them to jointly oppose "Taiwan independence" separatism and external interference and safeguard the common homeland of the Chinese nation.

The two-day seminar was organized by the mainland-based cross-Strait relations research center and brought together more than 160 scholars and experts from both sides of the Taiwan Strait.

Wang Yingjin, director of the Research Center for Cross-Strait Relations at Renmin University of China, said a sound sense of national identity is the first step in advancing cross-Strait relations and an important prerequisite for fostering emotional affinity between people on both sides.

Yang Yizhou, vice-president of the All-China Federation of Taiwan Compatriots, said that, since Taiwan is part of China's territory, people in Taiwan originally had no issue with their identification with China.

He said separatist forces on the island have sought to construct a "Taiwan independence" identity through policies, which he described as false identification. "Identification with national reunification is natural, while identification with 'Taiwan independence' is artificial," Yang said.

Chi Hsing, president and publisher of The Observer, a Taiwan-based magazine, said "different systems are not an excuse for secession". She said people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait form a community with a shared future and that Taiwan compatriots should uphold the tradition of patriotism reflected in their shared historical memory.

"The status quo across the Taiwan Strait is a transitional phase towards national reunification," Chi said.

Referring to the island's "constitution", whose preamble states that it is intended to "meet the needs before national reunification", she said Taiwan has only the option of pursuing reunification, not "Taiwan independence".

Experts at the seminar noted that the mainland's continuous development and progress has contributed to a growing sense of identification with China among people on the island. They also called on people in Taiwan to gain a better understanding of the mainland.

Ting Jen-fang, president of the south Taiwan cross-Strait relations association, said new forms of traditional Chinese culture have strong appeal among young people in Taiwan. He cited popular works such as the dance drama *A Tapestry of a Legendary Land* and the television series *Pursuit of Jade* as examples, saying they are opening up new avenues for cross-Strait cultural exchange.

Yang Kai-huang, director of the Cross-Strait Research Center at Ming Chuan University in Taiwan, encouraged people in Taiwan to experience the mainland's technological development, including the application of smart technologies in daily life and healthcare. Such developments, he said, offer a glimpse into future models and could also help strengthen a sense of identification.

Smart traffic controllers



An intelligent traffic management robot directs vehicles in Yiwu, Zhejiang province, on Thursday. The robot, fitted with a black police cap and fluorescent yellow-green reflective clothing, is the city's first traffic management robot and is currently in a trial phase. Equipped for tasks like routine patrols, violation detection, voice guidance and road safety education, it can operate continuously for eight to nine hours daily, effectively bolstering traffic control during nighttime and peak hours. WU FENGYU / FOR CHINA DAILY

Chinese surgeon saves lives in Africa

By **WANG XIAOYU**
wangxiaoyu@chinadaily.com.cn

For much of the past year, Chinese neurosurgeon Zhang Shijun's most vital instrument was not the advanced craniotomy system he was accustomed to using in brain surgery, but simple, handheld skull drills.

During his one-year medical aid mission in the Northeast African nation of Eritrea, which ran from July 2025 to July 2026, Zhang, 47, learned that when stripped of the high-tech trappings of a modern operating room, a doctor's most valuable assets are solid technical skills and an unwavering resolve under pressure.

"Back in my home hospital, we're used to having a high-powered electronic drill spinning within seconds just by releasing the foot pedal," he said. "In Eritrea, we could only rely on manual equipment most of the time, putting our wrist and shoulder strength into turning the drill over and over again."

"Moving from a well-equipped surgical room to an environment with scarce resources was a tough lesson for many of us medical aid workers. But we've all learned to overcome these challenges and live up to the trust our local patients have placed in us," he said during an interview ahead of China's ninth Doctors' Day, celebrated annually on Aug 19.

Zhang is the deputy director of the neurosurgery department at Yellow River Sanmenxia Hospital in Henan province. He also served as deputy head of the 18th Chinese medical aid team to Eritrea, which comprises 18 medical experts. They all come from Henan and specialize in a broad range of fields including radiology, surgery, traditional Chinese medicine and anesthesiology.

In Eritrea, the Chinese team was based at the Orotta National Referral Hospital in the capital city of Asmara and several other local medical institutions.

Throughout the mission, the team received more than 35,600 patient visits, performed or guided over 4,100 surgeries, delivered TCM therapies to nearly 20,000 patients, conducted 9,000 CT and ultrasound examinations, and trained about 180 local medical workers.



Zhang Shijun

As one of just two neurosurgeons on the team, Zhang said they were the only surgeons in the country capable of handling complex neurosurgical cases. While he was accustomed to the high-stakes pressure and critical decisions inherent in his specialty, the realities on the ground continually challenged him in ways he had never anticipated.

His most memorable case involved a man in his 20s who was transferred from a remote area to the hospital three days after falling into a coma due to a spontaneous intracerebral hemorrhage. Such cases were not uncommon in Eritrea, where long travel distances and inconvenient transportation often left patients in critical condition before they could reach medical help.

"His one pupil was already blown and there was no movement in any limb. His brain was herniating and he could die at any moment," Zhang said. "As an emergency head CT showed a hematoma in the brain, we decided to perform emergency surgery to clear the clot."

"There was no scrub nurse, so we picked our own instruments and used them ourselves. There was no surgical microscope or other advanced equipment. We had just one hand drill, and the bit wasn't very sharp," he said. "After drilling four holes in his skull, I was drenched in sweat, and my wrist was sore and shaking."

In the middle of the surgery, the bipolar coagulator used to control bleeding suddenly malfunctioned, and Zhang had to quickly apply pressure to the surgical site using a gelatin sponge.

"We had to swap out three different bipolar units before the device started working," he said.

The surgery was eventually completed after about three hours.

"When the patient gradually woke up and his limbs started moving again, it hit me that in conditions that bad, one slip in surgery and the outcome could have been totally different," he said.

"What I had relied on in those intense moments wasn't just my technical skill, but also the trust of a man handing me his life — and I cannot fail that kind of trust," he said.

After familiarizing himself with the local conditions, Zhang said he performed about six surgeries a week on average, and occasionally four surgeries a day on their busiest days.

"We had brought a type of cranial perforator and special drainage tubes from China in advance, having learned that there was a high prevalence of chronic subdural hematoma. With the domestic device, a procedure to address the condition took only 10 minutes, compared with about an hour before," he said.

"As a result, more patients could receive timely care," he added.

Tewelde Yohannes, medical director of Orotta hospital, said Chinese doctors play an important role in filling gaps in certain areas of expertise.

"They are always available, always willing, very cooperative, smiling, humble and ready to work at any time around the clock," he said during an interview with local television station Eri-TV. "We are very thankful and grateful for the support they give us, and we want it to continue."

Gao Jielei contributed to this story.

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Yak fighting



Two yaks grapple during a traditional yak-fighting performance held in Panam county, Shigatse, Xizang autonomous region, on Thursday. The bout was a demonstration event of the 14th Xizang autonomous regional games, which run from Aug 15 to 22. JIGMI DORJE / XINHUA

Story-sharing event fosters China-Nepal exchanges

By **YANG ZEKUN**
yangzekun@chinadaily.com.cn

More than 300 people representing various sectors in China and Nepal gathered in Kathmandu on Wednesday for a story-sharing event highlighting the Xizang autonomous region's progress in social stability, economic development, ecological protection and opening-up.

The event, titled "Xizang Panorama: New Era, New Development", was co-organized by the China Society for Human Rights Studies, Tribhuvan University and the National Human Rights Commission of Nepal. It brought together officials, scholars, journalists, educators and representatives from Nepal's cultural and performing arts sectors.

Jiang Jianguo, a member of the Standing Committee of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and deputy director of the Committee for Ethnic and Religious Affairs of the CPPCC National Committee, said this year marks the 75th anniversary of the peaceful liberation of Xizang.

Over the past 75 years, the Communist Party of China and the Chinese government have consistently regarded the rights to subsistence and development as fundamental human rights and charted a path for human rights development that follows the trend of the times and suits China's national conditions, said Jiang, who is also executive vice-president of the China Society for Human Rights Studies.

Jiang said Xizang has maintained social stability while making progress in economic development, ethnic unity, religious harmony and opening-up, with people's sense of fulfillment, happiness and security continuing to grow.

"The dramatic transformation of Xizang is the most vivid epitome of China's human rights development in the new era," Jiang said.

He called on people from various sectors to continue promoting China-Nepal friendship, observing Xizang's development and advancing exchanges between civilizations, helping more people gain an accurate, multidimensional and comprehensive understanding of the region.

Top Bahadur Magar, chairperson of Nepal's National Human Rights Commission, spoke highly of China's efforts in human rights development and said stronger exchanges and cooperation among countries and relevant institutions are important to advancing the cause.

He said the commission is willing to deepen exchanges with organizations including the China Society for Human Rights Studies, share experiences and perspectives and enhance mutual understanding through dialogue and learning.

The National Human Rights Commission of Nepal remains interested in further strengthening cooperation with China in the areas of human rights promotion and protection, he said.

Chinese Ambassador to Nepal, Zhang Maoming, said Xizang's experience in promoting vitality, openness, social harmony and environmental protection could offer useful lessons for deeper cooperation across the Himalayas.

Its practices in economic and social development and grassroots governance could also provide valuable reference for Nepal, Zhang said, adding that China is willing to work with Nepal to turn development opportunities into tangible cooperation and improve the well-being of people in both countries.

The event was structured around four themes: "Open Xizang", "Vibrant Xizang", "Harmonious Xizang" and "Green Xizang", with speakers presenting their observations and experiences of the region.

Eight speakers from China and Nepal, including scholars from the Xizang autonomous region academy of social sciences and the China Tibetology Research Center, as well as representatives from Nepal's media, education and performing arts sectors, took part in the sessions.

"From the historic streets of Lhasa to the innovative ranches in the countryside, I witnessed a Xizang that is actively modernizing while deeply respecting its cultural roots and natural environment," Kumar Sharma Acharya, former chairman of Press Council Nepal, said while recalling his visit to Xizang in June.

A photography exhibition was also held on the sidelines of the event, featuring images of the region's economic development, ecological conservation, ethnic unity and opening-up.

Xinhua contributed to this story.

Cause of Antarctic ice gain identified

By **LI MENGHAN**
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

While the Antarctic ice sheet has lost mass at an average rate of about 140.5 billion metric tons a year over the past two decades, satellite data showed a striking reversal from 2021 to 2023, when the ice sheet gained 695 billion tons — the largest increase on record.

An international research team has now identified the mechanism behind the unusual gain, revealing a previously overlooked climate link between the tropics and the Antarctic ice sheet.

The study, conducted by researchers from institutes in China, the United States, Japan, Belgium and Hungary, was published in the journal Nature on Wednesday.

The researchers found that sustained warming in the tropical warm pool — a broad region where the western Pacific and eastern Indian oceans meet and sea surface temperatures are persistently high — sent large-scale atmospheric waves southward toward Antarctica. These waves carried unusually large amounts of moisture from the midlatitude Indian Ocean to Queen Mary Land and Wilkes Land in East Antarctica, resulting in persistent heavy snowfall.

The researchers used several types of evidence, including satellite measurements of changes in Earth's gravity, records of snowfall preserved in Antarctic ice cores and computer simulations of atmospheric circulation.

Wang Yunhe, first author of the study and an associate professor at the Institute of Oceanology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, said such warming events in the tropical warm pool typically develop and persist for two to three years and occur roughly once in a decade. Similar, although smaller, fluctuations were observed around 2000, he said.

The team also examined what caused the unusual warming and snowfall. Their analysis showed that human-induced climate change accounted for only about 9 percent of the increase in snowfall, indicating that the event was driven mainly by natural fluctuations within the climate system rather than by greenhouse gas warming.

Wang, however, said the temporary increase in snowfall does not alter the Antarctic ice sheet's long-term trend.

"The West Antarctic ice sheet is still losing ice, and some outlet glaciers in East Antarctica are also threatened by ocean-driven ice shelf melting and accelerated ice flow," he said.

The findings help resolve a long-standing puzzle in Antarctic science: why the ice sheet's mass can fluctuate sharply over relatively short periods.

"Scientists have tried to explain the unusual fluctuations in Antarctic ice sheet mass," Wang said. "Most researchers have focused on the central and eastern tropical Pacific and its connection with West Antarctica, where climate signals are strongest and easiest to detect. We looked at the other side — the western Pacific warm pool and its connection with East Antarctica — and identified a pathway that had not previously been recognized."

In climate science, such a connection is known as a teleconnection, meaning that changes in one distant part of the climate system can influence weather and climate far away through atmospheric circulation.

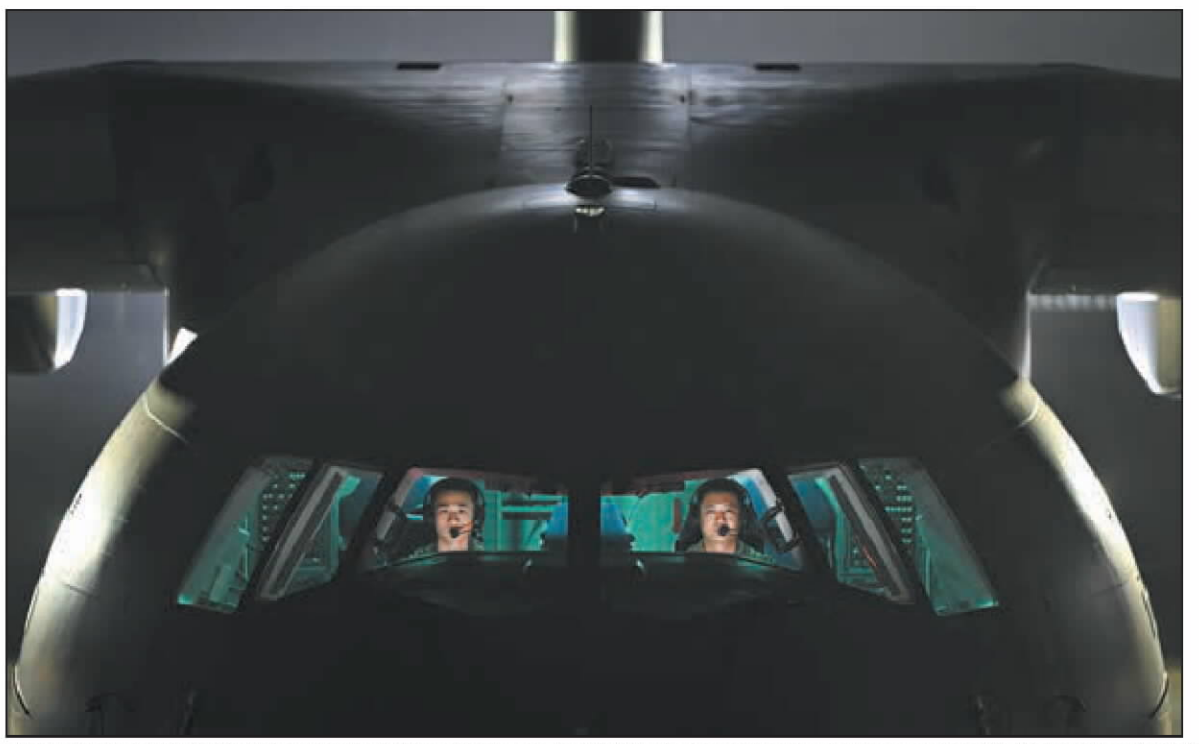
The study identifies a previously underappreciated link between the tropical warm pool and the East Antarctic ice sheet, Wang said.

The finding provides a new framework for understanding short-term changes in Antarctic ice mass and could help guide future research into the climate of East Antarctica.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:56 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:56 PM

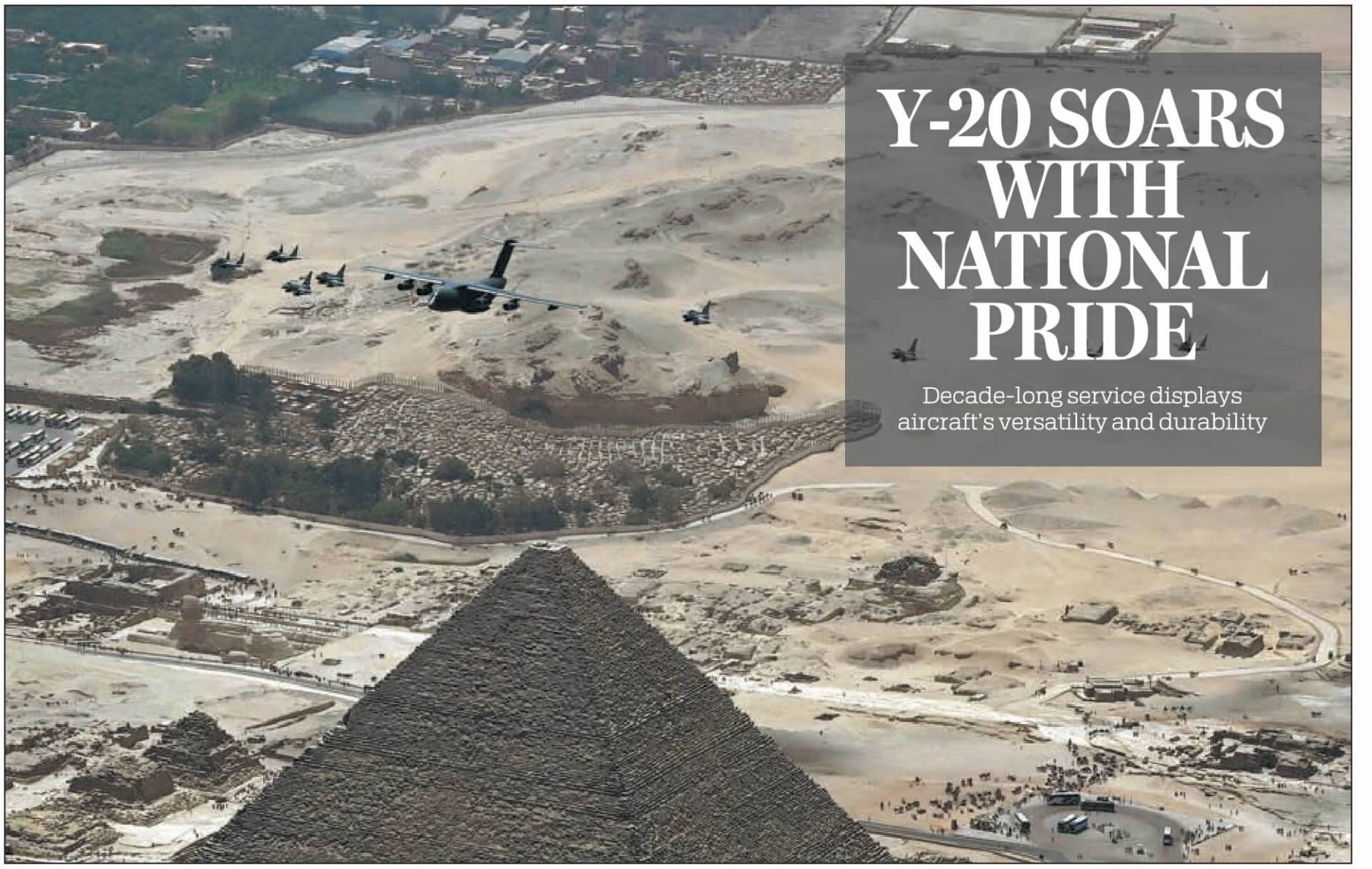
VISUAL







Clockwise from left: Y-20 pilots conduct nighttime training on April 27. Mechanics carry out maintenance work of Y-20 aircraft on April 27. Soldiers study tactics involving Y-20 aircraft on April 29.
PHOTOS BY YU HONGCHUN / FOR CHINA DAILY



Y-20 SOARS WITH NATIONAL PRIDE

Decade-long service displays aircraft's versatility and durability

A fleet of a YY-20A aerial tanker and J-10 and MiG-29 fighter jets flies over the pyramids in Giza, Egypt, on May 1 last year, during the "Eagles of Civilization 2025" joint training by Chinese and Egyptian air forces.







Clockwise from above, left: Paratroopers jump out of a Y-20A aircraft during a training session on Sept 23, 2021. A YY-20A aerial tanker fuels two J-20 fighter jets midair on May 12. A fleet of Y-20B aircraft conducts training on lowering takeoff intervals on April 27.

By CHINA DAILY

The Y-20, nicknamed Kunpeng after a giant bird in Chinese mythology, is China's first domestically developed large military transport aircraft. It was officially commissioned in July 2016, marking a milestone in the strategic delivery capability of the People's Liberation Army Air Force.

The project, led by the Aviation Industry Corporation of China's Xi'an Aircraft Industrial Group Co, began in 2007. Its prototype first flew in 2013 before entering service in 2016. With a maximum takeoff weight of 220 metric tons and a payload of 66 tons, Chinese pilots affectionately call it "Chubby Girl" for its wide fuselage.

Ten years after its commissioning, the aircraft has not only deeply integrated itself into various combat readiness training sessions, but also displayed its power in non-military tasks such as disaster relief, humanitarian rescue and overseas transport missions.

Over the decade, the aircraft itself has also evolved from a single transport platform into a family consisting of multiple variants including the original Y-20A, the Y-20B with domestically developed WS-20 engines, and the YY-20A aerial tanker.

It has reached Asia, Africa, Europe and Oceania, building a channel for international exchanges and demonstrating the open, confident and pragmatic image of the Chinese military.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:56 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:56 PM

CULTURE

The dance of homecoming

A traditional folk drama becomes the language through which a son finally understands his absent father, **Chen Nan** reports.



Odes to Heroes, a Chinese dance drama by the Guangzhou Song and Dance Theatre, returned to Beijing on Wednesday and Thursday before embarking on a tour of Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand in September and October. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By the time Erfan Omar's face is painted near the end of *Odes to Heroes*, his character is no longer the boy who has spent years wondering why his father left the family.

He has become the man he once imagined his absent father to be — responsible, courageous and willing to shoulder a greater duty.

"For me, the most moving part is that, in the end, I become the person I want to become," says Omar, a principal dancer with the Guangzhou Song and Dance Theatre, who plays the protagonist. "I want to become a man like my father — someone with responsibility and a sense of duty."

That transformation lies at the heart of *Odes to Heroes*, a dance drama that brings together the vigorous Lingnan folk dance *yingge* with *qiaopi*, the letters and remittances sent home by overseas Chinese.

Premiered in 2024, the production has toured extensively, with more than 150 performances in about 20 cities. It returned to Beijing on Wednesday and Thursday as part of the ongoing 7th National Ethnic Minority Art Festival before heading to Southeast Asia in September and October for performances in Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand.

The overseas tour will take the production back to a region closely connected to its narrative: Southeast Asia, where generations of people from southern China settled, built new lives, and maintained close ties with their homeland.

Set in the late 1930s, the drama follows a family in Guangdong province. A father leaves home for Southeast Asia in search of work and eventually disappears. His wife raises their son alone. Years later, during the Lantern Festival, the son picks up a pair of *yingge* mallets left behind by his father.

The mallets draw him into a dreamlike journey through the past. As he encounters fragments of his father's life, he gradually begins to understand the struggles and sacrifices of a generation shaped by migration, war and responsibility.

"I feel that throughout the dance drama, I am actually an audience member onstage," Omar says. "It is my character who leads the audience into the story."

His character's journey mirrors the audience's own discovery of the history behind *yingge* and *qiaopi*: moving from misunderstanding to recognition, and from personal loss to a deeper understanding of family and collective memory.

Codirected by Qian Xin, the production uses *qiaopi* as a narrative thread. Emerging in the 19th and 20th centuries, *qiaopi* refers to letters sent by overseas Chinese to families in China, often accompanied by remittances. The letters carried not only financial support but news, homesickness and reassurance across thousands of kilometers.

"*Odes to Heroes* turns that history into a story of one family, but its emotional landscape is much broader," Qian says.

While *yingge* provides the production's central movement vocabulary, the stage is filled with other elements of Lingnan (a region in southern China) heritage, including wood carving, *qianci* porcelain inlay, Chaozhou embroidery, iron-branch puppetry, beef balls, and Chaozhou oil-paper lanterns, adds codirector Wang Sisi.

"These elements are more than visual embellishments. Together, they create a multifaceted portrait of Lingnan culture and show how different traditions can connect through a shared cultural heritage," she says.

The production uses these traditions to move between the personal and the collective — from the fate of one family to the broader history of migration, mutual support and shared struggle.



Scenes from the production, which captivates audiences with its moving storyline and dynamic choreography inspired by *yingge* dance, a traditional folk dance that originated during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).

At the same time, *Odes to Heroes* does not simply reproduce *yingge* as a folk performance. Its traditional movements are reshaped for the theater and woven into the characters' emotional journeys.

For Omar, mastering the form has been a process of continuous learning.

He first encountered *yingge* in 2024, when the folk dance was gaining widespread attention through short videos and television programs. Its forceful rhythms and explosive energy immediately attracted him.

"I was struck by the energy and excitement of this dance form and its vibrant street culture," he says.

The theater subsequently invited practitioners of intangible cultural heritage to train the dancers. They first learned the traditional movements and techniques, and then worked with the creative team to integrate them into contemporary stage choreography.

The *yingge* mallets have proved particularly demanding. Omar's character carries a special pair throughout the drama, turning them into a recurring link between different times and stories.

"It took a long time to go from not knowing how to spin the mallets to being able to spin them well," he says. "And on every tour, in every performance, we are still constantly refining and thinking about it."

That process reflects one of the production's central challenges: how to preserve the character of a traditional folk art while giving it new theatrical possibilities.

"You can't simply move a street performance onto the stage," Omar says. "Two hours of pure *yingge* would be too much for the audience. We have to develop it creatively — give it a story, give the characters a journey, and bring in real historical stories and stories of unsung heroes."

For Omar, that task carries particular significance. Born and raised in Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, he came to Beijing to study at age 10 and has lived in Guangdong for nine years. Although *yingge* comes from a cultural tradition different from his own, he sees a connection in its exuberant energy and collective spirit. The experience has also made him more conscious of the responsibility involved in interpreting a traditional culture from a different region.

"There are certainly regional cultural differences," he says. "When we encounter this outstanding traditional Chinese culture, I feel a great sense of responsibility. We can't casually change it. We need to be cautious, but at the same time, we need to be bold enough to innovate."

That balance between preservation and reinvention runs through *Odes to Heroes*. Its *yingge* dancers carry movements passed down through generations, while *qiaopi* carries the words of those who left home. Together, they create a bridge between generations and across the sea, Qian says.

The Southeast Asian tour will extend that bridge further, bringing a story about migration and homesickness back to the region where generations of Chinese migrants once began new lives, the director notes.

Contact the writer at chennan@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

Theater recalls wartime Chongqing

EDINBURGH — For people living in Chongqing, Southwest China, in the late 1930s and early 1940s, fog was more than weather. It could mean precious hours of cover from bombers overhead.

Thick fog made it harder for Japanese pilots to see the ground, giving residents some respite from repeated air raids.

A Chinese-language solo play staged recently at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, which runs through Aug 31, offers audiences a glimpse into what life under such circumstances might have been like.

In *The Red Lantern*, Fan Shaolun performs alone, shifting between narration and multiple characters. Through voice, movement and sound, he re-creates wartime Chongqing through the eyes of a boy named Guang, whose unusually sensitive hearing allows him to detect danger before others do.

Beginning in 1938, Japanese warplanes bombed Chongqing, then China's provisional capital, killing and injuring more than 32,000 people. On June 5, 1941, about 2,500 people suffocated to death while seeking shelter in a tunnel during an air raid.

The play was created by Fan and Liang Yumin, who studied theater in Beijing before pursuing postgraduate studies in Britain. The idea grew from conversations about Chongqing's wartime experience and the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45).

For Liang, the history was personal. A native of Chongqing, she recalls hearing air-raid sirens every June 5 from primary school onward, when the city commemorated those killed in the wartime bombings.

She had learned about the history at school, but revisiting it for the play raised new questions.

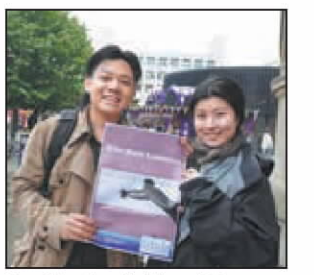
"When you really look at the history from the perspective of the people who lived through it, you begin to see how they lived and how they managed to get through those years," Liang says.

In May 2026, Fan and Liang traveled to Chongqing for field research, visiting museums, the June 5 tunnel massacre site, and the stage production *Chongqing 1949*.

One detail stood out: the fog. They found that during periods of particularly heavy fog, air raids could become less frequent. What Liang had regarded since childhood as an ordinary feature of her hometown suddenly took on a different meaning.

"For people at that time, fog was connected with survival," she says.

Fan and Liang chose to tell the story through a child's perspective.



Fan Shaolun (left) and Liang Yumin, creators of the Chinese-language solo play *The Red Lantern*, pose with the play's poster in Edinburgh on Aug 9. ZHAO JIASONG / XINHUA

"We didn't want to put the transformation of an entire city directly onto the stage," Fan says. "We wanted to follow the changes in one child and, through him, show something of the state of mind of the whole city."

One image from their research stayed with them. After an air raid, four Chinese characters were written on a surviving wall amid the ruins: "*Yu zha yu qiang*" — "The more you bomb, the stronger we are." A replica of the slogan is now displayed at a museum commemorating the June 5 bombing.

The play's Edinburgh run also coincided with an important date in the history it depicts. This year's Aug 15 marked the 81st anniversary of Japan's announcement of its unconditional surrender in World War II.

Dong Ning, chairwoman of the Beijing Performance and Arts Group, says the production offers an accessible entry point to a difficult chapter of history.

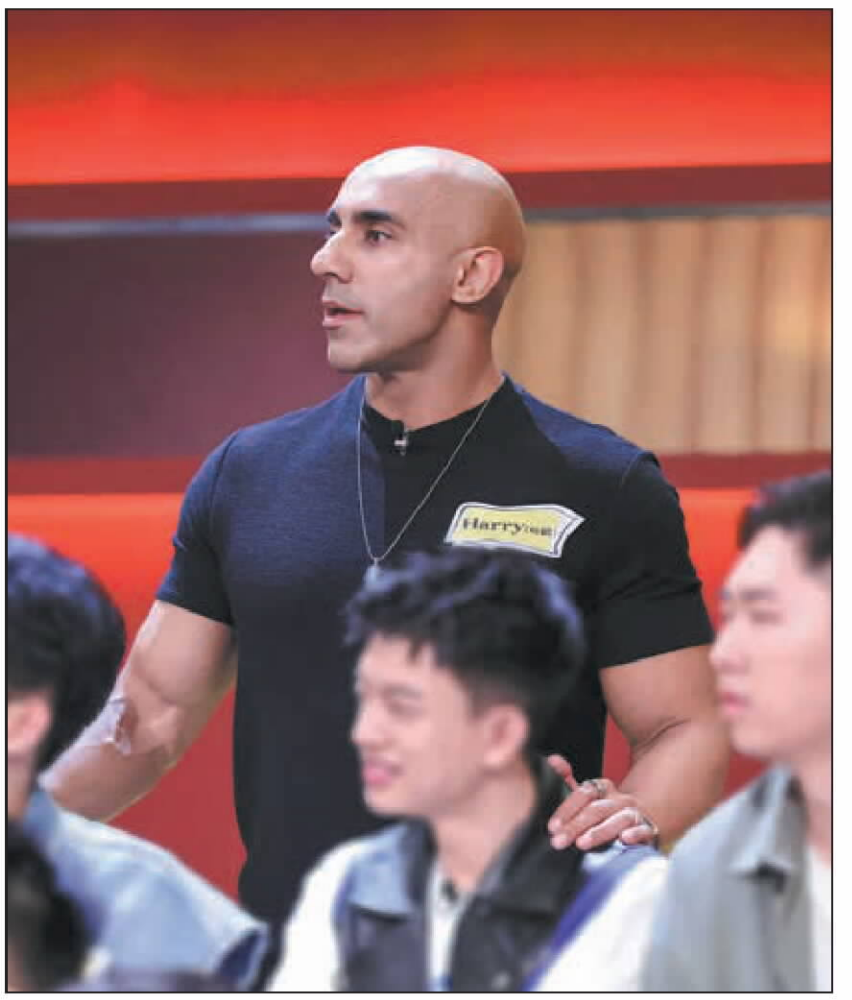
XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:56 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:56 PM

Inside jokes have outsiders laughing

Stand-up comedian delivers personal stories on the stage, with a solo special that has taken his work international, report **He Qi** and **Wu Wanzhen**.



At 7:30 pm, audience members begin filing into GOAT, a comedy club on Xiangyang North Road in Shanghai's Jing'an district. Backstage, Harry Hussain, who is known simply as Harry, eats a banana with his coffee, his pre-show ritual.

"I feel like I'm not here to do stand-up (comedy)," he says with a laugh. "I'm here to play tennis."

Printed on his T-shirt is the word "borderless" — a pun on national borders and personal boundaries. He allows the audience to write on the T-shirt following his show.

"Wars are breaking out everywhere, and it makes me uncomfortable," Harry says. "So I want to express something simple: We're all the same people." He never explains it on stage, preferring to leave it open to interpretation and letting the audience write what they want.

This British-Pakistani comedian has lived in China for 18 years and performed stand-up in Mandarin for five years. In December 2025, his first Chinese special, *Outsider*, premiered in Shanghai. In the spring, he took the show to Canada, where he completed five performances in different cities. He now plans to bring it to the United Kingdom.

"The Outsider" — that's his label and the name of his comedy special: A Briton in China can be an "outsider"; a migrant in a new city can be an "outsider". "Each of us," Harry says, "has felt like one at some point". Yet for the fans, fellow comedians, family, and friends who cheer him on across the country, he has long been an insider — one of their own.

Finding his voice

Harry came to China at 20, first studying medicine in Hebei province. After graduation, he moved to Beijing and stayed for over a decade. He even opened an Italian restaurant in the Liangmaqiao area.

But he found his true calling five years ago.

He was struggling with depression and looking for an outlet. "At first I was just writing jokes and posting them online. The more I wrote, the more I realized that I genuinely loved writing comedy," he recalls.

Having grown up watching British stand-up, full-length TV specials from age 7, he never imagined taking the stage himself. A friend persuaded him: since you've written them, why not tell them?

His first gig was at a bar in one of Beijing's *hutong* (alleyway): 10 audience members, 20 performers.

"I was so nervous, but the first day, the host forgot about me entirely," he says. The next day, the nerves had subsided. He went onstage, told a few jokes, and the response was surprisingly good.

"The laughter and applause made me realize so many people could understand me — that feeling was incredibly addictive," he says.

For Harry, performing in Chinese was a choice he made from day one.

"Honestly, most of the audiences are Chinese, so performing in their native language is more effective." In English, the audience would be smaller and at varying levels — he wouldn't know who to cater to.

But Chinese used in stand-up comedy is different from everyday Chinese. Wordplay, puns, idioms — he had to learn them all specifically for comedy.

Unlike first-arrival or character stories that other foreign comedians often cover, Harry wants to take a different path.

"What I want to be is a 'foreigner' audiences remember — sincere and truth-telling," he says.

On stage, he talks about his struggles, and the audience's empathy is therapeutic. "Things I didn't want to face before, I can now talk about openly," he says. "My mental state keeps getting healthier."







Clockwise from top: Harry at the variety show Stand-Up Comedy and Friends in 2024. He watches a game with friends. He takes the stage at a Shanghai open mic night. One moment of Harry and his daughter. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"Stand-up is my therapist," Harry always says.

Dedicated to his daughter

In the summer of 2024, Harry appeared on the variety show *Stand-Up Comedy and Friends*. Joking about English corners, training institutions and internet-famous foreigners, his first-round set brought the house down — guest judge and veteran television host Lu Yu called his material "very sophisticated".

But he didn't make it to the end. The day he was eliminated, he decided on the spot to write a special. "If I don't do a special, gigs will decrease," he says. "It's time."

He retreated to a friend's place in Hebei province's Jinshanling, not far from Beijing, to write in seclusion. "I don't like refining jokes word-by-word at an open mic (microphone)," he says. "I prefer to write the full hour first, then polish the details."

He also took a month-long acting class. "It required digging into inner feelings — childhood experiences, hidden emotions," he says. "I realized things I'd hidden for years could actually become jokes."

For Harry, a comedian's first solo show should be personal.

"Your first special should tell your story so the audience can really get to know you." TV clips are too short and edited for entertainment; a special is complete. "Some people might like me, some not — it doesn't matter."

The result is *Outsider*.

"Each of us has felt like an outsider — at work, at school, in social circles." A portion is dedicated to his daughter.

"She'll face identity issues — not just mixed race, but regional, like whether Beijing or Shanghai is home," he says. "I put my own experiences into the special, so someday it can help her."

Once the first draft of the special was complete, Shanghai became his testing ground. Three years ago, Harry moved to Shanghai, where Xiaoguo Comedy is based.

"Shanghai has the strongest stand-up scene in the country," he says. Within 15 minutes of home, there are four or five open mic venues; he hits several a night on his electric scooter. "Shanghai's audience is super diverse. If a joke works here, it will probably work anywhere."

On Dec 14, 2025, *Outsider* premiered at Sixiao Comedy in Shanghai, followed by a nationwide tour that included Beijing and Guangzhou, Guangdong province, attracting over 3,000 live audience members.

In April and May, Harry took his show to Canada — his first international tour. The audience was more diverse than he expected: Chinese, foreigners who had lived in China, local students learning Chinese, teenage immigrants, and mixed-heritage viewers. "It's amazing to have so many different backgrounds in the same room," he says.

Bridging cross-communication

"I'm a citizen of the world — I've always thought that," he says. On identity, Harry believes self-acceptance is enough. People have labeled him throughout his life, but these days they matter far less.

In China, he feels at ease. "Here, I'm just a 'foreigner'. I don't have to pretend to be Chinese, and no one keeps asking if I'm 'really Chinese'," he says. "'Foreigner' is broad — it includes every country, every identity. That's enough."

That process also shapes his view of cross-cultural communication: Stand-up is already a bridge. Chinese audiences have watched English-language stand-up for years, adapting a form developed overseas to local experiences and sensibilities. Now, Chinese stand-up is increasingly reaching audiences abroad. "It's a great cycle," he comments.

But he doesn't set out to deliver a message. "I'm just telling my real life. If people want to understand it, they can. How they interpret it is up to them. I trust the audience."

Back at GOAT, the show comes to an end.

Audiences sign Harry's T-shirt, leaving signatures, notes and well-wishes. For each performance, he prepares a new shirt and places it outside afterward for the audience to write on.

On his scooter ride home, Shanghai's night breeze hits his face. His wife and nearly 8-month-old daughter are waiting.

Harry says that parenting has become a new source of material. "I'm most interested in family stuff now — parenting differences with my in-laws, cultural gaps, traditional Chinese customs I never knew about," he says. "I'm learning them with the baby, and it's fascinating."

Contact the writers at heqi@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

Annual jazz festival returns for its 22nd edition with a record 17-day program

By **HE QI**





The 2025 Shanghai JZ Festival was held in Qiantan area. The 22nd JZ Festival will bring a larger and longer edition to the city. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Along the autumn bank of the Huangpu River, as a cool breeze sweeps past, it carries the soft notes of a trumpet, the warm tone of a saxophone solo, the steady pulse of a double bass, and spontaneous cheers of an outdoor crowd. Across sunlit parks and vibrant avenues, the waterfront becomes a giant soundstage.

From Oct 16 to Nov 1, that vivid scene will transform Shanghai's sprawling Qiantan area in the Pudong New Area into an open-air jazz paradise, as the 22nd JZ Festival brings its largest and longest edition yet to the city's riverside.

The 17-day festival will feature over 146 performances by more than 100 musicians from 29 countries and regions, spanning 13 venues across 1.3 square kilometers, including parks, theaters and shopping streets. Except for ticketed indoor concerts, all outdoor performances and forums will be free and open to the public. According to the organizers, Lujiazui Group and JZ Music, the festival is also the centerpiece of the 2026 New Bund Chillout, running from Sept 20 to Nov 1 in Pudong.

The JZ Festival has been held in Shanghai annually since 2005. It is the largest jazz festival in China and the second-largest in Asia.

Building on last year's success, which set records in the Qiantan area with 1.23 million visits and 162 million yuan ($24 million) in consumer spending, JZ Festival founder Ren Yuqing emphasizes, "The past is just the past; we will create an innovative future."

This year's program is organized around six themes. The opening Jazz Age Carnival at Qiantan Sports Park immerses visitors in a nostalgic Jazz Age atmosphere with swing dancers, vintage cars, vinyl records, and steampunk parade floats.

Jazz Avenue expands last year's street-music format from a single stage to a cluster of four stages, turning the neighborhood into a compact festival. Jazz Riverside takes place at Qiantan Leisure Park, where a grand stage overlooks the Huangpu River. Jazz Around the Town brings pop-up performances to shopping malls, alleyways, and even basketball courts.

The closing weekend features a solo concert by five-time Grammy winner Victor Wooten, who Rolling Stone ranked among the "top 10 greatest bassists of all time", alongside two special concerts led by Chinese soul diva Yuan Yawei (Tia Ray) at the Qiantan 31 Performing Arts Centre. Additional international artists are to be announced.

Beyond performances, the Qiantan Jazz Forum, co-hosted with the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, will bring together industry players, musicians and fans for a week of discussions on topics ranging from AI in music creation to live marketing and music education. The festival has also established a long-term strategic partnership with Music China, creating an annual October collaboration through cross-promotion, a shared stage and joint industry salons.

"Culture is a city's most enduring source of competitiveness, and music is one soul of culture," states Wu Jun, deputy director of Pudong New Area's culture and tourism bureau.

"With the conservatory and the instrument exhibition on board, we hope to build a high ground for the entire music industry in Shanghai this October — hopefully a high ground for China also, a musical peak facing the world," Ren says.

Ma Tan contributed to this story.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:56 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:56 PM

LIFE

Singer finds his voice on talent show

British vocalist Elliot James Reay learns to balance online success with live performance and personal authenticity, **Chen Nan** reports.



When Elliot James Reay first stepped onto the stage of *Singer 2026*, one of China's most popular music competition shows, he found himself experiencing something he had not felt for quite some time: nerves.

The young British singer had already built a substantial online following with his distinctive retro sound. But *Singer 2026* was different. It was live, competitive and placed him alongside accomplished singers, with audiences voting on their performances.

"I'd never been in a competition before, especially a talent competition," the 23-year-old singer-songwriter said in Beijing on Aug 14.

Yet the unfamiliar pressure brought an unexpected feeling.

"It made me feel like I just started my career again," he says. "It gave me a bit more hunger and a bit more fire."

For Reay, China became more than another stop on an increasingly international career. It offered an established online artist the chance, in a sense, to become a beginner again.

The invitation came while Reay was in the United States working on new material. His manager told him about the opportunity to join *Singer 2026*, and his first reaction was excitement. China was a place he had long wanted to visit.

Before becoming a full-time musician, he had traveled widely. "I went everywhere but China," he says. During his recent trip to Beijing, he also visited the zoo, where he saw pandas. He shared his trip on Xiaohongshu, or RedNote, receiving warm feedback from his fans in China.

Now he had finally arrived to do what he had dreamed of doing: making music.

Reay came with few expectations. He was entering a music market he did not yet fully understand and joining a competition unlike anything he had experienced. The language barrier and the intensity of the live performances made it a leap into unfamiliar territory, especially as he sang one song in Chinese.

But that uncertainty became part of the attraction.

Reay's musical identity, after all, is built on a journey across time. His music draws on classic rock 'n' roll and early pop, sounds that evoke nostalgia for some listeners while offering younger audiences the discovery of something new.

The same collision between old and new can be found in the way he built his career.

While his music looks back several decades, his first major platform was TikTok.

During the COVID-19 pandemic in the United Kingdom, Reay found himself with a choice: focus on writing songs or building an online audience.

"I feel like I was quite blessed in the timing of when I started social media," he says.

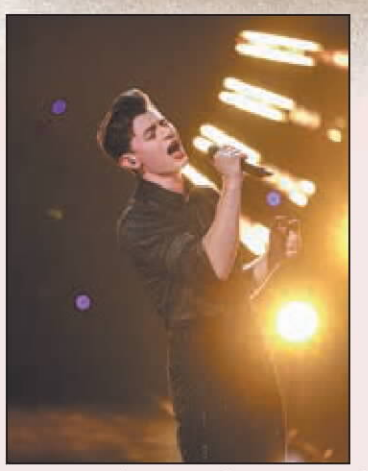
Some of his friends concentrated on songwriting. Reay chose to build a following.

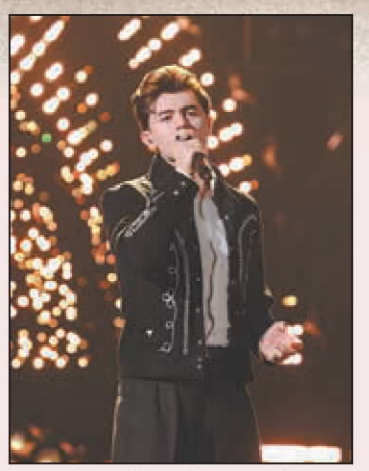
But the transition in the other direction — from online personality to a full-fledged musician — has proved more difficult.

"I've found it quite hard to go the other way — from making TikToks to writing songs and learning how to do that properly," he says.

Reay is grateful for the platform that introduced him to a global audience, but he does not want his story to end there.

"I love TikTok. It's a great platform," he says. "But I'm a musician at heart."







Top: Known for reviving the groovy sounds of 1950s rock 'n' roll, British singer Elliot James Reay rose to fame on the video platform TikTok in 2019. **Above:** Reay has gained a fan base in China after appearing on the popular TV talent contest *Singer 2026*.

PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

His goal is to become "a touring musician" — an artist who can bring people together in concert halls and venues, rather than simply accumulate views on a screen.

That desire is closely tied to another lesson he learned before finding his current musical direction. For a time, Reay experimented with pop music and tried to make what he believed other people wanted to hear.

Eventually, he realized that approach was taking him further away from the artist he wanted to become.

"I figured out that I needed to just do what I need to do," he says.

That experience shaped his approach to China as well. Asked what advice he would give to other international artists hoping to enter the Chinese market, his answer is simple: "Be yourself."

"It's very easy to want to try to change yourself to fit into a market," he says, "but at the end of the day, if you stay true to yourself, you'll be happy."

For Reay, authenticity is something learned through trial and error.

"If I didn't do that, I wouldn't be sitting here now," he says. "I wouldn't have done the show. My whole journey would have been different."

That philosophy was tested throughout *Singer 2026*, where the pressure to chase the next successful performance could easily lead an artist to lose sight of his own identity. Reay, however, was determined not to do so.

The competition also gave him an opportunity to reveal another side of himself. Each week brought the possibility that it could be his last, making his journey to the grand final all the more significant.

There, Reay chose to perform *I Think They Call This Love*, a song with a particularly personal place in his career. It was the first song he wrote that he truly believed in and felt ready to put out into the world.

It was also a love story.

Reay wrote the song with his girlfriend, inspired by the moment when, as he describes it, they both realized that they had fallen in love.

"So that song was not just a song," he says. "It's a true story."

When he performed it in the grand final, his girlfriend was there. Afterward, the two walked off the stage together, a moment that quickly attracted attention online.

For Reay, however, its significance was more personal than viral.

"She wrote it with me," he says. "We spent a lot of time making sure that it was perfect for the stage."

Having her there, he adds, brought him comfort.

China, meanwhile, is not a chapter Reay sees as ending with the final episode of *Singer 2026*.

For him, building an audience in a new country requires more than returning home and maintaining a presence through social media.

"To establish myself here, you have to be here," he says.

As an artist with Universal Music Group, Reay came to China as part of the company's initiative, "Go East", which was launched early this year to offer a bridge connecting international artists with the Chinese market. This is a reflection of China's growing importance as the world's third-largest music market and its booming live performance scene, which continues to attract artists worldwide.

"The rapid development of the Chinese music market and the creation of the new initiative will help guide overseas artists in establishing a lasting presence in the country," said Timothy Xu, chairman and CEO of Universal Music Greater China.

Contact the writer at chennan@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

Salvage diver-turned-rescuer navigates storms and saves lives in Zhejiang

HANGZHOU — The ache in Dong Jianhai's legs was a warning he had learned to trust. At 58, the resident of Zhoushan, a city consisting of islands off the coast of East China's Zhejiang province, knew it meant a storm was coming.

The day before Typhoon Dolphin — the 13th typhoon of the year — made landfall in Zhejiang, Dong spent the whole afternoon preparing for it, checking anchor points for vessels seeking shelter and making sure each ship was securely fastened, just as he had done hundreds of times before.

For more than three decades, Dong has seen the sea in nearly every mood. He began his career as one of Zhejiang's first professional salvage divers after earning his national diving certificate in 1991. Young, strong and ambitious, he was eager to make a name for himself underwater. Then an accident changed the course of his life.

During a salvage operation in 1994, Dong suffered severe decompression sickness, a potentially fatal condition caused by rapid changes in pressure after diving. Two months of difficult treatment saved his life, but when he finally left the hospital, he could no longer walk as he once had.

For a diver whose life had been bound to the ocean, the injury seemed to mark the end of a career. But Dong's bond with the sea endured, taking a different form.

"People told me my diving days were over, and maybe they were right about my body," he says. "But no one could convince me that my journey was over. If I couldn't go down into the water anymore, I would find another way to keep my promise."

Dong began a new chapter by bringing together people with diving and salvage experience to form his own rescue team. Over time, the team became a familiar presence along the coast, responding to sunken vessels, maritime accidents and calls to recover those lost at sea.

He would arrive at rescue sites with a cane in hand, helping divers prepare their equipment, secure hoses and ropes, and watching closely as they disappeared beneath the surface. Though he could no longer descend into the depths himself, he knew the pressure, darkness, and currents below — and the razor-thin margin for error — as well as anyone else.

When Dong could not be at the scene, he directed operations remotely. His cell phone stayed with him around the clock, and over the years his number became a trusted lifeline for people along the coast.

The calls came in for all kinds of emergencies: a vessel that needed salvaging, a missing diver, someone who had fallen into the water, a ship that had run aground, or people stranded on an island by a storm.

The team has also taken part in large-scale maritime operations. In one case, it participated in the salvage and subsequent repair of a 10,000-ton cargo ship. In another, it was called to assist a 300,000-ton Panama-registered oil tanker that had gone off course and run aground.

For Dong, the hardest calls were not always those that came in the middle of a rescue. Sometimes it was the quiet voice on the other end of the phone, telling him that another life had been lost at sea.

Such calls meant there was no longer a life to save. But Dong knew the mission was not necessarily over. For him, and for the families waiting on shore, there was still one final task: bringing their loved ones home.

Over the past 30 years, Dong has taken part in or directed the salvage of more than 120 sunken vessels, while his team has recovered more than 80 bodies.

The work is demanding and often dangerous, but Dong has never seen it as something to be carried out for a reward.

"When someone loses their life at sea, and you can bring them back to their family, that is not just a job," Dong says. "It is simply the right thing to do as a human being."

To Dong, it was all part of a promise he had made to the sea long ago — one he could not easily let go of, even though he could not have known what it would eventually cost him.

That promise has taken different forms over the course of a life intertwined with the water: the boy who lost loved ones to the sea, the diver who ventured beneath the waves, the survivor of a near-fatal underwater accident, and the man who refused to give up helping others.

Typhoon Dolphin made landfall the following evening after Dong felt his leg ache. The seasoned rescuer was out before dawn, leaning on his cane as he moved between harbors, checking vessels and directing his crew while strong winds swept the coast.

For most people, a storm is a reason to stay ashore. For Dong, it is a reason to set out. Somewhere beyond the waves, someone may be waiting — for rescue, for hope, or simply for a way home.

XINHUA



Fishing boats set sail from Shenjiamen Port in Zhoushan, East China's Zhejiang province, on Aug 11. XU YU / XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:56 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:56 PM

AMERICAFOCUS

Eight Immortals cross the ocean

Animated Chinese film *All Wishes Come True!* makes a splash with moviegoers in North American premiere

By **RENA LI** in Los Angeles
renali@chinadailyusa.com



The North American premiere screening of the Chinese animated feature *All Wishes Come True!* is held in Los Angeles last Thursday, showcasing the film's fantasy world inspired by the legend of the Eight Immortals. RENA LI/ CHINA DAILY

Few would imagine that strands of life-saving hair from Sun Wukong, the legendary Monkey King, could become an unexpected weapon for the Eight Immortals as they confront the powerful Erlang Shen, or Yang Jian, in *All Wishes Come True!* — one of the latest Chinese animated films bringing the country's centuries-old mythology to global screens.

Drawing on the folk legend of the Eight Immortals while weaving in characters and imagery from *Journey to the West* and other classical tales, the fantasy comedy brings traditional cultural icons together in a newly imagined universe for contemporary audiences.

At the film's recent North American premiere in Los Angeles, Hollywood filmmakers, actors and moviegoers praised its elaborate 3D animation. But many said what interested them even more was the world behind the images — Chinese mythology, folklore and philosophical ideas that were unfamiliar to them.

Inspired by the traditional tale *The Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea*, the film reimagines the immortals not as distant supernatural beings but as eight ordinary mortals whose weaknesses, ambitions and choices eventually lead them toward heroism.

Hollywood actor John Kyle Sutton said he was surprised by how completely the film held his attention despite its lengthy run time.

"Honestly, I think this movie is a masterpiece," Sutton told China Daily.

"I don't like long movies. Usually about 86 minutes is when I top out," he said. "This movie kept my attention the whole time."

Sutton said he was drawn to the themes of "brotherhood, fraternity, betrayal and greed", as well as the pacing and animation.

"I was fully engaged the whole time," he said. "I want to learn Chinese and its culture."

What impressed him in particular, Sutton said, was that the movie did not abandon its Eastern mythology in an effort to appeal to Western viewers.

Set around the celestial world of Penglai, the story begins with Lyu Dongbin and Zhongli Quan plotting to enter a divine vault, before their adventure expands into a battle involving mortals, gods and the fate of the wider world.

Film producer Stephen Nemeth described the movie as a "very, very beautiful spectacle", saying its fantasy world reminded him in some ways of the American classic *The Wizard of Oz*.

"I'm hoping hosting this movie here will bridge our cultures, in America and China, and we'll learn a lot from each other," said Nemeth.

He said he was impressed by how deeply Chinese culture draws upon "mysticism, folklore and backstory", elements that give the film a character distinct from much mainstream Western animation.

Nemeth's son Lincoln, an animation enthusiast, also noticed a visual difference.

"I think that the 3D aspect of it all looks a little more realistic," he said, comparing its attempt to reproduce aspects of real life with the visual style of American animated movies.

He said learning about unfamiliar cultural and religious themes through animation also made the experience educational.

Hollywood actor Chris Kriesa said the film's visual reconstruction of an imagined ancient China was among its most striking features.

"I was really mesmerized by the great creativity and the beauty of old China, the structures, the alleys, the buildings, and the mythology, the gods and the immortals," said Kriesa.



Audience members pose with *All Wishes Come True!* posters during the film's North American premiere in Los Angeles last Thursday. RENA LI/ CHINA DAILY

> "I was really mesmerized by the great creativity and the beauty of old China."
>
> **Chris Kriesa,** Hollywood actor who attended the LA premiere

However, Kriesa said he was unfamiliar with the origins and cultural significance of the Eight Immortals, wondering whether they were characters from children's stories or something much larger in Chinese culture. Characters instantly recognizable to generations of Chinese viewers can still be unfamiliar figures to American audiences.

For Georges Chamchoum, executive director of the Asian World Film Festival, the Chinese legend was a "discovery".

Chamchoum said introducing eight principal mythological characters to audiences unfamiliar with their histories presents an obvious storytelling challenge, but the distinct personalities of the Eight Immortals helped viewers quickly connect with them.

"The characters of the Eight Immortals are so interesting. Each one has its own personality," he said. "And you hardly have enough time to breathe because the action never stops … it is exciting."

An increasingly important task as Chinese animation expands globally, Chamchoum said, is making Chinese stories accessible to overseas audiences while preserving their cultural identity.

Rather than simply retelling *The Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea*, the film blends familiar mythological figures and motifs into a newly imagined universe or celestial realm. The approach reflects a broader trend in Chinese animation: drawing inspiration from traditional culture while using contemporary storytelling and digital technology to reach younger and increasingly international audiences, according to Chamchoum.

Huang Hongjiang, Chinese deputy consul general in Los Angeles, said the movie provides another channel through which overseas audiences can learn Chinese stories and visual culture.

"Here in Los Angeles, this is the center of the entertainment and film industry," Huang said. "Over the last several decades, the cooperation between China and the US has produced good results, not only in the film industry but also in economy, trade, education and technology."

The responses come as *All Wishes Come True!* begins its international rollout following a strong performance in China.

The film's Chinese box office surpassed 1.5 billion yuan ($220 million) by Aug 13 after opening on July 18. As of Aug 16, Box Office Mojo listed its China gross at about $235.9 million, while Variety reported a cumulative total of roughly $236 million after a $13.1 million fifth weekend.

Its overseas rollout began Aug 13 in Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea, followed on Aug 14 by the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland and the Netherlands. Belgium and Luxembourg are scheduled for Sept 4.

The overseas push follows the global success of Chinese animation in recent years. *Ne Zha 2*, another film deeply rooted in Chinese mythology, grossed more than $2.2 billion worldwide, demonstrating the potential for stories drawn from traditional Chinese culture to reach audiences far beyond their home market.

Written and directed by Mu Zhengyang, the 144-minute animated fantasy was produced by Pearl Studio, the Chinese animation company behind *Abominable* and the Academy Award-nominated *Over the Moon*, and a co-producer of *Kung Fu Panda 3*. CMC Pictures is handling international distribution.

Proposed US grant rule sparks fears of scientific decoupling

By **LIA ZHU** in San Francisco
liazhu@chinadailyusa.com

A proposed US government rule that could drastically restrict federally funded research collaboration with China has sparked confusion and concern among academics, with critics warning it could lead to a near-complete decoupling of the US and Chinese scientific communities.

The Office of Management and Budget, or OMB, part of the executive office of the US president, published the proposed rule in May as part of a significant revision of regulations governing federal financial assistance awards and sponsored research programs, including all federal research grants.

The rule was originally scheduled to take effect on Oct 1. Earlier this month, however, the US Senate passed a bipartisan continuing resolution that blocks the rule from being finalized or enforced until Dec 11.

Under the proposal, political appointees would gain greater authority over grant awards that have traditionally been guided by scientific peer review. The rule cites the Wolf Amendment, which bars scientists from using NASA funding for bilateral collaborations with China, as a model for government-wide restrictions on foreign research collaboration.

Scientific, research, policy and education groups have raised concerns that the proposal could effectively prohibit federal funding for US scientific collaboration with all leading Chinese universities and academic institutions.

For scientists whose work involves close exchanges with Chinese counterparts, the potential impact could be substantial.

"In my area of quantum materials, I will lose a lot if I am not able to collaborate and exchange ideas with my theory colleagues in China," Steven Kivelson, a theoretical physicist at Stanford University, told China Daily.

"Even more drastic, however, is the harm it would do to my science not to be able to communicate directly with my experimental colleagues in China," he said. "In many aspects of making and probing the properties of bulk quantum materials, researchers in China are the world leaders."

Kivelson said that for his own research, it is important to understand the details of experiments being carried out in university laboratories at several leading Chinese institutions.

He has grants from the National Science Foundation and the Department of Energy. So far, he said, his existing collaborations have not been directly affected because the Chinese institutions involved are not among those deemed unacceptable under the proposed guidelines.

"But that may well change, and anyway, I would find it beneficial to be able to collaborate with other wonderful colleagues at various Chinese universities," he said.

The overboard and vague restrictions have also created uncertainty over what kinds of international academic engagement would remain permissible.

"Some of my other involvements with China may be precluded by the new policies," Kivelson said. "I have written to my grant managers and am waiting to hear back, for instance, about whether I am allowed to continue on in my position as one of two editors-in-chief of npj Quantum Materials."

npj Quantum Materials is a peer-reviewed, open-access scientific journal covering quantum materials, their fundamental properties, fabrication and applications. The journal is published in partnership between Nature Publishing Group and China's Nanjing University.

In an article encouraging its members to submit public comments, the American Association for the Advancement of Science said the proposal would give the OMB and selected political appointees expansive authority over how federal research and development funds are awarded, allowing political considerations to override scientific opportunity.

The organization also raised concerns that the rule would determine the eligibility of institutions and individuals to receive federal awards on the basis of vague and undefined terms.

The proposed changes have drawn widespread opposition. Nearly 500,000 public comments were submitted to the federal government before the July 13 deadline. The Washington Post analyzed 50,000 of the comments and found that at least 88 percent opposed the proposed rule. Roughly 6 percent expressed support, according to the Post, but the overwhelming majority of those supportive comments came from a single form letter that was submitted more than 2,300 times.

The Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, in a comment letter submitted to the OMB, warned that the proposed regulations "will force a near-complete decoupling between the US and Chinese scientific communities".

The institute said the proposal cited a generalized concern about US national security interests but does not provide a detailed justification for why a broad ban on US-China scientific cooperation would serve those interests.

"As China is now becoming a global research and innovation leader across a wide range of areas, this would undermine US scientific advances in these areas," the institute said in its letter. Less understanding of Chinese scientific and technological capabilities "would have a harmful impact on national security in the long run".

Kivelson said legitimate security risks should be addressed to protect the relevant portions of the US scientific and technological establishment against possible theft or cyber-attack.

"But concerning scientific research being carried out at most US universities, it is a non-issue," Kivelson said. "At Stanford, for example, all classified research and most forms of proprietary research are forbidden on campus. The goal of the research endeavor at Stanford is knowledge generation. We publish our results in the open literature."

"Bottom line: There is no danger of the theft of secret information by Chinese nationals on Stanford campus, for the good and simple reason that there are no secrets to steal," he said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:56 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:58 PM

Green shift

Ningxia coal hub powers nation's sustainable future

BUSINESS, PAGE 10



Ink artist turns rhymed verses into paintings

LIFE, PAGE 14



Total victory

Spain advances to World Cup final after 2-0 win against France

SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 THURSDAY, JULY 16, 2026



President Xi Jinping visits a resident's home in Huangpu district of Shanghai to learn about the improvement in living conditions during an inspection tour in Shanghai on Wednesday. YAN YAN / XINHUA

Xi urges high-quality urban renewal

People-centered efforts to improve living spaces emphasized during inspection tour in Shanghai

By **XU WEI**
xuwei@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping stressed advancing high-quality urban renewal during an inspection tour in Shanghai on Wednesday, calling for comprehensive efforts to fully embrace the people-centered philosophy of urban development and keep enhancing urban residents' sense of gain, happiness and security.

In advancing urban renewal, sustained efforts must be made to listen to the people's needs, draw on their suggestions and assess results through their feedback, said Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission.

During the tour, Xi spoke with residents and community workers at a residential community in Shanghai's Huangpu district. He listened to a briefing on Shanghai's efforts to renovate old residential buildings lacking sanitary facilities and on the city's resolution of the long-standing problem of residents in old neighborhoods having to carry chamber pots.

He stressed that the CPC Central Committee has made urban work a policy priority, outlining steps to build modern cities of the people that are innovative, desirable to live in, beautiful, resilient, culturally advanced and smart.

Renovating aging urban residential communities is an important part of this endeavor, Xi said.

During the Central Urban Work Conference in July last year, Xi stressed that the nation must take urban renewal as a key driver and vigorously optimize urban structure, foster new growth drivers, improve urban quality, advance green transformation, preserve cultural heritage and enhance governance efficiency.

The State Council, China's Cabinet, released in May an urban renewal plan, outlining key targets and policy measures for the country's urban renewal efforts during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period.

According to the plan, the nation will launch renovation projects for 115,000 aging urban residential communities and carry out comprehensive community upgrading in 5,000 neighborhoods during the 2026-30 period, with the aim of creating higher-quality urban living spaces.

Xi underscored on Wednesday that officials must firmly establish and practice a correct understanding of governance performance, think about what concerns the people, respond to their most pressing needs, formulate and implement effective policies, and persevere in improving people's livelihoods over the long term.

He also called for improving property management and community services with what he described as the precision of "needlework", striving to better meet residents' expectations.

At the home of retired resident Zhu Guoli, Xi carefully checked the family's living conditions.

He told the family that the lives of ordinary people are both family affairs and affairs of the State.

The CPC is dedicated to serving the people, and only when the people live in peace and contentment can the Party and the government rest assured, he said.

The president also checked the supply of fruits and vegetables and spoke with community representatives, subdistrict officials and community workers.

He pointed out that communities are the basic units of the urban governance system.

Xi also called for steps to improve the level of community governance, directing more resources, services and management to the grassroots, while continuing to reduce burdens on primary-level organizations and empower them.

With the nation now at a critical stage of flood control and prevention, Xi called on various regions and departments to establish worst-case scenario thinking, closely monitor rainfall, flood conditions and typhoon developments, and carry out detailed investigations of potential risks and hazards. He highlighted the importance of making solid preparations for flood prevention and control, emergency rescue and disaster relief, and effectively safeguarding the lives and property of the people.

New growth drivers mark China's economic resilience

By **ZHANG CHENXU**, **ZHOU LANXU** and **YIN MINGYUE**

China's economy expanded 4.7 percent year-on-year in the first half of 2026, demonstrating resilience as advanced manufacturing, robust exports and emerging growth drivers helped cushion mounting external uncertainties, official data showed on Wednesday.

New growth drivers accounted for more than two-fifths of economic growth during the period, highlighting the Chinese economy's continued transition toward innovation-led and consumption-driven development, said officials and experts.

As the economy grew 4.3 percent year-on-year in the second quarter, moderating from 5 percent in the first quarter, experts called for a more forceful policy response to bolster domestic demand and keep the economy on a firmer footing.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics, China's GDP reached 69.57 trillion yuan ($10.3 trillion) in the first half, keeping the economy on track to achieve the government's full-year growth target range of 4.5 to 5 percent.

"China's economic performance has remained within an appropriate range in the first half, with new growth drivers gaining momentum," Mao Shengyong, deputy head of the NBS, said on Wednesday at a news conference in Beijing.

Although growth moderated in the second quarter, the fundamentals supporting stable economic performance remain unchanged, Mao added.

NBS data showed that the industrial sector maintained robust expansion in the first half, with the value added of industrial enterprises above a designated size rising 5.4 percent year-on-year and that of high-tech manufacturing increasing 13.3 percent.

Chen Wenling, a senior researcher at the Academy of Contemporary China and World Studies, said the development of new quality productive forces was providing increasingly strong impetus to the nation's economic growth.

NBS data indicates a modest recovery in consumption, with retail sales of consumer goods rising 1 percent year-on-year in June, following a 0.6 percent decline in May, and retail sales of services growing 5.3 percent year-on-year in the first half.

Inside
Editorial, **page 6**

That momentum is expected to receive further policy support under a recently approved plan to expand consumption during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period. It aims to raise the value of total retail sales of consumer goods to around 60 trillion yuan by 2030 and further strengthen consumption's role as a key driver of economic growth.

Meanwhile, inflation remained moderate as the GDP deflator returned to positive territory. Calculations by China Minsheng Bank showed that China's GDP deflator — the broadest measure of prices across goods and services — rose to 1.5 percent year-on-year in the second quarter, ending a 12-quarter run of negative readings.

Patrick Zweifel, chief economist at Pictet Asset Management, told China Daily that the Swiss asset manager saw China's economy as "pretty resilient" in the first half.

External demand has remained strong, with exports and industrial activity performing extremely well, despite domestic demand remaining weak, Zweifel said.

Rogier Janssens, president of Merck China, said the latest figures were consistent with what he has observed on the ground — solid momentum in high-end manufacturing and resilient trade in high-value-added products, trends that signal the arrival of "China Opportunity 2.0".

"China's market not only absorbs innovation but accelerates it," Janssens said, adding that the country serves as a shared growth platform for global businesses.

Marc Princen, global CEO of Mundipharma, a pharmaceutical company specializing in pain management, said that China's sustained commitment to reform and high-standard opening-up continues to "strengthen market predictability and long-term investment confidence".

"We have been in China for more than 30 years, and we will continue to be here for decades to come," Princen added.

Contact the writers at zhangchenxu@chinadaily.com.cn

Deeper Sino-Russian links reflect shared vision

WORLD WATCH
By Olga Migunova

Amid rising geopolitical tensions and growing polarization in global politics, Moscow and Beijing have promoted a model of cooperation based not on military alliances or ideological confrontation, but on respect for civilizational diversity, adherence to international law and support for the Global South playing a greater role in global governance.

The Asia-Pacific region has become one of the most important arenas for this cooperation. Viewing the region as their common neighborhood, Russia and China have worked together to promote stability, oppose militarization and support an open and inclusive regional architecture centered on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

China's taking over as the host of the 2026 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Economic Leaders' Meeting has further strengthened coordination between the two countries by promoting synergies between APEC initiatives and those of the Eurasian Economic Union, advancing the broader vision of the Greater Eurasian Partnership through practical cooperation in transport connectivity, customs coordination and investment.

Security cooperation has also expanded. The two countries' joint naval exercise this month underscored their commitment to maintaining regional stability. Rather than targeting any third party, the exercise reflected their shared advocacy of indivisible security, opposition to bloc politics and support for an Asia-Pacific security architecture based on equal dialogue and mutual respect.

Beyond regional affairs, Russia and China have increasingly coordinated their engagement with the Global South.

See ***Cooperation,*** *page 3*

ANCIENT SUMMERTIME TREAT CONTINUES TO DELIGHT

Due to creative culinary applications, humble Lingnan lychee has become a staple worldwide

By **GUO JIATONG**
guojiatong@i21st.cn

Guo Jialin reached through the dense green leaves of her family's orchard in Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong province, and twisted a ripe lychee from its branch. With a gentle squeeze, its rough red skin split open, revealing the cool, translucent flesh beneath.

"Their sweetness and refreshing texture make lychees one of the best ways to enjoy summer in Lingnan," Guo said. For her, this is not just a taste, but the flavor of a season.

Lingnan refers to a region in southern China covering Guangdong, the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, Hainan province and the Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions.

As the traditionally hottest period of the Chinese summer began on Wednesday, freshly harvested lychees once again appeared in fruit stalls and on dining tables across the country.

China Vibes — FOOD —

In traditional Chinese dietary culture, lychees are believed to replenish *qi*, or vital energy. This has made them especially popular during the sweltering summer months.

China is the world's largest producer of lychees. Guangdong alone accounts for around half of the country's output, followed by Guangxi, Hainan and Fujian province.

In Guangdong, the annual lychee season lasts nearly three months, typically running from May through late July, with different varieties ripening in succession.



Lychees attract the attention of a child at a lychee competition in Haikou, Hainan province, on May 23. LUO YUNFEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Located on the edge of the tropics and within the subtropical zone, Guangdong enjoys warm temperatures, abundant rainfall and short winters, creating favorable conditions for lychee trees to flower and bear fruit. The province's acidic red soil and well-drained hillsides further support cultivation, producing lychees prized for their rich aroma, abundant flesh and small seeds.

"Guangdong is home to more than 300 lychee varieties, each with its own flavor and texture," Guo said. "For example, *Nuomici* (glutinous rice lychee) has tender, pleasantly chewy flesh like gummy candy. *Guiwei* (sweet osmanthus lychee) carries a delicate floral sweetness reminiscent of osmanthus blossoms, while *Feizixiao* (concubine's smile lychee) stands out for its rich, bold sweetness."

See ***Fruit,*** *page 3*

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN ASIA NEWS NETWORK
China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved
Vol.8 — No. 1872

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

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:58 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:58 PM

INDEPTH



Coach Jifu Lama looks on as girls play football on a village pitch in the Liangshan Yi autonomous prefecture in Sichuan province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Mountain coach gives wings to soccer dreams

Determined mentor provides opportunities, pathways to youngsters in remote prefecture

By **LI YINGXUE** and **ZHAO JUNFENG** in Chengdu

It's 6 pm, and the summer heat still lingers over the mountains of the Liangshan Yi autonomous prefecture in Sichuan province. Children begin making their way to an artificial-turf soccer pitch in Ganluo county from villages scattered across the hills.

Some carry boots in their hands, others clutch worn soccer balls. A few have just finished their homework at coach Jifu Lama's home before heading to training.

Jifu places cones across the field and tells the players to warm up. In 90 minutes, darkness will descend over the mountains. After practice, he drives the children who live farthest away back to their villages. "I worry about them walking home alone at night," the 24-year-old said.

Jifu has a set schedule for his young charges during the summer holiday.

Children around 10 years old train from 8 am to 9:30 am. Boys around 12 follow until 11 am. Girls of the same age arrive in the evening, from 6 pm to 7:30 pm. Training is on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and weekends.

Some children live only a five-minute walk from the pitch. Others spend nearly 40 minutes trekking mountain roads to attend practice.

For Jifu, these daily routines are another way of pursuing the sporting dream that eluded him as a youngster.

Years ago, he searched for places to train, hoping soccer would carry him beyond the mountains. After realizing that becoming a professional player was beyond his reach, he returned home to help a new generation discover and master the game.

What began as one boy's solitary pursuit in the mountains has become part of a broader shift in grassroots soccer. Through improved facilities, school soccer programs, expanding competitions and a more structured youth training system, children in rural areas are gaining new pathways for personal growth and education — part of China's broader effort to develop soccer from the grassroots level.









Above left: Jifu takes his young charges through a training session on a pitch in the mountains of the Liangshan Yi autonomous prefecture. **Above right:** Boys and girls are part of the training squad, which also aims to build character. **Left:** Youngsters in the remote area are seen perfecting their soccer skills. **Right:** Jifu, a self-trained player, said he lacked the coaching and facilities as a youngster to have any chance of making it as a professional. His goal is to build opportunities for grassroots soccer players to achieve their potential.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Barcelona inspiration

Jifu's relationship with soccer began with a Barcelona jersey.

When he was in the second year of junior middle school, a friend who was leaving for school in Xichang gave him the shirt before moving away.

At the time, Jifu knew almost nothing about soccer. "But that jersey opened another world to me," he recalled.

He began watching match highlights online, teaching himself dribbling skills and saving his pocket money to buy a football. Back then, a soccer ball cost 55 yuan ($7.70), while his weekly living allowance was only 50 yuan.

His school had no soccer field, so he practiced dribbling on a basketball court. When he returned to his mountain village on weekends, he searched for the flattest piece of ground he could find. "As long as the ball was at my feet, I was happy," he said.

After graduating from junior middle school, Jifu scored well enough to attend the county's top academic high school. But the school had no soccer field.

Despite scoring more than 200 points above its admission requirement, he instead chose a vocational school with soccer facilities.

Determined not to abandon soccer, he asked the principal for permission to attend classes in the morning and devote his afternoons to training. The request was initially rejected. Only after he finished first in a monthly examination for his grade, did the principal agree to his request.

When older students graduated, however, he was forced to train alone.

During his second year of high school, Jifu put his studies on hold and returned to the mountains. He set himself a five-year goal to become a professional footballer.

Without coaches, teammates or any formal instruction, he relied on online videos, books and self-designed training programs.

Unable to afford proper training equipment, he improvised. He tied plastic bags to climbing ropes to create resistance parachutes. Tree branches inserted into wooden frames became defensive walls for free-kick practice.

Eventually, he built a small wooden hut in the mountains and stayed there for several days at a time to focus on training. There was no electricity. He cooked over a fire.

His parents knew little about soccer but quietly supported their son's dream. His father even gave up 0.1 hectare of cornfield and hired an excavator to level the sloping land into a dirt soccer pitch — a significant sacrifice for a farming family that depended on every piece of arable land.

"They didn't say much," Jifu said. "But they did a lot."

In September 2022, FIFA featured Jifu's story on its social media platforms as an example of grassroots soccer.

The moment in the spotlight brought a flood of interview requests, TV appearances, and, most crucially, invitations from clubs and amateur teams.

In May 2023, he represented Jingchuan Wenhui Football Club in the Chinese Football Association Member Association Champions League, the fourth tier of China's men's soccer league.

Walking into the International Football Center of Rizhao in Shandong province for his first official match felt surreal.

"The pitch was perfect. There were fans in the stands," he recalled.

But once the game began, reality quickly set in. "I felt comfortable on the grass, but my body became stiff because I was so nervous." For a long time afterward, he avoided watching recordings of the match.

Those 45 minutes fundamentally changed his understanding of the game. Training alone in the mountains had helped him improve his individual skills, but competitive soccer demanded much more: tactical awareness, positioning, teamwork, decision-making under pressure, and proper coaching.

"Before, I thought the game was about improving myself," Jifu said. "Then I realized soccer is played by 11 people. I had always trained alone, so the difference was enormous."

Gradually, he accepted that becoming a professional soccer player was unlikely. "I was not ready for the professional level, either technically or physically," he said.

Setting new goals

Instead of giving up soccer, he changed his goals.

Jifu earned coaching qualifications and spent time studying youth development at soccer clubs outside Liangshan before returning home in late 2024.

Today he teaches soccer at local primary schools, identifying children with genuine interest during physical education classes.

A pilot program began in one school and has expanded to two. After school, with the approval of their parents, children continue training on the village pitch.

To encourage discipline, Jifu created a points system. Children earn points by training seriously, showing good behavior and respecting teammates and coaches. The points can later be exchanged for soccer boots, training kits and other equipment donated by charities and supporters.

"Whether they become good soccer players isn't the most important thing," Jifu said. "We should first teach them good values and good habits."

More than technical ability, Jifu hopes soccer gives children confidence and ambition. "I want them to have dreams, expectations and direction," he said.

Fourteen-year-old Chen Yifeng is one of the children Jifu believes has changed the most.

Before joining the team, Jifu remembers him as mischievous and reluctant to cooperate with others. Through the sport, he has gradually learned to work with teammates and respect both coaches and opponents.

Asked about his future, the teenager answered without hesitation, "I want to become a professional soccer player."

This year, Yifeng and three other sixth-grade students — two boys and two girls — earned places at high-quality middle schools in the county through a school admissions pathway that recognizes soccer ability.

Jifu said it's his proudest achievement as a coach. "It showed me this pathway really works," he said. "Soccer may not make every child a professional player, but it can give them more choices in life."

The students will now have access to better facilities, more experienced coaches and higher-level competitions. Those with potential may eventually progress into county- and prefecture-level teams or training programs.

A bigger pitch

The dirt pitch Jifu's father once built has since been transformed.

With support from Chinese electronics manufacturer Hisense, artificial turf now covers the field, allowing year-round training. The local women's federation, charities and volunteers have donated footballs, uniforms, shin guards and water bottles.

The transformation of Jifu's pitch mirrors broader changes taking place across Liangshan. While Jifu's generation relied largely on individual determination and family support, today's children are growing up within a more structured grassroots soccer system that links school programs, competitions, talent identification and educational opportunities.

The progress is visible. The first Liangshan Youth Football League, held in 2025, brought together 851 players from 50 teams representing 14 counties and county-level cities.

In 2026, Xichang Aerospace School from Liangshan won the primary school boys' title at Sichuan's sixth Gongga Cup Youth Campus Sports Super League.

Behind those achievements is sustained investment in youth soccer. Liangshan has become one of China's pilot regions for integrating sports and education, with 103 nationally designated campus soccer schools operating in 17 counties and county-level cities.

For grassroots coaches like Jifu, such policies matter most when they reach the village pitch in the form of better fields, more matches, trained coaches and clearer pathways for children to keep playing while continuing their education.

Jifu believes competition is just as important as training. This summer he plans to take his youngest players to Xichang for tournaments.

His players benefit from artificial pitches, school soccer classes, county and provincial competitions, experienced coaches and clearer pathways into higher education. "They're much luckier than I was," Jifu said. "Everything is moving in a better direction."

Challenges remain. Boots, equipment, travel and transportation all require funding. Jifu is considering selling local agricultural products, including buckwheat and walnuts, to generate income for the youth program.

His long-term ambition is to establish a soccer club serving villages across the region, complete with full-size pitches and accommodation for young players.

"It may be a distant dream," he said. "Right now, my priority is helping more children reach better schools through soccer and discover their potential."

Contact the writers at liyingxue@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:58 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:58 PM

TOP NEWS

Book hailed for elaborating on modernization

Fifth volume of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* presented at event in Kazakhstan

By **ZHAO JIA** in Astana, Kazakhstan
zhaojia@chinadaily.com.cn

China's development has drawn global attention for its scale, dynamism and, above all, stability, said Gulnar Shaimergenova, director of the China Studies Center in Kazakhstan. For her, however, the more revealing point is what gives the country's development its continuity, resilience and sense of direction.

The answer, she said, lies in the governing ideas systematically presented in the series of volumes of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*.

Speaking at a book event for the fifth volume of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, on Wednesday, Shaimergenova described the book as a key to understanding the logic of Chinese modernization. The volume brings together 91 of President Xi Jinping's works from May 2022 to December 2024.

The book shows how China seeks to advance its own modernization while contributing to global governance and offering Chinese approaches to pressing global challenges, notably through the vision of building a community with a shared future for humanity, she said.

Shaimergenova said that China's governance is underpinned by strategic planning and long-term goals. Rather than seeking short-term political gains, it focuses on achieving economic objectives through sustained effort.

China's experience shows that such an approach can reduce the risks of abrupt policy shifts, provide society, businesses and international partners with clear and stable expectations, and create favorable conditions for more systematic and sustained development, she said.

For Kazakhstan, understanding the logic behind Chinese modernization is not merely an academic exercise. China is Kazakhstan's largest trading partner and a major source of investment, so a clearer understanding of its development drivers and strategic direction can help improve bilateral dialogue and the effectiveness of cooperation projects, she said.

Mo Gaoyi, deputy head of the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and director of the State Council Information Office, said that the fifth volume elaborates on China's people-centered development philosophy and its commitment to improving people's well-being.

It also reflects China's support for high-quality Belt and Road cooperation and greater openness, as well as its efforts to promote green development, harmony between humanity and nature, and exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations, he said.

China and Kazakhstan are both at crucial stages in their development and national renewal, Mo said. He expressed hope that the event would serve as a new starting point for deeper exchanges on governance experience and greater mutual learning between the two countries.

Elnur Beisenbayev, head of the Domestic Policy Department of the Executive Office of the President of Kazakhstan, said that the presentation of the fifth volume marked a new step in cultural and people-to-people cooperation between Kazakhstan and China.

Beisenbayev described the book as an important reference for readers seeking to understand China's political development, governance experience, approaches to national unity and social stability, and long-term strategic goals.

China is a reliable friend of Kazakhstan, and the two countries share similar approaches to development, including pursuing modernization in line with their own national conditions and promoting sustainable development, he said.

He added that exchanges on national governance, digital transformation, the efficiency of public services and governance culture are becoming increasingly important.

Manarbek Kabaziyev, deputy chairman of the board of the Foreign Policy Research Institute under Kazakhstan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said that the fifth volume sets out the contemporary thinking underpinning China's development, with an emphasis on high-quality growth, technological innovation, digital transformation, environmental sustainability and building a community with a shared future for humanity.

These ideas, he said, also offer guidance for the next stage of Belt and Road cooperation. Beyond trade and infrastructure, cooperation should foster new knowledge and technologies, develop human capital and strengthen long-term strategic trust.

For Kazakhstan, this means moving beyond the role of a transit hub to become a partner in joint production, innovation and the development of higher-value industrial chains, supported by closer cooperation among think tanks, universities and research institutions, he said.

Raikhan Abdrasilova, deputy general director of the China National Petroleum Corporation International in Kazakhstan, said that many of the ideas discussed in the fifth volume have already found practical expression in China-Kazakhstan cooperation.

She cited energy cooperation, which has expanded beyond resource extraction and supply into a long-term partnership built on investment, technology transfer, human capital development and shared responsibility for the future. This evolution, she said, reflects the volume's emphasis on high-quality development, innovation-driven growth and environmental responsibility.

Blackout in Cuba



People use flashlights to find their way along a street in Havana, Cuba, during a nationwide blackout on Tuesday. The power outage was the country's third in just over a week. Hit by United States sanctions, Cuba has long struggled to import fuel and equipment needed to repair its aging power plants, leaving the country's electricity supply under severe strain. NORLYS PEREZ / REUTERS

Friendship tour



Young people participating in the China-New Zealand youth friendship tour interact with a humanoid robot, modeled on Nobel Prize-winning physicist Albert Einstein, at the Beijing World of Robots exhibition center in E-Town, Beijing, on Wednesday. The 22-member delegation attended a series of events focused on mutual learning among civilizations, technological innovations and youth exchanges. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

BRI trade network gains momentum

By **REN QI**
renqi@chinadaily.com.cn

The China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative is demonstrating robust vitality as its westward cooperation with Central Asia deepens and its southward New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor sees surging freight volumes, creating a highly integrated trade network, experts said.

The westward momentum is anchored by the ongoing implementation of an action plan for high-quality Belt and Road cooperation between China and Central Asian countries. The cooperation document in this regard, which was signed during the second China-Central Asia Summit in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, in June 2025, marked the first time China signed a comprehensive BRI cooperation document with all countries in a neighboring region.

Through continuous coordination, China and the five Central Asian countries — Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan — are comprehensively advancing the plan and outlining future cooperation paths.

"China and Central Asian countries firmly support free trade and the multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization at its core, and are deepening high-quality Belt and Road cooperation," said Sun Weidong, secretary-general of the Secretariat of the China-Central Asia Mechanism.

With 2025 and 2026 designated as the "Years of High-Quality Development of China-Central Asia Cooperation", Sun noted that pragmatic cooperation has achieved solid progress. Trade is booming, investment is increasing, major projects are advancing steadily, and key items specified in the action plan have been fully implemented, he said.

Last year, the value of trade between China and Central Asian countries topped the $100 billion mark for the first time. The number of freight trains between the two sides reached a new high, the China-Central Asia natural gas pipeline operated smoothly, and cross-border railway construction, including the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan Railway, accelerated.

This westward connectivity is seamlessly complemented by the southward expansion through the New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor. Together, they form a comprehensive logistics network linking Eurasia with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, with China's central and western regions serving as a crucial nexus.

This synergy has driven significant growth in the southward corridor. According to China Railway Nanning Group, the corridor handled 660,000 twenty-foot equivalent units, or TEUs, of goods in the first half of this year, averaging 110,000 TEUs per month.

Notably, the second quarter saw a 3.6 percent quarter-on-quarter increase in freight volume, further reflecting the sustained high market demand.

To accommodate the surging demand and continuously expand the corridor's capacity, China Railway Nanning Group is vigorously advancing key infrastructure upgrade projects. These include the construction of second rail lines for the Qinzhou-Fangchenggang section of the Nanning-Fangchenggang Railway, as well as the railway route linking Qinzhou East to Qinzhou Port in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region.

Tang Qiang, dean of Southwest University's School of Geographical Sciences, noted that the corridor improves freight transportation efficiency and covers a wider range of goods through innovative multimodal transport. For example, the outbound route from Chongqing in Southwest China to Qinzhou Port in South China's Guangxi takes only 48 hours by rail-sea intermodal transportation, he said.

"Compared with traditional river-sea intermodal transportation via the Yangtze River trunk line to eastern ports, the journey time is reduced by 83 percent, and the distance is optimized from nearly 2,000 kilometers to less than 1,000 km," Tang said.

This effectively breaks the geographical constraints of the western region's access to rivers and the sea, he added.

Such seamless connectivity is playing a vital role in stabilizing industrial supply chains. This year, 72,000 TEUs of raw materials were shipped via Qinzhou Port East Station to ASEAN countries, up 49.4 percent year-on-year. It ensured supply chain stability for smart manufacturing industries in Chongqing municipality and Sichuan, Yunnan and Guizhou provinces.

Furthermore, exports of automobile and motorcycle parts manufactured in Chongqing and Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan, via rail-sea intermodal transportation reached 38,000 TEUs, up 89.9 percent year-on-year.

To date, the southward corridor's freight categories have expanded to 1,362, covering 76 cities in 18 provincial-level regions across China and reaching 593 ports in 128 countries and regions worldwide, further cementing the global reach of the BRI, data from China Railway Nanning Group showed.

Fruit: Young generation likes creative lychee drinks

From page 1

However, lychees come with one defining limitation: Their fragrance and freshness begin to fade within days of harvest. Yet this fleeting quality has never diminished their appeal. On the contrary, the race to savor them at their peak has added a sense of romance to the fruit's enduring charm — an affection shaped by centuries of cultivation and storytelling.

For example, the name *Feizixiao* is traditionally associated with a famous tale from the Tang Dynasty (618-907). Emperor Xuanzong, the seventh ruler of the dynasty, is said to have arranged a relay of swift horses to transport fresh lychees around 2,000 kilometers from Lingnan to the imperial capital of Chang'an — present-day Xi'an in Northwest China's Shaanxi province — so that his beloved consort, Yang Yuhuan, could enjoy them before they spoiled. Thanks to a tightly coordinated transportation system comprising boats and horses, the journey could reportedly be completed in as few as three days.

According to legend, the arrival of the fruit brought a smile to Yang's face, inspiring the variety's poetic name. Today, modern logistics are transforming the centuries-old race against time. Faster transportation and advances in cold-chain technology are bringing fresh Lingnan lychees to consumers far beyond China's borders.

Che Huoyi, general manager of Guangdong Mingjing Agricultural Development Co, said, "This year, our lychees are mainly exported to countries including the United States, Australia and Russia, while Cambodia has become a new market."

Younger consumers, meanwhile, have embraced creative combinations such as lychee lattes, sparkling lychee-flavored drinks, iced teas and frozen lychees filled with yogurt. These playful creations are giving the fruit renewed, contemporary urban appeal.

Local entrepreneurs have also found ways to preserve the fruit beyond its short harvest season.

According to Ou Qiwei, vice-president of Guangzhou Shunchangyuan Wine and Spirit Co, the company's lychee wine has reached markets across Europe, North America and Southeast Asia.

In traditional Chinese culture, it is believed that excessive consumption can cause "internal heat". Healthy adults are generally advised to eat no more than 10 to 15 lychees a day, while children and older adults should limit themselves to between five and eight.

Cooperation: Respect for diversity of civilizations stressed

From page 1

Their cooperation within BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the United Nations, the G20 and APEC seeks to amplify the voices of developing countries in global governance. Both countries view BRICS as an increasingly important platform for representing the interests of the Global South and for advocating reforms of international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the United Nations, so they better reflect today's geopolitical realities.

Russia and China also seek to provide developing countries with practical alternatives for economic development. Their cooperation emphasizes equality, mutual benefit and consensus rather than political conditionality. Initiatives such as expanding the use of national currencies in cross-border settlements and developing alternative payment mechanisms aim to strengthen economic resilience and technological capacity across the Global South.

Cooperation in artificial intelligence, semiconductor manufacturing, renewable energy and the safeguarding of digital sovereignty further demonstrates their commitment to supporting the sustainable development of the Global South.

An equally important pillar of Russia-China relations is civilizational dialogue. At a time when some countries seek to universalize a single value system and frame international politics through the lens of ideological competition, Russia and China advocate respect for the diversity of civilizations.

They reject the notion that one political or cultural model should serve as the universal standard for all societies; they instead emphasize that every nation has the sovereign right to determine its own development path in accordance with its own history, culture and national conditions.

This principle is firmly rooted in the legal framework of bilateral relations, particularly the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation and the Joint Declaration on Further Strengthening Cooperation to Uphold the Authority of International Law. Together, these documents establish a relationship that is nonaligned, not directed against any third party and based on mutual respect rather than ideological rivalry. They offer an alternative approach to international relations founded on dialogue, cooperation and sovereign equality instead of bloc confrontation and value-based coercion.

For both countries, multipolarity extends beyond the redistribution of geopolitical power. It also recognizes the legitimacy of different civilizations, cultures and development models. By defending the principles of civilizational diversity, mutual learning and balanced interests, Russia and China seek to demonstrate that international stability can be achieved through cooperation rather than domination. Their partnership reflects the belief that lasting peace depends on dialogue among civilizations instead of ideological confrontation.

Civilizational dialogue is reinforced through expanding people-to-people exchanges. The Russia-China Years of Culture (2024-25) and the Russia-China Years of Education (2026-27) have significantly strengthened cooperation in education, tourism and cultural exchange. More than 80,000 students now participate in bilateral exchange programs supported by over 150 joint education institutions.

At the same time, rapidly growing two-way tourism has deepened mutual understanding between the two peoples. These interactions have built trust at the societal level and helped reduce the influence of narratives that seek to divide nations along ideological or cultural lines.

Taken together, these developments illustrate the broader significance of the Russia-China partnership. It combines strategic coordination, support for the Global South, institutional reform and civilizational dialogue into a comprehensive model of international cooperation. Rather than advocating confrontation or exclusive alliances, Moscow and Beijing promote dialogue over conflict, equality over hegemony and mutual learning over ideological competition.

As this approach gains increasing attention across Asia, Africa and Latin America, it offers an alternative vision of international relations, one in which diverse civilizations coexist on the basis of mutual respect, sovereign equality and shared development.

In this sense, the Russia-China partnership represents not only a mature bilateral relationship but also an important contribution to the evolution of a more just, inclusive and multipolar world order.

The author is the academic supervisor of the Center for the Study of China and Asia-Pacific Countries at St. Petersburg State University of Economics. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:58 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:58 PM

WORLD

Survey: Views of US falling versus China

Favorability ratings have significantly shifted since last poll done by Pew in 2022

By **LIA ZHU** in San Francisco
liazhu@chinadailyusa.com

China is now viewed more favorably than the United States across most of the countries and territories surveyed by the Pew Research Center, according to a report the organization released on Wednesday.

China received higher favorability ratings than the US in 27 of 36 countries and territories examined, including the US' nearest neighbors — Canada and Mexico — and its allies, such as the United Kingdom, France and Germany.

By contrast, the US was viewed more positively in only nine countries, including India, Japan, the Philippines and South Korea. The gap is especially large in several Asia-Pacific and Middle Eastern countries.

Pew said the findings were based on interviews with 42,151 adults conducted from Feb 8 to May 13 in North America, Europe, the Asia-Pacific, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East. The center said the results marked a recent reversal because people in these countries and territories had previously viewed the US more positively than China.

Pew's report examined how respondents in 17 middle-income countries viewed the foreign-policy roles of China and the US. It found that a median of 75 percent said the US interfered in other countries' affairs, compared with 45 percent who said the same about China. In nearly every place surveyed, more people see the US as an interferer than China, the report said.

Similarly, people in many of these middle-income countries see China as a more reliable partner than the US and are more likely to say China contributes to peace and stability around the world.

For example, survey data show 72 percent of respondents in South Africa view China as a reliable partner, compared with 46 percent who said the same of the US. The disparity is even more pronounced in Pakistan, where 84 percent view China as a reliable partner, compared with only 36 percent who said the same of the US.

Across Latin America, the survey found that views of China are also more positive than views of the US, due largely to worsening views of the US. The views of the US have grown more negative over the last year in five of six Latin American countries surveyed, while the views of China have mostly held steady.

Overall ratings for the United States are also largely negative. Favorable views of the country have declined in many places over the past year, including double-digit drops in Indonesia, Italy, Nigeria, South Africa, South Korea and Turkey.

The share of the public who considers the US a reliable partner has declined steeply in many countries since Pew last asked this question in 2022. For example, in Canada, 83 percent described the US as a reliable partner in 2022, compared with 35 percent this year.

Similarly, the share who think the US takes into account the interests of other countries when making foreign policy decisions has declined in most places surveyed.

For instance, three years ago 60 percent of Germans said the US considers other countries' interests, but that share dropped to 23 percent this year.

A median of 35 percent say the US contributes to peace and stability around the world.

Among 20 countries surveyed annually since 2023, the median share expressing a favorable opinion of the US fell from 58 percent to 36 percent by 2026, the report said. It said China's median favorable rating rose from 32 percent to 46 percent over the same period.

The center said views of the US worsened after Trump's second term began, while China's image continued to recover over the past years. It attributed China's relative position to both improving opinions of China and deteriorating opinions of the US.

Reacting to a Washington Post article covering the survey, a reader, Luther Mahoney, commented, "Of course China has become more popular. It hasn't attacked or threatened anyone — certainly not Iran, Greenland, Cuba, Venezuela, Gaza, or others — in the past year."



Crew members attend a send-off ceremony before the launch of a Soyuz MS-29 spacecraft at the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan on Tuesday. MAXIM SHIPENKOV VIA REUTERS

Russian cosmonauts, NASA astronaut set off on 8-month joint space mission

WASHINGTON — Russia sent two cosmonauts and a United States astronaut to the International Space Station, or ISS, on Tuesday from Kazakhstan, resuming crewed flights from a recently repaired launchpad with a rare joint attendance by the heads of NASA and Russia's space agency.

US astronaut Anil Menon and cosmonauts Pyotr Dubrov and Anna Kikina lifted off from the Baikonur Cosmodrome aboard Russia's Soyuz MS-29 spacecraft on Tuesday, bound for the ISS, where they will spend about eight months as the station's 75th rotation crew.

The crew arrived at the American football field-sized space laboratory just over three hours later as they orbited over the Mediterranean Sea, joining three Americans, two Europeans and two Russians already aboard.

NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman traveled to Baikonur to meet Roscosmos Director Dmitry Bakanov and watch the launch, the first visit to Russia's launchpad by a NASA chief since 2018. Tensions over the Russia-Ukraine conflict had largely prevented Bill Nelson, former US president Joe Biden's NASA chief, from such visits.

During a meeting with the crew on Monday, Isaacman thanked Roscosmos for its efforts to prepare for the mission, saying "the integrated work performed over the past several months reflects the professionalism and dedication of everyone involved".

Cooperation amid tensions

Cooperation on the 27-year-old ISS between NASA and Russia's space agency Roscosmos has survived years of tensions between the two countries, including the Russia-Ukraine conflict, primarily out of technical necessity.

US solar panels power the entirety of the ISS while Russian thrusters help keep the station in orbit.

Both countries also see the ISS as key to maintaining their prized human spaceflight programs, despite the growing militarization of Earth's orbit that has created another flash point between Washington and Moscow.

Air leaks aboard the aging ISS have tested relations between NASA and Roscosmos, with the two agencies at times disagreeing over how to identify and fix the source of leaks.

Last month NASA ordered its astronauts to prepare for a possible evacuation during a dispute with Russia over how to repair one such air leak. A cosmonaut onboard was planning to use a saw to access a compartment believed to be housing the source of the leak, raising concern among NASA officials.

The health of the space station, which is poised for retirement soon after 2030, was likely on the agenda of Isaacman's talks with Russian space officials. A video posted on Telegram by Roscosmos shows Isaacman talking with Bakanov, flanked by senior Roscosmos officials.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA



Shadow play

Members of a Chinese culture summer camp try Chinese shadow puppetry in Bern, Switzerland, on Tuesday. A summer camp featuring traditional Chinese culture opened on the same day. LIAN YI / XINHUA

Angry public asks city why it lets chaos rule the night

By **CHANG JUN** in San Francisco
junechang@chinadailyusa.com

A public transit meltdown. Severe traffic gridlock. A near-total absence of civic management. Public fury. A punch in the face, bloodshed and a concussion.

Those are the memories Liang, a Fremont, California resident, is left with from the July 4 fireworks show in the US city of San Francisco.

Like tens of thousands of other attendees, Liang and his family were drawn in by the promise of an "unprecedented" Independence Day celebration in San Francisco. The city had heavily promoted the fireworks display this year, billing it as a once-in-a-generation spectacle with pyrotechnics launched directly from the towers of the Golden Gate Bridge, an iconic landmark.

San Francisco Mayor Daniel Lurie said that the event would "mark only the third time pyrotechnics have launched from the Golden Gate Bridge" as the US commemorated its 250th anniversary.

"It might only happen once in a lifetime," Liang said, "so I felt I couldn't miss this jubilant gathering". Lighthearted, they boarded public transit in the afternoon heading to San Francisco, exactly as the city had advised. What they didn't know was that a nightmare awaited them, one that would not end until 3 am the following morning.

According to Lurie's office, approximately 100,000 spectators flooded into the city for the fireworks show, 41,000 more riders than the public transit system's usual capacity could accommodate.

As a result, attendees reported being stranded in long lines for hours waiting to board connecting shuttle buses after the fireworks show ended at 10 pm. "Trying to leave the city's waterfront areas, traffic is very congested," one user posted on X. "Lines stretched for more than half a mile for people waiting to board buses."

'Complete chaos'

"Our line didn't move for an hour. When I went up front to check, it was complete chaos: there was no representative from the traffic authority or police in sight to oversee the situation," said Liang. "I took it upon myself to help maintain order, urging people to queue up. Most cooperated until a mother and her two sons cut in line."

"One of the teenagers, a head taller and much stronger than me, punched me in the face without warning. My face was instantly covered in blood. He then pushed me to the ground and kicked me several times," Liang recalled.

It took Liang and his family until 11:30 pm to finally board a shuttle bus. "Passengers were packed like sardines. There was no police directing traffic. It took another two and a half hours for our bus to travel three miles before we were dropped off at the BART station," said Liang. "By then it was 2 am, and BART had long stopped running."

Although BART, the Bay Area Rapid Transit, had publicly assured riders that it would extend operating hours, the agency only prolonged service by 25 minutes, shutting down at 12:25 am.

"This is outrageous," said April Lee, who had taken her two boys on BART into San Francisco for the celebration. "Did the government deceive the public? How could they manage this so poorly? Who should be held accountable for all of this?"

Like Lee, many frustrated attendees were demanding answers from the government. On July 8, Mayor Lurie addressed the media, calling the city's transportation failures on July 4 "unacceptable" and pledging that the problems must be resolved before the city's next large-scale event.

But Lee remains unconvinced. "The fireworks show had been in the works for a long time. This did not happen overnight. How did the government plan, prepare contingencies, and anticipate worst-case scenarios? Are they telling us this was all just a ragtag operation?"

As for Liang, he finally made it home at 3 am on July 5, after a friend drove nearly 100 kilometers from the suburbs of the Bay Area to pick up his stranded family.

DR Congo Ebola outbreak spreading faster than reported: UN

By **SHARON NAKOLA** in Nairobi
sharon@chinadailyafrica.com

The Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo is spreading faster than previously understood, with the United Nations warning that the epidemic could be at least two to four times larger than official figures and is recording some of the highest daily infection numbers since it began two months ago.

With nearly 2,000 confirmed cases and more than 700 deaths across five provinces as of July 11, health officials said the outbreak has become the third-largest Ebola epidemic ever recorded and the fastest-growing in recent history.

"We've seen the fastest growth in a single month since the outbreak started and of all the Ebola outbreaks that we have managed," Chikwe Ihekweazu, executive director of the WHO Health Emergencies Programme, told reporters in Geneva after returning from Bunia in eastern DR Congo, the epicenter of the outbreak, according to a UN statement on Tuesday.

"Over the last few days, we've seen some of the highest numbers of new infections in a single day," he said, noting that more than 80 cases were confirmed within a 24-hour period in recent days, among the highest daily increases recorded since the outbreak began.

Many of the newly reported deaths are occurring in communities, with patients dying before reaching health facilities, a development described by WHO as one of the most alarming aspects of the outbreak.

The current outbreak, caused by the Bundibugyo strain of Ebola virus, has now spread beyond its original epicenter in Ituri Province into Haut-Uele and Tshopo provinces, raising concerns about further geographic expansion.

Although about 95 percent of cases are still concentrated in Ituri, WHO officials warned that hidden transmission chains are driving the epidemic. The most alarming finding, Ihekweazu said, is that many of the newly reported deaths are of people who died in their communities without ever reaching health facilities or receiving care.

WHO modeling indicates the true scale of the outbreak could be significantly larger than official figures suggest. "We think, with some of our support and modeling, the scale of the outbreak is at least two to four times the number of cases we are finding," Ihekweazu said.

"You have to imagine that this is a fire. There's something driving the fire in its heart, and it's also expanding at the same time."



A hygienist decontaminates a doctor's boots as they leave the patient care unit of a treatment center in Bunia, Ituri, in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, on Monday. BENEDICTION MURHABAZI / AFP

Despite improvements in diagnostics and surveillance, approximately 80 percent of newly confirmed cases are emerging outside known contact lists, suggesting that large chains of transmission remain undetected.

Healthcare workers have also been severely affected, with Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, or Africa CDC, reporting at least 112 infections and 35 deaths among frontline personnel.

For aid agencies working on the ground, the rapidly changing dynamics of the outbreak are complicating containment efforts.

Frederick Lai Manantsoa, emergency coordinator for Doctors Without Borders in DR Congo, said insecurity, large population movements and displacement are making surveillance and contact tracing increasingly difficult.

"The success of the response depends on how quickly we can identify suspected cases, isolate them and cut the chain of transmission," he said. "There are several dynamics of the outbreak which make surveillance and contact tracing extremely complex."

Important progress

Despite the worsening situation, health officials say important progress has been made.

The response entered a new phase with the launch of new clinical trials aimed at identifying effective treatments and preventive therapies for the Bundibugyo strain, for which there are currently no approved vaccines or targeted treatments.

The EBO-PEP platform trial, launched this week in Ituri Province, is expected to recruit nearly 1,000 high-risk contacts in DR Congo and Uganda to evaluate whether antiviral drugs can prevent Ebola infection after exposure.

Africa CDC has pledged $1 million to support the study, while DR Congo and South Africa have committed an additional $5 million.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director-general of WHO, said the study could become a "game-changing approach" for preventing Ebola among exposed individuals and help bring future outbreaks under control.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:58 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:58 PM

WORLD

Tensions spur ultra-rich to diversify across Asia

By **PRIME SARMIENTO** in Hong Kong
prime@chinadailyapac.com

Investor jitters over Gulf tensions are prompting wealthy families and founders to consider shifting capital to rival financial hubs, say bankers and advisers.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that high-net-worth individuals are already exploring moving assets from the Middle East to elsewhere in Asia, with most of them preferring Singapore.

The reassessment comes despite an interim deal between Iran and the United States last month. Renewed attacks have underscored the need for greater diversification in wealth management amid heightened "geoeconomic stress", experts said.

Ian Yoong Kah Yin, a private equity investor and former investment banker in Malaysia, said some of his relatives and acquaintances based in the Middle East returned to their home countries at the start of the Iran war.

"Many contacts in hedge funds, asset management companies and family offices are in the process of relocating to Hong Kong and Singapore," Yoong said. "There is after all a lot of planning and execution involved."

Anthony Rollet, founder and CEO of private equity real estate firm Kane Capital Partners in Indonesia, said escalating tensions in the Middle East have prompted high-net-worth families and family offices to reassess concentration risk and rebalance capital.

"The period of geoeconomic stress has highlighted the importance of optionality. Investors who have best navigated this are the ones diversifying across regions," he said.

Dubai has long been a premier destination for high-net-worth individuals, drawn by its zero taxation, safety, connectivity and business-friendly environment. But regional tensions have clouded its safe haven status.

"Even if hostilities stopped right now, I don't think investor confidence would come back very soon," said Julia Roknifard, a senior lecturer at Taylor's University in Malaysia.

The disruption extends beyond financial flows to lifestyle and connectivity — two key factors that have long attracted wealthy expatriates. Given the uncertainty, Roknifard said investors will likely relocate alongside their assets, citing security concerns and the risk of travel disruptions.

Paul Bratby, Dubai-based founder and CEO of AI-powered trading signal platform xBratAI, said the data point to a more nuanced picture of wealth outflows from the Gulf.

"Where capital did move outward, it was portfolio diversification, not capital flight," Bratby said.

Gulf sovereign wealth funds deployed roughly $56 billion globally in the first nine months of last year, with about 40 percent directed toward Asia, he said.

Same message

Bratby launched xBratAI in Hong Kong in May and spoke with finance professionals across the region.

"What struck me wasn't a single conversation about leaving Dubai behind," he said. "Over and over, the message was the same: They wanted Asia access and a Gulf base, not one instead of the other."

Rather than walking out of Dubai, managers of family offices are using it as a launchpad for investments in Southeast Asia, he added.

Abbas Hashmi, principal of Saudi Family Holdings, a single-family office based in New York and Riyadh, said diversification has always been part of the wealth management strategies of high-net-worth individuals.

It is "highly unlikely" an ultra-high-net-worth individual with $60 million in assets under management would concentrate investments in a single asset class, geography or product, he said.

"It's not about whether the money is moving out. It's about how well diversified their portfolio is," he said.

If it becomes impossible to keep assets in the Gulf, investors have traditionally shifted them to other safe havens, he added.

"Singapore has been leading in this space for a very long time, but I'm seeing Hong Kong coming out with a lot of incentives (for) family offices," Hashmi said.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1873

Charred remains



Forensic personnel inspect the charred remains of a public transport bus after its collision with a pickup truck in Santiago, Chile, on Tuesday. The crash killed five people, sparked a massive fire and severely damaged adjacent commercial properties. JAVIER TORRES / AFP

Crisis intensifies as US resumes Iran blockade

Tehran vows Hormuz for 'everyone or no one' as Trump drops strait levy plan

By **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE, and **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong

The United States said on Wednesday it had begun a new wave of strikes against Iran after reimposing a naval blockade of Iranian ports, as the latest cycle of fighting stretched into its fifth day.

The fragile ceasefire between the two countries is collapsing amid days of reciprocal strikes, with both sides locked in a bitter contest for control of the strategic Strait of Hormuz.

The US Central Command said on Wednesday it had hit dozens of Iranian targets over seven hours. Iran's Islamic Republic News Agency confirmed renewed attacks on Bushehr, home to the country's sole civilian nuclear power plant.

Iran's military said seven soldiers were killed in a missile attack on its army barracks near the southeastern city of Iranshahr on Wednesday. State media also reported explosions hitting the city of Ahvaz and the key port Bandar Abbas on Tuesday night.

US President Donald Trump warned earlier he would widen strike targets to power plants and bridges next week unless Tehran returns to the negotiating table.

Asked how long US military operations would continue, he said: "Strikes will go on until I say enough. Next week it gets really bad for them."

Iran's Health Ministry said more than 260 people were injured from overnight strikes alone, signaling a sharp escalation in bombardment intensity. Government spokeswoman Fatemeh Mohajerani said more than 30 people have lost their lives in recent clashes.

Meanwhile, US Senate Democrats blocked a $1.15 trillion annual defense authorization bill on Tuesday over widespread opposition to the White House's Iran campaign.

"Trump started this war without authorization, without a strategy and without an exit plan," Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said in a speech announcing he would vote no.

20% fee

The wave of strikes came hours after Trump scrapped his proposed 20 percent transit levy on Hormuz shipping lanes — a policy at the heart of the regional flare-up that has roiled Middle East security and pushed global energy prices higher.

"I have decided to replace the 20 percent reimbursement fee with trade and investment deals that the various Gulf states will be making into the United States," Trump said on social media.

The renewed US naval blockade took effect at 12:01 am local time. The US first imposed the blockade in mid-April and then lifted it in mid-June, a day after signing an interim deal that set a 60-day period for negotiations over issues such as Iran's nuclear program, but talks have stalled as fighting over the strait has intensified.

There are at least 19 US warships in the Arabian Sea, including two aircraft carriers and an amphibious assault ship with more than 1,000 Marines aboard. The Central Command also said there are "hundreds of military aircraft operating across the Middle East".

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps issued a stark warning on Wednesday that it would halt all regional energy exports in response to the US blockade. "Oil and gas exports from the region will either be available for everyone or for no one," the IRGC said.

"The enemy must understand that its naval forces have blocked Indian Ocean shipping lanes for global oil and gas exports, putting the economic interests of US competitors at risk," it added.

"It should therefore brace for the shutdown of all other oil and gas export routes that benefit the US and its allies."

Oil prices rose immediately amid concerns over shipping security in the strait, with Abu Dhabi's Murban crude, the key Middle Eastern benchmark, jumping $3.79 to $81.93 per barrel, a 4.85 percent surge.

Elsewhere, missile alert sirens blared across Bahrain and Kuwait early on Wednesday. Jordan's military reported shooting down three incoming projectiles. The IRGC claimed it targeted US military sites in the three Gulf nations and inflicted heavy damage on US Fifth Fleet headquarters in Bahrain.

Agencies contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at cuihaipei@chinadaily.com.cn

Briefly

THAILAND

Death toll in Bangkok pub fire rises to 32

The death toll from an explosive fire at a Bangkok bar has risen to 32, authorities said on Wednesday. The blaze, one of the deadliest in recent years in Thailand, tore through the Rong Beer Na Lat Phrao pub on Sunday night, rapidly engulfing the venue. The Erawan Emergency Medical Center said 30 people were still being treated in hospitals in the capital, with 15 of those in intensive care units. A total of 44 people have been discharged. Authorities believe the fire was probably sparked by an electrical short circuit in a ceiling air conditioner. Police are investigating the possibility of negligence and if emergency exits were obstructed, as the government ordered an urgent inspection of all entertainment venues across the country.

UNITED STATES

Parasitic infections touch record high

Infections from the diarrhea-causing parasite cyclospora are surging in the United States, with state-level data suggesting that 2026 is already the country's worst year for reported cases. Nearly 7,000 confirmed or suspected cases of cyclosporiasis — an infection triggered by the microscopic parasite — have been recorded across 34 states, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The figure surpassed the record US mark of about 4,700 set in 2019. The illness is not usually life-threatening and is typically treated with antibiotics. Health officials have not yet definitively identified what is causing the infections. On Tuesday, federal health officials said there may be different infection patterns in different places.

Writers' union sues to block Paramount deal

The Writers Guild of America filed a lawsuit on Tuesday to block Paramount's $110 billion acquisition of Hollywood studio Warner Bros Discovery, saying the deal would jeopardize writers' livelihoods and threaten the health of US entertainment. This latest hurdle comes a day after California and 11 other states launched separate suits to block the merger. Paramount, which argued the combination would increase opportunities for writers, must now deal with a double dose of legal work. The Writers Guild said in its lawsuit that the deal would create fewer competitors and give the larger company "both the incentive and the ability" to lower wages and the number of projects that offer workers employment.

AGENCIES — XINHUA

EU, UK remove Gibraltar border fence

By **JULIAN SHEA** in London
julian@mail.chinadailyuk.com

The thousands of people who cross daily between southern Spain and the British territory of Gibraltar will no longer be crossing a physical border, after a specific new freedom of movement deal between the European Union and the United Kingdom came into effect at midnight on Tuesday.

Gibraltar — and its strategic fortress — has been in British possession since 1713, and is at the southern end of the Iberian Peninsula, close to where the Mediterranean Sea meets the Atlantic Ocean.

Over the centuries, Spain has regularly expressed territorial ambitions toward it, which has sometimes led to strained relations with Britain. In 1969, Spain's dictator Francisco Franco shut the crossing entirely, a closure that remained for 13 years, meaning the only alternative way in and out was a daylong sea crossing.

In the 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the EU, Gibraltar, which has a population of 38,000 people, voted 96 percent in favor of remaining in the bloc.

The majority decision to leave, and the prospect of a hard border between the UK and EU, requiring passport checks, posed a major problem for the UK government as almost half of Gibraltar's workforce come in from Spain each day, and this has taken years of delicate negotiations to resolve.

At midnight on Tuesday, with many Spaniards still celebrating their team's World Cup semifinal win over France, the last fence was removed and the physical border was no more, with crowds crossing freely in either direction.

"It has taken four years of patient, complex negotiation, but the outcome speaks for itself," said Maros Sefcovic, European commissioner for trade and economic security.

"It is a very special feeling to see a fence come down," he said.

The border town of La Linea de la Concepcion and its surrounding area is one of the most deprived parts of Spain, with particularly high unemployment, meaning that access to Gibraltar is vital for the local economy.

"This is something historic; we've had a border fence since 1908," Juan Franco, mayor of La Linea, told the BBC.

"You have to realize that for an average company in this town, a third of its income is from clients in Gibraltar," he said.

Fabian Picardo, Gibraltar's chief minister, said one of the key things that has defined the past eight generations of Gibraltarians is the restrictions at the frontier.



A vehicle crosses from Gibraltar into Spain on Wednesday after routine border checks at the crossing were lifted. MARCOS MORENO VIA GETTY IMAGES

"Business will now be able, in Gibraltar, to see a footfall increase, which is not going to be restrained by a potential queue on the way in or frontier queue on the way out," he said.

To maintain security, the removal of the physical barriers will be compensated for by a major increase in surveillance cameras and facial recognition technology used at entry points.

"The fortress has become a digital fortress now," Picardo said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:58 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:58 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

New drivers underpin China's economic resilience in face of pressure and challenges

Amid the weakening global economic outlook, China's economic performance in the first half of this year is a bright spot.

Data released by the National Bureau of Statistics on Wednesday show that the country's GDP grew by 4.7 percent from January to June year-on-year. The pace of growth of the world's second-largest economy is in line with its annual target.

China's GDP grew 5 percent year-on-year in the first quarter. Although growth moderated in the second quarter, the economy has remained on a stable footing, with its underlying trend toward innovation-driven and high-quality development unchanged.

The 22.1 percent increase in imports of goods and 13.4 percent increase in exports year-on-year demonstrate the vitality of the country's foreign trade, which, in spite of the rising protectionism and trade restrictions by some economies, continues to drive growth.

A deeper look shows the improving structure of the economy. During the first six months of this year, new drivers, such as high-end manufacturing, the digital economy and the modern service industry, contributed more than 40 percent of the growth, a testament that the country is advancing its innovation-driven progress.

Another telling piece of evidence is the robust expansion of the service sector, which has become a major growth engine. The sector's added value increased by 5.2 percent year-on-year, accounting for over 59 percent of GDP.

The country has intensified efforts to boost the service sector over the years to empower agriculture, manufacturing and other sectors, and create jobs. Even while the service sector is expanding, the country attaches strategic importance to manufacturing, the backbone of the economy. Statistics show the added value generated by the manufacturing sector accounted for 26.2 percent of the country's GDP, 0.4 percentage points higher than three years ago, the NBS said.

China enjoys unique strengths in its comprehensive manufacturing system, which is the foundation of the country's supply chains, as well as its ability to seize opportunities in global markets and turn out products tailored to the needs of consumers around the world.

The manufacturing powerhouse is now aiming to further consolidate these strengths by investing more in research and development to overcome technological choke points and exploring cutting-edge technologies to upgrade its factories, making them smarter and more eco-friendly.

According to the NBS, the volume of energy consumed per unit of GDP in the first half of this year decreased 1.9 percent year-on-year, as the country continues to maintain competitive advantages in its new energy products.

The country's economic performance is the product of targeted, systematic policies — carefully calibrated to sharpen the competitive edge of high-technology industries while shoring up the resilience of more established sectors.

Nevertheless, future growth continues to face complex external challenges. As Mao Shengyong, deputy head of the NBS, said at a news conference on Wednesday, the authorities should work to strengthen countercyclical and cross-cyclical regulation, further expand domestic demand, and strive to build a robust domestic market to counter the headwinds.

The 4.7 percent GDP growth in the first six months of 2026 was hard-won. It ought to reinforce the nation's confidence that the economy's intrinsic resilience will continue to help the country effectively navigate risks and challenges.

US' Red Sea bluster diplomatic theater

The United Nations Security Council's decision on Tuesday to extend the secretary-general's reporting mandate on Houthi attacks in the Red Sea should have been one of those rare moments when different countries acknowledged a shared interest in the freedom of navigation through one of the world's busiest maritime arteries.

Yet the meeting became noteworthy not for what the UN Security Council agreed upon, but for what one delegation chose to stage. The sharp exchanges between US Ambassador to the UN Mike Waltz and China's Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN Sun Lei revealed Washington's persistent habit of transforming multilateral diplomacy into geopolitical point-scoring.

China abstained on the resolution rather than exercising its veto, thereby allowing the reporting mechanism to continue. That alone suggested that Beijing hopes the UN will continue to play its role to help ensure maritime safety in the Red Sea. It made Washington's decision to single out China all the more improper.

Waltz insisted that his remarks — falsely tying China to the supply of dual-use items to the Houthis — were not an "accusation". He then feigned bewilderment, professing to be "struggling to understand why it's offensive" to call upon all member states to intercept such "material", as if the offense lay not in his words but in the very act of taking umbrage at them.

Diplomacy is about context, timing and intent. Declaring that one is not making an accusation while partially citing so-called UN-sourced "statistics" intended to implicate another country resembles the familiar fiction of "No offense, but ..." before proceeding to give offense. Waltz's response was a master class in theatrical innocence. An ambassador who lectures the UN about "statistics" and "concerns" somehow cannot grasp the causal chain of the Middle East crisis. It was carefully calibrated to appear "reasonable" while ensuring that the spotlight shifted from the resolution toward China.

China has always strictly abided by and implemented UN Security Council resolutions, and has consistently adopted a prudent and responsible approach to the export of military products and dual-use items, exercising strict controls in accordance with its domestic export control laws and regulations as well as its international obligations, Sun said.

Waltz's professed inability to comprehend Sun's justified rebuttal reveals something deeper: a US diplomacy so accustomed to its own "self-righteousness" that it cannot fathom why others might see things differently. Some US politicians would never pause to consider that the weaponry the US supplies to Israel fuels instability across the Middle East. They act as though the intelligence and Starlink capabilities the US provides to Israel are somehow exempt from scrutiny. True, the UN lacks the capacity to examine cargo manifests and port records of these US supplies. Yet these very tools — intelligence sharing and Starlink — are the indispensable instruments through which the US and Israel conduct targeted assassinations and "precision strikes".

But the fact is that neither China nor the US benefits from commercial vessels being attacked in the Red Sea. Their disagreement lies not over the objective but over diagnosis.

For China, as Sun said, the Red Sea crisis cannot be divorced from the wider instability engulfing the Middle East. The conflict in Yemen, the unresolved Palestinian question and repeated cycles of military escalation have created conditions in which maritime insecurity has become a symptom rather than the disease itself. Addressing shipping attacks while ignoring these underlying political crises is akin to repeatedly mopping the floor while leaving the leaking pipe untouched.

That diagnosis may be uncomfortable for Washington because it inevitably raises awkward questions about the US' role. Military interventions, sanctions, shifting alliances and proxy conflicts have become features of the Middle East thanks to the US' "concerns". Waltz extolled Washington's "peacemaking" credentials — ceasefires brokered, initiatives championed. But he omitted the inconvenient context: the very environment the US now seeks to stabilize was profoundly shaped, and in no small measure destabilized, by its own policies. One cannot plausibly claim the credit for extinguishing a fire while resolutely declining to investigate who supplied the kindling.

The distinction also explains the contrasting diplomatic styles. Beijing emphasizes dialogue, Yemeni-led reconciliation, humanitarian assistance and renewed momentum toward a two-state solution to the Palestinian question. Its successful facilitation of the rapprochement between Riyadh and Tehran before the US-Israeli joint attacks on Iran demonstrated that regional diplomacy need not always proceed through military pressure or bloc politics.

Washington, by contrast, frames regional crises through the prism of strategic competition and transaction. The temptation to link almost every hotspot issue to a deal through which the US can realize immediate monetary gains may generate domestic political dividends, but it rarely advances real solutions.

The Red Sea suffers from a lack of down-to-earth, solution-oriented political pragmatism. The US cannot play Red Sea sheriff while ignoring its own role as regional arsonist in the Middle East crisis. Diplomatic theater grabs headlines; it does not safeguard shipping.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Luo Jie



Opinion Line

Creating conditions for young people to choose parenthood

When Beijing chose "caring for early pregnancy, nurturing and empowering" as the focus for this year's World Population Day on July 11, some wondered if that was really a priority. Factor in that China's population has contracted, its birth rate has plunged to record lows and the total fertility rate is stuck below the replacement level — and the answer is clearly yes.

On the surface, focusing on providing care in the first 14 weeks of pregnancy seems almost quaint when fewer women are choosing to conceive in the first place. However, this narrowing of focus is not a retreat from the broader fight. It is a calculated repositioning — after years of providing subsidies, extended leave and expanding childcare facilities, it is now not the cost that is the decisive barrier to childbearing, but the anxiety that precedes the very decision to conceive.

Over the past decade, China's pro-fertility policies have largely been aimed at reducing the financial and logistical burdens of raising a child.

The 3,600-yuan ($531) annual childcare subsidy, the 158-day maternity leave, and the push for affordable nursery slots were all necessary, and all welcome. But these measures are applicable only after a woman has already decided to carry a pregnancy to term. What about the fear, confusion and lack of support that so often accompany that decision in the first place?

That is where early pregnancy clinics come in.

As of last month, China had established 12,226 such clinics — one-stop centers that offer medical assessments, psychological counseling and nutritional guidance to women in the first 14 weeks of pregnancy.

The rationale is rooted in both medicine and psychology.

The first trimester is the most vulnerable period for both mother and fetus and also the moment when worries — about health, medication safety or how it will affect career, if left unaddressed — can tip a woman toward terminating her pregnancy.

By providing timely, authoritative guidance and emotional reassurance, early pregnancy clinics aim to ease anxieties before they harden into a decision.

The 10-point health education guidelines, published by health authorities this month — covering diet, exercise, emotional well-being and risk avoidance — are also designed to demystify early pregnancy.

Together, they offer young women a clear road map at a time when uncertainty often dominates.

In a country where nearly half of all births are firstborn children — and many couples are navigating pregnancy for the first time — this clarity can be decisive.

Critics may argue that structural pressures — housing costs, job insecurity, education expenses — are still overwhelming. But the strength of this approach lies in sequencing: one cannot address the full chain of barriers if the first link is ignored.

Whether this bet pays off will take years to assess. Yet the direction is unmistakable: in addressing demographic decline, China has stopped simply asking young people to have more children — and has started building the conditions that might make them want to.

— LI LEI, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Application of high-tech key to modern agriculture

Editor's note: *China has unveiled a plan to accelerate the modernization of agriculture during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period. People's Daily Overseas Edition spoke to experts, including Zhang Chengpeng, an associate researcher at the Chinese Academy of Macroeconomic Research, on the development of agricultural technology in China. Below are excerpts of the interviews. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

In 2025, the contribution rate of agricultural scientific and technological progress surpassed 64 percent. The new plan has set a target of increasing the rate to 67 percent by 2030. This goal is not a catch-up gain from a low base, but an ambitious advance from an already high level.

This growth does not follow a linear trajectory. When the contribution rate was around 50 or 60 percent, the widespread adoption of individual technologies could generate noticeable gains. At the current level of more than 64 percent, however, the room for further improvement through the diffusion of a single technology has narrowed considerably.

Increasing the contribution rate by another 3 percentage points will require the coordinated application of multiple innovations, including biobreeding, digital and intelligent technologies, smart agricultural equipment and green production methods.

China's agricultural machinery industry faces structural challenges. It is not sufficiently competitive and lacks high-end products, while mechanization in hilly and mountainous areas continues to lag behind.

At the same time, greater efforts should be made to build a stronger industrial ecosystem, fostering leading enterprises, expanding remote operation and maintenance services, promoting shared-use machinery and improving equipment utilization. Policies on machinery purchase subsidies and operational subsidies should also be refined, while further expanding openness and international cooperation.

The country's agricultural biomanufacturing industry is at a pivotal stage where strategic opportunities coexist with practical challenges. To overcome existing bottlenecks, China should establish a scientific classification system for the sector, build a comprehensive national innovation framework for agricultural biomanufacturing, accelerate the development of an industry-university-research ecosystem led by enterprises, and formulate coordinated plans for differentiated industrial development.

AI holds enormous potential for agriculture, but many obstacles remain before AI and smart equipment can be widely deployed in the field. General-purpose algorithms often struggle to adapt to different climates, regions and crop varieties. Affordable, lightweight intelligent equipment remains in short supply, while agricultural data are difficult to collect and lack unified standards.

As a result, many AI applications remain confined to demonstration zones and pilot farms. China should strengthen agricultural and rural data infrastructure, build large-scale, multimodal, high-quality datasets, improve data standards and governance, accelerate the development of software and hardware with independent intellectual property rights, and encourage all stakeholders to speed up the digital and intelligent transformation of agriculture.

Emerging agricultural industries are the new engines of growth, while future-oriented industries represent the strategic frontier that China must secure in its quest to become a leading agricultural nation. Together, they form the technological foundation for building a strong agricultural sector.

Greater efforts should therefore be devoted to expanding emerging industries such as smart agriculture and the resource utilization of agricultural waste, while actively fostering future industries including molecular agriculture, gene-editing breeding technologies, agricultural foundation models and AI-powered decision-support systems. These measures will inject fresh momentum into high-quality agricultural development.

China has largely solved the challenge of ensuring an adequate food supply and is now shifting its focus toward improving quality, competitiveness and resilience. As the returns from traditional factor-driven growth continue to diminish, new industries and new business models will be essential for creating fresh sources of growth.

Accelerating the layout of emerging and future-oriented agricultural industries will accelerate agricultural and rural modernization, further strengthen the foundations of agriculture and address the remaining weak links in rural development.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:58 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:58 PM

VIEWS

Xu Qi

Illegal 'arbitration award' a political farce

The South China Sea "arbitration" unilaterally initiated by the Philippines in 2013, and the subsequent "award" rendered in 2016, constituted not a legal proceeding but a political farce meant to serve geopolitical goals. Fundamental flaws in both procedure and merit of the so-called award rendered it null and void from the very outset.

By not recognizing the "arbitration", not participating in the proceedings and not accepting the "award", China did not disregard international law but defended its core principles.

The legitimacy of any international dispute settlement mechanism hinges on one fundamental rule: the consent of the states concerned.

Without China's consent, the "arbitral tribunal" violated a fundamental principle of international law.

The "arbitration" also ignored the long-standing understanding between China and the Philippines to resolve disputes through negotiation.

Article 281 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea states that when parties agree to settle disputes by peaceful means of their choice, compulsory dispute-settlement procedures do not apply.

Similarly, Article 4 of the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea mandates that disputes be settled through negotiation by the parties involved.

These are legally binding instruments, and the Philippines' unilateral initiation of "arbitration" is a breach of the consensus it had previously endorsed.

In 2006, China made a declaration under Article 298 of UNCLOS, excluding issues related to maritime delimitation and historic rights from compulsory arbitration.

Although Manila avoided using terms like "sovereignty" and "delimitation", all 15 of its claims are related to these core issues.

To bypass China's 2006 declaration, the tribunal reinterpreted the disputes and reframed delimitation as boundary line drawing.

This action contradicted UNCLOS and revealed it was ultra vires. Without China's consent, the tribunal had no jurisdiction over the delimitation issue.

The tribunal's proceedings on the merits also significantly deviated from justice. It misinterpreted Article 121 of UNCLOS on the regime of islands by introducing arbitrary criteria and raising the threshold for what qualifies as an island for China.

This resulted in double standards that favored Manila. Features occupied by the Philippines were assessed under comparatively lenient criteria, while islands and reefs under China's control were downgraded to "rocks" or "low-tide elevations".

A number of international scholars have observed that the tribunal appeared less concerned with interpreting the UNCLOS than with rewriting it.

The tribunal arbitrarily dismissed China's historical rights in the South China Sea despite their recognition in several provisions of the convention and their independent status under customary international law.

By fragmenting the Nansha Islands into isolated maritime features, it attempted to undermine China's sovereignty claims, reducing them to ownership of individual features.

The tribunal's approach to evidence was also questionable. It violated the basic legal principle that "he who asserts must prove" by actively gathering evidence for the Philippines while ignoring historical documents submitted by China.

All experts appointed by the tribunal were from Western countries, and their reports were perfunctory and lacked transparency. Given these fundamental flaws, the "award" was null and void and had no legal binding.

Among the first states to ratify UNCLOS in 1996, China has always upheld the international maritime order through actions. It has enacted domestic laws on the territorial sea and the contiguous zone, and on exclusive economic zone and the continental shelf, proactively aligning its domestic legal framework with UNCLOS.

China actively participated in the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, fulfilled its obligations under regional fisheries management organizations, supported the governance framework of the International Seabed Authority, and signed and ratified the agreement on the sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction identified by UNCLOS.

This proves that China fully respects UNCLOS and has always strictly abided by its provisions and spirit. Manila's accusation that China "does not abide by the law" is a distortion of China's lawful exercise of its rights under Article 298 of UNCLOS.

The tribunal's politicization of the convention and its attempt to undermine China's sovereignty through judicial overreach was what truly violated international law.

The bilateral agreements between China and the Philippines and the DOC affirm that disputes should be resolved through negotiations between the parties concerned. That commitment carries significant legal weight.

History shows that negotiation and consultation are the most effective ways to resolve complex boundary disputes.

China and Vietnam successfully delimited the maritime boundary in the Beibu Gulf through negotiations under the UNCLOS framework.

China has also settled boundary issues with 12 of its land neighbors, delineating about 90 percent of its land borders through negotiations.

The South China Sea "arbitration award" was political manipulation disguised as international law. Genuine international rule of law respects state consent and the choices of nations.

The "dual-track approach" proposed by China — under which disputes are settled through negotiation and consultation between the parties concerned, while peace and stability in the South China Sea are jointly maintained by China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations countries — represents the right path to resolve the South China Sea issue.

Guided by this approach, consultations on the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea have made steady progress. Regional countries shaping rules and ensuring peace through dialogue is the most effective response to the "arbitration".

The author is the vice-dean of the Academy of Foreign-related Rule of Law at Jinan University, Guangdong province.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Maya Majueran

An inclusive vision for shared digital prosperity

As China prepares to host the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai, it is sending a message that extends far beyond technology.

President Xi Jinping is scheduled to attend the opening ceremony and deliver a keynote speech, during which he is expected to present China's comprehensive approach to AI development and governance, including policy priorities, a strategic vision, and proposals for international cooperation.

Global Lens

Beijing is positioning itself not only as a leader in artificial intelligence innovation, but also as a champion of a more inclusive approach to AI governance, one that gives developing countries a seat at the table rather than leaving them on the sidelines.

This matters because the future of AI will not be determined by algorithms and computing power alone. It will also be shaped by the rules, standards, and governance frameworks that emerge around the technology.

For many countries across Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Pacific, China's message of broader participation, technological cooperation, and shared development is increasingly attractive.

Across the Global South, the AI revolution raises urgent questions about technological sovereignty and inclusion. Many developing countries worry that the technologies, standards, and governance frameworks shaping the future digital economy may be designed primarily by and for advanced economies, leaving them as passive consumers rather than active participants.

Against this backdrop, China's commitment to broader participation, technological cooperation, and inclusive AI governance presents a compelling alternative.

At the heart of this appeal lies China's expanding open-source AI ecosystem. Models such as DeepSeek and Qwen are increasingly viewed as practical tools for countries seeking to participate in the AI revolution without becoming dependent on expensive proprietary platforms.

Their lower costs, strong performance, and adaptability make them particularly attractive to developing nations looking to build sovereign AI capabilities tailored to local languages, cultures, and development priorities.

The benefits are already visible.

Across Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East, startups, universities, research institutions, and government agencies are experimenting with Chinese open-source models to develop applications in education,



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

healthcare, agriculture, finance, public administration, and language services. Small and medium-sized enterprises that previously lacked the resources to access cutting-edge AI technologies can now build AI-powered products and services at a fraction of the cost.

For entrepreneurs, the availability of open-source models significantly lowers barriers to innovation, allowing local companies to compete and create solutions designed for local markets.

Individuals are benefiting as well. Developers, students, researchers and technology professionals can access advanced AI capabilities without paying expensive licensing fees or relying entirely on foreign proprietary systems.

This is helping foster AI communities across the developing world, accelerating skills development and digital literacy. In many countries, open-source models are also being adapted to support local languages and dialects that have historically been underrepresented in global AI systems.

More broadly, the rise of China's open-source ecosystem is contributing to the democratization of artificial intelligence. Rather than concentrating advanced AI capabilities in the hands of a few corporations or countries, it offers developing nations a more accessible pathway to technological participation.

For many countries in the Global South, this is not simply about cheaper technology — it is about digital sovereignty, stronger local innovation ecosystems, and the opportunity to become creators of AI rather than just its consumers.

Experts say the rapid global adoption of Chinese open-source models is driven largely by their affordability and competitive performance. For many developing countries, these technologies provide access to advanced AI capabilities that were previously beyond reach.

The implications are significant. Countries across Asia, Africa and Latin America can begin building AI systems adapted to local realities rather than relying solely on technologies designed elsewhere.

Whether in education, healthcare, agriculture, or public administration, open-source AI offers a realistic path toward greater digital sovereignty and technological self-reliance.

This approach becomes particularly compelling when contrasted with recent initiatives in the United States such as the "Tech Corps", which aims to support the adoption of American AI technologies abroad. Critics argue that such programs risk reinforcing technological dependence by expanding the reach of established US technology firms.

China, by contrast, presents its AI strategy through the language of openness, fairness and shared development, emphasizing that the benefits of artificial intelligence are shared more broadly.

For many countries in the Global South, this distinction matters. Their concern is not simply gaining access to AI tools, but ensuring that they have the opportunity to help shape, adapt, and develop those technologies according to their own needs and priorities.

The US, on the other hand, has adopted a more restrictive approach to advanced AI technologies, including export controls and limits on access to certain cutting-edge capabilities.

Critics argue that these measures prioritize technological leadership and competitive advantage, while raising concerns among allies and developing countries about unequal access to technologies that will shape the future global economy.

The upcoming conference in Shanghai is more than a showcase of technological achievements — it is a statement of China's vision for the future of global AI governance. Through the proposed World AI Cooperation Organization, Beijing seeks to create an inclusive platform where developing countries can help shape AI standards, governance, and capacity building.

By promoting artificial intelligence as a global public good, China aims to expand technological cooperation, strengthen innovation partnerships, and build international consensus around a safer, more equitable, and more inclusive AI future.

For many countries in the Global South, this is an attractive proposition. By framing AI governance around cooperation, accessibility, safety, and shared development, China is advocating for a more representative digital future.

At its core, China's AI strategy speaks to a demand that has been growing across the developing world: access without dependency.

Many countries want the benefits of AI without being forced into technological relationships that limit their autonomy or leave them permanently dependent on foreign platforms.

By emphasizing openness, cooperation, and capacity building, China is presenting a vision of AI development that many in the Global South view as more closely aligned with their own development priorities and long-term aspirations.

The author is the founding director of the Belt and Road Initiative Sri Lanka.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Zhao Chunlei

Japan's deep-sea venture a test for global ocean governance

Critical-mineral security might justify scientific exploration, but not ecological shortcuts into the deep sea.

On June 29, the Japanese prime minister instructed relevant ministers to accelerate the development and commercialization of rare-earth extraction from seabed mud within its exclusive economic zone around Minamitorishima (Marcus Island).

This follows a February 2026 announcement that Japan had successfully recovered rare-earth-rich sediment from a depth of nearly 6,000 meters in the same area, with a full-scale mining trial expected in 2027.

Tokyo has framed this move as a meaningful accomplishment in strengthening supply-chain resilience and diversifying Japan's sources of rare-earth supply.

Rare earths are essential to clean energy, advanced manufacturing, defense technologies, and digital infrastructure. No country should be denied the right to pursue lawful resource development.

The real question, however, is whether such development can proceed before environmental risks are properly understood, independently assessed, and effectively controlled.

Deep-sea rare-earth mud extraction is an industrial intervention in one of the least-explored and most fragile ecosystems on Earth. Disturbing the seabed may create sediment plumes near the ocean floor.

Any water discharged during dewatering or other processing stages could form additional plumes in the water column, carrying suspended particles and potentially harmful dissolved substances. Ocean currents could carry these materials beyond Japan's EEZ, making the environmental risks potentially transboundary.

Under Article 56 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, or UNCLOS, Japan enjoys sovereign rights to explore and exploit natural resources within its EEZ. However, these rights are neither absolute nor unconstrained.

Japan is entitled to pursue supply-chain resilience, but not by externalizing ecological risk to the Pacific Ocean and the global marine environment.

The Convention establishes a clear balance: resource development must be exercised with due regard for the rights of other states and in conformity with the duty to protect and preserve the marine environment.

Article 194 of UNCLOS requires states to take all necessary measures to ensure that activities under their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage by pollution to other states and their environment, and that pollution arising from incidents or activities under their jurisdiction or control does not spread beyond the areas where they exercise sovereign rights.

If sediment plumes, return-water discharge, underwater noise, artificial light, or other contaminants from Japan's deep-sea mining affect adjacent high-seas ecosystems or the waters of other states, Japan could constitute a breach of international obligations, entitling affected states to invoke state responsibility.

The credibility of Japan's environmental impact assessment process is therefore central. Article 206 of UNCLOS obligates states to assess the potential effects of activities likely to cause substantial pollution or significant and harmful changes to the marine environment.

For deep-sea mining, an environmental impact assessment should be science-based, independently reviewed, and publicly accessible, not merely a procedural formality completed after political decisions have been made.

At such depths, ecological recovery after deep-sea mining is uncertain and likely to be slow. Many abyssal species have low growth rates, limited dispersal capacity, and narrow habitat ranges. The precautionary approach is thus a practical requirement of responsible ocean governance. Neighboring countries, Pacific Island states, fisheries stakeholders, and the global scientific community all have legitimate interests in scrutinizing Japan's environmental assessment and monitoring arrangements.

This does not mean deep-sea mining should be permanently prohibited. It may become acceptable if advanced extraction technologies can demonstrably minimize seabed disturbance and ecological harm, supported by high-precision, long-term environmental monitoring.

This reminds one of Japan's earlier unilateral discharge of nuclear-contaminated wastewater from the crippled Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant into the Pacific, undermining regional trust in its marine environmental governance. The same pattern must not be repeated in the deep sea: deciding first, consulting later, and shifting ecological uncertainty onto neighboring countries and the wider international community.

Addressing the challenges posed by Japan's deep-sea mining venture requires a multilayered response leveraging legal, scientific, financial, and market-based mechanisms. Independent scientific reviews should rigorously evaluate Japan's baseline data, plume dispersion models, toxicity assessments, and monitoring designs. Simultaneously, governments and international organizations need to press for full disclosure of EIA reports and post-operational monitoring data. Finally, global markets are urged to categorize rare earths obtained from unverified deep-sea extraction as high-risk commodities.

Japan is entitled to pursue supply-chain resilience, but not by externalizing ecological risk to the Pacific Ocean and the global marine environment.

The Minamitorishima project must not become a precedent for premature and unilateral deep-sea extraction. Instead, it should push the international community to build a framework that keeps the door open to future responsible development while closing the door on reckless environmental risk-taking.

The author is an associate professor of the Law School, Ocean University of China.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:58 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:58 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

SUN ZHUANGZHI

Pioneering partnership

China and Russia have leveraged their time-honored tradition of good-neighborliness to forge a new model of state-to-state relations



This year marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the China-Russia strategic partnership of coordination and the 25th anniversary of the signing of the China-Russia Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation, making this year a milestone in bilateral relations. In May, Russian President Vladimir Putin visited China and held talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping. The two sides signed a series of important cooperation documents. Among them, a joint statement on further strengthening comprehensive strategic coordination and deepening good-neighborliness and friendly cooperation, signed by the two heads of state, holds particular significance.

This document, which is broad in scope and covers several aspects of bilateral cooperation, places particular emphasis on the treaty's role in inheriting and advancing the long-standing traditions of China-Russia exchanges. It establishes a durable legal foundation for contemporary China-Russia relations, fully reflecting the two countries' time-honored tradition of good-neighborliness and the shared desire of their peoples for enduring friendship.

The signing and two extensions of the treaty attest to the fact that China-Russia relations continue to move forward, thanks to the tireless efforts of both sides. They are mature in nature, driven by strong internal momentum and resilient to external interference. The stability and breadth of bilateral ties fully serve the fundamental interests of both countries and their peoples, align with their respective national development goals, and contribute greatly to advancing a more just multipolar world and the democratization of international relations.

Politically, the strategic coordination between China and Russia has helped elevate good-neighborly relations and strategic partnerships with other Eurasian countries, underpinned by an increasingly robust legal framework. China has signed similar treaties of good-neighborliness and friendly cooperation with all five Central Asian countries and achieved full coverage of comprehensive strategic partnerships with them.

Over the past 30 years, particularly since 2013 with head-of-state diplomacy playing a crucial strategic guiding role, bilateral cooperation between China and Russia has produced many remarkable outcomes. China has remained Russia's major trading partner, and people-to-people and cultural exchanges have continued to flourish.

New cooperation models and channels are being explored, such as using the internet to enhance media collaboration and cultural showcases, and increasing youth exchanges, especially among students, to cultivate talent with global perspectives and cross-cultural communication skills. Tourism and public health exchanges have become new focal points of their relationship.



ZHANG YUJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

The mutual visa exemption has facilitated personnel flows and cultural interactions. Cooperation mechanisms and platforms between the two sides are extensive, including regular meetings between the two premiers, intergovernmental and inter-parliamentary mechanisms, and people-to-people mechanisms such as the China-Russia Friendship Committee for Peace and Development.

Besides, cooperation platforms are no longer confined to the economic and trade sector but have extended to science and technology, think tanks, public health and other fields. The two countries have alternately hosted a series of "national years", promoting mutual understanding and affinity among their peoples. They also cooperate within multilateral frameworks such as the United Nations, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, BRICS, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and the G20, demonstrating the sense of responsibility befitting major powers.

China and Russia have jointly built a new type of international relations, reflected in a new model of state-to-state relations based on partnership rather than alliance, the shared pursuit of national rejuvenation and modernization, the joint commitment to upholding international fairness and justice within the United Nations and other multilateral frameworks and the common endeavor to promote world multipolarity.

Since 2013, when China first put forward the vision of building a new type of international relations, the two countries have issued several joint statements on major international issues, reflecting their converging positions. In 2017, they released a statement on the current world situation and major international issues; in 2022, they followed up with a statement on international relations and global sustainable development in the new era.

In May, the two sides issued a joint statement advocating a multipolar world and a new type of international relations, in which they explicitly opposed bloc confrontation and called for a more united international community. The document also underscored the importance of countries respecting one another's fundamental interests, treating each other as equals and engaging in mutually beneficial cooperation.

Over the three-decade development of the China-Russia strategic partnership of coordination, the two neighboring countries have strengthened their strategic mutual trust. And they have remained steadfast in their commitment to promoting the establishment of a global governance system that is more just, equitable and well-regulated.

Looking ahead, the two sides should develop exemplary cooperation projects and leverage these to strengthen their practical cooperation and promote deep-level cooperation with other countries in the Eurasian region on different platforms. As international conditions evolve, it is essential that they maintain strong coordination in strategic matters. Given the current global changes, strengthening this partnership is not just necessary but vital for future development.

The author is the director of the Institute of Russian, Eastern European and Central Asian Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

LIU JINLONG, JIA LUMENG AND VERENA HITNER BARROS

New paths for joint progress

After more than 50 years of persistent endeavors, scientific and technological innovation will help China and Brazil build a community with a shared future



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

Science and technology cooperation between China and Brazil is deeply rooted in their respective development philosophies and institutional arrangements.

China has formed a sound State-led development model. Beyond conventional market regulation and overall planning, the government coordinates all stakeholders, guides capital flows and sets long-term technological development trajectories. It not only remedies market failures, but also identifies strategic priorities, defuses development risks and actively promotes industrial structural transformation. This mature governance approach to science, technology and innovation, or STI, offers important references for Brazil, which in the last decades has been struggling to legitimize the government's role in national development.



Liu Jinlong

Jia Lumeng



Verena Hitner Barros

After the debt crisis in the 1980s and especially with the advent of the so-called Washington Consensus, Brazil has shifted from a governance model where the state acts as an active development planner, industrial promoter and core driver of technological progress to a model where it retreats to a passive role limited merely to market supervision.

The Brazilian state's governance model once observed national developmentalism. According to the tradition of Latin American structuralism, national development is a historical process of structural transformation, which can never be achieved through spontaneous market growth; it requires targeted and powerful state intervention. Technological innovation is regarded as the core engine of socioeconomic advancement, and underdevelopment cannot be eliminated by inaction or laissez-faire policies. This widely accepted viewpoint has influenced nearly all Brazilian administrations and laid the ideological groundwork for the establishment of major STI institutions, including the Brazilian Development Bank, the Funding Authority for Studies and Projects (Finep) and the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq).

Whenever Brazilian governments adopted the active development model, the country achieved remarkable progress in building independent STI capabilities. The government integrated national resources, formulated unified STI strategies and improved supporting mechanisms covering talent cultivation, research funding, technological investment and industrial application. In 1951, the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES) and CNPq were founded to standardize higher education and national research management. Regional research funding foundations were established nationwide, while development banks launched special technological funds to deliver stable financial support for R&D activities.

Backed by strong state support, Brazil's scientific and technological workforce expanded rapidly in universities, research institutes and corporate R&D departments, and a complete domestic innovation ecosystem gradually took shape. By concentrating resources on key technologies and strategic industries, the state effectively broke the development constraints of peripheral economies. The government served as a vital bridge connecting basic research, applied technologies and industrial development. With consistent policies, steady investment and smooth institutional coordination, Brazil's STI sector maintained robust momentum and marched steadily toward technological autonomy and industrial modernization. The results prove that proactive state intervention boosts STI progress in developing countries.

However, when successive governments turned to a market-oriented minimal-intervention model and confined state functions to market oversight, Brazil's STI development suffered severe setbacks. Fiscal austerity, financial and trade liberalization, state-owned companies' privatization and widespread deregulation meant the state lost the capacity to lead national development. The government withdrew from macro-level STI planning and industrial guidance. National layouts for key technological sectors were abandoned, and long-term R&D plans were frequently disrupted by political leadership changes. Public funding for scientific research became unstable and insufficient, hindering the progress of basic research and long-cycle technological projects.

More importantly, well-established STI institutions lost effective coordination. CAPES, CNPq, Finep and regional foundations operated in isolation without a unified governmental arrangement. Resource allocation became fragmented, and the link between research achievements and industrial application was broken. Numerous projects lacked follow-up investment and promotion, and accumulated technological advantages gradually faded away. The development of core indigenous technologies slowed markedly, severely obstructing Brazil's pursuit of technological independence.

The whole STI system became fragmented and inefficient; uncertainties in economic and technological growth increased; and the technological gap between Brazil and global technology leaders kept widening. These demonstrate that excessive government withdrawal from STI governance does not suit Brazil's national conditions and development stage.

Most Brazilians recognize that a large developing country cannot rely entirely on the free market to develop. Therefore, whenever the deepening of market-oriented policies leads to stagnation, calls for stronger state guidance emerge again; and the election and the current term of President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva are reflections of that.

Even so, the resilience of ideas linked to laissez-faire and this political alternation have become a prominent feature in Brazil, where a regime change may cause revised STI policies, redistributed funds and reset development priorities. This is a major obstacle to Brazil's long-term technological breakthroughs.

China and Brazil share the common goal of technological independence and self-reliance, laying a solid foundation for bilateral STI exchanges. China has adhered to a consistent State-led innovation strategy for decades, with stable policies, continuous R&D investment and systematic industrial planning. This stable governance has enabled China to make comprehensive breakthroughs in artificial intelligence, electric vehicles, aerospace, renewable energy, digital technology, modern agriculture and biomedicine. Over the years, the two countries have carried out practical cooperation in satellite development, public health, energy and agricultural technology, with all collaboration built upon their respective STI systems.

Brazil is drawing valuable lessons from China's experience and accomplishments in long-term strategic planning and stable policy implementation. Many local researchers and policymakers have reflected on domestic policy volatility, striving to build a balanced governance model that retains market vitality while giving full play to the state's strengths in strategic planning, resource integration and long-term STI layout.

After more than 50 years, China and Brazil have shared hardships and celebrated achievements, moving forward side-by-side along the path of science and technology cooperation. Their partnership is anchored by a shared commitment to independence, autonomy and mutual benefit — core tenets that embody the spirit of South-South collaboration.

Looking ahead, Brazil will continue exploring a sustainable STI governance path amid debates over governing ideas. Decades of practice have proved that neither extreme laissez-faire nor disconnection between government, research institutions and industries can sustain long-term technological progress. Only by defining a stable and clear role for the state, maintaining policy continuity and linking research closely to national demands can Brazil steadily enhance its technological strength.

The two countries can further expand cooperation in emerging fields including the digital economy, AI, cloud computing and advanced manufacturing. They will build joint R&D platforms, industrial joint ventures and incubation mechanisms to accelerate the development and application of innovation outcomes, and jointly explore AI governance pathways suitable for developing nations. As major commodity trading partners, China and Brazil integrate their STI cooperation in ecological protection for the Amazon rainforest and the Brazilian Cerrado. They jointly develop low-carbon technologies and sustainable production models, and promote green trade transition and ecological conservation, offering useful experience for other Global South countries.

China and Brazil are expected to take STI as a strategic bond to deepen mutual trust, strengthen their comprehensive strategic partnership, contribute to global innovation development and jointly advance the building of a community with a shared future for humanity.

Liu Jinlong is a professor and the director at the Center for China-Brazil Civilization Exchange and Cooperation Studies at Renmin University of China. Jia Lumeng is a researcher at the center. Verena Hitner Barros is a professor at the University of Campinas and the former director of the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation Governance and Indicators at the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation of Brazil. The authors contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:58 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:58 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

Innovation takes flight in boost to low-altitude biz

By **WANG YING** in Shanghai
wang_ying@chinadaily.com.cn

As China's low-altitude economy transitions from blueprint to benchmark, companies in the sector are poised to ride a new wave of industrial growth.

Although it may still take time for low-altitude applications to become widespread, stakeholders across the industry are making steady progress, from the rollout of supportive policies and the rapid development of the domestic supply chain to continued advances in research and development. These efforts have laid a solid foundation for the sector's projected expansion, experts said.

"The prosperity of the low-altitude economy must ultimately rest on proven commercial viability, which means delivering comfortable, safe and cost-effective travel experiences for passengers, sustainable returns for operators, and development opportunities for manufacturers and suppliers," said Dong Ming, founder and CEO of Shanghai-based Volant Aerotech during an interview in June.

Using the VE25-100, Volant Aerotech completed China's first piloted transition flight of a commercial passenger electric vertical take-off and landing aircraft, or eVTOL, in Sichuan province's Zigong on May 28.

Regarded as one of the key tasks in the commercialization of passenger eVTOL, the achievement made the company the third in the world to complete such a flight task, said Dong.

The success of the piloted transition flight will greatly accelerate the efficiency of future test flights and further accelerate the aircraft model's development, he added.

Dong believes that the gradual commercialization of the sector will depend on the establishment of a complete and sustainable industrial value chain. At present, the key challenge facing the industry is how to achieve commercial viability through developing such an ecosystem.

"Over the next three to five years, we expect the company to achieve a revenue of 10 billion yuan ($1.47 billion) and a market valuation of 100 billion yuan," Dong said.

Dong's forecast is underpinned by the promising outlook for China's low-altitude economy in the coming years.

"The low-altitude economy has been officially elevated to the status of an emerging pillar industry alongside aerospace during the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period," said Luo Jun, a low-altitude economy expert.

The public maiden flight of a consumer-grade wing-in-ground craft on June 4 in Suzhou of Jiangsu province marked another effort to explore the low-altitude market with an estimated trillion-dollar scale worldwide in coming years.

Claimed to be the first of its kind globally, the WaveFly 5X cruises at a height of between 50 and 60 centimeters above the water and has a top speed of around 85 kilometers per hour, according to Wang Yaozhang, chief product officer of the Suzhou-based smart mobility company Navee.

"It is projected to roll off the production line by the end of this year, and we expect to produce about 100 aircraft this year. Annual production capacity will be 2,000 units from 2027, and our future capacity will be determined by market demand," Wang said. "The waterborne aircraft will first target high-end overseas markets and will then be gradually introduced to other regions of the world."

The Civil Aviation Administration of China has forecast the country's low-altitude economy market to reach 3.5 trillion yuan by 2035. The sector has become a key driver in the nation's development of new quality productive forces, as well as in the cultivation of emerging industries with a trillion-yuan scale.



Volant Aerotech's VE25-100 eVTOL model on display during an expo in Shanghai. TANG KE / FOR CHINA DAILY



A shopper pushes a shopping cart outside Pangdonglai Times Square in Xuchang, Henan province. GETTY IMAGES

Pangdonglai setting new retail standards

Supermarket chain attracting loyal shoppers from across nation

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn

When Premier Li Qiang convened a symposium on Tuesday with experts and entrepreneurs to discuss the country's economic situation and priorities for the next stage, one attendee drew particular attention — Yu Donglai, founder of retail chain Pangdonglai.

This has highlighted the growing policy interest in a new model of consumer-driven growth. The model is built not only on expanding sales, but also on improving service quality, strengthening consumer confidence and investing in employees.

Li said the country's economy is shifting toward high-quality development. Among the priorities he outlined was the need to expand domestic demand by increasing the supply of quality services, combining investment in physical assets with investment in human capital, stabilizing employment and stimulating market vitality through reform.

Those themes closely align with the business philosophy promoted by Pangdonglai. The supermarket chain, based in Henan province, has become a benchmark in the retail sector for its emphasis on service, employee welfare and customer experience.

Against this backdrop, Pangdonglai stands out from many traditional retailers. On the 2026 top 100 supermarkets list released by the China Chain Store & Franchise Association, Pangdonglai climbed to ninth place, up from 19th last year. The company reported first-half sales of 14.5 billion yuan ($2.14 billion) this year, up 24 percent year-on-year.

But its influence extends beyond sales figures. Officials and industry observers have increasingly cited Pangdonglai as an example of how retailers can improve consumer confidence through better products, services and employee management.

At a Ministry of Commerce news conference on July 9, officials referenced Pangdonglai's experience twice, praising its efforts to "return to the essence of commerce" and improve the quality of goods and services.

Dong Lichun, vice-mayor of Xuchang where Pangdonglai is headquartered, said the company provided stable employment for more than 19,000 people in the first half and attracted more than 1 million visitors from across the country, with the Xuchang store having become a destination for both shoppers and tourists.

Dong said Xuchang's retail sales growth has remained among the strongest in the province for 29 consecutive months.

Jason Yu, general manager at CTR Market Research, said the invitation to Yu to attend the symposium sent a strong signal that the government is encouraging innovation in the real economy and prioritizing efforts to boost consumption.

"Pangdonglai has earned consumers' trust through exceptional services and a genuine customer-first approach, showing that improving supply-side quality and rebuilding consumer confidence are key to unlocking consumption," Yu said.

The symposium also underscored the importance of improving public services and stabilizing employment, he added. "By transforming employees from a 'cost center' into 'long-term assets', Pangdonglai has shown that the ultimate purpose of business is not simply to generate profits, but to create well-being and happiness for people."

For example, Pangdonglai has advocated sharing business gains with workers, arguing that improving employees' well-being can ultimately strengthen a company's competitiveness.

The company provides frontline employees with an average monthly take-home pay of about 9,400 yuan. Management staff generally receive two-day weekends, while frontline workers typically work shorter shifts and receive extensive paid leave benefits.

The retailer has also introduced a "grievance award" system, compensating employees who are treated unfairly by customers.

Krone reinforces footprint in China

TIANJIN — German agricultural machinery brand Krone has injected an additional 19.6 million yuan ($2.89 million) into its Chinese sales and service subsidiary based in Tianjin, North China.

The move marks the 120-year-old brand's latest effort to reinforce its local footprint, a decade after entering the Chinese market. It also underscores the global forage harvesting equipment leader's confidence in seizing opportunities arising from the country's agricultural modernization drive.

Huo Hongyan, general manager of Krone China, said the fresh funds will be channeled into improving the company's sales and after-sales service network across the country, expanding spare parts inventory to ensure rapid maintenance support, accelerating the introduction of new overseas products, increasing brand promotion investment in China, and strengthening the professional local service team. These initiatives aim to enhance the company's overall service responsiveness and operational capacity for its Chinese customers.

Originating as a blacksmith's workshop in 1906, Krone has evolved into an industry leader with business operations spanning more than 70 countries and regions. As a specialist brand in silage and forage equipment, Krone's comprehensive product portfolio covers mowing, raking, baling and transport operations.

In 2016, Krone officially established its China headquarters in Tianjin. Backed by a favorable business environment and a localized operational system, Krone has achieved steady growth in China, with its market presence and service network continuously improving and its investment in the country steadily increasing.

"China is not only a huge market, but is also in a period of accelerated agricultural modernization, with growing demand for high-end agricultural machinery. This is of extraordinary importance to us," said Bernard Krone, the fourth-generation head of the Krone family business.

China's ongoing land consolidation and large-scale farming operations, coupled with the dairy industry's rapid expansion and its rising standards, are driving higher requirements for forage quality, harvesting standards and operational efficiency, according to the company.

The latest investment aligns with China's broader efforts to boost agricultural productivity as the country embarks on the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period. The country has rolled out a series of targeted measures, ranging from high-standard farmland construction and seed industry revitalization to the development of a diversified food supply system.

The State Council has issued a plan to accelerate agricultural and rural modernization during the 15th Five-Year Plan period.

The plan calls for efforts to achieve major breakthroughs in developing new quality productive forces in agriculture, foster and strengthen specialty industries in rural regions, accelerate the comprehensive green transition of agricultural development and promote green agricultural production methods, and improve infrastructure conditions and public services in rural areas, among others.

Huo said the company remains firm in its long-term confidence in the development value of China's agricultural market. The scaling up of land use and the emergence of new types of farming entities are opening up increased space for high-end equipment.

Looking ahead, Krone is expected to continue to strengthen its sales and service network in China, accelerate the deployment and promotion of new products and technologies, and step up its participation in industry exhibitions and market events.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Briefly

NEVs close to half of new registrations

New energy vehicles accounted for 49.42 percent of all newly registered automobiles in China in the first half, up 4.45 percentage points from the same period last year, according to data released by the Ministry of Public Security. From January to June, traffic authorities under the ministry registered more than 5.19 million NEVs and 10.51 million automobiles in total, as well as 5.11 million motorbikes, the ministry said.

Yuan strengthens against greenback

The central parity rate of the yuan strengthened 80 pips to 6.791 against the US dollar on Wednesday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System. In China's spot foreign exchange market, the yuan is allowed to rise or fall by 2 percent from the central parity rate each trading day. The central parity rate of the yuan against the US dollar is based on a weighted average of prices offered by market makers.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Stimulating shopping key priority

China on Monday released its first five-year plan dedicated exclusively to expanding consumption, marking a significant upgrade in the top-level design for buoying domestic consumption.

With consumption having grown into the primary engine of China's economic growth, the plan is set to reinforce this momentum by unlocking the full potential of the country's super-large market, optimizing the consumption structure and improving people's livelihoods via targeted measures.

These efforts, while domestic in nature, also carry profound implications beyond China's borders, potentially reshaping global trade patterns and creating new opportunities for foreign companies, analysts said.

The dedicated five-year plan (2026-30) set a goal of raising total retail sales of consumer goods to around 60 trillion yuan ($8.8 trillion) by 2030 and further strengthening consumption's role in driving economic growth.

The target comes after China's retail sales of consumer goods crossed the 50-trillion-yuan mark for the first time in 2025, underlining the increasing importance of consumption in supporting the growth of the world's second-largest economy.

Consumption expansion used to be provisions attached to the national five-year plans, serving as supporting or phased arrangements, said Fu Yifu, a researcher at Jiangsu Su Merchants Bank.

"This is the first time the country has formulated a special five-year plan solely for expanding consumption, marking a breakthrough in the country's top-level design," Fu said.

Under China's five-year plan framework, dedicated plans are the operational tools that convert macroeconomic blueprints into measurable, sector-specific action plans.

"The dedicated plans translate the macroeconomic blueprint of the 15th Five-Year Plan into specific indicators and task lists. With the rollout of these dedicated plans, China's 15th Five-Year Plan is entering the stage of 'full-scale construction,'" said Xiao Hongwei, a researcher at the State Information Center under the National Development and Reform Commission.

While consumption already contributed 52 percent to China's GDP growth in 2025, its potential has yet to be fully unleashed, analysts said.

Liu Rihong, an official with the Research Office of the State Council, said that expanding consumption not only builds resilience against external shocks, but also transforms the nation's market advantages into better lives for its people.

A distinctive feature of the plan is its emphasis on boosting consumption that improves people's welfare, with targeted support for eldercare, childcare, culture and tourism, and health services — aiming to raise the quality of life through high-quality supply, enhanced platforms and stronger support mechanisms, said NDRC officials.

Huang Yiping, dean of Peking University's National School of Development, pointed to a gap between China's strong manufacturing sector and its still-maturing domestic consumption, which stems from several structural hurdles, including high household saving rates and local governments' preference for soliciting investment and building infrastructure over boosting consumption.

The consumption-focused plan outlines 28 key tasks across six crucial areas — including upgrading services consumption and boosting spending power — to tackle these hurdles on multiple fronts.

To improve consumption capability, it called for stabilizing employment, raising minimum wages and increasing property income via various channels.

To reassure consumers and lower precautionary savings, the plan emphasized improving the social security system and boosting public spending on education, healthcare and eldercare to reduce household burdens.

The document also pledged to optimize the overall consumer environment and remove unreasonable restrictions that have long suppressed spending.

Services consumption featured prominently in the roadmap. The plan called for steadily raising the share of per capita services consumption expenditure, with targeted support for eldercare, childcare, culture and tourism, health and sports services.

China has recently seen several bright spots in services consumption, including its booming tourism sector that is attracting more youngsters and overseas visitors. In 2025, China's tourism economy grew 9.9 percent, more than double the global average.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:58 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:58 PM

BUSINESS



Image shows a coal-to-oil plant, which has an annual output of 4 million metric tons in Ningdong, Ningxia Hui autonomous region. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Ningdong reinventing future of coal

Ningxia offers glimpse of how country envisions one of its oldest and most important industries evolving

By **CHENG YU** and **HU DONGMEI**

On the edge of the desert in the Ningxia Hui autonomous region, towering coal-to-liquid plants, sprawling solar farms and one of the world's largest green hydrogen projects are reshaping a landscape once known mainly for its coal reserves.

The transformation of the Ningdong Energy Chemical Industry Base, one of the world's largest modern coal chemical hubs, illustrates China's efforts to reconcile two often competing priorities: safeguarding energy security while accelerating the transition toward lower-carbon industrial growth.

The industrial base has become a cornerstone of China's energy system ever since President Xi Jinping visited twice, most notably in 2016 when Xi called large-scale modern coal chemicals a strategic exploration for national energy security and declared that "socialism is built through hard work".

That message has become the base's defining slogan.

Over the past decade, Ningdong's annual industrial output has more than doubled to over 200 billion yuan ($29.5 billion), making it one of China's five largest chemical industrial parks and the first in western China to surpass the 200-billion-yuan threshold. Its industrial value-added has grown 2.3-fold since 2016 and now contributes more than half of Ningxia's industrial growth.

Rather than relying on raw coal production, the complex has expanded into higher-value manufacturing.

Its coal-to-liquids facilities now produce more than 4.6 million metric tons annually, the largest single-site capacity in China, while coal-based olefin capacity has reached 4.2 million tons, accounting for roughly one-fifth of national output.

At the same time, Ningdong is building one of China's largest integrated energy systems.

Installed thermal power capacity stands at 17.35 gigawatts, while renewable generation has exceeded 18 GW, supported by large-scale wind, solar and energy storage projects.

Innovation has become another pillar of Ningdong's strategy.

Research spending has risen by more than 30 percent annually for seven consecutive years, while research and development expenditure now accounts for 3 percent of regional GDP, above both national and provincial averages.

As pipelines carrying synthetic fuels run alongside solar arrays stretching across the desert, Ningdong offers a glimpse of how China envisions the future of one of its oldest industries: not abandoning coal overnight, but reinventing what it can produce.

Contact the writers at chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

10th

One Call Ten Years One Answer

200 billion yuan
Industrial output has topped 200 billion yuan for two consecutive years — 2.6 times the 2016 level

4.6 million tons
Coal-to-liquids output exceeds 4.6 million tons — the largest single-site capacity in China

30%
Science and technology spending has grown by over 30% annually for seven consecutive years

360+
National advanced manufacturing cluster producing 360+ high-end chemical products

4.2 million tons
Coal-based olefin capacity reaches 4.2 million tons, about one-fifth of China's total

3 GW
National 3 GW utility-scale photovoltaic base completed

SOURCE: MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF NINGDONG ENERGY CHEMICAL INDUSTRY BASE

The "Shenning Gasifier" received the China Patent Gold Award

Home to the world's first 4-million-ton indirect coal-to-liquids project

Coal-to-liquids technology won China's National Science and Technology Progress Award



An employee works at a spandex production workshop at a firm in Ningdong. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



An aerial image shows a modern coal chemical industry green power park in Ningdong. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Picture shows a view of the coal-to-oil factory in Ningdong. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:58 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:58 PM

CHINA

China CDC experts join intl Ebola fight

By **WANG XIAOYU**
wangxiaoyu@chinadaily.com.cn

China's National Disease Control and Prevention Administration said it has sent two public health experts to Uganda to join a newly established international coordination platform supporting the response to the ongoing Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda.

The platform, jointly established by the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization Regional Office for Africa, is based at the Infectious Diseases Institute at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda. Known as the Joint Africa CDC-WHO AFRO Continental Incident Management Support Team, the platform became fully operational on June 29.

The two experts, both from the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, had participated in the Ebola response in Sierra Leone a decade ago. Invited by the platform's organizers, they departed from Beijing for Uganda around midnight on Wednesday.

China has already dispatched two teams of medical specialists to support the Ebola response in the DRC, with a total of 10 experts specializing in epidemiology, laboratory testing and clinical treatment.

As of Saturday, the Democratic Republic of the Congo had reported 1,926 confirmed Ebola cases, including 702 deaths. The outbreak was declared on May 15 and has since spread to two additional areas, affecting five regions.

Uganda had reported 20 confirmed cases and one related death as of Monday, according to the latest data.

"The platform is structured around 14 technical pillars, including coordination and governance, surveillance, laboratory work, community engagement, infection prevention and control, case management, logistics and supplies, among others," said An Zhijie, a public health expert from the China CDC and one of the two mission members.

An will serve in the coordination and governance pillar, where he will track the epidemiological situation, analyze transmission risks and the effectiveness of control measures across different regions, assess the risk of cross-border transmission and facilitate information sharing.

"It is important for us to integrate China's experience in disease control with the local context, share our hands-on lessons learned from previous outbreaks with international partners during routine technical discussions, and help Ebola-affected countries adopt suitable, tailored measures," he said.

Wang Huanyu, the other mission member and head of the Arbovirus Department at the China CDC's National Institute for Viral Disease Control and Prevention, will work in the laboratory pillar.

"I will support the expansion of the local testing network, as the Africa CDC is planning to increase both the number of testing sites and testing capacity in the coming months," Wang said.

He said he will also focus on improving sample transportation, as long transit times between collection sites and laboratories are delaying diagnoses and patient admissions, contributing to the high case fatality rate.

In addition, he will analyze each testing site's workload and positivity rate to help guide supply chain management and resource allocation, Wang said.

Reflecting on his experience fighting Ebola in Sierra Leone a decade ago, An said it was uncommon at the time to see Chinese experts participating in outbreak response efforts in Africa.

"Now, we have been invited to join this platform to deal with public health emergencies in Africa, which is a testament to the trust placed in our capabilities," he said.

Dock mishap



The *Mingzhu No 7*, a 158-meter-long unpowered barge, tilts at its mooring platform in Wenzhou, Zhejiang province, on Tuesday. The vessel, idle and not in operation, had no people on board at the time of the incident, and no casualties were reported. Local authorities launched an investigation into the cause. Initially planned as a hotel, the ship has remained unused due to the bankruptcy of its investors. QIAO JIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Cross-Strait trips show steady growth this year

More Taiwan residents visit mainland despite DPP efforts to deter interaction

By **YANG ZEKUN**
yangzekun@chinadaily.com.cn

More Taiwan residents, especially young people, are choosing to visit the mainland this summer for travel, study, exchanges and work despite continued efforts by the Democratic Progressive Party authorities to discourage cross-Strait interaction, Zhu Fenglian, spokeswoman for the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, said on Wednesday.

Speaking at a regular news conference, Zhu said the steady growth in cross-Strait travel reflects the strong desire of people on both sides for peace, development and exchanges.

Figures from the National Immigration Administration show that nearly 3.12 million cross-Strait trips were made in the first half of this year, up 22.1 percent year-on-year. Taiwan residents made 2.85 million visits to the mainland, an increase of 24.9 percent. Zhu said the figures show that claims by the DPP authorities that the mainland is unsafe have failed to convince people in Taiwan, with more Taiwan residents traveling to the mainland or planning visits.

Responding to online discussions among Taiwan youth about whether a trip to the mainland is "worth it", Zhu said, "A trip to the mainland is not only worthwhile, but more than worthwhile."

She welcomed more Taiwan youth to participate in cross-Strait exchanges. She said people on both sides of the Strait share common roots, culture and ancestry and should have more opportunities to meet and communicate.

The mainland welcomes more Taiwan residents, particularly young people, for exchanges, study, internships, employment, entrepreneurship, tourism and business, she said.

"Seeing is believing," Zhu said, adding that the mainland will continue to provide greater convenience and better conditions for Taiwan compatriots.

A series of youth exchange activities is scheduled across the mainland this summer. From July 14 to 17, a youth exchange delegation from the Taiwan People's Party is visiting Shanghai. The sixth Cross-Strait Youth Culture Month opened in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, on July 15. The ninth Cross-Strait Youth Development Forum will be held from July 17 to 21 in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, and other locations.

Zhu also highlighted the role of the "mini three links" — the direct passenger, postal and trade links between the coastal areas of Fujian province and Jinmen and Matsu. By June 30, the routes had safely carried more than 27 million passengers, including more than 1.15 million in the first half of this year.

The mainland has promoted the resumption of travel by residents of Shanghai and Fujian to Jinmen and Matsu. According to Zhu, such visits now exceed 300,000.

Mainland residents are also willing to visit destinations across Taiwan, including Penghu, she said. However, the DPP authorities have continued to restrict mainland residents from traveling to Taiwan on what she described as unjustified grounds, hindering the recovery of the cross-Strait tourism market.

Zhu urged the DPP authorities to put people's interests first and lift restrictions on mainland residents' visits to Taiwan as soon as possible.

She said a tourism development plan for the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30) calls for expanding cross-Strait tourism cooperation and strengthening youth exchanges. Tourism helps people on both sides better understand their shared history, culture and landscapes while also benefiting Taiwan's catering, transportation, cultural and creative sectors, she said.

Zhu also rejected recent claims by Taiwan's "mainland affairs council" that several Taiwan residents had lost contact after visiting the mainland and that one public servant had been questioned. Since 2024, Taiwan residents have made more than 11.7 million visits to the mainland for exchanges, study, employment, tourism and business, she said.

"As long as they do not engage in illegal or criminal activities, Taiwan compatriots can come to the mainland and return safely," Zhu said.

Direct cross-Strait flights also remained strong in the first half of this year, with passenger trips reaching nearly 3.14 million, up 15 percent year-on-year.

Zhu said the mainland will continue to promote the full normalization of direct flights and urged the Taiwan authorities to remove unreasonable restrictions so that airlines on both sides can arrange flights according to market demand.

US students attend Flying Tigers camp

By **TAN YINGZI** and **DENG RUI** in Chongqing

More than 40 students and teachers from the United States and China gathered in Chongqing this week for a summer camp marking the 85th anniversary of the Flying Tigers, the famed US volunteer group that helped China fight Japanese forces during World War II.

The 2026 Flying Tigers Summer Camp in China, held from Sunday to Wednesday, brought together 21 students and teachers from nine US educational institutions and 23 participants from three schools in Chongqing. The program featured historical visits, discussions and cultural exchanges.

Organized by the Sino-American Aviation Heritage Foundation, a US nonprofit dedicated to preserving the history of US-China aviation cooperation, the camp is part of a broader initiative to promote historical understanding and people-to-people exchanges. In September 2022, the foundation launched the Flying Tigers Friendship Schools program, a youth leadership initiative designed to help American students learn about the Flying Tigers, preserve their legacy and strengthen China-US friendship. This summer, nearly 200 students from the program are visiting nine Chinese cities, including Wuhan, Zhengzhou, Fuzhou and Chongqing, for cultural exchanges.

During the camp, participants visited the Chongqing Stilwell Museum, the former residence of US General Joseph Stilwell, and took part in a salon on wartime history, cultural exchanges and the role of young people in fostering bilateral ties. They also played a table tennis match to commemorate the 55th anniversary of China-US Ping-Pong Diplomacy.

The itinerary also included visits to Chongqing landmarks, including Jiefangbei, also known as the People's Liberation Monument, and the Chongqing China Three Gorges Museum, among others.

The program gave American students a deeper understanding of the wartime cooperation between US military personnel, led by General Joseph Stilwell, and Chinese forces.

"I used to think the Flying Tigers were mostly American pilots," said Dylan Mancini, 15, a student at East Side Community High School in New York City. "But now I've learned that Chinese soldiers and ordinary civilians also played important roles during the war."

For many participants, the camp also offered an opportunity to build friendships across cultures.

"I think it's a great way to bond," said Mason Shen, 13, a student at Linden Avenue Middle School in Red Hook, New York. "It's a great way to connect with each other without speaking too much."

Lin Zibei, 16, a student at Chongqing Yucai Secondary School, said the exchanges quickly revealed common interests despite differences in nationality. "Although our countries are far apart, we share many common interests."

Grace Guizhi Wang, the camp's lead teacher and a member of the Sino-American Aviation Heritage Foundation, said the program's guiding principle is "honoring the past and connecting the future".

"The children are already sharing their journey on social media," Wang said. "When they return, they'll share their experiences and friendships with their families and peers. These memories will last a lifetime."

Contact the writers at dengrui@chinadaily.com.cn

Urban unemployment rate in June falls further

By **LI LEI**
lilei@chinadaily.com.cn

China's surveyed urban unemployment rate fell to 5 percent in June, the lowest level this year, as the government's push for an "employment first" strategy showed early signs of progress, official data showed on Wednesday.

The rate eased 0.1 percentage point from May and extended its decline from a March peak of 5.4 percent, according to the National Bureau of Statistics.

The first-half average stood at 5.2 percent, unchanged from a year earlier, leaving economists confident that Beijing will comfortably meet its annual target of about 5.5 percent.

Together with other indicators, the first-half data "shows the economy is generally stable, with key indicators running within a reasonable range", NBS Deputy Head Mao Shengyong told a State Council Information Office news conference in Beijing.

He said authorities would step up efforts to stabilize employment, businesses, markets and expectations while promoting higher-quality development and sustaining reasonable economic growth.

The jobless rate rose from 5.2 percent in January to a March peak of 5.4 percent before declining for three consecutive months. Officials attributed the March increase to a seasonal postholiday surge in job-seeking by migrant workers.

In June, the unemployment rate was 5 percent for locally registered workers, 4.9 percent for workers registered outside their place of employment and 4.8 percent for rural migrant workers, the NBS said.

The surveyed unemployment rate in 31 major cities also fell 0.1 percentage point from May to 5 percent. By the end of June, the number of rural migrant workers employed outside their hometowns reached 192.27 million, up 0.5 percent from a year earlier.

The decline in unemployment came amid a national push to build an "employment-friendly" development model, a concept highlighted in this year's Government Work Report. The approach places "stable employment" first among four key priorities, followed by stable businesses, markets and expectations.

In June, the State Council, China's Cabinet, unveiled a plan to implement the "employment first" strategy during the 2026-30 period.

Last week, authorities released key employment targets for the period, including helping 25 million unemployed people return to work and assisting 6.5 million people facing employment difficulties in finding jobs.

The plan also calls for keeping the urban surveyed unemployment rate below 5.5 percent throughout the period and providing subsidized vocational training to more than 50 million people, including 17.5 million rural migrant workers.

"The latest jobless figures were in line with expectations and will significantly strengthen efforts to achieve the full-year employment target," Li Chang'an, a professor at the University of International Business and Economics' Academy of China Open Economy Studies, said in an interview with China Daily.

Separately, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security's employment promotion department said in a statement on Wednesday that China created 62.42 million new urban jobs over the past five years, while the average surveyed urban unemployment rate remained at 5.2 percent.

The employed population reached 725 million in 2025, with urban workers accounting for 65.6 percent of the total and nonfarm employment making up 77.8 percent, reflecting a continued shift toward higher-productivity sectors.

Sweet skills



Participants of the WorldSkills Shanghai 2026 Skills Practice Day & Summer Camp learn to make fondant models of "Neng Neng", the mascot of the 48th WorldSkills Competition, which is scheduled for Sept 22 to 27, in Shanghai on Tuesday. LIU XIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

APEC Digital Week to kick off in Chengdu

By **ZHANG YUNBI**
zhangyunbi@chinadaily.com.cn

A series of events for the APEC Digital Week kicks off in Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province and a city known for innovation and creativity in western China, on Thursday.

Running from July 16 to 29, the APEC Digital Week "is one of the most significant and well-rounded events in the series of APEC specialized ministerial meetings", Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said on Wednesday.

Among the events are the APEC Digital and Artificial Intelligence Ministerial Meeting, a high-level forum on AI and a high-level roundtable on data to spur growth.

There will also be meetings of the APEC Telecommunications and Information Working Group and the Digital Economy Steering Group, along with site visits focusing on data-driven healthcare, animation, cultural creativity, smart cities and AI applications.

They are among more than 10 specialized ministerial meetings and high-level events that China has planned to host throughout the year as chair of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation events in 2026.

Lin said digital technologies such as AI have become key drivers of new quality productive forces and innovative growth.

"Making good use of AI while managing its risks" and "transforming the vitality of innovation into a driving force for growth" have become common challenges facing stakeholders across the region, he said.

"We believe that APEC Digital Week will serve as an important platform for all parties to engage in in-depth discussions, further advance the inclusive and equitable development of AI, promote digital and AI-enabled cooperation and enhance the development and utilization of data," Lin said.

"It will also provide an opportunity for all parties to experience China's achievements in scientific and technological innovation and the development of new quality productive forces," he added.

With the APEC "China Year" now halfway through, Lin said cooperation across a wide range of fields has advanced steadily, "yielding a series of early harvests".

"I am confident that as upcoming events unfold, everyone will find the second half of the APEC 'China Year' to be impressive as well," he said.

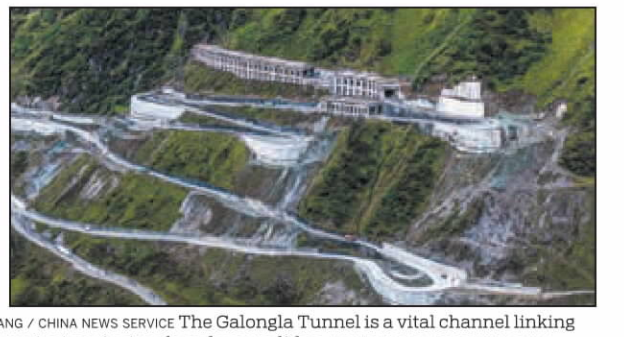
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:58 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:58 PM

CHINA







Clockwise from left: Dancers perform at a park in Metog, Xizang autonomous region, last month. KUNGA LESANG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE The Galongla Tunnel is a vital channel linking Metog with the outside world. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY The highway leading to the tunnel is partially covered to protect against rock and snow slides. HUANG JINGUO / FOR CHINA DAILY

Highway drives Metog's economic engine

Life in Xizang's last road-connected county reshaped through infrastructure

By CUI JIA in Metog, Xizang
cuijia@chinadaily.com.cn

When Kelsang Dekyi traveled out of Metog county in the Xizang autonomous region via a highway tunnel through the Galongla Mountain for the first time, she did not just see light at the end of the tunnel, but a brighter future for her people.

The tunnel, a key part of the Zhamog-Metog Highway connecting Metog with neighboring Bomi county's Zhamog township, looks like a tiny wormhole against a backdrop of mountains covered in snow even in June.

"The zigzagging old roads, which are abandoned, were the only means of getting in and out of Metog," said the 48-year-old. "All people, young and old, had to make the dangerous journey that took days on foot in the old days."

Frequent natural disasters, such as avalanches, landslides and mudslides, often blocked the old roads to the county. This extreme isolation earned Metog its name, which translates to "secret lotus" in the Tibetan language, according to Kelsang Dekyi, who now serves as the vice-principal of Wanquan Primary School in Metog.

Constructing modern roads to Metog, which lies on the lower reaches of the Yarlung Zangbo River and on the southern slope of the Himalayas, represents one of the most punishing engineering challenges in China due to highly unstable geological conditions and volatile mountain weather. After several attempts were thwarted over decades, a 117-kilometer highway finally opened on Oct 31, 2013, making Metog the last county in China to be connected to the national highway network.

The breakthrough required an initial capital investment of 950 million yuan ($140 million), a massive engineering gamble that has since yielded staggering economic returns. In 2012, the year before the highway opened, Metog's local economy was largely dormant, with a GDP of just 260 million yuan. Since the road's completion, the county's GDP has grown at an average annual rate of 13.8 percent, recently crossing the historic 1 billion yuan milestone — a nearly 300 percent total economic expansion.

This macroeconomic surge has translated directly into a dramatic rise in living standards for the county's estimated 15,300 residents. The average annual disposable income for rural residents in Metog has skyrocketed by more than 400 percent, rising from 4,875 yuan in the pre-highway era to 24,935 yuan today, while urban residents now see average incomes reach 47,198 yuan.

"I can still vividly remember having to walk through knee-high snow for three days to reach Bomi when I was a child," Kelsang Dekyi, a member of the Monba ethnic group, recalled. "I don't think I could endure such trips now, and the children in my school will never need to know the hardship of those journeys."

After graduating from Hebei Normal University's Minzu College in 2001, she chose to return to Metog to become a primary school teacher to offer local children better educational opportunities.

With more locals having the chance to explore the outside world and more people coming in bringing fresh ideas since the opening of the highway, Metog's residents now understand the importance of education more than ever, she said.

"In the past, our mission was to persuade parents to send their children to school and keep them in school. Now our task is to provide them with quality education," Kelsang Dekyi said while watching students playing on a recently refurbished soccer field. "Without the highway, the school would never have top teaching facilities in place. The road has changed everything."

Even with the modern highway, the journey to Metog remains an adventure. Drivers must cross the snow-capped Galongla Mountain at an altitude of nearly 5,000 meters before descending into the Yarlung Zangbo River valley at just 800 meters. The trip takes about eight hours, provided travelers do not encounter landslides in the summer or avalanches in the winter. Because vehicles must crawl carefully along cliff-hugging lanes, traffic management authorities only allow non-local motorists to enter Metog on even-numbered days and leave on odd-numbered days to prevent accidents and jams.

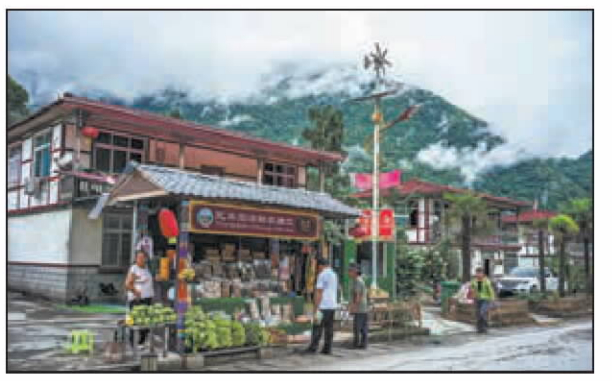
Zhang Shuisheng, a driver who has navigated the route frequently since 2013, said it's probably the only highway in China that still needs such regulation, which shows how challenging the road is.

"Efforts to upgrade the highway have never stopped over the past decade. Getting to Metog has become much easier and safer. And the transformation of the county in such a short time is unbelievable," said Zhang.

For the people of the Monba ethnic group who live along the Yarlung Zangbo River canyon, where the snow-capped peaks give way to lush subtropical forests, the road has unlocked a viable agricultural sector.

Resident Drakpa makes a living by planting tea, bananas and other subtropical fruits on terraced fields in a village in the canyon.

"Like many villagers, I only learned to become a farmer since the road opened. What's the point of cultivating agricultural products when it's nearly impossible to ship them out?" Drakpa said.







From top: A fruit vendor sets up shop by the Zhamog-Metog Highway in the Xizang autonomous region in October. HUANG JINGUO / FOR CHINA DAILY
Tourists purchase local specialty products in Deshing township of Metog in May. KUNGA LESANG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE
Visitors take in a panoramic view of a horseshoe-shaped bend of the Yarlung Zangbo River in Metog in May. KUNGA LESANG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE



CHINA DAILY

In the past, everything, including rice, salt and medicine, had to be carried on the backs of porters, or strapped to mules trudging over icy passes to reach Metog. And things were unthinkably expensive.

Following in the footsteps of his father, Drakpa became a porter when he was just 10. "At first, I could only carry 20 kilograms of goods. And each delivery trip to and from Bomi would demand more than 10 days of strenuous effort," he said. "I thought that's what life would always be like."

Today, he simply calls a courier service to deliver his tea anywhere in China.

Metog's tea industry was born in 2011 when teams from the coastal provinces of Guangdong and Fujian arrived under China's paired assistance program and realized the local monsoon climate was ideal for cultivation. Once the highway opened, the county government was able to scale production rapidly, transforming crude stilted villages into modern settlements equipped with stable infrastructure and bringing commodity prices down to match those of the outside world.

Beyond agriculture, tourism has become a new driver of the local economy, with Metog attracting over 700,000 visitors annually and generating 470 million yuan in tourist revenue. The county's unique altitude drop offers a condensed view of the Earth's diverse climates, packed with glaciers, rivers and rainforests. While Metog had barely one functional hotel a decade ago, dozens of modern lodgings and national hotel chains now operate at full capacity during holidays.

"It's like compressing the landscapes around the world into one county, earning Metog the nickname 'Condensed Earth,'" driver Zhang said. "Often, the hotel rooms are all fully booked during national holidays."

Tondring from Gelin village works as a guide taking tourists to see the 76.8-meter Bhutan pine, which is one of the tallest trees found on the Chinese mainland.

"I knew the tree was tall when I was a child, but I didn't know it was that tall until the scientists measured it in 2022. It has become the top tourist attraction in the village," said Tondring, who previously made his living from hunting.

Besides taking tourists to see the tree, Tondring said he also enjoys sharing with them lessons in the biodiversity of the forest. "The knowledge I gained from being a hunter now can help me better protect the wildlife," he said.

He said an increasing number of tourists now choose to stay at the homestays in the 28-household village, so they can enjoy the unique and stunning scenery of tea farms against the backdrop of Mount Namcha Barwa.

"Without roads in good condition and access to 5G networks, we wouldn't be able to attract so many tourists," Tondring said.

With the extra income from being a guide, he made a trip to Beijing two years ago and visited Tian'anmen Square — his dream tourist destination. "I would never plan the trip if the highway didn't open. I think it has made many impossible things possible."

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Resettlement transforms remote Himalayan borderlands

By CUI JIA

A newly completed relocation settlement in a secluded Himalayan area of the Xizang autonomous region has successfully transitioned hundreds of residents from hazardous, landslide-prone mountain villages into a modern, tourism-focused hub.

The Guoxing settlement, in Xizang's Metog county, is the last of five resettlement projects designed to improve livelihoods in the geographically isolated region. Situated just a few kilometers from the Line of Actual Control in the China-India border area, the village represents the dual strategy of poverty alleviation and border reinforcement through civilian development.

For Norbu Yangzom, the resettlement ends decades of environmental vulnerability. In the past, she often had to worry about landslides when it rained. Furthermore, her children had to make long and dangerous journeys to go to school.





Left: The Guoxing settlement sits on a slope in Metog, Xizang autonomous region.
Right: Residents pass through a street of the Guoxing settlement last month. PHOTOS BY CHENG XINGCHENG AND XU CHAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

Dorjee Phuntsok, an official at the settlement, said people can live a modern and safe life with reliable transport, ample housing and access to education.

Although people have only lived in the settlement for just over a year, businesses are growing steadily.

Tea houses and restaurants bustle with locals and visitors. The construction of homestays with views of Mount Namcha Barwa has been completed and they will be open soon.

To ensure the long-term economic viability of the border community, local authorities have leveraged Metog's unique, humid rainforest climate to establish high-value agricultural initiatives. With government backing, agricultural experts cultivated and distributed over 6,000 pots of dendrobium — a highly valued medicinal herb — to local households to establish a sustainable stream of income.

Domestic tourists are already arriving in the region, drawn by its pristine rainforests and dramatic mountain geography.

"I really enjoy the beautiful settlement surrounded by primeval rainforests and rolling green mountains with modern facilities," said Zhang Jun, a visitor from neighboring Sichuan province.

Zhang noted that thriving civilian populations and tourism play an indirect role in national defense. "I believe tourists can also play an important role in safeguarding the border because there is strength in numbers," he said. "If the border settlement can flourish and draw tourists, how dare people from other countries intrude on our land?"

With infrastructure complete and businesses expanding, local authorities hope Guoxing will serve as a blueprint for sustainable development along China's southwestern frontier.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:58 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:58 PM

LIFE





Step inside an emperor's inner world

Using technology and light, visitors are immersed in the 18th-century ruler Qianlong's retirement garden, experiencing history firsthand, **Bai Shuhao** reports.





Top left: An exquisitely detailed architectural model created using traditional Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) paper-modeling techniques. **Top right:** A holographic projection re-creates opera performances once staged at the theater pavilion of Juanqin Studio in the Palace Museum. **Above left:** A light and shadow show inspired by Biluo Pavilion in the Palace Museum. **Above right:** Guests attend the launch ceremony of the exhibition. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Visitors must knock three times before entering the wooden gate. After a brief pause, it creaks open. Standing inside is Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) Emperor Qianlong, the 18th-century ruler whose reign marked the period's height of territorial advantages and cultural confidence. With a slight gesture, he invites his guests to step into the garden he built for his retirement.

The emperor exists only as light.

Digitally projected onto a screen, Qianlong serves as the unlikely host of *A Garden Within: An Immersive Light and Shadow Exhibition of the Qianlong Garden*, which opened to public on July 9 at the National Library of China in Beijing. Through holograms, interactive projections and virtual reality, the exhibition offers something even visitors to the Palace Museum still cannot fully experience.

Built between 1771 and 1776, Qianlong Garden, officially known as the Garden in the Palace of Tranquil Longevity, was conceived as a private retreat for the emperor after his planned abdication.

Spanning roughly 6,400 square meters in the northeastern corner of the Forbidden City, the garden unfolds through four successive courtyards containing 27 buildings, each distinguished by elaborate decorative schemes and some of the Qing court's finest surviving interior craftsmanship.

For generations, however, the garden remained almost entirely inaccessible. Only last September, as the Palace Museum marked the 100th anniversary of its founding, were visitors allowed inside following years of painstaking conservation.

Even now, public access is limited to the first two courtyards. The innermost sections remain closed due to the fragility of the historical buildings and the artworks they contain.

"Fortunately, the exhibition makes up for that limitation," says Su Yi, deputy director of the Palace Museum. "It re-creates the spaces and preserves the atmosphere the emperor intended — a landscape that appears shaped by nature despite being meticulously designed."

The first gallery re-creates Yanqi Gate, the ceremonial entrance to the garden. Beyond it stands an exquisitely detailed architectural model built using traditional Qing-era paper-modeling techniques. Every pavilion, corridor and rock formation has been reproduced to scale, down to individual trees, including one that occupied a particularly important place in the emperor's imagination.

According to records, the Chinese catalpa tree was originally slated for removal during construction. Qianlong refused. Instead, he ordered a nearby pavilion to be moved about a meter north so the tree could remain untouched. The building was later named Guhua Pavilion for the blossoms of the ancient catalpa. More than two centuries later, the tree still flowers each year inside the Forbidden City.

That quiet relationship between architecture and nature becomes one of the exhibition's most contemplative moments. Visitors settle onto cushions laid across the gallery floor and look through digital windows into the garden beyond, inviting viewers to take a moment, as Qianlong once did, to watch the ancient catalpa complete its quiet cycle, year after year.

The exhibition also offers glimpses of Qianlong beyond his public role as emperor.

As a devoted collector and patron of the arts, Qianlong admired *Lanting Xu* (Orchid Pavilion Preface), the celebrated fourth-century essay by the calligrapher Wang Xizhi, which tells of a gathering where scholars floated wine cups along a winding stream (known as "*qushui liushang*"), drank, and composed poetry whenever a cup came to rest before them. Inspired by the story, Qianlong commissioned a 27-meter meandering watercourse inside his own garden.

This custom is digitally re-created. A projected stream flows across the gallery floor beneath stands of bamboo. Virtual wine cups drift with the current until visitors reach out their hands, whereupon they glide gently into their palms.

"The exhibition reminds visitors that Qianlong was not only an emperor," says Wang Zhiwei, deputy editor of the Palace Museum Press and the exhibition's chief curator. "He was someone with personal interests, hobbies and pleasures."

The watercourse, in particular, illustrates how literary customs became part of the emperor's private world. For young visitors, Wang adds, it also offers an opportunity to memorize passages from Wang Xizhi's famous text.

More broadly, Wang Zhiwei says, the imperial garden reflects the cultural landscape of the Qing empire. Southern Chinese aesthetic traditions appear throughout the garden, revealing the artistic and cultural exchanges that took place across the empire.

That cultural synthesis extends to the garden's interiors. The exhibition highlights decorative techniques, such as mother-of-pearl inlay, marquetry and carved lacquer preserved throughout the complex, many of which are now recognized as part of China's intangible cultural heritage.

The final gallery replaces projection with immersion. Wearing virtual reality headsets, visitors wander through a complete digital reconstruction of the garden.

One woman lingers after the experience ends, still holding out her hands as digital flower petals disappear.

"It feels like the garden represents Qianlong's inner world," she says. "People come and go, but the seasons never stop changing."

A question printed on the exhibition seems to give voice to the emperor: If you were given a space no larger than this, how would you create a world of your own?

Contact the writer at baishuhao@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

Chinese horn ensemble shares universal language of music





Left: Chinese musicians pose for a photo during the 58th International Horn Symposium on July 7. **Right:** The China Horn Ensemble plays at the opening concert of the symposium in Krakow, Poland. PHOTOS BY XINHUA

KRAKOW, Poland — As the final notes faded through the concert hall in Krakow, Poland, the audience rose in sustained applause, celebrating a performance that brought together European classics and Chinese melodies through the rich sound of the horn.

For the China Horn Ensemble, the concert marked more than the end of a performance. On July 7, it debuted at the opening concert of the 58th International Horn Symposium, the world's leading gathering of horn performers and educators.

Performing before an audience of leading figures in the international horn community, the ensemble moved seamlessly between works by Johann Strauss II, Giacomo Puccini and Pietro Mascagni and Chinese classics including the *Butterfly Lovers Fantasy* and *Dance of the Yao Ethnic Group*.

One of the evening's highlights was a jazz-inspired rendition of the Chinese folk song *Jasmine Flower*. As its familiar pentatonic melody unfolded over lively rhythms, audience members standing in the aisles began to smile and sway with the music.

Among the audience sat one of the horn world's most respected figures, Randall Faust, whose opinion carries considerable weight in the international horn community.

When the final note faded, Faust turned to Peter Luff, president of the International Horn Society, and quietly said, "I want to hear it again."

Luff knew exactly how much those words meant. Faust, he said, was known for his exacting standards and was not one to offer praise lightly.

"If he doesn't like it, he'll say it. He loved it," said Luff.

If Faust's words carried special weight, the prolonged standing ovation from the audience left an equally strong impression on Luff.

"That reaction is very unusual at an academic symposium like this," Luff said, noting that the Chinese musicians offered "a distinctly Eastern musical character and a completely fresh artistic interpretation".

Will Sanders, professor of horn at the Karlsruhe University of Music in Germany, shared a similar impression.

"The intonation and harmony are excellent, and the program is so interesting because it connects us with the Chinese way of feeling and expressing music," he said.

In addition, at the Academy of Music's classrooms in Krakow, Chinese musicians led master classes specially organized for students attending the symposium.

The exchanges focused not on dazzling techniques, but on musical details — where a phrase begins to breathe, how a musical sentence finds direction, and how technical accuracy can become expression.

Stephen Spacek, a student from Texas, the United States, said the classes left a lasting impression.

"I hope to become a horn educator like the Chinese teachers," he said. "They don't just perform beautifully. Their teaching, musical judgment and stage experience make them role models."

For Wojciech Kamionka, organizer of this year's symposium, inviting the Chinese ensemble was an easy decision.

He recalled visiting a summer music camp in Qingdao, Shandong province, years ago, where hundreds of Chinese students studied alongside dozens of teachers.

"That was when I realized this wasn't about one or two gifted musicians," he said. "More Chinese horn players are entering major orchestras and conservatories worldwide. China's visibility in this field is growing."

Luff has witnessed the same trend. He believes China's growing presence in the international horn community is no longer defined solely by exceptional soloists, but increasingly by ensembles performing at the highest level.

"When I first heard orchestras in Shenzhen (Guangdong province) and Beijing, I realized I was listening to world-class musicians," Luff said. "Now it's time for China to take its place on the world's concert stage in a big way."

In the eyes of Kamionka, the symposium reveals music's greatest strength.

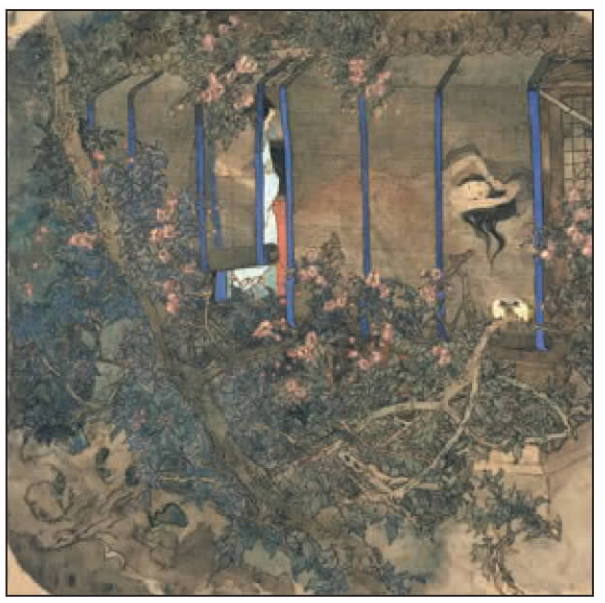
"It doesn't matter whether the music comes from the East or the West — it all comes together, and actually, the beauty of the sound, of the instrument, is universal," he said.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:58 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:58 PM

LIFE





Transforming poems into paintings

Veteran ink artist turns to rhymed verses of the Song Dynasty for inspiration, as his works become an immersive ongoing exhibition on the Bund, **Lin Qi** reports.

"In the dim, bewildering realm of pond and floating weeds, ripples tremble on the clear water; amid the pink mist and blue haze, one's resentment melts; the fragrance of lotuses veils the water, the flowers swell as if their crimson hue colored the waves into rouge, and the pool became a mirror to reflect a myriad of beauties competing with envy."

In his *ci* (rhythmic verses) work, *To the Tune "Guo Qin Lou" · Lotus*, Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279) poet Wu Wenying depicted a dazzling scene of the prosperous lotus pond immersed in a mystic, mournful mood.

The refined, sophisticated verses Wu composed some 800 years ago are now rendered through paintings and technological devices, depicting a vivid lotus pond veiled in wispy fog, providing a cool haven amid the summer heat and a one-of-a-kind ethereal experience that characterizes Song Dynasty (960-1279) aesthetics.

The cinematic scene, derived from an ink painting by veteran artist Dai Dunbang, born in 1938, is one of several immersive spots at *Echoes of Song Ci*, an exhibition to inaugurate the Daidunbang Art Museum's opening on July 9 in Shanghai, where Dai has lived and worked for decades.

The gallery is located at Bai Work on Hong Kong Road, a European-style building constructed in 1920 that has been transformed into a complex for culture and arts, offices and retail. Situated in the metropolis' historical commercial Bund, the building is surrounded by historical architecture and landmark sites.

Now, Dai's vivid brushwork is diversifying the area's cultural tableau by celebrating the depth of classical literature and the tradition of ink art. This inaugural exhibition, running until Oct 8, is a colorful narrative of Dai's lifelong oath: "With Chinese brush and ink, (I) paint the tales of China."



Top left: A painting inspired by Li Qingzhao's poem, *To the Tune "Ru Meng Ling"*. **Top middle:** Inspired by Song Dynasty (960-1279) poem *To the Tune "Guo Qin Lou" · Lotus*, Dai Dunbang captures the prosperity of a lotus pond alongside a hint of melancholy in this painting. **Top right:** A painting inspired by Song literati Yan Shu's poem, *To the Tune "Huan Xi Sha"*. **Above:** Dai's paintings are displayed alongside immersive installations, transporting visitors centuries back into the elegant, elusive world of Song poetry. **Below:** With vivid, expressive brushstrokes, Dai brings classical Chinese novels and literary masterpieces to life. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Between 1987 and 1991, Dai created 56 paintings inspired by Song *ci* poetry, done in the *gongbi* (meticulous brushwork) style of Chinese painting on silk. These works were featured in a collection of illustrated books published in 2025, which also cataloged his paintings drawn from Tang Dynasty (618-907) poetry and famed literary works of other periods.

The ongoing exhibition features most of the works from his Song *ci* series, illustrating the poems of over 40 authors, including Wu Wenying. Aided by illustrated boards, interactive installations, and light and audio settings, the works transport



audiences centuries back to an elegant, elusive world.

"In the long course of history, Tang and Song poetry represents the quintessence of our literary heritage, standing as a summit of artistic expression. Centuries separate these creators from us, and I read their texts with great care. The popularity of my works proves my earnest devotion," Dai says.

Song paintings were done on both paper and silk. To capture the splendor of Song art, Dai learned to paint on silk, a medium he had been unfamiliar with. He re-creates the refined sophistication of Song court paintings and integrates unpolished lines to form his own unique style.

While poets condensed the prosperity and upheavals of the Song over 300 years into verses of varying lengths, with flamboyance and melancholy, Dai details the passion, sentiments and timeless romance embodied in these lines with an elegant, conservative palette. Audiences will find these artistic qualities in his depiction of young women enjoying spring scenery, derived from Yan Shu's verses, or "of the burgeoning streets bustled with people in celebration of Chinese New Year", inspired by Wang Anshi's verse.

Dai's paintings are also a feast for fashionistas of classical outfits, hairstyles and accessories. He is attentive to the various ways women of different social ranks dress: those from well-off families wear towering hair buns to impress, while common girls favor low hairdos for the convenience of domestic work.

One of Dai's most celebrated works is a testimony to his painterly passion for literary classics: a long scroll of figures that appears at the end of *Shui Hu Zhuan*, adapted from *The Water Margin*, or *Outlaws of the Marsh*, a highly rated historical drama that first aired on China Central Television in 1998. The TV series was adapted from the eponymous novel by Shi Nai'an, set in the 14th century amid the turbulence of the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127), and narrates the story of a group of outlaws who organize an uprising against a corrupt imperial court.

Dai's work depicts the 108 heroes who band together to resist oppression.

His prolific output also includes *Journey to the West*, *Dream of the Red Chamber*, and other classic novels.

"I am no master artist," he says. "I'm just a grassroots painter who draws for the people."

Contact the writer at linqi@chinadaily.com.cn

Photographs preserve enduring, ironclad China-Serbia ties

BELGRADE — Through a panoramic, multidimensional presentation, a photo exhibition at the Chinese Cultural Center in Belgrade offers visitors a vivid glimpse into the ironclad friendship and fruitful cooperation between China and Serbia.

Let the Light of Ironclad Friendship Illuminate the Road of China-Serbia Cooperation — A Photo Exhibition of the Friendship Between the Chinese and Serbian People features around 70 photographs capturing memorable exchanges and major achievements in bilateral cooperation.

Together, the photographs illustrate how the friendship between the two countries has deepened over more than seven decades and continues to flourish with renewed vitality in the new era.

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic attended the exhibition's opening ceremony on June 18 and strolled through the hall on a guided tour, stopping frequently to examine the photographs.

"Great photos," he remarked more than once.

In the section highlighting key milestones in the history of China-Serbia relations, Vucic reflected on several important occasions he had personally participated in or witnessed.

"These photographs preserve precious historical memories," he said.

In another section dedicated to bilateral cooperation, images of landmark projects such as the Budapest-Belgrade railway, the Smederevo Steel Plant, and the Danube Corridor fast road attracted considerable attention. Many visitors paused to take pictures with their mobile phones.

Speaking with Xinhua after touring the exhibition, Vucic said the exhibition "speaks not only about our past, but also about the present time and mainly about our common future".

"Our ironclad friendship is the common denominator for both countries in the future," he said.



People watch a freight train arriving at the Soroksar railway station in Budapest on Feb 27, 2026. The Budapest-Belgrade railway, a flagship Belt and Road Initiative project, is a key infrastructure undertaking jointly built by China, Hungary, and Serbia to link the two capital cities. XINHUA

Among the visitors was Jelena Curafic, a Serbian doctoral student who has studied and lived in China for nearly a decade.

"The exhibition deeply moved me," she said. "It allowed me to see the development of our friendship over the years and to appreciate both its historical depth and its promising future."

Curafic noted that in recent years, an increasing number of young Serbians have shown interest in learning more about China and visiting the country.

"Many of my friends often ask me about China's development and changes, and they are eager to know whether there are opportunities to study or participate in exchange programs there," she said.

Aleksandar Mitic, a senior research fellow at the Institute of International Politics and Economics, a Serbian think tank, said the exhibition holds special significance, as this year marks the 10th anniversary of the comprehensive strategic partnership between China and Serbia.

Biljana Separovic, multimedia editor-in-chief of Serbia's Tanjug News Agency and host of the opening ceremony, said the photographs vividly reflect the mutual understanding and friendship between the two peoples.

"What always fascinates me most is the hospitality our people show, which is visible in the photographs," she said. "It is something that best shows the respect that we have for each other."

Separovic, who visited Beijing in 2018, said she looks forward to returning to China and seeing more of the places featured in the exhibition.

The exhibition opened in mid-June and runs for one month. It is co-hosted by the Xinhua News Agency Europe Regional Bureau, the Chinese Embassy in Serbia, and China Photo Service Co, and jointly organized by the Xinhua News Agency Belgrade Bureau and the Chinese Cultural Center in Belgrade.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:58 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:58 PM

CULTURE



Tsai Chih-chung talks AI and philosophy

During a book launch, the artist discusses the limitations of technology and the timeless appeal of his bilingual comic adaptation of the *Yi Jing*, **Yang Yang** reports.

AI is capable of providing highly accurate answers, yet it lacks the ability to think independently and be creative. The key to effectively utilizing AI lies in asking precise questions and skillfully filtering through vast amounts of information, said 78-year-old cartoonist Tsai Chih-chung.

Tsai acknowledges that AI can enhance efficiency and reduce costs in comic creation. However, when it comes to traditional comic styles, AI falls short. "AI is just a tool; the ultimate control always remains in human hands," he noted, while addressing a question about AI's influence during the book launch ceremony of the English-Chinese bilingual edition of his comic book *Yi Jing* at the Beijing International Book Fair in mid-June.

The original *Yi Jing* (Book of Changes) is an ancient Chinese text known as the "foremost among the classics", and elucidates the principles of change in the universe and provides guidance for personal conduct and interaction with the world. For millennia, it has enriched the spiritual lives of the Chinese people.

"Mr Tsai, with his signature Zen-inspired artistic style, has vividly illustrated the various life situations depicted in the 64 hexagrams (divinatory symbols) in *Yi Jing*, breathing new life into this ancient classic in the modern world," said Zang Yongqing, deputy general manager of China Publishing and Media.

"He transforms the profound wisdom of Chinese culture into a visual language that appeals to people of all ages and tastes using just a single paintbrush," Zang added.

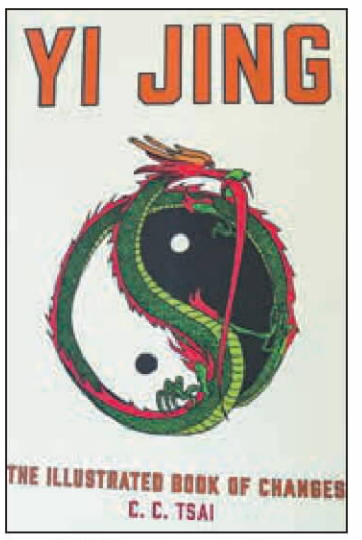
In 1984, Tsai founded a cartoon studio with the aspiration of becoming the world's most influential cartoonist. He asked a critical question: What kind of comic could be sold in over 100 countries, endure for thousands of years, sell more than 100 million copies, and be translated into multiple languages worldwide? The answer, he discovered, was comics about Eastern thought.

His initial comic adaptations of ancient Chinese classics included *Zhuangzi Shuo* (Zhuangzi Speaks) and *Laozi Shuo* (Laozi Speaks). To date, Tsai has adapted more than 40 Chinese texts, transforming Chinese philosophy into engaging, thought-provoking works with a clear, Zen-inspired style.

These adaptations have been translated into 27 languages and published in 67 countries and regions, with total sales surpassing 60 million copies, making them among the most widely read Chinese comics globally.

In 1990, after settling in Vancouver, Tsai began working on a comic version of the *Yi Jing*. However, he paused at the 27th chapter due to difficulty understanding many parts of this arcane ancient Chinese text. He resumed the project in 2011, with the Chinese-language version published in 2020.

When drawing the illustrations for *Yi Jing*, Tsai explained that he first deconstructed each hexagram from the ancient divination text into its six lines. After drawing the hexagrams, he incorporated interpretations by Confucius and by Shao Yong from the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127). Shao's work, *Huangji Jingshi*, is derived from studying the *Yi Jing*.



Top: Tsai Chih-chung signs his new work at the world debut of his English-Chinese bilingual comic, *Yi Jing: The Illustrated Book of Changes*, at the 32nd Beijing International Book Fair on June 19. **Above:** The cover of the book.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

> "Mr Tsai, with his signature Zen-inspired artistic style, has vividly illustrated the various life situations depicted in the 64 hexagrams in *Yi Jing*, breathing new life into this ancient classic in the modern world."
>
> **Zang Yongqing,** deputy general manager, China Publishing and Media

"Many people ask me, 'Is it easy to learn the *Yi Jing*?' My answer, 'It's very difficult.' There are two layers of meaning of *Yi* (changes). One pertains to the sun and the moon, the cycle of day and night, and the transformations occurring in the world. The second meaning is 'lizard' (its Chinese name is *xiyi*, named for its morphological changes), particularly a chameleon, which also symbolizes 'constant change'," he explained.

Tsai used the Qian Hexagram to address a young reader's question about how to navigate a world full of change and uncertainty. He explained that lines in this hexagram, such as "Hidden dragon, do not act", "A dragon appears in the field", and "A dragon flies in the heavens", emphasize the importance of understanding timing, preparation, and knowing when to advance or retreat at different stages of life.

"The whole logic of this hexagram is to tell people to maintain a calm, balanced mindset, build a strong foundation, evaluate the situation, and act accordingly," he said.

For Tsai, the *Yi Jing* possesses a timeless charm. One of the key reasons is its ability to offer positive psychological guidance when facing change and uncertainty. Even when confronted with "bad" hexagrams, one can find opportunities through the concept of "turning extreme adversity into prosperity".

He believes that this wisdom — of facing and understanding change and finding hope within it — is why the *Yi Jing* continues to resonate with people today.

In the early 1990s, Brian Bruya, now a philosophy professor at Eastern Michigan University, reached out to Tsai, expressing his wish to translate *Zhuangzi Shuo* into English. The translation was later published by Princeton University Press.

PUP has long been dedicated to the publication and dissemination of Chinese classics. In 1967, it published an English version of *The I Ching*, or *Book of Changes*, translated by US psychoanalyst Cary F Baynes based on German Sinologist Richard Wilhelm's German translation, and featuring a foreword by Swiss psychologist and psychiatrist Carl Jung. This edition became a crucial resource for the English-speaking world to understand the *Yi Jing*.

In 1992, Bruya's English translation of Tsai's comic book *Zhuangzi Shuo* was published by PUP as *Zhuangzi Speaks: The Music of Nature*, launching a 30-year-plus collaboration that translated eight key works from Tsai's comic adaptations of Chinese classics into English. Bruya translated seven of them, including *The Way of Nature*, *Dao De Jing*, *The Analects*, *The Art of War*, and *The Ways of Zen*.

Starting in 2018, these works were collected into PUP's series "The Illustrated Library of Chinese Classics". The latest addition to this series is the bilingual English-Chinese comic *Yi Jing*, published last month. This edition presents the text in a side-by-side format with clear English and the original Chinese, offering a visually engaging and accessible way for readers worldwide to explore the *Yi Jing*.

Christie Henry, director of Princeton University Press, said that *The I Ching*, or *Book of Changes*, is already a bestseller for the publisher, but its impact extends far beyond sales.

"Its philosophy helps us navigate the world, which is itself a very, very big book of changes," she said.

For her, Tsai has illustrated, with incredible creativity, some of the most formidable and enduring books of philosophy known to humanity at a time when humanity most needs its philosophical grounding.

"In this new vibrant original edition, Tsai Chih-chung brings to the *Yi Jing* a new chapter, a new life. And through his artistry and imagination, we will also be able to build bridges to new readers," she said.

Contact the writer at yangyangs@chinadaily.com.cn

Young readers explore authors' real worlds

Amid Beijing's wealth of historic landmarks, an unlikely attraction has captured the imagination of young visitors — the "ocean" in the Temple of Earth.

While it's unclear how the spot went viral, the Temple of Earth has long enjoyed a devoted following thanks to its association with the late Beijing-born writer Shi Tiesheng. In his masterpiece memoir, *The Temple of Earth and Me*, Shi traced his emotional journey from despair after losing his legs in his early 20s to finding solace in the quiet sanctuary of the former imperial park.

Today, the Temple of Earth continues to draw a steady stream of young followers eager to retrace Shi's wheelchair tracks.

Eager visitors line up to pose on the tree-canopied bench, facing nothing but a wall and pretending to gaze over a stretch of ocean. The "shimmering" blue backdrop in their photos is simply a white-painted wall sprinkled with tree-filtered sun rays. As 26-year-old Shao Yang understands it, sitting on the bench and gazing into the distance is a way for young people to "reunite" with an old friend.

Across China, literature-inspired tourism is gaining momentum, with travelers motivated by books, authors and landscapes depicted in literary works.

Behind this trend lies a broader shift in how young people approach travel. Rather than simply seeking out scenic attractions, they are looking for emotional connections and experiences that resonate with them on a deeper level.

A new five-year tourism development plan, recently approved by the State Council, taps into the current trend and highlights the deep integration of culture and tourism to leverage cultural resources and enrich visitors' experiences.

The plan came at a time when the country had already built the world's largest domestic tourism market and emerged as the world's largest source of outbound tourists, as well as a major global tourism destination.

According to the latest industry data, global tourism expanded by 4.1 percent in 2025, while China's tourism economy grew by 9.9 percent, more than double the global average.

The footsteps of writers

Winding through Shanghai's plane tree-lined downtown streets, visitors can follow in the footsteps of some of modern China's most celebrated writers.

A resident surnamed Xiong is an avid reader of Lu Xun, a leading figure in modern Chinese literature whose enlightening novels and essays even feature prominently in Chinese textbooks.

A few years ago, she first followed the bronze-colored "Lu Xun Trail" markers embedded in the pavement, passing the former site of Uchiyama Bookstore, frequented by the writer in his later years, and the memorial hall of a writers' league Lu Xun helped found in 1930, before arriving at the writer's former residence.

"The history feels tangible this way," she says.

Since that first visit, Xiong has become a regular on the Lu Xun Trail in Shanghai's Hongkou district. Her favorite stop is a memorial cultural venue repurposed from the former Uchiyama Bookstore. "My friends and I come here to catch up, read, and share what we've been reading lately," she says, adding that the place serves as a literary social space just like it once was in Lu Xun's time.

Like the Lu Xun Trail, which was launched in 2019 alongside online versions in English and Japanese, similar "citywalk" routes in Shanghai following in the footsteps of household-name writers have gained popularity in recent years.

Young readers today are no longer content with merely reading books, but are eager to step into the worlds they have encountered to relive the characters' joys and sorrows, and to reconnect literature with the real world with which it is associated, according to Huo Yan, a researcher at the Institute of Literature of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

Such enthusiasm extends beyond Chinese borders. One of the best-known examples is Cambridge in the United Kingdom, where the picturesque riverside setting was immortalized in the celebrated poem *On Leaving Cambridge*, about bidding farewell to the city, by modern Chinese poet Xu Zhimo. For generations of Chinese readers, the poem has made Cambridge a place of literary significance. So many Chinese visitors now flock to the city that some punters on the River Cam have learned to recite lines from Xu's poem to their Chinese passengers.

Reconnecting with roots

On a deeper level, many young people today are developing a growing appreciation for China's history and cultural heritage. Literature-inspired travel is not only an aesthetic experience but also a journey to reconnect with their cultural roots, says Xia Xuemin, a researcher at the Institute for Public Policy of Zhejiang University.

Macheng Road in the Xihu district of Hangzhou, capital city of East China's Zhejiang province, was once home to Li Qingzhao, one of China's most celebrated poets from nearly 1,000 years ago. Fang Jiayi, a visitor passionate about classical poetry, came all the way to take a look at the road after learning about its history.

"Despite the passage of time, the name Macheng Road has endured," she says. "Walking through a place where Li Qingzhao once lived makes history feel more tangible and alive."

Fiction becomes destination

Some localities have been quick to tap into the newfound enthusiasm. Even once-obscure towns that rarely featured on tourists' itineraries are now seeing opportunities. Shendang township in Haiyan county, Zhejiang, is a case in point.

"A sputtering boat carried us along an extended river toward the town called Sundang," wrote Yu Hua, a popular contemporary novelist native to Haiyan, in his novel *Cries in the Drizzle*. The fictional town Sundang was inspired by the real-world town of Shendang.

In recent years, Shendang has launched a "Yu Hua Literary Map" that turns locations from the writer's works into real-world destinations, with reenacted scenes where visitors can even sit down at the dinner depicted in the novel and order a portion of stir-fried pork liver and yellow rice wine, just like Yu Hua's hero does.

"By giving literary IP a physical presence, our once little-known town has been winning over more and more young visitors," says Pang Weihua, deputy general manager of Haiyan Shendang Brewing Co.

Similar destinations include the Changbai Mountain scenic area in China's northeast, which has created themed spaces, concerts and interactive events that allow fans of *The Grave Robbers' Chronicles*, a contemporary Chinese novel series, to relive key moments from the story.

Changbai Mountain serves as the setting for the story's famous "10-year promise", in which two protagonists agree to reunite there after a decade. Every August, thousands of readers make the pilgrimage to Changbai Mountain to "keep the appointment", turning a fictional promise into a real-world gathering.

As literary tourism continues to gain momentum, Xia believes its long-term success will depend on more than viral attractions and social media buzz. Destinations should take a more systematic approach to uncovering and showcasing their literary resources while cultivating a distinctive cultural identity, allowing literature to become more organically and deeply woven into the fabric of the city, Xia says.

XINHUA



An exterior view of the former residence of Lu Xun, one of the most famous modern Chinese writers, in Shanghai. FENG YIYI / XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:58 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:58 PM

SPORTS

2026 WORLD CUP

STURDY SPAIN DEUX IT AGAIN



Pedro Porro reacts after scoring Spain's second goal of its 2-0 World Cup semifinal win over France in Arlington, Texas, on Tuesday. AP



La Roja into a second World Cup final with 2-0 win over France

Jubilant Spain players celebrate at the final whistle of their 2-0 semifinal win over France in Arlington, Texas, on Tuesday. AP



France's Kylian Mbappe reacts to getting tackled by Spain's Lamine Yamal on what was a frustrating night for the French striker, who got none of his three shots on target. AP

Spain's defensive prowess and swagger were just too much for an attacking trio led by France great Kylian Mbappe, and more than enough to get the 2010 champion into another World Cup final.

The Spanish team managed a record sixth shutout in seven games so far, winning 2-0 in the semifinals Tuesday against one of the most prolific scorers in World Cup history in Arlington, Texas.

Teenager Lamine Yamal certainly was correct when he said France should fear Spain, despite it being FIFA's top-ranked team and led by Mbappe — its captain with 20 goals in his 20 World Cup games before the semifinals — Ballon d'Or winner Ousmane Dembele and Michael Olise, who has a tournament-high five assists.

"We were up against one of the best national teams in the world, but today, they were facing the best team in the world," Spain coach Luis de la Fuente said.

Mikel Oyarzabal scored from the penalty spot after Yamal drew a foul, and Pedro Porro added another from a give-and-go with Dani Olmo in the 58th minute to send Spain to its second World Cup final.

A day after his 19th birthday, and not long after Porro had put Spain 2-0 up, Yamal was denied a goal on a close offside call, but it was his smart play against France's veteran defender Lucas Digne that gave Spain the early lead.

After a poor first touch with his head, Digne was trying to clear the ball when Yamal raced in from behind to challenge in the penalty area.

The ball hit the leaping teen before he was kicked by Digne, who, six days before his 33rd birthday, was playing in his 63rd game for France.

Oyarzabal's 22nd-minute conversion from the spot was his fifth goal at this year's World Cup, and his 30th goal in 60 international games for Spain.

It also marked the first time that either team had trailed in their seven games in this tournament.

Spain had two other real scoring chances in the first half.

There was a freekick from just beyond the box after Adrien Rabiot drew a yellow card for a foul on Olmo in the eighth minute. Alex Baena's kick went directly into the wall of French players.

When France goalkeeper Mike Maignan's attempted clearing pass in the 38th minute instead went straight to Baena, there were several quick passes before Fabian Ruiz's close-range shot was denied by defender Dayot Upamecano's nifty play.

For the second goal, Porro broke free and received a pass back from Olmo, who got the assist away just before getting knocked off his feet by Upamecano.

In its first six games in this tournament, France had allowed only two goals.

"We know that we're a very tough team, we're doing things really well," Porro said.

Spain midfielder Rodri added: "(It's been) so difficult to get to this moment, but we want more. We want to win this World Cup."

Spain will face either defending champion Argentina or England on Sunday in East Rutherford, New Jersey, across the river from New York City.

Argentina and England contest the other semifinal on Wednesday in Atlanta.

After trying to become only the third team to reach three consecutive World Cup finals, France instead will play in the third-place game against the loser of Wednesday's match on Saturday, in Miami Gardens, Florida.

"Spain was able to defend well," departing France coach Didier Deschamps said.

"They closed out all the spaces, and also we've made some technical mistakes. So, it is difficult to create problems when the technical level is below standard."

This win on soccer's biggest stage marked the third summer in a row that Spain has beaten France in a tournament semifinal match. Yamal scored in a 2-1 win in the 2024 European Championship semifinals just days before his 17th birthday, and La Roja won 5-4 in the Nations League last year.

Yamal had been quick to point out that France should be concerned after Spain's quarterfinal win over Belgium set up another semifinal matchup.

"It's a team who loves to have control of the game, control of the ball. That's what we let them do," said Mbappe, who got none of his three shots on target.

"It's difficult when you don't change the play of Spain."

Spain has outscored opponents 12-1 since its surprise scoreless draw against Cape Verde in their opening group match.

The lone goal allowed by keeper Unai Simon, which snapped his World Cup record of 650 scoreless minutes, was in the quarterfinal game against Belgium.

This World Cup run has extended Spain's unbeaten streak in regular time to 37 matches (28 wins and nine draws) since March 2024. It breaks the country's previous record of 35 in a row from 2007-09.

The loss broke France's record-matching streak of six consecutive World Cup wins, which the team also accomplished in the 2018 and 2022 tournaments.

Mbappe, who is tied with Argentina's Lionel Messi on eight goals, sits atop the rankings for the Golden Boot courtesy of his tiebreaking assist record. He still has the third-place match to add to his tally. As of Tuesday, Messi had two games left to add to his, and to also try and increase his one-goal lead over Mbappe as the World Cup's all-time leading scorer with 21.

"As the captain, I have to take all the responsibility and I have no problem with that," Mbappe said. "We wanted to go to the final. We didn't make it."

AP

He's not scoring as freely as he'd like, but Yamal turns pressure into points

Lamine Yamal sensed an opportunity, taking off toward Lucas Digne as the France defender was trying to clear a ball he had just headed awkwardly in his own penalty area.

Digne didn't even see Yamal coming when he raised a leg for a clearing kick. His foot crashed into the Spain forward's thigh, and the penalty call that followed put La Roja in a position to take the lead.

Yamal has scored only one goal on Spain's run to the World Cup final, ensured by a 2-0 victory over France in the semifinals on Tuesday.

Coach Luis de la Fuente, when he was asked about the teen sensation the day before the match, on the Barcelona star's 19th birthday, tried to say there were other things besides scoring.

And, on Tuesday, Yamal offered his coach a perfect example of that.

His heady play had led to the penalty kick, but Mikel Oyarzabal was the choice to take it.

Yamal, who didn't talk to reporters after the match, still doesn't have an assist to go with his only goal, but, without him, Spain wouldn't have had a halftime lead against a France team that many considered to be the favorite to win its third world title.

As young as he is, Yamal has the perspective to understand that scoring isn't all that matters, even though, with 16 goals, he shared the Barcelona top-scorer mantle last season with Spain teammate Ferran Torres.

"Everyone has the same direction, the same idea, being aware of what is important," Oyarzabal said. "In the end, you try to put what everyone has, what everyone can give to the team, to the service of the team."

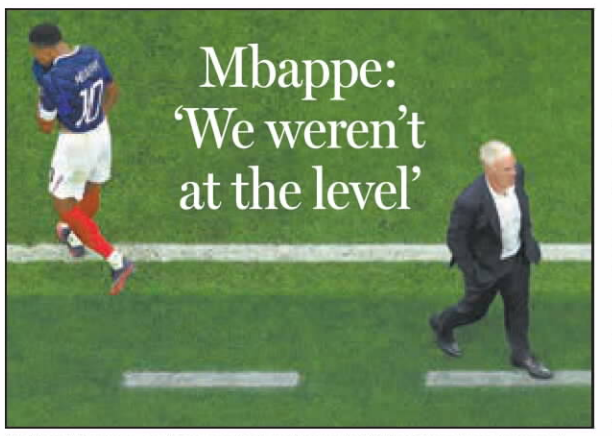
"I think that, in the end, I play as I am, and I will never play better than I am or worse than I really am," Yamal said on Monday.

"So, I always give the maximum ... and when that's what people ask you to do, you don't feel pressure."

Instead, Yamal was the one who applied the pressure, in a key moment, and La Roja is moving on to the final as a result.

AP

Mbappe: 'We weren't at the level'



Kylian Mbappe and France's head coach Didier Deschamps react after losing their World Cup semifinal to Spain on Tuesday. AFP

ARLINGTON, Texas — Kylian Mbappe saw it for himself on the field: France simply didn't play well enough to reach a third consecutive World Cup final.

The France striker will have to settle for a third-place match and an opportunity to take home another Golden Boot award, as a tight race with Argentina superstar Lionel Messi continues.

Mbappe, one of the biggest stars of this year's World Cup and one of the game's greatest scorers, just couldn't generate any decent chances in his team's 2-0 loss to Spain in the semifinals on Tuesday.

Mbappe and Messi have eight goals apiece at this year's tournament so far. Mbappe, who won the Golden Boot at the last World Cup three and a half years ago in Qatar, holds the first tiebreaker with a 3-2 lead on assists. Messi and defending champion Argentina will play again on Wednesday in the other semifinal match against England.

Both players will then have one more match before the award is decided. France will play the loser of the other semifinal match in the third-place game on Saturday in Miami Gardens, Florida. Spain will take on the winner in East Rutherford, New Jersey, in Sunday's final.

"At the end of the day, you take all the glory when you win," Mbappe said. "When you don't win ... it's part of the game. As the captain, I have to take all the responsibility, and I have no problem with that. We wanted to go to the final. We didn't make it."

Mbappe told French broadcaster M6 that the loss had been a "huge disappointment" for the French squad.

"I don't think we played the match we wanted to play — whether tactically, technically, or in terms of our overall performance level," Mbappe said.

"And, when you don't do what you're supposed to do in a World Cup semifinal, you don't win," the Real Madrid star added.

"Our goal was to press them high up the pitch to prevent them from settling into that slow, controlled rhythm — because when it comes to controlling the game, they are better than us. We failed to do that."

Mbappe pinpointed the crux of the problem in midfield, where France's Adrien Rabiot and Aurelien Tchouameni rapidly found themselves overrun by Spain's triumvirate of Rodri, Dani Olmo and Fabian Ruiz.

"We kept finding ourselves outnumbered 3-on-2 in midfield," Mbappe said. "And, against Spain, that's a real problem ... When you put it all together, the result is a defeat. It's a huge disappointment."

Mbappe had the fewest touches of any forward in the first half with 15. Perhaps his most prominent moment was trying to persuade referee Ivan Barton that the penalty that resulted in Spain's first goal shouldn't have been called.

The foul by Lucas Digne on teenager Lamine Yamal stood, and Mikel Oyarzabal's penalty kick in the 22nd minute put Spain into the lead.

Mbappe's best chance came in the 67th minute, when his shot deflected off Spain defender Marc Cucurella and went just wide. La Roja already had a two-goal lead at that point.

"It's a team who loves to have control of the game, control of the ball," Mbappe said. "That's what we let them do. We gave the midfield too much time to play, and, at the end of the day, they had quality to play. It's difficult when you don't change the play of Spain. We weren't at the level to go to the final."

The 27-year-old Mbappe was issued a yellow card in the 86th minute after he rushed toward Unai Simon just as the Spain goalkeeper was bending over to pick up the ball. The two collided, sending Simon to the grass.

Mbappe said France's crestfallen squad was determined to bounce back after digesting the lessons of the loss.

"It was a dream for us to reach the final, to give our country the chance to keep dreaming and to make history," he said. "Now, it is something we have to face with our heads held high. I believe that, when you win, you win with your head held high; so, when you lose, you have to lose with your head held high, too.

"But right now, there is immense disappointment. I find it hard to put into words just how disappointed the squad and I are.

"Yet, even if it might seem a bit robotic at times, we have to pick ourselves up, go on vacation, and move on to the next chapter. Because football waits for no one. We have to start over, put this failure behind us, and learn from it."

AGENCIES

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:37:58 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:00 PM

Dishing out a hit
Chinese film on war uses food as symbol of harmony
LIFE, PAGE 14



Nepal safari ruling sparks job worries
ASIA FOCUS, PAGE 4



Smart logistics
AI-powered robots, systems help reshape country's parcel network
CHINA, PAGE 12

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日報 TUESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2026

Xi reiterates China's Mideast peace stance

Importance of two-state solution emphasized at meeting with King Abdullah II of Jordan

By **CAO DESHENG**
caodesheng@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping reiterated on Monday China's position on the political settlement of the Middle East issue with the Palestinian question at its core, urging efforts to push for the resumption of talks between Palestine and Israel based on the two-state solution and the early establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

Xi made the remarks during his talks with King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein in Beijing. The Jordanian monarch was on a weeklong state visit to China, which concluded on Monday.

Xi emphasized that China has consistently advocated a comprehensive ceasefire, cessation of hostilities and the resolution of disputes through political and diplomatic means, and it maintains that the sovereignty and security of countries in the region, including Jordan, should be respected.

Noting that the principle of "the Palestinians governing Palestine" must be upheld, Xi said that Palestine is the home of all Palestinians, and this principle should be implemented in advancing the governance of the West Bank and postwar reconstruction of Gaza.

He stressed the need to adhere to humanitarianism, with the international community, especially the United Nations Security Council, taking responsibility for protecting the safety of civilians, ensuring humanitarian aid and preventing humanitarian disasters.

Xi called for upholding fairness and justice, following international law, addressing both symptoms and root causes, and taking pragmatic actions to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Palestinian question at an early date.

China values Jordan's unique and important role in the region and firmly supports it in safeguarding its national sovereignty, security and development interests, he added.

King Abdullah II expressed Jordan's high appreciation for China's fair stance on the Middle East issue as well as its support for the just cause of the Arab states, saying that China's just position is very important to countries in the region.

Jordan is willing to maintain close communication with China and continue making positive efforts to ease the current situation to enable the people of Middle East countries to enjoy peace and prosperity.

Regarding bilateral ties, Xi said that since the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Jordan, both countries have consistently respected each other, treated each other as equals, and engaged in mutually beneficial cooperation, setting a vivid example of win-win cooperation and mutual learning between small and big countries with different social systems.

In the face of international and regional situations of turmoil and transformation, building a more substantial and dynamic China-Jordan relationship meets the common expectations of the two peoples and aligns with the trend of solidarity and self-strengthening among countries of the Global South, he said.

Xi called on both countries to promote their traditional friendship, enhance strategic mutual trust, deepen mutually beneficial cooperation, strengthen multilateral coordination, and push for greater development of the China-Jordan strategic partnership to make positive contributions to regional peace, stability and prosperity.

China is willing to engage with Jordan at all levels of government, parties, legislative bodies and local exchanges, and to strengthen the exchange of governance experiences, he said.

Saying that the nature of China-Jordan cooperation is of mutual benefit and win-win, Xi underlined the need for both sides to further deepen the alignment of their development strategies, strengthen cooperation in traditional fields such as economy and trade, infrastructure construction, transportation and minerals, and expand new growth areas of partnership in digital economy, artificial intelligence and green energy.

China is willing to work with Jordan to implement the four global initiatives, strengthen coordination and cooperation in multilateral institutions such as the UN, jointly uphold an international system with the UN at its core and an international order governed by international law, and promote the building of a community with a shared future for humanity, he said.

King Abdullah II said China is a great country that has achieved remarkable and admirable development accomplishments under the leadership of President Xi.

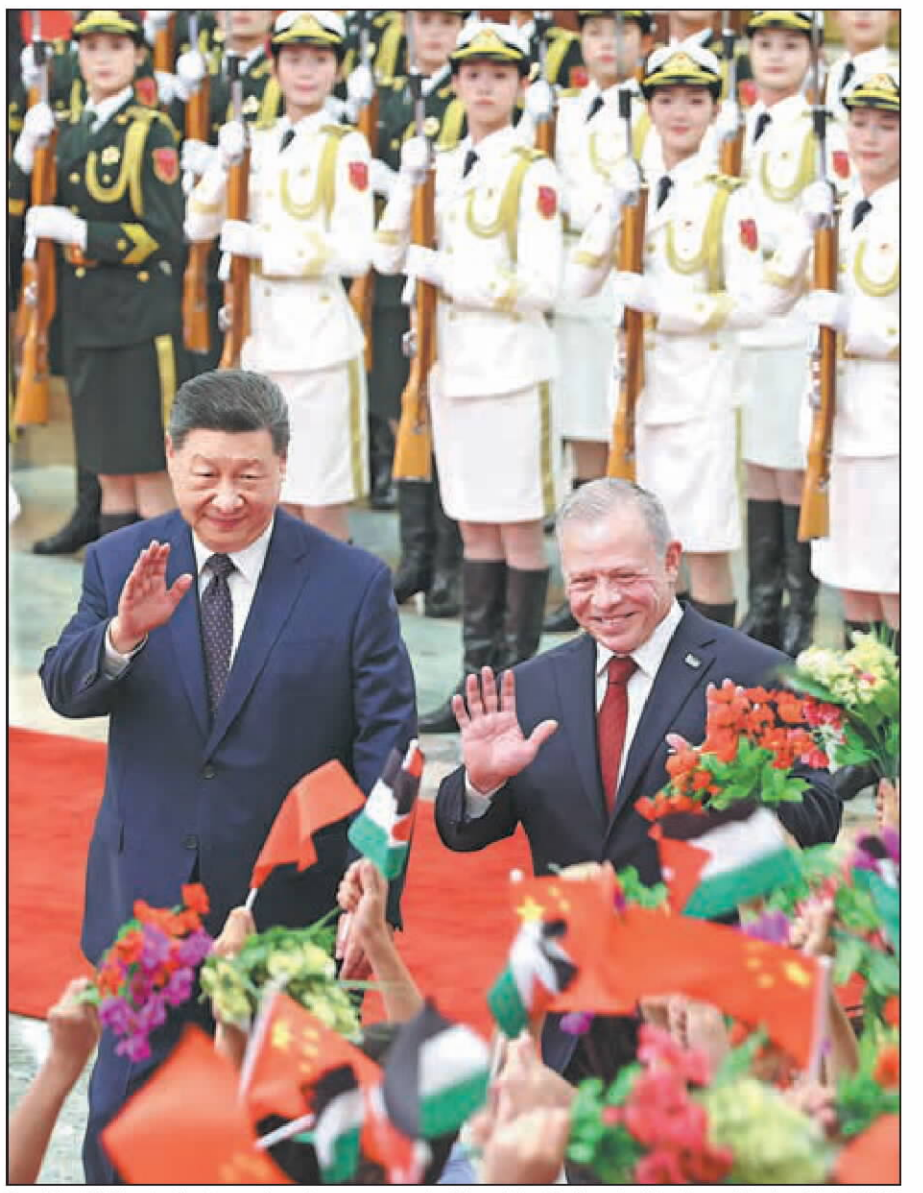
Jordan firmly adheres to the one-China policy, recognizing Taiwan as part of the Chinese territory, he said.

Noting that Jordan highly values its ties with China, he expressed his country's commitment to deepening cooperation and exchanges in areas such as economy and trade, manufacturing, agriculture, science and technology, medicine, culture and education.

He said that Jordan welcomes more investments from Chinese enterprises to achieve common development and prosperity.

Jordan highly appreciates the four global initiatives proposed by President Xi and looks forward to China playing a more significant leadership role on the world stage, he added.

The two leaders jointly witnessed the signing of multiple cooperation documents in fields such as diplomacy, economy and trade, supply chains and the judiciary. The two sides issued a joint statement on deepening the China-Jordan strategic partnership.



President Xi Jinping hosts a welcoming ceremony for King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein before their talks in Beijing on Monday. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

WORLD WATCH
By Zhao Bing

Early action can help better tackle climate challenges

In July 2026, forecasts warned of severe flooding in Bangladesh's Bandarban district. Rather than waiting for conditions to worsen, the United Nations World Food Programme activated anticipatory action and shock-responsive social protection, reaching 75,000 people with cash assistance before flood risks intensified.

The support reached families while they still had time to prepare — helping them meet immediate needs, protect livelihoods and avoid falling deeper into crisis. This is the promise of anticipatory action: turning early warning into early response. The forecast could not stop the flooding, but it gave people power over their fear. It gave them time to act instead of just waiting.

The need to act early has never been more urgent. An estimated 645 million people faced hunger worldwide in 2025. Conflict, economic shocks and displacement continue to drive food insecurity in many of the world's most vulnerable countries, while the escalating crisis in the Middle East is adding further pressure through disruptions to trade, energy and food markets.

Against this already fragile backdrop, extreme weather is accelerating food insecurity. In 2025 alone, weather extremes were the primary driver of acute food insecurity in 16 countries and territories, affecting 87.5 million people.

The risks keep rising. A strong El Nino is developing, bringing the prospect of above-normal temperatures and shifting rainfall patterns, with greater drought risks in some regions and heavier flooding in others. For millions of smallholder farmers, these are not distant threats. They show up in stressed water supplies, uncertain planting seasons and growing concern over future harvests, which translate into heightened hunger risk. WFP's early analysis projects that this El Nino could push at least 49 million more people into acute food insecurity by the end of 2027.

But climate hazards differ from many other crises in one important respect: Increasingly, we can see them coming.

Advances in forecasting and early-warning systems give us days, weeks or sometimes months to prepare.

See ***Crises,*** *page 3*

Warm welcome



China's green hero Yin Yuzhen welcomes Ronald Sakolsky, a retired teacher from the United States who supported her cause 27 years ago, to her home in Ordos, Inner Mongolia autonomous region, on Monday. SUN RUIBO / XINHUA **See story, page 3**

Chipmaker's turnaround shows resilience

By **MA SI**
masi@chinadaily.com.cn

Nexperia China's remarkable turnaround from a Dutch-imposed supply cutoff to successful local production in less than 11 months highlights the resilience of China's semiconductor industrial chain amid mounting challenges, said corporate executives and experts.

Their remarks came as Nexperia China held a global product launch on Sunday afternoon in Shanghai, marking the first collective public appearance of the company's core management team since it was lobbed into a crisis late last year.

"We are back!" said John Chang, CEO of Nexperia China, adding that the company is now approaching 100 percent local semiconductor production.

In October 2025, the Netherlands government intervened in the operations of Nexperia, a chipmaker owned by Chinese company Wingtech Technology, citing "national security" concerns. The intervention resulted in the sidelining of Wingtech. Weeks later, Nexperia's Dutch headquarters halted wafer supplies to the plant in China.

"Wafer supply was cut off. Systems went offline. Data from the overseas headquarters became inaccessible. We had orders, clients and trust — but no wafers to process," Chang recalled.

To overcome the challenge, Nexperia China made three crucial changes, the company said at Sunday's event.

First, it successfully spun off the China unit from the overseas Dutch headquarters to establish a fully independent operating system. Second, it secured local wafer suppliers and rebuilt a controllable supply chain. And third, by leveraging the 12-inch wafer platform of its strategic Chinese partners, it achieved a huge upgrade from 6-inch and 8-inch wafers to 12-inch process technologies.

The Nexperia plants in Europe are still mainly running on 6-inch and 8-inch wafers, but Nexperia China has achieved mass production on the 12-inch platform, Chang noted.

See ***Chips,*** *page 3*

BEAT THE HEAT WITH A COOL ADDITION TO YOUR WARDROBE

High-tech vests are finding new fans among outdoor enthusiasts and workers in the sweltering summer months

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn

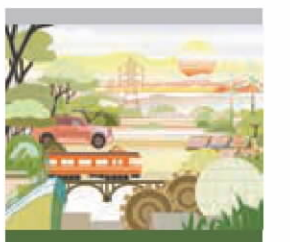
Summer is nearly over, but the heat hasn't loosened its grip. As the last of the season's hot days linger on, the battle against high temperatures has moved beyond sunscreen and iced drinks. For campers trekking mountain trails, cyclists logging long rides and anglers spending hours under the sun, a new piece of wearable technology is drawing attention: the cooling vest.

"It's like wearing a small electric fan inside your clothes," said an outdoor enthusiast surnamed Luo, who shared his experience on Chinese lifestyle platform Xiaohongshu, also known as RedNote, after wearing one while cycling. "As long as it's below 35 C, it works well. It's not an air-conditioner, but when you're moving around in this furnace-like weather, even a constant breeze makes a huge difference."

His experience reflects a growing market for wearable cooling technologies. The trend is emerging alongside the country's booming outdoor economy. Since 2019, participation in hiking, camping, cycling, trail running and fishing has surged.

Chris Sheng, founder of outdoor gear retailer Nomad Union, said: "In Zhejiang province, where our company is based, outdoor activities are almost suspended for nearly two months every summer because of the heat. These cooling vests borrow technology originally developed for industrial workers and adapt it for outdoor recreation, making summer activities much more comfortable."

See ***Tech,*** *page 3*



INSIDE
Enabling, not squeezing
Global Views, page 8

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved

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

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:00 PM

INDEPTH







Above left: Tourists watch a courtyard show about the women's rescue association in the 1940s, one of the Red Sisters' story performances in Changshanzhuang village of Yinan county, Shandong province. ZHENG SHUPING / FOR CHINA DAILY **Top right:** Villagers from Beiliangjia in Qingdao, Shandong, take part in a short drama series. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY **Above right:** Children get immersed in the walk-through experience *Retrace the Frontline Supply Route* in Yinan county, Shandong. ZHENG SHUPING / FOR CHINA DAILY

Lights, camera, tractors!

From short-drama videos to immersive performances and field poetry, rural communities are being energized through numerous cultural art forms

By ZHAO RUIXUE
in Linyi, Shandong
zhaoruixue@chinadaily.com.cn

During the recent summer vacation, visitors followed local villagers along ancient lanes in Yinan county, Shandong province, joining a "supply team" bound for the front line.

The immersive *Retrace the Frontline Supply Route* performance in Changshanzhuang village was not staged in a theater. Instead, it took place in the same locations locals once hauled supplies along to support frontline troops during the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45).

Since its launch in October 2024, the performance has drawn tens of thousands of visitors.

"This is completely different from anything we've done before," said Sun Fangchao, a tourist from Jiangsu province.

"I think he'll be thrilled about this for a very long time," he said while watching his 11-year-old son who moved along with the performance troupe.

For the show's creators, that emotional response is the point of its unique staging. Yinan county is famous for the Yimeng Spirit forged by ordinary villagers who risked their lives to support the Communist forces through extraordinary sacrifice during the war against Japanese aggression and the War of Liberation (1946-49).

The county has over 20 immersive Yimeng Spirit-themed performances, turning cultural tourism from a sightseeing experience into participatory education, according to the local government. The performers are villagers who know the heroic stories very well.

Ma Junling, 35, became a performer this year. Before then, she had worked as a tour guide in her village, explaining the Yimeng Spirit to visitors.

"Our village often receives groups of students on study tours. They are young and have limited understanding. A simple lecture couldn't hold their attention, but the live performances bring the stories to life and help children better understand the history and culture," Ma said.

Changshanzhuang is far from an isolated case. Across Shandong, grassroots cultural creativity is flourishing through immersive performances, verses composed by farmers, and rural micro-dramas filmed on mobile phones.

Ordinary farmers are picking up pens, smartphones, and scripts, becoming poets, actors and dramatists.

Storytellers

Changshanzhuang is the home of the Red Sisters, a group of local women who took care of the wounded soldiers and in some cases sacrificed their lives to protect them during the wars. They forged a major part of the Yimeng Spirit.

To honor their stories and promote the Yimeng Spirit, a Red Sisters Hometown Tourism Area has been established in the village.

Short folk performances are staged in old courtyards, bringing these stories to life, and the performers are villagers who have lived in the area their entire lives.

Yang Suhua, 63, from a neighboring village, used to spend her days doing housework and tending a small vegetable plot.

Two years ago, she became one of the most popular performers. Now she plays the role of an elderly cotton weaver in a show about the women's rescue association, a grassroots organization that supported the Communist revolution in the 1940s.

"I grew up hearing the heroic stories of the local women. I am so happy to tell their stories to more people through these small-scale plays," Yang said.

Villagers transform oral histories passed down from their ancestors into scripts, using relatable language and gestures that ordinary people can understand.

Li Xipeng, head of the Red Sisters Hometown Tourism Area, said the village's authenticity is key to the performances' appeal. "These houses and these lanes witnessed the actual events. They are the best textbook we could ever have," he said.

More than a dozen small farmyards have been turned into performance spaces. In one courtyard stands a small stone house with two dark narrow rooms. This is where Liu Naixiu, 73, once lived with her family of five.

"We were all squeezed in here. The house has barely changed from what it was back then. Now we've moved to a two-story home just 1 kilometer from this village," she said.

The places that best preserve the original feel of the period have also been used as film sets. Since 2007, over 500 film and television productions have been shot here, including *Six Sisters in the War*, *Red Sorghum* and *This Thriving Land*.

Liu was among the first villagers to join the film productions. "I've lost count of how many shows I've been in. Sometimes a crew member calls me directly and tells me that he needs 20 people for extras. I happily run from house to house, rounding up neighbors," she said.

Over the years, more than 30,000 villagers have performed as extras in film and television productions in the area. For many families, this part-time work has become a supplement to their farming income.

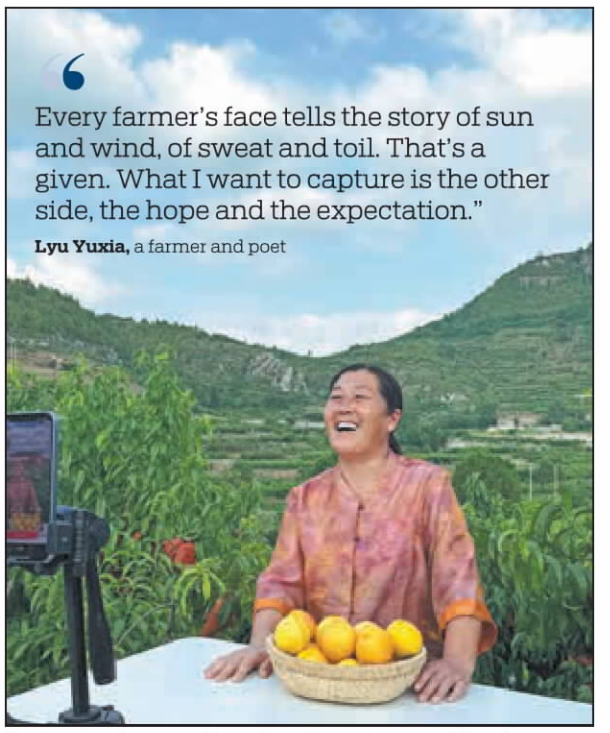
The rural cultural boom has brought economic ripple effects. More than 100 businesses have emerged around the scenic area, offering catering, farm stays, produce sales, and handcrafts.

"We used to worry about how to sell our produce," said a local farmer who grows vegetables and fruits on the hillside. "Now tourists come to us. They watch the shows, walk through the village, and buy local farm produce," he said.

The scenic area has partnered with villages around the area, integrating rural vitalization and tourism development. To date, more than 600 people from surrounding villages have worked in the scenic area.

"This is what it looks like when culture grows from the soil, not as something delivered from above, but as something that sprouts from the land itself," Li said.

> "Every farmer's face tells the story of sun and wind, of sweat and toil. That's a given. What I want to capture is the other side, the hope and the expectation."
>
> **Lyu Yuxia,** a farmer and poet



Lyu Yuxia, a farmer and poet from Mengyin county, Shandong, livestreams from her peach orchard, selling her own peaches and those of her fellow villagers. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Tourists buy local farm produce while they visit Changshanzhuang village. ZHENG SHUPING / FOR CHINA DAILY

Leave it to the prose

Not far away, in Mengyin county, another form of rural creativity is taking root in a farmer's notebook.

Lyu Yuxia, 54, is known online as Yimeng Second Sister, a name she uses because she is the second child in her family.

With calloused hands and a sun-weathered face, she has gained unexpected attention online for her poems. "I'm just an ordinary farmer, but words have always been with me," she said.

In the spring of 2023, Lyu walked up a mountain to pick Chinese toon sprouts. She looked out over a sea of blooming peach blossoms across the terraced hillsides.

The sight moved her deeply. She took out her phone, held up a bunch of toon sprouts, and recited a poem she had written in her notebook. That video, posted on Douyin, gained 100,000 followers in one week.

Several of her poems written, recited and recorded in the fields quickly gained widespread popularity online. In one of them, she compared the falling snow to icing sugar and salt sprinkled from the sky.

"I was a 50-something farm woman with wrinkles all over my face, feeling insecure at first," she recalled. "Now I am confident. Poetry gave me the courage to be myself."

Some online commenters have questioned whether her poetic portrayal of rural life is too idyllic and doesn't show the hardship of farming.

"Doesn't the hardship show right here?" she said, pointing at her weathered face.

"Every farmer's face tells the story of sun and wind, of sweat and toil. That's a given. What I want to capture is the other side, the hope and the expectation," she added.

"Every spring, we plow the soil, we plant the seeds. We don't know if the weather will favor us. But the moment we put those seeds in the ground, we are hoping for a good harvest.

"This is the faith in tomorrow. I write to celebrate that achievement," she said.

Her connection to literature began early. When she was very young, her father often told her stories.

At 15, she went to work in a textile factory. To block out the drone of the machinery, she recalled poems she had memorized, including those written by Li Bai, Su Dongpo, and even the elegy from *Dream of the Red Chamber*.

She bought magazines and filled notebooks with excerpts and original verses. "My world was too small. But through sharing online, my world got wider and wider. The beautiful words that netizens leave in my comments are as joyful to me as reading a good book," she said.

Lyu has started livestreaming from her orchard, selling not only her peaches but also helping fellow villagers market their produce. On the busiest days, she livestreams for nine hours straight, sometimes skipping meals.

"When I see the orders pile up and help people sell their goods, there's nothing happier than that," she said.

Playing up sales

In Beiliangjia, a village of just 247 households in the Qingdao West Coast New Area, farmers with no acting experience are using their phones to make short dramas that have racked up over 1 billion views.

Before they changed tack, they struggled to sell their produce.

"The village is not short of good produce. We grow sweet chestnuts, sticky sweet potatoes and big juicy cherries," said Zhang Wei, the village Party secretary. "The problem has always been selling them."

In the summer of 2025, Zhang reached out to Ding Zhaoting, an influencer from a neighboring town. Ding had previously run a building materials business before pivoting to online content creation six years ago. He now manages several accounts with millions of followers.

Zhang said the villagers agreed to use short dramas to sell their produce. Ding became the director and recruited about a dozen villagers.

He taught them the basics of filming, editing, and livestreaming. The villagers threw themselves into the new challenge.

In September 2025, the village's first short drama was released. It told the story of a rural woman who joins a poor family and, through hard work and wisdom, gradually leads them to a happy life. In just over a month, the series had garnered 270 million views.

The momentum built. Subsequent dramas each attracted over 100 million views.

In the dramas, village produce is a feature, with corn hanging on walls, chestnuts piled by stoves, and unpicked cherries glistening with dew. Viewers see these products in attractive settings and want to buy them.

Zhang Zhixing, 75, was among the first to benefit. He had three *mu* (0.2 hectares) of hawthorn trees. But at his age, he could no longer harvest the fruit, and they were rotting on the branches.

A few cast members heard about his situation, went to his orchard, and filmed videos and livestreams. Within days, his hawthorns were sold out.

The online traffic also caught the attention of investors. Local Ding Xinqiang stumbled upon the village's short dramas online. "The people and the stories are so real and trustworthy," he said.

He contacted Zhang Wei and said he wanted to invest in the area. Within a week, a sweet potato starch noodle processing plant was up and running, receiving an initial order of 25 metric tons. More projects followed, including dried sweet potato snacks, pet food, and cultural tourism.

Yu Xiaofeng, an associate professor at Shandong University's journalism and communication school, who has studied the phenomenon, sees it as part of a broader trend.

"In the context of the rise of new mass culture, farmers have become creators. They are telling their own stories," Yu said.

"The entire creative process is intimately connected to their lives, which gives them a tremendous sense of pride. This is the core manifestation of farmer identity, and the best expression of cultural confidence," she said.

Yu visited villages and observed the transformation firsthand.

"When I first saw the villagers, they were nervous and shy in front of the camera. But then, seeing all the likes they received online and the growing number of visitors coming to their village, they became confident and outgoing. They actively participate in village construction, voluntarily shoot short videos to promote their hometown, and take pride in its natural beauty and intangible cultural heritage. Their cultural identity is growing stronger," she said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:00 PM

TOP NEWS

Iran threatens to halt exports of oil from gulf

Strait of Hormuz tensions mount as diplomacy stalls and sanctions loom

By **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE and **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong

As the United States readied to unveil crippling new sanctions against Iran on Monday, in a bid to sever the country's economic lifelines following months of protracted yet inconclusive warfare, Tehran threatened to halt all oil exports from the Persian Gulf.

For weeks, both sides have refrained from launching military strikes against one another, though negotiations to end the six-month-old conflict remain stalled.

Mohsen Rezaei, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, warned in a social media post that "If the economic war continues, not a single drop of oil will be exported, neither through the Strait of Hormuz nor from anywhere in the Gulf."

All eyes are now on US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, who is scheduled to elaborate on Washington's intensified pressure campaign during a news conference at 1 pm local time on Monday.

"At dawn begins an economic D-Day — the single greatest financial offensive ever marshaled against an adversary," Bessent wrote in a Sunday opinion piece published in the Financial Times.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei retaliated by stating that Iran will never yield to external coercive conditions. "Washington's insistence on failed tactics proves nothing but its hostility toward the Iranian people," he said.

The conflict has killed thousands of people, mostly in Iran and Lebanon, and inflicted severe economic losses. Despite the killing of supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran still retains enough military capability to attack targets in neighboring nations and threaten oil tankers in the Strait of Hormuz, bringing shipping in the key waterway to a near standstill and placing global fuel prices under pressure.

The exact stage of Iran's nuclear program, which the US and Israel aim to wipe out, remains unknown. Without detailing specific measures, Bessent signaled the US would target "fearful nations" that practice "appeasement" by engaging with Iran's economy and financial system.

"They would do well to consider the consequences of sustaining it," he wrote.

On Monday, Brent crude futures dropped more than 1 percent to $93.45 a barrel, with US oil futures also falling more than 1 percent to $86.14 a barrel, Reuters reported.

Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi on Sunday dismissed the renewed US threats as an "old bullying tactic", saying that Washington has no choice but to speak respectfully to the Iranian nation, state broadcaster Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting reported.

Also on Sunday, the Iranian parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission approved Article 3 under its Strategic Action Plan to Ensure the Security and Development of the Strait of Hormuz. The provision mandates service fees for all eligible vessels transiting the strategic waterway under Iranian jurisdiction.

Hassan Qashqavi, the commission's spokesman, said the fees would be collected from vessels belonging to countries permitted to pass through the strait and paid in Iranian rials or another currency designated by Tehran, Iran's state-run Islamic Republic News Agency reported.

Iran's newly established Persian Gulf Strait Authority has issued fresh regulatory warnings, saying that 45 vessels found violating transit rules will face penalties including fines, detention and confiscation.

The US and Iran signed a memorandum of understanding on June 18, covering conflicts across the Middle East including Lebanon. The 60-day negotiation window stipulated in the deal expired last week, leaving prospects of a final settlement uncertain.

With formal US-Iran face-to-face talks suspended since the last round held in Switzerland in June, regional mediators including Qatar, Pakistan and Turkiye have continued diplomatic efforts.

Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir arrived in Tehran on Monday. Baghaei confirmed in a Sunday statement that Munir's visit comes as part of Pakistan's sustained efforts to advance regional peace and stability.

Omani Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi will also travel to Tehran on Tuesday for in-depth consultations with Iranian officials over security and maritime rules in the Strait of Hormuz, Iran's Foreign Ministry announced.

In a separate development, Iranian Petroleum Minister Mohsen Paknejad told state television on Sunday that a newly discovered onshore gas field in southern Fars province holds over 200 billion cubic meters of total reserves, and over 160 billion cubic meters could be extracted from the field.

Agencies and Xinhua contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at cuihaipei@chinadaily.com.cn

Chips: Company improves production capacity, quality

From page 1

"This represents a comprehensive leap in both production capacity and quality," Chang said.

According to the company, the 12-inch wafer platform has helped slash product iteration cycles from 36 months to just nine to 12 months. "Nexperia China achieving independent operations is not about confronting anyone; it is about protecting those we serve. To our customers, choosing Nexperia China means no more supply worries," Chang added.

In February this year, China urged the Netherlands to create favorable conditions to help Nexperia settle its internal disputes as soon as possible and to help maintain the stability of global industrial and supply chains. In July, the two sides agreed to facilitate the resolution of business disputes through consultations.

Hurdles notwithstanding, Nexperia China delivered over 40 billion chips to thousands of global customers with zero quality incidents over the past 11 months.

He Hui, semiconductor research director at the United Kingdom-based tech research company Omdia, said on Monday that China's semiconductor industrial chain has made significant progress in recent years, which can serve as a crucial backup for Chinese companies during emergencies and help them stabilize their supply chains. "More efforts are still needed to achieve breakthroughs in some key technologies," she added.

Wang Wen, dean of Renmin University of China's Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies, said the Nexperia incident shows once again that the semiconductor industry, by its very nature, is a globalized sector.

"Camp-based or politicized intervention will only fracture supply chains and send costs soaring," Wang said. "Only by reducing non-market intervention can we truly advance global technological progress and ensure that its benefits are universally shared."

Searching for survivors



Residents and rescuers use an excavator to search for victims on Sunday after a landslide occurred at a dumpsite overnight in Conakry, the capital of Guinea. Heavy rains caused a large mound of rubbish to collapse, killing at least 30 people and injuring six others. AFP

Crises: Sharing practical experience holds key

From page 1

The real test is whether that information reaches people who need it and is translated into action before it is too late.

Early warning is most valuable when it leads to action.

Anticipatory action takes the next step by linking forecasts to pre-agreed triggers, financing and practical solutions before disaster strikes. That could mean providing cash assistance before markets become inaccessible, protecting livestock and crops before droughts or floods hit, and strengthening social protection systems so assistance can be scaled up quickly.

For vulnerable families, acting before there is a crisis can mean the difference between protecting their livelihoods and losing assets that may take years to rebuild. Evidence shows that every $1 invested in anticipatory action returns up to $7 in avoided losses and additional benefits.

WFP is increasingly putting this approach into practice at scale. In 2025, more than $35 million was released ahead of disasters, supporting over 1.2 million people with anticipatory assistance, while more than 15 million people received early-warning information.

This is what anticipatory action makes possible: a forecast becomes a decision, a decision unlocks resources, and assistance reaches people before a hazard becomes a disaster.

As countries seek to strengthen these systems, international cooperation and the sharing of practical experience are becoming increasingly important.

China's experience offers a powerful example of what sustained investment in agriculture, technology and disaster readiness can achieve. Its growing strengths in meteorology, satellites and artificial intelligence are creating opportunities to strengthen early warning and preparedness beyond its borders.

One promising example is MAZU, an AI-powered meteorological warning system that combines advanced forecasting technologies with international cooperation to make climate information more accessible and actionable for all. Through South-South and Triangular Cooperation, solutions such as MAZU can help countries across the Global South strengthen their preparedness and build resilience in ways that reflect their own risks, institutions and priorities.

The WFP Centre of Excellence for Rural Transformation in China provides an established platform for this exchange. Since 2016, it has connected China's experience with developing countries through policy dialogue, technical cooperation and practical knowledge sharing on food security, agricultural transformation and climate resilience.

China's domestic experience also offers relevant lessons. In Jilin province, for example, WFP worked with local authorities on an integrated risk-management project for maize farmers. By combining precision agriculture, digital tools and an innovative "Insurance + Futures" solution, the initiative helped farmers better manage both production and market risks while using natural resources more efficiently.

By connecting innovations such as MAZU with practical field experience such as that in Jilin, the WFP center can continue to bridge China's expertise with global demand — adapting solutions to local contexts and turning preparedness into lasting resilience.

Preparedness cannot eliminate climate shocks, but it can change what happens when they arrive. Making it work, however, is a shared responsibility. Governments, international organizations, research institutions, development banks, technology companies and local communities all have a role to play.

It means investing in better forecasting and early-warning systems, but also in the mechanisms that turn warnings into action: pre-arranged financing, responsive social protection, local readiness and the capacity of communities and institutions to act quickly.

Over time, these sustained investments do more than reduce the impact of a single drought or flood. They protect livelihoods, safeguard development gains, reduce repeated losses and setbacks, and build long-term resilience so that communities are able to withstand tomorrow's shocks without losing ground today.

The future of food security will not be determined by climate hazards alone. It will also depend on our collective ability to anticipate risks, act before losses mount and invest in the resilience communities need to thrive, no matter what the weather brings.

The author is representative and director of the United Nations World Food Programme China Office. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Tech: Cooling vests creating niche market

From page 1

For manufacturers, wearable cooling equipment is becoming a fast-growing niche at the intersection of outdoor gear, consumer electronics and climate adaptation.

One of the latest entrants is Esguard, based in Pinghu, Zhejiang, one of China's largest outdoor apparel manufacturing hubs. The company has developed a cooling vest that combines ventilation with semiconductor cooling tech, lowering the perceived temperature by 8 C to 15 C, the company said.

Unlike conventional fan vests that simply circulate ambient air, Esguard's design integrates two semiconductor cooling modules with dual fans mounted on the back of the garment. Air is drawn into the vest, cooled by the modules and then circulated around the body, delivering what the company calls an "air-conditioning effect".

Powered by a 20,000 mAh battery pack, the vest can operate for up to 12 hours on its lowest setting, making it suitable for a full working day or extended trips.

"We wanted to move beyond simply blowing hot air around," said Fang Xiaodong, general manager of Esguard. "The goal was to create a wearable cooling system that people can genuinely rely on outdoors."

The company began developing the product in March after anticipating rising global demand for heat relief technologies. Working with university researchers, it has already begun exporting the vests to the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Japan and South Korea.



Sanitation workers show their cooling vests on July 31 in Nanjing, Jiangsu province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The technology is also finding a growing customer base among frontline workers. In Nanjing, Jiangsu province, where summer temperatures frequently exceed 35 C, sanitation workers were among the first to test the vests. Since mid-July, more than 20 cooling vests have been deployed across the city.

"It's much more comfortable," sanitation worker Zhu Wenxian told Workers' Daily. "I'm sweating much less, and I don't feel as irritable after working outside."

Another sanitation worker, Liu Fali, said the airflow has made long shifts noticeably easier. "My back stays dry now," he said.

Delivery companies are also embracing the tech. In Xuchang, Henan province, local franchisees of ZTO Express have equipped more than 100 couriers with cooling vests to help them cope with the summer of prolonged extreme heat.

Greening of desert hailed by US friend

By **WANG SONGSONG** in Ordos, Inner Mongolia and **YUAN HUI** in Hohhot

Ronald Sakolsky, a retired teacher from the United States, returned to the home of China's afforestation hero Yin Yuzhen on Monday in Uxin Banner, Ordos, Inner Mongolia autonomous region, 26 years after his first visit, and found the once-barren dunes transformed into a thriving forest — a living testament to perseverance that he says must be passed on to younger generations.

Sakolsky walked through Yin's desert ecological garden, appreciated fresh vegetables and fruits grown in the sandy soil, and visited her new home, which was a far cry from the tiny shelter she once shared with her family.

"From a one-bedroom sand shanty to this? You deserve every centimeter of this house," Sakolsky told Yin, gesturing at her home.

Yin has spent decades battling desertification on this land. What was once a wasteland is now her life's work — a thriving oasis attracting visitors from around the world.

Over the course of 41 years, she and her family have planted 8 million trees, literally one shovel at a time, turning more than 4,660 hectares of desert into an oasis, Inner Mongolia TV reported.

But Sakolsky was not just any visitor. He was an old friend — and, in a small but meaningful way, a part of this story.

Sakolsky made his first visit to this remote desert area in 2000.

Having been in China for two months at that time as a teacher taking part in a China-US teachers exchange program, Sakolsky was moved by a report on Yin's struggle. "I saw her story on TV and started to cry," said Sakolsky.

Together with another of his Chinese friends — Bai Fan, the former vice-principal of Luoyang Foreign Language School in Henan province, where he worked as an English teacher from 1999 to 2000, Sakolsky went to Uxin Banner for the first time.

He also made a quiet gesture of kindness — a $5,000 donation that helped Yin keep planting trees. "One act of kindness, no matter how small, never waste it," Sakolsky said.

Bai, who is now Party secretary and general principal of Luoyang No 2 Foreign Language School Education Group, again accompanied Sakolsky to the site of their shared memories.

Bai recalled how different things were back then. "It was all sand," he said. "Now it looks like a big garden and orchard. It's stunning."

Sakolsky, now in his late 60s, reflected on the deeper meaning of the transformation. "I still believe, 27 years later, that this story was written in heaven and that I am just an actor in the play. And today is just another chapter. But the story is not over — that's for all of you to tell people."

He urged more people to contribute to environmental and people-to-people ties. "More people need to do more for China and America. Even a small amount can become a forest."

Speaking of US-China relations, Sakolsky struck a personal note. "All Americans need to realize that Chinese and Americans can be family. We can get over the differences if we focus on the similarities."

For Yin, the visit was a moment of quiet pride. She showed her guests the fruits of her labor and smiled as Sakolsky repeated his long-held belief: "If you take care of the Earth, it will reward you."

Contact the writers at wangsongsong@chinadaily.com.cn

Zhao Manfeng in Ordos contributed to this story.

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:00 PM

ASIAFOCUS

Editor's note:
In this weekly feature China Daily gives voice to Asia and its people. The stories presented come mainly from the Asia News Network (ANN), of which China Daily is among its 20 leading titles.

Elephant in the room

Nepal's safaris caught between animal welfare and livelihoods



Mahouts ride elephants during the Elephant Festival in Sauraha, Chitwan, Nepal, on Dec 27. AMBIR TOLANG VIA GETTY IMAGES





From left: Elephants play with a ball during the Elephant Festival in Sauraha, Chitwan, Nepal, on Dec 27. AMBIR TOLANG VIA GETTY IMAGES
An eye of an elephant is pictured as she gets ready for the elephant beauty contest in Sauraha on Dec 27. SUNIL PRADHAN VIA GETTY IMAGES

Sauraha, a major tourist destination in Chitwan, Nepal, has long been synonymous with elephant safaris. For decades, foreign and domestic tourists visiting Sauraha, adjacent to Chitwan National Park, have mounted elephants to traverse the buffer zone's community forests in search of rare wildlife.

However, the local entrepreneurs who have privately owned and domesticated elephants are worried about a recent Supreme Court verdict. They express their concerns, stating that the future of the iconic practice of elephant safaris is in jeopardy. They argue an abrupt halt to elephant safaris could devastate the local economy, tourism and harm the animals themselves.

Private elephant owners in Sauraha express readiness to shift toward ethical alternatives, such as elephant-friendly sanctuaries and bushwalks, but contend that a sudden ban is impractical. They are urging authorities to phase out elephants gradually so that owners have time to adjust their businesses and protect livelihoods.

The delicate issue dominated discussions on Aug 12 during the 15th World Elephant Day celebration in Sauraha, where stakeholders gathered for an "Elephant Picnic" organized in the neighboring Baghmara buffer zone community forest.

"We are prepared to transition to a sanctuary model as envisioned by the court, but it cannot happen overnight," said Dipendra Khatiwada, the president of the United Elephant Management Cooperative Limited.

"We are not in favor of stopping elephant safaris at once. We should instead pursue a dual-track approach: allow fit, working-age elephants to continue safaris for a few more years, while creating dedicated sanctuaries for elderly, sick, or disabled elephants and integrating them into tourism activities that do not disturb nature and local communities."

The high-profile legal dispute stems from a petition filed in 2021. The petitioners demanded an end to animal cruelty, better recordkeeping to curb illegal trading, a prohibition on chaining, and a complete phaseout of elephant rides in favor of observation-only tourism.

On Dec 17 last year, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of animal welfare reforms. The full text verdict was recently uploaded to the Supreme Court's website, laying out comprehensive guidelines for elephant conservation and directing the government to seek alternatives to riding safaris.

"The anatomical structure of an elephant's spine, legs, and body is not evolved to carry human passengers," the court noted in the verdict. "Subjecting these animals to heavy loads and continuous circular tours causes severe physical stress, foot rot, and joint ailments. Using an elephant merely as a tool for human entertainment contradicts our legal duty to respect its intrinsic worth and welfare as a living biological entity."

The justices also instructed the government to establish clear legal policies transitioning Nepal toward ethical ecotourism, drawing upon international precedents such as "elephant bushwalks" and observation platforms that maintain a safe distance between visitors and animals.

In the verdict, the Supreme Court has directed the government and agencies concerned to make the registration and management of privately owned and domesticated elephants more systematic.

Under the regulation on the control of international trade of endangered wildlife and plants, all such elephants must be registered and properly documented. Authorities must identify unregistered elephants and take action under existing laws. Any transfer of ownership, sale, purchase or movement of elephants must also be subject to legal approval and proper recordkeeping.

The court has also called for stronger measures to control the illegal trade and cross-border smuggling of elephants.

Security agencies, forest authorities and conservation bodies should coordinate effectively, particularly along the Nepal-India border, and maintain special surveillance. Individuals or organizations involved in the illegal sale, transportation or smuggling of elephants should be investigated and prosecuted in accordance with the law.

On elephant welfare, the court has ordered authorities to prevent torture, violence and other forms of inhumane treatment. It has called for scientific and animal-friendly methods of elephant management and urged that tourism involving elephants be made more welfare-friendly.

Handlers and caretakers should receive training in elephant-friendly practices, while proper treatment and protection should be ensured for sick and aging elephants. The court has also called for the establishment of elephant retirement and rehabilitation centers.

The court has directed authorities to move toward a more natural system of keeping privately owned elephants.

According to the court, elephants should be provided with open and natural surroundings, while management plans should take into account possible conflicts between people and elephants, as well as between wild and domesticated elephants.

The court has further called for ethical elephant sanctuaries where tourists can observe elephants only from a safe distance rather than ride or directly interact with them. The practice of keeping elephants unnecessarily chained, whether for training or other purposes, should be ended. Authorities have been asked to develop and implement policies and action plans to make elephant conservation centers and management systems more scientific and welfare-oriented.

The verdict also calls for better coordination among all agencies involved in elephant conservation and management. Regular monitoring of conservation activities should be carried out, and clear standards for the management of privately owned elephants should be developed and enforced.

Job displacement

The local operators argue that forcing an immediate shutdown without a transitional safety net would lead to financial ruin and widespread job displacement.

A single adult elephant commands a market price between Rs10 million (about $65,360) and Rs15 million, while monthly maintenance, feed and healthcare costs range from Rs100,000 to Rs120,000. Each animal requires at least two full-time handlers: one to manage feeding and grooming and another to handle movement and general care.

"If owners are forbidden from offering safaris, who will pay to feed and care for these massive animals?" said Dipendra, who previously owned two elephants but now retains only one.

"Following the COVID-19 pandemic, when tourism collapsed, many owners were forced to sell their animals to buyers in India. In Sauraha, private elephant numbers dropped from 90 to around 45 today. A sudden ban without financial support will lead to complete abandonment."

The looming ban has cast a shadow over the lives of local handlers, or mahouts.

Jayalal Das, 48, a mahout from Rautahat who cares for an elephant, relies entirely on his income to support his six-member family. His grandfather was a mahout, and Das has spent 18 years in Sauraha driving tourist safaris.

"I do not know any other skilled work," said Das. "If safaris close down tomorrow, I will have no way to feed my four children."

Nandalal Sah, who also handles an elephant, shared similar worries, adding, "If there are no elephants left to ride, I will have no choice but to do manual labor."

THE KATHMANDU POST, NEPAL

Seoul's Incheon takes lead as busiest intl airport

SEOUL — Incheon Airport overtook London Heathrow and Singapore Changi to become the world's busiest international passenger hub in the first half of the year, reaching the top just 25 years after opening, latest data showed in August.

Incheon handled 38.39 million international passengers over the six months, according to preliminary data covering 1,234 airports compiled by Airports Council International. The airport has risen steadily from 10th place in 2002 to fifth in 2018 and third in 2024.

Heathrow ranked second with 37.79 million international passengers, followed by Changi with 34.53 million. Dubai Airport, which had long vied with Heathrow for the top spot, is expected to fall outside the top five.

According to Incheon International Airport Corporation, or IIAC, Incheon's new title solidifies its standing as a top-tier global hub airport.

The airport also surpassed 1 billion cumulative passengers just over 25 years after opening, faster than any other major international airport.

The reordering owes as much to shifting geopolitics as to Incheon's own momentum.

The conflict between the US and Iran choked off transfer traffic through Middle Eastern hubs, diverting travelers to Incheon instead. Transfer passengers climbed 18.1 percent from a year earlier to 4.24 million, while European transfer traffic soared 63.2 percent.

Inbound visitors have also poured into South Korea, led largely by tourists from China and Japan. Foreigners made up 44.4 percent of Incheon's overall passenger traffic in the second quarter, a record high and up from 39.5 percent a year earlier.

The broader traffic base rests on the airport's four phases of expansion, completed in November 2024.

The buildout gave Incheon capacity for 106 million annual international passengers, the world's third-largest, trailing only China's Hong Kong and the UAE's Dubai. Incheon now connects 183 cities across 53 countries through 101 carriers.

As South Korea's gateway airport, IIAC said it has long supported major national events and government policy, and is now investing in artificial intelligence and urban air mobility infrastructure, in step with the government's goal of 30 million inbound tourists.

THE KOREA HERALD, SOUTH KOREA

Forum calls for measures to help ASEAN tackle climate change

Climate resilience has stopped being an environmental issue and become an economic one, experts said. When 35 percent of a year's rainfall falls within a single week, as it did in parts of Thailand last year, the failure is not simply meteorological. It is a failure of design, of coordination, and of economics.

That was the argument advanced at a CAsean Forum 2026 panel on "Strengthening ASEAN's Physical Resilience", held in Bangkok in August, where experts said Southeast Asia's climate exposure is no longer a side issue for environment ministries but a direct threat to the region's economic competitiveness.

Witaya Wannasuphoprasit, dean of engineering at Chulalongkorn University, framed Thailand's exposure through three converging failures.

First, rainfall patterns have become faster and more erratic than existing forecasting tools can track, overwhelming the drainage systems designed for a gentler climate.

Second, decades of unplanned urban sprawl have eroded the natural floodplains that once absorbed excess water.

Third, as Witaya termed most structurally damaging, roughly 50 Thai government agencies are responsible for water management, each with their own budget and agenda and little shared data.

Although rain poses a threat to regional development, Witaya said water is not merely a hazard to be managed but a productive resource whose value can be measured and grown.

Citing UN data spanning roughly two decades, he noted that water productivity — the economic value generated per cubic meter used — has stagnated across Southeast Asia even as other regions have steadily improved theirs, representing what he called "a big room of opportunity".

Witaya laid emphasis on empowering the local communities, describing efforts to build local "water schools" so that residents — not only central agencies — understand and manage their own flood and drought risks.



A severe storm accompanied by torrential rain and violent wind gusts caused extensive infrastructure damage in Lat Krabang, Bangkok, Thailand, on June 26. THAI NEWS PIX VIA GETTY IMAGE

Wannaporn Phornprapha, founder and managing director of landscape architecture firm P Landscape Company, argued that much of the region's vulnerability stems from a design philosophy still rooted in "gray" concrete infrastructure rather than natural systems.

Asked to name planners' most common mistakes, she pointed first at fragmentation — designing single projects to withstand, say, a hundred-year flood without accounting for what happens beyond their boundaries, since "water has no boundary".

Second, she said regulation and data routinely lag behind the pace of climate change itself, citing the lack of research into which tree species actually filter fine particulate pollution effectively.

Third, resilient design is still widely perceived as an avoidable added expense when its real returns — public health, livability, and long-term value — are simply harder to put a number on.

Satoshi Iemoto, an expert affiliated with a Japan International Cooperation Agency project, said no single country can adapt alone, because climate risk ignores administrative borders — river basins and coastlines connect neighboring states regardless of policy.

He had three recommendations for the region: strengthen knowledge-sharing between countries facing similar disaster risks; empower local governments and communities, since disasters are ultimately experienced locally; and combine modern technology with traditional wisdom — from Thailand's sufficiency economy philosophy to comparable community-based traditions in Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia and Cambodia.

Stripped of its technical detail, the panel's case was straightforward: ASEAN's physical resilience has been undermined less by a lack of engineering knowledge than by fragmentation — of agencies, of data, of individual construction projects, and of national policies that stop at borders that climate risks do not respect.

Fixing that, the panelists agreed, is less about inventing new technology than integrating what already exists: shared data, nature-based design, community knowledge and cross-border cooperation.

As the moderator summarized in closing, resilience cannot be built by any single country, sector or discipline acting alone — it has to be, in Witaya's phrase, "everybody's responsibility".

THE NATION, THAILAND

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:00 PM

WORLD

Xi congratulates Alamgir on assuming presidency

By JI HAISHENG
jihaisheng@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping sent a congratulatory message on Monday to Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir on assuming office as president of Bangladesh, calling for joint efforts to carry forward the traditional friendship between the two countries, strengthen strategic communication and advance high-quality Belt and Road cooperation.

In the message, Xi called China and Bangladesh traditional friendly neighbors. Over the past 51 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations, the two countries have always upheld mutual respect and treated each other as equals, he said.

China and Bangladesh have supported each other on issues concerning their respective core interests and major concerns, and have moved forward hand-in-hand on their respective paths toward modernization, he said.

Bilateral relations have withstood the tests of a rapidly changing international situation, he added.

Xi said he attaches great importance to the development of China-Bangladesh relations.

He also expressed hope that the two sides will deepen exchanges and cooperation across various fields to make more solid progress in building a China-Bangladesh community with a shared future in the new era and bring greater benefits to the two peoples.

Alamgir, 78, a senior leader of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party, was sworn in as the country's 23rd president on Friday, according to Xinhua News Agency.

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, cabinet members and hundreds of distinguished guests attended the oath-taking ceremony at the presidential palace in Dhaka.

Briefly

DPRK

State media slams Japan's militarism

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea on Monday condemned Japanese politicians for visiting the notorious Yasukuni war shrine on the anniversary of Japan's surrender in World War II, warning the country "will perish in the flames of neo-militarism". In a commentary issued by the Korean Central News Agency, the DPRK lambasted Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi for sending a ritual offering and paying a "surprise tribute" to the war shrine, calling her move "a blatant challenge to the desire of humankind for global peace and security". Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi also visited the shrine, a clear demonstration of the dangerous nature of the Yasukuni visit, the commentary said. "Japan is bound to repeat its past as it never draws a lesson but wantonly denies its past as a war criminal country and a defeated nation," it said.

UNITED STATES

Trump threatens 50% auto tariffs on Canada

US tariffs on all cars and trucks, automotive parts and steel will be increased to 50 percent starting Jan 1, President Donald Trump said in a social media post on Monday after trade talks with Canada collapsed over the weekend. "Build in the US and there are zero tariffs," Trump wrote. "On trade, and in other ways, also, they are among the worst nations in the world to deal with. They feel entitled, and yet, we don't need Canada, they need us!" The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment seeking more details on the threatened tariffs. The two countries failed to reach a trade deal on Friday, with each side blaming the other as Canada readied tariffs on some US goods in retaliation for 50 percent levies ordered by Trump on other Canadian products.

XINHUA — AGENCIES

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108
529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1900

Bound by tradition



Members of the Karen community take part in a traditional wrist-tying ceremony in Bangkok, Thailand, on Sunday. The generational custom — involving white cotton threads tied around participants' wrists — symbolizes strength, well-being and the preservation of Karen cultural identity. WISSARUT WEERASOPON VIA GETTY IMAGES

Global tensions cloud trade

US tariffs make business decisions difficult, affecting manufacturing supply chains

By RENA LI in Los Angeles
renali@chinadailyusa.com

Tariffs and geopolitical tensions are adding uncertainty to global manufacturing supply chains, complicating sourcing decisions and long-term investment planning, industry and port leaders said.

Lance Hastings, president and CEO of the California Manufacturers & Technology Association, said manufacturers remain broadly positive about business prospects but are cautious about an unsettled global trading environment.

"There's still some anxiety as the year wraps up," Hastings said during a recent virtual media briefing with Port of Los Angeles executive director Gene Seroka.

"Manufacturing decisions aren't 30-day or 60-day decisions; they're actually six-year, 10-year horizons," he said, adding that sudden disruptions make it more difficult for companies to plan with confidence.

Manufacturing in California generates about $382 billion annually, accounting for roughly 10 percent of the state's economic output. China remains one of California's most important trading partners and a major part of its manufacturing and supply-chain network, with two-way goods trade totaling about $137 billion in 2024, much of it involving manufactured products and industrial components.

The relationship is increasingly shaped by a layered US tariff regime. Most covered Chinese imports currently face an additional 10 percent reciprocal tariff, while longstanding Section 301 duties remain as high as 100 percent on electric vehicles and 50 percent on semiconductors and solar cells, adding costs and complexity for companies with China-linked supply chains.

Asked by China Daily whether continuing China-US trade tensions were prompting California manufacturers to move production or sourcing away from China, or instead diversify while maintaining Chinese suppliers, Hastings said the latter better reflects what companies are doing.

"I think it's more of the latter," he said. "It's really assessing the global profile that we face right now."

Some manufacturers began reassessing supply chains following the COVID-19 pandemic and considered bringing certain operations closer to home, Hastings said. Tariffs and geopolitical tensions have since added further pressure.

"There is a lot of uncertainty," he said. "Manufacturers always are looking at the long term, and that's the more important view."

Seroka said those changing sourcing patterns are clearly visible at the Port of Los Angeles, but they should not be interpreted simply as a withdrawal from China.

"China accounted for about 60 percent of the port's overall business portfolio in 2018, compared with roughly 40 percent today," he said, adding that while trade with Vietnam has expanded sharply, China and Southeast Asia's manufacturing supply chains have become increasingly integrated.

Importers large and small have increasingly explored alternative sourcing locations, particularly in Asia, while maintaining complex supplier relationships that often span several countries, according to Seroka.

At the same time, Washington is increasing scrutiny of China-linked global supply chains as it seeks to identify suspected tariff evasion through transshipment, raising questions about how authorities will distinguish illegal practices from legitimate cross-border manufacturing.

A White House report released this month outlines an artificial intelligence-supported initiative called "Detective Border", designed to help US Customs and Border Protection analyze shipment origins, trade routes and product information to flag potentially suspicious cargo.

Seroka said greater use of AI has not yet disrupted cargo moving through Los Angeles.

"We'll see the advent of AI and trying to explore a realm of possibilities and maybe even theories, but nothing yet that is inhibiting the trade that comes through this port," he said.

He cautioned policymakers against confusing illegal tariff evasion with the complexity of legitimate international production networks.

Seroka compared Asian manufacturing networks with the tiered supplier systems around US automobile plants. A vehicle assembled in Michigan, for example, may rely on tires, wiring harnesses and other components from multiple suppliers. Asian manufacturing works in much the same way, he said, except that parts often cross national borders before final assembly.

A garment, for example, may include buttons or other components made in China before being assembled elsewhere in Asia and exported to the United States.

"There are some policymakers that think they're trying to evade these new tariff policies and the prices that are associated with them," Seroka said. "And while there are some bad actors out there, I'm sure, in general, it's a sourcing complexity of parts and components that go into a finished good."

US customs rules similarly recognize that determining a product's origin can depend on where it undergoes a "substantial transformation", rather than simply the country from which the final shipment departed.

Seroka said more sophisticated enforcement should therefore be accompanied by a practical understanding of how deeply integrated global manufacturing has become.

"I'd like to see more awareness," he said. "I'd like to see folks really get some practical understanding of how supply chains work on the international stage."

For California manufacturers, Hastings said the underlying challenge remains making long-term decisions in an environment where trade rules can change far more quickly than factories, supplier relationships or investment plans.

UK missile help for Ukraine 'adds fuel to fire': Kremlin

MOSCOW — The Kremlin said on Monday that the United Kingdom's decision to hand Ukraine information on British-made components used to make SCALP long-range missiles would "add fuel to the fire" and was regarded by Moscow extremely negatively.

UK Prime Minister Andy Burnham arrived in Kyiv on Monday on his first overseas trip since taking office and was due to announce British support to help Kyiv improve its domestic production of long-range missiles.

Asked about the visit and the support, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov accused the UK of doing everything it could to prevent any progress toward an eventual peace deal.

"Britain methodically and regularly adds fuel to the fire and methodically and regularly hatches schemes to prevent even the slightest progress in the peaceful settlement process," Peskov told reporters.

"Our armed forces are carrying out work accordingly, gathering the relevant intelligence to identify the production sites of such missiles and other military equipment, and taking measures to destroy these facilities," he said.

The SCALP missile is a long-range cruise missile capable of hitting targets around 250 kilometers away.

The UK and France have supplied the weapon to Ukraine since its conflict with Russia broke out in 2022, but Kyiv has not yet produced them domestically.

Burnham visited Kyiv on Monday for Ukraine's Independence Day commemorations and vowed to maintain Britain's military backing for the government.

"Despite Russia's outrageous threats to my country, we will continue our support for Ukraine's defense," Burnham said in a speech in Kyiv.

Ukraine was scheduled to host a meeting of its key European backers on Monday to press for critical air defense supplies.

The so-called Coalition of the Willing meeting will be jointly chaired by Burnham and the leaders of France and Germany, who will participate remotely.

The leaders of Luxembourg, Moldova, Estonia and European Council President Antonio Costa are also in Kyiv for the talks hosted on Ukraine's Independence Day.

The European Commission said on Monday that it had released another 6.1 billion euros ($7.1 billion) in new defense procurement for Ukraine, covering air defense systems, missiles, ammunition and radars.

The commission said the latest approval added to 16 billion euros in previously approved procurement plans, of which 8.35 billion euros have been disbursed.

Most of the equipment will be sourced from European Union defense companies, the commission said.

It said Russia's increased use of ballistic missiles and jet-engined drones had heightened the need to accelerate deliveries to Ukraine by reprioritizing orders and ramping up production.

The funding comes from the EU's 90 billion euro Ukraine Support Loan for 2026 and 2027. The European Parliament and the Council of the EU adopted legislation establishing the loan in February.

Under the disbursement procedure, Ukraine can request payments after signing procurement contracts with defense companies. The European Commission will review the contracts before releasing funds to ensure the purchases align with procurement plans agreed upon by EU member states.

On the battlefield, the Russian Defense Ministry said on Monday that air defense systems have intercepted and destroyed 351 fixed-wing Ukrainian drones over its territory overnight.

Russian forces continued overnight strikes with precision air-launched weapons and attack drones against Ukrainian ports and vessels allegedly involved in transporting cargo for the military, the ministry said.



Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha (second from left) greets United Kingdom Prime Minister Andy Burnham upon his arrival by train in Kyiv on Monday. HENRY NICHOLLS VIA REUTERS

AGENCIES — XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:00 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Some US politicians' China obsession a confession of their own misdemeanors

In his address at the TechNet Augusta conference last week, US National Security Agency Deputy Director Tim Kosiba tried to falsely portray China as a global "spoiler" and "disruptor" actively seeking to undermine the interests of the United States and its allies in almost every sphere across domains and environments — from the South China Sea to Greenland, from the Middle East to Latin America. "We must push back collectively by using all the levers of power smartly and strategically," he said.

His remarks, a manifestation of a Cold War mentality, reveal the deterioration in US strategic thinking. To claim China's presence is "adversarial" to the US and its allies in "nearly every engagement" and wherever the US seeks to defend itself and its allies is not an analytical assessment of reality. Rather, it is a reflection of the US' increasing unease about its capabilities to exercise hegemony in a multipolar world.

Baselessly labeling China as a "spoiler" confuses diplomatic engagement with hostility. China's extensive economic partnerships across the world are normal and beneficial to the international community. The country's footprint is characterized by trade, infrastructure development and dialogue, rather than the US style of military expansion or regime-change operations. Yet Kosiba interprets these as "adversarial", treating the entire world as the US' own exclusive domain.

Kosiba attempted to cast China's presence in Greenland and Antarctica as a "military threat". This groundless claim inadvertently exposes Washington's own intent to militarize these regions, where China's activities are transparent, scientific and cooperative. It is the US government that has defied international norms by repeatedly trying to assert control over Greenland, which is a sovereign territory of Denmark.

China has been a consistent defender of the international order and contributor to global peace and development. In its bilateral cooperation with other countries, China does not target third parties.

Kosiba's claim that Chinese companies are "passing intelligence to Iran" and "undermining" US operations is unfounded and intended to create a pretext for the US to use long-arm jurisdiction and impose unilateral and unlawful sanctions on Chinese entities.

The historical record shows that the US has frequently played the role of spoiler and disruptor in various regions — invading sovereign nations, meddling in domestic politics, and cultivating proxies to foment bloc confrontation, all while invoking the self-serving justifications of "human rights", "freedom" and "democracy" to lend "moral cover" to strategic overreach.

As a major country pursuing peaceful development, China's rise confounds some in the US. In response, they have repeatedly sought to provoke tensions or project the US' own behaviors onto China, levying unfounded accusations. Yet the more aggressively these US politicians make such absurd claims, the more they reveal their palpable anxiety in the face of a changing world.

Kosiba's call for "collective pushback" is actually a demand for allies to sacrifice their own interests and pick sides to alleviate Washington's anxiety. By falsely framing China as a "foe", these China-bashing politicians in the US are seeking to steer the world toward a new Cold War.

The US should follow the trend of the times, abandon its outdated zero-sum mindset and view China's development with a rational and pragmatic attitude. Resolving differences through equal dialogue serves the interests of both sides. The US is only shooting itself in the foot by continuing to perpetuate confrontation and spreading falsehoods that erode the international order.

Japan's remilitarization a fiscal dead end

The latest public opinion poll in Japan is a caution to the Sanae Takaichi government that it shouldn't allow the military buildup to consume the country's economic vigor. The Takaichi Cabinet's approval rating has fallen to 50.2 percent, its lowest level since she took office, while 71.7 percent of respondents say they are worried about Japan's fiscal health.

The immediate trigger may be a proposed cut in the consumption tax on food. The majority of respondents were worried the tax reduction could make it difficult for the government to sustain its social security system as Takaichi has failed to offer any alternative source of revenue to fill the fiscal gap to be left by the tax cut.

In fact, Takaichi appears to be promising everything at once: lower taxes, higher military spending, massive industrial investment, stronger security ties and faster growth. Japan's balance sheet, however, will not play ball.

She wants to protect households from inflation while maintaining an expansive fiscal and investment agenda. But the most conventional way to fight persistent inflation and support a weak yen is to allow the central bank to tighten monetary policy. The problem is that Japan cannot raise interest rates without confronting its debt mountain. This is the bind at the heart of Takaichi-nomics.

Takaichi's answer has increasingly been to promise investment and military spending as engines of "national renewal". But Japan has an aging population, a shrinking workforce, weak domestic demand and a shortage of resources. The proposed 370 trillion yen ($2.32 trillion) investment program over 14 years may help strategic industries, but no amount of government subsidy can substitute indefinitely for productivity growth, labor reform and a sustainable social security system.

The proposed domestic investment is to be accompanied by the cut in the food consumption tax from 8 percent to 1 percent. A complete elimination would represent roughly 5 trillion yen a year in lost revenue, so even the proposed reduction would leave a substantial hole. Meanwhile, the fiscal year 2027 military budget request stands at a record 8.9 trillion yen, and the final tally is on track to exceed 10 trillion yen as additional appropriations pile on.

This is where the rhetoric of "national strength" collides with the realities of the country's national debt. Japan already carries one of the heaviest public-debt burdens in the developed world. The 10-year Japanese government bond yield recently climbed to 2.95 percent, its highest level in about three decades. The Japanese Finance Ministry is preparing 36.6 trillion yen for government-bond principal and interest payments in fiscal year 2027, a 17 percent increase from the previous year.

The danger is a feedback loop: more spending requires more borrowing; more borrowing can raise investors' concerns; higher yields increase interest costs; higher interest costs consume fiscal space; and shrinking fiscal space makes every subsequent policy choice harder.

The Takaichi government has invested a considerable stake in promoting Japan's military, economic security and national identity. It has pressed ahead with controversial legislation on imperial succession and a backup capital, while its security policy is a de facto neo-militarist to-do list.

Yet unlike the right-wing forces, voters appear less interested in recovering yesterday's military "glory" than paying tomorrow's grocery bills.

In other words, Takaichi's main interest is remilitarization, while issues such as people's livelihoods and alleviating the burden on households take a back seat. The poll numbers on historical issues indicate that Japanese society is not unanimously behind her neo-militarist agenda. That is a big political gap.

The strongest mandate in the world cannot repeal arithmetic. Takaichi's ruling coalition may have won a Lower House majority, but it still faces resistance in the Upper House, and her popularity is already losing some of its protective cushion.

Takaichi vows to make Japan stronger. But strength is not measured by the number of missiles, submarines and warplanes a government can finance, but whether a country can pay its bills, maintain policy credibility and improve its people's well-being.

No country can become stronger in the long run by confusing military expenditure with economic vitality. Takaichi has a choice between political theater and economic discipline.

But even as the Japanese public grapples with the rising cost of living, Japanese Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi visited Australia and India last week, advocating Japan's "counterstrike capabilities" and promoting weapons exports. These moves reflect Takaichi is recklessly pursuing the wrong choice of expanding military and related industries while trying to cut taxes.

The more rational choice would be to embrace the trade-offs required for "national renewal": a credible tax base, structural reform, monetary-policy independence and spending that prioritizes the economy's long-term capacity. The neo-militarist drive should be discarded.

Japan's strained fiscal reality should serve as a stark warning to Takaichi: sacrificing public welfare for military expansion is a path to ruin. The problem, however, is that you can never wake someone who is pretending to be asleep.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

Middle East crisis cannot be sanctioned away by coercion

When Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister Miao Deyu met his Iranian counterpart Kazem Gharibabadi in Beijing on Aug 17, he reaffirmed China's commitment to dialogue and peace in the Middle East, saying that Beijing will continue helping restore peace and tranquility to the region.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs published a news release about the meeting on Sunday, after US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent publicly urged China, on Thursday, to join Washington's economic pressure campaign against Tehran. China's message was simple: It will not be pressured into being the US' accomplice in a conflict Washington created — along with Israel — and which it cannot resolve.

The conflict is entering its sixth month. The US' "Epic Fury" strikes in February and following campaigns failed to break Tehran's will. A full-scale invasion, according to Pentagon estimates, would cost trillions of dollars and require years of input — a political death sentence.

So Washington has increasingly pivoted to "economic warfare", with US President Donald Trump calling it "economic D-Day", a phrase that evokes the Normandy landings but increasingly sounds like a retreat.

This is a familiar Washington reflex: When military pressure fails, double down on sanctions. But three realities complicate that strategy.

First, Venezuela. Tehran has watched what happened under the US sanctions regime and drawn its own conclusion. Second, the Strait of Hormuz. Iran does not need to defeat the US Navy to control the choke point. Washington can squeeze Iranian oil exports, but it cannot open the strait. Third, the US' own fiscal predicament. Trump's suggestion that military force could be used if the national debt becomes unmanageable exposes an uncomfortable truth: domestic economic anxieties are increasingly bleeding into strategic calculations. A foreign confrontation can become a convenient distraction from problems at home.

So where does China fit in? China is Iran's trading partner. Bessent urged Beijing to sever those ties, but Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman Lin Jian was explicit: China opposes unilateral sanctions that lack a UN Security Council mandate.

Washington should discard the wishful thinking that it can compel China to cut economic ties with Iran. If the rest of the world is forced to do the US' bidding, international commerce stops being commerce and becomes permission-based globalization, in which Washington decides who may trade with whom.

There is also a larger geopolitical question. Washington's pressure campaign could produce the opposite effect. There have been reports that Iran has been invited to join the Mecca Joint Defense Agreement. Tehran has denied this, but it highlights that although the US seeks to isolate Iran economically, regional countries may be exploring ways to integrate it into a new security architecture.

Talk about the irony: the US threatens secondary sanctions against countries that trade with Iran at a time when some of its own allies and partners may be contemplating deeper security ties with Tehran.

Unilateral sanctions can concentrate pressure on one country, but they cannot prevent the costs from spreading. War cannot solve the problem; sanctions often create new ones.

Washington has been trying to turn economic interdependence into strategic leverage. But leverage works only when others are willing to accept the rules. Even US allies and partners reject US rules in many fields.

And the golden rule of being in a hole still applies: When you are in one, stop digging. Washington is scrabbling with both hands — military conflict and economic coercion.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

AI can speed up development of Global South

Editor's note: *Artificial intelligence can speed up the growth of developing countries. But these countries should take proactive steps to fully capitalize on the opportunities. People's Daily Overseas Edition spoke to Xu Xiujun, deputy head of the National Academy of Chinese Modernization at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and Jiang Tianjiao, associate professor at the Development Institute of Fudan University, about the challenges the Global South faces in leveraging AI and how international cooperation can help overcome these hurdles. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

AI technologies can diffuse through open source frameworks, pretrained models and cloud-based application programming interface calls. This allows developing countries to avoid costly hardware and gain direct access to advanced algorithmic capabilities.

Developing countries don't have to develop state-of-the-art AI models from scratch. Instead, they can adopt existing tools and tailor them to local conditions. AI applications in agriculture, healthcare, education, public governance, disaster response and other fields can enhance public services. This way, AI can ease the shortage of professionals and public services in some developing countries.

The competition over AI involves a comprehensive ecosystem that integrates data, algorithms and computing power. Currently, a few countries and enterprises dominate advanced computing resources, which raises barriers for developing countries. At the same time, many Global South countries face challenges such as insufficient power and network infrastructure, limited access to computing power, lack of localized data and talent, as well as underdeveloped industrial ecosystems for research and development and the application of AI. This threatens to turn the "access divide" of the internet era into an "intelligence divide".

AI has also given rise to a new "representational divide". Large-model training relies heavily on data, yet languages, cultures and knowledge of many developing countries are under-represented in the training datasets of mainstream models. This could lower the suitability of models and lead to algorithmic bias, undermining the performance of such AI models in local contexts.

The AI era requires not only basic digital literacy but also skills in human-machine collaboration, placing greater demands on education, vocational training and talent development. A country's ability to build a talent base compatible with intelligent transformation will determine whether it can fully unlock the dividends of AI.

Without an adequate understanding of AI application and regulation, and without policies and rules for AI development, governments risk long-term dependence on foreign technology suppliers and large platform enterprises. This dependence could hinder the development and growth of domestic industrial ecosystems and innovation capacity.

Future international cooperation should focus on systematically enhancing the capabilities of Global South countries. Priority should be given to developing inclusive digital infrastructure, including the power supply, networks and computing capacity, to support Global South countries in building more local, green and resilient intelligent computing centers. Efforts should also be made to establish an open-source and inclusive technology ecosystem. This includes encouraging the development and application of open-source AI models, frameworks and tools, and supporting Global South countries in cultivating local talent, native language models and AI applications tailored to their local needs.

Furthermore, countries should cooperate to establish a fair and reasonable global AI governance system. Platforms such as the newly established World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization should be leveraged to ensure Global South countries participate on an equal footing in formulating international AI rules, technical standards and ethical norms. Priority should be given to cooperation in areas related to people's well-being, including agriculture, healthcare, education, and disaster early-warning, to ensure that AI dividends can truly benefit broader populations.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:00 PM

VIEWS

Asit K. Biswas, Qu Yanping, and Yang Xiaojing

Tackling drought from parched to prepared

Throughout history, climatic fluctuations have been a constant companion of human civilization.

Early human civilizations developed along the fertile banks of rivers such as the Nile in Egypt, the Tigris and Euphrates in Mesopotamia, the Indus in the Indian subcontinent, and China's Yellow and Yangtze rivers.

There was abundant water for drinking and irrigation, and the rivers were also main arteries for transportation.

However, living close to the rivers also made these civilizations vulnerable to the threat of floods, while regions away from water sources faced the risk of droughts. The Indus civilization declined due to a prolonged drought, while in China, several dynasties lost power because the rulers were unable to protect the population from serious floods and droughts. Flood and drought management therefore became key issues for all dynasties.

As nations grew wealthier and technology advanced, policymakers across the world gained more alternatives to tackle extreme weather events. But floods have received more attention from scientists and policymakers than droughts because their impact is more visible and dramatic.

This is paradoxical, because floods can last for days, while droughts can extend for several months, years and even decades.

Moreover, prolonged droughts often inflict significantly greater human suffering than do heavy floods.

Droughts are now seen as multi-sector crises because they not only affect agriculture and food security but also reduce energy production, disrupt transportation systems, increase wildfire risks, and cause widespread economic losses that persist long after the drought itself has ended.

The severe drought in the Yangtze River Basin in 2022 exemplifies how droughts can evolve into a widespread socio-economic crisis when water shortage affects multiple sectors simultaneously. Prolonged high temperatures and extremely low precipitation led to reduced river inflows, declining reservoir levels and widespread deficits in soil moisture.

The impact extended beyond agriculture, disrupting urban and rural water supplies, hydropower generation, inland navigation and ecosystem health.

Unlike floods, which have clear beginnings and ends, droughts develop through an intricate interplay among precipitation, temperature, soil moisture, and human activities.

Global Lens

Advances in data analytics, artificial intelligence, remote sensing, and numerical modeling are improving drought prediction capabilities, but it is not yet possible to forecast when a drought may start, how severe it may become and how long it may persist.

Recognizing these challenges, institutions such as the China Institute of Water Resources and Hydropower Research are spearheading efforts to improve drought monitoring, forecasting and early-warning systems. Although significant knowledge gaps remain, advances in forecasting science are expected to provide policymakers and water managers more time to prepare for droughts and reduce their impact.

The good news is that China is better equipped to handle droughts than ever before. Substantial investments in water infrastructure, improved water management practices, expanded grain storage capacity, and more effective drought preparedness measures have bolstered the country's resilience.

As a result, although droughts will continue to occur and pose serious multisectoral challenges, their social, economic, and environmental consequences can be mitigated more effectively than in the past.

In addition, China's transport connectivity is now among the best in the world. Grain reserves can be moved quickly from one part of the country to drought-hit regions. This was not so easy just two decades ago.

However, future drought management must shift from reactive crisis response to proactive risk management. Historically, governments across the world have focused on emergency measures only after the impact of drought becomes visible.

A more effective approach involves drought preparedness, continuous monitoring, early-warning systems, risk assessment and institutional coordination to mitigate severe impact before it occurs. Such approaches can reduce vulnerability and increase societal resilience to droughts.



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) proposes new strategies for managing natural disasters, including droughts, and emphasizes proactive resilience. This will require a deeper understanding of droughts, extensive monitoring and a thorough analysis of their impact.

As climate change increases the frequency, intensity and duration of extreme weather events, research by institutions such as the IWHR will be crucial. These efforts aim to enhance our understanding of drought processes, strengthen forecasting capabilities, and develop more effective early-warning systems.

While droughts will remain an inevitable aspect of climatic variability, advances in science and risk management should enable societies to anticipate them earlier and respond more effectively.

Such progress would benefit not only China but also drought-prone regions across the world.

Asit K. Biswas is the director of Water Management International Pte Ltd in Singapore; Qu Yanping is a professor at the China Institute of Water Resources and Hydropower Research; Yang Xiaojing is a senior engineer in the same institute.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Chen Guiqing

Washington urged to honor one-China principle for stable ties

When the presidents of China and the United States met in May, they agreed to explore building a constructive and strategically stable relationship between the two countries. The Taiwan question, the most sensitive topic in China-US relations, was discussed in depth. The US made several commitments, including US President Donald Trump's remark that "I'm not looking to have somebody go independent", as well as signals that Washington would exercise restraint on arms sales to Taiwan and would not back the calls for "Taiwan independence".

Yet, months later, the reality is mixed. While Washington has shown some signs of restraint, it has simultaneously created new risks in the Taiwan Strait.

Stability in the Taiwan Strait is essential for maintaining steady China-US relations. Whether the US honors its commitments to China will directly affect the prospects for a stable relationship between the two countries.

Since the presidential meeting, Washington seems to understand the risks of conflict in the Taiwan Strait.

Following the meeting, the US temporarily paused major arms sales to Taiwan, stressed the importance of peace across the Strait, and resumed diplomatic communication with China at multiple levels.

Washington also publicly reiterated its adherence to the one-China principle, showing no fundamental shift in its Taiwan policy.

This period of relative restraint enabled the resumption of dialogue in areas such as trade, temporarily easing tensions across the Strait. Strategically, Washington recognizes that a conflict over Taiwan would incur enormous costs the US could ill afford. This reflects a calculation based on US interests, and aligns with the understandings reached by the two presidents.

Yet, high-level verbal commitments do not always translate into action on the ground. Provocative moves reveal a persistent problem in US policy: a divergence between Washington's words and its actions.

Raymond Greene, director of the "American Institute in Taiwan", often oversteps his role and intervenes in the island's political affairs.

In the current political environment, this distorts the status quo across the Strait and promotes the so-called "dialogue without preconditions", which emboldens separatist activities.

At the same time, the US continues to deepen military ties with Taiwan authorities, promoting defense concepts, pressing for increased defense spending, and accelerating efforts to build up "asymmetric capabilities".

It is also deeply involved in tactical defense planning, encouraging preparations for urban combat. Such moves embolden separatist forces seeking "Taiwan independence".

The US policy is marked by contradictions. While senior White House officials pledge to manage risks, anti-China lawmakers in the US push Taiwan-related legislation and military exchanges continue between the US and Taiwan authorities.

This double-faced approach seriously undermines the understandings reached by President Xi Jinping and President Trump, eroding peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait.

This contradiction stems from the US desire to contain the Chinese mainland, using Taiwan as leverage. Washington seeks to constrain China's development without being dragged into war by "Taiwan independence" forces.

This opportunism has made US policy unstable. Washington seems to believe that it can test China's limits while arming Taiwan and slow down China's reunification process without triggering a conflict.

But this dangerous ambiguity risks uncontrollable escalation. Separatist forces will not be satisfied with limited US "support" and will push Washington toward direct confrontation.

Those who play with fire risk getting burned. Provocations will only shrink the space for peace across the Strait and could lead to a dangerous strategic collision.

The Taiwan question is pivotal for a stable China-US relationship. Such a relationship should be defined by cooperation, healthy competition, manageable differences, and the promise of peace. Yet, Taiwan is a destabilizing factor in this path.

China and the US have differences over trade, technology, global governance and many other issues, but these allow room for negotiation. The Taiwan question is different and concerns China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, leaving no room for compromise.

The one-China principle is the political foundation of China-US diplomatic relations. If Washington continues to play the "Taiwan card", all the high-level understandings and plans for cooperation will rest on shaky ground.

A conflict could wipe out years of progress in China-US dialogue, dismantling the framework for a stable relationship and severely disrupting peace and stability across the Asia-Pacific.

Handling the Taiwan question is therefore a critical test for avoiding the trap of major-power confrontation. For a constructive and strategically stable relationship, Washington must abandon opportunism, honor its commitments and translate the understandings reached by the two presidents into concrete action. The following measures can take the relationship in that direction.

First, Washington should ensure consistency in its Taiwan policy, restrain provocative behavior by officials and stop further escalation of military ties between the US and the Taiwan authorities. Its words and actions on Taiwan should be consistent.

Second, the US should uphold its one-China principle, halt official exchanges and military ties with Taiwan, stop pushing Taiwan to expand its military capabilities, and abandon the idea of using the Taiwan question to contain the Chinese mainland.

Third, Washington should recognize the incompatibility of "Taiwan independence" and peace in the Taiwan Strait. It should stop encouraging separatist activities on the island.

The historical trend toward reunification across the Taiwan Strait cannot be stopped. China's central government consistently pursues peaceful reunification, but it has not renounced the use of force against separatism and interference by external forces.

Only by properly managing the Taiwan question and upholding the one-China principle can China and the US remove the biggest obstacle in their relationship and create broader space for a constructive and strategically stable relationship.

By preserving stability in the Taiwan Strait and abandoning the "Taiwan card", Washington can stabilize China-US relations and contribute to global peace.

The author is a researcher at the Institute of Taiwan Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Kang Bing

The author is former deputy editor-in-chief of China Daily.
kangbing@chinadaily.com.cn

Key to realizing life expectancy goals lies in rural areas

Six decades ago, when I was just six years old, for several months it was my uncle who came to fetch me from my boarding kindergarten to spend weekends with my grandparents.

My parents, I was told, were in the hospital, with my father suffering from tuberculosis and my mother from hepatitis. At that time, both diseases were infectious and, sometimes, fatal.

As a six-year-old, I could only cry and pray that they recover and live till the age of 60 — a target I also set for myself. As a child, I had no idea about life expectancy and set the goal just because I had heard people talk about someone having lived till "the ripe old age of 70".

Thanks to China's better living conditions, improved medical care, and probably my prayers, both my parents lived longer than I had prayed for, with my father passing away at the age of 91 and my mother at 86, even though they had to spend their last few years in the hospital.

The National Health Plan for the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30), released by the State Council, China's Cabinet, has set the country's life expectancy at 80 years, an increase of three months over last year. If China successfully meets the target, it will surpass many developed countries, and the world average of 73.5 years in 2024.

Checking China's historical records, I have little doubt that the target will be met — over the past few decades, the country has never failed to meet its Five-Year Plan goals. In fact, China has achieved the feat of raising the country's life expectancy from 67.9 years in 1981 to 79.25 years in 2025.

Health literacy indicates a citizen's ability to obtain and understand health information and their capability to make the right healthcare choices.

Every time I go through the details of the health plan, I feel I can sit back and relax. Going by the dozens of indices and practical measures in place, it seems that realizing the life expectancy goal is not going to be a problem. In fact, I feel, they have been extra cautious in setting the target.

The rates of infant mortality, maternal mortality and premature deaths, and of major chronic diseases, are likely to fall in tandem with the rise in life expectancy.

According to the plan, better-equipped hospitals will be established and measures will be taken to ensure citizens can find treatment options within 15 minutes' walking distance from their homes. The number of doctors and nurses will be increased to provide patients with better care.

To deal with the shortage of medical staff in rural areas, medical schools will open their doors wider to students and trainees from these regions on the condition that they return to their hometowns and villages after graduation and training to provide health services there.

More doctor exchange programs will be arranged so that rural doctors have more opportunities for training. Remote medical care will be encouraged to provide timely healthcare to the rural population. Of the approximately one million licensed doctors working in village clinics, many are nearing retirement age, leading to the closing down of many village clinics.

Providing rural societies with better medical care remains a big challenge for health authorities in their quest to raise the country's life expectancy. The challenge becomes tough when we realize that rural areas are fast turning into aging societies, as millions of young people from rural areas migrate to the cities in search of jobs.

While the required tweak (increase or decrease) in the rate of other indexes to meet the plan's goal is less than one percent, the biggest hurdle to cross is in residents' health literacy levels, from 33.69 percent last year to 40 percent five years later.

Health literacy indicates a citizen's ability to obtain and understand health information and their capability to make the right healthcare choices.

Publicity drives should be undertaken to encourage residents to adopt healthy living habits, such as not smoking, controlled drinking, and reduced sugar and salt intake. Awareness should be raised among citizens about chronic diseases such as hypertension and hyperglycemia, and they should undergo routine physical check-ups.

They should also engage in regular physical exercise — at least three times a week and no less than 30 minutes each time.

Surveys find disparities in urban and rural areas regarding sports, with around 38.5 percent of urban residents regularly engaging in sports activities compared with about 31 percent of their counterparts in rural areas.

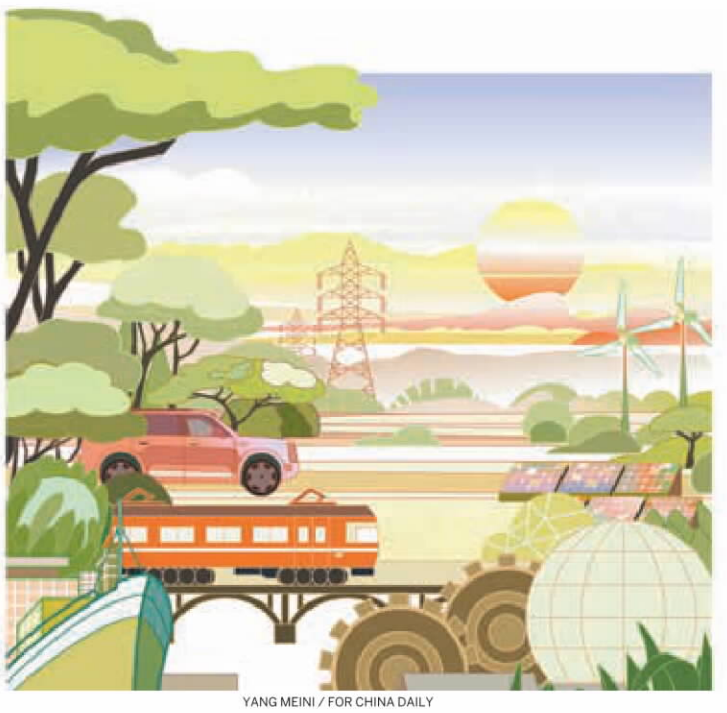
It seems the rural areas hold the key to realizing, or not realizing, the country's improved life expectancy goal.

Health authorities will find that a lot needs to be done in this regard in the rural areas.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:00 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS



YANG MEINI / FOR CHINA DAILY

BERNARDO MENDIA

Enabling, not squeezing

China's development enlarges the global industrial pie for shared prosperity across the Global South

A persistent narrative has gained traction among certain Western policy circles and think tanks: China's manufacturing capacity is "squeezing" the industrial space of other developing nations. Under this framing, global manufacturing is portrayed as a fixed, zero-sum pie in which one nation's export expansion inherently denies others the chance to industrialize.



This view relies on an outdated model of international trade. It fundamentally misinterprets the dynamic realities of modern global value chains and ignores how industrial upgrading actually occurs. Far from pulling up the development ladder behind it, China is constructing critical structural steps, through intermediate capital exports, greenfield foreign direct investment and joint production ecosystems, that lower the threshold of industrialization across the Global South.

Expanding market access and sharing development dividends are key measures through which China supports the shared prosperity of the Global South. A landmark development is China's zero-tariff policy, effective May 1, covering 53 African countries with which it has diplomatic ties. China is the first major economy to grant unilateral, comprehensive duty-free access to these African nations.

China is taking concrete actions to help African nations better integrate into the global market and unlock their development potential. According to China's General Administration of Customs, in May and June, China's imports from Africa totaled 193.8 billion yuan ($28.8 billion), marking a 23.5 percent year-on-year increase. The import volumes of African specialty agricultural products and semi-processed mineral goods have steadily risen. The structure of China-Africa trade continues to improve: Chinese imports can match Africa's distinctive products and resource endowments; Chinese exports can deliver its high-quality equipment, mature technologies and full industrial chain capabilities. The partnership — characterized by complementary supply and demand, integrated industries and interconnected markets — is growing ever more robust.

The zero-sum argument also overlooks a profound structural shift in global trade statistics. China's export architecture has evolved from final consumer goods toward intermediate components, advanced machinery and green technology. According to data released by the National Bureau of Statistics, China's equipment manufacturing sector became a major driver of the country's export growth in the first half of 2026, with exports of mechanical and electrical products increasing by 20.1 percent. Based on data released by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, exports of wind turbine generators, lithium batteries and automobiles have registered growth in the first half of this year.

This development provides other developing economies with competitively priced capital inputs. Critics often worry that relying on imported intermediate goods leads to premature deindustrialization or locks some developing nations into low-value assembly. Yet history demonstrates that almost every modern industrial power, including China during its early reform era, began by mastering processing and assembly before moving up the technological ladder. Importing cost-effective components, energy systems and industrial machinery lowers operational baselines for local manufacturers.

Furthermore, this mechanism generates a vital macroeconomic benefit: input-cost disinflation. Instead of forcing emerging markets into capital-intensive, high-risk import substitution from scratch, cost-effective goods act as a structural anti-inflationary buffer. Local industries gain immediate price competitiveness, enabling domestic capital to focus on downstream processing, customized manufacturing and regional market distribution. The emerging pattern is a highly collaborative division of labor where China supplies intermediate goods, partner countries process and assemble and both benefit from joint global exports.

Trade flows alone, however, tell only half of the story. The transition from simple commerce to long-term economic integration is powered by direct capital deployment. Data highlights a pivot in cross-border investment: China's non-financial direct investment in Belt and Road partner nations surpassed $39.67 billion in 2025, accompanied by over $257.98 billion in signed construction contracts.

This capital is no longer limited to basic infrastructure or sovereign loans. It is increasingly directed into physical greenfield production. From manufacturing complexes in Egypt's Suez Canal Economic Zone to multi-billion-dollar green ammonia and renewable energy programs in Ethiopia, capital is being anchored directly inside host countries. Dedicated industrial parks act as ecosystem anchors, generating local employment, transferring operational skills and converting raw materials into processed, value-added exports on-site. Greenfield investment ensures that host nations do not remain passive consumers, but steadily construct durable domestic industrial capacity.

In this sense, China and other Global South countries are complementary and mutually reinforcing partners working hand-in-hand, rather than competitors in homogeneous rivalry. China serves as an important enabler of industrialization and the green transition across the Global South.

The assertion that China's industrial power "squeezes" other Global South countries fails to withstand empirical scrutiny. Industrial growth in the 21st century is not achieved through isolation or protectionist barriers, but through deep integration into global value chains. By supplying cost-effective intermediate goods, mitigating domestic inflationary pressures, and committing direct capital to greenfield industrial ecosystems, China is expanding the global industrial pie. When integrated with various dynamic multilateral platforms, this model demonstrates that South-South cooperation is fundamentally transformational, building the steps for shared, long-term economic prosperity.

China's development is an opportunity, not a challenge, for the world. Committed to an open strategy of mutual benefits and win-win cooperation, China can empower global economic recovery through its own high-quality development.

Today, aligning with China's development opportunities, deepening practical cooperation with China, and participating in the Belt and Road Initiative have become significant choices for many countries around the world. Multilateral platforms such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum and the China-CELAC Forum have delivered tangible results.

Strategic cross-regional frameworks, such as the historical ties connecting Portugal and the broader Portuguese-speaking world (representing more than 270 million consumers), offer an additional blueprint for trilateral economic cooperation. As an EU member state with deep corporate networks across Latin America and Africa, Portugal can combine Chinese capital equipment and advanced technologies with local engineering, logistics, and management expertise. Coupled with the institutional clearing mechanisms of Forum Macao, this trilateral model can ensure that South-South trade is supported by balanced, multi-party supply chains to help deepen cooperation in global production capacity, technological innovation, infrastructure connectivity and green development.

The author is the secretary-general of the Portugal-China Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

LI XING

Out of double trap

The US faces difficult task of managing both external competition and internal pressures

For more than a decade, strategic debate in the United States has been echoing an influential proposition: the Thucydides Trap. Popularized by Harvard professor Graham Allison and inspired by the Peloponnesian War, the concept warns that the rise of an emerging power can generate dangerous structural tensions with an established one.



Despite scholarly criticism and even dismiss across continents, the proposition has often been cited in the US to interpret the contemporary strategic competition with China.

Recently, Ian Bremmer, founder of the Eurasia Group, drew on lessons from the collapse of the Roman Republic to revive the concept of the Gracchi Trap. Unlike the Thucydides Trap, which attributes the risk of conflict primarily to the structural dynamics of external power competition, the Gracchi Trap directs attention to the internal sources of a great power's decline. It argues that major powers ultimately lose their preeminence because they fail to reform themselves in the face of mounting domestic dysfunction. Political paralysis, institutional decay, widening polarization and growing inequality progressively erode state capacity and national cohesion, leaving a great power increasingly vulnerable to external competition and strategic pressure.

Taken separately, both traps offer peculiar viewpoints for understanding the internality and externality of crises. Taken together, however, they present a far more challenging picture of strategic predicament for the United States, which is simultaneously confronting both external struggles for global leadership and the internal polarization of governance and legitimacy.

The Thucydides Trap is most commonly applied by people from the US to the context of relations with China, although many Asia-Pacific researchers have pinpointed its inherent logical faults, disregard of Chinese philosophical tradition and structural mismatch with current circumstances. As China's economic, technological and military capabilities expand, Washington increasingly views Beijing not merely as a competitor but as the only country capable of fundamentally reshaping the global balance of power. Successive US administrations — Republican and Democratic alike — have increasingly viewed the bilateral relationship through the lens of the Thucydides Trap, making strategic competition with China the organizing principle of US foreign policy.

This contest now extends far beyond the traditional domains of military and security competition. It encompasses advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence and semiconductors, global supply chains, investment screening, export controls, critical minerals, maritime security and competing visions of global governance. Relations between the world's two largest economies have had resounding impact on the rest of the world as well as global development.

Such structural competition undoubtedly generates significant risks. History demonstrates that power transitions have frequently been accompanied by miscalculation, arms races and, in some cases, major conflicts. Escalating tensions and even conflict cannot be dismissed by many US personalities. Yet, hopes have been refreshed by the new vision of a constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability agreed upon by both sides during the landmark visit to China by US President Donald Trump in May this year.

The Gracchi Trap, however, shifts analytical attention away from China and back to the US itself. The concept derives from the Gracchi brothers of the Roman Republic, whose attempts to reform an increasingly unequal political system ended not in compromise but in political violence. Their failure marked the beginning of decades of instability that ultimately contributed to the decline and eventual collapse of the Roman Republic. The central implication of the Gracchi Trap is straightforward: great powers often weaken from internal dysfunction long before they are overcome by external adversaries.

In the US, the warning signs have become increasingly difficult to ignore. Political polarization has reached levels unseen for generations. Congress increasingly struggles to pass major legislation. Electoral outcomes are routinely contested. Public trust in government institutions continues to decline. Social divisions over race, immigration, inequality, identity politics and economic opportunity have become deeply entrenched. Meanwhile, mounting fiscal pressures, rising public debt and deteriorating infrastructure further complicate the prospects for effective long-term governance.

These domestic contradictions inevitably shape US foreign policy. When governments face difficult internal challenges, they often seek external sources of political cohesion and strategic purpose. Adopting a more hawkish stance toward China can serve to generate domestic political unity and reinforce an "America First" identity. Economic difficulties are increasingly attributed to competition from China, while even long-standing allies are portrayed as having taken advantage of the US. At the same time, perceived external security threats often receive greater political attention than the pursuit of necessary structural reforms at home.

This interaction between domestic politics and international strategies demonstrates why the Thucydides Trap and the Gracchi Trap should not be understood in isolation. Rather, they are mutually reinforcing dynamics. External competition intensifies domestic political pressures, while domestic political dysfunction, in turn, encourages more confrontational foreign-policy choices. The result is a self-reinforcing cycle in which external competition and internal instability become mutually amplifying forces, potentially accelerating both strategic overextension abroad and institutional erosion at home.

This has important implications beyond the US. Much of Europe has historically aligned itself with the US' strategic assessment of China, while US allies across Asia and Latin America have also adjusted their security policies in response to intensifying US-China competition. As a result, the trajectory of US domestic politics is no longer merely a national concern; it increasingly shapes the stability, direction and strategic dynamics of the broader international system.

While some observers may interpret US political dysfunction as evidence of inevitable decline, the realities of economic globalization suggest a more complex and double-edged dynamic. The relative weakening of the US should not be regarded as an unqualified strategic advantage for China, given the extensive economic interdependence, cultural exchanges and people-to-people ties that have developed between the two countries. In other words, a weaker US does not necessarily benefit China. Rather, instability in the world's largest and most influential economy could generate profound uncertainties for the global system, with significant repercussions for China itself.

Historical analogies should be applied with caution. Neither the Thucydides Trap nor the Gracchi Trap should be taken as deterministic predictions. History does not mechanically repeat itself. Rather, these concepts highlight structural pressures that policymakers should seek to resolve rather than allow to unfold.

Avoiding the Thucydides Trap requires strategic trust-building, crisis-management mechanisms and sustained dialogue between the US and China. Avoiding the Gracchi Trap requires something even more difficult for the US: restoring public trust in the political system, strengthening domestic institutions, addressing widening inequalities and rebuilding national consensus.

Throughout history, great powers rarely collapse because they lose a single external confrontation. More often, they decline gradually because internal weaknesses prevent them from adapting to changing circumstances.

The future global order will therefore depend not only on how the US manages competition with China but also on whether it can overcome its own domestic fragmentation.

The author is a Yunshan leading scholar and the director of the European Research Center at Guangdong Institute for International Strategies at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, and an adjunct professor of international relations at Aalborg University in Denmark. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:00 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

Alibaba seeks HK$80 billion placement

Raising equity gives firm longer-term funding; sends vote of confidence

By **CHENG YU**
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Alibaba Group is seeking to raise about HK$80 billion ($10.2 billion) through a new share placement in Hong Kong, which, if completed, would become the world's third-largest primary follow-on offering this year, behind only those placed by Alphabet and Intel.

The placement, announced on Sunday, would mark Alibaba's first new share sale since its Hong Kong listing in 2019. More striking is where every dollar raised is headed — the company plans to use 100 percent of its net proceeds to strengthen its artificial intelligence capabilities, including expanding and upgrading AI infrastructure.

Several sources close to the matter told China Daily that the offering was oversubscribed within an hour of its launch. One source close to the company disclosed that sovereign wealth funds and some long-term institutional investors showed keen interest.

Right after the move, Alibaba's Chairman Cai Chongxin and CEO Wu Yongming bought a combined about HK$120 million of Alibaba shares.

Guo Tao, deputy director of China Electronic Commerce Expert Service Center, said: "Alibaba's placement also has benchmark significance for China's AI industry. Alibaba's continued expansion in AI capital spending could accelerate development across China's domestic AI supply chain, from AI chip adaptation and intelligent computing centers to liquid-cooling systems."

As the AI race shifts from a technology contest into a "capital endurance race", raising equity gives Alibaba longer-term funding while sending a vote of confidence through the broader sector, Guo said.

The aggressive spending comes as AI emerges as an increasingly important growth engine for Alibaba.

The company reported revenue of 268.95 billion yuan ($37.5 billion) for its fiscal first quarter ended June 30, with net profit attributable to shareholders of 10.54 billion yuan.

Alibaba CEO Wu Yongming told analysts after the earnings release that annualized recurring revenue from AI-related products was expected to approach $10 billion in the next quarter. AI-related product ARR had already surpassed 49.5 billion yuan in the first quarter, Wu said.



View of Alibaba's booth at the recent World AI Conference held in Shanghai. AP

Jiang Han, a senior researcher at market consultancy Pangoal, said: "Alibaba's organizational restructuring was effectively designed to build a vertically integrated, full-stack AI operation, lowering transaction costs and speeding the deployment of new technologies. The improvement in commercialization returns mentioned by Wu is a direct monetization of that full-stack capability." Jiang added that Alibaba's AI investment was beginning to move from simply "burning cash" toward generating its own financial returns.

Alibaba's fundraising also comes as the AI sector's capital requirements are ballooning globally, pushing companies to seek ever larger pools of financing.

Anthropic confidentially filed for a United States' initial public offering in June and could list as early as October, with a targeted valuation of as much as $2 trillion. OpenAI is also targeting a potential fourth-quarter listing, while its valuation in private markets stands at around $850 billion.

Alibaba's HK$80 billion placement puts China's largest tech firms squarely into that global capital race. But raising more money does not remove the biggest uncertainty hanging over the AI boom — whether commercial returns can keep pace with the extraordinary amount of investment.

Investors are already showing some caution. Alibaba's US-listed shares closed at $119.34 on Monday, down 8.57 percent, while its Hong Kong-listed shares ended at HK$112, down 8.54 percent.

"The biggest risk investors need to watch is not that AI fails, but that the pace of AI commercialization fails to keep up with capital spending. In the end, this competition will not be about who spends the most. It will be about who can make returns on AI investment exceed the cost of capital first," Jiang added.

Smart agriculture


Staffers from State Grid Yangzhou check power facilities at Jiangdu District Modern Agricultural Industrial Park in Yangzhou, Jiangsu province, aiming to optimize power supply for electricity-intensive projects such as smart greenhouses, water and fertilizer irrigation infrastructure, and cold chain storage facilities. The power supplier aims to inject strong momentum into developing local smart agriculture. REN FEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Briefly

Railway cargo transport volume up

The China-Laos Railway has handled over 90 million metric tons of cargo since the railway began operation in 2021, with cross-border cargo surpassing 21 million tons, said China Railway Kunming Group Co Ltd. The number of cross-border freight trains operated daily has risen to a peak of 23, while the maximum hauling capacity per train has increased from 2,000 tons to 2,800 tons.

Yuan weakens against greenback

The central parity rate of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, weakened 24 pips to 6.7841 against the US dollar on Monday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System. In China's spot foreign exchange market, the yuan is allowed to rise or fall by 2 percent from the central parity rate each trading day.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Digital yuan use gathering pace

By **ZHOU LANXU**
zhoulanxv@chinadaily.com.cn

China's digital yuan is gaining traction in cross-border use as a growing number of transactions point to broader and more regular commercial applications, potentially bolstering the renminbi's role in international settlement and payments, experts said.

The development comes as recent volatility in the United States Treasury market has renewed discussion about diversification of the international monetary system. Central bank digital currencies — including e-CNY or the digital yuan — have been viewed as one possible avenue for supporting a more diversified system, given their potential to make cross-border payments faster, less costly and more secure.

Against this backdrop, Ping An Bank recently said that its Hangzhou branch in Zhejiang province had made the first e-CNY transaction in the lender's cross-border business. Using the Multilateral Central Bank Digital Currency Bridge (mBridge), the branch had processed a goods trade settlement for a high-end manufacturer in Jiaxing, Zhejiang.

Ping An Bank said the transaction shortened the intermediate clearing chain and significantly improved transaction security and settlement efficiency compared with conventional cross-border remittances.

The mBridge project is a new type of multicurrency international cross-border infrastructure leveraging blockchain technology, allowing direct transactions in local digital currencies.

The platform's cumulative transaction value had reached almost 500 billion yuan ($74.4 billion) by end-2025, with more than 95 percent of the transactions made using e-CNY as of end-November 2025, according to the People's Bank of China.

This month, the Beijing Municipal Branch of the PBOC said that Postal Savings Bank of China's Beijing branch had completed the city's first mBridge cross-border transaction involving the Macao Special Administrative Region, making a payment to a Macao company related to public transport card settlement.

Last month, Industrial Bank also announced that it had launched in Guangzhou, Guangdong province mBridge payment services to the Macao SAR, while having lately used the platform to process a 500 million yuan cross-border transfer for an equity acquisition involving an industrial park.

"Together, the cases show that cross-border e-CNY payments have moved beyond proof-of-concept testing into real-value transactions, and are accelerating toward regular, large-scale use," said Lou Feipeng, a researcher at Postal Savings Bank of China.

"The next breakthroughs are likely to come from deeper expansion of application scenarios," Lou said, as the digital yuan is extending usage from goods trade into services trade, cross-border investment and financing, commodity transactions, shipping insurance and other financial activities.

Further progress will also require broader infrastructure connectivity and a stronger institutional ecosystem, including cross-border anti-money laundering cooperation, he added.

Policy and institutional support have been strengthened. At its work conference held this month, the PBOC called for improving cross-border digital yuan infrastructure. The central bank subsequently expanded the number of e-CNY operating institutions to 30, broadening the banking network that could develop related applications.

Miao Yanliang, chief economist at China International Capital Corp, said, "The digital yuan has the potential to expand the RMB's role in international settlement and payments, with its programmability enabling fast and secure large-value cross-border transactions."

However, Miao said that the key challenge is interoperability — connecting different payment infrastructures across jurisdictions while bridging differences in technical standards and compliance regimes, thereby broadening the range of markets and users the digital yuan can serve.

China's pet industry evolving at unprecedented rate

By **HE QI** in Shanghai
heqi@chinadaily.com.cn

China's pet industry is evolving at a pace unmatched worldwide, with consumer and industrial upgrades that take five to seven years in mature markets compressed into just one to two years locally, Ganesh Ramani, general manager of Mars Pet Nutrition China, said in an exclusive interview with China Daily.

"The changes we see across the globe happen at a certain pace, but in China they happen much faster. The timelines are compressed," Ramani said on the sidelines of the 28th Pet Fair Asia held at the Shanghai New International Expo Center from Wednesday to Sunday, which gathered over 2,600 exhibitors from across the full pet industry chain.

Ramani attributed the speed to a comprehensive supply chain, a highly digital retail environment and strong social media influence. Additionally, the influx of first-time pet owners has further energized the market.

China is home to over 100 million pets, and most new pet-owning families have no multi-generational tradition of keeping animals. Consumers actively search for pet care knowledge online and are highly receptive to new information, fueling the growth of more than 3,000 pet food brands in constant innovation, said Ramani.

"Chinese consumers are probably among the most demanding in the world. They pay very close attention to what is on the back of the pack — they research ingredients, formulas, recipes and production processes, and look for validation of what companies are claiming," Ramani said, adding that such rational consumption will push the industry to raise standards and drive out speculative players.

This view echoes observations from Royal Canin, another Mars brand. Xu Juan, general manager of Royal Canin China, said the country's pet market has completed a transition from "quantity" to "quality" over three decades — evolving from functional home guarding to basic sustenance, then premium feeding, and now the pursuit of health and longevity. China has become the world's second-largest market by pet population, Xu said.

Strategic focus on China has translated into tangible investment. Mars Pet Nutrition entered the country in 1989 and started local manufacturing as early as 1995, making it one of the first foreign pet food companies to build production capacity here. Today, 90 percent of Mars' products sold in China are locally made.

"One of the key shifts we have made in recent years is building a portfolio designed around Chinese consumers and local insights," Ramani said, noting that more than 40 localized products have been launched since 2025. While Chinese factories currently prioritize domestic demand, innovations validated here may be exported to other markets in the future.

Royal Canin is also ramping up local manufacturing. With its Tianjin factory's wet pet food line now operational, the company has formed a Tianjin-Shanghai dual-factory footprint with both dry and wet pet food lines. The 88-gram single-serve can and Corgi-specific formula, Xu said, show how local consumer insights drive product innovation.

Pet aging is one of the most definitive niche trends. Xu said that around 20 million pets in China have reached senior age — pets over 7 and large breed dogs over 5 are considered early seniors — and it is estimated that half of the country's pets will be seniors by 2040. However, public awareness lags behind.

Mars Pet Nutrition is approaching the aging trend from a preventive nutrition angle. Ramani said the core logic behind the Nutro brand refresh is proactive health, as the gut serves as the first line of immune defense.

Unlocking growth via county-level markets

By **LI JING**
lijing2009@chinadaily.com.cn

China's vast county-level markets are rapidly evolving beyond a cheaper extension of urban markets into an increasingly important source of domestic consumer growth, industry experts and data show.

According to data from the National Bureau of Statistics, retail sales of consumer goods in rural areas climbed 2.4 percent year-on-year in the first seven months of this year, more than double the 1.1 percent growth in urban areas. Today, county and township economies generate approximately 40 percent of China's total GDP.

Rural retail growth has outpaced or roughly matched urban growth for 55 consecutive months, a span of more than four years, highlighting the durability of a shift in consumption toward smaller markets, said Zhou Mi, a senior researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation.

"Covering more than 90 percent of the nation's land area, county-level markets form complete, independent economic units with diverse consumption scenarios," Zhou said. "With rising living standards and incomes, pent-up demand for high-quality lifestyles is surging. This is being met by an influx of major retailers expanding downward, creating an efficient supply-and-demand alignment."

Crucially, experts note that county-level consumers enjoy a distinct structural advantage. "Compared with cities, consumers in county-level areas generally face significantly lower burdens for housing, mortgages and daily transportation," said Chen Liping, a professor specializing in retail at the Capital University of Economics and Business. "This lower cost structure frees up substantial disposable income, fostering stronger willingness to spend and higher resilience against economic headwinds."

However, stronger demand does not automatically translate into stronger brand sales. According to a recent report by market research firm NielsenIQ, also known as NIQ, county-level fast-moving consumer goods sales expanded 2.5 percent year-on-year, five times the 0.5 percent growth recorded in tier-one and tier-two cities. Yet, among the 20 leading FMCG manufacturers tracked by NIQ, only four posted sales gains in county markets, while 16 saw declines.

"County markets are no longer just a 'delayed version' of top-tier cities," said Ding Na, retail insights manager at NielsenIQ China. "Simply relying on downward channel expansion and price wars is no longer enough. Brands need to tailor their strategies to distinct local lifestyles and generational demands."

NIQ data show 53 percent of county consumers remain price-sensitive, while quality, practicality and experience are becoming more important. Consumers under 30 have relatively strong purchasing power and are increasingly interested in technology, design and new experiences, while older consumers tend to place greater weight on practicality and reliability.

"The diversity of county-level markets means businesses have broad room to develop new service models and create new momentum for consumption," said Shen Bing, a researcher at an institute under the National Development and Reform Commission.

Policy tailwinds are set to accelerate this transition. The Ministry of Commerce and eight other government departments released a guideline recently, setting out 18 measures covering upgrades to retail infrastructure, business format innovation, the supply of goods and services, distribution networks and financial support.

"County and township markets now hold the key to further consumption growth," said Yuan Xiaoming, assistant minister of commerce.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:00 PM

BUSINESS

HK, Macao key gateways to the world

Cities are ideal testing grounds for products on way to overseas markets

By LI JIAYING
lijiaying@chinadaily.com.cn

For an autonomous driving company, moving a vehicle from a left-hand-drive market to a right-hand-drive city is not just a matter of shifting the steering wheel.

The work involves developing the system from the ground up, with everything from product definition and the vehicle platform to the autonomous-driving system and human-machine interface redesigned around the traffic rules, road conditions and user habits of right-hand-drive markets, according to Guangzhou, Guangdong province-based autonomous driving technology company WeRide.

That is why WeRide's new right-hand-drive Robotaxi project began in Hong Kong.

"Few cities offer a tougher real-world test for autonomous vehicles than Hong Kong, where dense roads, mixed traffic and a mature public transport system converge in one of the world's busiest right-hand-drive markets," said Tony Han, founder and CEO of WeRide.

The autonomous driving developer recently announced that it is working with vehicle maker Geely Farizon and local transport operator Kwoon Chung Bus Holdings on a mass-produced model designed around Hong Kong regulations, road conditions and operating requirements.

Han added that if the vehicle works in the city's dense traffic, the experience can support its expansion into other key right-hand-drive markets including Singapore, the United Kingdom, Japan and Australia.

WeRide is not alone in assigning Hong Kong a specific role in a wider innovation chain. For a growing group of Chinese mainland technology companies, Hong Kong and Macao are where products encounter new operating conditions, local partners and international capital before entering overseas markets.

China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) calls for faster progress toward high-level technological self-reliance and again supports Hong Kong as an international innovation and technology center. Hong Kong is also preparing its first five-year plan, where technological development is expected to play a pivotal role.

Technological self-reliance, however, does not mean geographic self-sufficiency. An algorithm developed in a Beijing laboratory may need to be engineered, financed, tested against different rules and sold into markets with different languages and business practices, just as the emerging Beijing-Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao network connects those stages.

"Hong Kong and Macao boast diversified international business environments, leading innovation resources and mature global trade and financial systems," said Huang Heping, general manager of international business development at Beijing-based space company GalaxySpace.

"They are important gateways for mainland companies to connect with the global technology frontier, participate in international scientific cooperation and share China's innovation achievements," Huang said.

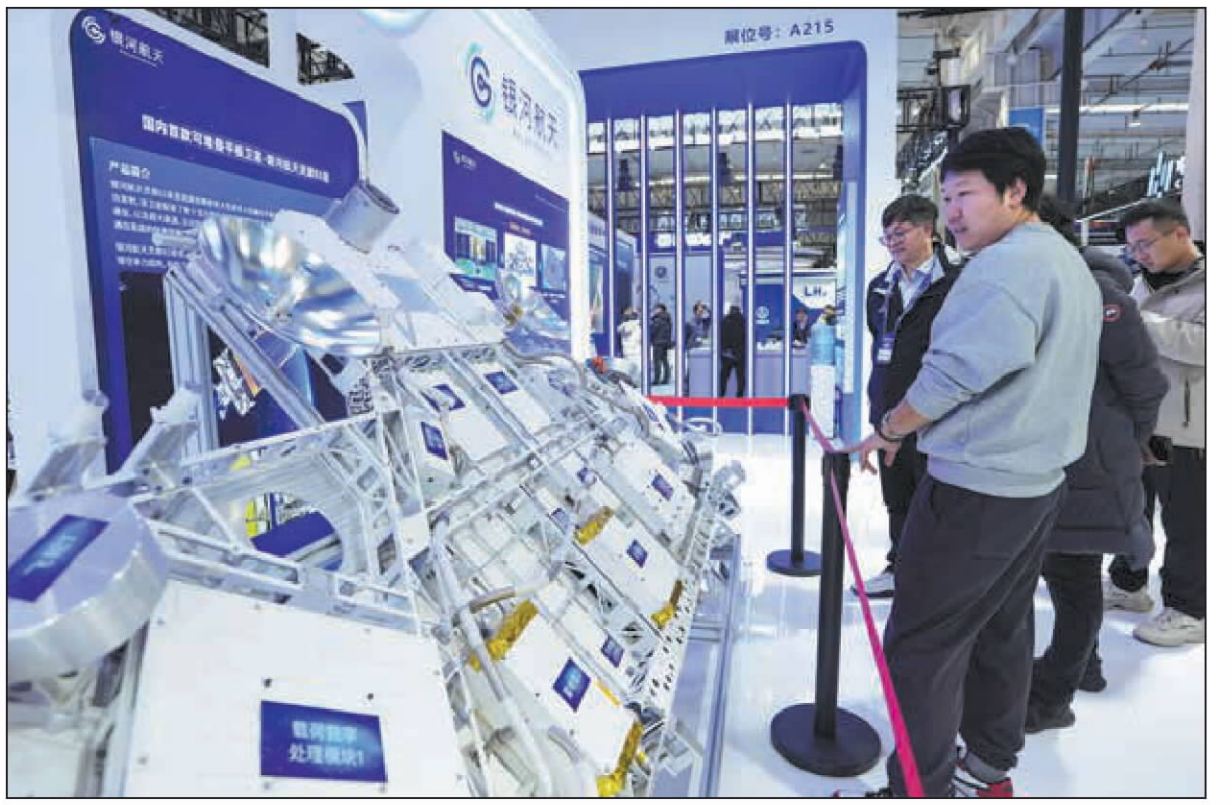
GalaxySpace develops communications payloads, satellite platforms and related systems and has built capacity for lower-cost, large-scale satellite production. In early 2025, it established a low-Earth orbit broadband demonstration station in Hong Kong, followed by a connected-car trial project, placing a mainland-developed satellite system in a local transport setting with Hong Kong researchers.

"Just as travelers need a power adapter when they go abroad, mainland space products need a 'converter' to enter international markets," Huang said. "Hong Kong is that crucial platform."

For GalaxySpace, the next steps include further tests, research cooperation and applications that can be assessed by local partners. "We believe Hong Kong and Macao will connect the mainland aerospace industry chain with the global market and create considerable value for the global space industry," Huang said.

Beijing Zhongke WengeAI Science and Technology Co is using Hong Kong in a different part of the same process. Founded in 2017 by artificial intelligence scientists from the Institute of Automation of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the company specializing in AI-assisted decision-making went public on the Hong Kong bourse in June under the exchange's specialist technology company regime.

In a bid to provide further support for high-potential specialist technology companies in their pre-commercial or commercial stages, Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited, also known as HKEX, launched a listing framework under Chapter 18C of the Main Board Listing Rules in March 2023 to allow such companies in frontier sectors to list without meeting traditional profit or heavy revenue requirements.





Above: Visitors take a look at a model of the Lingxi-03 stackable flat-panel satellite, developed by GalaxySpace, at the 2026 Beijing International Commercial Space Exhibition on Jan 23.
JU HUANZONG / XINHUA
Left: Reporters check WeRide's autonomous vehicles in Beijing on July 8 during visits to private-sector tech companies in the capital city.
MENG JIA / XINHUA

> "Just as travelers need a power adapter when they go abroad, mainland space products need a 'converter' to enter international markets. Hong Kong is that crucial platform."
>
> **Huang Heping,** general manager of international business development at Beijing-based GalaxySpace

As of June 30, 21 specialist technology companies had been listed under the framework, raising a combined HK$38.74 billion ($4.94 billion) through their initial public offerings, according to data compiled by RyanBen Capital. Thirteen of them listed in the first half, raising HK$29.82 billion.

"What attracts us most to Hong Kong is its international business environment and its unique role as a bridge between the mainland and international financing markets," said Wang Lei, chairman of Wenge AI.

Wang said the company hopes its Hong Kong listing will broaden access to international capital, providing sustained support for core technology development, AI product upgrades and expansion into new application scenarios.

Its Hong Kong operation has also put it in contact with about a dozen overseas customers so far and allowed its products to be demonstrated in local financial settings, which can provide valuable feedback on compliance language, data formats and professional workflows, he said.

Macao offers a multilingual route into another group of markets. Pachira, an AI speech recognition, analysis and synthesis company, has placed core research and talent in Beijing, its Chinese mainland headquarters, and operating functions in Hengqin, an island district of Zhuhai in Guangdong, adjacent to Macao, and its international operations center in Macao.

"With Hengqin serving as the main base for commercialization, technologies refined in Beijing can be adapted to a wider range of applications and replicated at scale," said Ho Kuok Tou, founder and CEO of the company.

21
number of specialist technology companies that had been listed in Hong Kong under a new listing framework as of June 30

"Macao, meanwhile, provides a natural testing ground for our international expansion — its concentration of hotels, tourism and leisure businesses, and cross-border financial services allows AI products to sharpen their multilingual capabilities and readiness for global markets," Ho added.

To navigate Macao's multilingual environment and distinctive customer-service habits, Pachira has carried out localized iterations of its proprietary speech large language model. The resulting AI voice system, developed for local electricity supplier CEM, now handles high-volume billing inquiries, marking Macao's first use of an LLM in a customer-service system.

The company said it plans to use its Macao operation to pursue opportunities in Portuguese-speaking markets, initially targeting smart-energy and cross-border financial applications in Brazil, as well as factory-installed automotive systems and overseas banking operations in Portugal.

Hong Kong banking on AI, robotics acumen

By LI JIAYING

With Hong Kong's abundant internationally connected services sector enterprises, research and development capabilities, and financial advantages, the special administrative region is becoming a testing ground for robotics companies seeking to take embodied artificial intelligence into overseas markets.

"Hong Kong was chosen as our first overseas stop because reference cases tested here travel well to Southeast Asia, Japan and the Middle East, where some service patterns and consumer habits mirror those in Hong Kong," said Xie Yunpeng, chief development officer of Yunji Technology.

Founded in 2014, the Beijing-based service robot manufacturer established its international business headquarters in Hong Kong in October 2024 and was listed on the main board there a year later.

Now used in Hong Kong hotels, senior living facilities, hospitals and factories, the company's Hong Kong presence combines R&D, market development and support for overseas operations, including a joint innovation lab built by the company and Hong Kong Polytechnic University to push forward intelligent practices for hotel services.

"A robot making reliable deliveries along a hotel corridor may draw on a Beijing company's engineering capabilities, Hong Kong academics' strengths in hotel management research, and the city's international services-sector environment," Xie said.

The city's financial sector can also support continued research and wider deployment, Xie said, adding that the company hopes to build ties with regional conglomerates and family-run offices.

Government support is reinforcing that role. The Hong Kong SAR government's 2026-27 Budget published in February includes embodied AI for the first time, and outlines measures to guide market capital into AI, robotics and other strategic cutting-edge technological fields.

At the first Hong Kong Embodied AI Industry Summit in May, Hong Kong SAR Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu said Hong Kong will establish a committee on AI+ and industry development strategy to formulate policies for driving industrial transformation through AI, with an initial focus on life and health technology and embodied intelligence.

Embodied AI companies on the Chinese mainland are backing that interest with concrete plans. Shanghai-based AGIBOT said in May it would establish an international R&D headquarters in Hong Kong and, over five years, work with the HKSAR government to set up several joint industry-research laboratories, nurture dozens of start-ups and develop hundreds of industry partners. Shenzhen, Guangdong province-based Pudu Robotics is establishing R&D, operations and production centers in the city, while Beijing-based Galbot has also pledged to build a local team, co-found an international embodied-AI talent exchange center with Hong Kong universities, and test its robots in commercial, tourism and other service sector environments.

That strategy is beginning to show up in the companies' accounts. Yunji's latest interim results put first-half overseas revenue at 5.4 million yuan ($803,220), surging 638.1 percent year-on-year, although it still accounted for only 2.8 percent of group revenue.

Yunji attributed the increase to deliveries to new customers and wider channel coverage. As projects reached more customers and service environments, its business abroad has moved from early validation toward more consistent product delivery, the company said.

What robots are asked to do also changes from one market to another, Xie said. Dense delivery networks on the Chinese mainland generate a large number of food orders, while higher costs and thinner logistics networks overseas shift hotel robots toward guests' needs during their stays, such as bringing slippers or toiletries, he said.

"For overseas resorts offering children's souvenirs, specialty foods, medicines and translation-device rentals, robots can handle final deliveries 24/7," Xie said, adding that Yunji has linked its robots with retail outlets, allowing them to receive an order, collect the item and deliver it without human staff intervention.



A robot developed by Yunji Technology cooks noodles on July 7 while reporters visit the Beijing-based service robot manufacturer.
MENG JIA / XINHUA

"Imagine if one wants an iced coffee in the middle of the night, the front desk may no longer be staffed, but a robot can get it ready with one click and bring it straight to the room," Xie said. "That's where hotels eye the robots for higher non-room revenue."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:00 PM

CHINA

Cultural heritage in the clouds



A performance of Huayin Laoqiang opera, a national intangible cultural heritage, attracts many visitors on the towering Huashan Mountain in Huayin, Shaanxi province, on Monday. Utilizing its natural beauty and cultural heritage, the scenic area has hosted a series of events like cultural heritage showcases and martial arts challenges to promote the integration of tourism, traditions and sports, boosting cultural and tourism consumption during the summer. CUI ZHENGBO / FOR CHINA DAILY

More HK, Macao buyers obtain homes in mainland GBA cities

Better transport links and favorable living conditions are driving purchases

By ZHOU MO in Shenzhen
sally@chinadailyhk.com

Hong Kong and Macao residents bought a growing share of homes across mainland cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area during the first half of this year, driven largely by better transport links and favorable living conditions.

According to the Zhongshan housing and urban-rural development bureau, the city recorded 9,308 commercial housing transactions between January and June, of which 23.2 percent were made by buyers from Hong Kong and Macao.

Earlier official figures also showed a growing presence of Hong Kong and Macao buyers in Zhongshan. The group accounted for more than 18 percent of the city's housing purchases in the first two months of 2025. By the first 10 months of that year, its share had exceeded 20 percent.

In Huizhou, Hong Kong and Macao residents bought an average of 4,865 homes a year over the past three years, accounting for 5 to 6 percent of the city's total residential transactions, according to data cited by Huizhou Daily.

The composition of those purchases is changing. Local media reported that second-hand home purchases by Hong Kong and Macao residents overtook new home purchases for the first time in 2024. The pattern continued through 2025 and the first half of 2026, with the gap widening.

Data from Jiangmen's housing authority showed that Hong Kong residents bought 760 homes in the city in the first half of this year, while more than 2,200 Hong Kong residents had purchased homes in the city since 2025.

Li Yujia, chief researcher at the residential policy research center of Guangdong planning institute, attributed the trend to improved transport connectivity, deeper regional integration and a favorable living environment.

"Links between Hong Kong and other mainland cities in the Greater Bay Area have become more convenient, while infrastructure, community facilities and the coordination of social services across the region have also improved," he said.

"Also, mainland cities in the Greater Bay Area offer a familiar linguistic, cultural and climatic environment while providing more living space at a comparatively lower cost for Hong Kong residents, particularly middle-aged and elderly residents."

Li noted that housing preferences among Hong Kong buyers have become more diverse. While some favor homes close to boundary crossings, properties delivered with interior decoration and communities with convenient transport links, others view mature community facilities, property management and easy access to cross-boundary transport as important considerations.

A Zhuhai-based property developer said Hong Kong and Macao residents accounted for more than 30 percent of total buyers in its Zhuhai projects in the first half of this year, up from 18 percent in 2025.

Lin Genghao, sales director of the Zhonghai Huanyu Tianxia residential project in Zhuhai, said more frequent cross-boundary travel and changing consumption patterns have contributed to the increase in Hong Kong and Macao buyers in Zhuhai.

"Most of their demand is for homes used for part-time residence or retirement," he said.

For Hong Kong buyers, who range from people in their 30s to around 65, Lin said three-bedroom homes of around 100 square meters and smaller two-bedroom units of around 60 to 70 sq m are the most common choices.

"Buyers with stronger purchasing power tend to place greater emphasis on views," he added.

Budgets also vary considerably among different groups of buyers. While ordinary Hong Kong buyers looking for retirement homes tend to seek properties priced between 1 million yuan and 1.5 million yuan ($149,000 to $223,000), wealthier ones prefer luxury residential projects priced from around 3 million yuan to 15 million yuan.

A Hong Kong resident who bought a home in Huizhou wrote on Chinese social media platform RedNote, or Xiaohongshu, that a pleasant environment and relatively low living costs were among the reasons for considering the city as a place to spend retirement.

Meanwhile, regional financial data provide another indication of cross-boundary property activity. The Guangdong branch of the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, said it had handled 3,341 home-purchase transactions on the mainland for Hong Kong and Macao residents as of the end of June 2025, with cross-boundary inflows hitting 3.08 billion yuan.

Yao Xi contributed to this story.

Elephants test peaceful coexistence in Yunnan

By YAN YUJIE and **LIU BOQIAN**

Forty-two wild Asian elephants have gathered in a rural area of southwestern China's Yunnan province, moving between forests and farmland and occasionally venturing near villages.

The elephants, belonging to three herds, have been feeding in maize fields and passing close to villages in Mengxian township in Ning'er Hani and Yi autonomous county, prompting authorities to step up efforts to keep both people and elephants safe.

Their return is a sign of a recovering ecosystem. But for people sharing the landscape with the elephants, it also brings the challenge of living alongside them.

In Mengxian, the elephants have become a familiar sight since April this year, with their numbers reaching an annual peak in August.

For Fu Chun, a 50-year-old resident of Zhushan village, the animals are hardly strangers. He has worked as an elephant monitor for more than a decade.

Since the herds arrived, Fu has spent his days tracking the elephants and warning villagers to keep away from their activity areas, particularly when farmers are working in the fields.

At times, the elephants have come within about 500 meters of him. When one charges, monitors run uphill.

"It doesn't happen often. Most of the time, we can keep a safe distance," Fu said.

The first elephant of the year arrived in Zhushan in April. The number detected in the area has risen sharply, from nine on Aug 14 to 42 on Sunday.

The elephants move between Ning'er and neighboring Jiangcheng Hani and Yi autonomous county.

"They come and go," said Wang Siqi, a worker with the agriculture and rural development service center in Mengxian township. "In some years, they come almost every month."

The elephants typically enter Mengxian from Dashujiao village in Jiangcheng, moving through forests and farmland in search of food. Based on past patterns, Wang said they are unlikely to continue north and will probably remain around Zhushan village and nearby areas.

Greater forest coverage and stronger biodiversity protection have made the area increasingly suitable for Asian elephants, Wang said. But forests, farmland and villages now overlap with the animals' routes, making encounters difficult to avoid.

"Elephants do not only live inside protected areas, they also live outside, where they interact with people," said Ahimsa Campos-Arceiz, a Spanish ecologist and professor at the Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

"They need to move from one place to another, instead of staying in the same place forever," he said. "We don't expect human-elephant conflict to finish. What we want is to make the conflict not too intense."

A revised wildlife protection regulation in Yunnan, which took effect on Aug 15, further strengthened measures covering habitat protection, monitoring and early warning, wildlife corridors and compensation for damage caused by wild animals.

In Zhushan village, that means drones in the sky and monitors on the ground.

Six monitors are deployed each day to track the elephants. When the animals are far from villages, drones typically survey the area every 30 minutes. At night, thermal-imaging drones are used to track their movements.

Once the elephants' location is confirmed, the information is shared in villagers' WeChat groups, warning residents to stay away and avoid working in affected fields.

The cost of coexistence is also partly offset through insurance.

Forestry authorities in Pu'er city have purchased insurance covering wildlife-related damage, including compensation for injuries, crop losses and some property damage caused by Asian elephants.

For example, compensation for rubber trees more than five years old is set at 52 yuan ($7.74) per tree. Damage to brick-and-timber structures is compensated at 300 yuan per square meter.

Contact the writers at liuboqian@chinadaily.com.cn



An aerial view on Aug 19 shows a herd of wild Asian elephants grazing in a cornfield in Zhushan village, Mengxian township, Ning'er Hani and Yi autonomous county, Yunnan province. YANG TINGRONG / XINHUA

Ecological action protects Xizang salmon industry

By YANG ZEKUN in Shigatse, Xizang
yangzekun@chinadaily.com.cn

Clear water has resumed running through a section of the Yadong River in Dromo county, Xizang autonomous region, while new grass sprouts on land once covered by construction debris — tangible signs of ecological restoration that prosecutors say helped avert risks to a local salmon industry.

The changes followed a public-interest litigation investigation into pollution upstream from salmon farms in local Xiayadong township.

Penpa Norbu, deputy chief procurator of the Dromo County People's Procuratorate, said prosecutors discovered large amounts of food packaging, construction waste and other rubbish scattered and piled along the riverbank while conducting follow-up supervision in connection with Xizang's second round of ecological and environmental protection inspections.

Waste was stacked nearly 1 meter high in some places without protective measures. Temporary toilets at a construction site lacked septic tanks or wastewater collection facilities, allowing domestic sewage to flow directly into the river.

Downstream, sections of the river had turned yellow and turbid and carried a noticeable sewage odor.

The river is the main water source for nearby salmon farms, leaving operators vulnerable to pollution originating upstream.

"The farms could only passively bear the consequences because the pollution sources were beyond their control," Penpa Norbu said.

Farm operators reported that some salmon had died or shown abnormal behavior. They feared greater economic losses if sewage and waste continued entering the river.

Yadong salmon, recognized as a geographical indication product, is one of the border county's best-known specialties and relies heavily on clean, cold plateau water. Wild Yadong salmon, classified as second-class protected aquatic wildlife in Xizang, are found only in a nearly 20-kilometer stretch of mountain streams running from Shangyadong township to Xiayadong township. The local commercial industry, meanwhile, uses legally bred sterile triploid fish.

The farm involved in the case has 20 breeding pools and produces about 200,000 salmon fry annually.

Since its establishment in 2019 through 2025, the local cooperative generated more than 8 million yuan ($1.2 million) in revenue from salmon sales and distributed more than 5 million yuan in dividends to residents.

Across the county, the salmon industry has helped 857 households and more than 2,300 border residents increase their income through employment and related economic activities.

Given the potential threat to both the environment and local livelihoods, prosecutors moved their consultation meeting from an office to the riverbank.

They conducted field inspections, used drones to collect evidence and visited salmon farms before bringing relevant government departments and the construction company together at the site.

Prosecutors presented evidence, clarified the regulatory responsibilities of different parties and coordinated discussions on an immediate remediation plan.

The construction company, responsible for an infrastructure project in the upper reaches of the river and whose proximity to the river caused pollution, was initially reluctant to make changes, Penpa Norbu said. It regarded the waste and sewage as temporary by-products of construction and underestimated the potential impact on salmon farms downstream.

"The main obstacle was not funding or the construction schedule, but weak environmental awareness on the part of the company," he said.

After prosecutors explained the relevant legal responsibilities and potential damage to the public interest, the company agreed to remove the rubbish, improve sewage disposal facilities and strengthen daily management.

However, the remediation process was not entirely smooth.

Because the construction area lacked a regular waste collection system, rubbish would begin accumulating again whenever removal was delayed by a day or two.

Prosecutors therefore carried out unannounced inspections and follow-up visits, urging the company to install garbage bins, build standardized sewage treatment facilities, establish enclosed temporary waste storage areas and introduce a daily collection system, with designated personnel responsible for implementation.

Grass seed was also planted on damaged bare land.

"When we returned, the river was clear again, and what touched us most was seeing new shoots emerging from land that had been damaged by old temporary structures," Penpa Norbu said.

"Vegetation grows extremely slowly on the plateau, so seeing those new shoots was the most direct evidence that the restoration was taking effect."

The case later prompted prosecutors to look beyond the area around the salmon farms.

Dromo county, also known as Yadong county, is an important border area with a frontier stretching about 290 km. As infrastructure projects have advanced, prosecutors have also identified problems including waste dumping, damage to native grassland and unauthorized excavation at some construction sites.

Prosecutors have since worked with multiple government departments to push for corrective measures and urge construction companies to standardize operations, seeking to protect the fragile plateau environment while allowing border infrastructure projects to proceed.

For Penpa Norbu, the salmon case showcased how environmental protection and economic development can reinforce each other.

"Protecting the river also means protecting an important source of income for local people," he said. "In the end, we safeguarded both the environment and their livelihoods."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:00 PM

CHINA





Left: Yellow sorting robots ferry parcels during a shopping festival at a logistics center in Deqing, Zhejiang province, on June 18. NI LIFANG / XINHUA
Right: A robotic arm sorts parcels on a production line at China Post's Jianggao mail processing center in Guangdong province in May. DENG HUA / XINHUA

Robot on the line

China's massive parcel logistics industry embraces tech in race for efficiency

By LUO WANGSHU in Guangzhou
luowangshu@chinadaily.com.cn

At a busy parcel sorting center in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, a humanoid robot works alongside human colleagues on a sorting line, repeatedly picking up packages and feeding them into the system. On a large screen overlooking the floor, its output is displayed directly against performance figures for human workers.

It does not tire, but for now, it remains slower and far more expensive than an experienced human operator.

Eight of these humanoid units have undergone trial runs at the center since March, capable of feeding as many as 1,200 parcels an hour into the sorting system, said He Yong, deputy director of China Post's Jianggao mail processing center.

Yet while eye-catching, the machines represent a technology still in its rough experimental phase — a high-tech snapshot of the transformation unfolding across China's logistics landscape.

By 2030, annual express delivery volume is expected to reach 270 billion items, according to the country's postal industry development plan for the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period.

After decades of explosive, volume-driven growth powered by the expansion of e-commerce, China's express delivery sector has reached a structural turning point. Volume is no longer the metric that matters most.

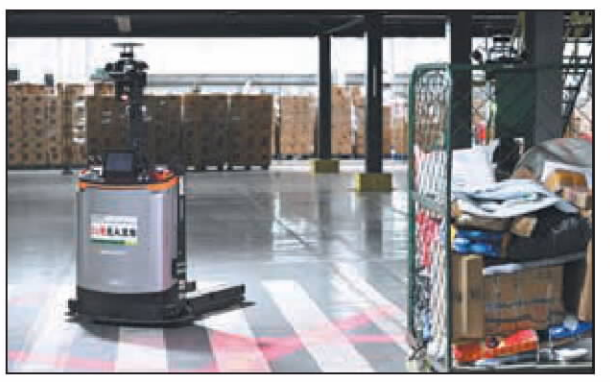
Handling over 100 billion parcels in the first half of the year alone, logistics giants can no longer survive simply by adding handling capacity, and so have shifted their focus to operational efficiency and unit-cost reduction.

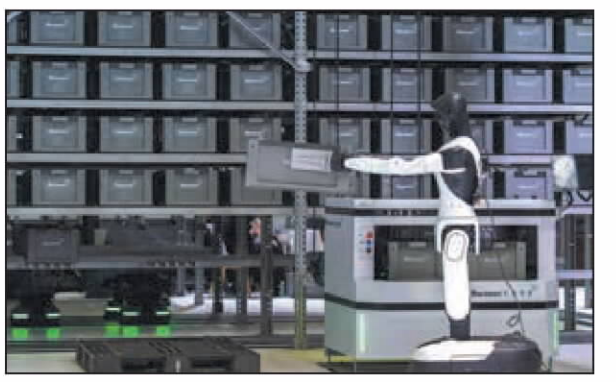
Companies are increasingly turning to artificial intelligence, robotics, autonomous vehicles and digital management systems to improve the efficiency and resilience of one of the world's largest logistics networks.



Clockwise from left: A robot sorts parcels during the 2026 World Robot Conference in Beijing on Aug 19. REN CHAO / XINHUA
A robot transports boxes during the FAIR plus 2026 robot industry exhibition in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, in April. QIN ZIHANG / FOR CHINA DAILY
Autonomous forklifts navigate around one another at China Post's Jianggao center in May. DENG HUA / XINHUA

Online
See more by scanning the code.





Test bed at scale

According to the postal sector's current Five-Year Plan, China aims for an 88 percent full-automation rate across large-scale processing centers.

In Guangdong, which processes approximately 22 percent of the national parcel volume, automation is expanding rapidly. Automated guided vehicles traverse warehouse floors, while 820 autonomous delivery vehicles and 247 drones operate across urban routes.

At large processing centers in Guangzhou, automation has moved well beyond conventional conveyor belts.

Robotic arms feed parcels into sorting systems, automated guided vehicles move cages and pallets across processing floors, while software increasingly monitors parcel flows and adjusts equipment in real time.

One digital system, for example, monitors congestion across sorting lines and automatically adjusts their operating speeds when traffic begins to build. At one processing center, sorting-line jams during the night shift fell from more than 20 a month to just one after the system was introduced, according to He.

Another trial system uses three-dimensional sensing to measure how much space remains inside trucks, check whether parcels are loaded properly and alert workers as vehicles approach loading bays. The center said it has cut waiting time between successive vehicles by about 20 percent.

Such changes point to an important evolution in logistics technology. Earlier automation largely focused on replacing a particular manual task with a machine. Increasingly, digital systems are being used to detect problems, adjust operations and coordinate equipment across an entire processing center.

Real-world problems

The same shift is taking place among logistics technology suppliers.

At Guangzhou-based Genye Technology, engineers have developed a three-dimensional sorting system aimed at two persistent problems in warehousing — long picking routes and limited floor space.

"Warehouse pickers used to spend much of their time walking back and forth between shelves. When orders surged, they were constantly on their feet, while labor and space costs kept rising," said Zuo Wen, general manager of the company's innovation business center.

"We developed the 3D sorting wall precisely to address those practical problems on the front line."

Instead of spreading sorting destinations across a large horizontal area, the system uses AI vision to identify items and scheduling software to direct them to vertically arranged compartments, allowing more sorting positions to be packed into a smaller footprint.

Genye said its larger systems can process up to 20,000 items an hour while taking up roughly half the space of conventional layouts.

The example illustrates how logistics technology is increasingly being designed around specific operational bottlenecks rather than automation for its own sake.

That technology is also moving out of warehouses and processing centers.

In Foshan, also in Guangdong, autonomous delivery vehicles are being tested on routes connecting express outlets, parcel stations and other logistics nodes. The city currently has 124 postal and express delivery autonomous vehicles involved in road testing across 219 routes, according to the Foshan Postal Administration.

Some companies are also experimenting with shared autonomous transport, allowing retailers and other small businesses to summon unmanned vehicles when they need to move goods rather than purchasing vehicles themselves.

The model points to a wider possibility of autonomous vehicles eventually becoming flexible urban logistics capacity rather than equipment dedicated to a single company.

National push

The postal industry's 15th Five-Year Plan calls for China to "actively develop smart postal services" and significantly increase digitalization across the delivery process. It also calls for wider use of artificial intelligence in customer service, operations, transport, collection and delivery, safety, management and warehousing, as well as upgrades to sorting, loading, transport and other equipment.

Hu Kai, spokesman for the State Post Bureau of China and director-general of its department of policies and regulations, said the sector would promote the "broad and deep integration" of AI with postal and express delivery services, accelerating applications ranging from intelligent transport and warehousing to operations and last-mile delivery.

Chen Kai, deputy head of the State Post Bureau, also said the sector will seek to extract greater value from industry data, strengthen the use of AI and develop low-altitude delivery logistics.

The push comes as the industry itself enters a different stage of development.

During the previous five-year period, China's express delivery volume rose from more than 80 billion parcels a year to nearly 200 billion, while postal industry revenue increased from 1.1 trillion yuan to 1.8 trillion yuan, according to the bureau.

The new planning period places greater emphasis on quality and efficiency rather than expansion alone.

That makes technologies such as AI, robotics and autonomous transport important not simply because they are novel, but because relatively small efficiency gains can be multiplied across an enormous network.

Human cost

For an industry that is estimated to employ as many as 8 million people, this tech-forward efficiency drive carries potentially profound consequences.

Despite this, automation does not necessarily mean removing people completely.

Parcel handling remains difficult to fully automate. Packages come in different shapes, materials and weights, while soft bags and irregular parcels can still pose problems for machines. When equipment encounters an exception, human workers often step in.

At some processing centers, the result is a gradual change in job roles rather than straightforward replacement. Workers who once spent much of their shifts repeatedly feeding parcels or moving heavy loads are increasingly taking on equipment inspection, system monitoring and exception handling.

"We don't blindly pursue full automation in one step," said He from the Jianggao center. "What matters is human-machine collaboration that actually fits the operation."

The humanoid robots in Guangzhou are themselves still being tested rather than deployed as a finished substitute for human workers.

Their potential advantage may ultimately lie less in performing one repetitive task faster than a specialized robotic arm, and more in whether they can learn different tasks and operate in workspaces originally designed for people.

That remains to be proven commercially.

Costs, reliability, safety, data interoperability and the ability to operate through demand peaks will determine whether many of today's trials become standard equipment. For autonomous delivery vehicles, regulation and road access will be equally important as deployment expands.

The next stage of China's parcel industry's technological transition will therefore be less about putting more futuristic machines on display and more about whether robots, vehicles, software and workers can operate effectively as one system.

The humanoid robot stands out on the Guangzhou sorting floor, but the bigger story is taking place around it — in the algorithms directing parcels, the machines moving them and a logistics network learning how to make better use of its enormous scale.

Autonomous vehicles find fixed route delivery role

By LUO WANGSHU
in Foshan, Guangdong

At a YTO Express outlet in Foshan, Guangdong province, courier Wang Kangkang finishes loading bags of parcels into a driverless van about the size of a golf cart, closes the cargo door and taps "depart" on his phone.

The vehicle, supplied by autonomous-driving company Neolix, pulls away on its own, joining regular traffic on a 3-kilometer run to a neighborhood parcel station. The route takes about 20 minutes, passing traffic lights, a speed bump and a narrow lane.

"This route is fixed. Once it's set, I don't have to watch it all the way," Wang said. "It's much easier than making the trip myself on a three-wheeler."

Such short, repetitive runs are emerging as one of the more practical uses for autonomous vehicles in China's vast parcel network.

Before the van was introduced, couriers at the outlet ferried parcels between the two sites on electric three-wheelers. Moving about 1,000 parcels could require at least two trips, according to outlet manager Ouyang Chaoyang.

The outlet estimates that its short-distance transfer costs have fallen by about 30 percent since it began using the vehicle last year, while the time couriers spend shuttling back and forth has been cut by about 40 percent.

"The time saved can be used for collecting parcels and making door-to-door deliveries," Ouyang said. "Those are the parts of the job where couriers can create more value."

The Foshan operation is part of a wider rollout. By the end of 2024, more than 6,000 autonomous delivery vehicles had been put into large-scale use across more than 100 types of applications nationwide, according to the State Post Bureau of China.

At one parcel station in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, more than 20 driverless vehicles handle over 30 percent of deliveries, with each carrying at least 1,500 parcels a day. Elsewhere, autonomous vehicles are being used in relay delivery models in cities such as Beijing, while some are serving villages in remote areas where conventional delivery is more costly and time-consuming.

In Foshan, their use is also extending beyond conventional parcel delivery. Small retailers can book shared driverless vans through mobile platforms to move goods between stores or replenish stock, rather than operating a vehicle of their own.

"For parcel companies, the routes are usually fixed and scheduled, more like a bus service," said Liang Haohua, head of marketing for South China at Neolix. "For smaller businesses, demand is more ad hoc — closer to ride-hailing."

The approach is still developing, but it suggests that the economics of autonomous delivery may depend as much on keeping vehicles busy as on the technology that allows them to drive themselves.

Scaling up also involves more than navigating traffic.

Foshan currently has 124 autonomous vehicles in the postal and express sector undergoing road tests on 219 routes, according to the Foshan Postal Administration. The city has been developing rules covering road access, testing, insurance, safety supervision and accident handling.

Similar questions remain elsewhere, as rules on routes, road access and stopping can vary among cities. That can make it harder for operators to replicate the same model across regions even as the technology matures, according to Jiang Haoran, a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference who has studied the sector.



A worker from SF Express loads a cargo box into an autonomous vehicle in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, in January last year. MAO SIQIAN / XINHUA

For now, the clearest role for driverless vans may be less futuristic than delivering a parcel directly to someone's door. They are taking over predictable journeys between depots, parcel stations, shops and villages, leaving couriers to handle the more complicated human end of the delivery chain.

About 20 minutes after leaving the YTO outlet in Foshan, Wang's van reaches the parcel station. It slows, signals and pulls over. Staff scan the vehicle, open it and begin unloading the parcels. Moments later, the doors close again and the van quietly sets off for its next stop.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:00 PM

CULTURAL HERITAGE

A romance with stone

Over 15 years, researchers have turned repeated tests and failures into a systematic approach to saving fragile relics, reports **Bai Shuhao** in Chengde, Hebei.



The decorative patterns on a pedestal at Puyou Temple in Chengde, Hebei province, damaged by a lightning fire in the 1960s, have been largely restored. BAI SHUHAO / CHINA DAILY

Whether in science or art, people tend to favor stories of sudden inspiration: an element discovered by chance or a flash of insight that gives birth to a masterpiece. But most of the time, things do not happen that way.

At least, that is not how it happened in Chengde, Hebei province, where a team of stone restorers has spent the past 15 years rescuing hundreds of cultural relics. Their work has rarely offered a definitive solution. Instead, it has been a long struggle against time, marked by experiments, failures and more experiments, as they search for ways for relics to coexist with the forces that are slowly destroying them.

What they have built in the process is not a single breakthrough, but a body of experience: an approach that can be tested, repeated, and passed on.

An unsolved problem

In 2011, when Li Li arrived in Chengde, about a three-hour drive from Beijing, she stood beneath an exquisite glazed pagoda and looked at its cracked stone base. Her mind went blank.

Chengde was once home to the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) imperial court's summer retreat. The city is known for the Mountain Resort, built as an imperial summer residence, and a group of surrounding temples. The site was inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1994.

Li, then a researcher who had just joined the China Academy of Cultural Heritage, was not responsible for preserving the grand buildings themselves. Her task was to protect the less conspicuous stonework that supported and surrounded them: pedestals, statues, steles, and other stone elements.

Stone, by conventional wisdom, should be among the easier materials to preserve. It is hard and heavy, built to withstand wind and rain. Its apparent permanence is precisely why people have relied on it for centuries.

But the craftsmen who worked here 300 years ago could not have known what their locally sourced stone would eventually endure.

The rock is a fragile volcanic material known as tuff. It contains salt-bearing minerals, is highly porous, and readily absorbs water.

Temperatures in Chengde can reach 40 C in summer and fall to around -20 C near the ground in winter. The repeated cycle of freezing and thawing causes the stone to split into thin layers.

"Tuff is much less dense than marble or white marble," says Chen Dong, chief engineer at the Chengde Municipal Cultural Relics Bureau.

He compares the stone to a millefeuille, with layers constantly peeling away. Sometimes, he says, "You barely touch it, and it crumbles."

That was only one problem. The stones had also been battered by wind and rain, suffering from missing sections, sanding, hollowing, and other forms of damage.

Before the China Academy of Cultural Heritage took on the project, Chengde had invited experts from around the world to examine the problem, including specialists from the Getty Conservation Institute in the United States. "They all shook their heads and said it was too difficult, that there was no solution," Chen recalls.



Left, top and above: A stone lion at Xumifushou Temple and a *bixi*, a mythical dragon-like creature, at Yongyou Temple, before and after restoration, in Chengde. **Top right:** Restoration samples at the Chengde laboratory. **Above right:** Li Li, deputy director of the China Academy of Cultural Heritage. **Middle:** Routine maintenance at Pule Temple in Chengde. PHOTOS PROVIDED AND BY BAI SHUHAO / CHINA DAILY

The difficulty was partly rooted in the unusual properties of the stone. Tuff of this kind is rarely found outside northern China. Li and her colleagues traveled across the country looking for comparable examples, but found no other site with the same pattern of cracking. "We were starting from zero," Li says. "We had no idea where the road would lead. As the person in charge of the project, I didn't know where to begin."

In the early years, the team rented a small one-story house halfway up a mountain near a temple where they were working. It served as a laboratory, meeting room, dormitory, and kitchen. They painted the house blue.

"Blue represents hope," Li says.

Repairing by trial and error

It was during those difficult years, from 2011 to 2015, that Li's team began making progress in developing conservation materials.

The process was painstaking. Researchers first tested materials under simulated environmental conditions in the laboratory, making sure they would not damage the relics. Only then did they conduct small-scale experiments on the actual stone.

A single test sample might need to be observed for two years. A material could pass laboratory tests and appear ready for use, only to expand after its first winter. Meltwater from snow would seep into the stone as temperatures rose, exposing weaknesses that laboratory tests had missed.

"What's even more frustrating is that a material might survive the first winter, and crack in the second," Li says. When that happened, the researchers went back to the beginning. The cycle repeated so many times that Li could no longer count the failed experiments.

In 2012, drawing on techniques passed down by earlier generations of craftsmen, the team settled on a traditional lime-based material whose main component is calcium carbonate. Similar materials have been found at archaeological sites dating back more than 5,000 years.

But identifying the core material was only the beginning. The researchers still had to repeatedly test firing temperatures and experiment with additional ingredients to determine how the material would interact with different relics.

"No material can be called a once-and-for-all solution," says Xu Dong, who joined the Chengde team after graduating from university in 2012.

Even on the same relic, conditions could vary. A surface exposed to direct sunlight could experience greater temperature swings and deteriorate differently from a shaded side.

Repairing a carved stone dragon about 50 centimeters long can require five different color samples, says Wang Ziyi, who joined the team in 2014.

Xu and Wang were not simply researchers selecting materials. They also worked directly on the relics, carving patterns and carrying out repairs themselves. In their daily work, scientific research and hands-on conservation occupied roughly equal portions of their time.

To this day, the team continues to conduct thousands of experiments to find suitable materials and conservation methods. It has developed a systematic approach that includes cleaning and dust removal, desalination, preliminary consolidation, anchoring, grouting, pattern repair, and color matching.

In 2015, the former director of the Getty Conservation Institute visited Chengde. After seeing the damage, he expressed surprise. For Li, however, the significance of the comment was not simply the authority behind it. "It represented a voice," she says.

The team now has more than 50 members, with specialists drawn from fields ranging from science to art. Since 2011, it has worked on 15 stone conservation projects in Chengde, rescuing hundreds of valuable relics and developing more than 10 patented technologies and materials.

The team calls its approach the "Chengde experience". It rests on three principles: putting preliminary research first and carrying scientific research through the entire conservation process; integrating research, design, field conservation, and monitoring; and using technology and interdisciplinary collaboration to strengthen heritage conservation. The team has also moved beyond stone, applying what it learned to murals and other forms of heritage across China.

Finding a rhythm

As one of the younger members of the team, Xu remembers that her first assignment was a 63.9-square-meter stone staircase panel at Puren Temple, tucked away in the mountains. The panel, known as a *danbi* stone, was carved with two dragons playing with a pearl. Years of deterioration had left the dragons almost unrecognizable.

Three months later, when Xu and her colleagues had brought the two dragons back into view, she experienced her first real sense of accomplishment as a restorer.

The temple was not open to tourists. Only a handful of restorers and other workers were stationed there. In summer, mosquitoes swarmed through the mountains. Sometimes one would crawl near Xu's ear and she would barely notice. She was too absorbed in the work.

A worker once passed by and asked her: As a young woman spending every day alone at a temple, didn't she find it boring? "Everyone thinks differently," Xu says. "I can get close to the relics. I can turn something damaged into something whole. I think that's satisfying."

To Xu, conservation is a race against nature. Sometimes a restoration can look successful, only to begin powdering away after weeks of rain. To a visitor, the relic may appear barely repaired. But for the experts, it may have already undergone an intense rescue effort.

Yet, rain is not always the enemy.

After completing the stone conservation projects in Chengde, the team turned to paper murals inside a stupa in the Mountain Resort. Xu moved her work into the tower.

When rain fell and the wind picked up, she could hear the bells hanging from the eaves. The sound of rain mingled with the soft chime of the bells, and she felt calm.

Xu says that, in the end, the work is made up of ordinary, even mundane tasks. What matters is finding a little enjoyment in them, along with a sense of accomplishment.

Contact the writer at baishuhao@chinadaily.com.cn

Mangguan rock art offers clues to ancient migration

By **WANG QIAN**
wangqian@chinadaily.com.cn



Left: Archaeologists measure the size of a rock painting at the Mangguan site in Gengma Dai and Va autonomous county, Lincang, Yunnan province. **Right:** Rock paintings of Mangguan represent one of the well-preserved prehistoric rock art sites in Yunnan.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

If a picture is worth a thousand words, the figurative rock paintings at the Mangguan site in Southwest China's Yunnan province carry a great many more.

Published in the Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports earlier this month, a study by researchers from the Yunnan Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, Nanjing Normal University, and other institutions found that the rock paintings were created at least 4,220 years ago, based on uranium-thorium dating technology.

This makes them the oldest confirmed rock art created by a settled prehistoric community in the region. The paintings predate the rock art previously documented by researchers at the nearby Cangyuan site by more than 400 years. The Cangyuan paintings date to between about 2,700 and 3,800 years ago.

Around the same time, an abrupt climate event occurred about 4,200 years ago, causing temperatures to drop in northern China.

"The coincidence suggests that drastic climate change may have driven humans to migrate from the north to the south," Wu Yun, an associate researcher at the Yunnan Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology and first author of the paper, told China Daily.

Located in Gengma Dai and Va autonomous county, Lincang, the Mangguan site features red and black pigment rock paintings depicting human figures, animals, handprints and abstract signs.

Besides its well-preserved condition, Wu was particularly impressed by the use of black pigment, which is rarely seen in the rock art remains discovered in this region.

By integrating data from the three major rock art complexes of the Jinsha River Valley in Lijiang, Yunnan, Mangguan-Cangyuan in Yunnan, and the Zuojiang River in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, the research team has established a chronological framework for the three stylistic phases of rock art in southwestern China.

"The first is the late Paleolithic, about 13,600 to 8,400 years ago, represented by rock art in the Jinsha River Valley featuring realistic animal motifs. The second is the late Neolithic, from about 4,200 to 2,700 years ago, represented by Mangguan-Cangyuan rock art, which shifted its focus toward human activities. The third is the early historical period, from about 1,900 to 1,700 years ago, represented by Zuojiang rock art, whose hallmark motifs are semi-squatting human figures with bent and raised arms," Wu says.

"This helps anchor the chronology of regional Cangyuan-type rock art, filling the artistic gap in the pre-Cangyuan period," she adds.

In addition to the human figure sample, the researchers also dated 11 samples taken from different motifs clustered at the Mangguan site. Their analysis showed that the paintings were created between about 3,907 and 3,056 years ago.

Because of preservation conditions and technical challenges, dating painted rock art in southwestern China has long been difficult.

The development of high-precision uranium-series dating technology in recent years has enabled Wu and her team to sample carbonate crusts covering the rock art surfaces, determine when the crusts formed and, in turn, constrain the age range of the paintings.

"Sampling only the carbonate crusts does not disturb the pigment body of the rock art, effectively protecting its integrity. Each test requires only 10 milligrams of material, making it a nearly non-destructive sampling method," Wu explains.

Wu and her team will continue to investigate the emerging chronology of rock art in the region and explore possible connections and exchanges between communities across southwestern China and neighboring areas in Southeast Asia.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:00 PM

LIFE





Left: Teen actor Omar Sherif plays an orphan who has a talent for cooking Chinese dishes in the summer blockbuster *Once Upon a Time in the Middle East*. **Middle:** Shen Teng (left) and Jiang Qiming respectively play a chef and front-desk manager at a local Chinese-cuisine restaurant in an unnamed country in the Middle East. **Right:** The restaurant takes in a group of orphans who had nowhere else to go amid the flames of war.

A recipe for peace

Blockbuster film puts war as a side dish, as food becomes a symbol for connection and harmony, **Xu Fan** reports.

French filmmaker and critic Francois Truffaut once said, "Every film about war ends up being pro-war" — a famous line that has been cited repeatedly, often by those who argue that war films inevitably glorify combat and turn violence into spectacle.

This paradox has inspired creators to seek new narrative approaches for anti-war storytelling. This summer, a Chinese blockbuster is offering just such a response: a fresh perspective on war, seen through the eyes of a Chinese chef.

Once Upon a Time in the Middle East, starring A-list actor Shen Teng as the chef, has become one of this year's most popular blockbusters. Since its debut on Aug 11, the film has grossed more than 1.6 billion yuan ($237.9 million), topping China's single-day box office charts for 14 consecutive days.

It currently holds a rating of 8.6 out of 10 on the popular review aggregator Douban, with many Chinese moviegoers praising its nuanced portrayal of human complexity amid war and its thought-provoking reflection on the longing for peace.

The third feature directed by Wen Muye, best known for his 2018 hit *Dying to Survive*, the film has an unusual premise in China's huge domestic market. Although the country has produced many war-themed films and television series over the past decades, few have combined overseas warfare with Chinese cuisine.

For thousands of years, food in China has been far more than a way to satisfy hunger. It carries memories of family and home, reflects the diversity of regional cultures, and preserves traditions passed down through generations.

These themes run throughout the film, which unfolds through the memories of its protagonist, Xu Fu, taking audiences back to 2002.

Xu, a chef with 30 years of experience, leaves his elderly mother and teenage daughter behind in northeastern China to work at a restaurant in a Middle Eastern country, hoping to pay off his debts. At the farewell dinner, he and his mother eat dumplings, a traditional Chinese culinary gesture in some parts of the country. Families customarily serve dumplings when seeing someone off and noodles when welcoming them home, symbolizing blessings and hopes for those traveling far from home.



Director Wen Muye (right) and actor Shen Teng (left) on the film's shooting site. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Upon landing on foreign soil, Xu quickly showcases his exceptional culinary skills at the Loong (Dragon) Restaurant, owned by a local official with the country's water and electricity authority. Among the dishes he prepares is "loong tide top" (dragon raises its head), a mandarin fish scored along the back and deep-fried so that it curves upward, which symbolizes rising fortunes and a bright future.

At first, everything indeed looks up. Xu's cooking quickly attracts local diners, and he becomes friends with Ma Junsheng, the restaurant's Chinese front-desk manager. But a sudden outbreak of war plunges the Middle Eastern country into turmoil, trapping the two men amid ruins and gunfire.

From there, one tense twist follows another. Xu decides not to return home after his boss makes him an irresistible offer to stay. Then, following an unexpected bombing meant to kill both American soldiers and locals, Xu and Ma are arrested and treated as suspects. Their fortunes take a sharp turn for the worse, and they soon become entangled with a group of orphans' fate — teenagers and children who are being brainwashed by extremist militants that are themselves rejected by the local population.

Yet even as the story moves deeper into the chaos of war, the film repeatedly returns to food as a symbol of connection and harmony. For Wen, that symbolism is rooted in his own cultural background.

As a native of Changchun in Northeast China's Jilin province, Wen tells China Daily that he believes Chinese cuisine conveys a deeper message: a yearning for wholeness and harmony.

"When Chinese families dine together, they traditionally gather around a round table, and chopsticks are used in pairs," Wen says, referring to the symbolism of pairs as a representation of reunion.

"So, in China, the act of eating together carries the symbolic meaning of 'ceasing conflict'," Wen adds, revealing that he hopes the movie will help audiences discover that even amid struggles and sorrow, ordinary people hold on to the humble wish of sharing a good meal.

The idea for the film dates back to 2017, when Wen was working on post-production for *Dying to Survive*, a film about an unlikely hero who smuggles medicine. "I read a news story about several Chinese people who ran restaurants in the Middle East and encountered war. It impressed me and gave me the impetus to create this story," Wen recalls.

Several years later, the director began preparing for the movie, traveling to Jordan and visiting refugee camps, where he spoke with people who had lived through war. But due to complicated international tensions at the time, he chose to cast Egyptian actors, including then 13-year-old Omar Sherif and veteran Sherif Sobhy, who play an orphan and the owner of the Loong Restaurant, respectively.

Sherif, whose great-grandfather was from Shandong province, learned Mandarin and about Chinese cuisine in Egypt for three months to prepare for the role.

Additionally, Faruk Muhammad, a young Egyptian actor who also plays an orphan, impressed Wen during his audition. For his character — a boy exploited by an extremist armed group to become a suicide bomber — Muhammad made a backpack filled with handmade "explosive" props himself, as featured in the script he was given.

"In the Arabic-speaking world, Egypt has a developed film and TV industry, as evidenced by its long-running Cairo International Film Festival, so we held casting calls there, and many actors showed up to audition," Wen says.

But the majority of the production was completed in China. Some exotic landscapes and creatures, however, could only be captured abroad. "For instance, we shot a scene of dromedaries (one-humped camels) running across the desert. In China, Bactrian camels — the two-humped variety — are a more common sight," Wen says.

To make the food scenes convincing, the production also brought in veteran chefs to coach the actors in cooking techniques and help design the dishes featured in the film. One of the most mouth-watering sequences shows Xu and Ma, assisted by more than 20 local orphans, preparing a wedding feast. The centerpiece is a large iron wok measuring more than 2 meters in diameter, turning the preparation of a celebratory meal into a striking visual spectacle.

Speaking of the wok used to prepare a fusion dish that combines iron-pot stew, a typical cooking method in northeastern China, with Arabic-style grilled fish, Wen says the scene was intended to reflect the exchange and fusion of Chinese and foreign cultures through vibrant, everyday imagery. More importantly, it highlights the shared aspiration of people from different countries for a better life.

"I'm not really a foodie, and I'm not much of a cook either. But what I want this film to say is, 'Eat well'. In China, those two words can carry much more meaning than they seem to. They hint at 'Take care of yourself'," says Wen. "In times of chaos, it can be a quiet expression of love — a wish that you stay safe, keep going, and above all, make it home," he adds.

Contact the writer at xufan@chinadaily.com.cn

Dear You fills SE Asian audiences with love and nostalgia

The acclaimed film *Dear You* made its Thailand preview screening in July, bringing an exploration of heartwarming diaspora narratives to Southeast Asian audiences following its theatrical success in China.

Thai Minister of Culture Sabeeda Thaised praises the film as a vital cultural medium for conveying filial piety and celebrating the enduring ties with China.

She highlights that Thailand-China relations extend far beyond diplomacy into daily traditions, family devotion, and shared values, built on over 50 years of formal bilateral relations.

The movie, known in Chinese as *Love Letters to Grandma*, centers on remittance letters that overseas Chinese used to stay connected with their families in China. Through these letters, the characters uncover memories, love and interconnected family bonds in a simple yet deeply genuine narrative.

While the story of long-lost letters originates in China, its themes of nostalgia and generational sacrifice hold personal resonance for Thailand's vast Tio Chew-heritage (from Chaozhou, Guangdong province) population, she notes.




Left: A woman poses for a photo in front of a poster for the Chinese film *Dear You* in Ho Chi Minh City on Aug 4. **Right:** Vietnamese audience members watch the film on Aug 4. PHOTOS BY HU JIALI / XINHUA

The minister also emphasizes the importance of cinema as a vehicle for international goodwill, reaffirming the Thai government's commitment to film as a cultural asset capable of driving social and economic value while deepening artistic collaboration between both countries.

"This film is an authentic mirror of our ancestors' struggles and a testament to the longstanding bond between Thailand and China," says San Chuapanyavit, vice-president of the Tio Chew Association of Thailand, who makes a brief appearance in *Dear You*.

As a third-generation Thai-Chinese, he says this story brought back vivid memories of his father sending "*qiao pi*" (remittance letters) in Bangkok's Chinatown.

"I was glued to the screen without blinking. Despite considering myself a tough person, tears came to my eyes because the story touches the very soul of the overseas Chinese diaspora," he says.

Stressing the significance of the film's linguistic heritage, he notes that watching it in the original Tio Chew soundtrack carries a depth of emotion and cultural nuance that subtitles alone cannot convey.

"It honors the legacy of generations who crossed oceans under severe hardship to establish deep roots in Thailand, contributing immensely to Thai society while keeping their familial ties alive across generations," he adds.

The film was set for a Thai nationwide release on Aug 6, offering screenings in the original Tio Chew dialect with Thai, Chinese and English subtitles, and a Thai-dubbed one.

The film also premiered in Vietnam's southern hub, Ho Chi Minh City, in earlier this month, ahead of its nationwide theatrical release in Vietnam.

The premiere was jointly organized by Vietnamese distributors Mockingbird Pictures and Galaxy Studio, with support from the China Cultural Centre in Hanoi.

Doan Thi Trang Anh, deputy CEO of Mockingbird Pictures, says securing the distribution rights for *Dear You* in Vietnam was a special opportunity for the company and expresses hope that it could bring more Chinese films to Vietnamese audiences.

Vietnamese actress of Chinese descent Tu Ho says she felt a personal connection to the film, recalling that her grandmother often told her stories about *qiao pi* her great-grandmother sent home from Vietnam.

"I've already prepared tissues (for the screening) because I believe the film will bring back many memories through the stories my grandmother told me," she says.

Nearly 1,000 guests, including representatives of Vietnam's film industry, cultural scholars, members of the overseas Chinese community, representatives of Chinese enterprises in Vietnam, and media organizations, attended the premiere.

"I was impressed by the actors' performances and the film's balance of humor and emotion," Vietnamese director Le Thien Vien says, adding that despite its long running time, the film kept audiences fully engaged throughout.

The director notes that *Dear You* inspired him and would provide creative motivation for his next project.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:00 PM

LIFE



Hong Kong's 'unofficial history'

Author Ma Ka-fai's latest novel, which concludes his trilogy, captures the essence of the city's past through the lens of secrets, martial arts and personal reflection, **Yang Yang** reports.

In July 2021, Hong Kong writer Ma Ka-fai had to stay in a suite of a resort hotel in Macao for a full 14 days without being able to go outside due to COVID-19 quarantine rules, so he took the chance to conceive his new novel, the last of a trilogy.

After seven days, and still struggling to come up with an idea for the book, Ma was feeling anxious. One night, he finally managed to fall asleep. In a dream, he heard a man asking him, "When will you start writing? I've been waiting for so long."

In a daze, Ma saw a thin man standing by the bed, dressed in a short martial arts outfit and looking like a kung fu master. Ma asked, "Who are you?"

The man cupped his hands and smiled: "I'm a ghost! I love *Longtou Fengwei* (*Once Upon a Time in Hong Kong I*) and *Yuanyang Liu Qi Si* (*Once Upon a Time in Hong Kong II*)," the first and second books of Ma's trilogy.

Ma paused for a moment, and then let out a joyful "Ha!" As his laughter echoed, the ghost vanished without a trace, and Ma woke up.

That ghost became the protagonist, Hon Tin-yan, in the third novel *Shuangtian Zhizun* (*Once Upon a Time in Hong Kong III*), published in May by New Star Press. In the introduction of the book, he recounts the ghost story.

A decade has passed since he published his debut novel *Longtou Fengwei* in 2016.

The book earned more than 20 literary awards, including being named on the top 10 novels list of Yazhou Zhoukan magazine and topping the fiction category in Southern Weekly's annual best original books list.

At the launch party for *Shuangtian Zhizun* in Beijing at the end of May, Ma, now 63 years old, said *Longtou Fengwei* was conceived when he was between 50 and 53 years old, when he "wrote in a free and uninhibited style, with words and plotlines that flowed effortlessly, full of vibrant energy".

The second book, *Yuanyang Liu Qi Si*, was written when he was between 54 and 57 years old. It moves away from the exuberance of youth and focuses on a deeper exploration, centering on the theme of "keeping secrets".

The final book in the trilogy was written between the ages of 57 and 62. His mindset and life experiences had undergone significant changes, prompting him to reflect on profound issues such as life and death and the true meaning of gains and losses, he says.

The first book follows the life of the protagonist Luk Nam-choi. Luk, a nobody from the countryside of Guangdong province, arrives in Hong Kong in 1936 and rises to be a gang leader in the city.

Against the backdrop of instability due to the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45) and the capture of Hong Kong by Japanese forces in 1941, Luk has a forbidden love affair with a British officer.

Film director Johnnie To praises Ma's perspective in examining and portraying this tumultuous period in Hong Kong's history, as "very special and quite spectacular".

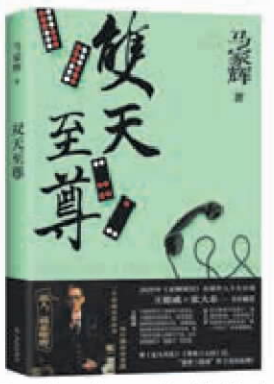
The story of *Yuanyang Liu Qi Si* takes place from the late 1930s to 1967, and focuses on a subordinate of Luk from the first novel, named Shaoyabing. After Luk dies, Shaoyabing reluctantly takes his place as boss and must adapt to his new role and overcome the challenges it presents. By the end of the novel, though, he disappears in mysterious circumstances after a string of bad luck.

Commenting on the novel, a winner of China's top literary award, the 2015 Mao Dun Literary Prize, Jin Yucheng says, "This is a novel I truly love. Its Cantonese undertone is strange yet brilliant, and the tragic emotions of the martial world swell like a vast ocean."

The trilogy's final book, *Shuangtian Zhizun,* begins in 1956 and ends in 1986 after the signing of the Sino-British Joint Declaration. During the 30 years of the novel, Hong Kong's economy soars and the old-style underworld is transformed. But the protagonist Hon Tin-yan still clings to tradition and former values and dreams of training in martial arts.

Ma says the common theme throughout the three novels is secrets.

"The first novel is about keeping one's own secret, the second about keeping another's secret, and as for the third, it turns out that there are many secrets in life that even we ourselves may not be aware of — and if we don't know them, they might as well not exist," Ma explains.









Top: Hong Kong writer Ma Ka-fai creates a complete picture of Hong Kong during that era in *Shuangtian Zhizun*, the final book of his trilogy. **Above from left:** The cover of *Shuangtian Zhizun*. Ma says he used Cantonese dialect to achieve linguistic precision in the book. The residential building Cherry House where the book unfolds. The author practices martial arts. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

> "I aimed to create a complete picture of the era, allowing readers to truly immerse themselves in the time and place where the characters live."
>
> **Ma Ka-fai,** Hong Kong writer

Ma's obsession with secrets began at the age of 10 after being caught stealing money. Scolded by his mother, he felt extremely ashamed. From then on, he often experienced a kind of "secret anxiety", constantly worrying that his various secrets would be exposed. This made him particularly sensitive to other people's secrets, he told the media. He says that he often observes and imagines how secrets are kept and shared, and the consequences of their revelation.

"The secret Ma Ka-fai explores is the unpredictable nature of life and human nature," David Der-wei Wang, professor of Chinese literature at Harvard University, writes in the foreword of *Shuangtian Zhizun*.

While the novels are about individuals' secrets, they are also the secrets of Hong Kong, a city that itself is a legend, Wang writes.

Liu Yang, a popular stand-up comedian and writer, says reading Ma's novels is like watching an old Hong Kong movie, full of vivid details. Between the lines, one can sense the bygone underworld and the rich essence of Hong Kong's unique charm, he adds.

For one thing, the three books' titles are very "Hong Kong-esque" and are named after three traditional hands in the gambling game *pai gow*, which is often shown in Hong Kong films.

Moreover, the trilogy, especially the third novel, contains a lot of Cantonese dialogue, dialect and even entire paragraphs of Cantonese, which can be challenging for non-Cantonese readers.

Ma says he used Cantonese dialects to achieve linguistic precision in writing. "Dialects aren't obstacles to reading; they enrich regional culture and bring characters to life," he says.

"Language is fundamental in literary creation. To bring characters to life, it's crucial to capture their tone, identity and environment accurately. Many characters in the book are from Hong Kong's underworld, and they naturally speak Cantonese. Translating everything into Mandarin would diminish their authenticity," he adds.

In the third novel, Ma included much more information about Hong Kong's cultural geography than in the previous two books. This includes elements such as the scriptures recited by Taoists during the "hell breaking" funeral ritual, lyrics from popular songs, rain-praying chants, the design and movement of the Southern Lion Dance, slogans from funeral homes, and the origins of famous Hong Kong place names like Yau Ma Tei and So Uk Estate.

Ma says that Hon, the protagonist of the novel, was born in 1957 and that Ma himself was born in 1963.

"I am familiar with and have a personal connection to that period, so it naturally led me to write more about it," he says.

His main goal in including a wealth of information about the city is to recreate the characters' authentic lives.

Dialogue and inner emotions alone can't sustain a complete story; it's crucial to build a tangible world: the characters' clothes, what food they eat, what the gambling dens look like, the popular hairstyles, and the significant events in society, including the severe drought in Hong Kong during the 1960s and the rain-praying ceremonies held by different religions, he explains.

"I aimed to create a complete picture of the era, allowing readers to truly immerse themselves in the time and place where the characters live."

In the third book, martial arts also take a central role.

Like the character Hon, Ma was deeply influenced by the Bruce Lee kung fu craze of the early 1970s. At that time, nearly every teenager in Hong Kong wanted to learn martial arts, making it a collective memory for an entire generation.

In the novel, practicing martial arts shapes the lifelong ambition of the protagonist — to become a martial arts master. Yet, he knows deep down that the traditional martial arts world has long disappeared. By the late 1970s, street fights in Hong Kong no longer relied on fists but on knives and even guns. His ideal was at odds with reality from the start, Ma says.

Another important aspect of martial arts is morality. Martial artists have principles and integrity, and these ideals influence the story's conclusion, which sees Hon refusing to follow the gang leader's orders in a bid to uphold the ethics of martial arts, ultimately leading to tragedy.

Ma notes that even today, in Hong Kong's older districts like Wan Chai, Mong Kok, Yau Ma Tei, and Prince Edward, you can still see remnants of martial arts school signs, such as those for Wing Chun and Hung Kuen. In the past, martial arts schools often doubled as clinics, reflecting how deeply kung fu is embedded in Hong Kong's culture.

"The characters in the book live between the 1960s and 1980s, and their lives are naturally intertwined with martial arts schools and kung fu," he says.

In his foreword to *Shuangtian Zhizun*, Wang describes the trilogy as "Hong Kong's unofficial history", but Ma says that "writing an unofficial history" was never the driving force of his creation.

"I didn't deliberately use characters to reflect or metaphorically represent that era of Hong Kong," he says; rather, the characters were rooted in that time, each carrying a fragment of Hong Kong's history.

The underground gambling depicted in the books is inspired by Ma's mother's frequent visits to gambling dens and her stories of them. Hon's obsession with martial arts reflects a common experience among men of that era. The Taoist and folk rituals are drawn from Hong Kong's diverse and inclusive cultural beliefs, he says.

In the three novels, many characters die unexpectedly. For Ma, although life is often expected to be a grand drama, it frequently comes to an abrupt halt.

He says this narrative choice has two underlying reasons.

The deeper reason is rooted in Ma's childhood, as several of his uncles were addicted to drugs, constantly causing trouble, and would show up at his family's door in the middle of the night asking for money. Growing up, he lived in constant, inexplicable fear, with a subconscious belief that good things do not last and that disaster inevitably follows contentment.

This sense of unease and pessimism about life's unpredictability stems from the long-standing threats he felt in his youth, forming the underlying tone of how he views the world, and leaving him always expecting sudden changes, he says.

Another more surface-level reason is John Woo's *A Better Tomorrow*, which Ma studied for his master's thesis at the University of Chicago. In the film, a conversation between Chow Yun-fat and Ti Lung is abruptly ended by a sudden gunshot that takes a life, a scene that left a lasting impact on Ma. From a narrative perspective, such sudden death scenes carry significant dramatic power, he says.

These internal and external influences led him to arrange for characters to have sudden exits. As the character Luk often says, "That's just how it is."

Beyond the pessimism about life's unpredictability, Ma intersperses a great deal of Hong Kong-style humor through his writing. He says that humor is a tried-and-true buffer, much like how people from Guangdong drink herbal tea when they feel unwell — it's something that, once found effective, becomes a lasting habit.

"Throughout my life, I've faced many setbacks in my career, finances, and relationships. I've tried approaching these challenges with a lighthearted, teasing mindset, applying the same attitude toward myself, and it truly helps alleviate heavy emotions," he says.

"Over time, this approach became a habit. If you face life in the same way for 10 consecutive days, it becomes ingrained in your daily routine. For me, humor is no longer a deliberate writing technique but an instinctive attitude toward life," he says.

Contact the writer at yangyangs@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:00 PM

SPORTS

SOCCER

Maresca's 'perfect day', as City rallies to win

While Liverpool grabs an equalizer in more late drama



Dominik Szoboszlai (center) celebrates scoring Liverpool's second goal of its 2-2 draw with Newcastle at St. James' Park in Newcastle, England, on Sunday. REUTERS

A big welcome from the fans at the start. A stoppage-time winner at the end.

For Enzo Maresca, it was the "perfect day" as he earned his first victory as Manchester City manager.

City produced a stirring late rally in Maresca's first Premier League game in charge, scoring twice in the final 10 minutes to grab a 2-1 win at home to Bournemouth on Sunday.

Josko Gvardiol placed a finish into the bottom corner in the first minute of added time for the winner, which was initially given offside before being awarded following a video review. Marc Guehi had equalized with an 84th-minute header from a corner to start the comeback.

Maresca, the successor to Pep Guardiola, punched the air when Gvardiol's goal was awarded and went onto the field after the final whistle to hug his players.

A huge banner, reading "Welcome back Enzo," had been held aloft by City fans as the Italian — Guardiola's assistant in City's treble-winning 2022-23 season — emerged from the tunnel before kickoff.

Wearing a sharp black suit, Maresca certainly looked the part on the touchline, but the slickness synonymous with City's play under Guardiola down the years wasn't quite there until the late comeback, sparked by substitute Rayan Cherki, who set up both goals.

"It is the perfect day, to be honest," Maresca said.

"I was very pleased when the game started to see the banner on the other side. And I was pleased because we give the fans the joy of the three points at the end.

"It was quite emotional."

Maresca began his time as Guardiola's replacement with a 3-0 loss to Arsenal in the Community Shield the previous weekend and has had to deal with the departure of star midfielder Rodri to Barcelona.

City might have found a long-term replacement for Rodri in 18-year-old Morocco international Ayyoub Bouaddi, who is set to join from Lille for 100 million euros ($117 million) according to French media, but Maresca opted against Bournemouth to deploy Guehi — a center-back — as a holding midfielder instead.

It was a contentious decision given there were other midfield options on the bench, and it might prove to be a one-off, but Guehi grew into the role.

City striker Erling Haaland wasn't on the scoresheet in the first league game of the season for the first time since joining the club in 2022. He sported a new hairstyle — a buzz cut that went viral on social media ahead of kickoff — and wasted a couple of great chances to score with it.

Szoboszlai hits back

Dominik Szoboszlai converted a penalty in the ninth minute of stoppage time to salvage a 2-2 draw for Liverpool at Newcastle in a match overseen by two new managers.

Before kickoff, the teams united to pay tribute to Kevin Keegan — a star player for both clubs — following his death last month at age 75. Players from Newcastle and Liverpool wore shirts with "Keegan" and his No 7 on the back during their warm-up at St. James' Park, while there was a mosaic in the center circle, a tribute video and a huge tifo in the stands dedicated to the former England star.

Szoboszlai smashed an unstoppable spotkick into the top corner after debutant Victor Munoz was fouled in the area in a dramatic finish to the match. There was a three-and-a-half-minute wait for a video review of the decision.



Manchester City's Josko Gvardiol (24) is mobbed by teammates after scoring his side's second goal in a 2-1 Premier League victory over Bournemouth on Sunday. AP

"I really hit it good," the Hungary captain said. "I love the pressure."

Joe Willock looked to have scored a 57th-minute winner for Newcastle, one minute after coming in as a substitute and two minutes after Cody Gakpo had equalized for Liverpool. Anthony Elanga put Newcastle ahead in the fifth minute.

Liverpool striker Alexander Isak was jeered as he came off the team coach and then every time he touched the ball by Newcastle fans still bitter about his switch of allegiance last season.

Matthias Jaissle was taking charge of Newcastle for first time, while Andoni Iraola was in the Liverpool dugout after replacing Arne Slot.

"It's not the result you wanted before the game, but obviously finishing, scoring in the last minute, it gives you a better taste ... I don't think we deserved to lose the game today," Iraola said.

"I value the effort from the players, they never gave up, and, at the end, we could recover at least a point."

There was frustration for Newcastle at conceding such a late goal, but also pride, given that former coach Eddie Howe stepped down late last month and influential players like Bruno Guimaraes and Sandro Tonali left the club for league rivals Arsenal and Tottenham, respectively, over the summer.

"It's rough, especially 30 seconds before the end of the game, but that's a huge step for us. That's the mentality we need to have through the season," Newcastle forward Yoane Wissa said.

"The manager arrived three weeks ago and gave us a lot of information. Now, we showed on the pitch that we are ready for the season. We needed a win to make a statement, but in the end we got a draw. We have so much to work on."

Brighton destroys Villa

Brighton scored four goals in the opening 31 minutes and also missed a slew of great chances in a 4-0 hammering of Aston Villa in Sunday's other early game.

To make matters worse for Villa, Joao Gomes was sent off for kicking out at Brighton's Georginio Rutter in the 40th minute, but the visitor, somehow, didn't concede again.

It has been a tough offseason for Villa, with key players Morgan Rogers, Youri Tielemans and Ezri Konsa leaving and speculation surrounding the future of Ollie Watkins and goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez.

Brighton looked sharper, having been in European qualifying action in midweek.

Fan dies

A Brighton fan died after falling ill as he was leaving the Amex stadium following the win over Villa.

The 72-year-old man became unwell as he was leaving to board a supporters' club bus.

Brighton said that, despite the best efforts of emergency services and club staff, the medical team could not save him.

Brighton chief executive Paul Barber said: "We are all shocked and saddened by the loss of one of our supporters."

AP

'Unbelievable' Cherki proves his point



Enzo Maresca revealed Rayan Cherki was frustrated to be left on the bench, before the "unbelievable" Manchester City playmaker inspired a dramatic 2-1 win against Bournemouth on Sunday.

For his first Premier League game as City boss, Maresca opted for Phil Foden and Antoine Semenyo instead of Cherki.

But, with City trailing to Marcus Tavernier's first-half goal at the Etihad Stadium, the Italian was forced into a change of plan in the 62nd minute.

Maresca sent on Cherki, who is short of full fitness after the World Cup, and the French star responded by showing why he should have started in the first place.

Cherki's corner was headed in by Marc Guehi for City's 84th minute equalizer. He then played a deft pass to Josko Gvardiol, who slotted the winning goal two minutes into stoppage time.

"The impact was unbelievable, he is that kind of player," Maresca said.

"I like Rayan, I told him also after the game, but sometimes when you plan a game, and you already have (picked) four out of 11 players who arrived late (from holidays), if you go with one more, maybe the difference is too big."

Cherki sometimes frustrated Maresca's predecessor Pep Guardiola with his volatile personality and habit of unfurling flamboyant tricks instead of simple passes last season.

But Maresca insisted he had no problem with Cherki's character or ability.

"Rayan is quite a nice and clear boy. If he is not happy, he wants to show it and I know that he was not happy today, but, in the end, I had to make a decision," Maresca said.

After the previous week's thrashing by Arsenal in the Community Shield, former Chelsea boss Maresca was able to celebrate his first win since replacing Guardiola.

"It is the perfect day. I was very pleased when the game started to see the banner and we gave the fans the joy of the three points at the end. It was quite emotional," he said.

"The spirit was fantastic. It's a game we deserved to win early with the amount of chances we had."

Guehi was deployed in an unfamiliar midfield role by Maresca, alongside new signing Elliot Anderson, who failed to impress on his debut.

With City closing in on a deal for Morocco midfielder Ayyoub Bouaddi from Lille, it was likely just a short-term option.

But Maresca had no regrets about using Guehi out of position, despite his team's tepid performance.

"I know Marc from (Crystal) Palace, and always thought he could be a good midfielder. It was a good performance from him," he said.

"The good thing is, he now gives us an option for the future."

AFP

Spain's World Cup hero Torres saves PSG's blushes at Rennes

PARIS — Spain's World Cup winner Ferran Torres scored twice to claim a draw for Paris Saint-Germain, as it started the defense of its French Ligue 1 title with a 2-2 draw at Rennes.

Torres came off the bench for his Ligue 1 debut and opened his account for his new club just weeks after scoring the winning goal for La Roja in the World Cup final.

Rennes led at the break after Sebastian Szymanski and Esteban Lepaul scored at Roazhon Park, before Torres' clinical interventions off the back of two assists from fellow World Cup winner Fabian Ruiz.

"The game was difficult, we knew it would be," Torres said.

"I just put my hand up, then, with Fabian's quality, you just have to run and he puts the ball in the right place," he added.

Luis Enrique named two of his big summer signings in 26-year-old Torres and France winger Maghnes Akliouche on the bench for a game moved from the French capital, due to the poor state of the Parc des Princes pitch.

Ex-Rennes attackers Ousmane Dembele and Desire Doue were joined in the Champions League winner's forward line by Khvicha Kvaratskhelia a week on from losing 1-0 in the French Champions' Trophy to Lens.

Rennes boss Franck Haise gave a league debut to Adrien Thomasson, who joined the Bretons from the coach's former club Lens over the summer.

Well-traveled Thomasson set up the opener by feeding Szymanski, who fired home with a low effort from outside the box after 21 minutes following a pinpoint header from Lepaul in the build-up.

Rennes doubled its lead seven minutes before the break, despite PSG showing plenty of intent and even having a Doue effort chalked off for offside.

Haise's side's second came on the counterattack, with a break from winger Mousa Al-Tamari and a delicate back-heel from the Jordanian wide man helping to set up Lepaul.



Paris Saint-Germain's Ferran Torres celebrates scoring his side's second goal in a 2-2 Ligue 1 draw at Rennes on Sunday. REUTERS

PSG was wasteful in attack, failing to hit the target with efforts from Dembele and Kvaratskhelia, forcing their Spanish boss to bring Torres on for the second half.

With half an hour left, Akliouche and Ruiz were also brought into the fray, and, 10 minutes later, PSG cut the deficit when Torres made the most of a pass from his compatriot to nutmeg Rennes goalkeeper Brice Samba.

Torres and Ruiz combined again with eight minutes to go, as the midfielder crossed for the forward to head past Samba.

PSG was on top after Torres' contributions, but it was unable to find a third.

Giroud rolls back the years

Earlier, Olivier Giroud scored the opening goal as Lille gave Davide Ancelotti a winning start as coach with a 2-0 victory at Angers.

Former France striker Giroud, who turns 40 next month, broke the deadlock in the 11th minute with an excellent low drive from long range after collecting a pass from Nabil Bentaleb.

Tiago Santos volleyed in a loose ball to double the advantage just after the half-hour mark at the end of an excellent Lille move.

Davide Ancelotti, son of coaching great Carlo Ancelotti, took over at Lille in June following the departure of Bruno Genesio who is now at Marseille.

Lille finished third in the French top flight last season to qualify for the Champions League.

"It wasn't perfect, but we wanted to start strongly today," Giroud told Ligue 1+.

"We could have killed the game off earlier," he added.

Lille midfielder Ayyoub Bouaddi has been strongly linked with a move to Manchester City and, despite not being involved in the match day squad, the 18-year-old Moroccan said his potential goodbyes to traveling fans after the game.

"We don't know what will happen," Giroud said.

"If it happens, then we will want to celebrate the win for him," the former Arsenal striker added.

Former England defender Eric Dier scored the winner as Monaco edged out Le Havre 1-0 in Normandy.

AFP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:01 PM

Cultural immersion
Australian students explore rich history in Liaoning
Z WEEKLY, PAGE 13



Many trapped as earthquake hits Japan
WORLD, PAGE 4



King's move
Four-time MVP LeBron James joins 76ers to chase another title
SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY
GLOBAL EDITION 中国日報 WEDNESDAY, JULY 29, 2026

China, Slovakia eye stronger partnership

Xi: Friendship, cooperation form foundation of ties

By **JI HAISHENG**
jihaisheng@chinadaily.com.cn



President Xi Jinping holds a welcoming ceremony for Slovak President Peter Pellegrini at the Great Hall of the People prior to their talks in Beijing on Tuesday. Pellegrini is on a state visit to China until Wednesday. WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY

President Xi Jinping said on Tuesday that China stands ready to work with Slovakia to foster a strategic partnership featuring mutual respect and trust, equality, mutual benefit, stability and resilience, in order to deliver greater benefits to the two peoples.

Xi made the remarks during a meeting in Beijing with Slovak President Peter Pellegrini, who is on a three-day visit to China, his first since taking office in 2024. "This marks only the second state visit in Slovakia's history, highlighting the significance of our relationship," Pellegrini wrote in a social media post ahead of his arrival on Monday.

The meeting marked the latest high-level interaction between the two countries, following Xi's meeting in Beijing in September last year with Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico. Xi and Fico met three times in less than two years.

Slovakia was among the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. The two countries elevated their ties to a strategic partnership during Fico's official visit to China in 2024. China is Slovakia's largest trading partner outside the European Union, and bilateral trade volume reached $8.63 billion in 2025, according to China's Foreign Ministry.

Despite having different political systems, China and Slovakia have consistently respected each other's development paths and maintained friendship and cooperation as the central theme of their bilateral relations, Xi told Pellegrini on Tuesday. He emphasized that this mutual respect and cooperation form the foundation for the healthy and rapid development of China-Slovakia relations.

China appreciates Slovakia's adherence to the one-China principle, and will continue to work with Slovakia to fully accommodate each other's core interests and major concerns, he added.

Xi noted that Slovakia has actively participated in the joint building of the Belt and Road and cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European countries, yielding fruitful results.

Both sides should also tap into the potential for collaboration in emerging industries and cutting-edge fields such as clean energy, the digital economy, robotics manufacturing and artificial intelligence, to create new highlights of cooperation, he added.

The two countries should broaden cooperation in culture, sports, tourism, youth and subnational exchanges, and make it easier for people to travel between the two countries, he said.

Xi also said China and Slovakia should safeguard the international system with the United Nations at its core and the international order underpinned by international law, jointly promote an equal and orderly multipolar world and universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization and contribute to building a community with a shared future for humanity.

China hopes Slovakia will play a constructive role in promoting the sound and steady growth of China-EU relations, Xi said, stressing that China always views the EU as a partner and develops its relations with the EU with sincerity and goodwill.

For his part, Pellegrini said that as a member state of the EU, Slovakia stands ready to actively promote cooperation between the EU and China, and the proper settlement of differences through dialogue and consultation.

He said that Slovakia highly commends China's remarkable development achievements and its steady progress in advancing Chinese modernization. Slovakia cherishes the strategic partnership between the two countries, firmly upholds the one-China principle, and looks forward to enhancing mutual trust, strengthening cooperation and deepening friendship with China, he said.

Pellegrini also said Slovakia highly values and appreciates China's international status and influence, and is willing to work with China in upholding multilateralism, safeguarding the purposes of the UN Charter and international law, and promoting regional and world peace and stability.

Slovakia fully endorses the concepts and initiatives put forward by President Xi at the 2026 World AI Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance, Pellegrini said, expressing his country's readiness to coordinate closely with China to strengthen global AI governance.

Before the talks, Xi held a welcoming ceremony for Pellegrini, and a welcoming banquet was held for him at around noon.

Michal Bartek, a member of the Slovak Parliament and deputy governor of Slovakia's Trencin region, said this high-level interaction "can open a new and even more ambitious chapter in our relations — one based on sincere friendship, strategic trust and concrete cooperation, benefiting both Slovak and Chinese people".

Noting that China is a strategic, trustworthy and long-term partner of Slovakia, as well as a key stabilizing force in the international community, he said, "Stronger relations between Slovakia and China can contribute not only to the prosperity of our two nations, but also to better relations between China and Europe."

'Excess capacity' claims rejected

By **ZHANG CHENXU** and **ZHONG NAN**

Responding to the massive hype surrounding the so-called "China's excess capacity" narrative in Western circles, officials and experts said that it only politicizes trade, deflects attention from structural economic problems at home and acts as a cover for protectionist measures.

They said that China's modern industrial development represents "China Opportunity 2.0" for the global economy, not "China Shock 2.0", and warned that such negative narratives can distort global trade, destabilize industrial and supply chains and hinder long-term growth worldwide.

Their comments came after the Ministry of Commerce released a document on Tuesday titled "China's Position on the So-called Excess Capacity Issue", which called for "a comprehensive, objective and fair view" of capacity issues, and for differences to be managed through open and mutually beneficial cooperation.

Noting that "excess capacity" is a dynamic feature of a market economy and that capacity supply and demand are never in lasting balance, the document said that shifts in the global capacity landscape reflect international industrial specialization and cooperation.

Detailing the document, Yan Dong, vice-minister of commerce, said at a news conference in Beijing that some economies, concerned about their industrial competitiveness and market position amid sluggish global growth, have repeatedly invoked the so-called "excess capacity" line to justify protectionist measures.

Meanwhile, Washington is pressing ahead with a Section 301 probe launched in March into alleged structural excess capacity and production in manufacturing sectors across 16 economies, including China, the European Union, Vietnam and Mexico. Reuters reported on Monday that United States Trade Representative Jamieson Greer said that his office hoped to conclude the probe soon and put forward a proposal that could lead to additional tariffs.

Lin Weilong, head of the policy research department of the Ministry of Commerce, described the US move as "a typical act of unilateralism", saying that Washington had no right to unilaterally label its trading partners' production as "excess capacity" and impose restrictions. He urged the US to return to dialogue, emphasizing that China reserves the right to take necessary measures.

See **Narrative,** page 3

PURE APPRECIATION STEMS FROM SUZHOU'S LOTUS MARKETS

City looks to build on its aesthetic traditions as more people choose the Chinese blooms over roses and lilies

By **XING WEN**
xingwen@chinadaily.com.cn



People visit a lotus market near the former residence of Tang Yin, a famed Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) poet-painter, in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, on June 27. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The lotus pond behind Liu Qinghua's childhood home in northern Jiangsu province was a place of labor, not leisure.

Every summer, as the flowers bloomed and wilted unseen, she would be busy digging roots from the mud, loading iron baskets onto her bicycle, and pedaling from village to village to sell them.

She had no time to admire the blooms. But now, as a 34-year-old resident of Suzhou, Jiangsu, the same flower has become part of her weekend ritual.

China Vibes

These days, Liu spends many summer weekends with friends or family at the city's lotus markets, which have emerged as a popular seasonal attraction in recent years.

The market on Baita West Road draws the largest crowds.

There, local growers harvest their flowers at night, board free buses before sunrise, and set up stalls by 7 am, offering blooms still wet with morning dew.

In fact, this tradition is deeply rooted in Suzhou's local culture. *Wujunzhi*, a regional chronicle compiled during the Song Dynasty (960-1279), documents the summer custom of lotus flower fairs.

After several visits to the markets, Liu has watched the vendors' offerings grow increasingly polished — from calligraphy-adorned wrapping paper to vibrant multicolored designs. Outdoor stalls now also feature mist-spraying devices to keep the flowers cool and fresh.

"Suzhou has long been a prosperous region where people have the leisure to discover the subtleties of everyday beauty," she said.

See **Flower,** page 3

Online
See more by scanning the code.

The reason has changed, but the tariffs remain

WORLD WATCH
By Massoud Amin

On Friday, the United States began collecting new tariffs of 10 to 12.5 percent on imports from roughly 60 trading partners. The duties cover 99.4 percent of all US imports. The latest tariffs replaced a nearly identical set of tariffs that had expired just minutes earlier. The rates barely moved. The goods barely changed. What changed was the stated reason.

The new tariffs rest on a finding, under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, that these 60 economies have failed to ban imports made with forced labor. Partners that commit to enacting and enforcing forced labor import bans pay 10 percent. Partners that do not make such a commitment pay 12.5 percent. The levy they replaced was a temporary 10 percent charge imposed under a different statute after the Supreme Court struck down the US administration's original and illegal "Liberation Day" tariffs in February and ordered tens of billions of dollars refunded. Those original tariffs had rested on the use of presumed emergency economic powers.

A basic diagnostic finding from the study of how complex systems fail applies here. That is: When the output of a system holds steady while its stated inputs keep changing, the stated inputs are not driving the system. The tariff is the constant. The justification is the variable. The justification, therefore, is not the cause of the tariff.

The Supreme Court struck down the first tariffs. The second expired by their own terms. The third began minutes later under a third statute. When a policy survives every change in its legal foundation, the law is not guiding the policy. The law is being fitted to it.

The design of the instrument says the same thing. It is a remedy that is narrow by nature. It identifies particular producers and blocks their goods on the grounds of forced labor. But the United States already owns a tool that does exactly that.

Section 307 of the Tariff Act of 1930 — the same act remembered for the Smoot-Hawley tariff wall — has prohibited imports made with forced labor for nearly a century and US Customs enforces it.

See **Tariff,** page 3



INSIDE
Dollar has new neighbors on monetary stage
Global Views, page 8

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved
Vol.8 — No. 1881
Newsstand prices:
US $1 Canada C$1; UK 1£ EU 1€
Kenya 50 Kenya Shilling
Asia Pacific: Thailand 120 thb; Philippines 120 php; Myanmar 2000 kyat; Japan 210 yen; Dubai 10 dirham; Pakistan 300 rupee

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:01 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:01 PM

INDEPTH

Harvesting history in fields of stone

Statues, monuments arrayed for imperial funerals stand in harmony with farms, villagers



Statues of one of the Song Mausoleums stand in a field in Gongyi, Henan province. WANG YI / FOR CHINA DAILY

A stone lion statue at Yongyu Mausoleum in Gongyi.

Farmers work in a summer wheat field in Gongyi with Song Mausoleum figures nearby. WANG XIANGYANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

The stone statue of the Mausoleum Guarding General at Yongzhao Mausoleum. QI XIN / CHINA DAILY

By SHI BAOYIN, QI XIN in Gongyi, Henan and **SHAN JUAN**

As 51-year-old Bai Suli walked around the perimeter of Yongtai Mausoleum her eyes carefully scanned the imposing stone statues.

She has been protecting the site — one of the Northern Song Mausoleums in Gongyi, Henan province — for 18 years.

Unlike the imperial tomb complexes of the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, many of the mausoleums from the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127) stand in harmony with the surrounding farmland. Striking stone figures of officials, mythical creatures and animals form silent, eerie-looking rows against a backdrop of shimmering fields and distant hills.

"Every spring, the wheat grows green. Summer comes, and the grain turns golden. Autumn paints the fields with sorghum and sunflowers, and winter blankets the land with snow," Bai said, describing the mausoleum's shifting seasonal scenery.

This summer the Northern Song Mausoleums were celebrated online as the "guardians of the wheat fields", with the statues gaining widespread popularity on social media.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian released a poetic post on the social network X accompanying a video of the wheat fields. "Harvesters move through waves of grain, while Song Dynasty imperial tomb statues, around 1,000 years old, stand in silence," he wrote.

Local authorities, experts and village leaders have to carefully balance tasks relating to preservation of the relics and tourism. The open-air stone statues need to be protected and safeguarded and villagers' incomes maintained. Digital technology also plays an important role in stopping permanent erosion of the stone relics, while also helping make them accessible for modern tourists.

Ancient layout

The Song Mausoleums are a nationally protected cultural site. The elaborate stone sculptures reflect the prosperity of the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127), an era that saw major advances in movable-type printing, the compass and gunpowder, according to Zhu Xingli, director of Gongyi's cultural relics bureau.

"If we move the stone statues from the imperial mausoleums into a museum exhibition, we will lose their most important historical value," he said.

What makes these relics valuable is the complete ancient imperial tomb layout designed for royal funeral ceremonies, Zhu said. Stone pillars, stone lions, stone elephants and giant statues line the central axis, following a full ancient imperial funeral format.

"Our best protection is to let these stones stay rooted where they have stood for 1,000 years, rather than moving them away," Zhu said.





Left: Summer harvesting seen at one of the Song Mausoleums. KANG ZHENLIN / FOR CHINA DAILY
Above: Adolphe Spruyt, a Belgian doctor for railway workers, poses for a photo with statues in 1906. PROVIDED BY GHENT UNIVERSITY TO CHINA DAILY

Song Mausoleums were purpose-built for open-air display, a distinction from the Longmen Grottoes in Luoyang, Henan and the Yungang Grottoes in Datong, Shanxi province, which had wooden roof shelters, he added.

To protect the relics, the local government follows the "minimum intervention" rule.

In order to prevent human damage and theft, the cultural relic authority has established 11 protection posts with 96 full-time guardians. The guardians take turns keeping watch 24 hours a day, supported by security cameras.

A major land regulation project placed 210.67 hectares of farmland at the center of the mausoleum zone. Farm machinery is required to stay at least two meters away from all stone statues, Zhu said, and agricultural workers must use manual tools rather than large farm vehicles near relics to avoid hitting them.

Thanks to these protection initiatives, visitors can enjoy the unique view all year round, such as when the monuments are surrounded by green wheat, sorghum and rapeseed flowers.

Since 2025, Gongyi has cooperated with Fudan University, Lanzhou University, Zhengzhou University and other academic institutions to conduct comprehensive 3D digital archiving and physical performance testing of the relics, Zhu said.

"High-precision scanning technology captures all subtle features of the stone carvings, including facial textures, garment folds, micro cracks and delicate carved ornaments," Zhu said.

Full digital modeling has been completed for Yongding Mausoleum, one of the Song Mausoleums, and some scattered stone statues. Permanent digital replicas are stored on cloud platforms, with the original stone monuments preserved in their original locations, Zhu said.

"Such digital tech will provide solid data support for precise restoration and historical research for future generations," he said.

Sharing a rich past

Protecting the stone relics is not only about maintaining the physical statues, but also about sharing their rich history and stories with visitors.

Guides undergo training to learn how to clearly explain to visitors the royal rituals and burial customs at the sites.

"We live here — and the more we learn, the more we can share with visitors," Zhu said. "We are also setting up standardized information boards with detailed historical stories. These will help tourists not only admire the stone statues, but also truly learn about the rich history."

Wang Junzhen, one of the tour guides, said the biggest benefit from the training is grasping the essence of successful cultural communication. She said she has learned how to make ancient Song Mausoleum culture come alive for modern audiences.

"As more people pay attention to cultural relics, the Song Mausoleums' historical records and vivid stories have won greater popularity," Wang said. She said she has noticed that foreign tourists are particularly interested in heritage sites like the Song Mausoleums.

Bai has witnessed great changes at the site. It used to be divided into separate private farm plots full of weeds and rubbish. After becoming a cultural heritage area, the statues are now surrounded by vast wheat fields in summer.

The local government launched the land consolidation project in 2021, following multiple rounds of communication with villagers. Fortunately, most residents supported the plan.

Baling village in Gongyi was chosen as the pilot village for mausoleum land consolidation. Cao Xianghui, Party secretary of the village, said different mausoleum areas develop in different ways. For example, some lie in the city area, while others sit in open farmland.

Villagers get more from land transfers than what they could earn from farming alone, removing financial worries that made people resist relic protection in the past, Cao said.

Some residents now work as tour guides, homestay hosts and *hanfu* experience staff. This creates a stable rural economy that balances farming, villagers' income, relic protection and cultural tourism.

"For people living in Baling village, these stone statues are not cold museum exhibits, but old companions they have known their whole lives," Cao said. There are plans to build more support facilities including parking lots, public restrooms, and cultural service areas to improve tourism services, he added.

Baling villager Cao Shigao patrols the mausoleum area at night with a flashlight and checks in at NFC checkpoints to record his rounds.

"Tourists can take photos from far away, but they must not damage the stone statues," he said, and pointed at a security camera. "This digital monitoring helps make traditional foot patrols more effective."

Yongyu Mausoleum and Yongtai Mausoleum in Baling village remain in their original rural farmland settings. Stunning views of the stone monuments, which attract photographers, travel bloggers and tourists all year round, can even be seen from passing high-speed trains.

In contrast, Yongzhao Mausoleum and Yonghou Mausoleum are located in Gongyi's urban area. Yongzhao Mausoleum was rebuilt decades ago as public city parks, where local residents can walk and relax beside ancient royal stone carvings.

Gongyi resident Zhang Panyi carries personal and shared memories of the mausoleums. He said he often visited Yongzhao Mausoleum Park when he was little, and only later learned it belonged to Emperor Renzong (1010-63) of the Song Dynasty and the famous historical figure Bao Zheng (999-1062).

Priceless pictures

Photos taken of the monuments in the late Qing Dynasty during the construction of the Bianluo Railway are priceless original materials, said Cao Miao, author of *Traces of the Song Mausoleums*.

Back then, photography was expensive and usually only for wealthy elites. Belgian and French engineers and doctors working on the railway took many clear, detailed pictures of the mausoleums. Today, photographers and history lovers take photos from the exact same angles as those century-old photos, Cao said.

"We can't stop natural weathering," he said. "The job for this generation is to slow this damage, keep the complete cultural background, and hand them down to later generations. Digital archives make sure this cultural heritage will never vanish entirely."

Comparisons with the old photos show irreversible damage.

Many carved decorations, sharp stone edges and surrounding scenery have worn away or disappeared.

Having photographed the mausoleums for more than a decade, Cao said: "When I press the shutter, I have a dialogue with these 1,000-year-old stone carvings."

Wang Guoqiang, a professor from Luoyang Normal University's school of history and culture, said digital copies of these old photos make international research easier, letting heritage lovers all over the world study the site online. "These photos also provide clear references for repairing stone relics and restoring the original ancient landscape," he said.

Wang also suggested connecting Gongyi's stone carvings with Longmen Grottoes and Songshan Mountain cultural sites to build a unified cultural tourism route.

"The famous scenic spots can share tourists and attract more people to come," he said.

Apple Rouse, vice-president of the US-based Chinese American Youth Association, believes the Song Mausoleums can help young people connect with their heritage.

"The Song stone carvings, beside high-speed trains and modern facilities, create a powerful clash of times, like images put together by AI (artificial intelligence). These 1,000-year-old stone figures overlook the Central Plains, showing the everlasting strength of Chinese civilization."

Contact the writers at qixin@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:01 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:01 PM

TOP NEWS

Solemn tributes



Residents visit the Tangshan Earthquake Ruins Memorial Park on Tuesday to pay tributes to family members who died 50 years ago when a powerful temblor struck Tangshan, Hebei province. On July 28, 1976, a magnitude 7.8 earthquake rocked the city, leaving more than 240,000 people dead and thousands of others injured.
MU YU / XINHUA

China builds up rail freight with Europe

Innovative management steps, more service routes to help strengthen cross-border trade

By **ZHONG NAN**
zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

China will improve the operation of its freight train services with Europe during its 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period by adopting more innovative management practices, deepening international cooperation and developing additional service routes, said government officials on Tuesday.

Speaking at a news conference in Beijing, Liang Linchong, director-general of the department of regional opening-up at the National Development and Reform Commission, said the country will strengthen cross-border support mechanisms to enhance the global competitiveness of China-Europe freight train services.

Rail freight transportation has become a key pillar of Belt and Road cooperation over the past decade, with its expanding network, improving efficiency and growing trade value reinforcing connectivity across Eurasia, Liang said.

More than 50,000 varieties of products across 53 categories are transported using the freight train services, with the value of cargo accounting for a growing share in China-Europe trade, he added.

The evolving efficiency of the service has also made it an increasingly attractive option for time-sensitive shipments.

As Europe endured a record-breaking heat wave that fueled soaring demand for air-conditioners last month, many Chinese manufacturers shifted replenishment shipments from sea freight to rail freight, reducing transit times from about 40 days to around only 15, providing a faster lane for bilateral trade.

Wu Zhaoxin, head of freight transportation at China State Railway Group Co, said the national railroad operator will work with railway authorities along the designated routes to improve efficiency, pricing, service quality and innovation in the next step.

"Priority will be given to expanding scheduled services, strengthening coordinated pricing, developing new transportation equipment, and enhancing cargo security through closer cross-border cooperation and smarter tracking technologies," Wu said.

Starting in 2025, China State Railway Group Co rolled out 40-foot containers for nonhazardous liquid cargo and large containers for vehicle shipments to expand transportation options.

Since the China-Europe railway freight express was launched under a unified brand in June 2016, the service has maintained safe and stable operations while evolving into a flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative.

The cumulative train trips to date have exceeded 130,000, transporting goods worth more than $520 billion, according to data from the NDRC.

As of June, the train load factor has remained at 100 percent for 46 consecutive months, while return services are now operating at nearly the same level as outbound trips, reflecting a more balanced flow of trade, the data showed.

According to Chengdu Customs, China-Europe freight trains to and from the capital of Sichuan province transported 922,000 metric tons of import and export goods in the first half of 2026, a year-on-year increase of 17.9 percent.

The services included cross-border e-commerce trains and cold-chain trains. High-tech products such as photovoltaic modules have become the mainstay of the export list, signaling a clear shift from labor-intensive products to goods that reflect China's manufacturing upgrade.

In late June, two China-Europe freight trains carrying 110 containers loaded with 260 elevators departed from Shenyang, Liaoning province, marking the launch of the northeastern city's first dedicated rail service for exporting domestically manufactured elevators to the European market.

Flower: Lotus has entered everyday life

From page 1

"Whether in garden ponds or in the water vats outside narrow alleyway homes, you see lotus flowers everywhere. This beauty is woven into daily life," Liu said.

Huang Xiayang, a creative planner based in Shanghai, is deeply fascinated by the aesthetic traditions of the Jiangnan region — the area south of the lower Yangtze River — and frequently travels to Suzhou and neighboring Hangzhou, the capital of East China's Zhejiang province.

She considers the lotus market a standout example of cultural tourism done right — rooted in local folk tradition and natural resources, born from farmers' spontaneous gatherings, and quickly boosted by government support.

She has also observed a broader shift: Many people now buy lotus flowers for home decoration over roses or lilies.

Once a niche choice, the lotus has entered everyday life — a sign, she notes, that "the public is more open to traditional culture and Eastern aesthetics than before".

In the essay *Ode to the Lotus Flower* by Song Dynasty philosopher Zhou Dunyi (1017–1073), the bloom symbolizes a person who maintains integrity and purity while navigating a corrupt world — one who stays true to one's principles without currying favor with the powerful.

For Zhang Mengyao, a middle-school encounter with the essay sparked her lasting affection for the flower.

Recently, she drove from Hangzhou to Suzhou to browse a lotus market near the former residence of Tang Yin — better known as Tang Bohu, the famed Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) poet-painter — in search of a parting gift for a friend.

She began the day with a traditional Suzhou breakfast of tea, crab and pork soup dumplings, wontons and steamed rice pastry at a restaurant near the market.

Then she and her friend strolled down a bluestone alley, passed through a creative fair and arrived at the market, where streetlamps were shaped like lotus flowers and lotus motifs adorned the walls.

"Though the market was crowded, it wasn't noisy. People were quietly admiring the flowers and taking photos," Zhang recalled.

"Elderly women by the roadside were selling Yulan magnolia bracelets, whose fragrance mingled beautifully with the subtle scent of lotus."

As rain started falling, she bought a bouquet and asked the vendor for some large lotus leaves, which she and her friend held over their heads as makeshift umbrellas.

Later, she found her ideal lotus-themed gift at a Suzhou-style embroidery studio. "My friend's name contains the characters for 'rain' and 'lotus,'" Zhang said. "Choosing this gift for her on a rainy day felt so serendipitous."

Chinese fans mourn Japanese author

By **YANG YANG**
yangyangs@chinadaily.com.cn



Keigo Higashino

The death of Keigo Higashino, one of Japan's best-selling mystery writers, has left his fans in China — the largest overseas market for his novels — devastated, with heartfelt tributes to his literary genius pouring in on social media.

Higashino, who was best known for his crime thriller *The Devotion of Suspect X*, lost his battle to colon cancer on July 23. He was 68. His publisher, Kodansha, announced the news of his death on Monday.

As the heartbreaking news circulated, the celebrated author's representative works — *The Miracles of the Namiya General Store*, *Journey Under the Midnight Sun* and *Malice*, besides *The Devotion of Suspect X* — entered the top 10 most-searched titles on WeRead, one of China's leading e-book platforms.

Higashino began his writing career in 1985, with the mystery novel *After School*, which won the prestigious Edogawa Rampo Prize. By the time of his final novel, *Eternal Memory*, which is scheduled to be published on Aug 5, he had authored 106 books.

As of 2023, his works had sold more than 100 million copies in Japan, and had been translated into 37 languages, reaching readers in more than 41 countries and regions. International sales totaled 68 million copies. China emerged as his largest overseas market, where sales hit nearly 50 million copies.

Chinese publisher Thinkingdom Media Group, which is known for its mystery titles, has published 52 of Higashino's books, with combined sales exceeding 23 million copies. The simplified Chinese edition of *The Miracles of the Namiya General Store*, which was released in 2014, sold more than 10 million copies within four years, while *Journey Under the Midnight Sun* sold more than 9 million copies.

In 2017, Higashino earned 22 million yuan ($3.2 million) in royalties from China, surpassing British author J.K. Rowling, creator of the *Harry Potter* series, to become the country's highest-earning foreign writer that year. Higashino topped the list of the richest foreign authors in China for three consecutive years — from 2017 to 2019 — earning 42 million yuan in royalties in 2018 and 30 million yuan in 2019.

Many Chinese fans shared memories of discovering his works and the impact that these works have had on their lives. A reader, who uses the name Lakuda on WeRead, recalled reading Higashino's novels first in junior high school. "You have put down your pen, but the gentleness, clarity and empathy you left to millions of readers will remain in the world forever. Thank you for accompanying me throughout my youth," the reader wrote.

Chinese mystery writer Zijin Chen reposted the news on Sina Weibo, saying that *The Devotion of Suspect X* introduced him to detective fiction. "I read it in 2012. It was my first encounter with detective fiction, and it inspired me to start writing my own novels. I'm shocked by the sudden news and feel a deep sense of loss," he wrote.

Another Weibo user, Anniweian-Vivian, commented under a China Central Television news post to highlight how Higashino's novels use suspense as a framework while exploring the complexity of human nature through love, hatred, choices and obsession. "I deeply admire Higashino's works, including *Mysterious Night* and *The Miracles of the Namiya General Store*, and will always treasure them."

Yet another fan, Wangdaotiebarry, thanked Higashino on Weibo for creating "such profound emotional worlds".

"*Journey Under the Midnight Sun* drew me into the world of crime fiction. Works such as *Malice*, *The Devotion of Suspect X* ... have amazed me time and again. You constantly pushed beyond your comfort zone to reach new creative heights and will remain a lifelong role model for me," the reader wrote.

Narrative: Industrial growth benefits world

From page 1

Looking beyond the immediate investigation, experts noted deeper concerns in the US and Europe over industrial competitiveness.

Cui Fan, a professor of international trade at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing, said that the relative decline in manufacturing competitiveness in the US and Europe, particularly in emerging sectors such as clean energy, is partly due to inconsistent and frequently shifting policy support.

"The excess capacity narrative ignores the contribution that China's manufacturing sector has made to the global economy," Cui said. "Shifting blame onto China does nothing to solve the problem."

Tu Xinquan, dean of the China Institute for WTO Studies at the UIBE, said US trade measures — from Section 301 tariffs to "reciprocal" tariffs — are a response to the rise of an emerging major power and its impact on existing balance of interests, power and division of labor.

"Claims of Chinese 'excess capacity' are, in essence, no different from earlier allegations of currency undervaluation or the 'non-market economy' label," Tu said. "Such a narrative is clearly intended to sow discord."

The ministry document also challenged the economic logic underpinning that narrative. "Large exports or trade surpluses are not synonymous with excess capacity," it said.

It noted that 80 percent of US chips are exported, as are two-thirds of Boeing's commercial aircraft, and asked whether such exports should also be seen as excess capacity.

Trade surpluses reflect global specialization and supply-demand patterns, not excess capacity, it said.

Alongside wider market access, China's innovation-driven industrial development offers the world "China Opportunity 2.0" rather than "China Shock 2.0", the document said — an opportunity multinational corporations are already tapping into.

Kilian Aviles, executive vice-president of Germany's Dekra Group and head of its Asia-Pacific region, said China's innovation ecosystem, powered by AI, digital technologies and green technologies, is boosting productivity and contributing to technological progress worldwide.

Contact the writers at zhangchenxu@chinadaily.com.cn

Flood challenge



Rescue workers evacuate people on Monday from a flooded area near Lahore, Pakistan. Heavy rains and flooding have killed at least 109 people, injured nearly 350 and damaged hundreds of houses since the start of the monsoon season in June, authorities said. K.M. CHAUDARY / AP

Tariff: Uncertainty, more than the duty itself, is what freezes investment

From page 1

It is enforced through Withhold Release Orders against named facilities. That is what real enforcement looks like. A flat surcharge on 99.4 percent of imports, with carve-outs for fuels, fertilizers, autos, metals, pharmaceuticals and various foods, is built for a different purpose. It is a revenue and leverage instrument carrying a human rights label.

The administration has said as much. The president and his trade representative have stated plainly that the goals are reducing the US trade deficits and reviving the country's manufacturing. Trade economists reached the same reading within hours of the announcement: Forced labor supplies the legal foundation, not the motive.

The label still matters, because moral language is a finite resource. Forced labor is real. Removing it from global supply chains is one of the few trade objectives on which nearly every government formally agrees. But when that cause is used as legal scaffolding for a general tariff wall, the genuine enforcement work pays the price. Trading partners learn to hear the words as pretext, and the next accusation, however well-founded, arrives pre-discounted. An honest argument survives being stated plainly. "We want tariff revenue and negotiating leverage" is a plain statement. It was available, and it was not used.

Tariffs do not act on a single wire. They act on a network, and interdependent networks respond to uniform friction in predictable ways. Flows reroute. Costs migrate toward the end consumer. Participants reduce their exposure to whichever node generates the friction. The last effect is already underway. Governments from Brasilia to Canberra called the new duties unjustified within hours, and their durable answer will not be rhetoric. It will be quiet diversification into agreements and corridors that do not run through the US market. Each rotation of legal rationale accelerates the shift, because a business can price a tariff, but it cannot price a rule whose justification changes every few months. Uncertainty, more than the duty itself, is what freezes investment.

The deeper problem is that the stated end goal deserves better means. Rebuilding manufacturing is a worthy aim, but factories follow reliable electricity, skilled workers, modern logistics and stable rules over decades, not election cycles. A tariff supplies none of these. It can shelter a plant that already exists. It cannot build the transmission capacity or train the workforce that a new one needs. It does the opposite: It raises the price of the imported transformers, machine tools and steel that every new plant requires.

A more productive path is open. Enforce the century-old forced-labor import ban on evidence, producer by producer. Make the trade-deficit argument in its own name so that it can be judged on its merits. Invest at home in the foundations that decide where the world's next factories will be located. Washington, however, has instead opened investigations into 16 more trading partners over industrial overcapacity, suggesting a fourth rationale is already in the works. The tariff will presumably remain constant.

As has been said, when the winds of change blow, some build walls and others build windmills. The wind is now moving through the entire trading system.

Every economy on the list of 60 must decide which to build. So must the country that wrote the list.

The author is a professor emeritus and director of technological leadership at the University of Minnesota. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:01 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:01 PM

WORLD

Trump touts 'friendly' talks with Tehran

Iran warns sustained naval pressure risks wider war as Oman advances strait plan

By **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong and **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE

US President Donald Trump said on Monday that "very friendly negotiations" with Iran were underway and touted the US Navy's "good blockade", even as Tehran warned that a continuous naval blockade would amount to an expansion of the war.

Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters accused the US on Monday of threatening Iranian vessels, commercial ships and tankers in Iran's coastal and territorial waters over the past three days as part of an "illegal naval blockade".

Inside

Comment, **page 6**

"We warn that this American action is considered an expansion of war in the region," it said in a statement, adding that Iran's armed forces would respond to any threat posed by the US military.

Trump also told US news outlet Axios that Washington was engaged in "very deep talks" with Tehran, but warned, "If they don't work out, we will go back to very strong military action."

Control of the Strait of Hormuz has remained a major point of contention since Iran and the US reached an interim memorandum of understanding last month, with tensions over the strategic waterway repeatedly fueling regional instability.

Oman has proposed a joint regional mechanism for managing the strait with voluntary fees, Reuters reported on Tuesday, citing a Gulf source.

The proposal, which reportedly has regional backing, would prevent Iran from exercising sole control over the waterway. It is modeled on the Strait of Malacca, where users voluntarily contribute to navigation, environmental protection and search-and-rescue efforts.

Omani Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi held phone talks with his counterparts in Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Iran to discuss ways to advance "practical, fair and sustainable understandings" on navigation and supply chain flows through the strait, Oman's Foreign Ministry said on Monday.

The developments follow weekend talks between Iranian and Omani officials on navigation security, transit arrangements and sovereign rights, according to Tehran.

Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is visiting Washington for his eighth meeting with Trump since the US president began his second term, which is "more than any other international leader", according to Netanyahu's office.

"We will discuss all the issues on the agenda, first and foremost, Iran," Netanyahu said before leaving for the US on Monday. "Naturally, our goal is to safeguard our security and also to expand the circle of peace around us."

Sujata Ashwarya, a professor at the Centre for West Asian Studies at Jamia Millia Islamia University in New Delhi, told China Daily that Netanyahu has little influence over when Washington launches attacks and is unlikely to use the meeting to press for it.

"His purpose is to shape the terms of whatever settlement follows, which is where Israeli absence from the negotiations has cost most," Ashwarya said.

She explained that the interim US-Iran deal lacked any agreement on Israel's main sticking points: limits on Iran's ballistic missile program, preventing the rebuilding of its network of regional allies, and International Atomic Energy Agency inspections of nuclear sites.

Ashwarya added that Netanyahu's departing remarks were "revealing".

A prime minister who measures a relationship in meetings cannot yet measure it in outcomes, she said.

"His stated goal also carries a second clause, expanding the circle of peace, and with Saudi normalization now attached to Washington's nuclear offer to Riyadh, that is where Israeli leverage actually sits," she said.

The two leaders want different things from the same war, she added. "Trump wants closure he can present as an achievement; Netanyahu wants Iranian recovery prevented, which is served by keeping options open."

Contact the writers at jan@chinadailyapac.com



A Saudi-operated reconnaissance drone burns after being shot down in Yemen's Al-Jawf Province on Sunday. Yemen's Houthi group claimed responsibility for downing the aircraft, further escalating regional tensions. HOUTHI MEDIA CENTER VIA XINHUA



Rubble's echo

Palestinians inspect the destruction after Israeli strikes in the Shujaiya neighborhood east of Gaza City on Monday. Residents returned to search the rubble for belongings as Israeli forces expanded the area under their control along the so-called Yellow Line, amid worsening humanitarian conditions. BILAL OSAMA / APAIMAGES

China urges Gulf talks, Israel to implement ceasefire

By **MINLU ZHANG** at the United Nations
minluzhang@chinadailyusa.com

A Chinese envoy to the United Nations on Tuesday called for renewed negotiations to ease escalating tensions in the Gulf region and restore safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz, while also urging the full implementation of the Gaza ceasefire agreement.

Sun Lei, charge d'affaires of China's permanent mission to the United Nations, said a memorandum of understanding signed more than a month ago was a hard-won result of mediation efforts and should be fully implemented.

"Now that the door to negotiations has been opened, it should not be closed. As long as there remains hope for peace, efforts should not be abandoned," Sun told a quarterly meeting of the UN Security Council on the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

On the Red Sea, Sun said all parties should respect the navigational rights of commercial vessels under international law and jointly safeguard the security and smooth flow of international shipping routes.

He said China welcomes the easing of tensions between Lebanon and Israel, calling on all parties to cease hostilities and fully implement UN Security Council Resolution 1701. "Israel should completely withdraw from Lebanon," he said.

The remarks came as US President Donald Trump held talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House on Tuesday. It was their first face-to-face meeting since the United States and Israel began joint military operations against Iran on Feb 28.

According to statements issued after the meeting, the discussions centered on Iran and its nuclear program, with both sides reiterating their opposition to Iran acquiring nuclear weapons.

Regarding Gaza, Sun called for the full implementation of the Gaza ceasefire agreement and efforts to secure a genuine and lasting peace.

"Gaza is not a permanent battlefield, nor are suffering and turmoil the destiny of its people," Sun told the council.

He made the remarks as violence has continued despite the ceasefire agreement announced on Oct 10, 2025. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 1,180 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza since the agreement was announced.

He urged Israel and other parties concerned to fully implement the agreement, and called on Israel to fulfill its obligations under international humanitarian law, remove restrictions on humanitarian supplies entering Gaza and facilitate relief operations by the UN and other humanitarian agencies.

Turning to the occupied West Bank, Sun said settler violence had caused civilian casualties and damage to homes, while continued settlement expansion was "encroaching on Palestinian territory".

He said the deterioration of the situation "was partly attributable to the lack of investigations and accountability", and stressed that international law and Security Council Resolution 2334 must be observed without double standards or selective application.

Sun said the recurring turmoil between Palestine and Israel stemmed fundamentally from the fact that only half of the two-state solution had been realized.

China supports the establishment at an early date of an independent State of Palestine with full sovereignty, based on the 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital, Sun said.

Dozens feared trapped in quake-hit Japan shopping mall

TOKYO — Dozens of people were feared trapped in a shopping mall in Japan on Tuesday after a major earthquake toppled buildings, sparked fires and reportedly killed one person and injured more than 100.

Private broadcaster TBS reported that a "considerable number" of people were feared dead inside the mall in the town of Kashima after the fire brigade said that the second floor of the building had collapsed in the magnitude 7.1 tremor.

Public broadcaster NHK cited police sources as saying that between 20 and 30 mall employees could not be contacted, showing footage of emergency vehicles with flashing red lights outside the building.

Police told Agence France-Presse they could not confirm any fatalities inside the building. Kyodo News reported that four people had been taken to hospital, all of them conscious.

Multiple people were also believed to be unaccounted for at a paper factory in Yatsushiro city, where the tip of a chimney fell down, NHK reported, citing sources.

One person was killed when a house collapsed during the quake, Kyodo reported.

NHK aired footage from elsewhere in the southwestern Kumamoto region on Kyushu Island showing several blazes, damaged bridges, a derailed cargo train and a number of houses on the verge of toppling over.

Chiharu Hara, a 35-year-old recruitment agent who was in Kumamoto, told AFP that she was "terrified" when the quake struck.

"The office swayed violently side-to-side. I was afraid it would collapse. Everyone panicked," Hara said.

The tremor at 4:27 pm was of 7.1 magnitude, the Japan Meteorological Agency said, but reached the highest level of seven on Japan's Shindo scale.

The US Geological Survey put the magnitude at 6.8.

A succession of aftershocks followed, including one with a magnitude of 6.1 at 5:08 pm.

Hundreds of earthquakes strike Japan every year, but the vast majority cause little damage.

Roads closed

Many roads were closed and high-speed Shinkansen train services were suspended in the region affected by Tuesday's earthquake. Kumamoto airport was closed for several hours before re-opening in the evening.

Two hospitals reported taking in at least 50 injured patients each, NHK reported.

"People are coming in with burns and fractures from being trapped under objects due to the earthquake, and ambulances are constantly bringing in injured people," NHK quoted one hospital employee as saying. "Inside the hospital, there are water leaks and electrical system failures."

The broadcaster also said that around 10 people were hurt at a nursing home for the elderly.

"Human casualties, building collapses, road damage, fires ... have been confirmed so far," Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said, adding there were also "water and power outages".

The Japanese military has mobilized 3,600 personnel for disaster relief operations and sent 20 aircraft to assess the damage from the air, the defense minister said.

The meteorological agency initially issued a tsunami alert, but withdrew it at around 6:10 pm.

Kumamoto was hit by two devastating earthquakes in 2016 — one of magnitude 6.5, followed two days later by one of magnitude 7.3 — which killed 273 people and injured more than 2,800.

Japan is one of the world's most seismically active countries, sitting on top of four major tectonic plates along the western edge of the Pacific "Ring of Fire".

AGENCIES — XINHUA

Letters sent across seas; hearts united across cultures

By **MINGMEI LI** in New York
mingmeili@chinadailyusa.com

Chinese hit film *Dear You* made its North American premiere on Sunday in New York, where its portrayal of family, memory and human connection resonated with audiences across languages and cultures.

The film closed the 25th New York Asian Film Festival, with director Lan Hongchun, producer Zheng Xuanxuan and actress Li Sitong attending the premiere. It is scheduled to hit theaters in September.

Centered on *qiaopi* — overseas Chinese letters that carried remittances — the film weaves together the Chaoshan region in South China's Guangdong province and Thailand, tracing decades of separation, sacrifice and enduring family ties.

The film is set against the backdrop of the large-scale Chinese migration to Southeast Asia. According to incomplete estimates, nearly 10 million Chinese left for the region in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with many immigrants from Guangdong seeking work in countries including Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia.

The story follows a young man from Chaoshan who travels to Thailand in search of his grandfather, only to discover that he had already died and the money supporting his grandmother for decades had been sent by another woman.

Filmed primarily in the Teochew dialect, *Dear You* preserves the region's linguistic and cultural heritage while exploring emotions that resonate across cultures.

New York, shaped by generations of immigrants, echoes the migration stories portrayed in the film. Director Lan, who conducted documentary research in the city, said it felt familiar to him.

"I believe Chinese audiences may feel as if they have received a package from their hometown," Lan said. "It is like tasting a familiar dish they haven't had for years and suddenly rediscovering the authentic flavors of home."

For audiences less familiar with Chinese traditions, Lan said he hoped the film could offer warmth through a story of kindness and human connection.

"Although the story is rooted in a specific culture, it is ultimately about the goodwill between people," he said. "I believe audiences from different backgrounds can feel that sincerity and warmth."

Lead actress Li said the film's emotional power goes beyond language.

"I believe emotions can cross languages, regardless of which dialect is spoken," she said. "During our screenings and road shows, many local viewers told us they felt the same sense of connection. I think emotions have the power to touch people's hearts."

Zheng, the producer, said the film uses a regional story to explore universal themes.

"The emotions shaped by a particular place are unique, but homesickness, waiting, family ties and friendship are experiences shared by everyone," she said. "What we are really portraying is the bonds and companionship between ordinary people."

For its North American release, the production team prepared Chinese and English subtitles but chose not to translate the songs, hoping audiences could experience the emotions behind the original language.

Lan said that ultimately, a story's power lies not in where it comes from, but in how truthfully it portrays human life.

"Whether it is set in Chaoshan or anywhere else in the world, if you truthfully portray a person's life and emotions, language and cultural background will not limit its reach," he said. "Instead, focusing deeply on individual human experiences is what allows a story to resonate around the world."



Director Lan Hongchun and lead actress Li Sitong (second and third from left) greet the audience after the North American premiere of *Dear You* at the 25th New York Asian Film Festival in New York on Sunday. LIAO PAN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:01 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:01 PM

WORLD

Trail of destruction



Residents survey damage after a tornado ripped through Menasha, Wisconsin, on Monday. The tornado passed through several communities in the area causing widespread damage and power outages. SCOTT OLSON / AFP

France comes under grip of 'unprecedented' fires

By **JULIAN SHEA** in London
julian@mail.chinadailyuk.com

French President Emmanuel Macron says the spate of wildfires ravaging the country this summer is "completely unprecedented" and that "the season is far from over", as firefighters try to bring blazes in the southwest of the country under control.

On Monday he visited the Gironde region, which includes the wine-producing areas and city of Bordeaux, to see for himself the full impact of the most devastating fires the region has seen since the 1940s, with more than 160,000 hectares already consumed by flames.

The situation had been "stabilized", he told reporters, "but it remains intense, and we must be extremely cautious over the coming hours and days ... we will win this battle together".

On Tuesday, local authorities ordered nearly 4,000 people to evacuate holiday homes and campsites around Lacanau on the Atlantic coast, around 50 kilometers west of Bordeaux, amid fears that increasingly bad weather conditions could make the fire situation worse. This comes after residents of several villages closer to Bordeaux had already been forced to leave their homes, with no indication yet when they will be able to return, although Bordeaux itself is not currently regarded as being under threat.

Sophie Brocas, prefect of the Gironde region, has urged tourists not to come, but Eleonore Caroit, minister for international partnerships, said visitors should not cancel holiday plans to France in general as most of the country is unaffected by the blazes.

Posting on X, French Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu said that in nine cases out of 10, fires "are human-caused and most arise from carelessness: a cigarette butt, a barbecue, work carried out without precaution".

The BBC reports that so far, four firefighters have died during the current outbreak of wildfires, and Eric Brocardi, a spokesman for the National Federation of Firefighters of France, said the flames were of "exceptional intensity" but that so far, the work of firefighters had saved 200,000 people.

"The fire is big," he said, adding, "(Firefighters) say that we are little, but we have a good strategy."

There is a similar situation in Spain, where fires west of the capital city Madrid, which is situated in the middle of the country, have forced around 60,000 people to leave their homes, with fears that temperatures will rise even higher.

Spanish Interior Minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska said the coming hours would be "absolutely decisive" as temperatures begin rising again, with an area of around 77,000 hectares — similar in size to the northern German city of Hamburg — already burned.

"I ask for understanding and call on all citizens in all the country to exercise extreme caution and take every possible precaution," said Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez. "We face difficult hours, complex hours."



Firefighters in Marcheprime work to battle wildfires amid drought conditions following a heat wave and water shortages across much of France on Monday. FLORION GOGA / REUTERS

Snub-nosed monkeys enjoy 100-day celebration



Zhang Zhouxiang
Reporter's log

FIRST PERSON VIEW

It was probably the most magnificent 100-day birth celebration I have attended since arriving in Europe.

At around 11 am, about 100 distinguished guests had already gathered beside a tranquil lake in Pairi Daiza, Belgium's best-known zoo.

Among them were China's Ambassador to Belgium Fei Shengchao, diplomats from the Chinese Mission to the European Union, and Brugelette Mayor Isabelle Liegeois. Even the Shaanxi Provincial Forestry Bureau had sent Vice-Director Chen Baolin, who traveled more than 10,000 kilometers from China for the ceremony.

From among the entire Chinese community in Belgium, it was hard to imagine a grander guest list.

All of those in attendance were there for two baby golden snub-nosed monkeys that were just 100 days old — the age at which a newborn turns into a baby, and symbolizes greater strength and independence in Chinese tradition.

The two stars of the day, however, seemed blissfully unaware of their celebrity status.

One baby clung tightly to its mother Lu Lu, occasionally stretching out a tiny hand to touch leaves hanging nearby. The other hid behind another female, Juan Juan, peeking curiously at the crowd before disappearing again.

Their shared father, Liuyun, looked far less concerned about diplomacy than about keeping an eye on his unusually busy family.

It was last May that three golden snub-nosed monkeys arrived in Belgium from China's Qinling National Park. At the ages of 5, 4, and 7, respectively, they were little more than awkward young adults by golden snub-nosed monkey standards.

And that made the ambassador's joke during the ceremony all the more amusing.

"We met this naughty young boy just last year," he said with a smile. "Now, whether he likes it or not, he has entered family life with wives and children."

The audience burst into laughter and applause.

Perhaps encouraged by the joke and the reaction, Liuyun rushed out of the indoor shelter, climbed onto the suspended rope bridge, and performed what looked suspiciously like a gymnastic routine.

Behind the laughter lies one of China's most ambitious overseas wildlife conservation projects.

Golden snub-nosed monkeys are among China's rarest primates, as even the largest subspecies among them, from Qinling, has only about 26,000 individuals. All the other four subspecies number in the hundreds or thousands.

Their breeding has challenged zoologists for decades because of their complex social structure and demanding environmental requirements, which require proper temperature, humidity, and adequate places for them to climb and explore.

Even with all the conditions met, a golden snub-nosed monkey can only get pregnant every two years and can only give birth to a single baby each time.

The Pairi Daiza zoo has spent months recreating something in Belgium that is remarkably close to its home in the Qinling Mountains.

The enclosure — or more accurately, garden — is the size of a 600-square-meter villa. Streams flow through rocks and dense vegetation. Elevated walkways connect different levels of the habitat. Wooden platforms, climbing structures, and countless tree trunks encourage the monkeys to spend most of their time above the ground, exactly as they would in the wild.

Standing there, it became surprisingly easy for me to forget I was in Belgium and imagine I was somewhere in a forest deep inside China.

That is perhaps why, in December 2024, the China Wildlife Conservation Association signed a 10-year cooperation agreement with Pairi Daiza, to establish the first publicly known overseas breeding program for Qinling golden snub-nosed monkeys. Three monkeys arrived in Belgium in May 2025.

Barely 11 months later, two healthy babies were born, which says much about the dedication of both the Chinese and Belgian experts, who have cared for the baby monkeys as if they were their own.

Yet what impressed me most that day was not confined to the monkey enclosure.

Walking through the zoo after the ceremony, I noticed ducks wandering freely among visitors eating lunch. Children sat only a few meters away while the birds calmly searched for crumbs beneath picnic tables. In another enclosure, a troop of monkeys occupied a vast landscape complete with cliffs, waterfalls, and islands separated by moats. The great apes lived beneath enormous glass roofs filled with climbing towers that many human children might envy.

It was obvious that the zoo went beyond just displaying animals. The goal seemed to be to allow them to behave as naturally as possible, while encouraging people to slow down and observe them with respect.

Near the end of the naming event, the ambassador offered a reflection that stayed with me.

"We don't always need grand theories to understand the relationship between humanity and nature," Fei said. "Sometimes all we need is to walk into nature, or simply visit a zoo, and we begin to appreciate that relationship."

Soon after, he and Pairi Daiza founder Eric Domb announced the names of the two babies. They are to be known as Zhenzhen and Xile, which mean "cherish" and "joy", names that seem to carry the sincere wishes of their parents, as well as all of those who care about them.

The author is chief correspondent at China Daily EU Bureau based in Brussels.

Contact the writer at zhangzhouxiang@chinadaily.com.cn

Japan urged to uphold pacifist constitution

Tokyo's expanding role in South China Sea affairs could raise tensions: Experts

By **HOU JUNJIE** in Tokyo
houjunjie@chinadaily.com.cn

Tokyo's growing involvement in South China Sea affairs is driven more by Washington's "Indo-Pacific" strategy than by Japan's own security interests, Japanese experts said.

They warned that Japan's expanding role could heighten regional tensions, and called on Tokyo to uphold its pacifist principles by pursuing diplomacy rather than military moves.

Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi issued a statement marking the 10th anniversary of the so-called "South China Sea Arbitration" on July 12, in which he endorsed the so-called "award", attacked China's lawful claims and portrayed Japan as a "legitimate stakeholder" in the South China Sea. A coalition of 14 countries issued the joint statement, which prompted a solemn representation and strong protest from the Chinese embassy in Japan on July 13.

Shi Yong, charge d'affaires ad interim of the Chinese embassy in Japan, lodged the representation with Kanai Masaaki, director-general of the Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau of Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Such actions have heightened vigilance among regional countries and the broader international community, the embassy said.

Moreover, Japan has expanded defense equipment transfers to the Philippines in recent years, while strengthening joint exercises and security cooperation with Manila, further deepening its involvement in South China Sea affairs.

Ukeru Magosaki, director of the East Asian Community Institute in Tokyo and a former foreign ministry official, told China Daily that Japan's growing security cooperation with the Philippines is likewise not based on Tokyo's own independent strategic judgment, but serves the overall US strategic deployment in the Asia-Pacific.

He said the United States regards China as its principal strategic competitor and is seeking to build alliances in diplomacy, security and other fronts to counter China. Japan's actions involving the South China Sea, he said, are part of that broader strategy.

In his view, the US is seeking to establish a strategic framework involving Japan, the Philippines, and Australia to counter China.

Japan's closer cooperation with the Philippines is an integral part of that strategy, with the Philippines expected to serve as a key strategic foothold in the US regional strategy, Magosaki said.

He said the most important way to resolve regional disputes is for the parties directly concerned to reach a consensus through dialogue. If a third party becomes involved, its role should be to facilitate consensus rather than deepen confrontation.

"Japan's current approach is the opposite," Magosaki said.

"Friendly relations with China are indispensable to stability and peace in East Asia. Any attempt to deliberately stir up confrontation with China could make the regional situation more tense and unstable," he warned.

Dual challenges

Hiroshi Shiratori, a professor of political science at Hosei University in Tokyo, told China Daily that as a country outside the South China Sea, Japan could face both constitutional and policy challenges if it continues to deepen its military involvement in South China Sea affairs.

Shiratori said Japan could even seek to build a relationship with the Philippines that is closer to a military alliance. However, expanding Japan's defense policy beyond its immediate region is inconsistent with the pacifist principles enshrined in Japan's constitution.

He noted that the Philippines occupies an important position in the "first island chain", a strategic string of Pacific archipelagos, including countries such as Japan and the Philippines, that the US can coordinate to act as a military barrier and containment line against China.

Against this backdrop, Japan's closer security cooperation with the Philippines could also be seen as serving Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's "Taiwan contingency" concept whereby she said Tokyo could respond militarily to a potential attack on the island.

Shiratori said such a stance could pose a new risk to regional stability while further expanding the overseas role of Japan's Self-Defense Forces.

He said Japan should face up to its history of aggression in the Asia-Pacific region and uphold the pacifist principles established through deep war reflection.



Protesters rally in Tokyo against Japanese PM Sanae Takaichi's moves toward remilitarization on Sunday. ZHU CHENXI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Briefly

UNITED STATES

Washington reviews force presence in Europe

The United States began reviewing its military presence in Europe on Monday, officials said, after US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth told his NATO counterparts last month that Washington was planning such an analysis. "As the secretary (Hegseth) laid out then, this will be a real review, designed to ensure that NATO is moving fast and irreversibly toward Europe taking primary responsibility for its conventional defense," US Defense Under Secretary Elbridge Colby wrote on X. President Donald Trump has repeatedly lashed out against European allies over their response to his military operation in Iran.

AFRICA

Ebola cases in DR Congo top 3,200

Confirmed cases in the Democratic Republic of Congo's ongoing Ebola outbreak have reached 3,262, its Ministry of Health said in an overnight update on Tuesday. Officials have said it is the "fastest outbreak on record" and has almost equaled the 2018-20 outbreak, the largest ever recorded in the country. The 2018-20 outbreak that was recorded in the country and neighboring Uganda lasted roughly two years, with more than 3,400 reported cases, including over 2,200 deaths, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:01 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:01 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

Global Development Initiative aims to propel shared development of world

As a major country in the world, China has both the capability and the willingness to contribute to global development. The Global Development Initiative is a public good offered to the world with the aim of helping advance global development and fulfill the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. It was presented as a timely response to the development deficit that had become increasingly evident.

Proposed by President Xi Jinping during the 76th Session of the UN General Assembly in September 2021, the initiative places development at the center of the global macro-policy framework, and seeks to help developing countries make shared progress. Upon its unveiling, it immediately received a positive response from the UN, other international organizations and many countries, as it addresses the urgent needs of people around the world for peace, development and cooperation.

The international community faces major challenges in implementing the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as the global development deficit continues to worsen.

Development issues have not received the attention they deserve. Unilateralism and protectionism are on the rise, with some countries erecting barriers and pushing for "decoupling", leading to the disruption of global industry and supply chains. All these factors, compounded by geopolitical conflicts, climate change, and energy and food crises, undermine the interests of countries — especially developing ones — making it even more difficult to achieve the UN 2030 targets.

Having accumulated development experience in its efforts to eradicate abject rural poverty, China put forward the initiative to promote global development.

Nearly five years have passed, and the initiative has made progress in its transition from concept to practice. It has now received the support and participation of more than 130 countries and international organizations, with more than 80 countries joining the Group of Friends of the GDI. The group works to advance the initiative's action-oriented, people-centered approach to accelerate the implementation of the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals through policy dialogue, experience sharing and practical cooperation.

With China's strenuous efforts, the initiative has mobilized over $23 billion to support the development of the Global South, and launched more than 1,800 cooperation projects. It has also provided training for more than 200,000 personnel from developing countries in various fields. All this has contributed to the economic and social progress of emerging market economies.

To review the initiative's achievements and further consolidate international consensus, a high-level meeting on the Global Development Initiative held in Beijing on Tuesday aimed to help translate cooperative commitments into concrete actions that will more effectively benefit the international community over the next five years.

In the face of a volatile international landscape, solidarity and cooperation are the only viable choices. In response to the global aspiration for peace and development, China will continue to uphold peaceful development, foster an open environment for sustainable growth, and ensure that the benefits of development reach more people.

All like-minded countries are invited to seize the opportunities presented by China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), share in the development dividends brought by Chinese modernization, and jointly explore new avenues for global development.

Over the past five years, the Global Development Initiative has served as both a road map for bridging the North-South divide and addressing development imbalances and as an "accelerator" for advancing the UN 2030 Agenda.

China stands ready to work with all parties by leveraging the projects related to the Global Development Initiative as platforms to pool broad development resources, build a solid foundation for shared progress, and foster an inclusive environment for growth, contributing to the building of a community with a shared future for humanity.

Washington's 6G club built on shifting sand

It seems the US administration likes to treat every major technological advance by China as a geopolitical emergency — this time the target is 6G.

China accounts for about 40 percent of global 6G patent applications, has completed the first phase of national 6G technology trials, and has accumulated more than 300 key technologies for the next generation of wireless telecommunications. Alarmed, Washington has unveiled another technology coalition, a more than 20-member clique to accelerate "secure" 6G networks. The strategy is familiar. Build an exclusive club, write the standards and fence China out. But behind the sound bites lies the same illusion that has plagued Washington's technology policy for years: geopolitics overrides economics.

The US administration hopes the new alliance will shape international 6G standards ahead of next year's World Radiocommunication Conference in Shanghai. Its claim that 6G will be dramatically different from 5G is less a technological assessment than a political "justification" for replaying its campaign against the Chinese tech company Huawei under a new label.

The problem for Washington is its 5G playbook delivered far less than it had promised. Billions were spent removing Huawei equipment from US networks, yet rural replacement projects remain incomplete. The campaign complicated deployment, increased costs and failed to halt Huawei's global technological development. Repeating the same strategy under the banner of 6G is unlikely to produce a different outcome.

And the belief that US allies will sacrifice their commercial interests in pursuit of Washington's strategic goals is equally wishful thinking. The "Chip 4" initiative is an instructive precedent. The Republic of Korea joined only after insisting on conditions that avoided explicit restrictions on commercial ties with China, which accounts for roughly 40 percent of its semiconductor exports. The Netherlands' ASML has repeatedly resisted expanding restrictions, noting that US technology companies themselves derive a large share of their overseas revenue from the Chinese market.

The same contradictions will haunt the new 6G alliance. Germany, Japan, the ROK and the United Kingdom all maintain extensive commercial ties with China's telecommunications industry. Huawei and ZTE occupy key positions in the deeply integrated global supply chains that deliver substantial cost advantages over competitors. Asking allies to abandon those relationships in the name of "shared security" amounts to asking them to absorb substantial economic losses for dubious geopolitical gains.

Washington's campaign to reduce dependence on Chinese critical minerals reveals a similar disconnect between political will and economic reality. US President Donald Trump has designated January next year as the deadline for achieving independence from Chinese rare earths, tungsten and tantalum, while directing tens of billions of dollars toward domestic mining and processing. Yet the numbers tell a different story. US demand for common rare-earth magnets reached roughly 48,000 metric tons in 2025, while domestic supply stood at around 300 tons. The US has not produced tungsten since 2015 or tantalum since 1959, and industry experts acknowledge that rebuilding these supply chains will take years. And the more the US tries to separate these systems through political pressure, the more frictions it creates for its own companies and partners.

Technological leadership cannot be secured through alliances and sanctions alone. The emergence of China's Kimi K3 model is the latest proof of that. China continues to strengthen the industrial base that underpins its self-reliance in sci-tech innovation, with Chinese companies investing heavily in indigenous innovation.

The new 6G coalition may improve coordination among like-minded governments, but it will not diminish China's role in developing the technology's global standards or supply chains. Nor will it persuade US allies to disregard their own economic interests.

The US should invest in research, infrastructure and industrial competitiveness instead of forging a new containment coalition and imposing another round of restrictions. Technological innovation in this century will be achieved through cooperation rather than monopoly.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

US seeks to reap dividends from managed instability

Just weeks after declaring the interim peace arrangement with Iran dead and resuming heavy strikes, United States President Donald Trump now says there is a good chance of a new agreement. That makes Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's White House visit this week hardly coincidental.

Meanwhile, a Ukrainian strike on an Iranian merchant vessel in the Caspian Sea has unexpectedly opened a new front.

This is the Great Game of the 21st century. It is fought less for territory than for markets, which reward uncertainty far more readily than they reward lasting peace, creating incentives to oscillate between confrontation and conciliation.

The Middle East illustrates this logic. The US and Israel have paused major strikes on Iran without abandoning the threat of force. Officially, diplomacy has been given room to work. Yet the Strait of Hormuz remains only partially open, while Houthi attacks in the Red Sea continue to threaten regional energy infrastructure. The objective is neither war nor peace but controlled instability, with oil prices serving as the principal transmission mechanism.

The political arithmetic is straightforward. Military pressure pushes Tehran toward negotiations, while the prospect of a diplomatic breakthrough pulls crude prices lower, easing inflation and reducing gasoline prices for US consumers. Markets respond not to peace itself but to expectations of peace. For any US administration facing the midterm elections, those expectations can prove almost as valuable as an actual agreement.

Netanyahu's visit adds another layer of complexity. Reports of tensions between him and the US leader, alongside Washington's willingness to pursue policies that unsettle Israel, suggest that the White House views an open-ended regional conflict as increasingly costly.

Following Ukraine's strike on the Iranian vessel, Tehran has accused Kyiv of acting on Israel's behalf in an effort to widen the conflict. The Caspian Sea — another major production base of oil and natural gas — has become an arena where the conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East intersect.

Markets reacted exactly as US politicians might have expected. Earlier diplomatic engagement between Washington and Tehran helped pull Brent Crude off wartime highs, delivering a sharp decline in energy inflation. Trump's renewed talk of negotiations pushed oil futures lower, laying the ground for a new round of reaping, despite little immediate change in the underlying security situation.

This reflects a broader pattern of hegemonic leverage. Washington can tighten sanctions to increase pressure, ease them to calm energy markets, then restore restrictions if negotiations falter — all while preserving the US dollar's central role in the global energy trade. Carefully timed communications from the US Federal Reserve have repeatedly amplified market expectations, reinforcing financial stability at politically opportune moments. Whether diplomacy succeeds or fails, the cycle ultimately strengthens the US' financial hegemony.

The substance of negotiations remains far less convincing. Proposals requiring Iran to dismantle significant elements of its nuclear program while committing the US to a substantial regional military withdrawal are politically ambitious and strategically difficult to implement. Few observers expect a comprehensive settlement in the near term. The mooted negotiations therefore serve as much to shape market expectations as to resolve the underlying disputes.

The contradictions therefore remain intact. Lower energy prices offer only temporary relief from broader inflationary pressures, while regional tensions continue to simmer beneath successive rounds of diplomacy. The oscillation between confrontation and engagement has become less a pathway to peace than a mechanism for the US managing domestic political risks and fleecing world markets.

That may be the defining feature of contemporary geopolitics engineered by the US. Stability is no longer the immediate objective. Managed instability can generate strategic, financial and political dividends that durable peace cannot. The Caspian Sea incident is a reminder that, in today's world, the choreography of crisis often matters as much as its resolution — and that the true currency of US geopolitical competition is increasingly volatility itself.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Digital cooperation to empower Asia-Pacific MSMEs

Editor's note: *The recent 2026 APEC Digital and AI Ministerial Meeting adopted a ministerial statement in which all parties agreed to jointly promote digital and artificial intelligence technologies to empower the Asia-Pacific community. China Economic Times spoke to Wang Jian, a member of the expert committee of the APEC E-Commerce Business Alliance, on the future of regional cooperation. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

For most members of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation mechanism, development remains the fundamental objective. Against this backdrop, the meeting identified technological empowerment and industrial upgrading as key areas of consensus. This pragmatic approach reflects the realities of the region, focuses on the broadest common ground for digital cooperation in the Asia-Pacific and lays a solid foundation for deeper collaboration.

Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises account for more than half of the trade and jobs across the Asia-Pacific, which makes them the primary beneficiaries of digital transformation. However, many such companies and businesses in remote areas have long struggled to join the digital economy because of the high investment required for digital systems, a shortage of technical professionals and inadequate network and computing infrastructure in less-developed regions.

The ministerial statement addresses these challenges by promoting lightweight digital tools, expanding access to computing and communications infrastructure and improving digital literacy across societies.

The statement also emphasizes improving internet accessibility in rural and remote areas and for vulnerable groups, aiming to overcome the geographical limitations facing the digital economy. As digital connectivity expands and digital skills become more widely available, economies at different stages of development and businesses located in different regions will be better positioned to participate equally in the Asia-Pacific marketplace.

The inclusion of open-source cooperation in the statement is a forward-looking breakthrough and provides a new pathway for inclusive and mutually beneficial AI industry collaboration in the region.

Open-source collaboration is a cost-effective channel through which developing economies can gain access to foundational AI technologies. In effect, it enables businesses and institutions embarking on digital and intelligent transformation to adopt AI applications more rapidly while offering a practical solution for narrowing the regional digital divide.

Security and development are mutually reinforcing. As the digital economy continues to expand, cross-border data flows, technological cooperation and trade become increasingly frequent, making robust security frameworks more essential than ever.

By building consensus on cybersecurity, data security and supply chain resilience, the statement builds on APEC's achievements in digital cooperation and addresses the shared concerns of member economies. In doing so, it provides greater confidence for businesses engaged in regional digital trade and technological collaboration. The meeting has also strengthened expectations for enhanced collaboration on AI governance and rulemaking within the APEC framework.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:01 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:01 PM

VIEWS

Kubanychbek Taabaldiev

Learning from China's economic journey

China has achieved remarkable progress in economic development, industrial modernization and technological innovation in recent decades. Behind these achievements lies a governance system that enables the consistent pursuit of long-term development goals. This model of governance has attracted global attention.

However, China's experience cannot be directly replicated by other nations. Every country follows a development path shaped by its history, culture and social conditions. Even so, China's successful practices offer valuable lessons for addressing modern challenges and achieving sustainable development.

Many of these ideas are articulated in the series of volumes of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*, in which President Xi Jinping explains China's approach to modernization, long-term planning, people-centered development, and national governance. The book is an important reference for the principles and policies that have guided China's development.

These experiences are of practical importance for Kyrgyzstan. The two countries share over three decades of diplomatic relations, expanding economic cooperation, and a mutual interest in stability and development in Central Asia.

China has become one of Kyrgyzstan's major trading partners and an important participant in projects related to transport, energy, industry, and digital infrastructure.

One key lesson from China's experience is strategic thinking. In today's world, many decisions are influenced by short-term political cycles. But major transformations require consistency, patience, and long-term vision.

China's development strategy, characterized by continuity of policy and clearly defined national priorities, has enabled the execution of large infrastructure projects, the establishment of industrial centers, poverty reduction, and significant progress in science and technology.

It shows that modernization requires not only investment but also effective institutions capable of achieving long-term objectives.

For Kyrgyzstan, long-term planning is equally important. The country's experience of independent development demonstrates that frequent changes in priorities can slow economic progress. Projects such as the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway require strategic consistency and an understanding of their significance for future generations. Such initiatives can enhance regional connectivity and create new opportunities for economic development.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Global Lens

Behind economic achievements are significant investments in education, scientific research, engineering and professional training.

Digital transformation is another area that deserves attention. Within a short span, China has emerged as one of the global leaders in digital technologies, artificial intelligence, and the use of big data. For Kyrgyzstan, this experience is valuable not as a ready-made formula, but as a source of practical ideas that can be adapted to national circumstances. Digitalization can improve public services and support the development of new economic sectors.

Equally important is China's focus on human capital. Behind economic achievements are significant investments in education, scientific research, engineering and professional training. Today, skilled specialists are among the most important resources that determine national competitiveness.

This is particularly relevant for Central Asian countries with young populations. The region's future will largely depend on developing education systems, creating opportunities for youth, and preparing specialists for a changing global economy. In this context, expanding academic cooperation between Kyrgyzstan and China can become an important element of bilateral relations.

China's governance experience is increasingly studied by experts worldwide. Strategic planning, infrastructure development, digital transformation, industrial policy, and professional training are areas attracting international attention. These fields are key factors of competitiveness in the 21st century.

As the modern world becomes more complex and interconnected, no single country offers a universal model of success.

However, the practical achievements of different nations can contribute to global discussions.

China's experience is significant not only because of its economic scale but also because it demonstrates the importance of consistency, adaptability, and the ability to implement long-term projects.

From Kyrgyzstan's perspective, the pragmatic nature of cooperation with China is especially valuable. Bilateral relations are expanding beyond trade to encompass education, technology, transport connectivity, and human capital development. These areas will shape the future quality of the bilateral partnership.

Educational cooperation deserves particular attention. Joint university programs, research projects, and specialist training can strengthen economic ties and enhance mutual understanding between the two societies.

For Kyrgyzstan, cooperation with Chinese educational institutions provides opportunities to improve the quality of training and benefit from international experience.

The world is becoming increasingly interdependent, and the exchange of governance practices is becoming as important as the exchange of technologies and investment.

China's experience is not a universal solution, but it demonstrates the value of strategic thinking, consistent reforms, and the ability of states to respond effectively to new challenges.

For Kyrgyzstan, the main lesson is the importance of studying successful international practices while preserving national identity and priorities. Cooperation based on mutual respect, dialogue, and shared development can contribute not only to stronger Kyrgyz-Chinese relations but also to greater stability and prosperity in Central Asia.

The author is a former director-general of the Kyrgyz National News Agency and a professor at the Ala-Too International University, Kyrgyzstan. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Peng Chong and Lu Ming

Consumption gives a new face to urban development

China's economy is changing in ways that conventional indicators only partly capture. In the first half of 2026, services value accounted for 59.5 percent of GDP, while per capita services made up 49.1 percent of household consumption expenditure.

These figures suggest that Chinese consumers are moving beyond buying more goods to seeking higher-quality services, richer experiences and a higher quality of life.

This change is visible across major cities. Cafés have increasingly become workplaces and meeting spots. Markets and restaurants draw evening crowds. Concerts, sporting events and nighttime businesses keep urban districts lively long after sunset.

Social media inspires people to travel across cities for a meal, a football match or a favorite singer. Service consumption is reshaping the growth of China's economy.

For decades, cities competed primarily through production, with local governments focusing on factories, infrastructure and industrial investment. While those priorities remain important, they are no longer enough.

As incomes rise, the service economy expands and digital technologies become embedded in everyday life, cities must answer new questions: Who wants to come? Why do they stay? And how can a brief visit become a longer-term connection — or even a decision to settle? The growing appeal of cities such as Chengdu, Hangzhou and Changsha among young people suggests that these questions are increasingly defining urban competitiveness.

Population density is often seen as the cause of congestion and pressure on public services. Yet density also creates larger markets, more diverse demand and closer connections between consumers and providers.

It enables independent bookstores, artisan markets or pet photography studios to survive. A niche interest that cannot support a business in a small town may flourish in a large city because enough people share it. Behind the concentration of shops lies a concentration of people, preferences and everyday interactions.

Consumption spaces also need to be viewed differently. Cities have traditionally valued places where people live and work and paid less attention to where they gather, socialize and spend. Yet these spaces increasingly generate innovation as well as consumption.

Shanghai's "Silicon Alley" in Changning district illustrates the point. Cafés there are not merely places to buy coffee; they have become informal meeting points where entrepreneurs, researchers, investors and public officials exchange ideas.

In today's service economy, the boundary between production and consumption is getting blurred. A cup of coffee may also create the conditions for a new partnership or business venture, even if that value never appears in the café's accounts.

Governance should also evolve from merely regulating consumption to enabling it. Public authorities rightly prioritize safety, sanitation and order. Those responsibilities remain essential. But cities focused only on preventing problems may be suppressing vitality. Building a thriving consumer economy requires more than short-term measures such as shopping vouchers or trade-in subsidies. It requires creating an environment in which new businesses and new forms of consumption can flourish.

Shanghai's Sijing Night Market offers a useful example. Rather than choosing between shutting the market down or allowing disorder to continue, local authorities redefined responsibilities.

The government established clear rules, professional operators managed daily operations and vendors participated in maintaining the rules.

The result was a vibrant marketplace with more effective governance. Successful urban management is not about eliminating street life but making it sustainable.

Online platforms have changed the way people explore cities. They help consumers search, compare and make purchase decisions, but they cannot replicate the experience of being somewhere. The barbecue boom in Zibo, Shandong province, demonstrated this vividly.

Social media first attracted national attention, but visitors recommended the city because of what they experienced after arriving: lively streets, genuine hospitality and a local government that delivered on its promises. The internet made Zibo visible; the city itself made it memorable.

The same logic applies more broadly. Digital platforms increase efficiency, but successful services still depend on real concentrations of people. Large concerts now draw substantial numbers of visitors from other cities. Technology lowers the cost of finding events and arranging travel, yet consumption happens only when people choose to make the journey.

In the industrial era, cities competed for factories and output. Today they compete for visitors, attention and tourist time. Jiangsu's hugely popular intercity football league is a telling example. Host cities have linked matches with tourism, dining, shopping and public events so that spectators become customers across the local economy.

The value of a ticket lies not only in admission revenue but also in the spending generated across hotels, restaurants, transportation and entertainment.

The real challenge is not attracting a surge of visitors for one event but turning a single visit into a longer stay and, ultimately, a return trip.

The metrics by which cities are judged should evolve accordingly. Investment, industrial output and tax revenue will remain important, but they no longer tell the whole story. Equally important are questions such as how many people choose to visit, how long they remain and whether they want to come back.

A successful consumer city is built on abundant services, welcoming public spaces, open markets and governance that is both effective and people-centered. Online attention may create a moment of popularity, but only consistently good experiences, reliable services and thoughtful long-term management can transform short-lived traffic into lasting growth.

Peng Chong is a professor of the School of Management Science & Real Estate, Chongqing University; and Lu Ming is a professor of the Antai College of Economics and Management, Shanghai Jiao Tong University. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Paul Alejandro Sánchez Campos and Guo Yifan

Hola! New growth opportunities for China and Mexico

Mexico's rise as a manufacturing hub for North America is a sign that globalization is no longer driven only by cost efficiency, but increasingly by resilience, regionalization and strategic trust. In 2023, Mexico became the top source of imports for the United States, with shipments reaching about $475 billion.

For Chinese firms facing US tariffs, strategic scrutiny and pressure to diversify production, Mexico appears attractive with great cooperation potential.

But that attractiveness comes with a difficult question: How can Mexico connect Chinese industrial capacity to North American markets without being perceived by Washington as a backdoor for China into the US market?

On the plus side, Mexico has a favorable location, established trade agreements, extensive industrial experience and a deep manufacturing base. Automotive clusters thrive in Nuevo León, San Luis Potosí, Puebla, Guanajuato and Aguascalientes, electronics and medical device manufacturing is concentrated in Baja California and Chihuahua while logistics corridors connect factories with the largest consumer market in the world.

Under the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, Mexico is no longer just a low-cost production platform, but part of a treaty-based regional economy essential to North American competitiveness. This framework creates opportunities for China-Mexico cooperation, particularly in the automobile sector.

But Mexico's opportunities are also its constraints. An increase in Chinese investment could be politically sensitive in the eyes of the US.

In the current environment, factories in Mexico are not evaluated only as a business decision but also examined through the lenses of industrial security, trade enforcement, technological competition and electoral politics. This raises concerns that economic cooperation may become overly politicized.

The USMCA makes the distinction unavoidable. For example, USMCA rules require 75 percent regional value content for passenger vehicles and light trucks, alongside labor value content and steel and aluminum requirements. These rules were designed to deepen regional production, strengthen regional supply chains and encourage genuine industrial integration.

Global Lens

It also requires clarity about what Mexico expects from foreign investors.

A company moving to Mexico should avoid superficial relocation that depends overwhelmingly on imported components.

It should comply with procedures to build the trust required for integrating into Mexico's industrial system and gaining durable access to North American supply chains.

Domestic challenges also matter. Mexico's "nearshoring narrative" often sounds stronger than its infrastructure reality. Sustainable industrial growth requires reliable electricity, transmission capacity, water, efficient customs, transportation, security and skilled labor. In several regions of Mexico, these systems are already under pressure.

The power system faces growing demand from industrial expansion, while transmission bottlenecks and uncertainty over approvals can slow investment. Water stress is another serious problem in northern Mexico, precisely where many export-oriented industrial corridors are located. Therefore, new investment should be meticulously planned to avoid worsening these bottlenecks that hinder cooperation.

For many Chinese manufacturers, investing in Mexico can be part of a broader transition from export-oriented globalization toward localized production, regional supply chains and long-term overseas industrial presence. Success requires treating Mexico not merely as a geographic solution to a geopolitical problem, but as a partner in industrial development.

A durable presence in Mexico involves working with local suppliers, training Mexican workers in higher-value processes, ensuring USMCA compliance, transparent customs practices and a willingness to integrate into the country's industrial ecosystem. Sectors such as electric vehicles, batteries, electronics, renewable energy equipment and industrial machinery offer opportunities to cultivate engineering, components, maintenance capabilities, logistics and supplier networks.

For Mexico, the implications are equally demanding. "Nearshoring" does not automatically lead to industrial upgrading. While the country has excelled in export manufacturing, it has struggled to transform that success into deeper technological capabilities and stronger domestic supplier networks. Chinese investment is an opportunity for Mexico to change that.

It must look beyond assembly based on imported inputs and use foreign investment to build capabilities in components, tooling, software, industrial services, technical education and clean manufacturing.

Achieving this requires a stronger industrial policy — not protectionist or discretionary, but focused on coordination between federal and state governments, energy planning, industrial land policy, technical training, supplier development and regulatory certainty.

It also requires clarity about what Mexico expects from foreign investors. Factories that generate employment, deepen supply chains and improve productivity should be welcomed.

China-Mexico industrial cooperation is possible if both sides act decisively. China has manufacturing scale, technology and global firms. Mexico brings location, trade access and industrial experience. These strengths can complement each other if cooperation centers on production.

If Chinese investment develops local suppliers, workers, infrastructure and long-term capabilities, it is easier to present it as part of Mexico's industrial development.

That distinction is crucial because it will define the future of the trade relationship. Mexico can connect China's industry to North America, but not as a shortcut.

A more durable path would be slower, more demanding and more institutional: investment rooted in Mexican capabilities, compatible with North American rules and credible to all three USMCA partners. If that happens, it would make Mexico a bridge that links Chinese industry to a more resilient and interconnected North American economy.

Paul Alejandro Sánchez Campos is an associate professor at the School of Engineering and Sciences at Tecnológico de Monterrey and Guo Yifan is a research fellow at the Center for Spanish- and Portuguese-Speaking Countries at Fudan University. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:01 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:01 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

MARIA LUIZA FALCÃO SILVA

Dollar has new neighbors on monetary stage

An increasingly multipolar financial world is taking shape as other currencies such as the euro, the renminbi and interconnected digital payments are used in preference to the US currency

The dominant position in global finance enjoyed by the US dollar for much of the 20th century and early 21st is evolving in an increasingly multipolar world.

At the end of World War II, the United States emerged as the world's top economic, financial and military power. While Europe lay in ruins and Japan began reconstruction, the US accounted for a dominant share of global industrial production and held the bulk of the world's gold reserves.



Against this backdrop, 44 countries gathered in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, in 1944 to design a new monetary order. The system they created pegged major currencies to the US dollar, while the dollar itself was anchored to gold at a fixed rate. The world economy effectively became organized around the US currency.

Even after former US president Richard Nixon ended dollar convertibility into gold in 1971, the currency's privileged position remained intact. Subsequent arrangements with major oil-producing nations, particularly Saudi Arabia, reinforced the dollar's international role by making oil transactions overwhelmingly dollar-denominated.

This led to the emergence of the so-called petrodollar system. Oil-importing countries needed dollars to pay for the oil, while oil-exporting countries accumulated large dollar reserves and reinvested them in US Treasury securities. This created a self-reinforcing cycle of global demand for the US currency.

Other factors also helped. The world's largest stock exchanges were in the US. The deepest financial markets were in New York. International trade was largely invoiced in dollars. Central banks across the world held substantial dollar-denominated reserves. Whenever a global crisis erupted, investors sought safety in US Treasury bonds.

From a national currency, the dollar became the backbone of international finance.

This dominance gave extraordinary advantages to the US. It enabled Washington to finance external deficits on favorable terms, allowed US companies privileged access to global capital, and made US financial sanctions powerful instruments of economic statecraft and geopolitical influence.

For decades, this arrangement worked smoothly. But profound transformations in recent years have gradually altered the foundations of this monetary order. The first driver is the structural change in the global economy. While the US remains a powerhouse, its share of global output has declined because other economies have expanded more rapidly.

After the rise of the European Union as a unified euro market, China became the most visible example. In just a few decades, it has transformed from a marginal player into the world's top manufacturing power. China is the major trading partner of more than 100 countries, a central force in the green transition and a leader in several emerging technologies. It has also significantly expanded its financial and diplomatic influence.

A second factor is geopolitical. The increasing use of financial sanctions as a foreign policy tool has led many governments to reassess their dependence on existing financial systems. The objective is not necessarily to replace the dollar, but to reduce vulnerabilities and increase strategic flexibility.



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

Before discussions about the internationalization of the renminbi gained momentum, the euro was seen as the principal challenger to the dollar.

Launched in 1999, the euro was one of the most ambitious monetary projects in modern history. For the first time since World War II, an economic bloc comparable in size to the US introduced a shared currency. For several years, the prospect of a bipolar monetary system centered on the dollar and the euro appeared plausible.

But the global financial crisis of 2008 and the subsequent European sovereign debt crisis exposed structural weaknesses in the monetary union. Eurozone members shared a common currency, but maintained separate fiscal systems and sovereign debt markets. Europe lacked a unified sovereign asset comparable to the US Treasury market.

The euro became the second most important international currency while the dollar remained the dominant reserve and crisis-management currency.

The Ukraine crisis accelerated trends that were already underway while putting more pressure on the euro. The financial sanctions imposed on Russia triggered an urgent search for alternative payment arrangements and reserve assets. Russia expanded the use of the renminbi in international transactions, strengthened commercial relations with Asian partners and developed alternative financial mechanisms.

The broader significance was not the emergence of a replacement system but the profusion of options. What might have taken decades began to evolve more rapidly. China has intensified its efforts to internationalize the renminbi through currency swap agreements, expanded cross-border payment infrastructure and promoted the use of it in bilateral trade. At the same time, emerging economies have intensified discussions on alternative financial arrangements.

The most significant changes are happening away from diplomatic summits. Across Asia and other regions, instant payment systems are becoming interconnected. Central bank digital currency projects are advancing. New financial platforms are facilitating cross-border transactions. Regional financial cooperation mechanisms continue to expand.

Despite these changes, the US still has the world's deepest and most liquid financial markets. US Treasury securities are the preferred safe asset during periods of uncertainty and the country's capacity to attract global capital remains unmatched. While the renminbi is expanding its international presence, it is not aimed at replacing the dollar.

The central question, therefore, is not whether the dollar will be replaced. It is whether the global economy will continue to rely on a single overwhelmingly dominant currency.

The dollar is likely to remain the leading international currency. The euro will continue to play a significant role. The renminbi will expand its presence, particularly across Asia, Africa and parts of Latin America. Bilateral trade in local currencies could become more common. Digital technologies may further diversify payment options.

In such a system, multiple currencies can coexist, each serving different functions and regions. Therefore, this is not the end of the dollar-centered world, but the gradual emergence of a more plural monetary landscape.

The world is witnessing an important historical transition. For the first time since the end of World War II, the US faces monetary alternatives. None is strong enough to dethrone the dollar, but several are becoming sufficiently important to reduce its exclusivity.

That may ultimately become one of the defining characteristics of the emerging international order: a world that is increasingly multipolar not only in geopolitics, economics and technology, but gradually in international finance as well.

The author is a Brazilian political economist and former professor at the University of Brasília. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

CHEN XINYING, CAO LING AND DAI MINHAN

Just a good start to ocean governance

Through multi-convention collaboration and by providing public goods and supporting developing countries, China can strengthen its voice in global environmental governance

The Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction, also known as the BBNJ Agreement, adopted in June 2023, officially entered into force on Jan 17. This marks a pivotal shift in global ocean governance from treaty negotiation to implementation, institution-building and measurable delivery. This year also marks the 30th anniversary of China's accession to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Drawing on its experience in global climate and biodiversity governance, China gains an opportunity to advance science-based, inclusive and equitable governance of the global commons.



Chen Xinying



Cao Ling



Dai Minhan

China's evolution through multiple recent environmental processes illustrates a clear trajectory from participation to deeper engagement, from compliance with agreed rules to active contribution to institutional design and implementation. The key to enhancing institutional influence is no longer only negotiation capacity, but also the ability to provide public goods: scientific knowledge, financing, capacity building, data infrastructure and practical implementation pathways.



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

Under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, China has gradually evolved from being an important participant to becoming a key contributor to global climate governance. China announced its carbon peaking and neutrality goals in 2020, established the "1+N" policy framework to translate these commitments into domestic institutional arrangements, and updated its 2035 Nationally Determined Contributions in 2025 to beef up its climate response. In the international cooperation sector, since President Xi Jinping announced the establishment of the China South-South Climate Cooperation Fund with 20 billion yuan ($2.94 billion) in 2015, China has signed 55 cooperation agreements with 43 developing countries, implemented over 300 capacity-building projects by the end of October 2025, and mobilized more than 177 billion yuan since 2016, according to data in a white paper titled "Carbon Peaking and Carbon Neutrality China's Plans and Solutions" released by China's State Council Information Office. These efforts have helped bridge North-South divides and build consensus.

Under the Convention on Biological Diversity, China's presidency of the 15th Conference of the Parties facilitated the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. China took the lead in investing 1.5 billion yuan to establish the Kunming Biodiversity Fund, moving from political commitment to operational delivery, which now supports 31 projects across 45 developing countries. Since 2019, China has been the largest donor to the CBD's voluntary core budget and the largest developing-country contributor to the Global Environment Facility. These actions demonstrate that institutional influence rests on deliverable public goods, predictable finance and credible cooperation mechanisms — not just diplomatic mediation.

Through South-South cooperation initiatives, China has engaged in pragmatic collaboration with countries such as Cambodia, Mauritius, Indonesia and Thailand in fields such as mangrove rehabilitation and coral reef cultivation while organizing training programs. These endeavors underscore that China's contributions to global marine biodiversity have evolved from financial aid to encompass skills sharing and institutionalized cooperation, thereby offering a replicable "Chinese model" for developing countries.

In this context, implementing the BBNJ Agreement provides a new lens for understanding the strategic value of proactive institutional engagement. With 145 signatories of which 92 have become official parties at present, the BBNJ Agreement applies to areas beyond national jurisdiction — covering two-thirds of the ocean and nearly half the planet's surface. It addresses governance gaps in marine genetic resources, area-based management tools, environmental effect assessment, capacity-building and technology transfer. Science is central to its implementation, requiring long-term observation, open data systems, transparent assessments and stronger developing-country participation. The upcoming BBNJ Secretariat will thus be more than an administrative body and will serve as an operational hub for meetings, information exchange, capacity-building and science-policy coordination.

As a full participant in BBNJ negotiations and an early signatory and ratifying state, China has formally submitted its bid to host the BBNJ Secretariat in Xiamen, East China's Fujian province. This bid is not merely a quest for institutional presence but a concrete proposal to support effective treaty implementation. It aims to respond to the need for broader regional representation, stronger developing-country engagement and more balanced access to ocean governance resources.

Strategically, this move offers multiple strategic benefits: It would optimize the geographical distribution of global ocean governance institutions and enhance representation and inclusiveness; it would demonstrate China's responsibility as a major developing country by signaling willingness to contribute not only to negotiation but also to implementation, institutional operation and long-term capacity-building, fostering broad participation and mutual trust; and, crucially, it would help narrow the implementation gap by addressing the uneven capacities of countries to engage in environmental effect assessment, area-based planning and benefit-sharing — ensuring that the BBNJ Agreement becomes a genuinely universal and equitable mechanism rather than one reserved for advanced marine nations.

The BBNJ Agreement's entry into force is the beginning of a long implementation journey. For China, active engagement is not solely about its willingness to host a secretariat; it is about contributing to a fairer, more science-based, and more effective global ocean governance system.

Chen Xinying is a senior engineer at the Secretariat of the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development (CCICED). Cao Ling is a distinguished professor at Xiamen University and the assistant director of Fujian Ocean Innovation Center. Dai Minhan is a council member of the CCICED, an academician at the Chinese Academy of Sciences and a chair professor at Xiamen University. The authors contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:01 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:01 PM

BUSINESS

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

DHL begins expanded ops at Shenzhen airport

By ZHONG NAN
zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

Logistics services provider DHL announced on Tuesday the start of phased operations at its expanded super gateway at Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport in Guangdong province, as China's industrial upgrading and innovation-driven development create new opportunities for global logistics businesses.

The project, with an investment exceeding 1.2 billion yuan ($177 million), marks the German company's largest single investment on the Chinese mainland.

The expanded facility, built on DHL's existing Shenzhen gateway, has increased daily cargo handling capacity to 900 metric tons, tripling the site's original figure.

John Pearson, CEO of DHL Express, said China's role has fundamentally changed. It is no longer just the world's factory — it is increasingly a global hub for innovation and demand.

"We are seeing explosive growth in cross-border e-commerce, new energy vehicles, lithium batteries and life sciences — high-value, time-sensitive products that demand premium logistics. The new Shenzhen facility is purpose-built to handle exactly this sophistication," Pearson said.

Once fully operational, the super gateway will provide a platform to support additional cargo flights directly from Shenzhen. Premium goods from the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area — including electronics from Shenzhen, cross-border e-commerce parcels from the provincial capital Guangzhou, and precision components from Dongguan, also in Guangdong, will reach consumers worldwide with greater speed.

Pearson said booming cross-border e-commerce has sharply increased parcel volumes from the GBA, one of China's most dynamic economic regions, to Europe, the Americas and Southeast Asia, prompting DHL to expand its capacity.

Since relocating to the customs supervision area of Shenzhen's airport in 2007, DHL's Shenzhen gateway has long served as a critical facility in the logistics network of South China and the wider Asia-Pacific region. The expansion project was initiated in 2022 and took four years to complete.

Pearson said this move comes against the backdrop of China's steadily resilient foreign trade growth.

Recent foreign trade data also support such a view. China's first-half combined imports and exports grew by 16.9 percent on a yearly basis to 25.47 trillion yuan, said the General Administration of Customs.

Alongside notable export growth in tech-heavy green products such as energy storage systems and electric vehicles, China's first-half trade in hardware that supports computing power surged 56.6 percent year-on-year to 5.13 trillion yuan between January and June.

Remaining optimistic about the opportunities presented by "China Opportunity 2.0", including innovation-driven development, rapid infrastructure upgrades, advances in artificial intelligence and high-end manufacturing, Pearson said China will remain one of DHL's top priority investment markets globally.

China Opportunity 2.0 refers to a new phase of China's development characterized by higher-standard opening-up, technological innovation and high-quality growth.

To support its long-term growth in China, Pearson said the German company will continue investing in infrastructure, air network capacity and last-mile delivery capabilities beyond the new Shenzhen super gateway to expand its network, improve transit times and better serve customers across China.

Zhou Mi, a senior researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, said China's industrial upgrading and export shift toward higher-value goods will sustain demand for premium logistics services and encourage foreign companies to deepen their investment.



View of DHL's booth during an expo in Shanghai.
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



A tax official (left) in Huaian, Jiangsu province, helps a merchant with tax regulations.
ZHAO QIRUI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Tax data: Economic performance solid

Robust growth seen in real economy, emerging industries, green sector

By REN QI
renqi@chinadaily.com.cn

China's economy has demonstrated a stable and positive trajectory at the start of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, characterized by robust growth in the real economy, emerging industries and green development, said the State Taxation Administration.

Hu Jinglin, head of the STA, highlighted that fiscal big data revealed four prominent features of the current economic operation: a stronger real economy, booming new quality productive forces, improved profitability and an accelerated green transition.

"The fundamental economic base is becoming more solid," Hu said, adding that the sales revenue of industrial enterprises grew 7.1 percent year-on-year in the first half, with manufacturing sales up 7.3 percent.

The momentum of new quality productive forces remains robust. Sales revenue from equipment manufacturing, information technology and tech services accounted for 23.5 percent of total corporate sales revenue, the administration said.

Meanwhile, corporate profitability has been optimized, with the declared profits of 1 million key tax-source enterprises surging 12.8 percent. Green development is also accelerating, evidenced by a 17.1 percent increase in clean energy power generation sales and a 38.9 percent jump in lithium battery manufacturing.

Hu said China's opening-up has demonstrated strong resilience, adding that the number of active foreign-invested taxpaying entities surged by 10.9 percent year-on-year, while their declared profits increased by 4.5 percent. Additionally, export tax rebates processed for enterprises grew by 7.7 percent, reflecting a steady momentum in foreign trade and foreign capital utilization.

Reflecting this steady economic expansion, China's tax and fee revenue reached 16.7 trillion yuan ($2.47 trillion) in the January-June period. Of this, tax revenue exceeded 10 trillion yuan, representing a 4.9 percent year-on-year increase, closely coordinating with broader economic growth, Hu said.

To further stimulate high-quality development, taxation authorities have intensified efforts to support scientific and technological innovation. Wang Shiyu, chief auditor of the STA, said tax and fee reductions — alongside tax refunds for sci-tech innovation and manufacturing — totaled 1.91 trillion yuan in the first half. This includes nearly 1 trillion yuan in value-added tax credits for advanced manufacturing enterprises and 659.6 billion yuan in deductions for research and development expenses.

"Under the combined effect of tax incentives and other policies, China's long-accumulated innovation potential has been further stimulated," Wang said. This has led to a dual advancement in which traditional industries are rapidly upgrading, while emerging sectors are experiencing explosive growth.

Notably, sales revenue from smart vehicle equipment and drones skyrocketed by 43 percent and 36.2 percent, respectively. The integration of digital industrialization is also deepening, with core digital economy industries seeing an 8.7 percent rise in sales revenue.

Beyond economic growth, tax policies have significantly improved social livelihoods. Tax reductions for special additional personal income tax deductions — such as eldercare, healthcare and education — exceeded 320 billion yuan, benefiting 126 million individuals, an increase of 5.9 percent from the previous year.

In addition, the STA has made significant strides in building a unified national market by rectifying the "invoicing economy" and irregular tax-related investment incentives, Wang said, stressing the administration has cracked down on "shell companies" and fake trade designed to create a false illusion of digital prosperity and illicitly obtain local subsidies.

During the first half, the STA identified 1.29 million shell enterprises and facilitated the deregistration of nearly 700,000 such entities. Furthermore, 833 non-compliant tax-related documents for investment promotion were abolished or amended across various regions.

CBM to play vital role in energy mix

By ZHENG XIN
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

China is stepping up the exploration and development of coalbed methane, or CBM, as a vital strategic move to optimize its energy mix and ensure domestic gas supply, buoyed by a newly unveiled government roadmap targeting massive production boosts in the nation's resource-rich heartland.

The National Energy Administration has released an action plan for increasing reserves and the production of CBM in the eastern Ordos Basin, aiming to comprehensively upgrade the region's extraction capacity during the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30). The plan is designed to transform the basin into a world-class production base characterized by improved efficiency and core technological breakthroughs.

CBM is an unconventional natural gas found in coal deposits. According to the NEA, the industry's scale has expanded rapidly in recent years, yielding significant economic and environmental benefits. The Ordos Basin, with its extensive coal-bearing strata and high gas content, is uniquely positioned to lead this frontier.

Under the new plan, the region is projected to add over 600 billion cubic meters of proven geological reserves by 2030. Annual production is slated to reach 18 billion cu m, of which over 16 billion cu m will be drawn specifically from deep-layer CBM.

To achieve this, the NEA has vowed to accelerate resource discovery in key reserve-building blocks, expand the exploration scope in active areas and aggressively push for breakthroughs in untapped zones.

Moving away from a one-size-fits-all approach, the administration has outlined a highly tailored strategy. It prioritizes a tiered capacity-building system — expanding new fields while stabilizing mature ones — and unites industry and academia to shatter technical bottlenecks.

Furthermore, the government is reinforcing pipeline networks and land-use policies to guarantee the gas is "produced efficiently and delivered smoothly".

The confidence to execute this ambitious blueprint stems largely from monumental breakthroughs already achieved at the Daji Gas Field in Shanxi province. Geologically situated on the eastern fringe of the Ordos Basin, Daji is China's largest CBM field and the nation's first large-scale demonstration project for the resource.

Compared with conventional natural gas, deep-layer CBM is notoriously difficult to extract due to complex subterranean conditions. For years, these deep layers were considered a geological "forbidden zone".

However, following a targeted technological campaign launched by China National Petroleum Corp in 2019, the field produced its first industrial gas flow from the Daji 3-7 well.

Industry experts believe advancements in exploration and production technology have played a central role in this self-sufficiency.

Continuous investments by the country's three major energy giants — China National Petroleum Corp, China Petroleum and Chemical Corp, and China National Offshore Oil Corp — have led to significant discoveries across traditional and unconventional fields, they said.

"China has been tapping into unconventional resources in recent years to expand its energy supply, with significant advancements in shale gas exploration and CBM extraction already reshaping China's resource landscape," said Wu Mouyuan, vice-president of the Economics and Technology Research Institute under CNPC.

Unconventional resources like CBM will not only enhance self-sufficiency, but also provide a buffer against external market uncertainties, unleashing vast new potential in the coming decades, Wu said.

Briefly

China's shopping mall sector sees upturn

Over 70 percent of shopping malls across China recorded increased foot traffic in the first half, showing a mild upward trend, a survey showed. The survey, released by the China Chain Store & Franchise Association, covered companies operating in China's shopping mall sector.

New HSR work in full progress

As construction of Xiong'an-Xinzhou High-speed Railway is in full swing, staffers from Taiyuan High-speed Railway Engineering Section are closely monitoring key construction milestones and making every effort to advance the latter phase of the 342-kilometer project. Given the high number of bridges and tunnels along the entire route and the challenging construction conditions, members of the section's intervention team implemented a task-list management system, strictly controlling key processes such as track laying and switch welding.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Boosting H2 consumption a leading priority

By WANG KEJU
wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn

With weak domestic demand still weighing on growth, China is likely to intensify policy efforts to boost investment and consumption in the coming months, economists said ahead of a highly anticipated mid-year meeting that will set the economic agenda for the remainder of the year.

The meeting, traditionally convened in late July, comes after a mixed first-half performance in which the economy grew 4.7 percent year-on-year — within the government's full-year target range of 4.5 to 5 percent — but lost momentum in the second quarter, slipping to 4.3 percent growth.

The economy has exhibited a pronounced K-shaped divergence as high-tech manufacturing and artificial intelligence-driven exports have outperformed, while consumption, real estate and traditional industries have lagged, said Robin Xing, chief China economist at Morgan Stanley.

While AI and high-tech sectors have been bright spots, Xing cautioned that their current scale "remains insufficient to fully offset the contraction in traditional industries".

The slowdown from 5 percent in the first quarter, the weakest quarterly reading since late 2022, has underscored the urgency of reviving domestic demand, analysts said.

"Based on keeping above a 4.5 percent perspective, second-half GDP growth only needs to be around 4.3 percent," a report from Guosheng Securities said, suggesting that broad-based stimulus is unlikely.

Instead, the focus will be on "making good use of existing policies" while preparing new measures as needed, the institution added.

On the investment front, the government is accelerating the "six networks" infrastructure, covering water, power, computing, next-generation communications, urban pipelines and logistics, with spending estimated to exceed 7 trillion yuan ($1.03 trillion) this year.

According to Ming Ming, chief economist at CITIC Securities, the plan is expected to be a "key driver of infrastructure investment recovery in the second half".

"With funding support strengthening and major projects accelerating, infrastructure investment is expected to stabilize and rebound in the second half, gradually bringing fixed-asset investment back to positive growth," Ming said.

Wang Qing, chief macroeconomic analyst at Orient Golden Credit Rating International, also expected infrastructure investment to return to positive growth in the second half, reaching around 3 percent for the full year.

To this end, authorities are expected to speed up the use of ultra-long special treasury bonds, local government special-purpose bonds and central budget investment, while coordinating the rapid deployment of 800 billion yuan in policy-based financial instruments to ensure investment projects translate into tangible economic activity as soon as possible, according to a research note from Huatai Securities.

In addition to shoring up investment, Citi forecasts that China will also step up efforts to bolster consumption, with additional policy measures likely in the third and fourth quarters.

"Policymakers are likely to focus on raising household incomes and repairing household balance sheets to boost consumption," said Yu Xiangrong, chief China economist at Citi.

The State Council's recently approved plan to expand consumption during the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30), China's first-ever national-level consumption plan, places "improving service consumption quality and delivering benefits to the people" at the top of its priority list. The plan targets 60 trillion yuan in total retail sales of consumer goods by 2030.

Key measures for the second half include implementing the "urban and rural household income growth plan" through raising minimum wages, expanding individual income tax deductions, and increasing pensions and healthcare, said Wen Bin, chief economist at China Minsheng Bank.

The deeper logic is "expanding domestic demand through improving people's livelihoods" — reducing households' future worries through better public services, stabilizing income expectations through steady employment and business confidence, and enhancing long-term spending capacity through investment in human capital, Wen added.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:01 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:01 PM

BUSINESS

AI adds sparkle to synthetic diamond sector

With highest thermal conductivity of any naturally occurring material, carbon gem is ultimate cooling solution for chips

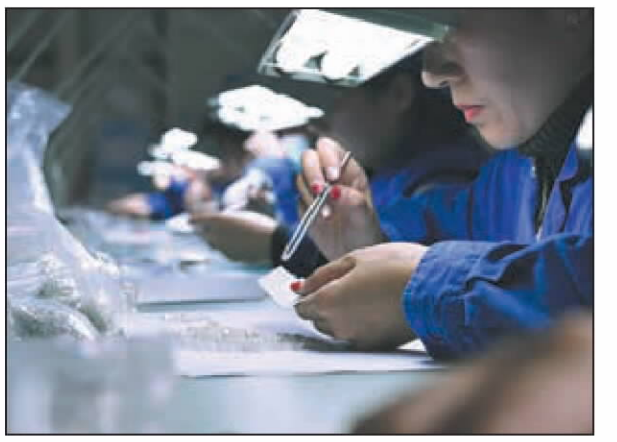
By **SHI JING** in Shanghai
shijing@chinadaily.com.cn



Customers browse diamond jewelry at a directly-operated factory store in Zhecheng county, Henan province, on June 11, 2025.
LI JIANAN / XINHUA



A member of staff checks the quality of diamond polishing at Liliang Diamond in Shangqiu, Henan province, on June 11, 2025.
LI JIANAN / XINHUA



Workers produce artificial diamonds in Fangcheng county, Henan province, on March 19. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

In an age being reshaped by artificial intelligence, few figures command the spotlight like Jensen Huang, Nvidia's founder, whose speeches, trips and even the fortunes of his suppliers are closely watched by the world.

During the AI exhibition Computex 2026 held in Taipei in June, MSI — an electronics company that has worked with Nvidia for over two decades — unveiled a new thermal solution for Nvidia's next-generation consumer graphics processing units, featuring a diamond-copper composite baseplate and diamond-composite thermal pads.

At the Consumer Electronics Show held in Las Vegas at the beginning of the year, Nvidia announced that its next-gen Vera Rubin architecture GPUs will fully adopt a solution combining diamond-copper composite thermal management and 45 C direct-to-chip liquid cooling.

At almost the same time, a picture went viral on Chinese social media: Huang met with Zhu Yanhui, founder of Chaoying Diamond Technology.

Yes, a key word has surfaced: diamond. This does not mean that the industry guru known for his taste of fashion, epitomized by his love of leather jackets, is venturing into another sector. But that diamond, or more precisely, lab-grown diamond, plays a crucial role in the AI race to cool down chips.

According to Lu Pei, chief machinery industry analyst at the research institute of China Galaxy Securities, diamond is no longer an option, but a necessity for cooling in scenarios where single-chip power consumption exceeds 1,400 watts.

Nvidia's Vera Rubin AI chip is reported to consume a staggering 2,300 W — equivalent to a household induction cooker running at full power, all packed into a chip the size of a fingernail.

In that situation, the chip's core temperature hits 110 C within minutes and forces it to slow down, crippling AI training performance.

Traditional copper and aluminum heat spreaders cannot pull heat away fast enough, while liquid cooling alone is no longer sufficient.

Diamond has become the ultimate thermal solution. With the highest thermal conductivity of any naturally occurring material, the diamond's room-temperature thermal conductivity is 5.5 times that of copper and 11 times that of aluminum.

Capable of instant heat removal, it also offers excellent electrical insulation and a coefficient of thermal expansion closely matched to that of silicon wafers, which can prevent chips cracking from sudden temperature changes, said Lu.

According to Pan Helin, a member of the expert committee on information and communication economy of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, diamond-based chip thermal management is primarily suited for high-end chips, while the most critical application field for high-end chips is the AI computing power sector.

Nvidia is not the only industry giant diverting to diamond as a solution. In March, an undisclosed US buyer placed a $300 million order for AMD Instinct MI350X GPUs cooled with lab-grown diamond, signaling a breakthrough approach to tackling AI data centers' massive energy consumption.

Another vibrant story is being told in the Chinese stock market. The A-share lab-grown diamond sector surged over 71.4 percent during the first half of this year, while the benchmark Shanghai Composite Index only climbed 3.16 percent during the same period.

The logic behind the market rally is simple. At the material side, China accounts for 95 percent of global synthetic diamond production, according to the superhard materials branch of the China Machine Tool & Tool Builders' Association.

> If Chinese companies can translate their scale advantages into technological edge, application know-how and supply chain synergy, they will have the opportunity to evolve from traditional synthetic diamond manufacturers into key players in the high-end thermal management materials market of the AI era."
>
> **Ge Shaobo,** an associate professor of the institute for interdisciplinary and innovation research at Xi'an Technological University

95 percent
China's share of global synthetic diamond material output

Product-wise, China produced 63 percent of the world's 40-million-carat lab-grown diamonds last year, overtaking all the other countries, according to an industry report released by Zhongyuan Jewelry Innovation Research Institute in December.

China's first synthetic diamond was successfully created in Zhengzhou of Henan province in 1963. According to the Shanghai Gold Jade Trade Association, the industry went through rapid development between 2010 and 2022 thanks to the maturity of key technologies.

However, overcapacity led to a sharp price collapse after 2023, with rough lab-grown diamond prices plunging to $15 per carat in 2024, from $100 per carat in 2022.

However, a silver lining has emerged for the Chinese retailing sector over the past few years.

In the first half of 2023, CHJ Jewellery teamed up with Henan Liliang Diamond to launch the lab-grown diamond retailing brand Cevol. Li Mengjiao, a salesperson in a Cevol store in downtown Shanghai, said that younger people in their 20s or 30s make up the majority of their clients as they attach more importance to value for money.

"People can get the same emotional value by paying one-tenth of the money for a real diamond. It can be said that we can achieve diamond freedom effortlessly now," she said.

Lab-grown diamond brands started to open offline stores in the Shanghai Diamond Exchange building in late 2021. Tang Nina, 31 and a wife-to-be, learned of this development from social media and became a customer of one of the brands in early July.

"The physical nature of a natural diamond and lab-grown diamond is the same. But the prices vary greatly. A one-carat diamond ring is usually priced over 100,000 yuan ($14,770), but a lab-grown loose diamond costs less than 2,000 yuan. By adding the ring setting or other exquisite decorations, the total cost will be no more than 10,000 yuan. We could use the rest of the budget for overseas travel, or invest in gold — the price of which has gone down lately," she said.

Tang's down-to-earth attitude toward such luxuries echoes the findings from Nicolas Willemot, global head of consumer products practice at consulting firm Bain & Co, who said that Chinese consumers are more rational and selective in the real benefits of products, either in emotional or functional ways.

The Chinese consumer market has become more fragmented, meaning brands have either to provide more added value or become more price-competitive.

But it is the AI boom that is really giving the Chinese lab-grown diamond industry a second growth curve.

According to Sui Dong, a researcher from private market tracker Simuwang, the growth logic for the industry has changed from the consumption side to the hardcore materials sector, with the core growth driver becoming the revaluation of AI computing power.

As Chinese synthetic diamond companies are now being more deeply integrated into the AI chip supply chain, global demand for China's synthetic diamond industry will rise accordingly.

Data from General Administration of Customs show that China's lab-grown diamond exports spiked 135.87 percent year-on-year in May thanks to the continued rising demand from overseas.

Therefore, leading Chinese lab-grown companies are adjusting their business portfolio to ride the AI tide.

In early June, Liliang Diamond announced a plan to reallocate the 1.028 billion yuan of its previously raised funds — originally intended for expanding its lab-grown diamond factory — to a new synthetic diamond functional materials production and research and development project.

Through renovations to its existing facilities, the company aims to accelerate its entry into high-end sectors including AI chip thermal management, optical materials and acoustic diaphragms. The new project has a three-year construction cycle, according to the company's announcement.

The company already has heat dissipation-related products in place and has achieved small-volume production. Through a partnership with a Taiwanese company, Liliang Diamond handles technology and production, while its partner is responsible for off-take sales.

Despite three consecutive years of revenue decline as of 2025, the company's share price doubled within two months in the second quarter of this year, pushing its market capitalization to a peak of over 23 billion yuan.

Henan-based Huifeng Diamond started to tap into the diamond thermal management sector in 2022, according to the company's Rotating General Manager Bao Siwei.

Last year, the company initiated a new strategy to further develop the two core technologies of high pressure high temperature and chemical vapor deposition, which are two key technologies in diamond thermal management.

In December, Huifeng announced plans to invest 1 billion yuan to build a CVD diamond project in Baotou of the Inner Mongolia autonomous region. While construction broke ground on May 28, the project quickly commenced production on July 1.

In late November, Huifeng invested 30.62 million yuan in a private equity fund, through which it acquired a stake in xFusion International, directly entering the thermal management application scenario for AI computing chips.

"This round of investment and application of diamond in the thermal management sector should be carried out in a measured and targeted manner, focusing on high-end and mission-critical needs, so as to narrow the gap between China and leading markets," said Bao.

Experts from China Securities said that commercial orders for diamond-based thermal management solutions are expected to materialize in the second half, with widespread adoption in AI servers and high-end consumer electronics.

Investment confidence across the industry chain will be boosted, they said.

According to a research report by Zhongtai Securities, the global market for diamond heat spreaders used in high-end AI chips is projected to reach 8.7 billion yuan this year and surge to 59.2 billion by 2030, representing a compound annual growth rate of over 50 percent.

The government has already noticed the industry's growth potential.

In April, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology officially included functional diamonds in the key catalog of strategic new materials for the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, incorporating the high-end and functional development of lab-grown diamond into the national-level industrial support system.

Likewise, the municipal government of Zhengzhou expressed strong support for the construction of high-end diamond industrial parks for the 15th Five-Year Plan period, aiming to build the city into the heartland for lab-grown diamond in the country.

But of course, the path to growth is never without challenges, especially as the Chinese lab-grown industry has already encountered the problem of overcapacity once.

Ye Zhibin, president of the Gems and Jewelry Trade Association of China, said the country's lab-grown diamond industry is large but not strong enough.

Companies' production covers a wide range of sub-sectors, yet the skills are not refined. This has led to Chinese lab-grown companies capturing only 15 percent of the profits in the finished product segment globally, while China accounts for the majority of the world's rough lab-diamond production.

The industry must strengthen itself across the technology chain, the value chain and the brand chain so that China can evolve from a "world factory" into a "value hub" for lab-grown diamond, he said.

Ge Shaobo, an associate professor of the institute for interdisciplinary and innovation research at Xi'an Technological University, said that China's production capacity and cost advantages in synthetic diamond provide a solid foundation for entering the AI thermal management supply chain.

However, the key to the next phase of development is no longer about concentrating on a large output, but rather applying in high-end scenarios, passing customer validation, securing stable orders and competing in the global AI hardware supply chain.

"If Chinese companies can translate their scale advantages into technological edge, application know-how and supply chain synergy, they will have the opportunity to evolve from traditional synthetic diamond manufacturers into key players in the high-end thermal management materials market of the AI era," he said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:01 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:01 PM

CHINA

Plateau sports



Riders compete in a yak race during a folk sports event in the Sanjiangyuan ecological and cultural tourism festival in the Yushu Tibetan autonomous prefecture, Qinghai province, on Monday. The festival, which ran from Saturday to Monday, featured traditional sports such as equestrian events, yak racing and sandbag lifting. It highlights the local nomadic culture, drawing visitors from home and abroad.
MA MINGYAN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

APEC ministers vow to balance economic growth and ecology

Joint statement reinforces commitment to sustainable forestry and biodiversity

By **CHEN HONG** and **LI BINGCUN** in Shenzhen

APEC forestry ministers agreed on Tuesday to strengthen biodiversity protection, improve forest governance and boost investment in the forestry sector to advance sustainable development.

The two-day meeting in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, brought together senior officials and experts from 21 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation economies and seven international organizations. It was the first APEC ministerial-level conference on ecological issues hosted by China in 15 years.

The meeting concluded with a joint statement urging APEC economies to integrate sustainable forest management into economic development plans with the aim of strengthening biodiversity protection and combating the illegal timber trade.

The statement encourages economies to expand forestry investment in line with their national circumstances, upgrade timber processing industries, strengthen cooperation on urban forestry and water management across the Asia-Pacific, and use technology to support ecosystem restoration.

It also calls for the development of emerging forest-related industries, products and services that are aligned with the principles of sustainable forest management.

Addressing the meeting, Vice-Premier He Lifeng said China has long prioritized ecological civilization and actively fulfilled its commitments to global environmental initiatives.

While maintaining robust economic growth and long-term social stability, China has forged a development path that balances economic progress with ecological conservation, he said.

Official figures show China contributes 25 percent of the world's newly added green areas and has achieved its 2030 national forest stock growth target ahead of schedule.

He noted that China remains committed to strengthening forestry cooperation across the Asia-Pacific region and promoting a fairer and more inclusive global ecological governance system.

According to the National Forestry and Grassland Administration, China has supported more than 50 forestry demonstration projects in over 20 APEC economies, providing more than $45 million in funding and restoring more than 1,300 hectares of degraded land to help revitalize regional ecosystems.

Delegates shared experiences and best practices in forestry conservation and regional cooperation during the meeting.

Jenny Cameron, head of the New Zealand delegation, said market-based incentives, strict harvesting controls and innovation in the bioeconomy have helped increase New Zealand's forest cover by more than 10 percent since 1990.

She said China and New Zealand share extensive cooperation in forestry and mangrove conservation, including collaboration on bird migration research and plant conservation. To promote sustainable forestry development in the Asia-Pacific region, she said, economies should work together to curb illegal timber trade and build resilient supply chains for forest products because of their significant environmental and social impacts.



Participants of the 2026 APEC Ministerial Meeting on Forestry watch a robot performance in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, on Monday. LIANG XU / XINHUA

Song Won Yeong, a representative of the Korea Forest Service, praised China's achievements in expanding forest coverage and restoring degraded woodland, particularly its landmark shelterbelt program in northern regions to curb desertification.

He said the Asia-Pacific region's vast territory and diverse climatic conditions support a wide variety of forest ecosystems. While this diversity presents challenges for regional forest management, it also creates opportunities for tailored approaches suited to local conditions.

Tse Chin-wan, secretary for environment and ecology of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government, told China Daily that balancing rapid economic development with forest and ecosystem conservation remains a major challenge for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

He said Hong Kong will work closely with mainland cities to strengthen ecological conservation. Besides cooperating on wetland and mangrove protection, Hong Kong and Shenzhen will continue advancing the construction of a cross-boundary ecological corridor in the eastern border area to facilitate wildlife movement and enhance biodiversity.

Contact the writers at chenhong@chinadaily.com.cn

Outdated rules revised, repealed for new eco code

By **LI HONGYANG**
lihongyang@chinadaily.com.cn

China's environment regulator is accelerating efforts to repeal or amend outdated regulations and introduce new technical standards to align the country's legal framework with the Ecological and Environmental Code, which will take effect on Aug 15.

It is China's second law designated as a "code" after the Civil Code, which took effect in 2021.

Addressing a news conference on Tuesday, Zhao Ke, director of the Department of Laws, Regulations and Standards at the Ministry of Ecology and Environment, said the ministry has been working intensively to prepare for the implementation of the code.

The ministry is reviewing more than 500 legal instruments closely related to the code. Any provisions that are inconsistent with, incompatible with or not aligned with the code will be revised or removed to ensure a smooth transition, Zhao said.

Regulations whose main provisions contradict the code will be repealed, while those containing only partial inconsistencies will be amended through a package of revisions.

The ministry has also notified ecological and environmental authorities at all levels that, from Aug 15, any rules that conflict with the code must no longer be enforced.

To support implementation of the code, the ministry has drawn up a five-year plan for environmental standards and benchmarks. So far this year, it has issued 64 environmental standards, including a revised ambient air quality standard, discharge standards for the Danjiangkou Reservoir and Chishui River Basin, and a series of emission standards for key industries.

"The code also cements a legal framework for compensation for ecological and environmental damage. We are improving technical standards for damage assessment. To tackle the pain points of difficult and expensive appraisals, the ministry has developed an intelligent assessment system," Zhao said.

The system has been piloted free of charge in more than 300 cases across 28 provinces, cutting assessment time by more than 80 percent on average, he said.

Zhao said the code consolidates China's decades of experience in pollution control and ecological conservation while establishing principled and forward-looking provisions in areas such as the management of new pollutants. It also provides a reference for other countries seeking to strengthen environmental governance, he added.

The ministry also released the latest environmental data at the news conference, showing continued improvements in air and water quality during the first half of this year.

Between January and June, the average concentration of PM2.5 — particulate matter with a diameter of 2.5 micrometers or less — in 339 prefecture-level and above cities fell to 29.9 micrograms per cubic meter, down 6.6 percent year-on-year. The proportion of days with good or excellent air quality reached 82.8 percent, up 4.5 percentage points from the same period last year.

Surface water quality also improved. The ministry said 87.4 percent of monitored sections were rated Grade I to III, an increase of 3 percentage points year-on-year. China classifies surface water quality into five grades, with Grade I representing the highest quality.

Wildlife populations also continued to recover. From 2021 to 2025, populations of targeted protected species increased in 87.1 percent of the country's national nature reserves, the ministry said.

In the Qomolangma national nature reserve in the Xizang autonomous region, the recorded number of snow leopards rose from 87 to 106. In the Yanchiwan national nature reserve in Gansu province, the number of black-necked cranes increased from 86 to 238, according to the ministry.

Nation's maritime legal system being upgraded

By **LI MENGHAN**
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

China is advancing a comprehensive maritime legal framework to match its standing as a leading maritime nation, legal experts said at a symposium in Beijing on Tuesday.

"China is home to eight of the world's top 10 ports by cargo throughput and six of the top 10 by container throughput. As China's shipping infrastructure and technological capacity continue to grow, the legal and institutional systems that underpin them are being strengthened," said Shan Hongjun, president of Dalian Maritime University in Liaoning province.

Shan made the remarks at the symposium on ocean governance and development, hosted by Dalian Maritime University, which brought together scholars, policymakers and industry representatives to discuss frontier issues in international shipping legislation and the development of China's maritime rule of law.

He said China's maritime legal system is built on three cornerstone laws — the maritime law, the maritime traffic safety law and the port law — all of which have been revised in recent years. The newly revised maritime law, the first comprehensive update since its enactment in 1992, took effect on May 1, marking what Shan described as "a systematic modernization" of the country's maritime commercial legislation.

Shan said the next step is to enact a dedicated shipping law to regulate market competition, pricing mechanisms and supply chain security, completing China's maritime legal framework. Such legislation would also strengthen the country's ability to respond to external trade measures, including the United States Section 301 investigation targeting China's maritime, logistics and shipbuilding sectors, he said.

He added that maritime competition has expanded far beyond traditional territorial disputes to encompass outer space, the deep sea and, most critically, rulemaking.

"If our rules, standards, institutional capacity and voice are not strong enough, we will be at a disadvantage in maritime competition," the university's president said.

Scholars at the symposium also highlighted China's growing role in shaping global maritime governance.

Huang Jin, chairman of the Chinese Society of International Law, said China has evolved from a follower and learner of international maritime law into a defender, builder and contributor.

"We must strengthen our agenda-setting capacity in international maritime law," Huang said, adding that the fundamental purpose of foreign-related rule of law is to safeguard national and people's interests, advance the international rule of law and promote a community with a shared future for humanity.

Ma Mingfei, a professor at Dalian Maritime University, presented the annual observation report on global ocean governance (2025-26), which identifies 10 landmark events, including China's bid to host the secretariat of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction, or BBNJ Agreement, in Xiamen, Fujian province.

"China has moved from a participant in international rulemaking to a rulemaker, institution-builder and provider of maritime public goods," Ma said.

Wang Hongxiang, executive vice-president of the China Law Society, called for cultivating interdisciplinary legal professionals with expertise in China, international affairs, maritime issues and the law, saying such talent is essential for China's effective participation in global ocean governance.

Wang Han, former vice-president of Northwest University of Political Science and Law in Shaanxi province, proposed establishing a dedicated national qualification examination for foreign-related legal practitioners and positioning China as a preferred venue for resolving international commercial disputes, saying such measures would strengthen the country's role in shaping the international commercial legal order.

Plan aims to strengthen disease control network

By **WANG XIAOYU**
wangxiaoyu@chinadaily.com.cn

China aims to establish a modernized disease control system by 2030, with a focus on enhancing its capability to detect and respond to infectious disease outbreaks, according to a national plan for disease control during the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30).

The blueprint, approved by the State Council and published on Monday by the National Disease Control and Prevention Administration together with six other departments, seeks to develop an efficient and agile surveillance and early warning network while upgrading risk assessment, targeted prevention, emergency response, treatment capacity, material stockpiles, public health research and talent development.

By 2030, the country aims to be better positioned to tackle emerging and acute epidemics, capable of containing major infectious disease risks and reducing the health impact of key diseases.

The plan comes as China continues to operate the world's largest disease control system, while maintaining generally stable epidemic conditions nationwide. However, the administration warned that the public health landscape is expected to evolve rapidly over the next five years and herald significant challenges.

To achieve its goals, the plan outlines a series of measures to strengthen the prevention and control of major infectious diseases, including respiratory infections, vector-borne diseases, bloodborne and sexually transmitted infections, and zoonotic diseases.

For infectious respiratory diseases, the plan advocates establishing a surveillance network covering more than 15 types of pathogens. It also emphasizes stronger health management at key venues such as schools, nurseries and elderly care homes, enhanced health risk advisories, improved response measures for infection clusters and optimized deployment of medical resources during peak infection periods.

Priority will be given to curbing the spread of COVID-19, influenza, pneumonia, respiratory syncytial virus infection, chickenpox and whooping cough, while guarding against epidemic risks posed by novel and acute respiratory illnesses.

To rein in vector-borne diseases, the plan calls for comprehensive routine prevention and control efforts in major port cities, provinces with large labor-exporting populations and international trade hubs. It also calls for intensified efforts to reduce the risk of imported dengue fever, chikungunya fever and malaria.

The upgrade of vaccines included in the national immunization program, promoting vaccination services at major hospitals and advancing the research and application of multivalent and other novel vaccines have also been proposed.

In addition, the plan seeks to establish a full-chain, closed-loop management system for the prevention and control of imported infectious diseases.

The blueprint calls for enhanced health education targeting cross-border institutions, organizations and travelers, stronger support for border provinces in cooperating with neighboring countries and regions on disease control, and improved systems for risk assessment, pre-entry disease prevention, port quarantine and post-arrival traceability of inbound travelers.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:01 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:01 PM

CHINA

CROSSING THE STRAIT

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

Filmmaker gives common roots new stage

Director seizes on Chinese mainland's short-drama boom to tell shared tales

By **LI SHANGYI**, **ZHANG YI** and **HU MEIDONG**

Drawn by its well-developed short-drama industry, Chiang Kuo-ming has moved to the Chinese mainland to produce series inspired by the shared cultural heritage across the Taiwan Strait.

Born in Tainan, Taiwan, Chiang majored in news documentary and short-film production before embarking on a career producing stories about local communities to promote grassroots innovation and development.

In 2024, Chiang decided to pursue opportunities on the mainland as vertical-format short dramas surged in popularity across the Taiwan Strait.

After visiting several short-drama production hubs on the mainland, he was impressed by the industry's efficiency.

"I was amazed to learn that an entire series could be filmed in as little as two weeks," Chiang said after he visited Hengdian World Studios in Zhejiang province.

He found that the mainland had developed a highly streamlined production system for short dramas, enabling efficient production at relatively low cost.

In December that year, Chiang established Xiamen Dulushou Film and Television Culture Media Co in Xiamen, Fujian province. The company became the first Taiwan-founded company to obtain a mainland license for radio and television program production and operation.

According to Chiang, the license allows practitioners from Taiwan to register their own intellectual property without partnering with mainland companies, helping reduce operating costs. So far, 18 companies founded by Taiwan entrepreneurs have obtained the license in Fujian.

"It shows that the mainland is willing to support Taiwan practitioners in pursuing the work they aspire to do," he said. His company has produced six short dramas to date.

The mainland's rapid advances in artificial intelligence video generation tools have since opened up new opportunities for Chiang, marking another turning point in his career.

At the beginning of 2025, Chiang met his mainland business partner, Chen Duo, who introduced him to the use of AI in short-drama production. He said AI tools can assist with story development and scriptwriting, reducing a process that previously took two to three months to less than two weeks.

"AI also allows us to bring more of our creative ideas to life," Chiang said. However, he added that the increased convenience and efficiency have also intensified competition within the industry.

Chiang has incorporated traditional Chinese cultural elements shared across the Taiwan Strait into his works, including folk deities such as Mazu and the Third Prince Nezha, with the aim of fostering greater mutual understanding between the two sides.

The company's latest series, *Coming Home*, tells the story of a young woman from Taiwan who travels to the mainland in search of her family roots, where she also finds love.

"The concept of family genealogy has gradually faded among young people in Taiwan, and we hope this series will encourage more young people on the island to explore their family roots and visit their ancestral hometowns," said Chiang, whose ancestral home is in Zhangzhou, Fujian province.

As he built his business on the mainland, Chiang gradually came to realize that information barriers still separated the two sides, leaving many of the mainland's latest developments unknown to people in Taiwan. Drawing on his own experience, he encouraged practitioners from Taiwan to work with mainland counterparts to reduce the costs associated with trial and error.

In April, the mainland introduced a package of 10 policy measures to promote cross-Strait exchanges and cooperation. Under the measures, practitioners from Taiwan are allowed to participate in the production of short dramas on the mainland through various channels.

Chiang said the policies provide clear guidance for people from Taiwan seeking careers in the industry, helping reduce the uncertainty they may face before relocating to the mainland. He added that Xiamen has also introduced preferential policies to support Taiwan residents.

"The relevant authorities in Xiamen also seek our input when formulating these policies, creating a two-way dialogue," he said.

Having lived on the mainland for more than a year, 45-year-old Chiang now sees his mother in Taiwan only once or twice a year. His mother fully supported his decision to pursue opportunities on the mainland, and he frequently shares updates about his life and work on social media to reassure her.

Chiang said life in Xiamen is very similar to life in Taiwan.

"It doesn't feel like I've left home at all. This place feels just like home," he said.

Lu Yan contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at lishangyi@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
See more by scanning the code.



Chiang Kuo-ming (right) discusses the characters of an upcoming animated series with business partner Chen Duo in Xiamen, Fujian province. CHINA DAILY





Left: Liao Yi-ting (front), her father and workers display orchids at her plantation in Xichang, Sichuan province.
Right: Liao carries out cutting and sprouting work at a nursery lab at the plantation. PHOTOS BY CHINA DAILY

Orchid grower cultivates cross-Strait community

By **ZHANG YI** in Xichang, Sichuan and **ZHAO JUNFENG** in Chengdu

High in the mountains of Liangshan Yi autonomous prefecture in Sichuan province, Peking University finance graduate Liao Yi-ting is blending heritage with high tech to grow an orchid empire and create a thriving future for over 80 local women along the way.

While most entrepreneurs from Taiwan head to the mainland's coastal hubs, Liao chose the southwestern hinterland in 2023. Drawn by Xichang's ideal climate and expanding logistics networks, she established an integrated agricultural company spanning orchid research, production and sales.

For the Liao family, orchids have long held a special place. In the late 1980s, her father crossed the Taiwan Strait for traditional manufacturing work, later transitioning into agriculture and selling orchid seedlings from Guangdong province to Sichuan.

"In the earlier years, the orchid industry was not as developed as now, and the cultivation period was longer," 29-year-old Liao said, adding that tissue culture technology has since greatly increased yields.

Instead of focusing on mainstream phalaenopsis orchids, Liao's family cultivated niche varieties, including oncidium, cattleya, and dendrobium. The highly specialized, tech-driven products have gained popularity in overseas markets.

Among their proudest creations is the Mengxiang, or "dream fragrance", mini oncidium series, a trademark registered in 2016. Its name was inspired by a poem composed by Liao's father, who was deeply moved by the flower's aroma. "This is a fragrance so exquisite, it feels as though it could only exist in dreams," he once said.

Notably, the beautiful blooms live up to their name, releasing a distinct, natural scent reminiscent of fresh cream.

Producing high-quality orchids requires careful management of growing conditions. To Liao, Xichang's low-latitude plateau monsoon climate, featuring warm winters, cool summers and ideal day-and-night temperature variations, makes the area ideal for growing orchids.

However, faced with unfamiliar climate and water conditions, Liao and her team started from scratch — surveying the site, installing water and electricity supplies and recalibrating key parameters.

Today, across more than 13.3 hectares of land, a highly standardized agricultural base has risen, featuring greenhouses fully equipped with automated shading systems, integrated water-fertilizer pipelines, and intelligent digital climate controllers to pamper the delicate flowers.

The garden boasts over 100 self-developed varieties and produces over 8 million seedlings annually. Through the expansive flower logistics and wholesale network centered in Kunming, Yunnan province, Liao's orchid products are transported to markets nationwide.

Liao's most cherished achievement is the deep bond she built with local women, whom she affectionately calls *niangniang* — the local dialect word for auntie. The base provides stable jobs for female villagers from various ethnic groups.

For 26-year-old Daxi Aji, a local Yi ethnic woman who lives near the plantation and previously worked as a temporary laborer elsewhere, the orchid garden became a turning point.

"Now, I work inside the smart greenhouses, and the income is better and more stable; it is not as hard as traditional labor, and it takes less of a toll on my body," she said. "The job also allows me to care for my family and children."

Ma Xinglan, a 52-year-old Hui ethnic woman who previously worked at a hotel, found her passion in planting. "First it was personal interest; I like growing orchids myself," Ma said.

Speaking of the status of local women within their families, Ma said it couldn't change overnight, but she added, "Thankfully, now I can decide how to spend my income."

"Most Yi women can understand our dialect, but theirs is very difficult to understand and basically needs translation," Ma said. Despite the barriers, the women worked hard together, mastering the complex names and traits of every orchid variety.

Whenever technical challenges or various everyday problems arise, the workers consult Liao, who explains everything carefully. "She is so young, yet she manages such a massive enterprise," Ma said. "I particularly admire her positive spirit."

Liao is eyeing a bigger market under the blueprint of rural development and agricultural modernization set in the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) on the Chinese mainland.

"As long as we persist in independent breeding, we can strengthen our competitiveness," Liao said.

In the fertile soil of Liangshan, the premium orchids are putting down deep roots — and the young entrepreneur from Taiwan feels she is doing the same.

Zheng Shuohan contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at zhangyi1@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Taiwan entrepreneur builds bridges in Beijing

By **LI SHANGYI**
lishangyi@chinadaily.com.cn

In southern Beijing, a single building has become home to a cluster of startups founded by Taiwan entrepreneurs, several of which were incubated by Hsu Yu-chieh's company.

Since launching her own business, Hsu, who was born in Taiwan in 1981, has been helping Taiwan entrepreneurs and companies establish a presence on the Chinese mainland.

She founded Cross-Strait Star Industrial Accelerator in 2017. Focusing on companies with potential in advanced technology fields such as semiconductors and new materials, the company provides financial support and policy guidance to help them grow.

"We support them through the most challenging stages of building their businesses and grow alongside them," Hsu said.

While working in the internet industry, Hsu became attracted by the mainland's dynamic innovation and startup ecosystem, which inspired her to establish the accelerator.

The Beijing Economic-Technological Development Area in Yizhuang, together with Beijing's Taiwan affairs office, established a cross-Strait science and technology innovation center in 2023 to promote the integrated development of technology enterprises across the Taiwan Strait.

Hsu's company has so far supported a dozen Taiwan companies. Many of their core team members came to Beijing with mature technologies, while the mainland offers broader market opportunities, she said.

"Our role is to combine their strengths with local resources and the business ecosystem," she said.



Hsu Yu-chieh (second from right) discusses investment portfolios with associates in Beijing. CHINA DAILY

According to Hsu, many startup founders from Taiwan have competitive products and technologies but lack familiarity with the mainland's market environment and business practices.

"A business model that succeeds in Taiwan may not necessarily work here, so we communicate extensively with entrepreneurs to help them adapt to the local market," she said. "Our company serves as a bridge, helping them establish operations on the mainland smoothly."

Zhiyi Technology Co is one of the companies supported by Hsu's accelerator and was the first to settle in the innovation center. The company specializes in photoresist materials for next-generation display panels. Originally from Taiwan, it has grown from a small cubicle in the center's incubator into an independent office with an expanding team.

"Given the mainland's vast market opportunities and strong support from the capital market, we encourage the company to build its own brand within the industrial chain rather than focusing solely on contract manufacturing," Hsu said.

Wu Chi-ming, founder and general manager of Zhiyi Technology, said the accelerator provided essential support when his company was in its early stages in 2024, including rent reductions and assistance in communicating with local authorities.

"The accelerator also helped introduce our company to a global startup competition, where we competed against 10,000 enterprises and won first place in the new materials category," Wu said.

Within just two years, the company has been recognized as both a Beijing technology-based small and medium-sized enterprise and a high-tech enterprise.

Wu came to the mainland to develop his business in 2022, attracted by Beijing's favorable business environment. Now based in Yizhuang, his company can easily collaborate with upstream and downstream partners in the industry, he said. Its partners include BOE Technology Group Co and Visionox Technology Inc.

In recent years, Wu has encouraged many entrepreneurs from Taiwan to develop their businesses on the mainland, telling them there are abundant opportunities across the Strait.

"From a market perspective, Taiwan and the mainland are complementary in many areas," Hsu said. The mainland has introduced a range of targeted policies to support advanced technologies, while Taiwan companies can bring their products and technologies to the mainland, she added.

Although various forms of cross-Strait exchanges have already taken place, Hsu said she hopes more people from Taiwan will gain a deeper understanding of the mainland's industries and policies, including opportunities in western regions.

Passionate and outgoing, Hsu said she enjoys interacting with talented people from different fields in Beijing. The city's abundant opportunities for international exchanges have given her another reason to stay.

"As cities across the mainland each have their own cultural characteristics and development environments, talents from Taiwan can experience a more diverse range of opportunities here," Hsu said, encouraging young people from Taiwan to gain firsthand experience on the mainland.

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:01 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:01 PM

Z WEEKLY

All about Gen Z

Z WEEKLY

Echoes of Hongshan cross oceans

From museums to archaeological sites, Australian students followed the traces of history across Liaoning and discovered a civilization still alive.



Australian students learn about the *zisha* pottery tradition at a workshop in the Mongolian autonomous county of Harqin Left Wing in Chaoyang, Liaoning province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By **ZHOU HUIYING** and **WU YONG**

Standing before a display case at the Liaoning Provincial Museum in Shenyang, Liaoning province, Sarah Jane Rutter studied a jade pig-dragon from Hongshan culture, created more than 5,000 years ago.

For the Victoria University student, the artifact revealed just how far back two enduring symbols of Chinese culture — jade and dragons — could be traced.

"I already knew how important both jade and dragons are in Chinese culture, but I had no idea that their significance dated back to the Neolithic period," Rutter said. "It's incredible to think that symbols that remain so central to Chinese culture today have such ancient origins."

For Rutter, Hongshan culture was no longer something that existed only in books and images. The jade artifact before her — along with the museums, archaeological sites and hands-on activities that followed — made a distant prehistoric civilization more immediate.

Rutter was among 11 students from Australian universities who participated in a two-week archaeological study program organized by Liaoning University from July 1 to 14.

The students traveled through Shenyang, Fushun and Chaoyang. Their journey took them from sites linked to the early Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) to core areas of Hongshan culture, a prehistoric archaeological culture dating back more than 5,000 years.

At the Shenyang Palace Museum and the Liaoning Provincial Museum, the students took notes, recorded videos and asked guides questions as they examined artifacts spanning different periods of Liaoning's history.

In Fushun, the group visited the Old City of Hetu Ala, a key site associated with the region's pre-Qing history. Its streets, walls, local stories and food offered a more tangible sense of the era than museum displays alone. At a Manchu pastry shop, the students were introduced to traditional specialties such as *sachima* — a sweet pastry made from fried strands of dough — and sticky bean buns.

The experience was particularly intriguing for Tinashe Katiyo, another Victoria University student, who said the visits offered a glimpse into a way of life and a culture far beyond his own familiar surroundings.

Inspired by the trip, Katiyo had already begun looking into exchange opportunities and one-year study programs in Liaoning. He was also considering "picking up some Chinese so I can actually immerse myself more into the culture".

After learning about Liaoning's more recent history in Shenyang and Fushun, the students continued to the Mongolian autonomous county of Harqin Left Wing in Chaoyang, one of the principal centers of Hongshan culture and the main base for the program's fieldwork.

Under the guidance of experts, they tried their hand at making stone tools and pottery and took part in simulated artifact restoration.

"I really loved the way the tour was designed," said Lauren Alexandra Wood, also from Victoria University. "We've gone from classroom academic learning to being able to apply that knowledge in the field."

The most physically demanding activity was constructing a small replica of a Hongshan-style semi-subterranean dwelling.

Han Bo, a teacher at Liaoning University's School of International Education, said he had initially worried that the labor involved in grinding stone, moving earth and building the structure might discourage the students. He was also concerned about the possibility of minor injuries during the work.

Those concerns quickly disappeared once the activity began.

Divided into groups, the students took on different responsibilities. Some shaped earth into bricks, while others carried and prepared materials for construction.

"Everyone pitched in," Han said. "They helped one another and built the circular wall together, turning a series of demanding tasks into a genuine team effort."

Liu Yanfei, a student volunteer from the school, said communication occasionally faltered because of language differences. However, a gesture, a clay brick or a demonstration was often enough to keep the work moving.

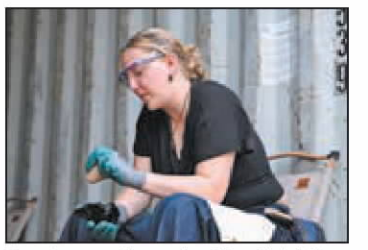
> "Combining site visits with immersive, hands-on activities provides a direct cultural experience that books cannot replace."
>
> **Han Bo,** a teacher at Liaoning University's School of International Education

"It felt as if we were not separated by an ocean, but were old friends who had known each other for a long time," she said.

The group also visited other major sites associated with Hongshan culture, including Niuheliang and Dongshanzui. At these sites, the archaeological remains were no longer isolated points on a map. The students could see how the sites related to the surrounding terrain and consider the relationship between the landscape, available resources and the lives of ancient communities.

For University of New South Wales student Declan Jacques Curran, the combination of archaeological sites and museum visits was particularly valuable.





Top: Lauren Alexandra Wood (right) helps build a replica Hongshan-style semi-subterranean dwelling at Liaoning University's archaeological field base. **Bottom:** Amelie Van der Plaat makes a stone tool from obsidian during a hands-on archaeology session at the field base. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"Being able to see a real archaeological dig and the process that goes into making discoveries was really special," he said. "And then blending that experience with going to museums, where we could see pieces like the goddess sculpture and the jade pig-dragons, made it even more meaningful."

Han said the integration of classroom study, site visits and practical work was central to the program.

"Simply reading books and viewing images in a classroom makes it difficult for students to develop a deep understanding," he said. "Combining site visits with immersive, hands-on activities provides a direct cultural experience that books cannot replace."

Beyond its academic focus, the program also marked Rutter's first visit to China. She said the support she received from Liaoning University's teachers and student volunteers allowed her to engage with the country more deeply than she could have as an ordinary tourist.

"They supported us in every aspect of the study tour — academically, logistically and practically — and always made us feel welcome," she said. "It was wonderful to see genuine friendships develop, and I hope those connections will continue long after the program."

Wu Bingyi contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at zhouhuiying@chinadaily.com.cn

Deep Dive

Generative artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT and DeepSeek are now widely used by students to brainstorm ideas, polish language and complete writing tasks. These tools can quickly produce coherent and grammatically accurate text. Yet their writing often sounds neutral, predictable and detached.

As AI-generated essays become smoother, a new question has emerged: what still makes human writing worth reading?

What makes human writing worth reading?



Ming Ming Chiu

Suppose I wanted a short explanation of generative artificial intelligence.

I asked DeepSeek to write one for me. Here is what it produced: Generative AI uses complex algorithms to solve problems, draft essays and generate images. While it can improve efficiency, it may also reproduce bias or produce inaccurate information. Therefore, society should balance technological innovation with careful consideration of its risks.

I then asked a human writer to revise the paragraph. Here is the revised version: Generative AI can write poems, draw images and help solve scientific problems. But because it learns from human-made data, it can also carry human bias, like barely visible cracks in fine china. If we trust it blindly, the harm may not stay on the screen. It may affect how essays are graded, how people are judged or whose voices are taken seriously.

Take a minute to analyze how the two versions differ.

The first paragraph is not wrong. In fact, it is clear, balanced and fluent. But it also feels familiar. It could have been written for almost any audience, in almost any context. Its ideas are sensible, but they do not reveal much about the writer. We do not know what the author cares about or what they want us to notice.

The second paragraph does something different. It still discusses the strengths and risks of AI, but it makes sharper choices. It selects concrete examples. It uses a metaphor — "barely visible cracks in fine china" — to make the idea of hidden bias easier to grasp and remember. Most importantly, it shows judgment. The writer is not simply repeating a general view of AI, but guiding readers toward a particular concern: that convenient tools can also carry real-world harms.

This is where human writing still matters. While AI can help generate ideas or give feedback on your writing, good writing requires purpose, context, voice, emotion and creativity. A strong writer does not simply arrange fluent sentences — they make choices.

First, write with purpose. What do you want to accomplish? What do you want the readers to know or do? A student writing about AI, for example, may not only want to define the technology, but also warn readers against trusting it blindly. That purpose shapes what the writer includes and what they leave out.

Good writing also depends on context. What does your audience know? What are their priorities? A general paragraph about AI may sound correct, but it may not speak to a reader's real concerns. By choosing examples that connect AI to essay grades, scientific discovery or social justice, the author gives readers a reason to pay attention.

Then comes voice. Find your voice. What do you care about? This is something AI cannot easily provide. It can imitate style, but it does not have personal concern, memory or lived experience. The human writer decides why the subject deserves attention.

Good writing should also elicit emotion. What do you want your audience to feel? The image of hidden bias as "barely visible cracks in fine china" works because it turns an abstract problem into something fragile and visible. It makes readers sense a danger that might otherwise go unnoticed.

Finally, be creative. Try expressing the same idea in different ways. Use metaphors. Explore different settings. Creativity is not only about beautiful language. It is about finding a way of saying something that helps readers see it differently.

Written by Ming Ming Chiu, chair professor of analytics and diversity and director of the Analytics/Assessment Research Center, The Education University of Hong Kong.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:01 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:01 PM

Turning policy into practice

A smartphone, a tripod and a simple idea transformed repeated counter questions into videos watched by millions of entrepreneurs.

By DU AORAN
duaoran@i21st.cn

When Kostiantyn Cherniak recently visited the business registration service center in Beijing's Xicheng district to update his company's registration, he had already watched a series of short English-language videos explaining the relevant procedures and policies.

"When I first started a business in China, many of the official terms in Chinese were difficult to understand, even after translation," said Cherniak, a 40-year-old Ukrainian entrepreneur. "I often had to ask Chinese friends or professional agencies for help because I was worried I might misunderstand the requirements."

This time, he said, he knew exactly what to expect.

The videos are produced by Xiaoying's Business Channel, a public outreach initiative run by the Beijing Xicheng District Administration for Market Regulation.

In 2024, the channel introduced an English-language series after its team noticed a growing number of international entrepreneurs seeking assistance at the registration counter.

"Policies to support foreign businesses have been in place for years, but many international entrepreneurs don't know where to find reliable information or which policies apply to them," said Zhang Yawen, a member of the administration's registration division.

"We want them to understand the registration process and prepare the necessary documents before they arrive."

Published on Facebook, X, YouTube and other international platforms, the English-language videos have reached audiences in more than 100 countries and regions, allowing entrepreneurs to learn about registration procedures before visiting the service center — or even before traveling to Beijing.

For Zhang, the videos are not only a way to explain policies but also a means of building trust by giving entrepreneurs a clearer picture of the local business environment.

"They are like a digital bridge," she said.

Service goes digital

That international outreach grew from a much smaller experiment that began during a lunch break at the service center in September 2021.

As the lunch crowd thinned, five young civil servants placed a smartphone on a tripod and pressed record.

"Can multiple business licenses be registered at the same address?" Zhu Ying, 34, deputy director of the registration division, asked on camera.

It was one of the questions she and her colleagues answered repeatedly while helping entrepreneurs register businesses, amend their registrations or deregister them.

The one-minute clip marked the launch of Xiaoying's Business Channel, a short-video series designed to turn complex business registration policies into practical, easy-to-follow guidance.

Since then, the channel has grown into one of the administration's signature public outreach initiatives. It has released more than 180 videos and attracted nearly 50 million views across online platforms.

The idea emerged from the team's daily work at the registration counter, where business owners often arrive with the same questions: How should a company define its business scope? Why can't a business name be reused immediately after deregistration?

"The policies themselves were clear, but the language was too technical for many people to understand," Zhu said. "We were constantly translating legal terms into plain language, so I thought: Why not make short videos that people could watch anytime?"

The team adopted a newsroom-style approach to producing the videos. Each week, members select topics based on questions raised at the counter, calls to Beijing's 12345 citizen service hotline and feedback from businesses. Routine procedures become one-minute explainers, while frequently misunderstood policies are presented through short skits.

Four months after the series debuted, a video explaining reforms to Beijing's business environment surpassed 5 million views, becoming the channel's first viral hit.

The response showed the team that its work could extend far beyond the registration counter.

"We used to help dozens of business owners a day at the counter," Zhu said. "Now, a single video can reach and help hundreds of thousands."

Producing the videos also changed the team itself. Distilling complex regulations into concise explanations required members to develop a deeper understanding of every policy they presented.

"Making these videos has become another form of professional training," Zhu said.

As the series evolved, the team began filming beyond the registration hall, drawing on the experiences of local companies to show how regulations affect businesses in practice.

Among its most memorable subjects were Xicheng district's time-honored brands, many of which face challenges involving trademark protection and brand rights as they pursue new opportunities.

One episode featured Ruifuxiang Silk Store, a century-old brand known for its traditional fabrics and bespoke tailoring. The company supplied the fabric for the first five-star red flag raised at the founding ceremony of the People's Republic of China in Tian'anmen Square on Oct 1, 1949.

Rather than opening with legal provisions, the episode introduced a historic wooden plaque inscribed by Li Linxiang, a scholar of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). The plaque served as an early symbol of the company's identity and later became the basis for its trademark registration, illustrating how an established business could protect its identity across generations.

The episode reflected the channel's broader approach: policies make more sense when viewers can see how they apply to a real business.

"We wanted intellectual property protection to be more than legal jargon," Zhu said. "Our goal was to turn it into stories that businesses could relate to and the public could understand."

Although the channel's reach and subject matter have expanded, its topics continue to be shaped by direct contact with business owners.

Earlier this month, the team attended a startup compliance workshop organized by the Xicheng District Administration for Market Regulation. Carrying cameras and tripods, team members spoke with entrepreneurs about the challenges they faced, their experiences with government services and the questions they still wanted answered.

After the event, the team gathered to review what it had heard.

"What businesses want to know shapes what we film next," said Wang Fei, 24, one of the younger members of the team, which has now grown to seven people.

When Zhu filmed the first episode in 2021, she was so nervous that she did not know where to put her hands. Today, she is more often behind the camera, helping new members refine their scripts, improve their delivery and become more confident on screen.

As new members take up the work, the team's method remains unchanged: listen to the questions businesses are asking, then explain the answers clearly enough to be useful.



Members of the Xiaoying's Business Channel team celebrate the Chinese New Year in February 2026.



Kostiantyn Cherniak (center) poses for a photo with two members of the channel's production team after updating his company's registration at the Xicheng District Government Service Center in Beijing on June 30, 2026.





Left: Zhu Ying (center) hosts an episode while filming in April 2026. **Right:** Zhu (right) reviews footage with a colleague. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:01 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:01 PM

Childhood friends turn uncertainty into shared journey

Starting with modest equipment and limited savings, two young vloggers use a southbound trip to capture a portrait of contemporary China.

By **MENG WENJIE**
mengwenjie@i21st.cn

On July 10, the Long March 10B carrier rocket lifted off from the Hainan commercial spacecraft launch site in Wenchang, Hainan province. Among the crowd, 25-year-old vloggers Wang Yihe and Li Donghao stood with cameras in hand, watching its fiery trail stretch across the sky.

For the two childhood friends from landlocked Shanxi province, it was their first time seeing a rocket launch in person.

"The roar was much louder than I had imagined," Wang said. "I could feel it in my chest, as though my heartbeat were rising with the rocket."

The moment appeared in the final episode of the first season of *China Story*, a travel series published by Lightbearer across several Chinese video platforms, including Bilibili, Douyin and Xiaohongshu (also known as RedNote).

Four months earlier, the two young men had left their hometown of Yuncheng with little more than a smartphone, a secondhand drone and 50,000 yuan ($7,386) in savings.

Traveling south across China, they eventually reached Hainan, the country's southernmost province. Along the way, they produced 12 episodes chronicling their journey and the stories they discovered along the route.

By the end of the trip, their original idea had taken shape: to capture the everyday moments, local traditions and personal stories that reflect China today.

Wang and Li had been friends for 20 years, but their lives took different directions after they graduated from college in 2023. Wang moved from city to city trying to figure out what kind of life he wanted. Li twice sat for the national postgraduate entrance examination but failed to achieve the result he had hoped for.

Still uncertain about their futures and yet to attain what society often defines as success, the two young men decided to stop waiting for a clear path to emerge and instead create one of their own.

They launched Lightbearer and started from scratch as travel vloggers, producing carefully filmed stories about the places they visited and the people they met. According to the pair, the channel attracted 200,000 followers within a week.

Their episodes combine geography, history, food and local culture, but they are not conventional travel guides.



Li Donghao (first from left) and Wang Yihe (first from right) meet two foreign tourists and explore Zhangjiajie, Hunan province, together in May. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Before visiting a city, Wang and Li research its background and identify possible subjects. Once there, however, they are willing to change course if they come across a more compelling story.

Wang had previously worked in short-video production and knew how striking visuals and fast pacing could capture attention.

With *China Story*, however, he began to focus on quieter moments: water flowing beneath a bridge, a breeze moving through the trees or an ordinary scene that revealed a place's character. Rather than chasing popularity, he wanted to preserve what genuinely moved him.

"A scene does not have to be dramatic to stay with you," he said. "Sometimes, if it gives me a sense of peace, that alone makes it worth recording."

> "When people see something distinctive about their hometown being recognized — especially something that is not widely known — it gives them a sense of pride."
>
> **Wang Yihe,** a travel vlogger

Their approach to storytelling is rooted in their own experience of growing up in Yuncheng. Unlike many famous tourist destinations, their hometown rarely appears on popular travel itineraries. They understand the pride people from smaller cities feel when others show genuine interest in the places they call home.

"When people see something distinctive about their hometown being recognized — especially something that is not widely known — it gives them a sense of pride," Wang said. "That is what we want to share."

Following untold stories

Guided by that belief, the pair often look beyond crowded tourist attractions and turn their cameras toward lesser-known places, cultural traditions and local communities.

In Xinyang, Henan province, they filmed six elderly shadow-puppet artists performing for an audience of only three people.

In Chenzhou, Hunan province, they spent several days with the Hunan Kunqu Opera Troupe, documenting its efforts to attract younger audiences, including offering tickets for as little as 9.9 yuan.

For Wang, the small audiences made the performances more important to record, not less. Their value, he believed, lay in the dedication of people who continued practicing their art even when few were there to watch.

"I hope our videos do more than simply provide travel information," Wang said. "I hope they help viewers form an emotional connection with the places and people we encounter and leave them with a lasting sense of warmth."

Some of the series' most memorable stories grew out of unplanned encounters.

In Zhangjiajie, Hunan province, they met two foreign travelers — one from Spain and the other from Colombia — who had first crossed paths on a 4 am train in Chongqing and decided to travel together.

Wang and Li set aside their filming plan and joined them, and this impromptu adventure later became the highlight of the episode.

In Xuchang, Henan province, they met an 80-year-old man traveling alone across the country. His journey challenged their assumptions about age, the timeline society expects people to follow and the idea that there is only one right way to live.

"Conventional definitions of success can fade with time," Li said. "What matters most is building a life you truly enjoy."

Wang and Li began with modest equipment, a tight budget and no guarantee that viewers would respond to their work. They have now attracted more than 550,000 followers, with people aged 20 to 35 accounting for over 60 percent of the total.

"Many people think they can only begin when they are fully prepared for everything. But there is no such thing as a perfect plan," Wang said.

"What matters is having the courage to take that first step. Once you do, you meet people and discover possibilities you could never have imagined," he continued.

Music exchange connects youth across cultures

By **ZHANG PEIRONG** and **GUO JIATONG**

Standing on stage beside her Chinese partner, 16-year-old Andee Rentschler felt tears welling in her eyes.

She and her fellow singers from One Voice Children's Choir, a Utah-based choir in the United States, were performing with students from Huashan Middle School in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. Though they came from different countries and spoke different languages, their voices blended as they sang *We Are Together*.

"I love singing in unison with my Chinese friends, with my partner standing beside me," Rentschler said.

The lyrics seemed to express exactly what she was feeling: "We are together, hand in hand, forever by each other's side. Across mountains and seas, our song carries warmth. We are together; love knows no borders. Different languages, the same hopes."

"I love the meaning," she said. "Even if we live far apart, we still have the opportunity to come together."

Rentschler was among 60 young musicians from China and the United States who gathered in Xinjiang from July 12 to 20 for an event under the China-US Youth Music Exchange Program.

Organized by the China Education Association for International Exchange and hosted by Huashan Middle School, the nine-day program included performances, cultural exchanges and activities ranging from cooking to calligraphy.

It was the third time the school had hosted the program. Zhang Wenzhi, its Party secretary, said the exchange helps students understand other cultures while remaining connected to their own.

"Through firsthand experience, we hope they can step onto a bigger stage and reach out to the world," Zhang said.

For One Voice, the Xinjiang exchange was the latest stop on a longer musical journey through China. Over several visits in different years, the choir had traveled to Beijing, Shanghai, Xi'an in Shaanxi province, Fuzhou in Fujian province and Shenzhen in Guangdong province, performing Chinese songs such as *Wish* and *It's Great to Know You*.

"Music really is a universal medium through which we can connect," said Tanner DeWaal, CEO and artistic director of One Voice. "Our goal is to create positive interactions with people and promote a world that is hopeful and friendly for all humanity through music."

DeWaal said that belief was confirmed as soon as the Chinese and American students began rehearsing together.

"We turned on the backing track, and everyone came in together and sang in tune," he said. "American students were singing in Chinese, and Chinese students were singing in English. That created a powerful connection."

The rehearsals also allowed the students to learn from one another.



Members of One Voice Children's Choir from the United States perform during a youth exchange program in Urumqi, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, on July 19. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Yang Wenbo, a student at Huashan Middle School, said he admired the American students' enthusiasm and sincerity.

"Their instructor told them they never know which pair of eyes in the audience might be watching, so they must stay focused and treat every performance sincerely," Yang said.

"I think they have brought those words to life through their actions. The more time you spend with them, the more inspired you feel to approach life with enthusiasm and care," he continued.

Beyond the rehearsals, friendships formed through simple gestures.

For Ma Qiyue, a Hui student at the school, it began with a hug. "At first, we were unfamiliar with one another because of our different cultural backgrounds," she said. "The Chinese students were relatively shy, but our American friends spontaneously hugged us. After that, we genuinely wanted to become lifelong friends."

As the students grew more comfortable together, questions about their cultures became part of their daily conversations.

Kang Yuke, another Huashan student, helped the visitors understand local customs. When people began dancing during a celebration, she explained that dancing is an important part of life in Xinjiang and is common at festivals, community gatherings and Uygur weddings.

By the end of the program, the initial shyness had given way to friendships that were difficult to leave behind.

"On the last day, when it was time to say goodbye, both my partner and I cried," Ma said. "We hugged each other tightly and looked forward to seeing each other again."

Through shared songs and simple gestures of friendship, the young musicians found that distance and language did not have to keep them apart.

Contact the writers at Zhangpeirong@i21st.cn

Online
Watch the video by scanning the code.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:01 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:01 PM

SPORTS

BASKETBALL

76ers celebrate James' arrival

As it prepares to give veteran a royal welcome, Philadelphia posts coronation photo fit for basketball's 'King'



LeBron James, pictured during the closing minutes of Game 4 of a second-round NBA playoffs series against the Oklahoma City Thunder in May, has signed a contract to play for the Philadelphia 76ers, the team announced Monday. **Inset:** James, then with Cleveland Cavaliers, talks with Joel Embiid (right) of the 76ers during an NBA game in 2018. AP

The Philadelphia 76ers sent the message that LeBron James was indeed — officially and perhaps amazingly — on the roster with a straightforward photo. In the shot, James' blue No 23 jersey hangs in a locker with a crown on the shelf next to it, a nod to his "King" nickname.

The 76ers and James announced Monday their two-year deal on the veteran's minimum for $8 million total was official, and that the four-time NBA MVP was indeed a Sixer.

"There is no doubt LeBron is one of the greatest players to ever play the game of basketball and there are no words to measure the impact he'll have on this organization," team president Mike Gansey said.

The NBA's career scoring leader, James revealed his choice on social media Friday, saying it will be his "last decision" and that it came after he strongly considered retirement.

"I believe I can help make the Philadelphia 76ers a championship team and I am so excited to energize a new fan base and start this incredible journey one last time," James said.

James posted videos on his Instagram story Monday morning with the caption: "It's that time again. 4:12 am. Let's get it." He posted workout videos from the gym throughout the weekend.

A four-time NBA champion, James wrote he was "done" when his 23rd NBA season ended, and that it was his last with the Los Angeles Lakers.

He instead reversed course and signed with a Sixers franchise that's loaded with All-Star starters in Joel Embiid, Tyrese Maxey and Jaylen Brown, yet has failed to win an NBA championship since 1983, or even advance out of the second round of the Eastern Conference playoffs since 2001.

James, who turns 42 in December, appears up for the challenge of turning the Sixers into champions, much as he did when he ended a 56-year championship drought for Cleveland by leading the Cavaliers to the title in 2016.

"I am thrilled to welcome LeBron James to the Philadelphia 76ers," ownership managing partner Josh Harris said in a statement. "One of the greatest players in NBA history and one of the best athletes ever, his accomplishments are iconic."

"I cannot wait to see LeBron alongside Jaylen Brown, VJ Edgecombe, Joel Embiid, Tyrese Maxey and our talented roster as we work to deliver a championship for Philly."



LeBron James, then playing for the Los Angeles Lakers, reaches for the basket as Houston Rockets forward Jabari Smith Jr (left) and guard Amen Thompson (right) watch on during the first round of the 2026 NBA playoffs in Los Angeles in April. AP

The Sixers went 45-37 last season and were swept in the second round by the eventual NBA champion New York Knicks.

James' resume is beyond compare in NBA history. He is a 22-time All-Star, a 21-time All-NBA selection, a four-time Most Valuable Player, a four-time NBA Finals MVP, a three-time All-Star Game MVP and a member of the NBA's 75th anniversary team.

He also is coming off a season in which he averaged 20.9 points, 6.1 rebounds and 7.2 assists per game.

> "I believe I can help make the Philadelphia 76ers a championship team and I am so excited to energize a new fan base and start this incredible journey one last time."
>
> **LeBron James,** on signing a two-year deal with the 76ers

For his career, he has averaged 26.8 points, 7.5 rebounds and 7.4 assists in more than 1,600 games.

James started his career in Cleveland in 2003 and spent seven seasons with the Cavaliers before heading to Miami for four seasons — where he won his first two NBA titles. He then returned to Cleveland for four more seasons, including that title run in 2016, and left in 2018 for the Lakers and won a championship in 2020.

James is the first player in NBA history to be named an NBA Finals MVP with three different franchises.

James is set for a reunion with Gansey, who was hired in late May after the Sixers fired Daryl Morey.

Gansey joined the Cavaliers in 2011 and had worked as their general manager since 2022. The ties between him and James were first forged as Ohio basketball stars more than two decades ago. Gansey at Olmsted Falls High School was runner-up in 2001 for Ohio's Mr Basketball award to James — who won it three times for St Vincent–St Mary High School, before bypassing college and going straight to the NBA.

"I have had the pleasure of knowing LeBron since high school and have seen the high-level impact he's produced at every stop of his basketball journey," Gansey said. "He is a consummate professional, the ultimate competitor and a tireless worker. But he is also an incredible person with natural leadership traits, a family man and someone who possesses unwavering commitment to community and those around him."

AP

FENCING

As FIE ambassador, pop star Wang sings sport's praises

By **SUN XIAOCHEN**
sunxiaochen@chinadaily.com.cn

Had he kept lunging on the piste instead of cutting a dash with a microphone, Jackson Wang would've very likely still made it to the highest international stage.

Now, as a globally renowned pop star and fashionista, the singer-songwriter, who was born in Hong Kong, China, hasn't forgotten his athletic roots and always stays "en garde" for any opportunity to promote fencing, the sport that defined his junior years, influenced by his Olympian father who represented Team China at the 1984 Los Angeles Games.

So, it was a no-brainer for the former Asian junior champion to step up when the International Fencing Federation (FIE) brought its senior world championships to his hometown, where nearly 1,500 athletes from 114 countries and regions are battling it out across six individual and six team events through Thursday.

In a groundbreaking partnership with FIE announced on Saturday, Wang has proudly embraced a new responsibility as the international governing body's first-ever Global Ambassador.

The hugely popular entertainer said it was an honor to leverage his massive fan base to promote his beloved sport, and there was no better occasion to do it than at home.

"While, ultimately, I chose to pursue a career in music, fencing has always been in my blood," Wang said at a news conference held at the AsiaWorld-Expo in Hong Kong to announce his ambassadorial role.

"As global fencing ambassador, my mission is to bring that same energy to the sport on behalf of all the athletes on the Road to LA28," said Wang, who, as a teenager, represented Hong Kong, China, at multiple international competitions, including the 2010 Youth Olympic Games and the 2011 Asian junior championships.

"I want to show young people everywhere that it's okay to follow your dreams, whether you pick up a sabre or a microphone," said Wang, who's garnered a whopping total of over 100 million social media followers globally.



Jackson Wang

Encouraged by his father Wang Ruiji, who won China's first Asian Games fencing gold medal in sabre at Bangkok 1978, Jackson Wang started fencing at the age of 10, also specializing in sabre, and his talent soon took him to the world stage.

He climbed to Asian No 1 in sabre in the U17 category in 2010, won the U17 individual title at the 2011 Asian junior championships and earned qualification for the 2012 London Olympics.

The multihyphenate star, instead, chose to pursue a serious career in music after he joined an audition in 2010 organized by South Korean pop talent management company, JYP Entertainment. He made an immediate impression and was offered a chance to join pop band, GOT7, which made its debut in 2014.

Now a decorated artist, Wang has captivated millions globally through albums like *Magic Man* (2022) and *Magic Man 2* (2025), both of which debuted in the top 15 of the Billboard 200.

Wang is also the most-followed Chinese artist on Instagram, with over 32 million followers, backed by sold-out shows worldwide and three consecutive Coachella performances.

Now as the FIE ambassador, Wang's appearance in Hong Kong to promote the worlds represents a full-circle moment, as it marked a meaningful return to his childhood passion, while bridging two historic editions of the LA Games — the first in 1984 where his father competed, and a second in 2028, where Wang is expected to feature in a series of lead-up promotional activities.

The ambassadorship is expected to see Wang collaborating with FIE to draw new fans to the sport from beyond the fencing community and to help engage top-tier sponsors and more celebrities to further expand the sport's exposure.

"Jackson brings immense influence to raise awareness of fencing among younger audiences and within celebrity circles worldwide," said Abdelmoneim El Husseiny, interim president of FIE, during Wang's introductory ceremony in Hong Kong.

"He carries a genuine connection with our sport, while possessing the cultural influence to introduce fencing to a new generation of fans who grew up on music and fashion and active, healthy lifestyles."

Following Wang's introduction, the world championships have kept the Hong Kong crowd thrilled with the action living up to the event's billing as an elite prelude to the LA28 Games.

Team China's young 29-strong squad, despite having no gold medals as of Tuesday, will, for sure, sign off the Hong Kong worlds with a talented group of up-and-coming fencers tested at the highest possible level ahead of the Olympics, according to Luo Dongling, president of Chinese Fencing Association.

"We are still a young team, lacking experience and technical maturity compared to the world's established fencing powerhouses," Luo told Xinhua.

"Our youngsters, though, showed in some moments during key matches that they can compete against the best of the world.

"The highlight of this tournament for us was our young fencers' fearless aggression and willingness to go all out, which showcased their competitive spirit."

The best result for Team China so far is a bronze medal in women's individual epee, won by 22-year-old Tang Junyao on Saturday.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:01 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:03 PM

Beyond peaks
Cultural tourism drawing foreigners to Zhangjiajie
BUSINESS, PAGE 10



Plateau rock glacier mapping springs surprise
CHINA, PAGE 11



Promising future
Men's basketball team celebrates silver lining at FIBA U18 Asia Cup
SPORTS, PAGE 16

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2026

China steps up cross-border corruption fight

Draft legislation aims to deepen intl cooperation against graft, regulate transnational businesses

By **CAO YIN**
caoyin@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese lawmakers started reviewing on Tuesday a draft law aimed at combating cross-border corruption as part of a broader initiative to strengthen legal tools for repatriating fugitives, recovering assets and addressing corruption cases with international cooperation.

The draft was submitted for its first reading to the ongoing session of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, China's top legislature.

With six chapters and 47 articles, the draft outlines the principles, scope and key positions underpinning China's efforts to tackle cross-border corruption. It defines the operational mechanisms and responsibilities of relevant departments, calling for stronger case handling and international cooperation.

The draft also clarifies the obligations of enterprises regarding integrity and compliance, and specifies legal liabilities for violations. Specific provisions included in the draft are currently under review and have not been made public.

Liu Jinguo, head of the National Commission of Supervision, who introduced the draft to lawmakers on Tuesday, said the legislation involves strategic implementation of the central leadership's plans to fight cross-border corruption.

It serves as a vital step toward establishing a comprehensive legal framework for addressing foreign-related corruption issues, he said.

Liu emphasized that making such a law is of great importance in filling the legislative gap in China's cross-border anti-corruption framework, improving the foreign-related anti-corruption legal system, and advancing legislative efforts against cross-border corruption through the rule of law.

The legislation also highlights China's firm stance against corruption, and is crucial for safeguarding national security and development interests, he added.

Liu noted that the draft law is a practical measure to regulate the healthy development of enterprises operating internationally and to foster a world-class business environment that is market-oriented, law-based and internationalized.

China is a major trading partner for more than 160 countries and regions, and it has signed Belt and Road cooperation documents with more than 150 countries and over 30 international organizations.

With more than 50,000 Chinese enterprises operating overseas, the scale of overseas assets is rapidly expanding, according to a statement released on Tuesday by the National Commission of Supervision. In this context, building a clean, integrity-based business environment is critical for expanding China's trade footprint, supporting Chinese companies amid global competition and advancing the Belt and Road Initiative, the statement said.

Liu said that by clarifying the compliance obligations of cross-border enterprises and enhancing regulatory oversight, the legislation helps guide overseas Chinese businesses to operate legally, compliantly, and with integrity.

He acknowledged the complexity and challenges of the anti-corruption battle, noting that corrupt actors are employing increasingly sophisticated and concealed methods, and that the cross-border nature of corruption is intensifying, with domestic and offshore corruption becoming more interconnected.

Liu said it is necessary to codify experiences and practices developed in the cross-border corruption battle since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2012, considering that the current rules in this regard are dispersed across various laws, with no systematic procedures for critical issues such as sharing case leads, reporting corruption, collaborating with foreign authorities on investigations and prosecutions, or tracking fugitives and recovering assets.

Zhang Lei, a professor of law at Beijing Normal University, underscored the importance of this legislative effort. "It clearly shows that China's commitment to combating corruption is steadfast and unwavering, which sends a strong message to the world about the progress and development of China's legal framework in this area," he said.

Humanity under attack



A man gestures as Palestinians inspect the site of an Israeli attack near a refugee camp in Gaza City on Monday. Israeli airstrikes and tank fire across Gaza on Monday killed at least four people, including two children, hospital officials said. DAWOUD ABU ALKAS / REUTERS

New US sanctions on Iran threaten global economy

By **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong, **JI HAISHENG** in Beijing and **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE

Inside
Editorial
page 6

The United States imposed a new wave of sanctions on Iran on Monday, which it said would cut off the economic lifeline that sustains the country. Experts said the move appears unlikely to force Tehran to bow down, but will further strain the global economy.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said in a news release on Monday that the new sectoral sanctions target five critical sectors: digital assets, technology, gold, aviation and shipping.

According to the department, starting on Monday, "the actions of Treasury and other agencies will tighten the noose and block every potential source of revenue that funds the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and the Iranian regime".

The department added that countries and entities continuing to do business with Iran will face heightened secondary sanctions risks.

"Every country has a defined timeline to shut down activities we have identified. If they do not take action, we will do so unilaterally through Treasury authorities," it said. "Any entity that facilitates money laundering on behalf of Iran will be removed from the US dollar system."

China firmly opposed on Tuesday these illegal unilateral sanctions, which it said lack any basis in international law and the authorization of the United Nations Security Council.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said at a regular news conference that China's cooperation with Iran has always been conducted within the framework of international law and should not be disrupted.

The country will take all necessary measures to firmly safeguard its own rights and interests, he added.

The spokesman stressed that economic warfare and maximum pressure will not help resolve the issue, but only further escalate tensions, create spillover risks, disrupt the global economic and financial order, and harm the legitimate rights and interests of other countries.

The top priority now is to ease the tensions and return to dialogue and negotiation as soon as possible, Lin said.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said, in his meeting on Monday in Tehran with Pakistan's Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir, that the US must change its tone and approach in dealing with Iran, Mehr News agency reported.

In a separate meeting with Munir on Monday, Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said that Tehran remains determined to pursue implementation of the provisions of the US-Iran peace memorandum of understanding signed in June, Tasnim News Agency reported.

Washington and Tehran have been at odds since the 1979 Islamic Revolution and the hostage crisis, in which Iranian students seized the US embassy in Tehran and took US diplomats hostage. Washington has imposed a slew of sanctions on Tehran and steadily expanded them over the past four decades.

Experts said that the latest move is likely to add fresh layers of disruption and complexity to the global economy and diplomatic efforts, particularly as Tehran maintains close communication with regional neighbors and mediators such as Oman and Pakistan.

Jawaid Iqbal, vice-chancellor of Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University in India, told China Daily that the US has been blowing hot and cold over the past several weeks with regard to Iran.

"This in itself is proof that the US is not in a position to dictate its peace terms with Iran," Iqbal said. "The latest threat of sanctions shows that Washington is trying to somehow extricate itself from a messy situation of its own making."

"Iran, on the other hand, will not bow down to Washington's terms and conditions so easily. It knows that by retaliating against America's regional allies, it can submerge the entire Gulf into chaos, which will in turn create turmoil in the world economy," he added.

Deniz Istikbal, an assistant professor and economics researcher at Istanbul Medipol University in Turkiye, noted that the economic dimension of the Iran-US conflict is intensifying, posing challenges for the global economy.

Conducting business with Iran is becoming increasingly challenging, as Washington seeks to isolate Tehran and push the government to the negotiating table by exerting financial pressure, he said.

"These developments are making the conflict increasingly costly for the global economy, while interest rates are rising and inflation is once again becoming a major concern.

"Ultimately, the cost of the conflict is creating additional burdens for the entire world, particularly for energy-importing countries, leading to higher taxation and increased borrowing needs," Istikbal noted.

Contact the writers at jan@chinadailyapac.com

KNEADING A GOOD MEAL: LANZHOU SPECIALTY WINS FANS ABROAD

Noodle dish offers a glimpse into nation's culinary traditions

By **MA JINGNA** and **HU YUMENG** in Lanzhou



A chef prepares beef noodles for customers at an eatery in Lanzhou, Gansu province, in May. CHEN KUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

The dough stretches and folds between Ma Wenbin's hands with each flick of his wrists.

China Vibes — FOOD —

Press, knead, pull, fold — the movements follow in quick succession. In seconds, a heavy lump of dough is transformed into strands as fine as threads before being dropped into boiling water.

But for Ma, a good bowl of Lanzhou beef noodles is about much more than the noodles themselves.

"It's the broth that gives the bowl its soul," said the fourth-generation Lanzhou beef noodle maker, who has spent nearly five decades perfecting the craft behind the counter.

For people in Lanzhou, Gansu province, that bowl is woven into the very fabric of everyday life.

Some noodle shops open as early as 5 am, before the streets have fully awakened. For many locals, having the first bowl of the day — known as *touguo mian*, or first-pot noodles — is a morning ritual.

See ***Noodles,*** *page 3*

AI can restore confidence, unlock growth

WORLD WATCH
By Alessandro Golombiewski Teixeira

The International Monetary Fund in July projected 4.6 percent growth for the Chinese economy in 2026, one of the strongest results among major economies.

China's economy has also demonstrated considerable resilience in the first half of the year, with GDP expanding 4.7 percent year-on-year despite a challenging global environment.

Yet some Western economists remain skeptical of China's growth path, citing structural concerns including an overreliance on trade rather than domestic demand and adjustments in sectors such as steel, electric vehicles and solar panels.

But what both official and independent readings agree on is that households, enterprises and local governments have all become more measured about spending, investing and borrowing. One possible key lever to spur growth is boosting the willingness of households, businesses and local governments to spend, invest and borrow again. And a new cluster of technologies — smart manufacturing, space technology, the low-altitude economy, robotics, big data and, above all, artificial intelligence — is helping to build that confidence and create new opportunities for growth.

A global comparison helps explain why these technologies, AI especially, carry this weight. Global capital is increasingly recognizing the transformative potential of AI and related technologies. The point is not which company is "better", but what the gap reveals: Global capital now assigns trillion-dollar valuations almost overnight to companies considered to be at the frontier of AI, in a way it never did for the previous tech cycle's retail and software platforms.

China's growth model has long rested on three engines: exports (about 20 percent of GDP in 2024), household consumption (around 39.9 percent), and gross capital formation — the broad measure covering investment and infrastructure — at roughly 40.6 percent.

See ***Technology,*** *page 3*

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

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN ASIA NEWS NETWORK
China Daily Global ©2026 All Rights Reserved



INSIDE
Chinese miracle
Global Views, page 8

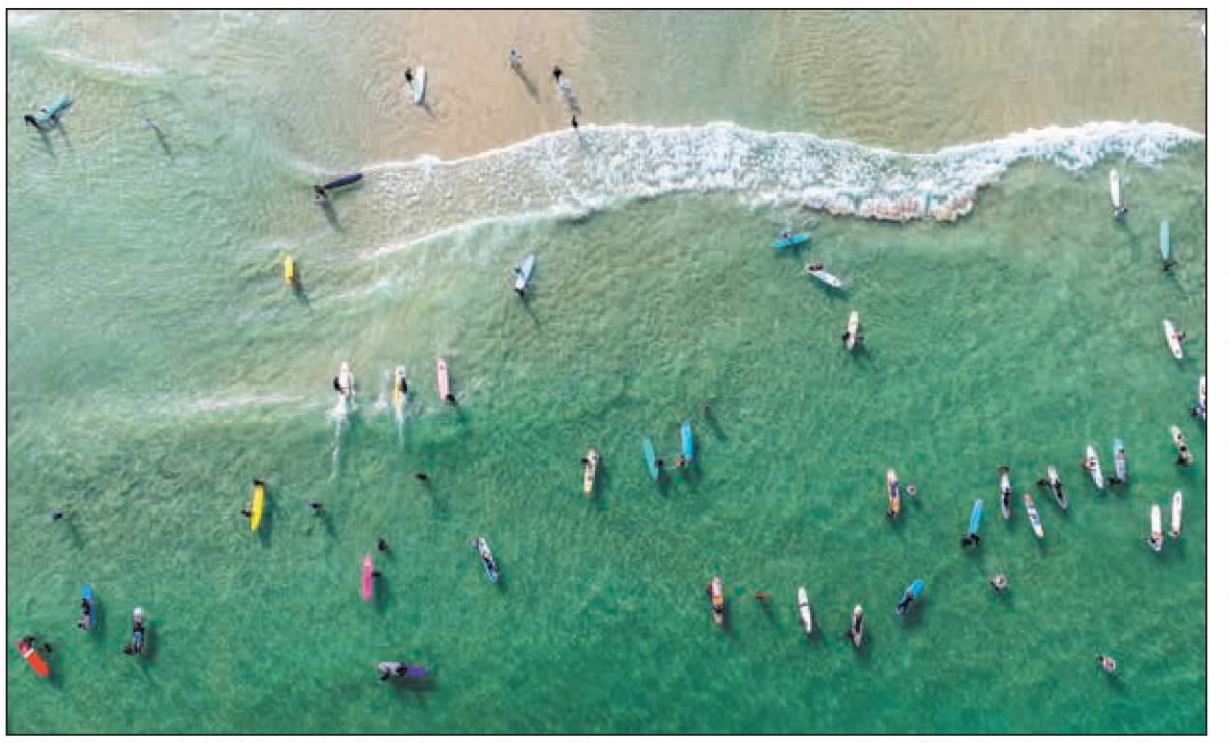
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:03 PM

INDEPTH







Top left: Tourists enjoy jet skiing in Wanning, Hainan province, on July 11. MENG ZHONGDE / FOR CHINA DAILY **Top right:** Surfing classes are held at Riyue Bay in Wanning on Aug 13. DAN SANDOVAL / AP **Above:** People learn how to surf at the bay on July 25. MENG ZHONGDE / FOR CHINA DAILY

'Sportcation' enthusiasts find place in the sun

Younger generation flocks to Hainan coastal area for health, fun, activities and personal development

By **MA SI** and **CHEN BOWEN** in Haikou

Qi Huan has spent four years at a Shanghai tech company, commuting two hours to work every day. She is in seven work chat groups and her heart races every time her phone buzzes on weekends.

One morning at 2 am, after finishing yet another business proposal, she stared at her screen for 10 minutes and decided on the spot to have a weeklong holiday. She immediately booked a flight to Sanya in Hainan province and a short time later arrived in the coastal city of Wanning by train. She had no itinerary or plan — just the knowledge that there was a "sports school" located there where people were active and energetic.

In Wanning, she found what she was looking for. "Before, I worked like crazy so I could have a better life. Now I realize life shouldn't be about that," she said.

Her mornings began with running or gym sessions. Days were filled with surfing, paddleboarding, and rock climbing. Afternoons consisted of more training, while evenings were filled with watching the sunset over the sea, dining, drinking, and dancing with new friends.

Qi is one of countless young people who flooded Wanning this summer. They call it "going to sports school" — but there are no gates, no uniforms and no diplomas. It's a lifestyle shaped by social media where gyms, surf clubs, paddleboard camps, beach volleyball courts, coastal cafes, bars, and long-term holiday rentals cluster together.

Sportcation is a travel model that integrates training, leisure, and social interaction, placing physical activity at the core of the holiday experience.

In China, the sportcation hashtag has generated over 40 million views. During the 2026 May Day holiday, searches for sportcation-related keywords surged 130 percent year-on-year, according to data from online travel platform Fliggy and social media platforms like Xiaohongshu (RedNote).

The rise of sportcations in China is being driven by a convergence of young urbanites seeking meaning beyond the daily grind and valuing physical exertion above passive indulgence, experts said.

The trend has also been advanced by Hyrox, a popular German-initiated fitness race that has grown from 650 global participants in 2017 to more than 1.5 million this year, with many young people in China embracing the event, according to data reported by CNBC.

Gao Shunli from the Tourism Research Center of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences said sportcation, an emerging trend of the sports tourism industry, has already demonstrated strong momentum and a high growth potential. However, its share of the overall tourism and sports industries could be bigger, and its development potential needs to be further unlocked.

The market size of China's sports tourism is projected to reach 3.88 trillion yuan ($576 billion) in 2026, Gao said.

Globally, sportcation is not new, but its growth is accelerating. The global tourism company TUI Musement's 2026 Travel Trends report named "sportcation" a key trend of the year, with bookings for sport-related activities rising nearly 37 percent year-on-year. In Southeast Asia, for instance, destinations like Bali have pioneered a "training camp" model.

Surfers' paradise

China's version, however, has developed its own characteristics, with a greater emphasis on self-improvement. The destination is the gym and the vacation is a personal development project.

Wanning's seaside playground provides the perfect setting for such journeys.

Surfing and tropical rainforest outdoor activities are two popular pursuits. As of May 15, searches for surfing-related products in Hainan grew 136 percent month-on-month, data from Tongcheng Travel showed.

Wanning has 109 kilometers of coastline, three distinct bays and more than 160 surf clubs. Riyue Bay's waves are rated among the most consistent in the world for nearly 300 days a year, with the average sea temperature hovering around 26 C. It has a dedicated community of surfers, coaches and enthusiasts, with more than 500,000 visitors coming every year for surfing, according to local tourism figures.

"China's surfing scene looks to Wanning, and Wanning's surfing is at Riyue Bay," said Li Zijia, founder of a local surf club.

International visitors are also taking notice of Wanning. Russian actor Ivan Maverick, who now resides in Wanning, said, "I've surfed in the US and Indonesia, but Wanning's wave conditions and community vibe are truly unique."

For foreign tourists, he added, "the visa-free policy and mobile payment options are also very traveler-friendly".

Booking demand for surfing-themed hotels near Wanning's Riyue Bay and Shenzhou Peninsula has risen rapidly, according to Tongcheng Travel.

Some visitors stay only a few days, buying passes and ticking off their bucket-list activities such as surfing, Hyrox, and paddleboarding, while snapping photos for their social media accounts.

Others rent apartments for a month or more, drawing up weekly training schedules and integrating exercise into their daily routines.

Avoiding a wipeout

However, the sportcation business is tougher than it looks, according to those involved in it.

Wang Zhiqiao, who runs the Wet Floor sports park on the beachfront, is called "Principal Wang" by participants in his Hyrox training sessions.

Wang realized the opportunities two years ago when he opened four training gyms in Jinan, Shandong province, betting on Hyrox before it had gained a foothold in China.

"For a city like Jinan, it was too early," he said. Only one gym survived.

An investor with Hainan real estate interests later approached him to open a gym in a hotel basement 100 meters from the sea. Wang took one look at the venue and rejected the plan. "Why not take it outside?" he wondered.

Wet Floor opened in January 2024, with the training equipment placed under coconut trees against an ocean backdrop. The Hyrox program quickly became Wet Floor's hottest offering.

Each Hyrox class regularly draws double-digit sign-ups, while other classes struggle to reach that number.

Wang said the appeal of such classes is that holidaymakers now want a nontraditional travel experience.

"The biggest difference between sports and luxury goods is that with luxury goods, you can buy them with money. But with sports, you can't," he said.

"The old middle-class status markers were about owning more luxury goods, traveling to more places, posting photos from Japan or South Korea. Now the middle class post photos of themselves doing all kinds of sports."

Wang conceded the economics of making the business profitable have been tough. Wet Floor's up-front investment was heavy, and the single location "can't make back its money", he said.

Peak season — Chinese New Year — draws about 200 visitors a day. In late May and June, the number drops to 20 or 30, and in summer it rises to 50 or 60.

To increase its viability, Wet Floor has opened a bar and restaurant next door.

But anecdotal evidence of Hyrox's growing popularity in Wanning and the rest of the country provides encouragement for operators like Wet Floor.

While there is no official data on China's total Hyrox participants, the scale of individual events is already remarkable. On Aug 15 and 16, Hyrox Shenzhen in Guangdong province attracted 12,000 athletes from 55 countries — with a total attendance of nearly 30,000.

The end of summer

In 2025, Wanning received 9.78 million tourists, generating 9.23 billion yuan in tourism revenue, according to government data.

About 70 percent of the visitors were young people, and roughly 70 percent participated in sports tourism.

For visitors such as Fang Fang from Beijing, who spent a month in Wanning, the coastal area was not simply a playground.

It offered her a chance to reflect on a healthier lifestyle and diet.

She was soon discussing the glycemic index of different foods with new friends, and eating protein before carbs, both medical recommendations to lower blood sugar spikes.

Fang also switched from evening workouts — which she said kept her awake — to morning sessions that reset her circadian rhythm.

After she returned to Beijing, she maintained the healthy habits she had cultivated in Wanning. Fitness had gone from being optional to essential.

Fang said in a laboratory "experiments fail all the time", but sports are different. "As long as you move, you see changes — in your body, in your mental state," she said.

Many of her graduate-school peers have only two stress outlets. "Either they're sports people, or they're heavy drinkers," she said, adding everyone needs a way to release pressure.

But not everyone is pleased with the influx of people to Wanning in search of sun and sports.

Some of the true "old surfers" have started to leave.

Seven years ago, before the COVID-19 pandemic, when freelance writer Chen Haiping arrived at Riyue Bay, it was pristine and low-key with only a few surfer guesthouses, he said.

"There weren't as many people, and it felt like a hermit's paradise," he said.

"Now, it has become more standardized, industrialized, but also commercialized. Most of my group, who truly embraced surfing as a lifestyle, have gradually left. They've moved to more remote bay areas around the world."

Chen said Wanning is neither a utopia nor a paradise to escape reality.

There are many real issues to deal with: rent does not match income, the cost of living is higher than expected, many things depend on transportation, and even fuel prices are higher because Hainan is an island.

"I have a deep affection for Wanning. Today, people seem to be flocking there as if heading to a carnival. I hope that after the excitement, people won't abandon it once they've had their fill."

Contact the writers at masi@chinadaily.com.cn







Left: A child practices surfing in Wanning on July 20. **Middle:** A cyclist performs stunts at a bicycle park in Wanning on Jan 18. PHOTOS BY MENG ZHONGDE / FOR CHINA DAILY **Right:** A surfer competes in the 2026 China National Artificial Surfing Pool Open in Wanning on March 7. LUO YUNFEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:03 PM

TOP NEWS

Tornado aftermath

Damaged houses and toppled trees are seen on Monday after a tornado struck Pomas in southwestern France. Local authorities said 39 people were injured, two critically, while about 300 homes were damaged. Emergency accommodation centers were opened for displaced residents.

IDRISS BIGOU-GILLES / AFP



Dialogue seeks tangible results in Sino-US ties

Representatives stress mutual respect while seeking progress in key areas

By ZHAO JIA
zhaojia@chinadaily.com.cn

Representatives from China and the United States participated in a dialogue on Tuesday in Beijing, where they called for joint efforts to translate the consensus reached by the two countries' heads of state into concrete action and tangible results, while also suggesting expansion of practical cooperation across a number of fields.

They highlighted mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation as key to keeping bilateral ties on a stable track, while stressing the need for the two countries to jointly address global challenges and bring greater stability to the world.

The gathering was the third China-US Track 1.5 Dialogue, jointly launched in October 2023 by the International Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the Asia Society as a platform connecting representatives from politics, strategy, business, academics, civil society and youth in both countries.

In May, President Xi Jinping and US President Donald Trump agreed to make the building of a constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability the new positioning for bilateral ties, providing strategic guidance for the relationship over the next three years and beyond.

John L. Thornton, cochair of the Asia Society Board of Trustees, said Xi and Trump are both historic figures who know each other well and have a good personal relationship — a combination he described as highly unusual.

"I think it's very important that the benefit of that is concrete and seen by the people, both in the United States and in China," Thornton said.

He added that the key test was what the new positioning would mean in practice and whether it could produce results. "There are a lot of possibilities for progress, and I'm optimistic that there will be progress," he said.

> "There are a lot of possibilities for progress, and I'm optimistic that there will be progress."
>
> **John L. Thornton,** cochair of the Asia Society Board of Trustees

Christopher Nixon Cox, a member of the Richard Nixon Foundation's board of directors and a grandson of former US president Richard Nixon, called the leader-to-leader relationship "the most important thing", saying it gave him confidence about the future of bilateral ties.

While acknowledging that China and the US would continue to have differences, Cox said they should seek common ground in the fields of artificial intelligence, agriculture, food security and economic affairs to help build a stable and prosperous world.

"There are many things with AI that we can agree on," he said, citing the need to prevent it from harming children.

Cox also invoked Nixon's historic visit to China in 1972 as an example of the political courage required on both sides. "There are many lessons from my grandfather's trip to China," he said. "One is that nothing happens without courage."

Liu Haixing, minister of the International Department of the CPC Central Committee, said that a stable China-US relationship was in itself the greatest contribution to world peace and development.

Liu called for expanding common interests, rejecting zero-sum thinking, managing differences through clear policy signals, and upholding the bottom line of no conflict and no confrontation.

Competition between major countries is normal, he said, but that should not define the entire relationship, emphasizing that it should be a healthy and positive race rather than a life-or-death gladiatorial contest.

A zero-sum approach, he added, would distort market rules, disrupt global industrial cooperation and undermine market confidence.

Craig Allen, former president of the US-China Business Council and a nonresident senior fellow at the Asia Society Policy Institute's Center for China Analysis, said that both governments needed to follow the common framework agreed upon by the two leaders.

He said maintaining an open trade and investment environment was critical to achieving the two leaders' goals. Warning that decoupling would "make us both poorer" and that "neither side can afford to decouple", Allen described the Chinese and US economies as "the two engines of growth in the global economy", saying robust growth in both was essential to global stability.

Sean Stein, president of the US-China Business Council, said that China's importance to US companies extended well beyond the size of its market.

"Think of China not as a market but as a platform. That's what's important," Stein said. China's technological ecosystem, the partnerships companies form and the experience they gain there help shape products and business processes used in other markets, he added.

The council's 2026 member survey found that 95 percent of respondents viewed their China operations as at least somewhat important to staying globally competitive.

"China is a really important part of global competitiveness for American companies," Stein said.

China ready to strengthen exchanges with India

By ZHOU JIN
zhoujin@chinadaily.com.cn

China is ready to work with India to strengthen communication, enhance mutual understanding, resolve differences and overcome obstacles, Foreign Minister Wang Yi said on Tuesday, calling on the two countries to be good-neighborly friends and partners that help each other succeed.

Wang, who is also director of the Office of the Central Commission for Foreign Affairs, made the remarks when co-chairing the 25th Round of Talks Between the Special Representatives on the Boundary Question with Indian National Security Advisor Ajit Doval in Beijing.

Wang said that institutional exchanges and cooperation between the two countries are gradually resuming, with both sides committed to maintaining peace and tranquility in the border areas.

The two sides should place the boundary question in an appropriate position within the bilateral relationship, and continue moving forward without stalling, backsliding or deviating from the right course, he said.

Wang called on Beijing and New Delhi to gradually foster a positive narrative on China-India boundary affairs, and make dialogue, peace, consultation and cooperation the mainstream, so as to inject positive momentum into the sound and stable development of bilateral relations.

The two sides held in-depth discussions on advancing boundary negotiations, strengthening border management, improving relevant mechanisms and promoting cross-border cooperation, according to a news release issued by the Chinese Foreign Ministry.

When meeting with Doval on the same day, Vice-President Han Zheng called on China and India to view and handle bilateral relations from a strategic and long-term perspective, and work together to implement the important consensus reached by their leaders.

The two sides should enhance strategic mutual trust, tap the potential for cooperation, maintain close multilateral coordination, properly manage differences and promote the sustained and stable development of China-India relations, he said.

As the world's two most populous and fastest-growing major economies, India and China have a historic opportunity for cooperation, Doval said, adding that India stands ready to work with China to deepen mutually beneficial cooperation, properly address the boundary question and make new progress in bilateral ties.

Noodles: Legacy of Ancient Silk Road achieves modern reach, global appeal

From page 1

A steaming bowl arrives topped with slices of beef, white radish, garlic sprouts and cilantro. The noodles are pulled to order in a range of widths to suit each diner's preference. Once the last strand is gone and the broth savored to the last drop, there is a particular sense of satisfaction — a feeling locals describe as *manfu*, meaning comfortable contentment.

"Having a bowl of beef noodles is part of everyday life for people in Lanzhou," Ma said.

Yet the roots of this deeply local dish reach far beyond the city.

The clear, aromatic broth that Ma considers the soul of the dish is prepared with beef, bones and carefully selected spices — some of which, including pepper, nutmeg and fennel seeds, have traveled thousands of kilometers to reach Lanzhou.

Their journeys echo the exchanges that have long taken place along the ancient Silk Road, with Lanzhou historically serving as an important crossroads where regions and cultures meet.

Today, that movement is going in the other direction. The noodles that have long defined mornings in Lanzhou are increasingly being served far beyond Gansu — and well beyond China.

According to the Lanzhou Beef Noodle Industry Association, Lanzhou beef noodle outlets can now be found across over 60 countries and regions.

That expansion raises a question: How can a food so rooted in Lanzhou go global without losing its distinctive identity? Ma Chenghu, deputy secretary-general of the association, said the answer lies in preserving the essentials while allowing for local adaptation.

> Lanzhou beef noodles carry the imprint of the ancient Silk Road and the Yellow River civilization, and in a single bowl, you can see the meeting of Eastern and Western food cultures."
>
> **Ma Chenghu,** deputy secretary-general of the Lanzhou Beef Noodle Industry Association

At the heart of a traditional bowl is a combination known to Lanzhou diners as "one clear, two white, three red, four green and five yellow", referring to the clear broth, white radish, red chili oil, green garlic sprouts and cilantro, and golden noodles.

Behind that seemingly simple bowl lies a rigorous craft. The dough must be repeatedly kneaded to achieve the right elasticity before being pulled by hand into strands of varying thicknesses. Beef and bones are slowly simmered with spices to produce a broth that is rich in flavor yet crystal clear.

Ueno Tomokazu, a Japanese cultural communicator, came to Lanzhou to learn the craft. The dish has become increasingly popular in Japan, where diners are often seen lining up outside noodle shops.

Pulling noodles by hand, however, is harder than it looks. It requires not only strength, but also an intuitive sense of the dough — knowing when it is elastic enough, how much force to apply and how to keep the strands uniform as they multiply between the hands.

For Ueno, what stood out during his time in Lanzhou was not only the technique, but the deep emotional bond local people have with the dish.

"To make a good bowl, you need the skills, but you also need to have a genuine love for the food," he said.

As the Lanzhou specialty travels further afield, some shops have turned the noodle-making itself into part of the dining experience. Diners can watch the process, gaining not just a glimpse of the craft behind an otherwise simple bowl, but a deeper appreciation of Chinese culinary traditions.

Ma Chenghu from the Lanzhou Beef Noodle Industry Association said, "Lanzhou beef noodles carry the imprint of the ancient Silk Road and the Yellow River civilization, and in a single bowl, you can see the meeting of Eastern and Western food cultures."

Contact the writers at huyumeng@chinadaily.com.cn

Technology: AI-driven growth strategy now requires more active policy support

From page 1

These figures capture the distinctive structure described above: Investment remains unusually high by international standards, consumption comparatively low. Exports still perform well, aided by industrial scale and diversification toward Europe and Latin America that has offset the weaker demand of the United States, but investment-led growth is harder to sustain as infrastructure can no longer serve as an unlimited stabilization tool.

Greater confidence should be built in consumption. Retail sales rose 3.7 percent in 2025, online retail increased 8.6 percent, and final consumption contributed 52 percent of GDP growth — five points more than the year before. That is a meaningful shift, but not yet a full substitute for property-led growth.

History offers a guide. Japan after 1990 showed that even near-zero rates cannot force households focused on repairing balance sheets to spend. China's own reform era is more encouraging: Deng Xiaoping's 1992 Southern Tour shifted expectations so decisively that real fixed investment rose 28.2 percent that year. Confidence returns when policy signals are sustained. China's own experience demonstrates how stronger expectations can unlock investment, entrepreneurship and economic activity.

> **China's own experience demonstrates how stronger expectations can unlock investment, entrepreneurship and economic activity.**

This is where AI — and the wider array of frontier technologies now emerging in China — becomes economically relevant, not as a symbol but as a potential fourth engine reinforcing the other three.

In exports, it can lift manufacturing productivity and push companies into higher-value segments, as Chinese labs such as DeepSeek have shown they can already do on the global stage. China's world-class manufacturing base gives it a strong platform for turning AI advances into productivity gains across the real economy.

In investment, it can redirect capital from basic infrastructure toward computing power and data centers — the very assets global markets now reward with premium valuations.

In consumption, it can open up demand in healthcare, education and digital services, while creating new products, services and employment opportunities for households.

The scale on display at the 2026 World AI Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance, backed by evident State commitment, signals this is a growth strategy, not a side project. Technology alone cannot inject confidence in all sectors. Turning that into domestic confidence still requires more active policy support — so that AI-driven growth becomes secure jobs and rising incomes, and eventually stronger household confidence and consumption.

China's transition can be summarized simply: In the earlier growth phase, expansion generated confidence; in the phase ahead, confidence will have to generate expansion. An economy with real capacity and increasingly sophisticated sources of innovation and growth, is still working to fully unlock the confidence needed to put that capacity to work. AI, if it can convert conference-hall momentum into household-level trust, may be the engine that helps supply it.

The author is a former tourism minister of Brazil, a distinguished professor at Tsinghua University and a professor at The Chinese University of Hong Kong in Shenzhen. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Birthday treat



Giant panda Katyusha enjoys a birthday cake at Moscow Zoo in Moscow, Russia, on Monday. Katyusha was the first giant panda ever born in Russia in August 2023.

PELAGIYA TIKHONOVA / SPUTNIK

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:03 PM

WORLD

Blaze battle



Firefighters battle a three-alarm fire along Main Street in Old Newhall, California, on Monday. The blaze broke out at 2:55 am, prompting an additional response as flames and smoke intensified, with flames destroying multiple businesses. MEDIANEWS GROUP VIA GETTY IMAGES

China fuels tourism in Australia

Digital shifts reshape travel demand as arrivals edge closer to pre-pandemic peak

By ALEXIS HOOI in Sydney
alexishooi@chinadaily.com.cn

Australia's tourism industry recorded steady growth toward pre-pandemic levels, with the Chinese market helping fuel the pillar sector as it rides on digital and other technological trends amid global challenges, according to the latest analysis.

Travel to Australia is on the rise, with short-term visitor arrivals growing by 8 percent year-on-year to 9.1 million in 2025-26, according to figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics on Aug 14.

Visits to the country have risen for the fifth year in a row, but they are still 3 percent lower than the peak of 9.3 million in 2018-19, it said.

Robin Mack, managing director of Tourism Australia, the government agency responsible for attracting international visitors to leisure and business events, told China Daily that in the year ending June 2026, Australia welcomed more than 1.1 million visitors from China, which was 18.2 percent more than the previous year.

"China continues to be a top inbound tourism market for Australia. We have seen the number of Chinese travelers arriving in Australia steadily increase since travel resumed in early 2023," he said.

China was Australia's largest tourism market by both visitor numbers and spending in 2019 and has "bounced back relatively quickly" to become the country's second-largest source of visitors, after New Zealand, and its largest market by spending, Mack said.

At an industry briefing on Aug 20 covering the latest trends and market insights, Mack also said international confidence in travel continues to rise as the situation in the conflict-hit Middle East, with its disruptions to fuel and other global supply chains, becomes the new "normal".

"Despite initial disruptions to travel earlier this year, Australia continues to welcome visitors from around the world. Australia's appeal as a destination remains strong, and importantly traveler confidence, and intention to visit, are steady," he told China Daily, adding that while there is a downturn in bookings from the United Kingdom and Europe in the months ahead, those in other key markets, notably China, are up.

"Our marketing continues to focus on building demand with campaigns targeted to key markets, working closely with distribution and airline partners to convert demand into bookings and a broad range of visitor experiences on the ground," Mack said.

He referred to Australia's "world-class nature and wildlife" as the main draws for Chinese visitors, as well as "great food and drink experiences".

Maturing market

"As the market continues to mature, Chinese travelers are sampling the best of Australian produce in urban and regional settings," Mack said.

The industry briefing also covered how artificial intelligence was becoming increasingly important in the sector's digital and technological development.

Tourism Australia's chief marketing officer Susan Coghill highlighted how 81 percent of Chinese travelers "use AI for trip inspiration, more than anywhere else".

Travelers now trust AI more than influencers to plan their travel, with AI-referred traffic to travel sites also up more than 2,000 percent since late 2024, she said.

"One is about how we create desire and how we connect emotionally with travelers and make them want Australia," Coghill said.

"Another is about how we get discovered by the machines; so it's AI tools and social platforms becoming more and more about how people are researching the next holiday or business event. We want to make sure that Australia ... is in the answers," she said.

John Pastor, who organizes tailor-made tours in Sydney, told China Daily he is banking on more Chinese tourist arrivals, in part by investing in advanced translation technology to help him communicate better with them.

"The Chinese are friendly, smart and generous," he said. "I like to create memories for people with their experiences here."

Zhang Liyun, an information technology professional from Shanghai, said her family of five is set for a trip to Australia during the Chinese holiday period in October.

"We'll be covering Sydney and its surrounding areas," said Zhang, 42. "Australia continues to be an attractive destination in the Southern Hemisphere, with its great outdoors and vibrant cities."

Beyond pandas, open doors draw visitors from afar



Chang Jun
Reporter's log

FIRST PERSON VIEW

I walked into the conference room not expecting much. Another tourism promotion event, another PowerPoint deck, another round of polished talking points. But something felt different last month as soon as I stepped into the room where officials from Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province, told attendees that the city, with thousands of years of history, has much more to offer than its iconic giant pandas.

Industry representatives, policymakers, travel agents, and service providers packed the room shoulder to shoulder. There was an energy I had not felt at one of these gatherings in a long time.

Jason Carter, regional director for the USA and Canada at the World Travel and Tourism Council, or WTTC, said China's travel and tourism industry had entered a period of rapid expansion. His statement was hard to argue with: the numbers were solid. In 2025, China hosted more than 68 million international visitors, up 15.5 percent year-on-year, nearly triple the global average. Those visitors spent $135 billion in China, while the country's total economic contribution from tourism reached $1.8 trillion, growing 9.9 percent year-on-year — more than double the global average of 4.1 percent.

I found myself joining the chorus of loud cheers and applause.

Well, I am not ashamed of losing my composure. Since the COVID-19 pandemic first struck in 2019 and cast its long shadow over the world, I have felt suffocated by a relentless flood of gloomy headlines — economic downturns, business slowdowns, store closures, declining tourism, eroding public confidence, and the drumbeat of war. Against that bleak backdrop, words like growth, expansion, job creation, and profit, riding on the wave of China's tourism boom, are nothing short of music to my ears.

Carter was clear that none of this was accidental. The recovery is the product of China's real work at every level. Services were upgraded, policies refined, and procedures streamlined to remove any hurdle an overseas visitor might face. Vowing to continue its openness, China now offers visa-free access to 50 countries unilaterally, with reciprocal agreements covering another 29. More than 30 million foreign nationals entered China visa-free in 2025 alone.

This is a remarkable gesture from China — an open, standing invitation to friends all over the world, extended with hospitality and backed by millennia-long history, cultural richness, and tourism resources.

Chengdu is a microcosm of this broader trend. Qiu Wei, director of the Chengdu Municipal Bureau of Culture, Broadcast-TV, and Tourism, promoted his hometown at the event by underscoring Chengdu's charm of blending high-tech innovation and ecosystem diversity with a laid-back lifestyle.

It seems to me that being named the Happiest City in China for 17 consecutive years is a strong selling point for Chengdu — or any place that can provide a temporary haven for people worn down by the pressures of modern life. Fortunately, China has many similar tourist attractions to host those who are heart-wrenched and physically fatigued.

The hard work appears to be paying off. I talked to Alex Mortensen, sales manager at the HiSEAS International Tourism Group, who specializes in arranging trips to China for US travelers.

What impressed him the most about traveling in China was the efficiency, well-trained staff, and cost-effectiveness. He stayed at the Four Seasons in Chengdu with his family in June. "Compared to what you pay in the United States, the price was incredibly enticing — and the service was exceptional."

Mortensen is neither the first nor the last to return with a positive impression of China, I believe. When these positive experiences become the new normal and go viral across internet communities, the success story of China's tourism industry will continue.

Deputy Consul General Cao Yibin closed warmly. "Tourism brings people closer together and builds lasting friendship," she said. In the current climate of US-China relations, those words carry particular weight.

I left with a half-built Chengdu itinerary on my phone and, for the first time in a long while, something that felt like optimism. The numbers are real. The doors are opening. The cities are ready.

The only question is whether enough people on this side of the Pacific are willing to go find out for themselves. Based on what I heard there, more and more of them are.

The author is a China Daily correspondent based in San Francisco.

Contact the writer at junechang@chinadailyusa.com

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Europe heat waves kill 35,000, strain insurers

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

At least 35,000 excess deaths have been recorded during heat waves that have scorched Europe this year, The Guardian newspaper has reported.

The final death toll is likely to be far higher because data is not yet available for half of Europe's nations, and because none have yet published excess death totals for August.

The provisional death toll has prompted the US credit rating agency S&P Global Ratings to warn that Europe's heat waves will cause a spike in insurance claims, and increase the cost of life insurance and medical insurance.

It said insurance companies will have to pay many extra claims, including for crop damage caused by droughts, and devastation left by wildfires.

"Beyond heat-related deaths, it's also deteriorating health conditions and the resulting increase in treatment and hospitalizations that might weigh on insurers' financials and, subsequently, increase premiums," S&P Global Ratings said in its analysis.

Europe's fast-aging population is more susceptible to heat-related health issues, the company added, and "the increasing share of elderly people ... suggests that heat-related mortality in Europe is likely to rise".

A recent study in The Lancet Planetary Health found that people aged 60 and older are more susceptible to excess heat because they sweat less and because their hearts work harder as their blood vessels cannot widen and increase flow.

Of the 35,000 excess deaths recorded so far in Europe, 10,650 occurred during a heat wave between June 22 and June 28, with 9,000 of those deaths among people aged 65 and older.

The Robert Koch Institute, a public health agency in Germany, said 9,600 of the 10,650 deaths happened in Germany, where a typical summer usually leads to around 2,000 heat-related deaths.

Excess fatalities

The heat-related deaths mean Europe is likely to see its largest number of excess fatalities since July 2022, when there was a spike connected to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Karl Lauterbach, a former German health minister, said last week that the latest figures are likely to be massive underestimates.

The four heat waves that have hit Europe so far this year have largely impacted the western side of the continent, where they have broken several records, including in France, where the hottest national average day on record was recorded. In Germany, temperatures topped 40 C for three straight days in June. And Spain saw many days of at least 42 C.

The hot weather has been attributed to human-made global warming exacerbated by an El Nino weather system.

Swallowed by grief



A man mourns next to the covered body of a person killed during an overnight raid by an armed gang on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince in Kenscoff, Haiti, on Monday. The attack left at least 47 people dead and 22 injured, as Kenscoff has endured about a dozen gang attacks since last year, according to the United Nations. PATRICE NOEL / REUTERS

US proposes H-1B fee exceeding $100,000

WASHINGTON — The US Department of Homeland Security, or DHS, on Monday proposed a $103,265 fee for employers hiring highly-skilled foreign workers through the H-1B visa program, marking the agency's latest move to restrict the visa program on new grounds.

The move came after a previous effort to charge $100,000 for the visa was struck down by the courts.

"The proposed fee would generate revenue to recover a portion of the federal government's costs for administering the lawful immigration system," the DHS said in a news release.

The new fee is designed to recover a portion of the full costs of providing immigration adjudication and naturalization services incurred by multiple federal agencies in processing, adjudicating and supporting the lawful immigration system, according to a document scheduled to be published in the Federal Register on Tuesday.

The DHS estimates the proposed fee would generate approximately $8.8 billion annually, based on projections of petitions for the annual cap of 85,000 H-1B visas, according to the release.

Under the proposed rule, the additional fee would not apply to H-1B petitions that are not subject to the cap, such as petitions filed by certain nonprofit research organizations, governmental research organizations, and institutions of higher education, the release added.

The public will be given a 30-day period to submit comments on the proposed rule before it can take effect.

"If finalized, the new proposal would place a significant new burden on the technology and finance sectors, which rely on the H-1B visa to hire top international graduates from US universities," The Wall Street Journal reported.

The latest proposal came two months after the Trump administration's $100,000 fee on new H-1B visas was struck down by a federal judge in Boston, Massachusetts. The judge ruled that the executive branch exceeded its authority and violated the Administrative Procedure Act.

Plan may backfire

CBS reported that the plan could backfire by encouraging US companies to shift jobs overseas, especially in specialized fields such as research and development. It could also further deter international students from studying in the United States.

On Aug 10, the US State Department announced that it had revoked more than 175,000 visas since January 2025, when Trump began his second term.

Meanwhile, the Trump administration is preparing to revoke the business and tourism visas of up to 200,000 foreigners who have applied for or are currently seeking asylum status in the United States, according to a report by The Associated Press on Tuesday.

"If it happens, the move would be the largest single mass revocation of visas in US history and would likely face legal challenges," the report said.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:03 PM

WORLD

In memoriam



People light candles next to a collapsed building two months after massive earthquakes in La Guaira, Venezuela, on Monday. The country's interim government on Monday reported 6,509 deaths from the twin earthquakes. MARYORIN MENDEZ / AFP

Japan Cabinet's poll ratings drop

Decline reflects rising public doubts about governing philosophy: Experts

By LIU JIANQIAO
liujianqiao@chinadaily.com.cn

Latest Japanese opinion polls show support for Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's Cabinet has continued to decline, reaching its lowest level since she took office. Experts said the drop reflects growing public doubts about the administration's governing philosophy, policy competence and approach to governance.

The approval ratings fell to 41 percent in a Mainichi Shimbun survey conducted on Saturday and Sunday, their lowest level since the administration came into office in October 2025. A Kyodo News poll at the same time also found that the approval rate for Takaichi's Cabinet fell 3.5 percentage points from the previous survey in July to 50.2 percent.

The key focus of the weekend polls was the government's plan to cut the consumption tax on food from the current 8 percent to 1 percent for two years starting in April 2027.

The support for the policy stood at 54 percent in a Yomiuri Shimbun survey and 52.7 percent in the Kyodo News poll. An ANN survey found that 47 percent of respondents supported the measure, while 42 percent opposed it. Mainichi's survey showed a different trend, with 47 percent of respondents viewing the policy negatively, compared with 33 percent who viewed it positively.

Although three of the four polls showed more respondents supporting the tax cut than opposing it, anxiety over its consequences for government coffers remained high.

A high percentage of Kyodo's respondents, 71.7 percent, expressed concern over the impact of the tax cut on government finances, while a similar proportion expressed the same concern in ANN's poll.

Yomiuri's poll found that a majority of respondents were worried that the tax cut could make it more difficult for the government to sustain the social security system. Many questioned whether the government would be able to restore the tax to its original rate after the two years.

Besides, according to the Kyodo poll, 42.6 percent of respondents said they disapproved of Takaichi's decision to omit the word "remorse" from her address at a ceremony on Aug 15 marking Japan's defeat in World War II.

Liu Shuliang, an associate researcher at the Tianjin Academy of Social Sciences, said that public concerns over the tax cut policy underscore the continued pressure Japanese households face from rising prices and higher living costs.

The government's economic and livelihood policies, dubbed "Sanaenomics" by the media for their resemblance to "Abenomics" by former Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe, are essentially election-driven measures aimed at securing short-term political support, rather than addressing Japan's long-standing structural economic problems, Liu said.

He noted that in response to mounting public concerns over rising prices and the increasing cost of living, the Takaichi administration has introduced measures such as consumption tax cuts in an effort to win public support by offering immediate policy benefits.

"However, such measures could further increase fiscal risks and place a heavier burden on future governments and generations, while the administration appears both unwilling and unable to pursue structural reforms that would challenge Japan's entrenched vested interests," he added.

Slush fund scandal

Chen Hong, director of East China Normal University's Asia Pacific Studies Center in Shanghai, highlighted that 73.8 percent of respondents in the Kyodo News poll opposed Takaichi's plan to appoint lawmakers implicated in a political slush fund scandal to key positions.

These findings indicate that the Japanese public remains deeply dissatisfied with political funding scandals, political ethics and what is often described as "Liberal Democratic Party-style factional politics". It also suggests that such problems remain deeply rooted in Japanese politics and have yet to be effectively addressed, Chen said.

Since taking office, the Takaichi administration has pursued a distinctly conservative, and in some areas, right-leaning policy agenda, experts said.

"Over the past year or so, the Takaichi Cabinet's policies on national security, foreign affairs, historical perceptions and reform of the imperial household system have increasingly aligned with the core demands of Japan's right-wing forces, further pushing Japanese politics in a right-leaning direction," Liu said.

The administration's rightward political shift is likely to exacerbate long-standing ideological divisions between the left and right in Japanese politics and society, prompting political forces and social groups to take more clearly defined sides, Chen said.

"This could weaken social cohesion, undermine political and social stability, and further deepen polarization in Japanese society," he added.

Forum calls for Asian unity amid geopolitical challenges

By ZHANG YUNBI
zhangyunbi@chinadaily.com.cn

Asia is now in urgent need of boosting unity, shelving differences and building consensus when faced with challenges such as geopolitical rivalry, gaps in technologies and power politics, political figures and policy advisers have said.

They made the point at the Conference on Building a Peaceful and Prosperous Asian Community with a Shared Future, a high-level dialogue in Beijing on Tuesday.

The event gathered over 300 delegates from countries in various parts of Asia, including political leaders as well as executives of think tanks, friendship organizations and media.

At the conference's opening, Wang Dongming, vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, voiced his hope that all parties would act on the vision of building a community with a shared future for humanity and implement the four major initiatives — the Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative, Global Civilization Initiative, and Global Governance Initiative.

He called on parties to join hands in advancing the building of a community with a shared future for Asia and to jointly write a new chapter of peace, development, cooperation, and prosperity for Asia.

Omar Razzaz, Jordan's former prime minister, raised concerns over challenges posed by cutting-edge technologies, including artificial intelligence, to Asia, which represents about 40 percent of the world's total GDP and 60 percent of the global population.

The younger generation is going through cognitive atrophy because of AI. While manual labor is being replaced by robotics and AI algorithms, economic monopoly by some IT giants based in Western countries may translate into political hegemony, he said.

He quoted President Xi Jinping as saying at the opening ceremony of the 2026 World AI Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance in July that "AI development should not be a solo performance by a single country, but a symphony of international cooperation".

"I could not agree more. This is something that each of us needs to be involved in," he said.

Yukio Hatoyama, former Japanese prime minister, warned that armed conflicts persist around the world, and economic sanctions and bloc-based politics have become a weapon in diplomacy.

"What our era requires is not the continuation of an old order based on the strength of nations," he said.

Hatoyama noted that China, as a major country, does not coerce others through force but influences them through virtue, and it builds trust through reciprocity and cooperation.

Tao Jian, a leading Chinese scholar on international relations studies and former president of the University of International Relations in Beijing, underlined the importance of Asian countries joining hands in partnership building and resilience buildup against economic, political and social impacts brought by factors, including bloc confrontation.

"Only when Asian nations fully recognize that they are all sailors on the same ship will they be able to truly join forces and move forward together amid raging storms," he said.

Sodiq Safoyev, first deputy chairman of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of Uzbekistan, said the region needs not just economic connectivity, but also "identity and a space of shared values".

Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, former Pakistani prime minister, said Asia "needs security that is common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable, where no country seeks security at the expense of another".

ACFTU Special

Man masters legendary machine to produce aircraft parts for country

From model workers and master craftsmen to factory hands and gig-economy workers, China's vast workforce is the bedrock of national development. Launched by the All-China Federation of Trade Unions, this series shines a spotlight on the responsibility and resilience of the modern Chinese working class, documenting their struggles and stories from the front lines to showcase the dedication, craftsmanship and pioneering spirit driving progress across every sector.

By YUAN SHENGGAO



Ye Linwei, team leader of the 80,000-metric-ton die-forging press crew at China National Erzhong Group Deyang Wanhang Die Forging, reviews operations at the production site.
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The first time Ye Linwei stood beneath the 80,000-metric-ton die-forging press, he was 26. Towering 42 meters above him — as high as a 15-story building and weighing 22,000 tons — was a legendary machine.

Ye, now 40, is team leader of the press crew at China National Erzhong Group Deyang Wanhang Die Forging. The press, developed by Erzhong Group, is one of the largest in the world and built to forge aircraft parts.

"I've dreamed of building aircraft since I was a child," Ye said. "My first encounter with the 80,000-ton press was as a freshman. It hadn't broken ground yet, but its legend was already whispered in every corner of the heavy machinery world."

In 2006, Ye was studying civil construction at Sichuan Polytechnic University when he learned his school was training specialists for an 80,000-ton press to support the development of homegrown aircraft. A budding pilot at heart, he switched to the forging program. "If I couldn't be the pilot," Ye recalls thinking, "I could at least help build the plane."

By 2012, the press was ready. So was Ye. Following a rigorous selection process, he was chosen as a candidate for the inaugural operation team.

The challenge was unlike anything in the textbooks. With no mature operating procedures to follow, Ye faced a maze of components: 10 kilometers of hydraulic piping, tens of thousands of electrical control modules and a mechanical frame that tolerated no mistakes.

"Mastering this unprecedented steel has no road map to follow; every step forward felt like navigating uncharted waters," Ye said.

To close the gap between theory and reality, Ye buried himself in studying the machine. During the day, he climbed the press to examine its structure against the blueprints. At night, he stayed at the console, recording data.

"At the toughest stage, we ran over a hundred trials on a single parameter. Constant tweaks, constant checks," Ye said. Undeterred by the setbacks, Ye's work finally paid off. He cracked the operating code a year early, earning the position as the press' inaugural chief.

Operating an 80,000-ton giant is less about brute force than microscopic control. Over years of repetition, Ye has developed a near-instinctive feel for operating the machine. "I taught myself to listen to the equipment," Ye said. By ear, Ye spots machine faults. He once used the press to crack an eggshell without rupturing the membrane inside.

That precision proved vital in national key projects, most notably in forging the C919's vertical stabilizer and its main landing gear. Working beside the press, Ye and his colleagues ran repeated trial forgings, adjusting parameters until the margin of error disappeared. The successful forging supported the aircraft's final assembly, maiden flight and commercial service.

Ye and his team took over 2,500 days to crack the core technology for central-wing titanium alloy edges, delivering more than 130 critical forgings, all now in active service.

"In aviation, nothing is trivial. Every forging is a layer of insurance for flight safety; there is zero tolerance for error," Ye reminds himself and his crew. Over the years, Ye's team has produced nearly 40,000 high-precision forgings. Among them are the world's largest gas turbine disc, ultralarge integrated titanium bladed disks and high-strength TC17 titanium alloy components.

"Serving national megaprojects as a frontline worker is my greatest pride," Ye said. For him, the work is less about awards and more about a quiet promise that ensures every part leaving the shop floor is strong enough to fly.



Waddle weigh

A zookeeper tries to lure penguins onto a scale during the annual Weigh In at the Zoological Society of London on Monday, as London Zoo's animals are weighed and measured on a regular basis as a way of continually monitoring their health, development and even identifying pregnancies.
FRANK AUGSTEIN / AP

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn

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

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1901

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:03 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

US needs an exit ramp for itself, not an 'economic D-Day' for Iran

Watching a superpower that cannot win a conflict pretend it can win an economic siege would be comic if it weren't so tragic.

That is what we witnessed this week, when US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent stepped forward to declare the "single greatest financial offensive ever marshaled against an adversary" — in this case Iran — only to acknowledge that Washington was not actually naming the countries to be punished or imposing secondary sanctions yet. There would be a "cure period". The penalties would come later.

Washington wants to convince Tehran that tougher measures are coming while keeping its own options open. But the much-hyped "economic D-Day" looks more like a damp squib.

The United States' latest campaign targets almost 60 individuals, entities and vessels and expands the reach into digital assets, gold, technology, aviation and shipping. Failing to fully throttle Iran's oil exports, Washington is technically waging an open assault on the non-dollar financial order to preserve the US' dollar hegemony.

China — one of Iran's trading partners — has made its position clear. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said sanctions and pressure tactics do not resolve problems; they only escalate tensions and damage global economic growth and financial stability. China urges all parties to return to political settlement through dialogue and negotiation.

Washington cannot turn every trading partner into a US accomplice in the Middle East crisis. China will do what is necessary to protect its legitimate rights and interests.

The irony is that while Bessent was announcing an economic war, Pakistan's army chief, Field Marshal Asim Munir, was traveling to Tehran after speaking with US President Donald Trump. Pakistani sources said Washington had asked Islamabad to use its influence to bring Iran back to negotiations.

The world has seen this double act before. Washington has repeatedly made extravagant claims about the Strait of Hormuz, at one point declaring that the US blockade was "100 percent effective" and that it had "complete control", when evidently it didn't.

By dictating timelines for other countries to cut ties with Iran in the listed fields, Washington has all but admitted that domestic pressure has left it desperate to escape the mess that it created.

The whole world, particularly Iran, can clearly see that the US administration appears increasingly trapped in a crisis of its own making. Gasoline in the US has risen above $4 a gallon. Inflation and living costs remain painfully high. The US national debt has climbed beyond $40 trillion, while the US administration is intervening in the Treasury market to support demand for government bonds.

Against that backdrop, the Iran conflict offers an irresistible political stage. A US administration under domestic economic pressure before the midterm elections can always look stronger by threatening a foreign adversary and telling the rest of the world what to do. In politics you get far more mileage out of managing expectations than you ever will from keeping your word.

Iran has already endured decades of sanctions. It has built mechanisms to diversify its economic relationships. Tehran says it has prepared a two-year plan to withstand the latest US measures. Whether that plan succeeds is another question. But expecting new sanctions alone to produce a result that has not been achieved in nearly half a century is hardly a strategy.

The longer this war and economic siege continue, the more the costs spread — to global energy markets and ultimately to US households. The US administration does not need another "economic D-Day" for Iran. It needs an exit ramp for itself.

After its many military misadventures, the US should have learned by now that you cannot bomb a nation into submission, sanction it into surrender or bluff your way out of a quagmire created by yourself. At some point, even superpowers have to choose between the theater of strength and the hard work of diplomacy.

The last time the US administration played listmaker to the rest of the world, it was the great tariff fiasco — a spectacle later ruled unlawful and remembered for its lose-lose consequences. Yet here we are again, with Washington dusting off the same playbook, this time in the name of the Iran conflict. History is unlikely to be kind to this rerun.

People-to-people exchanges enduring bridge

Ronald Sakolsky, a retired teacher from Pennsylvania, the United States, recently returned to China after more than 20 years, completing a personal journey that began with a simple act of kindness. In an era of strategic rivalry and political turbulence, his story serves as a poignant reminder of what truly sustains international relations.

In 1999, while teaching English in Luoyang, Henan province, Sakolsky was inspired by a television report on Yin Yuzhen, a Chinese woman fighting desertification in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region. Moved by her perseverance, Sakolsky raised $5,000 to support her tree-planting efforts on the barren land.

This week, he walked through the very land he helped rejuvenate, now a thriving forest and ecological garden. "Nothing but a miracle," he said, standing beside Yin. Their journey, from a small donation to a flourishing forest, encapsulates a powerful truth: individual human connections can transcend geopolitical divides and create lasting, tangible change.

This narrative is especially important today, as some politicians in the US continue to view China as a strategic rival, leading to restrictive policies that hinder bilateral cooperation and escalate tensions.

In such an environment, official channels often stall or get mired in suspicion and zero-sum thinking. However, international relations are not solely the domain of politics; they are also built on a foundation of mutual understanding between people from different walks of life.

When political rhetoric becomes adversarial, people-to-people exchanges act as crucial stabilizers, dismantling stereotypes, building trust and highlighting our shared humanity. As Sakolsky put it, "All Americans need to realize that Chinese and Americans can be family. We can get over the differences if we focus on the similarities."

This sentiment is not naive, but points to a historical truth. Ultimately, it is the people who uphold the bridge of understanding when political winds turn harsh. In times of diplomatic strain, grassroots connections play a critical role in keeping communication lines open and fostering dialogue and mutual understanding.

These interpersonal and cultural exchanges are the stabilizing forces for China-US relations, reminding both nations of their shared interests and the human connections that transcend political disagreements. Through sustained engagement at the individual and community levels, the potential for collaboration and peaceful coexistence is kept alive, even amid geopolitical tensions.

The promising areas for this cooperation should include green development and climate change — afforestation is part of these endeavors. As the world's two largest economies, China and the US share a common interest in combating climate change, advancing green technology and restoring ecological balance.

Yin's story is a metaphor for the engagement in these fields. With help from Good Samaritans such as Sakolsky, her painstaking efforts, which have turned over 4,600 hectares of desert into an oasis, are a victory for all of humanity.

Sakolsky's role sets an example of how cooperation can flourish despite political uncertainties. By focusing on shared environmental goals, both China and the US can contribute to a global public good while building a reservoir of trust and mutual respect that can positively influence other aspects of their relationship.

People-to-people exchanges and dialogues play a vital role in fostering mutual trust and cooperation. Demonstrating the broad scope of such links, the third China-US Track 1.5 Dialogue was held in Beijing on Tuesday, bringing together representatives from Chinese government departments and think tanks, as well as US representatives from several organizations. Centered on expanding economic and sci-tech cooperation, this face-to-face engagement exemplifies the kind of direct communication that is urgently needed between the two countries now.

It is through such sustained exchanges and cooperation that humanity's remarkable cultural tapestry endures and thrives.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

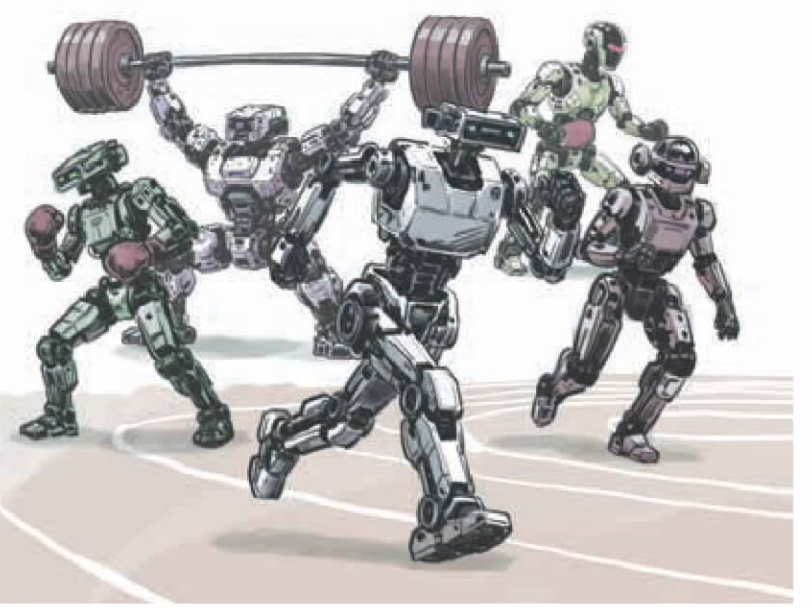
China Daily UK
90 Cannon St, London EC4N 6HA, UK
+44 (0) 207 398 8270
editor@chinadailyuk.com

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Jin Ding



Opinion Line

Latin America knows who is cooperative, who exploitative

Apparently, in the eyes of some United States politicians, the latest threat to Latin America is not invasion, inflation or being treated like Washington's backyard. It is a Huawei router.

Juan Pablo Segura, the US assistant secretary of state for Western Hemisphere affairs, who oversees US foreign policy and relations across Latin America, the Caribbean and Canada, has issued a warning worthy of a Cold War spy thriller: Huawei, ZTE, Hytera, Hikvision, Dahua and DJI are "high-risk technologies" because Chinese law supposedly "forces" them to "spy, hack and shut down" networks.

The message to Latin America is essentially: Trust us. We know what surveillance looks like.

China's Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian called the baseless accusations fact-distorting fabrications and blatant techno-bullying. And Beijing's diplomatic mission in Panama accused Washington of acting like a thief crying "Stop thief".

The US' unwarranted alarm bell rings hollow because Washington has a credibility problem. The US has a long record of electronic surveillance, tapping and cyber operations, including across Latin America and the Caribbean. So when Washington suddenly becomes the hemisphere's anxious aunt warning everyone about "Chinese spyware", Latin Americans have a reasonable question: Who exactly is listening to whom?

And, why should Panama, Brazil, Peru or any other Latin American country be told which telecommunications equipment, drones or cameras it may buy?

Washington's answer is "national security". But that phrase is becoming remarkably elastic. It now seems capable of covering everything from semiconductors and ports to lithium, telecommunications and, apparently, even *siu mai*, Chinese steamed dumplings.

There is a more uncomfortable explanation: China is gaining influence because it is offering things Latin America actually wants. It is building ports, railways, factories and digital infrastructure. The Chancay Port in Peru has shortened shipping times between South America and Asia dramatically. Chinese companies are localizing production of electric vehicles and cooperating on telecommunications, renewable energy and advanced manufacturing projects.

Washington wants Latin America to provide oil and critical minerals for US supply chains and to exclude Chinese companies. The US' trade initiatives come with geopolitical conditions. Its immigration policies have alienated millions of Latin Americans. And the US' maneuvering in the Panama Canal has revived fears that Washington still regards the hemisphere less as a community of sovereign states and more as a US preserve.

That is the problem with the "Donroe Doctrine" as it is known. The old Monroe Doctrine said, in effect, that outsiders should stay out of the US' neighborhood. The new version seems to say something more alarming: Latin Americans themselves should be careful about whom they invite into their neighborhood.

The seizure of control over the Balboa and Cristobal ports after pressure to push out CK Hutchison should be a caution to the region. If a company can operate legally for decades and then discovers that geopolitics has suddenly rewritten the contract, every investor should ask what "sovereignty" means when Washington disapproves of the business partner.

China does not want Latin America to become a zero-sum game arena. If US companies want to win local contracts, they should compete by offering better projects, better financing, better technology and better partnerships — instead of relying on Washington's coercion to dictate whom Latin Americans are permitted to work with.

If Washington keeps shouting "Chinese spy" every time Latin America buys a camera, a drone or a telecom system, it may eventually become just background noise.

Latin American countries have witnessed and taken full note of everything the US has done to Panama, Cuba and Venezuela. And they have noticed who is offering projects — and who is offering threats.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Standards for AI-driven services to help customers

Editor's note: *China's first national standards for coordination between human and artificial intelligence-driven customer service will come into effect on Sept 1. China Central Television spoke to Xue Jun, director of the e-commerce law research center at Peking University, about the new standards. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

The integration of AI into business operations, particularly in after-sales service, is one of the most common applications. AI-powered customer service can significantly reduce operating costs, prompting many companies to adopt AI solutions for handling after-sales inquiries and resolving service issues.

However, while many businesses are reluctant to invest heavily in human customer service, AI technology is not yet fully mature. This has led to a growing number of consumer complaints.

To address this problem, the national standards set rules to guide the development of the sector. The objective is to use technology to deliver after-sales services more efficiently and at lower cost, without compromising the consumer experience.

One common problem is that customers struggle to reach a human customer service representative, often finding themselves trapped in repetitive automated responses or being endlessly directed from one service to another, with no clear path to human assistance.

There are two possible reasons for this. First, although AI is increasingly being used for customer service, the technology is not mature enough to handle every problem. When an AI system encounters an issue it cannot resolve, it may simply keep the customer going around in circles.

Second, some companies may deliberately make it difficult for customers to find a way out of the automated system, hoping to exhaust customers' resolve to pursue their complaints and avoid addressing the underlying issues.

The new standards emphasize coordination between human and AI customer service because the two approaches have different strengths: AI offers efficiency, while humans provide superior user experience. These two strengths are not necessarily in conflict.

As AI technology continues to evolve in China, AI-powered customer service may eventually be able to resolve most customer issues. Then consumers may not care whether they are interacting with an AI system or a real person.

The problem today is that AI technology is still developing. Businesses must not pursue efficiency at the expense of the user experience. This is precisely why coordination between AI and human customer service is important. When AI can effectively handle an issue without affecting the customer experience, it should be used to improve efficiency. However, for complex or unique problems, the system must be able to quickly transfer the case to a human representative.

This coordination is essential to truly respect and protect consumer rights and interests. The new standards establish a very effective mechanism for achieving this coordination.

The potential applications of AI go beyond customer service, including marketing and promotional activities. Unlike human employees, AI systems can operate round the clock without fatigue. But when AI is used for outbound calls or marketing, businesses must strictly comply with the laws and regulations on marketing, advertising and commercial promotion.

They must not infringe on the rights and interests of others or abuse the technology simply because AI is a cheaper option. Technological advances should be used to improve efficiency, but always within the bounds of the law.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:03 PM

VIEWS

China and the World Roundtable | Media Cooperation with New Possibilities

Editor's note: *The 7th Forum on China-Africa Media Cooperation convened in Beijing on Aug 20. One of the parallel sessions, "AI Integrated Applications in the Radio Television and Audio-Visual Sector", explored how artificial intelligence and digital technologies are creating new possibilities for China-Africa media cooperation. Below are reflections from four of the speakers, as reported by Li Wei of China Daily.*

China-Africa can usher in AI media revolution

AI could help Africa find its voice



Aurélie Adam Soulé Zoumarou is the minister of digital economy and communications for Benin.

A young African woman loves to sing, cherishing both her talent and her country. For years, talent like hers was confined by geography, language and the prohibitive costs of reaching a wider audience. However, technology is beginning to change that. With digital platforms, artists who once had only a small audience can make their voice heard far beyond their local communities.

The potential of artificial intelligence in Africa is not just about making existing technologies faster or cheaper. It also offers the opportunity for more people to share their stories, in their own languages, and on their own terms.

This is particularly important in countries such as Benin, where more than 50 languages are spoken. Much of today's digital content is produced in a few dominant languages, creating a less visible digital divide. While people may have access to smartphones or the Internet, the technology often does not speak their language.

AI could change that. It can help produce and translate radio and television programs, educational materials and other forms of public information into local languages at a scale and cost that were previously unimaginable. Instead of relying on expensive, large-scale productions, communities could create content that responds to their own needs and circumstances.

The same technology can also help Africa preserve its rich history. Digital tools can help restore and organize archives, including historical records that might otherwise be lost. This ensures that future generations can connect with their heritage.

But a larger digital public sphere also introduces new risks. When everyone can become a publisher, the question is no longer simply who can speak, but how society can distinguish reliable information from manipulation. Cybersecurity, misinformation and the responsible management of digital platforms will therefore become as important as expanding access to technology itself.

This is where international cooperation can make a difference. Benin's experience shows that cooperation with China should extend beyond the mere transfer of technology. China's expertise in digital education, media platforms and technological applications offers valuable lessons for African countries to adapt to their circumstances. The goal should not be to reproduce another country's model, but to leverage technology to serve local needs.

Africa's technological future should not be measured by the number of AI systems it develops or how quickly it catches up with global technological powers. A more meaningful measure may be whether technology enables more Africans to learn, create, preserve their history and participate in public life.

The AI revolution will be truly inclusive only when it amplifies voices that have too often been left at the margins and empowers them to tell their stories through technology.

Beyond hardware, build human capacity



Evariste Ngamana is the minister of state for communication and media and the government spokesperson of the Central African Republic.

When a country acquires new technology, the most visible signs of progress are often the easiest to quantify: cameras, broadcasting equipment, digital networks and computers. However, for countries striving to build their media industries, the more important question is how technology can create lasting local capabilities.

The experience of the Central African Republic offers valuable insights. In a country where radio and television are essential channels for public information, educating young people and supporting economic activity, digital technology presents enormous opportunities. China has already supported the country in broadcasting, professional training and exchanges among journalists. Such cooperation can enhance media reach and connect more people with information.

Yet technology alone cannot create a flourishing media industry. The Central African Republic is also working to strengthen its media infrastructure, expand coverage, improve content production and develop a larger pool of trained professionals. But several basic constraints have to be addressed. Sophisticated broadcasting systems need reliable power, connectivity and maintenance systems. A newsroom cannot become digitally capable simply because new computers have been installed.

This is why the most important part of digital cooperation may be the part that is least visible: people.

A camera can be delivered, and a broadcasting network can be built. But the ability to operate a newsroom, produce engaging programs, edit videos, manage digital platforms and develop sustainable media businesses has to be cultivated. Developing local expertise is essential to turning technological cooperation into sustainable development.

This distinction becomes even more important as AI transforms the economics of content production. Social media and AI tools are lowering the cost of producing and distributing audio and video. For young people in the Central African Republic, this could open possibilities that were once reserved for organizations with substantial financial and technical resources. They can now become not merely audiences for digital content, but also its producers.

The significance of this shift extends beyond the media industry. A country capable of producing its own news, educational programs and cultural content has greater capacity to communicate with its citizens and to present its perspective to the outside world. Digital transformation, in this sense, becomes a question of who gets to create and disseminate knowledge.

The next stage of China-Central African Republic cooperation should place greater emphasis on joint capacity-building. Training journalists, developing technical skills and jointly producing audiovisual content could have a more significant impact than adding more hardware. Joint production, in particular, offers a way to turn cooperation from something delivered by one side into something created by both.

That doesn't mean infrastructure is not important. On the contrary, reliable electricity, communications networks and appropriate equipment are essential. But infrastructure should be developed alongside training, knowledge transfer and long-term maintenance. Otherwise, the hardware may outlast the capacity needed to operate it.

This principle applies in other countries as well. Across the developing world, digital transformation is often described as a race to acquire the latest technologies. But technological development is not a shopping list. The real question is whether societies can absorb technology, adapt it to local circumstances and eventually use it to create something of their own.

The success of international digital cooperation should therefore not be measured by what is delivered, but by what endures: the skills acquired, the local industries created, the content produced and the capacity to innovate and develop sustainably in local contexts.

The ultimate goal of cooperation is not merely to increase the use of technology, but to empower people to adapt, innovate and create with it. It is to give people the capacity to make technology their own.

When everyone can create, trust matters more

For much of modern history, publishing required an institution. A newspaper needed a printing press; a television station needed cameras, studios and transmission needed networks; a broadcaster needed a frequency; and a publisher needed a distribution system.

That world is rapidly changing. Today, a smartphone can be a camera, a radio station, a television studio and a publishing house all at once. Social media can transform an ordinary person into a global broadcaster. AI is propelling that transformation further, making it possible to produce text, images, audio and video with a speed and sophistication that once required a professional newsroom.



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY



Ibrahim Manzo Diallo is the president of the National Communications Observatory, Niger's media regulatory authority.

This may be one of the most consequential changes in media history. It gives millions of people a new ability to speak for themselves. But it also poses a challenge that is hard to ignore: When everyone can produce information, how do we determine what to trust?

AI can help a journalist produce an audiovisual report in minutes. It can also generate images of events that never happened, imitate voices of people who never spoke and create videos that appear to show something that never occurred. Social media can spread knowledge to millions of people, but the same networks can also amplify rumors, manipulation and disinformation at extraordinary speed.

The challenge, therefore, is not to choose between technological progress and caution. It is to build the institutions, professional standards and public literacy that enable societies to benefit from new technologies without being overwhelmed by their abuse.

This is reshaping media regulation. In the age of radio and television, regulators focused primarily on broadcasters: who could operate, what could be transmitted and the standards to be followed. The digital world is much harder to contain. When almost anyone can publish and algorithms can distribute content to millions, regulation must increasingly address the information environment itself.

This requires more than rules. It requires people who understand technology, journalism and ethics simultaneously. Young people, in particular, need the ability to recognize manipulated information, understand how digital platforms shape what they see and question content that appears convincing simply because it looks real. Media literacy is no longer a specialist skill, but a fundamental aspect of citizenship.

For African countries, there is another dimension to this challenge. The question is not only whether Africans can consume information, but who gets to produce the images and narratives through which Africa is understood.

The ability to produce and distribute their own content offers African countries the opportunity to introduce more diverse perspectives into the global information space. Television programs, documentaries, films and digital media produced by African journalists and creators can offer perspectives that are difficult to capture from afar. The goal should not be to replace one dominant narrative with another, but to create a more plural information space where different societies can speak for themselves and listen to one another.

This is one area where China-Africa media cooperation can take on a broader meaning. Cooperation should go beyond technology and equipment to include professional exchanges, joint research, training and, above all, co-production. Chinese and African media organizations could collaborate on documentaries, television programs, journalist exchanges and mechanisms for verifying digital content. Such projects would not merely increase the volume of information but would also help build mutual understanding.

China's expertise in applying AI and digital technologies to the audiovisual sector, as well as its efforts in cybersecurity and digital media, offers useful areas for cooperation. But the objective should not be to import a ready-made model. The goal is to develop approaches that reflect local realities while allowing countries to learn from one another.

Africa's young population adds urgency to this effort. A young person with a smartphone and an internet connection can now acquire skills, create a documentary, build an audience or start a digital enterprise with resources that were once not enough. The task is to make sure that these new tools create producers and creators rather than merely larger audiences.

The larger question facing the media industry is therefore no longer who has access to information, but who has the ability to create it, verify it and give it meaning.

AI may make information abundant, production faster and communication cheaper. But it cannot decide what deserves to be believed. That remains a human responsibility — and perhaps the most important one the digital age has given us.

Time for Africa to take tech leapfrog



Yang Hanhan is the director of the AI-generated short drama "Huo Qubing".

For much of the past century, the global film industry has been governed by a simple fact: making movies is expensive. Money, talent, technology and distribution have created formidable barriers to entry, allowing only a few Western countries to dominate the industry and shape the narratives that reach global audiences.

AI is beginning to change that equation. For developing countries, it offers something more important than a cheaper way to make films: the chance to bypass an entire industrial model rather than spend decades trying to catch up with it.

There are three propositions to consider. First, AI is breaking down the century-old barriers of the traditional film industry. Second, China has already demonstrated on an industrial scale that AI-generated content can dramatically reduce production costs while accelerating the process. Third, Africa might be uniquely positioned to seize this opportunity, precisely because it is not constrained by the legacy of a mature film industry.

Why have latecomers struggled to compete with Hollywood and other established film industries? The answer lies in four barriers: capital, talent, distribution and industrial infrastructure.

A successful feature film or television series is the result of decades of accumulated expertise, huge financial investment, specialized teams and cross-border distribution networks. Established film powers have spent generations building these systems. For newcomers, replicating them from scratch is costly, time-consuming and, ultimately limiting.

AI changes the starting point. A conventional blockbuster such as *Avengers: Endgame* required hundreds of people and months of work on visual effects. By contrast, comparable AI-generated material can now be produced by a single creator in roughly an hour, at a computing cost of less than 1,000 yuan ($149), based on the experience of Chinese creators. The significance is not merely that one film can be made more cheaply, but that an entire layer of industrial accumulation can be bypassed.

China's emerging AI film industry offers a glimpse of what that could look like. Production can now be managed through an end-to-end AIGC workflow, covering everything from scripts and storyboards to visual assets, video, music and distribution. This means smaller teams, shorter production cycles and much lower costs. A core team of three to five people can produce a 120-minute AI drama within three days at a computing cost of less than 30,000 yuan. A similar live-action production would typically require months, dozens of professionals and hundreds of thousands — or even millions — of yuan.

Nor is AI limited to short dramas. It is already being applied to films, animation, special effects, advertising, promotional videos and digital characters. In other words, AI is not simply making conventional productions more efficient. It is expanding what can be produced by creators who previously lacked the resources to enter the industry.

This is where Africa may have an unexpected advantage. Africa's greatest asset is cultural abundance: its languages, histories, traditions, landscapes and diverse societies. Global audiences may be increasingly familiar with standardized Hollywood formulas, but stories rooted in the African experience remain dramatically underrepresented on the world stage. For decades, production constraints limited the reach of those stories. AI could remove that constraint.

The technology is highly adaptable. Characters, settings and visual styles can be localized rapidly, allowing established production workflows to be combined with African stories, aesthetics and cultural references. The result could be something more significant than cheaper filmmaking: the creation of a new global content ecosystem in which African creators are not merely consumers of other people's stories, but producers of their own.

For a century, much of the world's cinematic influence has been concentrated in a handful of countries. The opportunity created by AI is not to run faster on the old track, but to build a new one.

That is the real meaning of technological leapfrogging — and Africa has every reason to believe it can be among the leaders of the new race.

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

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:03 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

ERIK SOLHEIM

Chinese miracle

It shows that, with the right approach and continued collective efforts, one generation can travel a road that took others centuries



Today China is one of the fastest moderning countries on Earth. Extreme poverty is gone and the green transformation of the global economy runs through China. No other major nation, at any point in human history, has reduced poverty at such scale and such speed.

Out of that long road, I draw four lessons for the rest of the world.

The first lesson is political leadership dedicated to going the last mile to eradicate poverty. At the end of 2012, close to 100 million rural Chinese still lived below the poverty line. They were not in Shanghai or Shenzhen. They were in the mountains of Gansu, Guizhou and Yunnan provinces, in villages the market would never reach on its own. China sent officials to live in those villages and solve the problem family by family. Could this household run ecotourism? Could that one grow a new mountain crop, or sell handicrafts online? Should another move to a town nearby? Not cash handouts but creating productive work, for everyone, down to the very last village. I know of no other country that has attempted anything like it. By 2020 the job was done. Every last person was helped out of extreme poverty. That is what leadership dedicated to development actually means.

The second lesson is family farming. China's reforms started in the fields. Earlier this year I visited Xiaogang village in Anhui province, where it all began. In 1978, 18 farmers there divided the collective land among their families and started working it as their own. One year later the harvest jumped. Their village became the model for the whole country, and the reform that followed lifted many people out of hunger. I asked one of those farmers, now an old man, what made the difference. His answer has stayed with me. "We had no idea we were making history," he said. "We only wanted our families to eat well. That is the entire secret." A family that owns its harvest tends its land like a garden and squeezes more from each hectare than vast industrial estates manage. And a nation of hundreds of millions of such families is food secure in the most fundamental way, because the people who grow the food are the people who eat it, with the surplus flowing to the towns and the income staying in the countryside to pay for houses and schools.



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

The third lesson is special economic zones, concentrating industries in competitive regions. Under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, China created four zones. The most famous, Shenzhen, sat next to Hong Kong. In 1980, it was a fishing town of some 30,000 people. Today, it is a city of over 18 million, one of the fastest-growing cities in the history of the world. The idea behind it is simple. Gather the best people, the best technology and firm government support in one place and let them learn from each other.

The United States proves the same point today. Some of the finest computer talents crowd into the San Francisco Bay Area, and out of that concentration has come one of the strongest innovation hubs in the world. Many governments hesitate to favor one city over others. But for a country trying to break into world markets, there is no way around concentration. And the development paradigm of special zone travels well beyond China. I have seen it in Ethiopia. Its construction of industrial parks draws on the development experience of Shenzhen, and Chinese companies such as shoemaker Huajian helped build them.

The fourth lesson is that green is gold. Going green is not a constraint on the economy. It is a huge opportunity for jobs and prosperity. In the past, development meant pollution, because fossil fuels were the only road to wealth. The United Kingdom and the US both took that road. In 2005, when visiting Anji county, Xi Jinping, then Party secretary of Zhejiang province, said that lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets. China has since proved it in hard numbers. According to China's General Administration of Customs, electric vehicles, lithium batteries and solar products, what the Chinese call "the new three", earned close to 1.3 trillion yuan ($192.8 billion) in exports in 2025, three and a half times the level of 2020, and have made China the indispensable nation of the green economy.

The green wave has moved beyond industry into nature itself. China has the largest area of artificial afforestation by far. More than 66 billion trees have been planted since 1978. I have seen them myself in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region, walls of forest rising against the desert. China is building the world's largest national park system and has brought the giant panda and the snow leopard back from the edge of extinction. As one keynote speaker at the Symposium 2026 for Eco Forum Global Guiyang in Guiyang, Guizhou province, this summer I heard Chinese colleagues explain how they are turning the restoration of rivers such as Chishui River into tourism and growth. The environment is no longer the price of development. It is an engine of it.

And the growth engine is being renewed again. The old three pillars of Chinese exports were built on intensive labor. Remarkably China remains the global leader in all three.

The new three — electric cars, batteries and solar panels — are built on green technology. Now China speaks of the next new three — artificial intelligence, robotics and innovative medicine. The change runs deeper than products. China is beginning to export capabilities, not just goods but the knowledge behind them, from drug development to intelligent manufacturing. The country that once staked its future on labor-intensive industries is now staking it on scientific innovation.

Can these lessons be copied wholesale? No. The whole system cannot be transplanted. But the lessons and inspiration can travel, and each of the four lessons has already demonstrated this in practice.

The thread that runs through all four lessons is the one those farmers in Xiaogang grasped without any theory. Under strong leadership, people have a real reason to build, and they will build farms that reward hard work, zones that gather talent and a green economy that renews the country. Each is a way of releasing the energy of ordinary people and making sure no one is left out. And that is why China's message to the developing world is one of enormous hope.

The author is the chair of the Europe-Asia Center and the former under-secretary-general of the United Nations. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

LI SILE AND ZHANG XIAOHUI

Old wisdom of balance shines anew

Shaped by ancient Chinese philosophy, the practice of *taijiquan* can help foster inner composure and mutual understanding across civilizations



Li Sile



Zhang Xiaohui

Over the centuries, *taijiquan*, or tai chi, has evolved from being a combat-oriented martial art form — rooted in traditional Chinese principles of yin and yang equilibrium and flexible resistance, and practiced by a relatively small circle — into an everyday practice that emphasizes physical health, mental well-being and harmonious living.

Unlike its combative origins, modern international *taijiquan* competitions are not fighting sports. They judge athletes on the execution of choreographed routines, assessing form, balance, rhythm and flow. The sport's growing popularity was vividly demonstrated in April at the fifth World Taijiquan Championships in Burgas, Bulgaria, which drew 400 athletes from 44 countries and regions — up from 320 participants from 32 nations and regions in the previous edition in Singapore. This November, *taijiquan* will reach another historic milestone when it becomes an official medal event at the Summer Youth Olympic Games in Dakar, Senegal.

In recent years, greater evidence has emerged that *taijiquan* has transcended its martial arts origins to become a cross-cultural lifestyle, embraced by people seeking relief from constant strain and a gateway to mutual understanding across divides.

In 2020, UNESCO inscribed *taijiquan* on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Last year, UNESCO designated March 21 as International Taijiquan Day, the first UN-recognized international day named after a martial art.

Against the backdrop of intensified cultural competition and widespread societal anxiety, the centuries-old practice delivers humble, tangible lessons for individuals and communities striving to build gentler, more harmonious human connections.

Rooted in intertwined traditional thought, *taijiquan* embeds the core Taoist ideas of yin and yang equilibrium and the Confucian preference for moderate coexistence within every shift of weight and turn of the limbs. Its accessible, body-based wisdom requires no complex academic background, making it uniquely capable of bridging gaps between disparate communities across continents.

Statistics from China's national sports authority confirm *taijiquan* attracts regular enthusiasts across more than 180 countries and regions. About 3 million overseas learners have become registered formal lineage disciples under certified Chinese masters, and thousands of international students travel each year to Wudang Mountain in Hubei province for long-term immersive training. Jake Pinnick, a practitioner from the United States, who obtained formal lineage certification after prolonged practice on Wudang Mountain, a Taoist holy site, exemplifies how consistent practice bridges cultural divides through shared, embodied experience.

Major countries including the US, Germany and Japan have built nationwide *taijiquan* or tai chi federations, arranging regular public courses and inter-city group events to share this harmony-centered practice with local residents.

This traditional wisdom has steadily woven itself into mainstream global daily life. Primary and secondary schools across multiple nations integrate *taijiquan* into scheduled break-time activities, while some universities list it as an official physical education elective.

Young people's surging enthusiasm for *taijiquan* may stem organically from their shared modern struggles and aspirations to find mental and physical equilibrium amid mounting daily pressures, rather than top-down promotion.

Confrontational mindsets continue to drive estrangement between neighbors, communities and nations, leaving people worldwide searching for simple, low-cost ways to rebuild mutual trust. *Taijiquan* meets this demand by translating millennia-old Chinese philosophical values into repeatable everyday physical practice, prioritizing personal inner peace as the foundation of collective harmony.

Turning to its philosophical core, *taijiquan* embodies a foundational precept long embedded in Chinese thought: sustainable collective harmony invariably originates from individual inner tranquility. Texts from Taoist and Confucian classics all uphold this principle, which *taijiquan* brings to life through structured physical movement.

As practitioners flow through often slow, seamless routines, they gradually release built-up stress, irritation and latent hostility, stepping out of humanity's instinctive "fight or flight" defensive mode. Far from simple leisure or relaxation, each sequenced *taijiquan* motion guides practitioners toward balancing internal yin and yang energies, calming inner turmoil to foster a placid, compromise-oriented outlook that shapes how people interact with those around them.

Another philosophical pillar drawn from ancient Taoist thought centers on the enduring maxim from the *Tao Te Ching*: Gentleness prevails over rigidity, and pliability over brute strength. Rejecting the reflex to meet friction with head-on resistance, *taijiquan* trains practitioners to align with natural rhythms and respond flexibly and strategically when met with overwhelming force. This lesson comes to life during pushing-hands drills, in which practitioners anchor their core firmly while flexing appropriately against outside pressure.

Translated into everyday human interactions, this mindset offers a pragmatic blueprint for cross-group coexistence: hold fast to one's own identity and core values, yet respect the unique life paths and legitimate needs of others. This way of thinking stands as a gentle counterweight to zero-sum, adversarial mindsets that strain personal, community and cross-cultural bonds, taking measured flexibility not as weakness, but as thoughtful, sustainable conduct for shared living.

Adding to its universal appeal, *taijiquan* is also easy to pick up. Built around fundamental bodily actions familiar to every human being — standing, stepping and shifting weight — it easily crosses geographic and cultural divides without rigid entry barriers.

Unlike ideologies or spiritual traditions that demand strict doctrinal commitment, *taijiquan* requires no prior adherence to specific beliefs. Communication forged through shared body movement bypasses linguistic barriers, opening up an organic space for spontaneous mutual understanding among people of disparate cultural backgrounds.

International Taijiquan Day and its accompanying global celebrations now sit as a footnote to *taijiquan*'s worldwide expansion. But the art's power to unite people operates independently of that single annual observance. The core insight behind the UN's institutional recognition shines brightly: Humanity universally craves practical tools to ease internal unrest and bridge divides, and *taijiquan* fills this grassroots need. It equips ordinary people with small, transformative personal qualities to engage others with patience and restraint.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Every opening and closing stance of *taijiquan* gently recalibrates a practitioner's emotional balance, and every calm-minded participant carries that balanced mindset into daily exchanges, adding incremental warmth and understanding to an increasingly volatile and fragmented social landscape.

As millions of people across the world embed harmony-focused ancient wisdom into their everyday lives through regular *taijiquan* practice, mutual respect may evolve from abstract ideal into a lived, accessible reality. Anchored in every extended breath and coordinated movement, humanity's collective pursuit of shared well-being develops into a persistent, embodied global practice — solid proof that age-old Chinese wisdom of balance can deliver gentle, practical guidance for people everywhere seeking kinder, more harmonious ways to live alongside one another.

Li Sile is the deputy dean and a professor at the School of Foreign Languages at Hubei University of Chinese Medicine. Zhang Xiaohui is an associate professor at Henan University. The authors contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:03 PM

BUSINESS

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

Bourse seen enduring fluctuations

Equities expected to retain their longer-term investment appeal

By ZHOU LANXU in Beijing and **SHI JING** in Shanghai

Chinese equities are expected to retain their longer-term investment appeal despite spillovers from heightened global market volatility, underpinned by China's distinct technology opportunities and ongoing reforms to improve shareholder returns, experts said.

The A-share market has been fluctuating amid external volatility as rising US long-term Treasury bond yields and sticky inflation expectations — alongside ongoing geopolitical tensions — put global equities under pressure.

Domestically, concerns that the current listing wave of tech champions — such as chipmaker CXMT and Unitree Robotics — might possibly strain market liquidity also weighed on the market.

A shares ended mixed on Tuesday, with the benchmark Shanghai Composite Index edging up 0.19 percent to 3,889.44 points, while the growth-oriented ChiNext Index fell 1 percent to 3,397.52 points.

Despite the recent volatility, UBS' medium-term view on Chinese equities remains constructive. The Swiss wealth manager continues to rate China equities as attractive, while emphasizing that the opportunity set is broader and more balanced than it was earlier in the year.

James Wang, head of China strategy at UBS Investment Bank Research, said that northbound flows via the stock connect programs turned net positive in the second quarter, with a record $33 billion in net inflows into A shares.

That was compared to a $1.8 billion outflow in the previous quarter, Wang said, led by purchases in the industrials and information technology sectors.

Zhu Liang, chief investment officer for AllianceBernstein in China, said the Chinese market offers opportunities arising from both growth-oriented sectors and ongoing reforms.

"In artificial intelligence, while Chinese tech companies exposed to global export supply chains could be affected by overseas volatility, a more diversified range of AI opportunities — including those engaged in homegrown alternatives to imported technologies and cost-effective large language models — continues to offer investment value."

Nevertheless, Zhu said investors should avoid excessive concentration in a single AI theme given the historically extreme valuation gap between A-share high and low-valuation sectors, citing city commercial banks as a potential sector to help offset volatility associated with the AI theme.

On the reform front, Zhu said regulators have been advancing improvements in corporate governance, while listed companies have gradually increased dividend payouts and share buybacks. The overall market has begun to see net share buybacks rather than net financing, providing support for A-share performance.

At a meeting of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee on July 30, it was stressed that comprehensive reforms of investment and financing in the capital market should be deepened to enhance its resilience and boost market confidence.

Kelvin Tay, chief investment officer for Asia at Pictet Wealth Management, said the large-scale offerings of emerging technology champions in China may create a short-term imbalance between stock supply and demand, weighing on market performance this year.

However, such near-term pressures do not undermine the longer-term investment case for China, Tay said, adding that he sees exposure to China as essential for investors' portfolios over the next five to seven years.

"The newly listed companies have strong fundamentals, with decent profitability and positive net cash flow, pointing to solid long-term growth potential for the Chinese stock market," Tay said.

Liu Jipeng, a professor at China University of Political Science and Law and a senior capital market expert, said a healthy bourse should enable the majority of investors to benefit from long-term value creation, rather than becoming a zero-sum game in which gains by a small group come at the expense of others.

Liu said regulatory efforts should prioritize market fairness, arguing that some quantitative trading strategies that rely on technological advantages to profit at the expense of ordinary investors should be better regulated.

Tian Xuan, dean of Peking University's Guanghua School of Management, suggested that policies for refinancing — as well as mergers and acquisitions — should be further optimized so that the quality of listed companies can be improved from the outset.

Contact the writers at zhoulanxv@chinadaily.com.cn

Briefly

Bankruptcy law draft revision reviewed

Chinese lawmakers on Tuesday began reviewing a draft revision to the Enterprise Bankruptcy Law, with the second draft incorporating refinements to provisions on individual bankruptcy, bankruptcy protection, restructuring and cross-border bankruptcy. Based on feedback from the first draft, the second draft adds a new section on pre-restructuring consultation. In addition, the draft improves provisions on cross-border bankruptcy, clarifying the extraterritorial effect of bankruptcy proceedings, the jurisdiction of Chinese courts and mechanisms for international judicial assistance. The current law was enacted in 2007. The first draft of the revision was submitted to the 17th session of the 14th National People's Congress Standing Committee in September 2025 and was later released for public comment.

Yuan weakens against greenback

The central parity rate of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, weakened 11 pips to 6.7852 against the US dollar on Tuesday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System. In China's spot foreign exchange market, the yuan is allowed to rise or fall by 2 percent from the central parity rate each trading day.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY



View of Shein's booth during an expo in Guangzhou, Guangdong province. HUANG TAIMING / FOR CHINA DAILY

What is behind Shein's drop in valuation?

By LI JIAYING
lijiaying@chinadaily.com.cn

Shein's Hong Kong IPO is testing how public investors value a global e-commerce model being reshaped by slower growth, rising fulfillment costs and tighter rules for low-value parcels, industry experts said.

At the top of the proposed HK$47.6 ($6.07) to HK$49.5 range, Shein would have a market capitalization of up to $27 billion, roughly 70 percent below its nearly $100 billion private valuation in 2022.

Pan Helin, a member of the expert committee for information and communication economy under the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, attributed the valuation reset partly to the maturity of e-commerce, where growth has slowed and competition has intensified.

"Shein's rapid rise in 2022 coincided with overseas supply-chain disruptions and sharp price increases, while today's market conditions leave less room for the exceptional growth expectations reflected in its earlier private valuation," Pan said.

Pan added that Hong Kong investors generally apply more restrained valuations to mature internet businesses, particularly apparel e-commerce, which operates in a largely established market. Capital has also recently shifted toward artificial intelligence-related companies, further limiting the valuation premium available to traditional e-commerce platforms, he said.

Although HK-listed e-commerce and internet companies are currently trading at relatively low valuations, a Hong Kong listing could help Shein reduce the compliance risks associated with cross-border fundraising and facilitate its domestic operations, Pan noted.

"It would give Shein access to a market recognized by international investors while also bringing it closer to domestic investors, particularly as the Chinese mainland could become a more important growth market for the company in the future," he said.

Pan's comments came as overseas policy changes have added to the company's operating pressure. The United States ended duty-free de minimis treatment in May 2025 for covered goods from the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong that had previously entered in parcels valued at no more than $800. From July 1 this year, the European Union also abolished its customs-duty exemption for consignments valued at no more than 150 euros ($175) and introduced a temporary duty of 3 euros per item category.

The e-commerce giant is responding by shifting from its previous direct-to-consumer shipping model into a more flexible business-to-business-to-consumer pattern — consolidating goods in China, shipping them to Europe in bulk and completing delivery from local warehouses, said Chen Liteng, a senior analyst at the Internet Economy Institute, a domestic consultancy.

"This model subjects the goods to the EU's regular apparel import tariffs instead of a flat duty on each item category," Chen said. "Even after adding the cost of sorting, packing and local delivery, the model's total cost remains below the per-category duty incurred by direct shipment of small parcels."

The senior analyst added that the use of local warehouses could also reduce customs-related costs while allowing Shein to retain the inventory discipline of its signature "test-and-repeat" model, under which products are initially made in small batches and replenished according to demand.

The IPO comprises about 280 million Class B shares. At the midpoint, without over-allotment, net proceeds are expected to reach HK$13.1 billion. According to its prospectus, the company has earmarked 40 percent for technology capabilities, 40 percent for brand building and global expansion, 10 percent for corporate responsibility and the balance for general purposes.

Pool cleaning robots make global splash

By ZHENG YIRAN in Shanghai
zhengyiran@chinadaily.com.cn

With technological breakthroughs, Chinese companies are driving structural changes in the pool cleaning robot sector.

According to a recent report jointly released by global market consultancy IDC, the global shipment of pool cleaning robots is expected to hit 3.97 million units by 2029, with a compound annual growth rate of over 20 percent.

The market pattern dominated by foreign companies five years ago is gradually being rewritten by domestic manufacturers. On the cross-border export side, a group of Chinese enterprises with self-developed capabilities have transformed from simple production execution roles to technology solution exporters.

Data from market consultancy huaon.com show that in 2024, the world's top five cable-free swimming pool cleaning robots in terms of shipment were all Chinese companies — Wybotics Co Ltd, Sunwoda Electronic Co Ltd, Sensomics, Wavefuture and Shenzhen Aiper Intelligent Co Ltd. The five companies took up 51.4 percent of the world's cable-free swimming pool cleaning robot market.

Another Chinese company from Taizhou in East China's Zhejiang province, Deep Cleaner, is also making a noticeable splash in the market. Established in 2022, the company had an annual shipment volume of over 100,000 units by 2025, a customer repurchase rate exceeding 70 percent, and a product return rate controlled at 2 percent to 3 percent, far below the industry average of around 15 percent.



A pool cleaning robot seen at an expo in Tianjin earlier this year. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

In addition, more than 95 percent of the company's products are sold to overseas markets, covering three major categories — underwater cleaning, water surface cleaning and swimming pool disinfection and sterilization, and all core components are self-developed.

Wang Hua, general manager of Deep Cleaner, said: "Pool cleaning robots are a category with a high proportion of plastic parts. The shell, internal structural components, transmission gears, seals — almost all are injection molding parts built on molds. The first step for a swimming pool robot from design to mass production is not the circuit board or motor, but the mold."

The factory of the company is located in Huangyan in Taizhou, the most densely populated area of China's mold industry. From mold design, steel processing, heat treatment, mold testing to injection molding mass production, Huangyan has the most complete mold industry chain cluster in China. Whether it's mold delivery time or repair response speed, Huangyan takes a lead in the country.

In terms of research and development, the company invests 7 million yuan ($1.04 million) to 8 million yuan annually, and has technical cooperation with Zhejiang University and Zhejiang University of Technology. These two universities have a deep academic accumulation in the fields of motor control, fluid mechanics and materials science, which happen to coincide with the core technology direction of swimming pool cleaning robots.

Lin Xianping, an associate professor at Hangzhou City University, said that domestic swimming pool robots are completing the transformation from original equipment manufacturer assembly to technical solution output, with the vast majority of products sold to the European, American and Australian markets.

Intensified efforts to help attract more FDI

By ZHANG CHENXU
zhangchenxu@chinadaily.com.cn

China's intensified efforts to attract foreign investment and promote two-way investment cooperation will help global businesses better tap opportunities arising from the country's vast market and innovation-driven industrial upgrading, while underscoring its firm commitment to opening-up, officials and experts said.

Their remarks came ahead of the 26th China International Fair for Investment and Trade, one of the country's key platforms for promoting mutual investment.

Scheduled to take place Sept 8 to 11 in Xiamen, Fujian province, the fair is expected to connect capital with projects across borders, reinforcing China's role as both a major destination for — and source of — global investment, they added.

"The fair has so far drawn delegations from 123 countries and regions, with 60 set to take part as exhibitors," Ling Ji, vice-minister of commerce and deputy China international trade representative, said at a news conference in Beijing on Tuesday.

Finland and Saudi Arabia will serve as guest countries of honor at this year's fair, Ling said. Saudi Arabia will send a large economic delegation to CIFIT for the first time. Investment from the kingdom into China surged 343.7 percent year-on-year in the first seven months, Ling's ministry said.

Zhao Zenglian, vice-governor of Fujian province, said the exhibition area at this year's fair will cover 200,000 square meters. The fair will feature 14 specialized zones spanning three major sections — "Invest in China", "Chinese investment" and "International investment".

Foreign firms and business associations have also shown strong interest in attending, Ling said.

Foreign investors now look beyond merely labor and land costs, placing greater weight on China's industrial ecosystem, infrastructure, access to green power and computing capacity, he added.

The latest data demonstrate that shift. In the first seven months, the number of newly established foreign-invested enterprises in China rose 4.4 percent year-on-year to 37,711, while foreign direct investment in actual use totaled 438.33 billion yuan ($65.23 billion), with the pace of decline easing from a year earlier, said the Ministry of Commerce.

Notably, FDI in high-tech industries rose 32.7 percent year-on-year, accounting for more than 40 percent of the national total, Ling said.

In a world facing rising protectionism and geopolitical tensions, foreign enterprises are looking to deepen their investment in China as a hedge against external shocks, said Zhou Mi, a senior researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation.

On outbound investment, Ling said China's outward FDI flows rose 11.1 percent year-on-year to $213.58 billion in 2025, while its total accumulated outward FDI value reached $3.4 trillion, ranking among the world's top three for the ninth consecutive year.

China will broaden economic and trade cooperation with other countries in the second half, expand trade in services and promote more balanced trade, according to a State Council report on the implementation of this year's plan for national economic and social development, delivered to the NPC Standing Committee for review on Tuesday.

The report also called for better outbound investment management, stronger support services for Chinese companies overseas, and further efforts to attract and make better use of foreign investment.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:03 PM

BUSINESS

Hunan scenic area boosts hot spot bona fides

Wulingyuan's spiked peaks made famous in 2009 blockbuster movie *Avatar*





Top: Foreign visitors get a taste of local wedding customs in Zhangjiajie, Hunan province, on Aug 14.
Above: Visitors experience the Cili Banban Dragon boat in Zhangjiajie on Aug 14.
PHOTOS BY GENG FEIFEI / CHINA DAILY

By LI JING
lijing2009@chinadaily.com.cn

On a theater stage framed by the towering sandstone peaks of Wulingyuan Scenic Area in Zhangjiajie, Hunan province, Pablo, a Spanish tourist, donned traditional Tujia wedding attire, playing the role of bridegroom as hundreds of spectators cheered.

The mock ceremony at Charming Xiangxi Theater offered him an unforgettable introduction to local customs. For local business owners and operators, it represents something more strategic — a golden opportunity to attract tourist revenue after travelers descend from the world-famous Zhangjiajie peaks.

"We had never seen a performance like this," Pablo said afterwards. "I would like to learn more about traditional Chinese culture."

Across Zhangjiajie and neighboring historical towns in western Hunan, rising inbound arrivals are encouraging businesses to expand beyond scenic-area tickets into evening entertainment, accommodation, dining and cultural experiences.

Official data underscore the momentum. Zhangjiajie welcomed 860,700 inbound visits from 195 countries and regions in the first seven months, up by 19.01 percent year-on-year. Tourism foreign-exchange earnings increased 40.52 percent to $98.5 million.

The demographic profile of visitors is also undergoing a structural shift. European and US travelers accounted for nearly 35 percent of total inbound arrivals, with their numbers rising 211.36 percent year-on-year and helping diversify a market long dominated by travelers from South Korea.

This surge has been powered in large part by China's expanding visa-free policies. China has expanded unilateral visa-free access to citizens of 50 countries for stays of up to 30 days, while nationals of 57 countries are eligible for its visa-free transit policy, following the addition of Kyrgyzstan and Vietnam on Thursday.

Zhangjiajie Hehua International Airport is among the 65 designated ports for the transit policy. The airport operates 13 passenger routes to eight countries and regions, and long-haul travel Western visitors increasingly bundle the city into multi-stop itineraries across China.

For years, Zhangjiajie's international acclaim rested largely on its quartz-sandstone pillars, famously associated with the floating mountains in the blockbuster 2009 film *Avatar*. Today, regional stakeholders view these iconic vistas merely as the starting point of an extended consumer journey.

"The underlying business logic is to shift from one-off gate admissions to capturing spending across the entire travel chain as visitors extend their stays. Accommodation, dining, performances and immersive cultural experiences can all generate additional revenue," said Huang Yuanji, vice-president of Hunan University of Finance and Economics.

At Charming Xiangxi Theater, which showcases the heritage of the Tujia, Miao and other ethnic groups, the number of overseas visitors reached 116,000 from 188 countries and regions between January and July, up 43 percent year-on-year.

To bridge cultural divides, the theater provides subtitles in English and Korean, with Russian and Spanish in the works. Promotional materials have also been tailored. Traditional acrobatic acts, for example, are introduced using references to Chinese kung fu that foreign viewers intuitively grasp.

"Foreign visitors might not know what Xiangxi is, but they know Zhangjiajie's mountains and are interested in authentic traditions. Our job is to interpret local heritage in ways they understand," said Xu Shan, general manager of the theater.

A short distance away, Xiangxi Fu, a newly opened cultural tourism attraction in Wulingyuan, welcomes guests with traditional drum performances, ethnic folk songs and ceremonial welcome wine before ushering them into a courtyard complex dedicated to centuries of Tusi history.

The attraction says foreign visitors account for 30 to 40 percent of its tourists.

"Our goal is to transform static heritage exhibitions into participatory workshops and performances, giving visitors compelling reasons to linger in town after their mountain hikes," said Tang Linfang, the site's marketing director.

A different experiment is unfolding in downtown Zhangjiajie. On July 10, Dayong ancient town reopened after an extensive renovation led by Zhangjiajie mango cultural tourism, a joint venture involving local operators and leading broadcast media.

The riverside complex blends historical architectural style streets with television-themed shops, youth-oriented cultural merchandise, craft workshops, street performances and evening boat rides. Within its first month, it drew more than 1 million visits and generated more than 10 million yuan ($1.49 million) in business turnover.

"We want travelers who spend their daylight hours among the peaks to return downtown at night for an entirely different cultural texture," said Zhou Yang, general manager of the operating company, adding that roughly 80 percent of weekend visitors arrive after dusk.

This strategy to capture extended stays is rippling across neighboring destinations in the Xiangxi Tujia and Miao autonomous prefecture.

In the town of Furong, perched dramatically above a cascading waterfall, foreign tourists browse tea workshops, stroll through historical alleyways and stop to dine alongside locals who still live inside the centuries-old settlement.

The town received 6.53 million visits in 2025, including 338,000 from overseas, up 61 percent year-on-year, according to local official figures.

Zhong Fei, chairman of Hunan Huaxia Investment Group — which operates the destination through a JV with the local government — said international tourists accounted for roughly 40 percent of independent arrivals and about half of independent visitor spending.

Evening performances, guesthouses and hands-on workshops have helped extend average stays from half a day to one or two nights in the town, Zhong said.

Local restaurants have also adjusted. Local smoked pork appears on pizzas and in burgers, while coffee is sweetened with local ginger candy, offering foreign visitors familiar formats with local flavors.

"The visitors are not just coming for the scenery. They are interested in the culture and in seeing how local people live," Zhong said.

Crucially, the town has preserved its ancient social fabric, retaining native residents within the scenic core. The settlement hosts roughly 200 guesthouses and nearly 1,500 small nighttime enterprises, with locals making up 80 percent of the resort's workforce.

Further south, Fenghuang ancient town received 111,313 inbound tourist visits in the first half, up 5.12 percent year-on-year, while inbound tourism spending increased 15.18 percent to $44.3 million, said Xiang Yang, deputy head of the Fenghuang county government.

To connect these scattered gems, Hunan provincial authorities are accelerating development of the "Greater Zhangjiajie" international tourism zone, spanning 38 county-level areas across five cities and prefectures, including Zhangjiajie, Xiangxi and Huaihua.

The province has introduced eight inbound tourism routes and aims to attract 2 million inbound tourists annually by 2027, targeting $1.12 billion in inbound tourism spending.

Challenges persist. Huang said overseas travel agencies still tend to sell the mountain parks as standalone destinations, while fragmented administration, limited transport connections and uneven international services continued to restrict travel beyond Zhangjiajie's best-known attractions.

The provincial plan seeks to address those gaps by improving transport connections, developing cross-regional itineraries, upgrading multilingual services and encouraging tourism companies to work across administrative boundaries.

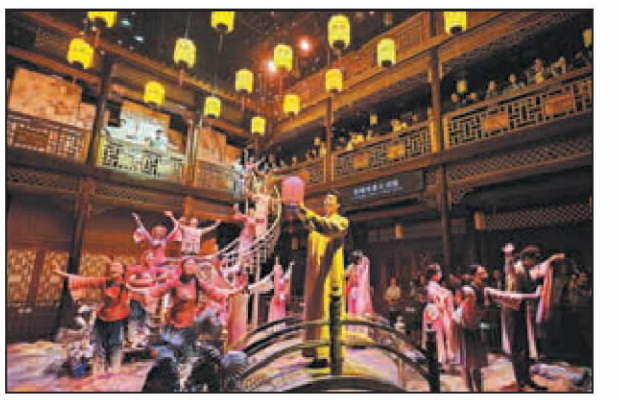
Huang emphasized that while eliminating low-cost package competition and administrative barriers takes time, the evolving mix of inbound visitors provides strong tailwinds for higher-value, tailor-made products.

The vibrant overseas reception across regional theaters, craft workshops and historic towns demonstrates that global travelers are eager to explore beyond the mountains.

"By improving regional connections and enabling travel agencies, hotels and cultural-tourism businesses to work together across the region, visitor flows can be converted into tangible and sustainable economic growth," Huang said.

He Chun in Changsha contributed to this story.

Immersive *Changde Stories* a boon to night economy



A large roving live-action show is staged in Changde, Hunan province, on Aug 13. Visitors follow performers to experience the region's history and charm. GENG FEIFEI / CHINA DAILY

By LI JING

As night falls over Changde in Central China's Hunan province, visitors board boats and follow actors along a historical riverside quarter, moving between illuminated waterways, old streets and a small theater as *Changde Stories* unfolds.

The immersive production, which blends local history, traditional opera and digital projections, has become a primary engine for the city's burgeoning night-time economy. After the show, visitors spill into nearby restaurants and handicraft shops, extending an evening of entertainment into hours of consumer spending.

This integrated model is helping the Changde River Street block convert into business for local merchants. The 1.5-kilometer block received 18.25 million visits in 2025, up 75 percent year-on-year, while revenue rose 58.9 percent to 1.24 billion yuan ($184.39 million), according to local official data.

Crucially, more than 70 percent of revenue was generated at night, underscoring the commercial value of retaining visitors in the area beyond daytime sightseeing.

Changde's success highlights the growing role of services in driving domestic consumption. National service retail sales increased 5.3 percent in the first half of 2026, outpacing the 1.1 percent rise in goods retail sales, with tourism, cultural and recreational services among the fastest categories, according to the National Bureau of Statistics.

At the block, *Changde Stories* serves as the evening's centerpiece. First staged in May 2025, the production uses the Chuanzi River as a natural stage to weave the city's history with local folk music and customs.

Spectators watch from boats and stroll through the old quarter before entering an indoor theater, becoming part of the performance amid floating live sets. More than 50,000 people have attended since its debut.

The route seamlessly channels audience traffic into restaurants, tea parlors and specialty retailers, forging a cohesive "show-shop-dine" consumption chain.

Gastronomy plays a pivotal role in that momentum.

At Changxiangyue, a 1,400-square-meter restaurant serving local specialities such as *leicha*, or pounded tea, Changde rice noodles and claypot dishes, daily customer numbers have exceeded 2,000 during peak periods.

"During holidays, customer traffic can be five to 10 times the normal level," said store manager Zhu Xueqin.

Nearby, a rice-noodle restaurant has sold more than 2,000 bowls on its busiest days, while snack and tea shops continue serving customers through lunch, dinner and late-night periods.

The integrated approach delivered standout gains during the five-day May Day holiday, when the block received nearly 1 million visits, peaking at more than 200,000 on May 1 alone.

Businesses generated 66.56 million yuan during the holiday, with food and cultural experiences accounting for more than 70 percent of revenue, according to local official data.

Rich heritage provides the lasting anchor. The block hosts 87 intangible cultural heritage projects, ranging from woodcarving and traditional incense to Changde opera and *leicha*.

More than 800 regular heritage performances drew more than 300,000 spectators between March 2024 and August 2026. Notably, half of the audience was born in the 1990s or later, suggesting that traditional art forms are finding new consumers through live performances and social media.

"A commercial district must be rooted in culture," said woodcarver Pan Nenghui, who is working with his wife on a 30-meter carving inspired partly by the writings of celebrated Hunan-born author Shen Congwen. "The essence of intangible cultural heritage is to bring our culture alive."

The block has also embraced technology-driven attractions. A traditional Chinese medicine zone launched in May features herbal dining, artificial intelligence-assisted diagnostics and a holographic installation of ancient TCM physician Zhang Zhongjing. It received nearly 100,000 visitors in its first month.

This steady influx has solidified the commercial ecosystem. Waterfront shop occupancy has reached 100 percent, while the merchant survival rate has improved by nearly 60 percent since the block's launch.

Changde's approach closely matches national initiatives prioritizing service-led consumer demand and calling for upgraded performing-arts offerings, vibrant night tours, and deeper integration among scenic sites, dining and retail. In the city, that policy has crystallized into a proven formula: captivate visitors after dark with immersive art, and sustain them with rich local culture, food and entertainment.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:03 PM

CHINA

Scientists map rock glaciers on plateau

By **LI MENGHAN**
limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese scientists have identified 132,867 rock glaciers across 16,500 square kilometers of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau in the first comprehensive inventory of its kind.

While glaciers are what come to mind when people think of the plateau's "solid reservoir", the number and significance of rock glaciers — periglacial landforms made of ice-rich debris that slowly move downhill in cold alpine environments — have been seriously underestimated.

The figure exceeds the total number of rock glaciers previously known worldwide, suggesting a long-standing underestimation of their quantity and their role in the plateau's frozen water reserves.

The study was published recently in the journal Science Bulletin. The dataset has been made public through the National Tibetan Plateau Data Center.

Although not true glaciers, rock glaciers serve as indicators of mountain permafrost and potential reservoirs of solid-water. The Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, dubbed a core part of the "Asian Water Tower", is home to one of the largest concentrations of mid- to low-latitude permafrost on Earth, nurturing many rock glaciers.

However, a comprehensive and unified dataset tracking the movement of rock glaciers has been elusive, largely due to the challenges posed by the region's high altitude, rugged terrain and the labor-intensive nature of manual data interpretation.

The research team integrated high-resolution optical remote sensing imagery, radar data and digital elevation models to develop a deep-learning method for automatically detecting rock glaciers across the plateau. They employed multi-temporal radar techniques to extract surface deformation rates and obtained kinematic data for 99.3 percent of the cataloged features.

In addition to location and boundaries, the inventory records the morphological type, terrain attributes, glacier connectivity and motion status for each unit, supporting research into rock glacier activity and periglacial geomorphic dynamics.

Notably, the team estimated that ice stored within the plateau's rock glaciers is equivalent to roughly 92 to 186 cubic kilometers, which is comparable to the storage capacity of dozens of large reservoirs.

"This represents a solid-water reserve in the Asian Water Tower that has been largely underestimated," said Feng Min, a professor at the Institute of Tibetan Plateau Research of the Chinese Academy of Sciences who led the study.

"This discovery could have substantial implications for long-term hydrological regulation in regions lacking glaciers or where glaciers are rapidly retreating," Feng added.

The dataset also provides insights into geohazard risks. Rock glaciers creep continuously and, where they intersect roads or river valleys, can trigger ground deformation, river blockages and debris flows. By documenting the spatial relationship between rock glaciers and nearby infrastructure, the inventory offers a new tool for assessing mountain hazards, Feng noted.

"When mapping permafrost, we used to lack direct geomorphic evidence. Rock glaciers are natural markers that indicate where frozen ground exists," Feng said.

He said that the dataset is expected to support permafrost monitoring, water resource assessment, cryospheric hazard identification and surface process modeling, while providing an important baseline for reassessing the global extent and water storage of rock glaciers in cold mountain regions.

Bridging cultures through innovation



Youth from China and abroad photograph a bionic hand playing an electronic piano in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, on Tuesday. The international science exchange event welcomed 50 offline attendees, including international students, domestic university students and experts, alongside over 5,000 online participants. The event focused on cutting-edge AI fields like brain-computer interaction and bionic technology, fostering dialogue and collaboration while advancing Hangzhou's international sci-tech ecosystem. LI ZHONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Officials to face lifelong ecological accountability

Guideline outlines when leaders may be held liable for protection failures

By **HOU LIQIANG**
houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese central authorities on Tuesday unveiled a guideline on holding Communist Party of China and government leaders accountable for ecological and environmental damages, with a clear emphasis on lifelong accountability.

The document, issued by the general offices of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council, makes clear that accountability is not limited by time or position.

Where distorted views of governance performance, violations of the new development philosophy and the requirements for high-quality development, or other similar acts have caused serious ecological damage, the responsible persons shall be held strictly accountable, "regardless of whether they have been transferred to another post, reassigned, promoted, left office or retired", the guideline said.

The rule applies to leading members of local Party committees and governments at or above the county level, relevant departments of the central and State organs, and related institutions. It also refers similar cases involving township governments, public institutions, development zones and State-owned enterprises to the same framework.

In defining major accountability situations, the rule said local principal officials should be held responsible if they fail to carry out central decisions on ecological civilization, make decisions that breach laws or policies, or cross the red lines for environmental protection, minimum standards for environmental quality, and ceilings on resource utilization.

It also covered failures in promoting green transition, poor coordination in ecological protection and mishandling major pollution or ecological incidents.

For other local leaders, accountability may be triggered when they fail to supervise departments under their charge, tolerate violations, or mishandle environmental funds, it said.

For department leaders, examples include issuing rules that conflict with environmental laws or policies, greenlighting projects that fail to satisfy statutory requirements, failing to enforce inspection requirements, or ignoring public complaints and reports, according to the document.

The rule further specified that leaders who use their influence to obstruct environmental inspections, interfere in judicial handling of environmental cases, meddle in project approvals, or order the falsification of statistical, survey, assessment, monitoring or environmental impact data will be held accountable.

Accountability measures may include reminder talks, criticism and education, orders to make self-criticism and admonition; organizational adjustment and punishment; and disciplinary penalties.

Suspected criminal acts must be transferred to the relevant authorities for handling under the law, it noted.

Government bodies that are responsible for the supervision and administration of ecological and environmental protection must, upon discovering any circumstances warranting accountability as prescribed in these measures, conduct an investigation into the ecological and environmental damage in accordance with the law and within the scope of their duties, the guideline ruled.

It said, where the issues involve major ecological and environmental damage, or where complex problems cut across regions, watersheds, or departmental boundaries, the investigation may be escalated to a higher-level authority.

Disciplinary inspections, environmental and resource inspections and departure audits of natural resource assets may uncover major ecological damage or official negligence, it continued. Such cases must be referred to the disciplinary and supervisory authorities and the personnel departments under established procedures. Those bodies will then pursue accountability in line with regulations, discipline and the law.

The guideline shall take effect upon promulgation.

Gift exchange highlights duo's long-lasting green drive and friendship

By **WANG SONGSONG** in Ordos, Inner Mongolia and **YUAN HUI** in Hohhot

> "She shares the same dream to make the Earth more beautiful. She made the changes. Now the Earth gives it back: all the trees, fruit, vegetables. She is the miracle hero and she never quits."
>
> **Ronald Sakolsky,** a retired teacher from the United States

Yin Yuzhen, a national model worker renowned for her decades-long desertification control efforts in Ordos, Inner Mongolia autonomous region, exchanged gifts with her American friend Ronald Sakolsky on Tuesday, as part of his long-awaited reunion tour in China.

The gift-giving ceremony took place in the morning. Yin presented Sakolsky with embroidered insoles inscribed with the words "desert" and "friendship", along with the phrase "never forget". Other gifts included an embroidery piece bearing the message "one Earth, one dream", with images of the planet, trees, and the names of both individuals, as well as a plate with their portraits on it and some local specialty foods.

In return, Sakolsky, who hails from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, brought gifts for his Chinese counterpart, including a scarf and a hat featuring the Pittsburgh Steelers, an American football team.

He also brought two large suitcases, adding that "I brought two suitcases because I know China. They are almost full and I only just arrived. I have to take these gifts home."

Sakolsky expressed his gratitude to the China Education Association for International Exchange, saying, "Let us not forget that CEAIE. I would not be here if it were not for CEAIE. They sent me to China. Now I am back again."

Their remarkable story began in 1999 when Sakolsky, who taught English in Henan province under a China-United States teacher exchange program, organized by CEAIE, was moved by a television report on Yin's tireless efforts to turn the desert green. He raised $5,000 in donations to support her afforestation work — a sum that helped transform the barren landscape into a thriving forest of over 50,000 trees.

"I am just playing my part in a broader story. I thought it was impossible. She made it possible," said Sakolsky as he reflected on their shared mission.

He added, "She shares the same dream to make the Earth more beautiful. She made the changes. Now the Earth gives it back: all the trees, fruit, vegetables. She is the miracle hero and she never quits."

On the same day, Sakolsky visited the global innovation research and development headquarters of Kargobot Autonomous Driving and experienced an unmanned bus.

"I've never been in a vehicle with no driver. It is amazing and it proves that Ordos is a city of the 22nd century," he added.

According to Yao Kai, vice-president of the headquarters, the technology makes cargo transportation more efficient and environmentally friendly, contributing to ecological protection efforts.

Sakolsky arrived in Ordos on Sunday to reunite with Yin for the first time in 26 years. Their emotional reunion, which attracted wide public expectations after Yin's online search for her benefactor went viral in May, has been hailed as a vivid example of people-to-people friendship between China and the US. On Monday, the pair planted three evergreen trees together in Maowusu, China's fourth largest sandy area, fulfilling a promise made during their online reconnection months earlier.

According to previous reports, Sakolsky's trip to China will run through Sept 1 and includes visits to Henan and Beijing.

Contact the writers at wangsongsong@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
See more by scanning the code.



Yin Yuzhen presents an embroidery piece bearing the message "one Earth, one dream" as a gift to Ronald Sakolsky in Ordos, Inner Mongolia autonomous region, on Tuesday. ZENG YUE / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Pioneering designer of JH-7 fighter-bomber dies

By **ZHAO LEI**
zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

Chen Yijian, chief designer of China's JH-7 fighter-bomber and an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, died on Monday in Xi'an, capital of Shaanxi province. He was 96.

Born in June 1930 in Fuzhou, Fujian province, Chen grew up amid the flames of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45) and completed his primary and secondary education in his home province.

In interviews prior to his death, Chen said when Japanese forces invaded his hometown of Fuzhou, he was forced to move with his father to Nanping county. With no air-raid shelters available, he and his family would often flee into the mountains whenever Japanese warplanes carried out bombing raids.

Chen explained that the Japanese pilots were so brazen that they flew extremely low — so low that people on the ground could clearly see their faces.



Chen Yijian

After graduating from high school in 1948, he applied to Xiamen University in Fujian, listing the newly established aeronautical engineering program as his only preferred choice.

"I was determined to study aviation and build aircraft — if we had no planes of our own, we would continue to be bullied by others," he said.

Three years later, following a nationwide restructuring of university departments, Chen and his classmates in the aeronautical engineering department were transferred to Tsinghua University in Beijing to continue their studies.

After graduating in 1952, the young engineer was assigned to the State-run No 122 Factory in Harbin, Heilongjiang province, now known as Harbin Aircraft Industry under the Aviation Industry Corp of China.

At the time, the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea (1950-53) was underway, and a number of damaged Chinese aircraft were rushed to aircraft factories in Harbin, Shenyang and other cities for repairs. Upon reporting for duty at the factory, Chen joined the repair work and gradually acquired the knowledge required for aircraft design.

In late 1956, Chen was selected to join the People's Republic of China's first aircraft design office, the predecessor of the Shenyang Aircraft Design and Research Institute in Liaoning province. It was there that his career in aircraft design took off.

He participated in the early development of several models, including the JJ-1, New China's first domestically developed aircraft, the CJ-6 trainer and the Q-5 attack aircraft.

In 1961, the Shenyang institute was formally established. That same year, Chen was promoted to head of fuselage design at the institute.

In 1964, Chen was transferred to the Xi'an Aircraft Design and Research Institute, now known as the AVIC First Aircraft Institute, where he was mainly involved in the development of the Y-7 transport aircraft and took part in modification work on two bomber models.

During the mid-1970s, Chen took the lead in exploring the development of a next-generation tactical bomber. Their proposal was accepted by the government and military in 1977, resulting in the launch of the H-7 bomber project.

In 1978, Chen was appointed deputy chief designer of the Xi'an institute. In 1982, he was named chief designer of the new aircraft, which by then had been renamed the JH-7 "Flying Leopard" fighter-bomber.

With no prototype or reference model to draw on, Chen broke with convention and, despite considerable pressure, made the decisive call that the new jet's design standards would be brought in line with international norms.

In his 50s, Chen taught himself to write simple aircraft design software. The JH-7 became one of the earliest aircraft models in China to use computer-aided design.

In December 1988, the long-troubled JH-7 finally made its maiden flight, followed by a decade-long flight-test phase. It underwent more than 1,600 test flights before receiving design certification in August 1998.

In 1999, the JH-7 received the top-grade prize in the national science and technology advancements awards. Chen was elected an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering in December that year.

After stepping away from aircraft design, Chen served as a professor of aeronautical engineering at several domestic universities and took part in feasibility studies for China's domestically developed large aircraft.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:03 PM

CHINA

CROSSING THE STRAIT

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

Fujian league attracts cross-Strait players

Taiwan soccer talent find goals, massive crowds at mainland matches

By **ZHANG YI** in Xiamen, Fujian and **HU MEIDONG** in Fuzhou









Clockwise from top left: Team Xiamen and Team Jinmen exchange gifts before a friendly match in Xiamen, Fujian province, on July 5. Taiwan's Peng Chia-en waves a flag for Team Xiamen. Taiwan's Huang Wei-chieh (right) dribbles during a match representing Team Fuzhou. Supporters cheer for both teams during the Xiamen-Jinmen friendly match. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The Fujian city soccer league is inviting Taiwan players to compete on the Chinese mainland, and welcoming residents from across the Strait to enjoy the matches firsthand to deepen compatriot affinities and bring hearts closer together.

Representing Fujian province's nine cities and the Pingtan Comprehensive Experimental Zone, 10 teams and nearly 500 amateur players are competing in the tournament, which will conclude with the final in October.

To boost cross-Strait integration, Fujian — the primary ancestral home for Taiwan compatriots — allows every participating team to add two Taiwan players to its roster. By August, 19 Taiwan players had joined different city teams, according to the Fujian provincial administration of sport.

Data shows that more than 1,500 people from Taiwan have attended matches across Fujian, and that the league serves as an active catalyst for deepening cross-Strait people-to-people exchanges.

Ni Pei-hsu, 24, from Taiwan, joined Fuzhou's soccer club in late June after learning about the recruitment online and was drawn by the massive crowds. It's his first time playing on the mainland.

At Saturday night's match, Fuzhou defeated Longyan 3-1 at the Fuzhou Strait Olympic Sports Center. Ni repeatedly tore through the opponent's defense, while his teammate Huang Wei-chieh, also from Taiwan, scored the opening goal.

"Hearing fans shout my name during the match felt incredible, an experience I've never had before," Ni said, adding that he could feel the energy from the nearly 50,000 spectators who filled the stadium.

Ni said he enjoys living, dining and training together with his teammates in Fuzhou. They visit local scenic spots and watch movies on weekends, inspiring him to stay and continue his soccer career on the mainland.

Another Taiwan compatriot, Yang Chih-po, joined the Pingtan soccer club in June through a coach he met during previous matches in Fujian.

On June 27, he made his debut in Pingtan's away match against Nanping. In the 65th minute, Yang scored the winning goal from a set piece. This marked his very first goal since joining the league, helping Pingtan secure a crucial 1-0 victory and snapping their previous seven-game losing streak.

Recalling his debut, although Yang felt nervous due to the massive crowds both in the stadium and online, he remained focused. "With such a great opportunity, I told myself to just enjoy this stage and perform well," he said.

"There are many young soccer players on both sides, and the sports environment and atmosphere on the mainland are excellent," Yang added, encouraging more Taiwan players to hone their skills and embrace the challenges on the mainland platform.

By reserving dedicated viewing areas and distributing free tickets, the league warmly welcomes both first-time and frequent visitors from Taiwan. It has also established a short-video collection event to encourage soccer fans from both sides to cheer together.

Chen Yu-hsuan, a Taiwan student at Xiamen Information School, performs as a cheerleader for Xiamen's club. Her squad wears white uniforms representing Xiamen's symbolic egrets, and ocean-blue ones representing the sea, beautifully capturing the coastal city's unique local character.

"When our team scores, the whole stadium erupts, and I stand up cheering with everyone in pure excitement," Chen said.

As a Taiwan student residing in Xiamen, Chen said that representing the city before crowds of both local and visiting fans makes her feel incredibly proud of her life and community on the mainland.

Rita Chen and her husband Joe Peng traveled from Taoyuan, Taiwan, to Xiamen over the weekend specifically to cheer for their son, who played for Xiamen on Saturday night against Putian. Prompted by the soccer matches, the trip marked the family's very first visit to the mainland.

In July, their son, Peng Chia-en, represented the team of Jinmen, an outlying island off the coast of Fujian, in an exchange match against Xiamen — a key sub-activity of the city league that drew many Taiwan spectators. After touring locally to boost cross-Strait understanding, Peng and another Taiwan player were officially invited to join the Xiamen squad, while another two joined the Nanping club.

"We discovered that so many people support soccer matches in Xiamen, which is rare in Taiwan," Chen said. "The atmosphere is incredible. I hope other Taiwan compatriots who are interested can come over, enjoy the soccer spirit, and grow."

Zhang Yuehong, assistant coach of the Xiamen team, said: "Taiwan players travel to Xiamen to play just like visiting relatives. There is a very harmonious atmosphere as soccer enthusiasts from both sides exchange ideas and build friendship."

The matches offer talented Taiwan players more opportunities to showcase their skills, Zhang said, adding that the league lays a foundation for the possibility of Taiwan soccer teams joining the tournament in the future, which is a highly anticipated wish for many Taiwan players.

"The league is like a seed planted in the hearts of sports-loving young people from Taiwan," said Lee Chen-hsuan, a Taiwan player participating in the league.

Lee, president of the Pingtan Taiwan Business Association who moved to the mainland in 2016, said the event serves as a grand platform for those from Taiwan to experience diverse local customs and Fujian's unique culture.

"Many from Taiwan want to participate in the event," Lee said, noting that participants can also integrate into coaching staff and logistical support teams to gain broader experience in the sports industry.

Lee added that the event's influence is expected to extend to other provincial leagues in Zhejiang, Jiangsu and Sichuan provinces, inspiring more young Taiwan players to explore and develop careers across the mainland.

Zhu Fenglian, a spokeswoman for the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, said that grassroots city soccer leagues across the mainland have ignited the passion and energy of fans from both sides of the Strait every weekend this summer.

"In the Fujian league, Taiwan players fight alongside their mainland teammates, scoring multiple goals and receiving passionate support," Zhu said. "Facts prove that anyone with passion and perseverance can win applause on an expanding stage."

Wang Jinghan and Qiu Yuwen contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at zhangyi1@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Animal communicator heals pet owners' hearts

By **ZHANG YI** and **HU MEIDONG**



Tseng Yi-ju, from Taiwan, works in her pet studio in Xiamen, Fujian province. WANG JINGHAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Tseng Yi-ju, who comes from Taiwan, has served hundreds of pet-owning families on the Chinese mainland, helping people decode the unspoken needs of their animals while healing the hearts of the owners.

With the rapid expansion of the pet market and a growing focus on the human-animal emotional bond, she has found a clear direction for her entrepreneurial career in this emerging field in Xiamen, Fujian province.

"Xiamen feels just like home to me," Tseng said, noting that her move to the coastal city in 2021 was eased by its familiar climate, warm hospitality and strong government support for Taiwan entrepreneurs — including intellectual property workshops that greatly accelerated her start-up's growth.

"People increasingly treat pets as core family members," Tseng said. Her business integrates patented animal communication training and custom pet accessories.

Tseng recalled one corporate executive who joined a session to bridge the gap with younger employees as he wanted to organize pet-centric activities to boost team cohesion, and hoped that understanding pets would help him better connect with the younger generation, as many raise pets.

"The initial and primary motivation of most clients is simply to forge a deeper, more meaningful connection with their own pets," Tseng said, noting that proper communication also offers critical solutions to severe animal behavioral issues.

Tseng shared a case where an indoor cat was constantly biting its own fur bald despite medical tests showing no physical illness. Through a communication session, she discovered the cat felt disturbed and unsafe due to its noisy environment.

This was because the cat owner's former apartment had poor soundproofing and creaky floors.

The owner later reported that the self-harming behavior stopped after she relocated to a quieter residence.

Tseng also helps owners navigate emotional crises during pets' final days. She recalled a client who enrolled because his dog was extremely old, deeply desiring to understand and accompany his companion through its final stage.

Another client sought Tseng's help for an aging cat suffering from severe organ failure following major liver surgery. During that emotional session, they spent most of their time addressing the owner's past regrets and saying a proper goodbye. The cat remarkably stabilized afterward, allowing the owner to adjust his life and maximize their remaining time.

Liu Jingruo, a Xiamen resident, experienced the deep emotional impact of this practice when she sought Tseng's help for her 17-year-old poodle, Youyou, which suffered from a painful, ruptured abdominal cyst.

"Veterinarians across the city warned me that Youyou was too old to survive an operation," Liu said. However, through a joint session with Tseng, she learned that the dog actually desired the surgery so it could leave the world with a whole body.

Tseng maintained constant communication with the owner and the dog right up to the operation. Just three hours after surgery, the elderly poodle managed to stand up independently.

"I burst into tears when I saw it. It was so tough," Liu said. "Though Youyou later passed away, the experience left me with absolutely no lingering regrets."

The experience inspired Liu to study animal communication herself, finding it deeply therapeutic. She now allows her middle-school child to join the training to help the teenager understand the pure, selfless love that animals offer.

Liu said that there are times when her child prefers to confide in the family pet rather than speak to her. "The animal might give the child a gentle gaze or a very calming feeling," she said.

Sun Xiaonan, another student, found that studying communication heightened her ability to manage multi-pet households, especially after she adopted a fierce stray cat that bullied her resident pet.

Sun discovered that her resident cat was enduring immense stress just to keep the peace and spare its owner from conflict. By providing targeted reassurance, Sun successfully gave the animal an emotional outlet, preventing further stress accumulation.

"Having reliable, trustworthy animal communicators is essential for modern families," Sun said, adding that she believes this specialized emotional support is quickly shaping up to be a major future trend across the mainland market.

Liu Yizhou and Wang Jinghan contributed to this story.

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:03 PM

Z WEEKLY

All about Gen Z

Z WEEKLY

Where law meets humanity

A suspense drama follows three legal professionals to explore justice, morality and human nature beyond courtrooms.



(From left to right) Francis Ng, Zhong Chuxi and Zheng Yunlong portray three legal professionals whose lives become intertwined in a decade-spanning case in the suspense drama *The Trembling of Cicada*. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By WANG XINGWEI
wangxingwei@i21st.cn

In the courtroom, criminal defense lawyer Ding Ning methodically presents evidence and points out uncertainties she has uncovered in a rape case. Rather than simply accepting a guilty plea, the young lawyer works to protect the legal rights of her client, a young nursing home caregiver accused of rape.

The scene appears in the first episode of the suspense drama *The Trembling of Cicada*.

Starring Hong Kong actor Francis Ng, Chinese mainland actor Zheng Yunlong and actress Zhong Chuxi, the drama premiered on Zhejiang TV on Aug 20 and is also available on streaming platforms including iQIYI, Tencent Video and Migu Video.

Through the perspectives of three legal professionals, the drama gradually unveils a complex case spanning more than 10 years, using the law as a lens through which to explore justice, moral choices and human nature.

For Ng, who plays judge Yu Songfan, the role offered a new experience despite more than three decades in acting.

"It was a rare opportunity. Almost every scene carried its own emotions and meaning, so I never allowed myself to relax," Ng said.

It is his first time playing a judge on the Chinese mainland, and the role gave him an opportunity to gain a better understanding of a judge's work.

"My character, Yu Songfan, carefully researches each case before it reaches the courtroom, and judges must deal with many cases every day. It made me realize just how demanding their work can be," Ng said, adding that judges need to remain clear-headed and make balanced judgments based on evidence and legal procedures.

For Zhong, who plays criminal defense lawyer Ding Ning, the role prompted her to think about a profession that can sometimes be controversial in the public eye because it involves defending people accused of serious wrongdoing.

"It takes courage to become a criminal defense lawyer," Zhong said.

She noted that being a suspect does not necessarily mean a person is guilty, and that criminal defense lawyers work to safeguard the legal rights to which suspects are entitled.

"Cases are rarely one-dimensional. There are often many sides to them," Zhong said. "At its core, the work of a criminal defense lawyer is about upholding justice and equality, and I find that deeply admirable."

> "At its core, the work of a criminal defense lawyer is about upholding justice and equality, and I find that deeply admirable."
>
> **Zhong Chuxi,** actress

For her, Ding's story is also one of personal growth. "Ding goes through a transformation after a long period of dormancy, much like a cicada emerging from underground. In that sense, her journey also echoes the title of the drama," Zhong said.

While Ding seeks to protect the rights of the accused, Zheng's character approaches the law from a more morally ambiguous direction.

Zheng plays prominent lawyer Zhao Yijie, who is adept at reading and manipulating others while navigating the gray areas of the law.

"It's an unconventional role," Zheng said. "He has his own ambitions and difficulties, but the way he deals with them can be quite unusual."

For Zheng, portraying the character required looking closely at the relationship between the legal profession and human nature.

He believes lawyers need to interact with people and, more importantly, understand them.

"My character, Zhao Yijie, is very good at identifying people's weaknesses. He observes them, provokes them and sets traps for them, pushing them to the point where they lose their rationality," Zheng said.

"When you play a complex character, you have to understand exactly where that complexity comes from and what lies behind it," he added.

That complexity also shaped how Zheng approached the character. As a musical theater actor, he drew on his stage experience while adapting it to the different demands of television.

"Stage and television are completely different. On stage, you're always conscious that some audience members are sitting far away, so your movements and expressions often need to be larger and more pronounced," he explained, adding that television acting, by contrast, calls for greater subtlety.

But beneath Zhao's dramatic persona and the twists and turns of the plot, Zheng believes the story ultimately deals with questions that extend beyond the legal world.

"It touches on something many people may experience: when you face adversity or even injustice, how do you overcome the negative emotions that come with it?" he said. "That is a universal theme, and I think it can resonate with audiences overseas as well."

According to the production team, the drama is set to reach audiences worldwide, with priority given to Singapore, Malaysia and Brunei.

Zheng said cross-cultural communication can be strengthened by finding emotional connections that resonate with people from different backgrounds.

He cited a production of *Hamlet*, in which he performed last year, as an example. Although the play is a Western classic rooted in a different cultural tradition, its central questions about choice and uncertainty remain recognizable centuries later.

Believing sincere emotions can cross language and cultural boundaries, Zhong hopes Chinese productions can offer international audiences perspectives they have not encountered before.

She likens an actor to a transmitter. "Our job is to convey emotions, ideas, values and perspectives," she said. "Chinese culture is incredibly diverse, and we are still exploring new ways to present it. I hope this drama can offer overseas viewers a fresh take on Chinese suspense storytelling."

For Zhong, audiences encountering stories from other cultures are often searching not for differences, but for something recognizable in themselves.

"They may see something of their past, their future or the possibilities in their own lives," she said.

"As a young actress, I also hope to keep discovering new possibilities for myself," she added.

Online
Watch the video by scanning the code.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:03 PM

Rewriting the story together

China-Africa media cooperation is expanding through co-production, training and technology, with greater emphasis on local voices and shared storytelling.

By **SHAMIM ZAKARIA**
shamim@21stcentury.com.cn

When asked how direct media partnerships could give African countries a greater role in shaping how they are represented internationally, Chernor Bah, Minister of Information and Civic Education of Sierra Leone, returned to a fundamental question: Who gets to tell the story?

"For years, Africa has been diminished and Africa's story has been told by Western narratives," Bah said. "Those narratives do not exalt us and they never make us really the heroes of our own stories."

Bah's concern was the extent to which Africans themselves help shape coverage of their continent. Closer China-Africa media cooperation, he said, offered "a huge opportunity to learn from each other" and to "author a different story" rooted in people's experiences, cultures and aspirations.

That idea ran through discussions at the 7th Forum on China-Africa Media Cooperation, held in Beijing from Aug 19 to 21. Delegates noted that authentic representation requires practical involvement at every stage, from developing ideas and identifying sources to local-language reporting, editing and distribution.

The forum brought together about 400 representatives from China and 45 African countries, including a record 33 ministerial-level guests from African countries, according to the organizers. It was co-hosted by China's National Radio and Television Administration, the Beijing municipal government and the African Union of Broadcasting.

The forum came as 2026 marks the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Africa and is the China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges. Egypt became the first African country to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China in 1956.

Co-production emerged as a main way to give local partners a role from the outset, bringing them into story development, editorial decision-making and production, rather than simply exchanging completed programs.

Dr Ismaila Ceesay, Minister of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services of The Gambia, said agreements reached with Chinese partners, including arrangements involving the country's public and private broadcasters, should provide a foundation for moving beyond content exchange toward co-production, particularly of programs concerning young people, culture and history.

Chinese programs were already being broadcast weekly on two television stations in The Gambia, Ceesay said, while a coordinating team was being established to bring media organizations together around co-production.

He also identified modern technology, digital skills, technology transfer and newsroom modernization as pressing needs. Gambian professionals trained in China, he said, should apply and share their knowledge at home so that one training opportunity can benefit an entire newsroom.

Ceesay described young journalists as eager to demonstrate their abilities and adept at using technology to introduce their cultures and countries. Bringing Chinese and African journalists together during planning and production, he said, could also build lasting professional relationships and improve access to local languages, sources and knowledge.





Top: Journalists interview a guest at the 7th Forum on China-Africa Media Cooperation in Beijing. **Above:** The 7th Forum on China-Africa Media Cooperation takes place in Beijing from Aug 19 to 21. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Tech expands reach

Beyond policy discussions, the forum gave delegates a close look at the technologies increasingly shaping media production. They visited the 8K facilities of Beijing Radio & Television Station (BRTV) and the 33rd Beijing International Radio, TV & Film Exhibition (BIRTV 2026). The forum also featured three themed exhibition areas presenting China-Africa media cooperation, audiovisual innovation and cultural exchanges.

Displays included digital content management systems and a mobile production vehicle using 5G, AI and cloud tools.

Marie-Louise Diallo, deputy director-general of Guinea's national daily Horoya, said she was highly impressed by BRTV's technical capabilities, particularly the image quality offered by its 4K and 8K systems.

She also noted that Guinean journalists were participating in a training program in Beijing.

Infrastructure cooperation is also extending beyond broadcasting. Bah cited a project in Sierra Leone where, in July 2025, he led the signing in Beijing of a $5 million memorandum of understanding with China's Diming Yimo (Tianjin) Printing Co Ltd to modernize Sierra Leone's Government Printing Department, provide equipment and training, and support a national printing training institute.

Some displays also showed how technology could address another challenge raised repeatedly at the forum: language.

At a display by Xiaohongshu, or RedNote, an AI function translated speech and written messages in real time. An interactive map generated a postcard for a selected African country.

Speaking during a visit to BIRTV 2026, Jean Maurice Uwera, deputy spokesperson for the government of Rwanda, identified language as a practical obstacle to the wider circulation of audiovisual content.

"Chinese culture is quite rich, but there is always that barrier of language," he said, adding that dubbing and subtitles could help productions reach audiences who might otherwise be unable to engage with them.

As AI plays a larger role in media production and distribution, the issue also extends to which languages such systems can recognize. Bah said African languages should be included in AI models and African partners should participate in developing them. Such cooperation, he said, could improve translation and digital tools for the communities whose stories they carry.

Bah noted the exchange should also work both ways, with African stories reaching Chinese audiences just as Chinese stories reach Africa. Joint reporting and content creation, he added, could introduce audiences to everyday life, entrepreneurship, history, culture and the experiences of young people.

The forum released a joint declaration and announced 80 achievements in China-Africa cooperation in areas including production and exchange, professional development and media technology. According to the organizers, the declaration advocates sustained news cooperation, joint productions, program translation and mutual broadcasting, AI application and governance, and youth exchanges.

For Ceesay, the purpose of such cooperation ultimately comes back to how people understand one another.

The objective, he said, should be to "tell our story, tell the African story, tell the Chinese story" in a way that enables people to understand one another's challenges, aspirations and history.



Participants in the 7th Forum on China-Africa Media Cooperation pose for a group photo. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Seeds of health care take root in mountain villages

By **MENG WENJIE**
mengwenjie@i21st.cn

In July, as cicadas echoed through the mountain villages of Enshi Tujia and Miao autonomous prefecture, Hubei province, 20-year-old Wu Yutong followed a village doctor along winding paths to visit local residents. As she met elderly villagers, she felt an unexpected sense of familiarity.

"Their accents sound very similar to those in my hometown, so I feel like I am seeing my own grandparents," Wu said.

Wu, a clinical medicine student at Taikang Medical School (School of Basic Medical Sciences) of Wuhan University (WHU), was among 17 students who traveled to Baiguoshu village to study rural healthcare and provide health education to elderly residents and children.

The visit was part of a tradition stretching back nearly a decade. Since July 2017, when the school's first group of 19 students established a volunteer health service base in the village, successive groups of medical students have returned to continue the work.

Wei Lei, a professor at the school and the team's instructor, was leading the program for the fourth time. The program included undergraduates studying clinical medicine, stomatology and public health. Wei said serving rural communities allows students to understand what it means to be a medical worker in ways textbooks alone cannot.

Over the years, the initiative has expanded from basic health checks to chronic disease follow-ups and research on local disease prevention. This year, the students turned their attention to how digital technology is changing access to healthcare in rural areas.

Focusing on the digital empowerment of primary-level healthcare, the team conducted research in Baiguoshu and seven surrounding villages, visiting hospitals, health centers, village clinics and residents' homes to examine the use of digital medical services at different levels of the healthcare system.



Volunteers from Wuhan University teach students how to use bandages at Enshi No 3 Middle School in Hubei province in July 2026. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

For team leader Li Wen, 20, the fieldwork revealed a gap between technological progress and accessibility. Questionnaires showed that many residents over 65 struggled to use smartphones or self-service registration machines when making medical appointments.

The students discussed their findings with local health authorities and proposed placing illustrated guides beside registration machines to help elderly patients better understand how to use them.

"It may not be solved overnight, but through sustained efforts, we can make progress little by little," Li said.

But the program's impact is not measured only in research findings and proposals. Years of repeated visits have also brought tangible changes to villagers' lives.

Wu recalled the case of a villager named Long Fubing. In 2024, the team discovered during a medical consultation that Long had severe hypertension and began monitoring his condition. When Wu met him again this year, she found that his health had improved significantly. He was taking medication regularly and no longer stopped treatment without consulting doctors.

"Standing there, I felt I was seeing the results of years of work by previous teams," Wu said.

Long's experience reflects broader changes across the village. In 2017, 45.7 percent of residents had fallen into poverty because of illness, while only 2.49 percent put health knowledge into practice in daily life. By 2025, 87.5 percent of surveyed villagers were receiving regular checkups, and all surveyed patients with chronic diseases were taking medication as advised.

"These figures show that an important idea has gradually taken root among villagers — health should be managed proactively rather than addressed only after illness occurs," Wu said. "This is the most valuable achievement of the past 10 years."

A decade of visits has brought more than medical services to Baiguoshu — it has also forged a lasting bond between the students, villagers and younger generations.

That bond was clear to Ning Zhenghao, 22, a basic medicine student who led the team in 2025. Although many villagers were meeting him for the first time, they immediately recognized the WHU T-shirts worn by the students.

"They told me that our team's story had even been recorded in the village archives," Ning said.

Ning and his teammates also gave health education classes at Baiguoshu village primary school, where he was encouraged by the children's enthusiasm for learning and their grasp of basic health concepts.

"Every health education class we give plants a seed in children's minds — an awareness of the importance of caring for their health," Ning said. "Perhaps one day, some of them may enter the medical field and use their knowledge to improve healthcare in their hometown."

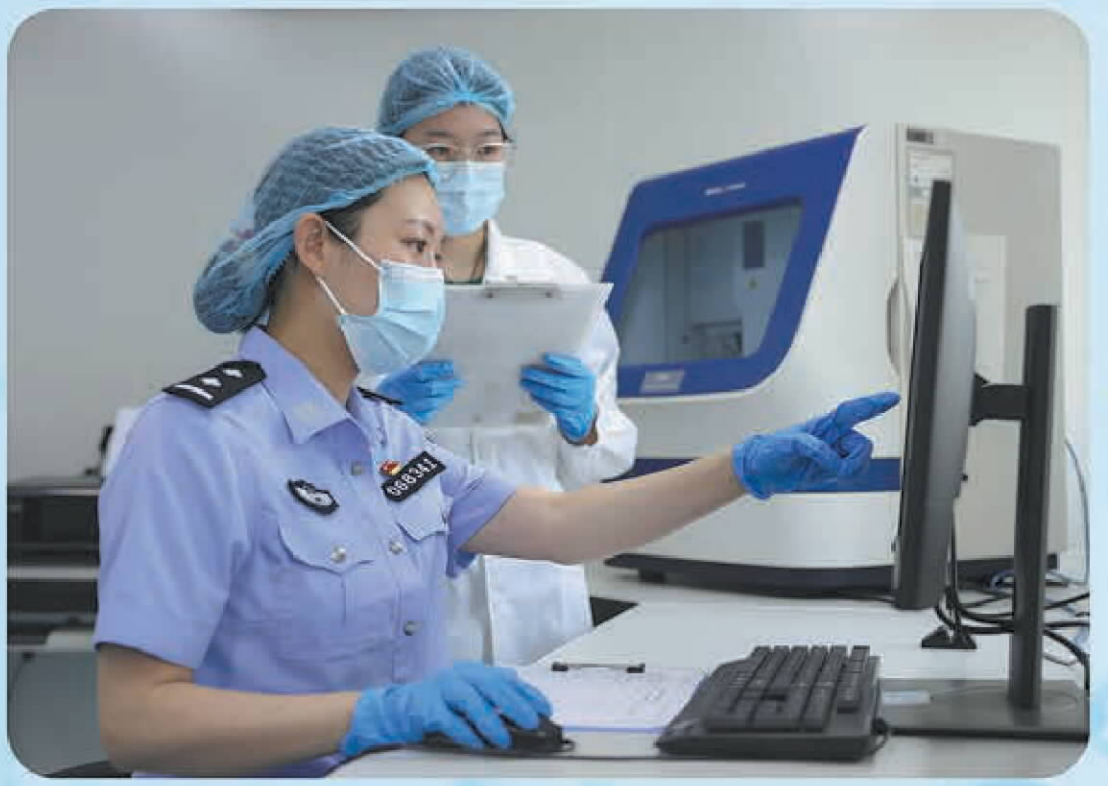
Li Bo contributed to this story.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:03 PM

Truth found in tiny traces

Zhang Mengting combines biotechnology training with police work, helping investigators identify suspects, crack difficult cases and bring families back together.





Left: Zhang Mengting (front), a forensic DNA analyst with the Xiangyang Public Security Bureau in Hubei province, analyzes results on a computer with a colleague. **Right:** Zhang conducts laboratory work.
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By GUI QIAN and **LIU KUN**

On a sweltering afternoon in August 2020, mosquitoes and other insects swarmed around a dilapidated shack in Gucheng county, Xiangyang, Hubei province.

Police believed a suspect who was on the run after committing a serious crime might have spent the night there.

After receiving the call, Zhang Mengting, a forensic DNA analyst with the Xiangyang Public Security Bureau, went to examine the scene.

Bending over, she searched the entire shack inch by inch. Once. Twice. Ten times.

Finally, on a worn sleeping mat, Zhang spotted a dark-red bloodstain measuring only about 2 millimeters across. It was not human blood, but blood left behind by a mosquito that had been swatted.

She carefully collected the almost imperceptible trace and took it back to the laboratory for analysis.

"Evidence doesn't reveal itself," Zhang said. "Only by staying focused and examining a scene meticulously can we find the crucial clue among countless traces."

DNA extracted from the blood eventually led police to the suspect, who had fled elsewhere, and the case was solved.

Zhang, however, stresses that solving cases is a team effort.

"Tracing the suspect's escape route and figuring out how he got there all depended on colleagues from other police units," she said. "I simply did my part."

Her ability to spot such an unlikely clue grew out of her scientific background and an unconventional path into policing.

Zhang, 32, is a native of Xiangyang. After graduating from Qingdao University in Shandong province in 2016 with a degree in biotechnology, she worked in new media and advertising.

In 2019, when the Xiangyang Public Security Bureau began recruiting DNA analysts from outside the police academy system, Zhang applied.

The decision brought her back to an ambition she had expressed years earlier. In middle school, when her English teacher asked students what they wanted to be when they grew up, Zhang answered, "A police officer."

"I found it fascinating that a tiny detail could help reconstruct the truth step by step," she said.

A changing profession

Her scientific training soon found a practical application in police work. The criminal technology unit where Zhang works covers a range of disciplines, including DNA analysis, trace evidence examination, forensic medicine, chemical and physical analysis, document examination, imaging and electronic evidence.

"Police academies usually focus more on training officers in investigation and case handling," Zhang said. "But policing today also brings together specialists from different fields, combining traditional investigative experience with better teamwork and procedures, as well as technologies such as big data and artificial intelligence. This makes investigations more efficient and precise."

> "If I could say one thing to the person I was back then, I would tell her: 'I hope you always hold on to your respect for science, your determination to pursue the truth and your commitment to serving the people.'"
>
> **Zhang Mengting,** a forensic DNA analyst

In recent years, more people without police academy backgrounds have entered the public security system through open recruitment, including some from fields outside the sciences. Zhang's career reflects that broader shift toward a more professionally diverse police force.

For Zhang, combining her biotechnology expertise with police work has yielded concrete results.

In 2024, a bottle was thrown from a high-rise residential building in Xiangyang and it struck a car below. With more than 1,000 people living in the building, investigators faced the challenge of narrowing down a suspect.

Rather than recommending that blood samples be collected from every resident, Zhang extracted DNA from the rim of the broken bottle. The DNA profile provided investigators with a crucial piece of evidence as they worked to identify the suspect.

Another case took her work in a very different direction. It involved a family separated for half a century.

In 1974, a 3-year-old boy referred to by the pseudonym Zhao was abducted and trafficked. His mother provided a blood sample for inclusion in a DNA database in 2017, but the search stalled because no DNA sample was available from Zhao's father, who had died.

Zhang and her colleagues proposed an unconventional solution: collecting blood samples from Zhao's biological brothers and using algorithms to infer their deceased father's genetic information.

The approach eventually helped establish the family connection, and mother and son were reunited after 50 years apart.

In more than six years as a police officer, Zhang has examined over 16,400 biological samples without error. Her DNA work has contributed to identifying suspects in more than 320 difficult cases, locating 35 missing or trafficked people and reuniting 42 families.

On April 29 this year, Zhang was awarded the Hubei May 1 Labor Medal.

But the moments she values most do not come with an honor or a title. As a technical officer who spends much of her time in the laboratory, Zhang rarely gets to meet victims or receive their thanks in person. After a case is closed, however, she often asks colleagues the same question: "How did the case turn out?"

Hearing that a difficult case has been solved or that her work has helped someone gives her a sense of fulfillment. "I realize that my expertise can really make a difference for victims," she said.

For Zhang, that sense of purpose goes back to what first drew her to detective work as a schoolgirl: the idea that something small, examined carefully, can reveal something much larger.

"If I could say one thing to the person I was back then, I would tell her: 'I hope you always hold on to your respect for science, your determination to pursue the truth and your commitment to serving the people,'" Zhang said.

Contact the writers at guiqian@i21st.cn

Global Insights

China's C919 through an AI student's eyes

On July 13, at 10:20 pm, I boarded a flight from Harbin in Northeast China's Heilongjiang province to Beijing, where I would transfer to another flight to Budapest and return home to Europe. The trip marked the end of my first academic year at Harbin Institute of Technology (HIT).

I expected the Harbin-Beijing flight to be an uneventful first leg of a long journey home. Instead, it became my first experience aboard the C919 — China's domestically developed narrow-body passenger jet — and it gave me a new perspective on the country's technological progress and my own studies in artificial intelligence.

Because we boarded via a jet bridge, I did not get a clear view of the aircraft from the outside. I realized it was a C919 only after entering the cabin and noticing that the interior looked different from those of the aircraft I usually flew on.

This discovery immediately excited me and gave the flight an unexpected sense of significance.

Although the cabin layout was familiar, several details on this Air China aircraft made the experience feel modern. The first was the wireless in-flight entertainment system. After connecting my phone to the onboard network, I could open a portal offering films, television programs and games. It did not provide regular internet access, but it allowed passengers to use their own devices as personal entertainment screens.

Another practical feature was a dedicated phone holder above the tray table. I could place my phone at a comfortable angle, connect my headphones and watch a Chinese action movie without having to hold the device throughout the flight.

I was beginning my journey back to Europe, yet I was still surrounded by the Chinese language, Chinese entertainment and an aircraft that represented one of the country's major engineering achievements.

Silent precision

The flight felt calm and comfortable throughout, but what stayed with me most was the fact that everything worked exactly as it should.

As a passenger, I experienced only a quiet cabin and a smooth flight. Behind that ordinary experience, however, countless electronic, mechanical and software systems had to work together with exceptional precision and reliability.



Bartosz Turczynski shares his perspective on China's technological development through his experience aboard the C919. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

As a first-year AI major at HIT, I began to think more deeply about those hidden systems. My courses included electronic circuits, computational thinking and practical programming in C, a widely used programming language. Until then, much of what I had learned existed mainly in the form of diagrams, exercises and small programs.

Sitting inside the aircraft connected those subjects to a much larger world of engineering. It made me consider how sensors, electronic components and software systems must cooperate continuously to keep a modern aircraft operating safely.

The area that interests me most is AI-assisted and increasingly autonomous aviation. Such technologies could help pilots interpret sensor data, identify abnormal conditions, optimize routes and make safer decisions.

For me, this area represents an exciting combination of AI, electronics, software and physical engineering.

I had already encountered this combination on a much smaller scale during a two-week robotics program at HIT over the winter vacation. At the end of the program, my group built a small autonomous vehicle that could receive information from sensors, process it and respond through movement.

The vehicle was simple but seeing it act according to our code changed my understanding of robotics. We were no longer only reading about autonomous systems; we had created one ourselves.

Before coming to China, I knew that the country was developing rapidly, but that knowledge was mostly abstract. During my first year here, I began to encounter technology not only as a topic in the news, but also through my studies and daily life.

The robotics program gave me the opportunity to help build a small autonomous system. The C919 flight allowed me to experience a far more complex engineering achievement as an ordinary passenger.

By the time we landed in Beijing, my initial surprise had developed into something more lasting. The flight gave me a clearer sense of why I had chosen to study AI and how much I still had to learn. It also strengthened my confidence in my decision to study in China, where the connections among research, engineering and everyday life are becoming increasingly visible.

Written by Bartosz Turczynski, a Polish undergraduate student majoring in AI at Harbin Institute of Technology. He has studied Chinese for five years and is particularly interested in AI, robotics and China's technological development.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:03 PM

SPORTS

BASKETBALL



Team China players pose on the podium after finishing second in the FIBA U18 Asia Cup with an 89-79 loss to Australia, its best finish since winning the tournament in 2014. FIBA

China celebrates silver lining

Under 18s narrowly miss out on Asia Cup glory, but runner-up finish hints at a golden future



Team China players celebrate reaching a first U18 Asia Cup final in 12 years after beating New Zealand 79-66 in Saturday's semifinal. FIBA



The rise of school-league prospects, such as Lyu Feiyan (center) of Tsinghua University High School, shows China's youth basketball pipeline is evolving. FIBA

By SUN XIAOCHEN
sunxiaochen@chinadaily.com.cn

It might have been a near-miss, but an inspiring run at the FIBA U18 Asia Cup has delivered a silver lining for the future of Chinese basketball, with the national program committed to revamping its talent development system.

For a second straight summer, Chinese men's basketball has fallen just short of continental glory, but its youth squad's runner-up finish at the Asian showpiece, after being overpowered by Australia 89-79 in Sunday's final, was anything but a disappointment.

The squad's gutsy final run, which marked the country's best result at the biennial U18 tournament in 12 years, has served up as encouraging a boost for the national program's rebuild as the senior squad's narrow one-point defeat to the mighty Aussies at the Asia Cup a year ago.

The last time China's U18 team won the continental title was in 2014, when Australia and New Zealand were not yet included in FIBA's Asian zone.

Despite coming up short against the Emus in the final in Ahmedabad, India, the Chinese team successfully avenged its 15-point loss to New Zealand in the 2024 semifinal, taming the Junior Tall Blacks 79-66 at the same stage on Saturday to reach its first title decider in over a decade — while securing a spot to next year's U19 World Cup in the Czech Republic.

Head coach Wang Jianjun, who guided his young squad to tournament bests in assists per game (27) and three-point shooting (43 percent), took pride from the teenagers' fighting spirit and future potential.

"From start to finish, everyone fought for every possession in every minute and every second of the game. I'm grateful for all the hard work these players have put in and I am really proud of them," Wang said in his post-final news conference.

"We have regrets about missing out on the title, but youth is our biggest advantage.

"This silver medal proves the huge potential of this young team. This precious international tournament experience will lay a solid foundation for their future growth.

"I hope they can show the world what they've got at next year's World Cup."

Talented, but lacking some physical and mental maturity, the Chinese team was dominated in the paint, out-rebounded 57-35 by the Emus with a stark 26-6 disparity in offensive rebounds, which allowed the Aussies 36 second-chance points.

However, the fact that Team China was the youngest among all quarterfinal contenders, with an average age of 17.2 years old and with four key members born after 2010, signifies a bright future for the squad.

Sixteen-year-old starting forward Zhang Yizhaojie, a versatile 6-foot-7 (2.03 meters) scorer, led China with a game-high 20 points in the final, before being selected into the All-Star Five as the youngest player in the tournament's best lineup.

He didn't get carried away by the recognition, though. "Playing against such a physical, high-intensity team like Australia has made me realize just how much we have to improve," said Zhang, who also led the team's scoring across the whole tournament, averaging 14.3 points per game.

"We need to further improve our ability to keep up with the physical nature and high intensity of international play."

Young center Li Junxian, a raw, 18-year-old talent that stands at 2.12 meters, notched a double-double of 15 points and 12 rebounds in the final, while sharp-shooting guard Zhang Yuchen, another 16-year-old prospect, added 13 points and seven assists on Sunday.

Zhang Yuchen also led the entire tournament field in three-point accuracy, shooting 56.2 percent from 16 attempts beyond the arc.

His rise from China's high-school league to the international spotlight, after leading Tsinghua University High School to the national championship in May, underlines China's evolving youth development system.

Once relying heavily on State-run sports schools and professional league clubs' youth reserves, the drafting scope of Chinese basketball is now expanding to school leagues, overseas academies and commercial training institutes.

Four of the 12 players on the current U18 squad were selected from outside the traditional pipelines, with Zhang Yuchen emerging as the brightest prospect and turning heads of North American scouts.

According to Li Qun, a former Chinese national team guard and a youth training promoter, Zhang Yuchen has attracted serious interest from Arizona-based Bella Vista College Prep School and the Royal Crown School in Canada, suggesting a potential move this fall with an eye on earning a future NCAA scholarship.

"A young guard like Yuchen, who attacks aggressively to make plays for teammates, fits into the modern style of basketball, and we should make it possible for him to tap into his full potential," said Li.

Zhang Bin, a former youth training director with the Chinese Basketball Association, stressed it's critical to give developing talent more international exposure and more competitive opportunities as early as possible.

"We have more games at home for junior players than ever, but the intensity and quality are still not enough," he said. "We should encourage more young talent to explore pathways to develop and study overseas."



Zhang Yizhaojie, China's top scorer at the tournament, was selected into the FIBA U18 Asia Cup's All-Star Five. FIBA

Klay joins Heat, set to team up with Adebayo, Antetokounmpo

MIAMI — Klay Thompson has signed his deal with the Miami Heat, which waited patiently for weeks to see if it would get the chance to add the sharpshooter to its reworked roster.

Thompson — who is No 4 on the NBA's all-time three-pointers list with 2,899 — cleared waivers Sunday afternoon and wasted little time finalizing a two-year deal worth about $11.5 million. The second season of the deal is at Thompson's option.

In many ways, the deal makes sense for both sides. Thompson makes no secret about how much he loves the water and boating; the Heat plays its home games at the edge of Biscayne Bay. He's of Bahamian heritage; the island nation is a short flight from Miami and is home to a sizable base of Heat fans. And, perhaps most importantly, the Heat knew it wanted to add shooting to surround the newly acquired Giannis Antetokounmpo and incumbent center Bam Adebayo.

"Klay is one of the most iconic players to ever suit up in the NBA," Heat president Pat Riley said. "A four-time battle-tested world champion who will fit perfectly into his role as an all-around player at both ends of the court. We all talk about his shooting skill, but there is so much more he brings to the game. We are blessed that Klay chose the Heat in our quest to challenge for championships."

Thompson, a 36-year-old about to enter his 14th season (not counting two missed because of injury), fits that bill perfectly. He's a career 41 percent shooter from beyond the arc, and last season marked the 11th time that he's made more than 200 three-pointers in a season. For context, only seven times in its history has the Heat had a player make 200 threes in a single year.



Following his contract buyout Klay Thompson will join the Miami Heat to play alongside Bam Adebayo and Giannis Antetokounmpo. AP

There's also the winning pedigree that Thompson brings. He paired with Stephen Curry to be part of Golden State's famed "Splash Brothers" duo that helped lead the Warriors to four NBA championships. He's a five-time All-Star, holds the league record with 14 made threes in a game, has connected on at least 10 threes in a game nine times and will enter this season just 74 three-pointers behind Ray Allen — a former Heat guard — for third place on the league's all-time list.

It's the latest big move for the Heat this summer. It acquired Antetokounmpo and Bobby Portis from Milwaukee in a deal that saw it send Tyler Herro, Jaime Jaquez Jr, Kel'el Ware and Kasparas Jakucionis to the Bucks. It also signed another big-time three-point threat in Tim Hardaway Jr, who grew up in Miami while his father was playing for the Heat.

Thompson and the Dallas Mavericks agreed on a contract buyout that was executed Friday, the end of his two-year run there that didn't get anywhere close to what either side originally envisioned — especially after the shocking trade of Luka Doncic by the Mavs to the Los Angeles Lakers.

Thompson joined Dallas in a sign-and-trade with Golden State, giving the Mavericks one of the league's all-time great three-point shooters to complement Doncic and another high-scoring guard in Kyrie Irving.

But the high hopes for that threesome imploded after the Mavericks sent Doncic to the Lakers for Anthony Davis in a deal before the trade deadline in 2025. Irving tore the ACL in his left knee a month later and hasn't played since, while Davis was traded to the Washington Wizards just before the February trade deadline last season.

AP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:03 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:06 PM

Thriving hub
Tianjin blends modernity, history and seaside charm
TALES & TRAILS, PAGES 7-10



US tariffs put Indian generics, patients at risk
WORLD, PAGE 11



Green milestone
Coal power falls below 50 percent for first time as renewables surge
BUSINESS, PAGE 13

CHINA DAILY
GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 FRIDAY, JULY 31, 2026

CPC to hold key meeting in October

Leadership pledges policy support for economic growth in second half of year

By **CAO DESHENG**
caodesheng@chinadaily.com.cn

The fifth plenary session of the 20th Communist Party of China Central Committee will be held in Beijing in October, with a focus on studying major issues on consistently advancing the Party's full and rigorous self-governance.

The announcement came on Thursday after a meeting of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, which was presided over by Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee.

A statement issued after the meeting said that with the profound changes in the international landscape, national conditions and the Party's development, there are new circumstances and issues in advancing the Party's self-governance.

In exercising full and rigorous Party governance, efforts should be focused on enhancing the Party's long-term governance capability, maintaining its advanced nature and integrity, and preserving the close bond between the Party and the people, in order to ensure that the Party always remains the strong leadership core in developing socialism with Chinese characteristics, the statement said.

The meeting also analyzed and studied the current economic situation and made arrangements for economic work in the second half of this year.

During the meeting, the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, the Party's top decision-making body, pledged to step up macro policy support, and underlined the need to implement a more proactive fiscal policy and a moderately loose monetary policy, fully leverage the effectiveness of existing policies and roll out practical and effective incremental measures in a timely manner.

It is essential to strengthen countercyclical adjustments, intensify efforts to expand domestic demand and optimize supply, enhance development momentum and stimulate social vitality in order to achieve sustained, innovative and improved economic growth, the meeting said.

The meeting emphasized the need to accelerate the pace of fiscal spending and the use of bond funds, effectively utilize monetary policy tools and adjust them in a timely manner, and optimize fiscal-monetary coordination to boost domestic demand.

It is important to expand mutually beneficial international economic and trade cooperation, vigorously develop service trade, and promote balanced trade development, the meeting said, urging efforts to actively attract and utilize foreign capital.

The meeting emphasized the importance of stabilizing the real estate market. It also underlined the need to take solid steps to build the "six networks" — water, new-type power grids, computing power, next-generation communication, urban underground pipe and logistics.

The meeting also called for efforts to accelerate the development of a modern industrial system and strengthen long-term and steady support for basic research.

While calling for deeply implementing the "AI Plus" initiative, fostering new forms of the smart economy and improving the governance system for artificial intelligence, the meeting underscored the need to seek breakthroughs in cutting-edge technologies and the development of future industries.

Efforts should be made to build emerging pillar industries, while continuously driving the transformation and upgrading of traditional industries, the meeting said.

The meeting emphasized the need to create a level playing field for market entities, comprehensively address "rat race" competition, further deepen the reform of State-owned assets and enterprises, and optimize the development environment for the private economy.

Prior to Thursday's Political Bureau meeting, the CPC Central Committee held a symposium on July 24 with non-CPC personages to solicit opinions and suggestions on the current economic situation and economic work for the second half of the year.

While presiding over the symposium, Xi said that in the first half of the year, China's economy made steady progress despite headwinds, demonstrating strong resilience and vitality.

In the second half of the year, efforts should focus on enhancing the effectiveness of macroeconomic policies, Xi said.

Key priorities include tapping into the potential for expanding domestic demand, promoting the deep integration of technological and industrial innovation, and deepening reform and expanding high-standard opening-up, he said.

Robotic greeting



Journalists and social media influencers from member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations interact on Wednesday with a robotic dog in Shenzhen, Guangdong province. More than 20 journalists and social media influencers from ASEAN countries visited Shenzhen as this year marks the fifth anniversary of the establishment of the China-ASEAN Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. MAO SIQIAN / XINHUA

China, US hold video talks on economic, trade issues to uphold leaders' consensus

By **ZHANG CHENGXU**
zhangchengxu@chinadaily.com.cn

Vice-Premier He Lifeng held a video call with United States Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer on Thursday, with both sides pledging to strengthen communication and promote stable economic and trade ties.

He, the Chinese lead for China-US economic and trade affairs, held candid, in-depth and constructive discussions with the US side on implementing the important common understandings reached by the two heads of state at their meeting in May in Beijing. They also exchanged views on maintaining stable bilateral economic and trade relations, expanding practical cooperation and properly addressing each other's concerns.

During the talks, the Chinese side expressed serious concerns over the recent US restrictive economic and trade measures against China.

Both sides agreed to make further good use of the China-US economic and trade consultation mechanism under the strategic guidance of the two heads of state, enhance communication, build mutual trust, clear up misunderstandings, expand practical cooperation, and promote the steady and sound development of bilateral economic and trade relations.

A smooth trade relationship between the US and China is vital and a reduction in US tariffs on imports of Chinese goods would help multiple industries in both countries, said Gary C. Hufbauer, a nonresident Senior Fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, who has written extensively on international trade and investment.

Hufbauer told China Daily: "Many US manufacturing industries would benefit from better access to Chinese intermediate goods. My calculation is that an extra $100 billion of two-way trade will boost US GDP by about $20 billion and Chinese GDP by about $50 billion. These are significant gains, if US tariffs are cut."

Also on Thursday, the Ministry of Commerce said that China has been actively implementing the consensus reached at the inaugural meeting of the China-EU trade and investment consultation mechanism, and stepping up preparations for its second meeting this autumn.

He Yadong, a spokesman for the ministry, said China is ready to work with the European Union to explore practical and feasible solutions to each other's economic and trade concerns.

See ***Trade***, *page 3*

WORLD WATCH
By Jayanath Colombage

Beijing helps safeguard maritime commerce

Long before the Strait of Hormuz became a critical and highly vulnerable choke point for global energy trade, the maritime world witnessed the threat posed by non-state actors engaged in piracy off the Gulf of Aden in the Arabian Sea starting around 2008.

The Gulf of Aden became a focus of attention due to the activities of a small group of Somali pirates. A large number of merchant vessels that were engaged in legitimate maritime trade were attacked, many were hijacked, and billions of dollars were lost through ransom payments, increased insurance premiums and the rerouting of vessels around the Cape of Good Hope.

No single navy in the Indian Ocean region could handle this maritime security threat on its own. In view of the grave threat to freedom of maritime commerce, the United Nations Security Council adopted several resolutions authorizing international naval cooperation against piracy. Numerous naval forces — including those of the United States, the European Union, NATO, India, Japan, Russia, the Republic of Korea and China — deployed warships to safeguard freedom of navigation in the region.

Toward the end of 2008, China dispatched its first escort task force comprising two guided-missile destroyers and one replenishment ship to the pirate-infested Gulf of Aden to protect Chinese commercial ships and those of other countries. This marked the first operational deployment of Chinese naval forces beyond the first island chain in modern history and initiated one of the longest continuous overseas naval missions undertaken by any navy.

See ***Security***, *page 3*

CHINESE BEAUTY BRANDS ENJOY A SURGE IN POPULARITY

Advanced production and traditional elements give domestic cosmetics a growing edge globally

By **HE QI** in Shanghai
heqi@chinadaily.com.cn

From Xiaohongshu to TikTok, and from bloggers to everyday users, a growing number of foreign faces are sharing their stories of discovering C-beauty, also known as *guohuo meizhuang*, or made-in-China beauty.

In one such video by beauty influencer Mikayla Nogueira, she holds up makeup products from Flower Knows, a Chinese brand targeting younger consumers, and exclaims: "This has to be one of the craziest makeup brands I've ever seen!"

After applying the products to her face, she's completely won over. "I'm obsessed with the brand, I want more."

On the lifestyle platform Xiaohongshu, or RedNote, a French woman named Sarah lays out her haul from Shanghai in a video before returning home: lotions, perfumes, eye shadow palettes, lip glosses and face masks, all from Chinese beauty brands.

"I always knew Chinese products were good, but buying them in person made me realize just how incredible the quality is," she said in Mandarin. "They're such a treasure to discover — so good that I want to fly back to China immediately to restock."

For many, the appeal of Chinese beauty brands lies in their thoughtful and authentic integration of traditional Chinese elements.

Thais Teixeira Mendes, a 28-year-old Brazilian master's student at Shanghai Jiao Tong University, has attended almost every beauty expo in Shanghai, testing products from major and niche domestic brands.



Foreign buyers select Chinese beauty products at the Yiwu International Expo Center in Zhejiang province on June 13. YANG MEIQING / FOR CHINA DAILY

See ***Products***, *page 3*

Prize catch



Participants scramble to grab a live fish on Wednesday during the traditional Naoyu Festival in a village in Liuzhou, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region. The festival, which originated in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and was listed as a city-level intangible cultural heritage in 2016, draws visitors from across Guangxi, as well as Guizhou and Hunan provinces, to wish for a bountiful harvest. LAN KUN/FOR CHINA DAILY

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

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved
Vol.8 — No. 1883

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:06 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:06 PM

INDEPTH

Urbanites head north for budget homes, rural tranquility

By ZHAO RUINAN
zhaoruinan@chinadaily.com.cn



Golden rice fields line the banks of the Huma River in the Greater Hinggan Mountains in Northeast China's Heilongjiang province. XIAO DIANCHANG / FOR CHINA DAILY



An aerial photo captures the snowy winter landscapes of Bishui town in Heilongjiang. LYU ZUOWEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

By the time Lyu Zuowei reached Bishui town in Northeast China's Heilongjiang province he had driven more than 3,000 kilometers over four days.

The final 100 km of the journey that started in Wuhan, Hubei province, followed a country road into the Greater Hinggan Mountains.

At the entrance to Bishui, Huzhong district, he stopped the car and lowered the window. "I had never breathed air so fresh," said 32-year-old Lyu. "It felt as if it went through my body and cleaned me out."

The stillness was just as striking. The former forestry town is ringed by mountains, with the Huma River nearby. Its broad, orderly streets had been laid out when thousands of forestry workers and their families lived there, but many of its homes are now empty.

Lyu said it was so quiet he could almost hear a pin drop.

He had come in August 2024 to inspect a courtyard he had already bought online for 16,500 yuan ($2,440) without seeing it in person. Advertised on social media, it included an old brick house, a wooden shed, and a narrow vegetable plot.

Lyu had recently left a publicity job with a State-owned construction company in Wuhan and was searching for a place to stay in the Greater Hinggan Mountains. He had read about the area in textbooks when he was a child, and had always wanted to go there.

He first thought of the place as a northern retreat. Somewhere to visit when the summer was too hot and stay before driving back to Wuhan.

But that first visit lingered in his mind.

In October of that year, when a detached courtyard house with a garage became available, he paid 40,000 yuan for it. The land covered more than 800 square meters. He later bought a third, row-style courtyard dwelling for another 40,000 yuan, bringing his total spending on the three properties to 96,500 yuan.

From July 2025, Lyu began spending longer periods in Bishui. On summer days, he sometimes rose before 4 am. He practiced tai chi and dance, wrote calligraphy, chopped firewood, cooked, tended the yard, and edited photographs and videos for his social media account.

Lyu, who studied dance at university and has always wanted to make it his career, said he felt like he was "actually living".

"A house with a yard here is cheap and the environment is so good. I plan to live and stay here for a while," he said. "I see this as a stage of my life — a time to adjust myself and think again about work and what kind of life I want."

He recently moved to Beijing looking for work, and a young woman is staying in one of his courtyard homes. She teaches Chinese online to students overseas and hopes to spend some time living in the region.

Although he is currently in Beijing, Lyu still feels that big-city life is not for him. In the longer term, he hopes to return to the Greater Hinggan Mountains and transform the courtyard homes he bought into a retreat combining cultural tourism, wellness and arts-based healing.

Breaking free

Lyu is part of a small but increasingly visible trend. In recent months, a growing number of social media posts have appeared about buying old homes in the Greater Hinggan Mountains.

Young people have shared stories about moving from major cities to Bishui and Yitulihe in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region, as well as their plans to renovate budget homes, tend vegetable plots and spend a season away from urban life.

In Yitulihe, outside buyers have been looking at low-priced apartments and courtyard homes for several years.

The dwellings in Bishui that caught Lyu's eye were built to accommodate a different economy. Many date to the 1980s and 1990s, when logging supported settlements scattered across the mountains. As forestry production changed and workers retired or moved away, rows of houses were left unused.

Pan Shiyu, who has lived in Bishui since arriving from Guangdong province in 2009, began helping meet the growing demand for such properties about five years ago. Sometimes she buys a home and sells it on, while other times she acts as an agent for sellers and buyers.

Her first purchase followed a meeting with an elderly couple preparing to join their children in Shanghai.

"They stood in front of the old house and were upset. They did not want to abandon it, but they could not stay," Pan recalled. She bought the roughly 50-square-meter home for 5,000 yuan and later began acquiring other vacant properties, arranging ownership documents and matching them with buyers.

Pan said she has helped put more than 300 homes back into use. At first, most buyers were approaching retirement. Over the past two years, more people in their 20s and 30s have made inquiries, she said.

"Some young people stay for a few months, some stay longer," she said. "When they have rested and recharged, they set off again."

The changing demographic is noticeable in Bixing community, Bishui.

Zhao Qingguang, head of the community residents' committee, has worked there for more than 20 years.

He estimated that "nonlocal households" have risen from just over 10 to more than 30 today. The number could reach 50 or 60, if buyers who have not yet arrived were included, he said.

The community has about 500 to 600 households. During busy times, it has 700 to 800 residents, Zhao estimated. In winter, the population drops to about 300. Only a handful of nonlocals remain throughout the cold months.

The houses are inexpensive, but many lack indoor bathrooms and modern heating. To deal with the cold, residents burn firewood or install electric systems themselves.

"Heating is a real problem in winter," he said. "The winter here is long."

However, many homebuyers renovate their courtyards and return in summer. Others discover that the distance, cold, or the daily work involved in maintaining the property and their desire for a comfortable existence are too much for them, and they put their homes back on the market.

Desire for land

It's not the first time that urbanites' retreat to greener pastures and search for bargain homes has made headlines.

In 2019, Hegang, a former Heilongjiang coal city, went viral after apartments sold for tens of thousands of yuan. A 2024 media survey found at least 24 cities in 10 provincial-level regions in similar situations. More than half were in Northeast China.

Fuxin and Linghai in Liaoning province also attracted buyers to cheaper old apartments. Some settled permanently, while others kept jobs elsewhere and returned only occasionally.

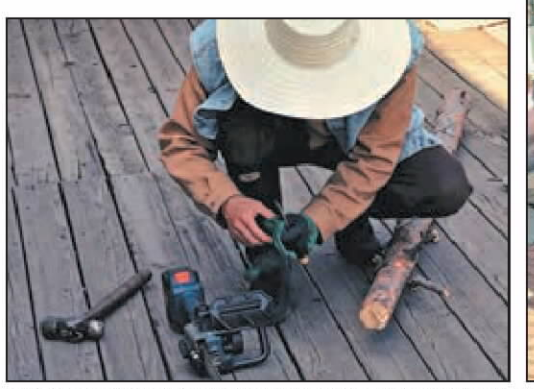
But the forest-town version of the migration to quieter locations offers something many bargain apartments do not: land. Bishui homes often include a courtyard, shed or vegetable plot. The low price buys shelter and the chance to plant vegetables, split firewood and organize life around manual work.

For Lyu, the yard is not purely decorative. He had tried to grow vegetables, adding another task to his routine of chopping wood, cooking and looking after the property.

Sun Jiashan, a researcher at the Academy of Chinese Culture, said improved transportation links, internet access and changing ideas about work have made it possible for more people to move around the country.

Remote work enables "geographical arbitrage", that is, earning income tied to a large city while living more cheaply elsewhere, he said.







Left top: Lyu Zuowei weeds his vegetable garden in Bishui on June 17. **Left above:** Lyu works on his hand-made wooden clothes rack on June 10. **Right above:** Pan Shiyu displays mushrooms she has dried in the yard in Bishui. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



A bird's-eye view of Lyu's house in Bishui. PHOTOS BY LYU ZUOWEI / FOR CHINA DAILY



Lyu's axe used for chopping firewood.



Lyu practices calligraphy in his spare time.

"Some can take a gap period in the Greater Hinggan Mountains and then return to a big city," Sun said. "People no longer have to work in an office building or a cubicle."

Retirees use the seasons as their compass.

Fan Xiuchun, 55, from Zhejiang province, paid a little more than 30,000 yuan for a house in 2023. She usually arrives in April, as the snow begins to melt, and stays until mid-September. Known as "China's coldest town", Huzhong averages 16 to 20 C in summer, while winter temperatures often fall below -40 C.

"The environment is excellent here. My sleep is better here. I spend the whole summer and then go back," Fan said.

She lived and worked in Chongqing for decades, and later spent a lot of time in Yunnan province.

She has a car in Bishui and treats the town as just one stop in a life divided among several places. Such an arrangement, she said, requires retirement income, savings or remote work.

"If you still have to struggle to make a living, this place is not very suitable," she said. "There are not many job opportunities even for local people, let alone for outsiders."

Last year Fan bought three more town houses in Huzhong district. She plans to take her family and friends there every summer to enjoy the cool weather.

In for the long haul

Wang Jiayan is among the few outsiders who have made the move permanent. The 42-year-old from the Ningxia Hui autonomous region has lived in the area continuously for six years.

He bought his first house, without visiting it, for 15,000 yuan after seeing an advertisement on a short-video platform in 2020.

Wang supports himself with his savings. Once the house was bought, he said, daily living has cost very little.

He has kept his home close to its original state, preferring a wood-burning stove and doing manual chores to a modern renovation. In summer, he rises at 3 or 4 am and tends his vegetable garden. He is usually in bed before 9 pm.

Wang's existence, however, is not solitary. "They treat me like a son," he said of the older residents nearby.

The care and concern is mutual. He has a car and drives his neighbors to hospital when they need help. When he fell ill, they came to check on him — one household brought steamed buns, another dumplings.

"People are social animals," Wang said. "Helping one another makes us happy."

He has no plans to return to city life. "I will live here for good," he said. "I like this place very much."

Unlike most outsiders, Wang looks forward to the coldest months. He enjoys chopping wood and stoking the stove when the streets grow quiet.

"Winter is when it is quietest," he said. "Burning firewood is where the warmth of everyday life comes from."

By contrast, Fan plans to leave Bishui by mid-September and return south.

Most of the summer residents will also be gone, but Wang will remain. From his courtyard, he has watched the newcomers grow younger. Many tell him that work and competition in the cities have exhausted them.

Bishui's low costs allow some to spend a summer, or even a year or two, outside their old routines — living differently, slowing down and thinking about what should come next. But family responsibilities and the need to earn an income eventually draw many away.

"Most young people cannot stay here for long," Wang said. "Some come only in summer. Others stay for a year or two to regain their balance, but many eventually return to the cities."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:06 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:06 PM

TOP NEWS

Talks: EU trade promoted

From page 1

The two sides held the inaugural meeting of the China-EU trade and investment consultation mechanism last month, during which they agreed that China and the EU are each other's stable and balanced key trading partners. They also tentatively agreed to hold the mechanism's second meeting this autumn.

Commerce Minister Wang Wentao and European Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security, Interinstitutional Relations, and Transparency Maros Sefcovic have remained in close contact through exchanges of letters and other channels, guiding their respective teams in advancing the work in an orderly manner, He Yadong said.

Working teams from the two sides have since held more than 20 rounds of consultations, with in-depth and professional exchanges conducted under four workstreams on their respective economic and trade concerns, he added.

"China is ready to maintain frequent communication with the EU, uphold mutual respect, and work in the same direction," He said.

The aim is to promote more bilateral trade balance and expansion to maintain a stable and key trading partnership, He added.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

HOUSTON
1001 South Dairy Ashford Suite 100
Houston, TX 77077
Tel: 713-595-7660

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1565

Perilous journey



Migrants, including children, board an overcrowded inflatable boat off the coast of Gravelines, northern France, on Wednesday in an attempt to cross the English Channel and reach the United Kingdom. French authorities said on Thursday that four people have died in two separate attempts to cross the channel on small boats. FRANCOIS LO PRESTI / AFP

Draft law unveiled to combat cyberbullying

By **CAO YIN**
caoyin@chinadaily.com.cn

A newly released draft law on combating cyberbullying has been praised by experts as a people-centered initiative that would establish a collaborative governance framework, uniting all sectors of society to effectively curb and prevent online abuse.

The 60-article draft was published on Wednesday by the Cyberspace Administration of China, the nation's top internet regulator, for public consultation, which will last until Aug 28. If enacted, it would become China's first dedicated law specifically targeting online bullying, providing robust legal safeguards for building a comprehensive governance system, experts said.

The draft defines cyberbullying as concentrated or sustained online acts that infringe on lawful rights — including reputation, honor, privacy, portrait rights and personal information — through insults, rumors, hate speech, divisive content, threats, discriminatory remarks, unlawful disclosure of personal data and persistent online intimidation or harassment.

Liu Yanhong, vice-president of China University of Political Science and Law, said cyberbullying not only infringes upon the lawful rights and interests of individuals and organizations, but also disrupts online order, breeds toxicity in cyberspace and gives rise to widespread social risks.

"It has severely eroded public trust in online safety and become a deeply entrenched ill of the digital world," Liu said, emphasizing that the draft law directly addresses public concerns and embodies a people-first approach to cyberspace governance.

Wang Zhiqin, deputy head of the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology, said the legislation will close institutional gaps in tackling online abuse and steer cyberspace governance toward a more systematic, law-based and sustainable path.

As the internet becomes deeply woven into every aspect of work and daily life, the online ecosystem is being reshaped. Yet it has also become a breeding ground for rampant cyberbullying, including doxing (publicly identifying or publishing private information about someone, especially for the purpose of punishment or revenge), smear campaigns and traffic-driven manipulation. Such misconduct harms internet users and poses a threat to national security and public interests.

Several high-profile cases have drawn widespread attention to the issue in recent years. In April, a diving enthusiast in Guangdong province was given 10 days of administrative detention and fined for repeatedly cyberbullying Olympic champion Quan Hongchan.

In 2023, the death of Zheng Linghua, who had been subjected to online abuse for dyeing her hair pink, sparked public outrage. She became a target after posting on social media a photo of herself proudly showing her postgraduate admission letter to her grandfather in his hospital bed. Trolls attacked her for her pink hair and made disparaging remarks, while others reposted the photo and fabricated rumors that it depicted an elderly man married to a young woman. The case prompted many people, including national lawmakers and political advisers, to call for legislation to remedy cyber abuse.

According to the draft, internet service providers would be required to offer users tools to block strangers and have the authority to restrict or close accounts that are found to be spreading bullying content. Cyberspace regulators, together with departments responsible for education, public security, telecommunications, civil affairs, culture and tourism, health and broadcasting, would be tasked with building a governance framework that adopts a tiered approach to handling cyberbullying.

The draft also prohibits any organization or individual from providing technical support — such as internet access, server hosting, data storage or communications transmission — if they know that cyberbullying activities are being conducted.

In addition to establishing a coordinated governance mechanism, the draft would require platforms to provide users with quick on-screen buttons to record suspected bullying content, with enhanced protection for children, the elderly and people with disabilities. It also urges judicial authorities to inform victims and their families of their right to apply for legal assistance and clarifies that psychological counseling and legal support from social organizations are available.

Cyberbullying poses a common governance challenge worldwide, with countries including the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia having introduced laws to tackle online abuse. Wang said China's draft follows this global trend by establishing a multistakeholder collaborative governance framework.

"This approach with Chinese experience will enrich global digital governance rules and advance the vision of building a community with a shared future in cyberspace," she added.

New US curbs slammed as act of bullying

Targeting advanced manufacturing a ruse to blunt China's industrial edge, experts say

By **ZHANG CHENXU** and **ZHONG NAN**

The latest restrictions imposed by the United States on new models of foreign-produced power inverters and advanced robotic devices are less of a response to genuine security concerns and more of a politically driven attempt to blunt China's growing industrial edge, officials and experts said on Thursday.

The US is once again "overstretching the scope of national security" to impose restrictions that risk further fragmenting global industrial and supply chains, while shifting the economic costs onto US businesses and consumers without addressing the structural weaknesses in the country's own industrial competitiveness, they added.

"Despite repeated representations from China and the restraint it has exercised, the US Federal Communications Commission has continued to introduce and escalate restrictive measures, seriously harming China's legitimate trade interests and undermining the stability of China-US economic and trade relations," a spokesperson for the Ministry of Commerce said in a statement.

The remarks came after the FCC added foreign-produced power inverters and advanced robotic devices to its "Covered List" on Tuesday, effectively barring relevant new models from obtaining FCC equipment authorization and entering the US market.

The FCC said in a statement that the products were deemed to pose "an unacceptable risk to the national security of the US or the safety and security of US persons".

The ministry spokesperson said that the move harms others without benefiting the US, and it constitutes "a typical act of market distortion and unilateral bullying". Under the guise of nondiscrimination, the move actually discriminates against and suppresses Chinese companies and products, the spokesperson added.

Inside
Editorial, **page 4**

Dai Mingfeng, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, said the move underscores the widening scope of US security-based trade curbs, which have expanded from traditional telecommunications equipment to new energy and advanced manufacturing. He added that it is aimed at restricting market access for Chinese products and erecting new barriers for industrial competition.

Beijing has urged Washington to immediately revoke the move and stop its wrongful practices. "If the US insists on going its own way, China will take resolute countermeasures to safeguard its legitimate rights and interests," the spokesperson said.

Shipping sanctions

In a separate move on Wednesday, the US sanctioned 10 Chinese shipping companies based on the Chinese mainland and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, along with eight tankers, alleging that they had transported Iranian oil despite US restrictions.

The move freezes the companies' assets in the US and prohibits US companies and individuals from doing business with them.

Chen Jianwei, a researcher at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing, said the measures were imposed under US domestic law, rather than a United Nations framework, raising long-standing concerns over the extraterritorial application of unilateral sanctions and their impact on normal international commerce. He added that China is capable of safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of its shipping companies.

Contact the writers at zhangchenxu@chinadaily.com.cn

Hanging in balance



A resident navigates wrecked railway tracks in a flooded area in Sheikhupura, Pakistan, on Wednesday, after the Ravi River overflowed due to heavy monsoon rains. Downpours and flooding have killed at least 109 people and damaged hundreds of homes across the country since June. ARIF ALI / AFP

Security: Humanitarian operation receives recognition

From page 1

The People's Liberation Army Navy also provided humanitarian assistance and medical support and conducted search-and-rescue operations in the region. Thanks to the efforts of the PLA Navy and other navies, incidents of piracy gradually declined and maritime trade resumed.

These anti-piracy operations helped transform the Chinese Navy into a blue-water navy capable of projecting power far from home and playing a crucial role in protecting and helping govern the Indian Ocean as part of the global commons. Through this uninterrupted, long-term deployment, China has demonstrated a high level of operational sustainability and logistics management. Chinese Navy vessels have reportedly safely escorted more than 7,000 merchant ships from many countries. In addition to conducting anti-piracy operations, the Chinese Navy successfully evacuated citizens of several countries who were trapped by the worsening security situation in Yemen in 2015. This humanitarian operation received widespread international recognition and illustrated China's expanding role as a provider of maritime public goods.

Maritime security and safety are increasingly becoming a grave concern for maritime trade, and collaborative mechanisms are needed to ensure them. China's contribution to protecting international maritime trade, maintaining global supply chains, facilitating energy transportation and supporting humanitarian shipping has clearly demonstrated that China is acting beyond its own national and commercial interests. It has supported international maritime governance and demonstrated its ability to work closely with multinational maritime forces as well as individual countries outside China's territorial waters. During these escort missions, China engaged in protecting transit corridors, information exchange, deconfliction mechanisms, communication protocols and joint search-and-rescue coordination. Such practical cooperation has reduced operational risks while strengthening international maritime governance. These long-term, sustained operations far from China's shores have also provided the PLA Navy with experience in long-distance navigation, fleet replenishment, maintenance at sea, extended crew endurance, overseas logistics, operational readiness and capabilities for expeditionary maritime operations. The operations have also helped the PLA Navy develop command skills and expertise in the rules of engagement, international communication, crisis management, boarding operations and maritime law enforcement.

A significant development was the establishment of China's support facility in Djibouti in 2017. This is China's first overseas logistics base, operating alongside bases run by Japan, the United States, France and Italy. The base has facilitated the replenishment of PLA Navy ships deployed for extended periods and provided repair and maintenance services, medical facilities and rest areas for crews. The base has substantially reduced the logistical constraints associated with sustained deployments for the PLA Navy.

From the Chinese perspective, the Gulf of Aden is a vital part of the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative. Furthermore, China is a net importer of oil and depends heavily on energy shipments passing through the region. Hence, the escort missions have broader implications for China. Protecting ships engaged in maritime trade also enhances China's global trade connectivity and investment security. It is a win-win situation for China and the wider world. China is also leading by example in line with its Global Security Initiative, which advocates common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security.

The escort missions demonstrate China's evolution from a regional maritime power into a country assuming greater responsibility for maintaining international maritime stability. Furthermore, China has proved to the world its commitment to contributing to a community with a shared future for humanity, particularly in areas where international cooperation is essential.

The author is the 18th Commander of the Sri Lanka Navy, a retired four-star admiral of the Sri Lanka Navy, the former secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka and ambassador to Indonesia and ASEAN. He is also a guest professor at Sichuan University, distinguished fellow of the Pathfinder Foundation, and nonresident senior fellow of the Hong Kong Research Center for Asian Studies. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Products: Traditional ingredients boost appeal

From page 1

"I could see, touch, smell and try various products," she said. "Many ingredients have been used traditionally for hundreds of years and are embedded in Chinese culture."

Chinese herbals such as ginseng, Chinese angelica and green tea are now widely used in domestic beauty products. It reflects the ancient philosophy of gentle and natural skin care, according to officials from domestic beauty brand Chando.

Behind this consumer enthusiasm lies the accelerating global expansion of Chinese beauty brands.

The Shanghai-based Chando Group has focused on tech-driven skin care, and now operates in 15 countries and regions. Zhang Yinggui, general manager of the group's overseas sales department, attributed the rising global recognition to its breakthroughs in independent research, a differentiated Eastern philosophy and cultural values.

Beyond brand growth, the Oriental Beauty Valley in Shanghai is also elevating its manufacturing capabilities to a new level. Flexible magnetic levitation production systems enable a single production line to switch seamlessly between eyeliner and cushion compact production, while artificial intelligence-powered unmanned workshops are paving the way for fully realized "lights-out factories".

This forward-looking advanced manufacturing approach allows Fengxian to meet the surging demand from fast-growing domestic brands and take on high-end, small-batch orders from leading European and United States beauty giants.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:06 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:06 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

US' unilateral sanctions about leveraging engineered volatility for hegemonic profit

When international rules constrain the actions of the United States, they are usually dismissed or bypassed. But when they can be invoked against other countries, they suddenly become indispensable. Extraterritorial sanctions, secondary sanctions and restrictions on third-country companies have become routine instruments of US foreign policy.

The irony is that these tactics may ultimately weaken the very system they seek to preserve. By encouraging countries to diversify payment systems, reduce reliance on the dollar and strengthen alternative economic partnerships, unilateral sanctions are accelerating the emergence of a more multipolar global economy. The US may succeed in delaying that transition, but every new round of sanctions makes it harder to claim that principle, rather than profit, guides its policy.

The latest demonstration of that came on Wednesday, when the US State Department announced sanctions on a group of Chinese mainland and Hong Kong shipping companies for allegedly transporting Iranian crude oil to China and the United Arab Emirates.

Let us dispense with the fiction that this is primarily about nonproliferation or Israeli security. The Donald Trump administration has been unusually candid about its real priorities. Asked on Monday where the $13 billion in Venezuelan oil revenue seized by Washington had gone, US President Donald Trump first replied, "It goes toward running the country." Pressed further, he admitted, "It can go to the military. Congress has to approve it."

The Financial Times reported last week that six months after Venezuela's political upheaval and two devastating earthquakes, the money remains unaccounted for, reportedly held in an offshore Qatari account. Trump was even more revealing aboard Air Force One: "Venezuela, we paid for that war many times over. And that'll happen with Iran also. We paid for the war many times over."

The implication was unmistakable. Wars are expected to finance themselves. Oil revenues cover the costs of military operations and generate additional returns. Iran's nuclear program and its alleged threat to Israel become moral justifications for what is fundamentally a contest over energy, finance and geopolitical leverage. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu described Tuesday's White House meeting with Trump as a "full partnership" to ensure Iran never acquires nuclear weapons "and other goals as well". Those "other goals" deserve at least as much scrutiny as the nuclear issue itself.

The Chinese companies targeted by the latest US sanctions are portrayed as part of Iran's so-called "shadow fleet". Yet the longest shadow is cast by Washington's own extraterritorial sanctions. Such unilateral measures are unlawful as they lack authorization from the United Nations Security Council.

In early May, China prohibited domestic organizations and individuals from recognizing or complying with the US' Iran-related sanctions imposed on five Chinese petrochemical companies. The Ministry of Commerce rightly pointed out that Washington was unlawfully restricting normal commercial activities between Chinese enterprises and third countries, violating international law and the basic norms governing international relations. The measures were adopted under China's rules on counteracting unjustified extraterritorial application of foreign legislation and other measures.

China possesses sufficient legal and economic tools to protect the legitimate interests of its companies. If Washington continues to weaponize finance and energy for geopolitical advantage, Beijing has every reason to respond with further legal and economic countermeasures.

The broader objective extends well beyond Iran. Energy security and financial power remain inseparable pillars of US hegemony. By maintaining dominance over the international energy system, Washington protects the petrodollar, limits alternatives to dollar-based settlements and constrains efforts by emerging economies to build more independent financial arrangements.

Every escalation reinforces the strategic importance of US influence over global energy flows and the dollar-denominated oil trade. Oil prices surged after renewed military tensions involving Iran, while concerns over the Strait of Hormuz once again rattled global markets. This has become a recurring pattern. Washington tightens sanctions to squeeze supplies, eases pressure when markets require stability, then restores restrictions as negotiations falter. The cycle preserves US influence over energy markets while reinforcing the central role of the dollar in global oil transactions. Geopolitical volatility has become an instrument of financial leverage for the US.

'Excess capacity' allegations false panacea

Nearly five decades after the launch of reform and opening-up, China has secured its place in the global market and supply chains. The country has not only embraced the opportunities of globalization, but also emerged stronger from the challenges of international competition, becoming an important contributor to the global economy.

But competition, one of the defining features of globalization, has faced higher barriers from some countries that were once among the most ardent champions of the process which connects economies around the world. Some economies, for specific purposes such as geopolitics and trade protection, have concocted various new standards to define so-called "excess capacity", simply, mechanically or generally, in an attempt to contain China's development and set obstacles to normal international economic and trade cooperation. These so-called "conceptual" standards are neither consistent with the laws of development, nor can they be detached from the realities of countries or how the global economy has evolved, as pointed out by the Chinese Ministry of Commerce in a document released earlier this week.

It's neither well-founded nor fair to attribute China's exports to "excess capacity".

Responding to some Western countries equating China's trade surplus in goods with "excess capacity", the position paper provides a wealth of examples to prove that this argument is untenable. It says the country's export growth stems not only from the improvement of its economies of scale and innovation capabilities, but also from the demand driven by other countries pursuing their green transition and industrial development, as shown by the popularity of Chinese products such as new energy vehicles and solar panels.

Over the past decade, for instance, the average cost of electricity from wind and solar power worldwide has fallen by more than 60 percent and 80 percent respectively, in large part thanks to Chinese manufacturing capacity — a dividend that has made a great contribution to the global energy transition.

Artificial intelligence models developed by Chinese companies are also rapidly gaining ground in overseas markets because they deliver strong performance on a cheaper basis, thanks to both the country's unwavering pursuit of innovation and its solid energy infrastructure.

Some Western countries blame China's development for their own problems such as slowing economic growth and lagging industrial transformation. Yet the data show China is providing more market, development and innovation dividends to the world through the utilization of its market advantages, industrial development and sci-tech progress. Instead of "China Shock 2.0", the reality is "China Opportunity 2.0".

Take for example the rise of China's electric vehicle industry. Not only are international companies collaborating with Chinese enterprises to develop their own products, but Chinese EV makers are also cooperating with their counterparts in Europe and other parts of the world by investing in local factories, reviving production lines, improving the supply chain and creating jobs.

Attempts to stifle competition under the pretext of "excess capacity" won't stop weaker industries lagging further behind.

Experience gained over the past decades of globalization demonstrates that openness unlocks shared opportunities, and an international trade and investment system that runs smoothly is in line with the interests of all countries.

A robust manufacturing foundation and rapid technological advances constitute key benefits China has reaped from globalization and passed on. Its contribution to the world economy should be fairly recognized, not stigmatized.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Hao Yanpeng



Opinion Line

Software pioneer helps build defense shields with dedication

The past two years have marked an obvious acceleration in the technological upgrading and equipment modernization of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, which has a growing array of world-class, domestically built weapon systems, many of which were publicly displayed during the magnificent military parade last September and subsequent interservice combat exercises.

Among the systems made public are the DF-17 hypersonic missile, which maneuvers at extreme speeds to penetrate missile defense layers; the J-35, China's first carrier-borne stealth fighter, which has been deployed aboard the CNS *Fujian* — the country's third aircraft carrier and its first with a domestically developed electromagnetic launch and recovery system; and the JL-1 air-launched long-range ballistic missile that has equipped the PLA Air Force with a reliable, powerful capability to execute a nuclear counterstrike.

Last year's parade also featured a dedicated unmanned combat formation, including loyal wingman drones that form a core part of the PLA's next-generation air combat plan, and ground-fighting robots that promise round-the-clock mobility and reduced human casualties. While some next-generation programs, such as the widely speculated sixth-generation fighter jet models, remain unannounced, their expected development underscores sustained investment in frontier defense technologies.

Such hardware advances cannot be separated from the people inventing them. At the core of China's tech-empowerment strategy is a years-long push to nurture high-caliber research talent, embodied by Senior Colonel Wang Ji, a National University of Defense Technology scientist who has just been given a top national honorary title.

Specializing in high-confidence software verification — a technology critical to the operational reliability of military hardware and space systems — Wang has dedicated his career to building an independent domestic platform in this once-overlooked domain.

High-confidence software serves as an invisible safety backbone for sophisticated military equipment. Using mathematical verification methods, it identifies hidden logical vulnerabilities deep within core operating code that standard testing is unable to detect — flaws that could derail missions in stealth fighters, missile systems or aircraft carrier command networks.

Breaking through numerous technical obstacles, Wang and his team developed a full-stack, self-reliant verification framework now deployed across dozens of major defense and space programs. His work has become a cornerstone of quality assurance for China's new-generation weaponry, directly supporting the rapid operational rollout of new platforms.

Equally vital is his role in talent cultivation: he has built a vibrant youth-led research team, with many early-career scholars leading key project tasks, creating a sustainable pipeline of expertise for future innovation in defense technology.

Wang's story is representative of a broader trend. As China deepens its technology-driven military transformation, improved incentive mechanisms and research platforms are drawing more top professionals to defense technology research, ensuring military modernization advances in lockstep with economic growth.

— ZHAO LEI, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Plan calls for full-caliber climate response

Editor's note: *China aims to reduce carbon dioxide emissions per unit of GDP by 17 percent from 2025 levels by 2030, according to the national climate change response plan for the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period. In a Q&A posted on the Ministry of Ecology and Environment website, the person in charge of the climate change response department elaborated on the policy, while Chai Qimin, director of the strategic planning department at the National Center for Climate Change Strategy and International Cooperation, outlined the significance of the plan in an interview with China Central Television. Below are excerpts of the interviews. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

China has introduced a climate change response plan to make further progress in addressing climate change and achieving carbon peaking and carbon neutrality goals. The plan also sets out goals to establish a comprehensive carbon footprint management system and bring improvements to the climate adaptation framework.

The plan comes at a time when global temperatures have likely reached their highest levels since modern record-keeping began. Rising temperatures have accelerated the melting of glaciers, contributed to the rise in sea levels and caused widespread degradation of coastal coral reefs. These changes threaten the ecological balance, undermine biodiversity and increasingly disrupt livelihoods, economic activities and sustainable development, resulting in economic losses worldwide.

Against this backdrop, it is necessary to build stronger foundational capacities, including the development of sponge cities and the implementation of comprehensive emergency preparedness and response systems to better protect communities from the growing risks of extreme weather and other climate-related events.

The plan sets out key goals for 2026 to 2030, including accelerating the green and low-carbon transition of the economy and society, enhancing the carbon sequestration capacity of ecosystems and advancing coordinated efforts to reduce pollution and carbon emissions.

It has also stressed strengthening methane emissions control, enhancing nitrous oxide emissions management and advancing the control of fluorinated greenhouse gas emissions.

Other goals include accelerating the development of the national carbon emissions trading market, actively fostering a high-quality national voluntary greenhouse gas emissions reduction trading market, enhancing the vitality and efficiency of carbon markets and expanding the international influence of China's carbon market.

Also on the agenda are improvements in carbon footprint labeling, certification and governance mechanisms, broadening the application of product carbon footprints and promoting international alignment of carbon footprint standards and rules.

China will play a major role in advancing multilateral climate governance, fulfilling its transparency obligations in a robust manner, deepening bilateral and multilateral international exchanges and cooperation, and continuing to strengthen South-South cooperation on climate change.

Recognizing that addressing climate change requires coordinated action across sectors and government agencies, the plan adopts a systematic approach to ensure effective implementation. It identifies three priorities for strengthening governance and policy execution.

The first is to deepen interdepartmental coordination. The Ministry of Ecology and Environment will strengthen policy coordination and operational cooperation with relevant government departments while guiding local governments and key industries in advancing climate initiatives in a coordinated manner. Enhanced information sharing and joint coordination mechanisms will help ensure that all stakeholders work toward common objectives.

The second priority is to strengthen public engagement and capacity building. Through broader public communication, education and professional training, the government aims to improve climate awareness and enhance society's ability to respond to climate change. These efforts are expected to encourage greener, lower-carbon lifestyles while expanding public participation in climate action.

The third priority is to strengthen monitoring and evaluation. Authorities will establish dynamic monitoring mechanisms, conduct midterm and final assessments, and ensure that the targets outlined in the plan are achieved on schedule.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:06 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:06 PM

VIEWS

Fang Ke

A nuclear shortcut to greater insecurity

Japan is steadily treading the dangerous path toward nuclear armament. Citing shifts in the global security landscape and adjustments in Europe's nuclear posture, Japanese Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi recently argued that Japan should "discuss nuclear-related policies without taboos".

His remarks challenge the country's long-standing "Three Non-Nuclear Principles" and are intended to garner public support and clear the legal hurdles for Japan's nuclear armament.

Koizumi's remarks are neither accidental nor isolated. Rather, they reveal a systemic push by Japan's right-wing forces to accelerate remilitarization and challenge the postwar international order. Shortly after Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi took office, several of her close aides expressed pro-nuclear sentiments.

Calls for nuclear-powered submarines and repeated attempts by the ruling coalition to scrap the "Three Non-Nuclear Principles" during revisions of Japan's security documents reveal that the die-hard nuclear ambitions of right-wing forces are resurfacing.

Japan may frame such moves as a response to its growing "security anxiety", but history and reality show that pursuing nuclear armament is counterproductive.

It would upset the strategic balance in Northeast Asia, intensify regional tensions, drag Japan back to militarism and plunge it deeper into a security dilemma.

After World War II, guided by pacifists' reflection on its history of aggression and constrained by restrictions of the postwar international order, Japan adopted an "exclusively defense-oriented" policy and embraced the "Three Non-Nuclear Principles" — not possessing, producing or introducing nuclear weapons. This commitment to peaceful development laid the foundation for decades of political stability and economic recovery for the country.

Instead of ensuring security, nuclear weapons would make Japan a prominent target while eliminating its strategic security buffer.

However, amid significant shifts in the international landscape, Japan's right-wing factions have increasingly exaggerated "external threats" to justify dismantling the constraints imposed by its pacifist Constitution and the postwar international order. This rise of neo-militarism, exemplified by Koizumi's overt calls for nuclear armament, reflects a dangerous drift away from pacifism.

By equating nuclear deterrence with "absolute security", Koizumi framed nuclear weapons as the ultimate weapon for coping with potential security risks and for elevating Japan's strategic standing. Koizumi's rhetoric is fundamentally flawed because it overlooks geopolitical realities, Japan's historical responsibilities, and the international constraints it should abide by.

The notion that nuclear weapons can ensure a country's security is also not correct. In fact, nuclear weapons will prove counterproductive for Tokyo by triggering a regional arms race.

Instead of bringing "absolute security" to Japan, they will endanger the security of all regional countries.

Northeast Asia is already one of the world's most strategically sensitive regions. Japan's nuclear aspirations will disrupt the strategic equilibrium maintained for decades, and force other countries to upgrade their necessary nuclear deterrence or conventional military capabilities. This would replace the strategic stability in Northeast Asia with escalating confrontation.

Geography also doesn't favor Japan. The country's long, narrow territory, limited strategic depth and densely concentrated population and industrial centers make it more vulnerable than its larger neighbors in a potential nuclear standoff. Instead of ensuring security, nuclear weapons would make Japan a prominent target while eliminating its strategic security buffer.

As a non-nuclear-weapon signatory to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Japan's pursuit of nuclear arms blatantly violates the international non-proliferation regime and undermines global nuclear governance.

The country's history of aggression and "Peace Constitution" strip Japan of any legitimacy to acquire nuclear weapons. More importantly, Japan has yet to fully reckon with its wartime crimes. Nuclear weapons would only bolster its historical revisionism and military ambitions.

As a defeated aggressor in WWII and the only country in the world to have suffered atomic bombings, Japan knows all too well how devastating nuclear weapons are. That painful history should reinforce, not weaken, its commitment to nuclear restraint.

Koizumi's advocacy of nuclear weapons for "security" is essentially an attempt to break from the postwar order and reestablish Japan as a major military power.

Its nuclear ambitions can trap Japan in a dual "security dilemma". For decades, the country has relied on the United States-Japan alliance and Washington's nuclear umbrella and military presence for its security. Developing its own nuclear capability would run counter to Washington's strategic layout in East Asia and invite US suspicion.

It would gradually erode the security umbrella provided by the US-Japan alliance. On the other hand, intensified tensions with neighboring countries would leave Japan politically isolated and diplomatically disadvantaged.

The warning signs are already visible. Japan's rapid military buildup — including substantial increases in defense spending, development of offensive arms, hyping of nuclear weapons, and interference in regional disputes — has already put its neighbors on high alert.

This might-makes-right security strategy will drag Japan into a vicious cycle of arms and insecurity, potentially reviving the militaristic path it followed during WWII.

Lasting national security does not come from military expansion or nuclear armament but from a stable regional order, mutual trust among neighbors, strategic restraint, and sustainable development.

Koizumi's fallacy that "nuclear brings security", along with the re-militarization and nuclear agenda pushed by Japan's right-wing forces, is a short-sighted gamble that threatens the country's national security, regional peace, and the shared future of humanity.

Tokyo must recognize that peaceful development, security and stability depend on adhering to the "pacifist" Constitution, committing to non-nuclear principles, and integrating into regional cooperation.

Indulging in militarism and pursuing the so-called "absolute security" through nuclear arms would only lead to disaster.

The author is a professor at the National Defense University, the People's Liberation Army.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Evan Freidin

China's open-weight AI a boon for the world

The 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance, hosted by Shanghai earlier this month, was themed "AI Partnership for a Brighter Future" and focused on the global development and governance of AI technology.

Global Lens

Currently, China and the United States are the only two nations with the resources to develop AI technology on a large scale. Therefore, their approaches to AI development significantly shape the global trajectory of AI evolution. While one country emphasizes AI as a tool accessible to all, the other has adopted a model where AI is controlled by the elite.

The success of the two approaches will depend not only on the capabilities of individual models but also on their global adoption. In recent months, the performance gap between Chinese and US frontier models has narrowed significantly. Moonshot's Kimi K3, for instance, recently achieved benchmark results rivaling those of Anthropic's Claude Opus 4.8 and OpenAI's GPT-5.5.

However, the more consequential divergence lies in governance philosophy. While US companies often retain proprietary control, China's leading labs and tech giants have embraced open-weight models. This means their model parameters are publicly accessible for modification and deployment, enabling global adaptation and innovation. Although this is not without the risks of misuse, it offers a viable alternative to AI monopolies.

The WAIC's emphasis on openness signals that this ethos is now central to Beijing's AI vision. As President Xi Jinping stated on July 17 in his address at the WAIC, "AI development should not be a solo performance by a single country, but a symphony of international cooperation. We should seize this rare, historic opportunity to encourage open source, openness, collaboration and sharing."



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

This message is like a beacon to the Global South, indicating that this powerful technology will not remain under the control of US tech giants. It allows developers from Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America to finetune Chinese models for their own languages and contexts while avoiding high costs. Countries that were previously limited to consuming technology can now actively participate in shaping its development.

Thanks to this ethos, since August 2025, Chinese AI has surpassed Western AI in terms of cumulative downloads in the open-source community, highlighting its widespread adoption across the globe. Many startups and companies, including those from the US, are increasingly using Chinese large language models to build their own AI programs.

For the world to enter the AI age equitably, there must be equal access to this technology. Otherwise, it could become another tool of hegemony and domination.

We have already observed that in Australia, where US companies are embedding themselves into the process of legislating AI and data center standards. The Australian government is resisting these influences, hoping to put in place measures to support Australian artists and the energy grid, but the threat to Australian digital sovereignty persists.

Recent moves by the US government to possibly ban US companies from using Chinese open-source models highlight its apprehensions concerning Chinese AI — not just its performance, but how ubiquitous it can potentially become.

Similarly, measures are being considered to ensure that US AI stays in the hands of US users.

In June, the US government went so far as to briefly ban Claude's highest-performing model, Fable 5, from use by anyone who is not a citizen of the US.

However, this pursuit of absolute control over AI may lead to its isolation from global AI development, ultimately weakening its position in the long run.

China's embrace of open-weight models in AI is a boon to the world. It will ensure that AI is accessible to all, and does not remain in the hands of corporate tech giants.

Without this ethos, AI is likely to become another divide between developing and developed nations — another form of fragmentation that breeds inefficiency and mistrust.

If AI is to become a force for good, then it must be developed through multilateral cooperation, allowing all stakeholders to guide the technology and the changes it will bring.

The author is a research affiliate at the AustChina Institute, a Melbourne-based foreign policy think tank.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Chen Weihua

The author is a China Daily columnist.
chenweihua@chinadaily.com.cn

Preserve the authenticity and charm of old towns

Over the past year, I must have visited some 50 old towns during my travels across China. Some are deservedly famous, including Lijiang and Dali in Yunnan province and the Xijiang One Thousand Household Miao Village in Guizhou province.

But perhaps the most impressive are those little-known places tucked away from the tourist trail. Among them is the Tianmen Bouyei Ancient Village, a 600-year-old traditional village of ethnic Bouyei people nestled deep in the mountains of Guizhou province, about a three-hour drive from Liupanshui.

Its traditional wooden stilted houses stand as they have for centuries, and have not been given cosmetic facelifts to please tourists. In fact, there are hardly any tourists there because the village is so difficult to reach.

By sheer coincidence, we arrived there during the Bouyei people's June Sixth Festival, which is celebrated on the sixth day of the sixth month of the lunar calendar. The entire village gathered for a festive meal, sharing food and laughter like an extended family. It was a living tradition, not a staged performance for visitors.

Another memorable stop was the Suoga Miao Village, about a two-hour drive from Liupanshui. It too has preserved much of its traditional way of life. With many old wooden houses, it is known for the distinctive headdresses of women — massive wooden horns wrapped with white wool and their own hair, symbolizing reverence for nature and their ancestors.

One woman patiently demonstrated how she creates the elaborate longhorn headdress for her teenaged granddaughter, passing on a tradition from one generation to another.

There is no doubt that tourism helps showcase China's rich cultural heritage to more people and boosts the local economy. But excessive commercialization can change the authentic character of a place, as it has in many old towns and villages across the country.

There should be a balance between developing tourism and preserving local culture, traditions and lifestyles that give old towns their identity.

The Xijiang One Thousand Household Miao Village is one such example. As the largest ethnic Miao settlement in China, it has more than a thousand traditional wooden stilt houses built along steep mountain slopes. It presents a breathtaking view, especially at night when the whole village lights up like a constellation of warm yellow lights.

Today, most homes there have been converted into family-run hotels, restaurants and shops catering to the swarm of tourists flocking to this National AAAAA attraction.

Tourism has helped lift local people out of poverty and created prosperity, but to me the touristy village is less appealing than the authenticity of the Tianmen and Suoga villages.

I am reminded of an article I wrote about 25 years ago in the Shanghai Star, a tabloid run by China Daily, after visiting two scenic canal towns near Shanghai.

Zhouzhuang had already become a commercial tourism success, while Wuzhen was relatively unknown and far less crowded. I wrote then that I hoped Wuzhen would retain its tranquility.

Of course, history had other plans. Wuzhen today is even more famous than Zhouzhuang.

It is regarded as a model of balancing commercial success with the preservation of its historical character.

However, most old towns in China have become too commercialized. It's disheartening to see nearly every house in Xijiang One Thousand Household Miao Village turned into a business.

It reminds one of Zhouzhuang in the 1990s, when shop after shop was selling the town's well-known pig's knuckle delicacy.

Even more dismaying is the craze to build "old towns" purely for commercial purposes over the past two decades. Many such newly built "old towns" are eyesores. They look more like theme parks than old towns because there are hardly any "old" houses there. Strictly speaking, they should not be allowed to be labeled as "old towns".

Despite enormous investment, few of these heritage projects have been successful in attracting tourists. Many have become ghost towns.

There should be a balance between developing tourism and preserving local culture, traditions and lifestyles that give old towns their identity.

For example, zoning is necessary so that local people can live there just like their parents and grandparents did, while commercial activities should be confined to designated areas.

Old towns are very charming, but that charm is also very fragile. It could quickly be lost if authenticity is replaced by excessive tourism development.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:06 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:06 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

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

TIAN QING AND WANG XINGXING

Why robots dance

China's robot dancers are not only a new expression of Chinese culture, but also the precursors of embodied intelligence for real-world applications

"Dancing robots" has repeatedly trended on social media after a series of high-profile public performances, including the *yangge* dance and Chinese martial arts shows at the Spring Festival Gala. Alongside admiration and applause from the public, there has also been persistent skepticism that this is simply "showing off" or even "useless".



Tian Qing



Wang Xingxing

Why should robots dance?

From a technological perspective, most artificial intelligence today is essentially a "brain in a vat" — skilled at processing symbols, but without a body. Humanoid robots represent the next frontier of AI: embodied intelligence, which allows AI to truly "inhabit" a body and move from the digital world into the physical one.

A robot can be thought of as having its own versions of a human brain, cerebellum and body — the "brain" decides what movement comes next and at what rhythm; the "cerebellum" controls how much force each joint exerts and where the center of gravity shifts; and the "body" consists of motors, sensors and limbs.

For a robot to complete a three-minute dance, its "cerebellum" must make hundreds of real-time decisions every second — continuously shifting its center of gravity, synchronizing more than a dozen joints and staying in time with the music. A delay of just 0.05 seconds in any one of these processes can cause the robot to lose its balance, fail the movement and fall.

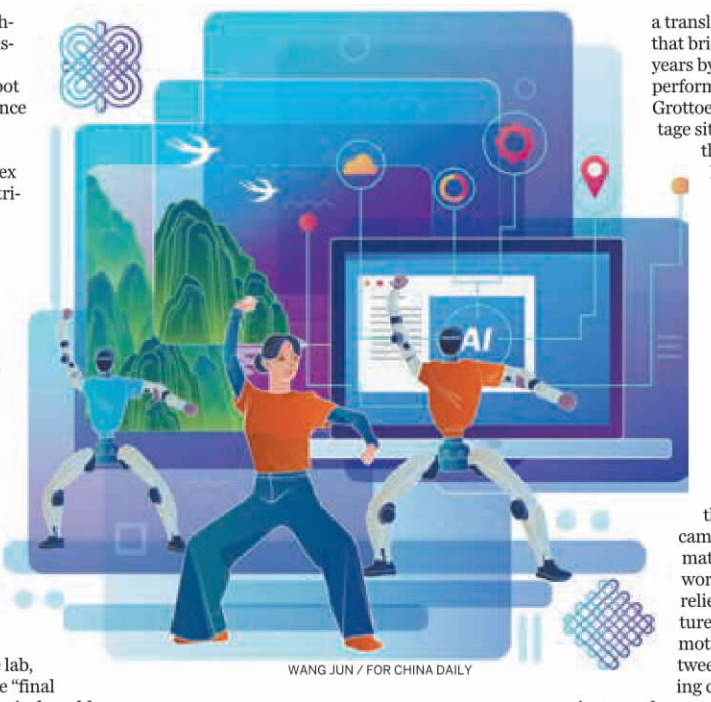
An even deeper challenge lies in the transition from simulation to reality. Even a model trained to perfection in the lab can still lose its balance in the real world, because real-world environments are always more complex than any simulation.

Mastering the skill of dance means AI can both "conceive of" a movement and "execute" it. As robots' ability to learn from training data advances, their movement precision improves accordingly. The more complex the dance movements, the higher the demands on balance and multi-joint coordination — and the stronger the robot's ability to withstand unexpected disturbances in real environments. A robot that can perform dance movements reliably has the potential to take on more complex tasks, such as industrial inspection, emergency rescue and household services.

In other words, a robot dancing at a heritage site today could be conducting rescue work at a disaster site tomorrow. Dancing isn't a performance stunt — it's a rigorous, real-world test.

From the perspective of application scenarios, when a robot operates in a lab, it is answering "questions it has already studied". When it operates outside the lab, it is stepping into the "final exam" of the real physical world.

In the AI field, there is a specific term: "out-of-distribution", referring to the real-world situations that robots have never encountered in the training set. Completing a performance smoothly and safely in a real-world setting is the most direct test of an embodied intelligence system's robustness, or its ability to resist interference. Data collected in real environments is itself valuable training material — it records how a robot responds to unpredictable variables such as lighting, ground conditions and sound, offering samples that are difficult to replicate in a lab and feeding into further algorithm iteration. Through the continual accumulation of this kind of data, robots can gradually progress from completing a single performance to genuinely entering homes, hospitals and communities — serving people's daily lives and empowering countless industries.



WANG JUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

And from a cultural perspective, dancing turns robots into narrators of human civilization.

Choreographing a robot dance of random movements is technically possible, but doing so yields relatively uniform data, and squanders the rich potential of cultural elements to empower new technology.

A team of developers recently completed a translation of cultural elements that bridges a span of about 1,500 years by staging flash mob robot performances at the Yungang Grottoes, a UNESCO World Heritage site. They used AI to convert the dynamic postures of the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534) guardian statues at the grottoes into data, and then had a fleet of robots physically render that data — so that this piece of cultural heritage could truly come "alive" before people's eyes.

The process began with dance archaeology, analyzing the physical tension, center of gravity and muscle orientation of 10 sets of the statues at the site one by one. Next came AI-based 3D pose estimation, in which a neural network translated the 2D stone reliefs into 3D skeletal structures. This was followed by motion completion, or in-betweening: since a stone carving captures only a single instant of a movement, AI was used to fill in the preceding and following frames of continuous motion — in keeping with the principles of human biomechanics — so that these static guardian figures could "move". Next came motion retargeting: since the skeletal proportions of humans and robots differ, each movement had to be precisely mapped before it could be applied to a specific robot body. Finally came physical feasibility verification, in which the movements were tested through simulation before being transferred to the hardware itself.

This work also raises a deeper question worth exploring over the long term: Most AI models today are trained on data from specific cultural backgrounds. Data from English-speaking countries teaches AI to understand and interpret the world through the logic of the English language, leaving such models ill-equipped to grasp the body language of Northern Wei Dynasty guardian statues from China. Using data on Eastern cultural rhythm and posture to train embodied intelligence is a way of building a "cultural body" for Chinese AI — and more than that, it adds Eastern cultural elements to the broader landscape of artificial intelligence, helping align AI with values shared by all of humanity, and promoting exchange and mutual learning among different civilizations.

The significance of embodied intelligence extends beyond any single country or civilization. It represents a technological leap that belongs to all of humanity — one that takes AI out of the virtual "brain in a vat" and into the physical world, while giving the cultural elements of different civilizations an entirely new medium of expression that global audiences can understand.

Film and new media technologies once drove the cross-regional spread of culture and art. Today, AI and robotics go a step further, bringing ancient civilizations "alive" in the real world as tangible, interactive presences. China's robot dancers are not only a new expression of Chinese culture, but also a new starting point for exchange and mutual learning among civilizations.

Just as Chinese robots can now perform the poses of Yungang's guardian figures, in the future they may perform Greece's Hera dance or India's Bharatanatyam. Such performances would enrich the cultural diversity within the AI world, so that each civilization's beauty can shine in its own way and, together, create a shared beauty — making robots a new vessel for the diversity of world civilizations and the uniqueness of national cultures.

Tian Qing is a member of the Beijing Dancers Association, a cross-media artist, and the director of the robot dance show at "Macau 2049" and "The Awakening of the Yungang Guardians". Wang Xingxing is the founder of Unitree Robotics. The authors contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

MA HANZHI

Modernizing together

China, Africa and other Global South countries can rely on multilateral cooperation platforms such as WAICO to jointly enhance AI governance

Among the 29 founding member countries that signed the agreement on the establishment of the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization — the first intergovernmental international organization dedicated exclusively to AI — on July 16, Africa stands out with 10 seats, accounting for about one-third of the total. This reflects the fruitful outcome of China-Africa cooperation in the field of AI in recent years.



China has been steadily improving Africa's foundational conditions for AI development by assisting in the construction of fiber-optic networks, cross-border connectivity and new-generation mobile communication networks and other digital infrastructure. In August 2021, then-assistant foreign minister Deng Li introduced China's proposals for the China-Africa Partnership Plan on Digital Innovation at the China-Africa Internet Development and Cooperation Forum, which made digital infrastructure a key area of cooperation. At the 2024 Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, Chinese President Xi Jinping pledged to "build with Africa a digital technology cooperation center and initiate 20 digital demonstration projects so as to embrace together the latest round of technological revolution and industrial transformation".

Today, China-Africa digital infrastructure cooperation is accelerating. On Nov 7, 2025, the eastern segment of China Mobile's 2Africa submarine cable was officially activated in Kenya's capital Nairobi. With a total length of about 45,000 kilometers, the 2Africa cable runs along the African coastline and connects over 30 countries and regions across Africa, Asia and Europe, providing high-quality, low-latency and reliable international communications services to an estimated 3 billion people along its route. Once fully operational, it will reduce data transmission costs across Africa and boost regional online connectivity.

In August 2025, the second phase of the Zimbabwe Center for High Performance Computing, built with Chinese assistance, was handed over to Zimbabwe. The computing platform provided by China's Huawei delivers powerful support for local cutting-edge scientific research and high-level talent development. According to allAfrica, a website that aggregates and produces news primarily on the African continent, Chinese-backed projects have accelerated access to digital infrastructure that might otherwise have taken years to develop. In the AI space, this translates into opportunities to adopt technologies that enhance public service delivery, improve financial inclusion, and drive efficiency in sectors such as agriculture and transport.

China adheres to a philosophy of openness and sharing, working hand-in-hand with Africa to reap the dividends of AI development. In building an open-source ecosystem, Chinese open-source large models such as DeepSeek, with their high cost-effectiveness and localization advantages, are winning wide favor among African developers, in contrast to the often hefty licensing fees charged by mainstream Western models. According to Microsoft's Global AI Adoption in 2025, DeepSeek usage in Africa is estimated to be two to four times higher than in other regions. As AI applications gain traction across the continent, more developers are choosing Chinese open source models as the foundational platform for local-language AI. In terms of application scenarios, Chinese AI technologies are now penetrating multiple sectors in Africa, presenting a diverse and flourishing landscape.

China's intelligent meteorological early-warning solution MAZU has been deployed in Ethiopia and several other countries, advancing the use of AI in numerical forecasting, extreme weather identification and risk management. In Mozambique, plant protection drones based on China's BeiDou navigation technology are widely used for farmland mapping, rice seeding and pesticide spraying, greatly improving harvest efficiency. In South Africa, Huawei has deployed intelligent systems for local railways, reducing accidents, and improving inspection and maintenance efficiency.

On talent cultivation, in July 2024, China and 26 African countries jointly issued the Action Plan for China-Africa Digital Cooperation and Development, explicitly committing to train 1,000 digital technology professionals for Africa over the following three years. On July 17, it was announced that in the next five years, China will provide developing countries with 5,000 opportunities in AI training and seminar programs, continuously contributing to global AI capacity-building.

As practical China-Africa AI cooperation deepens, consensus on improving global governance is also growing. In October 2023, China took the lead in issuing the Global AI Governance Initiative, establishing the principle of developing AI for good. Guided by the principles of extensive consultation, joint contribution, and shared benefits, this initiative has garnered broad international support and response by building cooperative consensus for global AI development.

At the Opening Ceremony of the 2026 World AI Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance in July, President Xi called for enhancing "alignment and coordination on AI development strategies, governance rules and technical standards, so as to form a consensus-based global governance framework at an early date to make this frontier technology better benefit humanity". These propositions resonate with the shared concerns of the Global South and embody the common aspiration of developing countries to seek development and participate in rule-making amid the new technological revolution. Documents such as the Africa Declaration on Artificial Intelligence show that Africa's AI governance philosophy centers on safeguarding sovereignty, upholding shared values, putting people first, balancing development and security — principles that are highly consistent with China's emphasis on sovereign equality and its governance tenets of people-centered approach and developing AI for good. Crucially, both sides firmly oppose the monopolization of AI governance by a few countries or blocs, and are committed to building a fairer and more inclusive global governance system. This is the underlying reason why African countries actively joined the WAICO. South Africa, Algeria, Ethiopia, and Kenya — countries with more rapid AI development — along with other African signatories, demonstrate Africa's positive stance toward WAICO and its strong endorsement of its principles.



YANG MEINI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Africa still faces multiple challenges in participating in global AI governance, including weak infrastructure, talent and data gaps, insufficient institutional voice and risks of technological dependence. Nevertheless, China, Africa and other Global South countries can rely on multilateral cooperation platforms such as WAICO to deepen innovative collaboration, promote inclusive development, strengthen coordinated governance, and jointly enhance the capacity and level of all parties in global AI governance. AI can be developed in a sound, safe and fair direction, and AI can effectively serve the modernization efforts of all countries.

The author is an assistant research fellow at the Department of Developing Countries Studies at the China Institute of International Studies. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:06 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:06 PM

TALES & TRAILS

Editor's note:
China Daily reporters leverage local expertise to devise diverse itineraries that showcase a blend of historical landmarks and natural wonders in highly recommended cities and sites, offering practical guidance to experience the country.

BORN *by* RIVER *and* SEA

A coastal city in northern China has developed into a thriving hub where history, culture and modernity converge, **Deng Zhangyu** and **Yan Dongjie** report in Tianjin.



Nestled along the Haihe River and facing the Bohai Sea, Tianjin is a vibrant coastal city in northern China that hosts a unique blend of history, culture and modernity.

Born from the river and thriving by the sea, the city has long been a gateway between China and the world.

In ancient times, the Haihe River, which runs through the city center, made Tianjin a vital trade and transportation hub.

In 1860, following China's defeat by the invading Anglo-French forces, the city was forced to open its doors as one of China's early treaty ports under the terms of unequal treaties, which allowed foreign countries to establish concessions.

Agonizing for the country's collective memory, this turning point in history also inadvertently launched Tianjin's connection with the rest of the world in a modern context, and its legacies remain ubiquitous in the city: Western-style buildings, tree-lined avenues and entire neighborhoods that feel like a journey through European capitals.

For a different perspective, take a nighttime cruise along the Haihe River, where traditional Chinese structures and Western-style buildings light up, creating a skyline unlike any other.

But Tianjin hasn't forgotten its roots. Today, Ancient Culture Street is a treasure trove of traditional Chinese architecture, where cobblestone alleys lead to shops selling intangible cultural heritage products, such as Yangliuqing New Year paintings and Niren Zhang clay figurines. Each is a living expression of the city's one-of-a-kind story.

Visitors can watch artisans at work or even try their hand at these time-honored traditional crafts.

Travel just a bit further to Binhai New Area to discover Tianjin's coastal charm. Stretches of sandy beaches offer sunset walks and sunrise boat rides. The TEDA Aircraft Carrier Theme Park and the National Maritime Museum of China provide family-friendly fun with a marine twist.

A visit to Tianjin would not be complete without tasting its food. Seafood lovers will enjoy local specialties such as *badacha* (eight great simmered delicacies) and mantis shrimp potstickers. But the city's most iconic bite is the *jianbing guozi*, a crispy, savory Chinese pancake that can be found on nearly every street corner. It's more than breakfast; it's a taste of everyday life in Tianjin.

From its historical streets to its modern coastline, Tianjin offers a memorable journey, whether exploring centuries-old architecture, watching the sunrise over the sea, or savoring street food. This city invites everyone to discover a side of China that's both familiar and fascinatingly new.

Contact the writers at dengzhangyu@chinadaily.com.cn

See more, *pages 8-10*

Online
Scan the code to watch the video.

The giant wheel of the Tianjin Eye towers above the Haihe River, capturing the city's bustling energy and romantic charm in its view. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

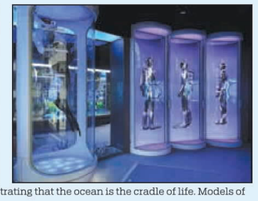
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:06 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:06 PM









From left: A restaurant bustles with diners at night in the Dongjiang Bay scenic area, located in Tianjin's Binhai New Area. The Age of Dinosaurs hall is a highlight of the National Maritime Museum of China in Tianjin, with precious fossils on display vividly illustrating that the ocean is the cradle of life. Models of minke whales are on display at the Today's Ocean hall of the museum. The Future Ocean gallery at the museum features immersive digital displays, showcasing how humans might live in the deep sea in the future. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

BLUE HORIZONS IN BINHAI

From maritime history and an aircraft carrier to sunrise fishing, a new area offers an easy coastal escape from Beijing, **Deng Zhangyu** reports in Tianjin.

Dreaming of a seaside escape? Hop on a high-speed train from Beijing and, in just an hour, you'll arrive at Tianjin's Binhai New Area, home to one of the capital's nearest stretches of coastline.

If Tianjin's city center is a canal-laced old town, Binhai New Area, about a 30-minute drive away, is a vibrant port shaped by the Bohai Sea, where maritime culture and modern attractions come together.

To understand the story of this coastline, I began at the National Maritime Museum of China. Perched beside the Bohai Sea, the museum is one of Binhai's biggest draws. Admission is free, but visitors should reserve tickets online well in advance, as same-day tickets are rarely available.

The gleaming white building immediately catches the eye. Its sweeping curves resemble a school of fish gliding through the waves or a sail billowing in the wind.

Two observation decks extend over the water, offering uninterrupted views of the Bohai Sea.

Standing there with the sea breeze on my face and the horizon stretching endlessly ahead, I easily lost track of time before my friend Chang Xiaojing, who works at the museum, brought my attention back to the exhibits.

Since opening in May 2019, the museum has welcomed more than 3 million visitors each year, Chang says.

During the summer holidays, tickets are especially hard to secure, with families and young travelers flocking from across the country.

The museum houses 13 permanent exhibition halls spanning three floors, covering themes like Ancient Ocean, Today's Ocean, Future Ocean, and Chinese Maritime Civilization. It is also hosting a special exhibition on China's underwater archaeological discoveries.

The museum's star attraction is impossible to miss — a 9.4-meter whale shark specimen suspended dramatically above visitors.

Nearby are a preserved pregnant hammerhead shark, a life-size model of a giant squid measuring more than 10 meters, and a display of plankton, crabs, shrimp and shellfish.

It isn't just marine life. The Age of Dinosaurs hall is also breathtaking, displaying precious fossils that vividly prove the ocean is the cradle of life.

My favorite was the Future Ocean gallery, where immersive digital displays imagine underwater communities, transport systems, farms and deep-sea cities. Moving from prehistoric oceans to futuristic blue worlds, the exhibition feels like a journey across millions of years of maritime history.

Before leaving, I stopped at the museum's popular seaside cafe. Floor-to-ceiling windows frame panoramic views of the Bohai Sea.

Coffee in hand, I watched the waves roll in and understood why many visitors linger long after their museum tour ends.



1.



2.



3.



4.



5

1. The National Maritime Museum of China is a new cultural landmark perched beside the Bohai Sea in Tianjin's Binhai New Area. **2.** The Dongjiang Bay scenic area is a popular venue for water sports performances. **3.** The stunt car show is a crowd favorite at the TEDA Aircraft Carrier Theme Park. **4.** A former aircraft carrier is transformed into a tourist attraction. **5.** Visitors enjoy horseback riding at the Dongjiang Bay scenic area.



The beach at the Dongjiang Bay scenic area offers plenty of fun for families traveling together.

Prime attraction

After a leisurely morning, I took a 30-minute taxi ride to my next stop: TEDA Aircraft Carrier Theme Park. For 220 yuan ($32.50), I stepped aboard a real aircraft carrier for the first time.

Commissioned in 1975 in the former Soviet Union, the ship was decommissioned in the 1990s and was later brought to Tianjin and transformed into a tourist attraction.

Inside, visitors can explore more than a dozen areas, from the expansive flight deck and combat command center to the crew's living quarters and missile and torpedo bays.

Wandering through its maze-like corridors, I was surprised to come across a fried chicken outlet, a cafe and a trendy souvenir shop. The contrast between the carrier's steel-gray military interior and its modern leisure spaces was as unexpected as it was entertaining.

Stepping onto the open flight deck felt like walking onto a movie set. Instead of fighter jets preparing for takeoff, children ran across the deck, tourists posed for photos and one visitor quietly practiced tai chi against the backdrop of the Bohai Sea.

The park's stunt car show is another crowd favorite, delivering high-speed chases, precision drifting and daring driving displays worthy of an action film.

Thrill-seekers can even pay 300 yuan for a 30-second drifting experience with a professional driver.

One foreign visitor emerged grinning, saying it felt like starring in his own *Fast & Furious* scene.

After spending about three hours aboard the carrier, I headed to my final stop of the day — Dongjiang Bay scenic area. The shift from the imposing military setting to soft sand and gentle waves was instantly calming.

Stretching for 2 kilometers, the beach is one of the best places in Binhai New Area to watch the sunset.

Visitors can also try jet skiing, speedboating and sailing before settling in for the evening spectacle.



Swings set in the middle of the water provide an ideal spot for photographs.

As the sun dipped toward the horizon, the Bohai Sea glowed in shades of gold and orange. I found a beach chair, sat back and watched the last light shimmer across the water, ending a day that had taken me from maritime history to military hardware and, finally, to the simple pleasures of the seaside.

Sea of surprises

The next day began long before dawn with another highlight of the trip — a fishing excursion with local fishermen to watch the sunrise over the Bohai Sea.

Several fishing docks in Binhai offer charter trips, with boats accommodating about 10 people for around 1,500 yuan.

Just after 4 am, my friends and I arrived at the dock while the sky was still dark. Captain Li Ning had checked the weather and tides. After putting on our life jackets, we set off into the Bohai as the boat's engine broke the morning silence.

The morning sea was quiet and gentle, with only the sound of wind and waves. As we sailed, the horizon slowly changed from inky blue to a faint orange glow. Suddenly, a red sun broke free from the sea, slowly rising, spreading golden light across thousands of waves.

This is the romance that only early-morning sailors can experience.

When we reached the designated fishing ground, the crew expertly operated the equipment, lowering a huge trawl net into the sea. After 40 minutes of waiting, it was time to haul it in — the most exciting moment. As the winch slowly turned, the heavy net emerged, and lively mantis shrimp, fresh fish, and small crabs tumbled onto the deck.

Captain Li laughed, comparing fishing to opening a blind box — you never know what the sea will offer. Some days bring an abundant catch, others less so, but that unpredictability is part of its enduring appeal.

As we sorted the morning's catch, a cool sea breeze accompanied us back to shore, bringing an unhurried end to the voyage.

My two-day journey through Binhai New Area proved that a memorable seaside escape doesn't require a long journey.

Just beyond Beijing lies a coastline where maritime history, unexpected adventures and quiet moments by the sea come together, offering a refreshing change of pace within easy reach of the capital.

Yan Dongjie contributed to this story.

Contact the writer at dengzhangyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
Scan for a Wow! China experience.



The Dongjiang Bay scenic area is a top attraction for a summer getaway.

Old villas and bold designs define historic cityscape

By **DENG ZHANGYU** in Tianjin

When it comes to cities made for slow, leisurely strolls, Tianjin always makes the list.

All you need is a comfortable pair of shoes. Follow the streets at your own pace, and around every corner, you'll find century-old mansions.

"Ten yuan ($1.5), 10 yuan to Italy!" As soon as I arrived in downtown Tianjin, I couldn't believe my ears when I heard a pedal-cart driver shouting that.

Yep, 10 yuan would take me to the Italian Style Area, the former Italian concession.

As one of China's early treaty ports, Tianjin was forced to open up in 1860, allowing foreign nations to establish concessions.

China's victory in World War I and World War II helped to gradually reclaim the concessions. By 1945, all foreign concessions in Tianjin had returned to full Chinese administration.

Italian Style Area is a well-preserved architectural complex designed entirely by Italian architects. There are 137 Italian-style villas. The heart of the neighborhood is Marco Polo Square, laid out in concentric circles.

Every building around the square is unique and no two look exactly the same. Scattered piazzas, delicate corner gardens, and clever arcade designs — every detail hides 100 years of architectural ingenuity.

On top of its century-old history, the Italian Style Area now perfectly blends old and new.

Hidden in the streets is the wildly popular bookstore Zhongshuge. Its ultra-modern design features layered staircases and mirrored ceilings, creating a high-end, light-filled space that young people love for photos.

Even Starbucks here stands out, with a theme of intangible cultural heritage that breaks the usual store design, blending Tianjin's local folk traditions into the decor. Details of Yangliuqing New Year paintings and Niren Zhang clay figurines can be spotted.

In the early 20th century, Tianjin was home to many prominent Chinese political, cultural, and military figures: Liang Qichao (1873-1929), a reformist thinker; playwright Cao Yu (1910-96); artist Li Shutong (1880-1942); and warlord Yuan Shikai (1859-1916). Their former residences are scattered among the streets. Each villa is a witness to modern Chinese history.

Leaving the Italian area, I strolled along old streets and arrived at the highlight of Tianjin's city walk: Wudadao.

This was once the British concession, and it's the best-preserved, largest collection of Western-style mansions in the city.

The area consists of five main roads, with a large number of Western-style buildings tucked into the crisscrossing lanes.

These elegant old villas, with their green bricks, red tiles and ivy-covered walls, may look peaceful, but every brick and tile holds a story.

When walking along Wudadao, you don't need to rush to see landmarks. Just follow your heart. Sunlight filters through the plane trees, casting dappled shadows across the streets. Vintage villas, quiet lanes and sculptures at every turn — one step, one view; one house, one story.

When I got tired, I stopped at a cafe for a drink, or just sat on a street-facing bench.

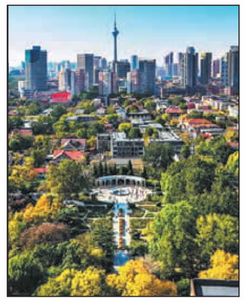
As night fell and the lights came on, Tianjin's romance truly began.

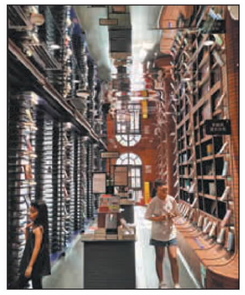
After a day of wandering, I took a Haihe River cruise strongly recommended by locals to experience the city's nightscape at its finest.

The river runs through the city center, connecting all its beauty and romance. Cruise docks are scattered along the river. A night ticket costs 168 yuan. The best times are the 7:30 pm and 8 pm departures. In summer, when days are longer, these two cruises let visitors catch sunset, twilight, and night views all in one ride.

As the boat glided gently along the river, the evening breeze softly brushed my face. The sky changed from golden sunset to deep blue night. The lights along the riverbanks came on, revealing the city's full skyline.

Near the water are rows of European-style red-roofed villas. Behind them, modern skyscrapers put on a dynamic light show, colors shifting and changing in perfect sync. Old meets new in a stunning visual feast.







From top: Wudadao is home to a large number of Western-style mansions. Zhongshuge bookstore is popular among readers and tourists alike. Visitors enjoy a sunset cruise along the Haihe River. PHOTOS BY DENG ZHANGYU / CHINA DAILY; PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



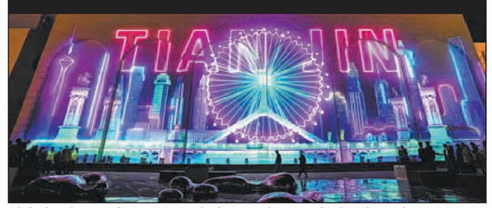
The boat moved forward, and ahead, the iconic Ferris wheel — also called the Tianjin Eye — stood quietly on a bridge, glowing with dreamy lights, the most dazzling landmark in the night.

The evening breeze, flowing water, city lights, old villas, and the Ferris wheel, all reflecting off the river, showed Tianjin's gentle beauty and grand scale.

If you go

Transportation: From Beijing South Railway Station, dozens of high-speed trains depart daily for both Tianjin and Binhai New Area. The journey to downtown Tianjin takes about 30 minutes, while reaching Binhai New Area takes approximately one hour. Ticket prices are generally under 60 yuan (around $8.87). Tianjin is also served by its own airport, Tianjin Binhai International Airport. Within the city, you can conveniently use the metro or taxis, with most attractions being less than a 30-minute ride away.

Accommodation: Tianjin offers a wide range of accommodation options, from five-star luxury hotels to budget-friendly chains, with prices ranging from 200 to 1,000 yuan.



A light show featuring the iconic Ferris wheel attracts a large crowd at the Italian Style Area in Tianjin.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:06 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:06 PM

TALES & TRAILS



The sea's freshest bounty takes center stage on the dining tables of Tianjin residents. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Dive into the culinary soul of a coastal community, where seafood dishes and street snacks create a tapestry of flavors, **Deng Zhangyu** reports in Tianjin.

Locking in the taste of the ocean

Tianjin has a long coastline, and its food is a beautiful blend of two worlds: half the flavor comes from the Bohai Sea, and the other half hides in the smoky, bustling breakfast stalls tucked away in the city's alleys. This is the relaxed, passionate soul of the people of Tianjin.

Just an hour's drive from downtown Tianjin will bring you to Binhai New Area, hugging Bohai Bay. With 153 kilometers of coastline, the sea's freshest bounty takes center stage on every local table, all year round.

Locals here have a unique cooking method passed down for over 1,000 years: *cha*. It's the fishermen's secret to locking in the pure taste of seafood and preserving it for leaner times.

The technique is simple but clever: boil water with sea salt, soy sauce, ginger, scallions, peppercorns, and other spices to make a spiced broth. Then drop in fresh seafood, let it simmer slowly over low heat, and leave it to cool completely before eating or saving for later.

Seafood prepared this way is collectively known as *badacha* (eight great simmered delicacies). It often includes fish, shrimp, cuttlefish, conch, clams, squid, and other specialties from the Bohai Sea. The result? Salty, umami-packed bites that preserve the ocean's original aroma.

This style of food was born from the hardworking lives of fishermen and salt workers in days gone by.

Back then, the coast was dotted with fishing villages and salt fields. Fishing and salt-drying were heavy labor, and sea salt helped replace salt lost through sweat and preserve seafood.

The sea was generous, but winter made it hard to find fresh fish and shellfish. Simmered seafood was easy to store, and was cheap and tasty with rice, so it became a household staple.

The older generation made it quite salty — a practical choice for those tough times. Today, to fit modern health habits, the saltiness has been reduced, making the fresh taste even more prominent.

In 2013, *badacha* was officially listed as a Tianjin municipal intangible cultural heritage. Now, almost every local restaurant features it as a signature dish.

At Xiaoman Seafood, a popular and trendy restaurant, founder Kang Yahui has been diving deep into this traditional dish. He says the secret to simmered seafood is all about heat control and timing.

"Each type of seafood has its ideal level of heat, spices and salt content," he explains.

Once cooled, the seafood hits diners' mouths with a rich, salty aroma, and layers of freshness burst out.

The restaurant is packed every weekend, and you have to be lucky to find a seat.

Besides the traditional *badacha*, food lovers have found another must-try dish: *pipixia guotie* (mantis shrimp potstickers).

Each thin sheet of dough is wrapped around three whole mantis shrimp. The bottom is fried until golden and crispy, while the top remains soft and tender.

One bite, and sweet, briny shrimp juices burst out. Many tourists come all the way just for this unique coastal treat.







Top: A dazzling variety of snacks at a restaurant in Tianjin. **Center:** Mantis shrimp potstickers. **Above:** Savory Chinese pancake. PHOTOS BY DENG ZHANGYU / CHINA DAILY; PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The vast mudflats of Tianjin's Binhai New Area produce plump, sweet mantis shrimp, and during low tide in summer, locals buy dozens to freeze for later. They toss fresh shrimp, shrimp paste, or fish sauce into everyday stir-fries. Seafood is woven into every meal — even breakfast.

Yang Kangping runs a seafood restaurant in Tanggu, Binhai New Area, that has been open for about 26 years.

By 7:30 am, the place is buzzing. Long tables are loaded with fried shrimp, fried yellow croaker, beltfish, sea bass, shrimp paste, fish paste, and various seasonal seafood side dishes.

Diners either wrap them in thin pancakes or enjoy them with jellied bean curd — a real energy-packed start to the day.

Born and raised in Tianjin, Yang says local residents have a rule: every meal must have a taste of the sea. Without seafood, the meal just feels incomplete.

On weekends, families gather around tables piled high with seafood at Yang's restaurant, turning breakfast into a lavish banquet.

The sea shapes Binhai's unique coastal food culture, but there's another kind of breakfast that unites all of Tianjin — a completely different street food vibe. *Jianbing guozi* (savory Chinese pancake) is a universally recognized symbol of the city.

The morning energy of Tianjin comes alive mostly through *jianbing guozi* stalls. The base is a thin pancake made from mung bean flour batter, then one or two eggs are cracked on top. It's spread with Tianjin's special sweet bean sauce and fermented tofu paste, and sprinkled with scallions.

In the middle, you can wrap either a thin, crispy, fried sheet of dough or a soft, fried dough stick. Rolled up hot, the aroma of grains, sauce and oil mingles — simple, yet unforgettable.

In Tianjin, stalls selling this are everywhere — on street corners, and in small community shops. The funny thing is, locals don't have a single "best *jianbing guozi* place". They'll all say: "The one downstairs from my apartment is the most authentic."

There's even a unique way to buy it: many residential buildings have a window on the first floor with a simple sign. Residents can buy *jianbing guozi* right from their neighbor's home kitchen, freshly made on the spot. And it's cheap. Less than 20 yuan (about $3) will fill you up.

Bohai seafood is rich and satisfying; *jianbing guozi* is simple and comforting. But Tianjin's charm doesn't stop there. People here are naturally laid-back, unhurried and easygoing. They don't like being rushed.

This relaxed vibe is reflected in every street snack you'll find, like the sweet, sticky *erduoyan zhagao* (deep-fried glutinous rice cakes) and the crispy, layered *mahua* (fried dough twists).

Just wander the streets and turn a corner, and you'll naturally discover your own favorite bite of Tianjin.

Yan Dongjie contributed to this story.

Contact the writer at dengzhangyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Exploring a city's spirit: Iconic prints and figurines await

By **DENG ZHANGYU** in Tianjin

When people think of Tianjin, their minds often jump straight to the delicious street food or the stunning foreign-style buildings that line the streets. But the real souvenirs one can tuck into a bag and take home — the ones that carry the city's true spirit — are two of its most famous intangible cultural heritage items: Yangliuqing New Year woodblock prints and Niren Zhang clay figurines.

To explore both in one trip, head straight to Ancient Culture Street along the Haihe River. This charming street is lined with houses with green-tiled roofs and wooden signboards, and shops dedicated to traditional Tianjin-style handicrafts.







Above left, below left and below right: Clay figurines are popular souvenirs for visitors to Tianjin.
Above center: A visitor gets hands-on experience in creating a Yangliuqing New Year woodblock print.
Above right: Chubby children are often featured in the New Year paintings. PHOTOS BY DENG ZHANGYU / CHINA DAILY



The most iconic stop is Yangliuqing Arts Store, a shop that has been operating for decades. Inside, you will immediately spot classic images that have been beloved for centuries: the legendary demon hunter Zhong Kui with his bushy beard, the God of Wealth, chubby babies holding a giant carp, and elegant beauties from ancient stories.

During the Spring Festival holiday, families often hang a picture of Zhong Kui at their front door to chase away evil spirits and bring good fortune, and display a picture of a baby with a carp to represent wishes for abundance and prosperity.

Yangliuqing New Year paintings originated during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and flourished in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). Every Spring Festival, families would buy them to decorate their homes, hoping for a bright and lucky new year.

The technique combines woodblock printing with hand-painting, resulting in warm, rich colors that have become a symbol of Tianjin's culture.

As the store manager Wang Yan explains, the shop sees long lines just before Chinese New Year, with locals coming to buy pictures for their homes. On regular days, however, young people are the main customers.

The store continuously launches trendy new products, including book-sized door-god magnets, fun blind boxes featuring characters from New Year paintings, and refrigerator magnets adorned with cute gods and playful wishes such as "May you have both good health and good luck".

Prices range from a few dozen yuan for these cute little items to thousands of yuan for hand-painted masterpieces.

If you want to get your hands dirty, the store has a workshop where you can try woodblock printing and coloring, creating your very own New Year picture.

On weekends, inheritors of this ancient craft come to demonstrate the whole production process and share the rich stories behind each image.

If Yangliuqing paintings freeze good luck on paper, then Niren Zhang figurines freeze the everyday lives of people in clay.

On the street, visitors can find several stores, but the most famous one is run by Zhang Yu, a descendant of Zhang Mingshan (1826-1906) who became famous by combining traditional Chinese clay figurine techniques with Western aesthetics.

The art was born during the Qing Dynasty. Legend has it that Zhang Mingshan would hide a lump of clay in his sleeve during casual conversations, and within moments he could produce a tiny figurine that perfectly captured the person he was talking to.

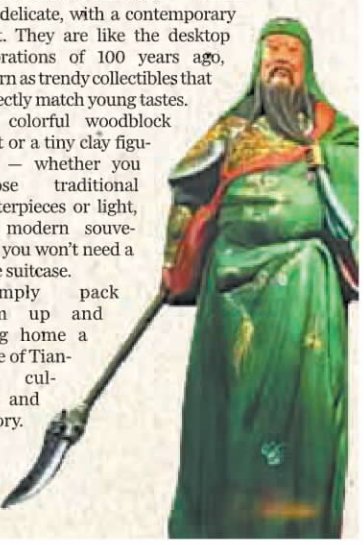
Today, artisans use local clay and follow a long process of pounding, shaping, firing, and painting. The sculptures range from tiny street vendors to grand opera scenes, and every detail is full of life and expression.

At Zhang Yu's gallery-like store, visitors can view a permanent display of more than 100 representative clay figurines — from antiques created by Zhang Mingshan to Zhang Yu's contemporary works — and can also attend workshop sessions to learn how to make the figurines themselves.

To draw young buyers, modern-day Niren Zhang has broken away from its "old-fashioned" image. Many stores now offer playful, youthful clay figures, such as cute cartoon characters — small and delicate, with a contemporary twist. They are like the desktop decorations of 100 years ago, reborn as trendy collectibles that perfectly match young tastes.

A colorful woodblock print or a tiny clay figurine — whether you choose traditional masterpieces or light, fun modern souvenirs, you won't need a huge suitcase.

Simply pack them up and bring home a piece of Tianjin's culture and history.



Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:06 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:06 PM

WORLD

Rescuers battle rubble



Rescue officials work at the site of a house that was damaged in Tuesday's earthquake, in Yatsushiro, Kumamoto Prefecture, on Thursday. Up to 34 people were feared dead on Thursday after the major earthquake in Japan, with four more bodies pulled out from the tangled wreckage of a shopping mall devastated by a suspected gas explosion. JIJI PRESS / AFP

Briefly

PAKISTAN

Police officers killed in overnight raid

At least nine police personnel and 15 militants were killed after militants attacked a police post in Pakistan's northwest Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, police said on Thursday. The attack targeted the Khazina Banda check post in Hangu district, where police repulsed the assault. Reinforcements sent to the area were ambushed en route, damaging an armored personnel carrier, police said. Police noted that 15 militants were killed in the ensuing operation, which was still underway.

ARGENTINA

Helicopter crash takes 7 lives

Seven people died when a firefighting helicopter in Argentina's western San Juan Province crashed on Wednesday, a local official said. The Bell 412 aircraft had been training before heading to a neighboring province to help put out dayslong fires when it crashed in a nature park. Fatalities included firefighters, police officers and civil protection personnel, he said. The causes were under investigation.

DR CONGO

Death toll in Ebola outbreak passes 1,500

The fastest-growing Ebola outbreak has killed more than 1,500 people in the Democratic Republic of Congo, official data released on Thursday showed, marking a 50 percent increase in around a week that shows the emergency continuing to outpace response efforts. As of Tuesday, 3,442 cases had been recorded, with 1,521 deaths, according to the latest government update. The outbreak, which was declared on May 15, has been linked to the Bundibugyo virus, for which there are no approved vaccines or treatments.

XINHUA—AGENCIES

Mideast conflict widens amid tit-for-tat strikes

Continued attacks drag in more powers as mediators appeal for talks to resume

By **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong
jan@chinadailyapac.com

The United States Central Command said it launched strikes against Iran following Tehran's attempted attacks on US forces in the Middle East, heightening concerns about a widening conflict that has dragged more countries into the fray this week.

The US command said its forces completed a heavy wave of strikes against Iran at 10 pm on Wednesday "in response to yesterday's attempted missile attacks on US forces".

The security situation continues to claim lives in the region.

On Thursday, the Chinese embassy in Kuwait said a Nepali driver working for a Chinese company had been killed as Washington and Tehran engaged in tit-for-tat strikes. The Chinese embassy also confirmed that no Chinese citizens were killed or injured in the incident.

Kuwait's Ministry of Defense said an Iranian attack targeted a building belonging to a Chinese company in the north of the country, killing one worker and causing extensive material damage to the facility and property losses for the company.

Jordan's military said on Thursday that its air defenses shot down five Iranian missiles targeting its territory, adding that the attack caused no casualties.

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps later confirmed launching an attack on Jordan's al-Azraq base, saying that three F-35 aircraft were completely destroyed.

In a statement, the IRGC said the US "used the occupied bases in your country (Jordan) to launch an airstrike with bunker-buster bombs on two residential houses, targeting two modest homes belonging to local residents on Qeshm Island".

In Iran, three members of a family — a two-year-old toddler along with his parents — were killed, while two other children from the same family were injured following a US strike in Qeshm, the IRNA news agency reported.

The latest violence came immediately after the US conducted a joint precision strike with Saudi Arabia targeting Iran-backed groups in Iraq.

The exchanges saw Iran draw condemnation from Gulf Arab countries while Washington and Riyadh's actions also drew rebukes from Iran and Iraq.

During a daily news conference of the United Nations Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General on Wednesday, Deputy Spokesman Farhan Haq told reporters that UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres had raised concerns that the conflict could widen if the parties do not return to the negotiating table.

US President Donald Trump told Fox News in an interview that the US would be "hitting Iran hard" and vowed to give Iran a beating.

This followed the Iranian Foreign Ministry condemning joint US-Saudi attacks in Iraq and days after Trump said the US was holding talks with Iran.

The IRGC warned on Thursday that countries "involved in assisting the aggressor will face harsh consequences if they do not correct their behavior".

In a statement that day, the IRGC announced that two oil tankers attempted to leave the "unsafe southern route" of the Strait of Hormuz on Tuesday night after being prompted by US aircraft.

Pakistan Foreign Ministry spokesman Tahir Andrabi told reporters in Islamabad that the country is trying to bring Iran and the US back to the table under the memorandum of understanding aimed at ending the conflict that Pakistan brokered last month.

"We are doing our utmost to bring all parties back to the Islamabad MoU," Andrabi said, adding that Pakistan was encouraging the countries to "fully adhere to their commitments to hold technical talks".

Cui Haipei in Dubai and agencies contributed to this story.



A child rests his head on the coffin of a Popular Mobilization Forces fighter draped in the Iraqi flag during a funeral on Thursday in Najaf, Iraq, for those who were killed in airstrikes. ANMAR KHALIL / AP

US tariffs pose threat to India's pharma sector

By **ARUNAVA DAS** in Kolkata, India, and **XU WEIWEI** in Hong Kong

The tariffs proposed by the United States on generic medicines, featuring a 200 percent duty by 2029, not only represent a medium-term risk to India's $9.7 billion pharmaceutical export market but also hurt US patients, analysts said.

They added that Indian pharmaceutical companies can take the challenge as an opportunity to diversify their export destinations and innovate.

US President Donald Trump announced a phased tariff schedule for imported generic drugs: zero duty until August 2028, followed by 100 percent for one year, and 200 percent thereafter. He said in a social media post that the US aimed to push generic drugmakers to move production onshore.

The US accounts for roughly one-third of India's pharmaceutical exports while Indian manufacturers supply nearly half of generic prescriptions dispensed in the US by volume, meaning tariffs will have a material midterm impact on India, said Lekha S. Chakraborty, a professor at the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, or NIPFP, an autonomous research institute of India's Ministry of Finance.

"While the two-year transition period limits immediate disruption, the scale of the eventual duties underscores structural vulnerabilities with high concentration in a single high-value market, thin margins on many commodity generics, and continued reliance on complex global supply chains," Chakraborty told China Daily.

"In this sense, the announcement serves as a timely signal for the industry and policymakers to accelerate diversification of export destinations, deepen domestic APIs (active pharmaceutical ingredients) and formulation capabilities, and invest in higher-value innovative and complex generics."

Swaran Singh, a professor of international relations at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, said that since India's pharmaceutical sector operates on thin margins, the potential imposition of a 100-200 percent duty from August 2028 is bound to disrupt supply chains and cause shortages.

Pharmaceuticals rank among India's largest export earners, Singh said.

However, the question is whether Washington can easily replace India as its supplier of generic medicines given the scale of India's supplies, noted the expert.

"For onshoring production lines, this two-year runway (until tariffs take effect in August 2028) is too short for typical US plant-validation timelines," he said.

"The February 2026 US-India framework for an interim trade agreement had reportedly carved out 'negotiated outcomes' for generic medicines, though things remain unclear as we speak," Singh said.

"Finally, for India, this threat of tariffs could as well be a (US) negotiating strategy rather than a certain outcome."

Singh said that an increase in tariffs will result in higher drug prices and out-of-pocket expenses for US patients — from antibiotics to cancer treatments — if manufacturers cannot absorb costs or relocate quickly. The move would also risk the supply of low-cost generic medicines that fill over 90 percent of US prescriptions, he added.

'Wake-up call'

While a two-year transition allows for adjustment, the policy has been seen as a "wake-up call" for India to diversify export destinations, reduce API reliance on global chains, and shift toward high-value innovative generics, said Chakraborty.

Krishnendu Paul, founder of Qbox Sciences Private Limited, said that though the proposed tariffs may create short-term difficulties, they also create an opportunity for the Indian pharmaceutical industry to mature.

"India should reduce its dependence on one market, develop better medicines, strengthen manufacturing, and expand to new countries," Paul said, adding that pharmaceutical companies that adapt now will be stronger in the future.

Paul said this is the right time for India to strengthen innovation and to invest more in research, new medicines, biotechnology, and healthcare startups.

Trinanjan Sarangi, chief intensivist and consultant neuro-anesthesiologist at the Kolkata-based Kothari Medical Centre, said that, from the perspective of a clinician with 25 years of practice, this is a wake-up call for India.

India should diversify its pharmaceutical exports across emerging markets while continuing to serve established markets, Sarangi said.

Arunava Das is a freelance journalist for China Daily.

Contact the writers at vivienxu@chinadailyapac.com

In tortas we trust



Participants take part in the 21st Torta Fair where they set a Guinness World Record for the largest torta, measuring 100 meters long, in Mexico City on Wednesday. A torta is a typical Mexican dish consisting of a bread roll filled with ingredients such as cheese, meat, and lettuce. GERARDO VIEYRA / GETTY IMAGES

Israel's decades-old support risks losing Democrats

WASHINGTON — For generations, support for Israel united Washington. Now Israel's attacks on Gaza, the Iran conflict and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's close ties to US Republicans are eroding Democratic backing, threatening to turn one of the US' closest alliances into a partisan divide.

Support for Israel among Democratic voters has plummeted, candidates critical of Israel are winning Democratic primaries and even moderate lawmakers are increasingly willing to challenge decades of US support for Israel.

The shift is evident in Congress. This month, nearly half of House Democrats voted for a failed amendment to cut off aid to Israel, legislation that once likely would have been defeated by an overwhelming bipartisan majority. Israel receives $3.8 billion annually in US military aid and received billions more in emergency funds in recent years.

House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries and some of his lieutenants opposed the measure, calling it overly broad. But former speaker Nancy Pelosi and House Democratic Whip Katherine Clark were among those voting yes.

Democrats are increasingly divided over whether military aid should continue unchanged, be restricted to defensive weapons or be halted altogether.

US Senator Chris Coons of Delaware, the leading Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said he hopes Israeli elections in October will help restore bipartisan US support while opening a new chapter beyond Netanyahu's leadership.

"New governments get to change direction," Coons told Reuters, adding, "Netanyahu has kept Israel at war for years now, partly to avoid the political consequences of his choices."

Overall sentiment toward Israel is declining. A June Quinnipiac University poll found 48 percent of voters and 66 percent of Democrats believe the United States is too supportive of Israel, up from 16 percent and 20 percent when the question was first asked in 2017.

"Yes, there is a vigorous debate, but across broad segments of the parties, support for Israel remains firmly in the mainstream," said Danny Danon, Israel's ambassador to the United Nations, in an interview.

The shift faces a major test in Tuesday's Democratic US Senate primary in Michigan where voters will weigh competing visions of US foreign policy, one of many races with Democrats openly questioning long-standing support.

Israeli policy has been a factor in other battleground congressional races, including New York, Florida and Colorado.

Meanwhile in Gaza, the strikes continue. Israeli strikes killed at least three people, including two children, in the Gaza Strip on Thursday, health officials said, as mediators held new talks with Hamas leaders to work toward full implementation of the US-brokered Gaza peace plan.

Medics said an Israeli airstrike on a tent encampment in Khan Younis killed a man and an eight-year-old girl. In the Bureij refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip, another Israeli airstrike hit a house killing an 18-month-old child and wounding at least eight people, medics said.

The Israeli military said both strikes targeted Hamas militants.

In Cairo, Hamas leaders were holding talks with mediators from Egypt, Qatar and Turkiye, over the implementation of the second phase of President Donald Trump's Gaza plan, as presented to them by his Board of Peace, that oversees its implementation.

The plan called for a surge in humanitarian aid, governance by a civilian Palestinian administration, the disarmament of Hamas, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza and the deployment of an international force to help maintain security.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:06 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:06 PM

WORLD

Washington urged to preserve improved ties

By ZHAO HUANXIN
huanxinzhao@chinadailyusa.com

China's top envoy to the United States has called on Washington to work with Beijing to preserve hard-won improvements in relations and implement the important consensus reached by President Xi Jinping and US President Donald Trump during their May summit in Beijing.

"The most important thing now is to take concrete actions to faithfully implement the common understandings reached between the two presidents, translate the new vision of a constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability into real actions, and keep expanding the list for cooperation while shortening the list of problems," Xie Feng, Chinese ambassador to the US, said on Tuesday.

Speaking at a reception at the Chinese embassy in the US marking the 99th anniversary of the founding of the People's Liberation Army, Xie said the two countries have "every obligation to pursue dialogue and cooperation, and no single reason for conflict or confrontation".

He said that during their summit in Beijing, the leaders made clear that the two countries will work toward a relationship with cooperation as the mainstay, competition within proper limits, manageable differences, an expectable peace, and explore the right way to get along in the new era.

As the world's two largest economies, permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and nuclear-weapon states, the two countries share a special responsibility for maintaining world peace and stability and advancing global development and prosperity, he said.

"It needs to be noted that the stabilizing and improving momentum in China-US relations has not come easily, and should be doubly cherished," Xie said.

Xie's remarks echoed the call made by Foreign Minister Wang Yi during a meeting with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on July 22 in Manila, the Philippines.

During the meeting, Wang noted that it is now the duty of both sides to "follow the course set by the two heads of state, eliminate disturbances and overcome obstacles", to ensure that the leaders' consensus is translated into whole-of-government consensus and action across all fields.

Last week, Vice-Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu traveled to Washington and held "in-depth exchange of views" with the US side on implementing the important consensus reached by the heads of state of China and the US, and advancing the building of a constructive China-US relationship of strategic stability, according to a Foreign Ministry readout.

Despite the intensified exchanges, Washington has continuously overstretched the concept of national security to target Chinese businesses and institutions.

On Tuesday, citing national security, cybersecurity and supply-chain concerns, the Federal Communications Commission added foreign-produced advanced robotic devices to its "Covered List", preventing such devices from receiving the equipment authorization required to be imported into and marketed in the US.

On July 23, the Pentagon added several Chinese research institutions to its so-called "list of foreign institutions engaging in problematic activities".

He identified four Chinese "red lines" that should not be challenged: Taiwan, democracy and human rights, path and system, and development rights.

Xie said that "Taiwan independence" and peace across the Taiwan Strait are "as irreconcilable as fire and water". He called on the US to adhere to the one-China principle and the three Sino-US joint communiques, and exercise "extra caution" in handling the Taiwan question.

Highlighting potential areas for cooperation, Xie said that Chinese advances in the digital economy, artificial intelligence, electric vehicles and the low-altitude economy offer opportunities for global development.

He said artificial intelligence also poses governance, security and ethical challenges. China welcomes the US and other countries to participate in the China-initiated World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization.

Xie said history and present-day realities show that the world is large enough for China and the US to develop and thrive together. With countries facing numerous global challenges, Washington and Beijing should fulfill their shared responsibilities for the global good, he said.

He urged the US to work with China to advance international cooperation through constructive engagement and promote world peace through bilateral strategic stability, "so as to jointly explore a right way to get along in the new era based on mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation, and make new contributions to human peace and development".

Rising demand drives TCM service expansion in Rwanda

By VICTOR RABALLA
in Nairobi, Kenya
victor@chinadailyafrica.com

Traditional Chinese medicine is gaining a firm foothold in Rwanda's healthcare system with government support, increasing referrals from local physicians and rising patient demand accelerating its integration into mainstream medical care.

As more patients seek relief from chronic pain and musculoskeletal disorders that are often difficult to treat through conventional approaches, the Rwandan government has backed the expansion of acupuncture and other TCM therapies beyond the capital, Kigali.

The move has led to the opening of a second TCM center at Kibungo Level Two Teaching Hospital in eastern Rwanda last week, expanding access to specialized care.

The expansion follows the success of Rwanda's first TCM center, established at Masaka Hospital on the outskirts of Kigali in 2023.

Between Jan 1 and June 30 this year, the 26th Chinese medical team to Rwanda, which set up the new TCM center, provided more than 13,000 TCM consultations at its centers in Masaka and Kibungo.

The decision to establish a TCM center in Kibungo was driven by the Rwandan government's push to expand TCM services to rural provinces.

Located about 110 kilometers southeast of Kigali, Kibungo serves as a regional referral hub for a largely rural population, many of whom previously traveled several hours to Kigali for specialized treatment.

"The new center allows residents of the eastern province to access affordable treatment closer to home," Zhang Shengmao, leader of the Chinese medical team working at Masaka and Kibungo hospitals, said.

The new center reflects Rwanda's broader efforts to improve equitable access to healthcare while diversifying treatment options for noncommunicable diseases and chronic conditions, which are becoming increasingly common as the country's population grows and ages.

"Many local residents suffer from chronic pain, muscle soreness and bone and joint disorders," Zhang said, adding that most patients are farmers affected by years of physically demanding work.

He noted it as encouraging that many local general practitioners now actively refer patients with chronic pain to the TCM centers.

"Initially, many Rwandans knew little about TCM and were skeptical. After seeing the treatment results, public confidence has grown significantly," Zhang stated.

He said patients now travel from across Rwanda for acupuncture treatment, with more local hospitals expressing interest in opening their own TCM clinics.

To support the expansion of TCM services, the Chinese medical team is providing lectures and bedside training for local doctors and nurses in acupuncture techniques and clinical skills.

Chinese medical teams have been serving in Rwanda since 1982, contributing to clinical services, surgical care, disease prevention and capacity building.



Petal power

People pose for a photo at the Tapete de Flores floral installation at the Santafe shopping mall in Medellin, Colombia, on Wednesday, ahead of the city's annual Flower Festival. JUAN DAVID DUQUE / REUTERS

China's vision for reforming global governance lauded

Experts praise Beijing's call for building equitable intl order to address trust deficit

By WANG MINGJIE in London
wangmingjie@mail.chinadailyuk.com

Experts have responded positively to China's vision of a United Nations-centered international system, where geopolitical tensions are eased, protectionism is countered and unilateralism is discouraged.

In a white paper titled "More Just and Equitable Global Governance: China's Principles, Proposals and Actions", Beijing has suggested nations support the Global Governance Initiative, or GGI, as a way to improve the UN-centered international system.

Under the comprehensive vision for reforming global governance, China argues that strengthening multilateralism and building a more just and equitable international order are essential if the world is to address growing deficits in peace, development, security, and trust that are confronting many nations.

The proposal calls for a larger voice for developing countries, a broader international consensus, more effective responses to shared challenges, and stronger global cooperation.

China also reaffirmed in its proposal the continued central role of the UN in safeguarding the international order, based on international law.

Lawrence Loh, director of the Center for Governance and Sustainability at the National University of Singapore, described the white paper as "a most timely and critical statement for global governance now, even when the world is fragmenting and institutions of international cooperation are breaking down".

The current deficits in global harmony have to be resolved urgently, as the world is seriously threatened by unilateral actions that will break down years of effort in building a cohesive and inclusive international order benefiting all countries, he said.

Loh said the document demonstrates China's evolution from participating in the international system to playing a more active role in improving it.

"China has clearly transited from a rule-taker to a co-architect of credible global governance — it is emerging as an effective arbiter and convener of the new world order," he said, adding that China is also becoming "a natural defender of the United Nations, whose core purpose is to upkeep the international system and multilateralism".

The paper reaffirms support for the UN-centered international system while advocating reforms that would make global institutions more representative and responsive to the interests of developing countries.

Tom Harper, a China specialist at the United Kingdom's University of East London, said the document shows the kind of global order that China aspires to, noting that many of the ideas in the white paper have featured in Chinese foreign policy for more than a decade.

"It ... shows how China, in some ways, is a status quo power, since it is emphasizing established international institutions, which contradicts the traditional path of a revisionist power that seeks to subvert or destroy these institutions," he said.

Harper added that China's continued emphasis on multilateral institutions reflects its efforts to present itself as a stabilizing force at a time when many global challenges can no longer be addressed by individual countries.

He said the paper's references to a multipolar world are also significant, suggesting a response to what he described as Washington's increasing reluctance to shoulder global responsibilities. China, he said, is likely to pursue this vision by working within existing institutions while encouraging greater participation from Global South countries.

Business implications

Michael Schumann, chairman of the German Federal Association for Economic Development and Foreign Trade, said the initiative carries important implications for businesses.

"China's Global Governance Initiative sends a clear signal: fair rules, inclusive multilateralism, and technological cooperation must go hand in hand," he said. "High-tech sectors — from AI to green technologies — can only develop their full potential through open and rules-based market access, not fragmentation."

Schumann said China's commitment to equal standards and a people-centered approach provides "a constructive framework for deepening EU-China trade", and added that pragmatic economic cooperation based on mutual interests and transparency remains "the most effective path toward stable and productive relations".

Climate action also features prominently in the white paper, with Beijing calling for stronger international cooperation to tackle global environmental challenges.

Loh said the world has lost valuable time that should have been spent addressing climate change, because of policy reversals by some countries.

"The Chinese document places key priority on building a climate-resilient world to safeguard humanity's future," he said, adding that China is increasingly acting "as a promoter of global governance by design".

Jenny Clegg, author of the book *China's Global Strategy: Towards a Multipolar World*, said the Global Governance Initiative reflects China's emphasis on collective security and shared development.

"In seeking to safeguard the UN-centered system, the GGI emphasizes both the mutuality of security — that nations cannot gain security at the expense of others — and the importance of a people-centered approach," she said.

Clegg argued that reforming global governance requires addressing structural imbalances in the international economic system, so trade and investment better support development, rather than focusing solely on shareholder returns.

Zhang Zhouxiang in Brussels contributed to this story.

Wildfires hit UK amid heat wave and drought

By JULIAN SHEA in London
julian@mail.chinadailyuk.com

The east of England has become the latest part of Europe to suffer from wildfires caused by extreme heat, as holiday homes and a caravan park were evacuated in coastal regions of the county of Suffolk.

Although not on a comparable scale to the devastating blazes that have caused major incidents in southwestern France or near the Spanish capital, Madrid, the fires in an area called Dunwich Heath, close to the Sizewell B nuclear reactor, are serious enough for local authorities to have declared a major incident.

The plant, which began operations in 1995, is Britain's largest nuclear power station, generating around 3 percent of the country's electricity. It has safety measures in place to protect against wildfires and is not currently considered at risk.

Local fire station manager Dan Davis called the blaze a "large-scale, wind-driven forestry fire", and Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has urged people to steer clear of beaches in the region "due to the ongoing nature and seriousness of the fire".

"We understand that the warm weather makes a trip to the coast very appealing, but for everyone's safety we are asking people to stay away from the area at this time," said a spokesperson from Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service. "It is essential that the area and surrounding roads are kept clear to allow emergency services to carry out their work safely and effectively."

Water stress

Counties across England have experienced weeks of extreme heat and exceptionally low rainfall, creating ideal conditions for wildfires to break out.

Britain's Environment Agency said more than half of England is now officially suffering drought conditions, with some 78 percent of England's rivers below normal levels and reservoir storage falling to 75.3 percent of capacity. The Scottish Environment Protection Agency said much of its territory is also suffering from "significant scarcity" of water.

Areas of the Cairngorms National Park in Scotland have been burning for two weeks, causing environmental damage described as "apocalyptic", but it is hoped that lower temperatures and some much-needed rainfall will help bring the situation at least partly under control.

Hosepipe bans are already in place for 23 million customers in England, mainly in regions across the east and south, with the Environment Agency blaming the restrictions on recent high temperatures and record-low rainfall, and the consequences expected to last until October.

This summer marks 50 years since the UK's record-breaking heat wave of 1976, which remains a benchmark for extreme heat in the country. Water Minister Emma Hardy has warned people must be "prepared for this new normal" as droughts become "increasingly common".



Royal Parks workers water young trees in Greenwich Park, London, on Wednesday, as more than half of England faces drought conditions. RICHARD BAKER / GETTY IMAGES

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:06 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:06 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

Coal-fired power falls below 50%

Landmark achievement backed by rapid expansion of renewable energy

By **ZHENG XIN**
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

China's energy sector has crossed a historic threshold, with coal-fired power generation accounting for less than 50 percent of the nation's total electricity output for the first time, according to official data.

Coal power generation stood at 2.5 trillion kilowatt-hours in the first six months, bringing its share down to 49.7 percent, said Xing Yiteng, deputy director-general of the National Energy Administration's development planning department, during a news conference in Beijing on Thursday.

"Falling below 50 percent of total power generation for the first time is a landmark achievement in China's long-term push for renewable energy alternatives, signaling a new breakthrough in the country's green and low-carbon transition," Xing said.

The NEA said the nation's expansion of renewable energy continued at a rapid pace. As of end-June, the combined installed capacity of wind and solar power reached 1.95 billion kilowatts, up 16.8 percent year-on-year.

Renewable energy generation surpassed 40 percent of total January-June output, producing nearly 2 trillion kWh of clean electricity, up about 9 percent year-on-year, accounting for 41.2 percent of the country's total power generation, it said.

Xing said that despite navigating complex global headwinds, China's energy security and effective investments continue to see robust advances.

Investment in new energy storage surged 74.3 percent year-on-year in the first half, while funding for the hydrogen sector skyrocketed by over 160 percent.

On the other hand, investments in new power grid construction and charging infrastructure also rose 13.5 percent and 21.8 percent, respectively, providing solid macroeconomic support, Xing said.

The nation's renewable capacity is expanding at an unprecedented scale, with its total installed power generation capacity breaking the 4-billion-kW mark, achieving a scale that far outstrips the rest of the world's major economies.

Of this, renewable sources account for 2.45 billion kW, or 60.7 percent of the total. During the first six months, China added 117 million kW of renewable capacity, accounting for nearly 74 percent of all newly installed power capacity. Notably, total solar power capacity reached 1.27 billion kW, putting it virtually on par with the country's coal-fired capacity.

China's domestic momentum is also driving global decarbonization.

The International Renewable Energy Agency said that over the past 10 years, the average cost of electricity globally for wind and solar projects plummeted by over 60 percent and 80 percent, respectively. Experts widely attribute this massive cost reduction to China's continuous technological innovation, unrivaled manufacturing scale and highly efficient supply chains.

Lin Boqiang, director of the China Center for Energy Economics Research at Xiamen University, said that China's green and low-carbon transformation serves as both a vital cornerstone for its high-quality domestic development and a landmark contribution to global sustainability.

"Crossing the 50 percent threshold for coal generation is a watershed moment. It proves that our new energy system is rapidly maturing, moving from a supplementary role to the primary driving force of national power supply," Lin said.

"As grid flexibility improves and new energy storage scales up at a record pace, variable renewables will be able to take on an even larger share of the baseload," he added.



Technicians check solar panels in Chuzhou, Anhui province. SONG WEIXING / FOR CHINA DAILY

In rail time



China Railway No 4 Engineering Group workers rotate a 145.5-meter beam, weighing 10,000 metric tons, along the Super Bridge Traversing Existing Shanghai-Kunming High-speed Railway early on Thursday on the 96-kilometer Shaoyang-Yongzhou HSR in Hunan province. The new HSR, construction of which began in 2023, is part of the 2,300-km Hohhot-Nanning HSR and a key part of China's HSR network. SHI JIAMIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Briefly

Ministry to issue treasury bonds in HK

China's Ministry of Finance said that it will issue this year's fourth batch of renminbi-denominated treasury bonds in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region on Aug 5. The scale of the bonds will be 15 billion yuan ($2.2 billion). Specific issuance arrangements will be announced via the Hong Kong Monetary Authority's Central Moneymarkets Unit, according to the ministry.

Profits of electronics sector up in H1

China's electronics sector posted a 96.9 percent year-on-year increase in profits in the first half, contributing 8.5 percentage points to the overall profit growth of major industrial firms, the National Bureau of Statistics said.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

China seen as global innovation engine

By **HE QI** in Shanghai
heqi@chinadaily.com.cn

Kering Chief Executive Officer Luca de Meo has upgraded China's strategic role in the group's long-term transformation, positioning the market not just as a core consumption hub but a pivotal driver of global innovation and operational change, as he addressed the recent 7th edition of Kering China Innovation Day in Shanghai.

"For Kering, China is not simply a market. It is a source of innovation for the entire group: from technology, to business, to client trends," de Meo said.

Under the luxury group's ReconKering mid-to-long term transformation framework, China takes on three layered strategic functions: a core consumption engine supporting top-line growth, a regional innovation hub powering Asia-Pacific operations and a testing ground for next-generation luxury models that can be scaled globally.

China's elevated status rests on its unmatched industrial and digital advantages, according to industry analysts. "China is the world's manufacturing base. So manufacturing innovation will become a huge advantage here," said Jeffrey Chang, an associate partner at consultancy McKinsey & Company. He noted that China's complete supply chain, massive user data pool and mature super-app ecosystem make it the world's fastest-growing and largest artificial intelligence deployment market.

De Meo echoed that assessment. "This is the manufacturing platform of the world," he said, citing mature industrial infrastructure, abundant data resources and a vibrant market environment as China's unique strengths. Domestic digital platforms such as Xiaohongshu also boast unrivaled penetration and sophistication, he added, and since AI fundamentally runs on data volume, markets with richer data and faster iteration naturally breed stronger technological progress.

This year's Innovation Day featured nine local AI startups across three tracks — creativity and brand communication; omnichannel retail and e-commerce; and client experience — to integrate local innovation into Kering's global business ecosystem.

So far, Kering's China Innovation Hub in Shanghai has launched more than 50 innovation pilots, spanning 3D virtual try-on, AR experiences, live commerce, generative AI content creation and other end-to-end use cases. Internal tools such as a mobile AI data dashboard have also been rolled out group-wide, drastically cutting repetitive work from manual data consolidation to presentation preparation.

Yet de Meo stressed that pilot volume alone does not equal real competitive value. "Pilots are never the destination. An innovation that stays a pilot is a curiosity. An innovation that scales is a competitive advantage."

To drive wider adoption, Kering is rolling out company-wide AI upskilling programs to lower the technology threshold, encouraging cross-functional teams to explore use cases tailored to their daily work.

On the broader debate over AI's role in luxury, de Meo struck a cautiously optimistic tone.

"A lot of people in the space of AI will sell you the idea that AI will become the destination of your mind," he said, noting that many technology providers overstate AI's capabilities to inflate their own valuation.

"At this stage, I still see it as a very powerful tool to support human beings. It's like putting a turbocharger in a traditional engine," he added. "I'm not sure you're going to do things better, but for sure you're going to do them faster, which is also important."

De Meo acknowledged widespread hesitation within the luxury sector toward AI adoption. "I don't know right now if AI usage can help us boost creativity," he said. "The luxury industry is a lot about heritage, craftsmanship and human touch."

Therefore, his solution lies in balancing both dimensions. "The best thing we could do is actually combine art and science," he said, merging creative intuition with data-driven rationality.

Guangdong bolstering server, computing strengths

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

Guangdong province is building on its robust server industry strength and experience to advance the upgrade of computing infrastructure for higher efficiency, technological self-reliance and low-carbon growth, transforming the province from a major manufacturing center into a global intelligent computing hub.

Dongguan, a heavily industrialized city in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, recently launched a global investment promotion for construction of its computing power industry island.

Under the municipal top-level plan, Dongguan plans to invest 100 billion yuan ($14.75 billion) in developing and constructing the industry island over the next five years with separate development targets, said Zeng Jianpeng, executive vice-mayor of Dongguan.

Zeng made the remarks at a server industry supply-demand matching event held recently in Dongguan.

By 2030, the island — which covers a planned area of about 6 square kilometers — will grow into the core growth engine of Dongguan's 500-billion-yuan AI server industry cluster, he said.

Wang Lijuan, deputy director of the Guangdong department of industry and information technology, said Dongguan serves as Guangdong's core carrier for computing hardware.

"The department will fully support Dongguan in scaling up its AI server industry, enabling Guangdong to contribute to boosting the global competitiveness of China's AI server sector," Wang said.

In 2025, Guangdong produced about 2.95 million servers, accounting for 49.3 percent of China's total output, claiming nearly half of the national market, according to official statistics.

Guangdong boasted a total of 1,533 industrial enterprises above designated size engaged in computer manufacturing last year, accounting for 45.1 percent of China's total computer makers.

Home to leading firms such as Huawei and Foxconn Industrial Internet, the province has fostered a complete industrial chain spanning chips, components and finished computers.

Authorities said that as the "mother machine of computing power" in the era of the digital economy, the server industry has emerged as a key driver for Guangdong to transform from a major manufacturing province into a global intelligent computing hub.

Xu Xiaomin, secretary-general of Guangdong's electronics and information industry association, said that as generative AI applications are rolled out at an accelerated pace, Guangdong's server shipment share of inference servers is expected to surpass 50 percent for the first time in 2026, overtaking training servers to become the mainstream product in the market.

"This signals a full shift of the industry from model research and development to commercial application," said Xu.

The strength of Guangdong lies in its fully connected industrial chain and integrated production and marketing, he said, adding that as China's largest manufacturing hub for the electronic information sector, Guangdong has established a closed-loop ecosystem spanning upstream component supply, midstream complete machine manufacturing and local downstream computing power absorption.

Xu urged Guangdong to further boost the coordinated adaptation of hardware and software.

"Capitalizing on its geographic advantage of 'production sites as market destinations', Guangdong should open up application scenarios and drive the AI server industry to shift from scale expansion toward high-efficiency, self-reliant and controllable development."

Wei Cailiang, senior vice-president of Guangdong HEC Technology Holding Co Ltd, said his company has built a full-chain business covering green energy, advanced manufacturing, computing power operation and AI applications.

In April, Wei's company set up its computing power operation entity in Dongguan, and backed by computing power service orders worth 39-46 billion yuan, it achieves efficient R&D and mass production relying on Dongguan's one-hour industrial circle with 95 percent local supporting capacity.

Cooperation crucial for future of AI, expert says

By **REN QI**
renqi@chinadaily.com.cn

International cooperation is crucial for the development of artificial intelligence, said Evgeny Burnaev, a Russian AI expert and laureate of the Russian government's award in science and technology.

Burnaev, who also served as the director of the artificial intelligence center at the Skolkovo Institute of Science and Technology in Russia, noted that cooperation was the core theme of this year's World Artificial Intelligence Conference, which was held in Shanghai recently.

He explained that AI is a complex discipline that has evolved from isolated research fields into an essential "infrastructure" covering healthcare, production, logistics and climate monitoring. Building a mature AI infrastructure is impossible without international cooperation, as the technology relies heavily on massive data and immense computing power, which require multiparty collaboration.

Regarding the inclusive development of AI, Burnaev warned that existing AI technologies could greatly magnify current global development gaps. To prevent a single culture or value system from dominating, he proposed two key measures: countries should collaborate in basic education and scientific research, and the world must establish unified global benchmarks and technical standards in AI engineering to prevent operational failures across critical systems.

Burnaev's call for inclusivity resonates strongly with China's ongoing efforts. As a major AI power, China has always been an active advocate and practitioner of global AI governance, committed to ensuring that the achievements of intelligent technology benefit people of all countries more equitably.

"China will adhere to coordinating development and security, actively practice multilateralism, uphold the concept of 'people-centric and AI for good', and promote AI to always develop in a beneficial, safe and fair direction," said Zhou Haibing, deputy head of the National Development and Reform Commission.

This commitment has gained international recognition. The British journal Nature previously published an article noting that "China is leading global AI governance" and called on other nations to participate in addressing the common challenges brought by AI-related development.

China's push for global cooperation and governance is backed by its robust and rapidly growing AI ecosystem. Official data show that the country is home to over 6,000 AI enterprises, with the core AI industry scale expected to exceed 1.2 trillion yuan ($177.48 billion) this year, up nearly 30 percent year-on-year.

Furthermore, China is now the world's largest holder of AI patents, and its domestic open-source large models have surpassed 10 billion cumulative downloads globally.

The consumer market is also experiencing a continuous surge in new AI products. In 2025, annual shipments of smart terminals such as AI smartphones and AI computers in China exceeded 100 million units. With significant growth expected to continue this year, sales of AI phones and PCs are projected to surpass those of non-AI products for the first time.

The vitality of this industry was on full display at the conference, where Burnaev highlighted the abundance of smart robots. He identified embodied AI as the core track for the next stage of AI, noting that the emergence of various robot vision-language-action models and motion control models can significantly enhance industrial automation efficiency and handle operations in high-risk scenarios.

"The conference exhibited multiple types of robots and supporting models. The technological trends in this area are highly worthy of attention, and I have seen a large number of eye-catching technological achievements," Burnaev added.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:06 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:06 PM

CHINA

Mudflat soccer



Young players compete in a mudflat soccer match as the sun casts their shadows on the muddy beach in Nantong, Jiangsu province, on Wednesday. The three-day provincial youth mudflat soccer invitational tournament features around 100 participants from cities across Jiangsu, showcasing the unique charm of the game. XU CONGJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Administrative public interest litigation boosts eco-governance

Dual-track mechanism enables better resolution of environmental problems

By YANG ZEKUN
yangzekun@chinadaily.com.cn



Zhang Xueqiao

China's procuratorial public interest litigation system has become a key legal instrument for ecological and environmental protection, helping resolve long-standing governance problems through legal supervision, administrative coordination and judicial accountability, according to a senior prosecutor.

Since the system was fully implemented in 2017, procuratorates nationwide have handled more than 600,000 environmental public interest litigation cases, accounting for 47 percent of all such cases, Zhang Xueqiao, deputy prosecutor-general of the Supreme People's Procuratorate, told China Daily.

Unlike traditional adversarial litigation, the system does not replace administrative authorities, Zhang said. Instead, procuratorates perform legal supervision through litigation-related procedures and urge government departments at all levels to fulfill their statutory duties.

Before filing lawsuits, procuratorates typically communicate with the relevant authorities and issue procuratorial recommendations. More than 95 percent of public interest damage cases are resolved before they reach the court. If an authority fails to act, procuratorates may file an administrative public interest lawsuit. If ecological damage remains unrepaired after the authority has fulfilled its duties, they may also initiate a civil public interest lawsuit to hold violators accountable for restoration and compensation.

Zhang said China's model has a distinctive institutional design. While some countries allow prosecutors to bring civil public interest lawsuits, few have established a systematic administrative public interest litigation system. China has developed a dual-track mechanism whereby administrative and civil public interest litigation operate in parallel, with administrative litigation serving as the primary approach.

River basin and marine governance has become one of the system's major priorities.

According to Zhang, basin governance is a global challenge because it spans administrative boundaries, involves multiple jurisdictions and requires coordination among various government departments, often resulting in fragmented responsibilities.

To address these challenges, procuratorates have targeted weak cross-regional coordination, inadequate interdepartmental cooperation and inconsistent enforcement standards in major river basins. The SPP has directly handled or guided landmark cases involving the Wanfeng Lake, Nansi Lake, ship pollution along the Yangtze River, water governance in the Pearl River Basin and marine ecological protection in the Bohai Sea.

Those cases have promoted coordinated action among procuratorates at the national, provincial, city and county levels, helping resolve long-standing environmental problems affecting large areas and attracting widespread public concern, Zhang said.

The SPP has also established regional coordination mechanisms aligned with major national development strategies. In the Yangtze River Basin, 19 provincial-level procuratorates and relevant city-level procuratorates have established 21 cross-regional coordination mechanisms covering all river sections along provincial boundaries. The SPP and the Ministry of Water Resources have also established a Yellow River Basin coordination platform to facilitate information transfers, case handling, information sharing and consultations among nine provinces and autonomous regions.

Despite the progress, Zhang acknowledged that cross-regional and cross-basin governance still faces challenges, including inadequate information sharing, the technical complexity of evidence collection, and inconsistent standards between administrative law enforcement and judicial rulings.

He said procuratorates will strengthen cooperation with administrative authorities, focus on major river basins and key regional ecological issues, and make better use of direct case handling by the SPP and provincial procuratorates to bridge governance gaps between upstream and downstream areas and between opposite riverbanks.

Since March 2025, the SPP has launched a two-year supervision campaign on water environment governance covering the Yangtze, Yellow and Pearl rivers. Procuratorates are also focusing on industrial solid waste, mine restoration, soil pollution, livestock breeding pollution, and water and soil conservation.

The system has also supported green and low-carbon development. By May this year, procuratorates nationwide had handled 57,000 related cases involving green spatial planning, industrial transformation and urban-rural green development.

New technology

Professional assessment has long been a challenge in ecological cases because environmental damage appraisals are often costly, time-consuming and technically demanding.

To address the issue, the SPP and the Ministry of Justice have expanded the network of environmental damage appraisal institutions and promoted an "appraisal first, payment later" model, with 141 partner institutions now participating.

Nearly 500 ecological testing laboratories have been established at procuratorates nationwide, achieving full coverage at the city level. The SPP has also created a national database of more than 800 technical experts, while 28 provincial-level procuratorates have established their own expert databases.

Digital technology is increasingly being integrated throughout the case-handling process.

Zhang said procuratorates use remote sensing satellites and territorial spatial planning data, administrative enforcement data and artificial intelligence to identify clues on a large scale. In Foshan, Guangdong province, a big data model for water environment governance identified 45 clues in a single screening, leading to 39 cases.

From January 2024 to April 2025, ecological litigation laboratories at provincial- and city-level procuratorates supported more than 4,500 case-handling activities and issued more than 3,500 testing reports.

In farmland protection cases, prosecutors have used satellite imagery, land parcel records and drone-based 3D modeling to collect evidence and quantify damage caused by illegal occupation of farmland, forests, grasslands and wetlands.

Digital tools are now used throughout the process, from information discovery and investigation to supervision of duty performance, rectification assessment and follow-up reviews, helping prosecutors verify whether ecological restoration projects have achieved tangible results, Zhang said.

The SPP has promoted the Yixinweigong volunteer cloud platform, recruiting 126,000 volunteers nationwide. The volunteers have submitted 38,000 clues and participated in 40,000 activities, including hearings and follow-up visits.

China's experience has also attracted growing international attention.

A number of Chinese cases have been included in the United Nations Environment Programme case database, while cases involving Nansi Lake governance and Yangtze River ship pollution control have been featured at international conferences, Zhang said.

In June, the SPP held a roundtable with the Brazil Federal Public Prosecutor's Office and ClientEarth on prosecutorial cooperation in global environmental governance. Representatives from Australia, Mongolia, Poland, the United Kingdom, Vietnam and other countries attended. Vietnam has authorized its procuratorial organs to pilot public interest litigation, drawing on China's experience.

Looking ahead, Zhang said procuratorates will implement the provisions of the ecological environment code, support special legislation on procuratorial public interest litigation, and improve rules governing case scope, procedures, evidence collection and liability determination.

They will continue to focus on pollution prevention and control, green and low-carbon development, ecosystem protection, carbon peaking and carbon neutrality, and national ecological security. Future work will place greater emphasis on professional supervision, closer coordination with administrative law enforcement, broader public participation and wider application of legal supervision mechanisms.

"Ecological and environmental public interest litigation has entered a stage of high-quality development," Zhang said. "This requires prosecutors to handle cases with greater precision, stronger professional expertise and more effective coordination."

Digital management system puts Dunhuang's camel rides on fast track

By HU YUMENG
and **MA JINGNA** in Lanzhou

As tens of thousands of tourists flock to Dunhuang, Gansu province, during the summer peak season, keeping crowds moving smoothly across the desert landscape has become an increasingly complex task. More and more, artificial intelligence is helping lighten the load on personnel on the ground.

At the Mingsha Mountain and Crescent Spring Scenic Area, camel rides across the dunes are among the city's signature attractions. During peak travel seasons, however, surging visitor numbers once left tourists waiting up to 60 minutes.

To ease the bottleneck, the scenic area launched its Desert Camel Ride digital management system in 2025. Visitors can now reserve camel rides in advance through a mini program, online travel platforms or self-service kiosks, eliminating long lines.

The platform digitally manages ticketing, reservations, camel assignments and boarding procedures. It automatically matches visitors with camel teams and displays real-time boarding information on electronic screens.

"Since its launch, the intelligent system has cut waiting times by more than half during peak periods, making the experience much smoother and reducing visitors' frustration," said Li Xiaoqing, deputy director of the service center.

She added that tour guides have also welcomed the system, saying it has made camel ride operations more efficient and orderly.

Handlers also use a dedicated mobile app that notifies them when to bring their camels to the boarding area, rather than waiting with the animals in holding areas throughout the day.

"That means fewer camels have to remain in the waiting area for extended periods, which not only improves efficiency but also helps reduce the environmental impact in the scenic area," Li said.

Along the camel ride route, camel-shaped traffic lights — an innovation unique to the scenic area — guide camel caravans safely across intersections while doubling as a popular photo spot.

"The traffic lights help keep both camels and tourists moving in an orderly way, and everyone follows the rules," visitor Mu Xinyue said. "It's also become one of the most interesting places to take photos."

AI is also playing a growing role at the nearby Mogao Grottoes.

An intelligent command center analyzes reservation data, visitor flows and environmental conditions to optimize cave openings, tour routes and visitor distribution.

> "Since its launch, the intelligent system has cut waiting times by more than half during peak periods, making the experience much smoother and reducing visitors' frustration."
>
> **Li Xiaoqing,** deputy director of the service center at the Mingsha Mountain and Crescent Spring Scenic Area

"We've moved from managing crowds after they form to preventing congestion before it happens," said Lei Zhengguang, director of the cultural promotion department at the Dunhuang Academy.

He said the platform also coordinates tour guide scheduling, shuttle bus operations and ticket reservations, helping balance public access with heritage conservation.

The adoption of AI is expanding well beyond Dunhuang.

Huangshan Mountain in Anhui province uses AI to predict congestion and recommend personalized routes, while West Lake in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, directs visitors toward less-crowded attractions.

In Guizhou province, the Xijiang Qianhu Miao village introduced an AI platform for ticket verification, multilingual services and personalized recommendations. According to Chinese online travel platform Mafengwo, AI-powered ticket verification has improved efficiency by up to 10 times, while complaint response times have fallen from 48 hours to four hours.

Yang Yanfeng, director of the online tourism research center at Beijing Union University, said tourism is particularly well suited to generative AI because standardized services, such as trip planning and ticket booking, make intelligent assistants both practical and effective.

He acknowledged that challenges remain, including high development costs, fragmented data systems and concerns over data security.

For Li, however, the rise of AI has come at the right time.

She believes scenic areas should embrace the technology to deliver better services, improve operational efficiency and enable smarter management.

Contact the writers at huyumeng@chinadaily.com.cn



Visitors line up on camels as a screen displays departing numbers at the Mingsha Mountain and Crescent Spring Scenic Area in Dunhuang, Gansu province, on Sunday. ZHANG XIAOLIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

2,000-year-old alcohol discovered in Ningxia tomb

By HU DONGMEI in Yinchuan
and **HU QING**

A cereal-based alcoholic residue, dating back to the Warring States Period (475-221 BC), unearthed by archaeologists at a cemetery in the Ningxia Hui autonomous region, is expected to shed new light on cereal processing, grain utilization and brewing techniques among the Qin people.

Experts said the discovery not only represents the best-preserved liquid alcoholic beverage sample from the Warring States Period ever reported in China, but also provides rare physical evidence of how the Qin people brewed grain-based alcohol more than 2,000 years ago.

The findings were published in the June edition of the Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports.

According to the study, the residue was discovered at the Shanjiabao cemetery in the southwest of Yuanzhou district, Guyuan. The cemetery, surrounded by a series of frontier defense facilities, lies about 2 kilometers south of the Qin Great Wall dating to the Warring States Period.

Chinese archaeologists excavated 183 tombs at the site, 179 of which belonged to the Qin people. Tomb M39, located at the northernmost edge of the cemetery, yielded a bronze bottle with a garlic-shaped mouth.

The bottle was sealed with textile on the inside and organic-tempered daub on the outside. After removing the seal with a sterile scalpel and forceps, researchers extracted about 3,740 milliliters of clear, light blue-green, odorless liquid, along with a small amount of sediment.

Wang Xiaoyang, who led the archaeological project at the Shanjiabao cemetery, said the bottle's multilayer seal effectively minimized evaporation and contamination, allowing the liquid to remain largely intact for more than 2,000 years.

To identify the beverage's composition and brewing techniques, a research team led by Wen Rui, a professor at Northwest University's School of Cultural Heritage, used a range of analytical methods, including Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy, or FTIR, as well as analyses of starch grains, phytoliths and yeast microfossils.

The analyses revealed characteristic flavor compounds, diagnostic organic acids, starches, phytoliths and yeast, providing multiple lines of evidence to identify the beverage's ingredients and reconstruct its brewing process, according to the study.

Microfossil analysis confirmed that the primary brewing ingredients were broomcorn millet and grains from the Triticeae tribe, including wheat and barley. Wang said the finding may reflect the development of the subsistence economy during the period. "Alcohol production was only possible when grain harvests generated a surplus."

Zhang Hongying, deputy director of the Ningxia Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, said the findings demonstrate that the Qin people had mastered the use of cereal-based *qu*, a traditional fermentation starter that enabled simultaneous saccharification and fermentation.

Wen said the study fills a gap in research on alcoholic beverage production by the Qin people during the Warring States Period in Ningxia and helps reconstruct how they brewed grain-based alcohol.

The findings provide further evidence of China's long-standing tradition of cereal-based fermentation and offer new material evidence for research on agriculture in the pre-Qin era (before 221 BC), ancient dietary culture and the evolution of handicraft techniques, he said.

Contact the writers at huqing@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:06 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:06 PM

CHINA



FORGING SHIELDS WITH CODE

Software pioneer builds digital backbone of national defense despite personal misfortune

Wang Ji (front) talks with his students about renowned scientists at the library of the National University of Defense Technology in Changsha, Hunan province, in May. ZHOU FUJING / FOR CHINA DAILY

By **LI SHANGYI**
lishangyi@chinadaily.com.cn

Around 7 am, as he does every morning, Wang Ji wheeled himself into his office at the College of Computer Science and Technology of the National University of Defense Technology. For more than four decades, the campus has been where the 57-year-old has devoted himself to advancing software engineering in support of national defense — contributions that led to him being honored as a national "Role Model of the Times" on Wednesday.

His wheelchair has been a constant companion for the past 11 years, ever since he underwent an amputation below the hip. Yet just as no one could count the miles it has carried him, no one could count the keystrokes his fingers have made.

"As long as my mind is clear and my hands can still move, I can keep working," Wang said.

Regarded as a talented student by his professors and peers, Wang entered university before turning 14 in 1983. At that point, he had already made up his mind to dedicate his career to computer science research. The university's campus in Changsha, Hunan province, witnessed his transformation from a student to a researcher, and from a young boy to a military officer.

His given name, Ji, means halberd in Chinese, a traditional weapon that combines a spear and a dagger-axe. Living up to the hopes his parents placed in that name, Wang has spearheaded efforts to make defense software more predictable and reliable, even though his own life has been shaped by unexpected twists and uncertainties.

Powering ahead

"There was a spark in his eyes whenever he talked about computers," recalled Tang Yuhua, who served as a teaching assistant at the college in 1984. Compiler theory and mathematical logic were Wang's favorite subjects. Tang remembered that the young student always sat in the front row and eagerly asked questions during class.

In the early 1980s, China saw rapid development in supercomputing. In 1983, the National University of Defense Technology developed the country's first supercomputer, Yinhe-1, or Galaxy, making China the third country in the world to independently design and build a supercomputer after the United States and Japan.

Chen Huowang, chief software system lead of the Galaxy project, became Wang's mentor and quickly recognized his exceptional talent in computer science. He told Wang that the essence of computer science lies in rigorous logical reasoning and formal proof.

In 2003, under Chen's guidance, Wang published a paper on high-confidence software engineering technology. By introducing the concept of high-confidence software technology, he became one of the pioneering figures in the field in China. At the time, the discipline was still relatively niche and was widely regarded by his peers as both highly challenging and theoretically demanding.

"He is like a radar," said Mao Xiaoguang, who also studied under Chen and who is now a professor at the university's College of Computer Science and Technology. "He not only tracks the latest developments in the field but also thinks deeply about where those advances will lead."

Wang said his research has always been driven by the needs of national defense. He realized that military information systems, like the human body, could become "ill", and that tools capable of detecting hidden flaws in software were essential to ensuring military security.

Wang and his team have developed a suite of specialized tools designed to diagnose different types of software defects from multiple analytical perspectives.

The technologies developed through this research have made significant contributions to improving the safety and reliability of mission-critical software used in aerospace systems and major weapons platforms.

Promoted to associate professor at 28 and full professor at 33, Wang appeared to be on an unstoppable career trajectory, with nothing standing in the way of his remarkable talent.

However, Wang's life took an unexpected turn in January 2013. After experiencing severe chest pain accompanied by numbness in both legs, he was diagnosed with an aortic dissection, a life-threatening condition.

A grueling 13-hour operation saved his life. But the disease had already caused extensive muscle necrosis in his lower limbs.

Yu Fang, an associate chief physician in the department of orthopedics at Xiangya Hospital of Central South University in Changsha, said Wang underwent several amputation surgeries to remove the necrotic tissue. Although the operations were successful, Yu and his colleagues were devastated, knowing that Wang would never walk again.

Several days after the first amputation in February 2013, Wang's wife, Huang Chun, who is also a researcher at the college, told him what had happened. "He was remarkably calm and accepted the reality," she recalled.

Yet the interruption proved to be only temporary. Confined to his hospital bed, Wang soon began reading work messages on his phone and asking about the progress of research projects, turning his hospital ward into a makeshift office. As his condition improved, he even began holding research group meetings with his students in the ward.

Zhou Jingwen, a professor at the college who was one of Wang's doctoral students at the time, attended those meetings in the hospital ward. He recalled that the discussions were no different from their regular research meetings. Despite Wang's illness, all of his graduate students completed their studies and graduated on schedule.

"Wang is like the ocean. While enduring countless storms, he remains serene," Yu said.

In 2015, Wang returned to his office at the university in his wheelchair.



At age 8, Wang speaks on behalf of new seventh graders during the opening ceremony of his middle school in Changde, Hunan, in 1978. PROVIDED BY LIU GUIZHI / FOR CHINA DAILY

RESUME

A member of the Communist Party of China, **Wang Ji** was admitted to the National University of Defense Technology in 1983 and joined the military in April 1990. After receiving his doctorate in 1995, he stayed at the university and has worked there ever since. He is currently a researcher and doctoral supervisor at the university's College of Computer Science and Technology.

In 2003, Wang published one of the earliest academic papers in China on high-confidence software engineering technology, systematically establishing the discipline's theoretical framework and technical system. In 2004, he launched the country's first graduate course on high-confidence software technology. In 2015, he helped promote the establishment of the Formal Methods Technical Committee of the China Computer Federation.

Wang has received the first prize of the Military Science and Technology Progress Award and the second prize of the National Science and Technology Progress Award. He has been awarded one second-class and two third-class individual merit citations. Last year, he was named a national model of self-reliance. Earlier this month, he was honored as a national "Role Model of the Times".

Wang's wife, Huang Chun, is a core member of the Tianhe supercomputer compiler team at the National University of Defense Technology and a recipient of the National March 8th Red-Banner Pacesetter award. Their family was named a "national five-good civilized family" in 2016 and was recognized as one of the "third cohort of national civilized families" in 2025.

Unbroken spirit

Those around Wang considered his survival a miracle. His return to work came as yet another surprise. He applied for a defense research project immediately after his return.

When they visited Wang in the hospital, his colleagues and students all hoped that he would return to them. Wang said that knowing he was still needed gave him the determination to return.

"My goal has never changed," he said. "Only the way I pursue it has."

He continued to travel alone on business, attend academic conferences, and mentor his students. Those who work with Wang said he has always insisted on self-reliance, never asking others for help as long as he was capable of doing something himself.

To support him, the university installed wheelchair ramps at the entrances to his office building and the campus canteen. Instead of using an electric wheelchair, he insisted on using the manual one to help him exercise more.

Chen Liqian, a professor at the university on Wang's team, said Wang had become even more focused on his work since the illness. "He often points us to papers that are closely related to our research, papers we hadn't noticed yet, but he already had," Chen said.

In 2021, Wang was diagnosed with kidney failure. He now undergoes four-hour dialysis sessions three times a week. Yet instead of slowing down, he said he wants to make the most of the time he has. Even during dialysis, he reads academic papers and attends online meetings. "For him, reading papers is a form of rest," his wife said.

On days when he does not undergo dialysis, Wang keeps to a disciplined routine: arriving at the university around 7 am, taking a short break at noon, returning to work at 2 pm, and heading back to the hospital in the evening. "Even on holidays, you can usually find him in his office," said Huang Zhen, his driver.

The researcher currently supervises more than 20 master's and doctoral students. Although his own time has become increasingly precious, he remains generous in sharing it with them.

Zhao Jing, one of his students, said Wang's office door is always open for one-on-one discussions. "His smile puts me at ease whenever I run into difficulties in my research," she said.

Fan Kai, one of Wang's master's students, said his mentor's wheelchair soon faded into the background. "Whenever we discussed research, I hardly even noticed he was in a wheelchair," Fan said.

The most noticeable change may be in his diet. According to Wang Ting, who has known Wang Ji for more than 30 years, Wang Ji used to be a food lover, with a particular fondness for the rice noodles sold near the campus. However, since being diagnosed with kidney failure, he has had to strictly control his intake of water and food. To make drinking water more enjoyable, Wang bought a machine for the office to make sparkling water.

"His illness never changed who he was. Even in adversity, he remained as kind, optimistic and passionate about life as he had always been," said Wang Ting.

Vision and mission

On Wang Ji's desk, two monitors stand along with a keyboard. There is also an electronic display screen for discussions with his team.

The office is modest, but the work carried out there has long been at the forefront of the field. Since the 1990s, Wang has devoted himself to software technology research, a pursuit he describes as his lifelong dream. High-confidence software technology is part of it.

Wang Huaimin, a professor at the university and an academician at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, said he was impressed by Wang Ji's pioneering spirit and his exceptionally broad research perspective. "Even after returning to work, he has maintained a vigorous and ambitious mindset, demonstrating remarkable persistence and resilience," he added.

Wang Ji said the university's spirit and traditions have profoundly shaped his career. As the birthplace of China's first supercomputer and a leader in the country's supercomputing development, the university instilled in him the importance of technological self-reliance.

"We cannot rely on technologies controlled by others," he said. "Key and core technologies must be mastered by ourselves."

Established in 1953, the university has overcome a large number of cutting-edge technological challenges and achieved a series of breakthroughs in the research and development of advanced weapons and equipment.

As the chief technical expert, Wang led his team in developing a project that won the First Prize of the Military Science and Technology Progress Award in 2025.

Wang encourages students to base their research on reality instead of intuition. "Scientific research is not a sprint to chase the latest trends, but a marathon that keeps pace with the nation's needs," he said. So far, Wang has trained more than 120 master's and doctoral students in the field.

As defense systems undergo an intelligent transformation, Wang and his team are focusing on the reliability of artificial intelligence, aiming to ensure that AI can better serve the country's major strategic needs.

Though he cannot take part in conventional warfare, Wang said, "I can still stand on the front line of high-level scientific and technological self-reliance, forging shields with code."

Zhang Zhaoxing and Yan Jin contributed to this story.

Online
See more by scanning the code.





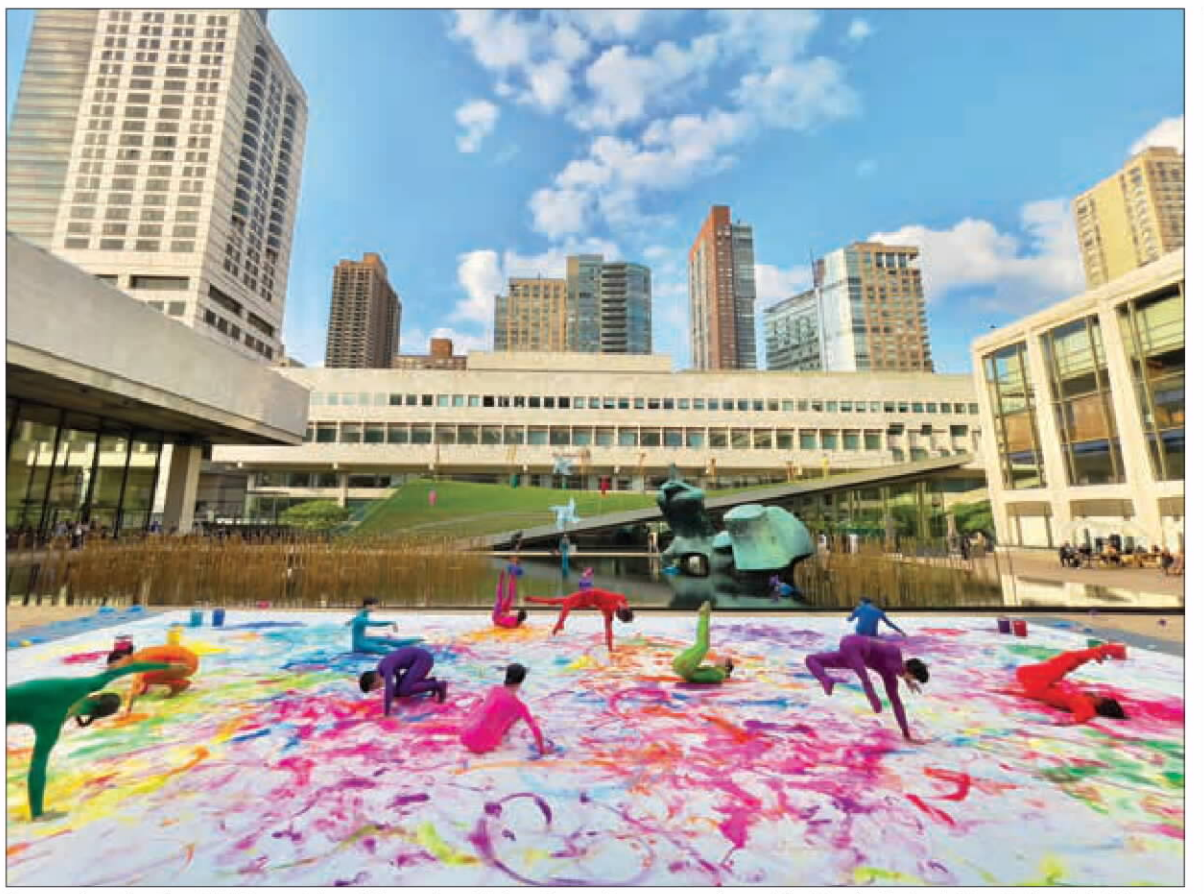


Left: Wang reads essays during a dialysis session in Changsha. HE SHUYUAN / FOR CHINA DAILY **Center:** Wang gives a speech during the 2020 CCF ChinaSoft conference in Chongqing. ZHU MINGHUI / FOR CHINA DAILY
Right: Wang leafs through books at the university library in May. FAN JUNWEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:06 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:06 PM

AMERICAFOCUS



Dancers from the Shen Wei Dance Arts and Guangdong Modern Dance Company, perform at the Lincoln Center in New York on July 23. BELINDA ROBINSON / CHINA DAILY

Chinese dance troupe wows audience in New York City

Choreographer Shen Wei combines painting, dance, poetry and music at Lincoln Center

By **BELINDA ROBINSON**
in New York
belindarobinson@chinadailyusa.com

Hundreds of art lovers enjoyed a stunning dance performance called *MindScape* by legendary Chinese choreographer Shen Wei on Wednesday at the Lincoln Center in New York City.

The free, unique, spellbinding outdoor 45-minute performance was a part of Chinese Arts Week that ran July 22 to July 26.

Performed by a troupe of over 20 dancers from Shen Wei Dance Arts in collaboration with Guangdong Modern Dance Company, the work was co-commissioned by the Lincoln Center and American Dance Festival.

In an exclusive interview with China Daily backstage at the event, Shen described his vision for the performance that blended painting, dance, movement and poetry to illustrate the "spiritual pursuit of inner harmony and transcendence".

"This one is so complex. It has poetry, productions, video, dance, live music and painting, visual arts, performance arts, and in some way, it is blended together at the same time and it lifts people's spirits," he said.

"It's not just something that's put together. It's not just about integrating something together. It's that we go lift up people's spirits, right now. So, every time you see it, you feel good after the show and have really nice, positive energy about life."

The audience watched as the dancers, dressed in brightly-colored unitards, began the show by lining up around a massive blank, white, canvas on the ground.

A few dancers stood in The Paul Milstein's Reflection pool. Some had a large windmill on their head that spun as they danced.

On the canvas, one-by-one, the dancers dipped their hands into brightly colored paint that matched their unitards and used their entire bodies to spread the paint across the canvas while matching the tempo of the music.

Nicholas Cemalobic, 25, a member of the audience, described the performance as terrific.

"I think the topology of the space is really exciting," he told China Daily. "I think it was nice to be able to look at things in the foreground and in the water, it was like a feast for the eyes. I mean, I wouldn't even have known that these were dancers who hadn't trained together, knowing that they all come from far and wide is pretty motivating."

As the performance progressed, the large, blank, white canvas became a massive, living, painting with swirling colors.

The work embodied the key tenets of Shen's approach to dance, which is that the human body is a canvas. It brought dancers from both Eastern and Western backgrounds together.

Zak Ryan Schlegel, rehearsal director and dancer with Shen Wei Dance Arts, told China Daily: "I think that Shen Wei has spanned his entire career holding the binary of the Eastern/Western marriage. And I think his language is a common language. It's his dream of a common language. And so, I feel as though the work is a visual metaphoric full multidisciplinary expression of what's possible between the East and the West, in full, unifying harmony."

He added that the work feels like it "truly ties together Shen Wei's long legacy in the field. It feels as though from his collective experiences and the languages he's created across his long arc as a choreographer, this piece truly realizes all of those languages and brings them into a full spectrum. It feels like it sheds light on his past and it brings him into the future."

Born in Hunan, China in 1968, Shen moved to New York in 1995. This year, he celebrated 30 years of his first work at Lincoln Center after 11 productions.

He hopes *MindScape* will bring the "happiness of life" to the audience.



Hundreds of art lovers enjoy a stunning dance performance by Shen Wei, in New York on July 23. BELINDA ROBINSON / CHINA DAILY



Shen Wei works with his team at the Lincoln Center in New York City on July 23. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"For me, born in China, growing up in China, and working in New York and the West, live in Paris and the West and the East actually for me there is so much beautiful, values of things to share rather than competing with each other," Shen said.

He chose the theme for the performance based on his journey of traveling and living around the world in China, Europe and America for over 30 years. He wanted to send the message that a person's spiritual journey is just as important as the pursuit of material things.

"You can see the team, there are Chinese people, there are American people, Western people, all different races, different backgrounds, to have that like a life, living, working together, there's no conflict through art. It shows that today, we're just people. We're just the same," Shen said.

Ricardo A. Zayas, 42, from Brooklyn, New York, took part in the show and has been a dancer with Shen Wei on and off for almost 20 years since graduating from Fordham University. He enjoys combining his Western background with Eastern art.

"It's something that we rarely, if ever, have seen put together, so it's made this alien hybrid thing that nobody really does, especially not like Shen Wei. So, it's been nice to learn this style that has a very, you know, specific mark on dance.

"This show has a lot of what I'd call his greatest hits, and his philosophies and dance, but it also has a lot of whimsy, which is a new, refresher, direction for him, which is fun to see."

Several members of the audience called the performance "amazing" and "remarkable".

Andreas Ortega, 22 from Brooklyn, New York said afterwards: "I liked it a lot! My favorite part was definitely the painting section and I really liked the way that their bodies hit the accents of the music. It was a nice fusion of Eastern and Western arts together."

Int'l cooperation, openness deemed vital to AI's global future

By **LIA ZHU** in San Francisco
liazhu@chinadailyusa.com

At the recently concluded 2026 World AI Conference, China pressed its case for open-source artificial intelligence ecosystems and deeper international cooperation on AI governance, a push that is seen as important for continued development and for addressing global problems.

The Chair's Statement issued at the conference, which was held in Shanghai earlier this month, described open source and openness as vital pathways toward inclusive AI development. It called for the joint development of open-source ecosystems and urged more robust international cooperation to share ideas and shape solutions to the major issues and pressing challenges facing humanity in the AI era.

Richard Dasher, director of the US-Asia Technology Management Center at Stanford University, said in an interview with China Daily that he sees merit in China's approach to promoting open models and international collaboration.

"International cooperation is good. It should be promoted," he said. "I think that open source has a role. You want to give people alternatives, not make them do something only one way."

Dasher pointed to the global nature of cloud computing as a reason why cooperation across borders is not just desirable but necessary. "The world of cloud computing is sort of intrinsically global, and you need data from multiple places in order to have good enough quality models," he said. "You can't deal with just a limited data set with the current technology, and so I think there's a lot of good in what China is promoting."

The conference came at a moment when Chinese open-weight AI models have been steadily closing the performance gap with leading US systems, while undercutting them sharply on price. Adoption of these Chinese open-source models has increased rapidly worldwide, including the United States.

That momentum was on display at the conference, when Beijing-based startup Moonshot AI unveiled its newest open model, Kimi K3. The model is reported to be catching up to the top versions of Anthropic's Claude and OpenAI's ChatGPT. With 2.8 trillion parameters, Kimi K3 is said to be the world's largest open-weight AI system by that measure.

Open-weight models release an AI system's core components publicly, allowing anyone to download them. This allows users to run the models on their own computers, study their inner workings, and modify them to suit specific needs — a departure from the closed, proprietary approach favored by many Western companies.

At the same time, Dasher cautioned that openness alone does not guarantee success. "The open-source models can be good. They can be flexible. You also have to worry about the quality, though," he said.

Drawing a historical parallel, Dasher recalled the rivalry between Microsoft and Unix in the early decades of personal computing. Unix, an open-source model, splintered into more than 10 popular variants as developers modified it freely, he said, which allowed Microsoft's proprietary Windows operating system to gain the upper hand for a time. He suggested a similar dynamic could play out in AI, where proprietary players such as OpenAI and Anthropic currently hold strong positions.

> "For AI to benefit all people, technology and international cooperation must move forward together."
>
> **Doreen Bogdan-Martin,** secretary-general of the International Telecommunication Union

Even so, Dasher argued that open-source models will remain important for the field's long-term development.

"For continued development, open source will be very important. Probably most university students who are studying how to develop models will learn from open-source models, so they'll be used to the open source," he said.

Ultimately, he said, the market will judge AI systems less on whether they are open or closed and more on practical performance. "You have to deliver something that's cost-effective. It has to be secure and support privacy, and it has to be very effective. It has to work. Those will be the characteristics that the market cares about more than whether it's open source or closed source."

The call for international cooperation in AI has echoed well beyond Shanghai. Speaking at the Global Dialogue on Artificial Intelligence Governance in Geneva earlier this month, Doreen Bogdan-Martin, secretary-general of the International Telecommunication Union, said, "For AI to benefit all people, technology and international cooperation must move forward together." An AI-driven future, she said, should include "everyone, especially the 2.2 billion people who have yet to join the digital world".

Dasher identified two areas where he believes international cooperation is especially urgent: health data and climate change.

On health, he said pooling more diverse, international data sets, while safeguarding individual privacy, would meaningfully improve the quality of medical analysis.

"I would think that health data is very important, and it's something where there are national security considerations, but to the extent that you don't damage individuals' privacy, then not only the larger data set that you use, the more diverse data set you have, the better the analysis will be," he said.

"Lifestyle in China is different from lifestyle here. Lifestyle in Europe is different from lifestyle here. It's good to have people representing all of those populations in some sort of healthcare analysis. I think that will encourage international work," he added.

Climate change, Dasher said, is a similarly borderless problem demanding a coordinated global response.

Despite persistent concerns over national security, Dasher expressed confidence that international cooperation on AI will continue to expand, as its benefits increasingly outweigh the risks. "I think that we will still see international cooperation to the extent that it doesn't have a negative impact on national security. I mean, that's a natural thing that everybody has always been concerned about," he said. "But I think that the benefits of international cooperation mean that you'll find a way to solve the security problem."



Visitors at the booth for Chinese AI Startup Moonshot's Kimi K3 during the World AI Conference in Shanghai on July 17. NG HAN GUAN / AP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:38:06 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:40:04 PM

Power of partnering

Business forum focuses on collaborations with Russia

WORLD IN FOCUS, PAGE 4



AI boosts future of gaming

BUSINESS, PAGE 9



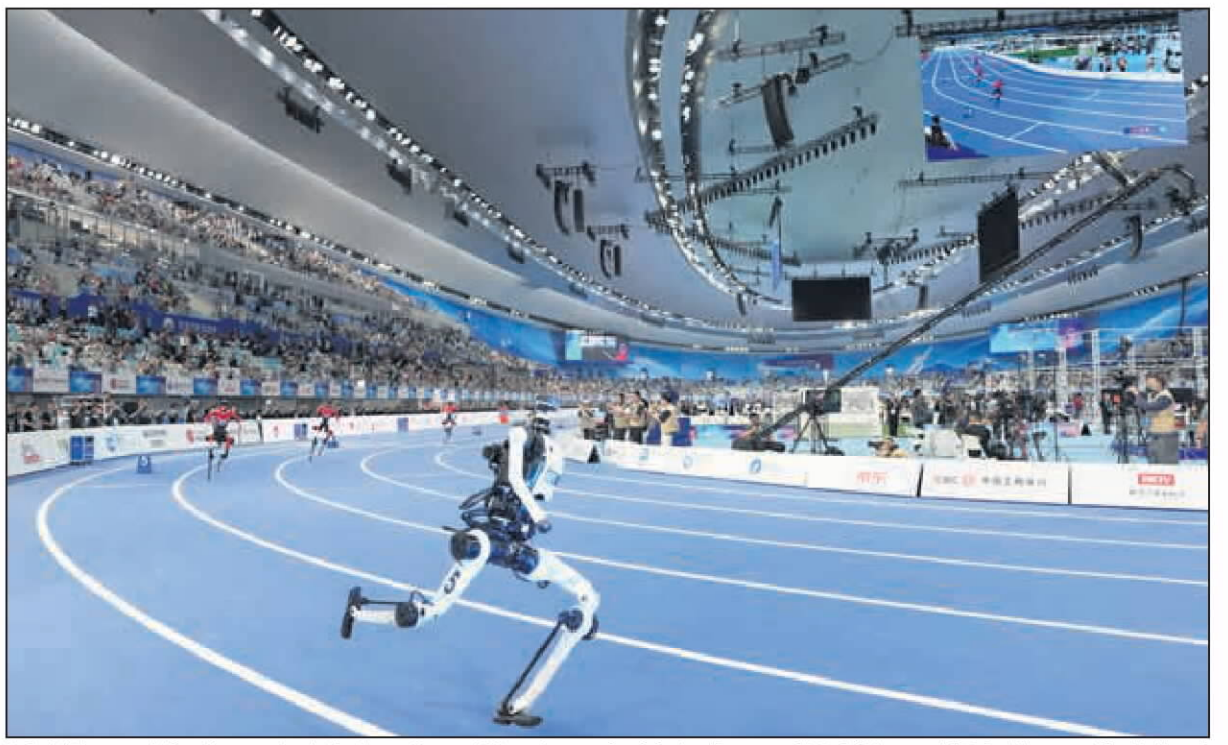
Golden threads

Greek jewelry reveals sharing of ancient artistic traditions

CULTURE, PAGE 13

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 MONDAY, AUGUST 24, 2026



Robot "Tiangong" (front) competes in the Large Group 400-meter race final during the second World Humanoid Robot Games at the National Speed Skating Oval in Beijing on Sunday. "Tiangong" won the race, clocking 38.15 seconds. JU HUANZONG / XINHUA

Swift progress of robots hailed

Bipeds push tech boundaries to beat human records at humanoid games being held in Beijing

By **MA SI** in Haikou
and **YANG CHENG** in Beijing

As biped robots shatter human world records at the second World Humanoid Robot Games, the event showcases not only China's rapid strides in embodied intelligence over the past year, but also the industry's swift progress toward real-world applications, Chinese and international executives and experts said.

Their comments came after the games opened in Beijing on Saturday, with 2,056 robots from 666 teams, representing 16 countries, set to compete in 51 events through Wednesday.

On the track, the action delivered jaw-dropping moments. A Chinese humanoid robot ran 100 meters in 9.39 seconds in a preliminary heat, beating the record of 9.58 seconds set by Jamaican Usain Bolt in 2009. The result was a sharp improvement from last year, when the 100-meter race was won in 21.50 seconds.

In a standing high jump, a robot cleared 2.88 meters, surpassing the human high jump record of 2.45 meters set by Cuba's Javier Sotomayor in 1993 as well as the 0.95-meter jump that was the best result by a humanoid in last year's games.

A Chinese humanoid robot also won the 400-meter final for large robots on Sunday in 38.15 seconds, outpacing the human world record of 43.03 seconds.

The 1,500-meter final added another record-breaking moment to the games, with 35 robots competing in seven heats and the top three all finishing ahead of the human world record of 3 minutes 26 seconds, led by the winner at 2:21.63.

Zhao Mingguo, a researcher at Tsinghua University's Department of Automation, said just as human sports push the limits of the body, the humanoid robot games are designed to extend the technological boundaries of smart machines across various scenarios and conditions.

Inside
Editorial **page 6**

Shift to autonomy

According to Zhao, the defining difference this year is the shift to autonomy. Organizers have scrapped remote controls for most events, requiring robots to rely entirely on their own artificial intelligence to perceive surroundings, make autonomous decisions and execute actions.

"From 'strings-attached' puppets to autonomous athletes, that's the transformation we've witnessed in just one year," he said.

The sector's growing vitality is reflected in the numbers. Team entries have jumped 138 percent year-on-year, while the number of participating robots has quadrupled.

This momentum is underpinned by China's manufacturing strengths. In the first half, the country shipped more than 40,000 humanoid robots, accounting for 97 percent of global output, according to the Chinese Institute of Electronics. The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology projected full-year production to exceed 100,000 units.

Beyond the competition, the event served as a showcase for human-robot synergy. The opening ceremony featured a "human-robot symphony" blurring the line between machine and performer, with 36 robots playing wind instruments, pianos and drums alongside a human orchestra, while 80 robots formed the games' emblem and another 80 spelled out "Beijing".

These smart machines also traded forehands with renowned Chinese athletes, including tennis star Zheng Jie. "I hope that in the future, robots can provide customized training for professional athletes and serve as a valuable auxiliary tool," Zheng said.

Beyond the games

This year's event introduced 21 scenario-based competitions, accelerating the transition of robots from the lab to real-world applications.

One such event, the dexterous-hand competition, tested micro-precision through tasks such as handling tweezers and twisting caps.

The "combined pentathlon" raised the stakes by merging sprinting with task completion, compelling robots to master physics, adapt to varied surfaces and recover from stumbles.

"The goal is to evaluate how far mass-produced robots can perform in real environments," said Chen Zilong, captain of Afu robot team.

During the hotel scenario practice, his machines struggled on thick carpet — a surface never encountered in training. Yet Chen sees the setback as providing valuable data. "When people see robots operating in hotels, malls and fire-rescue scenarios, they begin to imagine the possibilities," he said.

Zhang Feng, Party secretary of the Council of the Chinese Institute of Electronics, said the games are unfolding against a broader backdrop of technological transformation.

"Humanoid robots are moving beyond stage performances and race-track demonstrations to become genuine assistants in homes and workers in factories. They are poised to be the next game-changing innovation after computers, smartphones and new energy vehicles," Zhang said.

According to the institute, China's humanoid robot market is projected to hit 870 billion yuan ($129.4 billion) by 2030, playing a key role in advancing high-quality development.

China's technological strides also impressed international teams. Flavio Tonidandel, coach of Team Brazil, said, "We are thrilled to program the Chinese robot, the Booster, and interact with the most advanced humanoid robot we have ever seen."

Zati Hakim Azizul Hasan, mentor of Malaysia's Robotedge team, said: "China offers the best components. When you see robots that run faster and jump higher, that's the Chinese secret recipe. Chinese technology is exceptional in the world, and they can also make this software very affordable. This is what makes Chinese technology so intriguing."

Samantha Zhu, chairperson of Accenture China, said: "China is emerging as a critical testing ground for embodied intelligence such as humanoid robots. AI is no longer just a tool; it's becoming a versatile, cross-scenario capability permeating every facet of enterprise operations."

Local governments are also moving swiftly. The Beijing municipal government, for instance, has established a 10 billion yuan investment fund for robotics, which is expected to attract over 53 billion yuan in additional private capital. The city now hosts nearly 1,000 robotics companies, including seven valued at over $1 billion — the highest number in the country.

Contact the writers at yangcheng@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
See more by scanning the code.

Counter-tariffs widen Canada-US trade rift

By **LIU JIANQIAO**
liujianqiao@chinadaily.com.cn

The latest escalation in trade tensions between Canada and the United States underscores growing strains in the US' relations with its traditional allies under the "America First" policy, experts said.

Ottawa vowed retaliatory tariffs on US goods after the US announced a steep 50-percent tariff on imports from Canada.

Experts said the developments cast fresh doubts over the future of the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement, the cornerstone of North American free trade, as US protectionist measures and trade disputes increasingly challenge the region's deeply integrated economic ties.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney announced retaliatory tariffs on US goods on Saturday after walking away from what he called a "bad deal", as trade tensions between the longtime allies deepened following the collapse of last-ditch negotiations.

Talks between the neighboring countries broke down on Friday in Washington, DC, putting into force new 50-percent US tariffs impacting about $20 billion worth of goods, or 5.5 percent of Canada's exports to the US.

New Canadian tariffs, which will take effect on Sept 8, will notably target the US steel and dairy industries. More details will be revealed next week, Carney said. "You're at war when you get attacked. We got attacked," he added.

US President Donald Trump hit back at Canada on Sunday, saying, "Canada wants the benefits of being a State, without being one!!!" "They have also charged our great farmers, for many years, massive amounts of Tariffs. No more!!!" he wrote in a post on Truth Social.

Inside
Editorial **page 6**

Trump had previously said Washington "should be able to have a deal with Canada", citing his "good relationship" with Carney.

But on Saturday, the Canadian prime minister said that Trump set conditions which were ultimately unacceptable even though earlier talks had been positive.

"In recent days, the United States proposed new terms that were uneconomic, unfair and undermined the net benefits for Canada, and called into question the reliability of any deal," Carney said in Ottawa.

US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer told The New York Times on Saturday that the US had offered to reduce its tariffs on steel, aluminum and autos, as well as eliminate a recently imposed tariff on Canadian lumber. Greer told Fox News on Saturday that Washington was "moving forward with measures that respond to Canadian retaliation". He said that no new talks were planned with Canadian negotiators.

"We've been under no illusions. We recognized from the start that America has changed," Carney said on Saturday. "We recognize that sometimes, its signature was written in pencil."

The new US tariffs cover around 5 percent of Canada's exports to the US. They could severely damage vulnerable industries such as softwood lumber and wine and lead to job losses and business closures, trade experts have said.

See ***Trade,*** *page 3*



Paocai, or pickled vegetables, draw visitors at the 15th China International Pickle Food Expo in Meishan, Sichuan province, on April 26. LIU ZHONGJUN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

PICKLES A RELIEF FROM FIERY SPICES

Specially preserved vegetables, known as *paocai*, hold Sichuan's bold flavors together as a perfect palate cleanser

By **PENG CHAO** and
ZHAO JUNFENG
in Meishan, Sichuan

In the back corner of a kitchen in Meishan, Sichuan province, beside a stove hissing with chili oil and popping peppercorns, sits a jar that never makes it onto the menu. Its contents — a colorful mix of greens, reds, yellows and whites — rest submerged in an opaque brine.

The world knows Sichuan for kung pao chicken, mapo tofu, its mouth-numbing hotpot and the mellow depth of *doubanjiang* (fermented bean paste), but ask any local what binds those bold flavors together, and the answer is likely *paocai* — pickled vegetables.

It also elevates Sichuan breakfast staples such as noodles, steamed buns and congee, imparting a signature tang to classic dishes such as fish-flavored shredded pork, sour vegetable fish and sour-radish duck soup.

"Sichuan *paocai* is crisp and not overly salty," said 56-year-old chef Jiang Ming. "The lactic fermentation yields a natural, earthy sourness that vinegar lacks, making it an ideal flavor enhancer."

In Meishan, this tradition has been elevated to an almost architectural scale. At a workshop in the China Paocai City industrial park, nearly 5,000 giant clay jars stand in neat rows, each about 1.6 meters tall.

He Yanping, 49, a provincial-level inheritor of *Dongpo paocai*-making techniques, presses his ear to a lid as a gentle gurgle escapes from within. "That's the sound of lactic acid bacteria fermenting and releasing gas," he said.

China Vibes — FOOD —

See ***Delicacy,*** *page 3*

Agriculture can plow a productive furrow

WORLD WATCH
By Dan Glickman

The US-China relationship is very challenging. While the United States and China are the world's two largest economies, they have differences in the areas of trade, market access, national security, protection of intellectual property, technology and privacy. These differences should neither be minimized nor dismissed.

Nevertheless, while the two countries are competitors on the world stage, there are many areas where cooperation can be beneficial to both countries and their peoples, and to the world at large.

These include global health and prevention of diseases and future pandemics, educational exchanges, climate change and related natural disasters, energy, and sports, entertainment and culture.

And certainly, even more significantly, cooperation and collaboration in the area of agriculture and food offer perhaps the greatest opportunity for such cooperation. Food security and agricultural production are critical domestic and global imperatives for both countries.

In 2025 the US trade in goods with China totaled an estimated $414.7 billion. US exports to China dropped nearly 26 percent to $106.3 billion, including major agricultural commodities, and imports fell nearly 30 percent to $308.4 billion.

US farmers and Chinese consumers are certainly impacted by these reductions in trade in soybeans, livestock and many other farm commodities.

See ***Food,*** *page 3*



INSIDE
'RAMageddon' fallout
Global Views, page 8

www.chinadailyglobal.com
A member of ANN
China Daily Global
©2026 All Rights Reserved

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

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:40:04 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:40:04 PM

INDEPTH



Visitors explore the booth of Comtech Technology during the first Overseas Investment Fair 2026 in Shanghai on March 25. The fair's goal is to accelerate the construction of an overseas comprehensive service system for companies expanding abroad. LI GANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

A Shanghai slingshot for overseas expansion

Government services help clear obstacles for companies entering foreign markets

By SHI JING in Shanghai
shijing@chinadaily.com.cn

Going global — a pressing goal of many Chinese companies — is not only about grasping the big picture.

Nuanced details, such as what can be demonstrated in a product commercial, for example, may jeopardize a company's future prospects in an unfamiliar new market.

With eight years' experience in overseas markets, Shanghai-based gaming company Boke Technology learned this lesson, said the company's general counsel Wang Sijia.

One product commercial for a Southeast Asian market featured exaggerated creative content. It depicted a hamburger that had accidentally fallen on the ground being stepped on, which may have been construed as disrespectful due to cultural sensitivities. Wang said sometimes it's difficult for companies to make such fine distinctions.

However, this is one of the smaller challenges Chinese companies may be confronted with when they enter a new market. Abiding by local market entry regulations and contract formats are even larger issues, she said.

"The biggest headache about going global is the information gap. Companies do not know who to turn to or what they can do when a problem occurs," she said.

When publishing companies enter a new market, for example, they often have to work with local service providers for the first time. Without access to reliable information or experience in collaboration, it is extremely difficult to find the right partners.

A company's own internal risk management capabilities are usually insufficient, Wang added. "The cost of trial and error can be prohibitively high," she said.

Easier compliance

Shanghai companies have been boldly expanding into new markets.

Apart from mature markets such as Europe and the United States, more of them are reaching into Association of Southeast Asian Nations member states, the Middle East, and Latin America, according to He Dongbin, deputy director of the Shanghai Commission of Commerce.

In the first half of this year, Shanghai registered 383 newly established or acquired outbound projects, marking a 105 percent year-on-year increase in investment value.

Diversification of investment destinations has been a major trend. Economies involved in the Belt and Road Initiative have emerged as new investment targets, he said.

This is in line with a broader trend. About 80 percent of surveyed Chinese companies plan to expand overseas in the next three years, with ASEAN continuing to serve as the first choice, according to a report released by Singapore-headquartered bank UOB in early August.

The good news is that companies are being more proactive regarding compliance management when they enter new markets, according to He.

However, Liu Yanhao, deputy director of the Shanghai Municipal Bureau of Justice, said the expansion of legal service providers has not caught up with the expansion of Chinese companies and industries in overseas markets.

Companies can look for professional service providers in foreign markets on their own, Liu said. But the process will be lengthy and painstaking, and the strenuous efforts may not provide a satisfactory result.

A government-backed platform that can link lawyers with experience of overseas markets is an ideal solution, said Chen Jun, a City Development Law Firm partner, who also serves as deputy director of the foreign affairs committee of the Shanghai Bar Association.

In early August, Shanghai launched the international legal services hub, a digital platform where companies can search for institutions that provide legal services in overseas markets as well as experts who specialize in a certain country or industry. So far, 921 institutions with 413 overseas operations have been included on the platform.

Apart from connecting companies to law firms with expertise a company needs, the platform can identify potential country and industry risks.

This is especially important given the current complicated and unpredictable international situation, Chen said. Political changes can lead to policy inconsistencies or even deliberate legislative action targeting Chinese companies, he added.

"However, there is always a window of opportunity before such measures take full effect," Chen said. "Professional service providers can usually notice signs in advance. The government can provide early warnings and intelligence on the platform. The law firms on the platform serve as 'converters', interpreting the needs of Chinese enterprises and connecting them with local professional institutions. The problems can be solved more efficiently or even avoided," he added.

Asset-light initiatives

The shift toward asset-light investment has emerged as another major trend. Sectors such as technical services, the digital economy, and cultural creativity, which are asset-light yet high-value-added, have become key drivers of Shanghai's outbound investment, according to He of the Shanghai Commission of Commerce.



Customs officers inspect synthetic diamonds for export at the Shanghai Diamond Exchange on July 31. The targeted measures and checking service ensure both efficiency and security. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

> "Professional service providers can usually notice signs in advance. The government can provide early warnings and intelligence on the platform."
>
> **Chen Jun,** partner of City Development Law Firm

The demand for computing power and digital technologies has risen significantly as more Chinese companies expand their overseas businesses, said Zheng Maokuan, deputy secretary-general of Shanghai Digital Globalization Association. As a result, Chinese companies are bringing more digital technologies to emerging markets and developing economies to help intelligent and digital upgrading.

Shanghai Linshu AI is one such pioneer.

Founded in 2024, the company aims to digitize cultural heritage around the world and produce various cultural products, including games, animation, or immersive experiences with the help of augmented reality and virtual reality.

This will help cultural heritage across the globe be more accessible to a larger audience. Digitization can also better preserve cultural heritage, transcending the limits of time and geography, according to company partner and general manager Zhang Xiaoping.

Currently, Linshu is working with the Cambodian government to digitize Angkor Wat. This is by no means an easy job: not only because it requires interdisciplinary cooperation across cultural heritage preservation, archaeology and artificial intelligence, but, more importantly, because it needs to access data owned by Cambodia, according to Zhang.

"But gradually, the Cambodian government came to realize their data governance is still at a relatively low level. The participation of Chinese entities can bring in the most up-to-date technologies and even facilitate their own legislation for the cross-border transfer of cultural data," he said.

The Shanghai government has played an important role in helping Linshu's business move forward.

Lin-gang Special Area, a part of the China (Shanghai) Pilot Free Trade Zone, in April 2024 introduced a special service to process cross-border data.

Lujiazui, a part of Pudong New Area financial cluster, introduced supportive policies for one-person companies to form an industrial ecosystem for game and animation production, Zhang said.

These outbound companies are mostly knowledge-intensive. Instead of bringing products to new markets, they are now introducing technologies, skills, operational capabilities and intellectual property rights, according to Adaline Zheng, president and CEO of UOB China.

Data protection key

Against this backdrop, data has become the buzzword when it comes to overseas expansion. However, when a company finds its data has been infringed on or leaked in an overseas market, its competitiveness is significantly impaired and losses are hard to measure.

The confirmation of data ownership is of great importance before a company expands into a new market, said Zuo Weibo, CEO of CRECT Group, which helps companies expand into overseas markets, especially in Southeast Asia.

Shanghai-based Hero Esports has experience in securing its IPR in foreign markets.

Founded in 2016, it has held a number of e-sports games' IPRs in overseas markets including Vietnam, South Korea, Saudi Arabia and Indonesia.

Prior to the launch of Shanghai's data product IPR registration pilot program in December 2024, it was unclear how data could be registered to secure the company's interests, said Zhou Peipei, director of the company's legal and investment center.

"As e-sports games have become more popular, problems regarding data scraping, licensing boundaries and trade secret protection have all emerged. No company can tackle them single-handedly," she said.

"Companies need an official definition or confirmation as to the scope, development process and ownership of these data-driven outcomes. Otherwise, subsequent research and development, potential commercial collaborations and even internal management will be hampered," she added.

The pilot program helped the industry raise awareness of compliance and self-discipline, said Zhou.

Registered information can serve as key material for companies to assert their data rights in future infringement or trade secret disputes. Prosecutors are also involved, offering businesses quick access to expert advice on data ownership and privacy compliance, she explained.

"With the program connecting compliance, rights confirmation, legal protection and future data use, companies are more confident turning long-accumulated data into real innovation," said Zhou.

Data registration has been applauded by the AI, biomedicine, finance, education, culture and transportation industries, said Zhu Yanting, technology director of VLVE Information Technology, a service provider to technology companies.

The system is also directly linked to data trading institutions in Shanghai, so IPR certificates can be used as collateral to apply for bank loans. Data's value as an intangible asset has become clearer, Zhu said.

Shanghai's data product IPR registration is open to other places in China. By the end of July, the city had received 2,245 applications for data product IP registration.

Thirty percent of applications were from outside Shanghai. Data products registration applications came from 29 provincial-level regions. An application has yet to come from the Xizang autonomous region.

Data registration provides a snapshot of multiple efforts Shanghai has made to facilitate companies' steps to enter overseas markets.

In the first half of this year, the city launched a one-stop platform for companies to seek multiple services such as opening bank accounts, financing, legal consulting and logistics. Positioned as a service provider similar to Taobao or JD, the platform aims to make it easier to access, matching companies and service providers while tracking deals. Like the IPR registration program, the service platform is also available to companies across the country.

According to He of the Shanghai Commission of Commerce, the purposes of this open approach is to make the city "the optimal choice and the gateway" for Chinese companies seeking to reach international markets.







Left: A man uses self-service facilities at the 24-hour smart service zone of the Hongqiao Talent Service Center in Shanghai on Sept 10. The center aims to streamline administrative processes for global professionals. **Middle:** A staff member at the service center assists a woman with immigration procedures on Sept 10. **Right:** A center employee demonstrates an AI tool designed to enhance enterprises' overseas services on Sept 10. PHOTOS BY CHEN HAOMING / XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:40:04 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:40:04 PM

TOP NEWS

‘Dream come true’ reunion for green hero

Teacher from the United States returns to witness transformation of deserts

By **WANG SONGSONG** in Ordos, Inner Mongolia and **YUAN HUI** in Hohhot

When Ronald Sakolsky from the United States stepped off the plane at an airport in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region at around 6 pm on Sunday, it marked the beginning of a long-awaited homecoming to the region, where trees he helped plant more than two decades ago now stand as a living testament to a green bond of international friendship.

Waiting for him at the arrival gate was Yin Yuzhen, China’s afforestation hero whose battle against desertification in the Maowusu sandy area has inspired many people. Yin and her family hugged Sakolsky warmly at what was their first in-person meeting in years.

For Sakolsky, the reunion was a miracle.

“It is a dream come true,” he said, describing Yin as the “hero of the story”.

“She made a promise 27 years ago, and she kept her promise. I never thought I would see her again. It is a miracle. She is an amazing lady. She has done many things for China.”

Sakolsky, who taught English in Luoyang, Henan province, in the late 1990s, first learned of Yin’s story through media reports. In 1999, he donated $5,000 to support her reforestation efforts, a sum that allowed Yin to purchase much-needed saplings.

At the time, Yin was already renowned for her campaign to green the barren desert landscape, but she lacked the funds to expand her planting drive. Sakolsky’s donation changed that.

Combined with Yin’s effort, the once-barren wasteland has been transformed. Those seedlings have since flourished into a sprawling forest that now carpets the dunes in emerald green.

“I am very grateful that Mr. Sakolsky could come here to meet with us,” Yin said. “In preparation for his visit, we have been growing various fruits over this period for him to sample, including the ginseng fruit.”

She described herself as deeply moved and filled with excitement, adding that she strongly desires to take him into the desert and through the forests she has nurtured for nearly three decades.

> “She (Yin Yuzhen) made a promise 27 years ago, and she kept her promise. I never thought I would see her again. It is a miracle.”
>
> **Ronald Sakolsky**

Sakolsky’s return was made possible by an official invitation from the China Education Association for International Exchange, the goal of which is to further promote educational exchanges between China and the US.

What truly made the story go viral is the bond Sakolsky and Yin forged through afforestation efforts. That bond has now blossomed into a moment of shared celebration.

“Finally, that long-awaited moment has arrived, capturing the attention of netizens across the country. From sharing the same forest to forging a friendship between two nations,” one online user wrote. “The light of humanity knows no borders.”

According to the schedule, Sakolsky will visit Yin’s home in Uxin Banner, Ordos, on Monday and Tuesday. The two will tour the fruit-planting bases and shelterbelt forests that have reshaped the local ecosystem, revisiting the plots where Sakolsky’s saplings were first planted. They will also inspect fruit trees planted in recent years, highlighting the ongoing evolution of the region’s green transformation.

Following his stay in the region, Sakolsky and Yin will travel to Henan province to reunite with his old acquaintances in Luoyang. His itinerary there includes meetings with former colleagues and students from his teaching days.

Contact the writers at wangsongsong@chinadaily.com.cn

Online See more by scanning the code.



Chinese desert afforestation hero Yin Yuzhen (left) hugs retired teacher Ronald Sakolsky (right) from the US at an airport in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region on Sunday. LIAN ZHEN / XINHUA

Winning smile



Wang Hao (second from right), captain of the Chinese team BaiSha Gaming, receives the Most Valuable Player award after the *Crossfire* final during the Esports World Cup 2026 on Saturday in Paris, France. BaiSha Gaming defeated Team Liquid 3-0 in the grand final of the first-person shooter game to claim the championship. WU HUIWO / XINHUA

Archaeological links with Peru enter new phase

By **WANG RU**
wangru1@chinadaily.com.cn

Deepening cooperation between China and Peru in the field of cultural heritage has opened a new chapter in archaeological collaboration between the two ancient civilizations.

On Saturday, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences’ Institute of Archaeology signed cooperation agreements in Peru with the Caral Archaeological Zone of the Peruvian Ministry of Culture, and the Professional School of Archaeology at the National University of San Marcos, Lima, with the aim of jointly conducting archaeological research on Peru’s ancient Caral civilization.

This marks the first official cooperation on archaeological fieldwork between China and Peru, and the first time Chinese archaeological institutions are working in South America.

The Caral civilization, which flourished along the northern coast of Peru from approximately 3,000 BC to 1,800 BC, is the earliest-known civilization in the Americas to date.

According to the agreements, both sides will conduct comprehensive archaeological research at sites associated with the Caral civilization. Their cooperation will include field survey and excavation, scientific and technological research, as well as cultural heritage conservation and joint talent training.

Subsequent cooperation will also extend to the sites of the Inca civilization in the Andean highlands, facilitating comparative research between the ancient civilizations of China and Peru.

With the agreements signed, the China-Peru joint archaeological team will launch the first phase of a field survey, exploring the Chancay-Huaral and Supe river valleys, and conducting on-site inspections at key sites, to further refine subsequent excavation plans.

Jia Xiaobing, chair of the Department of World Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology, who served as a Chinese representative at the signing ceremony, said this cooperation fills the gap for Chinese archaeological institutions in South American fieldwork.

The Chinese side will obtain first-hand archaeological materials on early American civilizations, facilitating comparative research on ancient civilizations around the Pacific Rim and contributing a Chinese academic perspective to the global study of the origins of early complex societies, Jia said.

The Peruvian side, in turn, will benefit from China’s vast practical experience in scientific and technological archaeology, as well as cultural heritage conservation, achieving mutual academic enrichment, he added.

Academic exchanges between China and Peru in the field of archaeology have spanned more than half a century. As early as 1973, Xia Nai, then director of the Institute of Archaeology, led an archaeological team to Peru to visit important sites such as the iconic Machu Picchu. The following year, a Peruvian archaeological delegation visited China, marking the beginning of academic exchanges between the two countries.

In recent years, cultural and museum exchanges between China and Peru have continued to deepen. Peruvian artifacts have attracted much attention at ongoing exhibitions such as *Maize, Gold, Jaguar: A Grand Exhibition of Ancient Maya and Andean Civilizations* at the Capital Museum in Beijing and *On Top of the World Tree: Ancient Civilizations of the Americas* at the Shanghai Museum.

Meanwhile, the artifacts from China’s ancient Shu civilization, including those from the Sanxingdui site in Guanghan, Sichuan province, and the Jinsha site in Chengdu, Sichuan, also traveled to Peru in 2024, enabling Peruvian audiences to witness a dialogue between ancient civilizations across the oceans.

Trade: Tariff threats could fracture supply chains

From page 1

Chen Hong, director of East China Normal University’s Asia Pacific Studies Center, said the tariff war initiated by the US has not only taken a toll on the Canadian economy but also severely strained a decades-old alliance, exposing the growing fragility of Washington’s ties with its traditional allies.

Although the latest tariffs cover only about 5 percent of Canada’s exports to the US and affect a relatively limited number of industries, Ottawa’s decision to respond firmly reflects its determination to safeguard its autonomy in industrial and trade policy, he said.

According to a recent survey by Abacus Data, a Canadian polling firm, 36 percent of respondents want Canada to respond with new counter-tariffs, “even if that raises prices and risks escalation”.

“Over the past several decades, the US and Canada have forged a close political alliance and deeply integrated their economies under relatively stable and preferential trade arrangements. But the current US administration’s ‘America First’ strategy has turned Canada’s heavy dependence on the US market into an increasingly significant economic and strategic vulnerability,” Chen said.

The current breakdown also complicates the future of the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement, he added.

“Washington’s tariff threats are now pushing companies, particularly automakers, to relocate production and sourcing to the US. This could fracture established supply chains, distort the regional division of labor and ultimately hollow out the North American free-trade system,” Chen said.

Experts also said that Canada would find it difficult to break free from its deep economic dependence on the US in the near term.

“Realistically, Canada would find it difficult to offset the losses from reduced access to the US market in the short term,” said Huang Zhong, associate researcher at the Center for Canadian Studies of Guangdong University of Foreign Studies.

Agencies contributed to this story.

Delicacy: Ancient craft gives *paocai* unique flavor

From page 1

The craft takes its name from Su Dongpo — the celebrated Song Dynasty (960-1279) poet and gourmand who was born in Meishan. The legacy of Su, a passionate maker himself, lent the pickle its enduring cultural identity.

The roots of Chinese pickled vegetables stretch back even further, over 3,000 years in fact, to the pre-Qin period (before 221 BC), when early references to *zu*, or pickled vegetables, appear in classics such as the *Book of Songs* and the *Rites of Zhou*.

This deep historical lineage found its way into local customs. By the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), a jar of *paocai* had become an essential part of a bride’s dowry — a portable legacy of flavor carried into married life.

Traditional *Dongpo paocai* is made in a large earthenware jar. Fresh vegetables are packed inside and fully submerged in the “mother brine”, or *laomu shui* — a living culture passed down through generations. The lid is sealed with a water lock, allowing gases to escape while keeping oxygen out. What follows is daily care and patient waiting.

“The secret lies in the mother brine, teeming with the specific strains of lactic acid bacteria that give *Dongpo paocai* its distinctive flavor,” He said.

To outsiders, pickled vegetables may call to mind kimchi or sauerkraut, but Sichuan *paocai* is different. Radishes, carrots, cabbage, long beans, young ginger, red Sichuan chili peppers and bamboo shoots are packed whole or in chunks into a seasoned brine of water, salt, Sichuan peppercorns and other spices, often with a bit of *baijiu*.

Within hours or a day or two at most, they emerge with a clean, crisp sourness and a subtle fragrance.

“This water-based fermentation method sets *Dongpo paocai* apart from most other pickling methods in China or abroad,” He said. “The credit goes to the Sichuan Basin’s mild climate — free from freezing winters and scorching summers — which keeps the lactic acid bacteria active year-round.”

Another defining feature is the brief fermentation period — sometimes just hours — which yields a lower-salt product with a distinctly crisp texture.

What began as a local craft is evolving into a global curiosity, with a growing number of foreign visitors flocking to the China Paocai City industrial park to master the craft.

Among them is Hajar Wassila, a Moroccan student who joined a DIY session at the workshop of Sichuan Laotanzi Food Co. Guided by instructors, she packed her jar with vegetables, garlic, red Sichuan chili peppers and carrots, pressing them firmly beneath the brine.

“When I smell it, I want to taste it immediately,” she said, holding up the jar with a grin. “I love pickles and tried to make them before, but failed. Now I’ve finally got the secret.”

Contact the writers at pengchao@chinadaily.com.cn

Food: Agriculture offers a way to enhance and improve Sino-US ties

From page 1

Some of these changes in trade numbers were impacted by changes in US export policies and trade, although President Donald Trump’s visit to China offered some hope that the trade relationships between the two countries can improve.

The US has one of the largest and most historically productive agricultural sectors in the world. China also has a very significant agriculture sector. The next breakthrough in US-China relations could begin on the farm. Food is not ideological. And while trade disputes have periodically disrupted flows of agricultural commodities, both countries and their consumers and farmers benefit when these markets are transparent, predictable and certain.

In the promising area of agriculture research, collaboration in scientific research can foster solutions to the impact of climate change and the effects of droughts, floods, animal and plant disease, soil health, water resource conservation, food safety and nutrition. Both countries have suffered from the impacts of these challenges, and China has developed a major agricultural research infrastructure, with government and academic institutions working on problems affecting both countries.

The recent epidemics of zoonotic diseases (those that naturally spread between animals and humans) and related viruses, pathogens and parasites highlight the need for cooperation that US and Chinese scientists and academic institutions can provide in this area. And there are so many other public health challenges in the areas of food safety, food and nutrition, and cooperation on agro-biotechnology through modern agronomic technologies to sustainably feed a hungry world. Take genomics, for example. There is enormous potential to make rapid advances in crop productivity, livestock breeding and health, and resource use efficiency. And by properly and legally utilizing artificial intelligence, US and Chinese researchers can work together to leverage digital data to better control diseases, predict weather patterns and events and identify market trends.

Expanding academic exchanges and students studying food and agriculture is also important in developing a talent pool for the future.

None of this is easy and there are no simple answers to the disputes between the two countries, and in recent years there has been a growing lack of trust on each side of the Pacific Ocean. But cooperation in the areas of food and agriculture can help to build bilateral trust and reduce the heated rhetoric in both countries.

President Trump’s visit to Beijing in May was an important step in this process. I hope the US can resume congressional delegations to China which I participated in and also led while at the Aspen Institute. During the Bill Clinton administration, as secretary of agriculture I led a congressional delegation to China on trade issues. And as the Chairman and CEO of the Motion Picture Association, I also made several visits to China to discuss intellectual property and market access issues. I have long felt that although China and the US are serious competitors on the global stage, they are not enemies. Agriculture offers a way to enhance and improve the bilateral relationship for the benefit of both peoples.

President Xi Jinping has said that China and the US should be partners and friends, stressing that is what history has taught us and what reality needs. Mutually beneficial progress on agriculture can help build trust between the two sides and help to achieve progress in a dangerous and rapidly changing world.

The author is the former US Secretary of Agriculture under President Bill Clinton (1995-2001), and currently a Distinguished Fellow at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

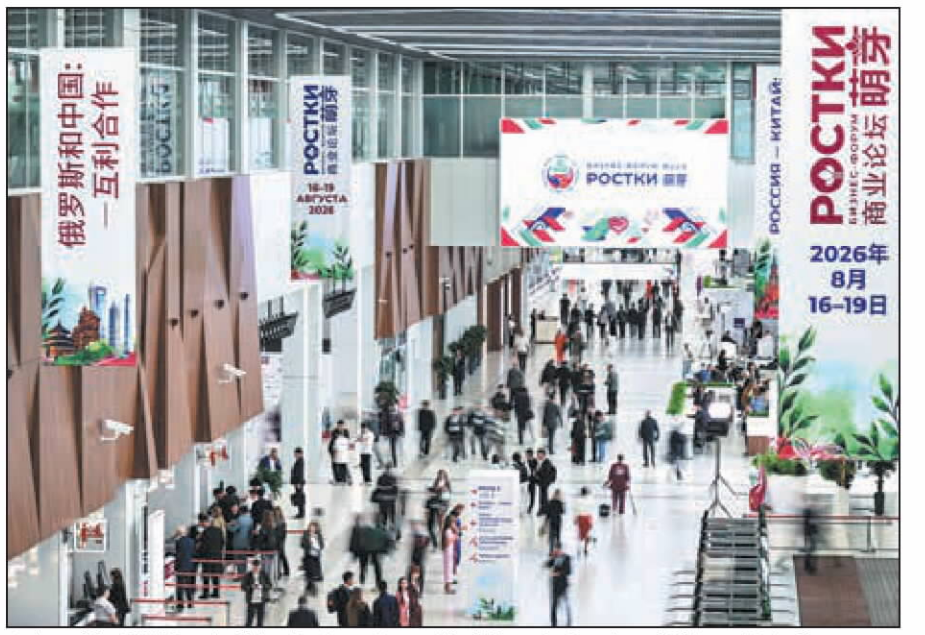
Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:40:04 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:40:04 PM

WORLD IN FOCUS



Drummers in traditional clothes at the 2026 Russia-China Business Forum at the Kazan Expo International Exhibition Center in Bolshiye Kabany, Russia, on Aug 18. YEVGENY MESSMAN / TASS



A view of the 2026 Russia-China Business Forum titled "Sprouts: Russia and China — Mutually Beneficial Cooperation" at the Kazan Expo International Exhibition Center on Aug 17. FENG KAIHUA / XINHUA

'Sprouting' partnerships

Forum highlights growing business collaborations between Beijing, Moscow

The 2026 Russia-China Business Forum titled "Sprouts: Russia and China — Mutually Beneficial Cooperation" opened on Aug 16 in Kazan, the capital of the Republic of Tatarstan, bringing together over 50 business sessions, eight Chinese provincial delegations, and numerous Russian federal officials.

More than 10,000 square meters of exhibition space showcased cooperation in logistics, finance, healthcare, industry, agriculture, creative economy, and artificial intelligence.



Attendees at the forum at the Kazan Expo International Exhibition Center on Aug 18. ERIK ROMANENKO / TASS

Against this backdrop of expanding ties, Chinese Ambassador to Russia Zhang Hanhui delivered an address at the forum highlighting the latest trade figures.

"Sino-Russian trade and economic cooperation is demonstrating steady growth. From January to July 2026, the volume of bilateral trade reached $159 billion, which represents a 26 percent increase compared to the same period last year. It is quite possible that a new all-time high will be set by the end of the year," Zhang said.

Local currency settlements also took center stage. Zhou Liqun, chairman of the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce in Russia, voiced strong support for bilateral settlements in national currencies during an interview of the forum.

"We support and pay close attention to bilateral local currency settlements. Such settlements are conducive to the development of enterprises and economic and trade cooperation between the two countries.

"Regardless of the payment system or form, we will support and encourage enterprises to actively participate," Zhou told Russian media outlet Sputnik.

Taliya Minullina, head of the Tatarstan Investment Development Agency, told Xinhua News Agency that eight Chinese provincial-level delegations and governors from multiple Russian federal subjects are attending this year's event.

Tatarstan has signed intergovernmental agreements with seven Chinese provinces — Shandong, Hunan, Sichuan, Anhui, Heilongjiang, Zhejiang, and Jiangxi — as well as Chongqing municipality.

Minullina said that Tatarstan offers eight federal-level economic zones with tax benefits — the most in Russia — and over 100 industrial parks, where Chinese investors can access land or rent fully equipped facilities at favorable terms.

She also emphasized the republic's rich educational resources to support foreign-invested projects.

Beyond business, the forum featured vibrant cultural programs. Delegates enjoyed a Tatar-language performance, a Chinese Film Day, and several cultural events celebrating shared folk traditions.

CHINA DAILY—XINHUA



Participants view Chinese-brand cars at the forum on Aug 17. FENG KAIHUA / XINHUA



Participants taste Chinese tea at the forum on Aug 17. FENG KAIHUA / XINHUA



A woman makes traditional hats at the forum on Aug 17. YEVGENY MESSMAN / TASS



An artist in a giant panda suit poses with a woman during the 2026 Russia-China Business Forum at the Kazan Expo International Exhibition Center on Aug 17. ALEXANDER MELEKHOV / TASS



Chinese dragon boat races are held on Lake Nizhny Kaban as part of the 2026 Russia-China Business Forum on Aug 16. YEGOR ALEYEV / TASS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:40:04 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:40:04 PM

WORLD

Search amid ruins



People look at the debris of a seven-story building under construction in Hyderabad, Telangana State, India, on Saturday. At least two people were killed in the collapse, local disaster response officials said, as rescue teams searched for possible survivors. JWALA KOTESH VIA GETTY IMAGES

Briefly

JAPAN

37 injured following magnitude 5.9 quake

At least 37 people were injured after a magnitude 5.9 earthquake struck Ibaraki Prefecture, northeast of Tokyo, early on Sunday. The earthquake also caused burst water pipes and transportation disruptions in some areas, local media reported. Japan's Fuji News Network, citing the Fire and Disaster Management Agency, reported that as of 10 am, at least 37 people were injured in Tokyo, Ibaraki Prefecture, Kanagawa Prefecture and other areas. The earthquake temporarily disrupted some train services in the Kanto region, though operations were gradually being restored. Multiple water pipes burst in Tokyo and other areas, causing temporary flooding on some roads.

UNITED STATES

$850m UN dues payment planned

The US government has notified Congress of its plans to pay $850 million of the several billion it owes to the United Nations, the largest payment that the administration would make to the world body since Washington demanded sweeping reforms in exchange for continued support as its largest donor. The US State Department laid out its plans to transfer $725 million as part of its dues to the regular UN budget and $125 million toward UN peacekeeping operations in Haiti and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, according to notifications sent to lawmakers this month and obtained by The Associated Press. The US is about $5 billion behind on dues related to its membership, with more than $2 billion owed toward the regular budget, the UN says.

DR CONGO

Gov't, M23 agree on road map for talks

The government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the March 23 Movement rebel group have agreed on a road map for peace negotiations, setting out sequenced steps and timelines for further talks, according to a joint statement issued on Sunday. The two sides said that, during meetings held from Aug 17 to 21 in Switzerland, they assessed progress and challenges in the Doha peace process while discussing the implementation of existing commitments and the way forward for negotiations under the Doha Framework Agreement. Following the assessment, the two sides developed a road map outlining the sequence and timetable for future negotiations.

AGENCIES — XINHUA

More than 3 decades on, a witness to China-S. Korea ties sees shared future

By **YANG HAN** in Hong Kong
kelly@chinadailyapac.com



Shin Jung-seung

For Shin Jung-seung, former South Korean ambassador to China, the 1992 signing of the joint communique establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries remains a vivid memory.

"Witnessing the normalization of bilateral ties with my own eyes was deeply moving," Shin said, recalling the signing ceremony at Fangfeiyuan Hall in the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing on Aug 24, 1992.

At the time, Shin was director of the Northeast Asia Division II in the South Korean Foreign Ministry's Asian and Pacific Affairs Bureau. In charge of China affairs, he played an active role in the negotiations that led to the establishment of diplomatic relations, often seen as a milestone that reshaped the geopolitical landscape of Northeast Asia.

Beyond the official exchanges, Shin recalled another touching moment that night at a restaurant near the state guesthouse. The owner, a member of China's Korean ethnic group, was overjoyed by the news and presented the delegation with a bottle of liquor as a gift.

"That gave me a tangible sense that the normalization of relations would greatly benefit the peoples of both nations," Shin said.

With his experience, Shin later served as a minister at South Korea's embassy in Beijing, director-general of the Foreign Ministry's Asian and Pacific Affairs Bureau, and ambassador to China from 2008 to 2009.

While many countries doubted in the early 1990s that China could achieve rapid economic growth, Shin said he was confident of its economic prospects when he became ambassador.

He said China's rapid development and the achievements it showcased at the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the 2010 Shanghai World Expo reinforced his confidence.

"What was unexpected was the dazzling advancement of China's high-tech technology today," he added.

Shin said he was impressed by the results of active government support, companies' creativity and bold investment, and academic institutions' efforts to cultivate talent.

"This is something I believe South Korea has much to learn from," he said.

After retiring from the foreign service, Shin continued to devote himself to China studies and promoting bilateral friendship.

He was the inaugural director of the Center for Chinese Studies at the Korea National Diplomatic Academy in Seoul and now heads the Center for Chinese Studies at Dongseo University in Busan.

Shin has also served as president of the Korea-China Friendship Association since 2021.

"I've always believed in the importance of viewing things objectively," he said.

Promoting exchanges

To achieve this, Shin said he has striven to promote academic exchanges with China and engage with Chinese experts, while frequently organizing discussions with experts in South Korea.

"In exchange with China, it is important to build trust by respecting each other and engaging with goodwill," he said, adding that he still constantly ponders how to effectively convey South Korea's position to his Chinese friends whenever opportunities arise.

He said active public engagement is needed to enhance mutual understanding in the spirit of "harmony without uniformity", while upholding the principles of mutual respect, reciprocity and equality enshrined in the 1992 Joint Communique.

Vast opportunities will emerge if the two countries continue to deepen cooperation based on mutual respect and identify complementary areas for win-win outcomes, he said.

For his part, Shin said he is committed to supporting bilateral relations through academic work and friendship activities.

He highlighted mutual visa exemption and the Collective Action for Mobility Program of University Students in Asia, a student exchange and academic cooperation program jointly launched by China, South Korea and Japan in 2012, as encouraging ways to deepen youth friendship.

At Dongseo University, Shin said he has seen students from the three countries build friendships under the program while learning one another's languages and cultures.

"Facilitating as much exchange as possible among the younger generations of South Korea and China will allow them to understand each other and deepen friendship, which will bring bright prospects to the future of bilateral relations," Shin said, adding that governments should fully support such efforts.

Looking ahead to the 33rd Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Economic Leaders' Meeting in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, in November, Shin said he expects further momentum in South Korea-China relations following last year's meeting in South Korea and state visits, even though challenges remain.

Noting that China emphasized the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a 2025 national security white paper, Shin said this is a shared goal for South Korea.

He expressed hope that closer cooperation between the two countries can contribute to peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region.

Iran pledges to weather 'full-scale' war

Tehran threatens retaliation against US sanctions backers as pressure mounts

By **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong and **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE

Iran said on Sunday it is fighting a full-scale economic, military and security war as it warned that countries joining United States sanctions against Tehran would be considered an enemy.

The warning comes as US President Donald Trump said he viewed the Strait of Hormuz as an "American territory". In a social media post on Saturday, he reposted a map marking the critical waterway as a "new US territory".

Speaking at a ceremony on Sunday, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said the government had faced war, sanctions, various pressures and continuous assassinations, alongside serious imbalances in water, electricity, gas, fuel, the environment and banking, but assured the public that his government is doing its best during the hardships.

"The enemies imagined that with their pressure and actions Iran would collapse. Not only did this not happen, but the power and unity of the Iranian nation amazed the world," he was quoted by the Mehr News Agency as saying.

"Of course, we are ashamed before the people that problems exist. But as long as we have breath in our bodies, we will serve our dear people, work to improve their lives and welfare, and pass through these crises with strength," he added.

In a speech published by state-run IRNA early on Sunday, Pezeshkian defended a recent memorandum of understanding as the best way for the country to move beyond what he described as a situation of "neither war nor peace".

Members of Iran's Supreme National Security Council believed the memorandum represented the best possible agreement based on dignity, wisdom and the national interest, he said.

In a televised interview on Saturday, Iran's security chief Mohsen Rezaei warned that countries joining US sanctions against Iran will be considered an enemy, and Tehran would retaliate by targeting their interests, the Tasnim News Agency reported.

Rezaei said Iran's defense strategy and international behavior have undergone significant changes following the US-Israeli war of aggression. Iran would have to adapt both its defense and diplomatic approaches considering US violation of its commitments and betrayal in negotiations, he added.

He also criticized Trump's policies, saying his "foolishness" has created a huge burden for the US people, its allies and the whole world, and that the US president has increased the logistic risk to global trade.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Sunday dismissed the threat of new US sanctions as a sign of desperation.

Describing what he said were "repetitive scenarios", Araghchi said in a video posted on Telegram, "The fact that they (US leaders) have moved on from military operations ... to bring up the same old plans shows that they are desperate."

Washington must speak to Iran respectfully to find "a solution based on justice and honor", he added.

Meanwhile, Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said Tehran had received "multiple messages from neighboring countries" regarding the formation of new security arrangements and economic cooperation across the region.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry said Pakistani army chief Asim Munir would visit Tehran on Monday to meet senior Iranian officials, Al Jazeera reported. The talks were said to focus on enhancing bilateral cooperation and regional peace.

Last week, Trump launched an economic campaign against Iran after Washington failed to achieve a breakthrough with Tehran as their memorandum of understanding signed in June expired on Aug 17.

Agencies contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at jan@chinadailyapac.com

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
Telephone: 212-537-8888
Fax: 212-537-8898
editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com
Subscription: 212-537-8899
Advertising: 212-537-8916
Follow us on:
x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily
usa.chinadaily.com.cn
These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108
529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel:206-922-2868

CANADA | TORONTO
4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 — No.1899

Israel raises 'serious security concerns' over Hamas disarmament deal

TEL AVIV, Israel — Israel has shared "serious security concerns" with the United States regarding the proposed disarmament deal with Hamas, an Israeli official said as Israeli strikes over the weekend killed at least 17 people, including children, in Gaza.

The remarks by Doron Spielman, spokesman for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office, were some of the first public comments since US President Donald Trump announced the agreement.

Spielman told The Associated Press that Israel's intelligence assessment is that Hamas remains committed to rebuilding its military rather than genuinely demilitarizing. He said the Israeli military would not withdraw from Gaza — where it controls more than 60 percent of the territory — before Hamas disarms.

"Our assessment is that if we redeploy before Hamas is truly disarmed, it will quickly expand its presence throughout Gaza, rebuild its terrorist infrastructure, once again threaten Israeli communities, and seek to carry out another Oct 7-style attack," he said, referring to the Hamas militant attack on Israel in 2023 that triggered the conflict in the Gaza Strip.

Israel responded with a punishing military offensive that has killed more than 73,000 people, according to the Gaza Health Ministry.

Spielman's comments come days after Hamas said it would begin disarming as part of the US-brokered ceasefire signed nine months ago to end the nearly three-year-long conflict. It marks a potential breakthrough in ending the conflict, but many hurdles, conditions and long timelines remain.

The 20-point ceasefire plan calls on Hamas to surrender its weapons and destroy its vast network of tunnels. It also envisions Israeli forces withdrawing from Gaza, the arrival of a new technocratic Palestinian government, deployment of an international security force and the rebuilding of the battered Palestinian enclave.

Hamas disarmament has been a sticking point and has deadlocked negotiations for months. In announcing the deal on social media on Thursday, Trump said it would be carried out in "carefully structured phases".

A copy of the agreement obtained and verified by the AP said that all weapons held by the Hamas-run police will be transferred to the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza upon its arrival in the enclave. It is unclear when that would happen, since it depends on other steps.

A process to decommission and store heavy weapons and to dismantle military production sites and tunnels will begin after the arrival of the Palestinian committee and the deployment of international forces. The process will be linked to a phased Israeli withdrawal, according to the agreement.

On Saturday, a delegation from the Palestinian National Liberation Movement, or Fatah, headed to Cairo, while Hamas affirmed its commitment to participating in the legislative elections scheduled for November as part of the broadest possible national coalition.

AGENCIES — XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:40:04 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:40:04 PM

COMMENT

Editorials

US-Canada talks impasse acute reminder that Washington should review its policies

The break in the United States-Canada trade talks is more than another episode in Washington's ill-advised tariff drama. When US negotiators introduced last-minute demands that would have constrained Canada's ability to reach trade deals with third parties, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney walked away. The striking thing is not simply that the talks failed, but how revealingly they failed.

The US-Canada trade dispute is a miniature of a much larger problem: a US administration treating economic relations as a series of zero-sum contests while overlooking the costs its policies impose on the US' trading partners and the US itself.

Tariffs, technology restrictions, military escalation and an increasingly interventionist approach to currencies form a policy mix that risks aggravating the very inflationary, fiscal and financial pressures Washington claims to be fighting.

US importers pay tariffs at the border. Much of the cost is then passed on to businesses and consumers through higher prices and thinner margins, while retaliation hits US exporters. Modern manufacturing does not respect tariff boundaries. Auto parts can cross the US-Canadian border several times before becoming a finished vehicle. Taxing each crossing does not make the final product more American, just more expensive.

The same logic applies to technology policy. Washington's expanding "entity lists" and restrictions on China may become self-defeating when US companies are forced to redesign supply chains around political considerations rather than productivity. The result is greater technological fragmentation and reduced access to markets in which US companies have long been competitive.

The US administration's "transshipment" report takes this logic to an almost comic extreme. Baselessly blaming China for the disappointing economics of an arbitrary tariff regime does not change the underlying arithmetic. Once Washington creates large tariff differentials, it should hardly be surprised that businesses seek alternative routes. The policy creates the incentive and then foreign countries are absurdly criticized for responding to it.

Military escalation in the Middle East adds another inflationary shock. Washington's pressure on other nations to align themselves with its so-called toughest-ever economic measures against Iran is a telling reflection of its own strategic passivity regarding the trouble of its own making. The longer this conflict drags on, the deeper the hole the US is digging for itself.

Energy-price volatility feeds into transport, manufacturing and household budgets, while making the Federal Reserve's task harder. Monetary policy can restrain demand to help cool inflation; it cannot produce more oil or repair disrupted supply chains.

Then there is the number Washington cannot tariff away: the national debt. Annual deficits approaching $1.8 trillion and a debt burden above $40 trillion leave the US exposed to higher interest rates. Debt-service costs have climbed above $1 trillion a year, consuming resources that might otherwise finance infrastructure, education and social programs. Long-term Treasury yields remain elevated as investors demand compensation for inflation risks and the scale of future borrowing.

The weakening dollar adds another complication. A softer currency helps exporters, but also raises the domestic price of imports. In an economy already confronting tariff-induced inflation, further weakness of the dollar is hardly cost-free.

Against this backdrop, the surge in AI-related corporate borrowing deserves particular scrutiny as a potential trigger of a financial crisis. As of August, nine major US technology companies reportedly had nearly $3 trillion in off-balance-sheet commitments — almost double an estimate made only six weeks earlier. Roughly $1.9 trillion involves purchases of chips and servers and another $1.2 trillion future leases. More troubling is the potentially self-reinforcing financing cycle in which vendors finance customers who then use the funds to purchase their products. If AI revenues disappoint or higher long-term rates puncture valuations, these commitments could surface abruptly, transforming an investment boom into a financial shock potentially far larger than the dot-com bust of 2000. The damage could spread through credit markets and pension portfolios precisely when Washington has less fiscal room to respond.

According to a report, 57 senior US administration officials are worth at least $100 million, over four times the combined number of ultra-wealthy appointees in the George Walker Bush, Barack Obama and Joe Biden administrations.

For this wealthy circle, tariffs, AI contracts, energy prices and market volatility represent speculative opportunities. Policies presented as defending workers are in effect deepening wealth concentration and shifting costs downward.

But the White House tries to explain away these contradictions by blaming the previous administration, China or other trading partners, including Canada and the European Union. The US-Canada trade dispute should be read as a warning about a self-reinforcing policy circle driven by vested interests in the US.

The outward symptoms? Too much international engagement is being viewed through a transactional, zero-sum lens, turning allies into bargaining targets and trading partners into economic suspects.

The US' architecture was originally designed to restrain individual impulses through checks and balances. Those guardrails, however, become meaningless if institutions evolve from constraining personal discretion to protecting it.

Striving to realize human-robot symbiosis

At the second World Humanoid Robot Games in Beijing on Saturday, a humanoid robot from Team Tianzhuo set a milestone, clocking 100 meters in 9.39 seconds. It not only beat the previous robotic record but also eclipsed the legendary Usain Bolt's world record of 9.58 seconds, a feat of human biology deemed near the absolute limit.

This record-setting sprint was the dramatic opening act for the games that are being held from Saturday to Wednesday. The event has exploded in scale. This year's event has attracted the participation of 666 teams and 2,056 robots from 16 countries, marking a 138 percent increase in the number of teams taking part and a fourfold jump in the robot count from the inaugural event last year.

It demonstrates the speed of technological iteration. More significantly, the games reflect a global commitment to moving robots out of labs. The scenario-based events have been extended into simulated real environments such as factories, hotels, homes and logistics with tasks such as packing, unpacking and retail service, pushing humanoid robots from "demonstration tools" toward "practical productivity".

This push for real-world utility was the central theme at the 2026 World Robot Conference, which was held under the theme "Human-Robot Symbiosis, Production-Demand Convergence" from Wednesday to Sunday. Over 370 exhibitors from around the world showcased 3,000 innovative products, with 311 being global debuts. The industry's focus is increasingly on reliability, cost-effectiveness and solving real-world problems.

The market's attitude toward the industry was apparent last week when Unitree Robotics, a global leader in humanoid and quadruped robots, went public on the Shanghai Stock Exchange's sci-tech innovation board.

In a market crowded with options, investors are placing long-term bets on China's ability to translate its industrial strength into commercially viable embodied intelligence. This confidence is well-founded. Embodied intelligence, the integration of artificial intelligence with a physical form, is poised to inject new momentum into the global economy. Its applications span manufacturing, warehousing, logistics, emergency rescue and household services.

China's market is one of the world's largest testing grounds. From traffic control to package sorting, Chinese robots are already at work, demonstrating that the future is not on the horizon — it is already here. However, AI and robots will also affect the job market.

Addressing the contradiction requires a multipronged labor-market strategy: A shift from income support to employment-conditional subsidies, including wage insurance for displaced workers moving into growing sectors, alongside portable benefits to reskilling programs tied directly to employer demand. There should also be tax incentives for companies that invest in human-AI complementarity rather than wholesale automation.

In practice, to harness the opportunities of the new technological revolution, governments, businesses and universities should forge closer partnerships to enhance workforce development. This ecosystem should prioritize "learning by practicing" through internships, apprenticeships and industry-sponsored projects that bridge theory and practice.

Crucially, policymakers should pursue active labor-market policies that enhance mobility, reduce skills mismatches and ensure productivity gains translate into broad-based wage growth rather than elite capture. With proper foresight, there is no reason why the development of advanced technology cannot be a rising tide that lifts all boats.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254(0)20 692 0900 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Shi Yu



Opinion Line

China's commercial space industry demonstrates innovation energy

Watching the Zhuque-3 Y2 rocket lift off from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center, courtesy of LandSpace's live footage on Wednesday morning, was a moment of proud fulfillment for me. Minutes later, witnessing its first-stage booster settle vertically onto the landing zone in Minqin, Gansu province, I felt the culmination of a decade of on-the-ground reporting.

That very day, I wrote the news story on this historic mission. My visits to LandSpace's research and development facilities and the Minqin landing site just days before the launch gave me firsthand insight into the formidable technical challenges faced by the company's young engineers, making their achievement even more praiseworthy to me.

Over the past 10 years, I have observed China's commercial space industry evolve from a handful of underfunded start-ups with modest ambitions into a formidable force reshaping the country's space landscape. In the early days, I recall interviewing a veteran rocket designer from a State-owned space giant who flatly asserted that China had "no foundation for commercial space operations" and that launch services should not be entrusted to private players.

At that time, SpaceX was already demonstrating the viability of reusable rockets and lowering launch costs in the United States, yet such a path seemed unimaginable to many in China's space community. What a difference a decade can make.

The farsighted decision by the top leadership to open the space sector to private capital and enterprises — framing them as valuable complements to State-funded entities and a source of dynamism and competitiveness — has been fully vindicated. My years of reporting have tracked how private companies have moved from tentative experiments to world-class accomplishments. Today, they are an indispensable pillar of China's overall space capability, injecting innovation energy into the entire industry chain.

Wednesday's milestone — China's first successful land-based recovery of an orbital-class rocket booster — has far-reaching implications. Developed by LandSpace, the stainless-steel Zhuque-3 is specifically built for large-scale constellation deployment, offering heavy-lift capacity at reduced cost. Its proven reusability will significantly accelerate the construction of China's low-orbit satellite networks and other commercial systems, giving the country more flexible and cost-effective options for its space programs.

Beyond the direct technical gains, the success triggers a powerful "catfish effect" throughout the industry: private-sector breakthroughs press State-owned contractors to accelerate their own innovation cycles. Healthy competition also drives local suppliers to upgrade manufacturing standards, boosting the overall competitiveness of the country's space sector.

That said, maintaining a sober perspective is essential. Compared with the US, which leads the world in reusable rocket and commercial satellite technologies, China still faces notable gaps in many areas of commercial space operations. The journey to full reusability and routine, affordable access to space remains long and arduous.

As I watched the over-40-meter-tall Zhuque-3 first-stage booster stand upright on the landing pad in the middle of the desert — dust settling around its deployed legs — I recalled the skepticism of that designer years ago. What has unfolded since is a testament to the power of vision, policy support and entrepreneurial drive.

China's commercial space story is far from over, and I feel privileged to continue documenting the next chapter of reusable launch and satellite networking.

— ZHAO LEI, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

New healthcare plan has people-centered approach

Editor's note: *China released a five-year plan that aims to enhance the accessibility, affordability and sustainability of its public healthcare system. China Daily spoke to Dong Wenyong, an associate researcher at the Institute of Law at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, on the importance of the plan. Below are excerpts of the interview. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

There is a noticeable gap between the current development of healthcare provision and the growing demand for high-quality healthcare services. Factors such as urbanization, an aging population and the growth of new forms of employment are generating new demands for healthcare delivery. Also, the lack of synchronization among healthcare services, pharmaceutical supplies and medical insurance hinders the effectiveness of healthcare provision.

Addressing these challenges and seizing the opportunities requires a dedicated and comprehensive plan to drive systemic reform and development. Advances in big data and artificial intelligence present new opportunities to improve the management of the healthcare system.

Against this backdrop, the plan proactively addresses the challenges and opportunities facing the public healthcare system. It outlines six goals and guiding principles, six areas of reform, five initiatives to improve people's well-being and three major projects.

The goals are the six qualities that China's healthcare system should feature by 2030: fairness, legal compliance, security, digital and intelligent capabilities, coordination and sound management.

This is the first time that these six qualities have been systematically identified as development goals of the public healthcare system. Their introduction clarifies the sector's objectives and provides specific criteria for evaluating progress. Together, they will serve as benchmarks, offering multidimensional guidance for the development of the public healthcare system over the next five years.

The plan also outlines six major reform tasks: improving the multitiered public healthcare system; implementing long-term care insurance; deepening pharmaceutical and healthcare service reforms; improving the management and regulatory system for public healthcare funds; improving the public service system; and strengthening the foundations for the development and provision of public healthcare.

A key focus of the reforms is addressing institutional gaps, particularly those affecting individuals in flexible employment, such as food delivery couriers and ride-hailing drivers, by facilitating their coverage by medical insurance. This adaptation is crucial to meet the needs of new forms of employment. Additionally, the inclusion of long-term care insurance in the overall public healthcare system directly addresses the demands of an aging population.

The five initiatives to enhance people's well-being include efforts to consolidate and improve universal enrollment in medical insurance, develop an all-in-one service for medicine purchases, strengthen primary-level healthcare with the support of medical insurance, standardize the direct settlement of medical expenses incurred outside the insured person's place of residence, and establish a personal medical insurance cloud platform.

These measures address long-standing concerns among insured people and matters that directly affect their daily lives. They demonstrate that the plan not only addresses national-level issues but also incorporates a people-centered approach that focuses on individual needs.

Through concrete measures such as building platforms for managing insured people's information, developing applications for comparing medicine prices and supporting primary healthcare institutions in residential communities, the plan aims to advance broader institutional reform through targeted initiatives.

The three major projects are a monitoring and early-warning system for fund operations, big-data regulatory models and international cooperation on public healthcare services. These projects address the challenges and opportunities of an era defined by risk, technology and increased openness.

Through targeted development efforts, these projects will help turn the concepts of secure, digital, intelligent, and well-managed public healthcare into concrete outcomes, thereby building a modern system that meets practical needs and prepares for the future, while delivering higher-quality coverage.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:40:04 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:40:04 PM

VIEWS

Muhammad Zamir Assadi

CPEC connects the dots to growth

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has transformed Pakistan's physical and strategic landscape. Journeys that once took days can now be completed in hours. Ports that were once idle are now bustling hubs of regional trade. Chronic energy shortages have been addressed by energy projects, enhancing industrial stability in the country.

However, the real evolution of the CPEC is just beginning to unfold. The second stage of the project is not just about concrete and asphalt. It's about production, innovation and shared prosperity.

The CPEC is entering a new phase of development and prosperity. This is not just a continuation of past achievements but a structural transformation.

Connectivity is evolving into industry cooperation, roads into value chains and energy generation into economic diversification. This transition is creating a new narrative on development that is focused on industrialization with people-centered growth as its goal.

At the core of this transformation are special economic zones, envisioned as engines of manufacturing and export growth. Pakistan has long grappled with insufficient industrialization and a lack of diversified export bases. Breaking this cycle requires attracting foreign investment into the CPEC's industrial zones and fostering collaboration between Chinese and Pakistani companies.

Regulatory reforms and skills development will be crucial to the success of these zones as well as infrastructure. Early initiatives are already showcasing this transformation, with emerging technology companies, textile units and engineering workshops starting to cluster in industrial parks along transport corridors.

For the next stage, deeper integration with global supply chains and stronger linkages between local suppliers and large industrial operators are essential. This integration will ensure the benefits of industrialization are felt across all industries.

Agriculture is another domain where CPEC 2.0 is likely to make a significant difference. Though it is the cornerstone of Pakistan's economy, the agricultural sector is plagued by low productivity due to outdated technology and minimal value addition.

Coordinated irrigation systems and advanced cold storage facilities for seeds and seedlings could revolutionize the sector. Technology-driven agriculture can reduce waste, enhance yields and boost export competitiveness.

It's not just an economic issue but a social one as well.

A large portion of Pakistan's population lives in rural areas where farming is the primary livelihood. Modern farming methods can alleviate poverty and reduce urban migration pressures. They can also help generate new opportunities for agro-based industries, linking farms more effectively with markets.

Another key feature of CPEC 2.0 is technology. Artificial intelligence and telecommunications have become integral to economic planning and digital infrastructure. These efforts can help bridge Pakistan's digital divide and improve public service delivery through enhanced cooperation. Smart logistics systems, digital payment platforms and e-commerce networks are already reshaping the country's business landscape.

Technology cooperation also impacts education and human capital development, as more universities and training institutions equip students with skills for emerging industries. This needs a change in curriculum design and stronger academic-industry linkages.

If technological infrastructure is to underpin sustainable growth, people must have the skills to drive it. Job creation is a key objective of the CPEC, and the transition from infrastructure to industrialization offers new opportunities.

But the quality of employment is as important as the quantity. The focus should be on skilled employment that provides stability and career progression, rather than short-term labor-intensive jobs. This can be done through vocational training programs, technical education and entrepreneurship support. Small and medium enterprises will be key enablers of this change.

Most economies rely on SMEs, which employ the majority of the population. Integrating SMEs into CPEC-related supply chains can distribute the economic benefits more widely and promote innovation at the local level, where businesses are more responsive to market changes.

Green development is another important aspect of CPEC 2.0. As the world focuses on climate change, development projects are increasingly held to green standards. The use of renewable energy, energy-efficient industrial systems and environmentally friendly construction measures not only helps achieve environmental objectives but also increases economic resilience. Renewable energy, particularly solar and hydropower, also reduces reliance on imported fuels and enhances energy security.

The central tenet of the next phase is people-centered development. The true success of infrastructure lies in improving everyday lives. Access to education, health care, clean water and economic opportunity determines whether large-scale projects are truly successful.

This transformation requires greater community involvement. Local populations should be active participants in development projects, not passive beneficiaries. This can be achieved through consultation processes, local hiring policies and inclusive planning frameworks. A sense of community ownership significantly enhances the sustainability of development projects.

CPEC also brings regional benefits. Greater connectivity and economic integration between China, Pakistan and neighboring countries can strengthen trade and economic ties across Asia.

The project can also connect remote regions that have been cut off from international markets. In this sense, the CPEC is not just a bilateral project but a catalyst for regional transformation.

Strategic infrastructure cooperation has already proven its worth in the context of the CPEC. The next chapter will determine whether this foundation can turn into sustainable industrial development and widespread prosperity. Infrastructure does not automatically lead to industrialization. It involves planning, investment and partnerships. The significance of this moment lies not only in the magnitude of the opportunity but also in the depth of transformation it offers.

If properly implemented, CPEC 2.0 can transform Pakistan's economy, diversify its industries and open new avenues for inclusive development.

It can also serve as a template for turning connectivity projects into comprehensive development partnerships.

The journey ahead is multifaceted and the direction is clear. Infrastructure laid the foundation; industrialization will define the future.

The author is the director of the China desk at Lord Media Network, Pakistan. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Digby James Wren

Robust H1 performance confirms China's stabilizing role

China's economic performance in the first half of 2026 demonstrated its growing resilience against external headwinds, such as disruptions in the Middle East, tariffs and sanctions.

The country's GDP reached 69.57 trillion yuan ($10.3 trillion), up 4.7 percent year-on-year, keeping it on track to meet its full-year growth target.

While second-quarter growth moderated to 4.3 percent following a stronger 5 percent in the first quarter, industrial output, retail sales and services all continued to expand. Furthermore, urban unemployment eased to 5 percent in June, while per capita disposable income rose 5.2 percent. Notably, the GDP deflator has turned positive after 12 quarters of deflation.

New growth drivers, such as high-end manufacturing, the digital economy and modern services, which capitalize on speed, scale, and technological integration, contributed over 40 percent of first-half growth.

The World Bank projected a steady 4.4 percent growth for China in 2026, noting that high-tech investment rose 4.5 percent year-on-year in January-May. The OECD has forecast 4.5 percent growth, citing strong semiconductor production and exports.

China's foreign trade reached a record high of 25.47 trillion yuan during the first half of 2026, the impressive 16.9 percent year-on-year growth reinforcing China's status as the world's leading goods trading nation. A key feature was a shift in trade dynamics. With the growth in imports outpacing the growth in exports, China has made substantial progress toward a balanced trade structure and increased consumer demand.

The transition to new growth drivers was decisive. Mechanical and electrical equipment exports saw a 20.1 percent increase, accounting for 63.5 percent of all exports. High-tech exports surged by 39 percent while AI and computing components posted double-digit growth due to global data center construction. Exports of electric vehicles grew by 68.7 percent, lithium-ion batteries increased 37.6 percent, while export volumes of wind turbines and associated green power generators shot up 35.6 percent.

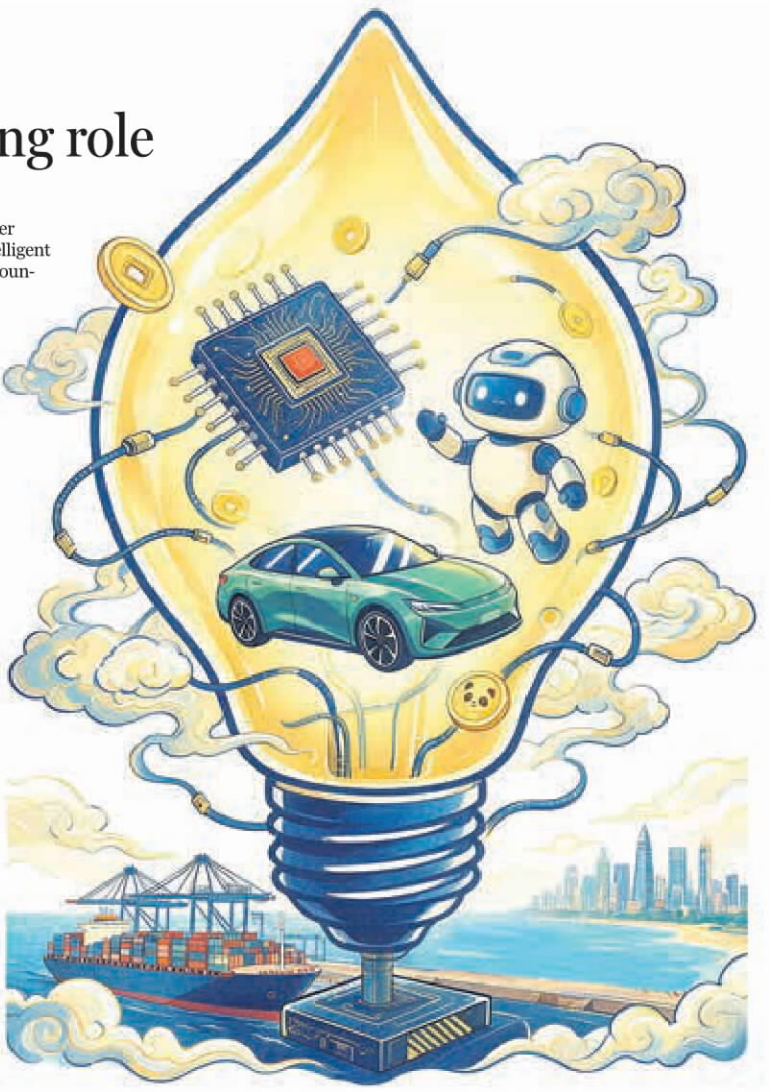
Nextgen green mobility exports of railway locomotives grew 45.1 percent and electric motorcycles and bicycles rose by 31.5 percent. China exported over 10,000 units of AI-powered intelligent bionic robots to more than 90 countries and regions. Exports of medical and surgical robots grew 3.3-fold to 480 million yuan, expanding their markets from 23 countries to 49 in 12 months.

For 17 consecutive years, China has been the world's second-largest import market, accounting for roughly 10 percent of global import demand.

By granting zero-tariff treatment to 63 developing nations, the Chinese market facilitated import growth from more than 150 countries and regions.

Trade with Belt and Road countries rose 14.8 percent to 12.97 trillion yuan, representing 50.9 percent of China's total foreign trade volume. Trade with Africa rose by 19.6 percent, Latin American trade expanded by 16.2 percent, and commerce with regional neighbors jumped 20.6 percent to 9.44 trillion yuan.

Trade with the European Union also registered a solid 10.2 percent increase. Foreign-invested enterprises and multinationals remain highly integrated within this ecosystem, shifting from "manufacturing in China" to "innovating in China".



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

While the European Central Bank notes that stronger Asian emerging economies, including China, lifted global momentum, French Finance Minister Roland Lescure says China is "under-consuming", the US is "over-consuming" and Europe is "under-investing". Banque de France Governor François Villeroy de Galhau has called for Chinese investment in Europe that creates local value and supports technology transfer. Germany's Finance Minister Lars Klingbeil says Germany is "not afraid of competition, but it needs to be fair".

Malaysia and Singapore have pointed to spillover effects from weaker demand, tariffs, and supply-chain disruption. Nevertheless, the global market's deep reliance on China's high-value, tech-driven exports creates mutual interdependence, rendering complete decoupling economically unfeasible.

China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations are each other's largest trade partners, which means any domestic slowdown would quickly impact Southeast Asia through trade demand, supply chains and commodity prices.

However, China's strong first-half performance has provided a vital economic buffer. Indonesia's trade with China rose in early 2026, Cambodia's total first-half trade with China exceeded $11 billion, and Thailand's export sector is projected to grow 8 percent to 10 percent driven by electronics and AI-related demand.

China's first-half performance in 2026 confirms the wisdom of transitioning to new growth drivers and strengthening resilience built on innovation. Its robust GDP growth of 4.7 percent reflects nuanced fiscal support and policy responses to external disruptions and domestic challenges in the property sector as consumption remains soft.

The underlying story, however, is one of sustained growth. As the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) begins, the central task for the second half of 2026 is to localize policy inputs, maintain fiscal flexibility and balance domestic property and consumption challenges with export and manufacturing strengths.

The author is the chair of BRCP Geopolitical Risk Advisory, publisher of The Chair Media Group, and visiting professor at ICES, France.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Xue Jinwen

Taking the local history of Lyuliang to the world

In Lyuliang, the past is always present. Visitors to the city in Shanxi province will find history almost everywhere: in former revolutionary sites, in village stories and in the songs that endured the years of war.

During the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45), Lyuliang was integral to the Jin-Sui border region. The struggle during that period gave rise to what is now known as the Lyuliang Spirit, a tribute to the sacrifices of soldiers and civilians during wartime, and a source of inspiration to overcome severe poverty and adversity.

That rich history deserves to be known beyond China. But sharing it with a global audience is a challenge. For those unfamiliar with China's revolutionary history, the stories of Lyuliang might seem distant. The key lies in finding effective ways to communicate the revolutionary heritage to an international audience.

Instead of presenting it as a lesson for the world, the focus should be on making the history accessible and engaging.

The first step is ensuring historical accuracy. The Lyuliang University has established the Jin-Sui Research Institute, bringing together researchers in history, literature, art and foreign languages.

They have preserved and digitized vast amounts of historical material, including wartime newspapers and other documents.

Archives may seem less glamorous than documentaries or viral videos, but without reliable sources, international storytelling quickly becomes little more than publicity. Digitized newspapers give researchers abroad access to authentic historical data.

Researching the writings of foreign journalists, such as United States reporter Harrison Forman, can also help contextualize the Jin-Sui experience within a broader international narrative. Readers outside China may approach Chinese history with different assumptions, but this is no reason to rewrite the past to make it more palatable to outsiders.

Instead, providing sufficient context enables readers to understand what they see and then form their own opinions.

Lyuliang's traditional culture — paper-cutting, shadow puppetry and dough sculpture — is not merely local handicrafts.

The greater challenge is fostering a connection with this history. While historical arguments can explain why the Lyuliang Spirit matters, cultural expressions — songs, novels or films — can evoke an emotional understanding of its importance. That is also why cultural forms should play a central role in sharing Lyuliang's history abroad.

The university has produced musical works and other projects drawing on local folk traditions. The revolutionary novel *The Lyuliang Heroes* is being translated into English and a documentary is being produced about artistic life in the Jin-Sui border region.

These projects should avoid the common mistake of over-explaining to foreign audiences. Often, what they need is a better story. Instead of simply stating that people in the revolutionary base areas demonstrated self-sacrifice and solidarity, it may be more compelling to depict the personal choices faced by families, villages or artists during wartime. The first approach tells an audience what to admire. The second gives them something to think about.

This is where digital technology can be useful. Virtual exhibitions, digital archives, short videos, and social-media platforms can bring Lyuliang's history to audiences thousands of miles away.

Lyuliang's traditional culture — paper-cutting, shadow puppetry and dough sculpture — is not merely local handicrafts. Properly presented, it can serve as a natural introduction to the region's history. A piece of folk art can spark curiosity, leading to a story, and ultimately fostering understanding.

Lyuliang University is exploring ways to weave stories of the region into such traditions, through bilingual embroidery, digital paper-cutting and online heritage experiences.

But technology is only the delivery mechanism. It cannot determine what stories are worth telling. A million views do not necessarily mean a million people understood the story. Nor does technological novelty make a historical narrative more convincing.

The true test is whether audiences feel invited into the history or are being lectured about it.

We need to rethink the approach to international cultural communication. Local history does not become universal simply because it has been translated into English or posted on foreign social platforms.

It becomes meaningful when it answers questions that resonate beyond its place of origin: How do ordinary people endure a catastrophe? What unites a community? How do memories of sacrifice endure when the generation that experienced them is gone?

Lyuliang has no shortage of answers to those questions. The challenge is to present them in a way that doesn't assume that the rest of the world already understands their significance.

Rather than asking others to share a memory that is not theirs, give them a way into it through the people who lived it and the choices they made.

That is what could give Lyuliang's revolutionary past a wider meaning. What began as a local history could evolve into a narrative for the rest of the world.

The author is the secretary of the Party Committee of Lyuliang University, Shanxi Province.
The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:40:04 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:40:04 PM

GLOBAL VIEWS

SHAHOBJON RAKHMONOVICH KUBATOV

New quality partnership

Uzbekistan's 35 years of independence demonstrate that sovereignty and international cooperation are not mutually exclusive



The year 2026 marks the 35th anniversary of Uzbekistan's independence. This date represents the long journey of a state that gained the right to determine its own development, build relations with the world and assume responsibility for its future. The development of relations between Uzbekistan and China is particularly instructive.

Over the past 35 years, China has evolved from one of the first states to recognize Uzbekistan's independence to become the country's largest trade and economic partner, a major investor and a participant in large-scale infrastructure, industrial and technological projects. Yet the central question concerns more than the number of agreements signed or the volume of trade. It is far more important to understand the new quality this partnership is acquiring and how it relates to the national interests of an independent Uzbekistan.

The partnership reflects a high degree of political trust and a shared intention to ensure the resilience of cooperation regardless of shifts in the international environment. At the same time, it does not imply the creation of a closed alliance or any restriction on Uzbekistan's relations with other states.

This is an important political quality of the Uzbekistan-China partnership. It is built on respect for territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs and the right of every nation to choose its own path of modernization. The two countries differ in their systems of government, historical experience and scale, but these differences do not impede cooperation when sovereign equality remains its foundation.

Openness is not the opposite of sovereignty. The experience of independent Uzbekistan allows us to speak of the principle of sovereign openness. Its meaning is straightforward: the state expands its trade, investment, technological and humanitarian ties while retaining the right to determine their direction and align them with the objectives of national development.

China is now Uzbekistan's largest trading partner. According to preliminary national statistics, China accounted for 21.2 percent of the country's foreign trade turnover in 2025 — approximately $17.2 billion. These figures demonstrate the scale of interaction. They also require careful analysis of the structure of trade rather than simple satisfaction with the results achieved.

Uzbekistan imports machinery, equipment, components and technologies from China that are essential to the modernization of its economy. A high volume of such imports is not inherently negative. The decisive question is whether the equipment acquired translates into higher national productivity, the training of engineers, the development of service enterprises, the localization of components and the expansion of Uzbekistan's own exports.

This is why the quality of cooperation matters more than simple arithmetic. When external resources generate new knowledge, skilled employment and modern industries within the country, interdependence strengthens sovereignty. When cooperation primarily entrenches the import of finished goods and the export of raw materials, however, the risk of structural vulnerability increases.

The production of BYD electric vehicles in Uzbekistan may offer an illustrative example. Its strategic impact will be determined not only by the number of vehicles produced, but also by the depth of localization, the participation of domestic suppliers, the training of technical specialists and the ability to enter third-country markets. The same logic applies to solar and wind energy. Long-term results depend not only on generating capacity brought online, but also on local equipment production, the transfer of expertise, environmental responsibility and the ability of Uzbek specialists to maintain new systems independently.



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

Transport connectivity is equally important. Uzbekistan is one of only two doubly landlocked countries in the world — countries separated from the sea by the territories of other landlocked states. For such a country, reliable access to external markets is not merely an economic question, but an element of strategic autonomy.

From this perspective, the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan Railway carries significance far beyond the transport sector. An intergovernmental agreement on the project was signed in June 2024, and a ceremony marking the start of construction was held in December of the same year. The new railway is expected to shorten the route between China and Central Asia and open additional connections to the markets of South and West Asia.

There is, however, a fundamental distinction between a transit route and a development corridor. Transit generates freight flows and related revenues, but it does not by itself transform the structure of an economy. A development corridor emerges only when logistics centers, industrial zones, processing facilities, educational institutions, service companies and modern customs systems are established along the railway.

Uzbekistan's national interest lies not merely in increasing the number of trains crossing its territory. More important is the creation of a productive ecosystem around the new railway.

The project also demonstrates Central Asia's growing agency. Its implementation requires the interests of three states to be coordinated. China provides a substantial share of the market, capital and technology; Kyrgyzstan provides the crucial geographic section; and Uzbekistan connects the route to subsequent western and southern corridors. The participants' mutual dependence creates a foundation for equitable consultation and shared responsibility for the outcome.

Uzbekistan-China relations extend beyond the bilateral level. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the China-Central Asia mechanism provide broader platforms for regional cooperation. Their significance will depend in part on whether Central Asian states can develop a coordinated vision on transport, trade, energy, water resources and digital connectivity.

For Chinese partners, it is essential to view Uzbekistan not only as a market, a transit territory or a source of resources, but also as a co-author of a new regional order. Joint projects will be more sustainable if they are assessed not only in terms of financial returns and transport capacity, but also by their contribution to industrialization, employment, environmental security and human-capital development.

A resilient partnership also requires stronger ties between universities, researchers and citizens. Confucius Institutes operate in Tashkent and Samarkand, while joint educational programs and research centers continue to develop. The Uzbek language is taught at Beijing Foreign Studies University. The visa-free regime that entered into force on June 1, 2025, allowing visits of up to 30 days, has created additional opportunities for tourism, entrepreneurship, academic contacts and direct interaction between the peoples of the two countries. The next stage should focus on the joint production of knowledge through research cooperation, academic exchanges and stronger ties between think tanks.

The political meaning of the Uzbekistan-China partnership lies in demonstrating that states of different sizes can build enduring cooperation without compromising sovereign equality.

The author is an associate professor at Mirzo Ulugbek National University of Uzbekistan. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

LI XUAN

'RAMageddon' fallout

US' technology-denial strategy is driving China's pursuit of endogenous capabilities to ease memory-chip shortage



The severe global memory chip shortage, dubbed "RAMageddon", is more than a supply-chain disruption linked to artificial intelligence demand: it exposes the limits of weaponized interdependence as a coercive strategy.

While many analyses find no quick resolution in sight as the shortage is structural, reflecting a reallocation of the memory fabrication base toward AI infrastructure that spurs consumption of memory chips by data centers, the geopolitical implication of RAMageddon lies in what it reveals about the United States' technology-denial strategy toward China.

Since 2022, the US has pursued escalating semiconductor export controls premised on what US scholars Henry Farrell and Abraham Newman term "weaponized interdependence" — the exploitation of chokepoints in global networks to exercise coercive power.

In October 2022, the US Bureau of Industry and Security issued sweeping export controls targeting advanced chips and chipmaking equipment destined for China. In October 2023, these rules were tightened further, closing loopholes that had allowed third-country rerouting and expanding the Entity List to cover additional Chinese AI companies. The 2024 amendments extended controls to high-bandwidth memory (HBM) specifically, while pressuring the Netherlands and Japan to impose restrictions on equipment exports to China by ASML and Tokyo Electron.

Early this year, the US imposed additional licensing requirements on manufacturing equipment related to dynamic random-access-memory (DRAM), potentially constraining Chinese producers' expansion plans.

The apparent logic of weaponized interdependence is straightforward: because advanced semiconductor manufacturing depends on irreplaceable nodes — ASML's extreme ultraviolet (EUV) lithography system, US-designed electronic-design-automation (EDA) software and the memory oligopoly itself — restricting China's access is intended to constrain its AI development. Interdependence thus becomes an asymmetric lever for geopolitical control.

However, the phenomenon of RAMageddon challenges that logic in two fundamental ways.

First, chokepoint control is a double-edged sword. As major memory giants redirect capacity toward a more lucrative AI-related industry, the resulting scarcity of conventional DRAM can harm the entire global electronics ecosystem, including US companies and allied economies. This is the "boomerang effect" in international relations: sanctions generate unintended costs that erode the sanctioner's own position. In this context, nine US industry associations warned the administration that the imbalance could raise the price of electronic goods for US customers.

Second, and more critically, the crisis creates the very market conditions that enable China's memory industry to achieve viability at scale — precisely the outcome that the US policy sought to prevent. By forcing incumbents to prioritize the high end, export controls and AI demand have jointly left openings in the middle of the market, offering ChangXin Memory Technologies (CXMT) and other manufacturers a strategic opening.

CXMT is not an isolated case. Across the semiconductor value chain, Chinese companies have leveraged exclusion as an accelerant. Huawei's semiconductor arm, HiSilicon, has pivoted to designing AI chips manufactured by SMIC on its most advanced available process node — currently 7nm using multi-patterning deep ultraviolet (DUV) lithography — circumventing the blockade of EUV lithography. SMIC has expanded capacity in Beijing and Shanghai, and its reported record revenue in 2025 makes it the world's third-largest foundry. Yangtze Memory Technologies Corp, despite being placed on the US Entity List in late 2022, now accounts for 13 percent of the global NAND flash market and reportedly supplies domestic smartphone makers.

The pattern is revealing: US restrictions have triggered a burst of new Chinese investment and market adaptation, contributing to the development of indigenous capability.

As US economist Albert Hirschman argued in his foundational work on the political economy of trade, economic coercion works best when the target lacks alternatives. When coercion persists over time, however, it incentivizes the target to develop substitutes, and those substitutes, once built, permanently reduce the coercer's leverage. This is precisely what is occurring in the memory chip sector.

The structural market crisis, especially the HBM-driven supply crunch, has created a demand vacuum that may lower the barrier to entry for new producers including those from China. Industrial policy matters, but market opportunity is the enabling condition.

The growth of CXMT, SMIC and Huawei maps precisely onto Hirschman's argument of how coercion erodes its own foundations. The dominant power's own strategic choices, including export controls and AI preference, interact with market dynamics to produce conditions that inadvertently accelerate the challenger's rise.

This phenomenon can be described as "displacement through a market structural crisis". The more aggressively the US pursues AI supremacy in memory-intensive computing, the more it starves the conventional memory market, and the more space it opens for Chinese producers. The definition of "strategic technology" thus requires dynamic and dialectic thinking.

US controls focus on the leading edge, such as EUV, HBM and advanced logic. But when conventional DRAM becomes scarce because the leading edge has absorbed most, if not all, capacity, the frontier of competition shifts. Controlling the top of the stack matters less if the system cannot supply the middle.

The shift in competition is already visible. The history of semiconductor technology shows that yesterday's leading edge becomes accessible through alternative engineering pathways: SMIC's achievement of functional 7nm chips without EUV lithography is the most striking recent demonstration. The risk for the US is not merely that it loses market share in conventional memory, but that the cumulative learning and capital formation enabled by the mid-market eventually propel Chinese companies toward the high end as well.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

RAMageddon is more than a supply-chain crisis; it is a natural experiment in the limits of technological hegemony, demonstrating that weaponizing chokepoints generates second-order effects that can undermine the original strategic intent.

For China, the path to semiconductor self-sufficiency need not run through the most advanced nodes first; it can run through the vast, underserved middle of the market. For the US, the lesson is revealing: a strategy predicated on permanent technological denial must contend with the possibility that denial itself creates the conditions for displacement. The question is no longer whether China has to be at the top in the global memory industry, but how quickly the displacement will happen. Continued rigidity in US export controls will not necessarily reverse China's progress, but will only ensure that the transition occurs on terms less favorable to US industry and consumers alike.

The author is an assistant professor at the Institute of International and Regional Studies at Zhejiang University of Technology, a researcher at Zhejiang Development and Security Research Think Tank Alliance, and a policy consultant for the OECD. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:40:04 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:40:04 PM

BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON X · CHINA DAILY

AI amping up gaming developers

Rapid development of technology fundamentally restructuring process

By **WANG XIN** in Shanghai
Wangxin2@chinadaily.com.cn

The effective application of artificial intelligence technologies and further global business expansion are seen as the key drivers shaping the future of China's gaming industry, business leaders and developers said at the 23rd China Digital Entertainment Expo and Conference (ChinaJoy), which took place from July 31 to Aug 3 in Shanghai.

The rapid development of AI technologies — such as large language models, multimodal models and AI agents — is fundamentally restructuring the entire game development and operations process. Targeting specifically the gaming industry, the AI gaming cloud has been booming over the past few years.

According to a recent research report by United States-based market consultancy IDC, the AI gaming cloud basically refers to the AI technologies, products and services used by game developers throughout the production process, from game design and prototyping to game development and testing, as well as game publishing and operations.

The report showed that China's AI gaming cloud market reached 1.86 billion yuan ($275 million) last year. The sector is expected to maintain a compound annual growth rate of about 91.6 percent over the next five years, hitting 11 billion yuan by 2029 and contributing more than half of the overall gaming cloud market.

Baidu AI Cloud, one of the earliest Chinese tech giants engaging in the sector, took about 51 percent of the nation's AI gaming cloud market share, said the report. To date, it has established in-depth partnerships with more than half of the nation's leading game companies and over 100 innovative AI gaming firms, providing full-stack AI capabilities to companies such as miHoYo, NetEase Games, 37 Interactive Entertainment and Unity China.

Among Baidu AI Cloud's offerings, its AI Heterogeneous Compute serves as the AI infrastructure that allows game developers to focus on essential content creation without worrying about computing power management.

Baidu Qianfan, an enterprise-grade, all-in-one large model platform, is built around agents, providing the gaming industry with a one-stop platform for model access, agent development and data intelligence services. It can support end-to-end AI collaboration across the entire workflow from text creation and character design to 3D modeling, animation production and code development, helping game developers improve both creative efficiency and quality.

"What AI truly unlocks is not just the content production capacity, but the gaming industry's ability to continuously create new gameplay, new characters and new experiences," said Zhang Wei, vice-president of Baidu Intelligent Cloud.

Baidu's AI solutions have empowered gaming businesses, such as SingularDance and SEELE AI. SingularDance is an innovative tech firm focused on the development of AI emotional companionship and hyper-personified intelligent agents.

Edward Lu Hongyi, founder and CEO of SingularDance, highlighted that they are committed to creating virtual characters that not only know how to chat with users, but also possess distinct, stable, independent and continuously evolving personalities with a "soul".

With a core focus on restructuring traditional game development workflows, SEELE AI is a tech firm focused on AI-native games and interactive worlds powered by foundational models. Collaborating with Baidu, it enables users to automatically generate interactive 3D game worlds via natural language using multimodal inputs, such as text and images, to complete the entire workflow, including character modeling, animation generation, scene construction, game mechanics and narrative presentation.

"We aim to enable every creative individual to collaborate with AI agents via natural language, quickly transforming their ideas into game worlds that are accessible, playable, editable and continuously iterable. So every gamer can actually become a game developer, and generate income from their creation," said Liu Bo, the company's partner of business operations.

Hu Xin, assistant to the chairman of Zhejiang Century Huatong Group, said that currently, AI has been fully integrated into more than 80 percent of the company's entire workflow of game development, which is also the case for most businesses in the gaming industry. The future competition within the industry would be much about "creativity, aesthetics and user insights".

The group, which is the parent company of Shengqu Games and Century Games, is also actively ramping up efforts in globalization and international collaboration for sustained growth. Following a fruitful 17-year partnership with South Korea's NC Corp, Shengqu Games unveiled the two sides' new collaboration on the much anticipated game *AION 2* on July 30 during the ChinaJoy 2026 expo.

As one of China's leading game companies, the group began its overseas expansion early and has achieved remarkable growth over the years. In 2025, the group saw its total revenue surge 67.55 percent year-on-year to nearly 37.9 billion yuan, with overseas' sales accounting for 58.63 percent. In the first quarter, the group raked in 11.01 billion yuan in markets overseas, up 35.19 percent year-on-year, according to the company.

In June, the group's hit game *Whiteout Survival* topped the global mobile game revenue chart, with its another hit *Kingshot* standing in seventh place, according to app data analysis firm Sensor Tower.

"For China's gaming industry, globalization is a goal that will never be fully achieved. The overseas markets are far from saturated and we still have huge potential to grow. Chinese game productions have high quality, and our developers and culture are gaining increasing recognition globally. We're proud to see such changes," said Hu.

The accelerating pace of Chinese game companies' globalization is also bringing vast opportunities for global emerging businesses. Aiming to better help game developers and companies acquire users worldwide in competitive markets, Berlin-based adtech company Almedia — which specializes in rewarded user acquisition — joined this year's ChinaJoy to find more Chinese partners.

Moritz Hollander, 24-year-old founder and CEO of the company established six years ago, said their approach involves a "better form of marketing or advertising" by offering cash rewards to users for engaging with advertisers' games and apps. He believes that in the future, this reward-based approach will be the new way people discover games and engage with brands, similar to loyalty and cashback systems with credit cards.

Hollander said the global gaming industry is very fast and competitive, so developers need to be very agile in various aspects. He said it is very efficient to work with Chinese developers, who are generally very fast, flexible, open-minded to new ideas, advanced and sophisticated.

"We focus more on mobile games and China — with a huge gaming market — is particularly successful and dominant in mobile gaming. It is one of the key growth markets and also the most important market for us right now.

"We hope to work with both big Chinese game companies and smaller game developers to together build an ecosystem of rewards, and help them expand their global presence with our users, platforms and global network across 16 nations," said Hollander.

Aiming to offer users more fun and rewarding gaming experience, Almedia's platforms have garnered over 80 million users worldwide. The company also launched a new Link product targeting the Chinese market during ChinaJoy, further reinforcing its long-term commitment to the nation's game developers for their global growth.

The global games market closed 2025 at $201.6 billion, marking a 9.1 percent year-on-year increase. Revenue for mobile games are expected to grow 6.8 percent year-on-year to reach $121.1 billion in 2026, said gaming industry consultancy Newzoo.



Visitors play a racing game during the ChinaJoy 2026 expo in Shanghai on July 31.



Visitors experience an extended reality game during the ChinaJoy 2026 expo in Shanghai on July 31.
PHOTOS BY XU PEIQIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Evolution of esports into economic force

By **WANG XIN** in Shanghai

An estimated 400 million Gen Z regularly engage with esports, representing an increasingly powerful opportunity for global brands to reach the potentially lucrative youth market through the games, platforms and communities where they already devote their time and attention, said a report.

A white paper titled "The Esports Generation: Who They Are and Why They Spend" was released in collaboration with Shanghai-based Hero Esports, one of Asia's leading esports companies, ESL FACEIT Group, a global leader in esports and gaming entertainment, and market research and consulting firm Niko Partners specializing in video games, esports and livestreaming across Asia and the Middle East and North Africa.

The report draws on survey data from 8,000 Gen Z esports fans aged 13-30 from across eight global markets, and found that esports has become a global entertainment force, attracting digitally-native Gen Z audiences who find the same passion, identity, community and excitement traditionally found in other sports.

According to the report, Gen Z esports fans are not a niche, they are extensively engaged in esports in various ways. They mostly watch gaming content, gaming livestreams and gaming podcasts, while also actively posting in game forums and social media groups, as well as regularly attending gaming conventions and esports events.

While esports audiences are still predominantly male, female representation in the culture is growing globally, especially at live esports events where female attendance is often higher. In China, over half of the attendees at the Peacekeeper Elite League and King Pro League were female.

The report highlighted that Gen Z esports enthusiasts are deeply loyal to the teams, titles, events and partnerships that earn their trust and energize their passions. They connect with esports fandom in the same ways previous generations connected with other sports — with genuine emotional investment, community identity and long-term loyalty.

Critically, they extend that affinity to the brands that show up authentically within this space, said the report. About 85 percent of this highly engaged audience said they take notice of branding in esports and 74 percent of them reported that this has had an effect on their purchasing behavior. Two thirds of esports fans have purchased a product because of a collaboration or co-branding partnership with an esports team, game or player.

Esports partnerships heavily influence consumer behavior, with a significant portion of fans purchasing products promoted within the sector, including food and beverage products, electronics and fashion. Similar engagement also extends beyond traditional categories, driving fans to purchase esports-related collectibles, makeup, beauty or skincare products as well partnered brands in other miscellaneous categories, said the report.

Jascha Braeker, senior partnerships development manager at ESL FACEIT Group, said during this year's ChinaJoy digital entertainment expo in Shanghai that many renowned brands are also actively engaging with the esports community for credibility within the gaming culture and even for talent acquisition.

Lamborghini joined EFG's gaming lifestyle festival DreamHack for the third time in May to connect and grow with the younger audiences. And DHL, one of the festival's longest partners, has built distinct recruitment campaigns tailored for tech savvy *Dota 2* and *Counter-Strike* fans, which brought it millions of career site visits and thousands of job applications from the Gen Z community.



People try out new gaming products during the DreamHack esports contest in Shanghai in May 2025. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"Esports has evolved into one of the most effective channels for companies looking to connect with Gen Z audiences at scale. What makes it unique is not just its reach, but the depth of engagement and trust that exists between fans, players, teams and events," said EFG's CEO Niccolo Maisto.

Danny Tang, co-founder and CEO of Hero Esports, added: "This whitepaper confirms that esports has evolved into a global cultural and economic force. For brands, the message is clear — esports is no longer a niche market, but a premier platform to connect with the next generation of consumers."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:40:04 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:40:04 PM

BUSINESSINSIGHT

‘Overcapacity’ claim masks anxiety over China’s green edge

EAGLE EYE
By Zhang Monan



AI PRODUCED BY CAI MENG / CHINA DAILY

The West’s renewed warnings about Chinese “overcapacity” reflect a deeper concern: China’s growing strength in clean energy and advanced manufacturing is challenging long-established Western advantages in some of the industries expected to shape the global economy.

In recent months, politicians and media commentators in the United States and other Western economies have increasingly portrayed the expansion of China’s electric vehicle, lithium battery, solar and advanced manufacturing industries as a new “China shock”. What began as a debate over industrial capacity has increasingly become an argument for higher tariffs, tighter investment restrictions and supply chains organized around geopolitical considerations.

China’s Ministry of Commerce recently responded with a position paper, arguing that industrial capacity should be assessed against global supply and demand, growth potential and business performance rather than simply comparing production with domestic consumption in a single country.

This distinction matters. Major manufacturing economies routinely produce more of certain goods than their domestic markets consume. German automakers depend heavily on overseas sales, and Airbus and Boeing manufacture aircraft for customers worldwide. Few would describe their export-oriented production as evidence of overcapacity simply because output exceeds domestic demand.

Applying such a test selectively to China risks turning an economic concept into an instrument of trade policy. Genuine overcapacity can exist in individual sectors, but large exports or rapid production expansion alone do not establish that capacity is excessive.

Much of China’s manufacturing strength has been built through years of intense domestic competition, investment and technological upgrading. This is particularly evident in EVs, lithium batteries and photovoltaic equipment, where companies compete fiercely on price, technology, quality and speed of commercialization.

China’s EV industry, for example, rests on an extensive industrial ecosystem covering critical mineral processing, batteries, motors, electronic control systems, vehicle manufacturing and charging infrastructure. Close links between suppliers and manufacturers have shortened development cycles, lowered costs and enabled companies to respond quickly to changes in demand.

Technological progress has reinforced these advantages. Chinese battery producers have made advances in lithium iron phosphate batteries, battery integration and safety, and solar manufacturers have continuously improved photovoltaic technology and production efficiency. Large-scale manufacturing has further reduced unit costs and made new technologies more affordable.

These are characteristics of industrial competitiveness, and don’t necessarily point to examples of market distortion.

Government policy has undoubtedly played a role in China’s industrial development. But industrial policy is hardly unique to China. The US has committed hundreds of billions of dollars in incentives for clean energy, EVs, batteries and other strategic industries, including measures favoring production in the US or North America. European governments and institutions have similarly provided extensive support for renewable energy, batteries and advanced manufacturing.

It is therefore increasingly difficult to divide the world neatly between Chinese “State intervention” and Western “market competition”. A more credible approach would examine whether specific policies create identifiable distortions and address them through transparent, proportionate and rules-based measures.

There is another weakness in the overcapacity argument: capacity cannot be assessed solely against today’s demand, particularly in industries central to the global energy transition.

The world is still far from completing the shift to low-carbon energy. The International Energy Agency expects renewable energy deployment to expand substantially through the end of the decade. Electrification will require enormous quantities of solar panels, batteries, power equipment, EVs and support infrastructure.

Viewed against those requirements, the challenge may not be too much high-quality green manufacturing capacity, but whether enough affordable capacity can be supplied at the speed and scale required.

Chinese production has helped reduce the cost of solar panels, batteries and other clean-energy technologies. This matters particularly for developing economies, where affordability can determine whether large-scale energy transition projects are commercially viable. Cheaper machinery, components and technologies can also lower barriers to industrialization and help emerging economies develop manufacturing capacity of their own.

The intensity of the Western debate therefore points to a broader source of anxiety: the changing geography of industrial competitiveness.

For decades, advanced Western economies dominated many high-value manufacturing industries, while China’s role in global value chains was largely concentrated in labor-intensive production and assembly for multinational companies. That division of labor has changed rapidly.

Chinese companies are increasingly competing in sectors with higher technological barriers and greater strategic importance. EVs, renewable energy equipment, batteries, industrial machinery and sophisticated electronics are becoming important parts of China’s manufacturing and export base.

This creates genuine pressure on established producers. But competition from increasingly efficient rivals is not in and of itself evidence of unfair trade.

The lesson is not that governments should ignore unfair competition, but that restricting one competitor does not eliminate the economic forces reshaping an industry.

A similar pattern could emerge in clean technology. Barriers against Chinese EVs, lithium batteries and solar products may alter trade flows, and they can also increase costs for consumers and manufacturers, encourage production to move through third countries and make supply chains more complicated without addressing the underlying competitiveness gap.

The greater danger is that ordinary economic competition becomes increasingly treated as a national security issue. Once industrial capacity, exports and investment are routinely framed through the language of security, almost any competitive advantage can become grounds for tariffs, export controls, investment screening or exclusion from supply chains.

The result could be higher energy and production costs, slower technological progress and innovation, and greater risks of retaliation and supply-chain decoupling. Such fragmentation would ultimately undermine the broader interests of the global economy.

Industrial capacity should be assessed comprehensively, taking into account global supply and demand, growth potential and corporate performance, rather than simply comparing exports with domestic demand. China’s manufacturing strengths should not be broadly characterized as “overcapacity” simply because its products are competitive in global markets.

Markets require rules, and governments have a legitimate responsibility to enforce them. But those rules should protect fair competition rather than particular competitors. Issues related to industrial capacity should not be politicized or turned into tools of geopolitical competition.

Allowing markets to play their role, maintaining transparent international rules and keeping trade and investment channels open offer a more sustainable path. The alternative is a cycle in which anxiety produces protectionism, protectionism accelerates fragmentation and fragmentation raises costs for everyone.

The debate over “overcapacity” is therefore about more than how much China produces. It is about how the global economy responds to a shift in industrial competitiveness. Adapting through innovation and competition may be difficult for established producers, but trying to hold back that shift through protectionism risks leaving everyone worse off.

The writer is a research fellow and deputy director of the Institute of American and European Studies at the China Center for International Economic Exchanges.
The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Meeting signals stronger H2 policy push

MAIN STREET
By Yang Zekun

The symposium chaired by Premier Li Qiang with experts and entrepreneurs in July came at a critical juncture in mid-year. Against the backdrop of the current economic situation and with an eye to China’s long-term development, the meeting laid out systematic arrangements for economic work in the second half.

The meeting highlighted three major priorities in policy focus. Macroeconomic policy is moving from implementing existing measures to giving greater emphasis to both existing and incremental policies.

Efforts to expand domestic demand are shifting from investment primarily in physical assets to a coordinated approach that combines investment in physical assets with investment in people.

At the same time, industrial upgrading is moving beyond technological breakthroughs to focus more on the large-scale commercial application of such advances.

The meeting called for making full use of existing policies while conducting advanced studies and preparing additional policy measures.

This message carries particular significance near the midpoint of the year, signaling that macroeconomic policy is moving from a phase of implementing and consolidating existing measures, to one in which existing and incremental policies work in tandem.

At the theoretical level, this reflects the principle that macroeconomic regulation should be targeted and effective.

Marxist political economy requires a proper balance between overall economic equilibrium and structural optimization. China’s economy currently faces structural challenges, including insufficient effective demand and overcapacity in some industries.

As the marginal impact of relying solely on existing policy measures diminishes, additional measures are needed to generate new growth momentum.

The call to “conduct advanced studies and prepare” incremental policies indicates that preliminary work on measures in key areas has largely been completed and that they can be introduced when conditions warrant.

This approach of preparing policy tools in advance — while acting in accordance with changing circumstances — maintains strategic resolve while leaving room for policy flexibility, providing greater space to respond to uncertainties that may emerge in the second half.

The urgency is also evident in the current economic climate. As China begins implementation of its 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), profound changes are taking place in both the domestic and international environment, while the economy faces prominent challenges such as relatively strong supply and weak demand. The shift in growth drivers has reached a critical stage.

Against this backdrop, preparing additional policy measures itself serves as a strong signal to the market. It shows that policymakers have reached a basic consensus on the need to strengthen policy support, with macroeconomic policies in the second half moving from providing a floor for growth toward taking more proactive action.

A clear policy signal is particularly important for stabilizing expectations among market entities and boosting confidence in investment. It provides greater certainty at a time when economic agents are seeking greater clarity about policy direction.

The meeting called for a systematic approach and for “coordinated efforts in investment in things and investment in people”, while stressing the need to improve public services such as healthcare, eldercare and childcare in order to expand domestic demand through improving people’s livelihoods. This signals a significant shift in the policy approach to expanding domestic demand.

The concept of “investment in people” has a strong theoretical foundation. Human capital theory, which emerged in the mid-20th century, has shown that economic growth driven mainly by the expansion of physical capital can be distorted and unsustainable. Sustainable growth requires coordinated development of human, physical and natural capital.

“Investment in people” can help expand domestic demand through both the supply and demand sides.

On the supply side, investment in people can improve the quality of the workforce and strengthen technological innovation capabilities, providing key factor support for the development of new quality productive forces.

On the demand side, greater investment in areas such as education, healthcare and eldercare can directly reduce households’ need for precautionary savings, increase their propensity to consume and unlock suppressed consumption demand.

Research shows that investment in people’s livelihoods can generate a stronger multiplier effect on household consumption than any indirect transmission effects from infrastructure investment.

This creates a virtuous cycle in which improvements in people’s livelihoods stimulate consumption while stronger human capital supports supply-side upgrading. It represents a concrete application, particularly the principle of safeguarding and improving people’s livelihoods through development.

The participation of the founder of Pang Donglai, a retail company, at the symposium offered a micro-level reflection of this policy approach.

By improving employee benefits and enhancing the consumer experience, the company has achieved growth, demonstrating that investment in people can serve not only as a government policy priority, but also as a competitive advantage for businesses.

Its approach to improving supply-side quality and stimulating domestic demand through better services provides a potentially replicable model for addressing weak consumer confidence.

The meeting placed particular emphasis on promoting the “large-scale commercial application of new technologies such as artificial intelligence”.

The focus on commercialization signals a shift in industrial policy from encouraging research and innovation to facilitating the application and commercialization of technological achievements.

In terms of technological evolution, AI is moving from breakthroughs at the theoretical level toward a new stage of industrial transformation. This is not simply a matter of adding AI to existing businesses as an external tool. Rather, the development of “AI+” represents a fundamental shift in the way industries operate.

AI is evolving from an auxiliary tool into an underlying infrastructure, from optimizing individual processes to reshaping entire systems, and from isolated applications to broad-based empowerment across industries.

In August 2025, the State Council — the nation’s Cabinet — issued guidelines on implementing the “AI+” initiative in depth, elevating the initiative to the national strategic level and calling for broad and deep integration of AI with different sectors and fields of the economy and society. The latest meeting’s emphasis is in line with this top-level policy design and sends a further signal that implementation should be sped up.

China also has distinctive advantages in promoting the large-scale commercial application of AI.

On the technology side, several Chinese large language models have reached internationally advanced levels in overall capabilities. On the industrial side, China has a complete range of industries and abundant application scenarios, while its strong manufacturing capabilities allow AI technologies to be rapidly turned into physical products and commercial applications.

On the institutional side, China’s socialist system provides strong capabilities for coordinating resources and mobilizing strengths from different sectors.

Overall, the signals from the symposium represent a practical application at a critical stage of China’s economic development.

The effectiveness of policy ultimately depends on implementation.

In the second half, as existing and incremental policies work together, the concept of investment in people is being translated into concrete measures in areas such as fiscal policy, employment and social security. And as the large-scale commercial application of AI accelerates, China’s economy has the conditions and capacity to consolidate its recovery and achieve its economic and social development targets for the year.

This will demonstrate China’s commitment to getting off to a strong start during the 15th Five-Year Plan period, while also providing further confidence in the path toward Chinese modernization.

The writer is a research fellow at the National Academy of Development and Strategy at Renmin University of China.
The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:40:04 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:40:04 PM

CHINA

Tech, AI key to cyberspace action plan

Top internet regulator lays out social and economic high-quality objectives

By **CAO YIN**
caoyin@chinadaily.com.cn

China's top internet regulator unveiled an action plan on Friday to make cyberspace enterprises a significant driver of high-quality social and economic development by 2030.

Released on Friday by the Central Cyberspace Affairs Commission, the plan outlines strategic goals for 2026 through 2030, aimed at enhancing the competitiveness of cyberspace enterprises through advancements in technological innovation, product quality and service delivery.

The plan envisions a robust industrial ecosystem and a supportive development environment for the cyberspace sector. It emphasizes the necessity of a strong institutional framework to ensure safe, standardized and orderly growth.

"Network information technology is highlighted as a critical area of innovation, attracting substantial global research and development investment," the commission said. "This sector consistently achieves breakthroughs, finds widespread applications and exerts a powerful influence across various industries."

The commission highlights that companies focused on cybersecurity and informatization are crucial to China's cyber strength initiatives. These enterprises are instrumental in building new productive forces and enhancing global competitiveness. The plan aims to invigorate cyberspace enterprises while ensuring their orderly and healthy development.

To achieve these objectives, the plan calls for intensified efforts in breakthrough technologies such as high-end chips, basic and industrial software, network communications, cybersecurity and data security.

Priority will be given to advancing frontier technologies, including quantum computing, blockchain, brain-computer interfaces, digital twins and next-generation displays.

Resources will be allocated to companies engaged in artificial intelligence research, with a strong emphasis on developing high-end AI chips, improving large language model performance and promoting agentic AI technologies. The plan encourages enterprises to actively participate in open-source projects and community building.

Security is a key focus, with promises of robust technological support to enhance risk identification, alert systems, monitoring and emergency response capabilities. Enterprises are urged to strengthen personal data protection systems and optimize algorithm management. According to the plan, preventing the misuse of AI-related technologies is essential to safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of netizens and workers.

It also mandates improvements in the quality of content provided by cyberspace enterprises and effective regulation of monopolistic practices in key areas.

"We will demonstrate greater resolve in upholding security, curbing disorderly competition and reinforcing the rule of law in cyberspace governance," the commission said. It pledges to collaborate closely with other authorities to implement the plan and will regularly seek feedback from cyberspace enterprises to address any challenges in its execution.

Masterpiece comes to Zhejiang



Visitors take photos of a Song Dynasty (960-1279) copy of *The Night Revels of Han Xizai* at the Zhejiang Provincial Museum in Hangzhou on Saturday. The work, part of the collection of the Palace Museum, is being exhibited publicly in Zhejiang for the first time and will remain on display through Sept 20. Traditionally attributed to the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms (907-960) painter Gu Hongzhong, the artwork is regarded as a pinnacle of ancient Chinese figure painting. CHEN ZHONGQIU / FOR CHINA DAILY

China postpones Chang'e 7 robotic lunar mission

By **ZHAO LEI** in Wenchang, Hainan
zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

China's Chang'e 7 robotic lunar mission has been postponed, the China Manned Space Agency announced on Sunday.

In a brief statement, the agency said that after comprehensive assessments, the Chang'e 7 mission headquarters had reached a conclusion that the lunar expedition cannot be carried out within this year's scheduled launch window as it had failed to meet launch criteria.

The decision was made in accordance with the principles of prudence, reliability and absolute safety, the statement explained without providing more details.

A launch window is a specific period of time during which a rocket must lift off in order to reach its intended orbital destination.

According to experts, choosing a launch window for a space mission is not a matter of convenience, but a mixture of multiple factors that require careful calculations.

Because Earth rotates on its axis and the target, such as the moon or another planet, is also moving, the geometry between the launch site and the final destination changes constantly. A rocket can only reach its preset position when all the orbital, communication and other conditions align simultaneously. If the liftoff point misses that window, the mission must wait until the next opportunity, which could be days, weeks or even months later.

While the Earth-moon transfer windows open roughly once a month, Chang'e 7's destination — the lunar south pole — imposes far stricter constraints, restricting usable launch opportunities to just one or two per year.

The Chang'e 7 is set to become China's seventh robotic mission to the moon, tasked mainly with searching for traces of water on the silver celestial body.

A Long March 5 carrier rocket, with the Chang'e 7 probe on top of it, was moved to its launch service tower at the Wenchang Space Launch Center in Hainan province on Wednesday, when the space agency announced that launch would take place "in due course in the coming days".

The Chang'e 7 was transported by air to the coastal spaceport in April, while the Long March 5 rocket arrived in July by ship.

They were assembled and tested at the spaceport.

To date, China has conducted six robotic missions to explore the moon. The most recent, a 53-day Chang'e 6 mission, took place in the summer of 2024, representing the world's first attempt to bring back samples from the far side of the moon.

The historic mission successfully retrieved a total of 1,935.3 grams of samples from the far side.

CSSC-developed podded propulsors rival imports

By **ZHAO LEI**
zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

Engineers at China State Shipbuilding Corp have developed a series of high-power podded propulsors, helping domestic shipyards break foreign manufacturers' long-standing dominance in this critical marine technology sector.

After 18 years of dedicated research, engineers at the Shanghai Marine Equipment Research Institute, a CSSC subsidiary specializing in ship mechanical and electronic systems, have designed and built three types of podded propulsors under the brand of S-POD to cover diverse operational needs, according to Zheng Jian, an engineer in charge of the S-POD products.

The L-type, with a propulsion power range of 1.3 to 5 megawatts, is a compact and efficient model suited for research vessels and law-enforcement ships that have displacements of more than 1,000 metric tons. When used on research vessels, it can save up to 30 percent of internal space.

The type has been deployed on the *Zhuhai Yun*, an unmanned system mother ship, and the *Tongji*, a research vessel operated by Tongji University.

The T-type, covering 1.3 to 18 MW of propulsion power, is designed for large vessels including cruise ships, passenger ro-ro vessels and offshore platforms.

The Shanghai institute has constructed China's first 10-MW podded propulsor and secured orders for it.

The model features a propulsion power equivalent to the traction power of an eight-carriage *Fuxing* high-speed train, with technical performance matching international advanced levels.

The TI-type, ranging from 2 to 15 MW of propulsion power, is an ice-breaking model specifically designed for polar environments, suitable for polar research vessels, icebreakers and polar operation platforms.

According to Zheng, podded propulsors are among the world's most advanced electric marine propulsion systems, serving as a core component for large cruise ships, research vessels and icebreakers.

"Unlike traditional propulsion systems with complex mechanical transmission, the S-POD propulsors integrate a permanent magnet synchronous motor and propeller inside a single pod mounted beneath the hull, enabling 360-degree full rotation for vector thrust," he said.

Zheng noted that compared with conventional propulsors, the podded systems have several advantages — their energy efficiency is improved by over 20 percent, while vibration and noise are substantially reduced. The 360-degree rotation capability allows vessels to perform complex maneuvers such as turning on the spot, greatly enhancing navigation flexibility and safety.

According to Zheng, the Shanghai institute launched research and development of podded propulsors in 2007. Engineers made the first conceptual prototype in 2015, and built a 5-MW prototype in 2018 for operating tests.

In 2023, the institute completed the construction of a dedicated manufacturing factory. The next year, design work on the 10-MW model was completed.

Prior to the development of the S-POD series, China's podded propulsion market had been monopolized by foreign suppliers for many years, with domestic shipyards relying entirely on imports.

300 strangers attend Uygur wedding after viral post

By **FANG AIQING** and **MAO WEIHUA** in Urumqi

Earlier this month, a Uygur wedding in Yarkant county of Kashgar prefecture, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, became an unexpected nationwide celebration. More than 300 strangers traveled from across the country to share in the joy and blessings of the occasion. The scene that followed, brimming with music and dance, cheer and laughter, was later captured in online posts and videos that spread the festive vibes even farther and wider.

The story began when the groom's mother Zoram Seyit posted a digital invitation on the short-video sharing platform Douyin on Aug 3, expecting only family and friends to respond. But when a curious user from Central China's Henan province asked if they could attend and the host family replied with a simple "yes", the post went viral overnight.

On Aug 8, the wedding day, the banquet hall was filled with guests from diverse regions and ethnic backgrounds, all gathered for the same celebration. Men and women, many in their finest attire, sang and danced throughout the day.

Groom Akramjan Omar said his online guests joined in every part of the celebration, from the midday procession to escort the bride to the wedding hall and the main ceremony in the afternoon, to the after-party that stretched past 9 pm.

He had been unaware of his mother's post until the next morning, when he woke up to find it had already racked up over 10,000 likes. For a family that has run a Xinjiang cuisine restaurant in Henan for nearly three decades, more guests meant more joy.

However, as the numbers kept climbing — likes, comments and promises to attend — the initial excitement gave way to a practical concern: how to take good care of these guests, especially when they had no way of knowing how many would actually show up.

The family then trimmed their original guest list from 500 relatives and friends on each of the bride's and groom's sides to 200 per side and reserved the second floor, which offered a full view of the hall, for strangers traveling from afar. Food supplies were doubled, featuring local specialties such as pilaf, baked stuffed buns, seasonal and dried fruits, as well as wedding sweets, while a Mandarin-speaking partner was added alongside the Uygur-language master of ceremonies.

Many guests attempted to hand over their cash gifts, following Chinese wedding customs, but the host family declined most of them. Akramjan Omar said he was touched at one point seeing people who clearly didn't really know how to dance moving anyway, their faces lit up with pure enjoyment. At the end of the night, the newlyweds and their unexpected guests gathered for a group photo.



A newlywed couple share an intimate dance at their wedding on Aug 8 in Yarkant county, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, in front of family, friends and more than 300 strangers coming from across the country. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Warm hospitality

Wei Lixi, 20, from South China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, was on a solo road trip in Kashgar city when he saw the invitation on Douyin. He had his vehicle washed for the occasion and joined the groom's procession early that morning. The groom led everyone in a dance, and guests were handed party poppers to set off during the liveliest moments.

At first, Wei worried about intruding — but the hosts welcomed the out-of-town visitors with open arms. "The air was electric. I felt like part of one big family," he said.

Hao Shuhui, 24, from Henan, married into a Xinjiang family earlier this year. She dug through her wardrobe for a bright red dress and made her way to the Uygur family that has long-standing ties with her hometown.

The hosts were warm enough to ease her shyness. A groomsman had set up a WeChat group in advance, sharing a few do's and don'ts and encouraging the guests to speak up about any needs. The netizens, meanwhile, were worried about causing trouble.

A guest in his 30s surnamed Tang from Shandong province said, "It was incredibly infectious, even for those of us Han people who aren't particularly good at singing or dancing."

He added that he had immersed himself in the warmth, hospitality and optimism of the Uygur friends, and felt a genuine bond between people of different ethnic backgrounds. Guests like him, too, began chatting and sharing stories of their travels and lives.

Emerging tourism draw

Grand and lively Uygur weddings have long attracted visitors and sparked fascination across China.

In May 2025, the variety show *HAHAHAHAHA* re-created a ceremony through role-play.

On Aug 12, the Uygur wedding of celebrity couple Madina Memet and Jiang Chao sparked heated online discussions. Some Douyin posts generated several hundred thousand likes, with the most popular exceeding 2 million.

A typical Uygur wedding unfolds with a morning session hosted by the bride's family, followed by the bride-pickup and a transitional segment for the younger crowd that features dancing, the bouquet toss and photo sessions, as well as a banquet by the groom's side with a formal veil-lifting ceremony. Singing and dancing accompany every stage of the wedding. Days before, a "consultation tea party" allows both families to get acquainted and exchange betrothal gifts, while days after, close family members and friends will gather at the bride's home for a visit.

The invitation post for the Yarkant wedding has to date accumulated more than 10 million views and some 77,000 comments. Some netizens posted their own wedding invitations on Douyin, while others simply asked: "Can I come?"

Experiencing a Uygur wedding has gradually become a tourism draw in Xinjiang. Some banquet venues in Urumqi and Kashgar offer viewing areas on the second-floor mezzanines for tourists to watch real ceremonies live. In Kashgar city, 26-year-old visitor Zhang Yao observed a wedding this way. "The women wore an abundance of ornate jewelry. Their dresses had a bold, vivid theme color but were different in design, all absolutely stunning," she said, while also noting the importance of respecting the hosts on their big day.

Yao Jiahui tried her luck on Thursday and happened upon a wedding. A bridesmaid took her along on the dance floor. Aunties asked her in Uygur if she was enjoying the event. "It's all in the dance," she said.

Han Yawei and Hu Dongyue contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at fangaiqing@chinadaily.com.cn

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:40:04 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:40:04 PM

Editor's note: *As protection of the planet's flora, fauna and resources becomes increasingly important, China Daily is publishing a series of stories to illustrate the country's commitment to safeguarding the natural world.*

Tradition and tech team up to preserve 'orchard in the sky'

Ming Dynasty pear trees still thriving in Gansu along the banks of the Yellow River

By **MA JINGNA** and **HU YUMENG** in Lanzhou

High above the terraces of the Yellow River in Northwest China's Gansu province, centuries-old pear branches weave together across elevated wooden scaffolding, casting a dense green roof over the basin below. These structures in Gaolan county are known locally as *gaojia yunpeng* — the "high-frame cloud canopy"— and create the illusion of an orchard floating in the sky.

A closer look at one of these massive, twisted trunks reveals more than ancient bark. Attached to the wood is a weather-resistant QR code.

A quick smartphone scan brings up a complete digital file showing the tree's age — approximately 345 years — health status, variety and the name of the local family responsible for its care. It is part of a sweeping "one tree, one archive" management system introduced by the Shichuan Ancient Pear Orchard Protection Center, bridging Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) farming traditions with modern data tracking.

That blend of deep history and living ecology has earned the site an official designation as a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in 2025. It adds to a list of accolades that includes a Guinness World Record as the "World's First Ancient Pear Orchard".

Yet behind the UN recognition and the spectacular spring blossoms that draw nearly a million tourists each year lies a delicate rescue operation — a race to blend ancient ecological wisdom with modern science before the orchard's aging caretakers retire.



Wei Zhouyu, a local farmer, uses a timber support stand to carry out artificial pollination in the Shichuan Ancient Pear Orchard in Gaolan, Gansu province, on April 14. PHOTOS BY YANG MINGZE / CHINA DAILY





Left: Visitors tour the Shichuan Ancient Pear Orchard in April.
Right: A close-up of pear blossoms in the orchard.

Ming legacy

The story of Shichuan began nearly five centuries ago during the Ming Dynasty, when farmers first recognized the unique microclimate of this Gansu basin.

"Shichuan is located in a basin with deep and fertile soil, large day-night temperature differences and a long frost-free period," said Li Xiaoli, a staff member at the Ancient Pear Orchard Protection Center. "These natural conditions are ideal for growing pears."

Over generations, local farmers developed a cultivation system adapted to the area's unique geography. Rather than reshaping the environment, they learned to work with the Yellow River's water resources and the Loess Plateau's terrain.

They planted deep-rooted pear trees on upper terraces to stabilize slopes, stop soil erosion, and conserve water, while cultivating crops on lower levels.

To maximize space and sunlight in the semi-arid environment, farmers developed the elevated canopy system. Supported by wooden frames, mature branches spread high above the ground, improving airflow, cutting disease risks, and creating space below for livestock, vegetables and medicinal herbs.

Today, the site shelters 9,423 pear trees that are over a century old, including more than 2,600 that have survived for over 300 years.

According to the FAO, the orchard follows a low-density planting model, with roughly 150 trees per hectare, creating favorable conditions for light penetration, airflow and intercropping.

In its assessment, the organization noted that this integrated agroforestry landscape creates a resilient ecological barrier along the Yellow River, improving nutrient cycling, strengthening local food security, and demonstrating how traditional knowledge can adapt to harsh environments.

"The knowledge developed in these orchards has been adapted and applied in newer plantations and surrounding landscapes, creating a coherent and ecologically sound agroforestry system," the FAO said in its description of the site.

Heritage plus science

Keeping 300-year-old trees alive requires constant intervention, but orchard managers are increasingly swapping chemical inputs for ecological solutions.

At a nursery near the orchard, rows of wild pear saplings are carefully cultivated for conservation work. According to orchard caretaker Wei Wanyi, these naturally occurring seedlings possess strong root systems and strong resistance to drought, disease and saline-alkaline conditions.

"They are valuable genetic resources," Wei said. "We use them for bridge grafting, trunk grafting and replanting endangered ancient trees."

Traditional restoration methods continue to play an important role in extending the lifespan of aging trees. Grafting, bridge grafting and cavity repair techniques are used to revive weakened specimens and improve their health.

Meanwhile, conservation efforts increasingly rely on environmentally friendly pest-control strategies.

Instead of depending heavily on chemical pesticides, orchard managers use a combination of physical and biological methods to manage major orchard pests including aphids, pear psyllids and several species of fruit-boring insects.

Yellow adhesive bands wrapped around tree trunks trap crawling insects before they reach the canopy. The practice evolved from a traditional local technique in which farmers piled sand around tree trunks to prevent pests from climbing upward.

"We improved the old method by replacing the sand barriers with adhesive bands," said Li Xiaoli, a staff member at the Ancient Pear Orchard Protection Center. "When insects climb up the trunk, they become trapped on the sticky surface."

Pheromone traps suspended among the branches provide another layer of protection, while beneficial insects are released to help maintain a natural balance between pest and predator populations, Li added.

Wei Zhouyu, a local farmer whose family has planted pear trees for generations, pointed to several triangular traps hanging among the branches, part of the orchard's biological pest-control system.

Such tools have become a common sight in recent years as the orchard expands the use of green management practices.

According to orchard managers, reducing chemical inputs has become a key principle of conservation. The goal is not only to protect fruit quality, but also to preserve the biodiversity that supports the orchard's long-term health.

While traditional knowledge remains central to orchard management, modern technology has become an increasingly important tool.

A major milestone came in 2019 with the implementation of the Regulations on the Protection of Shichuan Ancient Pear Trees, which established a legal framework for conservation and brought orchard management onto a more systematic footing.

Since the establishment of the Ancient Pear Orchard Protection Center in 2014, every tree has its own digital identity. Pointing to a tree estimated to be 345 years old, local farmer Wei Zhouyu showed the identification plate attached to its trunk. "The sign tells you the tree's variety, age and caretaker," he said.

The digital records also document each tree's health condition and maintenance history, allowing conservation teams to monitor changes over time and respond more quickly to emerging risks.

Today, more than 1,760 conservation agreements have been signed with farmers and agritourism operators, ensuring that local communities remain directly involved in protecting the orchard.

Growing together

Another factor that makes Shichuan particularly unusual is that the orchard is not separated from daily life.

Ancient pear trees stand beside and even inside homes, line village roads and spread across family courtyards. Generations of residents have lived among the trees, creating a landscape in which agriculture, ecology and community life are deeply intertwined.

"We don't just grow pear trees. We grow up with them," said Wei Zhouyu, who cares for 16 pear trees and learned orchard management skills from his father and grandfather.

The orchard is protected through a community-based management system that reflects this long-standing relationship between people and trees.

More than 6,000 ancient trees are cared for by farming households, over 2,600 by agritourism operators and around 600 by the orchard's protection center. In total, 1,765 households remain involved in cultivating and protecting the orchard.

Yet many of the caretakers are between 50 and 70 years old, highlighting the challenge of passing traditional knowledge to younger generations.

To encourage continued stewardship, local authorities provide annual subsidies totaling around 2.4 million yuan ($350,000) for irrigation and tree maintenance, while conservation staff take responsibility for trees that no longer have dedicated caretakers.

"We need to preserve these traditional skills, but we also need to attract new generations to join the effort," said Han Lei, deputy director of the protection center.

The close relationship between people and trees has also created economic opportunities for local communities.

In addition to pear production, residents operate farm stays, restaurants and tourism-related businesses linked to the orchard's seasonal landscape and agricultural traditions.

According to local authorities, the annual pear blossom season attracts more than 900,000 visitors and generates tourism revenue exceeding 90 million yuan.

"Visitors come to see the blossoms in spring and pick pears in autumn. We sell pears and run farm stays, and tourism has brought us new sources of income," said local farmer Wei Konglu.

For the FAO, this integration of ecological conservation, traditional agriculture and rural livelihoods is one of the orchard's defining strengths.

During a field assessment conducted before its GIAHS designation, FAO experts examined the orchard's conservation practices, traditional farming knowledge and local agricultural industries, describing it as an example of how agricultural heritage can continue to generate economic value while preserving ecological and cultural resources.

"Resilient to droughts and floods, the system sustains agrobiodiversity, food security and rural livelihoods, reflecting harmony between tradition and ecology," the organization said.

Supported by both inherited knowledge and modern conservation measures, the orchard remains a working agricultural landscape where ecological protection and rural livelihoods continue side by side.

Contact the writers at huyumeng@chinadaily.com.cn

Traditional ladders keep farmers high up in canopy

By **MA JINGNA** and **HU YUMENG**

Beneath the sprawling canopy of centuries-old pear trees in Shichuan town, Lanzhou, orchard work takes place high above the ground, within trees that can reach more than 10 meters in height.

Farmers here rely on a traditional wooden scaling ladder system known as *tianbashi*, a practice passed down through generations and recognized as a provincial-level intangible cultural heritage in Gansu.

Rather than a single tool, *tianbashi* represents a complete system of high-altitude farming knowledge used to access, manage and care for some of the world's oldest pear trees.

The system is closely tied to an elevated cultivation model known locally as *gaotian*, or "fields in the sky", in which branches are lifted and supported by wooden frames, forming a layered orchard structure above the ground.

"In other places, farmers plant on the ground, but here they plant in the sky," said Li Xiaoli, a staff member of the orchard's protection center.

"Mechanized operations can lead to soil compaction and surface hardening over time. In contrast, the *tianbashi* system places far less pressure on the ground. As farmers work above the soil using wooden ladders, the impact on the orchard floor is minimal, helping preserve soil structure and ecological stability," Li said. "It also offers greater flexibility, allowing workers to move through dense canopies and reach branches more precisely than machinery."

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, this reflects a long-evolved traditional knowledge system in which seasonal ecological practices are embedded in every stage of orchard management.

Using *tianbashi*, farmers carry out key seasonal tasks including pruning, flower management, pollination, fruit thinning, harvesting and ecological pest control, all guided by agricultural calendars shaped by flowering cycles and tree growth patterns.

For local farmers, *tianbashi* is more than a working method — it is inherited memory. Techniques such as high-altitude pruning, bark treatment and seasonal canopy care are learned through generations rather than formal training.

"These old pear trees are like our ancestors," said 63-year-old farmer Wei Zhouyu. "We must care for them using traditional methods."

Among these tasks, flower management is especially important. During blooming season, farmers perform flower thinning by gently shaking branches from elevated positions. The practice reduces excessive blossoms so nutrients concentrate in fewer fruits, improving size and quality, while also dislodging insects and eggs.

Equally important is pollination. Because main varieties such as the Dongguo and Ruan'er pears depend on cross-pollination, farmers plant compatible trees like Sumu and Changba pears throughout the orchard. Climbing the wooden ladders, they manually transfer pollen between varieties to ensure stable yields and high fruit quality.

Wei also practices winter bark scraping, a traditional technique that removes old bark, helps eliminate overwintering pests and improves tree health. "Removing the old bark helps the tree breathe more easily," he said.

Wei manages 16 ancient pear trees, including some over 400 years old.

The work remains demanding. Pruning, pollination and harvesting all require long hours in the canopy, and many young people are reluctant to take over. "It's hard and sometimes dangerous," Wei said.



A villager harvests pears while scaling the *tianbashi* ladder system at the Shichuan orchard in Gaolan, Gansu province, in October.
LI YALONG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

To address this, local authorities have incorporated *tianbashi* into heritage protection programs and training systems to encourage knowledge transfer. The orchard's protection center has also established a nursery with more than 2,000 saplings for restoration, while experts train farmers in green pest control and scientific orchard management.

The FAO said that the Shichuan system demonstrates how traditional agricultural knowledge continues to function as a living system rather than a relic of the past.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:40:04 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:40:04 PM

CULTURE



A gold octadrachm in the name of Arsinoe II Philadelphos on display at the Xi'an exhibition.

The golden thread of social exchange

Xi'an exhibition uses Hellenistic jewelry to explore how ancient civilizations shared artistic traditions, **Zhao Xu** reports.



Periammata, chains or straps worn diagonally across the torso or fastened over the breast.



Head ornaments on display captivate visitors at the exhibition, *Art in Gold: Jewellery in Hellenistic Times*, at the Shaanxi History Museum in Xi'an, Shaanxi province. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

When Alexander the Great's armies swept eastward in the fourth century BC, they carried far more than military power. Across the vast world that emerged — from the Adriatic to Afghanistan — people, languages, beliefs, and artistic traditions circulated on an unprecedented scale.

The kingdoms founded by Alexander's successors forged a shared cultural idiom linking cities such as Alexandria, Antioch and Pergamon, while local traditions remained remarkably resilient. In this first great experiment in globalization, gold jewelry became one of its most eloquent witnesses.

Fashioned from gold seized from Persian treasuries, adorned with gemstones from distant lands and shaped by craftsmen drawing on multiple artistic traditions, these objects embodied both the cosmopolitan ambitions and cultural diversity of the Hellenistic world.

More than ornaments, they accompanied their owners through marriage, worship and death, carrying the traces of commercial, artistic and spiritual exchanges that connected continents.

More than two millennia later, some of the finest examples of this cultural fusion are on display at the Shaanxi History Museum in Xi'an. *Art in Gold: Jewellery in Hellenistic Times*, which runs through the end of the year, offers a glimpse into the interconnected world that emerged in the wake of Alexander's conquests.

"The concept of exchange anchors the exhibition," says Ren Xueli of the Shaanxi History Museum, which has brought together more than 180 artifacts from 24 Greek archaeological museums alongside 70 objects from the Benaki Museum in Athens.

Ren was also referring to the exhibition's Chinese title, *Wenming Yi Zhi*, a phrase from *I Ching (Book of Changes)*. Here, *wenming*, commonly translated as "civilization", encompasses ritual, moral cultivation and the social order that binds communities together. *Zhi*, meaning "restraint", suggests the wisdom to recognize limits and exercise self-discipline. Together, they imply that civilization reaches its highest expression not through the pursuit of power, but through the ability to temper military might with moral restraint and imperial ambition with cultural understanding.

"Alexander's greatest achievement may not have been the lands he conquered, but the world of exchange that emerged from them and outlived him — a reminder that civilizations endure not through expansion alone, but through their capacity to transform power into connection," Ren says.

Prominence of queens

One striking example of this cultural synthesis is a gold coin minted in Alexandria in the name of the deified Queen Arsinoe II Philadelphos.

After Alexander's death in 323 BC, his empire was divided among his generals, one of whom, Ptolemy I Soter, founded the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt. Arsinoe is depicted wearing a draped Greek-style head covering and a royal headband (diadem) associated with Hera while holding a lotus-tipped scepter that evokes Egyptian royal iconography.

By equating her marriage to her brother Ptolemy II — the Ptolemaic dynasty is famous for sibling marriage within the royal family — with the sacred union of Zeus and Hera, the coin transformed dynastic politics into divine mythology, weaving Greek and Egyptian traditions together to legitimize royal authority.

The influence of Ptolemaic queens extended well beyond royal portraiture. Two pairs of gold sphinx earrings demonstrate how female authority reshaped one of Egypt's oldest royal symbols. Traditionally depicted as male and embodying the divine authority of the pharaoh, the sphinx gradually assumed female form during the Ptolemaic period, likely reflecting the growing prominence of queens such as Arsinoe II. One remarkable earring depicts a wingless sphinx wearing the Hathor crown with its solar disc and cow's horns — an unmistakably Egyptian emblem — rendered with the refined craftsmanship of a Hellenistic goldsmith. Rather than replacing Egyptian tradition, the Ptolemies reinterpreted it, creating a new visual language of female power.

The same spirit of cultural synthesis found expression in another defining motif of Hellenistic jewelry: Dionysus. According to Greek curator Irini Papageorgiou, his growing popularity may have reflected the prominence of his cult at the Ptolemaic court, though his appeal reached far beyond royal fashion.

In the Orphic tradition, the infant Dionysus, or Zagreus, was slain by the Titans and reborn, making him a symbol of regeneration and immortality. The Dionysian Mysteries, unusually open to women, likewise promised initiates that death was not an end but a new beginning.

It is therefore no coincidence that ivy leaves, grape clusters and vines — emblems of Dionysus — adorn Hellenistic wreaths, earrings and necklaces. Yet, the exhibition reveals a side of the god less familiar to many Chinese audiences. Along the ancient Silk Roads, Dionysus is best known as the god of wine, appearing on silver vessels and luxury wares that testify to the spread of Mediterranean drinking culture eastward. The jewelry tells a different story. Here, his symbols evoke marriage, fertility, death and renewal, revealing Dionysus not simply as the god of celebration, but as a guardian of life's greatest transformations.

A stolen necklace

Asked to choose the exhibition's most compelling storytelling object, Papageorgiou points instead to a humble lead curse tablet from the small Greek island of Delos. Dating to the late Hellenistic or early Roman period, it preserves the desperate plea of a woman who, seeing that her gold necklace had been stolen, calls upon both local and foreign gods and goddesses to expose and punish everyone involved. Her curse is relentless, condemning the thief's mind, soul, limbs, hands, fingers, and even genitalia, whether the culprit was "woman or man".

"The curse she directs at the thief is terrifying, yet it also highlights the deep emotional bond between a piece of jewelry and its owner — a connection that I believe is timeless," Papageorgiou says. "Reading her words, I feel as if I am hearing the innermost thoughts of any woman, from any era, whose most cherished possession has been stolen."

The impulse to protect what is precious transcends cultures, Ren observes. When archaeologists opened the early seventh-century tomb of the 9-year-old noble girl Li Jingxun in Xi'an in 1957, they found four stark characters carved onto her coffin: "*kai guan ji si*" (Whoever opens the coffin will die).

The Hellenistic gold exhibition was deliberately designed so that visitors leaving *Art in Gold* step directly into another exhibition devoted to China's ritual bronzes, Ren explains. Known as *jijin*, or "auspicious metal", these bronzes date from the Shang and Zhou dynasties (c. 16th century BC-256 BC).

"*Ji* means 'auspicious', while *jin*, though now commonly understood as 'gold', originally referred broadly to metal — in this case, bronze," she says.

Serving as sacred mediators between the living and their ancestors, the vessels bear inscriptions documenting political events, military campaigns, ritual ceremonies and family histories, forming some of the earliest written records of Chinese civilization.

"The juxtaposition of the two exhibitions is intended as a dialogue between ancient civilizations," Ren says.

"At first glance, Hellenistic gold jewelry and China's ritual bronzes belong to entirely different worlds: one intimate and wearable, the other monumental and ceremonial. Yet, both transformed precious metal into a vessel of memory.

"Hellenistic gold accompanied individuals through marriage, worship and death, preserving personal identity, affection and the hope of renewal. China's ritual bronzes, by contrast, embodied collective memory and ritual authority, sustaining the bonds between the living, their ancestors and the state. Together, they reveal a shared human impulse to fashion enduring objects that bridge the living and the dead, the earthly and the sacred, and the fleeting moment with the permanence of history."

Contact the writer at zhaoxu@chinadaily.com.cn

When adornments became symbols of love and loss

By ZHAO XU

Long before she became a wife, she first became a bride. On a fourth-century BC Attic vase displayed at the Shaanxi History Museum, a young woman sits at the center of the Epaulia — the celebration held the day after a wedding. Around her, female companions gather as fairies and doves present gifts: a diadem, a bracelet and a necklace. She wears a myrtle wreath, earrings and bracelets, while delicate buttons adorn her garment. Rendered in gilded applied clay, these ornaments shimmer not merely as embellishments, but as symbols of identity, affection and expectation.

More than two millennia later, they provide a fitting introduction to *Art in Gold: Jewellery in Hellenistic Times*, an exhibition that tells the story of Hellenistic gold through the lives of the women who wore it.

Yet, the vase tells another, quieter story. Excavated from the eastern cemetery of Pella in ancient Macedonia, it had served as a funerary urn. Inside were the cremated remains of a young girl, together with part of a gilded bronze myrtle wreath — the very kind depicted in the painted wedding scene — and a silver bracelet so small it could only have belonged to someone who died before reaching marriageable age.

According to Irini Papageorgiou, curator of the exhibition, the painted Epaulia became a final act of remembrance, allowing in death what life had denied.

"The ancient Greeks regarded the death of an unmarried girl as the greatest possible misfortune, since she was deprived of fulfilling her social and biological destiny — that is, marriage and motherhood," she says.

The belief found one of its most enduring literary expressions in *Antigone*, the tragedy by fifth-century BC playwright Sophocles. Betrothed yet never married, Antigone laments that she is destined not for a bridal chamber but for a tomb, with death rather than a mortal husband claiming her as his bride. As in the painted Epaulia on the Pella vase, marriage and death become two rites of passage that tragically converge.

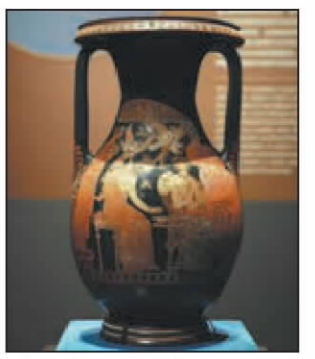
"In Hellenistic times, it was believed that the souls of those who had suffered untimely deaths — before marrying and having children — were unable to complete their passage to the Underworld," Papageorgiou says. "Instead, they wandered restlessly between the worlds of the living and the dead. Specific grave goods, including certain types of jewelry, together with particular burial rituals, were intended to assist their passage into the afterlife and appease their anger."

One such object is the Heracles knot, an ornamental motif of two interlocking loops resembling a reef knot. Originating in Egypt in the second millennium BC and later associated with the lion skin of Heracles, it became especially popular in Macedonia after Alexander the Great's conquests, appearing prominently on necklaces and other adornments worn by women.

Its appeal lay in the convergence of politics, mythology and popular belief. For the Macedonian royal house, which traced its lineage to Heracles, the knot evoked heroic virtue and divine ancestry. Yet it also functioned as a protective amulet. As a Greek hero believed to have attained Mount Olympus, Heracles offered those buried with his knot the hope that death itself might be overcome.

Another revealing category of ornaments is the *periammata*, chains or straps worn diagonally across the torso or fastened over the breast. Depicted on mortal maidens as well as goddesses such as Athena, Artemis and Aphrodite, the term derives from the Greek verb *periapto* — "to bind" or "to fasten". More than decoration, it served as an amulet, a marker of virginity and perhaps a symbolic restraint before marriage. Similar meanings attached to thigh-bands and garters dedicated by adolescent girls in sanctuaries as they approached adulthood. For those who died before crossing that threshold, such bonds acquired an even deeper resonance.





A fourth-century BC Attic vase (above) depicts a wedding scene featuring a young woman adorned with a gold wreath — a similar wreath (center) is on display at the Xi'an exhibition. Another highlight is an elaborate diadem (top) with its central part crafted as a Heracles knot.

Another exhibit, a terracotta figurine of a seated young woman with movable arms, wears a painted diadem and earrings that imitate gold jewelry. Unearthed in Pella and dating to the third or second century BC, it belongs to a type known as *plangona* — jointed dolls or puppets. More than playthings, these figures accompanied girls from childhood to the threshold of marriage and were often dedicated to the gods before a wedding. Buried in tombs, they became poignant reminders of lives interrupted before that final rite of passage.

Also associated with the prenuptial stage of life are the astragals, or knucklebones, which evoke a game of erotic divination once played with the knucklebones of sheep or goats. Papageorgiou explains that astragalus-shaped ornaments imitate the tarsal bone of mammals, believed in antiquity to possess protective and healing powers. Their frequent appearance in the graves of young women and children suggests they served as amulets, safeguarding their owners through life's most vulnerable transitions.

The spinning top, also found in the burials of Hellenistic women, similarly united play with symbolism. Its ceaseless whirl may have metaphorically expressed a bride's transformation while foreshadowing the course of her future life.

Perhaps the most emotionally evocative objects in the exhibition are the gold wreaths, like the one worn by the young woman depicted on the fourth-century BC Attic vase.

Accompanying their owners through life's defining moments — marriage, coming of age, religious initiation, and, ultimately, death — these exquisitely crafted crowns of myrtle, oak, laurel, and ivy adorned aristocrats, priests, victors, and initiates in sacred mysteries, signifying an individual's place within the social and spiritual order of the Hellenistic world. Yet it was in the funerary sphere that they acquired their deepest significance.

"Relatives gave the deceased, among others, a wreath as to those who had competed in life, reflecting a concept that assimilated the deceased to an athlete. Since the athletic ideal in antiquity was closely associated with the concept of virtue, this idea carries profound moral content," says the curator, referring to an ancient commentary on the works of the Athenian comic playwright Aristophanes (c. 446-386 BC).

Plutarch, in his *Moralia*, states that the deceased deserved to be rewarded, having competed like athletes, and to receive the honors due to them. In other words, placing a wreath upon the dead was, perhaps, to proclaim that life itself had been a contest worthy of honor. Like victorious athletes, the departed were believed to have completed their earthly struggle and earned the final reward: vindication, remembrance, and the hope of eternal life among the virtuous.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:40:04 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:40:04 PM

LIFE





From left: Chaozhou (in Guangdong province)-style preserved olives with abalone; oyster sauce; wild mushrooms from Yunnan province. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Chinese food is the world's oyster

Documentary follows the pursuit of *xian* among chefs, scientists and families, from mountains to sea, and from East to West, **Li Yingxue** reports.

In Fujian, an oyster has many lives. Layered with cabbage, laver and slices of pork, then coated in rice batter and fried, it becomes a golden, crispy oyster fritter. Dropped into a bowl of *laohua*, a local rice-noodle soup, it adds another layer of briny sweetness.

As China's largest oyster-producing province, Fujian has developed many methods of preparing the humble shellfish, from frying and boiling to steaming and more. But the oyster is only one chapter in China's long pursuit of *xian*, a culinary ideal encompassing umami, freshness and a broader sense of savory deliciousness.

Generations of Chinese chefs have transformed nature's bounty through accumulated knowledge, heat and time.

Now streaming on Tencent Video, *Oyster Sauce: A Drop of Umami* is China's first food and culinary culture documentary devoted to oyster sauce, taking *xian* as the starting point for a journey across mountains and seas.

Produced by Tencent Video and co-produced by DOClabs Beijing, the documentary traces the history of oyster farming, the origins of oyster sauce and the evolution of regional flavors, while exploring how Chinese cuisine has traveled around the world.

Through fishermen, chefs, scientists, and families, the series traces Chinese food culture across generations.

"When we make food documentaries, we often use something delicious as a pretext, hoping that audiences will see richer and various ways of living," says Chen Xiaoqing, the documentary's chief producer.

"What we really hope people will learn is why people eat certain foods, why they love certain flavors, and how much love, craftsmanship and time go into creating them."

The first episode begins deep in the Cangshan Mountains in Dali, Yunnan province, where an 11-year-old girl follows her grandfather into the forest in search of black tiger's paw mushrooms.

Mushrooms have long been regarded in China as a mountain delicacy. Although ancient people did not understand the chemistry behind umami, generations of experience taught them to recognize the distinctive value of fungi. Modern food science has shown that free amino acids and taste-active nucleotides in mushrooms work together during cooking to create rich, complex flavors.

The camera then travels to Zhengzhou, Henan province, where a local restaurant offers another example of Chinese culinary ingenuity.

To make a broth that is both clear and flavorful, the cook finely minces chicken breast or lean pork, mixes it with water, and adds it to the boiling broth. The meat forms flocculent masses that absorb suspended particles, blood foam, excess fat, and other impurities.

Known in Chinese cooking as *saotang*, or "sweeping the broth", the technique appears to be an exercise in subtraction, but ultimately allows the broth's flavor to emerge with greater clarity.

From mushrooms in the mountains to broth in the Central Plains, the documentary repeatedly asks: Where does *xian* come from?

"We wanted to find out," says Zhu Lexian, the documentary's supervising producer. The production team uses the history of China's pursuit of *xian* as its narrative thread, exploring it across time and space.

"We start with fishermen by the sea, then follow the journey through harvesting and simmering, and eventually to people applying new technologies. Then we connect all these stories," Zhu says.

The search links culinary knowledge, cooking practices, production technology, and everyday life.

"Eastern and Western understandings of *xian* are different," Chen says at the documentary's premiere.

In his view, Western discussions of freshness often emphasize the original state and immediate quality of an ingredient. The Chinese idea of *xian*, by contrast, can refer to a more layered form of deliciousness created through cooking, fermentation, concentration, and time.

"Westerners can be very concrete in their approach to food, while Chinese culinary life can sometimes be more abstract," Chen says.






Top: Fishermen in Fuding, Fujian province, haul in oysters. **Left:** The poster of *Oyster Sauce: A Drop of Umami*. **Right:** The documentary's production team (from left) Chen Xiaoqing, Zhu Lexian and Li Jie share insights into the making of the series.

Chinese cooking, he explains, often allows ingredients to transform, extracting and reshaping their flavors before using them in other dishes.

Behind this is a broader philosophy of eating. Chinese cooks have continually explored how one flavor can bring out another, how heat and time can transform ingredients, and how flavors from mountains, fields and oceans can complement one another at the same table.

For the filmmakers, the central challenge was how to turn the intangible quality of *xian* into something viewers could see and imagine tasting.

"People cannot actually taste the food or experience its *xian* through the screen," says producer Li Jie. But visual and auditory stimuli can activate memories associated with taste.

"Rather than simply presenting flavor, we are stimulating people's senses and building connections between them, so their brains can fill in the taste," Li says.

The filmmakers found visual counterparts for flavor: the texture of ingredients, bubbling broth, rising steam, and the colors of finished dishes. Images such as a flower blossoming or honey dripping evoke sweetness and roasted aromas through visual association.

"First, you have to give *xian* something tangible to attach itself to. Second, you have to give it movement," Li says.

The documentary was filmed over about four months in nearly 20 Chinese cities and abroad. From coastal aquaculture farms and remote forests to neighborhood eateries and family kitchens, the camera sought to connect flavors with people.

A modern food factory became another important stop on the journey. The production team was struck by the complexity of its production lines, research systems and laboratories.

"We had never imagined that oyster sauce was made on such a complex production line," Li says. After seeing the raw materials, production process, and research and testing systems, the team realized that this side of food production was "particularly worth documenting".

While food documentaries often focus on flames, traditional utensils and the hands of craftspeople, *Oyster Sauce: A Drop of Umami* also turns automated production lines, laboratories and machinery into subjects.

"We wanted to use images to show the beauty of science, industry and order," Li says.

The documentary also follows Chinese culinary influences overseas.

In Thailand, celebrity chef Pichaya Soontornyanakij, known as Pam, opened her family home to the production team for the first time.

Pam's mother is of Chaozhou heritage, and the family's everyday meals combine Thai and Chinese influences. Her mother takes the production team to the market before the family prepares a meal together.

Chinese food culture is expressed not through overt symbols but through ingredients, seasonings and cooking habits.

"When I saw Chinese seasonings in a Thai family kitchen, and saw Thai and Chinese elements blended into their everyday meals, I felt the subtle influence of Chinese food culture," Li says.

Such cultural transmission is not simply a matter of taking a particular Chinese dish overseas. As people migrate, and trade and cultural exchanges expand, Chinese flavors enter new environments, interact with local ingredients and traditions, and develop new forms.

Flavor thus becomes a form of cultural memory. It can cross linguistic boundaries and be passed from one generation to the next.

As the camera moves from the sea to the dining table, the documentary reveals more than how a flavor is created. It shows how Chinese food culture evolves through inheritance and exchange, continuing to find new life as it travels.

Contact the writer at liyingxue@chinadaily.com.cn

Time-honored pharmacy brings TCM to the modern age

In the bustling Dashilar area, a renowned tourist destination in downtown Beijing, Melvyn, a young man from Brussels, stepped into the Tong Ren Tang pharmacy, a time-honored brand with over 350 years of history.

This was Melvyn's second visit to China. Besides sightseeing, he intended to learn more about traditional Chinese medicine.

Accompanying him was Mana, a young lady from Pakistan, who was experiencing back pain and decided to seek relief while sightseeing. With the help of the store's staff, Mana quickly obtained the medicine she needed.

"I have a keen interest in TCM. I enjoy TCM massages and also like taking ginseng," said Mana.

Melvyn and Mana are among a growing number of young people from China and abroad who turn to TCM for health problems.

The Tong Ren Tang pharmacy, established in 1669, serves as a window for cultural exchange and knowledge in TCM.

The building itself retains its antiquated charm, with shelves inside the building stocked with an array of products.

Visitors can not only see a doctor, get prescriptions, and purchase medicine, but also buy nutritional supplements, food items, cosmetics, and herbal drinks.




Left: A pharmacist dispenses Chinese herbal medicine at a Tong Ren Tang pharmacy in Beijing on Feb 25, 2025. **Right:** A staff member displays Chinese herbal medicine drinks at a Tong Ren Tang branch on the same day. PHOTOS BY LI XIN / XINHUA

In the cosmetics section, Guo Haiyan, who oversees quality control, has introduced an anti-freckle cream, describing it as highly effective.

"We used to focus mainly on pharmaceuticals, but later we found that tourists to this area have a huge demand for cosmetics," she said.

She also pointed to incense sticks, noting that they have gained popularity abroad in recent years.

Herbal drinks are another distinctive offering. Tong Ren Tang has blended coffee with TCM ingredients to create beverages infused with herbal elements.

"Tourists can choose drinks suited to their body condition for health preservation," Guo said.

Near the beverage counter stands a wheel that visitors spin as part of a puzzle game to guess the names of TCM herbs based on photo prompts.

The store also sells TCM bracelets, sachets and other souvenirs that can be worn to help prevent ailments.

Children can try on *hanfu*, traditional Chinese attire, and experience TCM customs firsthand.

A tourist surnamed Lin from Guangdong province brought his family to Beijing during the summer vacation. They visited the third floor, which houses a TCM culture exhibition center and serves as a venue for educational tours. His son and daughter showed great interest in handling traditional pill-making tools and observing various plant specimens.

An on-site virtual reality display allows visitors to don headsets and watch immersive demonstrations of how these tools were used to make pills in the past.

"Just like making tiny glutinous rice balls, the TCM practitioner adds water and herbal powder and shakes the mixture back and forth. It takes about 40 minutes to complete the process," Guo said. "Factories usually have specialized machines for this, but we have preserved the traditional method here."

At the TCM digital health cabin, visitors can use machines for basic health check-ups. They can also see a doctor for further diagnosis.

On nearby tables, paper and pigments — the latter made from TCM herbs or minerals — are available for children to paint. They can also use TCM herbs and cloth to craft their own sachets.

Guo said that since the summer vacation began, the center has seen an influx of children.

There are many such TCM experiential centers across China. In Cangzhou, Hebei province, just over two hours' drive from Beijing, some schools have herbal gardens to help children learn about medicinal plants. In Chengdu, Sichuan province, Tianfu Medicine City attracts many enthusiasts from both home and abroad.

Back in Beijing, just a few minutes' walk from Dashilar, a smart health experience center at the Beijing Fun complex offers visitors exercise routines similar to *baduanjin* — a traditional form of *qigong*. The complex is a branch of Tong Ren Tang. Visitors can also use AI-powered machines that integrate TCM wisdom with large language models for health consultations.

"We aim to create a showcase for TCM culture. New technologies help us do a better job in promoting TCM culture," said Guo.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:40:04 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:40:04 PM

LIFE

Grandma behind the counter

At 86, Qingdao cafe owner has turned a struggling business into a place where coffee, companionship and purpose meet

A young woman arrives at Rona Coffee carrying a camera, having decided to feature its 86-year-old owner Zhao Qiying in a graduation documentary after seeing her online.

"If I can help young people, that is a good thing," Zhao says, before giving a customer entering the shop her customary greeting: "What would you like to drink?"

There is no printed menu inside the ground-floor storefront, located in an apartment building in Qingdao, a coastal city in East China's Shandong province.

Zhao points to a small whiteboard on the wall, where she has written the drinks and prices herself. She opens a notebook and records the order: "Matcha latte, hot, 25 yuan, WeChat Pay." Then she grinds the beans, steams the milk and carries the cup to the table.

The students helping the woman with her project begin filming. Off camera, they help Zhao carry cups and clear tables. Zhao lives only a 10-minute walk away from the cafe, yet the shop brings a much wider world to her door. She has also managed to turn a once-failing business into a success.

Residents from the surrounding neighborhood stop by for coffee. Students settle in with books. People from across China arrive after seeing Zhao online, some opening the door with the question, "Is Grandma here?"

Visitors from abroad have also found their way to the shop. When language becomes a barrier, Zhao points to the cups or asks a younger customer to interpret.

Customers have also suggested new additions to the menu, prompting her to learn how to make avocado, hazelnut and ice-cream coffees.

Zhao accepts mobile payments, but the orders still go into a handwritten ledger.

"I can't figure out those electronic ordering systems," she says. "Writing it down feels more reliable."

Zhao's decision to take over the cafe began not with a passion for coffee, but with a practical goal — the fully equipped shop should not simply be abandoned.

Her son had opened the cafe under a franchise more than a decade ago, spending more than 400,000 yuan ($58,900) on renovations, equipment and furniture. Zhao says the franchise arrangement later fell apart. With few customers and the business running at a loss, her son considered closing the shop in 2014.

Zhao, who had worked as an accountant at a Qingdao factory, looked at the furnished room and saw money already spent. "Wouldn't all that work go to waste?" she recalls asking. "How about I try running the place?"

She was then 74 and had never tasted coffee.



Zhao Qiying (left) chats with a customer at Rona Coffee in Qingdao, East China's Shandong province, on June 15. PHOTOS BY ZHANG LIYUAN / XINHUA



Zhao serves coffee at Rona Coffee in Qingdao.

Her first cup struck her as bitter. To her, different types of coffee seemed to differ only in how bitter they were. Still, she became familiar with the coffee machine button by button, replaying online videos and writing each step in a notebook.

Milk foam and latte art were the hardest skills to master. Unwilling to keep wasting cartons of milk, Zhao mixed laundry detergent with water to imitate milk foam and diluted soy sauce to stand in for espresso. She practiced with the two liquids at home every day. Within six months, she could pour a decent heart shape.

For years, Rona Coffee sold only 20 or 30 cups a day. Online attention changed that. Zhao now makes 50 or 60 cups on an ordinary weekday and as many as 70 or 80 during holidays. The cafe, where she is both the licensed proprietor and the only worker, now turns a profit.

The attention has also changed who comes through the door and how customers interact with Zhao. One wall is covered in notes praising her coffee and wishing her good health. Seeing her busy at work, regulars sometimes offer to collect their own drinks. If a latte-art pattern goes wrong, Zhao tries to keep the cup for herself, but customers usually reassure her that it still looks and tastes good.

"They tell me it looks good even when it doesn't, and I know they are sometimes just trying to make me happy," she says. "The kinder they are to me, the less I can afford to be careless. I have to take every cup seriously."

Younger people have also left their mark on the cafe. Zhao's grandson refreshed its playlist, while customers encouraged her to add new drinks. Zhao, in turn, gives them a place to study, talk or simply spend time. Some confide in her about breakups or failed attempts to lose weight. She offers a few words of comfort and marvels at the sheer variety of troubles young people encounter.

A longtime customer, Wang Xintian, says Zhao feels less like a shopkeeper and more like a familiar elder.

Zhao works about 10 hours a day. She gets tired, but says being idle would not necessarily feel any better. Before taking over the cafe, she imagined retirement as chores, errands and television. Life with the shop, she says, turned out very differently.

"Every morning, I know why I am getting up," she says. "At the cafe, I know what I have to do. When I go home after work, I know I have something to look forward to the next day."

Her son now often comes by for coffee. Zhao likes to joke that the cafe he once wanted to close has made him a regular.

Twelve years later, coffee remains bitter to her. But the 10-minute walk from home has opened onto a larger world of work, companionship and daily purpose.

The coffee, Zhao says, is "still just different degrees of bitterness".

Her days are not.

XINHUA

Fishing heritage finds a new shore

HAIKOU — When the tide retreats at Tanmen, people go after it. During the fishing town's summer beachcombing season, visitors spread across the exposed shore. Locals call the activity *ganhai* — literally, going out to "catch the sea".

This year's festival features a beachcombing treasure hunt, a fishermen's market, a long seafood dinner and intangible cultural heritage performances, turning traditions of an old fishing community into experiences visitors can join.

A tourist surnamed Hu from East China's Jiangsu province had been traveling with her family in Sanya when she heard about the festival and made a detour to Tanmen. "It was my first time watching the fishing fleet set out. It was spectacular," she says, adding that she plans to take her child *ganhai* and then visit the China (Hainan) Museum of the South China Sea.

The fleet she came to see belongs to a much less leisurely world. Tanmen is home to 86 medium and large fishing vessels, most weighing between 400 and 500 metric tons. At noon on Aug 16, when the summer fishing moratorium ended, firecrackers sounded over the harbor and hundreds of boats streamed toward the South China Sea.

For generations, fishing families preserved their knowledge of sea routes in handwritten sailing manuals known as Geng Lu Bu. The books recorded routes, island and reef features, positions and bearings; a *geng* was roughly equivalent to 10 nautical miles. Together, they turned hard-earned experience into practical guides for long voyages.

For three and a half months each summer, however, much of the fishing activity comes to a halt. This year's summer moratorium in designated South China Sea waters ran from noon on May 1 to noon on Aug 16.

Seasonal closures are also part of the region's fisheries-management tool kit. In its Thailand country profile, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations describes area and seasonal closures in the Gulf of Thailand imposed mainly for the recovery of Indo-Pacific mackerel, with restrictions on trawlers and purse seiners during designated periods.

The larger boats' return to sea is only one part of Tanmen's fishing economy. Closer to shore, a recreational-fishing pier serves smaller leisure vessels.

This summer, tourists have flocked to Tanmen Port and nearby fishing villages for *ganhai* and waterside sightseeing. Visitors have also stopped in Paigang village beside the harbor and visited the Geng Lu Bu museum, where sailing knowledge passed down through generations of fishermen is preserved.

The shift is also showing up in local livelihoods. More than 500 traditional fishermen in Tanmen have moved into leisure- and tourism-related work. More than 400 fishermen have formed five recreational-fishing cooperatives, and the town's recreational-fishery output value topped 100 million yuan ($14.87 million) in 2025.



An aerial view of fishing boats heading out to sea from Tanmen Port in Qionghai, South China's Hainan province. PU XIAOXU / XINHUA

Paigang village now has 13 fishermen's homestays, along with businesses offering sea angling, snorkeling and beachcombing. At the harbor, a 310-meter wharf dedicated to recreational fishing can accommodate 19 leisure fishing boats at a time.

Li Zhi, Party chief of Tanmen town, says the harbor upgrade is intended to serve both traditional fishing and the growing recreational sector, with leisure boats used for sightseeing and sea angling.

The result is a waterfront where commercial fishing and recreational activities increasingly sit side by side, widening the ways local residents make a living from the sea.

Fishing life also reaches shore through food and ritual. Tanmen's catches include Spanish mackerel, grouper, squid, sea cucumber and conch. This year's beachcombing season — the town's 12th — brings local traditions together with performances ranging from Hainan's carp-lantern performance to 24 Festive Drums, Indonesian folk songs and Thai finger dancing.

Before long voyages, another tradition comes into view: a ceremony honoring the Xiongdi Gong, also known as the "108 Brothers". Dating back to the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), the ritual was traditionally performed by Hainan fishermen before long-distance fishing and trading voyages in the South China Sea.

It was included in the fifth batch of China's national list of representative items of intangible cultural heritage in 2021. The official heritage record says its community of practitioners later expanded beyond fishermen to include people from Hainan living in Southeast Asia and elsewhere around the world.

Hainan itself is opening wider. This is the island's first summer since the Hainan Free Trade Port began island-wide special customs operations on Dec 18, 2025. In the first half of 2026, Hainan recorded 1.6 million inbound and outbound passenger trips, including 883,000 by foreign nationals.

Local officials say foreign guests visiting nearby Boao for the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference also make their way to Tanmen, where volunteers provide foreign-language services at major visitor sites during the forum.

Inside Tanmen's Geng Lu Bu museum, handwritten manuals preserve old sailing knowledge. Outside, commercial boats leave for fishing grounds, families head to the shore for *ganhai*, and smaller boats take visitors out with rods. The water is the same; there are simply more ways now to know it — and to make a living from it.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:40:04 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:40:04 PM

SPORTS

SOCCER

Mourinho decries alleged bullying of Vinicius

'Special One' goes to bat for his star player, claiming Brazilian was targeted during Madrid's win over Espanyol

Real Madrid manager Jose Mourinho accused opponents and supporters of bullying Vinicius Jr, after the Brazil winger was targeted with rough treatment in the club's opening 2-1 La Liga win at Espanyol on Saturday.

Real, which kicked off Mourinho's return to the club with a late victory, was furious inside the opening five minutes when Alex Calatrava brought down Vinicius from behind and then appeared to catch him again while the forward was on the ground.

Madrid's players appealed for a red card, but the referee took no action against Calatrava, who later scored Espanyol's equalizer after Jude Bellingham had put Real ahead.

Late Real substitute Carlos Espi struck in the 90th minute to give the visitor the victory.

Mourinho said the treatment of Vinicius had become a recurring theme.

"Vinicius is no saint, but what they were doing to him was too much. Right from the first minute. It's a pattern that repeats itself from one opponent to the next," Mourinho said.

"I'll give him one, now you give him one. If I get a yellow card, you give him one. If I'm substituted, another player comes on who hasn't been booked yet, and you give him one."

The Portuguese coach said Vinicius, who has often been the focus of abuse from rival defenders and crowds, needed to stay composed despite the provocation.

"He needs to have a lot of emotional control. I've told him that if he scores a goal, he needs to be careful how he celebrates it," Mourinho said.

> "Vinicius is no saint, but what they were doing to him was too much. Right from the first minute. It's a pattern that repeats itself from one opponent to the next."
>
> **Jose Mourinho,** Real Madrid manager

"We're in an era where society is against bullying, yet, with Vini, we're still seeing bullying from opponents and from the crowd. We have to educate him and prepare him as best we can, and that's it."

The controversy also carried echoes of last season, when Mourinho was Benfica manager and Vinicius was subjected to discriminatory abuse by Benfica's Gianluca Prestianni during a Champions League match against Real Madrid.

Prestianni was later handed a six-match suspension by UEFA for discriminatory conduct that was deemed to be homophobic in nature.

Mourinho was heavily criticized at the time for defending Prestianni, saying Vinicius had incited the crowd with his goal celebrations, and Benfica was anything but racist because the Portuguese club's greatest player, Eusebio, was also Black.

With Vinicius opting to stay at the Bernabeu, signing a contract extension earlier this month, Mourinho insisted in the Spanish media that the Brazilian now knows his coach is on his side.

He told Spanish outlet AS last week: "Prestianni was my player. That's it. Twenty players can come at me, and I'm still (with my player). I think Vini knows now ... he can look at me and count on me to stand alongside him."

Espi grabs the glory

Bellingham opened the scoring, and new signing Espi secured the points at the death, starting Mourinho's second spell at the club with last-minute win.

"I think that we deserved to win, but Espanyol didn't deserve to lose," Mourinho told reporters.

"They didn't have any players at the World Cup and have been working together for a long time, and you could see that."

Back in charge of Madrid 13 years after leaving, the Portuguese veteran must bring the dressing room under control after the chaos of last season, and, much like his last stint at the Bernabeu, he has been tasked with ending Barcelona's domestic dominance.

Mourinho started his superstars Kylian Mbappe, Vinicius and Bellingham, as well as handing debuts to Bernardo Silva, Denzel Dumfries and Ibrahima Konate.

Bellingham had an excellent first season at Madrid after arriving from Borussia Dortmund, but the subsequent two were disappointing, both for him and the club, which failed to win a major trophy in either.

Mourinho installed him in attacking midfield with licence to roam, and England's World Cup star was heavily involved before netting the first goal of Mourinho's second tenure, heading home Arda Guler's dangerously crossed freekick.

Espanyol threatened midway through the first half, as Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois beat away Clemens Riedel's drive and Roberto Fernandez hooked a shot over the bar shortly afterwards.

Madrid did not heed the warning and Espanyol leveled in the 30th minute, Calatrava slotting home a Javi Hernandez cut-back after a fine team move.

Espanyol stopper Marko Dmitrovic made a good save to deny Mbappe after he got in behind on the right of the area.

The French forward, La Liga's top scorer in both of his two seasons at Madrid, was not at his lethal best.

Mourinho sent on two more new arrivals in the form of record signing Yan Diomande and Marc Cucurella, as Madrid sought a winner.

Federico Valverde hit the outside of the post with a low effort from the edge of the box, as Espanyol dug deep to deny Madrid. However, in the 90th minute, Madrid found the goal it needed when former Levante striker Espi, the lowest profile purchase for Los Blancos this summer, capitalized on a loose ball in the box and fired home.

"We carried out our plan well and then let in that goal at the end," said Calatrava.

"That was a gut-punch."

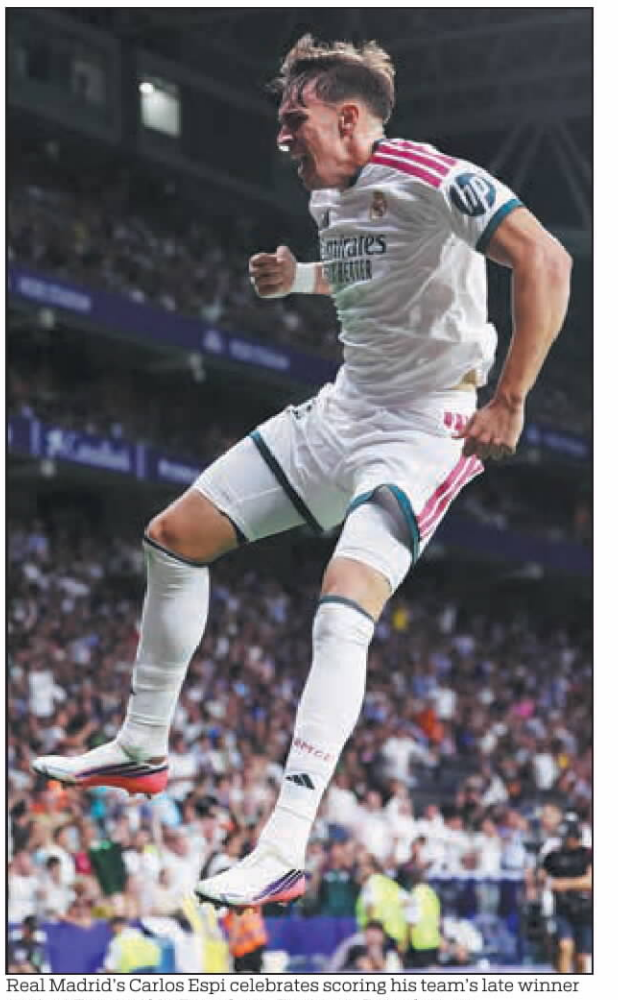
AGENCIES



Jude Bellingham celebrates scoring Madrid's opening goal against Espanyol at RCDE Stadium in Barcelona, Spain, on Saturday. AFP



Real Madrid's head coach Jose Mourinho gestures during his side's 2-1 La Liga win over Espanyol in Barcelona on Saturday. AP



Real Madrid's Carlos Espi celebrates scoring his team's late winner against Espanyol in Barcelona, Spain, on Saturday. AFP

Carrick calm despite United loss, while De Zerbi's big-spending Spurs get thrashed



Manchester United's Matheus Cunha reacts during his side's 2-0 Premier League loss to newly promoted Hull on Saturday. REUTERS



Tottenham Hotspur coach Roberto De Zerbi looks dejected during his side's 3-0 Premier League loss to Brentford on Saturday. REUTERS

Michael Carrick insisted he would not blast his Manchester United flops, despite a dismal 2-0 defeat away to Hull in their opening game of the Premier League season, while big-spending Tottenham slumped to an embarrassing 3-0 away loss to Brentford.

Carrick's side was rocked by first half goals from Semi Ajayi and Nobel Mendy at the MKM Stadium on Saturday.

Hull, which is back in the Premier League for the first time since 2017, was without 10 players due to injury, but still put woeful United to the sword with a vibrant display.

It was a chastening start for United, which many expected to mount a title challenge after finishing third last term.

There was scant evidence that United is capable of going toe to toe with champion Arsenal.

But the stoic Carrick was determined to keep his composure and to avoid the kind of emotional outburst that helped doom his predecessor Ruben Amorim to the sack last season.

"We came here to win, so to not take anything away is hugely disappointing. It is not a nice feeling, but it is not going to change our direction as a team or a club," Carrick said.

"You have to carry on as normal. We just don't all have to shout and scream and create some chaos. Calmness doesn't mean there is not emotion."

United finished the game with 72 percent possession, but it felt like possession without purpose.

Center-back Harry Maguire was among their most threatening attacking outlets.

Bryan Mbeumo forced one of the few meaningful saves from Konstantinos Tzolakis, but Hull's goalkeeper was otherwise little more than a spectator.

Even Marcus Rashford's long-awaited return could not spark a comeback.

Making his first United appearance since December 2024 after his exile under Amorim and loan spells at Aston Villa and Barcelona, Rashford showed flashes of sharpness, but received precious little service.

For Hull, it was a first league victory over United in 52 years.

For Carrick, it was a reminder that momentum is fragile.

Familiar collapse

Tottenham, meanwhile, has splashed out over 200 million pounds ($272 million) in a bid to improve a squad that narrowly avoided relegation to the Championship on the final day of last season.

But Spurs' lavish close-season spending failed to disguise the side's familiar shortcomings.

Roberto De Zerbi gave debuts to four of his new recruits as Sandro Tonali, Andy Robertson, Marcos Senesi and Jan Paul van Hecke all started, while the 85 million-pound Mateus Fernandes came off the bench in the second half.

But Brentford, offered another example of what continuity and smart recruitment can achieve, looking cohesive and confident despite operating on a fraction of Tottenham's budget.

The Bees swarmed west London with a dynamic display that exposed the flaws in the visitor's costly rebuilding plan.

Keane Lewis-Potter and Vitaly Janelt netted for Keith Andrews' side in the first half, before Michael Kayode struck after the interval.

It could have been even worse for Tottenham, as Igor Thiago missed a penalty that would have put Brentford four goals up.

"I am sorry for the defeat. I know we have to improve in our physical condition and the organization. There were many new players, but it was the first game. It's part of our journey," De Zerbi said.

Bolstered by impressive record signing Mamadou Sangare, who set up the second goal for Janelt, Brentford looked capable of surpassing last season's ninth-placed finish.

Spurs, meanwhile, looked bereft of ideas and were comprehensively outplayed and outfought, failing to register a shot on target in the first half.

Italian De Zerbi saved Tottenham from the drop in his seven games in charge last season and has been handsomely backed.

Brazilian winger Savinho is expected to arrive from Manchester City to bolster the attack.

City forward Omar Marmoush is also being pursued.

Yet, however many players Spurs bring in, De Zerbi knows the basics must be addressed to make progress.

"We lost and suffered the difference in the duels. It was the key of this game. We didn't fight in the right way," De Zerbi said.

"Our physical condition was not at the right level for all players, because many came later after the World Cup and there were many new players in the squad and starting lineup.

"But we have to analyze this game better, because we can't play this way in this type of game."

Sage suffers

Pierre Sage, Crystal Palace's new French manager, endured a miserable start in a 2-0 loss at Everton.

Under Sage's predecessor Oliver Glasner, the Eagles won the FA Cup in 2025 and the UEFA Conference League last season.

But Glasner left for Nottingham Forest in the summer, with Sage hired after leading Lens to a second-place finish in Ligue 1 and a French Cup triumph last season.

Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall gave Everton the lead against the run of play in the 42nd minute.

Thierno Barry added to Sage's misery with a bullet header from Iliman Ndiaye's 53rd minute cross.

AGENCIES

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 08/26/2026 3:40:04 PM